



Moving Board Agendas from Details to Governance and Strategic Planning Issues

The following items will help move a board from focusing on procedures (which are the responsibility of staff) to focusing on their governance responsibilities:

1. Board responsibilities chart
2. Typical agenda
3. Sample strategic plan
4. Template for board committee reports, based on the strategic plan.

If a board has been trained, then with gentle nudging of the board chair from the executive director, the agendas will focus on ONLY the things on this agenda. If a board member tries to stray into staff territory, it is the board chair's responsibility to suggest the board member take the issue to the proper board-level committee for further discussion and advice to the staff.

By the way, I believe board-level committees are essential in a small to mid-sized nonprofit. If the committees and staff are trained so that they know their sole responsibility is advice, then they will be less apt to meddle in staff responsibilities.

Board of Directors Responsibilities

Governance Responsibilities	Support Responsibilities
Legal Compliance	Fund-raising
Financial Oversight	Public Relations
Policy Setting	Self-assessment
Strategic Planning	
Executive Director Oversight	

**Board of Directors
Sample Agenda***

Date:

Facilitated by: Chair of the Board

Location and Time: *(include both beginning and ending times – which should rarely be more than 1½ hours)*

Agenda:

Call to Order

Welcome *(and introduction of any new board members or visitors)*

Secretary's report *(approval of the minutes of the last meeting)*

Treasurer's report *(approval of the financial report)*

**Executive Director report

***Committee reports:

Administration Committee (internal operations: finances, facilities, personnel, risk management, etc.)

Volunteer and Board Development Committee

Community Involvement Committee

Marketing Committee

Resource Development Committee

Programs Committee

New Business (anything brought up at the committee reports or the ED report that require further action)

Old Business (anything brought up at the previous meeting that requires updates)

Adjourn

****This agenda is a template of the way most board meetings should be conducted. Unless there are at least three items for a vote, do not have a meeting.***

*****Should rarely be more than 15 minutes with a focus on broad issues, not the details***

******Committee chairs should only bring to the board issues requiring a vote (policy, budget, or updates on strategic planning goals). Job descriptions and an organizational structure chart based on this committee structure are available if requested. The number of committees will vary and depend on the size of the nonprofit. However, all six of the core elements listed should be incorporated into the board-level committees so there are no less than three and no more than six committees.***

SAMPLE STRATEGIC PLAN (simplified version)
COMMUNITY CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CENTER

Vision: All children in our community are safe from sexual abuse.

Mission: To educate the community, develop effective programs, and support the victims of child abuse.

Values: Equal treatment for all...children should be safe....voluntarism is the best way to initiate change, etc.

Slogan: An Open Door to Love

MARKETING and RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	PROGRAMS and COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	ADMINISTRATION and VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT
A three year-marketing plan will be developed which will increase brand identity by 30%	A community-wide collaboration of agencies addressing similar issues will be convened within one year	A Total Quality Management strategy will be developed and implemented within two years.
A three-year research plan will be developed which will allow for on-going responses by stakeholders and the general public to brand awareness strategies	A community-wide needs and resource assessment will be developed, using the collaboration partners as stakeholders.	A plan for increasing the quality and quantity of facility space will be developed within the next year.
Within one year all material used by the agency will reflect brand identity strategies and logo.	The agency will be a catalyst for the development of a community-wide plan for reducing the number of child abuse victims.	A system of internal financial controls will be developed and implemented for testing by board members within one year.
A three-year fundraising plan will be developed which will increase financial resources by 30% per year.	Each program will develop 3-5 year plans for implementation of outcome measurement strategies	A board-level committee will research and develop suitable risk management policies and strategies.
The number of grants written will increase 25% per year.		A detailed policies and procedures manual will be developed within two years
A planned giving program will be established, with the first \$100,000 bequest within two years.		A board-level committee will establish a Volunteer Development committee to develop recruitment, training and recognition plans.
On-going research will identify at least one new potential fundraising market per year.		

From "Core Elements of a Successful Nonprofit," © 2000, 2011 edition, by M. L. Donnellan, marilyn157@aol.com

TEMPLATE FOR BOARD REPORTS
***Marketing and Resource Development**

2012 Strategic Goals

1 2 3 4 5

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. A three year-marketing plan will be developed which will increase brand identity by 30% | |
| 2. A three-year research plan will be developed which will allow for on-going responses by stakeholders and the general public to brand awareness strategies | |
| 3. Within one year all material used by the agency will reflect brand identity strategies and logo. | |
| 4. A three-year fundraising plan will be developed which will increase financial resources by 30% per year. | |
| 5. The number of grants written will increase 25% per year. | |
| 6. A planned giving program will be established, with the first \$100,000 bequest within two years. | |
| 7. On-going research will identify at least one new potential fundraising market per year. | |

The numbers in the right hand boxes represent the benchmarks for each goal. For example, the staff-developed work plan for goal #1 might include the following benchmarks:

- 1. By March 31st, draft of the three-year marketing plan presented to the Marketing/Resource Development Committee;*
- 2. By June 31st, final plan presented to the board for approval;*
- 3. By September 31st, marketing staff develops new materials based on the brand identity and presents it to the committee for input;*
- 4. By December 31st, new brand-based materials in use;*
- 5. By December 31st, methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the new materials in building brand identity will be finalized and implemented.*

This chart will be posted in the board room and when each benchmark is met, the square is colored in so the board can keep track of the progress toward goal completion. Similar charts will be developed for each of the other categories: Administration/Volunteer Development and Community Development/Programs, as shown in the sample strategic plan on page 1. Board reports using this format are simply updates of the progress, plus the review of any relevant budget issues or policies that need board review/approval.

**This is based on the board having three standing committees: Marketing/Resource Development, Administration/Volunteer Development and Community Involvement/Programs. Depending on the size of the nonprofit, the three committees could be expanded to up to six.*