

Board Recruitment Matrix Derived from Strategic Plan Goals

This tool can be used in a variety of ways to help the Board via the Board Development Committee to know “the right people at the right time” for board service. The key question to ask is “who needs to be in the board room over the next three to five years to help the organization meet its goals.”

A matrix is not simply a generic listing of characteristics, styles, backgrounds, etc., it is about being specific and aligned to the core purpose and values of the organization as well as clarifying what critical actions of the board need to be addressed by the board members based on the strategic and operating plan. The goal is to create a diverse mix of board members who together provide the wisdom and work to steward the organization’s goals toward excellence and mission impact.

There are many advantages of a board matrix including the ability to recruit beyond the “usual prospects” in the community; the ability to be strategically aligned in the organization; the ability to institutionalize succession planning in the organization; the ability to vet prospective board candidates through a standard process to ensure “the right people at the right time;” and to knowingly recruit not just people with interest, but people who will work to achieve the goals of the organization.

A board matrix: is not a one size moment; it can be used for one of three things:

1. Maintain status quo
2. Be a boundary spanner tool to ensure more of a cross section of your categories.
3. Be a purposeful disruptor tool

If you use the same matrix as always you will get exactly what you have – status quo. This is not necessarily a bad thing but also may prove to be frustrating for some who want to see change in diversity for example. Many organizations for example don’t want the status quo. They want to recruit people who want to take you into the future not keep you where you are. Be “on purpose” in your choices and your process.

Creating the Matrix:

Using the strategic plan, Core Purpose, Core Values and board job description as references, brainstorm all the backgrounds, current skills and talents, characteristics and work styles and access to constituencies that are needed in the board room over the next 3-5 years. Be as specific as possible. For example- if one of the goals is to raise more charitable money- think about the kind of person who will be the most helpful in this process- do you need someone with access to a new set of stakeholders? Or someone who has experience raising money from individuals? Or who has corporate contacts? Or who is detailed oriented? Or who is a visionary or a worker-bee? Etc.

Using the matrix:

1. Decide what the matrix is supposed to be telling you. (status quo, boundary spanner, disruptor)
2. Prioritize the types of diversity in the room you are seeking (gender, race, experience, geography, etc.) Yes, to it all, but what is needed next to round out more of the team you have?

3. Define a few key questions that reflect the organizations goals for the next three years
4. Write the characteristics on the top line of the matrix; noting one characteristic per column.
 - List skills and talents
 - Articulate your need for access to stakeholders – “boundary spanners”
 - Articulate diverse backgrounds
 - Incorporate different characteristics and styles
 - Reflect on your big questions
5. List your existing board members on the left-hand column.
6. Ask existing board members to fill in where they “fit” by placing an “x” in the appropriate box(es).
7. Have your Board Development Committee compile a summary profile that can be shared with the board for review. This summary profile should then serve as a discussion piece for identifying gaps that you wish to fill.
 - The boxes left without a mark collectively represent the assets of the person the board is seeking.
8. Populate with prospects
 - The board Development Committee with the help of the full board can brainstorm the names of people who fit at least three of the missing criteria.
9. Engage the whole team in using the matrix
10. The committee can actualize the board recruitment process to actively recruit the identified board prospects.
11. As a reminder, as the board faces turnover and/or new goals are set for the organization, the matrix should be updated for accuracy and relevance.

Sample Criteria for Board Composition

Derived from Strategic Plan, Core Purpose, Core Values, Board Job Description

Skills and Talents

(Examples: areas of professional expertise, potential/current board committee interests,

Access to Constituencies

(Examples: access to: government decision-makers, faith communities, civic/social groups, ethnic communities, other nonprofit allies)

Background

(Examples: age range, gender, ethnicity, geography, past board service tenure, fundraising wiliness, communication background etc.)

Characteristics/Style

(Examples: strategic thinker, doer, linear thinker, process thinker, leader, goal driven, team player, sounds judgment, sense of humor, entrepreneurial, sound problem solver, ability to manage conflict etc.)

Sample Matrix Form

Current Board Members

Board Prospects

Characteristics	/ / / / / / /							/ / / / / / /						