INC. 5000 HOUSEHOLD NAMES

If a business is like a house, revenue is just one part of a strong structure. Indeed, for many companies, making it onto the Inc. 5000—or its predecessor, the Inc. 500—is a predictor, but not a guarantee, of greatness. In 2016, Inc. and the Kauffman Foundation found that a good number of Inc. 5000 companies stop growing. Many of those honorees are the small and medium-size businesses that are so vital to our economy.

Then there are the Inc. 5000 alumni that go on to become household names. Microsoft, for example, was a small firm with modest revenue when it appeared on the Inc. 500 in 1984; now it's the second most valuable company in the world. Microsoft is no anomaly. You've probably heard of Zoom, Cisco, Domino's, Apple, and Callaway Golf; the list of über-recognizable companies that have made the Inc. 5000 on their way to the top goes on and on.

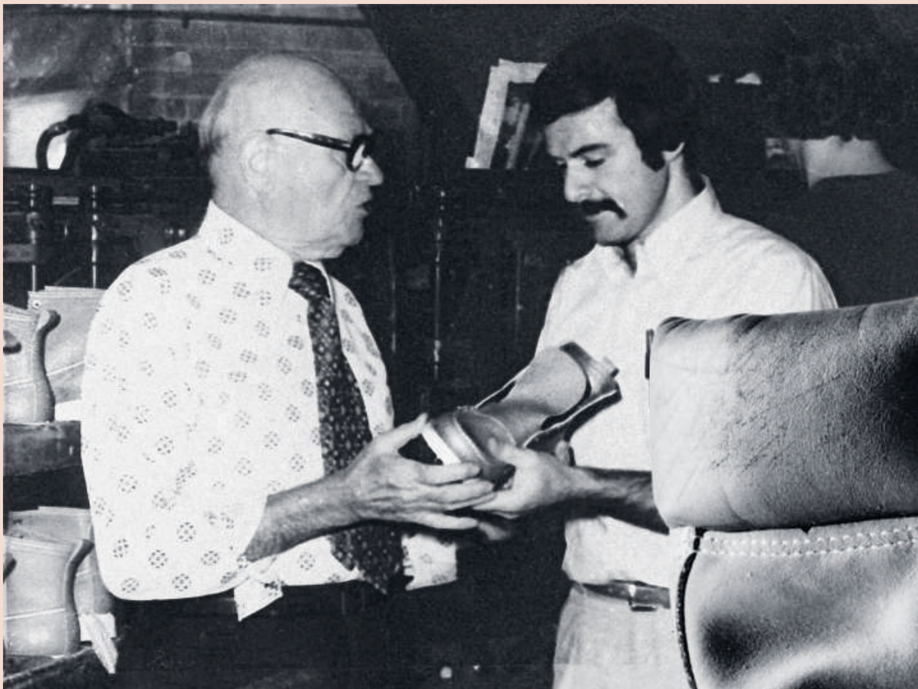
To parlay fast growth into sustainable success, alumni that become household names focus on more than just sales. They put real thought into company culture, customer feedback, strategic partnerships, branding, shifting market demographics, and innovative product development.

We looked back at our past coverage to analyze six Inc. 5000 alumni that have become household names. Read on to discover their secrets. —TIM CRINO

ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE PROJECT TWINS

TIMBERLAND

1983 (No. 495)



Nathan Swartz (left) and son Sidney Swartz, co-founder of Timberland.

"Fashion follows function."

Sidney Swartz, co-founder, Timberland

In 1983, Timberland ranked No. 495 on the Inc. 500 with $60,000 in 1982 revenue. In 1987, the boot and workwear company went public and achieved a valuation of $46 million. But for much of the four years between those two benchmarks of success, the company's growth created an internal state of turmoil that Inc. once described as "civil war."

The conflict started at the top. The co-founders of the Stratham, New Hampshire-based company, brothers Herman and Sidney Swartz, had inherited a boot business from their father, Nathan Swartz, and relaunched it as Timberland, in 1978. The brothers each owned half of the company, and while Herman wanted to sell, Sidney couldn't afford to buy him out.

Sidney Swartz and his grandson Jeff Swartz, former Timberland CEO.

COURTESY COMPANY

Meanwhile, the marketing and sales departments couldn't come to an agreement on the sort of customers Timberland should appeal to—its traditional base of blue-collar workers or the wealthier consumers who had begun to see Timberland's quality craftsmanship as a status symbol.

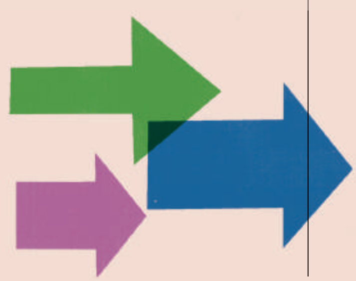
Marketers wanted to make more expensive shoes, continuing the upscale brand strategy that had allowed Timberland to succeed, even as the domestic footwear industry was rapidly contracting. Foreign shoemakers had grabbed more than 81 percent of the U.S. market share by 1986, the year more than 70 U.S. factories closed and the industry shed nearly 72,000 jobs. The sales department wanted to pursue a volume strategy while sticking to Timberland's roots: selling lower-priced footwear to blue-collar folks through upscale discount stores and Army surplus depots.

The data supported the marketers' strategy. Timberland's most expensive boots outperformed the rest of the lineup in terms of sales, and were particularly popular in Milan, where gangs of fashion-conscious teenagers had taken to robbing people of their Tims.

Sidney eventually bought out Herman in June 1986, with a $34.2 million loan, and in his first year as sole leader of the company, he fired nearly a dozen executives, including the CFO and the national sales manager.

That same year, the company launched an ad campaign with the slogan "more quality than you may ever need," which performed well, and became a guiding light of sorts for Sidney and his new team. Rather than choosing between selling low-quality products to blue-collar customers and selling high-quality products to fashionistas, Timberland focused on making durable, high-performance products for anyone who wanted and could afford them.

As a result, the brand began to develop relationships with a wider variety of consumers, from outdoor enthusiasts—Timberland famously sponsored the Iditarod for many years and even used it to test new products—to hip-hop moguls, fashion-forward teenagers, construction workers, and celebrities alike.



Inc. Regionals
PACIFIC

visual i	NO25 2023 Inc. 5000 Ranking	2005 Year Founded	584% 2-Year Growth	HQ Irvine, California

Teamwork—And a Growth Mindset—Make the Dream Work

How Visual i Solutions' resilience and team collaboration transformed adversity into success.

VISUALISOLUTIONS.COM

There's no straight line to success in business—something Visual i Solutions had to learn the hard way.

Before the pandemic, the Irvine, California-based provider of audiovisual and technical production for corporate and professional industries had 10 full-time staff and revenues of about $1 million. Then Covid-19 hit and within 11 days of March 1, 2020, the company's entire years' worth of planned events was no more, with revenue plummeting to $185,000.

"I typically have an answer as to how we're going to respond to problems," says the company's founder Jose Cruz. "And for the first time ever, I had no answer."

The company decided it was time to go back to basics. "Everything stopped, which gave us time to think about those initial steps you take as a business to think about how to create a service or product," he says.

Visual i Solutions quickly pivoted into virtual events, which helped keep the company afloat. It now offers audio-visual event production services for in-person, hybrid, and virtual meetings, conferences, and events.

→ Jose Cruz, founder, Visual i Solutions

Collaboration and customer service drive growth

After two long years, the live event industry is now back. Visual i Solutions has grown 584% during the last two years and an impressive 973% during the past three. He attributes his success to a growth mindset, which involves achieving growth by focusing on client pain points and providing strong customer service.

He also credits the company's dedicated team and active involvement in growing the business. "My core team has gained a deep understanding of growth stages," says Cruz. "Together, we work toward growth goals."

Team members, he explains, offer new revenue ideas and are involved in strategic planning. With a collaborative spirit and commitment to teamwork and mentorship, the company has a thriving culture that presents the "possibility of limitless growth."

"I've opened up to the team about how everything works," he says. "The contributions and ideas now coming from each individual are astounding."

With everyone working towards the same goals, Cruz has his sights set on bigger things; $10 million in revenue isn't out of the question. To get there, he's marketing in different areas of the country and exploring other revenue streams, such as event management and planning services.

While Cruz knows there could be more ups and downs along Visual i Solutions's journey, he's never been more confident about the business. "It's really about planning for growth and then thinking about how you can achieve it," he says. "And having the people to make it possible."

YETI

2010 (No. 140), 2011 (No. 550), 2012 (No. 458), 2016 (No. 510)

Back in 2016, when Yeti made the list for the fourth time, Inc. hailed the company as the "Range Rover of cold." The moniker was well-earned—since launching in 2006, the company had been selling its rugged coolers for up to 10 times the price of an ordinary cooler. Why were Yeti coolers so expensive? What made the brand so special?

Yeti's co-founders, brothers Ryan and Roy Seiders, understood the power of a narrative. They created a cooler so rugged that you could stand on it while sight fishing, which is a type of fly fishing, because they knew their target market of outdoor enthusiasts and anglers appreciated—and would pay a pretty penny for—durability and practicality. They associated the brand with voices their customers would trust by getting the endorsements of outdoors professionals. Even their distribution scheme followed a narrative. Yeti coolers were first sold at Bass Pro Shops, then at blue-collar favorites like Ace Hardware, and finally to affluent shoppers at Nordstrom. As Inc. noted back then, Yeti has a remarkable ability to create "objects of desire."

"People are really passionate about their hobbies—whether it's college kids who use our coolers for tailgating, or hunters and fishers. All of those groups are willing to pay extra money for products that will last. They wouldn't be caught dead with cheap gear, because they identify with quality brands. It can be hard to gain the trust of consumers, but once you do, it becomes very powerful."

Roy Seiders, co-founder and chair, Yeti

Ryan (left) and Roy Seiders, co-founders of Yeti.

MICHAEL FRIBERG

CHOBANI

2012 (No. 117)

When Chobani applied to the Inc. 5000 in 2012, the company, a sponsor of the London Olympic Games that year, caught the eye of Inc.'s editors. We discovered that Chobani founder and CEO Hamdi Ulukaya, a native of Turkey, had been "confused" by the low-quality yogurt that was available in the U.S. When he received an ad in the mail in 2005 regarding a Kraft factory for sale, Ulukaya realized he'd found a solution to that problem. So he obtained a loan from the SBA and got to work, launching his company in August of that year with just five employees.

Chobani began the Greek yogurt craze in the U.S. By 2011, the company's annual revenue had hit more than $600 million, growing at a rate of 2,662 percent. By 2012, Chobani had booked over $1 billion in total revenue. Today, the company, which recently acquired fellow Inc. 5000 alum La Colombe, is valued at an estimated $10 billion and is still private.

Last September, Ulukaya spoke with Inc. about his journey, and said he's been able to cultivate Chobani into a powerhouse for several reasons: Like many immigrants, he's not afraid of walking into unknowns and embracing discomfort; he works hard, and makes his business personal, but keeps a balanced relationship with it; and he trusts his own ideas. If that's not a recipe for success, we don't know what is.

LEVI MANDEL/TRUNK ARCHIVE

"There's an excitement, a can-do attitude, a magic, to thinking like an immigrant. It allowed me to concentrate, to stay in the moment."

Hamdi Ulukaya, founder and CEO, Chobani

Inc. Regionals
ROCKY MOUNTAIN

MIT45	$77.6M 2023 Revenue	109 Employees	135% 2-Year Growth	$679K 2023 Revenue Per Employee

Data-Driven Decisions Fuel Astronomical Growth

Information and a people-first approach have given energy to MIT45.

MIT45.COM

Salt Lake City-based company MIT45 has answered the call to revolutionize the $1.5 billion kratom industry and has experienced phenomenal growth along the way. By aligning with the heartbeat of the kratom market, MIT45 has transcended from a $1.5 million enterprise to a $77.6 million juggernaut. This meteoric growth is due to a potent blend of meticulous product development, judicious and data-driven strategies, and an unwavering commitment to prioritizing their customers and employees first.

Combining innovation and data

The key to MIT45's revenue boost was the development of an innovative kratom extract that could be incorporated into a variety of products. While kratom has been a popular botanical in the wellness space for decades, traditional formats (raw powder and capsules) left much to be desired. MIT45's pioneering kratom extract products brought to the market a reliable, attractive, convenient, potent, better-tasting, and easily transportable experience.

"No one else had this extract, and that was critical for the initial lift-off," says Ryan Niddel, MIT45 CEO. MIT45 has begun a planned launch of a dozen new products, including the highly successful MIT GO gel pack, which generated $2.3 million in sales in March 2024 alone.

Niddel's deep understanding of the company's data has been instrumental in driving growth.

By closely monitoring metrics such as manufacturing costs, sales productivity, and revenue per employee—which has gone from $350,000 in 2019 to $750,000 today—Niddel has identified areas for improvement and implemented strategic changes, including working with suppliers to lower import prices and investing in new manufacturing equipment.

The company's technology evolution meant moving from "spreadsheets and legal pads into more sophisticated enterprise resource planning solutions that are helping monitor and measure our data," Niddel adds. "We were early adopters of artificial intelligence, introducing predictive logic into the business."

→ The MIT45 team at headquarters in Salt Lake City

Building a people-centric culture

MIT45's success is a testament to its people-first approach. The company pays its employees above-market wages and pays the full health insurance premiums for staff, partners, and children. In addition, if the company were to sell in the future, staff would receive part of the upside with change-of-control bonuses.

With a continued focus on innovation, data-driven decision making, and a people-centric culture, MIT45 is well-positioned to maintain its impressive growth trajectory. "We've figured out something unique, but we're never happy with the status quo," Niddell says. "With more luck, hard work, and treating people right, we can keep innovating and pushing boundaries."

Inc. Regionals
SOUTHEAST

SIERRA GROUP ROOFING & SOLAR	NO69 2023 Inc. 5000 Ranking	25 Employees	2017 Year Founded	HQ Blytheville, Arkansas

The Power of Perspective: An Entrepreneurial Success Story

Sierra Group moved from near bankruptcy to become one of the fastest-growing companies in the Southeast.

SIERRAGROUPROOFING.COM

Six years ago, the Arkansas-based roofing company Sierra Group, one of the fastest-growing businesses in the Southeast, narrowly avoided bankruptcy. The rebound is a testament to Founder and CEO Marcos Sierra and his wife, Victoria. Sierra immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico at age eight as hidden cargo in a car trunk. When he got to the states, he was awed by the abundance of opportunity: free school, free transportation, free food in the cafeteria. He never lost sight of these blessings. "Even through our business's hardships, our attitude was always: 'We got this. We are in the U.S. There's always plenty of opportunity. You just have to search for it,'" he says.

An antidote for operational issues

Sierra searched for the solutions he needed at the local small business development center, which he discovered in 2018, a year after launching the company from his garage. His career in property management had prepared him for the production side of the business, but not operations. "I had no idea about accounting or money management. I had no idea about my KPIs. And marketing? What is that?" The business center provided Sierra with market research and help creating a business plan and marketing strategy. In 2019, he joined the SBA Emerging Leaders program, where he learned from business owners across verticals. His biggest takeaway was the power of asking for help. "Some of the most successful individuals that I've met ask for help from everybody and anyone, and that's how they grow," he says.

Building a legacy

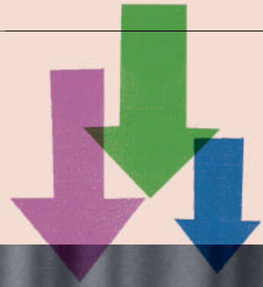
Victoria's support has been critical, Sierra says. She joined the business as co-owner and accountant in 2020. Together, they steered the company towards growth by focusing on inbound leads, employee training, culture, and customer service. When Covid-19 caused supply chain issues and hyperinflation, Sierra Group integrated metal manufacturing into its portfolio so it wouldn't have to rely on third-party suppliers. In 2022, the business bought a new 35,000-square-foot headquarters. Now, it is preparing to enter new regions.

"Everything we do is focused on legacy and making a positive impact," Sierra explains, noting that he and Victoria hope to instill the importance of hard work and positive thinking in their three sons. "My attitude now is the same as when I was an 8-year-old boy coming to this country: this is a wonderful country that offers so many opportunities for all of us."

→ **Marcos Sierra (far right), founder and CEO, Sierra Group, with Arkansas State Senator Wallace**

MICROSOFT

1984 (No. 80), 1985 (No. 163)



It is often said there are three ways to grow a business: build, partner, or buy. Microsoft, one of the world's most valuable companies, with a $3 trillion valuation, is good at all three. But Inc. would argue that Microsoft's greatest strength comes from employing those three growth tactics to dominate platforms needed by the masses.

That strategy dates back to the company's earliest days, when co-founders Bill Gates and Paul Allen purchased the rights to MS-DOS, an operating system designed to run Intel's 8086 microprocessor, and then licensed it to IBM for its Model 5150 personal computer. That PC became the first to gain widespread consumer adoption; as a result, MS-DOS became the dominant operating system, and Microsoft's revenue grew from $7 million in 1981 to $97 million in 1984.

That dominance came in handy when office productivity apps like WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3 were beating out Microsoft Word and Excel in the late '80s. Because most PCs ran MS-DOS, and its successor, Windows, Microsoft was able to make its own Office apps more compatible with Windows than those competing products were.

Paul Allen (left) and Bill Gates, co-founders of Microsoft.

ANN E. YOW-DYSON/GETTY IMAGES

> "Our success has really been based on partnerships from the very beginning."
>
> **Bill Gates,** co-founder, Microsoft

Following its 1986 IPO—one of the biggest at the time—Microsoft began a strategy of growth through acquisitions. It purchased a host of lesser-known businesses that helped it enter new markets, including flagship products like Hotmail and PowerPoint, the latter of which was bundled at a discount with existing Office products to solidify Microsoft's foothold in the enterprise office productivity market.

Though Microsoft continues to make acquisitions—more recent take-overs include companies that dominate in unique sectors, like LinkedIn and Activision—and it has partnered with OpenAI since 2020, the company's main revenue drivers are its cloud computing business and enterprise software subscriptions, a testament to Microsoft's strategy: Whether it's through building, buying, or partnering, long-term success often comes down to leverage.

Inc. Regionals
PACIFIC

STRAIGHT UP GROWTH

Unlocking Growth for Clients—and Employees

Straight Up Growth specializes in delivering best-in-class growth to brands on Amazon.

STRAIGHTUPGROWTH.COM

Founded at the beginning of the pandemic in February 2020, Straight Up Growth specializes in one thing: growing brands on Amazon.

Co-founders Evan Kesner, a serial entrepreneur, and Daniel Tejada, an Amazon ads wiz who has sold more than $1.5B of products on the platform, saw an opportunity to drive growth for one of the world's most popular product search engines. In less than four years, the entirely self-funded company has grown to 25 people and more than $700MM in Amazon sales for various leading brands in CPG, baby, health and wellness, and beauty.

According to Tejada, "What keeps our growth going is we've created an environment focused on educating each other. When our employees grow, it translates to our clients growing even quicker and referring us to other clients."

Many clients say they work with SUG for their full services, from PPC, storefront and listing content, and DSP. The majority outperform original forecasts, such as a leading chocolate brand that reached the number one listing spot in the first 30 days they were signed on with SUG.

As Kesner says, "One of the most rewarding parts of this business has been seeing not only our clients' growth, but our team as well. We have semi-annual trips to San Diego, and seeing spouses and siblings of current employees join the team after meeting us all on a trip makes me feel excited about building a great place to work."

Straight Up Growth team at company retreat in San Diego

BRANDED CONTENT

Inc. Regionals
SOUTHEAST

xGeniSys

Enterprise IT For Main Street Businesses

Technology company xGeniSys provides services to help SMBs grow.

XGENISYS.COM

Joseph Barnes (left) and Matthew Puckett, co-founders, xGeniSys

Two down-home, enterprising IT nerds, with more than 50 years of combined experience thought in 2007: "The strategies, innovative solutions, and security we're providing for the world's leading brands should be accessible to small and midsize businesses down the street." And so, xGeniSys was born.

Any company doing business online and using technology is in IT whether they like it or not. In an industry of cold digital and impersonal tech service, xGeniSys wanted to be neighborly, transparent, and earn client trust by always doing the right thing.

xGeniSys is focused on delivering outcomes that matter not only for business, but for improving quality of life for the people they humbly serve. xGeniSys frees clients to focus on their business by handling day-to-day IT needs. They also improve client stress levels and sleep, enable worry-free PTO, and ensure no soccer games or recitals are missed due to tech challenges.

Holistic IT services from xGeniSys ensure the best technology decisions are made for each client based on their evolving needs and budget. From executive advisory service to building, optimizing, and securing the right solutions, the "Friendly Neighborhood Nerds" at xGeniSys never compromise on the ITegrity and values the company was founded on.

For small businesses that want enterprise level service and peace of mind, provided by empathetic, down-to-earth experts who understand business is personal, "IT starts here."

CREATED BY INC. STUDIO

METHOD PRODUCTS

2006 (No. 7), 2007 (No. 637)

When you're a small cleaning products company going up against such giants as Clorox, Unilever, and Procter & Gamble, you have to embrace what makes your product different. According to Method co-founders and childhood friends Eric Ryan and Adam Lowry, doing so starts with company culture.

When Ryan and Lowry were running Method from 2000 to 2015, a core tenet of maintaining culture included weekly all-hands huddles to take the team's temperature. To keep everyone engaged, team members would draw straws to determine who would run the next week's meeting. The company also made sure to hire people who fit the culture, by asking for a thoughtful response to the question, "How will you keep Method weird?"

And what is the weirdness that became one of the company's core values? Ryan often wore a white lab coat and oversize glasses during his tenure as CEO. But being weird is about more than wacky attire. As Ryan said to Inc. in 2016, "Weird people are the ones who change the world." It's about innovation, community, and humility. That's why, for example, every employee at the company took a turn covering the reception desk. "The idea is that nobody is better than the receptionist. It's about keeping that sense of community and that humble spirit. There is nothing better than watching the CEO deliver the mail to somebody's desk that day," Ryan said.

LIZ HAFALIA/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Eric Ryan (left) and Adam Lowry, co-founders of Method Products.

> "You can copy our products, our fragrances ... but the one thing you can't copy is our culture. If you're going to create a brand that other people love, you have to love yourself first."

Eric Ryan, co-founder, Method Products

Inc. Regionals PACIFIC

LIBERTY 1 FINANCIAL	NO 4 2024 Inc. 5000 Ranking	2008 Year Founded	3,422% 2-Year Growth	HQ Irvine, California

Lenders on a Mission: When Your Success Secret Is Empowering Consumers

The co-founders of Liberty1Financial, a consumer lending company, credit their success to empowering customers to take control of their finances.

LIBERTY1FINANCIAL.COM

Jeannette Preston wants you to imagine this: "If someone is unable to put gas in their car or feed their kids because they're paying so much in credit card debt, educating them about finances can change their life." Preston is co-founder and managing director of Liberty1Financial, a progressive unsecured consumer lender with offices in Irvine, California, and Salt Lake City, Utah, servicing customers in 47 states.

The company's focus on education is key to its spectacular growth and its number four ranking on the Inc. 500 Regionals: Pacific. When helping individuals obtain a consolidation loan to pay off higher-interest credit card debt, Liberty1Financial agents take the time to teach customers about interest rates, credit scores, and financial well-being. "It's shocking to hear how many people have never been educated on this information. If you're working your entire life to pay off old debt, you should understand how credit and interest rates impact finances," Preston says.

→ Todd Betlejewski and Jeannette Preston, co-founders and managing directors, Liberty1Financial

Leading with ethics

"We provide a lot of educational resources for clients that our competition isn't necessarily able or willing to provide," agrees Todd Betlejewski, co-founder and managing director. In 2019, he and Preston, both serial entrepreneurs, noticed a growing need for lending solutions that offered more than a check. Their decades of business leadership prepared them to serve the influx of customers seeking loans due to Covid-related challenges. Satisfied clients referred friends and family, spurring even more growth. "If we put the client first, everything else has a way of working itself out," Betlejewski explains. "It's the founding principle that Jeanette and I started the company on. It's what every single person in this company is committed to doing." The approach earned the company an A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau (BBB) and a BBB Torch Awards for Ethics nomination.

Leading with purpose

Fast customer growth has inspired Liberty1Financial to open a third office in Phoenix, Arizona. New offices allow it to tap fresh talent pools for exceptional hires—another key to its success. The founders' sense of purpose attracts ethical employees, many of whom have decades of experience and credentials that extend beyond consumer lending; all share their passion for client education. "As a leader in the consumer lending space, we must hold ourselves to a higher standard than our competitors. Our family of clients deserve the best," Betlejewski says. Because of this commitment, we can go home at the end of the day knowing we have helped families in their time of need. That feels really good."

Inc. Regionals
PACIFIC

The Pipeline Group	NO48	2X	298%	400+
	2024 Inc. 5000 Ranking	Inc. 5000 Regional Honoree	3-Year Growth	Employees in 28 countries

When the Pieces Come Together: Building a World-Class Sales Solution

Seven years ago, this founder couldn't have predicted he was building a best-in-class global solution for B2B sales.

THEPIPELINEGROUP.IO

Building a business is like assembling a puzzle—except there's no picture on a box to guide you. "That's what happened: I found a bunch of puzzle pieces, and I started piecing them together. The result was a complete blessing and a complete surprise," explains Ken Jisser, founder and CEO of The Pipeline Group (TPG), a technology-enabled services company specializing in remote sales development representatives (SDRs) for business-to-business (B2B) technology companies.

For Jisser, one puzzle piece was people—"the world's best SDRs," he says. Another was technology that was purpose-built to manage and optimize remote sales processes and drive exceptional results. These pieces proved the foundation for a two-time Inc. Regionals honoree poised for continued domestic and international growth.

→ Ken Jisser, founder and CEO, The Pipeline Group

Built from necessity

TPG, an Inc. 5000 and Inc. Regionals honoree, began as a consulting business that optimized inside sales teams so deftly, it built a few unicorns. The problem, though, was that clients struggled to maintain the same level of success once TPG pulled away. This inspired Jisser to find and train an SDR workforce for clients to tap. He is proud that sales reps often come from non-tech backgrounds, like teaching and bartending.

Jisser says TPG excels at training salespeople with something to prove. Technology and data help, as well. TPG built its own technology and data capabilities because existing tools for managing remote sales teams fell short. The company's solutions increase transparency, automate conversations, and deliver verified data globally at scale to ensure SDRs deliver viable opportunities as opposed to just booking meetings.

Bootstrapped and debt-free

The combination of people, data, and tech has proved lethal, in a good way. On average, TPG delivers triple the return on their investment. Building sales teams can be costly, because of attrition, and it's time-consuming, so clients tend to stay a while and refer other customers. Another growth driver is private equity and venture capital firms that recommended TPG to their portfolio.

Thanks to these strategies, TPG has grown into a 400-person operation, with resources in 28 countries, without investing in marketing, sales, or seeking outside funding. This year, Jisser plans to use TPG's tech-enabled sales team to build its own pipeline. He is also making the company's battle-tested technology commercially available through a spin-off company that he expects to debut next year. "It was all through chicken wire and duct tape in the early days, but we are really excited about what we built," Jisser says. "We are on track to have our largest year ever."

Inc. Regionals MID-ATLANTIC | REDTRACE TECHNOLOGIES

A Human-Centric Approach to Cybersecurity Branded Content

RedTrace Technologies tackles cyber threats with cutting-edge technology and a human-centric approach.

REDTRACETECH.COM

Kelo Makelele, founder and president, RedTrace Technologies

Digital threats are evolving with alarming velocity, but RedTrace Technologies is redefining the cybersecurity landscape, transcending traditional cybersecurity approaches. Instead of offering one-size-fits-all solutions, RedTrace dives deep into the unique challenges and needs of each client. Dedication to personalized service has led to the development of highly effective security strategies and fostered lasting partnerships.

"We're in the business of building relationships, not just safeguarding systems," says Founder and President Kelo Makelele.

RedTrace's experts are among the most highly certified in the industry, a fact that underscores the company's commitment to excellence and continuous learning. "Our team's expertise is our clients' advantage," states Makelele.

In a world increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure, the need for robust cybersecurity has never been more acute. RedTrace Technologies stands ready as a partner in this journey, offering not just security services but a commitment to building a safer digital future together.

For businesses looking to navigate the complexities of the digital age with confidence, RedTrace Technologies offers more than solutions—it offers a partnership founded on trust, expertise, and a shared mission for security and success.

FIGS

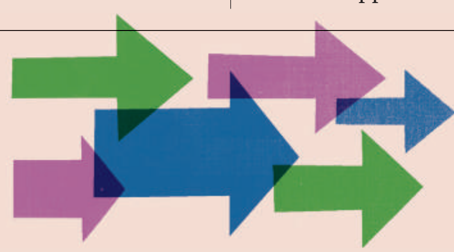
2018 (No. 21)

When Figs became one of the first e-commerce companies to sell scrubs directly to consumers in 2013, it defined a new category in the medical apparel market with fitted scrubs that were undeniably fashionable *and* functional. In so doing, Figs demonstrated a certain obsession with its customers—who have responded in kind.

In 2018, the Santa Monica, California-based company was No. 21 on the 5000, and in conversation with Inc., co-founder Heather Hasson described Figs's intimate relationship with its customers, highlighting its 24/7 customer service operation. Figs's customers typically work 12-hour days, Hasson said, sometimes overnight.

And being responsive to their needs has been vital to innovation. For example, the former head of fetal medicine at Cedars-Sinai, a member of Figs's advisory board, related that she was on her fifth wedding ring. This is common among health care professionals: They often can't wear their rings while working but still want to keep them close by, sometimes tying them to bra straps or drawstrings and losing them in the process. That feedback led Figs to add a dedicated ring pocket to its scrubs.

The company's dedication to its customers goes beyond product design. Figs also employs lobbyists to advocate for policies that address issues such as fair pay, workplace safety, and training. They've even pushed for changes to state licensure policies that penalize nurses who seek mental health support.



"The first year, we were very scrappy. We went to where our customers were. At 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.—that's when shifts change—we put on our scrubs, parked a coffee cart outside of a hospital, and passed out free cups of coffee. The doctors and nurses would notice how cute the scrubs were and we would pull a set out of my car to sell."

Trina Spear, co-founder and co-CEO, Figs

MICHELLE GROSKOPF

Trina Spear (left) and Heather Hasson, co-founders and co-CEOs of Figs.