



2025

Board Effectiveness Survey Report

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Executive Summary

Now in its fifth year, the Board Effectiveness Survey offers a detailed insight into how boards adapt to evolving pressures, technologies, and expectations. The 2025 results reflect the perspectives of directors, administrators, executives, and corporate secretaries, who offered candid assessments of their boards' strengths, opportunities for improvement, and progress compared to prior years.

The story reveals both progress and persistent challenges, especially when viewed comparatively over the last three years. In 2023, respondents expressed significant concerns about ineffective members, limited diversity, outdated technology, and a lack of centralized resources. At that time, many professionals felt their boards struggled to keep pace with evolving expectations. By 2024, respondents reported improved collaboration and engagement, but confidence in security fell steeply, from 71 percent in 2023 to just 54 percent.

The 2025 data show cautious but measurable gains. Seventy-one percent of board professionals reported that their boards are more effective compared to 12 months ago, and collaboration increased by three points to the same 71 percent level. Most notably, confidence in security rebounded by seven points, reversing the decline seen the previous year.

Despite this progress, familiar opportunities to improve remain. A significant portion of directors continue to be described as ineffective, and the preparation time for many boards remains limited. Respondents expressed confidence in their boards' financial oversight and governance practices, but rated them least effective when it comes to using digital tools.

One defining development in 2025 is the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) as a serious factor in board effectiveness. Nearly seven in 10 respondents reported using AI for board work in the past six months, and two in five used more than one tool. This is the first year the survey has measured AI usage, establishing a new baseline for years to come. Importantly, board professionals who reported using AI also rated their boards higher in terms of effectiveness, collaboration, and security, suggesting a correlation between AI use and stronger governance outcomes.

The bottom line from this year's findings is that boards are moving in a positive direction, but must continue to invest in technology, strengthen director performance, and strike a balance between innovation and security to maintain momentum.

Research Background & Methodology

The findings in this report are based on the annual Board Effectiveness Survey, now in its fifth year. This ongoing study offers a clear understanding of how boards assess their effectiveness, respond to new challenges, and adapt to technological advancements. By examining results across the last three years, the survey allows us to track meaningful shifts in boardroom performance and priorities.

Year-over-Year Comparisons

The 2023 survey highlighted deep concern over ineffective directors, lack of diversity, and outdated processes. At that time, many board professionals widely reported overreliance on email and fragmented resources as barriers to effectiveness.

In 2024, board professionals demonstrated progress in engagement and collaboration, but confidence in security declined sharply, from 71% in 2023 to 54%. This was the lowest point in the three-year trend.

The 2025 results reflect a cautious recovery. Effectiveness and collaboration each held steady at 71%, while confidence in security rebounded to 61%. This marks the first upward movement in security perceptions since the decline began in 2023, suggesting that investments in governance practices and new technologies are beginning to take hold.



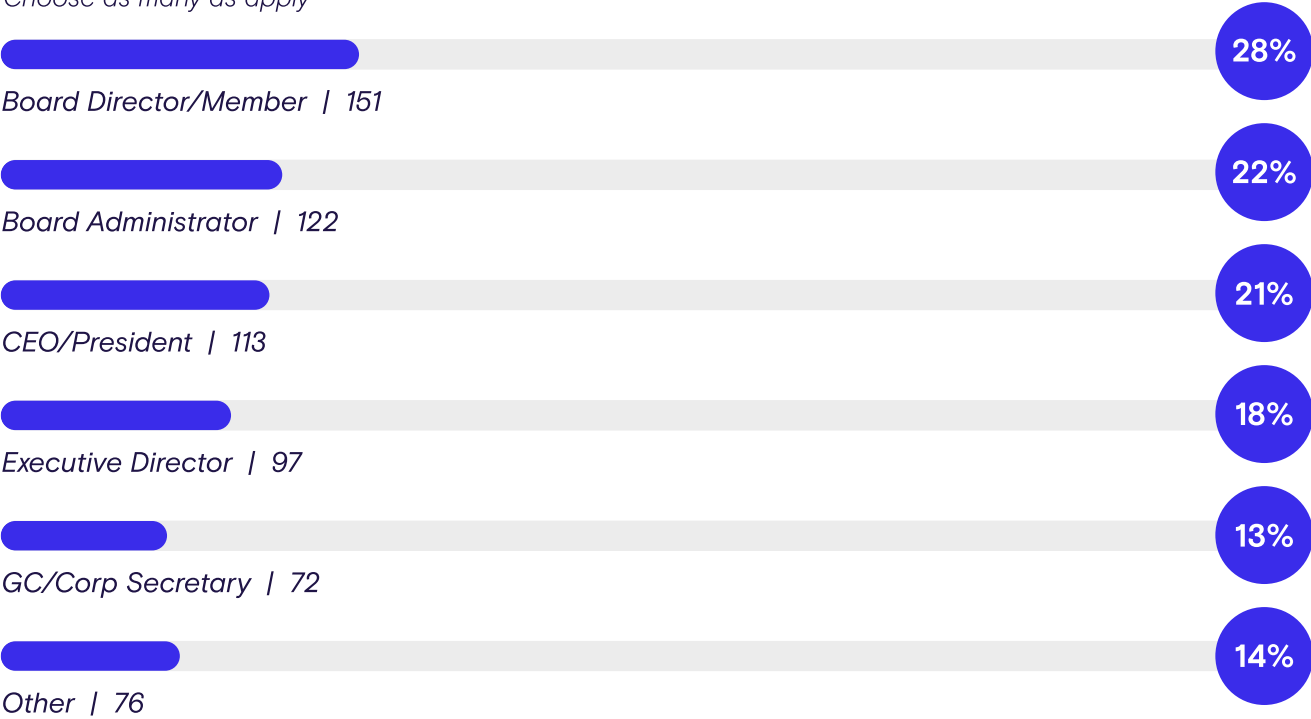
Respondent Profile: 2025 Survey

The 2025 survey gathered input from 549 board professionals globally. Respondents represented a broad cross-section of roles:



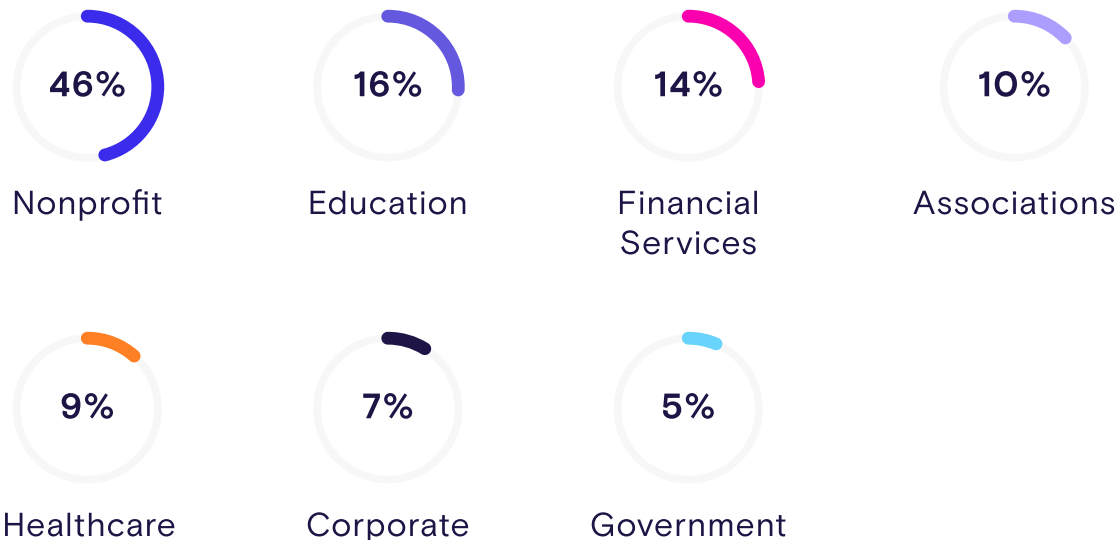
What is your role(s) in the boardroom?

Choose as many as apply



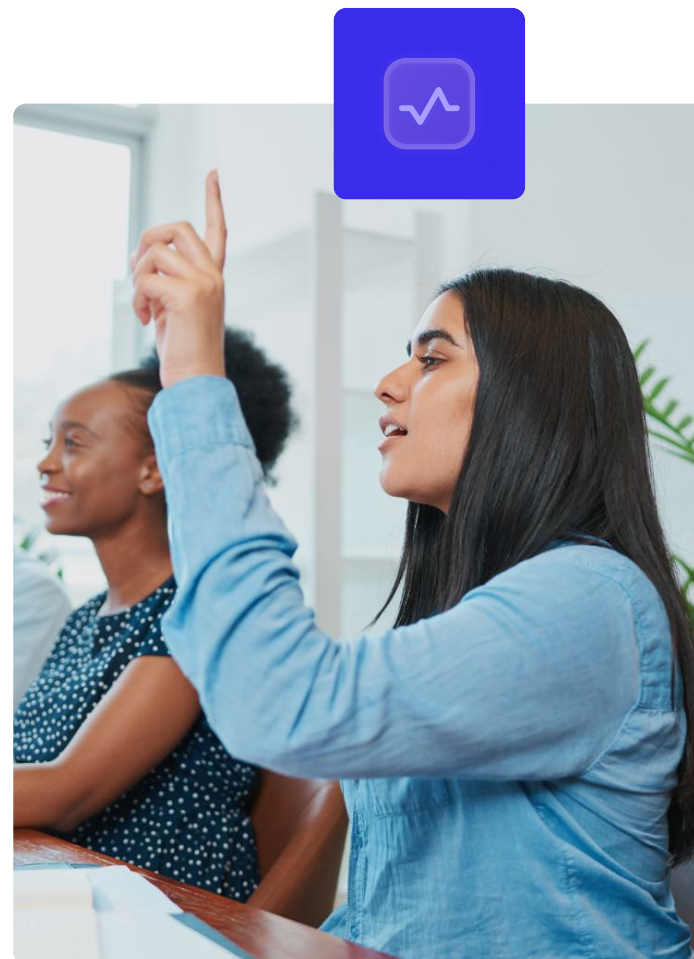
Organizations spanned multiple industries:

Respondents also represented a broad cross-section of board-led organizations :



Methodology

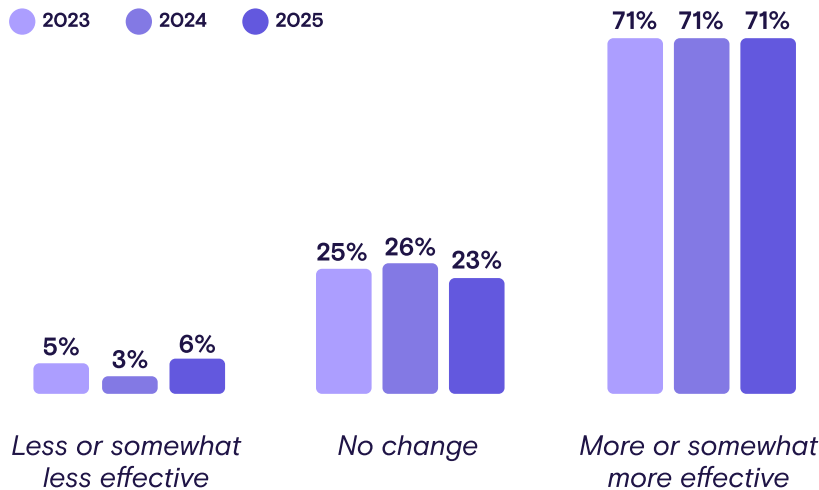
The survey employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Board professionals evaluated their boards on various measures, including effectiveness, collaboration, security, governance, engagement, and technology use. Open-text responses were also collected to surface details and context behind the ratings. Year-over-year comparisons highlight where respondents perceive boards are improving, where opportunities for improvement persist, and where emerging technologies, such as AI, are beginning to influence results.



Boardroom Sentiment in 2025

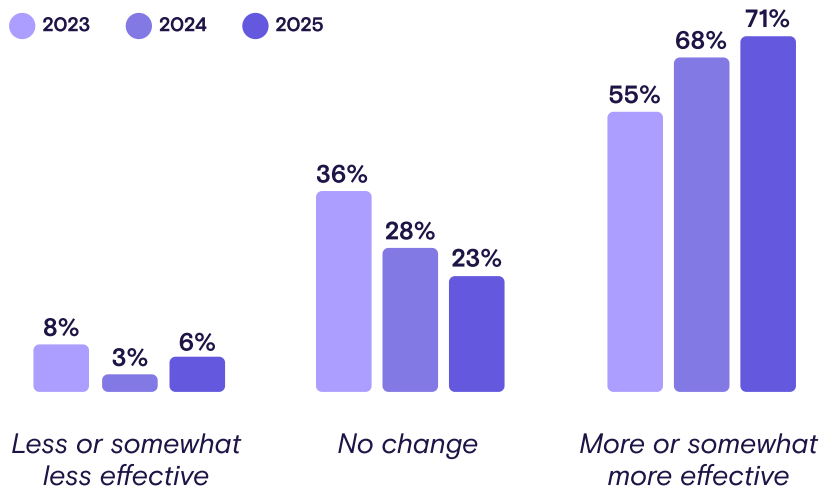
The 2025 findings reveal boards that, according to respondents, are holding steady in their overall performance while beginning to regain confidence in key areas. Effectiveness has held steady at 71% in terms of improved effectiveness for the last three years.

Effectiveness



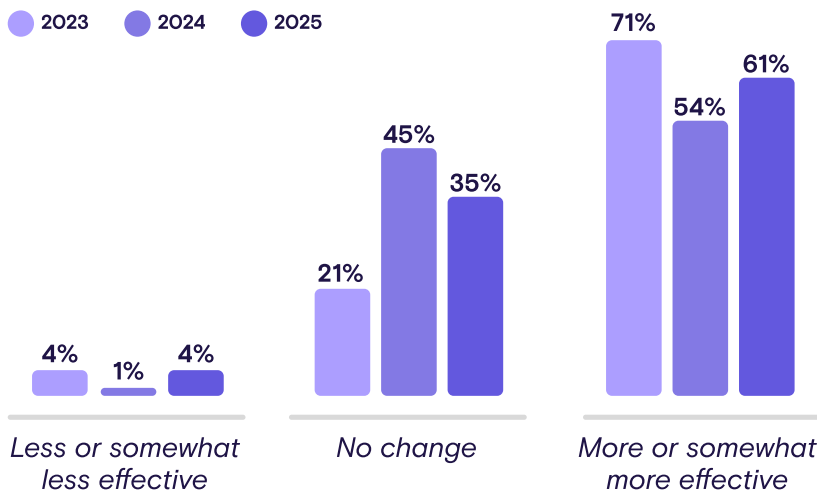
Board effectiveness has remained steady for three consecutive years. In 2023, 2024, and 2025, **71% of board professionals said their boards were more or somewhat more effective** than the year prior, while about one in four saw no change and fewer than 6% reported a decline.

Collaboration



Boards that feel more collaborative have grown steadily over the last three years, with **71% of directors saying they feel more collaborative in 2025** compared to just more than half of survey respondents (55%) sharing the same sentiment in 2023.

Confidence in Security



Perhaps the most notable shift is in security. After a sharp drop from 71% confidence in 2023 to just 54% in 2024, board professionals reported a rebound to **61%** in 2025.

The sentiment that emerges in 2025 can best be described as cautious progress. Board professionals said collaboration is high, security perceptions are improving, and boards are working together more effectively than they were three years ago. Yet familiar opportunities to improve persist, and a widening gap is visible between boards that have embraced technology and those that remain reliant on manual or outdated approaches.

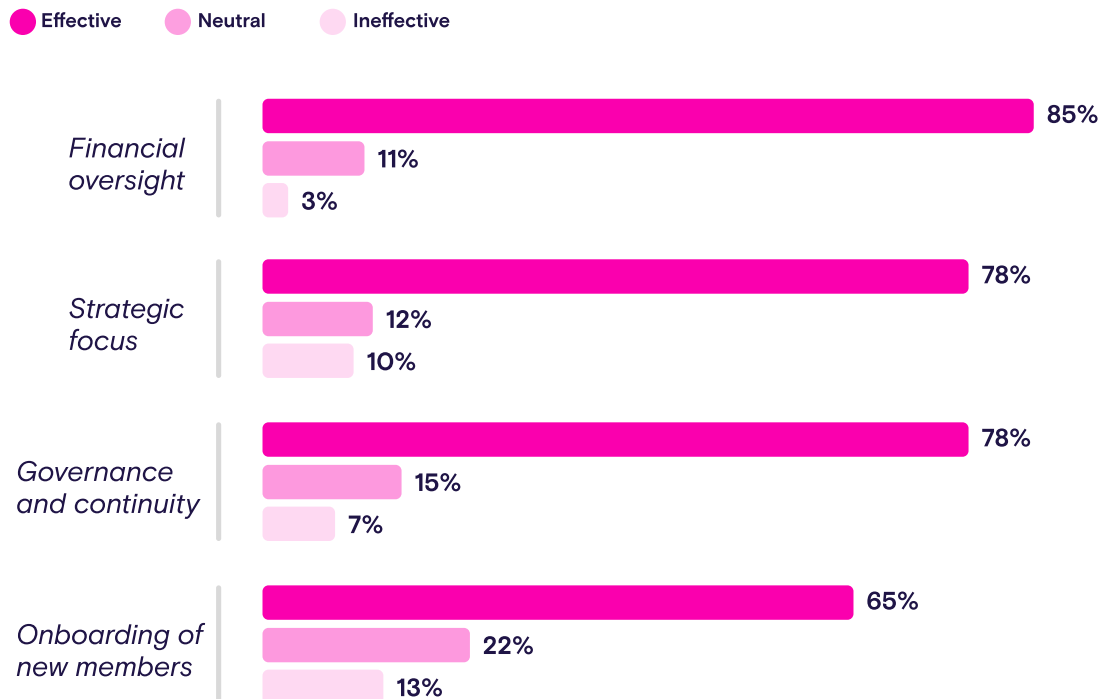
Gauging Effectiveness

Board professionals in 2025 continue to report steady performance in their boards' core responsibilities, but the survey highlights areas of strength alongside opportunities to improve.

Strengths:

- ➔ Financial oversight is the clear leader, with **85% of boards rating themselves effective and only 3% ineffective.**
- ➔ Strategic focus is another strong area, with **nearly 8 in 10 boards (78%) confident in their ability to shape long-term direction.**
- ➔ Governance and continuity also receive high marks, with **78% reporting effectiveness in ensuring stability and consistency.**
- ➔ Onboarding of new members is still seen as a net strength, with **nearly two-thirds (65%) of boards rating their approach as effective.**

Where boards feel most effective



Opportunities to Improve:

While boards report strong effectiveness overall, some areas scored notably lower in comparison:

- Use of technology for board meetings lags behind other areas, with two-thirds of boards (66%) rating themselves effective. A sizable minority remain unconvinced, with 25% neutral and 9% ineffective.
- Cybersecurity of board information is another area of concern. Although 69% report effectiveness, that leaves nearly one-third of boards either neutral (20%) or ineffective (11%) when it comes to protecting sensitive information.



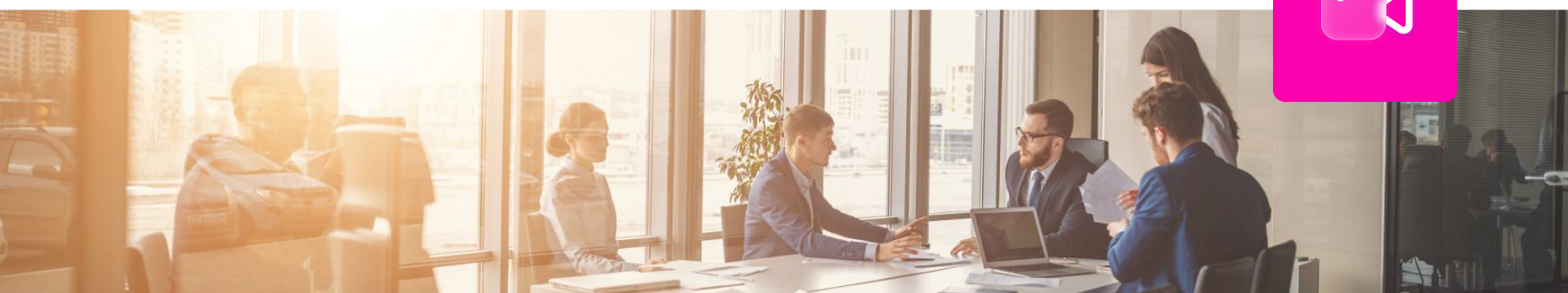
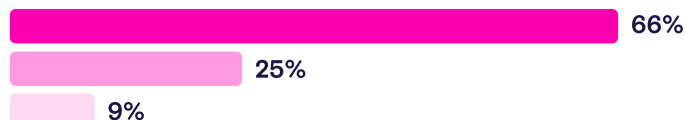
Where boards can increase effectiveness

● Effective ● Neutral ● Ineffective

Cybersecurity of
board information



Use of technology
for board meetings



The Rising Challenge of Ineffective Board Members

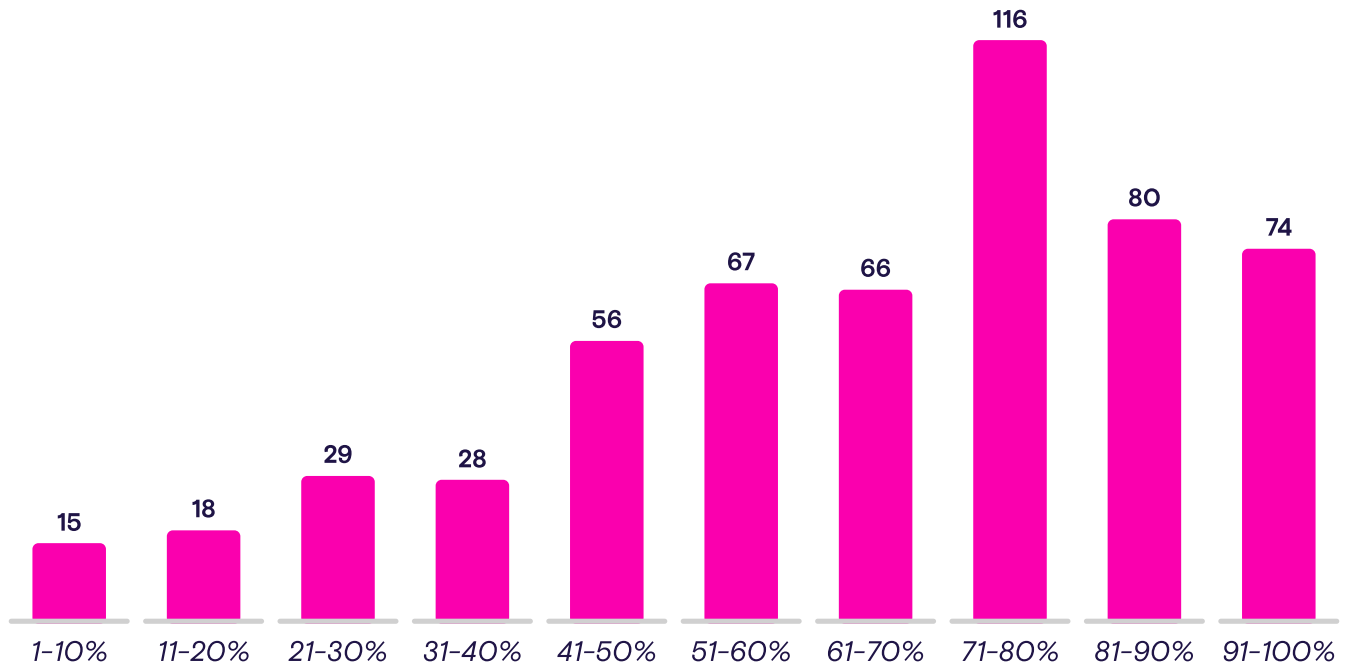
In 2025, boards reported higher levels of member ineffectiveness than in previous years. **Eighty-seven percent of respondents said at least 10% of their board members are ineffective**—a sharp rise compared to 72% in 2024 and 66% in 2023. This trend signals growing frustration with members who fail to fully contribute to the board's key goals and objectives.

87%

of respondents said at
least 10% of their board
is ineffective

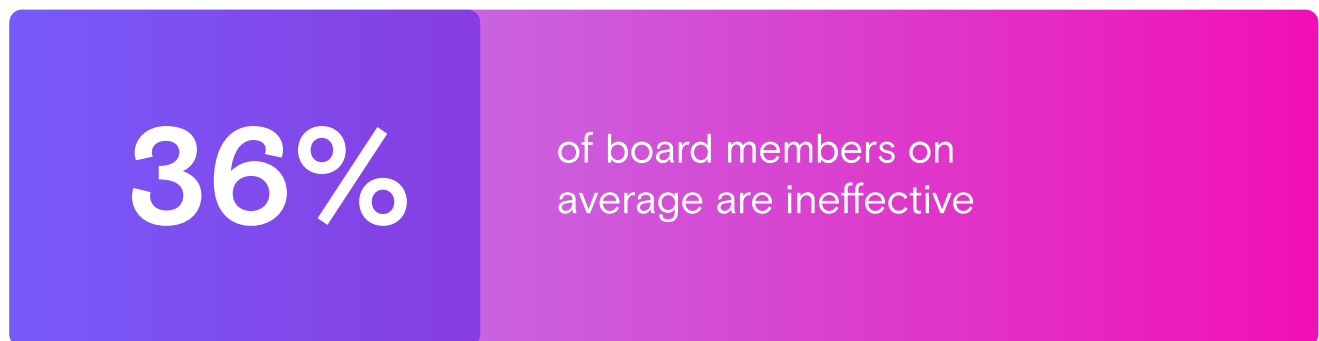
The largest group of respondents placed board effectiveness in the 71–80% range, meaning roughly one in five members is seen as ineffective. Significant clusters also reported effectiveness in the 81–90% and 91–100% ranges, suggesting that while many boards function at a high level, pockets of underperformance are persistent.

What percentage of your current board members effectively contribute to the board's key goals and objectives?



How We Calculated Ineffectiveness

To determine the average share of ineffective members, we analyzed responses across the reported ranges of board effectiveness. For each range, we used the midpoint as a working estimate (for example, a response of 71–80% effectiveness was treated as 75%). The balance of that midpoint was considered ineffective. We then weighted these estimates by the number of respondents in each range.



Using this approach, we estimate that boards in 2025 view about **36% of their members as ineffective on average**.

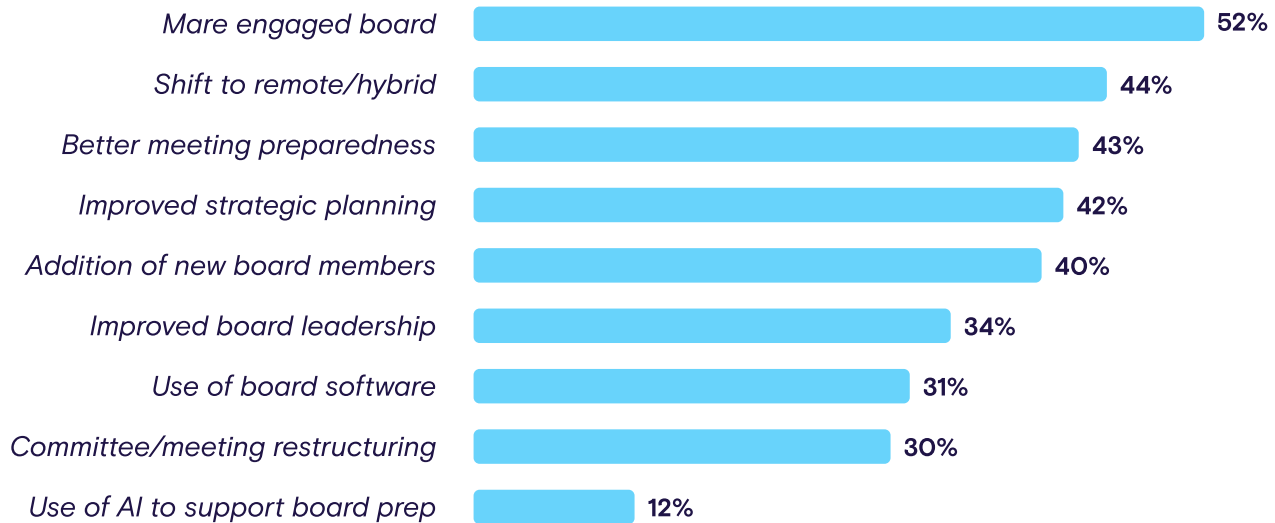
Taken together, the data shows that more than one-third of board seats are at risk of being underutilized—a significant drag on governance performance, especially as expectations for boards continue to rise.

What Drives Board Success

When asked what factors most contributed to improved effectiveness over the past year, board professionals consistently pointed to engagement, preparedness, and leadership.

Factors that improve board success

Choose as many as apply



Digging Deeper into Proven Board Effectiveness

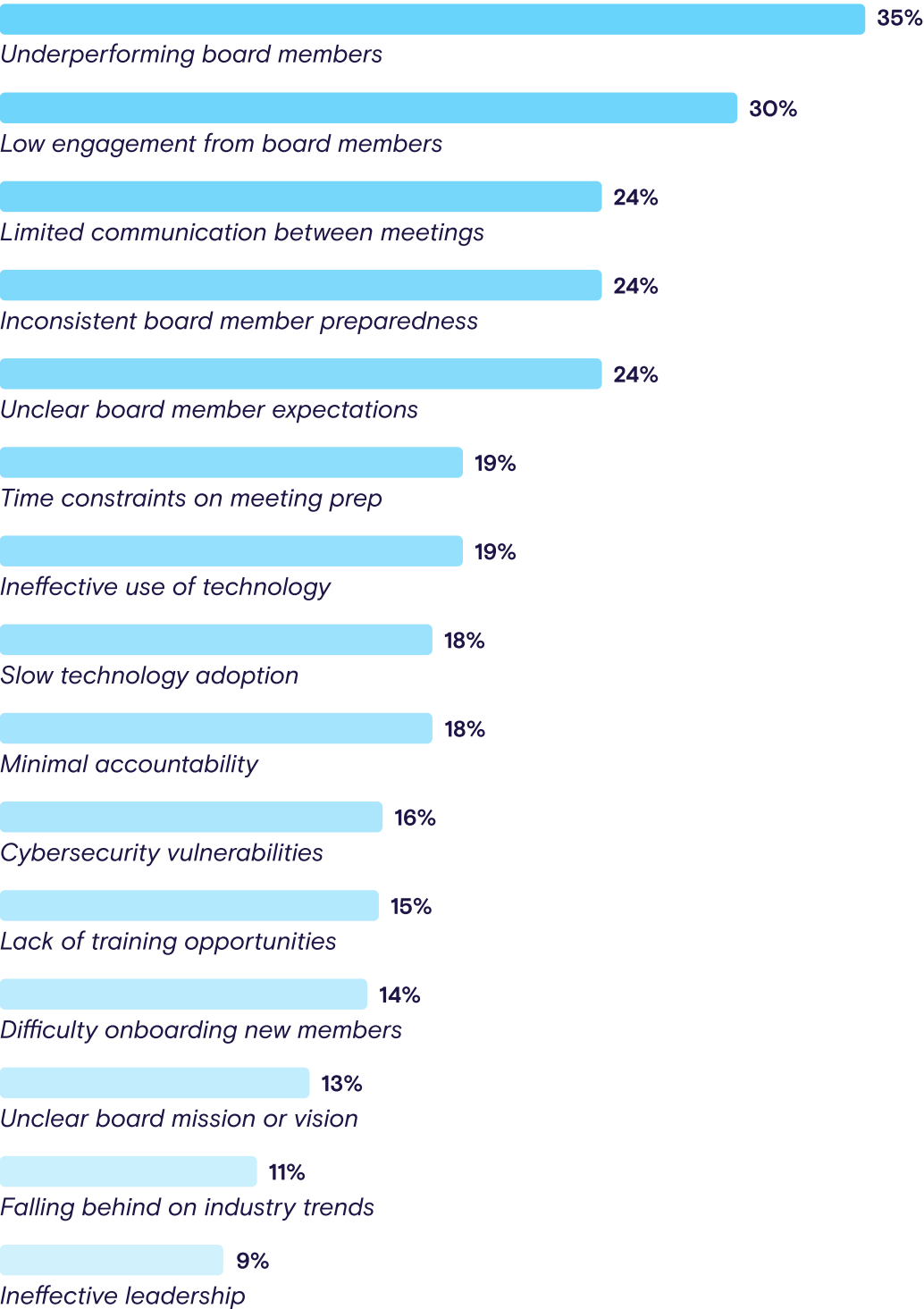
- A more engaged board is the single most important factor, cited by 52% of respondents.
- The shift to remote or hybrid formats continues to shape effectiveness, with 44% noting it has strengthened how their boards operate.
- Better meeting preparedness (43%) and improved strategic planning (42%) were also seen as critical contributors to stronger performance.
- The addition of new board members was cited by 40%, pointing to the value of fresh perspectives and expanded expertise.
- Improved board leadership (34%) also emerged as a meaningful factor in boosting effectiveness.
- Technology adoption also contributes to board success, with 31% citing board software as a driver. Committee and meeting restructuring (30%) emerged as another important factor for improving efficiency and focus.
- Finally, while less common in comparison but increasing in adoption, (more on this later), the use of AI to support board preparation (12%) shows early traction and signals a potential growth area for the future.

Closing the Gaps in Board Performance

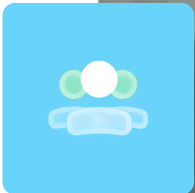
Boards overwhelmingly see people-related issues as their greatest vulnerabilities. Underperformance, lack of engagement, and uneven preparedness surfaced as the most pressing concerns, far outweighing structural or technology-based challenges. This underscores a recurring theme: the effectiveness of a board depends less on formal structures and more on the commitment, contribution, and readiness of its individual members.



Choose as many as apply



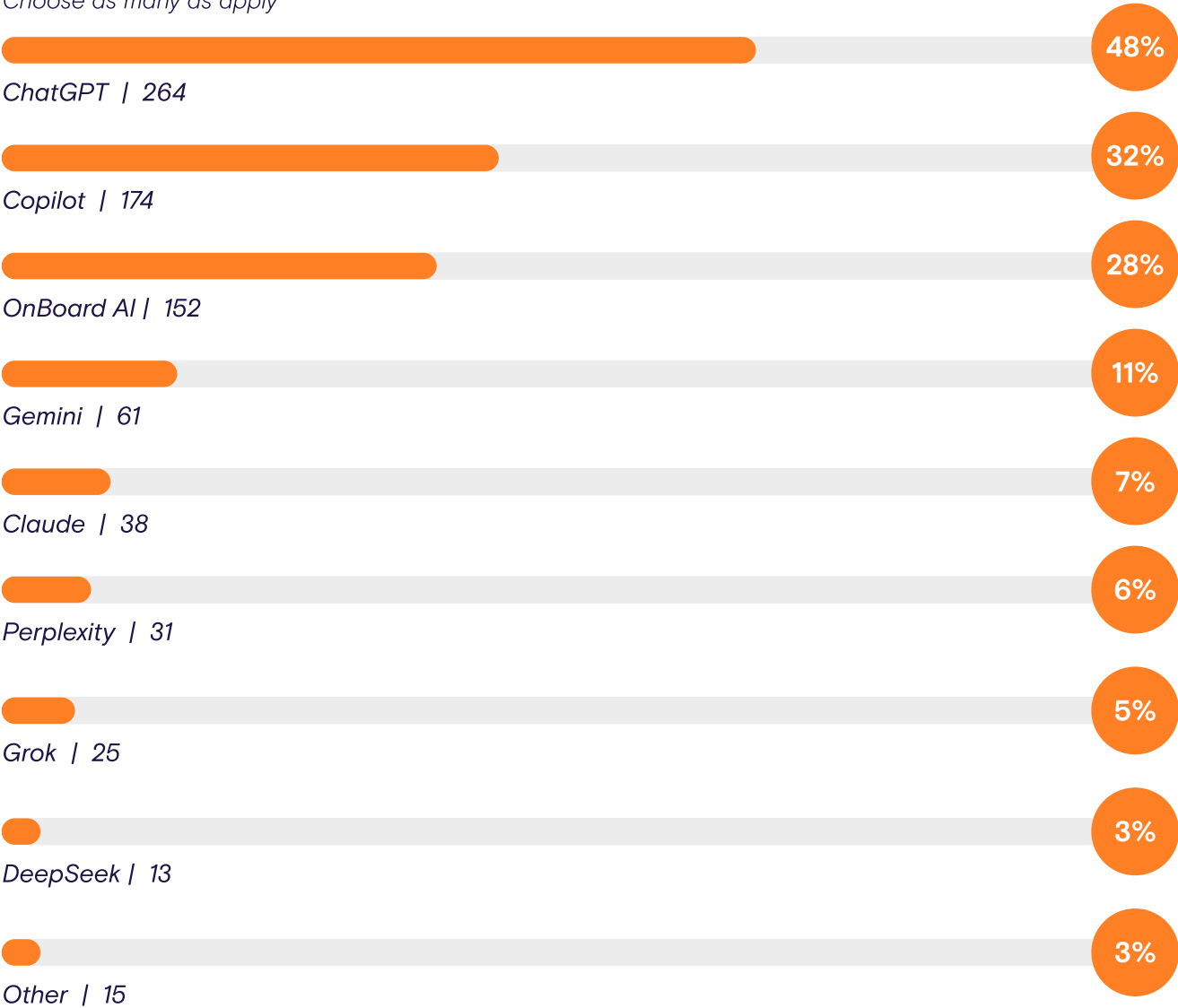
- Underperforming board members rose to the top, cited by 35% as the area most in need of strengthening.
- Low engagement from members was also a major concern, identified by 30% as a pressing challenge.
- Limited communication between meetings (24%) and inconsistent director preparedness (24%) further highlight gaps in board cohesion and follow-through.
- Other recurring themes included time constraints for meeting preparation (19%), ineffective use of technology (19%), and slow technology adoption (18%).
- Cybersecurity vulnerabilities (16%) were also flagged, underscoring the ongoing risks in protecting sensitive board information.
- Meanwhile, governance fundamentals like unclear board member expectations (24%), lack of training opportunities (15%), and unclear board mission or vision (13%) remain areas that could undermine long-term effectiveness if left unaddressed.



Technology and AI Usage

Technology remains one of the most uneven areas of boardroom performance, but in 2025, artificial intelligence has emerged as a defining factor in governance. This year's Board Effectiveness Survey is the first to examine AI usage in depth.

Choose as many as apply

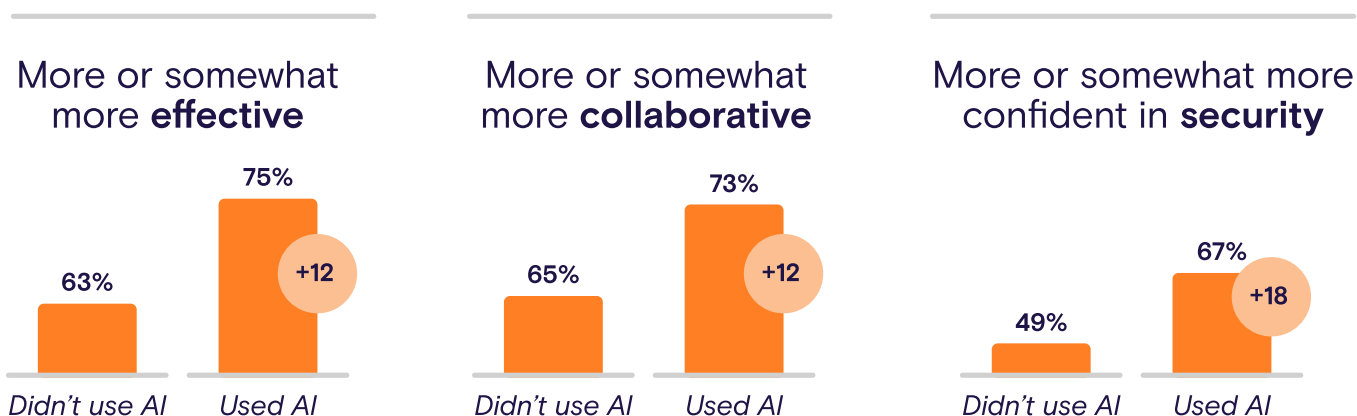


69%

have used AI to support board work.

- **69% of respondents reported using AI for board work in the past six months.**
- **40% reported using more than one AI application** during that period, indicating that experimentation with multiple platforms is common.
- The most frequently used AI tools were: ChatGPT (48%), Copilot (32%), OnBoard AI (28%), Gemini (11%), Claude (7%), Perplexity (6%), Grok (5%), DeepSeek (3%), and other tools (3%).

Comparing respondents who used AI with those who did not reveals important differences. Among AI users, 75% rated their boards as more effective, compared to 63% of non-users. Similar gaps were reported for collaboration (73% vs. 65%) and security confidence (67% vs. 49%). While these are self-reported perceptions, they suggest a correlation between AI use and stronger governance outcomes.



Prospective AI Adoption

If applied in a secure and compliant setting, respondents identified multiple areas where they would be most open to adopting AI more formally in board work.

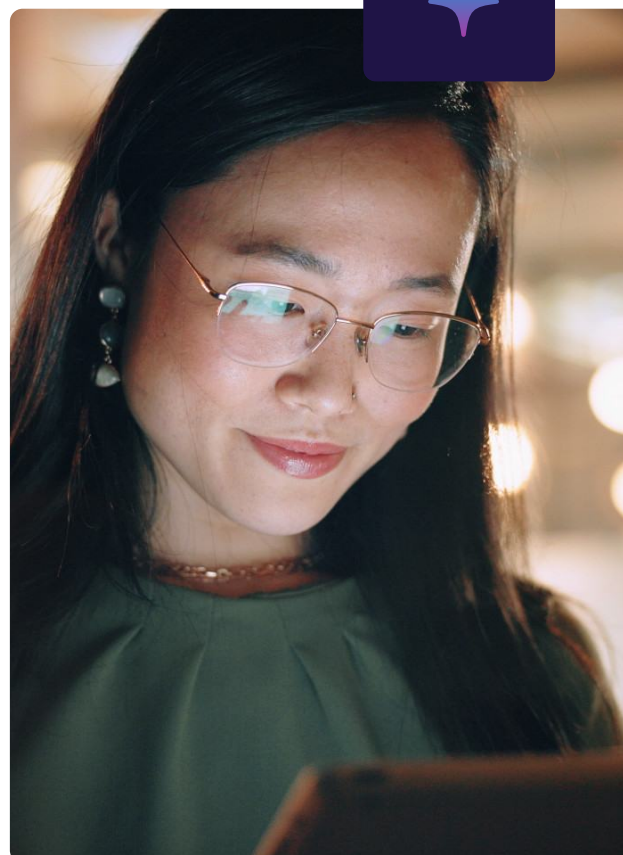
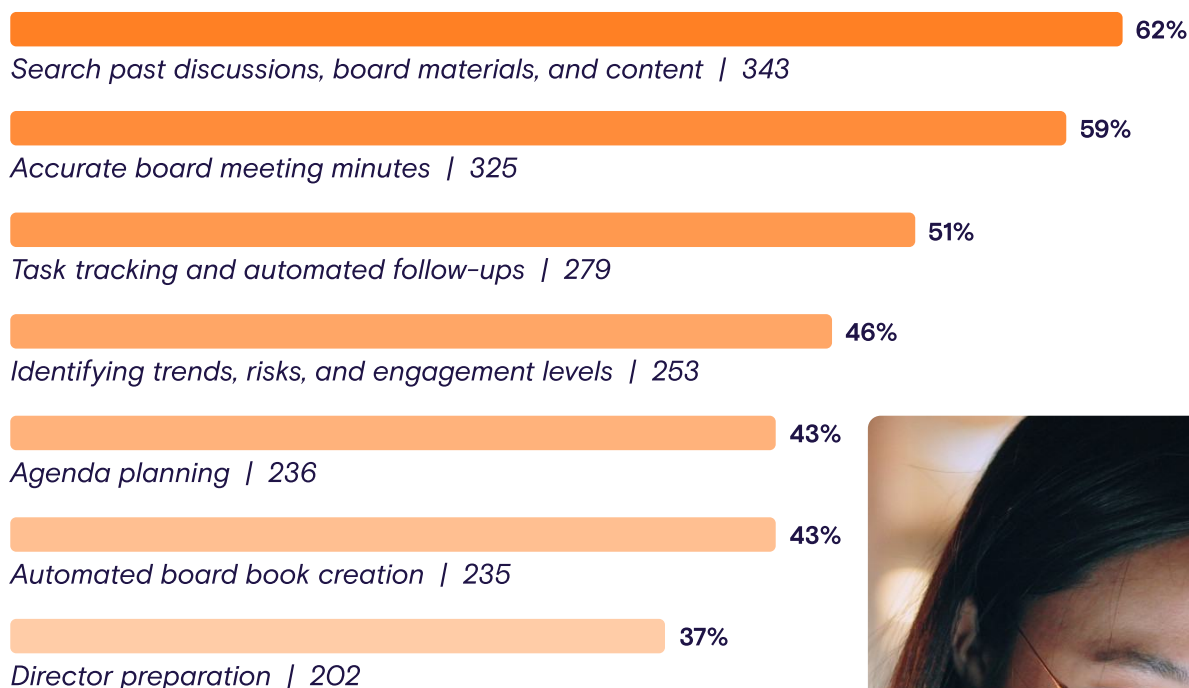
- Search across past discussions, board materials, and content ranked highest, with 69% of respondents citing it as the most valuable use case.
- Accurate board meeting minutes followed closely at 59%, reflecting continued interest in reducing administrative burdens and ensuring precision in records.
- Task tracking and automated follow-ups were highlighted by 51%, emphasizing the need to strengthen accountability between meetings.
- Identifying trends, risks, and engagement levels was selected by 46%, pointing to the potential of AI for board-level insights and oversight.

- Agenda planning and automated board book creation each drew interest from 43%, underscoring AI's role in improving meeting structure and preparation.
- Finally, director preparation (37%) emerged as a key area, where AI could help members come to meetings more informed and ready to contribute.

Together, these responses reveal a strong appetite for AI applications that reduce administrative friction, improve efficiency, and expand the board's ability to focus on strategy, oversight, and decision-making.

How would you use AI to support board work?

Choose as many as apply



Why We Examined AI Closely This Year

AI is now a regular part of professional life. OpenAI's recent 2025 usage study found that 30% of ChatGPT consumer use is work-related, primarily for tasks such as writing, planning, and decision support. These same use cases map directly to boardroom responsibilities, where directors and administrators utilize AI to enhance efficiency, clarity, and collaboration.

Concerns and Caution

Open text responses revealed six recurring themes concerning AI usage in the boardroom:

- 1 Security and privacy (20%)**
Demand for closed-loop systems that guarantee board data never leaves secure environments.
- 2 Cost consciousness (15%)**
Respondents want transparency and value, ensuring AI delivers measurable impact in proportion to expense.
- 3 Usability (12%)**
AI must simplify work, not add complexity.
- 4 Regulatory and ethical risks (10%)**
Concern that poor implementation could introduce compliance liabilities.
- 5 New data responsibilities (8%)**
AI forces boards to think differently about how data is managed and safeguarded.
- 6 Readiness and training (8–10%)**
Directors noted they need training or remain unsure what AI can realistically do. Without proper guidance, boards risk accidentally uploading or sharing sensitive information in a way that compromises compliance. This aligns with Deloitte's [2025 global survey of directors](#), which found that while awareness of AI is growing, only a minority of boards have formally embedded AI oversight or education into their agendas.

Respondents were also divided on whether they are prepared to invest in secure AI solutions. Forty-four percent said they were interested in investing in secure AI capabilities, while 56% said they were not. This highlights both the appetite for innovation and the caution that still defines adoption in the boardroom.

Nearly seven in ten respondents reported using AI for board work in the last six months, and two in five experimented with multiple tools. Many are open to expanding formal adoption, but enthusiasm is balanced by concerns around security, compliance, and value. Training is emerging as a core enabler, since directors must learn not only how to use AI effectively, but also how to use it safely without exposing sensitive data.

Opportunities for Improvement

As mentioned previously, respondents identified several recurring opportunities to enhance board performance.

- Director preparedness (25%)
- Meeting preparation (27%)
- Communication between sessions (33%)
- Ineffective members (13–17%)
- Technology adoption (66% rated effective, lowest category overall)

Respondents also highlighted AI-related opportunities: accurate minutes, task tracking, improved search, and director preparation. Training emerged as a particularly important theme, with board professionals emphasizing the need to build not only functional skills but also knowledge of security and compliance.

Technology adoption, in particular, remains a pressing gap. Just two-thirds of respondents rated their boards as effective at using technology, and separate research from 2025 reinforces why this remains a barrier. A majority of boards still rely on outdated processes to manage meetings:



57%

57% continue to use email and PDF attachments as their primary method of preparing and distributing board materials, a practice that fragments information and limits real-time collaboration.



31%

31% report using digital tools, but the majority of these are **off-the-shelf office platforms** like Microsoft, Google, and Adobe—not purpose-built governance technology.



13%

13% of boards still rely on paper printouts, underscoring how uneven digital adoption remains across organizations.

Most Boards are Over-reliant on Outdated Tools

How do you currently prepare and distribute board meeting materials?



***But**, 75% of these are off-the-shelf office tools, like Microsoft, Google, etc.

These patterns highlight why technology remains both an opportunity and a challenge. Even as digital adoption grows, most boards have yet to fully modernize the tools they use to prepare for and run meetings. The reliance on PDFs, generic productivity software, and even paper illustrates the gap between incremental progress and true digital transformation. Until boards embrace platforms designed specifically for governance, the effectiveness gains from technology will remain limited.



The Future Role of AI in Governance

The 2025 survey makes it clear that board professionals are open to using AI for routine but important tasks that improve accuracy, efficiency, and preparation. Respondents highlighted priorities such as minutes, task tracking, director preparation, and better access to documents. These are not futuristic ambitions. They reflect practical needs that boards encounter every day.

Emerging Categories of AI Functionality in the Boardroom



Agenda creation

Generating structured agendas from source materials or prompts.



Minutes drafting

Producing transcripts and summaries of discussions and decisions.



Document intelligence

Surfacing related documents, discussions, and prior decisions in context.



Conversational assistance

Providing on-demand answers and summaries from past materials.



Task and action tracking

Flagging unresolved issues, linking decisions across meetings, and maintaining accountability.



Insights and analytics

Analyzing engagement, agenda balance, and governance practices.

OnBoard AI

Lead with **clarity**.
Decide with **confidence**.

We're not imagining the future of board leadership.
We're delivering it—responsibly, practically, and powerfully.

[Book a Demo](#)





The Ethical Boundary of AI in Governance

While enthusiasm for AI is growing, respondents emphasized that its role should be supportive, not substitutive. Directors retain fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and oversight that cannot be delegated to technology. AI can reduce administrative burden and surface insights, but the responsibility for interpreting information, exercising judgment, and making decisions rests squarely with board members. *KPMG's 2025 survey of directors reached a similar conclusion: Boards view AI as a valuable support tool, but fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and oversight remain non-delegable.*

The Role of Security and Compliance

Respondents emphasized the need for secure, closed-loop AI systems that protect sensitive board data and ensure compliance with regulations. They most often highlighted:

- Confidence that board data would not be shared externally or used to train public models.
- Greater transparency and control over how recordings, transcripts, or draft minutes are stored and deleted.
- Assurance that any AI features operate within the same security and compliance expectations already applied to board materials.

Industry standards such as SOC 2, ISO 27001/27701, HIPAA, and GDPR provide widely recognized benchmarks for security and compliance in this area.

AI in governance is about reducing effort, improving accuracy, and helping directors focus on strategy rather than logistics. The categories of functionality emerging today map directly to the challenges identified in the 2025 survey. Adoption will succeed where innovation is balanced with trust, security, and compliance, and where directors remain clear-eyed about their ultimate accountability.

Differences by Role and Industry



By Role

Directors and Executive Team members were most likely to report using AI in the last six months.

Administrators, Executive Directors, and Support Staff were least likely, often citing training and usability as barriers.

Open text comments revealed that directors valued efficiency, administrators worried about cost and usability, executive directors expressed uncertainty, and GCs focused on compliance.



By Industry

Respondents in corporate and financial services sectors were most likely to report using AI.

Nonprofit and education respondents were least likely, often citing cost and readiness.

Healthcare and government respondents focused heavily on compliance concerns. This reflects broader patterns seen in [EY's 2025 Responsible AI Pulse](#) survey, which found that AI adoption is outpacing governance frameworks, especially in regulated industries where compliance risks remain at the forefront.

Role and industry shape how board professionals perceive AI. Directors and senior executives are more open to experimentation, while administrators and executive directors are more hesitant. Nonprofits and education emphasize affordability and readiness, while corporate and financial services focus on compliance. Across groups, AI is viewed as a support tool — a means to save time and enhance preparation, while accountability remains with directors.

Conclusion

The 2025 Board Effectiveness Survey reveals a governance landscape marked by cautious progress. Board professionals reported stability in effectiveness and collaboration, a rebound in security confidence, and growing engagement with artificial intelligence. Yet familiar opportunities to improve remain, particularly in preparation, director readiness, communication, and technology use.

AI is the most notable new factor. Nearly seven in 10 respondents reported using AI for board work in the past six months, and many had experimented with multiple tools. At the same time, respondents emphasized that AI must be secure, compliant, and transparent, and that directors remain ultimately responsible for fulfilling their fiduciary duties and exercising sound judgment. Across roles and industries, participants described AI as a means to reduce administrative burdens and strengthen governance, rather than as a replacement for accountability. According to respondents, the path forward is clear. To sustain progress, boards should:

- Continue to strengthen director performance and engagement.
- Prioritize training and readiness so directors use AI effectively and safely.
- Demand security, compliance, and retention controls as non-negotiable in any AI adoption.
- Utilize AI as a support tool to enhance efficiency and preparation, while remaining mindful of fiduciary obligations.

In Closing

Board professionals describe a governance environment where effectiveness and collaboration are stabilizing, security perceptions are improving, and AI is establishing itself as a practical tool in daily work. The directors and administrators who succeed will be those who embrace innovation with discipline, balancing efficiency with accountability, and ensuring that technology supports governance rather than defines it.

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Special Thanks

This report would not have been possible without the contributions of many individuals and partners. We extend our gratitude to:

- Carolyn Krupa, freelance report writer, for her thoughtful narrative contributions.
- Lee Sumner, Lead Research Analyst at Ideba, for his expertise in data review, analysis and interpretation.
- Ideba, provider of survey design and analysis services, for their support in fielding and analyzing the study.
- And most importantly, the 549 board professionals who participated in the 2025 OnBoard Board Effectiveness Survey, for sharing their candid perspectives and insights.



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