

What Makes a Successful (Great) Board Member?

No matter what other skills a board member has, he or she must have these:

- *A passion for the cause*
- *Respect for others*
- *Works well with a team (a team player)*
- *Thoughtful ability to consider issues, and to articulate those thoughts*
- *A sense of responsibility for making things happen*
- *The vision to think beyond today*



Passion for the cause is first and foremost. Why fill a seat on the board with someone who doesn't care enough to really work for OAAS and ultimately the success of the Districts and Agricultural Societies?

Respect – someone who is willing to listen to and respect other people's thoughts and points of view. I'm sure you have heard of boards where discussions devolve into a shouting match between two members who don't even try to listen to each other. Time is too short and your cause is too worthy, to waste a seat on a disrespectful board member.

Teamwork – works and communicates well with others. A team player will put personal opinions aside to work for the benefit of the organization.

Thoughtfulness – the ability to really consider the issue at hand and weigh its ramifications for the organization (this is a rare gem). The best board members ask questions that cause you to think through your own responses as well. If a board member can't stop to think about why he or she is supportive of or against an initiative, then you're allowing his or her personal past experiences to automatically have a vote, regardless of where those experiences have led.

Passion, respect, teamwork and thoughtfulness are great, but **responsibility** is where the rubber meets the road. When it comes time to act, you need board members who take responsibility for ensuring that promises are fulfilled. Whether it's attending meetings, connecting the Board with Districts, reviewing the audit, or making calls to supporters, promises don't cut it, actions do.

Finally, board members must be able to envision the future and think beyond today. So many decisions affect both today and tomorrow; considering only today's issue jeopardizes your future. Envisioning the future ramifications of today's decisions is imperative for your future.

Passion, Respect, Teamwork, Thoughtfulness, Responsibility & Forward thinking

This is the checklist when weighing the value of a new board member. Without these six qualities, you can have the best real estate lawyer, the best farmer, the best whatever, each at odds with each other, unable to make a decision and unlikely to achieve the desired goals.

So think about what the OAAS needs to achieve and seek people who are able to make it happen. Consider this checklist when making a decision on who to select as a Director.

And remember our Mission statement

The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies is a resource for its members, providing leadership through communication and education, and encouraging the promotion of a rural way of life in Ontario.

Vision statement "Inspiring and Supporting Ontario Agricultural Societies"