

# ANA MARIA PIUMBINI WALTERS

Founder, Freedom to Belong · Partner, US Legal Now · CEO, Forever Realty · Operating CEO · CEO & Shareholder, American Photonics  
*Hands-on operating CEO — real P&L, daily decisions, and execution (not a figurehead title)*  
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## BOARD VALUE PROPOSITION

C-level executive and board director with more than 30 years building, restructuring and scaling businesses across real estate, immigration services, optics manufacturing, retail, technology and client services. Proven P&L leader with global distribution, international trade, large commercial budgets and multicultural teams. Operator depth at the board table: strategy, growth, sales and marketing, governance, risk, AI-enabled transformation, M&A, joint ventures and cross-border expansion.

## CURRENT DIRECTORSHIPS AND EXECUTIVE ROLES

- Freedom to Belong (501(c)(3)) — Founder
- US Legal Now — Partner (Sócia)
- Forever Realty Investments LLC — CEO and Board Director (hands-on operating CEO)
- American Photonics — CEO, Shareholder and Board Director

## BOARD-RELEVANT EXPERTISE

- Growth strategy, corporate transformation and turnaround execution
- Global manufacturing, supply chain, distribution and international trade
- P&L, budgeting, financial oversight and investment portfolio management
- Sales, marketing, e-commerce, B2B/B2C channels and brand repositioning
- Technology commercialization, AI adoption, retail technology and telecom
- Real estate, construction, acquisitions, joint ventures and contract negotiation
- Multicultural leadership across the U.S., Brazil, Europe, Asia and Latin America
- Governance, stakeholder alignment, risk awareness and board-level decision support

## SELECTED BOARD AND EXECUTIVE IMPACT

- Transformed American Photonics from a concentrated U.S. distributor model into diversified worldwide channels; expanded global market share from ~3% to ~15% within four years.
- Hands-on CEO of Forever Realty Investments LLC — portfolio strategy, asset decisions, risk review and capital allocation.
- Founded Freedom to Belong as a 501(c)(3) for free English/civics education and citizenship pathways; partner of US Legal Now in the sister professional-services ecosystem.
- Led commercial and purchasing organizations with budgets up to \$1.5B; improved profitability through product mix, supplier strategy, inventory and segmentation.
- First female National Director of Retail Sales at IBM Brazil; pioneered PC sales through supermarket channels for major tech brands.

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

### Forever Realty Investments LLC | Sarasota, Florida | ~2016 – Present

*CEO and Board Director — Hands-on operating CEO*

Real estate and financial investment portfolio: growth strategy, asset decisions, risk oversight and capital allocation. Day-to-day P&L ownership and execution — not a ceremonial title.

### American Photonics | Sarasota, Florida | 2014 – Present

*CEO, Shareholder and Board Director*

Full P&L for precision infrared and laser optics manufacturing. Restructured distribution to diversified global channels; rebrand and marketing modernization; customers across the Americas, Europe, Asia, Middle East and Australia.

### Freedom to Belong | Founder | Present

Sole founder of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit (education, citizenship pathways, immigrant community). Co-founders on the leadership team support the mission as volunteers and directors.

### US Legal Now | Partner (Sócia) | Present

Equity partner in the immigration professional-services company (sister ecosystem to Freedom to Belong).

### Gaia DBA Total Help Sarasota | Sarasota, Florida | ~2023 – Present

Immigration support operations, multilingual client service and cross-border support for U.S.–Brazil connected clients.

### Granite Forever, USA | Port Charlotte, Florida | 2006 – 2014

### *CEO and Shareholder*

Importer/manufacture of granite countertops with installation throughout Southwest Florida; customers included Home Depot, Lowe's and 150+ cabinet/remodel firms. Full P&L, sales, manufacturing, acquisitions and strategy.

### **EARLIER SENIOR LEADERSHIP — RETAIL, TECHNOLOGY, BRAZIL**

- Visual Presence Brazil — Vice President (2005–2006): 180-person promotional team supporting Nokia, Motorola and 1,500+ retail locations.
- Carrefour Hypermarket Brazil — Director, New Business Development (2003–2005): ~\$1.5B annual purchasing budget.
- Fast Shop — Commercial Director (2001–2003): ~\$260M purchase budget; inventory turnover under 28 days.
- IBM Brazil — National Director of Retail Sales (1998–2001): first woman in the role; ~\$280M PC retail division.
- GPA (Pão de Açúcar) — National Purchasing Director (1995–1998): pioneered PC sales in supermarket channels.
- Microsoft Brazil — Product Manager (1992–1995): MS Office product line.

### **EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS**

- Harvard University — Executive Education in Artificial Intelligence (2024); Competing in the Age of AI (2023)
- Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern — Women's Director Development / Board of Directors Program (2019); post-MBA executive education
- PUC/MG, Brazil — MBA, Business Management (2001)
- Bachelor's — Business Management; Systems Analysis
- Languages: English, Portuguese (fluent); Spanish, Italian (conversational)
- Naturalized U.S. citizen (2018)
- Author: *Revealing the Corporate Comedy*; *Bluff Like a Woman*