



BOM Sourcing and Strategy Errors

Pitfalls	Manifestation	Solutions
The "Echo Chamber"	Recruiting strictly from current board members' personal or professional networks. This leads to a "jobs for the boys" culture that stifles innovation and creates a board with identical blind spots	Establish a Nominations Committee: Remove sourcing from individual networks. Mandate the use of public platforms, professional bodies, and grassroots forums.
Desperation Hiring (Warm body syndrome)	Rushing to fill empty seats just to meet a legal quorum or ease the burden on current members. Urgency compromises candidate quality and often results in unengaged directors who must eventually be managed out.	Maintain a Rolling Pipeline: Keep a "bench" of potential candidates warm through advisory councils or sub-committees so you aren't scrambling when a seat opens.
Ignoring Lived Experience (Only hiring corporate professionals)	Filling the board entirely with corporate professionals while failing to recruit anyone who actually represents, or has lived experience in, the community the non-profit serves	Update the Skills Matrix: Make "lived experience" and community trust explicit, required categories on your matrix alongside legal and financial expertise.
The "Rubber Stamp" Echo Chamber (Hiring loyalists)	Founders often bypass objective skills audits and instead recruit friends, family, or long-time loyalists. The goal is to fill seats with people who will automatically defer to the founder's historical knowledge, rather than independent fiduciaries who will ask tough financial or strategic questions.	Mandate Independence: Embed rules in the MOI or Constitution requiring the majority of the board to be fully independent, unlinked to the founder by family or business.
Repelling High-Level Talent (Micro-management)	Founders whose identities are entirely intertwined with the non-profit often view strong, visionary board candidates as personal threats rather than organizational assets. Consequently, the founder subtly sabotages the recruitment of anyone capable of leading the organization into its next phase, ensuring the non-profit remains entirely dependent on them.	Draft Board Charter: Implement a strict Delegation of Authority (DOA) matrix that clearly separates the founder's daily operational powers from the board's governance duties.



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The Succession Blockade (Blocking strong leaders)	New members are recruited with the promise of providing high-level strategic oversight. However, once onboarded, they discover the founder acts as a strict gatekeeper to all vital information. The board is either forced to blindly approve decisions the founder has already made, or members are treated as glorified volunteers expected to simply execute the founder's spontaneous ideas.	Formalize Succession Planning: Make succession planning a standing, annual agenda item led exclusively by the Board Chair, removing the founder from the driver's seat.
"Bait and Switch" (Downplaying the real commitment)	Downplaying the actual time commitment, fundraising expectations, or legal liabilities just to get a "Yes" from a hesitant candidate. This guarantees the member will become a "ghost" who rarely attends meetings	Control the Information Flow: The board must dictate the format, frequency, and detail of the financial and operational reports required prior to meetings.
Dazzled by Credentials over Fit (Corporate vs. Grassroots)	Assuming an elite corporate executive or wealthy donor will automatically make a great board member. A corporate CEO used to heavy delegation might struggle to adapt to the hands-on, resource-constrained reality of a grassroots NPO.	Test for Adaptability: Ask candidates how they operate without large support staff or massive budgets during the interview.
The Passion Blindspot (Hiring solely for emotional connection)	Recruiting individuals based solely on their emotional connection to the cause or community, while ignoring their lack of financial, legal, or strategic governance skills	Create Alternative Avenues: Direct passionate but unskilled individuals to volunteer roles or program committees. Reserve board seats for those capable of carrying fiduciary liability.
Compliance-Only Recruiting (Box-ticking for DSD/CIPC)	Adding names to the roster simply to satisfy the minimum legal director numbers required by the CIPC or DSD, rather than recruiting the specific skills needed to keep the NPO financially and strategically viable	Set Strategic Quorums: If the law requires three directors, require five in your MOI to force the recruitment of growth-oriented skills rather than just administrative minimums.
Confusing Availability with Commitment (Overly long interviews)	Creating a highly tedious, multi-step interview process to "test" dedication. This often just filters for privilege and free time, inadvertently screening out highly qualified candidates who are	Streamline Vetting: Keep interviews professional and concise (1-2 rounds maximum) to respect the time of highly qualified, busy professionals.



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	simply busy juggling full-time jobs and family.	
Skipping Checks (Treating vetting as a formality)	Treating vetting as a formality because the candidate is a "volunteer." Failing to check references or verify credentials leaves the organization vulnerable to conflicts of interest, ethical breaches, or financial misconduct	Standardize Background Checks: Run credit, criminal, and CIPC director-disqualification checks on every single candidate. No exceptions for prestige.
Asking the Wrong Questions (Generic interviews)	Relying on generic questions (e.g., "What are your strengths?") instead of behavioral questions that reveal how a candidate actually handles competing priorities, board-level disagreements, or crisis management.	Use Scenario-Based Interviews: Present a real challenge (e.g., "We just lost 30% of our funding. Walk us through your first three steps.").
"Bait and Switch" Governance (Gatekeeping info)	New members expect to provide strategic oversight but find the founder acts as a gatekeeper to vital information, forcing blind approvals	Control the Information Flow: The board, not the founder, must dictate the format, frequency, and detail of the financial and operational reports required prior to meetings.
Recruiting for the Past (Hiring for old problems)	Searching for candidates whose skills match the organization's history, rather than identifying the skills required for the upcoming 1-to-3-year strategic goals (e.g., hiring another program expert when you actually need is a digital transformation specialist).	Recruit for the Strategy: Base your skills audit entirely on the upcoming 1-to-3-year strategic plan, not historical operations.