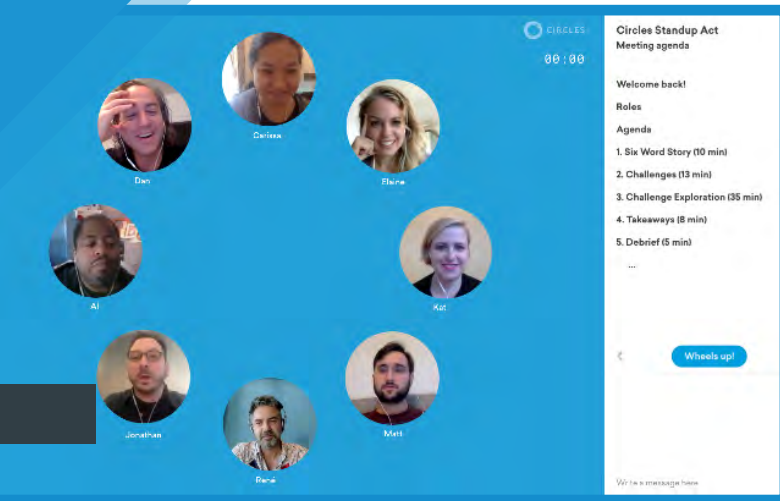


## Vidyo Goes in ‘Circles’ to Improve Peer Group Learning, Saving Significant Costs and Time for Leaders, Participants



### Challenge

Is there a way to improve peer-group learning in the business world at a 10th of the cost of current methods? Entrepreneur Dan Hoffman believes there is. Hoffman founded and sold a successful cloud communications company, M5, so he is proficient with the complexity of communications technology. Now he is using that technology to serve the learning and development sector to improve the way that peer groups collaborate, network, and leverage one another.

Hoffman, the founder and CEO of Circles, saw that people involved in peer coaching had to commute to be together — drive or fly — which was costly and time-consuming. He also wasn't satisfied with traditional tools, like one-on-one meetings and corporate universities. So he wanted to create an effective, affordable tool to easily form peer-group learning and development circles in a customized virtual video environment.

# CIRCLES

### ABOUT ORGANIZATION

Circles is an online peer coaching company that builds software, workshops, and programs that help teams to learn and grow faster together. Its clients range from high growth tech companies to Fortune 500s, to some of the world's top universities. Its clients and employees are located worldwide.

FOUNDED: 2017

HEADQUARTERS: New York, NY

**“In a matter of weeks, we had a working prototype, and then went live a couple of weeks later. We had four developers work on the project. Vidyo was great, responsive and supportive.”**

*-Dan Hoffman,  
Founder and CEO, Circles*

## Solution

Hoffman and his team began working on Circles in 2015, and Hoffman says they considered “countless” video providers. Buying a solution allows for faster development and fewer resources, Hoffman noted, but it also means trusting your business to a third party that is responsive, solvent, and aligned with your direction. Opting not to build his own, Hoffman wanted a partner who took reliability very seriously.

While organizations can build or buy their own video technology systems, Hoffman’s team didn’t want to do that because it had built a VOIP system in a prior venture and was aware of the challenges. The team grew convinced that WebRTC was the best approach and selected a vendor, but found that initial vendor’s reliability and responsiveness inadequate.

Hoffman’s team wanted a feature-rich set of APIs with great flexibility, but found many providers offered limited options and just wanted them to rebrand the same interface. They also wanted a provider with deep technical expertise and leadership in the codec because that foundation would be required to build and maintain a consistently reliable service.

### FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Hoffman said that he’s looking for new areas in which to use Circles, including grade schools for fresh learning opportunities and organic groups like book clubs.

The Circles team abstracted its technology from the underlying video engine and built a switch that could flip from one provider to another. Around this time, it so happened that one of Hoffman’s engineers took a full-time position with Vidyo, which had the desired flexible API, a cloud-based solution, deep technical knowledge, and proven reliability with its vidyo.io offering. Following his recommendation, Circles tested Vidyo and never flipped the switch back.

“In a matter of weeks, we had a working prototype, and then went live a couple of weeks later,” Hoffman said. “We had four developers work on the project. Vidyo was great — responsive and supportive.”

## Results

Circles officially launched on April 1, 2017, supporting companies, communities, and schools. Circles customers range across the B2B to B2C spectrum in such areas as training, technology, and project management. A top business school hired Circles to design and implement a program that would help students stay in touch after completing their program and stay affiliated with the school for continuing learning and other opportunities.

Circles provides an efficient way to conduct learning and development, saving clients substantial money and time. Hoffman noted that the average yearly price to join an executive peer group is about \$12,000, plus at least one day a month out of the office for participants. Circles can offer a

similar benefit via 90-minute desktop video meetings every other week. Since professional guides can run these groups from their homes, Circles can lower that \$12,000 price point to about a 10th of that — closer to \$1,000 to \$2,000.

To measure the success of its solutions, Circles enables clients to easily submit feedback via a survey after each meeting. Thus far, feedback has exceeded expectations. When Hoffman launched Circles, his target Net Promoter Score (NPS) was 40. To date, he’s seen his NPS range from 50 to 85. A more recent solution, Circles Workshop Product, which helps remote teams use video to conduct better meetings, has garnered NPS ratings of 50 to 60.



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