

Webinar Transcript

Setting your strategic vision and board agenda

Hi, Welcome to our Governance Made Easy webinar today titled Setting Your Strategic Vision and Board Agenda. I'm joined today by Stephen Bowman of Conscious Governance and Julie Garland McLellan from the Director's Dilemma.

My name is Sean McDonald, and I shall be with you for the next forty five minutes in the background.

Firstly, thank you so much for your attendance today. We always appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live events. And during the session, if you have any questions, please try and use the Q and A button on your toolbar as against chat. It just enables us to keep a track of them. If we run out of time, we can have a little session after and answer those questions for you. And finally, if you stay through till the end, which of course we hope you will do, and as is very customary for our webinars at BoardPro, we have a special treat for you. By answering our really short one minute survey at the end of the webinar, you'll go into the draw to win one of our beautiful gift hampers worth over four hundred dollars and unfortunately we cannot deliver it to the Cayman Islands I'm afraid, but anywhere in New Zealand and Australia is totally fine.

So for those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal. And we serve around about thirty two thousand users across about thirty different country these days. And we enable organisations to prepare for and run their board meetings more efficiently and effectively with, you guessed it, clever software, namely ours, with less time and we deliver more impact and value for the organisation.

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

And these free webinars and the many hundreds of templates, guides and white papers on our website are a really tangible, a great tangible example of how we look to achieve our mission for small to medium businesses and nonprofits around the world. And you'll find all of this material on the resources section of our website and our blog.

So for the next forty five odd minutes, forty minutes now, just relax, listen and add to the discussion by asking as many questions as you would like for the team.

A full recording of the webinar along with the slide deck and the transcript will be sent to you early next week.

So let's get into it. And Stephen and Julie, if you'd like to introduce yourself, starting with you first Julie.

Okay, fine. I don't know how many of you know me. My name is Julie Garland McLellan. I publish a director's newsletter called The Director's Dilemma.

I've been told I shouldn't call it a newsletter because it's really a case study based learning tool. But if you're interested, you are very welcome to join. I've got about twenty five years experience consulting to boards and directors. I've worked with big companies, small companies through institutions, I just love helping boards get it right so that it all just feels perfectly normal and natural to do good governance.

Over to you, Steve.

Thank you, Julie. Hi, everyone. Steve Bowman from Conscious Governance. Been in the sector, oh, ever since I was a wee lad, I think.

And, my second job ever was with a not for profit, and then after that, I was on numerous boards and have since morphed from that into advising boards. And, one of the things I enjoy about doing these board pro webinars is is we get to share with you what we've seen other boards use really, really, really, really well. And so whatever we talk about today is not just some outside person's perspective because they're trying to sell something. These are real life techniques that boards are using where we often come across them saying, gee, why didn't I think of that?

Let's add it to what it is that we talk to with people. So please enjoy the session as we go along today and ask questions. There's really, really good questions. Take us down rabbit holes that are often very, very interesting rabbit holes to go down.

Okay. So the title of today's session is is about your, you know, creating your vision that actually provides you with a focus, but also your agenda that keeps people being focused. But before we do that, I just wanted to start off on one thing that most boards don't understand and certainly a lot of chairs don't understand, and that is the chair owns the sequence of events, I e, the agenda and how it's structured and what goes on the agenda. The board does not own it.

It, of course, should have influence, and it should ask for things to be put on the agenda. But in the end, push comes to shove. It's the chair's right at law, and it's been tested, that they can structure the agenda as they see fit. Now the interesting thing there is if the chair's got no clue, then you're gonna have an agenda that's got no clue.

If a chair is, is willing to be focused strategically, then the agenda will be focused strategically.

Too many times we see instances where directors say, I had one just yesterday, a director said, if you don't let me put this on the agenda for discussion, I'm going to sue you for harassment.

So there's all sorts of really interesting power plays that go on.

I think the real key thing here is for the chair to understand that they have that right to own the sequence of events, but with that comes great responsibility as well.

And that responsibility is to make sure that the agenda is fit for purpose to keep the directors focused on the decisions and the insights that they need to make that is going to create the future for the organization and its stakeholders. Julie?

Yeah. If your chair truly has no clue, why do you make them chair and keep them in that position?

Members elected them, Julie. Members elected them.

Sometimes, yes, if you have a directly elected presidential role, there is no reason why you can't have a board chair as well as a member elected president write a good job description for both of them. But if you think your chair has no clue and you leave that chair in the chair, you are basically an accessory as the Americans would call it. You are an accessory to the crime of not letting your not for profit or your company do the things that it was created to do.

It should fulfill its purpose and if your agenda consistently doesn't fulfil its purpose, then it's up to you as a board as a whole to make sure it does.

One of the things that I found very useful, and I've done this myself when I've been on boards and I haven't been the chair of that board, is and I get into trouble for saying this, which is probably why I say it so often is act as if you were the chair.

What that means is that you support others, that you keep people focused on the strategic issues, you summarise the conversations when it's required. So you can actually support the chair by being that yourself without taking over the responsibility of the chair. So there's ways of doing that. I've seen many instances where the chair was absolutely a lovely person, but because I had a couple of really good directors on there, the meetings went really well, because the the other directors helped shape that.

So it's yeah. Not all is lost if your chair isn't that good, but the other thing is get them to do a chairing course. Julie and I both do governance reviews, and always our recommendation is the chair of any committee plus the chair of the board should within one year of their appointment to that chair's position do some sort of chairing course, even if it's a half day or a one day. So Yeah.

People just don't know that it's available.

Julie?

It definitely helps, and there is a chairing course on the BoardPro website that you can subscribe to or Stephen and I run them in person if that's your preference.

We are getting nudged by Sean with a new slide. Let's go.

I can't see the slide. It's gone all blank on me.

It's place your vision at the top of the agenda.

In that case, you might need to read the slides out because mine's gone all blank this end.

The key thing with setting the agenda is to realise that the purpose of the board is to make the choices that create the future for the communities that they serve. That's its job. It's not there to meet. It's not there to have bad coffee. It's not there to make decisions.

They're all tools to help it do the one thing that it must do, which is make choices that are actually creating the future for and with and on behalf of the communities we serve, and that's its job.

And so one of the things that helps us focus on that job is to put your vision statement or purpose statement or mission, doesn't matter what you call it, whichever one it is that actually reflects this is the difference that we want to make, and you put it at the top of your agenda. Now it's not just a set of words, then the chair or any other director should use that vision or purpose statement to help shape their questions, to help shape their conversations, to help shape where the conversation may be missing key risks. Because that vision statement, if you unpack it, will actually give you insight into the things that we've already agreed to the most important things, which is this is the difference that we want to make. Julie?

Yes, I totally agree. Place it at the top of the agenda. Another trick that I give people is when you are writing a board paper for the board, actually put in a little heading of how does this paper align to the strategy. What's the element? What's the outcome? What's the driver? Who are the community members?

Just make sure that everything you do supports your strategy, because it just cuts out an awful lot of unnecessary work and really helps people to make better choices.

Just a couple more words on vision statement without belaboring it. There's only two types of vision statements. This makes life very easy for us. There's two types of vision statements: those that work and those that don't.

And so the question is, which is your vision statement? Now the real question is, how do we know it works?

And the answer to that always is because we use it. We use it shamelessly in everything. We use it to help shape our staff meetings, we use it to help shape our website, we use it to help shape our annual report, we use it to help shape our board reports, we use it to help shape our recruitment of directors, the induction break. The key thing is we use it.

Now if you're not using your vision statement in those ways, either you haven't thought of using it and you're missing out on a fantastic strategic filter, or you cannot use it. It's not particularly

good. You know, we want to be the leading light in x y and z. Well that's not really a vision, that's talking about the organisation.

What is it that we need to put down that says here's the difference that we want to make? Most organisations I see, and I'll let Julie speak to this from her perspective, I would see probably about a thousand in different forms during the year. Of those, probably sixty-seventy percent have good vision statements, but of those only about ten percent use them.

And one of the questions we ask is how well does the board understand and use its vision statement to help shape strategic conversations? The most common answer to that is oh that's a good idea!

Yeah, if your vision statement isn't driving anything, why do you have it?

It's a waste of time and space and it's valuable.

In fact I think it might have been you Stephen that said every word in your board pack is worth ten dollars zero if you're not willing to invest in having that word.

Don't put it there. So yeah if you're regurgitating words and they're not having an impact, you're wasting effort and for a not for profit or for a small business, that's just the same as wasting money. Next slide is up for Stephen who is flying blind here, but doing a great job.

It's the meeting I can see this come back on the screen now.

Oh, you can. Perfect.

This is the meeting agenda flow. When we are talking about agendas and setting a strategic agenda, can't forget that it's actually in the context of people and how people see things.

Now Julie's developed this this really good meeting agenda for up, and I'll hand over to her to talk you through this, but it's very powerful. Julie?

Yep. This actually has come from some original thinking by Patrick Dunn, who wrote the book *Running Board Meetings*, which whilst the name suggests it might be a boring book, is actually a very exciting book, particularly for people like me. But you need to think about not just the amount of energy the board has, but the ability to concentrate that energy. And I know we've got a lot of experienced people in the room who've attended a lot of board meetings.

You can feel at the beginning of the meeting that everybody's there. Hopefully, everybody's really keen. Let's get going. Let's do some stuff.

But you've got a group of directors. And as you start going through the first few items on your agenda, they change from a group of directors to a board.

And they start to concentrate and focus their efforts. And that's the point at which you can move safely from routine into matters for Board's consideration.

I find this important because very often we will have a strategy session first up or after the Board meeting when everybody's exhausted, and no longer able to focus or concentrate.

So really important, think through how am I going to use the energy that's available to me in order to deliver the outcomes that I need from this particular meeting.

The logic behind this is to some extent inescapable because if you think of your typical board agenda now if all of you just reflect on what your board agenda looks like, pretty much I guarantee it's going to have present, apologies, declarations of interest. By the way, please don't have declarations of conflict of interest. There's not a conflict until the board decides conflict. So declarations of interest in some boards, I've suggested and they have used very successfully. If they've got a bit of a culture where the directors obviously haven't read their board papers or there are one or two that are, you know, they're they're just too busy to read them, then you have present apologies, declaration of interest, declaration I've read the board papers.

So, in fact, had one director say to me the other day, oh, I suggest that to the chair. The chair wouldn't have it. He said it would be too embarrassing for some of my fellow directors. So, yeah, just be aware.

These are little tools of the trade that you can use, and then you might have, the action list from the last board meeting, but that shouldn't really be something that takes up any time. It's almost a matter for noting unless there's an issue that needs to be raised. And then, typically, you should have what are the top two or three issues that is worthy of the board's time for this meeting? And you have them next.

Doesn't matter where they fit within the strategic plan or, you know, we've we've got a a, you know, a risk management section. If it's a big in your face issue, it should be up front. Don't, have it through some sort of logical well that's number nine on our agenda. Have those top two, three, maybe four big things right up front.

And what some chairs do that are very very useful is that they will start off the board meeting by actually reminding the board that we've got three big issues facing us today. They these are the following issues. Okay. Now let's get into the agenda.

Julie, what have you seen?

Yep. I love to see these tools used.

I actually love it when I work with faith based boards and a good chair in a faith based board has that wonderful opportunity to pray for guidance and the really clever one use that prayer to help the board to understand that these are the big issues. Please help us with this big decision or this CEO transition, help us make the best decision in the best long term interests of the company.

Which can be very important when you have got people who have a relationship with one person or an involvement with another organisation.

So that use of that early time, not just to help the board to focus their effort, but to target that focus to your strategic outcomes for this board. And the other thing I love to see people use is the consent agenda. A consent agenda is a brilliant tool for helping get through routine matters very quickly.

We have got some questions coming up here.

We have.

So maybe if we have a look at a couple of those. Sean, do you want to lead us through them?

Sure. First one is from Nathan. What are the qualities that a chair should have, and are not those qualities usually able to be learnt or not?

Oh, great question, Nathan. There's a whole lot of literature on this. There's a whole lot of anecdotes on this. But the key thing with any chair is the ability to keep people focused on the big ticket issues that they really need to get their head around. And, also, this is less well done to manage bad behavior so that the rest of the directors can get on with it.

So they'd be the two they they to me, they're the two key things that they understand that the the strategic side of things, the creation of the future is why we're meeting. And anything that doesn't meet that, we're not gonna really spend any time on at all. And also the bad behavior, which includes not reading board papers or, you know, going for the jugular when you should be talking about the issue. Julie, thoughts?

Yeah. I once had a really interesting five hour car journey with a chair that I particularly adore and he was very curious. It's like Julie, you're running this one day course on how how to chair effective boards and committees. Chairing can't be taught.

I said, well, how did you learn to chair? Oh, well, you know, after all my experience on board, I go, no, no, no, it's not just your experience on boards, you are actually learning from every chair you saw and copied. The whole idea of a course is that you can take that learning and concentrate it and deliver it with a great deal of clarity so people can access it more quickly.

So I really strongly endorse that, yes, chairs can be taught. Nobody is born knowing how to chair a meeting.

They learn The difficulty with chairs that have been chairs of many other boards is there's a fair percentage of them that just bring along their bad habits with them for the next board that they chair.

So we just need to be very aware. Now yeah. Yeah. Some chairs are just naturally brilliant, and they're the ones that you wanna be mentoring others.

Anyway, it can be taught. Right. Sure. Next slide.

Should we do your question, Let's fire through a few of them.

Chris has asked, who sets the vision? The board, the staff, or both?

It's not a committee structure that you set up and spend six months doing. It really should be established conjointly with the leadership team, which is the board and the senior executives.

And they should be the ones that say what difference do we want to make? And then you test it out by using it and starting to use it. The last thing that you want to do is every two years change one word in the vision statement because one person is not happy with the implications of that word. The only time you should change a vision statement is if things have changed, you can't use the old one, and it is not providing you with the strategic filter that you need to help keep you focused.

Yeah. Okay. Two more. Quick nuance. The board are the people that say, yes, this is the vision.

That is clearly a board power. Do not abdicate that power to management.

Yep.

Right. Two more questions and then we'll move on. This one from Isabelle.

If you could give advice, a piece of advice to a new chair about conflict or out of date strategy, what would it be and what should they never do?

Wow. These are all little mini masterclasses. Good question.

Conflict is only conflict if you, as a person, see it as conflict. Now the conflict of interest or conflict between people, the chair should be the, you know, the the the fair witness in all of this. If they they they cannot get involved in that conflict, but what they can do is assist the people to understand what the underlying issue is. And there's a whole range of techniques. Usually, really good questions will help do that.

Discussions with people afterwards, before and during the board meeting, finding out finding out from the the the conflict that's occurring. There's usually some underlying issue behind it.

The worst thing you can do with conflict is let it go on. Yeah. I know what there's one organization we're dealing at the moment where the the president, has one director who's constantly in conflict. Now it it's that director's personal style, but the president won't talk with that person about the style and how it's affecting how everyone interacts in the board meeting because he's uncomfortable doing that. Right? We've got as chairs, we've got to get over the uncomfortable in the solvent and look to see what's going to create greatest value. Julie?

Yeah. I think, really important, don't fan the flames and don't be frightened to go out and get help.

It's cheaper and more effective to go beyond the board and get help if things are going off the rails rather than staying on the runaway train and hoping that it somehow magically engages its brakes and gets back on the track.

That just never ends well, unless you've got Keanu Reeves.

Okay, so we've got our next slide up which says strategy ahead of operational matters. We've pretty much covered that. Have those big three items up front. I've seen many boards where they have, you know, item number one strategic plan, and then it's full of operational rubbish.

So just because it's called a strategy doesn't necessarily mean where it appears on the, on the agenda.

So prioritize for the big fellow matters, and that's where the chair can actually say at the start of meeting, here are the three big decisions we've got ahead of us today. The other one is that, what keeps the CEO awake at nighttime? The role of the CEO's report. Now there's separate board pro webinar we did on the CEO's report.

But in essence, the CEO's report should bring to light a number of really key things. Number one, what do I as a CEO see as the two big issues that we're facing?

And there are separate board papers on those big issues.

Secondly, a high level update of how things are going operational and any strategic implications that might be worthy of board discussion.

A CEO's report should not be a list of activities. Look how busy I've been. So, if you're interested in really good CEO reports, have a look at either the webinar or the, I think Julie did a paper on it. Yeah there's a white paper on it so have a look at those.

Okay now the consent agenda, this is what Julie mentioned before, or a block agenda. This is one of the most powerful tools that if you're not using it I will personally guarantee that you will save thirty percent of your board time and be able to focus on things more importantly. So three types of papers typically: there's a paper that is for discussion, a paper for decision, or a paper for noting.

And those items are allocated prior to the board meeting by the company secretary with the permission of the chair, or it could be the chair who's doing it. But, usually company secretary or CEO have first crack at it, then the chair agrees or changes things.

Now let's go through each of them. A paper for noting is sometimes called a paper for information, not to be discussed about, not to be talked about. Do not ever put on your board agenda item for noting verbal discussion. They should never appear together.

So items for noting literally are for noting. Now these are things like these are things like reports from the various operations where there's no real big discussion that we need. Just a quick

update of one page or whatever it might be. It might be something attestations where we you start off the meeting with here are the here, you know, we attest that we have covered off all of our legal liabilities, we've covered off on our GST and our superannuation payments.

One of the things that that we've agreed to do is to send you out a one page of some of the most common attestations that you should probably start off a board meeting with, but it's a paper for noting. You don't need to discuss it. It just is. So those items that are for noting, then you have the items for decision, and these are the ones where there's a recommendation or there's a proposal, and we've we've got to crunch it. And then there's an item for discussion. We don't, you know, we don't need to decide anything, but we do need to start getting our heads around this.

Now the key thing in this is all of those items that are for noting or for information only, you put them in one block, and you put it at the end of the agenda.

So all those items for noting, they're at the end of the agenda in one block, hence it's called a block agenda, and at the start of the meeting there's a resolution that all the items for note in noting have been taken as read and passed as provided.

And then that gets rid of all of your items for noting. If any of your directors want to talk about an item for noting, they must petition the chair prior to that board meeting to have that item taken off the items for noting list and put back on as an item for discussion.

So Julie, anything you want to add on that?

Yeah. I really, I slightly arc up with the taking things as read. If you suspect you have directors who aren't reading their papers, get the board to formally decide that, yeah, everybody's here. The board members are attesting that they have received, read, and made appropriate inquiry into their papers. Right. If people get that language rather than oh, everyone's assuming I've read it and nobody's gonna talk about it, I'll get away with it.

That's not so I love Yep.

Put the onus on them.

Yep. Now the other thing there is if you look at the bottom there, see the one that says items for information.

Is your board pack more than one hundred and fifty pages long?

Yes I hear from about two thirds of the people on this call. Anything that's over about one hundred and fifty pages there's a whole lot of stuff in there that is for information that should not be in the actual board pack itself.

They yeah. If you've got, for example, a marketing report, and there's nothing really the board needs to do with it. They don't need to approve it. It's just an update from an external marketing consultant. Maybe there's a one page summary of it, but you put a link to it.

Don't add it into the board pack as such. The difficulty is I saw a board pack two days ago where it was two forty seven pages long, and of those two forty seven pages, a hundred of them were items for information.

The difficulty is if you put it in the board pack, directors psychologically feel as if they must go through it in fine detail, even though there's nothing they need to do with it.

So just be aware items for information have a link to it, but don't actually physically put it in the board pack.

Okay, one of the other things we see done not terribly well is the notion of ratios. Be aware ratios are very useful. You can use ratios based on your balance sheet, based on organizational activity. There's a whole different reasons for using ratios.

The difficulty is I'm often left with the question, what do you want me to do with this ratio? I don't know if it's a good one or a bad one. So one of the things always with ratios is define what is the appropriate range for this ratio.

If all of you probably will have a liquidity ratio or a quick asset ratio, similar thing, and your ratio might be one point four.

Alright? My question is, well, what the heck does that mean?

I don't know if it's good or bad. If we've got a target that we should be having no less than one point five, then this one point four is not as good as we thought it might be. So you should have always the targets for all of your particular ratios to let directors know, are we within the agreed range we wanted? Julie, anything on that?

Yeah, the other thing I'd mention is, don't just take all the standard recommendation is that this ratio should be within these bounds. I've worked with a water authority whose assets were revalued because the government that owned them wanted to have a stronger balance sheet and it meant that their ratios looked shocking, but they were cash flow positive, paying dividends to the government every year. They had no need to improve the ratio.

It was just a number. The other thing is watch out for benchmarking.

I am a big fan of Michael Porter, particularly when he said that benchmarking is excellent if you want to spread mediocrity far and wide.

Benchmark purposefully because this organisation does this in this way that we want to emulate and this is the ratio that they have and therefore we think if we move towards this ratio we will

be moving in the right direction or we think if we do what they do we will be moving in the right direction. Benchmarks are actually seductively dangerous.

Good summary. Okay. Sure. Next one.

Okay.

Risk reports. Again, one of the most badly done areas because, typically, many boards think that a good risk report is, in fact, the risk register. And there's no analysis. There's no insights coming from it. So be very aware that when you're reporting to the board against risk, you should be focusing on the top three or four key risks, the critical or the very high risks that are owned by the board because they're of such strategic importance that if we get it right there's major opportunity and uplift and leverage that we can get from it and if we get it wrong that's going to suck big time, so it's going to really put us at risk. So understand that risk reporting shouldn't just be a hygiene factor, it should be actually a strategic conversation.

Here are our top three or four risks, here's how we could be leveraging them, here's what's changing with these risks, here are the other elements of the organisation that could actually benefit from what we've learned on how to work with some of these risks. It should be that sort of conversation, not just a tick and flick risk register. Julie?

Yep. And I love that last dot point. If people will pay you more for taking a risk than it costs you to manage it, there's a strong incentive to manage that risk for them. So really don't view risk as a negative.

Risk is just the chance of something happening that's going to impact your results.

And if you have what it takes to manage those risks, there is nothing that says you shouldn't take a lot of them.

Okay, dashboards, We've talked a little bit about that, but again, I'm starting to see a major increase in the use of dashboards. Quite honestly, as a director, I'm still left with, well, what do you want me to do with this? Yes, it looks pretty, but there's no insight. There's no analysis. There's no so what? And I've seen a board pack I saw a couple of days ago very proudly they had a one page dashboard report and I could not get any intelligence from that because there was no analysis of what are the implications for the next few years about where some of these dashboards are taking us.

Next one.

Leading versus lagging indicators. It's very easy to measure stuff that has happened.

It should be just as easy to measure those things that are going to give us an indication of what might be happening into the future, where things are going. Julie, you want to say anything about the leading and laggings?

Yeah, look, leading indicators are often hard.

Correlation doesn't actually mean that they are causing the thing you want to happen, it just means that they tend to happen when that happens.

But as much as you can, look at the things that are in your control that if you do these things, you should generate the outcomes you want. And make sure that you are aware that those things are being done and done to the right standard.

One of the best techniques that you can use, and I found this works really, really well, is just the senior executive team looking to see how they measure things and what they then report to the board just ask themselves, in this report the measurements that we've used are these leading measures or are they lagging?

And then if they're not quite if they say well they're lagging, it's past performance stuff. So what might be a leading measure? And then you just get curious about it.

Do a bit of training on what developing a leading indicator might be. Get people thinking about are we analysing past performance or are we looking at the performance that is going to influence future performance?

And those very simple questions can make fundamental differences to how we measure and both report things. Okay, sure. Next one.

Okay, the key thing with any agenda is that it should help us focus on where's Wally.

Where's Wally? Somewhere in there if you see that yellow circle there's Wally. Now I could find that straight away because there was a big yellow circle around it I didn't have to go searching through all the other things to find out where it is. This is what your agenda wants to do.

Pull out the big items and make it very clear where that big issue is that we need to discuss.

And so board reports for example, which are the operational side of the board agenda, board reports should always answer, so what? So what do you want me to do with it? So what does it mean? What are the implications of this? And where's WALL E? Where's the big issue in this? Don't give me a forty page report and expect me to go through that forty page report trying to find out if there's a WALL E.

Make it easy. Pull it out for me. Julie?

Yep. Totally agree. I love to see headings in your board papers of strategic issue for the board to discuss or alignment to the strategy or these are the areas where we are seeking board insight. No management team knows everything.

So if you are writing a paper and hoping that the board will discuss it and give you some ideas that you don't currently have, actually ask for them. Be upfront. That way your directors read the

papers because that's what tells them how to shine in the meeting and it also tells them how to create the future they want for the organisation they care about.

Okay, Sean, the strategic agenda template. Do you want to take over from here?

No, I just thought you could just talk about the template that's available, I haven't got the Word document loaded, but I thought you just might want to talk everybody through the template and the availability. Sure.

Okay. So there's a template that you can both get a download of, or if you're using BoardPro, it's actually hardwired into it now so that you can choose to use it if you so want.

But in essence, it it puts everything down that you that we've talked about here and gives you examples of what they might look like. Have you got another slide on this one, Sean?

No. No. Just this one.

No. Okay. So what it does is it goes through and says, here are the sorts of things that that, and the sequence that we suggest. Now every board agenda is different. There is no such thing as the right agenda. But what the the the the key focus behind this is how do we keep our directors focused?

How do we keep them so that they can get the most value from the board papers? How they can get the most value from the discussions? Because their time, their insight is why they're sitting around that board table.

So have a look at it. Pull it pull out from that the bits that you that make sense for your board. And, particularly if you aren't using a consent agenda, that but that bite alone will start to help focus the attention of the directors.

Now this template, by the way, will be available. This Word template that Stevens designed over the many years will be available on our webinar page next week. So the email that I send you out on Monday of next week will include a link where you can download the template free of charge.

Shall we ask shall we answer a few questions, team?

Let's go for it.

There's some good questions in the In the three minutes we got left.

Let's see what we can do.

Do you want to select from the ones that we have there, Julie, or do you want me to?

I am particularly loving Donna's question about most of the boards that she knows have one and a half to two hour meetings. How do you slow them down and get them to really focus on the big issues rather than rushing to the finish line?

I have a couple of ideas. One is annual strategy day, annual risk review workshop, or annual risk workshop, which goes a little bit to another question about unidentified risks. The only way to find your unidentified risks is to look for them.

So take some times when you ask the board for a bigger time investment.

The other thing is offer them tea and biscuits and sandwiches at appropriate times or a glass of wine if need be so that you can have what I call strategic gossip, That purposeful discussion of matters that you want them to start developing an insight and honing an edge, but it's not quite on the agenda yet.

The other thing is the meeting should be so engaging that suddenly they go, oh heck, is it over?

Because if they are not totally engaged, if they are looking at their watches or daydreaming about what's happening next, you haven't got the value you deserve.

Brilliant. Sorry, Steve. We are out of time.

We will answer all of these, won't we?

Well, yes, we will. Yes, we will next week, and we'll put them on our website on the webinar page as well. So we will attend to all of them, can assure you. So please feel free to connect with Julie and Stephen on LinkedIn, everybody. I'm sure they'll really look forward to your connection there.

I'll draw your attention to the webinars we have coming up over the next few weeks. We have some really great topics. You'll also find the upcoming webinars on our website, Funnily enough on the webinar page of our website.

So just as you leave the webinar, don't forget to complete our one minute survey to go in the draw for our beautiful gift box. Thank you again, everybody for attending today. We always appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live webinars. Thank you Stephen and Julie for your attendance today. I hope you enjoyed the session everybody have a great day.