



BOARD WORKS

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◆ RECRUITING AND ORIENTING

Developing an effective board starts with recruiting the right people. It continues with a good orientation program for new board members, ongoing education to develop a shared understanding of the board's role and responsibilities, and careful planning for future board leadership.

In this issue of *Board Works*, we will focus on recruitment and orientation of board members. Paying careful attention to recruitment and orientation will strengthen your board and the organization it leads.

Thoughtful recruitment and a good orientation program are keys to building an effective board. Carrying out these tasks well leads to satisfied board members who support the mission of the organization. Satisfied board members are more likely to serve multiple terms, thus deepening the expertise and stability of the board.

◆ IDENTIFYING CANDIDATES

The responsibility of recruiting new board members usually rests with a board-selected Development or Nominating Committee – or sometimes with the Executive Committee. If the board or a group designated by the board hasn't recently created a board profile the committee should create one as a first step. This profile will show the make-up of the current board, listing information such as church affiliation; profession and skill sets; age, gender, race, and ethnicity; and term or service dates.

Next, the committee should review the bylaws to see what requirements have been established for board member appointments.

Once you've identified desired characteristics of the new board member(s), develop a list of candidates by asking for suggestions from current board members and other church and community leaders. This list can be continually updated over time, with notes about candidate responses. A strong candidate may refuse the first request to join the board for legitimate reasons but express an interest in serving later.

A designated board member or the CEO on behalf of the board may make the initial contact with a candidate. If the prospective member is open to considering an appointment, the next step is to schedule an interview with one or two board members and the CEO. The conversation should cover topics that help both parties determine if the candidate is a good fit.

When candidates agree to serve on the board, ask them to complete a Board Member Information Form.



Interview Agenda

- *Knowledge of the organization.* Good board members have a personal connection with the mission of the organization. Find out what it is for this candidate.
- *Opportunities and challenges facing the organization.* Be candid in outlining these.
- *Composition of the current board.* Describe the board and name those currently serving.
- *Expectations of board members.* Be forthright in discussing board meetings and other expectations, such as committees, attendance at events or fundraising contacts. The starting date and duration of the term should be specified. Provide a job description [hyperlink] for board members.
- *Next steps in the appointment process.* Explain the process for board appointments.

By: Mim Shirk

For further information or to suggest topics for future issues of Board Works, please contact MHS Alliance at Emily@mhsonline.org.

◆ THE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

A good orientation program helps new board members contribute from the beginning of their term. Before the first board meeting, invite the new member to visit the organization, including a tour and conversation with the executive. Provide minutes of board meetings from the last year and summarize issues that the board anticipates addressing in the near future. Discuss a committee assignment (if appropriate). Clarify the address (email or surface) where board materials should be sent.

Some boards assign a mentor to new board members for the first year. This mentor, a seasoned board member, agrees to be available for conversation before and after board meetings. After the first year, ask the new board member and the mentor to provide feedback on the orientation program.

◆ QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who is responsible in your organization for recruiting new board members?
2. How does the board decide what characteristics or skills are needed on the board?
3. How well does the board incorporate new members?

Resources for Your Organization

MHS Alliance has resources for member organizations. Contact us for more information about these resources:

- Board Profile
- Board Member Information Form
- Mentoring Protocol
- Board Orientation and Integration Checklist
- Board Member Job Descriptions
- Facilitation of a Board Development Session

OUR VISION

To be a community of vibrant Anabaptist health and human service ministries committed to God's work of healing and hope in Jesus Christ.

OUR MISSION

MHS Alliance strengthens and extends Anabaptist health and human service ministries in faithfully and effectively fulfilling their missions.



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