Best Practices for a High-Functioning Board

Impact100 chapters rely on committed volunteer boards to bring the model to life. Building a high-functioning board takes intention, clarity, and care. Use these proven practices to strengthen your chapter's leadership team and keep things running smoothly year after year.

Set Clear Expectations

- Define time commitments, communication norms, and meeting cadence from the outset.
- Clarify expectations for attendance, meeting prep, and accountability.
- Share a one-page "Board Norms" sheet each year with meeting dates, deadlines, and key communication practices.
- Clarity prevents confusion—and shapes a strong, respectful board culture.

Establish a Consistent Meeting Rhythm

- Hold monthly board meetings on a predictable day and time.
- Avoid changing meeting schedules frequently—use calendar invites with start/end times.
- Stability builds trust and increases engagement across your board.

Prepare in Advance

- Distribute board packets 5–7 days before each meeting.
- Committee reports should highlight progress, questions, and recommended actions.
- Expect all board members to review materials in advance and be prepared to contribute.

Respect Everyone's Time

- Use a timed agenda to keep meetings focused and productive.
- Strategically assign the order of committee reports and time allocations.
- If a discussion runs long, the President may continue or table the conversation for later.

Invest in Board Retreats

- Plan at least one annual board retreat to build relationships and align strategy.
- A day-and-a-half format with one overnight is ideal.
- Use retreats to onboard new leaders, set goals, and reconnect with purpose.

Appoint a Model Guardian

- Consider designating a "Model Guardian" or "Culture Keeper" to help your chapter stay aligned with the Impact100 model and guiding principles.
- This role helps prevent mission drift while encouraging innovation that fits the model.

Set the Tone

- Culture is shaped by what you allow—and what you expect.
- Model professionalism, preparation, and purpose.
- Create a board environment that women are proud to be part of.