

Andrew C. Bielat

FRACTIONAL COO | AUTHOR | SPEAKER

Founder and Managing Partner, Pilot Advisors - Fractional Executive Services, Authors, Speakers · Founded 1997
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PROFILE

Forty years of learning something every week, much of it the hard way. Frito-Lay taught me process discipline at scale. Commercial nuclear power taught me to build a culture where doing it right the first time is simply how everyone operates. Steel put me through multiple acquisitions, a premium sale, and integration into a multinational, across US and Canadian plants. Three industries with little in common, except that each was changing, and none of it held unless the people carried it.

That thread is why I founded Pilot Advisors in 1997. Since then I have worked inside 92+ organizations as a Fractional COO and guided 355+ executives. I enter at the CEO. I get to the real problem fast, because I have seen it before, and I stay long enough to make the fix stick.

My clients are CEOs and Founder-CEOs of privately held, family-owned, and board-pressured industrial companies from \$20M to \$3B. The end state I work toward is a company operating at its BestPossible, with a leader who is free to lead because the organization runs itself.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- Fractional COO: an embedded, 18-month hybrid engagement for multi-site operating companies
- Sea Trials: fixed-scope, fixed-price 90-day engagements built around one visible problem
- Readiness assessment, root cause analysis and prevention, and culture verification
- Leadership succession, crisis recovery, and business continuity
- Post-acquisition integration, cultural alignment, and daily management systems
- Leadership development, team assessment, strategic planning, and forecasting
- Keynote speaking on building organizations that run at their BestPossible

SELECTED ENGAGEMENTS

JSW Steel USA Mar 2024 to Sep 2025 · shipping and production turnaround

Brought in to turn around shipping and production performance. Installed the operating systems and daily management discipline behind both. The engagement concluded at the end of its planned 18-month term, amid a family-ownership leadership transition. In the months after I left, those systems drove four consecutive record shipping and production months, proof they held without me in the building.

Services Group of America (FSA) \$3.1B · 5 operating companies · 3,000 employees · Recovery Advisor

The founder and CEO, the company's single source of direction, was killed in a helicopter crash, leaving the business to his 27-year-old son. Led disaster recovery and business continuity, advised the Board, and personally coached 57 leaders through vision and values work that made the guiding principles the operating standard. Built the leadership development, strategic planning, forecasting, and team-building programs the company had never needed while the founder was alive. Growth was sustained and accelerated through the sale of the largest asset, Food Services of America, at a very favorable price. Ten years later, leaders reported the culture had held almost intact.

Oregon Steel Mills \$1B · 2,500+ employees · operations leadership through the 1990s, eventually COO

Ran operations, capital project management, and M&A operations liaison across acquisitions in Regina, Camrose, Napa, and Pueblo. Each required aligning organizational structures and leadership cultures, integrating sales and operations, and resolving existing leadership and market issues. Delivered the highest profit levels in the company's 120-year history and 20x stock-value growth, named the hottest stock in the market by Jim Cramer, and positioned the organization for sale to EVRAZ at eight times revenue.

Steel Dynamics, EVRAZ, and Bayou Steel Fortune 500 and post-acquisition steel operations

At the Steel Dynamics Structural and Rail Division, a severe Fort Wayne winter stalled shipping while production ran on. The leadership team built a recovery plan in days that came in more than 30 percent above the pre-crisis forecast, a case published in Iron & Steel Technology. Brought into EVRAZ after its purchase of Oregon Steel Mills to restore profitability and address leadership and market culture issues. Advised Bayou Steel through an acquisition and management change.

Chemical Demilitarization and National Defense Tooele, Anniston, Pueblo, Umatilla, Hanford

At the Tooele Chemical Weapons Demilitarization Facility, led the return to an employee-focused leadership culture across a 205-person laboratory and air-monitoring organization, taking the site from worst to best of six national sites in safety and production at the same time. One commanding officer engaged me across four of these installations over nine years. Performance and readiness assessment and operations support extended to defense contracts, US military storage operations, and Hanford waste storage, where the consequence of an operational error is absolute.

Gardenburger \$25M-\$100M · first-of-its-kind food producer

Transitioned a multi-site small business into an integrated high-performance production company through performance metrics, statistical process control, leadership development, and strategic planning support. Revenue quadrupled, profits doubled, and share price rose 100 percent.

Group Danone \$20B · global leadership development

Coached the global CEO and delivered a readiness assessment of the leadership team and organizational structure. Follow-on vision, culture, and change management work with Danone Waters of North America.

PGE Trojan Nuclear Power Plant senior manager, Performance and Safety Review

Led the technical aspects of operations and managed the Technical Operations Advisor program and root cause analysis of significant events. Assigned to the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations to develop advanced preventive assessment techniques and establish industry-wide root cause analysis standards adopted into the Code of Federal Regulations, training thousands of industry specialists. Recognized by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Chemical Munitions Agency.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Steel and heavy manufacturing · Food production and distribution · Energy and utilities · Commercial nuclear power · Chemical demilitarization and national defense · Professional services. Regulated-industry clients include Grant County PUD, Battelle Memorial, PacifiCorp, Suncor, Clinton Nuclear, Davis Besse, Ontario Hydro, Duke Power, Hanford Waste Storage, Energy Northwest, and the Tooele, Anniston, Pueblo, and Umatilla chemical demilitarization programs.

PUBLICATIONS, SPEAKING, AND SERVICE

- “The Best Possible Enterprise: A Comprehensive Guide to Optimal Profits” (2013)
- “Profit Hawks: Capture the Profits Being Lost Every Day to the Complexity of Your Business” (2016)
- “Profit Optimization in the Steel Industry,” Iron & Steel Technology, with Y. Krotov, Dec 2015
- Keynote speaker, UC-California Polytechnic, EPIC Engineering Possibilities in College
- Contributing writer, Executive Street, Vistage Executive Coaching, 2018-2020
- MBA thesis industry reviewer, University of Idaho College of Business and Economics, 2015-2020

EDUCATION AND CREDENTIALS

B.S. Mechanical Engineering University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Graduate study Graduate coursework in Mechanical Engineering, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Certification Engineer in Training (EIT), State of Oregon

REFERENCES

Available on request. Prior engagement principals include Steve Manuszak (Services Group of America), Rob Simon (Steel Dynamics), Rick Smith (steel), and Ken Hukari (regulated operations).