

Building a Successful Board Communication Strategy

In the C-suite, effective communication differentiates thriving boards from those facing costly missteps. In fact, ineffective communication is estimated to cost businesses nearly half their employees' potential productivity.

Thus, effective two-way communication channels are the foundation of robust governance, providing a smooth flow of information. Moreover, it promotes a culture of collaboration among board members.

This white paper explains how to develop a communication strategy that bridges the gap between leadership and the board. It also explores the required steps of establishing the strategy. As a bonus, you can download a free customizable template for various situations.

Why is a board communication strategy important?

A well-defined communication plan customized to the board's needs promotes a collaborative and informed decision-making atmosphere.

Here's how a strategic communication approach empowers your board and ultimately, your organization:

- ▶ **Streamlined operations and increased engagement.** Clear communication channels ensure board members feel valued and informed. When directors feel heard, they are more likely to be engaged in the process. Therefore, a communication plan that tailors methods to the message (e.g., email for updates, board meetings for complex discussions) keeps everyone on the same page.

- ▶ **Sharper and informed decisions.** When board members have access to timely, clear, and concise information, they can confidently steer the company. With clear communication, board meetings become more effective by eliminating information bottlenecks.
- ▶ **Enhanced collaboration and innovation.** A well-crafted communication plan encourages open exchange of ideas and diverse perspectives. This mirrors the way a board leverages the expertise of its members. Therefore, by working together, directors can use their experience for more innovative and well-rounded decisions.
- ▶ **Transparency, accountability, and trust.** Clear communication channels promote transparency within the boardroom, resulting in more comprehensive corporate actions. This not only builds trust with stakeholders but also holds directors accountable for their actions.

Template of example of developing board communication strategy

This table offers a foundation for building your board communication strategy. You may tailor it to your requirements and download it as an editable spreadsheet for further convenience.

Communication goal	Communication channel	Frequency	Content	Metrics
Objectives	Board meeting packet and presentation	Quarterly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Company mission and vision 2. Strategic objectives 3. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board members comprehension of the strategy 2. Level of engagement with strategic discussion
Update board on key performance indicators (KPIs)	Monthly performance report (emailed)	Monthly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial performance 2. Operational metrics 3. Market trends 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alignment between actual performance and strategic goals 2. Timeliness of reporting
Facilitate discussion on critical issues	Pre-meeting materials and board meeting	Quarterly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Issue description and background 2. Proposed solutions and recommendations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Depth of discussion on critical issues 2. Board consensus on solutions
Maintain board member engagement	Board portal and secure messaging app	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share relevant news and articles 2. Facilitate discussions on industry trends 3. Address individual board member inquiries 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board member portal activity 2. Frequency of communication outside of meetings

Communication goal	Communication channel	Frequency	Content	Metrics
Gather board feedback	Anonymous board surveys	Bi-annually	1. Overall satisfaction with communication 2. Clarity of information provided 3. Value of board materials	1. Board member participation rate 2. Actionable insights from feedback

Step 1: Define your communication goals

Start by determining your communication goals. What do you want to achieve through increased board communication? Here are a few examples:

- Increase board members' participation in discussions.
- Improve understanding of critical strategic initiatives.
- Facilitate quick decision-making on crucial issues.
- Encourage a culture that values partnership and open communication.

Step 2: Identify your target audience

Consider your board members' diverse information demands. Undoubtedly, factors like tenure, committee participation, and background may impact the most important information.

Step 3: Choose your communication channels

Choose the most appropriate communication channels based on the information being conveyed and the desired level of involvement. Common channels are:

- **The board portal** is a secure online platform for sharing meeting materials, minutes, and other relevant documents.
- **Emails** are effective for time-sensitive updates and one-on-one communication.
- **Board meetings** are the primary forums for in-depth discussions and decision-making.
- **Conference calls** help to tackle the problem when in-person meetings are impossible.
- **Surveys and polls** gather board member feedback on important issues.

Step 4: Establish communication frequency and timing

Determine how frequently you will interact with board members and when particular information should be presented.

- **Regular meetings.** Set a regular schedule for board meetings. They can be weekly, but not less than once a month.
- **Pre-meeting materials.** Distribute board materials before (at least business 5 days) so attendees arrive prepared.
- **Interim updates.** Provide updates on important topics between meetings as needed.

Step 5: Define communication protocols

It's important to establish clear guidelines for communication flow so everyone is on the same page. This includes setting the following aspects:

- **Response timeframes.** Establish setting response timeframes so everyone knows when to expect a reply.
- **Confidentiality guidelines.** Ensure board members understand the sensitive nature of certain information.
- **Director contact information.** Encourage board members to communicate directly,

Step 6: Measurement and review

Improving your board communication strategy is an ongoing process, and feedback helps to ensure its relevance. For example, think about conducting periodic surveys or focus groups with board members to gather insights and identify areas for improvement.

Consider the following questions:

- Do you feel you have access to the information you need to make informed decisions?
- Are the communication channels used by the board clear and efficient?
- Are you comfortable sharing your opinions and participating in discussions during board meetings?

Communication channels and tools checklist

A well-defined board communication strategy is based on comprehensive communication channels and technologies. This checklist will assist you in identifying the resources required to guarantee that your board communicates, securely, and efficiently. Use this checklist to verify that you have remembered all important aspects of a solid communication infrastructure for your board.

- Identify the most suitable communication channels for different types of information (e.g., board portal for sensitive documents, email for time-sensitive updates, secure chat platforms for real-time discussions).
- Evaluate existing communication tools and platforms for effectiveness and security.
- Consider implementing a secure board portal for sharing materials, managing agendas, and storing board minutes.
- Establish clear guidelines for using different communication channels, including protocols for data security and information access control.
- Train board members on how to use the chosen communication tools and platforms effectively.

Simplify your board meetings and streamline collaboration using board portal solution.

According to the [board portal comparison](#), experts recommend the [iDeals' board portal](#) as the number one board management software:



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