

Request for Board of Directors to Adopt Policy for an Independent Chair

RESOLVED:

Shareholders request the Board of Directors adopt as policy, and amend the governing documents as necessary, to require hereafter that that two separate people hold the office of the Chairman and the office of the CEO as follows:

Selection of the Board Chair: The Board requires the separation of the offices of the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer.

Whenever possible, the Board Chair shall be an Independent Director.

The Board may select a Temporary Chair who is not an Independent Director to serve while the Board seeks an Independent Board Chair.

The Chair should not be a former CEO of the company.

Selection of the Board Chair shall be consistent with applicable law and existing contracts.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

The Chief Executive Officer of Salesforce, Inc. is also Board Chairman. These roles – each with separate, different responsibilities that are critical to the health of a successful corporation – are greatly diminished when held by a singular company official, weakening its governance structure.

Expert perspectives substantiate our position:

- According to the CFA Institute Research and Policy Center, “Combining [Chair and CEO] positions may give undue influence to executive board members and impair the ability and willingness of board members to exercise their independent judgment ... Many jurisdictions consider the separation of the chair and CEO positions a best practice because it ensures that the board agenda is set by an independent voice uninfluenced by the CEO.”¹
- A pair of business law professors wrote for *Harvard Business Review* that “letting the CEO chair the board can compromise board discussion quality, weakening the corporation’s risk management ability... Splitting the CEO and board chair jobs between two people can help strengthen the quality of questions the corporation asks itself. When those questions remain weak, the organization is less likely to develop strategies that mitigate risk.”²

¹ <https://rpc.cfainstitute.org/-/media/documents/article/position-paper/corporate-governance-of-listed-companies-3rd-edition.pdf>

² <https://hbr.org/2020/03/why-the-ceo-shouldnt-also-be-the-board-chair>

- Proxy adviser Glass Lewis wrote in 2021, “the presence of an independent chair fosters the creation of a thoughtful and dynamic board not dominated by the views of senior management ... the separation of these two key roles eliminates the conflict of interest that inevitably occurs when a CEO is responsible for self-oversight.”³
- Of former CEOs serving as Chairs, CFA Institute says, “this arrangement could impair the board’s ability to act independently of undue management influence ... Such a situation also increases the risk that the chair may hamper efforts to undo the mistakes made as chief executive.”

According to the 2022 Spencer Stuart Board Index survey, 51 percent of S&P 500 companies had separate CEOs and Board Chairs in 2017 versus 57 percent in 2022.⁴ The growing trend signifies the changing sentiment towards Chair independence.

³ <https://www.glasslewis.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/In-Depth-Independent-Chair.pdf>

⁴ https://www.spencerstuart.com/-/media/2022/october/ssbi2022/2022_us_spencerstuart_board_index_final.pdf