

The Board Narrative Canvas

Fill this in before you build a single slide. If you can't complete it, the deck won't save you.

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Most security board updates fail before the meeting starts, because the speaker prepared *information* rather than a *decision*. Boards do not want your dashboard. They want to know what changed, what it means for the business, and what you need from them. Complete every row below in plain sentences. Anything you can't fill in is a gap the room will find.

1 · The one sentence

If the meeting is cut to sixty seconds, this is what you say. No jargon, no acronyms, no numbers that need explaining.

2 · What changed since last time

Change	Why it matters to the business	Our response

3 · The ask

What I need

From whom, specifically

By when

What happens if I don't get it

IF THERE IS NO ASK, SAY SO

“Nothing needed from you this quarter” is a legitimate and confidence-building answer. Manufacturing an ask to justify the slot is how you lose the room over time.

4 · The uncomfortable number

One metric you would rather not show. Bringing it yourself is worth more than any other item on this page, because the alternative is somebody else finding it.

5 · Risk in their language

Say this	Not this
"We could not process payments for two days."	"We have a critical vulnerability in the payment stack."
"A supplier failure would stop onboarding for a week."	"Third-party risk posture is amber."
"We would take four days to recover; the business assumes four hours."	"Our RTO is not aligned to appetite."

6 · The three questions you will be asked

- 1 Are we more or less exposed than we were six months ago, and how do you know?
- 2 How do we compare to our peers — and is that the right question?
- 3 If you had more money, what would you do first, and what would it buy us?

Write your answer to each before the meeting. Answering these well matters more than the deck.

THE TRAP

Never present a risk you have already decided how to fix without saying so. A board that senses you are performing rather than reporting will start asking questions designed to test you rather than to help you, and that dynamic is very hard to reverse.

Companion to: "How to Talk to the Board Without Putting Them to Sleep" at cybersecleader.com. Adapt freely inside your organisation with attribution retained. Not legal or regulatory advice.