2025

Chief Executive

Guide to CEO Peer Networks



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Chief Executive

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What are CEO peer groups?

Interchangeably called CEO peer groups or networks, these organizations generally arrange regular meetings in confidential environments where CEOs can share ideas, best practices, experiences and advice. High performing executives value the perspective of other leaders, as well as the wisdom that comes from the practical experiences learned by others in similar circumstances and those who have gone down the same road before.

It is truly lonely at the top: most CEOs do not have "safe" environments where they can share all their concerns. CEOs often feel that any public show of vulnerability or uncertainty risks losing the confidence or respect of their boards of directors, employees or customers. Rightfully, most CEOs are reluctant to open up to consultants or other subject matter experts because these vendors have conflicting interests (after all, they live off client fees, and succeed maximally when they create client dependency).

Furthermore, people who haven't walked in a CEO's shoes often do not have the perspective to balance competing interests that CEOs need to weigh, which can include employee interests and morale, investor demands, customer focus and the ever-present tension between growth and profitability.

For these reasons, CEOs often make the best advisors to other CEOs, and an increasing number of CEOs find that peer groups are the best way to obtain such perspective.

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“We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change.”

—Peter Drucker

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Types of CEO Peer Groups

CEO Peer Groups can be meaningfully categorized as either local or national groups.

LOCAL

Local groups are convenient, bringing together CEOs from the same region who understand your market, workforce, and business climate. While the pool is geographically defined, the shared context often leads to practical insights and trusted connections.

These groups often include CEOs from a range of company sizes. While smaller company leaders may learn from larger peers, CEOs of more complex businesses gain the most when surrounded by others facing similar scale and strategic demands. To ensure relevance, many local groups are now curated by both geography and company size—keeping discussions focused and high-value.

NATIONAL

National groups often offer access to a broader pool of CEOs, expert speakers, and specialized resources—making it easier to find peers who face similar challenges. Many are organized by industry or revenue range, allowing for highly focused conversations around strategy, performance, and key metrics.

While they may require travel, national groups typically meet less frequently than local ones. For many CEOs, the depth of insight and quality of discussion outweigh the logistical tradeoffs.

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Types of CEO Peer Groups

CEO Peer Group meetings are either Professionally or Member facilitated.

Member Facilitated

While they have national staffers, several CEO peer networks are actually run by the members at the local level. This means it's up to each member to "take a turn" as host, agenda-setter and facilitator to their group (sometimes for as long as for 12 or 24 month "terms").

Professionally Facilitated

Other CEO peer group meetings are run by professionals who plan meetings, organize member communications and facilitate discussions.

Professional facilitators are trained to get to the root of issues, keep discussions on track and efficient, prevent anyone from dominating the discussion and focus on creating "take-aways" that the members are looking for.

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“Excellence is not an act but a habit.”

—Aristotle

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Benefits of CEO Peer Groups

Members report multiple benefits to CEO Peer Groups.

1

IMPROVE
the growth and profitability of your organization

2

OBTAIN
accurate benchmarks and best practices on key issues

3

PROVIDE
outlet to continuously learn and improve in confidential setting

4

TIME & PLACE
to work "on" vs. "in" your business regularly

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Benefits of CEO Peer Groups

5

DEVELOP
friendships and networks with other CEOs that can enrich your professional and personal life

6

EXPOSURE
to new ways of doing things

7

BENEFIT
from the hard-won lessons and experience of other leaders

8

RECEIVE
honest advice and feedback from peers who have no conflict of interest

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Benefits of CEO Peer Groups

Faster Growth (On Average)

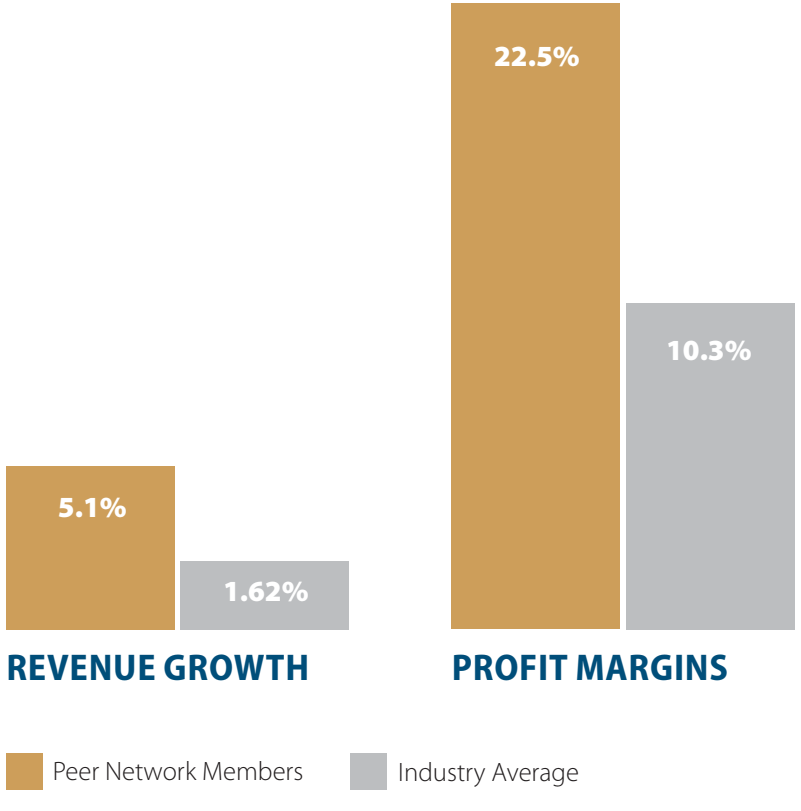
Members of Peer Networks experienced average revenue growth rate just above 5% last year compared to an industry average of only 1.62%—more than 200% faster growth.

More Profitable

Members of Peer Networks enjoyed operating margins of 22.6% last year vs. an industry average of only 10.26%—more than twice the profitability.

Overall Performance

Executives who set aside the time to attend industry specific meetings in order to exchange best practices and work on their businesses experienced dramatically superior operating results.



SOURCE: Stein + Partners Study of Chief Executive Network Members Vs. Their Industries

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“It’s fine to celebrate success, but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.”

—Bill Gates

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Why Member Size Matters

To the uninformed observer (and the media), it appears that all CEOs do the same thing: run an organization. But any real understanding of business recognizes the significant differences faced by CEOs of different-sized organizations.



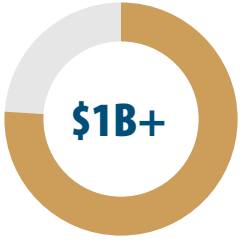
The smallest businesses almost always require a CEO to actively DO many of the functions needed on a day-to-day basis. Some days' tasks may be as mundane as ordering supplies and interviewing job candidates, as well as participating in front-line, customer-facing roles. Outside capital is often non-existent. As a business grows and matures, the CEO must adapt and change his/her style and role (e.g., develop and document processes, upgrade talent in high impact areas, and establish personal relationships with key customers).



The lower-mid-market company CEO (annual revenue $10-$100 million) is no longer fighting for survival, and now faces strategic planning with a longer time horizon. With basic processes established, this CEO may be consumed with issues like quality and efficiency or growing new markets or products to provide diversification. Capital becomes available at this size, and the CEO must think strategically about partners and alliances. Talent issues are still critical and consume increasing time even as the CEO delegates to and upgrades key people.



An upper-mid-market CEO (annual company revenue $100-$1 billion) faces many of the same challenges as a large-company CEO, but without the same resources. This places added demands on the individual, as they must assume additional responsibility in key functions like strategic planning, corporate finance, mergers/acquisitions/divestitures, international issues, talent development and management, technology and more.



The large company CEO (annual revenue $1 billion +) is typically engaged in strategic issues over a long time frame. This CEO must often deal with questions like which business lines to invest in, harvest or divest, how to motivate, groom and attract up-and-coming talent and key executives, how to deal with investors and/or regulators, and more. Given the size and scale of this organization, every word uttered by this CEO is closely scrutinized and parsed, with interactions between the CEO and average workers being infrequent.

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Key Point

- The size of the enterprises being run by peers in your group will directly impact your ROI in membership—in both time and money.

- Meeting with peers who run comparably sized enterprises—and face similar challenges—can accelerate value and time efficiency.

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Key Point

- **You will likely receive the highest quality, highest quantity insights about your business from non-competing peers.**

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“An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field.”

—Niels Bohr

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Who Should Join Peer Networks?

CEO peer groups are not for every leader. To benefit, a leader must have the following characteristics:



COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT

Those who believe that holding a CEO title is the end of a journey should probably not participate. On the other hand, members who value continuous learning and believe every CEO must invest in their ongoing professional development make excellent candidates.



WILLING TO MAKE TIME COMMITMENT

Consistent participation is often an important ingredient in bonding peers and building the trust required to discuss key issues. All CEOs are busy, and prospective members in any group should view participation as a priority.



SELF-AWARENESS

In addition to improved organizational performance, successful members aim to increase levels of satisfaction and performance in their own work as well as that of their employees, customers and investors.



HUMILITY

Peer group members must demonstrate a willingness to share their personal triumphs—and, as importantly—their failures. Hard-won experience (good and bad) is what provides depth and meaning for leaders of substance.

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Leading CEO Peer Network Profiles

LEADING PEER GROUP PROFILES

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The Wall Street Journal's CEO Council was excluded from this report because it's not a CEO peer network like the other listed organizations. The WSJ CEO Council is focused on giving large company CEOs access to exclusive on-the-record conferences and WSJ editors and visibility—and less about intimate peer networks focused on solving your specific issues.

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1 Chief Executive Network is a division of Chief Executive Group and shares the same parent company as Chief Executive magazine

Chief Executive Network (CEN)

ChiefExecutiveNetwork.com • Tel: 785-832-0303 • Email: rob@chiefexec.com

Membership count:
1,000

Personal membership criteria
Must be a CEO, President, or Business Owner.

Company membership criteria:
Most members run companies with $2 million to $5 billion in revenue and are grouped with CEOs in their industry, geography, revenue range, or facing similar challenges—always from non-competing companies..

Time Commitment Required:

Cost
$ $ $ $ $

BACKGROUND

After facilitating numerous CEO peer groups, organizational expert Dr. Ronald E. Wiley found that meetings were most effective when participants came from the same industry (non-competing) or led similarly sized companies. These dynamics produced more relevant, actionable insights grounded in real-world experience. Chief Executive Network (CEN) was founded on that principle in 1990 and is recognized for fostering high-value discussions on complex business challenges.

CEN offers both national groups—organized by industry and revenue size—and local/regional peer groups focused on geographic proximity. National groups meet several times a year in major hub cities; local and regional groups meet more frequently and emphasize shared market context and accessibility.

To better serve larger enterprises, CEN launched the CEO100 Network for CEOs of companies with $100 million or more in annual revenue. In 2022, it expanded its regional footprint through the acquisition of Chief Executive Boards International, which operates peer groups across the Midwest and Southeast.

INSIDER INFO

CEN has particular strength in manufacturing, distribution, tech, software, architecture, engineering, and construction. While not every industry is covered, groups are added based on demand. Local and regional networks are especially active in the Midwest and Southeast.

The CEO100 Network includes cross-industry groups for companies with $100M–$500M, $500M–$1B, and $1B+ in annual revenue.

WHAT SIZE COMPANIES DO THEY PRIMARILY SERVE?

Mid-Market and Upper Middle Market (typically $5 million to $2.5 billion in annual revenue)

UNIQUE ELEMENTS

Grouped with non-competing CEOs by industry, company size, region, or shared challenges—ensuring relevant, high-value discussions.

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Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO)

eonetwork.org • Tel: 703-519-6700 • Email: info@eonetwork.org

Membership count:
17,500

Personal membership criteria
Must be a founder, co-founder, owner or controlling shareholder of a company.

Company membership criteria:
Company must gross at least $1 million annually..

Time Commitment Required:

Cost
$ $ $ $ $

BACKGROUND
Founded in 1987 by a group of young entrepreneurs as YEO (Young Entrepreneurs Organization), EO enables small business owners to learn from each other, leading to greater business success and an enriched personal life. Their mission is to support entrepreneurial education and engage entrepreneurs to learn and grow. They offer resources in the form of events, leadership-development programs, an online entrepreneur forum, and business owner education opportunities, among other resources designed for business growth.

INSIDER INFO
While EO's 213 chapters across the globe provide an extensive network of entrepreneurs, participation in the organization is primarily focused on local chapter meetings. It is important to keep in mind that each chapter varies in terms of industries represented, size of peer companies and the number of members in the local chapter.

WHAT SIZE COMPANIES DO THEY PRIMARILY SERVE?
Smaller Companies (Median member had revenues of $4.1 million)

UNIQUE ELEMENTS
Entrepreneurs Only

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G100 (A Division of World 50)

G100.com • Tel: 212-332-6373 • Email: G100@G100.com

G100

Membership count:
Not known but estimate is <200.

Personal membership criteria
Invitation only extended to CEOs and Presidents.

Company membership criteria:
Only large, global companies are welcome in G100.

Time Commitment Required:



Cost
$ $ $ $ $

BACKGROUND

G100 was formed in 2005 when two separate organizations, G100 and Six Sigma Academy, were purchased and put together. G100 targets "the largest and most significant global companies" for membership and allows members to counsel and connect with each other in a private, off-the-record atmosphere of candid and informed discussion. Meetings are led by a core group of recent chief executives and senior advisors to CEOs. Membership provides access to two meetings a year in which presentations are facilitated and prepared by top representatives from various advisory firms regarding businesses most pressing issues. G100 was acquired by World 50, a leading peer network company that has peer networks for senior HR, Finance, IT and other CXO positions at large enterprise organizations.

INSIDER INFO

G100 is an exclusive organization comprised mainly of large public company CEOs. The meetings tend to focus on guest speaker and advisor led discussions which include leading former CEOs.

WHAT SIZE COMPANIES DO THEY PRIMARILY SERVE?

Large (Over $1 Billion)

UNIQUE ELEMENTS

Large Company Executives Only

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Vistage

Vistage.com • Tel: 858-523-6800

VISTAGE

Membership count:
45,000 executives including their non-CEO Groups

Personal membership criteria
Must be a CEO, or business owner to be in their CEO/Owner groups but they also have key executive groups for executives who aren't CEOs.

Company membership criteria:
Companies must have minimum annual revenue of $5 million. Most members are in the $5 to $50 million range.

Time Commitment Required:

Cost
$ $ $ $ $

BACKGROUND
Vistage membership includes a local, monthly group meeting plus an individual solo meeting with your group coach. Monthly group meetings are hosted by the members on a rotating basis. Founded in 1957 as The Executive Committee (TEC), the organization underwent a name change to Vistage in 2006 (though not all the company's licensees adopted the new name and still operate as "TEC").

INSIDER INFO
Vistage groups are recruited and run by local coaches (called "Chairs") who split member dues with the national organization. Many of these coaches depend upon cross-selling their consulting services to members to supplement their income. There is a significant time commitment (one half-day per month for group meetings, plus an additional 2 hour coaching session each month with your coach. Be aware that your Vistage experience is heavily dependent upon the experience base and skill level of the specific chair you are assigned and the 15 other members in your group from various industries and sizes..

WHAT SIZE COMPANIES DO THEY PRIMARILY SERVE?
Lower Mid-Market ($5 Million to $ 25 Million)

UNIQUE ELEMENTS
Personal Coach

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YPO (formerly known as Young Presidents' Organization)

YPO.org • Tel: 972-587-1500



Membership count:
36,000 members in over 142 Countries

Personal membership criteria
Must join before age 45.

Company membership criteria:
50 employees or $2 million payroll, plus $15 million valuation or $12 million revenue.

Time Commitment Required:

Cost
$ $ $ $ $

BACKGROUND
Founded in 1950, YPO is the largest CEO peer organization with chapters in 120 countries (approximately 50% of the membership is outside the U.S.) Members join a local "chapter," which are further broken down into one or more "forums" (each forum is comprised of 8-12 local members in a mix of business sizes and industries). Forums meet monthly for a half day, typically hosted and facilitated by each member on a rotating basis. Chapter members also typically meet on a monthly basis with a guest speaker, and YPO hosts national and international meetings and conferences. Members pay local chapter dues, international dues and fees for special national or international events. At age 50, each member is "transitioned" out of YPO chapters and "graduates" to sister organization YPO Gold.

INSIDER INFO
The impression of YPO is that it has a heavy concentration of second- and third-generation sons and daughters of business founders, lending the organization its unofficial nickname, "YPO: Your Parents' Organization." Due to its rule that new members must qualify and join before age 45, membership is skewed toward the inherited set, but there are many entrepreneurs and professional managers as well.

WHAT SIZE COMPANIES DO THEY PRIMARILY SERVE?
Lower Mid-Market ($12 to $100 Million)

UNIQUE ELEMENTS
Strong social and personal network

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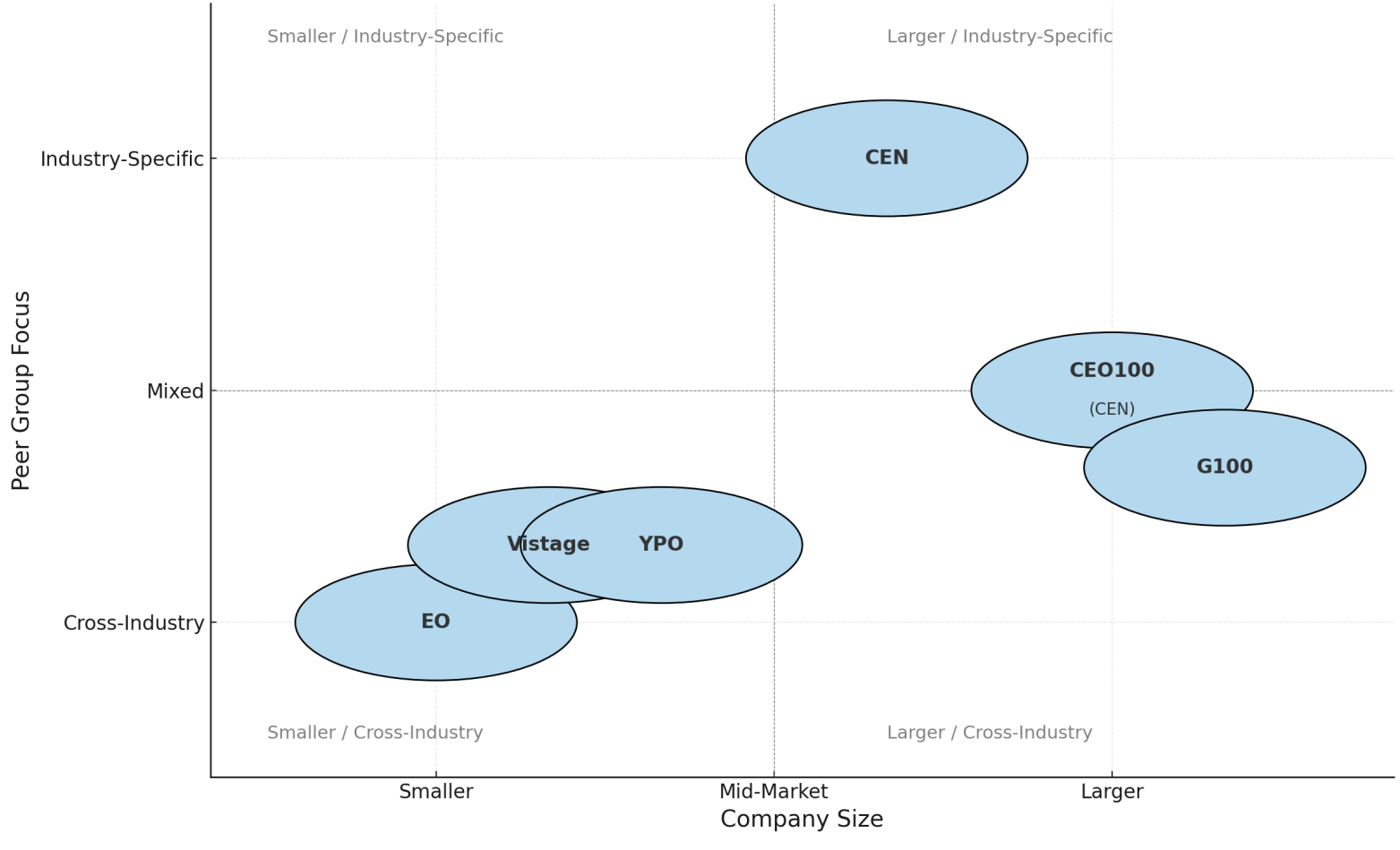
Comparison of Leading CEO Peer Networks

	Chief Executive Network (CEN)	Entrepreneurs Organization	G-100	Vistage	YPO (Young President's Organization)
Member Size Range	Mostly mid –market ($10 million to $2 billion +)	Mostly small companies (Under $5 million)	Large companies only (Over $1 Billion)	Mostly lower mid-market ($5 million to $20 million)	Mostly lower mid -market $12 million to $50 million)
Peer Groups Organized By Industry (Non-competitors) and Size	✓				
Meetings Are Professionally Facilitated	✓		✓	✓	
Local Meetings	Local, regional and national groups	✓	National only	✓	✓
Global Member Access	✓		✓		✓
Annual Fees	$5,250 to $25,000 (Based on co size and engagement)	$5,000 for local chapter and Int'l dues	>$75,000	$24,000 (Excluding conferences)	Local chapter and Int'l Dues @$10,000 (Excluding conferences)
Comments	Includes Research and Conference	Additional $3,500 initiation fee			Additional $10,000 initiation fee

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CEO Peer Network Market Map

(by Company Size & Peer Group Focus)



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Which Network Is Right For You?

Each network caters to different types of CEOs. Here are some factors to consider:

Network	Chief Executive Network (CEN)	For More Information
Chief Executive Network (CEN)	If you lead a mid-market company in manufacturing, distribution, construction, tech, or professional services, CEN offers national peer groups organized by industry and company size. Regional and local groups are organized by geography. All groups are carefully curated based on shared challenges, with some—like the CEO100 peer advisory group—structured specifically for CEOs of companies with $100 million+ in revenue.	ChiefExecutiveNetwork.com
Entrepreneurs Organization (EO)	If you are leading an entrepreneurial enterprise with revenues of at least $1 million (but probably under $10 million) and are looking to join a group of entrepreneurs for monthly meetings and presentations, EO is a network you should consider.	eonetwork.org
G-100	If you are the CEO or CXO of a $1 billion plus company and want to meet with other CXOs who run similarly sized organizations to network and discuss business challenges and best practices, G-100 could be a good option for you.	g100.com
Vistage	If you are a CEO or CXO in a company with revenues over $5 million and are looking for a local business coach and group of peers to discuss your business challenges with and hold you accountable, Vistage could be a good option.	vistage.com
Young Presidents Organization (YPO)	If you are a young CEO or President (under 44 years of age) , run a mid-market company with revenues over $12 million and are looking for other young CEOs to network with across industries, on business, family and personal issues, YPO is worth checking out.	ypo.org

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About This Guide

This guide was created by Chief Executive Group, which exists to improve the performance of business leaders, build stronger organizations, and drive meaningful results.

Chief Executive Group helps CEOs, senior executives, and public company directors improve performance and lead more effectively. Through peer networks, leadership events, research, and media platforms, the organization connects decision-makers across industries to share insights, benchmark data, and proven strategies.

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