

# VISTAGE Perspectives®

ISSUE 5



CEO CHRISTA SCHOTT  
PILOTS HER CONSULTING  
BUSINESS TOWARD  
NEW HORIZONS

## ILLUMINATE

A CEO'S JOURNEY FROM SIDE HUSTLES TO STRATEGIC IMPACT



# BREAKTHROUGH

Paul Hipkiss Managing Director of The Recruitment Group

When you're knee deep in the day-to-day, it's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. Managing Director of The Recruitment Group, Paul Hipkiss, shares how stepping back each month gives him the clarity to lead with purpose and take his business further.

"I always aspired to be a business leader, so when the chance came to run a company, I leapt at the chance. Joining The Recruitment Group – a new kind of agency connecting job seekers with employers across various industries – at a time of real change was both exciting and daunting. We were evolving rapidly, and redefining recruitment with a more human, relationship-driven approach.

Amid this period of transformation, Barbara Baker contacted me to see if I'd be interested in joining her Vistage CEO group. Barbara showed me the value of connecting with leaders from diverse industries – people who could offer fresh ideas, challenge my thinking, and provide the kind of support that's hard to find when leading through change. Joining her group is one of the best decisions I've made.

When you're knee deep in the day to day of running a business, it can be hard to see the proverbial wood for the trees. Dedication time each month to take a bird's eye view of the business with the rest of my group more than pays for itself.

Each session leaves me with greater clarity and confidence, helping me refocus on the company's long-term goals.

Although I'm not a shy person, I quickly felt at ease with my group. It's an incredibly safe environment, where you can have open conversations that you wouldn't have anywhere else. People say that being part of a Vistage peer group is like having your own non-executive advisory board – and they're right.

The collective knowledge in the room is incredible, and the way we challenge and support each other benefits my business in countless ways. I also really value my 1-1s with Barbara, my Chair, as well as the speaker sessions that always offer practical takeaways I can apply to my business. I've never walked away feeling it was a waste of time.

Since joining Vistage, The Recruitment Group has grown significantly. We've expanded our client base and put a lot of effort into pushing beyond business as usual – becoming more proactive, strategic and focused on long-term success. Our 60 internal staff work across 12 offices and generate revenues of around 35 million.

For me – and my Vistage peers – being in business is about much more than making a quick profit or chasing short-term gains. It's about the long-term journey, reaching new heights and building a business with real impact. I'm so glad Barbara reached out to me when she did.

**why  
stepping  
back  
can be a  
powerful  
move**



**The Recruitment Group**  
POWERED BY PEOPLE



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One of the joys of my role is hearing the remarkable leadership journeys that have led each Vistage member to the C-suite — and discovering the shared drive to grow through fresh perspectives. In this issue, we highlight the origin stories of several leaders who arrived at Vistage on different paths and how each one transformed their leadership and business.

You'll meet the new owner of Leeds-based JTM Service, a company recently named one of The Sunday Times Best Places to Work, and discover how a timely Vistage connection helped him take the leap into leadership — just days before a national lockdown.

You'll also hear how CMG Technologies, the UK's only specialist in metal injection moulding, transformed its workplace culture, embraced automation, and secured industry awards — all with the support of a trusted peer group.

I hope these stories spark fresh thinking and offer inspiration on how you can further leverage your Vistage experience. We remain committed to helping you grow as a leader, make better decisions and achieve the outcomes that matter most.

All the best,

*Sam*

**Sam Reese**  
CEO, Vistage Worldwide, Inc.

# CONTENTS

## 6

### From Research to Results

From lab work to leadership, David Coleman shares how Vistage is helping University of Birmingham Enterprise

## 12

### Exclusive Insights

Angela Duckworth and Seth Godin bring fresh views to Vistage members.

## 16

### Surviving, thriving and winning with Vistage

From lockdown struggles to award-winning growth, Paul Wood's Vistage journey transformed JTM Service into a thriving, values-driven business.



## 10

### VISTAGE HOSTS A SERIES OF UNFORGETTABLE SOCIAL EVENTS ACROSS THE UK

## 22

### Higher Altitudes

From founding Alliant Consulting to overcoming major challenges, Christa Schott used Vistage to lay the groundwork for national growth.

## 26

### Making confident decisions even in uncertain times

Rachel Garrett credits Vistage with giving her the confidence and support to lead CMG Technologies through growth, innovation, and cultural strength.



Read online at [vistage.co.uk](https://vistage.co.uk)



//

THE ISSUE PROCESSING  
SESSIONS ACT LIKE A MIRROR,  
REFLECTING THE TRUTH BACK  
AT YOU, EVEN WHEN IT'S  
UNCOMFORTABLE.

DAVID COLEMAN  
CEO, UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM ENTERPRISE



## FROM RESEARCH TO RESULTS

**From lab work to leadership, David Coleman shares how Vistage is helping University of Birmingham Enterprise make real-world impact**

**D**espite dabbling in business in my youth – first selling computer games, then running a young enterprise scheme marketing screen-printed t-shirts and awful waistcoats – I chose a science career. It didn't take me long to realise a life in the lab wasn't for me, so when I stumbled across a job ad in New Scientist to join a team commercialising innovation at Imperial College, I seized the opportunity. Within six months I was negotiating a £1m investment in a new business.

That was 25 years ago, and for the past 15 years, I've been a senior leader at the University of Birmingham Enterprise. Our mission is to help bring important innovations developed by, with, or at the university, into the world. We do this in a range of ways, from licensing technologies, offering academic expertise as a commercial service, and backing the brilliant businesses based at Birmingham Research Park.

I became the organisation's CEO following my predecessor's retirement, during a time of major change. We were just coming out of the pandemic and bringing in new team members – some into entirely new roles – while several experienced colleagues were retiring or moving on. There was a lot to think about, and on top of it all, I was trying to put together a five-year strategic plan.



//  
VISTAGE AND MY CHAIR,  
HELPED ME STEP BACK, FACE  
HARD TRUTHS, AND GROW AS  
A LEADER. IT'S BOOSTED MY  
CONFIDENCE AND DIRECTLY  
IMPACTED OUR BUSINESS. EVERY  
CEO NEEDS A PEER GROUP LIKE  
THIS.

DAVID COLEMAN  
CEO, UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM ENTERPRISE

Meeting my Chair, Barbara Baker, during this period was a game-changer. Her 1-1s and group sessions gave me a safe space to step back, see the bigger picture, and make sure I was on the right path. It's also been a great place to learn more about who I am and what I'm good (or not so good) at. The issue processing sessions, in particular, act like a mirror – reflecting the truth back at you and challenging you to confront it, even when it's uncomfortable.

My first experience with Vistage issue processing – sharing a problem that was bothering me with my peers – was both brilliant and brutal. I found myself getting a bit defensive, saying 'no, no, you don't understand!', but of course they did. It was clear to them something deeper needed attention, which is often the case.

Sometimes you're blind to the cause of a problem, and sometimes you know it but are resisting the truth. The diversity in our group means there's always someone that can get to the root of your problem. As leaders we often wrestle with the same kind of challenges, just in different guises.

Being a Vistage member has had a huge impact on me and the business. It has boosted my confidence, helped me spot and manage imposter syndrome when it creeps in, and improved my communication. This has strengthened trust and accountability within the team. I've also developed skills to tackle overthinking and manage my time better, rather than letting my calendar and inbox rule me.

In the four years I've been a CEO and Vistage member, our turnover has grown by about 40%, generating around £50 million in value for the university and our academics. This growth mainly comes from income sources such as royalties, consulting fees, and increased share values from the start-ups we support. The expert insights I gain from my Vistage sessions also help me guide my team and the early-stage companies better, boosting their growth and ours.

Being a CEO can be a lonely journey, where it's easy to get lost in your own thoughts while facing challenges – or to get stuck managing daily tasks instead of focusing on the business's future. My advice to any CEO is to invest in your leadership skills with a trusted peer group – the impact will be huge.



## Why are high-performing Vistage members embracing EOS?



*"Two of my members are successfully using EOS, a third has just signed up to implement it."*

*"I am a strong advocator of EOS, it helps to keep better control in a structured way, whilst being time efficient and effective."*

VISTAGE CHAIR - Andy Smith



*"EOS has helped us shift our thinking. With a clearer long-range vision and real accountability, I'm finally able to operate as the Visionary, not stuck in the weeds."*

*"Working with Adrian has brought outside perspective, meaningful challenge, and next-level discipline to our leadership team."*

***"As a team, we're more focused, more aligned, and making faster decisions. EOS is a game changer."***

FOUNDER OF THE SMART GROUP - Josh Yardley



**Scan this special Vistage members link now to find out more**

Adrian.Lomas@eosworldwide.com  
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07855 787105



# VISTAGE HOSTS A SERIES OF UNFORGETTABLE SOCIAL EVENTS ACROSS THE UK

The Vistage community has been enjoying a dynamic series of social gatherings across the UK, celebrating connection, collaboration, and camaraderie in true Vistage style.

## A Night to Remember: Vistage Members Shine at T20 Cricket Match

It all began with an unforgettable evening at a T20 cricket match on 29 May — even making an appearance on Sky Sports. Members came together for spirited conversation, laughter, and valuable networking, reinforcing the power of peer connection that lies at the heart of the Vistage experience.

## Cooking Up Connections: A Flavorful Evening of Collaboration in London

In London, members rolled up their sleeves for a lively evening of culinary competition. With delicious food, creativity, and genuine conversation on the menu, the evening captured the collaborative and community-driven spirit that defines Vistage.

//  
I really enjoyed last night it was fun to mix with other group members and I loved the competition element whilst also learning from a Michelin chef. I can now make beetroot caviar.

Julie Grieve  
Vistage Chair

//  
I thought it was a fantastic event and I've been urging the other members of my group to make sure they don't miss the next one. Whilst we get to meet members from other groups at the executive events, it's never in such a relaxed setting and that allowed for a nice blend of 'shop talk', and just general chit chat.

Max Perry  
Associate Partner  
Hurst Corporate Finance

## A Taste of Italy in Edinburgh: Social Connect with a View

Further north, Edinburgh hosted a Social Connect event that served up a flavour-packed Italian Master Chef experience with stunning views of Edinburgh Castle. Members and Chairs joined in for pasta-making and story-sharing in a warm and engaging atmosphere.

## Savoring the Finest: A Curated Evening of British Flavours and Connections

Another standout was an exclusive British tasting experience, where guests sampled award-winning wines, artisan cheeses, premium whiskies, and handcrafted chocolates. Guided by Michelin-trained chefs and knowledgeable hosts, the evening offered a rich mix of gourmet discovery and peer connection.

With high energy and strong participation at every event, Vistage's social gatherings are strengthening bonds and building momentum. The community is already looking ahead to the next opportunity to connect, collaborate, and grow together.

//  
Thankyou for a lovely evening. I thought it was a really good event and really interesting to learn more about food and wine whilst networking and having an opportunity to meet more Vistage members I the Vistage circle.

Jeremy Belcher  
Managing Director,  
Eco-1 Electrical Solutions Ltd

//  
Members and Chairs were treated to a wonderful evening of cooking, competition, laughter and ultimately great food.

My team were so proud of our efforts, as were the others and it made for a very different and memorable evening of entertainment and networking.

Laura Gordon  
Vistage Chair



VISTAGE Social Connect



Scan to view  
upcoming events



# EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS



## Angela Duckworth on Grit The Power of Passion and Perseverance

Angela Duckworth graced the Vistage stage and dove straight into the science of achievement, sharing her groundbreaking research on "grit" — the combination of passion and perseverance for long-term goals. In this exclusive for members and Chairs, Duckworth explained that grit, rather than natural talent, consistently emerges as the key predictor of success among high achievers.

She walked leaders through four essential steps to create a culture that drives meaningful impact:

1. Fostering curiosity and interest
2. Implementing deliberate practice routines
3. Connecting work to a greater purpose
4. Cultivating a growth mindset throughout the organisation

Duckworth posited that no one builds grit alone. Organisational culture, mentorship and peer relationships play crucial roles in developing this necessary factor for success.

WORDS TO  
LIVE BY



*"Culture is the largest driver of grit in individuals. If you want to build grit as a CEO, create a gritty culture."*



**Seth Godin on  
Creating  
Lasting  
Impact**

In a world of constant change, how do some leaders create lasting impact while others struggle to stay relevant?

In August, we asked Seth Godin to be our next featured speaker. Godin is an entrepreneur, speaker and author of over 20 bestsellers. His books include *This Is Marketing*, *Purple Cow*, *Tribes*, and his latest, *This Is Strategy*.

Seth also founded two companies, Yoyodyne, which was acquired by Yahoo!, and Squidoo. He's credited as

the inventor of email marketing (the good kind). Seth has given five TED talks, including two that rank as the most popular of all time.

By teaching about everything from effective marketing and leadership to the spread of ideas and our responsibilities as leaders, Seth has inspired countless people around the world.

His discussion is available at <https://bit.ly/vistage-godin> until 20 November. ■

## VISTAGE CEO CLIMB WEBINARS

The Vistage CEO Climb Webinars are a dynamic and value-packed virtual experience designed for business leaders seeking to elevate their leadership skills and decision-making abilities. These sessions feature engaging, interactive discussions on timely and relevant business topics, providing insights that can drive growth and success.



### 24th September **Sarah Furness**

The Secret to High Performance Teams  
Unitasking vs Multitasking



### 22nd October **Bodhi Aldridge**

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome



### 26th November **Brian Mayne**

Goal Mapping - the Science of Success

To find out more about our events please visit: [vistage.co.uk/events](https://vistage.co.uk/events)



# Life of climb

The following two case studies  
showcase how Vistage connections and  
peer support transformed challenges  
into remarkable growth and success.





## Surviving, thriving and winning with Vistage

**Paul Wood**, Managing Director, JTM Service

I always wanted to lead, so when the chance to run my own business came via a Vistage connection, it was a dream come true," says Paul Wood, owner of Leeds-based JTM Service – recently named in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2025.

"They say you make your own luck, but it was a chance event that led to owning JTM Service. My Vistage Chair at the time also chaired the founder and then-owner of JTM Service, John Middleton, who was looking to step away after 35 years. Knowing I was ready for my next challenge, my chair put me in touch with John.

I came into the business in March 2020 with big dreams and bold plans but a month later we went into lockdown. The world became a very scary place. I had debts to repay, and finances were extremely tight. It was a completely different reality to the one I'd imagined just a month earlier.

Joining my first CEO Vistage group shortly after was a game-changer. My peers encouraged me to stay true to my plans and to look beyond just surviving and find a way to turn things around and thrive. Their mindset, support, and encouragement helped me reshape the business and continues to fuel our growth.

It's probably clear by now that I'm a huge Vistage fan! Learning from such inspiring speakers and smart peers has totally changed the way I work. I'll often walk into a meeting grappling with a tough challenge, wondering: "How on Earth am I going to solve this?" But through Chair 1-1s and group issue-processing sessions, I always walk away with a clear plan and the confidence to tackle problems head-on.

One of the biggest turning points came when a Vistage speaker introduced me to the EOS Model. Adopting this within the business has helped clarify our vision and build the right team and strategy to deliver on our goals. When I joined, JTM Service was very much a solid lifestyle

**"I'LL OFTEN WALK INTO A MEETING GRAPPLING WITH A TOUGH CHALLENGE, WONDERING: 'HOW ON EARTH AM I GOING TO SOLVE THIS?'"**



Paul Wood  
Managing Director, JTM Service  
Vistage member since 2011

**"SINCE JOINING JTM SERVICE AND MY VISTAGE CEO GROUP, WE'VE GROWN THE TEAM BY OVER 50% AND WE'VE INCREASED OUR TURNOVER BY OVER 10% YEAR ON YEAR."**

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**  
**Best Places to Work 2025**  
SMALL ORGANISATION

business. We're now focused on growth underpinned by outstanding service and a motivated team.

Since joining JTM Service and my Vistage CEO group, we've grown the team by over 50% and we've increased our turnover by over 10% year on year. We were recently named in The Sunday Times Best Places to Work 2025 – the only company in our industry to make the list. With the help of Vistage, we've put a lot of work into making JTM Service a great place to work.

Another big win Vistage helped with was securing a major customer – a contract we'd tried to win three years ago. This time, we were up against five other companies, but thanks to support and ideas from my Vistage group, I took a different approach to the pitch. Instead of focusing on KPIs and company stats like everyone else, we focused on what really counts – understanding the client's values, aligning them with ours, and showing how we could work together as true partners. That values-driven, people-first approach stood out and ultimately won us the business.

It's moments like these that remind me just how pivotal Vistage has been in my journey. I can honestly say that without it, I wouldn't be where I am today." ■

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**OWAIN TUDOR,**  
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*Structured Support  
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Laura Davidson CEO, Tag Digital and SVP, Digital, mdg

**M**y partner – now husband – and I started Tag Digital 14 years ago. We were young, excited to be creating something from nothing, and happy to see where the business took us.

In many ways we were flying by the seat of our pants, but as the business grew, we knew we needed more structure and direction.

I discovered Vistage at a business scale-up programme after speaking with a woman who described it as life changing. At the time I wasn't ready to join – I was pregnant with my third child and preparing to move to the US for a while. Nonetheless, I reached out to Vistage Chair, Laura Gordon, for a chat. On returning to the UK, I joined, eager to embark on my own 'life-changing' journey.

Before joining Vistage, I hadn't had any structured mentorship, support or coaching. The business was still in that scrappy startup phase but growing quickly and maturing fast. My peer group gave me the outside perspective and diversity of thought I desperately needed. "The board you can't afford" moniker absolutely rang true for me when I joined.

Being around very experienced business leaders that had walked the path before us helped me learn a lot, fast. My peers provided the challenge, friendship, and camaraderie – all the good stuff I was missing in my day-to-day life. I was also really blown away by the issue processing sessions and the speakers.

Whether it was a talk about brand sales, cybersecurity, or AI – every talk has shaped my thinking. The real success of the group though comes down to our Chair, Laura, whose leadership is the reason everyone gains so much.

Since joining Vistage three years ago, our company has grown double digits year on year. We've matured significantly and gained a clearer vision of what we want our business to be. This year we were acquired by leading US events company, Freeman, and joined the events marketing division of mdg. Freeman has a 3,000-strong workforce so we're certainly working at a different scale to when we started Tag!

My Vistage peers gave me the support I needed to successfully navigate the acquisition, just as they've supported me in every decision I've had to make. We're a diverse and eclectic group – people you might never expect to be friends in any other setting. Yet, we've shared countless laughs and stood together through many difficult times. I feel very fortunate to have those people in my life."





# VISTAGE

Member Excellence Awards

## Celebrating Our Award Finalists

We are proud to announce that our outstanding members have been shortlisted for the 2025 Vistage Member Excellence Awards, recognising the very best in leadership, achievement, and community impact.

The categories include:



**Leadership Award – Honouring** members who demonstrate exceptional leadership and embody the core values of Vistage.



**Impact Award – Recognising** remarkable growth, development, and achievement in new members (1–3 years of tenure).



**Community Impact Award – Celebrating** members who have made a significant difference in their communities.



**Lifetime Achievement Award –** Acknowledging long-standing members with a legacy of impactful decisions and continuous growth.

The winners will be revealed at the glittering Awards Dinner, held after the CEO Connect 2025 conference. This special evening ceremony will be dedicated to honouring the talent, vision, and unwavering dedication of our remarkable community.

**BOOK YOUR PLACE:**  
**10TH OCTOBER 2025**

VISTAGE **CEO**  
**connect**

### A Day of Inspiration, Insight, and Celebration

This October, CEO Connect 2025 promises an unforgettable gathering for leaders ready to energise their vision and elevate their impact.

The day's programme features keynote talks from two extraordinary figures: Sara Davies, the celebrated Businesswoman and Entrepreneur and Tim Peake, the renowned British astronaut. Together, they will share powerful stories of innovation, risk, and leadership drawn from boardrooms and beyond Earth's orbit. In recognition of World Mental

Health Day, leadership coach Lorraine McDonnell will deliver an insightful session on building the mental resilience essential for high-performance leadership in today's demanding business climate.

The event concludes with our Vistage Member Excellence Awards Dinner, hosted by a celebrity emcee and followed by a lively afterparty with the Vistage community.

Spaces are limited—secure your place today for this high-impact leadership experience.



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ENTREPRENEUR  
AND  
MOTIVATIONAL  
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**SARA DAVIES MBE**  
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# HIGHER ALTITUDES

Alliant Consulting CEO Christa Schott Pilots Her Business to New Elevations



CHRISTA SCHOTT  
CEO, Alliant Consulting  
2023 Vistage Member Excellence Award Winner

Christa Schott knows how to make a dream take flight. At 22, just barely out of college, she quit two unsatisfying jobs (on the same day, no less). With no idea what to do next, she called her dad, a former electrician who built a general construction company, and asked to meet for coffee and advice.

While waiting, Schott read an article about a new labor compliance law in California. Plenty of work would need to be done by outside contractors, but no businesses existed to fill the gap.

By the time her dad arrived, Schott knew that she wanted to start a labor compliance business.

"What's that?" she recalls her dad asking.

"I have absolutely no idea," Schott responded, "but I know I'm going to do it."

Schott wrote a business plan, borrowed \$5,000 from her dad, and, for the first time, defined herself as a business owner. Six months later, she was fully invested in the San Diego-based Alliant Consulting, where she continues to serve as its founder and CEO 22 years later.

Business started off tough for Schott as she struggled to secure contracts. Despite working 20-hour days, doubts surfaced until she landed her first contract.

For years, Alliant flourished, allowing Schott to reconnect with a long-lost passion: flying. Inspired by her grandfather, a pilot who would take her up in his propeller plane every Sunday, Schott earned her pilot's license in 2006 so that she could take him on one last flight before he passed away a month later.

"It was the opportunity to fulfill one of his final wishes, but it completely inspired me to get back up in the air," Schott says.

Things were going well for Schott until 2017, when a lawsuit threatened her company. At times, she thought she might lose what she'd built, but she ultimately won the suit and emerged more determined to face future challenges.

As part of her plan, Schott joined Vistage in 2021 after learning about it from her husband, Michael, himself a member. Watching him return from each group meeting excited and inspired by his peers piqued her interest.

In her first meeting, Schott told her group about potential new growth opportunities. She wanted to take the company national, she told them.

"I approached Vistage members in my first group session and said, 'This is my dream. This is what I want to do. I know we can do the work. How do we just get there?'" Schott says.

The group examined Alliant's financial statements and organisational chart. They told her for this kind of growth she needed structure, new departments and a solid business plan. She'd also have to delegate.



Christa and Michael Schott  
with their dog, Molly

Schott's Vistage peers suggested she start by working on employee retention. Due to low pay and uncertainty, her firm had a revolving door of staff, so the group recommended she increase wages first. Next, Schott built a defined organisational chart and wrote a business plan focused on growth.

"They challenged me," Schott says. "I had never seen an org chart before that. I didn't know what that looked like."





//

**MY GROUP TRULY HAS AWAKENED A GREATNESS IN ME, INSPIRED ME AND EMPOWERED ME TO TAKE ON THE WORLD. ... BUSINESS IS DEFINITELY SOARING RIGHT NOW.**

—  
CHRISTA SCHOTT

*Christa Schott at the Alliant Consulting office in San Diego*

## 3 LESSONS LEARNED

With Jim Heaton, Schott's Vistage Chair

- 1 BE CONFIDENT**  
Before Vistage, an organisation told Christa she wasn't equipped to grow her business. I played for her a Jim Collins talk, in which he says, "Don't let anyone tell you that you can't take your business to the next level." Our group agreed fully — she's got this. Now she's far more confident in her abilities as a CEO.
- 2 FINANCIAL ACUMEN IS ESSENTIAL**  
An outsourced CFO gave Christa a five-year forecast showing she'd have the same net profit after growing. She and I found big errors in their numbers. Now she understands her finances better than ever, and her business has grown massively.
- 3 HIRE GOOD MIDDLE MANAGERS**  
Christa's biggest challenge was finding middle managers. Now she has placed employees in Vistage Key Executive and Emerging Leader groups to develop managers. She understands that without middle management, she couldn't grow the way she wanted.

Schott quickly offered employees a 10% raise, delegated tasks and hired an HR rep and a billing director. She also enrolled her high-potential managers in Vistage Emerging Leader programs to help them develop into the next generation of senior leaders.

In her first year at Vistage, Alliant Consulting grew 100% from the previous year. In 2024, her firm grew 200% from the previous year, and turnover dropped to 1%. All told, Schott's company is now five times bigger than it was before she joined Vistage, growing to \$35 million and securing contracts both across the U.S. and internationally.

"The growth over the last four years has been exponential," Schott says. "Sometimes I feel like I'm building the car as we're flying down the road at 200 miles per hour."

Schott attributes Alliant's growth to feedback from Chair Jim Heaton and her Vistage peer group. By delegating more responsibilities, she has empowered her leaders to make decisions and has given herself more capacity. Now with over 100 employees and plans to hire more, she feels increasingly confident and capable as a CEO and owner, supported by her Chair and group.

"Before Vistage, I didn't trust myself as a business owner, and I didn't even know it," Schott says. "My group truly has awakened a greatness in me, inspired me, and empowered me to take on the world. ... Business is definitely soaring right now." ■



WATCH CHRISTA'S STORY AND  
LEARN HOW TO GROW YOUR  
BUSINESS BEYOND YOUR DREAMS



*Christa Schott with Chair Jim Heaton*



# MAKING CONFIDENT DECISIONS EVEN IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Rachel Garrett, MD of CMG Technologies

**I**t can be lonely at the top and you can question yourself a lot," says Rachel Garrett, MD of CMG Technologies – the only company in the UK specialising in an innovative manufacturing process called metal injection moulding. "Am I doing the right thing, is anybody else facing this, or is it just me?" Here, Rachel explains how Vistage gives her the strength and support to keep her business thriving.

"I didn't know I needed a group like Vistage, but fate brought me to it just as things were about to change. It was 2023 and we'd just been acquired by INDO-MIM, the world's leading metal injection moulding company. I was excited about the move, but I could sense a shift in my responsibilities.

I first joined the business in 2006, and in 2013, together with our technical director Phil Marsh, my dad Chris Conway and I bought the company via an MBO. I became sales and marketing director, while my dad continued as the MD. As he prepared for retirement, he gradually passed on more responsibility until I was ready to step into the MD role.

While the company has been through many changes, the one constant is our progressive culture, which plays a big role in the way we lead, work, and grow. Our people are everything at CMG, and we strive to create an open and collaborative team that supports one another at work. A decade ago, we introduced a four-day-week to help employees improve their work/life balance, which has totally transformed the way we operate for the better. It's even contributed to us winning a regional Wellbeing Award, a great sign we are heading in the right direction.

More recently, inspired by a Vistage speaker event, we enhanced our recruitment and onboarding process, which has especially resonated with our younger recruits.

## // AM I DOING THE RIGHT THING, IS ANYBODY ELSE FACING THIS, OR IS IT JUST ME?

—  
RACHEL GARRETT,  
MD OF CMG TECHNOLOGIES

Breaking away from the traditional five-day workweek has done wonders for the business. 80% of our workforce has now been with us for more than 10 years – and they're always recommending friends and family for jobs. By finding strategies to work smarter, not harder, our profits have risen, and things run smoother than ever. Clients often mention how engaged the team is, which just goes to show that our culture really does work.



CMG Technologies - The team



Making big decisions is never easy but Vistage has shown me that one of the biggest mistakes a leader can make is trying to carry that burden alone.

My Vistage peers are invaluable sounding boards, offering fresh perspectives, incredible support and the reassurance I need to make confident decisions. Last year, I won an Institute of Directors award, and while I still don't know who nominated me, it could have been someone within the group!

My Chair, Stephen Norris, and peers made a big fuss of this success, which was lovely. It also gave me a confidence boost and fired me up to take the business to the next stage. Now, two years into being part of INDO-MIM, we're pushing to grow – jumping into new markets, and integrating automation

technologies. While some staff had their doubts about automation, I've been clear that automation isn't about cutting jobs. It's about growing the business by enabling us to offer more competitive pricing, secure more projects, and create opportunities for the team. A win-win for everyone involved.

We're on a really exciting trajectory here at CMG and I can't wait to see what the future holds for us, knowing I've got the support of my Vistage peers to be both our cheerleaders and our helping hand.

## 3 LESSONS LEARNED

Rachel's tips for more confident decision making

- 1 **LEAD WITH VALUES**  
The best leaders don't just talk about values – they use them to drive every decision and keep their vision on course.
- 2 **DON'T ISOLATE, INVOLVE**  
You don't have to go it alone – trusted peers bring clarity and fresh perspectives, and uncover what you can't see.
- 3 **TAKE TIME OUT**  
Curiosity fuels growth – make time to work on your business, not just in it. But likewise, knowing when to take that step back to relax and come back stronger is just as important.

//

80% OF OUR WORKFORCE HAS BEEN WITH US FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS.

RACHEL GARRETT,  
MD OF CMG TECHNOLOGIES



*Dr Samuel Wilberforce holding  
King Charles III  
credit CMG Technologies*



*Stainless steel 3D printed  
King Charles III  
Credit CMG Technologies*



# Hiring Smart, Leading Better



## The CEO and MD's Guide to a Future-Ready Workforce – with Omni

In high-growth businesses, your people are your most valuable asset – and your greatest risk. The wrong leadership hire, a poor candidate experience, or a disconnected recruitment process can quickly impact performance, culture and momentum.

### That's where Omni comes in.

As a UK-based talent consultancy, we partner with forward-thinking organisations to make talent strategy a true driver of growth. Whether you're scaling fast, evolving your leadership team, or building out internal capability, Omni offers four complementary services – all under one roof, all with one expert partner.

#### Our Talent Solutions:



##### Embedded Talent

Your flexible, in-house recruitment engine. We embed expert recruiters directly into your business - aligned to your goals, values and brand.



##### Executive Search

We appoint leaders who accelerate performance and align with purpose. Every search is designed to deliver cultural fit, strategic clarity and lasting impact.



##### Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO)

We manage your end-to-end recruitment lifecycle, delivering hiring at scale with greater speed, control and consistency.



##### Talent Strategy

From workforce and succession planning to DEI and recruitment training, we turn your talent ambition into a clear, actionable plan.

### One partner. One joined-up strategy.

Whether you need embedded support or a full recruitment transformation, Omni helps you build and retain the teams that will shape your future.

“Omni are extremely agile and work hand in glove with our processes, quickly adapting to changes. As a collaborative team, we made radical improvements to ways of working and bringing innovative ideas to fruition, which has resulted in a notable increase in the quality of candidates, significant reduction in the time to hire and achieving huge gains in hiring manager satisfaction.”

- Talent Acquisition Manager at London Gatwick

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## SMARTER HIRING IS EVERY VISTAGE CEO'S EDGE

Vistage member Louise Shaw is the expert person to turn to for hiring challenges – but even she counts on her Vistage peers. As the MD of Omni, a multi-award-winning resourcing partner to some of the UK's most recognised brands, Louise credits her group with pushing her thinking, sharpening her focus, and unlocking opportunities for growth.

**LOUISE SHAW**

Managing Director, OMNI



#### Q Tell us about Omni and your role within the company

**A** At Omni, we believe the way an organisation attracts and nurtures its people is directly linked to how well it performs, commercially, culturally and competitively. That belief sits at the heart of everything we do.

As MD, I set the direction and strategy of the business, but I also see it as my role to ensure we stay grounded in our values. We're curious, people-first and deeply committed to helping our clients unlock the full potential of their workforce. That sense of purpose runs through the whole team and it's why many of our client partnerships span years, not months.

#### Q What challenges do SMEs face in hiring, and how can they overcome them?

**A** Unlike larger companies, most SMEs don't have a dedicated talent function. This can make it hard to manage consistency or build a long-term talent strategy. Omni can become that function, bringing tools and people to build a hiring process that works, whether they're hiring three people or 30.

That's where Omni can make a real difference. We provide experienced talent professionals who work directly within organisations, fully aligned to their goals, values and ways of working, so companies get all the benefits of an in-house team, backed by our tools, tech and market insight.

The most successful SMEs treat recruitment as a strategic partnership, not a short-term transaction. When you invest in your people strategy, you're building the foundations for sustainable growth.

#### Q How is technology transforming recruitment?

**A** The world of recruitment tech has changed enormously over the last few years. The market is flooded with tech providers and it's difficult to know which tech stack to use.

The right tech stack can transform your hiring by streamlining processes, improving candidate experience and give you data to make smarter decisions. But for many SMEs, access to good tech is out of reach because of its cost.

And even when the tech is in place, it's not a silver bullet. Just because it looks slick doesn't mean it's being used effectively. Technology should amplify well-designed hiring processes – not replace them.

That's why process design, candidate experience, and ROI must come first. The best tech makes the biggest impact when it's aligned with clear goals and thoughtful recruitment design.

#### Q What common mistakes do businesses make when hiring?

**A** One of the biggest mistakes SMEs make is underestimating the strategic importance of hiring. Recruitment is often seen as an operational task rather than a leadership priority delegated too far down or treated as a short-term fix. When hiring goes wrong, it's costly, disruptive and deeply felt across the business.

There's also a widespread lack of investment in hiring capability. Nearly 30% of businesses don't train their managers on fair, inclusive or legally sound recruitment practices.

#### Q How has being part of Vistage shaped your leadership and business growth?

**A** Vistage has been one of the most valuable investments I've made in my own leadership development. It has challenged me to think more strategically, to step back from the day-to-day and focus on what will really move the business forward.

The advice from my Chair and the shared experiences of my peers have been invaluable. They have helped me test ideas, identify blind spots and make more commercially confident decisions. It is a rare opportunity to be held accountable by people who genuinely understand the pressure and pace of leading a growing business.

### 3 LESSONS LEARNED

Louise's top tips for improving your hiring process

- 1 THE RIGHT TALENT PARTNER SHOULD FEEL LIKE PART OF YOUR TEAM**  
Embedding expertise gives you control, consistency, and the capacity to scale
- 2 YOUR HIRING PROCESS IS YOUR BRAND IN ACTION**  
Every step of the hiring journey reflects your business.
- 3 SENIOR HIRES AREN'T JUST REPLACEMENTS — THEY'RE CATALYSTS**  
The right leadership appointment unlocks growth and shapes culture



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