



CDI BEST PRACTICES TIP SHEET

Career Marketing Collateral for the Board of Directors Candidate

It's not uncommon for executive job seekers to desire resumes targeting Board of directors roles. But where do you start?

Boards of directors have evolved along with the businesses they serve. There are now several types of boards and many roles for directors, so boards have become more methodical and strategic about director sourcing, recruiting, and selection. As a result, the strategies and documents required to land a board position have become more sophisticated, providing opportunities for resume writers and career coaches to be of service.

This tip sheet offers descriptions of materials and strategies used to attain membership on a board of directors. It is the second of two tip sheets devoted to board of directors candidates. See the first tip sheet, "Board of Directors Primer for Career Professionals" at <https://careerdirectors.com/library/board-directors-primer-career-professionals-best-practice-tip/> for descriptions of board duties and responsibilities.

EDUCATION AND NETWORKS FOR BOARD CANDIDATES

Director Education

Investing in director education can present opportunities for board hopefuls because the designation is recognized among board nominating committees. Director education programs also present lucrative networking opportunities for board candidates.

In the US, the National Association of Corporate Directors provides a designation in board governance. Typically, the tuition can be up to \$20K for the training.

In Canada, the Institute of Corporate Directors offers a robust education program with many streams, including training for non-profit as well as public boards. The typical investment level for the designation is approximately \$15K – \$20K Canadian.

In the non-profit world, training is available from university programs and organizations such as the National Council for Nonprofits. Some non-profit boards may provide training for members.

More information on director education and considerations for potential board candidates is available. In Canada, the Institute of Corporate Directors lists key resources for clients considering board service in the Board Resources of their website at <http://www.icd.ca/Home.aspx>. Find US resources at <https://www.iod.com/>.

Professional Networking Strategy

Boards hire directors who have deep professional networks, including customers, regulators, shareholders, and potential investors. Building one's network is a key strategy for uncovering opportunities and landing a board role. For tips to help clients build a networking strategy, see the CDI tip sheet "Networking for Job Search Success" at <https://careerdirectors.com/library/job-search-networking-best-practice-tip/>.

CAREER MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS TARGET

Marketing collateral and considerations for targeting a board seat include:

The Board Resume

Effective board resumes garner the attention of decision makers by focusing on financial stewardship and strategic planning for the company. They require you and your client to think more broadly than specifically, although numbers and results are still important. They are “outward” focused rather than concentrating on daily operations exclusively. For example, a board may decide to forge into a new market, contract from a market, or discontinue serving a market.

Still, corporate outcomes, metrics, and financial results are important because they show credibility. Board hopefuls should concentrate their resume content on P&L and financial stewardship, cybersecurity, and any other type of risk the company might face. Demonstrating your client’s passion and value is also essential.

Here are a handful of questions your clients need to address in a board resume:

- How have you and your company performed?
- What challenges have you overcome?
- Have you led mergers, acquisitions, and integrations?
- What about large company turnarounds? Innovations?

Further, to appeal to board recruiters and board nominating committees, help your client think about their impact on a larger scale, including:

- Big-big picture such as impact on the market and on the GDP of your state, your province, or your country.
- Significant P&L.
- The ability to critically read and interpret the balance sheet.
- Regulatory compliance.
- Crises management – consider September 11, 2001.
- Areas of expertise, especially emerging issues, including cybersecurity and digital exposure.
- Scientific knowledge and its subsequent commercialization.
- Mergers, acquisitions, and integrations.
- IPOs and your connection to capital markets.
- Creativity to produce unique capital structures.
- Conference keynotes, panel participation, and media exposure.

Reaching beyond the operations of their organization to the broader business ecosystem will create a springboard to showcase their board-level achievements.

In their brilliant article, [Positioning Yourself for First-Time Board Service](https://www.egonzehnder.com/what-we-do/board-advisory/insights/part-i-positioning-yourself-for-first-time-board-service) at <https://www.egonzehnder.com/what-we-do/board-advisory/insights/part-i-positioning-yourself-for-first-time-board-service>, Kim A. Van Der Zon and Martha Josephson explain:

“You need to think ‘beyond glittering generalities.’ You need to articulate and own your participation in ground-breaking achievements. New product launches, taking your company to market-leading performance in spite of a downturn in the economy, averting a major crisis—these are the results boards are looking for today to direct performance and manage risk.”

Pay particular attention to the most-difficult-to-articulate quality of all: your client’s fit for the role along with their energy, tenacity, and courage. What is the brand that has been consistently visible during their career? Is it their penchant for safety performance? Productivity performance? Quality? Product development? Industry leadership? Whatever their passion is—let it shine through in the board resume. It needs to be more than a list of accomplishments. The board resume needs to connect your client’s achievements to their appetite for influence and service to the board mandate.

Often-ignored Skills

In creating their resumes, board candidates often overlook critical soft skills, passion, and the ability to read a balance sheet with crystal-clear understanding.

Financial management is the lifeblood of any organization, and financial analytical ability is very important for all boards.

Soft skills necessary for any board candidate include collaboration, managing conflict, communications skills, stakeholder management, strategic influence, and ability to serve as a spokesperson.

A personal passion for the work of the board is also important to the organization because this passion will fuel motivation and creativity for innovative problem solving.

Sections of the Board Resume

The main differences between a professional or executive resume and a board candidate resume are:

Title: Often job descriptions are not available for BOD roles, so candidates may inquire about the title of the role or use Board of Directors: Independent Board Director.

Board Qualifications: You may choose to include a qualifications section. Suggested categories include Board Competencies, Personal Attributes, and Subject Matter Expertise.

Board Abstract or Board History: Ahead of the client’s Career Abstract or Career History section, place the Board Abstract or Board History section. List the organization name, your client’s title, and the years of service as you would in a career experience section. Describe each organization and board, the mission, and what attributes or accomplishments led to the board position. List how many times per year the board meets and any committee assignments your client has.

Career History or Career Abstract: This section is comparable to the Experience section on a professional or executive resume. Here are example accomplishment statements for you to customize for use in this section:

- Recognized as one of the youngest and most promoted senior executives in an organization of 22,000+ employees worldwide.
- Right-sized the production footprint of the company to meet the constraints of a contracting economy.

- Recommended the closure of four facilities and supervised construction of new US\$595M+ facility, maximizing newer and more efficient equipment.
- Transformed the plant from worst to first in performance among 6 international plants.
- Top operations executive recruited to manage 3 plants in the US, 2 in Mexico and 1 in Canada.
- Multi-national M&A experience in the United States, Middle East and the UK with P&L to US\$12.8B.
- Collaborated with industry stakeholders, including regional management team, executive board, sales team, OSHA, FDA, USDA and international union organizers.
- Astute financial steward with career-long success as the CEO of diversified portfolios of healthcare organizations.
- Led successful integrated delivery model subsequently adopted by senior leaders of the UAE healthcare system.
- Became the Bay Street “poster child” for elder care systems with several bond rating agencies.
- Drove market share 7.6% in a contracting economy with an estimated value of EBITDA of \$5.5M.

Other Sections: The remaining sections of a board resume are the same as a professional or executive resume, including Education, Certifications, and Professional Development, with optional sections depending on the industry and candidate: Awards, Publications, Presentations, and Patents.

Professional Biography

Professional biographies tell the entire story of the board candidate, including both professional and personal elements. During your client’s search for a board of directors position, a biography will often be used in addition to or in the absence of a resume. See CDI’s tip sheet, Writing the Professional Biography at <https://careerdirectors.com/library/writing-professional-biography-best-practice-tip/>.

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