



Mike Wittenstein

Strategy advisor to CEOs, leadership teams, and boards for 30 years. Founder of Storyminers (2002). Work with leadership teams has contributed to \$3.2 billion in documented client value, every figure traced to a source. Candidate for independent director seats at private companies of \$50 million to \$2 billion in revenue that are at an inflection point: AI, a new market, a changing customer promise, or a generational succession. This would be a first paid fiduciary seat; 30 years of board-level advisory work and formal governance training are the preparation.

COMMITTEE FIT

Strong fit

Strategy
Growth & technology, including AI
Succession & leadership transitions
Culture & Customer Experience
Governance

Not a fit

Audit Committee leadership
Risk/Compliance leadership
Tech implementation
Operating roles

Contact information on page two.

SELECTED OUTCOMES, WITH LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Transitions Optical *Store of the Future*

For a lens maker sold through opticians and retailers, led a 14-month prototype-store program: brand strategy, store programming, space and interactive fixtures, and live executive walkthroughs. Helped show that a leading retail experience could lift sales and share; the work helped spark Essilor's acquisition.

McDonald's *the first digital drive-thru (IBM engagement)*

Imagined ordering by phone before smartphones existed: store visits, mystery shopping, storyboards, role descriptions, and experience designs for a nationwide restaurant system. Our own 1999 projections said no existing restaurant could support it. They built toward it anyway; ordering by phone is now standard across the system.

iPay Technologies *positioning through growth to a \$300 million exit*

New customer and employee experience for the first online bill-payment company to reach profitability and hold it; revenue grew from \$13 million to \$58 million during the engagement years, ahead of the sale to Jack Henry.

Alternative Apparel *culture, promise, and new channels*

Guided the leadership team's search for "the soul of the company" into a Brand Promise, Reason for Being, principles, and organization design. The work contributed to new store-in-store and stand-alone retail channels and sales growth from \$40 million to \$70 million over five years, then a sale.

LeasePlan *a customer-experience framework adopted in 27 countries*

With the director of customer experience of a 1.3-million-vehicle fleet company in more than 30 countries, designed the customer-experience management framework; adopted in 27 countries within 18 months.

Maier America *from product supplier to partner*

US arm of a German maker of rotary bearings for specialty manufacturing. With the US managing director and board on marketing and service; sales doubled in three years.

GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE

FullCircle 2021-2026

Co-Founder (2021), Executive Director (2022-25), Board Member (2021-2026)
Nonprofit; board of three growing to seven, four meetings a year. A deliberate move from operational leadership to a governance-only role.

Set up the board's governance, handed leadership to a representative of the community served, and carried the hardest vote, dissolution, through a careful wind-down.

Georgia Tech, HCI (Human-Computer Interaction) 2013-2020

Advisory Board Member

Strategic governance for one of the nation's top HCI graduate programs.

Steered curriculum development to meet evolving employer needs; contributed to the program's sustained reputation for producing industry-ready graduates in AI/ML, UX research, and interaction design.

Alchemist.AI 2026-present

Advisory Board Member. AI-powered customer-acquisition platform for technical founders; positioning and product priorities.

Private Event Rentals 2026-present

Advisory Board Member. Rental platform for private events; first positioning and host and client experience.

EDUCATION

MBA, International Business

Thunderbird School of Global
Management / Arizona State University

BA, Foreign Languages

University of Florida

CREDENTIALS & LANGUAGES

Professional certifications

Private Company Governance Certificate
(PDA, 2026)

CMC (Certified Management
Consultant), earned; lapsed

CSP (Certified Speaking Professional),
earned; lapsed

CCXP (Certified Customer Experience
Professional), earned; lapsed

DTM (Distinguished Toastmaster)

Recognition

Top 50 Customer Service Experts of the
Decade, 2010–2020 (Nextiva)

Methodologies

Customer experience and governance
methodologies certified for method
quality by The Customer Institute's peer-
review panel

Languages

English (native)

Portuguese (fluent)

Spanish (conversational)

Russian (basic)

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS

Private Directors Association

AI Collective

Kettering Executive Network

CONTACT

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BOARD-LEVEL ADVISORY EXPERIENCE

Meeting Professionals International (MPI) 2017

Board-Level Strategic Facilitator

International association of 60,000+ meetings and events professionals.

Facilitated international board strategic planning; introduced a framework that shifted the organization's focus from serving members to helping members create value for their own clients.

PartnerTech (now Scanfil) 2013–2017

Board-Level Strategic Planning Facilitator

Global electronics manufacturing services provider.

Facilitated strategic planning for the international leadership team, including board members, across two multi-year engagements; the company could then make and keep larger commitments, and sales followed.

Maier America 2014–2016

Strategic Advisor to CEO and Leadership Team

US subsidiary of a German automotive and industrial parts manufacturer.

Worked with the US managing director and board on marketing and service initiatives; advised on strategies that earned the US team more marketing autonomy. Sales doubled in three years.

A midsize, family-owned EU commodity trading company 2024–2025

Strategic Advisor to the incoming CEO

EU-based trading house handing leadership to the next generation; name withheld at the client's request.

Advised the incoming CEO through the handoff: confidence, leadership skills, and a larger vision for the company and for himself. Worked with him on organization design, strategy, humans working with AI, and governance.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Storyminers 2002–present

Founder & Strategy Advisor

Strategic consultancy helping CEOs and leadership teams clarify direction, align people, and de-risk major decisions. Clients have included McDonald's, IBM, TELUS, Transitions Optical, and private companies from \$10 million up, many of them family-run.

\$3.2 billion in documented client value across 13 engagements over 30 years: revenue growth, permanent savings, and costs avoided, counted at the low end, excluding company sale prices. Every figure and its source: storyminers.com/sources.

Twice the growth strategy was my own to design and carry out: Galileo, one of the first digital agencies, and Storyminers, rebuilt for the AI era with tools we use on ourselves first.

IBM Global Services 1999–2001

eVisionary (IBM's title for its early digital-strategy leads), Strategy & Experience Leadership

Led early digital strategy and experience engagements as enterprises rethought customer experience, service design, and operating models; won back a major airline's \$1.1 billion infrastructure renewal by reframing it around customer and employee experience.

Galileo 1991–1998

Co-Founder & CEO

Co-founded and led one of the world's first digital agencies (gold NewMedia Invision Award): the first website to take hotel reservations online (Holiday Inn, 1995), among other industry firsts.

SKILLS & CAPABILITIES

Strategic foresight & future scenarios

Scenarios a board can walk through before it commits. One client's board, shown a detailed picture of its future, slowed a costly build and kept both the capital and the choice.

Culture and values made operational

Turns a company's values into tools people use: a Reason for Being (what the company is for and who it serves), working principles, and a Promise Map, a one-page picture of who is accountable for what.

AI & technology adoption

Guides boards and leadership teams through responsible AI adoption as a decision partner, not a replacement for judgment. Not an implementer.