

How to Make a Motion During a Board Meeting

There's a simple and well-established process to introduce, discuss, and vote on motions. This process was defined in Robert's Rules of Order and has been used as the standard since the rules were originally penned in 1876.

1. Recognition

The first step is to be recognized. This usually means waiting until no one else has the floor. Then, you will stand, raise your hand, or use an established procedure to get the attention of the chair. Once the board chair recognizes you, you have the floor to present your motion.

2. State the Motion

Next, state your motion clearly and concisely. Provide as much information as is required for board members to discuss the motion. Connect the motion to an agenda item or ensure it addresses an issue pertinent to the board's responsibilities or the organization's goals.

3. Second the Motion

In order for your motion to move forward, someone else will need to second the motion. Any other voting member of the board can choose to second a motion. This represents them agreeing the matter should be discussed and voted on at the present time. In some cases, the chair may acknowledge your motion personally, which allows the motion to move forward.

4. Debate and Discuss

The fourth stage is debate and discussion. During this phase, each board member has an opportunity to discuss the matter, weighing the pros and cons of a positive or negative vote. Board members also have the opportunity to propose changes to a motion.

Traditionally, each board member speaks once regarding a motion, but open discussion may also be permitted. There are generally three options for what will happen to your motion at this point. It may be tabled or postponed for later, sent to a committee for further investigation, or moved to a vote.

5. Vote

During the voting stage, each board member will submit a single vote for (aye) or against (nay) the motion. In some cases, changes to a motion will be voted on first.

If the ayes outnumber the nays, then your motion will be approved and the action you proposed will become an official board decision. If the nays outnumber, then your motion is rejected. But if you're driven to see your motion through, you may revise and propose it again at a later date.