

artsBoards 101: a Business for the Arts guide for young professionals

Have you ever considered using your business leadership skills on an arts board? boardLink is your connection to what you need to know!

What is an arts Board?

Incorporated not-for-profit and/ or charitable arts organizations are required to have a governing Board of Directors.

Their role is to represent the public interest with respect to the fiduciary operations of the company and to set long term strategic direction and management policies.

Why should I join a Board?

- 1 Develop leadership ability:** Get practical, hands-on experience by participating in the leadership of a non-profit organization; deepen and broaden your professional skills.
- 2 Gain exposure:** Increase the visibility of your business and/or professional profile through volunteerism.
- 3 Build your network:** Form a broader base of relationships that can impact both your career development and social life.
- 4 Find a new outlet for your creativity:** use skills and explore interests in ways your working environment doesn't offer.
- 5 Strengthen community:** help build the economic and cultural vitality of your community by fostering the arts.



Arts Boards require a diverse range of talent and experience to help achieve organizational goals. As a business professional, your expertise, network and leadership skills can add tremendous value.

What role could I pursue on an arts Board?

Perhaps you have specific professional skills that you can offer, for example: legal, marketing, IT or accounting expertise. Arts organizations rely on their Board of Directors to help fundraise, so using your broad network and creative energy in this capacity would be invaluable.

What kind of organizational structure would I be a part of?

Board Chair: is responsible to oversee the long-term direction and viability of the organization. The chair coordinates the work and direction of the board and its committees by planning and chairing meetings and managing the Board-level decision-making processes. The chair is responsible for board membership and, most often, for overseeing the contract/ work of senior management.

Board Vice-Chair: assumes the responsibilities of the Chair in his or her absence and often succeeds the Chair.

Board Secretary: prepares, maintains and distributes the board's records, such as the minuted, agendas, correspondence and contracts. This position is often combined with the Treasurer.

Board Treasurer: oversees the organization's finances, ensuring overall financial accountability. The Treasurer usually chairs the finance committee, oversee the annual audit and reports on the audit to the Board and the Annual General Meeting.

Board Member: attend board meetings and takes on specific Board or Committee responsibilities according to their skills and preferences. All members of a non-profit Board can be held responsible for staff salaries and government remittances should the company become insolvent. All members also act as Advisors and Ambassadors for the organization, providing a particular expertise that the organization lacks — financial, legal and marketing are typical examples. All members also actively represent the company and introduces the organization to potential funding partners, supporters and the wider community at large.



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What is expected of me as a Board Member?

- Attend all Board meetings, as well as attend, support and be informed about organization's mission, services, policies and programs.
- Keep current with the issues: review agenda and supporting materials prior to Board and committee meetings.
- Serve on committees, attending meetings as required and offer to take on special assignments.
- Make a personal financial contribution to the organization and/or fundraise.



Start as a volunteer or committee member first for a small to mid-sized arts organization and get to know the organization before joining the Board.

- Suggest new board members who can make significant contributions to the work of the Board and the organization.
- Assist the Board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the organization's annual financial statements, mission, by-laws, mandate and strategic plan.

How do I get started?

- Find volunteer positions in the arts, sign up online to our boardLink program at www.businessforthearts.org
- Get out and see the arts in your community; go to concerts, exhibits, plays; find an arts organization that you feel passionate about.
- Use tools such as Business for the Arts' program boardLink, a convenient online board matching tool, to find out which organizations are looking for Board Members.
- Introduce yourself, if you don't know anyone on the Board or staff or the arts organization of your choice, contact the administration, arrange to meet for coffee with the Board Chair or General Manager to discuss volunteer opportunities.
- Start as a volunteer or committee member first for a small to mid-sized arts organization and get to know the organization before joining the Board.
- Research and meet with several arts organizations to find the right fit.

What are the key questions to ask when I meet with an arts organization for an interview?

- 1** What is the organization's mission?
- 2** How is the Board structured? Are there job descriptions/ policies available, and an overall mandate for the Board?
- 3** What are the fiduciary responsibilities of the Board Members?
- 4** What are the main issues the arts organization needs the Board to address?
- 5** Based on my CV, how can I best contribute to the arts organization as a Board Member?
- 6** How much of my time will be required for meetings and special events?

How do I know if I've found a good match?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1** Does this organization truly engage me?
Am I excited at the opportunity to work with the board and management team?
- 2** Do I respect and am I committed to their mission?
- 3** Will I be proud and willing to promote them to my network?
- 4** Can I contribute the time necessary to be an effective Board/ Committee Member?
- 5** Can I wholeheartedly get behind and participate in the organization's fundraising strategies?
- 6** Can I contribute financial support consistent with the organization's expectations of Board Members and with my own means and priorities?



Ask yourself: Can I wholeheartedly get behind and participate in the organization's fundraising strategies?



BoardLink is a matching program, connecting business professionals with the Arts!

This online tool is designed to help arts organizations find skilled business volunteers, and to help business people find interesting volunteer opportunities on the boards of arts organizations, or working on special projects and committees. Interested volunteers register stating their location, interests and skills. BoardLink will then list volunteer opportunities in their community and, when a fit is found, can be prompted to contact the arts organization!

BoardLink is quick and easy to use. Just follow the link and log on: <http://businessforthearts.org/ovpc/default.html>

Indicate what your interests are, what skills you are interested in developing, and BoardLink will find your match!



Find volunteer positions in the arts, go to our boardLink program online at www.businessforthearts.org

Connect with other business professionals through artsScene.

artsScene is a group of leading young business professionals dedicated to fostering the growth of the arts in Canada through volunteerism, patronage and support. As a creative hub, artsScene connects young business professionals across Canada to the arts

Business for the Arts is a national business association dedicated to increasing the quantity and quality of partnerships between Business and the Arts through a cohesive set of programs that foster and promote business leadership in the Arts, facilitate funding relationships and connect business volunteers to the Arts. More resources on arts boards can be found on our website at www.businessforthearts.org