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| **DOCUMENT TITLE** | New director onboarding process |
| **LAST UPDATED** | October 2022 |
| **PURPOSE** | This document is intended to provide an outline for new director onboarding, including self-paced learning, as well as team-supported knowledge transfer. |
| **HOW TO USE** | Review this process and tailor to your organization. Use this tool as a support for the onboarding of a new Director. |
| **ADDITIONAL NOTES / CONSIDERATIONS**  The new director onboarding process can be used in conjunction with the new director onboarding checklist. This process should enable board directors to understand their function as a board member, the organization, and their place more effectively within it. Such a process helps new directors be more productive team members sooner, but also contributes to the development of an organization's positive culture of learning, growth and overall operational effectiveness.  This document does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Expert counsel is recommended if there are any issues requiring clarification. | |
| *Remove this table from the document before revising and issuing for your organization.* | |

# Objectives of a board onboarding process

The board onboarding process should aim to achieve three (3) primary objectives:

1. Develop an awareness of the organization's nature, activities, operations, and the wider sports sector in which it operates.
2. Develop an awareness of the relationships with the organization's key stakeholders; and,
3. Develop awareness and buy-in around the role of a board member.

## Sample workflow for a board onboarding process

The board onboarding process could include meetings (in-person or virtual, reading, webinars and virtual learning, self-paced online learning, shadowing and/or reverse shadowing).

***Step 1: “Welcome to the Board of Directors” communication package >*** An email that welcomes the individual to the organization officially. Within this communication is an outline of the board onboarding process, key meetings, and links to key documents. In addition, this is the time to send fillable forms, survey links, etc. to collect important information, provide information and deadlines for completing training requirements, etc.

***Step 2: Board onboarding package – “Key documents, presentations and tools” >*** The following list is indicative of the kind of documents, presentations and tools that may be included in the Board of Directors > Board Onboarding Package, but is not exhaustive. These can be delivered in physical copy or electronic format. (NOTE: For transparent and consistent knowledge transfer and onboarding using the most up-to-date documents, a central repository for onboarding documents is recommended. Example: SharePoint, Google Drive, Slack, etc.)

## Sample documents

* Onboarding Presentation – Welcome / Overview of the Organization
* Profiles / Bios of the Board and Committee Members
* Constitution as submitted to B.C. Registrar in compliance with B.C. Societies Act [SBC 2015]
* Bylaws as submitted to B.C. Registrar in compliance with B.C. Societies Act [SBC 2015]
* Legal duties of a director in accordance with the B.C. Societies Act [SBC 2015]
* Description of the Role of a Director
* Board Terms of Reference
* Board Committees Terms of Reference
* Strategic Plan, Operational Plan, and any other supporting planning documents
* Past audited financial statements
* Current Annual Budget
* Organizational Policies, (e.g., Risk Management, Conflict of Interest, Safeguarding, Privacy, Financial / Expenses, Travel, etc.)
* Code of Conduct
* Previous Board and Committee Meeting Minutes
* Current and previous financial statements
* Board/Committee Meeting Calendar
* Annual Board Planner/Calendar
* A snapshot of key stakeholders
* Overview of Knowledge Management Structure (e.g., where files are kept, naming conventions, etc.)
* Links to register for other required courses
* Proposed schedule for onboarding (i.e., which tasks need to be completed by when)

(Please see the Onboarding Checklist within the viaSport Governance Toolkit for the full list of documents to provide.)

***Step 3: “Buddy” check-in meeting 1 >*** This meeting is between a current member of the board who might be buddied with the new member of the board or responsible for the Board Onboarding Process for new board members. Some organizations may also ask the outgoing board member to support the transition process. This meeting typically lasts 20 to 60 minutes. Face-to-face is preferred for the purposes of “getting to know the new board member”, but a virtual meeting could be equally as effective. During this meeting, the current board member would confirm:

* Progress through the Board Onboarding Package
* Completion of any required fillable forms, web forms or online surveys
* Confirmation of required information/write-up for website postings, press releases, etc.
* Progress check on required task completion (e.g., Criminal Record Check, Commit to Kids)
* Questions about any of the documents or contents of the package
* Questions about the context in which the organization works
* Questions about board and committee roles and responsibilities
* Questions about budget, financial statements, etc.
* Questions about policies and/or operational procedures
* Questions about key stakeholders and approach for engaging them
* Other?

***Step 4: “New Board Member” announcement (to members or the general public) >*** This announcement may come in the form of a web post, blog post, social media post, news release, newsletter article, formal press release, or other. Ideally, there would be an introductory bio for the new board member, some information about their goals and objectives for joining the board, background regarding their skills and qualifications that makes them fit for the board, a quote from the new board member, a quote from the President/Chair of the Board, and contact information to reach the new board member.

***Step 5: “Buddy” check-in meeting 2 >*** This meeting is between a current member of the board who might be buddied with the new member of the board or responsible for the Board Onboarding Process for new board members. Ideally, this is the same individual that supported Meeting 1. This meeting typically lasts 20 to 60 minutes, face-to-face or virtual. During this meeting, the current board member would confirm:

* Completion of required courses (e.g., Respect in Sport for Board Members)
* Completion of required certifications (e.g., Competition-Introduction “Trained” Status)
* Confirmation of login to Knowledge Management/Team Collaboration Sites
* Confirmation of email connection
* Confirmation of telephone number functioning (if applicable)
* Check in on document reading
* Check in regarding outstanding questions
* Confirmation of next steps and outstanding activities
* Other?

## How to customize your board onboarding process

Each board member will have different levels of knowledge of the organization and the role of a board member. Some may be supporting the organization as an elected board member for the first time. Others may be seasoned veterans with years supporting committees and being involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization. The following are steps the board could take to better customize the Board Onboarding Process for the new board member:

1. Consult with the incoming board member prior to finalizing the Board Onboarding Process to solicit their feedback on how it should be personalized, both in terms of content and delivery;
2. Of course, prior experience may have a role in the design of the Board Onboarding Package and Process; it is possible that the director is already familiar with some or all the non-organizational-specific issues – such as legal obligations and the regulatory environment – and only requires an update in particular areas. However, an update on any developments may be appropriate, particularly if significant time has passed since the individual last served on a board of directors.
3. Plan the timing of information dissemination to prevent swamping a new director with too much information at once.
4. Plan the timing of any member/public announcements or news releases to coincide with proper set up on communication channels, as well as timing for key events, board member preference, etc.
5. Establish a timeline and prioritize the various Board Onboarding elements over a reasonable time period. Additionally, schedule meetings with employees, volunteers, advisors, members, and other key stakeholders over an extended period of time.
6. Allow the director to see the entire Board Onboarding schedule at the onset, so they can request certain elements or materials sooner.
7. Vary how information is delivered and keep the amount of reading material to essentials only.
8. Plan the Board Onboarding in conjunction with any relevant professional development programs for the board of directors. It could be worthwhile to consider whether some training and development activities could be offered to the full board, serving as a beneficial refresher for established board members and strengthening the board's relationships.
9. Midway through the board member’s term (e.g., 12-month mark for a two-year term), review the Board Onboarding with the director and get their advice on any additional Board Onboarding requirements they may have.
10. Request input from an existing Board Member on the content and design of the draft Board Onboarding for new directors.
11. Consider whether it would be useful to pair a Board Member with the CEO/Executive Director/President (if operational) or other senior staff member to expedite the new director's learning of a particular area of the organization.

## Committee onboarding

Where a director is appointed to a committee, a similar onboarding process should take place. Potential Onboarding materials for the Finance Committee and Nominations Committee may include:

* Committee terms of reference
* Committee policies (e.g., financial policies)
* Code of conduct
  + Committee membership and other regular attendees
* Meeting schedule
  + Pro forma agenda of regular items Recent minutes or meeting notes
* Any review reports or audited statements including suggested improvements
* Scheduled meetings with finance team and external auditors
* Board Evaluation Report
* Relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Metrics
* Succession, recruitment, onboarding, development plans (Nominations Only)
* Performance reviews (Nominations Only)
* Scheduled meetings re: management succession planning (Nominations Only)