

SAMPLE AGENDA: REGULAR BOARD CHAIR / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEETING



**FROM THE NONPROFIT
LEADERSHIP LAB**

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DEFINITIONS

- Regular = standing, prescheduled, canceled infrequently. Could be weekly or biweekly. Personally, I think monthly is not often enough.
- “We talk all the time” is NOT a meeting and is NOT regular.
- The meeting should be a gathering where BOTH parties benefit from the time.

What A Regular Meeting Agenda Should NOT Look Like

- Whatever comes to the top of the E.D.’s head an hour before
- Whatever GOOD NEWS the E.D. thinks the Board Chair should hear
- It should NOT include ONLY staff items
- It should not open with an unprepared Board Chair saying “So what’s going on?”

Think Like A Co-pilot

- Either during takeoff/landing or during flight, there is very little that is unplanned about what goes on in the cockpit. You check all the same things, you go into hyperfocus when the time calls for it and yes there is some time for you to talk about your kids, pets, or imaginary friends.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Agree on the template and it should be sent 24 hours ahead from the E.D. to the Board Chair so the Chair has some time to consider the list, add, percolate and include their own items in time for the meeting.

Also, action items from the previous meeting should be attached to the agenda, and outcomes from those items should be woven into the agenda categories below:

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- **Personal Check-In**
 - Don't leave this out – the two of you are in an important relationship
- **Headlines – Staff / Programs**
 - This is more rapid-fire, not requiring a deep dive or discussion – could be a new hire, a program win, a meeting with an exciting board prospect, or a lead on a new funding source....
- **Challenges To Talk Through Together**
 - Here the E.D. is looking for the board chair's good thinking and/or wants the Chair to be aware
 - Topics here could include an angry staff member exit, bad press, a cash flow challenge
- **Finances** (ONLY ON THE AGENDA MONTHLY unless there is a big challenge in which case it would be in the item above)
 - It would be fantastic if there was a VERY SIMPLE dashboard that gets sent monthly along with the agenda with key metrics (NOT THE ENTIRE FINANCIALS) or some agreed-on set of data points that are marked RED, GREEN, or YELLOW. Something like this to give the chair a quick sense of key financial metrics – a good way to keep the chair informed without being in the weeds.
- **1-2 Big Topics – Deep Dive**
 - There is typically some big in the works – annual gala, budget prep, strategic planning, or upcoming board meeting — the criteria here is something that touches every aspect of the org and involves the board in a big way.

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- This could also be something like Board Orientation – let's say you are bringing on a # of new members and you have agreed orientation needs an overhaul. The two of you can spend 5-10 minutes creating a new outline based on what you agree are the goals.
- **The Board**
 - This is the section of the meeting led by the Chair and where the co-pilots talk through issues with the board "engine." The chair should be aware of the status of each committee, where they are at with regard to goals (they should have them btw), challenges with individual board members, and the status of the prospect pipeline. I'd suggest that the chair goes through what's working and what could be working better and the two of you problem solve.
- **Coming Up Between Now and Our Next Meeting...**
 - Ex: E.D. going to put staff member X on a performance plan next week. May need to touch base.
 - Should we briefly outline the Exec Committee agenda now and dig into it next time? Initial thoughts can help prime pump for our next conversation
 - What does E.D. need from the Chair between now and the next meeting?
 - What does Chair need from E.D. between now and the next meeting?
- **Action Items (PLEASE save 5 mins at the end to recap)**
 - Review by agenda category what was agreed to be a next step, who would be responsible, and the timing.
 - E.D. agrees to send follow-up email with these action items within 24 hours



A BIGGER IMPACT

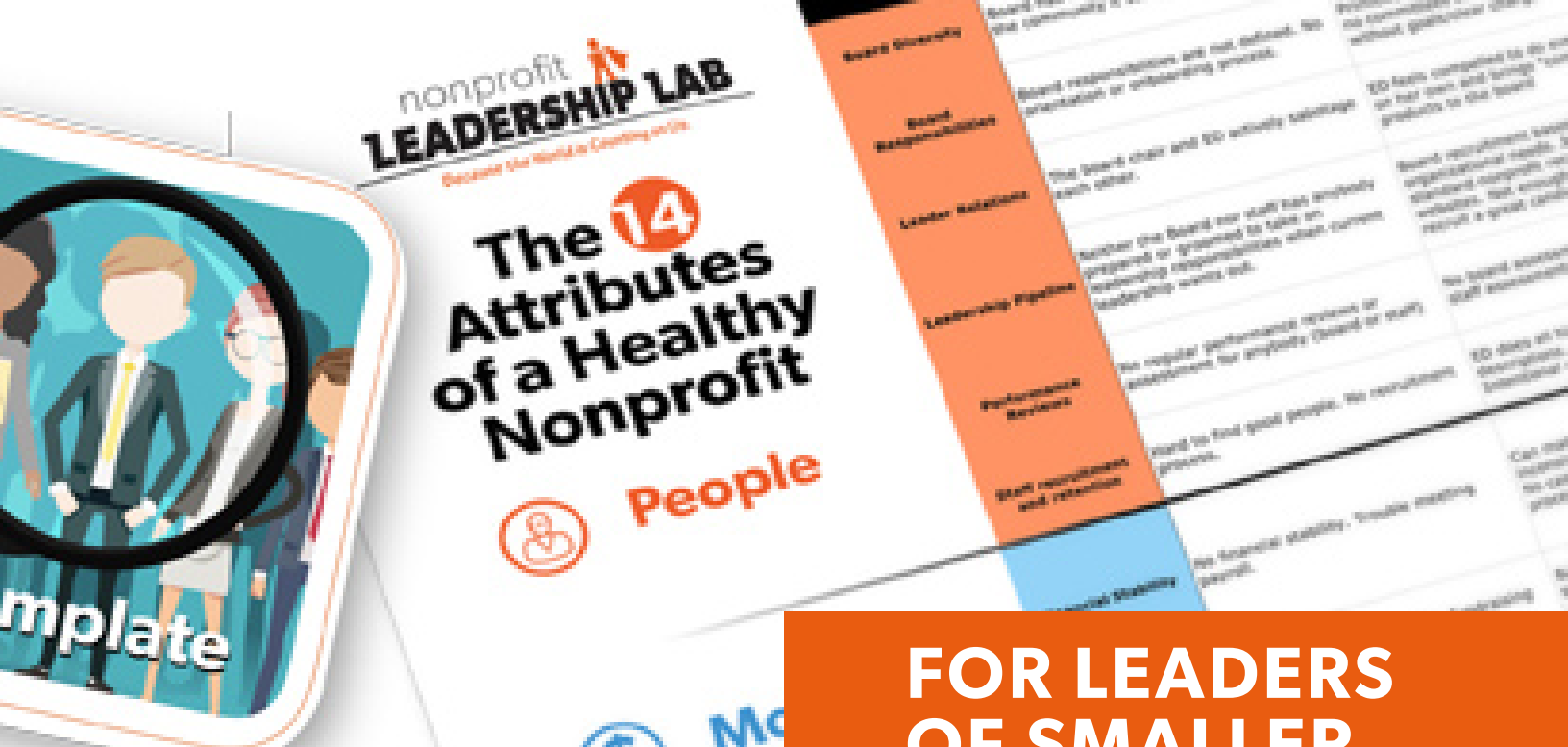
Hi, I'm Joan Garry. Consultant, coach, author of the best selling book "Joan Garry's Guide to Nonprofit Leadership", and the founder of the Nonprofit Leadership Lab. I have played every position on the nonprofit field – Executive Director, board member, donor, volunteer...

In my work with thousands of nonprofits all across America, and through my own experience as the Executive Director of GLAAD and board experience as a committee chair, I've seen first hand the challenges that nonprofit leaders face every day.

I created the Nonprofit Leadership Lab because I wanted to fill a gap – especially for board and staff leaders at smaller nonprofits that need advice, suggestions, and a big ol' shot in the arm.

I wanted to help small nonprofits have a much bigger impact. And I came to the realization that nonprofit leaders weren't getting enough help. At least not affordable help. And oh boy, they needed help in so many areas.

When you became
a nonprofit leader,
you became a
superhero



FOR LEADERS OF SMALLER NONPROFITS

With nearly 5,000 active members, the Nonprofit Leadership Lab is the world's most effective and supportive online membership program for board and staff leaders of smaller nonprofits, including:

- [Executive Directors](#) who do whatever it takes for those they serve... even sometimes at the expense of their free time, relationships, and health
- [Board Leaders](#) who care deeply for the cause and want to help their orgs become more sustainable for the long term
- [Startup Founders](#) who've gotten their nonprofits off to a good start and now need a clear path to growth and impact
- [Senior Staffers](#) who play a key role in fundraising or operations and are eager to help their orgs reach the next level

The Lab has everything leaders need to move an org from messy to thriving.





"The Nonprofit Leadership Lab is a supportive, collaborative, affirmative and resourceful space that will assist in your personal and organizational development. There is a plethora of resources and a community of people ready and willing to offer guidance and advice as you face challenges, celebrate with you on your wins, and inspire you to do the work of fulfilling the mission of your organization."

—Jennifer Fowler

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- [Live a more balanced life](#), where you don't feel as the leader that you're compelled to do whatever it takes ALL. THE. TIME. (which is really unhealthy).

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