

Desirable Board Member Attributes Under Policy Governance®

R. M. Biery, 2002

1. **Vitally interested in the organization and its general mission,**
2. **Some degree of knowledge pertinent to the Ends (*not* necessarily the means)**
3. **Good at seeing the big picture, and comfortable with an Ends focus instead of a Means focus, a strategic rather than tactical focus. (Forest instead of trees.)**
4. **Understand that allegiance, fidelity and stewardship is to the owners, not Management²**
5. **Foresighted (intuitively seeing the effects of actions into the future, through uncertainty and complexity (c.f. Greenleaf)).**
6. **Good at conceptualizing.¹**
7. **Smart¹ and wise² (good judgment, sagacious, not from a special competency, but from ability to see the big picture; strategically perceptive, capacity for imagination),**
8. **Aware (intellectual alertness; c.f. Robert Greenleaf's discussion),**
9. **Good at team dynamics and group skills¹ (emotional intelligence, c.f. Daniel Goleman's work);**
 - a. **Trustworthy (loyalty coupled with integrity) and willing to live by the rules (the board's rules)² (-not likely to be a maverick, for example, abusing power. This is different than an individual capable of courageous dissent within the scope of board discussion. That is desirable.)**
 - b. **Capable of noticing common interest among members and inventing win-win proposals, (the blending of humility and loyalty),**
 - c. **Knowledgeable in what is involved in the Ends issues under consideration. (See number 2 above.) (Note that this does not necessarily require knowledge regarding the means to get to those Ends.)**
10. **Possessing moral courage², willing and able to make hard decisions²**
11. **Time to do the work necessary and to attend reliably**
12. **Willing to support (or be loyal to) group decisions once made²**

(Other attributes should be added for the nature of the organization, e.g., for faith-based organizations: Biblically consistent life style, spiritually mature, in accord with the organization's belief system, etc.)

¹ Cognitive ability

² Character, especially integrity, both intellectual, and behavioral, honest with the board, dependable, etc.

Note: These attributes are a work in constant progress, as we learn and perceive more, we modify and enhance.