

NED/Board Readiness Guide
From Executive to Non-Executive

10 THINGS
I WISH I KNEW
BEFORE
STARTING
MY NED
SEARCH

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10 THINGS I WISH I KNEW BEFORE STARTING MY NED SEARCH

- 1 I'm not the irresistible catch for the market that I believe I should be.
- 2 Be prepared for the weight of responsibility as a Non-Executive Director
- 3 The power of patience
- 4 The critical art of assessing peers and executives.
- 5 Throw your net wide
- 6 Knowledge is power – do your research
- 7 Educate yourself
- 8 Engage your network
- 9 Help organisations flourish - even if the role is not for you
- 10 Be proactive and take a long term view



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"Since meeting the VOCASO team, we have been put in touch with both influential and relevant people that have helped progress our thinking and business from advisory and investment perspectives."

CO-FOUNDER
GROWTH COMPANY

”

I W I S H I K N E W

01

I'M NOT THE IRRESISTIBLE
CATCH FOR THE MARKET
THAT I BELIEVE I SHOULD BE.

Too many executives naively assume that landing a non-executive directorship is a simple step, solely based on their current or past positions. But let's face it, that's far from reality.

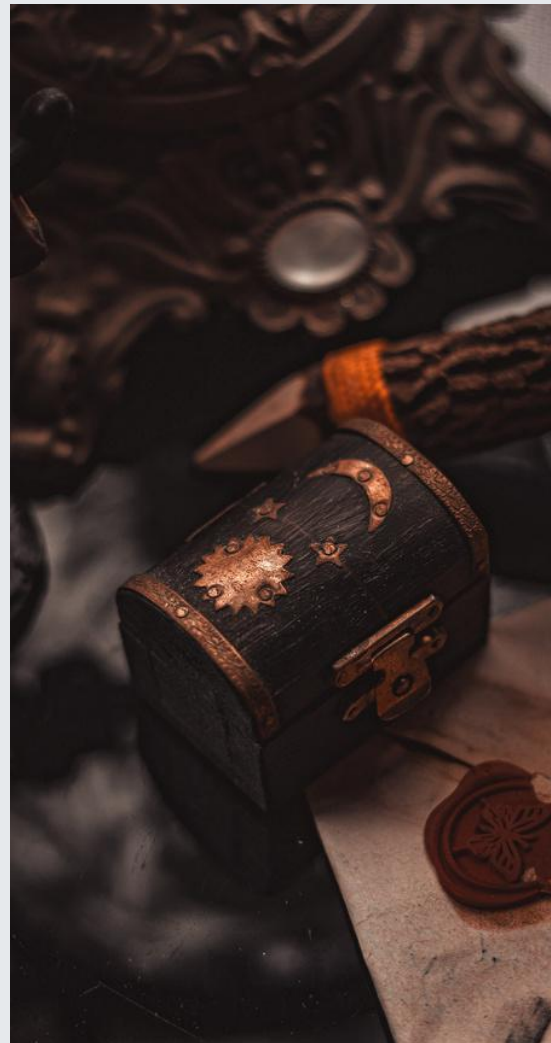
Numerous NED opportunities fly under the radar, tucked away within the confines of the outdated 'old boys network.' It's a relic of an expression that, unfortunately, still holds sway in filling NED roles.

Moreover, finding a NED role description that doesn't demand prior NED experience is a rare feat. How on earth are you supposed to gain experience without the chance to gain experience?

"HOW ON EARTH
ARE YOU
SUPPOSED TO
GAIN EXPERIENCE
WITHOUT THE
CHANCE TO GAIN
EXPERIENCE?"

Countless opportunities call for very specific expertise, which you either possess or don't. Finally, it's crucial to note that a considerable number of organisations are rightfully committed to building diverse boards.

Unfortunately, if you don't meet the criteria of a 'diverse candidate,' it can put you at a distinct disadvantage when pursuing numerous opportunities.



I W I S H I K N E W

02

BE PREPARED FOR THE
WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY
AS A NON-EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Embarking on a non-executive directorship is not a decision to be taken lightly. It is essential to be fully aware of the liability that comes with such a role.

Many individuals mistakenly assume that being a non-executive director is a mere formality, a title without consequences.

Their expertise and judgment are constantly scrutinized, and any missteps can have far-reaching legal, financial, and reputational repercussions. It is crucial, therefore, to approach these roles with caution, understanding the weight of the responsibility they entail.

"THE REALITY
COULDN'T BE
FURTHER FROM
THE TRUTH."



Non-executive directors bear a substantial burden of responsibility, often held accountable for the organisation's strategic decisions, governance practices, and overall performance.



I W I S H I K N E W

03



THE POWER
OF PATIENCE

When it comes to finding the perfect non-executive director (NED) role, patience becomes an invaluable virtue. Many aspiring candidates underestimate the time and effort required in this pursuit, often succumbing to the allure of immediate opportunities or settling for less than they deserve.

However, rushing into a NED role can be a grave mistake. The most rewarding and fulfilling positions often lie hidden beneath the surface, waiting to be discovered by those who possess the patience to explore all avenues. Patience allows you to cast a wider net, uncovering those unadvertised opportunities, shattering the barriers imposed by the "old boys network."

It grants you the opportunity to grow and acquire the necessary experience, even if initial rejections come your way.

"THE MOST
REWARDING AND
FULFILLING
POSITIONS OFTEN
LIE HIDDEN
BENEATH THE
SURFACE,"

Moreover, with organisations increasingly emphasising diverse and inclusive boards, patience enables you to align with the right fit, where your unique talents and perspectives can truly shine.

So, remember, in the quest for a NED role, be patient, persevere, and unlock the extraordinary possibilities that await those who are willing to wait.



I W I S H I K N E W

04



THE CRITICAL ART OF
ASSESSING PEERS AND
EXECUTIVES.

In the realm of non-executive directorship, a key aspect often overlooked is the careful assessment of your fellow board members and executives. The composition and dynamics of the board can significantly impact your effectiveness and influence within the organisation. Therefore, it is imperative to delve beyond surface impressions and truly understand the individuals with whom you will collaborate.

"DELVE BEYOND SURFACE."

Taking the time to assess your peers on the board allows you to gauge their expertise, experience, and perspectives. Are they seasoned professionals who bring valuable insights to the table, or do they lack the necessary competence?

Furthermore, evaluating their communication and interpersonal skills helps determine if they foster a constructive and inclusive boardroom environment or hinder productive discussions.

Equally important is assessing the executive team. Understanding their leadership style, strategic vision, and track record is essential. Are they receptive to feedback and open to collaboration, or do they exhibit a dictatorial approach?

Evaluating their decision-making processes, risk management capabilities, and ethical standards provides crucial insights into the organisation's overall governance. By carefully scrutinising the individuals on the board and the executive team, you empower yourself to make informed judgments and contribute effectively.

Building a cohesive and high-performing team requires alignment of values, shared goals, and mutual respect. Additionally, this assessment enables you to identify any potential red flags or conflicts of interest that may impact your ability to fulfill your fiduciary duties.

In the world of non-executive directorship, the art of assessing board members and executives can make the difference between a harmonious and successful collaboration or a tumultuous and ineffective one. Embrace the responsibility of evaluating your colleagues, as it paves the way for strategic decision-making, effective governance, and ultimately, the organisation's long-term success.

"...VALUES, SHARED GOALS, AND MUTUAL RESPECT."



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*"TO PLANT A GARDEN IS TO BELIEVE IN
TOMORROW."*

”

AUDREY HEPBURN

I W I S H I K N E W

05



THROW
YOUR NET WIDE

When seeking a non-executive director (NED) role, it's crucial to adopt a broad perspective and be prepared to embrace a wide variety of opportunities. The NED landscape offers a rich tapestry of options, often beyond the conventional paths or industries you might initially consider. By expanding your horizons and venturing into uncharted territories, you open yourself up to exciting prospects that can enrich your experience and broaden your skill set.

"MANY HIDDEN
GEMS REMAIN
CONCEALED
FROM THE
MAINSTREAM
CHANNELS. "

Don't limit yourself to the familiar or the expected. Take the time to explore different sectors, organisations of varying sizes, and even start-ups. Each opportunity presents a unique set of challenges and rewards, allowing you to develop new insights, learn from diverse perspectives, and make valuable connections outside your usual network. While some NED roles are widely advertised, many hidden gems remain concealed from the mainstream channels.

Networking becomes paramount in this scenario—actively engage with industry professionals, attend relevant conferences, and join specialised communities where insider knowledge and exclusive opportunities abound. Be open to unconventional paths and consider interim or part-time NED positions, which can provide valuable exposure while accommodating your other commitments. Such roles can be stepping stones toward more significant opportunities or avenues to gain invaluable experience if you are transitioning from a different professional background.



Embracing a wide variety of opportunities not only increases your chances of finding the perfect NED role but also allows you to contribute your expertise across different organisations and sectors. It fosters personal growth, broadens your perspective, and enhances your adaptability—a crucial trait in the ever-evolving corporate landscape. So, cast your net wide, seek out the unexpected, and embark on a journey of discovery. The world of NED opportunities is vast, waiting to unveil its treasures to those who dare to explore beyond the familiar.

I W I S H I K N E W

06



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER –
DO YOUR RESEARCH

In the quest for a non-executive director (NED) role, one cannot underestimate the power of research. It is essential to arm yourself with knowledge before exploring any opportunity. A thorough understanding of the organisation, its industry, and the specific role you are pursuing can make all the difference in your success.

Start by delving into the company's background, its mission, and values. What is their market position? What are their key challenges and opportunities? Familiarise yourself with their financial health, recent performance, and any significant milestones or controversies. This information provides a solid foundation for assessing the organisation's potential alignment with your skills, goals, and values.

Dig deeper into the industry landscape. Stay abreast of the latest trends, regulations, and competitive dynamics. This broader context allows you to demonstrate your industry knowledge and highlight how you can contribute to the organisation's strategic direction.



Furthermore, research the specific NED role you are interested in. Understand the responsibilities, expectations, and key attributes sought by organisations. Identify any specific qualifications or experience they prioritise and evaluate how your own background aligns with those requirements.

"IT EMPOWERS YOU."

Don't stop at the surface-level research. Seek out current or former NEDs, employees, or industry experts who can provide insights into the organisation's culture, governance practices, and board dynamics. This insider knowledge helps you gauge whether the opportunity is a good fit for your aspirations and working style. Remember, research is not a one-time endeavour. Stay updated on industry news and organisational developments as you progress through the selection process. It demonstrates your genuine interest, preparedness, and commitment to making a meaningful impact. In the competitive world of NED roles, research sets you apart. It empowers you to ask insightful questions, showcase your expertise, and articulate how you can add value. So, invest the time and effort in thorough research, and unlock the true potential of informed decision-making in your NED journey.

I W I S H I K N E W

07



EDUCATE
YOURSELF

In the realm of non-executive directorship, a key pillar of success lies in understanding and embracing the principles of corporate governance. Educating yourself on corporate governance empowers you to navigate the complexities of board dynamics, ensure ethical practices, and contribute effectively to the organisation's long-term success.

Begin by familiarising yourself with the fundamental concepts and frameworks of corporate governance. Explore widely accepted guidelines such as the principles set forth by organisations or industry-specific codes of best practices. Understanding these principles provides a solid foundation for your governance journey.

Delve into the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern corporate governance in your jurisdiction. Familiarise yourself with the obligations, responsibilities, and liabilities associated with being a non-executive director.

Stay updated on any changes or updates to the governance landscape to ensure compliance and mitigate potential risks. Broaden your knowledge by studying real-life case studies and examining both success stories and governance failures.



Analyze the factors that contribute to effective governance structures and those that lead to shortcomings. This critical analysis equips you with a discerning eye to identify and address governance gaps within the organisations you serve.

Stay informed about emerging trends and evolving best practices in corporate governance. Attend conferences, seminars, and workshops dedicated to governance topics.

Engage in discussions with fellow directors, governance experts, and industry thought leaders to expand your understanding and challenge your perspectives.

In addition to theoretical knowledge, seek practical experience by actively participating in governance-related activities. Consider joining committees, working groups, or non-profit boards where you can gain hands-on experience and observe different governance models in action.

Remember that corporate governance is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Different organisations have unique governance structures, cultures, and challenges.

Adaptability and a willingness to learn from each experience will prove invaluable as you contribute to boards with diverse compositions and objectives.

By immersing yourself in the principles and practices of corporate governance, you become a well-rounded and effective non-executive director.

Your knowledge will enhance your decision-making abilities, enable you to fulfill your fiduciary duties, and ultimately shape the organisation's trajectory in an ethical and sustainable manner.

Embrace the opportunity to educate yourself in corporate governance, and unlock the transformative power it holds in your governance journey.

"YOUR KNOWLEDGE WILL ENHANCE YOUR DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES, ENABLE YOU TO FULFILL YOUR FIDUCIARY DUTIES, AND ULTIMATELY SHAPE THE ORGANISATION'S TRAJECTORY IN AN ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER."





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*"PRESERVERENCE
IS POWER"*

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I W I S H I K N E W

08



ENGAGE YOUR NETWORK

In the pursuit of a non-executive director (NED) role, it's crucial to leverage the strength of public engagement and activate your professional network. By going public and actively engaging with relevant stakeholders, you position yourself for greater visibility, expanded opportunities, and valuable connections.

Firstly, embrace public engagement by sharing your expertise and insights through various channels. Write thought-provoking articles or blog posts on topics related to corporate governance, leadership, or industry trends. Speak at conferences, webinars, or panel discussions to showcase your knowledge and establish yourself as a thought leader. Engage with industry forums, social media platforms, and online communities, participating in meaningful discussions and sharing valuable resources. Such public engagement not only enhances your personal brand but also demonstrates your commitment to continuous learning and contributing to the broader professional community.



Simultaneously, activate your network by proactively reaching out to individuals who can support your NED aspirations. Connect with industry peers, former colleagues, mentors, or professionals within your extended network. Share your career goals and express your interest in NED opportunities. Leverage their insights, advice, and referrals to tap into the hidden job market and gain access to unadvertised or upcoming roles.

"SUCH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT NOT ONLY ENHANCES YOUR PERSONAL BRAND BUT ALSO DEMONSTRATES YOUR COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE BROADER PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY."

Additionally, consider joining professional associations, alumni networks, or governance-focused organisations, as they often provide networking events and platforms to connect with like-minded individuals and decision-makers.

Beyond simply expanding your network, actively nurture those relationships by offering assistance, sharing valuable resources, and staying connected through regular communication. Building authentic and mutually beneficial connections opens doors to collaborative opportunities, introductions to influential individuals, and insights into upcoming NED positions.

Remember, public engagement and network activation should be approached with authenticity, integrity, and a genuine desire to contribute and learn. It's not about self-promotion alone but rather about establishing meaningful connections, exchanging knowledge, and building a reputation as a trusted and competent professional.

"... UNLOCK THE
DOORS TO YOUR
DESIRED NED ROLE."

By harnessing the power of public engagement and activating your network, you amplify your presence in the NED landscape. Your visibility, credibility, and access to opportunities increase exponentially. So, step into the spotlight, engage with the wider community, and leverage the strength of your network to unlock the doors to your desired NED role.



I W I S H I K N E W

09



HELP ORGANISATIONS
FLOURISH - EVEN IF THE
ROLE IS NOT FOR YOU

You may not always be the perfect fit for a specific role within an organisation, that doesn't mean you can't provide valuable advice to help them thrive. Here are some ways to offer guidance and support, even when the role isn't meant for you:

1. **Share your expertise:** Draw upon your knowledge and experience to offer insights and suggestions. Identify areas where the organisation can improve its processes, operations, or strategic direction. Provide recommendations based on industry best practices or innovative approaches you've encountered in your career.
2. **Offer a fresh perspective:** Sometimes, an external viewpoint can shed new light on challenges and opportunities. Analyse the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, and potential blind spots. Present alternative ideas or strategies that could enhance their performance or address specific issues.
3. **Provide constructive feedback:** If you've had interactions or experiences with the organisation, offer feedback on areas where they excel and areas where they can improve. Be specific and provide actionable recommendations to help them overcome any identified shortcomings or capitalise on their strengths.
4. **Connect them with resources:** Utilise your network to connect the organisation with experts, consultants, or other professionals who may be better suited for the role they are seeking to fill. By making introductions and facilitating connections, you help them access the talent and knowledge they need to succeed.
5. **Be a mentor or advisor:** Offer your guidance on a more personal level by mentoring or advising individuals within the organisation. Share your insights, provide career guidance, and help them navigate challenges. Your mentorship can have a lasting impact on their professional development and contribute to the overall growth of the organisation.

"YOUR MENTORSHIP CAN HAVE A LASTING IMPACT..."

Remember, providing advice and support to organisations, even when the role isn't for you, showcases your professionalism, generosity, and genuine commitment to their success. Your willingness to contribute can lead to long-term relationships, future collaborations, and potential opportunities down the line.

I W I S H I K N E W

10

BE PROACTIVE AND TAKE A
LONG-TERM VIEW

10- I WISH I KNEW

To excel in any endeavor, including seeking non-executive director (NED) roles, it is crucial to adopt a proactive mindset and embrace a long-term view.

By taking the initiative and thinking beyond immediate gains, you position yourself for greater success and fulfillment. Here's how you can embody proactivity and long-term vision:

1. Anticipate and adapt: Stay ahead of the curve by anticipating industry trends, regulatory changes, and evolving governance practices. Proactively seek opportunities to enhance your skills and knowledge through continuous learning, professional development programs, and networking. Adaptability and a willingness to embrace change will set you apart as a forward-thinking NED candidate.

2. Cultivate relationships: Networking isn't just about finding opportunities; it's about building lasting relationships. Proactively engage with industry professionals, attend relevant conferences and events, and participate in governance-focused communities. By cultivating genuine connections and nurturing those relationships over time, you expand your support network and increase your chances of accessing long-term opportunities.

3. Invest in your personal brand: Establishing a strong personal brand is an ongoing process. Proactively build your online presence through a professional website, active engagement on social media, and thought leadership content. Consistently showcase your expertise, values, and unique perspective. Over time, your reputation as a trusted and knowledgeable NED will attract attention and open doors to desirable roles.



4. Seek board diversity: Embrace the importance of diversity and inclusion in boardrooms. Proactively advocate for diverse perspectives and challenge the status quo.

Encourage organisations to prioritize gender, ethnic, and experiential diversity. By actively supporting and promoting diverse board compositions, you contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of organisations.

5. Foster strategic alliances: Identify potential collaborators, organisations, or stakeholders that align with your values and long-term goals. Proactively seek opportunities for strategic alliances and partnerships that can amplify your impact. By joining forces with like-minded individuals or organisations, you can drive meaningful change and create a positive ripple effect within the governance landscape.

6. Embrace continuous improvement: Strive for excellence by continually evaluating and enhancing your skills and knowledge. Seek feedback from peers, mentors, and trusted advisors to identify areas for growth. Actively engage in self-reflection and seek opportunities for personal and professional development that align with your long-term vision.

By proactively taking initiative and embracing a long-term view, you position yourself as a proactive, forward-thinking NED candidate.

Your commitment to continuous improvement, strategic alliances, and fostering diversity will not only enhance your own success but also contribute to the betterment of organisations and the governance landscape as a whole.

"YOUR
REPUTATION AS A
TRUSTED AND
KNOWLEDGEABLE
NED WILL
ATTRACT
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OPEN DOORS TO
DESIRABLE ROLES."

VOCASO
INSPIRING LEADERS

Bonus Insights

BY VOCASO

EDUCATING ONESELF WITH
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATING ONESELF IN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WHEN CONSIDERING A CAREER AS A NED

When considering a career as a Non-Executive Director (NED), educating oneself in corporate governance is of paramount importance. Corporate governance refers to the systems and processes by which companies are directed and controlled. It encompasses the relationship between a company's management, its board of directors, its shareholders, and other stakeholders. Here are some reasons why educating oneself in corporate governance is crucial for a career as an NED:

01

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

NEDs have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the company and its stakeholders. Understanding the legal and regulatory framework surrounding corporate governance ensures compliance with laws and regulations and helps NEDs avoid legal and reputational risks.

02

Boardroom Effectiveness

NEDs play a vital role in the effective functioning of the board. They bring independent perspectives, challenge management decisions, and provide objective advice. By understanding corporate governance principles, NEDs can actively contribute to strategic discussions, decision-making processes, and the overall effectiveness of the board.

03

Risk Management

Effective corporate governance includes robust risk management processes. NEDs need to identify, assess, and mitigate risks that could impact the company's performance or reputation. By educating oneself in corporate governance, NEDs can understand risk governance frameworks and contribute to the development of risk management strategies.

04

Stakeholder Engagement

Corporate governance emphasises the importance of engaging with various stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and communities. NEDs need to understand stakeholder expectations, concerns, and interests to ensure that the company acts responsibly and ethically. Education in corporate governance helps NEDs navigate stakeholder relationships and address their diverse needs effectively.

05

Ethical Decision Making

Corporate governance promotes ethical behaviour and integrity within an organisation. NEDs must act ethically and ensure that the company upholds high standards of corporate social responsibility. Education in corporate governance equips NEDs with the knowledge and tools to make ethical decisions and establish an ethical culture within the company.

06

Board Committees

NEDs often serve on various board committees, such as audit, compensation, or nomination committees. Understanding corporate governance principles provides NEDs with the necessary knowledge to fulfill their responsibilities effectively within these committees and contribute to the overall governance structure.

07

Professional Credibility

Being well-versed in corporate governance enhances a NED's professional credibility and reputation. It demonstrates a commitment to excellence, continuous learning, and best practices. Companies and stakeholders value NEDs who possess a solid understanding of corporate governance principles.

In conclusion, educating oneself in corporate governance is critical for aspiring NEDs. It ensures compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, enhances boardroom effectiveness, strengthens risk management capabilities, fosters stakeholder engagement, promotes ethical decision-making, enables effective committee participation, and enhances professional credibility. By acquiring knowledge in corporate governance, NEDs can make meaningful contributions to the organisations they serve and uphold high standards of governance and accountability.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT US

A photograph of a person standing on the peak of a grassy cliff, looking out over the ocean at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The ocean is a deep blue-green color.

VOCASO
INSPIRING LEADERS

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*If I have seen further than others,
it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.*

SIR ISAAC NEWTON

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FROM EXECUTIVE TO NON-EXECUTIVE. WE OPEN DOORS AND CONNECT.



WHO WE ARE

We are a curated community of executives keen to transition into Non-Executive Directors and make a difference to growth companies.

VOCASO was born out of the need to provide a route for talented and diverse senior leaders to become Board Advisors. For these individuals options are limited.

We are a subscription based platform to help develop board careers and offer business founders access to tenured expertise to accelerate their growth.

WHAT YOU GET AS A MEMBER WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE

- ✓ Roles
- ✓ Online events
- ✓ Content
- ✓ Social Impact programme
- ✓ Connections to growth companies
- ✓ In-person events
- ✓ Coaching*
- ✓ Learning & Development*
- ✓ Challenge trips*

*additional cost to annual fee

WHY US?

Creating connections that matter! We have a people-first mindset. We are equally invested in delivering impact and making introductions that flourish. At VOCASO we will hold your hand during your transitional period, from executive to NED, leveraging our platform, our connections, assisting with your bio and creating a market for you based on your profile.

THANK YOU FOR READING.

If you would like to be considered for our community, we would love to hear from you.

Get in touch

hello@vocaso.com

15 minute intro call [click here calendly](#)
vocaso.com



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