

Writing frame: Board Report

Remember:

- 1. Use your company Style Guide if you have one.** Consistency helps directors read faster.
 - Follow the style guide/template, including layout, structure, fonts, colours, etc.
 - Don't just do an information dump or write as you think – follow the template.
- 2. Be completely objective.**
 - Avoid putting a positive 'spin' on issues.
 - Directors need the whole truth and accurate facts to make sound decisions.
 - To build a strong argument, focus on 'consequences' i.e. what are the implications of the decision?
- 3. Do the work for your reader.** Try to make the board's life easier.
 - Summarise long information.
 - Use numbered bullet points to help them scan information quickly.
 - Categorise long lists.
 - Help them understand what you're asking them to do, and help them decide on the best approach.
 - Substantiate your recommendations with logical arguments and proof.
- 4. Big news first.** Directors have a thick pile of reading to get through, so most won't read the whole paper.
 - Spell out your key messages (maximum 1–3) up front.
 - In each paragraph, get to the point fast – put the 'big news' first.
- 5. Write concisely.** More words DON'T mean more credibility or authority.
 - Don't drown directors in detail. Give them what they need to make a decision. They don't need to know everything you know about the topic.
 - Ask 'So what?' on their behalf to help you sort facts/issues into 'must know' (include) and 'nice to know' (omit).
- 6. Proofread carefully.** Grammatical errors, typos, poor layout, etc, cloud your message and diminish your credibility. Well-written documents help people trust you more.
 - Proofread at least once yourself, after having some time away from it (it's amazing what you see with fresh eyes).
 - Then get someone else to check it, too.

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Item: X.X
Date: dd month year

For decision/For noting

[Delete what doesn't apply]

Your heading here

i.e. in a nutshell, what's this about?

Purpose

What do you want this document to achieve? E.g. "This document requests the Board to approve XYZ."

Your text here.

Proposed resolution

Copy/paste section 4.2 into here.

(Also, if this is outside the bounds of your delegated authority, explain here.)

Your text here.

Prepared by:	Your Name Your Role Title and Department
Authorised by:	Their Name Their Role Title and Department

Your heading here

i.e. in a nutshell, what's this about?

1. Executive summary [maximum one page]

Ensure you cover:

1. **Purpose** – What do you want this document to achieve? E.g. "This document requests the Board to approve Project XYZ."
2. **Relevance** – Why should the board care about this issue? Highlight governance issues with financial or strategic consequences/implications. Avoid minor operational/management issues or facts.
3. **Recommendation or information** – Short, high-level summary of sections 3 and 4 of this document.

Your text goes here.

Subhead

Your text goes here.

Subhead

Your text goes here.

2. Background

2.1 Context

What led to or caused this issue? Orient your readers here.

Your text goes here.

3. Analysis

3.1 Rationale for recommendation

What case are you arguing for? Put forward your case here.

Your text goes here.

3.2 Important issues & implications

- What issues should the board be aware of?
- What are the consequences of acting or not acting?
- What are the strategic implications? How might it affect the business in future?
- What are the financial implications for the business? How could acting on this help the business avoid loss, or increase profit?
- What other options have been considered (where appropriate)? What are their pros and cons, including the implications of each for your finances and strategy?

Your text goes here.

3.3 Conclusions

As a result of your analysis, what do you conclude is best? Why?

Your text goes here.

3.4 Consequential issues

If the board accepts your recommendation, what will this mean? What else will need to be done?

Your text goes here.

4. Next steps

4.1 Recommendation

What do you recommend the board does?

Your text goes here.

4.2 Proposed resolution

Save the board time by writing the resolution for them to approve. When done, copy/paste into the cover sheet.

BOARD RESOLUTION

At the meeting of the Board of Directors on _____ [date], the board resolved to [write resolution here].

Sample table to insert

Table Heading			
Table Sub-Heading			
	Table Text		