

A SAMPLE AGENDA FOR A WEEKLY BOARD CHAIR – CEO MEETING

Here's a template for a 90-minute weekly meeting. If you can do it faster, more power to you. But as you will see, there is a lot of ground to cover. Adjust for your own specific needs accordingly.



1) NEED TO KNOW

Each of you shares the high-level “need to know” stuff. Make sure to keep the discussion at the 10,000 foot level, unless the E.D. asks for specific tactical help on a challenge. Here are some sample ideas for what you might discuss:

- Big headlines, like big news to share, great new hire, or a possible new program opportunity. Both the E.D. and Board Chair should bring such news to the discussion.
- Key challenges or obstacles the board chair should know and help the E.D. work through (an angry staff member exit, a potential bad press, a challenge with a partner organization or sector expert.) Certainly discuss anything that could jeopardize the public perception of the organization and the board's ability to be terrific ambassadors. The Board Chair should bring up his/her key challenges as well.
- The Board Chair should lead a conversation about the status of new board members in the pipeline and what is needed from the E.D. to move forward.

Note: It's easy to let the E.D. dominate this part of the discussion. That should not happen. If the Board Chair is unable to articulate updates for the E.D. about the successes, challenges, and opportunities of the board, that's a big red flag.

2) FINANCES

Please never leave this off the list, even if your finances are healthy. Never forget your obligation to donors to run a solid organization from a business perspective.

3) SPECIAL INITIATIVES

At nearly every time of the year, there is something large in the works - from budget prep to strategic planning to board governance issues to (god forbid) crisis management. Each of you should be clear about your roles with regard to these things and what the E.D. needs from the Board and vice versa.

4) FUNDRAISING

This is just a quick snapshot accompanied by a one-page dashboard with key metrics. Discuss where the organization is YTD and where the Board is relative to its commitment. This would be a time for the E.D. to ask the Board Chair to serve as a catalyst for getting board members to fulfill the obligations they made at the beginning of each year. These messages are so much more powerful coming from a Board Chair to her/his peers.

5) UPCOMING MILESTONES

This could be anything from (a) setting annual board goals to (b) the audit to (c) the annual gala to (d) the date the board set for vetting 5 new board members. Definitely use this time to discuss Executive Committee meetings and Board meetings coming down the pike. I believe deeply in dedicated prep for both of these regular standing meetings to use your board members' time wisely and to achieve your own goals.

5) REVIEW NEXT STEPS

During the meeting, the E.D. should be taking good notes. Review the notes together and make sure you both understand what's been agreed upon. Circulate the notes within 24 hours.

These notes become the basis for the following week's agenda. What was accomplished? What was deferred? Why?

