

CLIENT STORIES [1]

Adding value to a well-performing board

Generally this company was regarded (both internally and externally) as having a well performing board. Rosemary's review confirmed this. The board was indeed performing its governance duties well.

It was effectively structured in terms of delegating authority to board committees, it had good processes to help the board fulfill its accountabilities, a culture that reinforced ongoing high performance and a Chair who was well respected by his fellow directors, management and the market.

And yet...

Although the board was comprised of the right mix of capabilities for the company, there were several directors who were less active than others in board meetings. They seemed reticent to contribute early in the discussion of issues, if at all, despite being well qualified to do so. In the individual debriefing discussions with each of these directors, Rosemary provided clear feedback on each one's behaviour and the impact it had on the board's deliberations and coached each of them on how to contribute more effectively at board and committee meetings.

She also worked with the Chair to identify ways in which he could elicit more input from these directors in board meetings to better integrate them into boardroom discussions, as well as recommending ways in which he could decrease his overdependence on some very active directors when staffing committees.

It was clear in a board 'health check' discussion with the Chair later in the year, that the quieter directors were contributing more than in the past and that their insights were well regarded by their fellow directors. Committee membership was also more evenly distributed amongst all of the directors.

A board review may be focused on finding the more subtle points of intervention that can take the overall board's performance to a higher level.