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BUSINESS JOURNAL

2026

# HOUSTONCISO ORBIE® AWARDS

The annual HoustonCISO 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 April 23 at Hilton Houston North.

 HOUSTONCISO



#### LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT & KEYNOTE

Mario Chiock on his journey  
from the oil fields of Venezuela  
to becoming SLB's first CISO

B4



#### FROM THE CHAIR

32 Houston CISOs beat  
executive isolation

B3

# CONGRATULATIONS 2026 HOUSTONCISO ORBIE NOMINEES

<b>QASIM ALI</b> FICO	<b>CHARISSE BOUGERE</b> Houston Airport System	<b>ZAC FLETCHER</b> Service Corporation International	<b>NIKKI JACKSON</b> Woodforest National Bank	<b>JOHN MOWERY</b> Houston Methodist	<b>DIEGO SOUZA</b> PROG Holdings
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<b>JOHN BARROW</b> JB Poindexter & Co.	<b>ANN DELENELA</b> Entergy	<b>ROYA GORDON</b> ENGIE North America (fmr)	<b>MARK LUND</b> Nordson	<b>MIKE SEGALL</b> Tidewater	<b>JON VILLANTI</b> Stellar Bank
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<b>JERICH BEASON</b> WM	<b>PAUL DIAL</b> AECOM	<b>CHAD GUIDRY</b> Patterson-UTI	<b>LINDA MARCONE</b> Crate & Barrel	<b>CAROLANN SHIELDS</b> 3M	<b>KEVIN WEAVER</b> CommonSpirit Health
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					<b>DAVID ZACHER</b> Atmos Energy

## 2026 HOUSTONCISO ORBIE AWARDS | FROM THE CHAIR

### 32 Houston CISOs beat executive isolation

Even the strongest executives can feel isolated at times. When chief information security officers (CISOs) face challenges with trusted peers, isolation transforms into clarity and confidence.

HoustonCISO brings together top CISOs from Houston's leading organizations to build meaningful relationships, share what's working, and create real business value. While industries and organization sizes may differ, the challenges of leadership—and the power of connection—are universal.

The Inspire Leadership Network connects CISOs with over 2,000 C-suite executives across more than 50 chapters, spanning public, private, and nonprofit organizations across North America. Beyond CISOs, Inspire also serves communities for chief information officers (CIOs) and chief marketing officers (CMOs).

For more than 25 years, the ORBIE Awards have honored C-suite executives for leadership, innovation, and excellence. I encourage you to attend the 2026 Houston ORBIE Awards to meet and support these outstanding security leaders.

On behalf of HoustonCISO, congratulations to all nominees and finalists on these achievements. Special thanks to the awards partners, chapter underwriters, and staff whose support makes the HoustonCISO ORBIE Awards possible.

Sincerely,

**Annessa McKenzie**

2026 Chair, HoustonCISO  
CISO, VP, Enterprise Architecture, IT Infrastructure |  
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# Mario Chiock

Schlumberger Fellow, SLB

Retired SLB CISO reflects on his journey from the oil fields of Venezuela to his role as the company's first CISO

By The Business Journals Content Studio

The oil industry has been part of Mario Chiock's life for as long as he can remember. His father was a geologist and worked for major oil companies, and Chiock grew up traveling the world at his father's side.

When it was time for Chiock to pursue his own career, he also landed in the oil industry and spent more than four decades traveling the world once again, this time on behalf SLB (formerly known as Schlumberger), an international oil field services and technology provider.

Chiock's resume includes no shortage of accomplishments and accolades. As SLB fellow and chief information security officer, he developed the company's worldwide, long-term cybersecurity strategy, including a cybersecurity digital transformation and cloud migration.

Beyond SLB, he has contributed generously to the Houston cybersecurity community, teaching low-cost certification classes through the Information Systems Security Association (ISSA) and serving as a mentor to other CISOs.

"When I look back on my career, seeing people grow in their careers gives me the most satisfaction," said Chiock, now chief of staff for Itegriti Corp., CISO/fellow emeritus at SLB and principal and founder of Squiggle Cyber LLC.

Those efforts have earned Chiock another honor. On April 23, he will receive the Leadership Award as part of the 2026 HoustonCISO ORBIE Awards, which will be held at the Hilton Houston North. The program honors CISOs who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership.

#### The path to cybersecurity leadership

Chiock's career began in Venezuela, where he

worked as a wireline field engineer for SLB, acquiring and interpreting data about oil wells. From there, he moved to Curaçao and then New York, rising through the ranks until the CEO of SLB presented him with a new opportunity.

"In 1999, the CEO asked me what I wanted to do next. My answer was, 'I want to do cybersecurity,'" he said. "So I became the worldwide incident response manager. Anytime there was any potential of a cyber incident, it was my job to go after it."

In this role, Chiock launched an IT security research lab in Austin, Texas, and deployed intrusion detection systems across the organization's network.

"This was leading edge in 1999," he said. "Ten years later, we replaced it with next-generation firewalls."

Chiock also invested in professional development, racking up a host of certifications, including the CISA certification. He led the Houston chapter of ISSA and, in 2010, became chief information security officer at SLB, the first in the history of the global organization. In time, he also became SLB's first cybersecurity fellow.

#### A retirement cut short

In 2017, Chiock retired from SLB, but it didn't last long.

"A month after I retired, I was hired back to move a lot of the organization's infrastructure to the cloud," he said. "I built a five-year roadmap that I was able to finish in three years."

In 2020, Chiock decided to retire once again, but he hasn't gone far. He serves SLB as fellow emeritus, advising the executive team and the board of directors on cybersecurity matters. Chiock also founded his own advisory firm, Squiggle Cyber LLC,

and became chief of staff at Itegriti Corp., working to coach cybersecurity professionals who focus on critical infrastructure.

#### Developing the next generation of leaders

Chiock has worked passionately to develop other leaders throughout his career. He gives security talks and trainings and has mentored many CISOs. In 2024, he took these efforts one step further, partnering with Hou.Sec.Con to launch a large-scale mentorship program.

"I have helped people who started in either very technical or different careers become some of the top CISOs in the Houston area," he said. "That means my time giving back to the community has been time well spent."

Now, Chiock balances enjoying his retirement (and his new grandchild) with continuing to stay abreast of the dramatic changes taking shape in the field. He is obtaining new certifications in artificial intelligence and serves on the board of five AI startups, advising them on issues related to stealth.

"One of the things I hear often from security people is that humans are the weakest link. I do not consider humans the weakest link, but I would like to move them to serve on the front line of defense," Chiock said. "Humans can become our sensors. They can highlight areas of concerns, and we can use that intel to prevent a major incident."

Although he has been recognized with numerous awards throughout his career, the Leadership Award signifies something different.

"This award represents credibility earned through actions, leadership proven through adversity, and impact measured by how well people, systems and organizations are protected," he said. "I've done my job; now, I need to enjoy."

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# SUPER GLOBAL FINALISTS

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## Jerich Beason

CISO,  
WM



I transitioned from a cybersecurity enthusiast to a professional. Before joining WM in 2023, I worked at Lockheed Martin, RSA, and Deloitte, advising executives on cybersecurity strategy, architecture, and program development for government and Fortune 500 companies. Outside of work, I'm a devoted husband and father. I'm also a member of the Forbes Technology Council, a LinkedIn Learning instructor, and a Board advisor to several security startups.

**SUCCESS STORY:** While there are many successes to celebrate/highlight, my work within the Houston community stands out as my biggest success by far. The impact/connections we have made through this initiative are remarkable. Houston Cyber Peeps is a community of cybersecurity professionals based in the area. We meet regularly to network, share stories, and build a strong sense of community. With 950+ members, the group has grown significantly, reflecting the increasing importance of cybersecurity in our region. Our meetings provide a platform for professionals to exchange knowledge, discuss the latest trends and challenges in the field, and support each other's professional growth.



## Mohit Chanana

CISO,  
Chevron Phillips Chemicals  
LP



Mohit Chanana is the Chief Information Security Officer at Chevron Phillips Chemical, where he leads global cybersecurity, enterprise infrastructure, and technology supporting physical security operations. He is responsible for protecting corporate and industrial environments while enabling safe, reliable business operations. Known for building diverse, high-performing teams and embedding security into company culture, Mohit is recognized as a strategic leader who aligns risk management with operational excellence and innovation.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Since stepping into the CISO role, I've helped transform cybersecurity from a small, reactive function into a trusted, business-aligned organization. What began as a three-person team has grown into a diverse group of 30 professionals who are deeply embedded in how the company operates. Along the way, we shifted cybersecurity from being viewed as an IT concern to a shared responsibility—on par with safety and reliability. By investing in people, culture, and collaboration, we've built a team that others want to join and a security mindset that supports both protection and innovation across the enterprise.



## Dr. Stephanie Franklin-Thomas, PhD

VP & CISO,  
Medtronic



Stephanie Franklin-Thomas, Ph.D. is a seasoned IT executive with over 28 years of experience driving business transformation and security initiatives across various industries. Currently the global VP and CISO at Medtronic, a leading medical technology company, she oversees strategies to protect the company's operations globally. She holds an NACD director certification and serves on the boards of St. Luke's Hospital and The National Cryptologic Foundation. Stephanie is a published author, and frequent speaker on cybersecurity.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Medtronic cybersecurity team achieved key milestones, strengthening our security posture and ensuring long-term resilience. We redefined cybersecurity as a core strategic priority, creating a new operating-model that improved processes and collaboration. Key initiatives included a risk-based security program, enhanced security culture, and a comprehensive Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) system. We supported Medtronic's GPT GenAI initiative and launched the first dedicated security program for manufacturing sites. Additionally, we introduced proactive security hygiene, launched the Cybersecurity Committee, hosted the first cyberwar game, Introduced enterprise Cybersecurity threat briefings and organized global security events during National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, enhancing enterprise-wide security awareness.



## Abie John

VP & CISO,  
Halliburton



Abie John has over 20 years of experience in the technology and cybersecurity industries. From a consultant at Deloitte Abie worked his way up, leading as the CISO at Aon, Orthofix, Accelya and most recently at Halliburton. He is well versed in leading international organizations cybersecurity while building happy and high-performing teams.

# GLOBAL FINALISTS

OVER \$3 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE & MULTI-NATIONAL OPERATIONS



## Shola Bemi Anjous

CISO,  
Noble Corporation



With over 25 years in oil and gas, I am fluent in English, Arabic, and African languages, having visited more than 80 countries. I contributed to the Department of Energy Cybersecurity Maturity Assessment Model (C2M2) in 2019 and helped shape the upcoming IADC offshore cyber controls. I was named a Top 100 Global CISO and am an Orbie CISO of the Year finalist for 2025.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Becoming CISO at Noble was challenging. Noble's cybersecurity culture ranked fourth globally among industrial peers, but to achieve the top spot and align with the "first choice in the industry" strategy, I prioritized improving cyber culture, strengthening security posture, and making cyber risk management a board-level concern across people, process, and technology. Understanding legacy practices and collaborating were key. Through five major initiatives, quick wins (IT and non-IT), and a three-year maturation program focused on defense in depth, Noble became number one in cybersecurity among global industrial peers.



## Stephen Ford

VP & CISO,  
Rockwell Automation



As VP and CISO at Rockwell Automation, Stephen is responsible for developing and executing a holistic cybersecurity strategy, ensuring company infrastructure, products, and customers are safe, secure, and resilient. A native Houstonian and senior executive with more than 30 years of experience, Stephen is passionate about problem-solving, stakeholder engagement, and leadership development, assisting organizations in meeting their goals. Prior to Rockwell, he has also held leadership roles with McKesson, Hewlett-Packard, and Baylor College of Medicine.

**SUCCESS STORY:** My story involves a career starting over 30 years ago as a datacenter operator and systems engineer which has been more about the journey than the destination. From Systems Engineer at UT-HSC, to IT-Security Director at Baylor College of Medicine, to Systems Manager at HP, to VP at McKesson, and CISO at Rockwell I have had an amazing journey through hard work, continuous learning, and supported by many mentors and sponsors. It's also been rewarding to help others with their careers along the way. I consider myself fortunate to have this experience and the many relationships it has formed.



## Roya Gordon

CISO,  
ENGIE North America (fmr)



Roya Gordon has over a decade of energy cybersecurity experience, a master's degree focused on cyber warfare, and more than six years of service in U.S. Navy Intelligence. As CISO of ENGIE North America, she leads the IT & OT Cybersecurity and GRC organizations responsible for protecting critical infrastructure assets across the U.S. and Canada. Her scope includes cybersecurity strategy, ITDR, compliance, and operational resilience for sites spanning wind, solar, battery storage, and traditional generation.

**SUCCESS STORY:** I helped the organization transition from a checklist-driven compliance model to a strategic, risk-based cybersecurity approach that delivers measurable value to business stakeholders. This shift strengthened our ability to prioritize initiatives based on real risk exposure, improved resource allocation, and aligned cybersecurity outcomes with broader business objectives. I also played a key role in embedding cybersecurity into the strategic decision-making process for both divestments and future investments, ensuring that cyber considerations are factored into financial, operational, and governance decisions. This integration enhanced overall resilience and elevated cybersecurity as a core enabler of long-term business strategy.



## Cesar Suarez

SVP, Enterprise Architecture  
& CISO,  
Worley



Cesar Suarez is a Senior Vice President and Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) with global experience leading cybersecurity, enterprise risk, and digital transformation in complex and global environments. A trusted advisor to Boards and executive teams, he translates cyber risk into business impact to enable secure growth and resilience. He has built and scaled global high performance security programs aligned to frameworks and international standards, embedding Zero Trust and Secure-by-Design principles enterprise-wide.

**SUCCESS STORY:** We transformed our security function into a true Cyber Resilience capability strengthening governance and advancing our technical dept and positioning cyber risk as a business risk rather than an IT issue. This transformation shifted us from a reactive stance to a proactive, intelligence-led organization. By modernizing controls, expanding threat visibility, and embedding security into digital initiatives, we now enable innovation securely across the enterprise. Our teams engage early in transformation programs, ensuring new technologies, platforms, and business models are launched with resilience designed in from day one. We have not only reduced risk but also enabled digital growth with confidence.



## Ming Yeo

Senior IT Director of  
Cybersecurity, Governance,  
Cloud Architecture,  
& Operations,  
Nabors Industries



Ming is Senior Director of Cybersecurity, Cloud, and IT Governance at Nabors. Originally from Singapore and raised in Indonesia, he has over 16 years of experience, including consulting at Deloitte. A former military Sergeant, Ming holds an Accounting degree and a Master's in MIS from Texas A&M. He specializes in embedding security into architecture and building high-performing teams that drive scalable growth, while managing global IT strategy and financial planning.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Taking Nabors' cybersecurity from a developing state into a world-class, enterprise-grade function is our greatest achievement. Early on, we experienced our first ransomware scare and it accelerated the need to mature fast - deploying global EDR, SIEM, and incident response playbooks. Our resilience was further tested during COVID where we had to do a rollout of untested remote technologies securely, globally, while navigating constantly changing health regulations. Few leaders have the opportunity to lay the foundation and build an enterprise security program from ground up; I had that privilege, and with my team this is our greatest accomplishment

# LARGE ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

OVER \$6.5 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



**Ann Delenela**

VP & CISO,  
Entergy



Ann Delenela is Vice President and Chief Information Security Officer at Entergy, responsible for enterprise and operational cybersecurity, physical security systems, and regulatory compliance. With more than 25 years of technology and security leadership experience, she is recognized for advancing security maturity, strengthening operational resilience, and aligning cybersecurity with business strategy. Her leadership philosophy emphasizes clarity, accountability, and a people-first approach to sustainable security excellence.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Cybersecurity at Entergy is fundamentally about enabling trust, resilience, and operational continuity. Under my leadership, we strengthened enterprise security while sustaining exceptional system stability and measurable risk reduction. By modernizing identity infrastructure, enhancing detection capabilities, and deploying transformative technologies, our organization improved both protection and performance. We maintained 100% availability across critical cybersecurity systems, advanced our external security posture, and reinforced a culture of accountability, engagement, and resilience. These outcomes strengthened reliability, reduced disruption risk, and positioned cybersecurity as a strategic enabler supporting Entergy's long-term business objectives.



**Gordon Groschl**

CISO & Director of Healthcare  
Technology Management,  
Texas Children's Hospital  
(fmr)



As City of Hope's System VP and CISO, Gordon Groschl leads corporate security, IT compliance, and data privacy. A nationally recognized leader with over 25 years of experience, he joined in 2026 after serving as CISO for Texas Children's Hospital. Groschl has spearheaded massive infrastructure modernizations and earned honors like Top Global CISO and the CISOConnect A100. He holds a degree in cybersecurity and is an expert in healthcare technology and ransomware resilience.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Under my leadership, Texas Children's Hospital's cybersecurity team delivered a transformative enterprise security program that strengthened resilience while supporting uninterrupted patient care and research. We modernized data center architecture, advanced identity and access capabilities, and enhanced security operations through intelligent automation and improved threat detection. Beyond technology, we fostered a culture of enterprise-wide ownership and accountability, reinforced through organization-wide awareness and governance initiatives. This transformation embedded security into the fabric of clinical and research operations, ensuring protection, continuity, and trust across one of the nation's leading pediatric health systems.



**Anthony Leatherwood**

Director, Cybersecurity &  
Technology Risk & CISO,  
Plains All American Pipeline



Anthony Leatherwood maintains over two decades of leadership success in the cybersecurity and risk industry. His career includes leading successful global teams in government and the private sector. Anthony currently is at Plains All American leading teams and critical infrastructure protection strategies for North American Cybersecurity, GRC, and I&AM functions.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Anthony has continued executive leadership with international team(s) across Americas, EMEA, and APJ securing IT/OT environment(s) working collaboratively with the business that includes information technology, legal, finance, audit, and operational personnel. They're continuing to forge strategic public/private agency partnerships to build cyber resilient systems, processes, & people by creating business value. Anthony has been awarded both publicly & privately throughout his career in cybersecurity and IT engineering. Most recently, Anthony was commended with a Board of Directors award in Cybersecurity from SC Johnson, EC-Council Global CISO Award, & highlighted for achievements in the Government Sector media.



**Russell Richardson**

VP & CSO,  
Calpine Corporation



Russell Richardson is Chief Security Officer at Calpine, overseeing physical security, cybersecurity, and business continuity for America's largest generator of electricity from natural gas and geothermal resources. With 19 years in the utility sector, he previously led OT security for a major U.S. energy holding company and is a Department of Energy OT Defender Fellow. Russell holds a Master of Science in Technology from Purdue University.

**SUCCESS STORY:** As a Critical Infrastructure Provider, Calpine's mission extends beyond customers to national security, so we've prioritized strong public-private partnerships. More than 80% of U.S. energy infrastructure is privately owned, meaning government agencies can only help defend it when invited. Under my leadership, we actively engage with the FBI, E-ISAC, CISA, DSAC, and DOE's CESER, among others. These relationships enable bi-directional sharing of threat intelligence, tactics, and vulnerabilities. By building trust and processes before a crisis, we better protect our company, support our sector, and strengthen U.S. critical infrastructure against nation-state and other advanced adversaries.

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# ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

OVER \$2.5 BILLION  
ANNUAL REVENUE



## Mark Alvarado

Director, IT Security & Compliance,  
Academy Sports + Outdoors



Mark Alvarado is an accomplished cybersecurity leader recognized for developing and executing security strategies that strengthen organizational resilience and support business objectives. He enhances security posture, ensures regulatory compliance, and leads high-performing, cross-functional teams. Committed to mentoring future cybersecurity professionals, Mark brings deep expertise in risk management, threat mitigation, and innovative security solutions that protect critical assets in an evolving threat landscape.

**SUCCESS STORY:** During my tenure at ASO, I have built a resilient and adaptable cybersecurity program that protects the organization while driving cost efficiency. Its strength is grounded in three pillars: trusted partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, strong alignment between cybersecurity and business strategy, and a diverse, high-performing team with deep expertise in security operations, architecture, and regulatory compliance. Together, these foundations enable our program to evolve with emerging threats, safeguard critical assets, and support Academy's continued growth in a dynamic digital landscape.



## John Barrow

CISO,  
JB Poindexter & Co.



My career started in the Army/NSA, where I eventually worked in the public and private sectors supporting all military commands and government agencies. I made the natural transition from the Intelligence Community to Cybersecurity; essentially the same mindset, different focus. I spearheaded the formation and optimization of several exceptional cybersecurity programs and teams across multiple industries, to include Gaming/Entertainment, Healthcare, and Manufacturing. I now lead the exceptional cybersecurity program and team at JB Poindexter & Co.

**SUCCESS STORY:** When I arrived at JBPCO, there was no cyber program. No budget, people, processes, or policies. With the vision and support of my executive leaders, my team and I have completely transformed the security culture at JBPCO. 18 months after I arrived, we had a ransomware attack. We were able to recover to full operations in 4 days. According to our external IR partners, the recovery for a company our size will typically take 2-3 weeks. This is a testament to my fantastic leaders and team. The cyber program we have built in such a small time is remarkable!



## Todd Beebe

ISO,  
Freeport LNG



With 30+ years of cybersecurity expertise and several U.S. patents, I lead the security program for a global energy enterprise. I built this function from scratch, achieving a nine-year zero-breach record through zero-trust innovation. My leadership style, forged during 12 years as a volunteer firefighter, emphasizes service and decisive action. I am dedicated to securing critical infrastructure and mentoring the next generation of cybersecurity professionals through free, hands-on training.

**SUCCESS STORY:** I built a global cybersecurity program from scratch, maintaining a nine-year zero-breach record. I implemented a zero-trust framework resulting in zero malware infections for eight years and established response capabilities that isolate threats within 15 minutes. This posture successfully withstood a three-month CISA national red team engagement. I developed a simulation tool validating 600 daily attacks, leading to seven zero-day discoveries for vendors like Microsoft and SAP. I also cultivated a company-wide security culture through an incentivized awards program, reducing human-error incidents by 60% and turning every employee into a proactive defensive sensor.



## Mary Dickerson

AVP & CISO,  
UTHealth Houston



Mary Dickerson is Associate Vice President and CISO for UTHealth Houston and responsible for strategic planning and implementation of information security practices. She holds a BS from TAMU, an MBA from UH and industry certifications including: CISM, CISSP and PMP. Ms. Dickerson is a member of various advisory committees and boards. She has previously served on the Texas Cybersecurity Council, the DHS Data Privacy and Integrity Committee and the FBI InfraGard Houston Board of Directors.

**SUCCESS STORY:** While the UTHealth Houston InfoSec team doesn't cure childhood diseases or teach patient care, we enable these outcomes. Our biggest accomplishment is that we continuously find ways to support business success in spite of evolving cyber threats. As team leader, my focus is on empowering our team, recognizing that people matter. Leadership is about inspiring others, and to me "the answer is in the room," extends to "my fellow CISOs in the room are the role models I want to be". They inspire me to lead our team to change the world – one person, student and patient at a time.



## Dr. Christopher Mitchell

CISO,  
City of Houston



Christopher P. Mitchell, PhD, is CISO for the City of Houston. A U.S. Navy veteran, he previously served as ISO for the Houston Airport System and spent 14 years in aerospace and defense leading cyber operations. He holds multiple GIAC certifications, PMP, CISM, CISSP, and a PhD focused on AI-driven cybersecurity. He is a graduate of the FBI CISO Academy and a 2023 Global Cybersecurity Defender of the Year award recipient.

**SUCCESS STORY:** As CISO, I led the creation of the City's first Security Operations Center, unifying cyber defense across 23 departments. We have implemented an integrated, AI-driven detection and response ecosystem that has reduced detection and containment times while significantly strengthening citywide resilience. Our most successful Cyber Awareness campaign achieved an 86.3% completion rate, embedding security as a shared responsibility across the enterprise. Through the execution of our updated Cybersecurity Master Plan, we have advanced our cyber capabilities ahead of the 2026 World Cup. Most importantly, I have built and developed a high-performing team that now leads with confidence, ownership, and accountability.



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# LARGE CORPORATE FINALISTS

OVER \$1 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE



## Crystal Chatam

VP & Head of Cybersecurity, Speedcast



Crystal Chatam is Vice President and Head of Cybersecurity for a global communications and IT services organization. She leads enterprise cybersecurity strategy aligned to the NIST framework, overseeing governance, risk, and 24x7 security operations. With over 15 years in technology leadership, she specializes in transforming reactive environments into structured, risk-based programs. Crystal is also a Global AI Ambassador and an advocate for developing the next generation of cybersecurity leaders.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Under my leadership, we transitioned from a reactive cybersecurity posture to a structured, risk-based global program aligned to the NIST Cybersecurity Framework. We improved 24x7 monitoring through an MSSP transition, reducing response times by over 40%, and reduced critical and high vulnerabilities by 68% through strengthened governance and remediation discipline. We implemented enterprise risk management, completed a Business Impact Analysis, and formalized Disaster Recovery planning. Cybersecurity is now embedded into executive decision-making, improving resilience, accountability, and customer trust across the organization.



## Apurva Dhanwantri

SVP & CISO, Cornerstone OnDemand



Apurva Dhanwantri is Chief Information Security Officer, leading global cybersecurity strategy and operations across enterprise, product, and multi-cloud environments. He drives secure innovation, AI Security and compliance, overseeing SOC 2, ISO 27001, FedRAMP, ProtectedB, UK Cyber Essentials Plus, ISO 27018, and ISO 27701 certifications. Under his leadership, cybersecurity has evolved into a strategic enabler, delivering operational resilience, predictive threat detection, and enterprise-wide risk mitigation while supporting global business growth and innovation.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Under my leadership, the cybersecurity team evolved into a global innovation engine. We achieved six major certifications—SOC 2, ISO 27001, FedRAMP, UK Cyber Essentials Plus, ISO 27018, and ISO 277a01—creating a unified compliance framework that enabled 40% faster market expansion. Our Security Fusion platform protected 1.5M+ assets, achieved 99% threat detection accuracy, reduced response time from hours to seconds, and lowered licensing costs by 25%. Through AI for Security and Security for AI initiatives, we strengthened predictive threat detection, risk reporting, and AI governance—transforming cybersecurity into a strategic business enabler.



## Daniel Johnson

CISO, Prosperity Bank



Daniel Johnson is a Senior Vice President and Chief Information Security Officer with deep experience building information security programs that enable business growth while strengthening resilience. He leads governance, risk, compliance, and operations, partnering across technology, risk, audit, and business teams to deliver measurable outcomes. Daniel is active in industry information sharing communities and contributes to cybersecurity maturity initiatives. He is known for practical, people-centered leadership and for turning strategy into repeatable execution.

**SUCCESS STORY:** I have transformed information security into a business aligned program that strengthens resilience while enabling growth. I implemented a value driven operating model with transparency, measurable risk reporting, and consistent execution across security operations. Our program has improved incident readiness, expanded proactive threat detection and validation, modernized security awareness, and strengthened regulatory and third-party support. By aligning security investments to Bank priorities and embedding secure-by-default processes, we have reduced the risk of disruption and increased confidence in major initiatives. The result is a trusted, scalable security program delivering measurable outcomes.



## Mike Segall

CISO, Tidewater



Mike Segall is a distinguished cybersecurity and IT infrastructure leader known for elevating enterprise security, resilience, and governance. As CISO at Tidewater, he drives global cybersecurity strategy, strengthens risk management, and leads transformative improvements across cloud, OT, and enterprise environments. His leadership advances organizational maturity, fosters cross-functional collaboration, and delivers measurable, top-tier security outcomes recognized across the industry.

**SUCCESS STORY:** My team's greatest accomplishment has been achieving world-class cybersecurity maturity despite our small size and global responsibilities. We set an ambitious goal to reach a NIST CSF score of 95% and exceeded it achieving and sustaining a 97% rating. Our work was further validated when Tidewater underwent a rigorous third-party cybersecurity audit and earned the highest marks among industry peers, placing us in the top tier of the Energy sector. This achievement reflects my team's discipline, expertise, and unwavering commitment to protecting the enterprise.



## Kevin Spinnato

Senior Manager, IT Security, Archrock



Kevin Spinnato is a senior cybersecurity leader in the energy sector focused on prevention, resilience, and user-centered security. His career began after witnessing a real-world malware demonstration in training class, which sparked a commitment to helping organizations avoid disruptive incidents. He now builds practical controls and awareness programs that equip frontline teams to recognize threats, report concerns early, and reduce enterprise risk through shared accountability.

**SUCCESS STORY:** We strengthened cybersecurity by deploying a unified access-control framework across 45 offices. We replaced inconsistent legacy practices with centralized identity management, RBAC, and MFA—eliminating shared credentials and enforcing least privilege. IT can now monitor, adjust, and audit access in real time, improving compliance and resilience without slowing field mechanics or corporate teams. Just as important, we paired the rollout with a learning culture—"we don't blame victims"—so users reported issues early, and adoption stayed high. The result is a cohesive, scalable foundation that reduces risk and supports future growth.

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## Josh Dray

CISO, San Jacinto College



As Chief Information Security Officer at San Jacinto College, I led the creation of the institution's first enterprise cybersecurity program, aligning the College with Texas cybersecurity requirements. I established durable governance and executive accountability, strengthening audit readiness, incident preparedness, and third-party risk management while enabling innovation and uninterrupted operations. In parallel, I advanced cybersecurity education by supporting a bachelor's program and establishing a live, on-campus Security Operations Center strengthening institutional defense and prepares future professionals.

**SUCCESS STORY:** As Chief Information Security Officer at San Jacinto College, I led the creation and execution of the College's first comprehensive, enterprise cybersecurity program, advancing the institution to full alignment with State of Texas cybersecurity requirements. I focused on building durable governance, clarifying accountability, and ensuring cyber risk was understood and acted upon at the executive level. These efforts strengthened audit readiness, incident preparedness, and third-party risk management while enabling innovation and uninterrupted operations. In parallel, I helped expand cybersecurity education by supporting a bachelor's program and establishing a live, on-campus Security Operations Center, enhancing institutional defense while preparing future professionals.



## Susanne Elizer Senoff

CISO, PROS



Susanne Senoff is CISO at Conga, an enterprise platform that uses advanced AI to streamline contract lifecycle management, automate commercial processes, and improve revenue operations. Prior to Conga, she was CISO at PROS, which was purchased by Conga in February 2026. Prior to PROS, she served in various executive roles for over 20 years at companies such as McAfee, Arm, Microsoft and Morgan Stanley. Her work philosophy is Be Kind, Get Stuff Done, Have Fun.

**SUCCESS STORY:** As CISO at PROS, I lead enterprise security, including product, IT, risk management, privacy, resilience, and AI governance, overseeing a 20-person organization and a \$7.3M budget. My team enables PROS' mission to help companies outperform by reducing cyber risk while accelerating innovation and growth. Under my leadership, PROS significantly strengthened its security posture—reducing out-of-SLA vulnerabilities by 91%, achieving zero critical Wiz Cloud issues, and dramatically accelerating zero-day response times. Through building trust and high-performance, Security became a valued business partner, delivering measurable risk reduction, resilience, and cultural change, setting up my direct to takeover when I moved due to divestiture.



## Charisse Bougere

ISO, Houston Airport System



A seasoned cybersecurity leader with extensive experience in managing high-performing teams for over 10 years. Extensive knowledge in security risk management and policy development and enforcement. Strong knowledge in incident response, security architecture design, vendor management and compliance management. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills to educate employees on security practices. Ability to analyze complex security issues and propose solutions. Passionate about cybersecurity while focusing on threat analysis, incident response, vulnerability management.

**SUCCESS STORY:** Automation of tools has allowed our team to be successful and respond faster to threat detection in real-time. It has improved efficiency and reduced human error. It may take some time to build the automation process but well worth the investment. We purchased additional modules and now we see the great result of better time management while automating repetitive activities it has freed up the team to focus on strategic initiatives, such as threat hunting and improving overall security posture. Focusing on providing better process and procedures allows the team to prioritize the alerts and respond accordingly.



## Ross Leo

CISO, InvisAlert Solutions, Inc.



I have been in this profession since 1980. I have worked for NASA, UTMB and was Director of the Cybersecurity Institute for the University of Houston-Clear Lake for 6 years. I have met and befriended many of our founders and leaders during these years. I have seen and done a great deal, but would not say I have seen it all or done it all....yet.

**SUCCESS STORY:** My success is the result of commitment to excellence and the diligence to continually pursue it, because of the hard challenges it constantly presents. It has been assisted by having a very high frustration tolerance. It is also the result of the belief, encouragement and mentorship I have received throughout my career from close friends, colleagues, and leaders in this profession I have had the great privilege to know, work for and work with. Without them, I believe I would not have achieved all that I have, and I owe them much gratitude for all they have done for me.



## Lee Scott

Cybersecurity Officer, Odfjell Terminals USA, Inc.



I've worked in the oil and gas industry in various countries for over 30 years. I joined Odfjell Terminals 3 years ago. My focus has been to develop and sustain a cybersecurity program which supports change and addresses the risks associated with a large third-party ecosystem, operational technology associated with the storage of flammable and toxic liquids, digital transformation efforts, the advent of AI, and the ever-changing threat from opponents.

**SUCCESS STORY:** In 2023, Odfjell Terminals had expanding cyber risk from cloud, SaaS, OT and on-prem IT—and no cyber team. The Odfjell cybersecurity team built an internal Security Operations Center, aligned tools and processes to risk, and introduced clear metrics to manage and report progress. They improved network and endpoint visibility, deployed anomaly detection on industrial control networks, and upskilled analysts to detect and contain incidents. Organization-wide awareness increased and phishing rates dropped below industry peers. With executive and board backing, the team strengthened recovery through annual exercises and regular drills, and delivered a segmented network redesign protecting critical assets.



## David Sledge

CISO, Secure Seed Capital



David has a successful career in the IT and cybersecurity industries spanning over a decade. He works now at Secure Seed Capital where he is responsible for enterprise-wide security strategy, governance, risk management, and regulatory compliance, and for supporting investment decision-making through cyber and technology due diligence while advising portfolio founders through discreet, compliance-aligned engagement.

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