

# Board and Executive Collaboration: Components of a Secure Platform

Today's workplace is no longer limited to traditional definitions or boundaries. Companies are constantly adapting to new working models and exploring innovative ways to tailor them to the needs of their organization. The adoption of collaboration tools has skyrocketed as companies try to ensure that productivity and efficiency remain high, whether in a remote, in-office or hybrid work environment.

Many of these newly adopted collaboration tools are general-purpose solutions that meet the requirements of employee communication and collaboration well enough. But they may not be appropriate for the top layer of your organization — the board and executives.

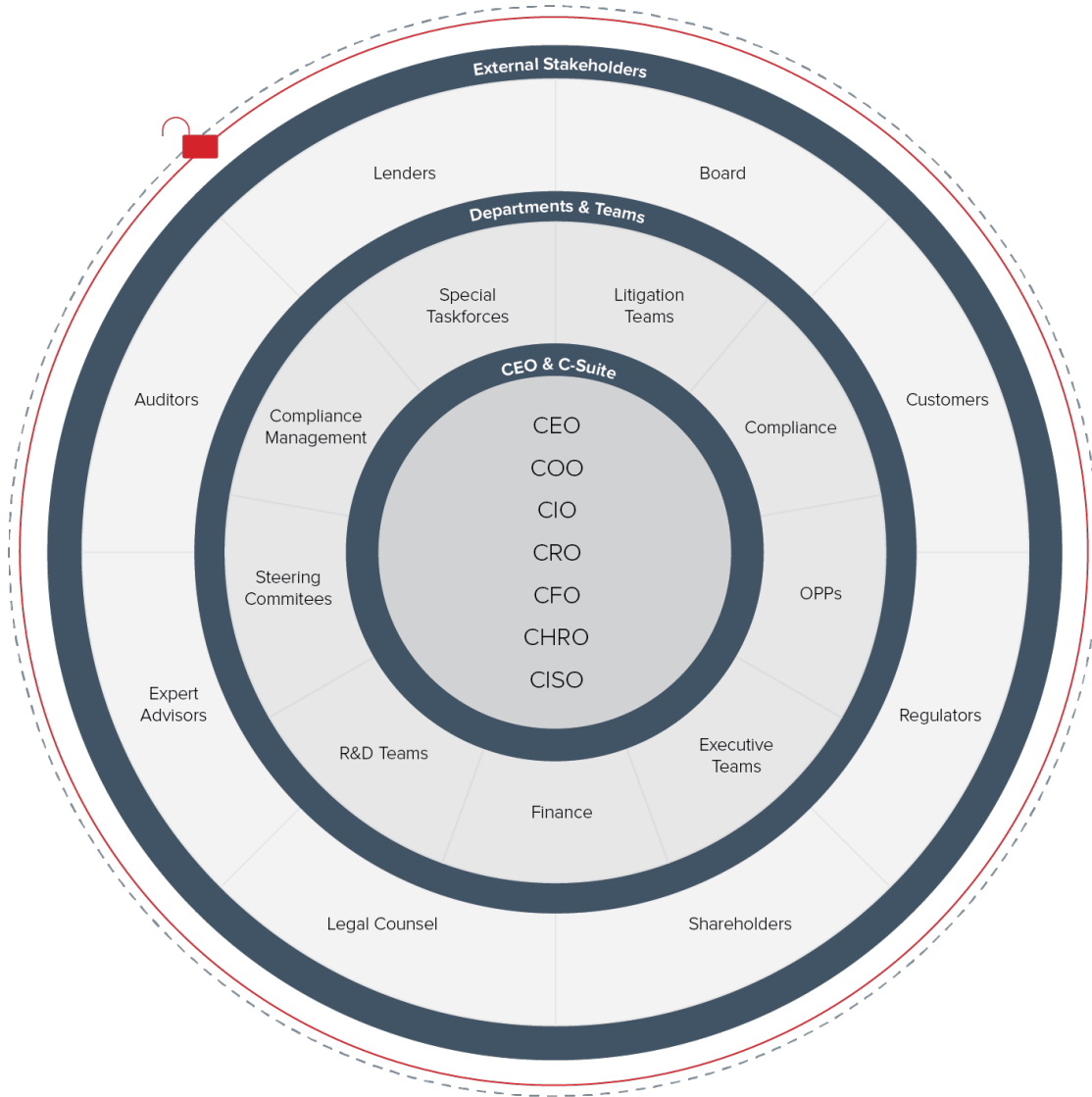
Your board and executives deal with information that is often highly sensitive and that consequently has higher costs of exposure. Think of the reputational, legal and financial repercussions if a classified document leaked because it was shared by executives on a general-purpose communication tool. The impact could be catastrophic. Recent cyberattacks have highlighted the importance of protecting an organization's most sensitive data. General-purpose collaboration tools are unable to offer the level of protection that sensitive information requires.

**It's critical to transition board and executive collaboration to the appropriate tools. This guide will help you:**

- Investigate the effectiveness and identify the shortcomings of your existing tools for senior teams
- Explore robust technologies that can help protect your organization's most sensitive targets — your board and executives
- Establish an agile and scalable platform that can help your leadership team be ready for anything

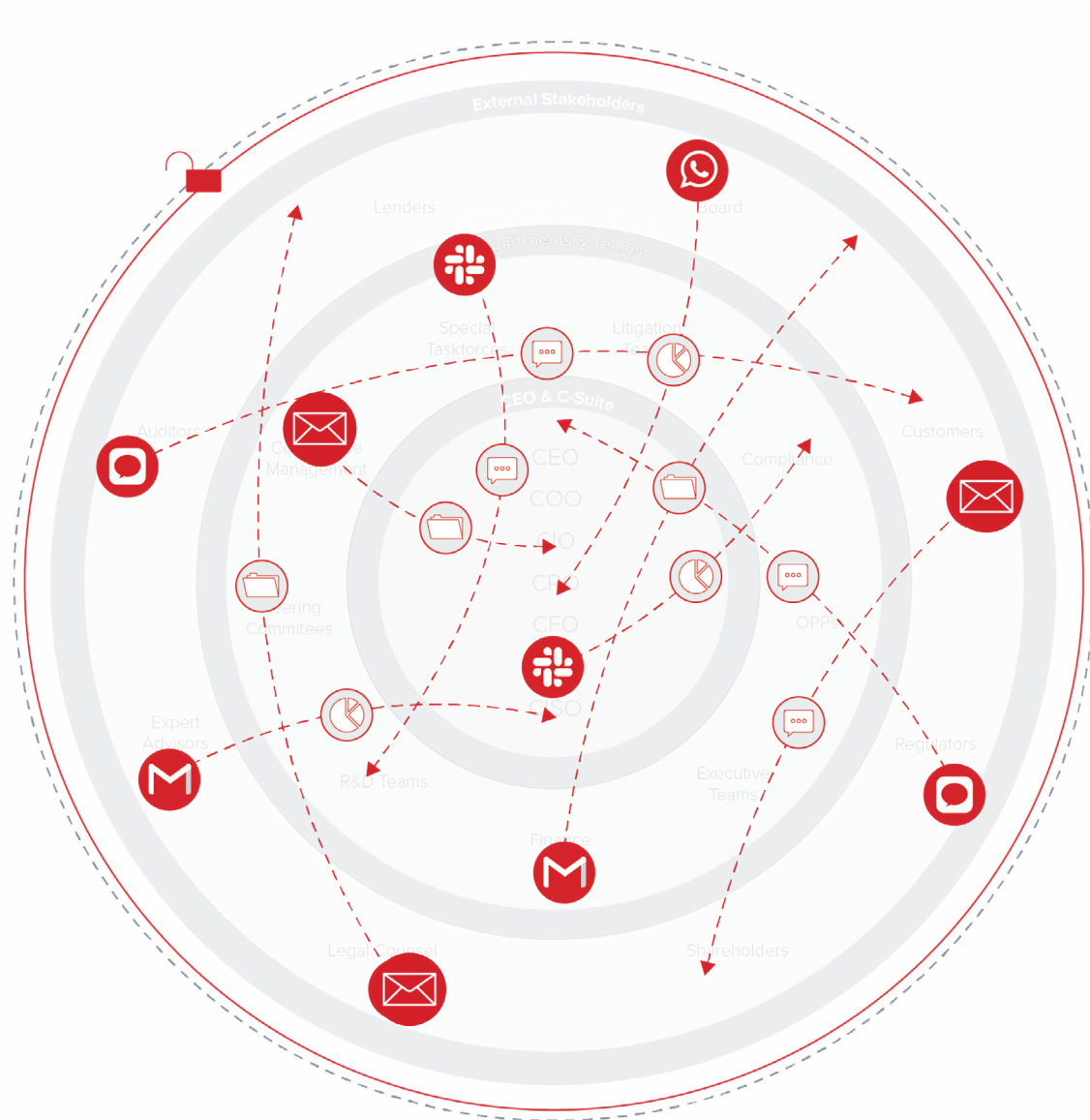
## Risks in Your Board and Executive Team’s Daily Communications

Navigating uncertain times requires careful coordination and collaboration between boards and leadership teams. This spans every business unit and includes collaboration with external stakeholders.



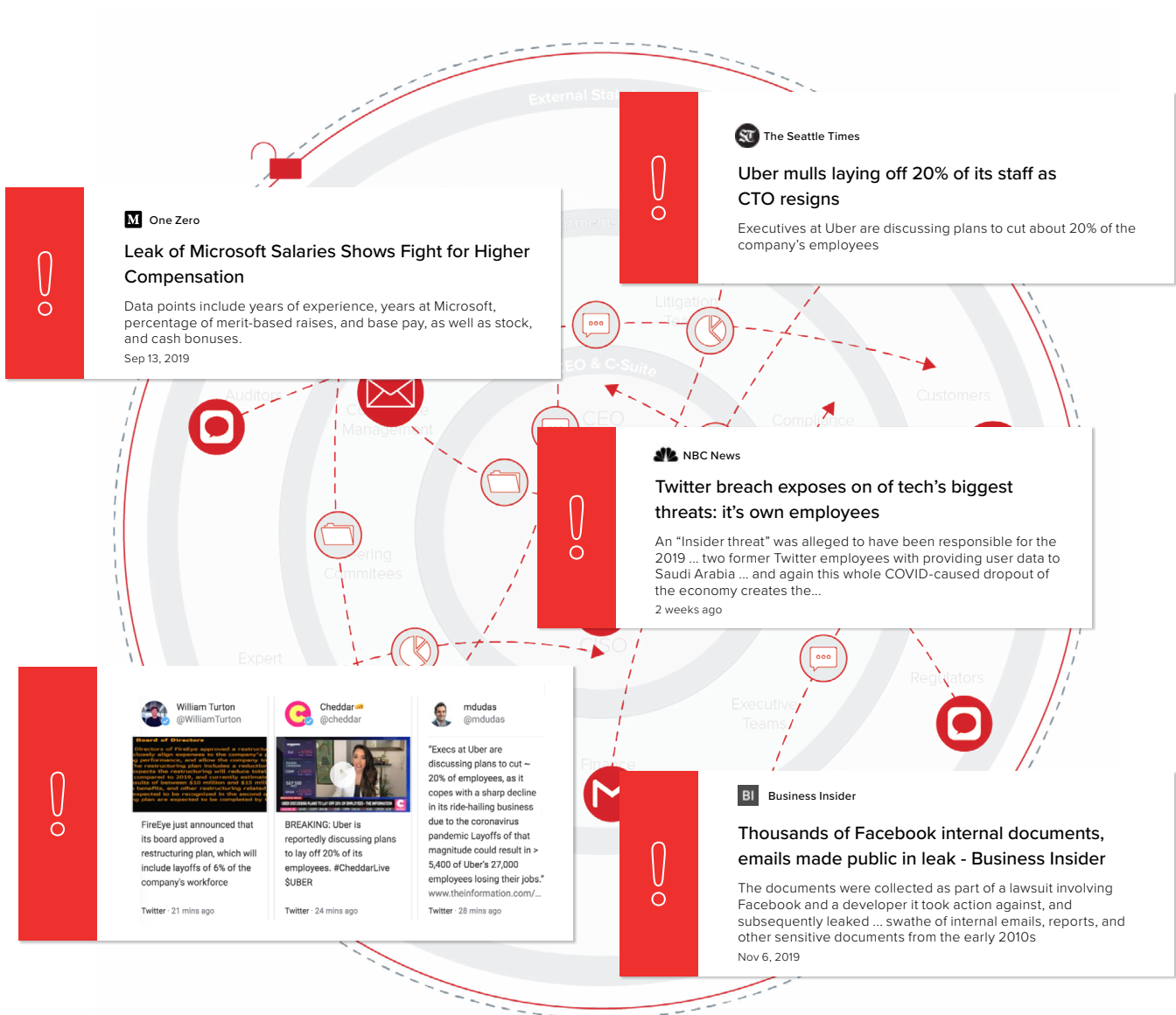
An organization-wide lens of stakeholders involved in governance who frequently engage in workflows containing sensitive data

The evolving approach to new challenges and potential crises means that leaders are often making tough business decisions on information that can change overnight. This leads to daily, weekly and quarterly exchanges of confidential information inside and outside the firewall. Creating millions of touchpoints across email, Slack, file-sharing systems, text message and other channels exposes organizations to cyber and discoverability risk.



Millions of touchpoints across enterprise-wide tools increase discoverability and cyber risk

Costly leaks occur when the risks of using vulnerable communication channels aren't well understood. Without a clear policy, stringent controls and the right technology solutions, teams working with sensitive information often rely on email or general-purpose collaboration tools because they don't fully understand the risks associated with them.



Vulnerable communication tools can cause irrecoverable damages — financial and reputational

## The Inherent Risks of General-Purpose Collaboration Tools

While boards and executive teams rely on broadly connected tools such as Microsoft Teams, Box, SharePoint, Slack and G Suite for some of their daily tasks, these tools should only be used in the right situations. Strategic conversations around possible mergers and acquisitions, financial restructuring, human capital management and other sensitive matters require solutions that support data encryption and privacy shielding.

Common Consumer / Commercial Products	Inherent Data Leakage Risks	Aggregated Risk Factors
WhatsApp	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authentication: does not provide federated identity integration with enterprise customers</li> </ul>
SMS text messages	Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SIM card hijacking attacks</li> <li>Communication not encrypted</li> </ul>
Box and other file-storage systems	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control of data contents resides within customer's reasonability</li> <li>Misconfigured sites can result in data leakage</li> <li>Larger attack targets (past attacks and known vulnerabilities)</li> </ul>
Email	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to account takeover attacks due to poor authentication methods</li> <li>Contents downloaded from webmail platforms are often saved on unencrypted disks</li> <li>Cannot enforce strong user authentication methods such as MFA</li> <li>Email messages can be saved on personal devices without applying encryption at-rest control (full disk encryption solutions such as Microsoft BitLocker, Mac's FileVault are not enabled by default)</li> </ul>
Infrastructure as a Service (AWS, G Suite, Azure)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents are protected individually by data owner</li> <li>Depending on the security policy of the provider, there could be gaps in optimizing configuration to the latest standards</li> <li>Misclassified data or out of date policy can result in unintentional data leakage</li> </ul>
Enterprise file sharing systems (Citrix file sharing, Slack)	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>File share locations are left open beyond original information exchange period</li> <li>Files can be downloaded to unencrypted workspace such as local hard disks</li> </ul>

## 4 Critical Components Needed for Boards and Executives to Collaborate Securely

### 1 Risk and legal controls

Mitigating risk through limited discoverability is required for any secure collaboration solution.

- The communication platform should equip users with the ability to either retain or destroy sensitive conversations, documents and note-taking when necessary.
- Lost devices, especially those of senior executives in the organization, must be wiped clean of all sensitive data.
- Confidential meeting records, messages and notes must have the ability to expire after a designated period, as defined by the policies set by your organization's security leaders.

### 2 User controls to protect sensitive information

The ability to set user permissions is critical to protecting sensitive information. Additional nuances must be considered at the board and senior leadership levels:

- Executives and board members need to shield information from system administrators to ensure that classified information remains truly classified. They should also extend special permissions to the general counsel or other privileged parties when necessary.
- User permissions must work just as securely with external third parties (e.g., lawyers, auditors, consultants).

### 3 Robust data encryption

Encryption capabilities are essential for transmitting secure data and documents. Encryption translates data into a cryptographic key or a string of characters to protect the information in transit.

- When using cloud-based video platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, meeting links should be shared only on encrypted platforms to mitigate the risk of sensitive information falling into the wrong hands.
- Board members and executives should have access to encrypted tools for secure one-to-one or group messaging, for sharing documents, and for secure board communication and meeting management.

### 4 Seamless user experience

Organizations must not underestimate the importance of integration and user experience when building secure collaboration workflows. Secure tools must be able to mirror the existing workflows of today's boards and leadership teams. Limited adoption of a secure solution leaves sensitive communications vulnerable to the same risks as no solution.

- Secure messaging platforms should feel as seamless as email or text messaging.
- Minute-taking, voting and compliance reporting should all integrate with the board's management software.
- Permissioned users should be able to collaborate in real time.

# Protect Confidential Information at the Most Senior Levels of Your Organization With Diligent






















In this evolving landscape, you're only as secure as your lowest common denominator. Boards and executives operate at an information tier that requires a heightened level of privacy and security — one that general-purpose collaboration tools cannot provide.



The information being shared today is more sensitive than ever. What happens when this information ends up in the wrong hands? Diligent's solutions are purpose-built to protect the most sensitive data and workflows while enabling efficiency.

## Board & Leadership Collaboration From Diligent:

- Is a fully integrated and encrypted solution
- Features secure, real-time messaging, document-sharing and editing
- Facilitates easy integration and adoption

Tasks	Diligent	Slack	Teams	Email
Share agendas and sensitive content for executive team meetings				
Collaborate on business continuity and contingency plans				
Discuss major corporate initiatives, like restructuring or layoff plans				
Communicate with your board, executive team or outside counsel				
Plan organizational strategy or market activity, like M&A projects				
Review press release statements before going public				
Access resources from anywhere using your mobile device				
Collaborate on daily activities and projects				
Connect with IT support for help with technology challenges				
Celebrate team wins, team members' birthdays and other milestones				
Web conferencing with full team or department participation				



## Drive Board and Leadership Effectiveness and Mitigate Risk While Collaborating Remotely

Communications within the Diligent ecosystem are secure and private. Data, documents and workflows managed in Diligent are shielded from the rest of the organization, minimizing discoverability. This reduces internal IT costs, as technology teams don't have to spend on infrastructure for security or on personnel for additional support.



### Communicate securely

Enable safe and secure communications between board members and executives with total control of data retention.



### Manage access to information

Completely lock down the security of your data at rest and in transit with strong encryption and granular access controls.



### Protect sensitive data and workflows

Secure the creation, editing, storage and sharing of highly sensitive materials while collaborating with internal and external shareholders.



### Mitigate risk of security breaches

Diligent's products are backed by the world's leading security standards with secure data centers located around the world.

Diligent's industry-leading suite of solutions changes how work gets done at the executive and board levels. Leaders rely on Diligent to drive accountability and transparency, while also addressing stakeholder priorities. Our comprehensive, integrated suite of secure applications means all workflows fall under the same security umbrella, driving operational efficiency and mitigating cyber risk.

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“[Diligent] helps ensure important messages don't get lost, and it provides us with another layer of protection knowing communications are being made on the securest platform available.”

**Ben Backberg**  
Senior Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary, General Mills

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## Collaborate Securely With Diligent

### Encryption:

With multiple levels of encryption, Diligent tools encrypt and decrypt data several times while information is in transit, providing an even higher standard of security than similar tools.

### User Permissions:

Strict user permissioning protects the data shared via Diligent Messenger, Diligent Secure File Sharing and Diligent Boards.

### Compliance:

A secure, single source of truth for executive teams mitigates risk by enabling transparency into compliance obligations and expirations.

### Risk and Legal Controls:

Tools like Diligent Boards and Diligent Messenger allow messages and notes to be set to expire after a designated period set by the general counsel, corporate secretary or CISO.

### Seamless User Experience:

Workflows mirror the communication and collaboration tools with which boards and management teams are already familiar.

## Board and Executive Use Cases

**1**

### **Support board meetings and global leadership meetings and operations**

The accelerating pace of change has exacerbated the need for a centralized platform that hosts executive teams' meeting materials, news updates, task managers, documents, data rooms and messages, all in one secure place. Organizations of all sizes use Diligent to streamline and secure their board and executives' daily meetings and operations.

**2**

### **Collaborate with external stakeholders**

Protecting the highly confidential exchange of ideas is a top priority for board and executives. Diligent provides an unmatched security infrastructure to ensure executives and leadership teams can collaborate with trusted partners effectively.

**3**

### **Ensure confidentiality on sensitive matters**

Executives and leadership teams look to Diligent to protect information shared during regular business meetings, such as senior leadership team meetings, sales forecasts, product R&D and internal strategy.

**4**

### **Shield intellectual property outside the firewall**

Forward-looking institutions rely on Diligent to protect their highest-level intellectual property when it's shared outside the organization, giving individual salespeople, customer success reps and senior leadership their own personal folders to use when sharing documents externally.

**5**

### **Access crisis management and business continuity information**

Diligent is a central repository for boards and executives to access scenario plans, external communications or supply chain updates in real time. It also provides a secure environment for critical information exchanges, reports and collaborative decisions.

**6**

### **Curate insights and market intelligence**

Diligent's curated personalized intelligence keeps leadership informed about industry news and can also be extended across the organization to keep employees and stakeholders abreast of market trends and competitors.

**7**

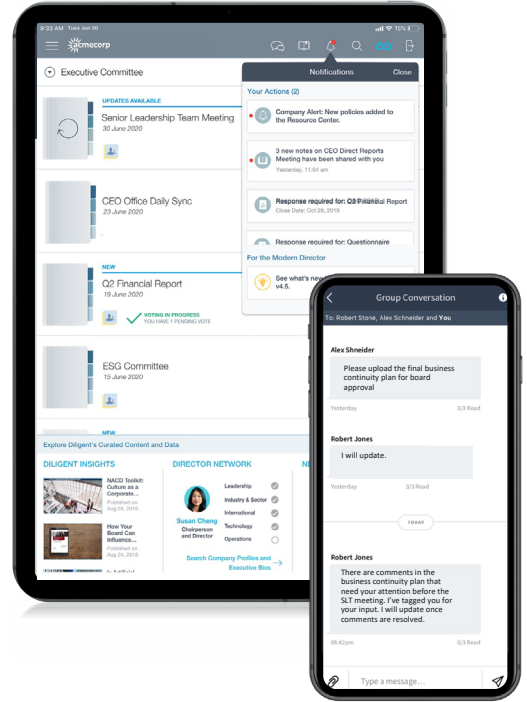
### **Safeguard merger and acquisition data**

Effective M&A and corporate development require the ability to collect, segregate and leverage competitive intelligence. Diligent enables teams to manage this highly sensitive information, provides teams with control over access to this data on a need-to-know basis, and facilitates easy coordination during postmerger integration for selective groups within and potentially outside the company.



“We had to communicate highly sensitive government directives to the board prior to [their] becoming public knowledge, and collaborating via Diligent was reassuring. We didn’t have sensitive data moving around our email network, and this meant we kept valuable patient data and system information secure and confidential.”

Dauniika Puklowski  
Director, Board Administration Services Ltd,  
Board & Committee Effectiveness, Professional Services, New Zealand



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