

# STRATEGIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL BOARD MEETING

## A 10-STEP GUIDE FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT BOARDS

Prepared by  
Joanna Davis | Jana Filippi | Dianne McWilliam | Ryan Quinn | Sophie van Dam

- As the main touchpoint and decision-making process for Boards, it is important that Board Meetings are effective and efficient.
- Strategies to facilitate a successful Board Meeting is a topic of wide interest.
- This e-book provides a condensed guide, with references, to some of the key areas for a successful Board Meeting.

### Interpersonal - Engagement, Dynamics, Conflict, Decision Making

The contribution and interactions of Directors during a Board Meeting contribute significantly to the success of a meeting. Strategies to enhance Director engagement, healthy team dynamics, robust discussion, and effective decision making are explored.

### Board Processes - Preparation, Board Pack Information, Structure

Practical steps to prepare for a Board Meeting occur outside of the Boardroom and are essential for success. Preparations that can be undertaken in advance of the meeting, tips for constructing an effective Board pack and implementing a strategic meeting structure are recommended.

### Tools - Technology, Measurement & Evaluation, Board Committees

A range of tools and strategies are available to Boards wanting to maximise their success. The use of technology, the measurement and evaluation of Board Director engagement in meetings, and optimal use of Board Committees is outlined.

## INTERPERSONAL



### ENGAGEMENT

How to encourage involved, active, and committed Board Meetings.

- Keep distractions away;
- Make onBoarding of new Board members a priority;
- Make self-assessments part of business-as-usual;
- Make it easier for members to participate during meetings; and
- Collaboratively set the agenda and make time for engagement.



### DYNAMICS & CULTURE

Board dynamics are fundamentally linked to the culture of the Board.

- Consider the skills, expertise and experience your Board Directors bring;
- Consider whether your Directors have mutual respect and trust for one another;
- Consider if your Directors' mindsets are aligned with the organisation;
- Consider the use of 'teaming' as a form of team building for the Board.



### DECISION MAKING

How to effectively make decisions as a well-run Board during the Board Meeting.

- Decision-making is both an art and a science, drawing on intuition and experience as well as facts and reasoned analysis;
- By having a strong and robust approach to decision-making, a Board will enhance its credibility and strengthen its transparency and accountability; and
- A Board decision should be strategic, informed, smart, balanced and fair, sustainable, affordable and legal.

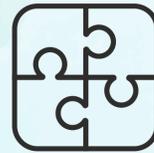


### CONFLICT

Strategies to reduce and manage conflict when it arises in the Board Meeting.

- Remember, not all conflict is bad;
- Pay attention to good interpersonal communications;
- Operate with a strategic plan;
- Help develop a skilled Chairperson; and
- Learn about conflict resolution processes

## BOARD PROCESSES



### STRUCTURE

Meetings should be a combination of transferring and processing information to make effective decisions

Consider:

- Having a pre-meeting;
- Having a clearly defined agenda;
- Taking detailed minutes;
- Sending out the Board pack in time for Directors to consider the items;
- The length of the meeting; and
- Expectations around attendance.



### PREPARATION

Take action beforehand to prepare for an engaged and effective Board meeting.

- Set a Board meeting schedule;
- Develop the Board agenda;
- Send out the Board pack;
- Engage with Board pack materials;
- Plan for the meeting;
- Prepare for meeting logistics; and
- Ensure a quorum.



### BOARD PACK

Provide concise, reliable information that is useful for Board Directors to achieve their decision-making objectives.

Board papers should be:

- Well-written in a standardised, structured format;
- Contain an executive summary;
- Include relevant information for the Board's purpose;
- Informative, concise and summarised;
- Include sufficient context about a topic, not assuming that Board Directors share in-depth knowledge on the subject; and
- Clearly outline anticipated benefits and risks.

## TOOLS



### TECHNOLOGY

Use technology to your advantage to create more efficient and effective Board Meetings.

- Use Secure portals for confidential items;
- Use Portals as an organisational library;
- Use live minute taking for those attending remotely;
- Use innovative online meeting tools;
- Use digital voting;
- Make sure Directors remain engaged when not meeting face-to-face; and
- Be wary of security risks.



### MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Tips to evaluate the effectiveness of your Board Meeting

- Consider the most appropriate party to organise the evaluation;
- Any form of Board self-assessment needs to be viewed as a process, not a once-off activity;
- Any evaluation process should occur at a time where the Board has capacity to enact any strategies or improvement activities that result from the process;
- Create 'in-camera sessions' as a standing agenda item;
- Don't forget to discuss the results;
- Conclude meetings with discussion of a few open-ended questions;
- Consider progressing to individual evaluations; and
- Agree as a group on the metrics for success.



### BOARD COMMITTEES

Use Board committees to delegate complex work and bring in specialists and experts.

- Use committees to carve off specialist or more complex work;
- Committees allow Directors to develop projects;
- Committees can bring in new knowledge, perspectives and skills;
- An opportunity to develop special interest groups; and
- Consider governance implications, time commitments and additional resources required.