

Board Agenda – Good to Go?

Gavel the meeting to order and a procession of reports begins. The bulk of time in many board rooms is spent on staff, officer, consultant and committee reports.

When directors are finally invited to tackle more meaningful issues, it comes at the end of the agenda under old or new business. By that time directors are eyeing their watches, ready to adjourn.

Improve the Agenda

Improve the agenda by using a consent agenda. Distribute the reports with the board packet or post them on a board portal for directors to read before the meeting. Time on the agenda will be accelerated by a *single* motion to accept the reports as distributed, unless something is controversial or requires action.

Fewer reports creates time for discussing the significant issues. Format the agenda to include agenda items that come from elements of the strategic plan. Directors should be discussing future-oriented, high-level issues at the board table --- not just listening to reports that leave little time for deliberation and decisions.

Filter Agenda Items

Don't assume that all directors know the importance of every agenda item; nor the amount of resources associated with the item.

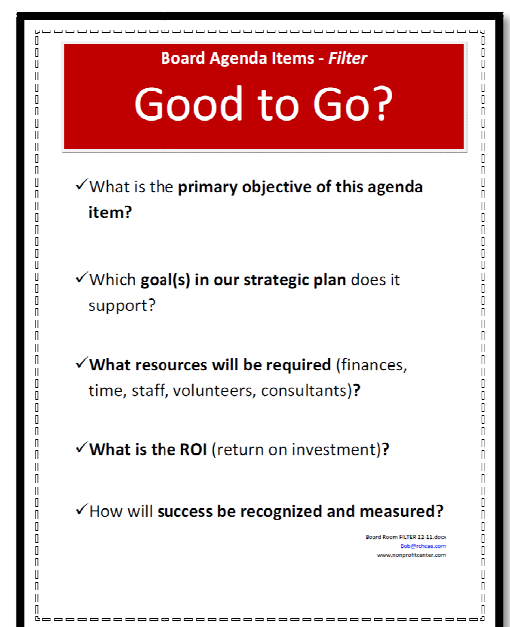
Frame items on the agenda with a preface describing how the issue impacts the mission, members and budget. Consider these questions:

- ✓ What is the primary objective of this agenda item?
- ✓ Which goal(s) in our strategic plan does it support?
- ✓ What resources will be required (finances, time, staff, volunteers, consultants)?
- ✓ What is the ROI (return on investment)?
- ✓ How will success be recognized and measured?

Create a placard for the board table or wall to remind directors that discussions should include aspects of the filter.

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Note: Bob Harris, CAE, provides board resources at www.nonprofitcenter.com



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- ✓ What is the **primary objective** of this agenda item?
- ✓ Which **goal(s) in our strategic plan** does it support?
- ✓ **What resources will be required** (finances, time, staff, volunteers, consultants)?
- ✓ **What is the ROI** (return on investment)?
- ✓ How will **success be recognized and measured**?

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