

## **SAMPLE GROUNDRULES FOR FAMILY FOUNDATION BOARD MEETINGS**

*These groundrules have been compiled by Karie Brown based on her consulting work with a number of family foundations. These groundrules can be used as a starting point for individual foundations to develop and adopt their own agreed upon approach to their board meetings .*

- Come to meetings prepared (each member should have their meeting materials at hand and bring their board binders for reference).
- Be mindful of the use of technology – turn phones off (or to vibrate) and only use computers to advance the purpose of the meeting.
- Maintain confidentiality in and out of meetings.
- Be respectful (let others speak and actively listen).
- Be open (as questions from a learning perspective).
- Ensure that only one person is speaking at a time.
- Don't personalize things and don't make personal attacks – stay on the business of the foundation.
- Don't bring up family issues, either directly or indirectly, unless they relate directly to the business at hand.
- Speak candidly and constructively – often what is not said can lead to more problems than what is said.
- Assist the facilitator by participating effectively and efficiently. This means that each board member should:
  - Make sure to stay on point;
  - Add value with his or her comments; and,
  - Not take too much airtime.
- Hold ourselves accountable for keeping discussions and decisions at a “board-worthy” level.
- Ground discussions in information, data and knowledge.
- Show appreciation.