



Attaining a Seat at the Table **Rita Wray, MBA, RNC, FAAN**

Board members provide critical intellectual capital and strategic resources to power organizational success and strengthen communities. Nurse leaders are equipped with the skills and attributes such as broad spectrum of credibility, awareness of community needs and ability to identify and solve problems to position ourselves for attaining a seat at the table. Giving of your time, talent and often times treasure to serve on a Board of Directors/Trustees can be rewarding, demanding, challenging and life empowering experiences.

Non-profit and For-Profit Boards, charities, private foundations, Chambers of Commerce, civic organizations etc. are seeking board members, particularly when it comes to strategic planning, marketing, finance and diversity. Consider these preparatory measures when seeking to attain a seat at the table.

I. Do your homework *by identifying your passion, knowing your expertise, assets, skills, resources and targeting a Board seat*

This will steer you in the direction where you can have the most impact and receive the greatest reward. When considering appointment opportunities, identify your unique relevance by conducting a critical self-assessment identifying your expertise, assets, skills, and resources relevant to appointment opportunities that may arise. Next, identify a Board whose mission matches your passion. As a board member of a Non-Profit, For-Profit, Governmental entity, Charity, Community or Civic organization, you become an investor in the organization. Match your investment of time, talent and treasure to the initiatives/programs that are meaningful to you as well as beneficial for the organization.

II. Develop your strategic pathway *by networking, acquiring potential nominators and familiarizing yourself with the application/nomination process*

Regardless of where you are in your leadership journey, seek progressive leadership positions with increasing responsibilities. Grow your leadership in the community by being responsive when others seek your assistance or an opportunity arises. Start by volunteering to chair a committee or task force. Demonstrate your ability to make significant contributions. Develop and/or strengthen relationships with nomination facilitators; let them know you are willing to serve. The leadership network that you have assisted makes excellent potential nominators. Keep in mind that Board leadership requires a broad knowledge base about various topics beyond nursing. You must be willing to assume a role of posing questions that generate ideas for others to consider. You must also have the ability to promote disruptive innovation while understanding the potential consequences of all board decisions. Commit to leading on behalf of the larger public. Become a community influencer - be a societal leader. Although similarities exist differences occur, familiarize yourself with your targeted Board's application/nomination process.

III. Shore up your board readiness *by acquiring proficiency in governance matters, tweaking technological savvy and updating personal/professional appearance*

If you are less than familiar with the general roles, responsibilities, and expectations of your targeted board's organizational structure, operations, financial reporting, legal compliance, and technological advances, now is the time to brush up. Allow technological savvy to be a self-descriptor – seek assistance if needed. First

Impressions still matter whether you are attending an interview for a board position or your first Board meeting. The importance of updated business attire, a proper handshake and a professional business card cannot be understated.

IV. Update your CV, resume & bio

Update all documents, your CV, which is a brief account of your education, qualifications and previous experience; your resume, a document listing your work experience, education, and skills; and your bio, a chronological description highlighting basic tenets such as education, career and family. Know the difference in each and use accordingly.

T H E N

ALLOW PREPARATION & OPPORTUNITY TO MEET

Resource

Board Source: <https://www.boardsource.org/eweb/>

Nurse on board. Planning your path to the boardroom, Connie Curran, 2016

Policy & Politics in Nursing and Health Care, Diane Mason, Deborah Gardner, Freida Outlaw,
Eileen O'Grady, Seventh Edition