

LIVE  
WEBINAR



# The VUCA Vectors

The Art and Science of Seeing Around Corners

with Linda Holroyd  
host & moderator Mark A. Pfister

 Webinar Start Countdown



M. A. Pfister  
Strategy Group



The VUCA Vectors - The Art and Science of Seeing Around Corners

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# — WEBINAR REMINDERS —

*a few points to mention*

- **Purpose:** Share knowledge of a framework to understand Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity in order to help leaders navigate unclear situations.
- **Questions:** Write your questions in the Q&A section. Our goal is to answer all questions at the close of the presentation. Otherwise, we will follow-up with you via email afterwards.
- **Materials:** Yes, this entire webinar is being recorded and you will receive a link via email shortly. This link will also include the ability to view & download the presentation deck in its own separate file.
- **International Board Director Competency Designation:** IBDC.D certification holders will receive 1 CPE credit by attending (be sure to follow proper CPE credit submission guidelines).



# YOUR SPEAKER



Linda Holroyd

CEO

FountainBlue

- CEO of FountainBlue, a change management consultancy providing executive coaching, leadership consulting, and strategic advisory services.
- She is a strategic adviser for tech Startups and a leadership consultant for global tech companies.
- She was formerly a Director at a Venture Fund as well as a Managing Director at a tech incubator.
- IBDC.D certified and also an IBDC.D education partner.

# YOUR HOST



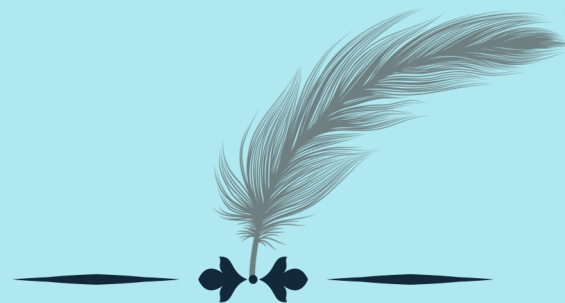
Mark A. Pfister

Non-Executive Director, CEO,  
& Chief Board Consultant

M. A. Pfister Strategy Group

- Governance & Strategy expert, Non-Executive Director, & Chief Board Consultant having consulted & advised hundreds of public, private, nonprofit, & PE Boards.
- His book, *Across The Board: The Modern Architecture Behind an Effective Board of Directors*, is a bestseller with circulation in over 70 countries.
- He is the creator of the International Board Director Competency Designation (IBDC.D), a globally-recognized Board Director education & certification program.





# THE VUCA VECTORS

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SEEING AROUND CORNERS

PRESENTED BY LINDA HOLROYD

**fountainblue**

VUCA RESEARCH CREDIT TO  
WARREN BENNIS AND BURT NANUS

# Linda Holroyd

- CEO of FountainBlue LLC for over 19+ years
- Strategic Adviser for Tech Startups
- Leadership Consultant for Global Tech Companies
- Executive Coach
- IBDC.D certified in 2023
- former Director at Venture Fund
- former Managing Director at Tech Incubator
- CEO and Founder of web development firm - launched, grew and sold, 1995-2001

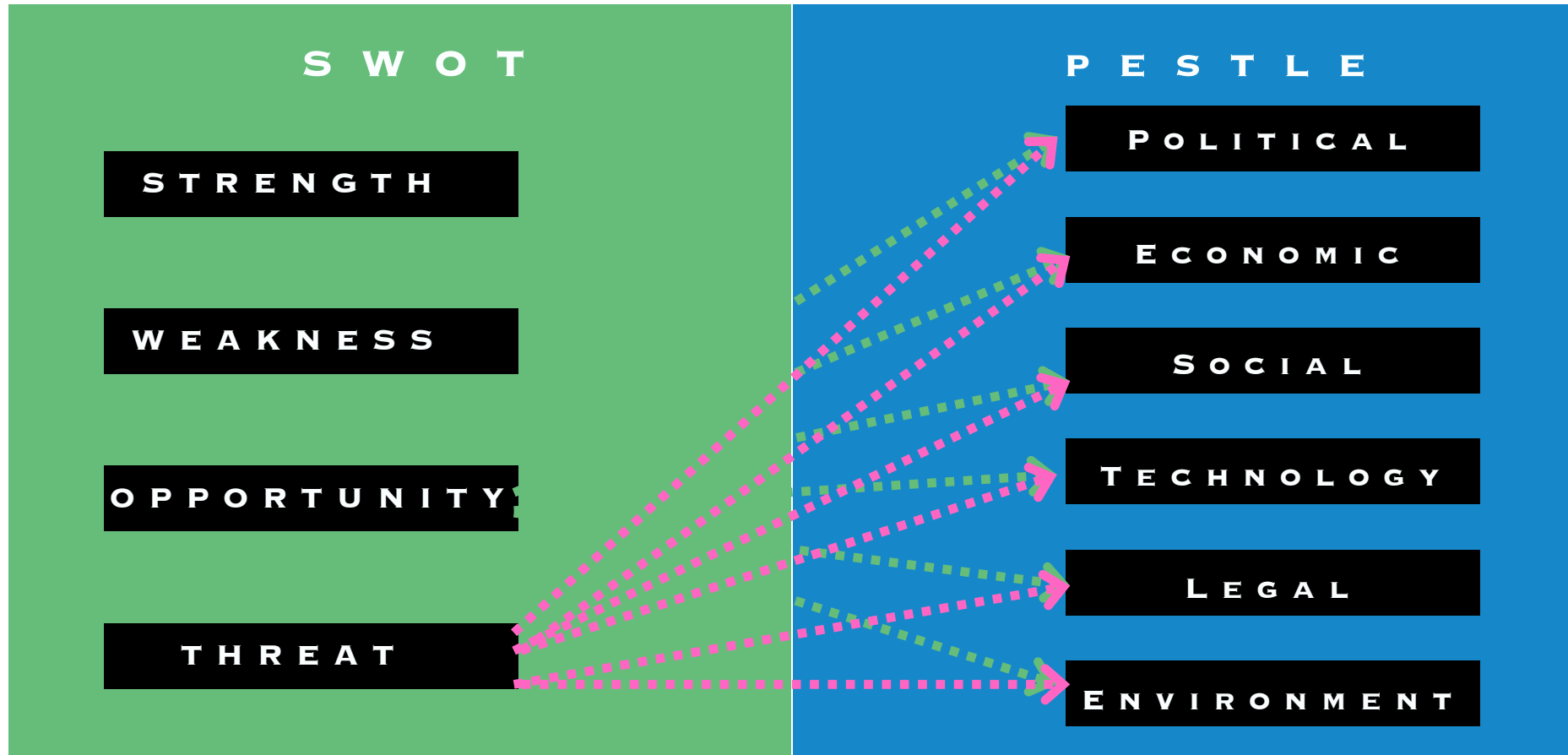


[Linda.Holroyd@fountainblue.biz](mailto:Linda.Holroyd@fountainblue.biz)



We live in interesting times...  
How has the pandemic impacted us all?

**SWOT: ANALYSIS OF A COMPANY'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS HAVE INFORMED CORPORATE STRATEGISTS FOR DECADES.**



**PESTLE: THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEADWINDS OF THE PANDEMIC HAS MADE STRATEGIC PLANNING MORE CHALLENGING.**



The pandemic affected us all, but did so un-equally.

**Who were the winners and the losers?**



# Winners



- **Moderna** (stock up 937%)- leverages a mRNA platform which led to a vaccine development strategy and a platform for new kinds of treatment.
- **Enphase Energy** (stock up 366%) - offers software-driven home energy solution that converts solar panel power to grid-compatible alternating current
- **NVIDIA** (stock up 322%) - produces graphics processing units - chips - for gaming, mobile banking, and automotive markets

Source: Forbes Pandemic Winners: The 10 Best Performing U.S. Companies January 2022

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/christianstadler/2022/01/18/pandemic-winners-the-10-best-performing-us-companies/>

# Losers:

- **Peloton** (all-time high of 167.42 Jan 13, 2021; 2023; November 24, 2023 closing price was \$5.27)
- **Zoom** (\$568.34 on October 19, 2020; 2023 stock price range: \$59.29 to \$84.66)
- **DocuSign** (2020 high of \$268.80; 2023 stock price range of \$38.53-\$67.83)

Source: Yahoo Finance

Share price performance since the start of 2020



Source: Sentieo • By The New York Times

Source: Forbes Pandemic Winners: The 10 Best Performing U.S. Companies January 2022

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/christianstadler/2022/01/18/pandemic-winners-the-10-best-performing-us-companies/>

**WHAT ALLOWED FOR THE WINNERS TO COME  
OUT ON TOP?**



# The VUCA Vectors

Presented by Linda Holroyd

Based on the research of  
*Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus*



**VOLATILITY**

Characterizes the rapid and unpredictable nature of change.



**UNCERTAINTY**

Denotes the unpredictability of events and issues.



**COMPLEXITY**

Describes the intertwined forces and issues, making cause-and-effect relationships unclear.



**AMBIGUITY**

Points to the unclear realities and potential misunderstandings stemming from mixed messages.

**VUCA IS A FRAMEWORK THAT CONSIDERS THE VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY, AND AMBIGUITY OF CHANGE IN ORDER TO HELP LEADERS NAVIGATE UNCLEAR SITUATIONS AND:**

**1) BETTER SHAPE OUR STRATEGY,**

**2) BETTER INFLUENCE OUTCOMES,**

**3) BETTER INSPIRE, ENABLE AND EMPOWER INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS,**

**4) BETTER ALIGN WITH OUR MISSION, VALUE AND PURPOSE,  
AND**

**5) BETTER MANAGE AND LEAD COLLABORATIVELY AND AGILELY LEADERSHIP**



**THE ART AND THE SCIENCE OF LOOKING AROUND CORNERS:**

**THE SCIENCE - THE VUCA VECTORS**

**THE ART - THE STORIES OF COMPANIES AND LEADERS MANAGING CHANGE**

# Volatility

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Highlights the rapid and unpredictable nature of change.



# Volatility

Highlights the rapid and unpredictable nature of change.

## WHAT CAN CHANGE

- **MARKETS**
- **CUSTOMERS**
- **TECHNOLOGY**
- **POLICY**
- **WORKFORCE**
- **PARTNERSHIPS**
- **GEOPOLITICAL CLIMATE**

*Velocity, Unpredictability, Impact*





## Moderna's Strategy:

- manipulation of mRNA molecules will provide a **platform for new treatments.**
- Invitation by US government to join **Operation Warp Speed**



## Moderna's Edge:

- **Rapid deployment:** Using messenger RNA, Moderna took a coronavirus vaccine from sequencing to human trials in 63 days.
- **Platform for future development:** wide range of diseases, including infectious diseases, immuno-oncology, rare diseases, and cardiovascular diseases
- **Private-Public Collaboration:** validate technology, support manufacturing and distribution

Source: <https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/how-moderna-racing-to-a-coronavirus-vaccine>



## Moderna's Edge:

**Moderna Chief Executive Officer Stéphane Bancel, said. "There is an opportunity for Moderna to positively impact public and global health, and with 31 active development programs, 19 of which are in the clinic, we expect to address several critical unmet medical needs with the power of our mRNA platform."**

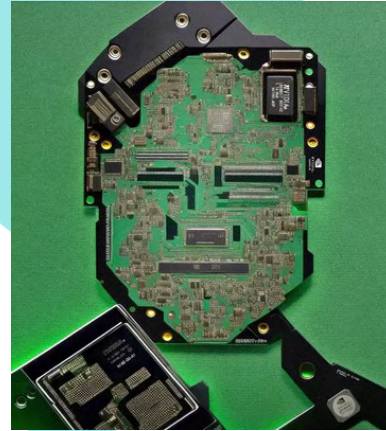


Source: <https://www.contagionlive.com/view/a-significant-investment-in-mrna-technology-fuels-moderna-s-vaccine-pipeline>

NVIDIA integrates hardware, software, and services to create unique value for various markets

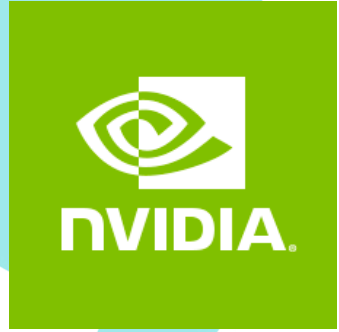
In 1999, NVIDIA introduced a graphics card called GeForce, a new category of product - Graphics Processing Unit - GPU, which unlike central processing units - C.P.U.s - breaks complex mathematical tasks apart into small calculations, then processes them all at once, through parallel computing.

- *A C.P.U. functions like a delivery truck, dropping off one package at a time; a G.P.U. is more like a fleet of motorcycles spreading across a city.*



Source: Stephen Witt,  
The New Yorker,  
November 2023,  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/12/04/how-jensen-huangs-nvidia-is-powering-the-ai-revolution>

- ChatGPT, the astonishing artificial-intelligence chatbot had been trained on an Nvidia supercomputer.
- In addition, Nvidia has sold similar supercomputers to fifty of America's hundred largest companies.



**On May 25, 2023, Nvidia's value increased by about two hundred billion dollars, making Nvidia the sixth most valuable corporation on earth, worth more than Walmart and ExxonMobil combined.**

Jensen Huang is positioned like Samuel Brannan, the celebrated vendor of prospecting supplies in San Francisco in the late eighteen-forties.

"There's a war going on out there in A.I., and Nvidia is the only arms dealer," one Wall Street analyst said.

Source: Stephen Witt,  
The New Yorker,  
November 2023,  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/12/04/how-jensen-huang-nvidia-is-powering-the-ai-revolution>

How is the volatility of change impacting yourself and your organization(s)?

- What are the market trends and customer requirements in the near term and the short term?
- What are the leading edge and bleeding edge solutions that might address these trends?
- How could any one thing become explosively good or not so good?
- How well positioned are we to address the near term and long term shifts?



# Embrace Volatility

- Expect the unexpected.
- Consider identifying and managing factors which may have a HUGE near-term or longer-term future.
- Proactive manage the speed, timeline and impact of these vectors.
- See the opportunities in the threats.
- Consider whether variables are internal or external.
- Adopt a big-picture view as well as an entrepreneurial spirit.



# Uncertainty

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Understand the unpredictability of events and issues.



# Uncertainty

Understand the unpredictability of events and issues.

## WHAT CAN CHANGE

- **MARKETS**
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- **TECHNOLOGY**
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*Velocity, Unpredictability, Impact*



PELOTON

Peloton produces at-home fitness equipment and virtual workout classes.

- Revenues doubled in 2020 and became profitable for the first time in its history
- However, as the pandemic receded and people began returning to gyms and fitness studios, Peloton's business experienced a 34% drop in its stock following its fiscal first-quarter earnings in November 2022

Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/peloton-company-history-rise-fall-2022-2>



## Peloton - Mismatched certainty

- Strategy Challenges:
  - Scaling operations too rapidly
  - Unprepared for the shift back to the return of in-person/at-gym workouts
- Execution Challenges:
  - Mismatching supply chain issues and product recalls (70 injuries and a child's death)
- Results: significant reduction in demand, a glut of products collecting dust in warehouses, stock plummeting, widespread layoffs, the resignation of its co-founder and longtime CEO



## Zoom's Strategy:

provide audio-video platform to connect teams and groups

- Zoom generated \$4.3 billion revenue in 2022, an 7.3% increase year-on-year
- It had 213,000 enterprise customers in 2022
- Zoom was one of the fastest growing apps of the pandemic; meeting participants increased by 2900%
- Zoom's valuation exceeded \$100 billion during the pandemic, a 383% increase on its value in January 2020



## Zoom's Challenge: UNCERTAINTY

- Shift back to in-person work
- Challenges with implementation
  - Zoom-bombing
  - Privacy issues
- Competition from Microsoft, Google, Cisco

## Videoconferencing Alternatives

- Microsoft and Google: integration with suites of software solutions
- Cisco, focus on enterprise market, emphasis on virtual collaboration tools beyond video conferencing
- Competitors' adoption of next-generation videoconferencing: instant messaging, screen sharing, document-sharing capabilities, VR and AR technologies

How is the certainty of change impacting yourself  
and your organization(s)?

- Is there a 'certain' change in your horizon?
- Do you have proactive plans to address this change?
- Which facets of this change will impact you and how?



## Accept Uncertainty

- Speak transparently and directly about the opportunities and the challenges with the uncertainties.
- Directly address the anxiety, stress, turf battles and over-analysis through transparent communication, active listening, and proactive planning.
- Invite participation and collaboration.
- Remain aligned to your mission, vision, values and purpose as you embrace change.





# Complexity

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**Intertwining forces and issues can make cause-and-effect relationships unclear.**

# Complexity

Intertwining forces and issues can make cause-and-effect relationships unclear.

## INTERTWINING FORCES AND ISSUES

- **PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGY**
- **CUSTOMERS**
- **PROCESSES AND POLICIES**
- **WORKFORCE**
- **PARTNERSHIPS**

*Velocity, Unpredictability, Impact*



Enphase Energy, founded in 2006, has transitioned from a solar microinverter systems company to an energy management systems company, focusing on energy generation, storage, consumption, and services



## Enphase: Deals with Complexity

The company's commitment to:

- operational excellence, financial sustainability, and environmental responsibility

The company's focus on delivering

- smart, simple, reliable, productive, and safe products
- while combating climate change and enabling sustainable development

## Enphase: Focus on Expansion and Growth

- Enphase offers a range of solar energy products and smart energy solutions including microinverters, batteries and even legacy components and accessories.
- Enphase provides products, services, and resources for solar installers, and its microinverters, batteries, and AC Modules are recommended by installers
- The company's international presence in over 145 countries and its entry into new markets in Europe and Asia



3M offers over 60,000 products but is now focusing on global trends such as e-commerce, personal safety, health care, automotive electrification, and home improvement, while de-prioritizing investments in slower-growing markets.

*Categories for current 3M product offerings categories, include abrasives, adhesives, sealants, advanced materials, automotive parts, building materials, cleaning supplies, coatings, electrical, electronics materials, filtration, labels, and more*



Reducing Complexity will help 3M to:

- advance its operating model
- improve cost structure
- accelerate innovation
- streamline supply chain

3M also plans to align planning, sourcing, manufacturing, and delivery processes to improve efficiency

How complex are your current product and service offerings?

- How well do your offerings map to market and customer demands?
- How might simplifying your offerings better increase adoption or reduce friction?
- What are the process and operational benefits for reducing complexity?





## Navigate Complexity

- See the bigger picture - the interdependencies and the trends impacting customers.
- Shift and pivot strategy, products and offerings to simplify offerings and meet customer needs.
- Make it easy for customers to adopt solutions and refer others.
- Create a platform which makes it easy for customers to engage.
- Manage and grow an ecosystem of trusted partners.



# Ambiguity

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**Unclear realities and potential misunderstandings can stem from mixed messages.**



# Ambiguity

Unclear realities and potential misunderstandings can stem from mixed messages.

## HOW CAN WE BE MORE CLEAR?

- **ALIGN ON MESSAGING, VISION, MISSION**
- **DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL VALUE**
- **EMBRACE INNOVATION**
- **EMPOWER YOUR WORKFORCE**
- **SIMPLIFY HOW THINGS GET DONE**

*Velocity, Unpredictability, Impact*



Neela Montgomery, the President of CVS Pharmacy

- the role of stores, including CVS, in providing essential products and serving as trusted places for filling prescriptions and maintaining health and well-being during the pandemic.
- CVS Health, under its data-driven approach, administered millions of COVID-19 tests and vaccines, leveraging real-time internal and external data to provide critical insights and organize its pandemic response.



Kelly Mok, Director of Retail Analytics Strategy, CVS Health:  
“We’ve empowered more users with self-service dashboards and we’ve increased our focus on using data to improve health outcomes in traditionally underserved communities.”

Source: <https://www.tableau.com/solutions/customer/data-insights-helped-cvs-health-improve-readiness>



## Square's business strategy:

- Supports safety-first payment processing needs during pandemic
- Aligns with the broader trend of digital transformation accelerated by the pandemic
- Promotes cashless payments, reflecting the shift in consumer behavior and the increased affinity for digital payments during the pandemic

Source: <https://squareup.com/us/en/making-change/2020/1>

What ambiguities are impacting your company's ability to strategize, plan and execute?

- How can you make things less ambiguous?
- How can you act on the KNOWN elements, working around the ambiguities?
- How can you better pivot or double-down once ambiguities become more clear?



## Face Ambiguity Head-on

- Define causal relationships using metrics.
- Create a data-informed framework for decision-making.
- Take small steps, acting on what you know.
- Call out the unknown unknowns and invite participation to define them.
- Iterate, expand, pivot and correct, making incremental shifts based on results.
- Adopt a measured boldness based on current and projected needs.







# Conclusion

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Resources & Reflections

## TAKE-AWAYS

- ACCEPTING THE NATURE OF CHANGE
- MANAGING WHAT YOU CAN
- PIVOTING NIMBLY WITH AGILITY, BASED ON MEASURED CONSIDERATION
- MAKING THINGS SIMPLE
- FOCUSING ON INNOVATION
- GROWTH MINDSET
- DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS CONSISTENTLY
- COLLABORATING AND COORDINATING



**VUCA IS A FRAMEWORK THAT CONSIDERS THE VOLATILITY, UNCERTAINTY, COMPLEXITY, AND AMBIGUITY OF CHANGE IN ORDER TO HELP LEADERS NAVIGATE UNCLEAR SITUATIONS AND:**

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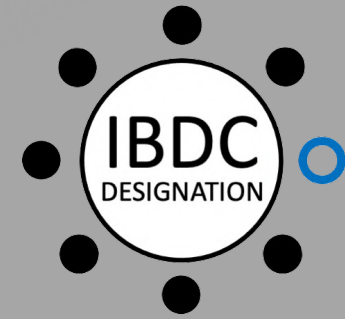
**4) BETTER ALIGN WITH OUR MISSION, VALUE AND PURPOSE,  
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The logo for Fountainblue is centered at the top. It features the word "fountainblue" in a bold, sans-serif font. "fountain" is in black, and "blue" is in a vibrant blue. Above the "blue" part, there are two stylized, dashed blue arcs that resemble water splashing or a fountain's spray. The background of the entire slide is a light blue network diagram consisting of numerous small circular nodes connected by thin, light blue lines, creating a complex web-like structure.

# fountainblue

- Strategic Planning for organizations undergoing change
- Growth-minded consultation
- Technology Innovation
- Human Capital Optimization



# Becoming an Exceptional Board Director Candidate

— Education & Certification Course —

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Get modern Board Director Candidate packaging **AND** modern Board operations knowledge all in one shot while **ALSO** earning your globally recognized *International Board Director Competency Designation* (IBDC.D) certification.

1:1

Group

On-Demand

<https://www.pfisterstrategy.com/exceptionalboarddirector>

# — THE VUCA VECTORS

*are you prepared?*

Know what  
VUCA is!

Navigate with  
a framework

Positively  
influence  
outcomes

# Q&A

Contact Mark at [mark@pfisterstrategy.com](mailto:mark@pfisterstrategy.com)

Contact linda at [linda.holroyd@fountainblue.biz](mailto:linda.holroyd@fountainblue.biz)

Board Director Education + Certification Details <https://www.pfisterstrategy.com/exceptionalboarddirector>



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# LINDA HOLROYD

CEO

*Biography*

[linda.holroyd@fountainblue.biz](mailto:linda.holroyd@fountainblue.biz)



Since January 2005, serial entrepreneur Linda Holroyd has launched, grown and run management consultancy FountainBlue, supporting innovation and leadership for a large and growing community of executives, investors and entrepreneurs. She has also served as a director for a technology-based venture fund and as a managing director for a technology incubator.

In addition to running monthly online programs on leadership and innovation topics, Linda also coaches executives at all levels, provides leadership consulting for teams, and advises companies on strategic growth. She is also an instructor for San Jose State's SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) Certification program, teaching on leadership, people, business acumen, and technology management topics.

Linda's first start-up was a web consultancy which designed and developed interactive web sites for corporate clients and start-ups. Linda began her career as an elementary school teacher and has deep experience supporting communities and nonprofits, especially around fundraising and communications. As a first soprano, Linda serves as as Communications Technology Chair for Pacific Coast Chorale in San Diego and volunteers in the mentorship program at Lavin Entrepreneur Center at San Diego State University.

Linda is passionate about growing people and businesses, and feeds her soul through singing, watching beach volleyball, gardening, spirituality, playing games and socializing with friends. She is married to an XGoogler, mother to an entrepreneurial UCLA graduate, and takes pride in working with leaders and innovators from around the world.



M. A. Pfister  
Strategy Group



# MARK A. PFISTER

Non-Executive Director, CEO, and Chief Board Consultant

Biography

mark@pfisterstrategy.com



With a strong focus in Strategy, Governance, and Technology / Cybersecurity, Mark A. Pfister is CEO & Chief Board Consultant of M. A. Pfister Strategy Group, an executive advisory firm that serves as a strategic advisory council for executives and Boards in the public, private, nonprofit, and private equity (PE) sectors. He is also Chairman & CEO of Integral Board Group, a specialized Board services and consulting company, as well as Founder & CEO of the International Board Director Competency Designation (IBDC.D) education and certification program, a Board Director certification course recognized globally. Mr. Pfister is a *'Board Macro-Influencer'* and his success has been repeated across a wide range of business situations and environments. He prides himself on being a coach and mentor to senior executives and Directors. In Board Director circles, Mr. Pfister has earned the nickname *'The Board Architect.'*

The overarching theme throughout his career has been his aptitude in leadership positions, passionate focus on people, unique governance models, and ability to create value for shareholders and stakeholders through innovative business strategies and operational excellence. Michael Lorelli, Executive Chairman of Rita's Franchise Company, has said, *"Mark's unusual combination of excelling at a macro and micro grasp of business, genuine interest in Governance, and ability to coach and mentor a Management Team make him a terrific Independent Director."*

Mr. Pfister is a certified project management professional and frequently serves as an expert Project Executive, consulting on global programs/projects in their initiation and operational phases, as well as programs requiring remedial focus to bring them back on track. He has deep knowledge and experience in Board design & operations, strategic planning, business transformation, technology implementations, decisioning processes, certification & continuing education programs, executive coaching, and governance models.

Mr. Pfister was CEO of Pro4ia, Inc., an international consulting and professional services company specializing in a wide range of technology solutions utilizing formal Project Management as a proven and repeatable delivery method. With a Fortune 50 client list, Pro4ia was Citibank's Nominee for Crain's *Magazine 'Entrepreneurship of the Year'* Award in 2005. He simultaneously served as CEO of Onit, Inc., a national sourcing company specializing in placements for all levels of technology skill sets. Mr. Pfister was also the Regional Program Office Leader for American Express leading some of the largest technology transformation initiatives in the company's history. He served as a Licensed Engineering Officer in the U.S. Merchant Marine, holds a B.S. from the State University of New York Maritime College in Facilities Engineering, and completed Harvard Business School's Executive Education Program for Board Directors.

Mr. Pfister is the creator of the *'Board as a Service'* (BaaS) engagement model, an industry he is credited with inventing. He is a Master Speaker and conducts international speaking tours, lectures, and seminars focused on effective leadership, strategy, Board architecture, becoming an exceptional Board Director candidate, professional project/program management, and entrepreneurship.

His popular book, *'Across The Board: The Modern Architecture Behind an Effective Board of Directors,'* an Amazon best-seller with circulation in over 70 countries, has influenced an entire new generation of Board Directors.

Mr. Pfister is a proficient Board Director and CEO with experience across multiple industry verticals. He is typically the Chair, or a member of the Strategic Planning Committee, Governance Committee, Technology & Cybersecurity Committee, and has deep Nominating Committee experience. Mr. Pfister's experience as an internationally renowned Board Consultant, having guided and coached hundreds of Boards, Board Committees, and Board Members across public, private, nonprofit, and private equity (PE) verticals, additionally offers up unique and informed viewpoints to the companies he serves.

He holds an *International Board Director Competency Designation* (IBDC.D) through M. A. Pfister Strategy Group, is a certified *Project Management Professional* (PMP) through the Project Management Institute, earned a *Global ESG Board Certification* (GCB.D) through Competent Boards, holds a *Certified Cyber Intelligence Professional* Board Certification (CCIP) through the McAfee Institute, and previously held an *Executive Masters Professional Board Certification* through the American College of Corporate Directors (ACCD).



M. A. Pfister  
Strategy Group

