

Keys to an Effective Board Meeting

Board meetings are the place where board leaders join together and act as a whole to carry out policy decisions, set the direction, mission and vision of the organization, engage in strategic thinking and planning, and provide fiduciary oversight for the organization.

Keys to an Effective Meeting

1. The board chair and chief executive determine the purpose of the meeting and draft the agenda, making sure that the meeting content is focused on board work, not staff work and involves tapping into the collective talents and wisdom of board members.
2. To allow for the majority of the work within the board room to be focused on substantive, strategic discussion and to increase efficiency, most boards use a consent agenda. Items placed on the consent agenda, require board action, such as voting on past minutes or acceptance of committee reports, but do not require board discussion.
3. Committees are asked prior to the meeting if they have specific issues the board needs to decide or discuss. These topics are considered for agenda inclusions. If there is no pressing issue or decision needed, committee minutes are placed on the consent agenda.
4. The board chair and executive director decide what kind of preparatory information the board will need prior to the board meeting and create a plan to send out materials to the board in a timely way.
5. Board members receive meeting materials and reminders of upcoming meetings, including date, time, and location at least one –two weeks prior to the meeting.
6. In planning for the meeting, the board chair and chief executive have also allowed time for board networking and if appropriate a “mission moment” - a presentation about the organization or conversation with client or program staff person about an organizational outcome - to connect board constantly to mission.

