HOW ORGANISATIONS ENGAGE ADVISORS AND WHAT THEY ARE PAID

RATES & ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2026-2028



ADVISORY BOARD CENTRE

How to use this report

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is designed for:

- Practitioners with guidelines to manage expectations
- Practitioners to navigate personal rates and engagement parameters
- Secretariats and Sponsors within organisations to manage the engagement parameters with external advisory board members
- Business Owners to manage budgets and expectations
- Universities and Academic Institutions as a reference for market currency
- Government and policy makers to inform future regulatory considerations
- Governance Board Directors to inform future governance system design
- Insurance agencies to inform professional indemnity policies
- The Global Research Council with interactive content so readers can contribute to the living research and inform future editions of the report

REPORT DESIGN

The report is designed to be a quick reference point for professionals and organisations adopting best practice. It also separates data and commentary via the 'Advisory Board Centre's Insights' sections. As all situations are different, practitioners require a discerning mind to ensure the engagement parameters are fit for purpose. Part of a longstanding discussion on ethics, the purpose is to offer many different points of view on the critical topic.

Each topic is a summary with two clear sections:

1. What the data is telling us
2. Guided thought leadership

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YOU'VE UNLOCKED THE FULL REPORT!

Our periodical *Rates & Engagement Report 2026-2028* is a cornerstone reference document serving the sector.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A New Future *is* Taking Shape.

LISTEN TO THIS SUMMARY
3:43

There are strong signals that the future development of this sector will be very different to its past.

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As the leading professional body for the advisory sector, the Advisory Board Centre is dedicated to supporting and enhancing practical engagement in the field.

The Global Research Council – the Centre's research and development division – is proud to publish the Rates and Engagement Report 2026-2028, which is the culmination of the largest global study of the topic to date. Our firsthand experience working with advisory structures around the globe allows us to move beyond the data, providing expert commentary and contextual insights that deepen understanding of the findings.

Integrated governance systems mean engagements are becoming longer and deeper. The market is following suit: changes include an increased application of retainers, extending to all organisational sizes and stages.

Beyond remuneration structures, there is also variability in methods of engagement, which raises a range of considerations. Both organisations and professionals should carefully consider the management and consequences of various models of engagement, and we have sought to represent differing perspectives in the report to inspire reflection. As part of our 'living research' mandate, you, the reader of this report, can engage with the content and include your own experience and perspectives.

Our sector advances through robust discussion and exchange – I welcome your contribution.

Two factors stand out to me:

1

The changing role of the Chair as the trusted Strategic Advisor

A "lean" approach to advisory board development provides speed and adaptability in a rapidly changing environment. Advisory Board Professionals are working with fewer organisations, but their involvement is deeper and more sustained. It's a clear indication that trust and relationships matter. This is "normalising" advisory boards and is a strong maturity indicator. However, the trend creates different ethical challenges for organisations and Advisory Board Professionals alike.

2

The alignment of remuneration methods globally

This is the first time we are able to dive deep into regional rates, in particular half-day rates and retainers. Globally, they are closer to each other than anticipated.

The *Rates and Engagement Report 2026-2028* includes remuneration models and additional sections to consider the complex relationships and individual engagement parameters. Designed to be practical, we aim to support the sector navigate the ethical and equitable exchanges of value.

> "Keeping up to date with benchmarks and market trends is vital for both Advisory Board Professionals and the market,"

Keeping up to date with benchmarks and market trends is vital for both Advisory Board Professionals and the market and the periodical Rates & Engagement Report is a cornerstone reference document serving the sector.

Thank you to everyone, including individuals, organisations and firms, for contributing to this global data set.

Kind regards,





Louise Broekman
Chair, Global Research Council

To learn more, visit advisoryboardcentre.com/our-research/rates-engagement-report/

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SECTION 01

Advisory Board Rates & Engagement Summary

01 SECTOR SUMMARY

A stand-alone document for market education as an open-source resource.

02 REMUNERATION

03 ENGAGEMENT

04 EVALUATION

MARKET SNAPSHOT

FOR ADVISORS

Most Common Half-day Rate

$1,000 – $2,500
USD

Rates indicted relate to the business sector. Corporate rates are as much as double.

Top 5 Remuneration Types

1. Monthly / Annual Retainer
2. Pro-Bono
3. Half-Day Rate
4. Hourly Rate / Meeting Attendance Rate
5. Equity

Average No. of Engagements in a Portfolio

4.5
AVERAGE

Advisory Boards Utilisation

Corporate	46%
Business Sector	40%
Startup/Scaleups	14%

FOR ORGANISATIONS

Top 5 Sectors

1. Education
2. Technology
3. Manufacturing
4. Financial Services
5. Not-for-Profit

Top 5 Organisational Motivations

1. Growth
2. Managing Uncertainty & Complexity
3. Achieving Scale
4. Commercialisation
5. Seeking Independent Input

Top 5 Impacts

1. Decision Making Confidence
2. Increased Revenue
3. Internal Capability Development
4. Access to Specialist Knowledge
5. Harnessing Thought Leadership to Inform Strategy

OUR INSIGHT

Key Ethics Challenge for the Sector

Advisory Board Chair roles are becoming extended in longer engagements. Chairs must consider their long-term independence and how to manage conflicts of interest, while organisations require more sophisticated engagement parameters and internal commitment in utilising advice effectively.

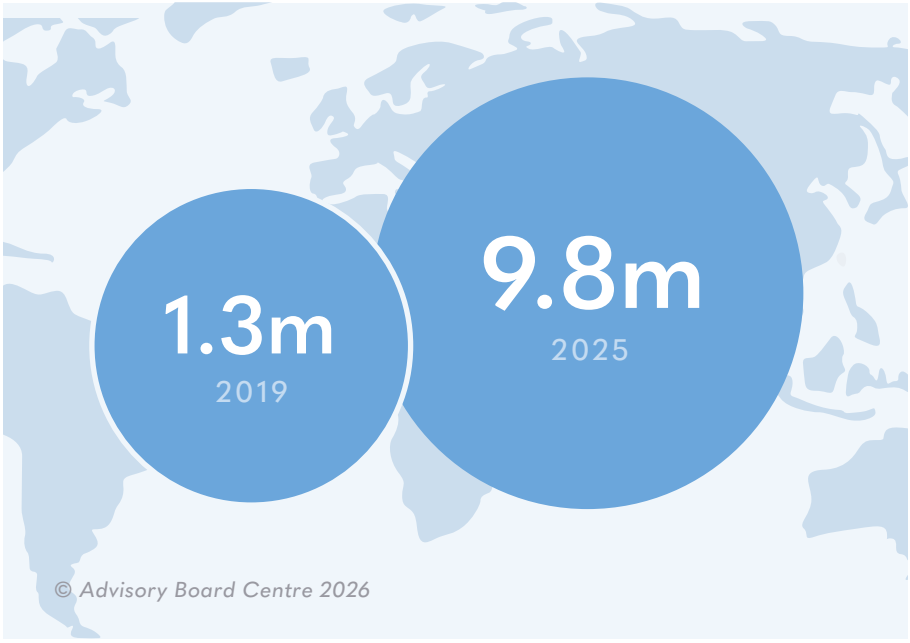
Sector Growth

The State of the Market Report 2025-2027 outlines the growth of the advisory board sector globally. From 1.3 million practitioners in 2019, to over 9.8 million in 2025, the utilisation of advisory boards is growing in all markets and all regions.

Resources

State of the Market Report 2025 – 2027
ABF101: Advisory Board Best Practice Framework
Advisory Board Professional Code of Ethics

Indication of Professional Sector Maturity



OUR INSIGHT

Maintaining Growth and Effectiveness

With many new entrants into the advisory board sector, professional engagement, implementation, and tangible impact is crucial. Maintaining quality and ethical appointments for both the individual professional and the organisation will ensure the sector continues to thrive.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

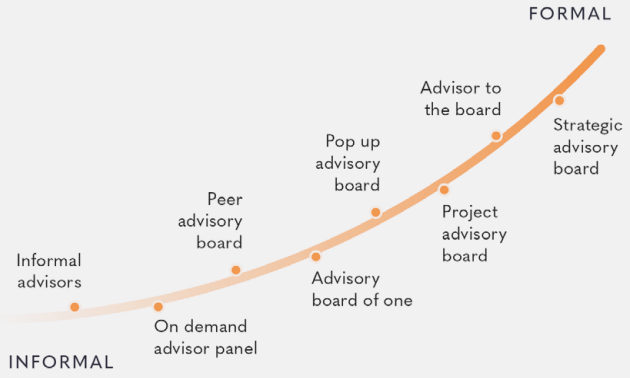
Q. *How do you see the topic and how do you approach quality and ethical appointments in the field?*

Have your say →

Common Advisory Board Engagement Models

Models and terminologies are evolving. To set the scene on today's advisory terms, we reference extracts from the State of the Market Report 2025 and the Certified Chair™ Executive Program Guide 2026 (9th Edition).

Fit for Purpose Advisory Boards



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Most Common Structure



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Informal Advisors	Used ad hoc or on demand advice from individual advisors.
On demand advisor panel	Most used with a panel of advisors that can be accessed by the organisation at any time.
Peer	A collaborative of leaders in a structured meeting format. Chaired by an expert facilitator, information and experiences are shared within the group.
Advisory board of one	Engaging a Chair on a scheduled basis proving a disciplined approach to creating an advisory board strategy over time.
Pop up	A flexible extension to an advisory board of one, inviting advisors to participate on a needs-basis.
Project	Formed for a specific purpose for a period.
Advisor to the board	Independent strategic advisor providing advice directly to the governance board.
Strategic	Strategic advisory boards typically feature a combination of a chair, internal representatives, independent members, a charter, meeting notes and periodical impact measurement.

SECTION 02

Advisor Rates & Remuneration

01 SECTOR SUMMARY

02 REMUNERATION

A summary of global market rates and engagement perimeters.

03 ENGAGEMENT

04 EVALUATION

Global Participation & Market Maturity

The advisory board landscape demonstrates wide geographical dispersion, with most active markets being United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

The United States and Canada remain the region with the largest adoption of advisory boards, accounting for over 50% of global advisory board activity. The adoption is wide ranging across government, family and privately held businesses, startup and scale up organisations, as well as scientific and medical advisory boards and committees.

Greater China and India, the world's two most populated countries, remain surprisingly modestly represented. Still, research shows that engagement and adoption rates with advisory boards are increasing in both markets. While it's from a low base, the growth rates are some of the fastest in the world.

Australia and New Zealand shows the highest participation, spanning active professionals, portfolio practitioners and organisational representatives across formal, informal and project advisory structures. However, this trend reflects more than opportunity alone. Increasingly, board professionals attribute the higher adoption of advisory boards to increasing governance burdens for directors and organisations.

While Continental Europe lags in parts, France, Switzerland and Scandinavia are exceptions, recording noticeably higher adoption and participation of advisory boards. Central and South America, Southeast Asia and Africa exhibit lower participation and earlier-stage adoption of advisory boards. Commentary and engagement with advisory boards is increasing as awareness, practice maturity and local recognition of best practice is growing.

Overall, remuneration structures vary significantly across regions, shaped by market maturity, organisational size and sector. Monthly retainers and half-day rates are the dominant global model, supported by hourly fees, meeting attendance rates, pro bono contributions and equity-based arrangements.

Equity is common in startup and early-stage contexts, while large corporates and government entities favour structured retainers. Emerging regions such as Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Portugal show wide variance, reflecting both economic diversity and various stages of market development.

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Market Rate Indicators

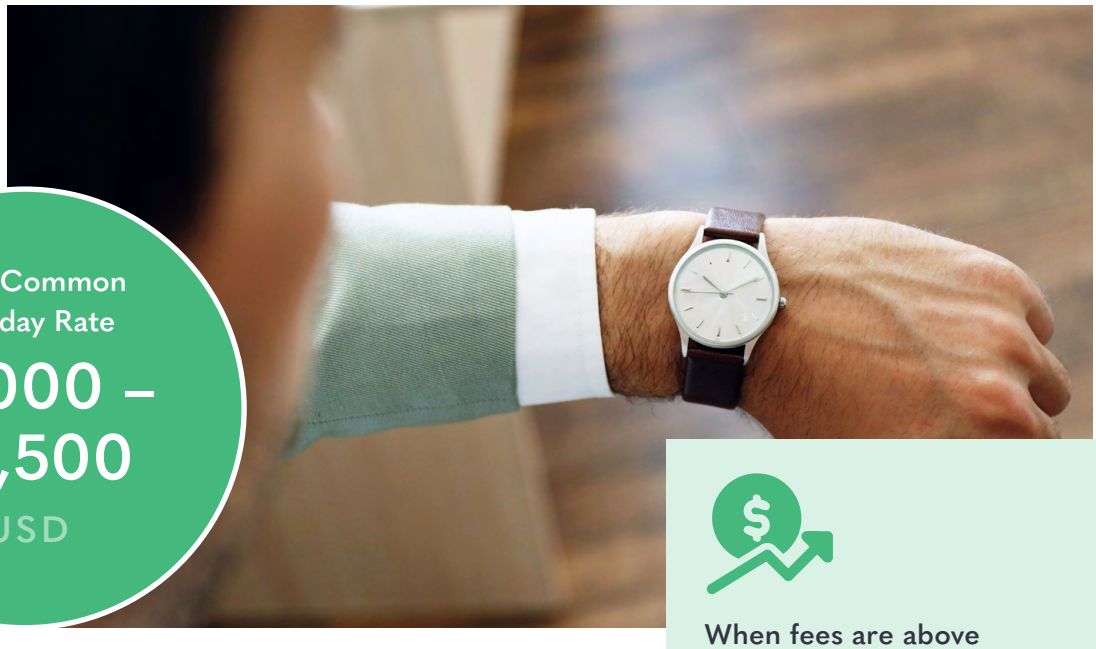
For portfolio professionals, retainers are on the rise in all market segments, demonstrating a longer-term commitment to a relationship.

This is particularly the case in smaller organisations. Overall, retainers and half-day rates dominate the engagement methods. While pro bono is widely used in the Not-For-Profit sector, equity is the primary remuneration for startups.

Engagement Type	
Pro bono	20%
Equity	8%
Hourly Rate	14%
Half-day Rate	16%
Monthly Retainer	27%
Meeting Attendance	15%

Retainer (Global Monthly) USD	
Up to 1,000	18%
1,200 – 1,500	31%
1,800 – 2,500	20%
3,000 – 5,500	27%
5,500 – 8000+	4%

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Most Common Half-day Rate

$1,000 – $2,500

USD

Rates indicted relate to the business sector. Corporate rates are as much as double.

Global ½ Day Rates USD	
$1,000 – $1,499	29%
$1,500 – $1,999	19%
$2,000 – $2,999	24%
$3,000 – $5,000	22%
$5,000+	6%
Average	$2,500

When fees are above $5,000 per month

Where monthly rates are higher than $5,000 per month, advisors are more likely to be working with families in business, corporate and government.

Advisors are also less likely to be working with small and medium businesses and have no involvement with startups.

OUR INSIGHT

Rates Consistency Considerations

With the rise in retainers, consistency in rates requires a disciplined approach in the method of engagement. Considerations include the shaping of the proposed approach, methods to demonstrate and report on value throughout the term of the agreement.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. How do you see the topic, and do you see rates consistency in your advisory work?

Have your say →

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Rates: A Global Perspective

Localised Rates

Half-day rates are the most common remuneration method reported in the advisory board sector. Below is a summary of typical ranges, quoted in the local currency.

Region		Currencies	½ Day Rate Ranges
Asia	Singapore	SGD	1,000 – 5,000
	Greater China	RMB	4,500 – 13,000
	Hong Kong	HKD	5,000 – 15,000
	India	INR	50,000 – 100,000
Australia/New Zealand	Australia	AUD	1,500 – 3,500
	New Zealand	NZD	800 – 1,500
Europe	Europe	EUR	570 – 2,800
	United Kingdom	GBP	500 – 2,500
North America	Canada	CAD	1,400 – 3,300
	United States of America	USD	1,200 – 10,000
Middle East & North Africa	Saudi Arabia	SAR	2,000 – 7,000
	United Arab Emirates **USD quoted frequently in this region*	AED	2,000 – 7,000
		USD	1,000 – 5,000



OUR INSIGHT

Rate Parity Individualised Market Assessments

Advisory board engagement models vary widely depending on organisation type, market and specialisation required. The market rates in this study is a representative sample of market activity. Where time-based rates are important, professionals need to consider the value proposition and rate parity. In section 4 of this report, there are activities for individual professionals to assess their market relevance and other considerations when calculating remuneration structures.

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Retainers: A Global Perspective

Localised Rates

Retainers are on the rise in the advisory sector. Most commonly ranging between 1.5 and 2 days per month, the below summary is based on a 2-day retainer, quoted in the local currency.

Region		Currencies	*2 day Month Retainer Range
Asia	Singapore	SGD	4,000 – 20,000
	Greater China	RMB	18,000 – 52,000
	Hong Kong	HKD	20,000 – 60,000
	India	INR	200,000 – 400,000
Australia/New Zealand	Australia	AUD	6,000 – 14,000
	New Zealand	NZD	3,200 – 6,000
Europe	Europe	EUR	2,280 – 11,200
	United Kingdom	GBP	2,000 – 10,000
North America	Canada	CAD	5,600 – 13,200
	United States of America	USD	4,800 – 40,000
Middle East & North Africa	Saudi Arabia	SAR	8,000 – 28,000
	United Arab Emirates *USD quoted frequently in this region*	AED	8,000 – 28,000
		USD	4,000 – 20,000

*Note: *Retainer rates may be negotiated at a lower half day rate pending on the length of engagement. The retainer and rates need to be determined on each engagement.*

OUR INSIGHT

Retainer Calculation Considerations

Retainer calculation requires an upfront assessment of the scope of work, frequency of engagement, time allocation to create a business case for both the professional and the organisation. See Section 4 for the considerations to set fair, transparent and market aligned engagement parameters.

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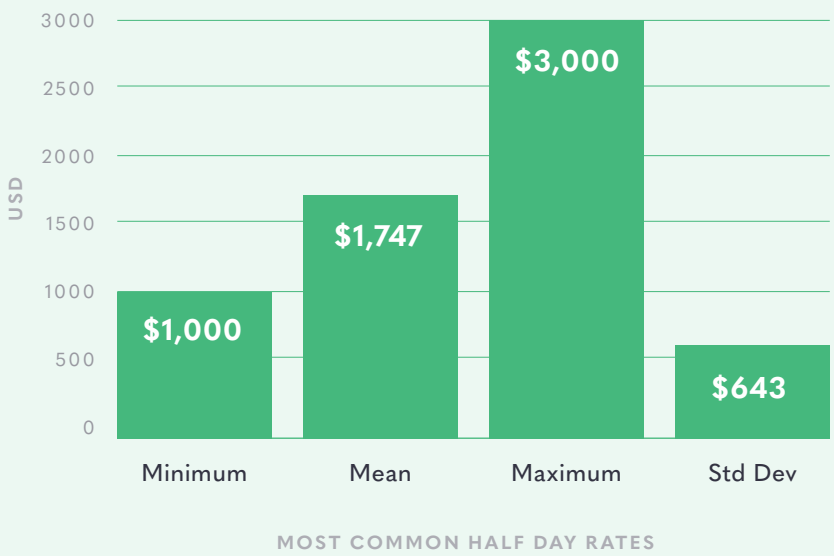
Global Range of Rates

Global Consolidated Rates to USD – Standard Deviation

The following is an overall summary of all quoted half-day rates converted into US Dollars (USD). Where local rates may not be reflective of an "exchange rate" value, it provides a consolidated perspective of industry norms as the sector matures globally.

Although the full range runs from **$1,000** to **$3,000**, the majority of rates cluster in the narrower band of **~$1,100 to $2,400 (USD)**. While outliers exist (especially at the high end), most regional rates stay reasonably close to the global average.

Half-Day Advisory Rates



MOST COMMON HALF DAY RATES

OUR INSIGHT

Beyond Time Considerations

The work of advice is wide and one definitive rate structure does not apply. As a guide, the standard deviation does indicate maturity in the understanding of value, based on time. Many debate that time is one measure of value, and a broader perception of value should be considered. Examples include, but are not limited to, experience and the value of connections.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *How do you see the topic, and what factors do you believe affect the range of rates?*

Have your say →

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Pro Bono Engagements

Many Advisory Board Professionals seek pro bono appointments as a means of sharing their expertise and gaining real-world advisory experience.

On average, 20% of portfolios are pro bono. In a portfolio with pro bono activity:



Mentoring is **12% higher** than average

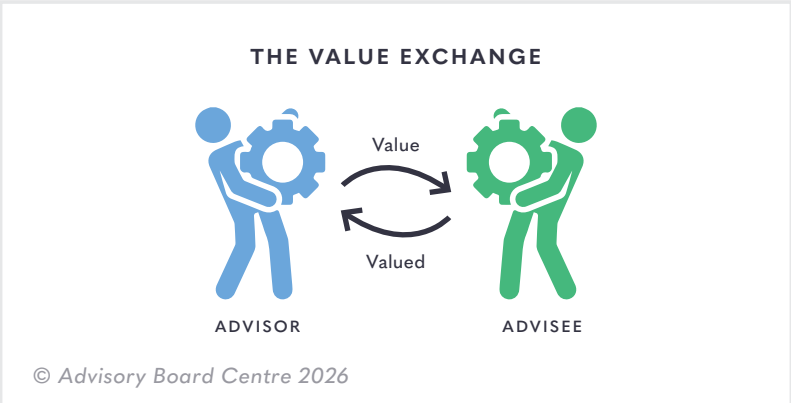


Working with startups is **20% higher** than average

OUR INSIGHT

The Fairness Test

The motivation to "give back" or "pay it forward" is often important for the portfolio based Advisory Board Professional. Individuals who want to contribute in a voluntary capacity on advisory boards (including committees) commonly face the dilemma of the arrangement being "fair". Individuals often use pro bono engagements as a professional pathway to boards as a mechanism to gain experience, build networks, contribute to a cause, and demonstrate skills to others. Being clear about the pro bono "Value Exchange" helps all parties to understand and respect the parameters of the engagement.



Unintended consequences from not managing pro bono engagements carefully can be difficult to navigate. The following Fairness Test is a useful approach to use when a pro-bono arrangement is created.

Map Guidelines for the Pro Bono Value Exchange

	Recipient	Advisor
What are the expectations?		
What is given?		
What is received?		

The Fairness Test

What are the options?

What is the value exchange?

Is the option fair for all parties?

What are the intended and unintended consequences?

What would be a milestone that would trigger a review?



CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *Have you contributed your expertise in a pro bono capacity, and what was your experience in terms of the value exchange?*

Have your say →

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Equity Engagements

Some advisors are remunerated in equity in exchange for their contribution and expertise. For engaged Advisory Board Professionals, on average:

8% of engagements are equity-based

Equity ranges from **1% – 25%**

Most common equity is between **2% – 5%**

Most common scenario: Startups

Equity offered by startups is commonly motivated by aligning advisor interests with long-term organisational success. This arrangement raises ethical challenges, including potential conflicts of interest (CoIs).

Below are common considerations:

- Equity (for example restricted stock awards, stock options) is often used by startups to compensate advisors.
- Vesting schedules (time-based, milestone-based, or hybrid) are tailored to the advisory role and organisational stage.
- Equity percentages typically range from 0.25% to 5%, with dilution over time as the company grows.
- Share management guidelines are available on various platforms and are useful reference points in managing arrangements and regulatory requirements.

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OUR INSIGHT

The Equity Debate

There are many views on this topic, and it is not conclusive. Professionals are guided by the situation, ethical considerations, regulations as well as their own personal boundaries.

Debated Views:

No equity: A view held by those that consider any equity will create a conflict of interest due to lack of independence.

Equity with no material interest: A view held by those with an equity interest in a company that corresponds, directly or indirectly, to 5% or more of available shares is considered a conflict of interest. Equity below 5% is therefore not viewed as a material interest or a conflict of interest.

Equity for startups: A view held by those to support startups and founders who can access advice, contacts and scale faster. Otherwise, they would not be able to afford expert advisors.

Equity and return: A view held by those that see alignment of interests and a level of return from leveraging skills, experiences, effort and contacts.

No equity & deferred payment: A view held by those seeking longer-term reward based on outcomes, and reducing short-term bias. These include success fees based on specific outputs arising from advice or input provided.

See 'Alternatives to Advisory Boards' in Section 4.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *How do you see the equity debate, and what has worked (or not worked) for you in the past?*

Have your say →

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Advisory Board Sector Engagement by Region

Advisory board engagement varies significantly across regions and sectors, demonstrating the adaptability of advisory boards to diverse environments. Which sectors are driving advisory boards globally? See the top sectors, below.

COUNTRY	TOP SECTORS (FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST)
Global (across 12 regions)	Education, Technology, Manufacturing, Financial Services, Not-for-Profit, Construction, Healthcare, Professional Services, Resources, Real Estate, Tourism, Transport, Retail, Government, Utilities



OUR INSIGHT

Targeting Industry Sectors Challenge

The regional snapshot provides interesting perspectives on industry sector activity. The ethics challenge for professionals requires careful deliberation of their value based on skills, knowledge, experience and perspectives. Targeting sectors where market activity exists without context challenges the best practice principles of being "fit for purpose".

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COUNTRY	TOP SECTORS (FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST)
Asia	
Singapore	Financial Services; Technology; Not-for-Profit; Manufacturing; Education
Greater China	Technology, Professional Scientific Technical Services, Manufacturing, Cross Regional Businesses
Hong Kong	Financial Services; Utilities; Healthcare; Not-for-Profit; Family Office
India	Financial Services; Professional Services
Australia / New Zealand	
Australia	Healthcare; Education; Construction; Technology; Manufacturing
New Zealand	Education; Manufacturing; Professional services
Europe	
Europe	Technology, Manufacturing, Financial Services, Professional Services, Not-for-Profit
United Kingdom	Financial Services; Technology; Healthcare; Education; Construction
North America	
Canada	Financial Services; Technology; Manufacturing; Education; VC/fundraising
United States	Technology; Education; Retail; Professional Services; Not-for-Profit
Middle East & North Africa	
Saudi Arabia	Government; Engineering/Construction; Technology; Professional Services
United Arab Emirates	Manufacturing; Financial Services; Tourism; Real Estate; Transport

Note: *Sector references are inconsistent due to terminology used by research participants.*



CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *Do you see the risks of advisors contributing to 'new' sectors without having contextual knowledge?*

Have your say →

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SECTION 03

Professional Engagement Considerations

01 SECTOR SUMMARY

02 REMUNERATION

03 ENGAGEMENT

A summary of engagement models and considerations for professionals.

04 EVALUATION

Managing a Portfolio Mix

Advisory board professionals manage generally 2 – 5 different engagements at any given time.

A portfolio is generally a blend of advisory boards, governance boards, interim executive, consulting, coaching, mentoring and investment. When managing a full-time mixed portfolio, 30 – 50% of the overall portfolio are advisory boards.

Number of Engagements in a Professional's Portfolio at Any Given Time	
1	6%
From 2-4	58%
From 5-6	22%
From 7-10	11%
From 11-20	3%
Average	4.5

Number of Advisory Board Engagements that Professionals Have at Any Given Time	
1	13%
From 2-4	76%
From 5-6	8%
From 7-10	3%
From 11-20	<1%
Average	3

Role Types in a Portfolio by Frequency	
Mentoring	75%
Director	55%
Consultant	59%
Advisor	72%
Own Business	31%
Investor	22%
Interim / Fractional Executive	16%
Full Time Position	13%

Average No. of Engagements in a Portfolio

4.5

AVERAGE

Percentage of Portfolio is Advisory Boards

10%	46%	24%	20%
<30%	30-50%	>50%	100%

OUR INSIGHT

Blended Role Ethics Debate

The mix of portfolio from 5 – 6 roles in 2023 decreasing to 2-5 in 2026 is one of the largest shifts in information in this report. It could indicate different scenarios. A key scenario identified is the increase in the application of the role of the Chair as the Strategic Advisor where the relationship with the organisation is deeper and wider. This indicates a rise in "blended roles", which pose considerable ethical considerations including:

- The management of independence and conflicts of interest
- Alternative engagement methods to an advisory board

Learn more: In Section 4 of this report, examples for alternatives to advisory boards is explored.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *Do you see an increased application of the role of the Chair as a longstanding 'Strategic Advisor'? What ethical challenges do you see in your field of work?*

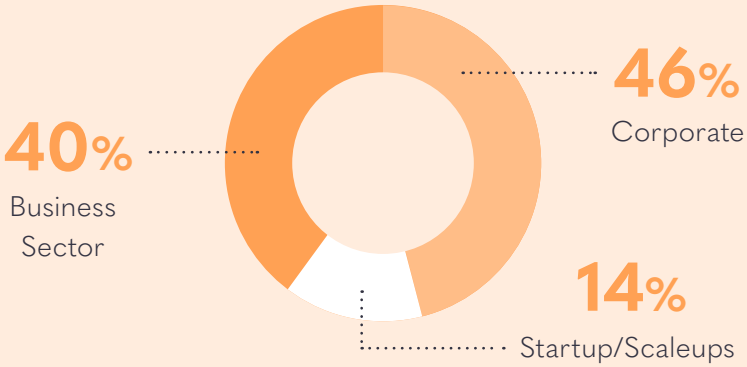
Have your say →

Managing Organisational Expectations

Internal advisory boards sponsors often take a leap of faith when engaging advisory boards, especially when implementing them for the first time.

Predominately motivated by strong growth ambitions and the need to manage change differently, sponsors are seeking expert guidance to establish an advisory board that supports their strategic direction.

Organisational profiles



Time expectations to start an Advisory Board



Top 10 Organisational Motivations

- #1 Growth
- #2 Change
- #3 Managing Uncertainty & Complexity
- #4 Achieving Scale
- #5 Commercialisation
- #6 Independent Input
- #7 Applying Specialist Knowledge
- #8 Navigating Emerging Technologies
- #9 Managing Risk
- #10 Succession

What Organisations Have in Place When Engaging an Advisory Board Chair



4 Big Shifts in Future Advice

	Now	Future	% Shift
Marketing	24%	41%	17%
Tech / Digital	27%	39%	12%
Sales	11%	36%	15%
International Markets	5%	19%	14%

Top 5 Impacts

#1 Decision Making Confidence

#2 Increased Revenue

#3 Capability Development

#4 Access to Specialist Knowledge

#5 Harnessing thought leadership to inform strategy

OUR INSIGHT

Managing Expectations Considerations

When initially engaging an advisory board, 91% of organisations have no formal structures in place. This is an important finding in this report. With limited knowledge or exposure of how they work, this places significant responsibility on the structural management of the Chair, Sponsor and Secretariat function to:

- Educate on best practice frameworks
- Establish protocols and manage expectations over time
- Implement and coordinate carefully as a change management process
- Measure impact and evaluate effectiveness

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. Which role have you taken on and how have you approached managing expectations?

Have your say →

Engagement Ethics for Professionals

Advisory boards consist of a chessboard of talent, bringing together representatives from diverse backgrounds, contributing in distinct ways with different motivations.

Regardless of why Advisory Board Professionals engage in the field, it's critical to maintain a strong sense of ethical responsibility. Below are some key considerations for professionals to reflect on their own roles.

Category	Ethics Considerations
Portfolio Professionals	***1. Fairness of the Arrangement:*** Ensure engagement terms are clear, fair, and balanced for all parties. ***2. Value Exchange:*** Confirm transparent, mutually beneficial value — whether monetary or pro bono. ***3. Conflict of Interest***: Identify and manage financial or role-based conflicts to maintain independence. ***4. Boundaries and Role Clarity***: Define scope clearly to prevent scope creep or operational involvement. ***5. Compliance with Governance and Indemnity Requirements***: Meet legal requirements whilst managing personal risk through insurance or indemnity.
Advisory Firms & Partners	***1. Independence and Objectivity:*** Avoid undue influence; maintain impartiality despite multiple service offerings. ***2. Conflict of Interest Management***: Disclose overlapping roles; implement safeguards to prevent biased decisions. ***3. Transparency in Value Exchange***: Clearly define advisory scope versus other paid services upfront. ***4. Boundaries and Role Clarity:*** Separate advisory responsibilities from consulting or operational involvement. ***5. Compliance and Risk Management:*** Ensure governance, confidentiality, and indemnity obligations are fully met.

Category	Ethics Considerations
Full-time Employees	***1. Maintain Objectivity:*** Manage bias; represent organisational interests without personal agenda. ***2. Role Clarity:*** Define advisory role clearly; prevent operational or decision-making overlap. ***3. Conflict of Interest:*** Disclose internal loyalties; manage competing priorities transparently. ***4. Confidentiality Compliance:*** Protect sensitive organisational information from being shared during advisory discussions. ***5. Fairness and Independence:*** Ensure engagement terms are fair; avoid undue influence or defensiveness.
Pro Bono Committee & Advisory Board Members	***1. Fairness of the Arrangement:*** Ensure expectations and responsibilities are clear for all parties involved. ***2. Value Exchange Transparency:*** Clarify what is given and received to avoid misunderstandings. ***3. Commitment to Contribution:*** Provide meaningful input; avoid token participation or minimal effort. ***4. Conflict of Interest Awareness:*** Disclose motivations like gaining experience; manage potential bias carefully. ***5. Ethical Motivation:*** Balance "giving back" with professionalism; avoid exploiting Not-for-Profit opportunities.

Engagement Ethics for Organisations

As the advisory board sector matures, it's placing higher expectations on formal engagement approaches and stronger internal commitment. Below are some ethical considerations for Sponsors and Secretariats.

Category	Ethics Considerations
Roles & Responsibilities	***1. Role Clarity:*** Define scope clearly to prevent scope creep or operational involvement. ***2. Authorisation:*** Clarity in the process where the Sponsor provides internal authorisation. ***3. Sponsor Commitment:*** Internal discipline in the agreed advisory board approach and schedule with the Chair. ***4. Secretariat Disciplines:*** Allocation of time, methodologies and resources for the secretariat function whilst ensuring the secretariat is experienced to deliver internally. ***5. Internal Communication:*** Clear communication internally of the roles and process for preparation and follow through.
Engagement Management	***1. Term:*** Clarity in the duration and payment terms. For example, the most common duration terms are annual engagements with three-month termination clauses and annual reviews. ***2. Budget:*** Clarity in planning the budget considerations of advisory board members. ***3. Agreements:*** Clear process for agreements issued from either advisory board members or from the organisation including terms, payment and indemnification parameters. ***4. Placement:*** Due diligence and independence in the selection process. ***5. Compliance and Risk Management:*** Ensure governance, and legal compliance is considered including tax treatment, visa, employment / contractor requirements.

Category	Ethics Considerations
Integrated Governance System Management	***1. Preparation:*** Careful mapping of the existing governance system and where decisions are made. ***2. Stakeholder Engagement:*** Consider stakeholders roles and expectations. ***3. Conflict of Interest:*** Consider internal and external advisory board member potential conflicts and bias. ***4. Schedules:*** Consider internal meetings and cascading information and reporting lines including a decision-making matrix. ***5. Clarity of Scope:*** Ensure the Charter is clear to ensure the advisory board is focused and lines are not blurred.
Other Considerations	***1. Culture Fit:*** Consider carefully the organisational culture and how the advisory board is positioned in the organisation. ***2. Agenda Design:*** Plan ahead and design agendas to consider the outcomes from advisory boards, how they influence decision making and how actions may be followed through. ***3. Ability to Execute:*** Consider how the organisational ability to execute on commitments made and the impact on the secretariat function. ***4. Other Options:*** Evaluate all options and when selecting an advisory board model to be committed to it with 12-month review periods. ***5. Review:*** Schedule reviews to refresh and refocus structures and roles.

Rate Structure Models

The following examples are common models used by portfolio professionals for rate structures within commercial agreements.

 **Retainer**	A monthly or annual retainer is based on a pre-determined schedule of various activities including meetings, mentoring, attendance at internal meetings. This is the most common model for Strategic Advisory Boards with 2 days per month allocation.
 **Retainer + Hourly Rate**	A minimum monthly retainer is established, with allowance for additional time if needed, at an hourly rate, calculated monthly. Clear guidelines are important to establish upfront including authorisation protocols and pre-approval processes.
 **Meeting Fee**	A meeting attendance fee is set where the engagement would consider preparation, attendance and post meeting obligations (if any). This is most commonly used for advisory board members where their only obligation is preparing for and attending meetings.



2:1 Chair Time Allocation Ratio

With an increase in the utilisation of retainers for Chairs, a growing trend is the alignment of mentoring and meeting facilitation. This is an indication that advisory board chairs are increasing their focus on the "organisation's ability to execute". Mentoring time is also commonly used for internal advisory board activities including facilitation of working groups and committees.

The most common ratio of meeting facilitation to mentoring is generally 2:1.
For example: for every half-day meeting, there are 2 x half-days allocated to mentoring the Sponsor, Secretariat and Executives.

OUR INSIGHT

Time Allocation Considerations

Chairs are most commonly engaged on a retainer. Advisory board members may be internal or external. External advisory board members when paid per meeting may not feel the same level of commitment from the organisation in valuing their advice. However, if they are on a retainer and unable to attend meetings, it creates friction in managing expectations and attendance. Striking the right balance and relationship development is crucial for the Chair.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *How have you been engaged and what have you experienced in the field as a provider of external advice?*

Have your say →

Challenges for New Professionals

Entry into the advisory board profession, including raising a professional profile, sourcing opportunities and educating the market can be a slow, yet deliberate process.

What they say

Recurring themes emerging from the qualitative data:



Motivations for Advisory Board Professionals

Across regions, professionals consistently cite motivations such as career building, diversifying income, enhancing market profile, contributing expertise, and accessing governance pathways.

Across all regions, there is a visible trend toward professionalisation, measurable outcomes, and the integration of technology and AI-driven insight into advisory practice.



Challenges for Professionals

Despite growing recognition, recurring challenges include defining scope, establishing independence, measuring impact, educating the market, and distinguishing advisory from governance or consulting roles.

Emerging regions often face market immaturity, cultural barriers, founder-centric dynamics and unclear expectations.

Governance, ethical and structural issues such as conflicts of interest, hybrid volunteer/paid models and inconsistent remuneration practices are noted as challenges for professionals to navigate.



Sourcing Advisors	
Advertise	4%
Government Agencies	4%
Current advisors	27%
Industry groups	18%
Business network	45%
Social media	2%

Sourcing opportunities is largely weighted on reputation, relationships and networks. The data indicates Government Agencies are a smaller opportunity pipeline overall. However individual markets may work differently. For example, Singapore Government Agencies can be a key source in funding advisory activity.

OUR INSIGHT

Market Development & Opportunity Creation

New professional entrants to the advisory board sector require careful planning. Many factors are considered including approaches for market entry, creation of pathways for professional and personal profile development.

Generating advisory board activity is generally not a direct sales approach. Where a need is identified, an education process on best practice advisory boards and other forms of advice is necessary to create quality opportunities. Reshaping existing meeting structures is the most practical approach to building new advisory board activity.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESEARCH

Q. *Upon entry to the advisory board sector, what approaches worked for you?*

Have your say →

SECTION 04

Professional Evaluation Activities

01 SECTOR SUMMARY

02 REMUNERATION

03 ENGAGEMENT

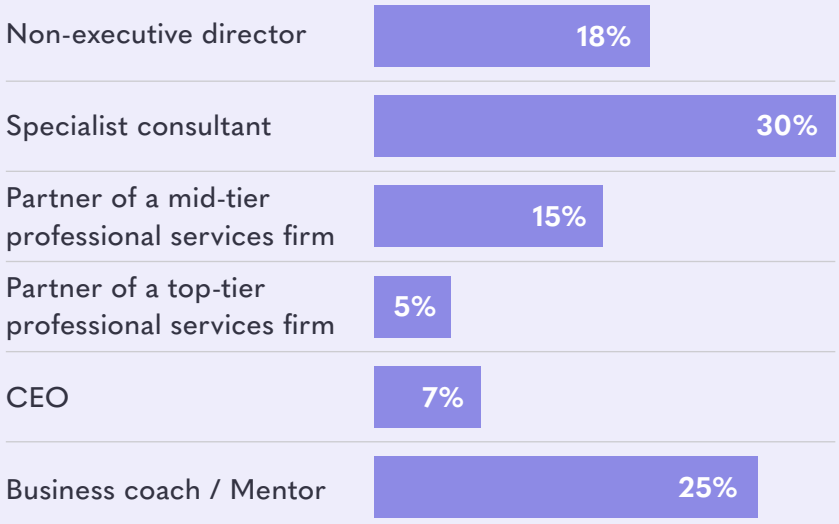
04 EVALUATION

An exclusive resource for navigating individual and organisational engagement parameters.

Rate Marker Evaluation

When setting rates, the majority of Advisory Board Professionals are aligning their rate expectations with specialist consultants, business coaches, mentors and non-executive directors. Evaluating market rates to other forms of advice is an ideal annual activity to align with personal and market expectations.

Rate Marker Most Aligned with Rate Expectations



ACTIVITY: REFLECT ON YOUR RATE

Which professional group most likely aligns with your rate parity in the market? What research do you need to complete to test your market rate?

Marker	Sources of information	Findings
Non-executive director in my region or sector		
Specialist consultant		
Partner of a Firm		
CEO		
Business coach / Mentor		
Other		

Calculating a Retainer

To support Advisory Board Professionals to set fair, transparent and market aligned engagement parameters, information from this report has been used to create the top 10 considerations in setting monthly and annual retainers.

Top 10 Considerations

1. Scope of Work

Define activities included in the retainer (meetings, mentoring, preparation, follow-up). Clear boundaries prevent scope creep.

2. Frequency of Engagement

Account for meeting schedules and mentoring sessions. Strategic boards typically involve 4–6 meetings annually plus monthly Chair interactions.

3. Time Allocation Ratio

Apply the common **2:1 ratio** for mentoring vs. meeting facilitation (e.g., two half-days mentoring per half-day meeting).

4. The Business Case

Specialist roles often require higher retainers due to expertise, risk profile and preparation demands. Similarly, the business case will determine the outcomes the organisation is seeking, setting out the "value exchange".

5. Organisational Size & Budget

Rates vary by client type – startups vs. corporates. Larger organisations typically support higher retainers due to the complexity of the role and requirement for expert facilitation.

6. Market Benchmarks

Align with global norms: see rate indicators in this report

7. Engagement Duration

Long term strategic role retainers may be different to short-term or project-based boards.

8. Additional Services

Include mentoring, internal facilitation, or project support beyond meetings. Clearly scope these to avoid ethical conflicts. Alternatively, include a clause for additional time.

9. Risk & Indemnity

Factor in professional indemnity, confidentiality, and risk management obligations.

10. Ethical & Governance Considerations

Ensure fairness, independence, and conflict of interest management. Retainers should reflect a transparent value exchange.



New Engagement Tips

For new engagements, scope the first engagement for three months and schedule a review. Ensure you have an agreement in place prior to commencement. The agreement should consider additional engagement factors including expenses, travel and termination clauses.

Alternatives to Advisory Boards

Advisory Boards are an effective method to engage fresh independent perspectives. Depending on the situation, purpose and ethical boundaries, alternative structures can also be considered.

Key Considerations

What are the expectations of the Sponsor beyond an advisory role?

Are there commercial interests beyond the engagement as an advisory board member?

What are the alternative engagement models to consider?

What advice can you seek in relation to agreement parameters, legal and commercial considerations?

Organisations may have mixed motivations for engaging an advisory board, which can create challenges for individual professionals in understanding their role and managing Sponsor expectations.

In these circumstances, it is worthwhile to consider commercial alternatives, particularly if there are incentive payments connected to outcomes:



Agent Agreement

When an organisation (typically startups and scaleups) are seeking market introductions and the development of sales pipelines and lead generation.



Reseller Agreement

When market representation on behalf of an organisation is sought.



Expert Consultation

When a specific recommendation is sought, harnessing expert opinion. This may be sought and concluded in written form from a consulting firm or an individual leading expert.



Contractors

When specific activities are completed by an external party for a specific scope of work.



Directorship

Where both equity and advice is sought. A Directorship may be more appropriate in gaining alignment of common goals, managing expectations and focus on outcomes and return.

Investment & Impact Calculator

Calculation of an advisory board investment depends on the business case including average frequency of meetings per annum with the number of members and specialisation required.

The final decision is a balance of the investment made to achieve the intended impact. Below are considerations in building the financial investment rationale of an advisory board.

Considerations	Notes
What is the purpose of the advisory board?	
What is the intended impact of the advisory board?	
Investment Considerations	
Chair base rate	
Chair meeting and mentoring schedule	
Advisory board member rates or engagement method	
Number of advisory board members	
Number of meetings	
Other expenses	
Estimated investment over 12 months	
Alternative methods considered to achieve the same impact	
Reasons why an advisory board model was chosen	
Impact measurement and success factors	
Return on investment rationale	

Research Methodology

Primary Research

The quantitative and qualitative data for this report was collected via surveys, focus groups ad interviews from August 2023 to December 2025. All individual information is confidential.

76	+1,200	50+	12
Global Focus Groups	Surveys	Case Study Interviews	Regions

How to Reference this Report

Advisor Engagement and Remuneration Report 2026-2028; Global Research Council; Advisory Board Centre; Research Lead – Louise Broekman

Report History

- This study commenced in 2012, culminating in the Consulting Industry – Global Trends & Implications Report in 2016.
- It was a culmination of a study of 430 Consulting Firms and Quantitative Surveys. It marked the beginning of tracking the democratisation of advice through advisory boards.
- Since 2017, the Global Research Council has produced periodical reports for advisory board professionals, providing research data on market rates and engagement models. Information is used global markers to support professionals in developing their own engagement models.
- In 2026, the report is largest global study to date, culminating in practical executive summaries in managing engagement activities.

EDUCATION. CONNECTION. IMPACT.

The Advisory Board Centre is the global professional body for the advisory sector, providing best practice implementation, professional development, certification, research and advocacy. Founded to improve the effectiveness of advisory boards, it supports organisations, professionals and executives who fulfil and manage an advisory function.

Advisory+ Board Support Services

Organisations can access support for board scoping, establishment, recruitment and review through our Advisory+ services. Backed by over 15 years of research and practical experience, our team support a broad range of organisations to leverage advisory boards to advance their strategic objectives.

Education

Our flagship program, The Certified Chair™ Executive Program, is the globally-recognised credential for the advisory board sector. Delivered worldwide, it is essential professional development for senior executives, directors and board professionals seeking to master the world-class standard for best practice in advisory boards. Advisory Board Centre Faculty also provide sector-specific training, mentoring, and professional development to build expertise across the sector.

Global Community & Membership

Representing members in over 30 countries, the Advisory Board Centre provides a critical link between organisations and Advisory Board Professionals. We support connection, capacity building, best practice application and professional practice with global hubs.

Our Research & Development

The Global Research Council takes an unbiased validation approach to study the role of advisory boards, leveraging data sets from the Advisory Board Centre's global network of Advisory Board Professionals, organisations and leading academics. The ongoing development of best practice is underpinned by its living research mandate in the study of advisory board adaptation within modern governance systems. Publications include the State of the Market and the Rates & Engagement Reports.

LEARN MORE

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The ABF 101 Advisory Best Practice Framework™ provides a global first, principles-led foundation to support the advisory community and the organisations they serve through advisory boards.

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