

Preparing a board biography

Part of IoD Ireland's Director Development Toolkit

Introduction

As you embark upon a board director career path you will undoubtedly be asked for your board biography. A board biography outlines the specific skills and experience you bring relative to the board. It answers the question 'What does this person have to contribute to this board?'

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Planning a board biography

There are several instances when you may be asked for a board biography such as:

- Registering on IoD Ireland's Boardroom Centre service
- By a head-hunter / recruiter
- By the chair of the board
- As an introduction or follow up from a potential board appointment meeting
- For speaking engagements
- For company websites upon appointment as a Non-Executive Director (NED)
- For PR / appointment announcements.

Note for the latter 3 scenarios the board biography will be a lot more succinct and run to a couple of paragraphs only. Examples of both are provided at the end of this document.

Just like when writing your board CV there is lots of planning to do when writing your board biography. While the style of your board biography is personal and they come in many formats, consider including the following areas:

1. Executive Summary: This will be very similar to the executive summary in your CV and in the 'About' section on LinkedIn. Board biographies often lead with this section and the goal is to engage the reader's attention leaving them wanting to find out more. It needs to be strong and succinct in one clear paragraph showcasing you at your best. The executive summary should reflect the seniority and breadth of experience you can bring. Include what makes you unique and a valuable asset to the specific board you are applying to. Showcase the personal qualities and attributes you have that would make you a great addition to the board.

2. Skills and Competencies: Include your top 3-5 skills and competencies that you bring to the boardroom. Use the **Skills you need to succeed** toolkit to reflect upon the unique combination of skills you would bring to a board. What are the transferable skills you bring from your executive career that would add value in the boardroom? This should not be an exhaustive list of skills, but rather the top 3-5 skills that are your unique strengths.

3. Education: Include main degree, post graduate and board relevant qualifications. Include relevant courses like IoD Ireland short courses, workshops, programmes, other non-executive director certification, sustainability, cyber security etc. This will not be as detailed as in your CV but at a high level you want to showcase your academic experience. Click [here](#) to review IoD Ireland's portfolio of learning and education opportunities.

4. Key Accomplishments: What are the things you are most proud of that would be relevant and interesting to a board? Include awards won, key projects you would like to showcase — include results if appropriate, key achievements in your executive career perhaps revenue or profitability growth, P&L experience, IPO, M&A, international experience, specialist knowledge, board exposure, regulatory involvement.

5. Sectoral Experience: Include a brief run down on your executive career experience in terms of industry sector. List the industry sectors you have experience in. Don't forget to include any voluntary work as well, for example education or charity work.

6. Board Experience: Include board membership details including company name and dates served as well as committee membership. If you have experience with state agencies, including commercial, non-commercial, or regulatory entities, be sure to provide details in this section. If you have chaired a committee, make sure to mention this.

7. Contact Details: Increasingly people include a recent photo in their board biography. Ensure you include your email address and mobile phone number (include country code if applying for overseas NED opportunities).

The finer details

Use the following checklist to ensure the finer details are correct on your board biography.

● A board biography should not run longer than 1 page. You can use a word document or slide format.

● Use a regular font type and ensure the font size is at least 11pt.

● Check all spellings.

● Make it easy for the reader to contact you with contact details clearly visible.

● The layout of the biography should be clear, easy to read and consistent — check bolding, font type and size.

● Use the third person.

● A board biography is less about sentences and paragraphs and more about short, punchy bullet points.

● Avoid acronyms and jargon.

● Use non-executive director vocabulary.

● Label the name of the file professionally e.g. 'Denis Dunne Biography'.

● Focus on significant experience only and not minor roles.

● Tailor the board biography to the specific role in question — showcase how your experience fits the skills and experiences required.

● Templates for board biographies can be found on Word Templates and on tools such as Canva by editing CV templates.

Board biography example 1



Mark Moore CDir
Tel: +353 87 2223333
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About Mark Moore

Mark Moore has 30+ years' experience devising strategy and leading transformational change for international B2B organisations — ABC plc, DEF Ltd and TXY plc. Mark has delivered market growth and triple bottom line impact across financial services, shared services, manufacturing, and facilities management. Mark was CEO of ABC plc, leading 4000+ global employees and a €1bn revenue and oversaw the expansion into Eastern Europe. As a qualified accountant Mark has experience in finance, strategy, change management, scale up and technology across multiple sectors.

A former Board Chair of the MNO Charity, Mark increased fundraising by 22% and secured a 5 year strategic partnership. Mark chaired the Audit committee, and led a board evaluation process to improve board governance. Mark was a spokesperson for MNO Charity and advocated for increased government funding. Under Mark's tenure as Chair MNO Charity won the Best Places to Work Awards for a small business.

Skills:

- Finance — ACCA Qualified
- Strategy
- International Growth
- Transformational Change
- Governance.

Education:

- BComm, UCD
- ACCA, Chartered Accountants Ireland
- MBA, ABC University
- Chartered Director Programme, Institute of Directors Ireland.

Sectoral Experience:

- Financial services
- Shared services
- Manufacturing
- Facilities management.

Board Experience:

Director ABC plc: Jan 2020 – to date – Member of Sustainability Committee
Director DEF Ltd: Jan 2014 – Jan 2020 – Member of Nominations Committee
Chair MNO Charity – Jan 2015 – to Jan 2022 - Chair of Audit Committee
INED GHI School – Jan 2012 - Jan 2020 - Chair of Audit Committee

Board biography example 2



Mark Moore CDir is a qualified accountant with 30+ years' experience devising strategy and leading transformational change for international B2B organisations — ABC plc, DEF Ltd and TXY plc. Mark was CEO of ABC plc, leading 4000+ global employees and a €1bn revenue and oversaw the expansion into Eastern Europe. As a qualified accountant Mark has experience in finance, strategy, change management, scale up and technology across multiple sectors.

Mark has extensive board experience and was former Chair of the MNO Charity. Mark is a Chartered Director, has an MBA from ABC University and holds a BComm from UCD.



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