

TRUSTEE Q&A

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Why did you decide to join a charity board?

I decided to join a charity board as part of my professional and community development journey. I personally give a lot to the community in terms of time and talent. I am professional trained in board, governance, strategy and risk/crisis management. I felt I could lend my expertise to a couple of Irish charity board after taking an executive course from IESE/Harvard Business School titled "Value Creation Through Effective Board" (VCEB) and "Mobilising Your Non-Profit Boards (MYB) from Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

What have you learnt by being on a board?

I have learnt a lot from governance, crisis management, strategy execution, board politics and CEO succession planning. I have particularly learnt about crisis management in an unprecedented era i.e. steering and rowing in an uncharted and stormy waters.

What challenges did you encounter whilst being on a board?

Simply put, there is a lot of work to be done on diversity and inclusion in Irish Charity Boards. The diversity on a voluntary board can enhance the opportunities for collaboration both with fellow board members and the organization's management team.

How have you found serving on a board remotely/virtually?

It is cost-effective and time-saving for all board members. Hence, frees up a lot of time to do more. However, it is challenging in that you don't really know other board members beyond the virtual board room. Though, to overcome these challenges, some charity boards do organise a 1-2-1 amongst different board members in order to create that platform to connect on personal level and bond.

How would you describe time management with respects to your day-job and voluntary board position?

Most of the Irish Charity boards take cognizance of the member's day-job. Hence, most meetings are in the evenings. Few meetings that happen during the day are juggled with one's day-job. Virtual meetings has also help tremendously with time management.

How important is teamwork and collaboration in relation to board effectiveness?

Teamwork is key in board effectiveness as board members are jointly and severally liable and responsible for their strategic decisions. Teamwork and collaboration are most effective where board members have strong bonds. I think to some extent, this may be hindered by virtual meetings only.

How has your board experience affected you personally?

It has significantly accelerated my career growth and perspective to strategic issues. It has sharpen my strategic lens through which I see and analyse issues. I have also learnt a lot from other high-calibre and well-tenured board members.

What advice would you give to someone considering joining a charity board?

They should consider what skills and talent they possess that will **add value** to the board and see how they can **match** that with needs/gaps of the charity board.

Also try and **match** your personal ethos and values with the organisation's ethos, norms and values.