



Guiding Principles and Board Values

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Organizations develop guiding principles from inception. Founding leaders instill their values. Through time, culture and environmental changes, the ideals evolve.

Values apply to organizational priorities and decisions; as well as the selection of leaders.

Desired Traits

Discuss organizational and individual values in the nomination and selection process. They should frame discussions and decisions of the board throughout the year.

☑ **Authentic** – An authentic leader is not there for personal gain

or fame. They have an ability to recognize what's important and are charismatic about influencing others to action.

☑ **Candid** – Directors are expected to be “up front” with their ideas and concerns. They should be frank in expressing thoughts.

☑ **Committed** – There will be good and bad times in the organization. A director should be committed for the long term; not only interested in a few priorities and then lose interest.

☑ **Community Minded** – The director should prefer unity over exclusion. They embrace and

represent the entire community; not just subgroups or personal preferences.

☑ **Considerate** – There will be times when the board may disagree, or a discussion may cause conflict. Courtesy to colleagues and staff is essential.

☑ **Diversity of Thought** – A director should be open to new ideas, new models and new people. The opposite is the director stating, “That’s not how we used to do it.”

☑ **Engaged** – Though meetings are periodic, a director should remain engaged in the interim. Adjournment of the board meeting is not a cue to lose

interest until the next meeting.

- ☑ **Innovative** – The director seeks solutions with available resources; frequently applying new technologies.
- ☑ **Inquisitive** – Curiosity, to a point, is an asset. Directors should ask questions or “verify and trust” that processes and initiatives are in good order.
- ☑ **Integrity** – A director should support the highest standards of excellence, honesty and ethics in carrying out duties.
- ☑ **Objective** – Directors must make decisions based on facts and knowledge. Too often proposals are adopted because they sound like a good idea or simply support a friend on the board.
- ☑ **Optimistic** – Directors should have a positive attitude; it is far better than the pessimist who postures, “You guys better solve this problem.” Positivity encourages team problem solving.
- ☑ **Passion** – The director has enthusiasm for the

purpose and advancement of the organization.

- ☑ **Proactive** – The director offers ideas and volunteers for tasks, not one to wait to be “voluntold” (the opposite of volunteering).
- ☑ **Relentless** – With a mission and strategic plan in place, a director should work steadily for their advancement; while serving members and the community.
- ☑ **Resources** – A director should have sufficient time and finances to fulfill board duties. A prospective director might confirm with an employer and family that there is sufficient time for the role.
- ☑ **Respected** – The organization needs persons who are respected in the community. Directors should be considered models of excellence.
- ☑ **Selfless** – The director is more about giving than taking credit; ideas are generously shared with others.
- ☑ **Supportive** – The director comprehends

and is committed to teamwork with the board, committees and staff while advancing the mission.

- ☑ **Time Management** – A director respects time; realizing the value of meetings, honoring commitments, and allocating time to fulfill commitments.
- ☑ **Thought Leaders** – Thought leaders offer insights and vision. They continually conduct environmental scans to share in board discussions.
- ☑ **Transparent** – Secrecy has no place in governance. A director should promote openness.

Understand and promote the values associated with the organization. Encourage the nominating committee to discuss existing and desired values with candidates.