

COMMITTEE REPORTS TO THE BOARD

The purpose of this document is to provide a template for the monthly committee reports to the Board.

A standardized template:

- provides Board members with information in a consistent and predictable form, which assists the Board in decision making;
- ensures a brief, written record is available for the Minutes;
- provides an opportunity for BOD members to track activity; and
- helps BOD members shift resources in cases where a committee requires additional support to meet its goal.

Suggested structure for Committee Reports to the BOD:

(The content of the following report is fictional, and offered only as an example of what a report may look like)

1. Committee Name:

Fundraising

2. Issue(s):

List out principal issues the committee is dealing with, for example:

- Capital campaign
- United Way Campaign
- Some other pithy example

3. Recent Activities:

Describe, in point form the most important events, activities, and key timelines or dates.

- committee met on (list dates)...
- the following events are scheduled for December ...

4. Key Challenges:

Describe, in point form:

- key challenges facing the committee, and
- options or considerations for addressing these challenges.

- bring the discussion to completion

- The facilitator notifies participants when they are close to running out of time on a particular topic. The participants may then decide to continue, or proceed onto the next topic.

3. Set the "Rules"

- It is helpful to spend a few minutes at the start of the meeting gaining agreement on the principles that will guide the meeting. These may include:
 - only one person will speak at a time
 - if several people wish to speak, a speakers list will be maintained
 - people will listen to one another
 - no one will ridicule or dismiss what another person is saying
 - everyone will respect the timeframes by arriving back from breaks on time
 - no cellar phones (have all messages held at the front desk and collect and distribute them at a break)
 - all participants will be honest, candid and respectful.

4. Keep a Record (Minutes)

- Each meeting should have a scribe who records the key points, by each topic area. The scribe should not be the facilitator, whose responsibilities are to ensure the meeting stays on track.
- All "Action" items should be recorded, including *who* will do *what* by *when*.
- The record provides an opportunity for those not able to attend the meeting to gain a sense of what occurred.
- The record should reflect the range and flavour of the discussions. It should not be a verbatim account of who said what. A verbatim account is difficult to ensure and often inhibits discussion.
- Include a contact name and phone number for anyone wishing to obtain additional information.

5. Identify Next Steps

- At the end of the meeting, list the key topics arising out of the meeting that will be addressed at the next meeting (this serves as the basis for the next agenda).

- Recap (verbally or on a flip chart) the action items, so that everyone is clear who is responsible for doing what before the next meeting.
 - Set the day, time and location of the next meeting.
6. Evaluate the Meeting
- In some cases, it is helpful to circulate a short, written "Feedback" form to participants. The purpose of the feedback is to identify areas that were most meaningful to participants as well as areas that can be improved.
 - For smaller, more informal sessions, go around the room and allow each participant to provide verbal feedback on what they thought of the meeting.

gay_yth2

A Facilitator "Tool Kit"

(Tricks of the Trade)

1. Ask for Clarification

- If you are unclear about the point being made, or the logic someone is using, ask them, or another participant to clarify what is being said. As the facilitator, you may also wish to restate what you understand has been said. It is often helpful to ask for examples.

2. Be a Traffic Cop

- Encourage full participation by ensuring no one person overly dominates the discussion or cuts other speakers off before they are finished.
- You can also create opportunities by inviting the more quiet participants to express their views or input.

3. Listen

- Actively explore ideas and avoid debating or having them being defended. It is often more valuable to solicit the full range of opinions than it is to decide who "is right" and who "is wrong".

4. Summarize

- Occasionally, it can be helpful to summarize your sense and understanding of what has been said. Ask the participants if their sense is the same as yours.

5. Keep the Discussion Relevant

- Step in and do not permit overlong examples, speeches or irrelevant discussion.

6. Stay on Time

- It is your job and duty to the participant to do your best in ensuring each topic is adequately covered, within the timeframe allotted to it.
- If a topic requires more time, ask for agreement from participants to continue, and identify which other topic (or break such as lunch) will be adjusted to accommodate the shift in times.
- Do not extend the meeting beyond the agreed to time except under extraordinary circumstances, and only if the participants agree.

7. Know When Enough Has Been Said

- Learn to tell when enough has been said, and it is time to wrap up discussion on that topic.
- Often, it is time to move on to another topic when people are repeating ideas previously expressed.
- Don't be afraid to move onto the next topic even though there is still time allotted for discussion. If the key points have been made, most participants will thank you if you move efficiently on to the next topic

8. Touching Base

- At the end of each topic discussion, summarize the key points that have been made. This summary should be very brief and focus on the key themes or ideas expressed during the discussion.
- In some situations, you may be required to seek consensus; while in others, a summary is all that is required.

9. Ask Questions

- Throughout the meeting, assess the quality of the discussion. Ask yourself and the participants: Are we getting what we want from this discussion? If not, what can we do in the time remaining to get "back on track?"

Request for Decision

This document is designed as a tool to assist decision makers, and those requesting that a decision be made. It is designed in a “fill-in-the-blanks” format in the hope that it will help speed up and focus the decision making process.

A Request for Decision should be a maximum of 1-2 pages in length.

It is suggested that we use this approach for 60-90 days, at which time its effectiveness will be evaluated.

Issue:

State the issue in a single sentence

For example: Streamlining the Decision Making Process

Decision being Requested:

State the decision you want the Board/Management or Committee to make in a single sentence. Be as specific as possible.

For example: That the Board and management at AVI adopt the attached template to help guide decision making for the next 90 days; after which its effectiveness will be evaluated.

Background:

Provide the decision makers with 3 - 4 sentences, in “bullet” format, which describe the key reasons this issue must be addressed or requires a decision.

For example:

* Several Board members and others have expressed concern that they are being asked to make program or policy decisions without adequate information, or time to consider the full range of options. Examples include: the recent shift in travel reimbursement for excluded staff and volunteers, and the Glen Net proposal from the Fund Development group.

* We are now requesting coordinators and staff to provide options and recommendations to the program and client concerns they identify. This is to

say we are making a significant shift away from the process of simply identifying problems and talking about them. We are now moving towards a place where our key staff and volunteers play a more meaningful role in decision making by identifying options and solutions to the challenges we face.

Options:

Provide the reader with your sense of what the most effective options are for resolving the issue raised.

For example:

Option 1:

Introduce the attached template designed to improve decision making for a 90 day period, after which its effectiveness shall be evaluated.

Option 2:

Retain the status quo, where decisions are requested on an ad-hoc basis.

Option 3:

Require staff and those requesting decisions to prepare full briefing notes in advance of any major decision being considered by the Board or management.

Partner/Client Input:

Where appropriate, provide 2-3 sentences describing feedback from the client/partner group most affected by the proposed decision. This input should be accurate, and not anecdotal or based on one individual's perspective.

For example:

Most staff and Board members support using the suggested decision making template for the 90 period. Most see it as potentially helpful in clarifying and speeding up the decision making process.

The Board and management are asked to ensure that the process not become "bureaucratic" or unnecessarily impede discussion on minor program or service delivery issues.

Advantages / Disadvantages

Describe the 2-3 most important advantages and disadvantages to the option or decision you would like the Board/management to make.

Recommendation:

State what you believe is the most effective option for addressing the issue raised.

For example:

Option 1:

Introduce the attached template designed to improve decision making for a 90 day period, after which its effectiveness shall be evaluated.

Prepared by:

Include the name of the person sponsoring the request for decision. Be specific and do not use the name of a committee or group (although the person requesting a decision may be presenting it on behalf of a group or committee).

For example:

Ted Matthews

Date:

Include the date the decision request is made.

For example:

March 7, 1997.

decision.doc

Request for Decision

The purpose of this document is to assist decision makers and those requesting that a significant decision be made. It is designed in a "fill-in-the-blanks" format in the hope that it will speed up and focus the decision making process. While "significant" is not clearly defined, those requesting decisions by the Board or Committees are trusted to use their judgement.

A Request for Decision should be a maximum of 1 - 2 pages long.

Issue:

Decision being Requested:

Background:

Options:

Partner/Client Input: (if appropriate)

Advantages/Disadvantages:

Key Advantages

Key Disadvantages

Recommendation:

Prepared by:

Date:
