

What the Full Board Owns

While committee responsibilities will vary by company, industry, and level of AI maturity, every board should be clear about four core areas:

1. Your organization's strategy for creating value with AI

The board should approve the company's AI strategy as part of the enterprise plan, understand management's choices and trade-offs, and test whether its ambition matches the pace of change.

2. Clear executive accountability for executing AI strategy

The board should be clear about executive ownership, including the role of the CEO. AI requires technical leadership, but it cannot remain only a CIO, data, or technology mandate when it is reshaping enterprise strategy and operating decisions.

3. Required leadership and governance capabilities to oversee AI effectively

The board should assess whether directors and senior leaders have the fluency, judgment, and governance discipline needed to challenge management, oversee responsible adoption, and connect AI decisions to strategy, risk, talent, and culture.

4. How AI is changing the basis of competition in your industry

The board should test where AI creates threats or opportunities and which proprietary assets, data, customer insights, brands, relationships, or specialist capabilities may become more valuable or less differentiated.

Questions for the full board

- Where can AI create material advantage, rather than only efficiency?
- What explicit bets and experiments are we making, and what are we learning from them?
- Where must accountability remain human, even when decisions are AI-enabled?

- Does our governance model clearly distinguish what remains with the full board from what is delegated to committees?
- Do we have the leadership and governance capabilities required to oversee the strategy effectively?

Where boards get stuck

- Treating AI as a standalone agenda item rather than integrating it into strategy, capital allocation, talent, and operating decisions.
- Delegating AI to a technology leader or committee without clear CEO and enterprise accountability.
- Focusing on downside risk while underestimating the strategic risk of moving too slowly.

How Egon Zehnder can help

We help boards assess whether they have the leadership, governance, and decision-making capabilities required to create value from AI.

Speak with our team:



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