

# Board Member Bingo Instructions

Board member bingo is a fantastic ice breaker/game to play at your next board retreat. It helps participants get to know one another, and have fun at the same time. Board Member Bingo also helps relieve tension in the room – if people are feeling anxious about the day’s activities/agenda. Finally, this ice breaker sets the stage for meaningful discussions about the make-up of your board in terms of their diversity, professions, hobbies, interests, skill sets, and fundraising experience.

**Object:** Fill every space on your card with name of someone in the room (not simply a row or column, like traditional bingo). However you can only use each person a maximum of 2 times (unless you have less than 12 players – then you can use people’s names up to 3 times). For example, if Mary is a lawyer, loves to ski, and has a dog – you can only use her name in 2 of the squares.

**Timing:** Depending on how much time you have, give participants between 10 and 15 minutes. The more people you have in the room, the longer it may take. You will need another 10 to 15 minutes to debrief and discuss.

**Facilitator:** Hand out a bingo card to all retreat attendees (including staff members and other participants). Tell participants that everyone in the room should play – not just board members. Read the object (above) aloud. Tell participants that they have 15 minutes to fill their card – and that they need to stand up and move around the room to be successful.

**Debrief:** After time is up and everyone is back in their seats, ask some debriefing questions, such as:

- Were you able to fill your entire card?
- Are there a few spaces empty on everyone’s card? For example, if there are no lawyers, or CEO’s etc.
- Did you learn anything new about someone in the room? Were you surprised by anything?
- Has anyone here solicited a major gift? What about given a major gift?
- Does anyone have a bequest?
- What does this tell us about our board as a whole? (Or, what did you learn about our board?)

**Note:** You need a minimum of 10 people to play this game. (If you only have 10 to 12 people, you will need to allow people to use each person’s name up to 3 times to complete the card.)

Board Member Bingo should be played after a round of introductions, because not everyone in the room will know one another. Name tags also help, but are not necessary.