

JULY 10, 2020

# CIO OF THE YEAR

## 2020 ORBIE AWARDS

The **2020 Colorado CIO of the Year® ORBIE® Awards** program honors chief information officers who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. Winners in the Global, Large Enterprise, Enterprise, Large Corporate, Corporate and Public Sector categories will be announced on July 17 at a virtual awards ceremony.



**COLORADO CIO** A SPECIAL SECTION PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **COLORADO CIO**

### FROM THE CHAIR

#### CIOs ENABLE LARGEST REMOTE WORK EXPERIMENT IN HISTORY



By mid-March, CIOs everywhere realized their systems and teams would be stretched in the largest work-from-home project ever tackled.

**BRIAN SHIELD, B3**

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

#### NAVIGATING A 'PERMANENTLY ALTERED' IT LANDSCAPE



Serial tech entrepreneur, executive and angel investor Fran Dramis says the pandemic will have long-lasting effects on tech and those who lead the industry.

**JONATHAN ROSE, B4**

### LEADERSHIP AWARD

#### ARROW ELECTRONICS CIO APPLIES TECH TO BIZ STRATEGY



While becoming CIO was an unplanned series of fortunate events, the reasons Vin Melvin has stayed in the role are completely intentional.

**JENSEN WERLEY, B8**

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**VINCENT MELVIN**  
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Frontier Airlines

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR - BRIAN SHIELD

# CIOs enable largest remote work experiment in history

At the beginning of 2020, no one could have imagined the enormous change we would all experience in the first year of this new decade.

By mid-March, chief information officers everywhere realized their systems and teams would be stretched beyond belief in the largest work-from-home experiment in the history of the world. Thanks to cloud-first systems, tools and services created by technology innovators, we have held virtual meetings, had food and goods delivered to our doors, and remained connected to colleagues, friends and loved ones. We have adapted, survived and adjusted to our new abnormal.

CIOs are leading this overnight virtual transformation from office-based to remote work. Without their planning and implementation of the systems and services to support remote work, conducting business would be impossible under these circumstances. Thanks to Covid-19, there's greater appreciation for CIOs and the technological sophistication required to provide secure, available and scalable sys-



BRIAN SHIELD

tems to enable digital business.

ColoradoCIO is an executive peer leadership network focused on helping CIOs maximize their leadership effectiveness, create value, reduce risk and share success. Convening Colorado's leading CIOs in member-led, non-commercial programs, CIOs build meaningful professional rela-

tionships with colleagues facing similar challenges, solving problems and avoiding pitfalls.

From the beginning of this crisis, ColoradoCIO members have participated in regular local Zoom collaborations and national Zoom calls featuring CIOs from industry, higher education, health care and technology. In any gathering of CIOs, the answer is in the room. The challenge one CIO is facing has likely been solved by another CIO. What was their experience? What did they learn? What would they do differently? How could other CIOs benefit from sharing their experiences?

Peer-based leadership groups have incredible ROI when leaders share a common problem set. The vertical/industry and size/scale may be different, but similar approaches to effective leadership and problem-solving are transferrable. Every leader's perspective is valuable and contributes to the conversation – and everyone wins when leaders engage and share ideas, experiences and best practices.

For over 20 years, InspireCIO has been inspiring CIO success through the

annual CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards – but this is just the tip of the iceberg. By joining ColoradoCIO, technology executives take their leadership to the next level through year-round, member-led programs and interaction. The power of CIOs working together – across public and private business, government, education, health care and nonprofit organizations – creates enormous value for everyone.

Together, we are transforming our organizations with technology and enriching our region and our world. On behalf of ColoradoCIO, congratulations to the nominees and finalists on their accomplishments and thank you to the sponsors, underwriters and staff who make the ORBIE Awards possible.

Sincerely,

**Brian Shield**  
2020 National Chair, InspireCIO  
VP of IT, Boston Red Sox



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER - FRAN DRAMIS

# NAVIGATING A 'PERMANENTLY ALTERED' IT LANDSCAPE

Serial tech entrepreneur, executive and angel investor Fran Dramis says the pandemic will have long-lasting effects on tech and those who lead the industry

BY JONATHAN ROSE

jrose@bizjournals.com  
303-803-9235

**F**ran Dramis' keynote address at the inaugural Colorado CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards program has the 50-year tech industry veteran entering uncharted waters.

It's not the address itself, or the audience; the serial executive, author and investor was honored with the Georgia CIO Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016. And he's given keynotes in Dallas and in North Carolina. So you could say he's used to this sort of attention and activity.

But because the Colorado event has gone virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic, he'll be speaking to a room without a physical audience.

"This one's gonna be a little bit unique because it's a virtual meeting," Dramis told Denver Business Journal. "It will be more than my usual running around the stage."

The biggest difference, though, is the sea change happening both in the larger world and within the IT and business communities – trends accelerated by the coronavirus, yes, but also by the wider movement in increased broadband availability and speed, and the way that companies do business.

"The CIO position was always one whose job it was to connect the people, the clients and employees to information," Dramis said. "It started off as just connecting employees to data. It extended with the internet – and with broadband access, it extended to have clients connected to information and then clients connecting to the employees. And now with Covid-19, it's the ultimate extension connecting everybody to everybody else, connecting customers to employees, employees to businesses, businesses to customers; so the circle is now complete."

Mobile technology extends that connection even further, Dramis said.

"It's connecting all people at all times wherever they may be to whatever they may want at the time," he said.

#### Four careers worth of advice

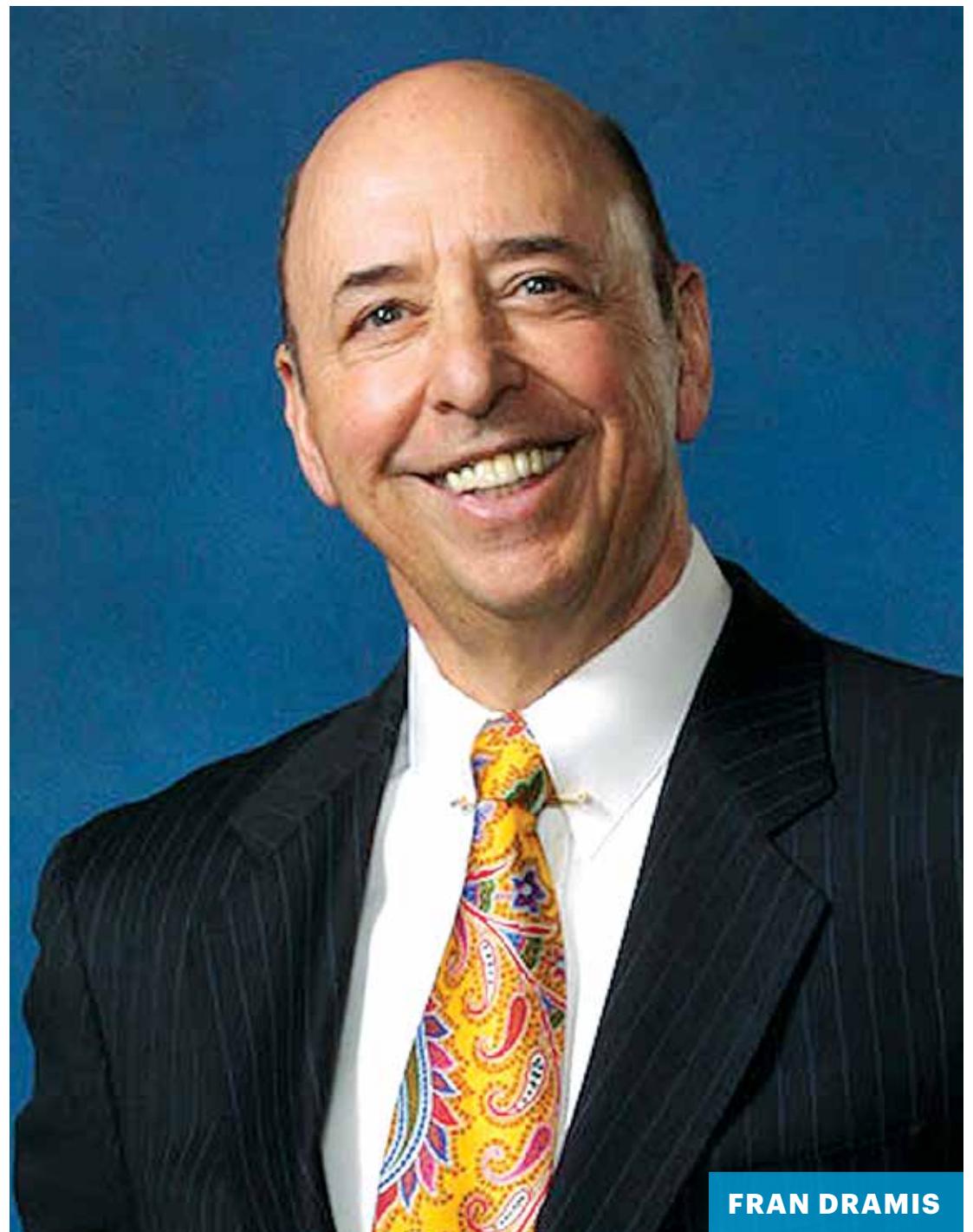
Dramis has had what he calls "four parallel business careers." They include being a senior executive at companies like BellSouth, which was acquired by AT&T and where he served as a senior vice president and CIO; being a board member at companies like Netezza, Advocent and Ditech Networks; being an angel investor to more than 30 companies; and being an author and speaker.

"All of my investments are technology-based investments," Dramis said. "But in the last few months, those businesses that are looking at support of rapid testing, support of tracking, those sorts of things which are really front and center right now. Some of my investments are leaning more toward the medical field than just the [business-to-business] environment right now and that's just because they're hot."

He's authored three books, "The CIO Handbook: How to Avoid Having 'CIO' Mean 'Career

Is Over,'" "The Four Secrets of Retention" and "Creating an Intentional Business Life," which presents the mentoring process he uses to help professionals shape their career path in a way that provides fulfillment, both personally and professionally.

"One of the things that I'm really passionate about is the role of a business leader in helping people ... working with them to understand what their eventual business life goal is," Dramis said. "I mentor people all the time and



FRAN DRAMIS

people call me and say, ‘I’m looking around for another job – where should I go?’”

He asks them how their personal passions fit into their overall goal at the end of their “business life,” Dramis said.

“I talk to so many people in their 60s and 70s,” he said. “They’re happy but they’re not satisfied. They really haven’t figured out what makes them feel fulfilled in their business life.”

And in a role like CIO, where turnover is relatively rapid – he pegs the average length of stay at about five years – it’s even more important to understand how those things, personal goals and professional aspirations, dovetail. And to help the employees a CIO oversees meet their potential.

“The role of a senior executive is to really be that business life mentor,” Dramis said. “A lot of people mentor people by saying, ‘Here’s how you be successful at that job,’ but it’s really, ‘How does this job make you successful in your overall business life?’”

People are searching for meaning and relevance in their jobs, he said, referring back to his book: “Every job can become relevant if it allows you to attain something which you need in order to meet your business life goal.”

**A shifting role**

And as the top tech position at companies shifts from one that was often shadowed by the rest of the C-suite to one that is now leading the direc-

tion companies take in an era when every meeting seems to happen on Zoom, GoToMeeting, Slack or Microsoft Teams, it’s more important than ever for tech executives to own that leadership role, he said.

“The CIO position has really evolved from a back-office person with a set of screwdrivers and a wrench in their back pocket to really sitting at the strategy table,” Dramis said.

He says he’s amazed at the backgrounds and community involvement of the 2020 class of CIO of the Year honorees. And the new era of leadership they face is what he plans to discuss during the virtual awards ceremony.

“... A lot of CIOs are being asked to help define the post-Covid world of business, because some of these changes may be permanent changes – the changes in retail and connecting employees to each other may end up being permanent,” Dramis said. “So the CIOs are being called to talk through, ‘What does it mean for a business if what we’re doing right now becomes permanent?’”

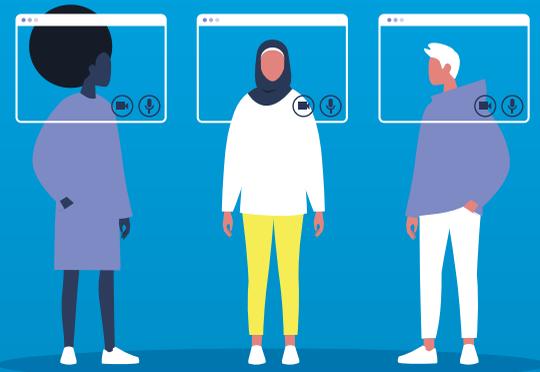
That means CIOs are working on business strategy, getting product placed and connecting with suppliers, on top of their traditional duties of guiding a company’s technological direction.

“The entire ecostructure of business is altered right now,” Dramis said. “And if it’s permanently altered, the implications for technology and the people who oversee implementing technology is pretty interesting and formidable.”

*Editor’s note: Fran Dramis is the keynote speaker for the virtual Denver CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards program on July 17 from 7:30-9:30 a.m. For more information or to buy a ticket to the event, visit [bizjournals.com/denver/events](http://bizjournals.com/denver/events).*

*“... A lot of CIOs are being asked to help define the post-Covid world of business, because some of these changes may be permanent changes – the changes in retail and connecting employees to each other may end up being permanent.”*

**FRANCIS “FRAN” DRAMIS,**  
CEO, F. Dramis LLC



A large advertisement for Associate Staffing. The background is a blue-tinted photograph of a woman with curly hair holding a camera up to her eye. In the top right corner, there is a white square logo with a blue telescope icon above a large blue letter 'A', with the text 'ASSOCIATE STAFFING' below it. At the bottom, the text 'POWERED BY PEOPLE, DRIVEN BY VALUES' is written in large white letters. Below this, a white text box contains the message: 'Your fellow InspireCIO Nominees and Award Winners trust us to save money and be an effective partner to supply the talent needed for change. We’d love the opportunity to do the same for you.' At the very bottom, there are three white boxes containing contact information: '720-464-5665', 'INFO@ASTAFF.US', and 'WWW.ASTAFF.US'.

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 SVP & CIO, Janus Henderson Investors

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Algreen's 17-plus years of financial industry experience include working as a trader and portfolio manager, and he's held leadership positions at Markit Group and III Associates. He holds a degree in aeronautical and astronautical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and serves on the senior advisory board at Financial Technology Forum.

### Success Story

"My greatest accomplishment has been to lead the transformation of our business past the 'merger of equals' of Janus Capital Group

and Henderson Group. The merger integration program was a bold effort to integrate a U.K.-based and a U.S.-based asset manager into a single global business, supported by a unified global operating model and consolidated technology platforms. The program delivered an integrated global asset management business ready to meet the needs of colleagues and serve our clients with excellence.

"Whereas many mergers fall short of expectations, through organizational transformation, innovation and relentless pursuit of business value, we achieved a superior and market-leading result."

## MICHAEL FELITON

 SVP & CIO, Crocs

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Feliton is responsible for strategic vision in technology and the application landscape at Crocs. He spent most of his career in the retail and apparel industries, previously serving as CIO at jewelry firm David Yurman. His philanthropic work includes serving on child-poverty-focused charity Room to Grow's board of directors.

### Success Story

"In October, Crocs opened a distribution center in Ohio. At the same time, our design and

marketing teams had amazing collaborations with pop artists Post Malone and Luke Combs (if you missed out, be on the lookout for what they do next). This coincided with record Cyber Week sales flooding the new facility.

"My team put their goals aside and spent weeks working side by side our warehouse associates, and we pitched in in every way possible. This team enabled Crocs to achieve a record fourth quarter. Living that Crocs culture made us all proud."

## MICHAEL RHYMES

 CIO, Gates Corporation

Gates



Rhymes leads Gates Corp.'s strategic direction, execution and support of information systems infrastructure, security and network operations. His previous IT experience includes work at Eaton Corporation, Cooper Industries and Cap Gemini. Rhymes holds a bachelor's degree in economics and an MBA from Texas A&M University.

### Success Story

"I am fortunate to be a part of a great team at Gates. We have built an IT group that works

hard each day to enable the goals of our business partners through reliable, secure and cost-effective technology solutions.

"Whether it be better servicing our customers, generating new revenue streams or driving quality of process and productivity throughout the organization, I couldn't be prouder of the results this team delivers."

## AMIT SHARMA

 CIO, Western Union

WesternUnion WU



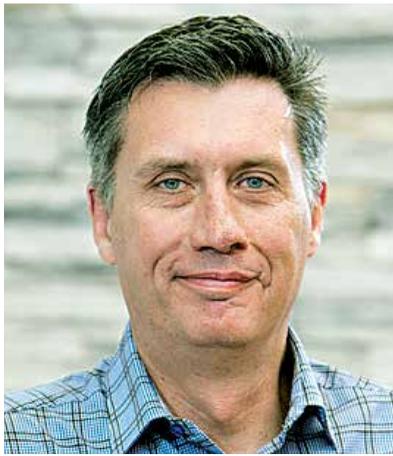
Sharma manages strategy, transformation and operations for Western Union Money Transfer, Bill Payment, Prepaid and Money Order products, supporting more than \$5 billion in revenue. He previously served as senior vice president and CTO of the firm's Global Money Transfer product. He's one of the company's top 50 leaders.

### Success Story

"Western Union's Cloud Strategy aims to deliver on the promise of business agility and

innovation by promoting developer autonomy, enhanced security and higher operational efficiency. This requires my team to adopt key methodologies: continuous improvement, continuous security, continuous operations and AI operations. These methodologies, along with a cloud-first approach and microservices architecture, allow my team to focus on standardization, optimization and automation. This approach has allowed us to modernize our pricing capabilities with a new pricing engine."

**JAMES CAPPS** SVP, Institutional Engineering, E-Trade



Capps leads E-Trade’s software engineering teams, guiding the technical vision, development and deployment of the firm’s institutional systems. A Denver native, Capps previously served in leadership positions at Trust Company of America and Comcast. He’s the city director at Denver’s House of Genius where he helps foster entrepreneurship.

**Success Story**

“Balancing the development of my team with the growth of my company is the foundation of my role as a technology leader.”

“An accomplishment of which I am most proud involves the growth and evolution of my team to a world-class engineering group. I had the fortune of being tasked with growing a small private company, TCA, with a strong but undisciplined technology team, and positioning it to be acquired by E-Trade. Financially strong, the company was being positioned as a tech firm. Significant investment in process, skills and tooling helped the team find stability and improved morale.”

**ALAN CULLOP** SVP & CIO, DaVita



Cullop’s history of success in building and leading progressive, global Information technology led him to his role as CIO at DaVita where he combines technology knowledge with strong business acumen. He’s been recognized by tech futurist Thornton May as one of the nation’s top CIOs.

**Success Story**

“We put the needs of our patients first. Our technology strategy is an integral part of care delivery, and I’m proud of how we contribute and collaborate across the organization. We make a difference in people’s lives through

exceptional clinical care, using data-driven insights to connect care teams with our patients and their families. We customize chronic care management based on each patient’s unique needs.

“Health care is dynamic, complex and incredibly rewarding. Our efforts to transform delivery of care serve as an example of what can be done when dedicated professionals come together for a meaningful cause.”

**CHRIS MEYERPETER** CIO, Ardent Mills



A U.S. Navy veteran, digital strategist and delivery executive, Meyerpeter spent 21 years at Monsanto Company before joining Ardent Mills in February 2018. Meyerpeter has spent his career shaping the landscape, digital strategy and transformation of the agricultural industry. His leadership focuses on people development, customer experience, technology implementation and business-process design.

**Success Story**

“The transformation that I have led in our IT organization has changed the brand of IT

across Ardent Mills. We saw that we needed to end an outsourcing support agreement early and take more control of our IT systems — and our company’s destiny.

“This complete transition was done in six months, even after many experts continued to caution us it couldn’t be done. Not only did this transition significantly improve team-member satisfaction, the project saved just shy of \$3 million dollars annually for Ardent Mills to invest in new IT technologies.”

**CRAIG RICHARDVILLE** SVP & CIO, SCL Health



Richardville’s responsibilities include leading all aspects of SCL’s IT strategy and operations, including enterprise systems and applications, information security, core infrastructure and leading the system’s digital transformation and information automation. He previously led Richardville Consulting LLC, delivering resource, advisory and brokerage services for innovative start-up software and services companies.

**Success Story**

“One word for me: ‘people.’ We are a health care and digital technology company, yet

most importantly, we are a people business: people that we serve and people that have the privilege and honor to serve.

“People is the one thing that cannot be duplicated. Even for those that lead digital technology, people is the one and only thing that the competition cannot duplicate. We must always remember that people is the core of what makes you unique, and people separates you from the competition.”

LARGE ENTERPRISE FINALISTS

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Vin Melvin, who is being honored with the Leadership Award at Colorado CIO's CIO of the Year ORBIE Awards program, has been with Arrow Electronics since 2006.

**LEADERSHIP AWARD - VIN MELVIN**

# THE CIO'S SECRET

## Arrow Electronics CIO talks applying tech to business strategy

BY JENSEN WERLEY  
jwerley@bizjournals.com  
303-803-9232

**V**in Melvin didn't originally plan to have a career in information technology.

He studied physics but minored in computer science at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, after taking "a bunch of computer programming courses" because he wasn't sure what he would do with his physics major. After a coding internship, he had a choice to go to graduate school for optical physics or pursue a job at IBM. He chose the latter, which has led to his career as chief information officer at Arrow Electronics (NYSE: ARW).

A Connecticut native, Melvin was introduced to science by his father, a hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey.

Melvin was with IBM Corp. (NYSE: IBM) for 18 years, working there as a systems engineer and logistics analyst. While Melvin worked in New York state, where IBM is based, he also got the chance to go to Europe and Asia for the company. He got a lot of support at IBM, as well,

which helped him grow at the company – and in his field.

While becoming CIO was an unplanned series of fortunate events, the reasons Melvin has stayed in the role are completely intentional.

"Technology changes so rapidly, the job is always new," he told Denver Business Journal. "It's incredibly challenging and enjoyable. In the CIO role, there's an ability to make a difference to the strategic capabilities of an organization through technology – and that motivates me."

That ability to translate a company's strategy into a technology road map so that the business can achieve its objectives is one of the most important parts of being a CIO, Melvin said. He joined Arrow – a Centennial-based company specializing in the distribution of electronic components and related services – in 2006.

Over 14 years with the company, he's come to deeply grasp its business. Through that long-term understanding, he's been able to craft its technology strategy.

"It's not something you can do in three months or six months," he said. "It takes time

spending a lot of energy and effort with the business's leadership. What I try to do is line up the business strategy with the technology strategy so the two pieces work in harmony."

### Change is the appeal

Part of tech's appeal to Melvin is how quickly it changes. In 2016, Melvin told DBJ he was excited about his company's efforts in big data.

"The data is almost in real time," Melvin said during that 2016 interview. "It's been a three- to four-year journey, but now we're seeing it get to a place where we can harness it for value."

That holds true, but the company's capabilities have evolved over the years since.

"It's something we continue to focus on," he said. "Four years ago we were looking at how we acquired data and how we leveraged the enterprise data we had. We were building a foundation. Now we're seeing that data is capable of adding significant value."

On top of big data, Arrow is working on overlaying machine learning tools. One major development is that machine learning, while still highly technical, is more accessible and wide-

► LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Leadership ORBIE Award recognizes a current or former CIO who has:

- A proven track record of successful technology leadership throughout their career;
- Made significant contributions to/had a meaningful impact within Colorado's technology and business community;
- Inspired others through their personal, professional and civic contributions; and
- Whose accomplishments have been acknowledged by peers, industry leaders and/or prior ORBIE winners.

spread. That makes it all the more able to aid businesses in their tech processes.

At its core, Melvin said Arrow is a supply chain enablement company. One technological development he's enthusiastic about is applying data intelligence to the supply chain.

"It's a very exciting frontier and investment area that continues to really do things that are meaningful for a company," he said.

There are other big projects of which Melvin is proud. Not too long ago, Arrow made a successful and complete global transformation effort. It made sure there was a platform with a uniform user experience throughout the business, which has more than 18,000 employees globally.

"We wanted data to be more consistent when looking at our businesses, which is better than a disparate system," he said. "We optimized our

platform footprint."

Ultimately that provided a better customer experience, he added.

In the future, Melvin said he wants Arrow to continue to use technology to differentiate the value it provides to customers and supplier partners.

"So much of what Arrow does is tied not just to the person getting the products from Arrow but to the partners we have looking at us to provide additional value to those customers," he said. "We continue to build that through tech, the talent and teamwork across the globe. I find significant self-satisfaction in that."

**Beyond 'IT'**

Melvin is CIO, but that means thinking about more than just information technology. Melvin also has to lead. For him, a big part of that is marrying business acumen with understanding computer science.

"You do have to fundamentally understand the changes and transformation of technology," he said.

But just as important is the ability to lead through example and work with his team.

"I'm notorious for wanting to climb into the engine room too many times," he said. "I've learned to allow my leadership team to make decisions, support those decisions and guide them in their efforts. I try to do that in a way that is more of a stewardship role than a driving-the-car role."

During this time of Covid-19 and America's reckoning with racial injustice, Melvin said he's taking the time to think about his leadership.

"We all have to look at the world through a different lens now," he said. "That lens has to be inclusive and focused on compassion."

*"I'm notorious for wanting to climb into the engine room too many times. I've learned to allow my leadership team to make decisions, support those decisions and guide them in their efforts. I try to do that in a way that is more of a stewardship role than a driving-the-car role."*

**VIN MELVIN,**  
CIO, Arrow Electronics

When he isn't busy as CIO, Melvin said he's taking this period of working from home to spend time with his family. His college-aged sons are both back home because of the pandemic.

"As a parent," he said, "you don't expect to get that time back. So, in my part of the world, I'm spending time with my family. We all like to golf although none of us are good. We ski up in the mountains. It's fundamentally safer outdoors right now, which is a nice opportunity to spend time and socially distance with friends."

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## EILEEN BAINES SVP & CIO, CoBank



Baines manages the information technology division and is responsible for IT enterprise and solution architecture, software and platform development, IT infrastructure, IT operations, end-user computing and support at CoBank. She's led and transformed at financial services organizations including Western Union, Janus Capital Group and JPMorgan.

### Success Story

"Attracting and retaining technology talent, especially in Colorado's competitive market,

is challenging. CoBank needed to increase our IT employees by 34% to nearly 200. Working with recruiting, D&I and IT leaders, we sourced talent to ensure a diverse candidate pool. We also established an IT rapid onboarding team and related principles to ensure a positive and consistent candidate experience and efficient onboarding. Although I provided the direction, IT employees fully owned the creation and execution of the onboarding principles. Engaging current team members to own this resulted in both a great sense of pride and a more successful recruiting effort."

## PETE DUPRÉ CIO, Elevations Credit Union



Dupré is responsible for developing and driving the implementation of Elevations' technology strategy and leading its IT operations and business applications teams. Prior to joining Elevations, Dupré was CIO, Latin America Region, for First Data Corporation and CIO of JetPay Corporation. He also held IT leadership roles at Amazon Web Services.

### Success Story

"From the perspective of business impact, I believe my greatest accomplishment in this

role is the implementation of our Agile Transformation. I designed the program, recruited leaders and partners and secured business sponsorship. Our initial Scrum pilot project was a little clumsy, however the team embraced the approach and released an enhancement in a fraction of the time it would have released using old methods. The transformation has been comprehensive. Now all projects use Scrum, business alignment improved, rework is nearly eliminated, quality is measured and improved, and IT is now viewed as a partner across the lines of business."

## AARON EVERETT VP Information Technology, Lucky's Market



Prior to leading Lucky's Market's IT staffing, budgeting and operational initiatives, Everett managed \$35 billion in revenue, an IT budget of \$100 million and 200 staff across the globe at Staples. He managed multiple IT teams at Corporate Express, which was acquired by Staples in 2008.

### Success Story

"Having the opportunity to come in and assess and transform an IT organization that didn't have the core foundation needed to grow was hugely rewarding. Support-

ing and maintaining while transforming and implementing change management can be a challenge when doing it all at the same time. Working with various business teams to help them achieve their goals and strategic initiatives by transforming IT talk into tangible business programs is gratifying.

"What I'm most proud of is the IT team. Their commitment and dedication are second to none and are simply the reason we've achieved so much success in our projects."

## STEPHEN KATSIRUBAS CIO, Hunter Douglas



Katsirubas is responsible for the overall IT strategy and technology empowerment of the Hunter Douglas North American organization. In his more-than-25-year career, he's served as global CIO for Crocs, CIO for Clarks, and has held positions as program director, software engineer and a management consultant in the international trade arena.

### Success Story

"The past three years have been revolutionary for Hunter Douglas. We successfully moved multiple major systems to one platform sup-

porting our entire enterprise. This, coupled with our accomplishments at vastly improving the customer digital experience, will continue the great success Hunter Douglas has enjoyed for over 100 years.

"Personally, the entire credit goes to the IT and business teams that have toiled, sweated and remained so focused and dedicated at making these transformations a reality. I feel so lucky to have been a part of such great endeavors and so very fortunate to work with such committed and passionate individuals."

**PAULA KAUTZMANN** CIO, Colorado Access



**K**autzmann is responsible for managing the IT direction of Colorado Access, including providing vision and leadership for operations and infrastructure, and for developing and implementing an IT strategy that supports company growth and strategic initiatives. Her experience includes more than two decades in the Medicaid health plan space.

**Success Story**

“My major accomplishment as CIO of Colorado Access was creating the vision to bring IT in-house after being outsourced for many

years, and making it a reality with major assistance from my IT management team. This increased employee engagement, allowed for employee ownership of processes and elevated IT as a strategic business partner, rather than a reactive vendor.

“The new IT department has more company knowledge, makes strategic business decisions and utilizes expertise to offer innovative ideas that help create larger-scale lasting decisions. Ultimately, we created an in-house, top-tier IT department that produces high-quality results at a reduced bottom line.”

**MELISSA PENZA** Former VP of Technology Services and PMO, Flexential



**P**enza manages all of Flexential’s platforms. Flexential is the result of a merger of regional data-center companies ViaWest and Peak 10. Her prior work includes leading product engineering and program management IT at insurance-software firm StoneRiver and serving as a principal consultant at ConvergeOne and Deutsche Bank.

**Success Story**

“I joined Flexential in 2017 in a newly created role to integrate several companies that had been purchased by a private equity firm. As

IT in a technology company, we were still able to build a scalable business platform — all while rebuilding a team from scratch. Making it happen with my fantastic team has been my biggest achievement.

“In addition to the Technology Services group, I also founded the Program Management Office. This organization has been implementing project and product development life-cycles and disciplines to align the company’s book of work into a portfolio that executes the company strategy.”

**RUSS TRAINOR** SVP, IT, Denver Broncos Football Club



**T**rainor manages the IT systems at both the stadium and training facility for the NFL’s Denver Broncos. The nearly-30-year tech veteran is also a military veteran, having served in the Coast Guard. After positions at Equifax, Atlanta Gas & Light and The Home Depot, Trainor worked for the Atlanta Falcons.

**Success Story**

“I’m very proud of the overall ‘network-first’ mindset we have enabled across the organi-

zation. We had a plan back in 2011 and have stuck with it, and it has paid off by helping us enable various platforms across the company. In 2013, we installed an IPTV System; in 2010/11 and again in 2018/19, a robust HD Wi-Fi system at the stadium and training center, 10Gbps connectivity for various high-powered desktops, completely virtualized server farms, HD video playback/content/editing for both football and stadium use cases, new stadium point-of-sale system along with many other initiatives.”

**WAYNE WHITE** Global CIO, Startek



**A**t Startek, White develops technology and network designs, processes, products and tools to drive business solutions and client offerings for the federal government as well as companies in the BPO and automotive manufacturing space. He drives a truck, a tractor and a Harley Davidson, depending on the weather and location.

**Success Story**

“My greatest accomplishment is creating the next generation of leaders. I would not

be where I am today without the assistance and advice of several mentors, all of whom were critical in my career growth.

“Therefore, I look at the young men and women coming into the workforce as a trust I need to repay. I look at the team and see their career growth, see them learn new skills or take on new challenges, and know that I have made a difference. My success story is simply the success of those on my team.”

LARGE CORPORATE FINALISTS

COMPANIES WITH OVER \$400 MILLION IN ANNUAL REVENUE

## CORPORATE FINALISTS

COMPANIES WITH  
UP TO \$400 MILLION  
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## JOHN EDWARDS

 SVP & CIO, Red Lion Hotels Corporation


Edwards partners with business leaders, vendors and technology organizations to solve challenges through technology solutions that lead to memorable customer experiences. His work has resulted in industry firsts like a mobile check-in solution from Oracle, a fully integrated Apple & DirecTV guest room experience, and a robotic bathroom cleaner.

### Success Story

"As CIO at Red Lion Hotels Corporation, I've been tasked with overseeing our shift toward technological innovation. Over the past four

years, we've transitioned from simply consuming technology to building solutions and enhancing integrations with industry system providers. My team delivers innovative solutions to hotels without high costs or long timelines and creates new products our company can leverage to improve our business offerings. Working with the team at RLHC has allowed me to share my passion for technology while partnering with leaders excited to see what ideas can come when industry barriers are removed, and possibilities are limitless."

## ROB GRANT

 CIO, CPI Card Group


Grant is responsible for driving CPI Card Group's overall IT strategy, cybersecurity road map and technology operations. Grant previously served as VP of global technology and cybersecurity for Crocs, as well as serving in tech leadership roles at Newmont Mining, HIS and JD Edwards.

### Success Story

"In this role, the biggest accomplishment has been the cultural clean up and reconstruction of four independent IT groups into an

enterprise organization. This was an effort to redesign the organizational structure, assess and top grade the talent levels (replacing as needed). We had to prioritize focus and investment areas in order to effectively mitigate areas of risk and maximize the company's focus on quality and customers. Through this effort, we were able to 'compartmentalize' key functions and leverage strategic partnerships so that we could build up core capabilities while maintaining focus on delivering on customer commitments."

## DR. WES WILLIAMS

 VP & CIO, Mental Health Center of Denver


Williams oversees Mental Health Center of Denver's information systems. His current focus is on launching the nonprofit's Innovation Lab, using human-centered design to improve access, engagement and treatment efficacy. He was appointed to Colorado's eHealth Commission, representing behavioral health interests in allocating \$64 million in federal funding.

### Success Story

"My greatest accomplishment has been earning the opportunity to stand up Mental Health Center of Denver's Innovation Lab. I

established a solid foundation for innovation. Technology-wise, I've replaced and modernized nearly our entire IT infrastructure. Process-wise, I have implemented two major initiatives: adoption of agile project management and a cybersecurity program. This foundation allows us to focus on innovation. We are committed to finding digital health solutions to improve access, engagement and treatment efficacy. Our first two programs have launched to make Denver No. 1 in well-being. We strive to provide extraordinary experiences to improve well-being for everyone in Denver."



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GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**DR. DAVID BESSEN** Director IT & CIO, Arapahoe County



**B**essen has established IT governance at Arapahoe County, converted the IT Department to a bimodal operation, focused on using technology to drive efficiencies and fostered collaboration. His department's work was awarded a 2019 Digital Edge 50 award recognizing Arapahoe's use of technology that benefits citizens there and in other Colorado counties.

**Success Story**

"Writing software that saves lives is uncommon; having that software developed by a few

people in county government is unheard of, but that is what Arapahoe County did.

"Our HSConnects product digitizes food, medical and housing benefit applications and recertifications — accelerating their processing and review by 92%. The product has saved \$1.4M annually on a five-year capital investment of \$1.8M in Arapahoe County. The county has also made the product available to a dozen other counties and, as a SaaS provider, generated a revenue stream to recover capital investment costs for Arapahoe County taxpayers."

**ALETA JEFFRESS** CIO & CDO, City of Aurora



**J**effress, now VP of consulting services at CGI, established inaugural cybersecurity programs and project management offices at two organizations. Modernizing legacy systems increased taxpayer compliance by a projected \$30 million over five years. Prior to her role with the City of Aurora, she served as CIO at The Indiana Department of Revenue.

**Success Story**

"I believe the greatest accomplishment is the change in culture for IT. Internal culture change was implemented by introduc-

ing new divisions and revisiting processes, investing in additional staff and educating and providing opportunities for people to advance. Externally, turning IT from a department of 'no' to a valued business partner that many of the departments engage with first to determine their next steps and overall technology strategy.

"In addition, there have been multiple enterprise projects implemented with the help of a well-defined governance process; this has resulted in significant, positive impacts across the organization."

**ANDREW MOORE** CIO, Boulder Valley School District



**M**oore provides IT services for about 4,200 employees and 30,000 students. Before joining Boulder Valley School District, he was a senior director at Sun Microsystems, overseeing a global IT team. Moore served as mayor of the Town of Erie, and is an MBA candidate at CU Denver in 2020.

**Success Story**

"Working in K-12 public education has allowed me to understand the challenges students

face with the homework gap. In the 21st century, access to the internet is a learning necessity. I have led an effort to find a creative way to bring free internet to the homes of students in need. The pilot program, called ConnectME (My Education), is a public-private partnership with an over-the-air broadband provider. In exchange for backhaul using district dark fiber assets and allowing small transmitters/receivers onto schools, the company provides free internet to students who are federally qualified for free/reduce lunch."

**DR. THERESA SZCZUREK** Executive director and CIO, Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology



**S**zczurek is co-founder and former CEO of Boulder-based Radish Systems. She was key in transforming the telecom startup into a thriving firm that sold for more than \$40 million. The best-selling author has served in executive roles at Colorado Women's Education Foundation and Institute of Management Consultants.

**Success Story**

"Expanding virtual government services, anywhere and anytime, is one of my strategic initiatives; the Colorado Digital IDTM is an

example of how the state of Colorado is using emerging technologies to enhance the lives of Coloradans. Digital ID was released within the myColoradoTM mobile app, enabling Coloradans a secure, legally acceptable electronic version of their Colorado driver's license that can be displayed on smartphones within Colorado. Nearly 40,000 Digital IDs have been created to date and growing. Download myColoradoTM now. Additional capabilities are on the way to make it easier to do business with the state, law enforcement, and merchants."



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