



# **Are you looking for software for your HOA or condo?**

A comprehensive guide to buying  
the right software



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# **Are you looking for software for your HOA or condo?**

## **A comprehensive guide to buying the right software**

### **Getting started**

Congrats! Considering HOA software is a big step. Technology is driving change in every industry; HOAs and condos are no exception. Cloud-based software can be considered an essential tool for today's modern organizations.

Knowing how to use a smartphone, email, Excel and Word (and perhaps Dropbox and Google Drive) is no longer enough. Cloud-based software has arrived in droves for the property management industry. Software can practically run an organization, but only if the right software is chosen.

Choosing the best software for your board is challenging, but we've written this guide to help you and your board of directors decide. The product you choose will play a critical role in helping you manage your board of directors.

After all, boards have more important work to do; that of providing leadership to the board and its members. Enough already. Let's move on to finding the right solution for your board.

### **Even the way we buy software has changed**

In the "old" days, we bought a software license and then downloaded it from a CD or the internet. Now, software is purchased on a subscription basis and "rented" rather than purchased.

There is nothing to download anymore as you buy a subscription on a monthly or annual basis and login via a web page. The industry refers to this type of product as SaaS –software as a service – a baffling term to anyone but industry insiders.

## **Do-it-yourself solutions don't work**

Many boards still have their records stored in filing cabinets, bankers' boxes, here and there at directors' homes and board offices. Some save their documents on thumb drives, in email inboxes, Google docs, Dropbox or on WordPress websites.

## **How much are you thinking about spending?**

Prices vary a lot. Expect to pay anywhere between \$75 – \$500 per month. Annual subscriptions usually save 10% or 1 or 2 months free. It is best to decide on a budget and then stick to it.

## **What problems are you looking to fix with software?**

Modern software like BoardSpace comes packed with features and helpful tools. No software product does everything, so it is best to figure out what is really needed. With so many vendors on the market, don't get sidetracked by looking for features that you won't use.

Make a list of the challenges that you think software can solve. As these questions get answered, write them down to keep them organized. Brainstorming can help bring in a variety of ideas from lots of people. Ask everyone who will use the software. More input will result in a better list. The goal is to identify as many problems as possible.

## Software for your board should solve all of the following problems, and offer all of the following benefits:

What do I want?	Feature	Benefits?
I need to organize my documents.	Document management	Always find what you need.
I want to create agendas easily.	Agenda builder	Save time by reusing templates. No need to start from scratch each meeting.
I never get my minutes finished. And a month later everyone has forgotten.	SMART minutes	Create minutes during meetings. Have drafts ready right away.
I missed a contract cancellation date and I never want that to happen again.	Planner	Never forget an important event.
We dash off at the end of our meetings and forget to jot down who is doing what and its due date.	Actions (to-do-lists)	Don't worry. BoardSpace tracks actions and sends reminders automatically on a weekly basis.
Some of our board members connect via telephone for our meetings. They have a hard time keeping up.	Live update for minutes	It's easy for remote attendees to keep up with the meeting even if the sound quality is poor.
Our board needs some structure.	Built-in best practices	We created BoardSpace with the best practices in mind.

## Why not just use Dropbox or Google Docs?

Pretty much every software vendor includes some kind of document storage as one of their features. Storing the documents is not the hard part; finding them is way more difficult. A board of directors face a special challenge not experienced by other types of users. This is because directors come and go on a regular basis. This means that any system set up today must be easily understood and administered by future users. Not all document storage systems are created equal. Read on to learn the differences between BoardSpace, Dropbox and Google Docs.

Comparison	BoardSpace	Dropbox	Google Docs
Document storage system?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Purpose-built for boards?	Yes	No	No
Board management system?	Yes	No	No
How much storage is provided?	Unlimited (up to 1 TB)	Depends on plan	Depends on plan
Is there an extra cost for more storage?	Included in subscription	Yes	Yes

Comparison	BoardSpace	Dropbox	Google Docs
How much storage is provided?	Unlimited (up to 1 TB)	Depends on plan	Depends on plan
Is there an extra cost for more storage?	Included	Yes	Yes
Organizing structure	Tags	Folders	Folders

## The Nitty Gritty

Fancy complicated systems don't necessarily translate to being easy to manage. And for volunteers who are unlikely to be technical experts, it is critical to choose a system that works for them. Volunteers do not want to waste a lot of time trying to find documents or learning a new system.

## Why do we need anything more? My property management company currently uses HOA software

Most HOA software products do not include the board-focused features that you need.

**Capterra** (a B2B software guide to help customers choose software) describes homeowner association software as having features such as:

- committee management
- document management
- event management
- member database
- website management
- work order management
- calendar management

## What does a feature like committee management do?

Committee management is not the equivalent of board management. Committee management includes document storage, calendar management, event management, and more. It does not include the necessary board management features such as taking minutes, keeping track of actions, monitoring events such as contract renewals and most important the saving of “corporate knowledge.”

Common to both are document storage, but not all document storage systems are created equal. HOA software as a category is not complete without the inclusion of the board management features.

## Don't forget to ask these questions too!

Ask	Why is that important?	What does BoardSpace provide?
Is there an onboarding fee?	Sometimes the onboarding fee is hidden so make sure to ask.	No onboarding charges.
How much storage? If we need more storage is there an additional fee?	Varies. Often there is an extra charge.	Unlimited data (up to 1TB)
What happens if the board moves to a new property management company?	The board will lose its records.	Fully portable.



Ask	Why is that important?	What does BoardSpace provide?
Where is my data stored?	It depends on the vendor.	Canada
If the number of users changes, is there a per-user cost that will increase the price?	Many vendors charge a "per-user fee" that can substantially increase the annual cost.	No per-user fee.
Is the vendor open to suggestions for new features?	The best companies are always looking to improve their products.	Yes, we want to hear from our customers. Our future development plans are based on what our customers want.
What happens if we change our minds after a few months?	Onboarding fees are generally non-refundable.	BoardSpace offers a 90-day money-back guarantee. If you don't like our software and we can't fix what you don't like, we'll give you 100% back.

If you're looking for a software to help organize your board, products like Google Drive or Dropbox just don't match up to a purpose-built software like BoardSpace. This is because BoardSpace offers so much more than just document storage.

## Say Hello to a whole new way!

Through BoardSpace's integrated features and single login portal, directors can say goodbye to spreadsheets, scribbled notes, unfinished minutes, lost documents and forgetting important dates such as a contract renewal. Say HELLO to simple, organized, and findable board management features.

It is increasingly difficult to get volunteers to serve without expecting them to look after all the busy work that used to come with traditional board administration.

With BoardSpace, boards of directors can focus their time by making great decisions for their communities.



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Schedule a free demo

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