



Webinar

How to harness conflict in the boardroom to optimise outcomes

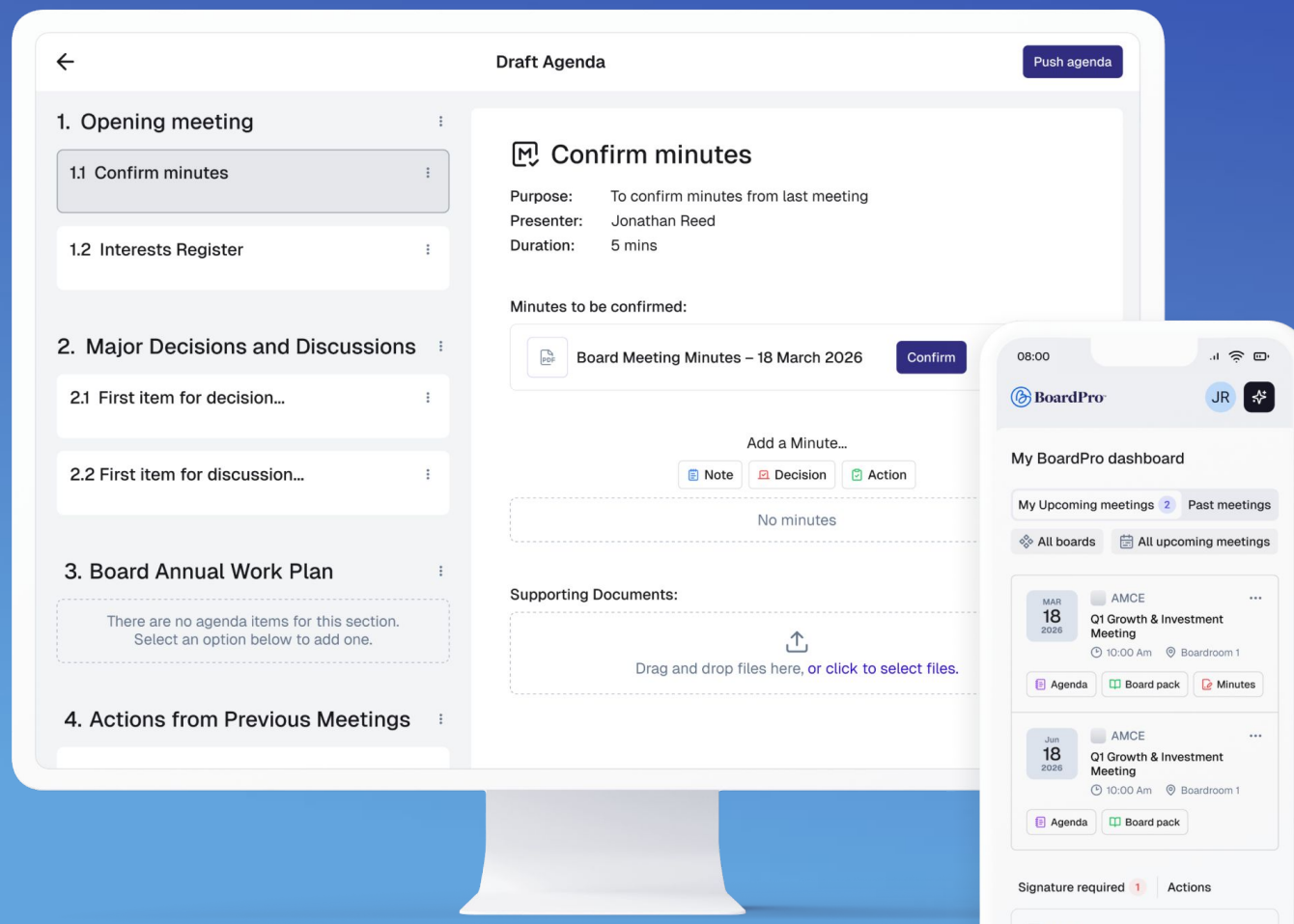
With Georgia Henry







Refreshingly simple board management software





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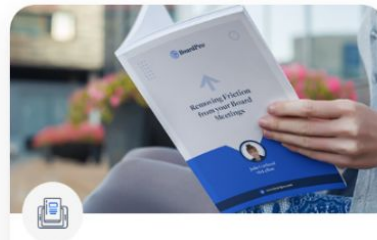
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Georgia Henry

CEO
Henry Reed



Fiona McKenzie

Managing Director
Resolving Matters



Anna Phan

Director
Resolve Consulting



Conflict is essential in the boardroom

- Many governance issues and strategic risks are caused by a failure to challenge assumptions and have difficult conversations.
- High-performing boards balance collaboration with constructive challenge.
- Effective governance requires diversity of thought and the confidence to express differing views.
- The objective in the boardroom is not harmony at all costs, it is better decision-making.



Positive conflict

- Focuses on ideas, risks, assumptions, and strategic alternatives.
- Encourages directors to test thinking and uncover blind spots.
- Improves decision quality and organisational resilience.
- Creates psychological safety where differing perspectives are welcomed.

Negative conflict

- Becomes personal rather than issue-focused.
- Involves hidden agendas, factionalism, or political behaviour.
- Undermines trust between directors, management, and the CEO.
- Leads to disengagement, defensiveness, and poor governance outcomes.



The goal is not to eliminate conflict.

**It is to ensure conflict is focused on
issues, not individuals.**



Why conflict becomes toxic and damaging

- Lack of psychological safety
- Dominant individuals
- Lack of role clarity and accountability
- Harmony over healthy challenge
- Unresolved grievances and lack of trust



The warning signs of a toxic dynamic

- Directors disengage or stop contributing
- Meetings become adversarial or passive-aggressive
- Alliances and factions emerge
- Conversations move outside formal meetings
- Board – CEO – Management relationships become strained



Effective boards embed challenge in governance practices so that disagreement and exploring different perspectives becomes normal, productive, and expected.



Avoiding a toxic dynamic

- The Chair's role is critical in setting the tone and upholding standards
- Establish clear values-aligned behavioural expectations and hold each other to account
- Encourage challenging assumptions and diverse perspectives
- Rotate the role of 'devil's advocate'
- Build respectful and trusted relationships
- Conduct regular board reviews



High-performing boards are not conflict-free.

They have learned how to engage in robust, respectful disagreement while maintaining trust, alignment, and a shared commitment to the organisation's success.



When conflict begins to become toxic

- Act as soon as it is apparent that relationships are at risk
- Refocus on purpose, core beliefs, and values to bring alignment and reinforce behaviours
- Provide clarity of roles and decision-making processes
- Reinforce common goals and governance protocols
- Seek independent support when needed



Strong governance requires constructive challenge.

By creating a culture where diverse perspectives are welcomed, assumptions are tested, and disagreements are managed respectfully, boards can transform conflict from a risk into one of their greatest strategic assets.



Georgia Henry

in www.linkedin.com/in/georgiahenry-henryreed



**Fiona
McKenzie**

in www.linkedin.com/in/fionamckenzie



Anna Phan

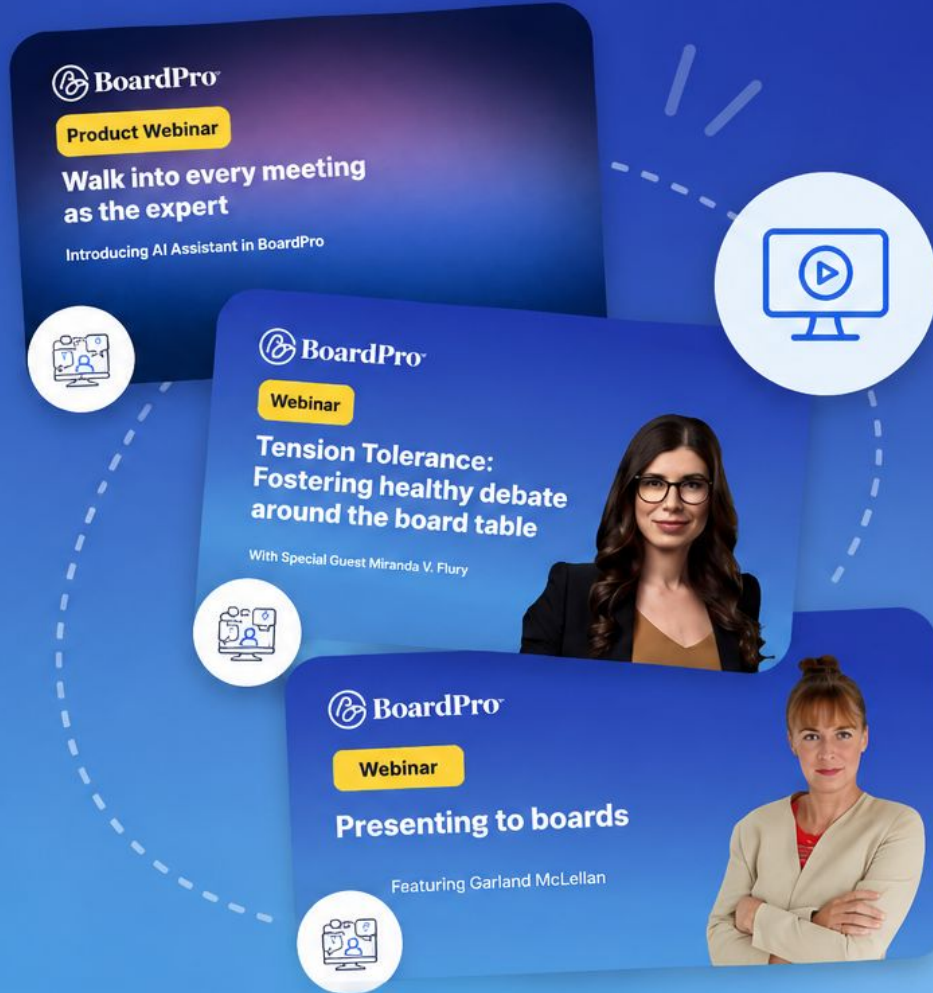
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