

Webinar Transcript

Presenting to boards

So hi, everybody. Welcome to our webinar today titled presenting to boards.

Our webinar team today is Julie Garland McClellan. Now Julie is calling in at three o'clock in the morning local time from Malta, would you believe? So thank you Julie for attending today. We also have Stephen Bowman and we're very privileged to have Megan Motto with us today, who, of course, is the ex CEO of Governance Institute Australia and the founder and CEO of Motto Advisory. So welcome to you, Megan.

My name's Sean, Sean McDonald, and I shall be your moderator in the background for the next forty five odd minutes. Firstly, though, thank you for attending today. We always appreciate the you the effort you make to be here for our live events.

During the session, if you have any questions, please try and use the Q and A button on your toolbar. It just enables us to keep a track of things as we're going through the webinar. We'll answer as many of those questions as we have time for. And finally, if you stay through till the end, which of course we hope you will do, we have a really short one minute survey at the end of the webinar for you to consider. Your feedback is super important. It helps us bring really relevant content to you week after week and enables us to position the wealth of the expert presenters that we have for you. So if you could take a minute to complete the survey when you exit the webinar, we'd really appreciate it.

For those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal, and we serve about thirty five thousand users, about four thousand boards and around eight thousand committees around the world, and we are across about thirty four different countries these days.

We enable organisations to prepare for and run their board meetings more effectively and efficiently 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.

And one of the many ways we do this is by providing access to hundreds of governance templates, guides, resources, which you'll find funnily enough in the resources section of our website. And these webinars that we host every week are also a great way of accessing really good governance knowledge without the time commitment and costs associated with traditional in person events.

So for the next forty odd minutes, just sit back and relax and add to the discussion by asking as many questions of our team that you would like. A full recording of the webinar along with the slide deck and the other resources will be sent to you twenty four hours after our session today.

So without further ado, let me have our team introduce themselves. And I'm going to start with you first, Megan.

Thanks so much. Shaun, as you said, previously the CEO of the Governance Institute of Australia, which was a wonderful opportunity to get my teeth into both governance as a topic area and all of its nuances, but also to build a great network of people. And so, the likes of Steve and Julie and yourself that I go back with quite some time.

These days, I'm doing a variety of things. So, I'm sitting on some boards myself. I've founded Motto Advisory because I'm doing some governance consulting work, particularly to the association not for profit sector because that's where I've been as my home. I've run industry and professional associations now for twenty five years and including Peak Body. So, if there's a horror story out there, I've probably seen it or heard of it in that sector and there's plenty of them. Also then doing some work for a particular not for profit at the moment myself. So keeping my hands in the mix and very busy working with the ambulance provident fund.

Thanks Megan. Stephen over to you.

Hi, everyone. Steve Bowman here from Conscious Governance. Been around for a long time, seen almost as many stories probably as Megan and not quite as many as Julie. Most of the work that we do is primarily with boards and senior executives, primarily around governance reviews, around strategic planning, around getting boards and particularly new directors up to speed, improving induction programs, those sorts of things. So I really look forward to having this chat with everyone today.

Thanks, Stephen. And finally, Julie, last but by no means least.

Hi. And I gather quite a few of you might know me. I'm probably best known as the person behind the Director's Dilemma, which is the world's most widely read newsletter, and everything in it is true, it's case study based, but I do change names just to protect the innocent and also the guilty, unfortunately.

I've, like Steve, been doing governance consulting, working with boards, helping boards like Megan. I sit on boards myself so I can speak from experience. And about the only two things I ever do with executives, teach them how to write better board papers and how to present in the boardroom.

Hence today, and hence my book, and I think you might be getting a free e copy from Sean when he sends out the email after this. So enjoy.

I'll kick off by saying that I am not going to go through how to write a decent board paper. So this presentation is purely about what you do after you've written a fantastic board paper when you step into the boardroom to talk with the board about what you wrote.

And that, if you need to do any work on getting the board paper right, you can download. There's a webinar on that, and there's also a download on demand masterclass that you can watch. So I'm gonna keep it straight away and say, when you walk through that boardroom door, you should already know what's in it for the board, because you wrote that paper and you crafted that sentence or that statement, and you know exactly why is this coming to this board at this meeting and what do you want them to do with it.

Megan, Stephen, I'm sure you've both got some horror stories about people standing at the front of the room or the side of the table and not knowing quite why they'd been asked to talk, only that there was a topic and they knew lots of stuff about it.

Oh, go on, Stephen.

There's only one thing worse, that's that and that's you're one you're one word ahead of the presenter on the PowerPoint slide.

So I've seen this, and it doesn't it's not just in small organizations. I've seen this in billion dollar organisations where we've sat in and been part of board meetings.

And so rather than accessing the wisdom of the presenter, they're accessing the wordsmithing of the person who wrote it. Megan?

Yeah, I've seen a few of those myself, Stephen. Also, Julie, I have to say, unfortunately, I've seen situations whereby a presenter for a paper hasn't been briefed really well, that they will be attending and presenting the paper. Oftentimes last minute, oh, can you ring downstairs and get Joe? He wrote this paper.

Can you get him to come up and present? So, being prepared and asking the question in advance, would you like me to come and present this paper or at least be ready to just in case? I think is a really good habit for executives that are presenting and preparing those papers. And it really goes to like anything, just in the way we're not going to cover writing board papers, but writing a good board paper starts before you start writing.

And the same thing, good presentation skills happen. The preparation for that happens before you go in the room, not once you're in the room. So having a few moments to calm yourself, think deeply about your audience, not just as a collective, but the individual personalities, what they're like, what do you know about them, who's likely to ask which questions, all of that preparatory work is really important to help you feel steady and calm and in control when you're presenting.

Yep, absolutely. Preparation is the foundation for success.

Next slide, Sean.

I always like to think through what's the structure for my presentation. You sometimes see presentations and there's data slide after data slide, and I'm sitting there thinking, what's the story?

Where am I going? Why are they telling me this?

You should tell them why you're telling them this. That's the first thing you should say.

I love the format format. I hate the cutesy name, but I absolutely love it. There are so many different ways to structure your presentation.

The format format is very much like the what, so what, now what, what next format.

I would add to that for the board what else, what could go wrong, what's the discrepant data.

You can do the starting with the big picture and narrowing in. You can do the starting with us and looking out and expanding to the world, but you need to have a logical structure and framework to what you intend to say. Remember your presentation's gonna be tiny and short and fast so they get to the discussion. So really think hard about your structure. Megan, what's your favourite structure?

Look, I think you're absolutely right. Covering off all of those basics. I said about knowing your audience before you walk in and that is really deeply thinking about what is the role of a director and how do you present so that you're assisting them in fulfilling that role? And probably the biggest mistake that I see executives make and CEOs as well, And that is that they walk in and present to the board and their intention, whether or not it's unconscious or conscious, their intention is to tell the board how busy they've been, how smart they are and how much they've done.

And how much research I've done on this topic. And so it's really important that you're thinking through the lens of a director, is asking those questions about what do I need in order for me to come to a decision on this matter or to move the dial forward in some way and stick only to those things. It is not the time to do your performance review, three sixty review, show everyone how smart you are in the room. So it's really, really important to think about the purpose of your audience.

And the other thing I'd say is the biggest issue I find with executives is because they don't understand that the fundamental role of the board is to keep you accountable and ask questions to dig for any holes and to really ask those probing questions.

Very easy for executive to get very defensive about the work that they've done. I'm working in this business all day, every day. I know this topic back to front. So why are you asking me these silly questions?

And it can really play out in the room. It can show on executives faces and getting defensive about the workload that they have done. So really important step I would say for once again executives before they go into the room is to think about their mindset before they walk in. And think about that I'm gonna be open, I'm gonna be calm, I'm gonna be controlled, take a few breaths if you need to, do some meditation, whatever you need to do.

But understand that it is the job of the board to ask questions and potentially poke holes in your presentation and to take all of that with a very open mind and an open heart because that's when you'll get to the best collaborative outcome rather than you being defensive and setting up a situation whereby your relationship with the board can fracture quite easily.

So important.

One of the worst experiences of my life, I signed up for a boardroom presenting skills from a very well respected acting teaching institution.

And the lady who was presenting it, she was amazing. I was thinking, wow. I'm gonna learn so much from her about the nuance and the timing of words, and it's gonna be really helpful and persuasive.

And the first thing she said was, when you walk into the boardroom, remember that you are the expert. You need to imagine yourself in your superhero suit with your red cape swirling around your calves.

You will instantly, as you imagine this, you will feel that swagger coming into the way you walk.

And I'm thinking, if I walked into any of my boardrooms with that swagger, they'd think I was an idiot. And the ones that didn't think I was an idiot would think I was a target.

They'd wonder what the bluster was trying to hide.

Actually, the board and saying to them, this is what's in that number four. What else? What could go wrong? Saying to them, these are the bits we're not sure about.

These are the bits we want your strategic insight because there's a choice to be made, isn't there, Steve? And we need all the brains making it, not just one.

If I can put a slightly different perspective on this too, there's also times where you've actually written a really good board report. It answers all of the here are the two or three recommendations that we've got, here are the emerging risks associated with us, here's the analysis that we've got done, and I often find when I go into a board meeting and I'm supposedly presenting that report, I say to them, okay, you've all read the report. What questions have you got for me? And then I just keep quiet.

And the conversation that can come out of that, that it relies on having the board report that actually gives them the space to ask questions that are not performative questions. They're not questions of content. They're questions of insight. They're questions of exploration.

And so everyone who's listening to this, I would recommend judiciously trying that technique where it becomes a conversation of exploration rather than a testing of knowledge.

Julie? I know, Stephen, I had that same experience. I walked into a boardroom once as a new executive and I'd written a fairly comprehensive paper and they were used to the CEO prior to me doing a kind of long rambling presentation to the board. And I simply sat down and said, well, take the paper as read, really interested in your thoughts and any questions. And they actually took a couple of moments to compose themselves because I was so shocked by that situation. And it just goes to show once again, I know Julie, you're going to speak about this about keeping your presentation material short. One of the reasons that you want to really streamline your presentation material is so that the content is not so overwhelming that you don't have time to listen.

Because remember presenting to the board is as much about listening. And when I say listening, I mean listening with your ears and listening with your eyes, having that emotional intelligence with you in the room.

Is a board member squirming? Do you need to go over a particular point? Is there eye rolling happening? Directors are people too and they can often have not the clearest of poker faces. So it's a really important time for you to be settled and have the space and not be crowded with content so much that you don't have time to listen.

One of my favorite examples there, Megan, was I was in a board meeting and one of the directors who was seated opposite me was starting to, in my view, look angry and so I'm relatively fearless so I said to her oh you're looking angry, what's going on?'

And she said well I think what you said here is absolute rubbish' I said well which exactly is the part that you think was rubbish? She said well I can't find it now but it's in there. You said such and such and such. I said oh okay well if you can find it to me I can give you the background behind why that was said and then about ten minutes later one of the other directors piped up and said I found that spot and you're right it is rubbish and so page ten had a look at it oh okay one of the directors said that not me So what would you like to talk about? And that's where you don't get as presenter you don't get hooked into people liking or not liking. You understand, you name the behaviour if that's appropriate, ask for what exactly they would like to discuss about it and then it takes a different course as a conversation.

Yeah, can't solve a problem that you don't understand. I've done the same, Steve. I've said, you know, I've looked at a particular director and said, you're looking uncomfortable.

What's going on in your mind? Like, talk to me about what's going on in your mind. I can't help solve the problem if the director is looking uncomfortable but then doesn't say why they're uncomfortable. You've got to get those conversations on the table.

I'm here helping you to present to boards, but other times I'm helping the board to question the presenter, and I often show them the one clean with no swear words bit of pulp fiction where mister Wolf says, I'm not here to play nice.

I'm here to get the job done. So if it helps, please, pretty please with sprinkles on, clean that car because that's what your board is like. They they don't have the time to say, well, I almost entirely agree with your pearls of wisdom, Steven, but I'm just concerned about this statement on page ten. I I I'm sure it's just me.

They'll cut to the chase. They'll go, what's this on page ten?

And you've gotta be ready for it. Oh oh, Steve, Sean's giving us a quick nudge. He says you've been on that slide for too long. So this is the slide that Megan was jumping ahead to because, of course, we being professionals, you should practice too.

I like a short presentation. A short presentation is a good presentation. If you have to show them slides, just pick a few. The title slide don't waste the title slide by telling them your name and your job title.

They already know that.

Make sure your title slide tells them why this is coming to them and what you want them to do with it.

Maybe put your name and your job title in a smaller font down in the corner.

Then you go into the key data, and I wouldn't have more than three slides here. Pick the most important exciting charts. Make sure that they can be read on screen. Make sure that they the colors are visible, all of that good stuff. And then when you've given them the data, again, go back to this is what I want. And really importantly, I love it when the final slide says, these this is where we want your strategic insight.

This is what we would like from you.

WIFM, what's in it for me? Yes. Everybody's favorite radio station. WFIIMFM, WFM.

And the other thing is you're not there to present. They've already read. If they are good directors, they will have hit Google or tickled Claude to find out more about what it is you're talking about.

They're not there to get educated. They're there to make decisions and to get assurance.

So your job is to help them have the conversations that will do that.

I'm a great believer in silence.

Having done a lot of martial arts and the Japanese are masters of silence. They will walk to the front of the boardroom table and say, Africa's underperforming.

And then they'll just stand there.

And they're quite comfortable with all of the directors looking very uncomfortable because Africa's underperforming. That's a bad situation. But the presenter just stands there silently, letting it land and percolate.

Don't feel that you have to fill every every tiny moment. It's hard for me because I'm a raging extrovert. It's much easier for the introverts to stand there silently and let the board get their heads around it. Active listening.

You know, listen when they are talking to each other, it's easy to feel like, oh, yeah, I've been left out. I'm just sitting here at the corner of the table, and I'm not doing anything.

Lean in or lean out to give them room to discuss. It's a lovely thing when you say, so now I would like you to give these strategic insights and tell me what it is you see in the community.

And you instantly, even on camera, create space for them to lean in and talk. So leaning out is actually much more useful for getting them to talk than leaning in. But nodding, watching, smiling, Louise Marler, if any of you watch her videos, she always says you want that slow nod that just conveys gravitas, because that's her favorite word, I think.

The jury's out on the head tilt.

I kind of like a head tilt, which I see as encouraging. It'll normally be accompanied by big wide eyes and a bit of a smile.

Some people see head tilts as aggressive or sceptical.

Some people see head tilts as a sign of weakness. So this is where you need to know yourself, what works for you, and your board. But always think about open body language.

If you say, Right. Okay, guys. Over to you.

And you cross your arms, they're like, Yeah, it might be over to us, we'll just sit here and nod.

That's a danger sign, that's telling us not to talk.

Again, hands behind your back. All of these things that you might do because you're nervous, you don't do when you're talking to your friends and your family. Try to keep that same open body language. And it's hard, because we're experts at what we're experts in. We're not experts in body language and conveying nuance by the way we move, but it's important.

I think Megan hit on a really interesting point before, Julie, when she was talking about CEOs in particular getting quite defensive because of the style of questioning of the board. Now you can't

change the board, only they can change themselves, but you can model that behavior yourself. So one of the things always and this is not a good career move to be seen as being defensive. I've had many, many boards tell me during, you know, governance reviews, the CEO, you know, we we have to tread on eggshells a little bit and it's really not sustainable.

And that's a bit of self reflection that the CEO needs to bring into place. But one of the things I found really useful as someone presenting to boards, either as the CEO of the organizations I have been involved in or chair or board member, whatever it might be, or adviser, is this notion of what I'm about to say, am I doing it to prove something or am I doing it to create something different? And of all of the techniques I've come across in all of the decades I've been doing, that one technique is the most powerful. So before you open your mouth, particularly if someone's coming at you, say to yourself, what I'm about to say, am I doing it to prove them wrong?

I'm right? I'm wrong? They're right? Something's wrong? Something's right? Yeah, that proving is very powerful but not creative.

So am I doing this to prove or am I doing it to create? And if you come from that space of creation, you'll be absolutely stunned what comes out of your mouth.

Just a couple of points for me. I love that model, Stephen. Will write that down and take that away myself.

In my teaching for executives, I've done a lot of coaching of executives in exactly these things over the years. Just a couple of things. The first is back on the previous slide and Julie's absolutely spot on. You want your PowerPoint presentation to be short, brief, to the point, all of those things that she talked about, but it can also not be there.

Just because you're asked to present to a board does not mean that you have to have a PowerPoint presentation and speak to it. Remember, this is about facilitating discussion. So it may well be that your presentation is, look, I'm just gonna sit at the table and I'm just going to kind of take you through the thinking of the most important points of this paper or whatever it might be. So you don't necessarily have to have a PowerPoint presentation.

Remember, when people are reading and listening at the same time, the data shows that they take in about forty percent less because we all know now multitasking is actually a myth even for women, that we take in forty percent less than if we were just reading or just listening. So just sitting and speaking is fine. You don't always have to have a PowerPoint presentation.

The other thing that we talked about when we did our pre briefing was, do you stand up in front of the room? Do you sit down? Different people will like to present in different ways. Certainly, gravitas can be born from standing up, you might feel a little bit better on your feet, but when it comes time to the discussion part, I would encourage you to sit at the table and be an equal participant in the discussion rather than you're standing at the front of the room while the discussion is happening at the table. It's really important that the mechanics of the room suit the environment that you're trying to create. And if you're trying to create a collaborative

environment where you're one amongst equals and all discussing this issue, then sitting at the table with the board is a really good way to do that.

I watched one of the world leading experts absolutely lose the whole board of BHP.

He stood right at the front of the table, very powerful, very imposing, towering over Brian Loughton, which immediately was the wrong thing to do in BHP under Brian Loughton. And then he walked to the whiteboard, uncapped a pen, put the point of the pen to the whiteboard, turned to the board, and the first words he said to them were so.

And you could just feel the temperature drop. Oh my goodness. What a disaster. So really think about what do I want to create here? I love that word, create. And what's the best way of facilitating that creation?

Really think through who's in the room, what do they like, how does it work. And it's people will sometimes, again, the presentation skills presenters, they'll tell you something like, Tell them what you're gonna tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you told them. No, don't! Because you'll tell them what you're gonna tell them, and they'll think you've finished your presentation, and they'll start talking.

Or they'll be irritated because they can't start talking, because you are. So, don't use these long It's not the place to break the ice by telling a joke or talking about the weather. A funny thing happened as I was walking into the boardroom this morning. Oh gosh. They haven't got time. Board meeting time is precious. And it takes less than a second to glance around the room, give a bit of a smile or at least a friendly expression if you're not a smiley person.

Take a good breath, because there's nothing worse than a presenter who's out of breath. Take a good deep breath, greet them, say good morning or good afternoon, or if it's an informal board, hi.

And unless you're the CEO and you present to the board three or four times at every meeting, Thank you for letting me be here. Or thank you for the opportunity to talk about this with you. Those are the way to do it. And you wanna do it fast.

Do not waste time, and certainly don't tell jokes.

Next slide. I think we're all in heated agreement here.

Hello, Sean. Next slide. Thank you.

I thought I'd throw in a slide about online, because you will do a lot of online give us a wave, put up your hands and give us a wave electronically if you present to your board at online meetings, because I'm sure you all do, and there aren't many people training people on how to do it. But you need good lighting.

If you look at Steve and Megan, you can see that they're both well lit, they're both right in the middle of the screen, or they've got their heads in the top third. Yep, watch out for the overhead light if you are challenged with hair. Megan and I have no such issues. Look at the camera. Don't look at yourself or look at them. Look straight into, most cameras will actually have a light that helps you to look so that when you look at the camera, your eyes are coming straight out of the screen at them. So they think you're looking at them, whereas when I look at Steve, I'm actually not looking at you.

And Steve thinks I'm not looking at him either. So look at the camera and keep an eye on the chat. If you're new to the organisation and you don't know the board, Craig, then the best thing to do is ask someone who does. And usually, the best person to ask is the company secretary, because they spend a lot of time in that room watching that board and trying to think about what are they doing, how are they doing it. So they're a good person to ask. The CEO is an excellent person to ask. If you get access, the chair, anyone who's ever presented to them, just make sure that when you walk into that room, you know, oh, the lady with the blonde hair, she's the expert on sewage.

The gentleman with the dark hair and the beard, he's the expert on finance.

And there's another financial expert in the room too, but she's an expert on structured project finance, not general finance. So know these things, because they will prepare you for where the questions are coming from, and when you're facilitating that discussion, if you're ending with, so we'd really like your insights on how we're going to pay for this, look at the two finance experts, or if you're online, look straight into the camera and they will feel looked at.

It's hugely useful advice, isn't it?

Absolutely. And a great hint on this one is when you're presenting on screen to hide yourself. So hide your own image, which you can normally do depending on your platform, clicking on the three dots, etcetera. We actually look for feedback on how well we're doing naturally as human beings.

We are egocentric and no matter who you are as a human being, we often look for feedback and the most instantaneous feedback that you can get is looking at yourself. And so it's very easy to be distracted by yourself and say, your inner thought process is, oh gee whiz, my shirt's out of place or whatever. You cannot be distracted by those things. So turn your own screen off is a really good hint.

Yep. Very important. And also watch out for things like what am I wearing?

I went into an online meeting, and I was wearing an off the shoulder dress. And I looked before I switched my camera off, I looked and I said, like, oh my gosh. I look like I'm naked. I've gotta put a jacket on.

Little things because you want them concentrating on the topic and their discussion, not on you. Next slide, I think.

Favourite slide, this one.

Love it.

Don't, don't, don't, the number oh we've all seen it. Don't you just cringe when you see somebody who's being paid good money to stand on a stage at a conference and they say, No, you probably can't read this. It's like, Well, why are you wasting my time by showing it then?

Every single word and sentence on this slide is good, useful information, but it's wasted, and these are the sorts of slides that encourage presenters to turn their back on the board and read and say, Essential presentation skills are essential for senior executives. No.

Don't do it.

Three or four dot points would be much better.

Next slide. We've had enough of that one.

Makes me feel ill. The other thing is don't get put off by body language.

I've got a naturally very expressive face. You can tell what I'm thinking. Strangely enough, it helps in negotiations because it builds trust.

And sometimes it helps in the boardroom, because the chair will say, Julie, I can see you want to say something, or I can see you're concerned about something.

And that's actually quite a good thing. But most people have not learned what you just learned about how to have an effective presentation on screen. If you look at this, only two of the people are actually correctly positioned. The number of people I see, and they think it's perfectly okay to have the camera off to one side, and you're looking at the side of their face, it's as if they're not talking to you. And the number of people who have an I allowed to say resting ***** face?

Unfortunately, here's a picture of mine. One of my friends took this when we were and I'm clearly not engaged in the discussion.

Clearly switched off. I've got my hand over my mouth, so I can't possibly join in. That's very unusual for me.

And I'm just slumped there.

I was quite likely thinking about something that somebody had said and making sure I understood it, or thinking about an implication. But the general body language signals I'd be giving people, if you have a set and you've said, I'm going to show you this and I'll take questions at the end, because you're the sort of person who gets distracted by questions mid flow, then if you see this sort of body language, don't get put off.

I have no idea why the gentleman at the bottom of that screen thinks it's okay for us to look up his nose, or what this particular posture means in terms of boardroom body language.

Don't get flustered. Don't get put off. Most people are not good in front of cameras.

You are gonna have a huge edge just because you now are. Next.

Biggest horror story I've got on that one, Julie, is when I'm in an international environment. So a lot of the meetings are in the night times for people, morning times, middle of the night like you, and you get people that are eating their dinner or eating their lunch on screen loudly while you're trying to present to them. So, it's really critical to not get distracted. But this is also where a really good cosec will mute people for example, or ask people to turn their screen off if they're gonna eat, but it's okay, you're still listening. So a bit of orchestration never goes astray, but I've seen some absolute shockers.

Yeah, oh yes. And we've all been guilty of them too.

It's not so much that we've seen other people and we ourselves are perfect.

I once caused con I'd switched my camera off. I was doing an observation, and they'd forgotten I was there, and I hadn't switched my microphone off, and I sneezed. And they all jumped. They were like, who sneezed? Because they heard the sneeze, but they couldn't see anybody sneezing.

And it it really put the wind up them for a moment or two. I had to put my camera back on and apologize and switch my mic. It's the other thing. If you're not talking, switch your microphone off.

Objections. We talked before about not getting defensive. If somebody objects or disagrees, that's great because they're engaging with your material. You want them to engage.

So a really beautiful I learned this from Julian Treasure, and Megan will know where I learned about Julian Treasure, who really is a treasure.

Rasa receive, appreciate, summarise and answer. And Steven does this.

You you actually notice if you will notice now because you'll watch. But when you say something to Steven, he goes, or, yeah. He makes a little noise or sometimes does a little head movement, to let you know that he's heard it, and he will very often start by saying, That's a good point. Thank you.

Or, Can I just confirm that I've understood it? And then he'll devastate you with an absolutely fantastic answer. It's a great model, because the receiving and the appreciating, and then the making sure that you're clear before you answer. One, it builds a lot of time for you to think about your answer and get it straight.

And two, it makes the person feel heard. And I've gone into meetings where I've had talk to somebody who is a director who is at odds, and everybody knows that they are all at odds with this particular director. My job is to listen, and for them to know that I have listened, and to feel that I have tried to understand their side. It's not to correct them or put them right.

If there's an elephant in the room, name it.

You're trying to present on damn safety board when there's two damn safety great engineers sitting there at the table looking at me. It's like, well, I don't actually know as much about this as you guys do, but as a director, name the elephants in the room, particularly if there's a conflict of interest.

We all know this person's related to this particular institution, and so there is a tie of duty there for us to think about.

Yes and. Do say no. Nancy Regan's advice was good. But say no about doing things, not about receiving information. Always think yes and and then add your refutation or your countering.

But is another one, but be careful with but, because actually, emotionally, it is heard the same as no.

When you finish your presentation, as Sean is hinting to us that we finished this one, some really good idea to just very quickly say, Well, thank you very much.

This is what we've agreed, or this is the decision. You repeating that decision because you are the subject matter expert really helps your company secretary.

Because they've been taking notes, they are not the expert on spillway design and how concrete can levitate, and trust me, it does. Well, it it can lift up at amazing angles. So really make sure that you tell the company secretary what's important, and that you leave the board with that clear understanding of what it is they've just decided. If there are any next steps, make sure that you state them again.

That helps with the minutes, with the actions, and it builds your credibility. Particularly if there's any questions you haven't answered. It's fantastic to say: And I will send you that additional information.

Always, if you can, leave them with an invitation.

Of course, if you want to ask any further questions, always happy to respond. And unless you're the CEO, because it's weird when the CEO says: Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you four times in the same meeting.

But if you only talk to the board once in a blue moon, thank you for the opportunity to talk about this with you. Never does any harm. And yes, Howard, that is a great book. I also love Michelle Bowden's How to Present and How to Persuade. And at nearly four in the morning, How to Talk

would be a good one for me. Maybe I'll get Michelle to write one of those next. Over to you guys for questions.

Any questions? Pop them in the chat.

No questions, Megan? Stephen, you have a question?

One of greatest gifts that you can always give at the end of any presentation is to say, Okay, so is there anything we haven't covered?

Is there anything that's emerging from this that you think would be worthy for us to go away and look at again? So you actually leave them in a curiosity mode rather than, Thank God that's finished.

Brilliant. I like it. I'm gonna steal and use that one. We've got a question from somebody who's a participant. As a COSEQ, how do we coach our CEO not to say taken as read and then rehash the whole thing?

Just Just say that to him or her.

Every time you say, I'll take the paper as read, and then you summarise or rehash or, even worse, read the paper, you are training your board not to read their papers.

Don't train your board not to read their papers. They will wind up in court like James Hardy or Centro, and they will look stupid, and they won't thank you for it.

Governance and operational, again, the more you give them detail, the more operational they're going to get. If you only give them the top line strategic stuff, they will naturally work up at the governance level.

Structure your presentation so that you haven't given them any excuses to get into the weeds. Just give them sunflowers, they're nice and tall. I saw them all growing in the fields yesterday, they were bigger than me.

Sean, you're nudging us.

Thank you. We're at time.

Always like to keep Thank you, Janine.

Glad you enjoyed it. Thanks, Jonathan.

And, of course, thanks, Megan, and thanks, Steven. Couldn't have done it without you guys helping me, keeping me awake.

Thanks. No. I don't need keeping awake.

Well, three o'clock in the morning Board papers for noting only.

Again, explain to the board why they're noting it, but put that in the paper. If it's for noting only, don't let them discuss. Have a look at the consent agenda stuff.

Just Google consent agenda in the resources area of Sean's website, of the BoardPro website, and keep your noting stuff for noting.

Don't let them discuss and ask questions. That's when they get operational, isn't it, guys?

Thanks, Julie. So everybody, you'll receive an email from me tomorrow. It'll include a recording of today's webinar, the transcript, and also the presentation slides for you to take home with you. They'll also be hosted in the webinar library on our website within the next forty eight hours. And of course, if you're considering board management software for your organization, then we'd love to hear from you, of course.

Better still, why not try our free thirty day trial? It's really simple and straightforward, and you don't need any credit cards to get started. Let us know on the survey if you'd like to contact you on this as well.

So thanks for your attendance, everybody. I hope you enjoyed the session today. I know I did a special thanks to Julie for being up so early in the morning at four o'clock in the morning in Malta. Thank you, Stephen, and very nice to have you with us again, Megan. Thank you very much.

I look forward to seeing you all at our next webinar. Everybody have a great day.