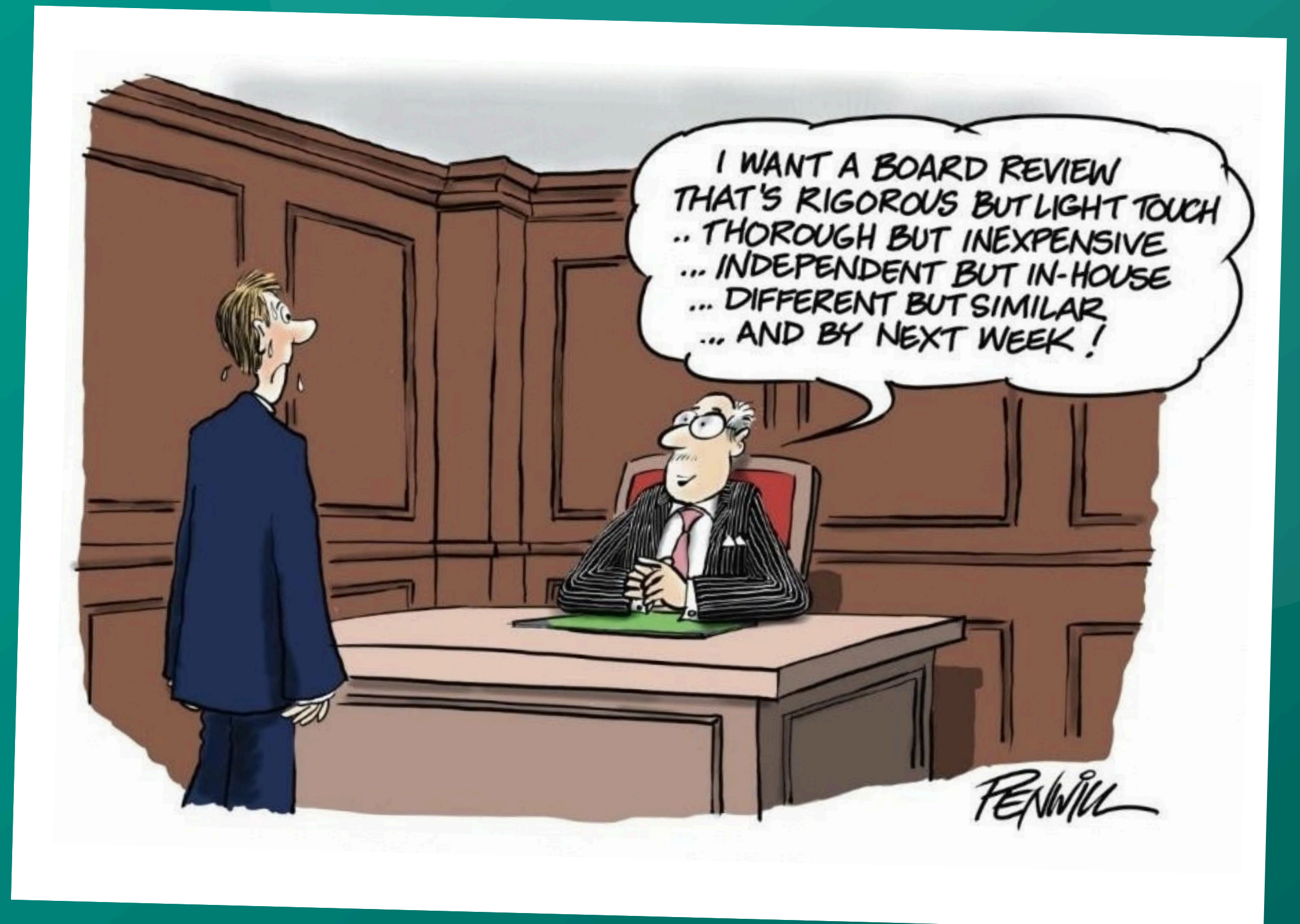




Planning your internal board review

Getting the focus and approach right

Your annual review shouldn't be a "here we go again" exercise. Done well, it sharpens board discussions, surfaces blind spots, and gives directors confidence that they are adding real value.



Get the focus right

The best reviews don't just check process and compliance. They ask the bigger questions that test whether the board is working as intended. A fresh focus helps surface what really needs discussing.

01 Look at the whole picture

Keep the full range of effectiveness influences, but liven it up with more interesting questions about how the board really works as a team.

ASK: Is the board spending the right time on what really matters?

02 Tackle the big issues differently

Pick the factors that matter most for your board, up to 8 topics in more depth. Culture, succession and risk appetite demand fresh angles.

ASK: Are we looking at these beyond the usual lens?

03 Strategy: more than sign-off

Focus on how the board shapes strategy, tests assumptions and helps management refine choices, and whether papers and meetings support that.

ASK: Do we spend enough time on the core drivers of success?

04 Probe risk and resilience

Go beyond the risk register. Look at how the board oversees responses to the core threats, and how widely it tests risk management.

ASK: How would we respond if key assumptions failed?

05 Strengthen the dynamics

Use the review to look at behaviours: the balance of debate, whether every voice is heard, and the mix of challenge and support.

ASK: Do all voices get heard in our discussions?

06 Check the committees

Deep-dive one or two committees. Look closely at how they meet their responsibilities, add value, and where their time should go.

ASK: Where is each committee adding most value?

Get the questionnaire right

Even the right topics won't deliver value if the questions miss the mark. Good reviews depend on how issues are framed, explored and followed up.

AVOID	TRY INSTEAD
✗ Asking for facts the CoSec already knows	✓ Ask about what actually happens in the boardroom
✗ Questions that address multiple points	✓ One short point per question
✗ Vague or ambiguous wording	✓ Everyday language, not governance-code wording
✗ Over-focus on process mechanics	✓ Ask about impact and outcomes
✗ Closed or self-incriminating questions	✓ Open questions that make candour feel safe
✗ Over-reliance on scores without context	✓ Pair every rating with a chance to comment

Make the report count

 Give commentary

Say what the data means. Don't leave directors to interpret charts.

 Explore the "why"

Context behind the numbers is everything.

 Compare perspectives

NEDs vs executives, new joiners vs experienced voices, group vs subsidiary.

 Curate comments

Capture the insights, not every word.

 Prioritise

Surface the top issues, not an endless list.

 Show what's changed

Have changes in composition, strategy or risk environment affected board performance?

An internal review is an opportunity to learn, not just comply. The boards that get most from it ask sharper questions, look under the surface, and use the findings to guide what they do next.

Keep it internal. Don't do it alone.

Thinking Board® does all the work: directors spend 20 minutes answering interesting questions, and an anonymised board-ready report is available immediately.

Remneek Sangar · +44 (0)7549 032722
remneek.sangar@independentaudit.com

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