

Diligent **Institute**

# 2025 Risk and opportunity outlook

Insights from the **Elevate Leadership Summit**  
presented by **Diligent Institute**

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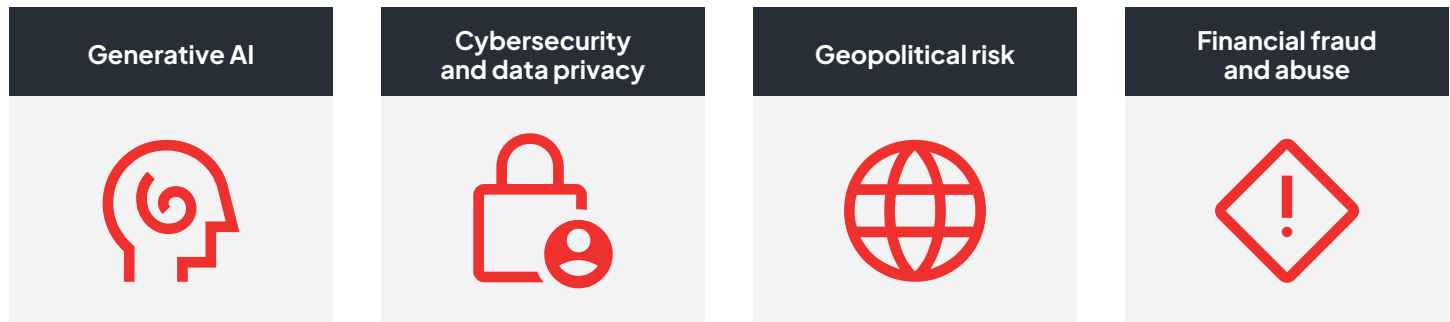


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# A new risk and opportunity landscape

As organizations prepare for 2025, overseeing the risks and opportunities that lie ahead is more critical than ever for corporate leaders. This whitepaper, inspired by the discussions and key takeaways from the Diligent Institute Elevate Leadership Summit held in Houston in September 2024, seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of four critical topics that demand our attention:



We brought together a select group of 65 distinguished board members and C-Suite leaders, alongside top-notch subject matter experts, to delve into these pressing topics. The Summit, held under Chatham House Rules, fostered an environment of open dialogue and peer-to-peer networking, allowing participants to share candid experiences and insights. The result was a rich tapestry of knowledge and perspectives, augmented by on-the-record interviews with attendees and speakers, which this whitepaper aims to capture for a broader audience.

Generative AI has rapidly emerged as a transformative force, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency. However, it also presents significant ethical and operational challenges that organizations must navigate carefully. Cybersecurity remains a perennial concern, with an ever-evolving threat landscape that requires constant vigilance. The geopolitical landscape continues to impact global trade and business operations, particularly with increasing tensions between major world powers. Lastly, the realm of financial fraud and ethics and compliance underscores the importance of robust governance structures, as demonstrated by the experiences shared by whistleblowers in high-profile cases like the Wirecard scandal.

We hope this paper will serve to equip leaders with actionable insights and practical guidance. In laying out proactive measures and strategies, our goal is to enable organizations to not only mitigate risks but also seize opportunities for growth and innovation in 2025. By highlighting the key themes and takeaways, we aim to ensure that the valuable lessons learned at the Summit are accessible to the wider community of practitioners and leaders.

The challenges we face are formidable, but with informed leadership and collaboration, we can navigate the complexities of the modern business environment with confidence and resilience.

– **Dottie Schindlinger**

Executive Director  
Diligent Institute



## Generative AI: Use cases, opportunities and risks

Unsurprisingly, generative AI was one of the most discussed topics at our conference. Significant advancements in generative AI can now be accomplished in seconds compared to years of human effort. But while AI offers immense opportunities to improve the human condition, it also presents substantial ethical and operational challenges. This is why responsible AI governance is so crucial.

It's important to note the intense hype surrounding AI and the need for realistic expectations. "AI is an exponential growth phenomenon where most businesses are currently overestimating the short-term impact and *still* dramatically underestimating the long-term potential and impact," says Florin Rotar, Chief AI Officer at Avanade. "The last time exponential phenomena happened was with Internet, and the result was that the cost of distribution went to zero and today's titans like Google, Netflix, and Amazon were born. AI as a growth phenomenon is on a path to drive the cost of innovation to zero, and every single industry will be impacted. But we're still in the early phases of fundamental disruption."

Sophia Velastegui, AI expert and board member, lays out a clear path forward: "The potential of AI depends on an organization's business goals. First, you must identify the problem, then build the solution that will solve it. AI integration takes a cross-functional team to figure out how to leverage it to its full potential."

Many organizations are only looking for efficiencies, increased productivity, and resulting cost savings when it comes to AI. "But they should be looking for efficiency *and* innovation," says Velastegui. "It's when they weigh both approaches that you truly gain the competitive edge. The companies that have tapped into AI as part of the user or customer experience have exploded in the market. That's why technology companies continue to invest in AI - because they know that there is opportunity to do even more."



The regulatory landscape is also top of mind when it comes to generative AI. "The AI regulatory landscape is evolving rapidly," says Lavonne Burke, VP of Global Security, IT, and AI at Dell and an attendee at Elevate. "So far, there are comprehensive AI regulations in three major jurisdictions, and all of them look very different from each other. Meanwhile, we have more than 90 countries and numerous states where we know something is coming."

For Burke and many other leaders, this presents a unique challenge. "This is one of the first issues I can remember where practices and norms haven't been broadly established by the time regulations come out," she says. "Everyone is trying to create governance and compliance processes with just the tip of the iceberg showing in terms of regulations, and we don't know specifically what else is coming from regulators."

Because of the speed of innovation and the evolving global regulatory landscape, companies are challenged to

quickly ramp up. “Implementing a robust ethical framework from the beginning of your AI strategy will keep ethical standards at the forefront – no matter what regulatory changes are up ahead,” adds Velastegui. “AI ethics are crucial – embedding transparency and accountability builds user trust in the technology and will enable the creation of better, more impactful solutions.”

There’s also the human capital element to be considered. “I’ve been in technology 35 years. This is one technology where I’m constantly surprised by how much continuous change enablement is needed, because it takes so much to help people to truly think about AI as an enabler rather than threat to them,” says Rotar. “It requires so much engagement to unlearn and relearn new habits, and it shouldn’t be like that. AI should adjust to us people rather than the other way around, but this is the current reality. So, continuous change enablement at scale is absolutely critical for success.”

And then there’s the risk of failed transformations. “How many Chief AI and Technology officers didn’t make it through the first two years in their posts?” says Anastassia Lauterbach, PhD, technology expert and board member. “How many Technology Committees got built and didn’t survive?”

Our speakers stressed, above all, that people and organizational readiness are more important for AI success than the technology itself. “The purpose of AI should be to help people become the best version of themselves, to soar and to reach their true potential. Yet a recent [Pew analysis](#) suggests that 52% of Americans report feeling more concerned than excited about AI,” says Rotar. “Unless we genuinely overcome the hype and focus on building humane trust and organizational readiness, AI is unlikely to gain meaningful adoption in the enterprise. Without meaningful adoption, achieving real value with AI could remain a distant promise.”

## Questions for your board and management team:



- **Who is in charge of your organization’s AI strategy?** The same way you have cyber governance or any other governance framework, do you have a framework for responsible generative AI usage? Don’t use generative AI unless your executive team has an answer for tools, practices, training and skills.
- **Who is actually getting value from AI?** Pay attention to how the big players are approaching the technology and who benefits. Understand and remember that AI strategy should be no different from the overall business and human capital strategy. How do you keep track of progress given the exponential advancement and change in the technology?
- **How do you do AI governance?** Conduct an internal assessment and ensure a robust risk management framework. Where does AI oversight fit into your overall oversight structures at the board level? Ensure internal understanding of AI and where the company is headed with the technology. Create and prioritize safe to fail experiments to learn more about AI. Have a specific calendared agenda item to talk about this.



## The perfect storm of risk: Cyber crime, regulation and talent

Cybersecurity and data privacy also continue to top the list of concerns for directors and company leaders. “Cyber crime is absolutely the biggest risk companies are facing in 2025,” says Anastassia Lauterbach. “Digital assets drive valuation, and most valuable business are data centric. This means the bread and butter of your business would then be impacted in a cyber incident.”

On the flip side this also means that, for many companies, data is their greatest asset. “The biggest opportunity for companies in 2025 is their data, so understanding and building emerging digital assets is also crucial,” says Lauterbach. “You can experiment if you have the right digital capabilities and bring the value of your data to life.”

The 2024 CrowdStrike incident can provide some lessons learned, with a focus on change management and basic technology hygiene. Technology debt - the cost that occurs when an IT team prioritizes speed over long-term design and must make changes to the system later - was dubbed by our panel as the “unwritten enemy of cybersecurity.” Technology debt is something that every company has, and it impacts your ability to recover from a cyber incident. Our panel stressed the need for understanding this debt to be a management and board level priority.

Cybersecurity risk is also impacting the race for talent - particularly when it comes to your CISO. “With reporting timelines accelerating for cyber incident response, there’s a growing trend towards holding CISOs personally liable,” says Jim Alkove, CEO of Oleria. “This shift could influence how CISOs respond in high-pressure situations and make it more challenging to attract and retain top talent. CISOs need robust support and consistent attention from company leadership and the board to effectively manage cyber risk.” Because they often don’t have the same protections that other C-suite officers have, it may be worth having the conversation and revisiting the way the CISO is compensated and protected.



What are other things companies can do to better understand and mitigate cyber risk in 2025? Our experts focused on reporting lines and organizational structure. For many companies, accountability and reporting lines are unclear when it comes to cybersecurity, leading to confusion and inefficiency. Ensuring smooth, clear, and open lines of reporting and accountability is key.

It’s also vital to have the right targets in place and to understand the types of reporting that will be helpful for the business. Think about where your critical assets are and conduct materiality assessments. From there, it’s all about having playbooks. Make sure your cyber incident response plan is up to date. Make sure your cybersecurity strategy and the data you receive is grounded to revenue operations and strategy so you can make the right decisions.

Board members can’t all be cyber experts either. There are lots of opportunities for directors to move the needle

and become conversant in cybersecurity in other ways. Engage in regular tabletop exercises, and make sure that the board is engaged in that preparedness dialogue. “Financial, technology, and AI literacy must be embedded into the DNA of leadership,” says Lauterbach. “The board and senior leadership team will need a base level of understanding to be able to oversee strategy, respond properly and ask the right questions.”

“Overseeing cyber risk means responding to an inherently unpredictable threat landscape that can never be fully mitigated,” Alkove continues. “Organizations must adapt to today’s climate of uncertainty by investing in automation and the right talent, process and technologies to stay agile and resilient.”

## Questions for your board and management team:



- **How can we commit to continuous improvement?** Cybersecurity will always be a moving target as technology advances and bad actors adapt. Think of each incident as a discrete project with a lifecycle and rules. Treat every cyber incident like it has the potential to be hugely significant. That’ll protect your business and customers when it comes to your response.
- **How does cyber intelligence find its way into the boardroom?** Think about the incentives around your leadership team when it comes to cyber. Is the CISO properly supported? Do they have a clear line of sight into boardroom conversations around cybersecurity?
- **Do we really understand our organization’s cyber risk?** Do we have a simple, standardized way to measure and aggregate risk and showcase at a business unit level? What are our operational risks and metrics? The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Federal Trade Commission (FTC), shareholders, lawyers and judges are thinking about cyber strategy in terms of operations, fiduciary obligation, revenue and ability to implement strategy – make sure you can speak this language.



## Geopolitical risk in a turbulent world

Our research at Diligent Institute shows that geopolitical risk is creeping up on the board agenda, but that directors and senior leaders still struggle to navigate this landscape. Our panel at the Elevate Leadership Summit focused on laying out the many new and emerging risks on the geopolitical stage and what leaders can do to first understand how it might impact their businesses and then to work on strategies for oversight.

The panel began with a geopolitical heat map, covering flash points in Europe like the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine and the rise of far right and anti-immigration parties. In Africa, the biggest geopolitical risks stem from health crises, fighting corruption in governance systems, and the implications of a growing youth population. In Latin America, there's a large focus on the root causes of emigration. In the Indo-Pacific region, the focus is largely on China's posture.

Our speakers also discussed the global perspective versus the U.S. perspective on many of these risks. For example, many U.S. companies are looking to understand more about how the role of the United States of America is shifting, and how changes to the international financial system will impact them – with the caveat of course that the U.S.'s approach to foreign relations will change with the outcome of the Presidential Election.

“In my opinion, geopolitical risk is one of the biggest area companies will have to tackle in 2025,” says Ana Dutra, experienced public and private company director. “There are about fifty country-wide elections going on around the world in the next few years. Considering the degree to which social, economic issues and climate issues are being politicized, the outcomes to these elections can have a huge impact on corporate strategy and enterprise risk management.”



Our panel recommended greater dialogue between business and government as one way to begin navigating these issues. They touched on three major areas of risk when it comes to geopolitics:

- Risks from sanctions and tariffs
- Reputational risk
- Supply chain risk

For this reason, our speakers reiterated the importance of supply chain diversification, a lesson that was learned the hard way for many during the pandemic. This also plays into conversations about preparing for black swan geopolitical events, and how companies can respond. One way to pivot quickly to an emerging geopolitical risk is to take a playbook from a different crisis preparation plan and adapt. For example, one of our speakers mentioned using a NIST playbook and adapting it to a pandemic context in 2020.



One of the questions our attendees were most curious to get answered: What hypothetical events could really shock our geopolitical system? Here were some of the topics mentioned:

- Another pandemic
- Massive terrorist attacks
- Becoming involved in a regional war
- Political meltdowns in China
- Use of nuclear weapons by Russia
- Invasion of Taiwan blockade
- Natural disasters
- Conflict between India and Pakistan

If geopolitical risks feel dizzyingly complex, what are some best practices to align to those risks? “Always work with scenario planning, especially with different political and economic scenarios,” says Dutra. “Ensure that you have a core strategy and work on how it would be polished and shaped depending on the developments in each potential scenario. Understand what you can and cannot control. Define what you can control and refine and adapt your strategy to what you cannot.”

## Questions for your board and management team:



- **What is our current geopolitical footprint?** What regions of the world are the most essential to our business? What regions do our third parties and suppliers operate in? What are the biggest geopolitical risks in these areas?
- **How do we best work with the governments in our various jurisdictions?** Do we understand how to best work with governmental authorities in the regions in which we operate? How can we best understand their goals and objectives, and make clear to them our own?
- **What is the risk of having a global supply chain?** Understand the inflationary implications of moving production closer to home, and weigh that against the risk of supply chain disruption. How can you accommodate manufacturing flexibility while keeping costs manageable?
- **What are the key labor and workforce challenges we face in our critical regions?** How can we ensure we have access to the necessary talent, and what strategies should we implement to attract and retain skilled employees in these areas? How can we align our workforce planning with our overall business strategy to respond effectively to geopolitical risks?



## Mitigating financial fraud and abuse

A hallmark of good governance and sound company management, ethics and compliance programs are often passed over as top priorities by senior leaders and the board. Our session at the Elevate Leadership Summit focused on the fallout when financial fraud runs unchecked – even in what might appear the most outwardly successful organizations. The session featured two whistleblowers from the Wirecard scandal – chronicling each of their experiences, red flags, the process of coming forward, and long-term ramifications.

“The root of the problem here is often cultural, and it’s no secret that lack of compliance can kill a business. But the flip side is that so many businesses that are run by compliance alone don’t innovate or progress,” says Anastassia Lauterbach, PhD. “It’s up to the executive leadership team to find the right balance for how much compliance is involved in day-to-day operations.”

“As a board member, it’s crucial to get familiar with the operational heartbeat of the business,” says Pav Gill, CEO of Confide. “Step down from the boardroom and immerse yourself in the company’s day-to-day workings. Many board members operate from a high-level perspective, but without understanding the granular details, it’s hard to connect fully with the challenges the organization faces. By taking a closer look, you not only enhance your oversight but also humanize the organization.”

Our speakers also focused in on the importance of having independent instruments in the business so that employees, partners, and suppliers can disclose in a way that protects them. “Solutions like Confide, which allow people to anonymously report ethics and compliance issues, won’t prevent criminals. But, it can help your organization avoid a lot of negative impacts,” counsels Lauterbach. “Make sure you have good instruments and process in place. Set the tone culturally so that there’s no fear to report.”



“There’s often an inclination to avoid bad news, with a hope that problems will be resolved before they escalate to the board level,” says Gill. “But boards should proactively request access to whistleblowing reports. It’s essential to see firsthand how secure, robust, and effective the current mechanisms are. Only then can you be confident in the integrity of your compliance framework.”

“Board members frequently receive surface-level data, such as the number of whistleblowing reports, with little context,” says Gill. “Always dig deeper. For instance, three reports in a quarter may sound like a low figure, but if all those reports involve the same individual, that’s a red flag worth investigating.”

They also stress the need for compliance leaders to feel connected to the board and to senior leaders. “There should be a direct, consistent line of communication from the Chief Compliance Officer (CCO) or General Counsel (GC) to the board,” says Gill. “A strong GC understands that

their ultimate responsibility is to the board, but the board must also recognize this dynamic. Ensure your GC is not only reporting on legal and financial risk but is building a meaningful relationship with the board.”

All in all, good compliance will emerge with the right processes, talents, and best practices for communications. “Be proud of your transparency. If you

don’t have reporting, it’ll end up on Glassdoor, it’ll end up on the press, it might even end up with a human life cost,” says Lauterbach. “This all goes back to culture and HR. What is your philosophy here? Do you have a CHRO or Chief People Officer? Make sure you’re truly and fully behind the culture at your organization.”

## Questions for your board and management team:



- **Are we maintaining a balanced approach to compliance in our day-to-day operations?** Is this issue being discussed regularly at the board level to ensure financial fraud isn’t taking place? Ensure board members and senior leaders are familiar with the day-to-day workings of the company to better identify and mitigate potential compliance risks.
- **Do we have effective instruments and processes for anonymous reporting?** Assess if there are robust and secure mechanisms in place for employees, partners, and suppliers to report ethics and compliance issues without fear of retaliation. What happens to these reports once they are filed? Are the board and senior leadership team kept apprised of reports?
- **Is our compliance team supported?** Ensure that there is a direct line of communication between the Chief Compliance Executive, the GC and the board. Having the right talent and teams in place can make all the difference.

# Looking ahead to 2025

As you prepare to lead your organizations into next year and beyond, we'd like to leave you with some best and final thoughts from our experts:

*"The winners will be the companies that recognize that risk and opportunities need to be standing discussion topics on the board agenda. Think about changing your committee structure to reflect this – and make sure that you aren't throwing everything under the Audit Committee's purview. Beware of the dangers of a purely check-the-box mindset when it comes to preparing for these risks and identifying emerging opportunities."*

– Ana Dutra

*"Being on a board is about realism and not perfection. Many directors are afraid to say when they don't know something – and this needs to change. Lean into perpetual learning – for the teams, the directors and the executives. Invest in merit-based leadership. When you invite a newcomer into your ranks, listen to them. Many people want to serve on boards, and not many understand or have what it takes. You need to be on the board for the right reasons and you need to be providing value."*

– Anastassia Lauterbach

*"Ongoing education in these times is crucial – it's hard for anyone to be at step one. With any emerging risk or opportunity, especially with technology, go back to some foundations and understand where it came from. Chances are, you'll recognize the origin story."*

– Anddria Varnado

*"Be optimistic, and don't let the risk mindset drive you down a bad path of battenning down the hatches. Risk can actually be a good thing. Opportunities and growth can come out of risk."*

– Florin Rotar

*"To date many organizations are optimized for making great decisions, but not necessarily fast ones. How do you adapt to the accelerating pace of change, while becoming more effective and nimble? Not all decisions are created equal. It's essential to focus on the balancing of speed of decision-making with the decision's impact and cost of changing the decision down the road starting at the highest levels of the organization."*

– Jim Alkove

*"2025 is the year we put the 'G' back in ESG. The strongest defense against emerging risks lies in sound, well-structured governance systems."*

– Pav Gill

*"Resilience is key. To build resilience, an organization needs to both acknowledge known risks and appreciate the reality of uncertainty. Scenario planning can help to ensure an organization is as prepared as possible when the unexpected hits. Now is the most important time in the history of governance to be doubling down on building organizational resilience."*

– Lisa Bougie

*"To align your business strategy with a changing risk and opportunity landscape, foster a culture of learning where data-driven insights guide decision making at every level. Embrace technology to create real-time feedback loops and pull information from silos, allowing you to adapt swiftly to new challenges and opportunities. Lastly, empower your team to act with clarity and accountability, ensuring your strategy is resilient, responsive, and always focused on customer impact."*

– Sophia Velastegui

# Contributors



## Jim Alkove

Jim is co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Oleria, a visionary in identity security solutions. He is a recognized tech industry luminary, with nearly 30 years' experience including leading security for some of the world's largest companies. Most recently, he served as Salesforce's Chief Trust Officer, and spent over 16 years at Microsoft, serving as Chief Security Officer for Xbox and Corporate Vice President for Enterprise and Security in Microsoft's Windows and Devices Group. He held security, privacy and product engineering leadership roles at Google Nest. A formidable force in the security space, Jim was a founding member of the World Economic Forum's Center for Cybersecurity and has been a featured speaker at the WEF's Annual Meeting in Davos. He currently serves as strategic advisor to numerous startups including Snyk, Aembit, and SafeBase. Jim is an inventor on 50 U.S. patents. He earned a degree in electrical engineering at Purdue University.



## Lisa Bougie

Lisa Bougie is a high impact C-suite executive, board director, and trusted advisor with 30 years of experience in the consumer goods sector. With deep expertise leading digitally native and omni-channel businesses at Stitch Fix, Nike, Patagonia & Gap, Lisa has achieved extraordinary success building global apparel & footwear brands. An accomplished leader with progressive P&L responsibility, Lisa has served in a variety of executive operating roles including Chief Merchandising Officer and GM.



## Lavonne Burke

Lavonne Burke is an award-winning attorney, speaker, author, and transformative leader that has represented companies of all sizes in product development, cybersecurity, privacy & data protection, IP, IT, and emerging technology legal matters. As Vice President at Dell Technologies, she currently leads a global legal team focused on Product & Application Security, Cybersecurity, IT, Privacy/ Data Protection, Supply Chain Security and AI compliance. Her responsibilities include: advising on the creation, development and implementation of global information/cyber security and product & application security policies, enterprise risk management and corporate governance, data protection, cyber security & product security incident response, third-party risk management, M&A transactions, and AI compliance.



## Suja Chandrasekaran

Suja Chandrasekaran served as Senior Executive Vice President, Chief Digital and Information Officer at CommonSpirit Health, leading all aspects of product, technology, cybersecurity, digital health and marketing for the \$35B healthcare integrated delivery network. She is a global, operations, supply chain, digital transformation, eCommerce and P&L leader. Previously, she has been a member of executive leadership teams, global chief of digital, tech AI and operations at large companies including Walmart, Inc, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Nestle S.A. PepsiCo and The Timberland Company. Suja serves as a board member on the boards of public companies American Eagle Outfitters (NYSE: AEO), global omnichannel apparel retailer, Brenntag SE (BNR.DE), DAX40 German listed company, Cardinal Health (NYSE: CAH), ATOS SE (EPA: ATO) Tech Services company head quartered in Paris, France and Agendia Inc, a precision medicine, molecular diagnostics company focused on breast cancer research, diagnosis and treatment. Suja is also a board director at Pando.AI Supply Chain Logistics AI company. Suja is on the board of advisors of SAFE Security, focused on cyber risk management and Test Dynamics, healthcare AI platform for radiology, cardiology and other clinical focuses.



## Ana Dutra

Ana Dutra is a Global, Veteran Board Director, 2X CEO, and Fortune 250 Senior Executive who advises public, private, PE and family-owned company boards drawing from 30+ years of strategic governance and P&L experience – building \$500M+ businesses organically and via M&A, advancing Technology/Digital and Cybersecurity practices, guiding ESG/Sustainability strategies, and mitigating risk. She is a highly experienced Nom/Gov and Compensation/Human Capital Chair, and key member of Audit, Strategy, Risk, and Market Regulation Committees in very regulated industries and rapidly evolving global markets.



## Keith Enright

Keith Enright is a partner in Gibson Dunn's Palo Alto office and serves as Co-Chair of both the firm's Tech and Innovation Industry Group and the Artificial Intelligence Practice Group. With over two decades of senior executive experience in privacy and law, including as Google's Chief Privacy Officer, Keith provides clients with unparalleled in-house counsel and regulatory experience in creating and implementing programs for privacy, data protection, compliance, and information risk management.



## Pav Gill

Pav Gill is an influential figure in corporate governance and ethics, renowned for his role in exposing Europe's €24 billion Wirecard fraud. As a former Magic Circle lawyer and fintech general counsel, Pav has navigated some of the most complex legal and ethical matters worldwide. His experience, coupled with a strong moral compass and compelling journey as a whistleblower, is now fueling the early success of the Confide Platform, a startup he founded in late 2023.

Pav's compelling narrative and authoritative insights into corporate ethics have captured the global stage, earning him features in major documentaries and coverage by top-tier media outlets. His impactful contributions to the discourse on corporate responsibility have garnered prestigious recognitions, including the Blueprint for Free Speech Award and the ACFE Cliff Robertson Sentinel Award, underscoring his significant impact on the field. A highly sought-after keynote speaker, Pav delivers transformative insights on fostering ethical leadership and operationalizing the principles of transparency and integrity within corporate frameworks. His contributions have not only catalyzed regulatory reforms but also inspired a comprehensive reevaluation of corporate governance standards globally.



### **Anastassia Lauterbach**

Prof. Dr. Anastassia Lauterbach-Lang is the CEO and founder of AI Edutainment, a limited company in Switzerland that democratizes the knowledge of AI and Robotics with children and their families. She is creator of the “Romy and Roby” series, professor of cybersecurity and AI at the MCI in Innsbruck, and an MDEMEA at the ExCo Leadership Group.

Anastassia is a Non-Executive Independent Director at Aira Technologies and LAC2, Lucerne Cognitive and AI Hub. She is an Advisor to the Israeli Association on Artificial Intelligence & Ethics, and the UN Global Mental Health Taskforce. Anastassia was member of supervisory and advisory boards in companies such as Intel, Star Alliance, NASDAQ, Dun & Bradstreet, easyJet, censhare, Wirecard, Cyberion, and RiskQ. In November 2024 Anastassia will be inaugurated in the Hall of Fame for Business Excellence in the category Corporate Governance by the Global Business Excellence Institute, Dublin.



### **Florin Rotar**

As Avanade’s Chief AI Officer, Florin Rotar drives the global AI strategy and execution across all parts of our business, spanning leadership, sales, solutioning, delivery, capability and our partner ecosystem. He also accelerates Avanade’s internal transformation, identifying new ways AI can disrupt – and improve – how we work, operate and deliver for our clients. Florin previously served as Chief Technology Officer at Avanade, where he led the strategic development of a portfolio of solutions and services centered on emerging technologies and innovation. He is a member of the Forbes Technology Council and was recognized by Entrepreneur Magazine as one of the Top 10 CTOs to Watch in 2023. Florin is passionate about people-first AI innovation and co-authored the book “We the People: Human Purpose in a Digital Age: A Guide to Digital Ethics for Individuals, Organizations and Robots of All Kinds.” Florin holds a master’s degree in telecommunications engineering from Lund University. He is a world citizen, having lived and worked in 10 countries across three continents, and now calls the Pacific Northwest home. When he’s not busy raising young children, he loves running while listening to EDM.



### **Dominique Shelton Leipzig**

Dominique Shelton Leipzig is a Mayer Brown Privacy & Cybersecurity Partner. Leading Global Data Innovation, she counsels CEOs and Board Members on smart digital governance. She has trained 50,000+ professionals in AI, privacy and cyber. For decades, Dominique has studied legal trends to accurately forecast digital risks and opportunities. Companies, with a collective market cap of 3 trillion USD have benefited from her insights. Trust is her fourth book. Her articles include a Financial Times op-ed concerning cross-border transfers, that the White House adopted. She founded the Digital Trust Summit for leaders to reimagine effective data oversight. Named a Diligent Modern Governance 100 leader and a LA Times “Legal Visionary,” she has won 24 awards. A board member of the AI Governance Center and the International Association of Privacy Professionals, she is certified in privacy and board governance. Dominique is the co-founder of NxtWork, dedicated to diverse leadership.



### **Anddria Varnado**

Anddria Clack-Rogers Varnado is a visionary leader in modern consumer businesses, blending digital innovation with product and service design to create meaningful customer experiences. With experience in President, Strategy and Marketing roles at premier brands such as Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Macy's, Inc. and Kohler Company, Anddria has directly led new brand and business developments, acquisitions and investments, and critical business transformations, driving accelerated revenue and profitability. Anddria's accomplishments include leading WSI's historic acquisition of Outward, Inc., which expanded the company into "retail tech," and launching businesses across her portfolio. Anddria credits her comprehensive business expertise with early foundational roles in finance, management consulting, and product management. Anddria extends her corporate engagements as a Board Director for Umpqua Bank, Red Robin Gourmet Burgers and PATTERN Beauty LLC by Tracee Ellis Ross.



### **Sophia Velastegui**

Sophia Velastegui is a tech industry leader in corporate strategy, product development, and AI for Fortune 200 companies and startups. She helped launch traditional and generative AI products and businesses, including Microsoft, Google/Alphabet, Apple, and Aptiv. Sophia is a board director at Blackline and on Georgia Tech's President Advisory Board, an AI advisor for National Science Foundation (NSF) and a member of the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD).



### **Michael Volkov**

Michael Volkov is a recognized expert in corporate governance and compliance, internal investigations and white-collar defense. Michael Volkov is the Chief Executive Officer of The Volkov Law Group. He has over 40 years' experience in practicing law. The Volkov Law Group brings over 40+ years of combined experience in government, big-law firm, federal prosecution, corporate monitoring and ethics and compliance legal services. Mr. Volkov has represented companies and individuals in high-profile, high-stakes litigation and investigations. He is a regular speaker at popular legal and compliance conferences around the globe. The Volkov Law Group maintains a popular legal blog and a regular podcast: Corruption, Crime & Compliance. Mr. Volkov is frequently cited in the media for his knowledge on white collar enforcement issues, internal investigations, corporate governance, and ethics and compliance issues.



# About us

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## About Diligent Institute

Diligent Institute informs, educates, and connects leaders to champion governance excellence. We provide original, cutting-edge research on the most pressing issues in corporate governance, certifications and educational programs that equip leaders with the knowledge and credentials needed to guide their organizations through existential challenges, and peer networks that convene directors and corporate executives to share best practices and insights.

## Diligent Institute

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## About Diligent

At Diligent, we believe in a world where transformational leaders can build more successful, equitable and sustainable organizations. One million users and more than 700,000 board members and leaders rely on Diligent software to connect insights across governance, risk, compliance, audit and ESG to drive greater impact and lead with purpose.



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