

❁ BUILDING THE TEAM YOU CAN DEPEND ON

# PAVING THE WAY TO SUCCESS

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



## 3 LESSONS LEARNED

With John Trakselis, Campbell's Vistage Chair

### **Investing in staff means more invested staff.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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