

CRAIG CECCANTI

Real stories on building, scaling, and leading.

He built Pinot's Palette from a single studio to more than a hundred and fifty locations, sold it, and now helps leadership teams grow without breaking.



150+

Locations, built from one Houston studio

Multiple

Companies founded and exited

Rice

Adjunct professor of entrepreneurship

Both Seats

Visionary and Integrator, including a global turnaround

Craig Ceccanti grew Pinot's Palette from a single Houston studio into a national franchise of more than a hundred and fifty locations, then sold it. He teaches entrepreneurship at Rice University and is a Professional EOS Implementer® working with leadership teams across greater Houston. He has sat in the Visionary seat, the one everybody romanticizes, and in the Integrator seat, the one nobody writes about. Most recently he sat in that second seat in a major way, leading a global turnaround. He has been on both sides of the table, and he has been the problem on both sides of the table.

INTERVIEW TOPICS

The Ceiling Nobody Warns You About

Why the systems that got you here start working against you, and why founders misread it as a people problem.

Founder to CEO

The transition nobody preps you for. It feels like being fired from a company you still own.

Both Seats

Visionary and Integrator conflict from someone who has been both. Why it breaks, and what founders get wrong when they finally hire one.

What the Team Is Not Saying

Passive aggressive conflict, accountability avoidance, and the meeting that happens after the meeting.

Ten to Fifty

What breaks in that range, and what franchising to a hundred and fifty locations taught him about what scales.

Worth Buying

Exit readiness for people who are not exiting yet, which is the only time it actually works.

QUESTIONS HOSTS CAN STEAL

- 01 You went from one studio to more than a hundred and fifty locations. What broke first?
- 02 What did you get wrong as a Visionary that you only understood after you sat in the Integrator seat?
- 03 What does a leadership team look like right before it stalls out?
- 04 What would you tell a founder who thinks the business is going great right now?

RECENT APPEARANCES

Success Formula Podcast with Shawn Lynch. The early Pinot's Palette days, from one room in Montrose to a national franchise.

Arcus Arena, episode 23 with Candus Hinderer and Carrie Ferroukhi. Wild growth, a winning exit, and the messy middle.

Leo Interviews, episode 50. Building, scaling, and what it costs. Filmed in the session room in Sugar Land.

Setup. Records from a dedicated studio with a cinema camera, broadcast microphone, and a hardwired connection. Riverside, Zoom, or your platform. Local files sent after on request. Remote any time, in person around Houston with reasonable notice. **One ask.** Craig points listeners to a single destination, never a stack of offers.

Invite Craig to speak

One short form. Bios, headshots, and past appearances all live here too.

craigceccanti.com/speaking