Board Meeting Management Training Course: Agendas, Chairing and Decision Records

17 – 21 May 2027
Cape town

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Ref: 621_31604 **Date:** 17 – 21 May 2027 **Location:** Cape town **Fees:** 4800 GBP

Programme Summary

Board meeting management is the subject of this one-week training course for chairs, directors, company secretaries and chiefs of staff, ending in a board meeting pack for one live meeting cycle. Many boards spend long hours on meetings that leave decisions unclear, papers late and actions untracked. The programme builds a repeatable method for agendas, chairing, debate and decision records, applied to a board or committee the participant selects. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme on board meeting management to mixed-organisation cohorts.

The Business Case

Board time is scarce and every meeting carries governance duties, so weak papers, drifting debate and vague minutes weaken oversight and slow execution. Leaders who structure board meeting agendas, manage the discussion and keep a precise decision log give directors the evidence to act and give management clear instructions.

- Decision Quality: Improves as papers state the decision sought, the options and the risks before the meeting.
- Meeting Time: Falls as agendas are weighted by importance and chairing keeps debate on the question.
- Action Follow-Through: Improves as decisions and owners are recorded and reviewed at each meeting.

Principles and Evidence Base

- Agenda and Board Paper Design: Sessions 1 and 2 apply it to set the decision sought and the time for each item.
- Chairing Technique: Session 3 applies it to open, steer and close debate.
- Minutes and Decision Log Practice: Session 4 applies it to record decisions, owners and follow-up.
- Board and Committee Meeting Recording: Session 4 applies it to separate the record of decisions from the record of discussion.

Intended Participants

- Chairs who lead board and committee meetings and set their pace.
- Directors who read papers, challenge management and vote on decisions.
- Company secretaries who prepare agendas, papers and committee meeting minutes.
- Chiefs of staff who prepare executives for board discussion.

Typical sectors include banking, healthcare, energy and public bodies.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct weighted agendas that separate decisions from information.
2. Participants will be able to evaluate board papers against a decision sought standard.
3. Participants will be able to apply chairing technique to steer debate to a resolution.
4. Participants will be able to diagnose weaknesses in minutes and decision records.
5. Participants will be able to justify an action tracking routine between meetings.
6. Participants will be able to prioritise improvements to one board or committee cycle.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Board Meeting Management and Agenda Design

What should a board meeting decide, and how does the agenda reflect it?

- Annual Meeting Calendar
- Decision, Discussion and Information Item Classification
- Agenda Time Allocation Grid
- Consent Agenda Criteria
- Standing Item Review

Day 2: Board Papers and Preparation

How do papers give directors what they need to decide?

- Board Paper Template
- Decision Sought Statement
- Options and Risk Summary
- Paper Deadline and Distribution Protocol
- Director Reading Guide

Day 3: Chairing Board Meetings and Debate

How does a chair keep debate on the question and reach a decision?

- Opening and Framing Script
- Time-Boxed Discussion Method
- Challenge and Dissent Handling
- Conflict Declaration Step
- Summing Up and Resolution Wording

Day 4: Minutes, Decision Records and Follow-Up

What must the record show, and how are actions tracked?

- Minutes Structure
- Decision Log Format
- Action Owner Register
- Draft Minutes Review Cycle
- Committee Report-Back Template

Day 5: Applying the Tools to One Board Cycle

Do the agenda, paper, chairing and record tools hold together in one cycle?

- Applying the Session 1 Agenda Time Allocation Grid
- Testing the Session 2 Board Paper Template
- Rehearsing the Session 3 Summing Up and Resolution Wording
- Checking the Session 4 Decision Log Format
- Completing the Board Meeting Pack

Methodology

The programme uses a simulation method built on anonymised board packs, agendas and minutes from several sectors. Participants take turns as chair, director and company secretary in mock meetings, observe each other's handling of debate, and receive written facilitator feedback on each paper and record they produce.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting a weak board paper around a decision sought statement.
- Suggested activity: Chairing a time-boxed item with a dissenting director.
- Suggested activity: Turning rough notes into decision records and an action register.

Capstone Output

Each participant completes a board meeting pack for one live meeting cycle. It holds an annual calendar, a weighted agenda, a paper template with a decision sought statement, a chairing outline, a minutes structure, a decision log and an action register. The pack is used at work to brief the chair and set up the next meeting.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is board meeting management training suitable for directors without governance qualifications?

Yes. Board meeting management is taught through cases and templates, so the programme assumes experience of attending board or committee meetings but no formal governance qualification.

Which practices does board meeting management training draw on?

Board meeting management training draws on agenda and board paper design, chairing technique, minutes and decision log practice, and board and committee meeting recording.

How is the pack from board meeting management training used at work?

You use the board meeting pack to brief the chair, prepare the company secretary and set up the next meeting with clear papers and an action register.

How does board meeting management differ from strategy oversight training?

Board meeting management centres on how agendas, debate and records are run, while strategy oversight training centres on what the board challenges in the strategy itself.