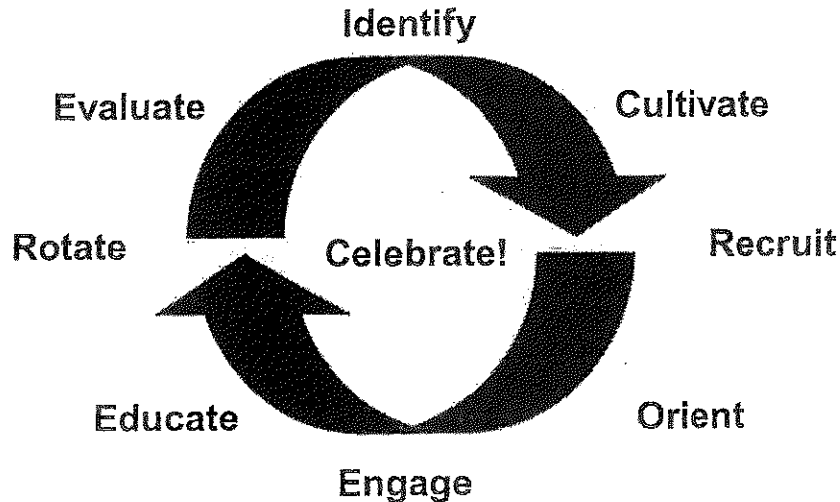


## The Board Building Cycle



**Step 1: Identify** board needs (Skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan). What do we have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the needed characteristics.

**Step 2: Cultivate** potential board members. Get them interested in your organization and keep them informed of your progress.

**Step 3: Recruit** prospects. Describe why a prospective member is wanted and needed. Describe expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don't minimize requirements. Invite questions, and elicit their interest and preparedness to serve.

**Step 4: Orient** new board members to the organization - program, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities, organization chart - and to the board - recent minutes, committees, board member responsibilities, lists of board members and key staff members.

**Step 5: Engage** all board members. Discover their interests and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces. Assign them a board "buddy." Solicit feedback. Hold everyone accountable. Express appreciation for work well done.

**Step 6: Educate** the board. Provide information concerning your mission area. Promote exploration of issues facing the organization. Don't hide difficulties. Celebrate accomplishments.

**Step 7: Rotate** board members. Establish and use term limits. Do not automatically re-elect for an additional term; consider the board's needs and the board member's performance. Explore advisability of resigning with members who are not active. Develop new leadership.

**Step 8: Evaluate** the board and individual board members. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self-assessment.

**Step 9: Celebrate!** Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the organization, and the community. Make room for humor and a good laugh.

Adapted from *The Board Building Cycle*  
by Hughes, Lakey & Bobowick, 2003

## Board Profile Worksheet

### Expertise/Skills/Personal Data

This worksheet can be adapted by organizations to assess their current board composition and plan for the future. The governance committee can develop an appropriate grid for the organization and then present its findings to the full board.

In considering board building, an organization is legally obligated to follow its bylaws, which may include specific criteria on board size, structure, and composition. Or the bylaws may need to be updated to incorporate and acknowledge changes in the environment and community that have made changes in the board structure necessary or desirable.

Remember, an organization will look for different skills and strengths from its board members depending on its stage of development and other circumstances.

Members	Current Members						Prospective					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>Age</b>												
Under 18												
19 – 34												
35 – 50												
51 – 65												
Over 65												
<b>Gender</b>												
Male												
Female												
<b>Race/Ethnicity/Disability</b>												
African American/Black												
Asian/Pacific Islander												
Caucasian												
Hispanic/Latino												
Native American/Indian												
Other												
Disability												
<b>Resources</b>												
Money to give												
Access to money												
Access to other resources (foundations, corporate support)												
Availability for active participation (solicitation visits, grant writing)												

	1	2	3	4	5	6	A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>Community Connections</b>												
Religious organizations												
Corporate												
Education												
Media												
Political												
Philanthropy												
Small business												
Social services												
Other												
<b>Qualities</b>												
Leadership skills												
Willingness to work												
Personal connection with the organization's mission												
<b>Personal Style</b>												
Consensus builder												
Good communicator												
Strategist												
Visionary												
<b>Areas of Expertise</b>												
Administration/Management												
Entrepreneurship												
Financial Management												
Accounting												
Banking and trusts												
Investments												
Fundraising												
Government												
International affairs												
Law												
Marketing, Public relations												
Human resources												
Strategic planning												
Physical plant (architect, engineer)												
Real Estate												
Representative of clients												
Special program focus (education, health, public policy, social services)												
Technology												
Other												
Number of years (or terms) on the board												

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## **How and Where to Find Board Members**

### **Where to find suggestions of good board members**

- Colleagues
- Board members of other nonprofits
- Articles and reports in the local media
- Chief executive and other senior staff
- Board members
- Volunteer centers
- Other ideas?

### **Whom to consider for board membership**

- Current and prospective major donors
- Community leaders
- Executives of local or national corporations, including those not at a senior level
- Owners of small businesses
- Individuals in professions related to the organization's mission
- People who have benefited from the organization's services, or their relatives
- Local leadership programs
- Other ideas?

### **Where to look for prospective board members**

- Churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions
- Trade, professional, and fraternal associations
- Organizations representing various racial and ethnic groups
- Local colleges and universities
- Other ideas?