

# octane

**KICKING**  
INTO GEAR



# octane

MARCH 2017 / VOL. 11, ISSUE 3



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## KICKING INTO GEAR



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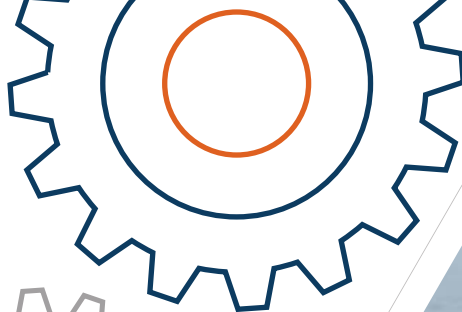
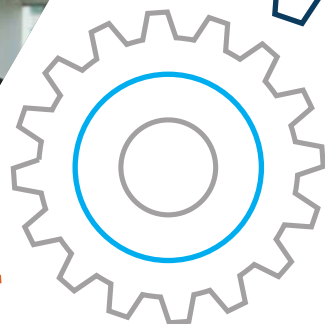
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## Giving Back to Get Ahead

When I introduced my theme—"Share to Learn. Share for Life."—at the start of the year, my goal was to inspire members to share their experiences so that others can learn and grow from them. To me, sharing is a fundamental part of the entrepreneurial journey. It is a universal solution for the issues all business owners face, and it has long been a lynchpin of EO membership. Thirty years ago, a handful of young entrepreneurs came together to learn from each other's experiences, laying the groundwork for the global community we now know and love. As we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the coming year, we will reflect on our history and the spirit of contribution that helped shape it.

Since July, I have had the chance to connect with countless members at chapter, regional and global events around the world. Along the way, I have seen the direct impact sharing has had on the lives and communities we touch. Through all of the conversations I've had, stories I've heard, experiences I've shared and relationships I've formed, I have been reminded of how influential we all can be when we choose to give back so others can get ahead. When we commit to sharing, we become stronger for it. We not only strengthen the lives of our peers, but we invite new opportunities into our world. In doing so, we get one step closer to becoming the world's most influential community of entrepreneurs.

As we reflect on our anniversary this year, I encourage you to keep the momentum going by using your experiences to inspire and educate your peers, while also building your networks, maximizing the value your membership provides and getting the most out of your entrepreneurial journey. Let's keep setting an example so that our peers will be inspired to do the same.

Regards,

Ivan Ting, EO China South  
EO Global Chairman

**SHARE  
LEARN.  
SHARE  
FOR LIFE.**



Photo by Matt Leedham

## Building EO's Leadership Community

Around this time each year, we reflect on our organizational progress while planning for a new fiscal year ahead. An integral part of this preparation is a suite of strategic sessions that are designed to unite and inform our member leadership. These include Presidents' Meetings, which recently concluded; the Operational Planning Meeting, held in late February; Strategy Summits, delivered around the world; the Global Leadership Conference (GLC), to be held in late April in Frankfurt, Germany; and the All-Committee Meeting, all of which is part of our annual leadership planning cycle.

As we prepare to lay the groundwork for a new fiscal year, we will do so while recognizing the growth of our global leadership community. Since 1987, EO has been led by member leaders who invest their time, energy and experience into moving the organization forward. In the past few months, we have been building this leadership community through recruitment. We had 211 applications by deadline last year; this year, we had 394. Of these applicants, 62 are women entrepreneurs. These are just two leadership wins worth mentioning as we gear up for another year of success and significance.

The growth of our leadership community is a testament to the power of EO leadership, and it serves as a reminder of how anything is possible when we unite to strengthen the organization. As we prepare for GLC and FY2017/2018, we will do so while continuing to deliver the EO experience you expect and deserve.

Regards,

Vijay K. Tirathrai  
EO CEO



# CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF EO SIGNIFICANCE

A lot can happen in 30 years. In 1987, 22 young entrepreneurs united in Calgary, Canada, to learn, network and share experiences in pursuit of personal and professional growth. What started out as a small group of peers turned into a global community of 12,000+ members in 50 countries.

At the core of our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration this year is our commitment to **“One Brand, One Culture, One EO,”** a priority that will drive our efforts as we celebrate at all levels of the organization, in all corners of the world. Our celebration will begin at the Global Leadership Conference (GLC) in Frankfurt,

Germany, in late April, followed by year-long campaigns that will incentivize our community to share their celebrations more broadly, and will conclude during the 2018 GLC.

Together, we will reflect on our progress, honor our culture, have fun, and look ahead at 30 more years of growth and greatness. Start showing your EO pride by using **#EO30**. Additional anniversary details, as well as a “celebration kit” and website, will be available soon.

**For more information, contact  
[communications@eonetwork.org](mailto:communications@eonetwork.org).**

## A Fond Farewell

Much like EO, *Octane* has evolved over the years to deliver maximum value to the membership. Leading these efforts was Nicholas Addison Thomas, EO’s Senior Director of Editorial and Marketing. For 10 years, Nicholas has dedicated himself to delivering dynamic content to educate and inspire all members. During this time, Nicholas has published 39 issues of *Octane*, filmed 17 Project *Octane* videos, and won eight awards for publication and video excellence.

We would like to recognize Nicholas for his commitment to *Octane*, his dedication to EO and unwavering passion for sharing members’ experiences. In April, Nicholas is moving to a new role as the lead storyteller for United Way Worldwide, the world’s largest privately funded non-profit with more than 2.6 million volunteers and more than US\$5 billion raised every year. Thank you, Nicholas, for all your hard work and commitment to EO. We wish you the very best in your new and exciting adventure!

Karen Summerson,  
Managing Editor





# WORDS MOVE US, EXAMPLES CHANGE US

**Ernesto Amescua**  
Founder of AIM Worldwide

EO Guadalajara is breaking new ground as the first chapter in EO to appoint a Community Outreach Chair, a unique position that speaks to the chapter's passion and eagerness to contribute to the greater good of humanity. I am fortunate to serve in this role. In 2016, I helped implement the chapter's "Challenging Your Vision" program, which assists 300 young men as they transition from high school to the workplace. By focusing on various topics such as self-esteem, life plans and resilience, EO Guadalajara members mentored these students as they prepared for the challenges of adulthood.

A staggering 50% of Mexico's citizens are poor, with 10% enduring extreme poverty. According to the Borgen Project, about 25 million Mexicans make less than US\$14 a day, despite the country's sizable GDP of US\$1.283 trillion. Energized by the notion of counteracting these dismal statistics, EO Guadalajara took action. They selected Villa de los Niños ("Boys Town"), an institution with campuses throughout Latin America, as an ideal opportunity to impact young men seeking to *make their mark* on the world.

To be accepted into the Villa, boys must be among the poorest of the poor with a strong desire to improve their situation. They must also commit to teaching others in their community what they've learned. The Villa's Guadalajara campus houses about 2,000 boys who are undertaking a five-year high school program, where they will learn technical skills like auto mechanics, painting or carpentry. After graduation, most of the students will enter the workforce, while a small minority will continue on to college.

Based on the idea that "words move us, examples change us," my EO peers shared their challenges to illustrate the concept of learning from adversity. Presentations by 17 members included: "Life is Not Fair," "Powerful Habits," "Failure is Part of Success" and "The Outcome of Doing the Right Thing." Members specifically crafted presentations to instill an entrepreneurial spirit, encourage self-esteem and help the students become more competent, ambitious and honorable. All presentations were filmed

so that they can impact future Villa students, as well as students in other organizations.

EO members also facilitated peer-to-peer sessions between Villa students and graduates, exploring topics such as challenges in the workplace, meeting expectations and financial planning. By graduation day, the boys were knowledgeable, inspired to excel and prepared to overcome obstacles. What's more, 10 of the graduates were hired by members' companies.

The program also impacted the EOers. We feel we benefited as much as the students in preparing and sharing our stories, and receiving feedback. In 2017, we will grow the program with more speakers and organize a job fair where invited companies can hire up to 300 graduates. We're also exploring ways to assist students who want to go to college.

Beyond our chapter, this outreach effort has instilled a sense of pride in the staff of my company. We hired a Villa graduate who was instrumental in organizing the program, and he is a great addition to our team. My goal is to make community outreach an integral part of doing business, keeping my employees apprised of ongoing activities and encouraging their participation.

The ROI for our new community outreach program is palpable: EO Guadalajara is attracting more members and member participation is on the rise. Long term, we hope this initiative will prepare more capable people for the workplace, positively impacting the Mexican economy, and consequently, our businesses. This effort marks a change in mindset for many of us who strongly believe that community outreach is a part of our mission to be the best we can be individually and with our families, businesses and communities. It is a part of the 360° platform needed by EO members everywhere.

*Ernesto Amescua is EO Guadalajara's Community Outreach Chair and the founder of AIM Worldwide, a marketing innovation agency. Ernesto is a family man with a keen interest in helping the poor and bettering his country. Contact Ernesto at [eamescua@aimww.com](mailto:eamescua@aimww.com).*





# A New Approach to Leadership

**Jeremy Choi**  
CEO of WPUP

I've learned a lot in my 19 years as an entrepreneur. For instance, you can compulsively read, study and seek advice about running a successful business, but you cannot possibly anticipate every challenge you'll confront. That's just one realization I've come to grasp as I grow into a seasoned entrepreneur who no longer wants to be "the hero." I've moved beyond business naiveté to a place where I strive to become "the coach," a business expert who empowers others through his own organic brand of leadership. Here are some things I've learned throughout my entrepreneurial journey:

## **YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL**

Many entrepreneurs think they can do everything themselves. Managing every aspect of a business is an enormous amount of work and takes a toll on resources, especially if you focus valuable time on areas where you're not the expert. Why not hire experts to do those tasks for a lot less than you can? For more than five years, we did our own bookkeeping because I couldn't find someone as

meticulous as I am. Eventually, I realized I was wrong. I wasn't looking hard enough, nor did I provide adequate training.

It's unrealistic to think someone could assimilate years of accumulated knowledge in a few days. After wrapping my head around that, I made some fantastic new hires and dedicated 300% more time and attention to training. As a result, now I have designers who out-design me, salespeople who outsell me, bookkeepers more organized than me and project managers who outmanage me. Now I focus on what I love. I don't know about you, but I didn't become an entrepreneur to do things I don't like doing.

## **SUCCESS WON'T HAPPEN OVERNIGHT**

No business is successful overnight. Period. It takes months of preparation, marketing, networking and hard work to launch a successful organization. At the start of any new business, time and finances are tight. You worry that you'll never succeed. But you have to stick to it. With perseverance, you can achieve your dream.

Early on, I went 18 months without a paycheck. I reinvested every penny back into the business. It was tough. I lived frugally in my father-in-law's condo, working 10-hour days and attending industry events most evenings. On my rare days off, I worried about how I would make payroll. Now I make sure I'm prepared for tough times by having at least six months' worth of expenses in the bank.

Also, never underestimate the value of networking! Before I closed my web-hosting business, I built strong relationships with clients, vendors and other industry contacts. Those great relationships helped jump-start my agency business from day one.

## **SOCIAL CIRCLES MAKE OR BREAK YOU**

Who are your influencers? What is their mentality? Close influencers make or break an entrepreneur. To grow, surround yourself with positive people who believe you will succeed. Cultivate acquaintances who challenge you to believe in yourself and think big, and who offer insightful advice—you'll be more likely to succeed.



Photo courtesy of Capture Scratch (GTAAT)

I surround myself with people who focus on learning, growing and boldly going beyond comfort zones. You don't have to abandon your friends, but it's important to consider the impact acquaintances can have on you. That's why I joined EO. It's also why I participate in other organizations that support the entrepreneurial mindset. I also make time for several local associations dedicated to inspiring leaders, because I believe it is our duty to encourage a new generation of entrepreneurs.

### CLARIFY YOUR VALUES

Once upon a time, you could start a business and with reasonable outreach, customers would find and appreciate you. Those days are over. Consumer behaviors have changed dramatically. It takes time and commitment to grow a customer base, and even longer to develop loyal clients who will recommend you to colleagues. Before launching an outlandish marketing campaign, realize that hundreds of other businesses pull similar stunts. Don't fall into that trap. Entrepreneurship isn't a sprint—it's a marathon. Live your values, define your company culture and insist that your whole company walks the walk.

One powerful exercise we do is outline our company's core values. We list how we interpret each value, give examples of how we demonstrate it daily or weekly, and define why it's important to us. Just putting it on paper won't cut it. Living,

deciding, firing and hiring to uphold your values does. In every weekly huddle we have, all team members must talk about one thing they've done to demonstrate one of our core values. When I had the design agency, beauty was a core value. Nothing left the agency without our creative director's thorough inspection—even AdWords campaigns! It's the same in my agricultural business, where product quality reputation is crucial. Nothing ships unless it's pristine. We'd rather lose money than damage our reputation. And if an employee doesn't support our company culture and values, they're out.

### A BIG MARKETING BUDGET WON'T SAVE YOU

Most entrepreneurs have small marketing budgets. But even when you have money, spending recklessly on every channel can be a bad decision in the long run. If I gave you US\$1 million tomorrow, how would you spend it? You might not even know. Don't feel ashamed—I didn't either. When I had money, I wanted to outspend and outspoke competitors, but doing so caused a financial burden and created an expectation. When resources dip too low to uphold that expectation, your brand may deteriorate. Now, I consult with experts before spending my marketing budget. Spending a few hundred dollars on advice that can save a few thousand is well worth it.



As you embark on your entrepreneurial journey, remember: It isn't just about the ideas. It's about execution, too. Let's stop saying, "coulda, woulda, shoulda," and let's start making it happen!

*Jeremy Choi (pictured) is an EO Toronto member, as well as a father, husband, mentor and irredeemable golf addict. As the founder and CEO of WPUP, Jeremy helps entrepreneurs get back to doing what's important in their businesses by proactively supporting and managing their websites. Contact Jeremy at [j@wpup.co](mailto:j@wpup.co).*



# The One-Page Marketing Plan

**Franziska Iseli**

Co-Founder of BasicBananas.com

It's not news that one of the biggest challenges business owners face is marketing. A scattered and unorganized approach can make it very difficult to stay focused on the activities that matter most. There is so much information out there, and it's easy to be pulled in a million directions.

To help busy entrepreneurs not only select the right marketing channels, but get a better return, I've created a planning framework that has helped thousands of businesses stay focused on growth. It's a slightly different approach to the conventional methods you find in textbooks— and it works. The good news is you don't need a 50-page marketing plan to grow your business exponentially.

So, grab a pen and paper (yep, totally old school), a glass of wine, put on your favorite music, and let's go! Please note the first three parts in your one-page marketing plan are just as important as, if not more than, the actual marketing strategies themselves. They are here to make sure your business is positioned to attract the right people.

## **PART ONE: YOUR WHY**

Understanding your "why" is the most important piece when it comes to creating outstanding marketing. It will help you produce campaigns that are engaging, memorable and sharable. I'm not talking about your vision and mission here, although those are important. I'm talking about the solutions people come to you for. If you start talking about the why or the outcomes of working with your business, your audience(s) will pay attention. Why do people come to you? What are you really selling? It's usually not the most obvious answer. A bookkeeper doesn't sell bookkeeping; she sells peace of mind. Harley-Davidson doesn't sell motorcycles; they sell freedom. Your turn! Crank up the music and write down your why before moving on to the next step.

## **PART TWO: YOUR WHO**

One thing I love about being an entrepreneur is you get to choose with whom you want to work. Most business owners stop at the demographics, but to truly create extraordinary marketing, you need to look into the psychographics. Divide your page into two with a line down the middle. On the top left, write the words "hopes and desires," and on the top right, write "fears and frustrations." Now, think about your favorite customers and write down everything that comes to mind regarding their frustrations and desires. Make sure you go deep and think of things they might not even talk about. This information will be invaluable once you create your marketing campaigns. Your turn! Put yourself in your customers' shoes.

## **PART THREE: YOUR UNIQUENESS**

In today's busy market, blending in just doesn't cut it. You have to be "talk-about-able" to be talked about. Think about what differentiates you from your competitors. Maybe you have an amazing satisfaction guarantee, or you provide freshly baked muffins in your waiting area. Also, ask yourself: What are some of the frustrations people have in your industry? And then see how you can overcome them in your business. For example, customers may be frustrated about the long waits on the phone, so you should focus on making your phone communication quick and sleek. Your turn! Write down three things that make you unique. Remember, they don't have to be big; the magic is in the details.

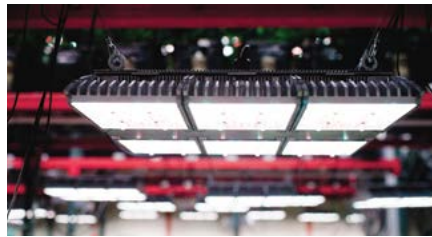
Only once you've worked on the first three parts of your one-page plan will you be able to choose your marketing strategies. There is no point in selecting your channels without truly understanding your positioning in the market, core message, customers and differentiation. Your business has to be positioned to be attractive to your ideal market, or else you're just wasting time, energy and money on marketing that won't give you a great return.

You did it! It wasn't that difficult, was it? Something that has worked exceptionally well in my businesses is to review our plan at the start of each quarter. This way, we can ensure we're staying focused and aligned with our overall 12-month goals. Good luck!

*Franziska Iseli (pictured) is a Swiss-Australian member of EO Sydney. She is an award-winning entrepreneur, leading marketing and brand strategist, avid adventurer, bestselling author and speaker, as well as the co-founder of BasicBananas.com, OceanLovers.com and TheBusinessHood.com. Contact Franziska at [franziska@basicbananas.com](mailto:franziska@basicbananas.com).*



Photo by Alexandrina Owens



Photos by Kristen Angelo photography



# Entrepreneurship in the Weeds

When the state of Washington legalized recreational marijuana in 2012, there was a lot of debate and controversy. Though it remains illegal at the federal level, Initiative 502 sparked the interest of so-called “cannapreneurs” to start manufacturing, distribution and retail operations. As the cannabis-law landscape continues to evolve in the U.S., several EO members are leveraging their knowledge to make a mark in the industry. One of them is EO Seattle’s **Kevin Sullivan**, who in this interview shares the challenges, stigmas and market potential of cannabis.

## HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY?

**KS/** “When Washington legalized recreational marijuana, my sister, who is now my business partner, had an energy-conservation firm selling energy-efficient LED lamps. One of her LED manufacturers sold lamps used for indoor agriculture originally designed by NASA for growing lettuce on the space station, and they suggested selling them to the cannabis industry for marijuana horticulture. At first, my sister wasn’t interested because she disagreed with legalization. But then we analyzed the numbers: The lamps sell for nearly US\$2,000 each, and an average grower uses more than 1,000 lamps. The total market potential was huge! We incorporated within a week, and I began my new career in plant biology and light engineering with absolutely no prior experience in either.”

## HOW DO LED LAMPS IMPACT THIS BURGEONING SECTOR?

**KS/** “For starters, they reduce growers’ costs without sacrificing quality or yield. Also, the energy consumed by marijuana growers using traditional high-intensity sodium lamps is enormous. Sodium lamps get extremely hot and require up to four times the electricity for air conditioning versus low-temperature LED lamps. According to a *New York Times* article, ‘When air-conditioning and ventilation are included, the energy used to grow a single marijuana plant would run seven refrigerators for the same period.’”

“While LED lamps represent a bigger up-front investment—nearly US\$2,000 each, as opposed to US\$350 for sodium lamps—lower electricity usage saves growers money in the long run. LED lamps also help lower demand on the electricity grid, which has struggled to keep up with the industry’s meteoric energy demands. My partner’s experience in the energy-conservation industry allowed us to get a fast start working with power companies to offer energy-efficiency upgrade grants for our grow lamps.”

## WHAT WOULD PEOPLE BE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY?

**KS/** “I would say the high level of sophistication in the top 20% of marijuana-growing companies. These are not ‘stoners’ growing pot in their garage. These entrepreneurs are focused on the science of plant health and the business of manufacturing. They’re well-financed, well-organized and well-managed, and

they experience all of the same issues every entrepreneur does. Sitting and talking with an owner is no different than talking with any EOer about the daily joys and struggles of entrepreneurship.”

## ARE THERE ANY INTERESTING “SIDE EFFECTS” IN THIS GROWING MARKET?

**KS/** “There is a certain stigma associated with being involved, even tangentially, with the marijuana industry. Out of EO Seattle’s more than 150 members, only four have businesses associated with the industry. Yet, the state of Washington will tax more than US\$1 billion of marijuana sales in 2016. One reason more entrepreneurs aren’t entering the market is overcoming the stigma with family, friends and the business community. It took over a year for the people close to me to believe that our startup was a serious business with real ambitions. Six of us from EO Seattle and EO Portland formed the Northwest Cannabis Forum, where we discuss the unique challenges of operating in this industry. We meet regularly to support each other and share solutions; it’s been incredibly helpful.”

## WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED WHILE BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS?

**KS/** “At first, our LED lamp technology was not accepted by the marijuana-cultivation industry, primarily because they had poor results with LED lamps from China that weren’t optimized for growing. We taught ourselves plant biology and the science of light. We conducted extensive testing on

various light spectrums with growers, which provided reliable scientific outcomes. We also partnered with local utilities to accept our lamps as energy-efficient alternatives to traditional grow lamps. We write grants, which result in the end-user customer paying a fraction of the retail cost for the lamps, all while saving 50% or more on their energy bill. Upon founding the company, we had little experience in these areas, but as scientific tests proved the technology worked, our confidence grew."

### IN YOUR OPINION, WHERE IS THE INDUSTRY HEADED IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

**KS/** "Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia currently have laws legalizing marijuana in some form. California by itself has the sixth-largest GDP in the world. The ArcView Group, which does industry research, estimates legalized marijuana will account for US\$11 billion in the U.S. alone by 2019. The industry is still very young, and because it's not legal at the federal level, there are clear risks associated. Prospective entrepreneurs will want to be careful about their choices and whether they want to concentrate just on this market. Fortune 50 firms won't have much interest in the industry until the federal government fully adopts a legalized approach to cannabis.

"With legalization, multiple industry segments will move into cannabis farming and distribution. We anticipate major players entering the space—from big AG like Monsanto, to big tobacco like Phillip Morris, or even big pharma like Merck and Pfizer. When that happens, we expect industry mergers and consolidation to drive up the sales value of well-positioned firms in the industry. In our case, we might find interest from General Electric or Philips, companies with large footprints in the lighting industry. So, while we focus on making money today, we're also positioning the business for a strategic sale down the road."

*Kevin Sullivan (pictured) is an EO Seattle member and CEO of Forever Green Indoors, Inc. Contact Kevin at [Kevin.Sullivan@forevergreenindoors.com](mailto:Kevin.Sullivan@forevergreenindoors.com).*

# Challenges of the Cannabis Industry

## Jeff Anderson

Co-Founder of The Evergreen Market

Life has a funny way of surprising us, doesn't it? Here's something I never saw coming: I met my cannabis-industry business partner at my daughter's Girl Scout troop meeting! Eric Gaston, an EO Seattle member, was an attorney dissatisfied in his profession. When Washington's Initiative 502 passed, he asked me and our other partner, Arne Nelson, to consider exploring the marijuana business.

After months of due diligence, we decided our biggest opportunity was in the retail space. We were lucky enough to secure two retail licenses through a state lottery process. It has certainly been an interesting journey so far. Here are some of the biggest hurdles we've faced entering this burgeoning industry together:

- **Initial funding.** We couldn't take outside money due to the federal precedence, so my wife and I cashed in our retirement to fund the venture.
- **Banking.** Most financial institutions won't bank with retail marijuana stores. We were one of the first to secure a banking relationship, business debit cards, and armored car pickup to mitigate financial and security risks.
- **Locations.** Finding viable retail locations that met restrictive buffer-zone requirements was difficult. Vacant space and willing landlords were few and far between.
- **Branding/build-out/partnership.** We hired a branding company to help us create our vision, mission and brand. This was paramount for our business, as not only was our concept new, but our partnership was, as well.
- **Lack of industry-insider knowledge.** As founders, we have unique skill sets. Knowing the product and culture was not one of them. We aligned ourselves with experts to fill our blind spot—one of our best moves.
- **Communication issues.** We are open late, seven days a week. This causes communication challenges as regular employee meetings and team-building exercises are hard to schedule.
- **Millennial employees.** Each store has approximately 25 employees, mostly millennials. While they are enthusiastic and fun to work with, challenges persist; scheduling demands, calling in "sick" at the last minute and entitlement issues are difficult for managers to deal with.
- **Having "the talk."** Telling people what I do—including even my family at first—is an eye-opening experience. The most difficult thing has been the reaction of my children's friends and their families. Not everyone is on the recreational cannabis bandwagon, and it definitely throws a wrench in my kids' lives.

We currently own two retail stores and have several scheduled to open in 2017. I owe a huge amount of credit to EO for my success. In my 10 years as a member, I've gained invaluable knowledge and insight through my Forum and the Entrepreneurial Master's Program. We wouldn't be here today without EO!

*Jeff Anderson is EO Seattle's incoming Learning Chair and a co-founder of The Evergreen Market, an award-winning cannabis retail business with the mantra: "Educate. Elevate. Celebrate." Contact Jeff at [jeff@theevergreenmarket.com](mailto:jeff@theevergreenmarket.com).*






# RIDING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL Wave

**Richard Walton**  
Co-Founder of AVirtual

I was six years into running my business, GVI, when I went to the bank for a loan. My wife and I were expecting our first baby, and whilst the business was doing well, it was a lot of work and not making enough money. The bank needed me to take out life insurance, so I went to the doctor for a health check. His diagnosis was clear: "If you continue on like this, you'll be dead by the time you're 50." That one sentence changed my life.



Whilst my company was sending groups of young people on expeditions to remote locations around the world, I was stuck at my desk in the U.K. managing spreadsheets. I was overweight, stressed and scared about the future. I had set up GVI as an adventure whilst living on an island off the coast of Honduras. Now, I was living in a tiny house in suburbia, rarely exercising and drinking too much.

The birth of our first baby was the real catalyst. I wanted to be a good father. My wife understood that, for me, it wasn't about going to the gym and changing my diet. I needed to do something drastic. She asked me what I'd always wanted to do. My answer? Surf. It wasn't just that I saw surfing as an exhilarating form of exercise—it was the lifestyle it promised. People describe surfing as meditative; it encourages a more mindful existence, and for me, that meant a major shift in my mentality ... which wasn't likely to happen in England where I was trapped in bad habits.

So, with a 3-month-old baby, we sold our house and moved to Costa Rica. I surfed every day, ate only organic food and meditated. All the while, GVI doubled in size. There's no doubt that moving to Costa Rica positively affected my leadership for the long term. It forced me to prioritise my physical and mental health, which is important for my clarity and enthusiasm; but truthfully, our business growth was mainly due to luck. The market developed, and so did we.

However, my business would have done a lot better if I had stayed in the U.K. Some companies can be run remotely, but nothing beats being in a room with people, brainstorming and building partnerships. Once or twice a year, my top management team flew to Costa Rica to discuss strategy, but it was never enough to build a true sense of togetherness. Some of my team eventually moved out to join us, lured by the beach-bum lifestyle, but they didn't stay. For all the appearances of paradise, Costa Rica is a hard place to live. We had one major earthquake, frequent water shortages, weekly power cuts and tsunami warnings almost every month. We loved the adventure, but it was always a struggle.

And then the financial crisis hit. GVI plummeted by 50% overnight, and I was forced to let a lot of my team go. The industry has never fully recovered. For

me, it was a big reality check. I realised I missed being at the pulse of business, and that if I had been at the U.K. office, I could have at least restored office morale. The decision to ultimately leave Costa Rica was personal as much as it was professional. The children (there were now four) were being home-schooled, and the nearest hospital was six hours away. It made sense for GVI, and it made sense for my family.

Cape Town, South Africa, was the compromise between England and Costa Rica. Our head office was already based there, and the business scene in Cape Town was booming. It had the relaxed pace of life that I loved about Costa Rica, but with all the comforts of England that were important for my family: good hospitals, schools and more opportunities to build friendships. Best of all, I still had the surf lifestyle (plus, a few extra sharks), and my management team was around me. The industry is still tough, but we're growing, which would have been impossible if I were still operating out of Costa Rica.

Living in Costa Rica taught me the importance of exchanging ideas and the power of networking. Above all, I no longer suffer from regret. Most people long to pursue something different, but when you're working—especially as an entrepreneur—it becomes more difficult to do. I'll admit it was a huge risk sacrificing my career and financial stability for my health, family and personal benefit, but I did it for eight years, and it has given me a lot of peace. I think everyone should have a massive adventure in their lives. It doesn't have to be a permanent change, but just enough to give you the satisfaction that you did what you wanted to do.

*Richard Walton (pictured) is an EO Cape Town member and a co-founder of AVirtual, a virtual-assistant firm he started in 2015 after struggling to find a great virtual personal assistant to help him manage his busy life. Contact Richard at [richard@avirtual.co.uk](mailto:richard@avirtual.co.uk).*

# ARE YOUR CLIENTS in it for the Long Haul?

## Paul Binsfeld

Founder and President of Company Nurse, LLC

The word “partnership” gets thrown around loosely when describing client relationships. What does it truly mean? Is it that your clients are too comfortable to go elsewhere, or that you got their daughter a really cool wedding gift? In my experience, a partnership isn’t either of those things— instead, it’s a relationship of mutual respect based on producing results.

I grew my startup from one employee (me) to a nationwide operation serving high-profile clients. The road has been bumpy at times, sure, but the biggest lesson I’ve learned is what it takes to maintain true partnerships with clients: trust, respect, shared values and good communication. Here are some insights gleaned from 20 years of servicing long-term clients:

### UNDERSTAND A CLIENT’S MOTIVATION

Design your services to help your client achieve their goals. It sounds obvious, but often plans are developed without benchmarking against goals. We assess results for each client monthly, quarterly and annually, adjusting our services as we go to maximize client benefit. They appreciate our customized approach, which leads to an even greater understanding of their needs.

### THE CLIENT CAN FIRE YOU AT ANY TIME

You have to adopt the mindset of proactively earning your client’s business every day. If you’re not helping them achieve objectives, you’re not doing your job. The definition of a true partnership is not a contract with a handcuff clause. Going the extra mile to help your client shine is a solid stepping stone toward a stronger relationship.

### YOU CAN FIRE THEM, TOO

Respect is a two-way street. I remember a situation when a client was verbally abusive with my team. I confronted him about his unprofessional behavior and requested that he speak politely to my team. The behavior continued, so I gave them 30-days’ notice. In the end, the rude individual was terminated, my employees received an apology, and we’ve enjoyed a strong relationship for 15 years. Not only do you have to treat your employees with dignity— your clients do, too.



### COMPANY CULTURE IS KEY

I’ve seen employees leave for a “better opportunity,” only to come back because of our company culture. Work-life balance is a buzzword, but are you truly affording your staff that benefit? I set reasonable parameters, and employees return the favor by being even more accountable. I encourage employees to find their balance. I make an effort to do the same, staying involved in my children’s lives and sharing hobbies with my wife.

### SAY “I’M SORRY”

In 2010, I brought all call center operations in-house. The switchover was not seamless, as I underestimated some challenges. My rowboat had leaks and was slowly sinking— and my clients felt it. So, I embarked on what I now call my “apology tour.” I was truthful with clients about what I had under control and what needed to be handled. One major municipality requested I speak directly with some very frustrated members who were rightfully fed up with the situation. I was transparent with them, and we all ended up on the same page. My clients gave me some breathing room, the transition was completed successfully, and we recently celebrated 10 years of service with that municipality.

### DO THE RIGHT THING FOR THE CLIENT, AND THE MONEY WILL FOLLOW

An early mentor gave me that advice, and I’ve faithfully followed it. Doing the right thing fosters good business decisions and helps me sleep better at night. If you always work with your client’s best interest at heart, and couple it with good communication, you will build strong trust, respect and credibility over time.

*Paul Binsfeld (pictured) is an EO Arizona member, as well as the founder and president of Company Nurse, LLC. In 2016, Paul launched Enspiri Solutions, LLC, the first-to-market SaaS solution for workers’ compensation nurse triage management. Contact Paul at [pbinsfeld@companynurse.com](mailto:pbinsfeld@companynurse.com).*





# The Perils of WORKPLACE GAMIFICATION

**Thierry Poitras**

Founder and CEO of Greatify

The word “gamification” entered our business lexicon in 2010, but the concept has been around since at least the 1970s with “Salesperson of the Month” contests. Gamification is hailed as a panacea by HR professionals and managers who want to drive employee engagement and productivity in a lively, participatory way. The idea of applying game theory—Earn points! Win badges! Get on the leaderboard!—to galvanize employees in support of organizational goals sounds like a win-win. Rather than being a universal cure for workplace woes, however, gamification can go sideways fast without a well-conceived strategy.

Here’s an example: Jack, a call-center manager, decides a series of contests will motivate his employees. A die-hard football fan, he spends weeks crafting a sports-themed program and launches it with more pomp and circumstance than the Super Bowl. Rather than motivating employees, the program falls as flat as a deflated (ahem!) football. Why? Sixty percent of his team doesn’t watch or even enjoy sports. And the prizes he offered—caps and t-shirts—are usually relegated to the donation pile. Jack didn’t do his research. Such failures are common due to a complete misuse and misunderstanding of gamification in the workplace.

One problem is that companies deploy gamification as an end unto itself, when it should be the means to an end. If the game becomes the focus rather than the organization’s goals, the work at hand isn’t taken seriously. Where’s the ROI in that? In a nutshell, HR, performance and organizational challenges can’t be fixed through gamification alone. To

change employee behavior, you have to motivate employees and cultivate engagement. Studies show that motivation and engagement come from having clear goals, tracking progress, getting constructive feedback and developing a sense of team spirit. Let’s explore some common gamification mistakes and how to remedy them:

**Completely ignore company culture and staff personalities.** As Jack demonstrated, you’re doomed if you neglect to align gamification strategy and incentives with employees’ genders, age groups, preferences, cultures and values. Know your audience.

**Develop a one-size-fits-all program.** There’s no cookie-cutter approach to gamification. What motivates a sales team likely won’t work with field technicians. Recognize what gets your teams fired up. Competition? Collaboration? Sci-Fi? Fashion? Don’t exclude any segment of your staff. Sometimes incentives for high-achievers can discourage staff members who aren’t as likely to climb the leaderboard.

**Base your gamification strategy solely on competition.** Don’t turn your workplace into “Game of Thrones.” While friendly competition can bolster team spirit, pitting employees against each other can obscure the purpose of your incentive program—they just want to win.

**Set unrealistic and unachievable goals.** You want your team to aim high. You’re under pressure to hit sales targets or decrease customer complaints. However, if goals are unattainable, no matter how much gamification you add, employees

won’t succeed. Instead, target reasonable, bite-sized goals.

**Design a behemoth contest with one huge prize at year’s end.** A single grand prize won’t motivate dozens of employees to achieve targets. Keep employees engaged by dividing your gamified incentive program into digestible monthly or quarterly chunks. Staff members will be more enthusiastic about multiple chances to win. Attaining monthly goals fosters long-term, cumulative achievements.

**Don’t measure ROI.** Without measuring ROI for both your incentive program and accompanying gamification strategy, how will you know its value? Always take the pulse to justify results and determine whether you chose the right KPIs from the get-go.

I’m not bashing gamification; it can be a very potent solution to jumpstarting employee performance. However, I am calling out ineffective and downright absurd gamification implementations without legitimate goals, strategies or consideration for employees. It’s not about playing games. It’s about fundamental human nature. With that thought firmly in mind, game on!

*Thierry Poitras (pictured) is an EO Québec member, as well as the founder and CEO of Greatify, whose mission is to restore performance and engagement in the workplace. Contact Thierry at [thierry@greatify.co](mailto:thierry@greatify.co).*





# KICKING INTO GEAR

Every company has a personalized business model, one that separates them from the herd. For EO Chicago's **Zak Dabbas** (right) and **Ryan Unger** (left), co-founders of Punchkick Interactive, a mobile app and web development agency, the secret to their sustainability comes from "going flat." In this special interview, Zak and Ryan offer insights into their EO journey, the decision to adopt a new business model, and how a flat focus has led to a surge in productivity and innovation.

## WALK US THROUGH THE ORIGINS OF PUNCHKICK INTERACTIVE. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START A BUSINESS TOGETHER?

**ZD/** "Ryan and I first met at Kent State University in Ohio. At the time, I was a pre-med student—my father was a physician—and although I've always been a design junkie, I had never considered pursuing software or technology as a career path. I first met Ryan when he was in our school's design program, where I discovered he was doing freelance work on the side. I wanted to be a part of it, so we started working together. Before long, we were winning projects and earning weekend money. After a battle with cancer in my last year of the pre-med program, I completed the program, shifted gears and decided to study law ... but I didn't like it. It wasn't for me. I realized that what I was building with Ryan was the only thing that really gave me joy. In 2006, we officially launched Punchkick Interactive. I play a lot of video games, and

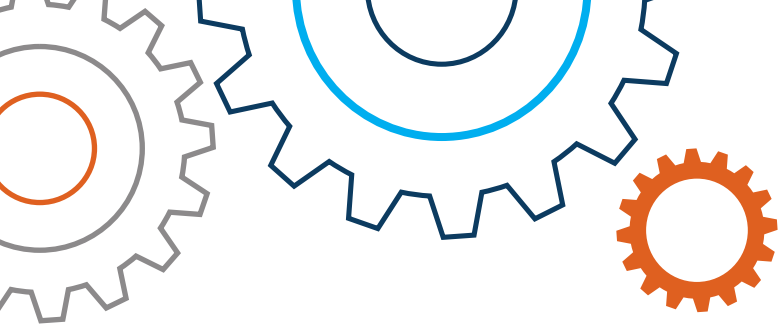
'punch' and 'kick' are a natural combination for fighting games, so we combined the two for our company name. By the time we graduated college, we were landing Fortune-level clients. We've been growing ever since."

## EARLY ON IN YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY, YOU RELIED ON EO GSEA AND EO ACCELERATOR TO HELP YOU BUILD YOUR BUSINESS. WHAT VALUE DID THESE PROGRAMS PROVIDE?

**RU/** "It was 2008, and Zak and I were still building our business from the ground up. I remember seeing a web banner for the EO Global Student Entrepreneur Awards (EO GSEA) while working toward my graduate degree, so I decided to go ahead and nominate myself. I really just thought it would look good on my resume, but I wound up becoming a global finalist and connecting with other young entrepreneurs from around the world. I remember finding a flyer in my registration bag at the EO GSEA Global Finals, which highlighted the benefits of EO Accelerator. I showed Zak and sold him on the idea of joining. We still had a lot to learn about running our business, so we signed up. We went into the program with US\$432,000 in revenue, and we graduated with EO qualifications and the kind of knowledge you can't put a price on. EO Accelerator showed us how to scale Punchkick to realize our vision.

"Around this time, we met an EO Chicago member who introduced us to the Entrepreneurial Masters Program (EMP). When Zak and I applied, we agreed that if one of us didn't get in, the other wouldn't attend. As it turned out, we were one of the only duos in the program's history to be accepted. In a lot of ways, EMP was the catalyst to joining EO in the first place. We had





been drinking the EO Kool-Aid for so long, and we didn't want it to stop. I really think EO should advertise itself by guaranteeing you positive ROI or your money back, because I don't see how anybody won't get that. The value is just incredible."

**A FEW YEARS AGO, YOU DECIDED TO ADOPT A "FLAT" BUSINESS MODEL. HOW DID YOU ARRIVE AT THIS DECISION, AND WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF GOING FLAT?**

**RU/** "We have never been a traditional business, so we've been more or less flat since day one. But we didn't really start to scale in this way until EMP. We realized we needed to change how we were running our business, or we would be on a death march. I remember hearing Verne Harnish give a speech in our third year of the program, and afterward, I spoke with him about the concept of going flat. He suggested I read a book called 'Emergence,' which motivated me to learn more about the model. And then I came across 'Reinventing Organizations,' a book by Frederic Laloux, and I was freaking out about what I was learning. I remember being on a plane with Zak, trying to get him to read a summary of the book. After he read it, we were both sold on the idea. Zak and I started the company partially because we hated the idea of working for someone else. If we were feeling that way, everyone else probably was, too. So, we found ourselves wondering: What would it be like if we got out of the way?"

"Really, 'flat' means that you believe people are inherently good, and that with the right information and transparency in the business, people can make decisions without the need for management layers. I truly believe, with the exception of people having fear for self-preservation purposes, that people are good. And all things being equal, they will do right by their peers. For me, that was a huge component of going flat. So, we decided to build a company where it feels like you don't have a boss. It was non-hierarchical from the start, and the more I learned about removing the bureaucracy, the more I was blown away by the business model. It seemed like some sort of fictional utopia that I absolutely wanted to realize in the company. It's been hugely rewarding in so many ways."

**ZD/** "Going flat has a lot of tangible and intangible benefits. Tangibly, I believe it helps attract better talent, reduce turnover, and bring the best ideas to the forefront. It's the people on the frontlines who are able to see the opportunities for business improvement, but they're often ignored in a traditional hierarchy. Intangibly, people chill out; there's no need to 'kiss up' to superiors or prove that you're better than everyone else. In a flat organization, people see their peers growing and making big changes for the business; someone else's success is not perceived as a threat to their own. In fact, they're happy about it, because it means good things for them in their career, and it means longevity and security for the business. In our first year of going



*Ryan, getting a tattoo of Punchkick Interactive's logo.*

flat, we experienced 28% growth. Since then, relationships have grown stronger and processes are more reliable. We're rowing in the same direction. For me, just being around people who are enjoying what they do and feeling empowered, that's the best feeling of all."

**TO SUPPORT YOUR FLAT INFRASTRUCTURE, YOU INTRODUCED TWO AVENUES OF PEER ENGAGEMENT—AN ADVICE CHANNEL AND A FEEDBACK CHANNEL. HOW HAVE THESE BEEN IMPACTFUL?**

**ZD/** "The advice channel is the single biggest component to going flat at Punchkick. We're not short of people who have brilliant ideas on how to move the company forward, but they may struggle to make decisions because they don't want to 'ruffle feathers' or make a mistake. The advice channel arms employees with what they need to know that they're doing the right thing. It starts with talking to experts, inside or outside of the business, to learn more about the decision they're trying to make. The second step is talking to peers in the office who will be impacted by their decision; whether that's finance because of the cost, or IT because of the integration within the company. After using the advice channel, the final decision is entirely up to the employee. The advice channel exposes people to other parts of the business, and that dialogue is priceless. What we've found is that when people are socializing their ideas and getting advice, they make the right decision."

**RU/** "The feedback channel is also a critical component to running Punchkick flat. Whenever you feel strongly—positively or negatively—about an idea or decision a peer has made, you have to give them feedback in a timely and non-violent manner. When matters don't resolve themselves through a simple feedback session, it can escalate to what's called a 'dispute resolution,' which can include third parties within Punchkick. Every decision you make at Punchkick, you're free to make through the advice channel, knowing the feedback channel also exists. So, if you leave someone out, or you make a decision that's in your own best interest and not that of the business, your peers will hold you accountable. This checks-and-balances system helps people make great decisions because they know their peers and the company will feel the impact of it. You're not dissociated from your decision-making anymore, and that makes it really special."

## WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES OF INTRODUCING A FLAT MODEL INTO THE WORKPLACE?

**ZD/** “I think a lot of people don’t understand what goes into going flat. If you are a co-founder or founder, and you’re ready to be flat, you have to go all in. Going flat is the last executive order you make. You’re saying to the company, ‘We are all managers. We are all running this place.’ It’s very hard for people to let go. At times, I find myself wanting to jump in and make a big decision, and I feel so much happier when I use the advice channel to gauge people’s feelings about what I’m working on or the direction I’m moving toward. The validation I get in return is wonderful ... but, if you’re not open to that kind of dialogue with your team, flat is not going to work for you.”

“Going flat might not be for everyone. In order to be a flat organization, you have to truly believe in sharing with others the experience of running the business; the highs and lows, really letting people understand the numbers and processes that make the business tick. You have to say to your employees: ‘If you’re truly interested and invested in this model, the doors are open for you to help make a positive change. You will be judged on your merits, not your titles or seniority.’ Going flat creates a platform for everyone to have a voice, and it opens you up to constructive feedback from your colleagues. It is peer accountability at scale, and it really works.”

## WHAT ARE SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS OF GOING FLAT?

**RU/** “I think one big misconception is that you can just decide to go flat, and you’re flat. To be flat, you have to commit to transparency. It’s not enough to make the data and metrics in your business transparent. You have to take that data and make it meaningful. You need to let people understand the levers they can pull to help reduce company expenses, increase revenue and maximize customer satisfaction, so that everybody in the business can understand at all times what they can do to help move the business forward. We’re transparent about everything in Punchkick, except for salaries, which I’m hoping will change soon. We learned early on that making our data transparent is a critical step in the flat process, but a lot of people don’t realize the magnitude of work involved in taking that information and making it meaningful to everyone in the company.”

**ZD/** “I also think there’s a misconception that flat has to look the same in every business. The way we run flat is different than how others run flat. Depending on your business, the channels you might need to put in place to keep the company flat at scale will

vary. At Punchkick, we’ve gotten to a place where we can find excellent talent who really fit in, so for us, it’s less about putting in channels to keep cultural protections in place, and it’s more about encouraging people to continue giving feedback to each other. In a flat environment, everyone is holding each other accountable for the decisions they make and the actions they take, and that’s a beautiful thing. But you have to keep working at it to make it stick.”

## WHAT TIPS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR EO PEERS WHO ARE THINKING ABOUT TRANSITIONING INTO A FLAT INFRASTRUCTURE?

**RU/** “Make sure there is financial literacy among your staff. For years, we’ve been transparent about our numbers, and what we found is that when we started sharing profit data with our people, they were like, ‘Oh, so you don’t have a 100-foot yacht docked in the harbor?’ It was really awesome to see how grounded people became and how much they bought into the business, once they began to understand the expenses and see how their decisions and actions directly impacted the bottom line. So, I think financial literacy is a huge component to going flat.”

**ZD/** “The biggest tip I can share is: If you are not evolving as a business, you are dying. In our industry—software development—the next big thing is always around the corner, so we have to stay agile. Right now, we’re moving from a service-focused model to a more product-centric one. With products, we see higher margins, shorter sales cycles and renewable revenue. It will help us normalize and have more predictability behind our revenue. The idea is that we will get 80% of our revenue coming from products, with 20% coming from our services, and it will just be a cycle. We’re constantly innovating as a business because if we don’t, we’ll get left behind. Going flat ultimately taught us that you have to truly be willing to disassemble your operating system and evolve if you want to survive. It’s been an incredible journey so far, and we’re excited to see what the next 11 years has in store for us.”



**PUNCHKICK INTERACTIVE**



To learn more about Zak and Ryan’s journey, contact them at [zak@punchkick.com](mailto:zak@punchkick.com) and [ryan@punchkick.com](mailto:ryan@punchkick.com),

or visit [www.punchkick.com](http://www.punchkick.com). For a special, behind-the-scenes video about their journey toward flat, scan the QR code.

# FROM EO LAGOS TO EO LEADERSHIP



*They say the more you invest in your EO experience, the more you get out of it. For members like EO Lagos's Ayo Stuffman, pursuing a leadership position in EO is an investment in his future. In this interview, Ayo talks about his leadership journey and upcoming role as Chapter President.*

## **WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE AN EO LEADERSHIP POSITION?**

**AS/** "When I was first introduced to EO in 2012 by my office neighbour, Otunba Ayodele Shittu, my interest was immediately piqued by the opportunities the organization presented. I quickly realized the intrinsic value of knowledge derived from peer-to-peer sharing; only another entrepreneur can provide such deep insight into the challenges we all face. As a business owner with so many responsibilities, time is precious to me. Yet, I found myself drawn to the opportunity and soon became one of the founders of EO Nigeria, now called EO Lagos. Because of this, I have a deep-rooted connection to my chapter and a vested interest in growing with it. I am honoured to be President-Elect."

## **HOW ARE YOU PREPARING FOR THE ROLE OF CHAPTER PRESIDENT?**

**AS/** "My path to leadership in EO has been a steady climb. Serving as EO Lagos's Membership Chair was a remarkable experience that galvanized me to put forth more effort. I later earned the opportunity to further enhance my leadership foundation as Integration Chair and MyEO Chair for Africa. The pinnacle of my learning commitment came when I was accepted into EO's Entrepreneurial Masters Program, which challenged me to sharpen my leadership skills in ways I never imagined. I'm also thankful to our current Chapter President, Funmi Ashaye Babington, for working closely with me as I prepare for my most important EO role yet."

## **WHAT SURPRISED YOU ABOUT EO OR YOUR LEADERSHIP TRAINING?**

**AS/** "The number of 'wow' moments I have experienced thanks to great leaders from around the world, all of whom share their astounding experiences and enlighten us through their courageous actions. My time at the EO New York University, for example, was filled with epiphanies inspired by the unrelenting commitment and focus of fellow leaders. Another unforgettable experience was Jack Daly's presentation on 'Sales Playbook for Hyper-Sales Growth,' where he shared how he built a world-class sales team and doubled sales quickly."

## **WHAT SKILLS ARE YOU LOOKING TO IMPROVE AS YOU PREPARE FOR FY2017/2018?**

**AS/** "Although I have vastly improved my leadership skills through EO's resources in the past five years, I suspect my journey is only just beginning. With this in mind, I hope to enhance my team-building, public-speaking, coaching and mentoring skills by learning from peers. It is a gift to draw from the expertise that only another entrepreneur would have. The knowledge, skills and behaviours gained enable me to make a bigger impact on my team. For example, I've learned how to mentor my staff on being accountable for tasks delegated to them. Learning from so many innovative and talented people enhances my business and makes me a better person. I've come a long way, but the more I learn, the more I realize I still have a lot to learn!"



*Ayo Stuffman (pictured) is EO Lagos's incoming Chapter President, as well as the driving force behind VAS2Nets Technologies, Ltd., a convergent communications technology company based on his VAS2Nets MVAS platform. Contact Ayo at [a.stuffman@vas2nets.com](mailto:a.stuffman@vas2nets.com).*





# An Open Invitation to be “B”

## Shawn Busse

CEO of Kinesis

Dear fellow business owners,

I know you work hard to make your company amazing. I also know you have a fierce desire to win, sprinting to your next goal. That's because I'm just like you. This intensity is what makes us successful entrepreneurs. But here's a question to consider: If you want to win, exactly what game are you playing, and how do you really know when you've won?

For many of us, the answer is simple: Winning means bringing more money to shareholders. But this is a fundamentally flawed approach. History has shown us that the “shareholder value theory” fails even on its single rule of “make more money.” Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric (GE), who seemingly “won” at the shareholder value game, disparages this approach. In a 2009 interview with *The Financial Times*, he said, “On the face of it, shareholder value is the dumbest idea in the world.”

As a fellow CEO and EO member, I challenge you to play an entirely different game; one where we redefine what winning means. This new game is one where we drive our companies to serve customers, employees and communities ... not just to increase revenue for shareholders.

In *Leaders Eat Last*, author Simon Sinek shows us that playing the one-dimensional “profit game” benefits nobody (owners included). Case in point: In the past 30 years, GE has prioritized shareholders, whereas Costco has prioritized employees and customers. As a result, Costco has greatly outperformed GE in the long run.

Costco pays its workers' wages well above industry standards and provides health insurance, vacation time and a matched 401(k). This pays off with a shockingly low rate of employee turnover (17% overall) and one of the lowest shrinkage (employee theft) figures in the industry. Costco's loyal workforce returns high productivity, good customer service and strong profits. Costco's founder and former CEO, Jim Sinegal, says, “When employees are happy, they are your best ambassadors.”

There is a powerful way to begin playing this new game—become a B Corp. I speak from experience since my company, Kinesis, just joined this growing community of change-makers. From our inception in 2000, Kinesis has focused on being a better business. And at our annual planning session in early 2015, we realized that while we are proud of what we've accomplished, it

was time to raise our standards by becoming a certified B Corp. This move was right for the following reasons:

- We want to “practice what we preach” by going through a rigorous, third-party certification of our commitment to social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency
- This certification aligns closely with our core values and puts us in a growing community of likeminded companies, including Patagonia, Etsy, Warby Parker, Ben & Jerry's and many others
- Kinesis strives to provide meaningful work for every person who works here, as well as be a company that our clients feel good about hiring
- The B Corp assessment system provides ongoing data points and measurements of our progress (examples of measurements for context)

We found the process of becoming a B Corp to be very motivating to our company. The assessment process allowed us to take stock of the areas where we wanted to improve our impact. As a result, we revised our employee guidelines, streamlined our recycling process, added benefits for our team and increased our involvement in our community.

So, fellow entrepreneurs and EO members, I invite you to join us in this new game that doesn't play to win at all costs, but instead focuses on being a company that is the best for your employees, customers, communities and the environment.

Kind regards,

Shawn

*P.S. Our overall score is an 85 on the B Impact Score. In the spirit of friendly competition, I will be the first to congratulate you if you can beat us. Game on!*

*Shawn Busse is an EO Portland member and the CEO of Kinesis, a marketing and business consultancy helping B2B service-centric companies achieve growth from the inside out. Contact Shawn at [shawn@kinesisinc.com](mailto:shawn@kinesisinc.com).*

# THE INTENTIONAL Entrepreneur

**Jay Feitlinger**

Founder and CEO of StringCan Interactive



Like many of you, I'm a serial entrepreneur. But what might set us apart is that I consider five of my first six businesses failures. Despite this, I was determined to pursue my entrepreneurial dreams and learn from my mistakes. It was during this time that I found the guidance and support I needed within EO. When I joined the organization, I was in the process of selling my seventh company. I did well with the sale, and I was feeling good about my prospects as an entrepreneur. I could smell success and figured my next business would do just as well, if not better. What I didn't expect was the collateral damage.

When I launched my current business, StringCan Interactive, I hit the US\$1 million-revenue mark within 20 months. I felt like I finally had what it took to successfully scale a business. My eye was on the prize, and I was certain nothing would stand in my way. There was just one problem: As my business grew, my home life wilted. I woke up one day and realized my family was suffering from my devotion to my business. I had always valued that my wife, Rachel, was supportive of me in my business endeavors. When others told me I should get a "stable job," she encouraged me not to throw in the towel. I was proud of our marriage and relationships with our two daughters, Lexi, 12, (pictured left at middle) and Ella, 10, (pictured left at bottom). But I was confronted with the truth: Along my journey toward professional success, my most important relationships were sacrificed. It wasn't intentional or malicious, but it happened nonetheless. My wife and I started to feel like roommates, and we squabbled with our kids often.

When I was honest with myself, I saw the path that brought us here, one marked by late nights at the office, answering emails during family meals and a dogged pursuit of success. Something had to change. When I considered my malnourished relationships at home, I became frustrated. In business, I rarely had issues working through tough interpersonal dynamics. I always had an open dialogue with my clients and employees, and I was intentional about keeping it that way. But for some reason, I felt powerless to do the same with my family. And then it hit me: Why not take the same intentionality and processes I used to strengthen my work relationships, and apply them to my most important relationships outside of work?

The processes in my career that had always been effective were annual business planning, goal-setting, a consistent review of performance, and weekly one-on-one meetings with team members to





## Scale Up Your Family, Scale Up Your Business

address expectations and individual goals, as well as team building. These tenets had served me and my colleagues well over the years, and I wanted to find a way to translate them into practices that could serve me and my family.

So, I dreamed up an annual, four-day family retreat that is fun, customizable and centered around defining our purpose, staying focused, family bonding, improving communication and goal-setting. Day one lays the foundation, as the parents create a family vision. Day two includes reflecting on the past year in a visual way. Day three zeroes in on the coming year, using “dream boards” and activities to share hopes for the future. On the fourth and final day, goals are set and each family member writes a letter to their future self.

When I first invited my family to participate in this retreat with me, reactions were mixed. But they all ended up saying “yes,” and we threw ourselves into the activities I designed. The results were astonishing, to say the least. We came away from that inaugural family retreat with clear insight into one another’s insecurities, hopes and goals. It was refreshing, healing, productive and altogether rejuvenating. I can now say that after having just wrapped up our second retreat, my family has never been healthier or happier.

As entrepreneurs, we have an interdependent relationship between our home lives and our businesses. If the only thing you’re intentional about nurturing is your company, your business’s growth will be limited. But if you’re just as intentional—if not even more intentional—about working through family issues and growing in your home relationships, your business’s potential will be limitless. After all, someone floundering in his or her most sacred relationships will lack the energy and peace of mind to effectively run a business. But if that same person feels secure and content in his or her marriage and/or relationships with his or her children, he or she is free to thrive in all areas of his or her life (like in business).

And that’s really what this all boils down to. Success will only take you so far alone. But success can only be stoked—and enjoyed—when you have a strong family by your side, savoring it with you. How badly do you want to improve your family? Are you committed to creating a more meaningful life for you, your spouse and your children? The first step is to take a hard look at yourself in the mirror and consider how much your family means to you. Drastic changes are possible, and intentionality might be all you need to make things better.



Photo by Stephanie Heymann

*“I was a bit skeptical when Jay first brought this idea to me. It sounded like he would treat us as employees, but he won me over by introducing a fun and eye-opening activity we did together. Once I realized how far we were from the alignment we both craved, I knew we needed to prioritize our family again and make our communication more intentional.”*

**-Rachel Feitlinger**

*“My favorite part of our retreat was creating the dream boards. It was so fun. We each got to say what was important to us, and I could tell my parents were really listening.”*

**-Lexi Feitlinger**

*“I was on board right away! My dad told us we’d be taking a fun vacation together, and that we would use some of that time away to decide what we wanted the next year to look like. That sounded awesome, especially the part about my dad getting off his laptop to spend time with me!”*

**-Ella Feitlinger**

Jay Feitlinger (pictured above on a retreat with his family) is an EO Accelerator graduate and EO Arizona member, as well as the founder and CEO of StringCan Interactive, a digital marketing agency. Jay recently published his first book, “FAMILY 2.0: Harness Business Principles to Reboot Your Family in 4 Days.” Contact Jay at [jay@stringcaninteractive.com](mailto:jay@stringcaninteractive.com).





# Don't Be the Next Dinosaur

**Martin McNicoll**

Founder and CEO of Gurus Solutions

If you're not moving forward, you're falling behind. This statement has never been truer than it is today. In our mobile society, business models evolve at rocket speed. Digital cameras replaced film, and now I bet you take most photos with your phone, right? Change happens. My passion is helping organizations scale activities to better position for growth. I've learned that growth hinges on processes, which hinge on values. I identified my core values long ago. Raised in a foster home, hard work and tenacity were my ticket to a better life. I excelled in school, the Canadian military, and in companies like Accenture and CGI.

When I opened my business in 2005 and asked others to join me, I met a wall of skepticism. How could I be certain that Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) wasn't a passing trend? Risk didn't scare me. I launched my basement startup, and it took off. If I had been complacent or feared change, I would have missed out. Complacency doesn't help when adversity strikes—and adversity always strikes. In 2014, my business partner left, sued me and started a competing company. What's more, our largest client's cash-flow issues led to a million-dollar shortfall, and 60% of my staff left. By all accounts, it was time to close shop. The odds were against me, but failure wasn't an option. I reorganized, rehired and grew the company's annual revenue by year's end.

I recently spoke about entrepreneurship at McGill University, explaining the

ingredients of business success in my path to scaling up. Here are three of them:

- 1. Ego.** Ego can get you into trouble, but the confidence it generates is a magnet. Drawn to your success, others help you along. As an entrepreneur, you must be convinced that you'll succeed where others have failed, just like prospectors were sure they'd find Yukon gold, even after so many people left empty-handed. I grew my company from a tiny operation into a mid-sized company, and now into a premier cloud integrator. None of it would've happened without ego, but ego necessitates regular reality checks. It's a conundrum: You're never as good as you think, even though you need to think that way to get ahead.
- 2. Ignorance.** As they say, it's bliss. I'm a fairly easygoing guy, but if I had known the risks or how hard entrepreneurship would be, I wouldn't have chosen this path. Know the feeling? Let ignorance work in your favor. Do you really need to know how many predecessors failed before you? Probably not. Assume success. Keep stocking the champagne.
- 3. Luck.** Luck is when preparation meets opportunity: choosing the right technology, meeting the right people, or finding the means to execute your vision. Never underestimate what's beyond your control—and keep in mind, that's most things.

Ego, ignorance and luck are powerful on their own, but together they form the perfect storm. My success proved this recipe worked. However, after my presentation at the university, I realized it was missing something. Even though my formula worked, I knew there was a hidden ingredient:

- 4. Fear.** Does that contradict everything I said about having confidence and going boldly forward? Hardly. We all have fears; often they work to our benefit. For example, a healthy fear of the status quo propels you forward. The status quo was an option for businesses in the past, but not anymore. Airbnb turned the hospitality industry on its ear. Uber forced a global rethink of transportation regulations. Amazon is opening physical stores. They, too, will be challenged by newcomers.

So, what's your plan to adapt and thrive? To become a change instigator rather than the next dinosaur to go extinct? The only guarantee for the future is that the status quo will become outdated. That's why scaling for growth is the only strategy that makes sense.

*Martin McNicoll is an EO Montréal member, author and a leader in the cloud technology space. He is the CEO and founder of Gurus, a business consulting firm that integrates cloud solutions for the healthcare and life sciences industries. Contact Martin at [martin.mcnicoll@gurussolutions.com](mailto:martin.mcnicoll@gurussolutions.com).*



## EO Global Citizen Award Winner Focuses on Education

Every year, EO honors one member whose selfless work changes lives, transcends borders and sets an example for us all through the Global Citizen of the Year Award. Previous winners have built schools for the underprivileged, cleared tons of plastic from the Pacific and revolutionized healthcare in Africa. In this interview, **Manny Padda**, an EO Vancouver member and the 2016 Global Citizen of the Year, talks about the impact of the award and his global education goals.

### WHAT WAS IT LIKE WINNING THIS PRESTIGIOUS EO AWARD?

**MP/** "It was a deeply humbling experience to receive such an award from our organization, which encompasses so many successful individuals whom I admire. I'm very grateful to EO. Since I joined this global community, I have gained invaluable knowledge and insight from peer-to-peer sharing with accomplished individuals around the world, which has served as a catalyst for my own work. For the organization to recognize me among my peers is a wonderful honor."

### WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO MAKE A MARK IN EO AND BEYOND?

**MP/** "It's awe-inspiring to hear the amazing and diverse stories from EOers who have built incredible businesses from nothing. The ability to develop a thriving enterprise from the ground up is what intrigues me the most. I learn from these individuals and try to surround myself, both personally and professionally, with people who challenge and motivate me to greater heights, so I can continue on my path of leadership."

### WHAT NEAR-TERM GOALS ARE YOU HOPING TO ACHIEVE WITH EO'S HELP?

**MP/** "My passion is geared toward children and education. I have set a goal of helping to educate one million children globally through social-impact ventures and traditional donations by age 40. Winning this award has enabled me to reach out to other chapters and EOers to speed up my trajectory in achieving this important goal."

### WHAT'S ONE OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED TO DATE?

**MP/** "My Kairos moment—the instant I realized my circumstances

were creating a path to opportunity—came when I realized I could be successful and do good at the same time. The two are not mutually exclusive, and in fact, they dovetail nicely. Focusing on success opens the door to leading a life of significance. Making a conscious decision to impact the lives of others around the globe is more fulfilling than any other achievement imaginable. And EO makes it happen: When you reach out to EOers in your chapter or across the ocean, they respond by openly sharing great ideas, experiences and resources. In this sense, EO becomes the ultimate catalyst for multiplying the good we can do in the world."

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE OTHERS WHO ARE LOOKING TO MAKE THEIR MARK?

**MP/** "Start young. Weave your passion—whether it's the environment, education or poverty—into your business model. If you start on this track early and persevere with dedication, it will always be a part of your business. The two become intertwined, and then you're working not just for yourself, but for others. I have learned that giving is truly better than receiving, and I strongly encourage my fellow EOers to explore what gifts they might offer our society."



Manny Padda (pictured) is an EO Vancouver member, the founder of New Avenue Capital and the co-founder of GradusOne, an organization that empowers high school and university students to discover options, realize opportunities, and focus on their career and future success. Contact Manny at [mpadda@newavenuecapital.com](mailto:mpadda@newavenuecapital.com).





# Creating a Millennial-Friendly Workplace

## Susan Michel

Founder and CEO of Glen Eagle

The influx of millennials into the workplace is providing today's entrepreneur with a number of new challenges and opportunities. As you add more and more millennials to your team, you should be prepared to answer the question: Are you ready for a more participatory workforce with strong needs to both grow and contribute? If you answered "Yes," then you understand how influential millennials can be in creating a more competitive and inquisitive workplace.

As a group, millennials—75 million of them in the U.S. alone, ages 19-35—are digital natives who yearn to learn and grow on the job. What's more, they have their fingers on the pulse of the consumer marketplace, with US\$1 trillion in buying power. Millennials are a talent pool with a lot to offer, and it is up to us as business leaders to successfully recruit, engage and retain them. This will mean shedding a hierarchical mindset that many of us use, and instead conveying a vision that welcomes a diversity of ideas and the opportunity to be part of a team.

According to Gallup, millennials look closely at what a prospective job will offer in terms of professional growth, learning and advancement—more than any other generation. They also scrutinize us, their prospective employers, to ensure they will have a quality manager and management team. As entrepreneurs, we must embrace this dynamic and design a workplace that accommodates their hunger for learning and sharing. Here are two lessons we learned in our ongoing development of a creative multigenerational workplace:

### LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO BUILD CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

A strong relationship with clients is critical for any relationship-based business. And technology is the key to freeing our employees to deliver the intelligence, research and revenue-generating ideas that provide value to clients and customers. It almost goes without saying that millennials are especially skilled at technology. We

have made it a point to have millennial employees on each of our teams to review any new technology we're considering. The cross learning in both directions—older employee to younger, and vice versa—has paid large dividends while substantially enhancing our technological capabilities.

### CREATE AN EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST A JOB

It's crucial to provide a robust, meaningful experience in the workplace. In particular, younger people want to enjoy their work and feel fulfilled doing it. A recent study by Deloitte showed that 44% of all millennials would be willing to leave their current employer due to a perceived lack of leadership-skill development and feelings of being overlooked, compounded by larger issues around work-life balance, the desire for flexibility and a conflict of values.

With this in mind, give employees the opportunity at staff meetings and during one-on-one conversations to make proposals. At Glen Eagle, if an employee proposes an idea or concept that has promise, we encourage them to create a pilot. The opportunity to present and test their ideas is a positive learning experience in itself. We have found that even when the pilot does not show enough promise to become a permanent implementation, the learning and knowledge gained contributes in a very positive manner to company morale and culture.

In conclusion, entrepreneurs and millennials share a passion for learning and growth. Let's seize this opportunity to channel that passion into growth for each of our companies.

*Susan Michel is an EO New Jersey member, as well as the founder and CEO of Glen Eagle, a financial services firm that specializes in serving the needs of business owners. Contact Susan at [smichel@gleneagleadv.com](mailto:smichel@gleneagleadv.com).*



# Principles for More Engaging B2B Content

**Frank Cowell**

Founder and CEO of Elevator Agency



Congratulations! After years of struggling, you’ve reached the pinnacle of your industry by offering eye-opening solutions that benefit your customers’ bottom lines. With so much first-hand experience, you’ve got what it takes to be a subject matter expert. But does your website content reflect that?

Bad content is a plague that makes customers cringe. Don’t let it anywhere near your website. B2B audiences are savvier than B2C audiences. They want to be educated and informed by fresh perspectives that are authentic. If you dive deep to bring ingenious solutions that enhance value, your reward will be loyal followers who visit your site—and your business—first. Build your brand by providing authoritative content that is informational, relevant and unique. I help clients do it every day. In the EO tradition of experience-sharing, here’s what I ask my clientele:

## **DO READERS VIEW YOU AS AN EXPERT?**

Are you positioning yourself as an expert with intimate knowledge of your product and audience? Crafting meaty, original content earns their trust. Consistently providing information that only an expert could will result in followers looking to you for advice. You’ll become their go-to resource for questions about your industry, and they’ll be more likely to endorse and share your content. Try to answer readers’ burning questions, ideally before they’re even asked.

## **DO YOU USE JARGON STRATEGICALLY?**

Industry-specific buzzwords help your audience feel included and respected, while also showcasing your knowledge. By speaking their language, you prove that you know them and can help their businesses thrive. It’s a fine line with jargon: Too little makes it seem like you don’t understand their world. Too much, and you’re trying too hard. Strive for a conversational tone that exudes expertise.

## **ARE YOU FORWARD-THINKING?**

Do you stay updated on industry trends? Readers expect you to. Innovative, authentic content keeps you on the cutting edge. Your opinions reflect valuable insight that no one else has. Why shy away from topics others aren’t addressing? When you’re the first to discuss it, your voice shines more brightly.

## **GOT DATA?**

Can you support your findings with strong data points? B2B audiences crave data. It’s ammunition they will put to good use. Whether you cite details from a case study or data mined from the industry at large, add your personal spin to it. Case studies—especially your own—provide contextual data and valuable insider information readers want, while demonstrating the capabilities of your business.

## **WHAT ABOUT DATA-DELIVERY METHODS?**

Do your readers prefer small snippets ideal for social media posts, or longer case studies brimming with results? How about blog posts chock-full of statistics? If you analyze your audience and deliver what they want, they’ll thank you for it.

## **ARE YOU SOLVING PROBLEMS?**

Ditch the “fluff.” Readers want their business problems solved. Provide deeper-level information—think advanced guides instead of simple how-to’s. Get down to the nitty-gritty. Attention to detail sets you apart. A good B2B article addresses a problem, describes how it impacts their business and spotlights your unique solution.

Throughout my experiences, I’ve learned that B2B audiences are highly invested and appreciate knowledgeable enthusiasm. Building a connection with them is the key to strong content; how you speak to your audience impacts that. If you rise to their level and provide content that engages them, your customers will value your input and your brand will reflect that.

*Frank Cowell is an EO San Diego member and the CEO of Elevator, a digital brand strategy firm. Frank regularly presents to organizations on topics related to branding and digital marketing. Married with four children, Frank loves to travel, surf and practice Kung Fu. Contact Frank at [fcowell@elevatoragency.com](mailto:fcowell@elevatoragency.com).*



## INTRODUCING EO'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY: Class of 2016!

From 5-7 December, 29 members from 20 countries united in Washington, D.C., USA, to learn, grow and network as participants of the prestigious EO Global Leadership Academy, an annual leadership-training program equipping members with the tools and skills they need to strengthen their leadership. One of EO's highest-rated programs, this year's Executive Education offering earned an impressive 9.8 rating (out of 10). For a list of this year's graduates, or to learn how you can apply for next year's program, contact Mick Sloan, EO's Leadership Coordinator, at [msloan@eonetwork.org](mailto:msloan@eonetwork.org).



## Core Value Spotlight: MAKE A MARK

Aligned with EO's core value of "Make a Mark," EO DC recently hosted a mentorship dinner for a group of aspiring entrepreneurs with disabilities from local colleges, where they discussed the nuts and bolts of running a business. EO DC organized the event as part of its participation in a one-year pilot project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, through which three small business associations worked to ensure their workplaces are open to the skills and talents of qualified people with disabilities. The chapter was selected for participation in the project following a competitive application process; the other supporting organizations were the South Dakota Retailers Association and the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber of Commerce.



## EO Hosts Record-Breaking PRESIDENTS' MEETING IN PUERTO RICO

In preparation for FY2017/2018, EO recently held several Presidents' Meetings around the world, including one in Puerto Rico for the Americas, where from 1-3 February, nearly 300 members from 88 chapters and five regions united to learn and grow. As the largest Presidents' Meeting in EO history, this leadership-training event delivered a welcome speech by the governor of Puerto Rico, Ricky Rosselló (pictured); an electric evening at Hacienda Siesta Alegre; and an inspirational activity where members wrote on shells what was holding them back in business and life, and then tossed them into the ocean.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



## **SANJAY RAGHUNATH**

*Member since 2009  
EO U.A.E.*

*Chairman and managing  
director of Centena Group*

Born in Calicut, Kerala, and raised in Hyderabad and Chennai, India, Sanjay Raghunath is an entrepreneur who believes that “efforts never fail.” He started his career in 1983, working his way up from having little to achieving success as a serial entrepreneur. Currently the chairman and managing director of Centena Group, Sanjay has helped the

diversified global conglomerate flourish in the field of science and technology in the following industries: maritime, industrial automation, life and analytical sciences, identification and security, and educational training systems.

Today, Centena Group is consistently ranked among the top 100 SME companies in Dubai and is known for being a frontrunner in innovation, human capital development and

corporate governance, with more than 20 offices across the Middle East, India and Singapore. Using profits the way they are meant to be used, and as a process of giving back to society, Sanjay used his business experiences to create the Centena Foundation, which is making education accessible to underprivileged segments of society. Sanjay firmly believes that education is the cornerstone of building a brighter future and stronger community.

A longtime EO member, Sanjay has made a significant mark in his chapter, region and Global through his leadership. His Path of Leadership (PoL) journey began as a Finance Chair for EO U.A.E. in FY2013/2014, where he created a record reserve for the first time in the chapter's history. Sanjay went on to serve as a member of the Technology Committee in FY2014/2015, and since then has served as a Finance Director for the Standing Finance Committee. In December, Sanjay was approved and ratified as a three-year Director on the Global Board (FY2017/2018), where he brings more than 30 years of business, international management and financial experience.

When he isn't running his companies, foundation or serving EO, Sanjay is mentoring rising entrepreneurs through the SEED Entrepreneurship Center. He is happily married to his wife, Seetha, and has two children: Gayathri, 19, and Aravind, 16.

*To learn more about Sanjay or his PoL journey, contact him at [sanjay@centena.biz](mailto:sanjay@centena.biz).*

# GLOBAL STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## **ALLISON HETZEL**

*Hire date: 27 August 2014*

*Position: Mentorship Manager*

*Location: Germany*

*Contact: [ahetzel@eonetwork.org](mailto:ahetzel@eonetwork.org)*

## **WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WORK FOR EO?**

**AH/** “Initially, EO was a way to combine my professional strengths and personal passions into one job. I have a master's degree in Education, a background in project management and training, and I enjoy working on culturally diverse teams; what makes me stay is completely different. While engaging leading entrepreneurs to learn and grow is EO's primary goal, I look beyond and see the tertiary effects of that growth. When businesses grow, jobs are created, economies are strengthened and people's quality of life improves. When ideas are shared, bridges are built between cultures, common ground is

found where none existed previously and prejudices fall away.”

## **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?**

**AH/** “The member leaders I am privileged to work with are the best part of my job. They are kind, passionate and willing to accept any challenge thrown at them. I am increasingly impressed with EO's member leaders; their passion, unquenchable thirst to learn and willingness to give back encourages me daily. Over the past year, EO Mentorship has grown dramatically, and they have been the catalyst behind it.”

## **WHAT SHOULD MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT THE EO MENTORSHIP PROGRAM?**

**AH/** “Members who participate in the EO Mentorship program rate it as one of their most valuable member benefits. Why? Because the program engages members in one-on-one relationships, increases

chapter health, improves retention rates and serves as a way to quickly integrate new members into EO. If you're interested in serving as a mentor, contact me at [mentorship@eonetwork.org](mailto:mentorship@eonetwork.org)!”





# 2-6 AUGUST EO FAMILY RETREAT & EXPERIENCE

# MARK

Our world and business landscapes are changing faster than ever. Join your EO peers in Edmonton, Alberta, for the 2017 EO Canada Conference, and prepare to discover the ideas and stories of leaders who are forging the future. To be held from 1-3 June, this annual regional event promises to deliver signature social events—including mountain bike tours and special spousal experiences—and top-tier learning that emphasizes the perseverance of entrepreneurs. Get ready to be inspired and unstoppable!

Each year, EO hosts regional events that are designed to help you get more out of your business and entrepreneurial journey. Here are several upcoming events to note:

## 1-3 JUNE

Inspired and Unstoppable  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

## 5-8 JULY

EO Unlimited  
Zurich, Switzerland

## 14-16 SEPTEMBER

EO Alchemy  
San Diego, California, USA

## 17-20 SEPTEMBER

EO XCentric  
Austin, Texas, USA

## 27-29 SEPTEMBER

EO LACademy  
Panama City, Panama

## 5-8 OCTOBER

EO NERVE  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, USA

DISCOVER THE EXCLUSIVE PARTNER BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO YOU AT [WWW.EOPARTNERS.ORG](http://WWW.EOPARTNERS.ORG)!



# YOUR CALENDAR



Learn more by visiting <https://eo2017conf.ca> or contacting [lorinda@eoedmonton.com](mailto:lorinda@eoedmonton.com).

## GLOBAL LEARNING

### 9-12 MAY

EO@Wharton

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Sold out! Join the waitlist

### 24-28 MAY

EO Entrepreneurial Masters

Program, Class of 2019, Year 1

Dedham, Massachusetts, USA

### 2-6 AUGUST

EO Family Retreat & Experience

Orlando, Florida, USA

Registration is now open

### 28-30 AUGUST

EO@IMD

Lausanne, Switzerland

Registration is now open

### 11-14 OCTOBER

Key Executive Program

Dedham, Massachusetts, USA

Registration opens 11 April

### 25-29 OCTOBER

EO Hyderabad University

Hyderabad, India

Registration opens 15 May

### 28-30 AUGUST

EO@IMD: NAVIGATING  
YOUR FAMILY BUSINESS

For more  
information about  
EO's events, scan  
the QR code or contact  
[events@eonetwork.org](mailto:events@eonetwork.org).



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#### OUR MISSION

To engage leading entrepreneurs to learn and grow.

EO is dedicated to offering once-in-a-lifetime programming for every stage of your family's journey.



Learn how you can grow more at [eonetnetwork.org/why-join/global-events](https://eonetnetwork.org/why-join/global-events).