

# VISTAGE Perspectives®

SUMMER 2023

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SALES LEADERS



HELPING  
OTHERS  
(AND YOURSELF)  
DURING  
TOUGH TIMES



PAVING THE WAY  
TO SUCCESS

ED CAMPBELL  
CEO, ROSE PAVING



# wheels of FORTUNE

**M**athias Ihlenfeld had no idea the gift his son Luca received for his second birthday would transform his career from IT consultant to CEO of woom, a global children's bike company that made the Inc. 5000 list from 2019 through 2021.

woom started with Ihlenfeld's brother, Marcus Ihlenfeld, and his business partner, Christian Bezdeka, thoughtfully designing a range of children's bicycles in Vienna, Austria. Rather than making an adult bike smaller, they made it 40% lighter than traditional kids' bikes and added special features, like an automatic shift. The goal? Make kids fall in love with cycling and support parents in aiding the effort.

When Luca started riding the bike around his neighborhood, Ihlenfeld's neighbours took notice.

"They asked, 'Where can I get one?'" Ihlenfeld says. "That got the wheels rolling."

In 2014, Ihlenfeld launched woom bikes USA in a rented, unheated garage in Austin, Texas, and used his cell phone as the customer service line (not a move he'd recommend). That first year, he sold 14 bikes; the following year it was 1,500. But exponential growth soon followed through word-of-mouth advertising. The company sold nearly 50,000 bikes in 2022 leading woom to double its workforce.



*woom CEO Mathias Ihlenfeld*

Since then, woom has become the fastest-growing kids' bike brand in North America and the largest direct-to-consumer brand in the space, reaching annual sales of over €100 million (more than \$107 million USD) in 2022, a new company record.

"I didn't have experience running a business, so there was a steep learning curve," says Ihlenfeld, a 2022 Vistage Member Excellence award winner. "When I joined Vistage in 2019, I learned a lot about different tools available to me and that has helped me move to the next level." ■



Hear Ihlenfeld discuss the balancing act of scaling a business on our A Life of Climb Podcast.  
[vistage.com/podcast](https://vistage.com/podcast)



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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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One of the immutable laws of leadership that we embrace in the Vistage community is "Rise by helping others." As a member, you aren't just focused on your own decisions, you help peers critically think through their challenges so they can have a positive impact on their companies and their communities.

And they do the same for you.

In this global issue of Perspectives, you'll see how several members have extended this philosophy to their organisations by developing their leaders. Regardless of the approach they've chosen — internal training programmes, apprenticeship models or purpose-built leadership development programmes — they've increased their bottom line and employee satisfaction.

We'll also share how a one-time micromanager became one of the top-performing CEO coaches in the world; how a CEO found solutions to her worst nightmare; and what *life* looks like for three Vistage members after selling their businesses. (Spoiler alert: It looks pretty good!)

We hope the following pages provide fresh perspectives, inspiration and insights that you can take to your business and discuss with your peer group.

All the best,

**Sam**

**Sam Reese**

CEO, Vistage Worldwide, Inc.

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Bringing new insights to CEOs is paramount to the Vistage purpose of helping leaders make better decisions for their companies, families and communities



Read online.

## HOW DO YOU INCENTIVISE

# RETENTION

## AT YOUR COMPANY?



We retain employees when we provide value to them that meets or exceeds the value they provide the organisation. Value is individually perceived, and therefore it's critical to have regular conversations with employees to get to know them and understand what they value so that you can deliver on it.

### Jessica Liu

Employee Benefits Broker, Bolton, an IMA Company  
Pasadena, California  
*Vistage member since 2014*



Sprinkling small incentives along an employee's career path — such as additional paid time off, access to new educational resources, getting a mentor, joining a committee, receiving unique perks like free oil changes, passes to the zoo, etc. — can be more enticing for lower-wage workers. For higher-pay SMEs, consider offering a one-month paid sabbatical after so many years of service.

### Cara Silletto

President & Chief Retention Officer, Magnet Culture  
Louisville, Kentucky  
*Vistage speaker since 2015*



We start with culture, making sure that we are intentional with our team about issues that impact culture. We optimise transparency by identifying issues, which issues we are addressing, and presenting the culture plan to all employees with milestones and outcomes. For key employees, offering a deferred compensation package provides an incentive to stay and have more financial security.

### John Schwanke

President, Lakeview Industries  
Carver, Minnesota  
*Vistage member since 2022*



Be the person you would want to work for, be the company you would want to work for. That's what we try to do.

### Preston Cross

President, Four Cs Construction  
Fresno, California  
*Vistage member since 2020*



Focus on aligning employee values with company values. Hire for values and purpose alignment. Those things are way stickier than a few pounds.

### Jonathan King

Founder/ CEO, Lean Leaders  
Frisco, Texas  
*Vistage speaker since 2017*

# Selling a business is not just about money

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WIN BIG BY

# INVESTING

IN SALES LEADERS

Putting time and resources into sales management can unlock growth



By Joe Galvin,  
Vistage Chief Research Officer

**B**uyers are changing, prompting a shift in the art and science of sales. Companies are overhauling how they find prospects, build relationships, interact with customers and close deals.

Who's bearing the brunt of this change? Sales managers, says Gary Braun, Vistage speaker and owner of Pivotal Advisors based in Prior Lake, Minnesota. "The sales leader sits in the middle, and nobody tells them how to do the things they need to do, like make changes on the fly, adapt the sales process, coach to a new process and manage somebody who's not in the office."

Managers of all disciplines are similarly challenged, which is why 80% of CEOs from small and medium sized businesses plan to invest in leadership development this year, according to a survey of 1,373 CEOs of small and medium sized businesses. To provide perspective on how SMBs support sales leaders specifically, two CEOs share their focused efforts and the return on their investments.



**Download CEO Projections 2023**  
Explore the major investments, decisions and challenges you'll face this year.





## CASE STUDY ONE:

### CREATING A WINNING MINDSET

Sean Lafferty | CEO, Steinel America Inc.

When Sean Lafferty became CEO of Steinel America in 2017, he inherited a whole host of problems.

Sales were declining, morale was low and the sales team had little incentive to work harder, as everyone was paid below the industry average without eligibility for bonuses. Sales leadership was also weak, with the company's two product lines — lighting controls and heating tools — overseen by two unqualified and untrained sales managers.

"These managers were telling salespeople what to do while working less and collecting a bigger paycheck," explains Lafferty, a Vistage member since 2022. "Not exactly the winning mindset I was looking for."

Pledging to turn the team into "winners," Lafferty made sweeping changes to the sales team. He fired one sales manager, hired another and took on the responsibilities of a sales manager himself. He swapped salaries for variable compensation packages, brought in a consultant to create a common language for sales and developed a rigorous process for managing funnels and forecasts.

He started personally training his sales managers, teaching them about the principles of good management, such as how to lead from the front, take care of people, communicate effectively and leverage the unique strengths of each team member.

"As a sales manager, you have to have a lot of discipline and focus to step back from your day-to-day activities and understand the capabilities of your salespeople," Lafferty says. "Everybody's different, and you're going to end up with all kinds of personalities. You need to understand how to work with those people and adapt to their communication styles and needs."

To serve as a model for his managers, Lafferty also started having weekly meetings with leads from different divisions in the company to discuss and solve practical issues impeding sales and impacting the forecast. In doing so, he tried to demonstrate what he envisioned for his managers and teach them how to do it.

"A big part of being a sales manager is problem-solving, understanding activities that lead to success and taking excuses out of the equation," he explains. "When you start removing roadblocks, people start to win. And it becomes contagious."

People are, in fact, winning at Steinel now. Between 2018 and 2022, the company's revenue grew from \$5.5 million to \$16 million. This year, it's projected to hit \$22 million.

Lafferty credits the discipline of his sales team, rather than his sales strategy, as key to this success. "There are a ton of great methodologies out there," he says. "To be perfectly honest, it doesn't matter which one you pick — as long as you pick one, stick to it and get disciplined around executing it." ■



## CASE STUDY TWO:

### HIRING FOR CHARACTER, TRAINING FOR CODE OF ETHICS

Brenda Dohring Hicks | CEO, RealWired

For more than 20 years, Vistage member Brenda Dohring Hicks successfully ran her software company, RealWired, with only two or three salespeople on staff. The model worked — until one of her salespeople started underperforming and another quit.

Hicks, who had growth ambitions for the Tampa, Florida-based company, thought to herself: "There's got to be a better way to do this."

The solution was to hire a sales manager who would bring rigor to the sales process and team. Hicks hand-selected someone for the role who was experienced and trained in sales management, coaching and communication. Then she taught them about the "code of ethics" of selling — a concept she learned through Sandler sales training that was now a cornerstone of RealWired's culture.

"Salespeople have a moral obligation to help people make decisions," Hicks says, explaining that RealWired sells software to valuation professionals in commercial real estate. "It's all about building a relationship based on trust and making that relationship work for both parties."

Another priority was to set expectations for revenue growth and build a system for monitoring progress "so we always know where we stand and when we need to make adjustments to meet goals." To that end, Hicks and the sales manager collaborated to develop metrics-driven solutions and processes for the sales team. This included setting expectations for what each salesperson needed to do in a day, such as the number of calls and appointments to

make, and how and when to provide demos. With those expectations in place, it was easy for the sales manager to hold them accountable.

The sales manager was also tasked with hiring three salespeople based on character — as opposed to industry knowledge — and training them on the "social science of selling," says Hicks, a member since 2019. "As a salesperson, you've got to be authentic first and foremost. You've got to be trustworthy, and you've got to be curious. It's about knowing your customer, not knowing the product."

This insight, which stems from Sandler, is foundational to the company's sales training and coaching, Hicks adds. "The old adage of 'people buy from people they like and trust' is our belief and mantra."

The approach has paid off. In the last 18 months, RealWired has doubled its sales volume and personnel, despite a sluggish market for commercial real estate. In 2022 alone, sales of YouConnect™, RealWired's automated appraisal workflow software, increased by 75%.

Hicks is proud of those metrics but even prouder of how her sales team acts with integrity. Recently, a colleague in her industry approached her with a compliment for one of her salespeople.

"She told me, 'We were at a meeting in Washington, and every single person there loved him. He took the time to ask how we were doing, he knew our families and he just seemed sincere,'" Hicks recalls. "When I heard that, I got chills." ■



# HOW DO YOU BOUNCE BACK

## FROM A PROFESSIONAL SETBACK?

Some setbacks can cripple a company. We spoke to two Vistage members who faced potentially business-altering challenges on how they rebounded.



**Sue Chapple** is CEO of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management (CICM), the largest recognised professional body in the world for the credit management community.

Joining at a time with declining membership and a pandemic looming, Sue turned a major setback into a big triumph.



**David Woodcock** is the MD of PSP, a leading AV and technical production company working with agencies to deliver events such as TED Global, Vodafone and OnePlus. In February 2020 PSP was preparing

for a major event when the plug was pulled. Everything began to unravel but ultimately for the best.

### BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR SETBACK. HOW DID YOU RESPOND IN THE MOMENT?

**SC:** I was appointed to my first Chief Executive role just before the pandemic. A couple of days after lockdown I went to my first Vistage meeting. Like most businesses, I furloughed a big chunk of our staff at the start. However, this became an opportunity to get under the cover of the business and see what was going on, where we needed to be and what changes we needed to make.

**DW:** It was the middle of February 2020 when everything in our industry started to unwind. We were doing a big event at the O2 InterContinental. Everything had been planned and nailed down, and just as we were about to go in, we got a phone call to say it was being postponed. The next few weeks everything started to unravel. We found ourselves turning up on site, only to find events cancelled at the last minute, until face-to-face events altogether stopped.

### HOW DID THIS SETBACK AFFECT YOUR BUSINESS STRATEGY?

**SC:** With the support of my Vistage Chair and peers, I set about restructuring the business. I raised subscription prices and moved into different markets – I call it fishing in the Atlantic or getting out into wider waters. This had a significant impact on our bottom line. When I joined the CICM individual membership to all professional bodies was in general decline but our business is now growing exponentially. In that first year we also moved premises and grew staff numbers by 15%.

**DW:** A few of our big clients wanted help communicating with their staff and clients so we quickly jumped into the world of virtual events. Within 10 days we developed a virtual events platform that enabled companies to deliver content to remote audiences. We then turned our warehouse into 15 virtual streaming studios, including a large presenter broadcast studio and a green screen studio. In that first year we delivered over 200 virtual events.

### IN TERMS OF LEADERSHIP, WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS?

**SC:** I soon realised that as a CEO you're not part of any team. You have a board to answer to and teams that report to you, but essentially, you're on your own. Vistage gave me something to belong to and a group of incredibly supportive peers to help with any issues, concerns, or anything else that was going on. The other members don't just listen or offer advice but challenge you to push yourself, to get out of your comfort zone. They want you to be your best self, and they'll hold you to account until you do.

**DW:** I've learned a lot generally in the 3-4 years I've been with Vistage. Taking the time to step back, share ideas, learn new things, and benefit from the experiences of others, many of whom have similar challenges you can tap into, has been brilliant for me. When you're busy it's easy for those long-term ideas or plans you want to explore or implement to drop off your to-do list. My Vistage group are great at challenging me and holding me to account. This helps me stay on track and think longer-term about the business, not just about the day-to-day.



For 65 years, more than 100,000 executives have turned to Vistage to become better leaders and drive better results. Of those thousands, three members — two current and one former — share a unique bond.

John W. Mellowes of Charter Manufacturing and Dennis Konkol and Robbie Fullerton of ER Wagner lead companies whose executives were there when founder Robert “Bob” Nourse held the first-ever meeting on October 25, 1957.

Then-presidents Charles Mellowes (Charter) and Robert S. Wagner (ER Wagner) sat with Nourse and other local executives to talk about their challenges. By the end, the group agreed to meet again, and The Executive Committee (later renamed Vistage) was born.

Vistage has remained connected to these companies, helping executives continue to learn, grow and succeed — in one way or another — across generations.

#### PASSING IT DOWN FROM FATHER TO SON



For years John W. Mellowes didn't know his grandfather, Charles, was a founding member. He just knew his father, John A. Mellowes, was a member of a group he thought was spelled T-E-C-H. “I had no idea what it was,” says Mellowes.

A graduate of both Princeton University and The Wharton School, the younger Mellowes worked outside the family business for years before joining Charter in 2003. As Mellowes adapted to working with family members, his father suggested joining a peer group.

“Being in a family business is incredibly powerful, but it can be frustrating as well,” Mellowes says. “So to have a resource group that you can talk to on a confidential basis, and they know where you're coming from, that's a great resource to have.”

Mellowes started in a Vistage group of younger-generation members from local family businesses in 2004, later joining a Chief Executive group after becoming CEO in 2013. A 19-year member, Mellowes continues to utilise his membership, particularly the thought leadership from guest speakers.

Still, Mellowes says the issue processing has been the most valuable. That guidance helped Mellowes

lead Charter to No. 25 on Deloitte's 2022 Wisconsin 75™, a ranking of Wisconsin's 75 largest private companies.

“Whether you're a junior member in a family managed business, a senior member or just an executive, the phrase ‘it can be lonely at the top’ is really a true statement,” he says. “So it's great to be able to have a sounding board to bounce ideas or work through specific problems.”



Recently, Mellowes learned about his grandfather Charles's status as a founding member of Vistage. That makes sense, the third-generation member says, surmising that his grandfather convinced his father to join.

“My father would have taken him up on the offer very quickly,” says Mellowes.

#### BRINGING VISTAGE BACK INTO THE FOLD



Robbie Fullerton didn't know his grandfather, Robert S. Wagner, was a founding Vistage member when he joined in 2006. He just knew Vistage sounded like a good idea.

“I was really attracted to the notion of ‘Hey, let's hop in a room together, spend a day a month, and let's focus on the business issues, bring in speakers, all of it,’” says Fullerton.

Fullerton learned from a former Chair that ER Wagner had fallen on hard times. That prompted Fullerton to join the company's board.

“My father made it very clear that under no circumstances would we work for any of the family businesses,” Fullerton says. “When I heard about the performance at ER Wagner, that gave me cause to get involved with the business with the blessing of my family.”

After joining, Fullerton set about finding a new chief executive for the Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin-based metal fabricator and manufacturer. While scanning the resume of local executive Dennis Konkol, Fullerton noticed something immediately.



“He was a 20-year member of Vistage,” Fullerton says. “That really says something about someone.”

A Vistage member since 1997, Konkol has stayed with his CE group because of the value he's found as a young executive and as a seasoned C-suiter.

“I have a simple way of looking at leadership, both tone and technique. So let's just say that I was a tone leader and what TEC brought in was more technique,” Konkol says. “Now it's just about fine-tuning.”

When he interviewed with Fullerton for the CEO job, Konkol said he'd only take it if he could remain a member. “Some companies are persnickety about stuff like that,” Konkol says, adding that Fullerton encouraged it. “I know Vistage is a source of pride for those guys.”

Now in his fifth year, Konkol says the company is righting itself. Fullerton concurs. “Dennis has done a number of incredibly proactive things,” he says. “We're confident we've got the right guy at the helm.”

Over the years, these executives have found value in being a part of Vistage, to sustain and grow their businesses. And it's a partnership they plan to continue for years to come. ■

The founder of Blue Rock Advisors, a fund-of-funds investment firm based in Wayzata, Minnesota, Fullerton spent almost seven years as a Vistage member, learning how to grow his business into an industry leader in market-neutral strategy.

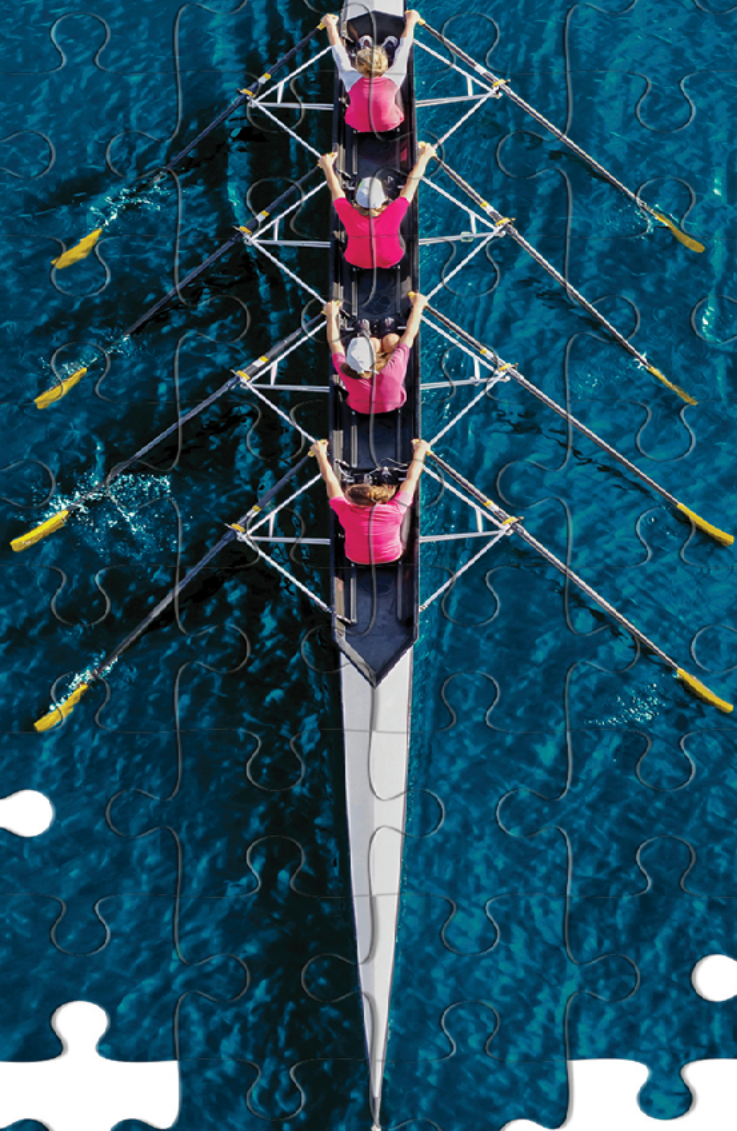
Fullerton left Vistage and moved from CEO to the Chairman's position after a medical condition required him to step back. But a few years later,

**VISTAGE** | 65



# BUILDING

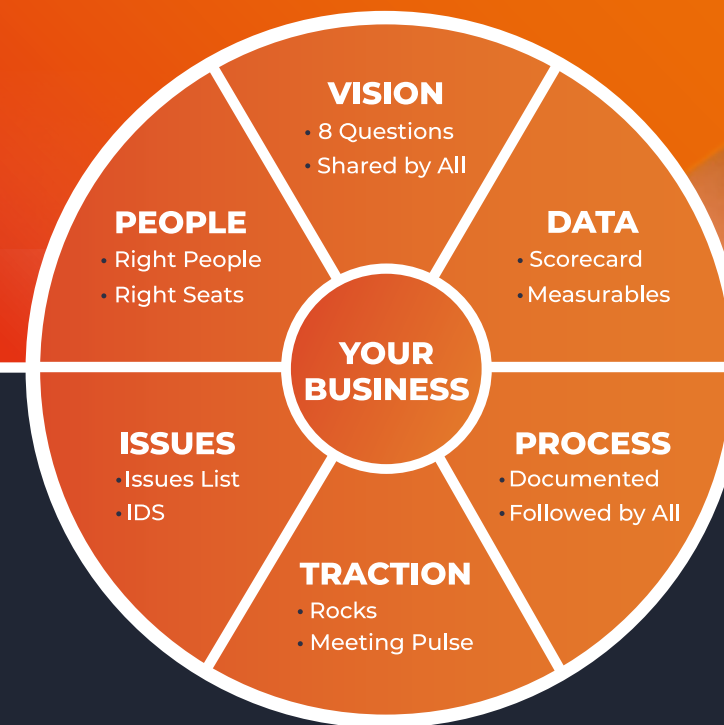
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Training and development programmes can also be a boon for recruiting. A report from the Sitel Group found that 79 percent of employees believe that it's important for a prospective employer to train them.

We spoke with three Vistage CEO members on how they're using training programmes — apprenticeships, software-based training and Vistage Leadership Development Programmes — to develop their people and help recruit new talent. Despite the talent shortage, these CEOs have set their companies up for future growth and greater success.

Request your **FREE 90 Minute Meeting** with a Professional EOS Implementer® today.

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# paving the way to success

Ed Campbell needed leaders, so he partnered with the same organisation that helped him become a better leader.

Ever since Vistage member Ed Campbell became CEO of Rose Paving, the nation's largest paving and parking lot management company, business has been booming. In 2008, his first year as CEO, the company was generating \$30 million in revenue. Now, its annual revenue is \$250+ million.

Despite its success, Campbell recently noticed a big problem: Employees weren't developing to the level the company needed.

This issue became obvious when Rose searched for an emerging leader within its ranks. "When we had an opportunity to promote somebody from within, there was a gap in their skill set that wouldn't allow it," Campbell says. "We weren't doing a very good job in training and developing our talent."

One issue was the size and geographical spread of Campbell's workforce. Rose Paving has 400 employees in offices all over the country serving

all 50 states, Canada and Puerto Rico. Campbell said they plan to keep growing the workforce by acquiring companies.

But how could Rose Paving keep growing if it had no homegrown talent? Perhaps the same system that helped Campbell could work his employees.

Campbell had joined Vistage the same year he became CEO at Rose Paving. He became a member so he could have a group of peers to speak with and learn how to become a better leader. In 2021, John Trakselis, Campbell's Vistage Chair, asked Campbell if the Vistage group concept could help develop talent at Rose Paving.

Campbell was intrigued. He knew Rose Paving needed to develop its next generation of leaders now and knew how much Vistage had helped him. He agreed with Trakselis and they got to work.



Rose Paving CEO Ed Campbell with his construction crew in Bridgeview, Illinois. Photo by Paradeigm Films





Those who can multitask—who can continue to be an A-player at their job and an A-player in Vistage—are those who are rising to be the next leader in the organization.

Ed Campbell  
CEO, Rose Paving



Scan to watch more of Ed's story and learn about Vistage Leadership Development Programmes at [vistage.co.uk/membership/programmes/](https://vistage.co.uk/membership/programmes/)



## 3 LESSONS LEARNED

With John Trakselis, Campbell's Vistage Chair

### Investing in staff means more invested staff.

Participants are more invested in the success of the company. That's because the Vistage Inside programme shows employees that the company is invested in their personal and professional development.

### Employees like to hear from speakers, too.

Ed brings in tons of outside thought leadership — mostly Vistage speakers — to Rose Paving. Almost 15 years of Vistage membership has fostered Ed's love for developing his people.

### Training works. It's as simple as that.

Participants are showing stronger communication, collaboration and relationship skills that make them more effective in their jobs. Rose Paving, because of Ed's leadership, is a learning organisation that develops its people.

In 2022, Rose Paving launched three Vistage Inside groups within the company, including groups for general managers, directors and account executives with 50 of his employees enrolled. Ideally, those who excel in the groups would lead the way for Rose Paving's future acquisitions, Campbell says, helping the company grow from within while staying aligned on the CEO's goals and strategy.

Rose Paving's Vistage groups work much like any other. Meeting monthly, each group has confidential, open conversations and opportunities to learn from one another. Trakselis, who runs each group, sits down with Campbell and each group's leader to assess where group members need to grow. They'll use that information to set the group's itinerary for the next year. The groups will even invite speakers on topics like communication, mental health and emotional intelligence. "John uses his Vistage toolbox well," Campbell says.

There have been some challenges over the first year, Campbell says. Rose Paving is a seasonal business, with most of its work coming amid the warmer months — but despite the busy season, employees overwhelmingly find the meetings and homework worth the time. Campbell expects the groups to improve exponentially over the next two years.

"Those who can multitask — who can continue to be an A-player at their job and A-player in Vistage — are those who are rising to be the next leader in the organisation," Campbell says. "We've identified the 10 to 15 employees we think could be the next leaders in the organisation, just by their participation in Vistage groups."

Implementing these groups meant spending money, investing time and putting trust in employees. But Campbell has already seen it pay off.

Since introducing Vistage Inside groups, Campbell has noticed its usefulness as a tool to retain driven employees and recruit new hires. He's also seen improvements in skill and engagement from employees who attend groups. Also, many employees recruited from outside the business love the idea of a programme that will help them develop leadership skills.

"It's a good way for them to know that the company isn't stagnant, that we are going to move them up within the organisation. The job market today is very tight, so you have to differentiate yourself from other construction companies," Campbell says.

And while Vistage Inside groups are confidential, Campbell has been able to keep a better pulse on his workforce. Trakselis shares overarching trends and issues allowing Campbell to help solve potential workforce problems quickly.

With the success of the Vistage Inside groups, Campbell plans to add two more — a small group for executives who may one day take his place, and one for hourly employees who have the potential to grow.

For other organisations intrigued by the idea of adding their own Vistage Inside groups, Campbell also noted trust is essential. You must trust the employees who will participate, and most of all, you must trust that the investment will pay off, he adds.

"You have to be OK with seeing a return in probably a year," Campbell says. "It's an investment and you can't exactly put a dollar figure on it. But we were up 25% percent this year in both top-line and bottom-line revenue. Vistage Inside groups played a part in that." ■



# 'This is How We Do It' 101

**'Two heads are better than one, but twelve heads are even better!'**  
 Simon Spinks, CEO of Harrison Spinks, on the power of collective wisdom.

If you haven't got time for Vistage, you haven't got time for your own business," says Simon Spinks, CEO of luxury bed and mattress manufacturer, Harrison Spinks. Founded in 1840, Simon is the fifth-generation family member to run the Yorkshire firm which has grown from 33m to 70m by embracing sustainability, innovation and the support of his Vistage group.

"I was born into the family business, but it wasn't what it is today. I started helping out during school holidays, knowing one day I wanted to run a business. I joined the Company full-time age 19.



Fast-forward to 2017 by which point I'd been running the firm for a couple of decades, driving double digit growth. However, the business was plateauing and I wanted to find a new way of evolving it. The Company was also too much about me. If I'd gone under the proverbial bus at that point, I'm not sure the business would've survived as I was the only MD. We now have three.

Around this time, I was introduced to a Vistage Chair and I thought, why not have a chat? It's tough at the top and I needed help with succession planning and generating some fresh ideas. Plus, I've always been interested in hearing other people's business experiences, and he had a very interesting business past.

The Chair explained the value of stepping outside the business once a month to hear other leaders' perspectives and honest opinions.

**“ The business has grown from £33m to £70m by embracing sustainability, innovation and the support of his Vistage group**

*Simon Spinks, CEO  
 Harrison Spinks*

As a Vistage member you also hear world-class business speakers on topics that frequently lead to a step change within the group. All SME leaders share similar problems, and peer group meetings are a great opportunity to tap into their thinking and experiences. It's also a chance to share things you can't say at work – I mean, you can't talk about your team to your team!

The group's diversity also makes it special. Currently there are a dozen of us from all walks of life, bringing different experiences and ideas to the group. This means that when you raise an issue (we call it issue processing at Vistage) you not only get a range of perspectives, but often someone with specialist knowledge. I have an HR leader in my group which is especially helpful when people issues crop up.

Right now, my business is well placed for growth. Mattresses for some reason sell well in an economic downturn, and our commitment to quality and sustainable circular design keeps us at the top of the game. However, you can't stand still for long, you have to keep evolving in business, and taking time out from the day-to-day stuff once a month to look at the business with my group adds a lot of value to the way I think. As the saying goes, 'two heads are better than one' but twelve heads are even better! It's remarkably powerful having all that brainpower focused solely on you."



**As a Vistage member you also hear from world-class business speakers on topics that frequently lead to a step change within the group**



## Harrison Spinks - The True Bedmakers

Simon Spinks is the CEO of Harrison Spinks. Founded in 1840, he is the fifth-generation family member to run the Yorkshire firm which has grown from £33m to £70m by embracing sustainability, innovation and the support of his Vistage group. Simon joined Vistage in 2017 for help with his business challenges and to gain the fresh ideas and perspectives other leaders bring. The group is Chaired by Keith Stewart and meets once a month in Yorkshire.

### Why Simon joined Vistage

- The Chair showed me the value of stepping outside the business once a month to talk through my challenges with a trusted peer-to-peer group.
- It's an authentic, confidential environment where everyone is open, honest and eager to listen, learn and help each other win at business.
- Getting outside your business to reflect on the things you're doing and to look at the business as a whole with others is invaluable.
- Peer group members come from all walks of life bringing a diverse range of perspectives



# GUIDING LEADERS

Upholding Vistage's core values of growth, care, trust and challenge with stellar contribution towards supporting the Vistage community

Embracing diversity and equality sits at the very heart of Vistage membership. The recent National Chair meeting saw two exceptional female leaders scoop the highest Chair accolades for the first time for their incredible work within the Vistage community.

## Cat McManus

Multi-award winning Chair, Cat McManus, received the prestigious **Vistage's 2022 UK Chair of the Year Award**. A passionate business mentor and coach, Cat received the award for her stellar work developing, empowering and inspiring business leaders in the greater Sheffield area.



Cat McManus

**2022 UK Chair of the Year Award**

## Laura Gordon

Vistage Chair Laura Gordon was this year awarded the highest accolade within the **Vistage 2022 UK Chair community, The Phil Meddings Award**. Laura received the award for her commitment to upholding Vistage's core values of growth, care, truth and challenge and in catalysing leadership growth in her London and Central Scotland peer groups.

Laura Gordon

**The Phil Meddings Award**



Knowing that you've secured your wealth for future generations

Our legal and financial experts can help you prepare for the future and protect your family, wealth and business.

You've built a business you're proud of. You've created a network of stakeholders, earned a great reputation, and enjoyed watching your company grow. Now, your hard work can look after you and your loved ones. We want you to achieve your goals and aspirations, and your financial, business and personal choices play a big role in reaching them. Our experts can help you to consider all your options and help take control of your future.

Book a complementary consultation with one of our experts, to find out how we can help.

We'll cover the cost for your initial meeting and there's no obligation to go any further.











Cxstomer CEO Sandy Murphy

Just four months into her membership, Murphy leaned on her Vistage group for guidance. Group members offered tremendous advice for navigating the situation with compassion while also ensuring Cxstomer was not exposed to liabilities. Sandy's Chair, Perry Maughmer, also suggested posting in a Vistage Network.

Support poured in from other CEOs. A fellow member, the CEO of a staffing agency in Atlanta, Georgia, proposed helping the impacted employees find new jobs. Another member passed Murphy's story to an outside executive, one who needed staff and coincidentally knew Murphy from a previous role. The two worked together and got several of Murphy's former contractors hired at the company.

"The Network community creates a safe space to share your biggest struggles while at the same time allowing you to share your own experiences and best practices with others," Murphy says. "It's nice to be able to ask questions in a less 'public' format than other apps like LinkedIn, where you may not want to share something that could be sensitive or private."

All the while, Murphy worked with Maughmer to handle the situation through one-to-one meetings. "He is incredible at helping me to see the bigger picture and focus on the positives that

are occurring instead of sulking in the negatives," she says. "Talking tough things through with Perry reminds me that my Vistage membership is invaluable."

Beyond finding insights for living her mission — treating customer care representatives with respect — Murphy discovered an equally powerful lesson: It's not selfish for leaders to acknowledge the anguish of making difficult decisions.

"Mass layoffs are very painful," she says. "They are not something you ever learn about or realise the impact on your heart and soul until you go through it."

In a fortunate turn of events, the same client who requested the layoff now needs more help, which allowed Cxstomer to bring back about 25% of the people it had to let go.

"The tenacity of the remaining team members that kept their heads up and worked hard despite the tough times we had last year has given us a huge win," Murphy says. "I believe this is due to the foundation of our organisation centering on leading with heart and kindness. I have seen incredible things resulting from this simple philosophy and can't wait to see where we take it in 2023." ■



**Mass layoffs are very painful. They are not something you ever learn about or realise the impact on your heart and soul until you go through it.**

➔ **Connect with peers for real-time answers to your questions. Visit [myvistage.com/networks](https://myvistage.com/networks)**

# SAVE THE DATES VISTAGE

## Inside the World of a Vistage Chair



**15 SEPTEMBER**

**An invite-only, FREE Event with Vistage**

## CEO Climb Events



**13 SEPTEMBER**  
**Nicola Cook**

**Building a Sales Engine for Growth**



**11 OCTOBER**  
**Michael Canic**

**Ruthless Consistency: Aligning your Organisation to Win ... or Else!**



**8 NOVEMBER**  
**Floyd Woodrow**

**Optimise Performance**

## Vistage Executive Summits



**Roger Martin-Fagg**

**Behavioural Economist**



**Dr Stephanie Hare**

**Researcher, Broadcaster, Author**



**Gerard Grech**

**Founding Chief Executive of Tech Nation and Tech Creative**



**1 DECEMBER**  
**Roger Martin-Fagg**

**Behavioural Economist**

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR EVENTS PLEASE VISIT: [VISTAGE.CO.UK](https://VISTAGE.CO.UK)



# EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS

Bringing new insights to CEOs is paramount to the Vistage purpose of helping leaders make better decisions for their companies, families and communities. That's why we handpick a slate of renowned experts to give members the tools they need to excel in leadership year after year.

The lineup of experts featured at recent Vistage events provided actionable takeaways — from scaling a business to using negative emotions for good to being all-around world-class executives.

## BUSINESS GROWTH 2022: UNLOCK OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY OBSTACLE

The Business Growth National CEO Conference explored how to spark growth through the challenges and opportunities that all businesses go through. We asked attendees:

**Can you grow a business through a challenge and come out on top?**



Keynote speaker **Barbara Corcoran**, of ABC's hit show Shark Tank, shared how she mastered the art of bouncing back and

learned the ins and outs of weathering the storm. She provided expert tips to help businesses adapt to change quickly and make the most of their resurgence.

Then, branding expert **Martin Lindstrom** took a deep, remarkable dive inside some of the world's strongest organisations and their daily challenges as they rediscovered, built and maintained powerful cultures.

### Words to live by:

Take advantage of bad times. The biggest successes happen on the heels of failure and your ability to get back up.

## DANIEL PINK ON 'BEYOND RESILIENCE: A NEW PATH TO A STRONG CULTURE'

A revered thought leader and New York Times bestselling author, Daniel Pink held a provocative discussion around the power of regret and resilient leadership. He shared key tenets and some counterintuitive approaches to help leaders sharpen decision-making, boost performance, and strengthen the sense of meaning and connectedness of their teams.

### Words to live by:

There's a quiet muscularity in the leadership of the future, focusing on listening, humility, psychological safety and purpose.

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP 2023: EMPOWERMENT, ENCOURAGEMENT, ENGAGEMENT

Our National CEO Conference for women, by women, made its return in June. Featuring a powerhouse lineup of female speakers — including **Randi Zuckerberg** — members' passions were reignited and equipped with tools to take their leadership climb to the top.



**Words to live by:** Women have a space in technology and the future of business. Use your influence to make yourself, and others, heard.

## COMING THIS SUMMER

### ADAM GRANT

This summer, organisational psychologist, speaker, and No. 1 New York Times bestselling author Adam Grant is coming to Vistage for an exclusive community event. He will offer ways for business owners and leaders to identify and harness the power of "knowing what you don't know" to transform how they think about and lead their companies.



→ **View more upcoming events at [myvistage.com/events](https://myvistage.com/events)**

New York Times  
bestselling author Daniel Pink



**VISTAGE**

**WE ALL RISE**

# HIGHER

WHEN WE CLIMB TOGETHER

CEOs and owners of small and medium sized businesses must often navigate rugged, unpredictable terrain alone. But as a Vistage member, you're traveling a proven, time-honored path to new levels of success.

So go ahead and set your sights on that next great peak — because your peers and your guide have your back.



**LIVE A LIFE OF CLIMB**

Scan the QR code to find out how the world's leading CEO peer advisory and executive coaching organisation can help you reach new heights.