



12 LEADERS[®]

12 hand-picked
entrepreneurs, leaders,
and influencers

12 months of high-impact,
results-based learning
and development

1 powerful and
transformative
experience

PROFILE OF GRADUATES

Ann Lawrence

When Ann Lawrence joined the 2013 offering of 12 Leaders, she already had significant accomplishments on her résumé. A graduate of Yale and of Columbia Law School, she had been a partner since 2010 at DLA Piper, the world's largest law firm by revenue. She and her teams had won big awards for the quality and impact of their work. She had also founded and served as president of the Network of Executive Women, and served several years on the board of directors of the American Diabetes Association's Los Angeles Chapter. She and her husband had two children.

"I was confident that 12 Leaders was going to help me be a lot more effective in all aspects of my life, and that's really what I was looking for," Ann recalls. **"That happened—I saw how to dramatically accelerate my success at doing the things that mattered most to me—but what I hadn't expected was that I would discover and quickly bring into being a wholly new opportunity to make a large impact that synced up with my life in a completely organic way."**

At her law firm, greater effectiveness meant serving clients even more successfully and making contributions that led to her recognition by *Forbes* magazine in 2014 as one of six "notable women innovators in the field of law . . . women who are innovating the industry, evolving the practice of law, and setting the course for years to come." It also helped her advance her long-time interest in expanding opportunities for women within the legal profession—she led the development of a plan that was rated by a large international consulting firm as the best among 20 diversity plans submitted to it for review.

The brand new mission she undertook as a result of 12 Leaders was to co-found Pink51, an internet destination where consumers can buy from companies that support, promote, empower, and value women. To have a presence at Pink51, a company has to meet one of four criteria: be at least 50 percent owned by women; have at least 20 percent of its board of directors be women; have a female CEO; or have at least two female C-Suite executives. Ten percent of Pink51's profits go to charities that promote girls' and women's economic development and leadership success.

"Pink51 has significantly moved the needle in support of women in business, and without 12 Leaders Pink51 wouldn't exist," Ann says. **"Not only did 12 Leaders open my brain to envisioning this project, but we were able to build it in**



a year, when I'm certain that it would have taken three or four years under normal circumstances. Robert showed me around the corner—how to move this rapidly from an amorphous idea to a feasible concept to a completed product. Eight amazing women have given blood, sweat, and tears to it for a year, but I'm sure we'd still be working on it—or might never have attempted it—if it weren't for 12 Leaders."

"I learned to think outside the box early in my life," Ann says, recalling growing up in a family business, surrounded by entrepreneurs. "I was always looking for better ways to run the family business, and I wasn't afraid to argue for what seemed right to me. I wasn't afraid to be disruptive in the interest of a better outcome." She observes that while many people have valued her innovative spirit, others have not always been fully supportive of it. **"Being part of an amazing group of innovators in 12 Leaders reaffirmed the value of my perspective,"** she says, **"and 12 Leaders also helped me immensely with seeing ways to be more persuasive with people who might not initially be receptive to my ideas."**

"Thanks to 12 Leaders, I get things done so much more effectively and efficiently now," she says. "I have more skills and a broader view. Life is short. Whatever you want to do, you should know how to accelerate it, how to achieve greater results in less time. **12 Leaders drops what you need to know right into your lap. The value it has added to the quality and impact of my work and my life is incalculable."**

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John Eliason

John Eliason **started his multi-million dollar merchant services company, [First Financial USA](#), on a shoestring, from his basement, in 1992.** The company, which has now served close to 10,000 clients, handles almost a billion dollars in annual card (Visa, MasterCard, Amex, Discover) volume. He built it by meeting the needs of clients better than his competitors and by creating, as he has said, “a home for sales professionals who want to grow a legitimate business to an insane level, with all the best tools, and have a great time doing it.” First Financial has been named for six straight years as one of the best places to work in its headquarters city, Minneapolis.

For almost ten years the company has offered a program that allows businesses to financially support nonprofits and charitable organizations without spending a dime; more than 600 organizations have benefitted from the program. First Financial also sells the software that John created to manage the company’s superlative sales and marketing efforts, even though people warned him against making it available to his competitors.

In his 2014 book, [Rewire](#), he concisely shares what he has learned about growing a business and having a great time doing it. If we repeat the idea of having a great time here, it’s inevitable. To say that John lives his life to the fullest is an understatement. Travel, fitness, coaching sports teams, hiking, SCUBA diving, and exploring other cultures—often alongside one or more members of his family—fill out the parts of his days that aren’t committed to growing his businesses or helping others grow theirs. His philosophy of life, he says, is “Live in gratitude and help others around you soar.”

At the University of Minnesota—where he still returns regularly to talk with students about creating fulfilling lives for themselves—John had considered getting a Ph.D. in psychology. He decided that life in an ivory tower would not suit him. He says that **when he first heard Robert Cooper giving a talk, more than twenty years after leaving college, he realized that deep scholarly insight could be combined with intense real-world application. “I was blown away,” John recalls. “I wasn’t sorry that I hadn’t followed the same path, but I saw a glimpse of what could have been, with the way Robert completely closed the gap between theory and practice.”**



He didn’t really consider joining 12 Leaders then, though: “I already had too much on my plate. I had had coaches before. And I’m very impatient and outspoken—I was kicked out of the last executive group I had been in for expressing my frustration with the slow pace.”

Past members, and some conversations with Robert, convinced him that **12 Leaders just might provide the kind of experience that he had found lacking in other programs and coaching relationships. It did.** “The best way I can describe the overall experience,” he says, “is with an expletive, which I’ll delete for politeness. I went around all day referring to Robert as ‘that bleeping Robert Cooper,’ because he was stretching me and challenging me so much all the time that my brain hurt. My brain hurt—I don’t know how else to put it. The last time it hurt that much was when I took statistics in college, but this was a better kind of hurting.”

“I’m good at seeing ahead, but Robert’s better,” John says. “He widened my angle, helped me strategize better, and then helped me see how to make the right things happen faster. I love growing my business, because everyone gains from that. I love living my life as fully as possible, along with my family and others. And my real goal is to rewire the world. Robert advanced my success in all those areas, and taught me ways to keep doing it. He’ll always be bleeping Robert Cooper to me, in the best possible way.”

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Rod Fallow

Rod Fallow is the owner and president of Swagelok Northern California, a company that delivers more than a million parts each year to customers who require sophisticated gas and fluid system components.

The stated vision of Swagelok Northern California is “to be our customers’ favorite story.” Rod says that it was not difficult to define his company’s mission, values, and other core success drivers, but the vision took some serious thought. “So much is changing in our industry that it was hard to really nail down a vision,” he recalls. “Then we recognized that if customers treasured our relationship they would give us permission to keep changing to stay relevant and provide more and more value. The best way to earn their ongoing support is to do everything we can to please them so much that they take delight in telling the story of how we helped them.”

The importance of the vision is reinforced through the mechanism that Rod calls “the four P’s”—plan, prepare, progress, and party. “We develop an ambitious plan, do the critical preparation to make sure we can achieve it, hold ourselves accountable, measure our progress, and we reflect on and celebrate our successes,” he says, noting that **his resolve to emphasize the positive was further strengthened by his participation in 12 Leaders**: “Robert reminded me about how strongly our brains tend to dwell on negatives, and how important it is to acknowledge and internalize positive achievements. We’ve had many successes to celebrate here—including recognition recently from one of our biggest customers with their Supplier Excellence Award. We want to remember those successes, understand how we earned them, and keep improving.”

Rod recalls that **his interest in 12 Leaders was first prompted by a talk that Robert gave**. “I’ve been interested for a long time in how our brains influence us,” Rod says, “and Robert’s knowledge and practical application about that are something very special.” He contacted Robert, heard about 12 Leaders, and joined. “**It’s been great since the first day**,” he says. “**Not a day goes by that I’m not applying something I have learned in the program, not just to achieve peak performance for myself, but to ignite it in everyone around me.**”

For example, he paid close attention to his daily energy rhythms in order to schedule daily 90-minute “islands of focus” during which he concentrates on making important progress on a small number of critical issues. “Carving out those 90 minutes wasn’t easy to do,” he observes, “but the payoff has been so great that I have strongly encouraged



other Swagelok Northern California leaders to do it.” He notes that his calendar also now includes time to think about ways to build stronger relationships with his “Vital 12”—the core group of people most important to him. “I want to be sure I’m honoring and fully appreciating those relationships, and never taking them for granted,” he says.

Rod and his wife Rebecca are taking big steps toward a commitment they share to helping children achieve higher levels of literacy through the organization Storywise. Rod says, “The goal of Storywise is to make a measurable difference in the lives of tens of thousands of children around the world. Rebecca and I had both been strongly involved in local programs to help kids learn, but **12 Leaders elevated our vision and helped us develop confidence that we could be part of a more ambitious goal.**”

Rod is fortunate to have a number of like-minded friends that are Swagelok business owners. Already, he and a number of Swagelok friends from seven countries have committed to collaborating under the Storywise banner. Together they are hopeful that their number will multiply significantly by 2017. He says, “There was a time when 2017 might have felt too near to really accomplish our vision, or too far away to be worrying about now. But **that’s a major thing I have learned from 12 Leaders, not just for this project but for my business and my life: If you aren’t always connecting the near and the far, always resisting your brain’s instinct to default to what’s good enough for today and not what’s best for tomorrow, your life won’t add up to what you want it to be. My sense of what life can become has expanded greatly thanks to 12 Leaders.**”

PROFILE OF GRADUATES

Doug Andrew

Doug Andrew knows investing. He has written best-selling books on personal asset optimization (including a *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* #1 bestseller); he hosts radio and television shows on asset optimization, tax minimization, and abundant living; he speaks at seminars and symposiums throughout North America, blogs to a large following, publishes a popular newsletter, and leads a nationwide team of top financial advisors. **He has also participated for many years in several of the best-known coaching programs.**

So when Doug says, **“I couldn’t afford not to invest in joining 12 Leaders,”** his view carries the weight of some very substantial expertise. The return on that investment? A member of the 12 Leaders class of 2013, Doug says that by 2018, **“I’m convinced that my company will be doing ten times the business we were doing in 2013, and a very large part of the credit for that is owed to Robert Cooper and 12 Leaders.”**

“Robert is able to look at what you’re doing and see things from a loftier perspective,” Doug says. “Sometimes we can’t see the forest for the trees, and Robert helped lift me up above the forest like a helicopter, so I could see what’s possible. You’ve got to rethink your thinking; you have to constantly disturb your business or someone else will—Robert was unimaginably helpful with doing those things.”

Doug’s business, and his life, are about more than financial wealth. They also focus on two other dimensions of what he calls “authentic wealth”: foundational assets (which include family, health, values, spirituality, unique abilities, and heritage); and intellectual assets (including knowledge, experiences, education, skills, reputation, systems, and traditions). Doug demonstrates how to contribute your time, talents, and financial resources to benefit others. “So many people lose their health gaining their wealth and then spend their wealth regaining their health. Many accumulate wealth at the expense of relationships with a spouse, children, or a higher maker. We help people get all those things in order and aligned,” he says.

The greatest gift I can give anyone—my clients, my kids, my grandkids, and others—is confidence in a brighter future,” he says. “Then that attracts opportunities to them—or rather, they recognize opportunities they were not recognizing before.” You can read more about the services of Doug’s company at the website liveabundant.com.

Doug says that **12 Leaders has contributed to the company’s current and anticipated growth in many ways.** For one thing, he says, “I learned to constantly



ask three essential questions—What’s possible? Who are we missing? What is the smallest change that will have the greatest impact?—and asking those questions has transformed the way we think and act.”

Doug says another crucial breakthrough has come from asking, “How can we arm our recommenders to easily defend with pride why they have engaged with us?” “All of our thinking is about how to make it easier and easier for people to refer the right-fit clients to us and recommend us,” he says.

You can watch a large collection of videos featuring Doug at <https://www.youtube.com/user/missedfortune/videos> and <http://youtu.be/UTCGSgpPPXE>. Where once his videos were lengthy, averaging more than 40 minutes each, he has adopted another idea from 12 Leaders and is now redoing those videos in the form of what Robert calls *brevz*®—brief, immediately useful messages that convey the practical essence of an idea. Doug calls these videos “Abundant Living Ways.” And he hasn’t stopped with refashioning his videos—his radio program, blog, newsletter, and newspaper columns all now conform to *brevz*® principles.

What’s possible? Who are we missing? What’s the smallest change that will have the greatest impact? The more that Doug Andrew asks and answers those and other core 12 Leaders questions, **the greater he sees the return on his investment in 12 Leaders becoming.**

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Neal Mody

In 2001, when he was 21 years old, Neal Mody opened a mobile phone store with a \$15,000 loan from his grandfather. In its first year, the store grossed a million dollars; he opened two more and then sold the three of them after a couple of years. He parlayed his hefty return from that sale into four very successful years buying and selling real estate.

In the fifth year, he lost everything when the bottom fell out of the real estate market. So he started over. Approached to help start a company that was developing a new high-temperature superconductor, he served as the company's first CEO and the company went on to raise 22 million dollars. Within seven years, the company's patent portfolio was independently valued at 124 million dollars. With 200-plus patents, it owns half the patents in its field. (In achieving its goals, the company beat out the more than 800 million dollars spent in the field by two publicly-traded companies and a dozen Fortune 500 companies.)

Neal's business acumen landed him on the boards of several other fast-growing entrepreneurial companies. "I could make a handsome yearly income, as well as having a lot of very interesting conversations, just from serving on boards," he says, "but it didn't feel right to me." Discussing his possible next steps with Robert Cooper, Neal realized that as diverse as his career path as a serial entrepreneur might appear, it had a common theme: "I was constantly asking, 'Is there more? How can I make a bigger impact? How can I play a bigger game?'" He decided that starting a venture fund would be the right way to extend that trajectory, and Zoic Capital was born."

That crucial insight about what makes most sense for me is one of many epiphanies that came while working with Robert," Neal says. "How many people can you work with who will provide you with life-changing and life-accelerating realizations in the course of a year, where you become completely re-wired? The impact that Robert has had on a regular basis has been huge."



"Robert causes you to look at things differently, and he does that by leading first with support," Neal says. "He brings an amazing depth of clarity by asking all the right questions, but his position is always to support you in being your best. Experiencing that has significantly affected my own approach to leadership and relationships. I now see with more clarity, to understand what people need. I look for ways to respond so they get what they need from me as well as what they're asking for."

"I've also learned how to structure my creativity as a result of my conversations with Robert and Suanne," Neal says. "I now work very differently, more systematically. As a result of that and some other 12 Leaders things, I have learned to trust my best instincts, because I'm more prepared for things that happen. It's a great feeling."

Neal has built strong relationships with other 12 Leaders participants—"I love and care about more than a few of these people, and I call them all the time," he says—and he hasn't been shy about recommending it to others: **"I got all the benefits that 12 Leaders promised, and way more.** I'm completely confident that the same will be true for any of my friends and colleagues that I send Robert's way."

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Darius Campbell

Darius Campbell is multifaceted, and each facet shines very brightly. He's a platinum-selling singer-songwriter with five top-ten singles; he performed the male lead in the opera "Carmen" in a 20,000-seat arena, as the first non-classically trained singer to headline a professional world-stage operatic production; and he has had leading roles in West End musicals including *CHICAGO*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *From Here to Eternity*.

He is an Ambassador for the Prince's Trust, which helps tens of thousands of young people stabilize and improve their lives by developing skills, confidence, and motivation; and he has a leadership role with fresh2o, a nonprofit that brings clean-water technology and education to people in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. "Millions of people die every year as a result of dirty water, and millions more suffer from severe and debilitating illnesses," Darius says. "Our mission is to help end that tragedy."

Darius says that when he joined 12 Leaders, he wasn't sure that he could sustain a satisfying professional career while also participating substantially in the philanthropic activities that were very important to him. "Robert **gave me the game-changing insights, along with the practical tools**, to do both, and to do each of them with more passion, deeper commitment, and greater success than I had thought possible," Darius says.

As the son of two highly-regarded physicians (his mother was an oncologist and medical pioneer, and his father, a surgeon, invented the world's first heart-lung-kidney machine for premature babies), Darius grew up with a thorough respect for practical science, and that has deepened his enthusiasm for 12 Leaders. "Robert has the mind of a scientist along with the heart of a humanitarian," Darius says. "He's sharing deep scientific truths in a wide range of fields, including neuroscience, physiology, and linguistics, and his heart is always engaged. This combination is very rare. I feel so fortunate to have encountered it in Robert."



"There were many 'Eureka' moments of great insight from 12 Leaders, and those alone would have made the program invaluable to me," Darius says, **"but I also acquired a very large portfolio of specific skills and practices that start helping me when I wake up in the morning and continue to benefit me all day.** The more that I solidify those skills and practices into habits that I execute without thinking, the better my life, my relationships, and my professional and charitable work become."

"Simply put, **12 Leaders has been life-changing** for me," Darius says. "No one should miss out on this opportunity."

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Max Hansen and Brian Mohr

When Max Hansen and Brian Mohr co-founded the leadership search firm Y Scouts (www.yscouts.com) in Phoenix in 2012, they agreed to pursue one overarching goal: to disrupt the staffing industry forever.

Having both been involved in that industry for more than a decade, they had observed that the most successful placements occurred when the values of the candidate and the company were aligned. So they set out to deeply understand their client companies and job candidates in ways that most of the industry does not. They describe what they are doing as purpose-based recruiting: matching purpose-driven leaders with purpose-driven companies. In a thorough process, they discover the salient characteristics of each client company—its culture, mission, and values—and then they learn about the desires, motivations, passions, and purpose of each potential candidate before recommending a hire. “We’re convinced that this method consistently creates the best possible outcome for our clients,” Brian says.

Y Scouts has been successful, with more than 100 percent year-over-year revenue growth and expansion beyond the Phoenix area to now also serving national and international clients. But Brian and Max want more; there’s still a lot more of the staffing industry out there to be disrupted, and bigger and better ways to keep doing that.

Hence, 12 Leaders. “In our work at Y Scouts, we had noticed how important coaching and mentoring have been for the best leaders so they keep learning and growing,” Max says. “So **we decided to seek out the best coach we could find for ourselves to reach our challenging goals.** After talking with Robert, it was obvious to both of us that he was the right choice to keep us growing in the right directions. That judgment has proven correct.”

“We’ve achieved a lot at Y Scouts in a short time,” Brian says. “That’s satisfying, and it tells us we’re indisputably on a good path, but success can also breed a kind of tunneling in, where you can come to think that your idea is right and that if you keep doing what you’ve been doing, you’ll succeed. Max and I stay alert to Robert’s encouragement not to waste time polishing the past and to always be constructively irritated with the status quo.”

Brian and Max discuss virtually everything that each of them has learned from his individual conversations with Robert. **“To have a partner growing at the same time in a very similar**



context with the same advisor is just incredibly valuable,” Brian says. “I would recommend it to everyone.” Max says, “The fact that Brian and I are both being coached has really changed everything. We’re constantly downloading with each other. **This is one of those situations where, in terms of learning and growth, one plus one equals eleven.**”

Because the company’s two leaders are speaking the same language and accelerating their own growth, staff have benefited, too. “Our learning is definitely rubbing off on the rest of the team,” Brian says. He also notes that **the influence of other 12 Leaders members is compelling** for him and Max: **“It’s really special to be in a room with people who have clearly been selected very carefully, who are creating the future right now. What we see when we get together with them is a room full of optimism, and humility, and brilliant people:** the soul of the room is people who are trying to do something remarkable. They’re not people who are just figuring out how to make more money—they’re determined to create positive disruption, just as we are.”

The “Y” in Y Scouts stands for several things. It visually depicts the relationships among the company, its clients and the candidates; it sounds out part of the core question, “What’s your ‘why?’”; and it represents a fork in the road. That fork faces candidates making career decisions and companies deciding how to hire the best—and it also represents Y Scouts’ determination to blaze a new path in the staffing industry. “An organization can only develop as fast as its leaders are developing,” Max says. “We want to break through the ceiling and never look back. No doubt, 12 Leaders is helping us to do that, together.”

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Elizabeth Sarquis

After quite a few years of bettering lives through established organizations, Elizabeth Sarquis decided in 2013 to create her own company, with the goal of not just improving lives but changing the way we think about what we carry in our pockets.

In her earlier roles, she worked at the United Way, identifying challenges facing youth and developing strategies to ensure that they were on a road to success; she teamed with Minnesota's Governor Jesse Ventura on an extensive campaign to increase the use of booster seats in cars; she worked with the National Eating Disorders Association and other organizations to advocate for solutions to youth diseases, disorders, and systemic impediments to positive growth; and she led a yearlong program to encourage teens to talk about social issues that typically get swept under the rug, using film to prompt open-forum discussion—the acclaimed film, “The New Girl,” resulted from that project.

All of her projects were driven by her persistent desire to help young people attain freedom, mobility, success, and happiness. Then one day, sitting with her own three children in a hotel lobby and seeing them engrossed with their smartphones, she was struck by the potential of combining smartphone gaming with doing good for young people globally. Not long afterward, she formed her company, [Global Gaming Initiative](#) (GGI). GGI sells smartphone-based games, with a large part of the proceeds supporting charities.

The first game the company released, *Sidekick Cycle*, is a downhill bicycle-racing title, inspired by Elizabeth's son's experience as a volunteer in Ecuador, where he saw how a lack of basic transportation kept young people from accessing many important needs, including making the long trip to and from school. Funds raised from *Sidekick Cycle* support two charities that provide bicycles to youth around the world. Other games include *Winning Kick* and *Outbreak Responder*—proceeds from *Winning Kick* help provide soccer balls to impoverished children in the developing world, and proceeds from *Outbreak Responder* go to combatting malaria.

Elizabeth's mission is far larger than her company's products. “I want people to think of games as a way to impact social causes,” she says. “I strive for GGI to be a bridge between the committed citizen and the global gaming community. I want the whole world to reach the point that through their mobile phones, everyone is carrying positive change right in their pockets.”



As a new entrepreneur with a passionate drive and a big vision, Elizabeth says that 12 Leaders has helped her **do the right new things in the right new ways**. “I’ve learned so much about how to communicate what GGI is doing and what we’re trying to trying to do,” she says.

“Robert Cooper is a genius at many things, and one of them is learning how to describe what you do so that it doesn’t just inform people, it inspires them. I’ve learned about building a great team, an elite team, and not settling for anything less. I’ve learned how to streamline my efforts, align everything I do with what really matters most, connect the near with the far in everything I do, and build strong alliances with people and organizations that will be in this with me for the long haul.”

“There’s so much,” she says, “but two things have been most important to me. First, **Robert was with me in a deep and heartfelt way at every step. A lot of people will say they’ll be there for you, but not many will give what Robert gives, week in and week out.** Second, Robert, his wife Leslie, and even his daughters when I met them, all modeled the way a person would want to live. As hectic as Robert’s and Leslie’s lives are, they are always fully present, fully centered, and richly enjoying life. They showed me—I think they showed all of us in 12 Leaders—that you can deeply care about something without losing your balance. I think that lesson affected everyone in the program, and it brought us all together with an amazing bond.

There isn’t a single person in that group that I can’t call at a moment’s notice. We would do anything for each other. **12 Leaders has been an inspiring experience, and that inspiration, plus the many skills I gained, will help carry me, my business, and everyone around me to a higher level.”**

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Chris Smith

In April of 2016, the management consulting firm that Chris Smith co-founded in 2007, ARRYVE, was acquired by Chicago-based Grant Thornton, the world's sixth-largest professional services network of independent accounting and consulting firms.

Chris is now leading Grant Thornton's Pacific Northwest advisory practice, which deals with mergers and acquisitions, risk and compliance, and business consulting and technology; and he also holds the title of National Lead for Growth Strategy, tasked with developing and deploying the firm's growth strategy service offering across its 50-plus other offices in the US.

"Grant Thornton loved the methods and practices that we developed at ARRYVE and saw their immediate potential for making its customers more successful, so now I'm working with a big GT team to scale things throughout the company," Chris says. "The same ideas that were once ARRYVE ideas now have access to a national and international platform. The scale of influence is literally over a hundred times greater than I had at ARRYVE. I am loving the challenge and the opportunity."

Chris co-founded ARRYVE after years of consulting experience in a variety of settings—as a member of a firm and as an independent. Along the way, he founded or invested in several other ventures, ranging from brick-and-mortar retailing to an industrial company to an online community for social change. He also served as a director, and now board president, of a non-profit focused on ending sexual assault.

This is what Chris has said about his experience with 12 Leaders:

"Like all of the participants in 12 Leaders, I came to it as a pretty accomplished person. I wasn't looking for a miracle to jump-start my life—I wanted a few breakthrough ways of thinking that would optimize my whole me; I wanted to enable others more; and I wanted more clarity and focus about where my existing passions fit into the bigger, longer-term picture."



"The 12 Leaders program kept a spotlight, week after week, on what I wanted to achieve, and I came to see some things that have had a huge impact on me. They all were so big that it's hard to say which was most important."

Robert showed me the importance of having a brand of my own. I am a brand and that brand has a platform. That really did shift me. He also made me acutely aware of how much intellectual property I create and how much that is worth. I'm much more attentive to that now."

"I was optimized from an hours and business output perspective, but not from a holistic perspective. My wife would say, and I would say, that while I'm not perfect yet, I'm much more engaged and present. I can be as engaged in my whole life as I am in my business life."

"Robert Cooper and 12 Leaders didn't directly lead to discovering the bigger platform that I now have with Grant Thornton, but I feel additional confidence that I can make the very best of the opportunity I have with GT, putting all that I have learned to work for maximum success for the firm, its clients, its staff, and myself personally."

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Dean Sawyer

As the co-founder and CEO of Sentrian, Dean Sawyer is located where he has been throughout his career, at the place where emerging technologies create breakthroughs in healthcare quality and cost containment. Leveraging the revolution in biosensors and machine learning, Sentrian aims to eliminate all preventable hospitalizations. By continually monitoring the critical health indicators of at-risk patients and feeding them through a cloud-based analytical engine, Sentrian detects potential health problems days or weeks before a crisis would have occurred, allowing for early medical intervention. Big data continually refines the indicators to discover the most critical information to be tracked.

"Millions of hospitalizations costing tens of billions of dollars can be avoided every year through early remote detection of health deterioration," Dean says. "My own father died from a condition that Sentrian is now able to give advance warning about, so I have a personal as well as a professional connection to what we are doing."

Dean's farsighted savvy was vividly demonstrated in 2000, when a business plan he co-authored won first place—and five million dollars in startup funding—in the world's largest business plan competition. The company that received that funding, Lathian Systems, was an early entrant in the pharmaceutical e-detailing/e-marketing space. He further advanced that space at Allscripts, and he also helped build Allscripts into becoming what is today the industry-leading electronic health record company, growing the company's HER revenue from zero to more than a hundred and eighty million dollars in six years.

Before co-founding Sentrian, Dean was the chief business development officer at Physicians Interactive Holdings, a leading resource for healthcare information, medication samples, and mobile decision support tools to medical professionals, and an alternative sales and marketing channel for pharmaceutical and biotech companies. The company was acquired by Merck.

In addition to his duties at Sentrian, he is a partner at Frost Data Capital, which is transforming the venture capital and incubator model for big data start-ups, and he serves as an advisor to Singularity University Labs, where he helps startup teams develop successful healthcare business models, raise capital, build healthy leadership teams, and execute the lean startup methodology.



"I have learned so many crucial skills from 12 Leaders, it's hard for me to say which has been the most important,"

Dean says. "I'm much more alert to noticing and acting on the smallest things that can make the biggest difference. I press myself and my team to create breakthroughs, however big or small they might be, every week. I keep an Idea Bank that has led to many important new actions. My energy is higher all day, and my focus is sharper than ever. I understand myself better, so I can deploy my strengths most effectively while I am also alert to potential issues that my personality inclinations could create."

"I joined 12 Leaders because I was at an important inflection point in my career and my life. It was my first time as a CEO, and the opportunities at Sentrian to transform the healthcare industry are huge. I wanted to be sure I gave it my very best. **Robert Cooper, and the 12 Leaders experience, has made sure that has happened. I see myself being at Sentrian for a long time, but I also am looking forward to a future opportunity to apply all I have learned starting from day one.**"

PROFILE OF GRADUATES

Ramesh Kumar

When he was 14 years old, living in his home country of India, Ramesh Kumar experienced the suffering and death of a beloved family member from cancer. “It was terrible,” he says. “Not just the disease itself, but the lack of true human concern—of communication, connection, and support.” He decided then to devote all of his energies to challenging that disease and helping individuals with cancer and the families and others who support those patients.

With many sacrifices from his family, he earned a medical degree, and then he came to the United States, where he excelled at all the required examinations for a foreign-trained physician, gaining acceptance into a university medical school residency program where he focused his learning on radiation treatments for cancer.

Not many years later, he co-founded a cancer-treatment radiation center in Florida, using the most advanced technologies. But the best technology is only part of Ramesh’s commitment. He nurtures and treats the entire person—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. He is an expert at inspiring patients to take appropriate action through education, encouragement, and empowerment.

Always widely and intently curious, Ramesh ponders wellness and healing, the medical profession, and the human condition in general. In 2011, he co-authored a book, *Fight for Your Dreams*, which reached the top position in sales at amazon.com on the day after it was published. Some of his thoughts can be read at his website and blog, www.rameshkumarmd.com.

Eventually, he owned six radiation centers, which ultimately served nearly 10,000 cancer patients. In 2014, he sold all of his centers except for one. “It was a very abrupt change for me, and quite unsettling,” he recalls. “I went from 25 employees to three, and my daily driving between the centers, which could amount to about two hundred miles each day, was no longer necessary. I had a lot of time that I hadn’t had before. I wanted to be productive; I needed to find the next really important thing to devote myself to.”



“It was Robert Cooper who most helped pull me out of the noise, who was able to help me see a bigger picture of what was possible for me in service to others,” says Ramesh, whose commitment now is to participate in and lead a process of enrolling individuals and institutions to help create a world free of cancer by 2030. That can be accomplished, he says, if the right people bring a full appreciation of new theories, practices, and technologies to a committed, full-scale effort.

“I am convinced that what I have learned from 12 Leaders will help me accomplish my big daring mission,” Ramesh says. **“I have learned important new methods for being more effective, but most importantly, 12 Leaders shows you a complete way of being, always connecting the near and the far, always being fully aware and at your best at key moments, always open to seeing patterns that are beyond what is obvious, always remaining closely in touch with what matters most. Robert Cooper models that—he is always ‘on,’ always advancing, never satisfied with the status quo, always fully engaged—and my colleagues in 12 Leaders are an extraordinary group of world-changers.”**

“The overall experience of 12 Leaders would be very hard to top,” he says. **“It has moved me to new levels in all of the important areas of my life.”**

PROFILE OF GRADUATES

Jasmine Youssefzadeh

Toward the end of 2011, just after she had earned her graduate degree in international management from IE Business School, Jasmine Youssefzadeh received a fellowship to work in South Africa with a social enterprise incubator and an entrepreneurial education institute. For several months, she helped those citizen-sector organizations improve their strategic and operational excellence.

As much as she helped them succeed, they also inspired her with a clearer vision of what she wanted to do with her entrepreneurial energy, business skills, and other personal strengths. Always an adept storyteller, and having taught herself many aspects of digital storytelling when she worked in international business development at STM Networks before entering grad school, she asked herself what kind of storytelling would make the biggest difference to the world. “That’s when I decided to get into the social impact space, to help companies, nonprofits, and brands that are making a positive difference in the world get their stories heard and enlist more support,” she says.

She founded Impact Rising, a cultural movement agency specializing in storytelling and engagement campaigns. The company’s clients have included UNICEF, Chrysalis, CicLAvia, Burton Snowboards’ Chill Foundation, Green Dot Public Schools, the LA River Revitalization Corporation, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Keep A Breast Foundation, and the Children’s Bureau of Southern California. The signature activity of Impact Rising is its Produce-A-Thon, a 72-hour marathon model of storytelling during which teams of media and branding professionals help organizations conceptualize, produce, and edit short videos that compellingly tell organizations’ stories. Examples of the videos can be seen at the company’s website, www.impactrising.co. Jasmine aims to scale the Produce-A-Thon to serve a hundred organizations at a time, nationwide.

“Robert Cooper and 12 Leaders helped me with thinking big picture and with incorporating everyday tools that have made me substantially more effective,” she says. “I learned how to integrate everything that mattered most to me into my business idea, so that various passions aren’t pulling me in different directions, and I learned how to really focus my energy and maximize my impact using 12 Leaders methodology. I constantly look for the



smallest changes that will make the biggest difference; I make sure that I am prepared to notice and respond to the opportunities that can arise in surprising ways in everyday interactions; and I invest my time more wisely than I did before. All of this has been of great value to me.”

“One thing that has really influenced my thinking and actions is the idea of my Vital Circle—the people whose success will influence my own ability to achieve my biggest goals,” she adds. “I am much more conscious now about how I connect to others to expand my Vital Circle and how I support the people within it. I experience myself building and participating in a richly collaborative network of people who create win-win scenarios and help each other succeed.”

On a personal level, 12 Leaders has also positively reshaped her activities: “I have transformed my life into really trying to be the best version of myself that I can be—fitness, eating right, drinking cold water to jumpstart my brain, getting enough rest. This has made a huge difference in my mood, my confidence, and my ability to think sharper.”

“12 Leaders has accelerated my growth in so many ways,” Jasmine says. **“Every day I can actually notice myself becoming more effective and better able to serve the organizations we work with to make a difference in the world. It’s a great feeling.”**

PROFILE OF GRADUATES

Brian Altounian

Name an aspect of modern entrepreneurship and the chances are good that Brian Altounian has been there, done that, added value, and made a difference. With strong expertise in finance and operations honed by an MBA and experience at several household-name media companies, he co-founded his first venture, a tech startup, in 2000. Soon he was advising other start-up entrepreneurs, helping them sharpen their plans and bring in funds, and often serving as a board member or board chair as the companies went public.

Then it was back to starting his own businesses, in the medical and financial fields. He also launched the charitable organization, Lost and Found in America, promoting the efforts of organizations and individuals committed to providing dignity and hope to those in need, and he made time to serve for seven years on the board of the Hollywood YMCA, where he chaired the financial development committee.

From 2009 until recently, he was president and CEO of Wowio, a company with a proprietary patent allowing for advertising to be inserted into ebooks, meaning that a vast range of online content can be delivered to consumers for free. At the time this profile was written, he was board chair of Wowio and its partner company, Studio W.

His primary current role is building a financial services agency in West Los Angeles, California with Transamerica Financial. "I have always seen myself as using my skills in service to others," he says, "and this agency is a nearly perfect place to do that. My team and I help families develop financial strategies that are roadmaps to a better future, and then we help them implement those strategies. We're not limited to people of great wealth; we help families that are struggling, too, families where hard-working people just need some insight and some guidance to get beyond living paycheck to paycheck and build a secure future. I feel great about coming to work every day, growing this business and growing my team."



"What I've learned from Robert Cooper in 12 Leaders is a big part of everything I'm doing, and of the way that I do it," Brian says. "I've always been a high-energy person, but Robert has really shown me how to make the most of my energy, guiding it and managing it to keep it at peak levels all day long. I know my optimal times of day for planning, for thinking creatively, for interacting with my team, for administration, and for other things. I'm much more focused and effective, in bite-sized pieces, and the people around me feed off of that, becoming more focused and effective themselves. **We're setting amazing records for getting things done as an agency. And because of what Robert has taught me, I have as much energy for my family in the evening as I have for the business during the day.**"

"I'm right where I want to be," Brian says. "Building a great new business, helping people, and thriving in my personal life and my family life. So much of what I have learned from the 12 Leaders program has been instrumental in bringing that about, and I know it's going to benefit me for many years to come."