

Overview: Leader Retreats at BRV

Retreats at the Edward Lowe Foundation give entrepreneurs a unique opportunity to step away from daily distractions and really focus on building their business.

Our retreats are designed specifically for leaders of second-stage companies — entrepreneurs who have moved beyond the startup phase and have the intent and capacity for continued growth. Held at Big Rock Valley (BRV), the foundation's 2,600-acre campus in southwest Michigan, retreats usually span three days and two nights, and fees include not only program content but also lodging and meals.

Programs address the many challenges that second-stagers face, including building a management team, communications issues, company culture and strategic growth. Each course builds upon the previous one and revolves around inflection points: how your organization is changing, how your team is changing and how you as a leader are responding to these changes. (To further support second-stage companies, we also offer retreats for your key



executives to help with their professional development.)

"The logistics of planning the retreat couldn't have been easier," says Barbara Aras, founder of Aras Group LLC and chair of a WPO chapter in Cincinnati. "My group was initially skeptical about attending because they worried they might be doing a lot of touchy-feely exercises — but it was a great surprise for them. The retreat was an opportunity to look at their businesses, themselves and their teams, and enabled them to envision a much clearer future. At the end of the retreat, when I asked if they wanted to come back next year, everyone's hand shot up."

"The Edward Lowe Foundation really gets it — not only the issues we're dealing with, but how to approach us," says Larry Kooiker, founder of Agritek Industries in Holland, Mich., who has been to several retreats at BRV.

"Dino and his staff have a unique ability to understand the character of the entrepreneur; of being able to dig into issues and getting us to think differently without turning us off," Kooiker adds.

What makes us different?

- A laser-like focus on second-stage entrepreneurs.
- Relevant content for addressing the challenges of growth-oriented companies.
- Facilitation that elicits the group genius.
- A deep understanding of peer learning.
- Big Rock Valley's inspirational setting — 2,600 acres of woodland, prairie and wetland.

Your takeaways include:

- A new framework from which to view your business.
- Greater insights into your strengths and leadership style.
- A clearer vision about your company's direction.
- Practical tools and techniques to accelerate growth.
- The ability to think differently about yourself, your people and your organization.
- Stronger bonds with your peer group.

"At first, I had no idea what to expect; then I realized the sessions guide you to interactions with the other entrepreneurs, and the networking is fantastic. My second retreat was even better. I left enlightened, emboldened and re-energized."

— Pete Colan, founder of SportCrafters in Granger, Ind.



Our facilitator

An expert on second-stage entrepreneurs, Dino Signore has a doctorate in business psychology and is manager of entrepreneurial education at the Edward Lowe Foundation. Signore leads all foundation learning events, which have been attended by thousands of second-stage business owners and executives. "Second stage is a critical junction for entrepreneurs," Signore points out. "What made you successful in first stage may not make you successful in second stage."

Our facilities

The Tower of Tomorrow — Opened in 2010, this state-of-the-art facility is LEED certified and features a geothermal heating and air-conditioning system. Recycled materials, as well as stone and wood from the foundation's property, have been used throughout the building.

Boxcars — Five renovated railroad boxcars provide overnight housing for guests. Each features two bedrooms, a large bathroom and a sitting area. The cars have their original floors and new tongue-and-groove paneled interiors that have been built with wood from BRV.

Guest Houses — Ten renovated farmhouses, many dating back to the 1830s, provide additional housing. Although equipped with modern conveniences, much of these buildings' original construction has been preserved. Guests will share a house with their peers, but have their own private bedroom.

Amenities — Running and hiking trails, a fitness center with weights, treadmill and elliptical machine, and a leisure center with games, TV and free Wi-Fi.



Sample agenda

Day 1

3-5 p.m.	Guest check-in
5:30 p.m.	Dinner
6-9 p.m.	Opening night session
9 p.m.	Campfire

Day 2

8 a.m.	Breakfast
9 a.m.-noon	Morning session
Noon	Lunch
1-6 p.m.	Afternoon session
6 p.m.	Dinner
7-9 p.m.	Evening session
9 p.m.	Campfire

Day 3

8 a.m.	Breakfast and checkout
9 a.m.-noon	Closing session
Noon	Departure

Scheduling a retreat

Fees: \$700 per participant, which includes program facilitation, lodging, meals, snacks and nonalcoholic beverages.

Travel to BRV: We're located at 58220 Decatur Road in Cassopolis, Michigan. The closest major airports are Chicago's O'Hare and Midway or Detroit. Nearby regional airports are in South Bend, Indiana, Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Check-in: 3-5 p.m., please arrive by 5 p.m. If you're early, feel free to explore the property and relax.

Attire: Be comfortable! We do many outdoor activities, so jeans are perfectly acceptable.

Book now! Space is limited, so we recommend reserving your retreat early. For more information about specific program content, logistical information or available dates, email Rita Phillips at rita@lowe.org.