



BoardWorks

Developing an annual agenda

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Too many boards drift along merely responding to what management places in front of them or responding to the crisis de jour. This passive approach allows their work and focus to be defined by others. A board should be intentional about how it spends its limited time and those matters it wishes to explore in detail. In addition to a good practice meeting agenda, we suggest that the board is proactive in crafting its annual work plan.

High on the work plan are the critical issues that will impact on the achievement of stated outcomes (ends policies). These are the major strategic issues that the board through its discussion will add value to. Discuss and decide on these, not many, three or four. Schedule one for discussion each quarter. Have management prepare material, bring third parties to the table, seek out reading. This gives real structure and intention to the board's work

Another approach is to schedule an in-depth discussion of each of the outcomes in the plan. Sport and recreation organisations generally only have two or three. Each is subjected to a variety of strategic thinking and strategic analysis processes. The result of this is not only an in-depth assessment of organisational progress but also a deepening of board members knowledge about the outcome areas under discussion.

An annual work plan might also include.

- Chief executive performance appraisal cycle and key dates
- Annual meeting with the external auditor
- Meeting dates, board and sub committees
- Preparation for the AGM and annual report sign off
- Strategic thinking sessions
- Risk analysis sessions – at least twice each year
- CEO Performance assessment and remuneration
- Board performance review
- Board review and development
- Meetings with stakeholders/owners
- Planning the annual board calendar
- Retirement dates for directors
- Selection/appointment/induction of new board members
- Progress reports on special projects e.g., buildings, fundraising etc
- The annual retreat
- Review of Governance Process and Board-CEO Linkage policies

Summary

The development of an annual agenda as described has the potential to have a significant positive impact on board meetings and board business. With the exception of a small number of annual matters, every item on the agenda has a policy reference (the board's role). If the board has in place effective compliance monitoring, it can then spend most of its precious time addressing strategic issues rather than partnering the CEO in managing the organisation or worse, simply observing management busyness.

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