

Central Ohio's Smart 50 make success happen by being on target

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Congratulations
to the inaugural
members of
Smart 50

Introducing the leaders of the region's smartest companies

When you're an ESOP, your employee-owners have a vested interest in the organization's success. Not only that, their commitment to being innovative so that the organization is able to make an impact on its clients — and the community-at-large — is well-ingrained in the corporate culture.

This is something that we, at [Oswald Cos.](#), pride ourselves on every day. Our employee-owners are tuned in to much more than their jobs. We use our expertise as insurance brokers to gain a deeper understanding of our clients' businesses, then develop tailored solutions designed to chart a successful course to the future by offering the best products and services available.

Oswald Cos. was founded in 1893 and today is celebrating 121 years in business. Our overall goal is simple: Ensure that our clients' businesses, like ours, are built for the long run.

We are honored to partner with *Smart Business* to present the Oswald Cos. Smart 50 Awards to celebrate and recognize central Ohio's top executives for their ability to effectively build and lead innovative and "smart" organizations. All the honorees make a difference in their organizations and the region in many ways, including innovation, impact on employment and business sustainability.

These organizations, which represent all shapes, sizes and industries, have leaders who motivate and inspire people. They have a passion for what they do and are committed to unsurpassed customer service. The executives we are celebrating are able to tackle unique business challenges and continue to lead their organization on a continued path toward success.

On behalf of Oswald Cos. and all of our sponsors, congratulations to the inaugural members of Smart 50.



Todd Miller

Senior Vice President

[Oswald Cos. Columbus](#)

tmiller@oswaldcompanies.com

Honorees listed in Alphabetical order by last name



Dianne Grote Adams

President

Safex Inc.

President Dianne Grote Adams and Safex Inc. have changed the picture of health and safety consulting by making the business about people. Staff partner with clients to improve employee well-being, comply with government regulations, minimize workers' compensation costs and maximize profits.

Safex goes beyond Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance by establishing standards that create a culture of safety that manifests itself in cleaner, safer and more productive job sites. Webinars and hybrid module training courses provide an outlet for meeting needs without travel.

Adams also emphasizes employee growth and professional development by encouraging continued education and involvement in professional organizations.

Every year, Safex employees help build a house with Habitat for Humanity, collect donations for Westerville Area Resource Ministry and other charities, and contribute to local food banks. Adams, a board member at Cristo Rey Columbus High School, encourages employees to participate in fundraisers of their choosing and often matches donations.



George Barrett

Chairman and CEO

Cardinal Health

As the health care landscape continues to evolve, Chairman and CEO George Barrett's determination to ensure Cardinal Health is an essential part of the industry drives the organization forward. This determination has created an atmosphere of forward-thinking leaders with the goal of serving pharmacies, hospitals and ambulatory sites to reduce costs, improve efficiency and quality, and increase profitability.

Barrett continues to stay ahead of key trends within the health care marketplace and focuses on key priorities to keep the organization relevant. Several examples of this are Cardinal's acquisition of AssuraMed, a home health care medical supplier, and its recent joint ventures with CVS Caremark and Fuse technology lab.

With more than 33,000 employees worldwide, Barrett strives to be a connected leader. He surrounds himself with diverse expertise and talent, and supports programs that develop the talent and skills needed to excel in a leading health services organization.



Wesley Bates

CEO

Stanley Steemer

Wesley Bates, CEO of Stanley Steemer, runs his organization with a bottom-up approach. Bates recognizes hard work and rewards his people, as evidenced through 235 franchise locations in 49 states, 80 percent of which are run by owners who began their careers at Stanley Steemer and worked their way up through the ranks.

Employee training, state-of-the-art equipment, innovative thinking and leadership

have contributed to the continued success of Stanley Steemer. To maintain consistency across the entire organization, all cleaning equipment is manufactured and all vehicles outfitted from the headquarters in Dublin.

Bates continues to innovate and adapt to the evolving industry, leading Stanley Steemer beyond carpet cleaning and into sectors such as upholstery, tile and grout, hardwood floor, air duct cleaning and 24-hour emergency water services.

The company also is certified asthma & allergy friendly™ by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.



J. Renee' Claxton

President and CEO

[Sort & Pack Inc.](#), Catch of the Day Wholesale Liquidators LLC

President and CEO J. Renee' Claxton founded Sort & Pack Inc. in 1996, after developing extensive experience in the wholesale and retail industries.

Her passion and industry knowledge has allowed her to cultivate significant international relationships, and positioned her as a go-to source for all fulfillment needs. Internally, she has fostered a culture of trust and loyalty among her employees, many of whom have worked for her for 10 to 12 years.

In 2006, Claxton purchased 10 acres and built Sort & Pack's 40,000-square-foot facility in Columbus with a vision for future expansion. The company officially moved into the new facility in 2008, later adding its retail store, Catch of the Day Wholesale Liquidators LLC. There is enough land for further expansion, and the area is geographically positioned for growth.

Claxton's business savvy was recognized just two years after launching Sort & Pack with the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ award.



Mark Daniels

President and managing partner

[M+A Architects](#)

In 2008, Mark Daniels, president and a managing partner with M+A Architects, understood that being flexible, nimble and brand focused was going to be critical during the downturn.

Instead of hunkering down, he became proactive in internal marketing and leadership training for employees, implemented a major rebranding effort, began setting annual smart goals and redefined the company's culture.

Daniels helped grow the business by excelling in talent management and development. He implemented a specialized employee-training program and advanced a synergistic team-oriented and fun office culture — driving collaboration, efficiency and accountability.

The training program was implemented within the organization at four levels — architectural standards and methods training, project management training, key leader development training and individualized mentoring by senior staff.

Today, the quality level of the staff has increased, efficiency on projects is more evident and the firm is winning more prominent projects within the community.



Elfi Di Bella

President and CEO

[YWCA Columbus](#)

Elfi Di Bella began her journey as president and CEO of the YWCA Columbus in January 2010. As large corporations and individual donors began to tighten their budgets, Di Bella was charged with providing services to a growing sector of the population who found itself hitting rock bottom.

As Central Ohio's only emergency shelter for families, the YWCA Family Center has seen its highest number of homeless families these past few years, yet it has maintained an average length of stay at between 18 and 20 days before families move into permanent housing.

Di Bella also oversees a Women's Residency program, leadership programs and racial justice programs.

While demand for the YWCA's services has increased, Di Bella has spurred revenue growth. The organization's annual fundraising events have seen record numbers of attendees and funds raised, which is sparking plans for a major transformation of the historic Griswold Building.



Ric Dillon

CEO

[Diamond Hill Capital Management Inc.](#)

At the height of the dot-com bubble investors gravitated towards short-term market success. Ric Dillon, however, believed in value investing.

In 2000, he formed Diamond Hill Capital Management Inc. with a mission to invest with discipline, maintain a long-term focus and align the firm's interests with its clients.

As CEO Dillon has made substantial contributions to the firm's use of technology as a business tool through two separate, patent-pending innovations. The Diamond Hill Investment Model is a tool used to assist the investment team in estimating the value of stocks, while the Valuation-Weighted 500 Index is Dillon's newest innovation. Back in the early '80s, at the beginning of his career, Dillon theorized that a portfolio of securities weighted according to their intrinsic value, rather than market capitalization, was likely to produce superior returns. After back testing his idea, he applied for a patent and launched the index in 2013.



Tom Feeney

President and CEO

[Safelite Group](#)

Tom Feeney was promoted to president and CEO of Safelite Group in 2008, just one year after being acquired by the international vehicle glass company, Belron. That

year, the economy crashed, consumer confidence was low and companies were suffering.

In addition, top-of-mind awareness of the Safelite AutoGlass brand was less than 5 percent. Yet, Feeney saw these challenges as an opportunity and took control of Safelite's culture, service and brand positioning.

In 2009, he led a four-year strategy called Destination 2012 to double business by 2012 and become the natural choice for vehicle glass repair and replacement services in the U.S.

The philosophy was simple — happy, talented people create happy customers that tell others about the company's service, which improves brand image and sales.

Initiatives in culture, service and advertising helped build brand awareness, and boosted sales and profits by 85 percent and 140 percent, respectively.



Mary Lynn Foster

President and CEO

[Children's Hunger Alliance](#)

Mary Lynn Foster took over the helm of Children's Hunger Alliance as its president and CEO in September 2013.

From the start she met with valuable members of the CHA family to introduce herself and gain a clear expectation of their important relationship to the agency's viability.

Since CHA is a statewide organization, Foster also attended quarterly meetings of the governing board and separate quarterly meetings of five regional boards. As she listened, assessed, learned and asked questions, Foster began understanding the landscape and framework of CHA.

By the end of her first quarter, Foster had completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the organization, determining that CHA needed to develop a multiyear strategic plan.

By the end of her first year, a process was in place to get CHA where it needed to be within a three-year time frame.



Dr. Steven Gabbe

CEO

[The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center](#)

Dr. Steven Gabbe was named CEO of The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in 2008. Since then, he has focused his vision on smart strategies and innovative approaches to patient care, research and teaching.

Gabbe's guidance has led to significant growth for Wexner Medical Center, including more than \$263 million per year in biomedical research funding; designation as one of 12 sites in the nation to host an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship program to help address local unmet health needs; and much more.

Gabbe is also guiding the Wexner Medical Center's \$1.1 billion expansion, the largest construction project in OSU's history, which is expected to support 15,000 local jobs.

One of Gabbe's main focuses is talent management and development. His strategy is designed to increase innovative research, advance personalized medicine and speed technology transfer to the marketplace.



Charles W. Gehring

President and CEO

[LifeCare Alliance](#)

Charles W. Gehring is just the sixth president and CEO to lead LifeCare Alliance in its 116-year history.

The company didn't get to be this old without having to jump a few hurdles, and under the leadership of Gehring, that continues to be the case.

Due to ongoing economic challenges, the agency has been experiencing significant funding reductions from federal, state and local governments. In order to continue serving all of those in need and ensure there is no waiting list for the agency's services, Gehring turned the company's focus from government dependence to fundraising independence.

Not only does LifeCare Alliance have an aggressive fundraising plan in place today, but Gehring also continues to encourage the agency to be more in control of its own destiny to be in a better position to serve those in need. In order to do this, Gehring instituted several successful social enterprise programs.



Russ Gertmenian

Managing partner

[Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP](#)

As managing partner of Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease LLP, Russ Gertmenian knew the legal industry would forever change as a result of the downturn in 2008.

Rather than waiting to see what would happen, he took action to modify the firm to ensure that the next generation of lawyers would have the most flexibility to successfully deal with the direction of the marketplace. He accomplished this by rearranging the firm's structure to make it more open.

He grew the management committee and allowed practice area leaders to make decisions regarding staffing based on need.

The firm also evaluated services and offerings for clients, which resulted in an Internet defamation practice group. The defamation practice has more than doubled in size since its launch, and overall firm growth has led to two new offices, in Houston (2009) and Pittsburgh (2013).



Michael P. Glimcher

Chairman and CEO

[Glimcher Realty Trust](#)

Michael P. Glimcher, chairman and CEO of Glimcher Realty Trust, built a successful company on a foundation of flexibility, continuous improvement and smart decision-making.

What started as a lumber and supply company became a retail development firm to capitalize on the growth of big box retailers like Kmart and Wal-Mart.

During the recession, the retail sector was hit hard, and Glimcher's stock dipped below \$1 and debt leverage exceeded 80 percent. The executive management team sought to "control what you can control," and a task force drafted a rebuilding strategy that led to a joint partnership relationship with The Blackstone Group. The partners purchased 80 percent interest in WestShore Plaza and Lloyd Center, generating new revenue for Glimcher.

The company continued to transform itself by focusing on its people, properties and balance sheet. Since 2012, Glimcher has acquired seven properties totaling 2.9 million square feet and averaging \$600 per square foot.



Jason Goldberg

CEO

[America's Floor Source](#)

Initially, when America's Floor Source started, it was a flooring company that provided flooring material and installation to single and multifamily homebuilders. It didn't take CEO Jason Goldberg long to realize that some of his smaller homebuilder customers that didn't have designer centers were in need of a place where their customers could select interior and exterior finishes.

So Goldberg expanded the company's service offering by creating a design center call . This service offering has helped the company attract dozens of smaller homebuilders and is the company's largest and most impressive showroom.

Goldberg diversified his company further to service three more distinctly different customer segments — the property management sales division for apartment and condominium replacements, the wholesale division for customers who wanted to purchase material only and handle their own installations, and the retail division for flooring and installation services to homeowners.



Thomas R. Green

CEO

[Lancaster Pollard](#)

When Thomas R. Green came on-board as Lancaster Pollard's CEO in 1997, the company was 9 years old with six employees. Green's capabilities as an investment banker and senior business executive were pivotal in laying down a plan for company expansion.

Today, his strategic vision has fueled the firm's growth and honed the disciplined focus on the market sectors it serves.

Just two years ago, the company, an investment banking and mortgage banking services firm, added a private equity funding option to its product line, and earlier this year, the firm expanded its mergers and acquisition services for senior living providers.

Due to this focused strategy, Lancaster Pollard has experienced annual revenue growth of about 30 percent over the past five years, has grown to 117 employees, is now comprised of four companies and has a national presence.



Samuel W. Grooms

CEO

[Hy-Tek Material Handling Inc.](#)

CEO Samuel W. Grooms and four partners purchased Slife Material Handling in 1989 and renamed the organization Hy-Tek Material Handling Inc. Since then, the former Slife employees have developed complementary business segments to increase revenue 12-fold to a projected \$72 million in 2014.

Hy-Tek's first year saw the launch of an Integrated Systems Division for design, engineering and storage system needs. A Lighting and Green Product Solutions Division was created in 2005, a storage and handling location opened in 2011 and a Construction Equipment Division was introduced in 2013.

Unlike its competitors, Hy-Tek provides a one-stop shop for comprehensive industrial and construction equipment, integrated systems, lighting, and storage and handling solutions.

The employee stock ownership plan invests staff in company success and keeps customer satisfaction top-of-mind. Any employee-owner with 20-plus years of service receives an engraved brick that becomes part of the William K. Slife Foundation Wall, honoring the late founder.



Derek Grosso

President, CEO and founder

[Columbus Young Professionals Club](#)

After moving from Washington, D.C., to Columbus in 2005, Derek Grosso recognized the city boasted everything you can imagine to lure in young professionals, except an organized effort to reach out to them.

Thus, the Columbus Young Professionals Club was born.

A networking group, social club, volunteer network and an athletics coordinator all in one, the CYP Club, now 9 years old, has 21,000-plus registered members who live and work in the greater Columbus region.

As president, CEO and founder Grosso has led the organization into new territories by launching CitYPulse: The Young Professional's Guide to Columbus; Wonderful Workplaces for YPs, an annual list of the top 40 Columbus region employers; and YP360, a nonprofit to develop future leaders.

The CYP Club hosts nearly 200 annual events, offers 40 different recreational sports leagues, logs 20,000 volunteer hours and has raised more than \$300,000 for area nonprofits since its inception.



Bob Grote

CEO

[J.E. Grote Co.](#)

CEO Bob Grote, the second generation to head J.E. Grote Co., has led the manufacturer into the next phase of its life cycle.

With a long history and stellar reputation in the food processing industry, Grote and his management team set their sights on expansion via acquisitions, buying two companies in 2007 to expand into automated sandwich manufacturing and the snack food market's root vegetable processing.

This diversification has allowed the company to weather ups and downs in the capital equipment markets. Vanmark Equipment LLC, which works with the French fry industry, now represents one third of J.E. Grote's overall revenue.

Recently, Grote has steered the company to a more open attitude toward partnering with industry leaders in the equipment supplier base. Customers are asking for more complete solutions, so what was once a competitor may now be an ally — an important directional change for the business.



Tom Harris

CEO

[HMB](#)

HMB CEO Tom Harris instills a “do the right thing” mantra among the IT consulting firm's 170 employees, empowering them to develop custom solutions to solve client challenges. Employees who “do the right thing” are recognized at quarterly meetings and in the company newsletter.

In 2008, HMB partners realized they needed a more scalable model relying less on the executive team working on every project. The result was a formal reorganization of company structure that served as a catalyst for recent success.

HMB has built a company culture based on ethics, technical quality and work/life balance. Harris advocates continued learning and development, instituting a structured mentorship program to help both senior and junior professionals grow. HMB University offers continuing education through hands-on events, technology deep dives and a technology book club.

He also has led support of local organizations, including Battelle for Kids, area science, technology, engineering and mathematics initiatives, and Columbus Service Days.



Michelle Heritage

Executive director

[Community Shelter Board](#)

Despite a strong economy in Columbus and Central Ohio, many people aren't reaping the benefits. The number of single adults in homelessness grew 14 percent in the past three years, and the number of homeless families increased 65 percent.

As executive director of the Community Shelter Board, Michelle Heritage facilitates

and leads the community plan to end homelessness. The Community Shelter Board's family system has achieved excellent, well-documented results. On average, families are in shelter for only 21 days and 71 percent find permanent housing. But the number of families in need has surpassed current available resources.

So Heritage led an intensive two-and-a-half-year community-wide planning process to develop a groundbreaking new model to aggressively address homelessness by focusing on four outcomes: double the rate of diversion, reduce the average length of stay, increase successful housing outcomes and address the issues that resulted in homelessness to prevent it from happening again.



Sally Hughes

Founder, president and CEO

Caster Connection

In 2009, Sally Hughes realized her company, Caster Connection, a manufacturer and distributor of casters and wheels, was in a stagnant period due to a complacent culture. As founder, president and CEO, Hughes knew her company had more potential than it was fulfilling and set out to right the ship.

She moved the company to Columbus from Chardon, Ohio, and only selected a handful of employees to make the trek.

Shortly after relocating the company, Hughes began to add talented and extremely driven personnel, which has since made Caster Connection smarter, more innovative and on the cutting edge of the caster industry.

Nearly five years after moving to Columbus, Caster Connection's 2014 sales are on pace to more than double those of 2009. With several new and exciting initiatives — including expansion of e-commerce, marketing campaigns and strategic partnerships — Caster Connection is in a position for sustainable success.



Lisa Ingram

President

White Castle System Inc.

Following a family led succession-planning process Lisa Ingram was named the fourth president of White Castle System Inc. in February 2013. Facing a difficult business environment, Ingram moved quickly to identify key opportunities, align resources and put plans in place to make the most of the strengths of the White Castle brand.

First, she got the right people in the right places. Ingram redesigned internal governance structures, reshaping the membership and role of the company's executive council and leadership teams.

She also led the crafting of a strategic vision and plan for the business to establish key benchmarks of growing sales, profits and feeding a winning culture. The company focused on innovation to ensure it was adapting to changing customer needs and trends.

Finally, Ingram utilized White Castle's smaller size to be more nimble than its competition. Today, these initiatives have allowed White Castle more creativity in all segments of its business.



Kent Johnson

CEO

[Highlights for Children Inc.](#)

Highlights for Children Inc. has evolved from producing a well-loved children's magazine into a global family media brand. The company also serves the school marketplace through wholly owned subsidiaries Zaner-Bloser, which provides curriculum, technology and services to schools; Staff Development for Educators; and Stenhouse Publishers, which produces books and videos to help teachers.

The majority of growth and innovation has been under the leadership of CEO Kent Johnson. Since 2006, the company went from publishing one magazine to offering brand-extending apps, books, continuities and games. New magazines High Five and Hello were launched for children ages 2 to 6 and 0 to 2, respectively.

Johnson believes Highlights' mission is to serve children, their families and others involved in their development, helping children become their best selves.

He also wants to make Highlights magazines and products available to everyone — more than 125,000 magazines and products valued at \$375,000 are donated annually in the Central Ohio area.



Craig A. Kasper, P.E.

CEO

[Hull & Associates Inc.](#)

CEO Craig A. Kasper and Hull & Associates Inc. offer innovative, sustainable solutions to help clients address challenges related to land, energy and the environment. The project development, energy and engineering consulting firm specializes in the alternative energy, brownfields, environmental, shale oil and gas, and waste management markets. Hull employs 170 professionals in seven offices in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana.

A recognized leader in brownfield redevelopment and alternative energy project development, Hull operates a portfolio of real estate and energy projects. The company has demonstrated its commitment by building its own offices on revitalized brownfields.

Another way Hull strives to make an impact is through its Giving Forward Program, which encourages employees to engage in volunteer work and support charities. Hull has an annual charity golf outing that has raised \$237,000 in 14 years for Kinder Key, a volunteer organization supporting the Heart Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.



Amy Klaben

President and CEO

Columbus Housing Partnership Inc., dba [Homeport](#)

Homeport President and CEO Amy Klaben works to create and preserve healthy, stable and affordable communities — one neighborhood, one person at a time.

Homeport started in 1987 with 10 employees and has grown to a staff of 65 providing programs and service-enriched housing to more than 10,000 people.

When demand for services increased in 2006 as more homeowners faced default, Homeport modified operations to enable programs to scale up from helping 250 households annually to 1,500 households at the height of the foreclosure crisis.

The organization continues to innovate, establishing a new position of director of strategic initiatives last year in order to measure the impact of programs on people being served. By measuring impact, Homeport aims to demonstrate its commitment to residents in neighborhoods being served, increase employee satisfaction and allow investors to see the impact and benefits of their support.



Tom Krouse
President and CEO

[Donatos Pizza](#)

Tom Krouse's career has spanned over three decades of marketing and management in the restaurant industry. In 2010, Krouse was appointed as president and CEO to oversee Donatos Pizza's 154-store restaurant business as well as Jane's Dough Foods, the company's bakery division.

Prior to his current position, Krouse was responsible for franchise development, where he placed an emphasis on growing through franchising, after the Grote family purchased Donatos back from McDonald's Corp. Last year, Donatos entered two new markets — Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Raleigh, North Carolina — to now operate in seven states.

Krouse also was the catalyst behind Donatos' gluten-free push, an initiative that took nearly three years. Its methodical approach, spurred by high-quality standards, has proved worthwhile — what started as an idea to help an employer with Celiac disease morphed into a major business line. Today, customers can order gluten-free pizza or pick up gluten-free Take & Bake pizza at local Kroger stores.



Catherine Lang-Cline
President and co-founder

[Portfolio Creative](#)

Founded in 2005, Portfolio Creative is the nation's fastest-growing creative staffing and recruiting firm.

Under the leadership of president and co-founder Catherine Lang-Cline, Portfolio Creative's business model is built on developing relationships — both with clients and talent. Many of the same companies and creative talent that gave Portfolio Creative a chance during its first year of business are still loyal clients today.

The road to success hasn't always been a smooth one for Lang-Cline and co-founder Kristen Harris. Both walked away from steady jobs, guaranteed paychecks and reliable benefits to start their own endeavor.

Self-funded since inception, the business has grown steadily. An Inc. 500/5000 fast growth company for the past five years, Portfolio Creative is headquartered in Columbus with a branch office in Pittsburgh.

The company recruits creative talent in Columbus, Pittsburgh and New York. It also provides direct hire, educational resources and payroll services.



Dr. Mary Lou Luebbe-Gearhart, Au.D.

President and CEO

[Luebbe Hearing Services](#)

Dr. Mary Lou Luebbe-Gearhart's passion for helping people through the field of audiology was determined at age 3 when she witnessed her father help a former soldier regain his hearing through hearing aids.

Since 1973, Luebbe-Gearhart has been president and CEO of her late father's company, Luebbe Hearing Services, and is recognized as one of America's most experienced and trusted hearing experts. She has redecorated, installed state-of-the-art equipment and transformed Luebbe Hearing Services' marketing and business communications. Luebbe-Gearhart even created its famous jingle, "Luebbe Hearing Services, you'll hear what you've been missing!"™

She has grown the business immensely and continued her father's legacy. Luebbe Hearing Services' expertise is measured by its commitment to patient satisfaction, continuing education and the application of current technologies. Its professionals understand that value is not measured by price alone — it's about translating their professional knowledge into customized hearing solutions that exceed customer expectations.



Farah B. Majidzadeh

Chairwoman and CEO

[Resource International Inc.](#)

Farah B. Majidzadeh has led Resource International Inc., as chairwoman and CEO, from a startup in her basement to a broad-based, multidisciplinary engineering consulting firm.

Under Majidzadeh's guidance, the company has implemented new methods of delivering services to exceed client expectations. For example, design engineers used an accelerated delivery method for a reconstruction project in Morrow County to push the completion date a full year ahead of schedule.

Resource International's information technology and pavement divisions also are working in tandem to develop bulky, outdated data collection equipment into an app accessible by smartphone. The end result will be an innovation that saves engineers time, money and resources.

As a woman in a male-dominated field, Majidzadeh has faced numerous challenges. As a result of these struggles she has devoted herself to equality inside and outside of the firm. She makes sure women have an opportunity for growth in Resource International and is dedicated to supporting the education of women.



Pat McCurdy

President

[Kimball Midwest](#)

Kimball Midwest, led by President Pat McCurdy, responded to cost pressures in a challenging marketplace by focusing on superior performance and exceptional value in the parts and services the company offers for maintenance, repair and operations.

Its commitment to quality, American-made products has Kimball Midwest consistently named among the top 50 industrial distributors by trade publications. The

company also is a two-time winner of the Top Workplaces Award in Columbus.

When adding new products, Kimball Midwest adheres to the highest performance and quality standards. Continuous improvement is so ingrained in company culture that a team of specialists is dedicated to researching items that solve customer problems.

The company mantra “green and growing” reflects a forward vision that has helped fuel growth. Kimball Midwest recently announced expansion of its Columbus warehouse and the purchase of a fourth distribution center in Savannah, Georgia, joining facilities in Columbus, Dallas and Reno, to improve shipping times.



Jordan A. Miller Jr.
President and CEO
[Fifth Third Bank](#) (Central Ohio affiliate)

Jordan A. Miller Jr., Central Ohio affiliate president and CEO of Fifth Third Bank, strives to run his business similar to how he was raised — caring for employees and the community.

For example, one of the bank’s flagship programs is the Young Bankers Club, geared towards fifth graders. This year, employees volunteered 1,034 hours and helped provide basic budgeting classes in 15 schools.

Fifth Third Bank distinguishes itself through its affiliate model where the Central Ohio affiliate has a team of local experts in each line of business to make decisions locally. Thus, the bank has the local focus of a community bank but the resources of headquarters in Cincinnati to compete in the larger regional space.

Miller works diligently with senior leaders and bank officers to ensure each division has a team engagement plan and regularly checks for accountability.

Leaders also are required to take part in leadership development courses.



Chad Monnin
Co-founder
[Mission Essential Personnel](#)

Chad Monnin co-founded Mission Essential Personnel in 2004 with just a few hundred dollars. As CEO, he grew the Columbus company to more than 3,000 employees with over \$400 million in annual revenue by 2009.

He also was the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year™ 2006 Ohio and Kentucky Region award winner.

MEP serves defense, diplomatic, intelligence community and law enforcement customers, as well as multinationals and friendly foreign governments using the most advanced technology to deliver mission essential, innovative solutions. It serves its customers at both the strategic and tactical levels.

The business leverages top talent and its partners, as well as low overhead, a flat organized structure and real-time decision-making and action, to deliver the plan. It has demonstrated agility and efficiency by overcoming obstacles that encumber large complex operations.

Monnin resigned as CEO in January 2010 but continues to serve on the company's board of directors.



Curtis Moody
President and CEO

Moody Nolan

In 1982, Moody Nolan was just another startup company with a two-person staff.

Today, it's one of the most respected architectural firms in the nation and the country's largest African-American-owned architectural firm.

While the firm has designed structures for universities, cities and schools around the country, the project that lies closest to President and CEO Curtis Moody's heart is the construction of the Schottenstein Center.

As a former college athlete and Columbus native, it was Moody's dream project to design the city's largest and most visited arena. Winning the project was attributed to his firm's impressive work, but more importantly to his sincere passion for the project.

Moody Nolan has captured so many projects because it has surrounded itself with some of the industry's brightest minds and has strived to make inclusiveness a hallmark of the firm, enhancing the company's ability to understand the diverse nature of its clients.



Neil Mortine
President and CEO

Fahlgren Mortine

In 2009, Fahlgren Mortine felt the sting of the recession with the loss of some major accounts. In just five years Neil Mortine, the marketing and communication agency's president and CEO, turned the ship around, growing agency revenues by 53 percent with an unwavering focus on attracting talent that fits the firm's collegial, collaborative culture.

Associates at all levels have freedom to take risks and are immersed in their accounts, visiting clients' offices to become intimately familiar with their brands. Mortine often accompanies his employees, whether it's a large client or pro bono.

Some nonprofits that Fahlgren Mortine provides marketing and communications expertise to include: Ronald McDonald House Charities, Pelotonia, Buckeye Ranch and the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens.

Under Mortine's leadership, Fahlgren Mortine has received numerous accolades. The company also announced in January 2014 the acquisition of a boutique travel, tourism and active lifestyle public relations firm, Turner PR.



Jack Partridge

President

[Columbia Gas of Ohio](#)

Under the leadership of President Jack Partridge, Columbia Gas of Ohio has enhanced its position as one of the top-performing companies of NiSource Inc. and as one of the natural gas industry's most progressive, innovative and employee-friendly companies.

As part of Partridge's and the company's commitment to innovation, 1.4 million homes were modernized and updated with automated meter reader devices.

The company also launched a 25-year infrastructure improvement program that upgrades aging steel pipelines with plastic pipe.

Columbia Gas has negotiated an infrastructure improvement program with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio that allows the company to recover the costs for maintenance, repair and replacement of hazardous customer-owned service lines and certain prone-to-fail gas risers.

In its initial five years, this program has replaced over 827 miles of priority pipe, as well as 92,000 associated service lines and 82,000 hazardous customer-owned service lines.



Debra A. Penzone

President

[The Charles Penzone Salons](#)

Under the leadership of Debra A. Penzone, The Charles Penzone Salons operate within six salon/day spa locations. Penzone has influenced the company for nearly 25 years, starting as a hair stylist assistant and moving up the ranks to president.

Penzone employs training teams to remain on the cutting edge of the industry. With Penzone's oversight, the company embraces technology through SalonBiz — a salon management system, social media and is involved with a network of other salons/spas across the nation for benchmarking and best-practice sharing. The training teams meet monthly to improve salon offerings and develop and write protocols for seasonal services that are specifically curated for The Charles Penzone Salons.

Penzone also was instrumental in building up community involvement within the salons. In 2013 alone, the salons donated more than 600 volunteer hours towards bettering the community. Penzone has earned several awards for her volunteerism and philanthropic spirit.



Dr. Mark Rinkov

Founder and CEO

[Rinkov Eyecare Centers](#)

Dr. Mark Rinkov founded Rinkov Eyecare Centers to improve patients' lives through outstanding quality eye care.

While many private optometric practices have declined, Rinkov Eyecare Centers has grown to eight offices and now employs more than 50 people.

In 2010, CEO Rinkov brought his son, Jeff Rinkov, a law school graduate, into the practice to build an infrastructure for growth. Two years later, a corporate office location was established and staffed for insurance verification and billing, as well as executive management.

Rinkov continually invests in new technology and the latest diagnostic equipment. A new computer system network that links all patients and offices allows all locations to share information. Plus, Rinkov Eyecare Centers' proprietary 20-Point Eye Exam® is a comprehensive annual examination that includes 20 important assessments at no extra charge. It can uncover early signs of health risks such as cancerous tumors, diabetes and eye conditions that need immediate attention.



Peggy M. Ruhlin

CEO

[Budros, Ruhlin & Roe Inc.](#)

Unlike service professions such as law and accounting, there have been little or no models or best practices established for growing a successful wealth management business. Budros, Ruhlin & Roe Inc., and its CEO, Peggy M. Ruhlin, are solving that problem.

BRR was one of the very first wealth management firms to institutionalize its business. Instead of being a conglomeration of individual financial advisers, all of BRR's clients are clients of the firm.

This has promoted a culture of collegiality and cooperation. It has also lead to real, transferable business value for shareholders, and the assurance of stable, sustainable business continuity for clients.

Another growth driver for BRR has been its Internet portal, My BRR Office, which now has its own app. Using this, clients can communicate with the firm and their service team, upload and download documents, review financial reports and information, and view market updates and commentary.



Daniel Sadd

CEO

[Salon Lofts](#)

CEO of Salon Lofts Daniel Sadd says, "We will gladly zig when others zag."

Sadd reinvented the beauty industry by integrating proprietary technology to benefit beauty professionals who want to operate their own businesses with minimal risks, as well as consumers who want an easy way to find stylists.

Consumers use a proprietary feature called Open Chair to book hair, skin, nail or body services with Salon Lofts. Open Chair enables consumers to find an appointment at any of the Salon Lofts locations nationwide with a beauty professional available for their preferred date and time.

Under Sadd's leadership, Salon Lofts has grown to lease space to more than 1,000 beauty professionals nationwide, and presently operates 54 shops in five states.

The proprietary online marketing services and solutions that Salon Lofts has developed for both its loft owners and customers set it apart from competitors.



C.K. Satyapriya

President and CEO

[CTL Engineering Inc.](#)

C.K. Satyapriya has played an instrumental role in the success of CTL Engineering Inc. for nearly four decades. Satyapriya assumed the role of vice president in 1979, became president in 1986 and has served as president and CEO since 1999.

As a new CEO, Satyapriya re-engineered CTL Engineering by adding complementary services, opening branch offices and making acquisitions. The acquisitions and internal growth spurred by the changes have helped increase the value of the employee stock ownership plan over the past 10 years.

CTL Engineering is based on shared principles such as values, policies and attitudes, and shared practices including norms, systems and processes.

In 1992, Satyapriya began adopting the balanced scorecard approach — a bottom-up rather than top-down method to strategic planning. Today, more than 50 of CTL Engineering’s management team make up four committees that help drive results within the organization.



Dr. Eric R. Schertel, Ph.D., DACVS

President and chief medical officer

[MedVet Medical and Cancer Centers for Pets](#)

Since it opened more than 25 years ago, MedVet Medical and Cancer Centers for Pets has been committed to delivering the highest quality, most compassionate specialty and emergency veterinary care available anywhere in the country, while providing support for clients and their family veterinarians.

Over the past several years, MedVet has experienced tremendous growth with the help of its President and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Eric R. Schertel. With offices now in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Hilliard and Louisiana, MedVet treats more than 60,000 dogs and cats each year.

MedVet’s doctors utilize cutting-edge diagnostic tools and offer the most advanced treatment options in a variety of specialty areas including neurology, ophthalmology, surgery and internal medicine.

MedVet is also committed to advancing clinical research by running one of the country’s leading Clinical Studies Centers where it develops new diagnostic modalities, medical therapies, surgical procedures and devices.



Michael Schoedinger

President

Randy Schoedinger

CEO

[Schoedinger Funeral and Cremation Service](#)

Michael and Randy Schoedinger, president and CEO, respectively, are the sixth-generation leaders of Schoedinger Funeral and Cremation Service, which began in 1855 with

German immigrant Philip Schoedinger.

Michael and Randy's leadership has earned the company membership in Selected Independent Funeral Homes, as well as the inaugural Family Business of the Year Award given by the Family Business Center of Central Ohio in 1999. They continuously innovate, becoming the first green burial certified funeral home in Columbus, specializing in environmentally friendly funerals, and the first funeral home to webcast funerals.

The Schoedingers strive to maintain a family business environment without bureaucracy and excessive levels of management. When a policy or program needs change, the staff and the Schoedingers work in committees to get it done. They don't have outside shareholders to please with dividends, instead investing the money in the staff and business.



Gary Schottenstein

Chairman and CEO

[Schottenstein Real Estate Group](#)

Gary Schottenstein has led the Schottenstein Real Estate Group as chairman and CEO by diversifying the business, differentiating the company from its competition and personally selling \$300 million worth of properties, which he originally built, in the past 11 years.

Schottenstein was selected by his peers as the Building Industry Association Developer of the Year for the third time in 2012.

He has driven innovative product and community designs, including developing apartment buildings where every unit has an attached garage, and one- and two-bedroom garden apartments are offered.

Under Schottenstein's leadership, the company has expanded into Florida, Kentucky and North Carolina. This translates to more than \$90 million in new construction in three communities, with another \$150 million planned within the next 12 months.

Under Schottenstein's leadership, the company maintains a 100 percent satisfaction warranty policy and has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.



Alex Shumate

Managing partner

[Squire Patton Boggs](#)

For more than two decades, Alex Shumate has been managing partner of the Columbus office of Squire Patton Boggs, an international integrated legal firm.

Shumate's management style stems from extensive civic involvement and the belief that leadership in the law and in the community are the essential ingredients of success.

Shumate and the firm impact the community as advisers to important economic development projects throughout the region. These include advising on the ongoing development of Columbus Commons, advising the City of Dublin in its \$100 million-plus redevelopment of the Bridge Street District and much more.

Shumate serves in many city, regional, state and national roles, including a third term on The Ohio State University Board of Trustees. He and his wife also co-founded the Shumate African American Outreach and Engagement Council at the Wexner Center for the Arts to engage diverse communities in the programming of the center.



Jim Smith
CEO

[Elford Inc.](#)

Elford Inc., the largest locally owned construction company in Central Ohio, has played a key role in the region's growth since the company's founding in 1910. From hospitals to high-rise office buildings, historic renovations to higher education facilities, and retail centers to industrial facilities, Elford has delivered some of the area's most respected buildings.

Jim Smith, Elford's CEO, joined the company in 1990 as a project manager. He has held a number of operations positions, including project executive, vice president, president and in 2011 was named to his current post.

Smith makes himself available to provide guidance and counseling and believes every employee should have a clear path to grow.

Since 1999, Smith and senior leaders have maintained an employee retention rate of 90 percent. Elford's employees stay with the company and move into management positions — 90 percent of current field superintendents have come up through the ranks.



Kara Trott
CEO

[Quantum Health](#)

CEO Kara Trott spent years conducting in-depth consumer behavior research in the retail industry. She realized those same principles could be applied to the health care system, making Quantum Health the first health care company to apply consumer-research based strategies.

Care coordinators are encouraged to take their time when engaging with members and providers so they can truly understand their needs. Through this engagement, Quantum Health has a 15-year track record of independently validated results showing seven to eight points cost reduction for medical claim savings in the first year and 20 percent claim savings by year three.

Under Trott's direction, Quantum Health also has developed a unique technology platform so all information about a health plan member exists in one place. Built-in alerts allow care coordinators to access important information, see appointments and procedures scheduled in real time, and recognize when they can help members save money or improve the quality of care.



Diane Warren

President and owner

[Katzinger's Delicatessen LLC](#)

Katzinger's Delicatessen LLC President and Owner Diane Warren believes a true deli isn't just sandwiches, but traditional food served with the integrity of its heritage. Katzinger's brought specialty foods to Columbus, introducing customers to extra virgin olive oil, aged balsamic vinegar, farm-made cheeses and European-style crusty breads.

It also became one of the area's first non-smoking restaurants in 1988 and one of the first to offer sidewalk dining.

Katzinger's was one of a few small businesses to cover the entire premium for employee health care, and still manages to keep plans affordable to staff despite rising costs. In 1993, Warren testified before the U.S. Senate to lobby for changes in our health care system.

Katzinger's employees also are offered a gain sharing plan to increase business knowledge and provide extra cash.

Warren is a founding member of Dine Original Columbus, promoting locally owned and operated restaurants as an alternative to chain franchises.



Scott White

President and CEO

[IGS Energy](#)

Scott White and his father, Marv, founded IGS Energy in 1989 to develop the nation's first self-help program for natural gas customers and suppliers. Marv has since retired and Scott, president and CEO, assumed leadership of what has become one of the largest independent energy companies in the U.S.

IGS Energy's five corporate values are camaraderie, innovation, continuous improvement, integrity and exceptional customer experience. Employees are empowered to think differently in developing ways of servicing customers. Their dedication to service is reflected in the company's 95 percent retention rate among commercial and industrial customers.

The company's corporate office, designed as a model to encourage energy efficiency, was awarded Platinum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification in 2011. The facility has preferred parking for low-emission, fuel-efficient vehicles; solar panels to save on electricity; recycled building materials; and on-site renewable energy sources, enabling it to use 42 percent less energy than a standard building.



Michelle Yeager-Thornton
Co-founder and COO
[Champion Real Estate Services](#)

When Champion Real Estate Services opened its doors in 2010, it owned 128 units and managed two apartment communities.

Since then, the multifamily real estate firm led by brother-sister duo Michelle Yeager-Thornton, co-founder and COO, and Brian Yeager has experienced significant growth and currently manages more than 4,000 apartments across 14 communities.

Champion's growth was in big thanks to a Web-based technology at the core of its operations called Rent Manager. This system allows Champion to keep track of all business facets from accounts receivable, to accounts payable, to resident information and maintenance requests.

The system also integrates with an online application and payment portal, where Champion residents can apply for an apartment or pay their rent online. In fact, Champion provides prospective residents with a way to complete the entire lease signing process online.

In addition, Rent Manager has a mobile component and can be accessed by cell phones and tablets.



Bryant Young
CIO
[Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities](#)

More than five years ago, Bryant Young joined the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities as CIO. Young engineered a turnaround of DODD's IT performance, service levels and raised the visibility of IT, while transforming it into a strategic business partner through large development projects, processes and infrastructure virtualization.

A large part of this effort focused on changing the organization's culture. The department's IT game plan quickly became the blueprint for creating a positive customer experience. The plan helped IT to engage the business and effectively utilize limited resources by creating efficiencies through technology.

In the infrastructure space Young focused on replacing outdated equipment and reducing costs. A secondary part of the turnaround was a storage transformation, which allowed DODD to simplify backup processes and leverage backup capabilities.

With adoption of these changes and delivery of the major systems, Young has delivered business value, cultural change and changed people's lives across Ohio.