

## **A Guideline for Revitalizing Your Advisory Council**

*Carter McNamara, PhD. Modified from the Free Management Library.*

*It's important to keep the perspective that your board or Advisory Council deserves highly skilled and participative leaders. Consider the nature of issues and goals currently faced by your organization and seek leaders with skills you can use. If you are considering bringing a significant number of new members on to your Advisory Council, you may also want to consider raising the caliber of involvement for all members. The following guidelines are relevant to all volunteer leadership recruitment efforts, but you always should be aware of your need for fund raising leaders as part of your Advisory Council membership. These guidelines should be modified as necessary to conform to the particular culture and purpose of the organization.*

1. Maintain an up-to-date list of potential candidates, including the particular skills each one can bring to the organization. This list is often generated by the Nominating Committee or the Advisory Council Development Committee.
2. Develop a background information form for Advisory Council leaders. The form should request biographical information, why they want to join, what they hope to bring to the group, what they would like to get from their experience, as well as space for any questions they might have.
3. Reference major strategic goals for the organization. List skills that would be highly useful to the group (e.g., if new staff people will be hired, the board or Advisory Council may desire people with human resource skills).
4. Review the list of potential candidates to recruit and ask to meet with them.
5. Identify if there are any potential conflicts of interest with any candidate, e.g., is he or she on the board or Advisory Council of an organization with a similar mission, or a vendor of the organization, etc.
6. Request that prospective leaders meet with the chair and project director to learn more about the project/organization. They should receive relevant organizational materials and Advisory Council member job descriptions with volunteer application forms. Provide names of current Advisory Council members whom a prospective new leader might contact with any questions.

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7. Before you invite the new recruit to join the team, ask if he or she would like to sit in on a meeting. Let current members know that a potential new leader will be attending. Consider nametags to help the potential new member become acquainted. Introduce the visitor right away in the meeting and, at the end of the meeting. Ask the potential new leader if he or she has any questions. Thank them for coming.
8. Shortly after the meeting, call the prospective new leader to determine if he or she wishes to join the team. If yes, solicit the completed application form and provide all applications to the group for their review and election
9. Notify new leaders (those who have been elected) and invite them to subsequent meetings and an orientation.
10. Activate new leaders immediately. Give them a choice of time and a specific project right away while their enthusiasm is at a high point. Identify 2 or 3 projects that fit their skills and interests and your project needs. Then let them choose. This is very key to Baby Boomers.