

# Landing Your First Board Seat

YOUR 12-MONTH EXECUTABLE PLAN



**Dr. Sara Faivre**



**Board of Directors**

Farmer Mac (NYSE: AGM)  
One More Cloud (private)  
NACD-TTC advisory board



**Creator, MyBoard Quest  
And inTouch2020 Board  
Readiness**



**Business Evolution Coach  
and  
Conscious Capitalist**



**Ph.D. Researcher  
Molecular Genetics**

Texas A&M  
University of Illinois  
University of Iowa  
USDA



**Entrepreneur; Ag Biotech,  
Sustainable Food Systems**

Wild Type Ranch  
Viagen, Inc.  
GenomicFX

# Road to the Boardroom



# Creating Your 12-month Roadmap

1. Assess your strengths and gaps
2. Identify actions for improvement
3. Prioritize and establish realistic goals
4. Create 12 month and quarterly action plans
5. Establish KPIs and execute!



# Step 1: Identify Strengths and Gaps

The more strengths you have, the easier to land a board seat



BUT no one can be an expert at everything!



Not every competency gap is worth your time, energy and money

Gap between where you are now and you-as-board-ready

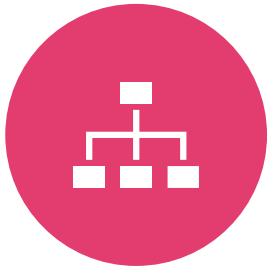
Relative importance to getting your board seat

Available resources for development

# Career Stage and Expectations

- ▶ *Early Stage Middle management, but not a seasoned executive (5-10 years from corporate board service)*
  - ▶ Build networks with senior executives
  - ▶ Become active in professional organizations
  - ▶ Seek educational and leadership opportunities to fill gaps
- ▶ *Mid-Stage Established executive but not yet C-suite OR C-suite in small company (2-6 years from corporate board service)*
  - ▶ Manage teams and budgets
  - ▶ Leadership in nonprofits and professional organizations
  - ▶ Network with sitting board directors
- ▶ *Advanced Stage Established C-suite or Board-facing exec or recently retired (1-3 years from corporate board service)*
  - ▶ Serve on board of major non-profit or government commission
  - ▶ Focused networking-target companies and industries
  - ▶ Director Education/certification

# Areas to Assess



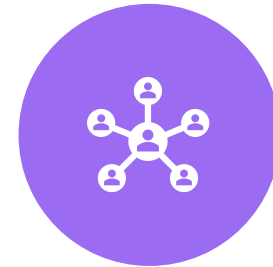
EXECUTIVE STATUS



BOARD-RELEVANT  
SKILLS AND  
EXPERIENCE



PERSONAL  
CHARACTERISTICS



NETWORK AND  
PERSONAL BRAND

# Professional Assessment

Executive  
Status

Professional  
Stature and  
Visibility

Board  
Experience



# Board Relevant Skills and Expertise

Financial literacy

Governance expertise

Business/management  
(size matters!)

Legal/regulatory

Risk Management

Human Resources

Sales/marketing/  
business development

Investment/M&A

Industry-specific  
knowledge

# Personal Characteristics



Available Time



Confidence



Self-awareness



Leadership



Strategic thinking



Critical thinking/problem solving



Planning and execution



Relationship building

# Network and Personal Brand



Board relevant  
personal brand



Network of  
corporate board  
members



Network of  
board-facing  
executives



Community  
involvement



Am I a resource  
for others?

# Step 2: Target Actions



BRAINSTORM AT THIS STAGE  
AND DON'T OVER-ANALYZE



CONSIDER YOUR CORE  
STRENGTHS AND YOUR  
BOARD OBJECTIVES



NOT EVERY LINE ITEM NEEDS  
AN ACTION

# Target Actions: Professional Status



## **Executive Status (very stage-dependent)**

Seek opportunities to interact with the board

Evaluate career path; C-suite opportunities and company size



## **Professional Stature and Visibility**

Leadership in professional organization

Thought leadership; publish and speak

Mentor others, especially external



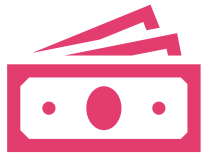
## **Board Experience**

Leadership in non-profits and professional organizations

Serve on non-profit, professional or government commission boards

Aim for the audit and governance committees

# Target Actions: Board-relevant Skills



## Financial literacy

Serve on audit committee of non-profit board

Serve as treasurer of professional or non-profit organization

Take a financial literacy course (*all public company directors need basic financial literacy*)



## Governance experience

Be active on a well-run non-profit board

Governance training/certification

Participate/interact with your company's board



## General business and management

Broaden your current role

Executive education programs

## Target Actions: Personal Characteristics

- ▶ Honestly evaluate time commitment and availability
- ▶ Expand your comfort zone (networking, speaking, education)
- ▶ Develop your EQ
- ▶ Work with a coach

# Target Actions: Network and Personal Brand



**Board-specific  
resume and bio**



**LinkedIn profile as  
a board member**



**Cultivate  
advocates and  
mentors**



**Be visibly active**

Community  
organizations  
Nonprofits  
Professional  
organizations



**Actively network**



## Step 3: Prioritize and Establish Goals

Gap between now and board-ready

Importance to getting *your* board seat

Identify end-point and timeline

- If longer than 12-months, is there a 12-month goal?

## Step 4: Establish 12-month and 3-month Plan

Select 3-6 most important goals for next 12 months

Break down into steps of < 3 months

Add a target completion time for each

Select 3 action items to execute on this quarter

Break those down into discrete steps with timelines

# Step 5: KPIs and Execution



Establish weekly and/or monthly  
KPIs for the next quarter

Hours per week on board quest

Number of new network connections

Steps toward skill improvement

Professional development action



Use SMART goals

**S**pecific

**M**easurable

**A**ttainable

**R**elevant

**T**ime-Bound

# Thank You!

For worksheet and  
instructions:

Email

[admin@MyBoardQuest.com](mailto:admin@MyBoardQuest.com)

Link to FREE Board  
Readiness  
Assessment at

[InTouch2020.com](https://InTouch2020.com)

Contact me:

[Sara@SaraFaivre.com](mailto:Sara@SaraFaivre.com)