

Jacob Gottlieb - CEO of Altium Capital: Investing, Philanthropy & Perseverance (from a native New Yorker)



Jacob Gottlieb, CEO at Altium Capital

Contact:
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CEOCFO: As you wind down the Visium Funds, what is your focus today?

Jacob Gottlieb: I've maintained my role as [CEO at Visium](#), and I have had the opportunity to step back and think about what kind of investing I would like to do going forward. For now, I plan to continue to reach a finalization of the current Visium Fund entities and look forward to investing in innovation, quality management and execution. Giving back to the community and supporting local organizations has always been important to me, even more so, now and in the future.

CEOCFO: Why is giving back important for you at this time?

Jacob Gottlieb: Even with some recent issues, I've been fortunate to have career success, and this has afforded me the ability to give back to the community. Earlier in my life I was extremely busy building my career and didn't have a lot of time or money to give back. Although I am quite busy investing, I really want to contribute to organizations that are dedicated to helping others further their education and realize success in their careers.

“My first investment success was when I was in the seventh grade and won a stock-picking contest... I have always enjoyed investing and evaluating new ideas- and I expect to continue for many decades to come.”- Jacob Gottlieb

CEOCFO: Where are you focusing your efforts and how did you decide; so much need today?

Jacob Gottlieb: Although there are a lot of very worthy causes and charitable organizations in need of support, I try to focus on local needs as much as possible. As a born and bred New Yorker, this city is very important to me and I love to be active and present in the organizations that I support. I think it's wonderful to be able to see my contributions and involvement make a difference in the city that has given so much to me.

CEOCFO: What is your [philanthropic role](#) at Covenant House, Math for America and Robin Hood?

Jacob Gottlieb: These three organizations provide critical support for children and youth and I am fortunate to be able to make recurring contributions to all three. They all have a very broad reach, but they are all rooted in New York. I have a true interest in giving back to my community and supporting youth to make sure that they not only have the basic support that they need, but also the education and resources to thrive and succeed.

CEO CFO: How does [your Medical Doctorate \(MD\)](#) provide a balanced perspective when solving problems?

Jacob Gottlieb: I find that there are actually many similarities between being a fund manager and being a scientist. In both professions, there is a high degree of risk management needed as well as the need for careful planning and decision making. In both cases you need to have a very methodical and logical thought process and ensure that you are addressing risks before a problem arises. And while that methodology may address the known knowns and known unknowns, the 'unknown' unknowns can arise and require flexibility and adaptation.

CEO CFO: What have you learned from experiences at various organizations – from the structural level down to the one-on-one encounters?

Jacob Gottlieb: At the organizational level you really get an appreciation for the business behind the organization. They are not businesses in the sense that they're trying to make money for shareholders, but they are very business-like in their operations. Everyone there should share one common goal: to make the biggest impact on the individuals and communities that they support. To do this, they have to be very strategic and maximize every dollar – much like a business. In terms of the one-on-one encounters, it has been very humbling to be surrounded by people who are so generous with their time and money. Some people contribute and some commit their lives to the organization.

CEO CFO: Where are we going wrong in helping people in need? What do you recognize that perhaps others do not?

Jacob Gottlieb: I think there's a lot of opportunity to get people involved with charitable endeavors at an earlier age. My family and school focused on charitable causes from childhood, instilling a sense of community and participation. Young people can get involved and make a difference and it doesn't have to be financial. I think it is important to embed an appreciation of the importance of philanthropy in young people by delivering a clear message as to why their support is needed. Schools and education are a great way to communicate this and get young people engaged in important causes.

CEO CFO: What is ahead for you?

Jacob Gottlieb: I am very excited by the prospects of my current firm, Altium Capital. We are making investments in innovative growth companies that may have a large impact. We have [invested in a number of healthcare companies](#) that are working on therapies for diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

CEO CFO: Striking out on your own to start Visium was a big risk. How did you handle the uncertainty you faced with starting your own company?

Jacob Gottlieb: When we created Visium I knew it would be difficult, but I also knew it was something I had to do. Managing other people's money is a responsibility, and of course there were times (ie during the financial crisis) when I had doubts. The key for me was to always remember that I had a number of key elements: solid experience, risk management, and a passion for doing the best work possible.

CEO CFO: How did you become interested in investing?

Jacob Gottlieb: My first investment success was when I was in the seventh grade and won a stock-picking contest. My father was always my biggest supporter and set me up with my own investment account when he saw I had an interest and aptitude for numbers and finance. I continued to pursue investing through high school, college and medical school and it naturally evolved into a career. I have always enjoyed investing and evaluating new ideas- and I expect to continue for many decades to come.