

## The Board Building Cycle

→Rotate→identify→Cultivate→Recruit→Orient→Involve→Educate→Evaluate→

**Step 1: Identify** the needs of the board: the skills, knowledge, perspectives, connections, etc., needed to implement the strategic plan. What do you have? What is missing? Identify sources of board members with the desired characteristics.

**Step 2: Cultivate** potential board members. Ask current board members, senior staff, and others to suggest potential candidates. Find ways to connect with those candidates, 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. Explain expectations and responsibilities of board members, and don't minimize requirements. Invite questions, elicit their interest, and find out if they would be prepared to serve.

**Step 4: Orient** new board members both to the organization — explaining the history, programs, pressing issues, finances, facilities, bylaws, and organizational chart — and to the board — describing committees, board member responsibilities, and lists of board members and key staff members.

**Step 5: Involve** 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. Hold retreats and encourage board development activities by sending board members to seminars and workshops. Don't hide difficulties.

**Step 7: Evaluate** the board as a whole, as well as individual board members. Examine how the board and chief executive work as a team. Engage the board in assessing its own performance. Identify ways in which to improve. Encourage individual self-assessment.

**Step 8: Rotate** board members. Establish term limits. Do not automatically reelect 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 9: Celebrate!** Recognize victories and progress, no matter how small. Appreciate individual contributions to the board, the organization, and the community. Make room for humor and a good laugh.