



THE
Better Boards
INITIATIVE

Advice to New Directors

BETTER BOARDS BEST PRACTICE RESEARCH

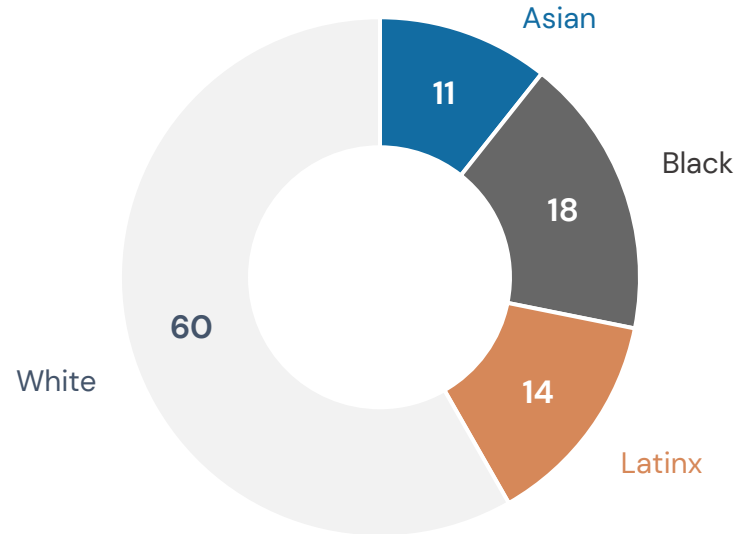
Who

WE INTERVIEWED

103

DIRECTOR
INTERVIEWEES

ETHNICITY



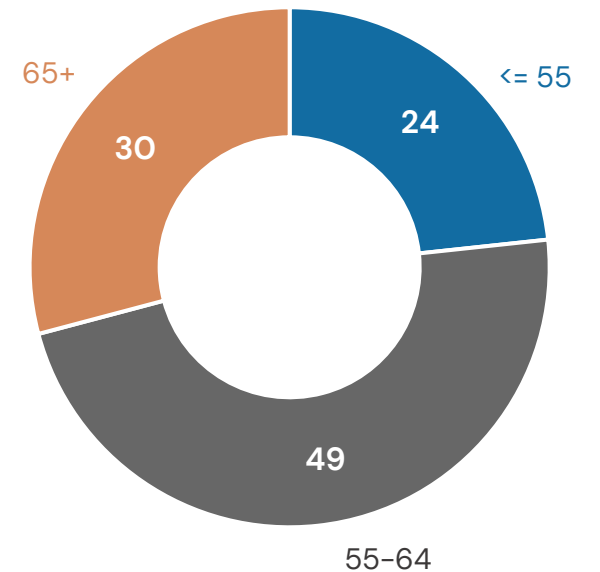
60:40

WHITE/BIPOC RATIO

50:50

MALE/FEMALE
RATIO

AGE



36-80

AGE RANGE

628

CORPORATE
BOARD SEATS

44

FORTUNE 500
COMPANIES



BOARDS ARE
transforming

OLD STYLE BOARDS	NEW STYLE BOARDS
<i>Predominantly male</i>	<i>Women and men</i>
<i>Mostly white</i>	<i>Mix of ethnicities</i>
<i>CEO/CFO/Finance focus</i>	<i>Wider range of strategic perspectives</i>
<i>Over 60</i>	<i>Multiple generations</i>
<i>Hierarchical decision-making</i>	<i>Collaborative decision-making</i>

WE ASKED

two 'new director' questions:

What do you wish you knew stepping onto your first board?

What advice do you have for new board members?

Surprising difference

IN THE TWO ANSWERS

The unseen dimensions of board culture.

"I wish I would have had a decoder ring."

"You don't know about culture, long-held values, where the sacred cows are."

WHO HAS influence?

“On every board I’ve ever been on there’s always an inside group.”

“I wish I understood then how political a board could be and how to read a room on who were the influencers and how to ally with them faster.”

WHAT ARE THE
relationships
AMONG BOARD
MEMBERS?

WHO KNOWS WHO
how?

*“What are the relationships beneath
the relationships?”*

“What is the informal network?”

WHAT HAPPENS

in between

MEETINGS AND HOW
ARE DECISIONS MADE?

“The drive to achieve collegiality requires a lot of work behind the scenes.”

“There are a lot of one-to-one conversations. If you’re not in the loop, I don’t know how you can be effective.”

WHAT IS THE BOARD'S style?

"It's no different than sports. You see how the coach is directing people. Is it really formal? Is the Chair very authoritative and are they following Robert's Rules of Order or is it more of a free-for-all?"

"If you come in, saying this is me, take it or leave it, you may fit or you may not. Hopefully you have more tools in your toolkit than just being one way."

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN ABOUT OUR
UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Onboarding for New Directors

<https://betterboardsinitiative.org/unwrittenrules/>



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