

**Effective Board & Committee Meetings**

**Leadership**

Identify a strong presiding officer or committee chair who can welcome all participants and provide assertive leadership (keep participants focused and working through agenda).

**Frequency**

Determine appropriate meeting frequency. This depends on the function of the board or committee. The caution against meeting too frequently is that there is not enough time between meetings to work through tasks and prepare good reports. A goal is to meet often enough to fulfill fiduciary responsibilities while remaining efficient.

**Preparation**

All information and reports should be sent in advance of meeting. Participants are expected to read and consider materials. Committee chairs should be prepared to give reports and lead discussion as necessary.

**Agenda**

The meeting agenda provides direction and purpose. Include the following:

* Mission statement printed at bottom of page
* Name of organization, place, date and time of meeting
* Approval of minutes
* Chair and chief executive reports
* Treasurer report
* Issue(s) of consequence
* Committee reports requiring discussion or vote
* Board education opportunity
* Executive session

**Tips for success:**

* Put priority items near top of agenda and more regular reports near end of agenda.
* Make sure that there is time to address each agenda item, and if not, table some items until the next meeting.
* Start and end the meeting on time.
* Introduce all meeting participants.
* Encourage attendance at all meetings. Provide opportunities for attendance via teleconference as appropriate. *54% of organizations provide call-in options.\**
* Provide materials in advance via email and/or a board portal or password-protected site for easy reference. *30% of organizations use a portal for board members.\**
* Encourage discussion/participation by all board members.
* Consider use of consent agenda to allow meeting time for meaningful discussion. The consent agenda allows quick approval of routine, non-controversial issues that do not require discussion (i.e. prior meeting minutes, committee reports). *57% of organizations use consent agenda.\**
* Table issues for which consensus is difficult to obtain. Send back to committee or create ad hoc task force.
* End each meeting with a review of action items and next steps.
* Ensure good room set-up (board room style vs. classroom style).
* Incorporate executive session into regular meeting agenda. This allows an opportunity for sensitive issues to be discussed without minutes being taken. It can be with the board only, or with board and chief executive.  *61% of boards meet in executive session as-needed, 18% use executive session every meeting.\**