

## **"Can You Hear Me Now?"**

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**Boardroom communications often break down when directors do not dedicate enough time to communicating with one another and when they refuse to speak up for fear of undermining the views of fellow directors.** In a study of boardroom communication at five public U.S. companies, two patterns of behavior were identified that hinder boardroom interaction. The first mistake was that directors spent more time talking with managers than among themselves, hindering their ability to get a better understanding of other directors' viewpoints. The second mistake was that directors criticized one another for remarks that threatened the balance of the directors' role as adviser and compliance enforcer, or they did not speak up at all in order to avoid conflict. As a result, some directors waited until after the meeting to raise important issues, which left other directors out of the loop and increased the risk of information that was shared being distorted by those not present for those private conversations. Two of the boards studied kept in-meeting discussions relevant with executive sessions and active-in-meeting leadership.