

Case Study

10 Key Board/Committee Practices

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Introduction

Our Golf clubs health and long term sustainability is based on the effectiveness of our governing bodies, be they your National Association board, your District Association board and your own club board. Then on through to management committees or the numerous operating committees you may have their effectiveness is paramount to Golf's long term success and viability. Ideally a linking of all these boards thinking and implementation of aligned plans will really create a vibrant and relevant golfing community.

The following 10 key behaviors are a great checklist to see where you sit in this space at present, an ideal tool to introduce at your next board/committee session to checklist the health of your governance.



10 Key Behavior's:

In our golf clubs we have a variety of governance models and for the purpose of this case study we will use the term board, these key practices can also be attributed to the committee structure some clubs may have.

1. Practise participative leadership:

Any decisions made are made with the most participation from those making them and those affected by them. The board chair is the key to successfully ensuring maximum participation and input, balanced with actual decision-making.

Does the chair draw on all members of the board? And, are your board's decisions well-informed with the views of those who will be affected by your decision?

2. Share responsibility:

No one board member is more responsible than another. All board members are equally responsible and accountable. For this reason, all board members must give something so that the organisation receives the benefit.

Do some board members carry more of the burden than others?

3. Align with purpose:

To be aligned with purpose means that everything you do as a board member is in service of the purpose – the mission of the organisation.

Too often directors serve on boards for all the wrong reasons—for ego, power, to leave a legacy or they just can't say no—when their legal, fiduciary reason for being on the board is to serve the organisation's purpose and to act in its best interests.

Does your board act in the best interest of the organisation or are individual board members allowed to act in their own self-interest?

4. Encourage high levels of communication:

The primary responsibility for ensuring a message has been received lies with the sender, not the recipient. Operating at a high communication level means your interactions with management, shareholders and stakeholders alike are open and transparent, with full disclosure

The board must also take responsibility for the information it receives from management. A high-performing board proactively lets management know what it wants and needs.

5. Focus on the tasks of the board and the results of the organisation:

Is your board focused on the strategic governance work of the board, respecting the board/management line and readily moving beyond the task to results?

Or does it get bogged down in operations, management-level decision-making and generally the fun parts of operating a business? (Based on clubs with paid management structures, those without still need to make sure homage is paid to strategic direction)

6. Orient toward the future:

Are you future focussed and not always stuck in the present or past-focussed? Organisation that remains optimistically but realistically future -focussed are more successful, allow for more innovative thinking and actions.

7. Make use of diverse and creative talents:

There is significant value to boardroom diversity. Real value in diversity lies in diversity of thought, sex, experience and skill sets. Are your board members representative of your stakeholders? A quick and easy check for this is "what are the golf handicaps of your board?" are they all too similar?

8. Respond rapidly to organisational

Boards should never become a stumbling block to decision making. When faced with pressure to make a quick decision, should they take the time to constructively challenge management recommendations, test their assumptions and consider the pros and cons? Yes they should! A clear understanding of the decision-making process is understood so they are ready to respond rapidly when called on.

9. Have a healthy risk appetite:

A high-performance board has a risk appetite suitable for the organisation and the sector it is in – it decides on opportunities in a calculated and measured way, while at the same time acting with courage, wisdom and common sense.

10. Be comfortable with dissent:

Life and board meetings, just seem easier when we all agree with one another. But is that best for the organisation? Or, is there value to be had in dissenting views?

Building a board that is comfortable with dissent takes a great chair and emotionally mature board members. High-performing boards maintain solidarity while being comfortable with dissenting voices, challenging assumptions and building consensus.

Conclusion

Effective governance is the key to our future, if you require assistance in governance at any level Ph. 09 485 – 3230 to locate your areas NZ Golf Regional Support Manager

