



January 2013

What Gets Board Prospects to Yes?

When prospects are asked to serve on a nonprofit board, what motivates them to say yes?

This was one of the questions posed to participants in my survey "Why Don't Board Members Do What They're Supposed to Do?"

The survey identified six major considerations that influence decisions to accept a board invitation.

- The predominant factor was that a **meaningful personal connection** to the cause or organization must be felt before a commitment is made.
- Furthermore, survey participants also said they want to feel a **significant professional connection**. Both responses indicate prospects want to see themselves as a good fit with the organization.
- The merit of your cause doesn't mean an automatic yes, according to survey results. Do your homework to determine if a **prospect's interests and background** are a good match before an invitation is extended.
- Naturally, the survey confirmed that **time** is an issue. My experience tells me the real question is whether or not someone is willing to commit his or her own time to *your* organization.
- Before saying yes, potential board members want to know they will have an **ability to make an impact** on the organization and not simply be a name on a letterhead.
- **Who's asking** makes a difference. Survey respondents shared that a positive response is much more likely when the ask comes from someone the prospect has a personal connection with.

Other concerns that influence decisions to join a nonprofit board that the survey identified include personal opinion of current board members, the board's reputation, perception of how well organized the organization is, financial soundness of the organization, and opinion of the organization's staff.

When recruiting to fill positions on your nonprofit's board, give careful consideration to the thought process of your potential prospects.

The responses cited in my survey provide insights on what motivates prospects to accept your invitation.

Use them to focus your recruitment efforts on prospects who are most likely to respond with an enthusiastic Yes!

Thanks to the following publications for sharing my insight for improving organizational performance:

Investor's Business Daily, Canadian Fundraising & Philanthropy, Supervision Magazine, The Real Estate Professional, Nonprofit World, Nonprofit Business Advisor, The Practicing CPA, BoardSource, GuideStar, Industry Week, and Building Women Magazine.

Benefiting leaders of nonprofits, associations, community groups, and volunteer based organizations is the purpose of this monthly newsletter. Your suggestions for issues to address in future editions are certainly welcomed!

My email address is hardy@hardysmith.com and telephone number is **386-451-0652**. I would welcome an opportunity to discuss your organization's needs and how I might be able to help you with practical, easy to implement solutions.

My mission is to increase the performance of America's nonprofits and associations and their essential leadership teams. For testimonials on my ability for delivering results please visit: www.hardysmith.com



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