

# KANBRICK

## **Kanbrick Announces First Group of Participants as it Launches New Program to Support Midsize Companies**

The Build with Kanbrick Program Combines a Focus on People, Purpose, and Performance to Drive Long-Term Growth

Kanbrick, the long-term investment partnership co-founded by Tracy Britt Cool and Brian Humphrey, today announced their first participants as they launch Build with Kanbrick, a selective three-month business program designed to help midsize companies accelerate long-term growth.

Kanbrick, which is focused on buying and building great businesses for the long term, established Build with Kanbrick after recognizing a gap in the market serving owners and CEOs of midsize companies. While traditional accelerators support startups through networking and mentorship, no such opportunities exist for strong midmarket businesses.

“Small and midsize companies are the backbone of the American economy, but following this unprecedented year, many are facing unique challenges in taking their businesses to the next level,” said Britt Cool. “At Kanbrick, we partner closely with owners and executives to help grow their businesses, and the Build with Kanbrick program is an extension of our broader mission to help organizations and people reach their full potential.”

Build with Kanbrick’s approach is rooted in the Kanbrick Business System, the value creation playbook the team developed through years of building and growing great companies. The program helps owners and CEOs assess key opportunities and create a plan to drive lasting value.

“During our time leading companies and partnering with owners and CEOs, we identified common themes to the opportunities and challenges they face,” said Britt Cool. “We formed Kanbrick to address those needs and drive value through a focus on people, purpose, and performance. The Build with Kanbrick program gives us the opportunity to share those learnings and have a greater impact.”

We have selected five owners and CEOs into the first cohort. Build with Kanbrick begins with a business system diagnostic that leverages the Kanbrick Business System to assess each company’s opportunities. Participants will receive one-on-one sessions with the Kanbrick team and collaborative group sessions

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with guest experts, as well as templates, tools, and resources focused on growing their business. Build with Kanbrick alumni will also have access to the Kanbrick Community for networking with other executives and exclusive content.

The companies and leaders participating in the spring 2021 Build with Kanbrick program are:

## [Cotopaxi](#) – Salt Lake City, UT

Founder & CEO: Davis Smith

Founded in 2014, Cotopaxi is a sustainable outdoor apparel and equipment company with a poverty-fighting business model. The brand allocates 1% of its total revenue to the nonprofit Cotopaxi Foundation, which channels the money to groups dedicated to causes like refugee assistance, poverty alleviation, and community development.

## [SET Environmental, Inc.](#) – Wheeling, IL

CEO: Joel Tameling - President

Combining a tradition of integrity, innovation, and excellence, SET Environmental provides environmental management services to a nationwide client base.

## [Three Ships](#) — Raleigh, NC

Founder & CEO: Zach Clayton

Founded in 2009, Three Ships is a digital marketing business. Their mission is to simplify the ways people discover, research, and buy. They operate 50+ websites that help consumers buy with confidence and advertisers find the right customers efficiently.

## [Truck Centers](#) – Troy, IL

President/COO: Katie Hopkins

Founded in 1970, Truck Centers, Inc., based in Troy, IL, and is a family-owned dealer group providing full array of products and service to the heavy truck industry including truck sales, parts, service, body shop and training. Truck Centers, Inc. was one of the first heavy truck dealers to receive a Freightliner franchise in 1977. Over 50 years in business, they have grown from \$1 Million to \$425+ Million in annual sales and \$18+ Million in stocked parts inventory.

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## Woodbine Manufacturing – Woodbine, IA

CEO: TJ Blandford

Woodbine, Iowa is at the heart of Woodbine Manufacturing Company. Since Delbert “Bus” Brown created the original Tommy Gate Hydraulic Lift in 1965, Woodbine Manufacturing Company has honored a tradition of building high-quality liftgates. Working alone, Bus designed and constructed the first Tommy Gate in a small, brick machine shop, naming the lift after his son. More than 50 years later, Woodbine Manufacturing has grown into an industry leader with dozens of liftgate models, and a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility.

## **About Kanbrick**

Kanbrick is a long-term investment partnership founded by Tracy Britt Cool and Brian Humphrey. Kanbrick is focused on buying, building, and growing great businesses for the long term. Kanbrick partners closely with owners and executives, taking a hands-on approach to empower people and companies to reach their full potential. For more information visit [Kanbrick.com](https://www.kanbrick.com).

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## Spring 2021 Participant Bios:



**Davis Smith**

Founder & CEO, Cotopaxi

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/davismsmith/>

Davis is the founder and CEO of Cotopaxi, an outdoor gear brand with a humanitarian mission. He is a member of the United Nations Foundation's "Global Leadership Council" and is a Presidential Leadership Scholar. Davis was Silicon Valley Community Foundation's "CEO of the Year" in 2016 and previously started Brazil's "Startup of the Year" in 2012. Davis holds an MBA from the Wharton School, an MA from the University of Pennsylvania, and a BA from Brigham Young University. Davis is an adventurer who has floated down the Amazon on a self-made raft, kayaked from Cuba to Florida, and explored North Korea.



**Joel Taming**

President, SET Environmental, Inc.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joel-taming-02667912/>

Combining a tradition of integrity, innovation, and excellence, SET Environmental provides environmental management services to a nationwide client base.

In assisting clients with a wide range of non-routine environmental concerns, SET recognizes that finding the right solution to any hazardous problem requires an appreciation of each client's particular circumstances. Our understanding of what our clients face enables us to provide the appropriate resources to address any issue.



**Zach Clayton**

CEO, Three Ships

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/zachclayton/>

Zach Clayton is CEO of Three Ships, which he founded in 2009. Three Ships owns more than a dozen marketplace websites such as Sleepopolis and HouseMethod that help consumers buy with confidence. The company also forms strategic partnerships with advertisers and media companies to unlock growth through performance-based marketing programs. Previously Three Ships incubated, built and exited the software company Demand Signals, which was acquired by Tranzact.

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Zach is a “digital lifer.” He started New Media Campaigns, a web and application development firm, as an undergraduate and published his first research paper on social media well before Facebook was public or Instagram existed. He has worked with leading private equity firms and more than 50 private equity-backed clients, advising investors, CEOs, and CMOs on digital strategy.

Zach holds an MBA with high distinction from Harvard Business School, where he was a Baker Scholar, and a BA from UNC Chapel Hill, where he was a Morehead Scholar and elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Zach currently serves on the Board of the Dix Park Conservancy, the board of With Honor, and the board of the UNC General Alumni Association.



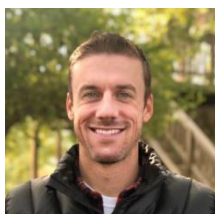
## **Katie Hopkins**

President/COO, Truck Centers, Inc.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/katie-hopkins-a7a5a259/>

As the President/COO of Truck Centers, Inc., Katie Hopkins is one of the few female leaders in the heavy-duty truck dealer industry. Truck Centers, Inc. is a family-owned dealer group with a 50-year history proudly representing Freightliner, Western Star, Sprinter, Kalmar/Ottawa, and Detroit Performance Products across 12 locations in 3 states.

Upon receiving her degree in Business Administration from Truman State University, she joined the company full-time and in 2018 became the third generation in her family to lead the nationally recognized company. Under Katie’s leadership, Truck Centers continued to expand with new OEM agreements and geographically into the western corridor of the St. Louis market. As one of the most influential and recognized female leaders in our industry, Katie has continued to advance TCI and our industry.



## **TJ Blandford**

CEO, Woodbine Manufacturing Company

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tj-blandford-b247b654/>

TJ Blandford is the Chairman and CEO of Woodbine Manufacturing Company, a family-owned, 55-year-old producer of equipment for commercial vehicles. A believer in the value and dignity of “old-fashioned” manufacturing as well as the innovation and reinvention opportunities for such firms, TJ truly enjoys leading his team of 200 coworkers and envisioning how the next five decades of growth will look.

Backpacking, hiking, yoga, golf, and traveling are among TJ’s favorite hobbies, along with spending time with his young family. TJ earned a B.A. in Economics and Philosophy from Furman University, and an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.