



Board Level podcast
Australian Institute of Company Directors, powered by CommBank

Episode 15: Forging a path to the boardroom

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Interviewee: Alex Sloane and Nicki Kenyon

Featuring:
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This episode, Catherine interviews Nicki Kenyon, an executive who has worked in leadership positions across the travel, finance and tech industries in Australia and internationally. Catherine also interviews Alex Sloane, the Director of Customer Marketing at Facebook.

Rebecca [00:00:03] Hello and welcome to Board Level, the podcast that's changing the conversation around boardroom tables. Board diversity and gender balance make sense. It delivers better outcomes for shareholders, consumers, employees and the community. I'm Rebecca Warren, General Manager of CommBank's Women in Focus and we're proud to support the AICD in this valuable conversation. As a board member myself, I know the challenges and the value of contributing at this level. We all have a role to play in improving both equality and diversity. So let's level up with your host, Catherine Fox, award-winning journalist, author, presenter and leading commentator on women in the workforce.

Catherine [00:00:49] Welcome to Board Level and an energising and rich conversation with two women who had quite different pathways into the boardroom. Nicki Kenyon is an executive who has worked in leadership positions across the travel, finance and tech areas here and internationally. Alex Sloane is the Director of Customer Marketing at Facebook. Now, they did know each other professionally but reconnected when Alex reached out to Nicki for some advice on whether to join a board. This conversation has some remarkable reflections on taking up opportunities, leading with purpose and getting your timing right. So, Nicki, let's start with you and thanks for dialing in. Your career has spanned travels, finance, tech, the whole area of transformation and digital disruption. Tell me, did you sit down and plan your career?

Nicki [00:01:37] **Absolutely not, it's evolved, I guess, as I've evolved and along the way, I found myself in some wonderful cities, great companies and working with some amazing people. I've also discovered I have an always-on approach to learning. So when I learn about something new in an effort to understand it better, I've moved into that area or I've moved into that industry. For instance, e-commerce at AsiaRooms or social media with Facebook so my career represents a combination of places that I've lived, companies that I've worked for and people that I've worked with and to be honest, I'm still on that journey and still always on learning.**

Catherine [00:02:13] So that sounds as though you're very open to exploring different things and perhaps taking risks. Is that part of that approach?

Nicki [00:02:22] **It is definitely. Although I don't think about it myself as being risky, I make informed decisions that, yes, I've regularly taken myself outside of my comfort zone. I've tried new opportunities. I've moved countries. I've also moved into start-up environments because that's where I feel my quest to continually add value is a good place to be but at the same time, I'm learning as well. So yes, I guess it could be seen as somewhat risk-taking.**

Catherine [00:02:48] What about working overseas, which obviously you've just mentioned? What has that added to your kitbag, if you like, of skills?

Nicki [00:02:56] Without doubt, my breadth and depth of experiences are absolutely an outcome of the years that I've spent overseas, as well as the different cities within Australia that I've lived and worked. I think the single most powerful outcome or outtake from that experience would be a genuine embracing of diversity of thinking. It's very easy to go into Asia or any different country, in fact, and know that you will be exposed to different languages and different cultures, but I think the depth of diversity of thinking is something that I didn't expect. The different perspectives that people have is very rich when you're working in a country other than your own particularly in cities like Hong Kong and Singapore, where I've spent most of my international career. As multicultural hubs in a dynamic region, they are inevitably made up of many different people from different walks of life, different perspectives and, of course, different cultures.

Catherine [00:03:49] I imagine that feeds very much into your leadership style as well, the way that you manage people. How would you describe your leadership style?

Nicki [00:04:00] That's an interesting question because just recently someone else described my leadership style as being democratic, which hadn't been a word that I'd have used myself, but it absolutely is a word that resonates with me. So I would describe my style as being inclusive and respectful, I think democratic summed it up quite nicely because, yes, I have experience and I have expertise and I certainly have perspective but I think listening to other people and embracing the contribution that other people can make is a critical leadership skill and I mean, all people, it's not just old senior people who have good ideas.

Catherine [00:04:36] Pretty good words.

Nicki [00:04:38] Thank you.

Catherine [00:04:39] Tell me about recognising some of those opportunities that you mentioned that you've taken in your career and maybe some examples of where something opened up. You mentioned going where you can learn. How did you identify that?

Nicki [00:04:51] My career opportunities have often come about because of that always on learning trait I have, curiosity, if you like. For example, I was at MasterCard and I was leading the introduction of digital marketing across Asia Pacific. At the time, e-commerce was a reasonably new thing and during that tenure, an opportunity for me opened up with an online travel company, which was at the forefront of e-commerce and I was curious about it. So I moved over to that company to look behind the curtain, to really get into the nitty gritty of how that kind of business operates. I guess I would say I look at my career as a series of university modules rather than going to university and studying various subjects. I've gone and lived those subjects in the real world. Another example would be Facebook in the world of social media. Social media was new and promising. I was curious and I wanted to be a part of it and to better understand how, as a channel to connect with consumers, it could enhance marketing effectiveness. So each of my decisions, I guess, as I've taken my executive career to where it is now and where it will continue to go will be made somewhat based on what I've learnt and can contribute the value that I can bring to an organisation as well as what I learn and how I can continue to grow through learning.

Catherine [00:06:07] Do you have a way of doing due diligence on an organisation or some way that you're actually looking at joining?

Nicki [00:06:15] Yes, I do, I like to think that I'm a quick decision maker and I certainly can be agile when I need to be but I'm also a very painstaking information gatherer as well. So I balance those two things to enable me to move quickly when I need to but also to get the information that I need to make the right decision. So when it comes to my career that will certainly be my approach equally, for an executive opportunity or a board role, it'll be seeking and understanding all of the information that's readily available to me but also getting to understand the people and the culture. One of the most important things I've discovered for myself in making the choices that I make is a sense of purpose. If a company

or a CEO doesn't have a clear sense of purpose, it's harder for me and everybody else in that organisation to support the organisation's goal. I've been lucky enough to work for some companies that have had a very clear sense of purpose and it stands out when you find it because when you have a clear sense of purpose and it's well articulated, everybody in the organisation signed up for it and they're all moving in the same direction, business success will happen faster, more naturally and I think more easily.

Catherine [00:07:26] That's so important. We talked about doing due diligence but what about role models or indeed mentors? How much how important have they been to you in building your career?

Nicki [00:07:36] I would say important, although I haven't actively sought out mentors, although I've thought about it many times but I've been lucky in the different jobs that I've had that I'd meet people and I've been exposed to people from very different walks of life and experiences. I also recognise when someone energises me and therefore that's the person that I'll forge a relationship with and in some way, that person then becomes a mentor because with a relationship in place, I'm able to bounce ideas off them and to sense check my thinking and that person might have been someone who's like minded, where we connect easily and we can talk about lots of things, or it could be someone who's actually quite different to me and therefore I want to understand their perspective better because it's so different to mine. So in that way, in that sense, there are many, many different people that I would say in some way have been a mentor to me and there are also the people that are younger than me, people that I'm mentoring at the moment, who I think are playing just as much of a role in mentoring me because they're sharing things that I don't know about from a very different perspective, from a different stage of career and, of course, a different age.

Catherine [00:08:41] That reverse mentoring is such an interesting concept, isn't it? I think it can be highly effective and, of course, you know, when I was starting out in my career, a mentor wasn't something particularly formal. It was that relationship that you've just described, somebody that you've got on with and energised you that's such an important part of that spark. So tell me, when you made a decision to look at boards joining a board, was that sparked by somebody you knew or somebody who was on a board or was it just a more general goal for you?

Nicki [00:09:13] My introduction to a board was actually via the executive role that I held at the time. I was managing director of the online travel company and I found myself in the boardroom as the executive representative with a number of other board members and it was kind of cool. There were some really smart people around that table who weren't involved in the business in the same way that I was running of the day to day but they were just as passionate and committed to the success of the business and therefore they were able to add perspective to the job I was doing in a different way than I could because I was so close to it. I was then inspired by the opportunity to work just beyond my day job, my executive job and continue to add value in different ways through board positions. I'm enjoying a diverse and varied executive career, but one job at a time leverages many of my skills, but not all. Therefore, a board approach allows me the opportunity to add even more value so it was a couple of years after that executive board position that I signed up for the introductory AICD Company Directors Course, which I have to say was probably the most sensible thing I've done in my career.

Catherine [00:10:19] It's interesting that you were able to observe the board dynamic and then make that decision so sometimes people haven't actually had that exposure to boards when they decide that they would like to and then indeed do join the board. So it's interesting that you saw that and found that level of discussion and strategic impact and found that so attractive.

Nicki [00:10:38] Yes, I think I was lucky in the sense that I was able to be an observer because it's not often that you would get the opportunity of just joining a board meeting and listening to everything that's going on. It's just not the way it works but equally, the benefit that I gained from the AICD course was incredibly helpful because you do role playing and you see many of those examples brought to life through the theory that's presented through the course but certainly being in a room with a group of people who are designed to be there to contribute to the well-being of an organisation and have quite different conversations to those that happen in management is incredibly insightful to understand what a board life could look like.

Catherine [00:11:15] Do you think that's something that occurs at a certain part of your career, that idea or that attraction to that, or is it something that you think can happen anytime during a management career when you've moved into sort of executive roles?

Nicki [00:11:27] I think it could actually happen at any time because people work through their careers at different paces. People have different numbers of jobs and therefore different numbers of experiences. So there's I don't believe there's an age or stage that necessarily is the trigger for it being the right time for a board, because, again, there are as many different boards as there are people in their experiences. I do think there are some people who are naturally more strategic in their thinking, in their approach and therefore more quickly able to grasp the big picture view and to separate the forest from the trees, which I think is somewhat the way you need to approach a board role and of course, that could happen at any stage in a career, depending on the individual. It does tend to happen when you've got more experience but if you've been exposed to strategic discussions through your career, then you can just as well be the right time for you, which will be a different time for someone else.

Catherine [00:12:23] So it's possibly less about age or stage of career and more about skills and what you can contribute.

Nicki [00:12:29] Yes, exactly that's what I was trying to say.

Catherine [00:12:31] I'm going to ask you a question, which I'll ask both of you. What's the one thing you wished you'd known when you set out on your board career?

Nicki [00:12:39] I think this thing that became very obvious to me as I was starting my board career was the accountability and the responsibility of a board directorship. I can't underestimate how important it is to commit to the well-being of an organisation and being responsible for that well-being of the organisation through a board role. It's not something to be taken lightly and I think any prospective board member should consider that carefully and not be distracted or flattered by an opportunity that presents itself. I think the other thing that I would add is it's also important to fully appreciate how the dynamic of a board will work and how important that will be to you personally as a member of that board. Now, of course, that's a little bit harder to know from the outside looking in but how each of the individuals, individually and collectively work as a board is really important to understand as best you can before going in and before accepting the board role.

Catherine [00:13:32] Fantastic. Thank you. Alex, you have been working at Facebook for a number of years now, but you previously had been working in creative agencies both here and in New York, which sounds like a fabulous career. Tell me about that transition from the agency side into Facebook.

Alex [00:13:49] Absolutely, I guess a bit like Nicki, none of it was planned and so I went from working on Madison Avenue, making big budget TV commercials and it was all incredibly exciting and digital really took a hold of the industry at exactly the same time I chose to have my first child. So I felt like a career in an agency or in a service business was complex and difficult. I made a conscious choice to leave that industry and then come back to something new. Facebook was the opportunity in front of me at that moment in time when I moved back to Sydney and here I am now, almost eight years later. I feel incredibly grateful to have grown up with the company and also to, you know, similar to Nicki, been able to take advantage of all the learning opportunities as the industry and as technology has evolved in our lives and in the industry as well.

Catherine [00:14:46] Did you know anyone working at Facebook?

Alex [00:14:48] I actually did, yes, I had one colleague who is now a dear friend who I'd known in New York and she was in the Sydney office.

Catherine [00:14:57] It would not be relevant to say, were you familiar with Facebook because everyone is but that's yes that's interesting. So tell me about the roles that you've had. What sort of manager and leader are you? How would you describe yourself?

Alex [00:15:11] I'm a big subscriber of the idea that my role as a manager and as a leader is to create an environment for others to succeed. So, you know, I always say that my goal is to ensure that everyone has the best time of their career when they're working with me and I take that really seriously so always looking out for opportunities for people to thrive and learn and grow and also to succeed is kind of my north star.

Catherine [00:15:37] Anyone that you've looked to as a role model for that?

Alex [00:15:41] I agree that, you know, formal mentors can be helpful but I've actually found the things most helpful in terms of mentorship have been those informal women that you can call on so whether it's a situation with a tricky colleague and you want to rehearse a hard conversation with them or you need advice on a career move or a new role or an international move really having a good group of women or men who you can call on for those particular situations that you come up against. I actually called Nicki as I thought about what's my kind of plan to embark on my board journey. She was so generous with her time but just half an hour and women are generous. Women in my life are generous and they'll make the time, just like I do to young people who've made an effort to reach out and ask a particular question about whether it's a board career move. I think being really specific about what you're asking for help around is really important.

Catherine [00:16:43] That generosity, I agree with you and I think it's often something that we need to myth bust the idea that women are not helpful to each other. My experience has been the same. Women have been very generous.

Alex [00:16:54] Absolutely, I love that phrase, her success is not your failure and I think that's so important. There's plenty of glory and success and opportunity around for everybody so keeping that in mind as you help people, but you also ask for help as well.

Catherine [00:17:09] So tell me, you spoke to Nicki but what was the trigger for even thinking about perhaps moving onto a board?

Alex [00:17:17] The trigger for me, moving onto board actually, it's something that I had in my longer-term plan. I did the AICD course because a couple of people told me it would be a good thing for me to do. So I was actually considering an MBA but the things I would really get a lot out of were those modules in that AICD course.

Catherine [00:17:37] Because we talk a lot about agility and the capacity to pivot in business in sort of further education of all kinds that's absolutely essential, too, isn't it?

Alex [00:17:46] Definitely, one of the big surprises about the course was the bits that I enjoyed the most and my favourite module was the finance one and that was a big surprise to me being much more of a strategic, creative person but certainly just opening up doors that I hadn't been exposed to before has been incredibly enriching.

Catherine [00:18:08] We heard from Nicki that a sense of purpose and clarity around that purpose is very important in leaders. Is that the case for you?

Alex [00:18:16] Yes, absolutely, I think being in a company where my values feel aligned to the company's values has always been important and leading with a clear sense of why you're here is critical. If you look at financial performance, Kantar just released a study called BrandZ, where they've surveyed 17,000 companies over two decades. They've found three factors that are driving incremental financial performance this year. One of them is organisational performance so socially being responsible to staff, adapting to new working conditions, which we all have this year. Second is digital transformation so how quickly and successfully they've been able to adapt their business to evolving customer needs. Lastly is purpose so how community driven, how supportive they've been during this crisis to their customers and generally responsible as well.

Catherine [00:19:12] It's interesting, Alex, that you say that about being surprised by enjoying the finance side, what the research tells us is that for a lot of girls and women, in fact, there's something called stereotype threat. So they're surrounded by boys or indeed in mixed groups but they don't do as well at maths as they do when they're separated out. I think that's absolutely fascinating so it's again, it's not about the female brain versus the male brain. We all have that capacity but it's about context and socialisation so it's fascinating to think that those skills are there in the right place. So take us back a bit to when you started out in your career. You described yourself as a creative person. You've found perhaps a little later in life that you actually do like the numbers as well. Did you always think, well that's going to be my career track? Did you have toys with different kinds of careers and jobs?

Alex [00:20:10] I think when you when I say creative, I probably mean strategic and problem solving and not, you know, an artist but, you know, I think, you know, my strengths have always been making the complex simple and kind of getting a group of people on board and aligned around a way forward. So I think that serves me well in my professional career but it came up as something that I think would serve me well in a board setting as well when there are big decisions to be made, when there's some diplomacy required to get lots of different people aligned around something new that we might have to do or hard decisions to stay the course so that was kind of where I thought that my skills might apply.

Catherine [00:20:51] Now, we've talked about networks and role models and so on, was there anyone that you knew on board? Other than Nicki but did you have any contemporaries who'd also made that change?

Alex [00:21:02] No and that's something that Nicki and I have discussed; is it just seems like a big mystery how you get on a board. I'm really keen to kind of open up that conversation and have it less shrouded in mystery and that's kind of the learning journey that I'm on at the moment, is what are the steps? How do I kind of get to my long-range plan? Part of it is having discussions like this and then, of course, you know, making sure I've got the skills and experience to add maximum value.

Catherine [00:21:29] I think transparency is a big issue and has been particularly an issue for women, hasn't it? I think because, you know, obviously not as many women on boards, even though we're gratified to see that has increased but certainly for a long time, the very idea of how you went about joining a board, much less if you actually had the skills, was pretty, as you say, shrouded in mystery. Alex, what's the one thing you wished you'd known before you joined the board?

Alex [00:21:56] Well, I'm very early on the journey, so I won't kind of impart lots of wisdom, but I agree with Nicki, the responsibility and legal accountabilities is huge. So I think the course was great in outlining that and probably made me be a bit more considerate about the timeline for me to get on to board. I also think I, you know, I pride myself in being really good with people and being really diplomatic but just like they say in the course, when you get a group of very diverse thinkers in the room, it's really tricky. You've got, you know, varying tenures on the board. You have different backgrounds. Everyone's very accomplished and so that took me by surprise, that's a really tricky part of it, even though I think I'm really good at people.

Catherine [00:22:41] Different level of complexity, you've both had different experiences of doing the AICD company directors' course. Alex, you did it with CommBank Women in Focus. What was it like doing the course with that cohort?

Alex [00:22:57] It was incredible, I think, for me, being in a room full of women, it felt like a really safe learning environment. You know, I think in my career I've always possibly struggled with confidence and there are other rooms where I would've felt possibly threatened or intimidated. So it was a really safe learning experience that I thrived in.

Catherine [00:23:18] Now, Nicki, you did the course in 2017, I gather, was that something that you'd been planning to do for a while or what led you to do it at that point?

Nikki [00:23:29] I was living in Singapore at the time and through my network found myself being invited to join the Singapore committee of the AICD and someone suggested that being on the committee would be good for the AICD and good for me. So as a committee member, I learnt about the AICD from the best

people who could talk about it. I then did an introduction to the AICD course and having been an executive member of a board previously, I knew broadly what was involved enough to know that I wanted to know more and to get serious about it. I was also at the point when returning to Australia was a reality. So before that actually happened, I decided to do the AICD company directors course to be true to myself and to understand it properly at a point in time where my life was about to change anyway and I was looking back on my career and thinking I want to be doing more. I want to be adding more value somewhere and I was about to move countries again. So I flew down to Melbourne and did the course in Melbourne because moving back to Australia, as I said, was inevitable and I figured doing it here would be more sensible as ultimately I would be sitting on an Australian-based board.

Catherine [00:24:33] Well, that sounds very smart and how important has that network been subsequent to the course?

Nikki [00:24:38] Well, it's been great. It was really good for me. It was a soft landing for me to come back to Australia to meet people who were also doing the course at the same time, who were in business here, even though they were all looking to do board work for a different reason. They were on the ground in Australia with Australian-based experiences. So from that perspective, it was beneficial because my experience at the time and my knowledge wasn't current as far as Australia was concerned, given I'd been in Asia for the past 13 years. So being with a group of Australians, talking about Australian issues in context of board directorships brought the whole course to life for me in a much more valuable way. You always learn, in my view, as much from the other people in the room, the other attendees as you do with different instructors because of that diverse thinking that those different perspectives that you hear.

Catherine [00:25:27] And are there people in that network that you still talk to now?

Alex [00:25:30] Yes, I do, definitely.

Catherine [00:25:32] And Alex, network, how important has that been as a legacy of doing the course?

Alex [00:25:38] 100%, it's really important and I was learning with a group of only women, which also served me well, so I think it was just a really open, safe environment that wasn't as intimidating as potentially other environments could have been for me. So the network has been incredible, there were people from all over the country and in such diverse fields so that, you know, there was a farmer and there were like manufacturing CEOs. It was just incredibly enriching and again, when you've led a career that is more or less in the same industry, there were people I just would never have met in my life that I was stuck in a room with for five days and I loved it.

Catherine [00:26:17] And tell me, of that cohort, were many already on boards or most of them aspiring to board positions?

Alex [00:26:25] I think most of them were aspiring and not everyone was doing the course to get on board, at least immediately. So a little bit like me, it was a bit of an audit of where my knowledge gaps and how can I fill them in and the AICD course actually ended up being a really good next step.

Catherine [00:26:42] Now, I wanted to ask you both but, Alex, we'll start with you, what kind of boost to your confidence does doing something like that course and mixing with that incredibly eclectic bunch of people give you?

Alex [00:26:54] It was a huge boost for a number of reasons. So one is, you know, when I took the knowledge and experience back to my current role, I felt like I had an increased understanding of what's going on in boardrooms for my customers and understanding what that conversation was like, particularly around marketing, investment and all the different factors that go into that. It gave me confidence in my role and then also, you know, being in that room, having those very intellectual discussions, testing out whether you're understanding what is going on in that safe environment was a huge boost. I don't think I'd done formal learning in a very long time and in fact, it's inspired me to go and do some more kind of corporate performance or, you know, financial performance work next year because I enjoyed it so much but it also gave me that boost of confidence.

Catherine [00:27:47] Fantastic, Nicki, I'm thinking the same thing I was going to ask you. Obviously, the cohort was an important one and you're still seeing or talking to some of those people in that network. What did that make you feel about the next step and about going onto more boards?

Nikki [00:28:01] I think it confirmed to me that it was the right decision. There were a couple of moments during the course where I thought, oh gosh, I didn't really know how serious this could be and thinking to myself, is this really what I want to do? By the end of the week, without question, it was certainly what I wanted. The relationships with the other people on the course, I've continued because we had the same questions at the time when we arrived at the same answers. Yes, this is something that we wanted to sign up for. So I fully embraced the opportunity and wanted to be on the board because I felt there was so much value that I could bring based on my career beyond just a day job that I was doing at the time. The information was practical. It was useful and in terms of confidence, I think the fact that I passed my exams was a huge confidence booster because there were some tricky modules in there that were definitely challenging for me and outside my comfort zone. So I think I came out of it more of an all rounder and even more committed to embarking on my board career and being serious about it, being committed to it, bringing value and getting enormous value for me.

Catherine [00:29:02] Can be quite off-putting doing exams when you haven't done them for a long time. No doubt we will have listeners weighing this up and thinking about this course. I wondered if I could ask both of you for some advice for them. You know, is there a right time to do this? You've both talked about your own personal decisions around that, but I wonder if there's any sort of rules of thumb and maybe we'll start Nicki with you. When would it be a good time if you're weighing up, whether this is a course you should take up?

Nikki [00:29:32] I would say as soon as someone is serious about considering a board career, do the AICD course. It's a commitment of time and certainly cost but before you go into any more work, groundwork or networking or applying for the board positions, the clarity and the implications of being on a board must be understood. I think the course is the best way of understanding that. I think as far as timing goes, as soon as you are thinking of doing it before putting all of that legwork in. There's a delta of practical knowledge and reality that I think people need to fully understand. It's a huge compliment when you are invited to join a board. The instant emotional reaction is to say, yes, of course, you've asked me, of course, I want to join but without that practical knowledge and a deep understanding of what the implications are for you personally as an individual and also for the company that you would be representing, you need to understand that really thoroughly. So I would say definitely do the course as soon as you are serious then take it from there.

Catherine [00:30:34] Yes and almost regardless of, in fact, of your career stage but if it's in your head, do it first before you go on. Alex, what about you? What is your advice that you would give to a listener maybe toying with this idea?

Alex [00:30:47] Completely agree with Nicki, I would also add on a practical level, thinking about your time and do you have enough time to do it? I remember when the box turned up and I had this sinking sense of what have I done, because there was so much reading to be done. So I think just making sure that you've carved out the right amount of time not just to get the reading done, spend the week doing the course and then get the assignments done but so that you actually enjoy it and you feel like you created the space to enrich yourself.

Catherine [00:31:17] And Alex can I ask you a slightly more practical question, when you decided, yes, you'd do the course that a board position was something that you would like to take up, how did you go about actually finding a board position and why did you make the decision that you made?

Alex [00:31:33] I had a colleague in New York reach out to me to meet with the chair of the Australian chapter of the IAA here. Then I was invited onto the board. So I was introduced and it's been a really good experience, a really good first step in terms of putting into practice all of those things that I talked about in the course, which is really incredibly interesting. And in the long term, I'm really drawn to the idea that more and more so social change will be coming from the corporate sector. And I think, ultimately, a board career, for me, would seem like a very impactful way to see faster progress on the issues that matter globally and domestically.

Catherine [00:32:14] Yes, a time when you're getting perhaps experienced that you never thought you would be getting and Nicki again, just this idea of getting the pathway onto a board but also making those decisions about not just taking up something because it happens to be offered to you.

Nicki [00:32:29] **Yes, I think time is a really important consideration because there's a decent amount of work involved in participating on a board. I mean, a couple of advisory boards as well as full boards and there are differing degrees of input that's required but there's still work and there's still commitment. You owe it to yourself and the board to know enough about the business and to know what's going on to be able to add value. If you don't have something to say to add value, then perhaps you shouldn't be there and to not just speak for the sake of speaking but to really add true value and that means understanding the businesses that you're advising on and supporting and helping. So that time consideration, I think, is something that needs to be carefully thought through because there is a real requirement. It's certainly something that can't be taken, shouldn't be taken lightly.**

Catherine [00:33:16] I wanted to thank you both just for your contribution today. Thank you so much.

Joanne [00:33:21] Thanks for listening to Board Level hosted by Catherine Fox for the AICD and powered by CommBank's women in Focus where we are sharing stories from women making an impact in the boardroom. I'm Joanne Gilroy, Board Diversity Manager at the AICD. We're helping build the capability of the next generation of outstanding boardroom leaders. Visit AICD.com.au to access show notes from this episode and other valuable resources. Subscribe to Board Level wherever you get your podcasts, so you don't miss an episode. Leave a rating or a review and help keep the conversation going.