

# TAKING THE “U” OUT OF VUCA

## Reducing Uncertainty During Times of Change

The term “VUCA” (Volatile – Uncertain – Complex – Ambiguous) entered our business vocabulary in the 1990s, and though it may often be used to describe military operations, there’s a very good chance it also describes your working environment.

The element of VUCA over which you have the most control is *Uncertainty*, which can negatively affect your business performance, client retention, and employee engagement. Though Volatility, Complexity, and Ambiguity may depend more on forces outside of your control, the amount of Uncertainty in your organization is often up to you.



Uncertainty leads to performance problems when

- Employees hesitate to take any action because they don't know if what they do today will matter next week
- Innovation grinds to a halt because potential innovators may feel they are taking on too big of a risk by trying something new
- Clients are unwilling to buy products or sign contracts because they don't know what the future holds for you
- Employees who are unsure about their future in the company choose to leave for a more stable environment.

Rather than letting Uncertainty add to your costs, a few simple steps can help you create a more stable environment.



From the time he joined the US Air Force as a Lieutenant in 1989 until he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2010, Dr William Thomas led many of the strategic planning efforts that transformed the US military. His doctoral dissertation focused on that change, and he brings the lessons from his career into the private sector. In this session he shares examples that include the difficult transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War world, his experiences in Eastern European peacekeeping operations, and his combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. While showing participants how to overcome Uncertainty in the most challenging environments imaginable, he then helps them adapt those lessons to their own organization.