

“Success is all about going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.”

- Winston Churchill, (an example of a man who persevered through his ADD).



Neil Peterson is a successful businessman, public servant and leading advocate for the disabled in his role as the head of the not-for-profit Edge Foundation.

Business

Neil’s most recent business success is the highly acclaimed Flexcar, which he founded in 1999. Flexcar—which some describe as “time-share for automobiles”—operates in twelve cities across the country, providing an answer to Americans’ desire to reduce their reliance upon foreign oil, meet environmental goals, fight global warming, decrease carbon emission levels, and make our cities more livable. In 2005 Steve Case of AOL fame purchased Flexcar. Recently, Flexcar and Zipcar merged.

A self-confessed “serial entrepreneur,” Neil has founded four other businesses—an international transportation consulting firm, a company providing interim executive management, a travel and tour company, and a private fishing club.

In addition, Neil has served as CEO, COO, or CFO of six companies, including a publicly traded membership campground company, a television and TV advertising research and ratings company, a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), an international people-mover company in the transportation industry, a contracted heavy equipment maintenance service business, and a travel publication. Neil’s first job in the private sector was as a consultant for Booz Allen Hamilton.

Public Service

Another chapter of Neil’s career is as a public servant. He is best known for serving as leader of the public transportation systems in Los Angeles, San Francisco’s East Bay, and Seattle metropolitan areas. In these roles he has received numerous awards.

As executive director of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (METRO), in addition to his responsibility for public transportation Neil was responsible for regional sewage collection, treatment, and water quality.

Previously Neil served as a city manager and worked for two U.S. congressmen and two state governments. In New Jersey he worked in the anti-poverty program. In the state of Washington he served the Department of Social and Health Services as its Management and Budget Director and as its COO, supervising 10,000 employees.

He has held leadership roles in a number of organizations, including the Transportation Research Board, National Academy of Sciences (former Executive Committee member), and the American Public Transportation Association (former chairperson of Legislative Committee, board member, Executive Committee member, and vice president of technology).

Neil has been a member or served as a board member for:

- American Road & Transportation Builders Association
- Californians for Better Transportation
- Transportation Coalition of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
- California Transit Association
- Commuter Transportation Services
- Association of Metropolitan Sewage Agencies
- International City Management Association
- American Society for Public Administration
- Transportation Committee of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- The Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet on Transportation
- City of Seattle's Public Private Partnership Task Force

Neil has also served as cosponsor of the Transportation Innovations Project, cochairman of APTA's Innovative Financing Committee, and member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Transportation Commission. He has also served as Co-Finance Chairperson of the Seattle School Levy Campaign, and Board member of the Citizens Education Center Northwest.

Not-for-Profit

Neil has a passion for the disabled and has devoted much time to helping those with disabilities. While serving as COO for the Department of Social and Health Services, Neil was responsible for Washington State's programs for the physically and mentally disabled. In Seattle Neil was responsible for making METRO the first large transit agency in the country to adopt and successfully implement a full accessibility policy for the disabled on all METRO buses. For this he received an award from the Disabled American Veterans. He has also served on the board of a not-for-profit agency that helped the blind and visually impaired.

The father of two children with learning disabilities and ADHD, Neil himself has dyslexia and ADHD. Neil and his kids were featured in the May 2007 edition of *ADDitude* magazine.

Neil also has what many might view as a physical disability—he has just one eye. Despite having no depth perception, he is able to carry a 5 handicap in golf.

Neil is a member of Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD), Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADDA), Learning Disabilities Association (LDA), and International Dyslexia Association (IDA).

Personal

Ever since he was inspired by the movie *Shall We Dance*, Neil has become an accomplished dancer, focusing on ballroom, Latin, Argentine tango, and West Coast swing dances. He periodically serves as a dance host on passenger cruise ships and is represented by two talent agencies.

Born in 1944 in Georgia, Neil grew up on the East Coast, mostly in the Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and New Jersey areas. Educated at Williams College, he received his master's degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He has taught courses at Rutgers University and the University of Washington.

With a love for learning and a curiosity about what we can learn from other cultures, Neil has traveled extensively, visiting over 50 countries on six of the seven continents. He organizes a few trips each year under his Peterson's Sunshine Tours company.

Neil has four stepchildren, two children, and two step grandchildren. He lives on a houseboat in Seattle in the summer and on a motor coach in the Palm Desert area of California in the winter.

Neil is an affiliate member of the National Speakers Association and frequently speaks to organizations. He has spoken before numerous civic and business groups, conferences, and trade organizations, including the Design-Build Institute of America, the American Public Transportation Association, the American Road & Transportation Builders Association, the Privatization Conference, and the Rail BOOT Conference.