

ST. LOUIS  
**BUSINESS JOURNAL**

2025

# ST. LOUIS **ORBIE** AWARDS

The annual St. Louis ORBIE® Awards honors chief information officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Large Corporate, Corporate, & Nonprofit/Public Sector categories will be announced December 11 at Chase Park Plaza.



 **ST. LOUIS CIO**



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Great CIOs Understand How  
Connections Drive Transformation  
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#### **LEADERSHIP RECIPIENT**

How Olin CIO Christy Barker  
transformed tech and teams  
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# CONGRATULATIONS 2025 ST. LOUIS ORBIE NOMINEES

**KIRAN ACHEN**  
Delta Dental of Missouri

**KEVIN ADAMS**  
Edward Jones

**JOSH ALLEN**  
Sunnen Products Company

**BHAVANI AMIRTHALINGAM**  
Ameren

**DOMINIC ARULSAMY**  
Equifax Workforce Solutions

**SHANE BEHL**  
Enterprise

**BRENT BETTIS**  
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**ABHA BHASKAR**  
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Axia Women's Healthcare

**SAAD CHAUDHRY**  
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**SHIBU CHERIAN**  
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**KYLE COLLINS**  
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World Wide Technology

**WILL DAUGHERTY**  
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**BRAD GREEN**  
Nortek/MadisonAir

**TERI GREEN-MASON**  
Lite Technology Solutions

**RICK HALL**  
Royal Canin

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**CORY HEIDEN**  
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**WILLIS HILL**  
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**MARK HIRST**  
Graybar

**JENNIFER HOPPER**  
Save A Lot

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Whether you're leading a large corporation or a nonprofit, there's no

textbook for how to be great in a role that changes as rapidly as technology. That's why relationships create superpowers, driving personal and organizational transformation.

The Inspire Leadership Network connects CIOs with over 1,700 lifelong learners across more than 40 chapters. From public and private companies to government, education, healthcare, and nonprofits, we exist to help members navigate and thrive in a uniquely challenging executive role.

The leadership principles that have served CIOs for over 25 years are now available to communities

serving CISOs as the Inspire Leadership Network expands in 2025.

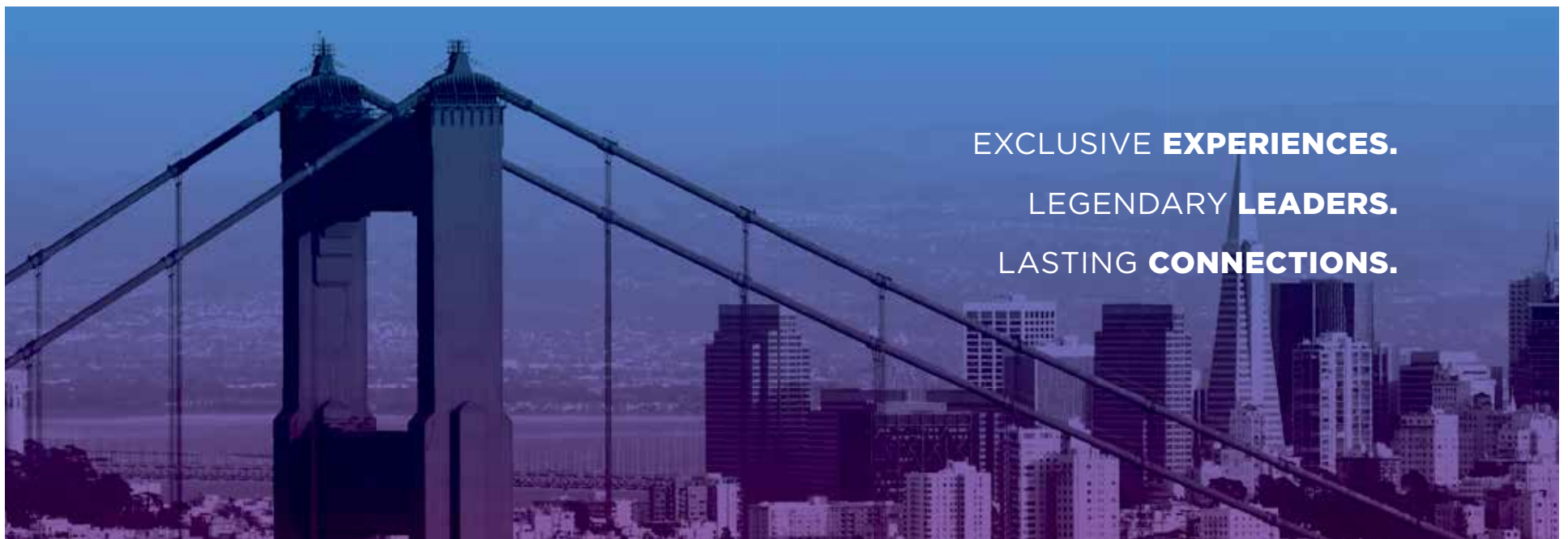
The ORBIE® Awards recognizes the great leadership of CIOs in St. Louis. On behalf of St.LouisCIO, I congratulate the nominees and finalists for their remarkable achievements. A special thank you to the sponsors and underwriters for their foresight in making the St. Louis ORBIE® Awards possible.

With the right connections and relationships, transformation is not only possible - it's happening today, as evidenced by the finalists you will meet throughout this special section.



Sincerely

**Rick Hall**  
2025 Chair, St.LouisCIO  
CIO, Royal Canin



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2025 LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT:

# Christy Barker

Vice President and CIO | Olin Corporation

## How Olin CIO Christy Barker transformed tech and teams

By The Business Journals Content Studio

Christy Barker's career has been defined by transformation.

Early on, her transformation was personal. The first in her family to attend college, she had no set career plan. She explored new roles — programmer, business analyst, product manager — and evolved into a strategic technology leader driving global change.

"In those first five years, I was gaining confidence in my abilities," said Barker, vice president and chief information officer of Olin Corporation. "I was starting to see that I can put myself in new situations and come out learning something new about the skills and myself."

She was also building her approach as a leader — one that would come to be defined by service to the people and organizations she served.

"Leading with service means helping others reach their goals and helping them figure out how they're going to be successful. Bring your strengths, and then shine the light on the others in the room," Barker said. "At this point in my career, I'm going to remember more about the people and the experiences rather than the work I accomplished."

Barker will receive the Leadership Award as part of the 2025 St. Louis ORBIE Awards at a live event on Dec. 11 at The Chase Park Plaza Royal Sonesta Hotel. The program honors CIOs who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership.

### Pivotal career opportunities

One of the first significant opportunities in Barker's career came when she was approached to join a new joint venture and lead a multimillion-dollar SAP implementation.

"I was probably in my late 20s, and I had to rely on the people around me and not my own personal experience because I had very little at the time," she said.

Her strategy worked. The project was a success, and Barker became the company's CIO a few years later.

That role laid a strong foundation for the next major opportunity, which came when her company was acquired Israel Chemical Limited (ICL), a global manufacturer of specialty minerals and fertilizers. ICL wanted to transition the business from multiple operating companies to a global share service model supporting each business unit. Barker took an assignment in Israel to help lead the transformation.

After the successful transition, ICL asked Barker to move to the Netherlands to build a business shared service center to support all European back-office functions.

"That experience taught me a lot about communications skills and the importance of speaking with clarity, not with buzzwords and acronyms, because people in other cultures don't always understand the message you're trying to convey," Barker said. "I also learned how to lead with influence, which I've come to believe is more important than relying on a position of power."

### Coming home

After a number of years abroad, Barker's family — she's married with two adult children — returned to the U.S. Barker was then offered a new opportunity at Olin Corporation, a global chemical and small caliber ammunitions company based in Missouri. Barker led the technological transition after a multi-billion-dollar acquisition that quadrupled Olin's size.

Over the past nine years, Barker spearheaded the evolution of a small team to a fully fledged global technology organization focused on creating value and driving business strategy.

"Given the complexity and scope of the transformation, I had to focus on what matters most at any given point in time," she said. "It was all about being clear on the objectives, the problems that needed to be solved, the outcomes that were desired and keeping the big picture in sight."

### The future of the CIO

Over 30 years, Barker's perspective on the role of technology has shifted.

"Early on, I thought of technology as a way to automate processes, and that's still there," she said. "But, in my role as CIO, I see technology as it relates to business transformation and how we use technology for a strategic advantage — how it's going to drive growth, reduce costs and enable all the other functions in the company in the most impactful and seamless way."

Barker has not lost sight of the

foundational principles that drive technological success.

First, Barker said, architecture integration and data matter. To have any meaningful output from technology, you need infrastructure that's going to produce data you can trust.

Second, cybersecurity must be foundational. For every technology decision, plan for cyber protection and cyber response from the start, not after the fact, she said.

Lastly, don't over design or over engineer a technical solution. Start with the problem you're trying to solve and the value you need to create and go from there.

### Advice for the next generation of tech leaders

As technology changes rapidly, it can be tempting to focus on technical skill to build a career. Barker advises that finding success requires skills that go beyond technical capabilities.

"Run your organization like you're running a business. You have to be relentless and completely focused on the outcomes so you don't get distracted," she said. "Also, develop your leadership skills so you're going beyond being the tech guru in the room. Develop business acumen to speak the language of business leaders. Also, keep in mind that technology is creating change. Strengthen your change leadership skills to add the kind of bottom-line value companies today are seeking."

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## **Congratulations to the 2025 St. Louis CIO of the Year® Award winners and nominees.**

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# GLOBAL FINALISTS

OVER \$2 BILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUE AND MULTI-NATIONAL OPERATIONS



2025  
ORBIE  
AWARDS



## Abha Bhaskar

CTO, Experian Housing,  
Verification Solutions & Employer  
Services, Experian



Abha Bhaskar is Chief Technology Officer for Experian's Housing, Verification Solutions, and Employer Services businesses. She leads global technology strategy, innovation, and talent development across engineering, data, and compliance. Under her leadership, Experian has unified platforms into a secure, scalable cloud ecosystem, accelerated innovation, and strengthened culture. A hands-on leader, she champions trust, autonomy, and collaboration, aligning technology to Experian's mission of driving financial inclusion, empowering consumers, and creating a better tomorrow.

### SUCCESS STORY

Experian's mission is to drive financial inclusion, empower consumers, and create a better tomorrow by unlocking the power of data. My leadership reflects this through trust, autonomy, and shared vision. I believe teams thrive when empowered to decide, communicate openly, and align around a shared purpose. During the integration of five platforms, I empowered leaders, fostered collaboration, and reinforced a unifying vision. This turned a complex challenge into success — migrating to a unified cloud platform while strengthening culture and inspiring teams to achieve extraordinary goals together.



## Fred Burdell

VP & CIO,  
Copeland



Fred Burdell is Copeland's Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer and oversees global hosting, network management and enterprise applications supporting corporate functions. Prior to his role at Copeland, he held senior IT leadership roles at organizations like Emerson and Northrop Grumman. A dedicated advocate for mentoring, education and workforce development, he has contributed his leadership to numerous nonprofit boards including Washington University StemPact and Biome Charter School.

### SUCCESS STORY

One of my greatest accomplishments was leading our carve-out from a conglomerate and developing systems for a standalone company. This was completed in 18 months—six months ahead of schedule. This involved establishing a full IT organization, including infrastructure, cyber, network and global applications, to support a \$4.8 billion business. We used the separation to modernize, moving infrastructure to the cloud, adopting managed services for transactional IT and implementing a cloud-first, agile strategy. By coaching and empowering the team, we fostered collaboration and resilience, solving complex challenges and positioning IT as a strategic partner within the business, driving Copeland's growth.



## Jake Fritz

CIO,  
Emerson Electric



Jake Fritz is CIO of Emerson, leading a global IT organization of 3,300 professionals across 68 countries. Over his 24-year career at Emerson, Jake has driven digital transformation, major portfolio integration, and fostered a culture of empowerment and transparency. He is known for his people-first leadership style, collaboration, and ability to align technology with business strategy.

### SUCCESS STORY

In the past four years, Emerson transformed its portfolio by buying and selling over \$36 billion in revenue to become a unified automation company. This required IT to separate divested entities, integrate acquisitions, and achieve synergy goals—all while maintaining seamless operations. The work was complex and demanding, yet we met every deadline, ensured uninterrupted operations, and exceeded our synergy targets.



## Anatoli Lataria

CIDO,  
Mitek



Anatoli is a technology leader with extensive experience in cybersecurity, risk management, and digital transformation across global industries. He has held various roles in global companies, focusing on building resilient systems and fostering innovation. He leads a global team of IT professionals, driving scalable, secure digital experiences aligned with MiTek's vision of transforming communities through efficient and sustainable building methods. His leadership philosophy emphasizes adaptive, courageous decision-making, empowering teams to surpass limits and deliver results.

### SUCCESS STORY

Our team drove transformative milestones, positioning IT as a key driver of business agility and resilience. We developed and executed a unified digital strategy that integrates technology with core objectives, promoting seamless cross-functional partnerships. We are on a journey of ERP transformation to streamline processes and deliver enhanced customer experiences. We have also enabled product delivery via cloud-centric models, expanding customer capabilities and market reach. These efforts have positioned our organization for long-term success, driving efficiency, agility, and a competitive edge.



## Ed McLaughlin

President & CTO,  
Mastercard



Ed McLaughlin is President and CTO of Mastercard, overseeing global technology operations. Since joining in 2005, he's held key leadership roles shaping digital strategy and product innovation. Previously, he co-founded Paytrust and held executive roles at Metavante and LogicWorks. He serves on boards including Xerox and Karat, and is a member of Harvard Kennedy School's AI Council. Ed is a Wharton graduate and a CIO Hall of Fame inductee.

### SUCCESS STORY

Under Ed McLaughlin's leadership as Chief Technology Officer, Mastercard has transformed into a digital, AI-driven technology powerhouse. The company has scaled its infrastructure to support rapid growth and significantly expanded its services business. Innovations in tokenization have enabled secure mobile commerce across platforms like Apple Pay and Android Pay. Ed also oversaw the launch of Mastercard Transaction Stream, a next-generation switching technology that is multi-cloud, edge-enabled, real-time, and event-driven. Internally, AI has modernized customer service operations, improving speed and satisfaction while reducing costs. These initiatives have unlocked new revenue streams, enhanced efficiency, and strengthened trust across Mastercard's global network.



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# LARGE ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

OVER \$6.5 BILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUE



2025  
ORBIE  
AWARDS



**Rob Childs**

SVP & CIO,  
Ameren



Rob Childs, Senior Vice President & Chief Digital & Information Officer at Ameren, leads enterprise-wide digital strategy, transformation, and IT operations, managing a \$500M annual budget. He oversees infrastructure, applications, data platforms, and customer-facing digital experiences. Rob has delivered major initiatives including Customer Experience, Grid of the Future, Smart Meter deployment, and the Athena AI platform. He serves on multiple industry boards and is recognized for driving innovation, operational excellence, and talent development across the energy sector.

## SUCCESS STORY

Under Rob Childs' leadership, Ameren's Digital organization delivered over \$40M in O&M savings through transformative initiatives. Key achievements include migrating legacy Finance and Supply Chain ERP to Oracle Cloud, redesigning 1,900+ processes, integrating 112 systems and saving \$5M annually. His team launched the Athena AI platform, boosting field and contact center efficiency - increasing self-service adoption to 90%+ of all interactions. Smart Meter enabled remote connect/disconnect, saving \$20M+ annually, and the team deployed a modern customer relationship management solution, increasing productivity leading to \$5M+ in annual labor savings. These efforts reflect Rob's commitment to strategic alignment, innovation, and measurable business impact.



**Mark Hirst**

VP, Technology,  
Graybar



Mark oversees Graybar's Information Technology team and is responsible for planning and executing the company's strategic technology initiatives. Mark has more than 32 years of business and IT experience. Mark and his team play a key role in Graybar's success by delivering innovative, reliable solutions that directly support the company's focus on driving growth and delivering exceptional customer experiences.

## SUCCESS STORY

Graybar's technology team successfully replaced its legacy SAP ECC system with SAP S/4 HANA, completing a 2.5-year ERP transformation that modernized operations and improved analytics. The team also migrated infrastructure to the cloud, enhancing scalability and security, and deployed Manhattan Active Warehouse Management across 20 major distribution centers to optimize logistics and customer service. These initiatives support Graybar's strategic transformation and future growth.



**Paula Peters**

CIO, Digital Transformation,  
State of Missouri



Paula has devoted the past 30 years to excellence in information technology. She is a visionary with a diverse background in project management, technology planning, and program leadership. Paula's current passion is leading Missouri's Digital Transformation efforts including the new Citizen Portal and MOVERS, which is Missouri's statewide Budget, ERP and HCM implementation. In 2024, Paula received the NASCIO State Technology Innovator award for her outstanding leadership in promoting excellence in government through information technology.

## SUCCESS STORY

Our team has had many great accomplishments but one of the most significant accomplishments has been our Digital Government Transformation. In 2018, we started a multi-year plan for modernizing our approach to technology to lay the foundation for future success. I had the privilege of leading this effort and we knew that this was going to be a once in a lifetime chance to make a major difference in the future of state government and the citizens of Missouri. It has been the privilege of my career to lead these efforts with our incredible team of technology professionals.



**Mike Sullivan**

COIO,  
Post Holdings



Mike Sullivan is Chief Information Officer at Post Holdings, leading enterprise IT strategy. He has responsibility for cybersecurity, analytics, corporate applications, and IT shared services. With 33 years of experience, Mike focuses on building high-performing teams and leveraging technology to deliver measurable business value. His leadership emphasizes trust, collaboration, and strategic alignment, enabling IT to serve as a trusted advisor. Mike is a graduate of Duke University, and holds an MBA from Ohio Christian University.

## SUCCESS STORY

This ORBIE nomination celebrates the strength of Post Holdings' collective IT team. We are fortunate to have strong IT leadership in corporate roles and across our business segments. In recent years, this team has advanced our IT services and delivered technology-enabled solutions that have created measurable business value. Recent achievements include expanding upon an enterprise analytics platform that drives operational efficiencies, enhancing cybersecurity maturity beyond industry benchmarks, modernizing core financial systems for scalability, and revamping identity management to improve security and user experience. These successes have demanded a strong, collaborative approach while working across a decentralized business and IT organization.



**Michael Wojcik**

SVP & CTO,  
Panera, LLC



I have been with Panera for 12+ Years. My scope of accountability is the Technical Infrastructure and Operations from Cafe (Company & Franchisee) to Panera Support Centers (Headquarters) to our Data Centers and across Public Clouds (GCP, MS-Azure, OCI, and AWS). Prior to Panera, I was in Financial Services for over 32 years.

## SUCCESS STORY

Some of our success stories were realized by some "Successful Failures". Early during our Digital Transformation, we realized a catastrophic Hardware Incident resulting in data loss requiring recovery over hours rather than weeks. Years later our Digital Platforms encountered a Security Incident requiring surgical recovery over days rather than weeks. Both Major Incidents changed our mindsets as it related to Recovery: Operational, Disaster, and Cyber. The Character of our IT Leadership and Team Members were defined by our actions and behaviors as to how we lead and execute during a crisis. The Lessons Learned and Innovation realized factored into future maturity and success.



# ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

OVER \$1 BILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUE



2025  
ORBIE  
AWARDS



## Matt Boyce

Sr. Director, ITS,  
MFA Incorporated



Matt Boyce is Senior Director of Information Technology Services at MFA Incorporated, a position he has held since August 2020. He leads ITS teams across technical support, cybersecurity, infrastructure, field-services, application development, and analytics, aligning technology with business goals and advancing agricultural innovation. Focused on collaboration and strategic IT initiatives, he ensures MFA's systems support over 45,000 members/owners across Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Iowa, helping the organization and its farmers remain competitive and successful.

### SUCCESS STORY

We are centralizing data to support analytics and AI, providing members/owners with advanced insights to improve yields and land efficiency. Partnering with Microsoft Fabric, we are migrating from on-premise systems to deliver a holistic operational view, incorporating auxiliary data for predictive analytics. Our infrastructure is being modernized to support emerging AgTech, including autonomous vehicles, plant automation, and mobile satellite connectivity. Additionally, we are improving connectivity across all locations by evaluating high-quality, cost-effective providers and strategically deploying mobile satellite systems to maintain operational continuity while reducing redundant spend.



## Jennifer Hopper

CIDO,  
Save A Lot



Jennifer Hopper is an accomplished technology executive with over 25 years of experience leading digital transformation across global organizations. Known for her strategic vision and natural curiosity, Jennifer excels at navigating complex business landscapes, identifying critical levers of innovation, and translating them into actionable, forward-thinking technology strategies that drive measurable business results. She empowers high-performing teams to deliver cost savings, revenue drivers, and lasting cultural impact.

### SUCCESS STORY

Under Jennifer's visionary leadership, Save A Lot's technology organization transformed into a strategic growth engine. By modernizing infrastructure and embedding Agile practices, the team reduced IT operating costs and have been key to driving material revenue driving initiatives. A proprietary wholesale app unlocked new income streams, while cloud-based platforms improved accuracy and customer satisfaction. Through inclusive governance and talent development, the team aligned innovation with retailer needs, delivering measurable impact. This success reflects a commitment to servant leadership, resilience, and community access—proving that technology, when thoughtfully led, can drive both financial performance and meaningful change.



## Steve Kappel

Corporate SVP & CIO,  
Safety National



Steve joined Safety National in 2014 as Director of Application Development, advancing to CIO in 2020 and Corporate Senior Vice President & CIO in 2025. He leads enterprise IT strategy, infrastructure modernization, cybersecurity, digital transformation, and data enablement. With over 25 years of IT experience, Steve has strengthened Safety National's digital capabilities and contributes to global technology strategy through Tokio Marine's Global IT Committee, and he frequently shares his insights at industry, technology, and leadership conferences.

### SUCCESS STORY

Safety National has undergone a fundamental transformation through adoption of the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe). Guided by a vision for predictable, high-quality value delivery, the company shifted from a project to a product mindset. Under Steve Kappel's leadership, traditional Business Analysis and Project Management job families were restructured into clear Product Management and Lean Portfolio Management tracks, supported by education, standardized roles, and career paths. This wasn't simply title changes—it created lasting capability. By truly partnering with our business, teams now continuously inspect, adapt, and improve delivery outcomes, driving sustainable value aligned with enterprise strategy and measurable performance improvement.



## Michelle Kaufman

SVP, Technology,  
Distribution Management, Inc



Michelle joined Distribution Management in 2003 as a Development Team Lead after working as a consultant. Her commitment to the customer and technology have proven to be a major benefit to all involved. She has been promoted several times and moved into her current role as SVP of Technology in 2013. She and her teams are meeting the challenges of the integrated world of data and ecommerce. Education – B.A. in Computer Science from Goshen College

### SUCCESS STORY

I'm proud of the competitive advantage our custom software provides. Through deep collaboration with key partners across the business, we've built a culture where new ideas are welcomed and solution design is a shared effort. The entire company approaches growth with an inventive mindset—because they know our IT department will deliver. I'm equally proud of the people in my department. IT can be hard and stressful but we've established a caring and resilient culture in our department. I'm proud of how many people have made DM IT the place they call home.



## Rick VanMatre

Director, IT,  
Brinkmann Constructors



Rick VanMatre has been in his current role at Brinkmann Constructors for over 7 years where he leads the IT department and establishes strategic direction. He has a broad background in infrastructure, application development and business process improvements, with extensive knowledge in the engineering and construction industry. He has over 35 years of experience in the IT industry, with 20 years in IT leadership and strategic planning. Active involvement with Inspire CIO STL.

### SUCCESS STORY

Over the past 7 years, Brinkmann Constructors has experienced tremendous growth and success, expanding to 6 locations nationwide. This has necessitated the hiring and development of a team of talented IT employees in the areas of Support, Infrastructure and Cybersecurity. I have led several IT Strategic Initiatives to streamline operations within the company including Payroll, Operations, HR and IT, including new efforts related to AI. This monumental success is a testament to the collective talent, dedication, and vision of our team, particularly within the Information Technology (IT) department, which has played a pivotal role in supporting this growth.

# LARGE CORPORATE FINALISTS

OVER \$500 MILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUE



2025  
ORBIE  
AWARDS



## Kiran Achen

Delta Dental of Missouri,  
CIDO



Kiran Achen is Chief Information and Digital Officer at Delta Dental of Missouri, leading IT strategy and digital transformation since May 2023. He brings 24+ years of insurance industry leadership, including CIO at Tokio Marine Highland and senior roles at CNA Insurance. Kiran holds an MBA from Chicago Booth and an MS in Computer Science from Northern Illinois University. He has been recognized with the 2022 Chicago CIO ORBIE Award and CNA Chairman's CARE Award.

### SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership, our IT team's greatest accomplishment has been transforming from a group with limited confidence and business trust into a high-performing organization recognized as a trusted advisor. We cultivated a culture of empowerment, intellectual curiosity, and a true "can-do" mindset, which reignited belief in our capabilities and strengthened collaboration with the business. We also built a sustainable talent pipeline through university engagement and internships, welcoming graduates who quickly became valuable contributors. These accomplishments are significant because IT now consistently delivers measurable results, drives innovation, and plays a strategic role in advancing DDMO's mission to improve community health.



## Dara Meath

SVP & CTO,  
Build-A-Bear



Dara Meath, Chief Technology Officer at Build-A-Bear Workshop, leads with heart and innovation — transforming how technology connects people and experiences. Through her T90 Transformation Framework, she empowers teams to deliver progress every 90 days, blending data, AI, and creativity to modernize the brand's digital future. Dara's leadership inspires collaboration, growth, and purpose — bringing Build-A-Bear's mission "to add a little more heart to life" to every interaction.

### SUCCESS STORY

At Build-A-Bear, technology is the heartbeat of transformation. Through our T90 Framework, we've modernized platforms, empowered teams, and reimaged how digital and physical experiences connect. By combining data, AI, and creativity, we've built seamless, personalized journeys that inspire joy and growth across our brand. As a technology leader, I believe innovation is about people first — creating environments where teams are empowered to transform ideas into impact. Together, we're proving that technology, when led with heart, can truly connect, inspire, and add a little more magic to every guest experience.



## Craig Moellenhoff

CIO,  
Crown Packaging



Craig Moellenhoff is Chief Information Officer at Crown Packaging, leading enterprise IT strategy, digital transformation, and security while supporting scalable growth. He previously held senior IT roles at Silgan Plastics, MLC, and Anheuser-Busch InBev and began his career at Accenture, delivering technology-driven improvements for manufacturing clients. Craig holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology, combining engineering, consulting, and IT leadership to align technology with business objectives.

### SUCCESS STORY

Since joining Crown in 2025, our IT team has modernized infrastructure with new storage, servers, UPS, firewalls, and backup technology, while strengthening security with leading partners and products. On the application side, we integrated our ERP with new sales tools, migrated legacy technology to the cloud, launched new productivity tools, enabled a new distribution system, and developed a technology roadmap. Culturally, we introduced project milestone tracking, career development tools, and training programs. These efforts improved IT credibility, employee optimism, and alignment with Crown's growth-driven business strategy.



## Nitin Sharma

Global VP, IT,  
Watlow Electrical Manufacturing



Nitin is a global technology executive with 25+ years of leadership experience across multiple countries. He has led large-scale global deployments, major business system implementations, M&A integrations, carve-outs, and complex transformations in demanding private equity environments. With expertise in business process reengineering, digital modernization, and AI-driven initiatives, he is recognized for simplifying IT landscapes, strengthening cybersecurity, and developing high-performing global teams—consistently positioning IT as a strategic growth engine that drives business continuity, competitiveness, and worldwide expansion.

### SUCCESS STORY

As Global VP of IT at Watlow, I have led one of the company's most ambitious technology transformations, aligning IT directly with the business strategy of global growth. I built a leadership team from scratch, consolidated 13 ERPs across 20+ countries, and rationalized 100+ of 500+ applications toward a target of 200. By advancing SIOP, CPQ (36% of volume), PLM, and SolidWorks, we streamlined design-to-quote processes, improved inventory turns, and enhanced speed to market. I also drove cybersecurity, data, IoT, and MES innovations, ensuring continuity, resilience, and the scalable platforms required to support global expansion.



## Subbu Subramanian

CIO,  
Anchor Packaging



As CIO at Anchor Packaging, Subbu Subramanian transformed IT into a strategic business driver, leading digital initiatives in AI, analytics, IoT, and cloud. His agile leadership delivered measurable outcomes in cost savings, revenue growth, and cross-functional optimization. Subbu's industry engagement and global experience have positioned Anchor for sustained innovation and operational excellence, earning recognition as a 2025 St. Louis ORBIE Awards finalist.

### SUCCESS STORY

As CIO of Anchor Packaging, Subbu Subramanian transformed IT from a traditional support function into a strategic driver of innovation and business value. He led the company's digital evolution by implementing technologies tailored to operational needs, optimizing investments, and advancing cybersecurity. Subbu's service-minded leadership cultivated a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration, delivering measurable results in efficiency, cost savings, and growth. His commitment to aligning technology with business goals positioned Anchor Packaging for scalable success and ongoing competitive advantage, earning industry recognition.



## Congratulations, Kiran!

Delta Dental is proud to recognize Kiran Achen, Chief Information & Digital Officer, as an ORBIE Award finalist for 2025. We are proud of you and all the nominees of this prestigious award. Your contributions to the business and tech community continue to inspire excellence across the region.



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2025  
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## Josh Allen

Director, Global IT,  
Sunnen Products Company



Josh Allen is the Global Head of IT at Sunnen Products, where he leads worldwide technology strategy, cybersecurity, and digital transformation. With over two decades of experience, he has guided organizations through mergers, modernizations, and large-scale cloud initiatives, consistently driving measurable business value. Known for his empathetic and strategic leadership style, Josh empowers teams to innovate, align IT with business goals, and deliver secure, scalable solutions that enable long-term growth.

### SUCCESS STORY

Our IT team has transformed stability, transparency, and value across the organization. By adopting a cloud-first strategy, we resolved persistent outages, introduced redundancy, and dramatically improved uptime. We established IT governance with change management, asset tracking, and project intake processes, creating visibility and alignment with business goals. Cybersecurity was strengthened through updated policies, user training, and enhanced endpoint protection, reducing risk and improving compliance. Beyond operations, IT is now positioned as a strategic partner, leading modernization initiatives such as ERP cloud migration and process revamps to support long-term scalability and growth.



## Taylor Cane

Director, Information Systems,  
The International Companies



Taylor Cane is the Director of Information Systems reporting to the CEO at The International Companies, leading enterprise modernization, data, and AI initiatives across the entire organization. He brings 20 years in IT and a decade of leadership in manufacturing, with experience in ERP and Digital Transformation; He holds an MS in Computer Information Systems from Missouri State University and a BS in Business Management from BYU-I.

### SUCCESS STORY

Taylor has completely transformed the IT organization, modernizing the company's entire technology stack end-to-end. Through strategic hires, disciplined planning, and steady execution, Taylor has driven a new era of digital transformation and AI-driven innovation at The International Companies, positioning the business for scalability, efficiency, and future growth.



## Pallavi Chandak

CIO,  
Axia Women's Health



Pallavi brings 22 years of experience in IT and healthcare. At Mercy, she led their digital transformation and patient experience. At Evernorth, she served as CIO of the Home-Based Care division. Most recently as CIO at Axia Women's Health, Pallavi is responsible for all their technology including cybersecurity & AI. This role aligns Pallavi's mission of simplifying & connecting care with her passion for advancing women's health. Pallavi has a B.S. in Electrical Engineering & M.S. in Information Systems.

### SUCCESS STORY

I have always believed in being first, best or different. My career journey has been one of many firsts. From humble beginnings in India as the first woman engineer on a factory floor to the first woman CIO for Axia Women's Health - I always strive to embrace my differences, welcome constant change and give my best to every role. Watching the women in my life manage it all with grace and strength has inspired me to help improve healthcare for this underserved and underinformed demographic. I hope to continue to give back to this community in any way I can.



## Greg Pauli

Director, IT,  
St. Louis Cardinals



Greg Pauli is Director of Information Technology for the St. Louis Cardinals. With more than 20 years of IT experience and nearly two decades supporting the organization, he leads enterprise-wide technology strategy, operations, and security. Greg is recognized for advancing modernization, strengthening cybersecurity, and fostering innovation. His leadership ensures IT delivers reliable, secure, and scalable systems that support business growth, enhance operational efficiency, and create stronger connections with fans through technology.

### SUCCESS STORY

This year, the IT team has delivered transformative accomplishments that strengthened both business and baseball operations. We modernized core infrastructure with data center and switch upgrades that reduced downtime and risk. We rolled out the organization's first AI program, providing baseline training to all employees and empowering Champions across the organization to identify and develop high-value use cases. At our spring training facility in Jupiter, we are rebuilding the technology foundation with Wi-Fi 7, a modernized network backbone, and IPTV. These efforts will improve reliability, accelerate innovation, and ensure consistent, modern capabilities across all venues.



## Ken Somogyi

VP, IT,  
Spinrite LLC



As VP of IT with 20+ years of experience, I drive innovation through automation, AI, and digital platforms that cut costs, accelerate decisions, and unlock growth. An MBA graduate with ITIL and Agile leadership, I've led enterprise transformations, implemented advanced analytics, and introduced metrics-driven service models. Combining cost discipline with forward-looking strategy, I've delivered millions in IT savings while building scalable, resilient systems that position organizations for long-term success.

### SUCCESS STORY

The past 12 months at Spinrite have been extremely challenging, yet our persistence and focus have made both our team and organization stronger. We proved our resilience, reminding ourselves that "Yes, we can." This journey reinforced our ability to adapt, execute, and thrive under pressure. With this strength and knowledge, I'm excited to accelerate innovation, close gaps quickly, and continue driving meaningful progress for the business.



## Bill Steimel

VP, IT & CIO,  
CPC Logistics Inc



Graduate of Washington University in St Louis with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering. Experienced CIO and Vice President of Information Technology with over 36 years of a demonstrated history working in the transportation industry. I hold the Certified Transportation Professional designation from the NPTC Private Fleet Management Institute, specializing in Transportation. I oversee the development, management, and implementation of technology solutions tailored to meet our internal and external customers' specific transportation needs.

### SUCCESS STORY

I must acknowledge that my success as a leader is a direct result of the exceptional dedication and hard work of my team. They manage the infrastructure supporting 33 offices, provide top-tier support to over 50 private fleets, 4,050 drivers, logistics personnel, and our customers. Despite being a small team of twelve, they perform at the level expected of a much larger IT department with a substantially larger budget. My team provides best-in-class technology to logistics services across a diverse private fleet customer base. I firmly believe that a team makes a leader successful, not the other way around.

# NONPROFIT/PUBLIC SECTOR FINALISTS

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## Marie George

CIO, Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority - MOHELA



Marie George is CIO of the Missouri Higher Education Authority (MOHELA), where she leads IT strategy, operations, software development, cybersecurity, and business continuity. She earned a degree in Aerospace Engineering from Saint Louis University and an MBA from Fontbonne University. Marie also holds graduate certificates in Information Management (Washington University) and Cybersecurity-Threat Detection (Webster University), and is a Certified Information Governance Officer in AI. She actively mentors individuals pursuing careers in STEM.

### SUCCESS STORY

In my position as CIO, MOHELA successfully launched a new business line by migrating the technology and workforce from the largest student loan servicer—over 900 people—onto our platform within 12 months. The project integrated a new telephony system, customized applications, and three major processing systems, while maintaining uninterrupted Borrower services. We executed 40+ vendor agreements, built new network environments, automated 2,000+ scheduling events, and implemented robust security protocols. What made this exceptional was the deep collaboration across IT and business teams, transforming our culture into one of agility, unity, and shared purpose—delivering measurable impact and lasting change.



## Feng Hou

CIO,  
St. Louis Community College



Feng Hou serves as Chief Information Officer at St. Louis Community College, where he leads digital transformation across four campuses. A nationally recognized higher education innovator, he has implemented AI-powered assistants, contactless student IDs, and blockchain-based credentialing systems to enhance learning and efficiency. Harvard-educated and a thought leader in blockchain and AI, Feng also teaches at Washington University and contributes to multiple national technology and education boards advancing digital innovation and governance.

### SUCCESS STORY

Since joining STLCC as CIO in 2022, I've been honored to lead a dedicated IT team committed to serving students and the community through technology. Together, we implemented a HyFlex learning model, giving students the flexibility to attend classes in-person or virtually—an invaluable option for those balancing work, family, and education. We also launched a loaner technology program to bridge the digital divide and ensure access for all learners. Most recently, our integration of AI technologies has transformed student support, improving engagement and success. These initiatives reflect our people-first approach to innovation and impact.



## Simon Huang

CTO, City of St. Louis & St. Louis Development Corporation



Simon Huang is CTO for the City of St. Louis and the St. Louis Development Corporation. In Mayor Spencer's Cabinet, he leads technology strategy, enhances operational effectiveness, and drives innovation to improve government service delivery. Committed to digital equity, Huang works to expand access to technology for residents while fostering partnerships to advance the city's IT capabilities. Huang held leadership roles across public and private sectors and holds degrees from Grinnell College and Washington University.

### SUCCESS STORY

Under my leadership as CTO, IT has delivered on initiatives that transformed operations, service delivery, and equity. An ERP implementation and modernizing HR talent with a new applicant tracking system streamlined hiring and financial processes. Our OneStopGov portal reduced in-person visits and processing times by 50%, while our Digital Inclusion Action Plan expanded broadband, devices, and literacy training, earning national recognition. Establishing a Data Analytics Center of Excellence enabled our performance management program to improve 311 service resolution. Collectively, these efforts strengthened transparency, equity, and accountability, demonstrating the power of strategic technology leadership in government.



## Ginny Kienstra

CIO & Director of Technology,  
Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District



Ginny Kienstra is the Chief Information Officer and Director of Technology for the Metropolitan Sewer District, overseeing business and operational technology strategy to ensure the resiliency of critical infrastructure and applications. With over 25 years of IT leadership at organizations including Scotttrade/TDAmeritrade and Anheuser-Busch/AB InBev, she brings deep expertise in infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital transformation. A St. Louis native, she holds degrees in Computer Science and IT Management from Webster University.

### SUCCESS STORY

One of my proudest accomplishments was leading a cultural and operational transformation of the IT organization. When I joined, IT was viewed as disconnected from the District's mission and a barrier to progress. I partnered with my leadership team to rebuild trust through transparency, alignment, and accountability. We restructured to embed technologists within business units, prioritized visibility, and deepened understanding of core operations. This shift transformed IT into a proactive, trusted partner. Customer satisfaction rose 10%, collaboration flourished, and IT is now integral to solving business challenges and delivering measurable value to the ratepayer.



## Amrit Maharaj

Senior Director, IT,  
MERS Missouri Goodwill Industries



Amrit Maharaj, MSc, is Senior Director of IT at MERS/Goodwill, leading technology strategy and infrastructure to drive organizational impact. With over 20 years in IT leadership across nonprofit, corporate, and public sectors, he has held key roles at Charter Communications, BHR Behavioral Health, RSM US LLP, and G4S. Amrit excels at leveraging technology to improve operations, empower teams, and deliver innovative solutions that support business growth and mission-driven outcomes.

### SUCCESS STORY

At MERS Missouri Goodwill, I led IT initiatives that strengthened the organization's ability to serve our community. By modernizing infrastructure and implementing new systems, we improved operational efficiency, freed up staff time, and provided leaders with insights to make better decisions. These innovations help our teams focus on what matters most: putting people to work and creating opportunities. IT became a true enabler of Goodwill's mission and impact.



## Jennifer Walton

Director, Technology Services,  
Saint Louis Zoo



Jennifer A. Walton is the Director of Technology Services, leading strategic initiatives that enhance innovation, cybersecurity, and operational efficiency. With a passion for aligning technology with organizational goals, she oversees systems modernization, digital transformation, and user-centered solutions that improve collaboration and guest experiences. Jennifer is committed to empowering teams, driving continuous improvement, and building resilient, future-ready technology environments that support the organization's mission and long-term success.

### SUCCESS STORY

Our team is leading a transformative effort to replace four mission-critical systems supporting accounting, CRM, fundraising, and core operations—putting people at the center. This modernization empowers staff to work efficiently, collaborate effectively, and focus on high-impact work. With intuitive design, cross-functional training, and strong change management, we're ensuring smooth adoption. Guests and supporters will benefit from streamlined, secure, and personalized experiences. By embedding innovation, cybersecurity, and operational excellence, we're building a modern, resilient foundation that strengthens our mission and transforms how we work, connect, and serve.



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