

Director, Defined:

Your Board Archetype

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4 in 5 directors say their board
is effective.

Fewer than half formally evaluate
whether that is true.

Source: Private Company Governance 2026 Report — Private Directors Association & ASU New Governance Lab.

Confidence in board performance is considerably higher than the rigor used to evaluate it.

2026 EFFICACY FINDING

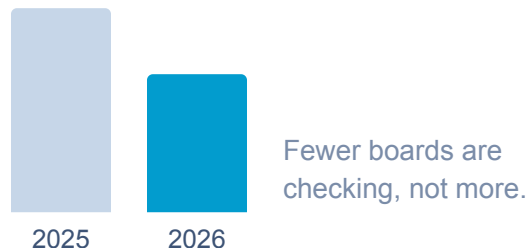
80% of fiduciary directors rate their board effective or better.

46% report conducting a formal board performance review.

38% report individual director performance evaluation.

YEAR OVER YEAR

Formal fiduciary board reviews declined from **68% in 2025** to **46% in 2026**.



Source: Private Company Governance 2026 Report — Private Directors Association & ASU New Governance Lab.

Grounded in behavioral governance research

Board effectiveness is shaped by more than who is in the room. Research on board behavior points to differences in how directors gather information, focus attention, challenge, interpret and engage.

Forbes & Milliken (1999)

Boards are strategic decision-making groups. Effectiveness depends on how directors exchange information and interact, not on credentials alone.

van Ees, Gabrielsson & Huse (2009)

Directors bring habitual routines for processing information and making judgments. Those patterns shape how a board behaves.

Bailey & Peck (2013)

Boards differ measurably in decision-making style, shaped by shared mental models, power relationships and the chair.

Schiehll, Lewellyn & Yan (2023)

Boards do not attend equally to everything. Where attention goes is itself a governance behavior.

Krause, Withers & Waller (2025)

Board decisions move through discovery, deliberation and decision. Bias drops when all three work together.

Pernelet & Brennan (2023)

418 director questions across nine observed meetings. Challenge is muted in public session and substantive in private.

Full reading list at governancestyle.org

Every great board needs all four



Steward

Protect what matters.

Stability and
judgment



Strategist

Shape what's next.

Direction and
opportunity



Catalyst

Drive meaningful
change.

Momentum and
innovation



Navigator

See around corners.

Awareness and
adaptability

Effective boards need range

OUTWARD
THE
ENVIRONMENT



Navigator

Reads signals early and asks what the board is not seeing.



Strategist

Connects today's decisions to tomorrow's opportunity.



Steward

Holds continuity, judgment and the governance floor.



Catalyst

Forces the overdue conversation and moves it to action.

INWARD
THE
ORGANIZATION

PRESERVE

PROPEL

**What kind of
room are we in?**



PART TWO

PDA 2026 Private Board Insights

What the research says about how boards judge themselves.

Private Company Governance 2026 Report — Private Directors Association & the New Governance Lab, W. P. Carey School of Business, Arizona State University.

3 additional themes

- 1 CEO accountability and succession
- 2 Emerging challenges: AI and workforce
- 3 Getting a seat and cognitive diversity

Source: Private Company Governance 2026 Report —
Private Directors Association & ASU New Governance Lab.

CEO accountability is rising. Succession readiness is moving in the other direction.

FIDUCIARY BOARDS, 2025 → 2026

57% → 71%	evaluate the CEO
51% → 45%	have a succession plan
81% → 55%	of those plans name an emergency successor

Which is easier for a board to discuss: the CEO's performance, or the possibility that the CEO may suddenly not be there?

ARCHETYPE
CONNECTION

○ **Steward**
Protect continuity

↗ **Strategist**
Define future needs

⚡ **Catalyst**
Force the conversation

📍 **Navigator**
Plan for the unexpected

Source: Private Company Governance 2026 Report — Private Directors Association & ASU New Governance Lab.

Does the board's attention match the company's stated priorities?

AI #3 BUSINESS CHALLENGE

41% report AI or technology oversight policies.

25% of fiduciary respondents already use AI for note-taking or minutes — 44% of advisory.

Workforce #2 CHALLENGE

Share of fiduciary-board talent discussion

13% Workforce planning

26% Leadership development

4% Inclusion

How much of your last board meeting went to your company's top three challenges?

ARCHETYPE
CONNECTION

○ **Steward**
Set the guardrails

↗ **Strategist**
Tie AI to priorities

⚡ **Catalyst**
Push to act now

🕒 **Navigator**
Name the emerging risk

Source: Private Company Governance 2026 Report — Private Directors Association & ASU New Governance Lab.

Boards want cognitive diversity, but recruiting reproduces the networks they already have.

WHAT BOARDS SAY THEY WANT

90% prioritize specific skills and expertise.

63% prioritize diversity of thought and experience.

HOW THEY ACTUALLY RECRUIT

84% rely on informal networking or word of mouth.

16% use a third-party candidate assessment.

27% plan any board-composition change in 2026.

If every current director recruits someone they already know and trust, how likely is the board to add the perspective it is missing?

ARCHETYPE
CONNECTION

○ **Steward**
Protect trust and fit

↗ **Strategist**
Recruit for the strategy

⚡ **Catalyst**
Break the network habit

@ **Navigator**
Name the missing view

Source: Private Company Governance 2026 Report — Private Directors Association & ASU New Governance Lab.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Take the assessment back to your board

- 1 Send the link to your fellow directors.
- 2 Compare which archetypes your board has.
- 3 Put the missing perspective on the agenda.



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