

VISTAGE

Perspectives®

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ADVENTURES
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MOUNTAIN



CHAIRING WITH
EXCELLENCE

EVOLUTION OF
THE BUYER

SCALING NEW TERRAIN

Meet Vistage members who are thriving and growing
in year three of the pandemic.



Peppered with prosperity



If you've eaten bell peppers from the grocery store, there's a chance they've come from Baloian Farms. The fourth-generation, California-based operation grows red and green peppers on nearly 5,000 acres. The peppers ship throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico under Pam Pak- and Baloian Farms-branded packaging.

Pam Pak is short for "pampered." The product is still pampered by farmworkers who pick and pack at the perfect moment, but automation has helped the company bloom.

In 2021, Baloian Farms received the Moss Adams Agribusiness of the Year Award from the Fresno Chamber of Commerce. The award honored Baloian's leadership and commitment to philanthropy and cultivating its people. The farm employs 50 full-time staff, more than 1,000 seasonal workers and an additional 200 packers.

"The credit goes to the people who work here; many have been here for over 20, 30 and 40 years," says CEO Tim Baloian (pictured, right), part of the family's third generation. "God gives us resources and talents and expects us to share and give back. Everything I have is God-given, and I need to be a good steward."

Baloian says his biggest strength is delegating — a skill he continues to hone.

"I've learned to get out of the way and let people do what they're best at," he says. "That comes with parameters, but I want them to excel and be creative." ■

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Improving the effectiveness and enhancing the lives of CEOs, business owners and key executives of small and medium-sized businesses.

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Scaling new terrain seemed a fitting metaphor for this issue of Perspectives. Vistage members in 26 countries are crossing a business landscape that's uneven and with stronger headwinds. But they trek forward the only way they know how: by staying resilient in the face of adversity, embracing humility as they seek the perspectives of their peers, and upholding integrity as they make decisions for their companies, families and communities.

This edition spotlights several members who've successfully traversed new terrain. There's a Canadian adventurer who found a new business model that grew the bottom line and community engagement, a chemist-turned-CEO whose dedication to rigor and diverse perspectives has made her a top problem-solver for military and defense organizations, and the CEO of a third-generation family business who scaled the organization and improved its culture along the way.

We also celebrate Chair Cheryl McMillan who has earned the highest distinction as a Vistage Chair: the Cope Memorial Award. And we wrap up with a look at several members who've sold their businesses and put themselves on unique, fulfilling paths following the C-suite.

I hope this issue sparks new ideas and inspiration that you can apply to your business and leadership. Thank you for all you do for your peers and your dedication to personal and professional growth.

All the best,

Sam

Sam Reese
CEO, Vistage Worldwide

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Scaling New Terrain

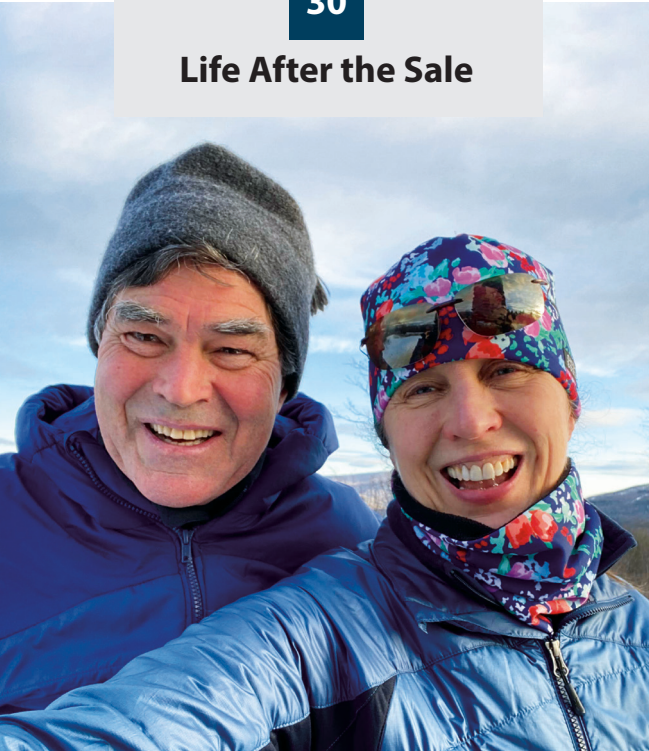
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Life After the Sale



WHAT IMPACT HAS

INFLATION

HAD ON YOUR BUSINESS?

We're passing on our costs, for sure. We're using this as an opportunity to increase prices where we can and where we feel like there wouldn't be too much pushback from customers. Taking into consideration the competitive landscape of each situation, we are making the strategic decision to raise prices to compensate for the increase in our costs.

Dave Offerman

President and CEO, IEH Corporation
Brooklyn, New York
Vistage member since 2018

The supply chain has been really difficult and inflation is driving up costs. I'm in the electronics manufacturing industry, so we have the global component shortage to contend with. I've been expanding our suppliers and changing the electronic designs to increase our part options and avoid the worst of the price increases. It's been a challenging year, but we're able to adapt.

Cassandra Gluyas

CEO, Thomas Instrumentation, Inc.
Cape May Court House, New Jersey
Vistage member since 2021

It's a competitive market right now for talent, and that is everything from a laborer through leadership. We've had to increase wages to remain competitive in the marketplace, and we'll likely need to continue to do so.

Steve DeWeese

Vice President of Construction, Elder Construction, Inc.
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Vistage member since 2020

We've seen opportunities mostly in office space. We took advantage of having a lease that ended and — with skyrocketing real estate prices in Nashville — went 100% remote. So our challenge now is to maintain corporate culture and collaboration while we're working on a flatscreen more often than not.

Becky Sharpe

CEO, International Scholarship and Tuition Services, Inc.
Nashville, Tennessee
Vistage member since 2006

The supply chain has dried up and we're absorbing as much as we can, but we're making investments in the business. We had a new website developed that has cost us quite a bit but that has been bringing a great ROI. We're branching out into some new manufacturing brands of equipment to give them a try because the equipment is more readily available than some of our older go-to manufacturers.

Janice Miller

CEO, MAC Equipment LLC
Albany, New York
Vistage member since 2021

There's the old phrase: "What do you do with lemons? You make lemonade." We had our banker proactively approach us to actually reduce our rates on our loans before the next guy down the road came knocking on our door. We were able to take advantage of that, and that helps now and really into the future.

Brian Burns

Founding Partner/Owner, Cutting Edge Countertops, Inc.
Perrysburg, Ohio
Vistage member since 2019

CHALLENGE:
HOW DO
LEADERS
HELP STAFF
& THEMSELVES
RECOVER FROM

BURNOUT?

The pandemic has been exhausting for employees and leaders alike, which has led to increases in burnout. We spoke with two leaders about how they and their employees are dealing.

**Bridget Lopez**

is managing partner of the Dallas law office of Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, LLP, and has experienced burnout firsthand. Her plan to confront it? Tough conversations, avoiding 2 a.m. emails and providing time off when employees need it.

**Carrie Boyd**

is managing principal at architectural and design firm M+A Architects in Columbus, Ohio. Since adding more than 50 workers to her 115-person firm last year, managing burnout has become a challenge. She counters by making employee health her No. 1 priority.

How has burnout affected you and your staff?

Lopez: There've been some retirements — we've seen that with our clients, too. We represent schools, counties and cities, and we saw a lot of city managers, executive staff and superintendents retire. Within our own ranks, some retirements happen where people don't want to risk their health coming into the office. Or they look ahead and ask themselves, "Do I really want to spend my life working 10-to-12-hour days?"

Boyd: Burnout causes fatigue, low motivation, disengagement and poor performance. I used to have this vision where I would flip this switch and be the strong, supportive leader and never show when things affected me. But this pandemic has shown that there's a different level of transparency and empathy needed now.

How do you help them deal with burnout?

Lopez: I had a time in my life where I suffered from anxiety, and I went to counseling. I was surprised when it happened to me; I was a go-go person. I did not know what anxiety was when it hit me. When people come to me and say, "I'm having some problems," I feel like I can recognize that and help them. I've told them to take time off and get help, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Boyd: We have a respite room that helps with anxiety, migraines or other symptoms of burnout. When leaders use a space like that, it shows staff that it's OK. My boss isn't going to be looking at me like I'm not working if I go into this space. It starts with leaders reminding everyone that we all go through this.

How do you cope with burnout?

Lopez: For the first time in my life, I took a two-week vacation. And I decided after that, I'm going to do that every year. If you have two weeks, you really do get a break. I came back super excited and motivated to get back to work and see what people had done. I had a lot of ideas.

Boyd: Like anything else, if you don't talk about a goal or a plan, and you don't write it down, it's not going to happen. I'm fortunate to have a lot of supportive people around me. I just had a conversation yesterday with our client experience person, and told her I wanted to get better at taking breaks. She said, "Carrie, I'm going to keep you to that." Having accountability partners who know what you're trying to achieve is important to preventing burnout.

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

How leadership development leads to successful, sustainable businesses

Many CEOs believe implementing a fresh, new strategic plan will lead to success and growth, but often they're missing a critical piece: having the talent with the right skills and competencies to execute.

Understanding and addressing gaps between goals and talent has become necessary in order to gain a competitive advantage. Currently, only 31% of executives map leadership competencies to their business strategy, according to the 2021 State of Talent Optimization Report from The Predictive Index, a Vistage member company.

David Zerfoss, a Vistage Chair based in Charlotte, North Carolina, encourages members to conduct an evaluation exercise to identify gaps in talent and skills on a regular basis throughout the year. He calls it an essential activity to "build a bridge to the future."

"You must clearly identify the functions, deliverables and talent to execute the plan, if you ultimately wish to build a successful, sustainable and relevant business," he says. **"You can't scale on past business plans or skills. To grow — and grow exponentially — you've got to grow skills dramatically."**



Need a simple tool to help you align your goals with your talent? Download the **Leadership Evaluation Guide** at bit.ly/vistage-leg. Go through the exercise with your Chair, uncover any gaps and make an action plan.

CASE STUDY:

The Payoff of Identifying Gaps in Goals and Talent



Robby Shaul, President of PMMC, is a member of one of Zerfoss' four Vistage groups. Shaul takes his Chair's guidance to

heart. "We revisit the skillsets of the team constantly as we're changing our organization and shifting our culture," he says. "We're always asking, 'What am I missing? What am I not getting?'"

Shaul says he thinks it's important to develop leaders at all levels, and he's among the few to put belief into action: while 83% of organizations believe it's important to develop leaders at every level of the company, only 5% of businesses have implemented leadership development at all levels, according to the career resources site Zippia.

"You've got to grow the skillset of the whole team," Shaul says, "especially the people who can take their teams and the company to the next level."

Going through the exercise of identifying talent needs and gaps led Shaul to employ a variety of learning opportunities to grow his staff, including Vistage Leadership Development Programs such as Key Executive for his direct reports, Advancing Leader for experienced managers and Emerging Leader for rising stars. Shaul and two members of his team have also gone through the Vistage Executive Leadership Program in collaboration with Stanford Graduate School of Business.

"Everyone on the team is leveling up," Shaul says. "People are thinking more strategically and planning quarters out versus days out. They're solving problems on their own and proactively driving improvements. From a retention standpoint, employees are asking, 'How do I grow within the organization?'"

PMMC's investment in talent hits the bottom line too. The company has grown an average of 20% per year over the last three to five years, Shaul says. "We couldn't do that

without implementing better processes and building the skillsets of our team and infusing new talent to augment when necessary. ... That's really helped us scale and plan for our future."

83%

of organizations say it's important to develop leaders at all levels, but only 5% actually do so.

Source: Zippia.com



Congrats to our 2021 Vistage-Stanford graduates

Since the program's launch in 2017, 265 leaders in the Vistage community have graduated from the Vistage Executive Leadership Program in collaboration with Stanford Graduate School of Business.

The year-long program is a unique combination of online, self-paced lessons from Stanford faculty and monthly workshops facilitated by Vistage Chairs who help members apply concepts for immediate impact on their business' strategy and growth. Join us in congratulating our graduates at vistage.com/stanfordgrads.

If you're a member looking to sharpen your strategic thinking, spur transformative change, or better align your strategy and organization's structure, learn more at vistage.com/stanford.

EVOLUTION

OF THE BUYER



By Joe Galvin,
Vistage Chief Research Officer

People are not just working differently now. They're buying differently. In the last two years, consumers' preferences, priorities and processes for spending have all changed as a result of the pandemic.

These changes to buyer behavior are impacting businesses across nearly all industries. **A recent Vistage CEO Confidence Index survey found that 78% of CEOs reported that buyer behavior had changed.** The survey, which captured responses from 1,620 CEOs, found that buyers have become more independent and digitally driven while becoming less able and willing to meet with sellers face-to-face. Consequently, their expectations and requirements for digital buying experiences have increased.

Companies are under pressure to adapt, especially in terms of how they serve and market to their customers. Two Vistage members, Mike Atkinson and E. Scot Davis, explain how they've pivoted to keep pace.

CASE STUDY 1:

Using Education To Make Specialty Coffee Accessible

Mike Atkinson | CEO, Seattle Coffee Gear

Before the pandemic, many people only bought specialty coffee — say, a shot of espresso or an oat-milk latte — from their local barista. But when coffee shops became less accessible in lockdown, it pushed consumers into a kind of “awakening,” says Mike Atkinson, CEO of Seattle Coffee Gear. “People realized they could make really great coffee at home.”



Mike Atkinson,
photo courtesy
of Seattle
Coffee Gear.

Since then, Seattle Coffee Gear has experienced a spike in demand for its products, which include espresso machines, high-end coffee makers and coffee accessories. But it has also seen an increased need for education, as many of its first-time customers don't know what equipment to buy or how to use it. After all, many of the coffee machines have a high price tag (ranging from about \$400-\$4,000), along with complex and unfamiliar features.

“When you just look at an espresso machine online, it can be intimidating,” says Atkinson. “They have all kinds of levers and buttons. People think: ‘How long do I pull the shot for? Pressure profiling — what's that?’”

“Now, the exposure you can get on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok to put your brand and product in front of people and get them to come to your site is just incredible. Our ROI is through the roof.”

To make this process feel approachable, **Seattle Coffee Gear has invested in creating content that educates consumers about the ins and outs of making specialty coffee.** On its YouTube channel, for instance, it posts daily videos from its in-house coffee experts (no actors are ever used) with product reviews, recommendations and coffee-making techniques, such as how to make latte art. It also creates and shares informational content on its website, blog, podcast and other social media channels. This investment has paid off significantly, Atkinson says.

“In the past, our customer acquisition was largely driven by SEO and paid search,” he says. “Now, the exposure you can get on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok to put your brand and product in front of people and get them to come to your site is just incredible. Our ROI is through the roof.”

Seattle Coffee Gear is also educating consumers in person. Although the company is primarily an online retailer, it has brick-and-mortar shops in Kirkland and Lynwood, Washington, and Palo Alto, California. The company plans to open five more locations in the next three years. These shops follow the Apple store model, offering a minimalist design, curated product line and the opportunity to test-drive equipment. “Instead of having iPhones and MacBooks on countertops, we have espresso machines powered up with water and beans so you can grind beans and pull shots,” Atkinson says.

Whether shopping in person or online, he hopes customers walk away with the same takeaway: “Wow, I don't have to drive through Starbucks. I can make great espresso at home. And it's fun.”

Story continues on page 10

CASE STUDY 2: Providing Calm to Increase Patient Care

E. Scot Davis | CEO, Arkansas Urology

In 2020, E. Scot Davis wasn't just worried about the rise in COVID-19 cases. He was worried about the decline in preventative care visits at Arkansas Urology, the medical practice he has led since 2013 as CEO.

Approximately 40% of Arkansas Urology's 120,000 patients had stopped attending routine care visits because they were afraid of contracting the virus. This carried potentially serious consequences: It meant that doctors couldn't screen their patients for medical problems that required prompt treatment, such as prostate cancer.

"If you catch prostate cancer early, it's one of the most treatable forms of cancer," explains Davis, a Vistage member since 2018. "But if you find it late, it's often very difficult to treat."

Adding fuel to the fire, hospitals across Arkansas were canceling surgical procedures for their urology patients to deal with a rapid influx of COVID-19 patients. That meant thousands of urology patients weren't getting the treatments they urgently needed.

Davis knew he needed to act, and quickly. So he rallied his team of 350 staff members and 39 providers around a three-pronged solution.

“Rallying around our staff and physicians, we created a three-pronged solution that focused on patient safety and health.”

First, Arkansas Urology introduced a hybrid model of care. It ramped up its telehealth services, increasing the frequency of virtual visits from 20 per month to 800 per month. It introduced drive-thru therapies, such as injections, to make it convenient and comfortable for patients to receive treatment. It also referred patients to local clinics for routine tests, such as bloodwork or radiological screenings.



E. Scot Davis,
photo courtesy of
Arkansas Urology.

Second, the practice reached out to directors at hospitals across the state, offering to take over patients on their caseload that they couldn't manage.

Since Arkansas Urology had its own outpatient surgery facility, it had the capacity to conduct surgical procedures that other places did not.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the practice launched a robust marketing campaign on its website and social media pages focusing on patient safety and health. Designed to ease patients' worries, the campaign delivered practical information to help people understand new safety procedures and options available through the hybrid model of care.

"The key component in all of this was to bring a sense of calm and avoid creating panic," says Davis. "We wanted patients who had chronic conditions to continue to come and see us. Certainly, for patients that were undergoing treatment for prostate cancer or kidney cancer, we wanted them to continue to feel safe."

This year, Arkansas Urology has again shifted its model of care to accommodate what patients want: more in-person time with their doctors. While demand for telehealth visits has decreased, patient volume has grown 15% within two years.

When asked about the future of telehealth, Davis says, "There's always going to be a place for it. But health care really comes from the relationship between a physician and a patient. Because what is medicine? It's laying hands on a patient, something you can't do through a phone call or videoconference." ■

Entrepreneurs know they can't know everything and usually accounting is one of their biggest hurdles. Budgets? Forecasts? Cash flow analysis? Yes, you really need all that—but unreliable, delayed, and inaccurate financials won't get you what you need.

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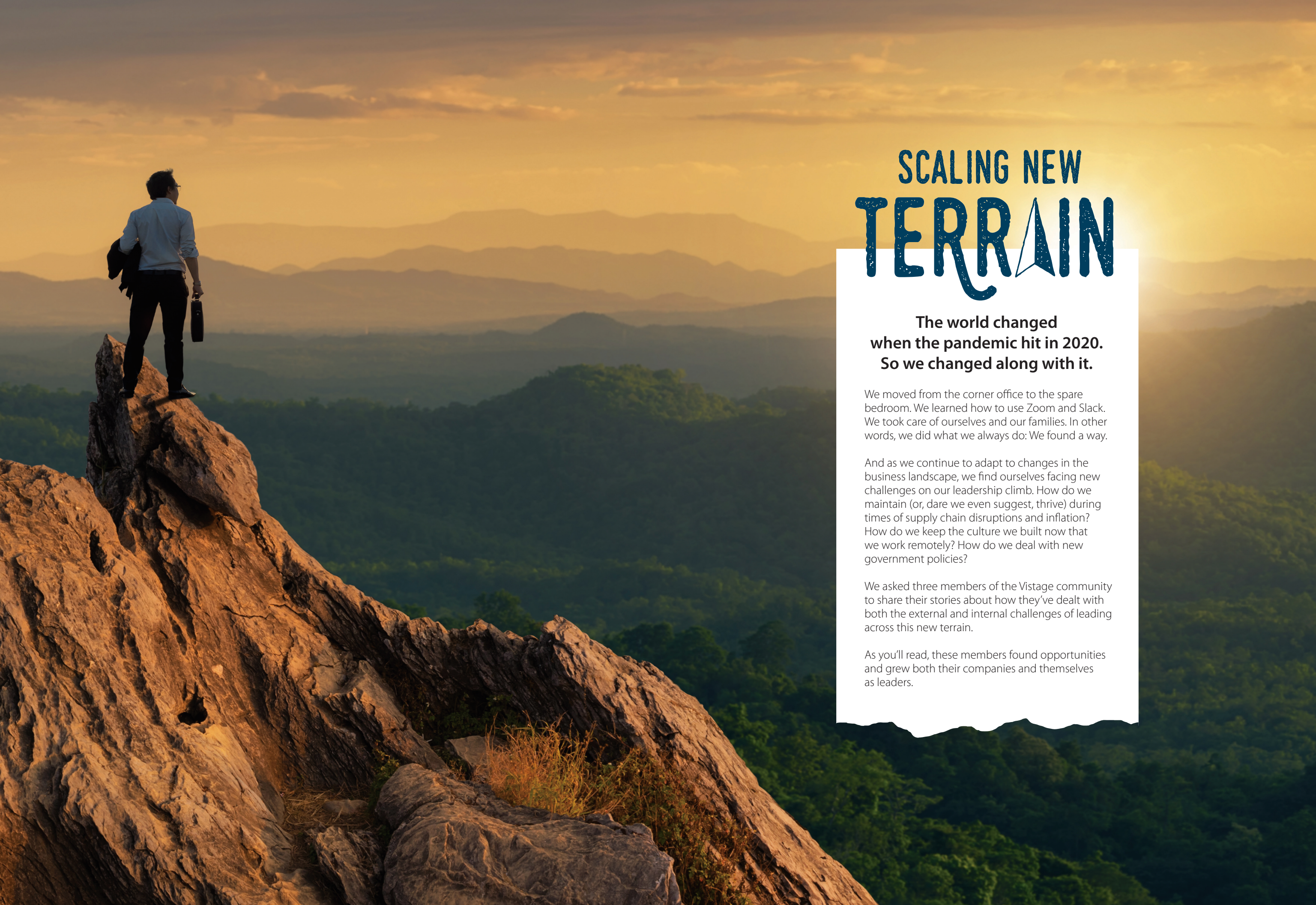
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SCALING NEW TERRAIN

**The world changed
when the pandemic hit in 2020.
So we changed along with it.**

We moved from the corner office to the spare bedroom. We learned how to use Zoom and Slack. We took care of ourselves and our families. In other words, we did what we always do: We found a way.

And as we continue to adapt to changes in the business landscape, we find ourselves facing new challenges on our leadership climb. How do we maintain (or, dare we even suggest, thrive) during times of supply chain disruptions and inflation? How do we keep the culture we built now that we work remotely? How do we deal with new government policies?

We asked three members of the Vistage community to share their stories about how they've dealt with both the external and internal challenges of leading across this new terrain.

As you'll read, these members found opportunities and grew both their companies and themselves as leaders.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

**Cosmos CEO
Landon Hobson leads
his third-generation family
business with a focus on
culture, stewardship
and faith**



Landon Hobson, photo courtesy of Cosmos Corporation.

Navigating a relationship with your in-laws can be challenging. Now imagine they're your board of directors.

That's where Vistage member Landon Hobson found himself after becoming CEO of Cosmos Corporation in 2017. A pet products business based in St. Peters, Missouri, the company had grown from the founder's one-person operation in 1980 to 100 employees with several global brands.

The founder's four sons — Hobson's father- and uncles-in-law — ran the company, but knew they needed to streamline executive leadership and update their processes if they wanted to continue growing.

"Their task to me was scaling this into a corporation," says Hobson, who started as the company's director of operations in 2016 before taking over as CEO, "without losing the culture, the family business aspect."

And what's the culture at Cosmos? "Our vision is to be an uncommon business for the common good," Hobson adds. "The company's mission is to enrich the lives of people and pets, support and invest in our employees, and provide for the poor around the

globe — all to the glory of God. We always want to keep that vision in mind as we grow the top and bottom line."

Hobson was well suited to the task. He holds two graduate degrees, one from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and another in international economics from Columbia University. As he began building a new executive team and scaling operations, Hobson saw the opportunity to take the Cosmos culture a step further.

From its beginning, the company's honored its mission by supporting a nonprofit its founder established to provide food, shelter and education to underserved communities abroad.

Hobson has expanded that altruism, offering five paid "mission days" annually so employees can take time off to volunteer abroad or within the local community.

Under Hobson's leadership, Cosmos also started a program providing financial assistance to employees pursuing the adoption of a child, and introduced an educational scholarship program in honor of two employees who tragically died in a traffic accident. That program is open to employees interested in

advancing their education — even if it means they will eventually leave the company.

"If Susie Q. wants to be a nurse, then we'll help pay for her nursing degree," Hobson says. "When she's done, there's no commitment to us. We'll celebrate you and off you go."

Care of both employees and customers is not only the backbone of the Cosmos culture but also an essential element in hiring and retaining talent, Hobson says. Since Hobson became CEO, the company has grown to 270 employees, with more than 120 joining since COVID hit in March 2020.

Hobson admits those first few months of the pandemic led to some sleepless nights. At the time, Cosmos was overexposed, both in the market and operationally; the company was finishing construction on a new 200,000-square-foot

manufacturing facility in the neighboring O'Fallon and St. Peters business community.

“

Care of both employees and customers is not only the backbone of the Cosmos culture but also an essential element in hiring and retaining talent.

Hobson got his executive team together and came up with a plan. First, take care of their employees and philanthropic commitments.

Next, pivot in terms of product. Leveraging its manufacturing capabilities and relationships with several national retailers, Cosmos, like many companies, started making hand sanitizer.

Then, a funny thing happened about two months into the pandemic. People started getting pets. "All of a sudden, huge pet orders started coming in," Hobson says. "So we had to hire more people."

Through it all, Hobson says he couldn't have grown Cosmos without the full support of his board/family.

"I can walk upstairs, have a conversation and say, 'Here's why I think this is the best decision,'" he says of his family. "And more often than not, they're going to be super supportive in the decision that I make."

As for the company's culture? "Our culture blossomed" during the pandemic, says Hobson. He's implemented quarterly town hall meetings, and a daily "Cosmos Minute" where leaders share insights to foster

3 Key Takeaways from Allen Hauge, Hobson's Vistage Chair:

Opportunity is Job No. 1

A CEO is ultimately accountable for identifying, selecting, pursuing and realizing opportunities. He or she cannot do all these things, but must see that they get done. Landon understands the importance of attending to all four of these activities.

Learn to align

Companies are also communities. In Landon's case, there are the family members who are owners, and there are employees, customers and vendors. The CEO's job is to align these into an effective organization that produces results.

Be selective with your time

The CEO has to choose what to do; equally important is a clear process for understanding what not to do.

team alignment and employees thank each other for helping out without being asked — a practice Hobson calls "being willing to make the coffee." He even instituted a quarterly book club that pays employees for reading certain titles. One of their most recent: "The Ideal Team Player" by Patrick Lencioni.

"When you get 150 people reading the same book together, the alignment you get across the organization is nuts," Hobson says. "Sure, we pay out a few thousand dollars each quarter, but the synergies that come from that are insane."

His next task? Preparing the company for the next generation as Cosmos continues to expand its business. Currently, seven family members work at Cosmos. And Hobson sees himself as a steward for both his relatives and the Cosmos employee base.

"I didn't create what's happening at Cosmos ... our people created that," Hobson says. "I hopefully created a framework and helped cast the vision for the kind of company we want to be, and it actually wasn't my vision. It's the founder's. I've just been put in a place to make sure that we keep doing it." ■



2021 Member Excellence Award winner Katherine McGrady (center) and staff at the 31st Arlington Best Business Awards. Photos courtesy of CNA.

DIVERSITY-DRIVEN PERFORMANCE

Katherine McGrady builds a world-class culture at CNA through a commitment to diverse perspectives

When Vistage member Katherine McGrady first interviewed with the Arlington, Virginia-based CNA, she had never heard of it. At the time, McGrady was exploring job opportunities when CNA visited the University of Michigan. She's a chemist, so typically she would not have been wearing an interview suit, but fortunately, she was that day.

"I had no idea that organizations like this existed," says McGrady of that day in 1988. "But I liked that they wanted to use my analytical way of thinking about problems."

Fast-forward to today, and McGrady is now in her seventh year as President and CEO of the nonprofit think tank, which includes leading the federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) that serves the U.S. Department of the Navy. Since taking the helm in 2015, McGrady has focused CNA on enhancing its analytical and intellectual rigor in its dealings with the Navy — from operational warfighting and data science to military and security intelligence.

She's also established and grown CNA's non-defense business by working with other U.S. federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security and its divisions, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)



McGrady during a deployment to Saudi Arabia in 1991.

and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). CNA also partners with law enforcement agencies at the federal, state and local levels to analyze ways of providing system-wide improvements in the administration of justice.

When McGrady first became CEO she had several goals, one of which was holding herself accountable to her employees. Another was focusing on CNA's initiatives on diversity, equity and inclusion. "I'm a chemist. I'm in a field where there aren't a lot of women, and I went through the experience of feeling like I didn't really belong," she says. "I'm deeply familiar with how that feels and the negative impact it can have on your performance."

McGrady upgraded CNA's initiatives with a focus on workplace diversity, building an inclusive environment and equipping leaders to address and maintain those standards. She encouraged the development of employee resource groups at CNA and employee-led working groups

focused on improving diversity in CNA's hiring. CNA also has a speaker series built around key DEI issues.

The benefit has been two-fold, she says. Not only has McGrady seen a more inclusive and comfortable staff, but she's also seen a richness in the analytical work that comes from having various perspectives.

“

Our work depends on diverse points of view. We're asked to solve really tough problems.

"Our work depends on diverse points of view," she says. "We're asked to solve really tough problems. And that means that the standard approach or conventional wisdom about a particular issue has already probably been put out there."

And as new challenges arose, McGrady empowered her staff to create new programs and processes. Following the death of George

Floyd, CNA launched "Unmute Yourself," a monthly series of conversations where employees could talk, listen and share their experiences.

What's particularly special about the sessions, McGrady says, is that they are virtual — part of CNA's staff works remotely — and that meant more employees could participate.

"The sessions have been on Zoom, and I wonder whether or not the very candid and open conversations we are having are happening more readily because we're not face-to-face," she says.

Still ongoing, the sessions are connected to the company's work with law enforcement agencies, which has become a catalyst for growth in non-defense-related work.

"Departments are really working their way through these issues," she says. "And word has gotten out about the type of work we do, and how we focus on the data and the need to be objective. Employees want to be part of the effort."

Despite seeing that unexpected gain from the pandemic, McGrady says the company's DEI efforts can improve. She likens their mission to both asking someone to the dance, and then asking them to dance, and believes that doing so will ensure that excellent analysis will continue.

"I think we've gotten better at helping people feel included," McGrady says. "Are we more diverse as a population than we were before? The answer is, 'not in every aspect,' and I feel strongly that I have to push on that point." ■

3 Key Takeaways from Debbie Tyler, McGrady's Vistage Chair:

Discuss through a non-judgmental lens

Bringing an interested, diverse and fully present perspective to conversations leads to more open and respectfully varied discussions.

Recognize those electrifying the workforce

Katherine employs a variety of ways to share good news and acknowledge outstanding work, which has been shown to result in higher performance.

Trust is paramount

Trust grows from consistent behavior and holding oneself accountable to commitments. Katherine has delivered on her promise to improve DEI at the organization. When a leader shows what optimum behavior looks like, others believe and follow.

WEATHERING THE MOUNTAIN STORM



Lyndie Hill grew her company during COVID by offering locals some much-needed R&R.

The pandemic forced Hoodoo Adventures CEO Lyndie Hill to do what she does best: Think outside the box

Before the pandemic, Hoodoo Adventures in Penticton, British Columbia, Canada, was known for its annual large-scale events designed for adventure enthusiasts. Thousands of visitors came from around the world each year to participate in and watch outdoor/endurance races and competitions.

One fan favorite — the “Elevator Race” — tested competitors’ stamina as they (in order) paddled, biked, snowshoed, nordic skied, hiked and then skied up and down a mountain. Another beloved event, the annual 10k “Beer Run,” included stops, samples and tastings at breweries along the way.

For those not looking to compete, guided hiking, kayaking, biking, stand-up paddleboarding and snowshoeing tours offered an opportunity to get

outside and enjoy the beauty of the surrounding mountains, lakes and rivers.

When the pandemic hit, Founder and CEO Lyndie Hill watched business evaporate overnight. Lockdowns banned even outdoor group gatherings. Despite the “confusing and frustrating” COVID-19 restrictions, Hill leaned into previous experiences of weathering unpredictable storms. Three years of forest fires and two years of flooding prepared her to pivot during the pandemic.



Hoodoo Adventures CEO Lyndie Hill.
Photos by @JoelPerrella/@AngryWhaleMedia.

“As a seasonal business, we realized early on we had to be diverse in our offerings and be creative,” says Hill, who joined Vistage (called The Executive Committee in Canada) in 2019. “That has served us well through forest fires, floods and a pandemic because seasonality is something where it’s the same deal; you’re feast or famine all the time.”

In the earliest lockdown days, she created a membership model granting access to the company’s equipment. People who joined paid a one-time fee for equipment use.

“We wanted to make sure that they were able to get outside and do stuff, take care of their mental health and not be restricted. We could see that everybody was struggling,” she says. “It was our way of saying that we care and we’re going to help them get through this. Then it was making sure people knew the benefits of being outdoors and having that connection to the land, which can be so good for your headspace, your body and mind.”

The next step was retooling events to meet limits on gathering sizes. She introduced snowshoeing tours with a three-course fireside dinner limited to 10 or

“

We’ve been this sanctuary for people to get away, be able to do things and not feel trapped. We’ve been able to give them things to look forward to. We want to be part of that recovery and in a sustainable way.

fewer people. As restrictions eased, she reintroduced a variety of events first designed to fall within the guidelines, starting with those for 50 people, expanding to 100 and increasing to 175 by mid-2021.

“We’ve been this sanctuary for people to get away, be able to do things and not feel trapped. We’ve been able to give

them things to look forward to,” Hill says. “We want to be part of that recovery and in a sustainable way.”

Like many young people, Hill left her hometown after high school to see the world. She worked in New Zealand’s adventure tourism industry and knew her hometown was brimming with opportunity.

Hill realized early on that a seasonal business wasn’t sustainable. So, over the last few years, she has built an indoor climbing gym and offered youth programs and corporate retreats. When she launched the company in 2007, she was the only full-time person.

3 Key Takeaways from Shaune Eldred, Hill’s TEC Canada Chair:

Lead with humility

Lyndie truly combines passionate leadership with humility. She celebrates her team and makes sure everyone has the tools they need to be successful and safe.

Be part of the community

Lyndie authentically cares about her employees and her community as a whole. She freely gives her time to make her community a better place by volunteering on boards for tourism, the Chamber of Commerce and others. She works hard to provide opportunities that lead to a healthy physical and mental lifestyle.

Find ways to elevate your team

Lyndie has the ability to “lift” others, even in times of great uncertainty. She is tenacious and just doesn’t give up — ever. Her smile comes from her heart.

Today, she employs 30-40 seasonal workers and 12 full-time staff members.

The Okanagan Valley native is passionate about creating an impact on the community, including a financial boost to the area while showing kids the influence of leadership during good and challenging times.

“In all honesty, my goal has never been to make a whole bunch of money. That’s not important to me. Material things are not important to me. If I have a roof over my head, food in my belly and my kids are taken care of, then that’s what’s most important,” she says. “So, creating this was more about offering something to my community and making an impact on getting people outdoors.”

As she looks to the future, Hill hopes to host the World Championships of Adventure Racing within the next three to five years. Add that to hosting “Expedition Canada,” the valley’s six-day adventure race held every June, and the region should be able to get back on its feet, Hill says. ■



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Networking with Chairs and Vistage members helped Tom Klaff turn a smart toaster into a bestseller

The hosts of *The View* raved about it. Oprah endorsed it. Williams-Sonoma splashed it across the back of its catalog before the 2019 holiday season. Even “Good Morning Football” dedicated a three-minute segment to it. When Tom Klaff set out to reinvent the toaster, he had no idea his \$300 appliance would become the toast of the town.

But then, turning the mundane into a must-have is a Klaff specialty. The serial entrepreneur has made a career of identifying industries that lack innovation and upending them. He has started, led and sold six technology startups in 25 years, including one that brought the world keyless car entry.

“There are riches in niches,” says Klaff, who got a job at a health tech startup after studying pre-med in college to see if he should pursue medicine or business as a career. After the first month, he “fell in love with the entrepreneurship side, not the medical side.”

“My Vistage group is like a personal board of advisers, a safe place to be vulnerable. It has been a sounding board for strategies, especially my Chair. Having someone who knows you and knows how to help is invaluable.”

A few years later, he abandoned medical school and went to business school at Carnegie Mellon where he not only learned the foundations of business but also fell in love with technology and disruption. After graduation, he set his sights on finding large, “sleepy” markets that he could disrupt.

So when he met a wealthy investor who was obsessed with how long it takes to make toast (going so far as to track how the productivity of his company declined whenever someone brought in bagels for the office), Klaff was intrigued. Here was a ubiquitous commodity that hadn’t seen such innovation since the Harding administration. Klaff believed he could do for the toaster what Dyson did for the vacuum cleaner.

Though the investor had developed a “patron-artist” relationship with a scientist who had devised a faster heating mechanism, they could not get this new technology out of the lab. Klaff, a Vistage member

since 2017, didn’t know a thing about toasters. But he had a funder, he had a goal, and he had Vistage.

“This was my first consumer product. I am more accustomed to software and recurring revenue, not consumer durables and inventory,” Klaff says. “My Vistage group helped me transition.”



Tom Klaff

Vistage Chair Les Smolin says Klaff “reached out to various network groups, speakers, members and Chairs alike who might have contacts to help out with a new venture.” That included Klaff leveraging contacts both in the U.S. and internationally. Klaff also used the Vistage Manufacturing and Global Network to connect with a Chair in China who helped him with talent and manufacturing resources.

Revolution Cooking’s toaster debuted in 2019 to rave reviews and robust sales. And when the pandemic hit a year later, Klaff found the insight and support he needed through Vistage to launch the No. 1 Amazon store in his category.

Klaff’s Vistage connection was also instrumental in putting him in touch with members and their contacts in China and elsewhere to help him navigate pandemic-related supply-chain issues and logistics.

Revolution Cooking is now a \$10 million company whose heating technology is set to disrupt the microwave and air fryer markets in 2022. Klaff says he is grateful to his peers and connections at Vistage, not only for his professional growth, but also for his personal growth.

“My Vistage group is like a personal board of advisers, a safe place to be vulnerable,” he says. “It has been a sounding board for strategies, especially my Chair. Having someone who knows you and knows how to help is invaluable.”

Cheers to the Revolution! ■



Revolution Cooking's InstaGLO® toaster series became a must-have appliance in 2019. Photos courtesy of Revolution Cooking.



2021 Cope award winner Cheryl McMillan (center) with past winners Jeannette Hobson and Peter Schwartz.

★ ★ ★ CHAIRING WITH ★ ★ ★ EXCELLENCE

2021 Cope award winner Cheryl McMillan leads by example, helping members and peers face their toughest challenges

In the fall of 2019, Chair Cheryl McMillan walked into a meeting with her Chief Executive (CE) group and told the members they were going to do an exercise.

"Let's assume you wake up tomorrow and 20% to 30% of your business is gone," she told the executives. "What would you do? What lessons did you learn in 2008 that you can apply?"

Breaking up into teams, the members got to work on their plans. Financials. Communications. What they would tell customers. Once they got back together, McMillan asked members to share elements of their plans with the group and challenged them to continue working on those ideas after the meeting.

In other words, McMillan serendipitously helped her group build their disaster recovery plans six months before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Stories like this exemplify why McMillan was awarded the 2021 Don Cope Memorial Award. An eight-time

Master Chair and STAR award recipient, 2016 Robert Nourse Chair of the Year, and 14-time Chair Excellence award recipient, McMillan has now earned Vistage's most prestigious honor for a Chair.

Named after one of the first Chairs to be based in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Cope award recognizes a Chair who epitomizes the Vistage values of "Trust, Caring, Challenge and Growth," traits McMillan embodies, says Lee Peters, senior vice president of Vistage's Eastern region.

"Cheryl cares deeply about the Vistage mission and is committed to having that shine through with the work she does with her members," says Peters. "There isn't anything Cheryl wouldn't do to help them."

McMillan's contributions have had a lasting impact on Vistage members. She was one of the Chairs instrumental in fostering a relationship with the Healthnetwork Foundation so that members had initial access to the top hospitals in the United States, including Johns Hopkins and the Cleveland Clinic.

But McMillan, who is based in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, finds working with her groups the most rewarding.

"Where else can I go where I'm helping people and every conversation matters, whether it is during a one-to-one, or a group meeting," McMillan asks of Chairing. "It's a little bit like being an ER doc. I never know what will show up, so I'm never bored."

The combination of unbiased feedback from peers and insights from world-class speakers has helped McMillan energize members to become better leaders and live more balanced lives.

“

You can talk about anything, but we're going to do it within the process. And you are going to ask real questions. We're not going to ask leading questions or suggestions disguised as questions.

When she joined Vistage in 2005, McMillan learned to use Vistage's issue processing system. She strictly adheres to that process, she says, along with compelling members to ask tough, yet insightful questions during meetings.

"I'm firm about that," she says. "You can talk about anything, but we're going to do it

within the process. And you are going to ask real questions. We're not going to ask leading questions or suggestions disguised as questions. Many times, I'll ask them to rephrase it. Just like in their businesses, if members don't follow the process, it just doesn't work as well."

GIVING BACK TO THE CHAIR COMMUNITY

McMillan says she "would not be here today without Ed Crabtree, a local Chair (now emeritus). He recommended me and before Vistage had a mentoring program for new Chairs, he coached me."

Crabtree also invited McMillan to observe one of his meetings to better understand how real meetings worked. Those lessons were "so valuable," McMillan says, that ever since Vistage implemented an official mentoring program in 2007, she has coached new Chairs as they begin to build their practices.

But she has taken it one step further. New Chairs don't just observe the meetings, she says, they practice being a Chair. This includes leading issue-processing sessions so they know what to expect once they launch. "It's critical that new Chairs are in

'Chair mode,' not member mode where they are only focused on content," she says.

"My groups are really good at giving feedback to new Chairs," McMillan adds. "And I've lost count of how many of them that I have mentored."

"She spends a ton of time working with Chairs on this in an effort to help deliver the highest level of member value," says Peters. "The funny thing is Cheryl loves this as she gets Chair feedback on how she facilitates a meeting, and it's just as helpful for her as it is for the new Chair."

As she looks to the future, McMillan wants to continue helping new Chairs acclimate. And she wants to continue helping members ask powerful questions, both to themselves as well as their teams and spouses.

"2022 is about adjusting my meetings, processes and one-to-ones to post-pandemic changes," McMillan says. "Many of my members plan to spend more time outside of the state. I've accepted that hybrid meetings are here to stay. I'd rather have a member attend virtually than miss a meeting."

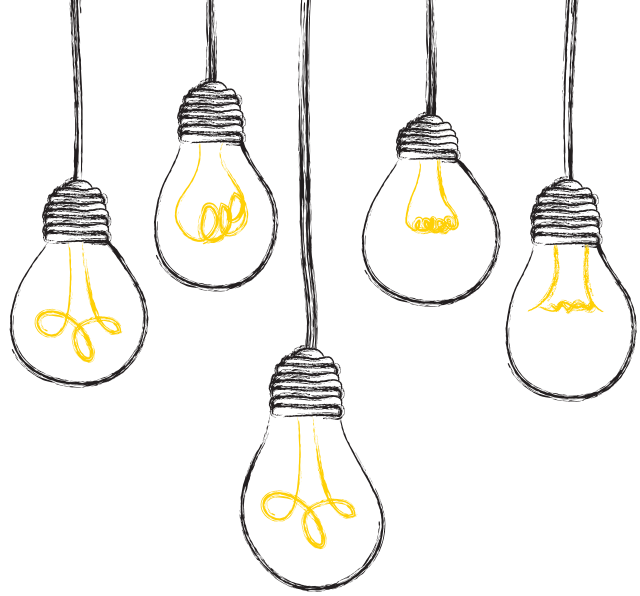
But for right now, McMillan wants to celebrate this win with her husband, Mike, a retired architect. It's still sinking in, she says.

"I think it's every Chair's dream to win this award," she says with glee, "and I didn't really think it would ever happen."

It did happen, Cheryl, and congratulations.



Photos by Allison Hopkins Photography.



Exclusive Insights

As a Vistage member, you get access to exclusive year-round events filled with innovative, cutting-edge thought leadership.

Our recent lineup of Peak Performer events and National CEO Conferences feature acclaimed business and leadership experts eager to share their experiences, insights and key takeaways that you can apply to any business challenge.



Leadership in Times of Crisis

Former CEO and Chairman of PepsiCo **Indra Nooyi** offered insights and guidance on how to effectively lead in today's uncertain and rapidly changing world. She outlined how she managed balancing commerce and public health concerns in the wake of COVID-19. Nooyi also drove home the necessity of leaders possessing the "5 Cs": competence, courage, communication, curiosity and compass.

💡 **Key Takeaway:** CEOs have a responsibility to their teams and the type of legacy they leave behind. The future requires novel ideas, novel strategies for business and novel capabilities that can be sustained well into the future.

3 Steps to Regenerating Your Team

The importance of teamwork was the resounding theme of New York Times bestselling author **Patrick Lencioni's** presentation exclusive to the Vistage community. In his 25 years of working with teams, Lencioni reiterated the importance of team players, leveraging talent and methods to achieve high performance. He provided innovative yet practical methods to strengthen and reinvigorate CEOs' companies and laid the roadmap for long-term success.

💡 **Key Takeaway:** SMBs have a unique challenge in that the positive results of teamwork have a noticeable impact felt throughout the organization. Conversely, ineffective teamwork will be just as noticeable, and possibly damaging.



Bonin Bough
(above) and
Tiffani Bova
(right)



Growth Through Sales and Marketing

The Growth Through Sales and Marketing National CEO Conference featured four keynotes who provided insights on how to navigate a changing digital market and prepare for a dynamic future.

Bonin Bough, chief growth officer of Triller; **Boaz Rauchwerger**, Vistage speaker and President, Boaz Power Corporation; **Deb Gabor**, Vistage speaker and CEO, Sol Marketing; and **Tiffani Bova**, Global Customer Growth & Innovation Evangelist of Salesforce, provided the audience with daring insights to overhaul their current marketing methods. Themes surrounding "embracing uniqueness" and "taking an out-of-box approach" were shared along with data to support new methods.

💡 **Key Takeaway:** Preparing your business for growth in the future means adapting to change and taking new, calculated risks.

COMING IN JULY

Alan Mulally

Mulally, the legendary CEO who led Ford's transformation into one of the world's leading automobile companies, talks strategy and leadership exclusively with the Vistage community.

View upcoming events at myvistage.com/events.

Technology and Innovation

The CEO's Journey: Technology and Innovation was a powerful Vistage National CEO Conference.

Keynote speakers **Andrew McAfee**, co-founder and co-director of MIT's Initiative on the Digital Economy, and **Adaora Udoji**, media innovator, shared their wisdom about preparing for and adapting to rapid innovation. Hundreds of Vistage CEO members joined together to explore their role in instilling the change necessary to stay relevant and soar past competition.

💡 **Key Takeaway:** Align your team and strategic goals with an innovative mindset by embracing challenge and empowerment.



People and Culture

As the talent wars continue to escalate, how can you tackle imperatives for recruiting, hiring, retention and employee development while championing a culture of connectivity for a hybridized workforce? Keynotes from power players like **Liz Wiseman**, best-selling author of "Multipliers: How the best leaders make everyone smarter;" breakout sessions on critical topics like hiring, recruiting, and mental health; and networking with Vistage CEOs across the U.S. provided an opportunity for deep reflection on cultural norms within CEO companies.

💡 **Key Takeaway:** Instilling a culture of adaptability and agility within your organization fosters exhilaration — not exhaustion — when it comes to the employee experience.



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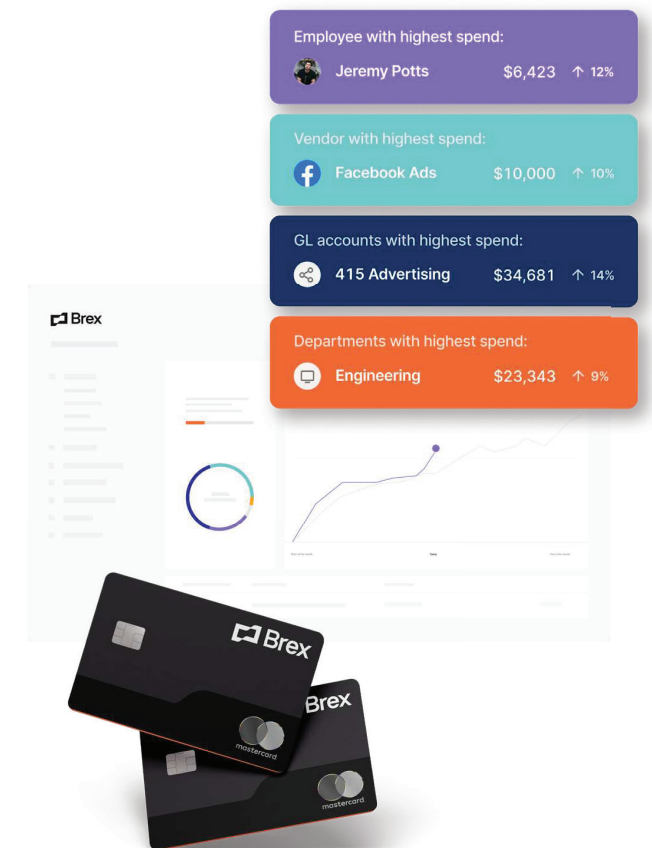


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Life

AFTER THE SALE

A Year to Find My 'Yes'

Mundy Wilson Piper
Former CEO of Chippers
Joined Vistage in 2011
2021 Member Excellence
Award winner

My late husband founded Chippers, a company that provides arboriculture, turf and soil care, land enhancement, and other services, in 1986. When he died in 2010, I promised I'd stay on as CEO for five years. But when 2015 came around, I realized I needed more time. I wanted the company to transition to full employee ownership, and I still needed to grow the business, build up the leadership team and mentor a successor.

Then the pandemic hit.

Like so many, I became deeply reflective. I looked around and thought, "Why am I still doing what I'm doing?"

This view from my home in Ireland is great inspiration for the next chapter of my life, which includes time for reading and writing.



I now have more time to swing with my Irish grandbaby!

During a strategy session in 2020, it became obvious that we would need many more years to do employee ownership the way I wanted to do it — and I was running out of steam. Plus, something else was tugging at me — I wanted more time with my husband (I remarried in 2013), my family and a new grandbaby in Ireland.

That's when I started looking for a buyer.

I began speaking with the owner of a large corporation that was already employee-owned and had a 40-year track record. We were on the same page on the most important issues and negotiated a deal.

“*I want this transition to be about becoming a human being again, instead of a human doing.*”

The day I announced I was stepping down, I called everyone into a big meeting. I told them the story of the business and the poignant details that led to this day. I explained that the next chapter was not going to include me and told them about the company.

That moment was the realization of a dream — to be able to leave on my terms.

As soon as my contract was up, I left for Ireland. I also began writing and spending more time with my family. All kinds of exciting opportunities have been coming my way, but I am going to wait to decide what's next. I want this transition to be about becoming a human being again, instead of a human doing. I've declared this as my year of saying no to new commitments. It's a time for introspection and to delve deeper into myself. When this year is over, I'll say yes to something that really matters to me.

Not Retired, Just Rewired!

Jay Steinfeld

Former CEO of Blinds.com
Joined Vistage in 2005

I started out as a CPA, which I hated, and then became a vice president of finance. I then scrapped the corporate world to own a small drapery shop. In the early '90s, I became curious about e-commerce and launched Blinds.com, the internet's first blinds store, from my garage.

Blinds.com became the largest online retailer of blinds in the world. We won many awards, and I was honored in 2006 to be recognized as the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year.

While not necessarily looking to sell, it wasn't surprising when [The] Home Depot approached us in January 2014. After the sale, Home Depot integrated our proprietary technology into its enterprise systems. I remained as Blinds.com's CEO and also joined Home Depot's online leadership team. With the power of Home Depot combined with our nimble entrepreneurial mindset, we accomplished everything I had envisioned. Together, we were Ironman!

I believe one should not retire, but "rewire." So after seven years, I finally stepped away

Story continues on page 32

Still singing in the same barbershop quartet since my days at The University of Texas — almost 50 years ago. (Jay is second from right.)



in 2020, and have been as busy as ever in all areas of my life.

I teach at Rice University's Graduate School of Business. I'm on the advisory council at The University of Texas' Entrepreneurship Center, and on the board

“*I never want to be stagnant or obsolete — so I keep evolving, experimenting, expressing and enjoying the ride!*”

of directors and audit committee for Masonite (NYSE: DOOR) — and for four other startups. I enjoy giving back.

I've been writing for years and recently published my book, "Lead from the Core: The 4 Principles for Profit and Prosperity," a Wall Street Journal bestseller. There are also causes I care about, so I sit on the board of a not-for-profit in Israel called Hand in Hand, which brings Arab and Jewish students together to promote peace and equality. And of course, there's more time with my family — the lights of my life — my wife Barbara, five children and my grandkids I refer to as my seven startups.

Yet through all of life's changes, I still sing in the same barbershop quartet since my days at The University of Texas — almost 50 years ago — and continue having a blast in "rewirement!"

Fulfilling My Calling

Wayne Coffey

Former CEO and Founder of Coffey & Company
Joined Vistage in 1996
Vistage Chair since 2020

I had been a Vistage member for 26 years before I sold my company in 2018. It was a business that I founded after I left my role as president of the 74th largest commercial insurance agency in the country. I was offered a business buyout that enabled me to create a very comfortable retirement. It can feel daunting to have this financial freedom because to whom much is given, much is expected.

My plan was to take time off and travel with my wife more — but I was nominated to become a Vistage Chair, and I had some people I respect encouraging me, so I said yes after a year. I have a big network, and my group came together quickly.



Surrounded by family (Wayne is second from right).
Outer Banks, North Carolina, July 2021.

I launched in March 2020, right as COVID hit, which actually proved to be fortunate because CEOs especially need Vistage during challenging times. To illustrate the caliber of members I have: When one member confided that they couldn't continue in the group because of finances, another member stepped up and paid for his peer anonymously. As a side note: That member who had been in financial trouble has since doubled their business and just paid it back by taking care of the fees for another group member who is going through a hard time now.

I am so inspired by this incredible group of people that I get to guide. And I am happy to say that not one member has left since the group began.

I enjoy a deep sense of fulfillment knowing that I am doing what I was always meant to do. My cup is very full. I'm married to my soulmate of 46 years, I am active in my church, and I have four children and seven

“*I am so inspired by this incredible group of people that I get to guide.*”

grandchildren living within a half-hour of us. I founded a charity in 2004 called "No More Stolen Childhoods," for children who have been abused, and I sit on the board for a Christian-based center for drug and alcohol recovery.

I believe there is nothing greater in life than helping people. ■

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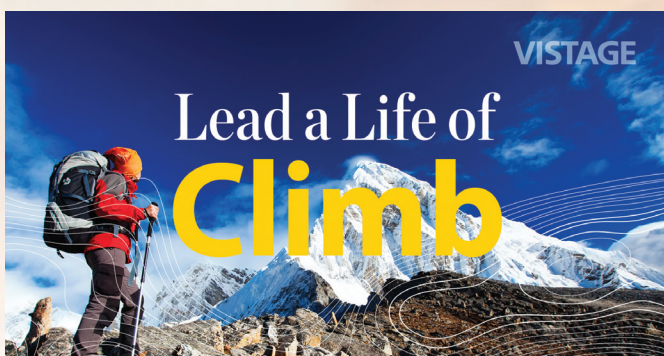
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