

Recruiting and Sustaining Remarkable Mission-Driven Leaders

**SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPOSITION:
What’s Right for Your Organization?**

At Eos Transition Partners, when we first engage with our nonprofit clients on a search for a chief executive officer, a question we are frequently asked is “Who should be on our Search Committee?”. Although we pride ourselves on always being direct with our clients, our initial answer is a less than satisfying – and not very direct – “well, that depends.”

Since we genuinely believe each client and search is unique and that Search Committee composition is fluid, before we make a recommendation on composition, we want to know the following:

- Does the Board have the capacity to manage the search independent of the participation of others?
- How well does the Board “know” the organization and are they informed enough to make an independent decision?
- Does the Board have prior experience recruiting senior leaders?
- What is the current level of trust between the Board and the staff, community, funders, etc.?
- How are decisions typically made at the organization and is there a clear understanding of governance vs. management?
- What is the staff’s expectation about their role in the process and what role, if any, has staff played in previous senior-level searches?
- What is the culture of staff and Board engagement in decision making?

Informed by these answers, we find our clients typically choose one of the Search Committee Composition descriptions in the table below, all of which have proven to be highly effective when thoughtfully chosen, communicated organization-wide, and adhered to throughout a search process. Even though each client is unique, we do find certain sectors are drawn to particular Search Committee compositions, as detailed below, although we never assume, since “it all depends!”

Search Committee Composition			
	Board-Owned	Board-Led	Collaborative
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Members • Staff Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Members • Staff Members • Stakeholders

	Board-Owned	Board-Led	Collaborative
Board Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprise entire committee • Oversee the process • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Make final hiring decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprise the majority of committee members • Oversee the process • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Make final hiring decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on the committee • Oversee the process • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Manage a final collaborative decision-making process
Staff Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Meet and greet finalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Serve as committee members through initial of the process • Participate in selection of interviewees • Participate in 1st round interviews • Inform selection of finalists • Formal meeting with finalists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Serve as full members of the committee throughout the process • Participate in selection of interviewees • Participate in 1st round interviews • Inform finalists' selection • Participate in a final collaborative decision-making process
Stakeholder Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the upfront assessment and position profile • Serve as full members of the committee throughout the process • Participate in selection of interviewees • Participate in 1st round interviews • Inform finalists' selection • Participate in a final collaborative decision-making process
Sector Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associations • Foundations • Higher Education • Hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development Corps. • Education-based nonprofits • Human Services • Schools (K-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts and Culture • Social Justice / Advocacy • Societal and Public Benefit • Youth Development