



**NONPROFIT  
BOARDS**

Suite 900  
1828 L Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
20036-5104

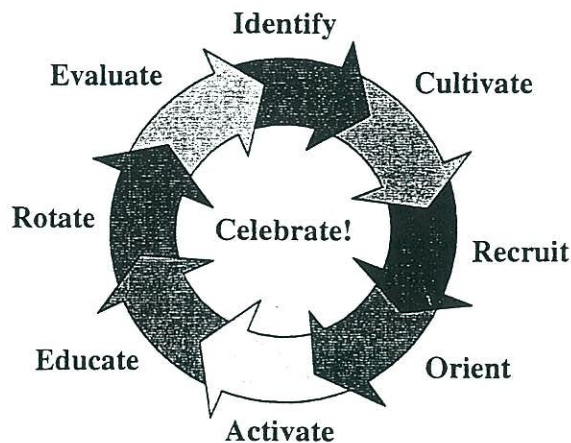
202-452-6262  
202-452-6299 FAX  
ncnb@ncnb.org  
www.ncnb.org

*A good board is a victory, not a gift*

*Cyril O. Houle,  
from Governing Boards*

National Center for Nonprofit Boards  
1828 L Street, NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 452-6262  
[www.ncnb.org](http://www.ncnb.org)

## THE BOARD BUILDING CYCLE



**Step 1: Identify** board needs (Skills, knowledge, perspective, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan). What do we have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the needed characteristics.

**Step 2: Cultivate** potential board members. Get them interested in your organization and keep them informed of your progress.

**Step 3: Recruit** prospects. Describe why a prospective member is wanted and needed. Describe expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don't minimize requirements. Invite questions, and elicit their interest and preparedness to serve.

**Step 4: Orient** new board members to the organization—program, history, bylaws, pressing issues, finances, facilities, organization chart—and to the board—recent minutes, committees, board member responsibilities, lists of board members and key staff members.

**Step 5: Activate** all board members. Discover their interests and availability. Involve them in committees or task forces.

Assign them a board “buddy.” Solicit feedback. Hold everyone accountable. Express appreciation for work well done.

**Step 6: Educate** the board. Provide information concerning your mission area. Promote exploration of issues facing the organization. Don't hide difficulties. Celebrate accomplishments.

**Step 7: Rotate** board members. Establish and use term limits. Do not automatically re-elect for an additional term; consider the board's needs and the board member's performance. Explore advisability of resigning with members who are not active. Develop new leadership.

**Step 8: Evaluate** the board and individual board members. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self assessment.

**Step 9: Celebrate!** Recognize victories and progress, even small ones. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the organization, and the community. Make room for humor and a good laugh.

## **RECRUITING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE BOARD**

1. Be prepared to devote time, attention, and consistent effort to board recruitment and retention.
2. Be honest in discussing the issues.
3. Build relationships that foster trust and alliances.
4. Look for skills as well as attributes in prospective board members.
5. Engage new board members in meaningful activities based on their skills, talents, and interests.
6. Follow sound board development practices to create a positive working climate for all board members.

From *Building Board Diversity* by Jennifer Rutledge. Published by the National Center for Nonprofit Boards.