

Recruiting and Retaining Board Members

[Adapted from: 9 Simple Steps to Recruit and Retain Great Board Members - By Amy Eisenstein](#)

Considerations

What do your bylaws outline for board terms, number of directors, standing and ad hoc committees, and membership? Review these regularly (annually or every two years) to be sure they are still serving your camp well and the work that needs to be done.

Who are the people already in your community and do they understand the need and expectation for serving on the board? Use fundraisers, newsletters, and other touchpoints to communicate clearly and with enthusiasm about the opportunity to serve on the board. Build ambassadors for your camp through all your contacts and circle of influence.

Document your recruitment and onboarding process to include how you screen your candidates. It is important to collect applications and reference checks. This will help you determine if candidates have the skill set or experience you need, and contribute to your risk management strategies and due diligence for volunteer screening.

Steps for recruiting and retaining board members:

1. 'Ideal' List

Where are the gaps in your experiences and skill sets? What work needs to be done (existing or new) and what is the ideal candidate to fill that role? You can use a board skills matrix to help with the process of determining the skills or demographics missing from your board. (a Google search will generate many matrix options - you can find one that fits your camp the best)

2. Nominating Committee

All board members can pass potential candidates to this committee. This committee will be responsible for executing the screening process and bringing recommendations back to the board and membership (based on how your directors are elected).

3. Written Role Descriptions

Having clear role descriptions for directors, officers, and committee members is ideal for communicating the expectations put on board members. Candidates will want to know what is expected of them and how much time they need to commit to the role. Remember to include general board expectations regarding meeting

attendance, committee participation, event and summer contributions, and fundraising/personal donation obligations.

4. Orientation Process and Mentoring

Make sure you are caring well for new board members by providing an adequate orientation that includes information about your camp (history, programming, organizational structure); board structure, function, and expectations; and introductions to other board members. It is also helpful to orientate your new board members in your digital filing systems, policies and procedures, and communication systems and methods so they are comfortable with where information can be found and how to contribute to discussions and meetings.

5. Utilize Skills

Once you have board members in place - be sure to utilize the skills they are bringing to the table!

6. Energize Meetings

Be sure to include success stories and meaningful discussions in your meetings. Board members need to know why serving the camp in this way matters and that they are contributing. Engaging meetings take preparation so commit to putting in the work.

7. Training

Providing board members with training opportunities allows them to grow in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. It will elevate the work the board is doing and increase effectiveness. Training can take an investment of time or money. Some courses will have registration fees, and some are offered for free. Consider the training that is needed and seek out opportunities. Training can be as simple as including 15-20 minutes of intentional discussions during a board meeting about relevant topics like fundraising or governance. Articles, videos or podcasts are great resources on a tight budget.

8. Gratitude

Make sure you are thanking your board members! This can be through public means like a list of serving directors in an annual newsletter or a shout-out/highlight of a committee's efforts and success. Personal thank-yous through cards or small token gifts are highly effective too (think camp swag or coffee gift cards so they can grab a Timmies while they tackle special projects).

Hosting annual board retreats is a great way to provide your board with time for meaningful training and show gratitude through a nice meal and/or fun team-building activities.