To build a better board, you will need to be creative when it comes to leveraging your network. Reach beyond your comfort zone to see where (and with whom) your board can grow.

1. **Mine your network**

Leverage your key connections to identify new candidates for the board search.

- Check in with your local bankers, accountants, lawyers, insurance brokers and other **professional service providers** for connections to leaders from historically marginalized groups whose expertise will strengthen your board.
- Identify people from historically marginalized groups on your company’s **leadership team** and ask them to connect you to their networks.
- Look inside **membership organizations, which often have subgroups such as women’s initiatives**.
  - Alumni associations for undergraduate and graduate programs
  - Business and professional associations
  - Check out panels on diversity on boards and mine them for potential candidates

2. **Expand your search beyond your existing network**

Connect with organizations and professional associations that can help you identify top talent.

- The California Partners Project’s **Resource Hub** can point you to director affinity groups as well as organizations that offer curated lists of qualified candidates.
- Washington State’s Office of Financial Management has created a **Diversity Organizations Resource List** which provides links to a wide range of business and professional associations for women and members of historically marginalized groups.

3. **Identify connections to your network**

Use databases to identify existing relationships with potential candidates to build confidence and familiarity with those candidates. Candidates may have second- or third-degree connections with board members.

- Equilar’s **Board Edge** database can help you uncover connections between candidates and your company’s board members and executive team.
- **LinkedIn**: Contact other CEOs and directors for names of candidates they have considered – a mismatch for one company can be a fit for another.
- Keep and regularly update a spreadsheet of potential board members that tracks the expertise and attributes of each candidate. Even if they are not a fit today, they may be a suitable candidate in the future.

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