



Accelerating Growth through the Front-Line

Interview with [Dave Friesema](#), CEO of Sleep Country Canada.

Sleep Country is the largest mattress retailer in Canada. They have just celebrated 8 consecutive quarters of comp store growth, at a time when overall industry growth has flat-lined.

What role have your front-line employees played in your recent growth momentum?

Our front-line Associates have contributed heavily to our growth throughout our entire history, and this contribution has amplified over the past couple years. While our industry has been flat to slightly down over the past 30+ months, our business has grown. The majority of this growth has been driven from our existing stores by our Front-line Associates in Sales and Operations. The Customer experience, while always a priority, has improved on all fronts.

These improvements have increased our shopper-to-buyer conversion, led Customers to buy higher quality products, made our home delivery experience more comfortable and resulted in overall higher Customer satisfaction. Highly satisfied customers return, visit us more often and refer us to others.

How have you achieved this Customer experience based differentiation?

Training. Historically, we have done a good job of training our Associates when they join the organization. The training is longer and more Customer-centric than others in our industry. Over the past few years, we have added a significant amount of on-going and advanced training for our more tenured Associates. As a specialty retailer focused only on sleep-related products, we have the opportunity to be experts.

Our turnover of Associates is approximately 66% lower than retail averages, which allows us to focus on the ongoing training of our existing teams, as opposed to training new replacement Associates. So, we continually raise the bar on our service.

We also recognize outstanding performance, which generally relates to great internal and external Customer service, through monthly and yearly departmental awards.

What are the key metrics you use to measure Customer satisfaction?

The first metric we use is the conversion rate of shoppers to buyers. We also measure and benchmark customer satisfaction and employee retention.

Every Customer should receive a thank you card or email after they make a purchase. That card has a short questionnaire and we use the responses to help understand satisfaction and provide training. We also conduct yearly market research studies that provide valuable feedback. You'll also find that our leadership team always inquires about the service experience when they meet a person who made a purchase at one of our stores.

Who are your favorite sources of inspiration on Customer experience excellence?

Our Customers. We receive dozens of letters and comments every week about our service, as well as information gathered from our Customer Service department. We take time to look at all the responses, both negative and positive, and we learn a great deal from both. The vast majority of the comments are positive, and we send them to the entire company every Tuesday. People love to see great service and it inspires everyone.



CEO + Executive Team Breakfasts

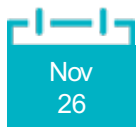


Toronto 7-9am
Building a High Performance Culture

CEO PANELISTS:
Kevin Higgins CEO, Fusion Learning
Joseph Lo President, Medisys Corporate Health
Peter Legge Chairman & CEO, Canada Wide Media
Doug Vanderspek President, Trailer Wizards

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with Medisys Canada



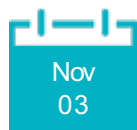
Vancouver 7-9am
Building a High Performance Culture

CEO PANELISTS:
Dave Curtis President & CEO, Viking Air
Dr. Beth Donaldson Medical Director, Copeman
Aaron Gillespie President, COBS Bread
Debi Hewson President & CEO, Odlum Brown

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with Copeman Healthcare

CEO Awards & Summits

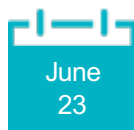


Vancouver 6pm-9pm
BC CEO Awards Gala

Join us to celebrate the 2015 BC CEO Award Winners

[Tickets & Information](#)

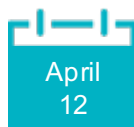
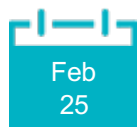
Co-hosted with Business in Vancouver



Vancouver 11am-3pm
BC Business Top 100 Event

Join us for the 2016 BC Business Legends Luncheon - with Peter Legge & Christine Day! Save the Date.

Co-hosted with BC Business



Toronto 12pm-late

Waterstone Most Admired Corporate Cultures CEO Summit & Gala

This is an exclusive opportunity for our members. Note new date. More details coming soon.

Co-hosted with Waterstone

CEO Leadership Tip



Great Questions to ask about Strategy

Great strategies are borne out of attacking the current strategy over and over again. A once-a-year strategy offsite is not enough. Create space and time either monthly - or at worst, quarterly - to talk about differentiation and how to extend your competitive advantages. Ask questions like:

- What can we do to create barriers to competing in our target market?
- Who are our rivals and how are they competing?
- What are key trends that affect our business and in what respects can we leverage them?
- What are alternatives or choices buyers make? Why do they trade across to competitors, or even to other industries altogether?
- How can we mitigate our customers' pain points? What happens before, during, and after customers interact with us?

Contributed by [Henryk Krajewski](#), PhD - Toronto Forum Chair and President of [The Anderson Leadership Group](#)

Toronto 7am-late

Best Managed Companies Symposium & Gala

This is an exclusive opportunity for our members. Save the date. Registration details coming soon.

Co-hosted with Deloitte

CEO Health Tip



Scheduling to Maximize Brain Activity

Exercising in the morning before going to work spikes brain activity, prepares you for mental stresses, helps increase retention of new information and improves your ability to react to complex situations.

By making a simple scheduling change you can extract even more value from your regular exercise routine.

Contributed by [Copeman Healthcare](#)

Announcing New Alliance to Accelerate CEO Health

We are excited to announce an alliance with [Copeman Healthcare](#) and [Medisys Canada](#) to accelerate CEO performance through health.

All MacKay CEO Forums members and families will now receive preferred pricing with Copeman Healthcare (BC, Alberta) and Medisys Canada (rest of Canada). In addition, their leading health experts will be available to speak to our forums on topics such as leading under pressure, building strategic health resilience and brain health. For more information, please contact your Forum Chair.

Meet our Newest Forum Chairs

[Oliver Baezner](#) - Calgary, AB - A business and executive coach, Oliver has over 25 years of leadership and management experience with some of Canada's largest national retail chains. He is an accomplished facilitator and keynote speaker with several coaching certifications, including Motivating by Appreciation at Work.

[Michael Walsh](#) - Vancouver, BC - A growth specialist with over 20 years of experience guiding business owners,

CEOs and top executives to build high performing companies, Michael is a gifted storyteller, talented strategist and author of two books on business growth.

CEO & Executive Forums

MacKay CEO Forums accelerates CEO performance through the highest impact, least time-intensive peer groups for results-oriented CEOs and top executives in Canada. If you would like to explore a forum opportunity, or refer someone to us, please contact [Nancy](#).