BoardVantage

eRead

All About Board Portals

A primer through the lens of BoardVantage

www.boardvantage.com

Inside

A board portal is a secure app or website designed specifically for the purpose of facilitating communication between a company and its directors. The current generation of these portals supports information exchange and captures the process that takes place during and in-between meetings.

About BoardVantage
BoardVantage addresses the secure collaboration needs of boards and leadership teams. In use by half the Fortune 500, BoardVantage sets the bar for a rich mobile experience and delivers security that meets or exceeds the standards of enterprise IT departments, including those of global financial institutions.

Board Portals: An Overview

Once board work started to expand beyond the boardroom, replacing the traditional boardbook with a more nimble and collaborative online tool became a necessity.

An electronic board portal saves companies weeks of time and supports communication between senior leadership and directors.

Technology has fundamentally changed the way modern boards communicate

Traditional board communications were paper and fax based. Companies sent out (hard copy) boardbooks in advance of meetings, and directors always met in person to discuss agenda topics. Until a few years ago, this approach to managing communications was sufficient.

A new landscape

Regulatory scrutiny, greater globalization, deeper competitive pressures, and an increase in shareholder activity have dramatically increased the volume of board work. Today, a great deal of board work takes place between meetings in addition to during meetings.

Goodbye to paper

Old-school paper processes are simply too slow and cumbersome to keep up with the pace of today's board work. Boardbooks are difficult to update and subject to loss; faxes are unreliable and present security issues. Something had to give.

The advent of the board portal

To deal with the changing needs of today's board communications, many boards are adopting electronic board portals. Board portals give directors greater visibility into operations, streamline boardbook creation, and tighten information security.

Evolution of the Board Portal

Around 2007, companies started looking for something more secure than email to facilitate communication between directors and senior executives.

A board portal, with its built-in security, ease-of-use, and document management capabilities, had obvious inherent advantages to address these needs.

It started with the need for electronic access

There were two factors that propelled market development of the board portal. The first was a cadre of progressive directors who, enthusiastic about technology and tired of bulky boardbooks, advocated electronic access to meeting materials.

The second driver was the passage of the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley act. This major piece of legislation, written in response to the accounting scandals of that time, threw a spotlight on board portals as a vehicle to drive governance. The "electronic boardbook" that emerged provided rudimentary online access — but not much more.

The board portal concept is born

It wasn't until 2005 that the board portal as a category found its footing. Around this time, the term "electronic boardbook" was replaced by the "board portal" concept that is in use to this day. This was an implicit acknowledgment that newer technology could do much more than provide simple electronic access to board materials.

A new demand: executive collaboration

Driven by a growing need to include senior executives in boardroom conversations as well as the desire among executives to collaborate more closely among themselves, companies looked for something better and more secure than email. A board portal that included built-in security, ease-of-use, and document management capabilities, had the advantages to address these needs.

The second-generation board portal that emerged in 2007 web-enabled all board processes as they were practiced inside a typical Fortune 500 company. This iteration of the board portal included a corporate secretary toolkit for creating an online agenda, managing and tallying director input, and assembling a boardbook from Microsoft Word.

The iPad® as game changer

After the release of the first iPad in 2010, boards across a wide range of organizations began to consider the device as a way to facilitate collaboration between directors and senior management. Coupled with an advanced board portal, directors and executives can use the iPad to review sensitive documents and communicate through confidential messaging and secure email.

What to Look for in Board Portal Technology

Most directors today carry their iPads everywhere and rely on them for access to their board materials—even when they're out of Wi-Fi range.

The online-offline syncing found in an advanced board portal provides directors up-to-date access to documents and notes.

Five requirements of an efficient board portal product:

1. **A better-than-paper experience.** Though paper may be cumbersome, expensive and slow, it has the advantage of giving boards control over who sees what and when they see it. When you replace this process with a board portal, the technology needs to have the equivalent ability to differentiate access between various users (this is called "content segregation").

2. **Two-way communication.** For years, the board portal was a one-way communication tool used between the general counsel and the directors. Now portals are shifting to two-way interactive capabilities that can improve decision making by providing greater efficiency and allowing directors to focus on the substantive issues rather than minutiae.

3. **Online-offline syncing.** Board portal technology uses an electronic "briefcase" (an encrypted folder designed for storing sensitive documents and personal notes) to give directors mobile access to materials even when they're offline. Information in the briefcase is automatically synced when Wi-Fi is restored. It lets the general counsel push new materials directly to the directors' devices (usually an iPad) to ensure that they have the latest information.

4. **Protection against discoverability.** Making the boardbook accessible on a director's iPad creates potential legal exposure if the director forgets to purge the information at the end of the quarter. To eliminate this risk, the board portal system must have centralized control so that downloaded content and directors' notes can be purged remotely by the person assigned this role.

5. **Engaging visuals.** When you change a long-standing process, you have to offer an incentive. The board portal user experience needs to be more intuitive and engaging for directors than the paper boardbook, taking maximum advantage of the rich graphics and animation capability of the iPad.

Board Portal Technology from BoardVantage

BoardVantage leads the market in delivering paperless process for board and leadership communication. Trusted by enterprises worldwide, including over 60 of the Fortune 100 and half of the Fortune 500 companies, BoardVantage sets the bar for a secure and mobile executive experience.

BoardVantage addresses the secure collaboration needs of boards and leadership teams everywhere.

BoardVantage's advanced board portal dramatically reduces the time and cost of meeting preparation by giving administrators a toolkit that lets them efficiently create and distribute complex online board-books. The platform gives senior leadership intuitive, secure access to meeting materials on their iPads, which allows them to approve and sign off on resolutions, even when Wi-Fi is unavailable.

BoardVantage sets the bar for a rich mobile experience and delivers security that meets or exceeds the standards of enterprise IT departments, including those of global financial institutions.

Is BoardVantage Right for Your Board?

Learn more and request a free demo at www.boardvantage.com

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Ready to Learn More?

BoardVantage keeps an extensive and up-to-date library of videos, articles, webinars, and blog posts on board portals and leadership team collaboration.

Explore all the resources at
www.boardvantage.com

The Paperless Boardroom is Here - No More Excuses
By combining the immediacy of online access and readability of print, the iPad can deliver an experience that's better than paper. Learn how BoardVantage's sync technology gives board members unprecedented efficiency using the iPad.

NYSE Director Education Q&A with BoardVantage CEO Joe Ruck: Commonly Asked Questions about Board Portals
The iPad has been a game changer for board portals and 'tech savvy' is no longer a requirement for directors. Today, the briefcase technology found in advanced board portals allows the corporate secretary to exert full control over all content downloaded by directors, thereby dramatically reducing the risk of discoverability. To learn more, read this Corporate Board Member interview with Joe Ruck.