

VISTAGE

Perspectives[®]

Issue 10 | Fall 2022

BEAD INDUSTRIES
CEO JILL MAYER ON
HYBRID WORKING:
WE'RE STRONGER
NOW.



VISTAGE'S CLIMB
TO 65 AND BEYOND

flip over for special issue

HOW FRONTLINE
MANAGERS DRIVE
COMPANY CULTURE

LEADING THE WORKFORCE REVOLUTION

Work has changed. Meet 3 Vistage CEO members who've adapted to grow their businesses.



In 2010, Keith Zars knew his company, Keith Zars Pools (KZP), had plateaued. He was 65; he could have sold and retired. Instead, he chased growth opportunities for his custom swimming pool business, known for its breathtaking designs that blend indoor and outdoor living to create an oasis of tranquility.

Fast-forward 12 years. The company ranked first on Pool and Spa News Top 50 Service lists in 2020 and 2021, third on its Top 50 Builder List in 2022 and was voted 2021 Best Swimming Pool Builder and Services by the San Antonio Express-News. Projects have included pools for multiple players on the NBA's hometown team, the San Antonio Spurs.

KZP has built more than 11,000 pools since 1985. And while the pools cool its customers, Zars' business continues to run hot as soaring gas prices and record-breaking temperatures have homeowners rushing to buy.

"When I started with Vistage, I wore 20 hats. I was managing everything," says Zars, now a 12-year Vistage member and 2021 Member Excellence award winner. "The knowledge I've gained has helped me expand from about 275 to over 500 employees, and that has freed me up to focus on my strengths." ■

EDITORIAL

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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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Every high-performing Vistage member company can articulate a vision, its core reason for existence that provides a sense of purpose and direction.

For Vistage, our vision is to be the most trusted resource to CEOs of small and midsize businesses. We want to make sure you have the best tools and resources to become better leaders, make better decisions and drive better results. That vision has guided our march forward over 65 years, alongside more than 100,000 leaders.

The pages that follow illustrate our relentless commitment to building the best approach to how leaders learn. We celebrate members who are leveraging peer perspectives, Chair guidance and speaker insights to navigate uncertain times. And we spotlight exclusive engagements with impactful speakers, like Alan Mulally, who spark conversations that matter.

Our community is now 28,000 strong in 26 countries. I'm so grateful that you've entrusted us with your leadership development. It's a duty that we hold sacred against a vision that endures.

All the best,

Sam

Sam Reese
CEO, Vistage Worldwide

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How Vistage's enduring purpose has helped high-integrity leaders reach new heights since 1957



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HOW DO YOU FIND

FOCUS

AS A CEO?



I have installed Robocaller, and do not attend any phone calls if the contact is not saved. Yearly, I go to a cabin, cut off technology, read and think.

Anoop Menon

President & CEO, Confianz Global, Inc.
Charlotte, North Carolina
Vistage member since 2016



First of all, I must define a FOCUS. To do that, I work deeply in the annual business plan, then I make a drill-down, separating the big ideas into smaller ones.

Gustavo Marino

CEO, United Logistic Company, S.A.
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Vistage member since 2019



I focus on what I am good at and pick other leaders who fire up themselves to focus on what they are great at. Right people, right results.

Gore Bolton

CEO, Land Intelligence, Inc.
Columbia, South Carolina
Vistage member since 2007



Calendar blocking all the way! Schedule the important things first and then repeating blocks of time for intentional work.

Susan Fennema

Chaos Eradicating Officer, Beyond the Chaos
McKinney, Texas
Vistage member since 2020



I schedule "deep work" early in the day, then make it impossible for interruptions by turning off my cell phone and working offline.

David Barnes

President & CEO, Isotec Security
Westminster, Colorado
Vistage member since 2017



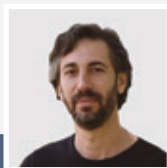
I schedule time for opposite-brain activities (yoga, exercise, drawing) and commit to the activity as if it were a meeting with the President.

Peter DiGiammarino

Managing Partner, IntelliVen
San Francisco, California
Vistage speaker since 2021, Joined Vistage in 2006

EXPANDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY

STANFORD
BUSINESS SCHOOL OF



Strategic leadership, organizational design, storytelling ... each one forces you to dig deep into the roots of your company to better understand the processes lying beneath the surface. And, almost immediately, you are compelled to take action and propose ways to apply these insights to your company. It is very hands-on. The approach is iterative and cumulative, building your case week after week and getting a fully (self-made) implementable construction at the end of each module.

Javier Chornik
Director, FADETE
Vistage Argentina member since 2007
Chair: Bob Shingler

This year, CEO members from 11 countries enrolled in the Vistage Executive Leadership Program in collaboration with Stanford Graduate School of Business to transform their organizations.

What happens when you combine the academic excellence of **Stanford Graduate School of Business** with the world-class peer advisory experience of Vistage? Transformation.

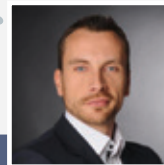
Launched in 2017, the Vistage Executive Leadership Program (VELP), in collaboration with Stanford GSB, is a one-of-a-kind offering that focuses on developing strategic thinking and applying innovative strategies to drive transformative change in an organization.

Members enroll in three self-paced courses from Stanford faculty: **Strategic Leadership, Designing Organizations for Creativity and Innovation, and**

The Innovation Playbook. As they go through each course, members work with their designated Chair facilitator and other Stanford cohort members to apply those lessons to their businesses.

This year, enrollment included international Vistage members from **Argentina, China, Germany, Malaysia, Malta, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, Spain and Uruguay.** Chairs and members in 11 countries connected with veteran Chair facilitators to understand the value of this exclusive program, creating the most effective executive education experience for SMB CEOs.

The lessons learned have helped create global change and continuing success since **VELP launched in 2016. More than 300 alumni across multiple industries with revenues ranging from \$1 to \$250 million** have learned to make better decisions for their companies, families and communities. Here, 3 Vistage CEO members describe their experiences.



I decided to participate in VELP without hesitation because — as a person and as a manager — I have the inner desire to grow constantly. This is my personal fuel. After many years in a company, you quickly become operationally blind and may miss opportunities. Through my membership in Vistage, I am always taken out of everyday (business) life and can exchange ideas with inspiring executives from other companies. And often we share the same challenges. In combination with the focused and valuable Vistage learning content (speaker, group work, company tours), I was able to expand my skills and avoid “blindness.”

From my Vistage experience, I know that only high-quality content is taught, along with Stanford's outstanding reputation, and it was clear that this program could take me to a whole new level. In addition, I love the exchange with international members, because every company and every culture works a little differently.

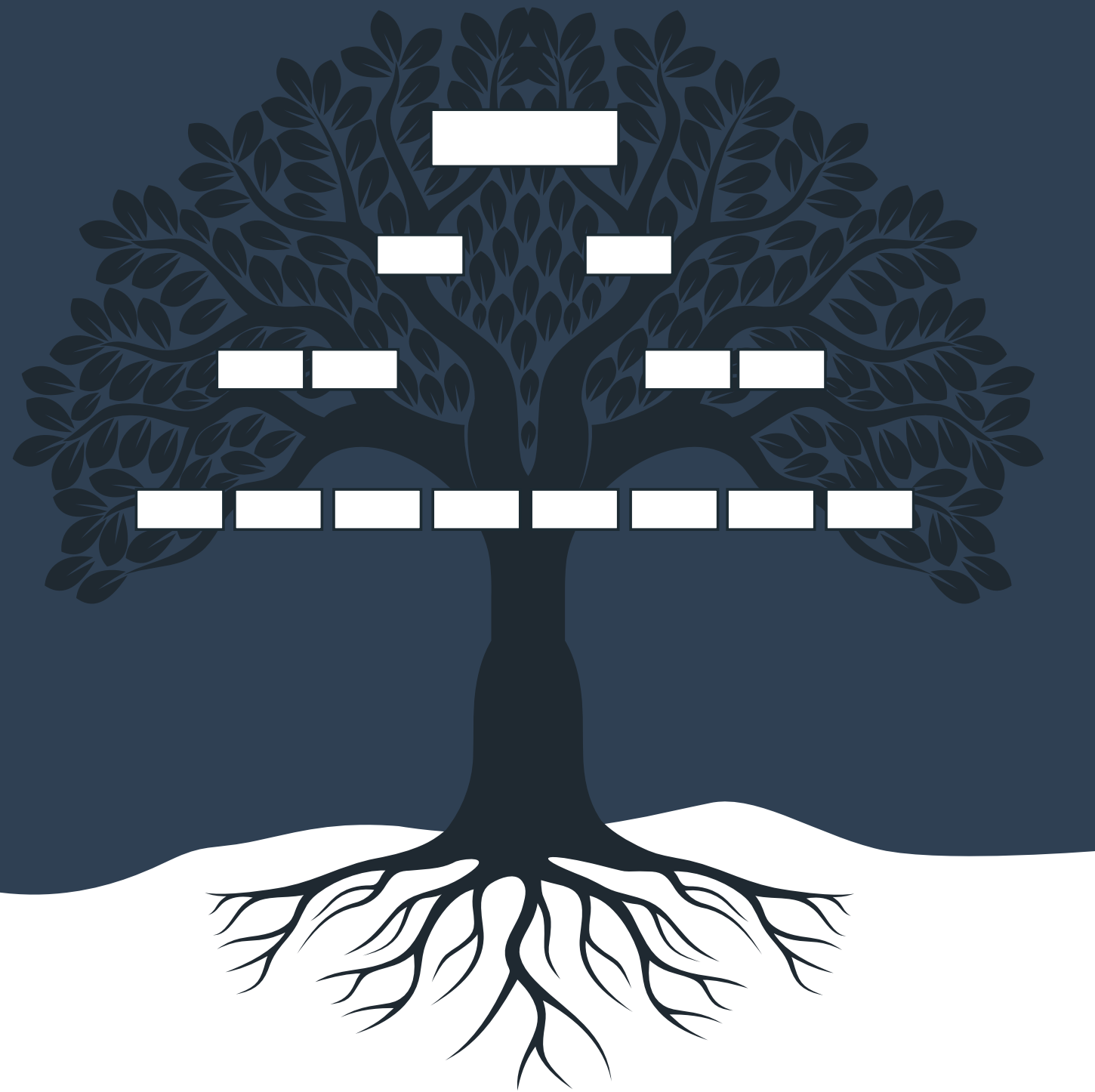
Torsten Schmitt
General Manager, Cortec GmbH
Vistage Germany member since 2018
Chair: Janet Fogarty



The VELP program has had a significant impact on the business, and it was designed in such a way that my team is involved in the assignment. To build momentum, I needed to brief my team and build the groundwork by going through the key concepts and reference case studies from some of the top organizations in the world. One important note to the team is that “the boss” is learning, which indirectly inspires them to continue learning to stay relevant in the competitive world. It will take some time before we see major changes in our business because the contents of the program have to be multiplied internally.

A great success was the presentation of the PARC (people, architecture and routines, and culture) model. In addition, we have gained a common understanding of strategy, so we first ask ourselves whether our activities help to create more value or not. The greatest progress has been made in HR. Good employees determine the success of the company. We have developed a series of general and specific training programs open to every employee. We want to promote personal growth, no matter how long that person is “part of our journey” (our company). We believe that this increases satisfaction and can take the company to a new level.

Peng Yew Choy
CEO, Wah Kong Corporation Sdn Bhd
Vistage Malaysia member since 2017
Chair: Bob Shingler



WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN TAKING OVER A FAMILY BUSINESS?

Climbing the ladder takes on new meaning when your employer is your family. We spoke to two Vistage members working in family businesses — one who is just taking over and one who has been at the helm for a few years — about the unique leadership challenges they face as the next generation.



Corey Brown

is president at Burger & Brown Engineering in Grandview, Missouri. After a nine-year succession plan, Brown will replace his father as CEO of the engineering-driven manufacturing firm in June 2023. Transparency with customers, vendors and associates has been critical to the Browns as they move forward with the leadership swap.



Braydan Shaw

is CEO of Burns 1876, a Salina, Utah-based, sixth-generation Western retailer of custom saddles, belts, jewelry and cowboy hats. In 2020, the 43-year-old took over the company. Diversification has kept family harmony. Each member has a distinct area of focus, but they stay supportive of each other.

To learn more about Braydan's journey, visit **"A Life of Climb Podcast"** at vistage.com/podcast.



How does your family's history with the company play a role in how you lead?

CB: For 20 years, my dad has created a culture of pride, integrity and awareness that is second to none. People don't like change. They want to know they will have the same interactions with me. I am my own person, but my dad and I both exude the same core values. I have lofty goals ahead, but I intend to keep intact the company's tradition and family atmosphere.

BS: Being part of a 146-year-old family business that has survived countless disruptive events, including two pandemics, our leadership team often reflects on the past while looking forward. There aren't many business decisions we face that the previous five generations haven't tackled. I lean on the stories of my progenitors to provide inspiration and motivation.

How would you describe the impact your generation of leadership has brought to the organization?

CB: I've brought in new ideas and direction. Being younger and in the early part of my career, I am more willing to take risks. I've pushed the envelope a little bit with my dad to grow and diversify the business. So we've developed new areas of work that he might not have considered in the past.

BS: We've enhanced our business structure. Our artisans typically follow the apprentice model, with information passing only from craftsman to apprentice. Two years ago, we began documenting the process to expedite the training of new craftspeople as well as preserve the manufacturing of our traditional heirloom quality products.

What are you doing to train and prepare the next generation? Why is that important?

CB: Whether another family member takes over this business or not, someday there will be someone new. We encourage the group with us now to learn and evolve with us. The more people who can be part of our journey, the smoother any leadership transition will be in the future and the longer the company can continue to thrive.

BS: We keep our kids active in the business, from building hat bands to working at trade shows. It's important for the next generation to feel gratitude for the hard work of each generation before them. Working side by side with my grandparents and parents helped me to appreciate the family business. It's the reason I wanted to join it and add my mark to its legacy.

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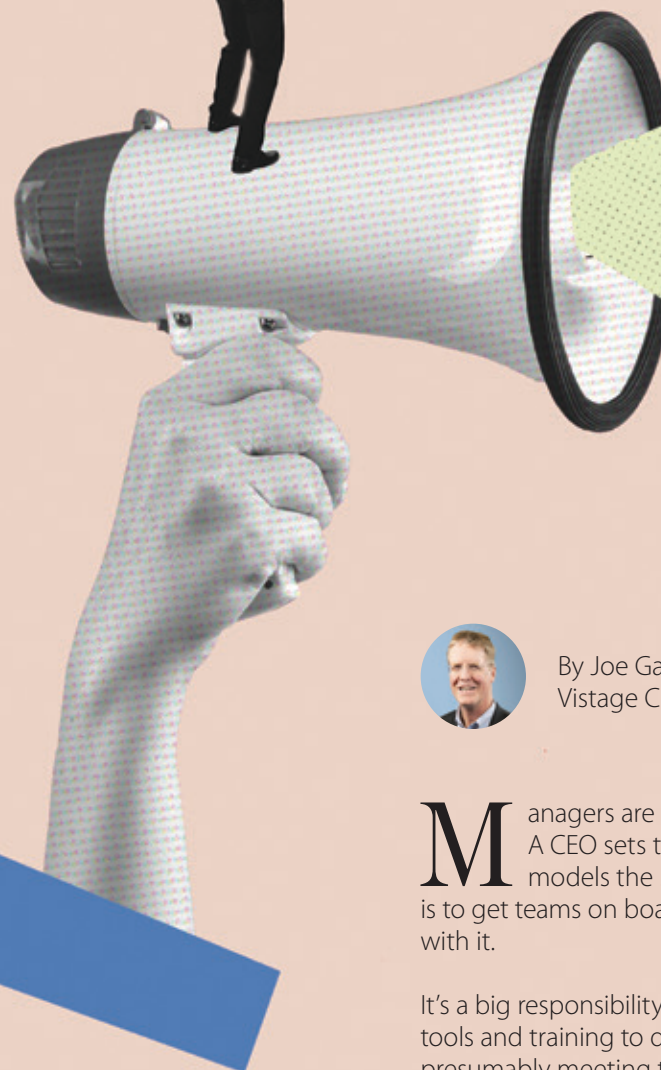
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The Ambassadors of

CULTURE



By Joe Galvin,
Vistage Chief Research Officer

Managers are the unofficial ambassadors of culture. A CEO sets the vision for culture, but a manager models the behaviors that bring it to life. Their job is to get teams on board with culture and keep them aligned with it.

It's a big responsibility, and most managers need certain tools and training to do it well. Fortunately, many CEOs are presumably meeting this need: Three-quarters (75%) of leaders are investing in development specifically for managers, according to our survey of 1,584 CEOs of small and midsize businesses. Importantly, many CEOs are also implementing processes and tools to help managers put these skills into practice.

But how, exactly, are CEOs equipping their managers to drive culture? We spoke with 2 Vistage members to find out.

CASE STUDY 1

Engraving The Culture
Through Ritual, Story And Commitment

Dave Sweet | President, MECCO

For the last 10 years, employees at MECCO, a laser-marking company based in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania, have met twice a month for donuts and a work meeting.

While donuts are the draw, the real focus is to review the company's core values and celebrate employees who are exemplifying MECCO's cultural values. Every manager in the company is asked to nominate employees for a recognition called "Cheers," and two are selected to tell the story behind their nomination.

“Frontline leaders set the stage for day-to-day work.”

"I always ask them, 'What happened here? Why are we cheering?'" says Dave Sweet, president of MECCO and a 2022 Member Excellence award winner. "It gives folks an opportunity to show appreciation. And it's a great way for people to get recognized for being a good employee and teammate."

Getting managers to engage in storytelling goes back to one of the company's fundamental beliefs: Culture is only effective when people can articulate it, commit to it and put it into practice. It's also why MECCO decorates its office with signs for "Align with Nine" — a set of nine core behaviors that represent the company's culture and values.

Much like the Working Together Management System Practices and Principles that former CEO Alan Mulally championed during his time at Boeing and Ford, these values set the foundation for how MECCO operates.

By repeatedly communicating and ritualizing these core behaviors, says Sweet, the company helps ensure its managers truly live them every day. "Frontline leaders set the stage for day-to-day work," he says. "It's critical for them to have the right attitude and the right behaviors."

He offers this example: MECCO recently received an unusual request from an automotive manufacturer. The manufacturer asked if MECCO, which specializes in laser marking, was capable of laser welding two pieces of plastic together.

The short answer was no. But because of the company's values — namely, providing innovative solutions, responding with urgency

and designing for success — the team didn't want to turn the manufacturer away. "We said to them, 'We have no idea if we can do this, but we'll spend half a day with you or longer and try to figure it out,'" Sweet explains. In the end, an application manager and two engineers came up with a viable solution. Today, the auto manufacturer is MECCO's biggest customer.

Beyond communicating culture, MECCO uses a tool to quantify it. Through a software platform called Rhabit, the company monitors the performance of managers and their impact on culture. Once a week, Rhabit sends MECCO employees a few questions about their manager, which they can quickly answer on their phone by swiping left or right. That feedback then feeds into each manager's profile, which Sweet can use as a guide for coaching and discussions during one-to-one meetings.

"If a manager is not living up to the culture, we can use this tool to pick up on it," explains Sweet. "I'm always open to other viewpoints. But our core values and behaviors are non-negotiable. You've got to adhere to those." ■



Dave Sweet, photo courtesy of MECCO

CASE STUDY 2

Taking Care Of Each Other,
Authentically

Ellen Wood | President & CEO, vcfo

For many companies, the COVID-19 pandemic dealt a blow to culture. But not vcfo, a professional services firm that provides solutions in finance, recruiting and HR.

"I would say, if anything, the pandemic strengthened it," explains Ellen Wood, President & CEO of vcfo. She has the retention numbers to prove it.

Wood gives credit to the company's frontline managers in particular for safeguarding culture during the toughest moments of the crisis. The managers "routinely checked on every single employee to make sure they and their families were OK," she says. "We wanted to know if there was something the company could do for them. For example, if they were sick, we could give them additional time off. If they didn't have enough work, we could figure out a way to make sure they weren't losing money."



Ellen Wood, photo courtesy of vcfo

“Our leaders are very aligned on what our culture is, how to model it and what we will and will not tolerate.”

vcfo managers also took the initiative to launch "Lunch and Learns" over Zoom, organizing lunch deliveries to the homes of every employee. That's no small feat, given that vcfo has consultants dispersed across Austin, Dallas, Denver and Houston.

But taking care of people is integral to the company's culture, Wood explains. It's fully embraced by managers from day one because vcfo embeds culture into the hiring process. Candidates undergo a rigorous process to screen for cultural fit.

"We don't just look if they can do the job," says Wood. "We look at whether they demonstrate each of our values as they go through their work experience with us. And we ask questions targeted at finding out how a candidate feels about what we consider to be critical values."

Once on board, managers have several tools at their disposal for modeling those values and keeping people accountable for them. For example, they're taught to use the "Kudos" channel on Slack to give compliments to their colleagues, clients and partners when they do something that reinforces culture. Since 2018, the company has also used the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) to continually communicate its vision and purpose. The system has a feature that allows colleagues to share conversations about culture that take place in department meetings across its four locations.

"It has been a fabulous enhancement for our company-wide communication, which is critical — especially for a dispersed workforce like ours — in messaging culture," says Wood. "Our leaders are very aligned on what our culture is, how to model it and what we will and will not tolerate."

The strength of that commitment was especially clear last year when vcfo marked its 25th anniversary. The milestone was a cause for celebration. But instead of blowing money on a big party, vcfo used those funds (and more) to donate \$100,000 to charitable endeavors.

The reason? Their culture of "doing the right thing." ■



LEADING THE WORKFORCE

REVOLUTION



Today's CEOs are dealing with a workforce that's unlike any they've ever witnessed before.

These days, workers can choose whether they'll work in the office, remotely, or a mix of both, forcing CEOs and business owners to figure out what model works best for them.

But that decision presents several challenges for business leaders: What works best for my company? How do I maintain accountability, productivity and performance? What's most attractive for both my current employees and potential new hires? Can I use this to spark growth and success?

And what about my employees who have to come to work?

We spoke with three Vistage CEO members on how they're leveraging these new ways to work — from essential to hybrid to remote — and how they surprisingly found new opportunities to grow.

THE KEY TO HYBRID? ACCOUNTABILITY & PERFORMANCE

Skeptical at first, Jill Mayer has embraced hybrid working by tracking metrics both on- and off-site.

In the first days of the pandemic, Bead Industries CEO Jill Mayer realized that her office employees would need to work remotely.

Her first thought: “Oh, crap.” Before the pandemic, few Bead employees had ever worked remotely.

Mayer is a fifth-generation owner of the Milford, Connecticut-based Bead, which created the familiar chains of military dog tags and window shades but also manufactures electronic connector pins and plumbing fixture trim. She felt fine with employees in marketing or accounting roles occasionally working from home, but Mayer worried that too much time away might hurt collaboration. With the pandemic setting in, she’d have to deal with a move, en masse, toward remote work.

“How are we going to feel connected to one another?” Mayer says of her thoughts as the pandemic started.

*Jill Mayer,
photo courtesy of
Bead Industries*

“We had a very good company culture with good collaboration and communication across functional teams. How is that going to translate over Zoom?”

At first, the transition was shaky. Bead’s online meetings didn’t run as smoothly as they did in person — people on Zoom had trouble timing when they should talk. And Mayer, a Vistage member since 2019, was concerned that people might be too distracted by their home lives to get work done.

But with time and adjustments, remote work felt easier. To avoid Zoom burnout, Mayer would only

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Companies that stubbornly refuse a hybrid model are going to be hurting for talent.

hold Zoom meetings when video was needed, preferring to schedule about half of Bead’s meetings over the phone. Mayer also noticed that employees were doing their work, even if they often finished at odd hours.

Remote work was functional, Mayer saw, but she still wanted to keep the company’s bond and culture strong. Bead also hosted remote parties, happy hours, and contests for employees and their families.

Bead involved those factory workers who had to be on-site by putting Friday calls on over the speaker for company updates, thanking the essential employees for coming in and bringing them cookies decorated with masks.

Now, with pandemic lockdowns no longer a widespread issue, Bead Industries office employees are working on a hybrid schedule — some days are at home, some at the office. With hybrid work, **Mayer has noticed one big change in Bead’s workflow from before the pandemic to now: “We tend to overcommunicate now.”**

People tell each other when they’ll be in the office, are better at scheduling meetings, and bring their computers home just in case, she says. If even one person is missing from an in-office meeting, they’ll hold it over Zoom instead to avoid any feelings of being left out or apart from the team.

Despite Mayer’s initial fear of remote work, Bead has become both more profitable and more efficient since the pandemic began. Mayer cites the early and continued adoption of The Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) as a big step, something she learned about during her Vistage group meetings as members discussed their various challenges surrounding hybrid working.

The system gives Bead management the ability to see metrics about how employees are working, providing clarity and transparency to employees about their objectives. This allows Bead to hold employees accountable, even while working remotely. This accountability helped Mayer go from anxious to excited about the hybrid work environment.

“We worked on our processes and our technology,” Mayer says. **“When we came out of the pandemic, we were stronger. If we didn’t hire smart, capable, accountable people, we probably would have struggled with going remote.”**

3 Lessons Learned

**With Will Henrickson,
Mayer’s Vistage Chair:**

Welcome the revolution

The hybrid workforce and flexible workplaces are here to stay. Embrace them as tools to improve productivity and employee engagement.

Start small

You don’t have to have it all figured out to get started. Start small and experiment with a single team or a single shift to find what works best.

Communicate and have purpose

Overcommunicate and eagerly solicit new ideas. Start with why. In the end, success is all about a shared commitment to a common purpose, vision and goal, regardless of where the team is located.

Mayer hears from executives outside of Bead who struggle with a hybrid workforce, often echoing the same concerns she had at the beginning. While she understands their concern, she says that hybrid can be a big win, so long as companies can trust employees and hold them accountable.

“Companies that stubbornly refuse a hybrid model are going to be hurting for talent,” Mayer says. “There are ways to try a hybrid model — start with one day, then move to two days, then three days. If three days is too much, roll it back. There’s room for trial and error.”

In the future, Mayer says she believes that more companies will adopt hybrid work models, especially since younger employees expect to work remotely. Remote work also helps people who have young children, Mayer says, which is important for any company that wants to be family friendly.

Employees will come to the office with a good reason, Mayer says, but that reason must be well communicated. And employees must buy into the reason why they’re coming into the office.

“If they’re in their car driving to work with a purpose, they’ll come,” she says. “But if they’re just driving because ‘that’s the way we’ve always done it,’ people are going to move on.” ■

MAKING ESSENTIAL WORKERS PART OF THE ‘MISSION’

Sherwood Egbert needed his essential workers in the factory, so he infused them with a purpose beyond the company’s goals

During the pandemic, no one from the factories of Custom Pipe & Fabrication worked remotely. Their job wouldn’t allow it — they are essential workers and needed to be at their machines, creating steel pipes, pumps and other groundwater-related products.

Sherwood Egbert, Vice President of Shapco Inc., the owner of Custom Pipe, says that their machines were well-distanced, but it was still difficult for employees to come to work. It seemed like everyone else was at home, protected from the virus, even their office coworkers. Work became harder when the supply chain slowed to a crawl; goods became harder to procure. Work became more uncertain.

Egbert, a Vistage member since 2021, knew that it was a confusing time for his company’s employees in 10 locations across seven states, so he looked for ways to bolster certainty. Headquartered in Stanton, California, Custom Pipe followed and communicated CDC safety mandates, provided masks and other PPE, and staggered lunch breaks. Management started a massive communication push to all employees to let them know that there’s a purpose to their work.

“We told them, ‘You’re not just threading pipe, you’re building the nation’s water infrastructure for food, housing communities and people,’” Egbert says. **“You’re doing this so people can turn on the tap in their homes and have water.”**

Employees bought in immediately, Egbert says. Working became about undertaking a mission: Provide the U.S. with water.

Custom Pipe also incentivized its employees with raises and bonuses. Employees received vaccination bonuses as well as their regular bonuses, which are based on operating income. **Custom Pipe had a “banner year” in 2021, Egbert says, as material prices rose — bonuses were much bigger than usual.**

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If you’re not engaged with your workforce, then you’re obsolete.



Sherwood Egbert, photo courtesy of Custom Pipe

“Everyone saw the fruits of that, from the machine operators to the office staff,” he says. “At the end of the year, they saw that I wasn’t just blowing smoke. We came out of this much stronger.”

Custom Pipe’s big year in 2021 was also due to its strategic planning efforts. “One thing I’ve learned is that you can’t sleep on your business,” Egbert says. “The pandemic really made us realize that we needed to change how we thought about the business.”

Egbert brought in **Marc Emmer**, a Vistage speaker and president of Optimize Inc., a management consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, to chart out the company’s growth over the next five years. With Emmer’s help, Egbert refined messages around the company’s values and vision, created new incentives for employees, and tailored individual growth plans for employees to help identify the future leaders of the company.

“Not every employee is going to stay with us for their whole career,” he says. **“But if we can invest in them and develop them professionally, they’ll be better off as people and as employees. Yes, we hope they stay, but if they leave, we’ll continue that relationship and that will benefit us down the road.”**

Custom Pipe also implemented a feedback system. Egbert was surprised to find that compensation wasn’t at the top of the list of what employees wanted. They want to feel valued, they want to feel appreciated, and they want to feel like the company is investing in them. They also want to feel like they’re working as part of something bigger.

“We used to just try to throw money at the problem, to give out raises or give monetary incentives, and we ignored that communication piece,” Egbert says. “We came to realize that we couldn’t do that anymore. We needed to be more forthright and transparent with all the employees in communicating why Custom Pipe exists and what role they play in our bigger mission.”

With more communication, training and focus on company values, Egbert hopes that they’re turning essential employees into internal promoters. He wants to be sure that employees not only feel good about where they work but also that their families feel that their loved ones are safe and treated well. He also believes that having employees be internal promoters can only help with recruiting and retention, a tricky issue currently facing every company.

Egbert says that they’re currently looking at improving how they onboard new employees. Instead of simply following up with new employees after 30 or 90 days, he wants managers to have weekly, informal conversations with new employees. He hopes that this can provide some transparency; by answering questions and concerns of new employees as they arise, they can better retain new talent.

Through everything, Egbert believes that the success of Custom Pipe & Fabrication has come from purposeful communication.

“If you’re not engaged with your workforce, then you’re obsolete,” Egbert says. “The workforce wants to be engaged with. They want to be in a transparent company that tells them what’s going on, where they’re going, and what the purpose is. They want to be part of something bigger than just themselves, the company, and the profit.” ■

3 Lessons Learned

With Gail Schaper-Gordon, Egbert’s Vistage Chair

Show empathy

Sherwood joined Vistage in the middle of the pandemic and immediately applied the lessons he learned. He was aware of the pandemic’s impact on employees and increased empathetic communication.

Be willing to change strategies

While Custom Pipe was profitable, Sherwood saw that it grew without any cohesive strategy, pushing its internal capacity and leadership to the limits. Sherwood shifted the initial plan. He got to know each of the different branches of Custom Pipe as a member of the Shapco oversight team, taking a hands-on approach with the purposeful direction of the company.

Welcome expertise

Sherwood and Marc Emmer, a Vistage speaker, began a comprehensive strategic planning initiative that included reorganization, alignment and succession planning. This plan will take the company into the next generation of growth. Sherwood has learned the value of outside expertise.

DEVELOPING CULTURE REMOTELY

By quantifying success, Jonathan Reynolds has built a winning culture.

When Jonathan Reynolds first joined Titus, it was an accounting services firm where everyone worked in an office. In 2015, Reynolds completed a buyout of the recruiting division that he was a part of starting in order to launch a new company, Titus Talent Strategies, a recruiting and talent strategy firm where the entire workforce was decentralized.

It's been what Reynolds likes to call a "mobile workforce." "Remote" sounds too isolated to his ear.

“

High-performers want to know what winning looks like.

Reynolds, now CEO of Titus Talent Strategies, says his business partner, like many, was initially wary of an all-remote workforce. How would they know that employees were doing work? "It's going to be amazing," Reynolds recalls saying. "We're going to do this by accountability and trust."

To trust employees, Reynolds established

some early ground rules. First, Titus leadership must be clear about the job of each employee. Leadership worked to quantifiably define success for each position. For those who get their job done, freedom awaits — they can take time away, travel or simply walk to the park.

As employees proved themselves trustworthy, the company grew, Reynolds says, adding that **Titus has recently seen an average of 60 percent annual growth.**

Jonathan Reynolds,
photo courtesy of Titus Talent Strategies

3 Lessons Learned

With Richard Carr,
Reynolds' Vistage Chair

Talent wants to win

A-players want to work somewhere they can win and enjoy the trust, accountability and clarity of expectations from management.

Know your aim

Culture is all about everyone knowing the aim and vision of the enterprise and the role they play.

Understand what success looks like

A virtual company can thrive when team members feel connected. Connection comes when every single team member understands what quantifiable success looks like.

To quantify success, Titus created a software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform to ensure employees knew what was expected of them, were working well, and receiving coaching and development to meet company goals. Reynolds pulls up a color-coded heat map showing each employee at the company to see who is meeting their goals and who is falling short — the majority seem to exceed the quantifiable metrics of their jobs. Having a system like this allows Titus to see where employees are succeeding or falling short, allowing Reynolds' team to coach around problem areas and refine successful ones.

"The notion of a high-performing, highly engaged culture is attractive to business owners," says Reynolds, a Vistage member since 2018. "To get that, you must define performance to every person in the company. **If you want a high-performing culture, every single person needs to know what quantifiable success looks like in their role. It cannot be a feeling — you must make it objective.**"

Having this system has allowed Titus and its 200 salaried employees to be completely remote, aside from a training facility in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And while the workforce may be mobile, Reynolds doesn't

want employees to feel remote. Employees gather to do charitable work, like building houses. Reynolds says that they've worked intentionally to form bonds over weekly Zoom meetings, yearly in-person team meetings, and an annual company meeting — one year, they had life, finance, and health coaches available for employees. This year, they'll focus on business goals and next year, they will take the whole company to Mexico to build homes again.

Gathering each year allows leadership and employees alike to learn and grow together, Reynolds says. It's an idea he came up with after speaking with his Vistage Chair, Richard Carr. Noticing that Titus was growing quickly, Carr encouraged Reynolds to ensure his company was also growing intelligently and relationally.

"Growth equals opportunity, and for employees, that means career growth," Reynolds says.

Taking that advice a step further, Reynolds looks for ways to engage each employee or group of employees, noting that they all have different needs. A single employee, for example, may yearn for more connection with coworkers. "We spend a lot of time, thought, strategy and intentionality around human connection," Reynolds says. **"There is an exchange anytime we hire people. I'm going to pay you for your service and I'm also going to create a value-driven environment for you to work, and we will develop you."**

People often hide behind the word "culture" without defining it, Reynolds says. But just as a job well done is impossible to see without quantifiable objectives, a good culture is impossible without an aim and a definition. At Titus, it's about creating a culture of success and winning. Because more than anything, A-level employees want to be somewhere they can win.

"A-players don't make career moves because you have a potluck on Thursdays and you've got a great family culture," Reynolds says. "High-performers want to know what winning looks like. They want to win championships, they want to push themselves, and they want to know that they're on a team of people who push themselves."

A mixture of trust, accountability and clarity of expectations gives employees a winning culture alongside the freedom they desire, Reynolds says. And giving employees that freedom while the company grows has been rewarding for everyone. ■

WHEN COMMON SENSE

IS THE BEST MOVE

With little knowledge of the region, Vistage Malta CEO Nathan Farrugia launched Vistage United Arab Emirates to bring a needed community to expatriates.

When Nathan Farrugia was a young child in Malta, doctors diagnosed him with asthma so severe they advised him to stay indoors at all costs.

His parents' response?

"They signed me up for every sport under the sun," says Farrugia, who became a celebrity athlete in Malta after running 27 marathons in 27 countries in 27 consecutive days.

This was Farrugia's first lesson in calculated risk. Spend childhood shuttered indoors or search for sports at which he could excel? Farrugia learned that sometimes going against "common sense" is the most sensible thing to do.

Like when Farrugia launched Vistage in the United Arab Emirates in January 2022, a country that he'd only visited once on a three-day holiday. But we'll get to that.

First, a little about Farrugia: When he became a CEO at 26 with no corporate leadership experience, he dove into executive training to improve his game. A successful corporate run later, he discovered his calling as a coach.



Photo courtesy of Nathan Farrugia

Today, the former kid with asthma inspires leaders to win corporate races that would leave others breathless.

"All my big wins are watching my members grow," Farrugia says. "In Malta, travel is a big industry, and it went dormant during COVID. We had members say, 'My friends in the industry gave up their dreams, but thanks to Vistage, I was able to keep it going.' These are the stories that inspire me."

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

Early in his career, Farrugia found a mentor in Vistage Chair Peter Yeoman, who initially founded Vistage Malta.

"When I was younger, I was more cocky and brash and wanted to win. I grew up through my mistakes, through being a dad, through my Vistage group," he says. "I realized that winning the short game isn't everything. It's shaped me."

It also led him to want to help shape others. He saw the value of Vistage for himself personally, and he wanted to share that value with the rest of his business community.

Under Farrugia's leadership, Vistage Malta's membership grew from six to nearly 100 — a combination of expatriates and local businesspeople — with much of that growth happening during the pandemic.

"We increased during COVID because people were lonely," he says. "We had open sessions that showed people what Vistage is and how it works, and quite a few people stuck with it."

Like Farrugia himself, Vistage Malta is unique. Many are expats from all over Europe, people who are long on smiles but short on trust. Building community is as essential as building business acumen. Farrugia saw how Vistage could fill that need.

"In Malta, we're very helpful and friendly, but at the same time, people hold stuff close to their chest," he says. "I found that being transparent and open myself allowed me to lead by example."

Part of that leadership centered on Change Makers, a "Shark Tank for social impact," and one of the many nonprofits where Farrugia serves as a board member. Farrugia has Vistage Malta members choose a nonprofit to coach as they compete for funding.

Sharing their business skills gives Vistage members a greater sense of purpose — and strengthens trust among members.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

If things are going great in Malta, why branch out to the UAE? Farrugia gives a winning grin. More calculated risk.

"Some challenges are global," he elaborates. "Most of the CEOs in the UAE are expats. It's not their home. They don't have family."

“

All my big wins are watching my members grow.

Many of the CEOs are on extended contracts that last six months or a year. Not enough time to make meaningful connections. And, because they hail from literally everywhere — the U.S., India, South Africa — every encounter is fraught with cultural differences and opportunities for conflict.

This is where Farrugia's life-earned philosophy can make a big impact. Don't focus on the barriers. Where everyone else sees challenges, find the opportunities.

"Responsibilizing the group to take care of itself is important. I expect my members to be able to run a session if I can't make it," he says. "Not just the Chairs, but also the members. This gives them a sense of ownership."

Leading by making your groups lead? Not a lot of people would attempt this approach, especially in unfamiliar territory. It goes against common sense. Then again, Farrugia learned long ago never to let "common sense" shutter him in. ■

EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS

Each year, Vistage curates a lineup of business and leadership experts who have the insights that CEOs need to continue to climb higher and higher. These speakers and events are hand-selected to meet the unique challenges that small and midsize businesses face.

From transformational leadership to federal policy, these exclusive experiences provide Vistage members with a competitive advantage across industries.

ALAN MULALLY ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

First, Alan Mulally turned around Boeing. Afterward, he did the same for Ford. We welcomed this legendary CEO for an exclusive, candid conversation around his simple-yet-effective frameworks which apply to companies of any size. Mulally sat down with Vistage CEO **Sam Reese** to discuss how leaders can transform their companies and find renewed purpose.



Pearl of wisdom:

"Expect the unexpected, and expect to deal with it. You're going to find situations that are not like you thought it was going to be, and you want to think of those as gems."
— Alan Mulally

2022 VISTAGE ON THE HILL

We are passionate about helping small and midsize businesses (SMBs) thrive. In that spirit, we convened the 4th annual Vistage on the Hill event in July, where members connected directly with the very experts who help shape policies that affect SMBs. Award-winning members from across the U.S. met with top analysts from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to discuss policy implications, share their stories and exchange ideas around a better path forward for the SMB community.

Pearl of wisdom: *"I thought government interaction was reserved for larger businesses. Some of the speakers have shown me ... change can be elicited by smaller businesses, especially through telling our stories."*
— Vistage member and 2022 Member Excellence Award winner Alastair Sanderson, COO LFA Machines

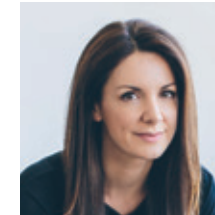
Vistage members met with Chamber analysts to discuss legislation and voice their most pressing challenges.



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP 2022

The Women in Leadership CEO Conference is a unique, once-a-year opportunity for the women of Vistage to connect and gain access to inspirational speakers and actionable takeaways. This year's conference featured three powerhouse keynotes from **Kat Cole**, the COO and president of Athletic Greens;

Joanna Barsh, Director Emerita of McKinsey & Company and founder of Centered Leadership; and **Melissa Bradley**, co-founder of Ureka.



All three experts shared ways to find the hustle, heart, grit, and resilience to lead boldly in modern markets and companies.

Pearl of wisdom: *"It's crucial to discern meaningful patterns through the right questions, disrupt yourself, build modern teams, and manage tough decisions that may have short-term trade-offs."* — Kat Cole

Top to bottom: Kat Cole, Joanna Barsh, Melissa Bradley

UPCOMING SPEAKER: DANIEL PINK



Best-selling author Daniel Pink will deliver a keynote on resiliency and regret in February 2023. He'll discuss how to anticipate and respond to the

most significant organizational regrets, how to transform existing regrets into a positive force and an adaptable company culture, and why regrets of inaction outnumber regrets of action.

➔ Feeling inspired? View more upcoming events at myvistage.com/events.

CEO Sam Reese, Chief Research Officer Joe Galvin and Chief Member Programs Officer Mary Ellen Sheehy joined members at Vistage on the Hill 2022 to connect directly with experts from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce shaping SMB policies.

Photos by Patrick Murray

THE RIVER OVERFLOWS

WITH NEW PERSPECTIVES

Barry Lipsett needed a fresh look at his company. He found it in Chair Michele Breslin with the help of Vistage Networks.

Businesses often run like rivers — steady yet forever changing. And much like its namesake, Charles River Apparel has skillfully used the “guiding banks” of its mission, values, and purpose to meet changing customer demands and evolving business environments.

Second-generation CEO Barry Lipsett credits the company’s decades-long success to those guiding banks established by his father, Walter, who started the Medford, Massachusetts-based company in 1983.

Early on, the elder Lipsett focused on building relationships to grow the line from an innovative yellow rain slicker inspired by the New England weather to include outerwear, activewear, corporate attire and other apparel.

Lipsett took it a step further by leveraging the power of mentors and advisors to hold him accountable as CEO and give him the confidence to move forward on initiatives. In addition to bringing in four other advisors when he took over the business in 1993, Lipsett joined Vistage, where he continues to lean into his group for insights and perspectives. Even the elder Lipsett, at 95, continues to serve as a sounding board.

“*When he posted asking for help to re-energize his board of advisors, it was the perfect opportunity.*”

During the worst of the COVID-19 slowdown, Lipsett and his advisors focused on identifying ways to cut costs. While they successfully pinpointed some cost-cutting measures, it was during that process that Barry realized his advisors had lost touch with the marketplace along with technological advances in the industry. New perspectives could help the company adapt to shifting customer preferences and evolve its technology to improve efficiencies.

“I had four board members but did not have an official contract. I thought it was time to create a more official structure and to bring some new blood,” he says.

After struggling to find candidates through informal connections, Lipsett turned to Vistage Networks, posting a call for “new board members with executive-level experience and preferably with a marketing background.” Soon, responses flooded his inbox.



“We got over 10 responses, and I was really surprised. I interviewed some people and passed those on to my son and my wife, and we narrowed it down to Michele [Breslin],” he says.

Breslin, a Vistage Chair based in West Harrison, New York, knew the company well — her three daughters had closets filled with Charles River Apparel products from their time at sleepaway camps.

But she had more than a personal connection to the brand — she had C-level experience in product development at Macy’s, Ralph Lauren and Echo Design Group.

“When he posted asking for help to re-energize his board of advisors, it was the perfect opportunity,” Breslin says, recalling Lipsett’s post in the Vistage Family Business Network.

As they spoke during the interview process, Lipsett’s vision captured Breslin’s attention and desire to serve. Breslin attended her first board meeting in Spring 2022 and is eager to leverage her expertise and expansive network to find innovations to keep Charles River Apparel ever-flowing with the times.

“Where he wants to take the company was interesting to me. He’s focused on growth and diversification — both important business factors for me,” she says.

With outside expertise helping him chart a new course, Lipsett plans for Charles River Apparel to be agile and profitable for years to come. ■

➔ Connect with peers for real-time answers to your questions. Visit myvistage.com/networks.

People are not algorithms.

You know this. You need a partner who thinks like you do. We are HireBetter, and we’re on a mission to humanize the recruiting industry. That’s why we created **Growth Matching** - a process used by founders and CEOs to align their talent strategy with the business’ growth trajectory.

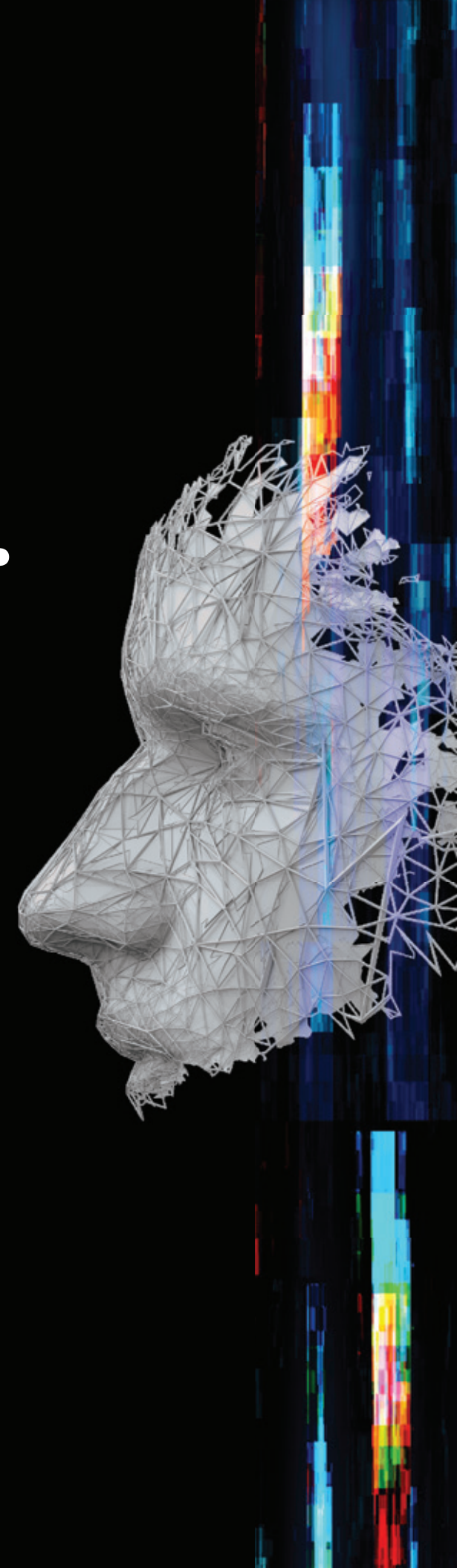
Growth matching considers current realities, blending strategic talent planning, assessing current teams, and implementing a humanized recruiting process. Companies that adopt growth matching accelerate and sustain their rate of expansion by continually hiring the right people to achieve long-term business goals.

The future of business is human to human. Partner with someone who gets it.

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Life

AFTER THE SALE

We're all familiar with the saying: It's about the journey, not the destination.

Still, when you're running a business, it's hard not to think about the day you reach that summit and either retire or sell your business. *What will your life look like then?*

We spoke with 3 Vistage members who've reached that milestone and have re-imagined their lives in unique and different ways. Think of this as fuel to spark your imagination, a chance to think about what comes after you complete *your* leadership climb.

"We were looking for a better place to raise our kids and were tired of the city routine. Now we live in paradise! During the winter we go alpine skiing. In the summer, it's biking or kite surfing on the lake." — Nicolás Magni

Photos courtesy of members

A NEW LIFE IN A NATURAL PARADISE

Nicolás Magni

Co-founder at Wolox
Joined Vistage in 2018

Enjoying family life and a greater sense of community in Patagonia.

I grew up in a family of entrepreneurs — my father, sisters and brother all started businesses. In 2012, I was 1 of 7 co-founders who launched Wolox, a digital product creation company devoted to transforming industries through innovative technology.

I joined Vistage in 2018 when we were opening a new delivery center with a plan to expand from 150 to 400 staff members. My Chair had expertise with big commercial teams and strategy so it was exactly what I needed.

I moved to Colombia and then Mexico with a two-year plan to scale and transform our business from software to digital products. But in 2020 my second son was born, and I wanted to spend more time with my family.

In 2021, we sold to Accenture, and I stayed on as a senior manager for about a year. During this time, my wife and I visited Patagonia and fell in love with it; we moved there in December. It's safe, secure and a natural paradise. It's also a great place to raise kids.

Now I spend quality time with my kids, playing and reading to them. We go biking, kite surfing, skiing and

have all kinds of family adventures. My wife — who is also in the tech world — and I are putting a lot of effort into creating a sense of community here. We often come together with other tech people, just to work in the same space and spark ideas.

I also have a lot of time to think about what I'd like to do next. A new kind of platform is emerging called "Web 3." It's a more decentralized structure for companies. It's going to give the information and power to the creators, artists and users, instead of keeping it centralized within big corporations. The people will own their content ... everything will be totally transparent. It's a good thing that's happening, and I want to be part of it. ■

“

Now I spend quality time with my kids, playing and reading to them. We go biking, kite surfing, skiing and have all kinds of family adventures.

TIME FOR FUN AND LIGHTNESS

Elizabeth Waltman

Former COO and SVP of South Texas Blood & Tissue
Joined Vistage in 2014
2021 Member Excellence Award Winner

Every morning for decades my first thought upon waking was: Is there enough blood on the shelves?

In April I retired as COO and SVP of South Texas Blood & Tissue, and now I wake up thinking about other things — like planning my next European motorcycle adventure.

While I loved my job, I wanted to enjoy the fruits of my labor while I was still physically fit; I set my sights on retiring just after my 66th birthday and methodically planned my departure.

We began identifying potential successors a few years ago. While a few could have risen to the occasion, one stood out. For 18 months, we gave her more complex projects. I changed my direct reports to her direct reports. We looked at the team for gaps and for



Racing my beloved Mugello motorcycle circuit in Italy, summer 2021.

new hires. She developed her budget and ran it past the board. We then slowly turned all of the legal elements over to her. During the last three months, all I did was stand in the wings. There wasn't a blip. It was very comprehensive and deeply satisfying.

Through this process, my Vistage group was extremely supportive. They helped me think through personal and professional issues. They asked all kinds of questions to be sure I was being proactive. Maybe most importantly, they gave me a lot of hoorays — something that you don't always get when you're at the top of the totem pole.

As I look ahead, I'm most excited about having a whole slew of new experiences. I feel light as a feather. Being in blood banking for 40 years is a heavy load. It's fulfilling to know that I did my part, created an A-Team and can totally let go.

Now I've got these great goofball motorcycle friends who I have so much fun with. I love to start the day on the racetrack with a cup of coffee and watch the world come to life. ■



Editor's note: Over the summer on her way to Italy to race the Mugello motorcycle circuit, Elizabeth (pictured left) stopped in Norway to receive the coveted THOR Award, the top prize given to the person who made the biggest impact in the field of Trauma, Hemostasis and Oxygenation Research in a given year. She is the first woman — and the first recipient who is not a physician — to receive this high honor for her team's work in providing trauma patients with specially screened type O-positive whole blood at the scene of an accident, on a medical helicopter, or in an emergency room.

FROM JOYFUL WORK TO FINDING A JOYFUL LIFE AS A VISTAGE CHAIR

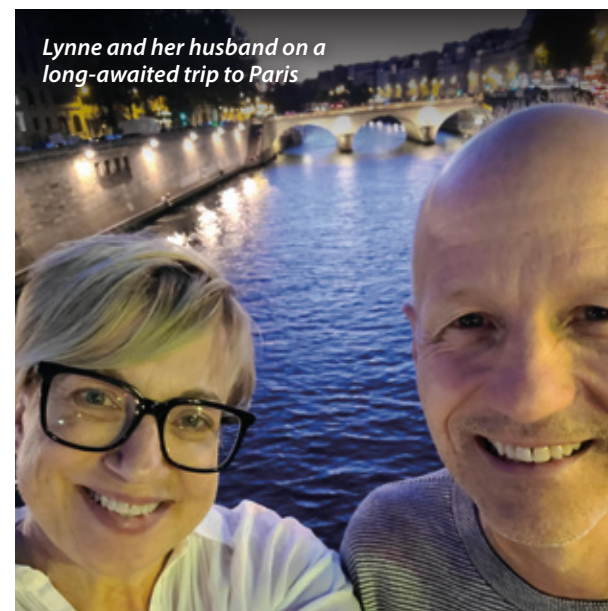
Lynne King Smith

Co-founder and CEO of TicketForce (2003-2019)
Joined Vistage in 2013
Vistage Chair since 2021

My husband and I started TicketForce in 1997 under our nonprofit organization and launched it as its own business in 2003. In 2018, we set a goal to sell within 2 years and hoped to stay involved during the transition so we had time to plan our next phase of life. During the sales process, I leaned on several of my Vistage peers for support.

I'm 100% confident that my Vistage membership helped me create value in the company and be well-prepared for a sale. We closed the deal just eight months later to a strategic buyer and contracted with the new owner for about a year. During that time, while I was evaluating my next move, our mayor resigned and, since I no longer had the everyday pressure of running a business, I decided to run for the seat.

The same week our management contracts ran out, the election was over — I had lost in a tight three-way race. With newfound time and needing time to reflect and plan, my husband and I took off in our Airstream



Lynne and her husband on a long-awaited trip to Paris



Lynne with one of her Vistage groups

on a six-week road trip, visiting the great national parks of the West. We had hours of beautiful drive time to decompress, to think and to feel.

While I wasn't sure Vistage Chairing was for me, I started Chair Academy after the holidays. I was energized as soon as I started building my first group — and I launched just six months later. I find this to be joyful and deeply fulfilling work, and I am now leading and building three more groups.

I've been intentional about working with people I really enjoy, so I'm always energized on meeting days and look forward to the coaching sessions. I plan my Vistage schedule around my life, not the other way around; this allows me to travel, camp and spend time at my ranch in northern Arizona.

My family has said that I'm different now: more flexible, relaxed and happier. I couldn't agree more." ■

“

I plan my Vistage schedule around my life, not the other way around; this allows me to travel, camp and spend time at my ranch in northern Arizona.

VISTAGE

A LIFE OF CLIMB PODCAST

You have guidance along your leadership climb.

LISTEN FOR IT

Listen to the powerful stories of Vistage CEO members as they traverse the peaks and valleys on their journeys. Explore the battles fought and lessons won that you can apply immediately. Series hosted by Vistage CEO Sam Reese.



Landon Hobson
Cosmos CEO
& Vistage member



Jessica Meyers
JEM Group CEO
& Vistage member



Braydan Shaw
Burns 1876 CEO
& Vistage member

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and at vistage.com/podcast.



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VISTAGE | 50
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A LEGACY OF
INNOVATION



THE JOURNEY TO SIXTY FIVE

Evolving to meet the needs
of high-integrity leaders since 1957

Robert “Bob” Nourse’s mission, when he founded Vistage, was to “help solve each other’s problems.”

That mission has led to what is now Vistage’s unwavering purpose: To help high-integrity leaders make great decisions that benefit their companies, families and communities.

How? By bringing together CEOs and business owners from non-competitive companies to candidly and confidentially discuss their challenges and opportunities. By sitting down with a seasoned executive with a track record of success who facilitates the conversation. By calling in subject matter experts on relevant, timely topics for fresh perspectives and deeper understanding.

Those components remain the core of the Vistage model. Over the years, we’ve innovated to meet the changing needs of leaders, so they have the programs, resources and connections to make better decisions and drive better results.

October marks the 65th anniversary of Vistage Worldwide, which started as The Executive Committee (TEC) when Nourse founded the organization in 1957.

As we look back, we first celebrate the 100,000+ members — the CEOs, business owners and executives — who have shared their perspectives, challenges and solutions for the betterment of their peers. We honor the Chairs who have guided members along their journeys. And we applaud those visionaries who laid the groundwork to create the best platform for high-integrity leaders to learn across 26 countries.

THE EVOLUTION OF VISTAGE

Over the years, we've continually evolved to meet the changing needs of leaders through:

- **Global perspectives:** Expanding around the world to bring more fresh perspectives to our community.
- **World-class insights:** Getting a pulse on the biggest challenges CEOs face and helping them uncover solutions through research like the Vistage CEO Confidence Index and exclusive engagements with high-level thought leaders.
- **Powerful peer connections:** Creating forums for connection and real-time problem-solving, including in-person events and online Networks.
- **Leadership development:** Establishing programs that help CEOs develop the leaders they depend on to achieve their goals and retain A-players.
- **Impactful partnerships:** Building partnerships that give CEOs an influential voice in the policies that impact small and midsize businesses.



Bob Nourse (bottom, second from left) Chairs the very first peer advisory group in October 1957.

“Now, let’s get down to work.”

After his family business failed, Bob Nourse wondered what might have happened if he were able to tap into the expertise and objective advice of his peers. That sparked an idea.

On October 25, 1957, he assembled several Milwaukee-area executives to help each other solve their business challenges. He made sure they came from non-competing industries, and he kept conversations confidential. He also brought in subject matter experts to share their insights.

He called the group **The Executive Committee (TEC)**. The name would later become Vistage but would retain the core elements of those first meetings.

1957



Fred Chaney (second from left)
Chairs the first California peer group.

1968-1978

Expanding to the West Coast



The organization expands from the Midwest, bringing executive coaching and peer advisory to the West Coast. Chair Fred Chaney launches the first group in California to help guide CEOs through their leadership journey.

Fred still Chairs to this day.

1986

Developing the leaders that CEOs depend on



Recognizing an opportunity to help CEOs improve execution and reach their goals faster, the **Key Executive Program** is introduced. In this program, the CEO's direct reports develop the skills and competencies to support the organization's strategy and vision.

Since then, **leadership development programs** have expanded to address all levels of management, including the CEO's senior leaders (Vistage Inside), experienced managers and team leads (Advancing Leader) and high-potential individual contributors (Emerging Leader).

1988

1,000 Members

1990

100 Chairs

1985

Growing internationally to bring in fresh perspectives

Global expansion begins with the launch in **Canada**. Dr. W Lynn Tanner became the company's first international licensee after Tanner attends a meeting in the U.S. and realizes the benefit of the peer advisory format on executives.

That same year, Australia welcomes its first peer advisory group, triggering an expansion that would bring the organization **to 26 countries across 6 continents** and provide high-integrity leaders with access to unprecedented resources.



2003

Helping SMB leaders make decisions through data-driven research

The goal of helping CEOs solve their biggest challenges leads to the release of the first **Vistage CEO Confidence Index**. This quarterly report captures CEO sentiment on the economy, hiring, investment and profitability. The Index has since become a proven predictor of GDP two quarters in advance.

Our surveys now provide the platform for **Vistage Research**, which has evolved into original analyses, curated subject-matter expertise and actionable insights to help leaders navigate hurdles. **The Wall Street Journal** also relies on Vistage survey findings.



2006 >>

Vistage events create peer-to-peer connections and provide expert insights



2004
10,000 Members

Vistage launches its first-ever series of regional events to bring members together for a full day of learning that included discussions, keynote speakers and workshops.

Now called **Vistage Executive Summits**, the events provide curated and original data and insights, leadership speakers and opportunities for members to network and grow their connections. Vistage has also expanded to include virtual **National CEO Conferences**, focusing on topics including Women in Leadership and People and Culture.

2017

Transforming businesses through Vistage-Stanford partnership

Vistage partners with the **Stanford Graduate School of Business** to create the **Vistage Executive Leadership Program**, a once-in-a-lifetime executive education opportunity for leaders to accelerate and innovate their businesses. Vistage members benefit from the thought leadership of Stanford faculty combined with the real-life application of Vistage peer advisory.

2018
1,000 Chairs



2019 >>

Elevating members into a national voice for SMBs

Vistage forges a strategic partnership with the **U.S. Chamber of Commerce**, the leading advocacy group for business on Capitol Hill. Members have the opportunity to directly connect with the very experts shaping policies that affect small and midsize businesses and share their perspectives.

STANFORD
BUSINESS
GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF

2015
20,000 Members

2007
500 Chairs

2015 >>

Connecting peers globally for real-time problem-solving

Vistage Networks brings together a global community and provides them with a platform where they can connect, access real-time answers to challenges and leverage the power of peers. Vistage Networks has grown to 14,000+ members worldwide in 31 Networks.



2021 >>

Bringing acclaimed thought leaders to Vistage

Vistage unveils the Peak Performer series to bring the most trusted experts to its community. Speakers like Patrick Lencioni, Simon Sinek, Indra Nooyi and Alan Mulally provide exceptional insights, key takeaways and best practices to help members navigate new challenges and opportunities.

2022
28,000
Members



Patrick
Lencioni



2023

A N D B E Y O N D

Vistage continues to support the small and midsize companies that drive the world's economies, staying committed, focused and motivated on bringing executives together so they can talk, learn and grow.

Members and Chairs continue to work together to stay ahead of the curve, adapting to the ever-changing pace of business and navigating the rough terrain toward the summits that await.

And together, we continue to be the world's most trusted resource for CEOs, business owners and key executives of small and midsize businesses, helping them become better leaders, make better decisions and drive better results.

With Bob Nourse's vision as our North Star, untapped markets yet to explore and 65 years of momentum propelling us forward, the future is bright for our community. The potential is unlimited.

T H E C L I M B C O N T I N U E S . . .