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## **Tap into Board Talent with a Survey**

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There are many ways to build a great board of directors. The process starts with a nominating committee interviewing and researching the backgrounds of volunteers. The committee may be limited by access to information about the candidates.

If the committee deserts their task, you might hear them advise, “You won’t have to do anything when you get on the board.” And, “Once you’ve served as a committee leader your nomination is a shoo-in.”

### **Gap Analysis**

The BOMA Oakland/East Bay in California does a gap analysis of association needs. For example, if our small staff needs marketing, technology, or creative help, we can call on board members with the expertise.

To acquire the interests and talents of the board, we use a short survey. It is collected annually using a platform such as SurveyMonkey.

“We knew we had talented individuals on the board, but until we surveyed their education and special interests, we weren’t taking advantage of their skills,” Julie Taylor explained about BOMA. “We want to make best use of our board’s talents as we possibly can.”

The survey matches association needs with volunteer expertise. “I found they had skills that filled the gaps to which our association professional staff could tap into.”

For example, a director responsible for technology within their company, can share that expertise to benefit the association. A director who heads a marketing department in their firm can lend their knowledge to the association.

It is often said that volunteer leaders bring with them Time, Talent and Treasure – the three Ts. The survey identifies and engages their talents.

### **Volunteer Survey**

The survey takes less than ten minutes, directed at members of the board and candidates.

A. Which of the following areas do you have expertise in? (Check all that apply.)

- Finance
- Marketing
- Legal
- Construction
- Management
- Leadership
- Communication Skills
- Interviewing skills
- Social Media
- Technology
- HR

- Training
- Strategic Planning
- Project Management
- Fundraising
- Government Affairs
- Investment Management
- Administration
- Leasing
- Sales
- Other (please specify)

The survey also asks about community connections that could benefit the association.

B. What community connections do you have?

- Corporate
- Educational institutions
- Media outlets
- Political organizations
- Philanthropy

- Small businesses
- Social Media Firms
- None
- Other (please specify)

By identifying volunteer interests, we strive to fill the positions with members who add diverse experience, thoughts, and ideas to our governance and association.

The information from board candidates has made the nomination review process robust and engaging at BOMA Oakland/East Bay. Without the survey, our insights into directors might be limited to reading resumes and LinkedIn profiles.



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Julie Taylor, CAE, is the executive director at BOMA Oakland/East Bay. Bob Harris, CAE, provides free governance tips and templates at [www.nonprofitcenter.com](http://www.nonprofitcenter.com).