



# The First 100 Days

New Board Members



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# Introduction

The day you join the leadership team on a board of directors is the day you become liable for the decisions of the board. Preparing for this responsibility, ensuring you are confident, enthusiastic and ready for the challenges that lay beyond the first board meeting, is the function of a well-designed board induction program.

This is a crucial process which routinely suffers from a breakdown in implementation. No matter how experienced (or not) you are as a Director, the first 100 days sets the scene for your tenure.

## The Four Key Elements

There are four key elements that create a high performing Board Induction Program. These key elements need to be embedded into the Induction program

- 1** It is mandatory
- 2** The process and outcomes are formally monitored by the Governance committee or any equivalent committee
- 3** Mentors are assigned to each new Director, with a changeover of mentors after 6 months
- 4** The Induction program is at least 12 months in duration

# Content Checklist

The content of the Induction program should include, but does not need to be limited to, the following:

- 1 Vision, Strategic Priorities, History and Philosophy
- 2 Constitution
- 3 Board policies
- 4 Directors' Code of Conduct
- 5 Contact details, CVs and skills register
- 6 Organizational chart
- 7 Strategic Plan
- 8 Risk Management Plan
- 9 Program descriptions of key programs, how they fit in to your strategic direction, with key highlights and issues
- 10 Relevant press clippings
- 11 Annual report
- 12 Relevant brochures of programs
- 13 Financial documents
- 14 Annual Board Workplan
- 15 Board training program
- 16 Board minutes
- 17 Board resolutions
- 18 Board evaluation process with examples of previous Board evaluations and outcomes
- 19 Insurance policies
- 20 List of key legislation
- 21 Decision making skills and strategic thinking protocols
- 22 Board mentoring protocols
- 23 Induction key dates: Including visits to chairman, staff briefings, site visits etc. as specified in Board Director – Orientation Checklist
- 24 Constitution
- 25 Position Description
- 26 Glossary of terms

# Getting the Most from your First 100 Days

## 1 Understanding and using your strategic plan

Your Strategic Plan should be part of your induction material (either hard copy or online). Have a glance through your Strategic Plan and focus on the key headings which are likely to be called strategies, goals or objectives. Become familiar with the key, high-level strategies so you can use them to shape your questions and conversations.



### Strategic questions to consider before and during your Board meeting

- Where in the strategic plan does this fit?

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- How does that help us in our strategic direction?

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- How does that input into strategy X?

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- Going forward, what are the strategic issues around what we are discussing?

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This was a great reminder about how the strategic plan should shape the board meetings and discussions, and how we as directors can add value by asking questions that relate back to the plan.

Helps me to pick out framework from the fairly bewildering complexity of my first two meetings; which is reassuring.

## 2

## How to read and use your vision statement

Your Vision Statement (sometimes called a Purpose or Mission Statement) can usually be found on your Strategic Plan, website and/or Annual Report. Get a copy of your Vision Statement close to hand so you can see how to use it to help shape your questions and conversation.



### Strategic questions to consider before and during your Board meeting

- Is our Vision statement effective?

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- How do we actually use our Vision statement?

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- What are the 2-4 key intents of our Vision?

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- What do the key intents mean to me?

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- What do the key intents mean to the Board?

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- How is this strategy going to help us with our vision statement intents?



Helped me to think about what are the key elements of our vision e.g. rural and regional, women, all ages, optimal health and wellbeing + purpose. Good to think about keeping these commitments in mind to be clear about WHY we are meeting.”

### 3 How to use your board policies

Find a list of your board policies, and the policies themselves, Understanding and using your board policies enables you to fulfill your legal obligations and provides a framework for how you and your organization should and must function. If in doubt, ask your CEO for more details on your policy framework.



#### Strategic questions to consider before and during your Board meeting

- Which policies have been referenced or used in the past?  
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- Do I understand this policy?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Does this policy comply with relevant legislation?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How does this add strategic value to our organization?

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Made me realise that I was expecting to gradually come to terms with Board policies throughout the year BUT realising after our last Board meeting that with the organisations 3 year review process means I won't see a lot of the policies in the year ahead. So now thinking I will ask which 3 policies are key starting point as a new Board member.

## 4 Extracting strategic insights from your financial reports

Find your profit and loss statement (sometimes called income and expenses statement), your balance sheet and your cash flow (some organizations may not have a cashflow, check with your CEO). Refer to them to start putting into practice some of the questions explained below.



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I really enjoyed this one – quite smart to actually chase the reason for variances – it’s almost like being on the lookout for issues even before they become apparent.

### Strategic questions to consider before and during your Board meeting

#### Profit and loss statement

- What’s the reason for the variance between what was expected and what our reports tell us?

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- Given this reason for variance, what are the strategic implications?

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- What’s not working? What do we need to do about it?

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- What questions should we be asking that we haven’t asked yet?

#### Balance sheet

- What are the key ratios your balance sheet is telling you?

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- What has changed and why?

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- What are the strategic implications?

## Cash Flow

- What's our cash flow likely to be like on a three-month rolling basis?

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- Are we keeping to our budget, or do we expect to fall below our forecasts?

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- What are the strategic implications for us and what, if anything, do we need to start doing about it?

## Key ratios

- What are the acceptable ranges for our ratios?

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- What has changed and what do we need to consider longer term?

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## Understanding and using your Risk Management Plan



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Am aware of basic risk management processes and data for projects and organisations. Appreciated the encouragement to think laterally about the opportunities within risk.

Find a copy of your Risk Management Plan (either a printed or online version). If this is not available as part of your induction package, please set up a time with either Chair or CEO to view the Risk Management Plan.

## Strategic questions to consider before and during your Board meeting

- What are the 2 or 3 key risks we should receive reports on, and focus on leveraging for opportunity?

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- What is our risk appetite and how do staff use that to triage what they bring to us as Directors?

## 6 Tips on what to look for in your constitution, rules and by-laws

Your constitution is the contract you have that provides the rules for how the organisation should conduct its business. All Directors should be familiar with the key clauses in the constitution. These could include:

- What are our dispute mediation/ Conflict resolution clauses?

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- How is voting carried out at the Board meeting?

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- What are the terms of my position?

### Strategic questions to ask when reading your constitution

- Are we carrying out everything required of us based on our constitution?

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- Have there been in legal changes that must be reflected in our constitution?



## 7 Reflection on Legal Responsibilities

As a director, you have certain legal responsibilities that you must be aware of, and put into action. There are 3 duties of directors at law that are common in most countries. Check in with your CEO regarding any particular circumstances or detail you may need to know as a Director in your organization.

**1. The Duty of Care:** to act as an ordinary, prudent person would in a similar set of circumstances. This requires diligent, attentive, informed participation.

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**2. The Duty of Loyalty:** to act in good faith, in the best interests of the organisation.

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**3. The Duty of Obedience:** to act to ensure the organization operates in keeping with the laws and rules governing its formation and status and in accordance with its own bylaws and mission.

Check in with your CEO regarding any particular circumstances or detail you may need to know as a Director in your organization.



Useful to reflect on examples of duty of care, loyalty and obedience, led me back to another look at our Rules of Incorporation

## 8 Getting the most from your induction - Mentoring

Make sure you get the most from your Director mentoring program. This program should fast-track any answers to questions you might have as a new Board member before or after meetings, and facilitate getting to know other Board members, senior management and stakeholders.



Really nice idea, was never suggested on any of the boards I have been. But definitely will apply it to a board which I chair.



### Strategic questions to consider before and during your Board meeting

- New Board member's questions regarding how the Board works, about individuals or about Board actions;

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- any problems with the new Board member's conduct that do not meet Board expectations;

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- goals and major areas of interest as a new Board member;

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- new Board member's satisfaction with the induction as well as his or her ability to participate at Board and Committee meetings.

# Summary

There are 3 key areas that need to be a focus of any new Director in their first 100 days on a Board

1. Make the most use of the Induction program through questioning, meeting people and utilising the mentoring for greater insight

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2. Understand how the Board uses various resources such as strategic plan, risk management plan, financial reports, vision statement, and use these resources to help shape powerful questions and conversations

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3. Be willing to contribute questions and discussion from your first Board meeting onwards.

These behaviours will assist in further strengthening the Board culture where robust discussions, strategic viewpoints, risk issues and a continuous focus on making the choices that create the future for the communities you serve, are the hallmarks of your high performing Board.

## About Conscious Governance



Conscious Governance is a global, independent advisory service for nonprofit Boards, CEOs and directors. We provide strategic planning, board governance, leadership, and risk management consulting services.

We work with organisations across virtually all sectors and provide resources, guidance and online programs that help promote strong governance practices. In delivering our services, we inspire greater strategic awareness within an organisation, opening up new ways to better serve the wider community.

# Appendix:

## SAMPLE BOARD INDUCTION PROGRAM

[www.consciousgovernance.com](http://www.consciousgovernance.com) | [www.consciousgovernancetv.com](http://www.consciousgovernancetv.com)

Your induction program will be different to any other organization. Use this checklist as a foundation to ensure you have not missed any major components in your induction program.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:

1. For new inductees to track their progress through their induction material **or**
2. For the Chair and/or Governance Committee to collate the required material in preparing their induction pack for new Directors

	Item	Content	Material received	Material read	Questions/ further action
	To be used in conjunction with "Induction Insights for Directors online program" <a href="https://conscious-governance.mykajabi.com/induction-insights-for-directors">https://conscious-governance.mykajabi.com/induction-insights-for-directors</a>				
1	History	Outline of formation of organization, key issues, philosophy, foundation participants, ongoing successes, outstanding aspects, highlights and any other historical features. <b>(View "How to read and use your vision statement" Induction Insights module)</b>			
2	Constitution	Highlight those areas most relevant perhaps in a one-page summary as well as the full constitution – for example, voting rights <b>(View "Tips on what to look for in your constitution, rules and bylaws" Induction Insights module)</b>			
3	Board policies	Access to or copies of all governance policies <b>(View "How to use your board policies" Induction Insights module)</b>			
4	Director statement of duties and responsibilities	<b>(View "What your Statement of Director Duties means to you" Induction Insights module)</b>			
5	Director Code of Conduct	This provides guidance for Director behaviour			
6	Contact details, CVs and skills register	Include: Board members, Chief Executive Officer and auditor			
7	Board and staff communications policy	This will provide the ground rules for interactions with staff			
8	Organizational chart				

9	Strategic Plan	(View “Understanding and using your Strategic Plan” Induction Insights module)			
10	Risk Management Plan	(View “Understanding and using your Risk Management Plan” Induction Insights module)			
11	Program descriptions	Short descriptions of key programs, how they fit in to your strategic direction, with key highlights and issues to be aware of			
12	Relevant press clippings	Background to stakeholder involvement/ communication			
13	Annual report				
14	Relevant brochures of programs				
15	Financial documents	Budgets, balance sheet, profit and loss, cash flow, variance reports, audited financial statements. (View “Extracting strategic insights from your financial reports” Induction Insights module)			
16	Schedule	Board meeting dates/ other relevant dates. For example: annual dinner, conferences, annual Board Work plan			
17	Board training program	Professional development for Directors			
18	Board minutes	Minutes from the last three meetings			
19	Board resolutions	A resolution may be a single act by the Board to approve or adopt a change to a set of rules, new program, new contract, etc; resolutions are included in the minutes of the Board meeting.			
20	Board evaluation process	Examples of previous Board evaluations and outcomes			
21	Insurance policies	Provide copies			
22	List of key legislation	Particularly those which affect the Board and organization, and a compliance schedule stating how compliance is managed by staff.			
23	Decision making skills and strategic thinking protocols	(View “How to stop micromanaging – Operational vs strategic” Induction Insights module)			
24	Board member ‘Expectations worksheet’	States the expectations the Board has of Directors			
25	Board mentoring protocols	(View “Getting the most from your induction – Mentoring” Induction Insights module)			
26	Induction program key dates	Including visits to chairman, staff briefings, site visits etc.			
27	Glossary of terms	A list of acronyms, jargon and critical terms.			

[Download the word template!](#)



## About BoardPro

We exist to increase boardroom productivity and create better functioning boards. We don't believe good governance processes should be left to the domain of larger companies. We know that all parties in a board/management relationship want to use their time and resources most efficiently and productively. We found that a product that helped with the processes, workflows and guidance to work on the right things was missing from the market. So we developed BoardPro in partnership with some of the best independent directors and most progressive CEOs.



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