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2025

BAYAREACISO ORBIE® AWARDS

The annual BayAreaCISO ORBIE® Awards honors chief information security officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Super Global, Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise & Corporate categories will be announced September 25 at DoubleTree by Hilton San Jose.



FROM THE CHAIR
KRISHNAN CHELLAKURAI

Collectively We Secure
the Enterprise



LEADERSHIP RECIPIENT

Atticus Tysen, SVP Product
Development, Chief
Information Security and Fraud
Prevention Officer, Intuit



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Collectively We Secure the Enterprise

Successful CISOs appreciate the power of collaboration with peers facing similar challenges.

BayAreaCISO brings together preeminent CISOs from Bay Area's largest organizations to enhance leadership effectiveness, mitigate risks, and recognize shared successes. Member-led, non-commercial programs foster meaningful professional relationships, empowering CISOs to protect their organizations and develop cyber resilience.

Through year-round, secure, member-focused events and interactions, the collective expertise of CISOs creates remarkable organizational value. The answer is in the room. Sharing best practices and experiences in a confidential, collaborative environment helps everyone win. Together, we are building a

collective defense.

The Inspire Leadership Network connects CISOs with members across 15 chapters, with more to come in 2025. Experienced leaders understand the 'superpower' of trusted relationships with other leading CISOs, which strengthens security and creates significant value across public and private businesses, government, education, healthcare, and nonprofit sectors.

The ORBIE® Awards honor outstanding CISO leadership in Bay Area. On behalf of BayAreaCISO, congratulations to the nominees and finalists for their remarkable achievements. A special thank you to the sponsors and underwriters for their investment to make the BayArea ORBIE® Awards possible.



Sincerely

Krishnan Chellakarai

2025 Chair, BayAreaCISO

VP, Chief Information Security Officer, Gilead Sciences



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2025 LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

Atticus Tysen

SVP Product Development, Chief Information Security and Fraud Prevention Officer | Intuit

Intuit Executive Honored with Bay Area Technology Leadership Award

By The Business Journals Content Studio

As senior vice president and chief information security officer (CISO) at Intuit, Atticus Tysen is responsible for information security, fraud prevention and enterprise information technology.

Tysen is the recipient of this year's Leadership Award as part of the BayAreaCISO ORBIE Awards held Sept. 25 at DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel San Jose. The ORBIE Awards honors CISOs who drive innovation and transformation at leading organizations.

Before assuming this expanded role, Tysen served as chief information officer (CIO) for nearly 10 years. Prior to that, Tysen was vice president of product development for Intuit's Financial Management Solutions group, leading product development efforts for the company's Small Business

group. Since joining Intuit in 2002, he has also served as director of new technology and led the company's patent program, building a process to protect the company's intellectual property.

Previously, Tysen was vice president of engineering at Aveo, Inc. where he set overall technical direction and led teams to build and deliver proactive tech support and messaging systems for personal computer manufacturers such as Dell and Gateway. Prior to Aveo, he worked as a software engineering manager at OCTel and Apple Computer, as a software engineer working on collaboration and digital signature projects.

Tysen earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from Stanford University.

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2025
CISO
AWARDS



Krishnan Chellakarai

CISO,
Gilead Sciences



Krishnan Chellakarai is the CISO and Head of Employee Experience at Gilead Sciences located in Foster City, California. He has over 30 years' Information Technology, Cybersecurity experience in multinational biopharmaceutical, life sciences, financial and technology environments. Proficient in global information security leadership, focused in the areas of digital resilience, intellectual property protection, enterprise risk management, compliance, data privacy, and a trusted partner as a strategic advisor and board member for early startups and non-profit organizations.

SUCCESS STORY

As Chief Information Security Officer at a leading pharmaceutical company, I've led initiatives that align with our mission to deliver innovative therapies for life-threatening diseases. We've built a mature cybersecurity program that detects, protects, and mitigates threats while enhancing resilience. My success extends beyond the company I serve shaping the cybersecurity industry and its future. As founder of NextGen Cyber Talent, I've helped train and mentor over 600 individuals from underrepresented backgrounds. This blend of enterprise leadership and community impact defines who I am, a cybersecurity leader committed to protecting today and empowering tomorrow's diverse and resilient workforce.



Gary Hayslip

Global CISO, SoftBank
Investment Advisers



Subra Kumaraswamy

SVP & CISO,
Visa Inc



Subra is SVP and CISO at Visa Inc., overseeing cybersecurity, technology controls, and cyber resiliency. With 30+ years' experience, he has built Visa's Zero Trust Architecture and enhanced VisaNet's cyber defenses, leading to Gartner's highest maturity rating in high-risk sectors. Previously, he held cybersecurity leadership roles at Apigee, Intuit, eBay, and Sun Microsystems. Subra holds multiple patents, co-authored a book on Cloud Security, and is a founding member of the Cloud Security Alliance.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, Visa's cybersecurity team with 1,000+ professionals and 1,200+ Security Champions has transformed security through initiatives such as Shift Left, Zero Trust, Agile Cryptography (Post-Quantum Crypto), and AI-driven SOC automation. Our annual cybersecurity investment has tripled, enabling state-of-the-art data protection, strengthening the security of 10 acquired companies, and ensuring regulatory compliance. We launched Cyber-as-a-Service with 13 proprietary tools and the Visa Payments Learning Program to address the cybersecurity talent gap globally and support the White House National Cybersecurity Strategy. These comprehensive efforts have earned Visa the highest security maturity rating in our sector, sustaining our industry leadership.



Hanan Szwarcbord

BP, CSO & Head of
Corporate IT, Micron



Hanan is a visionary leader with a 25+ years track record of driving business transformation through process improvement, innovative technology solutions, and engaged workforce. Strong background managing global, large-scale IT and Cyber transformations, skilled at overcoming challenges and meeting demanding, time-sensitive objectives. As the VP and Chief Security Officer at Micron, Hanan is responsible for defining and implementing the company's cyber security transformation strategy, protecting customers from cyber threats in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

SUCCESS STORY

Over the last years, Micron's Enterprise, Infrastructure and security team had been focused on driving secure innovation, focusing on supporting scale, driving innovation and enabling productivity. We have focused on working with our design, development and manufacturing peers to define the risks, create and implement mitigation controls and support Micron's continued growth and success while reducing risk and focus on critical risk in a complicated IT and OT global environment. To achieve that, we focus on supporting our diverse global team, encourage internal and external growth innovation and drive open communication with our customers.



Friedrich Wetschnig

CISO,
Flex



Friedrich (Fritz) Wetschnig is the CISO and DPO at Flex, a prominent manufacturing company with over 160,000 professionals across 30 countries. He leads a corporate-wide information security program to safeguard company assets and confidential information, fostering a culture of IT security within operations. Additionally, he oversees global enterprise technologies, IT risk, governance, and infrastructure. Mr. Wetschnig holds an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering and is dedicated to implementing innovative security solutions across the organization.

SUCCESS STORY

One of our most significant success stories is establishing the Shielded Shopfloor program, which arose from a critical learning experience regarding vulnerabilities in our production environment. Collaborating closely with operations, we defined and integrated our core principles with essential cybersecurity protocols. This comprehensive program was specifically designed for our production equipment, enhancing our cybersecurity resilience and significantly improving recovery times during an incident. The impact has been profound, with a marked reduction in security incidents and downtime, allowing us to maintain a stable business environment. The Shielded Shopfloor program exemplifies our commitment to integrating security into our operational framework.

GLOBAL FINALISTS

OVER \$2 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE & MULTI-NATIONAL OPERATIONS



2025
CISO
AWARDS



Vijaya Kaza

CSO & VP, Engineering -
Trust and Safety,
Airbnb



Vijaya Kaza is CSO and VP, Engineering – Trust & Safety at Airbnb. She previously held executive roles in Engineering, Product, and General Management, and led the development of industry-leading security products at Cisco, FireEye, and Lookout that generated over \$1B in annual revenue. Vijaya has received numerous accolades, including “100 Women in AI” and “Top 30 Women in Cyber.” She serves on the board of Heidrick & Struggles (Nasdaq: HSII) and is a board advisor to Zendesk.

SUCCESS STORY

As Chief Security Officer and VP, Engineering for Trust & Safety, Vijaya leads the Security and Trust organizations, spearheading key initiatives that are pivotal to Airbnb's mission and strategy. Under her leadership, her teams proactively modernized Airbnb's security architecture, implemented innovative Trust & Safety solutions, and embedded security into every layer of the business, supporting the company through the challenges of the pandemic, a successful IPO, and the rapid post-IPO revenue growth. These efforts prevented material breaches, enabled smooth public company operations, and reinforced Airbnb's reputation as a safe, trustworthy global platform, demonstrating how security & trust can be enablers of business success.



Huy Ly

Head of Global IT Security/
Infrastructure, Monolithic
Power Systems



Huy Ly serves as Head of Global IT Security/Infrastructure at Monolithic Power Systems (MPS), a Fortune 500 semiconductor leader. Huy previously held leadership roles at Oracle, Intuit, and Ancestry.com, bringing deep expertise in virtualization strategies and data center optimization. An active ISSA and Gartner CISO member, Huy brings over two decades of IT infrastructure/security experience. With \$15M annual cybersecurity budget, Huy transformed MPS's security team into a high-performing unit, while driving operational excellence.

SUCCESS STORY

Huy Ly exemplifies exceptional CISO leadership, driving measurable security transformation at a Fortune 500 semiconductor company. After a major cyber incident, he implemented a zero-trust security platform, achieving a top 1% BitSight score. He pioneered a fully autonomous, AI-powered Security Operations Center, enabling a lean team to protect 4,000+ employees and \$2B+ in revenue, maintaining 47 months without a breach. Huy's leadership transformed team performance, fostered internal talent, and advanced industry best practices through active engagement with ISSA and Gartner's CISO community. His strategic vision and people-focused approach delivers quantifiable security outcomes and enables continued business growth and market leadership.



Clint Maples

CISO,
Robert Half



Clint Maples is CISO at Robert Half with 15+ years of experience spanning startups to Fortune 5 companies. He serves as President of the Information Security Leadership Foundation, a 501(c)(3) focused on practitioner collaboration and developing next-generation security leaders. Co-founded Silicon Valley CISO Investments, comprising 65 CISOs who identify, advise, and invest in cutting-edge cybersecurity companies addressing critical industry security gaps.

SUCCESS STORY

My greatest success wasn't implementing new technology—it was building relationships through pragmatic leadership and empowering my team. I transformed security from the “Department of No” into genuine business enablers by listening more and prescribing less. Instead of imposing solutions, I empowered my team to innovate with existing resources and trusted their frontline expertise. I built trust through transparency—replacing defensive technical jargon with honest, accessible communication. This shifted security from a necessary evil to a strategic partner that enables rather than impedes. Result: An empowered team that proactively supports business objectives while strengthening our security posture through relationship-driven collaboration.



Ben McLaughlin

VP & CISO,
Proofpoint



Ben McLaughlin is CISO and Vice President at Proofpoint, leading global cybersecurity strategy and operations across the US, Europe, and Asia. A seasoned executive across Cybersecurity, SaaS, Cloud Services, and Semiconductor industries, Ben has built and transformed security programs for startups and Fortune 200s alike. A servant leader, he is known for transforming cyber risk into business resilience and competitive advantage, influencing board-level governance across diverse global markets, and delivering secure digital transformation at scale.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership as CISO, Proofpoint evolved from a reactive, compliance-centric posture to a proactive, risk-informed cybersecurity strategy. We launched our inaugural enterprise-wide Cyber Risk Management framework, prioritized and mitigated existential threats, and earned Board confidence through transparent governance. I transformed our global security team—doubling core capacity without increasing spend—and elevated high-potential talent into enterprise leaders. Today, cybersecurity at Proofpoint is not merely a control function, but a force-multiplier for business resilience, executive trust, and revenue growth. We've proven that when cybersecurity is embedded with purpose, it transcends traditional defense to become a strategic driver of competitive advantage.



Wagner Nascimento

VP & CISO,
Synopsys Inc.



Wagner brings three decades of tech industry experience to Synopsys, where he serves as a CISO. With a deep understanding of various domains, Wagner skillfully delivers innovative security solutions encompassing security architecture, engineering, governance, compliance, threat intelligence, operations, cloud and AI. His academic background includes a B.S. from American Intercontinental University and an MBA from California State University East Bay. Outside of professional pursuits, Wagner cherishes playing guitar, and enjoying time with his family.

SUCCESS STORY

During my time as CISO at Synopsys, I led a team of over 100 members, transforming the company's security perception and approach. This earned the respect of both the Board and senior leadership, showcasing our ability to balance business and security needs. Technologically, we implemented a global zero-trust architecture, established the first security operations center. We also shifted Board presentations to focus on business risks rather than technical details. Operationally, we introduced red/blue team practices and engaged R&D and product teams with AI-powered automation and innovative methods for measuring product portfolio risk, resulting in two security team patents.



Dr. Carl Windsor

CISO,
Fortinet Inc.



Carl is Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) for Fortinet, where he has helped to drive product strategy in the CTO Office for over 19 years. He is responsible for driving Product Security and culture across the company. Prior to working at Fortinet Carl was Chief Technical Architect responsible for managed security service strategy at European Datacenter company TeleCity (now Equinix) and holds a Ph.D. in Computational Chemistry & Quantum Mechanics from the University of Manchester.

SUCCESS STORY

Under Windsor's leadership, Fortinet maintains a proactive, transparent, and responsible approach to communicating vulnerabilities. This includes upholding the highest standards for responsible disclosure practices, aligning with international and industry best practices. Fortinet proactively and voluntarily incorporated such practices which, while valuable for the industry and end users, are not mandated nor enforced across software vendors. We continue to be a role model in ethical and responsible product development and vulnerability disclosure. In this spirit, we are a prominent voice encouraging all vendors to engage in similar proactive analysis and disclosure practices, which enhances the safety of the entire cybersecurity ecosystem.

LARGE ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

OVER \$1 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



2025
CISO
AWARDS



E'Jaaz Ali

CISO,
Alameda Health System



As CISO I lead the strategic direction and execution of the organization's information security program. With over 15 years of experience in the field, I have a proven track record of developing and implementing effective security policies, procedures, and best practices to protect sensitive data and systems. My expertise spans across various areas. I am passionate about staying ahead of emerging threats and ensuring the highest standards of security for my organization and its stakeholders.

SUCCESS STORY

We have built one of the most cost effective security programs in the world. We've proven that you don't need to break the bank. What you need is a long term vision and support from the top down to put that vision into action. We have that support. Over the past 5 years the organization has shifted to a security aware organization with my team leading from the front. We deliver outstanding results and our driven by the motivation to succeed. Which has earned them deserving accolades from both internal (praises) and external (team awards) to the organization.



John Byun

CISO,
Sephora



John S. Byun is the Chief Information Security Officer at Sephora, where he leads cybersecurity strategy and operations.

He was named Vectra AI's first-ever Legend of Cybersecurity and serves on the Advisory Board for Delinea. He is also member of the Governing Body of Gartner's C-Level Communities, where he helps shape the future of cybersecurity leadership.

He is also frequently invited to speak or participate on panels at various cybersecurity conferences and events.

SUCCESS STORY

One of our proudest accomplishments has been transforming Sephora's cybersecurity program from a relatively immature state into one of the most advanced and forward-thinking within LVMH, our parent company of over 75 brands.

We've consistently led the group in adopting and operationalizing cutting-edge technologies—including passwordless authentication using biometrics and device trust, ransomware resilience, Network Detection & Response, CWPP, CSPM, API security, CAASM, PAM, automated penetration testing, SaaS security, and next-generation bot protection.



Prakash Kalaiah

Head of Security,
Enphase Energy



I'm a visionary cybersecurity executive and patented innovator with a track record of securing global enterprises and delivering over \$5B in business value for Fortune 50 companies. As Head of Security in the energy and fintech sectors, I've led AI-driven, secure-by-design transformations—reducing MTTR by 40% and eliminating millions in risk-related costs. Trusted by boards and regulators, I align cyber strategy with business growth & mentor future leaders in cloud, GenAI, and next-gen security.

SUCCESS STORY

Led security transformation at Enphase Energy, achieving SOC 2 Type II certification that unlocked new revenue streams and built customer trust. Enabled secure-by-design product rollouts, driving additional growth. Reduced Phishing/Smishing threats significantly through custom awareness programs and layered technical controls. Improved security maturity by 60% with Zero Trust, MFA, least privilege, and robust third-party risk management. Ensured 99.99% uptime via enhanced protocols and disaster recovery planning. Boosted user productivity by 25% through SSO, secure MFA, and automation. Integrated security into DevOps, cutting time-to-market by 35%, and maintained SOX compliance across all business units.



Upendra Mardikar

EVP & CISO,
TIAA



As TIAA's CISO, Upendra Mardikar leads comprehensive cybersecurity and fraud prevention strategies across a \$1.4T financial enterprise. With 25+ years experience and 115 patents, he drives innovation in securing TIAA's platforms and technologies. Before joining TIAA in 2022, he served as CISO at Snap Finance and held senior security roles at American Express, Visa, and PayPal. Upendra co-authored the PCI DSS standard, helped create Google/Apple Pay security frameworks, and serves as an industry advisor.

SUCCESS STORY

As TIAA's CISO, I lead 700 global professionals protecting \$1.4T in assets that secure the retirement of educators and healthcare workers. Combining strategic vision with technical expertise, I implement security aligned with TIAA's century-old mission while connecting team members directly to client outcomes.

My 2025 strategy builds on 3 pillars—STRENGTHEN, TRANSFORM, and LEAD—executed through workstreams including Zero Trust, AI Security, and Next-Gen Resilience.

Beyond organizational impact, I advance cybersecurity through industry leadership, with 115 patents. My hands-on approach was demonstrated during the MOVEit incident, where I led a response that protected client trust during an industry-wide security crisis.



Patrick Wilson

Information Security Officer - Executive (CISO),
Adventist Health



Patrick Wilson brings his 30+ years of experience to Adventist Health serving as their CISO. Patrick is drawn to the challenges found at the intersection of people and technology. Previously he served as (CIO, CISO, CTO) for Contra Costa Health for 19 years, and other high-tech companies prior and spends his weekends as a skydiving instructor. He holds a master's in organizational leadership. He is a husband, father and a licensed pilot.

SUCCESS STORY

Securing the Human, as SANS describes it, has been a standout success this past year. We now distribute monthly security awareness content (blog, screensavers, handouts) to all associates, empowering them to reinforce both personal and professional cybersecurity practices. Our recent training on safe travel tips received exceptional feedback for helping safeguard families beyond the workplace—one associate even credited it with preventing an \$80,000 loss from their savings account. We're confident that this program has also helped prevent millions in potential business email compromise fraud given the reporting through the "report phishing" button.

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OVER \$1,000,000,000 ANNUAL REVENUE



2025
CISO
AWARDS



Abhishek Agarwal

VP & CISO (fmr),
Emergent BioSolutions



Abhi Agarwal is a distinguished security leader and technology visionary with over two decades of experience in cybersecurity and privacy. His career spans global organizations like Emergent BioSolutions, BioMarin, Fresenius Medical Care, Baxter, and JPMorgan Chase. As CISO and executive board member, he has led digital transformations, aligning security strategies with business goals. Abhi holds a BE from Manipal Institute of Technology, MBA from Pittsburg State University, and executive credentials from Chicago Booth.

SUCCESS STORY

When I joined the company, everyone knew that they have a problem at their hand to resolve but they didn't know to approach it in solving it. I am talking about millions of technical security vulnerabilities that almost every company deals with in their technical operations environment. Helping the stakeholders in IT, OT (Manufacturing) and Labs environment understand the problem before remediating it was very important. We divided the vulnerabilities based on criticality and impact on the environment. It moved the needle and build trust and confidence. Together, we were able to show the progress to the management and board.



Richard Chang

CISO, California Water
Services Group



Cybersecurity leader with over a decade of experience protecting critical infrastructure and enterprise environments. Skilled in risk management, regulatory compliance, incident response, and team development. Proven track record transforming cybersecurity programs from reactive to proactive, fostering talent growth, and aligning security initiatives with business goals. Committed to safeguarding essential services and enabling secure, resilient operations that support organizational missions and community safety across diverse industries.

SUCCESS STORY

Since joining nine years ago, I've led our cybersecurity team's transformation from reactive to proactive. Early penetration tests revealed major issues, but sustained improvements reduced findings to low and informational this year. Under my leadership, we consistently meet all state and federal cybersecurity requirements, built a formal incident response program, and supported three team members in earning CISSP and PMP certifications. These certifications enhance our team's expertise, ensuring we maintain strong security practices to protect critical systems and continue providing safe, clean drinking water to our communities.



Esteban Gutierrez

VP & CISO, Information
Security, New Relic



Esteban Gutierrez is a seasoned information security professional with over two decades of experience. He excels at aligning security frameworks with business goals and balancing best practices with pragmatic risk management. At New Relic, he has built a security program based on a "Security is Nurturance" paradigm shift. His experience along with his background in cognitive linguistics offers a unique blend of technical expertise and an understanding of communication, crucial for developing effective user-friendly security.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, New Relic has achieved a highly effective international security organization, expanding into India for optimized incident management and continuous operational support. I maintained high team morale during global expansion by conveying work significance and acknowledging contributions. Collaborating with Engineering and Product, I was able to embed security early in development, leading to faster, more secure product delivery and successful launches, measured by frameworks like CIS Critical Security Controls. The team improved strategic goal comprehension, risk tolerance, and mitigation, balancing security with business needs. I'm proud of our globally proficient security team's strategic alignment with vital business operations.



Michael Mestrovich

CISO,
Rubrik



Michael Mestrovich is the Chief Information Security Officer at Rubrik. As Rubrik's CISO, he is responsible for the strategy and operations of the company's cyber security program which focuses on both securing the internal IT components of the company as well as ensuring the security of the software development process and overall product security. Previously, Michael worked for the CIA, the US State Department, Cisco Systems and is a veteran of the US Air Force.

SUCCESS STORY

Over the past three years, the InfoSec team has blossomed into a cadre of professionals who not only look after the security of the company but have also become trusted advisors. This team is now relied upon to help our product team envision ever more important product capabilities and is relied upon by our engineering team to help ensure that features are built in a secure fashion and that they will withstand the most rigorous scrutiny. Seeing this team evolve to be trusted advisors and watching their confidence and esprit de corps grow with each day has been immeasurably rewarding.



Sunil Seshadri

EVP & CSO,
HealthEquity



Sunil Seshadri has over 25 years' experience leading cybersecurity for financial services and technology companies, having served as CISO for the world's largest stock exchange, the world's largest payment technology company, and one of the largest banks. In January 2025, Sunil joined HealthEquity as their Chief Security Officer reporting directly to the CEO, to help the company build an industry-leading program and a team and to transform the company's cyber and fraud posture.

SUCCESS STORY

Under Sunil Seshadri's leadership, Wells Fargo's cybersecurity program transformed into a world-class defense organization. Leading over 3,300 professionals, Sunil designed a cyber strategy addressing regulatory scrutiny, operational complexity, and evolving threats. The team implemented a security modernization roadmap, applying advanced encryption, GenAI solutions, and zero-trust frameworks, protecting millions of customers. Sunil's team exemplified the power of bold leadership and shared purpose. Now, as CSO at HealthEquity, Sunil and his team are pioneering a passwordless authentication platform, aiming for a secure mobile experience focused on healthcare members.



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Wagner Nascimento**
for being named
a finalist for the
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CORPORATE FINALISTS

UP TO \$ \$800,000,000 ANNUAL REVENUE

2025
CISO
AWARDS**Pallavi Damle**VP, Corporate
Cybersecurity, Netgear Inc

As a seasoned executive, people leader, and accomplished results-driven cyber expert, I bring over two decades of Big 4 consulting and Fortune 500 corporate experience managing and enhancing the security posture of global enterprises. I specialize in both Enterprise Cybersecurity and Product Security. I have a track record in developing robust security strategies, implementing cutting-edge technologies, and leading cross-functional teams to safeguard organizational assets. I remain committed to advancing empowerment, and innovation for sustained success.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, our cybersecurity team has achieved significant milestones, including the implementation of a Zero Trust Framework and integrating AI/ML for real-time threat detection, reducing risk and response time. We overhauled protocols through a Defense in Depth and Cloud First strategy, launched a Vulnerability Management program with bi-weekly metrics, and established a Secure Software Development Lifecycle. Our external Bug Bounty and Incident Response programs, along with regular training across the organization, have fostered a security-conscious culture. These efforts fortify our defenses, protect assets, ensure business continuity, and uphold our strong reputation in the industry.

**Tas Jalali**CISO,
AC Transit

As CISO at AC Transit, the third largest bus-only transit agency in the USA, I lead cybersecurity efforts to ensure safe, reliable transit for underserved communities. I drive innovative solutions to secure systems and enhance safety, setting new standards. Chair of APTA's AI Subcommittee, I speak at cybersecurity conferences. With 17 years at McAfee, Qualys, & others, plus co-founding Smashon Inc., I hold a Bachelor's from NIT, a Master's from Harvard, and CISSP, CISM, CEH certifications.

SUCCESS STORY

As CISO at AC Transit, the third largest bus-only transit agency in the USA, I ensure safe, reliable transit for 200,000 daily passengers, many from underserved communities.

Our pioneering use of advanced PKI certificates enables secure bus communication, while AI-powered lane enforcement, a first for bus-only transit, enhances safety. My hiring prioritizes diverse, skilled candidates, fostering continuous learning to strengthen cybersecurity, prevent disruptions, and protect our community.

**Chad Kalmes**CISO & CIO,
Udemy Inc.

Chad is a seasoned technology and security executive with 25+ years of experience leading global teams across security, risk, IT, engineering, and compliance. He's guided companies through hypergrowth and long-term scale, serving as the top IT exec at both Twilio and PagerDuty during their IPOs. Chad excels at aligning innovation with business strategy, and has deep expertise in AI-transformation, risk governance, and operational scalability, having served in both CISO and CIO roles across multiple companies.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, we've led a strategic transformation across security, compliance, and technology - prioritizing simplification, innovation, and scalability. We streamlined operations through platform consolidation and adopted an AI-first mindset to boost efficiency and reduce costs.

Security and GRC evolved into risk-aligned, user-centric programs that enhance protection without hindering productivity. We've broken down silos and enabled real-time insights by leaning in on AI, automation, and well-integrated data.

Most notably, we've launched a strategic, company-wide AI transformation, embedding intelligence into core workflows to accelerate decision-making, improve productivity, and drive continuous innovation - positioning the organization for long-term growth and competitive advantage.

**Vasanth Madhure**CISO,
Couchbase Inc

Vasanth Madhure is a seasoned technology leader with over two decades of experience in Information Security, IT, and Cloud. As CISO at Couchbase, he leads the security program and advises the executive team and board. He has driven compliance with ISO 27001, SOC 1 & 2, HIPAA, etc. Previously, he was VP of InfoSec & Technical Operations at Certent and held leadership roles at Fortune 500 firms including Oracle and Sun Microsystems.

SUCCESS STORY

As the inaugural CISO at Couchbase, I architected and led the execution of a comprehensive, multi-year cybersecurity strategy aligned with business objectives. Key initiatives included strengthening secure SDLC practices, launching proactive programs such as threat modeling, bug bounty, and external penetration testing and rolling out enterprise grade security tooling such as SIEM, EDR, CASB, and MFA. These efforts drove early vulnerability remediation, accelerated go-to-market through a customer-facing trust portal, and enabled successful attainment of multiple industry certifications. Under my leadership, the company achieved a sub-5% phishing-prone rate and built a mature, scalable security program recognized by customers and auditors alike.

**Leda Muller**Chief Information Security
& Privacy Officer,
Stanford University - R&DE

Responsible for the cybersecurity, privacy, digital accessibility and PCI strategy and programs. She has overseen protection of enterprise information assets, technology, and business processes. She is passionate about engaging end users in understanding how security is everyone's job, and has built successful security steering teams of business operators. Leda holds a B.A. in Sociology from Whittier College and an MBA and Master's degree in Information Systems, and is CISM, PCIP and is ITIL certified.

SUCCESS STORY

Developing a Security Steering Committee, comprising representatives from departments with the organization, ensuring diverse perspectives in our strategic decisions. This collaborative approach not only enhances our understanding of operational needs but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for cybersecurity and privacy throughout the organization. With this committee we are able to have views into where we may have had blind spots and this helps the organization as a whole be proactive in areas to build a stronger security posture.

**Azeem Nizam**CISO,
ABC Fitness

Azeem Nizam is Chief Information Security Officer at ABC Fitness, where he leads global cybersecurity, privacy, and compliance across operations in over 100 countries. With more than 22 years of experience, he built the company's first ISO 27001 certifications, unified SOC 1 reporting, and embedded security into product development and vendor operations. Azeem is also a cyber advisor to several companies and focuses on building trusted, flexible teams that drive secure innovation and business growth.

SUCCESS STORY

We transformed security into a competitive advantage. By embedding security thinking into product development, vendor management, and customer engagement, we became a trusted partner across the business. Teams now come to us early because we help them move faster and win more confidently, with SOC, PCI, and ISO certifications that set us apart. Security is now a driver of growth, reinforcing ABC's position as a leader in the fit-tech space.

Congratulations to the 2025 Bay Area CISO of the Year® Award winners and nominees.

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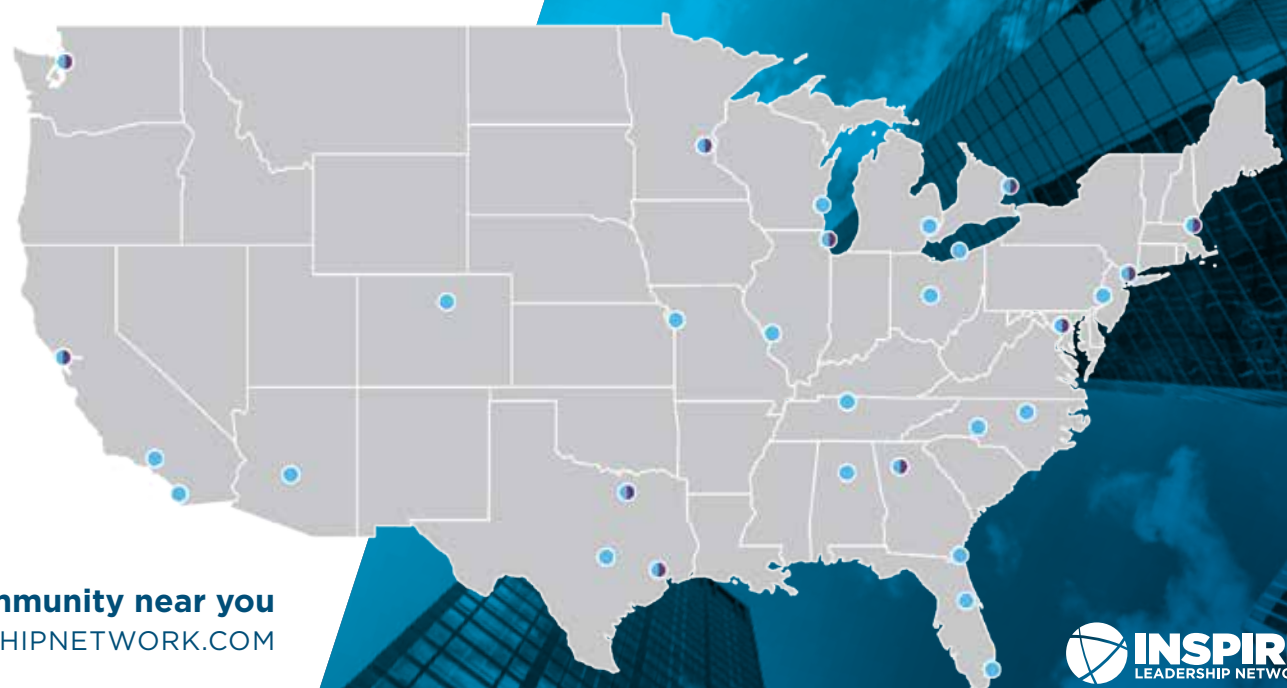
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