

K – Knowledge For The Board

Welcoming New Board Members
The Board Orientation Manual

For more information on Board Orientation please link to: www.nutsbolts.com

How To Welcome a New Board Member

When a new volunteer joins your board of directors, send a "Welcome Aboard Kit" as soon as possible. At a minimum, include the following items in this kit:

- Welcome letter signed by the executive director and the board president
- Description of duties as a member of the board of directors
- Board meeting minutes for the last 12 months
- Strategic plan
- Board governing documents, including bylaws, policies, etc.
- Current budget
- List of all board officers and board members with addresses, phone numbers and fax numbers
- Committee descriptions, goals and list of members

Source: Nuts & Bolts Publishing

<http://www.nutsbolts.com/Articles/br125.htm>

WHAT GOES IN THE BOARD MANUAL?

The Board Manual: An Orientation and Resource Tool

The foundation of a committed, knowledgeable, and effective board is orientation and education. As an essential companion to orientation and education, every organization should have a thorough, easy to use manual that board members can use throughout their terms.

A board manual serves two functions.

- For the new board member, it is an orientation handbook that provides useful information about the organization, board structure and operations, and fellow board members and staff.
- For the balance of a member's board service, the manual then becomes an indispensable working tool and a central resource about the organization and the board.

Materials can be added and removed to create an up to date reference. The board manual is developed by staff in consultation with the board chairperson and other officers. Present it to board members in a durable, attractive loose-leaf notebook with a table of contents and clearly divided and labeled sections. Date every item and replace material when necessary. Insert stationery, brochures, and similar items in pockets of the notebook.

To develop a working manual that board members use and rely on:

- Don't overwhelm new board members with too much information. When several examples are available (e.g., current press clippings), Include only one.
- Keep each item brief. A two paragraph biography of the executive director is preferable to a four page resume, for example.
- Use the handbook as a "textbook" during board orientation.

- Encourage board members to read and ask questions about the material. Ask board members to evaluate the usefulness of the manual each year.
- Revise the contents or format based on their comments.

Board Manual Contents Checklist

A thorough board manual can include the following materials. (Remember to keep each item as concise as possible.)

The Board:

- Board members listing and bios a Board members terms
- Board statement of responsibilities
- Committee and task force job and descriptions.

Historical references of the organization

- Brief written history and/or fact sheet
- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- IRS determination letter
- Listing of past board members

Strategic framework

- Mission and vision statement
- Strategic framework or plan
- Current annual operating plan

Minutes from some recent board meetings

Policies pertaining to the board

- Policy on potential conflicts of interest Insurance policy coverage
- Legal liability policy

- Travel/meeting expense reimbursements

Finance and Fund-raising

- Prior year annual report
- Most recent audit report
- Current annual budget
- Banking resolutions
- Investment policy
- Current funder list

Staff

- Staff listing
- Organization/team chart

Other Information

- Annual calendar
- Website information
- Promotional material (membership brochure, information brochure, advertisements, etc.)

For more information:

Hughes, Lakey and Bobowick`s [The Board Building Cycle](#) features nine steps for your board to follow through the board-development process.