

Tool



The Chair's meeting companion

A tool to use before, during and after each board meeting.

Meeting details

Organisation:

Meeting date:

Start / end time:

Location / link:

Quorum required:

Chair:

PART 1

Before the meeting

Work through this section in the week leading up to your meeting.

Agenda check: have you applied the five principles?

- ☐ The most important strategic item is near the start, when energy is highest
- ☐ Every item is has timings allocated so directors arrive with realistic expectations
- ☐ Each item is labelled discuss, decide or note
- ☐ Routine items (minutes, standard reports) are grouped into a consent agenda
- ☐ There is time at the end for reflection — even five minutes

Board papers: have you reviewed them as a director would?

- ☐ All papers received at least one week before the meeting
- ☐ Each paper has a short cover sheet stating purpose, recommendation and decision required
- ☐ Plain English throughout — jargon or acronyms explained
- ☐ I can follow every paper. If I can't, I have pushed back before the meeting

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Pre-meeting briefings: the two conversations that save the meeting

Who	When	Key points / agreed actions
CEO		
Secretary		

Director check-in — what to watch for in the room

Who hasn't spoken much in the last two or three meetings? How might I invite them in?

What's brewing that might come up unexpectedly?

Plan your opening: the first five minutes

- ☐ Welcome and acknowledgement of country
- ☐ Apologies noted
- ☐ Conflicts of interest invited — "Any conflicts to declare on today's agenda?"
- ☐ Agenda and timing confirmed — "We have two hours. We'll spend most of it on item three. Any objections?"
- ☐ State the purpose — "What we're here to achieve today..."

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PART 2

During the meeting

Keep this page in front of you. Use the tables to track decisions and the things that come up.

Facilitation phrases worth remembering

To slow a dominant voice: "Thanks Pat, let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken on this yet."

To bring in a quiet director: "Sam, I'd value your take on this."

To test for a decision: "It sounds like we're broadly agreed on X, is anyone still uncomfortable?"

To diffuse tension: "I can see there are strong views here, let's pause and make sure we understand each other."

To buy time: "I'd like us to take ten minutes. Let's reconvene at quarter past."

Decision log

Motion / decision	Vote outcome	Action owner	Due

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Parking lot: important but off-agenda

Capture anything raised that doesn't belong in today's discussion. Return to it deliberately, not by accident.

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PART 3

After the meeting

Complete this section within 48 hours, while the meeting is still fresh.

Reflection: two questions, every time

What worked well? What would I do differently next time?

Debrief with CEO and secretary

A 20-minute call within a few days. What did each of you observe? What needs to change before next time?

People to check in with

Anyone who was visibly uncomfortable, went quiet, or pushed hard on an item that didn't land. A short call — listen more than you talk.

Who	What I want to acknowledge or explore

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Looking ahead to the next meeting agenda

Items that need to come back, actions to follow up on, or process changes worth making.

A note on doing this every meeting

The first few times this will feel like extra work. By the third or fourth meeting it becomes a rhythm and the meetings themselves get noticeably better. You don't have to use every section every time. Use what helps.