



**SIR ALAN PARKER**

**CHAIRMAN,  
BRUNSWICK GROUP**

“I HAVE NEVER WORKED IN SUCH UNCERTAIN TIMES.”

That’s a phrase we hear from business leaders all over the world. But boards and management cannot wait for a quieter, more predictable world – decisions have to be made and followed through on, even if the only certainty seems to be uncertainty.

That leaves us with the question: What view of the future can you rely on – at a micro or a macro level? This is the overarching concern that is at the heart of this “Predictions” issue of the Brunswick Review.

Like our clients, everything we do has an element of situation assessment and then prediction built in. In recent years, this has only become harder. We get out of bed expecting the unexpected, with vastly more data available and more views and voices on everything than ever before. But if this complicates decisions, it also exponentially multiplies the options.

For the first step, assessment, there are a number of specific things we can do. For example, understanding the ebb and flow of geopolitics is increasingly important. At Brunswick, we’ve developed extraordinary firepower with our Geopolitical team of Bob Zoellick, Pascal Lamy, Lord Powell and George Yeo. They bring their combined experience and perspective to bear for our clients in all sectors.

Likewise, we can interrogate issues through our research teams within Brunswick Insight, to help define problems, design solutions and evaluate impacts

for all of the organizations we work with.

But as helpful as those abilities are, specific predictions are another matter. Dynamics and likely outcomes are unique to each case; it is up to those leaders to think through the risks and decide on a course of action. Then, to paraphrase Lady Macbeth, they have to “screw their courage to the sticking point.”

To make judgments in the midst of fast-moving complexity requires changes in the way we work. Information and ideas have to flow faster and more effectively; silos are the enemy and sustaining multiple and often conflicting stakeholder views becomes crucial. Echo chambers are impediments; outside voices are often valuable.

Organizational intelligence has to be joined up to maintain constructive real-time relationships with a full range of stakeholders. Shareholders, employees, board members, media, the public, regulators – these can’t be thought of as isolated groups. That means that isolated teams for public and internal communications, IR or regulatory affairs, are now not just inefficient, they are dangerous. To add another layer of complexity, companies are now being asked to take strong and public positions on all sorts of contentious social concerns that were not previously seen as in their domain. Fast-changing public attitudes often drive these issues. We have to plot their trajectories to plan effectively.

At Brunswick, we decided a long time ago to be a “one firm firm,” not to separate profit centers or divisions. A client team can be highly focused, but can also call on all of the expertise around the Group for any client anywhere in the world. Taking advantage of this natural diversity – top experts in widely separated centers of excellence – is a crucial advantage.

The world has never been so fast, and it is only going to get faster. The potential for uncertainty will tend to increase. Agility and resilience play an increasingly large role in successful execution. Great leadership requires clarity of purpose, good planning and support, both internal and external. However clear the strategy, there will be in-course corrections and unforeseen challenges in abundance – those trusted relationships are what will carry the day.

All of those arguments are made in this magazine, in the words of business leaders, outside experts, clients and team members. It is rigorous thinking and a diversity of opinions that reflect our daily work at Brunswick toward one goal: to help our clients create the right mix of agility and smart decision-making internally and a good store of reputational capital externally to deliver the resilience needed to navigate these extraordinary times. ♦

## GEO OF THE AMERICAS

**NIKHIL (NIK) DEOGUN** was named CEO of the Americas and US Senior Partner of Brunswick.

Mr. Deogun comes to Brunswick from CNBC, where he served as Editor in Chief and Senior Vice President, Business News. Mr. Deogun was responsible for all editorial content for daily live news programming, working closely with anchors, reporters and producers, as well as CNBC’s network specials and documentaries.

Previously at The Wall Street Journal, Mr. Deogun excelled as an M&A reporter, thrived as the editor in charge of covering entertainment, publishing, advertising, consumer goods, fashion and retail, then, during the financial crisis, ran coverage of Wall Street, banking, hedge funds,

private equity and mutual funds. He also served as deputy bureau chief in Washington, D.C., where he oversaw regulatory and investigative coverage for the paper. He ended his Journal career as Deputy Managing Editor in charge of financial and international coverage.

“Nik has reported on the most competitive of business activities, mergers and acquisitions; led coverage of consumer giants like Coke and Pepsi; leapt into



guidance of political and regulatory coverage, and taken brilliant charge of video reporting when he had practically zero experience with it,” says Paul Steiger, ProPublica founder and formerly managing editor of The Wall Street Journal. “Whether it’s advising leaders in a crisis or building a team adept at avoiding them, I’d want Nik on my side.”

At Brunswick, Mr. Deogun will advise clients on a range of critical business issues, spanning the financial, commercial, M&A and political spheres. He will be based in New York and report to CEO Neal Wolin.

Mr. Deogun grew up in India. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Muskingum University in Ohio. He received a master’s degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Nik is married and has two children.