

Erik Peterson

Partner and Managing Director of A.T. Kearney's Global Business Policy Council & Senior Advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Erik R. Peterson has devoted more than three decades to assessing long-range global trends and determining what they mean to leaders in government, business, and civil society. He has provided riveting presentations in more than 45 countries about the current and future implications of sweeping change for organizations across the board. In the past 10 years, in his capacity of leader of A.T. Kearney's global ranked think tank, he has engaged business leaders the world over on the profound shifts underway in the operating environment.

Peterson's differentiation is that he stands at the intersection of policy and business—and has the capacity to identify macro trends and then explore specific implications for companies with global operations. His perch as leader of A.T. Kearney's think tank, the Global Business Policy Council, gives him constant access to the thinking of leaders worldwide.

A Unique Perspective. Peterson's current point of departure is that we have reached a seminal point in history at which developments in geopolitics, economics, technology, population, resource management and the environment, and society have all reached major and interrelated inflection points. Changes in any one of the areas would be important, but he maintains that we are likely to see profound and disruptive transformations that come when several of them occur simultaneously. The result is a highly complex mix of opportunities and risks that will serve to magnify greatly the challenges—and the rewards—to leaders. For audiences across diverse sectors and cultures, Peterson untangles these complex trends and examines the real-world implications—present and future—of accelerating change and abbreviated time frames for decision-making.

Ubiquitous Challenge. In his presentations, Peterson challenges audiences to take a “commanding heights” view of the macro drivers of global change and then explore how they translate into immediate opportunities and risks. “The opportunity for leaders,” he says, “is to inform strategy and tactics with a sharp understanding of the broader strategic context.” His comments go well beyond boiling the ocean. They include practical approaches on how countries, economies, sectors and companies need to adjust to maximize their prospects.

Anticipating and Preparing for Growing Disruption. As the director of A.T. Kearney's Global Business Policy Council, Peterson advises the world's top CEOs and business-minded thought leaders. His work focuses on approaches and solutions to some of the world's most pressing issues. Prior to joining A.T. Kearney, he served as senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and as director of research at Kissinger Associates.

Looking at the Future Today. The author of numerous publications, Peterson is now completing a book on global strategic trends and their impact on global business—from the changing nature of production in the Fourth Industrial Revolution to new forces shaping supply chain management to emerging challenges to labor to policy and regulatory variables. His recent writings have focused on foreign investment trends, the attitudes of business leaders around the world, how cities are rising to the challenge of changing circumstances, the impact of Brexit, shifts in global supply chain management, the global economic outlook, and global trends. Peterson was a part of A.T. Kearney's recent work with the World Economic Forum on the Future of Production, which assessed the impact of take-off technologies including artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, advanced robotics, 3D printing, and augmented reality.

Extensive Bona Fides. Peterson currently serves on the Board of A.T. Kearney's recently established Energy Transition Institute, a non-profit group with the mandate of providing decision-makers with strategic recommendations based on objective research combining deep technology expertise with business acumen and foresight. He has also served on several advisory boards and judging panels, including the Center for Global Business Studies at Pennsylvania State University, the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress, and the Gerald R. Ford Foundation prize in national security reporting. In past years, Peterson was a fellow of the World Economic Forum and a member of the Forum's Global Risk Network. Peterson received his MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, his MA from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and his BA from Colby College. He holds the Certificate of Eastern European Studies from the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) and the Certificate in International Legal Studies from The Hague Academy of International Law (The Netherlands). Most recently, he received a certificate in scenario-based planning from the Said School at Oxford University.

