

CEO WORLD

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LEADERS

Engineering
Value, Mastering
Price, and
Redefining
Profitability

THE BIRTH
OF A PRICING
PHILOSOPHY

ON WORK, LIFE,
AND RELENTLESS DRIVE

THE PRICE WHISPERER'S
ENDURING LESSON

Per Sjöfors

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Engineering Value, Mastering Price, and Redefining Profitability

Founder & CEO | Sjöfors & Partners Inc

In global business, pricing is often treated as an afterthought a number assigned at the end of product development, marketing strategy, and sales planning. For Per Sjöfors, pricing is not a number. It is the ultimate expression of value.

Known internationally as “The Price Whisperer®,” Per Sjöfors, Founder and CEO of Sjöfors & Partners Inc, has built a career and a company around a simple but transformative premise: price does not exist in a vacuum. Everything a company does affects what customers are willing to pay. And when that willingness to pay is understood and optimized, growth and profitability follow.

His journey to becoming one of the most sought-after pricing strategists in the B2B and B2C space, however, began not in a boardroom but in a hotel room 250 nights a year.

A CEO at 30: Learning at Speed

In 1986, at just 30 years old, Sjöfors accepted his first CEO role. Born and raised in Sweden, he relocated to Zürich, Switzerland, to lead a newly formed company funded by investors.

The opportunity was ambitious. So were the unknowns.
He had never formed a company before.
He had never been a CEO.
He had never built or supported a European-wide distributor network.
He had never built an organization from the ground up.
He did not know Swiss business culture.
He did not speak the language.

“It was all about learning quickly,” he recalls.



With limited startup capital, he traveled extensively by car across Europe, forging distributor relationships country by country. His wife tracked his first year on the road: 250 hotel nights. Three to five weeks traveling, followed by a week to ten days of planning before the next trip.

This was before email, mobile phones, or the internet. Sjöfors worked from hotel rooms with one of the very first clamshell laptops a Kaypro 2000 and a small printer. Documents were faxed from hotel front desks to distributors and partners across Europe.

It was relentless. It was immersive. And it worked.

Within a few years, the company was generating approximately \$6 million annually a powerful achievement for a startup built under intense constraints.

Scaling Across Continents

In 1990, Sjöfors was recruited to lead the European subsidiary of a Japanese electronics firm in the same professional electronics space. Over three years, he drove revenue growth from \$5 million to \$25 million.

By 1994, another opportunity emerged this time in the United States. He relocated to the Los Angeles area to establish and run a new business unit for a publicly traded company. Within roughly two years, that division reached \$78 million in revenue.

Over the following years, Sjöfors led additional startups, established companies, and served in several vice-presidential roles in high-tech sectors.

Across each organization, one pattern intrigued him: pricing experiments could radically alter performance for better or worse.

Some changes drove revenue increases of 25% to 30% in a single quarter. Others were disastrous.

What puzzled him was not the volatility, but the lack of clear explanation. Business school had offered limited, theoretical insights on pricing nothing that could explain why one pricing adjustment produced dramatic growth while another damaged performance.

That gap would become his life's work.

The Birth of a Pricing Philosophy

When it came time to launch his own company, Sjöfors chose to focus entirely on pricing not as a narrow tactic, but as a strategic discipline.

He founded Sjöfors & Partners Inc with a mission to eliminate guesswork from pricing decisions. His core insight was deceptively simple:

Price reflects value. And value lives in the mind of the customer. Therefore, if a company wants to price effectively, it must first measure customer willingness to pay not assume it.

Sjöfors developed a structured process built around that principle:

Measure willingness to pay in the client's marketplace.

Analyze how every element of the company's go-to-market strategy influences that willingness.

Align pricing, marketing, features, bundling, monetization, and sales strategy to maximize both perceived value and revenue.

Unlike traditional pricing consultants who rely on static spreadsheets or abstract models, Sjöfors combined behavioral insights with rigorous market data.

He often references a quote from Warren Buffett:

"Price is what you pay. Value is what you get."

For Sjöfors, profitable growth is not about charging more arbitrarily. It is about delivering more value and ensuring that value is recognized and compensated appropriately.



AI Before AI Was Fashionable

Long before artificial intelligence became a corporate buzzword, Sjöfors and his team developed proprietary software to analyze market research data.

Fifteen years ago, they did not call it AI. They described it as a dynamic, self-learning rules engine a system capable of interpreting data patterns and continuously improving its recommendations.

Today, that system forms the backbone of their methodology.

The firm conducts sophisticated online market research within a client's B2B or B2C marketplace. The data is first processed by their proprietary AI system. Then, critically, it is reviewed and interpreted by experienced business leaders not junior consultants or newly graduated MBAs.

Sjöfors jokingly refers to this combination as "AI²" Artificial Intelligence plus Actual Intelligence.

The output is not abstract analysis. It is highly actionable guidance, including:

- Identification of customer personas with the highest willingness to pay.
- Marketing messages and channels that support premium pricing.
- Product features and benefits customers value most.
- Bundling strategies that increase perceived value.
- Monetization models that reduce sales friction.
- Sales methods and channels that support higher margins.
- Exact price points that prevent revenue leakage.

In addition, the company's expanded AI capabilities now scan public digital sources review sites, trade publications, social media, online media, and competitor commentary to gather real-time insights into how markets perceive brands and their rivals.

This data-driven, behaviorally grounded approach has enabled clients to increase both revenue and profitability not through aggressive discounting, but through strategic alignment of value and price.

A Mission Rooted in Value Creation

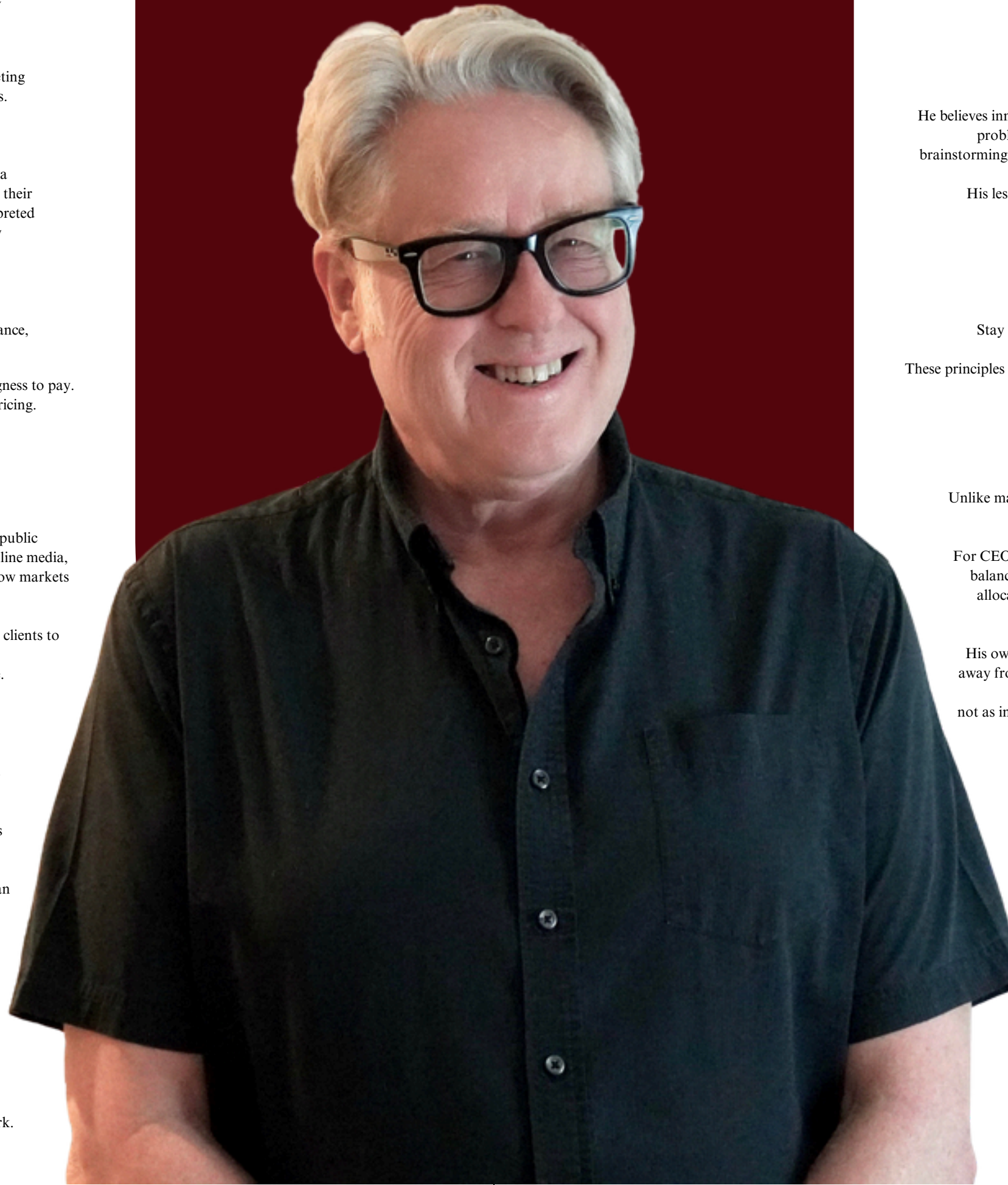
Sjöfors' daily motivation is not simply profit optimization. It is value creation at scale.

"Every company is in business because it adds some value to its customer's value they are willing to pay for," he explains.

More profitable companies grow faster. Growing companies can invest in innovation, employees, and customer benefits. In his view, helping companies price correctly ultimately benefits customers, staff, investors, and the broader economy.

His work is grounded in understanding human decision-making. Markets evolve. Technology changes. But human psychology particularly buying behavior remains remarkably consistent.

By studying how customers evaluate options, perceive value, and make purchase decisions, Sjöfors ensures that his pricing strategies are rooted in behavioral science rather than guesswork.



Leadership by Trust and Urgency

Sjöfors' leadership philosophy is straightforward:

Lead by example.

Be transparent.

Don't micromanage.

Hire the smartest people you can find and let them work.

He believes innovation flourishes when talented individuals are trusted to solve problems independently. Creativity, in his view, is not forced through brainstorming exercises but enabled through autonomy and clarity of purpose.

His lessons from decades in executive leadership are equally pragmatic:

Tenacity beats talent.

Always show up.

Trust the right people; correct hiring mistakes quickly.

Maintain urgency lost time cannot be recovered.

Take calculated risks.

Stay slightly uncomfortable; growth rarely happens in comfort zones.

These principles were forged during years of international expansion, high-stakes turnarounds, and volatile pricing experiments.

On Work, Life, and Relentless Drive

Unlike many executives who emphasize work-life balance, Sjöfors sees the concept differently.

For CEOs and founders, he believes work and life are not opposites to be balanced but intertwined dimensions of the same coin. Some hours are allocated to business, others to personal pursuits. Both are integral to fulfillment.

His own early career marked by near-constant travel and long stretches away from home demanded resilience and sacrifice. Yet he frames those years not as imbalance, but as commitment to building something meaningful.

A Quiet View on Legacy

When asked about the legacy he hopes to leave, Sjöfors offers a refreshingly unromantic answer.

He does not focus on legacy.

In his view, once promotion stops and leadership transitions, businesses and individuals are quickly forgotten. What matters more is impact in the present: helping companies operate more effectively, deliver greater value, and grow sustainably.

That humility belies the significant mark he has already made in the field of pricing strategy.

Redefining Pricing as a Growth Engine

What distinguishes Per Sjöfors from traditional consultants is not merely his technical framework but his executive perspective.

He has sat in the CEO chair. He has managed distributor networks across Europe without digital tools. He has scaled companies across continents. He has experienced pricing failures and dramatic revenue surges firsthand.

His insights are not theoretical. They are battle-tested. By reframing pricing as a reflection of holistic value influenced by marketing, product design, bundling, monetization, and sales strategy he transformed what many view as a static decision into a dynamic growth engine.

In competitive markets where companies often compete on discounts, Sjöfors teaches firms to compete on value clarity.

When willingness to pay is accurately measured and strategically influenced, companies stop leaving money on the table. They stop racing to the bottom. They grow smarter — not just bigger.

The Price Whisperer's Enduring Lesson

From hotel rooms across Europe with a Kaypro laptop to leading multimillion-dollar divisions in the United States, Per Sjöfors' journey reflects a single consistent theme: disciplined curiosity.

He questioned why pricing experiments succeeded or failed. He challenged academic orthodoxy. He built systems to measure what others assumed.

And in doing so, he helped reshape how companies think about value and price.

In an era of digital acceleration, algorithmic decision-making, and AI-driven analytics, his philosophy remains anchored in a timeless truth: business is ultimately about human choice.

Price is not merely a number on a tag or a line in a spreadsheet.

It is a signal.

A reflection.

A conversation between company and customer.

And when that conversation is grounded in measurable value, growth becomes not accidental but engineered.

For Per Sjöfors, that engineering of value is not just strategy.

It is the art of listening to the market and whispering back with precision.





Kelly Bagla, Esq.

World's Most Fearless Leader in Law, 2026

The Journey

What possessed a 15-year-old girl to leave her family, cross an ocean, and enter a field where few women had succeeded? Even as a young teen, Kelly Bagla possessed remarkable courage and ambition, fearlessly embarking on her childhood dream of practicing law in the United States.

Today an internationally acclaimed corporate and securities attorney, Kelly Bagla, Esq. serves high-net-worth founders, investors, and enterprises navigating the legal complexities of safeguarding their assets, mitigating risks, and achieving long-term success. She is known for her rare blend of legal precision, entrepreneurial insight, and global perspective. Founder and CEO of Bagla Law, APC, Kelly is a trusted advisor to domestic businesses as well as to worldwide clients seeking to enter the United States market.

Fearless Leader in Law

CEO WORLD LEADERS Magazine has named Kelly Bagla, Esq. the World's Most Fearless Leader in Law, 2026. And for good reason. Her entire journey has exhibited a winning combination of ambition, vision, and courage.

Graduating top in her class Kelly earned multiple law and business degrees, in the United Kingdom and the United States, including a Master's degree in law. She then took the bold step of interviewing at the number one Mergers and Acquisitions law firm in the world. It never occurred to Kelly to aim anywhere but for the top. She was hand-selected by Baker McKenzie LLP and spent several years serving both domestic and international clients. The experience was invaluable, enhancing her understanding of domestic and global corporate law. A promising, secure career was afforded her within the prestigious firm. But Kelly made a daring decision that changed the course of her life.



Branching Out

It had become evident to Kelly that too often the legal services of a mega firm fell short for entrepreneurs. Business founders had difficulty navigating the complex legal systems (and cost structures) designed for large corporations. They needed more accessible guidance that could be tailored to early-stage or growth-focused businesses. Entrepreneurs could be better served.

Kelly, a successful attorney, always had a heart for entrepreneurs. Her father was a business owner who worked his way from the ground floor to eventually buy and transform the business. Kelly saw first-hand the dedication, vision, and risk required of an entrepreneur. She inherited her father's entrepreneurial spirit and has modeled her fearless approach after his example.

Remaining at the world's largest firm would have been the safe plan. But Kelly saw that she could provide entrepreneurs something better. She founded Bagla Law Firm, APC, specializing in business formation & asset protection with a vision of shaking up the corporate legal field, by putting the client's best interests at the forefront of every interaction and decision. For more than two decades, she has provided founders with tailored legal strategies to protect their assets in all phases of starting, growing and exiting their businesses. Bagla Law Firm's boutique services include entity formation, securities law, mergers and acquisitions, and international market entry.

Kelly's revolutionary transparent flat-fee structure lets business owners know up front what their legal fees will be. No longer are they suddenly surprised with hidden billable hours.

Her bold move to start her own firm has earned her great success and numerous accolades including California's Attorney of the Year and the 2025 and 2026 Lawyer International Legal 100 Award.

The Entrepreneur's Attorney

An entrepreneur at heart, Kelly is always envisioning the next opportunity. Kelly is CEO and founder of two additional enterprises, GoLegalYourself.com, a Do-It-Yourself online legal protection company to help entrepreneurs acquire the right legal documents, and *Pitbulls 'n Pearls*®, a business and personal development coaching company. She hosts her *Biz Queen*® Podcast, – listened to in 26 countries and named in the top 20 Business Law Podcasts. And she is the author of 5 books, including a New York Times, best seller, *Go Legal Yourself!*®. Kelly is a compelling online and broadcast guest, including her roles as a judge on the Emmy award-winning tv series, *Everyday Edisons*® and on *The Blox*®, an entrepreneur reality show in its 20th season.

Kelly's dual perspective, being both an award-winning attorney and a celebrated entrepreneur makes her the ideal Entrepreneur's Attorney. She understands the unique risks and challenges of business owners. And she knows how to navigate complex corporate law to create strategies for advancing her clients' dreams while protecting their assets.

The Essence of Courage

Kelly has been more than fearless throughout her career. She has been courageous. In her view, courage is the best foundation for fearlessness. In other words, taking risks fearlessly simply for the adrenalin rush can be fun but pointless unless it is grounded in a greater purpose.

Each of her corporate enterprises was founded on her mission to inform, equip and inspire entrepreneurs. Her purpose to help others achieve success provided the courage to undertake each business venture.

In addition to her companies, Kelly has embarked on surprising risky endeavors requiring other forms of courage. Entering the 2010 Ms. Southern California BODYBUILDING CHAMPIONSHIP presented Kelly with the opportunity to push herself beyond what she had believed she could achieve. The extreme training and discipline tested, broke, and built a new level of confidence. Everything she learned through the grueling experience has fortified her confidence and benefitted her career. Kelly won Ms. Southern California BODYBUILDING CHAMPIONSHIP and was the first Indian female to win it.

Kelly entered an entirely different kind of competition after she happened to visit a toy fair in Los Angeles. Walking up and down the aisles all she saw were unattractive, imported toys with very little emotional substance. She had an idea, researched the market, spoke with a patent expert and toy designer and invented the plush toy collection, Eardorables®. She entered a television contest THE TOY BOX on ABC, won the Mattel® Award and entered into a licensing agreement. The knowledge and experience she gained have applied to all of her business ventures since.

It also takes courage to stand up for one's values and to persevere in the face of opposition. Kelly is unapologetic for her strong belief in the American Dream. She crossed an ocean to follow her dream and now speaks boldly to audiences of aspiring entrepreneurs and professionals to assure them that America is still the Land of Opportunity. A British immigrant, and naturalized citizen, Kelly has become a walking, breathing example of the successful American Entrepreneur with a mission to help others on their journey.



Future Ventures

Kelly will continue building her brand and expanding her enterprises and global influence to advise entrepreneurs and investors in building durable businesses. She has no intention of slowing down but sees her momentum grow as her domain expands.

Outside of her career Kelly is a staunch supporter of veterans, evident through her pro bono work with the Veterans Chamber of Commerce and the various magazine publication contributions she provides to outlets like Homeland and San Diego Veterans Magazine. Bagla Law Firm, APC offers veterans discounted legal fees to say “thank you” to everyone who has defended this country. Kelly’s husband, Brent Waters is a retired US Marine and her most trusted advisor in all aspects of her career and personal life. They are both devout American Patriots.

The other passion in Kelly’s life is rescuing dogs! (5 rescues and counting...) The cause nearest and dearest to her heart is ensuring every dog finds its “fur-ever” home with a loving family. Bagla Law Firm, APC regularly donates to and supports Last Chance At Life: All Breed Rescue and Adoption, where Kelly enjoys donating her time. The focus of the non-profit is helping the animals in San Diego County. They have a special fondness for boxers, which Kelly shares! Kelly and Brent have always chosen to adopt dogs. The couple currently has three (3) four-legged rescues in their family. Affectionately known as “the girls,” the pups join Kelly each morning on a daily run.

Together Kelly and Brent share a vision to open their own dog sanctuary. The planning and dreaming have been in the works for years. Their goal is to treat canine guests in the sanctuary like family. Dogs will be properly fed with nutritious food, enjoy exercise and loving care. Stay tuned for this and other adventures ahead for Kelly.

Every challenge will be met with fearless courage and every success will be grounded in the values that have guided her through the decades.





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DEREK CAFFFERATA

Founder of Travel Advances

TRAVEL ADVANCES

The industry is now at an inflection point. The global travel market is projected to surpass \$11 trillion over the next decade, with digital platforms capturing an increasingly dominant share.



TRAVEL ADVANCES:

Why I Chose to Build a Movement Instead of Another Travel App

I created Travel Advances because I saw something the industry had stopped seeing. After decades of leading teams, scaling brands, and building systems across continents, I realized that travel, one of the most emotional experiences in a person’s life, had been reduced to a transaction. It had become a marketplace of noise. Every platform promised the “best deal,” the “smartest itinerary,” or the “top ten must-see attractions,” yet travelers were not feeling any smarter or more confident. If anything, they were more overwhelmed. They were drowning in options, starving for clarity, and increasingly unsure of who to trust. At some point, the industry had mistaken chaos for innovation. I knew the world did not need another travel app. It needed a movement. It needed a platform that advanced not just where people go, but how they feel while going there.

My background shaped that conviction long before Travel Advances had a name. I had spent years architecting organizations where clarity, emotional intelligence, and disciplined execution were the difference between momentum and mayhem. I learned that people do not respond to noise. They respond to confidence. They respond to connection. They respond to feeling understood. And if you can deliver that consistently, people will follow you anywhere, even across time zones. I had seen this play out in boardrooms, in global operations, and in the countless teams I had the privilege to lead. The pattern was unmistakable. When people feel supported, they perform better. When they feel seen, they trust more. When they feel guided, they move forward with conviction.

Meanwhile, the travel industry was moving in the opposite direction. It was becoming more transactional, more algorithmic, and less human. The irony was almost comedic. Travel is one of the most human things we do. We travel to celebrate, to heal, to reconnect, to escape,

to rediscover ourselves. Yet the tools guiding us had become some of the least human experiences imaginable. I remember thinking, “If travel platforms were people, most of them would be shouting at you from across the room.” That was the moment I knew something had to change.

That insight became the philosophical foundation of Travel Advances. I set out to build a platform that restored emotional intelligence to travel, something the industry desperately needed but had never prioritized. I wanted to create a space where travelers felt guided rather than pressured, supported rather than sold to, and understood rather than analyzed. I wanted to build technology that behaved more like a trusted companion and less like a vending machine.

The entrepreneurial journey that followed was defined by intentionality. In the early days, our prototypes looked like everything else in the market, feature-heavy, data-dense, and indistinguishable from competitors.

If you squinted, you could barely tell which app was ours and which belonged to a billion-dollar incumbent. That was my wake-up call. Through rigorous testing and honest internal debate, I recognized that complexity was the enemy of confidence. Travelers did not need more buttons. They needed more breath. They needed a platform that felt like a guide, not a puzzle. So, I made a decisive pivot to simplify the experience, sharpen the language, and make clarity the core product value. That pivot became our first defining milestone. It aligned the team around a philosophy that would ultimately become our competitive advantage. And it taught us something important. When you remove the noise, people finally hear what matters.

As the vision sharpened, I knew I needed partners who could elevate the mission. When Roger Thomson, Vice Chairman and former Chief Operating Officer of Capital Markets for HSBC, joined as a strategic co-author of the movement, everything accelerated. Roger brought global financial discipline, narrative clarity, and a rare ability to translate vision into investor-ready language. He helped articulate what I had always believed. Emotional intelligence is not a soft differentiator. It is a strategic one. His influence transformed Travel Advances from a promising concept into a compelling investment thesis.

But vision alone is never enough. To build something that could scale globally, I needed a technology leader who could turn philosophy into architecture. That is where Rakesh Mittal entered the story. With his background as a Managing Director at Genpact, Rakesh brought the engineering discipline, architectural rigor, and operational clarity required to build a platform capable of global expansion. He engineered the systems that transformed Travel Advances from a beautifully designed idea into a resilient, enterprise-grade product. His approach was methodical and uncompromising. Every system had to be transparent. Every workflow had to be reliable. Every feature had to reinforce our philosophy of emotional intelligence. Under his leadership, the technology became a fortress, scalable, secure, and built for long-term growth. Investors immediately understood the significance. With Rakesh, the company was not just visionary. It was structurally sound.



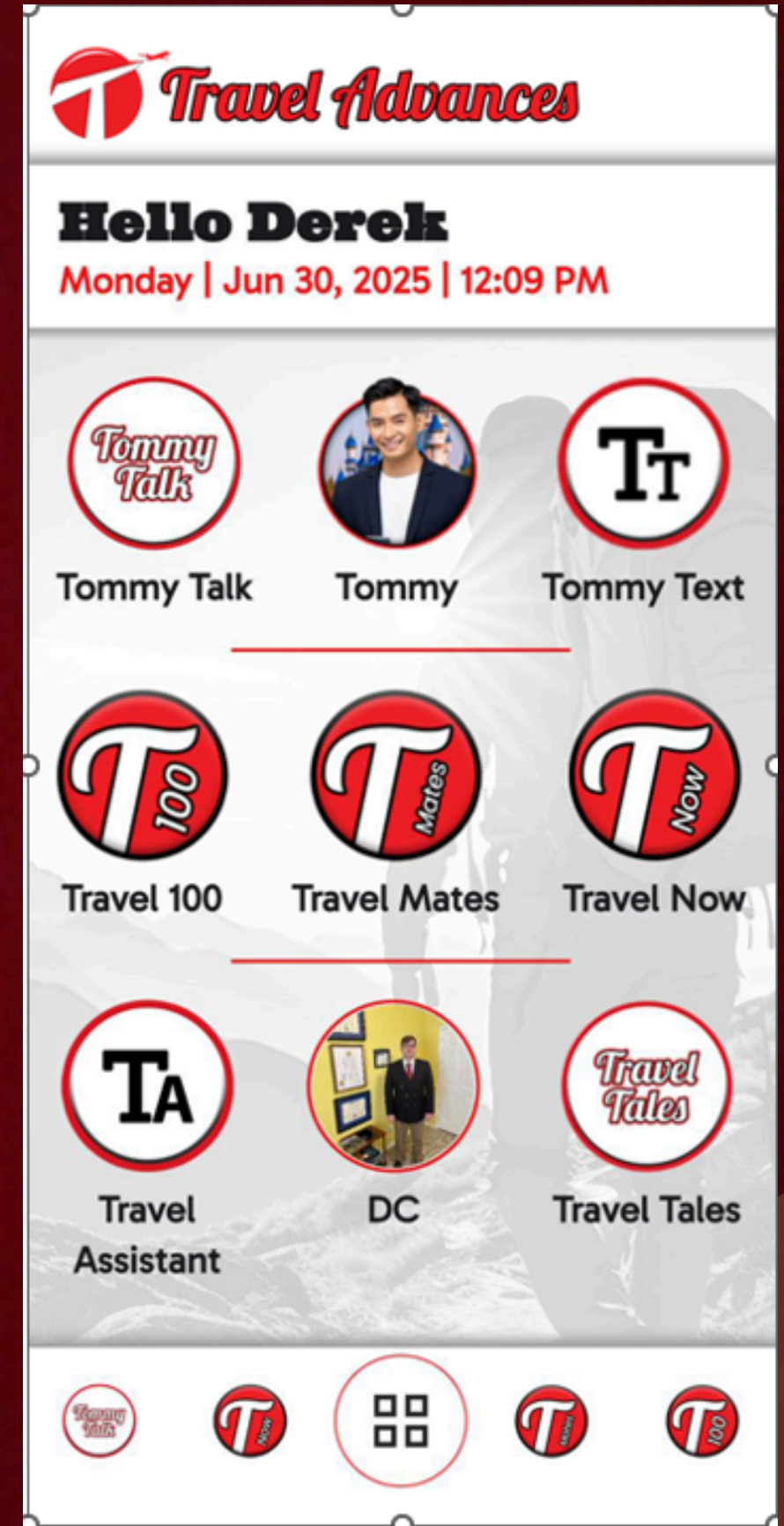


The long-term opportunity is not just to build a platform. Platforms come and go. Movements endure. What we are building is a movement that reshapes how people experience the world, one emotionally intelligent interaction at a time. I want Travel Advances to be the quiet confidence behind every great journey, the companion that makes people feel supported, understood, and empowered. If we do that well, the rest will follow.

And at the center of that movement, I remain guided by the same conviction that started it all. Travel is emotional. People want clarity. People want confidence. People want to feel understood. These truths are universal. They do not change with trends, technology cycles, or the latest buzzwords. They are the constants that define human experience. Travel Advances is my commitment to building technology that honors those truths rather than ignoring them. It is my answer to an industry that forgot the emotional side of travel, somewhere between the price comparison widgets and the endless pop-ups insisting you “book now before someone else does.”

The message I want to leave readers, investors, and future leaders with is simple. The most powerful innovations begin with a person who sees the world differently. Not louder. Not faster. Differently. I believe the future of travel belongs to those who understand not just where people want to go, but how they want to feel along the way. That belief is what drives me. That belief is what built Travel Advances. And that belief is what will carry this movement forward.

Because at the end of the day, travel is not about miles. It is about the meaning. And meaning is something worth building for.





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