



Why It's Time to Blow Up the Board Book

 **Boardable**

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The board book. A longtime mainstay in board meetings around the world, the board book is simultaneously viewed as a necessity and a nuisance. Traditionally, board books accompany board meetings and offer dozens of pages (printed out, no less) outlining strategy, financial standing, performance, and other measurements. They deliver insight into how a nonprofit is performing, keeping up with goals, and planning for future growth.

And while board books can deliver important information and strategy to nonprofit boards, in today's fast-paced, tech-first landscape, these multi-page monoliths are starting to feel outdated and unnecessary. Here's why:

Board members don't have time to read board books

Nonprofit board members are typically engaged, upstanding members of the community. With jobs and lives of their own, sometimes they don't even have time to attend the board meetings in person, let alone read pages and pages of pre-work. Often, board books go unread and are only brought up at the meeting as a reference to a statistic or number. Additionally, the contents can quickly become outdated.

Creating a board book wastes valuable time

If the responsibility of creating the board book falls on your shoulders personally, you know firsthand how many hours go into collecting the information, typing it up in the appropriate fashion, and actually printing out multiple copies of the book. This takes up critical time that could be spent on other duties that your nonprofit requires.

Printing is a waste of financial and physical resources

Cloud computing has ushered in a new, paperless world, and printing multiple board book copies doesn't fit into the modern era. Dozens of pages, printed dozens of times, are wasteful and expensive, drawbacks irreconcilable with nonprofits that are dedicated to helping charitable causes. This ebook will reimagine board books and will offer innovative ideas for bringing the next generation of board documentation to your organization.

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Introducing the next-generation board book

As the world of nonprofit boards becomes more innovative and forward-thinking, nonprofit leaders who are responsible for the board book must take this foundational part of nonprofit board experience forward as well.

Instead of working on dozens of pages that may or may not even be read, nonprofit leaders can instead focus their efforts on new, proactive ways of relaying the same key information in a different way.

The next-generation board book still delivers the information board members want and need to know—it simply does it in a way that leverages

technology and efficiency. The following board book examples champion modernity and focus—they allow boards to highlight the most important information without creating a burden for staff or board members. Nonprofit leaders can better organize board documentation for unique members or specific meetings and can even open up the once-stagnant board book format to group discussion and collaboration.

Electronic board books

Think about how you currently engage with your board members. If you're like most non-profit leaders, you rely heavily on emails and possibly even a [board management solution](#). Why not start sending your board books as PDFs to your board members in advance of your meetings? That way, they can prepare early and have an electronic copy readily available (even on their smartphones or tablets) to access during the meeting.

Additionally, electronic board books can be stored online, which makes it easy for your board members to find past board books when the need arises. Consider an online board book option that compiles all needed information into an online pdf that can be saved or printed by board members who may still need a physical copy. Giving your board members a single online spot where all board book data is stored—talk about transparency and efficiency!



Electronic board books can be shared and stored online, to make it easy for board members to find past board books as the need arises.

Collaborative board books

If your board is still in its early stages, or if your board members like to change and discuss certain talking points before they are formally recorded in a board book, then collaborative board books might be the answer. Akin to a Google Doc or other collaboration document, a collaborative board book is a great way to update your board in real time with what you're discussing, so the content is never outdated.

In addition, a collaborative board book enables nonprofit leaders or board members who are responsible for building the board book to gain some input from other board members. Your finance committee, for example, could contribute to the section on finances, while your marketing committee might be responsible for your events and strategy sections.

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Dynamic digital agendas

Dynamic digital agendas can help you take your board books to the next level and turn a stale necessity into an educational, engaging experience that's tailored to your organization's needs. Quickly build and share meeting agendas to give board members the content and tools they need to be fully engaged both in the board room and outside it.

With [dynamic meeting agendas](#), you have the ability to create a totally customized agenda. If your team is using a dynamic agenda for the first time, consider using a template to guide you through the process. And once you're done, save the agenda as a PDF and email it to everyone—or a small subset of your board members who need the information.

Creating dynamic agendas is a great way to get your board members more engaged and involved in the conversation. If you really want to discuss a certain agenda point at your upcoming meeting, add a few talking points in your board book to get the creative juices flowing. Then, at your meeting, attendees will already have a good idea of where the meeting should go and what needs to be discussed.

Finally, encourage board members to take personal notes that only they can see so they never lose track of personal thoughts or ideas that may help your board now or in the future.

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Are board books even necessary anymore now that everything is online?

The short answer here is yes . . . and no. Board members must have access to the minute details and metrics of a nonprofit, down to daily budgets and year-long goals. This usually means a ton of data points are housed in traditional board book formats, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Board books can be useful because they deliver this information in a concise, direct way, but if your nonprofit (and your board members) are ready for a change, then it's never been a better time to go for it.

Many of today's nonprofit organizations are already making the switch to online processes and solutions in other parts of their proceedings (such as with scheduling and building meeting agendas), which means much of the information typically housed in a board book is already available online in some capacity. So if your team has access to this data online, all you really need to figure out is how best to organize and deliver the content to your board members. And it doesn't have to be in a "book" format, either. An online file tree could work just as well, or a complex Google Drive account. Just make sure you're using a secure platform to ensure complete privacy with your nonprofit data.





How to blow up the board book

As a nonprofit leader or board member, if you're ready to get rid of your board book days forever, here are a few tips that may help:

- First, make sure you explain to your team the benefits of an online board book, from efficiency to time to resources.
- Next, get both the [leaders of your nonprofit](#) as well as the other board members to understand and support your transition plan.
- Finally, highlight that modern board books simply repurpose content that is already online in a way that's easy to manage, communicate, and reference.

With everyone behind the idea, you can finally say goodbye to the traditional board book and hello to a modern, progressive way of running board meetings.

About Boardable

As leaders in the space, we understand the frustration you feel (and the hours you lose) just from organizing board meetings — let alone staying productive and communicating between them via email, phone, and text. We've lived that reality. After tirelessly searching for the right solution but not finding it, we decided to build it ourselves!

Boardable is an online board management platform that centralizes communication, secure document storage, meeting planning, and everything involved with running a board of directors. Founded in 2016 by nonprofit leaders and founders, Boardable has a mission to improve board engagement for nonprofits. Boardable is based in Indianapolis, Indiana. Learn more at [boardable.com](#).



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