

The Boardroom



When discussing “the boardroom,” we are in fact talking about many thousands of boards, each shaped by different cultures, industries, and political and regulatory environments. Yet despite their differences there is one thing on which most directors and business leaders would agree: the spotlight on them has never been more intense.

While business is regaining some of the trust lost after the financial crisis, the pressure on boards to continuously improve remains acute. Directors have to lead businesses that are increasingly global, complex and fast-paced, and contend with political, social and environmental pressures.

Undoubtedly, these circumstances also present opportunities. Boards able to look beyond their basic responsibilities and adapt to this dynamic environment not only help their companies, they also communicate – both internally and externally – about themselves and their businesses to a large, attentive audience. Importantly, successful boards help shape the agenda, rather than just react to issues as they come.

Issue

Diversity is one of the most significant issues on the board's agenda today. Progressive companies are focusing on what it means to be inclusive, as opposed to simply ticking boxes and fulfilling quotas. It is an effort that encompasses far more than gender alone. True diversity involves different sexual identities, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, professional experience and personality types.

Fostering this inclusive culture in their own ranks, and in the businesses they lead, is now a core responsibility of those in the boardroom. Tabling the issue or ignoring it altogether is no longer a viable option for those who want to compete for millennial talent, win new customers and generate transformative ideas.

This challenging landscape calls on those in the boardroom to keep upping their game. This issue of the *Brunswick Review* offers a broad range of perspectives, as told by the men and women serving on boards, as well as those advising them.

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