

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic enough for the boardroom. Practical enough to build what it decides.

Tavis Scholz is a multi-unit growth and development executive who spent twelve years building, scaling, and transforming Pepper Palace, a national specialty retailer — six leadership roles, store manager to Vice President of Real Estate & Franchise Development. Under his sales and operations leadership the chain grew from 21 stores and \$5.7M to 173 stores and \$38.5M, through a chain-wide POS migration, COVID-era phased reopening across dozens of jurisdictions, and the company's July 2021 equity event.

When strategy shifted from growth to discipline, he rebuilt the development department from zero staff to ten — in-house tenant-improvement crew included — and executed a 94-keep / 48-close rationalization through roughly 130 site projects, standardizing retrofits to a fixed five-day delivery. He then built the franchise system from zero: US and Canadian FDDs, an independently verified Item 19, a 17-chapter operations manual, and an AI-augmented sales process that closed the brand's first three franchisees within a year.



8X locations scaled nationally

21 → 173

point-of-sale growth

\$5.7M → \$38.5M

site-level projects delivered

130+

franchisees closed, from zero

0 → 3

SIGNATURE ACHIEVEMENTS

Built a franchise system from zero**150 inquiries · 3 deals closed · 10 months**

US and Canadian FDDs with counsel, a 614-market territory model, and an AI-augmented sales process one person could run — the first three franchisees closed at roughly twice the benchmark rate for new franchisors.

Scaled — then rationalized — a national portfolio**173 locations · \$38.5M sales · 94 retained**

A 154-store evaluation and triage system drove the 94-keep / 48-close decision; occupancy costs came into the target band and same-store sales returned to growth (+1.6% in 2025).

Built a repeatable development engine**130 projects · 5-day retrofits · 10-person team**

Cross-functional lifecycle playbooks behind ~130 site projects — 21 openings, 100+ wind-downs, 21 simultaneous exits in one month — with build errors near zero.

THE OPERATOR

He has owned every side of the seams where scaling problems live — where real estate meets operations, where sales planning meets labor cost, where a franchise promise meets what stores actually do. A former franchisee and former adjunct lecturer in entrepreneurship, he builds with modern tools — including AI where it genuinely compresses work — without making the technology the story.

IN BRIEF

- MBA — Carson College of Business, WSU (2020)
- BBA, *cum laude* — Entrepreneurship & International Business, WSU (2012)
- Former franchisee
- Adjunct Lecturer, Entrepreneurship — UMBC (2013)
- Native/bilingual English & German; limited Spanish
- Based in Sevierville, TN — working across North America