

Setting the Stage: Building Your Board Through Orientation



The purpose of orientation:

- For the new member to know the organization
- For the organization to know the new member
- To discover how to work effectively together
- To clarify roles and responsibilities

Ideally, a new board members should leave with a story to tell, with clear boundaries and with permission to participate.

A new driver isn't allowed on the road before taking a test, a new board member should not be allowed into a board room before going through orientation! (They will all say they are busy, even if they are not. So what!!!)

If a new board member can't devote a few hours to orientation, what does that tell you about his or her commitment?

Never forget, it's an honor to serve!

Board manual for the the board should include (if available):

By-laws

Strategic plan

Annual calendar

Certified audit

Annual report

Newsletters

Organization Chart

Board job descriptions

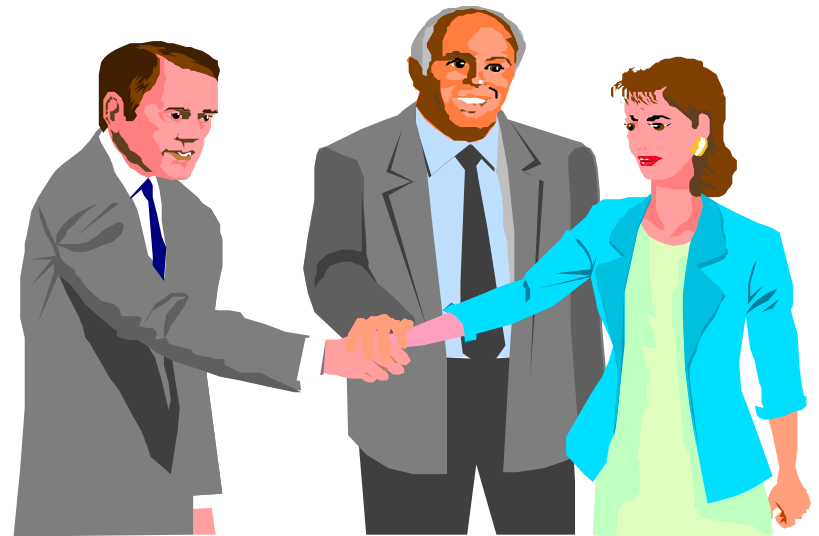
Glossary of terms

Fundraising Plan

List of board members

Assign a Board Mentor

- o Call in advance of meeting to welcome
- o Offer ride to meeting
- o Introduce new member
- o Sit together in meeting



Board Orientation

- Two ways to proceed:
group and individual
- Meeting should include
overview of past and present
- Introduction to key leaders
- Share vision of future

A Lofty Goal:

I challenge you to develop an orientation program that is so interesting, so engaging and so powerful that current board members want to come and that once someone has been through it, wants to bring their family and friends!

**Many people do not perceive a
room full of strangers
as a great social opportunity**



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Board Orientation Should Include:

- A warm welcome
- A mission moment
- Good food (even if just a snack)
- A sincere interest in getting to know the new members
- Permission to get involved (you don't have a year or two to wait for people to jump in)

Questions to ask new members

- What boards have you served on before?
- What did you like about your previous service?
Dislike?
- What experience do you have with our Bar Association?
- Tell us about your time challenges/availability.
- What skills would you like to share with our organization?

Ways to bring the mission to the orientation

- Share how the Bar Association has helped you
- Share an innovative program the Association is sponsoring with the new member
- Bring in a front line staff person
- Bring in a member at a different stage of his or her career

Have a treasure
hunt with prizes
through your
board manual

Your new members will need to know:

1. Roles and responsibilities
2. What to expect from staff
3. Forms and procedures
4. By-laws

Final thoughts about orientation-

- Make it fun
- Make it meaningful
- Give your new members the tools they need
- Make them feel welcome!