

Fund Boards Follow Strong Governance Practices to Best Serve Shareholders

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Study from IDC and ICI Examines Trends in Fund Governance Practices Since 1994

Washington, DC, October 19, 2011 - Fund governance practices continue to evolve to the benefit of funds and their shareholders, and fund boards' independence and operational practices often go beyond explicit regulatory requirements, the Independent Directors Council (IDC) and Investment Company Institute (ICI) report in an update to their biennial paper providing an overview of common fund governance practices.

In [Fund Governance Practices, 1994–2010](#), key findings for the complexes surveyed include:

- As of year-end 2010, independent directors made up three-quarters of boards in more than 90 percent of fund complexes. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of complexes where independent directors hold 75 percent or more of board seats rose from 52 percent to 91 percent. Current SEC rules require only that funds relying on common exemptive rules have boards with a majority of independent directors.
- Nearly two-thirds of fund complexes report having an independent board chair. Sixty-three percent of complexes reported having boards with independent chairs at year-end 2010. When complexes that have boards with independent lead directors are also considered, 88 percent of participating complexes reported having an independent director in board leadership at year-end 2010.
- More than nine in 10 fund complexes report that separate legal counsel serve their independent directors. The total percentage of complexes reporting that independent directors are represented either by dedicated counsel or counsel separate from the adviser's has increased steadily, from 68 percent in 2000 to 91 percent at year-end 2010. More than half of complexes say their independent directors retain their own counsel—separate from both fund counsel and the adviser's counsel.
- A vast majority of fund complexes have an audit committee financial expert. While current rules require only that funds disclose whether the audit committee includes a financial expert, 97 percent of participating complexes report having a financial expert on the audit committee.

"These broad survey data show clearly that most funds are going beyond legal requirements in implementing strong governance practices, to the benefit of fund shareholders," said Amy Lancellotta, Managing Director of IDC.

The Investment Company Act of 1940 imposes significant responsibilities on fund boards and dictates elements of board structures and practices. In 1995, ICI began to document fund governance practices by collecting data from fund complexes biennially. IDC was formed in 2004, and the studies have since been conducted jointly by IDC and ICI.
