

◆ OSLO BUSINESS FORUM

2016-2025

10 YEARS

The Story Behind Oslo Business Forum
and how Christoffer Omberg and Marius
Røed Wang ended up on this cover

Why Speed and
Alignment Matter
More Than Ever

The Power of
'Unreasonable
Hospitality'

Top 5 Leadership
Trends in 2025



Employees at Oslo Business Forum are excited to celebrate the 10-year anniversary in 2025. Join us to empower leaders to change the world.



Back: Fredrik C. Paulshus Dehli, Lars Erik Fjøsne-Eide, Simeon Mathyer, Thea Grønbeck, Hanne Lindbæk, Tonje Gustavsen & Andreas Storsveen Kustås
Front: My Elfstrand, Siri Børsum, Christoffer Omberg, Marius Røed Wang, Malin Skog & Aleksander Moberg

(Photo by Erik Krafft)

Table of Contents

06

A Story of Curiosity, Inspiration, and Agility

How fearlessness built a movement, not just a conference

12

A Timeline of Bold Decisions

From BI Students to Barack Obama and further

16

5 People Who Believed in Oslo Business Forum

Meet the visionaries who took a chance on an ambitious idea

25

The End of the World (As We Knew It)

CNN's Richard Quest on why business' survival depends on rewriting the rules

28

Most Memorable Speakers

14 speakers who shaped the conversation on leadership

30

A Sports Team, Not a Family

A culture that values bold action over cautious perfection

37

Why Speed and Alignment Matter

How to equip leaders in an era of constant change

42

PwC and OBF: Redefining Collaboration

How PwC connects with executives to turn insights into action

45

Transforming Culture at Würth Norge

Inspiring the shift from individual to team performance

46

7 Book Recommendations

The books that shaped OBF and guarantee success

48

What's the Worst that Can Happen?

How OBF Event takes business conferences to the next level



54

Top 5 Leadership Trends

The insights empowering leaders in 2025 and beyond

58

The True Stars of Oslo Business Forum

How we're shaping the next generation of leaders

62

Unreasonable Hospitality

Create a lasting impact by designing an unforgettable experience

66

Oslo Business Forum in Numbers

Our activities and community in 2025

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A Word From the Founders

Ten Years of Bold Leadership and Innovation

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Oslo Business Forum, we take a moment to look back at our incredible journey. What started as a bold idea at a business school has grown into one of the world's leading business conferences. This milestone is a celebration of all the courageous decisions, innovative ideas, and relentless pursuit of growth that have defined us over the years.

This special edition magazine is dedicated to everyone who has joined us on this amazing journey — our inspiring speakers, our supportive partners, our attendees, and you, our supporters, who come each year full of enthusiasm. Your trust and participation have been crucial in making each event more impactful than the last.

Over the last decade, we've seen the true meaning of courageous leadership. It's about being brave enough to change course when necessary, to make tough decisions that might not be popular, and to always move forward. We've embraced challenges and learned that real leadership involves not just strength, but also the flexibility to adapt and grow.

In these pages, we'll share stories of the bold and the brave — including our own journey of dreaming big, the insights from leaders who have graced our stages, and all of you, who seek to learn and connect. You are the innovators and visionaries who inspire and drive change.

Thank you for ten incredible years. Let's keep pushing boundaries, challenging ourselves, and leading with courage. Here's to the next chapter of Oslo Business Forum, where we continue to make a difference together.

Christoffer Omberg
CEO & Co-founder

Marius Røed Wang
Partner & Co-founder



Building Oslo Business Forum

A Story of Curiosity, Inspiration, and Agility

The Leap into the Unknown

In 2015, Christoffer Omberg and Marius Røed Wang were two students at BI Norwegian Business School with an ambitious idea: to bring a world-class speaker to their university. They had no established connections, no industry experience, and no blueprint for success—just a vision and desire to make it happen.

What followed was a journey marked by bold risks, relentless learning, and moments of triumph and adversity. Today, Oslo Business Forum (OBF) is one of the most significant business conferences in the world, creating connections between some of the most influential thinkers and business leaders. But their story is more than just a series of big-name speakers; it's a testament to their curiosity, inspiration, and ability to execute.

Curiosity in Action: From Dream to Reality

The journey began with a simple but daring idea: to attract a big international keynote speaker. Christoffer and Marius believed one great name could be the spark that ignited something bigger. But they quickly learned that landing a major speaker wasn't a guarantee of success.

In January 2016, they received a call from Manchester: Sir Alex Ferguson was available and keen to come to Oslo. Initially, the event was planned in collaboration with BI Norwegian Business School and the student association. However, within days, BI pulled out due to the large financial commitment.

That was the moment everything changed.

The next day, Christoffer and Marius dropped out of their studies, invested 500,000 NOK each, and founded their own company. There was no business plan. There was no strategy. They were just two young, naïve business students with a dream and Sir Alex Ferguson on board.

"We didn't have a big purpose or 'why' in the beginning," Christoffer reflected. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that was almost too good to be true."

Feeling they had no choice but to seize the opportunity, Christoffer calculated four different scenarios for how it could play out. The best-case scenario projected a profit of 4 million NOK while the worst-case scenario still promised a profit of 300,000 NOK. Fueled by optimism and ambition, they took the leap.

Their confidence was quickly tested. On April 19, 2016, they announced the conference with great fanfare, believing 1,400 business leaders would be eager to flock to the Oslo Concert Hall. Instead, one week later, they had sold only three tickets, generating 12,000 NOK—against costs exceeding 2.5 million NOK.



“Fearlessness was our biggest strength and biggest weakness in the beginning. That made us dare to do it”

Christoffer Omberg
CEO & Co-Founder
Oslo Business Forum

“We could have written a whole book of mistakes. None of us would go through that process again.”

All their plans were crumpled up and thrown in the trash. Everything needed to change, especially their approach to marketing and ticket sales. “We realized that building a business conference is not as easy as just getting a big name,” Marius said. They worked tirelessly, pivoted their efforts, and by November, they had gathered 850 participants for the first-ever Oslo Business Forum.

The event was a success, breaking even financially. More importantly, it earned OBF credibility. Jan Grønbech, head of Google Norway at the time, took the stage and opened his speech by saying Oslo Business Forum was the most professional conference he had ever attended. Not bad for two kids without a university degree between them.

Inspiring Growth: Building a Movement, Not Just a Conference

Christoffer and Marius’ mission quickly evolved beyond just hosting events—it became about shaping the future of leadership. “We weren’t just organizing conferences,” Marius said. “We were empowering leaders to change the world.” They set an ambitious goal: to become one of the most significant business conferences in the world.

They gained momentum quickly. Two years after their first event, they pulled off a game-changing moment when former U.S. President Barack Obama agreed to speak. The city of Oslo felt electric as Obama arrived and took the stage. It was a milestone and a turning point that cemented the legitimacy of the conference on a global stage.

While high-profile speakers were important for attracting attendees, Christoffer and Marius realized their real differentiator wasn’t booking speakers but designing experiences. From the moment attendees arrived, they wanted to create a level of hospitality and attention to detail seen at only the most prestigious business conferences. Inspired by Will Guidara’s concept of ‘Unreasonable Hospitality,’ they set out to create an experience that extended far beyond keynote speeches and would keep attendees engaged year after year.



Marius Røed Wang, Axel Kleivane, and Christoffer Omberg with moderator Lillian Gjerulf Kretz before going on stage at OBF 2024. (Photo by Erik Krafft)

“People buy a ticket because of a speaker, but what gets you here next year—that’s the customer experience.”



This focus on experience led to one of OBF’s most unique aspects: its Ambassador Program. Each year, more than 150 student volunteers, mainly from BI Norwegian Business School, play an integral role in shaping the event. From volunteers on the conference floor to team leaders to operational interns, these committed students make the “magic” happen at OBF (and, at the same time, earn heaps of practical experience). Many attendees emerge from the conference saying what stood out the most wasn’t the speakers but the way they felt by being part of OBF.

Moving Fast: Navigating Crisis and Scaling with Speed

For all of OBF’s success, challenges were inevitable. In June 2018, they faced a financial crisis, forecasting a 5 million kroner loss that would put them on the brink of bankruptcy. Then, in a moment of strategic execution laced with a lot of luck, they secured Barack Obama as a speaker. Ticket sales soared, and OBF survived what could have been its breaking point.

As every business leader remembers, an even bigger test came in 2020. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, 90% of OBF’s revenue disappeared overnight. Many organizations were paralyzed at this point, waiting for government aid and hoping for the best. In contrast, Marius and Christoffer’s survival instincts kicked in. They took immediate action to figure out how to preserve a business that relied almost entirely on in-person event attendance.

The team at OBF rallied to make an aggressive pivot into digital experiences, leveraging their expertise in high-quality content delivery. The transition wasn’t easy, but by embracing change rather than resisting it, they not only survived but thrived. Today, 10,000 digital attendees engage with OBF’s content—a shift that may not have happened if they hadn’t been forced to adapt.

As Christoffer put it, “Maybe Obama was luck. But everything we did during COVID was intentional.”

Behind the Scenes:

Meet the Founders

Christoffer Omberg – The Calculator Kid Turned Visionary

Even as a little guy in daycare, Christoffer was the kind of kid who would quickly correct the caretakers on their Yatzy scores, calculating faster in his head than they could with a calculator.

That same speed and sharp thinking define him today. His colleagues often joke that keeping up with Christoffer is a challenge—his quick calculations and fast decision-making push everything forward at an impressive pace. Christoffer is known among his friends as one of the most determined entrepreneurs you could work with.

Beyond his sharp mind, he's also a creative thinker with a deep passion for testing new ideas, exploring different perspectives, and discovering innovative ways to solve problems. He thinks big, challenges ideas, and is always looking for new ways to improve.

Marius Røed Wang – The Networking Guru Born with a Dealmaker's Instinct

Marius has been closing deals since day one. Raised in a family deep in entrepreneurship, he was pretty much brought up making deals. At OBF, Marius is the master at making connections that matter, always putting people first and having a unique ability to understand and appreciate everyone around him.

Beyond his networking skills, he has a natural charm that makes him the first choice to host events, whether giving a wedding toast or speaking on the spot. He knows how to connect with people, keep them engaged, and leave every room feeling excited and ready to collaborate.



Looking Ahead: Scaling Ambition into the Future

From two students chasing a dream to 85 million NOK in forecasted revenue for 2025 with aspirations of hitting 500 million NOK by 2030, Christoffer and Marius have built more than a conference—they've built a global movement. Business leaders don't just come to OBF to hear a keynote speaker and exchange a few business cards. They come to gain knowledge, and insights, build valuable relationships and get courage to thrive in an uncertain business landscape.

“Our working environment is characterized by an exceptionally fast pace, a high level of unpredictability, and radical internal candor.”

Despite their success, Christoffer and Marius are acutely aware of what it takes to sustain and scale OBF. They openly acknowledge their early years were filled with mistakes—from hiring too many like-minded people to underestimating the complexity of running large-scale events. But the pair's ability to learn, adapt, and keep moving forward has been their greatest strength.

When asked if they would do it all over again, Christoffer admitted they might not take the leap. “We were quite naïve when we started because we didn't understand what it would take to get here,” he said.

But maybe that's the essence of their journey and the lesson others can take from their experience—sometimes, you need to be willing to jump before you fully understand how deep the water is. As OBF continues to grow, one thing is certain: they will continue to stay curious, be inspiring and always move fast.



“Psychological safety is predictive of performance in teams.”

Amy Edmondson
Oslo Business Forum 2022

The Story of Oslo Business Forum

A Timeline of Bold Decisions

Our story begins in 2014 when Marius and Christoffer worked on organizing “Næringslivsdagene,” at BI Norwegian Business School. For two years, they struggled to secure a major international speaker and failed repeatedly.



Despite a rocky start with only 3 tickets sold in the first week, their persistence paid off. The first edition of Oslo Business Forum gathered 850 attendees, featuring speakers like Sir Alex Ferguson, Øystein Spetalen, Hanne Kristin Rodhe, and Jan Grønbech. Oslo Business Forum was officially a reality.



2016

In January, Christoffer and Marius received a career-defining call from Manchester; Sir Alex Ferguson could potentially headline an event in Oslo. Originally planned in collaboration between the student union and BI Norwegian Business School, the event faced financial hurdles. To make it a reality, they decided to drop off their studies and invested 500,000 NOK each to launch their venture, initially named ‘Walkover AS’, without any business plan or strategy.



2017

After a challenging first year, Marius and Christoffer had planned to return to their studies. However, inspired by the enthusiastic feedback from Oslo Business Forum 2016, they chose to continue their entrepreneurial journey. They expanded their team and doubled their efforts, organizing two events in the following year—one in the spring and another in the autumn. Both events were immensely successful, selling out with 700 and 875 attendees respectively, featuring the iconic Gary Vaynerchuk as headliner.



2019

In 2019, OBF kept growing by featuring David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the UK. The biggest highlight of the year was joining forces with the Nordic Business Forum in Helsinki, which took a 30% stake in OBF. This big move significantly helped OBF grow and gave it access to more skills, better organization, and new opportunities.



2018

"We have international ambitions and want to become one of the most significant business conferences in the world," declared the young co-founders. They shifted the forum's communication to English and raised their profile by inviting global icons like Randi Zuckerberg and Garry Kasparov. The year was marked by a record attendance of 3,000 during the autumn event, thanks to keynote speaker, former US President Barack Obama.



2020

Before 2020, OBF shifted their focus to hold just one big business conference over two days instead of two events a year. This new approach attracted top-notch speakers like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Steve Wozniak, and Seth Godin. Demand increased, and within just three months, OBF had surpassed the revenue from 2019. Things were on the upswing, and OBF scaled fast.

However, on March 12, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard, and OBF lost 90% of its revenue almost overnight. What was expected to be a 40 MNOK revenue year plummeted to just 6 MNOK, and the team had to be cut down from 15 full-time employees to just 6. Despite these setbacks, OBF quickly adapted. They revamped their business model and successfully held the annual event online, drawing 4,000 participants.



2021

During the pandemic, COVID-19 restrictions in Norway changed often, and many companies relied on government help. OBF got creative by adapting their business model to focus more on on-line participation. Even though only 750 people could attend the Oslo Business Forum in person, this shift helped OBF earn a record-high profit.

2022

In 2022, things at OBF went back to normal. The 2022 edition, themed 'Future-Focused Leadership', drew 2,500 attendees and featured well-known speakers like Steve Wozniak, Amy Edmondson, Yuval Noah Harari, and Nassim Taleb. That same year, OBF also started a new subsidiary called Flow Event. This new company aimed to be the top event organizer in Norway, helping OBF's clients plan and execute their corporate events.



2023

In 2023, big names like Sir Richard Branson and Malala Yousafzai were the main attractions at the event. Despite having such famous speakers, OBF had a tough year. Ticket sales were lower than expected and expenses were high, leading to a financial loss by year's end. Looking back, this was perhaps the toughest year of OBF's existence. However, the changes made during the year were necessary and beneficial for the company's future.

2024

When attendees left 'Oslo Business Forum 2024: Courageous Leadership,' they could feel something extraordinary had taken place. The event, which had sold out three months in advance, featured speakers like Ole Gunnar Solskjær, Brené Brown, Adam Grant, and Sanna Marin, and it turned out to be the highest-rated event in OBF's history. Clearly, OBF was back on track.



2025

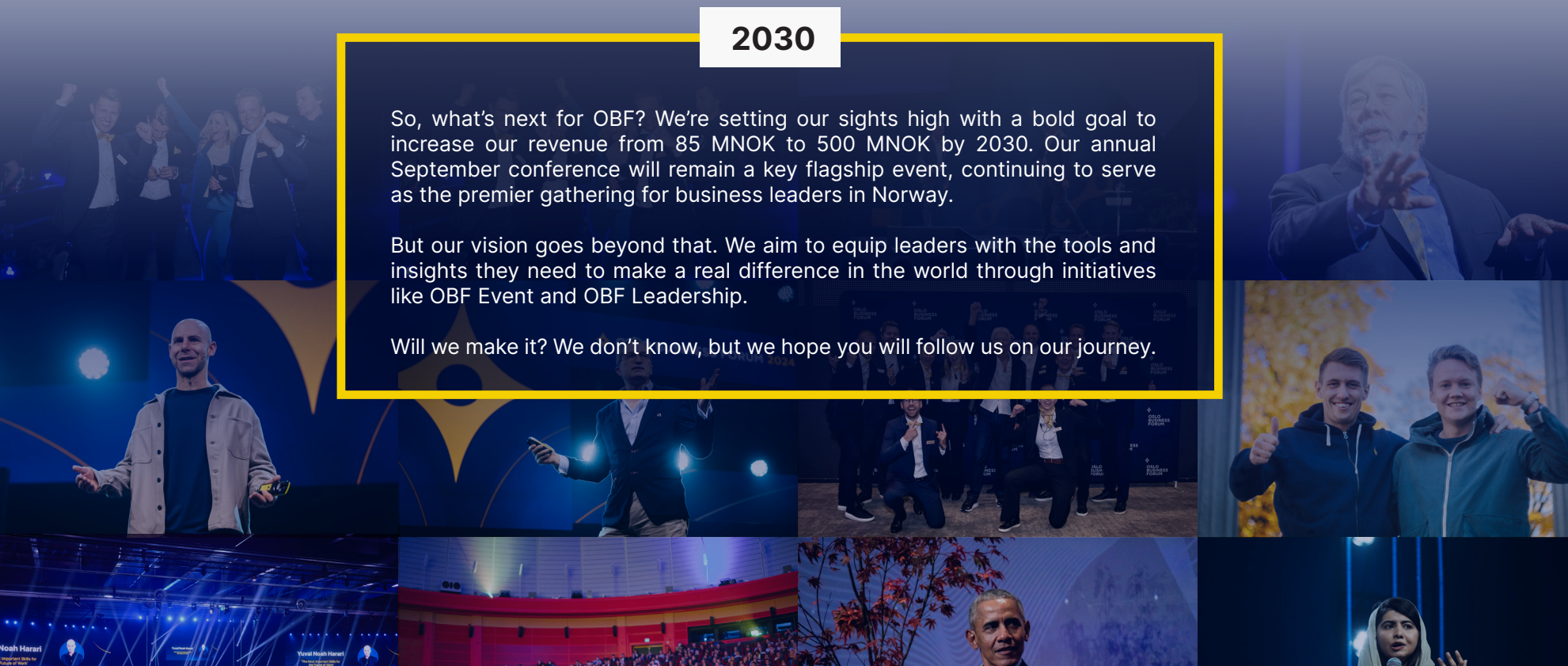
2025 is not just the 10th anniversary of Oslo Business Forum; it's also a turning point for the company. The annual conference sold out 10.5 months in advance, showing incredible demand. During this special year, OBF introduced a top-tier leadership program called OBF Leadership. Additionally, Flow Event was renamed to OBF Event, and plans are in place to form a new umbrella organization called 'OBF Group'.

2030

So, what's next for OBF? We're setting our sights high with a bold goal to increase our revenue from 85 MNOK to 500 MNOK by 2030. Our annual September conference will remain a key flagship event, continuing to serve as the premier gathering for business leaders in Norway.

But our vision goes beyond that. We aim to equip leaders with the tools and insights they need to make a real difference in the world through initiatives like OBF Event and OBF Leadership.

Will we make it? We don't know, but we hope you will follow us on our journey.



5 P e o p l e

The Visionaries Who Saw It First:

5 People Who Believed in Oslo Business Forum

Long before OBF became a powerhouse, there were skeptics—but also believers. Meet the five visionaries who took a chance on an idea, helped shape its success, and continue to inspire its future.



Tor Haugnes

Mentor and early Board Member

Managing Director, Neste Steg Norge

Spotting the Spark

Tor Haugnes has spent his career teaching and mentoring young entrepreneurs, helping them develop ideas into viable businesses. When Christoffer and Marius approached him in 2015, he immediately saw something special.

“They had no business plan, just an opportunity,” Tor recalled. “This was an ambitious project—even for two ambitious students. But when you meet people with ideas, sometimes you just know. These guys were going to make it happen.”

At the time, Tor was a lecturer at BI Norwegian Business School and was responsible for the university’s startup initiatives. Christoffer and Marius weren’t his students, but they approached him to pitch their vision for a business conference featuring Sir Alex Ferguson.

The idea was bold, but what truly set them apart was their capacity to learn.

“What made them different from other young entrepreneurs was their ability to learn fast—and they still do,” Tor said.

Tor played a critical role in OBF’s early days, providing mentorship, moderating events, and helping the team with speech training before major launches. Over the years, his role has evolved from mentor to friend and sparring partner.

“I like to think that I helped them stay on their toes,” he said. “Now, I’m learning more from them than they are from me.”

Tor has seen the duo and their team face incredible challenges—financial uncertainty, a pandemic that threatened their entire business model, and hard lessons about trust in partnerships. Yet, their entrepreneurial spirit never wavered.

“They pushed themselves harder than any external consultant or teacher ever could,” Tor said. “Anyone else might have given up when faced with the obstacles they’ve encountered. But Christoffer and Marius kept going.”

His advice for the future? Stay humble, stay curious, and don’t be afraid to acknowledge the broader context in which business operates.

“OBF is really trying to show powerful leaders, which they do in a brilliant way. But it’s also a little bit out of context because business decisions don’t occur on an island. Finding ways to integrate the broader context could be an opportunity and a necessity for the future.”



“The ability to learn fast differentiated them from other young entrepreneurs—and they still do.”



“If you really mean it, if you’re deadly serious about it, you can build something that lasts.”

Anita Krohn
Mentor since 2016
Group CEO, DSD AS

Building an Ecosystem, Not Just a Conference

When Anita Krohn first met Christoffer and Marius, she was struck by their unique energy.

“You are allowed to have a vision, but nobody believes it until you actually prove it,” Anita said. “I had an immediate feeling that these two young men were serious and willing to do the hard work.”

As the CEO of Innovation Norway, Anita became an early supporter of OBF. When they initially approached her for an interview, she challenged them instead.

“Why don’t we do something more innovative?” they suggested. “Let’s do a webinar together.” And I said yes, why not, I’d never done that before.

Anita had insights to share from her leadership of Innovation Norway’s transformation—step-by-step, how to start, the chal-

lenges you’d meet, and how to mitigate them. The story clearly resonated because two months later, they had 4,500 registrations.

Over the years, Anita has watched OBF evolve from a conference into a full-fledged ecosystem of learning and networking. She’s seen Christoffer and Marius build something that connects people in a way few business conferences do, bringing big names, rising talents, and key decision-makers together in the same space.

“One of the most valuable sessions I attended was a meeting with 12 executives sharing operative lessons learned,” she recalls. “As a CEO, you’re invited to a lot of roundtables like this—but when it’s run by OBF you know it’s going to be a good agenda, facilitated as a real dialogue.”

Reflecting on the relationship she’s developed with Christoffer and Marius, she thinks the mentorship has worked both

ways. “I see it much more as a connection, a common understanding and drive for change. I’ve been as inspired, motivated, and humbled by them.”

She’s also inspired by how the pair have become role models for their generation and the generations coming behind them. Their leadership demonstrates that you can create and succeed.

“If you really mean it, if you’re deadly serious about it, you can build something that lasts,” Anita said. “We all can learn something [from them] about building something you believe in.”

Her advice for them for the future? Stay unreal.

“As long as they keep evolving, remain curious, and include the next generation of upcoming business leaders, OBF will continue to grow.”

"I remember thinking, 'There is no way these guys can top this.'"

Jan Grønbech

Speaker at OBF 2016

CEO, Sunstone Institute

The Moment He Knew OBF was Different

Jan Grønbech has been to more conferences than he can count. As the former CEO of Google Norway, he spent years speaking at events across the country, often delivering multiple talks a week. He had seen it all—or so he thought.

In 2015, he arrived at the student-run business conference at BI Norwegian Business School and sensed something different. The event had been organized by two ambitious students, Christoffer and Marius. From the moment he stepped on stage, he could feel their influence.

"I had spoken at that conference for years, and this was the first time I walked away thinking, 'This was as professional as any of the best-organized events I've been to.'"

Jan wasn't the only one who noticed. After the conference, Christoffer and Marius sat down with the school president to review the financials. The event had been expected to operate at a loss. Instead, it had turned a profit—something that had never happened before.

That was when they realized they had something special.

When Christoffer and Marius launched Oslo Business Forum, Jan was one of the first people they invited to speak. He didn't hesitate to say yes. But despite his belief in their potential, Jan wasn't sure they could sustain their momentum after the first event.

"I remember thinking, 'There is no way these guys can top this.' And then, somehow, they did. And they've continued to do it, year after year."

Jan has watched OBF evolve from a bold student initiative to an internationally recognized business forum. What continues to impress him most is Christoffer and Marius' willingness to take risks. They refused to play it safe, and that courage has propelled OBF to new heights.



As OBF continues to grow, Jan's advice to Christoffer and Marius is simple: Avoid the temptation of thinking you've figured it all out.

"It's easy to become complacent, but OBF is the one conference that should always aim to surprise, to blow our minds. This should be the event where people say, 'No, that's not possible'—and then it happens."



Photo by Line Steiro

Anniken Fjelberg

Mentor and Early Board Member

Associate Partner, Sprint Consulting

Building Something Bigger

When Christoffer and Marius left BI, they needed a place to grow their vision. Anniken Fjelberg, a seasoned entrepreneur and co-founder of 657 Oslo, a coworking space for startups, welcomed them in.

“They were the youngest entrepreneurs we had in the building,” she recalled. “They had to figure out so much—not just how to build a company, but how to do it with a friend, how to brand, how to scale. But one thing they always did well was ask for advice.”

Anniken remembers an early branding conversation with Christoffer that saved them from a costly mistake.

As they talked about additional offerings OBF could deliver, it became clear they were at risk of fragmenting their brand. “We talked it through, and by the end of the discussion, Christoffer said, ‘I think this conversation just saved me 100,000 NOK’ That’s who they are—they have always been good at gathering information, reflecting, and then acting decisively.”

One of Anniken’s biggest concerns in the early years wasn’t whether OBF would thrive—it was whether Christoffer and Marius would survive as business partners.

“I’m a serial entrepreneur myself. I know how hard it is to stay friends when you’re building something together,” she said. “There were moments when I wondered if they would continue to team up. They are different people, but at one point, I think they realized the blessing of their differences.”

Despite Christoffer and Marius’ contrasting personalities and leadership styles, they complement one another instead of clashing.

“They could never have done it alone—separate from each other,” Anniken said. “They have really co-created this.”

Their success is due to their strong friendship and, in part, to their belief in the power of building a strong team. Anniken sat on the OBF Board of Directors for four years, between 2019 and 2022. She joined at a time when Christoffer and Marius start-

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“They could never have done it alone—separate from each other. They have really co-created this.”

ed having, entrepreneurially speaking, “grown-up problems.”

“The opportunities always highly outnumber the negative issues, but in the boardroom, you tend to focus only on what you need to fix,” she said. “In the beginning, it was Tor and I and the guys, and after a while, they started extending the board with other collaborative partners.”

Anniken saw Christoffer and Marius gather the skills they needed to build the company they wanted through the boardroom. They consistently sought out skillsets neither of them had to grow specific parts of the company. And importantly, “they were never afraid of bringing very tough questions to the board.”

After years of mentorship, board meetings, and personal dinners with the OBF founders, Anniken is still in awe of what they’ve built.

“It has been very interesting to witness how these two young men managed to transform [their vision] into action. I’m looking forward to seeing how they will grow as leaders and how they will grow the company from here.”



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“I call them doers, and doers fulfill something—they just go for it.”

Bente Sollid

Mentor since 2016

Serial Entrepreneur and CEO,
Digital Hverdag

The Power of a Big Ask

Bente Sollid first met Christoffer ten years ago when he reached out to her on Twitter. At the time, she was blogging about entrepreneurship—writing about what it takes to succeed when you have a dream and want to build something.

“I could notice in the very first moment that Christoffer and Marius are doers,” she said. “They don’t just have a dream—they can actually fulfill the dream.”

Early conversations between the three were filled with questions. They sought advice on everything from leadership to execution to scaling a business. Over the years, Bente has watched them evolve from two ambitious students into some of the most respected business leaders in Norway.

“They have stamina, business acumen, and a relentless drive to grow and develop the OBF concept,” she said. “They’re able to think big and have the ability to actually execute on the big thoughts.”

Having worked closely with OBF—through hosting podcasts, video interviews, and writing content—Bente has gained an inside look at both the company and the team behind it.

“I’m a great fan of the whole team. They’re carefully chosen, talented young people,” she said. “And the team is great because they have great leaders.”

Bente recalls a conversation that perfectly captured Christoffer’s persistence—one that would ultimately lead to one of OBF’s biggest milestones.

“After Sir Alex Ferguson, Christoffer kept asking me, ‘Who should be on our stage next?’ I told him, ‘I want to see Barack Obama.’ He said, ‘Wow.’ And then he went to work.”

A few years later, she was out fishing on a gorgeous summer evening when she got the call.

“We just signed with Obama. We are getting Obama to Oslo,” Christoffer said.

“That’s who they are,” Bente said. “If you plant a seed with them, they will do the work to make it happen.”

And who’s next? Bente believes OBF can get anyone on their stage. As of the writing of this article, she hadn’t yet revealed her latest suggestion to Christoffer, but she has someone in mind: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Does she believe they can do it?

“Just keep focusing on what’s relevant—what’s happening in business, what will educate leaders and open their horizons. That’s what they’ve been doing, and that’s what they’ll continue to do.”



“We have amazing gifts we’re meant to use and understand, and many of us don’t even know we have them.”

Patrick Lencioni
Oslo Business Forum 2023



***“There are big questions
we simply don’t know the
answers to.”***

Richard Quest

Richard Quest, Anchor and Correspondent, CNN Business

The End of the World (as We Knew It)

The world is shifting at breakneck speed, and the old playbook no longer applies. CNN's Richard Quest breaks down why today's business leaders are facing a future unlike anything we've ever seen—and why survival depends on rewriting all the rules.

Written by Jennifer Tucker

As CNN's foremost international business correspondent, Richard Quest has spent decades analyzing the forces shaping global business—tracking economic trends, trade shifts, and leadership decisions as they unfold in real time. He has a front-row seat to the events shaping our world today. He's also had a front-row seat to the evolution of Oslo Business Forum.

A longtime supporter of OBF, Richard first took the stage as moderator in 2018 and returned for multiple events in 2019. During the pandemic, he surprised attendees as a guest webinar speaker, offering insights on the world economy and the latest business trends. His connection to OBF has helped the conference evolve into an essential platform for leaders navigating this era of transformation.

The World in Flux

For decades, business leaders have operated under a familiar set of assumptions: trade agreements provided a predictable foundation for global commerce, the U.S. was a stable economic and military ally, the rules of engagement between business and government were largely understood.

Not anymore.

According to Richard, we're not just experiencing a period of volatility—we're living through the collapse of the old world order.

"You're underselling it by calling it 'uncertainty,'" Quest said. "It's more than uncertainty; it's a wholesale shift in the landscape. This is a revolution of design."

A New Business Landscape with No Precedent

Since the beginning of the year, the global stage has been shifting at breakneck speed. U.S. foreign policy stances on Ukraine have flipped (and flipped back) overnight. Companies have backpedaled on diversity and inclusion commitments. European economies are reconsidering the economic policies they've relied on for over a decade. Seemingly unshakable structures have been dismantled.

The result? Business leaders no longer know what—or who—to trust.





Richard Quest during a moderated talk at the Fireside Stage at Oslo Business Forum 2018.

“There is no way to prepare because we have never experienced this before,” Richard said. “It’s as if we’re being told the world is flat after all.”

Without a historical roadmap to navigate today’s environment, Richard argues that businesses must abandon the idea that stability will return. The challenge isn’t just adapting to short-term disruptions—it’s learning to operate in a world where our fundamental economic and political assumptions no longer hold.

The Collapse of Business and Government Trust

One of the biggest casualties of this upheaval has been the already fragile relationship between business and government.

“There is and will continue to be a growing lack of trust,” Richard said. “But they need each other, so get on with it.”

The uneasy alliance between business and politics has always existed, but as trade policies, regulations, and geopolitical alliances become unpredictable, companies must navigate an increasingly hostile environment where decisions can be—and often are—overturned overnight.

“If you ask, ‘Did change need to happen?’ the answer is ‘Totally,’” said Richard. “But did it need to be done in such a violent and aggressive way in such a short period? Some would say we had to break the system, and that’s the only way to get the change required.”

“Get on with it.”

What's Next for Business Conferences?

As business leaders struggle to find direction in this chaotic environment, conferences like Oslo Business Forum have an even greater responsibility. Richard believes that while large business forums still serve an important role, they must evolve alongside the world they seek to make sense of.

"OBF plays a role in bringing people together to hear the big names and big thoughts of the day," he said. "But they will be forced with more challenges. They need to ask themselves, 'What's the next thing?'"

For years, business conferences have relied on high-profile speakers and broad themes. But Richard sees the future of conferences following the same path as travel:

"People no longer want to simply go and see—they want to experience."

Gone are the days when a lineup of high-profile speakers was enough. Today's business audience is demanding more relevance, more specificity, and more actionable insights.

"Too often, conferences become very impressed with a big name but haven't really thought about the thematics," Quest said. "You've really got to ask yourself, 'What are we talking about? Why are we talking about this? What's the goal?'"

For OBF, the challenge—and opportunity—is clear: become the event that makes sense of the chaos.

A World Where No One Knows What's Next

If Richard is right, the next decade will be defined by uncertainty, upheaval, and unpredictability.

For business leaders, the comforting illusion of stability is gone. The playbook is being rewritten in real-time, and the only certainty is that everything we thought we knew is up for debate.

And for the leaders who can't see what's coming next?

"It's very difficult to plan for the future when you're worried about the present," Richard said. "You might be in survival mode, but there will be opportunities."



Richard Quest

Anchor and Correspondent CNN Business

Richard Quest is CNN's foremost international business correspondent and the host of *Quest Means Business*, airing on CNN International. As a journalist at the forefront of global affairs, finance, and leadership, he has a unique vantage point on how shifting geopolitical landscapes impact business and trade. One of the first international figures OBF brought in—both as a moderator and a speaker—Richard has had a front-row seat to the conference's evolution and influence on global business leaders.

The Best of

Most Memorable Oslo Business



○ **Sir Alex Ferguson**
2016

Legendary football manager who led Manchester United to 26 years of success, defining sports leadership.



○ **Randi Zuckerberg**
2018

Tech innovator and former Facebook spokesperson, championing creativity, women in tech, and digital trends.

Gary Vaynerchuck
2017

Visionary entrepreneur and marketing leader, shaping digital culture and the future of business.



Garry Kasparov
2018

Chess legend and political strategist, pioneering thought on AI, leadership, and competition.



○ **Steve Wozniak**
2022

Silicon Valley legend, co-founder of Apple, and a pioneering force in personal computing.



○ **Malala Yousafzai**
2023

Nobel laureate and education activist, championing human rights, gender equality, and empowerment.

Sir Richard Branson
2023

One of the world's most successful entrepreneurs and founder of the iconic Virgin brand.



Ole Gunnar Solskjær ○
2024

Former Manchester United player and manager, a Champions League hero embodying leadership and football excellence.



Speakers From Business Forum



○ **Barack Obama**
2018

44th U.S. president and global statesman, defining leadership and progress in the modern era.



○ **Amy Edmondson**
2022

Harvard professor and leadership expert, redefining teamwork, learning, and psychological safety.



○ **David Cameron**
2019

Former UK prime minister and Conservative Party leader, shaping policy and governance.



○ **Yuval Noah Harari**
2022

Historian and bestselling author of 'Sapiens', exploring AI, human history, and the future of civilization.



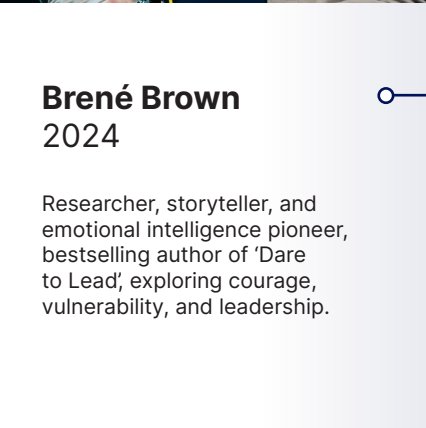
○ **Adam Grant**
2024

Influential psychologist and bestselling author of 'Think Again', transforming how we think about work and success.



○ **Sanna Marin**
2024

Finnish leader and former prime minister, shaping progressive politics and governance.



○ **Brené Brown**
2024

Researcher, storyteller, and emotional intelligence pioneer, bestselling author of 'Dare to Lead', exploring courage, vulnerability, and leadership.





Building Oslo Business Forum

Why Oslo Business Forum Runs Like a Sports Team, Not a Family

At a lot of companies, people talk about their colleagues as family. Not at Oslo Business Forum. Instead, the culture is something far more intense: a sports team.

It's a defining philosophy that shapes everything from hiring and leadership to execution and performance. OBF is a company built for speed, accountability, and high expectations. It's not a place where employees get by on loyalty alone. Everyone is expected to show up, contribute, and push themselves—and each other—to perform at their best.

“In a sports team, you earn your spot, and everyone is expected to bring their A-game. No excuses.”

the OBF Team

For those who thrive in a fast-paced, high-energy environment, OBF is an exciting place to be. For others, it can be overwhelming. The company makes no apologies for this. “OBF isn't for everyone,” the team agrees. “But for the people it's right for, it's a perfect fit.”

High Performance, High Visibility

On a sports team, there's nowhere to hide. Your performance on the field is always visible. That's true at OBF, too.

“You cannot hide behind big systems or bureaucracy; you are very much on display,” said Financial Manager Malin Skog.

This means that if you strive to achieve, you'll be noticed. But it also means that when you fail, you're noticed. The key is being willing to fail and learn from it.

OBF values taking bold action over cautious perfection. Employees are encouraged to take risks, move fast, and make things happen—even if that means failing sometimes.

“We always say we'd rather do eight or nine things and get a few wrong than only do one or two and play it safe,” said Key Account Manager Tonje Gustavsen.

This isn't just talk—the company's leadership team lives by this philosophy.



Malin Skog, Financial Manager

CEO Christoffer Omberg is deeply involved in the day-to-day, always watching, always pushing. His presence keeps the team accountable, but his leadership also reinforces a key lesson: if you want to improve, you have to be willing to make mistakes. “Creating a culture that motivates, empowers, and drives performance is key to our long-term success,” said Partnership Manager and Partner Fredrik Dehli.

Speed & Adaptability: The 2023 Course Correction

From day one, OBF leadership has prioritized speed, focus, and high performance. But when you’re scaling fast, you don’t always get everything right the first time. That’s part of the game.

In 2023, OBF had ambitious goals but faced unexpected challenges. Every Monday, they met and looked at numbers in the red. “We were working really hard but couldn’t turn that trend around,” the team recalled.

At first, they looked outward, blaming external factors for their setbacks. It was their first full year back following the pandemic, after all. Eventually, they came to realize the real issue: they had changed too much, too fast.

“We stopped pointing fingers and started looking inward. We learned that we needed to evolve—but strategically, not just for the sake of change,” said Business Development Manager Aleksander Moberg.

Christoffer was willing to say, “I understand this is not working.” With eight weeks left before the conference, they decided to do the best they could in the present—and start proactively planning for the future.

This ability to self-correct without losing momentum is what sets OBF apart. Instead of getting stuck in a failure mindset, they did what great sports teams do: analyzed the playbook, adjusted the strategy, and came back stronger next season. In 2024, OBF celebrated its highest-ever ticket sales and, at the close of that year’s event, almost immediately sold out for 2025.

Extreme Ownership & A Commercial Mindset

Another defining trait of OBF’s culture is the expectation that everyone thinks commercially. It’s an environment where accountability and ownership are valued.

“It doesn’t matter what your job title is—everyone is expected to contribute to the company’s success,” said Aleks.

Even employees in non-revenue-generating roles are pushed to ask: How does my work drive business results? In many organizations, employees work in silos, focusing only on their specific tasks. At OBF, there are no silos. Everyone plays a role in moving the company forward.



“I thrive in an environment where I work alongside talented colleagues who push each other to perform better every day.”

Fredrik C. Paulshus Dehli
Partner & Commercial Director

That mindset is especially visible in the days and weeks leading up to the event, where every single member of the team pitches in to assist with tasks that aren't in their job description—from coordinating name badges to setting conference room tables.

"A lot of people are surprised by how small the team is," said Malin. "Even I was surprised by how involved each employee is, with everyone pulling up their sleeves and working late into the night."

Holding Each Other Accountable

Anyone who has been part of a sports team knows there is respect, admiration, and a desire to have each other's backs. But there's also a tremendous level of accountability. If one player isn't carrying their weight, the whole team suffers.

"We don't make excuses for each other," the team explained. "We give direct feedback because we all want to win."

Honest, constructive feedback is a core part of the culture. Employees call each other out when necessary—but always with the goal of improving performance. At first, some team members found this approach to be challenging. But over time, they came to appreciate it.

"Christoffer is a bit of a headache 90% of the year," joked Head of Marketing and Communication Simeon Mathyer. "But as long as I'm committed and I give 100%, I fit in here."

Leadership, Transparency, and Trust

OBF's leadership approach is intensely hands-on but also deeply transparent. "As we grew from humble beginnings, we didn't just scale our operations; we also nurtured a high-performance, feedback-driven culture," said Fredrik.

Leadership plays a crucial role in cultivating that culture, ensuring feedback is constructive, actionable, and helps everyone continuously improve. Christoffer doesn't just give orders—he invites disagreement, debate, and direct challenges. "Even though he has an opinion on everything, what he loves most is when we push back," Malin said. "He encourages us to challenge him."

The company also operates on high trust and autonomy. There's no formal vacation policy, no rigid time tracking—just the expectation that everyone delivers.

"It's built on trust. If you're doing what's in the company's best interest, you have the freedom to work how you need to," said Simeon.

This level of trust only works because leaders lead by example. Even if Christoffer is 'on holiday,' the team jokes, he's present.



Tonje Gustavsen
Key Account Manager



Aleksander Moberg
Business Development Manager

"We run together and move fast. It's so fun to be a part of a team where everyone is filled with energy and so ambitious."

Tonje Gustavsen
Key Account Manager



Fredrik C. Paulshus Dehli
Partner & Commercial Director

Celebration & Camaraderie

For all its intensity, OBF isn't just about relentless execution—it's also about celebrating wins and lifting each other up.

"We cheer for each other. We clap for each other's achievements. We set ambitious goals, but we also make sure to celebrate when we reach them," Simeon said.

Storytelling is a core part of the culture, reinforcing the shared journey the team is on. There's a strong sense of camaraderie, respect, and admiration—but also an expectation that everyone earns their spot on the team.



Simeon Mathyer
Head of Marketing & Communication

What Leaders Can Learn from OBF's Sports Team Approach

For leaders looking to build or strengthen their company culture, members of the OBF team offer some key takeaways from their experience:

- **Don't Just Talk Culture—Live It.** Culture is what leaders model every day. Establish a clear culture code that aligns with your values and energizes your employees.
- **Put People First.** Understand your organization from the inside out and invest in your team's development.
- **Encourage Speed & Risk-Taking.** Give people the freedom to move fast and make mistakes.
- **Emphasize Team Accountability.** Candid feedback and high expectations create a culture of performance, not excuses.
- **Give People Autonomy—But Expect Results.** High trust works when paired with high responsibility.
- **Celebrate Wins.** Even the most competitive sports teams celebrate victories—so should your business.

OBF's culture isn't about comfort. It's about winning together. And that's why, year after year, they keep pushing forward, stronger than ever.

How can you empower your team to win?

Written by Jennifer Tucker
Photos by Erik Krafft



Carla Harris



Adam Grant



Yuval Noah Harari

'The Most Important Skills for the Future of Work'



Amy Webb



Lillian Gjerulf Kretz



Ole Gunnar Solskjær



Peter Hinssen



“Leadership today is not a start and a stop—it’s learning while you are running.”

Jacob Schram
Executive Chair
OBF Leadership

The Need for a New Leadership Program

Why Speed and Alignment Matter More Than Ever

In today's high-stakes business environment, leadership isn't just about quick decision-making—it's about aligning people, driving execution, and navigating complexity with confidence. Jacob Schram and Hanne Lindbæk are equipping leaders with the skills and mindset to lead with impact in an era of constant change.

Written by Jennifer Tucker

The Urgency of Leadership Today

In today's business landscape, leadership isn't just about making decisions—it's about navigating complexity, aligning people, and driving execution. That's how OBF Leadership is designed to help. The program, created for the top 3–4 management levels within organizations, establishes a common leadership language to enhance alignment and organizational speed.

Built on four essential modules—leading results, strategy, execution, and people—OBF Leadership blends cutting-edge learning, world-class faculty, and immersive experiences to prepare today's leaders for real-world challenges. But why now? And how is this program different from the crowded landscape of leadership development? We sat down with Jacob Schram, Co-Founder & Chairman, and Hanne Lindbæk, Creative Director, to discuss the urgent need for a new take on leadership development.

How has leadership evolved, and what are the most crucial traits leaders need today?

Jacob: Leadership is changing faster than ever. What might be different now is that things go fast, and people have so many more options. More than ever, a leader's ability to create motivation and engagement is super important. If you step on the gas too quickly, you lose grip. Leadership is about understanding when to accelerate and when to steer.

In Norway, you get used to driving a car in snowy conditions. If you come around a curve and it's icy, the worst thing you can do is brake because then you're likely to go off the road. You need to continue steering. Courageous leadership is like that: keeping speed around the curve.

Hanne: I believe we're at a critical moment in leadership. We've seen a historical temptation for power, where someone wants to fight to protect their right to be right. The time for old-fashioned power has to be gone.

We need to know the challenges of a simulated, hyper-connected world but find ways to stay grounded in human relationships and decision-making. You can translate that to leaders leading by example and being role models. As Amy Webb has said, the future of business won't be about machines, but about human beings.

“When I looked for top executives, I always looked for people with scars, who have been down like a boxer but managed to rise up.”

Jacob Schram

Jacob: I often hear people say that leadership is all about making quick decisions, so we don't need strategies anymore—I couldn't disagree more. Compare this to driving on the highway. If you're driving really fast you have to look long in front of the car. Companies must be clear on what they're steering towards. If you have speed without a guiding light, you won't succeed.

What are the biggest leadership challenges OBF Leadership aims to address?

Jacob: Leadership today is a jumble of buzzwords, theories, and philosophies. We're trying to find a common language that can help leaders create alignment.

We know from experience that the most difficult part of a top leader's job is getting the 3-4 layers below them going in the same direction with speed. When you crack that code, magic happens.

Hanne: Another challenge is that fewer people are aspiring to leadership roles. In Norway, we're seeing fewer young professionals willing to step into leadership positions. In the times we're in, that's heart-breaking.

Jacob: One of the leading causes of this is cancel culture—social media scrutiny and the constant pressure not to do something wrong. But great leaders are not afraid of taking risks. If you think too much of the consequences—if you're afraid—you're not going to jump.



OBF Leadership Creative Director, Hanne Lindbæk (Photo by Erik Krafft)



“OBF Leadership is for managing and maneuvering in the context of the world we’re living in today. It’s a contextual recipe for leadership.”

- Hanne Lindbæk

Many leadership programs inspire people in the moment, but the impact fades when they return to work. How does OBF Leadership make sure the lessons stick?

Hanne: When you go to a conference and you hear a great speaker, you come away with a great sense of inspiration—and then that inspiration dies when you return to the office. The holy grail of any development program is to utilize the power of that inspiration and create something that is sustainable and sticks with you in everyday life.

OBF Leadership is embedded in the OBF Conference experience. So, leaders don’t just hear powerful ideas and leave; they immediately start applying what they’ve learned in real-world settings.

Jacob: What we’re building wouldn’t be possible without OBF’s energy and community. The vibe of OBF, the people, and the commitment to learning by doing make this the perfect platform for creating a leadership program.

If you could give one piece of leadership advice, what would it be?

Jacob: Leadership is all about the team. You don’t have to be the smartest person in the room or have the answer on everything. The whole purpose is that you surround yourself with good people.

Hanne: There are so many different versions of leadership philosophies and theories. It becomes complex and difficult to understand “the art of leading.” What if it’s not that hard, and what if learning about this stuff could be fun? Things are solvable.

OBF Leadership isn’t just another development program. It’s a unique educational experience, and we are proud to partner with McKinsey & Company, Morten Hansen, and former Norwegian Special Forces to make this program truly world-class.

A Leadership Revolution: Why Siri Børsum Believes in the OBF Leadership Model

Siri Børsum, Executive Board Member of OBF Leadership, has spent years engaging with OBF as a podcast host, event moderator, and leadership advocate. Now, she's helping expand the reach and impact of OBF Leadership.

“I was drawn to OBF because of their curiosity, willingness to ask questions, and desire to truly understand the problems businesses are trying to solve. Now, I get to bring that same mindset into OBF Leadership.”

With 25 years of experience working in global organizations like Google and Huawei, Siri has seen firsthand the impact of effective leadership. According to her, today's leaders face a range of challenges that have made their learning and development more important than ever:

Strategy & Navigating Uncertainty: In an era of economic shifts, geopolitical uncertainty, and rapid digital transformation, businesses need strategies that are both resilient and adaptable. Leaders must be able to anticipate disruption and guide their teams through complexity with confidence.

Results & The Pace of Change: The rapid evolution of technology and the shifting business landscape have companies struggling to keep their strategies relevant. Leaders must remain adaptable and forward-thinking to drive sustainable results.

Execution & The Speed of Decision-Making: Businesses struggle to execute at the speed that today's world demands. Innovation can be accelerated when leaders gain alignment, remove barriers, and get people on board with a shared vision.

People & The Generational Shift: Young professionals are entering the workforce with different expectations and new leadership styles—forcing leaders to rethink how they engage, develop, and retain talent in a workplace where old-fashioned leadership styles no longer resonate.


Investing in leadership development isn't just about individual growth—it benefits the entire organization. Companies that fail to invest in their leaders risk losing top talent as employees seek workplaces where they feel valued, challenged, and supported.

“In companies without a system for development, employees can quickly feel demotivated. Why should they invest their time, effort, passion, and joy and not get anything back? When businesses invest in leadership, they're not just developing individuals; they're securing their future success.”

“What I love about OBF Leadership is that it's practical. It gives leaders real tools they can use immediately.”



Siri Børsum, Executive Board Member OBF Leadership
(Photo by Erik Krafft)

A photograph of Morten Hansen, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a light blue button-down shirt. He is standing on a stage, looking slightly to the left of the camera with a thoughtful expression. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is a blurred blue and white, suggesting a conference or event setting.

“To work smart means to maximize the value of your work by selecting a few activities and applying intense targeted effort.”

Morten Hansen
Oslo Business Forum 2024

Beyond Sponsorship: How PwC and OBF Are Redefining Collaboration

The PwC-OBF partnership has evolved into something beyond simple sponsorship: it's a dynamic collaboration rooted in trust, bold thinking, and real impact. Discover how PwC leverages OBF to connect with top executives, turn insights into action, and push the boundaries of leadership.

Written by Jennifer Tucker

When PwC Norway first partnered with Oslo Business Forum, it seemed like a natural brand alignment. A major global brand and a rising business conference—both committed to leadership, innovation, and bold thinking. But early on, it seemed the partnership was mostly symbolic.

“We knew it would be good for our brand to partner with OBF and have a logo at the conference, but we perhaps didn't put enough effort into it at first,” said Petter Vold, Deputy CEO of PwC Norway. “That really changed three years ago when we talked about how to enhance our partnership.”

What could have been nothing more than a simple sponsorship evolved into a mutual collaboration rooted in trust, ambition, and impact.

The Tipping Point: From Presence to Partnership

As a network of firms that help organizations and individuals create real value, PwC's purpose is to build trust and solve important problems. In the early years of the OBF partnership, PwC saw the conference as a valuable platform to advance this mission, but they weren't really maximizing its potential.

Petter recalled an early attempt to bring together executives at the conference, which didn't quite land as intended. “We tried to gather some executives ourselves, but it didn't get the response we hoped for—it was actually quite embarrassing,” he admitted.

That moment led to a critical discussion: Was this partnership delivering real value? Rather than walking away, both sides doubled down.

“Marius and Christoffer stepped up and said, ‘Let us take responsibility.’ And that's what is really impressive about them—they know how to get the attention of the right people and create conversations that matter.”

The result was a shift to more active engagement. PwC leveraged OBF's ability to connect with high-level executives, ensuring the firm's presence at the conference wasn't just about visibility but about facilitating meaningful discussions.

“Last year, we hosted a CEO panel with [best-selling author and former Harvard Business School and INSEAD professor] Morten Hansen, and this year, we're building another high-impact event. Now, we see OBF as a driving force for bringing top leaders together.”



“We expect OBF will always try to make us think further, push our mindset.”

Petter Vold
Deputy CEO
PwC Norway

What Makes OBF Different?

PwC partners with many organizations across many industries. But Petter sees something unique in OBF's boldness and ambition—a trait that closely aligns with PwC's values.

"It's inspiring in itself to work with guys like Christoffer and Marius. They have this braveness and boldness that I haven't seen anywhere else—without being arrogant. That's what I really like, and it's a fine balance," Petter said.

For PwC, OBF has become more than just another business conference—it's a gathering point for top executives and a place to gain insights into the shifting business landscape.

"It's not just about the speakers—it's about who is in the room. You see the CEO of this company, that company, and that company. It's where top leaders go because they know the experience will be relevant and high-quality."

The 'So What?': Turning Insights into Action

One of PwC's guiding principles is ensuring the lessons gained from OBF don't fade once the conference ends.

"I have a favorite phrase: 'What's the so what?'" Petter said. "Before we go to a conference, we ask ourselves: What do we expect to get out of it? How can we take these ideas back into our work as consultants?"

PwC has operationalized this approach, ensuring their team prepares before the event, debriefs afterward, and translates insights into real actions.

"It's super important that you actually take the time to reflect," Petter said. "What have we learned? What are three concrete actions we will take?"

The Future of the PwC-OBF Partnership

The strength of the PwC-OBF partnership lies in its shared investment and mutual trust. It's not just about branding—it's about building something meaningful together.

"This relationship worked for so long because of the dedication from each side," Petter said. "We're both fully invested, engaged in a constant dialogue about how we can enhance and develop this collaboration on a continuous basis."

For PwC, one of the biggest opportunities ahead is creating even more executive-level engagements through OBF.

"The real potential is in bringing together exclusive panels of 20-50 top CEOs for high-value discussions. That's where we see the greatest impact," he said.

And when it comes to OBF's future, Petter has high expectations.

"We expect OBF will always try to make us think further, push our mindset. This is a conference that should never settle—it should always raise the bar."



From Inspiration to Action:

How Oslo Business Forum Helped Transform Culture at Würth Norge

When Thor Melcher, the now-retired HR Director of Würth Norge AS, first attended Oslo Business Forum, he wasn't looking for just another industry event—he was looking for tangible insights his company could implement. Over the years, he and the entire Würth top management team found exactly that.

For Würth Norge, the most impactful takeaway from OBF wasn't just a new idea—it was validation and momentum for an ongoing cultural transformation.

The Shift from Individual to Team Performance

At the time of Thor's first OBF experience, Würth Norge was in the early stages of shifting its business culture. The company wanted to move away from an individual result-oriented mindset to one that prioritized activity driven performance through teamwork and shared success. But making that kind of change in a large organization isn't easy.

At OBF 2022, the Würth Norge team heard Amy Edmondson, a renowned expert on organizational learning and leadership, speak about psychological safety and high-performance teams. It was a perfect fit.

"What we heard from Amy Edmondson strengthened our belief that we were on the right path," Thor said. "We found supporting arguments in her presentation that we could take home and use the day after."

Edmondson's keynote underscored the power of psychological safety—the idea that people do their best work when they feel safe to ask questions, share ideas, and challenge the status quo. Inspired by her insights, Würth Norge deepened its focus on building a culture where employees not only felt responsible for their own performance but were actively encouraged to support one another.

"We created a more team-based culture where the best people help those who are struggling to succeed," Thor explained. "Rather than just setting targets, we built a system where employees reflected on how they could make a difference."

To reinforce this shift, Würth Norge established training bases with dedicated coaches, managers, and trainers. Employees received hands-on coaching, and a "train-the-trainer" model ensured the new mindset would be embedded in daily operations.

Turning Ideas into Action

For Thor and the rest of the Würth Norge team, OBF wasn't just an inspiring experience—it was a strategic investment.

"You can't afford to throw money at an event just for the sake of it," Thor said. "We were quite cynical in regard to getting value. We wouldn't have attended if we didn't see that there was something in it for us that we could actually bring home and implement."

Thor believes that understanding business leaders' pragmatism is what makes OBF different from other conferences.

"You have to bring value to the people attending the conference," Thor said. "They have been exceptional in targeting topics they know business leaders are interested in—or will be interested in. It's an art to read trends, cut through the noise, and find real value. That's what OBF has done so well."

Today, Würth Norge's cultural transformation continues to evolve, and Thor credits OBF with providing the reinforcement and clarity his team needed to push forward. It's proof that the best business events don't just spark your imagination—they prompt you to take real action.

The Books that Shaped Us

Top 7 Recommendations

“Implement these books and we guarantee your success”



1

No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention

Discover how Netflix's unconventional culture of radical transparency and freedom fosters innovation, adaptability, and high performance.

Erin Meyer & Reed Hastings

Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know

Success isn't just about what you know—it's about rethinking and unlearning. This book explores the power of open-mindedness to challenge assumptions, embrace uncertainty, and grow.

Adam Grant

2

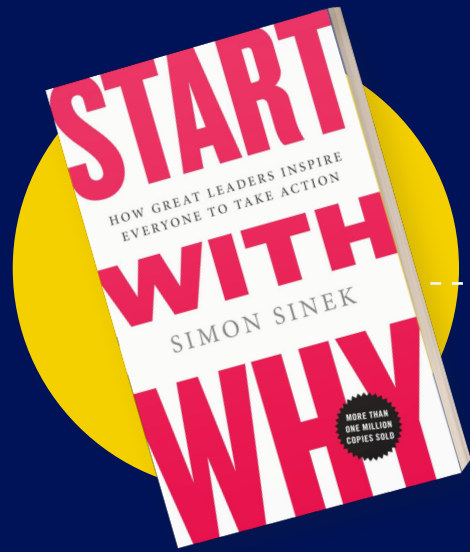


3

Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.

Courage, vulnerability, and empathy are at the heart of great leadership. Brown offers a powerful guide to building trust, leading with integrity, and creating high-performing teams.

Brené Brown



4

Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action

Great leaders don't just communicate what they do—they inspire by sharing why they do it. This book explores the power of purpose in driving success and lasting influence.

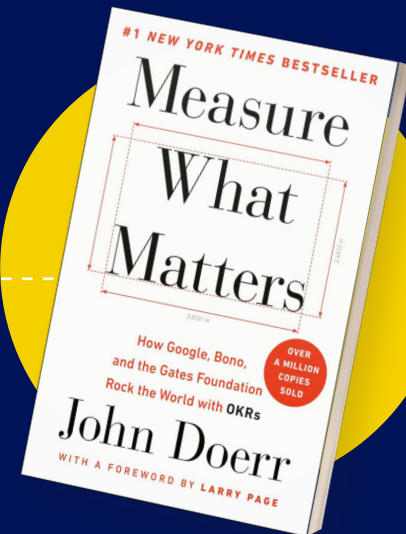
Simon Sinek

Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs

Backed by extensive research, this book reveals the key principles of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) and provides practical strategies to set and achieve ambitious goals with focus and alignment.

John Doerr

5



6

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't

What separates good companies from truly great ones? Through in-depth analysis, Collins uncovers the key principles that drive long-term excellence.

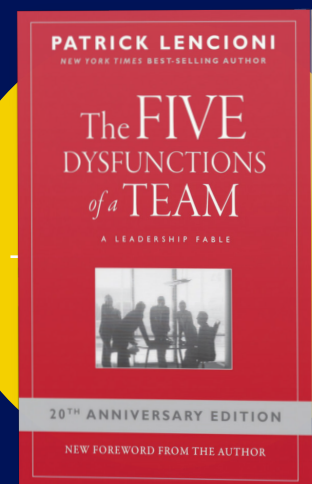
Jim Collins

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable

From lack of trust to unresolved conflict, this book breaks down common team challenges and offers strategies to build high-performing teams.

Patrick Lencioni

7



How Courageous Leadership Creates Powerful Moments

What's the Worst that Can Happen?

Behind every remarkable event is a team that dares to think differently. OBF Event takes business conferences to the next level, blending creativity, strategy, and flawless execution to deliver experiences that leave a lasting impact.

Written by Jennifer Tucker

Andreas' Journey: From Student Leader to Event Visionary

Few people set out specifically to work in the event space—most end up here because they fall in love with the energy and impact events inspire. Andreas Storsveen Kustås is one of those people.

His passion for organizing events began during his time at BI Norwegian Business School, where he served as president of the school's massive student union with over 7,000 members and 2,500 active students. In this role, he managed internal strategies, strengthened business relationships, and coordinated large-scale student initiatives. That experience, combined with his dual bachelor's degrees in marketing management (BI) and media science (University of Oslo), made him a natural fit for event production.

It was during these years at BI that Andreas first met Christoffer and Marius. After finishing his studies, he got a call from Christoffer offering him an opportunity that would take him on an unexpected journey: join OBF.

"It was a steep learning curve," Andreas recalled. "I always loved organizing events, but when you get the opportunity to do this for a living, you realize it's a different ball game."

Just a few months into his new role, OBF confirmed Barack Obama as a keynote speaker—a pivotal moment in Andreas' career. "We were thrown into deep waters. Of course, I was nervous, but we were surrounded by terrific people who wanted to help us. I kept reminding myself: What's the worst that can happen? We're doing everything we can."

That mindset—fearlessness in the face of the unknown—was a defining trait of OBF's founding story and, in many ways, Andreas' leadership style. "If you're looking for opportunities, you're going to find them. If you're hiding from them, you'll never grow."

From this point forward, Andreas played a key role in expanding the organization's expertise beyond its flagship conference. In 2019, he had the opportunity to begin working with Nordic Business Forum (NBF), one of the most established business conferences in the world. "Being an executive producer there helped me understand not just how to do things, but why." For the next five years, he served as Executive Producer for both OBF and NBF, refining his approach to event strategy and imagining new ways to design impactful experiences.



“If you’re looking for opportunities, you’re going to find them. If you’re hiding from them, you’ll never grow.”

Andreas Storsveen Kustås
Managing Director
OBF Event

Lars Erik's Journey: From Multimedia Freelancer to Art Director

At OBF, the seamless execution of world-class events is a testament to the dedication and expertise of its team. While the spotlight often shines on figures like Managing Director and Partner Andreas, the behind-the-scenes contributions of Art Director and Partner Lars Erik Fjøsne-Eide are equally pivotal in creating transformative experiences.

Lars Erik embarked on his journey with OBF in 2017, alongside Andreas and Fredrik Dehli, OBF's Commercial Director and Partner. With a background in music and video production and web and graphic design, Lars Erik sought stability after three years of freelancing. He began as a video producer and quickly immersed himself in the technical aspects of OBF's conferences. He took on accountability for the technical operations of what were modest events at the time—and laid the foundation for the spectacular events OBF hosts today.

Over time, Lars Erik assumed dual roles: as Art Director, collaborating with the marketing and communication teams to shape OBF's visual identity, and as a key player in conference production, working closely with Andreas. Reflecting on the evolution of OBF's conferences, Lars Erik recalls the challenges that came with managing increasingly complex productions. Now, he leads a team of over 30 technicians to ensure major conferences and smaller events run seamlessly.



Lars Erik Fjøsne-Eide
Partner & Art Director



The Birth of OBF Event

From the early days of Oslo Business Forum, attendees realized they were experiencing something special: each event was a truly unique, engaging experience. It wasn't long before companies began asking OBF to help them bring the same magic to their own events.

This demand led to the creation of OBF Event in 2022, with Andreas and Lars Erik stepping in as partners to spearhead the venture from 2025. Under their leadership, OBF Event has set its sights on becoming the premier event production company in the Nordics, with 2025 poised as a pivotal year in this ambitious journey.

OBF Event designs and produces everything from corporate conferences to large-scale customer events. But more than just managing logistics, OBF Event is about breaking the script and creating something extraordinary. Andreas said, "Our job is to get inside the client's world. What do they really want to accomplish? An event isn't just a standalone experience—it's a means to achieving something bigger."



My Elfstrand, Project Manager at OBF Event backstage at Oda Inspirasjonsdagen 2024.



Thea Grønbeck, Project Manager at OBF Event backstage at Cloudcamp 2024.

Delivering Unforgettable Experiences

What makes OBF Event stand out isn't just an ability to execute flawlessly—it's the strategic thinking that goes into every project. According to Andreas, two core principles drive OBF Event's approach:

1. **Creating Tangible, Lasting Impact**

"We have an incredibly large focus on learning experiences and making sure we provide value through learning. It's not just about high-level ideas—it's about delivering something concrete, something that people can take back and implement immediately."

OBF Event ensures attendees leave with actionable tools and insights they can execute in their day-to-day work. Whether it's a leadership offsite or a large-scale conference, the goal is always the same: make it meaningful, make it useful.

2. **The Customer Experience: Every Touchpoint Matters**

"From the moment a participant signs up to the moment they leave the venue and beyond, every touchpoint matters. We analyze what people expect—and how we can surpass that."

For instance, a recent participant reached out at the last minute to say they couldn't attend an event in person but wanted to watch virtually. Instead of simply sending them a link, the customer service team went one step further: they arranged for breakfast to be delivered to their home, creating a seamless and special experience.

Breaking the Script: Designing Events Differently

One of the key philosophies behind OBF Event is to challenge expectations. Before every event, the team sits down and asks: What's the typical script? What do people expect? How can we break that script to create something unexpected?

A perfect example of this was BI Norwegian Business School's 80th anniversary celebration. Instead of a standard corporate event, OBF Event transformed the celebration into a storytelling experience woven throughout the school's facilities. Different decades and milestones were highlighted through immersive designs and live performances with actors, turning history into an experience.

This ability to think differently and execute boldly is what makes OBF Event so impactful. "We always ask: How can we make this unforgettable?"

"We always ask: How can we make this unforgettable?"



OBF Event: My Elfstrand, Andreas Storsveen Kustås, Thea Grønbeck & Lars Erik Fjøsne Eide.

Behind the Scenes: Crafting Unforgettable Experiences

The success of OBF's events is also rooted in meticulous planning and a persistent commitment to excellence. Lars Erik emphasizes that "It all comes back to the customer experience we aim to be the best at." This philosophy drives every aspect of event production, from the initial concept to the final execution.

A critical part of this process is the technical production team. Behind the scenes at OBF, a team of approximately 20 professionals manage various aspects, including live streaming, while the impact stage has 5-6 dedicated technicians. Lars Erik acknowledges that none of it would be possible without the team's talents and the years of experience they bring to the table.

The digital dimension of events has also become increasingly significant. OBF's focus was originally on physical events, but the pandemic necessitated a shift to digital platforms. "After COVID, we learned we could create a really good digital product," Lars Erik said. This evolution has enabled OBF to produce high-quality digital live streams and offer on-demand content, effectively bridging the gap between the physical and digital experience.

Looking Ahead: The Future of OBF Event

With a foundation built on innovation, resilience, and commitment to excellence, OBF Event is ready to grow. As Andreas and Lars Erik embrace new challenges and opportunities, their focus remains firm: deliver unparalleled experiences that continue to push the boundaries:

- **Serve as a Strategic Advisor**
"We want to help companies create powerful moments that align with their larger goals."
- **Embrace Curiosity and Creativity**
"We see endless opportunities to apply our approach in different ways, depending on who we're working with."
- **Continue to Deliver Beyond Expectations**
"We want to create customer experiences that are beyond what they could have imagined themselves."

OBF Event is more than an event production company—it's a partner in crafting meaningful, transformative experiences. For Andreas, that's what makes the work so fulfilling. "I feel thankful that I get to create these moments for and with people—together with our clients, partners, and coworkers."

As OBF Event continues to evolve, one thing is certain: the best moments are yet to come.



*“Maybe we should just put the
Norwegians in charge of everything.”*

President Barack Obama
Oslo Business Forum 2018

The Top 5 Leadership Trends in 2025 and Beyond

In business today, great leaders are exerting tremendous influence over employee engagement, organizational performance, and long-term profitability. This means the number one role of a leader must be to inspire their followers.

Embracing the latest trends in leadership will help you enhance organizational resilience for long-term impact. Here, we're offering a glimpse of the top five leadership trends empowering leaders in 2025 and beyond.

#1 Use resilience to turn hard times into opportunities

As a leader, it's your responsibility to lead through both the good times and the bad. And while the good times are a reason to celebrate, nothing is more rewarding than weathering a tough storm and coming out stronger.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from failure, and it's not just important for leaders—it's crucial for the entire organization. With resilient teams from top to bottom, your business is better equipped to navigate the change and complexity we're bound to face in 2025 and in the future.



Sir Richard Branson

#2 Lead with constructive candor to nurture accountability

Candor is a core element of effective leadership, essential for cultivating trust. Leaders who embrace transparency and constructive candor foster an environment where open communication thrives, enabling them to nurture ethics and accountability.

But candor is about more than simply speaking your mind. Constructive candor acknowledges the drawbacks of withholding information, knowledge, and feedback. A traditional, tight-lipped approach to management inhibits growth and progress. Instead, empower your people to confront challenges by encouraging open and honest dialogue. It creates a culture of mutual respect and a breeding ground for continuous improvement.



Erin Meyer

#3 Human-centered leadership is crucial in a digital world

As technology advances at a breakneck pace, the demand for tech-savvy leaders is more pressing than ever. In an HBR survey last year, one-third of respondents cited accelerating digital technology as a top business challenge, and 46% anticipated a greater need to adapt to the penetration of emerging technologies.

But navigating the digital landscape requires more than just tech-savviness. Leaders can't lose sight of the human element that remains critical to leadership. As technology accelerates, those who embrace empathetic communication and create an environment where everyone feels valued and heard will succeed at cultivating more meaningful connections, building greater resilience, and leading with care.



Ole Gunnar Solskjær



Dr. Eliza Filby

#4 Generation Z requires navigating a new workforce mindset

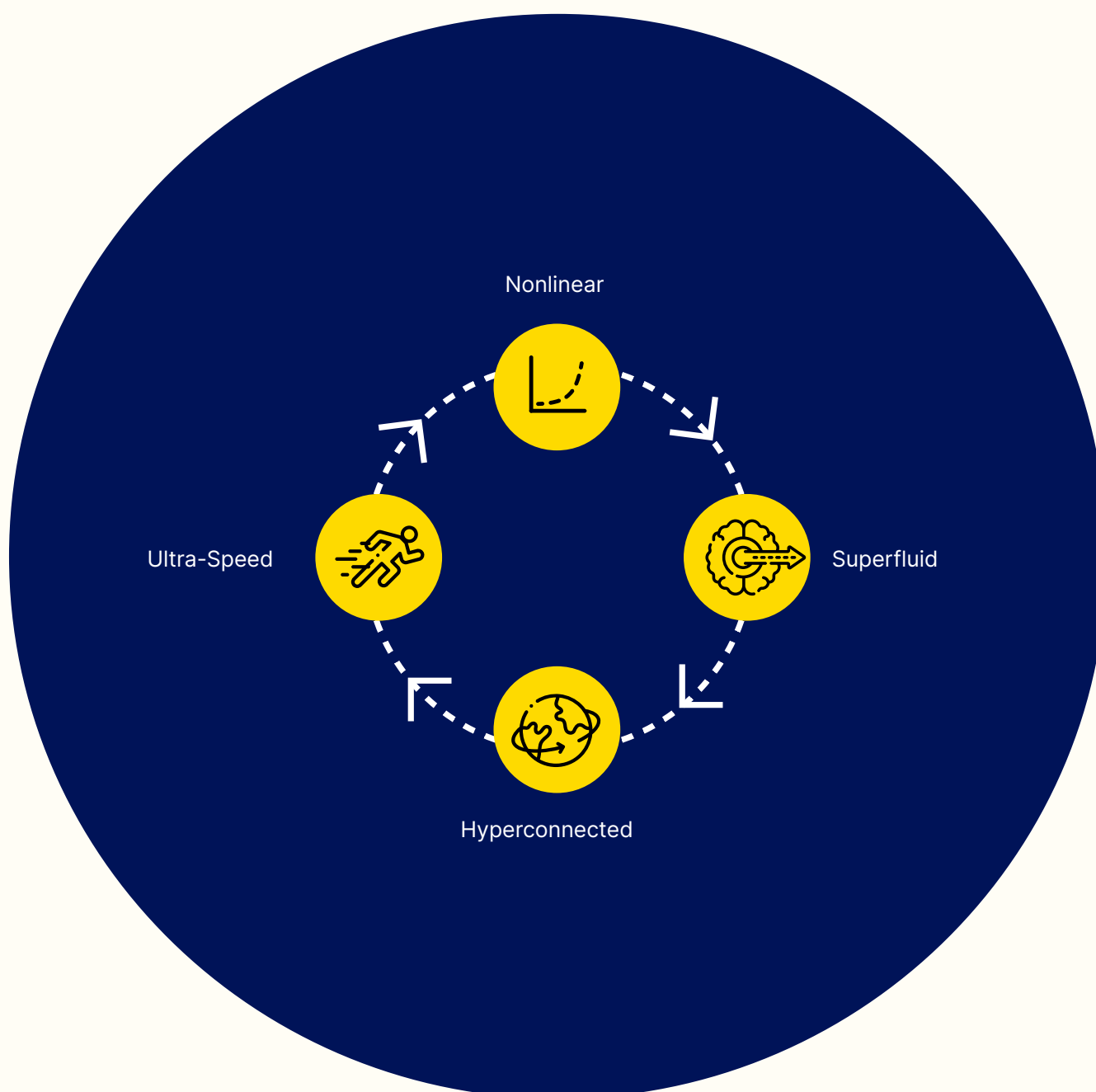
It's no secret that Generation Z is reshaping the workplace with a fresh outlook on purpose, fulfillment, and work-life balance. It's easy for other generations to characterize their approach as lazy or entitled, but Gen Z isn't disengaged; they just have a pragmatic view of work in today's economy.

Every generation has challenged the way we work, but this generation is different; they're simply unconvinced of what older generations considered to be the norm. Shift your mindset and recognize Generation Z's changing values. Adapting to their needs for flexibility, transparency, and purpose-driven work will build trust and motivate this generation to contribute meaningfully.

#5 AI is redefining leadership—set the right priorities

As AI becomes an integral part of business, you must set clear priorities for its use, balancing automation with human intelligence. AI isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, and futurists and strategists emphasize the importance of adopting it with strategic intent: identify where AI can genuinely enhance productivity, empower teams, and maintain ethical standards.

Despite the questions AI raises about ownership, reliability, safety, and security, leaders must face their fears—organizations that fail to adopt AI will be left behind. Foster innovation, embrace disruption, and find ways to stay ahead of the curve. Don't overestimate the speed or underestimate the size of the technological revolution we're facing—it may take longer than we anticipate, but it's sure to be bigger than we predict.





“AI is not a revolution; it’s an evolution.”

Amy Webb
Oslo Business Forum 2023



The True Stars of Oslo Business Forum

By delivering hands-on experience, networking opportunities, and lessons in leadership, OBF has become a launch pad for talented young professionals. Discover how the one-of-a-kind OBF Ambassador Program is shaping the next generation of business leaders.

At Oslo Business Forum, there's an unmistakable energy that permeates every event—an atmosphere of curiosity, inspiration, and connection. It's more than world-class speakers or cutting-edge content. It's the people who make OBF special. And at the heart of this experience are the OBF Ambassadors.

OBF has built a program that ensures a seamless, welcoming environment for attendees and serves as a launchpad for the next generation of business professionals and leaders.

“People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Maya Angelou



OBF Ambassadors team photo 2024 (Photo by Kai Chen)



Astrea Kustås
Former Customer Success Manager

Astrea Kustås' Rise: From Ambassador to Program Leader

Few stories illustrate the power of the OBF Ambassador Program quite like Astrea Kustås' journey. What began as a volunteer role in her student days ultimately led to a full-time position at OBF—where she helped shape the very program that launched her career.

Astrea joined as an Ambassador while studying at BI Norwegian Business School, initially seeing it as a great way to gain hands-on experience. What she didn't expect was how deeply she would connect with the OBF culture. Over time, she moved from an Ambassador role to a Team Leader and eventually took on a leadership role overseeing the entire Student Program.

As she approached the end of her studies, Astrea decided to use OBF as the focus of her bachelor's thesis. Through that project, she was able to sit in the office day-to-day, getting intimate with the conference in a different way. After graduating, she briefly took a job elsewhere, but her passion for OBF quickly pulled her back.

"I walked into Christoffer's office and asked if there was any way I could work there because I was so inspired," she recalled.

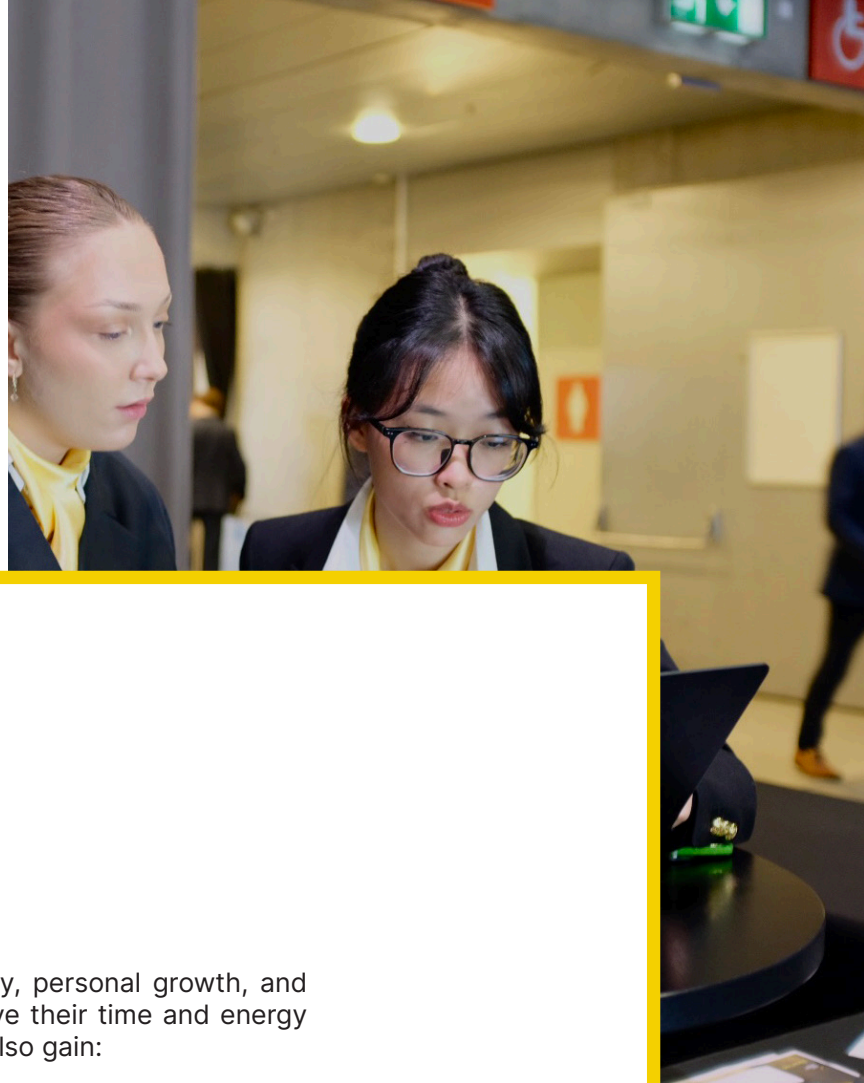
Recognizing her dedication, Christoffer immediately found ways to bring her back onto the team. She started with part-time work supporting student operations, contracts, and customer experience—but her role quickly grew. Soon, she was producing podcasts, working on additional OBF events, and reshaping the Student Program into what it is today.

"It's very special and so rewarding to work with a scale-up. You have your finger on the pulse of the business," Astrea said.

Her work ensured that students' interests remained at the heart of the program's evolution. The structured training, mentorship, and leadership opportunities didn't just prepare students for OBF—they set them up for long-term success.

"It's a brilliant way to gain relevant experience, but also, you connect with other students who in five years might be the most valuable network you can have."

After more than three years of full-time work with OBF, Astrea knew she was ready for her next challenge. Having worked closely with PwC during her time at OBF, she was offered a role there in 2024 as an Event Manager, allowing her to apply the lessons she learned in a larger corporate setting.



Photos by Kai Chen

Why Do Ambassadors Go the Extra Mile?

The combination of unreasonable hospitality, personal growth, and the OBF community inspires students to give their time and energy year after year. Through the program, they also gain:

Tailored Training & Experience: Hands-on exposure to the inner workings of a global business conference provides experience few other programs can match.

Building Networks & Future Opportunities: The program has become known as a springboard for successful careers in Norway and beyond.

Lifelong Learning: In addition to practical experience, Ambassadors get full access to the conference recordings and continued learning opportunities that ensure the impact of the program goes beyond event day.

Investing in the Future, One Ambassador at a Time

The OBF Ambassador Program isn't just about enhancing the conference experience—it's about shaping the next generation of leaders. By giving students the tools, experiences, and opportunities to thrive, OBF is shaping a generation of leaders who will drive impact in organizations for years to come. And for many Ambassadors, this is just the beginning.



Lousia meeting Ole Gunnar Solskjær at Oslo Business Forum 2024.



Lousia Y. Stephansen

The Ambassador Who Keeps on Giving

Lousia, known to everyone as Yessie, has been an Ambassador at almost every conference since OBF began. Despite having a full-time career, she takes time off each year—without hesitation—to return to OBF. For her, this experience is about more than volunteering; it's about being part of something bigger.

“People at work ask, ‘Why would you take three days off, unpaid, to volunteer?’ And I tell them—why not? Why wouldn’t you want to be at OBF? The energy, the experience, the leadership—it’s unlike anything else.”

Yessie’s OBF journey began when Andreas Kustas—who was a friend and classmate at BI—persuaded her to join one of the early events as a Student Ambassador. She hasn’t missed a single conference since, despite graduating, beginning her own career, and progressing through roles with several companies. Today, she works as a Contract Administrator with Aker Solutions, a major player in the global energy industry.

The skills she developed at OBF—thinking on her feet, problem-solving, and leading teams—have helped her navigate her professional career in ways she never expected. She recalls, too, how her affiliation with OBF opened doors for her along the way.

Yessie was on her way to an OBF event on the day she had her first interview with her current company. She arrived donning her black trousers, blazer, and blouse—and her signature yellow OBF shoes. She felt compelled to explain the yellow shoes, leading to a discussion of her involvement with the conference. “The people on the other side of the table were interested,” she said. “That’s when I started to realize OBF was growing, and it was something everyone could relate to.”

For Yessie, the Ambassador Program has become more than just an opportunity to help run an event. It’s about the relationships, the energy, and the leadership lessons she has gained. She’s taken on various roles over the years, from coordinating the support desks to working the main

stage to leading the VIP teams. Her experience has naturally evolved to mentor new Ambassadors.

She loves to see young students step into their Ambassador roles. She aims to empower them, encouraging them to think for themselves and grow into confident leaders—just like OBF did for her.

“I tell them, ‘Put the effort in now, put it in your CV, make sure you talk about it in interviews.’ Because all the big companies in Norway know what OBF is now,” she said.

This level of dedication exemplifies what makes the Ambassador Program special: it’s an experience that people keep coming back to, year after year. For Yessie, OBF isn’t just a conference—it’s a community and a place she’ll always call home.

Inspired by Will Guidara

The Power of ‘Unreasonable Hospitality:’ Redefining the Attendee Experience

In today’s business landscape, it’s no longer safe to assume you’ll be successful by simply delivering a product or service. Creating a lasting impact comes by designing an exceptional experience.

Written by Jennifer Tucker

OBF has mastered experience by adopting an approach inspired by Will Guidara’s *Unreasonable Hospitality*, a concept that goes beyond expectations to deliver something over-the-top and truly memorable.

The Origin of ‘Unreasonable Hospitality’

Will Guidara is a hospitality visionary and former co-owner of Eleven Madison Park, a three-Michelin-star restaurant that was named the best in the world. His Unreasonable Hospitality philosophy is rooted in the idea that businesses thrive when they make people feel truly seen, valued, and cared for. By applying this mindset, any company—not just those in the hospitality industry—can transform customer interactions into unforgettable experiences.

In 2024, Will was a keynote speaker at OBF’s partner Nordic Business Forum. He helped participants unleash their inner CX expert by exploring why you need an un-

reasonable approach to the pursuit of human connection and how to harness the unlimited potential of a “one-size-fits-one” strategy.

The OBF Feeling: Unreasonable Hospitality in Action

From the moment participants step into an OBF event, they’re met with a level of hospitality and attention to detail that’s clearly different from traditional business conferences. “What happens at the conference is something that I think is very hard to copy,” Astrea Kustås said. “It is this OBF feeling.”

As Astrea describes it, the OBF Feeling is a genuine atmosphere with complete attention on the individual. It happens when a participant feels that everywhere they go, people care immensely about how they can make the experience as good as possible.



Photo by Sami Tuoriniemi

- **Mobilizing Ambassadors**

One of the most distinctive aspects of OBF's hospitality is its Ambassador Program—a team of more than 150 student volunteers who work in both the front and back of the house to ensure things run smoothly. Their role is to make attendees feel welcomed, valued, and supported.

- Ambassadors create an atmosphere that gives attendees a sense they're part of something bigger while still personalizing the experience.
- Business leaders often mention that what stands out most is not the conference content but the experience.

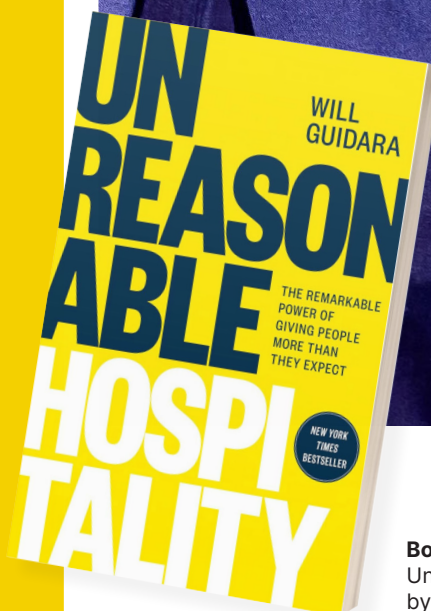
- **Designing an Emotional Connection**

OBF understands that emotions influence business decisions, so each aspect of the event is designed to evoke inspiration, engagement, and connection.

- Seamless coordination behind the scenes ensures a stress-free experience for attendees—and creates a strong bond across the OBF team.
- An emphasis is placed on community-building and creating a space where people make connections and form lasting relationships.

- **Small Details Make a Big Impact**

A business leader attending OBF once shared how strongly a keynote on customer experience resonated with them. Inspired by the event, they went back and redesigned their entire customer journey for 10,000 clients.



Book Tip:
Unreasonable Hospitality
by Will Guidara

One-Size-Fits-One: Stories of Impact

At OBF, no two attendee experiences are the same. Unlike traditional events that apply a one-size-fits-all approach, OBF operates with a one-size-fits-one mentality—customizing interactions based on the individual. Every participant, speaker, and partner is treated as a valued guest, with personalized touches that elevate their experience.

“What’s great about this is that it makes the mindset of the ambassadors one in which they’re always thinking ahead,” Astrea said.

Every year, OBF is amazed by the creativity and dedication of its Ambassadors. From creating custom artwork to making special deliveries, the stories of extraordinary contributions are countless.

A Personalized Touch for Speakers

One ambassador, inspired by the event’s mindset, hand-drew portraits of all the 2024 keynote speakers. The drawings were framed and left with a handwritten note in each speaker’s hotel room. One of the speakers, Howard Yu, was so moved that he specifically requested to meet the ambassador behind it. Brené Brown asked to have hers shipped to her home.

Literally Going the Extra Mile

A guest once realized she had accidentally brought her house keys to the conference, leaving her husband locked out at home. Instead of simply calling a taxi, an OBF ambassador took a Porsche—then an event sponsor—to personally deliver the keys to her husband so she wouldn’t have to leave the event.

Welcoming the Next Generation

When a guest asked if she could bring her baby to the conference, Eva from the OBF Ambassador team went above and beyond. She created a custom baby package, complete with a personalized onesie and beanie printed with “My First OBF.”

How Any Business Can Apply Unreasonable Hospitality

You don’t have to run a restaurant, hotel, or business conference to put these principles into action. Today, any business can be a hospitality business by choosing to transform ordinary interactions into extraordinary experiences.

Empower Your Team

Encourage and equip your employees to go the extra mile in making customers feel valued. When they’re given ownership, they’re more likely to create magical moments that feel authentic, not forced.

Create an Emotional Connection

Adopt a transformational versus transactional mindset, focusing on what people feel and not just what they receive. When customers feel a connection to your business, they’ll keep coming back.

Obsess Over the Details

Identify the little things that create a lasting impression and inspire long-term engagement. Then, do those things consistently well. True hospitality is found in the details.

What bold step can you take today to exceed expectations?



Will Guidara

Will Guidara is the author of the National Bestseller *Unreasonable Hospitality*, which chronicles the lessons in service and leadership he has learned over the course of his career in restaurants.

He is the former co-owner Eleven Madison Park, which under his leadership received four stars from the New York Times, three Michelin stars, and in 2017 was named #1 on the list of the World’s 50 Best Restaurants.

He is the host of the Welcome Conference, an annual hospitality symposium that brings together like minded people to share ideas, inspire one another, and connect to form a community.



Lillian Gjerulf Kretz is a cherished part of the OBF family. She hosted her first main stage event in 2021 and has been a key presence ever since. In 2025, for the anniversary edition, she will take the stage as host for the fourth year in a row.

(Photo by Erik Krafft)

Oslo Business Forum

Statistics and Numbers

As of 2025

In-person attendees

3,000

Online attendees

10,000+

Attendees from

30

different nations

Subsidiaries

OBF Leadership

55,6%
ownership

OBF Event

88%
ownership

Revenue

85 MNOK
(forecast 2025)

Employees

13

97,8%

would recommend
OBF

Previous Conferences



Oslo Business Forum 2024:
Courageous Leadership



Oslo Business Forum 2023:
Thriving in Chaos



Oslo Business Forum 2022:
Future-Focused Leadership



Oslo Business Forum 2021:
Rethinking Business



Online Bootcamp 2021:
Leading & Innovation in
Changing Times



Online Masterclass 2021:
Jim Collins' Masterclass



Oslo Business Forum 2020:
The New Normal



Online Event 2020:
Rethinking Business



Oslo Business Forum 2019:
Beyond 2020



Oslo Business Forum 2019:
Digital Leadership



Oslo Business Forum 2018:
The Future of Technology



Oslo Business Forum 2018:
Leadership in
Changing Times



Oslo Business Forum 2017:
Technology, Marketing
& Leadership



Oslo Business Forum 2017:
The Future of Technology
& Leadership



Oslo Business Forum 2016:
Leading to Change

Forum in Numbers

Next up

◆ OSLO BUSINESS FORUM 2025

THE BIG SHIFT

10
YEARS

24-25 SEPTEMBER 2025

Executive Community

Beyond our renowned annual conferences featuring world-class speakers, Oslo Business Forum has engaged an Executive Community among the members and partners. This exclusive network brings together top CEOs and executives to learn from each other.

Executive HR Summit

20 May 2025
Munch

A focused gathering for CHRO's to discuss the evolving dynamics of workplace culture and talent management.

Executive Summer Summit

21 May 2025
Munch

Our flagship summit where 120 CEOs meet at OBF to share insights on global business trends and leadership challenges.

Executive Summit at OBF 2025

24-25 September 2025
NOVA Spektrum

An annual event that brings CEOs together to explore new business strategies and network in an informal setting.

Executive Roundtables

13 November 2025
Sommerro

Intimate, topic-specific discussions that allow for detailed exploration and peer exchange on industry issues.

Become the Leader You Wish You Had.

◆ OSLO BUSINESS FORUM 2025

