

The annual Alabama CIO of the Year® ORBIE® Awards program honors chief information officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Large Corporate, & Corporate categories will be announced April 14 at the Hyatt Regency Birmingham.

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FROM OUR CHAIR

Chris Morrow: Technology Leaders are the X-Factor A3

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Bob DeRodes, Founder and President, DeRodes Enterprises, LLC A4



LEADERSHIP AWARD

Ellen Holladay, CIO, Motion Industries (ret) **A10**



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Hibbett Retail, Inc.

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TOMMY MCNEAL Hargrove Engineers + Constructors

CLAUDIUS MOORE

American Family Care

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THE ANSWER IS IN THE ROOM... ARE YOU?



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2022 ALABAMACIO CHAIR LETTER

TECHNOLOGY LEADERS ARE THE X-FACTOR

Technology is at the center of modern business transformation and leadership is the X-factor between surviving and thriving in today's digital economy.

AlabamaCIO brings together leading CIOs of Alabama's largest organizations to help CIOs maximize their leadership effectiveness, create value, reduce risk and share success. Through member-led, non-commercial programs, CIOs build meaningful professional relationships with colleagues facing similar challenges, solving problems and avoiding pitfalls.

AlabamaCIO members collaborate locally and nationally with CIOs across industries because, successful CIOs understand the 'superpower' of trusted relationships. In any gathering of CIOs, the answer is in the room. The challenge one CIO is facing has likely been solved by another CIO.

There is no textbook for how to be a great CIO. The best way to sharpen your leadership acumen is by collaborating with other leaders facing similar challenges. The

industries and size may be different, but winning approaches to effective leadership are transferrable. Every leader's perspective is valuable and contributes to the conversation — and everyone wins when leaders engage, share ideas, experiences and best practices.

For over twenty years, InspireCIO has helped CIOs succeed in their challenging C-suite role. By joining AlabamaCIO, technology executives take their leadership to the next level through year-round, member-led programs and interaction. The power of CIOs working together — across public and private business, government, education and nonprofit organizations — creates enormous value for everyone.

Together, we are transforming our economy using technology and enriching our region and our world. On behalf of Alabama-CIO, congratulations to the nominees and finalists on their accomplishments and thank you to the sponsors, underwriters, and staff who make the ORBIE Awards possible.



Sincerely

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Chris Morrow 2022 Chair, AlabamaCIO CIO & Member, Warren Averett





By Laura Newpoff

Bob DeRodes has worn many hats over the course of his 50-year career in information technology. He's an accomplished senior executive who helped shape IT for some of the world's most well-known companies, including Target Corp., First Data, The Home Depot, Delta Airlines, Citibank and USAA.

DeRodes' experience touches seven decades, from his first job as a computer operator in 1969 to running his advisory firm DeRodes Enterprises, LLC until the early months of 2020. Today, he remains a recognized leader in IT and business operations with an established track record for innovation, operational excellence, transformations and cyber security and enterprise resiliency.

DeRodes also serves on the board of Privafy, an innovative cloud-based security startup, and recently retired from the NCR Board of Directors after 12 years. He has served on the board of numerous early-stage technology companies and remains an active advisor. He was named one of the top 25 technology officers by Information Week in 2006 and was awarded the 2005 Information Services executive of the year by the Lattanze Center at Loyola College Maryland. He received a Lifetime Achievement award in 2018 from the Georgia CIO Leadership Council.

DeRodes will be the keynote speaker at the Alabama CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards on April 14. He recently talked with the Birmingham Business Journal about his technology career.

What attracted you to technology as a career?

DeRodes: Having lost my college football scholarship due to a wrestling accident, I was working one summer on a shipping dock and noticed someone at the time clock wearing a shirt and tie. I discovered he worked in an air-conditioned room as the computer operator. Shortly thereafter, he quit and I applied for and got my first technology job. That was 1969, and it was totally serendipitous.

Describe your leadership style and any leadership mentors/influencers?

DeRodes: My style changed over the years as I

learned to adapt to numerous company cultures and changing social norms. Throughout that evolution I never lost sight of my moral compass, nor the importance of understanding the impact of my decisions on others. I was incredibly fortunate to have worked for so many well-know, highly respected leaders. Every one of them had a profound impact on my leadership style by demonstrating leadership skills I admired and desired, as well as some traits and behaviors that I wanted to avoid.

What would you consider your greatest career achievements?

DeRodes: First off, I have never considered my technical accomplishments my own. I was able to surround myself with incredible people who did extraordinary things. There are six major accomplishments I treasure most: Opening the USAA Federal Savings Bank, the first bank of that type in the country in 1983; leading the initiative at American Airlines to consolidate four distinct IT businesses into The Sabre Group; leading the creation of a global credit card processing platform for Citibank, the then-largest world-wide card issuer; returning internal IT to Delta Airlines, and then helping the industry recover from 9/11; digitizing The Home Depot and inventing self-checkout for the hardlines industry; last, I am proud of the work I did to help Target get IT back on track, post their massive credit card breach in 2013. Each one a significant accomplishment in its own

How have obstacles/hardships made you a better leader?

DeRodes: Obstacles and hardships can not only make you a better leader, they can make you a better person. It is life's hard lessons that teach you perseverance, test your inner strength and challenge your values. My largest personal hardship as CIO was laying-off people. I went through a number of downsizing efforts and it never became easier. It was, however, a teaching moment for those who stayed with the company. It showed the importance of treating everyone with the utmost dignity and respect, and

it called into question whether those of us remaining were doing everything we could to help the company and each other.

What advice do you have for the next generation of IT leaders?

DeRodes: Don't go it alone. Learn from those that came before you, and leverage your complete ecosystem. Always remember you can outsource your capabilities, but you can never outsource your responsibilities. Also, strive for a work/life balance. No CIO's last words were, "Gee, I wish I would have worked more."

Could you share a key moment/milestone from each of the roles throughout your career.

DeRodes: I was fortunate to catch the wave of digitization that started in the 1960s. There were many opportunities to leave IT and move into different roles, and I actually took one such opportunity in 1982, and moved into cash management with a large regional bank. After six months, I realized how much I loved the reach and influence of IT. IT is special in the way its tentacles touch every aspect of the enterprise, and I knew then I would stay in the field as long as I could

Share a few words about your community involvement:

DeRodes: At every stop along the way, I was involved in the local charities and sat on the boards of the local chapters of the Heart Association, American Lung Association, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and my longtime favorite TechBridge, where I spent 20 years trying to help smaller outreach organizations get IT help in Atlanta. IT leaders always want a seat at the table, and I found it helps if you lead by example when it comes to your community.

Over the years, I sat on numerous Boards, but the most significant for me was NCR, where I served for 12 years. The role of a board member is unlike that of an executive inside the company. You can't put your hand on the joystick and take control, you must lead through knowledge, influence, and persuasion.



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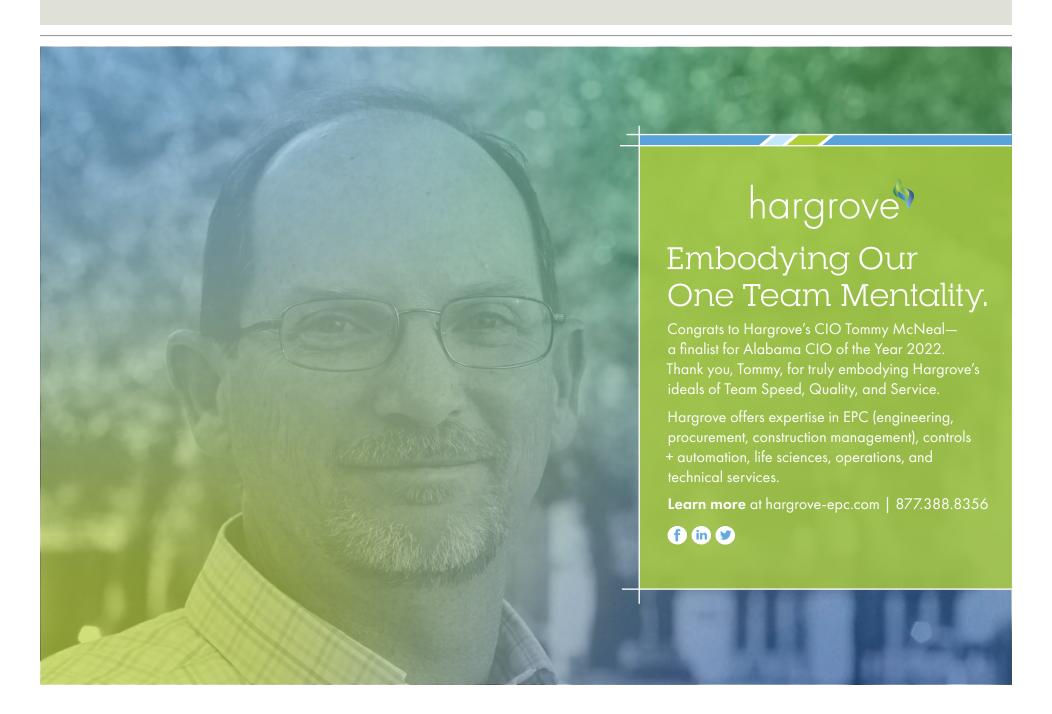


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LARGE ENTERPRISE

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Anthony Williams

VP & CIO | Surgical Care Affiliates

Anthony Williams has over 27 years of information technology experience and joined Surgical Care Affiliates as VP and CIO in November 2018. He is responsible for providing strategic and organizational leadership, overseeing the capital and operational budgets and directing the dayto-day planning and execution of all IT-related functions. Prior to joining SCA, Anthony served as the CIO at American Family Care, one of the largest urgent care providers in the US.

SUCCESS STORY

One of the greatest accomplishments in my current role is without doubt, leading and growing a high performing team through an incredibly difficult pandemic. A period in which teammates experienced the loss of loved ones, sickness, mental health challenges, burnout and other stressors. We grew closer as a team and we leaned on and supported each other in creative ways. This was also a time in which our business grew considerably. Our incredible teammates enabled us to meet the demands of the organization while also achieving exceptional teammate experience survey results during the same period of time.



Ryan Loy
CIO | EBSCO Industries

Ryan Loy currently serves as the CIO for EBSCO Industries, where he focuses on enhancing the value technology can deliver, providing guidance on target acquisitions and managing the build out of a global shared services organization. In addition to his role as CIO, Ryan also leads global information security and procurement services. He has extensive global experience focused on technology innovation, data privacy and mergers and acquisitions.

SUCCESS STORY

When I first came into the role, the organization had a negative Net Promoter Score. Morale was at an all-time low. The organization was fatigued and did not trust leadership. Over the next 18 months, we lead a complete cultural transformation which brought about a lot of organizational change. We went from a negative Net Promoter Score to winning Forbes Top 100 Best Places to Work in IT - the only company in Alabama to win this award. People are our greatest asset and by building team which fosters growth, trust and commitment the organization can deliver far more value.



Ron Blahnik
SVP & CIO | Hibbett Retail, Inc.

Ronald Blahnik is SVP and CIO for Hibbett Retail, Inc., joining the team in November 2016. He is responsible for strategy, innovation, and information technology. While at Hibbett, Blahnik has spearheaded several critical programs and projects, including point of sale applications, warehouse management, digital commerce and cloud migration. Prior to joining Hibbett, Ronald had an IT consulting business and had previously served as SVP and CIO for Hudson's Bay Company and VP, Information Technology Infrastructure Services for Lowe's Companies.

SUCCESS STORY

My greatest accomplishment as the Information Technology Leader with Hibbett has been the building of a digital transformation dream team that literally propelled the company through sustainable strategic innovation. We moved aggressively, but not recklessly, to complete thousands of critical projects and accomplish more in 5 years, than in the previous 25. The support of the board, CEO, and executive management team resulted in the removal of barriers and silos. We absolutely became the win-together team. Our future growth is through our people. Empowering, training, mentoring our associates, and providing stretch/growth assignments will be the key to our continued success.



Sateesh Donti

After a number of career pivots, including more than 15 years at Honda Logistics, Sateesh Donti joined O'Neal Steel in 2020. He now oversees the modernization of IT infrastructure, the introduction of new sales channels through e-commerce platforms, and the implemention of digital transformation across the organization. Alongside his background in civil architecture, Sateesh has experience implementing world class supply chain systems, driving operations automation and leading digital strategy.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, O'Neal Steel is on the path to digitally transforming ourselves and our industry before others do. I have led the team to modernize IT infrastructure and processes, paying of technical debt, to build a solid IT foundation necessary to build scalable business applications at a higher velocity. The migration of on-premises business applications, including our ecommerce platform, to the cloud has freed up IT resources to focus on building applications. The adoption of Robotic Process Automation to enhance customer experience and modern data architecture in the cloud have delivered significant value to the business.

ENTERPRISE

OVER \$600 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



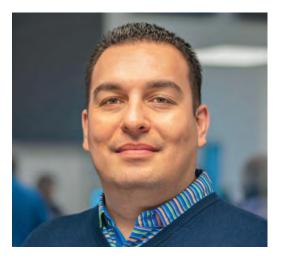
Oliver Banta

VP & CIO | East Alabama Health

Oliver Banta joined joined East Alabama Health in March of 2019, and has responsibility for information services, information security, clinical engineering, and revenue cycle across the organization. Prior to joining East Alabama Medical Center, Oliver was VP & CIO at Columbus Regional Health and also served as CIO for Nebraska Heart Hospital and Institute in Lincoln, NE. He proudly serves on the Board of Directors for Georgia HIMSS Chapter, Goodwill Southern Rivers, and the Columbus State University Alumni Association.

SUCCESS STORY

Going live with Cerner ambulatory, our electronic health record, during COVID-19. This resulted in having more comprehensive health information readily available for clinicians. We did this all while supporting the organization in numerous COVID-19 activities, including the implementation of a new IT platform to support a mass vaccination clinic in partnership with the cities of Opelika and Auburn.



Mauricio Paredes

VP of Technology | PS Logistics

Mauricio Paredes has worked in technology for almost 30 years. He is currently VP of Technology at PS Logistics and is part of the team that has grown the organization from 600 trucks in 2012 to over 3,800 drivers in 2021. Throughout his career, Mauricio has worked to expand the use of analytics to improve all aspects of the supply chain. He currently also serves as a Blockchain in Transport Alliance Board member.

SUCCESS STORY

Mauricio 'Mo' Paredes and his team empower PS Logistics with technology, systems, and processes to win and serve their drivers, employees, and customers. Mo joined P&S in 2012, bringing applicable experience from a wide range of industries. During his tenure, he developed a responsive team that focuses on the latest technology, business intelligence, and standardization of processes. His team has made significant contributions to PS Logistics' success. PS Logistics is one of the largest flatbed carriers in the country.



Claudius Moore

CIO | American Family Care

Claudius Moore has more than 20 years of experience in information systems, information technologies, and clinical and revenue cycle management. As CIO at American Family Care, Claudius oversees the architecture and implementation of the firm's operational and business support systems, helping to develop unique applications that define AFC as a leader in healthcare. Prior to joining AFC, Claudius served as CIO for The South Bend Clinic; a physician-owned multi-specialty group that has served the community for more than 100 years.

SUCCESS STORY

In 2021, American Family Care treated 6.2 million patients. The spike in Covid19 was the driving force behind this surge which poses operational challenges. The IT team reconfigured our phone system to route calls more efficiently to simplify how patients connect to our caregivers. IT implemented features on our electronic medical records that enabled patients to check-in and register using their mobile devices. These changes reduced the bottleneck at the front desk and decreased patient wait time. The use of chatbots and secure texting increased our engagement and communication with patients.



Rick Orcutt

CIO | The Onin Group

Rick Orcutt joined Onin Staffing in 2005, where he was hired to act as an account manager, recruiting and managing workers in an automotive manufacturing plant. Rick deployed his business acumen and informal technological training to create enhancements and efficiency, and was quickly promoted to scale his IT operation across the entire company. 16 years later, he oversees a department of 32 professionals focusing on solutions and technology. The Ōnin Group has grown more than 1400% during his tenure.

SUCCESS STORY

My teams have created a technological ecosystem that meets our proprietary workflow and allows us to be agile in an industry that is constantly shifting, especially over the last 2 years. We have been able to meet our continued growth with scalable solutions/architecture, and a cheery disposition. Onin's IT department is loved by those we serve and that makes us way more effective than the stereotype.

LARGE CORPORATE

OVER \$100 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



Billy Helmandollar

CIO | DCH Health System

Billy Helmandollar joined DCH Health System in 2015, where he serves as CIO. In his role, Billy is responsible for all aspects of strategic IT planning, implementation, and support. Since joining he has overseen the restructuring of the IT department and its infrastructure, to function more efficiently within the organization. Prior to joining DCH, Billy served as Director of Information Technology/CIO at Newton Medical Center and Director of Information Technology/CIO at Wallace Thomson Hospital.

SUCCESS STORY

Our greatest accomplishments will always be measured by the teams we build and mentor. The growth of the team I currently oversee has been awesome to watch and be a part of assisting. Healthcare IT can be more challenging than other industries, especially in the past 12-24 months. Our IT Infrastructure has been designed using an agile and innovative design so we can adapt as emergencies present. While others could be afforded the ability to slow down/stop production, Healthcare actually ramped up. I am extremely proud of how the team can take my vision and make it a reality.



Tommy McNeal

CIO | Hargrove Engineers + Constructors

Tommy McNeal currently serves as the CIO for Hargrove Engineers and Constructors. Tommy's role as CIO allows him to partner with technology solution providers to implement new tools and practices, enabling Hargrove and their family of companies to be successful in project execution. Having begun his career as a structural engineer, Tommy is able to utilize his knowledge of industrial design and construction tools to better support and implement technology initiatives.

SUCCESS STORY

One of the greatest accomplishments I've had the privilege of implementing and supporting has been our HELIX initiative. Over the last several years, Hargrove has focused on structuring our company to work as one integrated organization. We refer to Hargrove as ""One Team"". HELIX is Hargrove Expertise Linked for Interoffice eXecution. As CIO, I ensure our Hargrove Team is able to work efficiently together by deploying tools such as Microsoft Teams, Nasuni file sharing, and virtual desktops. These tools enable our Teams to collaborate effectively on projects from any location and create successful projects for our clients.



LaTesha Blair

CIO | Burr & Forman LLP

LaTesha Blair is the CIO for Burr & Forman LLP. She is responsible for the leadership and management of the firm's technology efforts and the information technology department. She directs technology planning and implementation as well as oversees all aspects of technology services and resources for all of Burr & Forman's locations. With over 21 years in technology, LaTesha has worked throughout the IT field in various environments, including Lexington Medical Center and the South Carolina Department of Commerce.

SUCCESS STORY

One of my greatest accomplishments as CIO was to keep our lawyers and support staff working and fully functional while working remotely during the shutdown due to the pandemic. We went from having a 5 percent remote workforce to a 95 percent remote work environment seemingly overnight. My team stepped up to the challenge by assessing and expanding our remote capabilities fairly quickly to accommodate the demand. With great effort the transition was seamless and mostly painless to our end users.



Eddie Messick

CTO | CMX Cinemas

James 'Eddie' Messick has proudly served as the CTO for CMX Cinemas, formerly Cobb Theatres, for more than a decade. With over 20 years of successful experience in business automation and IT innovation, Eddie is a seasoned business executive with a passion for leveraging cutting-edge technology in order to maximize revenues and boost profitability. In addition to his role as a critical senior leader, Eddie has served as an Executive Committee Board member for

SUCCESS STORY

My greatest accomplishment is leading, inspiring, and empowering my team. It is the job of the CIO/CTO to understand the functions and needs of all branches of the organization and its customers, and to create innovations that further the overall goals of the company. More importantly, when bringing new visions and projects to my team, I insist on their feedback. If my career has taught me anything, it is I, or anyone on my team, can have good ideas that make positive advancements in the organization, but together we create great innovations that profoundly change the way we do business.

CORPORATE

UP TO \$100 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



Landon Nelson

CIO | Taco Mama

Landon Taylor Nelson spent the majority of his career working as an IT professional in the hospitality industry, combining his love of technology with his passion for the restaurant industry. He has led the digital transformation of several brands, leveraging his expertise in scaling through technology. Landon is passionate about transforming businesses and enriching the lives of others by building the strongest teams, providing the highest level of support, and developing solid relationships with those he serves.

SUCCESS STORY

The greatest accomplishment in my current role is successfully leading the technology efforts to smoothly transition into the recent shift in hospitality trends. This allowed us to not only survive but continue to thrive during the pandemic. While the hospitality industry struggled as a whole, we successfully opened new restaurants, kept our current guests happy while also gaining new fans, and we were able to retain our staff and even hire a few new smiling faces along the way!



Robert Long

CTO | AlabamaONE Credit Union

Robert Long has been the CTO at Alabama ONE since 2017, where he also leads the firm's technology CUSO initiatives. After a decade of working in technology and risk management at a large banking institution, Robert launched a project management consulting firm, working with various regional banks. His expertise and industry knowledge also led Robert to be a founding partner in a data analytics company, providing data warehousing and reporting solutions to banks nationwide.

SUCCESS STORY

AlabamaONE has a technology team of leaders! All facets of our group focus on solving business needs to drive our technology advancements. This team of IT leaders has transformed our technical operating environment by successfully executing on tactical initiatives to support our business strategies to transform and grow the institution. One very prideful point for me is my team's ability to work together and leverage their strengths to accomplish a common strategic vision. We have supported significant growth of our organization and continue to be exceedingly capable of executing on innovation to support business strategies through our use of technology.



Kevin Warren

Director IT | Whatley Health Services, Inc. (frmr)

Kevin Warren is the Director of Information Technology at Whatley Health Services and loves helping people learn, gain experience, and reach their personal career goals. He has spent most of his career in the IT industry, gaining experiences in areas such as support, implementation, and leading successful teams. While leading his IT team is his primary job function by day, Kevin also enjoys coaching and mentoring today's youth.

SUCCESS STORY

My greatest accomplishment in my former role was successfully completing our \$1.2 million dollar infrastructure project. Ripping and replacing all hardware and some software across 13 locations. Replaced all computers and laptops, firewalls, managed switches and routers, wireless access points, printers, anti-virus, transitioned to VoIP phones, new monitors, TVs in waiting areas, conference room TVs upgraded to whiteboard TVs, and upgrade all servers to 2016/2019 in about 4 months. Being able to accomplish this was a testament to our team and vendors working as one unit and for the greater good of the patients we serve.



Greg Solomon

Director IT | Bank Independent

Greg Solomon is the Director of Information Technology for Bank Independent, where he drives the management and architecture of the bank's technology department, as well as steering technology goals, initiatives and directives. Greg joined the Bank Independent team in 2018, bringing over 21 years of corporate IT executive experience. His direction and focus on stronger cybersecurity, infrastructure, application development and support has enabled the bank as it expands in footprint, employment base and customer offerings.

SUCCESS STORY

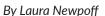
As an organizational leader for technology, I was challenged to help achieve several objectives across the organization during an unprecedented pandemic to balance risk and reward, increase cybersecurity awareness and to optimize areas of support for our retail systems. During the challenging times I was able to lead teams to implement a new Mult-Factor authentication platform, new VPN systems for remote work initiatives due to COVID-19 and continue support for critical applications across the organization. I continue to lead our Technology Steering Committee to assess, research and forecast the technological needs that drive the strategic goals of the bank.

2022 LEADERSHIP AWARD

Ellen Holladay

CIO | Motion Industries (ret)

ORBIE Awards Leadership Recipient reflects on 35-year career, challenges for next generation



Before she retired in March of 2020, Ellen Holladay spent more than 35 years helping companies achieve technology, operational and digital excellence. That experience spanned the manufacturing, distribution, engineering, health care, banking and education sectors. In her most recent position as the CIO and operational excellence officer for industrial distributor Motion Industries, she helped the company significantly expand its services revenue by deploying cutting-edge technologies.

Holladay recently talked with the Birmingham Business Journal as part of her recent recognition as the 2022 Alabama CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards Leadership Recipient.

Over the course of your nearly 30-year career as CIO of Motion Industries you helped promote growth from \$750 million to over \$6 billion. How did you deploy technology to fuel this growth?

Holladay: As a premier industrial distributor and solutions provider, Motion has always recognized the competitive advantage that technology can bring to the business, and they've stayed committed to providing innovative solutions to create an exceptional customer experience.

I was fortunate enough to join Motion at a critical juncture in their technology journey. As strategic systems manager I was responsible for developing our long-term technology strategy. Our team began by designing an integrated operating platform to automate every aspect of the business and to provide a comprehensive database to support advanced analytics for sales, supply chain and operations.

As technology evolved so did our capabilities. Motion led the industry in the development of a complementary set of digital offerings to service the customer 24-7-365. We built one of the most expansive product databases of its kind to support intelligent product selection across millions of SKUs and tens of thousands of suppliers. We also fully automated all distribution centers, layering in competitive technologies as they became available.

Over time, Motion's customer requirements grew more complex, and we continued to invest in technology by adding capabilities such as on-site inventory management, predictive maintenance and other value-added services. This included deployment of a comprehensive set of Industry 4.0 technologies including IIoT, automated vending, RFID, advanced analytics, digital dashboards and mobile. And we effectively leveraged these capabilities by staying committed to tight integration with across all platforms.

I believe Motion's continued commitment to technology has significantly differentiated the company in the market and supported its impressive record of growth.

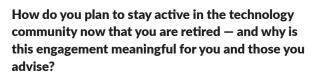
In addition to your role as CIO, you spearheaded a broad operational excellence program and served as the company's first operational excellence officer. How was this program structured and how has it benefitted the company?

Holladay: The mission of our Operational Excellence program was to foster continuous improvement in customer service excellence and supply chain leadership.

I was asked to spearhead this initiative by establishing a methodology to leverage the talent of cross-functional teams to analyze and recommend new ways of doing business that would improve customer service, quality and efficiency.

The Operational Excellence group was responsible for methodology, program management, project management, measurement and reporting. Each team was led by an executive sponsor from the business and included relevant subject matter experts from that line of business, plus representatives from support organizations like accounting, information technology and supply chain.

Over the life of the program, we engaged over 2,000 participants both internally and across our supply chain. In addition to significant measurable monetary benefits, we identified and launched new business models to better service our customers, engage our supply chain partners in process efficiency and to maximize the effectiveness of our associates.



Holladay: I am passionate about technology innovation, leadership development and helping entrepreneurs successfully navigate the challenges they encounter as a start-up. Since retirement I have been fortunate to mentor and advise several young companies in the areas of product development, goto-market strategy and communication. Birmingham has such a rich technology eco-system and there are plenty of opportunities to be thoughtfully engaged, whether it be Bronze Valley, Innovation Depot or TechStars. I'm especially interested in technology with a business-to-business and/or industrial focus. As someone whose has evaluated technology in this space for many years, I believe that I offer a valuable perspective for those founders as they develop their product and their messaging. I've also enjoyed helping young female professionals through Momentum Leaders as a mentor and speaker. Balancing these interests with my corporate board service has given me the opportunity to continue making contributions professionally while maintaining flexibility for my personal interests.

What are the top challenges CIOs are facing these days and what advice do you have for the next generation of CIO leaders to help them navigate those challenges?

Holladay: CIO's face many challenges today, but I'd have to put talent development and retention at the top of list. The market is fiercely competitive, but I believe that most technology professionals desire a long-term career with a successful company where they are valued for their contributions over time. Salary and career advancement are significant, but it's also important to engage professionals in the business and give them the opportunity to participate as respected business partners. CIO's must understand the needs of their talent base, value diversity of thought and develop leaders who are not only technically competent but effective communicators who can establish credibility with internal and external partners. Most importantly, they must lead by example and stay committed to personal leadership growth as well as the growth of the team.

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