

**EVENT TITLE: Governing for the Future in a Globally Interdependent World**

**EVENT DATE: 12/3/2025**

**EVENT TIME: 12:00 Noon EST (Virtual)**

## **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

As the global business environment becomes increasingly interconnected and unpredictable, boards must reassess how they oversee strategy, risk, and resilience across international operations. This NACD New England Chapter program examined how directors can shape and govern global expansion efforts in a way that aligns with long-term enterprise value, geopolitical realities, and evolving stakeholder expectations.

The discussion framed global expansion not as a tactical market-entry question, but as a long-term governance challenge. Directors were urged to elevate oversight of international strategy beyond growth metrics, probing management's assumptions, ensuring alignment with corporate values, and evaluating the durability of operational capabilities across borders. Expansion in today's environment requires more than ambition; it demands deliberate, well-governed execution.

Panelists emphasized that boards should actively engage before decisions are finalized, not after, and ask tough questions: Why this market? Why now? What does success look like three years out? They encouraged boards to demand clarity on the risks being assumed, and whether short-term opportunity could compromise long-term strategic integrity. Global moves must be rooted in purpose, not just profit.

A recurring theme was the importance of local context. Boards were reminded that compliance, labor law, culture, regulatory frameworks, and political dynamics differ widely across jurisdictions. What works in one region may falter

in another. Directors should expect management to stress-test expansion strategies across multiple dimensions, including stakeholder expectations, legal exposure, and operational control.

Global expansion also introduces elevated compliance and reputational risks. As companies navigate markets with differing ESG standards, data protections, and anti-corruption enforcement, directors were cautioned to avoid assuming existing risk frameworks will scale seamlessly. Governance and compliance processes must adapt. Several panelists flagged international operations as growing areas of enterprise risk concern, particularly when reputational stakes are high.

Boards were advised to periodically assess their own global fluency. While not every director must have international operating experience, the board collectively must be capable of understanding and challenging assumptions tied to cross-border execution. Some boards are bolstering their capabilities by appointing regionally experienced directors or creating informal advisory panels for specific geographies.

The conversation turned to cybersecurity, especially as global operations increase the attack surface. In less mature or under-regulated jurisdictions, data protection vulnerabilities can become systemic risks. Directors were reminded that expansion increases not just business complexity but exposure. Boards should confirm there is clear accountability for information security across all markets, and that incident response plans scale globally.

Human capital strategy was also central to the discussion. As companies grow globally, workforce expectations diverge, on compensation, remote work, leadership access, and career development. Boards must oversee how talent is recruited, retained, and developed in a way that honors both global culture and local norms. Cultural missteps in new markets can lead to turnover, brand damage, or employee disengagement.

The panel emphasized that international expansion requires ongoing oversight, not a one-time strategy review. Conditions change, markets evolve, and assumptions must be challenged over time. Boards must remain alert to

inflection points—geopolitical instability, ESG regulation changes, talent constraints that may require slowing, adjusting, or even reversing global strategies.

Finally, panelists noted that stakeholder expectations are increasingly borderless. Investors, customers, and employees expect consistent values, governance, and transparency—no matter where a company operates. Boards were urged to ensure that global actions reflect enterprise-wide integrity and do not fracture the trust companies work hard to build.

In closing, directors were encouraged to treat global expansion as an enterprise-wide governance issue, requiring ongoing attention, specialized insight, and alignment with corporate purpose. The board's role is not to manage international growth, but to ensure it is pursued responsibly, strategically, and with an eye on long-term resilience.

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS:**

- **Align Global Expansion with Long-Term Strategy and Purpose**  
Boards should push for clarity on why a market matters strategically and whether growth assumptions are credible.
- **Local Context is Non-Negotiable**  
Governance oversight must reflect the real legal, cultural, and regulatory complexities of each new geography.
- **Compliance and Reputation Require Scalable Controls**  
Directors must ensure governance systems adapt to international exposure and evolving expectations.
- **Cyber and Talent Risk Multiply Across Borders**  
International operations create new vulnerabilities. Boards must oversee both IT risk and human capital alignment.
- **Boards Need Global Fluency to Govern Effectively**  
A board's ability to challenge, support, and guide global strategy hinges on its knowledge and visibility into international dynamics.

**MODERATOR:**

**Yvonne Schlaeppli**, Director, AstroNova, Inc. & Managing Partner, Stratevise LLC

**SPEAKER(S):**

**Paul Humphries**, Board Member and Advisor

**Karen Golz**, Director, Analog Devices, Inc., Aspen Technology, Inc.; iROBOT Corporation

**Damon Pike**, Principal, Customs & International Trade Services; BDO

**PROGRAM PARTNER:**

