

Recruiting New Trustees

Nearly all voluntary and community organisations have a committee that is responsible for carrying out the day to day running of the organisation. This is known as the governing body.

The committee can be called the management committee, executive committee, steering committee, council of management, board of directors, board of Trustees. They all mean the same thing. The committee is the body that is legally and financially responsible for the organisation as a whole (see Information Sheets 2.1 Being a Charity Trustee and 2.2 What do Trustees do?).

Finding and keeping trustees is a vital but demanding task for voluntary and community organisations. Some of your trustees may have left or are intending to leave soon. Or maybe you feel your board needs reinvigorating. This should be seen as an opportunity to bring in new skills, experiences and perspectives to your board.

Before you start... Preparation within the current board

As a committee, ask yourselves the following questions:

- Are we ready and willing to involve new people?
- Are we working well together? Do we need to deal with any issues or tensions before someone new joins the board?
- Would we be willing to change where and when we meet?
- Are we open to different ideas and fresh perspectives?

It is important to address any of these issues before you start recruiting.

It is also important to check your governing document to see if there are any restrictions on what you can and cannot do. There may be a limit on the number of trustees you can have or set terms of office that you need to consider when recruiting. Also ensure any relevant policies and procedures are up-to-date so that you are in a good position to take on new committee members.

Review your current roles

It can also be a worthwhile exercise to review the roles of your current trustees, especially if one person is taking on a lot of the work and other people would like to take on more responsibility. If you are a trustee of a small organisation, it is likely that you carry out several roles - you may volunteer to do things for the organisation in addition to your trustee responsibilities. Are the activities best carried out by a new trustee or could they be done by a volunteer? Is the amount of work reasonable for one person?

Decide who are you looking for

Before recruiting, you should think about the type of person or people you are looking for and ask yourself the following questions:

- What skills and experience would you like to find?
- Are there gaps in your current board that would be useful to fill?
- Are you looking for someone with specific knowledge such as marketing, finance or planning?

VODA can help you to carry out a **skills audit**, which is a useful exercise to determine the skills and experience you may need from any new board members. Contact us for more information.

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Recruitment

It is a good idea to think about why someone would want to join your organisation and use these reasons as selling points when you advertise the role(s). Think about what motivates people to become trustees and draw on that when preparing your recruitment, for example, you may offer trustees training and support; trustees will get the chance to shape a service they care about; meet new people; the chance to learn leadership skills.

Now you have a good understanding of who you are looking for and what might attract people to join your board, you need to get the message out there.

- Consider where the people you want to attract to the trustee role are and how to promote the vacancy to catch their attention. Make use of all avenues available to you including free advertising, social media, brokerage agencies, on-line promotion, volunteer agencies, press advertising, local notice boards, your website, word of mouth and umbrella bodies (such as your local Council for Voluntary Service, like VODA).
- Develop an information pack to give to potential trustees who want to consider the vacant position with your organisation. This should include a role description covering the duties of a charity trustee and the specific skills and experience being sought, an outline of the organisation and its priorities for the next few years (two to five years,) how to apply for the role and details on the appointments process being used.
- Agree your shortlist and interview criteria for selection and make sure these will be drawn out in the application and interview process.
- Appoint a main point of contact for enquiries, which may be a website, backed up by an internal person or a representative at a recruitment or volunteer brokerage agency depending on the promotion approach you are using.
- Review applications to create a shortlist and then meet prospective candidates to sell your organisation, establish their capability and fit to your needs. You can then select your trustee.
- Write to your preferred new trustee with an invitation to join the board, subject to references and attendance at a trustee meeting - for more information see Information Sheet 2.8 Inducting a New Trustee.

VODA can help you promote your trustee vacancies - contact our Development Team on 0191 643 2636 or email development@voda.org.uk.

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