

Public Awareness and Media Training

As with any other issue, there's a direct correlation between public awareness about corporate governance and media coverage of stories related to corporate governance. Most of our corporate governance advisory services projects devote some time, effort, and resources to national public education campaigns, aimed at raising awareness. Part of this work involves providing training to educate journalists on the importance of good corporate governance and working with the media to encourage coverage of corporate governance-related news.

The work here helps create a broader popular understanding of corporate governance and the proper functioning of a modern corporation. It leads to changes in attitude that can help drive new behaviors: increased support for reforms, heightened interest in the study of corporate governance topics as part of professional training in law and business, and acceptance of foreign investment as a necessary condition for growth of the economy.



RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Our public awareness work takes a variety of forms: press conferences, round tables, articles written for trade publications, and interviews with the press. In many cases, projects sponsor the publication and distribution of periodic newsletters on corporate governance issues, making use of data from our surveys on corporate governance practices. Information from surveys can be shared with key government officials as well, to help drive home the message on the value of governance improvements.

These efforts enable better understanding of the importance of good corporate governance for the

general public. Awareness activities are also aimed at shareholders, to help them learn more about their roles, rights, and responsibilities.

MEDIA TRAINING

Providing training to journalists and members of the media builds their skills and knowledge, and leads to more sophisticated coverage of business issues in a particular country. It also ensures that the work of informing the public and keeping corporate governance issues in the public eye will continue after project activities end.

Bringing stories of interest to the media is another key aspect of our work. Because journalists are looking for interesting, headline-grabbing pieces, our role here is to bring good stories to them, in addition to helping them understand the value of good corporate governance. This can mean arranging press tours so that journalists can visit firms that have implemented corporate governance improvements and interview decision-makers at these firms about the reasons for their initiative and how it has enhanced company performance.

In particular, journalists are interested in:

- Shareholders' rights
- Transparency
- Securities markets
- Statistics, numbers, and data

It is also worth noting that working with journalists carries some risks, since some may be looking for gossip or scandal rather than solid news. One way to avoid this trap is to assign all media-related contacts to a dedicated staff person with professional communications skills. This also ensures that messaging remains consistent.

The SmartLessons in this section offer insight into successes in media training and public awareness activities.