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2023

## ORBIE AWARDS

SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL





LEADERSHIP AWARD

ORBIE Leadership Award recipient Ashish Gupta shares IT career advice



FROM OUR CHAIR

Leadership makes the impossible possible

The annual South Florida ORBIE® Awards program honors chief information officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Large Corporate & Corporate categories will be announced June 9 at The Diplomat Beach Resort.

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#### **2023 ORBIE AWARDS**



#### FROM THE CHAIR

## Leadership makes the impossible possible

Technology is everywhere in our lives, and when it doesn't work, we notice.

For nearly twenty-five years, the Inspire Leadership Network has helped CIOs succeed in today's most challenging C-suite executive role. SouthFloridaCIO members grow their leadership through year-round, member-led programs and interaction. Working together, CIOs across public and private business, government, education, healthcare and nonprofit organizations collaborate, share ideas and best practices, and create enormous leadership value.

The ORBIE Awards bring together leaders facing similar challenges – and this year – the Inspire Leadership Network will grow to 30 chapters, including the first international chapter in Toronto, and 3 chapters exclusively for Chief Information Security Officers.

Security is top of mind for every leader and organization, and the same principles that have served CIOs can be applied to CISOs as well.

There is no textbook for how to be a great CIO or CISO. But relationships with other leaders facing similar challenges sharpen leadership acumen. Every leader's perspective is valuable and contributes to the conversation – and everyone wins by joining a peer leadership network.

Member-led, non-commercial programs build meaningful professional relationships with colleagues facing similar challenges, solving problems and avoiding pitfalls. Successful leaders understand the 'superpower' of trusted relationships. In any gathering of technology leaders, the answer is in the room.

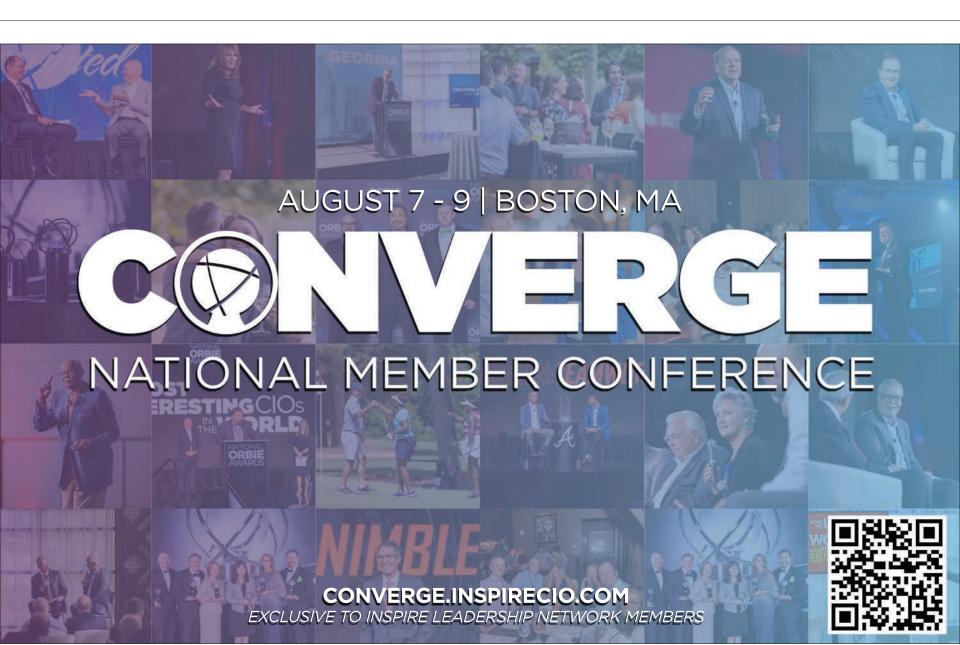
Together, we are transforming our economy using technology & security, and enriching our region and our world. On behalf of SouthFloridaClO, congratulations to the nominees and finalists on their accomplishments and thank you to the sponsors, underwriters, and staff who make the ORBIE Awards possible.



**Sincerely** 

Darryl Maraj

2023 Chair, SouthFloridaClO SVP and Global ClO, GA Telesis, LLC



**2023 LEADERSHIP RECIPIENT** 

### **Ashish Gupta**

**VP & CIO** | NextEra Energy

# ORBIE Leadership Award recipient Ashish Gupta shares IT career advice

By The Business Journals Content Studio



When Ashish Gupta began his career, he was fascinated by the growth and potential of the technology sector.

"The internet was booming," he said.
"Access to personal computers was getting easier, and there was a big boom in the job market for IT. As I built my career in IT, I truly saw firsthand the value technology can bring to the business."

Gupta spent more than 20 years in roles of increasing responsibility with General Electric before joining Juno Beach-based NextEra Energy in 2017. Today, he serves as vice president and chief information officer and remains passionate about the vital role ClOs play in helping businesses achieve their strategic priorities.

"CIOs are the change agents who can share the art of what's possible with technology and communicate interdependencies across the company," said Gupta, who is receiving the Leadership Award at the 2023 South Florida ORBIE Awards on June 9. "They are advocates who promote digital concepts, innovation and experimentation."

As he looks to the future, Gupta reflects on the evolving role of CIOs and recommends up-and-coming IT leaders apply their energy in three areas.

#### 1. Focus on business impact and business value rather than technology outcomes.

At NextEra, Gupta oversees technology strategy, digital transformation, cybersecurity and communications services that span Florida Power & Light Co., which is America's largest electric utility, and the competitive clean energy business NextEra Energy Resources LLC. The company

employs more than 15,000 people, including more than 1,000 in IT.

Over the past six years, he has led a transformation of his business unit from a cost center to a business enabler. Its focus is on helping improve IT capabilities to drive project pipelines and continuously deliver business benefits.

As an IT leader, it's important to be able to speak in terms of how your team is delivering business value and what that means to the organization and the teams you are supporting, he said. Projects aren't about technology for technology's sake.

"The adoption of digital technology such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and predictive analytics has made it easier to drive insights from the data to identify patterns and predict trends," Gupta said.

#### 2. Always be a change leader.

The next generation of IT leaders needs to think of themselves as change leaders rather than technologists. "Work to understand the industry, company and processes better than any other business leader," Gupta said. "This enables you to better understand pain points and recommend solutions ahead of a business partner coming to you with ideas on what technology they feel they should be implementing, which helps you get a seat at the table."

Having a seat at the table is important not just for individual IT leaders' careers but for organizations. Technology is vital to determining resource allocation, creating new revenue streams, fostering a culture of engagement and driving customer satisfaction, Gupta said, which means having technology leaders in the

C-suite is vital for any industry or business.

"These technology leaders help organize and make available critical data sets that help teams make data-driven decisions and improve performance across all levels," he said. "More importantly, it helps attract and retain top talent by building a culture of experimentation where testing and learning are fostered."

### 3. Hire teams of professionals who are better than you and who bring different skills and alternate perspectives.

In today's market, there are several critical skill sets. One of the biggest challenges for CIOs across all industries, Gupta said, is cybersecurity. This includes ensuring the business has the proper controls and tools in place to mitigate cybersecurity risks. In the energy industry, technology teams also are intensely focused on safeguarding critical infrastructure and electronic information, ensuring regulatory compliance and analyzing data.

"The amount of data available continues to grow," he said. "CIOs need to be in the forefront of managing the analysis and ensuring it's accurate and available to help business partners to improve decision making."

This means recruiting and developing forward-thinking teams with diverse skill sets

"Leadership is about creating other leaders, not about having all the answers," Gupta said. "In the end, your legacy will be about the teams and careers you helped build."

### **GLOBAL FINALISTS**



#### OVER \$5 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE & MULTI-NATIONAL OPERATIONS



Eric Firer

Bacardi Regional CIO -North America & Latin America



Eric Firer is the Regional CIO at Bacardi for North America and Latin America. He has over 22 years of IT leadership, strategy, CPG, program management, and information security experience. Prior to joining Bacardi, Firer worked for Estee Lauder Companies for six years, most recently serving as CIO for Global R&D Function. Before that, Eric held the Director of the Project Management Office role at J. Crew Group.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

Unfortunately I cannot list just one. Since I came onboard, my biggest focus has been fostering a culture of innovation and empowerment. Also building the right relationships across our business, building trust as we identify, prioritize and deliver technology projects that support both our nearterm and long-term growth opportunities. Some of these opportunities include new ways to fuel revenue growth, optimize our operations all supported by a strong foundation of data and analytics. Our company aspirations are to double in size over a 10 year period, and data and technology is one of the ways we achieve this vision.



Kevin Grayling

Florida Crystals CIO



We have transformed our sugar cane farming, refining and consumer brands businesses, driving major improvements across the entire business. This includes farming management for our agricultural planting and harvesting processes, consolidating multiple ERP platforms into one and moved it to the public cloud, digitized enterprise sourcing, buying and payables processes, integrated sales and operations planning and demand forecasts with our manufacturing, and reinventing financial planning allowing automation of annual budget planning, actuals and cost/driver analysis. All of this was achieved without increasing IT costs by driving greater efficiency with infrastructure to invest in these new capabilities.



Tim Langley-Hawthorne

Hertz EVP & CIO

#### Hertz

Tim Langley-Hawthorne has served as Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer since October 2021. He is responsible for the Hertz technology strategy, and deploying technology to deliver digital customer experiences, digital employee experiences, enabling productivity and reducing risk. He previously served as CIO at Hitachi Vantara, a hi-tech subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd. In that role, he led transformational infrastructure, application and information security efforts and all technology integration for global M&A transactions.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

Hertz is shaping the future of mobility through electrification, and technology is a critical enabler of this strategy. The technology organization, in strong partnership with the product development organization, is delivering digital customer experiences, digital employee experiences, supporting profitable revenue growth for key business segments, and reducing risk through technology and cyber modernization initiatives. None of this is possible without a talented global team of technologists, working with key strategic technology partners. With a focus on customer and employee outcomes, the Hertz technology organization is a critical component supporting the Hertz shared mobility and

electrification ambitions.



#### **Rocky Wiggins**

Spirit Airlines SVP & CIO

#### spirit

Rocky joined Spirit Airlines as Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer in October 2016. Prior to joining Spirit, from June 2014 to September 2016, Mr. Wiggins served as Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer at WestJet Airlines. From September 2011 to May 2014, he served as Chief Information Officer at Sun Country Airlines and from September 2000 to July 2011 as Chief Information Officer of AirTran Airways.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

I am most proud of how we turned Spirit around from being a small company with unreliable commercial and operations systems, to being the premier low cost airline in North America. We transformed the technology into a reliable, scalable, and industry leading technology company.

#### **OVER \$5 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE**



Margaret Brisbane

Miami Dade County CIO



Margaret Brisbane is the CIO/ Director of the Information Technology Department for Miami Dade County. In her current role she is responsible for leading a team of IT professionals in servicing the technology needs of the County. The primary IT pillars are Security, Platforms and Applications along with Administration to support all operations. The team provides support to County Departments including enterprise solution for Financial, Payroll, Human Resources, Public Safety, Legislative, Commerce and the PeopleSoft systems.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

It has been an honor and a privilege to to be appointed as the first woman and person of color in the role of CIO for Miami Dade County. My career in both the private and public sector has been very rewarding and filled with opportunities. In my current role, I lead an amazing team that deliver excellent technology services, not only to our county departments, but extend that support to the 2.8 million residents of the County. Our goal is to build strong partnerships with our academic institutions, creating a talent pipeline from academia to career.



Sam Jaddi ADT

ADT

CIO

Sam Jaddi is a technologist & growth leader committed to business transformation through digitization. Jaddi has experience in defining strategy, developing talent, and driving execution via cross functional, enterprise-wide initiatives that capitalize on growth imperatives, inter-company synergies directly improving the bottom line. Sam is a passionate strategist with a track record of igniting organizations to deliver best in class product, technology, & customer experience while increasing shareholder value, enabling business performance, driving optimization and efficiency.

#### SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, we have successfully shifted our organizational culture from a traditional brick and mortar mindset to a digital- first approach that emphasizes agility and business outcomes. As a result of this transformation, we have achieved significant financial savings and have been able to improve our customer satisfaction ratings through the use of our virtual services. Our ability to adapt and thrive in the digital age while delivering exceptional value to our customers has been our team's greatest accomplishment.



#### Christos Kotsakis

AutoNation

#### **AutoNation**

Christos Kotsakis currently serves as the Chief Information Officer of AutoNation, one of the largest automotive retailers in the United States. Christos has a proven track record of driving digital transformation and modernizing technology infrastructure to improve business processes and customer experience. Prior to joining AutoNation, he held various senior leadership positions in the technology sector, where he demonstrated his ability to lead largescale technology initiatives and develop innovative solutions to complex business problems.

#### SUCCESS STORY

As the CIO of AutoNation, I am proud to have spearheaded a business transformation initiative that delivered impressive results. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies like automation and AI, we streamlined our operations and improved productivity for our associates. At the same time, we prioritized the customer experience and implemented new tools to enhance the buying process, resulting in increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Our data-driven approach also enabled us to identify areas for cost savings, resulting in a significant reduction in operating expenses. I am grateful to have worked with such a dedicated team and look forward to more

accomplishments ahead!



#### Tom Moreno

Lennar Financial Services

LENNAR Financial Services

As the Chief Information Officer at Lennar Financial Services, Tom has helped lead Lennar Mortgage to an almost fully digital platform. Tom has 30+years of Information Technology experience and has held senior leadership positions for mortgage lenders and technology vendors for over 20 years. Tom works closely with key members of the senior management in production and operations to integrate and align technology and digital assets with strategic business needs.

#### SUCCESS STORY

Using AI and Robotics, we transformed the mortgage and title process to be efficient, convenient and 100% digital. Our new digital process has created efficiencies throughout Lennar Financial Services and solved a major pain point for our customers. Our cloud-based strategy has been especially impactful during the pandemic, allowing us to serve our customers remotely when they need us the most. We've turned face-to-face closings into celebrations from anywhere, allowing customers to complete loan documents in the comfort of their own homes.



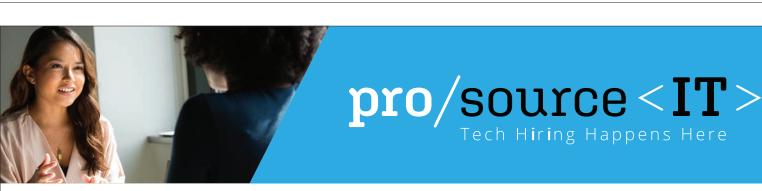
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2023 ORBIE AWARDS

# ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

#### **UP TO \$5 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE**



Patrick Hale
VITAS Healthcare
EVP & CIO

#### VITAS Healthcare

Patrick D. Hale is executive vice president and chief information officer of VITAS Healthcare, the nation's leading provider of end-oflife care. Patrick oversees all aspects of large-scale IT operations. His 20-plus years of experience span multiple business verticals, including healthcare, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, financial services, retail and government. Patrick joined VITAS in 2013 as a key member of a senior management team that has successfully steered the organization through rapid, continued growth.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

We are proud of our "Championship IT Team" that has garnered international recognition and accolades. But it's not in any award that we find our biggest accomplishment. It is in the daily privilege to work with a team that cares deeply for each other, doing work that matters. They care enough to never settle with "catching up to mediocre." They want to change the world. This team is the greatest accomplishment I could ever hope to achieve and I could never thank them enough for their drive to make healthcare better each and every day we come to work.



Steven May JenCare - a ChenMed Company



Steven May is the Chief Digital Officer, for JenCare, a ChenMed company. Jen-Care is a national, privately held, physician-led primary care practice focused on the underserved, moderate-to-low-income seniors with complex chronic diseases. Prior to joining Curity, Steven was a senior leader for a large public, softwareas-a-service provider, UKG. He led global technology product development and delivery – growing the business 10-fold in ten years & created a global SaaS product that hosted over 50 million users.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

Our team directly contributes to betterment of our patients health and happiness by providing access to the highest quality of healthcare to the most underserved and who need it the most. The custom software we develop powers our entire healthcare operation by embedding our industry leading clinical model in curated workflows, predictive insights, and next hest actions our doctors and our care teams follow which has resulted in increasing the lifespan of our senior patients on the average of seven years, results in over fifty percent less hospital visits, and substantially reduces the cost of care.



Ram Puppala
ACI Worldwide
Chief Technology &
Operations Officer



Ram Puppala is ACI's chief technology officer. In this role, he leads ACI's technology & operations organization, which is focused on developing and running our worldclass payments software products. Before joining ACI, Mr. Puppala served as Chief Digital Officer of Metropolitan Commercial Bank, leading the digital payment product portfolio. Prior to that, he served as Chief Technology Officer at State Street Global Exchange, where he scaled Agile methodology and DevOps capabilities across the organization.

#### SUCCESS STORY

I joined ACI Worldwide in 2021 as Chief Technology & Operations Officer responsible for the global technology and operations function. Since I joined, the organization has embarked on a strategic transformation focused on enabling growth through Cloud-native solutions such as the ACI Realtime Payments Cloud, while creating a positive impact on short-term opportunities. Our innovative ACI Realtime Payments Cloud is efficient and flexible, allowing ACI's clients to build new payment products faster, at a lower cost. This transformation has positively impacted our top line by winning new logos and the bottom line by reducing the cost to operate and scale.



Brad Rohrer
University of Miami
VP, IT & CIO



Brad Rohrer is the Vice President for Information Technology and CIO at the University of Miami, ranked by U.S. News and World Report as one of the top research universities in the country. An accomplished information technology executive with a customer-first approach to IT, Brad is the leader responsible for providing strategic vision, coordination, and administrative oversight to the University's many innovative and technology-driven initiatives that enhance the academic and research experience across the University.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

We have transformed the University of Miami IT organization into a competitive advantage by focusing on customer experience and business solutions. We accomplished this by re-organizing into five areas of focus that moved resources closer to the business: student and faculty experience, research computing and innovation, digital transformation and data services, talent development, and information security. Existing functionality and offices were re-imagined to ensure collaboration and consistency of service delivery. The goal is to build a team of leaders that operationalize strategic initiatives, while establishing a pool of new and highly engaged IT professionals to meet ever-changing technology needs.



2023 ORBIE AWARDS

#### **UP TO \$1 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE**



Mary Desmarais NCH Healthcare System



For the past 15 years and counting, Mary Desmarais has had the privilege of devoting her professional career to helping establish innovative solutions for the healthcare environment to improve patient care and the patient experience. During her career, she has worked for an electronic healthcare record (EHR) software vendor, a healthcare consulting firm focused on Information Technology (IT) practice, and has worked alongside some of the best healthcare providers in the United States.

#### SUCCESS STORY

In September 2022, Naples was in the direct path of Hurricane Ian which devastated the local community. Some healthcare facilities experienced flooding, ran on generator power for days, and sustained damage that is still being addressed today. And yet, our technologies were reliable, facilitated patient care across outside organizations in need, and we were able to bring patient care to patients in the community when there was no internet and no power after the storm. My team's greatest accomplishment is that we banded together to provide a sense of security in times of uncertainty using the power of technology.



Dr. David Seo
Nicklaus Children's Health
System
SVP & Chief Digital and
Information Officer



David Seo, MD, serves as senior vice president and chief digital and information officer of Nicklaus Children's Health System, the region's only healthcare system exclusively for children and the parent organization of Nicklaus Children's Hospital, a nationally recognized nonprofit pediatric specialty hospital based in Miami, Florida. As a seasoned IT leader, practicing cardiologist and National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded researcher, Dr. Seo leads with breadth of expertise in clinical practice, research and information technology.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

I have the privilege of working with a group of highly skilled and dedicated IT professionals that work on a dizzying number of projects to provide a better patient experience, improve operational effectiveness and support the growth of our health system. We are constantly looking for ways to innovate and work smarter and more effectively. Our greatest accomplishments are delivering the tools and services that our clinicians need to provide our patients with world class care.



Daniel Tehrani ScribeAmerica VP, IT



Daniel is the Vice President of Information Technology at ScribeAmerica, where he leads and executes the strategic vision for the IT team. He builds and maintains strong relationships with vendors and senior leaders to ensure the success of his initiatives. Daniel is widely recognized for his creative problem-solving approach, and he consistently delivers innovative solutions to meet the demands of the management team. His objective is to bring advanced technologies to ScribeAmerica that enhance operational efficiency and promote continued growth.

#### SUCCESS STORY

As ScribeAmericas's first IT employee, I spent the initial few months understanding the business and our processes. I used those insights to source the right technologies and developed processes to facilitate sustainable growth for the company. I lead the digital transformation from paper-dependent operations to completely paperless, including leveraging Docusign and eventually Workday, to allow the company to scale from 1200 to 25000 employees. This was done while keeping relatively lean back office teams as well as expanding service delivery to all 50 states and Canada over an 8-year period.



William Velez
Harvard Maintenance Inc.
CIO

#### HARVARD°

William Velez is the Chief Information Officer of Harvard Maintenance where he leads information technology strategy and operations across the company with a focus on business digital transformation. Prior to Harvard, Mr. Velez was CIO of Intermex Wire Transfer (NASDAQ: IMXI), where he architected and implemented Intermex's online processing and anti-fraud capabilities. Prior to Intermex, Mr. Velez served as CIO of Abarca Health, a pharmacy transaction processing and health technology company.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

I feel that my greatest accomplishment is the privilege of now being in a role that enables me to give back and inspire future technology leaders with the help from other ClOs. We do that by helping current high school students go to college through scholarships funded by the "CIO Council of South Florida" I led from 2018-2021 and that I belong to. I am extremely thankful that I can leverage my technology background and leadership experience to inspire others coming from similar backgrounds. To be able to contribute to the success of others is my greatest accomplishment.

# CORPORATE FINALISTS



2023 ORBIE AWARDS

#### **UP TO \$500 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE**



Lakshmi Balusu Now Optics



Lakshmi Balusu is the CIO for Now Optics. In this role, Balusu is responsible for defining the company's IT architecture, managing and overseeing IT projects, planning and developing applications, supporting business operations, and ensuring the security of IT systems and processes. Previously, Balusu served as VP, Financial Systems for Perry Ellis International, Inc. During Balusu's nearly 20 years there, he led the architecture, design, development, and implementation of enterprise-wide systems and financial reporting functions.

#### SUCCESS STORY

Lakshmi Balusu's visionary leadership has led Now Optics to strategically invest in migrating all in-house developed solutions to Azure cloud and building the necessary infrastructure. This investment will positively impact employee retention and the company's success for decades to come. Lakshmi is proud of his team for producing the tools essential for the company's successful operations and achieving their mission of making eye care easy for customers. His passion for innovation and dedication to customer experience has helped him navigate the evolving role of CIOs, and technology.



Tony Casciotta
Broward College
VP IT & CIO

#### BROWARD COLLEGE

Tony Casciotta is the Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer at Broward College. He brings 40 plus years of technology experience while providing transformative leadership for all aspects of the technology environment including project management, cloud based applications, systems, networking, data bases, web management, classroom technology, managed services, vendor partnerships, and cybersecurity. He is a firm believer in aligning IT Solutions with the goals of the institution.

#### SUCCESS STORY

My greatest accomplishment is having the most awesome team a person could ask for! Building this organization over the past 5 years has given me so much pride and has made me so proud of the profound impact it has had on the college. This is a world class IT Department that is laser focused on customer service and innovation. This would be hard to repeat in any organization in any industry, but to have accomplish this in college that is a state agency with many constraints is truly amazing!



Ely Garcia
Cisneros
CTO

#### **CISNEROS**

Ely Garcia is Chief Technology Officer of Cisneros. Ely is an Information Technology Executive with significant experience in IT strategy, governance, business continuity, infrastructure, communication, application and service management. Ely joined Cisneros in 1998 as Director of Information technology for the corporate offices and in 2009 was named CTO of the group placing operating companies under her direction. She has had extensive experience implementing and managing technology solutions in a wide variety of industries.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

My team's greatest accomplishment under my leadership was the successful digital transformation of our company, enabling remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. We transitioned to 100% remote within weeks, keeping our television channels on-air and content distribution channels working. Our use of AI to close-caption 60,000 hours of programming has also expanded our content's reach to new audiences. These achievements have been critical to our success, providing flexibility, adaptability, and efficiency in the face of unprecedented challenges making our organization more competitive and agile in an ever-changing business environment.



Mark Moch
American Oncology Network



Mark Moch is responsible for overseeing information technology across AON. Prior to joining AON, Mark served as CIO for Florida Cancer Specialists and as Vice President of Information Technology at Promise Healthcare, Inc., the nation's 5th largest long-term acute care (LTAC) hospital company, where he was responsible for the leadership and planning of information technology for all the Promise Healthcare locations. Before joining Promise Healthcare, Mark worked as an Operations Analyst for The GEO Group.

#### **SUCCESS STORY**

As the CIO for American Oncology Network, ranked 107 out of 5000 fastest growing companies by INC. com, I have directed our Information Technology team to deliver transformative, modern, and innovative systems to support over 200 oncology physicians and care extenders. With over 70+ locations across 17 states we deliver IT solutions for centralized lab, pharmacy, radiology, and back office support along with clinical decision support and data analytics. Taking the technical burden off our physicians and administrative staff is my passion to allow them to focus on what matters most- our patients.



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Dr. David Seo, Chief Digital and Information Officer and Senior Vice President

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