

About 43% of boards still use email for communication, voting, and even sharing sensitive documents. At the same time, more and more boards are turning to board portals as a more secure and convenient solution.

Since both tools have benefits and drawbacks, it's important to thoroughly weigh them all and then choose the best option. Use the comparison table and recommendations below to ease your decision making.

Email communication vs board software communication

Let's compare two tools for board communication and management and see what their advantages and disadvantages are.

Email

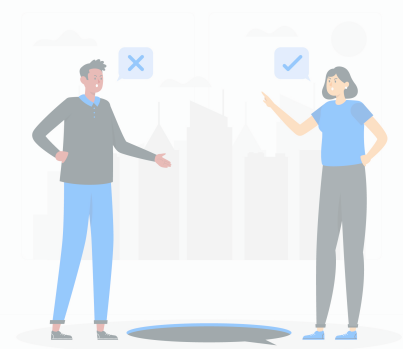
Generally, email is known to be an informal method of communication and isn't recommended for sharing confidential information or board voting. But there are also a few advantages directors choose it for. Let's look at them in more detail.

Disadvantages

- 1. Lack of security.** 83% of organizations experienced email data breaches in 2021 alone.
- 2. Lack of centralized data storage.** Boards require a secure and convenient method for storing and sharing documents, which email can't provide.
- 3. Non-compliance risks.** Boards that fail to comply with data protection standards and experience a data breach may suffer a fine of up to €20 million.
- 4. Ineffective communication.** Emailing can cause misunderstandings and lead to poor decision making.
- 5. Unintended recipients.** An email can end up in the wrong hands because of a simple human error like entering an incorrect address.

Advantages

- 1. Accessibility.** Email communication is accessible to everyone with an internet connection.
- 2. Speed.** A board member can send an email in a matter of a few clicks.
- 3. Ease of use.** The tool is very intuitive and no prior training is required.
- 4. Affordability.** Using email is often free of charge or pocket-friendly.



Board portal software

Board management software is a secure space specifically designed for board members. It allows them to collaborate with other team members and access confidential board documents safely and conveniently. Let's see what pros and cons a solution has.

Advantages

- 1. Secure and centralized data storage.** All documents are stored in one secure place and can be easily accessed from anywhere, anytime.
- 2. Effective communication.** Group and private chats and video conferencing let board members communicate effortlessly during virtual board meetings.
- 3. Improved collaboration.** Tools for voting, polls, setting deadlines, and assigning tasks simplify, speed up, and improve board teamwork.
- 4. Streamlined board administration.** Agenda creators, meeting minutes templates, and scheduling tools help reduce meeting preparation time.
- 5. Cost-effectiveness.** Virtual paperless board meetings significantly reduce the time and money spent on printing and storing paper documents and traveling.

Disadvantages

- 1. Time for training.** Even though most board portals are user-friendly, some users may need training to learn how to use the software.
- 2. Price.** Despite being an affordable solution, board portals are still more expensive than email tools, as the latter are mostly free.
- 3. Mobile limitations.** Some mobile versions of board portals support limited functionality.



What companies need board meeting software?

Board management software can be beneficial for companies of all sizes and from all industries, as long as they have board-related tasks like:

- Preparing for meetings
- Participating in meetings
- Managing committees
- Requesting approvals
- Requesting signatures
- Storing and sharing documents
- Voting
- Completing surveys



Top 5 board portal providers by Board-room.org

Let's first start with a short algorithm Board-room.org sticks to when reviewing and rating board portal software vendors:

1. Finding, reading, and analyzing feedback from real users
2. Getting in touch with the providers and discussing their products' functionality, pricing, pros, and cons
3. Testing the platforms using demos and free trials

Such an approach makes the reviews unbiased and honest. You can find the result of the research in a [board portal comparison](#) table. The top 5 providers are also described below for your convenience.

1. iDeals Board



iDeals Board software drives board processes before, during, and after meetings and is equally beneficial for corporations, governments, and nonprofits.

The provider's customers say that with the software, their meetings have become more efficient and board members are now more engaged. They also highlight the easy onboarding and professionalism of the iDeals Board support team.

Key features

- Automatic meeting minutes drafts
- Agenda builder
- Activity dashboard
- E-signature
- Chats
- Document annotations
- Deadline management
- Reminders
- Voting

To learn more about iDeals products or have a sales, support, or billing request, follow the <https://www.idealsvdr.com/contacts/>

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2. Diligent

Diligent is a governance software provider that helps 700,000+ board directors from 23,000+ companies streamline meetings, collaboration, and communication.

One of the vendor's biggest advantages is its mobile app, where users can access all documents and prepare for meetings effectively. However, some clients find the platform a bit complicated and require training to learn how to use it.

Key features

- Messaging
- Microsoft Teams and Zoom integrations
- Task assignment
- User access permissions
- Keyword search bar
- Centralized document storage



3. Boardvantage

Boardvantage is a platform for meeting management and leadership team collaboration designed by Nasdaq — a multinational financial services corporation.

Generally, customers leave positive feedback on the provider, saying it ensures efficiency, productivity, and simplicity for board directions, committees, leadership teams, and corporate alike. However, there are several drawbacks, among which are difficulties with onboarding new team members.

Key features

- Multi-factor authentication
- E-signature
- Notes, highlights, and annotations
- Offline viewing of materials
- Secure email
- Storage space for documents and folders



4. BoardEffect

BoardEffect is a board management solution that delivers services for nonprofits, higher education institutions, community healthcare organizations, and credit unions.

The provider has 3,500+ customers that are generally satisfied with the tools and services. They especially like how easy it is to organize and share meeting books and that all board members are prepared for meetings now. Among the disadvantages are not straightforward navigation and lack of third-party integrations.

Key features

- Online board books
- Event scheduling
- Surveys and polls
- Approval requests
- Task assignment
- Reporting



5. Govenda

Govenda is another virtual boardroom solution designed for board members, administrators, executive leadership, and IT department to execute every aspect of the board cycle.

One of the product's advantages is that it's built for all devices and can be accessed from anywhere. Another benefit is unlimited users number, which saves the clients from paying additional fees for new users. But board members complain that they get logged out during board meetings. They also don't like the minutes' interface, which is problematic and difficult to navigate.

Key features

- Messaging
- Admin reports and dashboards
- News items
- Annotations, highlights, sticky notes
- Directory search
- Biometric logins
- Voting

