You don’t need to serve on the board of a publicly traded company to reap the benefits board service can offer your career. Serving on a local nonprofit board or joining the board of a trade association can get you in the spotlight, build your network and help you increase your business knowledge. Serving on a board of directors can benefit your climb up the corporate ladder.

**Boosts Your Public Profile**

Serving on a board of directors gets your name out in the public. You’ll be included on the organization’s website, letterhead and in its publication. You’ll have the opportunity to write articles, make presentations, serve on panels at conferences and be quoted in press releases. You can also put your board service on your resume.

**Provides Experiential Opportunities**

Board service allows you to join committees that provide experiences you might not have at your current job. This can include learning about corporate finances, meetings planning, communications, marketing and lobbying. After you serve on a committee or two, take the reins as a committee chairperson. As you attend board meetings, you’ll learn how to run them, which will help you if you eventually rise to a vice chair or chairman of the board position. Familiarize yourself with Robert’s Rules of Order to learn the protocol many boards use to run their official meetings.

**Increased Networking Opportunities**

The more boards you join, the more influential people you meet. In addition to your fellow board members, you’ll network with volunteer committee members and office staff, if the organization has hired management professionals. You might begin to meet key players in your profession or organization, especially from the ranks of industry suppliers. Once these people feel comfortable with you, they’ll start introducing you to their peers, further expanding your network. You can also invite people you’d like to add to your network to join one of your organization’s advisory boards or a committee. An invitation from a board member will increase your chances of getting a positive response and getting a chance to work with a specific person who can help further your career.

**Chance to Make a Difference**

In addition to the self-directed reasons for serving on a board of directors, you’ll gain an opportunity to make a difference in your community or profession. Board service gives you a strong voice regarding a charity or trade association’s mission. If you serve on a for-profit board, you’ll have more say regarding the company’s policies and business practices. If you’re looking to give back, board service is one way to do that.