



GET ON BOARD!



Hodgkinson: legal skills in demand

Why not make a difference in 2009 and make a New Year resolution to put something back into society? Volunteering as a trustee of a charity, a school governor or a member of a board of a public body enables you to have a tremendous impact in the community. Additionally, Board-level volunteering, promoted by Getting on Board, is an enormously rewarding experience and can be a lot of fun, too.

Your skills as a barrister are greatly in demand, and you will be spoilt for choice of organisations to join. The skills we are talking about are not your knowledge of the law, but your familiarity with decision-making, analysing

Stuck for a New Year's resolution? Try Board-level volunteering, says [Sarah Hodgkinson](#)

materials or points, and taking part in constructive discussion or argument. Running charities and schools has become increasingly complex and many trustees worry a great deal about whether or not they are running their charity in a proper and effective manner. Having someone on the board with these skills is of tremendous help when grappling with a range of issues.

The image factor

Robert Sadotti, who has worked as both a self-employed and employed barrister, is a trustee of Change-makers, a national charity that aims to encourage young people to become involved in their communities. "Lawyers so often get a bad press, as we are perceived to profit from others' misfortunes, or otherwise as being mercenaries or fat cats. I wanted to make my expertise work for an undeniably good cause. Going into it, I wasn't sure how much I would be able to contribute to the board of Change-makers, but I have been able to use my experience, both directly and

indirectly, to good effect," he says.

Robin Knowles QC, CBE, Chairman of the Bar Pro Bono Unit and of Bar in the Community, comments: "I have no doubt that Getting on Board will be working a lot with Bar in the Community. It will also be a main partner in the ALLIES (A Local Lawyer In Every School) initiative that takes a strategic approach to the involvement of lawyers as school governors where they are most needed. These are all examples of the contribution that the Bar can make and of the collaboration that is increasingly, and importantly, a hallmark of work in this area".

The X factor

As well as benefits for the community, there are definite benefits for you as an individual. Sadotti said: "For many reasons, working as a lawyer can be dispiriting. Volunteering for a board is a kind of antidote to one's everyday work life". ❖

[Sarah Hodgkinson](#), Chief Executive, Getting on Board. Email: Sarah@gettingonboard.org

How to get on board

- Getting on Board aims to strengthen the governance of voluntary organisations, schools and public bodies, by encouraging people with skills to volunteer for their boards.
- If you would like to volunteer as a board member, please contact us via www.gettingonboard.org and, through our brokerage service, we will help you to find a suitable role that fits with your experience, expertise, interests and location.