

How To Diversify Your Board of Directors



Why create a Board of Directors that is equitable, diverse and inclusive?

- To lead by example in showing commitment to equity, diversity & inclusion (EDI).
- To reflect the changing demographics of Canada.
- To gain new and relevant insight.
- To connect to different communities of prospective athletes, volunteers and donors.

The following steps focus on increasing Board representation of individuals who identify as gender diverse, Indigenous, racialized and/or women.

1. Decide which group(s) you want to increase representation of on the Board (e.g. gender diverse, Indigenous, racialized and/or women).
 - If you plan to recruit candidates with Indigenous backgrounds, then Indigenous Cultural Sensitivity training is recommended.
2. Articulate why you want that group(s) represented.
3. Adopt a Board Diversity Policy. This will help ensure that Board diversity is an ongoing and organizationally identified priority rather than being a passing trend or subject to the inclination of the Chair and recruitment task force.
4. Modify the Recruitment Framework and Process to identify diversity criteria and to ensure that the process supports recruiting and nominating diverse candidates.
5. Have the Board Chair agree to be a gatekeeper of inclusion (i.e. that everyone's voice is heard and respected even when it is a dissenting opinion). Intercultural coaching may be necessary if the Chair does not already have this skill and mindset.
6. Have Board Members be champions of inclusion, ensuring that every individual feels welcomed, valued, mentored and has an opportunity to have their voice genuinely heard and supported at the Board table including when there is a dissenting opinion or a different perspective or reality. This may require training on unconscious bias for Board members.
7. Keep track of the identities (e.g. cultural background, ethnicity and gender) represented by Board Members and/or create a Board Matrix.
8. Increase the talent pool that you're recruiting from. One easy way to do this is via organizations dedicated to assisting with Board diversification:
 - DiverseCity onboard, Maytree (Toronto-based organization with relevant resources/research) www.diversecityonboard.ca

Board
Diversity
Policy

Board
Matrix





9. Take advantage of networking opportunities to reach the intended group(s).
 - i. Reach out through 2SLGBTQI+, Indigenous and cultural networks for prospective candidates.
 - ii. Recruit through Chapter initiatives that are accessing diverse cultural, Indigenous and racialized networks.
 - iii. Create alliances with Employee Resource Groups in the private and public sector.
 - iv. Women's Executive Network (WXN) www.wxnetwork.com
10. Establish a database of future prospective board members.
11. Establish Mentoring: Traditional, Reverse and/or Reciprocal Mentoring.

Mentoring allows for the flow of information to enhance understanding between mentor and mentee. It permits off the record Q&A, and encourages an amicable relationship. The pairings can be based on Board experience or other criteria.

Traditional Mentoring

Willing, experienced Board members are paired as mentors with new Board members (mentees).

Reverse Mentoring

In the context of creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive Board, Board members who are from underrepresented groups (e.g. gender diverse, Indigenous, racialized and/or women) are paired as mentors with Board members (mentees) from the dominant group (e.g. White and/or cisgender men or women) to allow the latter to better understand different worldviews and perspectives.

Reciprocal Mentoring

In reciprocal mentoring, both traditional and reverse mentoring occur in the same pairing with a two-way flow of information.

The Rule of 3

When possible, it is recommended that three or more people with a particular identity (e.g. gender diverse, Indigenous, racialized, women) join the Board to help create a Board environment that is welcoming and inclusive where all members feel they can speak comfortably and be understood.

For more information, please refer to the "SOC Board Diversification Strategy" by contacting info@specialolympics.ca

Increase
the talent
pool you're
recruiting
from

