
Board Ambassadors

Out in the Community

Board members have an important role to play beyond the board table in supporting the work of their organization. Indeed, it's success benefits from the awareness, interest and engagement of people in many corners of the community. For this reason board members are encouraged to help make the organization's mission more visible.

Here is an exercise designed to get one started on being an active community ambassador.

Board members are influential. They are volunteers, community members and in many cases donors themselves. External engagement by board members, especially in interpersonal and small group settings, complements that of staff.

Community Education

Whether at the pub or around the kitchen table conversations provide a great opportunity to talk about the issues in the community and your organization's work in addressing them.

Donors and Board Prospects

Over the long term talking to people about the organization helps cultivate future donors and potential board members.

Public Policy Advocacy

Board member voices are also important on public policy matters. Be on the lookout for opportunities to speak to an elected official (or candidate), senior public servant or business leader.

Consider writing a personal letter about an issue to your elected representative, not just as a concerned citizen but also as a volunteer board member.

A Board Member & Group Exercise

My Networks

Your networks can include:

- ☐ Co-workers/former co-workers
- ☐ Those you have dinner with
- ☐ People on your team (hockey, soccer)
- ☐ Former classmates
- ☐ Poker buddies/bridge partners
- ☐ Siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces

Social Media

You are not only out in the community in person you may also be out there digitally on Facebook, LinkedIn or other platforms. Is your volunteer work in your online profiles?

Instructions

There are five board member questions. **To encourage openness and reflection the completed question page should not be collected.**

Distribute the exercise or just the questionnaire portion to all board members at the next board meeting and ask them to complete it and bring it to the following meeting.

Alternatively, explain the exercise and hand out the question page and give board members 10 minutes to answer.

For a board discussion on being a board ambassador focus on questions 1 and 5 only. Board members can keep the answers to questions 2-4 to themselves.

Board Ambassadors Exercise

You will not be expected to share your answers to questions 2, 3 or 4, but if you are willing you might share your answers to questions 1 & 5

Your Name _____

1. Is my membership on the board listed in my professional bio, on my Facebook or LinkedIn profile, or on my resume?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (but I will make these changes)
- ☐ This is not relevant to me

2. When was the last time (approximately) I had a conversation, of any length, with someone outside of the organization about the importance of the issues the organization is involved in, or the organization itself

When _____ With whom _____

- ☐ I do not remember

3. When was the last time (approximately) I had a conversation with someone outside the organization where I mentioned that I serve on the board of the organization?

When _____ With whom _____

- ☐ I do not remember

4. Who are three other people in my own professional or friendship networks that, the next time we meet, I will try to have a conversation with that will broach the subject of the organization's work and/or my board involvement?

Name _____

Name _____

Name _____

5. Who is one person in my professional or friendship network who would likely be interested in the work of the organization, may not aware of my involvement and perhaps would support it and therefore should get a letter or brochure from us?

Name _____

Contact Info _____