



# The 15 Faces of the Nonprofit Board

Developed by Al Lyons, PhD

*Nonprofit Boards as an entity – and individual board members – can be expected to fulfill multiple roles for an organization, sometimes without the member or the organization even being aware of it. Each of these roles has a different set of expectations – either by other board members, by the staff, by the organization’s constituents, or by the greater community. And these may or may not coincide with the interests, understandings, abilities and motivations of each individual board member!*

*Identifying how board members and staff understand these roles can help leaders see how individual board members perceive their own position on the board. This can also help better define what the leadership “expects” from their board. Together they can help organizational leadership better craft future board use, assignments, and strategies.*

*Understanding what role the organization needs from future board members can also help to identify and recruit new board members.*

1. **An Advocate** – Promotes the organization and its mission
2. **An Agent** – Represents the interests of an institutional hierarchy or an outside entity
3. **A Community Representative** – Acts on behalf of donors, constituents, and other key stakeholders
4. **A Corporate Advisor** – Ensures and supplements good business practices for the nonprofit corporation
5. **A Donor** – Provides needed funding for the organization
6. **An Evaluator and Problem-Solver** – Brings experience and wisdom to key issues faced by the organization
7. **An Expert Resource** – Shares professional expertise with the organization to help address program and operational areas
8. **A Fundraiser** – Seeks and secures needed funding
9. **A Governor** – Establishes Policies, Procedures, and Evaluation Criteria and Methods
10. **A Networker** – Links the organization to other organizations in the community, through their business, personal, and other associational relationships
11. **An Owner** – Hires the Executive Director, defines the executive director’s responsibilities, establishes organizational goals and objectives, and evaluates whether they are met
12. **A Participant** – Attends organizational events . . . and gets others to do the same
13. **A Trustee** – Oversees the organization’s assets, to preserve for the good of the community today and into the future
14. **A Visionary** – Is committed to the organization’s mission and works to envision and advance their future role within the community
15. **A Worker** – Conducts the daily business of the organization

# **“IDEAL” BOARD ROLE – Board Member**

## *The 15 Faces of the Nonprofit Board: A BOARD MEMBERS Assessment*

WHAT BOARD ROLE DO YOU SEE AS BEING YOUR “IDEAL” ROLE?

(Please rank from 1 to 15, with “1” being the MOST “ideal”)

- \_\_\_ An Advocate
- \_\_\_ An Agent
- \_\_\_ A Community Representative
- \_\_\_ A Corporate Advisor
- \_\_\_ A Donor
- \_\_\_ An Evaluator and Problem-Solver
- \_\_\_ An Expert Resource
- \_\_\_ A Fundraiser
- \_\_\_ A Governor
- \_\_\_ A Networker
- \_\_\_ An Owner
- \_\_\_ A Participant
- \_\_\_ A Trustee
- \_\_\_ A Visionary
- \_\_\_ A Worker

***Comments or Suggestions:***