

Jim Donald

Co-Chairman of Albertsons, Former CEO of Starbucks, Former CEO of Extended Stay Hotels, & Former CEO of Pathmark Supermarkets

Lessons for Overcoming Today's Business Challenges. In this talk, Jim Donald arms organizations with his proven strategies for success as they redefine their businesses in an evolved marketplace. As the former CEO of Starbucks and Albertsons Companies, he shares key leadership components from his playbook that he has used to get his companies through every obstacle imaginable, as well as solidify customer relations, grow revenue bases, and administer a shot of encouragement for developing stronger engagement.

Donald explains that now, more than ever, is the time to steal business from your competition, improve the quality of your product, and operate as one team. He shares the three common traits that today's best leaders maintain—being humble, succinct, and injecting humor into your delivery – to effectively work with both team members and customers.

Audiences will also learn:

- His #1 secret to success in encouraging others to take more risks
- His best-ever learning experience that will build both revenue and engagement
- His best tips for building a sustainable career and business

Leading Beyond the Walls of the Workplace: What They Don't Teach You in Business School. As the former CEO of many large, multinational companies over his career, Jim has experienced a crisis or two at every company he has led. While the nature of a crisis may differ from one company to the next, the need to communicate to hundreds of thousands of people remained the same. Communication is, without question, the main ingredient to leading your team(s) through any challenge and beyond. The art of communication will enable your company to emerge from any crisis stronger than when you went in.

In this talk, Jim, coined as “the vagabond CEO”, discusses how best to operate in uncertain business environments, especially as the modern era of work continues to introduce new ways for teams to collaborate both in person and virtually. He will share the structure that he is using to consult with CEO's globally, along with best practices for the following:

- Leadership team meetings
- Leading your company at every level
- The language you speak
- What your associates need to know
- Celebrating every little success

Embracing Technology Disruption To Fuel Customer Loyalty. Jim Donald believes firmly that leaders “cannot just be executives sitting in an office.” Rather, it's imperative that managers get to the front lines of their businesses and talk to employees and consumers to understand changing shopping habits and tactics. And, more than that, Donald knows firsthand—being at the helm of a retail industry packed with start-up challengers and game-changing technology—that those who don't innovate to create new and better experiences, lose.

With this talk, Jim reviews changes happening at both the product and process level to help leaders grappling with the new technology landscape and new consumer behavior, plus what it all means for customer loyalty. Touching on breakthrough IoT, AI, and cloud computing technology, and using anecdotes from his time at Starbucks, Extended Stay Hotels, and Albertson's, Donald helps audiences understand how eCommerce, the advent of Amazon, and emerging technologies will continue to reshape retail, as well as how to both “catch up” and leapfrog the competition.

Leading In The 21st Century. Fact: Online addiction is at an all-time high, with the average person using email as much as six hours per day and using digital media more than nine hours per day. How do leaders and managers cut thru these distractions and tap into the divided minds of their associates in a way that drives revenue, improves customer service, strengthens quality of product, and grows the bottom line?

As former CEO and current chairman of Albertson's, 75% of Jim Donald's employees are millennials and Gen Xers, and he understands the difficulties that come with leading an entire generation with new habits, expectations, and motivations. With a battle-tested approach to corporate leadership that has been tested and refined over 45 years in retailing, hospitality and food service (both before and during the digital revolution), Jim has developed leadership tenets that can empower individuals to change their organizations for the better. The first step, he says, is to embrace the fact that if you understand how and why your people think and act, you can get them as addicted to building the business as they are in checking their email. In this spirited and challenging presentation, Donald breaks those tenets down into five eight-minute segments, each one separated by a two-minute break; during which time people can ask questions...or check their email.

The First Day of Anything. Jim Donald is not an academic, a professor, consultant, or a black belt in anything. Rather, he is a storyteller with a powerful urge to lead corporations to improve the lives of his associates, the run rate of the business, and the investments of shareholders. Without knowing it, his "vagabond CEO lifestyle," a phrase coined by the *North Carolina Business Journal*, has enabled him to understand and deploy a leadership trait that can be quickly adapted and honed by leaders at all levels.

So, what is this trait? It's not about the latest technology, data mining, or the use of algorithms or analytics. It's not even written about in leadership books that "guarantee" to take you to the top of your game. Jim's talk is about something you have control of everyday: Giving you and your company an advantage over anything—from jobs to relationships, attitudes to action of execution, and, from a corporate standpoint, it's about becoming competitive with the "X" factor that can either destroy or accelerate your business, making you realize that your biggest threat is coming from the inside of your four walls rather than externally.

While not approved by HBS, the SEC, or the USDA, Jim's conversation with you and your team will make you think back to the "first day" of anything you have experienced. Jim will then take those thoughts and help turn them into action that will make you and your business better.

Jim covers:

- How he became the CEO of Starbucks by doing something you can do every day
- How to grow your business by 20% by encouraging people to "steal"
- The real reason ESA hotels went from worst to first in service and financial metrics
- How you can unlock "gold mines" in your organization by never stepping foot in your office again
- Reminding people that they can't forget where they came from if they want unbridled success—a lesson from the wealthiest man in the world
- How to capture and bottle your company's excitement like it's the "first day of anything"

Lessons From Retail: From The Founding Executives To The Front-Line Employee. Jim Donald spent four decades watching, listening, learning, and executing valuable lessons from the most successful figures in the world of retail. During his time, though, he also listened to, and learned from, the employees who were on the front-line helping customers, doing the maintenance, and performing the face-to-face marketing that moves product and keeps customers happy. His lessons come from the widest possible range of personalities in the retail sphere: He has sat across from Sam Walton while the Wal-Mart founder explained how front-line employees can be the most valuable market researchers. He has also talked to the clerk selling seafood or the evening maintenance worker to get their perspectives from the ground floor. In his witty and wise lessons from retail—lessons they *don't* teach in business school—Donald distills the wisdom he's gained from working with employees in some of the most successful, iconic companies in the world.