

Partner Feature | Why Board Volunteerism is a Win-Win

By: Matthew Goldstein, Founder & CEO of Besa

An individual who goes all in as a board director can change a nonprofit's entire trajectory. I've watched it happen.

The power of one person—and the invaluable impact they can have in guiding an organization forward—cannot be overstated. Their work as a nonprofit board director, of course, betters lives and the community at large.

The bonus? It also betters them, too.

Here are five benefits that make board volunteerism not only a win for the people you're serving, but for you as well:

1. **You meet extraordinary people.** Board service allows you to work closely with fellow board members from across your community who are passionate about the same mission you are. So, you get to do good work with good people, expanding your network both personally and professionally.
2. **You put your talents to work for the greater good—and bring your network along.** Whether your skills are in marketing, legal, HR, or beyond, board service allows you to apply your skills at a high level in a way that advances a cause you care deeply about. It also gives you the chance to bring others to the table, strengthening the social fabric of the organization and inspiring your network in the process.
3. **You help drive an organization forward from a different vantage point.** As a board director, you're not working in the business; you're working on the business. Every nonprofit, of course, is different in terms of cause, size, and challenges. Some nonprofits are startups, for example, while others are scaling. To maximize your time and gifts, it's good to understand where an organization is in its journey and what needs they currently have, so you can judge whether this board is the best one for you to plug into at this moment.
4. **You hone your leadership skills.** Board directors get to be of counsel to the executive director through board meetings and one-on-one conversations. It provides a great opportunity to help another leader become their best self while honing your leadership skills in the process.
5. **You find personal fulfillment.** Giving feels good. It's science: Many studies show direct links between generosity and happiness. When we give, our brains release feel-good chemicals like dopamine and serotonin. Volunteering has also been linked to reduced depression and longer lives.

So, what's in it for you? A lot.

The key, of course, is joining the right board at the right time so you can help unlock their potential—and yours. Start by volunteering for one-hour or two-hour shifts at different organizations to see which mission speaks to you.

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Once you find the right cause, have honest conversations with their executive director about their leadership needs and whether there's a seat at the table where you might add value.

Once you find the right board for you, dive in and enjoy the journey.

Matthew Goldstein is the founder and CEO of Besa, an award-winning nonprofit dedicated to supporting communities by making volunteerism easy and impactful for individuals and businesses. In 12 years, Besa has forged partnerships with some of the most notable companies in the Midwest—from AEP to Bath & Body Works and has helped make over \$100M in community impact.



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