



MICHIGAN MAIN STREET

CASE STUDY:

BOARD RECRUITMENT STRATEGY IN WAYLAND

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Wayland Main Street's board recruitment process provides a structured approach to onboarding new members, ensuring they are well-suited to their roles and committed to the board's objectives. Their method of evaluating skills, setting clear expectations, and providing ongoing support helps maintain an engaged and effective board. By pairing new members with experienced ones and regularly assessing fit and performance, Wayland Main Street demonstrates best practices for fostering a dynamic and successful board. This process highlights the importance of intentional recruitment and continuous evaluation in achieving organizational goals.

At Wayland Main Street, the board recruitment process starts by targeting potential candidates, typically new business owners or current volunteers. Initial conversations focus on understanding their objectives and skills to ensure alignment with board needs. Interested individuals submit an application, which the mayor reviews; if deemed suitable, the application is brought to the board for a vote. Accepted candidates are formally installed, and the Chair meets with them to discuss their committee preferences and contributions.



New members receive a board handbook, including information about the district, Michigan Main Street, and grant programs. Each board member is assigned a specific role to ensure active engagement beyond voting. New members are paired with existing board members for additional support, and the Chair conducts annual one-on-one meetings to ensure ongoing retention and engagement. The time commitment for board members generally ranges from 3 to 10 hours per month, depending on their level of dedication.

The board actively maintains awareness of its members' strengths and connections, regularly evaluating areas where gaps may exist. When such gaps are identified, the board brainstorms potential candidates to fill these roles, ensuring that the team remains well-rounded and effective. Intentional efforts are made to ensure that each board member feels valued and understands their role, which is tailored to align with their talents and interests. Detailed write-ups of each member's responsibilities have proven beneficial in keeping everyone informed and engaged.

KEY SUCCESSSES

Structured Recruitment Process: The thorough process of evaluating applicants, including setting expectations and reviewing applications, ensures that suitable candidates are selected and integrated effectively.

Role Clarity and Engagement: Providing detailed role write-ups and assigning specific responsibilities helps board members feel valued and ensures they are engaged beyond just voting.

Ongoing Support and Communication: Pairing new board members with existing ones for support, along with regular one-on-one meetings with the Chair, fosters a sense of inclusion and retention.

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CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Misalignment of Motivation: Some applicants may lack the drive or genuine interest in the role, which is identified during initial conversations but can still be a challenge in ensuring committed and motivated board members.

Inconsistent Follow-Through: Occasionally, individuals may not meet expectations or fulfill their roles effectively, necessitating conversations with the Chair and potential adjustments to their responsibilities.

Managing Expectations: Ensuring that all board members understand and meet their commitments can be challenging, requiring clear expectations and follow-up to address any shortcomings.

PROJECT FUNDING

Dollars are earmarked for committee chairs to attend the Main Street Now conference. Allocated when the new director began as the importance was demonstrated.

The organization often exchanges education or training for volunteer services. For example, a Farm Market Manager would receive specialized training for the role, paid for by the organization, for that individual to provide volunteer services.



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