

CHAPTER 3

E-governance Is Good Governance

IMPROVING NONPROFIT BOARD LEADERSHIP
THROUGH ONLINE TECHNOLOGY

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Picture the ideal board of directors, one that is fully engaged in the stewardship of the nonprofit's mission—a board that is interactive in its governance role, without relying solely on printed reports for business intelligence. This board would be informed well in advance of each meeting on the key issues to be discussed and resolved. Members would collaborate between meetings and inform the agenda. They would have quick access to current financials, performance benchmarks, policies, and other information. They would be confident that the information they see is accurate, current, and reliable. Their decision-making process would be transparent, and members would be accountable for individual and collective actions.

WEB 2.0 ENTERS THE BOARDROOM

At its core, the concept of e-governance is about good governance. With the widespread adoption of e-governance in the nonprofit sector, there is a paradigm shift as boards move from passive consumers of historical data to active participants in knowledge creation and management. With e-governance, nonprofits have the potential to cultivate the ideal board.

E-governance is paving the way for this evolution in much the same way that Web 2.0 changed the way we communicate. Gone are the days when we relied solely on snail mail to share information—we now regularly share photos and videos online; we blog, podcast, chat, and post messages on others' "walls." E-governance begs this question: With the wide variety of online, real-time collaboration people enjoy at home and at work, why would boards of directors

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still rely only on traditional methods of communication? Organizations are asking themselves this question, and the industry is responding with online tools—such as board portal technology—and strategies designed specifically to support good governance.

What Is E-governance?

Although the initial use of the term “e-governance” dates back to the late-1990s Internet boom, the concept continues to evolve in the wake of widespread use of Web 2.0 technologies. In its earliest iteration, e-governance referred to the use of the Internet to deliver government information and services to citizens—particularly in remote regions of the world—as a means to increase access to services as well as democratic participation.¹ With the advent of Sarbanes-Oxley legislation in the United States, many corporate boards began adopting similar principles to increase organizational transparency. Now, with governance-specific online technologies in use across the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors, “e-governance” can be defined as the strategic, conscious use of web-based technologies—particularly board portals—to improve governance.

Board portals offer a cohesive collection of web-based tools designed specifically to address the needs of boards of directors (Figure 3.1). Most board portals are online software-as-a-service solutions in which board members can store and retrieve documents, access real-time information, and connect with one another, thus allowing them to spend less time on routine tasks and more time focused on strategy and policy. Portal solutions offer the ability to meet virtually, as well as to enhance the productivity of face-to-face meetings. Although board portals range in terms of their features and pricing, all board portals have a common goal: to provide boards of directors a platform for achieving good governance by making their work more efficient and transparent.

This screenshot is of a typical board portal. The portal enables board members to share documents, communicate, and collaborate online through a web-based interface.

E-GOVERNANCE IN THE NONPROFIT SECTOR: WHAT’S HAPPENING NOW?

BoardEffect and the Alliance for Nonprofit Management teamed up in May 2008 to conduct a survey on alliance members’ use of various online technologies to facilitate board governance.² The data collected tracked current board communication methods, the usage and adoption rates of different tools, and the effects that technology is having on board engagement. The results provide insight into a shift currently under way—as more nonprofit organizations

Board Home
 Committee Workroom
 Development
 Calendar
 Board Directory
 Resource Library
 Help
 My Account
 Administration

Welcome

Welcome to BoardEffect® – the leading e-governance tool for nonprofit boards of directors. BoardEffect® can help your board members organize and streamline the governance process.

In BoardEffect®, you can:

- Store and organize documents, minutes, and more in the Resource Library
- Conduct your committee work in the Committee Workroom
- Access an online version of your Board Manual
- Download or print Meeting Books for upcoming meetings
- Respond to RSVP requests to help with meeting scheduling
- Use the Task List to set reminders for yourself or for other board members
- Discuss issues between meetings using the Discussion Forum

News & Announcements [add]

Welcoming our newest members

RSVPs [add]

August orientation meeting

Please let us know which date in August works best for our annual orientation meeting.

RSVP by: July, 31

[View all RSVP's >](#)

Poll [add]

Should the board adopt the Conflict of Interest Policy provided by the Governance Committee?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Abstain

[View all polls >](#)

[edit]

My Tasks

Task Title	Due Date	Task Creator	[add] [edit] [delete]
Prepare committee report	08/31/09	Dottie Schindlinger	[edit] [delete]
Finalize July Board Retreat Agenda	08/19/09	Dottie Schindlinger	[edit] [delete]

Upcoming Board Events

Start Date	Event Description	
Jul 20 at 11:30 AM	BoardEffect demo	<input type="button" value="save"/>
Jul 24 at 06:00 PM	Sample event	<input type="button" value="save"/>
Jul 31 at 01:00 PM	July meeting	<input type="button" value="save"/>
Aug 07 at 07:00 PM	Summer reception	<input type="button" value="save"/>

In this section

- Meeting Books
- Board Manual
- Poll(s)
- RSVP(s)
- Discussion Forums
- Live Talk
- Create a Task
- Email a Board Member

Who's Logged In? (0)

AA Larger Text

FIGURE 3.1 **Board Portal** *Source: BoardEffect.*

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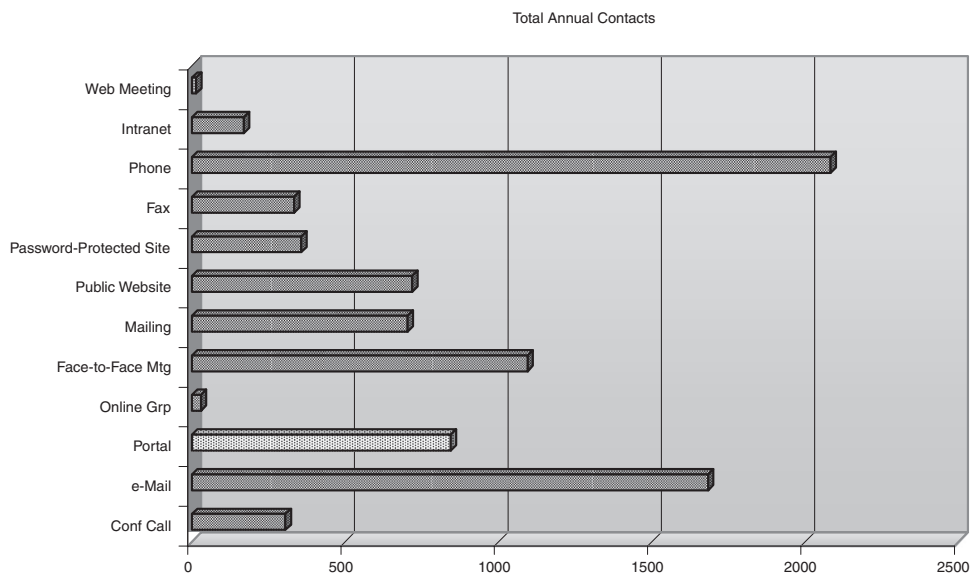


FIGURE 3.2 Total Annual Contacts *Source: BoardEffect.*

begin adopting e-governance, they are realizing gains in their boards' level of efficiency, productivity, and engagement. Of the 17.6 percent of Alliance members who participated in the survey, 61 percent work for nonprofits; another 33 percent were from for-profit organizations serving the nonprofit sector; and the remaining 6 percent were from other organizations, including consulting firms with both nonprofit and for-profit clients.

The survey asked what methods respondents were using regularly to communicate with their boards (Figure 3.2), ranging from board portals to e-mails and face-to-face meetings. The results show that nonprofits still rely mostly on e-mail, phone calls, and face-to-face meetings to facilitate board communication. However, although the percentage of nonprofit boards using board portals was small, the number of annual board contacts made via board portals was higher than via conference calls, public web sites, password-protected sections of web sites, online groups, mailings, and faxes. Figure 3.2 shows the number of annual contacts nonprofits have with their boards using various communication vehicles.

The survey also found that board portal-driven communication happens more frequently (at least once per month) than other methods (see Figure 3.3). This indicates that the organizations using board portals have a greater level of interaction with board members than those relying solely on other methods of communication. Figure 3.3 shows the frequency of contact nonprofits have with their boards using a variety of communication vehicles.

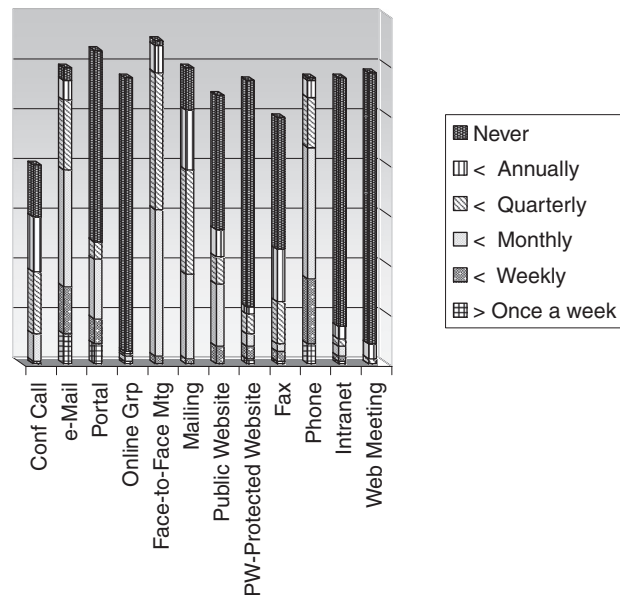


FIGURE 3.3 Frequency of Board Communication, by Method
Source: BoardEffect.

In terms of the types of organizations using board portals, the survey found no significant correlation between the size of the organization, average age of board members, or the size of the organization's budget and board portal usage. In other words, the perception that an organization's budget is too small or its board members or the organization itself too old to implement a board portal solution does not seem to be accurate.

The survey also asked respondents to estimate their time and expenses to manage the board's work. The weighted annual cost came in at \$7,500, and the estimated cost in terms of staff time to facilitate the board's work was even greater. For example:

- About 70 percent of organizations require the efforts of two to five staff members to prepare board documents.
- More than 60 percent of nonprofits report that at least 10 hours per month of staff time is spent on managing the board's work.
- Approximately 20 percent reported spending more than 20 hours per month of staff time managing the board's work.

Even the most routine task, scheduling meetings, was reported to be labor intensive. More than half of all respondents reported that rescheduling meetings takes two days of staff time, and another 18 percent reported that it takes between

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7 and 14 days. The high cost—in terms of staff effort and the expense of creating and disseminating board materials—is of great concern to many organizations, particularly in this era of heightened scrutiny and limited resources.

In addition, the survey found that information security—perhaps the most pressing concern in corporate governance—is becoming an issue in the nonprofit sector, as well. Although one-third of respondents reported concerns about the privacy and security of their board’s information and documents, most respondents also distribute information to the board in e-mail attachments, a method of sharing information that is notoriously unsecure. The majority of the respondents who are concerned about information security rely primarily on e-mail, faxes, and mailings to distribute information to board members; none of these respondents used a board portal. The indication is that, as information security concerns continue to rise, nonprofits are likely to seek out more secure communication methods such as board portals.

Board Portals: A Brief History

As with many online technologies, board portals began to fill a specific need, namely reducing the personal liability of corporate directors in the wake of the Enron and WorldCom scandals early in the 2000s. New rules and requirements being handed down from every regulatory body—from the Securities and Exchange Commission to the U.S. Senate—meant that directors suddenly found themselves overloaded by information. Companies quickly realized they would need a way to manage and organize documents, track communications among directors, and filter important information so that it wouldn’t get “lost” in directors’ e-mail inboxes. Directors also needed to know that they were protected—that the information they had access to was of high-enough quality that they would be able to be accountable should something go wrong.

Beginning in 2002, several voices in the United States began to clamor for similar changes in the nonprofit sector. A study by McKinsey & Company in June 2002 calculated that the nonprofit sector could leverage an additional \$100 billion a year by improving efficiency.³ Soon after, the U.S. Congress, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and a panel on the nonprofit sector comprising nonprofit leaders from across the country began issuing recommendations for ways to improve nonprofit management and governance, focusing on transparency, accountability, and efficiency. In 2008, the IRS implemented a new version of Form 990—the form many nonprofits are required to file annually to the IRS—which required nonprofits to disclose their policies on conflicts of interest, document retention and destruction, and whistle-blower protection, and to identify whether the organization has a separate audit committee.

Nonprofit organizations now face increased scrutiny, tougher requirements to keep their charitable status, and heightened public interest in how dollars are spent. As early as 2003, nonprofits began seeking technology solutions that could help their boards govern more effectively. Some nonprofits, such as Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, developed their own solution by adapting existing intranets.⁴ At the time, the cost of hosted online governance solutions was perceived as too high for the nonprofit sector to absorb, with entry fees for board portals hovering around \$25,000 per year.⁵ However, with the recent advent of lower-cost board portals and the increased availability of nonprofit-specific options, more nonprofits began taking the leap, with an estimated 5 percent of the sector using board portals by June 2008.⁶

Board portal usage is on the rise in general—recent studies show that the number of companies using board portals grew from 12 percent in 2005 to roughly 26 percent in 2007.⁷ Recent articles and workshops offered by BoardSource, a nationally recognized capacity-building agency specializing in nonprofit board governance, demonstrate that more nonprofits are beginning to take notice of e-governance and to investigate the options available.⁸ The usage of this new technology in the nonprofit sector is likely to increase at rates similar to those in the corporate sector over the next three to five years.

Board Portal Features and Functionality

Although board portal software ranges widely in terms of price and industry focus, the features and functionality portals offer tend to be similar. The following sections discuss common features.

Personalized Dashboards and Alerts Most board portals offer a variety of strategies to keep directors updated on current issues, discussions, documents for review, action items, and financials. A common feature is the personalized dashboard, which shows board members the items waiting for their time and attention the moment they log in to the portal. Items on the dashboard might include personalized to-do lists, meeting scheduling requests, news items, upcoming events, messages from colleagues, and the most recent documents added to the portal. Automated or manual alert systems are typically tied to e-mail—not to distribute board-related materials (which would bypass the security measures built into board portals) but to alert board members that something is awaiting their attention in the portal.

Meeting Materials and Policy Documents As compliance regulations and accountability requirements have increased for board members, board portal companies have focused heavily on document management solutions. With few exceptions, board portals provide strategies for uploading and downloading,

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organizing, archiving, editing, and deleting documents securely through the web. Board members log in to find materials for the next meeting and are able to read, annotate, and download or print the files as needed.

Online Collaboration and Virtual Meetings Most solutions include a variety of collaboration tools designed to enable directors to enhance the productivity of face-to-face meetings by allowing purely routine work to happen between meetings rather than at meetings. Online discussion forums, private workrooms for committees, shared calendars, resource libraries, and group editing of documents can be used both during and between meetings to help board members complete their work. When virtual meetings do occur, web conferencing, chat, and instant messaging can be used to help individuals interact more effectively, especially as online meetings often occur without the benefit of eye contact and body language.

Electronic Voting and Record Keeping Although the rules on electronic voting for nonprofit boards differ state by state, most board portals offer some form of electronic voting functionality. For organizations in states that accept electronic voting, the board portal can assist in disseminating the motion, collecting and recording the votes, and exporting the results into the official minutes.

Security and Data Recovery Selecting an online, hosted solution typically offers the benefit of redundant data storage, regular backups, and data recovery in the event of an accidental loss of data. The security options often increase with the cost of the board portal, with the most expensive solutions providing dedicated servers, restricted Internet protocol addresses, and rotating access credentials for users. Still-secure, but less expensive options focus on secure-sockets-layer (i.e., SSL) encryption, unique usernames and passwords for users, and security certification for the hosting facility. Options to add security to specific documents and secure messaging is also offered in some board portals.

Board Portals: Promise and Pitfalls

Boards that have implemented e-governance are reporting satisfaction in meeting their governance goals, but as with any technology, there are challenges. A study conducted by the Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals (summarized in Table 3.1) highlights some of the benefits and challenges of organizations that have implemented e-governance solutions.⁹ This study, along with articles in publications such as *BusinessWeek* and the *Wall Street Journal* point out that, though board portals offer a great deal in terms of increased efficiency, their adoption can be a slow process.¹⁰ Critical to success is having a concrete

TABLE 3.1 ADAPTED FROM SOCIETY OF CORPORATE SECRETARIES AND GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONALS' RESEARCH

Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time collaboration and communication among board members • Efficient facilitation of scheduling, organizing, and distributing information for corporate board meetings • Quick and easy access to the latest corporate information and company updates; current and historic company records; and key contact information • Cost and time savings by eliminating the need to create and distribute last-minute updates to board binders • Instant access to all proposed and approved minutes and resolutions • Flexibility to facilitate the delivery of information to board members during unexpected or unplanned travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes time to see true efficiencies in the process; implementing a board portal can require more work up front. • Content has to be selected carefully; some documents don't lend themselves to online review. • Usability is key - the portal has to be intuitive for members to use, and providing training is a must.

Source: Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals, New York, NY. "Developing a web Portal for the Board: A Research Paper from the Corporate Practices Committee," originally conducted in 2005 with updated data collected in 2007.

plan for implementing e-governance that clearly identifies the needs, goals, and core group of users and that introduces the new technology in stages.

SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING E-GOVERNANCE

Making any significant change, particularly a change to long-standing group processes and procedures, takes time. Implementing an e-governance solution successfully requires strategic decisions and careful planning. There must be alignment between the needs of the board and the technology selected. Organizations that randomly select an e-governance solution without planning the implementation process are not likely to realize large gains.

Developing a Plan

Research on the best practices for implementing portals shows that the most successful ventures are those that were carefully planned, researched, rolled out in phases, and then evaluated against the original goals.¹¹ Figure 3.4 shows this

Utilizing a cyclical planning process to implement e-governance successfully

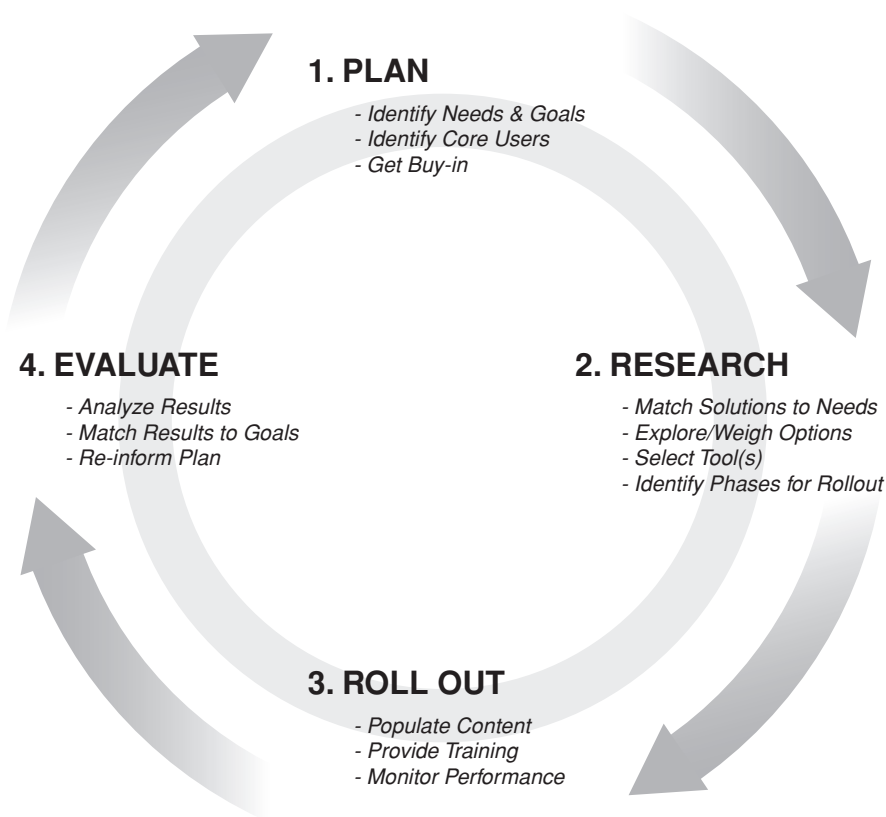


FIGURE 3.4 Utilizing a Cyclical Planning Process to Implement E-governance Successfully *Source: BoardEffect.*

approach as an ongoing cycle involving four steps that are repeated every two to four years, depending on the time line for implementation (see Figure 3.4).

Step 1: Plan The board of directors and executive staff should work together to identify the specific needs and goals for an e-governance solution. Asking core users about their pain points—specific processes that are onerous to undertake, are inefficient, are difficult to achieve in a timely way, or are otherwise in need of improvement—can provide a list of measurable goals that the e-governance solution must meet. For example, a goal might be to reduce the amount of staff time devoted to preparing board-meeting materials by 50 percent within a year. The more specific and tangible the goals, the easier it will be to evaluate e-governance options.

Equally important is identifying the core users for the e-governance solution—most often, the organization's board members and staff members who serve as liaisons to the board. The core group of users should review the goals to ensure they fit reality. At the end of the day, the core group of users will determine the success or failure of the e-governance solution—their buy-in to the concept of e-governance in general, and to a specific solution in particular, is critical to success.

Step 2: Research Once the goals and needs have been identified, list them in a chart to assist in evaluating specific e-governance solutions (see Table 3.2). Weigh the specific options available against the list of goals and needs to find the best fit.

While you narrow the options available, have the core user group sit in on one or two short product demos. This is an important step to ensure that the solution truly fits their needs and gain buy-in for a particular solution.

Step 3: Roll Out As the research process wraps up, a plan for the rollout should be in place. Time should be allocated to populate the new e-governance solution with content that is meaningful and valuable to the core users before it is introduced to the entire board. Content may include news items, policy documents, meeting materials, forms needing to be completed, calendar appointments, user contact information, topics for discussion and more. What is uploaded prior to the rollout should in part be determined by the goals identified during the planning phase. For example, if one of the goals was to provide more timely access to proposed meeting agendas, then focus energy on uploading meeting materials.

The best rollout plan introduces specific features and functions of the e-governance solution in stages—combined with appropriate training—to address the most important and urgent goals (see Figure 3.5). Other features should take a backseat and be introduced at a later date, once the most pressing needs have been addressed.

The example in Figure 3.5 of a phased rollout plan demonstrates how board portal features can be introduced in stages for a smooth implementation.

Step 4: Evaluate Use the data collected during rollout to evaluate the advantages or limitations of the e-governance solution; compare the actual measurements (e.g., staff time preparing meeting materials) with goals to determine how they measure up. Be careful not to confuse the technical performance of the e-governance solution with the board's ability to use and adapt to new processes. For example, if the e-governance solution fails to reduce the staff time required to prepare meeting materials, examine the specific steps involved to determine how the e-governance solution supported or inhibited the process.

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TABLE 3.2 E-GOVERNANCE SOLUTION RESEARCH, WORKSHEET

NEEDS	SOLUTION 1: <i>Sample</i>	SOLUTION 2:	SOLUTION 3:	SOLUTION 4:
Time required for setup and rollout	Initial setup is 5-7 business days; another 3 weeks on our end to populate content			
Training or documentation provided	Training provided for administrators, training for the board for an extra fee; user manual included in price			
Able to reduce amount of staff time required to create meeting books	Meeting books can be created from various documents and compiled into a single PDF; able to create a template for future meeting books to save time			
Shared calendar integrates with personal calendars	Web-based calendar; able to save appointments to Outlook			
Meeting scheduling capabilities	RSVP feature where members can vote on dates and add comments			
Private work space for committees	Committee workroom for just committee members; includes meeting book functionality and calendar for committees			
Works on different browsers and platforms	Explorer versions 6-8, Chrome, Firefox (all versions), Safari; PC, Mac, Linux			
Able to be customized	Customization available for additional fee			
Able to be rolled out in phases	All functionality is turned on; we can introduce functions in phases			

Source: BoardEffect

Board Portal Implementation Plan

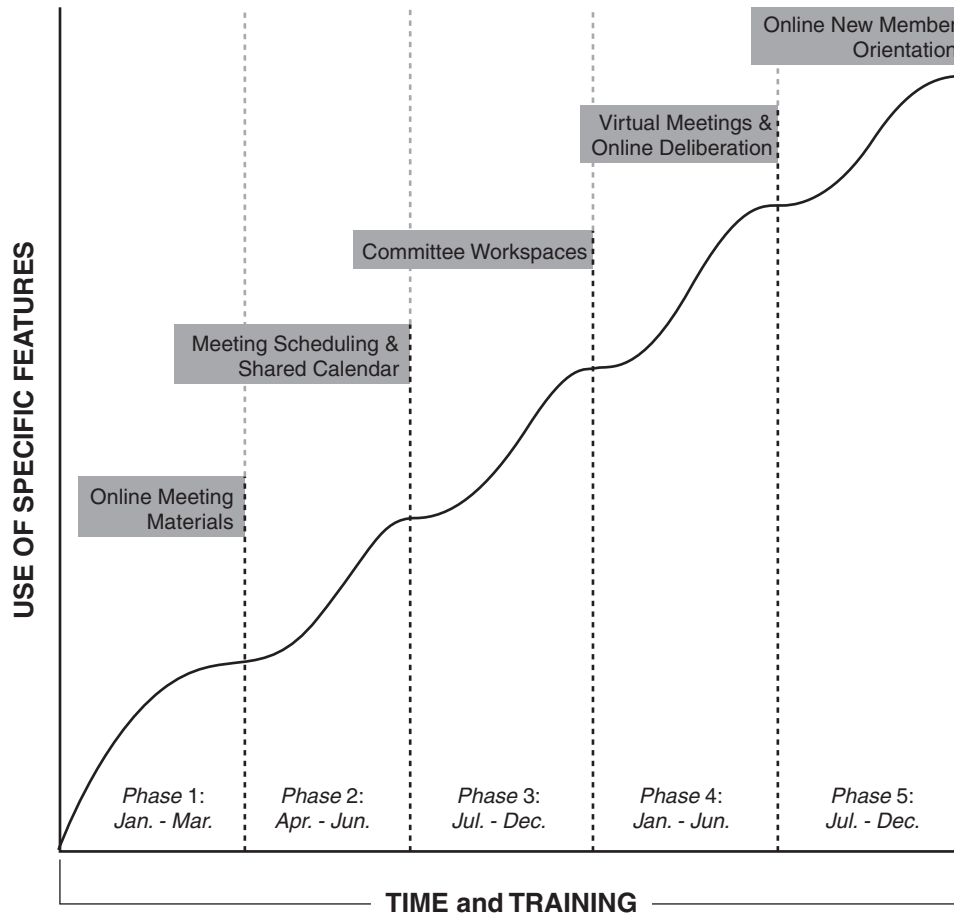


FIGURE 3.5 Board Portal Implementation Plan *Source: BoardEffect.*

Armed with more information on the outcomes of the initial e-governance implementation, the original plan should be revisited to assess if there are any new pressing needs. Invariably, as board members cycle off the board and new members arrive, new priorities will make themselves known. Use the cycle approach of planning, research, rollout, and evaluation to ensure that the return on the organization's investment can be maximized.

E-GOVERNANCE AND BOARD ENGAGEMENT: WHAT TO EXPECT

Despite the newness of e-governance in the nonprofit sector, organizations are already beginning to see an impact on their boards' ability to govern well. In recent interviews with nonprofits that have implemented board portals,

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respondents identified an increase in their boards' efficiency, improvements in communication, and a recommitment to best practices in governance.

Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness

The creation of meeting materials, board manuals, and reports can be labor intensive and inefficient. The traditional process, typically coordinated by staff, can take weeks as written reports are assembled into a meeting book that numbers in the hundreds of pages. Board members might receive this information as late as the day before the meeting as staff scramble to collect and collate the documents. With only hours (or minutes) to review copious information, boards often dedicate meetings to walking through meeting book content to get directors up to speed. By the time the documents have been reviewed, there is typically little time left to perform the governance role: that of careful oversight, deliberation on strategic issues, and policy setting.

It was this type of experience that led the Enterprise Center (TEC) to implement a board portal solution.¹² The Enterprise Center, founded in 1989 by the Wharton Small Business Development Center, provides a portfolio of business-acceleration services designed to better position minority enterprises to compete in the local, regional, and global economies. Like many nonprofits, TEC is underresourced and understaffed. Demands on staff time are great and, remaining true to its mission and constituency, TEC prioritizes program delivery above all else. Subsequently, administrative and managerial duties can be difficult to manage. Among the first of the tasks TEC sought to trim were document management, planning, and communications for TEC's board of directors. These labor-intensive activities at times demanded the full attention of both TEC leadership and administrative staff.

Now, with a board portal solution fully implemented, meetings are scheduled, RSVPs are tracked, meeting books are distributed, and online votes are held—all through the portal. The subsequent savings in staff time has allowed TEC to completely reorganize its administrative staffing structure, and board relations and communications no longer require a significant portion of any one staff person's work portfolio. Further, direct costs including express delivery of documents, paper, and publishing have been virtually eliminated. Management estimated a 660 percent return on the annual investment. According to TEC's president, Della Clark, "Basic board engagement has been reduced to a few points and clicks of the mouse. When we now spend time with our board, we can spend that time on substantive topics and decision making, not document review."¹³

Secure, Targeted Communication and Group Collaboration

Board portals have the potential to change the nature of conversations with the board. Once routine needs are being met in a more efficient way, board

communications can focus on more significant issues. As Olivia Selinger, Director of Governance for the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania, put it, “[Our board portal] did not necessarily foster more communication, just made communication more efficient. The portal has changed the content and quality of communication between board and staff.”

Communication between board members and staff at nonprofits can be very time consuming. In our survey of nonprofits on board communication practices, we saw that even the most routine communications, such as scheduling meetings, can take hours, days, or even weeks of staff time. Because most nonprofits use one-to-one phone calls as a primary means of communicating with their board members, who often number in the dozens, we estimate that nonprofit staff people spend several weeks of every year engaged in routine communication with the board. In addition, the communication methods that nonprofits rely on, especially one-to-one phone calls, circumvent group deliberation and put the onus on one or two individuals to report on what was said and heard. E-mail communication, though it has the potential to be more egalitarian, can quickly lose its edge when one person decides not to reply to all and the thread of a conversation is eternally lost.

E-governance offers a way out of this trap. When board members have equal access to information and equal opportunity to comment, discuss, and review others’ ideas, they have a greater ability to collaborate. Board portals also help take some of the sting out of routine communications by offering meeting scheduling functions, group polls, online discussion forums, real-time meeting capabilities, and an easy way to connect with the entire group. Conversations held in board portals can be archived and maintained for future reference rather than languishing in a single board member’s e-mail inbox.

Transparency, Accountability, and Renewed Engagement

In this era of increased scrutiny and accountability, e-governance offers a way to improve not just the efficiency of the board’s work but also the quality of its actions. As Olivia Selinger points out: “Changes in the [IRS Form] 990 and increased public attention to governance matters have enhanced consciousness and raised awareness of board responsibility. Through [our board portal], we’re fostering best practices by making it easy [for board members] to stay organized and see current information well before meetings. . . . Our investment in e-governance tells board members that we value their contributions and involvement in governance.”¹⁴

In addition, TEC found that using a board portal helped increase the organization’s transparency and ability to manage knowledge transfer; staff turnover no longer affected board relations and communications. As the board has a portal, not a liaison, more sensitive documents could be shared than through e-mail,

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and specific documents could be further protected and viewable only to selected committee members. As S. Jonathan Horn, former co-chair of TEC's board of directors and principal at Deloitte Consulting, wrote, "We've seen a real increase in board activity and commitment in the last year. We've been doing a lot of things to make that happen and [our board portal] really facilitated the increased activity."¹⁵

The Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania have also seen how a board portal allows the organization's board to be more accountable to policies set at the national level. Olivia Selinger was particularly concerned with finding ways to ensure her board members could remain updated even as policies are changing: "[Our board portal] makes it easier [for board members] to know what they need to know when they need it. For instance, [they] don't need a 100-page board manual in front of them. . . . If you provide a hard-copy board manual to a new board member, it either requires constant updating or it will be two-years-old by the end of the director's term. Both we and our national organization update policies regularly, so [we] change files [in the portal] to ensure they're up to date whenever board members might look for them."¹⁶

E-governance, as realized through board portals, has the potential to create a paradigm shift away from the idea that board members merely review information and toward the idea that information is the fuel that powers good governance. With e-governance, the ideal board is easier to picture; e-governance is good governance. When board members are empowered with a platform designed to make their job easier, more secure, and efficient, increased effectiveness is a natural outcome. When given a secure environment to sharpen and deepen their communication and collaboration, they can capture the essence of great ideas, which will later grow into thoughtful substantive plans. When the tools for interactivity are carefully and consistently introduced, an enlivened, fully engaged board is within grasp. E-governance is more than just the next makesense technology; it is the next logical step in the nonprofit sector's quest for great governance.

Dottie Schindlinger, Vice President of E-governance for BoardEffect Inc., is an expert on the impact of e-governance in the nonprofit sector. She has worked in the nonprofit sector for more than 15 years, first developing projects for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and later certificate programs for the Nonprofit Center at La Salle University. She joined Verve Internet Solutions in 2005 to help nonprofits meet their missions more effectively through online technology. During her tenure, Schindlinger was instrumental in developing BoardEffect, a secure online portal and information management system for

boards of directors. She is a frequent national and international presenter and writer on e-governance in nonprofits. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and holds certificates in nonprofit management and board leadership from the Nonprofit Center at La Salle University's School of Business.

Leanne Bergey, Chief Strategy Officer for BoardEffect Inc., is a national expert on emerging trends in online technology for mission-based organizations. An entrepreneur and lifelong educator, she lead the research and development process for BoardEffect. She founded Verve Internet Solutions in 1996, an Internet-solutions company that served nonprofits in the Greater Philadelphia region, leveraging her background in marketing, strategic planning, and technology to transform business processes in the nonprofit sector. For her success in growing Verve and establishing BoardEffect, Bergey received the prestigious 40 Under 40 award from the *Philadelphia Business Journal*, which recognized her accomplishments as a successful leader and entrepreneur. Bergey earned her bachelor's degree at Dickinson College.

