



Board Placement: A Candidate's Checklist

It can be very flattering to be invited, whether the recruitment occurred through a formal process, like BoardStar's OnBoard program, or because someone you know is already on the Board and thought you might like to join them. Often, the knee-jerk reaction is to accept the position. However, once you have been approached about joining a Board of Directors in the Nonprofit Sector it is worth taking a step back and considering the role you may be taking on.

The following is a checklist of some of the questions to ask yourself and the organization you may be joining. There are no right and wrong answers, here, and there is no magic scoring mechanism that will tell you whether to accept the role of Board Director or not. Instead, this is intended as a process to help you ask questions, and make a considered choice.

Mission Match

You'll be more enthusiastic about serving on a Board that offers programs and services in an area that is already of interest to you. Ask yourself:

☆ What is my personal mission?

☆ Does the mission of this organization align with mine? Yes No

Personal Fulfillment

We all have different reasons for wanting to serve on a Board. If the Board opportunity can give you what you want, it will be a far more valuable experience for you. Ask yourself:

☆ Does this Board help me fulfill my motivation for joining a Board?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am concerned about an issue in the community | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to volunteer time | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to "give back" or "pay it forward" | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want my employer/business to look good | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I need to add something to my resume | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I like power | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am excited to be part of a decision-making team | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Expectations

It may seem mundane, but it is important to know what the organization will expect of you and if you can fulfill your obligations. Ask yourself:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☆ Are the Board and Committee meetings held at a time that conflict with other parts of my schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ☆ How much time every month will this organization expect of me?
Can I meet that expectation? | _____ Hrs
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| ☆ How large a donation am I expected to make every year? | _____ |
| ☆ Can I afford that? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Fundraising

Every Board has expectations of Board Directors' involvement in fundraising.

These are legitimate expectations, so you should ask yourself:

☆ Have the expectations about fund raising been explained clearly to me? Yes No

☆ Can I legitimately do what is expected? Yes No

☆ What might be a hurdle for me?

Personal Reactions

☆ Have the leaders of the organization introduced themselves to me? Yes No

Reactions:

☆ Have I been invited to attend a Board Meeting as a guest? Yes No

Reactions:

Background Information

Some basic questions to ask yourself about the organization start

Am I comfortable with...

☆ ...what I know about the organization's financial condition? Yes No

☆ ...what I know about the success the organization's programs are having? Yes No

☆ ...what I know about the history of the organization? Yes No

☆ ...the organization's plans for the future? Yes No

If the answer to any of these is "No, then you should contact someone at the organization and ask for more information.

These are just some basic questions to ask yourself, and none of them represent the single reason to accept or reject an invitation to join a Board of Directors. That is a personal choice and is up to you. Now that you have answered all of the questions, ask yourself the main one:

What does my gut say: do I want to join this Board? Yes No Still not sure
Why?