



National Diversity on Boards Conference

(May 2008)

How to get
started



Is this the career for me?

- Needs to be a conscious decision
- Broad business background (senior/CEO)
- Strategic vs operational
- Understand the very real risks and liabilities
- Collegiate, courageous, lateral, flexible, ethical
- Income not an issue!

Know yourself

- Be very clear on what you have to offer
- Make sure your “brand” is relevant
- Be happy NOT to be perfect
- Know how to sell it
- Be prepared for frustration!

So what is your plan?

- Think about a long term strategy
 - How far do I want to go?
 - How long do I want to do this for?
 - What steps do I need to take to get there?
- Build your strategy around your skills/experience
- Write it down!

Research! Research!

- Group boards (public, listed, NFPs etc)
- Look at what they do, who is on them, selection processes
- Cut back into realistic numbers
- Create a clear filing/reference “library”
- Refine your strategy

What does your plan look like?

- Likely to have a number of “arms”
- Work through each methodically
- Think about connections laterally
- Look at stretch goals & work backwards
- Make sure it is written down with timelines
- Review it regularly

Professional Promotion

- First impressions do actually count!
- Be serious about your brand
 - Relevant brief CV
 - Professional business cards
 - Professional written formats
 - Prepare sound bites
 - Dress professionally
 - Do AICD diploma

Building a profile

- Target specific boards
- Develop your own networks
- Join relevant business groups
- Be introduced to directors of interest
- Get on relevant databases
- Be interviewed by relevant recruiters
- Take every public opportunity to sell yourself
- Get board experience – appropriate NFPs
- Keep track of all contacts and follow up

Progress so far

- 18 months NED large NFP
- 18 months Chair of Finance & Investment and member Audit Committee large NFP
- 12 months Audit, Finance and Risk Committee of very large NFP
- Chair Asia/Pacific Fund
- 18 months NSW Bar Assn Professional Conduct Committee
- 6/7 approaches for NFPs declined after due diligence
- Some formal applications pending

Lessons learnt

- Know what you have to offer
- Always present professionally
- Work out a strategy and write a plan
- Research and network constantly
- Be careful what you take on
- Be resilient
- **STAY POSITIVE!**