LINKE LEADERSHIP

Board Confidence Framework

New Director Checklist

Before you join, in your first meeting, and in your first three months

Joining an NFP board is a significant commitment. Most new directors underestimate the preparation required and the time the role takes. Use this checklist to arrive ready — and to build your contribution quickly once you are in the room.

Before You Accept

☐	Read the constitution and the last two annual reports in full.
☐	Review the most recent audited financial statements.
☐	Talk to a current or recent director about the culture.
☐	Ask about the time commitment — papers, committee work, and preparation, not just meetings.
☐	Understand your legal obligations as a director before you sign.
☐	Be clear about what skills or perspective you bring and confirm the board needs them.
☐	Ask what the board's current priorities are and what challenges it is navigating.
☐	Check for any conflicts of interest and discuss with the chair before accepting.

In Your First Month

☐	Complete the director induction briefing with the CEO.
☐	Meet individually with the chair for an orientation conversation.
☐	Read the last three sets of board minutes.
☐	Familiarise yourself with the board's delegation and committee structure.
☐	Understand how the board handles conflicts of interest.
☐	Ask: 'What do you most need from a new director right now?'
☐	Review the current strategic plan.
☐	Introduce yourself to each board member before or at your first meeting.

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At Your First Board Meeting

☐	Read all papers thoroughly before arriving.
☐	Arrive early and use the time to speak with board members informally.
☐	Listen more than you speak — understand the existing dynamics before contributing heavily.
☐	Ask one substantive governance question.
☐	Declare any conflicts of interest at the start.
☐	Note: who drives discussion, who is quiet, how the chair facilitates.
☐	After the meeting, reflect on where you can add most value.

In Your First Three Months

☐	Develop a working understanding of the organisation's financial position.
☐	Identify which committee is the right fit for your skills.
☐	Build individual relationships with each board member outside formal meetings.
☐	Identify the one or two areas where you can make the most meaningful contribution.
☐	Raise a question or observation in a board paper before month three.
☐	Review the board's performance evaluation process.
☐	Complete the Director Self-Evaluation (BCF tool E2) at the three-month mark.

Joining a board because you were asked, or because you admire the cause, without understanding your governance obligations, is how good people end up in difficult positions. The cause and the board are not the same thing.