

# 15 Board Productivity Techniques

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There are meeting process ideas and governance decisions that can make any board more productive.

## Meeting process

1. Insist that proposals be presented days ahead of a meeting. Outline pros and cons of several options and highlight one the board ought to pick.
2. Practice punctuality; start on time.
3. Choose meeting days dates and times such that all directors have the best chance of being on time, prepared and energized.
4. Use a “soft-start” time: give the directors 15 – 20 minutes before the start of a meeting to engage in “small talk.” E.g. “Soft start 1:00 PM. Meeting 1:20 – 2:30.”
5. Place strategic issues discussions first: regardless of the time of day, the most energy the board will have is at the beginning.
6. Use a consent agenda to dispense with routine items all at one time.
7. Use something simpler than Robert’s Rules of Order.
8. Keep things moving: gently prod folks to speak succinctly, speak once, and to not repeat their points/arguments/views.
9. Allow for a modicum of jocularly: fun can energize participants.
10. Avoid unnecessary delays: don’t allow a minority of directors’ lack of preparation delay planned discussions, debates and decisions. Reward the prepared by moving ahead.
11. Incorporate a “parking lot” discussion period: ideas not correlated to current agenda items have a place to park until the board completes the agenda (Refer to #1).
12. Adjourn the meeting when the approved time to adjourn (a consent item) arrives.

## Governance

13. Define what your board wants in its regular diet of information; focus it down.
14. Delegate operational decisions to management.
15. Provide a formal orientation process.