

Technology Best Practices for Governance Professionals

How does your organization stack up?

Non-profit boards have always needed someone to plan, keep track of meetings and assist board members. Originally this role was performed by someone who was a member of the board, often called “board secretary”, or “board administrator”. But board work has evolved over time; governing in the digital age means that all organizations and their boards must keep up with news, risks and opportunities that arrive in a nanosecond. The only way boards can keep pace is with the support of modern-day governance professionals.

Today’s governance professionals now fill an essential, strategic role within organizations, providing the skills, competencies, savvy and dedication needed to support boards and leadership in pursuit of governance excellence. Wearing many hats, they help source key insights and analytics to inform board decisions, enable team-building efforts among directors, and facilitate strong communications and strategic partnerships between senior managers and directors.

Critical to the work of the modern-day governance professional is the essential technology tools that make their success possible. In this guide, we detail the core responsibilities of today’s governance professionals with a look at how effective organizations are using BoardEffect to establish a new standard of excellence.

In general, core responsibilities for the non-profit board’s modern governance professional fall into the following three categories:

- 1. Board Education**
- 2. Board Meetings and Practices**
- 3. Communications and Relationships**

BOARD EDUCATION

- **Orientation.** Board professionals get new directors off to the right start by developing a structured orientation process that includes knowledge building about industry trends and issues, good governance practices and information about the organization itself.
- **Ongoing Development System.** It is a well-known tenet that an educated board is a higher performing board. Board professionals develop an organized system to ensure that directors participate in ongoing learning that keeps them up-to-date on key industry issues.
- **Organizational Insider Insights.** Board chairs and CEOs rely on the modern governance professional to have his or her “ear to the ground” on issues and events in the organization so that board members are not taken unaware.

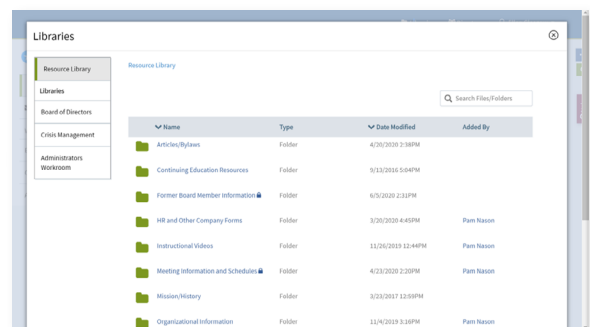
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Providing key documents and materials for education and onboarding is critical. With BoardEffect, a centralized **Resource Library** enables governance professionals to store important notices, alerts, onboarding and educational materials, and then feature link to the documents in the **Welcome Message** or **News** section to increase their visibility.

“We were able to complete orientation and training via our platform. We sent one message to direct new board members into the platform, rather than having to communicate back and forth throughout the process, and they were able to access all the info they needed in advance.”

Becky Wolf,
Director of Finance, Draper Holdings



BOARD MEETINGS AND PRACTICES

- **Board Roles and Authorities.** Defined roles, responsibilities, expectations and designated authorities are critical to effective board functioning. Board professionals ensure that there are current board job descriptions and a decision authority matrix in place.
- **Board Meetings and Agendas.** Modern governance professionals are experienced in how to work with chairs and executives to develop well-designed agendas and implement meeting processes and procedures that enables the board to be most productive and effective in its time together.
- **Board Committee Support.** Board committees are the engines that fuel efficient board work, and governance professionals play essential roles in populating committees with experts as well as ensuring that committee meetings result in the deep-dive discussions and recommendations that the board relies on.
- **Board Competencies and Succession Planning.** Modern boards select and evaluate directors based on the competencies, experiences and perspectives needed to foster robust discussion and decision making. The board professional develops a data base to track competencies and an ongoing roster of potential candidates for board succession.
- **Board Documentation and Compliance.** Governance professionals are the custodians of board and committee meeting minutes and ensure that all ongoing compliance activities are conducted and documented.
- **Board Assessment.** Governance professionals ensure that boards conduct assessments on a regular basis and ensure that results are used to systematically improve the board's functioning and effectiveness.

“BoardEffect has even streamlined the board meeting itself,” shares Teti. “We have voting items first, then they go to management reports. It’s easy to follow along. And one of the most positive things is if there’s a last-minute change, it can be easily made and all our directors will be updated.”

Judi Teti,
Executive Assistant to the Office of the President,
Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union

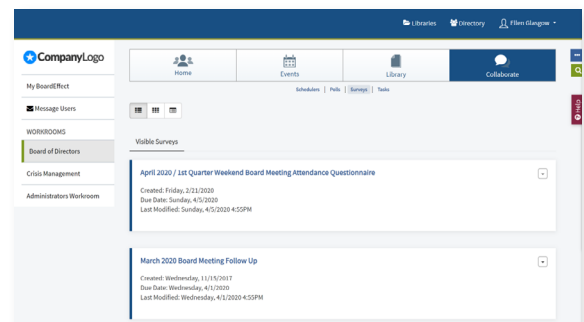
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Effective governance professionals should be able to prepare for meetings from any location, work within a secure environment, and facilitate regular self-assessments for the board. In the BoardEffect platform, they can use the **Scheduler** feature to help with coordinating and rescheduling meetings. They can also decentralize and streamline the process of assembling **Meeting Materials** using **Contributors and Approval Workflow**, assign user permissions for certain materials, and use integrations to embed a video conference link.

“We recently conducted a board self-evaluation survey on BoardEffect, and it was easy to use. The function enabled us to develop quickly a professional looking report on results that included the details we needed.”

JoAnn Cragoe,
Executive Assistant to the President,
American Public Media



COMMUNICATIONS & RELATIONSHIPS

- **Board Chair – CEO – Director Relationships.** Governance professionals are often the “linchpin” in facilitating timely formal and informal communication between the board chair, CEO and directors, enabling the board’s culture and ability to address issues together. They are a neutral party when board political issues arise, but are vocal advocates for governance best practices.
- **Board Chair Support.** Governance professionals play a key role in enabling the chair to perform at his or her best through tools, practices and conversation. Savvy governance professionals know how to support board chairs without getting “in between” the CEO and board chair relationship.
- **Director Point-of-Contact.** Directors rely on governance professionals to be accessible and be a resource to individual board members, educating, spotting issues, and identifying sensitivities.

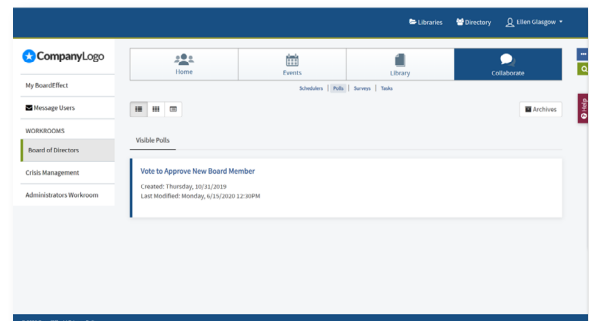
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Having the right tools to facilitate conversations, ensure all parties are supported, and maintain focus on good governance practice is essential for the governance professional. The BoardEffect platform enables users to create dedicated **Workrooms** for certain topics or initiatives, where members can utilize **Polls, Surveys**, and other core collaboration features to streamline decision-making.

“BoardEffect has really allowed me to automate those tasks, and it has made space for me to do the deeper work of this work. So to really be able to focus on governance, to really look at best practices.”

Felicia Fett,
Board of Directors Liaison, National
Association of Secondary School Principals



PURSuing GOVERNANCE EXCELLENCE: WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Now that you've dived deeper into the intricacies and demands of the modern-day governance professional's role, it's time to consider the next steps in your journey to governance excellence. As you think about your current processes, daily challenges and obstacles to achieving success in your role, we recommend connecting with a BoardEffect advisor to help you think through practical solutions and pinpoint major gaps you may be missing.

CONTACT YOUR ADVISOR FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Call: **(866) 966-4987**

Email: **info@BoardEffect.com**

