



## Book Review

# The 2020 Board: The Future of Company Boards

■ By Michael D Thede



As the title suggests, *The 2020 Board: The Future of Company Boards* offers readers an introductory look into the present-day (and future) world of corporate governance amid an ever-changing landscape of technological innovation and globalisation and the increasing pace of modern business. The book was penned by CEIBS' Honorary President (European) Pedro Nuño and is one of a number of works he has published on a variety of business-related subjects – a list which also includes titles such as *The Light and the Shadow*, *Corporate Turnaround: A*

*Practical Guide to Business Survival*, and *Letters to a Young Entrepreneur*.

In addition to his work as a writer, Prof Nuño has served on the governing boards of numerous international companies and has acted as a consultant for organisations such as the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Ford, and Morgan Stanley. And from even just the first few pages of *The 2020 Board*, it is clear he has acquired a lifetime of professional and academic experience from which to draw upon in taking us on a tour of the boardroom.

Along the way, Prof Nuño

employs a mix of best practices, case studies, and personal observations in order to give us a sense of what boards are really like and how they operate. In the process, he dives into a wide range of topics, including board membership and structures, roles and functions, challenges and limitations, group dynamics, decision-making processes, and even remuneration, while at the same time exploring some of the key differences between large vs small, established vs start-up, and public vs private (including family-owned) enterprises.

Prof Nueno also takes further care to highlight the importance of areas such as ethics and diversity and to dispel a few common myths around issues like accountability and confidentiality (or, rather, the lack of it) as they typically apply to members of the board. More importantly, perhaps, he also offers some valuable suggestions for how boards can promote higher levels of professionalism and raise the standard for what constitutes good organisational leadership.

Additionally, Prof Nueno's casual style and sense of humour (interspersed with a selection of cartoon illustrations from the *New Yorker*) makes the book an enjoyable one to read and the relative simplicity with which the material is presented makes it an easy-to-grasp, practical guide to life on the board.

Ultimately, *The 2020 Board* is a thoughtful, fresh, and engaging work suited for both emerging business minds with future boardroom

aspirations as well as for those with only a passing interest in learning more about the world of corporate governance. And coming in at just over 130 pages cover-to-cover, *The 2020 Board* makes for a convenient reference, a handy travel companion, or even just an interesting weekend read.

