



Dear potential Board Apprentice candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in becoming a Board Apprentice.

I am the founder of Board Apprentice and also a professional NED. I serve on the boards of a number of listed and unlisted companies and have done so since 2007. During the years I have spoken to many people about how to become a NED and to many boards about how to find suitable diverse board members with board experience for their boards.

It occurred to me after a while that since only boards can give board experience, we, as boards, need to offer a seat at our table for education. This will help develop a larger pool of board-ready candidates for our succession planning and we can be an active part of making that pool more diverse by educating especially diverse candidates. I have spoken to a few of the boards I serve on and they have all embraced the idea.

That was the beginning of Board Apprentice in 2014.

I set up Board Apprentice with the vision of it becoming a leading part of changing the composition of boards globally. We would like to see diversity happen now, not in 10, 20 or 50 years. For companies to survive in a rapidly changing world, board compositions need to change equally rapidly.

So what do boards and Board Apprentice look for in an apprentice?

We look for people who are in all ways board-ready, practically and in spirit. We are all about practical implementation of the theory that we expect the candidates to have already.

We give apprentices access to a range of webinars explaining practical implementation of governance best practice at board level. We also aim for the apprentices to be invited to various industry events for NEDs alongside existing NEDs. Those events vary from region to region and are offered by companies such as law firms, accountancy firms, NED organisations and associations etc.

We expect that the candidates have been working with, or on, boards somehow. It could be any board, including not for profit company and school governor boards. They may have reported into boards or serviced boards in various ways through their work.

We also expect them to be familiar with the relevant code of corporate governance in their own country of residence.

For the UK it is the FRC Code of Corporate Governance. The FRC (Financial Reporting Council) website has many complimentary general governance papers available. We consider the UK Code of Corporate Governance to be the most developed in the world and thus use that as a measure of best practice.

Finally, we expect the candidates to understand the basics of company financial reporting.

The IoD (Institute of Directors) courses and other general governance courses give a really good base for any aspiring NED; in fact even many experienced NEDs find them useful. Participation in such courses shows your commitment to learning about the workings of the board before becoming a board member and are well worth doing in advance of becoming a board member.

Our programme primarily consists of boards offering to reserve a seat at the table for education. The apprentices learn about the workings of a board and its dynamics through observing board members at work during the apprentice year. The apprentices receive board packs and meeting notices and attend all meetings for one year. They are treated as a board member with the exception that they do not take part in discussions and decision-making. This prevents them from potentially becoming shadow directors by being exposed to decision-making responsibilities. They are not appointed to the board in any capacity. Normally the board will appoint one of the board members as a mentor to the apprentice during the year of placement. The apprentice can ask the mentor questions before and after board meetings.

Non-corporate apprentice candidates will pay an administration fee of £500.00 (or local equivalent). This will be payable in two instalments; £250 upon being accepted onto the programme, and £250 upon placement on a Host Board. Applicants who cannot afford the fee can apply to have it waived.

We are not accredited by anyone and we do not follow any recognised training as part of the programme, due to its more practical nature.

We do provide apprentices with a certificate at the end of the apprentice year, confirming their role as a Board Apprentice and the board on which they sat.

I hope this gives you enough details about the programme and I look forward to hopefully receiving your application.

Yours Sincerely

Charlotte Valeur

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