

WGOB E-GUIDE

5 TIPS FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



WGOB E-Guides provide tips for your board journey, empowering you with the confidence and courage to lead and serve on corporate boards.

Whether you are an experienced corporate director or new to board service, being a new board member can be overwhelming without an onboarding plan or process. It can take up to one year of onboarding before you become a truly influential director on a board.

ONBOARDING IS A TWO-WAY PROCESS. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION, AND SO IS THE COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION. HERE ARE FIVE TIPS TO HELP YOU HIT THE GROUND RUNNING WHEN YOU TAKE ON YOUR NEW BOARD ROLE:

1. UNDERSTAND THE BOARD CULTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

AS [THIS PIECE FROM SPENCER STUART EXPLAINS](#), THE CULTURE OF A BOARD IS COMPOSED OF UNWRITTEN RULES, MINDSETS, ASSUMPTIONS, NORMS, BELIEFS AND VALUES THAT INFLUENCE THE MEMBERS' INTERACTIONS AND DECISIONS. TAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND THE CULTURE OF YOUR NEW BOARD, INCLUDING HOW FACTORS SUCH AS REGIONAL CULTURES, INDUSTRY NORMS AND THE CHAIR'S LEADERSHIP STYLE IMPACT IT.

2. SEEK OUT A BOARD BUDDY OR A MENTOR

AS A NEW MEMBER, YOU MIGHT HAVE QUESTIONS, BUT FEEL INTIMIDATED TO SPEAK UP IN FRONT OF LONG-TENURED BOARD MEMBERS. CONSIDER SEEKING OUT A MENTOR TO HELP NAVIGATE THE FIRST FEW MEETINGS. THIS SHOULD BE AN EXISTING BOARD MEMBER WHO CAN MEET WITH YOU ONE-ON-ONE, TOUCH BASE BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING AND OFFER A SAFE SPACE TO ASK QUESTIONS AFTERWARDS. FOR MORE ON SEEKING OUT A MENTOR, READ [DEBORAH ROSATI'S BLOG POST ON THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP](#).

3. BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE

YOU SHOULD ARRIVE TO MEETINGS WELL-PREPARED AND INFORMED. DURING THE MEETING, REMEMBER TO PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING, ASK THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS, BE CONCISE AND KEEP YOUR COMMENTS RELEVANT TO THE TOPIC AT HAND. [THIS POST FROM BOARDBE](#) HAS MORE TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING. [THIS ARTICLE FROM DIRECTORPREP.COM](#) IS GREAT RESOURCE TO HELP YOU PREPARE TO ASK QUESTIONS CONSTRUCTIVELY IN BOARD MEETINGS.

4. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

BUILDING TRUST IS CRITICAL TO A BOARD'S SUCCESS—AND [TRUST MEANS CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS](#). NEW BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD PROACTIVELY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR BOARD COLLEAGUES OUTSIDE THE BOARDROOM. FOR GUIDANCE ON BUILDING TRUST, [REVIEW DEBORAH ROSATI'S BLOG POST ON ELEVATING YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE](#).

5. CONTINUOUS LEARNING

TO EXCEL AS A PROFESSIONAL, YOU SHOULD AIM TO EXCEED EXISTING REQUIREMENTS BY CONTINUALLY LEARNING. CONTINUOUS LEARNING REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING NEW SKILLS OR AREAS OF EXPERTISE, PRACTICING IN THE REAL WORLD AND REPEATEDLY SEEKING FEEDBACK FROM YOUR MENTORS. REFER TO OUR [WGOB E-GUIDE TO BOARD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS](#) FOR MORE GUIDANCE.