

They want you on the board—but is it a smart move?

You've been approached to be on a board. You are flattered! But, should you accept? There is a lot to consider as you weigh the time, personal investment, and—at times—risk. Cheryl Hyatt of Hyatt-Fennell Executive Search has five tips for evaluating a board position to make sure it's right for you:

1. **What is your connection to the organization?** Being on a board involves significant time and effort. You should only consider board appointments if you're passionate about the mission of the organization.
2. **How much time to do you have?** A good opportunity at the wrong time is a bad opportunity. Consider the amount of time you have to devote to the work involved as well as your availability to travel.
3. **What else will flourish?** Does serving on a board fit in with the other career goals you're currently pursuing? Are you seeking to developing deeper and more varied connections? There can be decisive benefits from serving on a board. [One study](#) found that "serving on a board increases an executive's likelihood of being promoted as a first-time CEO to an S&P 1500 firm by 44%—and even if they weren't promoted... serving boosts an executive's subsequent annual pay by 13%."
4. **What else will suffer?** Be honest about what other things you will have to shift to invest in a board position. Cutting back on a hobby may be worth the experience of being on a board; however, if your job or family commitments will get short-changed, you should reconsider.
5. **What do other board members have to say?** Talk with a current board member about the board's functioning. How much time does the commitment require? Does the board work well together? What do they enjoy most about being on the board? What are the biggest challenges facing the board?

A board appointment is an exciting opportunity to hone your communication and leadership skills while investing in an organization. If your deliberation leads you to the conclusion that this is not the right time, communicate to the organization that you would be interested in the future, but you are not currently able to serve. Whether you accept or decline, be sure to thank them for the opportunity.

With over 20 years of executive-search consulting experience, Cheryl Hyatt has been responsible for successfully recruiting senior-administrative professionals for educational and non-profit organizations. Before partnering with Dr. Marylouise Fennell, she was the President and owner of The Charitable Resources Group and provided not only executive search services but fundraising consulting expertise to the clients she served.

[Hyatt-Fennell](#) brings over 60 years of combined highly successful executive search expertise to its clients, a reputation for achieving results on the national and international level, and the ability to place top executives with higher educational institutions nationwide.