

TRUSTEE Q&A

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Why did you choose to take on a voluntary trusteeship?

I had enjoyed some success with my company, and as the company grew my role was changing from engineering into management. So when a local charity approached me about joining their board, I jumped on the opportunity. I saw it as a chance to give back to the community and develop my leadership skills at the same time.

What have you learnt by being on a board?

Being on the charity board has developed my leadership skills. It is very different to lead a company as a board director, compared to your full-time job. It forces you to think more strategically and focus on the areas with the most significant impact.

What challenges did you encounter whilst being on a board?

My biggest challenge was to adapt to the new leadership role. I was used to running a company where I met my colleagues almost every day. In a board position, you meet your colleagues once or twice per month. It requires a very different approach to leadership and management, and it took some time to adapt and learn.

How did you approach conflict resolution on your board?

The best boards bring together people with different experiences and backgrounds. This means there is often a healthy measure of tension in the discussions. Most of that tension is constructive, but it's important to be respectful and to know when to pause a debate that is getting too intense.

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

It was never difficult to manage the time. The board usually meets once per month for two hours, so it's easy enough to fit into the schedule. However, to make the meeting effective, you must prepare before the meeting and thinking strategically about the agenda items. It deserves a good bit of planning.

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

It is essential that the board has people with different skills that complement each other. If there is a good spread of relevant skills, and the board members are good at collaborating, it filters down through the whole organisation to create a great place to work.

How has your board experience affected you personally?

I find it very rewarding to be on a charity board. I have met some fantastic people from other walks of life. People I would never get a chance to work with otherwise. It has given me new insights into people and organisations and has helped me grow both on a personal level and as a business leader.

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

Go for it! Joining a charity board helped me grow a lot, both as a leader and on a personal level. It's an excellent opportunity to give something back to the community and learn and have fun at the same time!