

KEN BELL

Senior Operations Executive • Hospitality, Venue & Multi-Unit Operations • Owner-Operator

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Working remotely on U.S. business hours • Available for approximately 20–30% travel • Consulting, project-based, fractional, interim & contract engagements

PROFILE

Operations leader and owner-operator with 25+ years running hospitality, live entertainment, food and beverage, and property businesses — as a turnaround manager, a general manager, and twice as an owner. Specialises in repairing underperforming operations: deployed into one struggling restaurant at a time across a multi-state group, recruited as a general manager to fix a failing store, and as an owner took over a struggling 150-capacity music venue, closed it for a two-week rebrand and relaunch, and grew sales nearly 300%. Founded a second independent venue, built it into one of Portland, Maine's premier live-music rooms, carried it and its team through the COVID-19 shutdown, and sold it. Won a multi-state restaurant group's top award for the largest sales growth in the company, running locations with budgets from \$1.8M to \$4.5M and staffs of 45 to 100+. Concurrently built a 15-unit rental portfolio across the United States and Mexico. Strongest where a business needs someone who has carried the risk — not an outside adviser.

SELECTED RESULTS

- **Grew sales nearly 300%** at a 150-capacity music venue and nightclub I took over struggling, across seven years of ownership.
- **Delivered the largest sales increase in a multi-state restaurant group (+30%)** and was recognised with the company's 2006 Ben Franklin Award, its annual award for top sales growth.
- **Founded, built, and profitably sold an independent live-music venue** — concept and buildout through to exit after seven years.
- **Drove a \$13,000 EBITDA increase within 30 days** at an underperforming \$1.4M restaurant carrying a \$2.5M target.
- **Led staffs of 45 to 100+ and ran locations with budgets from \$1.8M to \$4.5M** while repairing underperforming restaurants one at a time across a multi-state group.
- **Built and operated a 15-unit rental portfolio across two countries**, earning **589 guest reviews** and a **4.9 Airbnb Superhost rating** across ten years of hosting.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Operations Leadership Business Turnarounds & Restructuring • Operations Management • Multi-Unit Restaurant Operations • Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) • Operational Systems • Process Improvement • Interim & Project-Based Leadership • Operations Consulting

Hospitality & F&B Hospitality Operations • Restaurant Operations • Food & Beverage • Bar Program Management • Guest & Customer Experience • Service Delivery • Front-of-House Leadership • Private & Corporate Events

Venue & Entertainment Venue Management • Live Event Operations • Event Production • Talent Buying & Booking • Occupancy & Safety Compliance • Crowd Management

Property & Rentals Property Operations • Real Estate Development • Short-Term & Vacation Rental Management • Airbnb Operations • Renovation & Buildout Projects • Tenant & Guest Relations

Financial & Commercial P&L Ownership • Budgeting & Forecasting • Cost & Liquor Cost Control • Revenue & Sales Growth • Pricing Strategy • Inventory Management • Vendor Management & Negotiation

People & Compliance Team Building & Leadership • Hiring & Recruiting • Training Program Development • Manager Development • Scheduling • Licensing & Permitting • Liquor Licensing • Regulatory Compliance • Cross-Border Operations (U.S. / Mexico)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Principal — Operations Consulting

[[CONFIRM START YEAR]] - Present

Ken Bell Consulting — Mérida, Mexico • Remote & on-site, U.S. and international clients

- Operations consulting practice serving hospitality, experiential, property, and founder-led businesses — built on twenty-five years of operating and ownership experience rather than an advisory-firm background.
- Practice areas: operational systems and SOPs, guest and customer experience, service consistency, cost and margin control, vendor management, multi-unit consistency, and on-site operational assessment. Available independently and as an associate consultant through boutique consulting and fractional executive firms.
- Built and operate **Buy Smart In Mexico** (buysmartinmexico.com) — an independent 21-module due-diligence system for U.S. and Canadian buyers of Mexican property, with bilingual glossaries, closing-cost and rental calculators, worksheets and scorecards.
- Co-built **STR Host Advisory** (strhostadvisory.com) — nine modules of short-term-rental buying and operating courses, a guest-communication playbook, listing evaluations and a launch package, published under Two Smart Operators. Together the two amount to **thirty published modules of operating systems, checklists and scorecards** — documented work product any client or firm can review before hiring me.

Real Estate Developer & Rental Portfolio Operator

2015 - Present

Independent / Self-Employed — Mexico & United States

- Built and operate a portfolio that reached **15 short-term and long-term rental units** across two countries, managing listings, pricing, guest experience, turnover, maintenance, and vendors.
- Earned **589 guest reviews and a 4.9 Airbnb Superhost rating** — sustained, independently verified guest-experience performance at volume without corporate support infrastructure.
- Develop residential and investment property in Mexico from acquisition through renovation, buildout and furnishing — managing scope, budget, contractors and timelines.
- Navigate licensing, permitting, tax and regulatory requirements across two countries; built contractor, cleaning, maintenance and service-vendor networks in both. Ran these concurrently with a full-time U.S. music venue. Relocated to Mexico full-time in October 2022.

Founder & Owner / Operator

2015 – July 2022

Portland House of Music and Events (P.H.O.M.E.) — Portland, ME • Independent downtown live-music venue

- Conceived, built and launched an independent downtown Portland music venue (opened June 2015) and grew it into one of the city's premier live-music rooms.
- Directed all operations — talent booking, staffing, finance, marketing, bar program, event production, licensing, and guest experience — with full P&L ownership and final accountability for the business.
- Built the SOPs, service standards and operating systems that let the venue run consistently across widely varying event types and volumes.
- **Sustained the venue and its team through the COVID-19 shutdown and recovery**, managing staffing and the operational rebuild through reopening.
- Booked local through international talent; held responsibility for liquor licensing, entertainment permitting, occupancy and safety compliance, and municipal relationships.
- **Completed a profitable sale of the business in 2022** after seven years of ownership.

Management

2014 – 2015

One Longfellow Square — Portland, ME • Nonprofit live-music listening room

- Operations and programming at a respected nonprofit Portland music venue, immediately prior to founding P.H.O.M.E.

General Manager

2013 – 2014

Friendly's — South Portland, ME • Fast-casual family restaurant

- Recruited to turn around an underperforming location; completed the 12-week management training program three weeks early.
- Tasked with restoring a \$1.4M store toward \$2.5M in revenue; **drove a \$13,000 EBITDA increase within the first 30 days** and rebuilt staffing levels through creative recruiting.

Owner / Operator

2006 – 2013

The Big Easy — Portland, ME • 150-capacity music venue & nightclub

- Acquired a failing 150-capacity music venue and nightclub and **grew sales nearly 300%** over seven years of ownership.
- Implemented operating systems, theme nights and community events that expanded the customer base and built recurring revenue.
- Added a cold-serve food menu as a revenue stream without kitchen infrastructure, and built the talent relationships that let the venue compete against substantially larger rooms.
- **Developed managers capable of running all aspects of the business independently** — building an operation that did not depend on the owner being present.
- Won Portland Phoenix "Best Of" recognition — the Portland alt-weekly's annual readers' awards — during ownership.

Multi-Unit Manager

2000 – 2006

Margaritas Management Group — New England • Multi-state full-service restaurant group

- **Sent into one underperforming location at a time** — took over the restaurant, repaired and supported the operation, and moved to the next assignment when it was running. Six consecutive years of turnaround work across the group.
- **Delivered the largest year-over-year sales increase in the company (+30%)**; recognised with Margaritas Management Group's 2006 Ben Franklin Award, the company's annual award for top sales growth.
- **Ran locations with sales budgets from \$1.8M to \$4.5M** and consistently led all locations in liquor-cost efficiency.
- **Led staffs ranging from 45 to 100+** and established business relationships across multiple states.
- Authored the bar training manual adopted as the standard across the group's locations; developed multiple managers who were promoted within the company.

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING