**Board Chair Trait Checklist**

Being a board chair is a very difficult and rewarding role. A lot can go wrong for boards, executive directors, and organizations if they don’t have a strong chair. The chair should be committed to excellence and constant improvement. They should fully grasp the weight of their responsibility and how their behavior and attitude can shape an organization. It can also feel thankless at times, so make sure your organization expresses its appreciation to whomever serves in this capacity. As you recruit and develop board members toward the chair role, you may want to consider this an aspirational checklist. Few board chairs have all these qualities, especially on day one. But it is worth spending the energy and time finding the right fit.

* High emotional intelligence
* Self-aware
* Commitment to the organization/mission above all else
* Tolerance for ambiguity
* Commitment to diversity (demographic, geographic, perspective, etc.) Defeat groupthink
* Flexible
* High moral and ethical integrity
* High enthusiasm and optimism for the organization
* Skilled at leading and conducting meetings
* Collaborative/consensus builder yet decisive/problem solver
* Values relationships, rapport building, and empathy
* Leadership skills
* Knows when to hold back and when to weigh in
* Able to make the time and be available to the ED and board
* Commitment to board fundraising (culture of asking)
* Discreet – able to respect confidentiality
* Conflict resolution skills – not afraid of conflict

Here are some additional things to look for: Contact us for a full list of Chair responsibilities.

* Future orientation – plan board meetings at least a year ahead. Think about future needs, board development, strategic planning and succession planning.
* They should be the CEO of the board (Chief of Enthusiasm and Optimism)
* Keeps discussions, decisions, votes and priorities rooted in mission attainment
* Emanates integrity and confidence, while being humble and comfortable with vulnerability
* Not afraid to ask for help. Should not see their role as chair, as permanent
* Committed to constant improvement
* Root out self-dealing and conflicts of interest.