

BOARD CHAIR CHECKLIST

The performance of the Board Chair can make or break board productivity and organizational effectiveness. The Board Chair's job is to facilitate meetings, foster strong board performance, and serve as a bridge between the board and staff leadership, promoting accountability, collaboration, and long-term sustainability.

Use this checklist to ensure your tenure as Board Chair strengthens board leadership and engagement.

Communication

To promote clear and effective communication, the board chair must model clarity and respect, create structured processes, and foster mutual trust. Open, two-way communication with the executive director and among board members is foundational to effective governance and mission success.

As Board Chair, I...

- ☐ Meet regularly with the ED to share ideas, ask questions, voice concerns
- ☐ Frame questions in ways that lead to productive conversations
- ☐ Create a safe space for asking questions, voicing concerns, and offering dissenting views
- ☐ Demonstrate active listening and ask clarifying questions.
- ☐ Touch base with committee chairs regularly to encourage and support
- ☐ Ask for feedback from board members on board process and procedures

Meetings

The board chair plays a critical role in ensuring that board meetings are productive, engaging, and aligned with the organization's strategic priorities. Well-run meetings build trust, drive progress, and support board member engagement.

As Board Chair, I...

- ☐ Craft the agenda with input from the ED and Committee Chairs
- ☐ Use the consent agenda to handle routine and non-controversial issues quickly
- ☐ Ensure meeting packets go out on time
- ☐ Facilitate meeting discussion so all voices are heard
- ☐ Understand who will speak up in meetings and who need to be coaxed
- ☐ Remain impartial
- ☐ Keep board discussion aligned with long-term goals and mission impact

BOARD CHAIR CHECKLIST (cont.)

Leadership

Effective board chairs set the tone for board culture and performance. They model high standards, focus the board on governance rather than operations, address underperformance or misconduct directly, and actively support the development of other board leaders. By fostering accountability, inclusion, and strategic thinking, strong board chairs ensure the board remains mission-driven, future-focused, and effective in its oversight role.

As Board Chair, I...

- ☐ Model the level of performance expected of all board members, leading by example in fund development, meeting attendance, and ongoing board education
- ☐ Ensure that board members are focused on governance and not involved in operations
- ☐ Mentor and guide committee chairs
- ☐ Follow up with board members who are disengaged to determine the reason and identify next steps
- ☐ Caution board members who disrupt meetings, behave rudely, or violate board policies
- ☐ Diplomatically encourage non-performers and disruptors to resign and take steps to remove them if necessary
- ☐ Schedule regular board self-assessment, using results to guide improvement
- ☐ Invest in board succession planning and leadership development to ensure long-term sustainability

If you are missing a few checkmarks above or if you need more detail about any item on the checklist, the ElevateNPT team is here to help.

Let's chat!