

Guide to the Nomination & Selection Process

THE ASSOCIATED'S
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY 
ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

ACHARAI
THE SHOSHANA S. CARON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE



I. INTRODUCTION

The selection, training and transition of leadership are deeply rooted in our Jewish tradition. A common theme throughout the Tanach (Bible) is the challenge of finding, sustaining and replacing good leaders. Take Moses, for example...

In the Book of Exodus, God decides that it's time to move the Children of Israel in a new direction ("I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt... I shall descend to rescue them from the Land of Egypt and to bring them up to a good and spacious land, flowing with milk and honey..." Exodus 3: 7, 8). God selects Moses to lead His major change initiative; however, the nominee is not eager to accept the responsibility. Moses has three very legitimate concerns.

First, he does not consider himself worthy of the position ("Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should take the Children of Israel out of Egypt." Exod. 3: 11). Second, he fears that the people will not accept him as a legitimate leader ("...But they will not believe me and they will not heed my voice, for they will say, 'God did not appear to you.'" Exod. 4: 1). And third, he feels that he does not have the leadership skills necessary for the role ("...I am not a man of words...for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of speech." Exod. 4: 10). But God persists and convinces Moses to accept the position, by guaranteeing the following:

He gives Moses a "Vice-Chair" whose leadership skills are complementary -- namely, his brother Aaron, who is an effective speaker and recognized by the people as a community leader ("...Aaron your brother, the Levite, I know that he will surely speak...He shall speak for you to the people; and it will be that he will be your mouth and you will be his leader." Exod. 4: 14, 16).

He provides Moses and Aaron with the leadership training and tools to succeed ("...I shall be with your mouth and with his mouth, and teach you both what you are to do...And this staff you shall take in your hands, with which you shall perform the signs." Exod. 4: 15, 17).

And, most importantly, He promises to be with Moses all the way ("And He said, 'For I shall be with you.'" Exod. 3: 12).

God's intensive on-going relationship with Moses attests to the importance of nurturing and coaching current and future leaders. But God also leaves room in the relationship for other leaders -- Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Jethro -- to step up and partner with Moses, teaching that good leadership is not a solitary activity. This lesson is further illustrated in Exodus 18, where Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, shows up to congratulate him and to praise God on the miraculous departure from Egypt. To his dismay, he finds Moses sitting from morning to evening, settling disputes and making decisions for a never-ending stream of people ("And Moses' father-in-law said to him: 'This is not good what you do.

You will become worn out, and so will the people. This matter is too difficult for you to handle alone.” Exod. 18: 17, 18). Jethro suggests to Moses that he select a group of honest God-fearing men, and establish a governance structure to deal with these matters, leaving only the most important issues for Moses to decide.

An effective governance structure, which engages its leaders in meaningful work for the organization, is a critical part of the strategy to guarantee that there are knowledgeable and committed people in the pipeline for the top leadership positions. However, every leader brings different skills and talents to the job; and not every great treasurer or great fund-raiser makes a great President. Therefore, succession planning requires foresight, to ensure that the right person is in the right leadership position at the right time.

Moses was a great teacher -- we refer to him as Moshe Rabeinu, Moses our Teacher --but he was succeeded by his student Joshua, a great warrior. Each brought to his leadership position the skills necessary for the enterprise to succeed at that particular time. For Moses, the task was to teach the Children of Israel how to build a covenantal community, where individuals take responsibility for their actions and for each other, in accordance with the laws of the Torah. For Joshua, the task was to conquer and settle the Land of Israel, in accordance with the Torah that had been taught and entrusted to him by Moses.

It is a very poignant scene in the Torah when God confirms that Moses will not be crossing over the Jordan into Canaan. Moses -- always the great leader -- responds by asking God to appoint his replacement (“May God appoint a man over the assembly,...and let not the assembly of God be like sheep that have no shepherd.” Num. 27: 17). Joshua is appointed the new leader in a very public ceremony, so that there is no question regarding his authority (“Moses summoned Joshua and said to him before the eyes of Israel: ‘Be strong and courageous, for you shall come with this people to the land that God promised to them...God will be with you... He will not forsake you...’” Deut. 31: 7, 8).

The lesson that we take from this, regarding leadership and succession, is very powerful. It is our duty as leaders to ensure that the people who replace us are passionate about the mission, and have the training and tools to succeed. And then it is our job to step aside and to let them lead.

II. NOMINATING COMMITTEE TIMELINE/ CHECKLIST

The Nominating Committee may be an ad hoc or Standing Committee. Below are suggested items to consider. Please note that the timing on each of the following steps may vary based on the structure of your Committee. It is suggested that in January of each year, you have a sense of who is rotating off your Board.

- ✓ Determine a Nominating Chair and Committee in accordance with your by-laws that are representative of your constituency. CCEL lay leadership is available to serve as Members of your Nominating Committee if there is interest.
- ✓ Develop a list of objectives for your Board composition as a whole.
- ✓ Develop a list of criteria that you feel must be met by anyone being considered for your Board.
- ✓ Develop a list of specific needs, such as certain skill sets, that your Board feels are important for at least one nominee to have.
- ✓ Distribute these lists to all Board Members and Nominating Committee Members (not all of whom may necessarily be Board Members, depending upon your by-laws) and request that they submit names of potential nominees who fit the objectives/criteria/needs. We request that you connect with the CCEL professionals at THE ASSOCIATED to review potential Board and officer prospects to ensure that an individual isn't asked to serve in multiple capacities.
- ✓ Prepare a profile of your continuing Board Members detailing certain characteristics deemed important for your organization, including geographic, demographic, professional and financial capacity.

- ✓ Prepare a profile of all potential nominees detailing the same characteristics as above.
- ✓ Circulate all information to Nominating Committee for review in advance of selection meeting. Materials may include: By-laws, list of current Officers and Directors along with a demographic profile of this group, a list of Board responsibilities and a statement of goals for the Nominating Committee), the number and type of positions (e.g. Officers versus Directors) that needed to be filled as well as a list of the candidates under consideration with some background information on each. Biographical information should be provided for each candidate in a uniform manner. The detailed biographical information should include a description of the person and why the candidate is the right fit for the Board.
- ✓ Hold Nominating Committee meeting to review all Board openings (Officers and Directors) and identify first and second choices for each position, keeping in mind all the objectives, criteria and needs and with the aim of building a deep Board with many individuals who could be candidates for leadership positions in the future.
- ✓ Agree who on the Nominating Committee will make the "ask" of each individual selected by the Nominating Committee to fill one of the open officer and director positions.
- ✓ Prepare a list of talking points to review with each individual selected by the Nominating Committee, including the organization's Mission, Vision Statement, Core Values, Brit Avodah (Covenant of Service), Board Member responsibilities and Board Member expectations.

(Please view samples in the appendix:
associated.org/nomination_appendix)

- ✓ Arrange a face-to-face meeting with each individual who is being considered for a position. We encourage you to utilize the talking points referred to above.

III. Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Nominating Committee?

A Nominating Committee should be developed to bring on new Board Members and determine who will fill vacant offices each year. Professional and volunteer leaders or Executive Committee should discuss and determine goals, timeline and appoint a Nominating Chair.

When should I form a Nominating Committee?

The Nominating Committee may be an ad hoc or Standing Committee. We suggest that you set up a Standing Committee (may be referred to as Board Development Committee, Governance Committee, Committee on Trustees) that begins to identify Members in early summer so you have enough time to adequately prepare for the Nominating process. Recruitment and cultivation of lay leadership is an ongoing process so it is helpful to have a set structure in place to cultivate these individuals.

What are the functions of the Nominating Committee and what items should they explore?

The Nominating Committee should identify the needs of the organization in partnership with an assessment of current and potential Board Members.

Items for the Committee to explore:

- ✚ Will the traits or competencies needed for the positions now be any different three to five years from now?
- ✚ What is the size of your Board? Is that what is needed to run most efficiently and effectively?
- ✚ After a Board Member needs assessment is complete, the Nominating Committee should understand Board and organization's needs. (view exercise included in packet)
- ✚ Do we have potential candidates who we should ask to serve on a Committee first so they develop a greater understanding of the agency before they are asked to serve on the Board?
- ✚ What are the current and future needs for Board Members, Committee Chairs and Committee developers? Do they have to be knowledgeable of Judaism? Do they need certain skills – marketing, accounting or legal?
Use your Board Member profile sheets to help determine
(associated.org/nomination_appendix)
- ✚ Work with the Executive Committee to determine the needs.

What is the role of past President(s)?

It is essential that past Presidents are kept involved in this process. Their input and perspective into what the organization needs and their assessment of individuals is critical to effective succession. Their ability to view the situation from the proverbial 30,000 feet is unique.

What is a suggested Nominating Committee make-up?

Often the Nominating Committee may be comprised of three Board Members and two Non-Board Members. This is often stated in the by-laws. If Non-Board Members are asked to serve on the Committee, it is important that they understand the mission of the organization and how the organization functions. They should understand what the agency will need to be successful in the future and know the current slate of Officers or Board Members and their strengths.

Choose Members who represent different segments of the community. Because the Nominating Committee is typically a small group, you want people involved who will know various community Members.

Often, the immediate past President is made the Nominating Chair. Note that in most organizations it is a two year position until the past President rotates off the Board.

What is the Board's role in the Nomination process?

It is critical to include the entire Board in the search for ideal candidates.

What is the role of the Nominating Committee in identifying the Chair and Officers?

Succession planning is an ongoing process and potential candidates should be cultivated for several years prior to officially being asked to serve as a Chair or Officer.

Are there any roles that automatically lead to Chairmanship?

Each organization has different systems in place for this: (associated.org/nomination_appendix). If your by-laws calls for automatic succession please ensure that the message is conveyed when asking an individual to take on a specific role (ex. when a Treasurer is brought in, it is conveyed that the individual will be asked to serve as Vice-President for the following term). It is equally important to clarify that in some organizations, individuals who are asked to serve as Vice-Chair are not automatically asked to serve as Chair.

Why is a lot of the succession planning work regarding the identification and recruitment of future Officers often done outside of the formal Nominating Committee process?

While it is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to nominate Officers as well as Directors, it is recognized that cultivating and grooming officer candidates, especially those to fill the top officer positions, is a multi-year succession planning process that is not well suited to the ad hoc nature of a Nominating Committee that has different membership each year, unless the Nominating Committee operates as a Standing Committee with some consistency of membership over time.

Otherwise, those most well-suited to determine who would best serve the organization in an officer capacity are those who are best positioned to observe the candidates' contributions and interpersonal skills in a variety of settings over time, which is usually the current President, past President and Executive Director, as well as several others including the Vice-President (absent a conflict of interest), Nominating Committee Chair and selected other long serving Directors.

Members of the Nominating Committee, several of whom in some organizations may not be current Members of the Board, are often not the most qualified to determine who would be best suited from among existing Board Members to serve in a top officer capacity. Therefore, the Nominating Committee may often rely upon more knowledgeable lay and professional leaders of the organization who have the organizations' best interests at heart to recommend who the Committee should nominate to fill the top, if not all, officer position(s) in the organization. However, in this instance, in order to ensure transparency and so that they can make an informed decision, the Nominating Committee Members should be made aware of all past succession planning conversations that have occurred with each officer candidate and the rationale for why these individuals should be nominated to fill top leadership roles.

Who should meet with each identified candidate to discuss the offer?

This will vary by Board. Options include President, Nominating Chair, Nominating Committee Members, and Executive Director.

What questions should you be prepared to discuss when offering a position to a potential candidate?

- ✚ Why are you interested in me as a Board Member?
- ✚ What role do you see me playing on your Board?
- ✚ What are your expectations and commitments?
- ✚ What is unique about your organization?
- ✚ What do you feel is unique about your Board?
- ✚ What weaknesses are there in the way the Board works together and with staff?
- ✚ What are the major issues this Board is facing? How are you addressing them now?
- ✚ If I were to join this Board, what would you want me to do during my first year?
- ✚ If I were to join this Board, what could I reasonably expect to get out of the experience?

IV. SAMPLE EXERCISES FOR THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

These sample exercises can be used at Nominating Committee meetings to help select and nominate incoming Board Members or Chairs:

Exercise I: Assessing current talents and identifying gaps

Fill out the following charts based on your current Board Members and Officers. It is important to answer the following questions when thinking about your current Board Members and Officers since you might have people that apply to numerous categories on the chart but aren't active or the right choice for a variety of reasons.

- ✚ Did the person attended meetings when needed?
- ✚ Did he/she fulfill the roles and responsibilities as expected? How so and how not?
- ✚ Is the person ready to take on more responsibility?
- ✚ How was the person viewed as a leader? Where did he/she succeed? Fail?
- ✚ Was he/she effective in what was trying to be achieved?

Once you assess your current talent, identify areas/positions where you have a gap. For each position, think about possible candidates who may be ready now or in the near future to fill the position. Consider what each person brings with them – competencies, knowledge, traits. Consider bringing in new people who will balance the five W's (Work, Wisdom, Wealth, Wit, and Wallop) and who will complement the Board and help with the Board's mission.

Categories to Consider if Relevant	1	2	3	4
Personal Information				
Geographic Location/Focus				
Local				
Regional				
National				
International				
<i>Financial History/Position</i>				
Salaried				
Self-Employed				
Philanthropic Reputation				
Prospective Major Donors				
Personal Skills/Strengths				
Strategic Thinker				
Problem Solver				
Visionary				
Asks Good Questions				
Open-Minded				
Passionate about Philanthropy				
Good Speaker/Presenter				
Strong Facilitation Skills				
Cultivates Relationships				

Categories to Consider if Relevant	1	2	3	4
Works Well in Groups				
Time Management				
Conflict Resolution				
Other (Specify)				
Organizational Skills/Strengths				
Board Development				
Board-Staff Relations				
Collaboration				
Community Convener				
Discretionary Grants				
Evaluation				
Family Dynamics				
Grantee-Grantor Relations				
Grants Management				
Public Policy				
Strategic Planning				
Technical Assistance to Non-Profits				
Other (Specify)				
Career Experience				
Development/Fundraising				
Entrepreneur				
Financial - Accounting				
Financial - Investments				
For-Profit-Executive				
For-Profit-Program Staff				
Foundation Management/Admin.				
Foundation Governance				
Foundation Program/Grant-Making				
Legal-Attorney				
Legal-Legislative				
Marketing/PR				
Media/Journalism				

Categories to Consider If Relevant	1	2	3	4
Membership Recruitment/Retention				
Non-Profit Executive				
Non-Profit Program Staff				
Organizational Development				
Technology				
Other (Specify)				
Service With Other Non-Profits				
Board Member				
Committee Member				
Consultant				
Funder/Fundraising				
Grantee				
Other (Specify)				

Personal Characteristics to Consider:

Ability to: Listen, analyze, think clearly and creatively, work well with people individually and in a group, lead and participate in discussions

Willingness to: Prepare for and attend Board and Committee meetings; ask questions take responsibility and follow through on a given assignment; contribute personal and financial resources in a generous way according to circumstances; open doors in the community; evaluate oneself

Develop certain skills if he/she does not already have them, such as the ability to: Cultivate and solicit funds; cultivate required Board Members and volunteers; read and understand financial statements; learn more about the substantive program areas of your non-profit

To possess: Honesty; sensitivity to and tolerance of different views; a friendly, responsive and patient approach; community-building skills; personal integrity; previous or history with your organization, passion for your non-profit's development

Exercise II: Succession Planning & Judaism

Read Exodus 18:8-27 Explore the relationship of Moses (Moshe) and Jethro (Yitro)

7 And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent. **8** And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. **9** And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, in that He had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. **10** And Jethro said: 'Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. **11** Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods; yea, for that they dealt proudly against them. **12** And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. **13** And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood about Moses from the morning unto the evening. **14** And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said: 'What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand about thee from morning unto even? **15** And Moses said unto his father-in-law: 'Because the people come unto me to inquire of God; **16** when they have a matter, it cometh unto me; and I judge between a man and his neighbour, and I make them know the statutes of God, and His laws. **17** And Moses' father-in-law said unto him: 'The thing that thou doest is not good. **18** Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee; for the thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. **19** Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God be with thee: be thou for the people before God, and bring thou the causes unto God. **20** And thou shalt teach them the statutes and the laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. **21** Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. **22** And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge themselves; so shall they make it easier for thee and bear the burden with thee. **23** If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people also shall go to their place in peace. **24** So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. **25** And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. **26** And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. **27** And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Ask the following questions:

- How does the story begin?
- What exists in the relationship between Moshe and Yitro?
- Describe the process in which Yitro mentored Moshe.
- How does Yitro help Moshe to become a more effective leader?
- What else does Yitro do before offering advice to Moshe?
- What is significant about the way in which Yitro offers his advice to Moshe?

Exercise III: SWOT Analysis for the Board

To help you with the nominating process, your Board may choose to conduct a SWOT Analysis.

This identifies and categorizes **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**. Strengths and weaknesses represent dynamics in the organization and opportunities and threats represent environmental dynamics that either impact your organization today or will in the future.

Examples of each:

Strength – ongoing cultivation efforts in place with current Board Members and prospects interested in the Board

Weakness – not enough people who are ready for officer positions

Opportunities – new leadership development graduates who are new to the system

Threat – many organizations are competing for the same talent

Exercise IV: The Next Leader (p. 215) - From *Inspired Jewish Leadership* by Dr. Erica Brown

- a. Briefly note your thoughts on the latest leadership transition your nonprofit institution experienced. How did it go? What were some of the challenges? What was your role in this transition, if you had one?
- b. Name five qualities that you look for in the leader of your nonprofit and rank their importance, with 1 being least important and 5 being most.
- c. Now backtrack. Think of your current leaders and grade from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest) for each trait. Are they living up to your expectation?

APPENDIX

External Links (available via associated.org/nomination_appendix)

Talking Points for Asking Candidate to Consider Serving on a Board

THE ASSOCIATED Nomination Template

Board Member Profile Template

JCS Nomination Form

JCS By-Laws

AJC By-Laws

JCC By-Laws

JCC Board Responsibilities

JCC Board Contract