

Webinar Transcript

How to create a CEO report that inspires your board

Hi, everybody. Welcome to our Governance Made Easy webinar today titled How to Create a CEO Report that Will Inspire Your Board. We are joined today by Stephen Bowman, Simon Telfer and Julie Garland McClellan. And my name is Sean McDonald and I shall be your moderator in the background for the next forty five odd minutes.

Firstly, thank you for joining us today. We always appreciate the efforts you or the effort you make to be here for our live events.

During the session if you have any questions please use the Q and A button on your toolbar. It just enables us to keep a track of things as we're going along.

Finally, if you stay through till the end which of course we hope you will do and as is customary for our webinars now, we have a special treat for you. By answering a really short one minute survey at the end of the webinar, you'll go into the draw to win one of our beautiful gift baskets worth over four hundred dollars. Now for those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal, we serve just over thirty two thousand users across the globe these days, across about thirty four different countries.

And we enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings more effectively and efficiently with clever software with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organisation.

And as much as we are a board software provider, part of our wider mission here at BoardPRO is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy to implement for all organisations, but especially those organisations with resource constraints.

These webinars and the many templates and guides on our BoardPro website are a great tangible example of how we look to achieve our mission for nonprofits and small businesses around the globe.

So for the next forty five odd minutes, just relax, listen and add to the discussion by asking as many questions as you would like. A full recording of the webinar along with the slide deck, the transcript, the CEO report guide, the template, all important CEO report template, and some of the other resources which we'll talk to you about towards the end will be sent to you after the webinar today.

So let me have our team introduce themselves starting with Steven, you first.

Hi everyone, Steve Bowman from Conscious Governance. I've been working with boards, been on boards or been CEO of boards for probably close to about forty five years. So I have had the

great pleasure of interacting with many very high performing boards, picking the IT out of what they found as work, and then sharing that with others, which is primarily what we're going to be doing today. Simon.

I'm living in Wanaka in, beautiful central Otago in Aotearoa. I specialize in privately owned business governance, and I do that by practicing as a director and advisory board member. I also do a lot of board recruitment and board appointments. And, for those of you looking for board roles in New Zealand, you'll probably be aware of Appointmentner Boards, a community of about twenty six or twenty seven thousand people that we have curated over the last few years.

More so just been reelected into local government. So I'm staying I now chair or I continue to chair a community board down here as well. So even though privately owned businesses is my specialty, I can, mix and mingle with the local government as well. Julie.

Hi. I'm probably known to a few of you as the person who presents the Director's Dilemma newsletter, which according to the Financial Times is the most fun a director can have with their clothes on. Actually, don't mind what you're wearing when you're reading it, as long as you do. I've been working with and around boards now for pretty much as long as Stephen, although I've got more hair. But the main thing I love doing is working with boards to help them make the decisions they need to make so their companies do what they're supposed to do.

Over to you, Steven. Kick us off.

Okay. Thanks. So we're we're chatting with you today about CEO reports, just a couple of ground rules behind this, suppose. First of all, there is no one way of doing it.

So what we want to be able to do today, from all sorts of different perspectives from Julie, Simon, myself, is to talk about the thinking behind really good CEO reports, to some extent what they should be achieving, and then we'll show you an example of a template that more than anything should be the way of thinking about things, not that you necessarily have to follow exactly the template. So we'll go through that. The first thing, however, before we get into looking at the CEO's report itself is why have we got a CEO's report in the first place? Well, we've got to make sure the CEO's busy.

Well, that's probably not the best answer. But one of the things that that I really put to all the boards that we deal with is if we understand the role of any board, then how we report should be there to support the role of that board.

And the role of any board is to make the choices that create the future for the communities that we serve, whether it be a for profit, privately owned, whether it be a nonprofit, NGO, whatever it might be, any board, its role is to make choices, not necessarily decisions, but choices from amongst these options that we've got. What are the choices? Now is that choice still working? Do we need to change it? If we do need to change it, what are the other choices that we've got? So their role is to make the choices that actually create the future, not reporting on what has been in the past.

So making the future for and with the communities that we serve so we can never forget our key stakeholders, whether it be members, shareholders, the sector itself, whatever it might be. We don't act in isolation. We have communities around us, and we're creating that future for and with those communities. And this simple notion then of the role of the board to make choices that create the future for the communities we serve should give us an insight into how we structure our CEO's report.

So let's get into the next one. Why do we have a CEO's report? Well, quite honestly, a good CEO's report has one job, and that job is to focus. To help focus the directors on the most important things.

And to help focus, there are three distinct areas that we find a good CEO's report will cover. The first area is any key issues or insights that are coming up to us.

What are the key areas that we need to be looking at? And what are the insights? So for example, in many CEO reports that I see, there's all this, look how busy this department is. Look how busy this department is.

But there's no key issues or key insights that come from that report. It's just a reporting against activity. What I wanna see from my CEO's report is, so what? What is the insights?

Get us thinking about things. As a director, I want the CEO's report to get me thinking about something, to start starting to have a look at something. So always looking at what are the insights that we as the senior executive leadership team or the CEO, what are the insights that we bring from what it is that I'm reporting against? The second key thing I wanna know as a director is I want a real focus on what are some of the emerging risks, not just the the the key risks that we've got on our risk register, but what are some of the what are some of the big emerging risks?

You know, AI, culture, whatever it might be, changes in stakeholder engagement, changes in our supply chain, whatever it is. What are some of these emerging risks that we need to start putting our attention on? Not necessarily right now, but it's certainly something we should start educating ourselves about and starting to have a look at. And what are the strategic implications?

Too often when we report against risk, we say oh here are our top three risks and here's what we're doing about them' and that misses the point. What I'm after is here are the top three risks, here's what we're doing, but how are we leveraging them? How can we turn them into advantage? Where's the value that we can create from actually understanding and managing these top two or three key risks? And then next, what are some of the emerging risks that we need to start putting our attention to?

And then the third part of providing focus is what are some of the opportunities that are on the horizon? What might be in four or five or six years time, and what do we need to start looking at now? How does that fit in with our strategy?

So the whole purpose of the CEO report is not to report on activity, it is to provide a focus for the directors. Okay, Julie, go for it.

Yeah, I'll push back gently. I like the CEO report to give me a little bit of an idea on activity, so I know what's going on.

But there's a very simple little framework that I find helps with getting a really purposeful report.

That is what, so what, now what. And if I can get those three, so what's going on? So what are the implications?

What are we going to do about it? What are the big risks? Well, so what? What opportunities can we not get because of those risks?

Or because we're not able to handle those risks? Because if we could handle them, they wouldn't be the big key ones, they would be down there in the day to day. Or what threats are we vulnerable to because we are not able to handle those risks? And the same with the opportunities.

Well, yeah, we could all build a spaceship if we wanted to.

But really?

Is that a good idea? So the what, so what, now what? I find is a great way of lifting you first of all from activity to insight and then from insight to action.

Trying to go into your circle there, you can see my little movements.

Thought Simon?

Well, I don't want to be at risk of supporting you too much, Steven, because I feel very uncomfortable, but you're bang on. Because a lot of the times I have to work with CEOs, particularly that are new to that role, where they feel that they're having to validate how they're spending their time. And I think we need to give the CEO security saying, look, we know that you're doing what you need to do. You don't need to do a board report to tell us about that. Otherwise, it does become activity based and it sort of becomes justification.

So I, you know, that's that relationship between the board and the CEO, particularly the chair and the CEO, have that confidence, have that security there and then you can move your reporting into those insights. And I think those when we get insights in a report then as a board member it can help trigger other things and it stimulates a much higher level of conversation so the insights themselves don't have to be bang on or right but just putting them out there does then stimulate and is the catalyst for a much higher level of conversation at an important part of the board meeting.

And we'll show you how to do that in a second.

Can I add to that? Never be frightened say, I'd like the board's help or input on this. Yes. That is a perfectly acceptable way to finish off a little section in your report. Say, this is what I'm doing, these are the issues I'm finding.

And this is what I'm And it does come down to that relationship between the board.

We set up a CEO to feel that they have to have all the answers that are uncomfortable with being vulnerable, you know, expect to walk into the room and have it all. That is not and that it's not just for the CEO report, but that is just not creating that environment that's going to lead to better decision making.

Yeah. And that goes to the culture of the board. Too often we find that there are boards, particularly if they come out of membership organizations, where their job is to keep the CEO on us. This is in their view. And to do that, we need to have all the information about how busy the CEO is. So, therefore, the CEO's report becomes fifteen pages of operational detail because that's of interest to me as the director. The big difficulty with that of course is that you're missing what it is that we should be focusing on as a board which is creating the future not just making sure people are busy.

Absolutely and Leah you've asked a really good question in the Q and A, can these insights be questions? And absolutely they can be and that's just going back to what we just said there that the board is there as a repository, as a source for you as a CEO or a senior leader within the organization to not have all those answers. It's absolutely fine to say this is where we're heading, these are the challenges, I have some insights or you know let's put can you share with me three answers to these questions to help me frame for the next board report where I believe we should approach or attack or exploit this opportunity or risk?

One of great tools of the trade is when you provide an insight, it might be a sentence or two sentences or half a paragraph or whatever, but there's always a question at the end of that that I find particularly useful if I'm the author of that report, And that question is, so what are we missing? And that gets people thinking and also puts it out there that this is not an answer.

This is yeah. It's an insight. Doesn't mean it's an answer. And what else are we missing?

What have we missed? And one of the best questions as a director you can ask of the group when you've actually come to the choice side of things, what are the choices we've got here? Okay. So let's let's look at choosing this one.

The the penultimate question should always be, so what are we missing? Because that then opens up the possibility of either the board and the seniors saying, no. I can't see anything we're missing at the moment, or gives permission for a director to say, hey, hang on a second, think we might be missing how stakeholders might be viewing this, or how this might look, what are the optics behind this that we need to be aware of. So it's just a fantastic question to ask to bring that next level of conversation and to make sure that insights don't become answers.

Good question.

Lovely question from Sanjay in the chat, that when he's raised these sorts of issues, he gets pushed back from his chair and what would we suggest to help him?

What do you think, Julie?

What do I think?

I think actually having that conversation with the chair about which bits of my report are dashboard reporting and which bits are for me to help the board to help me so that I can do a better job in future and be really clear that you don't expect the board just they've got to be giving you oversight, yes, but also foresight of what might happen and insight as to what does that mean and what are the implications and then Steven raised the stakeholders, I sometimes jokingly talk about outside what do the stakeholders think about this and what we need to be aware of and manage? And again, it comes back to that what's going on, what does it mean and what are we going to do about it? And you should be able to keep it fresh if your board is willing to work with you on that.

A practical tool that that we can all use is to sit down with your chair and say, hey. Can we try this new format of the CEO's report and see how it goes? If you don't like it, we can always change it back again.

And and that is probably the single best way of dealing with change when it comes to board reporting to say, okay, or even setting the agenda of the board. Let's try this, and we'll find out from the directors whether they found this more useful.

And if they haven't found it useful we can always change again and that's again a conversation that you have with the chair. But in the end sometimes as CEOs, if writing this report, the only reason we don't have good CEO reports is because we haven't thought of writing them in a different way. And often boards get their CEO report, and it's the same format every time. There's and I've seen thousands of them as have have Julie and Simon. And the vast majority, I'd say probably over eighty five percent of them are not really adding value to the board except from a compliance and comfort perspective.

That's not good enough because the role of the board is not about compliance and comfort, it's about creating the future.

So let's talk about some of the things that we should be including in our CEO report. First one I want to mention is this notion of attestations. Now most of you, I guarantee, will not have a formal process to attest that the following things have occurred, And you'll see an example when we look at the template, there are certain attestations that we should have. You know, we attest that these things have been looked at, and they're in good shape. Things like, you know, occupational health and safety, and have we paid our our have we paid our tax dues, those sorts of things, but you'll see them as we go through. But from the CEO or from the senior leadership team, because sometimes they're incorporated, there will be four or five, maybe six key attestations that give comfort to the board that, yes, we have looked at these things that are

critically important to have done, and we are comfortable that they have been done from our perspective as senior executives.

Now Julie, you had some interesting thoughts yesterday about attestations from the board level, at the board agenda level. Do you want to chat to that?

Yeah, I mean I love attestations, and I think when you look at the attestations, you think what would I want to be assured about by my CEO? And then there are those things, what do I want to assure the board about and put into my minutes?

So there are a series of similar attestations that when running a board meeting, good chair will put into the meeting, such as the directors confirm that they have received, read and considered the board papers.

The directors consent to the notice of meeting. Particularly if you are meeting at short notice to deal with a particular issue.

When we were putting this together, I shared the very sad story of a board of eight people, where a meeting was called very short notice, three of the directors couldn't attend and they sent in emails saying I can't make it, sorry I'm busy, I'm booked.

The other five got together and decided to cancel the AGM, which was in six days time and the notice of meeting had already been sent out.

They then changed the locks on head office just in case. The other three directors turned up and held the AGM on the pavement outside and the legal fallout was that the other three directors were perfectly entitled to hold the AGM outside and that they had not consented to waive their right to reasonable notice and that a few days notice was not reasonable given that they were talking about potentially cancelling an AGM. The other interesting thing is that at the AGM the members consented to waive their notice of a motion that was put to the meeting and immediately voted the five directors out of office and replaced them with five others.

Is very interesting, the sorts of things that housework is housework, but it is there because if your house is not worked upon it becomes unlivable very. So I love to see attestations about notice, attestations about receipt of papers.

The one that straddles the gap is that attestation which may be given by the CEO that if there was a circular resolution, it has been duly carried because everybody was able to participate and everybody supported the notion.

That sort of thing, you need to have a conversation about does that go in the CEO report or does the Chair report it or does the company secretary report it? But attestations cut out an awful lot of time if they are quick and easy.

And we'll show you what it looks like in a minute, so bear with us. Okay. Now the next one is strategic initiatives and key metrics. So, what we want, as, directors is some of the key

metrics that the CEO can summarize for us either in a dashboard or in a written form, but just to give us a, essentially a traffic light of how we're going.

Yeah. Are we on track? Is it in progress? Are we running into some troubles with it?

But something that's very simple. So in in a nanosecond, I can get a sense of where the organization's at. That can always be supported by further information, but the CEO's report should essentially give me a dashboard of how things are going. And, again, we'll show you what that looks like.

The other one that I find many CEO reports don't do, it's it's very useful to have in your CEO's report. From my perspective as a CEO, here are the two key decisions that I think we need to make at this upcoming board meeting.

So there's the whole agenda in there, but you do this obviously with the chair. But from our point of view as a as a senior executives, here are the key decisions that we need to be looking at at the upcoming board meeting.

I don't see too many doing that, but the the boards where they have instituted that through the CEO's report have found it a great focusing mechanism. It also gets the the staff to to think at a a higher level as well too.

Then there's a section on current and emerging issues. So are there any current issues? Have we got any, and we'll we'll see that in a minute. Any compliance issues that we need to deal with?

Are there any emerging issues that we need to deal with? And then the last one, a high level update reports. Now it's not that we don't wanna have updates, but we need to get them to a level where it's not, and so and so did on such and such a date the following things, and then we've got this coming out. So it becomes more of a report against activity rather than higher level.

So these are the things to consider. The things missing from most CEO reports, pretty much all of that.

Okay. Sure.

Next We've we've got a question about whether a compliance report would be synonymous with the attestations.

The answer to that to me is no. A compliance report is, are complying with these things in detail? I've seen a couple of organisations in New Zealand use a risk management compliance software program that I I think is actually quite good, and they have a a three page compliance report. But I like the attestations because it forces CEO to think about it, first of all, and then secondly, give comfort to the board that actually we have dealt with this.

So I would still have the attestations in there because they cover slightly different things. Compliance report, most organizations do not do this well because they haven't got the systems in place to be able to do it. At least an attestation report will cover off in big areas. Julie, your thoughts?

Yeah, I like it. I mean, imagine if the CEO of Astronomer had signed an attestation, that there are no potential staff grievances that I'm aware of. Or It just might have focused his mind a little bit before he went to the Coldplay concert. That sort of, I love the way the things in your CEO report should lead you as CEO to think Oh, do I need to say something here? Is there an issue?

What should I be doing? An attestation if you are listed that no senior executives or board members have sold shares in the last period. That sort of thing which is, yes, it's technically compliance, but it's the sort of thing that the board needs to be aware of. If if your insiders are selling your stock, it tells you something.

So let's let's have a look to see what this looks like. So what we've done is is put together the the template for you, but I wanna take you through the thinking behind behind the various areas in there. So the first one says insert organization name, but underneath that, have a look at that vision. Put your vision up this up the top there to remind people that we're not here to meet.

Our reason for being is for us to actually achieve our vision, and therefore the vision of our organization should help shape how we write some of the activities, some of the reporting that we have. So always have that in there. And then some guidance notes. I find this really, really useful.

So the first guidance note is aimed at my directors. So as CEO, here's my guidance note to you as directors who are the recipient of this report. If you believe any items below require further board discussion, don't wait for the board meeting to bring it up. Talk to the chair beforehand so that we can prepare something for you.

So when we're having a CEO's report, it shouldn't just be a a a static document that is just noted. It should actually generate thinking and more questions. And then there's a guidance note for the CEO just to remind the directors and myself as CEO this is what we should do. If we've got any items for decision or discussion that come out of my CEO report, then I need to prepare a separate board report around that decision or discussion item.

It shouldn't be hidden in the CEO's report bring it out as a separate briefing paper. This is one of the greatest tricks of the trade. If everything that should be discussed or decided has a briefing paper, even if it's only a page or a half page, it's really clear what we need to do about it then. Don't hide it in other reports.

So I've got here the CEO's report should be no more than two pages.

Julie's has got, you know, she's seen five or six pages, and the template we're giving you is actually four pages. So, you know, you can change that as you see fit. And the the key purpose of this CEO's report why not put it in the start of your report? The key purpose of this report is to

provide you, the directors, with a concise strategic overview, etcetera, etcetera. So you can put whatever you like in there. So any thoughts on those, Simon, Julie?

Guidance? No.

You go, Jen.

I love the forty eight hour rule and I apply that to the whole board pack. If you've got things in a consent agenda or in a noting paper that you want to talk about, be nice to people and give them forty eight hours notice so they can rejig the agenda.

There's nothing more upsetting when you are chairing a meeting and you get to a noting paper and someone says actually I want to discuss that or I really think we need to make a decision here and here is some other information that you haven't had a chance to look at, read, think about, verify, etc.

So, the forty eight hour rule, I think, is just plain human decency.

I love have And then maybe remind people about that by having it as a guidance note.

Yeah, I love to have a purpose for each paper.

And if your organisation is mission led rather than vision led, put your mission.

I'm not precious about it, put what you think is going to lead your people to think in the right way so that you make the right decisions.

Okay, let's move on. Simon, anything to add to that one as we go through?

Marco has asked a really good question about whether a change in CEO leadership might be used by board members to bring about some of the reporting changes and absolutely it's a chance for reset isn't it? There is almost an expectation that things will come of a slightly different flavour or a slightly refresh so that is a key catalyst and I would seize that because you do get that movement before maybe after a few meetings it falls back into the structure it used to. Don't waste a good opportunity there, Mark.

Here's an example of attestation.

Of them since the last board meeting, and you put the date in there, we've had and then these are really straight up in your face. No notifiable incidences incidents against privacy, health and safety, not aware of any cyber breaches, no whistleblower escalations, no sexual harassment. So you can put your own attestations in there, but these are the six that I found to be the most powerful that gives comfort that there are no major surprises that, that we haven't been made aware of. So that's a really great set of attestations. So moving on, key metrics. Again, this is essentially a very simple dashboard. So strategic initiatives or strategic plan or whatever whatever that you call that that key document, just put in there, are we on track?

Are we in motion? I we're doing things, but there's there's a little bit of leeway in terms of timings or so on, or is there some sort of attention needed? Whatever descriptions you want to put in there is fine, but just make sure that it covers the key areas that is important to your organization. So it doesn't have to be those four. It could be, but you decide what are the four, five, maybe six key areas that you wanna provide the key metrics on, and just give me a snapshot of how we're going with that. If there's attention needed, then there's probably gonna be a report on it, which will be a a a paper for noting or a paper for discussion.

And then the key decisions or the key discussions from my point of view as a CEO that that is coming up for this upcoming board meeting, to me, the really big one is whatever the agenda item is. And that just gives the board an insight into what you see as a CEO as some of the really key issues that we've absolutely got to nail at this upcoming board meeting. Julie, Simon?

Yeah. I was slightly distracted. There's a great, question from Kate about boards having subcommittees and the CEO reporting to them. We have a very good master class on writing better board papers and we have guidance on the whole board pack, But the short answer is: the CEO's report to a subcommittee is at a different level of detail and a different focus to the CEO's report to the whole board.

They are different. They might have the same topic, but they are different levels of detail, different focus, written for a different audience, for a completely different purpose.

Right for purpose.

The board committees do the heavy lifting in some of the areas, but they should always, at the end of their board minutes, have a little heading that says: Items for escalation to board for discussion. So that it's very clear that you they shouldn't the board shouldn't just be getting the minutes from that subcommittee. The the subcommittee should agree what they want to escalate to the board for discussion or decision. So then becomes very clear.

Again, it's this focus. Alright. Coming on to current and emerging issues. Again, guidance note there.

Any major issues, then do a separate director briefing, but this is a chance for the CEO to really just say in two or three paragraphs, what do they see as the current issues? Are there any emerging issues?

Compliance, now then we get into some of the compliance and external reporting side of things. So these are the ones that boards have told me they found the most useful. So for example, are there any reportable incidents and compliance checking? So that just gives us an insight if anything's coming up.

The next one is HR update. Are there any workforce strategic implications about workforce issues? Now for some of you, this may not be relevant. You've got to put your own stuff in here, but this gives you the thinking behind it.

So here's the overview. Here's some of the issues that we've got, and here's what I want the board to do with this. Note the HR update.

Risk management: are there any key risks?

Any critical risks that we need to be aware of? Any emerging risks?

And again some some overview. Don't just give them a risk register.

That's not a risk report. Eighty percent of all the risk reports I see are just the risk register and here's what's changed in the risk register. I want to know more than that. With the big risks, what do we need to know about? What are the opportunities that are arising for it? What are some of the emerging issues?

Oh and S fits under that one as well too. Stakeholders and partnerships, any changes to relationship and what are the strategic implications behind that? This is really badly done by most boards, looking at their stakeholder relationships from a strategic perspective rather than just leaving it up to staff to manage the day to day stakeholder relationships. So one of the things we find more and more boards are starting to do is to develop up strong strategic stakeholder engagement strategies, so that they're looking three, five, ten years down the track about how they could be dealing with some of these stakeholders.

Keep going Sean. Organisational culture, a culture report of some sort, and this is just an example of what one board did, and they're very simple, but it just gives us an update, and also if there's an issue in there then there's a separate board discussion paper that comes out of that if the CEO wants the board to get more to get into more depth and have more, thinking around that area.

And then at the end of the CEO's report, put in your strategy on a on a page to remind people of why we're actually doing all this. So here's our strategic plan, and this is just an example from one of the clients we had, where here are the strategies, here are the actions underneath these strategies, here's our vision and mission. So every organization has a strategic plan, very few of them have a plan on a page that just summarizes all this. So that just puts it back into perspective of why we are doing this to remind people that the CEO's report is there to actually support the strategies as well as to give us updates.

So there's a worked example in there, that you can read. Also, Julie has done this fabulous, how to write an excellent CRO report, but not only that, and delight your board.

So there's a there's a link to that there.

So what other questions have we got there? Julian, Simon?

Yeah, I'll be monitoring those. Leo, we love your humor when you said two pages exclamation mark, bless you. I think we should also remember that there is substantive other briefings and

other papers that go alongside this. So I think we're all sort of used to sometimes the CEO report being one document with everything in it.

So don't get confused that there will be other discussion and decision papers alongside that. I think that Chris Casey asked a really good question about the attestations and whether they should have been mentioned in advance. And yes, there is a no surprises policy. So when you said, so he's not convinced they should be in the report, I don't think it's an either or there, Chris.

There and there might be different moderations around those edestations. There might be something to be aware of as opposed to being yeah. If there's something very serious like a cybersecurity breach, obviously, you wouldn't wait to the board paper just to share that.

Wayne, just a couple of others, Steven, is that you noticed that emerging risk and opportunities wouldn't change that frequently, otherwise, they're being quite tactical. And I think that's a very, very fair comment that you've got to look at the materiality of those things and don't feel that there is a need every board paper, or every CEO report, if you're doing it monthly, that you're having to come up with new risks or new opportunities. So there there can be some tempering of that. You could be looking at risks at one stage and looking at maybe opportunities in another paper or doing it more on a quarterly basis. Yes. Things are changing in a, a volatile and uncertain world, but not probably on a monthly cycle at the magnitude that we need to discuss there.

Good summary, Simon. Thank you.

I I I put that into CHET GPT, and that's what it told me to say.

CEO's report. Julie, in your view, the top two things that you've seen work really well in a CEO's report that you don't find in many CEO reports.

One, mention something at high level for the strategic area, the strategic financials, the strategic risks, the strategic performance, even though there are going to be detailed project and risk and finance reports later. But the other thing is, think about the whole board pack. Your CEO report doesn't arrive in isolation. Unless, of course, you're one of those quarterly meeting boards where the CEO, bless him or her, gives you a report in between times, which you do read in isolation.

But if it's coming with the rest of the pack, make sure that you are not repeating and regurgitating information, that your report is there to provide that strategic context.

Think about the whole pack. There's a lovely question from Helen about whether the CEO report should come at the beginning or the end.

And I've seen boards argue this one black and blue.

I would try putting it in both places and see what your directors like.

There's no rule that says they have to start reading on page one and finish on page two hundred.

They might start reading on page ten to fifteen and then go to page thirty to forty and then start from one to two hundred.

Different directors will read in different ways.

Understanding how they read is one of the keys to writing in a way that's going to delight them. And you need to train the people who write your board papers, not just the CEO who writes the board pack, but the whole set of papers, the people who write chunks of it for you.

I think it's really important that as a board, you think about what works for you and your organisation.

If your chair is ineffective at getting things up to strategic level, as CEO, you're duty bound to try and help them and hopefully you've got at least one strategic director there who will put some weight behind you and give you a hand in doing that.

Simon, your viewpoint, what are the two top tips that you've seen that work really well with boards?

Yeah. And I'm conscious of time, Sean.

The one thing I would say is put yourself in the shoes of the people that are reading it. And I know I've just done some training with some CEOs as well around this, it's like, why would they need to know that? And once I sort of said, well, put yourself in the shoes of x, y, and z that is coming in quarterly, I think that changed their perspective. And I think the best thing a CEO can do is obviously be on another board to sort of see it from the other side of the table, and I think that creates a real richness when this within a CEO report because you can see it from both sides.

The only final tip that I have seen that I'd like to share is that be brave if you're in that executive team and don't fall for the it's always been done this way. I've noticed on some of the chats there's just been a little bit of reticence to sort of the chair doesn't want to and that sort of thing. Just sort of maybe not a not go full hog the first time, but just ease these things in, find a supporter around the board table, encourage them to say during the meeting, that CEO report was great. I love that part, and get sort of permission around that to keep going.

So so be brave to try and affect some change.

Sean.

Fantastic. So thanks everybody. We're at the end of our webinar today. I hope to see you back for other webinars in our series.

As I mentioned in the introduction, you'll receive an email from me. It'll be tomorrow now, will include, gosh, a raft of resources and some of the many resources you saw on the screen there just before.

The CEO report template and the guidebook from Julie that she's created for you.

Just as you leave the webinar, don't forget to complete our one minute survey to go into the draw for our hamper. I'll announce the winner for that tomorrow as well.

Thank you again for your attendance today. Thanks Stephen, Simon and Julie for your contribution. It was fantastic. I really enjoyed it. We shall look forward to seeing you all at our next webinar. Everybody have a great day.