THE OBJECTIVE IN CORPORATE FINANCE

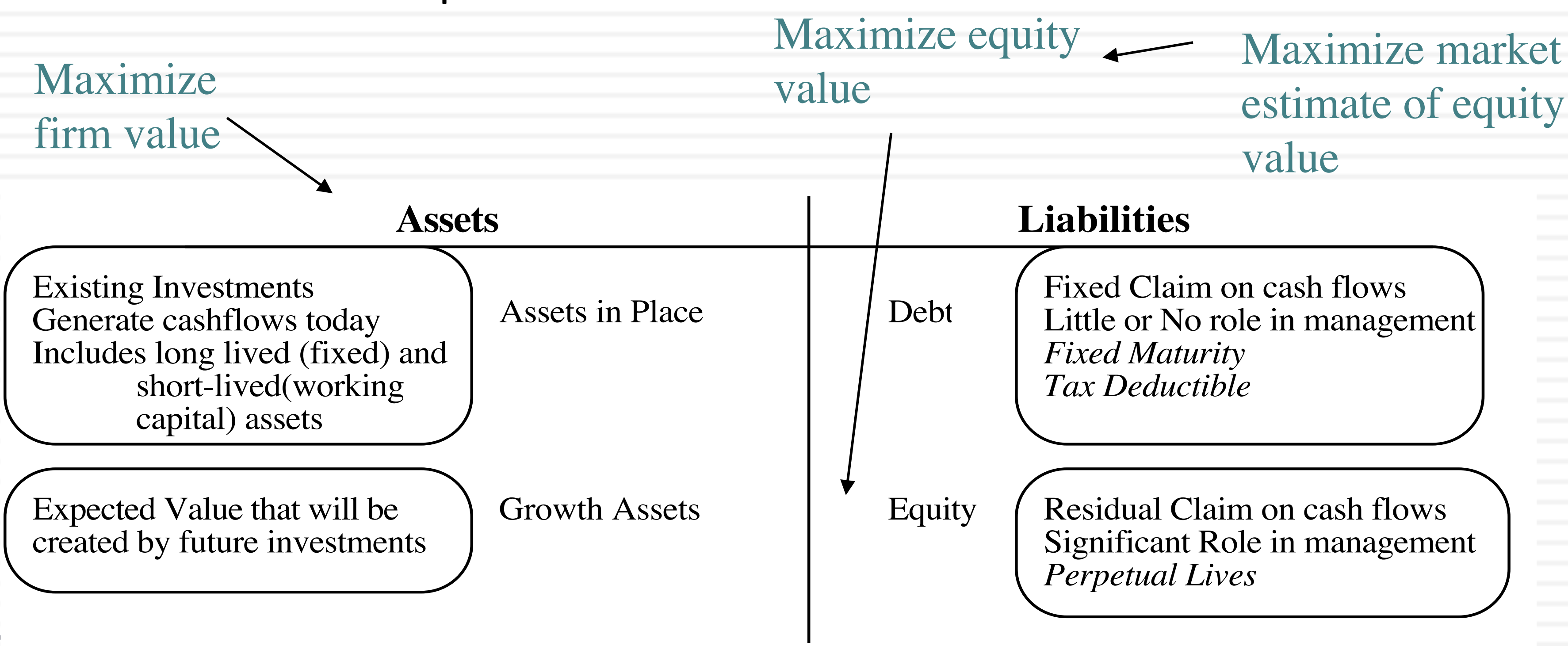
"If you don't know where you are going, it does'nt matter how you get there"

First Principles

- Maximize the value of the business (firm)
  - **The Investment Decision** Invest in assets that earn a return greater than the minimum acceptable hurdle rate
    - The **hurdle rate** should reflect the riskiness of the investment and the mix of debt and equity used to fund it.
    - The **return** should reflect the magnitude and the timing of the cashflows as well as all side effects.
  - **The Financing Decision** Find the right kind of debt for your firm and the right mix of debt and equity to fund your operations
    - The **optimal mix** of debt and equity maximizes firm value
    - The **right kind** of debt matches the tenor of your assets
  - **The Dividend Decision** If you cannot find investments that make your minimum acceptable rate, return the cash to owners of your business
    - **How much cash** you can return depends upon current & potential investment opportunities
    - **How you choose** to return cash to the owners will depend on whether they prefer dividends or buybacks

The Objective in Decision Making

- In traditional corporate finance, the objective in decision making is to maximize the value of the firm.
- A narrower objective is to maximize stockholder wealth. When the stock is traded and markets are viewed to be efficient, the objective is to maximize the stock price.



Maximizing Stock Prices is too "narrow" an objective: A preliminary response

- Maximizing stock price is not incompatible with meeting employee needs/objectives. In particular:
  - Employees are often stockholders in many firms
  - Firms that maximize stock price generally are profitable firms that can afford to treat employees well.
- Maximizing stock price does not mean that customers are not critical to success. In most businesses, keeping customers happy is the route to stock price maximization.
- Maximizing stock price does not imply that a company has to be a social outlaw.

Why traditional corporate financial theory focuses on maximizing stockholder wealth.

- Stock price is easily observable and constantly updated (unlike other measures of performance, which may not be as easily observable, and certainly not updated as frequently).
- If investors are rational (are they?), stock prices reflect the wisdom of decisions, short term and long term, instantaneously.
- The objective of stock price performance provides some very elegant theory on:
  - Allocating resources across scarce uses (which investments to take and which ones to reject)
  - how to finance these investments
  - how much to pay in dividends

The Classical Objective Function

STOCKHOLDERS

Hire & fire managers
- Board
- Annual Meeting

Maximize stockholder wealth

Lend Money

No Social Costs

BONDHOLDERS/ LENDERS ⟷ **Managers** ⟷ SOCIETY

Protect bondholder Interests

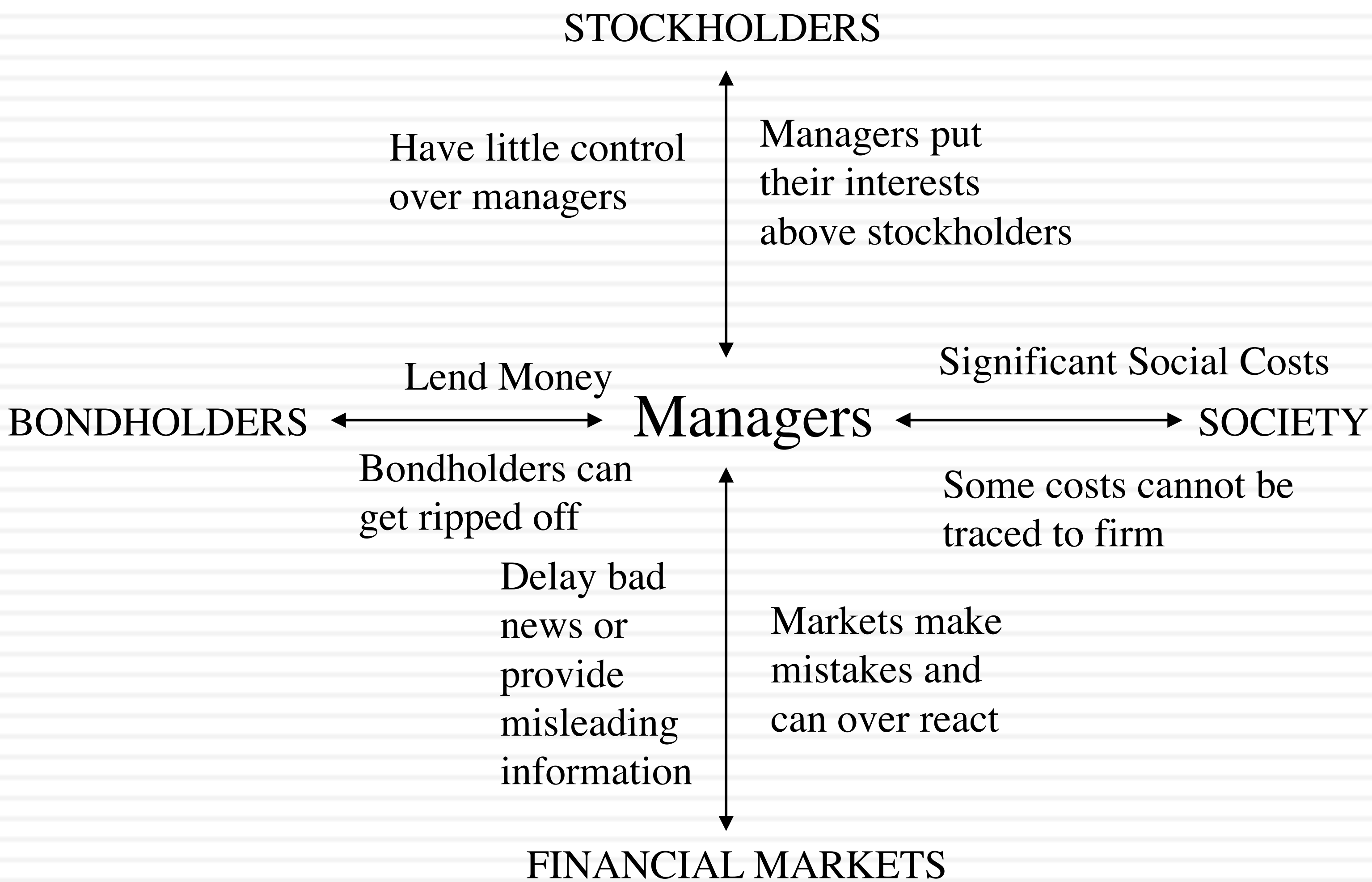
All costs can be traced to firm

Reveal information honestly and on time

Markets are efficient and assess effect on value

FINANCIAL MARKETS

What can go wrong?



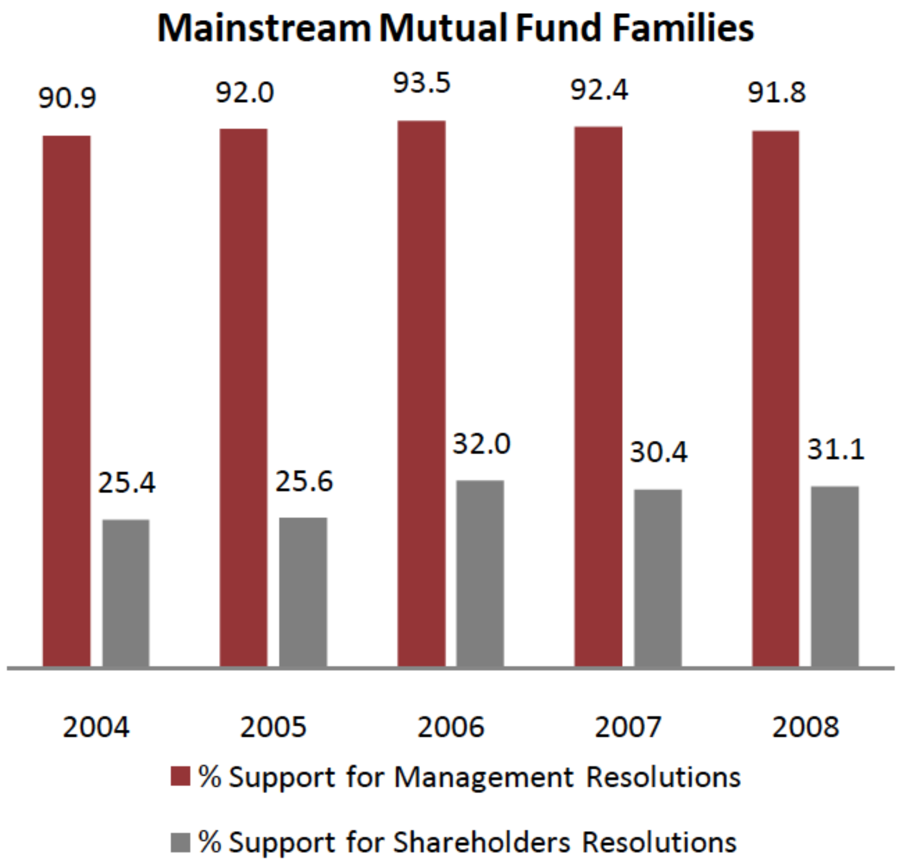
I. Stockholder Interests vs. Management Interests

- In theory: The stockholders have significant control over management. The two mechanisms for disciplining management are the annual meeting and the board of directors. Specifically, we assume that
  - Stockholders who are dissatisfied with managers can not only express their disapproval at the annual meeting, but can use their voting power at the meeting to keep managers in check.
  - The board of directors plays its true role of representing stockholders and acting as a check on management.
- In Practice: Neither mechanism is as effective in disciplining management as theory posits.

The Annual Meeting as a disciplinary venue

- The power of stockholders to act at annual meetings is diluted by three factors
  - Most small stockholders do not go to meetings because the cost of going to the meeting exceeds the value of their holdings.
  - Incumbent management starts off with a clear advantage when it comes to the exercise of proxies. Proxies that are not voted becomes votes for incumbent management.
  - For large stockholders, the path of least resistance, when confronted by managers that they do not like, is to vote with their feet.
- Annual meetings are also tightly scripted and controlled events, making it difficult for outsiders and rebels to bring up issues that are not to the management's liking.

And institutional investors go along with incumbent managers…



Board of Directors as a disciplinary mechanism

- Directors are paid well: In 2010, the median board member at a Fortune 500 company was paid $212,512, with 54% coming in stock and the remaining 46% in cash. If a board member was a non-executive chair, he or she received about $150,000 more in compensation.
- Spend more time on their directorial duties than they used to: A board member worked, on average, about 227.5 hours a year (and that is being generous), or 4.4 hours a week, according to the National Associate of Corporate Directors. Of this, about 24 hours a year are for board meetings. Those numbers are up from what they were a decade ago.
- Even those hours are not very productive: While the time spent on being a director has gone up, a significant portion of that time was spent on making sure that they are legally protected (regulations & lawsuits).
- And they have many loyalties: Many directors serve on three or more boards, and some are full time chief executives of other companies.

The CEO often hand-picks directors..

- CEOs pick directors: A 1992 survey by Korn/Ferry revealed that 74% of companies relied on recommendations from the CEO to come up with new directors and only 16% used an outside search firm. While that number has changed in recent years, CEOs still determine who sits on their boards. While more companies have outsiders involved in picking directors now, CEOs exercise significant influence over the process.
- Directors don't have big equity stakes: Directors often hold only token stakes in their companies. Most directors in companies today still receive more compensation as directors than they gain from their stockholdings. While share ownership is up among directors today, they usually get these shares from the firm (rather than buy them).
- And some directors are CEOs of other firms: Many directors are themselves CEOs of other firms. Worse still, there are cases where CEOs sit on each other's boards.

Directors lack the expertise (and the willingness) to ask the necessary tough questions..

- Robert's Rules of Order? In most boards, the CEO continues to be the chair. Not surprisingly, the CEO sets the agenda, chairs the meeting and controls the information provided to directors.
- Be a team player? The search for consensus overwhelms any attempts at confrontation.
- The CEO as authority figure: Studies of social psychology have noted that loyalty is hardwired into human behavior. While this loyalty is an important tool in building up organizations, it can also lead people to suppress internal ethical standards if they conflict with loyalty to an authority figure. In a board meeting, the CEO generally becomes the authority figure.

The worst board ever? The Disney Experience - 1997

Reveta F. Bowers 1,5
Head of School
Center for Early Education

Roy E. Disney 3
Vice Chairman
The Walt Disney Company

Michael D. Eisner 3
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
The Walt Disney Company

Stanley P. Gold 4,5
President and Chief Executive Officer
Shamrock Holdings, Inc.

Sanford M. Litvack
Senior Executive Vice President
and Chief of Corporate Operations
The Walt Disney Company

Ignacio E. Lozano, Jr. 1,2,4
Editor-in-Chief, LA OPINION

George J. Mitchell 5
Special Counsel
Verner, Liipfert, Bernard, McPherson
and Hand

Thomas S. Murphy
Former Chairman
Capital Cities/ABC, Inc.

Richard A. Nunis
Chairman
Walt Disney Attractions

Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.
President
Georgetown University

Michael S. Ovitz 3
President
The Walt Disney Company

Sidney Poitier 2,4
Chief Executive Officer
Verdon-Cedric Productions

Irwin E. Russell 2,4
Attorney at Law

Robert A.M. Stern
Senior Partner Productions

E. Cardon Walker 1
Former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
The Walt Disney Company

Raymond L. Watson 1,2,3
Vice Chairman
The Irvine Company

Gary L. Wilson 5
Co-Chairman
Northwest Airlines Corporation

1 Member of Audit Review Committee
2 Member of Compensation Committee
3 Member of Executive Committee
4 Member of Executive Performance Plan Committee
5 Member of Nominating Committee

The Calpers Tests for Independent Boards

- Calpers, the California Employees Pension fund, suggested three tests in 1997 of an independent board:
  - Are a majority of the directors outside directors?
  - Is the chairman of the board independent of the company (and not the CEO of the company)?
  - Are the compensation and audit committees composed entirely of outsiders?
- Disney was the only S&P 500 company to fail all three tests.

Business Week piles on… The Worst Boards in 1997..

THE WORST BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

					Board Performance Poll				Governance Guideline Analysis		
BW Rank	Overall Score	Survey Score	Analysis Score	Details	Shareholder Accountability	Board Quality	Board Independence	Corporate Performance	Shareholder Accountability	Board Quality	Board Independence
1. DISNEY	10.3	1.8	8.5	Investors decry board for conflicts; many directors own little if any stock	3.3	4.3	2.0	5.8	–0.4	2.8	2.2
2. AT&T	10.9	–16.6	27.5	Investors scorn board for failing to control succession, not ousting CEO	3.0	4.2	3.5	2.8	2.0	5.2	7.4
3. H.J. HEINZ	15.4	–1.1	16.5	Longtime CEO dominates insider-filled board; resists investor calls for change	2.8	3.7	2.0	4.7	4.4	6.0	1.4
4. ARCHER DANIELS MIDLAND	16.8	–12.2	29.0	Board changes fail to satisfy investors, who say directors still lack independence	2.3	2.1	1.3	3.5	5.6	7.6	5.0
5. DOW JONES	21.1	1.6	19.5	Investors disenchanted with performance; weakest attendance record of any board	2.6	4.6	2.8	2.6	6.0	0.0	5.8
6. DILLARD'S	22.0	5.0	17.0	Board loaded with insiders; lacks an outsider with retail expertise or CEO	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.5	6.4	3.2	2.0
7. ROLLINS INTERNATIONAL	22.7	1.7	21.0	Board dominated by family members and insiders; lacks nominating panel	1.0	1.0	0.0	2.0	4.0	7.6	4.4
8. OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM	24.0	–1.5	25.5	Investors outraged over $95 million payout to CEO by cozy, aging board	1.3	2.0	1.1	2.0	2.8	6.0	5.8
9. OGDEN	27.2	4.2	23.0	Board has three consultants and a lawyer who do business with company	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	2.0	8.4	4.0
10. MAXXAM	28.3	4.3	24.5	Tiny board with little business experience dominated by CEO	1.5	2.0	1.0	3.5	3.6	2.0	6.0

Application Test: Who's on board?

- Look at the board of directors for your firm.
  - How many of the directors are inside directors (Employees of the firm, ex-managers)?
  - Is there any information on how independent the directors in the firm are from the managers?
- Are there any external measures of the quality of corporate governance of your firm?
  - Yahoo! Finance now reports on a corporate governance score for firms, where it ranks firms against the rest of the market and against their sectors.
- Is there tangible evidence that your board acts independently of management?
  - Check news stories to see if there are actions that the CEO has wanted to take that the board has stopped him or her from taking or at least slowed him or her down.

So, what next? When the cat is idle, the mice will play ....

No stockholder approval needed….. Stockholder Approval needed

- When managers do not fear stockholders, they will often put their interests over stockholder interests
  - Greenmail: The (managers of) target of a hostile takeover buy out the potential acquirer's existing stake, at a price much greater than the price paid by the raider, in return for the signing of a 'standstill' agreement.
  - Golden Parachutes: Provisions in employment contracts, that allows for the payment of a lump-sum or cash flows over a period, if managers covered by these contracts lose their jobs in a takeover.
  - Poison Pills: A security, the rights or cashflows on which are triggered by an outside event, generally a hostile takeover, is called a poison pill.
  - Shark Repellents: Anti-takeover amendments are also aimed at dissuading hostile takeovers, but differ on one very important count. They require the assent of stockholders to be instituted.
  - Overpaying on takeovers: Acquisitions often are driven by management interests rather than stockholder interests.

Overpaying on takeovers

- The quickest and perhaps the most decisive way to impoverish stockholders is to overpay on a takeover.
- The stockholders in acquiring firms do not seem to share the enthusiasm of the managers in these firms. Stock prices of bidding firms decline on the takeover announcements a significant proportion of the time.
- Many mergers do not work, as evidenced by a number of measures.
  - The profitability of merged firms relative to their peer groups, does not increase significantly after mergers.
  - An even more damning indictment is that a large number of mergers are reversed within a few years, which is a clear admission that the acquisitions did not work.