

BOARD LEARNING TOOLKIT

MAKING INFORMATION STICK



Quick Assessment: Is your Board learning stuck?

Check all that apply

- Board members ask the same questions repeatedly
- Board discussions lack depth or insight
- You re-explain concepts from previous meetings
- New members take 6+ months to feel confident
- Members seem disengaged during presentations
- Strategic discussions get bogged down in basic explanations



If you checked 3+ boxes, your board would benefit from these adult learning strategies.



1

Start with “WHY” before “WHAT”

The Principle: Adult learners need context and relevance

- Begin each topic with: "To fulfill your governance role of [X], you need to understand [Y]."
- Frame information around decisions they need to make.
- Connect data to board responsibilities.

Template Phrases:

"This impacts your fiduciary oversight because..."

"As stewards of our mission, this means..."

"For strategic decision-making, the key insight is..."

2

Use the 10-MINUTE rule

The Principle: Chunk information into digestible segments

- Break presentations into 10-minute blocks.
- Follow each segment with 2-3 minutes of discussion.
- Use visual breaks between topics.

Meeting Structure Template:

Minutes 1-10: Present one key topic

Minutes 11-13: Interactive discussion / Q&A

Minutes 14-24: Next topic block

Minutes 25-27: Application & Reflection

3

Connect to Personal Experience

The Principle: Link new information to existing knowledge

- Ask: "How does this compare to what you've seen in your industry?"
- Reference their professional background when relevant.
- Use analogies from their expertise areas.

Conversation Starters:

"In your experience with [their field], how would you approach..."

"This reminds me of the [concept] you mentioned from [their industry]..."

"Given your background in [X], what patterns do you notice here?"

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4

Build in Reflection & Application

The Principle: Active processing transfers information to long-term memory.

- End each topic with: "What's one key insight you're taking from this?"
- Ask application questions before votes.
- Create brief reflection moments.

Reflection Question Bank:

"How might this influence your decision on [upcoming vote]?"

"What would you want to know more about before our next meeting?"

"If you had to explain this to another board member, what would you emphasize?"

BETWEEN-MEETING REINFORCEMENT STRATEGIES

Micro-Learning Emails



Send 2-3 sentence updates that reinforce meeting topics Template: "Quick reminder: Last week we discussed [X]. The key takeaway for your governance role: [Y]. This will be relevant when we vote on [Z] next month."

Peer Learning Partnerships

Pair experienced members with newer ones for informal mentoring.

Just-in-Time Resources

Provide targeted information right before board members need to apply it.

Inventory Checklist

This Month

- Identify 1 recurring topic that needs re-explanation.
- Reframe next presentation to start with "why".
- Set timer for 10-minute presentation blocks.
- Prepare 3 reflection questions for your next meeting.

Next Month

- Survey board members: "What format helps you learn best?"
- Create template for micro-learning follow-up emails.
- Establish peer mentoring partnerships.

Ongoing

- Track which topics require repeated explanation.
- Ask for feedback: "What helped that information stick?"
- Build reflection questions into every agenda.

Quick Reference



- Adult Learning Principles: Self-directed, experience-based, problem-centered, immediately applicable
- Retention Rate: People remember 10% of what they read, 70% of what they discuss and apply

