Executive Profile — David W. Berkus

David W. Berkus is a nationally recognized technology pioneer, venture capitalist, and board leader whose career spans more than five decades across software, hospitality technology, entertainment, and early-stage investment. Widely credited with creating foundational innovations that transformed hotel and lodging automation, he was inducted into the HFTP International Hall of Fame and described by *Inc. Magazine* as a "super angel," the first use of that term. He was recognized by the Forum for Corporate Directors as "Director of the Year" and "Tech Leader of the Year" by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

As founder and CEO of Computerized Lodging Systems, Berkus built the company into the world's largest supplier of hotel automation systems, achieving global market share leadership, six foreign subsidiaries, and revenues exceeding $100 million (2026-equivalent). His product innovations — including the first UNIX open-systems PMS, early AI-based yield management systems, and Marriott's integrated PMS network — set industry standards still referenced decades later. Marriott Hotels continued using software he authored in more than 4,200 properties as recently as 2026.

Berkus has advised some of the world's most complex hospitality operations, including being hired by Disney to analyze and recommend financial and operational improvements across all twenty-two of its Orlando properties. He has facilitated corporate board retreats for companies in both the hotel and technology sectors, guiding directors through strategic alignment, governance discipline, and technology-driven transformation. In this process, he created the phrase, "Where there's mystery, there's margin", now used in several industries including hospitality, to force boards and management to focus on profitable demographic and technology niches that are defensible and viable for profit and growth.

As Managing Director of Berkus Technology Ventures and multiple early-stage funds, he has completed 215 angel investments with a 102% IRR, with several portfolio companies achieving billion-dollar exits. He is a founding member and Chairman Emeritus of Tech Coast Angels, one of the nation's most influential angel networks.

Across more than forty public and private boards, Berkus has led companies through major technology transitions — including the creation of hospitality's first AI-based revenue management system — and has repeatedly improved profitability, market awareness, and strategic focus as a board member, CEO coach, and board chair. His board leadership has contributed to multiple M&A exits with gains exceeding 1,000%.

He is widely regarded as an expert in board governance, having published books on building effective boards and delivered numerous workshops and keynote presentations on governance excellence. His early predictions of the time of arrival and effect of the AI revolution — highlighted in keynotes and articles between 2014 and 2017, including a 2017 keynote to 800 hotel technology and finance executives titled "Will Tech Take Your Job?" — demonstrated his foresight into emerging technology risk and opportunity.

Beyond industry leadership, Berkus has contributed decades of service to the Boy Scouts of America and nearly thirty years as an Occidental College trustee, including service as Vice Chair of the Board. He led the creation of Berkus Hall and Berkus House through major philanthropic gifts. A prolific author, he has published fifteen books and writes the widely read *Berkonomics* blog, reaching more than 75,000 readers weekly.

Ideal Board Fit: Technology-driven companies, hospitality and travel, enterprise software, AI-enabled businesses, early-stage or growth-stage organizations, innovation-focused boards, audit and technology oversight committees, and companies navigating digital transformation or platform modernization.