

(Carl Richards - Narrator) Organizations are built upon various elements that work in tandem to achieve growth and success. Ensuring that these interconnected systems function seamlessly is often incumbent on an entity called the Board of Directors. The Board, as it is conventionally referred to, is a governing body that represents the interests of community stakeholders on non-profit boards and owner shareholders when referring to corporate boards. Their responsibility is to devise and implement governance policies, provide risk mitigation and prevention, and guide the longterm strategic trajectory of the organization. The composition of a board has a considerable impact on the effectiveness of an organization's corporate governance policies. Cultivating a skilled and balanced group of individuals to work on boards promotes respectful and productive discussions, and it is fundamental to achieving organizational success. In fact, one key measure of a board's effectiveness is its level of diversity. According to Krystal Abotossaway, the president of the Indigenous Professional Association of Canada, holding a board position has continuously proven to be an enriching experience. (Krystal Abotossaway) I think I joined my first board without knowing what it meant to be on a board. But I've loved, loved the experience. I spent most of my twenties on small Indigenous NGO boards and now find myself on bigger boards. Most recently I'm joined Michael Garron Hospital board. And I'm just so humbled at the experiences I've had being on the board to date. And I would recommend all of you that watch this video to join and participate in boards because it is such a rewarding experience. (Carl Richards - Narrator) Diverse representation on boards offers a myriad of benefits for any organization, including providing a wider range of personal experiences and being a better representation of stakeholders. Increased diversity in the boardroom has even shown to increase a company's long-term profitability and market share.

Unfortunately, minority populations are vastly under-represented in the boardroom, especially in the corporate world. A 2020 report on diversity disclosure practices in corporate Canada shed light on the significant lack of Indigenous representation on corporate boards. The report found that only 0.5% of board members in Canada, were of Indigenous descent, despite comprising 5% of the overall Canadian population. It seems that corporations have yet to realize what many non-profit community boards have known for years: that Indigenous board members contribute valuable insight and unique perspectives to their organizations, especially when it is important to engage with Indigenous communities in a respectful and meaningful manner. (Krystal Abotossaway) You use your skill set and your lived experiences to contribute to conversations and to help with the best practices or things that leadership or the organization of the highest level should care about. You get to give your perspective of strategies, you can think about things that they're not being cognizant of. Board members really appreciate and the organization would do better because you're bringing that perspective to the table. (Carl Richards -

Narrator) With the aid of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, both community and corporate boards can improve their engagement with Indigenous populations. In doing so, those organizations have the opportunity to demonstrate respect for the social, cultural, and environmental values of Indigenous populations. The inclusion of Indigenous professionals on governance boards has the additional benefit of potentially attracting and retaining more Indigenous talent. As the Indigenous workforce in Canada grows, assembling a Board of Directors that understands and appreciates their cultural values will project a positive image of the organization to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders alike.