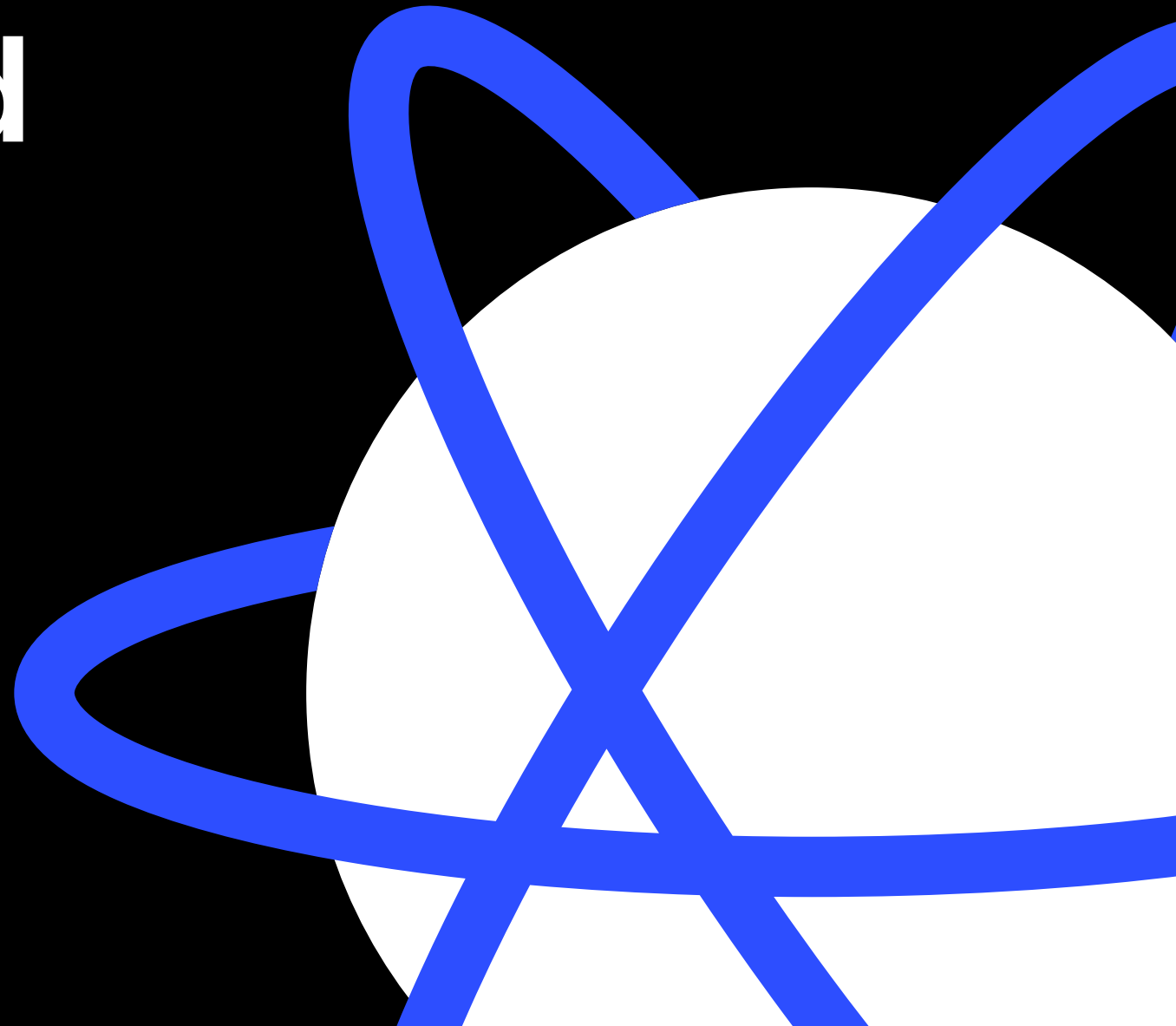


PROPHET

# Innovation in a Post-Pandemic World

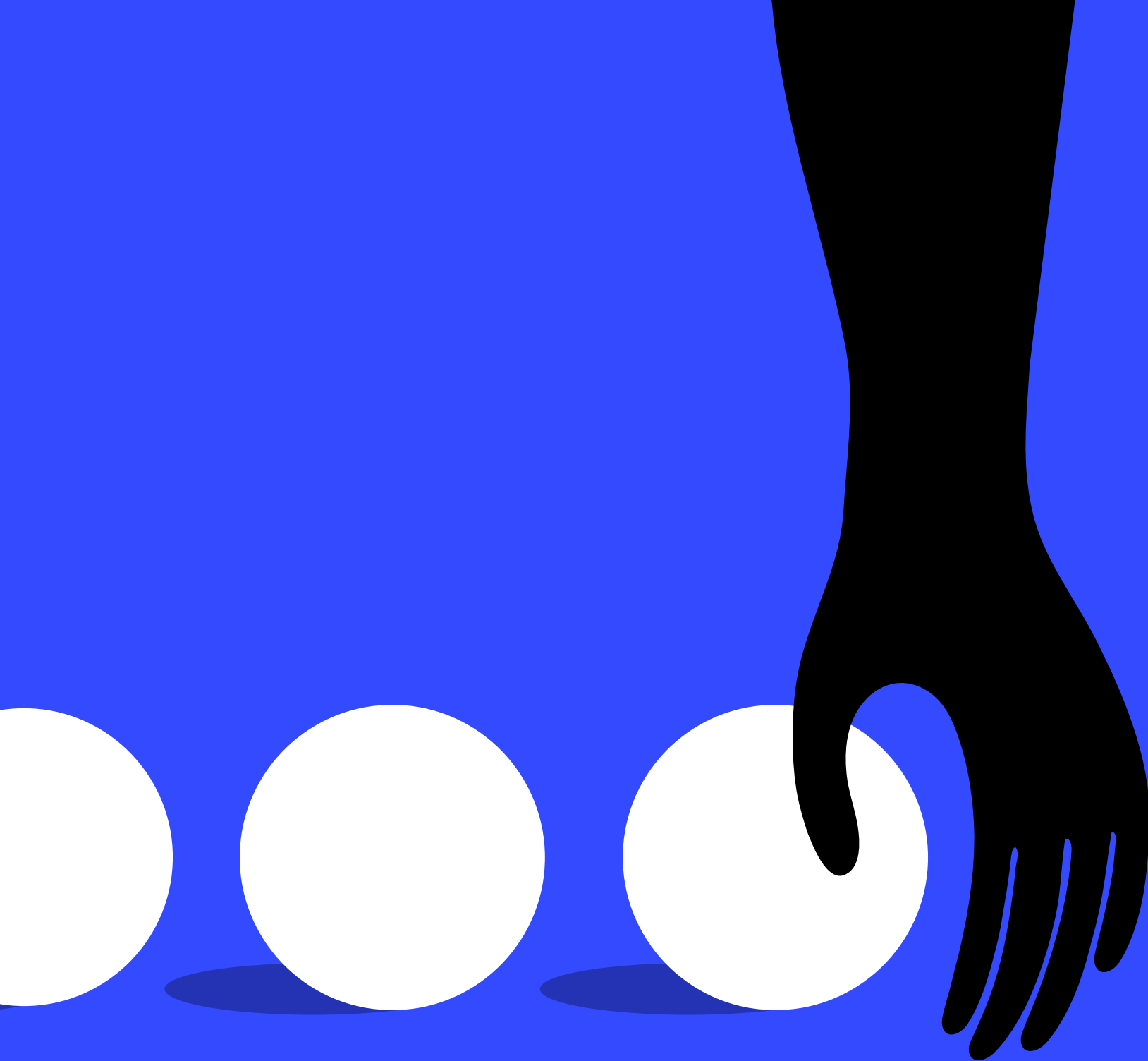
The Critical Traits of a Truly  
Enlightened Company



**It's the best of  
times to innovate.  
It's the worst of  
times to stand still.**

It's the age of artificial intelligence. It's the age of artificial meat. It's the epoch of conscious consumption. It's the epoch of the auto-order. It's the season of light mayonnaise. It's the season of dark chocolate. It's the spring of digital disruption. It's the winter of legacy business models. We have everything before us. We have nothing to hold us back from being an enlightened, innovative company for the times ahead. The coronacoaster we've been riding has given birth to blue skype thinking as businesses have stepped up and strapped in.

Enlightened innovators are opening their minds (and processes) on how they do innovation in a post-pandemic world. Some are broadening their thinking from ultra-focused USPs to multifaceted selling propositions. Many are expanding their insight framework from pain points and unmet needs to pleasure points and over-satisfying desires. Most have progressed from thinking about goods and services in isolation to thinking about innovation as gestalt end-to-end systems. All are actively reconfiguring how they organize themselves for innovation success in our ever-changing world.

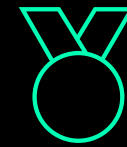


# Prophet works with enlightened innovators across multiple categories.

The cleverest ones take what's worked for others  
and add it to their own bag of tricks.

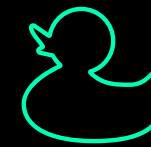
# Our recent work has identified seven enlightened innovator traits.

01



Crystal Clear  
Goals

02



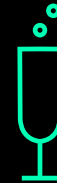
Ducks in  
a Row

03



Nearsighted  
& Farsighted

04



Cultural  
Voyeurs

05



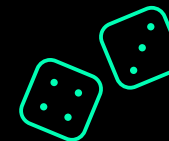
Voracious  
Experimenters

06



Speed  
Freaks

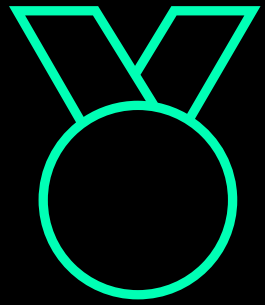
07



Roll the  
Dice

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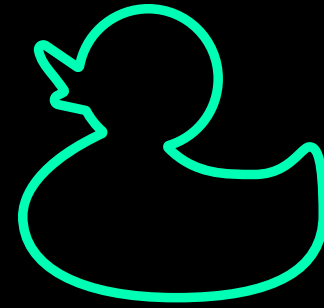
These traits impact how (and how well) an organization sets itself up to innovate. It's important to note that enlightened innovator traits are NOT one size fits all... or one style suits all. Different organizations must find their own way of making enlightened innovator traits their own.



01

## Crystal Clear Goals

Enlightened innovators have **Crystal Clear Goals** with an innovation agenda that's inextricably linked to corporate strategy and commercial payoff. They express their goals through language that inspires and aligns stakeholders (e.g., the JFK moonshot goal of 'landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth'). They go beyond a 'set and forget' goal process. Instead, they actively track progress at regular intervals and course correct over time.



02

## Ducks in a Row

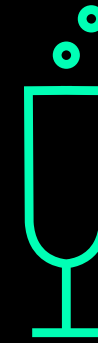
It's impossible to have a steady stream of wins unless you've got your **Ducks In a Row**. Enlightened innovators operate with a solid foundation for ongoing innovation success. All (or most) of the elements are present and accounted for including efficient stage-gating, plug & play research, fast prototyping, collaborative partnerships, launch & learn labs. And the best of the bunch are constantly looking for ways to strengthen their already solid foundations.



03

## Nearsighted & Farsighted

Enlightened innovators constantly have a range of projects on the go with different time horizons — some are for a ‘this year’s model’ update, some are for a future several years out. By being simultaneously **Nearsighted & Farsighted**, these organizations maintain a well-managed pipeline that drives superior returns over time. The ratio of nearsighted to farsighted emphasis will naturally vary by category dynamics and competitive positioning, but it’s important to ensure (at least a little) of each lens in the mix.



04

## Cultural Voyeurs

Innovators have an innate curiosity. They’re obsessive observers of consumer lifestyles and cultural trends. Enlightened innovators purposefully set themselves up as **Cultural Voyeur** extraordinaires. They curate a living library of cultural insights. They dip into diverse information pools — some book-smart, some street-smart. They get out into the wild on their own to see what’s going on in the world first-hand. They’re not afraid to peer into the lunatic fringes to predict what’s next for the mass markets.



05

## Voracious Experimenters

The only way to advance the state of the art is through experimentation. Enlightened innovators embrace multiple forms of experimentation — from insight generation to organizational structure to research methodology to launch models and beyond. They diligently capture experimental learnings to prevent themselves from reinventing the wheel (too often). Every experiment doesn't have to work perfectly, but every experiment should add value in some way.



06

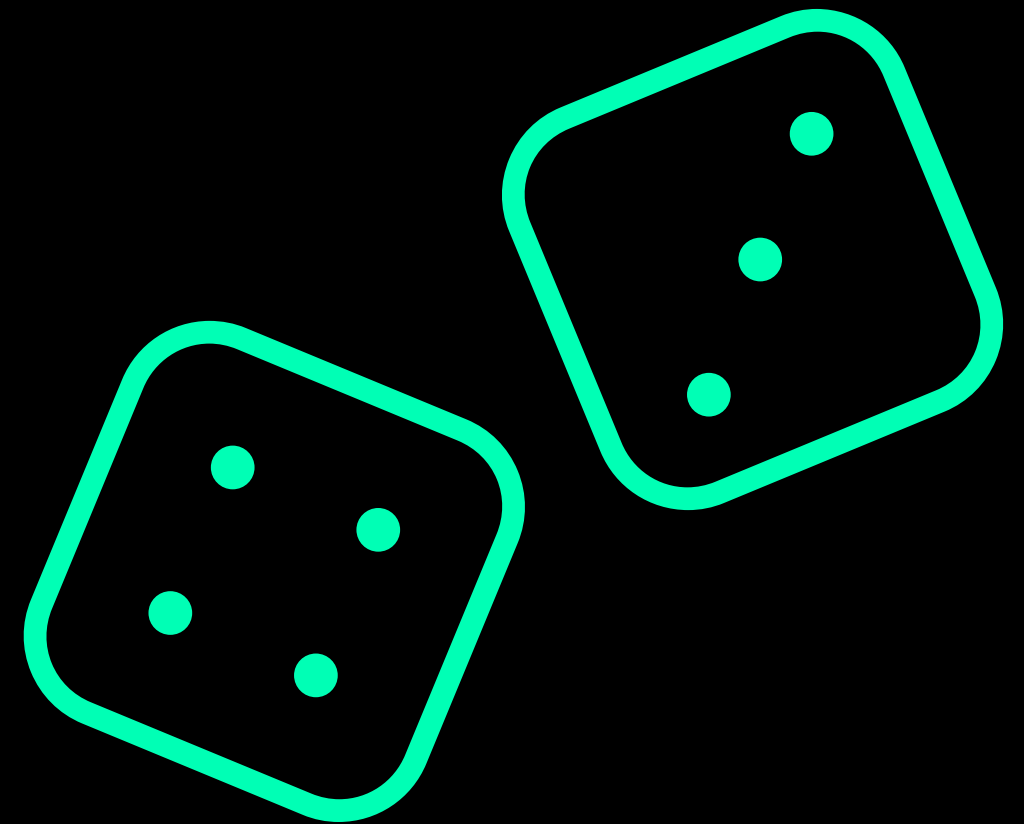
## Speed Freaks

Enlightened innovators are impatient **Speed Freaks** by nature. They're constantly on the lookout for ways to streamline and go-go-go faster. They recognize that sometimes being first is all that matters. Speed kills (the competition). Enough said.

07

# Roll the Dice

Innovation can be a big step into the unknown. Enlightened innovators are comfortable and confident in dealing with uncertainty. They're willing to **Roll the Dice**. They're willing to take (calculated) risks. They're confident decision makers who manage to steer clear of the analysis paralysis trap. They're in it for the long game as well as the short game. They see failure as a learning opportunity rather than a CLM (career limiting move).





How do you  
become an  
**enlightened**  
**innovator?**







# The Prophet Enlightened Innovator Model

## Belt Mastery Progression\*

\*Identify which belts you are wearing today. Make choices about where you want to focus your progression. Make it happen.

### Enlightened Innovator Traits

	 <b>Bottom Third Beginner</b>	 <b>Middle Third Intermediate</b>	 <b>Top Third Advanced</b>	 <b>Top 5% World Class</b>
<b>01 Crystal Clear Goals</b>	Vague or none	Formalized & aligned	Aligned & tracked	Inspiring & tracked
<b>02 Ducks in a Row</b>	Little formalized process	Working towards standardization	Standardized & efficient	Flexible plug & play with organizational memory
<b>03 Nearsighted &amp; Farsighted</b>	Short-term focus	Some interest in long-term	Handle short-term and long-term differently	Creative linkages between short-term and long-term
<b>04 Cultural Voyeurs</b>	Ignore cultural trends	Occasional cultural exploration	Finger on the cultural pulse	Peer into cultural fringes to predict 'what's next'
<b>05 Voracious Experimenters</b>	Stick with the proven	Experiment cautiously	Embrace experimentation	Extensive experimenters with feedback loops
<b>06 Speed Freaks</b>	Slow & consensus-driven	Starting to accelerate	Built for speed — systems & processes	Fast & furious — lead, follow or get out of the way
<b>07 Roll the Dice</b>	Highly risk-averse	Moderate acceptance of risk	Embrace calculated risk — if business case warrants	Failing is learning — but don't fail too often

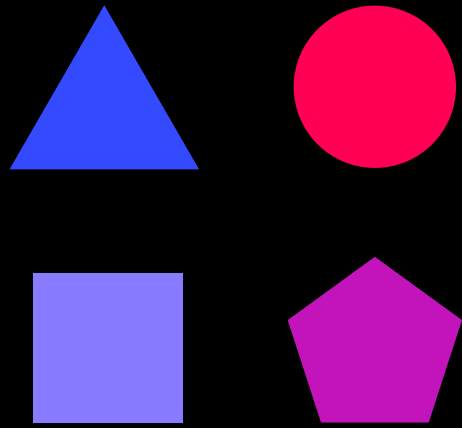
# Start by taking a hard look at yourself in a full-length, well-lit mirror... with buck naked honesty.

(metaphorically of course)

We work with clients to identify where they stand on each trait. As part of the process, we conduct a session with 100+ diagnostics. To make it more fun, we've wrapped up these diagnostics into a belt progression system (adapted from Judo where red trumps black). A 'current state' diagnosis is a great way to take the first step on your enlightened innovator journey.

Then some tough choices need to be made. Which enlightened innovator traits do you prioritize? The answer will be a function of your organization's situation and ambition. Different organizations will do their prioritization in wildly different ways. Some are happy to handle things based on current information, hypotheses and expert opinion. Others will opt for a multi-month engagement to take everything into careful consideration before locking and loading. We have seen (and done) it all.

Finally, the hard (and fun) work really starts. Once you've selected your enlightened innovator traits, it's all about laying down the assets and initiatives required to move the needle (and thread) on your belt progression. This is where you'll build the capabilities that make enlightened innovator traits your own.



# What will it be for you?

Maybe it's putting a motivating stake in the ground that rallies stakeholders behind your innovation agenda?

Maybe it's constructing a 'launch & learn lab' to build a relationship with early adopters?

Maybe it's setting up an internal crowdsourcing platform to take advantage of in-house brainpower?

Maybe it's just doing everything a teensy bit faster?

Maybe it's writing the definitive book on how your organization will do innovation going forward?

**It's the best of times  
to innovate. It's the worst  
of times to stand still.**

**Be an enlightened innovator  
for the times ahead.**

PROPHET

# Experience & Innovation Practice at Prophet

## Our Services:

Experience Strategy

Service & Touchpoint Design

Product Creation & Management

Business Model Design & Innovation

If you're thinking about how to best foster resilience in your company and would like to discuss these ideas and specific approaches further, please [contact us](#). We'd be delighted to help you to slingshot your organization towards a more resilient future.

[prophet.com](http://prophet.com)

## About Prophet

Prophet is a digitally-powered, creatively-inspired consultancy that helps our clients unlock uncommon growth in the face of disruption. Unprecedented levels of change and disruption require new thinking and transformative approaches to growth. From purpose to product, brand to experience, customers to operations, we bring the insight, rigor and expertise needed to help our clients realize transformative opportunities.

Our global team combines insight, creativity, data and technology to help our clients unlock growth that is human-centered, transformative and durable. We are guided by a mission and set of values that are focused on a higher-order approach to growth. Our global footprint operates within a single P&L, enabling us to bring the right people with the right experience together to solve our clients' current business challenges from across our 12 global offices.

### Our Core Work:

Brand Activation

Experience & Innovation

Marketing & Sales

Organization & Culture

Atlanta  
Austin  
Berlin  
Chicago  
Hong Kong  
London  
New York  
Richmond  
San Francisco  
Shanghai  
Singapore  
Zurich