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December 07, 2021

In-House Corner: Virtual Annual Meetings – Part 3

This feature of our blog is where our in-house readers share tips, anecdotes and thoughts about things that come up in their daily practice. We received so much feedback on the [first blog](#) and [second blog](#) about the practice of holding virtual annual meetings of shareholders that we now have this Part 3 [with Part 4 coming soon; feel free to ping me and share your thoughts – they will be posted anonymously or with attribution, whichever you desire]: 1. "We held a virtual annual meeting last year as a result of the pandemic. We had been wanting to incorporate at least some form of virtual element for awhile, but had received some resistance. Our transfer agent was great and the collaboration and engagement contributed to a meeting that went off without a hitch. I will say that communication is the most important thing – think through potential issues and ensure that you're responsive to any questions that come in. We received some nice feedback on the meeting, so it may end up serving as a model for future meetings." – Kim Honeysett

2. "I love the simplicity of virtual annual meetings now that we've figured out the technology and the vendors are becoming more sophisticated. It also helps that everyone has gotten comfortable with video calls. Now, I cringe every time someone suggests a combined virtual/in-person meetings—nothing like having to coordinate a vendor and army of IT folks for the virtual aspect, and also worry about coordinating security, coffee, cookies and chairs for the in-person meeting." – Kamala Doe

3. "You can never be too prepared for a virtual meeting given the limitations of technology and the inevitable glitches. Make sure you have a backup plan and a way to get technical help from your transfer agent/virtual meeting provider in the case of a problem. I highly recommend a dry run. It's worth the extra money." – Rich Reich

4. "Ah, the joys of the virtual annual meeting. Sitting in front of a computer, wondering if there is a ghost in the machine. The ghost of corporate secretaries from the past?" – Jenny Yoo Doe

5. "It is crucial to find a virtual meeting platform that can really walk you through the event and a platform that seamlessly holds meeting to ensure everyone feels prepared. Annual meetings already take a lot of work and you want a vendor who will make it as painless as possible." – Carolyn Hax Doe

6. - "Communicate early on about the preferences of executives and directors for the meeting. Will there be video? Will any portions be pre-recorded? A lot of the logistics take lead time, so decisions need to be made in advance. - Have well-defined roles and responsibilities that avoid 'too many cooks.' For example, assign one person to sort and assign questions on meeting day, and decide in advance who will speak and respond to questions. - Make sure rehearsals are as close to the experience that will be had on the actual meeting day as possible, and leave plenty of time to solve access issues. - Create a roadmap for meeting day for participants and directors so that they have a quick reference guide for how the day of the meeting will proceed. - Script as much of the meeting as you can to keep everything on track. - Have one person log-in as a shareholder on the day of the meeting so they can report on the meeting as shareholders are seeing it, and alert the team to any video/audio/technical issues." – Fernando Tatis Jr. Doe

7. "Internal communication during the meeting is potentially a challenge when company participants log-in virtually from different locations. To solve that, we dialed-in to the hosted meeting conference line, logged-in to Broadridge's virtual platform (which is great, by the way), and had a separate Zoom line open among the company participants. There are chat features that would work too, but our method prepared us in a way so that we can quickly talk about any questions in real-time and decide who will be answering." – Alicia Keys Doe

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