

SUCCESSION PLANNING: Recruitment Tips

BOARD COMPOSITION

Two primary ways for selecting directors are appointment and election. They can be used individually or in combination, depending on your by-laws.

Appointment vs. Elections

- Appointments = made by or through funding agencies (governmental or private)
- Elections = made by the members of an organization

Even if your organization has an appointed board, you should still plan to recruit the right people with the skills / experience you need. Often, the agencies responsible for appointment will take advice or requests from existing board members.

BOARD SIZE

The board should have enough members to reflect the size and scope of the organization, meet the needs of the committees, and provide a healthy diversity of views and experience.

A board should be small enough to encourage discussion and facilitate collective decision-making, but not so small that it becomes difficult to achieve a quorum or fulfill obligations.

QUALITIES TO LOOK FOR IN A BOARD MEMBER

The qualities of good directors include:

- **Commitment & interest:** available and can invest the time to understand and support the organization; passionate about the organization's success.
- **Objectivity and independent-mindedness:** they form their own judgment and are not biased towards any particular interest or stakeholder.
- **Integrity:** they have personal integrity and insist that the organization behave ethically.
- **Courage:** they have the courage to ask tough questions and voice their opinions.
- **Perspective:** they have board knowledge and experience that they apply to discussions and decisions.
- **Analytical:** they have well-developed conceptual thinking and problem-solving skills, are quick studies, and avoid 'group-think'.

The dynamic of a board is as important as important as skills, experience and knowledge of its members.

Directors should have the behavioural skills required to work effectively together, including:

- **Ability to present opinions:** they are able to present their views clearly, frankly, constructively and persuasively.
- **Willingness and ability to listen:** they listen attentively and respectfully and make sure they understand what they have heard.
- **Ability to ask questions:** they ask questions in a way that contributes positively to debate.
- **Flexibility:** they are open to new ideas and responsive to change.
- **Conflict resolution:** they are orientated to resolve conflict, are resilient after it occurs, and support board decisions once made.