REDWOOD MEDIA'S TOP 100 MAGAZINE

THE TOP 100 INNOVATORS and Entrepreneurs

FEATURING:

JAMES STRADER

CEO, BioSecure 360

Owner/Advisor, Avrio

THE TOP 100 MAGAZINE

Produced By:
Redwood Media LLC

Editor-in-Chief:
Heather Andrews

Contributors:
Laura Caseley

Graphic Design:
Soha Farrokhi

The Top 100 Innovators & Entrepreneurs
Copyright 2022
All Rights Reserved

www.TheTop100Magazine.com

Redwood Media Group
990 Westbury Road
Westbury, N.Y. 11590

This magazine is the intellectual property of Redwood Media LLC and its content is protected by federal and state copyright infringement laws. No part of this publication may be copied, reissued, republished, or represented by any person or entity without the express written permission of Redwood Media LLC. Violations will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The individuals represented in this magazine shall also be covered by the same federal and state copyright infringement laws and their editorial content and images shall not be reproduced or published without their express written consent.

The staff of *The Top 100 Magazine* would like to express their gratitude for having the privilege of working with some of the brightest, most accomplished, and esteemed thought leaders in the world.

Through the combined efforts of our account directors, writers, production staff, and artists, as well as the cooperation of everyone who is featured in this extraordinary edition, I believe we are presenting one of our most impressive publications to date.

I know that our readers will be equally enthused by these stories and appreciate the tremendous fortitude, dedication, and perseverance of these individuals, along with the many sacrifices they have made in the pursuit of their dreams.

It is my sincere wish that each and every one of these amazing professionals continue to experience success and my pleasure to present *The Top 100 Innovators & Entrepreneurs Magazine.*

Joseph Nunziato
CEO, Redwood Media

All of the information, images, logos, and individuals contained in this magazine are subject to copyright laws and intellectual property guidelines. No part of this magazine may be copied, published, or reproduced for any reason, without the express permission of the publisher. The editorial content of this magazine is not an endorsement for any particular service.

THE TOP 100 INNOVATORS and Entrepreneurs

WHO'S INSIDE

A-D: Abbott, Rick-89, Addie, Chad-113, Ansusinha, Michael-119, Arbabha, Sara-65, Assefa, Nahom-69, Baird, John-93, Barkwill, Sarah-62, Bednarski, Julie-71, Belzberg, Lee-84, Bill, Glenn-8, Block, Dr. Lanise-97, Boyle, Mike-107, Bozkurt, Seyhan-78, Broccoli, Megan-67, Brooks, Michael C.-102, Burt, John-50, Cazes, GB-94, Chyu, Dr. Ming-Chien-38, Coleman, Andra-101, Craig, David-117, Curry, Michael-105, De Angel, Edwin-107, DiMuria, Michelle-98, Dooley, Tyler-73, Downing, Dirk-115, Draper, Pamela Tate-54, Dudhat, Ashok-121

E-I: Ernest, Dr. Byron-34, Esposito, Brian J.-63, Evans, Sarah-114, Farjadrad, Ramin-119, Fayed, Wassim-26, Fertakos, Darrell-103, Fielding, Landon-77, Friesen, Teresa-108, Ghavamian, Mahsa-66, Gibson, Susan P.-92, Gilliam, Eric-36, Glaze, Emmanuel-40, Goodliffe, Craig-4, Gorovitz, Cory-99, Gross, Todd-81, Guadarrama, Victor-116, Hadlock, Jake-82, Hill, Crystal-87, Hopkins, Lauren-30, Hopson, Sonya-96, Ingram, Megan-112

J-L: Jedlowski, Joseph-56, Johnson, Kendall-79, Justic, Todd-100, Kalina, Deep-58, Keith, Graeme-12, Khawaja, Jereis-116, Kline, Allison-44, Knorring, John-109, Koeppel, Kevin-20, Lacy, Colin-74, Levis, Maria-104, Linn, Alexander-60, Lissack, Ryan-80, Luce, Cris-114

M-R: Machles, Cindy-85, Madden, Tim-16, Madsen, Arlyn (Reese)-118, Marsden, Meghan-18, Mathai-Davis, Stephen-118, Matta, MaryBeth-122, Mavrou, Tom-75, McAuley, Timothy R.-28, McCarthy, Debbie-70, McElwain, Dean-108, McGhee, Kirt-86, Meyer Bentley, Carly-14, Moazzamuddin, Azeem-110, Moll, Sandy-90, Myers, Ryan-88, Ochoa, Gus-42, Pastores, Anna Victoria Ting-72, Power, Michelle-22, Prasad, Arun-112, Ratner, Ed-121, Ritteman, Ashley-18

S-Z: Sakaria, Aaron-117, San Antonio, Brandon-120, Sandhu, Harparam-106, Santoso, Dr. Stephanie-74, Sapirstein, James-68, Sare, Hadarou-115, Scott, Shannon-24, Settles, Scott-48, Stewart, Gregory-110, Strader, James-10, Tanner, Cory-32, Tedford, Cody-83, Ten Eyck, Stacie-122, Tewarie, Bharat-120, Trapasso, Jody-76, Twitty, Cort-46, Villegas, Zayman-111, Walker, Kimberly-111, Wang, Jerry-91, Weekley, Jeremiah-52, Weisman, Jennifer Berk-95, Zenian, Arthur-64, Zurkov, Svetlozar-109, Zuteja, Valdet-113

Chief Executive Officer

CRAIG Goodliffe

ABOUT

In 2018, when Craig Goodliffe launched Cyberbacker, he had one goal: to build an innovative company through which both their clients *and* cyberbackers could thrive. And he's delivered. The firm quickly became a leading provider of first-class administrative support services "*from* anyone in the world *to* anywhere in the world." Headquartered in Utah, and with two legal entities in the Philippines, Cyberbacker saw their team of experts grow in just the first two years from 120 to over 900, providing behind-the-scenes support with setting appointments, social media, researching, sales and marketing, administrative and other services to more than 1,000 clients across the globe. By the close of 2021, this passionate group of "cyberbackers" had exploded to an astounding 2,200 and the firm had added 23 franchises, all dedicated to helping their clients lessen their workloads to achieve optimal success.

As a real estate veteran of more than two decades who's clocked more than 10,000 hours in coaching and training business owners, Craig understands their immense responsibilities and their challenges, and designed Cyberbacker's unique model with these in mind. And while his growing team of cyberbackers work hard to help their clients flourish, Craig helps them the same. In 2021, Craig launched Cyber Capital, a lending company, which, like Cyberbacker, was an immediate success. He saw the accomplishment not as a feather in his own cap, but as a win for the entire cyberbacker team and profit-shared more than $647,000.

We sat down with Craig to hear about Cyber Capital, his franchise expansion, and one surprising new venture.

Q & A

Q: Tell us about your latest venture, Cyber Capital.

A: It actually arose from our cyberbackers, in a way. Last year, companies everywhere were struggling with staff retention, and we wanted to make sure we kept our great people, so we asked them what they needed to achieve their own goals. The answer was buying a house or a car. We started Cyber Capital to provide loans to our associates for those purchases, and now it's become our lending company, with $261,501 lent last year. We're able to give loans to great and deserving people at a more affordable rate than most banks, and because our people become stakeholders, when we profit, they profit, and we all celebrate the wins. We were also able to provide calamity loans to people in the Philippines after Hurricane Bernadette, but more importantly, many of our cyberbackers helped other cyberbackers.

Q: Your franchising model has seen incredible expansion. Where did this idea come from?

A: We launched our franchises in May 2021, and ended the year with 23. Today, we have 36 and 19 in negotiation. It all started when Rich Rector, an independent contractor, said he had an idea. I had felt guilty because if something happened to Rich, I would end up getting a raise. It wasn't fair. So I looked at what Gary Keller, the founder of Keller Williams and great mentor of mine, did with franchising and used that as a guide. In the next six years, we hope to have 364 franchises, geographic- and demographic-based.

> We're able to give loans to great and deserving people at a more affordable rate than most banks, and because our people become stakeholders, when we profit, they profit, and we all celebrate the wins.

Q: You're also expanding your reach further with sub-franchises. Tell us about this.

A: Our sub-franchising model allows cyberbackers to be paired with industries they know to get businesses the best help, and it allows small business owners to get top talent at affordable rates. For businesses, one of the biggest challenges is finding qualified talent. That's hard enough, but it's also prohibitively expensive to acquire those people in today's market, so that's where we come in. We average 20,000 applications per week for the positions we offer and conduct an average of 5,000 interviews per week. This year, we're really looking to expand in this area. We're hoping to hire 15,000 cyberbackers by 2025, which will allow us to profit-share $5 million. This means that each cyberbacker would average $333 per month, which, in the Philippines, will allow them to be self-sufficient. This year, we've also started renting physical spaces in the Philippines, along with computers, so those who don't have a lot of access to tech can use the space to work. Eventually, they can save up and buy their own computers and work from home as cyberbackers. Computers are a great way to create new jobs and enable businesses to scale and hire overseas.

> In the next six years, we hope to have 364 franchises, geographic- and demographic-based.

Q: Speaking of niche industries, tell us about your two new wedding and event venues.

A: We very excited about this! During COVID, many venues struggled to function. We bought a wedding venue that was doing fairly well, despite the pandemic, and powered it with cyberbackers who knew the wedding industry to do marketing, booking, and the behind-the-scenes work. They were able to profit remotely from it and we've doubled the venue's profitability. I attribute that success to the talented individuals working with it through Cyberbacker.

In the past two years, we bought two buildings that were owned by John Browning, who invented the 50-caliber machine guns used in WWII. One is now an office building, but there are places where you can still see the shell casings from their test firings. They have Browning firearms on display, which definitely adds an edge for people looking to throw events. That's why we bought it: to see how far we could push the envelope both with a unique venue and having people work completely off site. Like the wedding venue, all the booking and everything else is handled by a cyberbacker. It's been a big hit; we recently hosted the Cowboy Hall of Fame there.

Q: To what do you attribute the remarkable growth of Cyberbacker?

A: Our ability to hire great, talented, and hardworking people, plus our wonderful clients who provided feedback and helped us grow. These people sacrifice and work long hours with us. They've all shaped the company, along with the franchise owners, who have provided great feedback, and stepped up to become great leaders. It's been a collective team effort all around. There's a misconception that where someone is born influence their intelligence or capability. But every day, we see that there are good, hardworking, smart people born everywhere. What sets us apart is being able to identify and work with them.

I've also been blessed to be surrounded by extremely gifted minds who have shaped our growth: Our VP of franchise, Jason Stowe, has worked with some incredibly successful franchises, and his leadership has been life changing

for the company. He's a great mentor and a great friend. Our COO, Jennifer Capero, is in the trenches with me, making sure everything gets done at the highest possible level, and she my biggest support in the company. Our president, Sheila Mie, who was my first hire, presented on stage multiple times on behalf of Cyberbacker. I couldn't be prouder of her as a leader and a person. And our VP of social media, Joarra Solis, is one of only six people in all of Asia to be recognized as massively influential by Google and YouTube for her number of followers.

Q: Innovation from your own cyberbackers has also played a role in your growth. Tell us about this.

A: Our cyberbackers have come up with some remarkable innovations. One of them came up with a fantastic media marketing strategy. They spent all day on social media, and they realized they could target people on Facebook within a 25-mile radius just by noting when they switched their profile to "engaged," and started putting venue ads in front of them. It's been a great opportunity that I never would have thought of—I wasn't even paying attention to Facebook and the opportunities it presented! I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing without the people I surround myself with.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work, or what drives you?

A: In the office, we have a photo of each cyberbacker, with their name, what they do, and what brought them to Cyberbacker. One of them, Gabrielle Salazar, told me, "We joke about me being your adopted daughter, but you have been more than a father to me and TEEJAY; you're our mentor and our crazy friend. We are what we are now because of you." TEEJAY is her husband, and they met at Cyberbacker! They bought a house, got married, and now they're having their first baby. Our COO, Jennifer, always had the goal of taking care of her parents. With a Cyber Capital loan, she bought a hectare of land and built them a house, and was able to pay off the loan in record time, the fastest in the history of Cyber Capital. Our president, Sheila, recently got to take her sons to two different beaches for the first time. She never had a car, and they were never able to travel before, but after becoming a cyberbacker, she was able to buy one *and* save money for those vacations. It's helping all these families that keeps me going. They are the people who inspire me and drive me every single day.

> Our sub-franchising model allows cyberbackers to be paired with industries they know to get businesses the best help, and it allows small business owners to get top talent **at affordable rates.**

CYBERBACKER

CONTACT

www.cyberbacker.com
craig@cyberbacker.com
LI: cyberbacker | craiggoodliffe
FB: Cyberbacker
IG: CyberbackerInc

> We're striving hard to have the University of Attitude be the world's number one source for attitude awareness, diagnosis, and development!

Founder

Glenn BILL

Glenn Bill is the rare person who can truly say his work has touched millions. A nationally recognized attitude coach and sales strategy specialist, he's sharing all he's learned in life with generations across the globe to help them succeed as he has. He's a two-time bestselling author of *The ABC's of Attitude* and *Source of Sales*, focusing on cultivating confidence to foster success. He did it all, (with help) raising four kids and coaching on a high a school football team to 13 State Championships. He won't take all the credit; that's not his style. Glenn stays forever thankful and humbled by the impact of the extraordinary people who helped raise him to the heights of success—and he's dedicated to paying it forward.

Glenn started his career while he was young father, making just $11,600 a year. In 1989, at just 19 years old, founded the Glenn Bill Group. By 23, he purchased a national franchise organization and had grown it from $600,000 in revenue and 16 agents to nearly $10 million, 135 agents, and three offices, becoming one of the top 10 franchisees in the world before selling it. He could have retired, but that's Glenn's style, either. He didn't "just" forge a new career as a sought-after keynote speaker and corporate strategist. He started the *Attitude Movement* that has taken industries by storm. In 2014, he founded the University of Attitude, followed by his national award winning *Get Attitude Podcast* in 2019, earning him recognition in *SUCCESS Magazine* as a *Top 125 Speaker, Influencer, and Innovator*.

We spoke with Glenn to learn more about how he's helping people rise to heights they never imagined.

Your approach as both a speaker and a corporate strategist is centered around attitude principles. What does it mean to have a "winning attitude," and how can it increase productivity, profitability, and morale?

A winning attitude must be delivered from the leader. I've always said, "No one works for me; everyone works with me." Great leaders have the ability to see and communicate that. My goal as a speaker, strategist, and results coach for companies is to develop an aligned corporate attitude and culture so that a winning attitude is received by all who engage, creating a tangible bounce-back result for the leaders. A "winning attitude" is solution based, collaborative, and always puts others first. My work helps people cease to exist as individuals and realize accomplishment only is created through helping others.

Will you give us a brief description of your attitude speaking and training events and a few takeaways attendees can expect?

I always survey my audiences to create the largest impact for them. I never give the same presentation twice. I

must understand and feel my audience, and they must understand and feel they've been heard *prior* to me hitting the stage. My keynotes focus on the three biggest attitude mistakes people make and I weave that directly to the audience. I then give them 10 attitude strategies to take home to not only make them better business peers, but better spouses, parents, friends, and community-minded people.

> "My work helps people cease to exist as individuals and realize accomplishment only is created through helping others.

Glenn Bill
Get Better. Glow Brighter. Grow Bigger. Go Beyond.

Tell us about your Get Attitude podcast and what people can learn from it.

I'm very selective with who I interview, and very deliberate about being inclusive on my show. It's not just another white-male-dominated interview list. We've had some of the most influential and accomplished people as our guests. We reveal their secrets on how they "Bridge the GAP (Get Attitude Podcast)" from who they were to who they wanted to become. We're starting our third season with the theme "Carry the Light," interviewing people who are considered torchbearers for greater causes.

Can you tell us just a bit about University of Attitude and The Attitude Movement?

We're striving hard to have the University of Attitude be the world's number one source for attitude awareness, diagnosis, and development! We believe everyone can benefit from learning about why they do what they do, think what they think, feel what they feel, and how to reprogram negativity into a positive force for others.

The attitude movement was created as a membership arm to get one million people to join us annually. We celebrate Global Attitude Awareness Day and have Global Attitude Fest. Our goal is simple: attract one attitude ambassador from every state and from 50 countries and to have Global Attitude Awareness Day celebrated everywhere on the same day. Big goal, but it'll happen with the right people!

What do you enjoy most about your work or what drives you?

Helping and serving others and changing lives for clients and their loved ones. Helping just one person have a winning attitude has the potential to change the world and that excites me!

www.glennbill.com | glenn@glennbill.com | LI: glennbill | FB: glennbill | IG: universityofattitude | Twitter: @uofattitude

Q&A JAMES STRADER

Dr. James Strader, D.C. , like many other people, contracted COVID-19 in 2020, leading to a three-week hospital stay with a collapsed lung. He recovered, but experienced the long-term effects, and he knew others were facing the same issues. But the pandemic created a bigger problem. During the two years that COVID took center stage and doctors struggled to manage the influx of patients afflicted with the virus, many people avoided seeking regular medical care. Now, with patients returning to health care providers, doctors are once again inundated, but they're now faced with incomplete medical records. With an extensive medical background that includes over 100 patents in immunology, biosecurity, and electronic communications, James created BioSecure 360, a tech company ensuring a more comprehensive approach to health and research. He also created Avrio, a fertility-focused company performing embryonic research in response to flagging fertility rates linked to the pandemic. Lastly, he is a founder of Shot Free Allergy which makes use of some of his innovative patents regarding needless allergy immunizations.

> BioSecure helps doctors identify overlooked patients and catch them up with proper testing and updated treatment. It's all done electronically and integrates with existing records for a complete picture.

James's empathy is the driving force of these endeavors, from his work doubling the reach of the allergy industry in just five years to reducing the devastating effects of opioid use. "I've personally suffered from every problem we're trying to help," he says. "I created these companies to solve problems other medical professionals couldn't."

We sat down with James to get a glimpse of his incredible career and how he's helping millions get better, safer, and more complete health care.

What inspired the creation of BioSecure, and how is it helping both doctors and patients in the wake of the pandemic?

During the pandemic, people stopped visiting doctors, so there's a two-year gap in electronic health records, which is a real problem. People missed necessary screenings and care, and those who got COVID had subsequent health issues their doctors didn't know about. Doctors are now just getting back to seeing patients and are completely inundated, but they don't have time to do thorough evaluations of what's happened medically to their patients over the past two years. That's where BioSecure steps in. BioSecure helps them identify overlooked patients and catch them up with proper testing and updated treatment. It's all done electronically and integrates with existing records for a complete picture. It will also help COVID research on how it affects the body long term.

Tell us a little bit about your other company, Avrio Genetics.

Avrio Genetics focuses on fertility, an issue that COVID has exacerbated significantly. Avrio does everything, from genetics to stem cells and help with fertility, as well as diagnosing and treating long-haul COVID fertility issues. We work with fertility physicians to advance diagnostics and treatment protocols to increase fertility rates. Stem cells are also used to treat fibrosis in lungs, something seen in COVID patients. Avrio Genetics also is helping to advance several of his patents including allergy immunotherapy systems and partners with a sister company called Shot Free Allergy. Shot Free Allergy manages the back-office systems and implementations into medical practices on behalf of Avrio Genetics.

You have a wealth of experience leading medical startups and working with the government on critical health issues. Tell us a little bit about your background in these areas.

I'll be happy to. I've been a CEO in medical startups for years, including United Allergy, which became the country's largest immunotherapy services company, with over 1,000 locations opened in four years. It led to my inventing the first needleless allergy "shot," a topical cream, and putting allergy treatments into primary care to reach the over 60 million people who need it, so this improves lives significantly. I also worked at the White House as an advisor on the opioid crisis, which was also something that affected me personally as several people I know have suffered from many of the addiction issues associated

> I like seeing a problem and applying my knowledge, medical skills, and innovations to help people and bring a solution to market quickly.

with opioids. Like with the allergy treatment, I looked into topically applied medicines that could treat pain without damaging organs or leading to dependency and resulted in a 40% reduction of chronic opioid use while still allowing people to control their pain.

This work has also led to many other patents. Can you tell us about some of them?

Most are in allergy and immunotherapy, but others are in electronic communications. They include the first needleless allergy shot, and the use of DNA to identify and create immunotherapies. I also created a communications network to train pharmacists to administer the allergy shots in a uniform way. I lost my sense of smell during COVID, so I created an all-in-one hand sanitizer and smell-test. Since most people lose their sense of smell before even testing positive, this allows people to know if they're exposed earlier. It was used in several underserved markets.

What's the best part about your job? What drives you?

I'm inspired by issues that have affected me and my family directly. I like seeing a problem and applying my knowledge, medical skills, and innovations to help people and bring a solution to market quickly. I'm able to fund early stages with my own money, which accelerates the process. If I see a problem, I can solve it.

CEO, Owner & Advisor

BioSecure

AVRIO

CONTACT

straderjames@gmail.com
biosecure360.com
www.avriogenetics.com

GRAEME KEITH

Development Partner

With over 400 completed projects in 36 states and five countries, the North Carolina-based real estate development firm also offers full-service facility maintenance, property management, and brokerage services.

In business and in life, Graeme Keith is driven by the mantra "To whom much is given, much is expected." He's the very definition of a servant leader whose humility belies the success of someone who has transacted over $500 million in deals during his decade with The Keith Corporation (TKC). Founded on Christian principles and grounded in the mission, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever," TKC is a multi-generational family business focused on single-tenant, net lease, build-to-suit developments across the industrial, retail, office, healthcare, and airplane hangar sectors. With over 400 completed projects in 36 states and five countries, the North Carolina-based real estate development firm also offers full-service facility maintenance, property management, and brokerage services.

Graeme joined TKC in 2011 after passing the bar exam and becoming a licensed attorney. He worked in every division of the company before taking the helm as a development partner, where he helps manage the firm's many lines of businesses, corporate strategy and specializes in helping clients solve complex real estate challenges. While he gracefully handles myriad responsibilities, it's his inherent belief in the marriage of mission and purpose that makes it clear he's been called to do more than just run a successful organization, which is evident in the way Graeme serves his employees, clients, and community. As he helps to make the development process enjoyable and seamless for clients who span the globe, Graeme is guided by his unwavering faith and TKC's promise to deliver the highest level of quality, service, commitment, and excellence.

We sat down with Graeme to learn more about TKC, his perspective on leadership, and how faith plays a pivotal role in the success of the company and their clients.

What makes your company different from others?

Our Christian principles, family culture and unique client-driven approach. Our mission statement is "To Glorify God and enjoy

THE KEITH CORPORATION

Him Forever." Since we are striving to glorify God in all we do, good isn't good enough, great isn't good enough, we strive for excellence because we are unashamedly representing and striving to glorify Him. Our team members are part of our extended family and there is no way we would be successful if it wasn't for the incredible team that we have in all aspects. We're fortunate to have many employees who have been here for 20+ years. Our client-driven approach is simple – we want to make the development process as easy as possible for our clients. Our track record supports our ability to simplify the process with the vast majority of our projects being repeat business. Most developers construct buildings and get tenants to move into a very generic building they constructed that might be adequate for many tenants, but not super effective or efficient for any specific tenant. We do the exact opposite. We work directly with the tenant to understand precisely what they want and where they want it. From there, we handle site selection, approvals, permitting and build a highly qualified team of architects, engineers and contractors to deliver on time and under budget.

What are your greatest professional accomplishments?

From a company management standpoint, the greatest accomplishment is having relatability to, and trust from, our employees. I spent time working in every division of TKC so I've been there and understand a lot of their challenges and can talk from a first-hand perspective. I know we're nothing without our people, so ensuring they're taken care of is, and always has been, the utmost priority for me. Adding the development of airplane hangars as a service line was another great accomplishment. We completed our first hangar for a DoD contractor in 2016 and have completed several additional projects with the same client, as well as the Truist Bank corporate hangar in 2021. In addition, I brought the "blend and extend" model into our company first in 2014. We've completed many transactions since, providing a nice revenue source without the inherent risks associated with ground-up development.

What do you enjoy most about your work, or what drives you?

I enjoy the fact that no two days are ever the same. I'm driven by the idea of not wanting to get to the gates of heaven and have God tell me, "Why didn't you get the most out of everything I gave you?" I want to get there knowing I did everything I could with what I was given.

In addition his role at TKC, Graeme serves as chief operating officer of MedChat and co-founder of Orbitr, Inc. He also severs on the board of trustees for The McCallie School, and the board of directors for both The Good Fellows Club and Youth Commission International. He holds a bachelor's degree from Wake Forest and received his law degree from Charleston School of Law.

CONTACT

www.thekeithcorp.com | G3@thekeithcorp.com
LI: Graeme Keith

Morrison Yard Office Rendering (Under Construction) – Charleston, SC

Iredell Medical Office – Mooresville, NC

Charleston Trade Center | 1.22 MM SF Industrial Spec Building (Completed 2021) – Charleston, SC

Delray Square Shopping Center – Delray Beach, FL

Carly Meyer Bentley

Through The Freckled Strawberry, Inc., she's created a long-needed "movement of the sorority" that is assembling women from all backgrounds and helping them to **ascend, aspire, and achieve.**

Carly Meyer Bentley believes that women have come a long way in the workplace, but the gap in financial literacy remains extensive. Through her meaningful and momentous organization, The Freckled Strawberry, Inc., she's created a long-needed "movement of the sorority" that is assembling women from all backgrounds and helping them to ascend, aspire, and achieve. In the words of this *Financial Consigliere for Women*, "She can, she will."

The Freckled Strawberry is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering independence in women through individual development, career advancement, entrepreneurship, and financial intelligence. Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, they serve women all over the world, helping them gain comprehensive knowledge of finance through a suite of resources such as their vast cooperative of female professionals and entrepreneurs. The fee for the knowledge and network? Zero. It is truly a philanthropic project and one that Carly has prepared for her whole life.

Prior to launching The Freckled Strawberry in December of 2021, Carly worked in the finance industry for over 20 years. This not only gives her the ability to provide counsel to others, but valuable insight as a woman who succeeded in a male-dominated field. She's walked in the shoes of those she now supports as "The silent partner for trailblazers, lady bastons, and high performers." "I call myself 'consigliere' because I am someone who gives it to you straight and will take your secrets to the grave. Because of that, people open their hearts to me," Carly shares.

Carly's "can-do" attitude has been an immensely important catalyst for this thriving organization that she's meticulously crafted to be welcoming, inviting, and *human*. And for so many grateful women, she's making financial independence attainable. "A lot of successful women find themselves in a difficult situation, but most don't talk about it. Whether a bad relationship, a bad workplace experience, or life obstacles, we can let them defeat us or we can let them push us and transform us. We can choose to rise up and not be a victim," Carly elucidates. And she speaks from personal experience. After ending an abusive relationship, Carly made a transformative pivot. "I was a single mom for many years, managing a career and taking care of my son. It was hard, but I rose, and then I took all those ups and downs and channeled them into The Freckled Strawberry." That model, constructed from one woman's experience, ambition, and altruism, was a huge hit. In the first 28 days of being live, they had reached nearly 40,000 women in all stages of business and from all industries, and to date, they've already supported 221 women. "It's as if women were just waiting for this," Carly shares.

CEO, Founder

www.thefreckledstrawberry.org | carly@thefreckledstrawberry.org

We spoke with Carly to learn more about her journey and the amazing organization she created to champion the women's movement of the decade.

Q: What compelled you to leave an astoundingly successful career as a leader in finance to launch a nonprofit committed to lifting up women?

A: I realized that big corporate financial firms were not moving fast enough to address the financial needs and demands of women, and were not speaking to the real issues women deal with on a daily basis. Too many women were ignoring or deferring money matters to others, without understanding it themselves. I realized I could have conversations about money with women through a unique feminine voice, without interrupting them, or speaking over them, and in a language they could understand. Through The Freckled Strawberry, I deliver a financial conversation in a female voice, from a feminine perspective, putting her needs first. Now, I can facilitate difficult conversations with my heart open, my ears listening, my intentions engaged, and my technical skills prepared provide them with truly personal guidance and the capabilities to build financial independence. Women leave our conversations with a better understanding of money matters, and how it relates to the overall health and wellness of their lives.

THE FRECKLED Strawberry
SHE CAN. SHE WILL.

Q: Where did the name come from, and how does the concept of "strawberries" reflect in the women you serve and the services you offer?

A: People think I chose the name because of my red hair and freckles. While this may be partially true, the strawberry plant resonates with me because it is a female plant. The main plant is referred to as "The Mother" and vines that grow from that are fondly referred to as "the daughter plant." All life comes from The Mother plant, who feeds the daughter from her vines. Our collaboration as women reflects the way women can nurture each other. The crown of the strawberry plant is the productive engine of the plant. The Freckled Strawberry's trademark conversation was born from the strawberry plant—The Seven Conversations to the Crown™. This is our unique process through which we provide strategic advice, financial education, and intentional relationships for women. They receive access to resources and connections to professionals that will help them level-up. From us, she receives a consigliere that stays with her throughout her lifecycle.

Q: While you are the founder and CEO of the organization, you see yourself as a "consigliere." Tell us about this.

A: Entrepreneurs have always disclosed to me their most valued dreams, wants, and wishes. They would literally lean in and whisper to me their intended plans of buying another company, selling an existing one, purchasing real estate, running for office, and even getting divorced or married. I honor the position of being the confidant entrusted with their most intimate secrets. They do this because they know they will get my confidence as well as my honesty. The "consigliere" is an advisor that speaks the truth and protects "the boss," even from herself.

Q: The Freckled Strawberry was instantly popular within days of its launch. Why do you think this is?

A: Empowerment. Women are owning their space more now than ever, and they own more positions of power than in decades prior. They're internalizing their strength and claiming their space in personal opportunity, career advancement, entrepreneurship, and family matters. Now, women are generating more income, creating wealth of their own, and refining their relationship with financial matters and decisions. We're poised to collaborate with them, and we're doing it every day.

Carly is past president of the Princeton Merchants Association, holds a bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University, completed the Robert Morris RMA Commercial Lending Program, is a Registered Investment Advisor with FINRA, and holds her Series 7 and 66 securities licenses.

TIM Madden

Founder & CEO

> We provide our clients with a full spectrum of assets so that they can convert interviews into jobs.

The employment market of today presents a deluge of challenges for job seekers, especially in the post-COVID landscape of the "Great Resignation," and particularly for the C-suite sector. The method of submitting a résumé electronically and waiting around for a response while HR managers pluck through hundreds of applicants is an ineffective one and rarely, if ever, elicits the desired outcome. And for the lucky few who are granted an interview, not many are adequately prepared to land the position.

Tim Madden has sculpted a career out of evening those odds, and to the delight of over 10,000 working executives that he's helped to land six-figure and above salaries, he's been doing it for more than a decade with no plans of slowing down.

To say that Tim has amassed over a decade of experience is an understatement. He's not your average "headhunter" and his company, Executive Career Upgrades, is not your run-of-the-mill recruitment agency. But don't take our word for it—Tim's stats speak for themselves. By the time Tim founded Executive Career Upgrades in 2017, he had already worked for the largest Fortune 500 executive placement firm in the world and led teams who generated $50 million in staffing services. From first year revenues of a hearty $100,000 to an impressive increase in its second year that nearly touched $1 million, then a massive 100% growth for 2021, Executive Career Upgrades is now poised to exceed $4 million in its fourth year. That translates to an average of 800 jobs filled annually, even during COVID, when hiring all but ceased.

So what is it that drove Tim to continually surpass his own extraordinary records, year after year? He could have rested on his laurels after becoming one of the top recruiters in the nation for the U.S. Army, where he served in active duty for 12 years and subsequently contributed his expertise to major publications such as *Forbes, Fast Company, Business Insider, Newsweek*, and *Entrepreneur.* Surprisingly, despite the notable profits and acclaim, he's not motivated by a financial goal or placement benchmark. "I love seeing people succeed. It's great to have a company and to be successful, but doing something purposeful, where you know you're impacting people's lives for the better is the reward. It's a great experience. That's why I started this company. I do this because this is what I love to do," Tim reveals.

Naturally, we were intrigued and had to learn more about Tim, his company, and how it is that they are succeeding where so many others have faltered—helping professionals with no network and no "inside track" land careers with some of the most exciting and desirable companies in the world.

Q: Tim, tell us a little about Executive Career Upgrades. What's the mission statement?

A: Well, what we *aren't* is a "recruiting agency." We don't just put people in front of an HR person for an interview. We are a comprehensive career coaching company for upper-level executives from all over the world. We provide our clients with a full spectrum of assets so that they can convert interviews into jobs. In this market, candidates must have a unique "brand" and understand how to convey their value. They've got to be comfortable with discussing compensation because, although no one likes talking about money, everyone wants more of it. We also work with the people who do the hiring because they need to recognize talent and create a culture that will attract it. For instance, we were engaged by NASCAR to develop a training program for one of their business units, which had to address the communication skills and leadership principles that their C-level executives needed to support.

Q: What makes Executive Career Upgrades different from other executive coaching companies?

A: Last year, I developed a marketing automation tool that put our clients in front of 2,900 decision makers per week. Thus far, it has generated about 5,000 interviews. The

biggest differentiator, however, is that to my knowledge, we are the *only* executive career coaching firm that will work with people until they're hired. The number one thing we hear from job seekers before they work with us is that they keep applying but they don't get called. If this happens enough, they start to blame themselves and question, "Am I too old? Am I not qualified? Is it because I don't have a specific degree or education?" It's none of those reasons. The hiring process has changed dramatically, so if you don't have a strategy, you're left behind. We also work with people who want to change careers but don't know how their skills translate to another field. We help them find those career possibilities and create the right message to land a new position. Our partnerships with placement agencies around the country are also a great benefit because it removes the geographical limitations many other companies contend with.

Q: How are you helping organizations with their leadership development efforts?

A: Organizations need to be open to change. Every business has problems—turnover, budget, team cohesiveness. If these problems affect their growth, they've got to find a new way of thinking and operating. If leaders don't know how to train, motivate, push, and inspire their staff, they're going to sacrifice talent, and there's a wealth of it out there. They need to change their strategy if they're going to attract and retain it.

Q: Are you seeing greater demand as a result of the unprecedented number of career-changers triggered by COVID?

A: Absolutely. People are leaving their jobs in record numbers, to the tune of 4-6% monthly. In fact, if you're *not* leaving your job every two-three years, you're losing out on 50% of your lifetime earning capability—most people don't know that. That's why it's so important for your life, family, and legacy to be trained on how to obtain your worth in the marketplace. That's what we do. Being good at your job isn't enough anymore. You could be the best basketball player in the world, but if you don't get in front of the NBA, why waste your time?

ECU

EXECUTIVE CAREER UPGRADES

www.execupgrades.com | tim@execupgrades.com
LI: Tim Madden, MBA

Ashley RITTEMAN

&

Meghan MARSDEN

Ashley Ritteman, CEO, and Meghan Marsden, COO, are co-founders of the intermodal rail services company, Valor Victoria, LTD, an aptly chosen name that literally translates to “courageous victory.” Dubbed the “Midwest Express” by shipping clients they’ve served, it is an appropriate moniker considering they move freight at speeds that humble traditional methods. In an industry saturated with long-established global titans, these two women had the bravery to not only enter the arena, but to challenge—and advance—the traditional ways of logistics.

ABOUT VALOR VICTORIA, LTD.

Founded in 2016, the company was developed to provide importers and exporters with access to the U.S. rail infrastructure apart from traditional supply chain methods. The principle is centered on using the rail system to get freight closer to its destination. By establishing private terminals in underserved markets, Valor Victoria not only cuts trucking miles out of the logistics equation, but reduces costs as well as CO2 emissions in the process. Since 2020, they’ve handled over 10,000 shipments and as a result of successfully navigating the supply chain crisis of that same year, the market started looking to Valor Victoria as a solution to all rail inland services. Subsequently, their service landscape quickly expanded to both a public and private terminal model. Working with Class One and short-line railroads, ocean carriers, and trucking companies, Valor Victoria serves some of the top BCO’s (beneficial cargo owners) and NVOCC’s (non-vessel-operating common carriers) in the country, having private terminal routings in Iowa and Ohio with more poised to open across the country in 2023. In August of 2022, ahead of the forthcoming peak season, they will unveil a Wisconsin terminal, which will handle more freight across Midwest.

A contributing factor to Valor Victoria’s progress has been their relationships with trucking companies and rail terminals. By rapidly moving containers away from the ports and into the market, they reduce congestion and enable truckers to move

VALOR VICTORIA
INTERMODAL

quickly in an organized way. And since Valor Victoria gets containers closer to their distribution centers, multiple turns can be made each day, thereby increasing their vendor-partners' revenues. "We've created a very unique method in how our supply chain flows," Ashley shares. "One key difference is our customers only book freight on a port-to-port basis. On ocean liners, you are often locked into an inland strategy at the time freight departs it's import origin (i.e. Shanghai). Our method monitors containers as they depart origin and move across the water, prior to hitting the U.S. We can look 9-10 days in advance and advise the shipper on the best inland strategy upon port arrival. This is where our private and public rail terminals come into play. When we see hubs congested, we advise customers to use a different route so their freight doesn't sit idle for weeks on end, incurring daily storage rates."

ABOUT ASHLEY

Ashley co-founded Valor Victoria after gaining a wide range of experience at a private intermodal terminal and leading the start-up of the Minot, North Dakota, and Minneapolis, Minnesota, offices for BNSF Logistics. Her role as general manager at BNSFL was to lead the Minot intermodal initiative as well as develop agricultural sales nationwide. Within various organizations, she has contributed to the development of export strategies, acquired expertise in agriculture trade, and assisted the expansion of American and European businesses into Asian markets while based in Singapore. Ashley earned a master's degree in agribusiness and applied economics, specializing in logistics, strategy, and market risk, from North Dakota State University. In graduate school, she was known as "The Container Queen," a label that is quite fitting for her still. Ashley and her husband, Thomas, live in Minneapolis, and enjoy being outdoors in the great North with their son, Titus, and their baby girl, who they welcomed in July 2022.

ABOUT MEGHAN

Meghan co-founded Valor Victoria with a wide breadth of experience in supply chain, sales and operations, entrepreneurship, and M&A activities. She has successfully launched and led varying organizations from their conception to operational stages. She gained invaluable industry experience by managing executive customer relationships for the Fortune 500 logistics company Owens & Minor, where she and her team managed the supply chains of health care networks from the macro and micro levels, assessing varying aspects of the supply chain, from financial implications to inventory management. Meghan earned a bachelor's degree in marketing and economics from the University of Nebraska. She enjoys horse riding and spending time in the mountains of Colorado with her husband, Aaron, while skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking with their dog, Greta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Both Ashley and Meghan recognize the importance of the roles of their husbands. "Our husbands were our financial and moral support throughout the five years of our start-up and now they've entered as official partners of the business," Meghan shares. "We're a true family-owned company. The strong men behind us, our husbands, also made this possible," Ashley adds.

www.valorvictoria.com | ashley@valorvictoria.com | meghan@valorvictoria.com | IG: city.nd.field (Ashley Ritteman)
LI: ashleyritteman ; meghanmarsden ; valorvictoria

KEVIN Koeppel

In 2019, entrepreneur Kevin Koeppel did something that not many have had the mettle or business savvy to do. He made the mighty and seemingly impenetrable daily fantasy sports industry uneasy.

Kevin didn't come up with a way to beat the house or bankrupt any of the dozens of sports-wagering apps by beating the odds and breaking the bank. No. His was a much more strategic and well laid-out plan that capitalized on his resourcefulness, will, and aptitude for finance and enterprise. The company is No House Advantage and it's the most innovative daily fantasy sports platform to arrive in years.

So what's all the hype about? With new options for wagering popping up regularly, what is so different about this one, and why did more than 30,000 users flock to No House Advantage in its fledgling state? The answer is "player prop betting" and it has tipped the scales toward the *players* and away from the *proprietors*.

Player prop betting is a wager that is based on an athlete's statistics, not the team's final score. Users can bet on how many touchdowns their favorite running back will record or how many points an NBA player might get. Best of all, they aren't betting against the house, as in other platforms—they're betting against other users. Earn more points with your lineup than other users do with theirs, and you're a winner! And it's not just for the NFL or NBA. No House Advantage offers the full spectrum of sports, including MLB and PGA. With or without experience, users can avoid unfair advantages with expert players identified and "Beginners Only" contests. Plus, because No House

> "I'd like to enter the digital sports book and casino sectors, wherein we would have a presence across every part of the industry—**fantasy sports, sports betting, and casino games.**"

Founder/CEO

> We find ours to be very different in that it combines the best components of sports betting and daily fantasy sports. Users are betting on confidence-weighted spreads in a contest model.

Advantage is a daily fantasy sports platform, it's available in more states than most of its competitors. As Kevin explains, "We find ours to be very different in that it combines the best components of sports betting and daily fantasy sports. Users are betting on confidence-weighted spreads in a contest model."

It's of no surprise that the wildly popular and innovative platform attracted the attention of venture capitalists and investors in just over two years in operation. In 2021, Kevin sold a majority stake of the company, while retaining his position as CEO. And, in another clear example of how his platform differs from most others, Kevin started it from scratch, self-funded it, and built it up to its VC-appealing status. As he often shares, "My heart, soul, mind, and focus are on continuing to grow this company, to build upon the reputation that we've been fortunate enough to gain in such a short time as a world-class betting platform." In that pursuit, Kevin remains very hands-on, overseeing the entire company, including product development, brand messaging, and navigating the legal landscape of the daily fantasy sports industry.

We wanted to learn more about this standout of fantasy sports platforms and the man who conceptualized it, funded it, built it, and marketed it.

Kevin, where did the idea for No House Advantage come from?

In 2018, in my sophomore year at USC, I was studying daily fantasy sports companies and discovered that our "Player Prop" model didn't exist. All the apps used the same "bet against the house" method. I wanted to come up with a new product, and since I always had an interest in sports betting operations, I knew I could create one. I hired a developer and drew the wireframes myself so that I could see and test its functionality. From idea to first iteration, a website and mobile app, it was just seven months. I continued to make improvements until its release in 2019.

Tell us about your startup phase and how your unique model has attracted so many users so quickly.

In the startup stage, I didn't want outside funding, so I footed all the costs personally. Once I had a successful and attractive product, I decided that the resources of a private equity company could help us grow to where we were competing at a higher level. With the capital investment made, we really took off, and we've continued along that trajectory at a parabolic rate. It's been a lot of hard work and persistence, but our users love the platform. They send us emails raving about our features and how different we are from other fantasy sports platforms.

What does the future look like for No House Advantage?

I plan to grow the current daily fantasy sports business by adding products and giving users more options and multiple games. Ultimately, I'd like to enter the digital sports book and casino sectors, wherein we would have a presence across every part of the industry—fantasy sports, sports betting, and casino games. We're also in the process of expanding to more states. My sole focus is on this company, but I have some other ideas brewing that are slowly developing. It's been an exciting ride, and I'm loving every second of it.

Lastly, Kevin, what do you enjoy most about your work?

Just the pursuit of success and creating something that people love to play. That's what drives me. We put so much blood, sweat, and tears into this company, and to see it thriving and more and more people enjoying the experience is the greatest reward.

Kevin holds a B.B.A. from the University of Miami, Undergraduate School of Business and an MBA from the University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business.

www.nohouseadvantage.com
LI: House Advantage

IG: @nohouseadvantage
Twitter: @nohouseadv

Michelle Power

Founder/CEO

About Michelle

In the U.S. alone, approximately 264,000 women and 2,400 men are diagnosed with breast cancer each year. The physical effects of this illness might be commonly acknowledged, but the emotional trauma is equally impactful. Too often, the psychological stressors, augmented by financial burden, causes lives to unravel. These patients need support, and it must be more than pretty pink ribbons or a show of solidarity. Enter Michelle Power.

Michelle is the founder and CEO of Pawsitively 4 Pink Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has championed and supported low-income, underserved women in Massachusetts since 2018. Michelle has made it her mission to provide unwavering, long-term aid *and* companion animals to breast cancer patients, but more than that, and unlike most "support groups," she offers the crucial supplement of financial assistance. On average each woman receives $9,500. This year alone, P4P has distributed nearly $150,000 to more than a dozen women.

Hers is a purposeful objective, and few people have the qualifications to take on such an endeavor. Prior to starting Pawsitively 4 Pink, Michelle was a psychotherapist for 25 years and served as a clinical supervisor for Spectrum Health Systems. She helped develop the Family Stabilization Program at Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and has maintained a private practice in the same area for over 30 years. Michelle also held the title of staff sergeant in the United States Air Force. And, as Michelle points out, "Pawsitively 4 Pink is not my first entrepreneurial adventure. I was the co-founder of a mold remediation company called Commonwealth Environmental Services and owned the Tatnuck Garden Center."

The *Top 100 Magazine* was not only intrigued by Michelle and Pawsitively 4 Pink (P4P), but compelled to learn more. What we unearthed was more than just an inspiring story.

Michelle has made it her mission to provide unwavering, long-term aid and companion animals to breast cancer patients, but more than that, and unlike most "support groups," she offers the crucial supplement of financial assistance.

The Interview

Q: Michelle, what was the impetus for starting Pawsitively 4 Pink?

A: Having watched my mother battle with anxiety around meeting her financial obligations after being diagnosed with cancer, I was left feeling helpless. As a child who often worried about food and staying in our home, I recognize the importance of these matters and how they relate to one's psychological well-being. Those two needs must not be a concern when dealing with an illness.

I grew up in a low socioeconomic class. I know that households and individuals of lower income status are more likely to suffer from poorer health, and have fewer resources to buffer against the negative effects of major health issues. As a result, unexpected adverse health events can be particularly devastating for these households because they disrupt employment and create new costs. For these reasons, I knew I had to do something to make a grand impact on these women's lives.

Q: Michelle, the benefits provided to breast cancer patients by P4P are vastly different from—one might even say "superior" to—other groups. Tell us why.

A: First, we help women *throughout* treatment and for six months *after* treatment. Other organizations stop once care has been completed. Secondly, I personally meet with the individual and find out what they need the most help with—almost always, it's rent or mortgage. Lastly, we don't discriminate between holistic or traditional treatment—we assist both. I don't know of any other organization that does that.

Q: You've had growing interest from some of the biggest names in retail. Who are some of your partners?

A: Currently, our partners include the YWCA, Emily's Interior, a business owned by Joseph Kupstas, The Botanist, and Camosse Masonry Supply, but to help more people, we need more businesses to join us in our efforts. It really does take a village to make such an impactful change.

Q: And how can businesses and individual donors get involved?

A: They can email, call, or reach me any way that's convenient for them. Donations can be made through our website, Facebook, and Instagram.

Q: Can you tell us about some of your upcoming fundraising events?

A: We're developing a few right now. One is a nationwide contest called Strike a Paws Photo Challenge, where you take a picture of your cat or dog and receive a personalized URL so you can send it to everyone to vote on and donate. We also are looking forward to our Drag Queen Meat Raffle, Our Comic Relief Night, and on June 11th, we had our 3rd annual golf tournament, where we raised $58,780.

Q: What are some of the ways in which P4P grants are helping women?

A: When people think of assistance for women with breast cancer, their first thought is on the treatment itself, which is the most critical need. But what many don't understand is that there are a great number of other expenses beyond that, and some women are faced with the choice between literally surviving *or* keeping a roof over their heads. For example, we work with a woman who has stage 3 metastatic cancer and stage 4 pancreatic cancer. We've been paying her mortgage for the past two years. For her, that's impactful—it's improving her quality of life.

Q: Lastly, Michelle, where did the name come from?

A: I love dogs. They're food for the soul. Dogs teach us that all that matters in life are relationships and unconditional love. Also, we rescue shelter dogs, have them trained, and gift them to the women we assist, if they choose.

Michelle holds a master's degree in clinical psychology from Lesley College, a BS in psychology from Worcester State College, a certification in rape crisis counseling, and a certification in mediation and arbitration.

Pawsitively 4 Pink

www.Pawsitively4Pink.org
michelle@pawsitively4pink.com | LI:Michelle Power
FB: Pawsitively 4 Pink | IG: Pawsitively4Pink

SHANNON SCOTT

Co-Founder & CEO

Many small business owners don't know about the billions of dollars in unclaimed tax credits and incentives available to them. But Shannon Scott does. He's considered one of the premier tax credit experts in the industry, having helped over 25,000 companies, and he's consulted for some of the most successful firms in the country. Today, as the founder and CEO of OnCentive, Shannon leads a thriving company considered "the Robin Hood of the business world." A fitting nickname for a firm that just nine months into its inaugural year has captured over $1.5 billion for their clients. Founded in June 2021, OnCentive simplifies the process of identifying and qualifying for business incentives and tax credits to help business owners maximize profitability and grow their enterprises. "We're passionate about putting money back in the hands of the small businesses that drive the economy," Shannon explains.

That passion has driven Shannon for over 20 years—from his early days as a CEO at just 19 and through a remarkable career as the owner of multiple successful companies, three of which received the *Inc. 500 Award*. Now Shannon brings together his finance knowledge and IT background to drive OnCentive's innovative software vision that is helping small businesses from Main Street to Manhattan excel.

We sat down with Shannon to learn more about the inspiration behind OnCentive and how they're helping businesses flourish, even in the most challenging times.

As the founder and CEO of OnCentive, Shannon leads a thriving company considered **"the Robin Hood of the business world."**

Q&A

Q: What compelled you to start OnCentive?

A: I got into this business in 2007 because the first credit I learned about was one that helps veterans find jobs. My father was a Vietnam vet who struggled to find a job when he returned home, and one of these credits could have helped him, so it was my heart that first led me to this field. Prior to launching OnCentive, I'd owned a similar company that I had sold, and I'd acquired a few companies over the next two years while I was considering my next move. Then COVID hit, and my heart felt just as heavy. As I saw these businesses struggle and fold, I knew this was what I *needed* to do. I founded OnCentive with a bigger technology approach, focusing on the software component of it rather than a manual approach, which allows us to identify significantly more credits and incentives that can help small businesses.

Q: How does your software and your funding model help small businesses?

A: There are over 3,000 types of incentive programs in the U.S. that many people aren't educated on, and we're here to help them. Our software allows us to match clients with the perfect credit and to assist small businesses who might not otherwise have the resources to take advantage of them. Right now, we're focusing on COVID-related incentives, which can be out of reach for small companies without finance teams. One of our clients, a family-owned business, called me crying with relief and gratitude. They were days away from losing their business during COVID, and they got their recovery check and saved the businesses and all their employees. It was a very inspiring call.

We also partner with small financial consulting and CPA firms so that they can also help their clients using our expertise and IT. We also provide a funding source for our clients that allows them to borrow a portion of their pending incentive or credit, and an alternative funding source to give them 50-70% of their pending refund in a matter of days.

Q: Will you share some of the ways in which businesses can benefit from these incentives and credits?

A: When a client comes to us, we learn about their business, look at what's available, and come up with a plan and the most lucrative program for them. Sometimes these credits can be kind of like a bank; you can put them in a savings account. The credits that we typically find are income tax credits, but many times we find more credits that the business can carry forward for 20 years, which they can include as part of the value of their company or use the money to expand, and, for some, these credits can also help them personally. For example, we helped a company in Louisiana obtain a disaster relief credit after a hurricane, and they used the money to buy out a competitor and expand.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work, Shannon?

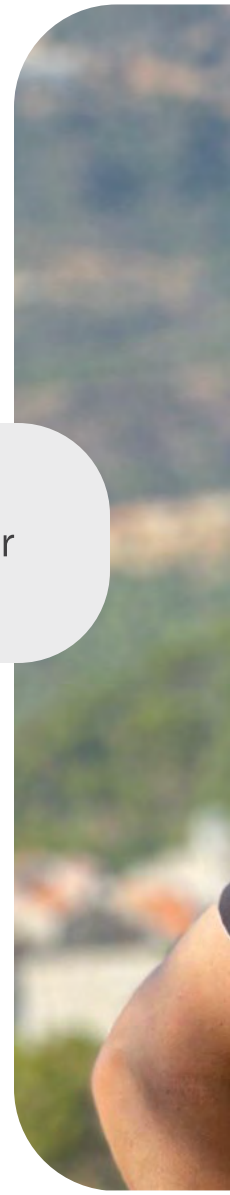
A: I have the best job in the world. I get to give away money for free, and many of these programs are based on companies creating jobs for people with higher barriers to employment. Seeing clients get credit for hiring struggling people is so rewarding. People send us letters and emails all the time thanking us; it's very inspiring.

oncentive
PROFITABILITY & COMPLIANCE EXPERTS

CONTACT

www.oncentive.com
sscott@oncentive.com
LI: shannonscottceo
oncentive

WASSIM FAYED



> One of my greatest joys is seeing my best chefs—four to date—graduate from tanoor and open their own restaurants using our guidance to open their businesses.

In 2017, in the heart of Sammamish, Washington, not far from his family's home, Wassim Fayed and his wife, Jennifer, built a little slice of Lebanon to bring to their community the flavors, scents, beauty, and culture of their homeland. Tanoor Lebanese Grill was a hit from day one, as diners were entranced by the atmosphere of warm summer days in the mountains of Lebanon, the romance, the beauty, and authentic fare. Today, with a second location in Seattle and their extraordinarily popular hummus and babaghanouge sold in Metropolitan and PCC Markets throughout the area, tanoor is feeding an ever-growing, eager public.

To many, tanoor's success is no surprise. In the late nineties, Wassim and Jennifer had grown a single restaurant in Florida to five thriving locations, so they clearly know the business. But this is a success story that almost never was, one born purely from the heart and a lifelong passion for bringing people together through food. "After we sold the restaurants in Florida, I joined Microsoft, and my wife and I swore never again," he says. Or so they thought.

With a degree in computer engineering from Florida Institute of Technology, Wassim spent the next 21 years in Microsoft's Redmond offices as principal program manager, helping in the development of some of the most amazing server management technologies. Along the way, he and three community leaders established the Sammamish Muslim Association, and started a mosque and community, where he served as imam. "When I was about to retire from Microsoft, everyone at the mosque kept asking when we were opening a Lebanese restaurant, so we finally decided to do it again, this time using all our experiences and research to open a beautiful, upscale halal concept," he explains.

Tanoor's diners are no doubt celebrating Wassim's decision, as they enjoy a traditional, celiac-friendly menu of Lebanese mezze, salads, grilled items, desserts, and more, all made from the best ingredients, fresh produce, and 100% halal beef, lamb, and Tahir hand slaughtered halal chicken. Behind the scenes, Wassim brought his Microsoft skills to bear with advanced technologies that he coded and designed specifically for tanoor. "Tanoor combines my passion for cooking, coding, and customer relations, and the teachings of the Quran, which I have carved in my heart to make me the person I am today."

We joined Wassim for a conversation about the not-so-secret recipe for his success.

Q: Where does your passion for food come from?

A: My mom was a really good cook and I used to love spending time with her in the kitchen. When I was six, I pulled a chair to the stove and cooked my own dessert. My mom came in and asked, "Where did you get that?" I said, "I cooked it myself!" From the time I was 12, I cooked almost every family dinner, and they all really liked it. Now I'm cooking for a larger family—our customers!

Q: While tanoor brings diners the tradition and authenticity of Lebanon, you designed sophisticated technology to run it. Tell us about this.

A: I did. We have a full suite of products, including an in-house POS system, which provides a 360-degree view of the business and tracks daily sales to the item level. The technology is at par with major restaurant chains solutions, but what sets our POS system apart is that it's designed and coded by a restauranteur who knows firsthand what is needed to run such a business.

Q: Tell us more about your community work as one of the leaders of the Sammamish Muslim Association.

A: For the first 12 years of the mosque's inception, I took the responsibility to lead the prayers as the imam for the community

> Tanoor combines my passion for **cooking, coding,** and **customer relations,** and **the teachings of the Quran,** which I have carved in my heart to make me the person I am today.

as a Hafiz Al-Quran, meaning I have the Quran memorized from cover to cover. I also give lectures and Quran explanation sessions to members of the community and lead many youth activities that teach them leadership skills and give them an in-depth understanding of the core beliefs in Islam.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work, Wassim?

A: Seeing the real-life changes in the lives of the people around me. One of my greatest joys is seeing my best chefs—four to date—graduate from tanoor and open their own restaurants using our guidance to open their businesses. Our staff is an extension of our family, and we take care of them in every way we can, including paying them top dollar compared to the industry. Islam teaches us that wealth comes from God, so if I am generous, he will be generous with me. It all comes back in the end.

Wassim contributed to multiple protocol standards in DMTF and ISO standards in the field of remoting protocols, which included Redfish, WS-Management and PowerShell remoting.

tanoor
Lebanese Grill

Contact

www.tanoor.com | wassim@tanoor.com
+1-425-961-0831 | 206-457-5272

Timothy R. McAuley

About Timothy

For nearly 20 years, Dr. Timothy McAuley has led the way in the field of environmental innovation, working tirelessly with companies and organizations across the globe to solve the most pressing environmental issues, namely air quality and human health exposure and risk assessment. But with a BS in biochemistry, a master's in chemistry, and a PhD in environmental sciences and engineering, it's clear that this passion began long before his remarkable career as an award-winning environmental leader with a widespread reputation as a forward-thinking authority. In 2008, Timothy founded CHANGE Environmental, LLC, a multi-award-winning, certified Veteran-Owned Small Business providing strategic top-tier professional environmental consulting and research services across a wide array of specialized areas that deliver cutting-edge solutions to various technical issues. In the process, they form long-lasting strategic relationships with each of their clients. "When we're brought in, it's something that's going to be complicated and require our advanced expertise," he explains.

Timothy and his international team of environmental scientists, field researchers, published authors, and consulting professional have established relationships with communities, the industrial and medical sectors, businesses, and the public and private sectors. Clients from all corners of the globe—across the U.S., Europe, Australia, and throughout East Asia—turn to this learned group for their expertise in air quality, acoustic engineering, and environmental epidemiology, as well as climate change and sustainability structure. This uncommonly large array expertise is critical to many of their clients and their infrastructures for ensuring compliance and strategic planning for their current and future environmental needs. For their dedication, expertise, and contributions to the field, Timothy and CHANGE Environmental have been showered with at least a dozen industry awards, among them the *Environmental Business Journal's Award for Green House Gas Mitigation and Strategies on Climate Change* and the *Corporate Visions of America Award for Environmental Strategy and Consulting* in 2020 & 2021. In 2019, Timothy returned to his alma mater, Clarkson University, as he was asked by President Anthony Collins to be a featured as a keynote speaker for the 100th anniversary celebration of Wallace C. Coulter, a global, innovative alumni of Clarkson and founder of the Coulter Blood Counter, which changed the medical field. Presented by President Collins, it was in recognition of his efforts to the global environmental field.

As he continues his tireless work to help improve the environment for everyone, everywhere, we sat down with Timothy to find out just where his passion began, what drove him to start the company, and about some of his favorite projects.

> The core values of our company are professionalism, accountability, transparency, honesty—PATH.

Founder & CEO

The Interview

Q: Can you remember the first event that sparked your interest in chemistry and the environment?

A: I was in my second year in the U.S. Navy. One Sunday, I found myself at the library, picking up books on science and fell in love with chemistry, biochemistry, and physics. When I had completed my master's in chemistry, I was evaluating whether to get a PhD in chemistry, but instead I entered an environmental science and engineering program. I fell in love with it. I have a fluent understanding of the body and the impact of air pollution on the body, and this has played a pivotal role in a lot of my work.

Q: What compelled you to start the company?

A: To make a difference. That's been my motivation my entire career. The core values of our company are professionalism, accountability, transparency, honesty—PATH. Doing that and making a difference in what we do have been my drivers since day one. Seeing the difference that we're making in companies, industries, people's lives, that is the most rewarding part of my job.

Q: There have been countless, but can you share just a few of your favorite projects?

A: One of my favorite projects was an asphalt plant in Sugarloaf, Pennsylvania. They claimed to be a light-duty plant, but through our calculations, we found they should have been classified as heavy-duty. I did the modeling and emissions calculations to look at what their true impact would be on the community. The whole community turned out to hear the report, and based on my report and testimony, the planning board shut down the plant's permit.

Another favorite was a national policy study with Safe Routes to School National Partnership in Washington, D.C. I wrote the guidance document to reduce students' exposure to traffic-related air pollution on their way to and from school, both walking and by car or bus. The policy was issued to 30,000 schools across the U.S.

Q: What do you consider your greatest professional accomplishments, Timothy?

A: Building this company is the greatest achievement I can share. Bringing together a diverse team of experts has been a great achievement, and most importantly, earning the respect and admiration of colleagues and clients across the globe.

CONTACT www.changeenvironmental.com | mcauleyt@changeenvironmental.com | LI: Timothy R. Mcauley

MEET Lauren Hopkins

In a post-pandemic world, more and more people across the U.S. are feeling the pull of their roots beckoning them back to their homelands. For a growing number of Italian Americans, their ancestors' voices waft from the cobblestone lanes of Amalfi, the sprawling vineyards of Sicily, the cultural mecca of Florence, and every tiny hamlet in between in a serenade of *la dolce vita*. But the return to their beloved Italy can be a process that is fraught with complications and bureaucratic red tape. It is a path that Lauren Hopkins, herself an Italian American, successfully navigated, and one she is now helping others traverse. Through her company, Your Italian Passport, she is delivering the "sweet life" to those who seek Italian dual citizenship.

Since founding Your Italian Passport in Florida more than a decade ago, Lauren has served thousands of clients throughout the world with the assistance of a competent, globally placed staff and a simple mission—fulfill dreams. As an experienced attorney and former state and federal prosecutor with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office and the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.,

Lauren could have opened a law firm serving the influential, the powerful, and the uber-wealthy. Instead, she launched a company committed to helping those who seek a new way of life. "Not only am I proud of my nearly eight years of public service, but I think this background gives our clients confidence in working with an agency and an attorney located in another state or even country, and who they may only ever meet via Zoom," she says.

We spoke with Lauren to learn more about Your Italian Passport, how they're helping people achieve Italian dual citizenship, and why her personal experience is of such great benefit.

Through her company, Your Italian Passport, she is delivering the "sweet life" to those who seek Italian dual citizenship.

Q: Having been through the dual citizenship process yourself, can you elaborate on some of the typical pitfalls you help your clients avoid?

Italian law provides citizenship to those of Italian descent, assuming their family history aligns with the various provisions of the law. Applicants are required to present their family tree in the form of documentation—vital records, naturalization documents, ships' manifests, other historical records—to the Italian government. Your Italian Passport conducts historical research, compiles these records, and prepares clients for presentation of their citizenship applications.

Q: Tell us a little bit more about your role, Lauren.

I'm the face of the company, so I personally handle all initial consultations, and I'm also responsible for managing of a team of attorneys, records collectors,

and translators, who compile and ready the required documents for presentation to the Italian Embassy and consulates in the U.S. and abroad, and via court in Italy.

Q: Does having gone through the process yourself give you a better understanding and a deeper appreciation for your clients' journeys to dual citizenship?

It definitely does. I've been on the other side, whereas who's heading the few other companies in this space have not. Using my legal expertise, I can help clients maneuver through the legalities, the research, and all the documentation requirements. But I can also relate personally to their situation, anticipate their questions, and empathize with their anxiety and their eagerness to reach the end of the process. At the end of the day, it's about building the relationships with my legal counterparts and government officials in Italy. Sometimes it's smooth and sometimes it's a rocky road, but I will always get them across the finish line.

Founder

Q: Are you seeing an increase in people seeking dual Italian citizenship in recent years? If so, why do you think this is?

Absolutely. While many people have contemplated this for years, changes in the U.S., be they political, legal, or otherwise, have altered the way many Americans perceive their home country. In this time of flux and uncertainty, pursuit of ancestral citizenship provides option and opportunity that many are taking advantage of.

Q: Lastly, Lauren, what would you say are your most valued experiences since starting Your Italian Passport?

Starting with an investment of only $750 and building a company that has helped thousands achieve their dual-citizenship dreams. I get a such joy out of being the conductor—and it's a big orchestra to lead. What is most rewarding is connecting our clients with their family history because everyone—even those with knowledge about their ancestry learns something. I love being part of their journeys and that discovery. It truly is a privilege.

Lauren is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and the Schreyer Honors College at Pennsylvania State University. Your Italian Passport is a corporate sponsor and partner, for purposes of Italian dual-citizenship, of the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), the largest organization of Italian Americans in the United States.

> "Using my legal expertise, I can help clients maneuver through the legalities, the research, and all the documentation requirements.

YOUR ITALIAN PASSPORT

CONTACT:

www.youritalianpassport.com
lhopkins@youritalianpassport.com
LI: Your Italian Passport
FB: YourITPassport
IG: youritalianpassport

Cory Tanner

Founder

> Middle-market business owners are the backbone of America. It's our job to make sure they're rewarded for their contribution to America's economy.

Consider this: Over 4.5 million U.S. businesses representing more than $10T in value will transition within 10-15 years—each one built on a lifetime of sweat, work, and passion. Yet when it's time for them to exit their businesses, only an estimated 20-30% that go to market will sell. For Cory Tanner, founder of Utah-based Exit IQ, who, himself, has owned and exited middle-market ventures since 2012, this is completely unacceptable. And as the leader of a firm that has turned this 80% failure rate into a 90% success rate for hundreds of privately held middle-market ($5m-$500m) companies over the last 15 years, he knows of what he speaks.

"For these business owners, their business is like family that they've nurtured and grown over decades, yet they're easily taken advantage of by knowledgeable acquisition teams driven to get the lowest price," Cory says. "As entrepreneurs ourselves, who have personally experienced the challenges and frustrations of exiting our own businesses, our goal is to protect them from the sharks and create the opportunity for owners to exit their business when they want, how they want, and for the optimum price."

To accomplish this, Cory, an Advanced Exit Planner (AeXP), works with Exit IQ's experienced team to strategically design and execute the optimum exit strategy for every business. Whether navigating an outside third-party sale, transferring ownership internally, or executing an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), Exit IQ quarterbacks the entire professional advisor team and stays with their clients well beyond the transaction, helping them invest the proceeds into a sound investment portfolio. "What drives us is trying to make sure these business owners receive the highest value for their business, rewarding them for the creation of new innovations and their contribution to the economy," he shares.

As Cory leads Exit IQ through unprecedented demand from businesses owners across the country, the principle upon which the company was built remains unwavering: Humanity. "This is what we stand for, and as we grow, we want to continue to make a positive contribution in the lives of those that are the lifeblood of America."
Here, Cory discusses the biggest problems—and fears—American business owners face when exiting and how Exit IQ is not only eliminating them, but changing the landscape in their favor.

Cory, for business owners considering an exit, what are some of the most common problems they face?

If I had to break it down into two bullet points: The current M&A industry is insufficient and broken and business owners are not prepared. Most owners will go through an exit once in their life, with no experience. Many don't prepare because they don't know the key components of an optimum exit plan, what advanced preparation is critical, how buyers will value their business, or if the net proceeds from the sale will provide the income needed to sustain their lifestyle. This makes them easy targets for experienced acquisition teams whose only goal is to get the lowest price. Many owners seek professional help from their CPA or attorney; however, they're only specialists in a very small part of the exit process. With no quarterback this oftentimes loses the business owner millions due to rushing to market with no advanced preparation. Also, owners don't know how to evaluate and select all the advisors needed: Exit Planner, CPA, M&A and estate planning attorney, valuation specialist, executive compensation specialist, etc.

We're solving these with our proven disciplined process that designs and executes the optimum exit plan for every business. We quarterback the entire professional advisor team, and stay with our clients through the five stages of advanced preparation, the close of the sale and onto the next chapter of their lives.

Does your own experience as an entrepreneur give you a deeper appreciation for your clients' fears and perspectives?

It absolutely does. I think the three greatest fears that you feel as a business owner are loss of

control, concern for your employees' jobs, and what will life be like after the sale.

First, every business owner fears loss of control. You work every day with your employees toward a common goal. When you enter the transaction stage unprepared you suddenly feel like you have no control, and that's terrifying. Imagine you're in an ocean full of sharks, a ton of buyers trying to get the lowest price. You don't have experienced advisors, and every investment banker is claiming they can sell it, even if they're not qualified. Second, fear for your employees' jobs, and this is often a dealbreaker. Many owners have, along with their top-tier management teams, worked for decades to build the company. It's the fear: "If I sell, are they going to fire the people who helped me build this?" Finally, fear of life after the sale. Business owners go to work every day for 10, 20, 30 years. The business is their pride and joy, their identity and where they have 80-90% of their financial assets. As they approach the close of the sale, the fear hits them. "What do I do now?"

At Exit IQ our proven disciplined Five Stage Process and Implementation Road Map eliminates these three fears and dramatically increases the odds of success for every business owner.

With all this in mind, how does Exit IQ eliminate these issues for business owners?

First, we are an advocate for our clients to select the right investment banker/business broker. This is a critical decision and must be a high-trust relationship. After comprehensive due diligence, we present the top 2-3 from our national network who meet with the business owner, and the owner makes the final decision on who they want to work with. Then we organize the Exit Advisor Roundtable, typically comprised of an M&A attorney, investment banker, valuation expert, compensation specialist, and the business owner's CPA. We quarterback the implementation team to execute the optimum exit strategy, and we assist the owner in evaluating the financial and non-financial structure of each offer. It is not always about money for our clients. Oftentimes, it is also about culture, employee security, business legacy, and future contributions to the local community. Our goal is to execute the ultimate exit and then assist every owner to manage their financial resources well into the next stage of their life, whatever that may look like. We are there from the critical preparation stage, through the sales transaction, and into their next life as they make the transition from business entrepreneur to successful investor.

EXIT IQ

www.exitiq.com | ctanner@exitiq.com

Dr. BYRON ERNEST

He's set his sights on being the source of growth development for educators everywhere as a veritable **"map to the stars."**

BYRON ERNEST
Leadery Global
Creative & Collaborative Help

Contact

www.byronernest.com
byron@byronernest.com
LI: Dr. Byron L. Ernest
Twitter: ByronErnest

Children are often told to reach for the stars. Equipping them for such a challenge is a mission entrusted to the honorable teachers and professors of the world—but who supports *them*? Who encourages *and* empowers educators to stretch to new heights and lead generations to that twinkling promise of tomorrow?

Dr. Byron Ernest, founder and chief positivity officer of Leadery Global, has dedicated his life to education. It is a passion that has driven him for 37 years as a teacher, a principal, a superintendent, and an industry leader whose devotion has been recognized as the *2010 Indiana Teacher of the Year,* and the *Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation National Outstanding Agriscience Teacher.* Additionally, Byron was awarded the *Lilly Endowment Distinguished Fellow Teacher Creativity Grant, the Smithsonian Teacher Ambassador Diffusion Award,* and *Inspire Education's Mentor of Excellence Award*, among others. Now, he's set his sights on being *the* source of growth development for educators everywhere as a veritable "map to the stars."

Founded in 2021, Leadery Global provides customized leadership development programs to academic organizations and individuals in a unique and engaging way that diverges and distinguishes itself from the outdated and uninspiring "teacher's seminar." Throughout all 50 states and globally, Dr. Ernest presents solutions to embolden members of academia and educational institutions, while more corporations are reaching out to him for help in improving their organizations and leadership as well.

We spoke with Dr. Ernest to learn more about his segue from teacher to trainer, and why his unorthodox "syllabus" is attracting clients in droves.

Q **Dr. Ernest, what compelled you to start Leadery Global?**

In short, I wasn't seeing people who were motivating *and* giving people practical tools for growth. Much of my career was in teaching, so I sat through many so-called "professional development sessions," and the speakers were always static and dull—most weren't former teachers, so they lacked perspective. Teachers love their jobs, and they constantly want to improve their skills or discover new ways to reach their students, but too many people get into this field of professional development for the wrong reasons. I do this because I'm passionate about it, I'm good at it, and I want to help others.

Q How is your approach different from other companies, and how can educators and schools benefit from your services?

Nothing I do is cookie-cutter. This is one of my core values. Educators and schools have different needs and skills they want to focus on. Before I do anything, I find out exactly what they are so that I'm giving them precisely what they need—not a smattering of what they need buried in a session that covers a mountain of other things they don't. I define what I do as "gatherings," as opposed to meetings, classes, or training sessions. We're going to have fun, talk, and laugh. It's an organic conversation with heuristic learning.

Dr. Ernest presents solutions to embolden members of academia and educational institutions, while more corporations are reaching out to him for help in improving their organizations and leadership as well.

Q What do you enjoy most about your work? Is there a particularly motivating factor?

I get to work with very diverse groups of people with very different needs. I'm at a point in my life where I want to help others be the best that they can be. I love knowing I've made a difference. For example, I became the principal for Emmerich Manual High School in Indianapolis after it was taken over by the State for receiving seven consecutive failing annual performance grades. I developed a new staff and culture of excellence that focused on student achievement and performance. As a result, the State removed us from its "F List." I'm proud to have had a part in that achievement.

Q Tell us a little about your book, *The Hand In The Back Of The Room: Connecting School Work To Real Life*.

Like the name states, it encourages educators to infuse their classrooms with everyday, relatable experiences in order to engage *all* students—especially those who are not actively immersed or enthusiastic.

Founder & Chief Positivity Officer

Q You have such a wide breadth of knowledge, both from experience and education. Tell us about some previous roles and your academic attainments.

Prior to founding Leadery Global, and apart from being a teacher,principal, and superintendent, I wrote and developed teacher leadership programs, coached teachers, and mentored and coached principals. I am a policy maker and citizen leader on the Indiana State Board of Education; chaired the Graduation Pathways panel, created to study and make recommendations to the Indiana State Board of Education; and former chair on the board of directors for the National Association of State Boards of Education. I received my B.S. in animal science and agricultural education and my master's in education from Purdue University. I then earned a doctorate in administrator leadership for teaching and learning from Walden University and completed the Advanced Educational Leadership Program at Harvard University.

ERIC Gilliam

Owner & CEO

Visium's services are improving the quality of care, the patient engagement, and financial performance of the practice or the hospital.

About

Imagine a health care system in which everyone has their very own health care *team*. Someone to advocate for them with employers and doctors, someone to navigate all the red tape—to coordinate hospital visits, manage prescriptions, and assist patients throughout *and after* recovery. This is the vision that drove Eric Gilliam through over two decades of managing hospitals and health systems and leading them as president and COO. One that he refused to let go of as he witnessed the medical community's tireless work to guide patients through the labyrinth of care in an overburdened system, and watched patients fall through the cracks despite their best efforts.

In 2019, after a long, extraordinary career, Eric could have retired comfortably; instead, he was more determined than ever to find a solution to the gaps in health care. And he delivered, founding a company that has turned the dream into reality for more than four dozen physicians and health care providers, private employers, and thousands of patients in just three short years—and he's just getting started.

This is Visium HealthLink, a comprehensive population health company that partners with health care providers and employers to improve the overall health and care coordination for patients and employees with chronic conditions. Each client has a personal health advocate who utilizes Visium HealthLink's technology to provide care management, remote patient monitoring, transition care management, annual wellness visits, and advanced care planning. It's all covered by Medicare and most insurance companies.

Visium HealthLink serves physicians, hospitals, and ACO's with programs that allow organizations to easily adopt a model of advancing wellness and delivering value-based care, while improving the patient experience and earning new, recurring revenue. Currently serving Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia, Visium will soon expand throughout the country. And, with his multidisciplinary team of nurses, social workers, dieticians, certified medical assistants, cardiologists, endocrinologists, pain management specialists, and primary care doctors, Eric has accomplished his goal and unraveled the problem he so passionately set out to resolve.

We spoke with Eric to learn more about Visium HealthLink, the services they provide, and how they are improving the quality of life for thousands of patients nationwide.

Q&A

Q: Eric, what compelled you to start Visium HealthLink?

A: Throughout my career, I recognized that patients really needed additional support and the expertise of someone well versed in the health care industry to help them navigate their care. There are so many gaps that can occur, and patients are often caught in the middle. We connect all the moving pieces of the health care systems to close these gaps and get them the health care they need when they need it.

Q: How are Visium's services and programs benefiting physicians and hospitals?

A: They're improving the quality of care, the patient engagement, and financial performance of the practice or the hospital. Because we work directly with the patient to handle the health care coordination and management, doctors and hospitals can focus specifically on patient care, and it frees them up to treat more people, which, in turn, increase their revenue. It's a win-win for medical professionals and patients. As we saw during COVID, oftentimes, the demand for care is so significant that patients wait weeks, months, to see their doctors. We give doctors updates every month until that appointment so that they're current on the patient's

Visium HealthLink
YOUR HEALTH PARTNER

health, allowing higher quality of care and a deeper patient-doctor relationship.

Q: Your remote monitoring service is a gamechanger that not only allows for immediate interventions, but gives peace of mind to patients and caregivers. Tell us how it works.

A: Many people are living with chronic conditions—hypertension, diabetes, congestive heart failure, asthma, COPD, obesity, and a host of others. With our remote monitors, patients can track their blood pressure, glucose levels, airflow, and other critical readings from home. That information comes to us in real time, and we can work with their provider and make quick interventions. We have nurses on call 24/7. If an abnormal reading comes in at midnight, we call the patient to see if everything's okay. It's giving patients and families huge peace of mind knowing that they're being watched over.

Q: Can individuals enroll in your program?

A: Absolutely. A person can tell their doctor that they want to use Visium's care management program, and the physician can either send a referral directly to us and we'll get it all set up for them, or they can implement the program in their practice. People can also call us directly, and we'll have them up and running typically within a week. We take care of everything.

Q: Let's end where it all began. What do you enjoy most about your work, Eric, or what drives you?

A: What drives me is seeing the results that we're able to deliver through this program and seeing the improved health and outcomes for the patients. Every patient or family member I talk to, they're just so grateful for what we're doing. They are the people that continue to motivate and inspire me.

Eric is a board-certified patient advocate and holds a master's in business administration and health administration.

CONTACT

www.visiumhealthlink.com
elgilliam@visiumhealthlink.com

> We have nurses on call 24/7. If an abnormal reading comes in at midnight, we call the patient to see if everything's okay. It's giving patients and families huge peace of mind knowing that they're being watched over.

Dr. Ming-Chien CHYU

> Dr. Chyu has been a pioneer in the field of healthcare engineering and was one of the early advocates for applying engineering practices to efforts to enhance the delivery of healthcare.
>
> -James P. Bagian, MD, PE, US National Academy of Medicine, US National Academy of Engineering, former NASA Astronaut

MEET DR. MING-CHIEN CHYU

Dr. Ming-Chien Chyu is the founding president of the Healthcare Engineering Alliance Society (HEALS), a global organization established in 2016 that works to advance healthcare through engineering and to promote collaborative and innovative exchanges between engineering and healthcare. This society also prepares engineering students for occupations in the healthcare industry and helps practicing engineering professionals to advance their careers in healthcare.

ABOUT HEALTHCARE ENGINEERING

Engineering has been playing a crucial role in serving healthcare and bringing about revolutionary advances in healthcare. As its name implies, healthcare engineering encompasses engineering involved in all aspects of healthcare. Dr. Chyu, supported by 40 expert co-authors from around the world, was the first to define this field in a milestone whitepaper and on the current Wikipedia profile. Dr. Chyu's definition and contributions continue to serve as the cornerstone for the development of this unique and groundbreaking sector.

DR. CHYU'S CAREER

Dr. Chyu is a tenured professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and an adjunct professor in the School of Medicine at Texas Tech University, also a fellow of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American College of Healthcare Trustees. He has conducted research funded by the National Institute of Health, National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as national laboratories, professional societies, state governments, and private foundations. He has participated in superconductor research at Argonne National Laboratory, the design of the International Space Station at NASA Johnson Space Center and served as a consultant for nuclear energy research at Sandia National Laboratories. Dr. Chyu has served on a number of national-level technical committees such as the chair of the Superconductivity Technical Committee in the Advanced Energy Systems Division of ASME. He has authored 200 technical publications on engineering and healthcare. His tireless dedication to the advancement of engineering and education has earned him numerous awards, including *Outstanding Researcher, Award of Excellence, Best Paper*, *Most Useful Paper*, *Excellence in Teaching, Professor of the Year*, *Most Influential Faculty Member, and Distinguished Achievement*.

> Dr. Chyu may have already secured a historical position in the development of healthcare engineering.
>
> -Fazle Hussain, PhD, US National Academy of Engineering, The World Academy of Science

Dr. Chyu has been in the field of healthcare engineering for more than 15 years, where he has founded numerous organizations, programs, and platforms to bridge healthcare and engineering, advancing not only his own career, but those of leading professionals from both sectors. He has made a major impact on the healthcare/medical community through such innovations as a platform that allows healthcare professionals, engineers, researchers, inventors, entrepreneurs, and companies to collaborate on projects and develop new medical devices and technologies. The platform features a list of technical projects that address unmet needs in patient care, mostly originated from clinicians and medical device/technology companies seeking collaborations on the design, prototyping, testing, clinical trial, regulation, FDA clearance/approval, manufacture, capital funding, etc. This platform also provides excellent opportunities for engineering students to work with clinicians and companies on real-world healthcare projects. As a powerful tool for the invention and development of new medical devices, Dr. Chyu established a

comprehensive, user-friendly medical device platform that provides systematic state-of-the-technology information for all medical devices (currently over 210,000), including the most recent, cleared/approved by FDA.

As a major contribution to help train engineering students for occupations in healthcare, Dr. Chyu founded a program that invites medical doctors with expertise in healthcare engineering and medical technology innovation, particularly those few MDs with engineering degrees, to deliver lectures to engineering students, with a focus on healthcare issues and problems that need engineering solutions to directly improve patient outcomes. Also invited as guest speakers are engineering leaders from the healthcare industry, particularly the medical device/technology sector, as well as medical school professors with degree(s) in engineering. These experts with dual expertise turn out to be most effective in teaching healthcare engineering to engineering students.

Also, in preparing engineering students for jobs in healthcare, Dr. Chyu developed a healthcare engineering certificate program featuring the innovative Cutting-Edge Courses Customized (CeCoCu), which allows individuals to determine the course topic, objectives, and scope of their learning, based on their own backgrounds, interests, career strategies, and market opportunities. He works with healthcare engineering professionals and industrial leaders on how to better train engineering students for healthcare jobs and helps university professors and administrators improve their curricula. Dr. Chyu is also the founder of one of the first graduate healthcare engineering degree programs in the world (2009, Texas Tech University), as well as one of the first programs that help engineers and engineering students to find jobs and internship opportunities in the healthcare industry and for healthcare industry employers to recruit qualified engineers and engineering students. The Healthcare Engineering Mentoring Program (HEMP) he founded is a platform where healthcare engineering professionals and leaders volunteer to share their knowledge, skills and experience to help engineering students prepare for occupations in the healthcare/medical technology industry, and to help young healthcare engineers thrive.

Dr. Chyu is the founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Healthcare Engineering*, one of the first journals to publish scientific articles on collaborative research in this field focusing on impact on patient outcomes. Ming also introduced the Healthcare Engineering Online Communities that provide updated information about more than 500 topics from artificial intelligence to 3D printing for surgery, engineering for cancer diagnosis, and nanomedicine.

Professor & Founding President

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Chyu shares, “I am lucky to have married my wife, Professor Chwan-Li (Leslie) Shen, Texas Tech University School of Medicine. I learned so much from her about unmet needs facing healthcare professionals, which motivated me to develop innovative approaches and platforms to address those issues. I also thank all HEALS members and followers worldwide, healthcare industry, government (FDA and NIH in particular), and Texas Tech University for the supports of pursuit of my passion for all these years. It was an incredible journey from “not sure about what I am doing” to exciting connection with more and more people sharing the same passion and being able to help people with different needs on a daily basis. That is the major impetus that drives me moving down this road every day with great enjoyment.”

**Edited by Ming-Chien Chyu*

CONTACT: www.healthcare-engineering.org | m.chyu@healthcare-engineering.org | LI: Ming Chien

EMMANUEL Glaze

> “As leaders, together, we can change lives one person at a time.”

As a child, Emmanuel Glaze would peer through the fence of the Augusta National Golf Club to watch the sport’s greatest athletes compete in the Masters Tournament. Like so many kids from low-income families in Lincolnton, Georgia, the elite confines were forbidden to him, and Emmanuel yearned to see what was on the other side of the fence. His determination to do so and his passion for sports would drive him through a decades-long career as a football coach, TV host for the Next Level Sports and Entertainment Network, and the founder of two thriving media enterprises—The Crush Sports Network and OTV Media LLC. With CSN’s growing popularity as a highly respected network in Atlanta—over 10,000 listeners in just six years—and OTV’s swelling roster of guests across sports, business, and entertainment, Emmanuel’s status as a business leader and entrepreneur is well established. But with all his success, he was on a bigger mission—to use his experience to give youths the opportunities he never had.

In 2019, he founded Optimize The Vizion, a nonprofit dedicated to helping uplift kids across the Atlanta metro area by exposing them to the countless opportunities and possibilities the world can provide—all free of charge. With participation from the Atlanta Falcons, Georgia State Football, CBS, and a growing number of local and national businesses, leaders, and sports teams, nearly 20 youths from sixth to twelfth grade are seeing a vast horizon of possibilities for a brighter future. Through him, they see that dreams can indeed become a reality, and the “other side” of the fence is theirs for the taking.

We sat down with Emmanuel to learn more about his organization and his mission to lift up younger generations.

What inspired you to start Optimize the Vizion?

I had worked with youths for 18 years, and was a middle school football coach for 10. I had played sports in school and would go to Falcons games and see professionals working with the team on the sidelines. I thought, “Who are they? I want to be one of them.” In 2018, I was interviewing Tiger Woods at East Lake Golf Club after his Tour Championship victory. I noticed hardly any local kids there, and I knew that I could change this. I combined my coaching and sports radio experience to form the organization six months later.

Tell us a bit more about the organization.

We work with high school, college, and professional sports teams and programs, as well as businesses, to expose youths to the career possibilities that they might not otherwise know about. When they see the professionals behind the teams, they realize they don’t have to be a football player to work in sports. When they see the sound engineers at Patchwerk Recording Studios or meet the executives at the local news station, they realize they don’t have to be a rock star or TV celebrity to work in those fields. There is no charge to join or participate in the events. We handle food, tickets, and transportation.

What has the feedback been from students, parents, and businesses and teams?

It’s been phenomenal. The program was created for middle-schoolers, but the students asked that it include high school because of all the wonderful things we’ve been doing. The parents are so happy that they play a big part as chaperones and advocates, and the businesses and teams have enjoyed our students so much, we’ve worked with them on multiple occasions. The Falcons were so gracious, letting us speak with their marketing and advertising teams.

Why is it important for business and community leaders to lift up younger generations?

Because children really *are* our future, and if you show them people like us, successful people, you can show them what they can be. We have 16 students—“Vizionaries”—in our program, and if you can get 16 people to believe in themselves and a bright future, you hope that each one can affect 16 more, and then it will spread. As leaders, together, we can change lives one person at a time.

Optimize The Vizion

With all his success, he was on a bigger mission—to use his experience to give youths the opportunities he never had.

Founder & CEO

With two flourishing media companies, you are clearly a leader who has walked the walk. Tell us about The Crush Sports Network and OTV Media, LLC.

CSN is a sports talk network that I started seven years ago with my partner, Maceo Heard, Jr., and I'm also the co-host. I'm just ecstatic that it's become so popular. OTV Media creates healthy, exciting conversations on sports, business, entertainment, etc., and airs on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Since starting in 2020, we've interviewed over 80 professionals from across the country. Each program is built to create a positive influence in the communities we serve.

www.OptimizeTheVizion.org | emmanuelglaze@optimizethevizion.org | LI: Emmanuel Glaze | Optimize The Vizion
FB: Emmanuel R Glaze | Optimize The Vizion | OTV Media Network | The Crush Sports Talk
IG: EGlazeOTV | OptimizeTheVizion | OTVMediaNetwork | The Crush Sports Talk

GUS

Founder/CEO

Ochoa

If there's one thing that Gus Ochoa knows, it's that no two businesses are alike. Like the people who run them, they evolve, shift, and develop at different paces and in different ways. And, as continually progressing and changing entities, they cannot be put into, then kept in, a one-size-fits-all box. Even as technology itself advances at the speed of light, the need for unique, customized, and "case-by-case" IT services that can keep pace with all this motility has never been more essential. Luckily, for the business owners of Chicago, and quite often beyond, Gus Ochoa created O-Lux Technologies.

O-Lux Technologies, based in Naperville, Illinois, is a leading, full-service IT management firm that specializes in scalable, fully managed IT solutions for small to mid-sized businesses. Founded in 2020 and backed by over a decade of holistic experience, this is not your average, Xerox version of an IT provider. With 24/7 support, backed by their industry-leading response time guarantee of 15-30 minutes, a triaged ticketing system, and white glove service that easily surpasses the competition, O-Lux Technologies is the model that all other IT companies should aspire to. "Technology is at the core of most industries today, and we know the path to modern success and sustainability is built on steadfast, strategic IT management," Gus shares. "We're making it easier for businesses of all sizes to leverage the power of cutting-edge tech without the hassle of an in-house IT team." And with that mission, Gus and his team have helped businesses of all sizes to increase productivity, enhance stability, and amplify security.

The Top 100 Magazine spoke with Gus to learn more about his background, why he started O-Lux Technologies, and how they continue to differentiate themselves in such a saturated market.

Gus, first tell us a little about your background and what you did before you founded O-Lux Technologies.

I've been in the field of IT for over a decade. Earlier in my career, it was primarily in a consulting capacity for large enterprises, such as Fortune 500 companies and the military. After about five years of that, I pivoted to serve independent organizations, which allowed me to expand my knowledge base and fine-tune my skills for application in the small-business arena. This was especially valuable because it allowed me to see what was lacking in the services these businesses were receiving and what was being offered. Ultimately, it helped me devise a strategy for offering more options with more scalability and lower costs.

> "We're making it easier for businesses of all sizes to leverage the power of cutting-edge tech without the hassle of an in-house IT team."

Gus and his team have helped businesses of all sizes to increase productivity, enhance stability, and amplify security.

What made you decide to start a company that would cater to and support small business?

There was definitely an unmet need for bespoke solutions. Almost every company out there was providing a monthly service "package" that did not offer the more unique options that so many clients require. The small business experiences growth and can develop or slow erratically. Regardless of the operational trends, we can revise our services to match what the business is going through at any given time. We are serving a wide array of business types, from law offices, engineering and architectural firms, publishing companies, and property management clients to construction, health care, education, and logistics companies. There's just no way a "standard" package can serve the varying and unique needs of so many activities. At the end of the day, it's about helping our customers utilize their IT optimally, in a way that suits *their* needs.

You're very passionate about the company and the industry as a whole. You even created the company website yourself. Why is it so important for you to differentiate O-Lux Technologies from others in the IT sector?

Most people don't realize that there are options outside of the antiquated, "standard" IT solutions packages offered by typical IT firms. Then they're stuck with services they might not need or unable to get services they do need. We don't restrict our amenities to those that we can provide *easily*. It's not about us—it's always about the client. Some businesses might need network, computer, and cybersecurity solutions, as well as monitoring, etc., while others need more focus on certain technology. We even have partners to assist with the services we do not offer, such as website and software development. Innovation is key and I always want to be on the cutting edge of technology so that we can understand the unique tech needs of today's businesses. Our industry knowledge lets us identify weak points, suggest innovative solutions, and effectively manage our clients' IT. We are a company founded and managed by IT experts. As such, we're able to foster a culture of in-depth tech understanding throughout the entire organization. For our clients, that means faster solutions, fewer problems, and a more efficient IT team.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

The technology. I got interested in this field initially because technology is the future—it is ever growing and expanding, and I love doing something new all the time. Being able to stay on top of new trends and products allows me to better serve our clients, but it's also very rewarding as a career.

This field requires you to have several certifications. Can you tell us about them?

The certifications are probably the most difficult to obtain. You have to be skilled and knowledgeable, with a thorough understanding of the critical functions required by an organization to actively protect their data and have the ability to grow and adapt with an organization's evolving data protection needs. I have several certifications, including Cisco, Microsoft, Veeam and many more. I have a double major in cybersecurity and information technology for my BA.

What are a few of your greatest professional accomplishments?

One is seeing my small business clients growing, knowing that our services helped to facilitate that growth. Also, obtaining my certifications, not only because they were challenging to get, but because with them, I can ensure my clients have access to the skills I've acquired in pursuing them. It inspires confidence, and I'm glad that my clients feel secure with O-Lux Technologies on their side.

Allison Kline

Owner & CEO

> I love being able to go into someone's home or office and make their space functional, plus I leave people with tips and tricks to help them stay organized.

CONTACT

www.greathorse.com
www.Restorationchaos.com
www.Albrighthcs.com
allisonmoran1001@yahoo.com
LI: Allison Kline, MBA
FB & IG: RestorationChaos

> I've always liked things to be aesthetically pleasing and entirely functional, so I launched Restoration Chaos to assist people with both.

Allison Kline is a creative thinker, strategic leader, marketing guru, and multifaceted entrepreneur who has perfected the art of multitasking. In the business world, she's a triple threat—leading two thriving ventures of her own and serving as membership director at the luxury lifestyle club, GreatHorse. Allison is an unstoppable force whose fierce ambition and drive have allowed her to thrive in this male-dominated industry. Since joining the club just six years ago, Allison's been a key player in their explosive membership growth, which has swelled from 150 to 550 families, shooting from a historic annual average of 40 new memberships, annually, to 122 added last year alone—Today, the club is nearly sold out!

So what does it take to accomplish such a feat? It takes an uncommon repertoire of creativity, skill, ambition, and experience combined with the unique perspective of an entrepreneur driven to improve the status quo—all of which Allison brings in abundance. But more than this, it is her passion for connecting and helping people, a desire that bloomed in high school when she began working with Habitat for Humanity—and one that has underpinned her entire career.

While Allison drives the upward trajectory of GreatHorse with her innovative marketing and advertising efforts and innate ability to connect with people, she's bringing unique solutions to improve people's lives through her own booming enterprises, Restoration Chaos and Albright Home Care Services. We sat down with Allison to learn more about the luxury lifestyle club, her pair of thriving businesses, and the myriad connections she's cultivated along the way.

The Interview

Q: Let's start with Greathorse. Tell us a bit more about your role and the club.

A: I manage the membership process from start to finish. Through the application process to making sure our longtime members stay engaged and connected in the community. As a department of one, I am responsible for marketing plans, budget forecasts, external marketing, meeting budgets, outstanding balances, and disputes. We're in Western Massachusetts, but in a *very* rural town. We don't have any stop lights in town and only one gas station, so the fact that we're able to draw people from the tristate area, and even across the country to our rural location, is exciting and really a testament to our unique luxury offerings. I love connecting with so many people from various walks of life and introducing them to our club. We have a lot of really great events where I really work to connect like-minded individuals through the membership experience. For example, in June we have an event with Macallan and Bentley Motors where our members will have the opportunity to partake in an elite test-driving experience and sample unique spirits. As our motto stands, "It's Different at GreatHorse."

RC
Restoration Chaos

Q: You're also the owner of two thriving firms. Tell us about your latest venture, Restoration Chaos.

A: I'll be happy to! It's a functional home and office organization company that I started in October 2021. I've always liked things to be aesthetically pleasing and entirely functional, so I launched Restoration Chaos to assist people with both. I help a lot of clients with kitchen organization, because if people can't visually see something, and they think it's lost or misplaced, they overspend. I love being able to go into someone's home or office and make their space functional, plus I leave people with tips and tricks to help them *stay* organized. Each client has different needs, so it's about making the space functional for each person and best aligned with their needs.

Q: You co-founded your first company, Albright Home Care Services, four years ago. Tell us a bit about this one.

A: We're an intimate consulting firm for in-home private-duty nursing, offering around-the-clock staffing for home care and private duty nursing. Many of our nurses and

caregivers' patients are terminally ill, or have a very severe illness, therefore there is no room for staffing errors. We work diligently to connect quality leads with potential home care providers, so we're basically matchmakers for people who place individuals in homes to provide private duty care.

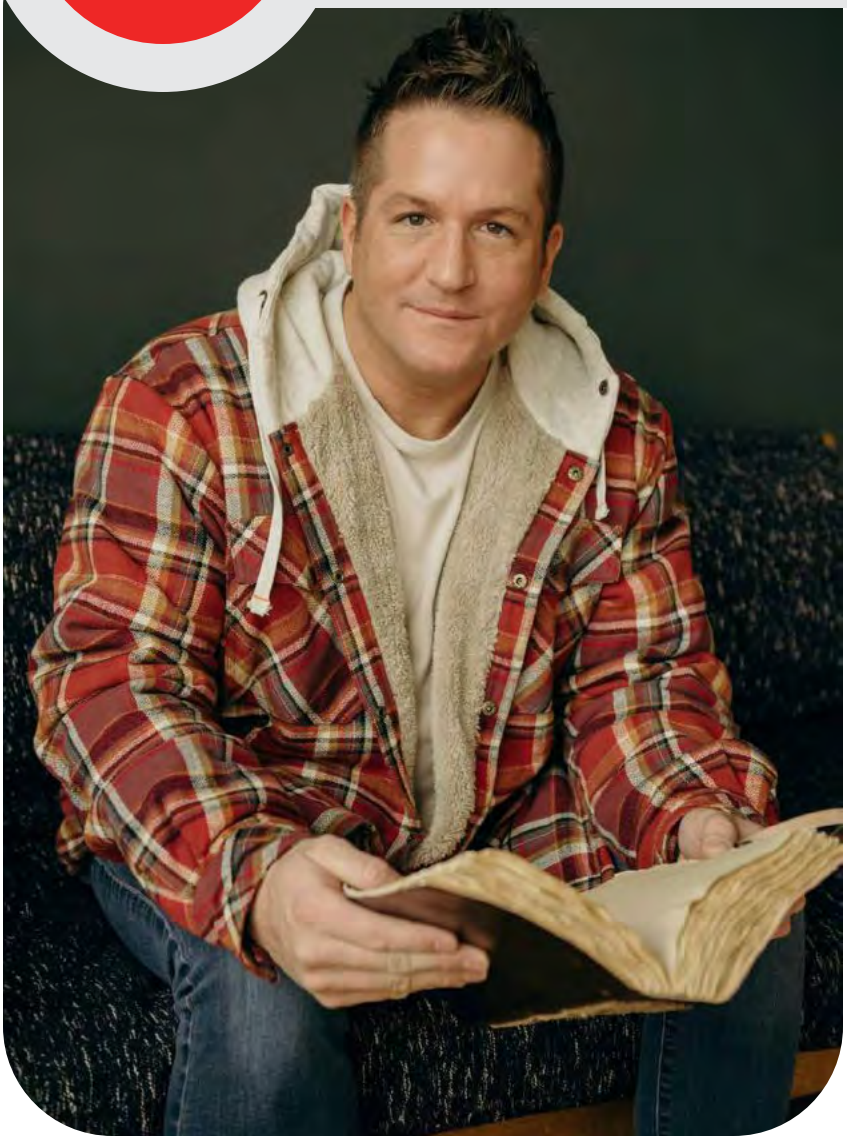
Q: What do you enjoy most about your work, or what drives you, Allison?

A: I love that no two days are ever the same, which keeps things new and fresh. I encounter so many unique individuals, especially in the lifestyle membership industry, and I just love connecting with people. The fact that I'm able to help people and find solutions to make their lives easier is really what drives me every single day.

SCAN ME

Allison holds an MBA, master's degree in Entrepreneurial Thinking and Innovative Practices from Bay Path University, where she received the Best Innovation Award for her graduate school thesis. She's a Retail Management Student of the Year Award winner, and a recipient of the Dean-to-Dean Award at American International College, where she was named Marketing Student of the Year.

Q&A CORT TWITTY



> “I’m on a mission to help those suffering like I used to—good people who put everyone else’s needs before their own.

Kicked out of school. Homeless at 16. Forty-one different residences by the age of 18. But today, Cort Twitty is a licensed fiduciary and part of a financial advising firm with $64.5 million under management and helping branding efforts to help companies grow to values over $1 billion. In 2017, he founded Steele Institute for Emotional and Financial Literacy (SIEFL) and has helped over 1,600 people to date with something more precious than finances: mental health.

Cort’s own personal experiences and struggles inspired him to write *Godfidence: The Art of Quiet Confidence and Emotional Intelligence*, which addresses the difficult but very real issues of depression, suicide, and addiction facing professionals. “I’m on a mission to help those suffering like I used to—good people who put everyone else’s needs before their own,” Cort says.

Cort was gracious enough to share some of the insights behind his book, his company, and his mission to unite others.

Q: What inspired you to found the Steele Institute?

I wanted to roll up my sleeves and help with a problem that’s bigger than me: the issue of suicide among health care workers, professionals, and teenagers, so I co-founded the institute with my son and my daughter, in the name of my grandparents, Cliff and Emily Steele. It gave me a chance to show my kids what is possible with action, hard work, and clear purpose. We are only as good as the people we surround ourselves with. That’s why people like Andy Weng, Richie Norton, Tony Robbins, Christie Turley, and Jess Hershey have been so instrumental in teaching me strength where I’m weak.

Q: Tell us about your book, Cort.

The book has become an innovation for mental health. The book is extremely vulnerable; I share suffering that few in the public eye are willing to share. I discuss major setbacks in each chapter. Each setback led to suicidal consideration. Although I was suicidal, nobody knew or suspected it. The book was originally written for suicide in health care, because it’s a huge problem and they have little chance of overcoming depression and suicidal ideation with the resources available to them. It has

Author, Serial Entrepreneur, Emotional Intelligence Expert, and Founder

since evolved into something much more broad and bigger than I imagined. I walk readers through a simple routine I've perfected over 24 years to help busy, stressed people find rest and peace so they can thrive personally and professionally. Unlike religion, the book is authentic, vulnerable, and transparent. It's religiously and politically neutral, so don't let the title fool you. Ages 14+.

Q: Why did you choose to address specifically the combination of—and connection between—emotion and finance?

Because I found major, preventable mistakes with each subject, and then found the reason they are, in fact, connected. First with emotion, the top five professions that commit suicide most often are all in health care, with dentists leading the way at over 8% (all five are over 6.5%), yet the words "mental health" are still unspoken in dental school, why?

Now finance: major, credible studies show about 65% of Americans are considered financially illiterate, I know I was. A finance class is only required to graduate high school in 17 states, yet all 50 states require a sex ed class, again, why? But here's the kicker: two of every three suicide notes left behind specifically mention money, debt, insurance, or finances. It's great for my business, but I'm the only person in the world talking about these subjects together.

Q: You also talk about another serious issue that you, yourself, have experienced and overcome: addiction. Will you share some of your personal insight on this?

I have met some of the brightest minds and most creative people in recovery. Of course, recovery is anonymous, everyone is there in the spirit of universal improvement. There weren't too many people that wanted me around when I decided a new way of life was necessary. But the people in recovery welcomed me with open arms. It's a one-day-at-a-time program that allows me to keep my ego deflated by accounting for my thoughts and actions. I've truly been blessed, and in July, I celebrated five years. Now I get to pay it forward by mentoring men facing the same dilemma.

"A Licensed Fiduciary"

Q: What drives you in life, Cort?

Someone commits suicide every 40 seconds. That drives me. There are 1,440 minutes per day, and it only takes 10 minutes per day to keep myself centered. Miracles happen every day! As I give this interview, I'm literally writing a report on quantifying how much being a positive person helps you in life. Six years ago, I worked at a mattress factory and wanted to die. I get it, life is hard. But 10 minutes a day, relative to how much we work on our facades and social media handles, seems doable. Magic happens when we work on us.

Steele.

CONTACT

www.cort-twitty.com
cort@theheroadvocate.com
LI: corttwitty | IG: twittycort
FB: Steele.Twitty

SCOTT Settles Founder

CONTACT

www.thega.com | scott@thega.com
LI, IG: scottsettles | FB: scottmsettles

> Everyone lives online now, so we use algorithms to help our client firms' ads get in front of the right people, and we fine-tune the placement of them so that they get the attention of candidates with the right credentials for finance and other positions.

In an era of the Great Resignation and the rise of professional contract workers across business and finance, companies everywhere are struggling to attract and retain extraordinary talent. Enter Scott Settles, the visionary founder and chief recruitment officer of digital recruiting firm The General Agency (The GA) who is turning the age-old industry on its head and driving it into the future. With an advanced talent attraction algorithm and new technologies, they're positioning their partner's ads where they *should* be—directly in front of career-changers, professional athletes, and military veterans.

Founded in 2017, The GA exploded right out of the gate, helping over 200 clients and financial leaders across the country attract top talent to their firms in the last five years—and their trajectory shows no signs of slowing. As business leaders are now engaged in an unprecedented competition to capture the crème de la crème of candidates, they're finding that "old school" internet recruiting is yielding dismal results. And no one knows this better than Scott. He's worked the finance industry for over a decade—*after* he retired from a 10-year career as a PGA golf professional. Indeed, The GA is most assuredly *not* your grandmother's headhunter. They use the power of the internet and social media to dominate their clients' markets and promote their career opportunities. And in just five years, they've placed over 3,000 candidates into financial, insurance, and sales contract positions, giving their client companies the talent they need, and their individual clients work in their field.

We sat down with Scott to find out how The GA emerged from the sea of uninspired recruitment tactics, and how he's helping reshape the way companies think about hiring.

Q: Where did the idea for GA come from, and what differentiates it from recruiters and headhunters?

A: I've been in finance for the past 12 years, and I always thought it was strange that the financial sector didn't seem to believe in internet recruiting. I developed my digital recruitment concept while serving as Northwestern Mutual's director of recruitment. I knew how challenging it was, seeing my colleagues struggle to crack the code and retain talent, and it was because the job descriptions were boring and weren't reaching the right people. I knew there had to be a better way. I told leaders of offices all around the country about my idea, and they thought I was on to something. From there, it just completely blew up.

Q: You work with both companies and candidates. How does this unique approach benefit both sides?

A: Everyone lives online now, so we use algorithms to help our client firms' ads get in front of the right people, and we fine-tune the placement of them so that they get the attention of candidates with the right credentials for finance and other positions. We often work with the companies to tweak the ads and build the targeting for optimal results. We give them the best of the best candidates, and let them have the conversation with the candidates directly. By letting us handle the tech side of recruitment, running the behind-the-scenes promotion, our clients can focus on the human element that they know best.

When it comes to individual job-seekers, we have an inbound recruiting model, so all candidates come to us with a real interest in learning more about our partners' firms. This produces warmer leads and more engaged candidates than traditional internet recruiting. The other beautiful thing about internet recruitment is the diversity of candidates we attract. We're reaching a much more diverse candidate pool that likely wouldn't have been discovered by the company looking to hire.

Q: Are you seeing greater demand as a result of the Great Resignation and an increase in contract workers and career-changers as a result of COVID-19?

A: Absolutely. The last two years have been the busiest we've ever seen. The financial sector in general has never been more attractive than it is now. It has everything people are looking for these days, including remote work, more freedom, and more money. People got used to new lifestyles during COVID; they don't want to be stuck at a desk anymore. Most of the roles we offer from our clients really check the boxes on all those things.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your work, Scott?

A: What I really love about my job is finding people that have never heard of these firms and didn't know what they did, or thought the company might be too exclusive for them. But when they see our ads, they realize that they're a great fit for the company and learn things about them, and themselves, that they didn't know.

Scott is a Chartered Leadership Fellow® (CLF®) of the American College of Financial Services.

"When it comes to individual job-seekers, we have an inbound recruiting model, so all candidates come to us with a real interest in learning more about our partners' firms.

John Burt

Although the pursuit of happiness may take many paths and even change over time...diversity matters, it always has and always will.

With increased awareness and prioritization of *inclusion and diversity*, the principle of this idiom, are what John Burt has dedicated his life to.

John is the CEO and co-founder of JumpStart Advisory Group, established in 2004, a forward-thinking company that connects employers and academic institutions with highly qualified diverse candidates during three career phases (undergraduate and graduate school, and working professionals). Among their distinguished index of patrons are top universities who have been there since the beginning, such as Duke, Univ. of Chicago, Harvard, Stanford, Wharton, Columbia, and their corporate client list includes Bank of America, Evercore, First Republic, Vista Equity Partners, Accenture, Bain, BCG, Deloitte, McKinsey, West Monroe, Google, Sephora, Beam Suntory, ConAgra, as well as many others.

Leaving his corporate career, John has led JumpStart's business model across financial services, management consulting, consumer product goods, technology, and healthcare industries with clients in their pursuit of an inclusive and diverse culture. More notable still, JumpStart enables individuals to progress in their careers and students to advance their education.

Undoubtedly, John's contributions to create an *equal opportunity society*, where diversity and inclusion is no longer a necessary labor, have been immeasurable, but his own journey was not without conflict. While his academic background may have been a catalyst to the formation of JumpStart, he was a graduate student during an unprecedented time in America—9/11. Several years later, following that catastrophe, John would be faced with two personal tragedies—the untimely and unfortunate loss of his son and, one year ago, his wife. They were grievous losses that impacted him deeply, both emotionally and professionally, leading to a reassessment of his life. He questioned how he would re-invent himself and remain productive as a businessperson, but more importantly, as a father to his two young daughters and adult son. Thankfully, with faith and support of many, John chose to endure, and more than that, to succeed and to uplift others in the process.

We spoke with John to learn more about his journey and how it led to the creation of a company whose sole aspiration is to democratize equality in every workplace, campus, and community.

Q: John, what was the impetus for JumpStart?

A: While pursuing an MBA and transition into to professional services, I realized the need for advanced diversity and inclusion. My classmate, Elton Ndoma-Ogar, and I created a strategic approach to the job search process as MBA students, which resulted in 19 job offers. We published our strategies and then, realizing that others could benefit from them, we turned *plan* to *practice*.

Q: Since co-founding JumpStart in 2004, you've held other roles that focus on diversity. Tell us a little about them.

A: As a co-founder of JumpStart, we had the opportunity to create something unique and

address unmet needs of the marketplace at scale across industries, companies and thousands of individuals. For 7 years, I was a director of diversity for The Boston Consulting Group, a management consulting firm in the business of solving the most critical problems for clients. Throughout my 7+ year corporate finance career at Eli Lilly, a pharmaceutical company, I held six roles with increasing responsibility, including corporate global roles, business unit roles, and regional roles. Those line experiences included consideration for diversity initiatives. As an adjunct professor at three academic institutions, I was able to influence the classroom while bringing a diverse perspective of experiences as an African American male. I serve on the boards of the Indiana University Kelley School of Business Dean's Council and The Oaks Academy. Previously, I served on the advisory board of the Ron Brown Scholars program. Each of these organizations had a diversity initiative.

JumpStart enables individuals to progress in their careers and students to advance their education.

JumpStart Advisory Group

Q: How has JumpStart grown since its inception?

A: In 2004, we were a small startup with less than five clients. Today, we are a full-service diversity and inclusion (DNI) advisory firm that covers recruiting across undergraduate, graduate, and lateral hire career phases. We have earned ongoing relationships with many top tier clients across several industries and academic institutions. We impact the lives of thousands of diverse individuals who help each other and live the mission of JumpStart. Operationally, our staff and execution team are truly global in nature with people in the U. S., India, Philippines, and Toronto.

Q: How has JumpStart effected change toward diversity and inclusion?

A: Problem-solving is at the core of our mission, and through it, we've been successful in penetrating many industries that were not typically known for DNI and preparing candidates for careers in those and other markets. Through our JumpStart network, which is a cooperative of talented professionals and students working in support of each other, we offer resources and opportunities for development.

Q: What are your greatest professional accomplishments?

A: Although there are several professional accomplishments throughout my career, my view is more about concepts and themes. As a problem solver, advising several top tier clients and executives on initiatives that are important to them has been a focus of mine for several years. This includes business priorities as well as the evolution of how diversity and inclusion initiatives help us get there. Being a co-founder of an organization via JumpStart that has been able to remain viable and scale over 15+ years brings a smile to John Burt. My ability to influence as an individual contributor early in my career has taken different forms over time based on various roles as a leader, manager, owner, investor, and decision maker.

Q: What drives you?

A: A pursuit of interests with elements of problem solving, curiosity and learning, continuous improvement, helping others, and smiling or laughing often while living my purpose in life represent what drives me. As a father of two young daughters and a grown son, frequent adjustments to be what is needed of me motivates me daily.
Authored by J. Burt.

John holds a bachelor's degree in business from Indiana University Kelly School of Business and received his MBA from Duke University School of Business.

CONTACT: www.mbajumpstart.com | jburt@mbajumpstart.com

Jeremiah Weekley

About Jeremiah

What do manufacturers in the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, space exploration, and defense industries all have in common? They all desire the latest technology and most advanced equipment and solutions, so they go to Jeremiah Weekley at Fabrication Solutions & Technologies (FST), a leading authority on steel fabricating, steel processing equipment, and solutions in North America. As founder and president of the Longview, Texas, company, Jeremiah works with giants from these industries, providing top-quality equipment, solutions, and service for all their needs—including equipment to manufacture the kinds of things that go into space.

Jeremiah draws inspiration from Europe's automation practices and aims to modernize the North American industry and bring it up to the level of its international counterparts. FST handles everything from single solutions to full-scale design projects as one of the only companies in North America to offer end-to-end, full-scale factory design and equipment specification. They also provide training and after-sales service and support, often using multiple machine types for a full-scale solution. FST is one of the few companies capable of complete greenfield design, ranging from wind tower and offshore monopile construction, stainless tanks and vessels, to automated steel processing operations.

We caught up with Jeremiah to learn more about FST and his entrepreneurial journey.

Q&A

Q: How has your 20 years' experience informed FST's success?

A: I've managed imports and exports extensively in North America, Europe, and Asia, and was an executive in steel fabrication sales and imports, oil and gas tank manufacturing, and fabrication of high-pressure ASME vessels for natural gas. I worked my way up from entry-level sales to being the North American sales director at my previous company and worked there for 10 years until some entrepreneurs contacted me to start a tank and vessel facility from the ground up. Those two jobs allowed me to be on both sides of the industry— the sales side as well as the shop floor side. I learned to see through the clients' eyes, which has served us very well. I also have consulting experience in manufacturing and engineering, so I can advise on assessing talent, developing strategies, and even some M&A to help companies better sharpen their operational focus in sales, marketing, and beyond. Ultimately, I've been blessed with a wide range of experience and business mentors, who have shared their experience and wisdom, which has been invaluable.

Q: What's the biggest challenge of being an entrepreneur?

A: The failure. When you take a risk and fail, you question everything. Being an entrepreneur is a litmus test of humility, and the fundamental lessons come when things don't go the way you want. It's a double-edged sword, because failure is brutal, but it highlights areas that need growth. No true entrepreneur just "makes it." It's a continual journey of learning. Even when failure may not directly be your fault, you still have to analyze your role and adjust for the future. I always say mistakes are not a problem, it's making the same mistakes over and over that hinders self-growth and indicates true problems in both business and life.

Q: What accomplishment are you most proud of?

A: When we launched FST, the dream was to bring the latest technology and manufacturing solutions utilized in Europe to a desperately lagging North American market. Starting with a vision and a laptop and selling high-end equipment is a scary place to be. I made sales calls and emails all while implementing our marketing plan and focus. After we built our team, we saw sales revenue exceed $10 million by year five. None of our growth and sustainability would be possible without the team members who trusted our vision and do a remarkable job every day. When you're a business owner, it's humbling and a bit frightening to consider the people whose livelihoods depend on the success of the business. No one does great things alone. Overall, my relationships with employees, clients, and partners are my greatest accomplishments. When someone invests in my vision, I always strive to exceed their expectations on returns not only to broaden future opportunities for collaboration, but also, on a personal level, to have them value my integrity, character, and work ethic. I've been able to parlay the success of FST into additional opportunities and partnerships that keep me excited and passionate about the future.

> FST handles everything from single solutions to full-scale design projects as one of the only companies in North America to offer **end-to-end, full-scale factory design** and **equipment specification.**

Q: What do you enjoy the most about your work, Jeremiah?

A: I've been very fortunate and blessed to work with and be mentored by some brilliant business minds, who helped me to believe in myself and understand the hyperfocus necessary when taking a risk on an opportunity. Any company is only as good as its team. I enjoy the people I work with every day—both our staff and our customers. Our clients are very diverse and unique and I consider them close friends and partners. I love learning their stories and working with them to help grow their companies, many of which are multi-generational family businesses.

FST
FABRICATION SOLUTIONS & TECHNOLOGIES

www.FSTSteelFab.com; www.JeremiahWeekley.com | jeremiah@fststeelfab.com | LI: Jeremiah Weekley
FB: Jeremiah Weekley | IG: @Jaydubya80

Pamela Tate Draper

Q & A

> What I envisioned was a charter school that would be accessible to anyone in a situation like mine. That vision turned into my mission.

Contact: gatewaycharterschoolde.org
pam.draper@gcs.k12.de.us | LI: gateway-charter-school
FB: gls.k12.de.us | IG: gatewaylabschool

Just outside the bustling metropolitan city of Wilmington, Delaware, lies a cutting-edge school, founded by an extraordinary woman who believes in the power of education for the underserved and often marginalized.

Gateway Charter School, founded in 2011 by Pamela Tate Draper, provides an immersive educational experience for students in grades 3-8 who struggle to achieve academic success in a traditional classroom environment. Utilizing research-based intervention strategies and an arts-based learning environment, Gateway identifies and capitalizes on a student's strengths and interests. To date, they have assisted nearly 2,000 learners, many of whom require an Individualized Education Program. They will soon add classes for kindergarten through second grade. "There are not many opportunities for special needs students who fall in the middle of the academic spectrum. There are schools that cater to those who are severely challenged and traditional schools that can assist children who have mildly limiting capabilities, but many others fall through the cracks," Pamela shares. "We have a diverse population of students with different educational aptitudes. They are bright students who have learning differences, disabilities, and difficulties. I believe that each and every student has the capacity to learn if they are treated as individuals."

The results of the school's mission and model speak for itself. The Department of Education recently commended Gateway Charter School for its crucial role with children who might not otherwise have their educational needs met. While Pamela credits this success to the enthusiasm and the dedication of the teachers and administrators at GCS, her background has certainly contributed to the school's success. Prior to founding Gateway, she amassed more than 30 years of experience in marketing, business development, educational programming, and operations management. She also served as chief programs officer at YWCA Delaware.

The Top 100 Magazine spoke with Pamela to learn more about the arts-based learning environment and what motivated her to found Gateway Charter School.

Pamela, what compelled you to start the school?

It was back in 2006. I was watching an episode of *The Today Show*, which featured Sally Smith, the founder of The Lab School of Washington. As a parent of two sons with unique learning styles, I felt the anguish of watching them fall through the cracks of an educational system that would not accommodate their learning differences, which resulted in their frustration and feelings of inadequacy. I contacted Sally, thinking that maybe I could start a parent group to bring a lab school here, but tuition was $40,000 per year, and not everyone can afford that. What I envisioned was a charter school that would be accessible to anyone in a situation like mine. That vision turned into my mission.

Can you tell us about your intervention strategies and arts-based learning environment, and how they're helping students succeed?

Arts integration does a number of things. A large percentage of our students have special education needs, so traditional classroom curriculum doesn't benefit them. Music has been shown to strengthen math and reading skills, and scientific evidence shows that the arts help students become critical thinkers and gain content knowledge. We've also been successful in the development of social skills. Many students who have developmental delays don't grasp social cues through observation, the way others do. We help them learn how to interact with others, so they feel a sense of belonging. This also aids in reducing anxiety and opens them up to learning. My son was in special ed classes his whole life and I was shocked by the number of teachers who specialized in the field but could not, or did not, understand the nuances of working with these children.

At Gateway, parents see the improvement in grades and engagement, and together we watch the students prepare for high school or college with a heightened sense of confidence. One of our memorable success stories is of a fifth-grade girl who could not read when she enrolled with us. She was so traumatized by a previous school experience that she spent the entire first year in tears. That student is now studying graphic arts in college under a full scholarship and maintaining a 4.0 GPA. It's so rewarding to hear about the triumphs our students achieve in adult life. Every staff member, every teacher, and all the parents are actively involved in the process, and when the kids know they have so much support and love, it's a game changer.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I get to see children's lives transformed on a daily basis. I'm looking forward to the day when one of our students heads off to the White House. We're making a generational impact because a child who felt hopeless now has a future filled with hope and will pass that on to their children, and on and on. What we're doing doesn't just change the child, it changes society.

Q&A JOSEPH JEDLOWSKI

Joseph Jedlowski's grandparents have always been a big part of his life, not only playing major roles in who he's become, but ultimately in his career. Inspired by helping his grandmother in the nursing home where she worked, Joseph has spent the last 20 years in the retirement hospitality industry. Last year, he founded Distinctive Living, LLC, a third-party management company, and Distinctive Living Development, a senior housing development company that develops their own assets and help others manage theirs. Today, Distinctive Living manages 22 properties in nine states and has 11 properties in varying stages of development.

We caught up with Joseph to learn about how he's keeping his business on the cutting edge of hospitality while helping to create an environment that allows residents, clients, and staff to flourish.

Q: How has your background prepared you for your current role?

A: There isn't a position within any community that I haven't held, except being a nurse. I became an administrator of a facility, then VP of a large organization, so I went from single site oversight to managing multiple sites in multiple states. In 2010, I became an owner and president of Milestone, a management company for independent and assisted living and memory care communities. I helped them grow from 11 to over 100 communities in 22 states in 10 years. It was a combination of organic growth and developing new assets, as well as the acquisition of another senior living management company. Milestone was really eye-opening for me; I thought I knew everything before that role, but it gave me a whole new appreciation for the business.

Q: Your internal structure plays a significant role in your success. How do you approach it?

A: It comes down to our management and culture. We have a pretty robust infrastructure. We have our senior leadership, and then our sales, HR, operations, culinary, and maintenance teams deployed in the field. The key component to our leadership success has been wrapping our heads around all our team members. They have high expectations and require high productions and returns on the products they provide to residents. It's about maintaining that high standard in the communities.

Secondly, we place a very large emphasis on culture. We've spent a lot of time dissecting our culture and finding ways to improve it. I participated in a program called *CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion* to empower employees to embrace diversity. We also have them take third-party surveys to get feedback, and conduct "stay interviews" for current employees, which improves satisfaction and decreases turnover. We look to invest money in our people, not reduce it.

Joseph founded Distinctive Living, LLC, a third-party management company, and Distinctive Living Development, a senior housing development company that develops their own assets and help others manage theirs.

Q: Tell us about Distinctive Living Development, Distinctive Living's sister company.

A: Distinctive Living Development complements Distinctive Living, our operating company. We provide development services to folks outside of our own company who are looking to get into the senior living industry but don't have the experience to do so. We bring a full development team, including development services, owner representation services, architectural and interior design services, general contracting services, and more. At the end of the project, we'll help get these projects financed, and operate them via Distinctive Living.

Q: What do you do to keep Distinctive Living on the forefront of the industry?

A: While we have sophisticated processes in place, we believe that each asset has to stand on its own and that each community has to have an individualized plan.

CONTACT: www.distinctive-liv.com | joe@distinctive-liv.com | LI: Joseph Jedlowski | IG: jedlowski

> We provide development services to folks outside of our own company who are looking to get into the senior living industry but don't have the experience to do so.

We've found it's important to invest and buy locally, which is a huge contrast to the big-box providers. That means our facilities have a very boutique feel to them, and we stay very active within the communities, celebrating anniversaries and our residents. I'm a member of the Cornell Health Futures Board, where Cornell University's schools of hospitality, design, and business collaborate to come up with new data-driven ideas to improve the industry. I also participate in many senior housing associations, and I work a lot in recruiting new people into the senior housing industry.

Q: What drives you, Joseph?

A: The people and seeing the good care they provide to residents. One day it might be a loved one of mine, so I treat people the way I would want my grandma to be treated. I strive to create a culture where our team members *want* to come to work. And it's knowing that the families of our residents can see their loved ones thrive and flourish, that's the most gratifying. Of course, I wouldn't have been able to do any of this without my wife, Jessica, behind me, along with my daughter Ella and son Benjamin.

DISTINCTIVE LIVING

Deep Kalina

Founder & CEO

Deep Kalina is an award-winning visionary and prolific leader with the heart of an entrepreneur and the soul of an innovator. Deep has dedicated the last 16 years to helping businesses grow, develop, and reach their ultimate potential with game-changing digital products and applications. He's been the primary inventor on eight patents and has served as CTO for companies such as Ampology, Kazzam, and Hum by Verizon Telematics, and his products have received some of the highest accolades in the industry. He is also the founder and CEO of IntuitoLabs.

In the telematics space, he developed In-Drive, which received the *Stevie Award for Tech Innovation of the Year* and has since been named the *Best Aftermarket Device and Solution*. He worked on the founding team that created Hum by Verizon, which won the *Stevie Award for Excellence in Consumer Electronics* at the 2017 *American Business Awards*.

In 2019, he launched the Atlanta-based full-service agency IntuitioLabs, to help companies large and small bring ideas to market. IntuitioLabs specializes in strategy, design, development, and performance marketing to solve business challenges and build great digital products. Deep's global team of over 80 strategists, designers, architects, developers, and marketers have garnered a reputation for its ability to effortlessly fuse together technological, analytical, and creative components to deliver show-stopping solutions for their clients.

With services including branding, product design, product development and performance marketing, IntuitoLabs has helped startups and enterprises across North America, Canada, India, and the United Kingdom launch nearly two dozen products geared toward consumers in a span of just three years. Their growing number of clients range from

> We work with startups and larger enterprises to help bring their innovations to market and, due to our global teams, we can deliver all of these services at very compelling price points.

independent entrepreneurs to small businesses to a dominant digital music distribution enterprise and one of the world's leading manufacturers of consumer goods.

Fueled by an insatiable curiosity, Deep's unparalleled passion and inquisitive spirit are the building blocks upon which the company was cultivated. As he manages the rapid growth of a company on rise, he remains committed to maintaining a culture that champions inclusiveness, diversity of thought, and a global perspective with an unwavering dedication to the client and end-customer experience.

We sat down with Deep to learn more about his thriving enterprise, his commitment to giving back, and how he and his team are playing a crucial role in the success of startups across the globe.

What compelled you to start IntuitioLabs?

My background is in startups, building businesses, and private equity. The framework was really building a company that lives at the intersection of purpose, expertise, and opportunity. In the United States, there continues to be a rapid growth in technology-based startups but not enough talent to support this growth. Nearshoring and offshoring companies have been successful in delivering value to enterprises but have missed the mark in delivering similar value for startups and small and medium businesses. As an entrepreneur, myself, I wanted to use my experience and expertise to address this. This led me to start IntuitioLabs, which provides the value that comes with using non-US talent but, more importantly, a team that has deep experience in rapid digital product development for startups.

Besides addressing the market need for experienced product development teams, applying our skills to help give back to our communities is something that's important to me. So I wanted Intuitiolabs to be a for-profit company with a purpose. We give back an equivalent of 10% of our revenue in time to nonprofit endeavors—hunger and education. I'm on the board of Second Helpings Atlanta and work as technology advisor to Kadam Foundation in India. Through my time and my team's time to these causes, we have exceeded our giving back goal every year.

Tell us a bit more about what your company does.

At the core, we take ideas to market. Everything from designing, building, launching, scaling —we can handle any part of the product lifecycle. We work with startups and larger enterprises to help bring their innovations to market and, due to our global teams, we can deliver all of these services at very compelling price points. Tightening budgets, growing inflation, and change in company mindset of needing co-located teams for building good products have all fueled our rapid growth in the past three years. We're making the product and technology expertise and skills that startups and businesses absolutely need to succeed accessible. Clients come to us with ideas and/or problems that they need help building or solving. We look at the various aspects of the need including the why, what and the how. We take all of that into consideration and develop the strategy, technology, and design to create a finished product to bring to the marketplace.

What do you enjoy most about your work? What drives you?

Solving problems and learning. For me, it's building tangible things that real people use to solve everyday problems. That's what excites me. As an individual, investing my time and energy into giving back to the community also drives me. I am of the opinion that profit without purpose, capitalism without a consciousness, does not lead to a fulfilling life.

Deep holds a master's in electrical engineering from Clemson University. Over the course of his career, he's launched and scaled multiple products for a host of companies including Verizon Wireless' first UBI and aftermarket telematics product across the United States, a digital party planning platform in partnership with Party City, the largest user-based insurance product and service domestically, and the first aftermarket telematics solution and business. He is the primary inventor of 9 US patents, with over 25 US and international citations of his work.

CONTACT

www.intuitiolabs.com
deep.kalina@intuitiolabs.com

Q&A
Alexander LINN

Alexander Linn is on a mission to use artificial intelligence to help people. As the founder and CEO of Shipshape Solutions Inc., he and his team use AI to help homeowners transform their houses into safe, reliable, efficient havens through smart upgrades. Prior to starting Shipshape, he studied smart buildings, worked on new philanthropic models, and became a specialist in AI; all preparing him to build Shipshape. We asked him how it all comes together.

Q: Why did you start Shipshape?

A: With the resources and technology we have nowadays, everyone should live in a home that is reliable and efficient. We should not live in a world with so much advanced technology and wealth, yet leave families struggling to keep a roof over their head. Homes today waste energy, cause financial nightmares, and even make people sick. The home is deeply emotional for people. It's their foundation, their safe place, their steppingstone to build wealth.

I just think we could make a positive impact by helping homeowners save energy, money and time with new technologies and doing so will strengthen local economies and families.

Q: What inspired you to become an entrepreneur and innovator?

A: It was more like I caught a bug and couldn't get it off my mind. I think technology needs to be used for the right things — used to make the world better. That's the point of new products and technology, right?

I became concerned that artificial intelligence could cause some problems for us if we are not intentional about how we use it. So I wanted to design a business model that would use AI to make the world a little better and help people.

The way I see it, companies are the greatest platform for change, and I want to build a company that raises the bar for how business models can be used to do good. Not only did we design a core business model that wins when homeowners win, we created our 2-2-2 philanthropic model and the Shipshape Foundation. We set aside 2% of our equity, 2% of our product, and 2% of our time to help homeowners that need it most.

As the founder and CEO of Shipshape Solutions Inc., he and his team use AI to help homeowners **transform their houses** into **safe, reliable, efficient havens** through **smart upgrades.**

Q: How did you get in a position to start Shipshape?

A: I'd say my up bringing. My mom and dad were big on community service and both of them had entrepreneurs for parents. I remember my mom taking my brothers and me at a very young age to serve homeless people.

My dad encouraged my interest in economic development, he asked me to help him develop a model to help orphans lift themselves out of poverty in Kenya. That program has helped 2,700 orphans lift themselves out of poverty so far – we thought teaching them entrepreneurship and providing

shipshape

a micro-grant would work but we quickly learned that they needed to have a roof over their head at home to take risks at work.

Around that same time, my dad wanted to develop technology aimed at energy efficiency in the wake of rising concerns about climate change. As an intern in college, I worked for his startup helping develop award-winning, patented technology that used artificial intelligence to reduce the energy consumption of the HVAC systems in commercial buildings.

To learn more about homes and homeowners I went into a lot of crawl spaces and attics, rode along with service pros, and installed early prototypes of shipshape in homes of all sizes and shapes.

Prior to starting Shipshape, I went to work at Salesforce to learn how Marc Benioff built such a great company. At Salesforce I helped companies determine how to use the latest technologies to operate more efficiently and deliver more value to customers. I learned from smart people and gained experience analyzing how industries are transforming in the wake of new technologies. When I left Salesforce, I was a lead solution engineer specialist on their Einstein AI & Analytics platform.

Q: Tell us a little about you, personally.

A: I grew up in Alabama and Ohio. Small town kid. A lot of things didn't go my way, but I kept a good attitude, strong values, and the determination to make an impact. I am passionately curious and believe willpower can make the difference. I exercise, eat healthy, spend quality time with friends and family, travel the world, and am an avid snowboarder, mountain biker, and hiker. Spiritual. Deep thinker. Sometimes a bit introverted but I love people, great conversations and a fun party. I have four brothers and a remarkable mom and dad!

CONTACT

www.shipshape.ai
alexander@shipshape.ai
LI: Alexander Linn

Meet Sarah Barkwill

Sarah Barkwill is the founder and CEO of Eyes on HR Consulting Solutions Corp., a Canadian-based firm with a global reach that helps businesses align with their overarching objectives. Founded in 2020, the firm brought in six figures during its first year alone with a diverse roster of clients in various business sectors—a clear testament to not only the company's success, but Sarah's commitment to helping enterprises thrive. The privately owned firm champions the idea of a supportive employee culture, where happy employees generate satisfied customers and more profit, with independent consultants who view employee engagement as a critical component for the overall success of an organization. As such, they partner with clients who recognize the value of investing in the employee experience, operating under the pretense that client successes and their own are essentially one and the same. With special focus on companies who count employees among their greatest assets, Eyes on HR Consulting Solutions provides bespoke programs for each business based on their unique objectives.

The process starts with a business assessment session to better understand the company's strengths and weaknesses along with their strategic objectives. From there, the team at Eyes on HR Consulting Solutions analyzes the information and uses it to curate tailored programs that increase employee engagement, productivity, and profitability. Prior to launching the company, Sarah's experience as an executive director of human resources as well a senior HR consultant has given Sarah an intimate understanding of the priorities of larger organizations, with regard to talent management and shifting company culture. Her extensive experience serves as the foundation for her latest professional endeavor. Now, as the leader of her own flourishing firm, Sarah leads her team of talented culture designers, and engages with clients at the strategic level, while effectively managing every aspect of the business. Together, Sarah and her changemakers are empowering organizations to reach their full potential while maximizing profits.

Together, Sarah and her changemakers are empowering organizations to reach their full potential while maximizing profits.

Sarah holds a B.A. with honors from Queens University and an HR Management Certificate from Ryerson University.

eyes on HR
CONSULTING SOLUTIONS

CONTACT

www.eyesonhr.com | info@eyesonhr.com | LI: sarahbarkwill

Brian J. Esposito

Ranked among the world's top 10 CEOs for 2020/21 in *The World CEO Rankings Award*s by Adria Management, LLC, Brian J. Esposito, the founder and CEO of Esposito Intellectual Enterprises, LLC (EIE), is an award-winning serial entrepreneur and business leader. He is a core part of the innovative team that built Nodle—the world's largest wireless network and ecosystem of connected devices, as well as Turrncoin, a registered SEC digital security that shares 100% of the revenues generated from its TheXchange's VirtualStaX platform with Turncoin holders. TurnCoin is the only revenue sharing digital security that derives its value and yield from the sale of VirtualStaX. TheXchange is the First Global Talent Exchange and a one-of-a-kind platform that is set to completely reimagine and disrupt the global fan economy. Turncoin is presently sitting at just under a $15B valuation and has the full support and investment from icons such as Drew Brees, Patrick Mahomes, Randy Jackson, David Meltzer, Luke Bryan, Von Miller, Cam Jordan, and many more.

One of Brian's early businesses ranked among *The Fastest-Growing Private Companies* by *Inc. 5000* for six consecutive years. In December 2019, as well as August 2022, he was featured in *The Corporate Investment Times*, the next-gen investment magazine in the Middle East. In 2022, he co-led the development and launch of ChainTech Labs, licensed and registered out of the DIFC in Dubai, UAE. ChainTech Labs holds NFT project sensations and communities such as BAPES/BAPESCLAN, CubeX, Apiens, and Bloodlines. It also developed a revolutionary NFT airlines rewards system in partnership with Etihad Airways. With over 20 years of experience in high-profile executive roles involving complex business challenges and high-stakes decisions, Brian founded Esposito Intellectual Enterprises (EIE) in New York in 2013. Wholly owned by Brian, EIE currently consists of 90+ entities, 150+ joint ventures around the world, and operates in over 25 industry focuses. There is just one degree separating any industry or market that Brian may want to enter and do business in. With a technique that he spent years perfecting, Brian connects not only the right people, but the right people at the right time. "Integrity is at the core of who we are and what we do at EIE. We strive to do good business with good people," he says.

ESPOSITO INTELLECTUAL ENTERPRISES
LLC
TIME IS OUR MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY

With more than 20 global locations, which include Dubai, London, Chicago, NY, San Diego, Singapore, Stellenbosch, LA, Seattle, Asbury Park, and San Francisco, among others, EIE sources and invests in many exciting developments in the beauty, fashion, technology, music, entertainment, charities, government, transportation, blockchain, crypto, Web3, Metaverse, IoT, eSports, and hotel development industries, as well as others. Brian's specialty is taking a company's vision and launching it into the market with the correct team and resources to ensure its success. "Time is our most precious commodity," he says. "I have the ability to be a connector, but I also know when to stand back and let the magic happen, and to ensure that I am part of the upside of bringing those parties together."

When potential partners come to Brian for assistance, he joins them with a company, or companies, within his holdings that will be the most beneficial for them, and if they need to raise money, he can open those avenues through this vast network. "In this chapter of my life, this is what I love to do. I utilize my experiences, relationships, resources, and assets to work with establishments from start-ups to *Fortune 500* companies—helping them create new opportunities and self-sustaining business models that can grow from positive cash flow, eliminating the need to raise capital," he says.

Brian's job is to protect his integrity and that of the firm's holdings, projects, partners, clients, employees, and investors, while delivering value and win-win situations. "This means that I'm a man of my word, no matter what," he says. Unafraid of creating and seizing business opportunities, expanding into new markets, and launching innovative products and services, Brian also understands the importance of knowing who *not to* do business with. "Making money is a byproduct of doing great things with great people, and you can damage your reputation, integrity, and network by dealing with the wrong person or getting involved in the wrong situation," he explains.

Brian's commitment to helping entrepreneurs extends beyond the walls of Esposito Intellectual Enterprises. He has participated in hundreds of podcasts, expert panels, live interviews, and webinars, in which he shares his journey and experiences. "I talk about the nitty-gritty and the reality of how hard it is to own and manage a business, dealing with banks and partners, etc. This really resonates with the listeners, the realness of it," Brian says. "Everyone can be an overnight success if you were to wake up each day a little smarter, a litter wiser, and little stronger than the day before." — Brian J. Esposito.

CONTACT: www.eie.rocks | brian@eie.rocks
LI: Brian J. Esposito Twitter: brianjesposito

ARTHUR Zenian

Founder & CEO

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the global healthcare system to its core. Thousands of doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, and engineers worked tirelessly around the clock. Arthur Zenian and enBio were there, delivering best-in-class clinical/biomedical equipment maintenance and management, temporary BMET staffing, and of course, ventilators—just as they'd been doing since he founded the company in 2008. "We make a difference by being there for our customers when they need us, not when we need them," Arthur says. This is the founding principle that's guided his 26 years in the biomedical engineering and health care technology management fields—a philosophy that pushed him to found prior multiple successful biomedical service firms including Strategic Clinical Engineering and Binovia. "I love what I do," he says. "I wanted to be in medicine and I like biomedical engineering, so this is a culmination of those two passions."

enBio™

MAKING HEALTHCARE HAPPEN.

> "Our team is passionate about health care and want to contribute to successful patient outcomes every day."

It was this combination of heart and science that allowed enBio and their 140 employees to help usher over 200 hospitals nationwide, surgical centers, clinics, and some of the largest health systems in the nation through one of the greatest challenges in modern times and beyond. Through enBio's services, health care centers can collect patient information to deliver accurate patient care. To meet the unprecedented demand during the pandemic, enBio expanded to meet the growing need for their full suite of biomedical and specialized services, and they did it all without compromising quality and customer care.

"Our team is passionate about health care and want to contribute to successful patient outcomes every day," Arthur says. "We helped guide our clients successfully throughout the pandemic and we couldn't be prouder of our team's commitment." In 2021, enBio was recognized as *Business of the Year* by the California Legislature Assembly.

Arthur has been featured in the San Fernando Valley Business Journal, 24x7 Magazine, and is a featured writer for Entrepreneur. He holds a BS in biomedical engineering from California State University Northridge and a BS in business and management from Woodbury University.

CONTACT: www.enbiocorp.com | social@enbiocorp.com
LI: Arthur Zenian & enBio | FB: EnBio Corp | IG: @enbiocorp

Sara Arbabha

Founder & Designer

> I love hearing all the positive feedback from people, and seeing how happy they are with not only my jewelry, but our customer service.

Inspired by the alluring image of the majestic Mediterranean, Gemma Azzurro is a line of luxury silver jewelry founded by Persian designer Sara Arbabha. Referring to the Mediterranean Sea, "Gemma Azzurro" means "blue gem," which speaks to the shimmering shades that are ever-present in the branding, from the product packaging to the actual pieces themselves. The enchanting aesthetic of the ocean lends itself to the unique look and feel of the entire collection, which is anchored by hues of blue and white that are reminiscent of a summer vacation on the sandy shores of Saint-Tropez. Her signature "Evil Eye" line features this protective talisman, a universal symbol that has always been part of her culture. "Growing up, we'd hang them for good luck, so when I saw the trend emerge in the U.S., I wanted to create a line of jewelry around this," Sara shares.

With a master's degree in psychology and no background in the jewelry business, Sara started Gemma Azzurro in 2014. "It was one of those things that happened accidentally," she explains. The timing was perfect, and through Instagram, her line took off. What started as a hobby-turned-side-business has since grown into a thriving enterprise with a global reach and interest from both national and international buyers. Today, Sara's distinctive designs enriched with bespoke details can be found in TJ Maxx and small boutiques across the U.S.

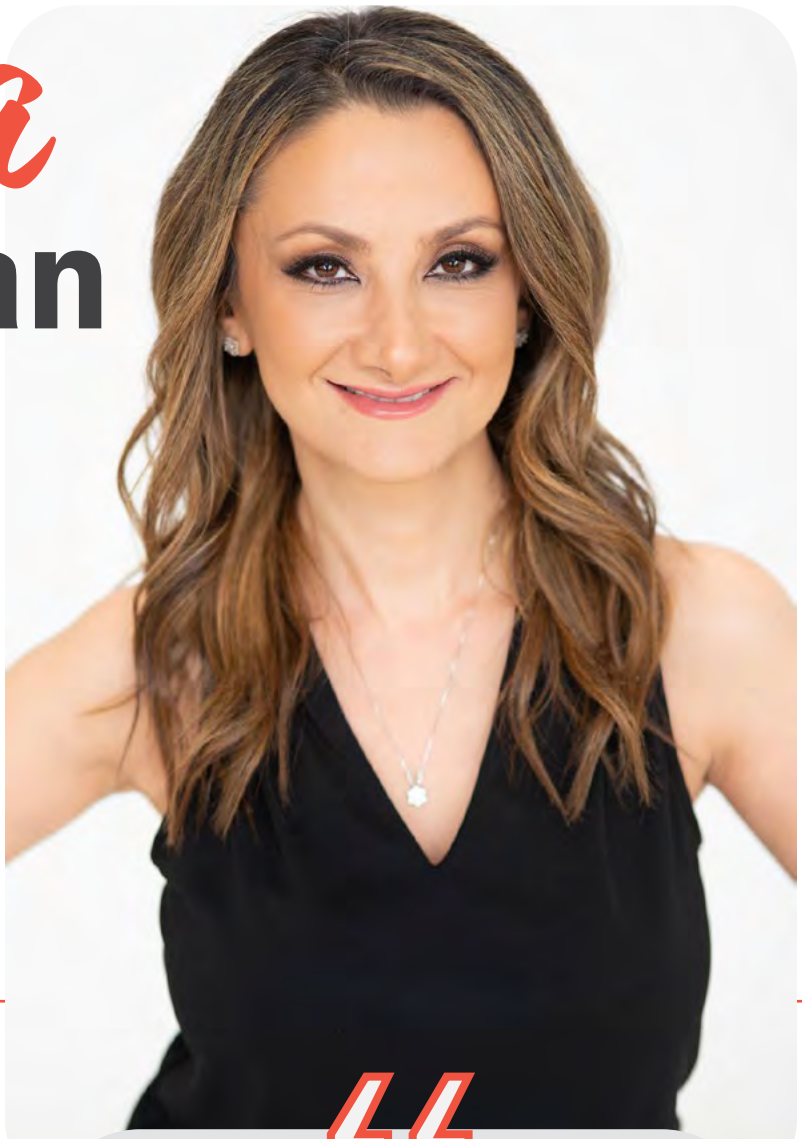
While Sara focuses on managing this successful one-woman business that she singlehandedly built, her passion for design and seemingly limitless creativity remain as alive as ever—as does her personal attention to her customers, for whom she goes above and beyond. Gemma Azzurro's mounting compliments from delighted, gem-adorned consumers across the globe stand as testament to that. "I love hearing all the positive feedback from people, and seeing how happy they are with not only my jewelry, but our customer service," Sara says. "This is what really drives me." Eight years ago, she founded the brand with an essence that "makes people want to travel." Little did Sara know that one day her elegant bejeweled "eyes" would themselves travel to spread joy and beauty the world over.

www.gemmaazzurro.com
info@gemmaazzurro.com

GEMMA AZZURRO
LOS ANGELES

FB & IG: Gemma Azzurro Jewelry
LI: Sara Arbabha

Mahsa Ghavamian



When Mahsa Ghavamian started painting with her daughter, she assumed it would just be a hobby. But when she saw her then-seven-year-old daughter's joy at her own blossoming artistic skill, Mahsa knew this was something more. "I thought, if we can do this together and have so much fun, why not create a space where everyone can do the same?" she says. So, in January 2019, Mahsa launched Canvas n Cup, leaving behind the comfort zones of the corporate and nonprofit sectors, where she'd worked for over two decades since graduate school. Today, that "space" stretches across the country and beyond bringing people together through virtual painting sessions, and the company has grown into an international art supply wholesaler.

Founder & Owner

Canvas n Cup, located in Westborough, Massachusetts, offers a variety of creative courses, including acrylic painting, ceramics, and more for artists of all ages. They run summer and after-school programs for kids, as well as company outings, parties, and events, and have hosted companies like Google, Facebook, and the Mayo Clinic. When the pandemic hit and businesses everywhere shuttered their doors, Mahsa refused to give in and abandon the artistic community. She launched virtual events to bring creativity and joy to people anytime, anywhere, during that difficult time, and teach them that creating art doesn't require expensive materials. "When there was no canvas available anywhere, I taught people to paint on cardboard boxes via Zoom," Mahsa says. "We had a blast!" They also hosted virtual events for universities like Harvard, MIT, and in-person events with over 400 participants at University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Canvas Cup

www.canvasncup.com

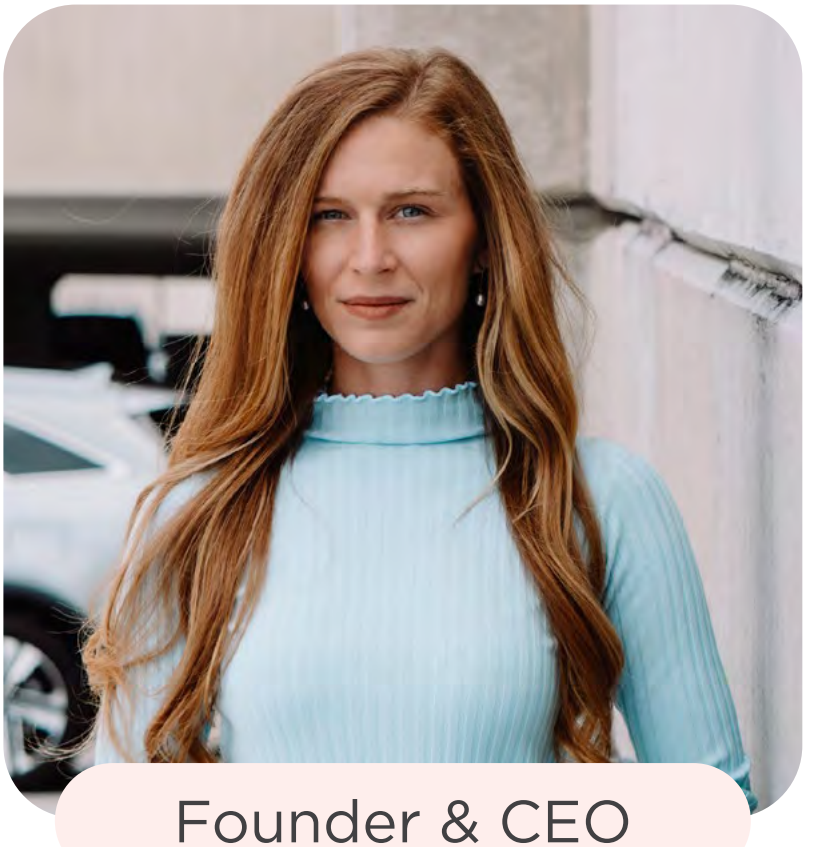
> What kept me going was believing I was offering joy and comfort to families during hard times and seeing them enjoy themselves. I believe in doing good in the world.

After experiencing the supply shortages during the pandemic, Mahsa was inspired to break into wholesaling, offering artist-grade supplies to studios and individuals at a fraction of the retail cost. She even left painting kits on doorsteps during the pandemic so people could keep creating and held virtual painting sessions to keep people engaged and connected. "During COVID, many people threw in the towel, but I'm proud that I never did," she says. "What kept me going was believing I was offering joy and comfort to families during hard times and seeing them enjoy themselves. I believe in doing good in the world."

CONTACT

info@canvasncup.com | LI: Canvas n Cup Arts & Crafts Center
FB & IG: canvasncup

MEGAN Broccoli



Founder & CEO

Megan Broccoli is the founder and CEO of Voi, a company that's changing the way corporations manage their vehicle fleets. Founded in 2019, Voi is the only automated violation management solution that simplifies the process of finding and resolving parking, camera, and toll violations across the nation. "The reality is, we all get parking tickets and traffic violations, and I knew there had to be a better way for people to stay on top of this before it even becomes an issue," she states. The entire process is not only innovative, but also completely automated. "What many people don't think about is the fact that one fleet could be exposed to hundreds of agencies that all have a different way of reporting their information," she states. "We take these fragmented systems and homogenize the data so that it's both readable and actionable." In doing so, the company effectually creates interoperability between various agencies through software that connects with authorities to track and handle fees, such as tolls, with efficiency and immediacy before they even have the chance to become violations.

> "What drives me is creating efficiencies and making things that people have to deal with every day a bit easier by using technology as a solution in order to simplify their lives and create more peace.

Given Voi's success right out of the gate—immediately turning a profit in its first month—it seems people were just waiting for Megan's revolutionary idea. Today, the firm's growing list of clients include commercial enterprises, ride-sharing and rental car companies, and delivery and logistics fleets. It's no wonder Megan earned a spot on the elite list of *Top 30 Miami Female Entrepreneurs* and has been featured in *Forbes*. Prior to launching Voi, Megan worked in the utility scale solar industry for a couple of years after college, which was where the idea for her company was born. "It started as a model to serve individuals years before, but we pivoted to serve companies and businesses," she shares. It's safe to say her company has since changed the entire landscape of fleet management, and for the better.

By enabling the ability to monitor an entire fleet of vehicles for parking tickets, speed, red-light and bus camera violations in real time, Voi gives businesses the power to act quickly before a situation escalates, ultimately allowing companies to avoid costly penalties that often include late fees, booting, impounding, and registration holds. The company actively manages toll accounts to ensure an entire fleet is accurately represented with payments that are always up to date. It also works to match every citation to the driver who had the vehicle at the time the violation occurred, making every attempt to hold the driver liable, then transferring the liability within the issuing agency. The end result for Voi clients? Significant savings and invaluable peace of mind. "Our customers see a 30% to 50% decrease in what they were paying for tickets and tolls because we're proactively dealing with this on their behalf," she states.

While Voi continues its upward trajectory, Megan's motivation remains as pure as it was the day the unique vision for the company first emerged. "What drives me is creating efficiencies and making things that people have to deal with every day a bit easier by using technology as a solution in order to simplify their lives and create more peace," she shares.

Megan has a bachelor's degree in finance from Florida Atlantic University. She's currently on the board for Florida Organic Growers where she's served as president since 2016.

CONTACT: www.voilogistics.com | megan@voilogistics.com | LI: megbroc

Chairman, President, & CEO

JAMES SAPIRSTEIN

James Sapirstein knows what it's like to roll with the punches and not let a few knockdowns deter him from striving and succeeding. After moving to Brooklyn from Argentina, he became the first of his family to graduate from high school and go to college. He was immediately attracted to the pharmacy field because it continually gave him new opportunities to discover new medicines and help countless people. He graduated from the Rutgers University College of Pharmacy, earned an MBA from Fairleigh Dickinson, and launched into a remarkable 37-year career with top-performing pharma companies such as Eli Lilly, Roche Labs, Bristol Myers Squibb, and Gilead Sciences, serving in nearly every role from sales to general management to CEO in locations around the world. As he gained valuable medical and social insights into developing medical products for the people who need it most, James put it to work, from navigating global pandemics to establishing a life-saving organization, and, most recently, leading a gastroenterology company, First Wave BioPharma, which aims to develop therapeutic products to serve unmet medical needs around the world. But it's a budding success story that almost never happened.

In 2018, James had essentially retired to a quiet life in Florida, when he received a phone call in 2019 from AzurRx BioPharma asking him to take the helm as CEO. He accepted and, 18 months later, acquired another company and renamed the new entity, First Wave BioPharma. The company develops pharmaceutical products designed to alleviate chronic ailments. For example, niclosamide reduces the inflammation of ulcerative colitis and delays the disease's progression. "We believe niclosamide has the potential to treat several inflammatory bowel diseases including Crohn's disease," James shares. In addition, they also have adrulipase, a product for treating a life-threatening digestive disorder faced by cystic fibrosis and chronic pancreatitis patients.

While he's enjoyed an enviable career that might have many leaders seeking the spotlight, James' humility contradicts his remarkable accomplishments. "I'm a pharmacist first and foremost," he says. "I really care about patients and want to put medicine out there that actually works." This is also why he was involved in a number of philanthropic projects like Secure the Future, which he founded 23 years ago. This community of medical professionals has been working to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa and has saved millions of lives. He was also integral in launching Viread and Truvada, crucial drugs for those living with HIV.

"My biggest motivators are the small victories," James says. "When we receive good data that we've spent years fighting for, that keeps me going." He also loves to see the growth of his team and colleagues. "Some of my hires have moved on to become CEOs themselves," he says. As someone who honors his own beginnings, watching people overcome hardships, be that be a chronic illness or a humble origin, and go on to live successful lives and help others, this is what drives James every day.

www.firstwavebio.com
jsapirstein@firstwavebio.com
LI: James Sapirstein

First Wave BioPharma

IG: First Wave Bio Pharma
Twitter: firstwavebio
FB: First Wave Bio

NAHOM Assefa

Driven by his ambitious nature, Nahom Assefa works towards increasing the value and success of communities countrywide one property at a time. His interest in real estate was enhanced while he was working fulltime as an IT specialist at one of the largest Fortune 500 companies in the world. Just one month into his role with Bank of America, he launched Nahom Buys Homes in October 2019. A few months later, he executed his first deal as an independent real estate investor, followed by a second. Nahom left the corporate world to pursue real estate full-time—and he never looked back.

Based in St. Louis, Missouri, Nahom Buys Homes specializes in providing valuable services in the real estate industry, working with buyers, sellers, and investors. To date, they've transacted over a million dollars' worth of deals across St. Louis, with plans to enter the Houston market by year's end. "We seek out properties with the primary objective of enhancing their neighborhoods and communities, by either personally rehabbing them or finding investors that can work towards significantly increasing their value," Nahom explains. "We make the process convenient, simple, and enjoyable." While the company is currently focused on single-family homes, they're working towards plunging even deeper into the commercial space market, including apartment homes and retail commercial buildings.

Founder & Investor

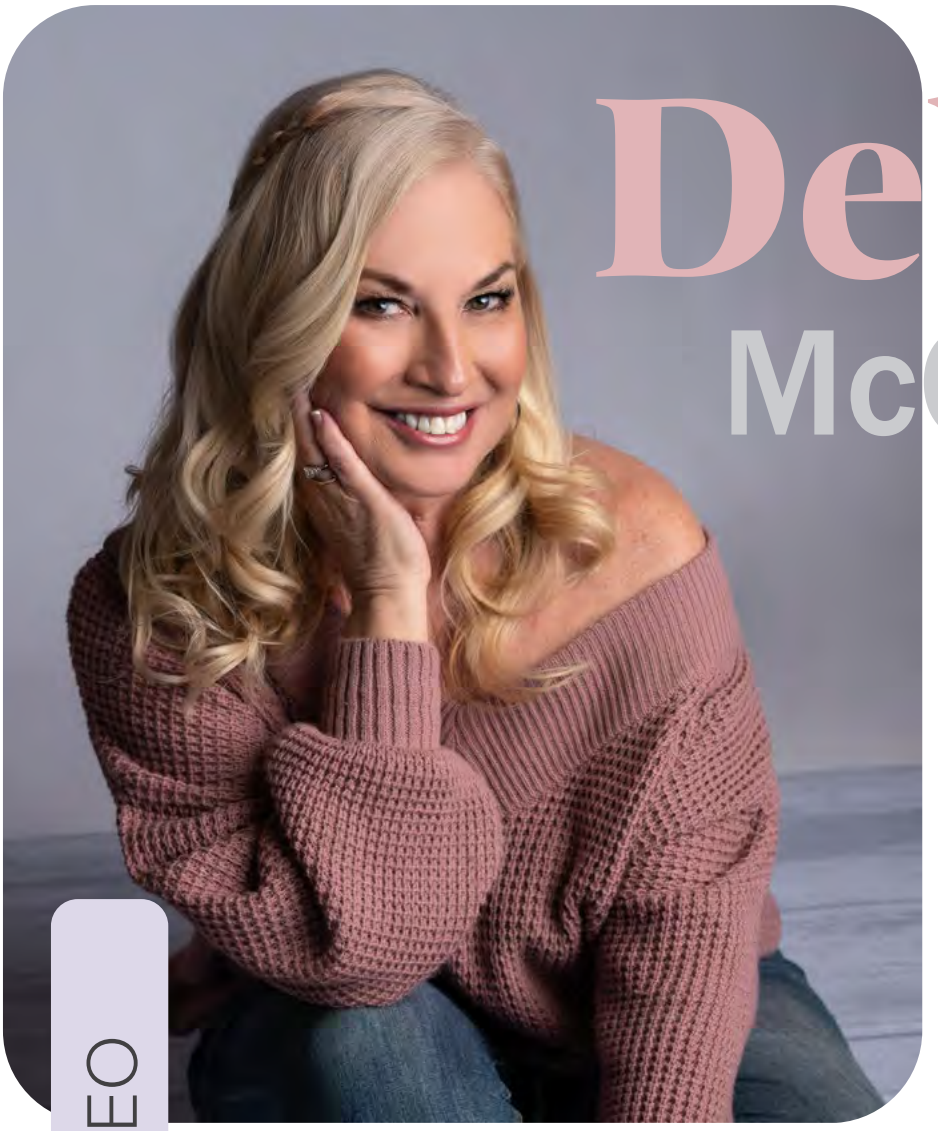
> "What I love about my job is getting to help people every day."

"With every deal we do, we go into it with this intention: How can we provide service and value, and in what ways can we do this?" he shares. "We look to partner with local investors, not compete with them." Nahom also puts special emphasis on developing networks with other investors and collaborating with local realtors to sell properties. While his role involves a great deal of negotiating with buyers and sellers, and working with private and hard money lenders, underlying it all is knowing that he's making a difference in the lives of others. "What I love about my job is getting to help people every day," he says. Nahom plans to build schools in his native country of Ethiopia by using the network and influence he's amassed through his business.

CONTACT

www.nahombuyshomes
nahombuyshomes@yahoo.com
LI: Nahom Assefa

Nahom holds a bachelor's degree in information technology from the University of Missouri.



Debbie McCarthy

Founder & CEO

Long before influencers were a thing, Debbie McCarthy was already there as the original. She's a recipient of the *2018 Sierra Nevada Powerful Women Award* and was named the *2019 Promotions Person of the Year* by the *American Advertising Federation (AFF-Reno*). Most recently, she received the *2022 Reno-Tahoe Ace Award for Outstanding Individual Marketing Professional*. Debbie is a food, travel, and wine blogger who's a huge proponent of finding your voice and never giving up. Her individual journey started about ten years ago during a period of life changes. She'd given up a decade-long career as a parish life director at a local church to care for her sick father. As he regained his health, he would accompany her around town while Debbie had her camera in hand. Soon, Debbie became a photographer for various local newspapers, taking photos for the community and nonprofit events. It brought her tremendous joy, and she became known as the "girl around town." Fittingly, her hashtag became #abouttowndeb.

When America Matters Media asked her to take photos for their radio station, she leaped at the chance—for free—to post the audio and pictures on her Facebook page. Then the CEO invited her to chime in on the radio. As someone who used to stutter, Debbie had been told she wouldn't make it, and while she overcame it, the idea of talking on the radio was entirely different. But this woman takes on any challenge in her path, so she did it anyway! She was then offered her show, *Chick Chat*, which Shamrock Communications picked up, followed by new partnerships, and she became a co-founder of Northern Nevada's only women's lifestyle magazine. Her latest venture is a weekly podcast, *City Talk with About Town Deb*. Debbie is a bright light in the community and beyond as the founder and CEO of a growing brand. Led by her motto, "Remember, together we're one heart," she created a campaign to give back to the health care and essential workers during the pandemic. She's also partnered with Crystal Basin Cellars in El Dorado County, sharing her branded wine labels with the community, where she donates a portion of profits to The Northern Nevada Children's Cancer Foundation.

CITY TALK
PRESENTED BY
ABOUT TOWN DEB

Contact

www.abouttowndeb.com | abouttowndeb@gmail.com | IG:abouttowndeb
LI: Debbie McCarthy | FB: debbie.torresmccarthy

Julie Bednarski

Founder & CEO

Julie measures her success not in dollars, but in knowing that their products are making people **feel good** and **happy.**

"If you focus on happiness and goodness, everything will organically grow from there." This is the mantra of Julie Bednarski, founder and CEO of Healthy Crunch. As a registered dietician and trained chef, Julie has devoted her entire career to making people happy and healthy. She started her company in 2014 to bridge the gap between healthy and tasty foods. With over 60 products in movie theaters, grocery stores such as Sprouts, Walmart, Loblaws, Shopper's Drug Mart, Rexall, Costco, London Drugs, and independent retailers across the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Middle East, Healthy Crunch is on a mission to innovate everyday foods. From Rice Crispy squares to granola bars, dark chocolate superfoods, seed butters, trail mixes, coconut chips, and chia jams, everything they make is allergen friendly and school approved. But it's more than just delicious foods; it's an entire movement of healthy bites that are lower in sugar and higher in fiber—think nutritious *and* delicious.

It all started with Julie's passion for kale chips coupled with a dream and the vision to make healthy snacks for friends and family. Within just a few years, it all came to fruition—though not without its challenges. In the beginning, starting a company was "sunshine and rainbows," but then Julie experienced the all-too-common obstacles of being a female business owner. "It was very hard to get funding, or even be taken seriously, so being able to succeed and overcome the struggles is something I'm really proud of," she shares. And she should be. Healthy Crunch is one of only 2% of women-owned businesses to break $1 million annually. While this accomplishment is awe-inspiring, Julie measures her success not in dollars, but in knowing that their products are making people feel good and happy. As for the journey to get here, well, Julie wouldn't have it any other way. "Everything happens for a reason. Being an entrepreneur is a roller coaster, but it's about resilience and pushing forward," she explains. "As they say, happy crunching!"

Julie attended culinary school in New York and holds a master's degree in nutrition communication and a bachelor's degree in applied human nutrition.

Contact

www.healthycrunch.com
julie@healthycrunch.com
LI: Julie Bednarski
IG: HealthyCrunchFounder

ANNA
Victoria Ting
PASTORES

> Everyone is held to a higher standard, and we're so passionate about the care we provide to our senior residents.

Executive Director

Doing the right thing, even when others aren't watching is a guiding principle for Oakmont of Orange's executive director, Anna Victoria Ting Pastores. The California-based company says they are "excited that one of our executive directors is being recognized for this reward especially from a community that was honored with the 2022 *Best of Senior Living Award* by *A Place for Mom*. Every team member at any of the 63 communities under the Oakmont Management portfolio are held to a high standard of excellence not available at other senior communities and we are proud that Anna is being acknowledged for exemplifying those values."

"Our community, residents and team members are amazing," Anna shares. "Our team is full of great, hardworking individuals, and we take pride in work that we do." Now an advocate for senior care for eight years, Anna's career began as an LVN in a nursing home. From there, she worked as a health and wellness coordinator, then health and wellness director at an assisted living community. Thereafter, Anna joined Oakmont as their health services director before taking the helm as executive director last July—at just 27 years old. "Assisted living is a rewarding and undervalued field," she explains. "Working with seniors is a calling for me, and I'm grateful to make any impact I can on their lives."

Anna oversees the directors within the community, handling daily operations and resolving concerns within the physical and overall plant of the community, while ensuring the senior residents are happy and well cared for. But for Anna, it's much more than that. It's about helping the residents and her team achieve their goals. "The interactions I have either with residents or team members, are about making a difference, by providing high-quality care and being authentic in who I am." While she humbly attributes her success to the residents and team, it's her authenticity and nurturing nature that serve to set the tone for the entire community. "I love what I do because of our mission and the expectations we live by," she states. "Everyone is held to a higher standard, and we're so passionate about the care we provide to our senior residents.

Assisted Living & Memory Care
Oakmont
Senior Living

www.oakmontseniorliving.com
annapastores@hotmail.com
LI: Anna Victoria Pastores

TYLER Dooley

> I want to provide a product that benefits people and allows them to live a healthy lifestyle, while still tasting amazing.

Founder & CEO

When Tyler Dooley needed a pick-me-up, he found himself at a loss. He wasn't a coffee drinker, and all the coffee alternatives he could find were loaded with sugar and artificial ingredients. "I wanted something that gave me an energy boost without the junk," he says. The obvious solution to someone with a lifelong entrepreneurial streak? Create your own! Tyler founded Wake Up Water – a healthy, alternative way for people to get their daily caffeine. As someone dedicated to a healthy lifestyle himself, Tyler wanted to share his "Better Fuel, Better You," vision with everyone. "When I see people consuming a lot of poor-quality food, I want to change that," he says. "I want to provide a product that benefits people and allows them to live a healthy lifestyle, while still tasting amazing."

Wake Up Water has roughly the same caffeine as a medium cup of coffee, electrolyte levels of the leading sports drink, and 100% of your daily value of vitamins B3, B5, B6, and B12, which provide extra, sustained energy throughout the day. The combination of energy and hydration make it the perfect pick-me-up. "We took the caffeine concept and blended it with the hydration element to create a truly unique product," Tyler says, "something that energizes you while also hydrating you. We don't claim to be healthy and then hide artificial ingredients from customers, we truly *are* a better option." Tyler encourages everyone to read the ingredient lists of the products they purchase.

Wake Up Water was formulated and bottled as a ready-to-drink item when it hit shelves. But just four months later, despite great initial success, they would have to rethink everything when COVID-19 swept through the world. Tyler realized that with people staying home and out of stores, he would need a better way to get the product into people's hands. In just a few months, he realized that Wake Up Water could exist—without the water. In April 2021, he debuted a powdered version in stick packs, which were easy to ship team and convenient for customers, who could add their own water as needed. "We had to pivot and start from zero again, but I viewed it as a great opportunity," he says. That pivot was a challenge, requiring the reimagining of not only the product, but the packaging and marketing. But in a true testament of "fortunate favors the bold," Tyler came out the other side with an even more popular product and promising business model.

WAKE UP WATER

Creating Wake Up Water and keeping it going even through a global crisis has been an impressive accomplishment. Tyler, who, just like wanting to reinvent starting the day, also wanted to reinvent what a successful career looked like after deciding that "traditional" career paths weren't for him. He wanted to forge his own path and create something beneficial for others. And to that end, he wants to share even more. In addition to providing healthy products to consumers, he's excited to share his experience and expertise with those looking to build their own business and career, and help other people achieve their lifelong dreams through advisory and mentorship.

www.Drinkwakeupwater.com | tyler.dooley@drinkwakeupwater.com | LI: Tyler Dooley | FB & IG: Wake Up Water; Tyler Dooley

Colin Lacy

Looking at economists' predictions, Colin Lacy and Dr. Stephanie Santoso were concerned: young people are predicted to be economically worse off than their parents, and inequality of opportunity, particularly in relation to parental wealth, still prevents so many youths from actualizing their dreams. "If people of color, women, and those from low-income communities became inventors and entrepreneurs at the same rate as men from high-income households, innovation in the U.S. would quadruple," Colin says.

In 2021, they co-founded MakerUSA, a nonprofit incubated in the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE). MakerUSA's mission is to build stronger pathways into careers in making and entrepreneurship, including advanced manufacturing, computer science, alternative energy, and the skilled trades. Colin serves as CEO and Stephanie as president. Six months later, over 52 institutions across 24 states applied to partner. Applications have come from community and technical colleges, HBCUs, tribal universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and community-based makerspaces, among others. MakerUSA embeds locally recruited program managers at partner sites to lead on projects that the community has defined. "Imagine if every community college had teams exclusively focused on

MakerUSA
COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INNOVATION & SOCIAL MOBILITY

www.makerusa.org
stephanie@makerusa.org
colinlacy@makerusa.org
LI: MakerUSA / Colin Lacy / Dr. Stephanie Santoso

Dr. Stephanie Santoso

empowering students on maker-related career pathways," Colin says. Stephanie and Colin each draw on extensive experience in the educational arena. Stephanie, with a PhD in information science from Cornell, served as Senior Advisor for Making at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy from 2014-16, helping develop the Nation of Makers initiative, broadening access to makerspaces and maker education across the country. Colin earned his master's in public policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and has served as an elected school board director and chamber of commerce president in rural Colorado. He was a founding leader and former executive director of Makers + Mentors Network, a community of STEM ecosystems serving over 200,000 students.

"We're excited about the diversity of communities eager to partner," Stephanie says. "We love bringing people and organizations together that might not have connected before, in ways that surface new ideas and solutions." Similarly, Colin is excited about building a new kind of workforce. "At scale, MakerUSA program managers would become a new national workforce, exclusively focused on growing pathways into maker careers and entrepreneurship within our most marginalized communities."

TOM Mavrou

> You have to keep on believing in what you're doing and in yourself to make it happen.

Chief Operating Officer

With over 30 years of experience in the restaurant industry, Tom Mavrou has mastered the art of making the perfect grilled cheese. His company, Meltwich Hospitality Group, Inc., is the fastest-growing grilled cheese concept in North America. It's not a fad, it's a *trend*. With 35 locations and another 40 scheduled to open before the end of the year, Meltwich is a quick-service restaurant dedicated to forever changing expectations in an unexpectedly exciting environment. Known for crafting the most modern, comforting, cheese-centric food around, Meltwich is concentrated on melting cheese—think Philly cheesesteaks, cheeseburgers, and, of course, their main star, the irresistible grilled cheese sandwich.

Together with his wife, Barb Kiss, Tom launched the company in 2015. It's since turned into a full-blown family affair. During the onset of the pandemic, it was just a husband-a-wife team chasing a dream. They drove across the country, sharing their passion for food with the world. They brought their son, Jordan on board to assist with the business, and now, he's the senior operations manager. As the company grows, their team continues to expand with their other son, Joshua, as national construction manager. But they'll tell you that their path to success hasn't been an easy one. "It's been a struggle to get where we are," Tom explains. "But witnessing the resilience of this team through the pandemic, and how they put their heart and soul into it is our greatest accomplishment."

MELTWICH food co.

Prior to launching Meltwich, Tom had an extensive career in the restaurant industry. He started working in his family's restaurant business at a young age, before going to college. Tom knew in his heart that school wasn't for him and eventually took over the family business and grew his portfolio. As he saw changes in the industry, he got into real estate with those ventures always funding his activity in the restaurant industry. Along the way, people told him that he would never make it, but Tom continued in relentless pursuit of his dreams, which have come to fruition because he had the courage to keep chasing them. "You have to keep on believing in what you're doing and in yourself to make it happen," he says.

Next? Meltwich America—Coming in 2022.

CONTACT: www.meltwich.com | tom@meltwich.com
LI: Tom Mavrou | FB: @meltwich | IG: @meltwichcanada

JODY TRAPASSO

The White House. Presidential campaigns. C-suite executive. Global law firms. Angel investor. Board member. Charitable foundation. Community partnerships. Advisor to the International Olympic Committee.

Jody Trapasso's 30-year career has spanned them all. That's why one client calls Jody "Renaissance Man."

He co-founded New Paradigm Agency, a cutting-edge public affairs and advertising firm that is an innovator in combining traditional public affairs with disruptive data and digital techniques on important policy and social issues. Senior executives turn to Jody as a trusted advisor on environmental, social, and governance matters. His success combines vision and focus. "Success comes from simultaneously understanding where things need to be six months from now and six hours from now," Jody says. "And never confusing motion with progress."

Believing today's challenges can be solved by innovation, Jody is an angel investor in and informal advisor to disruptive early-stage companies bringing transformational change to pressing social needs such as Veda Data Solutions, which is revolutionizing the health care data market.

> Senior executives turn to Jody as **a trusted advisor** on environmental, social, and governance matters.

Board service is also how Jody drives dynamic change. He serves on the board of advisors of the Seton Hall University School of Diplomacy and International Relations, which trains the next generation of diplomats, global philanthropists, and business leaders. President Clinton appointed Jody to an advisory board that assessed the impact of international trade on U.S. communities.

Strengthening communities is a hallmark of Jody's career. He created a ground-breaking corporate volunteer program and built community partnerships to address food security, urban revitalization, environmental justice, and increased access to higher education. Jody was one of 11,500 everyday American heroes selected to participate in the Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Torch relay based on their community service. Jody's sense of community comes from his father, who rallied a small town against impossible odds to build a new community house, which nearly 60 years later remains the center of activity in town. "My father inspired people to build rather than tear down. That's a lesson for these polarized times," Jody says. "Choosing community over division is how we rebuild the strength of our nation one neighborhood at a time."

NP NEW PARADIGM AGENCY

www.npagency.com | jody@npagency.com

Landon Fielding

For many employees, the most desired offering by employers is their benefits programs, and in an era of the Great Recession, as companies everywhere struggle with retention and labor shortages, this has never been more important. Yet, when faced with myriad medical and benefits plans, HSA and FSA contribution options, employee benefits can be incredibly confusing. As a benefits consultant for a decade, Landon Fielding co-founded Brite in 2020 to simplify what he saw as an unnecessarily time-consuming and complicated exercise. Just over two years on the map, and the company already serves benefits brokers, insurance carriers, and employers across the country, totaling over 1 million eligible employees located in 2,500 cities all over the world. Add to that the fact that Brite is only the sixth company in Utah history to be accepted into Y Combinator, the largest VC-backed accelerator program in the world,

Co-Founder & COO

> Brite has removed every hurdle for an employee to engage in benefits education! This is why we have seen the success we have. We are simplifying benefits for everyone.

and it's difficult to call their success anything less than remarkable. With Brite's innovative software, what once took a week for employees, takes a mere 10 minutes, and for companies, insurance brokers and carriers, the time to build out the benefits package education is slashed from six weeks to an hour.

"Over my career as a benefits consultant, I would strategize with employers about the benefits they should offer employees, and we'd implement innovative solutions aligned with company objectives," Landon explains. "But those programs never saw the success they should have, because we didn't have a way to help employees understand the value of those offerings. That's why we created Brite."

Brite's innovative software teaches employees about the benefits they have available through their employer, and then Brite's algorithm produces personalized benefits recommendations, such as health insurance, pet insurance, FSA programs, identity theft, and other company perks. And just like that, Brite is simplifying the benefit selection and enrollment process, one click at a time.

"Brite has removed every hurdle for an employee to engage in benefits education! This is why we have seen the success we have. We are simplifying benefits for everyone."

brite

www.getbritehr.com | landon@be-brite.com | LI: getbritehr | IG: brite.hq

SEYHAN Bozkurt

Co-Founder & CEO

"If you have a dream, go for it," is one piece of advice that Seyhan Bozkurt has for aspiring entrepreneurs. "It might be a risk, but if you believe in it, you have to follow your dream to make it happen." That's exactly what Seyhan did in 2017, when he took a leap of faith and cofounded Deziria Chocolates with his wife, Oniz Birsoy. But it wasn't the dream of being an entrepreneur that prompted him to enter the ranks of "business owner." It was his affinity for the sweet cocoa treats instilled in him as a child by his chocolatier father in Germany—and Seyhan's determination to spread happiness with "high-quality chocolates priced for all kinds of love." It all began in 2008 in Seyhan's Utah home. He had just moved to the U.S. and couldn't find chocolate that met his expectations at a reasonable price, so he made it himself using his father's formula. Before long, his friends were asking him for more....and more. Today, Deziria Chocolates can be found in Walmart, Whole Foods, and grocery stores across Utah and beyond—each luxurious, delectable bar "Joy-Tested" and priced so that everyone can enjoy the finest, organic, non-GMO, gluten-free chocolate. "Deziria is about love," Seyhan says. "It's about the love of chocolate, the love of craft, and the love of sharing something sweet." And it took a tremendous amount of love and dedication to bring them to the masses.

> Deziria is about the love of chocolate, the love of craft, and the love of sharing something sweet.

Fourteen years ago, Seyhan had fine-tuned a combination of farms, ingredients, processing, packaging, and trade to create the most desired flavor of chocolate for all, and as business started to grow, he partnered with a German factory to bring his hometown recipes to American consumers. But there was just one catch: the factory minimum was 10,000 pounds of chocolate—100,000 bars. "I had no idea where I was going to sell them, but I said, let's go for it!" he shares. "It was a *huge* risk." He sold all of them to Walmart, landing on shelves across seven states in just two months. Just like that, his dream went from fantasy to reality—and Deziria's happy, chocolate-loving consumers everywhere are most assuredly grateful.

Contact

www.deziria.com | seyhanbozkurt@deziria.com
LI: Seyhan Bozkurt | FB:deziriachocolate
IG:deziria.chocolate

DEZIRIA
finest quality

Kendell Johnson

Co-Founder & CEO

Kendell Johnson is the co-founder and CEO of a subscription-based carshare program built for the future. His company, Subskryb Corporation, is a Canadian-based social platform that serves as an incubator for carshare users and hosts alike. Named "One of the Best" owners on multiple carshare platforms in the past, Kendell has spent his entire career devoted to delivering exceptional products and customer service. With Subskryb, he's delivering once again, replacing the ineffective and anemic app with a comprehensive platform that is solving the problems that have plagued the industry.

"One of the Best" owners on multiple carshare platforms

SUBSKRYB
Where life is rewarding.

With special emphasis on enablement, the company's dual focus on subscribers and vehicle investors is what separates it from the pack as an innovative ecosystem that brings suppliers, partners, vehicles, and investors together for a better experience. The Subskryb platform facilitates asset sharing with long-term carshares and features that include location intelligence and profile management, which offers loyalty points that rewards users for safe driving. On the flip side, hosts have the ease and convenience of being able to invest and scale without any requirement of a physical presence. The company leverages technology as a vehicle to monitor the entire process and provide peace of mind for investors who want to expand into other areas. It also incorporates training tools that show users and hosts *how* to effectively participate in the program. "Much of my career was spent in technology while supporting the automotive industry, where I learned a very important lesson—focus on the people using the technology, and adapt the technology to the future needs of people thereafter," Kendell shares.

As a veteran in the software subscription business, Kendell spent almost two decades working for companies such as Zuora, Salesforce, Pitney Bowes, and Oracle Corporation, where he tackled some of the largest customer portfolios in North America. His extensive background and experience leading sales teams as one of the original sales leaders for Salesforce Quebec served to directly influence Subskryb, which stands at the forefront of the asset-sharing industry. "My co-founders, Giovanni Smith and Preston Martellyand, and the rest of the Subskryb family have all been critical on this journey," he shares. "I started with a dream, and together, we built a rocket ship."

CONTACT

www.subskryb.com | kendell@subskryb.com | LI: kendellvictorjohnson | Twitter: contactkendell

RYAN LISSACK

> Realize Me brings all that health and performance data together in order to provide a comprehensive view of an individual and uses intelligent technology to help users understand their data, leading to deeper insight.

Ryan Lissack has played a *major* role in building multiple successful companies over the course of his storied career. In 2006, he started his first company, Koral, and moved to San Francisco. The following year, it was sold to Salesforce and he spent the next five years working there in various roles, including leading mobile engineering. In 2012, he moved to Los Angeles to join Maker Studios as CTO. In 2014, they sold to Disney, where Ryan spent a few years integrating the companies before co-founding Rival in 2016, which was acquired by Live Nation in 2020. After Rival, he joined MedMen as CTO and then interim CEO before taking a sabbatical. A health and fitness aficionado for more than three decades, Ryan's approach to this field had become more data-driven, and while wearable devices provided a significant amount of data, the information lived in silos, making it difficult to gain meaningful insight. Determined to change this, Ryan founded Realize Me in 2021, a technology startup in the health and fitness space that offers advanced analytics for health enthusiasts.

"There are a number of companies in the space, and most focus on a very specific set of data," Ryan explains, "Realize Me brings all that health and performance data together in order to provide a comprehensive view of an individual and uses intelligent technology to help users understand their data, leading to deeper insight. It is their command center for health and fitness." The platform supports users' progress towards their goals through the collection, analysis, and visualization of data, and members receive significantly discounted access to resources such as lab testing and supplements. Realize Me is currently running a beta program before launching next year.

As a serial entrepreneur with three prior successful exits, Ryan is passionate about building companies and creating technology. "I believe it's important for founders of early-stage companies to be generalists who are willing and able to do anything the company needs to be successful. One of the most important skills is knowing how to bring together a team of exceptional specialists," he states.

Ryan holds a B.S. in Computer Science from the University of Johannesburg in South Africa.

CONTACT:
www.realize.me
ryan@realize.me
LI: ryanlissack
IG: realizemeofficial

TODD Gross

Co-Founder & Chair

Todd Gross enjoyed an illustrious 20-year career in finance as a head trader for renowned firms like Morgan Stanley and Cooper, Neff & Associates, and as a fund manager earning the title of *Best Commodities Manager* by *Barclay's Hedge* and authoring a book in 2013. He also founded and helmed multiple successful companies of his own. After amassing considerable experience in real-time predictive analytics, Todd decided to apply his skills to saving people's lives.

In 2019, Todd co-founded Quantaira, Inc., with Noah Clay, who started the Nanotechnology Center at Harvard, Cornell, and UPenn. Quantaira uses real-time predictive analysis to make clinical care safer, effective, and more efficient for both patients and health care providers by providing a comprehensive view of biometrics. Today, Quantaira is enjoying growing interest from international hospital systems, and continues to attract best-in-class talent. "The caliber of our people is truly remarkable," Todd says. His colleagues include the world's fourth-ranked cybersecurity expert and the former dean of George Washington University's Medical School. Their Patient C.A.R.E. (comprehensive access for remote evaluation) platform allows providers to observe patient biometrics from multiple medical devices and collect it into one place, all remotely, so they can easily monitor patients, all in real time.

Quantaira uses real-time predictive analysis to make clinical care safer, effective, and more efficient for both patients and health care providers by providing a comprehensive view of biometrics.

The idea came when Todd learned about baby socks that record vital signs and prevent sudden infant death via data collection. "Data is becoming a growing part of medicine," Todd, who now serves as chair of Quantaira, explains. And there's a personal reason behind everything, too: both Todd and Noah watched their fathers pass away on ventilators. Based on these experiences, they originally focused on pinpointing when patients should be taken off ventilators. With the rise of COVID, they expanded their scope to help even more people. Because their C.A.R.E. platform synchronizes biometrics with medications, the result is speedier care that saves money while alleviating the very real threat of burnout for providers—resulting in better patient care. Reflecting on his shift in focus, Todd is most happy that his work is directly helping people. "I spent over two decades trading commodities as a professional," he says. "Now, with my own company, I can benefit people directly with what I'm doing. It's very gratifying and drives me every day."

Quantaira Health

www.quantaira.com | t.gross@quantaira.com | LI: toddjgross

Jake HADLOCK

Founder & CEO

In the midst of a successful career in product development and marketing for dietary supplement companies, including VP of marketing for Tavala, Jake Hadlock, along with his brother Brandon, noticed that new businesses were struggling to get a foothold in the marketplace because of the high minimum quantity requirements of manufacturers. Determined to level the playing field, in 2019, they launched Nutriient, a contract manufacturer/copacker that also caters to small, startup companies. Located in Lindon, Utah, the company specializes in dietary supplements, beauty, and personal care products with low minimum order quantities (MOQ). While they serve local, global, and large companies, Jake and Brandon are champions of small enterprises. It shows in their genuine care for each customer they serve and each project they're entrusted with. It shows through Nutriient's fast turnaround times, responsive communication, and commitment to delivering quality products on time and on budget. And it shows in the gratitude from their over 100 clients, for whom the work of Nutriient has equated to over $20 million in product sales in 2021 alone. "I've experienced working for a large company, but I really wanted to work on meaningful projects where I can make a noticeable difference every day," Jake shares.

> Behind each solution is Jake's knowledge, insight, and experience from a career that took him from the business side to the manufacturing floor, from marketing to sales roles.

Nutriient helps companies formulate, manufacture, fill, and package liquid and powder products, serving as a one-stop shop for R&D, production, warehousing, and fulfillment, with specialties such as affordable stick pack production and R&D, including formulation and flavoring. Their team of researchers, developers, and operators can take a product idea from concept to reality, or work with an existing formula for production. "Having been on the brand side, we've experienced the pain of having to coordinate with multiple vendors, getting everyone to deliver on a common goal," he states. "We solve that issue, which really differentiates our company from others that only do the contract manufacturing." Behind each solution is Jake's knowledge, insight, and experience from a career that took him from the business side to the manufacturing floor, from marketing to sales roles. Underlying it all is his desire to support everyone he serves. "What drives me is building a really great company for not only our customers but our employees as well," he says.

nutriient.

jake@nutriient.biz | www.nutriient.biz | LI: Jake Hadlock | FB: Nutriient LLC

CODY TEDFORD

CEO & Owner

Every brand dreams of becoming a household name, but Cody Tedford knows how to make that dream a reality. “My philosophy has always been to think big,” says Cody, CEO and owner of Merchants International, LLC (BMI). “If you’re going to be thinking anyway, you might as well think big.”

Guiding brands along the process to becoming well-known and sought-after in large retailers like Walmart and Sam’s Club is Cody’s and BMI’s focus. They provide smaller-scale brands with consulting expertise to gain footholds in the market, advising on marketing and packaging design, product replenishment, and sales services to give their products an edge over the competition, as well as a full reporting suite. Cody also offers realistic advice. “You have to be aggressive but also patient. The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese,” he explains. “I know the journey from modest to thriving, and I want to help them get to the same place.” Today, BMI manages 40 brands with annual sales of over $600 million, including C4, Honeywell, CRKT, and FitRx.

Cody’s sharp insight comes from 15 years in retail merchandising, including as a buyer of $2 billion in products for Walmart’s entire 4,500-store chain. Collectively, BMI has over 100 years of experience to pass on to their clients, with an award-winning leader guiding the way. After receiving *Buyer of the Year* and leaving Walmart Corporate as merchant, Cody founded BMI in 2014, which has seen double-digit growth every year since. “It’s really fun to watch these small companies appear in Sams and Walmart, knowing you did something really big for them,” he says. When PocketJuice started working with BMI in 2014, they had no distribution; this year, they saw over $200 million and now regularly appear in Walmart and Sam’s Club.

> I know the journey from modest to thriving, and I want to help them get to the same place.

In 2019 and 2020, Cody co-founded two additional companies: Real estate investment firm, *Tedford, Smith, Goodin & Dunnaway Enterprises* with his partners Shayne, Lance and Jonas, and a fishing brand called *Toad Thumper* that he founded with Whiskey Myers front-man, Cody Cannon. It will likely come as no surprise to anyone that both took off immediately and are on the same meteoric rise as BMI.

BENTONVILLE MERCHANTS
210 N. Walton Blvd. Suite 20 Bentonville, AR 72712

CONTACT

www.bentonvillemerchants.com
cody@bentonvillemerchants.com | LI: Bentonville Merchants
FB: Bentonville Merchants, Inc. | IG: toad_thumper

LEE Belzberg

Co-Founder

Lee is merging his business expertise and passion for wellness to **make in-home Pilates more accessible with a lightweight, space-friendly, seamless design.**

CONTACT

www.framefitness.com | lbelzberg@framefitness.com
LI: lee-belzberg | FB: framereformer
IG: @lbelzberg & @framereformer

Every morning, he visualizes where he wants to be, and how he can achieve it. He takes 20 minutes to himself to say affirmations and listen to a podcast—usually on his morning walk before the workday begins. He's a strong believer in the idea that movement helps benefit our mental state, and he's a fierce advocate for self-care. Meet Lee Belzberg, the co-founder of Frame Fitness, who's raising the bar with a revolutionary Pilates reformer that's transforming the way Pilates is practiced. Lee began his career working as a financial advisor at London Life, where he helped clients with wealth management and pension programs. He later partnered with The Consulting House and Summit Wealth Advisory Group, where he drove business to new heights with an innovative method of consolidation that brought substantial cost improvements for clients. Today, along with Frame Fitness co-founder, Melissa Bentivoglio, Lee is merging his business expertise and passion for wellness to make in-home Pilates more accessible with a lightweight, space-friendly, seamless design. As they prepare for the public unveiling of Frame, the buzz is already growing. Named among *Built In LA*'s 2022 *Startups to Watch in 2022*, the company has garnered the attention of A-list entrepreneurs and support from investors and fitness industry pioneers Mark Mastrov and Michael Bruno that saw them quickly surpass their initial $5 million funding goal.

Cutting-edge and modern, Frame was designed to elevate any space, with patent-pending technology that amplifies the workout experience. Offering digitally connected, instructor-led Pilates with on-demand and live classes, it's already been named *Best Reformer of 2022* by *Women's Health* and has been featured in *POPSUGAR, Well+Good, Men's Health Journal*, *Forbes*, and a multitude of other publications. It was also one of three brands named to Jaclyn Johnson's venture capital firm and brand incubator, New Money Ventures. In an industry that hasn't been disrupted in over a century, the time is ripe for innovation, and Frame Fitness is doing just that. The key, according to Lee, is simple: "Life is short. Surround yourself with people that elevate you and you will achieve more!"

Lee holds a BA in political science and government from Dalhousie University.

Cindy Machles

CO-FOUNDER/CEO

Cindy Machles has long been a leader and pioneer.

While part of the big-conglomerate world, she took an entrepreneurial approach as one of the first to apply marketing principles from consumer-packaged goods to healthcare. This ultimately revealed an unmet need that inspired her to create and lead an independent operating unit within WPP that developed branding exclusively for prescription products.

Seeking to disrupt the industry once again, she joined forces with long-time copywriting partner, Alan Rothenberg, to envision and launch Glue Advertising in 2013 as a more strategic, innovative, nimble, and accountable communications company. Glue verticals include prescription products, devices, diagnostics, and OTCs, B2B, financial services, online gambling, and food and beverage. Its unique, hands-on model has been appreciated by clients and industry watchers alike. Glue has been recognized as a top 20 NYC agency since 2017 and a top digital agency on a global scale!

In 2019, Cindy got out in front of the latest trends, taking on the role of U.S. consultant to Singapore-based Artificial Intelligence (AI) media company, SQREEM. And now, with the additional title of chief marketing officer at SecureCHEK AI, she is revolutionizing how advertising collateral is developed—at the push of a button. This will save marketers millions of dollars and months and months of time that can be reallocated to reaching and influencing their target audiences sooner. Finally, as an adjunct to Glue, she is in the process of building yourmededge.com, a network of healthcare experts who bring consumers the latest trends and discoveries from the floor of major medical meetings in language they can understand.

Cindy has been recognized as a trailblazer on women's issues. She was featured in two books—*Surrounded by Awesome Women* and *Founded by Women: Inspiring Stories from 100 Female Founders*—and served as a keynote speaker at the nationally-recognized Founded by Women Conference. She is an avid mentor to start-ups—as a founding steering committee member of Chicago Booth Angels Network and an advisor to young companies within University of Chicago's prestigious accelerator, The Polsky Center.

Cindy has been recognized as a **trailblazer** on women's issues.

While Cindy is known more for her agency background, she began her career on the client side in brand management at Revlon, Clorox, and Johnson & Johnson.

www.glueadvertising.com
cindy@glueadvertising.com

FB & IG: glueadvertising
LI: Cindy Machles

KIRT McGhee

CEO& Managing Member

For Kirt McGhee, it all started on a 2019 fishing trip in Costa Rica and a series of mushy paper straws that fell apart. But the experience got Kirt imagining hemp-based straws that were eco-friendly and durable. At the time, hemp legalization was open in Texas, and Kirt started a market opportunity in industrial hemp. From there, Pura Vida Bioplastics was born, which today produces a 100% bio-based, fossil fuel-free plastic alternative that is fully compostable for home and industrial use—a true green product making a real difference in the fight against plastic waste accumulation.

Kirt comes from an entrepreneurial, finance, and real estate background, having founded a mortgage bank that provided fantastic investment opportunities for their clients. After the mortgage crisis, Kirt pivoted into construction, launching a company in Houston and building custom homes. All while keeping this company operable, Kirt delved deeper into the possibilities of plastic alternatives. He met with his first prospective manufacturer in November 2019 who promised a minimum of 10 billion polylactic acid (PLA) straws per year that supposedly came from hemp. But unfortunately, that wasn't the truth, and it was Kirt's first encounter with "greenwashing," a façade of eco-friendly practices masking a far less green reality. "I was essentially ripped off by their false branding," he remembers. "I thought it would be what they promoted it to be. I felt defeated." But Kirt was not about to concede his values of environmental responsibility. The next potential partner promised home compostable straws, but it turned out that to compost them, they would need to be treated in an industrial facility—not the home composting solution Kirt wanted for his consumers.

> "We work to educate consumers on the importance of reducing plastic consumption and how bioplastics are a viable alternative."

Thanks to his perseverance, Kirt finally found the right partner in Kaneka Biopolymers, a Japan-based company that truly offered 100% bio-based resin. He began production in August 2021, and by November, they were shipping samples to people. By January, the product took off and secured Pura Vida as the only 100% bio-based straw manufacturer in the world, producing millions of straws per month and distributed by major companies in the U.S. Right now, their focus is straws, but Kirt hopes to expand into other disposable plastic items, including containers, applicators, bags, and more. They also work to educate consumers on the importance of reducing plastic consumption and how bioplastics are a viable alternative. "We stand behind what we sell with integrity," Kirt says. "We're doing the right thing and making sure to do the right thing every step of the way." That also includes promoting diversity and getting other minority-owned companies, like ours, into bio-based products so that they can help make a difference, too.

The success has been phenomenal, but for Kirt, it's deeper than that. "When this opportunity came in 2019, I was blown away. It'll be the largest thing I've done to date in my life," Kirt says. "The best thing is getting away from chasing the almighty dollar, and actually doing the right thing and making a difference. It's a great feeling to put my head down at night knowing I'm doing the right thing."

www.PuraVidaBioplastics.com
Kirt.mcghee@puravidabioplastics.com

LI: Kirt McGhee; PuravidaBioPlastics
FB & IG: Puravida BioPlastics

CRYSTAL HILL

MBA, CPRS

> **My goal in life is to show others that it's possible not only to recover, but to succeed too.**

A little over six years ago, Crystal Hill stood outside the prison walls, for the second time. She'd given birth to her son during her first incarceration and swore this time would be the last. It was a day that would mark the end of 25 years of severe addiction and eating disorder struggles, and a new beginning driven by a fierce determination to succeed—and to help others do the same. Today, with seven years of sobriety and seven in remission from eating disorders, Crystal is a board-certified peer recovery specialist with an MBA and the founder and CEO of Twin Cities Wellness Center & Recovery Gym in North Minneapolis, the first intensive outpatient co-occurring and substance use disorder program in Minnesota to incorporate fitness into treatment. "I can relate with just about anybody that walks through our door and what they're going through because I've been through it," she shares. "When I figured out how to change my life, I wanted to help others do the same."

Crystal reflected on her own experiences with recovery centers and the gaps in their treatment programs, and designed Twin Cities Wellness Center & Recovery Gym with an array of services to fill them. TCWCRG offers group and individual counseling, mental health diagnostic assessments and psychotherapy, substance use disorder education, transitional services, case management and care coordination, mentorship/recovery coaching, and medical services. Underlying it all is one crucial key to recovery that Crystal found missing from treatment centers—fitness. It was exercise that helped Crystal springboard from addict to inspiring business leader, a technique she'd learned in prison boot camp and now brings to TCWCRG clients with therapeutic recreation wellness groups, free kickboxing classes, and an open gym.

"In prison boot camp, we did 45 minutes of PT every morning. I was clear-minded, sober, and I felt good about myself, but then when I went into treatment, fitness wasn't offered, and my mental health challenges began to creep in again," Crystal recalls. She started exercising on her own and saw her mental state improve. "I thought, if everyone had access to exercise, they'd have a better chance of recovery. Incorporating fitness into the lives of those in recovery while providing safe, supportive living is my passion."

Equally important to Crystal was ensuring that TCWCRG's entire staff was composed of people in recovery. "People who come to us feel safe because we've been where they are, and we know the road ahead of them—and through our success, they can also see what's possible on the other side of recovery," she says. "Our clients say that there's never been a treatment center like this, and it gives them a different level of hope. One person who graduated from our program is sober, working, and back with his family."

For the 32 clients who currently call TCWCRG "home," in Crystal, they see not only a successful leader, but an inspiring force who has dedicated her entire career to bringing others with her. Just a year out of prison boot camp, and prior to starting TCWCRG, a Minnesota DHS-licensed treatment facility for those struggling with substance use disorders, mental health issues, and criminal behaviors, she helped establish and operate One Love Housing sober living homes. "The first time I helped someone, I felt like it was why I went through what I did," she says. "Now I get to give them new hope and give my son a better life than I had."

CONTACT

www.tcwcrg.com | crystal@tcwcrg.com
FB: Crystal Hill Hover | TwinCitiesWellnessCenter
IG: chik4change | twincitieswellnesscenter
LI: Crystal Hill, MBA, CPRS

RYAN MYERS

CEO

Ryan Myers's career has always been about making people's lives better. As CEO of SparkRise, he's continuing his mission. SparkRise is a premier digital community that unites causes, companies, celebrities and engaged activists, collectively empowering them to spark change. The SparkRise model is designed to benefit nonprofits and empower activists at no cost to them. Sponsors receive an ROI equivalent to traditional advertising campaigns, while donating funds and raising awareness for the nonprofits they support. Both entities gain relationships with newly engaged supporters and customers. "Nonprofits need more innovative and effective ways to generate funds, and we're grateful to be able to fulfill that role," Ryan says.

An entrepreneur for 15 years, Ryan was a founding member of Flaggpole in 2012 and led the company's M&A by SparkRise in 2020. Now, with Brad Koepenick and Nancy Davies, he leads the company's mission to benefit nonprofits and schools across the U.S. Ryan draws on years of experience in marketing, branding, and strategic planning with organizations such as the American Cancer Society, before moving to his role as VP of marketing for a financial company where he tripled lead growth and led it to a *Best Place to Work Award*. He then entered the startup world with TalentSpring, which was acquired by Talent Technology, then co-founded Grocery Cart Savings—winner of *NWEN's Startup of the Year Award, and Flaggpole, which was acquired by SparkRise in 2020.*

SparkRise's campaigns range from digital media campaigns to live special events, like the recent "Val's Potluck Movie Night featuring *Top Gun.*" Hosted from Val Kilmer's HelMel Studio, the event was held in-person and streamed live in support of the USO, with participation from 15 celebrities, along with brand co-sponsors, who gained considerable visibility. "Brands spend billions on advertising, but though SparkRise campaigns, they achieve these same results, but more importantly spark real change in communities across the globe.. Through SparkRise, they get the same ROI, but benefit from cause marketing exposure, celebrity visibility, and best of all, the money goes to support great causes."

SPARKRISE

SparkRise is a premier digital community that unites causes, companies, celebrities and engaged activists, collectively empowering them to spark change.

For Ryan, it's about leaving the world a better place for future generations. "Our team is deeply committed to making a positive difference in the world through campaigns ranging from planting trees to those supporting our Vets" Ryan is excited about their recent roll out of profile pages on their website because now people can track their philanthropic impact and help drive significant change, which is exactly Ryan's vision.

CONTACT

www.sparkrise.com | ryan@sparkrise.com
LI: Ryan Myers | FB: SparkRise

Q & A | RICK Abbott

Navigating the health care system is stressful for everyone, but for the millions of Americans with multiple chronic conditions, it can be a nightmare. Rick Abbott, a 20-year veteran of the healthcare field, knows this all-too-well. He also knows that a little love, empathy, and compassion can make a lasting difference in the lives of people who need it the most. That's why in December 2021, he launched Lyn Health, a "human-centric" health care firm tailored to those with polychronic conditions. With a combination of virtual and in-person care, they provide customized and holistic clinical, advocacy, and care coordination services, collaborating with employers, health plans, and providers to be a much-needed enhancement to the current care environment.

Working only in healthcare since college, Rick was most recently VP of product and market solutions for Premera Blue Cross, chief growth officer at Imagine Health, and also has a decade of experience in startup leadership, making him perfectly suited for the role of CEO and co-founder of Lyn. And that's evident in how, in less than a year after launching, Lyn Health is already seeing customer growth across regional and national health plans, health systems, and Fortune 500 employers. Rick has been named a *Top 25 Emerging Leader* by *Modern Healthcare*, and a *2020 Disruptor of the Year* by *Puget Sound Business Journal*. "The current system is failing those who need it most, and I believe we can no longer sit idly as more and more people struggle to find the support they need," he says.

Rick, how is Lyn's Care Circle simplifying health care delivery for people with chronic conditions?

People with multiple chronic conditions deal with burdensome, disorganized, and disintegrated services. Lyn's Care Circle is a multidisciplinary, coordinated group of physicians, behavioral health practitioners, and nurses, who work collaboratively to simplify health care and unburden patients so they can focus on what matters most—their families and their lives. People enroll through their employer or health plan, and we work in a personalized manner to meet their health and well-being goals. In doing so, we restore hope to many who have been left behind by the traditional healthcare system.

How can people benefit in terms of cost?

People with polychronic conditions have a higher likelihood of being hospitalized and have more complex treatment regiments. Lyn ensures their treatments are aligned to the specific needs of each and every patient. Because we're always available via phone, text, or video, we can serve our patients in a manner that meets them where they are at, each and every day.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

The fact that we're helping people that have been left behind by our current healthcare system. We're restoring hope to people who are struggling not just from a medical perspective, but oftentimes in other aspects of their life, and to be able to help them see a path forward is endlessly fulfilling. I've been fortunate to learn from so many incredible mentors throughout the years, and my constant focus is "paying it forward" to help develop and inspire the next generation of health care innovators.

CONTACT: www.lynhealth.io | Rick@lynhealth.io
LinkedIn:Lyn Health FB: hellolynhealth IG: lynhealth

Sandy Moll

Founder President & CEO

> We're able to help clients get clarity on what they want, not just in our services, but in the big picture of life.

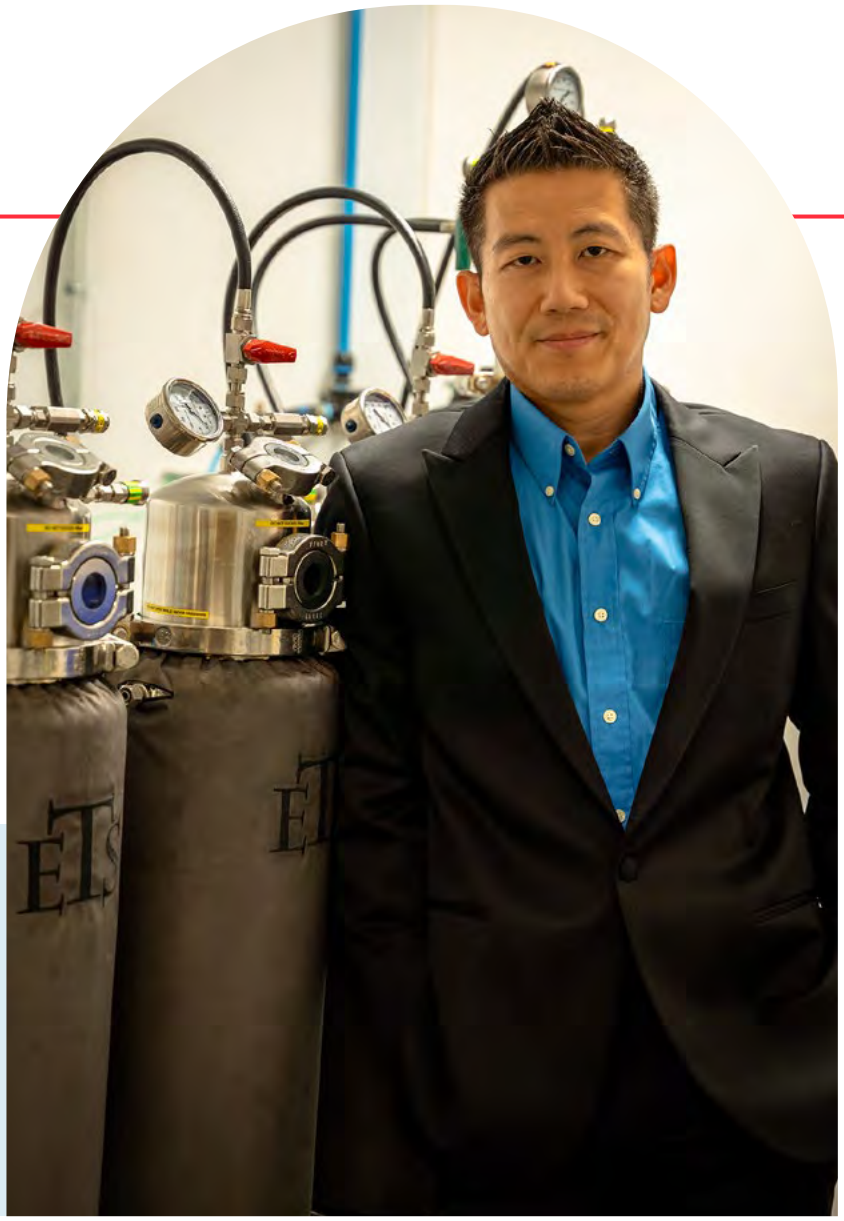
Sandy Moll has 25 years' experience in the financial service industry. She's guided six financial institutions through acquisitions, led 10 system conversions, participated in systems development projects, worked with Consent Orders as well as all the everyday needs in all areas of organizations. As the founder of Advanced Business Solutions, LLC, she is at once a visionary entrepreneur and a financial services expert who has walked in the shoes of her clients and understands the needs and challenges of both her industry brethren and business leaders. Underlying it all is her unyielding passion for serving others. "When I started this company, I did what every successful person did. I followed everyone's guidance, and quickly realized that I was miserable, and I hated it," she shares. "God put this in my heart, so eventually, I stopped listening to everybody else and just listened to Him. Together, we focused on our foundational mission to serve others." Designed to help businesses reach their fullest potential, ABS is a Kansas-based consulting firm that helps companies in the financial service industry thrive.

Sandy founded the company in 2008 as Applied Banking Solutions with her husband and three partners. Later, it became Advanced Business Solutions to reflect the complete line of expanded offerings curated for the clients they serve. With tailored solutions for improving efficiencies and bottom lines, ABS helps business leaders stop worrying about minutia, and focus on the people. Their full suite of offerings includes interim and permanent staffing, regulatory compliance reviews and consulting, accounting and technology support, lending, and credit solutions. As president and CEO, Sandy sets the direction and strategy for a company driven by an unwavering commitment to helping people. "We're able to help clients get clarity on what they want, not just in our services, but in the big picture of life," she explains. "We provide resources they don't have, and we always give a hand up." As the founder of three successful companies and a business owner outside the financial services realm, Sandy's mission to see others succeed extends beyond the walls of her own ventures. She's penned numerous articles for publications, including *Forbes*, and is a sought-after speaker, sharing her expertise and wisdom with people across the country.

CONTACT

www.abs-core.com | smoll@abs-core.com
LI: sandymoll & advanced-bank-solutions
FB: SandyJMoll & ABSThrive | IG: sandy_j_moll

JERRY Wang



Jerry Wang was working a comfortable, nine-to-five job as a scientist at Novartis, focusing on molecular biology in diagnostic product development, and publishing articles on cancerous gene mutation detection, among other topics. In 2015, while still with Novartis, he started his first business, and in 2017, he made the decision to jump full-time into entrepreneurship. He's never looked back.

Today, Jerry is the president and founder of NXLVL. With operations officially launched in early 2022, their cannabis delivery platform offers unique delivery options for cannabinoids, such as a water-stable powder and a water-soluble nanosyrup. They partner with a growing roster of health care industries, including cancer treatment and hospice centers, to supply fast-acting edibles to those who need them most, as well as to emerging CBD markets around the world. They also offer CBD and cannabis products directly to consumers, which are available nationwide online; and in California, they offer THC products. What's more, the delivery system is personalized for each patient based on genetic profiling and their own personal preferences. NXLVL is unique in that instead of focusing on licensing, production, and sales, Jerry and his team focus on R&D, technology, and innovation. "I think it's more impactful to bring in technology to enhance delivery and absorption for end users," Jerry explains. "That's why I started the company, to provide services specifically in this area." And they're not just serving their own customers—NXLVL also helps companies customize, brand, and deliver the products to their own unique specifications.

NXLVL is unique in that instead of focusing on licensing, production, and sales, Jerry and his team focus on **R&D, technology,** and **innovation.**

In addition to NXLVL, Jerry has also founded several other companies. NXLVL, LLC, based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is an indoor cannabis cultivation company that grossed $300,000 in its first six months of operation in 2022. Costera Consulting, Inc., assists with cannabis business and licensing needs, and has launched retail franchises in multiple Los Angeles locations. Finally, Lakewood Holdings, LLC, is in the process of obtaining its retail license to become a vertical cannabis company in Long Beach, California. And through all of these ventures, Jerry helps others rise as well. "In the beginning, it was about hitting goals, but now it's about the people," he says. "Bringing someone else up and coaching them to be a leader is the most rewarding thing."

CONTACT: www.nxlvl.com | isurfcalifornia@gmail.com | LI: Jerry Wang

SUSAN P. Gibson

President & Founder

vivolor® therapeutics inc.

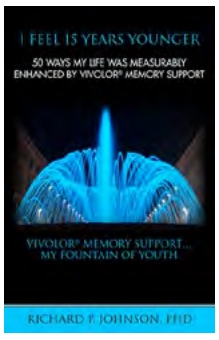
CONTACT

www.memorywellnessacademy.com
www.Vivolor.com | sgibson@vivolor.com
LI: sugibson | IG: Susan Gibson
FB: Vivolor Therapeutics Inc. & Susan Gibson

Susan Gibson never intended to start her own company, but personally observing the horrors of memory loss changed all that and turned a reluctant entrepreneur into the architect of an award-winning enterprise. After spending 30 years in leadership at pharmaceutical companies, including Genentech, Jazz Pharmaceuticals, and Corgentech, Susan founded Vivolor® Therapeutics in 2018, a brain health and memory wellness company that provides education on lifestyle actions that optimize cognition and a potent nutraceutical. "I attended scientific conferences, read medical literature and quickly discovered specific methods that were successfully improving memory." In just five short years, Vivolor® has served thousands of consumers and companies, offering training on natural, evidence-based techniques to improve memory and help prevent dementia, and a powerful supplement.

Scientific experts estimate 95% of memory loss can be prevented and data shows thousands of cases have improved. Vivolors® virtual and online programs include ***Peak Brain Performance***, which focuses on helping employees achieve optimal brain health. Most people aren't operating at their best because they don't know which daily activities help brain performance. This program engrains productive habits to support top performance using Vivolor's proprietary six pillars of brain health.

Maximize Your Memory Challenge is a virtual masterclass that uses assessments and insight activities to encourage participants to apply their brain health learnings in their own life. Vivolor® provides lots of options so participants can select the activities that are best for them in creating their own personalized memory health plan.



Emphasizing natural methods that have scientific evidence, Vivolor® also offers a nutrient-rich mega-supplement, **Vivolor®** Memory Support. One customer, Dr Richard Johnson, independently wrote three books about how Vivolor® changed his life. His most recent book titled, *I Feel 15 Years Younger*, mentions 50 different specific aspects of his life that were noticeably improved! Amazing! Many people have had their memory and hope restored. Vivolor® is making a powerful difference in the world, which we acknowledge with this award!

Susan holds an MBA from Harvard University. She's a registered pharmacist, certified coach, and certified functional nutritionist.

John Baird

Founder & Managing Partner

JACKYL CONSULTING

From cueing the orchestra and keeping time to weaving individual musicians into a cohesive symphony, the role of a conductor is critical, much like in business, where a leader gracefully drives and orchestrates various teams on a unified mission. At Canadian-based Jackyl Consulting, that person is founder and managing partner John Baird. He's a hands-on leader who works in and on the business as a part of the melody of a firm committed to helping companies digitally transform or modernize their IT organizations. Whether through data center consolidations, cloud migrations, infrastructure modernization, or process automation, they're on a mission to help make their clients successful.

Many authors of an enterprise named as *Canada's Top Growing Companies (2021)*® winner and *America's Fastest Growing Companies (2022)*® winner, among others, might take the credit for their notable rise. However, John points to his team of experts and their skills, characters, and solution-driven mindsets. And he should know—he's worked with many of them long before he launched the company seven years ago. "When I started Jackyl, I hired all these great people I'd worked with throughout my career, and it's their talent and caliber that truly differentiate us from others," he says. Today, this team of 135 is all cut from a similar cloth, operating with urgency and compassion, laser-focused on helping organizations thrive—and John works by their side as, in the words of his clients, he is a "fearless Colonel who is in and out of the trenches leading his team through very complex business problems." "It's not about us, it's about our customers, and building strong relationships based on a track record of outcomes that have made them successful," he explains.

John's humility is almost difficult to fathom, given his career trajectory from big banks to IBM, from complex network engineering roles to leadership positions, to the founder of an award-winning firm. "It was being in the right place at the right time, and a desire to help make meaningful difference for our clients," he shares. John also extends his gratitude to associate partners (in alphabetical order), Charles Chai, Hena Deschenes, Jack Gong, and Deepak Sharma for helping to bring the company to life.

> John is a "fearless Colonel who is in and out of the trenches leading his team through very complex business problems."

CONTACT

www.jackylconsulting.com
john.baird@jackylconsulting.com
LinkedIn: John Baird

GB Cazes

Founder & CEO

Partnerships. Community. People. Problem-solving. These are the ideals that Emory Solutions was built upon. Emory Solutions is a leading technology partner that delivers custom software and data solutions for small- and medium-sized companies. Headquartered in Northwest Arkansas, Emory's experienced team serves a growing number of clients across America's Heartland.

Emory Solutions takes a "people first" approach when partnering with its clients. "Every business has challenges and we solve them by listening to and investing in our clients so that we're able to truly understand their needs and provide solutions to ensure they achieve their goals," G.B. shares. Emory also has a well-defined methodology it follows when working with clients. This methodology not only identifies root critical issues, but also ensures that we deliver solutions on time and on budget. "Delivering a positive ROI on all projects is very important to Emory and our clients," says G.B.

And they couldn't be in better hands. With over two decades of experience, GB is a technologist and *Arkansas Power Player* with a passion for helping businesses tackle their most pressing challenges. He's built a cyber research park in Northwest Louisiana and the national model for cyber education. He's also been named to the Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce's *40 Under 40*, the National Leadership Cohort, National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education K-12 Working Group, and the Arkansas Military Affairs Council.

EMORY SOLUTIONS

> "Delivering a positive ROI on all projects is very important to Emory and our clients."

"I've watched many tech companies lose sight of what's important— people. They focus so much on tech, but that's just a tool," he states. "We focus on the people, whether employees or the people we partner with. When we automate processes, it's not to reduce jobs, it's to allow people with limited resources to focus on higher-impact and higher-value opportunities." As the hands-on CEO of Emory, GB specializes in strategic planning, talent development, corporate growth, and digital transformation, working with community and corporate leaders on designing and implementing strategies to help build stronger technology ecosystems through tech talent development, strategic partnerships, and community engagement. "I wanted to build a company that not only helps the companies we serve, but also the communities in which we operate, he says. "Helping people and our clients grow is what drives me every day."

CONTACT

gb@emorysolutions.com
www.emorysolutions.com
LI: www.linkedin.com/in/gbcazes

Jennifer Berk Weisman

Designer & CEO

Whenever Jennifer Berk Weisman took her twin boys shopping for swimwear, she was endlessly frustrated at how poorly many shorts fit. She recalls, "I didn't understand why they only sold volley shorts or fixed-waist boardshorts for kids." While most might shrug it off, Jennifer, who majored in textile design at the Fashion Institute of Technology, knew she could design better swim trunks. After all, this is the woman who designed her own prom dress. "Realizing the need for adjustable waist swimwear was my eureka moment, so I created it myself," she says. That's how Just Bones Boardwear was born.

Jennifer invented a design for an adjustable waist boardshort, and by 2011, she had samples. The novelty of the boardshorts and the void in the market sparked immediate interest among retailers, giving Just Bones Boardwear a fighting edge against well-established brands. Even getting hit by a car in 2012 couldn't stop Jennifer, who used the shocking event as inspiration to move forward with her new business. She met with patent examiners while recovering, earning her first patent in May 2013, and her second in 2014.

Today, Just Bones Boardwear is thriving, with Jennifer leading the way as designer and CEO. They've expanded into swimwear for men, women, girls, and toddlers, all in fabrics Jennifer designs herself, and with her patented waistband that keeps them in place even in the roughest seas. Her design won *TasteTV's Best Swimwear of 2016 Award* for special functionality, out of thousands of entrants, and Just Bones Boardwear was worn throughout SyFy original movie *Ghost Shark*. Jennifer also penned a memoir, *Sink or Swimwear*, about her experiences running her company while recovering from her accident, and has appeared on multiple podcasts discussing her inspiration, her book, and breaking into a male-dominated industry.

Creativity drives Jennifer, whether it's keeping shorts up or building an entire business. While enjoying success, she also embraces the adversity that has allowed her to grow.

Creativity drives Jennifer, whether it's keeping shorts up or building an entire business. While enjoying success, she also embraces the adversity that has allowed her to grow. "Nothing great has ever been achieved by staying in the same place."

CONTACT

www.justbonesboardwear.com
jweisman@justbonesboardwear.com

LI: Jennifer Berk Weisman | IG: justbonesbw
FB: justbonesboardwear

Business Mentor: gura.io/profile/Jennifer-berk-weisman

Sonya Hopson

Director of Banking

When people find themselves in professionally vulnerable positions, they need someone with answers who can get them to the next phase of their career. That someone is Sonya Hopson, CEO and founder of HIRE Strategies, LLC. They offer temp-to-hire and direct-hire opportunities in executive, administrative and skilled trade positions in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 2013, this female minority-owned business has filled over 10,000 positions to date. Hire Strategies adapts easily to the ever-changing employment environment, filling roles with the right people, and providing guidance for career growth. HUB (Historically Underutilized Business), MBE (Minority Business Enterprise), NC DOT, and WMBE (Woman Minority Business Enterprise) certified, HIRE has won numerous awards, including *Top Placement Agency in Raleigh*, *Top Minority Owned Agency*, and *Fast 50* recognitions for their growth in 2017. Given their unique approach, it's no surprise. HIRE Strategies goes beyond matching applicants with employers. They also help companies increase their team's diversity and offer behavior assessments to ensure a good culture placement.

Sonya started the firm with 15 years of experience and the simple philosophy of being authentic to oneself. "My core values led me to staffing," she says. "I believe that everyone should work in positions that align with their natural strengths and passions. Employees who genuinely enjoy their work are more engaged team members." To get that perfect alignment, Sonya dives deep. Not only into candidates' experience and skills, but into their passions, goals, and personal values. "Finding the perfect match is more than just looking for the right qualifications. It has to also be a cultural match," she explains.

> "We impact lives far beyond just theirs. Most of all, I love being able to align people's passions with their purpose.

In the wake of the Great Resignation, it's more vital than ever to look past a simple résumé and examine the person as a whole. "Our work is so much more than transactional," she explains. "We create a diversified organization with a culture that delivers results. And that begins with people." Her dedication has resulted in a plethora of success stories. Six years ago, a candidate was placed in a remanufacturing company and today, that person holds an executive position within the same company. "What drives me is the feeling when someone cheers on the phone when they get the job," Sonya says. "We impact lives far beyond just theirs. Most of all, I love being able to align people's passions with their purpose."

CONTACT

www.hire-strategies.com
shopson@hire-strategies.com
LI: Sonya Hopson

HIRE Strategies
Talent. Placement. Results.

North Carolina Department of Administration
HUB
Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses

DR. Lanise Block

Chief Executive Officer

Lanise and her team of highly qualified consultants provide resources and training for organizational leaders to make courageous, equity based decisions, using various cultural inventories to inform the process.

Dr. Lanise Block is an educator at heart, but she's looking far beyond a single classroom to make real change in the world. She's worked more than two decades in the Twin Cities school system, including 15 years in the classroom as well as leadership roles. Her experience, backed by multiple degrees in education, gives Lanise an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and unique insight to create innovative systems that take training to the next level for educators and leaders. That's exactly what she's doing as the CEO of Sankore Consulting.

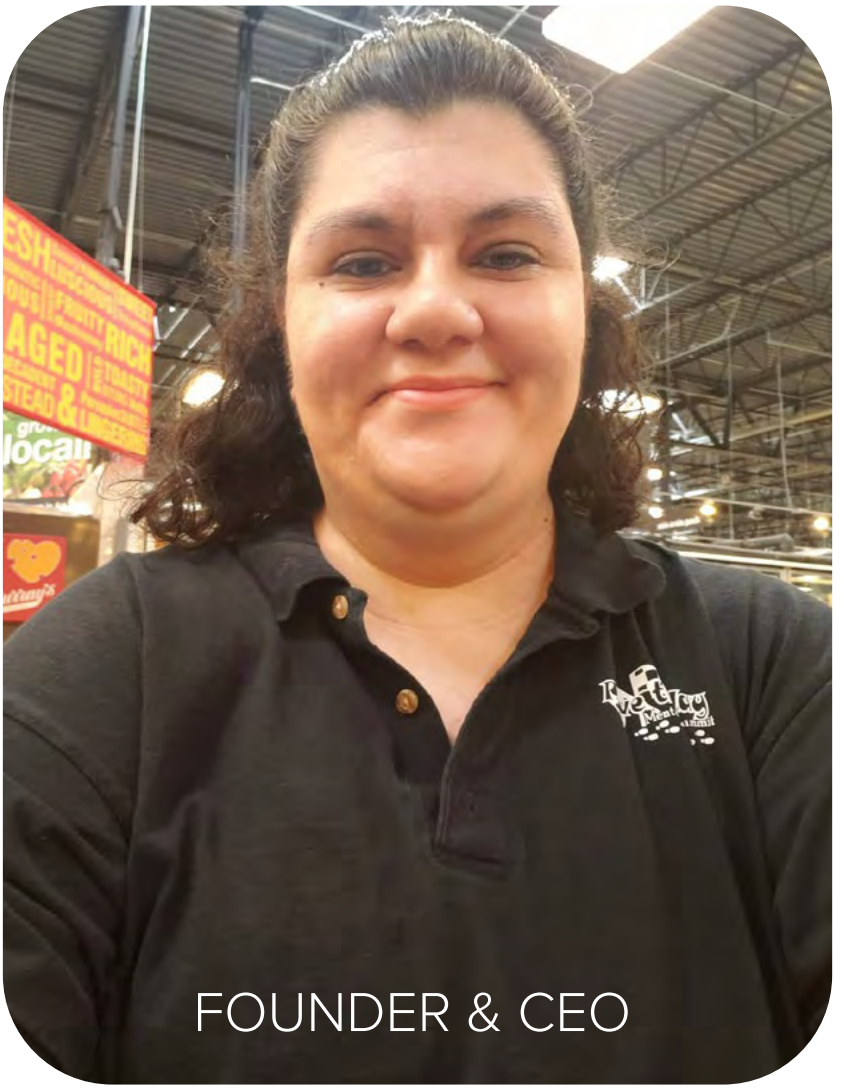
Launched in 2017, Sankore leverages organic, partnership-led education solutions. The company works with schools, nonprofits, and government agencies, providing diversity, equity, inclusion, and innovation (DEI) solutions in addition to strategic organizational planning. Lanise and her team of highly qualified consultants provide resources and training for organizational leaders to make courageous, equity based decisions, using various cultural inventories to inform the process.

Without a doubt, Lanise has had a meaningful impact. A few examples of public projects she has worked on include helping to create a cultural competency course that is now required for all MN teachers, as well as a tool that helps parents select the perfect school for their kids based on needs and goals. In addition, she helped to develop a Justice in Education toolkit to address discriminatory practices in school discipline. And Lanise always strives to connect innovation with inclusivity. "You can't do effective DEI work without Innovation," she says. Her work earned her an Outstanding Educational Leadership Award from Education 2.0 in recognition for her contribution to the field of education and learning. Lanise's classroom experience, combined with edtech expertise, merged with expansive knowledge of DEI topics, gives her a significant edge when it comes to developing and implementing successful projects. But it's the recipients of her work who drive her, and the joy of seeing organizations excel. She plans to expand into the corporate world to establish equity across even more industries.

Lanise holds a bachelor's in history, master's in teaching, and doctorate in education, and three graduate certificates: learning technologies, e-learning, teaching online, as well as serval micro credentials including certification in diversity equity and inclusion in the workplace and inclusive and ethical leadership.

CONTACT www.sankore.consulting | lanise@sankore.consulting | LI: laniseblock
FB: sankoreconsulting ; laniseblock | IG: sankoreconsulting

Michelle DiMuria



Demi Lovato, Michael Phelps, Lady Gaga. These are just a few of the public faces that represent the growing mental health crisis in the U.S. But in the shadow of the spotlight, millions more people are struggling in silence and isolation. Michelle DiMuria, founder and CEO of the BEE Daring Foundation, the first civilian mental health organization in the state of Arizona, is on a mission to eradicate the stigma and change the conversation one story at a time. BEE Daring provides a support system, a community, and resources for individuals looking to create a better version of themselves—from parents to high school and college students, athletes, health care workers, and others. And Michelle knows of what she speaks. She's been living with PTSD since 2017, and rose from a sexual assault victim to a survivor who built an organization to help others. Recognized with the *ASU Pitchfork Award for Best Education Program: Mental Health Awareness Week*, she's changing the definition from *living* with mental health issues to *thriving* despite them—and she's bringing her growing "BEE Tribe" with her. Over 6,400 people attended BEE Daring's summits and events—16 in total—in its first two years. In 2020, their mental health global summit "broke the internet" with over 12,000 people.

> BEE Daring is a community of civilians helping civilians, sharing their own mental health stories, experiences, and advice.

"I remember how alone and scared I felt when I was diagnosed," she recalls. "No one should ever feel that way or as though they don't matter. I wanted to create a place where individuals can BEE themselves." And so she did. Michelle launched the foundation in 2018, after receiving a B.A. in psychology, a B.S. and master's in criminal justice, and creating the Pave the Way: Mental Health Summit in 2017—all while struggling with PTSD. Through BEE University, people can utilize workshops, courses, blogs, magazines, podcasts, and self-care bags to create virtual toolboxes to help them in their everyday lives. But more than that, BEE Daring is a community of civilians helping civilians, sharing their own mental health stories, experiences, and advice. "I could have easily allowed my mental illness to define me, but I didn't. Instead, I gave myself a voice. And every day, I get a little stronger, *we* get a little stronger!"

BEE Daring FOUNDATION

CONTACT

www.beedaringfoundation.org | michelle@beedaringfoundation.org
LI: mdimuria | FB: BeeDaringFoundation | IG: beedaringfoundation
Bee University: www.beeu.beedaringfoundation.org

Cory Gorovitz

Founder & President

For ages, poets have endeavored to describe love, philosophers have tried to explain it, and people have tried to find it. For some, it is a tireless search with no definitive starting point … until now.

Cory Gorovitz, a born visionary, has created an incomparable solution to the dating conundrum with a truly unique platform that eliminates mindless swiping through a sea of moderately compatible matches. The app is called LuvHut®, and in fall of 2022, it will become the dating method of choice for Gen-Z and millennial singles.

Intrigued by this forthcoming phenomenon, which has already been chronicled by *Global Dating Insights* and *Start-Up Boston,* the *Top 100 Magazine* spoke with Cory to learn about the app, his motivation to create it, and what singles everywhere can look forward to.

Q: Cory, first tell us what inspired you to create LuvHut® and how the app works.

A: I have always enjoyed solving problems and finding new methods to address antiquated practices. This is very much the case with dating apps—they all work the same way. LuvHut® is a *video-based* platform that expedites how users match, chat, and plan dates. Our algorithms are unique to each individual user and provide compatibility percentages for each match; a valuable breakdown we call scorecards. Users can then keep up with matches in real time, send date requests, and earn various rewards like crypto for each date that's booked.

Q: How is LuvHut® making the dating search easier and more effective?

A: The platform was designed to provide convenience, safety, and accessibility for a generation of singles burdened by a lack of dates. While other apps don't offer much except features, we enable users to book seamless dates, whether they be solo or group, through our HotSpot portal. It's a more authentic approach, since half the battle is choosing where to meet. Plus, we've eliminated catfish, users not updating profiles accordingly and lying about their age or height—so, singles will certainly thank us for that. It's almost like a dating app on steroids that combines aspects of social networks and entertainment fused with insightful data at your fingertips.

Q: How can people get your app or become part of LuvHut®?

A: It will be available for both iOS and Android this spring and singles can sign up through our website and social media. As of today, we're close to 7,000 users on our waitlist. To increase brand awareness and sign-ups, we've hired undergraduate students from major campuses across the U.S.

LuvHut was designed to provide convenience, safety, and accessibility for a generation of singles burdened by a lack of dates.

Q: How did you raise funding early on?

A: I started it myself with $40,000. On January 7, 2022, we announced our partnership with TechRupt Innovations, a startup accelerator, and they're investing $330K at a $1.65 million valuation. We are also seeing interest from angel and VC investors to scale our efforts.

Q: Your educational background and experience have undoubtedly played a role in the creation of such an intuitive platform. Can you tell us about it?

A: I attended UMass Dartmouth and Framingham State University, where I majored in marketing and minored in entrepreneurship, ultimately graduating magna cum laude. I received *Entrepreneur of the Year* and *Innovation of the Year* for my senior thesis paper, which was about LuvHut®. During my time at FSU, I also served as a business development manager for a marketing company.

CONTACT

www.theluvhut.com | gorovitz7@gmail.com LI: LuvHut Inc.
FB: luvhutdatingapp IG: luvhutdatingapp

TODD Justic

Todd Justic knows that finding the right person for the right job is more than just putting out a job description and looking through résumés; it's an art and a skill. And he's honed that skill over a 25-year career in executive recruiting, and through the ranks as intern, associate, vice president, principal, and managing director at Carlyle Group. In 2009, he brought his experience and insight together to launch ALJ Group, LLC, to bring companies the highest-quality talent and represent the best minds in recruiting. The Chicago-based retained executive recruiting firm specializes in the real estate development, general contracting, program/project management, and architectural/design industries. The boutique practice reflects Todd's vision of what a recruiting firm *should* be—where the relationships between the client and the candidate are managed thoughtfully. "Talent is the most important asset to a company's success," he says. "Education, skills, experience are important, but equally critical is the cultural match between candidate and company, and ensuring each meets the other's unique needs." This intersection where art meets skill is where both AIJ and their clients thrive.

With a placement rate of 94%, compared with the industry average of 67%, AIJ has placed more than 7,750 candidates, 70 in the past year alone. And in the era of the Great Resignation, in which companies and recruiting firms are scrambling for top-tier talent, Todd's network of candidates with whom he's had long relationships is stronger than ever, all cultivated on trust. "People know me, my firm, so if I reach out to candidates, they trust the opportunity that I'm presenting them with," he shares. "It's all about investing the time to get to know them professionally and personally, and understanding what has and hasn't worked in company cultures before to find them the right match."

For AIJ's client companies, Todd and his team bring the same personalized attention to understand their unique needs and place top talent that meets their high standards and meshes perfectly with their environment, creating a "perfect union" in which both firms and candidates flourish. "What I enjoy most is improving the lives of the people I work with by finding them better opportunities. That's really it," he says.

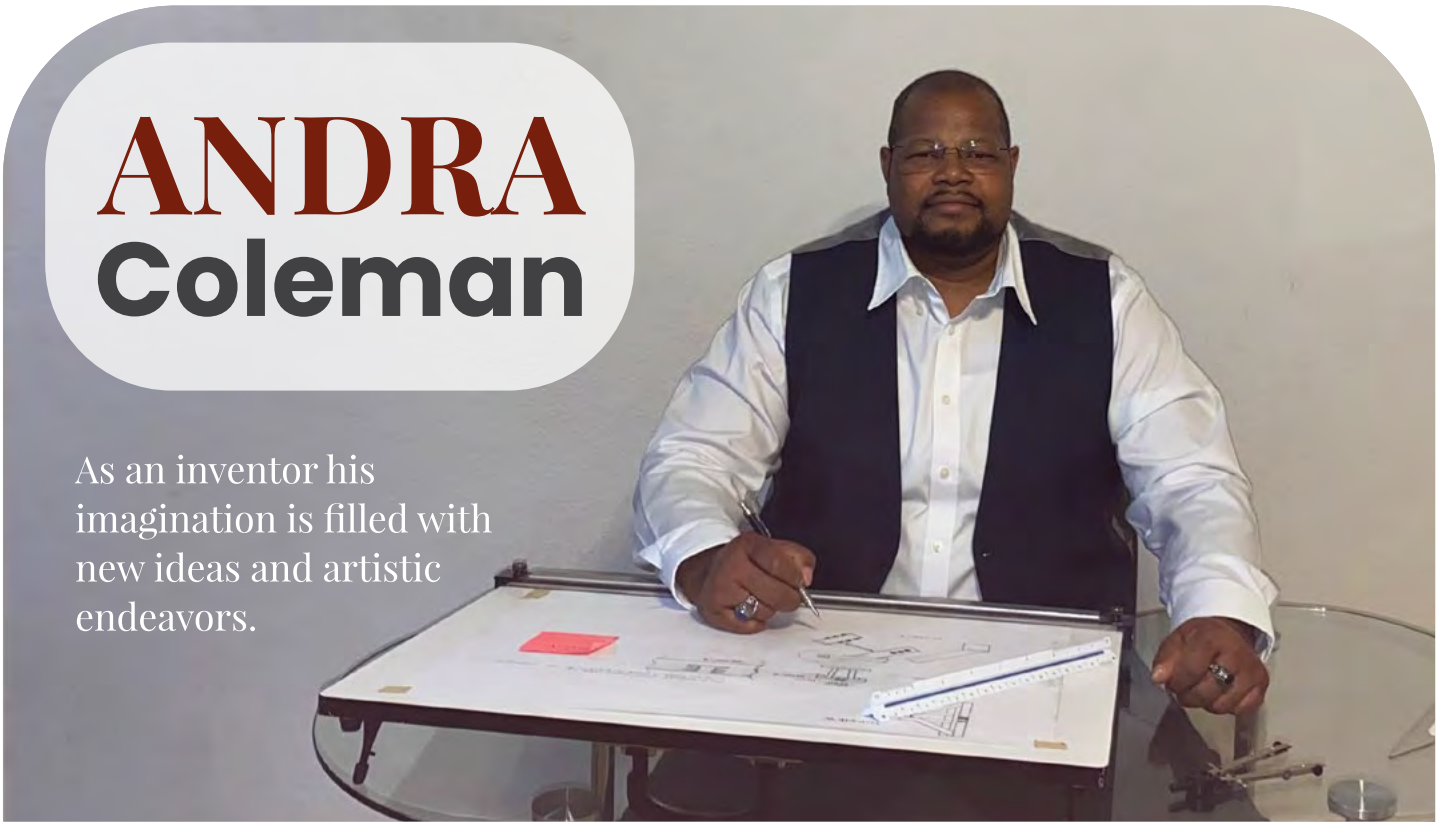
> What I enjoy most is improving the lives of the people I work with by finding them better opportunities. That's really it.

ALJ GROUP

CONTACT

www.aljgroupllc.com
Tjustic@aljgroupllc.com
LI: Todd Justic

ANDRA Coleman



As an inventor his imagination is filled with new ideas and artistic endeavors.

> "I can visualize people's ideas in my mind and sketch them on paper, and I've always felt my calling was to help other people."

Andra Coleman was born with a visionary gift—with the ability to draw. While many would consider this an enviable talent in and of itself, Andra also has the mind of an inventor. Through his 20-year plus career in manufacturing he has established expertise principles in the process. As an inventor his imagination is filled with new ideas and artistic endeavors. In 2012, he returned to college for a degree in drafting and designs technology. While attending, he designed his first invention—a hauling robot. Andra's gift for drawing allowed him to produce the sketches and schematics in a way that others could see what his mind saw, and they did. In 2021, he filed for his first Intellectual Property. But while he reveled in the triumph, his purpose in life was much larger than his own personal accomplishments. "I can visualize people's ideas in my mind and sketch them on paper, and I've always felt my calling was to help other people," Andra said. "Driven by this desire that same year, I launched Where Ideas Become Reality LLC," a Dallas-based consultant company committed to helping individuals to bring their innovative ideas to reality.

With special emphasis in mechanical 3D modeling, prototypes, and project management, Andra and his team bring decades of experience in manufacturing across a variety of CNC machinery, 3D design skills, and patent expertise to a full suite of services to make dreams come true. For some, the dream is an invention, for others, an innovative real estate designing idea. For both, Andra puts his visionary and artistic skills to work along with expertise in state-of-the-art designing software— Autodesk Inventor, Fusion 360 (with CAD/CAM capabilities), 3Ds Max, Revit, and AutoCAD Architecture—to design residential floorplans and remodeling projects.

WHERE IDEAS BECOME REALITY LLC

"So many people have innovative, brilliant ideas, but they hit a wall that stops them from fulfilling their dream," Andra shares. "Whether they're struggling to illustrate it on paper, draw up a schematic, get it manufactured, a protype made, or navigate the provisional patent process, I'm able to visionaries and inventors realize their dream just as I have realized mine."

Andra holds a bachelor's degree in project management, an associate degree in drafting of designs and a certificate in CNC brake press operations.

CONTACT: mcknightdesigns@ideas4reality.com
LI: Andra Coleman

Michael C. Brooks

Chief Executive Officer

As CEO of Law Enforcement Officers Health Services, he leads an organization that makes a tangible impact on the lives of law enforcement families.

LEO HEALTH SERVICES
CONNECTING HEROES TO HEROES

www.leohs.org | michael@leohs.org | LI: Michael C. Brooks-ceo
FB: LEOHealthSVCS | IG: leohealthsvcs

Michael Brooks dedicated his life to doing the right thing, even under the most challenging of circumstances. With an unwavering moral compass, stemming from his service in the U.S. Air Force, Michael has impacted thousands of lives throughout his career. As flight control specialist, he was responsible for repairing or releasing aircraft for takeoff. He once refused to release a plane that had a malfunction while preparing for Desert Shield, potentially saving the crewmembers lives, which earned him the Air Force *Achievement Medal* for meritorious service.

Now, as CEO of Law Enforcement Officers Health Services, he leads an organization that makes a tangible impact on the lives of law enforcement families. LEO Health Services connects the heroes of law enforcement to the heroes of medicine, ensuring that officers have access the right care at the right time. The company offers a popular physician membership organization that supports all police officers and provides special benefits for members. Michael credits the medical professionals who join with enabling medical advocacy to thousands of law enforcement families, often during difficult times, as the membership dues provide the necessary resources that provide for free services.

Previously, Michael was elected county commissioner of elections. While doing the right thing in politics was not always popular, he steadfastly defended democracy, nonetheless. Michael worked with the STOP DWI program, where he developed relationships with numerous police agencies to reduce drunk driving fatalities. He went on to work in pharmaceutical sales as a central nervous system specialist, where he began to understand the disparities that exist in accessing care.

Then, as director of the State Trooper Surgeons in New York State, Michael developed relationships with physicians and administrators of major hospitals to build a healthcare navigation process. The program sparked interest in other states, and today, LEO Health Services is serving law enforcement agencies nationwide.

Michael credits the realization of his goals and dreams to his wife and fellow executive board member, Jillian Mayott. Her belief in him, but especially her business and financial expertise, have fueled this successful venture. John Samuels, CEO of Better Health Advisors, completes the executive board, offering more than 25 years of experience in healthcare access and ER Management.

DARRELL Fertakos

Social Entrepreneur, Prolific Inventor, Innovation Scholar, Consumer Insight Specialist, Ideation & Invention Expert

Boundless Innovations and DreamLand Productions, founded by Darrell Fertakos, a three-time award winning social entrepreneur, prolific inventor, innovation scholar, consumer insight specialist, ideation and invention expert, continuously inspires the world to invent together without limits. Inspired by the *Thomas Edison Papers* and famous inventors, Boundless Innovations is now recognized as one of the world's most innovative companies by Innovationsoftheworld.com.

Darrell, a prolific designer of new products in thirty industries, was featured on *The Jay Leno Tonight Show* designing a similar product to what later became e-cigarettes (10/04) selected out of 4,200 for an invention award in The History Channel's *Modern Marvels* InventNow Challenge (5/06), for the design of a mobile payment app prior to the App Store. Darrell also appeared on ABC's *American Inventor* as NYC finalist inventing a smart airbag helmet (2007), and showcased on Discovery Channel's *PitchMen* TV show with his smart AR glasses invention (4/09), prior to Fortune 100 companies. Darrell's one- of- a kind talents as an award-winning product developer are recognized by National Inventors Hall of Fame, Rothman Institute of Innovation, History Channel, NJ Tech Council, and globally.

BOUNDLESS INNOVATIONS
& DREAMLAND PRODUCTIONS

In college, 2004 Darrell conducted an invention experiment hoping to break Thomas Edison's peak year creativity record of 106 patent applications filed in 1882, to serve the public good. "With the help of mind-machines, I began to design 389 ideas for new products, TV shows, and ventures within days and after filed at patent office," he explains. "During this experiment, I also designed similar products in part to what Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, SnapChat, ClubHouse, Square, Apple Pay and FitBit later became, even Smart Glasses and Web 3 innovations." Darrell also shares he created similar TV show formats to what later became *Shark Tank*, *America's Got Talent*, *Dancing With The Stars*, *The Profit*, and 500X more product, business and TV show concepts "most facts verified by patent attorneys at CoffyLaw," he adds.

To execute, Darrell reached out to Fortune 100 companies hoping for help to co-develop new products and TV shows. "I sadly encountered 'no unsolicited idea' polices that made it near impossible to share my ideas and talents with companies who could have benefited the most," he says.

As a positive change catalyst inspired by Harvard's open innovation research, which teaches companies grow more when working with inventors to co-develop and market new products, Darrell built one of the first open innovation social networks, and, he explains, "co-created hit TV show *PitchMen"* to help inventors. "These ideas, upon co-execution, helped inventors commercialize new products, resulting in awards won, patents granted, millions of new product units sold and billions in sales results on TV, online, and in retail," he adds. Darrell also aided in the design and marketing of bestselling consumer products and helped local inventor of Clamp Champion become a top seller on QVC three years in a row. "Companies can acquire, license, invest, or hire as a proven innovator who believes in win-win deals and a *collaborative innovation process* to develop the best new products and TV shows possible, to serve the world. So contact us today!"

CONTACT

www.BoundlessInnovations.co | www.DarrellFertakos.com
Darrell@BoundlessInnovations.co | 973-723-1628
LI: Darrell Fertakos

MARIA Levis

IMPACTIVO
DATA EMPOWERMENT• SUSTAINABILITY • SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTH

"There's so much darkness in the world, I do whatever I can to be a light." This is the guiding mantra of Maria Fernanda Levis, founder, CEO, and Health ImpACTivista at ImpACTivo, LLC. Named one of the *Top 100 Healthcare Leaders* by the International Federation for the Advancement of Healthcare, Maria has worked at the intersection of health and social innovation for almost 25 years. In 2010, she launched a Puerto Rico-based company as an impact-driven health IT and evidence-based consultancy committed to amplifying patient voices and creating pathways that transform health systems to address and personalize population's needs. "We bring people back to what's most important—their health," she explains. To this end, the ImpACTivo team develops and deploys innovative community and patient-centered solutions through data, training, technical assistance, and technology. To date, they've worked with over 4,000 health professionals, dozens of health centers, and hospitals in medically underserved communities on patient-centered care models, virtual care, quality improvement, burnout prevention, behavioral health integration, sustainability, and other initiatives.

> "We bring people back to what's most important—their health.

As the *2021 Best Health System Transformation Consultancy*, Impactivo has accessed over $150 million in federal funding to provide community services and develop proprietary methodologies for achieving improved patient outcomes. Maria and her team of "ImpACTivistas" are currently working on the development of a technology-enabled, personalized roadmap that enhances team-based, patient-centered primary care for low-income patients in the U.S. Funded through the National Science Foundation, the project recently received a USPTO patent and has launched a beta version that is out to market. In 2001, Maria led a team that developed the first homeless management information system to deploy health, housing, and social services for this population. Two decades later, she remains ever driven by an unwavering conviction that *everyone* deserves the resources that enable a healthy life—a clear testament to a career dedicated to health equity for all. And for an untold number of people, she's delivering.

Maria holds a master's degree in public administration and a master's degree in public health from Harvard University, a Data Science Certification from Johns Hopkins University, is a NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home Certified Content Expert, and a Certified Fundraiser Executive. She's a fellow of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health, and an author for Health Affairs, the American Public Health Association, and the Harvard Medical School Primary Care Blog.

CONTACT: www.impactivo.com | maria.levis@gmail.com | LI: marialevis | FB: maria.levis

Michael Curry

Founder & CEO

When it comes to reducing the world's carbon footprint, Michael Curry's Eco-Friendly Plastic Materials, LLC, is making some major waves. The founder and CEO has been an award-winning research scientist since 2005, and in 2018, he launched the company after having worked almost a decade in the area of biorenewable development. As an associate professor at Tuskegee University's Department of Chemistry, Michael has been recognized as a *Black History Maker* in Alabama, where he's credited with the development of innovations that utilize cellulose to make biodegradable plastics. "When you're looking at any plant, you're essentially looking at cellulose, which is very natural and abundant," he states. "We've developed a method for taking the cellulose and making plastic products that are environmentally safe."

> We've developed a method for taking the cellulose and making plastic products that are environmentally safe.

With the aim to replace traditional plastics with a stronger, long-lasting, biodegradable material that can decompose in a much shorter time span, Eco-Friendly Plastic Materials offers multiple services to make a change in the conventional plastic manufacturing industry. Its team of chemical, material, and manufacturing engineering experts and scientists work on eco-friendly plastic research that provides cost-effective and less hazardous solutions for the industry by using natural products. And while the company focuses on helping to revolutionize plastics manufacturing, Michael is equally committed to its impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM areas as he continues to inform the next generation of talent. And as a *STEM Summits Success Scientist of the Year Award* nominee and the recipient of the *2021 National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers's HBCU Pioneer Award*, he's just the leader to do it.

"This whole picture of creating equity, diversity, and inclusion, it's bringing more views to the table that can create these innovations that can be beneficial to society as a whole—and that's precisely what we're doing through our innovations, the development of our team, and the nurturing of emerging entrepreneurial and scientific minds," he explains.

Michael holds a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, and a B.S. in chemistry from the University of West Alabama.

CONTACT

www.epmsustainables.com | celluloseplastics@gmail.com | LI: Michael Curry

HARPARAM

Sandhu

Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Harparam Sandhu always had a passion for creativity and innovation. After completing medical school in India, he moved to the U.S. and continued his education in the fields of medicine, skincare, nutrition, and business at the University of Washington and UC, Berkeley. With research experience and a few patents under his name, the academic has since leveraged his extensive knowledge and education to create something for the benefit of others.

Harparam is the founder of SKN H2O, a carbonated beverage that nourishes the skin from the inside, out. “Skin is the largest organ of the human body and most of the skincare field is focused on *external* skincare,” he shares. And so, with the support of his wife, Ashley Sandhu, Harparam launched the California-based brand with the tag line, “Rethink what you drink.” The premium luxury sparkling water is infused with Resveratrol—the same compound famed for the health benefits of wine. “There’s plenty of research and data showing the benefits of Resveratrol,” he shares. “It’s one of the most potent antioxidants known to man. Not only does it help with breakage of collagen and elastin, but it reduces the effects of oxidative stress, and has cardiovascular, anti-aging, and cognitive benefits,” Harparam adds.

SKN H2O has been featured in *Women’s Health, Medium, Athleisure*, and *Poosh* by Kourtney Kardashian.

With carefully designed carbonation for a unique drinking experience and ingredients with maximum bioavailability, it is free of carbs and sugars, and comes in two flavors: Original and Organic Lemon. “It’s a clean, healthy product that can make a difference in your overall well-being,” Harparam shares. SKN H2O is currently available in over 50 medical spas, grocery stores, wineries, and wellness centers, and the company’s expansion plans include the addition of resorts and hotel spas, as well as international distribution to retail chains.

With a full skincare line on the horizon, Harparam remains focused on creating products from clean and sustainable ingredients, sourced from all over the world, with maximum bioavailability. “Our goal is to make SKN H2O the preferred beverage for the skincare industry,” he states.

CONTACT

www.SknH2O.com | harparam@sknh2o.com | LI: Harparam S. | FB & IG: SKNH2O

Mike Boyle had an 18-year career in marketing behind him, with experience as an account executive that led him to partner. In 2004, he left the C-suite, took his wealth of expertise, and founded Unrestricted MKTG, a full-service marketing agency on a mission to transform the client-agency relationship through authentic, next-level leadership, creative excellence, and effective execution. Driven by digital platforms, technology, and a team of marketing experts, Unrestricted MKTG has the unique ability to take the process through to the final stage of delivery, handling the warehousing, shipping, and logistics, to make sure retailer products end up on store shelves and available. “From creation to promotion to fulfillment, there are no restrictions on what we can do for our clients,” Mike says.

After nearly two decades of delivering this kind of high-touch service, Unrestricted MKTG has amassed hundreds of clients across the country, with a focus on mid-sized businesses, as well as corporate enterprises like General Mills and Fortune 500 companies. For each of them, Unrestricted MKTG creates bespoke solutions to help their clients’ revenue grow. For Mike, this is what it’s all about—helping people thrive, in both his professional and personal life. He’s actively involved with Jared Allen’s Homes for Wounded Warriors, which helps injured military veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the Shooting Star Foundation, helping to raise funds for children with special needs. “While we enjoy serving our clients, when we can make an awesome impact on someone’s life, that’s pretty cool,” Mike shares.

CONTACT: www.unrestrictedmktg.com | mike@unmktg.com
LI: mikegboyle

He’s a prolific inventor with more than 30 patents, an engineering expert with more than 25 years’ experience, and the entrepreneurial powerhouse behind three companies. If anyone knows how to spot a good idea *and* bring it to market, it’s **Edwin De Angel,** and as founder and CEO of Invention Matters (formerly Essential Technologies), he’s been doing it for over a decade. Edwin and his group of subject matter experts, patent attorneys, and licensing experts provide specialized expertise in intellectual property, development, positioning, and patent filing. Their mission? To help usher inventions and IP from genesis through patent acquisition and into the future.

While their clients include Intel, Intellectual Ventures, and Praetorian, Edwin is a champion of smaller tech companies, and the firm’s unique model gives them an advantage. Invention Matters® works with companies during critical times: product launch, M&A transactions, patent infringement, penetrating a new market, and technology licensing.\As Edwin helps inventors transform ideas into success stories, he also leads a pair of other thriving ventures—Angel Real Estate and Invention-AI.

Edwin holds a PhD in electrical and computer engineering and an MS and a BS in electrical engineering. He’s a licensed product management professional, certified licensing professional, IEEE senior member, and member of Business Network International.

CONTACT: ww.inventionmatters.com | www.invention-ai.com
edwin.deangel@inventionmatters.com | LI: Edwin De Angel

Teresa Friesen has been a champion for elevating women's voices for over a decade. In support of this quest, she co-founded SheMate in 2021. Headquartered in Nebraska, SheMate is a virtual platform that connects women in sports with the young people who look up to them. With hundreds of subscribers—including high school girls, parents, coaches and school administrators—the company is increasing visibility and representation of women in athletics. "Status quo right now is about 95% of sports media coverage goes to males, which is a missed opportunity," she explains. "We're making a change in that space." SheMate helps female college athletes meaningfully monetize their skills and experience while providing young people with customized, empowering content and parents and coaches with strategies for better athletic development—all from women who know the collegiate athletics realm best. Given the enormous response, it would seem SheMate is the change that female athletes have been waiting for. Over 1,400 have already applied and 200 are currently working with SheMate.

Prior to starting SheMate, Teresa was a social worker and most recently a college professor. As someone who's dedicated her career to helping others, her goal is to increase access to wellness through tech. SheMate was developed in pursuit of this mission. "We're focused on increasing on-screen, positive female representation and creating safe and empowering experiences in young peoples' digital world," she states. "We are a community where women *thrive*."

SheMate

Teresa holds a BSW from Creighton University and an A.M. from University of Chicago.

teresa@shemate.club | LI: friesenteresa
IG: shemate.club | www.shemate.club

Castle Connolly
PRIVATE HEALTH PARTNERS, LLC

Convenience, connectivity, collaboration, and coaching are the four C's that form the core principles for which Castle Connolly Private Health Partners was built on. Founded by **Dean McElwain** and John Connolly in 2014, the company is a leading concierge medicine and wellness support company with a passion for changing the lives of both physicians and patient members. As innovators in the concierge medicine space, the New York-based firm has led the way in developing and implementing concierge medicine programs with a fully integrated wellness offering, navigation services and world class marketing. The company prides itself on their selective partnerships with leading physicians and a continued focus on supporting the special relationship that exists between each doctor and their patients.

With a career in health care that spans over 35 years, Dean is a problem-solver who's driven by the ability to collaboratively create success with his team. Prior to launching Castle Connolly Private Health Partners, Dean was the CEO of Peak Health Consultants, a nationally respected and sought-after consultancy in the healthcare development space. Dean led the way for many physicians and organizations who transitioned to the membership model of practice as well as numerous deployments in the orthopedic and revenue cycle/compliance arenas. A serial entrepreneur, Dean started his own chain of sports medicine and physical therapy clinics at just 25 years old. Located throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts, he owned and operated the clinics while finishing his master's degree and doctorate in physical therapy and health care administration. "I enjoy complex problem solving, creating value, and focusing on reproducible positive health outcomes", Dean shares.

Dean holds a PhD in physical therapy with a concentration in healthcare administration.

www.ccphp.net | dmcelwain@ccphp.net | IG: ccphp.llc
LI: Dean McElwain & Castle Connolly Private Health Partners, LLC | FB: castleconnollyprivatehealthpartners

Svetlozar Zurkov is an entrepreneur and fitness expert who is on a mission to make the world a healthier place. He's the founder of Svetness, which provides in-home personal training services. With a growing network of over 500 trainers, the Svetness team has served over 5,000 people across 20 states nationwide. "We're all about our clients and want to help them achieve their goals," Svet explains. Hailing from a small town in Bulgaria, Svet has been heavily involved with sports since he was just seven years old. Armed with an unwavering childhood dream of owning his own business, Svet came to the U.S. in 2007 with the aspiration of starting his own fitness company, using the techniques gleaned from working with professional trainers in Eastern Europe. In 2012, he launched Svetness LLC, which has become a leader in home training services in the country, with an innovative approach that makes exercising convenient, accessible, and exciting—whether at an office, a home, park, or beach. "When I became a personal trainer here, I saw that people weren't showing up for their appointments. I thought we needed to bring the training *to* our clients," he says. "I started Svetness to offer more personalized training options for people." Shortly thereafter, Svet started Svetness Fitness and Nutrition Corp. in 2014, with the overarching goal of creating a global wellness conglomerate.

Svetlozar holds certifications from the National Council for Certified Personal Trainers and International Sports Sciences Association as well as Harvard Business School in Business Management and Leadership Principles.

CONTACT:
www.svetness.com
LI:svetzurkov
FB: svetzurkov
IG: svetzurkov

Not many kids count Warren Buffett among their idols, but **John Knorring** did. He always knew he wanted to go into finance, having been fascinated by the subject from a young age. His interest led him to an operations research and financial engineering degree from Princeton in 2003, then immediately into a 12-year career with Goldman Sachs, becoming a managing director and head of the U.S. natural gas trading business at just 30. In 2015, John pivoted to private trading company, DRW Commodities, dealing in a variety of commodity markets. Today, he is the founder and CEO of his own firm and incubator for new and underserved markets, Green Tiger Markets. "We have developed the Green Tiger Markets platform to facilitate cloud-based trading so that buyers and sellers of commodity products can easily hedge with one another across the world," John explains. With the platform complete, John is excited to take the next steps with client onboarding, building liquidity in markets, and securing approvals for global trade.

Green Tiger's listed products include rhodium, used in catalytic converters in cars, and other minor and precious metals. "We're making it easier for firms to hedge by bringing transparency and price discovery to underserved markets," John explains. In addition, Green Tiger also lists Philippines electricity. The Philippines has some of the world's highest electric costs, so John hopes that by introducing a forward market, he can pave the way for economic growth for that country. Looking back at all he's accomplished, it's difficult for John to choose a singular aspect of his career that he values the most, from his formative years at Goldman Sachs to building Green Tiger. But if he had to choose, it's cultivating relationships with mentees and building a solid, long-lasting team driven by hard work and innovation. "The company is still young, but I have every confidence that it will be a great success," he says.

CONTACT: john.knorring@gmail.com | LI: John Knorring

Did you know that by the time people get alerted by today's smoke alarms, they typically only have two minutes to get to safety? **Gregory Stewart** & SAAM, Inc. does, and they're on a mission to save lives and improve health. After 12 years running large P&Ls at Fortune 500 Asia Pacific companies in Shanghai and Singapore, Gregory returned to his native U.S., co-founding SAAM in 2019. With the goal of increasing fire safety response time, they've developed the next generation of home smoke alarms. "Existing technology is over 50 years old and obsolete; they are suited for houses of days past whereas todays home emit caustic gases that will kill you quickly, therefore it is paramount you have more time to evacuate the house," he says. "We've transformed the dumb smoke detector into a better, much faster, more responsive, interactive smart device that will literally save lives."

Currently scheduled to be available in 2023, there's a portable device for people away at school or traveling, inspired by the tragedies of hotel and dorm fires. There's also a hardwired device, which can be connected to the SAAM app to measure other airborne dangers like pollen, mold, and allergens. Response has been overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic—before even hitting the market. Independent fire testing facility Worcester Polytechnic Institute found the products greatly exceeded current day devices, so much so, they've caught the attention of multiple top companies. "I'm so thankful to be part of an outstanding team at SAAM focused on saving lives through enhanced technology," Gregory says.

Gregory holds an MBA from the University of Notre Dame and has won various awards from GE & Rexel centered around managing large P&Ls and business development.

CONTACT:
gstewart@saam.us.com | www.saam.us.com
LI: gregoryburchardstewart

As co-founder and CEO of Greenly Mortgage, **Azeem Moazzamuddin** combines technology with lending to deliver memorable customer experiences . With over $36 million of loans transacted to date, the Cleveland-based business serves clients throughout the state. Founded in 2022, the technologically advanced firm automates underwriting and loan processing to reduce closing times and create a better experience. With this in mind, Greenly is also focused on building out a fully digital blockchain mortgage that allows for the use of cryptocurrencies. "There's a high demand for the ability to use cryptocurrency to obtain mortgages in the smaller market, and the tech behind it allows for digital processing of traditional mortgages," he explains. "That's really where I see the future going, and we're working to streamline the process and make it more enjoyable."

Prior to launching Greenly Mortgage, Azeem helped to start and scale multiple companies and served as a vice president of operations in the mortgage industry, where he received the *Love Our Clients Award* in 2018 for customer satisfaction. It is precisely his commitment to helping people that has driven him throughout his six-year career, and, ultimately, what compelled him to start a company devoted to transforming the lending experience. "During my time as a banker, I realized the process was convoluted and painstaking, and it led me to dive more into the tech side and figure out a better solution for borrowers," Azeem explains. "That I'm able to help build better communities, this is what drives me every single day."

Azeem holds a bachelor's degree in IT management.

CONTACT: Azeem@greenlymortgage.com
LI: azeem-moazzamuddin

During the midst of an oil price war and the onset of a global pandemic, petroleum engineer **Zayman Villegas** did what very few were doing—he launched a business. While his initial vision wasn't to build an engineering consulting firm, that's exactly what happened. "What started as a way to make ends meet materialized into job opportunities for a group of intelligent, like-minded individuals," he explains. During college, Zayman interned at Devon Energy for 2 summers and Statoil before working as a pumper, and an engineer for Saguaro Petroleum. In 2020, he founded Fiducia Energy Consulting, where, as president, he leads a Texas-based team of petroleum and mechanical engineers with over 20 years combined experience in the oil and gas operator and service industry.

Located in the Permian Basin, the firm specializes in contract operating, field development strategy, and turnkey implementation, along with state and federal regulatory compliance. With a proven track record for executing multimillion-dollar technical projects from concept to completion utilizing systems that meet or exceed functionality, production, and reliability targets, they've completed over 150 projects for a dozen clients to date. And they're just getting started.

Zayman holds a bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering from Texas Tech University, where he's a member of the Petroleum Engineering Industrial Advisory Board and was keynote speaker at the 2021 Texas Tech Petroleum Engineering Senior Dinner. He was formerly the senior operations engineer for Saddleback Exploration, a private equity-backed start-up E&P. Zayman is currently the engineering & business manager for Saguaro Petroleum and Return Disposal.

CONTACT: zayman@fec.services | LI: Fiducia Energy Consulting LLC

Fiducia Energy Consulting

Kimberly Walker is a creative visionary and an entrepreneur with an eye for design—and she's making her mark on the tableware industry in a major way. Driven by a passion for creating the new, the unique, the unexpected, Kimberly thought incorporating art with technology could be the perfect recipe for functional tableware that turns the ordinary into the extraordinary. Her instincts were right, and she was awarded two utility patents for digital table settings. Now, as the CEO of Skylight Home Décor, LLC, with 20 years in management, she's bringing it to masses, with the product set to launch in October 2022. Located in South Jersey, the startup is a gamechanger for tech-inspired table settings and home décor with an innovation that aims to transform the definition of "decorating."

From a communication device that allows people to order directly from a menu on a table setting design, to transformative LED artistic tableware that can be used to emulate a variety of designs, Kimberly's creations are nothing short of unique. In a space that has remained virtually unchanged, Kimberly's trailblazing technology literally sets the table for the future of home décor as we know it.

Kimberly is a United States Army veteran and missionary volunteer. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Upper Iowa University.

For information about investment or partnership opportunities, please contact Kimberly directly.

SKYLIGHT
Home Décor

CONTACT:
www.skylighthomedecor.com
info@skylighthomedecor.com
LI: Kim Walker
FB: Kimberly. Walker &
skylighthomedecor_

Arun Prasad has business in his veins. It's how he managed to get Priyaa Groups, his family's apparel business in India, where he's worked from the age of 16, a $2 million annual income and two new locations as their director. Now 24—and a firmly planted New Yorker with a master's in industrial engineering from NYU—Arun has his eyes set on helping enterprise grow their businesses with blockchain, and founded Money Convey, LLC, in January 2022, to do it. "Blockchain technology is an emerging digital resource with growing applications in various industries such as BFSI, government, healthcare, and others," he explains. "We're a combination of Deloitte and AWS in providing consulting and technology services, respectively."

With a focus on health care, IoT, and energy sectors, and a growing number of clients, Arun is already being consulted by companies for his expertise in Blockchain, Crypto, and NFT applications. Meanwhile, Arun continues to build the technology that allows businesses to grow and thrive without the constraints of redundancy, long waiting times, and defects while ensuring and improving security, traceability, interoperability, and accessibility. "What drives me is the ecosystem, the community of startups, entrepreneurs, and visionaries we're building to serve people in every corner, every neighborhood, everywhere," Arun says. "The vision to be the next big thing is what drives me every day."

Arun also hold's a bachelor's in mechanical engineering, master's in industrial engineering and published a research paper in IAEME.

MONEYCONVEY

CONTACT: arunprasad@moneyconvey.com
LI: Arun P. | IG: ns.arunprasad11

As a leader in data intelligence, **Megan Ingram** combines the human touch of storytelling and the hard science of data to craft marketing campaigns that showcase businesses and brands the way that they deserve. After a 10-year digital marketing career with agencies like FleishmanHillard, Finn Partners, and Edelman, and winning a *YouTube Shorty Award* in 2016, Megan founded Ingram Digital Consulting in 2020. The full-service digital agency creates digital campaigns by combining design with research-based data strategy. "A lot of agencies talk about data, but don't lead with data," Megan explains. That's why she leverages keyword research, audience and market insights, conversation analysis, competitive review, and influencer identification to craft a truly authentic story. "I believe we've created a methodology that helps brands identify the right story to resonate with audiences," she says. "It's a balance of both data and human intelligence."

Megan and her Digital Outlaw team of vetted flexible talent have worked across many brands and verticals with non-profits, startups, and Fortune 500 companies, including the American Veterans Center, Blue Bird, and the National Policing Institute. Using data mining to craft a video strategy, Megan helped the American Veterans Center increase their views and subscriptions by 400%. "My passion is helping clients tell awesome stories using data and social intelligence," Megan says. "For me, it's about connecting the data to the people, and I really enjoy helping clients tell better stories and reach more people."

INGRAM DIGITAL consulting

CONTACT:
megan@ingramdigitalconsulting.com | www.ingramdigitalconsulting.com
LI: ingram-digital-consulting | IG: ingramdigital

Chad Addie knows it's difficult to build a creative career from the ground up because he's done it himself. Today, as the CEO of Karben Studios, he's helping imaginative minds in myriad fields establish their own dreams via coaching, SEO, graphic design, and marketing. Founded in 2016, Karben Studios encompasses Karben Marketing and Karben MGMT. The marketing branch serves multiple companies with graphic design and marketing services, while the management side represents artists like the Milwaukee Bucks' official DJ, DJ Shawna, and LA-based pop singer, Tanner Howe. Chad's multifaceted background gives him insight into what his diverse client base needs. While studying graphic design and marketing in college, he founded his first company, a clothing brand, where he worked with musicians, UFC fighters, models, and even Miss Teen Chicago. The brand gained national and international acclaim and helped to catapult his entrepreneurial career. He's worked across a wide range of industries over the years from startups to Fortune 500 brands. Along the way, his skill and expertise have earned his agency numerous awards for web development, digital and social media marketing, graphic design, and more from Expertise.com, DesignRush, and VVerge. Driving it all is his passion for seeing businesses and artists flourish and achieve their goals, and he's driven to help make that happen for every client that comes along. "I wanted to be more than just a graphic designer or marketer. Now I help people grow their passions and dreams. As an entrepreneur, I take great pride in that."

CONTACT:

www.Karbenmarketing.com | chad@karbenmarketing.com
LI: Karben Marketing | Chad Addie FB: KarbenMarketing | IG: karbenmarketing

KARBEN
MARKETING

Valdet Zuteja is the founder and CEO of Relia Insurance Group in Illinois. With an emphasis on insurance risk, the brokerage partners with carriers such as Nationwide Insurance, Travelers, MetLife, Safeco, Chubb and Berkshire Hathaway to provide coverage in the areas of auto, home, small commercial business, workers compensation and trucking insurance. "When people work with us, they get treated like VIPs," he shares. It's this level of truly personalized service that Relia is known for. But what many people *don't* know is that Valdet's unwavering commitment to help others flourish comes from a deeply personal place. In 1998, he traveled to the United States from Macedonia when he was just 18 years old. He was fluent in five languages—Albanian, Turkish, Croatian, Macedonian, and Serbian—but didn't speak a word of English, yet he was determined to create a better life for himself and his family. Today, Valdet leads a thriving insurance enterprise heralded for providing not only the fastest service possible, but the best value. "People often need immediate quotes. They don't want to wait three days. Our clients can text us, call, or email, and we're always here when they need us," he says.

Valdet began his professional career as a mortgage consultant, but as he gained increasing insight into insurance side of his work over a decade, his desire to own his own agency grew. In 2014, he left the mortgage world and joined Nationwide Insurance as an agent in their Glen Ellyn, Illinois, office. "My goal was to master every aspect of the industry," he shares. In spring of 2016, his entrepreneurial dream came true when the company announced they were shuttering their office. Valdet pivoted and launched Relia Insurance Group, and the rest, as they say, is history. "I believe things happen for a reason," he says. "I thank Nationwide Insurance every day for their decision to close our office."

Valdet holds an associate's degree in computer programming from MATC.

CONTACT: valdet@reliainsurancegroup.com | LI: valdetzyteja

RELIA
INSURANCE GROUP

When **Sarah Evans** found herself creating an international nonprofit, she was the first to admit she had no idea what she was doing. But as a self-described "overachiever," she pushed forward anyway, because the goal of getting clean water infrastructure to rural, developing areas was too important to give up. "My family thought I was crazy for dropping a career to work on the other side of the planet, but I had a feeling my skillset could make a difference if I persisted." And so she did, founding Well Aware 12 years ago—to great success. Since inception, the nonprofit continues to thrive, providing clean water and infrastructure to over 100 communities in East Africa. But she didn't stop there. Once she realized how often clean water infrastructure breaks down in these regions, Sarah set her sights on changing the industry and founded a for-profit branch, Well Beyond, garnering sector-wide traction. "So many well-meaning organizations are working toward clean water for all, but most of these water systems fail. I didn't see many people being proactive about this 'Hidden Crisis' and was compelled to take action, so we launched Well Beyond." The Well Beyond App offers remote diagnostics and maintenance for off-grid water systems and is accessed directly by community members using the well. Getting real-time technical expertise, they can maintain the infrastructure via cell phone, reducing the need for outside technicians and getting ahead of issues to avoid costly repairs later. This patent-pending tool is the first of its kind and is already getting water systems back up and running within hours (as opposed to weeks), preventing long delays without water in places where it's the only source. Today, the Well Beyond App is available worldwide and her background in law and securities has been extremely helpful in getting the businesses globally recognized. *Fast Company* recently recognized them in their *Ideas That Change the World* issue, the latest in a long line of international awards.

Sarah maintains positions on multiple prestigious boards like the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, and has been featured in Forbes, The New York Times, and many other publications.

CONTACT: www.wellbeyondwater.com | sarah@wellbeyondwater.com
LI: Sarah Evans | FB: sarahnellaustin | IG: sarahaware

"We do not inherent the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." - Chief Seattle. This is the guiding principle for SmartSort Technologies, Inc., co-founder and COO, **Cris Luce.** With the goal of becoming better stewards of the planet and its resources, the company is on a mission to solve sustainable materials management for a circular economy. By harnessing the power of patented AI software and hardware, SmartSort is revolutionizing the waste management space to address the problem of contamination and cost head-on. "We significantly reduce contamination, which permits the material to be reused in the manufacturing of goods or composting and, in turn, reduces cost," he explains. SmartSort's patented system for digital out-of-home post-consumer waste diversion directs and educates people on where to dispose of their trash—and in the simplest way. The display resides on the back of a trash can which has three options —recycle, compost, and landfill—essentially eliminating the guesswork of where to deposit your trash. It even features a data analytics and reporting component for the facilities.

The company is putting these innovative systems out for free, with an option to purchase and take part in the new revenue inflows the system introduces with advertisers. When it comes to developing efficiencies in material waste management, SmartSort Technologies is on the cutting edge as a leader in zero-waste to landfill solutions. «The problem with sustainability is that it has not been economically sustainable—until now," Cris says.

Cris is on the board of both the State of Texas Alliance for Recycling and Keep the Colony Beautiful.

CONTACT
www.SmartSortAI.com | cris@smartsortai.com
LI: Cris Luce | FB & IG: SmartSortAI

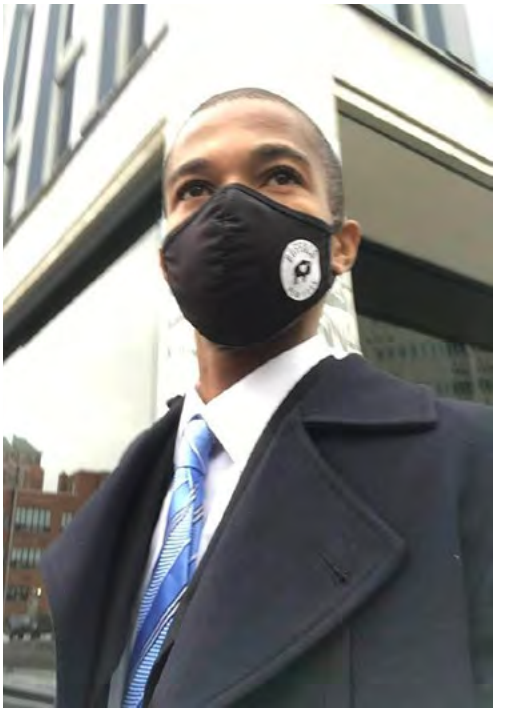
Dirk Downing has focused his entire career on mental performance. In 2017, he obtained a PhD in health education and promotion specializing in sports psychology. The same year, he founded Zoning In: Peak Performance Coaching, which offers individualized approaches to mental mastery through performance psychology consultation. Dirk coaches people on how to be more consistent, deliver under pressure, overcome setbacks, and avoid burnout. “These individually tailored workouts are carefully crafted to boost performance in creative and highly effective ways,” he explains. From athletes to coaches and business entrepreneurs to a variety of performers, Dirk has already helped hundreds of people nationwide to raise their game. And as a former competitive golfer and the author of “Train Your Brain: Your Path to Peak Performance,” *Winning Mindset: Elite Strategies for Peak Performance*, he knows of what he speaks.

Prior to starting his own business, Dirk served as a mental performance coach for D1 athletes at the University of Missouri, and for high school athletes. He’s since worked with collegiate golfers who have gone on to join the PGA, and high school athletes who have gone on to successful collegiate careers. Dirk also developed the mental training seminar “Building a Mental Golf Bag” for amateur golfers nationwide. As someone who helps others overcome mental obstacles, Dirk finds fulfillment in helping people maximize their performance. Game up.

Dirk holds a PhD in health education and promotion and an M.Ed. in sport and career counseling psychology from University of Missouri.

CONTACT: dirkmd23@gmail.com | LI: Dirk Downing

Hadarou Sare is an award-winning research scientist and the founder and CEO of SpaceTIS. Named a *Top 10 Aerospace Company* by *Aerospace and Defense Review Magazine*, the company develops cutting-edge space technologies, including novel reusable and affordable rocket launch systems using water as the propellant, innovative thruster technologies, robotic spacecraft for in-space asteroid mining, rover for mining water on Mars and on the Moon, small satellites for earth and space exploration, space telescopes for exploring planets and small bodies in the solar system. With teams in the U.S., Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, Hadarou and his group of passionate innovators are leading the world into the future. In tandem with his own venture, for the past six years he’s worked with NASA, where he developed algorithms that were applied to satellite images and used to find water on Mars. He worked with the Mars exploration group at NASA and helped NASA to select the best landing site for the 2020 Mars Rover Mission. He later joined the small bodies group at NASA and work on identifying scientific priorities and opportunities for the exploration of asteroids, comets, interplanetary dust, small satellites, and trans-Neptunian objects.



Driven to make the world a better place, Hadarou has also worked alongside other scientists and engineers on NASA’s planetary defense goal, helping to protect our blue planet from dangerous asteroids that could cause catastrophic damage to the Earth. He is currently a research scientist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center developing a robotic spacecraft for asteroid mining. As he continues his ongoing endeavor to invent and develop innovative technologies that have never been built before, Hadarou is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland College Park.

Hadarou started his PhD in aerospace engineering at SUNY University of New York before transferring to mechanical engineering at the University of Maryland College Park. He holds both master’s and bachelor’s degrees in planetary sciences from SUNY University, as well as a bachelor’s in science and technologies and a master’s in geomatics from the Higher Institute for Space Studies and Telecommunications.

SpaceTIS

CONTACT:
www.spacetis.space
hadarou.sare@spacetis.space
LI: Hadarou Sare
FB: SpaceTIS

Victor Guadarrama is the co-founder of Versa Consulting Firm, which helps small businesses stay competitive in the ever-changing marketplace. The Las Vegas-based company specializes in the areas of organizational change, marketing, and transformational leadership for a growing number of clients nationwide. But he and co-founder Kerry Toribio are much more than the leaders of a thriving enterprise. They are passionate champions of small businesses and agents of positive change keenly focused on strategic planning and growth. "We go down deep into the organization to identify where they are now, where they want to be, and what needs to change to get them there," he states. "Then, we put systems and processes in place and develop the marketing and advertising plan to help them achieve their goals."

As someone who has been in the hospitality industry for over a decade, Victor comes from an entrepreneurial family who owned a restaurant for over 25 years. He's traveled the country putting on real estate events for future investors, garnered experience leading cross functional teams, and also worked in the sales department at two resorts on the Las Vegas Strip. Now he's bringing it all together to help promising enterprises flourish. "I've seen firsthand what small businesses go through. Helping them to succeed and thrive, that's our hearts, our passion lies."

Victor holds a bachelor's from the University of San Diego and a master's from Pepperdine University. He's also a certified NLP practitioner.

VERSA
CONSULTING FIRM

www.versaconsultingfirm.com | victor@versaconsultingfirm.com
LI, FB, & IG: @versaconsultingfirm

For 15 years, **Jereis Khawaja** worked up the ladder at a billion-dollar company in the oil and gas industry, from entry-level to vice president of global sales, until he decided to follow his passion of smoking meat. In the digital age, he realized a huge opportunity to disrupt the BBQ industry. Access to Texas BBQ was very limited to consumers across the USA, and his calling was to close the gap.

In 2020, Jereis took a leap of faith and started Truboy BBQ to provide an authentic Texas barbecue experience for everyone to enjoy in the comfort of their home. This fully e-commerce company draws its delicious products from Jereis' own expertise in smoking meat over the years. Growing ~400% in 2021 and projected ~500% growth this year, Truboy now ships high-quality smoked meat, including halal options, delivered right to the doorsteps of people across the U.S. and Canada in just two days. This is made possible through a carefully designed chilling and packaging process that keeps the meat fresh and flavorful, all delivered in reusable materials. And it's clear that consumers across North America are gobbling it up and asking for more.

Besides the explosive growth, Truboy BBQ was named one of FedEx's *Top 100 Small Businesses* in 2022. They also partner with charitable organizations benefiting children's education and cancer research. Jereis' love for food shines through every bite. "Eating has always been social for me, so sharing my BBQ with people has been truly rewarding," he says.

TRUBOY
SMOKED & CHILLED TEXAS BBQ

CONTACT: www.truboybbq.com | truboybbq@gmail.com
LI: JereisKhawaja & TruboyBBQ | FB & IG: TruboyBBQ

David Craig is a decorated war veteran who served almost two decades in the United States Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. For 15 of those years, he worked for Mercedes, where he played a role in planning the delivery of the engine and transmissions for the BR167 projects, which is now their fourth-generation SUV, and did the assembly planning for the EVA2, which was the company's first electric vehicle in the United States. He's a skilled strategist, management consultant, planner, and implementer who is committed to the service of others. In 2019, David retired to a quiet life. Or so he thought. As he watched companies struggle with a skilled workforce shortage during the pandemic, he could not stand idly by. In August 2020, he launched Eminence Consulting & Business Solutions to help them—and it took off. The company develops advanced administrative, operational, and technical processes designed to assist clients with achieving their business vision. Founded on the premise of providing transformative client solutions, the firm leverages a unique combination of data analytics, critical thinking, strategic planning, and agile project management methodologies. Their growing number of clients is a testament to the company's success working with automotive suppliers and distribution centers nationwide, including Volkswagen, ThyssenKrupp Automotive Systems of America, Weidmüller Interface, and International Automotive Components.

Eminence's unique problem-solving approach serves as an anchor for a business that garnered a reputation for turning problems into working solutions. It's one that combines David's breadth of experience as a former operation and project manager, SAP consultant, and senior project engineer with the ability to identify issues that might be holding a company back. "By applying present and future trends, I can give clients a competitive advantage and provide sustainability," David explains. "I treat the problem, not just the symptoms because if you solve the problem, you also cure the symptoms," he says.

David is a project management professional with bachelor's degrees in industrial engineering and project management. He also holds a master's in information technology management.

EMINENCE
CONSULTING & BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

www.eminenceconsults.com
david.craig@eminenceconsults.com
LI: David Craig

Aaron Sakaria started trading company, Fresh Industries, in 2009 in Shanghai, selling furniture to major retailers like West Elm, Anthropologie, and Urban Outfitters. When he and his wife, Kristina, moved to Minnesota, their plans to start a family inspired Aaron on the business front, too. They saw firsthand how tough it was for new moms to find a comfortable, functional recliner at a fair price, so Nurture& was born in 2020, focusing on the baby and kids' market. Finally, in 2021, Aaron founded his third company, Northern Furniture Manufacturing, in the very town his wife's family hails from in Wisconsin. The factory is in the industrial park that her grandfather helped develop in the 1950's. "We wanted to have more control of our supply chain and were excited about creating jobs in the local community," Aaron explains. Today, Fresh Industries has expanded to work directly with consumers for an easy, affordable experience, with the benefit of manufacturing furniture in the U.S. Nurture& is now run under the management of Aaron's partners, while Fresh still retains a percentage of the company.

While juggling multiple thriving enterprises might seem a daunting task, Aaron does so seamlessly as they continue their upward trajectory. Aaron credits the great team he has built around him for the success. The companies grew 45% last year and this year, they've already seen a 360% increase from that. They stayed afloat through the COVID-19 pandemic, and Aaron is proud to have kept on all of his employees through that time. For Aaron, it's all about the people, his customers, vendors, business partners, and employees. "Our employees are our best investment," Aaron says. Their 99% staff retention rate is proof of that. With everyone taken care of so well, Aaron can focus on what he appreciates most: the creative aspect of developing new business plans to keep up with the evolving market.

When not leading Fresh Industries, Aaron and his family enjoy traveling and sports, and he coaches his son's hockey team. He also donates to Malawi-based Jacaranda Foundation, providing schooling for orphans; and Minneapolis-based Camp Odayn, providing camp programs for children with heart conditions.

FRESH
INDUSTRIES

www.freshind.com | www.nurtureand.com
asakaria@freshind.com | LI: Aaron Sakaria

“Doing the right thing, for the right reasons, at the right time” has been the driving force for **Arlyn “Reese” Madsen**, Jr. his entire life. He served 24 years with the U.S. Coast Guard before being appointed DoD intelligence and security chief learning officer within the under secretary of defense for intelligence in 2006. When he retired in 2020, he founded Maryland-based MEMY&I, LLC, an independent consulting firm in the federal government talent development space with the bigger goal of building a national learning ecosystem to help make federal government talent development programs more efficient and effective. “People get overwhelmed by the challenges and myriad programs available, sometimes they feel like it’s trying to boil the ocean,” he explains.

With over 40 years’ experience—and as the creator of the first nationally accredited federal government certification program—Reese helps his clients better understand federal government programs, requirements, and goals, and delivers simple, elegant, innovative solutions. As he serves clients across the private and public sectors, business leaders, industries, and experts are also reaching out to participate in his national learning ecosystem initiative. “If we can all move together in the same direction, then we’re all going to win,” he says.

Reese received the Presidential Rank Award of Distinguished Senior Professional, the National Intelligence Superior Service Medal, and is the first senior executive certified as an intelligence professional. He served as the inaugural chairman of the Department of Defense Intelligence Training and Education Board for 15 years.

CONTACT:
rcrmadsen@me.com
LI: Reese Madsen

Stephen Mathai-Davis is a full-stack data scientist, an investment research analyst, a seasoned trader, and a recognized expert in the application of artificial intelligence and advanced quantitative strategies to global public markets. He’s also an award-winning fintech executive with over 15 years in institutional investment management. In 2019, Stephen founded Q.ai, a Forbes company—the first fintech enterprise to use AI to take on the $25 trillion fund-management industry with the first AI-powered investment management app.

Since the start of 2022, the Q.ai investment solutions have outperformed the S&P 500 by over five points, on average, before fees, and with an app that has seen 17 months of double-digit growth since its launch, the accolades are pouring in. Stephen was recognized as a fintech rising star by the *U.S. FinTech Awards* in 2021 and *Banking Tech Awards* in 2022, and the Q.ai app was nominated as a semi-finalist for Product Hunt’s *Golden Kitty Awards*. At the same time, the performance of the Q.ai investment strategies has been recognized by media, as well as institutional investment management firms wishing to partner with Q.ai to deliver its investment technology to their clients. “We’re on a mission to power a personal wealth movement that drives true financial freedom and wealth equality for everyone,” Stephen shares.

Stephen has been quoted and interviewed in Cheddar TV, Forbes, CNBC, Fox Business, Business Insider, Nasdaq, Benzinga, Entrepreneur, Fortune, Inc., among others.

CONTACT: stephen.mathaidavis@gmail.com | smd@tryq.ai
LI: Stephen Mathai-Davis

Michael Ansusinha hasn't even been in real estate for a year, but he's already establishing himself and his investment firm, Snowlake Group, across Chicago's south side. Driven by the motto "The best on the block," the firm focuses on the acquisition and revitalization of affordable housing. After seeing communities suffer from unscrupulous owners and real estate professionals, Michael endeavored to help neighborhoods. "Our vision is to do the opposite of what's been done," he says. "And that means being ethical, responsible, and innovative."

It all started when Michael, after graduating with honors from Northwestern and working with Goldman Sachs and AQR Capital, bought his first investment property. To his surprise, it had drug dealers, homelessness, and an arsonist. Many tenants weren't paying. Angry at the building's condition, tenants called the city, and inspectors hit the property with 12 code violations. Then, his manager quit. Not making money, Michael was forced to dig his way out. Only months later, the building is safer and produces 20-30% returns. Since then, Snowlake has been revitalizing housing throughout the area—and Michael has his finger on the pulse of it all, handling operations, acquisitions, and capital raising so that Snowlake can continue making positive changes for southside communities. "Seeing buildings slowly change, that's what keeps me moving," he says.

Michael is active on the Associate Board of After School Matters, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, and the Lurie Children's Hospital. He will be a Moelis Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School (2025).

CONTACT: www.snowlakeventures.com
michael.j.ansusinha@gmail.com | LI: Michael Ansusinha

He's an innovator of over 130 patented inventions, the recipient of the *International Physics Olympiad Bronze Medal* and *EE Times Annual Creativity in Electronics Award*. This is **Ramin Farjadrad,** founding CEO of Eliyan Corp., a technology company that is challenging the status quo to create the most differentiated solutions to real world challenges. Eliyan's mission is to revolutionize chiplet-based system-in-package (SiP) technologies to break the current limitations of the semiconductor industry and unleash the ultimate performance of intelligent systems of the future. Their breakthrough technologies will have a transformational impact on many industries, including artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, networking, autonomous driving, 5G wireless infrastructure and many more. This isn't science fiction, but another in a line of inspiring solutions that Ramin introduced years ahead of its time.

For over two decades, Ramin has pioneered leading-edge technologies that have been adopted not only by high-tech industries but also as international standards, including the PAM4 SerDes technology (IEEE 802.3cd), Multi-Gig Automotive Ethernet (IEEE 802.3ch& IEEE 802.3cy), Enterprise Ethernet (IEEE 802.3bz), and OCP standard for chiplet connectivity (BoW). Prior to launching Eliyan, Ramin was co-founder and CTO of Aquantia Corp., which was awarded the *Most Respected Private Company* by GSA in 2013 & 2017, went public in 2017 and was acquired in 2019 by Marvell Technologies, where he served as CTO and VP of R&D. Today, Ramin and his superstar team continue to push the technology limits with innovations built for the future.

Ramin holds a PhD and master's degree from Stanford University.

eliyan

www.eliyan.com | ramin@eliyan.com
LI: Eliyan Corporation | Ramin Farjad

www.EverythingBreaks.com
Brandon@EverythingBreaks.com
LI & FB: Brandon San Antonio
IG: @EverythngBreaks
@Just_the_chip

If you've ever purchased a home, automobile, or electronic device, you've probably experienced the high-pressure tactics to sell you an overpriced extended warranty. **Brandon San Antonio** knows how that feels. "Traditionally, these products have been designed with everyone but the customer in mind. Huge mark-ups, poor customer service and non-transparent claims. With so many middlemen in the process, the value is lost," he explains.

That's why Brandon, whose experience includes commercial real estate with Cushman and Wakefield and financial advisory with Stanwich Capital Advisors, created Everything Breaks. The company's tongue-in-cheek name refers to the fact that all products need to be repaired or replaced at some point. Brandon's company is disrupting the $40 billion warranty industry by cutting out middlemen retailers and dealers. Brandon markets directly to customers, handling the marketing, selling, and claims administration entirely in-house. It allows him to give customers exactly what they want at the lowest price possible, all in a flexible, contract-free monthly subscription package that's changing the way people make major purchases.

The other thing setting Everything Breaks apart is the breadth of their product offerings. Unlike other companies, they cover home, auto, and electronics including bundles for discounts with other products coming in the near future. "We want to embrace the customer and everything they need," he says. And with a $20 million raise completed at the end of 2021, Brandon is excited about the future. "We control the complete user experience," Brandon continues. "Everything is simple on our website, you can shop and purchase only what you need. We've built our back-end system so claims can be handled quickly and efficiently." Their dedication to a seamless, intuitive customer experience means people are happy to return, and if something does go wrong, issues are handled with a personal touch to make things right. "There's only one phone number to call because they're only dealing with one company." And it's his honesty and willingness to be up front and realistic that customers find so refreshing, and keeps them coming back. It also inspired their motto: "Don't let perfect get in the way of good."

BOSTON BIOPHARMA
CONSULTANTS

Driven by a desire to push new boundaries and learn continuously, **Bharat Tewarie** has successfully pivoted his career many times. After his education as medical doctor, he moved from a hospital career to medical and then to commercial pharmaceutical and biotech roles. This resulted in his serving as the chief marketing officer and member of the executive committee of the biopharma company UCB for five years, until 2020. With his extensive professional experience across many countries and companies in hand, he launched Boston BioPharma Consultants, providing commercial advisory services to biopharma and medical device companies. Bharat assumes ad interim CEO roles and advises about corporate strategy, orchestrating winning product launches, improving commercial readiness, execution of go-to market strategies, and reinventing the patient experience. Bharat helps executives work on their mindsets to achieve success. "I help them find their inner genius," he says. "Simply put, to be number one, you should think, act, and compete like number one."

To this end, Bharat aligns vision, strategy, and execution to prepare the company, product, and market to win. He serves in boards of biopharma companies and is a keynote speaker on patient value, digital marketing, and harnessing the power of artificial intelligence. As the 2019 recipient of the *Top 100 Healthcare Leaders Award* from IFAH, he knows of what he speaks. Bharat also supplies mentorship to CEOs and founders of life science start-ups as a part of New York University's Endless Frontier Labs Program. Bharat holds an MD and an MBA.

CONTACT: www.BostonBioPharmaConsultants.com
bharat.tewarie9@gmail.com | LI: bharattewarie

Ashok Dudhat is the founder and CEO of Tech Jobs Fair (TJF) in Berlin, Germany. It all started during his master's degree, when he pursued an idea for developing a job recruiting platform, where talent can apply for jobs with just one click. This was reflected in *Germany Startup Jobs* and that the time when WP Event Manager, an all-in-one event management solution for website owners, was founded. ''WPEM is for listing events for the WordPress industry, which was the main spring for the Tech Jobs Fair," Ashok explains. TJF brings companies and talents together, virtually and in-person, where professionals and businesses can network, recruit, and promote their brands by having pre and post-event services with Hire Tech Talent, a platform based on a reverse recruitment process having screened tech talent. Counting 45,000 attendees and partnered with over 500 companies in 12 countries worldwide, TJF has garnered acclaim as the recipient of the 2020 & 2021 *Tech Event of the Year* by *German Business Awards*. Success is no mystery, considering its founder was named among the 2022 *Top 10 Indian Leaders in Germany* and has a 15-year record of successfully guiding teams through complex processes of technology development, software deployment, and operations. Still, perhaps the best-kept secret comes from Ashok himself, "I really enjoy what I do and seeing my ideas work gives me the motivation to continue."

CONTACT: www.TechJobsFair.com
ashok.dudhat@techjobsfair.com | LI: Ashok Dudhat
FB: techjobsfair | IG: techjobs_fair

TECH JOBS FAIR
TECH • INNOVATION • CAREER

Not many people can say they have 38 patents to their name, but **Ed Ratner** can. The applied scientist and entrepreneur filed his first patent in 1999 as the chief scientist at Pulsent, a tech company where Ed worked on video comprehension and gained a deep interest in artificial intelligence. Today, as the founder and CEO of Edammo (www.edammoinc.com), he leads a top-tier AI company named as a *Top 10 Predictive Analytics Company* by *CIO Applications Magazine*, a *Top 10 AI Solution Provider* by *Pharmatech Outlook Magazine,* and a *Top Start Up* on topstartups.us.

Ed launched Edammo in 2018, where his patents are focused on core algorithms and algorithmic tech, machine learning, and computer vision, all geared toward their breakthrough technology that flies above the static "deep learning" AI currently available. Aptly name after the firm, Edammo Extreme AutoML technology provides real AI insights from data that is small or dynamic, which can trip up more conventional AI tech. With the chance to harness AI more easily and in any application, Edammo customers from all industries, including biotech and media, are reaching for this revolutionary technology. It's no mystery that Ed's team was awarded the *Best Paper* award at the Extreme Learning Machines Conference in Singapore.

A deeply creative person with a passion for innovation and an uncommon breadth of experience, Ed is able to manifest his ideas from concepts to marketable products—from research to development to execution to delivery. Add to that his effectiveness in raising funds to feed his ideas—over $10 million to date—and he's an unstoppable force determined to turn dreams into reality. And this is precisely what gives him the greatest thrill. "I love seeing ideas come to life," he says. "It starts as a vision, and then actually gets deployed in the market and brings value to real customers doing real things."

CONTACT:
ed.ratner@edammoinc.com
www.edammoinc.com
LI: edratner

Stacie Ten Eyck is an accomplished event expert with over 14 years in hospitality. This career demanded long hours in a high stress industry. “I was unable to sleep and was restless with anxiety due to working 70 hours a week, she states.” After a decade of executing weddings, corporate events, and opening several restaurants, a drastic change was needed for her overall health and wellness.

Determined to bring an all-natural product to assist with relaxation and sleep to the tired masses, she created eunoia naturals. Eunoia is a Greek term meaning a well mind and beautiful thinking. The collection offers all natural essential oil blends that provide therapeutic benefits. RELAX Lavender + Chamomile Aromatherapy Mist was the first product launched on Amazon, and with huge success. Her most recent creation, NIGHT NIGHT, is a kid-friendly sleep spray accompanied by a bedtime meditation. Be on the lookout this fall for the next product line from eunoia of essential oil perfumes. Ophelia will be launched in October, which is a blend of sandalwood and amber!

Today, eunoia naturals currently offers eight products and is sold in 24 countries around the world. Making local and national news, such as Today Show, she has brought her brand of wellness and conscious living to the community. Collaborating with a major nationwide retailer, Stacie’s motivation remains the same—it’s all about helping people. “I want to give back and help others who struggle with sleep and/or are looking for a holistic way to better their health.”

eunoia naturals

www.eunoianaturals.com

Contact:
Email: info@eunoianaturals.com / LinkedIn: Stacie Teneyck
Facebook: enuoia naturals / Instagram: @enuoianaturals

MaryBeth Matta is the CEO and founder of the real estate development and consulting company Alodgio. Growing up, she was fascinated to see old buildings rehabilitated and the dramatic impact on city streets and neighborhoods as a result. This childhood interest in urban redevelopment has served as a catalyst for an enduring career in multifamily real estate that’s seen her named to Who’s Who in Multifamily Housing and honored with other industry awards.

In Italian, “alodgio” means housing and rest and MaryBeth's New York-based Alodgio is built on the belief that you can transform lives by providing people with a place to live. For 27 years Alodgio's mission, inspired by that redevelopment process she watched in her own city, has been to be a positive influence on both communities and their residents. “It’s not the buildings themselves, but the people who live in them and the impact a home has on their lives that makes the difference,” she says. She believes that beauty lies not simply in the structures but in the lives she touches through them. “For me, it’s important to meet the people we serve and understand what home means to each person.”

MaryBeth leads a thriving firm that prioritizes deep involvement with the properties the firm develops and with every client for which they provide development services. But it hasn’t been easy as a 100% woman-owned business in a classically male field. She says that she’s guided by a motto that hangs in a frame on her office wall-one that’s helped her succeed and truly defines her: “Either we will find a way, or we will make one.” Literally.

CONTACT:

Email: mbm@alodgio.com
Website: www.alodgio.com
LI: MaryBeth Matta
FB: Alodgio Consulting
Twitter: alodgio

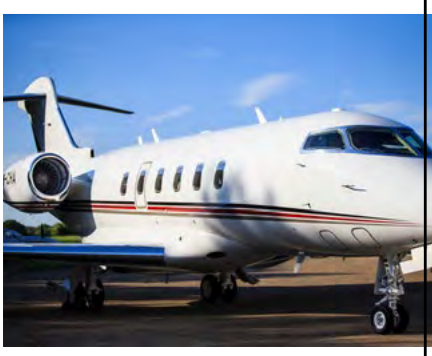
BLUE ROCK
VC FUND

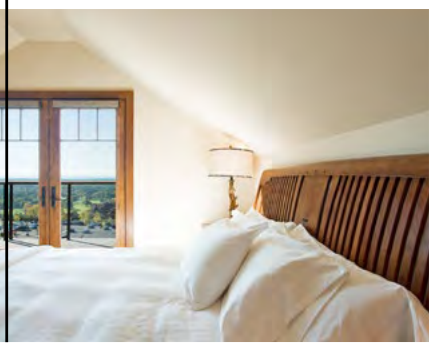
THE SMART, SIMPLE WAY TO INVEST IN HIGH-GROWTH STARTUPS.

www.bluerockvcfund.com

An entirely new concept of what a Luxury, Lifestyle Club should be.

Impeccable golf. Resort-style indulgences. World class relaxation.



It's Different at Greathorse

Greathorse.com/BostonCommon
(413) 566-8010 · Hampden, MA