

2022 ASEAN BOARD TRENDS

Driving Innovation for
Sustainability





THE 2022 ASEAN BOARD TRENDS report features the board's lens into building resilience, recovery, and the new reality.

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2022 Outlook

The world came to a halt in 2020 and many best-laid schemes went astray. The lessons from the continuing global pandemic, climate change and the shifting of political and economic powers have further reinforced the importance of taking the long view on our future state. Is it reasonable to discuss the end of the crisis and the start of a revived era now? The 2022 ASEAN Board Trends report features the board's lens into building resilience, recovery, and the new reality.

As the business and risk environment becomes more complex – driven by technological change and innovation, global markets and supply chains, human capital challenges, and more – the board's ability to prioritise and devote enough time to substantive issues becomes more vital. This is where the board needs to evaluate and take a hard look at the entire organisation, whether it has the right business model and governance, talents, dynamics, and culture to position itself for the future.

The 2022 ASEAN Board Trends Survey was carried out with the aim to better understand what affects ASEAN boards and directors - how the role of the board has changed over the past 12 months and what the key focus areas are for boards in 2022, apart from the business performance and outlook for the coming year.

The Institute of Corporate Directors Malaysia (ICDM) initiated and conducted the Survey from 25 October to 15 November 2021 in collaboration with our ASEAN partners - the Vietnam Institute of Directors (VIOD), Singapore Institute of Directors (SID), Thai Institute of Directors Association (Thai IoD), Indonesian Institute for Corporate Directorship (IICD), Myanmar Institute of Directors (MIoD) and Institute of Corporate Directors, Philippines (ICDPh) under the ASEAN IOD Network initiative. From the responses, we hope to provide insights and recommendations to better support boards and directors across the region.

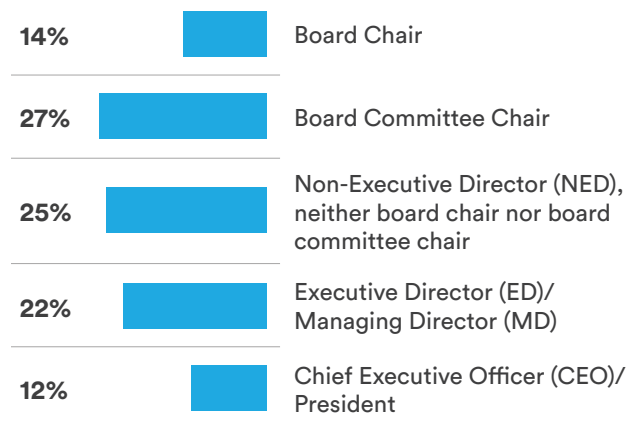
[#SustainableASEAN](#)
[#ProgressiveASEANBoards](#)

About The Respondents

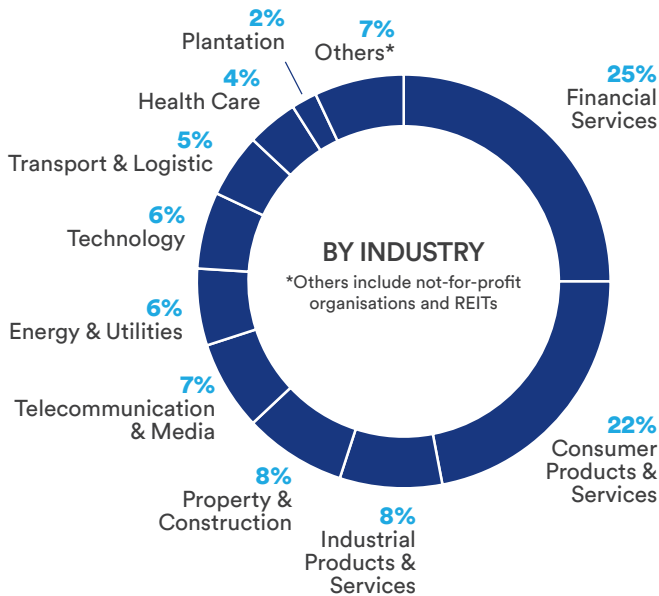
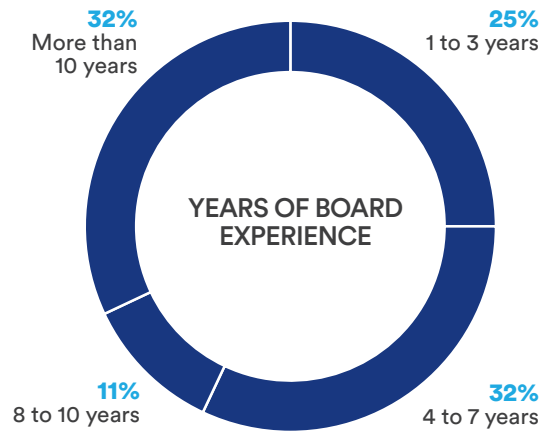
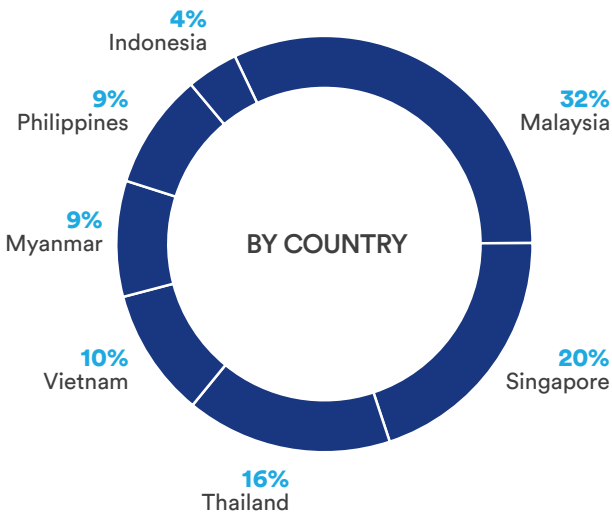


A total of 250 responses were received but with varying degrees of completion. This report is based on the **114 fully completed responses.**

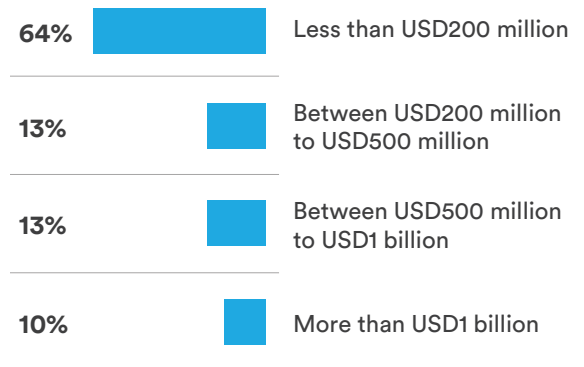
BY DESIGNATION



ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS



SIZE OF THE COMPANY BY MARKET CAPITALISATION



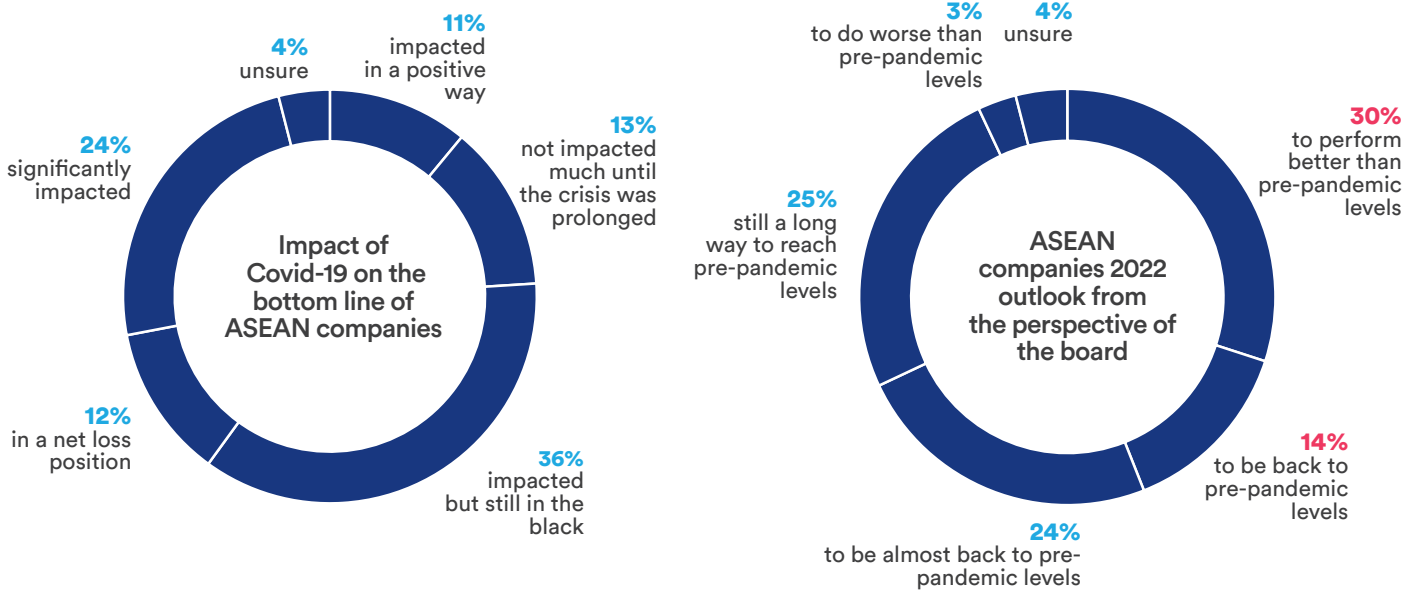
Note: More of the respondents' profile and the company they represent are reflected in the Appendix.



How the role of the board has changed over the past 12 months and what the key focus areas are for boards in 2022, apart from business performance and outlook for the coming year.

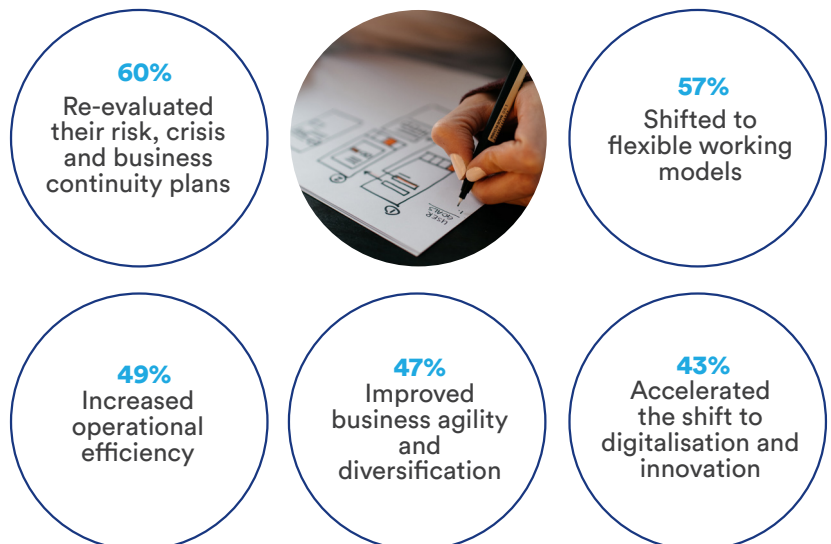
The Journey Thus Far

More than half of the ASEAN companies surveyed were able to weather the storm of Covid-19 with **44% expected to perform better or bounce back to pre-pandemic levels in 2022.**



Renewed focus on risks, newfound organisational agility and the willingness to innovate were the top contributing factors to resilience.

Top five things ASEAN companies did differently in the past 12 months to safeguard organisational resilience





The board needs to evaluate and take a hard look at the entire organisation, whether it has the right business model and governance, talents, dynamics, and culture to position itself for the future.

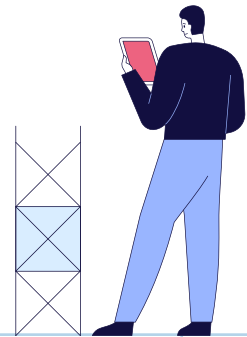


Going Forward in 2022

Most organisations made reasonable efforts and took effective measures in mitigating the impact of the pandemic, and when asked what their outlook was for 2022, 44% responded that they expected to perform better or bounce back to pre-pandemic levels in 2022.

In many ways, we see 2021 as an inflection point for corporate boardrooms – with increased oversight on financial health, governance, audit and risk management (64%) and enhanced oversight on crisis management and business continuity (55%) – these being significant changes made to the board to address the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Going forward, boards will never be the same again. The efforts taken thus far will beget more actions in 2022 to ensure that companies go beyond coping with the pandemic to a ‘building back better’ position.



Through the survey, we have identified the **Top 5 Trends** for the coming year that may impact your boardrooms.

	1
Innovation & transformation a top boardroom priority	

	2
Internalisation of ESG principles in the company	

	3
Strengthen oversight capabilities in risk and sustainability	

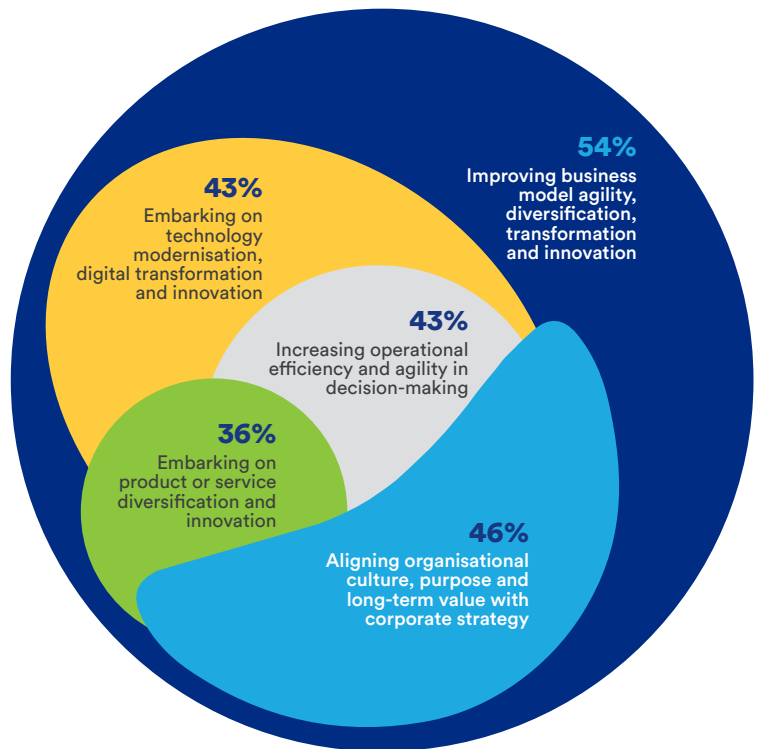
	4
Board refreshment is imperative	

	5
Directors all in for expanded responsibilities	

GOING FORWARD IN 2022

01. Innovation & transformation a top boardroom priority

Organisation-wide innovation and digitalisation dominates ASEAN directors' top boardroom priorities to drive success in the medium term.



Top five strategic priorities of ASEAN directors to drive company success over the next two to three years

Innovation & digital skills gap in the boardroom:

ASEAN directors surveyed said that innovation and transformation are the most challenging areas in boardroom deliberation. Skill set related to these areas is also ranked first in aspects required to improve board composition.

Top five focus areas that ASEAN boards find challenging, thus requiring more training to improve deliberation

67%	Innovation, modernisation and transformation
65%	Strategy & growth
54%	Risk management and enterprise resilience
54%	Sustainability & ESG matters
34%	Workplace transformation and future of work

Top five aspects to improve board composition

71%	Skill set related to innovation, digital and technology
65%	The appointment of new independent directors
60%	Generational difference, i.e., diversity in age
59%	Director tenure diversity
55%	Skill set related to sustainability and ESG

GOING FORWARD IN 2022

02. Internalisation of ESG principles in the company

ASEAN boards recognise the importance and urgency of incorporating environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into business strategy. However, they could benefit from greater capacity building to drive effective internalisation of ESG principles in their companies.

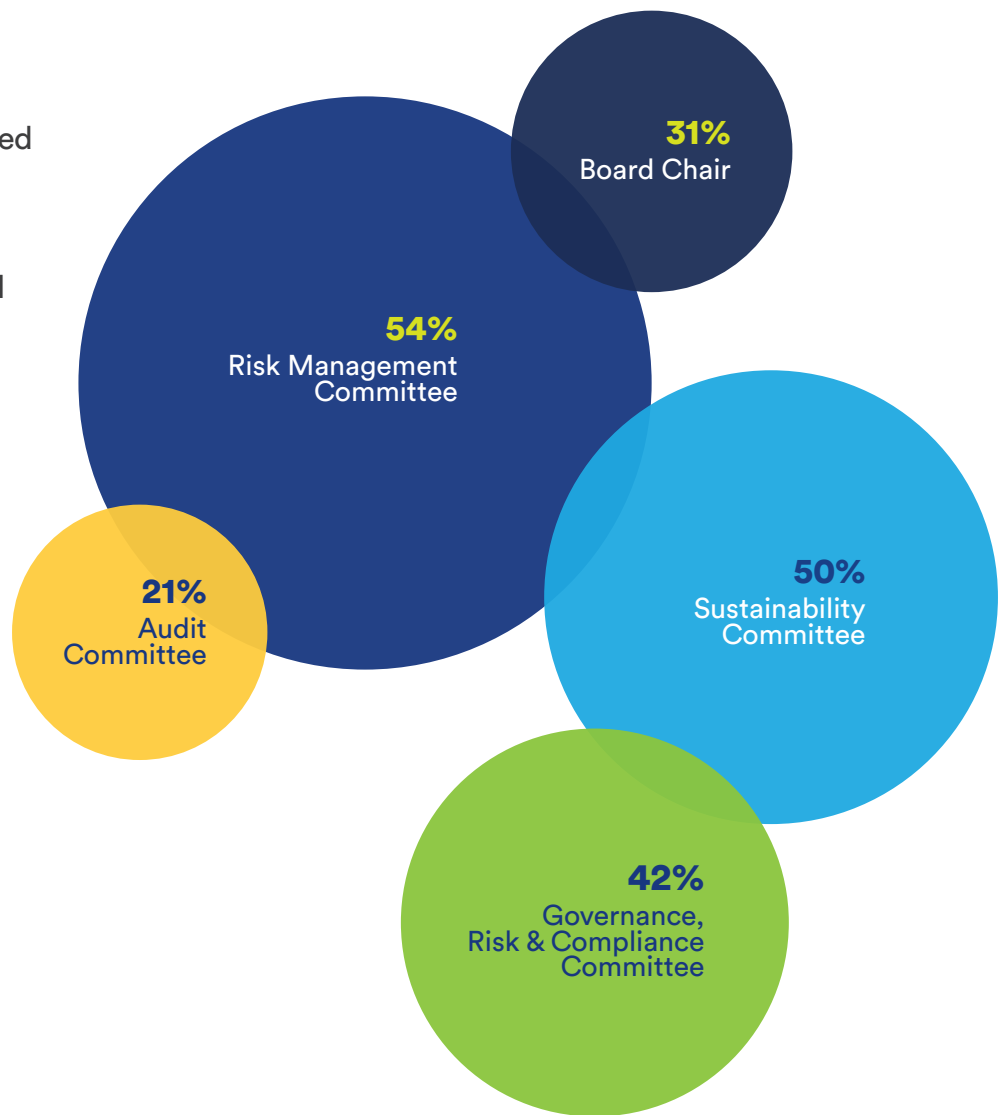
STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The board needs more board development and capacity building to have sufficient understanding and knowledge on ESG matters	19%	44%	28%	6%	3%
ESG matters will be a regular discussion topic on the board agenda – embedded in the strategy, opportunity, risk framework	17%	47%	22%	11%	3%
Sustainability, ESG and climate-related matters (collectively referred to as ESG matters in this survey) have been discussed in the boardroom	17%	47%	21%	11%	4%
The board is clear on what ESG matters are and how it may impact and can be linked to the organisation strategy and goal setting	10%	51%	25%	9%	5%
The board is able to monitor and discuss the organisational ESG performance report from management based on a clear ESG strategy, metrics and KPIs set	7%	42%	32%	14%	5%
The board will assign the ESG oversight responsibility to one of the existing board committees	11%	32%	33%	16%	8%
The board will set up an ESG committee of the board next year for better oversight on the subject matter	10%	23%	43%	18%	6%
The board will add board member(s) with specific ESG skills or expertise	5%	22%	42%	26%	5%
The board has no specific plans in place yet regarding ESG matters	5%	23%	33%	24%	15%

03.

Strengthen oversight capabilities in risk and sustainability

ASEAN boards are looking to elevate their oversight capabilities in risk and sustainability as interconnected risks are emerging at a much higher frequency alongside the accelerating pace of business due to technological advancement and rising concerns over environmental and social sustainability.

Top five board roles
requiring improvement in 2022



04. Board refreshment is imperative

Board refreshment is ranked first in measures required to improve board effectiveness; and amongst the top factors causing the slow evolution in board composition are dysfunctional social dynamics in the boardroom and a sense of complacency. There are opportunities for the board leadership to step up, to foster a culture of constructive dissent and encourage diversity of thought.

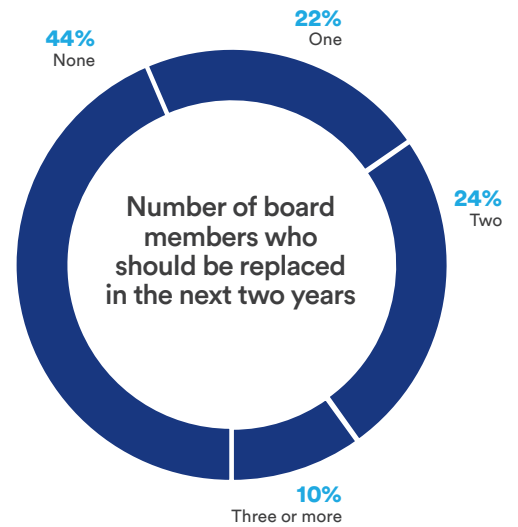
Top five measures
to help improve board effectiveness

51%	Refreshing board composition
47%	Having more candid and robust board evaluations
46%	Customising development programmes for board members
43%	Increasing interactions with management, especially those with multi-generational members
41%	Having greater diversity on the board

Top five barriers
to board refreshment and diversity

59%	Board leadership's unwillingness to have that difficult conversation with underperforming directors
54%	No clear succession planning in place
53%	Collegiality or personal friendships between board members
49%	Ineffective process for director assessment
49%	General perception that changes on the board are not needed

Apart from having innovation, digital and ESG competencies on the board, ASEAN directors believe that their companies could benefit from a multi-generational boardroom with independently minded directors.



Top five aspects
to improve board composition

71%	Skill set related to innovation, digital and technology
65%	The appointment of new independent directors
60%	Generational difference, i.e., diversity in age
59%	Director tenure diversity
55%	Skill set related to sustainability and ESG

05. Directors all in for expanded responsibilities

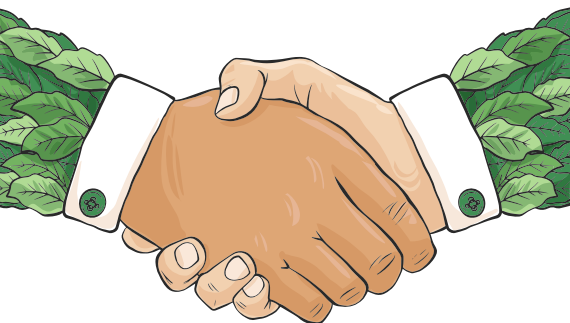
ASEAN directors are staying committed to driving growth despite the challenging times and expanding responsibilities - with broadening board agenda items including business resilience, diversification & transformation, sustainability & ESG, corporate purpose, technology capability and talent pipeline, amongst many others.

78% of respondents said that there has been a significant increase in time commitment to the board(s) they sat on and that they were still able to balance their time commitment and obligations to multiple boards throughout the crisis (80% either agreed or strongly agreed).

However, we received mixed responses when asked whether being on multiple boards during this crisis has challenged their effectiveness as a director – 4% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 30% were neutral, while 25% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed.

Majority of them also indicated that they did not give up or plan to give up one or some of their board roles due to increased time commitment expected on boards they currently sit on – 52% either disagree or strongly disagree, 34% were neutral.

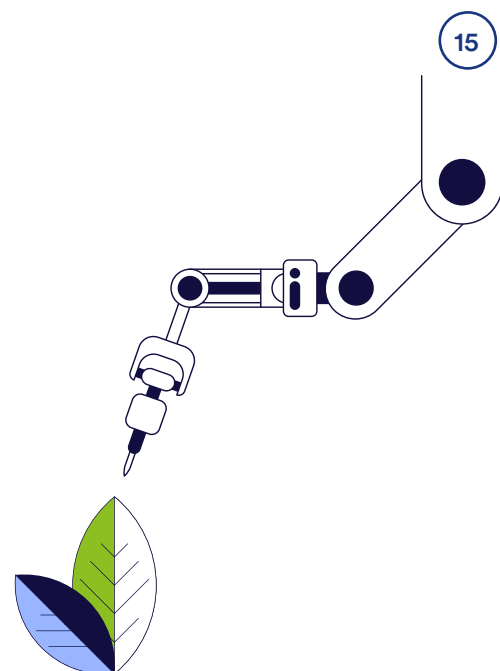
In fact, most of them said they realised that they could contribute more and plan to take up more board roles – 59% either agree or strongly agree, 29% were neutral.



GOING FORWARD IN 2022

Greater regional IOD effort needed to better support the boards and directors in ASEAN

Areas that ASEAN directors would like the institutes of directors to do more. Ranked by order of importance.



	1		2		3		4
75%	Platform for directors to voice out concerns to the regulators, investors and relevant stakeholders	73%	Director programmes/ training/dialogues on governance, board issues & trends	66%	Formal Director Certification programme	64%	Networking opportunities
	5		6		7		8
54%	Knowledge sharing, research & advocacy on key board matters	52%	Bespoke training programme tailored to specific company needs	52%	Mentoring/ coaching sessions	51%	Board sourcing & placement, pipeline building
	9		10		11		
49%	Board & director effectiveness evaluation services	30%	Membership support	30%	Local & regional affiliation platform		



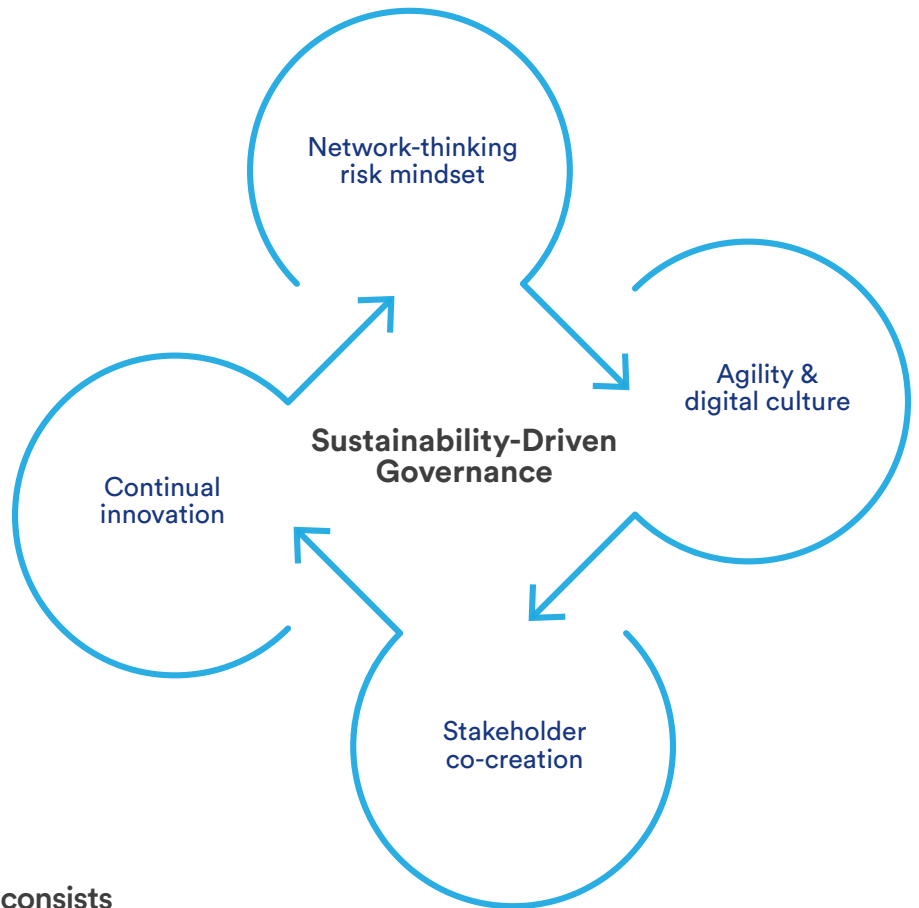
A shift to sustainability-driven governance a key necessity to elevate company performance and ensure long-term growth.

From Risks to Growth

A Forward-Looking Framework:

With the going forward trends in 2022 and evolving business risks, stakeholder expectations are expected to intensify. Boards should thus cultivate a forward-looking mindset and the right organisational culture to turn risks into growth opportunities for long-term sustainability.

A paradigm shift to a progressive, sustainability-driven governance model is necessary for companies to further catalyse their overall growth.



Sustainability-Driven Governance consists of these four elements:

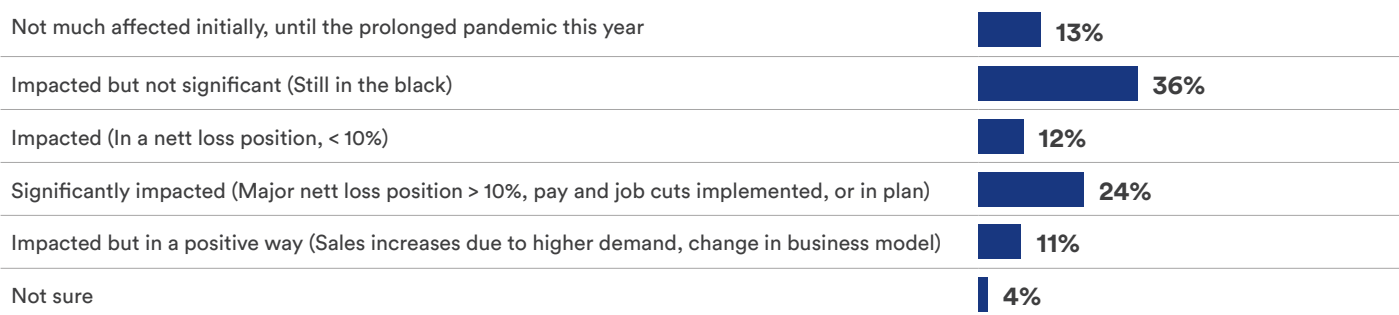
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| <p>Network-Thinking Risk Mindset 1</p> <p>Network-thinking helps organisations develop a broader understanding of the growing risks network and how external market forces and internal strength can impact the business. Having the ability to approach risks from multi-dimensional viewpoints would not only help organisations be better at dealing with risks, but also be more comfortable in taking strategic risks.</p> | <p>Agility & Digital Culture 2</p> <p>Being able to adapt swiftly to market changes is a competitive advantage. The key to that is by cultivating a digital culture that prioritises people and collaboration. It is about leveraging technological systems to help teams find clarity amidst uncertainties and be equipped to make fast yet effective decisions especially when the stakes are high.</p> | <p>Stakeholder Co-Creation 3</p> <p>Successful companies are those that put emphasis on delivering value to their stakeholders. Having stakeholders as active participants in the decision-making process is instrumental in aligning organisational purpose and values with stakeholder interests. This also promotes a culture of shared accountability, transparency and integrity.</p> | <p>Continual Innovation 4</p> <p>Innovation - disruptive or incremental - is key to an organisation's ability to evolve. Directors today should rethink old certainties, keep an open mind for unknown possibilities and inculcate a culture of experimentation. As commonly expressed in the startup industry, act fast, fail fast, but learn faster. It is better to choose iteration over perfection.</p> |
|---|---|--|--|

Survey Results

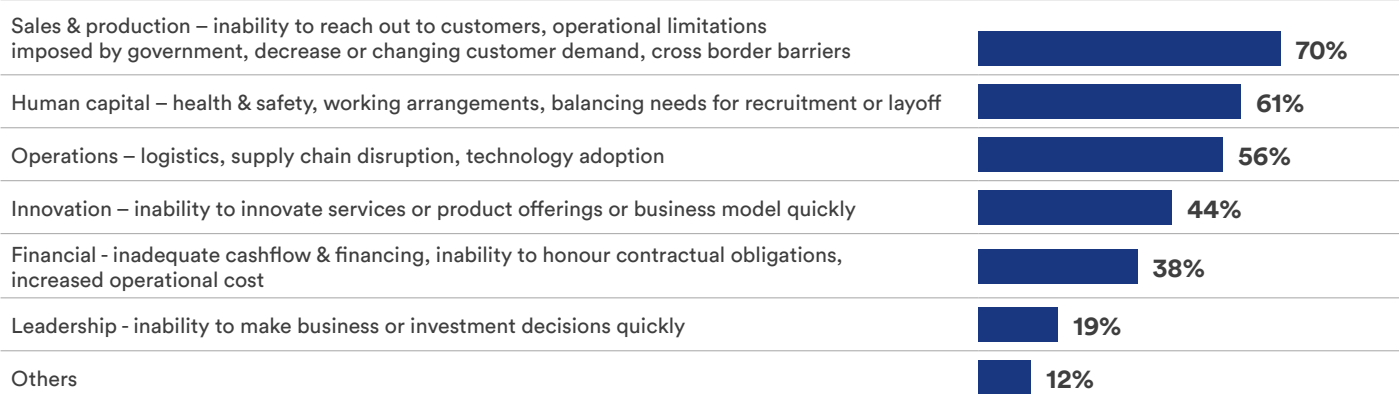
Note that percentage numbers in graphs/charts may be +/- 100% due to rounding-error.

Business Performance & Outlook

Q1: How affected is your organisation's bottom line by the Covid-19 pandemic?



Q2: What were the top 3 challenges faced by your organisation over the last 12 months that you foresee will flow into 2022?

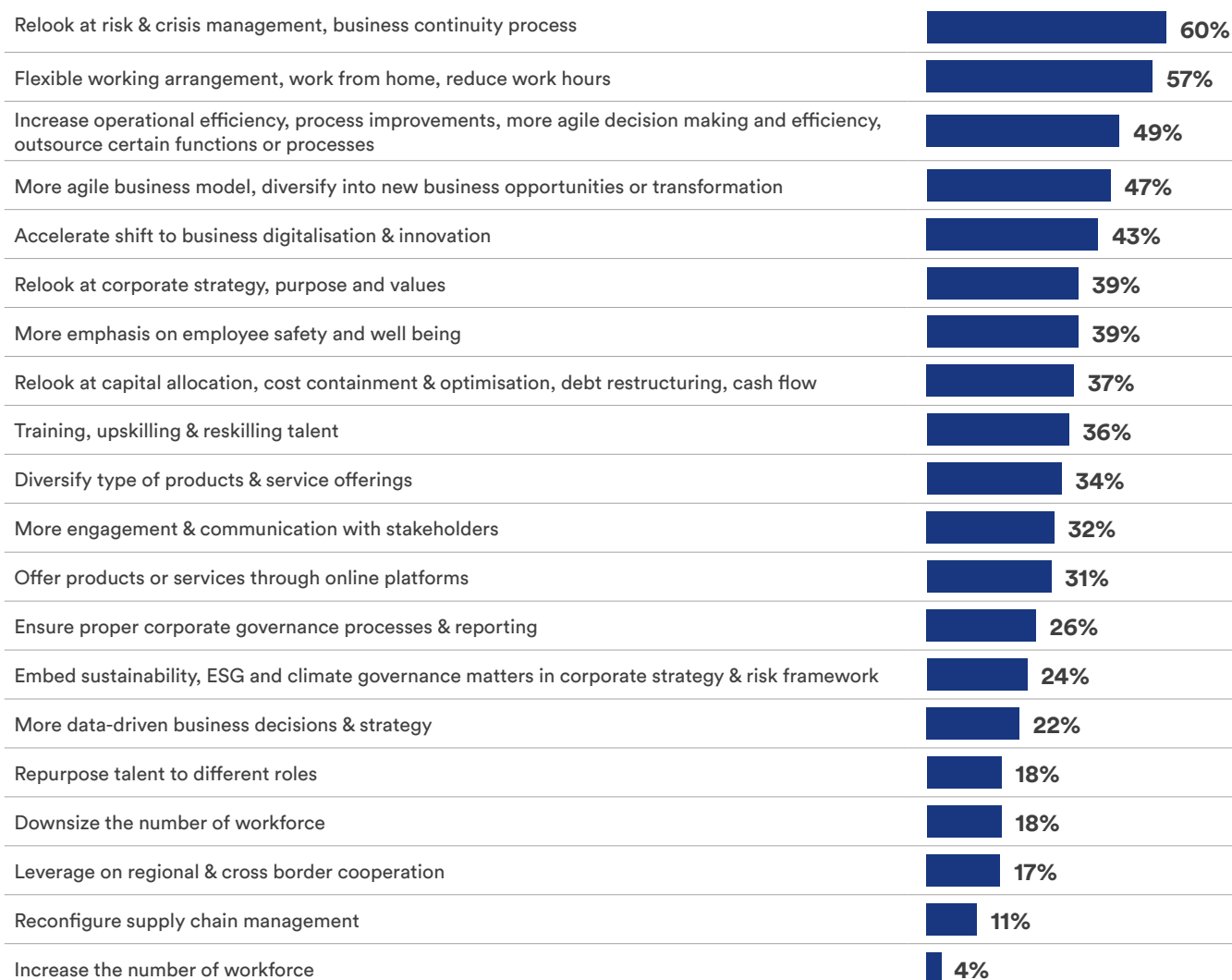


Survey Results

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Business Performance & Outlook

Q3: What has been done differently by your organisation in the last 12 months to ensure organisational resilience in this new world order?

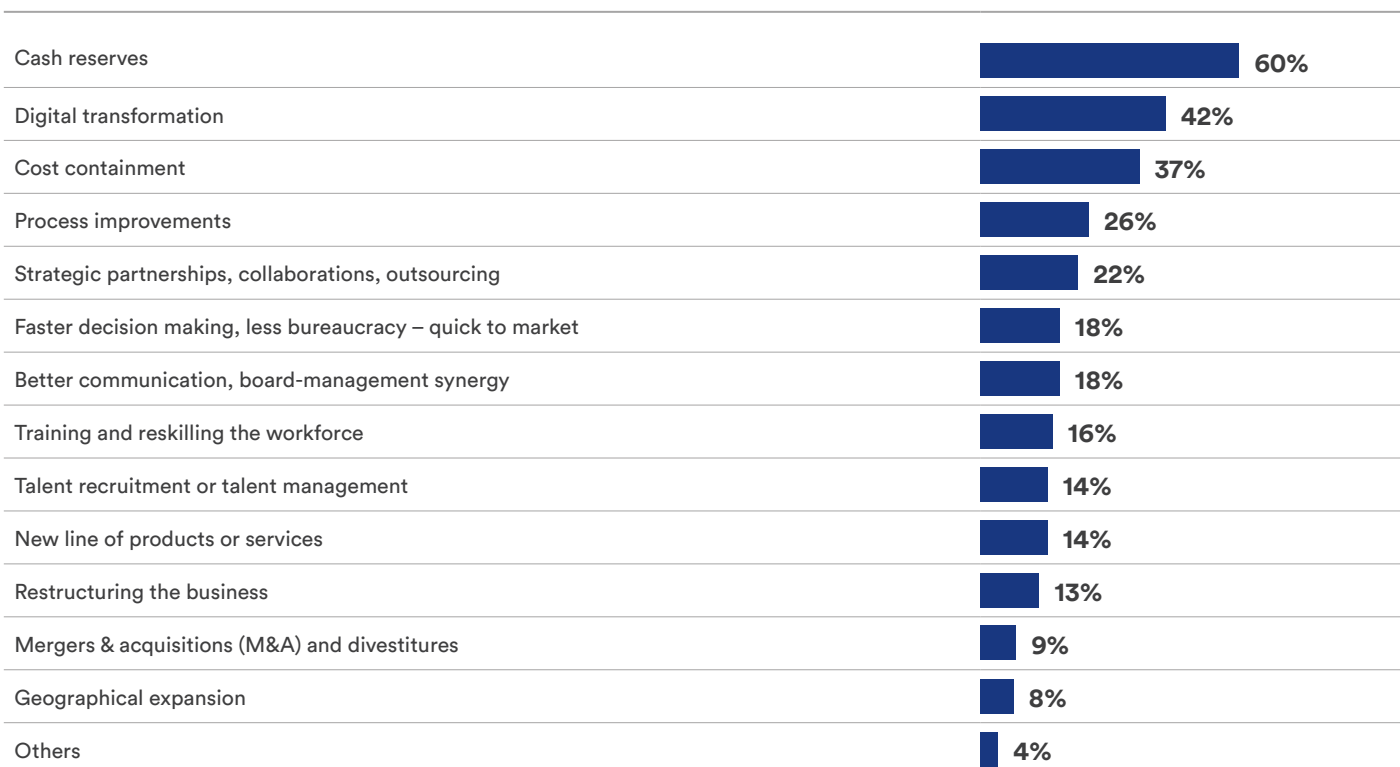


Survey Results

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Business Performance & Outlook

Q4: What were the top 3 strengths for resilience?



Q5: Based on your organisation's efforts to navigate the prolonged pandemic, what is the outlook for 2022?

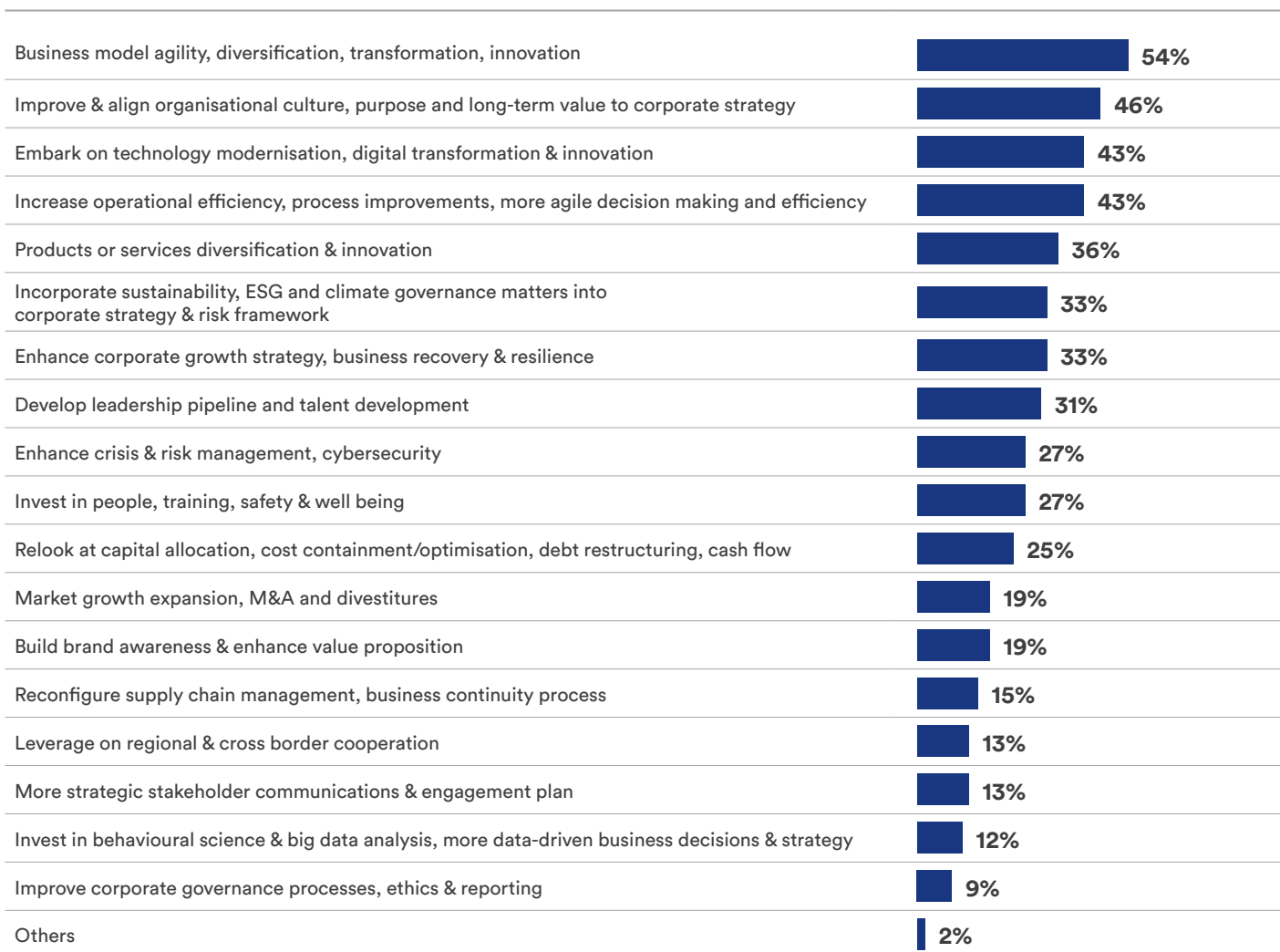


Survey Results

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Business Performance & Outlook

Q6: What are the top 5 strategic priorities that will drive your company's success over the next 2 to 3 years?



Survey Results

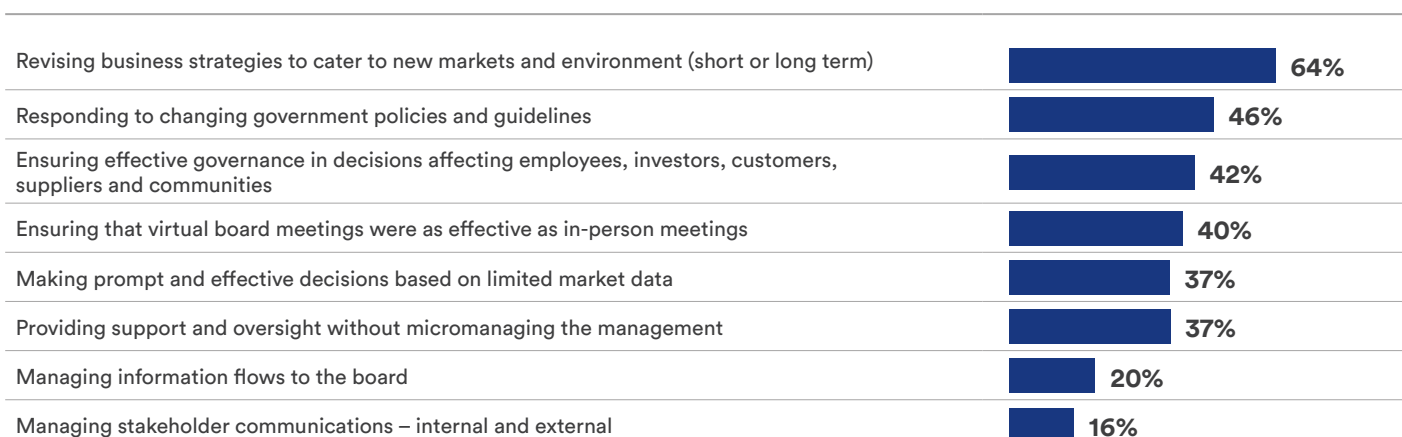
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Board Roles & Agenda

Q7: What are the significant changes made to the board due to the pandemic crises that will be continued over the next 2 to 3 years?



Q8: What are the top 3 challenges faced by the board since the pandemic started?

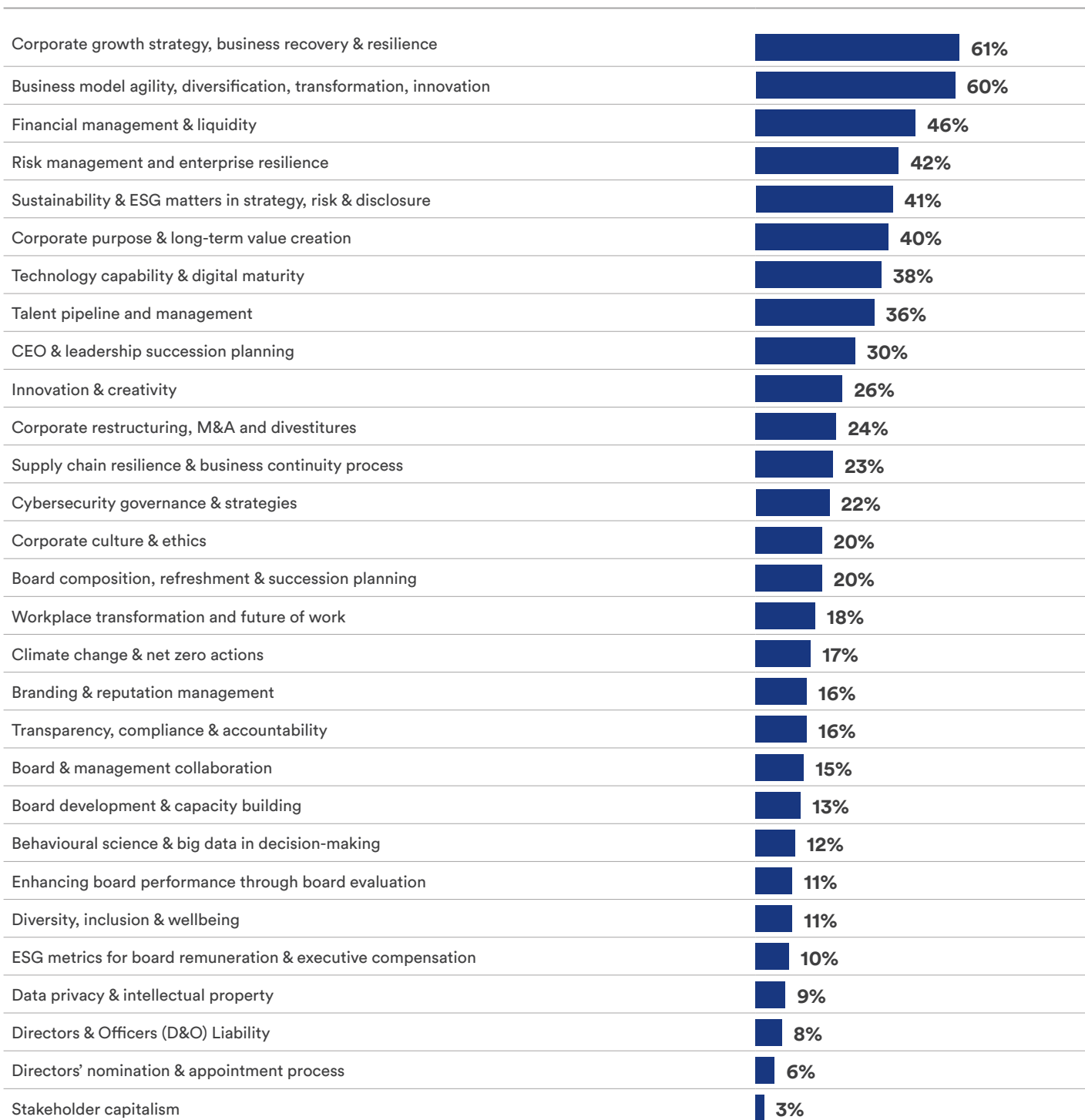


Survey Results

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Board Roles & Agenda

Q9: What are the key board agenda items and strategic considerations for 2022 and beyond?

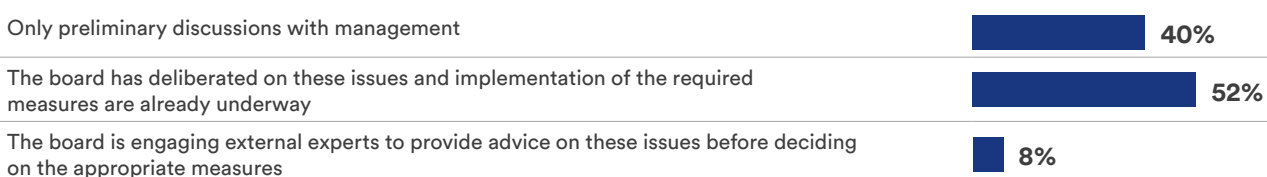


Survey Results

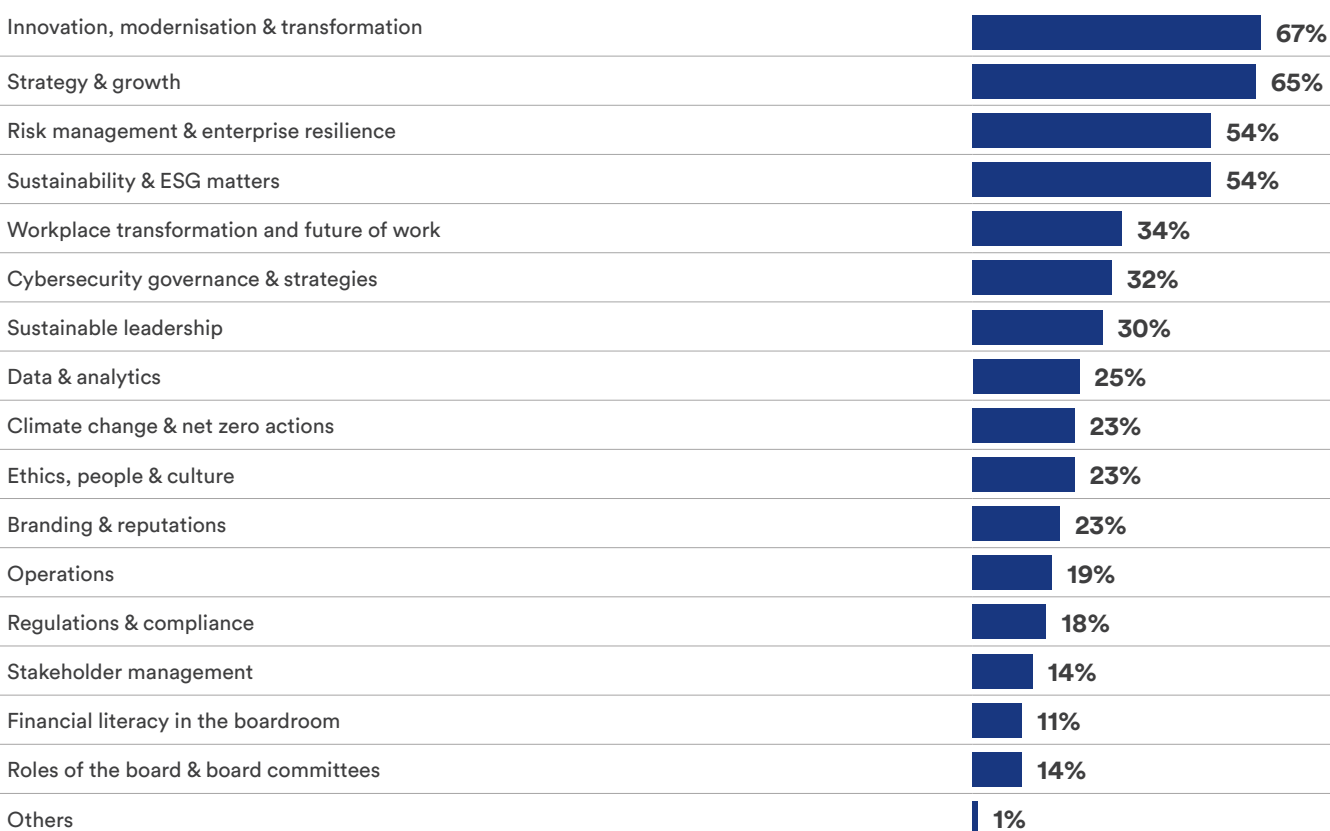
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Board Roles & Agenda

Q10: Has the board deliberated on the areas mentioned in Q9?



Q11: What are the top 5 board focus areas that will be more challenging and require more deliberation or more training on?



Survey Results

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Board Roles & Agenda

Q12: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements on ESG oversight by the Board?

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
The board needs more board development and capacity building to have sufficient understanding and knowledge on ESG matters	19%	44%	28%	6%	3%
ESG matters will be a regular discussion topic on the board agenda – embedded in the strategy, opportunity, risk framework	17%	47%	22%	11%	3%
Sustainability, ESG and climate-related matters (collectively referred to as ESG matters in this survey) have been discussed in the boardroom	17%	47%	21%	11%	4%
The board is clear on what ESG matters are and how it may impact and can be linked to the organisation strategy and goal setting	10%	51%	25%	9%	5%
The board is able to monitor and discuss the organisational ESG performance report from management based on a clear ESG strategy, metrics and KPIs set	7%	42%	32%	14%	5%
The board will assign the ESG oversight responsibility to one of the existing board committees	11%	32%	33%	16%	8%
The board will set up an ESG committee of the board next year for better oversight on the subject matter	10%	23%	43%	18%	6%
The board will add board member(s) with specific ESG skills or expertise	5%	22%	42%	26%	5%
The board has no specific plans in place yet regarding ESG matters	5%	23%	33%	24%	15%

Q13: Which role would need to improve further next year?

Risk Management Committee	54%
Sustainability Committee	50%
Governance, Risk & Compliance Committee	42%
Board Chair	31%
Audit Committee	21%
Remuneration Committee	11%
Nomination Committee	8%
Nomination & Remuneration Committee	8%
Others	8%

ANALYSIS

Survey Results

Note that percentage numbers in graphs/charts may be +/- 100% due to rounding-error.

Board Dynamics & Practices

Q14: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I can balance my time commitment and obligations to multiple boards throughout this crisis	20%	60%	17%	1%	2%
There is significant increase in time commitment to the board(s) I sit on throughout the crisis	25%	53%	15%	5%	2%
I realised I can contribute more and plan to take up more board roles	12%	47%	29%	10%	2%
My current board composition has the right people and right skills to provide the strategic direction and challenge required to take the company forward, to make sense of the present, anticipate and prepare for what is to come	13%	51%	19%	13%	4%
Being on multiple boards during this crisis has challenged my effectiveness as a director	4%	32%	30%	25%	9%
I gave up or plan to give up one or some of my board roles due to increased time commitment expected on boards I currently sit on	4%	10%	34%	39%	13%

Q15: Should any of the board members be replaced in the next 2 years?

None	44%
1	22%
2	24%
3 or more	10%

Q16: Rank which aspects of current board composition can be improved?

Skills set – related to innovation, digital, technology	1	71%
The appointment of new independent directors	2	65%
Generational difference (i.e. diversity in terms of age)	3	60%
A good mix of new and old directors and minimum presence of overly long tenure directors	4	59%
Skills set – related to sustainability, ESG	5	55%
Participation of women directors	6	53%
Skills set – related to people management, communications	7	48%
Participation of directors from other nationalities/with international expertise	8	45%
More diverse cultures	9	44%

ANALYSIS

Survey Results

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Board Dynamics & Practices

Q16a: Any other thoughts on how current board composition can be improved?

Reskill and think strategically	Removal of politicians from board	Continuity in Audit Committee chairperson	Appoint independent directors
Diversity in industry knowledge, new economy skill sets, old guard and new generation	Focus on skills, experience, and merit; not immutable characteristics such as gender or race	Real experience and general management exposure in the related industry must be a pre-requisite	Chairman should not interfere with nomination process
Majority of board should be independent directors	To onboard professional business-related independent directors; directors with strong business acumen	Effective teamwork and leadership are keys to set the direction for the company to ride out the Covid pandemic	Tenure should not be more than 9 years for all categories of directors

Q17: What are the top 5 barriers for board diversity and board refreshment in general?

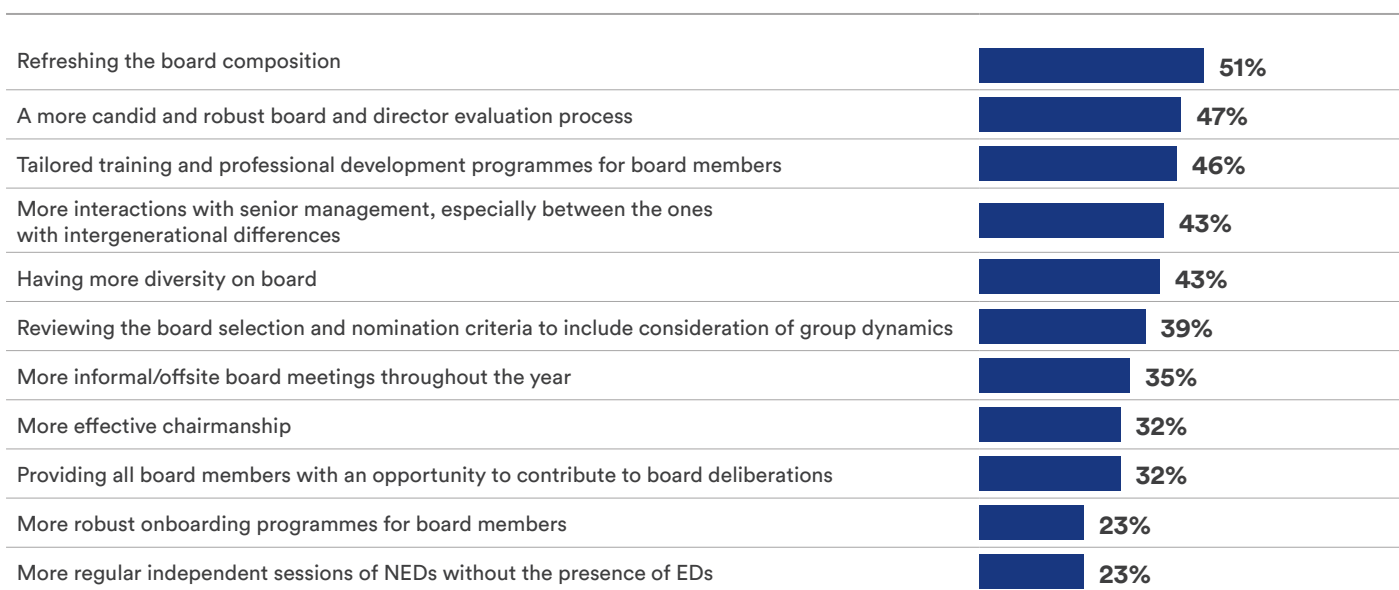
Board leadership's unwillingness to have that difficult conversation with underperforming directors	59%
No clear succession planning in place	54%
Collegiality or personal friendships between board members	53%
Ineffective process for director assessment	49%
General perception that changes on the board are not needed	49%
Lack of mandatory tenure limits or retirement age	46%
Major shareholders' interference	43%
Lack of qualified director candidates or inability to find skills needed	39%
Board leadership not invested in board diversity	39%
Influence from business owners or family members	33%
Long-serving director's reluctance to retire	33%
Others	4%

Survey Results

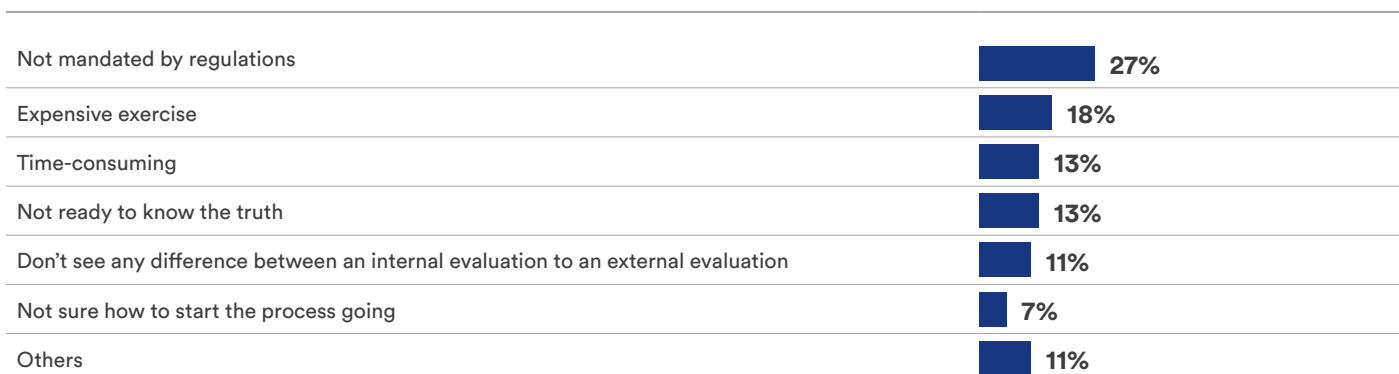
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Board Dynamics & Practices

Q18: Which of these measures can help improve the effectiveness and dynamics of the board?



Q19: What is hindering your organisation from doing an external board effectiveness evaluation?

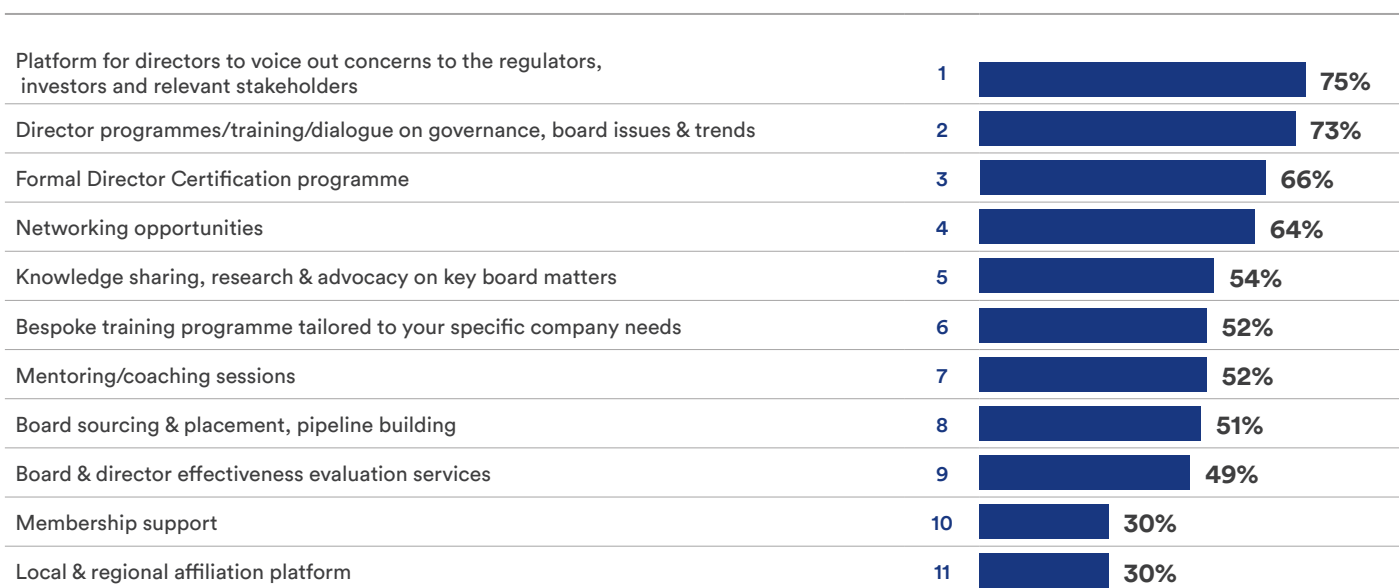


Survey Results

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Board Dynamics & Practices

Q20: Rank which areas you would expect the institute of directors to do more of.



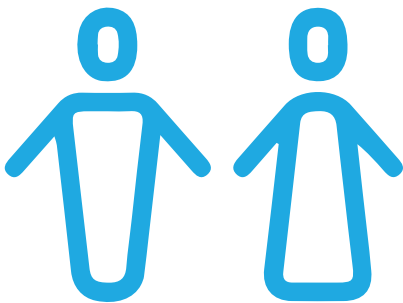
Survey Results

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Respondent's Profile

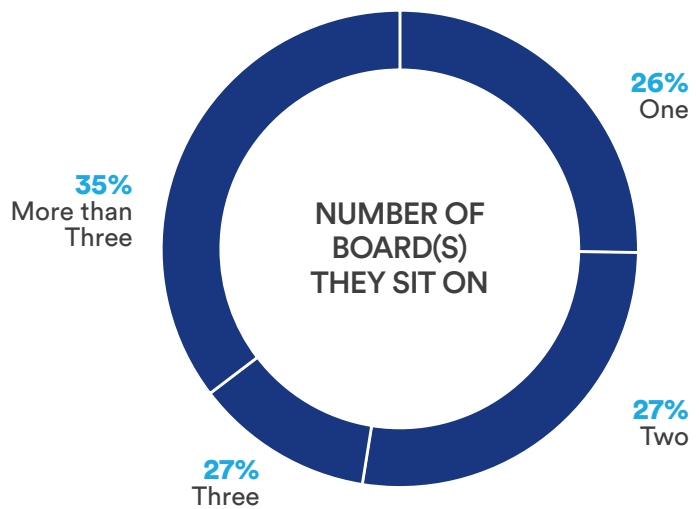
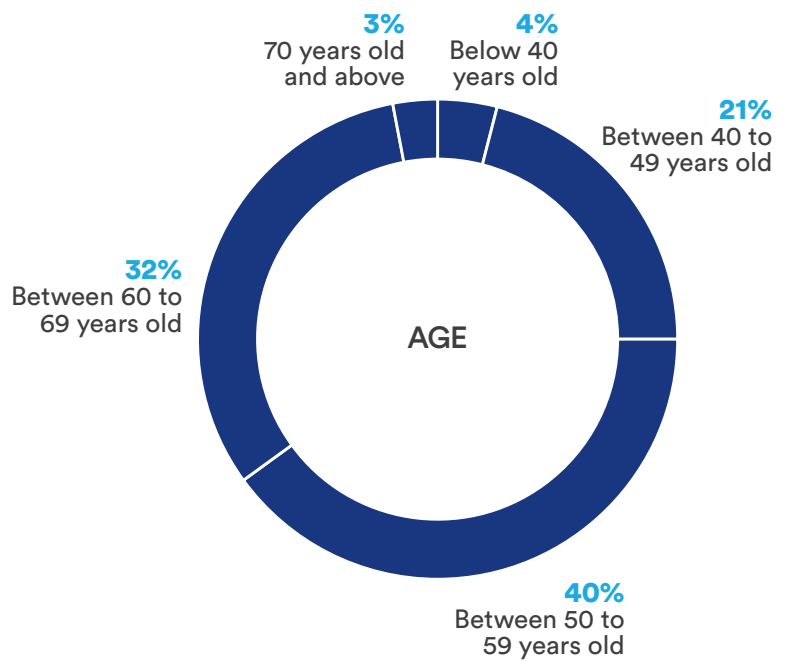
Additional respondent's profile apart from those already shown in page 5

BY GENDER



72%
Male

28%
Female

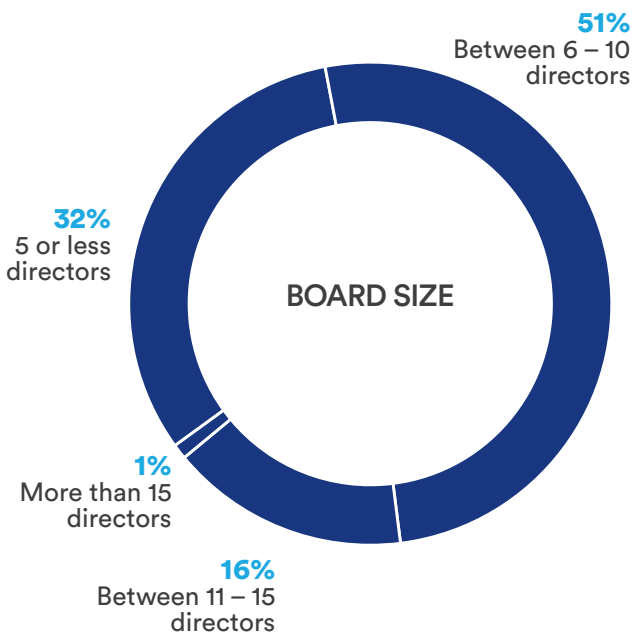


Survey Results

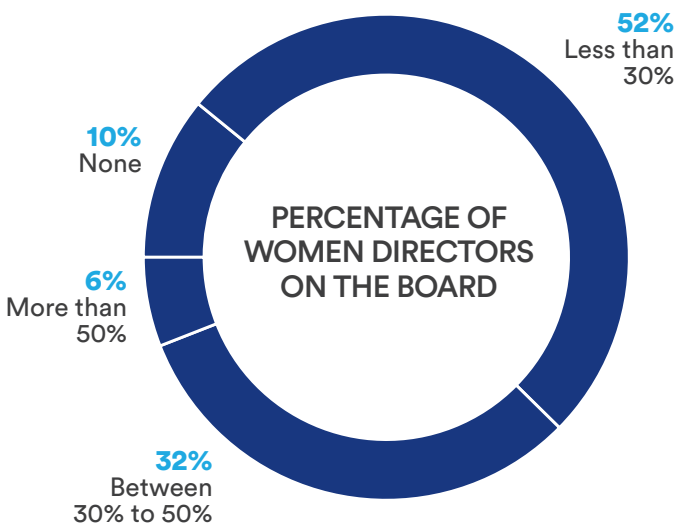
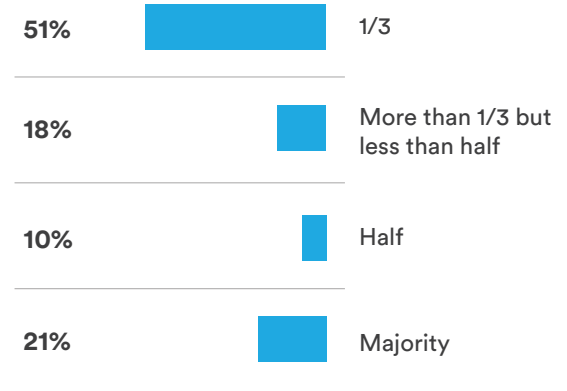
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Respondent's Profile

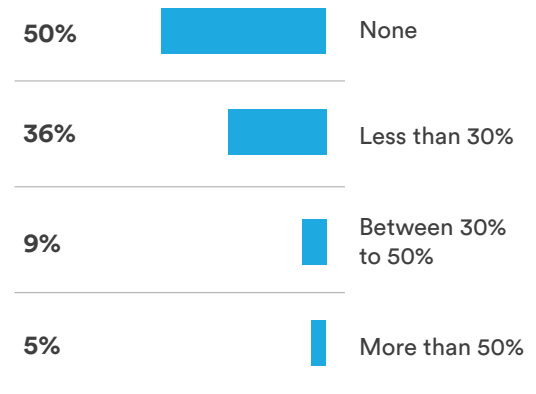
Profile of the respondent's board



COMPOSITION OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS ON THE BOARD



PERCENTAGE OF DIRECTORS BELOW 40 YEARS OLD



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Institute of Corporate Directors Malaysia (ICDM) would like to thank the 250 directors and CEOs across ASEAN for participating in the survey.

ICDM is also indebted to our six ASEAN partners - the Indonesian Institute for Corporate Directorship (IICD), Myanmar Institute of Directors (MIoD), Institute of Corporate Directors, Philippines (ICDPh), Singapore Institute of Directors (SID), Thai Institute of Directors Association (Thai IoD) and Vietnam Institute of Directors (VIOD) that have been very supportive of the ASEAN IOD Network initiatives.



About IICD

Indonesian Institute for Corporate Directorship (IICD) is a non-profit organization founded by ten (10) highly reputable Indonesian Business Schools and preeminent individuals. Since its inception in 2000, IICD which envisioned itself to be “Internalizing Best Practices of Good Corporate Governance and Directorship” has been actively working on Seminars, Trainings, Panel Discussions, Curriculum Design, and research activities on GCG and Directorship. IICD with its alumni of more than 1,700 Senior Managers, Directors, and Commissioners positions itself to support the decision makers, as the strategic partner in GCG implementation.

IICD programs have been supported by The World Bank, International Finance Corporation, Global Corporate Governance Forum, Center for International Private Enterprise, Asian Development Bank as part of the development of Good Corporate Governance implementation in Indonesia.

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About MIoD

Myanmar Institute of Directors (MIoD) is an independent organisation promoting corporate governance standards and best practices in Myanmar. Its vision is to strengthen Myanmar by advancing the highest level of ethical values, corporate governance, and the professional development of directors. Governed by a board of directors who are a diverse group of business leaders and advocates of good corporate governance, the institute aims to advance board professionalism, promote business ethics and transparency, create networks between corporate leaders and stakeholders, and boost investor confidence in Myanmar's private sector.

The MIoD also benefits from an Advisory Council with top officials from key regulatory bodies such as the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA) and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar (SECM), and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

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About ICDPh

The Institute of Corporate Directors, Philippines (ICDPH) is a nonstock, not-for-profit organization dedicated to professionalizing corporate directorship and raising the corporate governance standards of the Philippines. The institute was established in 1999 by Chairman Emeritus Dr. Jesus P. Estanislao in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, to establish and promote higher corporate governance standards in the Philippines. ICDPh is part of the Centers for Excellence in Governance (CEG).

ICDPH is the only institution in the Philippines accredited as a corporate governance training body by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Insurance Commission (IC), Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Governance Commission for Government-Owned or-Controlled Corporations (GCG) and the Career Executive Service Board (CESB).

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About SID

Singapore Institute of Directors (SID) is the national association of company directors. SID promotes the professional development of directors and corporate leaders, and provides thought leadership and benchmarking on corporate governance and directorship. It works closely with the authorities and its network of members and professionals, to uphold and enhance the highest standards of corporate governance and ethical conduct. Formed in 1998, the membership of SID comprises mainly directors and senior leaders from business, government agencies and nonprofits.

SID has a comprehensive training curriculum that covers the spectrum of a director's developmental journey. Members have access to a range of resources, including research publications, forums, seminars, benchmarking awards and indices, board appointment services and regular networking and social events.

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About Thai IOD

The Thai Institute of Directors Association (IOD) is a leading organization dedicated to improving director professionalism and corporate governance in Thailand. Founded in 1999, two years following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the IOD has been at the forefront of promoting good governance practices in the Thai companies. Through its various activities, the IOD had helped develop professional standards of directorship, and provides best practice guidelines for company directors to perform their duties effectively up to the international standards.

It is the IOD belief that with effective directors, the company will be guided in the way that it can be managed and operated effectively, hence, resulting in shareholders' value and sustainable growth of the Thai economy.

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About VIOD

Vietnam Institute of Directors (VIOD) is a leading professional organisation which promotes corporate governance standards and best practices in the Vietnamese corporate sector. Formed by the Vietnam Corporate Governance Initiative with technical support from International Finance Corporation and Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs; closely collaborates and partners with State Securities Commission of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange and Hanoi Stock Exchange; VIOD aims to advance board professionalism, promote business ethics and transparency, create a pool of independent directors, build a network to connect corporate leaders and stakeholders, and help companies gain investor confidence.

VIOD is governed by a Board of Directors composed of a diverse group of business leaders representing the private sector, including investment funds, international legal and accounting firms, and board members of well-known companies.

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About ICDM

Institute of Corporate Directors Malaysia (ICDM) is the one-stop centre for all board and director needs, dedicated to empowering boards and directors with the right skills, knowledge and mindset as well as digital competencies to enhance their professionalism and effectiveness. Spearheaded by the Securities Commission Malaysia and supported by Bank Negara Malaysia, Bursa Malaysia and the Capital Market Development Fund, ICDM serves as the national institute of directors and aims to be a leading influence of excellence in governance. For more information on ICDM, please visit www.icdm.com.my

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