

Try Flipping Your Board Meeting Agenda

Phil Kenkel, Bill Fitzwater Cooperative Chair

One of the innovative teaching ideas is to “flip the classroom” by spending class time working homework problems while students go over the lecture material on their own. I have found that throwing in an occasional “flipped classroom day” is a great way to invigorate interest and discussion. Many boards of directors have experimented with a similar concept by “flipping the board agenda”.

Instead of beginning the board meeting with the customary review of financials, committee reports, and expenditure approvals, try starting your board meetings with a lively discussion of industry issues and the cooperatives progress toward its strategic goals. Flipping the board meeting agenda can tap into the energy board members bring to the beginning of a board meeting. Scheduling discussion and action on strategy at the beginning of the meeting emphasizes the board’s commitment to that key area of governance. Considering the big picture issues first may bring a fresh perspective to the more routine issues which are the nuts and bolts of achieving that desired big picture. Another benefit of the flipped agenda is that strategic discussion tends to unify the board and that sense of purpose carries over into more constructive dialog on the more routine issues. Putting the challenging, truly interesting material at the front end of the agenda also provides an incentive for habitual late-comers to arrive on time.

The cooperative board has many roles including strategy, oversight and team work with the CEO. Flipping the board agenda is simply another tool to ensure that the board’s focus on strategy is not overshadowed by the oversight role. Try flipping the agenda for your next board meeting. A little variety might keep your board from flipping out!