

Setting up for Success: Steps to Executive Director Recruitment

Blog
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In April 2013, Vantage Point launched the search for our next executive director. Follow this blog series to learn about our recruitment process, and tips for leading a process of your own.

Of the many responsibilities of a board, one of the most critical for the success of the organization is the recruitment and selection of a new executive director (ED) or CEO. It is also one that many boards aren't ready for at the time. As we are actively engaged in this right now at Vantage Point, we thought you might be interested in the process we are using.

The critical question is *what does the organization require from its leader?* in terms of competencies, skills, and experience. We started our process by updating the role profile. We asked for input from a wide cross-section of stakeholders including employees, knowledge philanthropists, community leaders, and funders, via in-person conversations and an online survey on what they saw as the current as well as long term critical priorities.

With that in hand, members of the board defined the critical competencies that we would look for in recruitment. We then created an ED Recruitment Task Force, led by the Board Chair and consisting of 2 other board members and 2 previous board chairs.

The task force had to consider both what to do and how to do it, down to the logistics of setting up electronic folders to administer the process and information, how to involve the larger board and staff, where to look for candidates, and how to ensure that all candidates had a great experience interacting with Vantage Point.

We then moved on to creating tools to screen the applicants. We selected questions that would demonstrate the critical competencies, interview guides to ensure that all candidates were presented with the same questions and a standard scoring system to evaluate the candidates fairly.

If all this sounds like it takes time, it does. We launched the [role description](#) and began accepting applicants earlier this month. We are getting ready now to screen CVs and start the first round of interviews. From there, we will use the first round evaluations, and a lot of good discussion to select a short list of candidates to take to a second interview panel and another carefully selected set of questions. Finally, we will make sure that a larger segment of the board will have the opportunity to meet the final candidate(s) prior to decision time.

Recruitment always takes much longer than you expect, but making the right decision is critical to the future success of the organization. Our recommendation is to start early and invest the appropriate time and focus to ensure a great decision that will drive the mission of your organization.

Is your organization completing or preparing to embark on an executive director recruitment process? What components are in your plan? Tell us about it!

Vantage Point is accepting applications for our new Executive Director until June 1, 2013. We encourage you to circulate the [role description](#) to your networks.