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A CEO'S GUIDE TO The boardroom

Beverly Behan



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Review

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Managing and participating on governing boards of business can be a complicated and politically fraught experience. In many cases the room is filled with first timers - first time CEO, first time board member, or first time Chairman. As public and private companies are under so much public scrutiny, boards are increasingly being held accountable for the organization. This series of books covers key issues that are at the forefront of governing bodies such as: hiring board members; and creating boards that are effective and keep organizations on track; succession planning; compensation; organizational performance and measurement - plus more. Interviews with CEO's, Chairman of the Board and first time board members are sprinkled throughout, making these books readable and relevant.

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Top Contender for Business Book of the Year

By Michael N. Pocalyko

Beverly Behan's Great Companies Deserve Great Boards is probably the most important book on corporate directorship since William G. Bowen's Inside the Boardroom (1994). I encountered this book as a chairman of the board, an experienced public company director and audit chairman -- and I've been recommending it ever since I finished it the first time. On-point, highly readable, contemporary, and above all useful, Behan (a columnist for Bloomberg Businessweek) employs an ebullient didactic style, so rare and welcome in the Sarbanes-Oxley Dodd-Frank era. Here's a field guide to the way corporate directors think, act, and strategize ... or more correctly, how we should.

Any book recommended by Norm Augustine and Frank McKenna certainly deserves a wide readership, but this one will contend for business book of the year. Behan deals forthrightly with the sometimes-competing expectations of the board and management, audit committee frictions, and the board in M&A decision-making. But her chapter on "Transforming Your Board" is really worth the price of admission, providing real-life methods of ways to "force the conversion."

What a voice of sanity and serious intellectual discourse in our boardrooms and C-suites, delivered in an extraordinary book.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Great Companies, Great Boards, Great Guide!

By James F. Bolt

No one has more experience working with Boards than Bev Behan, and that comes across clearly in this book. Whether you are a board member or a CEO whose success depends on working effectively with the board, you will find that this book is full of practical ideas about what really matters -- high performance.

And let's remember that there is a lot at stake, i.e., the need for extraordinary organizations that not only create wealth, and positively effect the livelihood of thousands of employees, but also contribute to the

betterment society.

This book provides time-tested, practical advice for any board and CEO that will directly impact their organization in critical ways. It also serves as a wonderful resource for anyone who needs to understand and support Great Boards.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A practical guide to exemplary performance By J Garland McLellan Why do so many boards just comply with all the rules, get on politely and keep a watchful eye on management without ever leading them anywhere?

Does your board fall into that category? Even sometimes ...?

Nobody could disagree with the title of this book. Great Companies Deserve Great Boards . The sad fact is, however, that many companies cannot be great because their boards just don't manage to add that little bit of extra strategic awareness that can make all the difference between a reasonable performance, in line with its peers, or an exemplary one, that far outstrips peers.

This book can help your board to make the jump from good to great. It is full of real life case studies that give positive examples of the actions and activities that will lift the contribution from conformance to performance and into elite board athleticism. My personal favourite is the story of the board of Ford and their deep dive into the process of designing and producing a new car; it involved a visit to the design centre, an overview of the process, education sessions on design, dinner with the designers and a morning at the test tracks driving each car in the new range and experiencing it as the intended purchasers would. Wow! That is a lot of board and management hours but it will enable a lot of creative thinking and allow the board to understand the process they oversee.

The book is full of first hand experiences and the insights from these are easily transferrable across industry sectors and geographic regions. It is like getting ten years' experience in one easy month of part time reading.

The book is well written, succinctly worded and beautifully edited. The voice of the author is clear, as are the voices of the various protagonists in the case study. This adds an enticing and seductive tone to the work; it is like standing at a cocktail party on the outskirts of a group that is vigorously a topic of interest – you just can't help but be drawn in!

As I am fond of quoting 'A mind expanded by an original thought will never regain its original dimensions'. A mind after reading this book will never be satisfied with anything but a valuable board. This book should be mandatory for all boards and their advisers.

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