

## Master the art of board recruitment tipsheet:

Good board recruitment brings the right people to the table, improves decisions with diverse perspectives, shares the workload, and keeps the board strong.

*Recruit with the mindset:*

*"The co-op belongs to all of us, our leadership should, too."*

### Pitfalls to recruitment

When recruiting new board members, don't:

1. **Expect announcements to get volunteers:** Remember that people like to be asked.
2. **Do it alone:** Don't try to make recruitment the job of one or two members in your co-op. Ensure that all members know it is their responsibility to help recruit new board members.
3. **Assume that "no" means "never":** Most people will say no at first, so be ready to have the conversation more than once.
4. **Set a very short timeline:** Recruit year-round, start early, revisit conversations, and give people time to consider and prepare.
5. **Fall into the BIC trap (butt in chair):** Recruit early and intentionally, focusing on finding willing and committed candidates, not just filling a seat.

## Qualities of a good director

Committed to the co-op and its community.

Willing to learn bylaws, policies, and governance.

Uses good judgment and thinks long-term.

Respectful, collaborative, and open to different viewpoints.

Reliable, prepared, and able to follow through.

Communicates clearly and listens well.

Acts with integrity and keeps information confidential.

Fair, solution-focused, and able to work as part of a team.

A GOOD MEMBER THEMSELVES!

## Strategies for effective recruiting

- **Start with "The Ask"**: Ask with purpose and enthusiasm, highlight their strengths, share the vision, and explain what they'll gain, instead of just trying to fill a spot.
- **Simple role descriptions**: Be clear and honest about the role, time, and support, and show that there are many ways to contribute.
- **Mentorship, training & onboarding**: Offer strong support by providing training, a welcoming onboarding experience, mentorship, and regular check-ins so new members feel confident and succeed.
- **Improve board meetings**: People are more likely to join and stay engaged when meetings are well run, respectful, and give everyone a chance to be heard.
- **Address fears**: Be clear about time, workload, support, how decisions are made, and how conflict is handled so people know what to expect.
- **Recruit year round**: Keep an eye out, seek diverse voices, and recognize board members to build interest and engagement.

## **Case Study 1: The Overwhelmed Parent**

Marisol is a single parent with two kids. She works full-time and worries that joining the board would eat into what little free time she has.

She believes board work requires long weekly meetings, hours of reading, being “on call”, or extensive training.

Marisol declines the nomination because she thinks, “I just don’t have time for this.”

### **Develop a plan to overcome member’s refusal or hesitation:**

## **Case Study 2: The Dominant Director**

Liam has served on the board for several years, in meetings they speak first and at length, interrupts others, and pushes their ideas strongly, steering decisions toward his preferred outcomes.

As a result, people hold back, feel intimidated, and stop preparing, so decisions miss important viewpoints. Some members are considering stepping down.

**Develop a plan to overcome member's refusal or hesitation:**

### **Case Study 3: The Quiet Member**

Deven is very shy and doesn't like speaking in front of groups, dealing with conflict or being the center of attention.

He worries he wouldn't "fit" on a board full of outspoken personalities and being told he needs "leadership experience."

Deven withdraws his nomination, thinking he wasn't assertive enough to serve effectively.

### **Develop a plan to overcome member's refusal or hesitation:**

### **Case Study 4: The Burned-Out Volunteer**

Sarah has volunteered in the co-op for years, has previously served on the board, is engaged with committee work and event planning. She enjoys helping her community, but she's burnt out.

She fears she is at risk of becoming the "person who says yes to everything."

Sarah says no when asked to return to the board.

### **Develop a plan to overcome member's refusal or hesitation:**

### **Case Study 5: Conflict on the Board**

When Hazel attended her first AGM after moving into the co-op, she immediately noticed tension between several board members. She witnessed disagreements, curt exchanges, and meetings that seemed to go off the rails.

Hazel worried about getting caught in board conflict, stressful meetings, or cliques and power struggles.

### **Develop a plan to overcome member's refusal or hesitation:**

### **Case Study 6: “Too New” in the Co-op**

Omar has only lived in the co-op for six months. He loves living in the co-op but feels like an outsider, he doesn't know all the neighbours yet and is still learning how co-ops work.

He worries that he isn't experienced enough, unsure how decisions were made, and nervous about older members questioning his knowledge.

### **Develop a plan to overcome member's refusal or hesitation:**