

Tool 17: Board Development Plan

When your organization commits to getting the right people to lead it to success, it can be helpful to define your strategy for doing that. This tool offers an outline for a Board Development Plan, with five sections to help you map the path from the board you have today to the board you need to maximize your impact.

Overview

This section describes how board development supports the organization's strategic plan goals to ensure that the organization is led by a dedicated group of people who support the mission and who bring the commitment, connections and enthusiasm necessary to drive the organization forward. This section will also include the strategic plan's high-level Board Development Goal, if one was articulated.

Board Composition

This section will describe the ideal mix of board skills, knowledge, and networks. It will also describe the current board composition. A Board Profile Grid may be included in this section of the plan or at the end.

Defining the ideal board composition lets a group assess its gaps and develop targeted strategies to recruit people who bring skills or connections that are missing.

Board Development Goals and Strategies

This section describes the outcomes that leadership growth must achieve, and the organization's approach to board development. It will:

- Identify how the group will **recruit** leaders with skills and connections that are important to the board's function but currently missing from the board;
- Define the group's **orientation** process to bring new leaders up to speed, and any ongoing **training** to keep leaders apprised of trends and developments in the field;
- Describe how the group will create accountability and **evaluate** the board to ensure follow-through; and
- Describe how the group will **recognize** and thank leaders for their service.

A table can be helpful. On the following page is a sample with strategies and activities by year.

Board Structure

This section will define the board’s use of committees, how committees will conduct their work, and how they will relate to the rest of the board.

GOAL: Organization is led by a connected, skilled, and engaged board team.

STRATEGY	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
1. Clarify board roles and responsibilities.	Develop a board member job description		
	Develop a board application and board member agreement	Review / refine the board recruitment packet.	
2. Use committees to support the board’s work and develop a leadership pipeline.	Establish Nominating Committee.	Establish XYZ Committee.	Review / refine the committee structure
	Ensure every committee has a charter, a chairperson, and a clear work plan.	Update committee charters	
3. Recruit leaders with skills and connections that are important to the board’s function	Establish a nomination and review process for candidates.		
	Identify and recruit ## new board candidates.	Identify and recruit ## new board candidates.	Identify and recruit ## new board candidates.

A Board Development Activities Work Plan would provide details for the activities occurring in Year 1 and would assign responsibility for follow-through.

Attachments

At the end of the plan, the following documents should be included:

- Board Recruitment Packet
- Board Member Application
- Board of Directors Job Description
- Board Member Agreement
- Board Orientation Outline
- Committee job descriptions and committee work plans