

Four Cool Ideas for Recruiting New Board Members

1. Form a "One-Meeting Nominating Committee." Draw up a list of twenty well-connected people of the sort you would want on the board but who you suspect wouldn't join, (but who might know someone who would be a good board member.) Call those twenty people and ask them to come to a one-meeting committee over lunch. Tell them that at the lunch they'll be told more about the organization and what it's looking for in board members. At the end of lunch they'll be asked simply for the name of one person they think would be a good board member. The day after the lunch call up each of the nominees and begin by explaining who nominated them.
2. Take out a "Help Wanted--Volunteer Board Member" ad in the neighborhood newsletter or alumni newsletter of a local college. Example: "HELP SOUTH PARK... We're looking for a few talented and conscientious volunteer board members to help us guide our childcare, teen, and senior programs into the next century. If you can contribute one evening a month and have skills or contacts in accounting, publicity or special event fundraising, call Mary Margaret Jones at xxx-xxxx to find out more about whether this volunteer opportunity is right for you. We're a..."
3. Ask the executive director or the volunteer coordinator if there are two or three hands-on volunteers who would make good board members. Hands-on volunteers, such as support group facilitators, practical life support volunteers, meal preparers, weekend tree-planters, classroom aides and others bring both demonstrated commitment AND an intimate knowledge of the organization's strengths and weaknesses. Volunteers, donors and clients should be the first place you look. You don't have to "sell" the agency - they know it already!
4. Pick four local organizations where you don't know anyone, but you'd like to. Ask each officer to call one of the four local organizations and ask to have coffee with the board president or the executive director. Over coffee suggest that your two organizations recommend "retiring" board members to each other as a way of establishing organizational links and strengthening ties among communities.