



The Unitarian Church in Westport

Our Common Ground

Diane Hessian Biography

Fall, 2021

Diane Hessian is an award-winning entrepreneur and innovator in the market research field, and a nationally recognized expert on the American voter. Since 2016, she has been engaged in an in-depth, longitudinal study of the electorate, looking for trends, shifts and common ground. She has written more than fifty columns about her findings for the *Boston Globe* and her work has also been featured on CNN and NPR, and in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Fortune*, and many other outlets.

She is the founder and Chairman of C Space, formerly called Communispace, which was the first company to leverage social media to help companies get insight and inspiration from their consumers. Diane was CEO of the company during fourteen years of exponential growth, as C Space worked with hundreds of global brands across twelve countries. She has been honored as a disruptor in the market research industry because of her work in conducting breakthrough research via the internet. Diane recently consolidated all of her investment and advisory work into a new company called Salient Ventures, which helps accelerate the next generation of startup companies in tech.

She serves on the boards of Panera, Eastern Bank, Brightcove, Schlesinger Group, Mass Challenge, Tufts University, and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Diane has received many honors, including the Pinnacle Award from the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Most Admired CEO award and Boston Power 50 awards from the Boston Business Journal, Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year, the Northstar Award from Springboard, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce Entrepreneur of the Year, and a range of Best Boss citations. She has been inducted into the Babson Academy of Distinguished Entrepreneurs and she received the Asper Award for Global Entrepreneurship from Brandeis University.

Diane previously coauthored the book *Customer-Centered Growth: Five Strategies for Building Competitive Advantage*, a *Business Week* best seller that was published in eleven languages.

She received a BA in economics and English from Tufts University, and an MBA from Harvard Business School, and she has received honorary degrees from Bentley University and the New England College of Business.