

Is your Board suffering Covid-19 fatigue?



Tina Torode, Head of Corporate Governance and Board Advisory shares some of her observations on Board resilience in a challenging environment as we approach the first anniversary of Covid related lock-downs and “crisis management” for many boards.

Aspida’s Simon Walker has shared observations of general business resilience in the various lock-downs but, from our observations boards themselves are not immune with stresses and once suppressed tensions coming to the fore. Covid-19 is perhaps looking “fixed” in many ways but clearly many of the tensions that came to the surface over the past year will not go away so quickly.

Much has been written about the different stakeholders a board should be considering. The crisis has certainly validated the logic that the key 5 are undoubtedly customers, employees, suppliers, communities and shareholders – reversing the once considered primacy of the shareholder. But how do these reinforced priorities manifest around the board table? Non-executive directors v executive directors, shareholders v executives, staff v customers and, of course, the need for additional funding in many ways drawing us back to shareholders and other funders.

Of course, many of these challenges are not new but have undoubtedly been made more difficult after a year or more of virtual meetings and may well have long lasting and unforeseen consequences. Much harder to identify are those tell-tale signs of body language, side looks between participants, misunderstood comments and language nuances. All complicated by variable internet connectivity, background noises, telephone versus video calls etc. We could write a whole separate piece on virtual meetings but perhaps for another day.

The time for an effective Chair, not just in meetings but especially outside of meetings and managing relationships between the various stakeholders and /or

members is, of course, even more vital.

Throughout the past year we have seen an increased demand for our external board evaluation service across a number of different sectors including financial services, utilities and charities. Through them, we have gained a better understanding of how some of these challenges manifest themselves and, more importantly, how they can be addressed to ensure that the board is fully effective, not just during a crisis, but in rebuilding and capitalising on the opportunities that follow in the subsequent recovery.

We are unique in the market as we have detailed knowledge on listed companies and boards as we maintain a database of over 170 investment companies listed on the LSE, SFM, AIM, ISE, Euronext and TISE. The team at Aspida are always looking for ways to assist directors, trustees, businesses and charities and in 2011 created the Non-Executive Directors Forum. This forum has since gone on to become a leading independent body looking after the interests of directors involved in the finance sector and has been a significant success with membership extending outside of the finance sector.

To learn more, visit <https://aspidagroup.com/services/corporategovernance/boardadvisory/> and contact our team of experts.

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