



Checklist for A Killer Virtual Board Meeting

- **Chair Should Set Expectations:** The board chair should include some basic instructions and expectations in the invite, such as: no multitasking, business casual dress, taking the meeting in a “closed-door” setting.
- **Do One or Two Tech Run-Throughs:** Have a member of the IT team walk each director through their technical set-up — including the videoconferencing platform and any additional third-party apps — well in advance of the meeting. Liz Huebner, a board member for REI and Blue Apron, said REI required just such a training in advance of their virtual board retreat in early May. “They put protocols in place even about how to signal when you want to ask a question.”
- **Equip Board Members Accordingly:** After the tech-check, consider mailing hardware (like headsets) or suggesting noise-cancelling software (like krisp.ai) to improve audio.
- **Pass Legal Muster:** Ensure your remote meeting passes legal muster ([check this database for state laws](#) and consult your own bylaws and legal team) and that your discussion and file-sharing platforms meet security requirements.
- **Online Scheduling:** Use an online scheduling tool to assure time zones are accurate and respectful when planning your virtual meeting.
- **Video Camera Expectations:** Encourage participants to keep their camera on for richer engagement and clarity of intent. “It creates a more human connection, allowing the board to get a feel for how the management team is doing,” says Hubert Joly, executive chairman of Best Buy. “It also ensures greater focus as everyone has to be their best. There is no hiding on a video call!”
- **Staffing & Back-Up Plan:** During the meeting, have a staff member on-hand to assist with any technological difficulties. Have a call-in number to join the meeting as a last resort.
- **Use a Moderator:** A moderator can assure all these systems above are in place and can help keep a meeting running smoothly without a hitch. By leveraging a professional remote board coach, you get someone who can facilitate bold and effective group discussion and suggest a breakout discussion if they gauge participation is lacking or to help re-energize the group. Mullenweg, of Automattic, has run remote board meetings for years and swears by the use of a chief of staff to moderate.
- **Feedback Protocol:** Plan a feedback session the day after your first virtual board meeting. Request board members gather their thoughts and observations as quickly as possible, while their reactions are fresh in their minds. Participants could break into small groups to discuss what worked, what didn't, and any possible solutions and report back. You can collect feedback via anonymous polling, but we suggest you get your board comfortable with open and straightforward feedback.

Source: <https://hbr.org/2020/07/the-upside-of-virtual-board-meetings>