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2025

CAROLINACISO ORBIE® AWARDS

The annual CarolinaCISO ORBIE® Awards honors chief information security officers who have demonstrated excellence in security leadership. Winners in the Super Global, Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Large Corporate & Corporate categories will be announced September 18 at Embassy Suites by Hilton Raleigh-Durham/Research Triangle.



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Collectively We Secure the Enterprise

CarolinaCISO brings together preeminent CISOs from Carolina’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 Carolina. On behalf of CarolinaCISO, 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 Carolina ORBIE® Awards possible.



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Christina Bray
2025 Chair, CarolinaCISO
Chief Information Security Officer, Collins Aerospace



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2025 KEYNOTE

Ken Athanasiou

CISO | VF Corporation

VF Corporation’s Ken Athanasiou on his “fight the bad guys attitude” and beating AI-driven cybercrime



By The Business Journals Content Studio

After serving in the U.S. Air Force for 13 years as both an enlisted member and commissioned officer, Ken Athanasiou left the service at the rank of captain and transitioned to the private sector where he has been specializing in information security for nearly three decades.

For the past six years, Athanasiou has served as vice president and global chief information security officer (CISO) at VF Corporation, whose portfolio includes lifestyle brands such as Vans, The North Face and Timberland. Before joining VF Corporation, he held CISO positions at JPMorgan Chase’s retail business, American Eagle Outfitters and AutoNation.

For the impact he has made over the course of his career, Athanasiou has been selected as the Leadership Award recipient of the 2025 Carolina-CISO ORBIE Awards. The program honors chief information security officers who have a proven track record of successful information security leadership, made significant contributions to the business and technology community and inspired others through their personal, professional and civic contributions.

Athanasiou will receive his award at a live event on Sept. 18, where he will also deliver the keynote address, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Raleigh-Durham/Research Triangle.

Where it all began: Ethics, integrity and a mission to protect children

During his military career, Athanasiou worked on the Minuteman Intercontinental Ballistic Missile system, performed software testing on satellite command and control systems, ran his base’s network control center and conducted operational and combat tests on the B-2 bomber.

But what was most influential for Athanasiou was the leadership training he received as an officer in the USAF.

“The military is very focused on ensuring that their leaders understand psychology, how to lead and motivate people and the nature of what it is to be an ethical leader with high integrity,” said Athanasiou. “I wouldn’t be where I am right now if I hadn’t had those experiences in the military.”

In fact, it was while in the Air Force that Athanasiou experienced one of the defining moments of his career. He and his team caught and prosecuted a first lieutenant who was downloading child pornography onto government computers. Athanasiou participated in everything from the initial discovery to the prosecution and sentencing.

“It was a hugely significant emotional event for me,” said Athanasiou. “It defined my ‘I’m going to fight the bad guys attitude’ and spun off the future of my career.”

Attacked by cybercriminal group Scattered Spider

In his current role at VF Corporation, Athanasiou leads a team of 100 full-time employees and contractors. He primarily works with the executive team to ensure they understand the risks the company is subject to and the actions his team is taking to reduce those risks.

It was in this capacity Athanasiou experienced the second defining moment of his career. In 2023, the company was attacked by Scattered Spider, a cyberattack group. It was a huge fight for Athanasiou and his team that involved countless hours and resulted in success for the company.

“This was the biggest trial by fire I’ve experienced in my career and I hope to never have to do it again,” Athanasiou said.

Founding RH-ISAC and expanding the CISO network

While Athanasiou has been on the board of several information security organizations, in 2014, he was one of six people who helped found the Retail and Hospitality Information Sharing and Analysis Center (RH-ISAC), a national retail organization focused on cybersecurity.

The founding members realized the bad actors were collaborating but the people fighting them weren’t. There was concern about sharing corporate secrets. Eventually, they realized they needed to discuss the tactics and techniques they were seeing from the criminals to share how to fight them.

Athanasiou is a long-term participant in the CISO Executive Network, which also works together to fight cybercrime. He helped establish a chapter in Florida and joined the Charlotte chapter when he went to work for VF Corporation.

Increasing use of AI in cybersecurity and cybercrime

AI is becoming more prevalent across every sector, including both cybersecurity and cybercrime. Automated attacks driven by AI are moving at lightning speed, with machine intelligence capable of making rapid decisions based on vast amounts of information.

“If we want to win, we need to be inserting AI into all steps of the kill chain,” Athanasiou said. “We need to get to the point where we’re responding with the same speed, but with better clarity.”

He concluded, “It’s going to get to the point where we have AIs fighting AIs — good machine intelligence fighting bad machine intelligence.”

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Christina Bray
CISO
Collins Aerospace



Christina Bray is a Cybersecurity Executive with a focus on building and maturing cybersecurity programs for industry leaders. Christina's business acumen, approachability and consultative approach improves risk management at every level of the enterprise. As a servant leader, translator, communicator and security advocate, she creates a strong cybersecurity culture and improves decision making by advising senior leadership teams on risk. Her experience extends across Aerospace, Financial Services, Professional Services, Consulting, Insurance, Transportation and Logistics industries.

SUCCESS STORY

Given the nature of our business and the cybersecurity risks we face, we have a robust cybersecurity program for identifying, assessing, and managing cybersecurity risks, which include material risks from cybersecurity threats, to our internal systems, our products, services and programs for customers, and our supply chain. Our program includes processes and controls for the deployment of new IT systems by the Company and controls over new and existing system operation. We monitor and conduct regular testing of these controls and systems, including vulnerability management through active discovery and testing to regularly assess patching and configuration status.



Chase Carpenter
Chief Security Officer-
Honeywell



Chase joined Honeywell from Microsoft, where he spent 20 years in a variety of security related roles, including running security for the Windows, Devices, and Gaming organizations. He is active with the Evanta CISO community, Security 50, Information Security Sharing Forum (ISSF), and multiple ISAC communities. Chase graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology and is a member of the Board of Directors for Sandia National Laboratory and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation.

SUCCESS STORY

Chase leads all security work across the Honeywell. After joining in 2019 he established a unified team responsible for securing customer-facing products and online services, safeguarding Honeywell's internal IT systems, data, and infrastructure, and providing physical security to protect Honeywell's employees and facilities. Over the last 6 years, the Honeywell Global Security team has transformed into an organization that has been recognized with multiple industry awards for excellence and innovation around resilience, security, and compliance.



José Hernández
VP & Global CISO
Corning Incorporated



José J. Hernández has served as Corning's Chief Information Security Officer since April 2020, leading global cybersecurity strategy and operations. With over 25 years of IT and cybersecurity experience, he previously held executive roles at Bechtel and Fluor Corporation. Hernández has built and led large-scale security programs across global enterprises and is active in numerous industry groups and organizations. He leads a global team of professionals focused on protecting Corning's critical information assets.

SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, our team led a company-wide cybersecurity transformation that significantly improved our security posture and operational resilience. We consolidated and redesigned all security functions and began migrating critical manufacturing sites and five global data centers to a modern authentication infrastructure aligned with zero-trust principles. This transformation eliminated legacy vulnerabilities, ensured operational continuity at key locations, and elevated our overall cybersecurity maturity. It also reduced risk and reinforced cybersecurity as a strategic business imperative. By aligning security with business goals, we strengthened resilience and positioned the organization to operate confidently in an evolving threat landscape.



Aaron Pardue
CISO
Reynolds American



Aaron Pardue is the CISO for Reynolds American. Aaron is responsible for helping to build and deliver the cybersecurity strategy. Aaron is an experienced Information Technology and Cybersecurity professional with 25 years' experience leading, driving and executing IT and cyber strategy to help improve and secure business processes and operations to meet corporate objectives. Driven to exceed expectations. Action and team focused, open and adaptable to change, strong work ethic, and expertise in client engagement.

SUCCESS STORY

As the Chief Information Security Officer of Reynolds American, my team's greatest accomplishment has been the development and implementation of a robust culture of cyber awareness and behavior and creation of a cyber business engagement model across the business. This transformative initiative has not only fortified our defenses against cyber threats but also fostered a pervasive understanding of cybersecurity across all levels of the organization. Our approach to business engagement has redefined the traditional narratives around cybersecurity. Rather than being perceived as a hindrance, our cybersecurity practices are now seen as enablers of business innovation.

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Scott Behm

CISO
Keysight Technologies,
Inc.



Scott Behm is an award-winning CISO, Navy veteran, and transformational leader driving global cybersecurity at Keysight Technologies. His leadership directly contributed to Keysight being named one of Forbes' Most Cybersecure Companies in America. With 20+ years of experience, he builds elite teams, modernizes security operations, and turns cybersecurity into a growth catalyst. A University of Colorado, Boulder graduate, Scott is also deeply committed to mentoring and veteran community service.

SUCCESS STORY

We transformed cybersecurity into a business-driving force. By cultivating a Trusted Security First culture globally, we turned compliance into a sales accelerator underpinning over \$1.5B in annual revenue. We reimagined our SOC, building a world-class threat response engine from the ground up, and led a product security overhaul that de-risked \$200M in critical sales. Keysight earned national recognition from Forbes as one of America's Most Cybersecure Companies. Now, we're pioneering AI-powered defense strategies to ensure we stay ahead of adversaries at machine speed. Security isn't just protection it's now our strategic advantage.



Noah Davis

VP & CISO, Head of
Infrastructure and
Operations
Ingersoll Rand



Noah Davis is the Chief Information Security Officer and Head of Infrastructure & Operations at Ingersoll Rand. He leads global cybersecurity and IT operations across 60+ countries, aligning digital resilience with business growth. Noah drives enterprise-wide strategies in zero trust, infrastructure modernization, and operational continuity, enabling secure innovation at scale. A board-facing executive, he is known for unifying security and infrastructure to deliver measurable outcomes and trusted digital transformation.

SUCCESS STORY

In 2023, I joined Ingersoll Rand amid a challenging time. Working 12-hour days, seven days a week, we not only restored operations but transformed cybersecurity into a trusted business partner. We built GRC, Architecture, Engineering, and SecOps functions, launched quarterly governance with senior leaders, and secured Board support. In one year, we improved MITRE coverage from 23% to 75%, reduced MTTR from 17 days to under 2, and now contain threats in under 8 minutes while processing 30B+ events monthly to protect a dynamic global enterprise.



Gavin Guttersen

VP & CISO
NetApp



A seasoned professional driving AI security innovation, with a background in entrepreneurship and technology innovation. Recognized for building a fast-growing Internet company in North Carolina. Gavin is a parent of three, grandparent of six, and a committed philanthropist. He transitioned from entrepreneurship to corporate IT Security, then to leading the Global Security organization accountable for Information and Product security. He brings an understanding that success is reliant on the ability to hire an amazing team.

SUCCESS STORY

NetApp, a 30-year-old infrastructure company, transformed into a cloud-centric software company with notable advancements in cloud and AI. Despite inheriting security challenges from its legacy, the Global Security team successfully revamped the company's risk tolerance and security culture. By embedding security into the organizational fabric, they elevated security awareness and posture across leadership. Centralizing security functions, enhancing controls, deploying cyber asset management, expanding telemetry, and strengthening governance significantly boosted the security program's maturity. Notably, Data Protection, Identity Protection, and Infrastructure Protection have all seen exponential growth in maturity, showcasing a remarkable evolution towards a more secure environment.



Dr. John Opala

VP, IT & Global CISO
Hanesbrands, Inc.



Dr. Omondi John Opala is a seasoned global CISO and IT executive with over 20 years of experience leading cybersecurity, risk, and digital transformation across complex global enterprises. He has successfully aligned security with business strategy, built high-performing teams, and driven measurable outcomes using frameworks like NIST CSF 2.0. Guided by purpose, influence, and intentional leadership, Dr. Opala transforms cybersecurity into a driver of innovation, operational resilience, and long-term enterprise value.

SUCCESS STORY

As a global CISO, I'm guided by Dr. Handel Leslie's belief that "destiny is not left up to chance but rather a matter of choice," and John C. Maxwell's reminder that "leadership is influence." These principles shaped my journey as I transformed cybersecurity into a business enabler. I led the development of a NIST CSF 2.0-based maturity program, reduced threat response times by 75%, and built high-impact internal talent. Through intentional decisions, cross-functional influence, and a commitment to purpose-driven leadership, I helped embed cybersecurity into the core of innovation, resilience, and sustainable business growth.



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Congratulations Sanjeev Sah on your remarkable leadership.

We are so proud you have been named a 2025 CarolinaCISO ORBIE Awards finalist.

At Novant Health, we realize that it takes outstanding leadership and purposeful innovation to improve the health of our communities.

Sanjeev Sah is leading Novant Health into the future as a visionary cybersecurity leader. He and his team of talented and dedicated professionals are critical contributors to the success and resiliency of our organization.

Thank you, Sanjeev, for your commitment to enhancing care, experience and remarkable outcomes for the people we serve.

NovantHealth.org



Sanjeev Sah

Senior vice president, enterprise technology services, and chief information security officer, Novant Health



Scott Dickinson

CISO
AnMed



Scott Dickinson has over 22 years’ experience in the fields of information security and information technology. He has worked with various agencies to include FBI, DOD, Veteran Affairs, State of SC, and the private sector. He has been a CIO, a CISO, a virtual CISO, Cyber Security Division Director and a variety of positions leading up to those roles. He currently serves as the CISO at AnMed. He currently holds the CISSP and CCSP certifications.

SUCCESS STORY

My team has doubled in size since taking the inaugural role. Implemented Vulnerability Management program. Decreased vulnerabilities from over 200K to 30K in 2 years. Implemented new email system with additional security and repeatable phishing tests. Implemented first ever 24x7 SOC response. Increased overall cybersecurity maturity since inception of the CISO role.



Rick Doten

Healthplan CISO
(fmr)
Centene



Rick is VP, Information Security at Centene and CISO of the North Carolina Medicaid healthplan. He is also participates in AI Security and Safety committee. Rick is a frequent speaker at cybersecurity conferences and guest on cybersecurity podcasts. He is on the editorial board for CIS Controls. He is social coordinator for Charlotte CISO community. And works with several Venture Capital firms and is on the Board of Advisors for several startups.

SUCCESS STORY

I acted as fractional CISO for over a dozen non-connected subsidiaries across the US and Europe. Many where small organizations without security teams, and was able to provide processes and technology to mature their programs to be compliant with our corporate standards. I then oversaw the divestiture of each of them over a 2 year period to make sure they were prepared for inclusion to their new owners.



Donna Hart

CISO
Ally Financial



Donna Hart is the Chief Information Security Officer at Ally Financial. She is responsible for enterprise cyber security, technology risk management, identity and access control, data security and governance, platform and application security. She joined Ally in 2021 and reports to the Chief Information, Data and Digital Officer. Before Ally, Hart held multiple technology roles at Wells Fargo over a 25-year period. She holds a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from Appalachian State University.

SUCCESS STORY

My team’s greatest accomplishment has been our multi-year transformation. As a digital-only bank, having a robust, hardened and mature cyber security program allows us to be allies to all stakeholders. We’ve re-framed technology risk from reactive to preventative, doubled our budget, handled a significant increase in attack volume over the past 3 years (+115%), closed 7M+ vulnerabilities YoY, and increased regulatory output by 247%. My team of 300 professionals has rallied together to make Ally stronger than it’s ever been. I’m incredibly proud of each person who’s continued to “do it right” for our bank customers and auto dealers.



Marco Maiurano

CISO
First Citizens Bank



Marco Maiurano serves as the CISO for First Citizens Bank. Marco is a senior executive with over twenty years of experience driving security strategy and operations across multiple industries. Responsible for conceptualizing and building functions across the enterprise to ensure what matters is protected.

SUCCESS STORY

Our Cyber Security program has successfully protected the bank through 2 large acquisitions. Our purpose built design and forward thinking view of our tech stack allowed us to secure the bank while integration occurred. At the same time, our Threat intel team lead the industry response and coordination with the FBI and NCFITA to take down the Russian backed threat actors Disneyland Team/ Ivan.



Jim O’Connell

Director, Information Security
Old Dominion Freight Line



In my career I have played many roles in many disciplines. I started out as a programmer across various languages, pivoted to infrastructure and middleware, took on EA responsibilities and formal management roles. All of which prepared me for my Cyber Security role. Being fluent in other IT roles has been immensely in my role as Director of Information Security.

SUCCESS STORY

The role of cybersecurity was transformed within the organization, from a perceived inhibitor of business innovation to a pivotal enabler of growth. By integrating proactive security measures into everyday processes, our cyber strategy not only safeguarded critical assets but also supported agile operations and strategic decision-making. This reinforced our commitment to a secure yet progressive organizational environment.



Sanjeev Sah

SVP, Enterprise Technology Services & CISO
Novant Health



Sanjeev Sah, MHA, is the Senior Vice President of Enterprise Technology Services and Chief Information Security Officer at Novant Health. He leads cybersecurity, infrastructure, data services, governance, risk & compliance, and service operations for integrated health system, advancing digital resilience, operational excellence, and service innovation. With over 25 years of experience, including executive roles at CommonSpirit, Unum, BCBSLA, MUSC, and Texas Children’s, Sanjeev is a mission-driven leader focused on the Quadruple Aim and technology-enabled patient care.

SUCCESS STORY

At Novant Health, Sanjeev Sah led a cybersecurity transformation that integrated business continuity, disaster recovery, and incident response into a unified resilience program. His team advanced threat detection through automation and intelligence, strengthened governance with risk-informed practices, and embedded security awareness across clinical and operational teams. These efforts significantly reduced cyber risk, improved response times, and ensured continuity of care. By aligning cybersecurity with enterprise strategy and culture, Novant Health enhanced trust, operational reliability, and its position as a leader in healthcare cyber resilience.



Janet Heins

CISO
ChenMed



As a Chief Information Security Officer, Janet has established a proven approach in developing strategic roadmaps, deploying state-of-the-art technology solutions and educating employees to protect companies from security risks. Janet possesses deep experience across diverse industries, including pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, manufacturing, travel, media and entertainment, and healthcare running large scale technology organizations and building mature information security capabilities. This experience has afforded her extensive exposure and in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of various business sectors.

SUCCESS STORY

When I joined ChenMed in August 2023, the Information Security team had operated without a CISO for over a year, with staff reporting to different IT leaders. I immediately centralized the function, aligning security capabilities with company priorities through cross-functional meetings and creating a strategic roadmap. Using NIST CSF, I assessed program maturity to identify gaps. Despite flat investment constraints, I secured resources by negotiating favorable vendor renewals, optimizing team structure, and implementing automation. These changes increased our security maturity, established foundational capabilities in Incident Response, Asset Management, and Vulnerability & Patch Management while directly supporting ChenMed’s mission.



Randy Moulton

CISO & Deputy CIO
City of Charlotte



Currently serving as the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) and Deputy Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the City of Charlotte. Randy holds a Bachelor of Science from East Carolina University (ECU). His diverse background has equipped him with a comprehensive understanding of the technology landscape and the ability to drive strategic initiatives. Randy is a proud veteran of the United States Navy, where he developed a strong foundation in leadership and discipline.

SUCCESS STORY

Two of my bigger success stories while working as the CISO for the City of Charlotte was keeping Charlotte’s technology systems secure for both the Democratic National Convention (DNC) and the Republican National Convention (RNC). These two events were the most challenging and rewards events for me from a cybersecurity perspective.



Nelly Nauman

EVP, Corporate Technology & CISO
Parexel



Nelly Nauman is the EVP of Corporate Technology & (CISO) at Parexel. Since May 2021, she has spearheaded cybersecurity strategy and tech transformation across the enterprise, safeguarding critical assets amid evolving threats. With 24+ years in cybersecurity and risk management, Nelly is known for building resilient defense programs, leading crisis responses, and aligning security with business goals. Before joining Parexel, she was Deputy CISO and Managing Director at Moody’s.

SUCCESS STORY

After 20 years in the financial industry, losing my father to cancer shifted my priorities. His extended life through clinical trials left a lasting impact on me. Through an executive search, I was introduced to Parexel, a clinical research organization whose mission deeply resonated with me. I felt a deep emotional connection to the role—almost as if my father had guided me to it—offering a meaningful way to honor his memory. My work in Cybersecurity is not just a professional responsibility; it is a personal mission to make a difference in the lives of patients and their families.



John Scrimsher

CISO
Kontoor Brands, LLC



John Scrimsher is a global cybersecurity executive with over 30 years of experience across multiple industries. As Chief Information Security Officer of a multinational retail fashion company, he leads enterprise-wide cyber strategy, risk management, and resilience initiatives. John is known for translating complex security issues into meaningful business insights through clear, human-centered communication, including the series “Everything You Need to Know About Cybersecurity, You Learned in Kindergarten.”

SUCCESS STORY

The Kontoor Security team has proven repeatedly that the typical challenges of resources can be overcome with innovative thinking and technological prowess. In just a few years, we have developed capabilities to match or exceed the maturity of many of our peers, including defensive, detective and responsive capabilities to respond quickly to new threats. Having focused on traditional enterprise security, then layering on aspects of OT and Insider Threat security they have ensured the ability to protect the company from the evolving adversarial tactics we face.



Brian Wilson

CISO
SAS



As the Chief Information Security Officer, Brian oversees Global Information Security and Identity and Access Management for both the enterprise and SAS Managed Cloud Services environments. For over 21 years, Brian has been instrumental in leading and supporting the company’s information security program, ensuring its growth and maturity in response to evolving industry and customer compliance requirements.

SUCCESS STORY

One success story is related to our creation of engaging security awareness videos which required me to get out of my element and be more open and available to staff. The last thing I wanted to do was to be on camera, but when you have a good writer and producer, even those that don’t want to be in the spotlight can be funny and engaging. The series has generated lunch room & pre-meeting conversations. This is the kind of publicity that helps rally employees around an often confusing topic and enables them to understand the implications of their actions.



Frank DePaola
VP & CISO
Enpro



Frank DePaola is an accomplished cybersecurity executive bringing over 25 years of experience in technology, cybersecurity and risk management. As Enpro's first CISO, Frank is responsible for leading cybersecurity, data privacy, and regulatory compliance efforts globally. With deep cross-industry expertise, he provides practical, business-aligned strategies for securing critical resources while enabling innovation at scale. Frank is passionate about advancing the cybersecurity profession through mentorship, advising cybersecurity startups, and serving on industry boards.

SUCCESS STORY

Despite being a global, publicly traded company, Enpro had no formal cybersecurity program just seven years ago. Since then, we've built a globally recognized, business-aligned security organization that ranks above industry peers in benchmarking assessments. Under my leadership, my team has earned multiple honors, including consecutive CSO50 awards for delivering measurable business value through cybersecurity. We've cultivated a strong security culture that supports both organizational goals and individual awareness. As Enpro evolves through mergers and acquisitions and business expansion, my team delivers consistent and scalable security standards across all business units and champions the mindset that security is everyone's responsibility.



Joe Evangelisto
CISO
NetSPI



Joe Evangelisto is a results-driven technology executive and current CISO at NetSPI, with deep expertise in security, compliance, and IT operations. He is known for transforming culture and processes to build empowered, high-performing teams. He's adept at aligning enterprise strategy with stakeholder needs across all levels and passionate about mentorship and employee development. Joe holds an MBA in IT Management, BS in Business, and certifications including CISSP, Lean Six Sigma Green Belt, and ITIL V3.

SUCCESS STORY

Our team has significantly enhanced NetSPI's security posture. Facing the inherent challenge of maintaining robust security while enabling our technical teams, we implemented new tools for improved threat detection and response. Furthermore, we established proactive security collaborations across all departments while providing support for business needs and objectives. These initiatives yielded tangible results, including a reduction in security events, increased employee engagement, and a demonstrable improvement in our overall security maturity. By refocusing the team we've streamlined operations and improved response times. The broader impact includes heightened team morale, enhanced business resilience, and a strengthened security culture company wide.



Jerry Fowler
CISO & Sr. Director,
Infrastructure and ITGRC
Krispy Kreme Doughnut
Corporation



Jerry Fowler is a cybersecurity and infrastructure executive who leads with clarity, grit, and precision. Known for unifying chaos into control, he transforms fragmented environments into resilient, scalable platforms. His leadership spans global operations, compliance, and Zero Trust strategy — all anchored by a belief that calm is a superpower and trust is earned in adversity. Jerry doesn't just secure systems — he empowers people, shapes culture, and makes complexity feel simple when it matters most.

SUCCESS STORY

During a time of global expansion and high uncertainty, my team unified fragmented cybersecurity and infrastructure programs into a single, strategic function. We built a centralized framework that improved visibility, standardized best practices, and closed long-standing operational gaps — without sacrificing flexibility for local markets. This transformation dramatically improved response times, collaboration, and executive trust. Most importantly, it redefined cybersecurity's role across the business — from reactive support to strategic partner. And we did it all during a stretch that tested everyone. Their grit, focus, and resilience under pressure is something I'll always be proud of.



Marina Kelly
CISO
City of Raleigh

Marina Lail Kelly is the Chief Information Security Officer for the City of Raleigh, NC, where she leads enterprise cybersecurity strategy, governance, and risk management. With a background in software development, compliance, policy development, and cross-sector collaboration, she excels at building trust-driven security programs that enable innovation. Marina is passionate about demystifying cybersecurity, empowering employees, and aligning security practices with national standards. Her leadership reflects a commitment to resilience, transparency, and fostering secure digital transformation.

SUCCESS STORY

Effective cybersecurity leadership isn't implementing technical controls. It's building relationships and fostering a security-first mindset. Rebuilding trust and collaboration across the City after years of cybersecurity leadership turnover has been my specific focus. Launching an Information Security Committee created a structured, ongoing dialogue on policy, risk management, and joint problem-solving with our stakeholders. Establishing an effective minimum security tool set reduced security friction and helped transform cybersecurity from a blocker to a business enabler. This has led to faster incident response times, 100% employee security training completion, and a culture where security is a shared responsibility.



Mardecia Bell
CISO
NC State University



Mardecia Bell, CISO at NC State University, has 39+ years in IT. She believes appropriate security controls should follow the data wherever it lives. A frequent conference presenter, she serves on the Regulated Research Community of Practice advisory board. She's a founding member of NC State's Women In Technology Interest Group and co-chairs the AI Advisory Group. Mentoring female students interested in the cybersecurity field is a key passion.

SUCCESS STORY

The OIT Security and Compliance unit has significantly enhanced the university's cybersecurity posture. Key accomplishments include establishing a comprehensive cybersecurity program with an expanded Security Operations Center and an IT Purchase Compliance (ITPC) process to protect university data used in third party solutions. We developed a risk matrix to help review and approve AI tools via ITPC. We've achieved 92% compliance in mandatory data security training and organized a successful Cyber Bowl competition to boost cybersecurity awareness. We recently received CMMC Level 2 (C3PAO) certification for our Secure University Research Environment, one of two universities nationally to receive this certification.



Jonathan Dallaire
EVP & Chief Security Officer
State Employees' Credit
Union



Jonathan is the Chief Security Officer at State Employees' Credit Union, where he leads a transformative security program spanning cyber and physical domains. He reimagined SECU's security posture through strategic innovation, proactive governance, and a culture of excellence. With over two decades of experience, Jonathan is a recognized thought leader in cybersecurity and risk management, committed to building resilient infrastructures and empowering organizations to thrive securely in an increasingly complex digital landscape.

SUCCESS STORY

Guided by a bold vision, I led the transformation of SECU's information and physical security services into a proactive, future-ready program. We deployed advanced technologies to elevate threat detection and resilience, while launching a 24x7x365 Security Operations Center to ensure continuous vigilance. By investing in top-tier talent and fostering a culture of innovation, we built a scalable, adaptive security infrastructure that empowers the organization to grow with confidence. This journey redefined what security means for SECU—strategic, trusted, and mission-aligned.



Lisa Jones
CISO
Wake County



Lisa Jones is the Chief Information Security Officer for Wake County, North Carolina, where she established the county's cybersecurity program. She leads cross-departmental efforts in information risk management and compliance, while driving employee engagement in the protection of information assets. Lisa has championed cybersecurity funding for key initiatives that enhance the county's security posture. Her leadership ensures secure digital services for over one million residents and fosters a proactive, resilient security culture across the organization.

SUCCESS STORY

As CISO for Wake County, I led the creation of the county's first comprehensive cybersecurity program, aligning it with public service goals and operational resilience. Despite limited resources, I secured increased funding, led a cross-departmental risk team, and launched a security engagement initiative that empowered employees to actively detect and report threats. By partnering with HR, we modernized cybersecurity hiring practices to attract top talent in a competitive market. These efforts significantly improved incident response, reduced risk exposure, and strengthened public trust, ensuring secure, reliable digital services for the county's growing population.



Ben Schwering
CISO
Premier, Inc.



Ben Schwering is the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) at Premier, Inc, a healthcare improvement company based in Charlotte, NC. With over 20 years of experience in the field, Ben is recognized for his innovative approach to solving complex business and technology challenges and his commitment to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. He is passionate about leveraging technology to create a more efficient, secure, and patient-centric healthcare environment.

SUCCESS STORY

We've transformed cybersecurity into a business differentiating component of our solutions offerings. Cybersecurity is now seen as a critical partner to the business and is part of the sales and business development teams. I'm proud of our success in transitioning from a purely back-office security team, into an externally facing partner for our customers. We now engage with our customers regularly on cybersecurity related initiatives and provide thought leadership and support. This work has led to improved customer engagement and additional partnership opportunities.



Rob Bence
VP, Technology &
Cybersecurity
Tepper Sports &
Entertainment



Rob Bence is the Vice President of Technology and Cybersecurity at Tepper Sports and Entertainment, where he leads technology strategy for the Carolina Panthers, Charlotte FC, and Bank of America Stadium. A 20-year technology leader with a foundation as a U.S. Army Signal Corps officer, Rob specializes in building high-performing teams and implementing secure, innovative solutions that drive business value and enhance the fan experience in the fast-paced world of professional sports and entertainment.

SUCCESS STORY

The team has transformed Tepper Sports and Entertainment's cybersecurity framework. We re-architected security to unify protection for our global operations and premier stadium, fortifying defenses for dozens of major annual events. I also spearheaded the development of our first cloud-native application, introducing modern secure coding practices to the organization. These initiatives empower our teams to innovate securely on a global scale, protecting critical data and enabling the world-class fan experiences central to our mission.



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