

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
FASTEST GROWING
innovative companies
2017



PARSONSKELLOGG \$25M-\$75M



EMBRACE HOME LOANS \$75M AND ABOVE



PREMAMA \$250K-\$5M



LIFEWEAR TECHNOLOGIES INC. \$5M-\$25M

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Customer-centric yields top results

INTERNALIZING ITS CUSTOMERS' needs would seem to be the first thing a company should do to make market success more likely. And yet, too often enterprises miss that approach completely. If I say Equifax, need I say more?



On the other hand, nearly all of this year's Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies winners have put the needs of existing and potential customers at the front of their approaches, and the results speak for themselves.

From AVTECH Software Inc.'s creation of a power-monitoring device in six months (following a cry for help from an existing customer) to BI Medical LLC developing a coating that will improve how amputees connect with their prostheses to the laser-sharp focus on pre- and post-natal women exhibited by Premama, this special section is filled with example after example of innovations and significant growth that support a customer-centric approach.

Another trend worth noting is the growth being generated in the largest revenue category for this year's FGIC program. All of

the top five companies have revenue exceeding \$100 million (and Shawmut Design and Construction's \$104.6 million is just the business it does in Rhode Island; its total corporate revenue is much greater than that). Gilbane Co., the sixth-generation builder and developer exhibited 28 percent growth from 2014 to 2016, ending last year with \$4.9 billion in sales.

So read the profiles contained in this special section. You will find across the many different industries represented, all the companies are putting their customers at the top of their approaches.

The continuing success of the Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies program rests on the support of our sponsors, which this year including presenting sponsor CBIZ & MHM, as well as partner sponsors The Beacon Mutual Insurance Co., Cox Business, Embrace Home Loans, The Hilb Group of New England and Partridge Snow and Hahn LLP.

Mark S. Murphy

Mark S. Murphy
Editor

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●FASTEST GROWING COMPANIES

●INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

PBN COVER PHOTOS BY MICHAEL SALERNO AND RUPERT WHITELEY

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Congratulations to the businesses who have been named PBN's Fastest Growing and Innovative Companies. Embrace Home Loans is honored to be among you. Even after 35 years in business, continually exploring innovations to serve our customers and communities remains our pursuit, purpose and passion... your stories inspire us to keep doing so.



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congratulates the winners of the 2017 Fastest Growing and Innovative Companies Awards. Innovation and growth are hallmarks of great companies and the Hilb Group of New England recognizes the commitment, foresight, and hard work exemplified to attain these goals. Congratulations on your remarkable achievements!



Partridge Snow & Hahn is pleased to recognize the winners of the Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies Awards. We are proud to call Rhode Island home, and honored to be surrounded by companies that show the dedication, vision and commitment needed to keep Rhode Island in the spotlight for innovation. Congratulations!



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1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent):
 Dennis Hardiman, CEO;
 Kurt Noyce, president
2016 Revenue: \$159,406,217
2014 Revenue: \$94,456,562
Revenue growth: 69%

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN |
 Contributing Writer

KURT NOYCE has been with **Embrace Home Loans** for 27 years, 18 as president. In that time, he has watched Embrace grow from a small team of fewer than 50 employees to more than 800 today, with more than 80 offices.

Embrace has continued to adapt and flourish during its 35 years in business due in great part, Noyce says, to the company's vision and versatility.

"Innovation has consisted of major investments in digital marketing and customer-enabled technologies, but it has also been [in the form of] more subtle but meaningful adjustments to our approach," Noyce said. "How we support the employee needs of today, how we serve the customer expectations of today. By regularly asking, listening and responding, we are continually tweaking, and at times, overhauling. This is how a 35-year-old company can still be amongst those noted for its growth. And that is exciting, and something I am very proud of."

Embrace opened its doors in 1983 as a second-mortgage broker, helping Rhode Islanders finance home improvements. Utilizing mailing, media and digital-marketing techniques, Embrace grew into a full-service mortgage lender, expanding throughout New England and eventually nationwide. Today, the company operates in 47 states, providing mortgage financing for homeowners and homebuyers. In addition, Embrace provides full private-labeled mortgage operational services for financial institutions across the United States.

Recently, a large regional bank approached Embrace for help im-

proving its mortgage operations.

"What they found in the space were companies that approached the tasks as an 'outsourcer,' not a community lender," Noyce said. "Given that Embrace has always competed against well-known brands, outperforming them by the care extended, this bank asked us to build the same for them."

Noyce said the innovative approach required significant input from several areas, including legal; technology; compliance; human resources; training; licensing; and capital markets.

The project, which went from conception to rollout in less than six months, has been hugely successful – so successful that other banks have asked Embrace to do the same for them. The end result is a brand-new business channel generating more than \$15 million of revenue.

Over the past two years, Embrace also has placed great emphasis on turning its leaders into coaches. More than 40 of the company's management team are recognized as associate certified coaches by the International Coach Federation, carrying out their jobs as professional coaches with the goal of creating greater

self-awareness and action in all business relationships.

Finding the motivation to go to work each day is definitely not a problem for Noyce.

"People's houses are more than just shelter. They are homes, homes where memories are made," Noyce said. The company allows for clients to enjoy the experience of buying and refinancing those homes.

"My work is mostly focused on our leaders and employees and the banks we serve – helping them to see the true meaning behind the work they do and achieve fulfillment in the impacts they make to be a good steward of the responsibility given to lead others and to provide an example of how we can

prove that a strategy that is good for people is good for business," he said.

Mike Manley, a closing-department manager, says the culture at Embrace is the real deal, with knowledgeable and ethical executives who are quick to recognize good work. In addition to a monthly awards ceremony and luncheon, the company also offers personal-enrichment workshops.

"My late wife once told me, 'You can only be passionate about that which you love,'" Manley said. "I love the family culture at Embrace." ■



HUMAN INVESTMENT: Embrace Home Loans leaders help people finance "homes where memories are made." A key to that effort is in-house training. Engaged in conversation are Nicholas DeLuca, middle, Al Dussinger, right, and attendee Lillia Wild.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

'By regularly asking, **listening and responding**, we are continually tweaking, and at times, overhauling.'

KURT NOYCE
 Embrace Home Loans president

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RIDCO Casting Co.
Rogers Corporation
Seven Hills Rhode Island
Silver Creek Manor
SRC Providence LLC
The Kent Center

Prepared food leads to big catch

BY JULIA QUINN-SZCESUIL | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Todd Blount, CEO and president
2016 Revenue: \$293,036,957
2014 Revenue: \$181,815,824
Revenue Growth: 61%

2ND PLACE

WHEN IT COMES TO achieving growth, **Blount Fine Foods** isn't afraid to change.

But company leaders know Blount's excellent reputation of producing high-quality, prepared foods such as refrigerated soups and chowders is nonnegotiable.

So how does a seafood company achieve phenomenal growth in a stagnant marketplace? Blount's team made a careful, strategic and highly successful move toward the prepared-foods market with an eye on going national. This entrepreneurial approach led to 61 percent revenue growth from 2014 to 2016. The growth positioned Blount to serve brand-name outlets such as Panera and Legal Sea Foods, while keeping several local retail outlets.

According to Todd Blount, CEO and president of the Fall River-based company, being in the right marketplace factored in the growth his company has seen. But there's more behind it – having the right product for those markets is even more crucial.

"We want to ride the wave of being the best choice within a growing market," he said. "For Blount, that is the prepared-foods section of retail. We all want something convenient for dinner."

And Blount says the company's repeat appearance on this list is also testament to company employees. "Our team is key to this growth," he said. "Both in attitude and hard work." ■

Shawmut owns client service

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Les Hiscoe, CEO
2016 Revenue: \$104,600,000
2014 Revenue: \$79,400,000
Revenue Growth: 32%

4TH PLACE

SHAWMUT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION is a fast-growing company that has also been recognized among the most innovative.

The 35-year-old, Boston-based, employee-owned firm has established a culture of ownership that promotes forward-thinking ideas and growth.

Over the past five years, Shawmut's revenue has seen a nearly 50 percent increase. At the heart of Shawmut's growth is not only innovation, but its dedicated employee base – growing from roughly 600 employees in 2011 to more than 1,240 in 2016.

"Each one of our more than 1,200 employees nationwide is charged with thinking and acting like owners – supporting our

client-centric approach," said Ron Simoneau, vice president and in charge of the Providence office. Features such as lean design and construction management, integrated project delivery, flexible work schedules, building information modeling, virtual reality, a diversity focus and paid family leave are all efforts to keep employees engaged and appreciated, which keeps Shawmut ahead of its game.

"Delivering on our promise to offer the best client experience in the industry is essential to who we are as a company. When over 80 percent of our business is repeat business, we think it's working," said Simoneau. ■

Claflin innovates medical supply

BY JULIA QUINN-SZCESUIL | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Anne-Marie Johnson, president, chief operating officer
2016 Revenue: \$307,417,072
2014 Revenue: \$231,967,688
Revenue Growth: 33%

3RD PLACE

WITH THE MEDICAL-device industry exploding, **The Claflin Co.** serves a market segment that needs and appreciates its innovative approach.

When the company began as an apothecary 200 years ago, its founder likely never imagined the complex supply chains the Warwick-based company would manage in the future. The company distributes devices for health care organizations and companies, all with vastly different requirements.

Claflin has stayed ahead of the game since mixing medicines in 1817, using technology to help clients work more efficiently. The company is ISO 9002 certified, elevating its process control to an international standard of excep-

tional quality.

Thanks to devices such as a handheld, inventory-control product that reduces a time-consuming and laborious inventory process from hours to minutes, Claflin achieved 33 percent revenue growth from 2014 to 2016, topping \$300 million in sales for the first time.

Claflin's customers, such as hospitals and medical providers, depend on the company to supply, organize and track everything from scrubs to surgical instruments. With increased efficiency, firms reduce waste and costs, both of which lead to a better outcome. Claflin works with each client to ensure design and delivery of the devices and products. ■

Legacy, tech: A lucrative mix

BY MARY HOWE | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Thomas F. Gilbane, Jr., chairman and CEO
2016 Revenue: \$4,874,000,000
2014 Revenue: \$3,805,000,000
Revenue Growth: 28%

5TH PLACE

GILBANE CO., the Providence-based global construction firm, has prospered because of qualities that reach into the past for generations: six, so far. The company was founded in 1873 by two sons of Irish immigrants. Family ownership still guides the company's growth, from revenue of \$3.8 billion in 2014 to \$4.9 billion in 2016, a 28 percent increase.

Wes Cotter, director of communications, said recent growth can be attributed to faster, better, more-efficient construction techniques. A proprietary system called I Build places digital tablets in the hands of project managers in the field, so they can use real-time data.

Before a shovel or brick is

moved, Gilbane creates its buildings virtually, in a 4-D environment, showing the design, materials and all systems. The design can be placed in a virtual-reality engine that allows a client to walk through the building and see it as if in real life. The savings in design changes, time and money are enormous, Cotter said.

Beyond technical know-how, the company's 3,221 global and 281 Rhode Island employees can do their best work because they are constantly aware of Gilbane's core values, including integrity, excellence and caring.

Cotter said the principles come down to one singularity: "If it's not the right thing, we don't do it." ■



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PARSONSKELLOGG

1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent):
 Thomas Parsons Kellogg III
2016 Revenue: \$27,144,540
2014 Revenue: \$17,115,671
Revenue growth: 59%

BY NANCY KIRSCH |
 Contributing Writer

“I’M A T-SHIRT SALESMAN,” joked Thomas Parsons “Tom” Kellogg III, who said that, beyond that description, he has no elevator speech to describe **ParsonsKellogg**, the promotional-products distribution company he started 15 years ago. “Educating people about this fun business ... is challenging.”

After working with Nike, Asics, Oakley and Champion, Kellogg realized that the promotional-products industry offered a real opportunity.

“Our mission was to bring premium brands to industry and sell companies premium-branded merchandise,” said Kellogg, ParsonsKellogg’s president. The company started with a machine stamping logos on golf balls for NBC and ESPN, and selling Nike products imprinted with the Buick and Accenture logos. It branched out to provide promotional apparel from key vendors – Patagonia, Nike, Adidas, Peter Millar, Under Armour, Yeti, Vineyard Vines and Helly Hansen – for Fortune 500 companies. Citizens Bank is a local client. It also provides in-stadium, promotional giveaways and sponsorship support for major sports teams.

ParsonsKellogg has built business-to-business, e-commerce sites for about 30 clients and expects to do more. With companies such as Amazon and Walmart moving into the business, Kellogg is investing heavily in technology to automate customer orders.

Some 15,000 companies are in the \$25 billion promotional-products industry, said Kellogg, and no company owns more than 3 percent of the market. After

Staples, the largest company in the industry, it drops off quickly.

Earlier challenges have helped the company gain its now-solid foothold.

It bounced back from lean years during the Great Recession. Those hard times, Kellogg explained, helped him focus on what the company needed to do to survive. After establishing that strong foundation, Kellogg now credits the current success to the people he’s hired.

It’s no surprise there’s widespread employee longevity, with casual dress, a liberal vacation policy, a company bar, a 401(k) plan, limited telecommuting for some employees and time off for all when the company hits its sales goals. ParsonsKellogg is socially responsible as well, making donations to several local charities that are often chosen by employees. Last year, it participated in Patagonia’s 1% for the Planet program, contributing to an environmental nonprofit an amount equal to 1 percent of its sales from Patagonia products.

Only in the past few years has the company’s flat management

style been modified to include directors of operations, sales and finance. “One of our core values is disciplined freedom,” said Kellogg. “We like to point people in the right direction and let them go.”

Now employing nearly 50 people, based in East Providence, ParsonsKellogg benefits from its strong internship program with several Rhode Island institutions, most notably Providence College, Roger Williams University and the University of Rhode Island, Kellogg said. Currently, the full-time staff in their 20s or 30s include several alumni from those schools. Of the interns, Kellogg said it’s a great, mutually beneficial arrangement, with opportunity on both sides. “We get to test-drive them and vice versa... they get to work with some sporting-goods brands and some Fortune 500 companies.”

Kellogg considers the company’s size one of its strengths. It’s large enough to source products

as aggressively as anyone in the industry but small enough that it pays careful attention to details. “We’re big enough to get top-tier discounts, but we don’t have a lot of overhead; that enables us to be competitive,” he said. Nevertheless, ParsonsKellogg is now in a position where more growth is likely inevitable. Recognizing that the company could continue organic growth, buy other companies, expand to other locations or establish franchises, Kellogg is excited when he ponders, “How big could we get?” ■

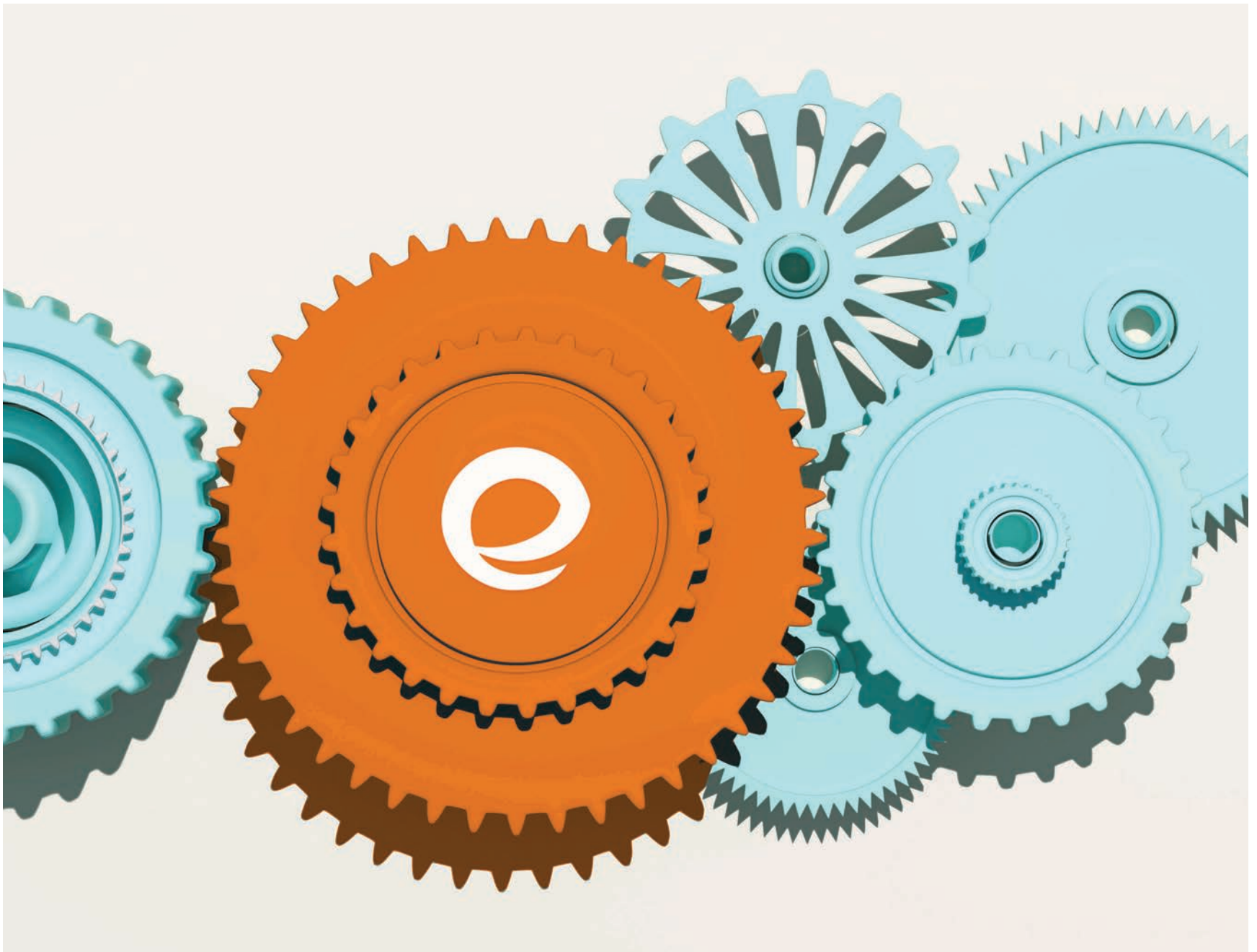


SEWING UP GROWTH: ParsonsKellogg President Thomas Parsons “Tom” Kellogg III, left, said he’s just a “T-shirt salesman.” Embroidery specialist Monet Sanders works with T-shirts and more for the promotional-products distributor.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

‘We like to point people in the right direction and let them go.’

THOMAS PARSONS “TOM” KELLOGG III
 ParsonsKellogg president



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Sea Corp. relies on adaptive approach

BY MARY HOWE | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
 Brian W. Gilligan, CEO
 2016 Revenue: \$74,911,544
 2014 Revenue: \$59,676,041
 Revenue Growth: 26%

2ND PLACE

A BRAINY, COHESIVE WORK-FORCE with a sterling reputation and a talent for borrowing and adapting existing technologies has made Systems Engineering Associates Corp. of Middletown, a subcontractor of services for the military, into a growing enterprise.

Sea Corp. is the largest subcontractor working with the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, said President David A. Lussier. It also works with General Dynamics Electric Boat, Lockheed Martin and Progeny Systems Corp.

One example of Sea Corp.'s flexible thinking arose last year, when it landed a contract with the federal Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business

Technology Transfer program. The \$1 million project required Sea Corp. to figure out how to launch a mine-neutralizing payload from an unmanned surface vessel.

The company solved the problem by borrowing technology from the auto air bag. Sea Corp. has landed about 15 SBIR jobs during 35 years in business, Lussier said.

The 400-employee company grew by 40 workers for 2015 and 2016 to handle work from two big projects. One was creating equipment for a new generation of submarine-listening tech.

"The innovation was to use software to make systems more capable" using apps rather than built-in hardware, Lussier said. ■

KLR balances books, security

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
 Alan H. Litwin, managing director
 2016 Revenue: \$44,300,000
 2014 Revenue: \$36,100,000
 Revenue Growth: 23%

3RD PLACE

EVERY ACCOUNTING FIRM claims it can manage books and estimate taxes.

Despite increasingly sophisticated online risks, "there are very few in the country that can bring cybersecurity to the table," said Alan H. Litwin, managing director of Providence's **Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd.**

Keeping online information secure is where his firm has positioned itself as a trusted resource, in addition to general accounting services.

Rising demand has the company expanding services such as risk assessments, program development, security audits and awareness training. Cybersecurity is a revenue funnel for KLR overall, with

growth of 23 percent, from 2014 to 2016, or \$8.2 million.

As a result, more hires are happening at KLR – with the help of a trusted partner.

Sister company Envision Technology Advisors helps KLR vet its cybersecurity candidates. "We're looking for people hungry to learn and are willing to invest in that," Litwin said.

KLR's growth won't be at the expense of employee retention or client satisfaction, Litwin said.

For instance, the firm has a "Shark Tank" competition. Employees submit ideas, with the best chosen at KLR's annual meeting – with that regular improvement trickling down to KLR clients. ■

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Fine linens lift John Matouk & Co.

BY MARY HOWE | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
George Matouk Jr., CEO and president

2016 Revenue: \$26,768,497

2014 Revenue: \$22,022,608

Revenue Growth: 22%

4TH PLACE

JOHN MATOUK & CO. of Fall River has prospered thanks to a dogged focus on high quality: in workplace conditions, in business-to-business relationships and – above all – the quality of its luxury linens.

The latter – making fine bed, bath and table linens for high-end consumers – is the most important, said CEO and President George Matouk Jr., the third-generation owner.

“We are a product-oriented company,” Matouk said. “Without a beautiful product that people want to own, all the rest is meaningless.”

Matouk became president and CEO in 2002. Since then, sales have grown from \$6 million to

approaching \$30 million, and staff has grown to 115 people at the 87,000-square-foot plant.

A recent innovation is the company’s new manufacturing resource planning software, which runs the operation.

Instead of buying conventional software for textile manufacturing that is inherently oriented toward the manufacturing floor, Matouk acquired a platform aimed at the sales force. “We approached this from a customer-first perspective,” he said.

Another innovation that addresses Matouk’s emphasis on treating employees well was to air-condition the warehouse, a rarity in the industry. ■

Balancing data, human touch

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Sandra J. Pattie, CEO and president

2016 Revenue: \$66,528,437

2014 Revenue: \$56,050,205

Revenue Growth: 19%

5TH PLACE

AS ONE OF THE OLDEST mutual savings banks in the United States, **BankNewport** has successfully balanced its legacy and tradition of products and services at the same time it’s kept up with the needs of its modern customers.

The goal is for the growth it’s exhibited to continue.

“We want to be a bigger bank than we were five years ago,” said Greg Derderian, chief financial officer and director of strategic analysis. “We really want to be a statewide bank that is top of mind for Rhode Island.” For now, that means expanding north of Cranston.

With 16 branches and \$10 billion in assets, the bank is committed to

straddling the line between what’s good for its customers in terms of technology and face-to-face service.

“We still want a branch presence. That drives customer relationships and provides solutions when they need information,” Derderian said, using an example of a 20-something exploring options for a home or business loan as better discussed in person.

The fact the bank has its own insurance company, Ocean State Insurance, helps. “It’s an important revenue driver,” said Derderian, “with a dedicated customer base, it makes introductions between the bank and insurance company so much easier.” ■



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1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent): Bradley J. Waugh, CEO;
 Al Greer, president and chief operating officer

2016 Revenue: \$22,652,000

2014 Revenue: \$3,600,000

Revenue Growth: 529%

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer

LIFE WEAR TECHNOLOGIES INC. already has shown significant growth. But more is to come.

The maker of branded and private-label sports medicine products for markets that include the United States, Canada, Europe and the Middle East is expanding into Japan and Mexico. In addition, CEO Bradley J. Waugh expects direct sales from Life Wear's website will rank among the company's top five sales channels in the next year.

With 44 employees (20 are at corporate headquarters or the manufacturing facility in North Kingstown), Life Wear has enjoyed enormous growth between 2014, with \$3.6 million in revenue, and 2016, with nearly \$22.7 million.

Waugh attributes such growth to several factors: A company acquisition (Modular Thermal Technologies bought Life Wear Technologies in July 2015); organic growth through building and expanding its customer base; and purchasing TriCalm, a steroid-free, anti-itch product line for eczema, psoriasis, bug bites and winter itch – a common skin condition for older adults. Of the future, Waugh said, "Our goal is to get to \$100 million [in revenue] by 2022, and we're on target to meet that goal."

In addition to constantly seeking new markets for its existing product mix, Waugh said, "What separates us from the competition [is that we're] always working on innovation; that's key."

Waugh called the company's new patent-pending product, My Splint, a revolutionary alternative to the off-the-shelf wrist braces that come in diverse sizes and have a fixed metal piece. In contrast, My Splint has a thermoplastic frame that conforms to any individual's wrist after a brief microwave heating, and is reusable.

My Splint is sold now by two retailers, Walgreens and H-E-B Pharmacy, though Waugh anticipates widespread availability soon.

Innovation comes, said Waugh, from employees and from collaborations, with the University of Rhode Island's College of Engineering on thermodynamics and new products and Lincoln Fine Ingredients, in Lincoln, on new formulations. "Our people are able to take an idea, innovate it and look at how it would impact the market and at what cost in less than three months. Some competitors take years to do so," he said.

Proud of the company's diverse workforce, Waugh is committed to employee retention. "Having an employee around for 10 years ... is the value of your company, [with] that intellectual property they have," he said. "It's something you hope to never lose." Waugh, who said he relies on a team more intelligent than he is, feels he gets the best from people by empowering them.

Life Wear is also out and about, putting many miles on its mobile-outreach vehicle.

An old Winnebago has been repurposed into the CryoMAX bus that regularly visits charity runs, 5Ks, etc., and donates ice packs, heat packs, tape, etc., to runners and walkers. An employee came

WHAT A RELIEF: Life Wear Technologies staffer Rafaela Hernandez packs CryoMax products at the company's North Kingstown facility. The company is expanding its distribution to Japan and Mexico.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO



up with the idea, said Waugh, which has been a great way to get some brand-name recognition and talk with customers to get feedback. In its first year of operations, the CryoMAX bus has visited nearly 32 states, he said.

Although Waugh is based in Florida, he called Rhode Island "far and above the best place I've ever been associated with" in getting business help from Rhode Island's congressional delegation and governor. U.S. Rep. James R. Langevin and his office helped out on some company issues related to

China, and patent and trademark infringements, as well as helping to resolve some visa and passport snafus for traveling businesspeople. "They may not have all the answers, but their offices are helpful in putting us in touch with the right people." ■

'What separates us from the competition [is that we're] **always working on innovation.**'

BRADLEY J. WAUGH
 Life Wear Technologies CEO

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ChartWise maps medical codes

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Dr. Jonathan Elion, CEO and president
2016 Revenue: \$5,658,200
2014 Revenue: \$2,331,358
Revenue Growth: 143%

2ND PLACE

IN 2008, Dr. Jonathan Elion attended a session run by a hospital consultant stressing the importance of learning 17,000 medical-diagnosis codes in order to write better notes and keep more-accurate charts.

Believing there had to be a better way, the experience inspired Elion to gather former colleagues to begin work on what would become the innovative technology at the core of software offered by South Kingstown-based, computer-assisted-clinical-documentation provider **ChartWise Medical Systems Inc.**

"Language that may be perfectly fine to convey medical findings among the clinicians may

not be sufficient to be codified and billed," Elion said. "We help to get it right, thereby not only improving revenue for hospitals, but also providing timely and valuable information to many departments at the hospital."

More than 100 hospitals use the ChartWise system. Elion projects 20 percent company growth this year. Improvements and innovations in several areas, including report generation, risk adjustment and patient-safety indicators, continue to strengthen the company's spot in the marketplace.

"We built a modern system that was flexible, powerful and ready to scale," Elion said. ■

Focus on tech users pays off

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Todd S. Knapp, CEO and president
2016 Revenue: \$12,200,000
2014 Revenue: \$8,100,000
Revenue Growth: 51%

4TH PLACE

FOUNDED NEARLY 20 years ago as a small IT consultancy offering technology services to businesses in and around Rhode Island, **Envision Technology Advisors** has grown steadily.

Today, with a team of more than 50 and offices in Pawtucket, Waltham, Mass., and Nashville, Tenn., the company boasts a comprehensive suite of business and technology consulting solutions.

"Whether we are architecting a new network, building a website, or helping to establish a business continuity strategy, Envision knows that success begins and ends with the real people whom that technology will touch," said Jeremy Girard, marketing direc-

tor.

Recent innovations include: the acquisition of Crown Web, an award-winning team of web designers, developers and digital strategists; the introduction of Concierge Configuration Services for companies that order large quantities of hardware configured to meet certain standards; and the development of the Business Continuity Solutions Accelerator, a solution that dramatically reduces the amount of time it takes a company to go from having no business continuity/disaster recovery plan to having a plan that is unique and ready to mobilize in about a month. ■

QRI finds talent in tight market

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Timothy Harrington, chairman;
Emily Harrington, CEO
2016 Revenue: \$8,525,512
2014 Revenue: \$5,581,453
Revenue Growth: 53%

3RD PLACE

FOR YEARS, **Qualified Resources International Inc.** has remained steadfast in its development of strong relationships with clients and employees.

Its growth has also been steadfast: The company has won this particular award from Providence Business News for several years in a row.

The staffing firm – which provides both temporary and permanent placements to manufacturing, distribution and professional-service companies in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, with a specialization in accounting, administrative, engineering, office and light industrial – realized nearly \$9 million in revenue last year.

It's grown to 11 direct employees and more than 300 on assignment. There are also plans for a possible expansion in Massachusetts.

QRI has developed a lean orientation program to help clients integrate new employees and to educate employees about the importance of time management and productivity skill building. The company has also created lean-for-office and lean-for-production offerings.

Its leaders say QRI rises to the challenge of finding the right talent in a tight labor market.

"We are passionate about connecting the right candidate with the appropriate job," said Tim Harrington, QRI's president. ■

Budget discipline fuels Site Specific

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Peter Crump, Matt Dempsey, partners/co-owners
2016 Revenue: \$17,217,082
2014 Revenue: \$11,522,838
Revenue Growth: 49%

5TH PLACE

SITE SPECIFIC LLC has come a long way from its beginnings in 2004, when co-founder Peter Crump worked from a basement with three employees and a part-time bookkeeper.

Now, the design-and-build construction firm has 50 employees in offices from Providence to Boston, is enjoying a successful year and expects 25 percent growth.

"We aim to bridge what we see as the gap in our industry, namely, the disconnect that can exist between budget goals, design intention and realized construction product and final costs," Crump said. "Eighty percent of our clients are repeat [business] from corporations and developers, private uni-

versities, small-business owners and homeowners."

Recent projects include renovation of Old Stone Bank in Providence into a single-family home. The company also renovated 75 Fountain St. in Providence, repurposing more than 100,000 square feet of office space, making new mechanical and life-safety upgrades. Site Specific is now leading design and construction of the new Yacht Club in Cranston, where Edgewood Yacht Club stood before a 2011 fire.

"Design and construction is always fresh and ever-changing," Crump said. "It's a process that constantly seeks out new and improved efficiencies." ■

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Maternity health drives growth



1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent): Dan Aziz, founder and president

2016 Revenue: \$866,264

2014 Revenue: \$134,083

Revenue Growth: 546%

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN |
 Contributing Writer

DAN AZIZ DEVELOPED the idea for a pill-free, drinkable prenatal vitamin company while studying entrepreneurship as a senior at Brown University. His concept captured the student track of the 2011 Rhode Island Business Plan Competition. With prize winnings in hand, Aziz settled down in Providence to launch what is now **Premama**.

Premama has created an expanding line of offerings for the entire maternity process, including: Premama Fertility, a range of easy-to-consume prenatal vitamins, just right for those who have trouble swallowing pills; a lactation supplement to aid with milk supply and fortifying breast milk; and an array of products designed to help with sleep, energy and digestion during pregnancy. Yes, even with morning sickness.

"We focus on all nutritional needs for women from the moment they decide they want to try and have a child, through getting pregnant and breastfeeding," Aziz said. "We want to be the go-to company for women as they begin, and go through, the beautiful journey that is maternity."

Today, Premama offers eight products that are sold in more than 8,000 stores, including Target, CVS Pharmacy and GNC, and the company plans to unveil five more next year, including a product for male fertility. In the past year, a safe-for-pregnancy energy product, a safe-for-pregnancy sleep aid and a prenatal gummy vitamin were launched.

The recent closing of a \$3.25 million round of Series B financing enabled Premama to double its

internal team from three to six – a critical step, Aziz said – in order to build upon the 430 percent growth the company experienced in 2016.

Jamie Schapiro, Premama's chief marketing officer, said when he was presented with the chance to join the Premama team, he jumped at it.

"I saw an opportunity a few years ago about working with a local startup that had a very unique value proposition," Schapiro said. "I wanted to finally work in a startup and help build something from the ground up. This is what makes me feel so passionate about what I do, as I have a chance to impact the lives of women and I have a chance to help drive a business from less than a million in sales to multiple millions."

That impact goes beyond cus-

tomers. A percentage of Premama sales goes to the international charity Vitamin Angels, which provides vitamins to children and mothers at risk of malnutrition in more than 50 countries – including the United States.

Schapiro feels a major differentiator between Premama and its competitors comes down to focus.

"Premama is unique, as its core focus and capability is maternity wellness," Schapiro said. "Most companies that sell products in the pregnancy nutrition space also sell vitamins and supplements outside of the category. We only focus on women who are trying to conceive, women who are expecting and women who recently had a newborn."

BOOSTING HEALTH: Packing individual orders for Premama clients worldwide are: from left, Marianny Rivos, packer at World Wide Shipping; Caroline Flynn, consumer relations specialist for Premama; Jamie Schapiro, chief marketing officer for Premama; and Randy Lundquist, client services manager for Coast to Coast shipping.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO



In addition to focus, Schapiro said, the company is always on the lookout for new ways to innovate. Premama was awarded a New Hope Network NEXTY Award last year for displaying innovation, integrity and inspiration, and for helping to forward the work of the natural-products industry overall.

For Aziz, the chance to not just create new products but to create products that influence lives is a win-win proposition.

"We constantly get reviews from women and families, telling us how we've changed their lives and helped them have a healthy pregnancy, and helped them bring life into this world – that is what keeps me going," he said ■

'We constantly get reviews from women and families, telling us how we've changed their lives.'

DAN AZIZ

Premama founder and president

BES riding build boom

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Michael E. Kenney, president
2016 Revenue: \$958,783
2014 Revenue: \$222,552
Revenue Growth: 331%

2ND PLACE

AN INVESTMENT IN knowledge was a good place to start when **Building Enclosure Science** incorporated in 2013.

"We did spend a good amount of money at the beginning, the first six to eight months, educating the market," said Charles Antone, chief operating officer. "We held lunch and learns so that we could share the information about the industry."

That strategy paid off, he acknowledged, as BES is one of the fastest-growing businesses in Rhode Island, with a 331 percent increase in revenue from 2014 to 2016. Additionally, BES hired 16 of its 20 employees in just the last year.

BES is a national construction consulting firm focused on sustainability and durability of materials, components and systems for building enclosures.

"What is working well for us is timing of the growth of the industry. Specifically, we are piggybacking on the construction economy doing well," explained Antone, "and the fact that my partner and I did this type of work for years already."

"The last thing," he said, "is we set up our company to be employee-owned, so we quickly attracted talent with experience. We didn't have to spend a lot of time in the learning curve and could capitalize on that experience right away."

Making sense of health data

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Michael Palazzini, president
2016 Revenue: \$1,087,722
2014 Revenue: \$366,194
Revenue Growth: 197%

3RD PLACE

HEALTH CARE AND big data go together.

But relevant, actionable data? That's where East-Providence-based **Predicata** serves its clients. It had 197 percent growth from 2014 – when its revenue was \$366,194 – to 2016, when it passed the million dollar mark.

"We focus on parsing that data, to find meaningful information," said Mike Palazzini, president of the 5-year-old firm, which has hired 11 more team members since inception. "Companies will emphasize that having data is a good thing. But how does it benefit the client? There seems to be a struggle with what is actionable and what is just ... there."

Health care has lots of data on quality and cost, but the two aren't connected, he said, partly because hospital culture isn't focused on costs, but outcomes. Prices for the same procedures vary wildly among hospitals. Financially unsound hospitals don't close, but are acquired by larger hospitals, he said. Doctors and hospital businesspeople don't typically come together. Predicata facilitates that collaboration.

The latest tool in Predicata's growth arsenal? Its merger with Pennsylvania-based health care supply-chain logistics consultancy Triose Inc. in March. Triose will offer Predicata's services to some 1,000 hospitals nationwide. ■



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Clients reign for nimble firm

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Jennifer Shaheen, president
2016 Revenue: \$1,063,291
2014 Revenue: \$581,285
Revenue Growth: 83%

4TH PLACE

WHILE MANY DIGITAL-content agencies are quite new to the market, **Technology Therapy Group** benefits significantly from 20 years of experience in the industry.

"Because we've been in this space for such a long time, we have been able to consistently keep pace with changes and help our clients provide their customers with the superior service they demand," said Jennifer Shaheen, president.

"The other factor has to do with the fact that we're in Rhode Island," she explained. "Identifying and retaining talent has become much easier. There are many highly qualified, motivated people to work with right here. The investment the state has made

in improving the labor pool has definitely paid off. We're finding it much easier to find the developers, creatives and client-support professionals we need to do our best work."

The web-design, development and marketing firm employs 10 people, with three additions in the past year.

Shaheen said it's important to learn from both the positive experiences and the missed opportunities.

"Rather than just moving on, our process involves examining these events, listening to what clients did and didn't say, and identifying where we needed to grow and change," she said. ■

Low inventory, record sales

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Christine M. Tanner,
owner/broker
2016 Revenue: \$4,340,227
2014 Revenue: \$2,377,038
Revenue Growth: 83%

5TH PLACE

A LACK OF INVENTORY in the housing market was no problem for **Re/Max Flagship** this past year.

"We set an all-time record for number of transactions last year and are on pace to do it again this year," said owner/broker Mike Mita. "Median values statewide are approaching record numbers as well. ... So with very high demand and very low supply, we expect value growth to continue until the demand has time to cool."

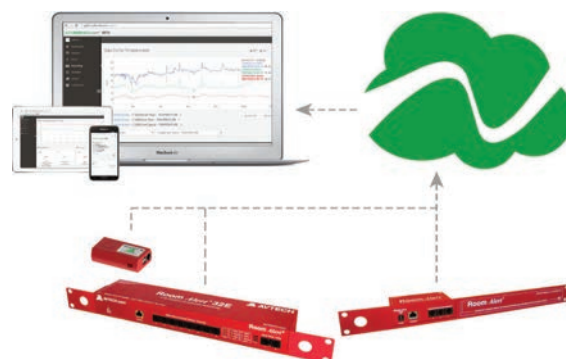
Re/Max Flagship specializes in residential sales, as well as some commercial property and luxury homes. It's a team effort for the staff and more than 50 associates, who move homes quickly and efficiently from "sale" to "sold."

"We are here to teach people new to the business how to be great for their clients, and veteran agents how to bring their high level of service to a larger base of clients. ... We try to anticipate the needs of our agents and their businesses and create services and systems that take the minutiae off their plates, so they can focus on taking great care of their clients and finding more clients," said Mita.

"We focus deeply on being here and being great for our agents, and the growth takes care of itself," he added. ■

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FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$75 MILLION AND ABOVE

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2017 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2016 revenue 2014 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage 3-year revenue growth	Type of business
1 2016: NL	Embrace Home Loans embracehomeloans.com Dennis Hardiman, CEO; Kurt Noyce, president	25 Enterprise Center Middletown, R.I. 02842 (401) 846-3100	\$159,406,217 \$94,456,562 December	69% \$64,949,655	Financial services
2 2016: 2	Blount Fine Foods blountfinefoods.com Todd Blount, president	630 Currant Road Fall River, Mass. 02720 (774) 888-1300	\$293,036,957 \$181,815,824 September	61% \$111,221,133	Food manufacturing
3 2016: 6	The Claflin Co. claflin.com Anne-Marie Johnson, president and chief operating officer	455 Warwick Industrial Drive Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 739-4150	\$307,417,072 \$231,967,688 September	33% \$75,449,384	Distributor of medical supplies and equipment
4 2016: 4	Shawmut Design and Construction shawmut.com Les Hiscoe, CEO	3 Davol Square, Suite A275 Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 732-6500	\$104,600,000 \$79,400,000 November	32% \$25,200,000	Construction management
5 2016: 21	Gilbane Inc. gilbaneco.com Thomas F. Gilbane Jr., chairman and CEO	7 Jackson Walkway Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 456-5800	\$4,874,000,000 \$3,805,000,000 December	28% \$1,069,000,000	Construction, site acquisition planning, project management
6 2016: 13	Arden Building Cos. LLC ardenbuildingcompanies.com Robert M. Bolton, CEO	505 Narragansett Park Drive Pawtucket, R.I. 02861 (401) 727-3500	\$130,000,000 \$102,000,000 December	27% \$28,000,000	Construction, design and engineering firm
7 2016: 1	Woodard & Curran woodardcurran.com Douglas McKeown, CEO	33 Broad St., Floor 7 Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 273-1007	\$205,487,646 \$165,909,663 December	24% \$39,577,983	Engineering, science and operations
8 2016: 9	Bristol County Savings Bank bristolcountysavings.com Patrick J. Murray	35 Broadway Taunton, Mass. 02780 (508) 824-6626	\$88,421,000 \$75,150,000 October	18% \$13,271,000	Financial institution
9 2016: 18	Carousel Industries of North America Inc. carouselindustries.com Jeff Gardner, CEO	659 South County Trail Warwick, R.I. 02822 (678) 892-3738	\$425,302,792 \$369,943,132 December	15% \$55,359,660	Communication and network technologies, professional and managed services
10 2016: 20	Lifespan lifespan.org Dr. Timothy J. Babineau	167 Point St. Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 444-4000	\$2,118,141,000 \$1,903,634,000 September	11% \$214,507,000	Health system
11 2016: 11	Fidelity Investments fidelity.com Abigail P. Johnson, chairman and CEO	100 Salem St. Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 292-5000	\$15,886,000,000 \$14,900,000,000 December	7% \$986,000,000	Financial services firm
12 2016: 10	Twin River Casino twinriver.com John Taylor Jr., chairman, Twin River Worldwide Holdings Inc.; George Papanier, president and COO, Twin River Management Group	100 Twin River Road Lincoln, R.I. 02865 (401) 723-3200	\$604,100,000 \$595,300,000 December	1% \$8,800,000	Gaming and entertainment complex

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1
First Point Power LLC
- 2
Blount Fine Foods
- 3
Atrion Inc.
- 4
Shawmut Design and Construction
- 5
Thielsch Engineering Inc.

LIST RESEARCHED BY
Nicole Dotzenrod

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FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$25 MILLION TO \$75 MILLION

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2017 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2016 revenue 2014 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage 3-year revenue growth	Type of business
1 2016: NL	ParsonsKellogg parsonskellogg.com Thomas P. Kellogg III, president	2290 Pawtucket Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 438-0650	\$27,144,540 \$17,115,671 December	59% \$10,028,869	Sports marketing and premium co-branded merchandise
2 2016: NL	Sea (Systems Engineering Associates) Corp. seacorp.com Brian W. Gilligan, CEO; David A. Lussier, president	62 Johnnycake Hill Road Middletown, R.I. 02842 (401) 847-2260	\$74,911,544 \$59,676,041 December	26% \$15,235,503	Engineering services
3 2016: 5	Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd. kahnlitwin.com Alan H. Litwin, managing director	951 North Main St., Unit 1 Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 274-2001	\$44,300,000 \$36,100,000 December	23% \$8,200,000	Certified public accountants and business advisers
4 2016: 3	John Matouk & Co. matouk.com George Matouk Jr., CEO	925 Airport Road Fall River, Mass. 02720 (508) 997-3444	\$26,768,497 \$22,022,608 December	22% \$4,745,889	Manufacturer of fine bed, bath and table linens
5 2016: 8	BankNewport banknewport.com Sandra J. Pattie	10 Washington Square Newport, R.I. 02840 (401) 846-3400	\$66,528,437 \$56,050,205 December	19% \$10,478,232	Financial institution
6 2016: 4	Altus Dental Insurance Company altusdental.com Joseph A. Nagle	10 Charles St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 457-7200	\$58,856,000 \$49,983,000 December	18% \$8,873,000	Dental insurance
7 2016: 7	Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc. starshep.com Larry Keefe, chairman and CEO	60 Catamore Blvd. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 435-3600	\$50,000,000 \$42,553,000 December	18% \$7,447,000	Insurance brokerage
8 2016: NL	E.W. Burman Inc. ewburman.com Edward W. Burman Jr., president	33 Vermont Ave. Warwick, R.I. 02888 (401) 738-5400	\$26,700,000 \$24,000,000 December	11% \$2,700,000	Construction manager and general contractor
9 2016: NL	Pawtucket Credit Union pcu.org George J. Charette	1200 Central Ave. Pawtucket, R.I. 02861 (401) 722-2212	\$66,163,645 \$61,654,342 December	7% \$4,509,303	Credit union
10 2016: 6	Navigant Credit Union navigantcu.org Gary E. Furtado	1005 Douglas Pike Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 233-4700	\$60,193,000 \$56,430,000 December	7% \$3,763,000	Credit union

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

1
Case Snow Management Inc.

2
Ximedica

3
John Matouk & Co.

4
BankNewport

5
Altus Dental Insurance Co.

LIST RESEARCHED BY
Nicole Dotzenrod

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FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$5 MILLION TO \$25 MILLION

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2017 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2016 revenue 2014 revenue FY ends	percentage 3-year revenue growth	Type of business
1 2016: 2	Life Wear Technologies Inc. lifeweartech.com Bradley J. Waugh, CEO; Al Greer, president	935 Roger Williams Way North Kingstown, R.I. 02852 (401) 667-7401	\$22,652,000 \$3,600,000 December	529% \$19,052,000	Leading global supplier of both branded and private-label sports medicine
2 2016: 1	ChartWise Medical Systems Inc. chartwisemed.com Dr. Jonathan Elion, founder and president	1174 Kingstown Road, #201 South Kingstown, R.I. 02879 (401) 473-2003	\$5,663,888 \$2,331,357 December	143% \$3,332,531	Software development for the health care industry
3 2016: 5	Qualified Resources International qrstaffing.com Timothy Harrington, chairman; Emily Harrington, CEO	78 Kenwood St. Cranston, R.I. 02907 (401) 946-1002	\$8,525,512 \$5,581,453 December	53% \$2,944,059	Staffing services
4 2016: NL	Envision Technology Advisors LLC envisionsuccess.net Todd S. Knapp, founder, owner and CEO	999 Main St., Suite 715 Pawtucket, R.I. 02860 (401) 272-6688	\$12,200,000 \$8,100,000 December	51% \$4,100,000	IT consulting
5 2016: 7	Site Specific LLC sitespecificllc.com Peter Crump; Matt Dempsey, partners/co-owners	141 Gano St. Providence, R.I. 02906 (401) 632-4400	\$17,217,082 \$11,522,838 December	49% \$5,694,244	Design/build general contractor
6 2016: NL	ADI Energy adienergy.com John Rizzo, CEO	37 Thurber Blvd., Suite 107 Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (617) 744-9234	\$13,124,091 \$10,607,339 December	24% \$2,516,752	Energy solutions for commercial and industrial customers
7 2016: NL	Drupal Connect drupalconnect.com John Florez, CEO	100 Bellevue Ave. Suite 2 Newport, R.I. 02840 (401) 338-2589	\$6,171,150 \$5,152,097 December	20% \$1,019,053	IT staffing
8 2016: 8	Preventure preventure.com Mark D. Correia, CEO	2000 Nooseneck Hill Road Coventry, R.I. 02816 (401) 385-9312	\$16,498,752 \$13,925,000 December	18% \$2,573,752	Corporate wellness
9 2016: NL	BlumShapiro blumshapiro.com Gregory Cabral, office managing partner, Rhode Island	1 Capital Way Cranston, R.I. 02910 (401) 272-5600	\$12,463,000 \$10,608,000 December	17% \$1,855,000	Auditing, accounting, tax and business advisory services
10 2016: NL	Automated Business Solutions absne.com Alan P. Albergaria, co-founder and president	415 Kilvert St. Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 732-3000	\$10,854,345 \$9,410,510 December	15% \$1,443,835	Office equipment sales and service, technology equipment and service
11 2016: 10	Innovex innovex.tech Peter S. Parisi	11 Powder Hill Road Lincoln, R.I. 02865 (401) 232-7000	\$13,305,142 \$11,885,996 December	12% \$1,419,146	Technology and digital marketing organization
12 2016: NL	(add)ventures addventures.com Stephen Rosa	117 Chapman St. Providence, R.I. 02905 (401) 453-4748	\$12,000,000 \$10,900,000 December	10% \$1,100,000	Multidisciplinary brand culture and communications firm

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1
Partnership for Rhode Island Streetlight Management
- 2
Life Wear Technologies
- 3
MojoTech LLC
- 4
Pranzi Catering and Events
- 5
Qualified Resources International Inc.

LIST RESEARCHED BY
Nicole Dotzenrod

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FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$250,000 TO \$5 MILLION

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2017 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2016 revenue 2014 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage 3-year revenue growth	Type of business
1 2016: NL	Premama drinkpremama.com Dan Aziz, founder and president	244 Weybosset St. Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 383-0299	\$866,264 \$134,083 December	546% \$732,181	Natural, pill-free prenatal vitamins
2 2016: NL	Building Enclosure Science buildinges.com Michael E. Kenney, president	859 N. Main St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (954) 288-9640	\$958,783 \$222,552 December	331% \$736,231	Consulting engineering firm
3 2016: NL	Predicata predicata.com Michael Palazzini, president	300 Wampanoag Trail East Providence, R.I. 02903 (508) 818-2727	\$1,087,722 \$366,194 December	197% \$721,528	B2B health care software developer and health care consultancy
4 2016: NL	Technology Therapy Group LLC technologytherapy.com Jennifer Shaheen, president	400 Putnam Pike Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 231-7620	\$1,063,291 \$581,285 December	83% \$482,006	MarTech/digital agency
5 2016: NL	RE/MAX Flagship rihomesearch.com Christine M. Tanner; Michael Mita, brokers/co-owners	140 Point Judith Road Narragansett, R.I. 02882 (401) 789-2255	\$4,340,227 \$2,377,038 December	83% \$1,963,189	Real estate brokerage
6 2016: 6	TribalVision LLC tribalvision.com Chris Ciunci, managing partner and CEO	2346 Post Road, Suite 200 Warwick, R.I. 02886 (774) 773-0568	\$4,498,242 \$2,489,556 December	81% \$2,008,686	Marketing
7 2016: NL	J&B Communications Inc. myjbcomm.com Robert O'Connor, president	60 Power Ave. Warwick, R.I. 02888 (401) 461-6677	\$615,000 \$350,000 December	76% \$265,000	Telecommunications installer and repairs; voice, data, card access and CCTV
8 2016: 12	Steere Engineering Inc. steereengineering.com Patricia D. Steere, president and owner	2350 Post Road, Suite 100 Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 773-7880	\$2,609,217 \$1,592,246 December	64% \$1,016,971	Civil and structural engineering firm
9 2016: NL	SecurityRI.com securityri.com Jon Volatile, managing partner	58 Waterman Ave. North Providence, R.I. 02911 (401) 231-8130	\$3,200,000 \$2,000,000 December	60% \$1,200,000	Security services
10 2016: 11	Liberty Mobility LLC liberty-mobility.com Paul Long, owner	5 Church St. West Warwick, R.I. 02893 (401) 827-8800	\$650,000 \$425,000 December	53% \$225,000	Buy/sell pre-owned and new power wheelchairs, scooters and replacement parts
11 2016: 4	Provdotnet LLC prov.net Ron Sacks, managing partner and CEO	1155 Westminster St. Providence, R.I. 02909 (401) 400-0030	\$2,350,000 \$1,600,000 December	47% \$750,000	Data center services and co-location
12 2016: 17	East Coast Technology Group ectne.com Steven J. Gietz, president	1300 Highland Corporate Drive Cumberland, R.I. 02864 (401) 464-9005	\$2,100,000 \$1,500,000 December	40% \$600,000	Business consulting, IT networking, security auditing and monitoring
13 2016: NL	Technology Advisory Group techadvisory.com Gary Harlam, owner	250 Centerville Road, Building F Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 228-6400	\$2,786,000 \$2,293,000 December 2016	22% \$493,000	Cloud-hosted infrastructure, full service IT support, IT security services
14 2016: 4	James Raiola CFP & Associates jjrcfp.com James Raiola, principal	125 Metro Center Blvd. Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 837-6200	\$2,013,005 \$1,740,657 December	16% \$272,348	Employee benefits, business insurance, corporate retirement plans and financial planning
15 2016: 8	G Media Studios Inc. gmediastudios.com David R. Paolo, CEO; Megan Decker, president	86 Weybosset St. Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 351-7900	\$2,500,000 \$2,200,000 December	14% \$300,000	Creative agency specializing in experiential marketing
16 2016: 15	Logicomm Inc. logicomm-inc.com Jim Van, partner	111 Irving Ave. Providence, R.I. 02906 (401) 441-5080	\$1,056,800 \$934,000 December	13% \$122,800	IT services and support
17 2016: 21	Coutu Bros. Moving & Storage coutumovers.com Robert S. Romano, president	2 Greco Lane Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 739-7788	\$875,648 \$783,276 December	12% \$92,372	Moving and storage
18 2016: 19	Secure Future Tech Solutions securefuturetech.com Eric M. Shorr, founder and president	110 Jefferson Blvd., Suite C Warwick, R.I. 02888 (401) 921-2607	\$2,650,000 \$2,400,000 December	10% \$250,000	Cloud computing, IT support/help desk, disaster recovery, network security

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1
ChartWise Medical Systems Inc.
- 2
New Economy CPA
- 3
Skinpros LLC
- 4
Fish Advertising
- 5
Lorimer Studios

LIST RESEARCHED BY
Nicole Dotzenrod

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Lean, flexible approach yields results

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer



ARCHITECTURE,
CONSTRUCTION &
ENGINEERING



CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT FIRM Shawmut Design and Construction possesses a reputation for completing complex and challenging projects. Each employee is encouraged to think like an owner (since in fact they are), creating a proactive, solution-creating work environment.

In the area of innovation, Shawmut keeps propelling forward with improvements in its field, introducing lean design and construction management, integrated project delivery, building-information modeling, virtual reality, as well as in its offices, with paid family leave, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

In adopting a lean culture – one that removes waste and rework – Shawmut has developed systems with built-in tests to identify prob-

lems for immediate response.

One important milestone, says Ron Simoneau, vice president, is the company's School of Engineering project for Brown University, one of the first attempts of integrated project delivery in an academic setting.

"Subcontractors and consultants all place their profits at risk and subject them to the outcome of the entire project. ... This alone has helped shape some of the project's most innovative and collaborative solutions, including strategies around quality control and safety built into the design," Simoneau said.

Another innovative element at Shawmut is the implementation of Shawmut Flex Initiative, providing employees with the most flexible circumstances for work, including remote work, job sharing, compressed workweeks, telecommuting and shifting work hours.

"We believe that these arrangements are a proven way to enhance employee engagement, productivity and job satisfaction, all of which ultimately serve to enhance our customer experience," he said. "Shawmut Flex is a



FULLY ENGAGED: Shawmut Design and Construction employees own the company, which leads to them acting as owners looking to create solutions to difficult challenges.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

'We believe that these arrangements are a proven way to **enhance employee engagement, productivity and job satisfaction.**'

RON SIMONEAU, Shawmut Design and Construction vice president

critical part of demonstrating our commitment to building a workplace culture of respect, empowerment and innovation."

Shawmut will continue to implement the most innovative services to best deliver the high-

est quality of customer service, says Simoneau. "There are some jaw-dropping technologies and practices that promise to further revolutionize the construction industry." ■

A clean solution for amputees

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer



BIOTECHNOLOGY
AND LIFE
SCIENCES



IN HIS 35 YEARS as a surgeon, Brown University professor and emeritus director of orthopedic trauma at Rhode Island Hospital, Dr. Christopher Born, noticed a pervasive problem with prosthetic liners used to merge prosthetic limbs to patients. The chafing of skin cells and collection of debris and bacterial byproducts caused a noticeable, pungent odor. The warm environment created a haven for bacteria. Because of this, amputees were at greater risk of ulceration, inflammation and in some cases, the need for additional amputation.

"Innovation is ultimately the ability to see a challenge and find a unique way of solving it," said

James Wagner, CEO and president of **BI Medical LLC**.

With the lead of scientist and entrepreneur Dr. John Jarrell, Born set out to create a coating for the inside of prosthetic liners that would minimize odor. They needed to balance different factors, including uniform dispersion of the active ingredients, acceptable drying time, durability, ease of use and affordability. "The team was able to develop a chemistry that fit each of the requirements," noted Wagner.

"Apocrine is a simple, easy-to-use liquid cleaner, decontaminant and deodorizer supplied in a single-use applicator. ... Apocrine decontaminates the prosthetic liner and minimizes or eliminates odor for two weeks and may last longer depending on concentration," he said.

With more than 1.8 million lower-leg amputees in the United States, BI Medical predicts a significant market opportunity. The company has slated a limited launch of Apocrine for the fourth quarter of 2017.

"Short term, BI Medical is focusing on the initial launch of



A FRESH START: BI Medical helps solve a bacteria and odor issue for lower-leg amputees. At the company's West Greenwich headquarters are, from left: James Wagner, CEO and president; Elizabeth Stone, business director; Michael Stone, director of research; and Jay Vincelli, laboratory director.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

'BI Medical ... **expects to build a profitable enterprise** that will be in a position to innovate additional products.'

JAMES WAGNER, BI Medical CEO and president

the Apocrine and raising the capital," said Wagner. Subsequently, the company "expects to build a profitable enterprise that will be in

a position to innovate additional products that mitigate or solve the tremendous challenges that amputees face." ■

Bryant's AIC transforms learning

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer



EDUCATION

Bryant University INSPIRED TO EXCEL

BRYANT UNIVERSITY'S VISUALLY STRIKING Academic Innovation Center, which opened September 2016, is designed to shun passive learning and lengthy lecturing. Instead, the AIC embraces design thinking – a way to solve problems from a more empathetic, idea-generation-type protocol – active and experiential learning, and dynamic teaching methods. The 48,290-square-foot building offers tiered classrooms, 23 multipurpose breakout rooms, moveable furnishings, whiteboards and 40 flat-screen, wireless monitors. Centrally located is its highly flexible and interactive Innovation Forum.

The \$31.5 million AIC constitutes the most recent significant innovation at Bryant. In the last two years, Bryant has received record numbers of applications – more than 7,000 annually – while

attracting highly regarded faculty members from Harvard, Yale, Cornell and Dartmouth, among others. Bryant graduates rank first in the state among median earners and ahead of their Brown University and Providence College peers, according to the federal government's latest College Scorecard. Faculty innovation grants and a five-year, \$75 million capital campaign represent additional investments in classroom innovation.

Innovation apparently breeds innovation: high demand for small-group-study spaces at the AIC and elsewhere, for instance, led one Bryant student to develop an app that signals when such spaces are available.

The AIC is the outgrowth of five years of research and development, including visits to Harvard and Stanford to evaluate the latest insights into educational spaces, said Bryant President Ronald K. Machtley. The AIC applies the IDEO design-thinking method, “observation, ideation, rapid prototyping, user feedback, iteration and implementation,” he said.

Eight faculty members comprised an advisory team that met regularly with the architect and



REWIRING EDUCATION: Bryant University's Academic Innovation Center includes breakout rooms for study and project work that support group learning. Here, Catherine Emond, class of 2017, writes on a glass board with other members of her study group engaged as well.

COURTESY BRYANT UNIVERSITY

'I love [Bryant's] focus on the design thinking, moving beyond the classroom.'

JEFFREY IMMELT, General Electric, chairman and former CEO

other stakeholders.

The AIC and its experiential-learning approach has earned widespread acclaim from leaders, including General Electric Chairman and former CEO Jeffrey

Immelt, who spoke at Bryant commencement.

“I like Bryant's culture of innovation,” Immelt said. “I love your focus on the design thinking, moving beyond the classroom.” ■

A renewing, powerful innovation

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer



ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT



POWERDOCKS LLC, founded last year by Chris Fagan and Anthony Baro and located in Newport and Fall River, develops marine autonomous powered, docking platforms for customers worldwide, including its recently developed autonomous floating, micro-grid platform, Blue Isles.

Launched last June, this product is able to store, generate and distribute its own renewable energy via wireless charging docking stations and marine electrical-distribution outlets to power vessels in a harbor.

All this and more from a company of 10 people.

“Our marine-powered platform serves as a floating electrical utility to distribute on-site electrical power,” noted Baro, managing partner. “Our platform also offers

integrated sensors, telecommunication and remote monitoring features connecting its users to the platform.”

Blue Isles can recharge on-site electric marine propulsion vessels; distribute power to recharge robotic vessels such as air drones, unmanned underwater vehicles and unmanned surface vessels; and power on-site electrical equipment for aquaculture farming facilities, or water-quality and water-remediation treatment.

The Blue Isle Mooring buoy – which runs on solar power – offers the benefits of off-location Wi-Fi and no bilge pump outages through the integration of photovoltaic power, energy storage and battery-charging technologies. The Blue Isles Marinas, meanwhile, feature self-powered, floating docks and moorings, energy-sustainable floating villas, electric-vehicle and vessel charging, as well as remote-monitoring capabilities.

The effects of a floating micro grid are considerable, especially benefiting the environment and sustainability by increasing water quality, as well as lowering the



CHARGED UP: PowerDocks has placed a 20-by-20-foot charging platform in Newport harbor. Using it with an eCraft boat are, from left, Rufus Van Gruisen, president of Cay Electronics Inc. and eCraft Yachts; Anthony Baro, managing partner of PowerDocks; and Chris Fagan, principal of PowerDocks.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

'Our marine-powered platform serves as a floating electrical utility.'

ANTHONY BARO, PowerDocks managing partner

cost of marine operations. Looking toward the future, Baro said PowerDocks wants to continue to reduce the operating cost of marine operations by “expanding the

use of on-site, sustainable power generation ... and preserve and expand the enjoyment of aquatics by leveraging the use of clean, sustainable forms of energy.” ■

RIQI highlights connection value

BY JULIA QUINN-SZCESUL | Contributing Writer

HEALTH CARE

Rhode Island Quality Institute

AN EMERGENCY ROOM patient often arrives with a blank medical slate. Most people aren't in any condition to give a medical history, and if they are alone or with others who don't have the information, essential care can be delayed while the medical team gathers information.

Laura Adams, CEO and president of the nonprofit **Rhode Island Quality Institute**, which owns and operates CurrentCare, the state's health-information exchange, thinks that's not good enough. The institute is changing the face of how patients receive care and how providers work. The result is nothing short of transformative.

Providence-based RIQI recently introduced the Care Management Dashboard, an electronic tool linking participating offices of providers such as primary care physicians, mental health cen-

ters, substance-abuse centers and emergency rooms. The institute focuses on four pillars: better health, better health care, lower cost and provider joy in work.

"The dashboards notify health care's right hand about what the left hand is doing and closes critical information gaps in real time," said Adams. Patient records such as laboratory results, medication histories, care coordination data and providers are available instantly. The result is better, more-targeted and faster care.

The institute protects the most vulnerable patients. The fast access to medical information prevents unnecessary hospital and ER admissions, said Adams, and facilitates the best possible care decisions.

The nation's opioid crisis gives a sense of urgency to the institute's work – many addicts are treated and released to risky environments, often without any notification to other care providers. When information is presented in a dashboard and all teams are connected, everyone knows what's going on and how best to help.

"When a provider community connects and wraps their arms



NETWORKED CARE: Rhode Island Quality Institute's CurrentCare and its new Care Management Dashboard help patients and providers make more informed and timely decisions. From left: Michael Dwyer, director of risk management and compliance; Laura Adams, CEO and president; Faye Howard, director of operations.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

'When a provider community connects ... it gives [patients] a fighting chance they otherwise might not have.'

LAURA ADAMS, Rhode Island Quality Institute CEO and president

around the patient in this way, it gives them a fighting chance they

otherwise might not have," said Adams. ■

THE DISCUSSION CONTINUES...

TOPICS

- ✓ What are the predictions for 2018 with the initial efforts of Repealing & Replacing Obamacare falling short?
- ✓ Where is innovation occurring within the RI health care landscape and how does RI's health care delivery system perform relative to other states?
- ✓ How can companies be more proactive in reducing their health care costs?
- ✓ HealthSource RI: With all the uncertainty, what is the impact on its future?
- ✓ What steps does RI need to take to further address affordability?
- ✓ 2018 rate requests are currently being reviewed, but how accurate can they be?
- ✓ Medicaid Rollback: Exactly what does that mean?
- ✓ Opioid Crisis: What is the impact on the workplace and how can businesses educate themselves on addiction and mental health issues?

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PBN'S Fall Health Care Summit will include a panel of health care experts and business leaders who will bring attendees up to date on the latest news and expectations in this vital and ever-changing piece of the region's economy.

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Quick disaster action, before the fact

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer



IT SERVICES



Envision
Technology Advisors, LLC

SOMETIMES INNOVATION COMES at the behest of outside forces. Take, for instance, **Envision Technology Advisors'** latest offering: the Business Continuity Solutions Accelerator. Its purpose is to first prevent, and then counteract, the effects of cyberattacks, weather events and other disruptions that can take a serious toll on a company's network infrastructure and bottom line.

"By having a strategy in place to minimize interruptions, as well as a process to quickly recover should a disaster occur, a company does not have to stop their business if a storm hits and power goes out, or if employees cannot make it to the office," explained Marketing Director Jeremy Girard. "Every minute that a company's employees cannot work ... is money that the business loses."

Envision's BCSA is an assessment and action plan developed and delivered for clients within 30 business days. Clients can then invest in Envision's services and the expertise that comes with its 17 years in the technology consulting arena.

"With business-continuity strategies, we recognized that ... the longer [companies] spent in [the planning] phase of the project, the more likely it was that it would fall apart before ever being implemented," said Girard.

Envision sales increased from \$8 million in 2015 to \$12 million in 2016 after rolling out the BCSA. The success of the program allows new clients to take advantage of Envision's other offerings. And Envision has expanded, opening a new office in Nashville, Tenn., to add to locations in Pawtucket and the Greater Boston area.

"Innovation has always been key to our company's culture," said Girard. "Our team is made up of individuals who are infinitely curious and smart, so exploring new technologies and tackling new challenges is really part of who we are." ■



QUICK AND COMPLETE: Envision Technology Advisors' new Business Continuity Solutions Accelerator is a disaster-recovery program that the IT consultant delivers to clients within 30 business days. Amongst company employees is senior designer Sarah O'Donnell.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

'A company does not have to stop their business if a storm hits and power goes out, or if employees cannot make it to the office.'

JEREMY GIRARD, Envision Technology Advisors marketing director

New sensor tech spots hot servers

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer



MANUFACTURING



AVTECH

CHECKING THE POWER STATUS of multiple servers in a data center is an information technology department nightmare. It's a time-consuming and often expensive process of powering down, unplugging and then restarting multiple servers to get readings and notifications.

Now, **AVTECH Software Inc.** offers customers a cost-effective, straightforward and fast solution – the Active Power Sensor. Paired with AVTECH's Room Alert, which monitors things such as temperature, humidity, power, flood, smoke, air flow and room entry in computer rooms, data centers and other facilities, the new sensor electronically monitors and reports the power status of a specific electronic device in real time.

"The real benefit is that the

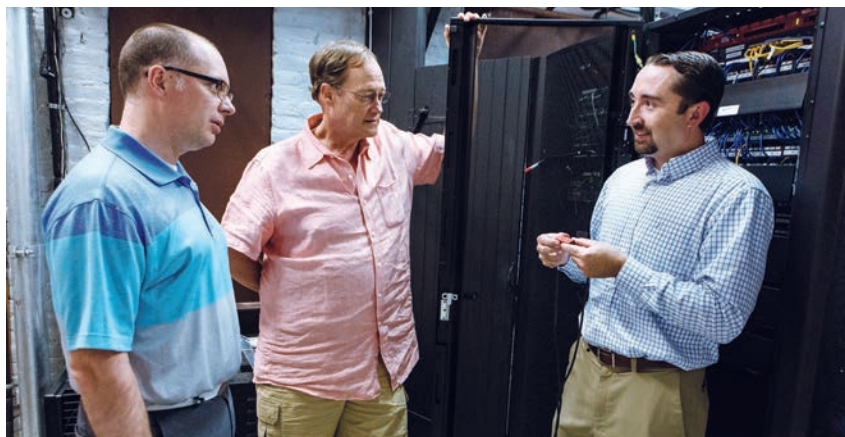
sensor, which you simply strap to the outside of any AC-powered cable, allows you to monitor equipment that may have been difficult, impossible or expensive to monitor before," said Richard Grundy, president of the privately held company in Warren.

Consider just one customer's situation: A large telecommunications and cable operator's production center has more than 800 racks of equipment, which contain more than 4,800 individual power feeds that couldn't be modified or powered down without impacting thousands of customers.

"It can be installed in a matter of seconds," Grundy said. It is manufactured in the United States and will function in environments that range from 257°F to -67°F.

The sensor was developed after a customer experienced an unexpected computer issue – due to an individual server's power failure – and sought a solution.

It took nearly half a year to design, prototype, file patents on and bring manufacturing into full production. That, said Grundy, is a very short time to bring any new hardware product to market.



SMALL PRODUCT, BIG LEAP: Rich Grundy, right, president of AVTECH Software, talks about the company's new Active Power Sensor with Marketing Manager Russel Benoit, left, and company founder and CEO Michael Sigourney, middle.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

'The real benefit is that the sensor ... allows you to monitor equipment that may have been difficult, impossible or expensive to monitor before.'

RICHARD GRUNDY, AVTECH Software president

AVTECH's client base is intrigued with the new innovation, said Grundy.

"We expect to begin shipping these patent-pending sensors – ap-

proximately the size and weight of a USB thumb drive – in mid-September, and we're seeing lots of activity and interest," he said. ■

Empowering nonprofits with access

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer



SINCE ITS FOUNDING by CEO and President Katherine Messier in 2010, nonprofit **Mobile Beacon** has extended low-cost, high-speed mobile, internet-access service to nonprofits, schools, libraries and homes across the country.

In arguably its biggest accomplishment, the company started the first-ever library hotspot lending program in 2012 with the Providence Community Library, allowing patrons to check out 4G mobile hotspot devices as they would books. This program has since expanded to the New York Public Library System and 34 library systems nationwide. It is now the largest library hotspot program in the country, lending out 10,000 units to date.

Its donation program with Tech-Soup and Digital Wish has pro-

vided more than 7,400 affordable 4G LTE high-speed mobile services to schools, libraries and nonprofits since 2016. Mobile Beacon's Bridging the Gap program has provided more than 30,000 families below the 200 percent poverty level with affordable computers and internet access.

"We are the only internet service provider exclusively for non-profit organizations," Messier said proudly. "Our mission is to be able to provide individuals and organizations with high-speed, mobile internet access beyond what they were capable of in the past."

Bridging the Gap, she said, helps nonprofits serve low-income individuals in a way that can lift them out of poverty. Having a home computer and internet access they couldn't otherwise afford allows people to "take classes, take tests – look for jobs the way other people with home computing can. It's ... a strong lever to get out of poverty."

Nonprofits with mobile internet access, she added, can hire more people and work more efficiently by being able to work outside of the office. "It's hard to pick what



A SIMPLE SOLUTION: Mobile Beacon staffers, from right, Lauren Yergeau, Cristina Graham and Rick Lindholm talk with Kate Aubin at the Providence Public Library about helping library patrons gain internet access through mobile devices the nonprofit supplies.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

"[Internet access] is ... a strong lever to get out of poverty."

KATHERINE MESSIER, Mobile Beacon CEO and president

accomplishment I am proudest of," fulfill their mission." ■
Messier said. "We help nonprofits

CYBERSECURITY THREATS AREN'T GOING AWAY!

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CYBER BREACHES to hit 1500 (37% increase over 2016)

By 2019

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By 2020

PEOPLE ONLINE WILL ALL BE PRIME TARGETS an estimated 4 billion people

By 2020

IOT (CONNECTED) DEVICES will need securing 200 billion

By 2021

CYBERCRIME DAMAGE COSTS to hit \$6 trillion

By 2021

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Identifying risks, bringing solutions

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



AS A CYBERSECURITY WATCH-DOG for its clients, **Citrin Cooperman** has earned its success.

The firm's technology and risk-advisory consulting practice, partner Michael Camacho said, separates the company from its competitors in the innovative way it assesses and addresses the vulnerability of a client's computer data to hacking or tampering.

Its Security, Compliance and Operations Risk Evaluation Report, Director Kevin Ricci explained, is a high-level assessment of a client's computer data system that is "an intuitive, cost-effective product which not only identifies real cyber risks, but also provides actionable solutions."

The company's virtual chief information security officer aids small to midsize companies that

can't afford their own information technology officer. Instead, a Citrin Cooperman employee uses the same tools and techniques an outside hacker would utilize, Ricci said, "identifying vulnerabilities and addressing them before they are exposed by hackers."

The firm's compliance management helps clients understand the growing list of cyber regulations that companies must abide by, find where the gaps are and then remediate those gaps. The compliance-management program's successes have included identifying companies not in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or Payment Card Industry Qualified Security Assessor regulations. In one case, Ricci said, a compliance-management project led a client from unfamiliarity with the regulations to being fully compliant in just six weeks.

Though the SCORE Report is only 2 years old, Camacho said, the company has completed more than 50 of them. Many have identified issues that could lead to a breach.

Citrin Cooperman's cybersecurity services, Ricci said, are a



IN TOUCH: Citrin Cooperman's cybersecurity services connect with clients' operations and generate solutions, thanks in no small measure to strong communications. Pictured speaking with Director Matt Wagenknecht remotely via Skype are, from left: Suzanne Miller, principal; Michael Camacho, partner; and Kevin Ricci, director.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

'[Citrin Cooperman's cybersecurity service] brings exceptional value and is easy to digest, even for someone not in the technology realm.'

KEVIN RICCI, Citrin Cooperman director

perfect balance of educating a company and identifying its computer data system's exposure to the risk "in a way that brings exceptional

value and is easy to digest, even for someone not in the technology realm." ■

Using AI to speed hiring process

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer



TECHNOLOGY



MATCHING QUALIFIED JOB applicants with hiring employers can be tedious and inefficient.

"Ninety-five to 98 percent of applicants drop off of online employment services, given the lengthy application process," said Ilya Reikhrud, founder and CEO of **Gulpfish Inc.**

"Gulpfish is trying to reverse those numbers. We're a direct connection between an applicant and a hiring manager," he said.

Gulpfish's artificial intelligence programs allow applicants to apply for jobs in 30 seconds; employers to communicate directly with groups of applicants and search for applicants based on specific criteria; and employers' workers to communicate electronically with one another about targeted applicants.

With 10 employees, the Warwick-based company first focused

on Rhode Island's restaurant and hospitality industry. Customers include such behemoths as International Game Technology, many restaurants on Providence's Federal Hill and Thayer Street, and some mom-and-pop operations. With more than 1,600 employer customers, it has a strong East Coast presence, but with customers in Texas and California as well, said Reikhrud.

Basic services for employers and applicants are free, though 70 percent of employers pay for additional services such as ad writing; training for human resources managers on Gulpfish applications; creation of marketing campaigns; or use of Gulpfish's newest service – JobisON – a referral program designed to help a company find top talent to satisfy those hard-to-fill positions. "We assume the upfront cost of finding applicants and a portion of the employer's recruiting fee is paid to the hired applicant as a signing bonus," said Reikhrud.

Some 115,000 Rhode Island residents have signed on to Gulpfish, which launched with 12 investors in the midst of the economic down-



PLAY BALL! Ilya Reikhrud of Gulpfish, standing, conducts a management-training session with employees of Arooga's Grill House & Sports Bar in Warwick.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

'We're a direct connection between an applicant and a hiring manager.'

ILYA REIKHRUD, Gulpfish founder and CEO

turn in 2010.

"This year has been incredible; 2017 revenue tripled last year's revenue," Reikhrud said. He anticipates introducing a new

application next year that will fill employers' hiring needs on a moment's notice. ■

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