

The Art and Craft of Meeting Minutes

A Practical Guide for Governance Professionals

Meeting minutes are a vital component of effective governance, serving as a detailed record of the discussions, decisions, and actions taken during board meetings. They provide a clear and concise account of the meeting, ensuring transparency and accountability among the board. In short, meeting minutes are more than just records; they also serve as a governance safety net.

This guide delves into the art and craft of meeting minutes, offering practical tips, insights, and tools to help governance professionals master this essential skill.

Why Meeting Minutes Matter

While meeting minutes may feel like a tedious governance process, they are essential to the board meeting lifecycle. Well-crafted minutes provide a clear record of an organization's decision-making process; help protect board members and create a reliable corporate memory. Moreover, quality minutes not only help protect board members but also create a reliable corporate memory that can be invaluable during regulatory reviews, legal challenges, and leadership transitions.

Finding the Sweet Spot for Detail

The key to effective minutes is finding the right balance of detail. Too little detail may result in a meaningless record, while too much detail may create a transcript that exposes unnecessary risks. When crafting meeting minutes, it is important to document the “what” and the “why,” as opposed to trying to capture every word. Minute writers – typically the corporate secretary – should focus on capturing the essence of the discussion, including key points that were covered, questions that shaped the board’s thinking, the rationale behind decisions, and any clear outcomes and action items.

Making Meeting Minutes Readable and Useful

Making minutes readable and useful is crucial for ensuring that they are easily understood and actionable. To achieve this, avoid dense, jargon-filled minutes and, instead, consider the below:

- Use plain language that new board members and other future readers will understand.
- Break up content with clear headings and structure to make it digestible.
- Highlight decisions and action items visually to help draw attention to them.
- Be consistent in conveying recurring elements of the meeting minutes.

Managing Sensitive Information

Some discussions, such as executive compensation or potential litigation, require careful handling. Minute writers should work with the general counsel to develop a consistent approach for sensitive topics. Sometimes less is more, but complete omission may be problematic. Therefore, it is important to balance transparency with appropriate discretion. To help do that, below are some tips from governance professionals, for governance professionals:

- ✓ **Draft minutes while fresh.** Minute writers should capture key points within 24-48 hours while memories are clear. This helps ensure that the minutes are accurate and reflect the true essence of the discussions and decisions made during the meeting.
- ✓ **Create a review rhythm.** When circulating the meeting minutes draft, minute writers should establish expectations and deadlines for comments. Setting a consistent review schedule helps streamline the process and ensure timely feedback from board members.
- ✓ **Befriend technology.** Minute writers should consider using board management software, like Nasdaq Boardvantage®, to streamline the meeting minutes process. Leveraging technology can help improve efficiency and accuracy and make the minutes easily accessible to board members.

The Bottom Line

Well-crafted minutes result from thoughtful preparation before the meeting, active listening during the meeting, and skilled distillation after the meeting. Mastering the art and craft of meeting minutes helps position governance professionals as invaluable partners who enable effective decision-making among the board and help protect the organization in the long run.

How Nasdaq Boardvantage® Can Help

Nasdaq's board management software is helping shape the future of the boardroom with AI-driven workflows, including AI minutes. Nasdaq Boardvantage helps capture discussions fast, streamlining the minutes process that typically takes up to five hours per meeting. Plus, corporate secretaries can provide the board with prompt access to recorded minutes, facilitating timely decision-making and historical reference. Are you ready to realize efficiency?

[Explore AI Minutes](#)

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