

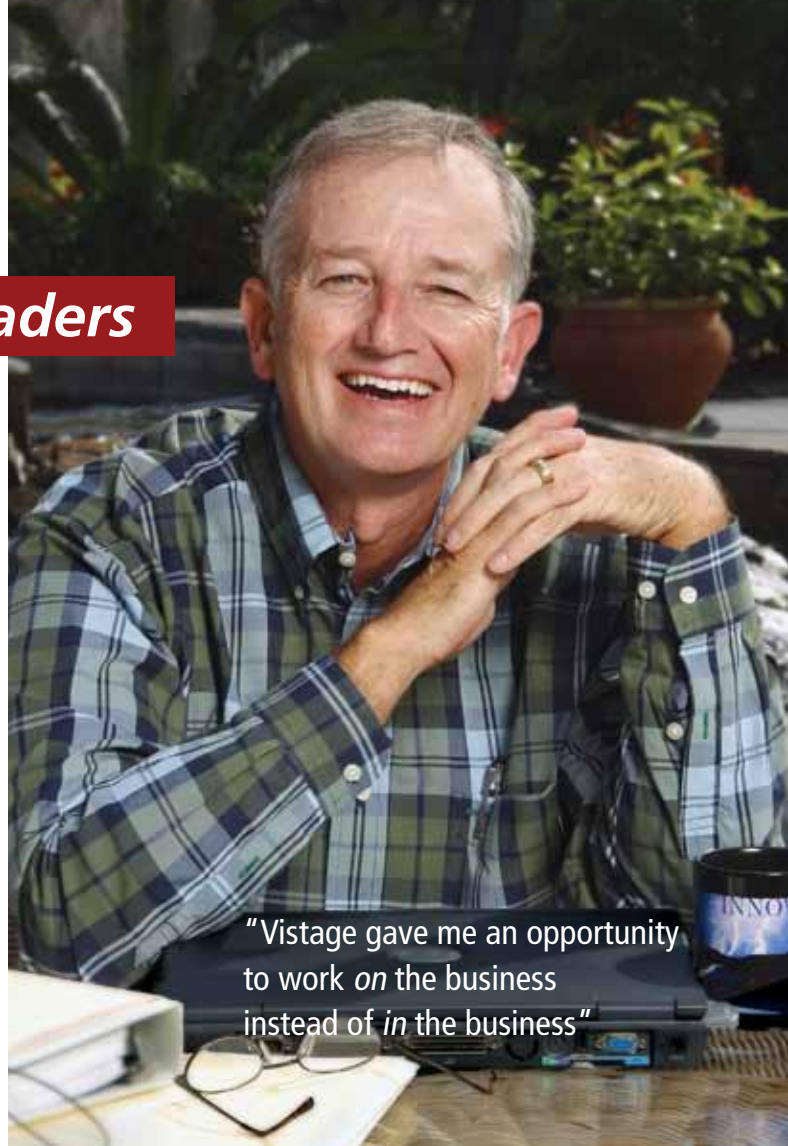
Vistage Grows Leaders

Who Grow Companies

Bill Dillard credits Vistage Florida for helping him develop the management skills necessary to grow Mechanical Services, Inc. into a profitable \$46 million company and successfully navigate its sale.

In 1986 Dillard was coping with fallout from an acquisition that had doubled the size of his commercial heating, ventilating and air conditioning business. "I hadn't given enough thought to integrating two companies. Bottom line: we were losing money." He said.

So, Dillard joined Vistage, an organization designed to help Chief Executive peers develop their leadership skills and knowledge. Members share



"Vistage gave me an opportunity to work *on* the business instead of *in* the business"

Vistage (TEC Florida's new name), formed in 1957 as The Executive Committee, is an international organization dedicated to increasing the effectiveness and enhancing the lives of Chief Executives. There are more than 15,000 members internationally and 70 Vistage groups in Florida, where Chief Executives meet in groups of 12 to 17 to give and receive feedback on business challenges and opportunities, share collective intellect and experience, and hear from outside experts.

Research shows that companies grow 2½ times faster after their CEO joins Vistage.

For more information call Vistage Florida at 800-733-4832 or visit www.vistageflorida.com.

business challenges and advice in a highly confidential forum and Dillard's Orlando group suggested a number of ideas to stop the bleeding and integrate the two companies.

"Considering my managerial experience at the time, I would have to say the group helped save the company." Dillard said.

Vistage enables Chief Executives to step back and see the big picture through the eyes of impartial peers who have vastly different backgrounds and perspectives. "Vistage gave me the chance to work *on* the business, instead of *in* the business," Dillard said.

Dillard's issues revolved around positioning the company for the future: financing growth, hiring a CFO and HR professional, and establishing a performance management compensation system. His Vistage group, which included an international accounting firm, one of Florida's largest law firms, and a software company that had gone public, helped him position the company for a public offering.

Because of poor market conditions in the late '90s, Dillard pulled the proposed IPO, but the exposure set it up for sale. In 1999, he sold the company the Group Maintenance Corp. of America.

An active member since 1986, Dillard now uses the knowledge gained through Vistage to help other business people develop their dreams. His consulting firm, Business Strategy First, provides strategic planning and succession planning services to business is ranging from \$5 million to \$250 million in annual revenue.