

# INNOVATOR

## OF THE YEAR

# AWARDS

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# Ex-Boeing Staffer Engineers Sweet Enterprise



Marei: quit a sure gig at Boeing to follow the urge to create something of her own

## Dirty Cookie Scales Milk Shots Famed Chef Created

By MEDIHA DIMARTINO

**Shahira Marei** jumped from managing projects at **Boeing** to serving cookie-enveloped milk shots. The career switch was rather drastic, but it was her ties to the aerospace giant that made her **Dirty Cookie** business a possibility.

**Dominique Ansel**, the star chef behind the Cronut pastry sensation, is credited with developing the cookie shot—a chocolate-lined cookie cup filled with cold milk that his Los Angeles and New York bakeries serve in the evenings. Marei adopted his concept but also figured out how to simplify the labor-intensive process.

“What everybody was doing, even Dominique, it’s not scalable,” she said, adding that the capacity of the baking molds available at the time was limited, so “there’s no way you could really grow it into a main business ... and take it nationwide and worldwide like what I want to do.”

An aerospace engineer friend of Marei’s—“outside of work hours”—created baking molds that can produce hundreds of cookie cups at a time.

“I told him, ‘When I make it big, I’ll write you a check for a million dollars,’” she said. “He’s holding me to that.”

Marei found a commercial kitchen in Huntington Beach, and in January 2015 leased a store at **Union Market** at The District at Tustin Legacy. Cookie cup options there include chocolate chip, cookies n’ cream, red velvet, matcha green tea, peanut butter and chocolate mint. They can be filled

with organic milk, vanilla almond milk, chocolate and vanilla creams, coconut cold-brew, soft-serve ice cream and toasted marshmallow. Shot prices range from \$5 to \$7 each, in line with that of a large Starbucks’ Frappuccino.

### The Dough

The Boeing engineer who helped her make the molds may wait a bit for the payout.

Dirty Cookie—she chose the name for its punch—is officially still a startup, with 15 full- and part-time employees, and breaking even. Anything that’s left over after covering expenses, Marei is putting back into the business.

Catering orders bring in more than half of sales, which inspired her to rethink the brick-and-mortar concept and focus on bigger clients.

“Opening other locations is going to be the last thing I do, because right now we’ve already started wholesaling to hotels, like the Four Seasons, the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles, and Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach.”

Plans also call for serving the vegan community by year-end.

“We’re really growing our vegan and gluten-free assortment,” she said. “We’re actually going to probably turn it into more like a sister company, a sister line or something.”

### Innovation Legacy

Marei said she dreamed of running her own business since she was a child. She was inspired by her father, also an entrepreneur, whose company in Egypt specialized in aluminum manufacturing and ultrasonic inspections.

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## Sudek

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raised came in the past couple of years, a timeline that coincides with Sudek’s tenure at the center.

“There’s an upward trend that shows that UCI, and what we’re doing at Applied Innovation, is really accelerating the startup activity here in Orange County and generally for UCI alums,” he said, adding that he’s particularly proud “that about 43% of the money,” or roughly \$7 billion “has been invested in startups here in Southern California.”

Sudek left his post as director of the Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship & Business Ethics at **Chapman University** in 2015 to join UCI. At the time, Orange County’s entrepreneurial ecosystem was robust, he said, “but it wasn’t fully leveraged and was a bit fragmented.”

His mission was to develop Applied Innovation into a “center of gravity for connections” for local startups, UCI researchers and students, corporations and investors.

Sudek said he was “skeptical that UCI—because of its size and bureaucracy—would really provide me the resources to accomplish this kind of vision, and I am just overwhelmed with how supportive they have been, both in resources but also in how to navigate all the different policies and the organization ... and how to really lead the UC system in integrating the university into the community and industry.”

“I’m a bootstrap entrepreneur, and the University of California is a massive system and [not known for] the ability to move quickly. We’ve moved very quickly—we started with a 1,500-square-foot facility just under four years ago. We have 48,000 [square feet] currently, and we’re growing to be over 100,000 next year.”



Going bigger: Sudek thinks Applied Innovation can triple in size. “We’re growing to be over 100K SF next year.”

Sudek was referring to the Cove, a state-of-the-art technological facility and office space that last year hosted more than 700 events, and attracted 45,000 people.

Applied Innovation runs on about \$7 million a year that largely goes toward faculty research, patents, development and facilities operations for The Cove. Revenue comes mostly from state and UCI funding, philanthropic giving, and fees The Cove charges. It launched with a \$5 million gift from the **Beall Family Foundation** in Newport Beach to speed the “transfer of technology ... and discoveries to the marketplace.”

Earlier this year, **Beckman Coulter Diagnostics** in Brea formed a strategic collaboration with the university—the device maker set up office space at The Cove and will have access to UCI research in diagnostic platforms, the university to Beckman’s expertise in accelerating commercialization of tech-

nologies.

Sudek’s group also helps facilitate connections between local startups and investors, including Menlo Park-based **New Enterprise Associates**, a venture capital firm with more than \$20 billion in committed capital that keeps office hours at The Cove.

“A good ecosystem creates opportunity for accidental collisions and collaborations,” Sudek said. “Corporations want to be in the building because there are startups here that could be strategic investment ... And they’re just not startups connected to UCI—they’re startups from the community, and that’s why the VCs and the other investors and angel groups want to be here.”

The Cove, besides providing meeting space, may house community wet labs—a space for startups specializing in life sciences to run experiments or test product prototypes without having to invest millions in equip-

ment.

“This is essential, because we have over 500 medical device companies in Orange County, but we have no wet labs for entrepreneurs to use—they have to either go to Pasadena or San Diego,” Sudek said. “They can come in and rent a bench and pay really a very small amount to get access to very expensive equipment and the right bench space to help develop their product. As they grow and scale up and they get more investment, they can then eventually open up their own labs.”

Sudek, a UCI alum, developed an affinity for entrepreneurship early on, running lemonade stands and washing neighbors’ cars. He founded his first company, **Nadek Computer Systems**, in 1982 with \$250 dollars. The data networking and design-implementation firm had Fortune 100 clients that included **Microsoft**, **Boeing**, **ARCO** and **Universal Studios**. He sold the business in 1999 to **SAIC**, a multibillion-dollar international firm. He completed a doctorate in management at **Claremont Graduate University** in 2007, and began teaching as assistant professor of entrepreneurship at Chapman.

He’s also an active angel investor, and serves as chairman emeritus of **Tech Coast Angels**, the largest angel organization in the U.S. He’s also a research committee chairman for **Angel Capital Education Foundation**, a national organization of U.S. angel groups.

Sudek cited a “passion for helping entrepreneurs” as a driving force behind his efforts.

“I enjoy having people see the opportunity here and making the connections to accelerate the ecosystem and the success here,” Sudek said. “When I sold my company ... my passion and sort of my efforts changed to helping entrepreneurs, and this is really an opportunity to really accelerate the whole ecosystem.” ■



## Cryptocurrency (and What it Means for Your Taxes)

Bitcoin had a banner year in 2017. Though it's been around for almost a decade, the explosive growth experienced in 2017 has piqued the interest of investors and the IRS alike. As Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies become more mainstream, savvy investors are advised to take a proactive approach to their tax planning and compliance surrounding these issues.

While IRS guidance on the subject is limited, they did provide some clarification regarding the taxation of cryptocurrencies in Notice 2014-21. According to the Notice, cryptocurrencies are treated as property for federal tax purposes. This important distinction means that the rules applicable to property transactions must also be applied to cryptocurrencies. Depending on the type of transactions a taxpayer is involved with, this can have a variety of implications.

**Sale or exchange** - The conversion of a digital currency into another form of property creates a taxable event. This includes converting cryptocurrency to cash, and even the exchange of one digital coin for another, such as exchanging Bitcoin for Ethereum. Also, where there was ambiguity in the past, the new Tax Reform and Jobs Act is clear - cryptocurrency does not qualify for a tax-free exchange under §1031.

**Spending** - Even the purchase of goods or services with cryptocurrency can create a taxable event. The transaction is treated as if the coin was first liquidated for cash, and then the cash was used to make the purchase. For example, if you bought a coin for \$100 and later used that coin to purchase \$500 worth of goods, you would have a taxable gain of \$400.

**Receiving** - The receipt of cryptocurrency in exchange for goods and services is taxed as ordinary income.

**Mining** - Successful mining of digital currency is considered ordinary income equal to the fair market value of the coin on the date it's mined.

**Initial Coin Offering (ICO)** - Unlike traditional stock offerings, an ICO can be used to raise capital without giving away equity. However, the capital raised then becomes taxable income. Companies seeking a way to mitigate these taxes are looking to foreign markets with favorable regulatory environments.

**Other considerations** - Like other property transactions, the holding period matters. If you have held the coin for longer than a year before exchanging it, you will be eligible for the favorable long-term capital gain rates.



Record keeping, an often-underappreciated aspect of taxation, is especially important when dealing in cryptocurrency. Digital exchanges like Coinbase are not subject to the same reporting regulations as traditional stock brokers, so don't expect to receive a Form 1099 detailing your annual trading activity. In crypto, the onus of recordkeeping falls to the taxpayer. Taxpayers would be well served by keeping detailed records-

about the initial purchase price, holding period, and exchange of any digital currencies. This information will be required for both self-reporting, and as support if the IRS ever comes knocking.

Our digital currency team at RJI CPAs is available to help you navigate the evolving tax law surrounding cryptocurrencies and its impact on your activity.

**Jeff Elkins** is a licensed CPA in California and Tax Manager at RJI International CPAs. He has an extensive background in income tax planning and compliance for corporations, partnerships and high net worth individuals. Specializing in closely held businesses, Jeff's focus is on helping his clients minimize their tax liabilities and create multi-generational wealth as they grow their business. Jeff can be reached at 949.852.1600 or [jelkins@rjicpas.com](mailto:jelkins@rjicpas.com).



**Fernando Jimenez** is the Chief Executive Officer and tax partner of RJI CPAs. Fernando has specific experience in corporate re-organizations, buy/sell transactions, representation before the IRS and state agencies, succession planning, operations planning and transactional analysis. Fernando can be reached at 949.852.1600 or [fjimenez@rjicpas.com](mailto:fjimenez@rjicpas.com).



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Ice-cold snack: shots \$5 to \$7 apiece retail; over half of sales in catering, wholesale

# Dirty Cookie

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“He always told me, ‘If you really want to change the world and change lives, you need to become an entrepreneur, because that’s what you do as a business. You can help societies and communities, give people jobs,’” she said. “I was really motivated to being my own boss.”

Quitting her job made no sense to anyone she talked to about the possibility. She had a 5-month-old daughter to support at the time, and though Boeing was frequently laying off workers, she said her job security wasn’t in question.

“People were freaking out, saying, ‘Nobody’s leaving Boeing—what are you doing?’” she said. “I was the youngest one of the people there, and I wasn’t overly paid like other people that have been there for a long time that they had to lay off.”

But she quit anyway, bringing along her best friend and a fellow project manager at Boeing, **Sally Elgamil**.

“I told her, ‘I really wanted to do this,’ and I knew she’d support me through anything,” Marei said.

About a year into their adventure, Elgamil returned to corporate life.

“She couldn’t really handle the life of entrepreneurship—it’s very stressful, and the sacrifice is big,” Marei said. “So we kind of just went our own ways, and she’s still my best friend.”

Riding solo has so far been working out for Marei, but to grow the business, she said she’ll need more support on the financial side.

“I’m looking for investors right now.” ■

# How To Reach Us

- **Letters to the Editor, Viewpoint** submissions, other **Commentary**: Editor Pete Weitzner at weitzner@ocbj.com
- **Corrections**: Pete Weitzner at weitzner@ocbj.com
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Orange County Business Journal,  
18500 Von Karman Ave., Suite 150  
Irvine, CA 92612  
(949) 833-8373; fax (949) 833-8751



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## Elder Care is Moving from Hospital to Home

*Northeast providers upping investment in home health to catch up to West*

### Elder Care is Moving from Hospital to Home

Northeast providers upping investment in home health to catch up to West. Seniors and their families are getting more comfortable with having productively uncomfortable conversations about their care options.

Historically, healthcare providers have fallen into a trap of medicalizing old age so much that they recommend continued treatments even if the ultimate outcome remains the same. Physicians have been hesitant to have difficult conversations with their patients about realistic end-of-life care options. Important questions—like what metrics the patient uses to measure quality of life—have gone unasked.

The tide is changing slowly, helped in part by Medicare's recent move to reimburse providers for having these conversations.

A bigger driver is seniors themselves. Their expectations are different. They're tired of receiving care that focuses just on increasing the number of days left without maximizing the quality of that time. And their advocates have more information and access. If their near-term investment plans are any indication, healthcare organizations are listening. Their future, and our seniors, depend on it.

We worked with NEJM Catalyst to survey healthcare executives, clinical leaders and clinicians about the outlook for elder care investment and innovation as providers work to meet the changing needs of the fastest-growing U.S. age demographic.



We found that the future of elder care is one rooted in empathy and focused on improving quality of life. We'll see greater investment in home health, palliative care and geriatrics and a move away from facility-focused models. Part of that includes improved training for physicians to have those important conversations about end-of life care. Another piece of that means hiring or training more on-staff geriatric caretakers to identify health risk factors for seniors before they evolve into greater health problems.

As Karen Stone, Atlantic Tax regional managing partner and member of the Long-Term Care Team for The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation, puts it:

"The 'traditional' nursing home is undergoing rapid change while the overall healthcare industry consolidates at a record pace. Under consumer-centric value-based care, elder care providers that evolve business models to improve care quality and satisfaction, boost population health and reduce healthcare costs—whether inside brick-and-mortar facilities or not—will thrive."

We also saw varying provider investment plans by region, notably in home health. While 52 percent of healthcare organizations in the Northeast said home health was one of the top two segments of care they'd invest in by 2020 to prepare for the growth of the aging population, just 35 percent of providers in the West said the same.

But we don't think providers in the West are less interested in home health models. It's just that their counterparts in the Northeast are playing catchup.

In the Northeast, you have states that tend to spend more on healthcare and hospital care because of the region's larger portion of elderly residents and high-profile hospitals. And then in the West, you have health systems like Kaiser and others which have for years provided a strong model of how a holistic, well-coordinated health system can keep patients healthy and out of the hospital.

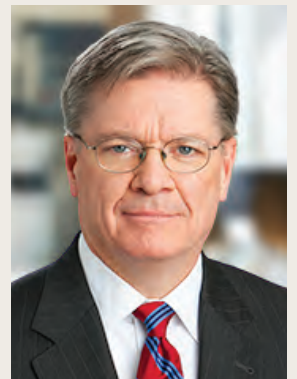
The West's tech-centric economy is another likely reason providers there have been ahead of the game in adopting home health models. They have more direct access to the innovative technologies that make them successful.

Changes in health models have a ripple effect. Implications abound for investors and the real estate industry. Read on for more **Candid Conversations on Elder Care** highlights that can be found on [www.BDO.com](http://www.BDO.com).

Patrick Pilch, managing director, and Steven Shill, assurance partner, are the national leaders of The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation. They can be reached at [ppilch@bdo.com](mailto:ppilch@bdo.com) and [sshill@bdo.com](mailto:sshill@bdo.com), respectively.

### Patrick Pilch 212-885-8006

Patrick Pilch leads the firm's National Healthcare Advisory Practice with more than 30 years of healthcare, financial services, operational management, and restructuring experience.



### Steven Shill 714-668-7370

Steven has spent more than two decades in public accounting, as well as five years in a senior management role with a publicly traded corporation overseas. Steven serves both public and privately held and nonprofit companies in the healthcare organizations.



### About The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation

Healthcare and life sciences organizations share the responsibilities of improving patient outcomes, cutting costs and collaborating across—and outside—their supply chains. To thrive in a consumer-driven wellness landscape, organizations must strive for *Shared Care, Shared Value*: breaking down silos and making connections to maximize revenue, manage risk, capitalize on data, compete and expand, and innovate patient care. The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation helps bridge the gap between the clinical and financial worlds to unlock value across the healthcare and life sciences ecosystem.





# CANDID CONVERSATIONS ON ELDER CARE

## Home Health, Palliative Care & Tech Will Drive Empathetic Elder Care

Five percent of Americans generate almost half of U.S. healthcare costs—most of them chronically ill seniors. Pressure on providers to curb healthcare spending will grow as seniors are poised to make up more than 20% of the entire population by 2029. Seniors are pressing caregivers to focus more on quality of life over the number of days left. Providers are responding with plans to focus their investments on home health and palliative care—and they'll look to technology to help improve both.

BDO's *Candid Conversations on Elder Care* predicts what elder care will look like by 2020 and beyond.



### Elder Care's Race Against Time

2010



In 2010, seniors made up **13%** of the U.S. population and **34%** of healthcare spending through Medicare & Medicaid

2016

In 2016, **healthcare spending made up 17.9%** of GDP and by 2026, it's expected to be **19.7%**



2029



By 2029, seniors are forecast to make up **more than 20%** of the U.S. population

2050

By 2050, the 85 and above demographic will **start growing at a faster rate than the entire working population**



### The Change Agent Formula



increasing pressure to cut public health spending amid growing senior population



increasing emphasis on quality of life over # of days



empathetic, quality-based elder care



### The Provider Response?

By 2020, they will invest most in...

44%



Home health

44%



Palliative care

39%



Geriatric caretakers

12%



Outpatient Rehab

12%



Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly

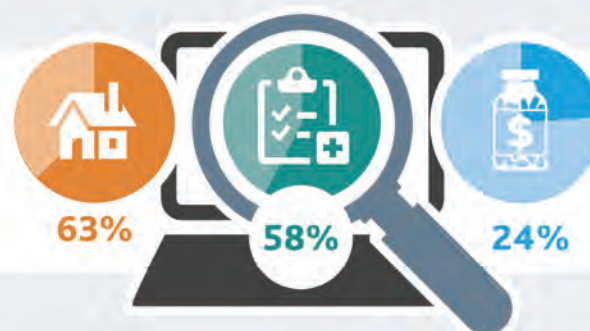
12%



Skilled Nursing Facilities

They see the greatest opportunities for technology disruptors to improve elder care in...

Home-based care  
Care coordination  
Drug pricing



They predict that the impact of technology on improving quality and safety of elder care will be greatest in...

**97%** Transportation coordination  
**93%** Electronic or telemedicine consultations/capabilities  
**89%** Wearables, sensors or connected devices

Join the conversation. Contact:



**STEVEN SHILL**  
Partner & National Leader of The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation  
sshill@bdo.com / 714-668-7370



**DAVID FRIEND**  
Managing Director & Chief Transformation Officer of The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation  
dfriend@bdo.com / 781-386-7090



**PATRICK PILCH**  
Managing Director & National Leader of The BDO Center for Healthcare Excellence & Innovation  
ppilch@bdo.com / 212-885-8006

Sources: U.S. Census, CMS, Health Affairs, BDO/NEJM Catalyst March 2018 Buzz Survey

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## The Up-C IPO: Strange name, Bankable structure

by Ryan C. Gaglio and Parker A. Schweich

The “UP-C” is one of the many reasons tax lawyers should not be allowed to name things, but, despite its strange name, the UP-C can be a useful structure for taking your tax partnership (likely your limited liability company, or LLC) public, while still maintaining some of the LLC’s tax benefits – for both you and the public shareholders.

### “Up-what?”

Even though the name is easy to mock, the UP-C has become a viable path for LLCs to access the public markets. For numerous reasons, LLCs have not traditionally been good candidates for initial public offerings (IPOs) of most operating businesses. The UP-C, which is shorthand for “Umbrella Partnership-Corporation”, allows the historic owners of an LLC to participate in an IPO while preserving many of the tax benefits that an LLC affords. In an UP-C, a newly formed corporation (“PubCo”) undertakes an IPO and uses the proceeds to buy interests in the LLC. After the IPO, the public shareholders own Class A stock of PubCo, the historic owners of the LLC own voting-only Class B stock of PubCo, and PubCo owns an economic interest in the LLC equal to the public’s economic interest in PubCo. PubCo also has all of the voting power in the LLC, which continues to operate the pre-IPO business. The historic owners of the LLC have voting-only interests in PubCo and solely economic interests in the LLC. This concentrates control of the LLC in PubCo while allowing the historic owners to maintain their traditional LLC pass through tax treatment until they are ready to exchange their divided PubCo and LLC interests for Class A stock of PubCo. An Exchange Agreement with PubCo allows for this exchange. The public disclosures required by the Securities and Exchange Commission in the registration statement for the UP-C IPO, and the ongoing accounting and compliance work, are more complicated (and, therefore, somewhat more expensive) than a standard IPO, but this is often outweighed by the benefits.

### That sounds complicated. Why would anyone do it?

Because LLCs have useful tax benefits – namely the potential for “basis step up.” You have tax basis in your LLC’s assets. This tax basis (i) allows for depreciation or amortization of those assets and (ii) reduces gain (or increases loss) on the sale of those assets. When you (or a corporation) acquire additional interests in the LLC (assuming it makes an election under Internal Revenue Code Section 754), your basis in those assets increases by what you paid (or exchanged) for the interests – the “basis step up.” This means your depreciation and amortization increases, and your gain on a sale of those assets decreases (or your loss increases). The same is true for PubCo. Every time PubCo exchanges its Class A stock for a historic owner’s divided PubCo

and LLC interests, PubCo gets a basis step up in the LLC assets and the resulting tax benefits. This basis step up could significantly increase PubCo’s valuation in any proposed sale of the company.

The UP-C structure also supports the growth of the business because the company will be able to compensate its employees with publicly tradeable Class A stock of PubCo and will have the option to issue either equity in PubCo or economic interests in the LLC when entering into strategic partnerships or acquiring other businesses.

Additionally, if you are a private equity group that owns portfolio companies structured as LLCs, the UP-C structure may be the most efficient way to attain liquidity (if an IPO is more preferable to you than a company sale) without having to reorganize the portfolio company and while still maintaining many of the tax benefits of an LLC and the ability to exercise some control over the LLC’s business through the Class B voting stock of PubCo.

### But I’m a founder. What’s in it for me?

PubCo – and thus the public shareholders – get the benefits of increased tax basis in the business you built. In exchange, PubCo shares these tax benefits with you – typically 85 percent to 90 percent, in your favor – under a “Tax Receivables Agreement.” As a historic owner of the LLC, you also continue to enjoy being subject to only one layer of tax for as long as you maintain ownership of your economic interests in the LLC. Whenever you desire liquidity for your ownership interests in the LLC, you can exchange those LLC interests for Class A stock of PubCo and resell the Class A stock in the public markets. Thanks to favorable UP-C interpretive guidance in 2016 from the Securities and Exchange Commission which (subject to certain conditions) allows the historic owners of the LLC to tack their holding period requirement for reselling stock under Rule 144 back to the date they originally acquired their LLC interests (rather than the date they exchanged those interests for Class A stock), this process of achieving liquidity has become easier. With the UP-C structure, you can reap the capital benefits of an IPO and the tax benefits of an LLC.

Additional contribution by  
Shelly Teleoglou  
Associate, Tax  
(949) 725-4171  
steleoglou@sycr.com

### Ryan Charles Gaglio

Ryan Charles Gaglio is a shareholder in Stradling’s Corporate and Tax practice groups. Ryan focuses on tax planning, tax controversy and transactional matters. He advises clients on the federal, state and local tax consequences of mergers and acquisitions, bankruptcies and workouts, and executive compensation, as well as on sales, use and property tax matters. Contact him at 949-725-4042 or rgaglio@sycr.com



### Parker Schweich

Parker Schweich is a shareholder in Stradling’s Corporate and Securities practice group and is a member of the firm’s Public Company, Mergers & Acquisitions and Emerging Growth practice groups. Parker helps clients raise capital, invest in or acquire businesses, achieve successful exits and navigate the complexities of corporate and securities laws. Contact him at 949-725-4241 or pschweich@sycr.com.







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## Looking for Efficiencies and Innovation in Treasury Operations? Is Digitization the Path for You?

By Joe Yurosek, California Market President, Fifth Third Bank

Today's treasury professionals face a common set of challenges when it comes to payments processing. The North American market for B2B payments is \$25 trillion and yet, in the U.S., more than 50 percent of these payments are still being made by paper checks.<sup>1</sup> Add to this, many organizations are burdened with handling paper invoices and matching remittance data. These manual, highly inefficient processes can be a tremendous burden on an organization's accounts payable (AP) staff. On top of that, inefficient and expensive paper payment processes make it difficult for accounts payable to know its cash position in a timely manner, making decision-making on how best to disburse funds less precise.

Businesses pay \$132,000 annually to manually process 500 invoices a month at a standard \$22 per invoice.<sup>2</sup> Factors that can add to that price tag are high processing costs, slow invoice approval times, frequent missed payments, weakened supplier relationships and inefficient use of company resources.

Industry stats show that 8 out of 10 invoices will have at least one exception.<sup>3</sup> Relying on manual entry alone can mean exceptions aren't caught, requiring someone to research the error before resuming their assigned tasks.

Fortunately, advanced electronic payables solutions are addressing AP concerns and making it possible to drive tremendous efficiency in payables processes. AP departments are now able to achieve automation around payments and invoices, helping to eliminate cumbersome paper processes and reducing the risk of fraud. In addition, organizations can use these solutions to improve supplier relationships by simplifying the supplier payment process, while reducing cost and improving the bottom line. Today's automated AP workflows make the entire process easier, more accurate and efficient. Through shorter payment cycles and improved processes, automated AP solutions help reduce clutter and paper.

### Major benefits of automating the AP workflow:

- ▶ **Integration with your ERP or accounting system** – This leads to productivity gains. Connected to your ERP or accounting system, each time an invoice is received or processed, the appropriate accounting entries are instantly and automatically created. This means the end of duplicate work and manually copying information from one system to another.
- ▶ **Integration with your bank** – At the end of the month, the accounting teams review every transaction to ensure they match with what's in the bank, manually and/or with spreadsheet programs. With the efficiencies of bank account integration, modern AP systems can download bank balances, pull cleared transactions and make the reconciliation process simple from end-to-end.
- ▶ **Fraud protection and information security** – Moving from paper to a digital system improves information security to your organization. This includes new visibility into all electronic payments and vendors, scans for duplicates and errors, and full control for approvers and exceptions.
- ▶ **Greater insight** – Business leaders should have instant access to reports telling them everything they need to know about the current state of the company's finances. This includes AP reports with information about outstanding payments by vendor and recent expenses by product, expense type, or category. This type of information can be available electronically across all products, functions and divisions.
- ▶ **Unlimited users** – Many AP systems charge a fee per user. Between the AP team, accounting, and various department leaders and managers around the company involved with the AP approval process, you may have a lot of users that need system access. If your AP is fully automated, however, you shouldn't need many accounts.
- ▶ **Paperless document storage** – Everything lives in bits and bytes on your network rather than papers in your filing cabinets. AP automation can effectively remove the need for paper storage and extensive holding periods.

### Laying the groundwork for automation success

Take time to map out the steps in your current AP process. Ask detailed questions such as those below because understanding the nuances of your process will be key to adopting a system that not only meets your needs today, but allows for scale and growth tomorrow:

- ▶ How do you receive invoices? Where do they come from?
- ▶ Where do the invoices go? Who is responsible for processing them? How? Using what methods?
- ▶ What kind of manual data entry or data manipulation is involved?
- ▶ How are invoices approved? How are the payments applied to pay those invoices?

- ▶ How are invoices paid? By card, ACH, or check?
- ▶ How are the payments captured in your accounting system? Who is in charge of ensuring the payments are accurate and posted correctly?

Your answers to these questions and finding the right partner will help you effectively automate AP.

The cost for <b>traditional</b> check payments and manual invoice	<b>\$22</b>
The cost for <b>electronic</b> payments and invoice	<b>\$9</b>
<b>Per transaction savings</b>	<b>\$13</b>

Sources:  
Ardent Partners, State of B2B Payments: Emerging Business Value "Strategies for Success"; Mercator, The US Commercial Card Market, 2017

With its game-changing electronic payables solution called Expert AP, Fifth Third can help you create efficiencies. This innovative, full-service, B2B AP solution manages everything from invoice receipt to actual payment and allows AP departments to run more efficiently, while positively impacting the bottom line. At the same time, suppliers benefit from additional payment and enhanced remittance options.

"We are the first bank to partner with the Mastercard B2B Hub powered by AvidXchange," says Expert AP product manager Adam Keck. "This enables Fifth Third to offer an end-to-end automated platform that converts payable processes traditionally done by paper into an electronic transaction. This technology maximizes electronic payments using virtual cards and enhanced Automated Clearing House (ACH)."

Contact our Orange County-based team members, Joy.Gilmer@53.com or Sandra.Collaso@53.com to see how Expert AP can transform and optimize your payables function into an efficient machine.

1. Fifth Third Press Release: <https://www.53.com/content/fifth-third/en/media-center/press-releases/2017/press-release-2017-10-16.html>
2. Article; "The Problem With Paper: A Case for Automating Accounts Payable", AvidXChange
3. Article; "Mission Possible: Reinventing Invoice Automation", by Guest Contributor, July 11, 2017 / CFO Essentials

### 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.



### About Fifth Third

While you might not know our name, you'll recognize our faces! Fifth Third is making a significant investment in the California market by hiring local, tenured talent and delivering value-add advice, products and services to help clients with their most pressing financial, growth, and risk management challenges.

Fifth Third Bancorp is a diversified financial services company headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio. As of June 30, 2018, the Company had \$141 billion in assets and operated 1,158 full-service Banking Centers and 2,458 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 more than 54,000 fee-free ATMs across the United States. Fifth Third operates four main businesses: Commercial Banking, Branch Banking, Consumer Lending and Wealth & Asset Management. Member FDIC





## Medical Device Leader Edwards Drives Meaningful Innovation for Patients

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Since introducing the first commercially available heart valve in 1960, Edwards has continued to meaningfully advance heart valve therapy and, more than 50 years later, remains a global leader in this field. Edwards also leads the development of technologies designed for the non-surgical replacement of heart valves, called transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR.



Edwards

Additionally, for more than 40 years, Edwards has advanced the care for the acutely ill.

The company invests 15 percent to 16 percent of sales in R&D, and recent years' product growth is directly related to the outputs of Edwards' R&D. Last year, Edwards was proud to introduce several innovative products that helped maintain strong global leadership positions and enabled more patients to benefit from the company's life-saving technologies than ever before.

For more information about Edwards Lifesciences, visit [Edwards.com](http://Edwards.com).



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## A Spotlight on Young Innovators

This summer, Maschoff Brennan launched an Orange County student innovator scholarship as part of the OCBJ's Innovator of the Year Award. We will award up to three \$2500 scholarships to undergraduate or graduate students who demonstrate outstanding innovation in any field. We invite nominations through August 20, through our website, [www.mabr.com/student-innovator](http://www.mabr.com/student-innovator).

As we approach our selection of our first young innovators, we reflect on the relationship between youth and innovation. Curiosity and rebelliousness are signature characteristics of youth. With open eyes, the made world becomes malleable. What is fixed, becomes challenged.

We are no stranger to the creative power of youth. At the age of 26, **Albert Einstein** published four papers, on the photoelectric effect, Brownian motion, special relativity, and the equivalence of mass and energy. **Louis Braille**, at the age of 15, invented handwriting for the blind. In the 1920s, **Philo Farnsworth**, as a high school student in rural Idaho, conceived the idea of projecting recorded images by scanning electrons on a glass screen. At the age of 21, he made the world's first working television. Innovation is the will to turn conception into a new reality.

Today's youth are no less impressive. You just have to look to submissions by high school students in national science competitions. **Maria Elena Grimmer**, at the age of 14, discovered a way to use recycled plastic beads to purify water of harmful antibiotics that build up in rural water supplies, for which she won the 2015 Siemens Competition in Math, Science and Technology. **Jack Andraka**, a 15-year-old high school freshman, discovered a test for early detection of pancreatic cancer, winning him the grand prize of the Intel International Science Fair in 2011. **Param Jaggi**, a 17-year-old senior at Plano East High School, developed a mechanism inserted into the exhaust pipe of a car that uses photosynthesis to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. **Raymond Wang**, at the age of 16, created a device that changes how air is circulated in an airplane to reduce germ transmission by 55 times, winning him the top prize at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in 2016. In 2018, **Gitanjali Rao**, age 11, won the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge for inventing a sensor that can detect lead in water more efficiently than traditional methods.

Orange County has been a hub of innovation beginning in its early days. **Clarence Leonidas Fender**, the inventor of the Stratocaster, was born in Orange County to parents who owned an Orange Grove near Anaheim. In a single year, 1995, UCI became

the first university to have two of its professors win the Nobel Prize in separate fields. **Frederick Reines** and **F. Sherwood Rowland** were awarded Nobel Prizes in physics and chemistry, respectively. Professor Reines discovered the neutrino; Professor Rowland discovered that chlorofluorocarbons contribute to ozone depletion.

In the business arena, Orange County has been blessed with many visionary innovators. **Jim Jannard**, founder of Oakley sunglasses and Red Digital Cinema, revolutionized eyewear and digitized film production, transforming two industries. **Reza** and **Maryam Rofougaran**, a brother and sister dynamo, hold over 1000 patents, making them among the top 20 inventors in the world. They have been pioneers in the development of Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and other communication technologies. Through Movandi, an Orange County-based venture, they are developing revolutionary applications in 5G and other next generation communications technology.

Recent winners of the OCBJ's Innovator of the Year Award confirm that the well of innovation has not run dry in Orange County. Past winners include **Stan Rowe**, the Chief Scientific Officer of Edwards Life Sciences, whose work helped revolutionize the heart valve to substantially reduce mortality rates among patients with heart problems. **Dr. Benjamin Park**, UCI Professor and founder of Enevate, has developed a fast charging lithium ion battery for electric vehicles recognized as a leader in its field. **Stuart McClure**, the CEO of Cylance, Inc., developed a cybersecurity solution using algorithmic science and machine learning to detect and prevent attacks with greater proficiency. The list of innovators is long; it is regrettable there is so little space here in which to showcase them. Which brings us to the future. We honor the notable achievements of individuals. But we ignore at our peril the deeper truth that innovation is a collective endeavor. The passion to inquire and to buck tradition is a force that must be nurtured and re-inscribed in each generation. That effort begins with the smallest of gestures, words of encouragement to the young misfits, heretics, and freethinkers among us who have the audacity and courage to challenge convention, and in doing so, to change our world.

### Maschoff Brennan

*Maschoff Brennan is a leading 50-lawyer IP and Commercial Litigation boutique law firm with offices in Park City, Irvine, and Salt Lake City. Michael Katz, a shareholder in the Irvine Offices, is a trial lawyer who handles patent, trade secret and other business litigation involving diverse technologies, including semiconductor, pharmaceutical, fiber optic, medical device, automotive, and software. He has been named a Southern California Super Lawyer every year since 2004 and listed in Best Lawyers in America in IP and Commercial Litigation. He is also a published poet.*



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**We proudly celebrate the great achievements of the 2018 Innovators of the Year.**







## How to Leverage the Gig Economy in Your Own Company

The Gig Economy continues to grow, with major implications for all employers going forward. Depending on how you count freelancers, the gig economy accounts for anywhere from 16 percent to 34 percent of the U.S. workforce currently, and it's anticipated to hit the 40 percent mark by 2020.

How does this trend affect you as an employer? Is the gig economy a valid answer to help you complete projects and fill spots that require hard-to-find skills? How do the finances look on your end? And who should you try to hire on a freelance basis? Take a look at these tips on how to make the gig economy work for you.

### Approach Freelancers as Professionals

Is your impression of a freelancer someone who's euphemistically "between jobs," just working as a "consultant" until they can finally land their next position? Maybe that was true in the past, but no longer. Fully 70 percent of freelancers are in the gig economy by choice.

When you look at their reasons, you can understand why these trained professionals might make that choice. Freelancers report a greater work-life balance, and many are firmly convinced that they're happier than their 9-to-5 counterparts. More than half, in fact, have no interest in returning to traditional employment.

What does this mean as you consider hiring freelancers? If you're looking at creatives, technical experts, or professionals, treat them with the respect you'd use with your own employees.

### Treat Freelancers as Insiders

When you hire a full-time employee, you may spend a lot of effort finding someone who fits in with your corporate culture. Many people think the issue of fit isn't important when bringing in freelancers — so they often ignore it. In actuality, if your in-house teams can provide a collaborative atmosphere that nurtures freelancers, you'll be in far better shape.

Think of the relationship between your in-house staff and the freelancers you contract as a blended family. Your freelancers, contract workers, and consultants may end up knowing your brand and your company better than your full-time employees, and they provide a depth of perspective that can only benefit you. Rather than treating freelancers as disposable (a holdover from the days before the gig economy took hold), treat them as

insiders to enjoy a new talent management strategy that should carry you into the future in a healthy and productive way.

### Pay Freelancers What They're Worth

People who still have the "unemployed" mindset when they consider freelancers often tend to devalue their monetary worth. Would you be surprised to learn that 21 percent of freelancers earn more than \$100,000 a year? In fact, the average freelancer's income is almost \$10,000 a year higher than the U.S. median household income.

If you want to access the top freelancers — whether you need creatives, tech, or professionals — be prepared to pay them what they're worth. Fortunately, you can still do this while keeping an eye on the bottom line, since you're likely to hire freelancers for shorter, more concentrated periods of time.

Isn't that the best of both worlds for you? You get high-powered talent when you need it, and you can choose exactly the right people (with the right skills) to complete your projects, knowing that they won't be distracted by competing tasks. You can even come back to the same freelancers when you have similar projects in the future.

At Marquee Staffing, we're ready to help you navigate the new gig economy and find the right freelance professionals to meet your needs. We have a dedicated team of professional recruiters that focuses specifically on engaging the top consultants, contractors, and creatives in your field. To talk about how we can help you with your recruitment needs, visit us today at [www.marqueestaffing.com](http://www.marqueestaffing.com).

### Claudia Perez

*As the Sr. Vice President, Operations, Claudia Perez's responsibilities include managing the Orange County territory, overseeing all operations, and driving success by providing excellent service to all customers, clients and colleagues. Claudia can be counted on to spearhead any project; she is a strong valued contributor to the overall success of the company and an excellent partner for your success planning. [cperez@marqueestaffing.com](mailto:cperez@marqueestaffing.com)*



**Rob Lake**  
Senior Vice President  
Head of Life Sciences  
(858) 523-4686  
[rob.lake@bridgebank.com](mailto:rob.lake@bridgebank.com)

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## Bridge Bank's Life Sciences Group

Bridge Bank's Life Sciences Group (LSG) understands the unique challenges our client companies face bringing their products from lab to market. Whether biotechnology, medical devices, or diagnostics/tools, these companies face uncertainties that would make less experienced bankers uneasy. Our team serves high growth companies within the following sectors: Biotechnology, Medical Devices and Diagnostics/Tools.

LSG is committed to providing clients with experienced lenders along with sophisticated products and services necessary to weather these uncertainties and ultimately succeed. Our goal as a capital partner is to provide simple, straightforward solutions to your credit and banking needs. This will put your mind at ease and allow you to focus on what's important — managing your business and achieving your goals. LSG provides venture debt and revolving credit facilities to life sciences companies for a variety of purposes, including growth capital, working capital, refinancing, restructuring, recapitalization, as well as mergers and acquisitions.

When evaluating financing options, it is important to consider how venture debt can benefit the company, and how a loan facility can fit into the company's broader operational and financial plans. Equity will always serve as the backbone of a company's capitalization structure, but when thoughtfully deployed, venture debt can be a valuable complement, allowing companies to support ongoing growth objectives, cushion its balance sheet, and minimize dilution as the company strives to achieve its longer-term goals.

A national practice targeting US-based life sciences companies, Bridge Bank's LSG team is comprised of seasoned lenders that have worked with various types of life sciences companies in all stages of development. Across the country, Bridge Bank offers smart banking solutions to help businesses reach their goals. To speak with a banker that understands your unique needs, please contact:

**Rob Lake**  
Senior Vice President  
Head of Life Sciences Group  
858.523.4686  
[Rob.Lake@BridgeBank.com](mailto:Rob.Lake@BridgeBank.com)

**Justin McDonie**  
Managing Director  
Life Sciences Group  
919.797.0580  
[Justin.McDonie@BridgeBank.com](mailto:Justin.McDonie@BridgeBank.com)



**Rob Lake**  
Life Sciences  
Group

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## Will Change in USPTO Leadership Bring Change to Patentability Issues?

By Mei Tsang, Esq., Partner and Dr. Martin Fessenmaier Ph.D., Senior Patent Agent

With the recent arrival of Andrei Iancu as the new United States Patent and Trademark (USPTO) Director, careful optimism has slowly begun to replace a gloomy outlook on what have been challenging years in the wake of a number of Supreme Court decisions. Director Iancu already has issued two noteworthy “pro patent” memos described below to the examiners especially in the area of patentable subject matter.

While many patent examiners rejected claims as unpatentable by applying the Supreme Court decisions in a rather general manner as being solely directed to an “abstract idea” or “natural phenomenon,” the memos provide a welcome sharpening of focus to the two-step analysis required to determine patentable subject matter.

Pursuant to the *Vanda* memo, dealing with the first step of the analysis (“Is the claim directed to a law of nature, a natural phenomenon, or an abstract idea?”), the examiners should **now** evaluate **claim as a whole** in the determination whether or not the claim is “directed to” a judicial exception. The Federal Circuit held that the claims at issue in *Vanda* were indeed patent eligible because they were not simply directed to a judicial exception (the correlation between a specific drug dosage and an adverse effect of the drug was held to be a natural phenomenon), but to an **application of a natural phenomenon**. Now, the memo makes clear that method of treatment claims can be patent eligible, which is of particular importance in the field of personalized medicine.

Pursuant to the *Berkheimer* memo, dealing with the second step of the analysis (“Is any element, or combination of elements, in the claim sufficient to ensure that the claim as a whole amounts to significantly more than the judicial exception?”), when determining whether something is well-understood, routine, and conventional, the examiners must make a **factual determination**, and must use

an express framework to make such determination.

These memos should greatly improve predictability and confidence in the patenting process in the tech and medical sector. Indeed, this year the USPTO granted its 10,000,000th patent, and under new guidance and leadership, we will reach 11,000,000 patents in the not too distant future.

### Mei Tsang

Mei Tsang is an intellectual property partner at the law firm of Umberg/Zipser LLP. Her practices focuses on helping client building an IP portfolio (patents, trademarks and copyrights), and enforcing IP assets. She is fluent in both Cantonese and Mandarin.



### Dr. Martin Fessenmaier

Dr. Martin Fessenmaier is a senior patent agent at the law firm of Umberg/Zipser LLP. His practice focuses on building patent portfolios and prosecuting patents both domestically and worldwide. Martin is fluent in English and German.



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## 3 Steps for Defining Your Business Technology Strategy

Cleaning homes may require more elbow grease than computer power, but Greg Shepard, owner of cleaning service Dallas Maids, says technology has given his company a competitive advantage.

The maid service uses scheduling software, Launch27, that allows clients to quickly book appointments and leave feedback online. It also uses a VoIP phone service, 8x8, and supplements its U.S. office staff through freelancer platform Upwork.

"Technology has scaled Dallas Maids to a million-dollar business," said Shepard, who worked in corporate IT before founding the Texas company.

In explaining how he is able to rely on cash flow, rather than borrowing, to fund his technology moves, Shepard said: "I'm so lucky to have my tech background because when you know how to propel your website to the top of Google and have free advertising, the thousands extra (that) other maid services put into marketing can otherwise be put back into your business."

There's no doubt that the technology revolution has transformed entire industries and changed the way businesses of all sizes operate. Company owners enjoy an almost overwhelming selection of apps and other technology that can help them automate and streamline processes, improve productivity and rein in costs.

And increasingly, it's the way companies prepare for and implement that technology that means the difference between success and failure.

Roughly 78 percent of the owners surveyed for City National Bank's Small Business Report agreed that technological advances have proven beneficial for their company, citing cutting costs as the main benefit.

But the survey also showed that some small business owners have struggled with technology, reporting that it wound up hurting more than helping. Approximately 22 percent of those surveyed said changes in technology have hurt their businesses, with the cost of keeping up with new tech cited as the top drawback.

### How to Create a Technology Strategy

Having a clear strategy and preparing carefully to manage technology can make a significant difference for businesses in virtually any industry or profession.

When City National senior business banking relationship manager Hermine Chobanyan talks to clients, she finds that the cost and adoption of new technology is always top of mind, no matter what industry they are in.

### Start with the Basics

Her clients, even late adopters of technology, are realizing that the internet has drastically changed their competitive landscape, Chobanyan said. Companies that comfortably relied on word-of-mouth to sustain and grow their businesses for years now face pressure from competitors who are more savvy online marketers, she said.

"You'll be amazed how many businesses don't have a website," including multi-million-dollar companies, she said. About a third of business owners don't have a website and 25 percent don't plan to have one, according to the City National Small Business Report.

Shane Skwarek, owner of S-FX.com Small Business Solutions, a New Jersey-based technology consulting agency geared towards start-up businesses, small businesses and non-profit businesses, had a family-owned furniture business as a client. When they started finding it harder to compete, he helped them set up their first website and implement simple inventory-management software to cut down on paperwork.

Within a month, the company got an online order worth a few thousand dollars from a customer who had never seen the product in person. "He saw it online, liked what he saw, and knew he wanted to buy it. They were absolutely floored," Skwarek said.

No matter what kind of business you own, a well-designed and functional website can provide both new and returning clients with added value, give them a way to communicate with you directly and nudge them into choosing your business instead of a competitor.

If you don't already have a website or haven't updated it in a few months, consider

making that a top priority. "Small businesses need to realize that having a website, updated computer equipment and modern software is really not just a luxury," Skwarek said. "It is a necessity."

### Identify Technology Priorities

Beyond company websites, businesses can invest in any number of administrative and operational technology tools, including marketing solutions, customer retention software and data collection platforms.

Yet all these options can be overwhelming. Companies happy with their technology investments tend to do their legwork first – clearly identifying the problem they're trying to solve, researching their options and exploring the likely effects on employees and customers. It's also crucial to implement the product correctly, said Cathy McKnight, co-founder of New York-based technology consultancy Digital Clarity Group.

For example Kelly McBride, founder and president of Cerritos, CA-based Century Building Solutions Inc., a firm that waterproofs and repairs buildings, recently adopted cloud-based technology to improve efficiency around job costing.

Century Building paid less than \$10,000 for material- and equipment-handling software from construction power tool supplier Hilti to electronically tag and track all the jackhammers, grinders, concrete saws, scaffolding and other gear the company uses on jobs.

Separately, Century adopted a cloud-based time-tracking platform, paid via monthly subscription, to handle time sheets and other administrative functions. Crew members use the app to clock in and log their hours, transmitting the data from their personal smartphones into the company's payroll service.

The programs helped Century Building Solutions become better at job costing, which "makes or breaks you in construction," he said. "The more effort you put into the job costing, the smarter you can be going into bidding."

Because he and his team were able to solve a large problem, he said his investment in the programs were worth the expense. "Initially you blanch at the cost of technology and then once you get over the initial adoption investment ... you can't understand how you did without it," McBride said.

### Establish the Right Team to Implement and Manage

Digital Clarity Group's McKnight stressed the importance of having a cohesive and well-communicated initiative around new tech implementation and maintenance.

"Any technology project is more of a change-management project than it is anything else," she said. Rather than simply adapting the technology to accommodate existing processes, companies should take the opportunity to reexamine roles and responsibilities to maximize potential and efficiency.

For businesses that don't have an in-house IT team or don't want to add headcount, utilizing remote workers is a viable option. Thanks to technology, business owners are able to hire and collaborate with remote workers to fulfill their needs without the burden of staffing full-time employees.

"Technology allows us to offer more value than the established franchises," said Shepard, whose company employs contract workers for such tasks as phone answering, initial recruiting, video production and website development. The tech services his company has adopted are affordable and easy to use, he said.

The companies that have seen technology positively impact their business clearly identify and prioritize solutions based on the greatest potential for positive impact and ensure they have the right team in place to support the proper management of the technology. These businesses also understand how their bank can support their goals throughout the change.

**Joe McHugh**  
SVP/Regional Banking Manager  
Personal & Business Banking  
(949) 223-4551  
Joe.McHugh@cnb.com





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# CITY OF CORONA: BUILDING A TECH COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Kimberly Davidson, Economic Development Manager, City of Corona  
951.736.2297 • [Kimberly.Davidson@CoronaCA.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Davidson@CoronaCA.gov)  
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## Using Innovative Banking Tools to Prepare your Graduate for Financial Independence

As millions of Americans gear up for the back-to-school season, many parents are busy preparing their high school graduate for college life. Helping your teen navigate life outside of the home is no easy feat, and beyond picking out dorm room essentials and making sure they know how to work a washing machine, it's important that they learn to manage finances.

Whether teens like to admit it or not, parents often serve as a guide and the biggest source of support during this time of change. While the conversation around tuition, financial aid and campus meal plans has likely taken place, the basics of budgeting should also be a point of discussion. Consider these six tips to help prepare your graduate to manage their money and gain financial independence:

**Start with a budget** – The first step to financial accountability is setting a realistic budget. Whether your teen plans to have a part-time job, is tapping into financial aid or you'll be supporting them during their college years, a budget will help them decide in advance how their money should be spent, and help discourage negative financial behaviors. Know that a budget is fluid and can be adjusted over time as income and expenses change.

**Commit to a monthly savings goal** – You're likely familiar with the old adage "pay yourself first," and it's a habit that's never too early to start. Saving during the college years – when student income isn't exactly consistent and tuition costs loom overhead – might seem like a foreign concept to you and your teen, yet establishing a monthly savings goal is a crucial best practice. Help your teen schedule an automatic checking to savings transfer so it becomes more of a fixed expense, and when the time is right, discuss longer-term savings and investment strategies. Encourage them to save early and often.

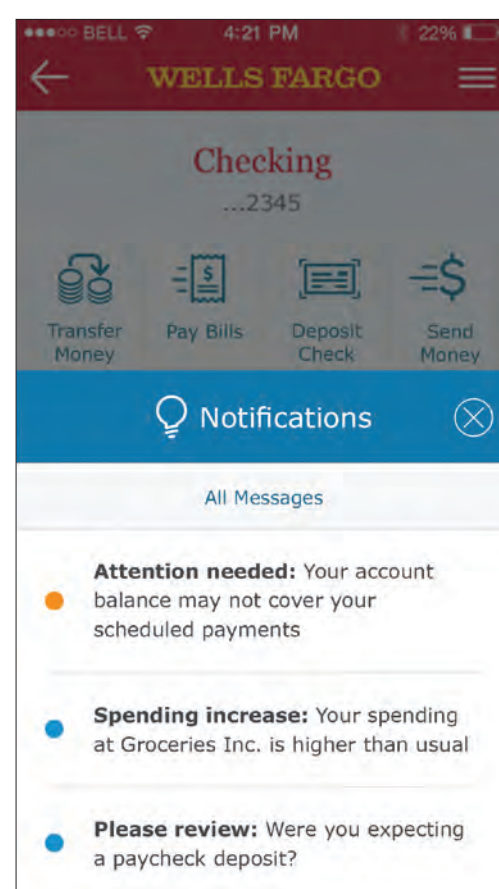
**Monitor spending** – You may think you know where your money goes each month, but the truth is, many people grossly underestimate their spending, and busy students aren't immune from that. It's important to get your teen in the habit of monitoring their bank accounts and credit cards for fraud, general balance awareness and spending. Are they paying for unused subscriptions and services? Spending too much going out to eat? These are helpful trends to keep an eye on to ensure money isn't being wasted.

**Get financially engaged** – There are more options than ever to engage with personal finances today, and it's increasingly easy for mobile-savvy students who have the power to bank whenever, wherever at their fingertips. Encourage your teen to make the most of their mobile banking app by tapping into the interactive tools and resources available to them. Wells Fargo's predictive banking feature is a great place to start. The in-app feature provides insight into spending patterns – such as how much they're spending at certain stores – and delivers prompts to save. By analyzing transactions, payments and other data, this feature offers intelligent guidance to help make banking simple.

**Know your credit score** – There will likely come a time when your teen needs to access credit or a loan, if it hasn't happened already, and one of the first things a lender will look at is their credit score. It's important to keep regular tabs on where you stand, yet <sup>1</sup>according to an Equifax study, only 45 percent of college students know their credit score. Wells Fargo offers eligible customers an easy way with its FICO® Score tool, accessible via Wells Fargo Online® or Wells Fargo Mobile®. Make sure your teen understands the importance of knowing their score and taking steps to improve it, before a lending need arises.

**Commit to regular financial check-ins** – Once your teen has their budget, savings goals and general financial plan in order, encourage them to set aside time for regular financial check ins. Getting in the habit of doing this early and often will help promote responsible spending and saving practices, and ultimately set the groundwork for financial independence.

A simple bonus tip for parents is to always model good spending and savings behavior. It goes without saying that leadership is best taught by example, so show your college student that you take these tips seriously. Taking time now to teach your teen how to manage their money will pay off in the long run.



<sup>1</sup><https://www.creditcards.com/credit-card-news/credit-score-statistics.php>

### Keith Kobata

Keith Kobata is the Orange County Region President, managing 79 Wells Fargo branches with over 1,200 team members and \$14B in deposits. His team is responsible for building relationships with existing and perspective customers by leveraging and optimizing Wells Fargo's products and services to help our customers succeed financially.

A 23-year banking veteran, Kobata was most recently the Area President for the Greater Orange County division where he was responsible for overseeing Wells Fargo's Community Banking throughout North Orange County and Long Beach. Prior to his role as Area President, Kobata held various roles such as banker, branch manager and district manager.

Kobata is actively involved in community events and nonprofits and serves on the board of directors for the United Way Orange County and the Orange County Business Council.

He currently resides in Irvine, Calif.







## California's Failed Experiment: The Private Attorneys' General Act (PAGA)

California's Private Attorneys' General Act (PAGA) is a bounty hunter law gone wrong. It authorizes "aggrieved employees" to sue employers on behalf of themselves and others for a host of exponentially increasing penalties. California keeps 75 percent of the penalties and employees keep 25 percent.

Yet, PAGA has proven ineffective for workers and for California. It is being used to avoid mandatory arbitration and to create class liability without the due process of class certification. But come settlement time, litigants reframe their cases as non-PAGA class actions, eliminating California's cut. Meanwhile, businesses are held hostage by PAGA's massive penalties for often unintentional, technical code violations, hitting employers with large workforces and more frequent pay schedules the hardest, and resulting in the elimination of worker-friendly policies.

In 2016, Governor Brown acknowledged PAGA's perverse results of "unnecessary litigation" and increased cost of doing business, and signed amendments that gave employers more cure time and increased California's budget to pursue PAGA penalties itself. But these amendments have failed to curtail the abuse. More must be done by the business community:

**Be compliant.** Conduct regular, privileged audits of company employment practices and fix technical violations with proper guidance. Even a clerical error on paystubs can cost employers millions.

**Be vigilant.** Businesses that receive presuit PAGA notices should take advantage of cure periods and consider using creative legal strategies to attack.

**Be vocal.** Support ballot initiatives and bills that will repeal PAGA or curb further PAGA abuse mandating caps on attorneys' fees, limited discovery, greater pleading specificity, and class certification. It is time to start lighting such candles; cursing the darkness helps no one and living in it is worse.

**Michelle S. Strowhiro** is a partner in the Orange County and Los Angeles offices of McDermott Will & Emery. She is an employment litigator and provides strategic guidance to businesses in all aspects of employment law compliance. For more information, email Michelle at [mstrowhiro@mwe.com](mailto:mstrowhiro@mwe.com).



## Innovations in Management Consulting

At PARRISH PARTNERS, we accelerate growth by tapping into unrealized individual and organizational potential. We are a leadership and management consulting firm that places emphasis on the role of leadership in creating real, sustainable change within organizations. Good management is necessary yet insufficient to compete in today's dynamic business world. Great leadership, on the other hand, enables companies to stay ahead of the curve by implementing the right changes at the right time.

Management consulting companies often focus on strategy, structure, and systems to create competitive advantage. Parrish goes beyond the typical and addresses the interpersonal and systemic issues that are at the root of performance challenges. We leverage not only IQ (intelligence quotient) but also EQ (emotional quotient) and CQ (cultural quotient) to drive improvements that are sustainable. We offer a unique array of services including executive coaching, executive search, leadership services, technology and transaction services for clients of every size, from start-ups to Fortune 50.



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The multidisciplinary PARRISH PARTNERS team brings a holistic, customized approach to each and every client engagement. Our team works with your team, providing the objectivity of an outsider and the commitment of your most loyal employee. We make it our mission to be not only thought leaders but also change leaders, working closely to implement and sustain powerful improvements in performance.



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## CONGRATULATIONS MICHELE PARRISH

2018 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEE



**PARRISH PARTNERS, L.L.C.**  
**MICHELE PARRISH**  
CO-FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER

Michele Parrish heads an inspirational team of leadership and management consultants. As Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Michele drives unprecedented client results through the power of leveraging three dimensions of intelligence: Intellectual Quotient (IQ), Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Cultural Quotient (CQ).

Parrish uniquely unleashes the mostly untapped potential in organizations through applied neuroscience and the integration of multiple fields. She has over 25 years as a change agent, leading and coaching organizations across numerous industries. Through her customized executive coaching programs, compelling B.M.O.R.E.® Leadership model, and breakthrough performance disciplines of Building Cultures of Commitment®, Parrish demonstrates novelty in the highly traditional field of management consulting. Michele was also recently nominated for the LA Business Journal Women's Council Awards.



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## Social Innovation – Driving Social Change Where innovation and the social sector converge

*By Dawn S. Reese, Chief Executive Officer, The Wooden Floor*

Today's social sector challenges in Orange County such as poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and education opportunity gaps are very complex issues, and require nonprofit executive leaders and board of directors to bring innovative solutions and a discipline to implementing best practices around design-thinking, collaboration, exceptional execution, and continual impact evaluation. Where do innovation and the social sector converge? This is what leaders in the field call social innovation. **It is the ability to create market-based approaches to benefit society by either creating new solutions to social welfare issues, or to re-engineer a program or organization to remain relevant and meet the needs of the community.**

The Wooden Floor has evolved over the last 35 years into one of the nation's leading social innovators, and is one of the foremost creative youth development nonprofit organizations in the country. Serving over 90,000 young people through year-round and community engagement programs since 1983, we believe our strategic solution for today's greatest social challenges is to transform the lives of young people in low-income communities through the power of dance and access to higher education. In Orange County and through national licensed partners, we do this by using a long-term approach grounded in exploratory dance education strategically integrated with academic tutoring, college and career readiness, and family support services to foster the confidence and gifts within each child to innovate, communicate, and collaborate – 21st Century skills necessary for success in school and in life. **100 percent of students who graduate from The Wooden Floor immediately enroll in higher education. Our students become change agents and beacons of hope within their own families, their neighborhoods, our community and our world.**

For our efforts, The Wooden Floor was honored with the 2015 Leadership Circle Award by the PIMCO Foundation, which "seeks to honor and support organizations poised to drive social change and progress. Recipients of this award are organizations adept at growing their impact and demonstrating ingenuity, while maintaining their quality and increasing their results."

Due to the holistic and integrated approach of The Wooden Floor's creative youth development model, we are provided with a unique lens to be a part of county-wide forums and idea exchanges on K-12 education tied to social-emotional-learning, college and career readiness to close the achievement gap, and workforce development trends in the time of burgeoning artificial intelligence. We find the one through-line in all of these forums: to prepare under-served children to achieve social and economic equity in an ever-evolving, automated and creative economy.

It is evident that The Wooden Floor's specific student development outcomes will align with the Orange County Department of Education's goal to foster the 5 Cs of: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity and Character in order to prepare students for their futures. At The Wooden Floor, we believe we foster a sixth C: Courage. This will be further validated by our own 10-year Longitudinal Study 2014-2024 titled: From here you can step anywhere - Dance as a Developmental Catalyst. Being focused and intentional about how programming advances these traits and skill sets prepares our students for the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" workforce wherein humanity intersects with artificial intelligence.

When dance is used as the means of social change, innovation flourishes into courageous life-changing outcomes for the children we serve, and moves The Wooden Floor's exciting mission forward, which helps move our community forward.

**To learn about the ways you can make a difference in The Wooden Floor's plans to grow and impact even more young people in Orange County, please contact Dawn S. Reese, Chief Executive Officer at (714) 541-8314 ext. 110 or Info@TheWoodenFloor.org.**



### Dawn S. Reese

Dawn S. Reese, Chief Executive Officer of The Wooden Floor, which was recently awarded the 2018 Best Places to Work by the Orange County Business Journal, received the 2018 New York Life Foundation AIM High Afterschool Award for Middle School Programming, and featured in the Stanford Social Innovation Review Magazine, summer 2017. Reese received the 2016 *Center for Leadership Award for Innovation* from **California State University Fullerton** and the 2015 *Difference Makers Award for Small Nonprofit Person of the Year* from the **Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce**. Reese serves on the Board of Directors for **Orange County Music and Dance**, and **OneOC** where she is also the Chairperson for the Nonprofit Advisory Council (2017-2019). She also serves on the Board of Advisors for the **Center for Leadership - Mihaylo College of Business and Economics at California State University, Fullerton** and Advisory Committees for **DifferenceMakersOC**, **Institute for Influential Community Impact**, and **Orange County Business Council's Latino Education Attainment Committee**. Reese is an author, coach/mentor, consultant, and international conference presenter on the topics of strategic planning, board governance, leadership development, and creative youth development. [www.TheWoodenFloor.org](http://www.TheWoodenFloor.org) Twitter: @DawnSReese







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THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS, OUR COMMUNITY – **AND OUR WORLD.**

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**Lift**



## **IT'S YOUR MOVE**

**WILL YOU HELP US LIFT CHILDREN OUT OF  
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*Lift: The Campaign for The Wooden Floor* is a special four-year comprehensive campaign to raise **\$27.2 million by 2020.** Through *Lift*, we will be able to grow to serve more and deepen our impact. Learn more at [LiftCampaign.org](http://LiftCampaign.org).

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## BioPhotons: A Holistic Innovation Story

When we think of innovation, we generally think of science and technology . . . the latest smart phone, the latest cancer treatment, the latest app or the latest “cloud” anything. While most new ventures start with that one new great idea . . . a better mouse trap, if you will, innovation can play a key role in any new enterprise, touching every aspect of an organization and making it stand out in a crowd. One such company is BioPhotons, an OC-based medical device manufacturer of the Celluma Series Light Therapy devices. This is its story of “holistic innovation”.

In a global age, when companies essentially have the same access to capital, technology and markets, how does a company distinguish itself from the competition? “Innovate, innovate, innovate,” says Patrick Johnson, the President and CEO of BioPhotons Inc. And not just in product technology. Innovation should permeate every aspect of a company and every person in the company should be looking for new and improved ways of doing their jobs. Not just for the sake of being different, but for the precise purpose of differentiating yourself from the competition in a way that creates real value for your customers.

In the spring of 2011, Johnson spent three months conducting his own due diligence on the world of Low Level Light Therapy (LLLT), or the use of light energy from high intensity Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) to trigger beneficial biochemical processes in the body. Looking at the science and clinical literature surrounding LLLT, then moving onto the intellectual property related to the science and application of LLLT, and finally examining the market and the competition, Johnson made some interesting observations.

First, Johnson was impressed by the breadth and depth of the body of science supporting the efficacy of LLLT and the prestigious institutions from where that research was emanating, including NASA. Second, Johnson was surprised that despite the robustness of the clinical literature, no one to date had successfully commercialized LLLT on a mass scale and to the degree of commercial success, the products were either effective but extremely expensive or very cheap but ineffective. This dichotomy looked like a unique market opportunity to Johnson.

In looking at the competitive products on the market, most were rigid flat panels of LEDs, more resembling a french fry warmer than a therapeutic medical device. Given his background in orthopedics, where thermal devices are wrapped closely around treatment areas following surgery to manage pain and speed healing, Johnson thought LLLT devices should similarly wrap the area of treatment for optimal effect.

His intuition as it turns out was supported by the laws of optical physics, which

teach that the closer you get light emission to the body, the more light energy there is for absorption. Johnson then realized that if a LLLT device could be designed that contoured to the shape of the area of treatment, the cost of the device could be dramatically reduced, making the therapeutic benefits of light therapy more accessible to the mass market. So was born the concept of BioPhotons’ current flagship product, the Celluma PRO Light Therapy Device.

With an innovative and patentable product design in hand, Johnson set out to fund the company and gain regulatory clearance in an equally innovative manner. Unlike typical medical device start-ups, Johnson did not go to the capital markets with a single product concept to address a single disease state, looking for a lump sum of funding to get from concept to market, or maybe only regulatory approval. Instead, Johnson conceived of a step-function plan to build the company around a versatile product platform that could yield multiple individual products with a minimum of time and regulatory filings. This approach also minimized the required capital, moved the company toward profitability as quickly as possible, and demonstrated to investors the viability of the go-to-market strategy. Once the company reached operational profitability, it could then fund its own development efforts for advanced medical indications.

By early 2013, with only \$1.5 million in funding, BioPhotons perfected the design of the Celluma, received its first set of FDA clearances for pain management and treating acne, received issued US patents and commercially launched the first in a series of iterative products, the Celluma PRO. Again, in 2014, 2015 and 2017, BioPhotons received additional FDA Clearance in skin care, received issued international patents and was the first company to have a Medical CE-mark put on a LLLT device for dermal wound healing. More impressively, the company accomplished all of this while achieving operational profitability in less than two years after market launch.

In the same period of time, BioPhotons and the Celluma have been awarded numerous product and company of the year awards, across industries, nationally and internationally. The company’s latest award came from the UK and US readers of London-based LUX Magazine, for Most Innovative Device in the Health, Beauty and Wellness category, as well as the Best Dermal Wound Healing Device. The company has also collaborated with the Semper Fi Fund in providing the Celluma to wounded and injured service members as a non-pharma Pain Management treatment.

In addition, unlike typical medical device start-ups, Johnson did not build insurance reimbursement into his initial growth strategy, figuring the additional regulatory







filings would consume an inordinate amount of investment capital and slow down commercialization. Instead, BioPhotas focused on “cash-pay” practices and cash-pay customers who would purchase the Celluma typically using a credit card. As a result, despite early operational losses, the company, given its rapid growth, began to generate cash to fund its own growth, collecting cash from customers days before receiving invoices from suppliers that would not need to be paid for 30 – 45 days. This cash generation scheme required a very innovative approach to vendor relations, where BioPhotas treated their suppliers more as business partners than mere vendors, creating an opportunity for several other OC companies to grow and succeed alongside BioPhotas.

Since the launch of the Celluma PRO in 2013, which retails for \$1,600, BioPhotas has introduced several additional versions of the product, using the same product platform and therefore the same regulatory clearances. This has resulted in a nearly doubling of sales revenue every year and the introduction of the Celluma HOME (\$700) and the Celluma POD (\$300) in 2018. The Company has plans to launch up to three new versions of the Celluma in 2019.

The Company is also conducting a clinical trial to prove the effectiveness of the Celluma in treating diabetic peripheral neuropathy, with plans for further trials for the treatment of diabetic foot lesions and decubitus ulcers. From the very beginning, Johnson saw the Celluma as a consumer device, particularly in the area of wound healing, where currently there are no real effective and affordable at-home therapies for these conditions that are growing at an epidemic pace. All these activities are being funded by the company’s discretionary cash flow, rather than multiple rounds of equity financing as is typical with med device companies.

Equally important as an innovative operating platform, Johnson believes that the company’s cultural foundation and team members will ultimately determine the success of the company. “At the end of the day, it’s the fit of our team members to the company and the company fit to them that will differentiate us from our competition and ultimately determine our success”, commented Johnson. Accordingly, we require everyone joining the company to take a work style assessment to evaluate how well they will work and fit with the others on the team. “Regardless of a particular persons skill set, experience or expertise, if they don’t fit with our existing team, we continue to look for the ideal candidate. We believe this is the right thing to do for the company and the candidates, whether they fit or not”, note Johnson.

Beyond hiring the right people, having a “living” cultural foundation is imperative for Johnson. First and foremost, we are a science-based company and we make no clinical claims, big or small, without substantial clinical proof. For this reason, despite receiving FDA clearances based on substantial equivalency, Johnson enlisted the assistance of researchers at University of California’s prestigious Beckman Laser Institute to prove that the Celluma was in fact triggering beneficial biochemical reactions in the body. In doing so, the researchers at the Beckman published clinical papers that for the first time definitively demonstrated the fundamental “mechanism of action” at work in LLLT, something only speculated in the prior research.

“Surrounding our commitment to scientific evidence,” explained Johnson, “are the four cornerstones of the company’s cultural foundation: Accountability – we own everything that happens with or to the company; Dependability – we do what we say and we say what we do; Responsiveness – We get back to people before they ever expect us to; and Compassion – we care about everyone the company touches. In short, we don’t make excuses, we don’t blame, we don’t ignore and we don’t not care. While our competition might be able to assess the same capital, the same technology or the same markets as us, we believe that our people and how they interact with the world will be the most difficult thing to “knock off”. Our people, how they act, how we treat them and how they treat the world is our greatest competitive advantage.”

From the beginning, BioPhotas’ mission has been to improve the health, wellness and beauty of the world’s population by giving them affordable access to the non-



toxic, non-invasive clinical benefits of low level light therapy. While ultimately viewed as a consumer product, BioPhotas has focused its marketing efforts to date on the clinical professional, believing that the efficacy and credibility of the Celluma had to first be proven in the hands of licensed practitioners. With this proof now well in hand, BioPhotas is beginning to expand into direct-to-consumer sales, which now represents 30 percent of its total business. At the same time, the company remains committed to the further development of advance medial applications for the Celluma.

Typically, companies select either the professional market or the consumer market for their products. However, given the company’s mission of bringing LLLT to the masses and its commitment to bringing innovation to every aspect of the company, BioPhotas has elected to address both markets simultaneously. The Celluma can now be found in hospitals, clinics, spas, physician’s offices and in homes in more than 40 countries around the world. This dual distribution strategy is further evidence that BioPhotas takes the path less traveled and that makes all the difference.

*Patrick Johnson is the CEO of BioPhotas and the inventor of the award winning Celluma Series of Light Therapy devices. He is a seasoned executive with P&L leadership in turnarounds, startups, emerging companies, as well as companies challenged with mature product life cycles. With a history of repeatedly growing sales and gross margins at double-digit growth rates, he has provided leadership in strategic planning, sales, marketing, corporate branding, product positioning, and operations. Mr. Johnson is a senior executive with 25 years of experience leading manufacturing companies in diverse industries including medical, dental, aerospace, and motorsports.*



For more information visit: [www.biophotas.com](http://www.biophotas.com)

Email: [Info@biophotas.com](mailto:Info@biophotas.com), Tel: (714) 978 0080





## Corona: INNOVATIVE Business Development

### Business is our Priority

Economic development departments within city halls are typically responsible for two things: bringing business to the city and keeping it there. But, as the world changes, business changes with it. To keep up, economic development specialists are needing to find new ways of being creative and innovative and city government needs to start thinking in a more entrepreneurial way.

This is exactly what the City of Corona is doing by taking a fresh, creative approach to attracting, retaining and growing business within our city. This is what makes Corona a great place for your business to thrive!

### Entrepreneurial Mindset

Corona's economic development team is made up of two entrepreneurial-minded professionals who have owned small businesses of their own. This really helps Corona to better understand the needs and wants of its business community and to think outside the box for solutions to issues.

### Corona Innovation Center

Corona is in the process of creating an innovation center in its former police department building near City Hall. This 25,000 square foot facility will be focused on growing start-up companies and will offer coworking space, mentorship opportunities, connections to resources as well as business-related workshops and meetups.

The innovation center, known as the Co:LAB (Corona: Learning, Arts and Business) District will open in early 2019 and will be the center of innovation and start-up technology for Corona and the region.

### Manufacturing

There are close to 400 manufacturers in Corona, spanning across five main industries: aerospace, food processing, after-market automotive, medical device and cosmetics/ nutrition. We work with our manufacturers daily to connect them to necessary resources for exporting and business incentives, adding to their bottom line and giving them the opportunity to grow in Corona. Quarterly, Corona takes a new group of its manufacturers to the Port of Los Angeles to have an intimate look at exporting and to gain connections to the resources that can help facilitate accessibility to world trade.

### Tech

We work very closely with our tech companies to create an entrepreneurial eco-system that encourages the growth of start-up tech companies in Corona. Tech-O Tuesday, a monthly meetup for tech entrepreneurs, has been widely successful over the past two years in connecting with our tech community. Being part of Innovation Month in Riverside County is another way Corona helps to foster the growth of our tech cluster.



### Communication

Like many of other cities, Corona has an easy-to-use website, an app for flow of communication to its residents and businesses as well as accessible Council Members who are available to answer questions. But for something innovative, Corona added a weekly podcast and utilizes all social media platforms to focus on business-related news and events in Corona.

### Partnerships

Collaboration and connections to resources are really what business is about in 2018 and beyond. Corona has worked hard to foster relationships with such entities as the US Department of Commerce, Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA), Small Business Administration (SBA), Center for International Trade Development (CITD), California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC), and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). The City of Corona also works very closely with the Corona Chamber of Commerce to ensure that our businesses have the best chance to succeed and thrive.

How can we help your business?

For more information visit [www.CoronaCA.gov](http://www.CoronaCA.gov)

### City of Corona's Economic Development Team:

#### Kimberly Davidson

Kimberly Davidson is Corona's Economic Development Manager, focused on encouraging the attraction and growth of manufacturers, entrepreneurs and tech-related companies.

Davidson has been in Economic Development for more than 9 years and previously owned a home-based marketing firm, so she understands the challenges of being a business owner. Davidson was named "Woman of the Year" in 2016 by Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez and received the "Citizen of the Year 2014" award from the Murrieta Chamber of Commerce. In 2008, she was awarded the National Small Business Administration (SBA) Award for being a champion of home-based businesses.

Davidson holds a B.A. in Journalism from California State University Northridge and has also completed a Leadership certificate program at California State University San Marcos.

Contact: [Kimberly.Davidson@CoronaCA.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Davidson@CoronaCA.gov) or 951.736.2297



#### Ryan Cortez

Ryan Cortez, Corona's Economic Development Coordinator, began his career with the City of Corona in 2014. Prior to his career in local government, Cortez helped found and manage a privately held construction firm headquartered in Costa Mesa, California. The skills developed while working in the private industry translated into him leading the charge with Corona's new development opportunities. Most recently, Cortez has focused on the disposition and development of City owned property within Corona's Downtown district. A lifelong resident of Corona, he hopes to continue creating opportunity and helping Corona maintain its regional dominance.

Cortez holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration as well as a Master's in Business Administration from California Baptist University. In 2016 he was recognized by the Riverside Community College District as the Norco College Young Alumnus of the year. Ryan Cortez is a member of the International Council of Shopping Centers and California Association for Local Economic Development.

Contact: [Ryan.Cortez@CoronaCA.gov](mailto:Ryan.Cortez@CoronaCA.gov) or 951.739.4964





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## Basic IP Protection for Start-Ups

By Andrew S. Fiori

Intellectual property (IP) forms the backbone of many start-up companies. Your ideas and works need to be protected, whether your start-up is a high-tech software, medical device, or biotech company, or a simple shop selling unique consumer products online. The failure to seek IP protection may put your start-up at a competitive disadvantage and could reduce your company's valuation. Thus, here are some basic IP tips to guide your start-up.

### Copyrights

1. Just because a graphic, video or other content is on the internet, does not mean it is free to use. Use content you own, have licensed, or content you are certain is in the public domain.
2. Make sure you have written agreements assigning any copyrights from independent contractors who work for you. Employees' works may automatically vest to you under a "work for hire" doctrine; however, works of independent contractors should be assigned over to you in writing.
3. Register your work with the U.S. Copyright Office. Registration bestows many benefits including statutory damages for infringement of your work and the possibility of recovery of your attorney's fees.

**"The failure to seek IP protection may put your start-up at a competitive disadvantage..."**

### Trademarks

1. When selecting a trademark, check with the U.S. Trademark Office for prior registered trademarks, as well as prior unregistered trademarks. Unregistered trademarks may enjoy "common law" trademark rights that could preclude your use of a similar trademark and impede your attempt to register your own trademark.
2. Register your trademarks with the U.S. Trademark Office. Registration provides benefits including nationwide priority of use of your trademark, as well as the possibility of statutory damages for counterfeits of your trademark. Registration may also prevent a third party from registering a similar trademark.
3. Apply to register your trademark promptly. You may file for a trademark registration prior to your actual use of the trademark under an "intent-to-use" filing. The "in-

tent-to-use" filing may give you priority over third parties as of the date you file your trademark registration application.

### Patents

1. Be expeditious in filing your patent applications. The United States converted to a "first to file" system in which the first party to file a patent application may have the patent rights to that invention. The United States allows for a "provisional" patent application, which is a more informal patent application that may preserve your filing date ahead of others.
2. Make sure you have written agreements assigning any patent rights from independent contractors who work for you. Patent rights initially vest in the "inventors" of the patented invention and that ownership should be transferred in writing.
3. Patent rights are not limited to new functions of machines or unique processes. Rather, a type of patent called a "design patent" may cover the ornamental appearance of articles of manufacture, which may include clothing, products, product packaging, furniture and webpages, among others. Design patents may prevent direct "knock-offs" of the appearance of your products.

### Trade Secrets

1. Maintain confidentiality agreements and other secrecy controls over those who have access to your trade secrets. Your trade secrets may be maintained by efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain their secrecy.
2. Remember that trade secrets are often broadly defined to include formulas, patterns, compilations, programs, devices, methods, techniques or processes. Thus, your "secret sauce" may extend to methods of doing business, customer lists and internal software processes, among others.

### Conclusion

This list is not comprehensive, however it does provide a foundation of basic knowledge you may need when operating your start-up. Some knowledge today may help guide your start-up and its valuation tomorrow.

### About Snell & Wilmer's Intellectual Property and Technology Practice

Snell & Wilmer's intellectual property and technology team advises clients on protecting their intellectual property and avoiding infringement. The full-service nature of our patent and trademark practice—from preparation and prosecution to litigation and inter partes review proceedings—allows us to have a wider "field of vision" when advising our clients. Our intellectual property attorneys are ready to engage as necessary, in litigation and other forms of dispute resolution, to enforce our clients' intellectual property rights and defend them against the assertion of intellectual property rights by others. For more information about Intellectual Property and Technology visit [www.swlaw.com/services/intellectual-property-and-technology](http://www.swlaw.com/services/intellectual-property-and-technology).



**Andrew S. Fiori's** practice is concentrated in intellectual property protection and litigation. He has experience in preparing and prosecuting patent applications in a variety of industries, including financial services and technologies, medical devices, software and business products, and mechanical devices. In addition, Andrew has experience in preparing and prosecuting trademarks, performing due diligence work related to the possible purchase of patents, preparing infringement and validity opinions, and has counseled clients on patent strategies and how to best maximize a patent portfolio budget.

Andrew S. Fiori | 714.427.7083 | [afiori@swlaw.com](mailto:afiori@swlaw.com)

Plaza Tower | 600 Anton Boulevard | Suite 1400 | Costa Mesa, CA 92626

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## An Orange County Institution

Building on more than 30 years of culinary excellence on the Orange County dining landscape, Prego Mediterranean has settled into its new home at The District at Tustin Legacy. Long-time supporters and new guests have been enjoying the lively bar area and grand dining room at the new location, where Chef Ugo Allesina continues to lead the culinary team. With two decades of experience at Prego, Chef Ugo has brought back signature items and has added new Mediterranean-focused dishes to the menu. The kitchen continues to focus on utilizing seasonal ingredients, the best meat and seafood, and freshly made pastas.



Prego owners Ruth and Tony Bedi

New Mediterranean-focused dishes include Seasonal Hummus of mushroom and truffle, sundried tomato and roasted garlic basil, served with house-made rustic flatbread; Golden Beet Salad with mixed baby greens, yellow beets, goat cheese and caramelized onions tossed in a balsamic reduction; and Lobster and Shrimp Stuffed Sole in a white wine, garlic, lemon and caper sauce.

Adding a splash of Mediterranean color to California, Prego Mediterranean features a lively exhibition kitchen, allowing diners to view the artful chefs creating their delicious dishes. With a capacity to seat more than 250 guests, Prego features al fresco dining, full bar, private dining and catering services.

For more information, visit [www.pregoOC.com](http://www.pregoOC.com).



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## 2018 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

**11 Health and Technologies Inc., Tustin***Michael Seres, Founder/CEO*

Founded in 2013, 11 Health and Technologies Limited is an integrated sensor platform for long term patients who manage chronic conditions while connected to medical bags. CEO and founder, Michael Seres has created a community centered connected health care network in the ostomy/IBD space that uses a patient to patient outreach and support model, while providing real-time bio-marker information to clinicians and health care providers via a cloud based IoT business model. The company's vision is to connect those bags to the 11 Health Sensor Network to improve outcomes for patients, deliver relevant real-time data to clinicians and lower costs. Michael frequently works with the NHS, the Department of Health in the US and top hospital groups like Mayo, Cleveland Clinic, Stanford etc., advising on the patient to patient care model and the real time care platform that 11 Health has built.

**Advantech North America, Irvine***Ween Niu, General Manager*

As the general manager for Advantech North America, Ween Niu oversees regional sales and marketing revenue for the \$1.4 billion company, while also managing its strategic business planning. From 2000 to 2012, Niu achieved 3,000 percent growth for the company and has continued to drive an average of 25 percent growth for the past five years. Niu's commitment to help grow and stabilize the company with his exceptional operational and sales strategies have positioned him as a key player in Advantech's globalization process, further achieving Advantech's mission of enabling an intelligent planet. Leading companywide programs, including direct fulfillment and express delivery, Niu's role as a mentor within the enterprise has helped shape a team driven environment vital to Advantech's progression in the IoT industry. Under his 18-year tenure at Advantech, Niu's leadership and integrity has helped realize incredible business growth, helping grow the company in revenue and gaining strategic partnerships with Fortune 500 companies in sectors such as Medical, Industrial Automation and Digital Signage.

**AIVITA Biomedical, Irvine***Hans Keirstead, PhD, CEO*

Dr. Hans Keirstead is an internationally known stem cell expert and has led therapy development for cancer, immune disorders, motor neuron diseases, spinal cord injury and retinal diseases. Keirstead is the CEO of AIVITA Biomedical which was founded in 2016 to develop stem cell-based clinical therapies and commercial products that improve quality of life and save lives. Its most notable achievements are the advancement of a platform cancer immunotherapy capable of treating multiple cancer types, currently in Phase II trials for ovarian and brain cancer, and the invention of a novel skincare active that has been commercialized to help fund the Company's clinical programs. In 2005, Keirstead was awarded the Distinguished Award for Research, the UCI Academic Senate's highest honor, as well as the UCI Innovation Award for innovative research leading to corporate and clinical development. He was a founding advisor of the California Stem Cell Initiative that resulted in a \$3 billion stem cell fund (CIRM). He has been a long-time advisor to several governments on biomedical policy.

**Allergan, Irvine***Dan Gil, VP, Research Technologies and Portfolio*

Dr. Daniel Gil's 30-year career at Allergan spans its evolution from a division of SmithKline Beckman selling primarily contact lens products, to a major stand-alone innovative pharmaceutical company. His innovations have contributed to the successful development of four medicines that catalyzed the growth of the company, two of which have accounted for close to \$1 billion in peak annual sales and spawned franchises that have endured for more than 15 years: Lumigan, the most effective eye drop for lowering intraocular pressure in patients with glaucoma, a sight-threatening disease. Alphagan, another glaucoma drug that both lowers intraocular pressure and directly slows the loss of the nerve cells in the retina. Dr. Gil's promotion of an innovation mindset at Allergan has also contributed to a robust pipeline of future drugs. He is an inventor on more than 70 US patents and author of 42 research articles published in refereed journals. He is or has been a member of several boards of directors including the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce and is an adjunct faculty member at UC Irvine.

**Alteryx, Irvine***Dean Stoecker, CEO/Chairman/Co-Founder*

Dean Stoecker is chairman, chief executive officer and a founding partner of

Alteryx, revolutionizing business through data science and analytics. Dean's leadership and motivational skills, along with his ability to create, communicate and realize a vision, are a driving force behind bringing back the thrill of solving to analysts and data scientists across the globe. Alteryx is a 20 year overnight success with Stoecker leading the company through solid organic growth, three rounds of funding and a successful IPO in March of 2017 to deliver a transformational experience to customers of all sizes. Stoecker's unique vision and strategy around bringing a code-free and code-friendly experience unleashes the line-of-business analyst from the menial and mundane to truly loving their work again.

**BANKCODE, Laguna Beach***Cheri Tree, Founder/CEO*

BANKCODE has successfully developed a game-changing technology and methodology called B.A.N.K. is designed to increase sales up to 300 percent by predicting the buying behavior of the customer in less than 90 seconds and then delivering the custom formula to ultimately close the sale and engage the client. B.A.N.K. is reverse-engineered personality science based in BUYology, the science of buying behavior. Cheri Tree, founder and CEO, published her book about this revolutionary methodology called Why They Buy. Tree is the leading expert in the world on selling using the power of personality science, and has spoken at Harvard University and UC Berkeley and recently had a white paper published by San Francisco State University. As a tool for sales, B.A.N.K. has been used successfully for more than 20 years. The four "buying personalities" used to type people have consistently increased sales success for users in the marketplace.

**Beacon Pointe Advisors, Newport Beach***Shannon Eusey, CEO*

Shannon Eusey is co-founder and CEO of Beacon Pointe and a member of the Beacon Pointe Investment Committee. She also co-founded the firm's Women's Advisory Institute, a forefront leader in the financial services industry to bring women further into the conversation focused on investments and personal finance. Eusey most recently co-authored, "Your Dollars, Our Sense: A Fun and Simple Guide to Money Matters," which makes sense of a variety of financial topics and seeks to educate readers in an entertaining, informative manner, capturing a multigenerational audience. The book is now an International Best Seller, having ranked No. 1 in six different business and finance categories. Eusey is a member of the CNBC Financial Advisor Council and is regularly featured in The Wall Street Journal, InvestmentNews, Barron's, Financial Planning Magazine, among other publications.

**Beeya, Laguna Beach***Ladan Davia CEO/Founder*

Ladan Davia founded Beeya at age 23, when she realized the troubles people have during the hiring and employment process. Prior to founding Beeya, Davia founded her first company in the tech space, Excelerate Test Prep, at 21. While the idea of finding a job online is not a new idea nor is connecting people in a professional network, what is new is the meta-search engine and employee matching platform, Beeya. Beeya is a platform that automatically matches employers and employees together using a matching algorithm based off of specific requirements selected by the user. The website brings the online job hunt, social network and professional network ideas all onto one platform. Beeya allows the user to look for exactly the job or candidate they desire, while filtering out results they don't want. Beeya is now serving 98 companies and almost 7,000 employees in Orange County.

**BioPhotas, Anaheim***Patrick Johnson, President/CEO*

Patrick Johnson is a seasoned executive with P&L leadership in turnarounds, startups, emerging companies, as well as companies challenged with mature product life cycles. With a history of repeatedly growing sales and gross margins at double-digit growth rates, he has provided leadership in strategic planning, sales, marketing, corporate branding, product positioning, and operations. Johnson is a senior executive with 25 years of experience leading manufacturing companies in diverse industries including medical, dental, aerospace and motorsports. He has been at





## 2018 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

BioPhotas for seven years and has helped obtain FDA approval and patents on products. BioPhotas manufactures and sell the Celluma Series of Light Therapy devices for treating skin, muscle and joint conditions. Since first receiving FDA clearance in 2013, the award-winning Celluma PRO has become the market-leading product in the light therapy product category, with sales doubling nearly every year.

**Burns & McDonnell, Brea**

*Rick Cramer, Environmental Technologies Manager*

Rick Cramer is environmental technologies manager for Burns & McDonnell in the firm's Brea, California, office. He has more than 30 years of experience in the environmental field with a focus on developing geology-based groundwater Conceptual Site Models (CSMs) for complex sites to successfully design and implement remediation strategies. Cramer leads the environmental sequence stratigraphy practice and develop conceptual site models and site strategies, for contaminated groundwater sites. In 2017, Cramer and his Burns & McDonnell team members co-authored a technical issue paper published by the Environmental Protection Agency on an application Cramer developed earlier in his career called Environmental Sequence Stratigraphy (ESS). This year, he and his team from Burns & McDonnell will travel the country to train regulators on how to implement this technology.

**ChromaDex, Irvine**

*Frank Jaksch, Executive Chairman*

ChromaDex Corp. is an integrated, global nutraceutical company devoted to improving the way people age. ChromaDex scientists partner with leading universities and research institutions worldwide to uncover the full potential of NAD and identify and develop novel, science-based ingredients. Its flagship ingredient NIAGEN, nicotinamide riboside, sold directly to consumers as TRU NIAGEN, is backed with clinical and scientific research, as well as extensive IP protection. Frank L. Jaksch Jr. is a co-founder of the company and has served as a member of the Board since February 2000. Jaksch oversees research, strategy and operations for the



Company with a focus on scientific and novel products for pharmaceutical and nutraceutical markets.

**Cie Digital Labs, Irvine**

*Andree Berengian, Co-founder/CEO*

Andree Berengian is an accomplished entrepreneur, technologist and investor passionate about driving progress through digital innovation. As the co-founder and CEO of Cie Digital Labs (CDL), an innovation accelerator for large enterprises and a growth accelerator for emerging startups, Berengian is responsible for growing CDL's digital transformation ideas into sustainable, profitable companies. He has helped raise close to \$200 million for startups and create over 1,000 jobs through his entrepreneurial efforts. His vision for CDL was to build a company that steers all aspects of a venture and serves as a springboard for the development of innovative ideas and ventures, strengthens their impact, and extends their reach. By providing hands-on assistance through a unique combination of shared and dedicated domain experts in product web & mobile development, business & corporate development, finance, HR and IT, CDL consistently accomplishes these goals. Berengian's leadership has led to exceptional growth for CDL and its portfolio startups and enterprise companies.

**Cloudvirga, Irvine**

*Kyle Kamrooz, Co-Founder*

Cloudvirga provides lenders and banks with a modern, cloud-based enterprise platform that automates complex back-office processes to reduce the time and cost of closing mortgage loans. Cloudvirga condenses the typical 40-60 day home loan process down to 7-10 days while empowering consumers with access to a transparent mortgage experience from any web-enabled device. An experienced lending and financial technology professional, Kyle Kamrooz has nearly 20 years of executive management experience in lending. Since founding Cloudvirga, Kamrooz continues to guide the firm's success as its chief strategy officer and product visionary. In fiscal year 2017, Kamrooz significantly grew Cloudvirga's customer base with the addition of some of the nation's largest lenders, which together



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represent over \$130 billion in annual loan volume (approximately 6-7 percent of the overall U.S. mortgage market).

**ConversionPoint Technologies, Irvine**

*Robert Tallack, CEO*

Robert Tallack brings over 15 years of experience in the e-commerce industry, having sold his last consumer products company to a publicly traded pharma company. As CEO of ConversionPoint Technologies, in just two years he has helped the company achieve over \$40 million in annual revenue. An industry veteran of the digital marketing business, Tallack has developed direct-to-consumer sales and marketing campaigns that have generated millions per month in sales. His ability to build an efficient organization using technology to scale rapidly has contributed greatly to his success. The company's proprietary e-commerce platforms enable high-volume product sales across multiple consumer verticals. Its technology suite includes a media optimization solution that uses machine learning to optimize ad purchases and lower customer acquisition costs, and a CRM that provides a robust payment processing and customer data management platform.


**CureDuchenne, Newport Beach**

*Debra Miller, CEO/Founder*

After her son, Hawkin, was diagnosed with Duchenne, a progressive muscle-wasting disease, Debra Miller left her job in Silicon Valley to launch CureDuchenne and raise funds for help find a cure. Since 2006, she has raised \$30 million and invested over \$15 million in scientific research. Miller's efforts have resulted in the first drug approved by the FDA for the treatment of Duchenne. Additionally, 12 research projects CureDuchenne has funded have advanced to human clinical trials. She is also responsible for developing the first Duchenne-specific physical therapy program and PT certification. Today, Miller is highly focused on strategic partnerships that allow CureDuchenne to serve the Duchenne community through every stage, from early diagnosis, to clinical trials to adulthood. Through her leadership CureDuchenne has garnered international attention for its efforts to raise funds and awareness for Duchenne muscular dystrophy through venture philanthropy.


**Devise Interactive, Irvine**

*Dalip Jaggi, Principal*

Dalip Jaggi is the principal and founder of Devise Interactive, a brand and digital agency aimed at helping businesses with a chance to reimagine and reinvent their digital work. By harmonizing creative design & innovative technology, the agency produces effective brand experiences and strategic reasoning to engage their customer's audience. This year, Devise Interactive was recognized as a top U.S. entrepreneurial business in Entrepreneur magazine. Having experience in building brands & technology, Jaggi set forth to invent and bring new products to market. He is the co-founder of EvaDrop, the world's first smart shower device and Fraxtion, an easy to deploy kiosk for brick-and-mortar shops. Both startups are bringing cutting-edge technology to the market.


**E Factor, Tustin**

*Kari Willis, CEO/Co-Founder*

Kari Willis and her husband Chris Willis started their own firm, E Factor to amplify their ability to make an impact in creating "experiences" for brands and events. Six years later, E Factor has grown exponentially, providing sales, marketing and event expertise across fields such as non-profits/charities, food & beverage, advertising and wireless. Willis's success has also led her to become the Executive Producer of a new innovative wireless trade conference. That conference, Wireless West, is now an annual three-day event, with over 600 attendees from both the United States and abroad. Word of her success and expertise has allowed E Factor to grow at a remarkable rate.


**Emerios Enterprise Services, Inc., Aliso Viejo**

*Jesse Crowe, CEO*

Jesse Crowe has enabled one of the nation's largest wireless providers to launch and achieve over \$500 million in annual revenue in less than 18 months, while accomplishing and retaining the No. 1 market share in a very competitive industry. Emerios has empowered the nation's leading telecom and energy companies in their



highly regulated industries to quickly onboard new customers without compromising quality. The company works with Fortune 500 clients to extend or replace their existing systems by providing the Emerios Platform that makes their customer onboarding process efficient and compliant so they can outpace their competition. Ultimately, they accelerate their customer's development roadmap years ahead and enable them to focus on their strategic vision resulting in more sales, more revenue and stronger brands.

**Ephesoft Inc., Irvine**

*Ike Kavas, CEO/ Founder*

Ephesoft was founded in 2010 by Ike Kavas and by 2015 was listed as an Inc. 500 fastest growing company with 1132 percent growth. Ephesoft is the leading developer of supervised machine learning-based document capture and analytics solutions in the cloud or on premise. Organizations use Ephesoft's platform to automate any document-based business processes, improving accuracy, increasing productivity and reducing costs. Kavas has 20 years of document capture, document management, workflow and systems engineer experience and has successfully grown Ephesoft into a multi-million dollar company. Ephesoft introduced the industry's first browser-based, cloud and Capture-as-a-Service platform, making it simple for any sized organization to streamline document business processes. The company employs 150 people worldwide with customers in 50 countries and has over 250 global partners, including companies like Microsoft, Box, HP, Infor, Nintex, K2, Blue Prism and Quest Diagnostics.


**Ergo21, Newport Beach**

*Steve Gambhir, President*

Steve Gambhir has changed the lives of thousands of people with back, tailbone and buttock problems with his seat cushion, Ergo21. Gambhir licensed the unique technology and created Ergo21, a high-level cushion and back support that can be used in multiple ways – in the car, on a sofa, bed, and during yoga and meditation. The product has become so popular that Gambhir is closing in on his first \$1 million in sales, and is also expanding his product line with LiquiCell-filled bicycle seats, pillow cases and shoe insoles. With 500-plus five-star reviews on Amazon, Ergo21 is poised to become the leader in the seat cushion industry. The Ergo21 is getting rave reviews from drivers of all kind from Uber and bus drivers to pilots. In addition, wheelchair users also are getting relief from pressure sores when they use the Ergo21 cushions. This year Ergo21 is expanding its products to Canada, Australia, Japan, England and Europe on Amazon and their website.


**Fairmont Private Schools, Anaheim**

*David R. Jackson, CEO/President*

Since 1979, David R. Jackson has expanded Orange County's largest, and oldest, non-sectarian private school's award-winning academic reputation by building a multi-talented, student-centric staff, who have helped more than 67,000 students pave their own path to success. While under Jackson's leadership, Fairmont Private Schools has expanded to four campuses throughout Orange County and has been named the 'Best School in OC' by Parenting OC for the last four years. He founded Fairmont Preparatory Academy in 1993 on the historical Stanton Estate, where 91 percent of graduates have been accepted into a top 100-200 college in the last five years. He also established Fairmont International Academy, integrated in the same campus as The Prep, in 2003, with 88 percent of graduates admitted to a top 100 college. Fairmont has continually dominated in the Orange County Academic Decathlon for more than two decades, while also having the highest participation in sports program of any other private school in the county. Jackson has provided more than \$5.2 million in scholarships to Orange County families.


**GlobeChat, San Juan Capistrano**

*Kevin Strom, Founder/CEO*

GlobeChat originally launched as a social network with an instant language translator in 2016 and spread by word of mouth to more than 150 countries. In 2018, GlobeChat received a patent for "The System and Method of Multi-Lingual Networking and Communications" and immediately switched direction from a consumer product to a B2B product. While existing global translation solutions are 1:1 and often have delays, GlobeChat is the first in the world to provide multi-lingual instant translation in a chat environment enabling people in multiple countries and in multiple languages to all concurrently communicate within easily customizable groups. The brand new B2B version of the software is nearing completion and 20 additional languages have







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been added and a total of 60 are now supported. They will be testing with the United States Military, USAID, NATO, Red Cross, United Nations, and have just been introduced to the Olympic Committee in Japan who will be hosting the 2020 Summer Games.

**Goettl Air Conditioning, Corona**

*Ken Goodrich, CEO*

Ken Goodrich bought Goettl Air Conditioning in 2013 from the founding Goettl brothers. Goodrich has since expanded the company from Phoenix, to Las Vegas and Southern California and grew in size from 50 employees to 276. He understands people are his biggest asset, and worked to not only repair employee morale, but build the framework of an employee training curriculum, to the lengths of creating Goettl University, a new \$10 million headquarters which includes a state-of-the-art training center to educate residential heating and air conditioning technicians throughout the Southwest. Goodrich has created solution systems around all parts of Goettl, including customer service, human resources, and internal methods and communication. His approach is innovative, in the home services industry, one which typically operates with no such systems and practices.

**Gorilla Stationers, LLC Cypress**

*Rosemary Czopek, President*

Gorilla Stationers has been servicing businesses and government agencies throughout the country since 2012 with their diligent customer service in addition to knowledge of all products within the office solutions industry. Founded in Huntington Beach by Rosemary Czopek, an industry veteran with over fifteen years of expertise, the company prides itself as a woman owned business that has successfully carved its niche in the office supply sphere by offering top-brand, cutting-edge items with unbelievably low prices. By 2015, Gorilla Stationers had expanded across the country, with 28 shipping facilities nationwide to ensure promised next-day delivery. Gorilla Stationers has a relationship with one of the largest vendors of office products in the world, along with direct relationships with manufacturers, which provides access to over 150,000 products, meaning bottom-line savings for customers.

**Greenlink Financial, Irvine**

*Brandon Avila, Director of Underwriting*

Brandon Avila started with Greenlink Financial in 2016. As Director of Underwriting he established himself as the company's top-innovator with record breaking numbers since he first joined the company. During his first year, he was the recipient of the Rookie of the Year award for funding \$10 million in personal loans. He has been recognized numerous times for his exceptional sales method and being a key player in helping and training new hires and fellow executives for setting goals and optimizing performance. Within two years of bringing his expertise to Greenlink Financial, Avila paved the way in setting higher goals for the whole salesforce. His innovation with his sales process paved the way for Greenlink Financial to be one of the most competitive lenders in Orange County.

**Greenwave Systems, Irvine**

*Martin Manniche, Founder/Chairman/CEO*

Martin Manniche is the founder, chairman and CEO of Greenwave Systems. He is responsible for leading all aspects of the company, including setting the company's vision and strategic roadmap, leading the hardware team and managing strategic partnerships. Since founding Greenwave in 2008, Manniche has piloted the company in raising \$90M in total funding. As an IoT Consortium member, Greenwave is actively educating and guiding the industry toward a safe, frictionless connected future that will both serve and delight users. As needs changed within the industry, Manniche had the foresight to see that the software platform also needed to change and he transformed Greenwave's business from one that focused on smart home devices and utility providers, to a platform that could scale much wider and satisfy requirements necessary for enterprise and industrial applications.

**Hyperice, Irvine**

*Jim Huether, CEO*

Jim Huether is an executive leader with expertise within the sports technology and medical industries. At Hyperice, Huether and his team have quickly positioned Hyperice as the market leader within the recovery and movement enhancement

technology space. He has played a key role in helping Hyperice change an entire industry and develop a niche market that did not exist five years ago. He is a two-time Inc. 500 CEO who helped turn around a small but promising company doing \$450,000 in revenue, to a highly efficient company on pace to exceed \$30 million in less than five years. During his time at Hyperice, he and his team hired a highly motivated group of former athletes, and trained and developed them into highly effective business professionals. Now, Hyperice products are distributed into more than 60 countries worldwide and is one of the fastest growing private companies in the US.

**HyperX, Fountain Valley**

*Daniel Kelley, Corporate Director of Marketing*

As director of corporate marketing for HyperX, the gaming division of Kingston® Technology Corporation, Daniel Kelley has helped shape marketing to support HyperX into becoming a leader in the gaming and esports community. With more than 20 years of professional marketing experience, Kelley leads his full-service marketing department to develop creative, innovative, carefully-planned, and award-winning strategies that support the company's overall marketing programs, including advertising, media and public relations, web design and maintenance, and a variety of channel sales functions. Kelley has also driven all marketing efforts while HyperX developed and launched its gaming peripheral product lineup including award-winning headsets, keyboards, mice and memory modules. Since its inception, HyperX has grown to be one of the top gaming peripheral brands, shipping more than 5 million gaming headsets worldwide.

**Ice Energy, Costa Mesa**

*Mike Hopkins, CEO*

Mike Hopkins CEO of Ice Energy since 2009, has most recently contributed to the Keep your Cool program. The company established the Keep Your Cool free HVAC replacement and energy storage program, as part of its historic award from Southern California Edison to provide 25.6 megawatts of behind-the-meter energy storage. Under the program, Orange County businesses are eligible to receive free, fully installed HVAC and thermal energy storage systems, using Ice Energy's proprietary Ice Bear® solution. Ice storage is a clean, reliable and least-cost distributed energy storage solution for the grid. Since 2005, Ice Bears have been installed in more than 40 utility services, transforming inefficient and polluting air conditioners into efficient and clean cooling systems. With a reliability record in excess of 98 percent, they benefit both utilities and their customers. Ice Bear batteries improve the efficiency and resiliency of the grid, lower cooling bills and reduce carbon emissions.

**iHeartDogs.com, Anaheim**

*Marshall Morris, Co-Founder/COO*

In 2014, inspired by his rescued Siberian Husky Splash, Justin Palmer started a Facebook page called I Love Dogs. The page quickly grew to over a million fans and in 2015, Justin cofounded iHeartDogs.com with Marshall Morris, an army veteran. Inspired by their passions for helping shelter dogs and supporting our veterans, Justin and Marshall built a line of products that give back to shelters and raise money to provide service dogs for veterans in need. By the numbers iHeartDogs has fed 10,000,000 meals to shelter dogs, donated 100,000 toys to shelters, donated \$200,000 to fund service and companion animals for Veterans, dedicated \$30,000 to disaster relief and funded 80,000 miles to move dogs from kill shelters to no kill shelters.

**InstaMed, Newport Beach**

*Chris Seib, Co-Founder/CTO*

Chris Seib co-founded InstaMed in 2004 and has since led the vision and successful execution of building one platform for all forms of payment in healthcare. At InstaMed, he is responsible for all aspects of the product strategy, product delivery and technology. Seib's efforts deliver the foundational components of the successful growth of the InstaMed Network in processing over \$300 billion in healthcare payments and two billion healthcare and payment transactions since inception. He combines expertise in financial technology, healthcare information technology and customer-centric design to drive the growth of the InstaMed Network which connects providers, payers and consumers and processes tens of billions of





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dollars in healthcare payments annually. Seib is a named inventor of multiple patents held by InstaMed.

**Klein & Wilson, Newport Beach**

*Mark Wilson, Partner*

Mark Wilson, and the law firm Klein & Wilson, have been innovating change in trial work and litigation since 1994. Law firms typically do not create predictability in fees and transparency in services, especially when a case goes to trial. Mark has recently articulated Klein & Wilson's process on creating predictability in fees and outcomes which provides companies with a clear process that meets their needs and expectations. More than ever, clients are seeking efficiencies and predictability in complex business litigation. This firm can predict, with relative certainty, details of the litigation process that translate into realistic budgets and identifiable outcomes should a matter go to trial. In these days of spiraling litigation fees, Mark and his firm provide a clear roadmap of options and the costs associated with them. Their distinctive roadmap for plotting out litigation strategy, the Litigation Analysis Memorandum (LAM), is the backbone of the firm's process for winning over 90 percent of its trials.

**Kush Bottles Inc., Santa Ana**

*Nicholas Kovacevich, Co-Founder/CEO*

Nick Kovacevich has taken Kush Bottles from a small, three-man operation to a dynamic, growing, publicly traded company with offices in three states, multiple vertical markets, 60-plus employees and close to \$10 million in revenue on sales of more than \$100 million units. He has done this by recruiting a team of experienced and dedicated people, creating an atmosphere of inclusion and rewarding accomplishment. Under Kovacevich's leadership, Kush Bottles continues to grow each quarter. He recently orchestrated several major acquisitions, including acquiring a genome bio-tech lab to create a new line of products in the company's portfolio and internal growth. Additionally, the company is now selling globally, and has added direct-to-consumer sales to complement B2B sales.

**Laurel at Sunset, Newport Beach**

*James Shun, Founder/CEO*

James Shun is a founder of Laurel at Sunset and Head of Product Development and Founder of 3Dazer. The initial concept for the 3Dazer project management app and laser measuring device was born from the idea of creating a software system platform for interior designers that could connect them with their vendors, process their projects and provide them more efficiency in their day-to-day tasks, ultimately saving them money. After further research it was discovered that the home improvement industry was a more expansive market with an even greater need for the app that was built. General contractors, subcontractors, and project managers were also suffering similar pain points, if not more, from how to collect and manage their project data efficiently and securely, to connecting with co-workers, vendors, and clients easily. After two years of research and development, 3Dazer became a project management app that can be accessed on a smartphone and used with an accurate laser measuring device, and cloud service.

**loanDepot, Irvine**

*Billy Spears, Chief Information Security Officer*

As the senior vice president and chief information security officer at loanDepot, Billy Spears has transformed their information security presence into a robust ecosystem for cybersecurity throughout the enterprise. He discovered the known environment tolerances by identifying and exposing critical risks. His notable innovation has led to the implementation of artificial intelligence and machine learning, improved network monitoring and log correlation capabilities, dramatically increasing the company's overall security posture. Most security professionals work in the background to provide the stable infrastructure needed for other departments to shine and earn credit for increasing sales revenue. Spears differentiated a traditional CIA model to include privacy, safety and reliability, ultimately making third parties feel safer providing their confidential data. Building trust in an era of industry broken systems is the biggest problem Spears has been dedicated to solving, and at loanDepot he successfully achieved his innovative architectural vision for revolutionizing technology, processes, and people- while simultaneously creating a market differentiator.



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## 2018 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

**Love & Puree, Costa Mesa***Jeffrey Chon, Founder/Owner*

Jeff Chon is a local restaurateur with five local businesses, employing over 100 people. Most recently, Chon teamed up with two other families to open a family kitchen offering organic purees and food blends for babies and children. At the age of 23, Chon bought the Alley Restaurant in Newport Beach and doubled the gross revenue in two years. Soon after he opened Tabu Shabu in Costa Mesa, a Japanese style hot pot restaurant similar to foods he grew up eating. In addition, he acquired landmark music venue, Detroit Bar, and rebranded with a million dollar renovation, to become the Wayfarer in Costa Mesa. Shon also owns and operates Oak & Coal, a Yakitori style dining which involves skewering meat.



supplier of metal business cards, producing for companies such as Tesla, Uber, Facebook, LifeLock and West Coast Customs. MMBC has since developed an entire space around metal business cards, invitations, VIP passes, and more. And, the company now offers additional complementary custom-etched products that are all done in-house. In fact, My Metal Business Card is the only metal business card company offering cards in 24 hours due to its in-house manufacturing. The company also launched [www.MyPlasticBusinessCard.com](http://www.MyPlasticBusinessCard.com) and the latest [www.MyWoodBusinessCard.com](http://www.MyWoodBusinessCard.com). All of the wood business cards are made in-house on specialized lasers and printers.

**MeridianLink, Costa Mesa***Tim Ngyuen, President*

MeridianLink provides mission-critical software solutions to financial institutions. Developer of the industry's first multi-channel account opening and loan origination suite, the company's LoansPQ, LendingQB, and ACTion platforms allow banks and credit unions to process and accept consumer and mortgage loans as well as account opening applications, and integrate seamlessly with all major core and data services providers. MeridianLink also offers Synergy, a highly customizable and configurable loan processing and decision-making workflow product, as well as MortgageCreditLink, the dominant provider of "tri-merge" integration functionality into credit bureaus and other third-party consumer and business databases. MeridianLink prides itself on being a learning organization for innovators and supports a culture of passion seekers who are relentless in pursuing excellence. Their learning and innovative orientation stretches beyond our company walls into both local community and the entire financial industry.

**Netreo Inc., Irvine***Kevin Kinsey, CEO*

Kevin Kinsey and his two partners formed Netreo in March of 2000 with a vision of changing the world of network management software. Netreo's plan was to focus on delighting customers and building a sustainable, viable business in order to quickly hit break-even profitability. As it turned out, break-even occurred in month 13 and the company has been cash-flow-positive ever since. Today, the company employs 21 workers and conducts business in numerous countries around the globe. Their client list includes Wells Fargo, AON, Broadcom, and client retention is 96.5 percent. The product is packaged as a Software-as-a-Service solution, so virtually all revenue is recurring. Recent growth has been a robust 29 percent for 2015, and 35 percent for 2016.

**MERIDIUM, Irvine***Robert Brown, Founder/CEO*

Emerging as a sought-after expert in the virtual, mixed and augmented reality market, Robert Brown, founder and CEO of MERIDIUM, is leading the charge in applying augmented reality and cloud computing technologies to advance enterprises into a new era of technology. Brown founded MERIDIUM in 2015 with the mission to reinvent the way people interact with the world. It is one of the first companies to integrate augmented reality and artificial intelligence into an agnostic, multi-device platform for enterprises—enabling companies to connect and curate data-driven experiences. The MERIDIUM technology enhances the customer experience and inspires purchases but also improves employee training, education, productivity and efficiency. Garnering world-class clients such as Walmart, Ford and Edwards Lifesciences, MERIDIUM has realized tremendous success, with revenue growth of 205 percent in 2017 alone.

**New American Funding, Tustin***Rick Arvielo, Co-Founder/CEO**Patty Arvielo, Co-Founder/President*

Starting the business from scratch, Rick and Patty Arvielo's vision of a mortgage company that would operate as a proficient call center focused on good pricing, fast home loan closes and excellent customer service quickly came to fruition. In 2003, the Arvielo's launched New American Funding as a 40-employee, refinance call-center. They have transformed their small, mortgage refinance call center into a national mortgage banker that maintains a servicing portfolio of over 100,000 loans for \$25 billion and funds approximately \$980 million loans every month. The company now has approximately 160 nationwide branches and about 2,800 employees, and is a 5-time Inc. 5000 Honoree for one of the fastest growing companies in the nation. The couple leads one of Orange County's top minority owned companies; employing over 2,800 individuals, 58 percent of which are female, with many C-level positions. Their innovative idea of bringing the entire loan process in house - origination, processing, underwriting, funding and servicing, has given New American Funding a great advantage in the marketplace; allowing them to consistently close loans faster than competitors.

**Money360, Ladera Ranch***Evan Gentry, Founder/CEO*

Evan Gentry is the chief executive officer and founder of Money360, a tech-enabled direct lender specializing in commercial real estate. As the CEO, Gentry oversees the overall business strategy, operations and strategic partnerships, and long-term vision of the company, which has revolutionized the commercial real estate financing model by providing more transparent and efficient lending. With over 20 years of experience, Gentry is an entrepreneur and innovator with a strong background in the application of technology to the real estate, lending and investment industries. Recently, many traditional lenders have exited the market in response to new, restrictive regulations, and Money360 has filled the void for commercial real estate owners, ensuring they can maintain their properties and continue to offer space for local businesses. One of Money360's greatest assets is its technology, which expedites and automates parts of the underwriting process; this capability combined with the Company's seasoned underwriting team produces high quality loans to more borrowers.

**NextWorks Strategy, Irvine***Scott Hamilton, CEO*

NextWorks Strategy has helped organizations ranging in size from start-ups to large cap enterprises define new growth opportunities, increase their competitive edge and build the internal capability of their teams to excel. They are trusted advisors in the field of global business, leadership and customer "next practices" strategies. NextWorks Strategy services include the development and facilitation of executive/board retreats, leadership development, improved customer centricity and overall alignment via their trademarked "Immerse Maps". Scott Hamilton has lead the NextWorks Strategy team in a variety of highly successful projects including internal alignment, performance management and operations performance improvement for such companies as Golden State Foods, Parsons, Nestle, Sizzler, Mimi's Café, Shakeys, Printronix, Altura Telecommunications and many others. His unique approach to tapping the collective IQ of an entire organization produces a high level of innovation and ROI.

**My Metal Business Card, La Habra***Craig Martyn, Founder/President*

My Metal Business Card was founded in 2011, by Craig Martyn of Fullerton, California, at the age of 26. Craig's understanding of the chemical etching process from a previous business he founded helped spur the idea for metal cards. In just seven short years, My Metal Business Cards has become the world's leading

**NotaryCam, Newport Beach***Rick Triola, Founder/CEO*

Rick Triola has been working in the real estate, mortgage and technology businesses for over 35 years. He founded NotaryCam with offices in Newport Beach and Alexandria, Virginia, in 2014. NotaryCam is the first venture-backed,





## 2018 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

on-demand notary service in the world. The company has facilitated more than 100,000 legally-binding online notarizations in all 50 US states and more than 70 countries. Triola leads NotaryCam as it works with its partners to facilitate 100 percent online mortgage closings through its patented eClose360 platform. NotaryCam is changing the way documents get notarized with its virtual signing room, which allows any and all parties to legally execute and notarize contracts and other documents on demand over the internet while deploying the industry's highest level of security and ID authentication. NotaryCam is endorsed by the National Association of Realtors® (NAR), the National Notary Association (NNA), the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac). Its network of trained and certified eNotaries is the largest and highest-paid in the world.

### NuEyes Technology Inc., Newport Beach

Justin Moore, President/Co-Founder

NuEyes was launched in January of 2016 by two childhood friends and military veterans, Justin Moore (Air Force) and Mark Greget (Navy). They started the company to leverage emerging technologies in augmented reality technology to help those who are legally blind, unfortunately the glasses don't currently work for those with no vision. Justin Moore is a specialist in building distribution channels for medical devices as well as recruiting and training salespeople and independent representatives who consistently exceed their goals. He has over twelve years of experience in sales, sales management and marketing in various roles. The product helps those who are struggling with legal blindness as a result of eye conditions, live better lives, they do so by capitalizing on the technology in the glasses to make the most use of the vision these patients have left by magnifying screens much larger than glass can do and also using the digital camera in the glasses to scan text and have it read aloud to the user.



### OC Facial Center, Lake Forest

Daniel Robbins, COO

Daniel Robbins is the chief operating officer of the OC Facial Center in Lake Forest. Robbins created a ground breaking medical grade men's skincare brand called 'his'. He launched an advanced pigment technology sunscreen that helps to hide and cover-up skin imperfections including uneven skin tone, acne and scars, and redness. Robbins helps the spa generate additional revenue through marketing and PR to achieve what will be the second year on the Inc. 5000 list. He is also a writer on men's skin health and has been featured in Forbes, Medium, Thrive Global and HuffPost.



### Orange County School of the Arts, Santa Ana

Ralph Opacic, Founder/ Executive Director

Ralph Opacic, Ed.D. founder and executive director of Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA), is now in his third decade of providing unparalleled arts and academic programming to students across Southern California. Dr. Opacic's innovation, passion, creativity and tenacity have resulted in OCSA growing from a small after-school arts program to a comprehensive public charter school serving 2,100 seventh through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students annually. OCSA offers a rigorous academic program and acclaimed pre-professional arts training in 20 disciplines to a diverse group of students in a creative, nurturing environment. Students are recruited by top-tier colleges and universities across the country, and OCSA reports a 99 percent graduation and college-acceptance rate. These achievements have made OCSA one of the most selective schools in the nation. Today, Dr. Opacic is leading a vision to provide this same life-transforming experience to 10,000 students annually, by opening a network of public charter schools across California. The first campus, California School of the Arts – San Gabriel Valley, opened in August 2017 to great success.



### Parrish Partners, San Clemente

Michele Parrish, Managing Partner

Co-founded in 2003 by Michele Parrish, Parrish Partners originally focused on M&A advisory before expanding in 2006 to include executive coaching services for Fortune 100 companies. Relocating to Orange County in 2011, the business further expanded to include private business consulting, executive search, organizational development and training, and most recently, technology and talent management. Through all its services, Parrish Partners leads with cultivating culture and makes the distinction between leadership (creating positive, lasting change in organizations, often transformational) and management (producing systemic, repeatable order, often from chaos). Parrish Partners is an innovator in the field of management



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## 2018 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

consulting, placing emphasis on leadership and the power of transforming people as the vehicle for transforming performance. In doing so, Parrish Partners fulfills its vision of being a premier pathway guide for creating and sustaining cultures committed to excellence.

**PhageTech Inc., Irvine**

*Richard Henson, Founder*

Richard Henson is a director and co-founder of Irvine-based PhageTech, one of the most high-profile biotech firms to be spun out of publicly funded research at UC Irvine School of Physical Sciences. The product of this research is an entirely new class of materials – bioconductors. Like semiconductors, bioconductors can connect directly to a digital device and allow blood and urine test results to be delivered electronically without a lab or highly skilled operator, all at a fraction of current cost. Current research is focused on studying the recurrence of bladder cancer by checking for biomarkers in urine. This promises to reduce the painful and very costly methods of current bladder cancer treatment. Future developments will allow testing of many other cancers and infectious diseases, a major problem in developing countries where there are no labs or even reliable electricity. The ability to deliver inexpensive and scalable testing to unserved populations will make a significant impact to global health and the economy. Early detection of diseases is considered the single, most effective way to reduce the cost of healthcare.

**Plutos Sama, Irvine**

*Matthew Browndorf, CEO*

Matthew Browndorf founded Plutos Sama LLC in 2013 and now works as the CEO, Chairman of the board of directors and managing member. Plutos Sama is a vertically integrated holding company with an expanding portfolio of entities providing its clients comprehensive business solutions. Plutos Sama LLC developed a diverse and stable revenue stream in an expanding, or declining, economy that is cyclic agnostic to origination volume and supply of non-performing loans. Revenue streams across all business platforms are enhanced with cross-selling of services that work due to the complementary platforms that service each other, providing clients with a one-stop shop for all their professional needs. Browndorf is an experienced investment advisor and has led the Plutos Sama affiliates to make successful strategic decisions positioning itself for organic growth in emerging markets while aggressively pursuing merger and acquisition growth across all brands.

**POPIn, Irvine**

*Hayes Drumwright, Co-Founder/CEO*

Hayes Drumwright is the founder of POPIn where he developed a platform that equips leaders to quickly implement decisions with the buy-in of the teams doing the work. He authored the book "Management vs Employees" which provides corporate leaders a roadmap for bridging the hierarchical gaps between management and employees to gain company-wide acceptance of transformative strategic initiatives. POPIn provides a platform that drives success for a company's initiatives through the intimate engagement of its employees, partners and clients. By making it safe to have a true conversation on a particular subject, leaders will uncover confusion before it negatively impacts success and at the same time build trust and foster buy-in by giving employees the ability to share in solution authorship.

**PriceSpider, Irvine**

*Dave Templin, Director of Research and Development*

As the director of research and development for PriceSpider, Dave Templin has spearheaded initiatives that have directly and positively impacted the continued success and growth of the company. PriceSpider has experienced unprecedented growth, especially over the last year, by expanding its product offerings. In addition to valuable enhancements to PriceSpider's Where to Buy solutions, led by Templin, the company introduced Brand Monitor, an advanced monitoring tool that complements its existing platform suite. The new content monitoring tool helps brand manufacturers quickly and easily visualize how their product content is displayed on hundreds to thousands of retailer websites to guarantee proper brand alignment. The product continues to evolve through cutting-edge enhancements, providing PriceSpider with a leg up on the competition. These innovations have been directly responsible for decreasing production costs, time to market, increasing overall consistency, reliability and both client and consumer satisfaction.

**Restaurant 365, Irvine**

*John Moody, Co-Founder*

Restaurant365 was founded in 2011 by John Moody, to fit the needs of an underserved, fragmented market, with the ultimate goal of helping restaurants grow. Restaurant365 is the world's only all-in-one, cloud-based, restaurant-specific accounting, operations and reporting solution developed specifically for restaurants. Connectors, import functions and open APIs truly enable Restaurant365 to "talk" with other systems including POS providers, payroll processors, vendors and banks. The result is real integration of transactional and detailed information. The result is advanced software technology that alleviates the significant burdens placed on restaurant operators. With more than 700 clients worldwide, Restaurant365 specializes in: independent, multi-unit chains, franchisors, franchisees of multiple concepts, accounting partners and large enterprise deals. The Restaurant365 Academy is a learning management system that provides all users with clear and engaging learning experiences. The Academy is complemented by a support center that provides in-depth solution articles, announcements, registration for user groups and webinars, support ticket management, product roadmap and a community forum. Restaurant365 believes in always improving and innovating their company, product, policies, procedures and their industry.

**SeneGence International, Foothill Ranch**

*Joni Rogers-Kante, Founder/CEO*

Joni Rogers-Kante founded SeneGence® in 1999 and the company has since become a recognized, international leader in the cosmetics industry. After learning that cosmetic companies use the same ingredients in one product to the next – Joni traveled across the world with a team of scientists and botanists to find ingredients for the unique formulas in SeneGence products, with a focus on long-lasting and anti-aging with lasting results. The SeneGence line stays on the cutting edge of technology with original, patented and proprietary cosmetic formulas blended with the same anti-aging properties of its skincare. It's about healthy and natural products that combine beauty, technology and cosmetics that are good for the skin. Thanks to her business acumen, visionary leadership and determination, SeneGence now offers more than 300 products and was the first to popularize the concept of long-lasting cosmetics. The appeal of SeneGence's unique products combined with the entrepreneurial opportunity to run one's own business has resulted in a rapidly increasing sales force with a growth of over 400 percent (in new distributors) since 2017.

**Shark Wheel, Lake Forest**

*David Patrick, Chief Technology Officer*

David M. Patrick reinvented the shape of the wheel for the first time in human history. Not only does it look different, but it has been scientifically proven in 2 years of testing by San Diego State University, Mechanical Engineering Department to outperform the traditional wheel in various categories including friction, load capacity, longevity and off-road ability. Patrick has appeared on Shark Tank, the Discovery Channel, and has made a major scientific discovery that gave birth to this wheel shape. He found alternating motions in nature are inherently more advantageous than linear motions. Additionally, Patrick won a government grant through the National Science Foundation (NSF) to create a wheel that saves farmers money and down time. The Shark Wheel can also be used as skateboard wheels, farming wheels, wheelchair wheels, pallet jack wheels, etc.

**Ship & Shore Environmental, Inc., Signal Hill**

*Anoosheh Oskouian, President/CEO*

Anoosheh Oskouian launched her pollution control business, Ship & Shore Environmental in 2000, since then, it has developed a comprehensive array of engineering and manufacturing capabilities. With increasing market demand on businesses to reduce operational costs as a driver, Oskouian has continuously expanded her company's product lines and services. Ship & Shore is also making waves in the flexographic and packaging industries, by offering experience to manufacturers that need to address all of the latest EPA Regulations and changes made to environmental rules and regulations. In September 2017, Oskouian led the company to start its "Keeping Up with the EPA Campaign" effort to help manufacturers address concerns and meet regulations, while saving time and energy. Likewise, under her leadership, the company grew 15 percent in 2017 and closed numerous new deals in different markets around the globe.



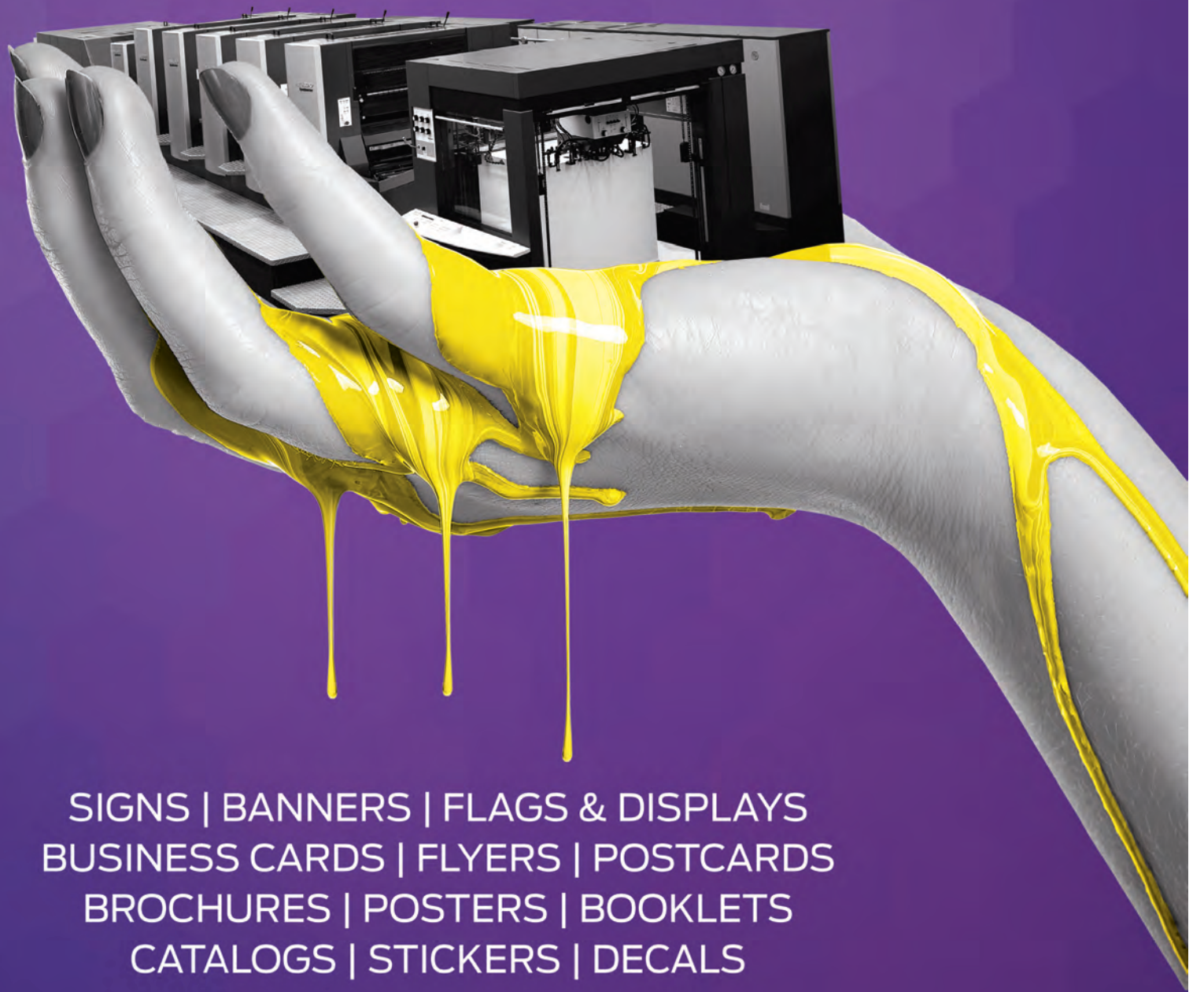


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**Stich Ai, Huntington Beach**  
*Matty Squarzoni, CEO*

Matty Squarzoni is the CEO and co-founder of Stich Ai, the new technology company focused on artificial intelligence and IoT technologies to improve geospatial and situational awareness. The company develops hardware and software for active shooter prevention, detection and response, military innovation and other smart city applications, and will launch commercially by the end of year, 2018. Outdoor geolocation has been available for a long time, but limited progress has been made for indoor geospatial awareness even though we spend 80 percent of our lives indoors. Stich Ai aims to bring these two worlds together with a self-learning, geospatially aware smart ecosystem of technologies and products. These integrated technologies will support the foundation for smart cities and buildings that will enable us to monitor, locate, track and manage for purposes of asset management, security and awareness, and behavioral analytics (consumer trends, etc.). Squarzoni is also establishing an innovation center in Orange County that will help to grow and develop dual-use technologies and tech companies that hold promising commercial and defense applications.

**Sports 1 Marketing, Irvine**  
*David Meltzer, CEO*  
*Warren Moon, President*

Over the past few years, David Meltzer has morphed Sports 1 Marketing into one of the fastest-growing sports marketing firms in the country, due to the forward-thinking development of a media division within S1M, S1Media House (S1MH). Since founding S1M with Hall of Fame quarterback Warren Moon, the business has changed rapidly, resulting in more than \$20 million in revenue in the last fiscal year. With Warren's guidance, Sports 1 Marketing has morphed from a boutique sports marketing firm into a digital marketing powerhouse, with an award-winning digital marketing platform that was named "Best in Sports" nationally and internationally and an award-winning media company, S1Media House. Meltzer has spent the last 25 years as an entrepreneur and executive in the legal, technology, and sports and entertainment fields with expertise across many industry verticals. In addition to his role as CEO of Sports 1 Marketing, he serves as executive producer for Entrepreneur Media's first-ever original show, Elevator Pitch, which had over 25 million views in its first season, making it the No.1 digital business show.

**Stroma Medical Corporation, Irvine**  
*Gregg Homer, Chairman/Chief Science Officer*

Gregg Homer is the inventor of the laser eye color change which has been developed for commercialization by Strōma Medical Corporation. The patented laser initiates a natural metabolic process that gradually eliminates the superficial pigment in darker eyes to reveal your natural underlying color. Essentially, a low intensity laser focuses on the iris to help it break down the pigmented tissues, unveiling the natural blue color underneath. The procedure does not instantly give a person blue eyes, but rather it may take a few weeks for the tissue to break down. The procedure has yet to be approved in the United States but has received mentions in media outlets like CNN, Time, Business Insider and Yahoo Beauty. In the meantime, Dr. Homer continues to invent, primarily in the fields of medical devices, media and communications, and enterprise software applications. In addition to the laser eye color change, he has invented multiple technologies such as subscription on demand, deep-packet inspection, fill iris laser irisoplasty for glaucoma treatment, hyperpigmentation tattooing, and automatic document commenting and electronic scent generation.

**TAE Technologies, Foothill Ranch**  
*Michl Binderbauer, CTO/President*

Michl Binderbauer helped build TAE Technologies, and has dedicated the past two decades to evolving the knowledge and technology of TAE, now one of the US's largest and most well-funded private fusion energy ventures. As president and CTO, he works with a team of 160 scientists, visionaries, researchers and rebels – all committed to starting a global energy revolution through fusion. The purpose of TAE Technologies is to deliver world-changing clean fusion energy as quickly as possible. Starting



with the end in mind, a commercially competitive fusion power plant, the company developed a unique pathway by being the first to combine well-understood advanced particle accelerator with plasma physics. The resulting technology is compact, safe, carbon-free and sustainable. Drs. Norman Rostoker and Michl Binderbauer developed a fusion technology that – when combined with the hydrogen-boron fuel cycles – facilitates easier engineering and a safer environmental profile than competitive fusion methods. He holds more than 40 issued and pending U.S. patents and numerous international technology patents, in addition to authoring many peer-reviewed publications in plasma physics and fusion.

**The Joseph Company International Inc., Irvine**  
*Mitchell Joseph, Chairman/CEO*

Led by Mitchell Joseph, The Joseph Company International, based in Irvine, California, is the developer, manufacturer, and patent holder of the world's first and only commercially viable self-chilling beverage can known as the Chill-Can®. The Joseph Company intends to rapidly commercialize the self-chilling beverage can and associated self-chilling beverage packaging containers through private labels and the licensing of the technology to the beverage world. Joseph is the founder of the Joseph Company International and is the 4th generation of The Joseph Family, dating back to 1921 with the bottling and distribution of Dad's Old Fashion Root Beer & Squirt, to dedicate himself to the beverage business. The Joseph Company is currently constructing a \$20 million Beverage Production and Technology Complex in Youngstown, Ohio which will allow for the production of billions of self-chilling cans and associated containers annually.

**The Wooden Floor, Santa Ana**  
*Dawn S. Reese, CEO*

Dawn S. Reese, chief executive officer of The Wooden Floor, is a social innovator with 25-plus years of experience who leverages her unique blend of experience in business, technology, education and the arts to propel young people forward. Founded in 1983, The Wooden Floor is one of the foremost creative youth development nonprofit organizations in the country. It transforms the lives of young people in low-income communities through the power of dance and access to higher education. During Dawn's nine-year tenure, the organization's budget has grown from \$2.1 million to \$3.4 million and she has led efforts to take its model national by signing their first licensed partner in Washington, DC in November 2015. In addition, a second location of The Wooden Floor opened April 2018 at the Depot at Santiago, workforce housing community in Santa Ana, through an innovative partnership with C&C Development which increases the afterschool student body to nearly 500 year-round children and their families who are served up to 10 years.

**Titan Health & Security Technologies, Inc., Newport Beach**  
*Vic A. Merjanian, Esq., Founder/CEO*

Vic A. Merjanian, Esq., is founder and CEO of Titan Health & Security Technologies, Inc. and is dedicated to improving school safety, as well as organizational safety (spanning private and public businesses, NGOs, and governmental agencies). Titan HST has been used 62 million times in the last year alone and has deployed patented next-gen features including augmented reality (allowing emergency personnel to see through walls and fire), real-time translation (bridging language barriers that cost precious time during an emergency), two-way communication with text, picture, group audio and video calling, and location services. Titan HST is also highly accessible for those who are visually or auditory impaired. Titan HST is always pushing innovation with new technologies such as Mesh Networking (allowing users to communicate even in complete black-outs when all cell towers and Wi-Fi are down). Titan HST was created to provide immediately accessible, organizationally, and technologically structured comprehensive two-way emergency communication – empowering all, reducing anxiety and response time, and enabling incident resolution.

**University of California, Irvine, Irvine**  
*Michael Dennin, Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning/Dean of Undergraduate Education*

Michael Dennin has contributed significantly to many milestones at UCI, but



# Ken Goodrich with Goettl Air Conditioning thanks Orange County for the nomination of Innovator of the Year!



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## 2017 INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEES

most recognizably is his ability to popularize science and bring active learning environments to higher education. Last year he launched UCI's Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning (OVPTL). The division has sparked updated academic programs, exciting community partnerships and national outreach like never before, resulting in a number of recognitions for UCI embracing student diversity and college access. In the past year Dennin has created many opportunities for milestones including: building the Anteater Learning Pavillion, creating the Active Learning Institute, creating a new campus space called the Student Success Initiatives Center, and an initiative called First generation Faculty which had so much success the first two years, that now all the University of California schools have adopted it. In addition he helped expand the Campuswide Honors Program, the international student excellence program and fundraising opportunities.



**Vincit, Irvine**  
Ville Houttu, CEO

Ville Houttu is Founder and CEO of Vincit California, Inc., a custom software development and design studio originally from Finland. Previously Head of Business Development at Vincit Group, Houttu helped the Finnish company reach 350 employees and make it public in Nasdaq First North marketplace. He opened Vincit California in 2016, and has grown the US footprint to over 30 employees supporting local projects across multiple industries. Houttu also founded Vincit Dev Talks, a quarterly meetup which brings together members of the Orange County tech community for networking and innovative discussions. These events cover various topics provided by speakers across multiple industries and backgrounds. He also keeps Vincit involved in events that support local coding schools and programs through UCI. Houttu was recently awarded with the 2018 Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Irvine Chamber of Commerce and has received increasing press coverage for his work in Orange County, growing the presence and clientele of Vincit.



**ViridiSTOR LLC, Tustin**  
Terry Mullin, CEO/ President

Terry Mullin is an active innovator and business builder in Orange County. He has formed and led teams in market leading companies that have brought first in class software and hardware to the market. Within his latest venture, ViridiSTOR, Mullin has launched a new era in compact content management systems to deliver information to the \$595 billion dollar event, conference, and tradeshow industry. ViridiSTOR has designed and delivered a system to eliminate paper handouts from the trade show and conference industries. Through the use of their Green Box solution, not only are costs dramatically reduced, but the environmental impact of paper waste eliminated. At the same time, Mullin has innovated and patented other products including an oral irrigation system that will aid millions in the recovery from oral surgery. Mullin has other patents pending in the area of wireless networking, retail management, and sustainable products.



**WHW, Irvine**  
Janie Best, CEO

Janie Best is CEO of WHW, a non-profit organization with the mission of providing the unemployed and the underemployed the skills and resources to get and keep a good job. Best is passionate about putting people to work because she believes that a job is more than a paycheck. It is essential to creating a stable, safe and educated community; the kind of community we all want to live in. But passion alone is not enough. Her persistence in finding new and more efficient ways to solve problems, increase efficiencies and track impact has taken WHW to a new level of operation, relevant to funders, donors and most of all the Job Seekers she serves. Today, WHW has served over 90,000 job seekers providing comprehensive employment support services to almost 10,000 Job Seekers last year with a \$1.6 million budget, the help of over 1000 volunteers and the collaboration of over 275 partner agencies.



**Xitore, Mission Viejo**  
Mike Amidi, CEO/Board Member

Mike Amidi, has over 25 years of experience in semiconductor and technology

industry where he spent the last 20 years in Solid State Storage where he held various management and executive positions in companies such as STEC, SMART, Netlist, and WD. Amidi has assembled world class executive and technology team with over 620-plus authored and co-authored patents to join the company. At Xitore, Amidi and his team have developed a revolutionary disruptive Solid State Drive (SSD) product that improves the performance by 3.2X, reduce latency by 42.5X, reduce the size by 5.0X, and reduce the power by 1.6X compared to fastest product in the market. Xitore currently has seven issued patents and several more in pipeline to protect intellectual properties. Xitore's focus is on developing a revolutionary, next generation Data storage which will enhance and improve user experience by increasing bandwidth, while reducing storage latency to a fix duration, and taking the experience into eXtremely new levels.



**Yonder, Laguna Niguel**  
Sheri Geoffreys, Founder

Being diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma Cancer, as a new mom and having a brother who passed away of same cancer, Sheri Geoffreys learned the power of Bone Broth Collagen nutrients. All of her friends and family noticed the benefits she was getting and wanted to try it, but they would not drink the soup daily. In early 2017, Geoffreys dedicated herself to finding the best sources of these nutrients all over the world, aligning herself with one of the healthiest manufacturers in the USA and gathering amazing support to help her bring this dream into reality. She has built a team of amazing souls crafting great tasting and nutrient dense Bone Broth Collagen Bars making it easy to enjoy for all. Her Bone Broth Collagen Protein Bars have no broth flavor whatsoever and blend organic whole food ingredients with amazing flavors like wild blueberry nut, peanut butter chocolate chip and coconut almond with only 2-3g of sugar, gluten free, non-GMO, rice free, soy free, dairy free and 14 plus grams of protein, the first bar like it on the market.



**Ytel, Foothill Ranch**  
Nick Newsom, CEO

Founded in 2012, Nick Newsom started Ytel to help businesses better interact with audiences through self-service software. As the company evolved, Newsom invested into culture and identifying top talent that would help propel Ytel to the next level. Ytel powers communications for businesses to build deeper relationships through human interaction. Ytel offers a communications application programming interface (API) that enables voice, messaging, and mail that integrate with existing applications, and a contact center application built for lead generation and sales acceleration. Ytel has been recognized by Entrepreneur Magazine as one of the fastest growing companies in America, by the U.S. Government for innovation in cloud communications, and has received extensive recognition for donating time and money to local education and tech programs right here in Orange County. In just four years, Ytel has grown from half a dozen people to more than 100 with several offices across the country to service its customers.



**Zadara Storage, Irvine**  
Nelson Nahum, Co-Founder/CEO

Nelson Nahum is a co-founder of Zadara Storage, the world's first enterprise-class storage delivered as a fully-managed service. His roles include founding CTO and member of the Zadara engineering team that won two U.S. patents for innovative software-defined-storage. Zadara Storage's service model offers enterprises, SMBs and startups a flexible, agile and cost-efficient storage infrastructure that's always aligned with their needs. Solutions have been recognized for innovation and leadership. The accolades include the Frost & Sullivan New Product Innovation Leadership Award, No. 87 on the Deloitte Fast 500, Gartner 'Cool Vendor' in Storage Technologies, and Dell Founder's 50. Despite managing the demands of the company's rapid growth, Nelson has found ways to give back, including free data storage for the companies that were affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Nelson brings over 20 years of experience in the storage industry in multiple storage software development positions. He is known for creating innovative products and successfully bringing them to the market.





# INNOVATOR

of the YEAR AWARDS

## ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

### Congratulations 2018 Nominees!

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>11 Health and Technologies Inc.</b> - Michael Seres    | <b>MERIDIUM</b> - Robert Brown   |
| <b>Advantech North America</b> - Ween Niu                 | <b>Money360</b> - Evan Gentry  |
| <b>AIVITA Biomedical</b> - Dr. Hans Keirstead             | <b>My Metal Business Card</b> - Craig Martyn                               |
| <b>Allergan</b> - Dan Gil                                 | <b>Netreo Inc.</b> - Kevin Kinsey  |
| <b>Alteryx Inc.</b> - Dean Stoecker                       | <b>New American Funding</b> - Patty Arvielo                                |
| <b>BANKCODE</b> - Cheri Tree                              | <b>New American Funding</b> - Rick Arvielo                                 |
| <b>Beacon Pointe Advisors</b> - Shannon Eusey             | <b>NextWorks Strategy</b> - Scott Hamilton                                 |
| <b>Beeya</b> - Ladan Davia                                | <b>NotaryCam</b> - Rick Triola   |
| <b>BioPhotas Inc.</b> - Patrick Johnson                   | <b>NuEyes Technologies Inc.</b> - Justin Moore                             |
| <b>Burns &amp; McDonnell</b> - Rick Cramer                | <b>OC Facial Care Center</b> - Daniel Robbins                              |
| <b>ChromaDex</b> - Frank Jaksch                           | <b>Orange County School of the Arts</b> - Dr. Ralph Opacic                 |
| <b>Cie Digital Labs</b> - Andree Berengian                | <b>Parrish Partners LLC</b> - Michele Parrish                              |
| <b>cloudvirga</b> - Kyle Kamrooz                          | <b>PhageTech Inc.</b> - Richard Henson                                     |
| <b>ConversionPoint Technologies Inc.</b> - Robert Tallack | <b>Plutos Sama LLC</b> - Matthew Browndorf                                 |
| <b>CureDuchenne</b> - Debra Miller                        | <b>POP Inc.</b> - Hayes Drumwright   |
| <b>Devise Interactive</b> - Dalip Jaggi                   | <b>PriceSpider</b> - Dave Templin  |
| <b>E Factor</b> - Kari Willis                             | <b>Restaurant365</b> - John Moody  |
| <b>Emerios Enterprise Services Inc.</b> - Jesse Crowe     | <b>SeneGence International Inc.</b> - Joni Rogers-Kante                    |
| <b>Ephesoft Inc.</b> - Ike Kavas                          | <b>Shark Wheel</b> - David M. Patrick                                      |
| <b>Ergo21</b> - Steve Gambhir                             | <b>Ship &amp; Shore Environmental Inc.</b> - Anoosheh Oskouian             |
| <b>Fairmont Private Schools</b> - David R. Jackson        | <b>SitchAi LLC</b> - Matty Squarzoni                                       |
| <b>GlobeChat</b> - Kevin Strom                            | <b>Sports 1 Marketing</b> - David Meltzer                                  |
| <b>Goettl Air Conditioning</b> - Ken Goodrich             | <b>Sports 1 Marketing</b> - Warren Moon                                    |
| <b>Gorilla Stationers LLC</b> - Rosemary Czopek           | <b>Stroma Medical Corporation</b> - Gregg Homer                            |
| <b>Greenlink Financial</b> - Brandon Avila                | <b>TAE Technology</b> - Michl Binderbauer                                  |
| <b>Greenwave Systems</b> - Martin Manniche                | <b>The Joseph Co. International Inc.</b> - Mitchell J. Joseph              |
| <b>Hyperice Inc.</b> - Jim Huether                        | <b>The Wooden Floor</b> - Dawn S. Reese                                    |
| <b>HyperX</b> - Daniel Kelley                             | <b>Titan Health &amp; Security Technologies Inc.</b> - Vic Merjanian, Esq. |
| <b>Ice Energy</b> - Mike Hopkins                          | <b>University of California, Irvine</b> - Michael Dennin                   |
| <b>iHeartDogs.com</b> - Marshall Morris                   | <b>Vincit</b> - Ville Houttu   |
| <b>InstaMed</b> - Chris Seib                              | <b>ViridiSTOR LLC</b> - Terry Mullin                                       |
| <b>Klein &amp; Wilson</b> - Mark Wilson                   | <b>WHW</b> - Janie Best  |
| <b>Kush Bottles Inc.</b> - Nicholas Kovacevich            | <b>Xitore</b> - Mike Amidi   |
| <b>Laurel At Sunset</b> - James Shun                      | <b>Yonder</b> - Sheri Geoffreys  |
| <b>loanDepot</b> - Billy Spears                           | <b>Ytel</b> - Nick Newsom  |
| <b>Love &amp; Puree</b> - Jeffrey Chon                    | <b>Zadara Storage</b> - Nelson Nahum                                       |
| <b>MeridianLink</b> - Tim Nguyen                          |  |



#### Keynote Speaker Richard Sudek, Ph.D.

Chief Innovation Officer  
& Executive Director

**UCI** Applied  
Innovation

#### Luncheon & Awards Program:

September 20, 2018 at Hotel Irvine from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. \*Tickets: \$175 / Table of Ten: \$1650

#### Reservation Information:

Visit [www.ocbj.com/bizevents](http://www.ocbj.com/bizevents) or contact Jayne Kennedy, Senior Events Manager, at [kennedy@ocbj.com](mailto:kennedy@ocbj.com) or 949.664.5065

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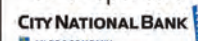
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\*Tickets are non-refundable. Ticket price includes self-parking and a six-month subscription to the Orange County Business Journal (\*\$15 allocated to the subscription). New subscribers only. Current subscribers may gift the subscription to a colleague.