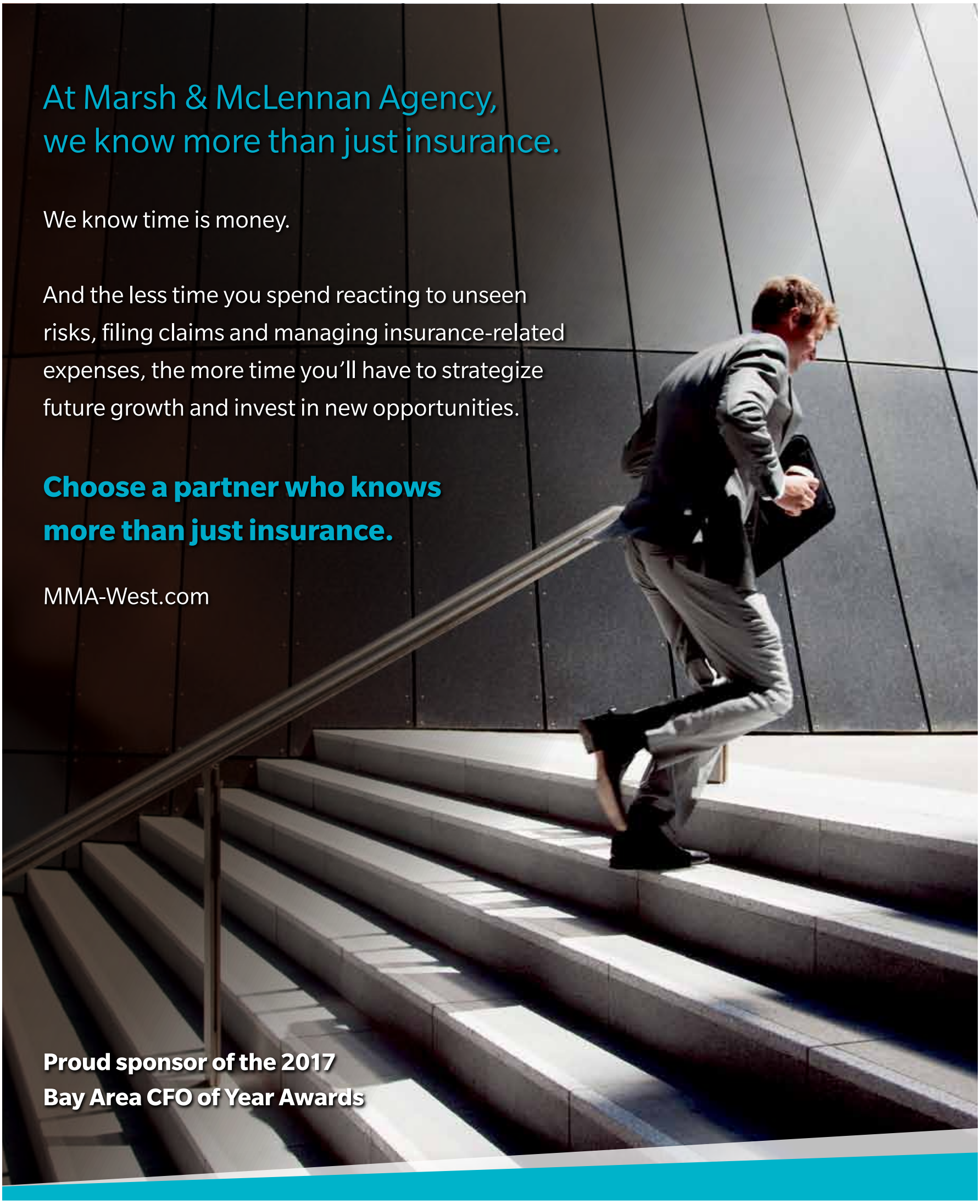
LARKIN STREET
YOUTH SERVICES

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES
ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT
May 26, 2017

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
Robin L. Washington
•
Gilead Sciences

CFO OF THE YEAR AWARDS



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES

Strategic financial leadership in a connected world

Sherilyn Adams
Executive Director
Larkin Street Youth Services

Strategy unites leaders across sectors. In business, as in the non-profit world, a defined vision around which every member of an organization can rally ensures that no one gets lost in tactical decision-making.

As the executive director of Larkin Street Youth Services, the largest non-profit provider of housing, hope, and much more to young people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, I know the stakes are too high not to take a strategic approach. Ending youth homelessness rather than simply interrupting it requires comprehensive services, not just a bed for the night. We focus on both long-term outcomes and short-term solutions, understanding both the underlying challenges to long-term independence and the immediate needs of a young person living on the streets. In addition to shelter and transitional housing, we offer comprehensive educational and employment programs, plus deep mental health services combined with wellness supports. We call this "wraparound care" and the model is proven – three out of four young people who complete our programs exit street life.

As our world becomes more complex, so must the offerings for young people in Larkin Street's care. In the last three years, we launched new, intensive college and career readiness programming to ensure our young people will be competitive on the job market, along with significant increases in staffing, infrastructure, and behavioral health services. These investments were possible through the funds raised by our $10 million Growth Campaign. Thanks to the support of our amazing community, we've almost reached our goal, and we're asking for your help to cap it off.

We focus on both long-term outcomes and short-term solutions.

We're already on the cusp of this achievement thanks to an anonymous donor who has agreed to match every new or increased donation to our Growth Campaign, up to $300,000! That's a dollar-for-dollar match, with only one catch – all gifts must be received by June 30. That's just 30 days to double your impact on our work. Please help us continue to provide high-quality services to young people experiencing homelessness by contributing today.

The business community has been integral to our work since Larkin Street was founded, over 30 years ago. We're immensely grateful to all the companies who have donated their time and resources, including this year's CFO of the Year Awards title sponsors: Deloitte and Marsh & McLennan Agency – Deloitte returning for an impressive twelfth year, and Marsh & McLennan joining us for the first time. Our two co-chairs for the CFO of the Year Awards committee, Art Fatum and Adam Moise, have also been incredibly generous with their time and efforts, ensuring our CFO of the Year Awards will again be a great success. All net proceeds from the event go to Larkin Street, making this event all the more meaningful by directly supporting our work to end youth homelessness in San Francisco.

My sincere congratulations go out to each of the CFOs who will be recognized at this year's CFO of the Year Awards ceremony, co-presented by Larkin Street and the San Francisco Business Times. They are beacons of strategic financial leadership in a world that grows more connected by the day. Thank you for your continued support of our work to end youth homelessness.

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WELLS FARGO

Communities are like families

When everyone comes together, wonderful things can happen. This event is the result of a lot of hard work by many talented people. The spirit of community is alive and well, right here and now.

Larkin Street Youth Services, you represent the heart and soul of true community.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES

CFOs step up to the challenge

Mary Huss
Publisher, San Francisco Business Times

Congratulations to our outstanding CFOs and to Larkin Street for the continued success of the Bay Area CFO of the Year Awards.

This program shines a spotlight on the importance of the CFO role, and what it takes to excel at it. At the same time, it brings to light the important and impactful work of Larkin Street in delivering critical services to homeless youth.

As you'll read in these pages, our Winners and Finalists exemplify the professionalism, integrity and mastery of the skills that make a great CFO.

One of the most gratifying parts of our partnership with Larkin Street in producing the CFO Awards over the past 12 years is that the program has introduced so many business leaders to their work. Through this program, business relationships have been forged that have led to volunteerism, board recruitment, funding and other support of Larkin Street.

Nominations were widely solicited throughout the Bay Area, aided by a Nominating Committee that managed the process, reviewed nominations and prepared summaries for the independent Selection Panel. Co-Chairs Art Fatum and Adam Moise and their dedicated committee worked tirelessly to find the very best nominees for these awards.

The selection process is thorough. The panel considers tenure, scope of responsibilities, leadership, stewardship of the company's business model and influence within the company. Also considered were the company's financial performance, sustained positive stock performance and recognition by outsiders.

Thanks to all the sponsors who generously stepped up to recognize these important corporate citizens and, in the process, support Larkin Street Youth Services.

Watch the Business Times for information about next year's awards, and visit Larkin Street Youth Services (www.larkinstreetyouth.org) to see the amazing results produced by this internationally recognized organization.

And thanks to the business community who supports these awards and the vital work that Larkin Street does on behalf of homeless youth every day.

2017 Nominating Committee

Bill Burke, VP Relationship Management, Comerica Bank

Marilyn Campbell, Larkin Street Community Volunteer

Donna Davidson, Principal, Davidson Associates

Scott Finegold, President, Finegold Commercial Real Estate

Mike Jenkins, Committee Co-Chair, VP/ Private Wealth Advisor, Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management

Scot Meyer, Analyst, Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management

Chris Myers, District Sales Manager, EMC

Laura Reale, Managing Director, The Siegfried Group, LLP

Jake Safarik, CPA, CA, Associate Manager, The Siegfried Group, LLP

Michael P. Sullivan, Financial Advisor, Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

Joseph Ham and Tess Minter, Research Interns; MBA Candidates, University of San Francisco

2017 Selection Panel

Alison Davis, Managing Partner, Fifth Era, Board Member: Royal Bank of Scotland, Diamond Foods, Fiserv, Unisys, and Ooma

Mary Huss, Publisher, San Francisco Business Times

Sharon McCollam, Winner, 2012 Hall of Fame – Lifetime Achievement Award; Former Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer, Best Buy

Byron Pollitt, Winner, 2013 Hall of Fame – Lifetime Achievement Award; Retired Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Visa

Richard Rosenberg, Retired Chief Executive Officer, Bank of America

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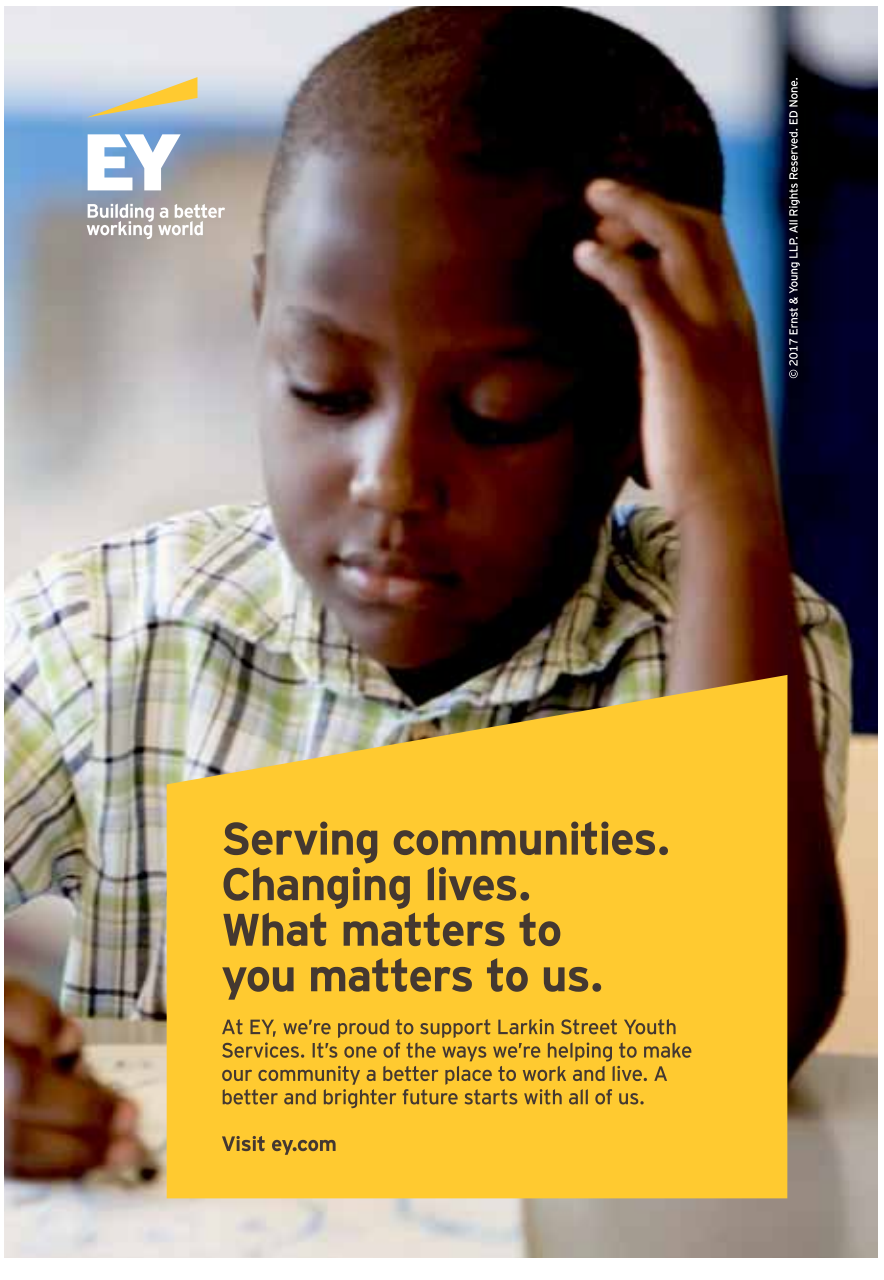
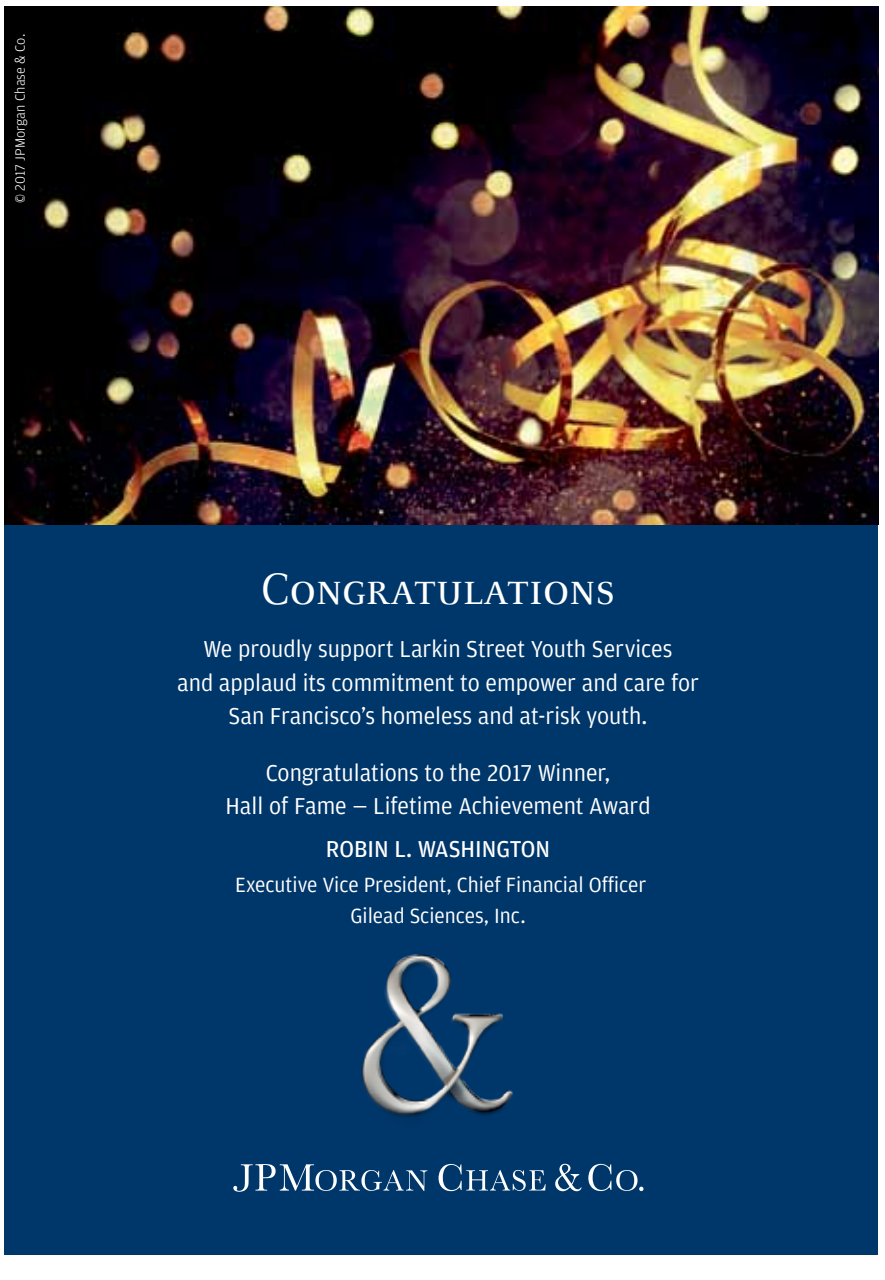




A PARTNERSHIP OF SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES AND LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES

How Larkin Street is working to end youth homelessness

Now in its 12th year, The Bay Area CFO of the Year Awards event is a partnership between the San Francisco Business Times and Larkin Street Youth Services recognizing outstanding CFOs in the Bay Area. The event has raised over $5 million since its inception to benefit Larkin Street Youth Services and the homeless youth they serve.

Larkin Street youth studying in the Technology Learning Center learn from volunteers who work in that sector.

A crisis hidden in plain sight

On any given night in San Francisco, more than 1,500 young people are on the city's streets without a safe place to call home, often through no fault of their own. Many more are hiding in plain sight: couch surfing, living in cars or abandoned buildings, or participating in the street economy for a place to sleep.

Since 1984, Larkin Street Youth Services has given more than 75,000 young people a safe place to rebuild their lives. Providing housing, education and employment training, and health and wellness supports, Larkin Street helps these young people get off the street for good.

While every young person's story is unique, there are common themes around trauma, family violence, job disruption, and housing instability. From outreach and housing to health, education, and employment, Larkin Street offers the comprehensive services a young person needs to end the cycle of homelessness and create a permanent pathway out of poverty.

Reaching out to young people

Larkin Street's drop-in centers, outreach services, and emergency shelters are a crucial first step in building trust between young people and program staff, who are a supportive and visible presence in programs and on San Francisco's streets. Providing support like food, clothing, hygiene supplies, internet access, harm-reduction kits, and more, staff work to connect young people to additional services including a medical clinic, supportive housing, and counseling.

The one-on-one relationships that youth forge with Larkin Street's counselors and case managers are crucial to supporting young people in formulating a plan to leave street life behind permanently. Larkin Street can provide supportive housing for two years or more. These housing opportunities include even deeper wraparound supports—from life skills like cooking and financial literacy to mental health counseling.

A sound education and career plan are fundamental to a young person's long-term success, yet many young people who have experienced homelessness have stopped attending school and have little or no work history. Larkin Street offers several levels of educational services, from GED tutoring to college preparation and success programs. Work opportunities are also available on a spectrum, from short-term paid work doing neighborhood improvement projects and basic job readiness classes to intensive, semester-long Learning Centers in topics including health care and technology.

Larkin Street offers the comprehensive services a young person needs to create a permanent pathway out of poverty.

Young people have access to trained staff and volunteer mentors in group and individual settings to explore career pathways, pursue internship opportunities, untangle financial aid requirements, and get job placement support. The combined aim of Larkin Street's education and employment services is to prepare young people for meaningful, sustainable, living-wage employment that makes lasting self-sufficiency possible.

Because Larkin Street focuses on the whole person, medical and behavioral health supports complete Larkin Street's continuum of services. The medical clinic provides free primary care and HIV-prevention, including confidential testing. Trained case managers use evidence-based techniques like motivational interviewing to help young people continue to plan for their futures. An innovative mindfulness curriculum delivered by UCSF helps young people cope with the stress of daily life, tools many never learned.

Technology Learning Centers

Considering the abundance of jobs in technology here in the Bay Area, it's no surprise Larkin Street recently launched a new program to prepare young people for successful careers in the technology industry. The Technology Learning Center is both rigorous and structured, requiring each participant to commit to six hours of instruction a day, five days per week, over the course of six months. Young people build the hard skills needed to pursue post-secondary degree programs and direct employment in several technology-related career tracks.

In addition to classroom and computer work, the Learning Center includes mentorship from volunteers who work in the technology sector to support skill-building, discuss real world challenges and rewards, and host them for visits at their workplaces. The goal of this Learning Center is to provide youth with a fundamental understanding of computer science including software development, web design, coding, hardware/network architecture, app development, and programming languages, as well as the connections and practical experience to find work in the field.

Setting the standard for success

Larkin Street's work is internationally recognized as setting a high standard for innovative and effective care for young people experiencing homelessness. Three out of four youth who complete Larkin Street's programs exit street life.

What's more, Larkin Street's work affects us all. According to an analysis by Bain & Co, for every dollar that Larkin Street invests in changing the trajectory of a young person's life, society yields eight times that amount in saved costs or social benefits.

TECHNOLOGY TREND

The auto-CFO

How automation is changing the business of finance

If Stuart West needs a new tech solution to help run the back office of Automattic, he doesn't go shopping for a new software suite. Instead, the company's senior vice president and CFO helps code a new system himself.

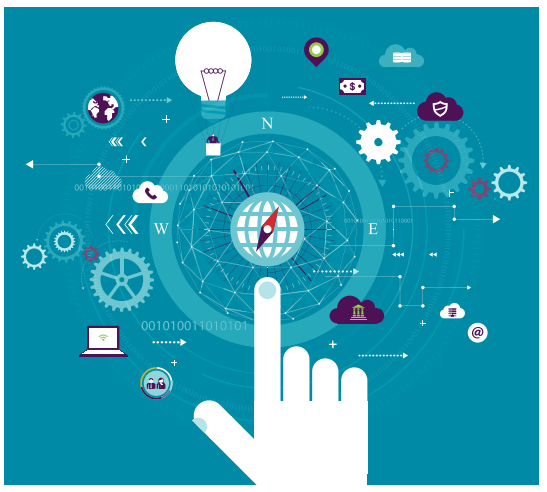
"Finance people who used to think that a spreadsheet was enough are finding in kind of a rude way that that's not enough," West said. "It's a very different job than it was 10 years ago, especially in Silicon Valley."

A recent survey of U.S. and European executives by The Economist's Intelligence Unit, for instance, found that 62 percent of respondents were planning an effort to increase automation within two years. Though conversations around the labor implications of advanced analytics, artificial intelligence and even robotics tend to focus on industrial sectors like manufacturing and logistics, consulting firm the Hackett Group also predicts a seismic shift in the finance workforce.

"It is 95 percent likely that accountants will be replaced by some form of automation over the next 20 years," the Economist report summarized.

The confluence of economic trends has made it more important to differentiate as a CFO, said Edward J. Murphy, executive vice president & chief financial officer of Presidio Bank.

"You see tech changing the industry and things getting further and further automated," Murphy said. "You can rent a CFO. There's lots of people that can do parts of my job."



For many executives, the changing competitive landscape has translated to honing a sharper focus on adding value.

At HP Inc., the printer and hardware division that emerged in 2015 after the split of former tech giant Hewlett-Packard Co., CFO Cathie Lesjak is focused on curbing paperwork. Her goal: "the individual doesn't spend any time producing the report."

To make that happen, Lesjak said HP Inc. has been investing heavily in technologies ranging from cross-platform analytics tools to soft-body robots, or softbots. In the meantime, that means reorienting the people that the company employs to carry out financial duties.

"People that I used to depend on for all the data gathering have to shift to be more analysts," Lesjak said. "There's going to be a lot of different training."

For Redwood City cancer diagnostic tech company Genomic Health, encryption and patient privacy are other top concerns, forcing the issue of technological precision. The company has also outsourced all billing in the complex health care market, freeing up G. Bradley Cole and others in his department to take on other internal pursuits.

"CFOs today are expected to oversee IT and software," said Cole, who serves as both CFO and COO of Genomic Health.

How this recalibration impacts overall employment in the industry will be an issue to watch closely in the coming years.

Already, the median number of full-time finance employees at big companies has dropped to 71 people for every $1 billion of revenue — a 40 percent decline from the 2004 median of 119 people, the Economist report on finance automation noted.

At Automattic, West counts six full-time finance and accounting employees at a 550-person company that powers more than a quarter of the world's 10 million most popular websites. The lean headcount increasingly pushes them to take the technical skills into their own hands. "We're essentially a group of software geeks, me included," said West.

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PAOLO VESCIA

Long-range thinking to guide biotech innovator's growth

Robin L. Washington

COMPANY: Gilead Sciences

TITLE: Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2008-present

BACKGROUND: Hyperion (acquired by Oracle), PeopleSoft (acquired by Oracle), Tandem Computers

When it comes to the way companies spend money, Robin Washington has seen both ends of the spectrum in her career bridging high tech and biotech.

Before the dot-com boom, Washington got her start in tech with companies like Tandem Computers and PeopleSoft, which relied on fast product cycles and lean spending to get ahead. When she accepted the CFO job at biopharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences in 2008, however, Washington knew she was in for a much longer-term capital management challenge.

"Software is a faster-moving, short-cycle industry," Washington said. "This was going to be an industry where you're making significant capital investments up front."

Among the first orders of business at the Foster City -based therapeutics company Gilead was better aligning financial planning and long drug development and approvals processes. Instead of two separate one- and 10-year planning cycles, Washington migrated to one three-year system.

"If you think about the cycles in our business, a year doesn't even get you through one stage in the approval process," she explained.

That's not to say that learning the ins and outs of drug development has been easy.

To evaluate the competitive landscape and scope out potential M&A deals, Washington recalls a sharp learning curve. Navigating deals like the $11 billion acquisition of Hepatitis C drugmaker Pharmassett in 2011 helped bring the science to life.

"For a person with a high school chemistry and biology education, it was huge," Washington said. "I had to understand the disease state, how we think about clinical trials, what was happening competitively, the direction of science."

Adapting to new fields is a role Washington has always relished. She didn't even really set out to be a CFO.

"I studied accounting because my dad told me I had to," says the Midwest native, who studied business at the University of Michigan and holds an MBA from Pepperdine University. "I thought I was going to be a lawyer."

Washington started her career in public accounting and went on to work at the Federal Reserve, but she broke into tech at enterprise software provider PeopleSoft in 1996. Establishing a new European headquarters office in the Netherlands took her to Europe for three years, after which Washington returned to Silicon Valley and eventually became controller.

Ironically, Washington says it was the dot-com bust that turned out to be among the most beneficial experiences of her career.

"Finance often plays a larger role when things aren't as good," she said. "I figured out that where I thrived was large, complex businesses."

Outside of her work at Gilead, stepping into a board role with industrial giant Honeywell has also been instructive for Washington when it comes to navigating corporate integration after a big transaction.

"It can be very valuable sometimes to step out of your own industry," Washington said, noting that it was Honeywell's reputation as a "serial acquirer" that piqued her interest.

Mentoring and STEM training, particularly for women, are also high priorities. In addition to leading Gilead's women's employee resource group, Washington started finance and IT rotation programs to help young talent gain exposure to the company's global operations.

"As a woman of color, the ability to be a role model and focus on making diversity and inclusion an initiative is really critical," she said. "I was fortunate to work for companies where people saw the value of developing people internally."

PUBLIC COMPANY – LARGE

Employees engaged as participants in company well-being

WINNER
Stephen M. Robb
•
The Clorox Company

Clorox isn't nearly the same company it was when Steve Robb joined the corporate development program in 1989 fresh out of San Jose State University.

Best known for household staples like cleaning products, the Oakland-based company has ballooned to encompass food (Hidden Valley salad dressing), cosmetics (Burt's Bees) and digestive health (Renew Life).

For Robb, who was named CFO in 2011, selectivity remains the name of the game.

"It's not enough to get good businesses. You need to get good deals," Robb said. "It's a lot of work to filter through."

Along the way to the company's top finance post, Robb has cycled through roles overseeing financial planning and U.S. accounting, along with stints abroad. A few memorable posts involved navigating Latin America during hyperinflation and a currency crisis in Mexico.

Now, he credits sound strategic vision and advising with boosting his value to the company.

"When people bring the finance person to the table, they expect an independent, objective point of view," Robb said. "It's not a sales pitch."

Though Clorox gets plenty of inbound pitches from businesses in search of a deep-pocketed parent company, Robb said expansion opportunities are only made possible with a consistent focus on cost reduction.

Since 2004 he has overseen the company's efforts to trim expenses, which Clorox says saves $100 million a year. The effort is a key pillar of the 2020 growth strategy for the company, which reported revenue up 5 percent year-over-year at $1.4 billion for fourth quarter of last year.

Stephen M. Robb

COMPANY: The Clorox Company

TITLE: Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 1989-present

"Cost savings is as important as growth because it fuels growth," Robb said. "There are no sacred cows."

One way the company has looked to maintain that focus without sacrificing employee morale is leaning on staff to identify potential areas for improvement themselves. Clorox has a core steering committee for cost savings, then project teams that form around specific initiatives.

"It's people-led. We don't do this on the backs of our people," Robb said. "In many companies it's not a good thing. It's cuts."

In addition to keeping an eye on costs and shopping for solid investments — like the $295 million Renew Life deal that put Clorox on the map in the trendy probiotic space last spring — Robb said he is focused heavily on internal training and retention efforts. The company's global learning and development program was created in house and routinely features executives offering courses in various offices.

"We hired a former university professor and gave him a big budget. We don't outsource this," Robb said. "I just taught a course a few weeks ago on coaching."

At the reins of galloping growth

FINALIST
Robert Eulau
•
Sanmina Corporation

Preparing a new product for takeoff — and then watching it scale at warp speed — is nothing new for Robert Eulau. He joined Hewlett-Packard in 1985, for instance, just as personal computing was taking off.

"It was very rapid growth," Eulau recalled. "It went from about $30 million a month in revenue to $200 million a month when I left."

Now at the financial helm of San Jose-based contract manufacturing company Sanmina Corporation, he finds himself at the intersection of emerging trends in advanced manufacturing, like the Internet of Things and cloud-based industrial software.

The 45,000-person company with factories in 20 countries makes everything from circuit boards and cables to data center infrastructure. Today, the company's biggest markets are industrial, medical and defense customers. Sectors with strict regulatory requirements, like the automotive business, are other target markets.

Most recently, Eulau has helped shape Sanmina's foray deeper into advanced manufacturing technologies and services. He cites the company's recently introduced 42Q cloud-based software division as one big area to watch as businesses look for better insight into their supply chains.

"It allows us to connect to a lot of machines and a lot of workspaces in the factory and do analytics," Eulau explained.

Big investments in new technology were enabled in part by Eulau's focus on strengthening Sanmina's balance sheet. Since joining the company in 2009, he has decreased the company's debt leverage ratio almost eight-fold. Sanmina's market cap has also increased from approximately $600 million to $2.7 billion on Eulau's watch.

He credits a focus on solidifying cash flow, striving for consistent margins and improved diversification of customers for the company's financial improvement. One metric Eulau said has proved especially useful for the company to implement and track is "controllable free cash flow."

A native of Southern California, Eulau has held positions at HP and tech companies like Rambus, Inc. that spanned accounting, marketing and IT, among other disciplines.

At Sanmina, tax policy has been another focus area for Eulau, particularly given the constantly evolving global economics of manufacturing. Implementing a new tax strategy to drive profit back to the U.S. was one highlight.

Meanwhile, Eaulau notes countries like Mexico and Malaysia gaining traction as larger manufacturing hubs, reducing the dominance of China. Eulau expects growth moving forward in target markets increasingly testing international manufacturing waters.

"We're a contract manufacturing business and a lot of industrials haven't outsourced much," he said. "It's pretty clear this will be a growth year for us."

Robert Eulau

COMPANY: Sanmina Corporation

TITLE: Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2009-present

BACKGROUND: Alien Technology Corporation, Rambus, Inc., Hewlett-Packard

Building ties by knowing core business

FINALIST
Brian Magstadt
•
Simpson Strong-Tie

Simpson Strong-Tie might not be a consumer household name, but it's hard to build a house without encountering the company's myriad offerings.

"All our products are typically behind the wall," CFO Brian Magstadt explains. "You can't go into a Home Depot without running into 40 feet of product."

Wood construction connectors, fasteners and concrete repair systems are all among the offerings of Simpson Strong-Tie and parent company Simpson Manufacturing Co., where Magstadt has served as CFO since 2012. A certified CPA, he ascended the ranks through reporting and accounting after joining the company in 2004.

Though Simpson Manufacturing recently reported $219 million in first quarter revenue, up 10 percent from the end of last year, it hasn't all been smooth sailing during Magstadt's tenure.

As a company rooted in residential building, the 2008 housing crisis registered as a major shock to the core business.

"One of the statistics we monitor that closely affects our business is housing starts," Magstadt said, noting that the 1.2 million-plus annual U.S. housing starts reported today are still well below the roughly 2 million yearly starts preceding the crash.

As a result, Magstadt has helped guide Simpson's push for greater diversification. Building out markets in Europe and elsewhere is one priority, along with expansion into categories like design and CAD software for builders. Acquisitions are one option, particularly for specialized products like concrete repair or strengthening that would allow the company to sell to bigger infrastructure customers.

"We're looking to grow those other categories," he said.

Share prices have jumped from around $25 in the aftermath of the housing crisis five years ago to $41-48 in the last six months. Magstadt credits differentiation in the crowded construction market, specializing in highly technical jobs like building for seismic resistance.

"We're not a commodity company," he said, emphasizing a focus on engineering.

Though Magstadt grew up just a few miles away from Simson headquarters in Pleasanton, the building industry was a totally new experience. An alumnus of Santa Clara University's MBA program, he worked for a small Bay Area CPA firm before joining Simpson Manufacturing.

His philosophy: get to know your core business, even if you don't plan to start doing the building from the ground up. Spending some time with product managers or joining ride-alongs with the sales team, Magstadt said, have proved hugely beneficial.

"I'm not necessarily going to be in there doing engineering calculations, but I'm spending time with the people that do," he said.

Brian Magstadt

COMPANY: Simpson Strong-Tie

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2004-present

BACKGROUND: Financial Reporting Manager, Simpson Manufacturing Co.

PUBLIC COMPANY – SMALL TO MEDIUM

Leader of change in how health care is delivered

WINNER
G. Bradley Cole
•
Genomic Health

Numbers have always come naturally for Brad Cole. Even at a young age, growing up in Kansas and California, Cole remembers a keen interest in everyday errands that offered clues about economics.

"Things like going to the grocery store were fun for me," Cole said. "It was like, 'Where does this all come from?'"

It may come as little surprise, then, that Cole would go on to land his first CFO job at 32 years of age at life science startup Applied Biosystems. Since then, he's continued to hone his skills in the tumultuous world of health care, today serving as both the COO and CFO of Redwood City cancer diagnostic tech company Genomic Health.

After joining Genomic in 2004 and steering the company through a 2005 IPO and follow-on offerings totaling $115 million, Cole is focused on growing the business during a period of much broader discussion about how health care is delivered in high cost markets.

As a provider of genome-based testing that promises to tailor medical treatment to individual health, the company is on the front lines of the so-called precision medicine movement.

The selling point for doctors and hospitals today is that diagnostic technology can be cheaper (and more effective) than some drugs. For every $20-30 currently spent on pharmaceuticals, Cole notes, consumers and their medical providers spend only about $1 on personalized diagnostics.

A path to market, however, isn't always clear.

"The challenge here is this is a laboratory service, and the regulatory agencies aren't familiar with it," Cole said. "Ten years, 20 years from now, I think there's going to be an office of the FDA regulating laboratory diagnostics."

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For Cole, work in life science was "somewhat serendipitous." His mother, a nurse, passed away from brain cancer when Cole was 28 years old, not long before he became the CFO at early gene sequencing startup Applied Biosystems.

"Life science became a passion partly because of that, but I didn't take any math or science in college," Cole said. "I just spent time with scientists."

Though he has taken care to understand Genomics' products and position in the marketplace, he said that being mindful of not over- or underselling investors on the science is a constant balancing act.

"As a CFO who's out front telling the story, you have to be very reticent about what you know or you don't know," Cole said. "You have to be careful in these roles. You can mislead people."

In addition to exploring other types of tests, he said Genomic is also in the process of building out its sales team, which so far includes 200 domestic employees and 50-60 people concentrated in Japan, Canada and Western Europe. The company is also eyeing an expansion beyond testing early-stage tumors, to analyzing patients' blood or urine for other medical conditions, Cole said.

G. Bradley Cole

COMPANY: Genomic Health

TITLE: Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2004-present

BACKGROUND: EndoVascular Technologies (acquired by Guidant Corporation), Applied Biosystems (acquired by Perkin-Elmer)

PUBLIC COMPANY – SMALL TO MEDIUM

Once-humble devices now big-data royalty

FINALIST
Matthew C. Garrett
•
iRhythm Technologies

Accepting the CFO role at San Francisco's iRhythm Technologies was an opportunity for Matthew Garrett to bring his career full circle. Over two decades in life science, he has progressed from old school pacemakers to iRhythm's digital cardiac monitoring technology.

So, how has the medical device industry changed in the meantime?

"That would require a bottle of scotch and a few hours," Garrett said. "The overall market has changed significantly."

iRhythm, for its part, sells a combination of wearable sensors and cloud-based heart monitoring software to detect cardiac arrhythmias. The nine-year-old company made headlines last fall with a $107 million IPO that surged past analyst expectations.

"Last year we kind of got to that decision point. We needed an infusion of cash," Garrett said. "Going into the open market, you never know how you're going to be received."

Among the major strategic shifts he has overseen in four years at the financial helm of the company is a move away from a traditional third party billing model of sales to the consumer, which sometimes left providers on the hook if insurance companies decided against reimbursement. Instead, iRhythm now contracts directly with Medicare and insurance companies, negotiating its own reimbursement rates.

"We think of our self as a healthcare service rather than a product," Garrett said. "It puts the risk directly on us as the company to get paid, but it also opens doors."

Garret grew up in Iowa, and he's up front about the fact that making the leap to high tech medical devices was far from a seamless transition. Starting out in smaller job markets in the Midwest made it more difficult to break into corporate finance.

"Trying to establish a meaningful job was hard," Garrett said. "I spent four or five months working night jobs and working as a waiter."

He worked his way up the financial ladder at cardiovascular device maker Guidant Corporation, where the diagnostic market he is now targeting with iRhythm was far from a focus area.

"In those days, there was very little appetite for moving into the diagnostic realm," Garrett recalled. At iRhythm, Garrett said the company is considering a number of strategic paths to take advantage of the plentiful health data generated by its biometric sensors.

"We capture beat to beat heart rates for the full 14 days," he said. "There are any number of avenues we could go down."

Matthew C. Garrett

COMPANY: iRhythm Technologies, Inc.

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2013-present

BACKGROUND: Corventis (acquired by Medtronic), Cogentus Pharmaceuticals, Affymetrix, Guidant Corporation

Keeping it local is a good business model

FINALIST
Edward J. Murphy
•
Presidio Bank

Edward Murphy doesn't work in tech, but he still got the full startup experience when he helped launch Presidio Bank in 2006.

Murphy, well versed in investment banking for community banks, was brought in just before the San Francisco-based upstart bank officially launched. Though the venture was well capitalized, the timing right before the financial crisis could have been disastrous without careful oversight.

"We didn't leverage up our capital really rapidly or make a lot of investments in exotic securities," Murphy said. "We had a good loan portfolio going into the crisis."

Of the total $600 million in loans issued during the life of Presidio, the bank has written off less than $2 million, Murphy said. On one loan, for instance, the organization worked with the borrower for five years to try to reach a satisfying agreement.

What makes Presidio and other community banks distinct from credit unions or commercial banks is the fact that funds are raised and loaned locally. Community banks also don't have larger financial parent companies.

"Our bread and butter tends to be the businesses in our communities. We also do quite a bit of commercial real estate," Murphy said of how Presidio's $700 million in assets are put into action.

It's a sector Murphy has come to know well after previous roles as an investment banker working with community banks at Bay Area firms Hoefer & Arnett and Van Kasper & Company, plus global investment bank RBC Capital Markets. Though community banks haven't been spared the backlash incurred by bigger institutions after markets collapsed during the recession, Murphy sees an important distinction.

"Community banks have been painted with the same broad brush as the big banks," Murphy said. "The market has changed, but community banks are still core service providers."

With the Bay Area back in an economic upcycle for the moment, more time of late has been dedicated to planning new branches and building out business infrastructure. Presidio Bank now has 60 full time employees and five branches in San Francisco, Walnut Creek, San Rafael, Palo Alto and, most recently, San Mateo.

As Murphy is quick to point out, expansion also highlights the need for careful planning to account for variation in the bank's regions.

"Parts of the Bay Area are very different," Murphy explained. "We know that the East Bay and the North Bay are going to generate a lot of loans, but we're not going to get a lot of big deposits. Certainly San Francisco and Palo Alto can generate a lot of deposits."

Edward J. Murphy

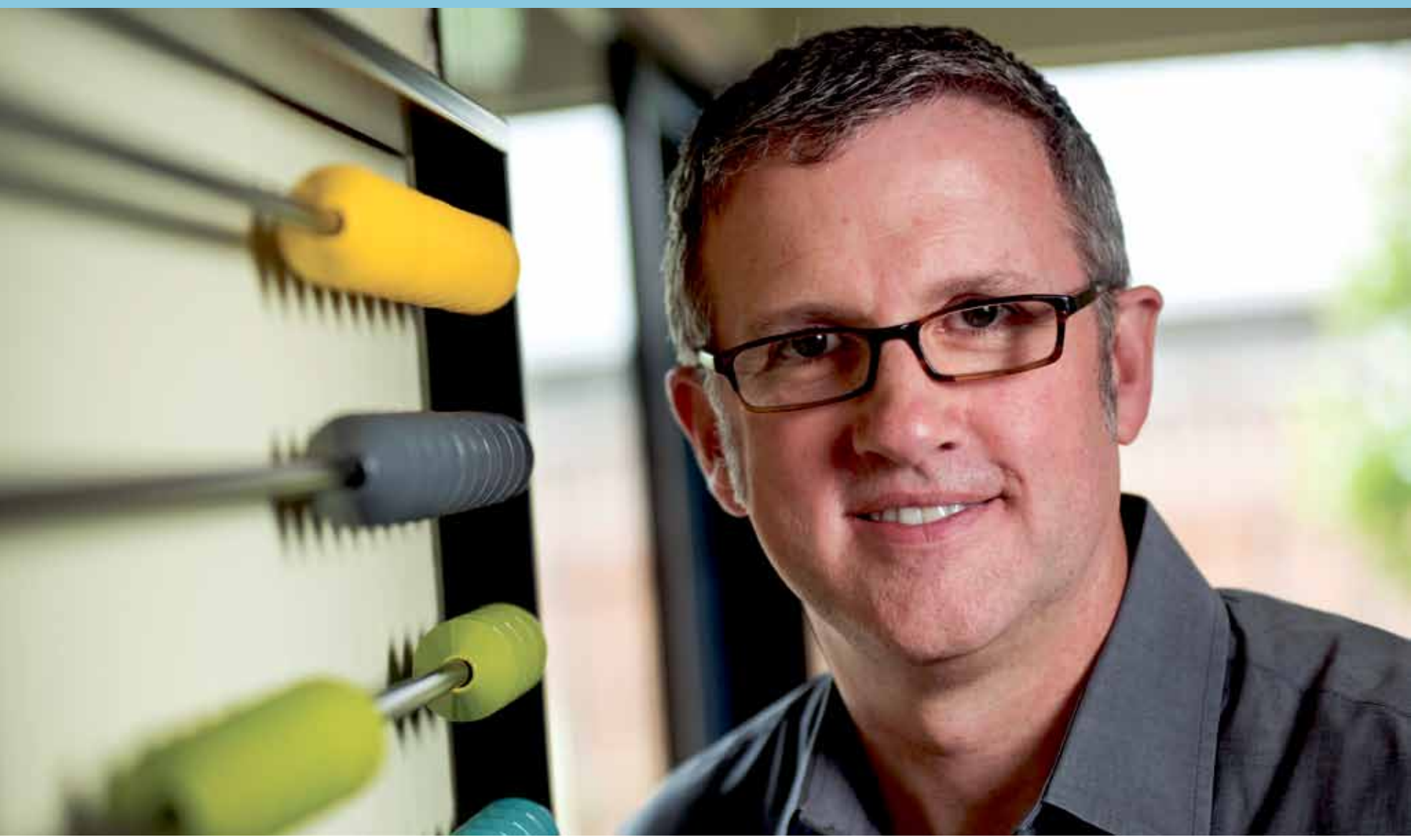
COMPANY: Presidio Bank

TITLE: Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2006-present

BACKGROUND: Hoefer & Arnett, Van Kasper & Company, RBC Capital Markets, Bank of America

EMERGING COMPANY



PAOLO VESCIA

Computer science affinity dovetails with CFO career

WINNER
Stuart West
•
Automattic

Becoming a corporate finance chief wasn't exactly what Stuart West had in mind when he set out as a student at Yale for a career in international relations.

"I definitely didn't even necessarily know what the CFO role was," West recalled. "I was very focused on actually becoming a diplomat."

After stints with the U.S. State Department and United Nations, West shifted gears to finance. He credits an early job on Wall Street at J.P. Morgan for exposing him to more hands-on work with entrepreneurs and tech companies, providing an avenue to pursue another longtime passion: computer science.

Today, as the CFO of Automattic, a parent company of Wordpress, West has carved out a career that combines open source information, tech and finance. Now at 550 employees worldwide, the company has raised upwards of $190 million but is less focused on an IPO than working internally to position its product for long-term success.

"There's probably about an 18-month cycle of things you need to do to go public. We're not doing any of those," West said. "We will stay private as long as we can. It gives us more flexibility."

Though West remembers his first startup experience at a company called TimeDance in the late 1990s as "a complete failure," he landed subsequent jobs at TiVo, Yahoo!, InfoSpace and Kno (acquired by Intel). At TiVo, West saw the company grow in revenue from $4 million to $260 million, even during the dark fundraising days of the dot-com bust.

Two subsequent roles as an entrepreneur in residence at Silicon Valley venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz and as a board member of Wikipedia parent the Wikimedia Foundation cemented an interest in open source software. An emerging force in the open source movement, Automattic caught his attention, but he didn't join the company until there were about 100 employees in early 2012.

"You don't want a really aggressive, business-focused person too early," West said. "I joke that I interviewed for the job I have now for about three and a half years."

Though fundraising and scaling Automattic's finance department have kept him busy, West has also found time to bolster his own web development skills, contributing code to new projects. Technical fluency has helped keep the finance department lean at about half a dozen fulltime employees, and West expects the trend toward tech-proficient finance executives to continue.

"I'm able to prototype just about anything," he said. "My advice to anyone who wants to be a CFO is learn software development."

Stuart West

COMPANY: Automattic

TITLE: Senior Vice President of Operations and Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2012-present

BACKGROUND: Andreessen Horowitz, Kno (acquired by Intel), Yahoo!, TiVo, JP Morgan & Co.

Connecting the dots between systems

FINALIST
Matt Langdon
•
MuleSoft

Matt Langdon was feeling jaded about managing other people's money when he decided to dive into high tech.

Just before the apex of the dot-com boom, the Detroit native was working as an investment manager for high-net worth individuals.

"I frankly had gotten a bit disillusioned," Langdon said. "I felt like I was betting on the horses, not the track."

So he decided to take a chance on Silicon Valley.

Langdon got the operational experience he was looking for as a product line manager at Siebel Systems, which would go on to be purchased by Oracle for $5.8 billion. He moved up the financial totem pole to the CFO role at TIBCO Software, setting the scene for his most recent role orchestrating the $221 million March IPO of enterprise application network company MuleSoft.

"We've been preparing for this since I got in the door, and even before," Langdon said. "It was time to move out of mom and dad's house."

MuleSoft is based in San Francisco and positions its API-based product as a tech backbone for enterprise customers to connect and coordinate back-end apps. Among the company's biggest target markets are businesses in industries just now grappling with full-on digitization, from restaurant chains to financial institutions.

"There are banks out there that have 7,000 applications," Langdon said. "They need a new and better way to tie those things together"

As a company built on efficient organization of business systems, he said the pressure is also on for MuleSoft to walk the walk internally.

The company's 900 employees use some 200 apps, but Langdon said the company is exceedingly cautious about avoiding unnecessary or incompatible systems.

"All too often in this industry still, you have people that turn to systems as a panacea or a quick fix," he said. "If you simply turn over a bad process into a codified system, I don't think you'll have the desired results."

Extrapolating into the wider world of business, MuleSoft projects that connecting the dots on corporate apps could be a market opening worth $29 billion.

"We believe this is the last great unsolved problem in enterprise tech," Langdon said.

Matt Langdon

COMPANY: MuleSoft

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2014-present

BACKGROUND: TIBCO Software, Siebel Systems, Bass Brothers Enterprises, Donaldson Lufkin & Jenrette

Knowing the market is part of the job

FINALIST
Christopher "Criss" Harms
•
ForeScout Technologies

It was supposed to be a ready-made IPO when Criss Harms signed on as CFO of San Jose network security company ForeScout Technologies. Four years later, he says the 800-person company is actually ready to go public.

"I was brought in because the company wanted to go public in 2013," Harms recalled. "They said, 'Hey, our house is in great order, and we just want you to build the second story.'"

It was "a painful couple of years" between then and now, requiring a near-total restatement of finances and implementation of back-end systems. Among the toughest challenges? Helping investors and founders "understand that their perception of reality was not closely related to reality," Harms said.

Given the way markets have aligned, with Internet of Things technology bringing more and more devices onto enterprise networks, Harms doesn't worry about the delay in going public. Today, ForeScout is among Silicon Valley's unicorn startups with a valuation of $1 billion, and the company confidentially filed IPO paperwork in February.

"This is a ubiquitous challenge for all CIOs at large organizations and down into middle markets," Harms said. "We choose to focus in several key verticals."

About 16 percent of the world's 2,000 largest companies are represented among ForeScout's base of some 2,200 customers. Harms said the company is focused on increasing penetration among Global 2000 players, prioritizing complex finance, health care and retail businesses. Both civilian and military government agencies are other target customers.

ForeScout's technology is differentiated from competitors in the increasingly crowded enterprise cybersecurity space, Harms said, because of the capability to not only detect but also analyze devices connected to secure networks.

"Visibility for us means people can identify every IP address on the network," he said. "We can tell you what the device is and how you can assess it."

For Harms, ForeScout would be his first IPO but far from his first big tech deal. The Central Valley native who started his career in tech at Hewlett-Packard has gone on to help orchestrate a slew of major tech acquisitions, among them: Counterpane (acquired by British Telecom), PSS Systems (acquired by IBM), Transitive Corporation (acquired by IBM) and Sentient Networks (acquired by Cisco).

"I only picked one that was a known loser at the time," Harms says now. "I knew I had made a mistake by Thursday of my first week."

Far from exclusively focused on number crunching, he credits an understanding of strategic positioning with helping to advance his finance career.

"A CFO is not a bean counter. A CFO needs to understand markets, needs to understand competitive landscapes," Harms said. "Those things are all fundamental."

Christopher "Criss" Harms

COMPANY: ForeScout Technologies, Inc.

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2013-present

BACKGROUND: Counterpane (acquired by British Telecom), PSS Systems (acquired by IBM), Transitive Corporation (acquired by IBM) and Sentient Networks (acquired by Cisco), Hewlett-Packard, Ernst & Young

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Unique financial strategies for a venerable nonprofit

Carl Nichols

COMPANY: Girl Scouts of Northern California

TITLE: Chief Business Officer

TENURE: 2013-present

BACKGROUND: Outlook Ventures, Pacific Bell, Scrivner, Booz Allen & Hamilton

WINNER
Carl Nichols
•
Girl Scouts of Northern California

After a career spanning high tech investing, telecos and management consulting, Carl Nichols was no stranger to sophisticated manufacturing and marketing operations.

But that all pales in comparison to the flagship annual event for his current organization: the Girl Scouts' famous annual cookie sale.

"From the outside it always amazed me, having spent some time in supply chains," said Nichols, who is the chief business officer of the nonprofit Girl Scouts of Northern California. "You have a four- or five-week window, and we're going to sell 4 or 5 million boxes."

In four years as chief business officer of the nonprofit Girl Scouts of Northern California, he's learned that manufacturing is centralized, with all cookies coming from one baker. Distribution runs from the bakery through a limited number of warehouses, then to 100 different local sales hubs (like volunteer living rooms).

All told, the cookie program accounts for nearly two-thirds of the more than $20 million in revenue the group reported in 2016, up from $15 million five years earlier in 2011, federal nonprofit filings show. The annual haul helps make the organization largely self-sustaining, generating over 80 percent of revenue from programming like cookies and summer camps, rather than fickler donations.

"We have the complexity of a larger business even though we're smaller," Nichols said. "We have 10 different revenue streams."

The Girl Scouts' regional organization counts 175 full-time staff and a network of more than 30,000 volunteers in a service area spanning 33,000 square miles of the state. To make sense of it all, Nichols has worked with the group's board and staff to develop a five-year plan, which also takes into account a portfolio of 29 properties like camps and program centers.

Reconciling revenue for camp registration, stores, cookies, activities and membership is one obstacle. Appealing to younger generations is a more nebulous challenge.

In the past two years, the Girl Scouts have started a digital program to develop websites and e-marketing for the companies "to make the whole program as girls' interests evolve continually relevant," Nichols said. In Silicon Valley, he has also worked with the NASA Ames research center to develop a new robotics program and space-themed cookies.

"We actually brought in national and are working with them now in partnership," Nichols said of a plan to also start offering new "space discovery badges."

Prior to the Girl Scouts, Nichols led strategic planning and financial management for Pacific Bell and applied his dual degrees in business and computer science to a range of early-stage tech startups and investments. In his first nonprofit role, he oversaw the Oakland Zoo's effort to develop plans, funding and approvals for an $80 million expansion.

"It's my third or fourth career, depending on how you look at it," Nichols said of his post with the Girl Scouts. "Definitely not pre-destined."

Crunching numbers for the greater good

FINALIST
Eric Larra
•
Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco

In the maelstrom of affordable housing challenges facing the Bay Area, Eric Larra and the nonprofit Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco find themselves on the bleeding edge of efforts to address surging rates of homelessness.

As one of the City of San Francisco's go-to contractors, Larra has helped steer planning and creation of the "navigation center" model piloted in the Mission District in 2015. The goal: to reduce barriers for connecting homeless residents to permanent housing, health care and other services by allowing couples, pets and personal effects usually barred by shelters.

"Back then, it was a very political thing. Very risky," recalls Larra, who has served as the organization's CFO since 2014. "A lot of eyes were on the success or failure of this initiative."

Though long-term housing for low-income residents remains a huge obstacle in the Bay Area, an expansion is planned for up to four additional navigation centers. Larra said Episcopal Community Services has recorded two consecutive years in the black and seen its annual budget grow from $20 million to $28 million in the last three years.

Larra's journey to the heart of the region's affordable housing crisis started a long way from San Francisco. He was born in Africa and grew up in France, immigrating to the U.S. with $800 to attend college at the University of Massachusetts.

After working his way through college at a gas station, he made his way to his dream city of San Francisco. His first gig on the West Coast was also at a gas station, but he soon landed a job at local business luminary Levi Strauss & Co.

"It was totally what I aspired to," Larra said of his time juggling finances and marketing for multiple brands at Levi's. "It was an icon of the 70s and civil rights."

After surviving a leveraged buyout, Larra left the company in 2000 to travel and get married. When he returned to the Bay Area, he found that he'd had a change of heart about for-profit finance work.

"Financial people have a tendency to think money is everything," Larra said. "Money is just a tool to get things done."

He accepted a role with the Sierra Club and then moved to a job in affordable housing as controller of the nonprofit Northern California Presbyterian Homes and Service. Now, Larra is focused on growing Episcopal Community Services, implementing a new accounting system, restructuring IT services and upgrading systems for 160 users.

Honing a more efficient way to work with the City of San Francisco on pricey projects, like the multimillion-dollar navigation centers, is another focus.

Eric Larra

COMPANY: Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2014-present

BACKGROUND: Northern California Presbyterian Homes and Service, Sierra Club, Levi Strauss & Co.

Factoring mission success into ROI

FINALIST
Holden Lee
•
Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund

Holden Lee took full advantage of his dual upbringing in the U.S. and Asia when he started his career in finance.

Shortly after the 1987 market crash, Lee found himself merging interests in international relations and investment banking by working for a firm focused on private power stations, toll roads and other complex global privatization projects.

"Emerging market companies couldn't afford to build new construction," Lee said. "That was my intro to very large, complicated multi-stakeholder financial projects."

The deals didn't get much easier when he moved into experimental private equity investing focused on water during the late 1990s. The trinity of public, private and philanthropic investing was completed when Lee moved into nonprofit education reform, laying the groundwork for his work today as the chief financial & investment Officer for San Francisco's $2 billion Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund.

"For me, the Federation is the culmination of everything," Lee said. "We have everything from private equity to hedge fund investments we have to look out for."

In addition to institutional investing, the Federation makes about $175 million worth of grants annually over some 10,000 transactions. Donor-advised funds are another growing area for the organization, which can entail gifts that come in multiple asset types.

Day to day, Lee sees his role as a combination of "keeping the trains running" for the organization's varied programs and refining the broader working definition of "blended return on investment." The latter focus, he said, requires tighter coordination between programming, finance and other departments at the Federation.

"It's not just a financial return, but also a blended mission return," Lee explained. "Just this ROI concept means that different parts of the house need to understand each other much more."

Part of the challenge lies in measuring non-traditional financial returns. Long an obstacle for impact investors, Lee is increasingly looking to data — and area tech firms who might be able to help parse that data — to assist in capturing and analyzing information related to multifaceted grant making and programming goals.

"The Bay Area is a great place to be," he said. "We've got a lot of the cutting edge providers here."

Lee also isn't alone in applying his varied background in for-profit and nonprofit experience to the organization's varied pursuits. He calls adaptability and flexibility crucial to the Federation's evolving model.

"Very seldom is there someone saying, 'I only do this,'" Lee said. "The kind of work we do requires a crossover."

Holden Lee

COMPANY: Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund

TITLE: Chief Financial & Investment Officer

TENURE: 2013-present

BACKGROUND: Cambridge Associates; Stupski Foundation; The Trust for Public Land; Aqua International Partners (TPG); Smith Barney, Harris Upham & Co.

NON-PUBLIC COMPANY

Solid busines values build foundation for global expansion

PAOLO VESCIA

WINNER
George R. Lotti, Jr.
•
Heat and Control, Inc.

Deciding which checks to sign and which ones could wait used to be a daily dilemma for George Lotti.

When he took over as CFO of Hayward-based Heat and Control, Inc. in 2001, the food manufacturing company had tapped out its credit line with the bank and was struggling financially.

Fast forward to today, and the company counts 1,350 employees and $400 million in annual revenue — a headcount that has more than doubled since Lotti first joined in 1991, and a yearly haul that has increased more than four-fold in that timespan.

"That bank that walked out on us has been calling us for a decade saying, 'Can we do business again?'" Lotti said with a laugh. "The answer is no."

A Bay Area native and graduate of Santa Clara University, Lotti started his finance career in auditing but soon grew disillusioned with business litigation. He said the field revealed a dark side to contentious proceedings like company valuations.

"Excuse my language, but people were screwing each other," Lotti recalled. "People tried to take everything they did out of a company and put it into their personal pockets."

When the opportunity to join Heat and Control's finance department came along in 1993, Lotti jumped at the chance to work for a family-owned and operated company. He cites examples like the company's president, Tony Caridis, who Lotti recalls working his way up to the c-suite from pushing a broom and making traveling sales calls.

Though the company's brand isn't necessarily familiar to everyday consumers, Heat and Control equipment is used for food packaging and cooking on such a large scale that it's hard to miss.

George R. Lotti, Jr.

COMPANY: Heat and Control, Inc.

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 1993-present

BACKGROUND: Hood and Strong, LLP

"Our equipment handles from 15,000 to 40,000 pounds of product an hour," Lotti said. "We deal with very large food producers."

With the globalization of the food industry, expansion to several domestic facilities and international divisions in Australia, Mexico, China, India and Brazil has been another focal point in recent years. Far from focused exclusively on outsourcing, Lotti said the goal of establishing bases of operations abroad is to provide access to customers in international markets.

"The company is not the same small company," he explained. "We've expanded our global footprint while not leaving the U.S. market."

Though worldwide food demand is anticipated to increase dramatically in the coming decades if expected population gains pan out, Heat and Control is also looking to branch out into other industries. Pharmaceuticals, for instance, are another industry where automated manufacturing processes help navigate stringent safety rules.

Agility is key in multifaceted finance job

FINALIST

Nancy Daum

•

Pereira & O'Dell

It's not every day that you find an upstart company looking to buy out its financial backers after just a few years in business.

Still, that was the deal Nancy Daum helped orchestrate for San Francisco digital advertising agency Pereira & O'Dell in 2015, seven years after the company was founded. The move countered an ad industry trend toward consolidation under centralized holding companies, but Daum remembers the firm's founders seeing value in breaking away from their Brazilian parent company, Grupo ABC.

"They just felt like it was reasonable for them to own more of the company up here," she said. "Since then, we've been able to add clients."

Coca-Cola, eBay, Intel, Kellogg's and a range of other big brands are among those on the Pereira & O'Dell client roster. Even with recognizable clients in the fold, managing capital flow remains a perennial challenge due to the up and down cycles of major ad campaigns.

"We average about 25-30 percent growth per year," Daum said. "It's hard to plan because agencies tend to get big projects."

Luckily, agility has always been core to Daum's skill set. After starting out in public accounting, she recalls making the jump to in-house finance "basically because I fell in love with the entrepreneurs." From gaming company Elliott Portwood Studios to the International Museum of Women, staying tied to one industry has never been the goal.

In the process, she's also seen the core value of financial professionals evolve.

"It's morphed over the years to be much more than accounting," said Daum, who serves as both COO and CFO at Pereira & O'Dell. "You're finding solutions, not just reporting."

Among the unconventional roles she has embraced is helping to set the 160-person company's talent attraction and retention strategy, offering perks like unlimited paid time off, a dog-friendly office and subsidies for afterhours Uber rides from the office. Pro bono projects, like school outreach to increase diversity in the advertising industry, is another area of emphasis.

"We really like to kind of be on the forefront," Daum said. "It's philosophical for us."

In addition to HR and finance, she has also spearheaded IT upgrades focused on protecting internal data and systems — an increasingly important area for a digital agency.

Though numbers remain core to the agency's success, Daum maintains that it is overarching goals around inclusion and technological evolution that will ultimately help the firm to stay on the bleeding edge of digital communication.

Nancy Daum

COMPANY: Pereira & O'Dell

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer & Chief Operating Officer

TENURE: 2009-present

BACKGROUND: International Museum of Women, Elliott Portwood Studios, Ernst & Young; Deloitte and Touche

The way up? Look for a challenge

FINALIST

Jeff Wofford

•

Able Services

From Apple's new spaceship campus to AT&T Park and San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, Able Services, an army of more than 16,000 global employees, are often an invisible force behind the buildings helping to power the U.S. economy.

"We like to say we own the skyline in San Francisco," said CFO Jeff Wofford. "We do almost all the building maintenance or engineering, sometimes both."

Aside from San Francisco and Silicon Valley tech campuses for companies like Yahoo and LinkedIn, janitorial and building services firm Able Services also focuses heavily on Chicago, Los Angeles and other large and mid-sized cities.

Though managing thousands of personnel and after-service billing for customers in a total of 46 states have become Wofford's bread and butter, he never set out to work in the world of buildings.

"My undergraduate degree is in marine biology," said the Southern California native. "As you get closer to graduating, you start looking around at life and think, 'Well, maybe that's not the way I want to go."

Outside the office, Wofford has stayed in touch with the aquatic element of his former field by completing 25 triathalons. He's also completed an iron man competition and climbed Mt. Whitney with his children.

In his career, Wofford has echoed some of that sense of adventure by avoiding rigid professional plans.

"I never knew what my next job was going to be," he said. "I did want to move up in corporate finance. How to get there? I always looked for a challenge."

One major milestone in Wofford's career was his time spent orchestrating a turnaround at health insurer Blue Cross of California. He started in 1989, when the organization had the worst-performing blue plan in the country. The plan was the best performing a few years later and converted to a for-profit structure, completing an IPO before eventually becoming Anthem.

Wofford veered into the nonprofit space with Pacific Child and Family Associates, growing the Autism-focused organization from a $15 million to a $65 million operation in about three years. Then, he got a call from a recruiter pitching him on the CFO role at Able Services, which was looking to go from a $500 million company to a $1 billion company.

"They had the operational side down, but they had no clue about the back office," Wofford said. "That's kind of my thing."

Scrapping their resource planning system was one early priority, which has paid dividends since 97 percent of the company's collections now come in electronically, up from 10 percent when Wofford started in 2011. Switching to pre-funding estimated worker's comp liabilities for the year has also saved about $35 million a year.

Looking ahead, he sees geography as the company's next big strategic frontier.

"The buzzword is scalable," Wofford said. "We're penetrating territories where we're either underrepresented or new territories."

Jeff Wofford

COMPANY: Able Services

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2011-present

BACKGROUND: Pacific Child and Family Associates, Consolidated Electrical Distributors, Blue Cross of California (now Anthem)

TRANSFORMATION AGENT

Skills in analysis and strategy are essential to finance role

Divvying up the people, products and assets that power one of the most well-known tech brands in the world is no simple feat. Just ask Cathie Lesjak.

As the CFO of HP Inc. — the personal computing and printer spinout to emerge from the 2015 split of tech giant Hewlett-Packard Co. — Lesjak was on the front line of the year-long process. Though she said personnel matters in particular were at times "gutwrenching," even seemingly mundane matters added unanticipated roadblocks in the early days of the new company.

"We had to open up just under 1,000 different bank accounts all over the world," Lesjak said. "I kept saying 'You've got to be kidding me. This cannot be what's holding us up.'"

At the time of the split, which emerged as a path forward following sales declines and disappointing earnings after the PC peak in the 2000s, Hewlett-Packard employed some 300,000 people in 170 countries around the world.

For Lesjak, who has been with HP since 1986 after immigrating from Canada and graduating with an MBA at Stanford University, the transition also came with unexpected benefits. In the past, she said, the half-dozen major business units at Hewlett-Packard made it easier to emphasize a product line that was doing well, overshadowing those lagging behind.

"Now, there's nowhere to hide," Lesjak said. "It puts a sense of urgency in the organization, but also an open mindedness about doing things differently."

Shares and revenue have seen a definite post-split boost, to $12.7 billion in revenue during 2016, though the company has also announced long-term plans to cut 3,000-4,000 jobs by 2019.

Within the finance organization specifically, Lesjak said there has already been a tangible shift away from number crunching. Instead, she increasingly looks to staff to function as "analysts" interpreting large volumes of data generated by internal systems.

"It's definitely changing the makeup of the required skills of the finance professional," she said. "No question about it."

In addition to evolving internal technology, HP Inc. is vying for position in the rapidly evolving world of printing. At a board meeting in Barcelona a few months ago, Lesjak got a sneak peek at improving 3D printing technology with a custom portable speaker.

She saw it as a small example of a much bigger strategic opening for the company.

"This is a huge opportunity," Lesjak said. "It's an opportunity about changing the way the world does manufacturing."

WINNER
Cathie Lesjak
•
HP Inc.

Cathie Lesjak

COMPANY: HP Inc.

TITLE: Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2015-present

BACKGROUND: Varied financial roles at HP

Zeroing in to engage a growing industry

FINALIST
Bob Halliday
•
Applied Materials

Bob Halliday isn't new to the tech industry, but he only recently moved to Silicon Valley.

In fact, he had three weeks to move from Boston to the Bay Area when he was named CFO of semiconductor supplier Applied Materials in 2013.

"They said, 'You're becoming CFO next Friday, when are you moving?'" Halliday recalled of his promotion. "I said to my wife, 'Hey listen, let's take this job in California and I'll just do finance.' I get out here, and it was a lot of work."

Halliday was previously the CFO of a division acquired by Applied Materials in a $5 billion deal a few years earlier, Varian Semiconductor Equipment Associates. The industry wasn't new, but the new parent company required additional technical expertise in the types of electronic devices products powered by Applied Materials parts.

"The learning ramp for me was pretty steep," Halliday recalled. "I still wasn't a technologist."

Worldwide manufacturing soon emerged as a key focus area. An obstacle emerged, however, when a proposed $10 billion merger with rival Japanese chipmaker Tokyo Electron was blocked by the Department of Justice after months of negotiating.

"You can be happy it got blocked. You can be sort of depressed, or you can be aggravated," Halliday said. "I was mostly aggravated."

Still, Applied Materials' revenue has increased 44 percent on Halliday's watch. Freeing up capital for investment in new business lines has been another priority, increasing the company's R&D budget by some $400 million.

When Halliday took over, Applied Materials had three primary product lines: solar, display screens and computer chips. He and the executive team zeroed in on the latter two, which has proved beneficial with the proliferation of chips needed for increasingly connected devices like cars, data centers and other sensor-equipped hardware.

"The fear was that the industry is not growing," Halliday said. "We're having record everything. We've put up a financial model to investors that our 2018 model was going to be $2 a share. We hit that in 2016."

He doesn't see that momentum slowing down anytime soon, given the ever-growing appetite for devices to help collect data for an expanding array of analytics capabilities. Looking ahead, Halliday is confident that demand for more tailored data sets will keep his company busy.

"We have to be able to tell the future a few years in advance," he said. "People are going to want to know three things: what do you purchase, what are your personal health problems and are you a security risk?"

Bob Halliday

COMPANY: Applied Materials Inc.

TITLE: Senior Vice President and CFO

TENURE: 2013-present

BACKGROUND: Varian, Ionics

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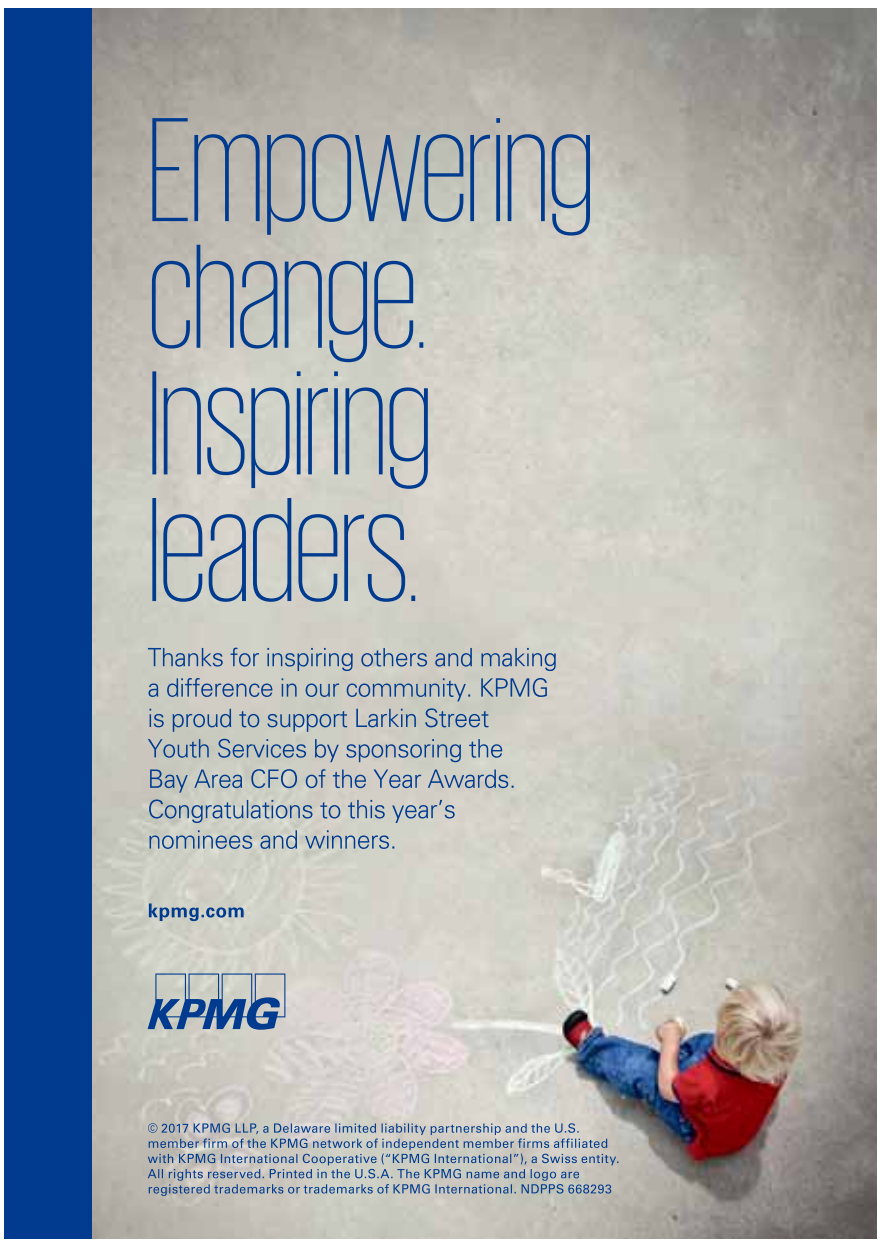

TRANSFORMATION AGENT

Dismantling a company to build it stronger

FINALIST
Thomas Seifert
•
Symantec

Thomas Seifert knew he was in for a challenge when he signed on as CFO of Mountain View cybersecurity company Symantec in early 2014.

Still, lopping off almost one-third of the company's revenue through strategic divestment and acquiring two sizable companies went way beyond your garden variety corporate revamp.

"Symantec was a significant strategic transformation," Seifert said. "You need to be deep in the wheels of how a company operates before you can dissemble it and put it back together."

After a CEO change on his second day, Seifert helped to identify ways to refocus on the company's core security business, divesting from Symantec's $7 billion Veritas storage business. To ensure that investors reaped some of the benefits, the company paid a special dividend worth roughly $2.7 billion and bought back $1.9 billion in Symantec shares.

Still, Seifert never doubted the end goal of the restructuring.

"Cybersecurity – I mean it's the next wave," he said. The Munich native added that he may have had a personal leg up: "People are more comfortable when you have a European accent if you're trying to sell security software."

The security space is also something of a moving target, shifting toward more holistic identity protection from previous efforts to protect individual devices. One way Seifert said Symantec looked to keep up is piloting security software in the consumer market, which could then provide data on new types of threats to shape additional protective features for enterprise offerings.

"We all do things when we are at home that we wouldn't in an enterprise environment," Seifert said. "With that, you are going to be exposed to internet threats that you don't see on the enterprise side."

Symantec also isn't Seifert's first foray into tech. He started his career in Germany with Siemens, going on to hold varied executive roles at companies including Brightstar and Advanced Micro Devices most recently.

"I have an unusual finance path," Seifert said. "I've been moving in and out of finance and operational roles my whole career."

In November of last year, he stepped down from his post at Symantec to pursue a new venture that he declined to discuss in detail. After taking time off to indulge his passion for skiing this year in destinations like Whistler, he advises others to keep work perspective.

"It's really difficult to set down and map out a career for the next 15 years," Seifert said. "It's much more about finding a job you enjoy and people you enjoy."

Thomas Seifert

COMPANY: Symantec

TITLE: Former Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer

TENURE: 2014-2016

BACKGROUND: Brightstar, Advanced Micro Devices, Qimonda AG, Infineon Technologies AG, Siemens

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