

Vista Growth: Anecdotes of Advancement

Previously, as we walked through [the six stages of the Vista Growth Process](#), we shared a number of the big picture questions that challenge the leadership of any organization that is poised for greatness. It is those questions, those words, which expose both the strengths and the weaknesses in the leadership team and, thus, the organization as a whole.

Sometimes, as those strong and weak points rise to the surface, events occur that are simply unforgettable, even years later. Here are some of those anecdotes for your energy, entertainment, and enlightenment.

The Carlyle Group: Origins

The Carlyle Group - named after one of the founder's favorite hotel in Washington, D.C. - is the largest Venture Capital firm in the United States. At their inception in 1987, Chairman Frank Carlucci (former Secretary of Defense) desired to brand and position the new organization to capitalize on their global opportunities.

Vista Growth founder Steve Beshara created a plan for branding the firm to set themselves up for the growth that they experienced, which helped put them where they are today. That plan is the origin of [The Vista Growth Roadmap](#) that we have today.

Cinnabon and the Sweet Smell of Success

During the process with Cinnabon, we had weekly meetings with the Guiding Coalition. Every week, the Cinnabon would, of course, bring Cinnabon's namesake product to the meeting. We gained some weight during that process. However, it was that same product that led to one of the most successful tactics of the hyper growth of the Cinnabon's franchise.

When you are near a Cinnabon store, what do you smell? The Makara Cinnamon, of course. But did you know that the olfactory sense is the human sense that is most closely tied to memory? It is, and that came into play as we were determining how to make the Cinnabon franchise materials stand out to potential franchise groups and individual owners.

We had questioned hundreds of franchise groups about their process for determining which franchise(s) they would invest in next. The most common answer was simple:

“We find the most attractive franchises, request their franchise materials, and sit around our table and see who has the most attractive terms and packaging for our needs.”

The question that stayed with our Growth Process group was, “how do we make the Cinnabon materials stand out?” Knowing what you’ve read already, you can probably guess what’s coming next. We contacted a local manufacturer of spices, and asked if their Makara Cinnamon could be mixed with printing ink. The answer was affirmative, the same as the printing provider when we inquired as to whether they could print the correct brand colors with Makara Cinnamon mixed in.

Every single Cinnabon franchise materials package emitted the sweet, irresistible, unmistakable aroma of Cinnabon cinnamon rolls. The Cinnabon franchise model took hold, and grew to be one of the most successful franchise brands in the U.S. The printing facility gave us a standing ovation when we printed the first run of materials, [and the aroma of their signature Makara Cinnamon still plays a vital role in the Cinnabon brand.](#)

LUMA Institute: Becoming Bold

LUMA Institute was born out of the idea to productize the processes that [Maya](#), a design firm, utilized in creating great products and services. LUMA peeled off these techniques to create a system of teaching organizations how to innovate. Two years into the venture, LUMA was doing well, but it was unclear how they could scale the business. At their core, LUMA teaches 36 methods that lead to innovation. But teachers only scale as people can scale, and LUMA did not want to be in the business of employing hundreds or potentially thousands of teachers. They quickly realized that they could *train the trainer*, and scale by teaching and licensing their methodology.

With that realization in mind, we created three possible growth trajectories. The most aggressive trajectory positioned LUMA to be much larger than their parent company, Maya, within about two years. The members of the Guiding Coalition simply could not get their heads around the concept of outgrowing the parent company.

If you saw a path to greatness and a road to being really good, why would you choose really good? That was the inflection point at which the leadership of the LUMA Institute realized that they had created a larger opportunity than their parent company had, and that they would be remiss if they did not set out to achieve greatness.

They chose the most aggressive path of growth, and achieved it. The 12th century proverb, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink, is applicable in many different scenarios; however, it became clear in this scenario that we needed to dunk the horse. Doing so made all the difference in the LUMA Institute growth story.

Kevin Gillespie & Gun Show: A New Recipe

Our latest implementation of the Vista Growth Roadmap is local to Atlanta, and unusual in that the organization is very small. Our target audience for working through the process is pre-IPO companies and organizations (publicly traded or private) that need a solid, executable roadmap to reach the \$1 Billion mark.

While Kevin Gillespie can only be seen as a successful chef and restaurateur already, when he reached the 2nd phase of the Vista Growth Roadmap, he realized that success is relevant, and was inspired - nay electrified - to reach for the top of his market. Such a quest requires time, money, and a thousand little victories along the way.

But what Gillespie and his organization needed first was a good old fashioned house cleaning. Today, just a few months after completing the process and beginning the execute on the roadmap, Gillespie had this to say about opening his 2nd restaurant in the coming week:

“We feel in control.”

One can either be steering through the tide, or be pushed by the tide. Gillespie has chosen to steer. We eagerly await the many thrills of victory that await Kevin and his team of chefs.