

# The 2026 Proxy Playbook: 6 Key Trends

In a market marked by constant change and increased levels of scrutiny, staying agile is essential. In order to stay properly prepared, we've assembled the top 6 key trends influencing 2026 proxies.

01



## Executive Pay Faces Longer-Term Scrutiny

Investors are evaluating pay for performance over extended time horizons, with increased focus on sustained value creation. One-time awards and discretionary grants remain a key source of dissent.

02



## Governance Replaces Broad ESG on the Ballot

As environmental and social proposals decline, investors are shifting attention to core governance votes: director elections, accountability, and oversight where influence is most direct.

04



## Board Accountability Takes Center Stage

Board composition, refreshment, and oversight effectiveness are under heightened scrutiny, particularly around strategy execution and emerging risk oversight.

03



## Proxy Voting Becomes Less Predictable

With Glass Lewis moving away from benchmark policies and investors adopting custom frameworks, voting outcomes are increasingly fragmented and harder to anticipate.

05



## Universal Proxy is the New Normal

Universal proxy rules are now embedded, increasing scrutiny of individual director nominees and raising the stakes for clear, role-based board narratives, even outside contested situations.



## Engagement Shifts from Episodic to Ongoing

As voting decisions move in-house and become AI-assisted, proactive, continuous shareholder engagement and clear, defensible proxy disclosure are more critical than ever.

06

**Optimize Your Proxy**

Download the full Guide to Effective Proxies.