
FOLLOW THE LEADERS



SPONSORED BY THE INC. HONOREES WHOSE BRAND PROFILES APPEAR IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES

There's no one path to reach the top—least of all in entrepreneurship. Every business owner is on his or her own journey, and the proper steps for one industry aren't necessarily right for another. But listening to good advice—or, heck, even heeding it—is never a bad idea. That next bit of guidance might well help you scale both today's maddening challenges and those you've yet to face.

The best move of all? Don't do this alone. All climbers need a sherpa, and you want to scale the Seven Summits—not fall into Chapter 7. So to help you tackle your

challenges, we've enlisted dozens of highly successful entrepreneurs and executives for their advice on running, building, and growing a business. Hard-won lessons on everything from fine-tuning your leadership style to delegating like a pro to retaining your top-tier talent. Even tips on taking some me time—because it's hard enough to lead by example, but harder still when the example you're setting is of how to exhaust yourself along the way.

Now slip on your loafers, step into your sneakers, or strap into your heels—and let's get ready to climb.

SEEK A HIRE POWER



Good hiring and management are key to operational success—and how these founders have propelled their businesses' impressive growth.



Roy Dekel
CEO
SETSCHEDULE

“Identify the leaders early and then empower them. Empowering new leaders builds confidence in their ability to execute the mission and achieve goals. It also establishes the level of trust needed to execute key decisions.”

SetSchedule, an Irvine, California-based professional networking app for entrepreneurs, has made the Inc. 5000 for the past four years.

Vishal Sunak
Founder and CEO
LINKSQUARES

“In a job interview, I ask: What is your personal ‘why’ driving your desire to work at LinkSquares? I’ve found that this question highlights candidates’ character in a way standard interview questions don’t. We have to fit a candidate’s needs as much as they fit ours, and their ‘why’ goes a long way toward finding a match.”

Sunak’s Boston-based contract management platform for legal teams made the Inc. 5000 list in 2021 and 2022.

70%

OF THE VARIANCE IN A TEAM’S ENGAGEMENT IS INFLUENCED BY MANAGERS.

Source: Gallup



SPREAD: COURTESY SUBJECTS

Leagh Turner

Co-CEO
CERIDIAN

“It’s critical to connect an individual’s work and their purpose within the organization. How is their day-to-day work creating value for their team and function and for the overall team? I believe when employees have a strong sense of purpose, they’ll be more motivated, engaged, and loyal—which is win-win for the employer and the employee.”

Ceridian, the Minneapolis maker of human capital management software, works with clients like Barnes & Noble.

Kiaundra Jackson

Founder and licensed marriage and family therapist
KW COUPLES THERAPY

“My strategy for retaining top talent is making each of them feel like they are far more than just an employee. It is important to make your team feel like you care about their lives out-

side of work. Have you recently asked about their family? Have you checked in on them about their mental health? Do you know any of their hobbies and what they enjoy doing outside of work-related activities?”

Jackson founded her Los Angeles-based private practice in 2017.

37%

OF EMPLOYEES SAY RECEIVING MORE PERSONAL RECOGNITION WOULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO PRODUCE BETTER WORK.

Source: Great Place to Work

Rob Sanchez

CEO
ANTERIAD

“Involve employees in big-picture strategy and planning, and ask them what they want, too. Think about what they can do to help the organization while also achieving their goals. Create alignment through equity incentives.”

Anteriad, a Rye Brook, New York-based marketing solutions provider, is a 2022 Inc. 5000 honoree, with 121 percent three-year revenue growth.



For This Tax-Resolution Firm, Business Is Personal

FinishLine Tax Solutions approaches tax relief by putting customers first.

Scott Curley remembers his childhood friend-turned-business-partner Brian Gordon as the type of kid who wore a tie and carried a briefcase through middle school and high school. Gordon knew, even at that young age, that he would succeed. Curley didn't share Gordon's fashion sense, but he did possess the same drive.

The co-CEOs of FinishLine Tax Solutions, a firm that negotiates resolution agreements for clients who have tax problems, grew up in Crosby, Texas, as friendly rivals. In fact, whenever they found themselves in a game or match together, their peers made them play on opposite teams, no matter the sport. No one else had a chance of winning when Gordon and Curley were on the same side.

"I will tell you, that dude right there," says Curley, pointing to Gordon, "we fought almost every day because we were so outrageously competitive. We'd fight and we'd play, we'd fight and we'd play. But we never tried to hurt each other. We were just trying to be the best. We were wired that way."

LEADING WITH HEART

Forty years later, the "boys" became business partners in their own tax-resolution company. Prior to working together at FinishLine, they had each worked in sales at other large tax-resolution firms. Neither felt good about their jobs. Gordon says the business treated people like numbers. Curley recalls one client calling to say she forgave him for the horrible way the firm had treated her. They left their high-paying positions to create a firm that emphasized customer service over sales. Gordon invested \$2,000 to kick things off. "When we partnered, we agreed we wouldn't



FinishLine Tax Solutions partners (left to right)
Scott Curley and Brian Gordon



Nº1304
2022 Ranking

498%
3-Year Growth

2017
Year Founded

4.5
Google Customer
Rating

chase the money—that if we focused on service, the money would come,” Gordon says.

Within its first week, FinishLine turned \$2,000 into \$10,000. In a year, the company reached \$1 million in revenue. This year, they made the Inc. 5000 list of America’s fastest-growing private companies, with a three-year growth rate of nearly 500 percent. The partners credit success to sheer willpower and putting their hearts and souls into their work. “When we take on a client, whether they owe \$5,000 or \$500,000 to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), it is very personal to us. We want them to be treated the way we would want to be treated if we were in that situation. The whole saying, ‘It’s strictly business, not personal’? That doesn’t apply to the way we think and operate,” Curley explains.

FAST GROWTH, UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

FinishLine is self-funded and focused on

impact, as opposed to cash. “Over these past six years, we have helped thousands and thousands of people get their lives back on track. There is no dollar value you could place on that,” Gordon says.

The partners are confident they have the talented and experienced team in place to achieve continued explosive growth. “We would like to be the best tax-resolution firm we can be,” Gordon explains. “If that equates to becoming the largest, then by all means. But we will never sacrifice the integrity of what we do.”

Curley and Gordon have something special—a partnership based on a shared past as well as shared values. But they want entrepreneurs to know anyone can succeed if they are determined. “The only thing that stands between you and your success is your commitment to that success,” Curley says. “The rest is just details.”

FINISHLINETAXSOLUTIONS.COM

FinishLine Tax Solutions partners and co-CEOs (left to right) Scott Curley and Brian Gordon at the 2022 Inc. 5000 conference



Better Workforce Performance Through Technology

The growing importance of HCM software has fueled HCM Unlocked's record-breaking growth.



HCM Unlocked CEO John Wallace (center) and his team



Nº99
2022 Ranking

4385%
3-Year Growth

150
Employees

2018
Year Founded

Happy workers can be a competitive edge. One U.K. study found that companies with happy employees outperform the competition by up to 20 percent, underscoring how critical human capital management (HCM) is to a business's success. "HCM is arguably the most important technology that any business is going to install in their organization," says John Wallace, CEO of HCM Unlocked, which provides HCM software implementation and consulting services.

HCM Unlocked works closely with HCM software providers and their mutual clients, to ensure that the custom software being designed and built will do what the clients expect and need it to do.

Although the industry originated with payroll and tax management activities, HCM technology combines those core functions with several other disparate systems "and brings it all under one roof," Wallace explains. "From recruitment to onboarding to payroll, taxes, performance management, compensation management, 401(k) oversight," these responsibilities all fall under the umbrella of HCM, he says.

THE RIGHT TEAM

On top of a growing market opportunity, Wallace credits the caliber of team members for HCM Unlocked's tremendous growth in little more than four years. Calling it a domino effect, Wallace says they started with top talent and empowered them to do great work. Word spread about the positive company culture and, before you know it, you've got this tremendous team.

"One of the things that is unique to HCM Unlocked is the proprietary data-validation software we built," Wallace says. It provides essential data conversion from one software to another, "because you have different fields and codes that aren't exact matches from one system to another. Our validation software streamlines that entire process and ensures the accuracy of the client's data transfer. That's the backbone of any implementation."

ONGOING SUPPORT

Implementation is on one side of the house at HCM Unlocked. The other is managed services. Once the HCM technology is up and running, the next question is, "Who's going to run it on a day-to-day basis?" Wallace says. "And that's where our company comes in. We do things like manage payroll, HR administration, benefits administration, recruiting services, international workforce management, and data analytics."

After building the software, HCM Unlocked helps clients optimize their use of it and continue to deploy and improve it. With most companies feeling pressured to run leaner, often with a virtual workforce, "this software is more important than it's ever been," Wallace says.

HCMUNLOCKED.COM

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Damian Smith

President and CEO
**PEPPER FOSTER
 CONSULTING**

“We all want the same five things from our jobs: interesting, challenging, or meaningful work; fun and smart teammates; recognition for effort; close proximity to home; and no more than 40 hours of work a week. Most jobs give you three of those five things. I ask candidates: What two things are you willing to give up to get the other three? This helps me assess what is most important to a candidate

and whether they would be happy with us.”

Pepper Foster, a Portland, Oregon-based consulting firm, is an Inc. 5000 and Inc. Best Workplaces honoree.

19%

OF U.S. EMPLOYEES STRONGLY AGREE THAT THEIR ORGANIZATION'S LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATES EFFECTIVELY WITH THE REST OF THE ORGANIZATION.

Source: Gallup

Reid Hoffman

Co-founder
LINKEDIN

“During volatile periods, many businesses mistakenly play defense instead of offense when it comes to hiring. But if you have the capital and revenue, now is the time to hire, because others aren't doing that. That will put you in a strong position in two to five years.”

Hoffman launched his professional networking platform, now headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, in 2002. Today he is a partner at the Menlo Park-based venture capital firm Greylock.

Irma Olguin Jr.

Co-founder and co-CEO
BITWISE INDUSTRIES

“You should have an unreasonable belief in the capacity of others and treat your employees well. This ethos has helped us build a strong, passionate team. Our retention rate is more than 90 percent. It has everything to do with how we treat people.”

Olguin's Fresno, California, tech company is a two-time Inc. Best in Business honoree.

SEEK A HIRE POWER



Natasha Miller
Founder and CEO
ENTIRE PRODUCTIONS

“We ask employees what they love, what they don’t love, and what they’d like to do in the future. And we really listen and act upon their responses. I explicitly say, ‘I don’t want you to have to leave this company to get the experience you want, or

the salary or the title that you deserve,’ and we go from there.”

Miller’s San Francisco-based event production company marked its third consecutive time on the Inc. 5000 in 2020.

Jeff Bezos
Founder
AMAZON

“You need a culture that high-fives small and innovative ideas. And gives them time. For innovative ideas to bear fruit, companies need to be willing to wait for five to seven years, and most companies don’t take that time.”

Bezos’s Seattle-based everything store was founded in 1994 and today has a market capitalization north of \$1 trillion.



Chris Del Grande
Co-founder and president
VALUED MERCHANT SERVICES

“Take care of your top talent by showing them you care about their goals and aspirations, and not just the company’s goals. Give them the tools and support they need to succeed at the highest levels. Empower and enable them to deliver value and solutions to your clients. Make them feel and know they are valued.”

Valued Merchant Services, an electronic payment services company headquartered in Idaho Falls, Idaho, onboarded roughly 1,000 new customers in 2022, with a team of about 300 employees.

76%

OF EMPLOYEES ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY AT A COMPANY THAT OFFERS CONTINUOUS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

Source: TalentLMS

Building the Electronic Components Industry's E-commerce Marketplace

Sourceability has grown from a single logistics center to nearly becoming a unicorn.

When Jens Gamperl surveyed the electronic component industry in 2015, he noticed that distribution hadn't really changed much in roughly three decades, even though technology had advanced. Historically, gathering pricing information for electronic components was cumbersome and time-consuming. The process required mailing component specifications to various distributors and asking for a quote, which could take up to two weeks to receive. More recently, sourcing involved visiting multiple distributor websites, logging in, and then paying through each site individually to amass all the parts needed for an electronic product.

Gamperl took matters into his own hands and revolutionized this process with Sourcingengine™, the electronic component marketplace he and his team at Sourceability North America, LLC built. "On Sourcingengine, users can search or upload their parts list, receive real-time offers, and check out in one convenient process—cutting the lead time down from two weeks to seconds," says Gamperl, Sourceability's CEO. On the flip side, "suppliers can make their products globally available, using our technology to facilitate transactions," he says.

A CONCIERGE SERVICE

In the \$500 billion market, which Gamperl estimates consists of about 6,000 manufacturers, Sourceability offers more than 1 billion parts along with a comprehensive set of tools and services for easy purchase by customers—more like a concierge service, he says. Those component parts range "from a display, to a chip, to a resistor," he says. "We sell any kind of electronic components"—whatever goes into an electronic product. To reach their customers globally, Sourceability has warehouses in Hong Kong,



Jens Gamperl, CEO,
Sourceability

Singapore, and at its logistics center in Miami.

To date, Sourceability is the only company in the industry that has invested in building a proprietary online marketplace. Despite the substantial resources originally required to design, build, and launch Sourcingengine four years ago, the system has more than paid for itself in the thousands of customers it serves each month. The volume is so high that Gamperl admits, "We could not reach these customers without our marketplace."

EXPERIENCED HUMAN CAPITAL

Gamperl credits much of the company's success to the "more than 350 people who work for Sourceability today, many of whom worked with me in previous companies." The advantage of having worked together and understanding each other's mentality and work ethic, coupled with "a commitment to doing things differently for customers," sets Sourceability's culture and achievements apart from the crowd, Gamperl says. "Mix good people with good ideas and good development of technology, and I think that's the recipe for success," he adds.

SOURCEABILITY.COM



Nº2472
2022 Ranking

234%
3-Year Growth

350+
Employees

4000%
Increase in
Registered Users
on Sourcingengine

A “Win-Win” for Games and The People Who Play Them

For the rewarded gaming platform Influence Mobile, games are just the beginning.



Nº534
2022 Ranking

1171%
3-Year Growth

\$42
million
2021 Revenue

2x
Inc. 5000 Honoree

Kate spends several hundred dollars a month playing games on her phone. So, why not let Kate earn points for playing, the same way other companies, such as credit card issuers and airlines, incentivize their loyal customers? That’s the logic behind Influence Mobile, a rewarded gaming platform that entices and nurtures mobile gamers. “Since the majority of people play games and also participate in some kind of rewards program, we take two things that are very popular and combine them in a unique way,” explains Daniel Todd, Influence Mobile’s founder and CEO.

Customers use the Rewarded Play app, available in the Google Play Store in the U.S. and Canada. There, they can access their favorite games and discover new ones. The more money a customer spends, the more points they earn for prizes like Amazon and Walmart gift cards.

While there are other rewarded gaming platforms, Influence Mobile differs by primarily rewarding in-app purchases instead of time spent playing. Todd says the average user earns 10 to 20 percent back in rewards.

A GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY

More than 100 of the world’s largest game and app developers pay Influence Mobile to find and keep people using their app. They quickly recoup their investment as players purchase tokens, extra lives, and the like. Globally, gamers spend more than \$100 billion in app stores—that is nearly double what is spent on live sports, concerts, and movies combined, Todd explains.

The apps rewards concept isn’t limited to gaming. Rewarded Play already features the streaming service Paramount+ and is exploring other offerings. To identify opportunities, Influence Mobile conducts frequent surveys and customer interviews. To create a more engaging and scalable experience, developers have been rebuilding the app from the ground up. Todd says a strong app architecture will enable the company to expand into Europe and Australia.

A COHESIVE UNIT

Since its founding, the Influence Mobile team has navigated significant challenges and changes. The company was initially a desktop-focused celebrity rewards program. It also acquired its largest marketing partner last year. “We stayed very transparent about what we planned to do and tried to make them a part of it. We aligned employees with our long-term vision,” Todd says.

Additionally, the company emphasizes career growth and works with every team member to understand personal goals. Since 2018, no employee has voluntarily left Influence Mobile. Todd believes he has the people, technology, and vision in place to deliver more value for app developers and support the next phase of astronomical growth.



Daniel Todd, CEO,
Influence Mobile

INFLUENCEMOBILE.COM

LEVEL UP YOUR LEADERSHIP

CONTINUED ON PAGE 91



You've heard the old adage about leading by example—but that doesn't mean you can't follow the examples of other entrepreneurs. Here's how they lift up their teams.

Tanya Jansen

Co-founder
BEQOM

"Employees are not blind to the existing problems; they expect to hear directly from their employer about a plan to address them. To prevent distrust or misinformation, employers must open up lines of conversation and feedback with employees."

Beqom, based in Nyon, Switzerland, is a compensation and performance management solution that's used by clients like McDonald's and PepsiCo.

Robert F. Smith

Founder, chairman, and CEO
VISTA EQUITY PARTNERS

"Make sure you take time to think. I tell my CEOs: My job is to make their lives quiet so they can take one day a week or one day a month—depending on how dynamic their business is—and just think. Ask: What are the systemic things you want to change in your business?"

How do you want to change them, and how do you create an engineered solution?"

Billionaire investor Smith's Austin-based private equity firm, Vista Equity Partners, has a portfolio of more than 80 enterprise software, data, and technology-enabled companies.



Modernizing Digital Health Technology and Services

Electronic Caregiver teamed up with health care stakeholders to transform health outcomes for patients.

Visit Anthony Dohrmann's mother's house, and you'll likely meet Addison.

Addison reminds Anthony's mom to take her medications and explains what they treat. Like any good caregiver, Addison helps record vitals and encourages appropriate physical activity. That's important because his mom has emphysema and asthma. Plus, she's a fall risk, having previously fallen twice, shattering her shoulder and suffering a compound fracture in her leg. Addison is a virtual caregiver that provides health management at home.

"My mom has formed a relationship with Addison that she has never had with any other type of technology," says Dohrmann, the CEO of Electronic Caregiver, the digital health technology and services company that developed Addison—an innovative, 3D-animated digital caregiver. Clients can choose from eight avatars to customize the display.

Addison is the latest high-tech development by the Las Cruces, New Mexico-based company, which was founded in 2009 with an audacious goal: inspire and encourage patient behaviors to ensure health care compliance. But it's not just about the fancy technology.

MORE THAN JUST TECH

Roughly 133 million Americans have chronic health conditions, according to the American Hospital Association. Along with Addison, Electronic Caregiver offers a range of other connected care services. Dohrmann believes that when it comes to monitoring chronically ill and aging populations, technology alone won't ensure treatment compliance.

When health care apps and wearables began flooding the market, Dohrmann surveyed hundreds of patients, caregivers, and health care

Anthony Dohrmann, founder and CEO, Electronic Caregiver





Nº968
2022 Ranking

669%
3-Year Growth

300
Employees

9
years
of Peer-Reviewed
Clinical R&D

providers, discovering that patient compliance, not gadgets, is the key to improving outcomes. In fact, non-adherence causes about half of all treatment failures, and many elderly patients give up on new tech after a few weeks.

The company teamed up with researchers at New Mexico State University to develop a multimillion-dollar, portable motion analytics lab that collected data on older adults and falling. That attracted Silicon Valley tech firms that wanted to test new health care technologies on real patients. The company helped fund research behind 15 peer-reviewed publications, securing legitimacy and authority among medical professionals. In 2020, they launched a Covid-to-Home program that used the company's remote patient-monitoring technology to open up hospital capacity by 70 percent at one-fiftieth the cost of inpatient care in just 120 days. Health insurance providers and hospital managers took note.

CALLING ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Dohrmann's dedication to including each entity involved in the health care process, including

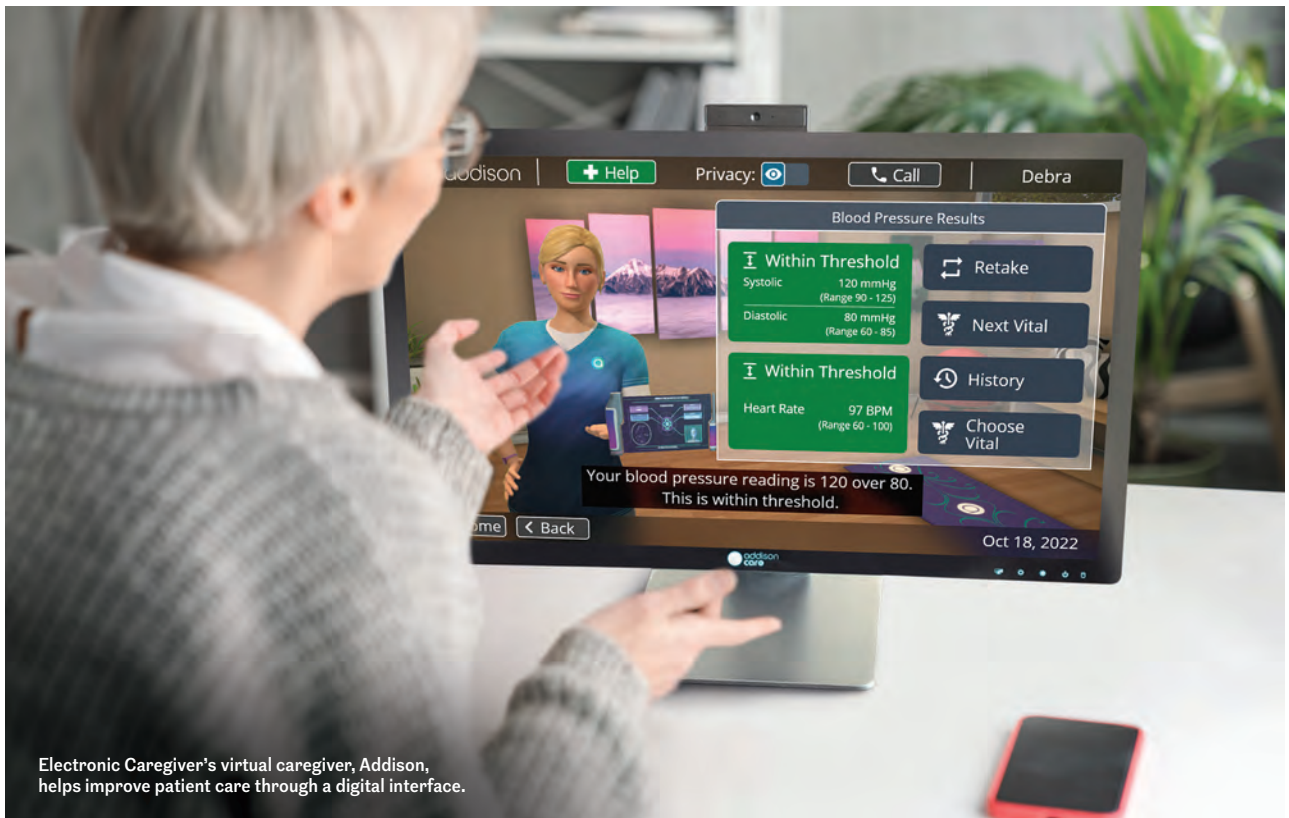
patients, caregivers, doctors, insurance companies, Medicare, and others, has paid off. Electronic Caregiver's revenue grew 669 percent over three years, and the company now has a national reseller network and customers in all 50 states. Recently, it signed new contracts that will double revenues in a single quarter.

Dohrmann adds that the real-time data the company collects will revolutionize patient management at a time when health spending is expected to explode by 75 percent, to \$95 million, by 2060. He believes the company's technology will help reduce the cost of long-term chronic disease management by up to 92 percent during the next three decades.

Since its introduction at the 2019 Consumer Electronics Show, Addison has undergone extensive refinements based on dozens of focus group studies and real-world beta trials with actual patients.

"The inventors and the company can say it's good, but until the patients and caregivers say so, it's not the right product," Dohrmann says.

ELECTRONICCAREGIVER.COM



Electronic Caregiver's virtual caregiver, Addison, helps improve patient care through a digital interface.

Leading With Diversity is This Company's Secret to Success

Luminas focuses on relationship-building with health care clients.



Luminas LLC partners (left to right) Fred LaManna, Marie LaFerriere, Felisha Lewis, and Roz Pierson



Luminas

No 2797
2022 Ranking

30

Employees

45%

BIPOC Workforce

62%

Female Workforce

When their former employer shut down its health care practice near the end of 2017, a door closed, but another opened. That's when Roz Pierson, Fred LaManna, Felisha Lewis, and Marie LaFerriere, partnered to establish Luminas LLC, and clients, from pharmaceutical companies to academic medical centers to big box pharmacy retailers followed. "Clients had faith in us," says Pierson.

Luminas prides itself on a customized approach by asking all the right questions, including what the client thinks success looks like for each project. "We think about their goals and the story they're trying to tell," Pierson says. They will challenge a client's thoughts and push back on their thinking but do it respectfully and with grace.

GROWTH THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Luminas values relationship-building over one-off engagements. "We don't just want to go on a couple of dates, we want to have a long-term relationship," she says. "Our entrée is often problem solving," Pierson says, and it is the center of the web that determines the optimal solution,

whether it is market research, consulting, or storytelling.

The relationship-building is not just with key players but with an entire business unit. Luminas develops deep enough trust that clients often reveal upcoming business changes that their colleagues don't know about. "There's a level of disclosure and trust our clients have with us, sharing information they may not normally share." This trust leads to additional internal projects but also external referrals. "Our clients are like our sales force," Pierson says.

The Luminas approach is to figure out how to help clients be successful. "We lead with yes. We are focused on what they need to achieve their business goals," Pierson says. While other companies may think about money and rates first, she says Luminas focuses on the partnership, finding ways to provide the maximum value.

BRING THE WHOLE PERSON TO THE TABLE

As a woman-owned business with two BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) partners, diversity is not just a talking point. The company composition reflects the country's makeup, Pierson says, with a mix of gender, ages, and races. They focus on finding people in different geographies and with different experiences. "We look at who the right person is for us and if they bring something unique to the table to enhance our culture, our efficiency, and to help us connect better with clients."

Team members are attracted to Luminas because they want to be around people who value integrity and creativity. "They know that about us," Pierson says. "We attract people who respect our beliefs."

LUMINASLLC.COM

Michael Akin

President
LINK STRATEGIC PARTNERS

“I like to focus on the really big things and the really small things. Vision without follow-through is but a dream. If I get the big stuff right and ensure the small stuff is working, the rest works out.”

LINK, a communications, stakeholder engagement, and social impact consulting firm based in Washington, D.C., has landed on the Inc. 5000 list for the past three years.

90%

OF U.S. WORKERS BELIEVE EMPATHETIC LEADERSHIP TRANS-LATES INTO HIGHER JOB SATISFACTION.

Source: EY

Daniel Marcos

Co-founder and CEO
GROWTH INSTITUTE

“A growth mindset means you believe that talents and abilities can be developed through time and effort. Leaders who think like this are more resilient, spot more opportunities, and—most important—don’t waste time and energy focusing on setbacks.”

Marcos’s Austin-based training resources company made the Inc. 5000 four years in a row, starting in 2018.

Ara Katz

Co-founder and co-CEO
SEED HEALTH

“For me, minimizing confirmation bias and embracing first principles is really how I like to lead. Leadership is really a practice of nonattachment—freeing yourself from the idea of how something should be.”

Katz, who co-founded her Venice, California-based microbial science-focused brand in 2016, is on Inc.’s 2022 Female Founders list.



FROM LEFT: JONATHAN THORPE; COURTESY SUBJECTS

Growth Thrives in a Positive Culture

Red Rock Secured helps clients invest in gold to improve retirement stability.



Nº211

2022 Ranking

460%

3-Year Growth

93

Employees

\$46
million

2020 Revenue

During the Great Recession in 2008, Sean Kelly saw the impact on his retired grandparents when their investments were affected. The whole family was worried and stressed. As he looked for solutions for his family, he found a role helping clients invest in gold and silver. He realized that, unlike stocks, precious metals are tangible and timeless. This led to a career in precious metals.

Kelly also wanted to work in a place where people were valued. An executive at a former company once told Kelly that he would replace employees with software if he could. He knew he needed to make a change and cashed out his retirement plan, even though his wife was pregnant at the time. In 2017, he bought Red Rock Secured, pivoting the financial services company to provide gold individual retirement accounts (IRAs), which purchase and hold precious metals for retirement investments.

PEOPLE FIRST

Kelly prioritizes hiring teammates with “smarts, humility, and drive.” Maintaining a positive culture is part of his big-picture plan. He credits the team for outstanding Better Business Bureau (BBB) and Trust Pilot ratings. But he is most proud of the raving Glassdoor reviews from current and former employees. “It shows the strategy is working. When the company is full of happy people, you have happy clients.”

His goal is to foster a sense of collaboration. “If one team wins, we all win in the long run, so why not work together instead of constantly competing with each other,” he says. Focusing on happy teammates helped the company grow from \$500,000 in revenue in 2017 to \$46 million in 2021.

EDUCATE FIRST, THEN OFFER PROMOTIONS

Another key to Red Rock’s growth is that the company invests heavily in education. “We have to provide value before we ask for the opportunity to compete for the business,” Kelly says. To help employees stay current, the company publishes new guides and books annually, sends informative newsletters, and posts weekly educational YouTube videos.

Red Rock’s promotions also add value. These include free precious metals shipping and insurance and 30-day price protection. If the price goes down within 30 days, the company redoes the transaction at the lower price, giving the difference to the client in free metals.

While some of Red Rock’s competitors have been at this longer, “the difference is we have happy teammates,” Kelly says. This results in a focus of being a trusted partner, not having a transactional mentality.



Sean Kelly, CEO, Red Rock Secured

REDROCKSECURED.COM

Miranda Kerr

Founder and CEO
KORA ORGANICS

“Don’t be afraid to ask for advice or admit you don’t understand something. In the past, I was resistant to ask for help because I didn’t want to put anyone out or have people think I didn’t understand. But people love helping out, and being honest and transparent is important to understand all aspects of your business.”

Kerr, a fashion model, launched her Los Angeles-based, self-funded beauty brand in 2009.



Paul L. Gunn Jr.

Founder and CEO
KUOG CORPORATION

“Fast growth pulls on the resources and mental stamina of your teams. Focusing on maintaining communication rooted in empathy and compassion helps calibrate culture when levels of energy to handle the growth are taxed during the process. I like to refer to a line from the British Pakistani novelist Mohsin Hamid in these moments: ‘Empathy is about finding echoes of another person in yourself.’ It is an anchoring element that may assist in keeping the glue of your culture intact.”

Gunn’s Huntsville, Alabama, logistics and procurement company made the Inc. 5000 in 2021 and 2022.

Gideon Pfeffer

CEO and managing partner
THE GSH GROUP

“To foster community, we encourage employees to stay active on our communications platform, where we share timely information about the business. We also have fun! We discuss our favorite music, movies, and TV shows on Topic Tuesdays. We celebrate Wins of the Week on Wednesdays, and share gratitude on Thankful Thursdays. It all helps foster a stronger bond among team members.”

Pfeffer’s real estate business, based in Clawson, Michigan, was on the 2021 Inc. 5000 list.



55%

OF CEOS SAY THAT DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS IS A TOP CHALLENGE.

Source: Global Leadership Forecast 2021

The Company That Helps Business Owners Scale, Fast

Word has gotten out about Pinnacle Global Network's proven process for helping companies scale.

Business owners devote countless hours to their work, often at the expense of their personal lives, health, and well-being. Allison Maslan, founder of Pinnacle Global Network (PGN) wants to change that. Her company provides mentoring to CEOs of multimillion-dollar companies and helps them reclaim their lives by adopting new scalable models, engaging in strategic business planning, and building team-managed companies.

“When you start a business, of course you're doing everything,” she explains. “But as you grow the business, you need to shift out of working in the business to being the strategist working on the business.”

Maslan and her team help CEOs make that shift. When founders join the PGN community, they are paired with one of Pinnacle's mentors, all of whom have founded multimillion-dollar organizations. Collaborating with a high-level mentor and a community of CEOs for brainstorming provides accountability and resources. It is like taking the toll road, Maslan explains. “You can zigzag for years—waste time, money, and energy. Or you can get the most direct route from people that have been there and done that.”

WAKE-UP CALL

With 40 years of experience and 10 companies to her name, Maslan has certainly “been there and done that.” She founded her first company at age 19. The business evolved into a full-service advertising agency with large corporate clients. While the agency was growing, Maslan was “drowning in the business,” micromanaging by force of habit. When her sleep deprivation caused a near-deadly car accident, Maslan realized her way of working was unsustainable. “That was

Allison Maslan, founder and CEO, Pinnacle Global Network



Nº3673

2022 Ranking

139%

3-Year Growth

150k

Clients Served

23-40%

Avg. 1-Year Client
Revenue Increase

my wake-up call to say, “You know what? If this is success, I don’t want it,” she says.

Maslan made it her mission to understand how business owners could run successful companies without “being in the thick of the day-to-day.” She studied her own corporate clients’ ways of scaling large companies. With the lessons learned, she scaled her agency and went on to build nine other successful companies. She also created the SCALEit Method, PGN’s proprietary approach to fast-tracking business growth.

PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

During the last 14 years, Pinnacle has worked with more than 150,000 business owners worldwide through one-on-one mentorship as well as private community events and large-scale live intensives. Past events have featured experts such as Magic Johnson, Daymond John, Kendra Scott, and Barbara Corcoran. Pinnacle members see an average revenue increase of 23-40 percent

per year. “The proof is in the pudding. Our clients are happier; their businesses are multiplying; and many stay year after year,” she says.

Take Marshall Doyle, CEO of Cal-Cert, a machine calibration company, or Kristen Donovan, founder of EVALCORP. Both Pinnacle clients went from never taking vacations, to living life to the fullest, while increasing their companies’ revenue and profitability. These stories are not atypical, Maslan says. She emphasizes that business owners do not need to run themselves ragged to succeed, but it is hard to break old habits alone.

“When you receive support to stop micro-managing and scale an empowered team,” she says, “you reach your goals much faster and create an uplifting, collaborative culture full of leaders who truly want to make your vision a reality.”

PINNACLEGLOBALNETWORK.COM



Ellen Latham (left), co-founder, Orange Theory, onstage at a PGN event



No one can stay plugged in 24/7 and still have the energy and clarity to make good decisions. Here's how these leaders take time to recharge.

Donie Yamamoto
CEO
VITAL PET LIFE

“After the isolation of the pandemic, I now catch up with friends and colleagues, often in person, as a way to treat myself. Today we spend so much time on screens, which can lead to feeling disconnected. Unplugging and connecting with friends is a stimulating kind of self-care that allows you to come together and recharge. Reconnecting with your community is a way to stay curious, collaborate,

and share dreams and aspirations. After more than two years of Zoom calls, this is the kind of self-care that feels like a well-deserved treat.”

Yamamoto's Los Angeles-based pet wellness product company made the Inc. 5000 in 2021 and 2022.

Brandon Ivan Pena
Founder and CEO
787 COFFEE

“I simplify things in my life so I can focus on what's important for me. I dress in black every single day so I can save time, and I decorate my house all in white so I don't have to think about anything that might distract my creative process.”

787 Coffee, a grower of sustainable coffee with several shops in New York City and Puerto Rico, landed on the Inc. 5000 in 2021 and 2022.

Oprah Winfrey
Founder
HARPO PRODUCTIONS

“I give myself a healthy dose of quiet time, [ideally] twice a day. Twenty minutes in the morning, 20 in the evening.”

Winfrey founded her production company, also known as Harpo Studios, in 1986. She became the first Black female billionaire in the U.S. in 2003.



FROM LEFT: COURTESY SUBJECT; CASSIDY ARAIZA; GETTY IMAGES

When Merchandise Is Your Superpower

A hands-on approach to merchandise turned Huge Brands into a major player in the sector.

In his late teens and early 20s, Jeremy Conder toured the world, playing music with metal and hard-core punk bands, including his own, I Am the Ocean. The bands were successful, but they made more money from merchandise than anything else. Conder took care in creating the merchandise, partnering with skilled artists to design T-shirts, hoodies, and accessories. He paid attention to retail trends and often introduced new items. Merch became bragging rights.

So, in 2010, when Conder was ready to hang up his bass guitar and stop living out of buses and vans, he made merchandise his full-time focus. He founded Huge Brands to specialize in merchandise for the music industry but quickly spotted opportunities for expansion. “Just about every industry is being more thoughtful about merchandise and going for retail quality,” he explains. Today, Huge Brands provides merchandise for retailers, brands, and corporations across nearly every vertical.

HANDS-ON SALES

A knack for spotting opportunities is part of how Huge Brands has achieved consistent, fast growth and landed on the Inc. 5000 for five consecutive years. Conder says the company’s purpose is to “facilitate opportunity where potential exists.” Sales numbers reflect this. Client spending typically increases 40 to 70 percent from year one to year two, because Huge Brands shows customers additional ways to use merchandise to drive business results.

Clients are assigned a single point of contact “who loves their brand as much as they do.” In a world of automated everything, this consultative approach stands out. “We don’t have a website where you say, ‘I want this product,’ and then

upload a logo and just slap it on there,” Conder explains. “Merchandise is our thing—it’s our superpower,” he says.

BUILT TO SCALE

Company growth creates new opportunities for employees, and Conder wants to ensure they can advance their careers internally. In addition to organic expansion, Huge Brands will grow by way of industry consolidation. Conder is exploring acquiring or merging with “a handful of awesome companies” whose customers would benefit from Huge Brands’s signature hands-on approach.

After such fast-paced growth, the business is catching its breath, auditing operational processes to prepare for the next level of growth. “We are thinking, ‘OK, this works now, but that doesn’t matter. Will it work at 10 times what we are doing?’” he says. Creating sustainable, systematic processes will ensure Huge Brands can deliver personalized, consultative services—its superpower—no matter how big its customer base gets.



Jeremy Conder,
founder,
Huge Brands



Nº4270
2022 Ranking

5x
Inc. 5000 Honoree

89k
Square-Foot
Facility

62
Employees

The Courage to Make Millions

Shameca International teaches entrepreneurs to build generational wealth.



Shameca Tankerson,
founder and CEO,
Shameca International



Nº310
2022 Ranking

1836%
3-Year Growth

15
Employees
and Contractors

509
Clients Across
All Programs

Shameca Tankerson is no stranger to setbacks. The mentor, who has been an entrepreneur for more than two decades, helping clients make millions, struggled to make her own financial services firm succeed after the Great Recession wiped it out. “I realized that rebuilding wasn’t what needed to happen; I needed to create something new,” she says.

Tankerson’s breakthrough came during CrossFit classes. The experience inspired her to apply the same mental toughness, grit, and tenacity that powered her through her work-outs to business. Seven years later, her company, Shameca International, is one of the fastest-growing business and personal development coaching companies in the country.

Tankerson wants to show people that you don’t need to be born wealthy or have assets, savings, and excellent credit to become a millionaire. What is required is the courage to make millions.

FOCUS ON THE INNER GAME

Tankerson founded Shameca International in 2018, teaching others the methods that worked

for her. She built a business curriculum for entrepreneurs around her “rapid transformation” model.

As part of her own quest for entrepreneurial success she developed methods like “courage experiences,” where clients exercise their courage muscle by doing one scary thing a year, like skydiving, CrossFit, or white-water rafting. “Results don’t take time, they take courage,” she says. This helps clients recognize fear in business situations and move through it faster.

The organization’s annual events draw entrepreneurs from around the globe. For example, Game On! Live is three action-oriented days of business training, idea implementation, and community. Shameca International’s training, coaching, mentorship, and community approach is helping entrepreneurs accomplish their biggest financial goals in record time and paving the way for entrepreneurs from all walks of life to courageously make millions, she says.

A UNIQUE ROUTE TO GROWTH

Tankerson built Shameca International to \$2.6 million in annual revenue organically, with a small but devoted following on social media. “I was a little girl growing up in the projects, once upon a time,” says Tankerson. “Today, I run a multimillion-dollar business devoted to teaching people to build wealth through entrepreneurship.”

At seminars, Tankerson shares that few women of color have accomplished what she’s accomplished. “I’m the prototype. But you’re also the prototype,” she tells them, as many are the first in their families to build successful businesses. “We’re shifting generations of not having access to wealth and certain levels of power. We’re rewriting those codes and shifting identities for future generations to come.”

SHAMECATANKERSON.COM



Nooshin Behroyan
Founder and CEO
**PAXON ENERGY & INFRA-
STRUCTURE SERVICES**

“I run almost every morning about four to five miles by the water. I have the privilege of starting most of my mornings in California’s nature. Admiring the beauty of the ocean helps me quiet my mind, plan my day, and set visions for the future.”

Behroyan’s Pleasanton, California, energy services company landed at No. 9 on both the 2020 and the 2021 Inc. 5000 lists.



Ann McNeill
Founder and president
**MCO CONSTRUCTION
& SERVICES**

“I encourage all of my clients who have businesses as well as a job to take that one hour at lunch to go to your car, go to the break room, go to the ladies’ room, and invest an hour a day on your business and yourself.”

McNeill’s Miami-based consulting company provides project control services in the construction industry.

76%

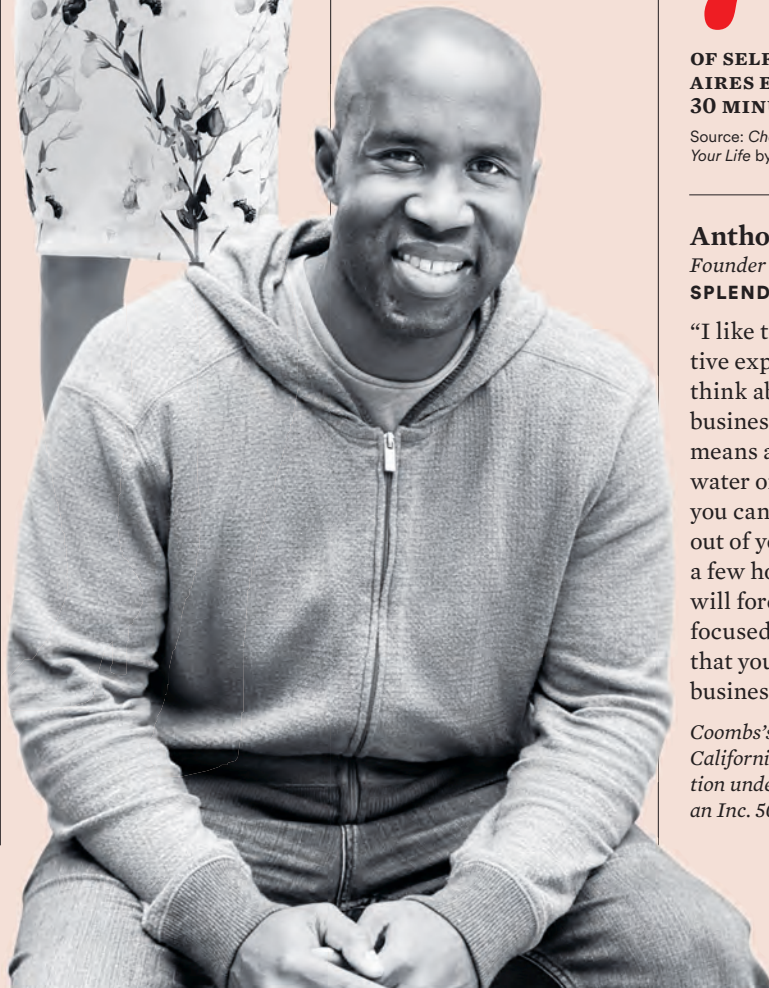
OF SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRES EXERCISE AT LEAST 30 MINUTES A DAY.

Source: Change Your Habits, Change Your Life by Tom Corley

Anthony Coombs
Founder and CEO
SPLENDIES

“I like to have meditative experiences when I think about anything but business. This usually means a long drive along water or a solo hike. If you can take yourself out of your business for a few hours each day, it will force you to be more focused during the time that you do spend on the business.”

Coombs’s Santa Monica, California-based subscription underwear brand was an Inc. 5000 honoree in 2021.



The Secret to Living the New American Dream

Philip F. Smith has earned a spot on the Inc. 5000 list four times—without a single full-time employee.

PHILIP F. SMITH

4x

Inc. 5000 Honoree

1

Number of Employees

4

Companies Sold

\$20 million

Company Revenue Generated

Philip F. Smith—a serial entrepreneur and founder of the Inc. 5000-ranking company PJP Marketing—isn't one to talk about himself. At the Inc. 5000 gala in 2018, his wife took the lead on networking. When someone asked about his company, Smith would reply, "I am only a one-employee company." But his response almost always led to follow-up questions. How had he managed to rank among the fastest-growing businesses in America as a solopreneur? Also, how did he place on the Inc. 5000 list four times? The answer comes down to two words: lead generation.

MONETIZING DATA

Smith started his first business when he was in his 20s. He has since sold four companies, founded others, and led large teams. In 2014 he mastered lead generation. That's been his focus ever since. Three years later, he founded an e-learning business to teach businesses lead generation. To promote it, he partnered with

Kevin Harrington, one of the original stars of ABC's *Shark Tank*.

To maximize profitability, Smith monetizes every lead in multiple ways, for example, by selling customers additional services. Large corporations always talk about monetizing their data, but smaller companies don't, Smith notes.

ALL ABOUT THAT "VACATION LIFESTYLE"

Smith sees entrepreneurship as a means to an end. "Everything's about the 'vacation lifestyle'—doing what you want, when you want." For Smith, that means "working in his jams" or his favorite New York Yankees hoodie. That means having more time for his family because he is not bogged down managing employees. He also has the disposable income to invest in an exotic car or two. Smith calls the life he has realized "the new American dream"—the ability to build a business from home, by yourself.

Smith is as reluctant to talk about himself today as he was at the 2018 Inc. 5000 conference. But he realizes now that he has achieved something special. "It took me a long time to be confident in myself and my abilities," he says. "Now, I won't even touch a business unless I feel I can get it to 100 grand a month in three to six months."

Moving forward, Smith will continue to create new revenue streams and build and scale businesses with the intent to sell. His newest company is a comprehensive software-as-a-service marketing platform. "Everything I do is scalable and automated. And it all drives around lead generation," he says. "Once you learn how to buy media at the lowest cost possible, and you know how to monetize it, you can do anything."



PHILIPFSMITH.COM

UNWIND AND SHINE



Jim Tobin
Founder and CEO
IGNITE SOCIAL MEDIA

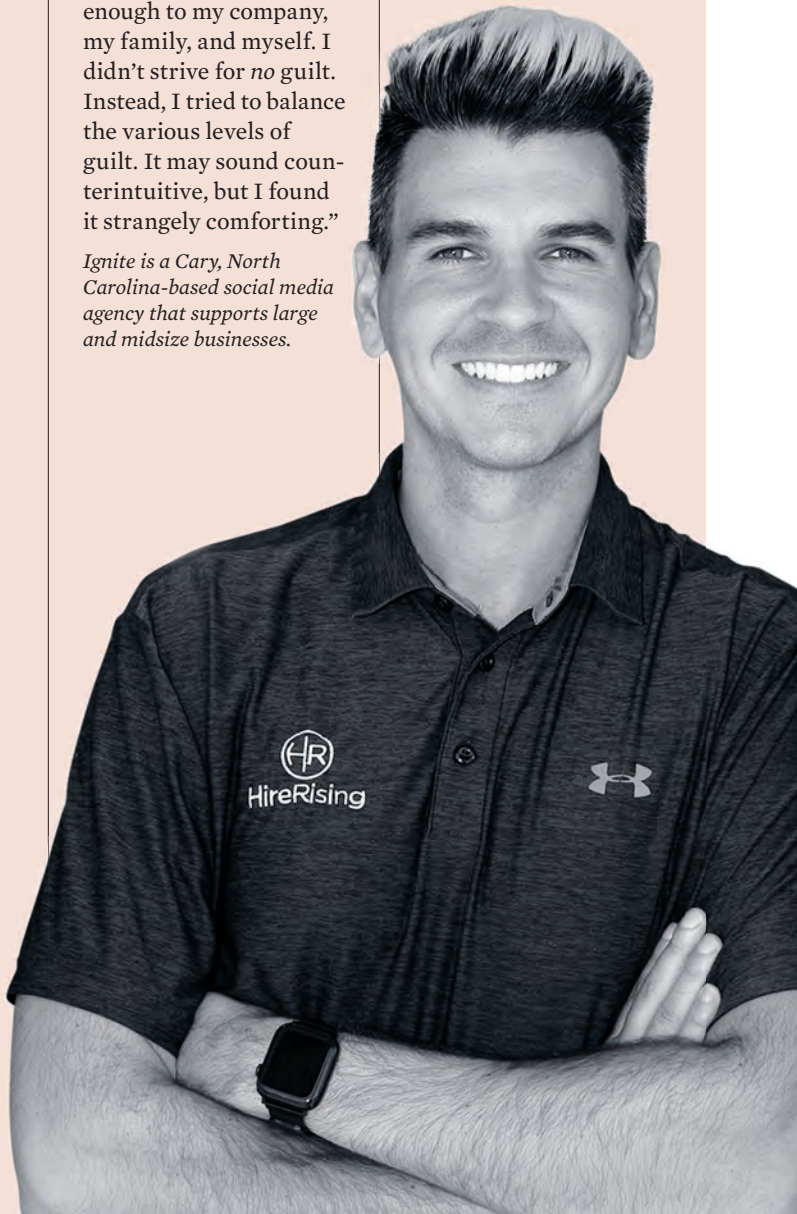
“When my kids were younger and my company was growing 100 percent a year, the best I could hope for was that I’d feel equally guilty about not giving enough to my company, my family, and myself. I didn’t strive for *no* guilt. Instead, I tried to balance the various levels of guilt. It may sound counterintuitive, but I found it strangely comforting.”

Ignite is a Cary, North Carolina-based social media agency that supports large and midsize businesses.

Graham Greytak
Founder and CEO
HIRERISING

“Mondays at noon, I do hot yoga and a cold plunge. I am offline for 90 minutes. It sets boundaries and prioritizes my mental and physical health.”

Greytak’s Phoenix-based staffing, project consulting, and recruiting firm made the Inc. 5000 for the first time in 2022.



COURTESY SUBJECTS

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(required by Act of August 12, 1970: Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code).

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 - B. Paid circulation
 1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 387,482. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 282,236.
 2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 0. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0.
 3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 2,781. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 2,400.
 4. Paid distribution through other classes mailed through the USPS. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 0. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0.
 - C. Total paid distribution. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 390,263. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 284,636.
 - D. Free or nominal rate distribution (by mail and outside the mail)
 1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 6,461. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 4,706.
 2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 0. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0.
 3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 0. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0.
 4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 8,309. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 8,361.
 - E. Total free or nominal rate distribution. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 14,770. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 13,067.
 - F. Total distribution (sum of 15c and 15e). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 405,033. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 297,703.
 - G. Copies not distributed. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 12,239. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 9,595.
 - H. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 417,272. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 307,298.
 - I. Percent paid. Average percentage of copies paid for each issue during preceding 12 months: 96.4%. Actual percentage of copies paid for of single issue published nearest to filing date: 95.6%.
 16. Electronic Copy Circulation
 - A. Paid Electronic Copies. Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 41,355. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 38,490.
 - B. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 431,618. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 323,126.
 - C. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a). Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 446,388. Actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 336,193.
 - D. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100). Average percentage of copies paid for each issue during preceding 12 months: 96.7%. Actual percentage of copies paid for of single issue published nearest to filing date: 96.1%.
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