

Four Challenges for Governance Boards

Many Boards Unprepared for the Future

By Warren Bird, Ph.D.



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Four Challenges for Governance Boards:

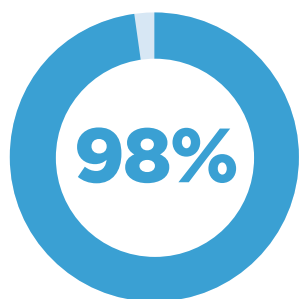
Many Boards Unprepared for the Future

By Warren Bird, Ph.D.

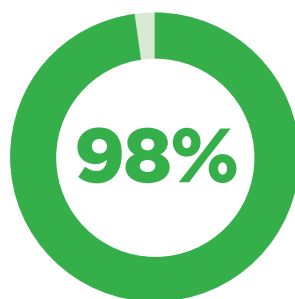
How do more than 1,500 CEOs, board chairs, and board members of Christ-centered, ECFA accredited ministries¹ feel about their ministry? We probed many areas of potential concern, and here's what rose to the top:

Let's start with good news:

Boards are highly passionate about their Christ-centered mission.



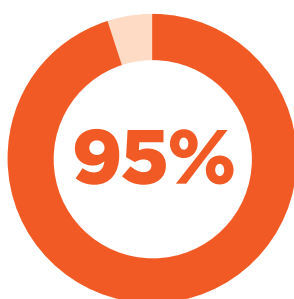
clearly see the board's work as **Christ-centered**



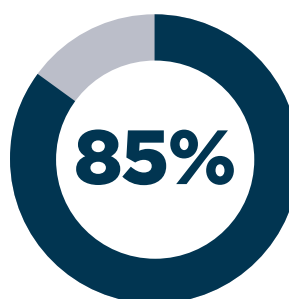
strive to conduct their work with **Christ-centered character**



agree with this statement, "It's very important that we know and leverage the **God-given strengths of every board member.**"



pray regularly for the ministry and the CEO



say they are **passionate about their organization's primary mission/vision** and that they invest time, talent, and treasure in personally enhancing the mission

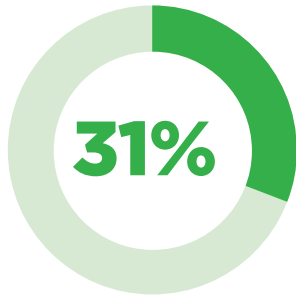
"We need board members who have the ability to lead the organization into the future"



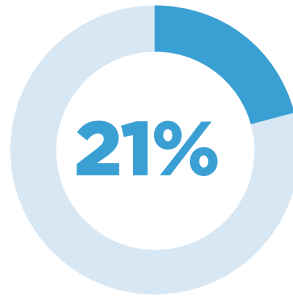
Now the four top challenges:

1. Succession

Fewer than one in three boards have a written CEO succession plan.



only 31% said yes to “Does your board have a written succession plan in the event of the CEO’s death, long-term illness, or unexpected resignation?”



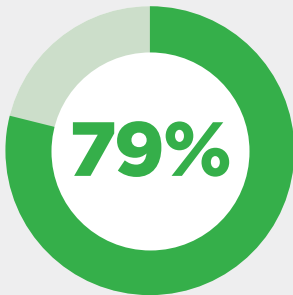
Meanwhile, 21% said they need “much help” or “major help” with their CEO succession planning



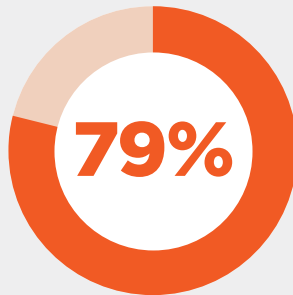
And 20% said they need “much help” or “major help” recruiting and selecting the next CEO

2. Measurable Goals

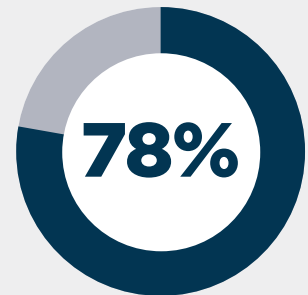
Boards want to monitor impact, but too often don’t track measurable goals to get there.



agree that “our board is very focused on measuring mission impact”

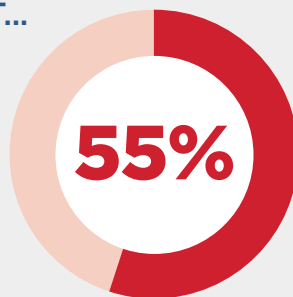


say that their board ensures that the ministry has an active strategic planning process in place

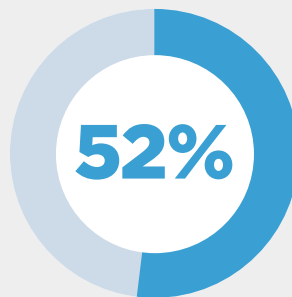


say that their board annually affirms and owns the ministry strategy

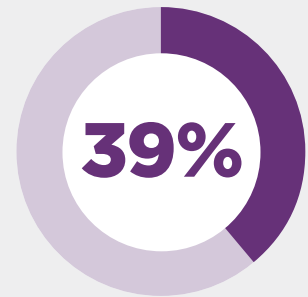
YET...



of board members receive monthly or quarterly dashboard reports that identify agreed-upon metrics or measurements, outcomes, and impact for programs, products, and/or services.



say that if the CEO has provided annual measurable goals, progress on those goals is “regularly reported to the board”



of the staff that directly report to the CEO each have three or more annual measurable goals

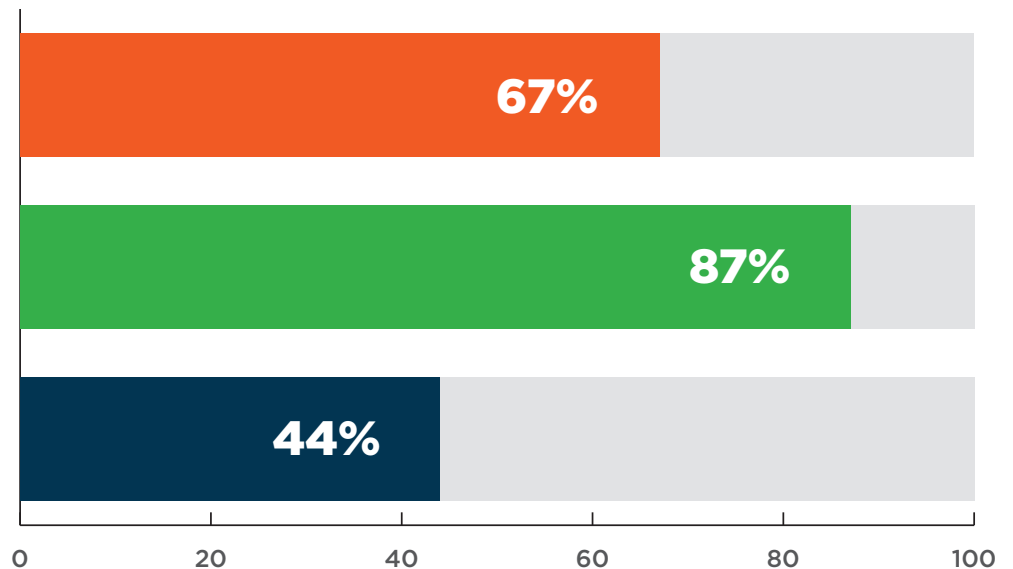
3. Future Focus

Boards recognize the need to be more future-focused, but don't always do so.

67% agree: "Our board carves out time to creatively address the current and future needs of our 'customers'."

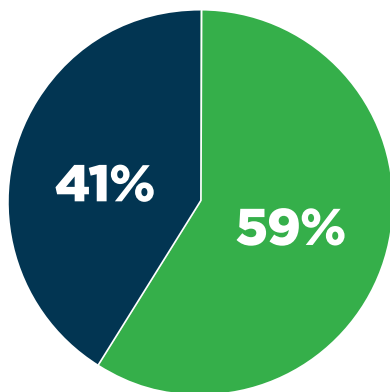
87% of boards that rate themselves as *effective* spend half or more of a typical meeting dealing with the future

Yet across all ministries, only 44% of a typical board meeting is spent on the future as compared to reviewing the present or past.



4. Best Board Composition

Not enough board members feel they have the right board composition for the future.



59% answer affirmatively to "Is our board composition right for the challenges ahead?"

41% say they need "some," "much," or "major" help to remove ineffective board members.

¹The ECFA-sponsored survey was fielded in late 2018 to CEOs, board chairs, and board members of all ECFA-accredited ministries except local churches. We received 1,662 usable responses.

About the author:



Dr. Warren Bird, ECFA Vice President of Research and Equipping, is a nationally recognized researcher and is an award-winning author/coauthor of 31 books for church leaders.

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