



The Balanced Board

The Nominating Committee's Role, Responsibilities & Process



Tecker International LLC

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For several years we have helped many organizations build a "balanced board". The balanced Board involves a three-level vet by a competent nominating committee informed by the Board about desired perspectives.

Level 1 is focused on individual skill sets- 6 essential skills of an organization board member.

Level 2 is focused on diversity of perspectives -generationally related experience, gender related experience, cultural and ethnically related experience, geographically related experience, experience related to role in the industry or profession, etc.

Level 3 is focused on specific experience - familiarity with having already been part of a major initiative being contemplated by the Board.

This approach has been employed many years by successful charitable organizations that do not have members who can "run" for offices. In some instances the organization has transitioned its nominating committee from viewing itself as a job placement firm accepting applications to thinking of itself as executive search firm that seeks individuals that can fill the Board's desired profile. Written policy guides the process.

We also observe that the secret sauce of effective governance in nonprofit organizations where the board has both a corporate and representative role understands how to navigate the structural conflict between fiduciary duties to the corporation and political obligations to a constituency. This involves understanding the difference between "representative for" and representative of" and the behaviors and decision systems that allow for balance to be achieved and sustained.

Mental Models

Where does your “mental model” for a Board come from? (such as experience with another organization, corporate, community organization, service organizations, academic institution, etc.)

Mental Models

Please list the major differences between the source(s) of your “mental models” and this organization.

- Mission _____
- Structure _____
- Business lines _____
- Decision Processes _____
- Culture _____
- Other _____

What are the implications of those difference for the nominating committee?

Board Responsibilities

1. Set organization **direction**
2. Ensure necessary **resources**
3. Provide **oversight**



Role of the Balanced Board Nominating Committee: An Analogy

From:



Job Placement Firm

To:

Headhunter



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Vetting Candidates for a Balanced Board

Three Considerations:

1. Board Member Skill Sets – Key Attributes
2. Generational, Geographic, Gender, Cultural, Industry, Ethnic, or Specialty Related Experience
3. Special Skills Or Expertise Germane To Key Strategic Initiatives



The Balanced Board : Desired Perspectives

1. Variable Specialty.
2. Variable Geography.
3. Variable Industry.
4. Variable Gender.
5. Variable Generation.
6. Variable Heritage.
7. Variable Investments.
8. Variable New Product Development.
9. Variable Etc..
10. Variable Etc..

Example

Current Board Profile

Variable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Board Member Initial										

Six Key Attributes of Board Members

1. The ability to think strategically and analytically and to effectively communicate thoughts and the reasons for them.
2. Possession of earned respect of other key stakeholder group members²
3. The ability to work well with others as a member of a collaborative group with group decision-making authority and an understanding of the fiduciary duties of loyalty, care, and obedience.³
4. A demonstrated understanding of the differences between “oversight” and “supervision.”
5. An earned reputation for emotional maturity, personal integrity, and honesty.
6. A demonstrated familiarity with the body of knowledge related to both the process for which the group is responsible as well as the substantive content of the subject area within which decisions and choices will have to be made.

Board Member Skill Sets – Key Attributes

Attribute	Evidence	Rating
The ability to think strategically and analytically and to effectively communicate thoughts and the reasons for them.		
Possession of earned respect of other key stakeholder group members		
The ability to work well with others as a member of a collaborative group with group decision-making authority and an understanding of the fiduciary duties of loyalty, care, and obedience.		
A demonstrated understanding of the differences between “oversight” and “supervision.”		
An earned reputation for emotional maturity, personal integrity, and honesty.		
A demonstrated familiarity with the body of knowledge related to both the process for which the group is responsible as well as the substantive content of the subject area within which decisions and choices will have to be made.		

Sample Written Interview Questions:



1. What do you hope to accomplish in the office for which you are running?
2. What leadership characteristics / values will you bring that would best impact the organization as a member of the Board of Directors?
3. What are the critical opportunities and challenges that you see for our organization?
4. In regard to the profession, what are the three most pressing issues/trends and how should we address these?
5. What 3 professional and 3 Society accomplishments are you most proud of and why?



Sample Written and Verbal Interview Questions

1. Describe the strengths you would bring to the Board and explain how each would be helpful?
2. Other than expertise in our organization's area of focus, what specific competencies do you bring that will enhance Board processes? Please provide examples related to such areas as finance and budgeting, setting strategic direction, performance assessment, project oversight, and/or change management

Explain the role of a Director serving on a nonprofit organization Board?

3. What do you see as the role of the Executive Director/CEO? How do you see Board members working with staff?



4. Describe your leadership roles both at work and as a volunteer working with other volunteers.

How would others describe your leadership style? Please provide examples.

In your leadership roles, what have been some of your accomplishments?

5. Describe your involvement with strategic planning and the results that have been achieved.

When confronted with team member conflict in a volunteer setting, how would you approach the situation? Please provide at least two examples.

6. What do you consider the two most exciting initiatives in our strategic plan? Please explain.



7. What experiences have you had with partnerships, alliances and collaborations among organizations?

8. What is your vision for the future of our profession?

9. What is your vision for the future of our organization?

Now that you have answered all these questions, what do you hope our organization will accomplish during your time of service on the Board?

Interview “Case Studies”

1. One board member is a member of a component/company board in addition to your organization board. A “yes” decision on a particular issue will be good for the component/company; and a “no” decision will be good for the organization?
2. A board member who is a major dues payer continually comes to meetings unprepared.
3. The organization is looking to pay someone to write a book and an officer wants to be a candidate.
4. A major exhibitor wants you to participate in a paid focus group of product users.
5. A major donor wants to fund a program that is only loosely related to the mission.
6. Your “partner organization” has observed that membership has been decreasing since the “passing” score of your credentialing exam was increased.



Thought Prompters – Case Studies

- What would you do?
- What policies could be in place to help guide the situation?
- How might our organization's culture support or inflame the situation?
- Who would be most appropriate to take the lead in handling the situation??
- How would you prevent this from happening?

