Case Study:  
BoardsWork! Board Member Training and Placement

A corporate staff member attended a BoardsWork! training, and ended up delivering multiplied value both in the nonprofit sector and at the workplace.

The Client
A corporation was looking for ways to equip staff with leadership and problem solving skills, as well as provide targeted benefit back to its community. The corporation contracted with the Bayer Center to send members of its staff through the BoardsWork! program, which not only trains individuals in nonprofit board service but also subsequently matches them with nonprofit boards looking for new talent.

The corporation hosted an information session with a Bayer Center representative for staff to learn about the program and encouraged all interested to apply via their own on-line system. Fifty-seven applied to be in the first cohort. Each of the applicants went through an internal interview to verify their commitment, and 20 were chosen through their company to participate in the training. One of them, a man who had lived most of his life outside of the United States, was particularly interested in finding a way to engage his international interests.

Our Work
The trainees all attended a day-long class which gave them practical information on the nonprofit sector, an in-depth look at board responsibilities and roles (ranging from the legal and financial to the strategic), and training in fundraising.

The next step was for Bayer Center staff to review assessments and surveys from nonprofits and trainees to identify the best matches. Each cohort member was asked to list years of experience in a variety of board-related skills, and it emerged that the trainee with international interests also had years of experience in strategic planning and a strong financial management background.

On the nonprofit side, one organization with global connections had recently come to the Bayer Center for help with board development. It was struggling to increase its professionalism and effective programming (which included financially supporting other area nonprofits through its merchandise sales), and was looking to create a strategic plan in the near future. The new trainee seemed like a perfect fit!

The Result
The Bayer Center matched the trainee and the nonprofit. While each had the option to decline the match, in this case there was mutual interest in moving forward. Two months after the introduction the trainee had joined the board, and lost no time putting his expertise to use. The other members recognized and capitalized on his value, and within a year and a half, he had been elected board chair. His active leadership on the board has continued – as well as helping with the strategic planning
and professionalizing the organization’s financial systems, he’s even made connections within his own network that have resulted in more new board members!

His commitment to the nonprofit has led to increased responsibility at work, as well. He’s now part of the company leadership team for BoardsWork!, and has the intention to build the program further.