

# BOARDBOOK

## My Board Journey

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DIRECTOR,  
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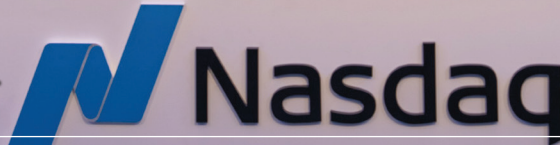


Photo courtesy of Nasdaq Inc.

### What was the first board you joined?

The first board that I had the privilege to join was Sunrun, the largest consumer solar-and-battery-as-a-service company in the United States. After joining Sunrun, about six months later, I had another opportunity to join my second public board, TrueBlue, a global, mission-driven workforce solutions company. As of last year, I entered portfolio life full-time and am now serving on several corporate boards and as an advisor to a Silicon Valley venture capital firm.

### What do you look for in a board?

I have always been intentional in my board journey. It's very important for me to join the board of a company whose mission and values are aligned with my own values. It's also important for me to join a board where I believe I can make a positive contribution and where there's a good culture fit with the current board. I'm fortunate to have been able to join boards of companies that are purpose-driven and where I believe I can make a positive contribution.

### How does your professional experience inform your board service?

For almost three decades, I had the privilege to lead and advise at the intersection of disruptive technology, digital transformation and ESG. I've done this both with smaller, more entrepreneurial, venture-backed Silicon Valley technology companies and with new, innovative businesses at large, global *Fortune* 100 companies, such as helping HP launch its 3D printing and digital manufacturing business, helping Siemens grow its digital energy business, and helping Pacific Gas and Electric Company with its smart energy and climate initiatives. These experiences enabled me to leverage my unique insight, foresight and perspectives to help oversee and govern companies in navigating the modern 21st-centu-

ry challenges and opportunities surrounding technology disruptions, cybersecurity, new business models and ESG for long-term value creation.

### What is the director's role in making sure that their companies are mindful of effects on the climate?

A director, as a fiduciary to shareholders, must ensure that their companies look at all the material risks and opportunities affecting long-term value creation, including climate. There are a lot of discussions surrounding ESG and climate these days, but unfortunately many companies still treat their ESG and climate strategy as separate from their overall company's business strategy. To succeed, it's important for a company to integrate its ESG and climate strategy into the company's overall strategy for long-term value creation. Moreover, it's important to realize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to how companies should approach their climate strategies, since each company has a different set of challenges and opportunities and is at a different stage of maturity in its ESG and climate journey. Boards should help management establish the right mindset to view ESG and climate as a way to better navigate material risks and opportunities for long-term, sustainable value creation.

### How important is it for boards to include directors with expertise in cybersecurity?

Given the increasing cyber threats and risks, boards should develop guiding principles that they can follow to ensure effective and systemic cyber risk governance and oversight. This includes upleveling the knowledge of the whole board on issues surrounding cyber risks and opportunities. Whether a company needs specific cyber expertise on the board will depend on the specific company's facts, circumstances, and cyber risk profiles and postures. There are several ways a company can address

cyber oversight — some may choose to add specific cyber expertise on the board, others may choose to have a cyber advisory board instead of a specific board member with cyber expertise, and still others may feel it is appropriate to engage outside cyber experts. However, even if a board has decided to add a specific cyber expertise, it is still important to ensure that the whole board is knowledgeable about cyber risks and that the new cyber director is someone who is not only an expert in cyber, but also a well-rounded business leader who understands strategy, financials, risks and long-term value creation.

### What are some practical steps directors can take to become more versed in the language of digital transformation?

First and foremost, given the accelerating pace of change and disruptions caused by technology, I believe directors should look at digital transformation as a way for the company to better navigate modern challenges and opportunities for long-term value creation. I say this because it's important for companies to integrate their digital transformation strategy into the company's overall business strategy, rather than treating it as the separate domain of the technology department or the IT department alone. In essence, digital transformation enables a company to do business in a new way — to improve operational efficiencies internally, to offer superior customer experience externally and, more importantly, to create new business models and revenue streams, which are usually higher-margin and higher-growth, that would not otherwise be possible. Directors can keep themselves informed on the various aspects of digital transformation in several ways, including continuing education with universities, centers for board matters at various firms and more. I also find it helpful for directors to engage with venture capital firms, disruptive entrepreneurs and other firms outside their industries that have been successful with digital transformations, as these interactions will open directors' minds to other paradigms that they may not have thought of before. Most disruptions aren't likely to come from your peer groups or competitors but rather from those in another industry. Thus, it's important to be aware of the technological and business model innovations and transformations outside your own industry that may have the potential to disrupt your company.

*To be considered for "My Board Journey," contact Bill Hayes at [bhayes@directorsandboards.com](mailto:bhayes@directorsandboards.com).*