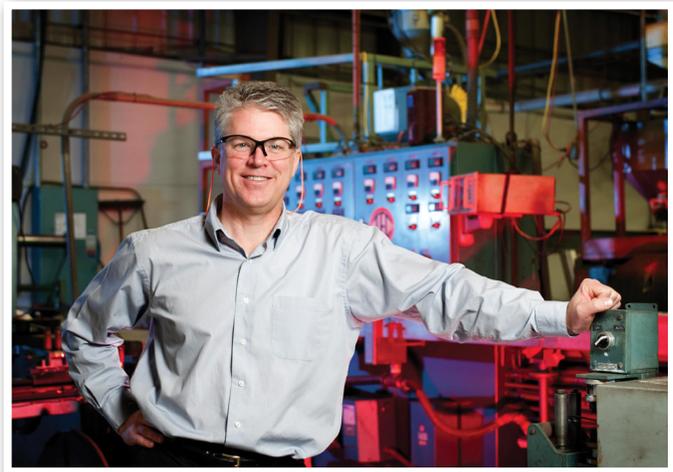


Case study: Pacer Group

For John Swiatkowski, one of the benefits of belonging to a PeerSpectives™ roundtable is getting a 30,000-foot view of his business. “Instead of being immersed in the day-to-day problems, the roundtable allows me to take action on bigger issues to drive growth,” explains Swiatkowski, president of Pacer Group (www.pacerwire.net), a Sarasota, Florida-based company that specializes in electrical wire and cable manufacturing.

Swiatkowski joined his roundtable in 2011, when his company was still recovering from the recession, which had sent annual revenue nose-diving from \$23 million in 2007 to \$11 million a year. Today his company is back at 2007 revenue levels with about 110 full-time employees.

Although it’s difficult to quantify to what extent his roundtable involvement has contributed to Pacer’s rebound, Swiatkowski credits PeerSpectives for playing a significant role: “The strategies, processes and direction we’ve taken over the last three or four years have been heavily influenced by the roundtable.”



John Swiatkowski, president of Pacer Group in Sarasota, Florida.

For example, roundtable members helped Swiatkowski develop an ordering program to deal with a difficult client. “Even though we knew how we wanted to structure the program, the group was really good at ironing out at what could go wrong,” he says.

In addition, participating in the roundtable has given Swiatkowski insights on everything from marketing to goal setting to personnel development. “The roundtable operates almost like a board of directors, except that members come from different industries,” Swiatkowski says. “The diversity is beneficial because you get quite a cross-reference of experiences.”

Other aspects of the roundtable that Swiatkowski appreciates include:

- *Structured format and professional facilitation.* “It’s very easy for entrepreneurs to go off in a tangent,” he says. “Our facilitator keeps us on track and ultimately guides the discussion to some type of group conclusion.”
- *Unfiltered feedback.* “The members are quick to hold you accountable,” Swiatkowski points out. “These people aren’t shy. If you bring up a topic, they may ask, ‘Why are you doing that?’ and question if it’s a good use of my time. As a result, I’ve become better at

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delegating and staying focused on growing the business.”

- *Visits from business experts* on various topics, such as acquisitions and employment law, which is a perk provided by his facilitator. Due to the questions sparked by roundtable members, Swiatkowski says the visits result in “a unique dialogue and interaction with these experts that you couldn’t get elsewhere.”
- *Inspiration.* “The roundtable sessions really recharge your batteries,” he says. “You’re with other people who have similar situations and are very energetic about what they’re doing. These people have become very good friends — and they’re also compatriots in the sense of our common mission to grow business in the Sarasota region.”

Swiatkowski says he can understand how CEOs would question whether they have four hours a month to break away from their companies to attend a roundtable. “Yet once you get there, you see the benefit of it,” he says. “The roundtable members are really concerned about growing their business — taking your company to the next level is the whole purpose of this program.”



About PeerSpectives: Developed by the Edward Lowe Foundation, PeerSpectives is a unique roundtable system designed especially for leaders of second-stage companies. Roundtables typically involve eight to 12 CEOs from noncompeting industries and are led by a facilitator who has been trained in the PeerSpectives protocol. The system revolves around confidentiality and experience-based learning rather than giving advice.