



Maintaining Continuity, Inspiring Change: Best Practices for Board Recruitment

**2014 Massachusetts Nonprofit Network
Annual Conference**

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Agenda

- The importance of recruiting
- 5 dos and don'ts of nonprofit recruiting



The Importance of Recruiting

You know it's time to recruit when



The Importance of Recruiting

Common presenting symptoms:

- The board keeps shrinking
- No one has joined the board in the past two years
- No one has left the board in the past two years
- Board members feel stuck
- The board can't seem to move forward with critical projects



Goals of Recruiting

- Continuity
 - Offset normal attrition
- Change
 - Move the board in a different direction
 - Add new skills
 - Raise profile in the community
 - Reboot failed board



Dos and Don'ts of Recruiting

#1

Don't make recruiting an option



Dos and Don'ts of Recruiting

#1

Don't make recruiting an option

Do have term limits
-- and enforce them!



What Really Matters



Establish and enforce term limits for all board, advisory board and committee positions.

BP = Best Practice



Dos and Don'ts of Recruiting

#2

Don't take the menu approach to recruiting

Do focus on your organization's specific needs when developing recruiting priorities



The Functions of Non-Profit Boards

How do boards spend their time?

Role 1: Executive Oversight

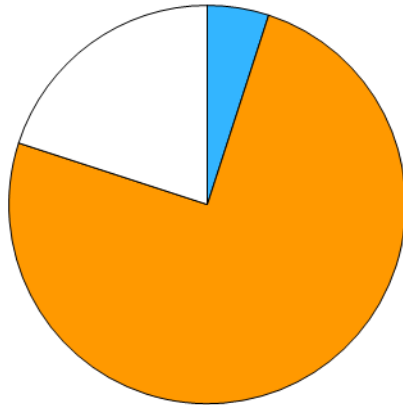
Role 2: Operational Support

Role 3: Resource Development

Role 4: Self Renewal

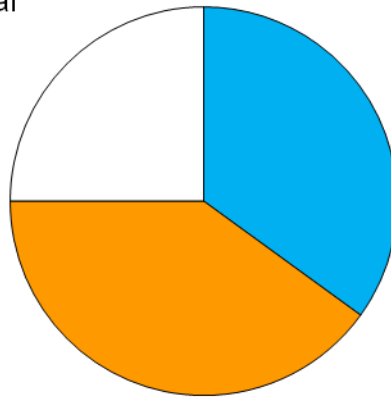


How Boards Spend Their Time



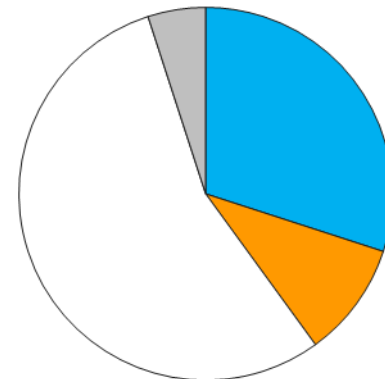
Small

- Executive
- Operations
- Development
- Renewal



Mid Sized

- Executive
- Operations
- Development
- Renewal



Large

- Executive
- Operations
- Development
- Renewal



What Really Matters



How a Board spends its time should match the needs and resources of the organization.



Dos and Don'ts of Recruiting

#3

Don't get ahead of yourself

Do avoid “board freeze” by
following the 10-step plan
-- one step at a time!



10 Step Recruiting Plan

Step 1: Determine needs and priorities

Step 2: Set goals

Step 3: Review by-laws

Step 4: Assign overall responsibility to individual or committee

Step 5: Develop talking points



10 Step Recruiting Plan

Step 6: Identify sources of recruits

Step 7: Generate a list of potential candidates and prioritize

Step 8: Establish a follow up procedure to both positive and negative responses

Step 9: Assign responsibility for making the calls

Step 10: Make the calls



Dos and Don'ts of Recruiting

#4

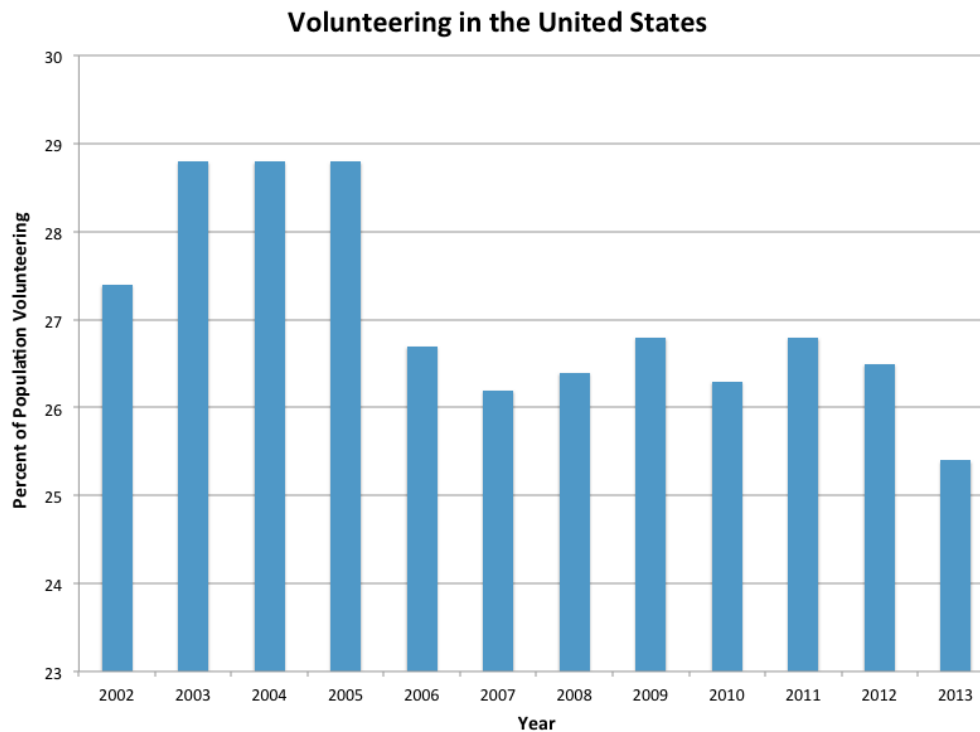
Don't set unrealistic targets

Do think about who is most likely to
volunteer



Volunteering Landscape

- The competition for volunteers is high, with volunteer rates at their lowest in a decade. Only **25.4%** of Americans spent time as volunteers in 2013.



**U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 25, 2014*



The Big Picture on Volunteers*

- Women volunteer at a higher rate than men across all age groups, educational levels, and other major demographic characteristics
- 33 – 44 year-olds most likely to volunteer
- People in early 20's least likely to volunteer
- Married persons volunteer at a higher rate
- Parents with children under age 18 volunteer more than persons without children

**U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 25, 2014*



The Big Picture on Volunteers*

- In order of magnitude, type of organizations people volunteered for:
 - Religious (tend to be older)
 - Educational or youth service (increases with educational level)
 - Social or community service organizations
- Equal proportions volunteered because they were asked to volunteer or became involved on their own initiative

**U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 25, 2014*



Volunteer Retention is Hard

- 1 of 3 people who volunteer at a nonprofit in one year do not volunteer at *any* nonprofit the next year.
- Episodic volunteering (on short duration tasks) has increased (short duration tasks)

****Issue Brief: Volunteer Retention.*** Corporation for National and Community Service and USA Freedom Corps, April 2007. ***Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974.*** Corporation for National and Community Service, December 2006.



Board Members as Volunteers*

- Two-thirds of smaller nonprofit boards have only white, non-Latino members
- 78% of board members are between ages 36 and 65
 - Only 7% are under age 36
- On average, 49% of board members are women
 - Percentage is lower on larger boards
- Recruiting from among board members' friends and acquaintances can be counterproductive.
 - "Friends and family boards" have lower levels of effectiveness on all aspects of board work other than fundraising.

*Francie Ostrower, "Nonprofit Governance in the United States: Findings on Performance and Accountability from the First National Representative Study," the Urban Institute Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, 2007



Board Members as Volunteers

Board member motivations for serving can be grouped into six categories:

- Enhancement of self-worth
- Learning through community
- Helping community
- Developing individual relationships
- Unique contributions to the board
- Self-healing



What Really Matters



Congruence of vision



Dos and Don'ts of Recruiting

#5



Recruit or DIE!



Potential Pitfalls



The board is convinced that recruiting is taking time away from its real work.



Changing one or two board members may not lead to overall change.



5 Dos of Recruiting

1. Have and enforce term limits
2. Focus on your organization's specific needs
3. Follow the 10-step recruiting plan – step by step
4. Think about who's most likely to volunteer
5. Recruit or die!



Thank you for your participation!

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