

Taking the ‘Bored’ Member out of Board Meetings

Have you ever left a board meeting and thought, “That was painful,” or “Did we even accomplish anything?” If it wasn’t for the lunch provided, that hour would have been completely wasted. Worse, if you weren’t served lunch, what was the point?

We’ve all been there. It’s time for a board meeting makeover, and we’re here to help. First, we have to determine what is making your board meetings insufferable. Is lack of engagement, disruptive behavior, a weak agenda or a different issue?

Let’s start with lack of engagement. Oftentimes lack of engagement comes from the core values of the organization being “lost” over the years. Holding an organizational retreat is a great way to reignite the energy and passion among board members. This type of retreat reviews and updates the mission and vision statements, bylaws and other fundamentals. It might sound like you’d rather have a root canal, but trust us - we have become experts on how to make this fun and exciting. Once board members are involved in the “recreation” of your organization, passionate engagement naturally returns.

If your board meetings have fallen victim to disruptive behavior, try some of the following tips to turn your naysayers into your biggest allies. Create parking boards for each meeting. Should a topic come up that is not on the agenda and it’s causing a hang up, “park” the topic on the parking board to be revisited at future meeting when it’s on the agenda. Also, give the board members permission to say “ELMO.” Alright, “Everyone, Let’s Move On.” If you have a relentless naysayer that keeps bringing so-called problems up, give them the 2-for-1 deal. For every problem they bring up, they must present two potential solutions. If they can’t do that, tell the naysayer that their concern is absolutely valid, and you’re appointing them chair of that committee. You’ll be blown away by what happens next.

If disruptive behavior runs deeper than this, it’s probably time to hold a board retreat related to team building, leadership development and collaboration. This is one event that the board won’t soon forget. A day filled with fun and challenging events that produce major “wow” moments related to collaboration will have each member walking away with renewed energy and a sense of belonging.

Georgia EMC’s Community Development Team is happy to provide facilitation services on behalf of our member local electric cooperative. If you would like more information, please contact your Georgia EMC Community Development Consultant: Jenny Robbins (jenny.robbins@georgiaemc.com), Araina Reaves (Araina.reaves@georgiaemc.com), Carrie Barnes (carrie.barnes@georgiaemc.com).