



Navigating uncertainty: The board's agenda for 2025



As consumer preferences evolve and economic uncertainty persists, boards face heightened complexity in guiding companies through 2025 and beyond.

In our recent webcast, [Consumer & Retail Executive Insights: On the Board Agenda](#), industry leaders shared insights on key topics that many board members are focused on for 2025. Areas such as strategic planning, technology and AI, managing workforce, board structure and composition, and cybersecurity as well as monitoring consumer sentiment are crucial for navigating the dynamic consumer goods and retail landscape.



Strategic planning

- Economic, geopolitical, and regulatory uncertainty are requiring a cautious yet adaptive approach.
- Change is expected to be constant with inflation and trade policy shifts being significant concerns.
- Boards play a crucial role in guiding companies through uncertain times.
- Scenario planning is essential for navigating potential risks.



Leveraging technology and AI for competitive advantage

- Companies that use technology, including AI, to enable critical strategic priorities will out-compete those that have a less integrated approach.
- AI is having a significant impact on marketing through outcomes-based media allocation, and large-scale personalization is becoming more prevalent.
- Customer service is being transformed to optimize call center operations and reduce product trouble shooting times.
- Cybersecurity remains a top concern for boards and AI is crucial for advancing security protocols while also enabling new cybersecurity risks.
- Responsible AI is a critical topic, focusing on transparency, fairness, and ethics.



The integration of AI and other technological advancements is a pivotal action for consumer goods and retail corporations. Focusing on critical strategic priorities is essential to leverage technology effectively.



Duleep Rodrigo, U.S. Sector Leader,
Consumer & Retail – KPMG LLP



Building future leaders and managing the workforce

- Attracting, retaining, and developing a skilled labor pool is essential and companies must balance pace, pay, and purpose.
- The CEO's role has become more challenging due to uncertainty and competition.
- Next-generation retail leaders are digital natives, requiring a work environment aligned with their expectations.
- The importance of diverse teams has been elevated, driving better and more creative decision-making.



Attracting, retaining, and developing skilled labor is essential. The next generation of leaders in retail are digital natives, and harmonizing the work environment with their expectations is crucial.



Elizabeth Miller, U.S. Audit Sector Leader,
Consumer & Retail – KPMG LLP



Board structure and composition for effectiveness

- The Board's structure and composition are being directly linked to the company's current and future strategic needs.
- Boards are having conversations about whether the current board composition is the right fit and are not waiting until a natural retirement to make necessary changes.
- New committees are evaluated for their potential value before being established.
- There is a stronger emphasis on board education, including investment in certifications and critical topics such as AI.
- The compensation committee now addresses a broader range of issues, including labor, workforce, and culture matters.



Conclusion: navigating the future with purpose and agility

In an environment characterized by extraordinary flux, the responsibilities of the consumer goods and retail company's board are more pivotal than ever. Strategic planning, technology assimilation, workforce curation, and governance demand the board's unwavering attention. By concentrating on scenario planning, capitalizing on AI and data resources, and maintaining an effective board, companies can confront the obstacles on the horizon.

The need for a balanced approach that combines strategic foresight with strong oversight is clear. For further insights on these and other topics, please listen to the replay from our KPMG Consumer and Retail Executive Insights Webcast.



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