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TWINCITIES CIO^{OF THE YEAR}
ORBIE[®]
AWARDS



The annual Twin Cities CIO of the Year[®] ORBIE[®] Awards program honors chief information officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Corporate, Healthcare & Nonprofit/Public Sector categories will be announced September 18 during the virtual CIO of the Year Awards.

2020 LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

CIOS ENABLE LARGEST REMOTE WORK EXPERIMENT IN HISTORY

At the beginning of 2020, no one could have imagined the enormous change we would all experience in the first year of this new decade.

By mid-March, chief information officers everywhere realized their systems and teams would be stretched beyond belief in the largest work-from-home experiment in the history of the world. Thanks to cloud-first systems, tools and services created by technology innovators we have held virtual meetings, had food and goods delivered to our doors, and remained connected to colleagues, friends and loved ones. We have adapted, survived and adjusted to our new abnormal.

CIOs are leading this overnight virtual transformation from office-based to remote work. Without their planning and implementation of the systems and services to support remote work, conducting business would be impossible under these circumstances. Thanks to Covid-19, there's greater appreciation for CIOs and the technological sophistication required to provide secure, available and scalable systems to enable digital business.

TwinCitiesCIO is an executive peer leadership network focused on helping CIOs maximize their leadership effectiveness, create value, reduce risk and share success. Convening Minneapolis/St. Paul's leading CIOs in member-led, noncommercial programs, CIOs build meaningful professional relationships with colleagues facing similar challenges, solving problems and avoiding pitfalls.

From the beginning of this crisis, TwinCitiesCIO members have participated in regular local Zoom collaborations and national Zoom calls featuring CIOs from industry, higher education, health care and technology. In any gathering of CIOs, the answer is in the room. The challenge one CIO is facing has likely been solved by another CIO. What was their experience? What did they learn? What would they do differently? How could other CIOs benefit from sharing their experiences?

Peer-based leadership groups have incredible ROI when leaders share a common problem set. The vertical/industry and size/scale may be different, but similar approaches to effective leadership and problem solving are transferable. Every leader's perspective is valu-

able and contributes to the conversation – and everyone wins when leaders engage, share ideas, experiences and best practices.

For over 20 years, Inspire-CIO has been inspiring CIO success through the annual CIO of the Year Orbie Awards – but this is just the tip of the iceberg. By joining TwinCitiesCIO, technology executives take their leadership to the next level through year-round, member-led programs and interaction. The power of CIOs working together across public and private business, government, education, health care and nonprofit organizations creates enormous value for everyone.

Together, we are transforming our organizations with technology and enriching our region and our world. On behalf of TwinCitiesCIO, congratulations to the nominees and finalists on their accomplishments and thank you to the sponsors, underwriters and staff who make the Orbie Awards possible.



MIKE LARSON | CHAIRMAN, TWINCITIESCIO | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, AGILITI

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2020 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

TOM LEIGHTON, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, AKAMAI TECHNOLOGIES

It may be hard to remember a time before the internet was a part of daily life, but even before it began to take the world by storm, Tom Leighton was already working to iron out the kinks.

Twenty-two years ago, Leighton co-founded Akamai Technologies, a content delivery network designed to help make the web work better. Today, Cambridge, Mass.-based Akamai is one of the world's largest distributed computing platforms with more than 300,000 servers in over 4,000 locations. According to Reuters, Akamai is responsible for serving 15% to 30% of all web traffic. Leighton has served as the company's CEO since 2012. Next week, he will serve as the keynote speaker during the Twin Cities CIO of the Year Orbie Awards, to be held virtually Friday, Sept. 18.

Leighton graduated from Princeton University with a degree in electrical engineering in 1978. He went on to MIT for graduate study in discrete mathematics and algorithms. After getting his doctorate, Leighton stayed at MIT, first as a postdoc and later as a professor of mathematics.

"My expertise was in developing

algorithms that solve problems more efficiently," he said, adding that math appealed to him from an early age. "There's a certainty in mathematics which is very appealing."

Computer science was a natural extension of Leighton's interest in math. And MIT was the perfect place to further his interest. "It was a fantastic environment. So many major advances at the intersection between math and computer science happened at MIT."

One of those intersections was the basis for Akamai.

"It all started in the 1990s when Tim Berners-Lee, who was down the hall from me at MIT, predicted internet congestion would be a problem, and he challenged us to solve the problem," Leighton recalled.

Leighton, who was head of MIT's theoretical computer science group at the time, was among those who accepted the challenge. Their research to efficiently distribute content on the internet would become the foundation for Akamai. Leighton said he and his partners didn't have the desire to start a company ("We preferred to publish our work and have



TOM LEIGHTON

Co-founder and CEO, Akamai Technologies

Tenure: 22 years | **Age:** 63

Education: Bachelor of Science in Engineering, electrical engineering, Princeton University, 1978; doctorate, mathematics, MIT, 1981

Board memberships: Leighton has served on numerous government, industry and academic advisory panels, including the Presidential Informational Technology Advisory Committee and chaired its subcommittee on cybersecurity. He serves on the board of trustees of the Society for Science & the Public and of the Center for Excellence in Education, and he has participated in the Distinguished Lecture Series at CEE's flagship program for high school students, the Research Science Institute.

existing companies use it.") but when internet service providers ignored their work they realized "the only way to make a difference with our technology was to start a company and do it ourselves."

Leighton, who has always loved solving challenges, started as the company's chief scientist. In 2001, U.S. News and World Report named him a Top 10 Technology Innovator. In 2017, Leighton, who holds more than 40 patents related to content delivery, internet protocols, algorithms for networks, cryptography and digital rights management, was inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame. In 2018, he won the Marconi Prize.

"I've been so fortunate to have had an interesting and rich career," he said. "First in academics ... and then to co-found a company and get it going was an incredible experience and then today in a CEO role to help the company go further and to make a real difference in the world. Especially at this time during the pandemic we are a critical, indispensable element of the internet today – helping it to be fast, reliable and secure when billions of people are relying on it for just about everything."

CIO LEADERSHIP AWARD

THOMSON REUTERS' RICK KING RECEIVES LEADERSHIP AWARD

Rick King's LinkedIn profile describes him as a "transformational leader." That's not hyperbole. Not only King, but the people King has helped place in leadership roles, have been transforming IT at key Minnesota institutions for years.

It's for his extensive impact on the industry that he has been named the 2020 Twin Cities CIO of the Year Orbie Awards Leadership Recipient.

King is managing director at Thomson Reuters, in charge of content operations, real estate and procurement. In his 20 years with the company, he's worn many hats: executive vice president, chief information officer, chief operating officer and chief technology officer. He's also shepherded many technology projects to fruition, such as the use of AI to automate routine processes.

King's fingerprints are also on technological advancements at key Minnesota institutions. For example, his many years on the Metropolitan Airports Commission have put him at ground zero of several improvements to region-



RICK KING

Managing director, Thomson Reuters

Tenure: 20 years

Age: 64

Education: Bachelor of Science, mathematics teacher education, and Master of Science, education, University of Vermont

Board memberships: Chairman, Metropolitan Airports Commission; TCF Financial Corp.; chairman, Governor's Blue Ribbon Council on IT; co-chair, MSP Regional Air Services Partnership; board of trustees, American Public Media Group

al airports and the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport. When he became MAC's chairman in 2019, he also began steering the ongoing \$1.6 billion construction project that will significantly reshape MSP.

Things have already gotten easier for travelers to use the airport. An app lets them find and reserve parking spaces. A large digital sign shows them each security checkpoint's wait time. And the Wi-Fi passengers once disliked now gets high ratings from them.

King didn't implement those upgrades, but he helped place a new CIO, Eduardo Valencia, who assembled the team that did. That strategy comes from King's days as a high school teacher and coach in Vermont: "You've got to get the right people into the right positions and then get coordinated."

A similar approach led to improvements at TCF Financial Corp., whose board King has been on since 2014. King, who chairs the board's technology committee, coordinated the recruitment of a

new CIO who proceeded to overhaul the bank's technology operations.

"They're doing some great work around digital banking, and it's great to see that transformation," King said of the financial institution.

King's influence will likely extend far into the future, not just for the companies and organizations he's part of but for the entire state.

Gov. Tim Walz's Blue Ribbon Council on Information Technology issued a report in June that made far-reaching recommendations for improving IT across Minnesota, including state IT operations and how to fund their modernization. As council chairman, King led a group of 17 people from the Legislature, private companies, nonprofit organizations and state agencies to write those recommendations.

"I'm really happy with that report," King said. "We presented the governor, the Legislature and the state CIO with some actionable things, some of which they've already put in place."

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Bob Olson

VP and CIO reinsurance, Aon

Bob Olson is vice president and chief information officer for reinsurance solutions at Aon. He is responsible for technology strategy and delivery with a focus on how to drive innovation, transformation and growth. This includes areas such as digital trading, e-commerce, sales enablement, policy administration, claims, accounting and data services. Olson also leads the global enterprise architecture practice across the CIO organization in Aon.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

On the back of having built and deployed a global reinsurance platform, GRiDS, Olson has led a broad set of innovations to move reinsurance into online trading with ABConnect Placements, enabled growth for Aon and its clients using online tools such as ReView and FAConnect, and enabled significant operational savings through automation while improving customer service for its clients by introducing a highly agile low code workflow automation tool. Olson and his team have also led some truly innovative efforts to introduce a digital auction capability and are leading the way with defining emerging blockchain standards for the reinsurance industry.



John Pelant

EVP and CTO, CWT

John Pelant is executive vice president and chief technology officer at CWT. He is at the forefront of helping to deliver the company's CWT 3.0 strategy. He has responsibility over the continued development of CWT's engineering and technology, innovation and IT infrastructure and operations. He joined CWT in 1991 and has held various leadership positions, with both global and Americas remits. He leads CWT's Responsible Business program in the Americas and is a board member of the Orphaned Starfish Foundation, a member of the Defenders Circle at Thorn, and a mentor for Genesys Works Twin Cities. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Saint John's University in Minnesota.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"I am a strong believer that teams solve problems and create solutions in a manner that individuals cannot match. As a leader, my greatest enjoyment comes from enabling a talented group of technologists to use their strengths and experience to innovate and deliver value to customers. At CWT, I have the privilege of working with a team from around the world that builds on each other's strengths and collaborates as we transform our industry. I am proud of our involvement in our community and the positive impact we have where we live and work."



Julius Chepey

CIO, APi Group Inc.

Julius Chepey is chief information officer of APi Group Inc., a parent company to 40 independently managed life safety, energy, specialty construction and infrastructure companies located in over 200 locations worldwide. He is responsible for the strategic leadership and value generation of the information technology function at APi. He earned an MBA from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. He was vice president of IT at J.D. Irving Limited in New Brunswick, Canada, and CIO and vice president of IT at M.A. Mortenson Co. in Minneapolis.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"APi Group is a market-leading provider of commercial life safety solutions and industrial specialty services. We have a motivated team of information technology professionals, working together with our key suppliers, to deliver and sustain results. My greatest success is supporting the development of our next generation of IT leaders. We have an active and strong IT leadership community, developing people individually and performing as one IT team. I am confident they will continue our IT journey and will innovate to meet our ever-changing business needs."



Tammylynne Jonas

Global CIO, Self Esteem Brands

Tammylynne Jonas is the global chief information officer for Self Esteem Brands, parent company for Anytime Fitness. She has responsibility for multiple franchise brands, with almost 5,000 locations across 40 countries. She owns development, infrastructure, security, field support/installation and data/analytics. Prior to Self Esteem Brands, she was CIO for Holiday Cos., a \$4 billion convenience store chain, with over 520 locations domestically. Jonas holds an executive MBA in international business from Marquette University, and has undergraduate degrees in math, English and Spanish. She founded MN-FIT: an organization committed to elevating and connecting female technologists.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"Anytime Fitness has always been about convenience. Members access our facilities 365/24/7. When clubs closed due to Covid-19, we wanted to do more than just offer workouts online. We wanted to get members back into our clubs ASAP! We launched an online reservation system, integrated with our door access, that members could use to schedule club visits. We are protecting our members and ensuring compliance with local legislation, worldwide. AF is making healthy happen: We meet our members where they are! I'm proud to be part of a team that can deliver innovative work at the peak of a pandemic!"



Kurt Svendsen

VP IS, The Toro Co.

Kurt Svendsen was appointed vice president, information services at The Toro Co. in May 2013. He is responsible for all aspects of the company's strategy and delivery of global information technology, from applications to infrastructure to business intelligence to security, including Toro's strategy for smart connected products. He also started and leads its Technology Acceleration Center in India, providing business and technology services to the enterprise. He holds a Bachelor of Science in electrical and computer engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as an MBA from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"The Toro Co. has been successful over the past 100 years, and we expect product and information technology to be more important in the future. We expect to be the leader in key areas of alternative energy, autonomous and smart connected products in our core markets, and are excited about helping our customers with their key priorities of labor, the environment and optimizing resources like water. As we adopt new approaches and business models, the IT organization continues to support our business as it has in the past, and is proud to play a new role in the future."

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Congratulations!

From one IT leader to another.

Concord is a proud sponsor and underwriter of the Twin Cities CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards and would like to extend our congratulations to all the nominees.



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ANNUAL REVENUE



Randy Kupper

CIO, Ameriprise Financial Inc.

Randy Kupper is executive vice president and chief information officer of Ameriprise Financial Inc. He is committed to ensuring technology supports growth in all lines of business and is a strategic advantage for attracting clients, advisers, investors and employees to the firm. Having joined the company as senior vice president of applications and engagement in fall 2008, Kupper was responsible for applications development and executive partner engagement to support the business agenda until his promotion to CIO in 2012. He has an MBA from Fairleigh Dickinson University and a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin–Stout.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"I am exceptionally proud of everything my team and I have accomplished during my tenure as CIO. We've helped Ameriprise excel as a leading wealth manager at a time when technology has shaped consumer expectations like never before. Our integrated suite of tools enables our 10,000 financial advisers and thousands more staff members to securely deliver personalized financial advice to clients from any device, anytime. Amid today's uncertainty, knowing that we help our clients make smart decisions and feel more confident about the future gives me a great sense of pride and gratitude for the talented people on my team."



Mike McGuire

*EVP, Chief Operations & Technology
Officer & President Abova Technologies*

Mike McGuire is executive vice president, chief operations and technology officer of Stratacor Inc., a \$1.4 billion holding company comprised of several for-profit and not-for-profit companies, of which Delta Dental of Minnesota is the largest in revenue and most recognizable brand. McGuire designs, coordinates and oversees all operational, clinical, technology and data aspects of the portfolio of companies. He also serves as president of Aböva Technologies, a digital interactive and software development entity along with an artificial intelligence research and development lab within the Stratacor enterprise. He has a Bachelor of Arts from Minnesota State University.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"Our Delta Dental and Aböva Technologies team members, could not be more excited about what we have accomplished. Our company has transformed our technology and digital platforms, data management and service delivery to our partners and customers. This leads me to my greatest accomplishment, which is being a leader in an organization that believes in order to transform your entire business it is more than deploying innovative and disruptive technology. The value of what we have created and accomplished is rooted in our team members, our company mission, our core values and our culture which we have created and embraced."



Hunter Saklad

SVP and CIO, Sleep Number Corp.

Hunter Saklad, Sleep Number setting 50, is senior vice president, chief information officer at Sleep Number Corp. From June 2011 to December 2012, he served as vice president, consumer insight and strategy at Sleep Number. From March 2006 to June 2011 he was vice president of finance and held a variety of positions across finance, serving business partners in marketing, sales, supply chain, FP&A, investor relations and treasury. He joined Sleep Number in October 2004 as senior director of finance. Prior to joining Sleep Number, Saklad held finance leadership roles at Ford Motor Co. and Visteon.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"My greatest success in my current role has been transforming the role of IT within Sleep Number from mere service provider to thought leader for business solutions that provide superior customer experience. That has led to a natural expansion to leading our supply chain team as well through the pandemic. We have developed our talent and visibly advanced the role of technology in unifying and improving the customer experience. The most rewarding part of my role now is the opportunity to see efforts that we began years ago burst into full flower, providing customer, employee and shareholder benefit simultaneously. Onward!"



Troy Cardinal

CIO, RSM US

Troy Cardinal joined RSM US as chief information officer in August 2014. He oversees the firm's technology strategy, solutions and operations for North America and works to align its information technology programs and projects with the firm's strategic objectives and enterprise initiatives. He serves on the firm's IT steering committee, the security advisory council and the innovation leadership council. He was named the managing partner of the Minneapolis firmwide office in 2015 and also serves on the executive council for the firm's culture, diversity and inclusion initiative. He has a Bachelor of Science, finance, from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"Over the past six years, we have embodied the essence of digital transformation at RSM by increasing our IT investment by 90% and increasing our capacity to serve the firm by over 200% as we continue to serve the digital needs of our firm.

During this exponential growth, we have achieved what I consider to be our greatest accomplishment: We have been awarded the 'Computerworld Top 100 Places to Work in IT' for each of these six years. It is so rewarding to experience this growth while our people continue to feel enthusiastic about being on our team at RSM."



Sid Gandhi

*SVP, chief strategy and enterprise technology
officer, Securian Financial Group Inc.*

Sid Gandhi is senior vice president, chief strategy and enterprise technology officer at Securian Financial Group Inc. He leads all areas of technology, including infrastructure, application development, digital and business technology. He also oversees the company's strategic planning efforts. He joined Securian in 2010 and has advanced its portfolio optimization, investments in new capabilities (digital, brand and innovation), and growth opportunities in new markets. He leads a technology transformation initiative focused on maturing cybersecurity and technology risk management capabilities, improving productivity, and enhancing the customer and channel partner experience.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"Customer expectations are rapidly changing due to technology, and only businesses that embrace the innovation needed to meet these expectations will succeed. In 2018, Securian Financial launched a technology transformation to move to the cloud, strengthen cybersecurity, modernize our platforms, and embrace new ways of working to enable business growth, enhance customer experience and increase productivity. While I provided vision, strategy and leadership, my talented team envisioned the possibilities and got to work. They transformed themselves to embrace change, champion the customer and learn new ways of working. I am humbled by their efforts and extremely proud of our accomplishments."

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Dennis Keane

VP and CIO, Red Wing Shoe Co.

Dennis Keane serves as chief information officer at Red Wing Shoe Co. In that role, he is accountable for the planning, development and operation of IT systems, business applications, and services supporting the global business. The IT team encompasses the office of the PMO, enterprise data, application development, enterprise architecture, infrastructure, support, cybersecurity and business partners. Prior to joining Red Wing Shoes in 2015, he worked for Bosch as global head of engineering, responsible for worldwide diagnostic software. He holds a computer engineering degree from University of Central Florida and a Mini MBA from University of St Thomas.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“A core element of our success at Red Wing Shoe Co. is based on developing strong partnerships. My core values are trust, respect and teamwork, and in the fast-moving technology world today, that team extends to selecting the right technology partners. I have made a concerted effort to build relationships based on trust, results and mutual benefit. I have found our local technology community to be something extraordinary, with a culture of collaborative exchanges and a willingness to learn and share. I am truly fortunate to be part of such a great community.”



Rachel Lockett

CIO, Pohlad Cos.

Rachel Lockett is chief information officer at Pohlad Cos. Starting her career as a programmer, she has over 20 years of experience in IT management. She is known for driving innovative solutions — from major software implementations to custom application development to infrastructure overhauls and cloud migrations — that drive results for the companies she serves. She achieves aggressive goals by building high-performing teams and a collaborative culture. She is a certified information systems security professional, as well as a certified ITIL practitioner. She holds a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from Illinois State University.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“My greatest achievement as the CIO of the Pohlad Cos. has been developing a collaborative community of IT professionals across our diverse group of businesses, and helping each of them to fundamentally transform the role of information technology into being a trusted business partner and strategic function for the organization with a seat at the executive table and a role in achieving the business objectives.”



Shawn Quant

Managing director, CIO and COO, Piper Sandler Cos.

Shawn Quant is chief information and operations officer for Piper Sandler Cos., and president for Piper Jaffray Investment Management. He is responsible for the strategic direction and management of the firm’s business information systems, trading and technology infrastructure, global securities clearing and operations, and global middle office. In his role as the president for Piper Jaffray Investment Management, he is responsible for day-to-day operations of the investment manager including finance, investor relations/marketing and operations. Quant earned a bachelor’s degree from St. Olaf College in Northfield.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“When I think about everything this team has accomplished over the past 12-plus years, nothing makes me prouder than the work they have done over the past 12 months. As a firm, we see our ability to execute against large, transformative projects as a competitive advantage, and this team once again demonstrated this to be the case. Over 12 months, from March to March, they successfully completed three mergers/acquisitions that significantly expanded the size and scale of the organization, and rolled straight into a pandemic where they migrated the majority of the company to working from home within weeks.”



Ben Davis

EVP & CDO, Cambria

Ben Davis joined Cambria as its executive vice president and chief digital officer in June 2015. Since then he has transformed Cambria’s digital capabilities into a customer-centric and scalable operation that uses automation and data to serve the company’s growth. His career includes service as an operations executive for multiple startups. He’s owned many facets of technology delivery to customers as part of his operations experiences. He began his career working for the Department of Veterans Affairs. He holds a Bachelor of Science, business computer information systems from St. Cloud State University.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“The transformational trajectory that I defined upon joining Cambria in 2015 was to pivot from a ‘keep the lights on’ IT department to a trusted technology and business adviser. I used my experience in the technology software and services space to pivot the IT department to embrace agile, automation and QA testing through DevOps, and scalability through cloud computing. The goal of building a business-minded team closest to where Cambria makes or saves money fueled our migration of commodity technologies to the cloud. These successes allowed my team to earn trust and deliver at a faster pace and lower cost.”



David Hirschorn

CIO, Eide Bailly

As chief information officer at Eide Bailly, David Hirschorn is responsible for IT operations at the firm. With more than 32 years of IT experience, his leadership has focused on supporting, developing and delivering technology-driven solutions and services, while providing outstanding client service and driving profitable revenue and growth. Hirschorn joined Eide Bailly in 1999 as director of information technology, was promoted to CIO in 2004 and promoted to principal in 2007. He has a Bachelor of Science in computer information systems from the University of Mary and an associate’s of applied science degree in electronic technology from Bismarck State College.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“My greatest accomplishment is being part of a tremendous firm with over 100 years of excellent client service and unmatched culture. For the past 20 years, I have been fortunate to lead our internal IT team through years of continued growth, numerous changes in technology, and new risks and security challenges. I am proud to be a principal with Eide Bailly and part of an excellent IT team.”

CORPORATE FINALISTS

UP TO \$450 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



Gary Inman

EVP, IT, Bell Bank

Gary Inman is executive vice president of information technology for Bell Bank. He served for eight years as president of TechND, an organization dedicated to advancing the development, use and advancement of IT throughout North Dakota. Originally from Worthington, Inman holds a computer information systems degree from Moorhead State University and a Masters of Management with an IT emphasis from University of Mary. Inman has held positions as director of services for Echelon Corp. and in various positions over 18 years with Microsoft and Great Plains Software, including as the director of information technology.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

Like many leaders and companies, Inman and Bell Bank found themselves tested in 2020 when Inman's team was tasked with getting the vast majority of the bank's 1,500-member workforce working remotely with the pandemic shutdown in mid-March. Based in Fargo and Minneapolis, Inman's team members had 1,200-plus people in nine states working remotely and securely, and connecting with each other and Bell Bank's customers – within a week! This amazing feat has been followed up by continued improvements in security, efficiency and connectivity as Bell Bank becomes a much more flexible, digitized and mobile company than it was prior to the pandemic.



Wade Anderson

CIO, Bay and Bay Transportation

Wade Anderson is chief information officer of Bay and Bay Transportation, a trucking and logistics company based in Eagan. He has over 25 years of experience building and optimizing teams, primarily in software development and IT operations. He has experience in every technology function, with emphasis on systems architecture, infrastructure and operations, software development, and project delivery. He has worked in many industries including manufacturing, retail, high tech, insurance, transportation and government. He has an MBA with an applied technology concentration from Bethel University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Northwestern in St. Paul.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"In 2019, Bay & Bay moved from a hosted data center solution to a fully cloud-based operation. This not only reduced costs and streamlined vendor management, but it also provided far more stable and higher performing infrastructure. By leveraging Microsoft Azure and Office 365, Bay & Bay was able to lower costs, increase speed to market, and improve overall systems reliability.

The project was an absolute success, far exceeding expectations of all stakeholders. Having a near zero-footprint environment also allowed for a faster move to a distributed work environment, which eased the transition into stay-at-home mandates."



Carey Smith

VP & CTO, Constellation Mutual

Carey Smith is a technology executive with a history of driving technology innovation. As chief technology officer at Constellation Mutual, Smith is delivering disruptive and transformative technology products while being accountable for all aspects of IT, including product delivery, data platforms, information security and strategic technology transformation. Prior to Constellation, Smith was a senior IT leader responsible for core IT, strategic technology innovation and transformation at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. Holding Bachelor of Science degrees in IT and psychology from Montana State University, he serves on local and national advisory boards.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

Constellation IT is pivotal in the execution of the enterprise transformation strategy delivering innovative digital products and corporate venture startups. IT has achieved a 24X efficiency increase in the delivery of new technology solutions allowing more digital products to be delivered with fewer resources, an 18X increase in velocity of delivering digital products now being in days versus months or years, and a 21X faster resolution of business impacting issues. Most importantly, these significant improvements were achieved without increasing the operating budget. Constellation IT has achieved the seemingly impossible – delivering significantly more products, quicker to market, with higher quality while reducing expenses.



Mark Bradley

CIO and CTO, Robins Kaplan

Mark Bradley, Robins Kaplan's chief innovation and technology officer, oversees the business innovation and technology services group supporting technology needs across the firm's eight national offices. The BITS team focuses on firmwide operations, cybersecurity, infrastructure maintenance and improvement, efficiency, and effective IT and communications services. With over 25 years of experience in IT, Bradley has concentrated his efforts over the past 15 years working in law firms. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He also is ITIL certified and a member of the International Legal Technology Association.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"No one had 'pandemic induced work from home' in their disaster recovery guidebooks before. Our team faced these challenges head on with great planning, calm decision making, clear communications, coordination and execution. A true team of 33 talented IT professionals worked with the firm's leadership and directives to come together and transition a firm to remote work in a matter of days. Technology was critical and the pandemic was a unique opportunity to build adoption across a firm willing to buy in to the tools and maximize the collaborative applications we support."



Steve Swenson

VP, product platforms and development, Wolters Kluwer

Steve Swenson is vice president, product platforms and development for compliance solutions in the governance, risk and compliance division at Wolters Kluwer. He has more than 25 years of technology experience and is responsible for leading technology teams and delivering solutions that help financial institutions manage their regulatory compliance needs. Prior to joining the governance, risk and compliance division, he was vice president of technology for the clinical drug information group in the company's health division. He has a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Minnesota.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"Our IT group has generated new revenue streams by creating scalable software and corresponding infrastructure that facilitates relatively easy adjustments to meet sudden demand surge or changing market requirements. This scalability enabled us to quickly add critical functionality to an existing solution, TSoftPlus, to support lenders' efforts in helping small businesses get crucial stimulus funding through the CARES Act. Without that foresight, we couldn't have expedited PPP loans that singlehandedly helped small businesses retain more than one million U.S. workers' jobs.

Close collaboration with customers has also led to remarkable product co-creations, providing market-tested solutions that address real customer challenges."

HEALTH CARE FINALISTS

HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE-RELATED COMPANIES



Francois Charette

CIO OptumRx, Optum

François Charette has more than 20 years of experience in technology. He has helped organizations deliver on their product strategy by focusing on customer needs, technology innovation and driving team transformation. He now serves as chief information officer of OptumRx where he works in close alignment with Optum Technology and OptumRx, providing an integrated value proposition across product lines to transform thousands of connections each day into synchronized, personalized pharmacy and medical benefits care. Prior to this role, he served as senior vice president of product engineering at Optum. He has been with UnitedHealth Group Inc. for over 15 years.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“As CIO of OptumRx, a national pharmacy care services company serving 60 million Americans, I lead technology transformation to enable an adaptable business focused on achieving better health outcomes for patients, lowering costs for the health care system, and improving the health care experience for consumers. During this critical time in health care, my team produces technologies that every day improve the health of our members and help the health system function at rapid speed. Most recently, we used artificial intelligence to evolve our operations and services, leading to increased consumer and client engagement and satisfaction.”



Alan Abramson

SVP & CIO, HealthPartners Inc.

Alan Abramson is senior vice president of information services and technology and chief information officer for HealthPartners Inc., a consumer-governed nonprofit health care organization. He is an active adviser or board member at numerous regional and national organizations, including Normandale Community College, The Health Care Executive Group, University of St. Thomas Graduate Programs in Software and BethelBiz mentorship program. He also co-chairs the Minnesota eHealth Advisory Committee, which advises the Commissioner of Health and the Legislature on electronic health policy.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

“In 100 days of Covid-19, HealthPartners IT teams mobilized to provide quick and easy solutions for our patients, members and colleagues. We introduced video visits for patients to see doctors using smartphone apps, growing to over 70% of appointments. We supported work-from-home employees with 1,200-plus web video meetings per day. Over 1,500 changes were made to our electronic health care system to help diagnose and treat Covid-19 patients. An iPad-on-wheels, designed by our IT and hospital staff, was constructed over a weekend for providers and patients to communicate in infection-prevention units, reducing the number of times providers changed PPE coverings.”



Mark Gingrich

CIO, Surescripts

As chief information officer at Surescripts, Mark Gingrich loves being in the middle of health care, where he can positively impact virtually every step of the patient journey. After earning his master’s degree in artificial intelligence from the University of Pennsylvania, he brought his expertise and knowledge to the health care industry. In 2001, he started RxHub, leading its IT build-out until 2008, when RxHub and Surescripts consolidated operations. Before that, he was a founding member of Abaton.com, which was acquired by McKesson, and introduced new technologies at UnitedHealth Group Inc., where he holds a patent and numerous awards for expert systems.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

As one of Surescripts’ first employees nearly 20 years ago, Gingrich has helped lead the organization through a number of significant growth opportunities, industry challenges and personal triumphs. In 2019, under Gingrich’s leadership of the network technology and operations function, Surescripts helped 1.78 million health care professionals and organizations access information for 314 million patients. Additionally, Surescripts processed nearly 20 billion secure data transactions. Gingrich is personally involved in industry efforts to drive greater information sharing across health care, including work with HL7, the DaVinci Project, Argonaut Project, and as a board member of the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs.



Shahid Alam

SVP, chief analytics and CIO, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

As chief analytics and information officer for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Shahid Alam is responsible for leading the transformation of analytics and technology initiatives across the company to ensure successful delivery of health care analytics, informatics support and analysis. Under his direction, the depth and breadth of organizational data will be optimized to give employer customers of Blue Cross insights into the health needs of their employees while empowering members to make informed decisions about reaching health goals. He received a bachelor’s degree in computer information science with distinction and honors from St. Cloud State University.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

Under the leadership of Alam, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is building one of the leading technology, data and analytics teams in the state. The company is leveraging new talent and capabilities to accelerate the organization’s mission-focused work of making Minnesota’s health care ecosystem more sustainable and personalized. By delivering predictive health models for better population health management, BCBS is not only re-imagining the health care experience, but also reinventing the industry as one that is dedicated to keeping people healthy instead of only treating them when they’re sick.



Cris Ross

CIO, Mayo Clinic

Cris Ross has 30 years experience in health care, technology and government. At Mayo Clinic, he is responsible for all information technology as its chief information officer. Since joining Mayo in 2012, he has revamped IT strategy, helped lead an enterprisewide electronic health record convergence program, developed partnerships, and initiated major innovation programs in data, analytics and machine learning. He is chairman of the board of the eHealth Initiative, and serves on the boards for Health Information Management Systems Society and Zipnosis. He has a Bachelor of Science in economics from the University of Minnesota and an MBA from Yale School of Management.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

Mayo Clinic’s CIO was honored as a finalist for CIO of the Year by TwinCitiesCIO and InspireCIO. The judges noted Mayo’s success in a major conversion of its electronic record system, innovative and advanced use of data, a partnership with Google in machine learning and artificial intelligence, and the effective transformation of the IT organization by IT department leadership.

NONPROFIT/ PUBLIC SECTOR FINALISTS

GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION AND OTHER
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



Idrissa Davis

*Executive director of technology services,
St. Paul Public Schools*

Idrissa Davis is executive director of technology services for St. Paul Public Schools and brings progressive experience as a business-outcome focused information technology executive. His passion for delivering performance excellence inspires him to continually evaluate operational effectiveness and deliver practical, and often breakthrough solutions. He engages with the C-suite and all key operational functions to achieve sustainable results. His strength in speeding up the overall pace at which IT understands, responds and supports business needs has enabled him to deliver capabilities that allow companies to become more agile, scalable and competitive.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, technology services in partnership with family engagement set up a family support line and curbside support for families that had issues with iPads or Wi-Fi hotspots. Families are able to call a local number and reach a staff member that can assist them over the phone. We also have translation services available if families need language support. If the issue can't be resolved over the phone we have curbside support at our District Service Facility and families can drive up and get service on the spot. These services have helped our families tremendously during trying times."



Rahoul Ghose

CIO, ECMC Group

Rahoul Ghose is chief information officer for ECMC Group, an education and student financial services company based in Minneapolis. Previously, he held many IT leadership roles, including CIO for Lifetouch, vice president of business integration at Best Buy Co. Inc., vice president corporate IT services at Cargill Inc., and CIO for Cargill's Animal Protein business. His earlier career was within IT at Ecolab Inc., and with Honeywell in IT as well as in manufacturing, audit and marketing. He is on the business analytics advisory board at Hamline University. He has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology and an MBA from the University of Minnesota.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"ECMC Group's technology success story is the migration of our entire IT systems portfolio to the Amazon AWS Cloud platform. This was significant for many reasons. It involved moving several hundred systems within a record nine-month period with zero business disruption. It delivered double-digit reductions in technology operating costs and similar improvements in cycle times for integrating new businesses. It resulted in up-skilling the IT team in contemporary technologies. We now have an AWS tech-savvy team that can add greater value to the company and can also grow their careers within the wider industry."



Dr. Casey Gordon

*CIO, College of Saint Benedict/
Saint John's University*

Dr. Casey Gordon is chief information officer at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University. She has embraced the opportunity to create and lead a vision for information technology in partnership with stakeholders across the institutions. She is a dedicated professional, highly experienced in building relationships and in leading department operations, digital transformation initiatives, and technology support. She has a PhD in educational leadership and higher education from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, a Master of Education from the University of Minnesota Duluth, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Minnesota Morris.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"Over the past several years, our IT department has blossomed into a partner to our organizations and a leader among other institutions. Previously, IT was viewed very traditionally, as something that kept the internet and services running reliably. By throwing open the doors to new collaborations and new ways of thinking about the role of IT, I enabled my staff to partner across the institutions to develop innovative solutions. We began new technology projects like creating an instructional technology department with innovation spaces for faculty and students. We have re-imagined our department as a true business partner to the organizations."

NONPROFIT/ PUBLIC SECTOR FINALISTS

GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION AND OTHER
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



Jim Jones

VP and CIO, Great River Energy

Jim Jones joined Great River Energy in 2003 and oversees the information technology division with primary responsibility to provide services and technology for corporate business operations, utility operations, wholesale supply and delivery functions, and support functions for member distribution cooperatives. He has a leadership role in grid modernization to increase interoperability and optimization of electric services. He is the executive leader of the enterprisewide security program which ensures the security of Great River's physical assets, cyberassets, information and personnel. He is a graduate of Hamline University and the University of St. Thomas.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"During my tenure, I have focused on people, culture and continuous improvement. These key ingredients have created a great place to work where everyone strives to deliver on our organization's mission and vision. People build the culture, and culture is everything. Our people and teams, grounded in shared values, interact in a collaborative and empowered culture to execute our long-term strategies and achieve our shorter-term business objectives. We help each other grow our individual skills for even greater future contributions. Our people and teams succeed by helping each other be successful, all in service to our member-owners."



Mike Thyken

CTO, CaringBridge

Mike Thyken is chief technology officer at CaringBridge, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring no one goes through a health journey alone. He has more than 35 years of information systems and technology experience. Prior to CaringBridge, he was chief information officer at SunOpta Inc., a global organic food company, and at Select Comfort Corp. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of St. Thomas and an MBA from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. He is a board member of Braun Intertec, an engineering firm, and Summit Brewing Co. He also chairs the board for STARBASE MN, a STEM-oriented educational nonprofit.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"CaringBridge is becoming the 'hub of help and healing' and has recently released a completely new planner capability to support caregivers as they coordinate care and support for friends and family on health journeys. Caregiving is a stressful and demanding role and is often layered on top of a person's day job. However, there are many people who are willing to help, but it is difficult and time consuming to arrange and coordinate support. The planner tool is intended to make it easy to request assistance and coordinate with those in the community who are willing and able to help."



Tarek Tomes

CIO, State of Minnesota

Tarek Tomes serves as the commissioner of Minnesota IT Services and the state of Minnesota's chief information officer, leading state efforts to provide the best possible IT solutions and customer service to the people of Minnesota and its business partners. He brings over 25 years of experience in managing technology innovation across diverse industries. Throughout his career, he has facilitated data-driven decision making, implemented many critical enterprise projects, and improved workforce diversity and inclusion. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and attended Graduate School for Business Management at Boston University.

What is your greatest success in your current role?

"When Minnesotans needed support most, our partnership to support unemployment insurance with the Department of Employment and Economic Development allowed us to meet increased demand during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are using our drive for collaboration to elevate Minnesota's Digital Estate — the 2,800-plus applications that capture transactions and fuel service delivery to support Minnesota's government services. The collective data and information from these applications connects people to jobs, health care, Minnesota's great outdoors, environmental data, educational resources, and more. Keeping people at the center of the services we support will propel innovative uses of technology that improve outcomes."

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