

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

After 41 years, the Columbia Tower Club is gone. *Its former General Manager built what comes next.*

Vantage launches in downtown Seattle on Thursday, July 23, 2026: an application-only network connecting the city's private clubs, anchored by a free public directory of local businesses and nonprofits.

780

FREE DIRECTORY LISTINGS

101

BIPOC-OWNED BUSINESSES

75

GUESTS IN THE ROOM

57

RESTAURANTS LISTED FREE

124

NONPROFITS LISTED FREE

\$0COST TO BE LISTED, EVER

The launch

Thursday, July 23, 2026

6:00 to 9:00 PM, downtown Seattle

Invitation only. Location shared with confirmed guests.

75 confirmed guests: founders, operators, and civic and organizational leaders, including leaders from several of Seattle's private clubs.

Membership

Founding rate: \$197 per month, held for as long as the membership stays active

Standard rate: \$497 per month once the window closes

Founding window: closes August 30, 2026, capped at 500 seats

Introductions: first within 30 days, three within the first 90

Home base club: included with membership. As more clubs join, members choose which is theirs.

The directory

780 listings, free permanently, funded entirely by membership dues.

474 businesses · 124 nonprofits · 101 BIPOC-owned · 57 restaurants · 24 venues

Vantage built the listings itself, unprompted. Any owner can claim a page or add a business at joinvantage.co/get-listed at no cost.

Listings are structured so AI assistants surface them when someone asks for a recommendation: visibility a small business cannot otherwise buy.

Clubs

The Shop, SoDo, founding flagship club: clubhouse, restaurant, and working garage under one roof.

Four additional clubs in conversation, several represented in the room on launch night.

Launch night partners

- Chef Thomas Cullen, cuisine
- Bloom Haus, bespoke florals
- Frederick Films, cinematography
- Brown Liquor Cocktail Co., the bar
- Seattle Glambot, slow-motion robotic camera
- DJ Yohiness, music

Broadcast: Fox 13, Studio 13 Live, Wednesday, July 22, 11:00 AM, with founder Rachael Barclay and former Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best. **Podcast:** Vantage Voices, wherever podcasts are found.

THE RELEASE, IN FULL

After 41 Years, the Columbia Tower Club Is Gone. Its Former General Manager Built What Comes Next.

Rachael Barclay, who ran the Columbia Tower Club before its April closure, launches Vantage: an application-only network connecting Seattle's private clubs, anchored by a free public directory of local businesses and nonprofits.

"A club gives you a room. Vantage gives you the person."

SEATTLE, WA, July 20, 2026. When the Columbia Tower Club closed at the end of April after 41 years, Seattle lost one of the important rooms where the city's corporate, civic, and cultural leadership actually met. Invited Clubs, its Dallas-based owner, cited downtown office vacancy near 40 percent. The room went dark at the exact moment downtown needed it most.

Rachael Barclay, the club's former general manager, saw the deeper problem from the inside: city clubs are strong rooms competing for the same members, none of them connected. Vantage is her answer. Instead of replacing one club, it connects many. Membership includes a home base club, and as more clubs join, members choose which one is theirs. The network then makes proactive introductions, the first within 30 days and three within the first 90, connecting members to the specific people they should know before they would ever find each other. The Shop, the SoDo "country club for car enthusiasts," signed as founding flagship, with four more clubs in conversation.

The old club's leadership is building it alongside her. Erick Slabaugh, Chair Emeritus; Jesse Rhodes Jr., former Board Chair; and Katrina Romatowski, former Vice Chair and CEO of reSpace, joined as founding members. Former Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best joined as Founding Civic Anchor. Shyan Selah, recording artist and founder of the Black Eco Chamber, and Norris Frederick, Team USA long jumper, joined as founding members.

The part of Vantage anyone can use costs nothing: a free public directory of Puget Sound businesses and nonprofits, funded entirely by the membership. 780 listings are live, including 101 BIPOC-owned businesses, 124 nonprofits, and 57 restaurants. Vantage built those listings itself, unprompted, and any owner can claim a page or add a business at joinvantage.co/get-listed at no cost, permanently. The listings are structured so that AI assistants surface them when someone asks for a recommendation, visibility a small business cannot otherwise buy. Barclay calls it a civic engine: the membership is the fuel, the directory is what it powers, and it feeds the city.

Restaurants are the clearest case. Operators here are absorbing higher wages and rising commodity costs, leaving almost nothing for marketing and PR. Vantage membership pays for that instead, which flips who funds a small business being found.

Vantage launches at an invitation-only event on Thursday, July 23, 2026, in downtown Seattle, with 75 confirmed guests including founders, operators, and civic and organizational leaders. Chef Thomas Cullen, the Columbia Tower Club's former executive chef, is preparing the food and debuting his own new venture the same night. Barclay and Best appear on Fox 13's Studio 13 Live on Wednesday, July 22 at 11:00 AM. The launch location is shared with confirmed guests. Founding membership applications are open at joinvantage.co, and the founding window closes August 30, 2026.

About Vantage. Vantage is a Seattle professional network and social club built on three pillars: a free public directory, The Blackbook private member directory, and proactive introductions matched through the proprietary Vantage Type assessment. Founded in 2026 by Rachael Barclay.

APPROVED QUOTES, CLEARED FOR PUBLICATION

"I spent seven years inside great rooms, watching them compete for the same people. Vantage is what happens when the rooms start working together instead. The clubs get stronger, the members get the whole city, and every membership pays to keep the directory free. Collaboration is the competitive advantage."

Rachael Barclay, Founder and CEO, Vantage

"I have spent my career talking about who gets into the room and who gets kept out. Vantage builds the connections this city never made and makes sure the people and businesses it overlooks are finally seen. That is why I signed on as Founding Civic Anchor."

Carmen Best, former Seattle Police Chief and Vantage Founding Civic Anchor

"The Columbia Tower Club was a room for people who already had access. Vantage is infrastructure for the entire city. Rachael didn't rebuild a club; she rebuilt the principle that made it matter: connection. And this time it belongs to everyone, not a landlord. That's the difference between a room and a movement."

Katrina Romatowski, CEO of reSpace, former Vice Chair of the Columbia Tower Club

"I live by a simple rule: create possibilities, not excuses. When the club closed, there was a perfectly good excuse to let its people scatter and fall out of touch. Rachael built the possibility instead. Now we are building this together, the way we always have, on our terms: Community first."

Jesse Rhodes Jr., former Board Chair of the Columbia Tower Club

"The essence of entrepreneurship rests in solving problems, but what makes something unique is the way in which the solution impacts its client or customer. I've always maintained the belief that innovation is the greatest form of protest and I think this idea reflects that ethos. Business professionals are looking for a type of authentic intimacy that's often lost in the fray of the hustle. That's how I see the utility of Vantage. It's a transportation system that builds roads for professionals to connect from one place to the next."

Shyan Selah, creative artist and entrepreneur; founder of Brave New World, The Black Eco Chamber, and The Artist Workshop. BECO and AWS represent a community of over a thousand business owners, professionals, and artists.

"Vantage is the network Seattle has been quietly needing for years. It's built on communication, curated introductions, and shared proximity, and it's built to connect the city's rooms instead of making them compete for the same humans. I'm a founding member because the room this builds is one I want to be in."

Norris Frederick, Team USA long jumper, cinematographer, Vantage founding member

WHO'S WHO, CAPTION-READY

Rachael Barclay — Founder and CEO of Vantage; former General Manager of the Columbia Tower Club (2023 to 2025); seven years with Invited Clubs in Philadelphia, San Jose, and Seattle. Built the Vantage platform and matching engine herself.

Carmen Best — Former Seattle Police Chief, keynote speaker, and on-air law enforcement analyst; Vantage's Founding Civic Anchor.

Jesse Rhodes Jr. — Former Board Chair of the Columbia Tower Club, Amazon ex-pat, speaker and author; Vantage charter member.

Katrina Romatowski — CEO of reSpace, former Vice Chair of the Columbia Tower Club; Vantage charter member.

Erick Slabaugh — Chair Emeritus of the Columbia Tower Club; Vantage charter member.

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Shyan Selah — Recording artist; founder and President of the Black Eco Chamber, Brave New World, and The Artist Workshop; Vantage founding member.

Norris Frederick — Team USA long jumper, 3x U.S. Indoor Bronze Medalist, 11x NCAA All-American, keynote speaker and cinematographer; Vantage founding member.

Chef Thomas Cullen — Former executive chef of the Columbia Tower Club; preparing the launch dinner and debuting his own new venture that night.

The Shop — The SoDo members-only country club for car enthusiasts: clubhouse, restaurant, and working garage under one roof. Vantage's founding flagship club.

Whitney Thom — Director, Membership and Partnerships. **Erica Carraway** — Venues and Marketing. info@joinvantage.co · 609.933.8849

FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

- 01** The Columbia Tower Club closed in April 2026 after 41 years. Its former general manager built what comes next.
- 02** Vantage connects clubs instead of replacing one. Members are matched to the right rooms, and the network makes the introductions on purpose.
- 03** The public part is free. A directory of Seattle businesses and nonprofits, open to any organization, is paid for entirely by the membership. 780 are already listed, including 101 BIPOC-owned businesses, 124 nonprofits, and 57 restaurants.
- 04** The founding circle spans the whole city: former Police Chief Carmen Best, Black Eco Chamber founder Shyan Selah, Team USA long jumper Norris Frederick, and the Columbia Tower Club's own former board leadership.
- 05** It launches Thursday, July 23, 2026 in downtown Seattle. Applications are open now at joinvantage.co, and the founding window closes August 30.

ABOUT THE COLUMBIA TOWER CLUB

The Columbia Tower Club, on the 75th and 76th floors of Seattle's iconic skyscraper, opened in 1985 with 1,600 founding members. Through the 1990s membership ran between 2,200 and 2,500. In the years that followed, the number declined. The decision to close in April 2026 was driven by high office vacancy along with post-COVID remote work.

Members at the time of closure were offered the chance to transfer their membership at a preferred rate of \$80 per month to The Collective, a social club in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood.

Media contact

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The Shop, founding flagship

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