

VISTAGE

Member *Stories*

Adam Sprecher, Managing Director
Salo LLC
Minneapolis

At a glance

Role: Managing Director

Industry: Professional Services

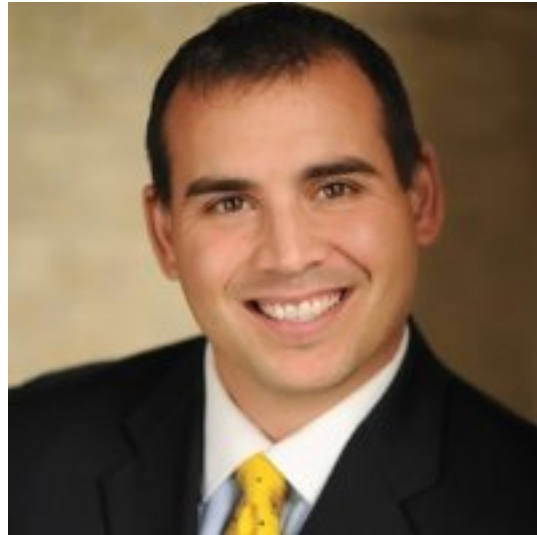
Employees: 500+

Vistage chair: Brian Davis

Adam: "Vistage has taught me to be open to seeking help from others outside of our organization. I'm building a network of trusted advisors."

[Salo](#), headquartered in Minneapolis, with an operation in Chicago, has been on a growth tear for five years in a row, expanding at the rate of 15+ percent annually. The staffing and consulting agency with over 500 employees provides senior-level finance, accounting, and human resources consultants to Fortune 500 companies in the Twin Cities and Chicago.

Minnesota Vistage member Adam Sprecher runs the company's 80-person strong HR practice out of the Minneapolis office. He landed at Salo nine years ago after he spent eight years of his career working in corporate recruiting for large companies. Before his promotion to managing director at Salo, Adam worked in business development for five years.



Adam shared that Salo's cofounders John Folkestad and Amy Langer are strong proponents of education and coaching opportunities that are available through outside groups. Therefore, when Amy introduced Adam to Vistage chair [Brian Davis](#) a few years ago, Adam decided to take the plunge.

"My Vistage group is a mix of key leaders and business owners. As we do business processing and talk through challenges that businesses are going through, it's been valuable and helpful to hear different opinions from a key leader versus a business owner, and how they see certain challenges, or how they would approach certain situations," shares Adam.

How Vistage broadens perspectives

The Vistage experience has broadened his understanding of how some problems and issues are similar across multiple industries. Lessons are learned when Adam realizes that each company has a slightly different twist on how to approach and solve the same problems. "I like the ability to talk with individuals who are in various industries. To interact with different types of leaders and see how they evaluate making business deci-

sions through various lenses has been very, very helpful," Adam says.

Indeed, insights from other group members and the monthly presentations from national speakers have helped Adam prepare for intermittent challenges to Salo's growth strategy. "We continually work to develop, build, maintain, and deepen relationships with our consultants and clients. But there are only so many hours in a day. How do you continue to grow but preserve the culture of how we have built the business?" he muses aloud.

Salo naturally performs well when the company's clients are growing and excelling. Many companies need help from firms like Salo when they are acquiring, growing too rapidly or implementing a new ERP system. But Salo also grows when the revenue curve of its clients changes direction. "In a downturn, when our customers are letting people go, we provide strategic talent to support our clients' outcomes." Moreover, some companies are unable to make investments in mission essential technology and new tools and may turn to Salo for help.

As a consulting firm, Salo must always be aware of nascent technologies and tools, and whether they have a potential to improve a company's operations and processes. He cites a Vistage speaker that spoke to his group on the broader topic of social media. "He talked about a lot of great apps for improving your business, but the most notable example I walked away with was Slack," he says.

Slack helps teams better collaborate and communicate. "We've been using Slack now for the better part of about nine months. The connectedness, the real-time sharing of information, and team building that comes through the tool have been well worth it for us. It's huge!"

Adam cited another Vistage speaker who intro-

duced his group to a tool that's helping him manage and lead more efficiently. The tool, known as Insights® Discovery, is used worldwide by companies to help employees discover and understand their working and communications styles. Think of Insights as a Myers-Briggs, but with colors to distinguish personality types.

"We have, as an organization, taken all of our employees through the process. In one-on-one coaching with each of my team members I've been able to understand better how they lead a conversation, how they respond and how they react." Adam says by implementing Insights Discovery they've also learned to do a better job of hiring people who would fit well and thus work well with existing teams. To be sure, finding people in this existing tight job market is challenging enough, let alone finding right people.

Adam gives the credit of continually finding inspirational business thought leaders to address his monthly Vistage meetings to chair Brian Davis. That also goes for a good mix of members who represent different industries and various levels of experience. "Brian's done a fantastic job of bringing an excellent mix of people together in my group. Having the right people around that table makes all the difference in the world. That has been great. He's very deft at making connections and bringing in the right people," Adam concludes.

Asking the tough questions

Adam says the professional manner in which Brian runs the group is one of the reasons he'll be staying with Vistage. "Brian's always respectful of our time, and he wants to make sure we're getting value from it, but still holding us accountable."

Summarizing, Adam says that when the group is

processing issues and working on answers to tough business problems, “Brian is always willing to ask that tough question or to go one more question deeper to make sure we're uncovering the right issues.” **V**