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## Recruiting Those High Profile, Connected Board Members

We all want the rare few. We puzzle how to attract them to our cause and organization. We get frustrated that we have been unable to fill our Boards of Director with high profile, big name execs who have lots of personal wealth, access to others, and corporate deep pockets. The myth that the "best" boards include the top banking execs, the Chamber chair, the CEO of the Major Hospitals, etc. is just that - a myth. It used to be that the famous 'movers and shakers' were an indicator of a healthy, well run nonprofit but for good reasons, that is less true so now.

Three big reasons: 1) There are *only a few* highly visible, community leaders featured in the press because many who run top companies here live and work elsewhere. And it's easy for the press to refer to the same few local executives for quotes, reactions to stories, and as "representative voices" of the corporate community. (2) We don't know who the top local business titans are! They are likely not working on Tryon Street and might well be working in small businesses in Pineville, Huntersville, Steele Creek, etc. The fastest growing companies in America are not the Fortune top

## And finally, Spring!

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter." - Rachel Carson

50, they are small businesses. (3) You might not be aware of it, but generous philanthropists might already be donors to your organizations, though not currently contributing major gifts to you. CompassPoint and Blue Avocado both offered provocative and similar ideas several years ago: Compass Point suggested a "one hour Recruiting Task Force" : Blue Avocado suggested a "Blue Ribbon task force". These groups can be people that are not currently on your board but you wish were; former board chairs/ board members; some of your donors. You are asking them to come to only one meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to generate 10 - 20 good people of the type you need on your board who they know have some interest in your mission. The group hears from you what you need in the board and generates ideas. Ask them for permission to tell the folks discussed who suggested them for a follow up call and visit with you.

We also have to help the next wave of major donors learn how to make significant gifts, over multiple years; through planned giving; by focusing on the outcome and impact they want to make; and taking the time needed to build their relationship and giving with our organization.

Most importantly, while we all need major donors, your board composition must be driven by what your organization *most needs for the coming years*. We have experience with board members who were successfully recruited because they were "well connected" and then never made an introduction, or brought a new relationship into the fold. You can recruit new board members based on the organization's leadership needs and also develop a major gifts plan cultivating significant supporters, not necessarily as trustees.

Featured LevRidge Resource: Katie Benston



"Just when the learner is ready, the teacher appears..." a well known saying and very true for us for just when we needed an excellent project manager, problem solver, and strategic thinker, we were introduced to Katie Benston! Katie has been working with LevRidge since last year and helped clients such as Elon Homes and Schools; NC Humanities Council and now working with Kathy Ridge on an engagement with Clay Works. Katie's background is deliciously deep in project leadership; Development and fundraising; and designing processes, metrics and reporting to strengthen projects and programs.

Katie, in addition to being a consultant, has been the Chief Program Officer for Care Ring; Director of Annual Support for Hospice and Palliative Care of Charlotte Region; Director of Fund Development for Goodwill Industries and even spent 7 years with Blackbaud, Inc. in Charleston, SC including time as their Director of Product Support.

Katie loves a challenge and helping nonprofits strengthen their foundational systems and processes to allow the organizations to run smoothly and give staff data upon which to make even smarter decisions.

## Interesting Career Opportunities with LevRidge Clients:

### **Crisis Assistance Ministry: Grants Relations Manager**

<https://crisisassistance.applicantpro.com/jobs/549912.html>

### **Levine Museum of the New South:**

#### **Chief Operations Officer and Senior Vice President for Audience Engagement**

<http://www.museumofthenewsouth.org/about-us/employment>

*The purpose of LevRidge Resources is to advance nonprofits by strengthening their leadership, business model, and mission for a sustainable future.*

