

Jon Schallert | The Schallert Group

Jon Schallert is the only consultant and professional speaker who teaches businesses and communities how to turn themselves into Consumer Destinations. Schallert speaks to thousands annually on his proprietary 14-step “Destination Business” process, which he developed over the course of twenty-four (24) years by studying and interviewing over 10,000 independent business owners in over 500 cities and towns. Jon’s Destination Business strategy has been used around the world by businesses large and small to help them capture more market share, even when larger, better-capitalized competitors seemingly have the advantage. His process examines how a business elevates their unique qualities that a targeted customer finds most important. When independent business owners apply Schallert’s strategy, they naturally attract more local consumers along with customers from outside their traditional marketplace. Businesses also begin to attract more free publicity from the media, which in turn attracts more consumers than traditional advertising could ever reach.

When Jon is not speaking around the country, he conducts his 2½ day Destination Business BootCamp® and oversees his online class, the Destination Creation Course, taught by a team of internationally based facilitators. Some of Schallert’s corporate consulting clients include Kellogg’s, KitchenAid, Bank of America, Denver International Airport, Jiffy Lube, Ace Hardware, Anheuser Busch, and Hunter Douglas, to name a few. His insights are frequently seen in national publications such as The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and Entrepreneur Magazine. He is the only consultant in the world to receive the “Top Motivator” Marketing Award from Potentials Magazine. He is a member of the National Speakers Association and the National Main Street Network.

Daron K. Roberts | DKR Strategies

Daron K. Roberts is a former NFL coach and author of, **Call an Audible** (Greenleaf 2017). **Call an Audible** was named a #1 New Release and Best Seller by Amazon, and Sports Illustrated selected the book as one of its “Best Sports Business Books of 2017.” In 2020, Roberts authored **A Kids Book About Empathy**.

Currently, Roberts serves as founding director of the Center for Sports Leadership and Innovation (CSLi) at the University of Texas, which he created in the fall of 2014. The Center is the first university-based institute dedicated to developing leadership and character curricula for high school, collegiate and professional athletes. Through the Center, Roberts teaches a course –A Gameplan for Winning at Life– to incoming freshmen student-athletes. In January of 2018, the Center received the commitment and financial support of NBA All-Star, Kevin Durant. Roberts holds a faculty appointment in the Liberal Arts Honors Program. He has received the Silver Spurs Centennial Teaching Award, Creative Engagement Award and was named a distinguished faculty member by the School of Undergraduate Studies in 2015. His research revolves around issues of rejection, failure management and leadership.

After graduating from Harvard Law School (2007), Roberts served coaching stints with the Kansas City Chiefs, Detroit Lions, West Virginia Mountaineers and Cleveland Browns. He holds a B.A. in Plan II Honors and Government from the University of Texas (2001) and an M.P.P. from Harvard’s Kennedy School (2004). The Presidential Leadership Foundation – a joint venture between Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush – tabbed Roberts as a Presidential Leadership Scholar for 2015. He was one of sixty members in the inaugural class. Roberts has been featured in ESPN the Magazine, Bloomberg Businessweek and Sports Illustrated. His articles have appeared in The Dallas Morning News, Fortune, Houston Chronicle, and Time. Daron grew up in East Texas and holds a fondness in his heart for Rural America and the values he learned from his childhood.

Zachary Manheimer | Atlas Community Studio & Alquist 3D

Zachary grew up in rural southeastern PA. Armed with degrees in Theater and Philosophy from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, he had zero job prospects, so he moved to London to pursue theater. Two years later his visa expired, and he did what every other American theater major does – he moved to NYC. Zack spent 8 years in Brooklyn running theater companies and working in restaurants to determine that NYC didn't need another theater or restaurant, and he looked around to see that he was in a homogeneous bubble.

Knowing there were many people who thought differently than he did, he went on a 22-city road trip across America over the summer of 2007 and settled in Des Moines, IA. Knowing no one in Iowa, Zack got to work meeting as many artists as he could in order to found the Des Moines Social Club in 2009, a non-profit arts and education center that hosted thousands of arts-related events.

In 2020, Zack, along with his partners, created Atlas Community Studios, a placemaking and economic development group working in 25+ states. Zack founded Alquist 3D at the same time in order to solve the rural housing crisis. Alquist 3D is printing affordable housing across the nation, starting with the first owner-occupied 3D home in the world in Virginia.

He serves on the boards of Iowa Public Radio and the Iowa Rural Development Council. He lives with his wife Sarah and their three kids Mira, Benjamin, and Fiona in Iowa City. Zack is an Opinion Contributor for The Hill and his work has been written about in the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, NBC News, CBS Evening News, Axios, Time Magazine, Architecture Digest, The Independent, Politico, The Atlantic, and dozens of community publications. Zack loves exploring rural communities, producing new pieces of theater, creating restaurant concepts, and has an unhealthy passion for the Philadelphia Eagles.

Stephanie Stuckey | Stuckey's

Stephanie Stuckey is the CEO of Stuckey's, the roadside oasis famous for its pecan log rolls. The company was founded by Stephanie's grandfather, W.S. Stuckey, Sr., as a pecan stand in Eastman, GA in 1937 and grew to over 350 stores across the country. The company was sold in 1964 but is now back in family hands and making a comeback.

Stephanie took over the company in November of 2019 and, under her leadership, Stuckey's has purchased a pecan-shelling and candy-manufacturing facility in Wrens, GA, revamped its distribution operations based in Eastman, GA, acquired a healthy pecan-snack company, rebranded its products and website, added four new franchised stores, expanded its B2B retail customer base, and increased online sales 550% – all while weathering the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stephanie received both her undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Georgia. She has worked as a trial lawyer, was elected to seven terms as a state representative, ran an environmental nonprofit law firm that settled the largest Clean Water Act case in Georgia history, served as Director of Sustainability and Resilience for the City of Atlanta, and taught as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Georgia School of Law. Stephanie's achievements include being named one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians by Georgia Trend Magazine, as well as graduating from Leadership Atlanta. A longstanding member of Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church, she is active in her community and serves on many nonprofit boards, including the Initiative for Affordable Housing, EarthShare of Georgia, and her local zoning review board. And if you aren't following her on LinkedIn...you should. An amazing storyteller, she invites you to join her down a nostalgic memory lane while enthusiastically building for the future.

James Chavez | SC Power Team

From the instant South Carolina Power Team was introduced to James he knew his career path had prepared him to lead the organization as President and CEO. With a 20 year track record of success in serving suburban, second tier and rural communities as a chamber of commerce and economic development professional, James was uniquely prepared to serve the Power Team.

A native of Albuquerque, James graduated from the University of New Mexico with a BS in Early Childhood. James began his career at a local children's hospital, with the intention of pursuing a master's degree in hospital administration. Call it chance or fate, when a friend presented an opportunity for him to work in economic development with the Chamber of Commerce in Leadville, Colorado, it changed his course and began his nearly 30-year career in economic development. Following, James worked in various executive leadership capacities for economic development organizations in Cobb County and Tift County, Georgia and Clarksville, Tennessee.

Upon joining the South Carolina Power Team in the fall of 2013, James ventured out to personally meet with over 130 stakeholders within his first 100 days. From these one-on-one conversations emerged the framework for the South Carolina Power Team Strategic Blueprint, which provided resources to make South Carolina's electric cooperatives an essential partner for growth and development. Since adopting the Strategic Blueprint in 2014, the electric cooperatives have played a key role in the attraction of \$9 billion in capital investment and 36,933 jobs to South Carolina. James, is an avid fisherman of both fresh and salt water. He also is a committed road and gravel cyclist, and recently discovered a passion for ultra endurance events. James, along with 22 other cyclists, recently completed a 640 mile ride in seven days in an effort to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke with electric cooperative employees. James lives in Columbia, SC with his wife, Stevie. Together, they have four adult children, and three grandchildren. He and his wife love cooking, street food and travel.

Alan Keck | Mayor, City of Somerset, Kentucky

Alan Keck was elected mayor of his hometown of Somerset in November 2018, after running a dynamic campaign to unify this southeastern Kentucky city and light it up through tourism, economic development, and community spirit. In his short time in office, he and his team have led a period of unprecedented change in Somerset – leading boldly and unapologetically to build a Somerset for all generations, charging forward with a vision to reignite the community's economy.

As a lifelong resident of Somerset, Mayor Keck has been greatly involved in local business and civic activities. Prior to being elected mayor, he served as president of Somerset Recycling. He is the founder and principal agent of Keck Sports Management, a professional baseball agency that represents professional athletes, and is one of the youngest ever independently certified agents through the Major League Baseball Players Association.

Following a vision to bring balance to higher education and tackling a long-discussed desire to build a four-year university in Somerset, Mayor Keck is the founder and board chairman of the University of Somerset, a private research university rooted in the classic liberal arts tradition while embracing technological innovation and scientific development. Mayor Keck is a 2003 graduate of Somerset High School, a 2007 graduate of Western Kentucky University and a 2014 MBA graduate of the University of the Cumberlands. He was a member of the 2017 class of Leadership Kentucky and now serves on the organization's board of directors. He is also a member of the Kentucky League of Cities board of directors. He has been deeply involved with the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), serving on its National Council between 2017 and 2019.

Jonathan Webb | AppHarvest

Kentucky native and University of Kentucky graduate, Jonathan Webb is turning his dream of a high-tech farming hub in Appalachia into reality with AppHarvest. The company is building some of the largest indoor farms in the world, combining conventional agricultural techniques with today's technology to grow non-GMO, chemical-free produce to be sold to the top 25 U.S. grocers. The company's first greenhouse spans 60 acres and opened in 2020 in Morehead, Ky. The greenhouse uses 90% less water than a typical farm due to its sophisticated circular irrigation system that uses only rainwater collected in a 10-acre retention pond.

Why locate in Appalachia? Like many Kentuckians, Jonathan grew up knowing of the devastating job losses in the region. His grandmother was raised in Whitley County, where a coal mining accident killed his great-grandfather. Jonathan strives to work alongside the hard-working men and women of Eastern Kentucky and build an inclusive economy for the future. By locating within Appalachia, the company is also less than a day's drive to more than two-thirds of the U.S. population. That lowers transportation costs by 80%, allowing AppHarvest's fresher produce to better compete against low-cost foreign imports.

Before founding AppHarvest, Jonathan worked with the U.S. Department of Defense on the largest solar project in the Southeastern United States. The project aimed to help achieve a White House goal of ensuring the military's hundreds of installations develop resilient on-site power generation and receive 20% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025. While living in Washington D.C. developing sustainable energy farms, Jonathan researched another type of farming – the Netherlands and its high-tech greenhouses that in a single acre yield as much as 30 outdoor acres and virtually eliminate the use of chemicals. In February 2017, encouraged by investors, advisors including Hillbilly Elegy author J.D. Vance, and politicians of both parties, Jonathan left Washington and came home to Kentucky, where he now works tirelessly to make the eastern part of the state the AgTech capital of America.

Eric Dusenbury | Visual Storyteller

Eric's photography and writing has appeared in numerous publications and he is the recipient of several national awards. Eric works with clients on their visual communications needs. By using unconventional thinking and curiosity to remove the jargon associated with many traditional approaches, the resulting work helps clients to stand out and engage audiences.

In addition to assignments and commissions, Eric uses photography and storytelling for a variety of social and cultural issues – to enrich and preserve the human spirit and to promote an appreciation for the rich cultural identity of the South. Photographs from projects have been widely exhibited from traditional fine-art galleries and museums to educational and cultural centers.

For many projects, the photographer chooses to work with film, including the large format 4 x 5 view camera with black-and-white materials. He is drawn to the rich, tonal range that film/paper provides and the experience of traditional photography with careful consideration of composition. In the field, using the 4 x 5 camera requires patience, self-discipline and control. It's an old-school approach, but it can be the ultimate tool for capturing details. In the darkroom, he hand prints each piece, utilizing techniques to enhance and intensify the images.

Eric Dusenbury (B.A. Cinema & Photography, Southern Illinois University) is passionate about using curiosity and photography to tell stories. Whether maneuvering among the rafters in a historic clock tower or crouched in a cooler on a shrimp boat, Eric's photographic escapades and stories make us eager to begin living a *life of curiosity*.

Scott Neil | Horse Soldier Bourbon

Days after 9/11, the USA responded with a daring insertion of small teams of Green Berets, mounted on horseback, into Northern Afghanistan. These brave men are honored today by America's Response Monument at Ground Zero in New York City. Nicknamed the "Horse Soldiers", these same men now make the award-winning Horse Soldier Bourbon, emblazoned with the image of this statue. Authentically made with all-American ingredients, the Horse Soldier glass bottle is even molded by steel recovered from the World Trade Center to commemorate the lives lost and never forgotten.

Scott Neil was one of the Green Berets sent into Afghanistan to take down the Taliban after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. He says it's important for he and fellow veterans have a chance to transition into another career after the military. For him, creating the American Freedom Distillery was perfect. American heroes, producing an American product, with an American story flowing through it.

Horse Soldier Bourbon Distillery, their flagship production plant, is currently under construction in Somerset, Kentucky. Scott Neil is the Chief Operations Officer and the "Doer of Things" at Horse Soldier Bourbon. Scott is responsible for everything inside the Horse Soldier Bourbon bottle, in addition to all things in day-to-day operations. President George W Bush painted Scott as part of his Portraits of Courage series. Scott is a regular contributor to Fox News, Newsmax, CNN, Global News, The LA Times and The NY Times.

Lorie Vincent, CECD | Acceleration by design LLC

Lorie Vincent is the founder and President of ACCELERATION by design LLC, a boutique economic development firm which provides a fresh new approach to economic development training, client engagement and organization effectiveness. A popular speaker, author and trainer, Lorie brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the industry. She is a strong proponent of regionalism, a fierce advocate for rural America, a public relations maven, a kick butt event planner and a traditional economic development practitioner who has a proven record of results. A master storyteller, her expertise is in making the audience think about new perspectives. Lorie is the creator of the Stand Up Rural America Summit, 40 Steps to Downtown Revitalization Program, The Life, Laughter & Laundry Weekend, and multiple economic development programs.

Prior to starting her own firm, Lorie most recently served as the first Executive Director of Team Texas. Team Texas is a member driven, economic development marketing coalition that operates under the umbrella of the TEDC. While with Team Texas, she doubled the size of the organization, increased the budget by 300% and quadrupled the number of marketing initiatives.

Prior to her time at Team Texas, Lorie Vincent served 17 years as the Executive Director of The High Ground of Texas. The High Ground is a regional coalition of over 75 communities and organizations involved in the marketing and economic development of West Texas. One of the largest and most successful regional economic development organizations in the USA, The High Ground of Texas, created in 1988, covers a 67-county area and celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2018.

Ms. Vincent served as 2013 Chairman of the Texas Economic Development Council. She has served on the West Texas A&M University Foundation Board, is a Leadership Texas Alumni member and a Rapport Leadership International Master Graduate III. She has received national recognition for her leadership and economic development accomplishments. Lorie holds a BBA in Accounting and is a Certified Economic Developer. Her two books, **Stand Up Rural America-Get Yourself a Seat at the Big Table** and **Misadventures, Mishaps & Mayhem-Tales of a Small Girl Gone Global** will be launched in Summer of 2022.