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In-House Corner: Board Presentations by Outside Parties - Part 2



In this blog feature, our in-house readers share tips, anecdotes, and thoughts about topics that arise in their daily practice. This particular batch of thoughts is Part 2 about bringing in outside parties to make a presentation before the board (here's [Part 1](#)):

1. "We ask that they provide maximum engagement, so we avoid traditional slide presentations. We've had good success using panel discussions (a couple of outside speakers facilitated by a member of management) or fireside chats (one outside speaker responding to questions from a member of management).

We provide slide decks as pre-reads, but don't project them. We had an awesome ESG panel to address what our directors needed to know to provide the right oversight for our company. Since the directors had read the pre-reads, no facilitation was necessary. They engaged from the get-go and right through to the end. Directors and management felt energized and we all gained actionable insight."

2. "As with any board presentation, it's helpful to identify your objectives/intentions at the outset and build toward that. Any outside speaker is vetted in advance to ensure that our objectives will be met and that we've selected the right speaker. Adjust as necessary."
3. "Not everyone is board ready. The CLO/GC should be able to help vet board readiness, but this is a big deal. If the third-party is not experienced in board presentations, they should not do so. I realize this is a chicken/egg issue, but it is a rule I would not break. If they can sit second chair several times before sitting first chair, that could be an approach."
4. "A speaker doesn't work well who has not presented to the board, who doesn't understand that what they are talking about is not the most important topic in the world, or is not able to be sympathetic to the reality that board members are sitting through 8 hours or more of meetings for 2-3 days and so they appreciate

brevity."

5. "If you have 30 minutes allocated to your presentation, then ½ that time should be kept open for questions. Make high level points only – do NOT get in the weeds. Anticipate questions. It is not a good look to not have a quick answer to everything that is asked. Don't BS. If you don't know, just say you will get back to them after the meeting."
6. "DO NOT READ THE SLIDES YOU HAVE PREPARED!!! Always assume that the board has read your slides. Remember, the board members will be sitting through a lot of content besides yours."
7. "The best type of speaker is someone who knows more about a topic than your board and that has a background that is intriguing (i.e., a cybersecurity expert that has worked for a military branch or government agency at a high level). Or if a lawyer, they must be an expert in their field and have some interesting client experience that will interest board members."

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