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The annual Charlotte CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards program honors chief information officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Global, Enterprise, Corporate and Nonprofit categories will be announced Sept. 20 at The Westin Charlotte.
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LETTER FROM CHAIR, CIO OF THE YEAR AWARDS

20 years of CIO success — inspiring tech leaders of the future

In 1998, when the first CIO of the Year ORBIE Award was presented, it was the products, not the people, who were at the center of attention. Laptop of the Year, Printer of the Year and PC Magazine’s Editor’s Choice awards were common, but it was a startup called Intellinet that noticed the real heroes were chief information officers who implemented these products, developed solutions and created business value for their organizations.

Roll the clock ahead 20 years, and today, CIOs are at the center of business transformation for all organizations. Technology is the engine that drives innovation and growth in every industry and sector in our global economy. It is the leaders who facilitate change by tech-enabling their organizations that are the rock stars of business today.

The first CIO of the Year Awards was not only a trailblazer for recognizing the people leading transformation, but it eventually led to creating the Georgia CIO Leadership Association (GeorgiaCIO) — a local, member-centric, professional organization dedicated to helping corporate technology leaders foster meaningful relationships, share best practices, solve problems and achieve their leadership potential.

In 2015, we launched BostonCIO and formed InspireCIO, a national professional association for CIOs with local chapters in Georgia, Boston, Dallas, Chicago, Alabama, Charlotte, Houston, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, New York, Bay Area and DC. We are proud to serve CIOs in growing relationships, recognizing professional achievements and inspiring the next generation of technology leaders.

This year, over 190 nominations were received for the Charlotte CIO ORBIE Awards, which will honor CIOs across four categories for leadership effectiveness and business value created through innovative use of technology. Finalists and winners are selected through a rigorous, independent judging process led by prior ORBIE winners.

The power of CIOs working together — across public and private business, government, education, health care and nonprofit organizations — is incredible. Together, we are making a difference, transforming our organizations with technology and enriching the Charlotte region and our world.

The CIOs honored this year are inspiring and challenge all of us to step up and lead well in our organizations. On behalf of CharlotteCIO and our many members from a 120-mile radius to the city, I congratulate all the finalists on their accomplishments and share our gratitude for the sponsors, underwriters, staff and the Charlotte Business Journal who make the 2019 Charlotte CIO ORBIE Awards possible.

I look forward to seeing the CIO ORBIE finalists and Charlotte technology and business leadership community at the CIO of the Year Awards on Sept. 20 at The Westin Charlotte.

Sincerely,

Ames Flynn
2019 Chair, CharlotteCIO
EVP Shared Services,
Extended Stay America

Tomorrow’s technologies today.

When it comes to becoming a digital organization, there’s no time like the present. It takes inspiring your workforce, transforming your IT, securing your most critical assets and redefining what applications can do. Dell Technologies is proud to provide the solutions and services to help you do it all—now and for your digital future.

Dell Technologies is a proud sponsor of the 2019 Charlotte CIO of the Year Awards.
Technology is driving conversation across all industries, perhaps most especially in financial services. At the forefront of that conversation is Cathy Bessant, chief operations and technology officer at Charlotte-based Bank of America Corp., a role she has held since 2010.

Bessant oversees 95,000 employees and contractors across the globe. BofA pledged to spend more than $3 billion in 2019 on new technological development.

Bessant will share her expertise as the keynote speaker at the Charlotte CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards, to be held Sept. 20 at The Westin Charlotte in uptown. The Charlotte Business Journal sat down with Bessant to discuss her role at the bank and the technology trends she's seeing. Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

How does Bank of America stay on the cusp of technology?

(CEO Brian Moynihan) understands technology and the role it can play in financial services, so commitment and tone from the top are clear, and that helps a lot. Second thing is we invest quite heavily in talent. Code doesn't write itself, so the way you get great technological outcomes is with great talent, and we invest heavily in new development. ... That combination of commitment, funding and then dedicated, smart, good, industry-leading people is, I think, the formula for success.

Has your role evolved over the years?

Absolutely. When I came into my role, most similar jobs were held by classically trained technologists, people who came up on the coding side of the organization. I think the recognition that technology is the underpinning to delivering financial services means the profile of the kinds of people that are in roles like mine has really changed. You’ve got to have people that really understand customers and clients, understand businesses, understand how companies build relationships and how they make money. That takes much broader business acumen.

Why is it important that BofA continues to invest in technology?

First and foremost, it’s core to customers and clients. Second, technology really improves the customer experience and makes it more reliable, makes us more consistent, takes the heroism out of great customer service and makes great customer service what we deliver every day. So, in a world where the cost of not delivering well is very high, technology makes us very reliable in delivering the highest quality of customer service.

In helping us automate routine tasks, it frees up the creativity and the thinking of our people. That’s very important in terms of what customers and clients want from their financial-services relationships. They want advice, they want expertise, they want customized or creative solutions to their needs, and people have to have thought time to do that. It’s no secret our strategy is a “high-tech, high-touch” strategy because we believe the high-tech element frees us up to be high-touch. The number of relationship managers in each of our financial centers over the last 10 years has doubled, and what they’re doing in those financial centers is not processing routine tasks, but offering great financial services.

The other thing is it makes us cheaper. When a customer can self-service — first of all, they prefer that. Second of all, it takes the need to have a human performing those tasks and, again, allows the humans to be doing more thoughtful, creative work.

Have you noticed any overarching trends with how technology is used in the financial-services industry?

Consistency of service is very important. I think that the ability it gives us to really deliver flawless execution — that’s a big change. When you’re not putting a statement in the mailbox, but somebody gets direct financial information from the company to the customer, those innovations and trends literally are changing the planet.

— Caroline Hudson

Why Cathy Bessant sees technology making a bigger impact at BofA

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Why Cathy Bessant sees technology making a bigger impact at BofA

Congratulations,
Lety Nettles

Congratulations to Lety Nettles, Novant Health senior vice president and chief information officer, for being honored in the Charlotte Business Journal CIO of the Year Orbie Awards. Your excellence in technology leadership is helping build a stronger organization and community. We thank you for your remarkable dedication to all that you do.
WHO WE ARE

Segra is one of the largest independent fiber bandwidth companies in the U.S. Representing a successful merger of Lumos Networks and Spirit Communications, the company now has the most advanced fiber network infrastructure of over 21,000 miles that connects more than 9,000 on-net locations and 44 data centers throughout nine Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern states.

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early a decade into his 36-year tenure with Charlotte Pipe and Foundry Co., CIO Cameron Faison was called to the president’s office after a mistake was discovered with the company’s annual rebate program.

Faison had written the programming code for the system and then accidentally loaded the wrong file to generate customer rebate checks. The mistake was not caught until at least one check was questioned by a customer.

“I’d never gotten a call like that from the president, and I thought, oh boy, here it comes,” Faison says.

But something different happened. Instead of being shown the door, Faison was offered a promotion to a new role managing inside sales. “It was the most unique thing that happened to me that helped shape my career more than anything,” Faison says.

The career step moved Faison, an Appalachian State grad in business information systems management—a major so misunderstood in the early 1980s that Faison says it puzzled his parents’ friends—out of IT altogether and put him in charge of a team of seasoned salespeople who were taking orders over the phone and through the mail.

Faison’s humble while capable persona had already won over the vice president of sales, who worked closely with Faison on the technical functions of the sales and marketing system. Next, Faison worked to win the confidence of the sales team.

The detour out of IT and an immersion into the broader business of Charlotte Pipe and Foundry, a 118-year-old maker of cast iron and plastic pipe and fittings, helped develop Faison into an industry leader who connects the dots between technology and business success.

“He is really a business guy that IT is what he does,” says Dave Dove, retired CFO of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte. Faison played a key volunteer role 15 years ago as the YMCA modernized multiple technology systems. “Cam approaches IT as a business person. He would always say, ‘What would success look like on the other side of this? What will the people in the Y be experiencing?’ He wasn’t thinking about IT success or servers or software. He was into what was good for the organization.”

Faison’s connection to the YMCA—made stronger by the unparalleled support for the Y by the Dowd family of Charlotte Pipe and Foundry—continued well after the modernization project as he served as a member of the Y’s IT advisory board.

An expanded role beyond IT made Faison the right pick when, by the mid-1990s, Charlotte Pipe was looking at its systems companywide. There were 10 IBM computers and no network. Employees entered numbers on spreadsheets and saved data on a floppy discs.

Faison was drafted to lead the sales and distribution side of the modernization, and he helped establish Charlotte Pipe’s first ERP package.

As the project progressed into 1998, Frank Dowd IV became chairman and CEO, leading to Faison being named CIO, a title he’s held since. The IT department that was 10 people when Faison joined the company is now 60 employees, overseeing systems that run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Charlotte Pipe runs its own data centers and writes its own mobile apps.

Charlotte Pipe’s enterprise resource planning, or ERP, system keeps extremely accurate counts of finished goods at the plant and, when it receives an order, can allocate finished goods in stock. It was a competency that, 20 years ago, enabled the company to tell customers exactly when they would get their product.

While that capability is expected today, Charlotte Pipe does maintain an industry-leading, vendor-managed inventory process.

“We set up an inventory profile for our customers based on their order history for the prior year and set minimum and maximum quantities,” Faison says.

“When the inventory falls below that amount, we do a replenishment order and ship that product. In theory, they are never short of product. I don’t hear many competitors doing that.”

Faison aims to position Charlotte Pipe ahead of competitors, but he’s shown a decades-long willingness to help the city’s nonprofits.

He became involved with Apparo, formerly NPower, in 2007 and eventually served six years on the nonprofit’s board, one as chairman. Apparo connects IT professionals and their technical skills to Charlotte nonprofit organizations with technical needs but little funding.

“Cam was a real champion of the needs of area nonprofits and their need to become more efficient and effective through technology,” says Kim Lanphear, Apparo’s executive director.

Lanphear says Faison helped revamp Apparo’s business model built on skilled volunteers. “There’s a wisdom about Cam, and it’s respected,” Lanphear says. “Cam is so all about the community.”

Faison says his technical skills have faded, but over 36 years at Charlotte Pipe and Foundry, he’s enjoyed using technology to improve the business.

“Sometimes, I think I’m less of a true tech guy. If I had to go code something we use that would be a 5-minute career,” Faison says. “It ties back to the customer, whether internal or external, and how we can make things better for you.”
Now, more than ever, technology is both supporting the business and becoming the business.
At Insight, we define, architect, implement and manage intelligent technology solutions that help businesses run smarter.
We are the partner who can get you what you need faster. Who can turn your challenges into meaningful outcomes. Who can secure both today and tomorrow. We are the partner to help manage and transform your business.
GLOBAL FINALISTS
OVER $3 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE & SIGNIFICANT MULTI-NATIONAL OPERATIONS

SHOUKAT ALI BHAMANI
VP, CIO & CDO, Schaeffler Group USA Inc.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?
“Establishing a strong business-focused IT team is truly the foundation of our success. We spent time to understand the business needs. We centralized the IT functions and established a strong leadership team. This leadership team drove our vision of value-based IT by hiring and developing talented staff, implementing efficient processes, finding innovative business solutions, changing the ERP landscape and aggressively going after goals and key performance indicators. The result is we have proactively supported our business to double revenue. Now, we have also taken over the digital transformation responsibility. All due to a strong leadership and technical IT team.”

IVY CHIN
Chief Digital & Technology Officer, American Tire Distributors

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?
“I’m proud of leading the IT team and transforming the culture of our IT organization to a unified team with clarity of direction in the first 12 months being in this role. I’ve transformed our IT culture to create an environment where IT is a seamless part of the fabric of the business collaborating across functional areas to impact the organization. We have one united culture at ATD, one where IT associates are engaged and doing work to drive the transformation of the business forward. And I’ve done that with my talented team all while delivering more with less cost.”

STEVE HAGOOD
SVP & CIO, Ingersoll Rand

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?
“I am most proud of Ingersoll Rand and our IT organization in two ways. First, IR has customer-focused employees and world-class products that deliver on our mission of environmental and social sustainability. That focus has resonated as we have been fortunate to enjoy top quartile revenue growth and improve margins during my tenure as CIO. IT has been a major part of that success, partnering with businesses to deploy innovative solutions that provide great customer experiences. Second, I am proud of IT’s leadership and commitment to social sustainability, developing talent with a focus on a progressive, diverse, inclusive and gender equal workforce.”

CYNTHIA MILLER
CIO, Hanesbrands Inc.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?
“...The greatest accomplishment is the integration of a global information technology team. We believe our brands and our teams are our greatest assets. Through our acquisitions we have grown both. We have expanded our global IT footprint of talent and have learned what it means to truly be a global company. The teams have completed the acquisitions and transformation while building cohesive working groups. We now leverage the talent to drive our business initiatives by thinking globally and acting locally. The strength of the team is the diversity of thought; challenging the present to excel in the future.”

PATRICK THOMPSON
CIO, Albemarle Corp.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?
“As Albemarle’s CIO, I have the privilege of empowering 5,400 global employees to be the best they can be by giving them the technology tools needed to make Albemarle successful. Building a global IT team of 140 talented and fantastic people to serve our stakeholders has been my greatest success in this role. Jim Collins’ quote really sums it up, “The most important thing to do as a leader is to hire the right people and put them on the right seat on the bus.” Together, we are doing great work — I am proud to be a part of.”
Truliant salutes Sandeep’s recognition as a finalist for outstanding leadership, for positively impacting technology, and improving the member experience through innovation.
ENTERPRISE FINALISTS
OVER $500 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE

ELIZABETH AUSTIN
CIO, Curvature Inc.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“The greatest accomplishment of my current role has been the successful merger integration involving the IT team, technology platforms, and process improvements. Curvature has achieved significant results through the integration efforts. Benefits include global data visibility, enterprise sales and service opportunities, inventory optimization, facility and technology consolidation and resource optimization. The building of the IT teams into a global enterprise organization capable of sustaining legacy operations while deploying new enterprise technologies has been a major contributing benefit. It’s not easy to effect major technology changes without disruption to business operations. I’m very proud of the Curvature IT team.”

STEVE ERMISH
CIO, Cardinal Innovations Healthcare

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“I came to Cardinal Innovations during a time of unprecedented crisis and my job was to help stabilize the organization and restore trust and credibility with the public and our employees. I was appointed by the newly named CEO to lead the execution of an enterprise business process improvement initiative. The goal was to develop a culture where employees could participate in solutions to improve business operations throughout the year of recovery. I led the team that optimized core cross-functional business processes that, at the center, focused on improving health care for our members and removing barriers to care.”

KIRBY MINER
SVP IT, Sunbelt Rentals Inc.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“I’m most proud of the IT team that’s been built in the past five years and our ability to implement a digital transformation strategy to support Sunbelt’s growth from $2 billion in annual revenue to now over $5 billion. We’ve improved our communication and listening skills, come out from behind our desks to learn what the business wants and to present the ‘art of possible’ of technology that industry had never adopted. Additionally, we’ve built a great network of business partners in the Charlotte area and have become one of the customers the Charlotte technology partners are excited to work with.”

DARRELL THOMPSON
CIO, SVP of IT, Coca-Cola Consolidated Inc.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“Due to the Coca-Cola System Transformation effort, many bottlers moved to a common shared platform, providing broader business capabilities and reduced cost. We react to partner and customer needs quicker (deployment once versus 12 IT shops). We now have the ability to streamline IT development and run costs. I consider my participation as one of my greatest successes, as it allowed Coca-Cola Consolidated to influence the common solution development. The shift to a common ERP platform allowed us to modernize our remaining app portfolio, with a strategy to re-platform remaining apps to Azure PaaS, IaaS, SaaS (allowing the data center to be decommissioned).”

GARY UPTON
Senior Director of IT, Sage Automotive Interiors

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“While bringing our textile manufacturing into the 21st century using technologies like AI and machine learning will be very important for Sage, I believe my greatest success to date is the improvement I brought to Sage IT. Four years ago, we were a dysfunctional collection of individuals who were anything but a team. Today, we have three teams within IT that not only support each other, but also put personalities and individual recognition aside to ensure the associates of Sage receive the best support possible. I am proud to be the leader of this team!”
CONGRATULATIONS
STEVE HAGOOGD
ON BEING NAMED A FINALIST FOR
CIO OF THE YEAR
CIO OF THE YEAR AWARDS

CORPORATE FINALISTS
UP TO $500 MILLION ANNUAL REVENUE

RONNIE BRYANT
VP, IT, Hornets Sports & Entertainment

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“The Hornets app, which launched in 2017, has been highly successful and continues to grow. At its launch, the app included mobile ticketing, mobile ordering and payments for concessions and retail; and a virtual currency called “Buzz Bucks” that patrons can use to pay for items within the arena. In 2018, we added fan-friendly pricing, which featured special reduced prices for several of our most popular items for fans using express ordering, as well as an AI-driven customer-service platform, live streaming and an in-game bingo game. We are currently working on new elements to add for the upcoming season.”

SHAWN CARDNER
EVP, IT and Operations, Grubb Properties

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“Throughout the years, I’ve completed on time, under budget, and impactful projects that increased revenue, cut expenses, or added value. However, my greatest accomplishments are illustrated by the people who work with me. When team members encourage former colleagues to apply for position openings because we’re an amazing company and I’m a great manager, that’s a success. When an employee from a different division wants to come work for me because of the great work we do, that’s incredibly humbling. When one of my employees is recognized with our most prestigious company award, that’s an incredible success for me.”

TANNER FRITZ
CTO, Sona Dermatology & MedSpa

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“My greatest achievement at Sona Dermatology & MedSpa has been the transformation of our IT team’s reputation within the company. Historically, the unit was known primarily as a support group. Today, with the support of the executive team, we are able to be technology leaders who are involved at the forefront of every initiative across the organization. We are known as dependable problem solvers and proactive strategists. I’m proud the repositioning of IT will continue to drive innovation, leading to an improved business outcome and, most importantly, the best customer experience.”

MIKE HILLHOUSE
CIO & Security Officer, Cadrillion Capital

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“As CIO for Cadrillion, I am responsible for IT and security strategy, policy and operations across the portfolio companies that Cadrillion owns. The most significant accomplishment I brought to the organization(s) was my leadership. I created a comprehensive IT and security strategy, along with risk analysis and gap assessments. This built a foundation for them to see the steps required to complete their tasks. Some of the projects we completed are virtualization of servers, implementing SSO capabilities into our customer portal, creating security policies and procedures, expanding infrastructure services, data center relocation, and installing a backup and recovery system.”

NICOLE WHITE
VP, IT, DCLI Inc.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“My greatest achievement in my current role is changing the mindset of the IT team to be more strategic and add more value to the company. The historical approach was rigid and left technical debt that has slowed down progress and the ability to be nimble. Our new approach is to provide solutions that can scale by using configuration options rather than customized options. This will change the team’s time allocation to focus more on innovation and improvements instead of run and maintain activities.”
SEPTEMBER 6, 2019

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THE CHARLOTTE REGION HAS EXPERIENCED A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF GROWTH IN THE PAST DECADE, PROPELLING US TO ONE OF THE LARGEST CITIES IN THE NATION. This rapid growth has been fueled by every industry in the region. We have added Fortune 500 companies, multiple buildings to our skyline, sports teams, breweries and massive developments in our 16-county region.

This statewide digital and print publication will take a deeper dive into the projects, companies and individuals that have shaped Charlotte over the past 10 years. Join us in helping Charlotte tell its unique and successful story. This glossy publication will be inserted into the Charlotte Business Journal. Additional copies will be available for sponsors and for sale throughout 2020. The publication will also appear online on the Charlotte, Triangle and Triad websites.

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DAVID KIM
CIO & VP IT, Research Services, Central Piedmont Community College

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“...The greatest success is not a moment in time but my growth as a leader. I learned the importance of being an active participant as a change agent. This requires an intimate knowledge of our business and an understanding of our students, so I may help in reshaping our culture. This journey has led to strong partnerships internally, granting an invitation onto the President’s Cabinet. It has allowed me to further stretch myself by partnering locally, regionally and nationally. Finally, the opportunity to mentor students has reminded me of the importance of how we positively impact the lives of others.”

JOE KRESS
CIO, Advanced Home Care

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“I believe my greatest success in my current role is building and retaining a high performing team or talented, dedicated and caring individuals. When I first joined the organization over two years ago, the IT function had been without a dedicated CIO for nine months and needed some vision. Through intentional work of myself and my management team, we have augmented the team with new people, put in retention and engagement actions and made the organization a fun place to work. As a result, we have a highly collaborative team that has a good time with over 90% retention.”

LETY NETTLES
CIO, Novant Health

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“Novant Health’s vision is to deliver a remarkable patient experience in every dimension, every time. Our digital vision adds dimensions by increasing the expectations of team members, patients and diverse communities. My greatest success has been increasing the expectations of team members by creating a common language and a liaison network that accelerates understanding, provokes collaboration, enables inclusiveness for innovation and funnels momentum in a common direction. This collaboration allows our team to deliver many game-changing solutions for patients and clinicians like a new program that benefits patients by greatly decreasing the time it takes to diagnose a stroke.”

DEREK ROOT
CTO, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“I believe that appropriate and meaningful access to technology is a great leveler of the playing field for kids. Digital resources made available to meet a specific student’s needs can remove the barriers of economic status, race, gender and other limiting factors in our society. With this in mind I have assigned a computer, available 24/7, to each of our high school students this year, and for any student in need we now provide free wireless internet access. In the last 12 months, my team has deployed computers to roughly 40,000 students and wireless hot spots to nearly 10,000.”

SANDEEP UTHRA
CIO, Truliant Federal Credit Union

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE, AND WHY?

“The key achievement is overall IT transformation (People, Process, and Technology) and providing a strategic direction to meet our business and members (customer) needs. A major focus area has been developing a culture of innovation, including a fail-fast philosophy with calculated risk to deliver innovative solutions — so we can deliver an optimal experience for our members. Overall, we have elevated IT's position within the company as a trusted adviser and enhanced overall service delivery. After all, it's not about technology, it's about the consumers of our technology (teammates and members).”
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF HONORING CIOs

Over the last 20 years, the CIO of the Year® ORBIE® Awards has grown to 15 cities. Since inception in 1998, over 800 CIOs have been honored as finalists and over 200 CIO of the Year winners have received the prestigious ORBIE Award.

GIVE GREAT CIOs THE RECOGNITION THEY DESERVE™

To nominate a deserving CIO, visit www.ORBIE.org/nominate
WHO’S WHO in CharlotteCIO

The Charlotte CIO Leadership Association (CharlotteCIO) is led by an advisory board of chief information officers from prominent Charlotte organizations who set the direction for our events, membership, and annual awards program. Our membership is comprised exclusively of CIOs (or equivalent executive roles) from public and private companies, government, education, health care and nonprofit organizations.

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**GAME-CHANGING CAREER ADVICE**
We asked four of Charlotte’s top business leaders to share the advice that has shifted their perspectives and fueled their success.

**Colleen Brannan**  
President, BRANSTORM PR & Marketing

Never eat alone. A mentor gave me a book by the same name that taught me while everyone doesn’t have time to meet, everyone eats and there’s a lot to be learned from someone over lunch.

**Cheryl Richards**  
CEO & Founding Regional Dean, Northeastern University - Charlotte

You can be everything, you just can’t be it all the time and all by yourself. This reminds me that there are times you need to let some things go and focus on other ones in the moment, and that it’s okay to ask for help.

**LJ Stambuk**  
President & CEO, World Affairs Council of Charlotte

Prioritize. Instead of trying to tackle multiple tasks at once, prioritize your responsibilities. Focus on addressing the most important tasks first. At the same time, it is not only important to prioritize your tasks but also your goals and leisure activities. Put aside everything that does not contribute to the accomplishment of your goals. If it does not add value or meaning to your life, it’s probably not of a high priority.

**Andrew Rieser**  
Co-Founder & President, Mountain Point LLC

Focus on what you can control and eliminate all excuses. In life there are so many things outside of our control and the faster you realize this the better.
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