



Margaret Heffernan

AUTHOR · TED SPEAKER

Business Author, Financial Times and Huffington Post Columnist, Mentor and TED Speaker

Dr. Margaret Heffernan produced programmes for the BBC for 13 years. She then moved to the US where she spearheaded multimedia productions for Intuit, The Learning Company and Standard&Poors.

Margaret Heffernan's 2026 Biography

About Margaret Heffernan

Margaret Heffernan is a charismatic and authoritative speaker who takes little at face value and regularly challenges received wisdom. With an unerring ability to highlight the talent that often lies underutilised in organisations, this five-time CEO and six-time author consistently questions common business practices in ways and from angles that never fail to surprise. Her aim? To show organisations how to 'get out of their own way' and release the talent already in their ranks.

Originally a producer for the BBC, Margaret moved to the US in the 1980s where she became a renowned media executive through her work at The Learning Company, Standard & Poor's, and others. To date she has written six books.

Her latest, *Uncharted: How to Map the Future Together*, invites us to adapt to a world in which uncertainty is now the default rather than the exception. It could not be more timely as Covid19, Brexit, AI and other volatile forces bring unprecedented disruption to lives and businesses across the globe.

Among her other roles, Margaret is a Professor of Practice at the University of Bath, Lead Faculty for the Forward Institute's Responsible Leadership Programme and, through Merryck & Co., she mentors CEOs and senior executives of major global organizations. She also writes for the Financial Times and Huffington Post.

She was shortlisted for a Thinkers50 Strategy Thinking Award in September 2021.

AVAILABLE FOR

- Speaking
- TV and Media

MARGARET'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Business Continuity and Crisis Management
- Business Strategy & Growth
- Change Management
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Employee Engagement
- Future of Work
- Growth Strategy
- Leadership

LANGUAGES: English

Margaret Heffernan's 2026 talks & topics

Disruption: Uncertainty Is The 'New Normal'.

With business' ability to predict accurately being increasingly curtailed by myriad disruptive forces (such as Covid19, AI, climate change) leaders need to understand that uncertainty is here to stay. In this powerful keynote, Margaret illustrates the tools and approaches leaders need to adopt in order to navigate the 'new normal' with confidence and purpose.

Leadership: The Future Of Leadership.

Leaders used to run their organizations with a 3 step process: forecast/plan/execute—and for decades, it worked well enough. But now that the future is uncertain, stakeholders demand participation, transparency and long-term thinking, which crucially, feels harder than ever. In an age of ambiguity and anxiety, what are the crucial skills and characteristics that leaders must have? What is their relationship to experts, to stakeholders, to the world at large. Where will we find such leaders and what kind of development will they require?

Business Strategy: The End Of Efficiency.

Since the Industrial Revolution, people and processes have been managed for efficiency: bigger, faster, cheaper. Technology optimises for efficiency too. It is the watchword of management everywhere.

But while efficiency delivers tangible benefits in complicated environments, it plays havoc with complex ones. Being able to distinguish the difference between the two, knowing when efficiency is safe and when it's dangerous, has never been more critical. Get it wrong and companies risk spending too much, amplifying endemic risks or missing huge opportunities to innovate. In today's organizations, being too efficient is as dangerous as being spendthrift. How can you tell when efficiency is your friend—or a foe?

UNCHARTED: How to navigate the future

The time horizon for accurate prediction is now 150 - 400 days out. Which means that the 3-legged tool of management (forecast-plan-execute) is broken. But that need not leave us helpless. Individuals and organizations can find in uncertainty the creativity, ambition and robustness they need to stay meaningful and important in the world—but only if they're prepared to rethink core concepts like efficiency, planning and strategy. Ineradicable uncertainty may be the defining characteristic of our age and it requires a new kind of leadership, from everyone.

The One Firm Firm

After years of streamlining and hunkering down to weather the crises, what companies now most need to do is pull their people together. Collaboration and innovation are vital skills in global business—but where do they come from? How do leading companies get the alignment, trust and energy they need to get their people to work well together? What are the impediments to, and habits of, creative collaborative teams?

Working across cultures, time zones and technology is logistically difficult but it's usually the human

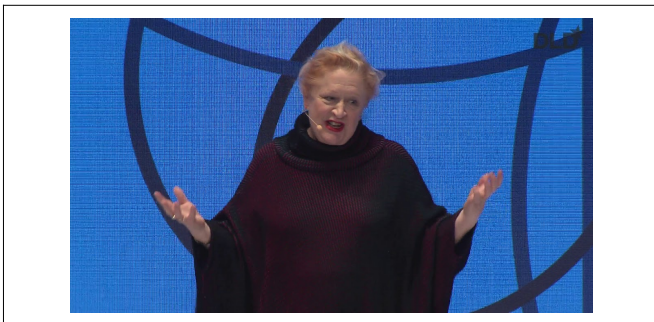
factors that make it hard for companies to achieve their aims. Everyone talks about collaboration but few know how to do it, what it feels like or what organizational structures enable—or disable—it. What they all know is that if they can't figure out how to do it will, others will.

Two For One: Seeing Risks/Seizing Opportunity

Big data, market research, social media: we can know more than ever and yet we keep missing the most important trends, information and trends. Why? What makes companies and individuals willfully blind?

Pulling together a century of psychological, industrial and economic research, Margaret Heffernan argues that willful blindness is the biggest risk most organizations face. But the good news is that those companies that confront the issue don't just reduce their risk; they also make themselves inherently more creative and collaborative. It's a twofer: when you see more, you can make more and risk less.

Margaret Heffernan's Videos



What Margaret Heffernan's clients say

Margaret delivered a colourful and engaging masterclass to a sold out session here in the IMI. She discussed how deceptively small measures can have a disproportionate impact on building a strong, sustainable organisational culture. Here at the IMI, we look at successful events on the number of fronts and audience participation is key. The Q&A session with Margaret was our best yet.

David Magee

IMI

Margaret was brilliant, very approachable and positive. Plus, she delivered an incredible presentation. Please pass along our appreciation, along with her average score from the audience: 8.82/10 - amazing score & great presentation. Very inspiring!

Excellence Summit

Margaret was fabulous, a great storyteller with practical tips. She was one of the highest rated speakers of the event.

LINKAGE (USA)

We owe YOU a huge thank you. Your session was definitely the highlight of the day - everyone was so engaged and then talking about it at the drinks later on having received their books - inspiring stuff. We were very pleased with how the day went.

PWC (London)

Your presentation was excellent, very well received by the teams, at all levels. I personally loved it. It very much resonated with me, and everyone could take something back to their day to day life, reflect and hopefully make some changes that would be beneficial to all. During all the many presentations we had at L@L, every single GSK presenter from Legal referred to your presentation! Thanks again. It was a pleasure to listen to you.

SK (London)

As you can tell from the attached evaluation summary, those in the room were really engaged. They benefitted from not only from the stories you shared, but also those you encouraged in the room from each other. Everyone was able to take something away to use and develop back at their organisations and Trusts. I couldn't have asked for more from a masterclass.

KKS ACADEMY

Margaret's contribution at our annual strategic offsite was outstanding – we could not have wished for a more thought provoking and insightful presentation. We had expected that she would hit some of the topics that we have built our change initiatives around – but little did we expect that our approaches would be this close. Our colleagues who were there also agreed with the majority rating her session as the one of the most valuable of our offsite.

Allianz Global Investors

The feedback for Margaret was fantastic, delegates really got a lot out of what she said, and how she said it! Content was fantastic, I think that Margaret related to the brief really well but crucially brought the fantastic external perspective that we were looking for. When it came to the panel I think that Margaret was a brilliant asset and brought a huge amount to the table.

Aisling Lewis

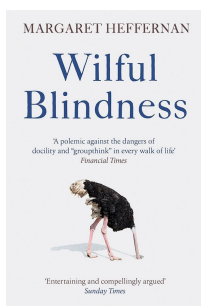
MPD Leader, Procter & Gamble

I was chatting to a couple of chief executives at the end of the conference, and both unprompted commented that yours was the most stimulating session, and the one that got them thinking the most.

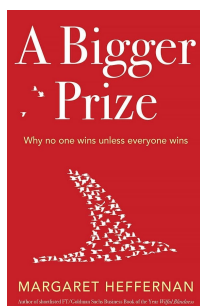
Joe Simpson

Principal Strategic Advisor, Local Government Association

MARGARET'S LATEST BOOKS



Wilful Blindness - Why We Ignore the Obvious at our Peril



A Bigger Prize - Why Competition Isn't Everything and How We Do Better

Uncharted

How to Map
the Future Together

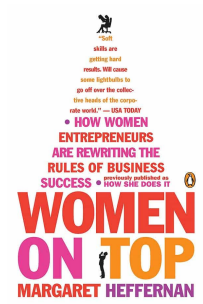


MARGARET HEFFERNAN
Author of *Wilful Blindness*

Uncharted - How to Map the Future Together



Beyond Measure - The Big Impact of Small Changes



Women on Top - Redefining power and the nature of success for the 21st century