

Tool 15: Effective Board Culture

Some boards adopt guiding principles or values that guide the board's work and its function as a team. Here are some examples:

- **Respect others when they speak.** The Board Chair will run the meeting and will recognize members to speak. Please wait until the Chair acknowledges you to speak.
- **Be courteous.** Members of the board, partners, guests, and staff will be treated with professional respect.
- **Include diverse perspectives.** When people bring diverse perspectives, they see problems differently, and they may arrive at different solutions.
- **Listen to understand.** As others express their opinions, listen closely to hear what they are trying to say, and ask clarifying questions to help you understand their meaning.
- **Make room for other voices.** Each board member will have a chance to speak before a board member is allowed a second comment.
- **Be brief and to the point.** Please refrain from soapbox speeches. The Chair will ensure strict adherence to agenda item time limits.
- **Disagree respectfully.** Differing opinions are crucial to the organization. However, while you are encouraged to argue passionately for your idea, disagreement needs to be handled in an appropriately dignified manner.