An Orange County Business Journal Special Report & Custom Content

CFO OF THE YEAR Awards

China ... Hurricanes ... New Execs ... 2019 Winners' Big Year

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CFO Award Nominees Start on Page 56

Awards Ceremony at Hotel Irvine on January 30, 2020

2019 CFOs of the Year: Carter, Dicks, Sharifi, Henry, Sunderland

Five CFOs Won, Then Had Dramatic Years

Global Unrest, Unruly Weather, C-Suite Changes, New Roles

From the U.S. banning a key Chinese customer, to a real live hurricane, to a chief executive in office seven months, to new roles, last year's Business Journal Chief Financial Officers of the Year had quite the 2019 … where 2020 will take our next slate of honorees after they're named is a story for another day. For now, we tell the tale of last year's Gang of Five, their companies, and five thrilling years in one.

—*Peter J. Brennan*

Cristina Brill, David Sunderland

Hurricane, Literally

David Sunderland, senior vice president of finance at **Emerald Expositions Events Inc.**, won as a Rising Star; his year saw a hurricane, literally; a tornado, figuratively, striking company shares; and an eclipse, of sorts: a big change in senior management.

After **David Loechner** resigned as CEO in November 2018, Emerald's board took more than six months to June 1 find a replacement, **Sally Shankland**. A week later the company also appointed **Brian Field** COO.

Six months later, Shankland said she'd step down for personal health reasons and was replaced by Field as interim.

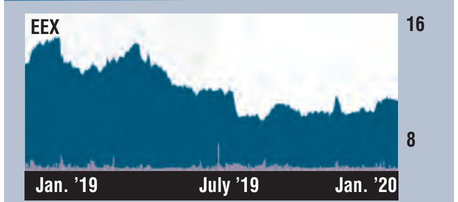
A hurricane also hit. The trade show operator reported third-quarter sales fell 27% to $75.6 million, partly because Hurricane Dorian caused the cancellation of two shows on the East Coast.

To top it off, its shares faced a whirlwind as well, dropping 12% in 2019; it now has a $750 million market cap. Sales are expected to climb 1.8% to $368.9 million in 2020, according to the average estimate of seven analysts.

Emerald (NYSE: EEX) built itself into a powerhouse through 15 acquisitions in five years. In 2018, it attracted 500,000 global attendees to more than 55 trade shows, taking more than 7 million square feet of exhibition space.

As executives came and went, the company's buying spree slowed. Its most notable local deal was last month for action sports online news site **Shop Eat Surf**, run by former **OC Register** reporter **Tiffany Montgomery**.

EMERALD EXPOSITIONS EVENTS INC.



- **HEADQUARTERS:** San Juan Capistrano
- **BUSINESS:** trade shows
- **FOUNDED:** 2013
- **TICKER SYMBOL:** EEX (NYSE)
- **2019 EST. REVENUE:** $362.3 million (7 analysts; down 4.8%)
- **MARKET VALUE:** $750 million
- **NOTABLE:** named Sally Shankland CEO in June; she resigned last month, citing health

Philip Carter

Now Hiring

Skyworks Solutions Inc.'s **Philip Carter** is a humble guy.

He didn't cite last year's CFO of the Year win in the Corporate Controller category on his LinkedIn page—but he did say the company (Nasdaq: SWKS) is hiring.

"If your New Year's resolution is to learn and be a part of a dynamic organization that is playing a big role in new technologies then now is a great time to join our team in Irvine, California!" he wrote last month.

His department at Skyworks oversees all financial and Securities and Exchange Commission reporting; general, technical and international accounting; Sarbanes-Oxley compliance; and payroll and fixed assets.

Skyworks is based in Woburn, Mass., though most of the chipmaker's management, including CEO **Liam Griffin**, works out of facilities in Irvine that total about 218,000 square feet.

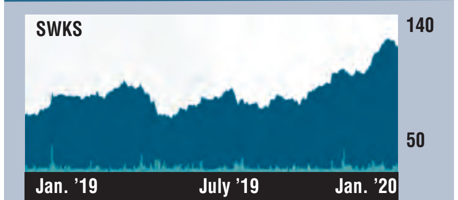
It wasn't the best year for sales: FY 2019 revenue fell 13% to $3.37 billion, in part because the U.S. banned sales to one of its key customers, **Huawei Technologies Co.**

The company's shares, however, had a great year: rising 84% to $120.88. It now sports a $20 billion market cap and entered the year as OC's third largest chipmaker by employee count with 444 workers, up 9% from a year earlier, according to Business Journal data.

Companywide, it employed 9,000 as of Sept. 27.

➡ *Big Year 22*

SKYWORKS SOLUTIONS INC.



- **HEADQUARTERS:** Woburn, Mass.
- **BUSINESS:** semiconductors
- **FOUNDED:** 2002
- **TICKER SYMBOL:** SWKS (Nasdaq)
- **FY19 REVENUE:** $3.4 billion (down 13%)
- **FY19 NET INCOME:** $853.6 million (down 7.1%)
- **MARKET VALUE:** $20 billion
- **NOTABLE:** U.S. Bureau of Industry and Security placed Huawei Technologies and certain affiliates on a do-not sell to list. Skyworks said 12% of its first-half 2019 sales went to Huawei.

Big Year

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Hotel Irvine, site of this month's CFO of the Year event


Allen Dicks

Spree Continues

After **Allen Dicks** took over as CFO of **Montrose Environmental Group Inc.**, he helped grow revenue 25% annually through 15 acquisitions, a feat that helped him win Outstanding CFO of a Private Company at last year's Business Journal awards ceremony.

The acquisition pace hasn't let up.

Montrose last year bought six more firms to expand in countries like Canada and Australia and in specialties such as spotting gas leaks. It typically buys companies with revenues between $2 million and $10 million, and with 10 to 15 employees.

The company's employee count has grown from more than 1,000 to 1,300 and it added 10 offices, to about 60.

Montrose's environmental consulting includes measurements and analytics, planning and permitting, environmental solutions, and waste-to-resources. Clients include Fortune 500 firms, with business lines ranging from oil and gas to manufacturing to automotive.

"It's a very fast-paced company, and everyone rolls up their sleeves to help the company grow," Dicks said a year ago. "There are no egos here. I've never seen anything like it."

One item likely still on the to-do list: an IPO. The company has said it could happen this year.

Montrose Environmental Group Inc.

- **FOUNDED:** 2012
- **CEO:** Vijay Manthripragada
- **BUSINESS:** environmental consultant
- **ANNUAL REVENUE:** $150 million (est.)
- **EMPLOYEES:** 1,300
- **OWNERSHIP:** private; undisclosed stake held by Oaktree Capital
- **NOTABLE:** Manthripragada was CEO of PetCareRx and SVP in Goldman Sachs' investment banking unit


Rebecca Miller, Guita Sharifi, Adam Cohen

Charter Member

Guita Sharifi believes a nonprofit should be run more like a business.

She's taken that attitude from an organization that helps AIDS victims to one that tries to provide better schooling for the poor.

She doubled revenue and cut costs by 35% at the **AIDS Services Foundation** and was honored as the Business Journal's CFO of the Year in the Nonprofit category. The foundation changed its name to **Radiant Health Centers** to reflect broader services.

"If you are not profitable, you can't provide the programs and services your population needs," she said a year ago.

On Oct. 15, she left Radiant and the next day started as CFO of **Learn4Life Network**, a network of 90 charter schools. The San Clemente resident commutes up to four days a week to Lancaster-based Learn4Life, which has a $350 million budget and more than 2,400 employees. The organization manages all the administration from fiscal oversight to technology to the curriculum.

While she left Radiant as a full-time employee, she continues working there part time to help it prepare its annual budget and training its new CFO.

Learn4Life Network

- **FOUNDED:** 2001
- **SUPERINTENDENT:** Caprice Young
- **BUSINESS:** network of charter schools
- **ANNUAL BUDGET:** $300 million
- **EMPLOYEES:** 2,400
- **NOTABLE:** Superintendent Young raised in a foster family, worked at IBM and then elected president of Los Angeles School Board; member of Charter School Hall of Fame


Shelli and Mike Henry

Tilly's Promotions

A year ago, **Michael Henry** became teary eyed when accepting the Business Journal's CFO of the Year award for public companies.

The CFO at **Tilly's Inc.** (NYSE: TLYS) recalled the support of his parents, who grew up poor and pushed him to live "a better life."

The company's affection for Henry was shown by a raucous standing ovation at the event and the firm's chairman and co-founder, **Hezy Shaked**, who rushed the stage to raise a glass to Henry.

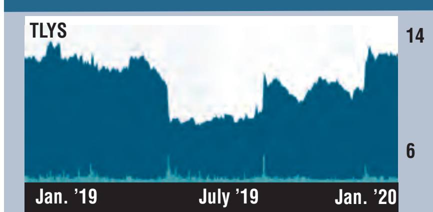
Tilly's dramatic year continued. Its stock fell 35% in May as it revealed second quarter sales were off to a slow start, due in large part to bad weather nationwide.

Then shares jumped 29% in September on positive momentum in the back-to-school season and popped 24% in December on "a good start to the holiday season."

All in, Tilly's shares climbed 22% in 2019.

Another positive: Tilly's promoted Henry to executive vice president, as well as CFO for "his contributions to the company."

TILLY'S INC.



- **HEADQUARTERS:** Irvine
- **BUSINESS:** retailer of casual, SoCal-inspired apparel, footwear and accessories
- **FOUNDED:** 1982
- **TICKER SYMBOL:** TLYS (NYSE)
- **Q3 REVENUE:** $154.8 million (up 5.4% y/y)
- **Q3 NET INCOME:** $6.4 million (up 19% y/y)
- **MARKET VALUE:** $357 million
- **NOTABLE:** Q3 physical store sales rose 2.4% while e-commerce sales climbed 7.4%. Ecommerce sales now 15% of revenue.


What's keeping
your business
from growing?
CAPITAL FOR EXPANSION
OPERATING EXPENSES
AGING EQUIPMENT
COMPETITIVE PRESSURE
ACCELERATING GROWTH

PwC's Private Company Services

Digital Transformation for Private Companies

Whether your organization is aspiring to be smarter, create capabilities for the future, break ground in new markets or redefine business at its core, a good digital strategy is never about technology for technology's sake—it's about serving the overall needs of the organization.

The right technology applied strategically can energize a business. But while private companies may underestimate the value of technology or the role digitization can play, it's often these same companies that stand to benefit the most. For many, getting serious about digital transformation can be a differentiator that unlocks their true potential for growth.

Align your digital strategy with your business strategy

Just as every successful company has a well-conceived business plan, so too do they need an equally well-considered digital strategy, which should be seen as a fundamental extension of the business strategy. Yet 64 percent of top financial performers say their business faces a serious threat from digital disruption, according to PwC's 2018 Digital IQ Survey.

How to address this challenge? The experts at PwC's Private Company Services (PCS) believe the first step is better communication between leadership and the head of the company's digital function (CIO, CTO, digital director, or another role). For companies that are developing a digital strategy for the first time, there is an opportunity for that process to act as a catalyst which will define and drive leadership consensus for overall business planning.

"When you have multiple areas that require technology-driven change, it's a big benefit to have a single, overarching plan that strategically aligns with the business goals," says Dan Moses, PwC Private Company Services Advisory Digital & Technology Lead. Creating such a plan helps ensure that as you embark on a digital journey, your technology strategy does not pull resources or focus away from the overall business strategy, but rather is a key extension of it that helps to further the organization's core objectives.

Shift your focus to the human element of digital change

To be successful, a digital endeavor of any scale must be developed with the stakeholders in front of mind. The human element is one that PCS constantly sees companies overlook, to their own peril. PwC's 2018 Digital IQ Survey found only 54 percent of top financial performers say their leadership is digitally savvy and helps the workforce think in a new way. Moreover, more than half lack a structure for delivering training—so it comes as no surprise that 70 percent of technological transformations suffer from users' failure to adopt new behaviors. This shows a clear disconnect between the skills and technologies that companies say matter most and what they're investing in at the human level.

"Overlooking the human element has been a factor in nearly all failed technology deployments," says Moses. "But with enough foresight and planning, companies can avoid this pitfall." PCS suggests digital leaders take the time to empathize with their counterparts across the business. "Digital leaders need to evaluate technologies that could support new capabilities and their corresponding functions and anticipate the effects that technological changes will have on the employee experience, customer experience, as well as processes across the business," says Moses. The lessons gleaned in this deep dive can then be advocated upon in discussions with the C-suite.

Next, companies must support, manage, and take full advantage of new technology by investing in people with the right skills, whether they be trained in-house, recruited externally, or outsourced. "Our approach for technology adoption is really a very personal one," says Moses. To do it right, PCS suggests investing specifically in digital fitness and upskilling, so that stakeholders are equipped with the skills to use new tech in their day-to-day work, with real-world applicability.

Create a roadmap to enable growth and innovation

PCS recommends a digital strategy roadmap to outline key initiatives, identify dependencies, and account for constraints like limited resources. Such a roadmap can also anticipate "foundational" activities, projects, and components that need to be in place ahead of business functions that a company might be newly developing.

"Developing a roadmap doesn't mean answering all the questions, but rather outlining when the questions need to be answered." says Moses. A roadmap is particularly useful in helping drive decisions about how to deploy new technology (e.g., "big-bang" approach, site-by-site, etc.) and assess the accompanying tradeoffs. It also helps set stakeholder expectations about which enhanced capabilities they will have and when.

Digital strategies are never complete—they should be reevaluated and tweaked, at a minimum annually. However, the strategy effort must not overshadow its execution: mobilizing resources, hammering out the details, lining up vendors, and finally implementing the new technologies. When executed thoughtfully, a digital transformation opens the doors of innovation and growth for businesses of all sizes.

The most meaningful technologies might support your business processes, or run your business processes more efficiently, saving time that employees can then spend on more impactful work. Other technologies facilitate better communication and empower your workforce with data so you can make better decisions. The list goes on. "When it comes to enabling an organization's growth, the importance of investing in technology cannot be overstated," says Moses.

Don't go it alone

Many organizations that are developing a digital strategy can benefit from outside assistance. "Privately-held businesses are America's growth engines," says Moses. Bringing in fresh perspective informed by experience in developing digital strategies can be energizing. "Our private company services team knows how to drive technology-enabled change and balance cost and disruption to the business while realizing value," Moses adds.

For all private companies, big and small, a well-considered digital strategy is critical. Not only will it help justify technology investments that top leadership must approve—along with the time and resources necessary for implementation—but it will also empower the company's larger business strategy. Remember, the best digital strategies do more than enable business planning—rather, they help shape it.

For more information please visit us at www.pwc.com/us/privatecos.

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MARSH & McLENNAN AGENCY

What CFOs Should Know Going Into 2020

By Trindl Reeves, Chief Sales Officer at Marsh & McLennan Agency

Chief Financial Officers are facing a challenging year of managing risk and insurance costs. Here are some things to keep an eye on in our current market.

Property Insurance – Be Prepared To Pay More

The insurance market was expected to firm up in 2019, but the dramatic shift in the cost of claims in California surprised even those expecting rates to rise.

The property insurance market has been buffeted over the past few years by record losses from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, as well as the California wildfires. Another rough California wildfire season could pressure carriers to raise rates even further next year. Each quarter, rates are increasing more than the last. The carriers are increasing rates in what they view is a correction to years of underpricing.

Impact

A firming market typically means higher premiums, tighter underwriting, and less competition for your business. Almost in unison, carriers have decided to recoup the recent catastrophic losses with rate increases. In some instances, those increases have been dramatic. Businesses with operations in earthquake and flood zones are likely to see the biggest rate hikes. Organizations with dated facilities could also see big premium increases. Now is a good time to upgrade older properties/assets or to consider disposing of them to minimize risk and premium increases.

Auto Coverage – Rates Also Going Up

Like the property market, the auto insurance market will continue to harden. Due to a rapid increase in claim frequency due to distracted driving and the increased cost to repair vehicles, carriers are reluctant to take on more auto liability risk. Their unwillingness to do so points to the softening profitability of their auto portfolios.

Impact

CFOs that manage fleets will need to think creatively to find the best rates and coverage. Fewer insurers are willing to cover large fleets. At the same time, insurers are scrutinizing the hiring procedures and driver safety programs of clients. Even those with the best safety records are seeing double-digit rate increases.

Directors & Officers Liability – The Struggle Continues

The current environment is the most challenging D&O insurance market since the dot.com bust. New and unfavorable case law has exposed carriers to significant new liability. As a result, the outlook for D&O insurance isn't likely to improve any time soon.

Impact

Both public and private companies need to be more diligent than ever. The 2018 *Cyan* decision permits suits to be filed against companies in both federal and state court for the same event. Insurance companies are very concerned about the ongoing and future cost of these claims. To manage costs, clients should be sure to request multiple options on the structure of their program and consider higher deductibles possibly lowering limits where possible.

IPO-bound companies seeking D&O insurance should also expect to pay three to five times more for coverage compared to just 24 months ago. Rates will continue to go up.

What to do in a market like this?

In these market conditions, CFOs will need to carefully evaluate the proper level of necessary coverage and potentially make difficult decisions. To manage cost and risk upon renewal, companies should consider doing the following:

- Start the renewal process early and engage the entire C-Suite so there are no surprises
- Differentiate your company during the renewal process. Make sure you know how your broker is positioning your company.
- Evaluate the amount of insurance to be purchased in advance by understanding your risk profile and your peer group benchmarking.
- Be proactive about risk mitigation initiatives, which will help control rate increases.
- Develop a plan to manage loss control visits when increasingly cautious carriers come to your facilities.
- Don't rely on past performance and relationships for renewal success. Underwriters have specific criteria and may not have room to negotiate. Be open to searching global markets for coverage.
- Explore the use of alternative markets, such as increased retentions and captives.
- Most importantly, work with a strategic business insurance broker like Marsh & McLennan Agency, who can secure coverage for all types of risk and has the global reach and resources to provide the most competitive rates and comprehensive advice.

MMA-West.com

Trindl Reeves is Chief Sales Officer, at Marsh & McLennan Agency (MMA), West Region. MMA is a full-service business insurance and employee benefits brokerage helping organizations identify risk and opportunities, secure coverage from best-of-breed providers, and create risk management and employee benefits programs that power your strategic objectives.

Growing Confidence Conflicts with Rising Cyber Concerns

Cybercrime has become a reality for the middle market. While major cyber incidents and data breaches at large corporations such as Marriott and Facebook continue to capture global headlines, middle market companies are starting to recognize that they are often the prime target for cybercriminals. In the past, midsized companies often held the perception that they were too small to be a target for hackers. However, with rising concern across the board about several types of cybersecurity attacks as uncovered in the RSM US Middle Market Business Index survey, these companies are starting to take notice.

According to the same report,15 percent of middle market C-suite executives said their companies experienced a data breach in the last year, up from 13 percent in 2018 and a significant jump from 5 percent just four years ago. Larger middle market organizations continue to be the most at risk, with high volumes of valuable data to attract cybercriminals, but lacking the robust security resources of their large-cap peers. However, the focus on data breaches can be misleading, as the term data breach typically entails a cyber-incident resulting in stolen sensitive data. There are a wide variety of cyber incidents that do not result in theft of data, such as ransomware, which interrupts business operations or types of social engineering that could cause the direct theft of funds from bank accounts.

Over half of middle market executives surveyed indicated it is likely that unauthorized users will attempt to access their organization's data or systems in 2019. In an effort to protect their firms and individual users against cybersecurity threats, more than half of midsized companies report carrying cyber insurance. However, among those organizations with coverage, only 43 percent of executives claim familiarity with policy details. In addition to cybersecurity challenges, emerging data privacy regulations are requiring organizations to make a significant shift in how they collect and store data. The European Union's General Data Privacy Regulation, known as GDPR, took effect in May 2018. Similar legislation is emerging in the United States, led by the California Consumer Protection Act, and congressional hearings have discussed regulation at the federal level. The new laws do not focus on how companies protect data, but rather why they have it in the first place, and these regulations create an array of new business challenges for organizations highly reliant on customer data.

Cybersecurity threats to the middle market are very broad and evolving. RSM's survey shows that criminals show no signs of backing down in the middle market, but they are slowly shifting from attacks meant to steal data to those meant to extract payment directly from the victim. Attacks come by several means: forcing the victim to pay a ransom, stealing funds by compromising corporate bank accounts or tricking the victim into making fraudulent payments. With generally limited resources, middle market organizations must place a premium on awareness and benchmarking to help mitigate the threat of cybersecurity attacks and to comply with data privacy regulations.

Despite more middle market companies experiencing a data breach or other cyber incident in the last year, and rising levels of concern over future attacks, almost all of the executives polled in RSM's research are confident in their current security measures. RSM's survey found that 93 percent of middle market executives are confident in their organization's measures to safeguard sensitive customer data or their own environments for the second consecutive year. While the number of reported breaches has tripled over the last five years, the level of confidence expressed by executives has actually grown by 18 points. This creates a potentially dangerous situation where executives have a false sense of security, seeing their peers falling victim to attacks but fully believing that "it can't happen to us."

Increased spending on information security is one potential reason for a high level of confidence. We have found that middle market companies are indeed making larger cybersecurity investments, but many need to implement more defined plans to ensure the right products and services are chosen and appropriate changes are made to their environment and business processes.

In addition, many middle market companies have aligned their processes to an established information technology security framework, whether due to regulatory compliance obligations or in an effort to improve their security posture. However, while mapping controls and functions to one of these frameworks is an effective first step, it does not mean that an organization is fully secure. These standards are meant to provide a strong foundation for information security, but companies must also consider several additional elements based on their specific industry and business objectives. Adopting a security framework can provide a sense of security, but not further adjusting it to the business can create security gaps.

Finally, communication breakdowns can occur among executives, the board and the people on the ground who are implementing security processes and controls. Sometimes what is communicated to the board is a vastly different view than the perception of security inside the data center. Organizations must ensure their stakeholders are on the same page from top to bottom to properly understand and address potential security issues.

RSM has developed this report to provide insights into relevant middle market cybersecurity and data privacy trends, and to highlight steps companies can take to enhance security and privacy efforts. Our research shows that the threat to the middle market is growing, but the organizations have only become more confident in current protections. Generally, companies have taken steps to improve cybersecurity, but criminals are becoming more sophisticated and determined. Cyber threats are going to continue to evolve and attackers will continue to get smarter. Middle market businesses must ensure that security investments, controls and communications align with rising threats, and that current actions do not create a false sense of security.

To learn more about the top cyber threats facing the middle market, please visit www.rsmus.com.

The Opportunities and Risks in Tariff Engineering

After years of conducting foreign trade in a stable environment, the ongoing discussions regarding renegotiating aspects of the U.S. government's global trade policy represent uncharted territory for many U.S. companies. In October 2019 alone, new tariffs were levied on goods from the European Union, while a preliminary breakthrough in negotiations with China led to the temporary suspension of a scheduled rise in tariffs on some $250 billion in Chinese products from 25 percent to 30 percent. But by mid-November, the possibility of those tariffs still increasing reemerged, while another bump up in tariffs on Chinese goods, remained on the calendar for December.

With the ongoing negotiations and uncertainty, it's useful to seek ways to mitigate the potential impact of higher input costs on your bottom line. Though options are limited, it's still advisable to consider trying to obtain tariff relief. Knowing what you can do legally and how to protect yourself against unscrupulous suppliers offering tariff reduction strategies can be essential to navigating this new era of fluctuating tariffs successfully.

Opportunities for Tariff Relief

Among appropriate means of gaining relief from increased tariffs is re-sourcing your inputs to suppliers of similar goods in lower-tariff countries, or even to domestic suppliers. Vietnam, for example, has adopted trade policies intended to ensure its manufacturers are more cost-competitive with those in China. The country has also entered into several free trade agreements to further enhance its status as a desirable trade partner to U.S. companies. While re-sourcing is time-consuming, switching could be a worthwhile exercise given resolution to the U.S. trade disputes could take some time.

Another option is to engage in permitted tariff engineering. This involves changing product designs to produce a favorable classification in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS). The HTSUS is a federal statute containing some 18,927 entries. Each entry is a code for merchandise that provides the corresponding rate of duty. For instance, a clothing manufacturer might find that a small adjustment in the fiber content of its raincoats could drastically reduce the cost of importing while preserving the quality and design.

Challenging the HTSUS codes and requesting exclusions is another option. While importers do not need permission from Customs to change the tariff codes the importers assign to merchandise, given the high profile of the new tariffs, importers should be cautious. There is a formal process of requesting a binding classification ruling from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and another for challenging a classification applied by Customs. The government has also permitted importers of steel and aluminum products and of goods from China that are subject to additional duties to request an exception. This involves submitting requests to the Department of Commerce (DOC) or the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. But it involves preparing petitions, submitting arguments, and time. Decisions may not come quickly.

Since June, when the appeals process became available, 31,000 requests for exemptions from the tariffs imposed on Chinese goods in the first round of the trade war had been made through mid-October. The U.S. Trade Representative had only ruled on 439 requests and denied 86 percent of them.

Relocating facilities to a free trade zone (FTZ) can eliminate tariffs altogether. FTZs are defined geographic areas spread across the country where goods may be stored, handled or assembled, and re-exported without incurring tariffs. For a current list of locations, check the Department of Commerce's website. If goods subject to additional duties are eventually entered into the commerce of the United States, duties may be due at that time.

Using bonded warehouses is another option. This involves taking delivery of goods subject to increased tariffs and storing them for up to five years. After this storage period, the goods can be exported directly from the warehouse or released into the U.S. market after the associated tariffs have lapsed or an exclusion requested from DOC is granted. Like FTZ, goods withdrawn from a bonded warehouse that enter the commerce of the United States may be subject to duty at that time.

What to Be Wary Of

While the above opportunities can mitigate the added expense of tariffs, there are several activities you should avoid, along with the firms and individuals who may suggest them to you or engage in them without your knowledge. Among the most common are foreign suppliers who offer to alter the HTSUS codes on their products or relabel goods to make them appear as if they come from a low-tariff country. Both activities are illegal.

Some foreign exporters and logistics companies are advertising tariff reduction strategies. These strategies involve rerouting shipments—also known as transshipping—through low-tariff ports to make it appear that they are not coming from China at all, but from Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia or another Southeast Asian country. While re-routing is not automatically illegal in the U.S., changing or disguising the country of origin of a shipment is.

The greatest risk you may face, however, is from exporters who simply change codes without your knowledge or misrepresent the location of their factories. The U.S. government expects you to do your due diligence and verify where your goods are coming from and that they are properly coded.

The penalties for knowingly reporting an incorrect country of origin to Customs can equal the value of the shipment in question. And, if false statements are intentionally made to the government, criminal penalties may also be assessed.

Where the misreporting is due to negligence—not executing care in performing due diligence and reporting information to Customs—the penalty can range up to twice the amount of the underpayment. However, if there was reason for you to be suspicious, and you ignored the signs of incorrect information rather than just missing them, the associated penalty may be as much as four times the underpayment.

If Customs has reason to be concerned about a shipment or happens to inspect it and finds an issue, it can seize your goods. In addition, inquiries may arise well after the goods are received and sold. In such cases, importers are assessed civil penalties or "liquidated damages" depending on the violation.

Trust but Verify

To help protect yourself, here are some actions to consider taking prior to placing orders with new vendors. These actions go beyond simply conducting a Google search to verify that a supplier is located where they say they are:

- Check the Internet for satellite imagery of the factory or engage someone to confirm and document that it exists.
- Visit the production facility or have a trusted agent do it for you.
- Ask to view records showing that the supplier has the machinery and personnel necessary to manufacture your goods.
- Require proof of payment and receipt of the raw materials used in your goods and evidence that shipping is being made directly from that facility to you.
- Contact local authorities to verify that the producer of your goods is a registered business.
- Crosscheck the HTSUS codes associated with your shipment.
- Verify the trade route before agreeing to it.

To lessen their risks, some U.S. importers are purchasing based on "delivered duty paid" terms. This is intended to make the seller responsible for compliance. Unfortunately, the strategy may not prevent liability. U.S. Customs has increasingly shown signs of treating the arrangement with suspicion.

Stay Informed

At a time when companies of all sizes view global opportunities as the key to their future growth, this year's ongoing shifts in the trade environment give rise to added risks and costs in conducting business overseas. Know that your international trade specialists are here to keep you updated. They'll work with you as you determine your best strategies for dealing with the evolving tariff environment in the most constructive way for your business.

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Fifth Third Bancorp is a diversified financial services company headquartered in Cincinnati. As of September 30, 2019, Fifth Third had $171 billion in assets and operated 1,143 full-service banking centers and 2,487 ATMs with Fifth Third branding in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Florida, Tennessee, West Virginia, Georgia and North Carolina. In total, Fifth Third provides its customers with access to approximately 53,000 fee-free ATMs across the United States. Fifth Third operates four main businesses: Commercial Banking, Branch Banking, Consumer Lending and Wealth & Asset Management.

Joe Yurosek

Fifth Third Bank hired Joe in December 2017 as California Market President to lead the Golden State's commercial vertical and market expansion strategy. An Orange County native and long-time resident, Joe has more than 25 years of banking experience; he joined Fifth Third from Comerica, where he served as market president for the Orange County region. He also was responsible for corporate middle-market strategy in Orange County, Long Beach and San Diego and co-led sponsor coverage strategy for Southern California. Joe holds a bachelor's degree from California Polytechnic State University – San Luis Obispo and earned his MBA from University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business.

For more information, please contact Joe Yurosek at (949) 576-3850 or joseph.yurosek@53.com.

Solving the Succession Puzzle: 5 Tips to Ensure a Smooth Transition

Leaving a business in capable hands can take years of forethought, planning, grooming and communication. Unfortunately, far too few business owners strategically prepare for their intended departure from the business. 61% of wealthy investors expect business succession planning advice to be a component of their financial plan, but only 6% have it included as part of their plan. A properly structured succession plan can help you understand the value of your business, preserve that value and its growth potential, and pass it on intact to leave a legacy.

According to a recent survey, 58% of business owners don't have a succession plan. This lack of preparation is a major reason why only 30% of family businesses survive as they transition to the second generation, only 12% are still under the third generation, and only about 3% operate into the fourth generation or beyond.

The successful transition of a business depends on several elements: the legal structure must suit the strategy, the strategy must address the interests of heirs, and the successors must be prepared and able to lead the business. While a comprehensive plan will address these and other points, below are five best practices business owners can follow as they plan their succession.

1 Start early

It's never too early to formulate a succession plan. A thoughtfully constructed succession process can take several years. The longer you spend on succession planning, the smoother the transition process will likely be. Revisit the plan periodically to make sure it remains relevant to your current needs as your business continues to grow over time.

2 Assemble a trusted team of advisors

A succession plan will involve legal and financial aspects that require the expertise of an attorney, an accountant, a financial planner and an investment banker. An experienced wealth advisor can help you assemble a team of specialists and craft a well-structured plan that can make a profound impact on the value of your business and help you achieve your objectives.

3 Involve family in discussion and encourage input

When transitioning a business to family members, if the family or other heirs don't agree with its terms or have input in the process, the plan stands little chance of success. Create an open dialogue among family members. Pay close attention to the personal feelings and expectations of everyone concerned as well as the goals of the business to eliminate conflict.

4 Choose business successors wisely

Just because they are your children does not mean they are qualified or interested in leading your business. Examine the strengths of all possible successors objectively and think about what's best for the business. Separating management from ownership can be very constructive. Your business is an asset and your primary objective should be to maximize its value, not serve as an employment vehicle for family members.

5 Define your role and exit strategy

Start by separating your responsibilities as CEO from your family responsibilities and your personal goals. These three domains often conflict so try to gain clarity on these objectives and responsibilities.

Define your succession objectives: will you transfer ownership to the next generation or will you seek liquidity through a third-party sale or other liquidity mechanism? If you expect to ultimately seek liquidity, ask yourself the following questions: what do I want my business to be worth when I exit, what are the attributes that will command such value, how much longer do I want to own the business, and can I make the changes needed to make the exit value match my expectations in that timeframe? If the answer is no, you will have to adjust your expectations or implement steps to grow the business into your target value.

Finally, learn about the various liquidity mechanisms available in today's markets. Transferring ownership and gaining liquidity do not necessarily mean giving up control. Recapitalizations and teaming up with private equity sponsors are common strategies that allow owners to gain partial liquidity and continue growing their business with an institutional partner before they pursue a final exit.

For more information, contact Steve Sherline at stephen.sherline@unionbank.com or visit our website to learn more about our wealth planning options.

The foregoing article is intended to provide general educational information about business succession planning and is not considered financial or tax advice from Union Bank. Wills, trusts, foundations and wealth planning strategies have legal, tax, accounting and other implications. Clients should consult a legal or tax adviser.

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[1] © Spectrem Group – 2019 Defining Financial Planning report. Survey of wealthy investors with $5 mm - $25 mm in net worth, not including their primary residence.
[2] "The Power of Planning," Wilmington Trust. Available at: https://www.wilmingtontrust.com/repositories/wtc_sitecontent/PDF/The-Power-of-Planning.pdf
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Key to Success During an Economic Downturn

In preparing for an economic down turn, there are a few key things to consider. From an operational perspective, liquidity would be high on the list of things to insure are available when you need it. However, when you need it is probably the worst time to request a line of credit from your bank. When performance metrics are solid is the right time to apply for that line of credit, so plan ahead.

Another key to successfully operating through a down turn is positioning your team for a defensive strategy, versus an offensive strategy. This means reviewing roles and responsibilities, and determining the optimal staffing level during the down turn. It may mean adding staff with different skill sets and reducing headcount in other areas.

Increase calling efforts to check in with your best clients and be prepared to make concessions so that they can continue to operate. Also, it's time to have a conversation with your key vendors. You need to understand their financial health as well as your own. Have alternative vendors evaluated and ready to utilize if your current vendors do not have enough capital to sustain them through the downturn. Review vendor contracts and renegotiate terms. It is far better to retain a relationship than to lose one. Then it's time to roll up your sleeves and look for other ways to reduce expenses.

Be cognizant of your minimum required cash flow to run operations over a six-month time horizon. During a downturn is not the time to pay cash for assets, or put large down payments on real estate transactions. Economic down turns generally mean interest rates are on the way down, so it is an optimal time to borrow funds to finance asset purchases. This keeps your cash on the balance sheet to meet current operating objectives.

Another question to ask yourself is while operating conditions are good, is it time to sell the business? Do you have adequate cash flow, the desire and the discipline to make the tough decisions? How you answer this question is an indicator of what your next steps should be.

CommerceWest Bank is a California based full service commercial bank with a unique vision and culture of focusing exclusively on the business community. Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Irvine, California. The Bank serves businesses throughout the state with an emphasis on clients in Orange County, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Riverside Counties. We are a full service business bank and offer a wide range of commercial banking services, including concierge services, remote deposit solution, online banking, mobile banking, lines of credit, working capital loans, commercial real estate loans, SBA loans, and treasury management.

Leeann Cochran is a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting. She has been with CommerceWest Bank for fourteen years as Chief Financial Officer. She is also member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

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CalCPA

Tax Tactics – Revised Reporting Requirements for Foreign-Owned, Single Member LLCs

By Miklos Ringbauer, CPA, MBA, PMP and Michael Barreto

Tax rules are like a perpetually shifting shoreline of details and requirements. Recent changes causing a buzz are new reporting requirements of foreign-owned single member LLCs (FOSM LLCs), regardless of their status in operating and earning revenue in the United States and the large fines that come with failing to report correctly.

Updated regulations to IRC 6038A changed the treatment of FOSM LLCs into a separate corporate entity for reporting purposes by the IRS. FOSM LLCs must now report their business information and file IRS pro-forma Form 1120 with Form 5472, an information return for foreign-owned corporations. The updated regulations also stretched the already sizeable $10,000 penalty for failing to report to an even larger $25,000 penalty, with an increase of an additional $25,000 penalty 90 days after receiving notice from the IRS that Form 5472 is due.

New Reporting Rules for FOSM LLCs

Of particular interest to CPAs working with FOSM LLC clients is Form 5472. First, it requires that the FOSM LLC has a valid employer identification number (EIN) to make the filing. Second, Part V of Form 5472 appears to provide a list of transactions related to the FOSM LLC that are now considered reportable.

New and existing FOSM LLCs must now obtain a federal EIN and designate a responsible person—typically, the owner—to the number. This may generate issues for FOSM LLC owners who never applied for EIN numbers in the past.

Part V of Form 5472 also requires a separate list of transactions to be included with the filing. Documentation of any transaction must be made if it relates to the "formation, dissolution, acquisition and disposition" of the FOSM LLC entity.

Hence, creation of single-member LLCs whose owners are not U.S. citizens are now considered reportable transactions. This puts FOSM LLC creation in the same realm as shell companies set up in tax avoidance schemes and may likely invite further scrutiny by the IRS. Complying with new reporting requirements may prevent possible, expensive dust-ups with the IRS and financial pain in the wallets for FOSM LLC owners.

FOSM LLCs will now also be required to maintain adequate bookkeeping and records for inspection by the IRS on demand, even if the only transaction made is with a corporate filing because the corporate filing itself deals with the legal "disposition" of the entity.

Example

Adele is a citizen of France who opened an LLC in Nevada in 2015 to provide web design services. She returned to France after four weeks to assist on a family issue and has not returned to the United States, but she never stopped paying her Nevada state filing fees. Under the new rules, she was responsible to file a pro forma 1120 and Form 5472 for the tax year 2017 and tax year 2018. Had she failed to do so, Adele would face significant fines.

In short, it seems, irrespective of the absence of business dealings in the United States, a FOSM LLC by default must file Form 5472 to stay compliant with the new rules.

Exceptions Still Apply

The IRS has provided an exception to the rule for the Form 5472 filing: If the FOSM LLC has completed dissolution by Dec. 31, 2017. The Treasury Department and the IRS have concluded that for ease of administration, these regulations should apply to taxable years of entities beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2017, and ending on or after Dec. 13, 2017 (The proposed regulations would have applied to taxable years ending on or after the date that is 12 months after the date of publication of the final regulations in the *Federal Register*, without regard to the date on which the taxable year began). This Treasury decision adopts the proposed regulations as so amended and with other minor clarifications for readability. (Refer to Internal Revenue Bulletin: 2017-3 for more details, irs.gov/irb/2017-03_IRB)

Tax Penalty Abatement

If a penalty is imposed, then an abatement may be available for failure to timely file due to a reasonable cause. This is normally evaluated on a case-by-case basis and a FOSM LLC likely will need the assistance of a tax attorney to resolve the issue. It should be noted that "forgetting to file" is not generally accepted as a reasonable cause.

Handle with Care

While FOSM LLCs are a specifically focused category of business entities, the recent federal rule changes are part of an effort to increase transparency between the United States and foreign tax entities. Of course, this move implies additional work for accounting firms and more issues to research. Many FOSM LLC business owners with income earned in the U.S. are encouraged to seek guidance to properly meet new compliance rules in addition to the LLC rules of their state where the FOSM LLC was formally organized.

CPAs can provide due diligence on new reporting requirements for FOSM LLCs at both state and federal levels when evaluating the needs of their foreign-based clients and help mitigate substantial penalties.

Miklos Ringbauer, CPA, MBA, PMP

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About CalCPA

CalCPA traces its heritage to 1903 when the California State Society of Certified Public Accountants was organized. In 1909, it merged with two other state CPA associations to form CalCPA. CalCPA serves more than 43,000 members in public practice, private industry, academia and government and has 14 chapters across California. CalCPA also offers more than 1,400 live courses, conferences, webcasts and on-demand self-study courses annually. For more information, visit calcpa.org.

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Century Group

Maximize the ROI From Your Recruitment Strategy

By Ron Proul, CEO, CENTURY GROUP

This hot, candidate-driven market reminds me of the bubbles of 1989, 2001 and 2007. And just like with those markets, many companies are understandably employing strategies that reduce outside fees. However, many of these strategies end up backfiring, rather than accomplishing the goal of attracting the very best talent.

Recently, I've noticed some problematic reoccurring trends in the tactics companies are resorting to in order to save on recruitment costs. These tactics play out like the classic scenario of saving on costs, simply to pay more later. One such method: investing solely in internal talent acquisition. Unfortunately for these companies, this often does not yield the returns they had hoped for.

The Limitations of Internal Talent Acquisition

In contrast to utilizing a recruitment firm, developing an internal talent acquisition team takes time, is costly and requires talent itself — a Catch 22. Still, many companies choose to make this investment. But the volume of placements an individual or *even a few individuals* can handle has its limits, and it can become difficult for one person to specialize or develop a truly robust list of candidates. In contrast to internal talent acquisition teams who work with a limited pool of candidates, recruitment firms develop lengthy, up-to-the-minute lists of top-tier talent.

Recruiters Can Access Top-Tier Talent, Fast

Recruitment and staffing firms have their finger on the pulse of the regional talent pool and know precisely which professionals are ready to make a career move. At Century Group, we even pioneered a practice called The Group Concept, where recruiters are encouraged and incentivized to work on searches together. This philosophy ultimately magnifies search capacity as well as results for the client. Recruitment firms will save you cost, time and uncertainty while optimizing your search's reach.

Reactive vs. Proactive

Most internal recruiting strategies are *reactive* — the talent acquisition team can only produce candidates interested in engaging when an opening occurs. Specialist recruiting firms, however, are *proactive*. Recruiters are constantly developing and refining a target list of talent — talent that represents the best of the market — to be tapped when the appropriate search arises.

When a client's talent acquisition department says, "We have been looking for this position for months and you produced the candidate within weeks," it's indicative of how good recruiting professionals develop a deep talent pool and nurture relationships over a long period of time — maybe even years — so that they are able to immediately contact the right candidate for the right opportunity.

The Value Proposition of Recruitment Firms

Many companies think recruiters just sit passively waiting for the opportunity to send a bill for anyone they can pull from a job board. This common myth is due to the fact that the majority of recruiting professionals don't adequately explain their value proposition.

At well-established recruitment firms like Century Group, recruiters nurture long-term relationships with top-tier candidates and track these candidates throughout their career. Recruiters also have the advantage of being seen by candidates as an objective third party who can bring candidates multiple opportunities, which encourages candidates to engage more actively with our clients.

Consider how a recruiter presents their value proposition when selecting a recruitment firm to work with — it will speak to how well they can negotiate on your behalf. In this market, a recruiter knowing and stating their value is not only paramount to their success in negotiations, it is also crucial to your success in this competitive marketplace. As Malcolm Forbes said, "Too many people overvalue what they are not, and undervalue what they are."

When companies try to save on recruitment costs by investing solely in internal talent acquisition, the return on their investment suffers when it comes to talent, time and the reach of their job search.

Ron Proul

One of Southern California's foremost executive recruiters and a noted expert on executive search, Ron Proul is CEO of Century Group, an award-winning recruiting firm that provides top-tier accounting and finance talent. During his 28 years with the firm, he has completed over 1,000 CFO, executive and management searches and conducted thousands of interviews for clients in a myriad of industries. Ron has contributed to leading business publications, served on numerous committees and boards and has served as a judge for the LA CFO of the Year Awards.


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Insurance Industry Claims Phenomenon Creating Disruption in The Marketplace

Inflation is a common event and is defined as a numeric measurement of the price increase change of selected goods or services. Inflation affects economic conditions both positively and negatively. It is generally benchmarked in quantitative analytics.

In the past few years, the Insurance Industry has experienced a resurgence of a unique inflation that is more qualitative in nature. This inflation is often referred to as “Social Inflation” and is creating a claims phenomenon that was not fully contemplated by the insurance marketplace.

Social Inflation is causing a hyperinflation through changes in claimant demands for awards, plaintiff attorney litigation methods, and from jury verdicts that are considered “nuclear” level awards in favor of claimants.

The social inflation claims phenomenon is transcending multiple lines of insurance – Directors & Officers, Employment Practice, Automobile, Liability, Excess Liability, amongst others.

Insurance carriers are suffering a significant increase in frequency of severity claims- there are 4 times greater $25 Million+ awards than a decade ago. Adverse claim trends are shaping the insurance marketplace.

What should CFOs expect in 2020?
The Management Liability marketplace continued to trend upward towards the end of 2019. CFOs and financial teams should not expect 2020 to be much divergent. All insurers are seeking rate increases across Directors & Officers (“D&O”) and Employment Practices Liability (“EPL”) books of business.

D&O premiums increased by an average of 17.1% during the first half of 2019 (for companies keeping the same limit and retention). Insurers are continuing to push for rate increases on both the primary and excess layers. In some cases, carriers are also looking to cut their limits from a $10M limit down to a $5M limit (or even $2.5M) to reduce their risk.

Organizations that are financially distressed pose the greatest exposure for insurers, as the frequency of claims brought by shareholders, creditors, regulators and customers against these insureds has increased over the past several years.

Publicly traded companies continue to be a challenge. Primary insurers are taking a benchmark minimum of 10% increases, and the excess markets are increasing their rates by at least 15% from expiring.

Federal class action legal filings escalated in 2017 and 2018 to 438 average annual class filings. The previous five year average was 235 annual filings. This momentum resulted in an 86.4% annual average claim run rate increase.

Employment practices liability insurance, particularly in litigious landscapes like California, still is not demonstrating any signs of improvement. Employers in California are experiencing premium and retention increases at renewal. Businesses with claim frequency and severity are seeing their retentions often double, and experiencing premium increases of at least 10%. Moreover, with the passing of AB 5 in California, we expect continued premium rate strain on Employment Practice Liability coverage and perhaps the passing may create upward rate pressure on Workers’ Compensation premiums in 2020.

Cyber liability continues to be a consumer-driven, soft premium market. It remains a hot topic, with constant changes in the marketplace from new market entrants and the ever changing cyber risk environment. The competitive environment and favorable claims experience affords more favorable rates and premiums for this type of coverage.

The Automobile line of coverage continues to experience inadequate premium rates according to the leading Property & Casualty insurance carriers. Rates will continue to be pressured by 10-35%, with greater rate pressure for transportation fleets and companies with underperforming loss activity.

Another rapidly changing line of coverage is Excess Liability / Umbrella. Carriers are closely evaluating risk exposure and leveraging for rate increase in the 5% - 200%+ range, with the high end of the range manifesting from excess coverage insuring heavy exposures such fleets of large trucks and truck-tractors. Additionally, underwriters are reducing limits of coverage for excess insurance programs covering fleets and other higher risk exposures (Example - $25 million expiring limit may be offered at $10 million - $15 million program limit thresholds at comparable pricing to expiring $25 million.)

There exists nominal upward rate creep in the General Liability arena. The marketplace is not experiencing as dramatic of claims activity and pricing pressure as in Automobile or Umbrella however, expect rate increase impact in the 1%-7% range.

Not necessarily affected by Social Inflation, however, it is noteworthy to mention that Property insurance continues to evolve, with rate increase pressure and potential changes to coverage, limits, terms and conditions. Companies with property losses and /or assets exposed to weather related events should contemplate premium increases, and possible deductible and coverage changes. Increases are varied from a few percentage points to premiums that are being offered at double or triple of expiring terms.

As with virtually all industries, the insurance industry experiences marketplace cycles. Unfortunately, there currently exists a convergence of the social inflation claims phenomenon coupled with a deterioration of claims performance, straining insurance carrier return on equity, inciting a marketplace into instability and perhaps overcorrection.

What might CFOs do to prepare for 2020?

• Consult with expert insurance brokers and risk advisors.

• Engage insurance broker partner early in the marketplace renewal strategy and planning.

• Examine and ensure that risk mitigation, safety, loss prevention and claims management programs are properly established and effective.

• Ensure that the most comprehensive and thorough message to the insurance marketplace is being delivered – accentuate positive attributes.

• Implement proper risk transfer techniques.

• Consider marketplace program alternative risk solutions.

• Contemplate / Budget for possible premium rate increases, increases in retentions / deductibles and possibly reduction in coverages.

This article was coauthored by the following associates:

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Top 5 Technology Investments that Organizations Should Embrace in 2020 for Better Business Results

Synoptek

At the start of each year, business leaders constantly find themselves deliberating amongst stakeholders about which technologies should be on their digital agenda. Technology plays an important role in staying competitive, differentiation and optimization in the marketplace, yet most companies still face huge challenges in achieving the desired results from their investments.

Each year ushers in a wave of new and disruptive innovations, all claiming their necessities to drive the results you seek. However, the question remains: what exactly does my business need, and how do I make it happen?

Here's the breakdown of the trending technologies that organizations should invest in and leverage for better business results in 2020:

1. Cloud Adoption and Implementation
Organizations in the digital era are compelled to embrace cloud to achieve improved flexibility, better responsiveness and scalability amongst other business drivers. Cloud-based solutions can minimize capital expenditures, offer 24x7 accessibility and security, and provide the agility necessary to keep pace with the evolving world. According to Gartner, their report forecasts a public cloud revenue growth of 17% in 2020 alone.

If your organization has yet to leverage cloud or is just beginning to implement it, be sure to identify the right steps to secure the desired results.

2. Business Applications
Opportunities await organizations that can capitalize data across the business; they just need to activate the right systems to drive value.

In 2020, the ability to embrace business applications is essential to managing the growing volume of data through simple interfaces, collaborating and communicating with teams across the globe to make intelligent evidence-based decisions for an optimized competitive advantage. Investing in applications such as ERP and CRM systems will enable organizations to address existing challenges and embark on their digital transformation journey – quickly and easily.

With the right applications in place, not only can organizations increase the efficiency of their operations, but they can also create new streams of revenue.

3. Workforce Productivity
Organizational success today largely depends on productivity and efficiency of the workforce. Empowering employees with modern workforce productivity tools has become a must-have for businesses looking to stay competitive. Tools like Office 365 or Microsoft Teams combine best-in-class apps, allowing users to work from anywhere, improve collaboration and stay up-to-date within the team.

Investing in these tools will enable organizations to empower the business and innovation, allowing the workforce to integrate day-to-day technology to maximize productivity.

4. Data Insights
For organizations struggling to make more agile and data-driven decisions, investing in advanced data technologies can help identify the impact of data and transform them into stronger actionable insights. Data insights can enable organizations to understand trends in a holistic way. These insights empower every person, process and system and ultimately, digital transformation.

From AI to BI and big data analytics to machine learning – insights aggregated by these tools not only help business executives make quicker and smarter decisions, but also create a data-driven culture – from strategy conception to actual execution.

5. Risk Management
For the modern organization, the impact of a data or security breach can be extremely significant. Enterprises, big and small, can become victims of risks from malicious hackers, disgruntled employees, power outages, natural disaster and poor system updates. Investing in risk management tools can help reduce the impact of these incidents and minimize costs while allowing organizations to resume business as soon as possible. In the absence of a robust risk management strategy, the average cost of a data breach is estimated to exceed $150 million in 2020 while ransomware damage and cost predictions amount to $20 billion by 2021.

Implementing and knowing how to utilize security technologies in a risk management framework can allow organizations to better understand security gaps, build the right processes, deal with cyber threats in real time, reduce downtime and diminish effects of a catastrophic event. Organizations must also continue to look for opportunities to meet U.S. and International data privacy and regulatory compliance standards to stay ahead of the constantly shifting threat landscape.

About Synoptek
Headquartered in Irvine, California and offices worldwide with about 800 employees, Synoptek is a global systems integrator and managed IT services provider, offering comprehensive IT management and consultancy services to more than 2,000 organizations worldwide. Synoptek partners with clients of all sizes, helping mid-market to enterprise organizations thrive. Synoptek focuses on providing maximum business value to its clients by enabling them to grow their businesses, managing risk and compliance and strengthening their competitive position.

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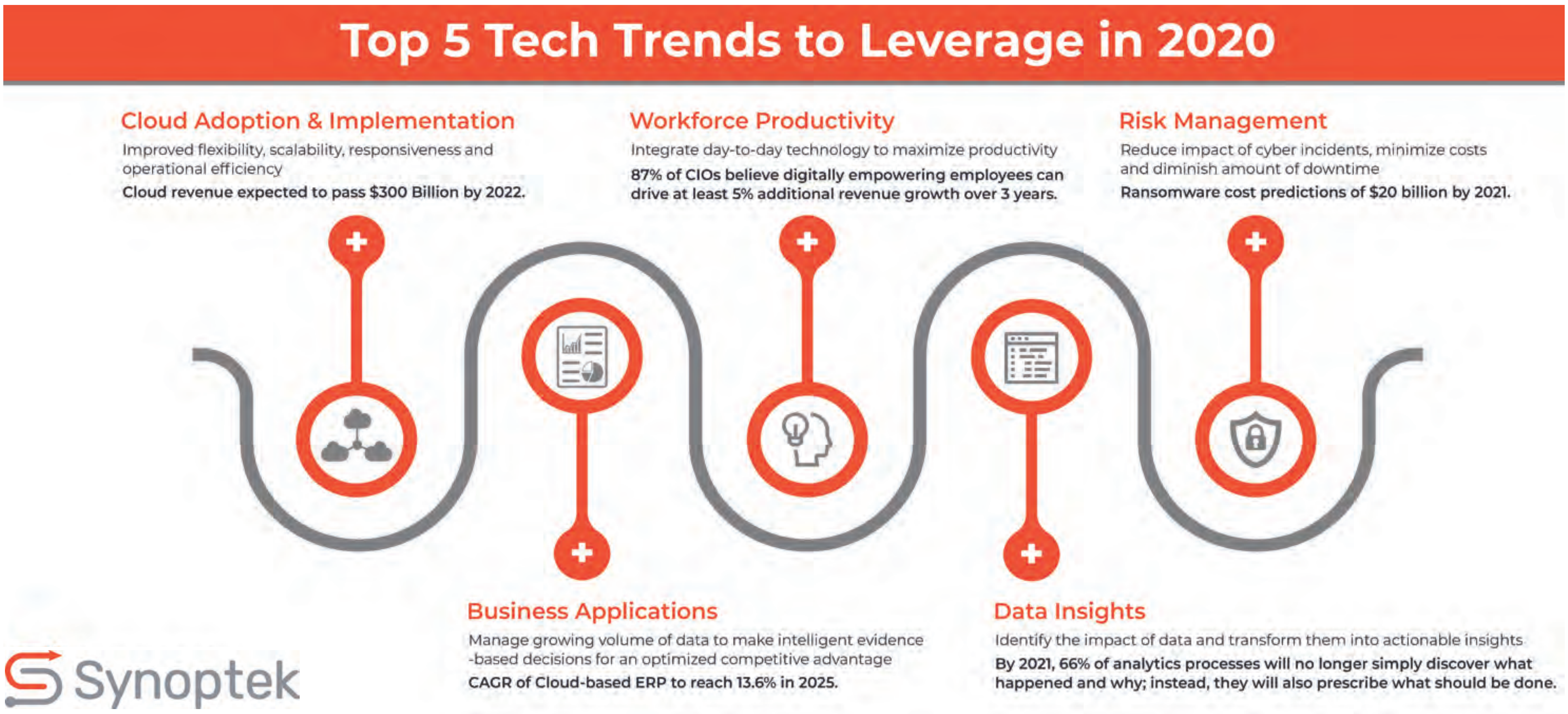

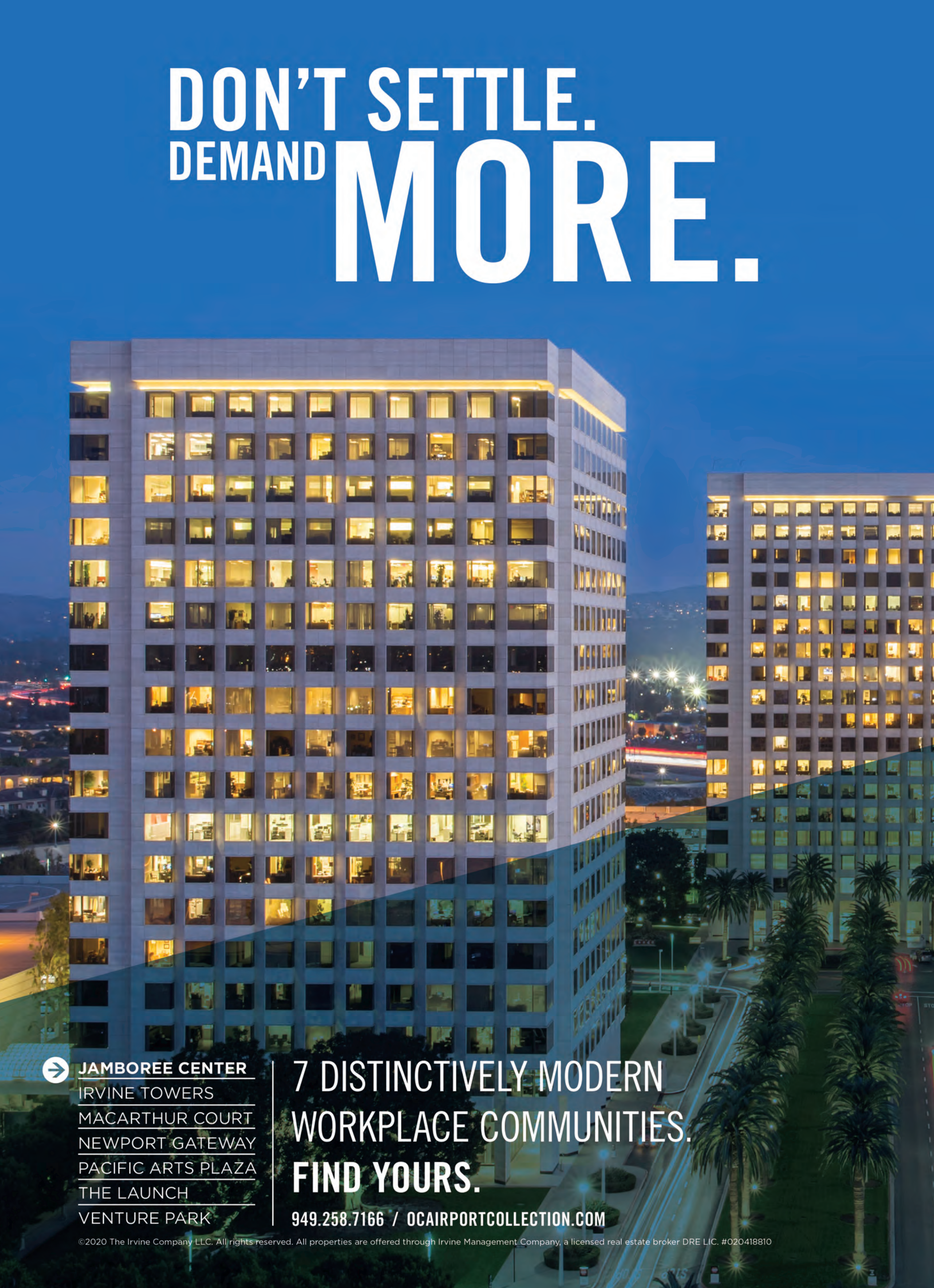
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CFO INSIGHTS SHOW BOTH OPTIMISM AND CONCERN FOR 2020

Nearly 150 CFOs from some of North America's largest and most influential companies participated in Deloitte's most recent Signals™ Report, a quarterly survey that captures insightful perspectives on issues top-of-mind for CFOs. In support of their peers, CFOs regularly share their thinking on topics such as the trajectory of the economy, key roadblocks and opportunities for success, as well as personal priorities for their businesses. Following are highlights from the Q4 survey from CFOs; almost 75% of their companies are publicly traded; and more than 80% have over $1B in annual revenue.

■ Tim Brandt, Orange County Managing Partner, Deloitte LLP

How do you regard the status of the North American, European, and Chinese economies?
Perceptions of North America leveled off, with 69% of CFOs rating current conditions as good (68% last quarter), and 23% expecting better conditions in a year (up from 15%). Perceptions of Europe rose, but only to 7% and just 6% expect better conditions in a year; Chinese perceptions fell to 18%, and 11% anticipate better conditions a year from now.

What is your perception of the capital markets?
Eighty-six percent of CFOs say debt financing is attractive. Equity financing is considered attractive by 43% of public company CFOs and 26% of private company CFOs. Seventy-seven percent say US equity markets are overvalued, up from 63%.

Overall, what risks worry you the most?
CFOs express ongoing trade policy worries, with growing concern about political turmoil, competition, consumer demand, and upcoming US elections. Internally, talent concerns continued, while concerns around change, costs, and growth rose.

Compared to three months ago, how do you feel about the financial prospects for your company?
The net optimism index rose from last quarter's -5 to +11 this quarter, but remains among the lowest levels in three years. Thirty percent of CFOs express rising optimism (26% last quarter), and 19% express declining optimism (31% last quarter).

What is your company's business forecast for the next year?
Although companies continue to focus mostly on growth and investment, their growing focus on cost reduction and returning cash (multi-year highs) may suggest growing defensiveness in anticipation of a downturn.

How do you expect your key operating metrics to change over the next 12 months?*
YOY revenue growth expectations slid from 4.3% to 3.7% (three-year low). Earnings rose from 5.6% to 6.0% (but still second-lowest in nine years); capital spending edged up from 3.6% to 3.7% (still near its three-year low). Hiring fell from 1.6% to 1.1% (second-lowest in six years). Dividend growth rose from 3.9% to 4.3%.

What are your economic expectations for 2020?
A minority of CFOs expect improvement in the US, Canadian, and Mexican economies; expectations for consumer and business spending declined sharply, and those for labor costs rose.

What are the prospect for a US downturn and has your company taken defensive action?
Ninety-Seven percent of CFOs say a downturn has either already begun or will begin in 2020.

What are your expectations for the capital markets in 2020?
Contrary to this time last year, CFOs expect very low interest rates and 10-year bond yields for the next calendar year; they again expect a strong US dollar.

What are your expectations for your company in 2020?
Compared to last year, CFOs are less likely to expect industry revenue and prices to rise; they are mostly unlikely to make major changes to their strategy due to downturn expectations or upcoming US elections.

Compared to three years ago, how has your company adjusted its geographic focus?
CFOs cite a higher focus on US, European, Chinese, and other Asian markets, and expansion of capacity/operations in the latter three regions.

Are you getting pressure from stakeholders to act on climate change?
More than 70% of CFOs say their company is under at least moderate pressure to act on climate change from at least one stakeholder group; the average is 2.5 groups.

Is your company taking action in response to climate change?
More than 90% of CFOs say their company has taken at least one action in response to climate change, with the average CFO reporting nearly four.

Does your company have greenhouse gas reduction targets?
Overall, 44% of all responding CFOs (52% of those who know their status) say their company already has or is working on greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Download the full report here.
*Averages have been adjusted to eliminate the effects of stark outliers.

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IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THIS SURVEY REPORT:
Participating CFOs have agreed to have their responses aggregated and presented. This is a "pulse survey" intended to provide CFOs with quarterly information regarding their CFO peers' thinking across a variety of topics. It is not, nor is it intended to be, scientific in any way, including in its number of respondents, selection of respondents, or response rate, especially within individual industries. Accordingly, this report summarizes findings for the surveyed population but does not necessarily indicate economy or industry wide perceptions or trends. This publication contains general information only, and Deloitte is not, by means of this publication, rendering accounting, business, financial, investment, tax, legal, or other professional advice or services. This publication is not a substitute for such professional advice or services, nor should it be used as a basis for any decision or action that may affect your business. Before making any decisions that may impact your business, you should consult a qualified professional advisor.

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CITY NATIONAL BANK
AN RBC COMPANY

Seven Tips to Improve Your Accounts Receivale Collections

By City National Bank

Even with steady sales and growth, if your company has continual cash flow issues due to lack of accounts receivable management, that could slow or stop your company's growth.

Nearly one-third of businesses find that they are unable to pay vendors, unable to make loan payments or unable to pay themselves or their employees, according to a report by Quickbooks.

The report also highlighted that more than a quarter of entrepreneurs had to turn down a sale or opportunity due to insufficient cash flow.

"There are many different things that go into running a successful business, but cash flow is what keeps it running," said Joe McHugh, senior vice president and Orange County regional banking manager at City National Bank.

Having ample cash flow allows you to continue expanding, whether you want to buy your company's building as a way to generate another stream of income instead of renting or you want to upgrade your company's technology and need cash to lease equipment.


Joe McHugh

Small businesses that manage their accounts receivable effectively have a formalized process for collecting accounts receivable as well as strategies for spotting potential cash flow issues and addressing them before they become detrimental to the business.

Create An A/R Aging Report and Calculate Your Art
The first step to take control of your collections efforts is to determine the current payment status of all your accounts receivable.

This is done by creating an accounts receivable (A/R) aging report, which will track and measure the payment status of all your customers.

Accounts are broken out by the number of days since the invoice was issued, such as:
• 0-30 days
• 31-60 days
• 61-90 days
• more than 90 days

The report also lists the amounts due. If this report is updated and reviewed on a regular basis, it can help to address any potential problems before the bill becomes past due.

"The financials and accounts receivable aging report are an important piece of weekly management for the business," said McHugh.

Another helpful tool is a calculation of your company's Accounts Receivable Turnover (ART) ratio, or the number of times per year that your business collects its average accounts receivables.

Net Annual Credit Sales ÷ ((Beginning Accounts Receivable + Ending Accounts Receivable) / 2)

For example, if you have an ART of 10, that means your average account receivable was collected in 36.5 days.

This calculation evaluates your business's ability to issue credit and collect funds in a timely manner.

A high ART ratio can indicate that your company has an efficient accounts receivable collection process while a lower ratio can signal the need to reassess your collection strategy as well as to evaluate what clients you are extending credit for longer periods of time.

This calculation allows for a faster evaluation of accounts receivable than the A/R Aging Report.

Be Proactive in Your Invoicing and Collections Effort
One of the important steps to ensuring on-time payment is making sure all parties are on the same page regarding payment deadlines, amounts owed and payment methods.

"Be out in front of it and have the dialogue early, making sure that clients are aware of when their payments are due," said McHugh.

Typically, this conversation happens when a business first becomes a client, but it can also happen if you've updated your accounts receivables collections process or if a client is continuously overdue and you need to realign expectations.

You should also ensure that you're making it as easy as possible for your client to pay invoices. For example, make sure your invoices are clear and complete, with no missing information that might cause your client's accounting department to kick it out of the system for further review.

Move Fast on Past-Due Receivables
Studies show that the longer receivables go uncollected, the less likely they are to ever be collected, either partially or in full.

For that reason, your business will have the best chance of collecting if you are aware of any past due receivables and can act quickly.

Whomever you choose to manage accounts receivable needs to understand that they must contact the client on the first day that a payment is late.

If your company has a policy regarding late payments, gently remind the client of any penalties they may face for late payments in the future.

Firmer communication may become necessary if payment is not forthcoming within a reasonable amount of time, including emails or letters informing the client that legal action is a possibility if the payment is not received by a set deadline.

Having an open conversation with clients can not only work to build stronger client relationships for your business but also allow you to understand why the payment was late and avoid that in the future.

Consider Offering an Early Payment Discount
Another way to help manage accounts receivable is a 2/10, net/30 discount, where customers receive a 2 percent discount if they pay within 10 days, instead of 30.

"For this type of discount, it depends on the industry. If you're in a very tight margin industry where every dollar counts, that 2 percent discount could be a lot of money to your prospective client," McHugh said. "Where a business can afford it, offering and encouraging early payment is important and can be very helpful in boosting cash flow."

It is important to seek advice from either banking professionals or industry professionals to evaluate whether this would be a viable option for your business to implement, based on your specific industry, McHugh advised.

Consider Offering A Payment Plan
You may have a past-due client who informs you, after a few payment reminders, that they're having cash flow challenges and need an extension to pay their bill.

If this happens, consider offering the client a payment plan for their outstanding balance.

"Setting up a payment plan and being flexible is helpful, especially when it comes to long-term clients in terms of building loyalty," McHugh said.

It is also important to put the plan and its terms in writing and have both parties sign it. Also make all future sales cash on delivery (COD) until the past-due amount is paid in full.

Diversify Your Client Base
Small businesses often come out on the short end of the stick when it comes to accounts receivable collections — especially when they are doing business with large corporations that stretch out their payment terms to vendors and suppliers — sometimes for up to 90 or even 120 days.

While working with large retailers can be great, client diversification is important, according to McHugh.

"As a bank we love to see diversification," he said. "We love when people have contracts with Walmart or Target but also with smaller customers so that it's easier to run the business in terms of cash flow."

If you have a few large clients who typically pay outside of a 30- or 45-day window, focus on acquiring additional smaller clients and ensuring they pay on time so you ensure healthy cash flow while you wait for the longer-term payments.

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McGriff Insurance Services

Precept Rebrands as McGriff Insurance Services
New Name Will Build on More Than 130 Years of Brand Equity

McGriff Insurance Services, a subsidiary of BB&T Insurance Holdings, today announced a rebranding for its California-based employee benefits firm, Precept.

Precept began doing business today as "McGriff Insurance Services." The rebranding follows the same name change for the former BB&T Insurance Services and BB&T Insurance Services of California in the past 18 months.

The McGriff name, with long-standing recognition in the insurance industry, comes from affiliate McGriff, Seibels & Williams.


Karen L. Reid, Area President for McGriff Irvine (formerly Precept)

"This is a name that goes back to 1886, and we're excited to build on the brand equity and recognition associated with this industry leader – now across all business units in California and the 16 states where we operate," said Rick Ulmer, president and chief executive officer of the Retail Insurance Division for BB&T Insurance Holdings.

Precept has a 30-year history of providing employee benefits consulting and benefits administration services. With offices in Irvine and San Ramon, it specializes in health engagement through innovative technology, wellness programs, and clinical management and data to develop Fortune 100-quality programs nationwide. The name change does not include affiliate Precept Advisory Group.

McGriff Insurance Services operates California agencies in San Diego, Pleasanton, Irvine, San Ramon, San Jose, Anaheim and San Francisco. The brand transition includes a new logo with an updated version of the McGriff name, as well as an updated color palette, fonts and other design elements.

About BB&T Insurance Holdings
BB&T Insurance Holdings, the fifth largest insurance broker in the U.S. and sixth largest in the world, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Truist Corporation. BB&T Insurance Holdings operates more than 200 offices through subsidiaries McGriff Insurance Services; McGriff, Seibels & Williams; CRC Insurance Services; Crump Life Insurance Services; and AmRisc, LLC.

> **"We are excited to begin this new chapter in our story as McGriff and we look forward to continue to deliver an outstanding consulting and benefit administration experience for both our clients and their employees."**

SOURCE: BB&T Insurance Holdings

For more information: Karen Reid, Area President for McGriff Irvine, (949) 798-1206, kreid@mcgriffinsurance.com

LUGANO DIAMONDS

INSPIRING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

As we acknowledge the financial professionals in our community for their outstanding performance as corporate stewards, we also recognize that great stewardship includes inspiration, creativity and innovation, all qualities shared by Lugano Diamonds.

"We are continually inspired by the values that define our brand," says Moti Ferder, CEO and design director of Lugano Diamonds. *"And we work hard to deliver exquisite works of art with each piece we design."* Lugano Diamonds presents an elegant collection of rare pink diamond pieces, all unique unto themselves.

Eternal Brilliance

This head-turning Pink Diamond Pear-Shaped Necklace showcases a breathtaking three carat pear-shaped fancy pink diamond. Set in 18k rose and white gold, this magnificent stone is surrounded by nearly eight carats of round pink diamonds, along with rose cut and round brilliant collection VS diamonds. This inspired piece shimmers with impossible beauty and makes the ultimate gift.

Inspired Sparkle

Sparkling with perfection, Lugano's Pink Diamond Pear-Shaped Earrings feature two fancy pink diamonds, each over two carats, surrounded and delicately suspended by more than two carats of glimmering pink and round brilliant collection VS diamonds set in 18k rose and white gold. This creative piece has an added bonus: the pink pear-shaped center diamonds can be removed from the setting and attached to two white pear-shaped diamonds with post backings that sit on the earlobe to thoughtfully create a completely different look.

Timeless Perfection

This stunning Oval Pink Diamond Ring exudes impeccable style and sophistication. The ring is centered around a three-carat fancy light pink oval diamond surrounded by a halo of pink diamonds set in 18k rose gold. The center stone is flanked by half-moon shaped collection VS diamonds outlined in a classic design of round brilliant collection VS diamonds. Finished with a band of 18k white gold patterned in gorgeous diamonds, the ring is a perfect touch of femininity for everyday wear.

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We welcome you to view our stunning collection at the Lugano Diamonds Grand Salon located at 620 Newport Center Drive, Suite 100, Newport Beach, and our additional locations in Aspen and Palm Beach. Please call 866.584.2666 or email info@luganodiamonds.com for more information.


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Above left: Pacific Life LIFEvest 2015 program graduate, Dyandra Magdaleno, who is now a freshman at UCI. "I am the first in my family to go to college," she says, "and LIFEvest helped me achieve that dream." **Above right:** Dyandra Magdaleno with UCI's Lee Anne Maki continues her campus connection prior to starting her first year.

LIFEvest proves to be life-changing

UCI financial literacy program for young teens gave incoming, first-generation freshman Dyandra Magdaleno the confidence, practical skills to pursue higher education

By Pat Harriman, UCI

While transitioning from eighth grade to high school, Dyandra Magdaleno was going through a very difficult time in her young life. A school counselor who was aware of her good grades suggested that the Santa Ana teen apply to the Pacific Life LIFEvest financial literacy program at UCI's Paul Merage School of Business.

Now in its tenth year, the weeklong summer outreach effort is hosted by the business school's Center for Investment and Wealth Management. It's dedicated to teaching underserved, Southern California ninth- and 10th-graders with the potential to be first-generation college students the value of higher education, budgeting and saving. Additionally, the teens – who stay in UCI dorms and eat in campus dining halls – explore various career fields, hear from guest speakers, visit local businesses and learn social etiquette.

Magdaleno participated in the residential program in August of 2015. This fall, the Segerstrom High School graduate returned to UCI as an incoming freshman, the first in her family to go to college.

"I never thought I would get into such a prestigious school, but attending LIFEvest made me realize that I should never doubt who I am or what I'm capable of," Magdaleno says. "My experience that summer gave me hope that no matter what I've gone through, I can tackle any obstacles that come my way."

The program's $2,100-per-person cost is covered by individual, corporate and community donations. Earlier this year, LIFEvest received a $2 million gift from the Pacific Life Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Newport Beach-based insurance company.

"We are overjoyed that the Pacific Life Foundation chose the LIFEvest program for this transformational gift," says Christopher Schwarz, UCI associate professor of finance and faculty director of CIWM. "LIFEvest makes a huge impact in these young people's lives. Not only does it provide important financial skills, but the residential component allows them to believe they belong in college. Over the course of the week, you can see a huge change in the students' confidence and plans for their futures."

Almost 500 teens have gone through the program so far. After participants' week on campus, LIFEvest continues to assist them on their path to college through events and additional educational programming. Last year, LIFEvest alumni returned to UCI to learn more about the college application process and attend the homecoming basketball game.

Magdaleno came to campus in the fall of 2019 and credits LIFEvest. "I enjoyed finding out how to manage my money and have a plan," she says. "Before LIFEvest, I didn't know how to save money. Since then, I've created a savings account for college, which has helped me tremendously since I live in a single-parent household with my two younger sisters."

At UCI, which was her first-choice school, she majors in psychological science, with the goal of becoming a child and family lawyer.

"I would like to thank everyone from the coordinator of LIFEvest to the sponsors for enabling me to grow in life," Magdaleno says. "The program has shaped me in ways I could never have imagined. Without it, I wouldn't be in the position I'm in today."

This past October, UCI launched an ambitious $2 billion campaign to fund scientific research, provide scholarships for students, advance healthcare innovations, and foster deeper explorations into our shared human experience.

Partnering with UCI is a wise investment in the future of Orange County and beyond. From research partnerships, to capital support, to recruiting relationships, working with UCI can advance your corporation's strategic positioning and goals. With your support we can redefine what's possible in science, technology, medicine, and community service as real life-ready leaders enter the workforce.

Learn more about this ambitious endeavor at **uci.edu/brilliant**.

UCI University of California, Irvine

CFO of The Year Award Nominees

Adam Ainbinder, CFO/CTO
TravisMathew LLC, Huntington Beach

Adam Ainbinder joined TravisMathew in 2015 with revenues of $28 million, as of 2018 the company has grown to $80 million in revenue. Ainbinder has helped increase eCommerce sales by more than 80% within one year upon taking over eCommerce operations and focusing on optimizing KPIs. He also completed a year-long initiative to implement a new SAP system to manage and plan inventory organization-wide. Implementation included new systems for every retail store, order placement systems for the global sales team, order processing through warehouse as well as the core system to manage inventory. Ainbinder was the CFO through the sale of TravisMathew to Callaway Golf Company for $125.5 million.

Ned Algeo, CFO
Xperience Restaurant Group, Cypress

In the past year, CFO Ned Algeo has ensured a newly formed Xperience Restaurant Group (XRG) is fully dedicated to building a sustainable business. He has played a key role in exponential sales and traffic growth for restaurant groups within the portfolio — growing incremental revenue streams; most notably the off-premise sales department. Algeo has also been the driving force/mastermind behind major renovation projects for almost half of the company's 55 restaurant locations, in under a year, in addition to opening a new restaurant. And furthermore, he has been a huge part of the successful effort to acquire a complimentary restaurant chain to add to the group's portfolio. XRG also moved corporate offices – staying in Orange County, but signing a lease with smarter terms and ensuring the corporate teams have an enjoyable and productive space to work in, everyday.

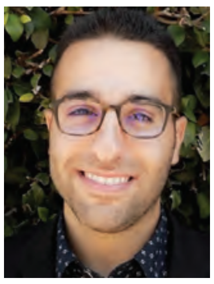
Ilene Anders, CFO
Alliant Insurance Services Inc., Newport Beach

Ilene Anders serves as chief financial officer of Alliant, overseeing the company's finance, accounting, and IT operations. Anders brings a multidisciplinary approach to the position well-suited for an industry where the worlds of finance and technology continue to merge. She previously served as Alliant's chief information officer, where she created the vision for client-facing technologies, directed business intelligence, and oversaw the integration of systems and infrastructure. Prior to that, she was Alliant's vice president and director of financial planning and analysis. Anders has helped saved millions of dollars annually in interest expense by restructuring Alliant's debt, cultivated partnerships with several new private equity investors and created new liquidity opportunities for shareholders. In addition, she created significant shareholder value by reinventing the way Alliant uses office space across 125 locations nationwide, leading to reduced office footprint, more engaged and connected employees, consistency across offices, and achieving millions in cost savings. Anders directed the integration of more than 20 company acquisitions in the past three years, ensuring expected synergies, and accretive shareholder value was achieved.

Brian Arnold, Senior Vice President, Finance
3 Day Blinds, Irvine

At 3 Day Blinds, Brian Arnold transformed the company's finance and accounting systems and has contributed to the company's extensive sales growth. He has managed several acquisitions and has been instrumental in many cost savings and growth strategies. Prior to joining 3 Day Blinds, Arnold has been involved in numerous M&A transactions. His accounting teams have met the ever-increasing internal and external demands and have made a huge impact on these companies. Arnold has invested heavily in implementing technology-driven platforms which provided cost savings, process improvements and greater effectiveness.

Justin Atneyel, Regional Director/Fractional CFO
TAG, Irvine



As the regional director for the Orange County and Los Angeles divisions at TAG, Justin Atneyel works directly with clients providing CFO-level accounting services for corporations in various industries, as well as high-net-worth families and individuals. He also manages a team of Staff Accountants, Accounting Managers, and Controllers who deliver fractional accounting and project-based work for TAG clients across the country. In addition, he leads the marketing and sales efforts to focus on new business development and expand growth into Orange County and Los Angeles areas. Prior to joining TAG, Atneyel served as a Controller/CFO for a startup manufacturing and engineering firm at the age of 20 years old where he managed operations of the accounting and human resources department. He was responsible for building out the finance staff and working with management to establish an organizational structure adequate for achieving the company's goals. Atneyel and the team of executives grew the company from a startup with less than five employees to a company that had a staff of 25+ with revenues over $10 million.

James Barry, CFO
SmartStop Self Storage REIT Inc., Ladera Ranch

In his role as chief financial officer with SmartStop Self Storage REIT, James Barry is responsible for everything encompassing the company's finances, including overseeing the finance team, cash-flow planning, raising equity and responding to questions from investors. Additionally, Barry is a member of the investment committee at SmartStop Self Storage REIT. As a member of the committee, he is actively involved in the underwriting and review of every single acquisition of the over 130 properties that SmartStop Self Storage has acquired or now manages. Since the beginning of his tenure at SmartStop Self Storage REIT and its predecessors, Barry has made numerous contributions to the company's success through his hard work, insight, and dedication. He was heavily involved in one of the most pivotal moments in SmartStop's history, when SmartStop Self Storage Inc., a public, non-traded real estate investment trust, was sold to Extra Space Storage in 2015. The company was sold in a $1.4 billion transaction for $13.75 per share, equal to a return of more than 15 percent to investors. His role included calculations, communications and the return of over $800 million of investor equity.

Mark Belzowski, CFO
Girl Scouts of Orange County, Irvine

Mark Belzowski oversees financial and business operations for the Girl Scouts of Orange County (GSOC) which serves 20,000 girls and 13,000 volunteers. In the non-profit world, resources are scarce, requiring the best-run non-profits to be laser-focused on applying donor contributions to initiatives that deliver maximum positive impact to the community. Belzowski brings that value to GSOC. He consistently asks the right questions and provides the right financial insights to guide GSOC and its board in driving forward its mission to create the best leadership development experiences for all girls in Orange County. As the nation's premier leadership program for girls (created with, by, and for girls), the movement prepares girls for a lifetime of leadership, carrying with it a proud history of developing the next generation of female leaders. With an operating budget of $11 million, the organization is blessed with $20 million of assets, which includes investments in a long-term trust, real estate, and intellectual property.

Ali Bhola, CFO
Exemplis/ SitOnIt Seating, Cypress

Ahi Bhola is an executive leader with broad and extensive experience across multiple functional areas. Experience includes divisional CFP, strategy executive, board member, head of FP&A, credit loss forecasting, mergers & acquisitions, and public accounting. Bhola started his role as CFO five months ago, he then started to create the foundation to enable an accelerated level of top-line growth and margin enhancement. This includes a strategic planning process that will better enable the team to deliver new products that will capture a larger percentage of the market share. His productivity process embedded in the budget that empowers the operations teams to identify areas to become more efficient in the variable and fixed costs areas. Bhola is also working to optimize the capital structure to more effectively leverage capital for organic growth and potential acquisitions.

Kurt Binder, CFO
CalAmp Corp., Irvine

Kurt Binder joined CalAmp in July 2017 as executive vice president and chief financial officer. Binder brings to CalAmp significant leadership and technical experience in finance and business management having worked extensively with multinational technology companies across Europe, Asia, Latin America and the U.S. Binder has spent the majority of his career in financial leadership positions, including most recently as chief financial officer of VIZIO, Inc., a global consumer electronics company, where he led VIZIO's accounting and finance, human resources and business planning teams. While at VIZIO Binder was also honored by the Orange County Business Journal as "CFO of the Year" (2015). Prior to joining VIZIO in 2010, Binder was a coordinating partner in the assurance practice of Ernst & Young, LLP, where he gained over 10 years of experience advising complex multinational companies across the globe. Binder began his career with Price Waterhouse, and holds a BBA in accounting and an MBA in finance, both from Loyola University Maryland.

Nate Brooks, CFO
PeopleSpace, Irvine

Since starting as CFO of PeopleSpace in 2017, Nate Brooks has restructured existing interior office solutions companies into a new consolidated company (PeopleSpace Inc.) transferring ownership from a handful of operating entities with multiple partners to the new company. He has helped diversify 40% of the company ownership through a Joint Venture with a strategic investor. In addition to raising $16 million in debt and equity that allows the newly formed PeopleSpace, Inc to focus on investing in future growth without concerns on short-term profits. Brooks has also implemented new ERP system.

Fernando Castorena, CFO
Renovo Solutions, Irvine

Fernando Castorena has led the Renovo Solutions accounting team amidst the company growing over 300% in annual revenue from $17 million to over $70 million today while creating efficiencies and scalability along the way. He was named Renovo's CFO in July 2019, was previously the head of the finance department as the controller. Castorena is instrumental in client acquisition by providing all financial data and projections/pro-formas to potential clients and meeting with potential customer executives to prove Renovo's capacity to perform on contracts. He has put Renovo on solid financial footing as they continue their upward growth pattern. In addition, he has helped secure breakthrough in the Life Science sector and continues to aid in the aggressive growth of the company where possible. Castorena has previously voted most likely to succeed during CalCPA's Southern California Emerging Leader's summit in 2013 and was the controller of the largest privately held electrical distributor in America that was roughly $160 million in annual revenues when he left to join Renovo Solutions.

Where personal and professional meet

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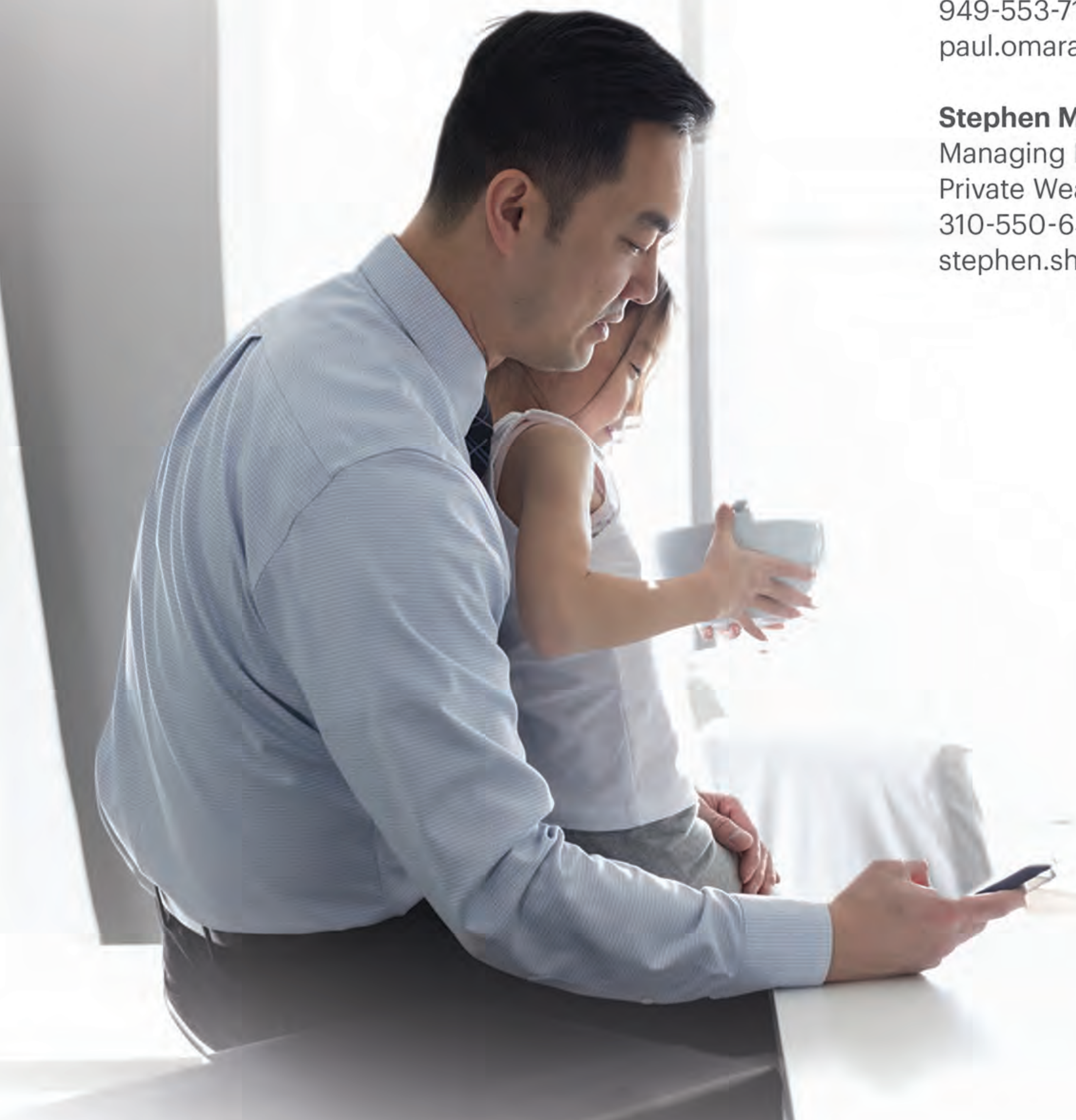

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

CFO of The Year Award Nominees

Julie Chassagne, VP, Corporate Controller
Alteryx Inc., Irvine

In 2016, after 17 years, Julie Chassagne left the public accounting industry and joined Alteryx Inc. as the corporate controller. Her first major project was assisting with its initial public offering, which was completed in March 2017. She was instrumental in the transition of the company from privately held to public, and in creating and enforcing Alteryx's policies, processes and practices to comply with regulatory requirements. She was also involved in the secondary offering that was completed in September 2017. Chassagne has been instrumental in building a world-class, global accounting function for Alteryx as they became a publicly traded company and continue their rapid growth. Chassagne has built a team that has supported significant international expansion, including hiring a global team, supporting five acquisitions, two equity offerings, and $1 billion in convertible notes offerings. She was instrumental in the implementation of ASC 606, SOX 404(B), and change in auditors with 33 days to meet their year-end filing requirements Alteryx has experienced strong success and through Chassagne 's leadership.

Leeann Cochran, Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer
CommerceWest Bank, Irvine

Leeann Cochran is a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting. She has been with CommerceWest Bank for fourteen years as Chief Financial Officer. She is also member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. She was a founding director of CIELO, a non-profit organization that assists with community job creation and skill development for jobs available in the current economy. Cochran helped successfully navigate through the financial crisis. CommerceWest Bank continues with record earnings, double digit growth and one of the strongest balance sheets of any financial institutions in California.

Jeff Conner, CFO
The Kanvas Company Inc., Newport Beach

Jeff Conner has worked in private equity for over 15 years assisting small to medium sized businesses achieve sustainable and scalable growth through implementing financial planning & reporting best practices while assisting with fundraising and business development efforts. Most recently, Conner has been assisting a start-up ancillary cannabis company, the Kanvas Company, to raise a seed round of capital and launch its disruptive cannabis storage and delivery technology. KANVAS is a cannabis packaging, accessories and design brand obsessed with the user's experience. Their promise is to provide solutions free of harmful toxins that delivers the best possible product. Founded in 2018, their approach is simple: superior goods and unmatched service. In an industry that's quickly evolving, their constant will always be at the intersection of innovation and people-focused operations.

Ronald Cortez, CFO & Vice Chancellor
University of California, Irvine; Division of Finance and Administration, Irvine

Ronald Cortez joined UCI in February 2017 as vice chancellor of Administrative & Business Services; and in February 2018 he became chief financial officer and vice chancellor for the Division of Finance and Administration. Reporting to the Chancellor and the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, Cortez is an integral member of an innovative and dynamic leadership team and a key partner in achieving the university's ambitious strategic vision for growth while being mindful of the need to develop new models of financial sustainability for UCI. Cortez has broad enterprise leadership and strategic authority over all UCI finances, including the health enterprise (health sciences and medical center). Cortez works closely with and provides strategic oversight to the CFO for Health Affairs to ensure overall financial strength of the university. Cortez is responsible for UCI's operating expenditures of $3.2 billion and a capital budget in excess of $3 billion. Cortez is a forward-thinking executive with a proven track record of implementing strategic initiatives while building effective communities within public higher education and local government sectors.

Brent Cranmer, CFO
Bal Seal Engineering Inc., Foothill Ranch

Brent Cranmer is a seasoned executive leader of corporate finance, accounting, and operations. Cranmer has diverse industry experience in the fields of manufacturing and professional service companies ranging in size from $20 million to $150 million. Cranmer has held successive positions that include tax accountant (PWC), auditor (PWC), plant controller, plant manager, corporate controller, and director of finance operations, and most recently was appointed treasurer of the board of directors. Cranmer's current role is with a diverse $100 million, multi-national manufacturing company. As a key member of the executive leadership team, Cranmer manages the entire finance and accounting department and works closely with the senior management team, and the board of directors to set and execute the annual operating plan, the five-year vision plan, as well as the financial budgets. Additionally, Cranmer is responsible for leading various cross functional teams that produced a combined $8 million in cost savings and marked gross margin improvements.

Donald D'Ambrosio, CFO
Telemynd Inc., Mission Viejo

Prior to joining MYnd Analytics, Inc. in 2017, Donald E. D'Ambrosio founded and built Oxygen Funding, Inc., an asset-based lending company that specialized in providing

working capital to small businesses, where he served its president, CEO and CFO between 2007 and February 2017. Oxygen Funding grew to fund over $100 million of client receivables. From 1996 to 2007, Mr. D'Ambrosio served as senior vice president, controller and, ultimately, chief financial officer of BNC Mortgage, Inc. (NASDAQ: BNCM). As BNC's CFO, Mr. D'Ambrosio played a key role in the company's IPO, raising $35 million, its listing on the NASDAQ, and was also intimately involved in taking the company private through a $52 million management acquisition by Lehman Brothers. D'Ambrosio played a key role in BNC Mortgage Inc's acquisition of certain assets and liabilities and the origination platform of America's Lender, Inc. As a subsidiary of Lehman Brothers, BNC Mortgage, Inc. was ultimately closed in 2007 as part of the financial crisis. Mr. D'Ambrosio has been a featured speaker for the Small Business Association and a writer for Commercial Factor magazine. D'Ambrosio holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in accounting from Temple University.

Juvi De Neve, CFO
Alzheimer's Orange County, Irvine

Juvi De Neve has been providing exemplary professional, financial and HR support to Alzheimer's Orange County (AlzOC) since 2012. She assumed the chief financial officer role in 2015 by overseeing the financial, HR, and business related operations of AlzOC and its subsidiaries, which included taking over South County Adult Day Services in Laguna Woods in 2016 and merging with Acacia Adult Day Services in 2017. She has taken on increasing fiscal responsibility over a budget that has grown from $4 million to $9 million in a period of four years. Juvi's personal business accomplishment is rather unique. Slightly more than 25 years ago, she arrived here from the Philippines and while she came with more than the clothes on her back, she didn't have much. Her first job was a cashier at a chiropractic college in Los Angeles. Five years later, she became the bookkeeper at the church her family attended. Following this, she became an Administrative Assistant to the CFO at Alzheimer's Orange County, of which she is now the CFO.

Chad Gardner, CFO
Blytheco Inc., Laguna Hills

Chad Gardner stewards the Finance, IT, Operations, and Human Resources activities for Blytheco. As a Finance business partner and leader Gardner brings over 20 years of progressive and diverse business experience and accomplishments developed in the fast-paced software and technology industry. A focus on finance strategy, operations optimization, M&A, compensation design, supply chain, and corporate facilities management led to his most recent appointment as CFO. During his time at Blytheco Gardner has; sponsored the development and formalization of sales empowerment tools to optimize sales efforts and increase opportunity close rates; established Governance Committee to review and approve changes to internal systems, ensuring system integrity and leveraging of existing functionality; launched cyber-security protocols, training, and system tolerance testing; automated a key publisher commission processes to reduce processing times and optimize cash flow; institutionalized cash management processes and reporting to maximize liquidity; re-engineered and reenergized the company Strategic Training and Recruiting program leading to a reduced training "incubation" period and radically increased success rate of program graduates; and successfully negotiated over a dozen ISV strategic partnership agreements, enabling top-line growth and greater customer solutioning.

Kelli Gerasimou, Controller & Sr. Director of Finance
Ivantis Inc., Irvine

As controller and senior director of finance for Ivantis, Kelli Gerasimou has transitioned the company from an outsourced accounting and finance function to full inhouse functions. In addition to establishing, leading and growing the finance and accounting departments, Gerasimou has negotiated debt financing and line of credit, and set up banking to maximize benefit to the company. She has implemented an annual operating plan and cash forecast 2+ years out including midyear updates as needed. Ivantis is now tracking to be among the top five first full year first product launches in MedDev VC history.

Naren Goel, CFO
Ephesoft, Irvine

Naren Goel is responsible for leading the global finance organization for Ephesoft. He is focused on driving the company's next phase of growth including international expansion in a metrics driven, structured and fiscally responsible manner as Ephesoft continues to lead worldwide adoption of supervised machine learning document capture and analytics. Goel is operationally-driven finance leader and will oversee multiple departments, business processes and systems. He brings nearly 20 years of senior finance leadership experience to the position, having led a broad range of startups to large corporations such as VMWare through various stages of growth. Goel has a strong background as a financial executive for a number of enterprise software and cloud computing organizations, including an understanding of Software-as-a-Service-model. He has also earned an ACMA (Chartered Management Accountant) designation in the U.K.

Daniel Hart, CFO
Avid Bioservices, Tustin

Daniel Hart has served as chief financial officer since August 2018 and has over 20 years of finance and accounting experience. Prior to joining Avid, Hart served as chief financial officer of ENO Holdings, Inc., a family of companies focused on the residential real estate market with offerings spanning brokerage, franchisor, property management, and settlement services. In this role, he helped improve the company's organizational results with a focus on establishing repeatable financial and operating processes, cash forecasts, strategic planning, and financial transactions. Prior to this role, Hart served as senior vice president, chief financial officer and assistant secretary at SM&A, a $100 million private equity owned management consulting firm that was previously a Nasdaq-listed company. During his ten years at SM&A, which included several financial leadership positions of increasing responsibility, he was responsible for overseeing financial stewardship and played a central role in various financial transactions and corporate acquisitions.

Jack Hartung, CFO
Chipotle Mexican Grill, Newport Beach

Jack Hartung, Chipotle CFO joined the brand in 2002 after 18 years with McDonald's. With almost twenty years of leadership at Chipotle, Hartung has seen the brand through some of the most challenging and most exciting of times. Hartung successfully transitioned the company headquarters from Denver, Colorado to Newport Beach, California in 2018 continuing to grow the brand's presence and economic impact. In July of 2019, Chipotle stock hit a record high and kept climbing, peaking at $857.90 a share in early September. Most recently and noticeably, Hartung has been the financial leader seeing Chipotle achieve seven consecutive quarters of accelerated growth. Chipotle's 2019 third quarter delivered outstanding financial performance as comps and margins continued to expand, further highlighting the strength of Chipotle's economic model. Under Hartung's financial leadership, Chipotle has seen significant store growth with more than 2,500 locations currently open and operating with an additional 150-165 planned to open next year. Supplementary strategic growth initiatives that continue to sustain strong sales momentum include the addition of Chipotlanes, a mobile pick up window for digital orders increasing access and convenience for consumers.

Tim Hatsukari, Vice President- Finance
Synoptek, Irvine

Since joining Synoptek in 2013, Tim Hatsukari has driven significant corporate growth in the competitive IT marketplace, including the accomplishment of 5x revenue growth ($100 million run-rate), 5x EBITDA growth ($17 million run-rate), +$100 million corporate assets management, and 7x FTE growth (+750 ppl worldwide). As a finance professional, he successfully completed six M&As, three series of debt refinancing, and a PE capital investment transaction in the last six years, which dramatically improved the company's operational scale and financial health and opened the door for next-level growth opportunities. As a strong team leader, he has established and managed a full-cycle GAAP Accounting business process with the team and implemented NetSuite ERP for growth and scalability. Finally, he actively engages with executives and investors in understanding corporate vision to achieve financial growth and profitability and enhance industry standing. His leadership, finance & capital management and M&A executions have successfully transformed the company from a regional MSP to a nationwide reputable MSP with global service delivery operations.

Eileen Haubl, Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer
Mission Hospital, Mission Viejo

Eileen Haubl serves as senior vice president and chief financial officer at Mission Hospital. In this role, she oversees the planning, development, implementation and management of all administrative functions and services within the revenue cycle departments. These include the business office, patient access, staff productivity,


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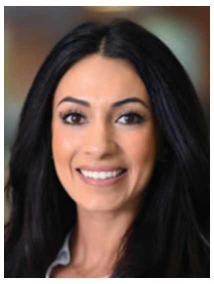
CFO of The Year Award Nominees

materials management, and service line operations improvement. She also oversees the operations of Mission Surgery Center. Haubl joined Mission Hospital in 2001 and has greatly impacted fiscal operations by increasing net revenue per adjusted discharge, increasing total annual cash collections, and directing financial turnaround at Mission Surgery Center. Her leadership of Mission Surgery Center has led to consecutive accreditations by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, which recognizes organizations that are compliant with quality care requirements. Haubl has also successfully led implementation of the Meditech client server, which supports increased patient safety with electronic health records, computerized physician order entry, electronic nursing documentation, and bedside medication verification.

Michael Henry, CFO
Tilly's, Inc., Irvine

Mike Henry is responsible for all finance, accounting, risk management, legal, loss prevention and distribution functions of the publicly-traded, 200-plus store youth culture retailer. In September 2018, he helped complete the $117 million secondary offering of TLYS stock. During his time as CFO of Tilly's, Henry has helped achieve seven consecutive quarters of year-over-year store traffic growth and nine consecutive quarters of improved year-over-year operating income. In 2015, he and the CEO made the decision to halt new store growth to focus on improving existing store performance, resulting in a significant improvement in business. In 2018 they re-initiated store growth with the opening of 12 new stores and four pop-ups. Prior to his time at Tilly's, Henry was senior vice president and global controller of Quicksilver from July 2012 to 2015 and senior vice president and CFO of Pacific Sunwear from 2008 to 2011. Henry won the 2019 Outstanding CFO of a Public Company award.

Neda Imbimbo, CFO
BigRentz, Irvine



Neda Imbimbo joined BigRentz in 2014 when it was a startup and seeking venture capital financing. Within two years she had strategically helped the company raise more than $20 million in funding. At that time, her role was vice president of finance and operations – a job that required not only managing all aspects of accounting operations – but also creating all processes from scratch. As a startup, the BigRentz accounts office was still very much a paper-based operation, using manual invoice processing for receivables and payables. Imbimbo was responsible for instituting entirely new accounting processes, systems automation and operations. It was the beginning of a new era for the company, which saw revenue rocket – jumping from $2 million in year one to $10 million in year three. It led to the company being named as one of Orange County Business Journal's fastest growing private companies two years in a row. Her financial planning, strategies for development and streamlining operational efficiencies have been instrumental in ensuring double digit growth for the company and increased profits throughout the last five years. It has led to BigRentz becoming the nation's largest online rental marketplace for construction equipment – with an incredible 8,500 rental locations and 2,500 rental partners.

Jerome Kaiser, Chief Financial Officer
SeneGence International, Lake Forest

Jerome Kaiser has served as SeneGence chief financial officer since September 2016. Kaiser has navigated the organic growth of SeneGence to over seven times in 24 months and has the helped international expansion and development of Canada, Australia, Mexico, New Zealand, Taiwan and Hong Kong markets. In addition he assembled a department of 30 staff from three in 12 months. Prior to SeneGence he served as the chief financial officer of Stemtech HealthSciences and ORYXE International, Inc.® Kaiser began his career in public accounting at PriceWaterhouseCoopers and has served in financial management positions with such notable companies as Liz Claiborne, Mikasa, Meguiar's®, and Ultramar. He is a Certified Public Accountant and is a member of the California State Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Kaiser received his master's degree in business taxation from California State University and graduated with honors from Pepperdine University with a Bachelor's degree in Accounting.

Ken Kruis, CFO
RiverRock Real Estate Group, Newport Beach

Ken Kruis joined RiverRock in 2005 just a few years after its founding. At that time he was one of 20 employees. Today RiverRock has 120 employees, a growth trajectory that Kruis has played a significant role in achieving. With a successful track record of delivering accounting and financial solutions, Kruis is responsible for profitability, controlling costs and enhancing efficiency. In his position, he handles all corporate accounting, financial planning & analysis, and financial management for RiverRock. Kruis's role is critical to effective property management accounting. Industry-wide RiverRock's accounting department and procedures, established in house by Kruis, are widely respected and sought-after by clients. Kruis strives to ensure he sets the bar and to that end RiverRock is one of few firms that is hired at times solely to handle property accounting. RiverRock takes pride in the 100 percent favorable audit results of its accounting procedures, policies and controls.

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Ontario
Inglewood
Whittier
Downey
Compton
Norwalk
Prado Flood
Fullerton
Lakewood
Anaheim
Disneyland
Torrance
Carson
Garden Grove
Orange
Silverado
Long Beach
Santa Ana
ORANGE
Palos Verdes
John Wayne/Orange County
Irvine
Santiago Pk
5,687 ft.
Huntington Beach
Costa Mesa
El Toro
Newport Beach
Mission Viejo
Laguna Beach
San Juan Capistrano
Dana Point
San Clemente
San Pedro Channel
Avalon
Santa Catalina Island
(LOS ANGELES CO.)
Catalina

CFO of The Year Award Nominees

Rino LaRosa, CFO
Craig Realty Group, Newport Beach

Over the past year, Rino LaRosa led the finance and refinance of retail, office, industrial and hospitality properties with bank and life insurance company institutions totaling over $1.1 billion dollars, including $100 million in development projects. LaRosa collaborated in the acquisition of over 800,000 SF of industrial and retail properties, and land over the past year. In addition, he led the private equity raise of over $42 million since 2009.

Jill Littley, CFO
Fuscoe Engineering Inc., Irvine

Jill Littley is a resourceful, self-motivated professional with a results-focused management approach. An energetic, seasoned financial specialist, Littley has experience in start-ups and rapid growth environments, private and public companies, and both domestic and international operations. Her background includes SEC compliance and management of finance, accounting, human resources and IT departments. Littley's primary responsibilities at Fuscoe Engineering are designing, implementing and monitoring financial systems consistently throughout the company; directing and analyzing studies of economic, business and financial conditions and their impacts on the firm; and overseeing regional administrative functions while providing policy-level help on facilities, ownership and information technology.

Lisa Locklear, VP & CFO
Avanir Pharmaceuticals, Aliso Viejo

Lisa Locklear joined Avanir Pharmaceuticals in September 2018 as vice president and chief financial officer. She brings a long career of operational and strategic financial leadership to oversee the financial operations of Avanir including controllership and accounting, financial planning and reporting, procurement/strategic sourcing and contracts and pricing. In the past year, Locklear has invested in learning the pharmaceutical industry. Through field visits with the Avanir sales team, detailed reviews of clinical trials and R&D programs and leveraging experienced colleagues at Avanir and at sister companies, she has built a new network and is grateful to have had this opportunity to expand her capabilities. Locklear set a vision for a future she calls "Finance 2.0" to create a scale-able and sustainable Finance organization to support the growth of Avanir. To apply this vision, she interviewed and hired the right individuals for the right roles, implemented several process improvements, spearheaded future automation and system upgrades and worked cross-functionally to become a trusted, highly consulted business partner across Avanir.

Matt Lopez, CFO & Treasurer
Strategic Storage Trust IV Inc., Ladera Ranch

With nearly two decades of experience, Matt Lopez is the chief financial officer and treasurer of Strategic Storage Trust IV, a public non-traded real estate investment trust that focuses on the acquisition of stabilized and growth self-storage properties. As of July 24, 2019, Strategic Storage Trust IV owns 17 self-storage facilities, comprising approximately 11,500 self-storage units and 1.4 million net rentable square feet of storage space, as well as two parcels of land under development. Lopez joined SmartStop in 2014 as the controller of Strategic Storage Growth Trust, Inc. and Strategic Storage Trust II, Inc., which were at the time, two public non-traded REITs. On his very first day, he was involved in the acquisition of a $25-million portfolio of real estate and has played an integral role in the financial operations of SmartStop entities ever since. Lopez's knowledge of real estate investment trusts began with his first position at PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, where he spent the first 14 years of his career in auditing and accounting.

Patrick Mahoney, CFO
United Service Technologies, Placentia

Patrick Mahoney is a Certified Public Accountant with over 30 years of experience in accounting, information systems, financial management and tax reporting for distribution and service businesses. He is also skilled in the implementation of new technology. During his time at United Service Technologies, Mahoney has improved the accuracy of billing and realized payroll cost savings and was able to reduce backlog from two weeks to two days. In addition, he established new reporting for sales and profitability by customer group, cash management, labor hour tracking, inventory reorder reports, etc.

Raymond Mao, CFO
Hydroponics Inc., Newport Beach

Hydroponics Inc. recently launched a $75 million fund for strategic acquisitions. As the CFO, Raymond Mao led a nationwide M&A target search, ranking upward of 40 different companies based on profitability, strategic location, and synergy with Hydroponics Inc. Hydroponics Inc., is a disruptive technology-enabled provider of global agricultural supplies, data & analytics, and procurement for large scale, commercial farms. Previously, as the owner of Ruizhi Technology Ltd, Mao expanded the Company's international footprint from solely operating in China to include the Middle East, and North Africa. Born in China, Mao has spent the last 12 years traveling between China and the U.S. for education and work. Whether owning an upscale restaurant in Dublin or issuing high-interest bridge loans in China, his fluency in Mandarin and English has helped him succeed in doing business internationally. Mao holds an MBA degree from UC, Irvine in Finance and Private Equity.

Chad Martin, CFO
MeridianLink, Costs Mesa

Chad Martin joined MeridianLink in June of 2018 and was instrumental in helping MeridianLink close the acquisition of CRIF Corporation in June of 2018 and has been responsible for the integration and optimization of the combined companies. Martin has executed a strategic vision to improve MeridianLink's financial performance by simultaneously investing in tools to modernize the finance department (including implementing an entire new suite of financial software); augmenting and upgrading his team and also partnering with key vendors (BDO, Wells Fargo) to improve internal processes to gain efficiency and efficacy. Also, he's led MeridianLink on two additional tack on financings to provide capital for business needs and expansion; working with its ratings agencies to maintain its current ratings. Because of Martin's work to drive efficiency and successful integration – MeridianLink has increased profitability over 30% year over year for the latest 12-month period.

Kevin McDonnell, Senior Vice President & CFO
JAMS, Irvine

In his role as CFO at JAMS, Kevin McDonnell oversees the financial department and works closely with the JAMS senior management team on financial planning and strategy. Under his leadership, the organization has seen tremendous results, cementing its role as the world's leading provider of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services. McDonnell joined JAMS in 2014, and in three short years, more than doubled the organization's EBITDA. He was able achieve this through implementing meaningful changes to the business model, which included pricing of JAMS premier ADR services. McDonnell has served for nearly 30 years in financial, IT and HR leadership roles, and the past 20 years as a C-level executive. His experience spans multiple industries with companies at various stages of growth. Working with a company's management team, he has created shareholder value by establishing a long-term plan with operational and financial targets, improving business processes, applying technology to business problems and building excellence within the financial, legal, HR and IT functions.

Matt McGuinness, EVP & CFO
WKS Restaurant Group, Cypress

Matt McGuinness is the EVP and CFO of WKS Restaurant Group, and has been with WKS 12 years since he left Diedrich Coffee, a publicly traded company where he was CFO and head of development. McGuinness also has prior experience as CFO for both Denny's, Inc. and El Pollo Loco, Inc., two of the franchisors WKS works closely with today. McGuinness led WKS' deal team this year in the largest acquisition it has ever completed. In 2019 WKS successfully acquired QK Holdings, the largest franchisee of Denny's with 94 restaurants in 11 states, and $160 million in revenue, now making WKS the largest Denny's franchisee with 127 units. WKS is known for successful growth by accretive acquisitions and creative deal making, and in 2019 this also included buying all company-operated El Pollo Loco's in the Phoenix market, following a 52 store Wendy's acquisition in December 2017. Based on the depth and sophistication of its management team, its best-in-class back office support platform, and excellent franchise finance industry and franchisor relationships and reputation, WKS is often sought out by prospective sellers, and therefore enjoys a steady "deal flow" of opportunities to selectively evaluate.

Anders Meier, CFO
Zen Ecosystems, Costa Mesa

Anders Meier is a multilingual finance and corporate strategy executive with over a decade of experience in owning all aspects of finance at high-growth software companies. He comes to Zen Ecosystems with deep industry expertise in software and IoT. In under a year with the company, Meier solo negotiated and closed the Zen biggest and most valuable sales contract and secured significant SAAS revenue stream over the next three years. Prior to joining Zen, Meier served as the VP of Global Finance at Greenwave Systems for five years, where he oversaw the company's finances, M&A initiatives, and investor due diligence. Meier has also served as a leading audit professional at two "Big Four" accounting firms, PwC and Deloitte. He earned his master's degree in Business Economics and Auditing from Copenhagen Business School. Anders also holds a Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from University of Southern Denmark and a Graduate Diploma in Financial and Management Accounting from Copenhagen Business School.

John Michel, EVP & CFO
First Foundation Bank, Irvine

At First Foundation, John Michel is responsible for the treasury and financial reporting functions. He also provides assistance to other members of the Bank's management team for business development and financial management matters. Michel, a certified public accountant (inactive), has over 20 years of experience in banking, mortgage and real estate accounting and financial management. He has served as the chief financial officer of community and regional financial institutions. Michel is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame.

Jessica Moeller, Chief Accounting Officer
Casco Contractors, LLC, Irvine

Jessica Moeller has worked at Casco Contractors for over 12 years and is currently responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company's finances including accounting and reporting, forecasting, budgeting, banking, surety, and risk management. Some of her accomplishments include: implementing an automated WIP statement saving one to

Congratulations Eileen Haubl of **Mission Hospital,** 2020 CFO of the Year Nominee

In addition to promoting optimal fiscal operations and supporting increased patient safety, Eileen helped lead the recent opening of the Judi and Bill Leonard Institute for Cancer Prevention, Treatment and Wellness. The Leonard Cancer Institute brings a new era of hope and healing to our patients.

We thank Eileen for working every day to make extraordinary health care available for our South Orange County community.

Eileen Haubl
Chief Financial Officer
Mission Hospital

MISSION HOSPITAL
Mission Viejo | Laguna Beach

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CFO of The Year Award Nominees

two days a month, implementing automation in the A/P process to reduce time and errors and participating in the payroll conversion dropping the payroll processing time from two days a pay period to 1.5 hours. In addition, Moeller has created: an automated company metric dashboard, monthly sales/billing reports which allow for more effective project management sales reviews, and automated plotting expenses to hit the projects so they can be recouped.

Mark Nelson, CFO
Crossover Health, San Clemente

Mark Nelson is a certified public accountant with an extensive background in the financial industry. Nelson joined Crossover Health in June of 2017 as the chief financial officer. His career began at Deloitte, LLP where he worked as an auditor before moving to Credit Suisse First Boston, LLC and working as an associate in mergers and acquisitions. Nelson was the vice president of Finance at Aspen Education Group, Inc., managing mergers and acquisitions, capital planning, and financial planning, before leading the sale of the business to a private equity-funded company. He spent the next nine years at VIZIO, Inc. (a company generating revenue in the multi-billion dollar range) holding a number of positions including Corporate Controller, VP Finance, and SVP Finance, and leading teams in all financial operations and process. He holds a BA in Business Economics from UC Santa Barbara, and a Master's of Business Administration with Honors from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

Elizabeth Pagliarini, COO & CFO
Summit Healthcare REIT, Lake Forest

Elizabeth Pagliarini currently serves as the chief operating officer, chief financial officer at Summit Healthcare. Pagliarini's responsibilities include corporate strategy, capital markets activities, financial performance and reporting, risk management, audit and tax functions, and investor relations. In 2019 she spearheaded the acquisition of 14 skilled nursing facilities in Indiana for the REIT. She had to coordinate with multiple parties including the sellers, a new JV cash partner, bank officers and loan covenants, insurance and outside consultants for all interested parties. Total purchase price was over $125 million and included in the acquisition of over 1,100 beds for the REIT. She was promoted to chief operating officer in 2019 thanks to her ability to shepherd the organization into a new joint venture with new partners. As of 2019 she manages a REIT that owns an interest in over 60 properties with the REITs ownership in the FMV being close to $100 million. Summit is a publicly registered non-traded REIT that is currently focused on investing in senior housing real estate located throughout the United States. The current portfolio includes interests in 12 long-term triple-net leased healthcare facilities.

Gary Payne, CFO & COO
Irvine Barclay Theatre, Irvine

Gary Payne has worked at The Irvine Barclay Theatre for 18 years and has overseen 10 straight years of budgets for the company. He fiscally guided the organization through a turbulent change in leadership in 2015-16 and helped to keep the organization stable. Since then, he has helped to grow the Barclay's operations from a $3.5 million annual budget in FY15-16 to $7.0 million in FY19-20. He has been instrumental in working with the City of Irvine and the University of California, Irvine on the Barclay's behalf, giving public partners confidence in Irvine Barclay Theatre's operations and guaranteeing a stronger financial footing. He negotiated some much-needed maintenance with The City that had been ignored in past years. His out-of-the-box thinking led to a new agreement with UCI and the City of Irvine for multi-year funding of capital projects. Like many nonprofits, staff members have more than one role. In addition to being the Barclay CFO, Panye is also the COO and oversees facility operations.

Ricardo Perdigao, Global CFO & COO
Sambazon Inc., San Clemente

Managing the operations for a company working with impoverished farmers at the base of the supply chain is no easy task. Environmental, political and financial risk are an everyday occurrence. Nonetheless, Ricardo Perdigao's leadership has resulted in the expansion of approximately 1,000 Fair Trade and organic certified farmers and creation of more than 200 direct employees. During his time at Sambazon, Perdigao has helped obtain eight consecutive profitable quarters (from loss making) and 24 straight months of positive EBITDA (profit making). In addition to two consecutive Fiscal Years of incremental net income (237% growth FY18 vs FY17), gross profit (46% growth FY18 vs FY16 or $10m), EBITDA growth (+$0.5 million FY18 vs FY17). Perdigao also spearheaded a second processing facility construction with an investment of $6 million that will more than double production and warehousing capacities, generating $2.5 million of incremental EBITDA and $1 million on incremental free cash flow.

Maria Pitol, VP & Corporate Controller
Montrose Environmental, Irvine

Maria Pitol has been with Montrose Environmental for over four and a half years and is now the vice president and controller where she has implemented proper segregation of duties, controls and metrics across the financial and accounting functions of the company. Pitol also supervised the Quality of Earnings process and financial due diligence from the finance/accounting perspective for 28 completed acquisitions (some of them all work done in house) and lead the back-office integration for said acquisitions, including businesses with operations in Canada and Australia. In addition, she assumed treasury function overseeing the streamlining of the function; consolidated over 35 bank accounts into six operating accounts; developed plan for phasing out the use of legacy accounts after acquisition; and leveraged the use of software automation for cash posting resulting in additional speed in terms of visibility of payments and accuracy of posting.

Amy Potter, CFO
Transportation Corridor Agencies, Irvine

Since 2012, Amy Potter has most notably excelled as chief financial officer (CFO) of the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA). TCA are two joint powers authorities formed by the California Legislature in 1986 to plan, finance, construct and operate Orange County's 67-mile public toll road system. The TCA's innovative approach to financing 30 years ago enabled the delivery of $4 billion dollars of infrastructure by issuing toll revenue bonds backed only by toll and development impact fees collected rather than subsidizing with federal or state funding or sales tax bonds. The vision of the leadership who formed these roads in response to the exploding population, worsening traffic congestion and shrinking government transportation funds has proven to be a successful model, as strengthened by the financial measures taken during Potter's tenure. As CFO, Potter is responsible for establishing, maintaining and monitoring TCA's fiscal activities and long-term financial planning. Her role includes supporting the CEO and the organization as a strategic partner to spot both opportunities and risk, providing vision and leadership to pursue growth, while also taking the necessary measures to protect the business.

Mike Prusty, CFO
Salas O'Brien, Santa Ana

Mike Prusty is vice president and corporate controller, the senior financial leader at Salas O'Brien Engineers. He has been instrumental to the organization as they achieved 300% growth in Revenue and EBITDA over the last four years. They have been a seven-times-in-a-row Inc 5000 winner based on their three-year revenue growth rate. At the end of this year, the company will be on a run-rate of $165 million in revenue and very profitable. During Prusty's time at Salas O'Brien, the company has successfully acquired and integrated eight companies in three years.

Nim Purewal, CFO & VP of Finance
Synamedia, Costa Mesa

Nim Purewal is the CFO of Synamedia Americas and vice president of finance – Synamedia is the world leader in Video Software with more than 200 customers including AT&T, Charter, Comcast, Disney, Liberty Global, Rogers, Sky, Tata and Vodafone. In 2018 Purewal played the lead financial role for the carve out of Cisco Inc. Video business to private equity group Permira, establishing the new Americas HQ in Costa Mesa and playing a key role in building the company's financial processes and teams from the bottom up. With experience of over 20 years in the industry, Purewal has also held senior finance roles with Cisco Systems Inc. and before that the NewsCorp subsidiary NDS. Purewal is a fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, having started his career in audit in the UK with technology startups. Purewal moved to California in 2007, where he is now happily settled with family, and as a Lakers season ticket holder is ever optimistic about the future.

Kim Racine, CFO
Vans, Costa Mesa

Kim Racine has been with Vans for over seven years and in 2019 was named the global CFO of Vans. In the past two years she has been at the forefront of tremendous 24% growth for the company. She has been instrumental in aligning Vans' financial practices globally; as well as a key player in restructuring the operations of their South Americas business where they shifted from direct operations to indirect operations/3rd party model to reduce complexity and improve profitability.

Sameer Rao, CFO
Enevate, Irvine

Sameer Rao has been critical to Enevate's ongoing success. Atypical of most CFOs, Rao has both a bachelor's and master's in engineering, which allows him to make contributions into a number of key domains as well as go deep into Enevate's battery operations. Rao's role is broad, he leads the 60 person company's efforts in finance, HR, IR, and IT/Cybersecurity. Enevate's operations include a full R&D battery pilot line which contains small versions of the same type of equipment found in battery Gigafactory's. Managing the costs associated with the operations and incoming battery materials is key for Enevate and Rao's business and technical background facilitate the best decision making which preserves Enevate's precious cash. Rao has led the company's financing efforts (~$30 million raised in multiple rounds under his tenure) which resulted in the company's valuation going up significantly. Rao helped set the direction for fundraising, pivoting the company's focus from traditional Venture Capital to strategic investors, successfully closing funding rounds with LG Chem, Samsung Ventures, and The Alliance (Renault, Nissan, Mitsubishi).

Ruud Rinkel, CFO
Upshoot, Costa Mesa

Ruud Rinkel is CFO for the Health & Wellness group, working with two CEO's. He is

CFO of The Year Award Nominees

responsible for Upshoot, the plant-powered nutrition company, providing proven programs and innovative products that leverage science and technology to deliver the maximum benefits of phytonutrients and Namawell, an appliance business that sells high-end juicers to everyday consumers. Rinkel has been with the company from its inception, overseeing finance operations, strategic planning, growth initiatives and scalability of process and systems. He overcame many challenges along the way, quickly resolved these and turned them around into opportunities. He built the entire finance organization and infrastructure from the ground up within less than a year. He led the valuation of Reboot with Joe, a company known from the movie "Fat Sick and Nearly Dead", which was acquired in 2018. Prior to Upshoot Rinkel set up international markets and was involved with various acquisitions, including a one-billion-dollar business unit from Pfizer. He was also engaged in restructuring debt to become profitable for venture capitalists—an endeavor that earned the company the "Corporate Turnaround of the Year" award from M&A Advisor magazine.

Scott Rosner, CFO
Infinite Electronics, Irvine

As CFO, Scott Rosner is responsible for Infinite Electronics' global Accounting, Finance, Information Technology and M&A diligence functions. Rosner comes to Infinite Electronics with over 25 years of Accounting, Finance, IT and HR experience, leading organizations such as Anchor Blue, APX Logistics, and the publicly-traded House2Home/HomeBase. His most recent role was with CoolSys, Inc, where he was CFO. Rosner holds a B.A. in Accounting and an M.B.A. from Cal State Fullerton.

Edzel Sarigumba, CFO
The Fischer Group, Orange

Edel Sarigumba has worked for the Fischer Group for over six and a half years, first as controller and now as CFO. Sarigumba has prepared the company's financials to potential buyers resulting in a 100% employee-owned ESOP on Dec 7, 2018. Sarigumba earned a Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina State University and a Master's in Business administration from the University of Chicago.

Brad Schmidt, EVP & CFO
Smile Brands Inc., Irvine
Brad Schmidt is chief financial officer at OneSmile, LLC, and Smile Brands Inc. (SBI). Schmidt co-founded OneSmile in 2015 and was with Smile Brands from 1998 through 2013, initially serving as vice president and controller through 2002, then subsequently as chief financial officer for over a decade. While under Schmidt's financial leadership, Smile Brands grew from a start-up to the largest dental support organization (DSO) in the United States, serving approximately 400 dental practices with annual revenues greater than $500 million. In supporting the company's growth, he played a leading role in the integration of the company's three initial platform acquisitions and Smile Brands' subsequent acquisitions of Monarch Dental Corporation and Castle Dental Centers Inc. He also oversaw the company's initial de novo expansion efforts, which led to the successful development of more than 150 practices. Schmidt has been responsible for the development and strategic expansion of many key functions, departments and initiatives at pivotal points in Smile Brands' history: developing the organization's support infrastructure, strategic expansion through acquisitions and de novos and negotiating several rounds of financing – that have been instrumental to Smile Brands' incredible story of survival, recovery and growth.

Eleanor Schultz, CFO
Haskell & White LLP, Irvine

Eleanor Schultz is the chief financial officer at Haskell & White. She oversees the Firm's internal accounting and finance functions, human resources, and facilities and plays a key role in assisting with the Firm's overall strategic direction. With 18 years of experience in financial leadership and accounting positions, she has expertise in developing financial controls and establishing policies and procedures to optimize efficiency, reduce costs and maximize profitability. Previously, Schultz was director of finance for a sales and marketing company, where she oversaw the divisional controllers and their staff, managed the accounting and finance functions for the marketing platform and served as a business partner to the President and her executive leadership team. Prior to that, she managed the more than $2.5 billion advertising sales revenue budget for a national broadcasting company. She also has held various accounting and Controller positions in New York City before relocating to Southern California in 2007.

Kris Sennesael, CFO
Skyworks Solutions, Inc., Irvine

Kris Sennesael is senior vice president and chief financial officer of Skyworks Solutions, Inc. He joined the company in August 2016, and since then he has rebuilt the accounting and finance teams - and transitioned the teams from being based in Boston to Orange County. Since he joined Skyworks the company has experienced over 10 percent revenue growth and 20 percent stock price growth. Prior to joining Skyworks, Mr. Sennesael served as chief financial

CFO of The Year Award Nominees

officer for Enphase Energy, a semiconductor-based energy solutions provider. Earlier, he served as chief financial officer at Standard Microsystems, a designer of mixed-signal connectivity solutions, and prior to then hed increasingly responsible financial positions at ON, AMI Semiconductor and Alcatel Microelectronics. Mr. Sennesael holds bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from the University of Ghent, Belgium, as well as an MBA from the Vlerick Management School.

Guita Sharifi, CFO
Radiant Health Centers, Irvine

Guita Sharifi, chief financial officer of Radiant Health Centers (formerly AIDS Services Foundation Orange County), has over 16 years of CFO experience in the nonprofit healthcare sector. With extensive expertise in fiscal oversight and operations, Sharifi supports RHC's board and CEO in meeting the agency's vision and strategic goals through cost-saving insights and efficient financial and operational oversight. With new HIV cases occurring steadily at a rate of six per week in Orange County, the former ASF had begun evaluating its services and the best approaches to get that number down to zero. The former ASF began evolving its services to improve and ease access to medications and health services for at-risk populations. Sharifi identified funding strategies to help the 32-year-old local nonprofit expand its services to help Orange County's vulnerable LGBT population. The first of these was the expansion of vital mental health services which began in 2018 for qualifying members of the LGBT community facing a mental health crisis or are in need of counseling. Sharifi also continues to oversee the organization's financial operations that fund its comprehensive social services for people living with HIV.

Brian Silver, CFO
Gray Construction, Anaheim

Brian Silver joined Gray's West Region office in 1998 and currently oversees all financial, risk management and human resource operations. As a certified public accountant, Silver's extensive background in finance and accounting, mergers and acquisitions, dispute resolution and technology adds great depth to Gray's West Region operations. In addition to Silver's regular risk management and investment duties, his leadership contributions were key this past year to a successful implementation of a major niche market growth initiative and a 'lean' initiative, resulting in significant bottom line growth and future opportunities.

Tobin Sloane, CFO & EVP
Ware Malcomb, Irvine

Tobin Sloane is CFO & EVP at Ware Malcomb, a leading international design firm providing planning, architecture, interior design, branding, civil engineering and building measurement services to commercial real estate and corporate clients. Sloane is a key member of the executive team, Board of Directors and provides oversight, vision and direction to the finance/accounting, human resources and administration functions of the firm. He holds a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance and Accounting and a Bachelor of Science with an emphasis in Business Administration, both from the University of California, Riverside. Sloane is an accomplished financial professional and business-savvy leader, bringing over 24 years of experience in financial analytics, accounting, management and operational leadership. He is well known for his strategic and innovative approach to the company's financial management and growth. Sloane has a strong commitment to fiscal discipline to ensure the overall health of the firm.

Al Talavera, CFO
NGD Systems Inc., Irvine

Al Talavera has spent his career leading technology companies financial planning for over 25 years. Talavera has helped raise three rounds of equity capital and one of venture debt for NGD Systems. He has led teams at Western Digital, Broadcom Corporation, Semtech and a number of early stage companies. Talavera has worked on M&A, Financial planning and fundraising efforts for these companies.

Michael Terjung, CFO & Treasurer
SmartStop Asset Management, Ladera Ranch

Michael Terjung is the chief financial officer and treasurer of SmartStop Asset Management, a diversified real estate company focused on student housing and senior housing. SmartStop Asset Management and its affiliates have a managed portfolio that includes approximately $2.0 billion of assets. Since 2007, SmartStop Asset Management has transacted approximately $5.7 billion in real estate deals. SmartStop Asset Management's managed portfolio includes five student housing communities with approximately 2,800 beds and 1.1 million square feet of space, as well as four senior housing communities with approximately 650 beds and 500,000 rentable square feet of space. Since joining SmartStop in 2009, Terjung has shown tremendous dedication and business acumen that has helped SmartStop grow into a leading sponsor of non-traded alternative investments and a leader in brand-based investing. Terjung's meticulous attention to detail and thorough approach to every aspect of finance has been instrumental to SmartStop. In January 2019, he was on the senior management team that closed the $350-million all-cash merger of Strategic Storage Growth Trust, for which he was chief financial officer, into Strategic Storage Trust II. The merger required the negotiation of more than $500 million in debt.

Mariane Teschner, Deputy Airport Director & CFO
John Wayne Airport/County of Orange, Costa Mesa

Mariane Teschner has been Deputy Airport Director (DAD), Finance Administration, since 2013 and was Airport Finance Manager for more than three years prior. She is responsible for Airport finances, debt and liquidity management, preparation and monitoring of the Airport budget and five-year strategic financial plan, daily operation of accounting systems and processes, procurement operation, airline rates and charges, preparation of financial statements, regulatory reports, and is the Airport's liaison to bond rating agencies and bond professional financing team. The division is comprised of three units, Budget and Procurement, Finance, and Accounting Operations. The Accounting unit is comprised of Airport staff and out-stationed Auditor-Controller staff. Prior to joining the Airport, Teschner had more than 20 years' experience working in the private sector in various financial management positions, including chief financial officer, finance director, controller, and vice president finance control and analysis.

Jesse Timmermans, CFO
Revolve Clothing, Cerritos

In the 18 months that Jesse Timmermans has been CFO at Revolve, he has increased profitability by 100 percent, and increased topline by 26 percent. He has filed an S1 to take the company public in the near future. Prior to joining Revolve, Timmermans worked for Jobaline, Blue Nile, T-Mobile and KPMG. He earned his bachelor's degree from Central Washington University. Revolve is an eCommerce startup that was founded in 2003 and is headquartered in Cerritos, California. REVOLVE is the virtual home for an unrivaled collection of over 700 of the world's most-coveted established and emerging brands in women's and men's designer apparel, shoes, and accessories.

Bill Tolmasoff, CFO
Harvest Landscape Enterprises Inc., Anaheim

Bill Tolmasoff has assisted with and currently designing plans and strategies for the optimal growth of a family business to a successful mid-sized company focusing on service and the well being of the environment. Harvest Landscape is a full-service landscaping firm. They handle every aspect of landscaping, including conception, design, installation and maintenance. Tolmasoff is working to develop a team of proactive individuals with accounting and finance backgrounds to grow and develop their abilities to turn data into useful information; that information is used to drive business decisions and the direction of the company.

Cort Townsend, CFO
Kofax Inc., Irvine

Cort Townsend was instrumental in the sale of Kofax (formerly the Lexmark Enterprise Software division of Lexmark) to private equity firm, Thoma Bravo. The deal garnered a higher than expected premium and included the carve-out and simultaneous sale of Perceptive Software, a subset of the Kofax business, to Hyland Software (an existing Thoma Bravo portfolio company). Two and a half years prior to the acquisition by Thoma Bravo, Townsend led the due diligence effort on the sale of Kofax to Lexmark culminating in an auction process among multiple potential buyers. This resulted in a purchase price of over $1 billion and nearly doubled the size of the Lexmark Enterprise Software business to approximately $700 million in revenue. Kofax is a leading provider of software to simplify and transform the First Mile™ of business. Kofax delivers its information capture, robotic process automation, financial process automation and customer onboarding solutions through its direct sales and service organization, and a global network of more than 1,300 authorized partners in more than 70 countries.

Steve Vilas, CFO & Partner
Burnham Benefits Insurance Services & Burnham Risk Insurance Solutions, Irvine

Steve Vilas is responsible for leading financial reporting, compliance and strategic expansion initiatives for Burnham Benefits. With over 30 years of industry experience, Vilas brings leadership and expertise to geographic, product development and market acquisitions that have continued to support Burnham Benefits growth including a near tripling in revenue during his six year tenure with Burnham. As part of the executive leadership team, Vilas had a key role in the development of Burnham Risk Solutions, a new company built on an acquisition platform, that expands Burnham's service capabilities into property and casualty management. As CFO of both Burnham Benefits and now Burnham Risk, Vilas secures the trusted industry status as a leader and an innovator proudly serving their partners and teams with diligence and commitment to excellence.

Drew Vollero, CFO
Allied Universal, Santa Ana

Drew Vollero has had a profound impact at Allied Universal since joining the company in Q4, 2018 as key strategic partner to CEO, Steve Jones. Prior to joining the company, Vollero was the CFO behind one of the largest IPOs in US history, taking Snap public in 2017, as well as working for leading academy consumer products companies like PepsiCo and Mattel. Vollero has played a lead role in Allied Universal's recent sale process, which lead to an extremely positive outcome, where Allied Universal was sold for a record

valuation of $7.25 billion to a leading PE firm and a Canadian pension fund as primary investors. Additionally, Vollero and the team refinanced the capital structure in 2019, raising an additional $4 billion in public and private debt through a successful national roadshow with banks and public investors. The company strategically extended its debt maturities at lower interest rates, in part due to an important outlook upgrade Vollero and team obtained from one of the rating agencies.

Robert Vreeland, CFO
Clean Energy Fuels Corp, Newport Beach

Clean Energy Fuels' performance is directly tied to diesel prices, they build and operate natural gas fueling stations. Their product is an alternative to diesel, when petroleum prices are high, Clean Energy's products are an attractive environmentally-friendly energy alternative. Bob Vreeland was able to dramatically improve the financial health of the company despite an environment of low oil prices when the company had expanded with building new fueling stations and took on debt to do so. The company had to recapitalize debt through this trend. For example, in 2012 Clean Energy has $620 million of debt and about $240 million of net debt. Today, that debt is $128 million of debt and net debt is a -$16 million (essentially zero). Clean Energy took on a significant investment by a foreign investor and added a strategic partner, and other strategic transactions that were successfully executed. Vreeland was able to dramatically improved operating expenses as well. For example, in 2013 SG&A was $138 million in 2013, and now it is $77 million, nearly cut in half.

Melanie Wenk, CFO & EVP
WNC Inc., Irvine

Melanie Wenk, CPA, is executive vice president and chief financial officer of WNC, one of the country's oldest and most active investors in affordable housing, where she oversees the underwriting, accounting, dispositions and human resources teams. A relative newcomer to the 48-year-old firm, Wenk has played a key role in its management and growth since joining the company 16-years ago as an accounting manager. Her leadership trajectory at the firm includes a promotion to CFO and vice president in 2009, senior vice president in 2014, and executive vice president in 2019. She chairs WNC's disposition committee, and is a member of both the preservation fund and investment committees. Wenk is a forward-thinking leader who tirelessly seeks to improve WNC's financial systems and practices. Since she took the helm of WNC's disposition team three years ago, its revenue has increased 116 percent, up to $6.9 million from $3.2 million, while its expenses were significantly reduced. Wenk saved WNC approximately $200,000 in annual reporting expenses when she implemented a business plan to sell the limited partnership interests in its public reporting SEC-registered funds.

CITY NATIONAL BANK

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Talk to Your Bank About Cash Management Tools
Banks offer a wide range of cash management services that can help you improve collections and better manage your cash-flow cycle.

One way to avoid the "check is in the mail" excuse is to implement electronic payments for your clients through Automated Clearing House (ACH) so they can pay electronically and boost your cash flow immediately.

Another tool for cash management is a wholesale lockbox, in which customers mail checks to a special post office box monitored by the bank, which collects and deposits them immediately.

You may want to consider talking to your bankers or others in your industry about the cash management tools that would work best for you based on your current clients and business model.

"There are some different ways that we look at cash management. We like to take a collaborative approach with our clients, understand how they get paid today and their client base, and from there we can recommend the best cash management tools for them," McHugh said.

By implementing cash management tools that allow you to better track accounts receivable, you can create more efficiency throughout your business, saving you and your employees time.

Maximize Your Cash Flow and Make It Easier To Accept Payments
Whether it's through paper checks or electronic payments, the easier you make it for your customers to pay you, the faster you will get your money. We can help you simplify your collections process. Contact us to get started.

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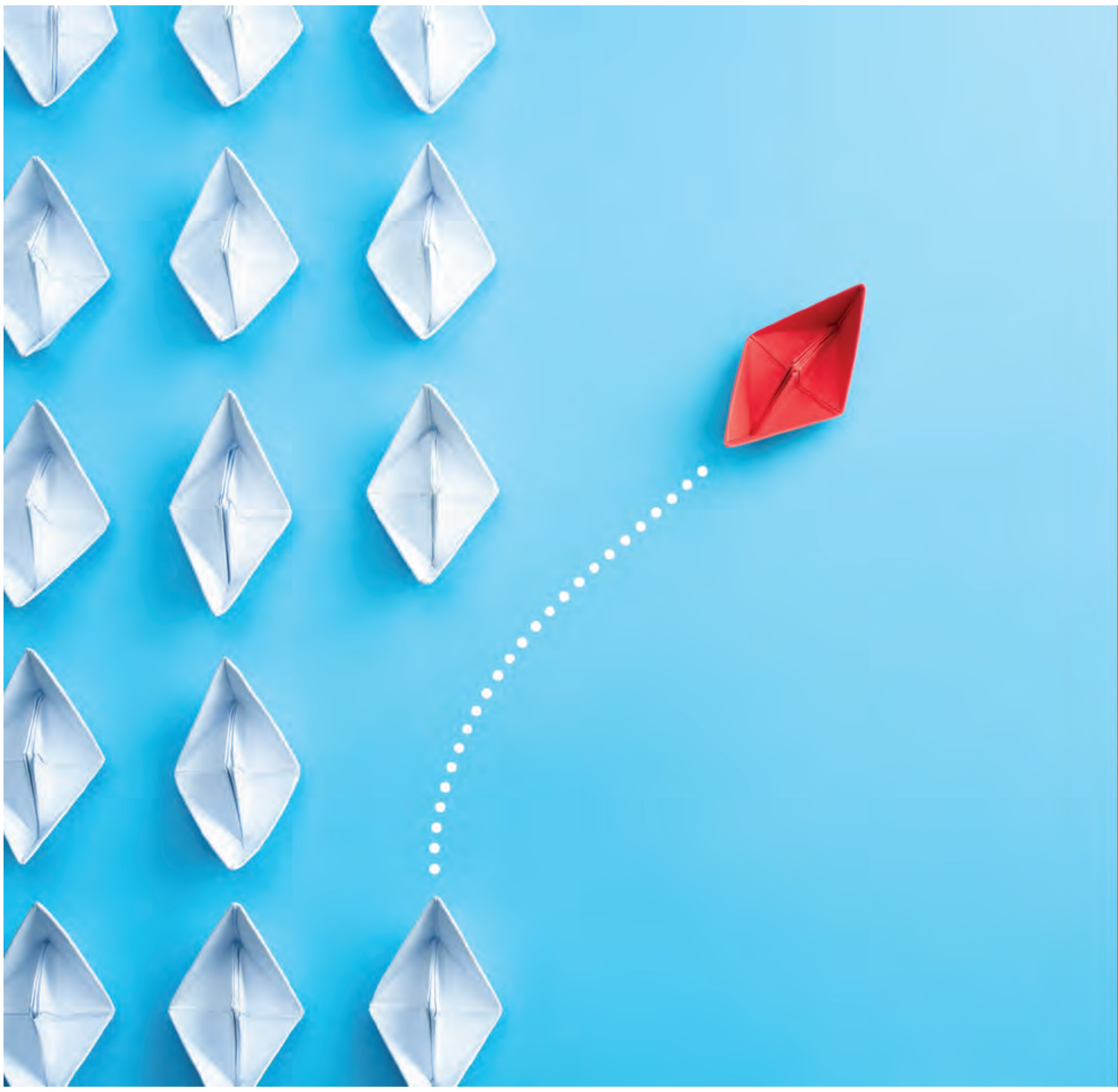

CFO OF THE YEAR Awards

Congratulations 2020 Nominees

PUBLIC COMPANY

Adam Ainbinder - *TravisMathew LLC*
Leeann Cochran - *CommerceWest Bank*
Donald D'Ambrosio - *Telemynd Inc.*
Daniel Hart - *Avid Bioservices Inc.*
Jack Hartung - *Chipotle Mexican Grill*
Matt Lopez - *Strategic Storage Trust IV Inc.*
John M. Michel - *First Foundation Inc.*
Elizabeth Pagliarini - *Summit Healthcare REIT*
Kim Racine - *Vans-a VF Company*
Kris Sennesael - *Skyworks Solutions Inc.*
Jesse Timmermans - *Revolve Clothing*
Bob Vreeland - *Clean Energy*

PRIVATE COMPANY

Ned Algeo - *Xperience Restaurant Group*
Ilene Anders - *Alliant Insurance Services Inc.*
Brian Arnold - *3 Day Blinds*
Ali Bhola - *Exemplis / SitOnIt Seating*
Kurt Binder - *CalAmp Corp.*
Nate Brooks - *PeopleSpace*
Jeff Conner - *The Kanvas Co*
Brent Cranmer - *Bal Seal Engineering Inc.*
Chad Gardner - *Blytheco*
Naren Goel - *Ephesoft Inc.*
Tim Hatsukari - *Synoptek Inc.*
Neda Imbimbo - *BigRentz*
Jerome Kaiser - *SeneGence International Inc.*
Ken Kruis - *RiverRock Real Estate Group*
Rino LaRosa - *Craig Realty Group*
Jill Littley - *Fuscoe Engineering Inc.*
Lisa Locklear - *Avanir Pharmaceuticals*
Patrick Mahoney - *United Service Technologies*
Raymond Mao - *Hydroponics Inc.*
Chad Martin - *MeridianLink*
Kevin McDonnell - *JAMS*
Matt McGuinness - *WKS Restaurant Group*
Anders Meier - *Zen Ecosystems*
Mark Nelson - *Crossover Health*
Ricardo Perdigao - *Sambazon Inc.*
Amy Potter - *Transportation Corridor Agencies*
Mike Prusty - *Salas O'Brien LLC*
Nim Purewal - *Synamedia*
Sameer Rao - *Enevate Corp*
Ruud Rinkel - *Upshoot*
Scott Rosner - *Infinite Electronics*
Edzel Sarigumba - *The Fischer Group*
Brad Schmidt - *Smile Brands Inc.*
Eleanor Schultz - *Haskell & White LLP*
Brian Silver - *Gray Construction*
Tobin Sloane - *Ware Malcomb*
Al Talavera - *NGD Systems Inc.*
Michael Terjung - *SmartStop Asset Management*
Mariane Teschner - *John Wayne Airport / County of Orange*
Bill Tolmasoff - *Harvest Landscape Enterprises Inc.*
Cort Townsend - *Kofax Inc.*
Steve Vilas - *Burnham Benefits*
Drew Vollero - *Allied Universal*
Melanie Wenk - *WNC Inc.*

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CO.

Mark Belzowski - *Girl Scouts of Orange County*
Ronald Cortez - *UCI Division of Finance and Administration*
Juvi De Neve - *Alzheimer's Orange County*
Eileen Haubl - *Mission Hospital*
Gary Payne - *Irvine Barclay Theatre*

RISING STAR

Justin Atneyel - *TAG*
James Barry - *SmartStop Self Storage REIT Inc.*
Fernando Castorena - *Renovo Solutions*
Julie Chassagne - *Alteryx Inc.*
Kelli Gerasimou - *Ivantis Inc.*
Jessica Moeller - *Casco Contractors LLC*
Maria Pitol - *Montrose Environmental*

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Mike Henry - *Tillys*
Guita Sharifi - *Radiant Health Centers*

Reservation Information

Visit www.ocbj.com/bizevents or contact Melanie Collins, Signature Events Manager, at 949.664.5065 or collins@ocbj.com.

Dinner & Awards Program

January 30, 2020 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
HOTEL IRVINE
Tickets*: $275 / Table of Ten: $2,600

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