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## DURING AND AFTER THE MEETING

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Quick Summary: Successful Board Meetings require detailed preparation and management of the meeting flow.

### Abstract:

Preparation for every endeavor is important. Board Meetings are no exception. The success of the meeting, as judged by the attendees, will be a direct function of your pre-meeting efforts. A few simple items can make the meeting itself and its aftermath even more successful. Focus on the meeting flow and the methods in which the material is presented.

If you have read the preceding four articles on meeting logistics, material, the CEO assessment, and presentation tips, you might be wondering what else is there to do to prepare for Board Meetings. The answer is simple, “Not much!” Below are the last remaining “checkbox” items to consider.

- Constantly assess the flow and value of the meeting from the Board Members’ perspectives. Avoid turning the meeting into a “bored” meeting by presenting reams of operational details or tangential discussions.
- At the beginning of the meeting, hand out a paper copy of the agenda so that Members can track the meeting’s progress. Highlight when certain topics, that may not be obvious from the agenda will be covered.
- Have separate handouts available that show details that do not project well. Items such as budget details, income statements, and sales funnel tabular summaries are examples of information that may require detailed discussions. If some Members plan to call in or view the material remotely, send the information to them before the meeting.
- Assign someone, preferably someone from the company, the task of taking meeting notes, capturing follow-up items, and tracking questions that were put off until later during the meeting. Ask them to quickly review a summary of the notes at the end of the meeting to help ensure all of the items of interest were captured, and any delayed questions were answered.
- If it is intended to provide copies of the presentation material for the Members to take with them, use the Notes version of PowerPoint™ or equivalent instead of the slides themselves. The Notes section of the slides should contain a summary of the commentary that was made during the slide presentation. This technique is especially helpful if the meeting participants plan to share the slides with others who were not in attendance.

- If backup charts and other material will be made available to Board Members for their review after the meeting, be sure that the material can stand on its own with no need for verbal interpretation.
- If an employee has done an outstanding job, suggest to the Members that they send the person a short, thank you email or personally reach out to the person after the meeting. Not only will be well-received by the employee but others, as they hear of the recognition, will appreciate the Board's personal involvement with the company.
- After the meeting, prepare a one-page summary of the highlights of the meeting. This summary does not replace the Board Minutes, which will most likely take longer and take more time to prepare. The one-page summary should be completed and sent out within hours of the meeting.
- Employees always seem to think each Board Meeting will be a major decision-making event. Some employees will "fill in the blanks" through the rumor mill. Hold a Town Hall Meeting after each Board Meeting and share SOME of the charts with the company. Especially the plus/minus and progress charts. Do not make it a broadcast event; answer questions openly and candidly.
- Develop a regular communications update process for the Board. Send it every week or two. Use a simple email format. Keep it short. Start by addressing any open items from the last meeting, followed by a status update. Never wait for the next update to send out significant bad news. If it is deemed necessary, set up a brief conference call to discuss any potentially significant issues.

All of your interactions should follow a simple goal: Help the Board Members help you and the company by providing guidance. Your Board is, by far, your most valuable asset; be sure to tap it.