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2026 SOCAL ORBIE® AWARDS

The annual SoCal ORBIE® Awards honors chief information officers and chief information security officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership.

Winners in the Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Corporate, Healthcare, CISO Global, CISO Large Enterprise and CISO Enterprise categories will be announced October 29 at Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach.

FROM THE CHAIRS

Tatiana Sana (SoCalCIO), Mark Hagan (SanDiegoCIO), and Paul Miller (SoCalCISO) share why great leaders never lead alone.

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LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT & KEYNOTE

Leadership Award Recipient **Michael Relich (Tilly's)** shares insights on the role of technology in business today.

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FINALISTS

Meet the
**2026 SoCal
ORBIE Finalists**

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Congratulations to the 2026 SoCal/San Diego CIO of the Year Award Winners and Nominees





Great Leaders Never Lead Alone



TATIANA SANA
2026 CHAIR, SoCalCIO



MARK HAGAN
2026 CHAIR, SanDiegoCIO



PAUL MILLER
2026 CHAIR, SoCalCISO

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

SoCalCIO, SanDiegoCIO and SoCalCISO bring together top CIOs and CISOs from Southern California’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 CIOs and CISOs with over 2,000 C-suite executives across more than 50 chapters, spanning public, private and nonprofit organizations across North America. Beyond technology and security executives, Inspire also serves communities for 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

SoCal ORBIE Awards to meet and support these outstanding technology and security leaders.

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

Sincerely,

Tatiana Sana
2026 Chair, SoCalCIO
CTIO, King’s Hawaiian

Mark Hagan
2026 Chair, SanDiegoCIO
Chief Information & Digital Officer, AMN Healthcare

Paul Miller
2026 Chair, SoCalCISO
CISO & VP IT, Public Storage

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S O C I A L ORBIE AWARDS

MICHAEL RELICH

Global Retail Chief Executive; Operational Leader; Board Director, Tilly's

2026 Keynote Speaker and ORBIE Leadership Award Recipient

The ORBIE Leadership Award will be presented this year to Michael Relich, who serves as global retail chief executive, operational leader and board director at Tilly's. For his exceptional work at Tilly's and beyond, his accomplishments have been acknowledged by peers, industry leaders and prior ORBIE winners, and he is clearly deserving of this year's honor.

The Los Angeles Business Journal had a conversation with Relich to learn more about his work at Tilly's and his perspectives on the evolving role of technology in business and the IT landscape in general.

How has your technology background influenced the way you lead a company—and what do CEOs without a deep technology background need to understand today that they may not have needed to understand 10 years ago?

My technology background taught me a lesson early in my career that has influenced the way I lead in every role since: before you can successfully solve a problem, you have to truly understand the problem—and the people affected by it.

You can develop the best technology solution in the world, but if the people who need to use it don't trust it, understand it or see value in it, you have wasted time and resources. The same principle applies to leading a company. You need to earn the respect of the organization, listen to different perspectives and build support around a strategy. Not everyone will agree with every decision, but if people respect the leadership and believe they were heard, they are much more likely to support the direction.

The other major change is that virtually every company today is a technology company, regardless of the industry it is in. Technology has become the backbone of the enterprise and increasingly determines how effectively a company competes, serves its customers and operates.

Ten years ago, many CEOs could largely delegate technology to the CIO. I don't think that is possible anymore. CEOs don't need to understand how to code or design systems, but they do need to understand technology strategy, data, cybersecurity, AI and the implications of technology investment decisions.

A CEO doesn't need to be a technologist, but today every CEO needs to be technology-literate.

After decades of leading retail organizations and now serving at the board level and advising technology companies, what do you believe separates truly transformational leaders from good operational managers?

Good operational leaders make the existing business perform better. They optimize processes, improve execution and create continuous incremental improvement. Those skills are extremely important. Transformational leaders do something different: they are willing to question what the business should become.

They look beyond existing processes and consider new business models, new capabilities and entirely different ways of approaching the business. Just as importantly, they create excitement around the destination and bring the organization along on the journey. Transformation creates uncertainty, and a leader has to give people confidence that the organization can successfully navigate that uncertainty.

I also believe transformational leaders own the journey and take responsibility for the outcome—good or bad. They recognize when something isn't working, change course when necessary, learn from mistakes and don't waste time spreading blame.

Where do you think AI can create the greatest competitive advantage for retailers over the next three to five years, and where do you think the hype may be getting ahead of the actual value?

AI is clearly a transformational technology and will have an enormous impact on retail. But I think the technology itself will improve much faster than organizations will be able to adopt it. We sometimes confuse the speed at which technology advances with the speed at which companies can actually change.

Much of the current focus in retail is on the front end of the business—content creation, marketing segmentation and personalization, customer-service chatbots and similar applications. There is good value in many of these use cases, and they are comparatively easier to deploy because they don't require deep integration into the heart of the enterprise.

I sometimes describe it this way: the front end is where the hype lives; the back end is where the cash lives.

The much larger financial opportunity will come from applying AI, agents and machine learning to areas such as sales and demand forecasting, assortment planning, open-to-buy, allocation, replenishment, labor forecasting, supply chain and markdown optimization. Those applications are much harder. They require clean data, integration with core systems and significant changes to business processes—but the potential returns are also much greater.

A chatbot that saves three minutes on a customer-service call is useful. An algorithm that prevents a retailer from buying \$20 million of merchandise its customers don't want can be transformative.

Inventory is typically a retailer's largest use of working capital, so I believe some of AI's greatest impact on retail profitability will ultimately come through inventory and supply-chain optimization.

The winners won't necessarily be the retailers with access to the best AI models, because increasingly everyone will have access to similar technology. The winners will be the companies with clean, accessible data, strong integration and the organizational ability to put those models to work.

At PacSun, you helped transform stores into fulfillment centers and used technology and data to improve inventory allocation and omnichannel fulfillment. What did that experience teach you?

One of the best examples from my career of technology solving a real business problem occurred at PacSun during the COVID pandemic.

When COVID hit, our stores were closed and e-commerce became essentially our only source of cash flow. At the same time, our distribution center could not operate at full capacity because of employee absenteeism and social-distancing requirements. We had another major problem: a tremendous amount of inventory was sitting in closed stores, getting older every day. Even if we successfully made it through the shutdown, we faced the prospect of reopening stores filled with aged inventory.

The solution was to rapidly turn our stores into a distributed fulfillment network.

Because the stores were closed to customers, we could have a single store manager working inside a location without creating social-distancing issues. Technology allowed us to expose store inventory to the e-commerce business, route orders to the appropriate locations and have store managers pick, pack and ship those orders directly to customers.

At the peak, we were shipping over 30,000 packages a day from our stores.

That capability generated critical cash flow that helped keep the company operating during an existential crisis, while simultaneously moving inventory out of closed stores and into the hands of customers.

That experience reinforced something I have believed throughout my career: technology should never be deployed simply because the technology is interesting. Technology is a business enabler.

The most successful technology initiatives start with the business problem, not the technology. In this case, the objective wasn't to implement "ship-from-store." The objective was to generate cash, serve our customers, move stranded inventory and keep the company operating. Technology was the tool that made it possible.

It also reinforced another lesson: implementing the technology is often the easier part. The ability of an organization to change quickly, align around a common objective and execute under pressure is what ultimately determines success.

How do effective technology-focused leaders achieve collaboration and support from the other members of the C-Suite?

Technology leaders earn a seat at the table by demonstrating that they understand the business, not simply by arguing that technology is important.

Having served as a CIO and later as a COO and CEO, I've had the opportunity to see this from both sides. The most effective technology leaders don't begin conversations with systems, platforms or architecture. They begin with the company's objectives and challenges—revenue growth, gross margin, inventory productivity, customer experience, labor efficiency and ultimately profitability.

Technology leaders should understand those issues as well



as anyone else in the room and then bring a unique perspective about what technology can make possible.

They also need credibility. That means being creative and ambitious while being realistic about what can and cannot be delivered. Promising the unachievable may get a project approved, but it is ultimately a recipe for failure.

Trust is built over time through successful execution. When your peers know that you understand their business problems, that you will tell them when something is difficult or unrealistic, and that you will deliver what you commit to, collaboration becomes much easier.

I know it is a cliché, but I have always operated under the maxim of under-promise and over-deliver. Success creates credibility, and credibility creates influence. Once technology leaders have earned that trust, they stop being viewed as providers of technology and become partners in defining the strategy of the business.

Do you have any predictions for what the future might hold for excellent corporate leaders and technology?

In the age of AI, the strategic use of technology is going to become an even greater differentiator between corporate winners and losers.

There will clearly be opportunities to use AI to automate tasks, improve productivity and reduce costs. Companies should take advantage of those opportunities. But I think leaders who view AI primarily as a way to reduce headcount or perform today's work less expensively will miss its much larger potential.

The more interesting question isn't simply, "How can AI do what we already do?" It is, "What can we do now because AI exists that we couldn't economically or practically do before?"

What services can we now provide that were previously too expensive? What customer experiences can we create? What decisions can we make that previously required too much data or analysis? What can employees accomplish when AI augments their capabilities? What new operating models become possible? And, ultimately, what entirely new businesses can be created?

That requires a different kind of leadership. Leaders will need enough understanding of technology to recognize what is becoming possible, but they will also need curiosity and the willingness to rethink long-standing assumptions about how their businesses operate.

The technology will continue improving rapidly, and increasingly sophisticated AI capabilities will become broadly available. Access to AI itself therefore won't be the sustainable competitive advantage. The advantage will come from what management chooses to do with it.

AI's limitation won't be the intelligence of the model, but rather the imagination of management.

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CHATTY
BIALESCHKI

Group CIO; Vice President
Resource Industries
Caterpillar

Chatty Bialeschki is a results-oriented technology executive who believes technology delivers its greatest value when it helps businesses grow, improve and solve meaningful problems. As Group CIO for Caterpillar Resource Industries, she works across complex organizations to connect strategy, people, data, AI and technology to accelerate business outcomes. She is passionate about developing future leaders and building high-performing teams that create sustaining value for customers, employees and shareholders. She is extremely proud of her team's results.

SUCCESS STORY

"The team's greatest success has been integrating into the fabric of the Resource Industries segment. We continue to provide the reliable technology foundation that our employees, factories, dealers, and customers depend on every day, but our role has evolved far beyond delivering technology. Today, we are trusted partners embedded in the business, advancing the strategy, solving complex problems, and enabling new opportunities for growth. We operate as One Team, united by common goals tied to revenue growth, factory throughput, customer outcomes, and operational performance. Simply put, we win when the business wins."



SYED SAMIULLAH

CIO
United HealthGroup/Optum

Syed Samiullah is a healthcare technology executive with more than 25 years of leadership across provider, payer, academic and value-based care organizations. As East Region CIO, he leads technology across 32 states, supporting more than six million patients and members. His work advances patient-centered transformation, clinical platforms, cybersecurity, data, AI, resilience and growth. A former Kaiser Permanente executive, Samiullah holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in computer science and an MBA from Boston University, mentoring future leaders.

SUCCESS STORY

Syed M. Samiullah is recognized for translating innovation into better patient care. He co-led a pioneering virtual cardiac rehabilitation program with Samsung, expanding access and strengthening patient engagement beyond traditional care settings. He also enabled an award-winning diabetic retinopathy screening program that combined centralized image review and AI to support earlier detection and protect patients' vision. His leadership also helped establish an early nationwide health information exchange connecting Kaiser Permanente, the VA and Department of Defense, advancing interoperability and more coordinated care. His work reflects a consistent commitment to secure, scalable, patient-centered innovation.



SCOTT SKELLENGER

SVP; CIO
Amgen

Scott Skellenger is senior vice president and chief information officer at Amgen. He leads Amgen's global technology strategy, oversees digital risk management, and drives modernization across platforms and infrastructure. During his career at Amgen, he has built next-generation platforms incorporating artificial intelligence and machine learning. He also spent several years developing health and life sciences products at startup companies focused on genomics and oncology. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from California Lutheran University.

SUCCESS STORY

"Under my leadership, Amgen Technology evolved from delivering technology to enabling enterprise transformation. We strengthened operational resilience, simplified our technology landscape, established disciplined governance focused on measurable business value, and built one globally integrated Technology organization with leaders who own enterprise capabilities. Together, these changes created a stronger foundation for AI, accelerated business agility, and positioned Amgen to compete in the next era of biotechnology. Most importantly, they changed how Technology partners with the business, creating lasting capabilities that help us better serve patients."



ATILLA TINIC

SVP; CIO
Qualcomm, Inc.

Atilla Tinic is chief information officer at Qualcomm, leading global IT strategy, operations, and the company's digital, AI, and data transformation agenda. He brings deep enterprise technology leadership experience, having previously served as CIO at DISH Network and Level 3 Communications. Recognized with multiple industry honors, including the 2024 Colorado ORBIE Super Global Winner and 2025 National ORBIE Super Global Finalist, he focuses on aligning technology with business growth, innovation, and operational excellence.

SUCCESS STORY

Since becoming CIO, Atilla Tinic has repositioned IT as a strategic enabler of enterprise transformation. He has accelerated Qualcomm's journey toward an AI-native enterprise by establishing scalable AI and data foundations, embedding security into platform design, and modernizing enterprise technology capabilities. His leadership has strengthened alignment between IT, engineering, and business functions, improving operational agility and supporting Qualcomm's diversification strategy. He has also advanced infrastructure modernization to better support innovation, scalability, and performance. Through these efforts, IT has evolved from a service organization into a catalyst for business growth, productivity, and digital transformation.



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GRANT ANDERSON

CIO
Living Spaces Furniture

Grant Anderson is a transformational CIO and retail technology leader with a track record of driving growth, operational excellence, and digital innovation. As CIO of Living Spaces since 2014, he has led major modernization initiatives across ERP, CRM, eCommerce, analytics, mobility, and supply chain. He has held executive leadership roles at Living Spaces, Tuesday Morning, Academy Sports + Outdoors, and At Home, and has served with NRE, SIM, ARTS, and USA Triathlon.

SUCCESS STORY

As CIO of Living Spaces, Grant Anderson has modernized core business systems, enabled customer and associate mobility, and built the technology foundation supporting significant company expansion. Across prior leadership roles, he led large-scale POS, ERP, eCommerce, network, and data initiatives, including an 820-store technology upgrade completed in 11 weeks. Known for combining strategic vision with disciplined execution, Anderson has consistently delivered complex transformations that improve customer experience, streamline operations, strengthen governance, and produce measurable business outcomes.



LUCY AVETISYAN

Associate Vice Chancellor;
CIO
UCLA

Lucy Avetisyan is UCLA's first campus-wide CIO, leading Digital & Technology Solutions and advancing technology strategy across one of the world's leading public research universities. She leads UCLA's digital transformation with a focus on modernizing technology ecosystems, strengthening cybersecurity, advancing responsible AI and data capabilities, and creating more connected and effective technology services. Her leadership centers on turning complexity into clarity, building trusted partnerships, and harnessing technology to advance UCLA's teaching, research, and public service mission.

SUCCESS STORY

"As UCLA's first campus-wide CIO, I have had the privilege of leading a transformation of how technology serves our university. Together, we reimagined our organization, strengthened collaboration across a historically decentralized technology environment, modernized critical infrastructure, advanced cybersecurity, replaced decades-old systems, and created a foundation for responsible AI adoption. Most importantly, we have shifted the conversation from technology itself to the people and mission it enables. Our success is creating a more connected, secure, and innovative UCLA, where technology removes barriers and expands what is possible for students, faculty, researchers, and staff."



NORMA GRUBB

CIO; Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)

Norma Grubb (MSIS, DPS, AIGP) has over 25 years of international experience effectively implementing technological solutions in the public and private sectors, for local and global organizations. She delivered multimillion dollar savings by streamlining business process automation and enabling predictive intelligence that identifies and mitigates risks. Currently as CIO & CAIO of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), Grubb leads the execution of AI-first technology strategies and roadmaps for the IT organization.

SUCCESS STORY

"As CIO and CAIO, I bridge tech and culture by pairing bold AI adoption with a hands-on, supportive leadership style that lets my teams run fast, grow independently, and build smart. I strongly believe that the best way to lead technology is to focus on capabilities that enable intelligent outcomes (data, automation, and AI), while protecting those capabilities with a strong cybersecurity posture. Cyber policies and productivity are allies, not antagonists, for effectiveness. By implementing this vision, LADWP is accelerating results that pivot the organization to the next level, with technology at the core that digitally transforms the business."



DANNY RODRIGUEZ

CIO
CoolSys

Danny M. Rodriguez is a technology and operations executive who brings over two decades of global experience building emerging products and services, developing effective innovation and technology strategies and transforming organizations. He has led large transformation programs across multiple industries and segments, remains ahead of the curve in technology, and successfully links technology with operations and business development opportunities to unlock value.

SUCCESS STORY

"With shifting leadership throughout the executive ranks over the previous years, the team was in disarray, overwhelmed with the number of projects, poor reputation, tech debt with vendors turning off solutions due to age, limited budgets and a lack of focus. Additional very poor partnerships with the business / operations were leading to a lackluster environment with minimal if any recognition. I was able to bring stability and focus to the team which actually allowed us to innovate and deliver more than we ever had in the past. We are now sought out by the business vs being avoided. We are a partner."



ABHISHEK UPPAL

CIO
Callaway Golf Company

Abhishek Uppal is CIO of Callaway Golf Company, a global leader in apparel, manufacturing and retail, leading a distributed IT organization spanning applications, infrastructure, cybersecurity, and AI-driven analytics. Guided by data-driven, empowerment-focused, and coaching-oriented leadership, he has built AI-powered manufacturing and retail analytics, modernized global platforms, launched new revenue channels, redesigned IT's operating model, strengthened cybersecurity, and mentored technology leaders. Uppal is a sought-after speaker and mentor at CIO forums and industry conferences on technology leadership.

SUCCESS STORY

"As CIO of Callaway Golf Company, a global manufacturing and apparel leader, I lead a large, geographically distributed IT organization. Over six years, I've built an AI-driven data lake that meaningfully reduced manufacturing scrap and unplanned downtime, driven substantial IT cost savings, strengthened our cybersecurity posture and accelerated project delivery through a redesigned operating model. I launched a DTC platform and modernized our B2B platform to unlock new revenue channels, executed two divestitures without business disruption, and built a Global Capability Center to scale delivery. Leading with data, empowerment, and coaching, I've turned IT into a growth engine for business."

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Winners

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ORBIE
AWARDS



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you

S O C I A L
ORBiE
AWARDS

ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

Over \$500 million annual revenue



SANDEEP CHAWLA

Chief Strategy & Information Officer
Monarch Landscape Companies

Sandeep Chawla has served as the chief strategy & information officer at Monarch since 2023. Sandeep has over 25 years of experience leading technology, program management, procurement, and business process outsourcing. Before Monarch, Chawla spent 12 years as CIO at 99 Cents and Grocery Outlet leading major transformation initiatives across technology, procurement and strategy. Earlier in his career, Chawla was an executive leader at Xerox, Microsoft, HealthNet, SAP and Deloitte, focused on building technology solutions.

SUCCESS STORY

“My tenure at Monarch led to a stable, secure, and scalable technology architecture. The ERP platform was modernized leading to significant improvement in financial & operational functions. The network was rearchitected & refreshed leading to almost 100% availability for the field & corporate sites. The reorganization of the IT department led to better governance, and scalable, efficient & predictable delivery of IT services. These improvements led to significant operational savings and creation of \$80 million in enterprise value. Prior work at 99 Cents, led to modernization of a 24x7 environment through implementation of a new ERP, Reporting, POS, Mobile App, WMS and eCommerce solutions.”



PAULA CROWELL

CIO
LA County Sanitation Districts

Paula Crowell is chief information officer for the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, leading a team responsible for enterprise technology, cybersecurity, and data strategy across an organization that protects public health and the environment for millions of Los Angeles County residents. She founded the Districts’ AI Steering Committee and Enterprise Data Governance Committee, modernized enterprise data infrastructure, and built one of Southern California’s strongest public-agency cybersecurity programs.

SUCCESS STORY

“I hired a college intern into my IT department with limited experience and a background in finance, but real tech curiosity. I mentored her, pushed stretch assignments, and watched her grow into a technical lead who now manages projects and mentors her own interns. She’s one of several former interns who now hold leadership roles across my team, a pattern I’ve deliberately built. Outside the agency, I mentor young women pursuing careers in technology because I know a champion early on can change a career’s trajectory. Growing talent is my legacy strategy.”



MARC MENDEZ

VP, IT
TraPac LLC

Marc Mendez is vice president of information technology at TraPac, where he leads technology strategy, cybersecurity, infrastructure, software development, data, automation, and digital transformation supporting highly automated marine container terminals in Los Angeles and Oakland. A technology executive with more than 30 years of experience in logistics and industrial environments, Mendez also serves as career technical education advisory chair for the Huntington Beach Union High School District and mentors high school robotics students.

SUCCESS STORY

Marc Mendez and his team are leading one of TraPac’s most significant technology transformations, modernizing the core systems supporting highly automated marine container terminals while maintaining safe, uninterrupted cargo operations. The team is replacing legacy platforms, integrating advanced automation, and applying artificial intelligence and digital emulation to improve efficiency and reduce operational risk. Their work has delivered measurable improvements in container movement and operating costs while increasing labor safety, strengthening cybersecurity, reliability, and data-driven decision-making. Together, these initiatives are creating a scalable, resilient technology foundation designed to support TraPac’s continued automation, operational excellence, and innovation.



SHAWN MICHAEL

CIO
See’s Candies

Currently the CIO at See’s Candies, Shawn Michael is a seasoned technology executive and CIO who specializes in business transformation and operational excellence. With over 20 years of leadership, Michael is recognized for modernizing enterprise environments and delivering scalable digital solutions that drive measurable impact.

SUCCESS STORY

“Our Success Story this year was the IT Team and their transformation. While still improving, they have made great strides this past year in becoming an improved business partner. The team shifted from reacting to requests, to collaborating with business leaders to solve problems and deliver solutions. This mindset change led to application reduction with significant cost savings and scalable application implementations with stronger business alignment. This collaborative approach in detailed planning, accountable execution, and the focused measurement of results has improved the relationship to a trusted partner.”



LORENZO OBREGON

VP, Chief Administrative Officer; CIO
LSMA Management, Inc.

Lorenzo Obregon is a veteran C-suite healthcare executive with more than 25 years of leadership experience spanning healthcare operations and information technology. His career includes executive roles at Loma Linda University Health, UnitedHealthcare, Optum, and LSMA Management. He has led networking, infrastructure, analytics, enterprise information systems, and one of the nation’s largest Epic Systems environments. Holding degrees in Psychology and Business Administration, Obregon is a former collegiate athlete known for transformational leadership and driving organizational excellence.

SUCCESS STORY

“Over the past year, I led one of the most transformative periods in LaSalle’s history while maintaining oversight of our clinic and IPA operations. Following LaSalle’s limited Knox-Keene license approval, we expanded into Medicare Advantage and launched Maren Medical Group, a technology-enabled practice leveraging Epic Systems, ambient AI, and a digital-first patient experience that has driven rapid growth across the Inland Empire. We also established LSMA Management, a full-service MSO supporting more than 4,000 providers and 400,000 patients across California. Successfully launching three organizations while sustaining daily operations reflects disciplined execution, strategic leadership, and a commitment to long-term growth.”

Los Angeles



Department of Water & Power



The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power commends

Norma Grubb

Chief Information Officer and Chief AI Officer

At LADWP, technology plays a critical role in helping us better serve the people of Los Angeles. By advancing digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and responsible AI, we are enhancing the services, systems, and solutions that support our customers every day.

We celebrate the vision, leadership, and achievements of all the 2026 SoCal ORBIE Awards finalists. LADWP is especially proud to recognize Norma Grubb, Chief Information Officer and Chief AI Officer, as a finalist in the Large Enterprise category. Under Norma's leadership, LADWP continues to drive innovation that strengthens our systems, enhances customer service, and positions LADWP to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

S O C I A L
ORBiE
AWARDS

CORPORATE FINALISTS

Up to \$500 annual revenue



**DR. DENISE
"NEECÉE" CORNISH**

*SVP, Institutional Shared Services; COO
Western University of Health Sciences*

Denise (NeeCee) Cornish, DBA, MBA, is senior vice president of Institutional Shared Services and chief operating officer at Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU). Beginning her career as a database programmer, she advanced through technology and operational leadership roles by aligning people, processes and technology to drive organizational transformation. With more than two decades at WesternU, Dr. Cornish is recognized for advancing AI governance, operational excellence, data-informed decision-making, and enterprise-wide innovation.

SUCCESS STORY

"I started my career as a database programmer. While I was passionate about technology, I was equally committed to understanding the business it supported. By aligning people, processes, and technology, I progressed from programmer to IT executive, then deputy COO, and ultimately senior vice president of Institutional Shared Services and chief operating officer. Today, I lead a portfolio spanning technology, facilities, public safety, capital planning, environmental health and safety, information security, and data governance. Throughout every role, one principle has remained constant: lasting transformation occurs when people, processes, and technology work together to advance a common mission."



HENRY HO

*CIO
Allen Matkins*

Henry Ho is the chief information officer at Allen Matkins, a growing real estate law firm, where he leads technology strategy, infrastructure, cybersecurity, innovation and AI adoption. He partners with firm leadership to align technology with business goals, enabling attorneys to deliver the outcomes their clients expect. Ho leads his team with a focus on accountability, cross-training and growth, empowering people to operate with agility and deliver lasting impact for the firm and its attorneys.

SUCCESS STORY

"During my three-year tenure, I've led a transformation in technology strategy, infrastructure, and team culture. My team has gelled, building the structure and cross-training needed to support the firm reliably as it grows. That foundation has let us lean into AI and innovation with confidence, including a firmwide AI policy, attorney training, and new tools that help our attorneys deliver the outcomes clients expect. We've also modernized our network, security, and communications infrastructure along the way, and we have fun doing it. Most importantly, I've built a team with real leadership, support, and a shared sense of purpose."



NEIL JADHAV

*Chief Information & Transformation Officer
Gemological Institute of America, Inc.*

Neil Jadhav is senior vice president, chief information and transformation officer at GIA, leading technology, cybersecurity, product management, and GIA's Global Capability Center. He brings rare dual credibility as both a technology executive and a P&L owner, having served as president, mobility platforms at Neology and previously as general manager of business transformation and advanced analytics at Cubic Corporation. A 40 Under 40 honoree, Jadhav holds an MBA in Finance from UCLA Anderson.

SUCCESS STORY

"Leading a 300+ people organization across 15 global locations, we transformed technology from a cost center into an engine of efficiency and new revenue. GIA became an early enterprise-scale adopter of generative AI, building an AI workflow for diamond verification and deploying Claude for Enterprise organization-wide, delivering substantial SG&A efficiency. AI-assisted development shipped a production Android app in six weeks rather than six months. Our GIA-eBay partnership embedded our verification into one of the world's largest marketplaces, opening an entirely new channel and further advancing our mission of consumer trust in gems and jewelry."



JANETTE SMRCKA

*VP, IT - Innovation & Revenue
SoFi Stadium - Hollywood Park*

Janette Smrcka serves as vice president of IT innovation and revenue for SoFi Stadium and Hollywood Park, a premier 298-acre mixed-use development in Inglewood. She oversees guest-facing technology and IT revenue for global events at SoFi Stadium and YouTube Theater. Smrcka leads team-driven innovative solutions that unify enterprise systems, streamline workflows, and enhance visitor experiences. By leveraging cutting-edge technology partnerships, she actively drives revenue and unlocks new opportunities across world-class sports and entertainment venues.

SUCCESS STORY

"After opening the most complex stadium in the world, I have gone on to leverage technology as an asset to drive revenue. Building an intentionally diverse team, I transformed Hollywood Park's digital landscape into an enterprise sales powerhouse. By creating campus standards and by converging infrastructure, millions have been saved in equipment, licensing, and power costs. Overseeing the installation of a campus fiber design, I have provided unmatched resiliency for world-class events while adding yet more revenue leasing dark fiber. My vision empowers creation of applications that reimagine experiences for fans and staff alike."



JEFFREY SULLIVAN

*CTO
eFax®, by Consensus Cloud Solutions*

As CTO, Jeffrey Sullivan drives the strategic direction of technology products that solidify eFax by Consensus Cloud Solutions as a global leader of digital cloud fax technology and trusted provider of interoperability solutions. With over 35 years of experience leading product and technology operations across health, finance and SaaS sectors, Sullivan oversees product strategy and technology advancements to streamline information exchange while staying on the leading edge of industry trends and IT requirements.

SUCCESS STORY

"The team's greatest accomplishments under my leadership include earning two CSO Awards (2024, 2026) for excellence in compliance and enterprise risk accountability. We expanded our regulatory footprint by securing FedRAMP Class D Certification for Enterprise Cloud Fax Government (ECFax by eFax), positioning us as a trusted partner for the government's most sensitive data. Additionally, our solutions, eFax Corporate and iSign, maintain HITRUST r2 Certified status. Building on this foundation of innovation, we recently reached an exciting milestone: the launch of our entirely re-engineered cloud fax platform to lead the future of secure information exchange and meet evolving customer requirements."



DR. TODD BRITTON

*CIO
University of La Verne*



THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SANITATION DISTRICTS CONGRATULATE

PAULA CROWELL
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

ON HER RECOGNITION BY THE
2026 SOCAL ORBIE AWARDS

 **LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SANITATION DISTRICTS**
Converting Waste Into Resources

HEALTHCARE FINALISTS

Hospitals & healthcare organizations



CONRAD BAND

SVP; CIO
Children's Hospital
Los Angeles

Conrad Band is senior vice president and chief information officer at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, where he leads enterprise technology strategy, cybersecurity, modernization and technology-enabled innovation. With more than 20 years of technology leadership experience across healthcare and other industries, Conrad is passionate about simplifying complex environments, building high-performing teams, and aligning technology with organizational strategy to advance patient care, research, operational excellence and innovation.

SUCCESS STORY

At Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Conrad Band has led the transformation of technology from a traditional support function into a strategic enterprise partner. He developed a multi-year technology strategy, restructured the IT organization, modernized infrastructure and applications, strengthened cybersecurity, and advanced capabilities supporting analytics, automation and AI. His leadership has helped simplify the technology environment, improve organizational resilience, and generate significant cost savings while enabling innovation in areas such as virtual nursing and artificial intelligence. Most importantly, Band has built stronger partnerships across clinical, research and operational teams, positioning technology to more effectively support the organization's mission and future.



TERRI COUTS

Chief Information &
Digital Officer
Sharp HealthCare

Terri Coutts is senior vice president and chief information & digital officer at Sharp HealthCare, where she leads enterprise technology, digital innovation, cybersecurity, analytics, and informatics initiatives. She is passionate about aligning technology with clinical and operational transformation to improve patient and caregiver experiences. Coutts has led major organizational modernization efforts, advanced AI strategy, and strengthened healthcare partnerships. A recognized industry leader, she actively contributes to several boards and healthcare technology advancement.

SUCCESS STORY

Over the past nine months, Sharp's ISD division transformed a \$26 million budget challenge into an opportunity to strengthen the organization's future. The team restructured operations around strategic priorities, reduced redundancy, and reinvested resources into areas delivering the greatest value. New governance and communication models connected technology decisions directly to executive leadership and Sharp's strategic imperatives of Grow, Advance, and Unify. The division also advanced an enterprise AI strategy, expanded Community Connect, and launched a system rationalization strategy. Through transparency, accountability, and a focus on patient care, the team demonstrated that technology, when aligned to mission, can drive meaningful transformation.



CRAIG KWIATKOWSKI

SVP; CIO
Cedars-Sinai

Craig Kwiatkowski, PharmD, is senior vice president and chief information officer at Cedars-Sinai. He leads technology strategy, enterprise applications, cybersecurity, clinical engineering, and data and AI capabilities across the health system. During his tenure, he has helped advance health system integration, modernize enterprise applications and infrastructure, and establish Cedars-Sinai as a leader in the responsible adoption of artificial intelligence. He is passionate about developing leaders, building high-performing teams, and delivering measurable organizational value.

SUCCESS STORY

Under Craig Kwiatkowski's leadership, Enterprise Information Services evolved from a high-performing IT organization into a trusted enterprise partner, helping Cedars-Sinai scale from a leading academic medical center into a more integrated health system. EIS modernized core platforms, strengthened cybersecurity and infrastructure, advanced responsible AI adoption, and built shared services that support growth across hospitals, affiliates, and the medical network. Just as importantly, the organization built a nationally recognized culture that demonstrates how exceptional technology outcomes and exceptional teams go hand in hand.



SIMON NAZARIAN

EVP, Chief Digital &
Technology Officer
City of Hope

Simon Nazarian is system executive vice president and chief digital & technology officer at City of Hope, where he leads technology strategy and drives operating model transformation across AI, data, cybersecurity and digital innovation. He joined in 2024 after serving as chief information officer at Optum Health-Care Delivery, and previously held leadership roles at McKinsey & Company, Kaiser Permanente, and Sony Pictures Entertainment. He brings more than 25 years of experience leading large-scale transformation.

SUCCESS STORY

Simon Nazarian is building a connected oncology ecosystem at City of Hope, uniting care delivery, research, and AI across one of the nation's largest networks of advanced cancer centers. Under his direction, teams advanced HopeLLM, a proprietary generative AI platform that turns hundreds of pages of records into clinician-ready summaries and flags gaps that could delay care. Embedded into research operations, it now supports feasibility assessments for over 200 clinical trials, compressing weeks of work into minutes so studies open across multiple locations simultaneously. Built with human oversight and rigorous governance, it delivers measurable impact for patients, clinicians, and researchers.



GANESH PERSAD

VP; CIO
Cottage Health

Ganesh Persad, MSBI, FHIMSS, CHCIO, CDHE, FACHDM, is vice president and chief information officer at Cottage Health with more than 20 years of experience leading healthcare digital transformation. He oversees enterprise technology strategy, clinical systems, cybersecurity, and digital innovation to improve patient and workforce outcomes. Previously, he led groundbreaking initiatives at Emory Healthcare, including a virtual and patient experience integrations. Persad is widely recognized for aligning technology, strategy, and care delivery.

SUCCESS STORY

"One of my proudest accomplishments has been building a culture of accountability, collaboration, and purpose within our IT organization. We focused on leadership development, role clarity, and empowering team members to think beyond tasks and take ownership of outcomes. By breaking down silos, strengthening trust, and creating a shared commitment to our mission, we transformed how the team partners with clinicians, staff, and leaders across the organization. The result is a highly engaged, resilient team that embraces continuous improvement, delivers meaningful business value, and is recognized as a trusted strategic partner in advancing the organization's mission and goals."



CISO GLOBAL FINALISTS

Over \$1 billion annual revenue & multi-national operations



SUNIL AGARWAL

VP, Information Security & Risk Management
OSI Systems, Inc.

Sunil Agarwal is vice president of information security & risk management at OSI Systems, where he leads the company's global cybersecurity, compliance, and risk management programs. A transformational leader, he has advanced enterprise resilience through ISO 27001:2022 certification, CMMC/NIST regulatory compliance, AI security governance, and post-quantum readiness initiatives. Passionate about developing future leaders, Agarwal is recognized for aligning cybersecurity with business strategy to drive innovation, customer trust, operational resilience, and sustainable growth.

SUCCESS STORY

Sunil Agarwal has transformed cybersecurity from a compliance function into a strategic business enabler. Under his leadership, the organization strengthened cyber culture, cyber resilience, advanced global security governance, and established forward-looking programs for AI security and post-quantum readiness. By aligning cybersecurity investments with business objectives, he enhanced customer trust, improved enterprise risk visibility, and positioned security as a competitive advantage. // "Technology will continue to evolve, but leadership is ultimately about people. My greatest accomplishment is not the security programs we've built, but the leaders we've developed and the culture of resilience, innovation, and trust we've created together."



KEVIN FORD

CISO
Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri)

Kevin Ford is the chief information security officer at Esri, the world leader in geographic information systems. He leads a global security organization that sets policy and conducts operations for Esri and its 92 independent distributors across six continents. Ford previously served as the CISO of the State of North Dakota and has advised NASA, HHS, and the US House of Representatives. He also co-authored the NIST Cybersecurity Framework and built a leading cybersecurity startup.

SUCCESS STORY

"Four years ago, I joined Esri with a vision of making cybersecurity a global business enabler. Since then, my team has unified security practices across more than 90 independent organizations worldwide, strengthened trust with customers, streamlined compliance, advanced Zero Trust capabilities, and helped establish the company's AI governance program. The common thread has been partnership. By bringing people together around shared goals, we built a security program that supports innovation, protects critical systems, and helps a global organization operate with confidence in an increasingly complex digital world."



DIANA LOVATI

Global CISO
AEG

Diana Lovati is senior vice president and global chief information security officer at AEG, leading cybersecurity, risk management, and resilience across the company's global sports, live entertainment, venues, and ticketing businesses. With more than 20 years of leadership experience spanning the US Navy, NASA JPL, Northrop Grumman, Ball Aerospace, True Anomaly, and AEG, she is known for translating cyber risk into business decisions, building high-performing teams, and driving innovation, resilience, and enterprise transformation.

SUCCESS STORY

"Under my leadership, AEG's Information Security team created the company's first enterprise-wide view of cyber risk. We led a Threat Landscape Assessment that brought together leaders across business, technology, and security to identify the risks that mattered most and turn them into a prioritized roadmap for action. That work helped move cybersecurity from fragmented technical activity to shared enterprise accountability. We also built a multi-year security strategy, strengthened governance, and improved how executives understand and act on cyber risk. The result is a stronger, more resilient AEG where cybersecurity supports trust, continuity, and responsible innovation."



STEVE TRAN

VP, Global Security (CISO)
Iyuno

Steve Tran's career has never followed a conventional path. From the early internet days and law enforcement to Hollywood and national politics, he has built and led security programs in complex, high-stakes environments. His roles have included FOX Studios, MGM Studios, the Democratic National Committee, and Iyuno. A lifelong magician, Tran believes curiosity, trust, and understanding people are just as important to security as technology.

SUCCESS STORY

"After joining following a significant security incident, I rebuilt the program from crisis response into a strategic function. We launched COMPASS, giving partners real-time third-party risk telemetry and scaling impact without proportional headcount growth; built an AI governance program from scratch covering EU AI Act Article 50, C2PA conformance, and content authentication; and rolled out passwordless authentication across a 34-country, 32,000-user enterprise, targeting the leading cause of industry breaches. Through secure-by-design practices, we cut production vulnerabilities by 45% and reduced mean time to remediation from ~30 days to five and restoring trust while making security a scalable enabler."



MICHAEL MONGOLD

VP, Information Security; CISO
Deckers Brands



NADA NOAMAN

CISO
Estee Lauder Company (fmr)

S O C I A L
ORBiE
AWARDS

**CISO LARGE ENTERPRISE
FINALISTS** Over \$4 billion annual revenue



ANDREW BEREZKY
CISO
The Automobile Club
of Southern California

Andrew Berezky has led Information Security at the Automobile Club of Southern California since February 2016. In this role he’s responsible for creating a culture of enablement and outcomes, while managing the organization’s information security risk posture. Prior to this role Berezky provided strategic consulting services to national companies, served as the SVP & CIO of Zenith Education Group, and global CIO with Alorica, a leading BPO provider.

SUCCESS STORY

“My greatest success is my team; it is through their everyday achievements that we thrive as an organization and that I can say we serve as ‘the wind behind our business partners backs.’ That they thrive is how I measure success.”



SAHAN FERNANDO
CISO
Rady Children’s Hospital San
Diego

Sahan Fernando is the chief information security officer for Rady Children’s. With experience across all IT and Security domains, he brings both technical depth and executive leadership. Fernando serves on the Board for Health-ISAC and is an alumnus of the FBI CISO Academy. He is a contributing author to Tribe of Hackers: Blue Team and was named a Top 100 CISO in 2025. He holds multiple certifications and is a frequent public speaker.

SUCCESS STORY

The IT and Information Security teams led Rady Children’s Health through a multi-year Zero Trust journey that fundamentally reshaped how security supports clinical operations and digital transformation. The team moved the organization away from perimeter-based assumptions toward an identity-centric, risk-informed model grounded in least privilege, continuous verification, shared accountability, and defense-in-depth controls. The team strengthened privileged access management and embedded security decision-making into everyday workflows. Beyond technology, they aligned governance, standards, and processes so these principles were consistently applied across all domains. The network segmentation implemented unified all of this into a leading architecture.



RENANA FRIEDLICH
CISO
LPL Financial

Renana Friedlich is executive vice president and chief information security officer at LPL Financial, where she leads cybersecurity strategy and resilience efforts. With more than 20 years of cybersecurity experience, she previously held leadership roles at PayPal and EY and served in an elite intelligence unit in the Israel Defense Forces. A recognized industry thought leader, Friedlich serves on advisory boards, mentors emerging cybersecurity professionals, and was named to the Cyber25 Women of Impact list.

SUCCESS STORY

Under Renana Friedlich’s leadership, LPL Financial has elevated LPL’s cybersecurity approach from a traditional control function into a proactive business enabler that supports innovation, resilience, and trust. Her team strengthened the firm’s security posture through advanced threat intelligence, modernized security operations, enhanced vulnerability management, and forward-looking initiatives that help anticipate emerging risks. She also championed stronger security practices across the broader advisor ecosystem, helping create a more resilient digital environment. These efforts have strengthened organizational preparedness, supported uninterrupted client and advisor experiences, and reinforced cybersecurity as a strategic driver of business success – all backed by the LPL Cyber Fraud Guarantee.



SUDHAKAR GUMMADI
CISO
HMSA Blue Cross Blue Shield
of Hawaii

Sudhakar Gummadi is CISO at HMSA - for Hawaii’s largest health plan. With more than two decades of experience in cybersecurity. Earlier he was a VP & CISO at Molina Healthcare Inc, and an exec advisor at Anthem Inc and previously worked at HP and Symantec. A Gartner/Evanta Top 25 Global CISO in 2014 and 2026 CSO Award recipient, he holds a MS in computer science and MA in public administration and a CISSP cert.

SUCCESS STORY

“HMSA safeguards the health information of more than half of Hawai’i’s population. In 2024, we set out to eliminate a long-standing industry practice: copying real member data into development and test environments. More than 50 terabytes of confidential member information spanned dozens of platforms outside production controls. Rather than manage that risk, we eliminated it by creating an automated, AI-enabled masking framework that delivers high-fidelity, fully de-identified data across non-production environments. Engineering teams-maintained delivery speed and testing quality, while member privacy was significantly strengthened. The initiative earned a 2026 CSO Award and transformed cybersecurity into a strategic business enabler.”



PAUL MILLER
CISO
Public Storage

Paul Miller is the chief information security officer and vice president of information technology for public storage. He leads cybersecurity, infrastructure, cloud, enterprise systems, and technology operations, securing and enabling one of the industry’s largest organizations. He is recognized for building high-performing teams, advancing risk-based security programs, and driving technology transformation through automation and innovation. He is an active industry leader, board member and advocate for developing the next generation of technology and cybersecurity professionals.

SUCCESS STORY

“Under my leadership, our cybersecurity and IT team has transformed how technology supports the organization by combining a lean operating model with automation, strategic architecture, and strong partnerships. We enhanced threat detection and response capabilities, strengthened cloud and infrastructure security, and elevated our enterprise resilience and compliance posture. At the same time, the team successfully supported major business transformations, including acquisitions, organizational growth, and new and transformative operational initiatives, without significant increases in staffing. The result has been measurable risk reduction, improved operational efficiency, and a scalable technology foundation that enables the business to grow securely and confidently.”



ROBERT PITTMAN
CISO
San Bernardino County

Robert K Pittman Jr. has been working in the capacity of the chief information security officer throughout this century. He has utilized his leadership, experience, knowledge and academia to develop “world-class” cybersecurity teams and experienced their growth. Additionally, he has built, maintained, innovated and grown successful cybersecurity programs for the nation’s largest populous County of Los Angeles, and the nation’s largest geographic San Bernardino County with talented individuals.

SUCCESS STORY

Robert K Pittman Jr. was appointed in September 2018 as the chief information security officer (CISO) for San Bernardino County after tenure at County of Los Angeles (COLA) for 37.5 years. His abrupt retirement in 2017 from the COLA as their CISO was due to the passing of his mother Ms. Louise Pittman, the dominant force in his life. She is the reason why he is driven, passionate, motivated, and committed to cybersecurity practice, at the highest level. His passion continues to be demonstrated as a mentor, published author, adjunct professor, and continually awarded by numerous cyber organizations.

CISO ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

Up to \$4 billion annual revenue



JEFFREY AGUILAR

CISO
Hoag Health

Jeffrey Aguilar is CISO for Hoag Health System, responsible for enterprise cybersecurity strategy, governance, resilience, and risk management. With more than 28 years of experience across healthcare, government, financial services, technology, and consulting, he is recognized for aligning cybersecurity with business objectives and program development. Aguilar holds an MBA from Pepperdine University, serves as an adjunct professor, and actively supports industry collaboration through advisory board participation, mentoring and cybersecurity leadership initiatives.

SUCCESS STORY

"We transformed a fragmented cyber security program into a standardized, business-aligned capability that provides continuous visibility into enterprise risk and resilience. Through collaborative design-thinking sessions, we established a shared Cyber North Star that aligned cybersecurity priorities with organizational objectives. The program introduced consistent risk measurement, improved visibility into business and third-party risks, and enabled trend analysis that supports proactive decision-making. Regular reporting to executive leadership and the Board strengthened governance and accountability, helping cybersecurity evolve from a compliance-driven function into a strategic business partner that reduces risk, enhances resilience, protects patient access, trust, and supports long-term organizational success."



QUINCEY COLLINS

Chief Security Officer
Sheppard

Quincey Collins is the chief security officer at Sheppard, where he has spent more than a decade aligning security and risk management strategy with strategic business objectives and performance goals with a distinct focus on growth, value preservation and value creation. With over 25 years of experience across information technology and security, Collins' background includes service with the United States Air Force, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Department of Defense.

SUCCESS STORY

"Over the last 11 years, my team and I have built a culture of security at Sheppard where we have engaged with all aspects of the business while supporting innovation, client service, and compliance requirements. Through our security architecture and deep collaboration with business units, we have enabled the firm to serve our clients with confidence, while bringing innovative technological solutions to our legal practice."



NEMI GEORGE

VP, IT; CISO
PDS Health

Nemi George is vice president & CISO at PDS Health, leading enterprise IT and cybersecurity across 1,250+ clinics and 18,000 users. With over two decades of global experience spanning healthcare, automotive and telecommunications, including leadership at Vodafone Global Enterprise. He is known for driving innovation, automation, and talent development. George is the immediate past President of ISACA Orange County, a respected executive consultant, speaker, and mentor, and leads various CXO (CISO, CIO, CTO) community groups.

SUCCESS STORY

Nemi George led transformative initiatives, helping architect and launch PDS Health Technologies, delivering secure medical technology solutions to universities and dental schools. He established the AI Center of Excellence, driving governance, enablement, implementation of AI services, including a Security & Architecture harness. He led ISO 27001:2022 certification across PDS Health, PDS Health Technologies, and PDS Health Innovations. His team achieved industry-leading cybersecurity maturity scores, built a strong security culture, and deployed an in-house automated SOC that cut response times from ~two days to minutes. He also completed a full AD redesign with TO disaster recovery, earning a CSO Cybersecurity Award.



JILL KNESEK

CISO
BlackLine

Jill Knesek has over 25 years of cybersecurity experience including more than 15 years as a CISO at companies such as BlackLine, Cheetah Digital, Mattel, and BT Global Services. Prior to her corporate career, she served as a special agent for the FBI, where she was the lead case agent on several high-profile cases, including the infamous Kevin Mitnick and MafiaBoy investigations. Knesek was named to the CSO Hall of Fame in 2024.

SUCCESS STORY

BlackLine's Information Security team maintains multiple international security certifications and was one of the first organizations to obtain the ISO/IEC 42001 certification covering secure AI management. But certifications and attestations are the end result of a robust and mature security program that requires constant management, oversight and operational excellence. As BlackLine has transformed into an AI-first company, the InfoSec team has had to quickly adapt to this changing landscape by researching, testing and implementing new AI capable technologies to stay abreast of this changing technology space and allowing BlackLine to innovate at velocity to meet and exceed our customers' expectations.



JACOB MARGOLIS

CISO
The Metropolitan Water District
of Southern California

Jake Margolis is CISO for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, protecting the systems that deliver water to 19 million people. He previously served as CISO for the County of Orange, and as a US Army Officer. During his military career Margolis served in command and staff assignments - including combat tours in Afghanistan and leading communications support during Hurricane Katrina Relief in 2005. He holds a Masters Degree in Information Systems and Technology Management.

SUCCESS STORY

"Our cybersecurity team transformed Metropolitan's approach from reactive security into an integrated, risk-based program aligned with its essential water-delivery mission. We strengthened identity protection, 24/7 security operations, threat intelligence, incident response, vulnerability management, and governance while improving visibility across enterprise and operational environments. By connecting technical risk to executive decision-making, we prioritized investments where they provide the greatest resilience and operational value. These efforts have improved our ability to detect and contain threats, reduce exposure, strengthen accountability, and help ensure cybersecurity enables — not constrains — the reliable delivery of water to Southern California."

2026SOCAL ORBIE AWARDS

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San Bernardino County



PROGRAMS
CO-CHAIR
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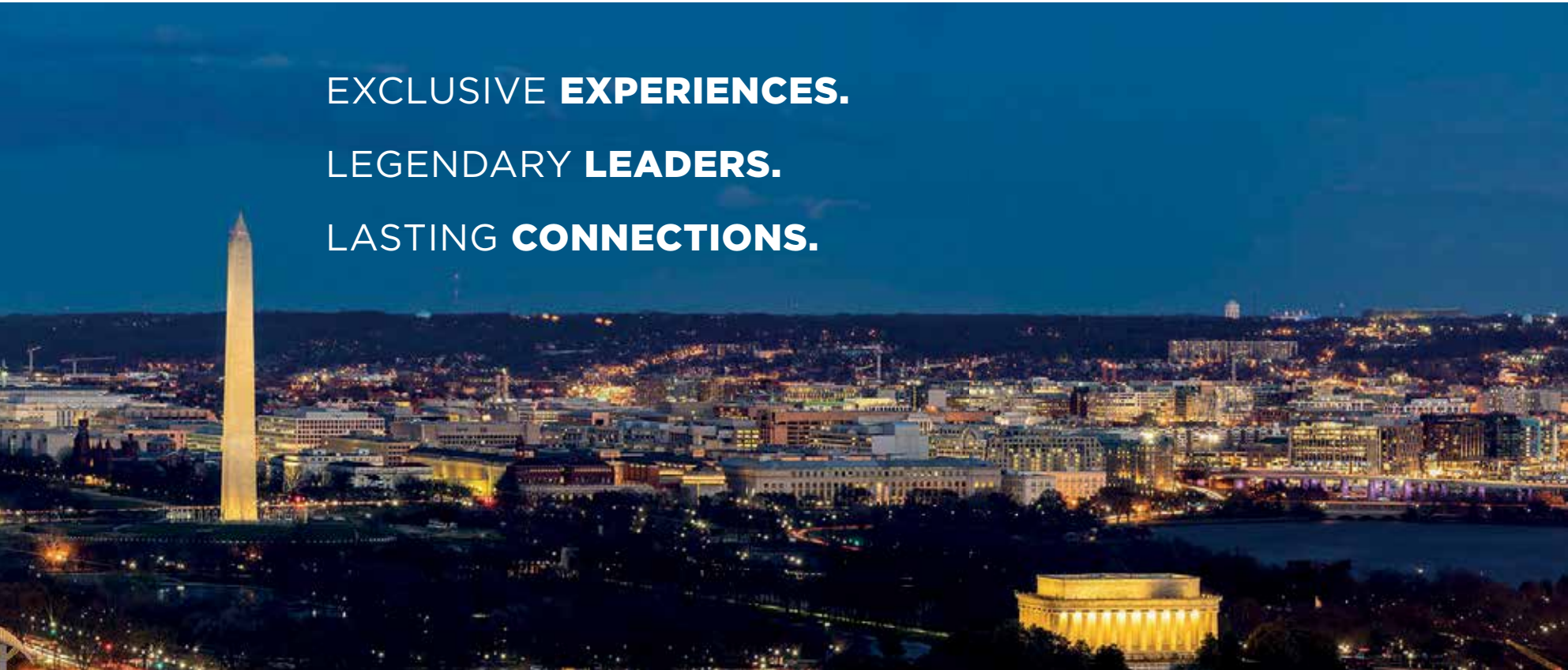












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