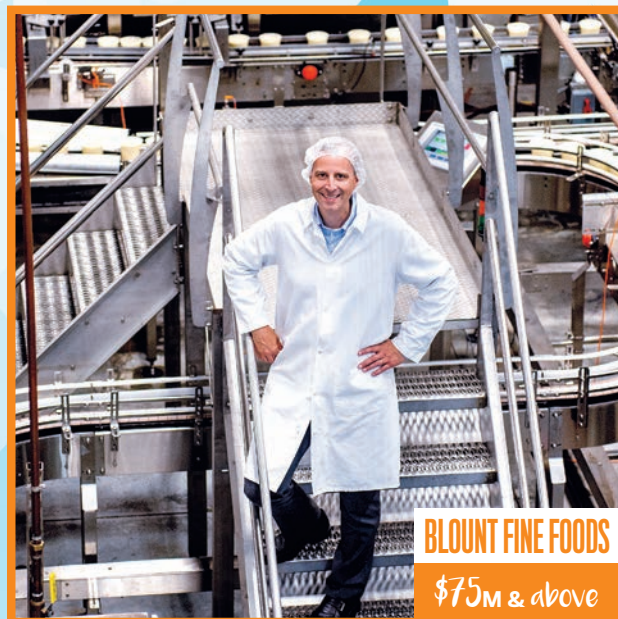
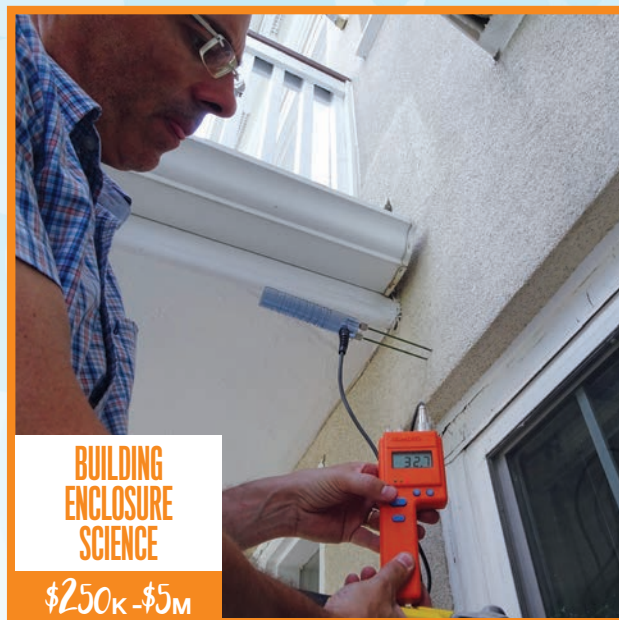
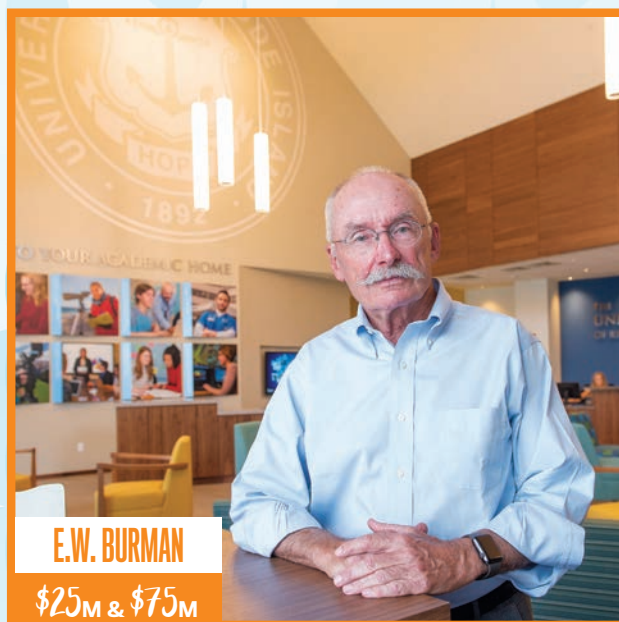


PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

FASTEST GROWING innovative companies 2018



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Customer-centric yields top results

IN THIS TIME OF INSTANTANEOUS and ubiquitous communications, it would not seem difficult



for any enterprise to know what its key stakeholders are thinking or doing at any moment.

Are your customers buying what you are selling?

Are your employees engaged by and supportive of your mission? Is your management team aligned with company goals?

All are simple questions, but getting the correct answers, it turns out, is not a simple thing.

This year's winners of the Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies program are answering those questions in the affirmative more often than not, and perhaps the reason is a simple one: They are listening.

Blount Fine Foods is at the top of the large fastest-growing companies list because it continues to innovate its offerings. First, it removed many additives, preservatives and flavorings from its products, creating a "Clean & Simple" set of offerings. More recently it has added ramen noodle bowls and broths to the line of products it sells. And why?

"Everyone's trying to be rel-

evant. Our goal is to help them be relevant," said company President and CEO Todd Blount.

Again, it sounds simple enough, but being relevant to your customers' needs and wants requires first finding out what relevant means to them, then reinventing your internal processes, and then, finally, confirming that what you think customers want is in fact what they are buying. And all that takes a whole lot of communication.

Blount's success is not isolated in this way, as all the other stories in this section make clear. But it is illustrative, and for that reason worth reading and, pardon the pun, digesting.

In its own way, Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies works because of the engagement of the business community, which is no more evident than through the support of our sponsors, which include presenting sponsor CBIZ & MHM, as well as partner sponsors Cox Business, Gallo|Thomas Insurance, Partridge Snow and Hahn LLP and Tufts Health Plan.

Mark S. Murphy
Editor

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1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent):

Todd Blount, president and CEO

2017 Revenue: \$338,253,858

2015 Revenue: \$233,695,825

Revenue growth: 44.7%

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB |
 Contributing Writer

BLOUNT FINE FOODS is one of those quintessential New England companies, and is family-owned to boot. For more than a century it's kept a keen eye on what its customers want – quality heat-and-eat soups, sauces, sides and entrees – and fed demand.

With a more than \$100 million increase in sales from 2015 to 2017, the company's future is bright, its growth strong. And with construction wrapping up on a major addition to its Fall River facility, **Blount Fine Foods** is positioning itself for decades ahead.

In the late 1880s, the Blount family started an oyster-packing company in Barrington. After World War II it became Blount Seafood Corp., and by the late 1940s it dealt mainly in bay quahogs – with Campbell Soup Co. as a major client.

Jump ahead 50 years, during which time Blount fed its growth via diversification – moving into stuffed clams and mussels – making bisques and chowders for clients that include Legal Sea Foods, Chart House and Shaw's supermarkets. (Its soups, sides and chilis are now sold under the



HOT STUFF: Blount Fine Foods President and CEO Todd Blount, with a couple of the company's new products, on its Fall River production line, from left, Beef PHO and Coconut Chicken & Noodle soups.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

Panera Bread name as well.)

Within the last decade or so, the company expanded its scope even more. There were acquisitions along the way. Blount Foods President and CEO Todd Blount took the helm in 2001, seeing promise in soups, which would allow the company to go past bisques and chowders and into meat soups, with opportunities into more markets and more growth.

In the early 2000s, the company moved to new space in Fall River, changing its name to Blount Fine Foods in 2009.

In 2015, the company began its "Clean & Simple" effort to eliminate certain additives, preservatives and flavorings from its products, the same year it bought a plant in Texas, while solidifying its local presence – planning a 50,000-square-foot, fresh-food product center in Fall River that is now nearly complete.

Blount said the fresh-food center is where restaurateurs and retailers such as Wegmans Food Markets Inc. and Whole Foods Market Inc. can sample products and plan menus, collaborating

tions for ready-to-eat meals."

Blount also said the new facility is a great venue in which to build and strengthen business relationships.

"We're asking them to come to Fall River. With restaurants, we hope they will be locked in for a lifetime and come back as things change," he said. "When they see people making the product, it goes a long way."

According to the Blount website, the new addition in Fall River should add about 50 full-time jobs to the 300 or so employees now at that location.

New Blount Fine Foods products include ramen noodle bowls and broths, Blount said, bone broths being a popular food trend. Blount's doesn't include sodium or MSG.

"Everyone's trying to be relevant. Our goal is to help them be relevant. A customer has a very specific reason to stop at these stores: diverse, nutritious, ready-to-eat meals," Blount said. ■

'Everyone's trying to be relevant. Our goal is to help them be relevant.'

TODD BLOUNT, Blount Fine Foods president and CEO

The company has ramped up the healthful nature of its foods as well, nimbly responding to these market demands without major overhaul. Gluten-free offerings have not been a challenge, for example.

"We've just naturally been that way," Blount said. "Soups don't have a lot of flour. ... It's not a lot to change to convert it. ... We substitute starch tapioca.

with Blount specialists. With organic, gluten-free and vegetarian options, it's an opportunity for chefs and retailers to see how Blount's full line of products can be customized to meet the needs of their customers.

"We have nutritionists on staff; our culinary team are all Johnson & Wales [University] grads," said Blount. "We're creating a program for retailers to provide diverse op-



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Carousel knows clients in depth

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Jeff Gardner, CEO

2017 Revenue: \$506,238,955

2015 Revenue: \$384,116,045

Revenue growth: 31.8%

2ND PLACE

LAST YEAR WAS a big milestone for information technology services company **Carousel Industries of North America Inc.** It reached \$500 million in revenue and 1,300 employees, with more than 20 offices across the United States and around the globe.

The Exeter-based company has worked to strengthen existing verticals – such as insurance, media and health care – and diversify as much as possible, said Jason Viera, Carousel chief technology officer, along with leveraging past acquisitions and its partnership with network-solutions conglomerate Cisco. More than focusing on any specific area, Carousel looks at positioning itself as a trusted adviser to its business clients.

“Business is spread across the

board. We do have subject-matter specialists, as we get into things [such as] health care and finance, with regulatory things. It’s where our engineers add a lot of value,” Viera said.

Carousel wants to see its clients succeed.

The company’s chief information security officer is brought into conversations on things such as the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation law, which regulates personal data and its movement, for example.

“It’s not always tech itself. It’s telling businesses they could be at risk from a competitive perspective. It can make a huge difference in the long-term outlook for the company,” Viera said. ■

A sustainable squid market

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Ryan Clark, CEO

2017 Revenue: \$91,814,388

2015 Revenue: \$71,208,756

Revenue growth: 28.9%

4TH PLACE

THE TOWN DOCK in Narragansett is already the largest supplier of fresh squid in the United States. Now it wants to be one of the most sustainable.

Earlier this year, the company’s U.S. Northeastern Loligo squid fishery became the first to be certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. The organization looks at scientific studies and the environmental impact of fishing practices before labeling a fishery as sustainable. **The Town Dock** is now working with MSC to earn certification for a second squid fishery.

Certifications are important for fishery health, but also for consumers.

“More than two-thirds of U.S. consumers want to know their seafood can be traced back to a known and trusted source,” said Patrick Maness, Town Dock’s director of marketing. “Nearly 80 percent of seafood purchasers cite sustainable sourcing as an important purchase behavior.”

Town Dock has also invested in additional fishing vessels and permits to help increase its revenue nearly 29 percent over the last three years. The seafood supplier ships its squid around the world, from North America to Asia. ■

Personal touch aids expansion

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Gary E. Furtado, president and CEO

2017 Revenue: \$77,376,245

2015 Revenue: \$59,807,687

Revenue growth: 29.4%

3RD PLACE

NAVIGANT CREDIT UNION has been doing business in Rhode Island for 104 years, but it’s not slowing down. The institution has opened four new branches since 2016, expanding into Washington and Kent counties.

The credit union now boasts 18 branches, 350 employees and \$2 billion in assets. Over the last five years, its membership base has grown 42 percent.

Leadership points to **Navigant Credit Union**’s personal touch as the reason behind its success. “We’ve never lost sight of the values on which we were founded,” said Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Lisa Dandeneau. “As long as we continue to treat our employees and members

like family; give back to the communities we serve; and help our neighbors realize their financial dreams, we’ll be successful.”

Dandeneau said that Navigant employees – from leadership to branch managers to tellers – are very involved in their local communities, even outside of work.

Moving forward, Navigant aims to better serve its customer base by offering more digital banking tools. ■

Water consults lead westward

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Douglas McKeown, CEO

2017 Revenue: \$203,086,116

2015 Revenue: \$160,483,703

Revenue growth: 26.5%

5TH PLACE

TO EXPAND **Woodard & Curran**, CEO Doug McKeown knew the business had to go west.

The engineering, science and operations company wanted to become a national leader in clean-water infrastructure and environmental consulting. That meant moving into California, a state known for its green initiatives.

In 2016, Woodard & Curran acquired California-based RMC Water and Environment, a 120-person firm with staff across seven offices. Woodard & Curran closed the deal even though it was the smallest firm vying for the acquisition.

“That move has put us on the map in a lot of ways and provided an opportunity to attract more

talent into the firm there and bring the rest of our engineering capabilities to clients in California,” McKeown said.

The acquisition helped Woodard & Curran increase revenue nearly 27 percent over the last three years.

The company is now working with agencies throughout California to help them with their state-mandated groundwater sustainability plans.

Woodard & Curran has public and private clients throughout the United States, from small towns to Fortune 100 companies, including Pfizer Inc., Delta, The Coca-Cola Co. and more. ■



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1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent):

Edward W. Burman Jr., president

2017 Revenue: \$35,387,366

2015 Revenue: \$16,610,766

Revenue growth: 113%

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB |
 Contributing Writer

E.W. BURMAN INC. is a three-generation, family-owned commercial construction company that has fostered successful growth by observing how bigger firms handle operations – and then going in the other direction.

“My father worked for a large construction company and didn’t feel they were working to please customers,” said Edward W. Burman Jr., son of the company’s founder, Edward W. Burman.

So, Edward Burman started **E.W. Burman Inc.** in 1964. His wife, Edward Jr.’s mother, Martha, was the company’s secretary, later becoming chairman of the board.

Though both have since died (Edward in 1977 and Martha in 2014, just shy of 100 years old), not much has changed at E.W. Burman of Warwick. It’s still a family business serving Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts.

Edward Burman Jr. is president and his brother Paul Burman is treasurer. The Burman brothers’ sons also work for the company: Edward “Tripp” Burman III, Andrew Burman and Patrick Burman are part of the firm, along with about 40 other employees – 10 added in the past five years or so.

“We kind of thrive on that tradition. Not only do we have three generations here in the office ... we’re on third generations out in the field as well,” Burman said.

The brothers, as principals, deal directly with clients. Edward Burman Jr. personally visits work sites to ensure all teams are working together and to help keep projects running on time and on budget.

The projects are almost a his-

torical timeline of Rhode Island itself. E.W. Burman built the iconic La Pigna arch on Federal Hill, for example.

The company has renovated interiors of The Biltmore and the University Club; built the University of Rhode Island’s Harrington School of Communication and Media as well as the school’s new welcome center; the Jesse M. Smith Library in Burrillville and South County Hospital’s Center for Women’s Health. It also handled construction of the Carter Center for Music Education for Rhode Island Philharmonic and, more recently, the state-of-the-art University Orthopedics facility in East Providence, to name just a few.

“We’re open to considering many projects, which you kind of have to be in a small state like Rhode Island,” he said. “I’d say we specialize in historic renovations, hospitals and education. We don’t build any roads or houses,” Burman said.

Though the company stays true to its roots of committed customer service and remains small enough to stay nimble, it’s the economy that often dictates growth, to some extent. But a rooted legacy of quality work at its core has helped the

company’s success when other factors fluctuate.

Medical construction and renovation, meanwhile, is a strong market. “Health care is an ever-evolving situation, mainly having to do with the technology; it is constantly changing, the equipment, diagnostics ... they need renovations or expansions to accommodate,” Burman said.

As a child, Burman remembers his father saying to him, “ ‘Don’t come to me with problems; come to me with solutions,’ ” he said. That’s a lot easier to do in business when the company is small, flexible and can pivot when needed, Burman noted. “We’ll take slow growth. We have no ambitions to become a regional contractor,”

STEADY RESULTS: Edward W. Burman Jr., center, with sons Edward “Tripp” Burman III, left, and Andrew in the University of Rhode Island’s new welcome center conference room, designed by E.W. Burman Inc.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

said Burman.

Burman remembers the time the team was working on a project for Providence’s Clifford Metal years ago, and steel beams, which were more than 100 feet long, being delivered by train, were lost. Or when the company was working in Newport and needed insulation as part of the job. The factory manufacturing the insulation burned to the ground.

“You have to be agile” to respond to those kind of curveballs in ways that will serve clients and help a company grow its reputation for excellence, he said – a practice E.W. Burman has perfected over decades. ■

‘We have no ambitions to become a **regional contractor.**’

EDWARD BURMAN JR., E.W. Burman Inc. president



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Rank	Company	CEO	2017 Total Compensation	2016 Total Compensation
1	Bank of America	Brian Moynihan	\$18,100,000	\$17,500,000
2	Wells Fargo	John Stumpf	\$15,500,000	\$14,500,000
3	JP Morgan Chase	Jamie Dimock	\$14,500,000	\$13,500,000
4	Verizon	Lawrence A. Tisch	\$13,500,000	\$12,500,000
5	AT&T	David C. Best	\$12,500,000	\$11,500,000
6	Procter & Gamble	Andre Schmitz	\$11,500,000	\$10,500,000
7	Johnson & Johnson	Alex Gorsky	\$10,500,000	\$9,500,000
8	United Therapeutics	John J. F. Johnson	\$9,500,000	\$8,500,000
9	Novartis	Peter Brabeck-Letomat	\$8,500,000	\$7,500,000
10	Amgen	Robert A. Davis	\$7,500,000	\$6,500,000
11	Abbott	Abbott F. Abbott	\$6,500,000	\$5,500,000
12	Merck	Robert M. Davis	\$5,500,000	\$4,500,000
13	Roche	Paul H. Oetli	\$4,500,000	\$3,500,000
14	Novo Nordisk	Anders Hartvigsen	\$3,500,000	\$2,500,000
15	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000
16	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$1,500,000	\$1,000,000
17	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$1,000,000	\$500,000
18	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$500,000	\$250,000
19	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$250,000	\$125,000
20	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$125,000	\$62,500
21	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$62,500	\$31,250
22	Novartis	Paul H. Oetli	\$31,250	\$15,625

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To e-commerce and beyond

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



PARSONSKELLOGG

2ND PLACE

PARSONSKELLOGG has been in the promotional-products game for more than 15 years, but now the East Providence-based business is broadening its horizons.

ParsonsKellogg works with Nike, Adidas, Oakley and other well-known brands to produce custom products for Fortune 500 companies – everything from corporate jackets to sunglasses and water bottles. The company will soon up its game by rolling out a comprehensive online ordering system and e-commerce sites.

“We’re going to position ourselves for the future to re-create our business online,” said founder and President Thomas P. Kellogg III. “It will create an experience

CEO (or equivalent):

Thomas P. Kellogg III, founder and president

2017 Revenue: \$37,745,617

2015 Revenue: \$20,867,066

Revenue growth: 80.9%

for our customers that’s similar to Amazon.”

Kellogg also envisions ParsonsKellogg going beyond corporate swag to provide other services for clients, such as sponsored music events and on-site event management. For example, rather than just shipping sunglasses to a corporate client, ParsonsKellogg could set up and staff a custom-fit sunglasses booth at a corporate event.

“We almost create an experiential event in the beginning, revolving around the fact that we sell custom logo products, offering support and staffing for events,” said Kellogg. ■

Thriving on N.E. winters

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Jason Case, owner and CEO

2017 Revenue: \$36,045,533

2015 Revenue: \$29,063,732

Revenue growth: 24%

3RD PLACE

JUST LIKE NEW ENGLAND winters often do, snow-and-ice removal company **Case Snow Management Inc.** has staying power.

The family-owned company has a solid business history packed with accolades. While the weather can be unpredictable, the company has seen success not only from having properly trained employees and constant investments in new equipment but from planning in ways that it can.

According to Case Snow’s website, each client property is visited before the snow falls to ensure correct equipment and procedures are used. A response plan is created, complete with site photographs

and notes on priority removal areas and snow-placement locations.

The North Attleborough-based firm has been named a PBN Fastest Growing Company before and has made Inc. Magazine’s list of the top 5,000 fastest-growing companies in America several times, as well.

This year, Case reported 24 percent growth in revenue, reaching \$36 million in 2017 from \$29.1 million in 2015. Its plowing, hauling, de-icing and shoveling come with a focus on safety, too: The company is SN-9001 certified by the Accredited Snow Contractors Association. ■

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Acquisitions, focus bolster agency

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Lawrence E. Keefe

2017 Revenue: \$55,000,00

2015 Revenue: \$45,238,000

Revenue growth: 21.6%

4TH PLACE

EAST PROVIDENCE-BASED

Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc. has been focused on acquisitions and expansion. Last year it acquired a 22-person insurance agency in central Massachusetts and opened a new office in Tampa, Fla.

Strengthening its 19 practice areas is another strategic focus for the 139-year-old firm, said Director of Corporate Communications and Media Stefan Petrella.

"In 2015 we looked at our book of business and where we saw our biggest percentages. Construction was one ... along with human services, nonprofits. ... We want to be defined as leaders in those groups"

and across specialties, he said.

Figuring out how to add value for clients and give them what they need to help their business grow has involved corporate events such as seminars on workplace safety, for example, and legal-advice panels on the claims process.

Expanding geographically and in the ways it serves clients is paired with an existing strong corporate base, said Petrella. Employees benefit from profit-sharing – with clients ultimately benefiting from the strong company culture.

"Everyone has a sense of pride and ownership," he said. ■

KLR personnel power growth

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Alan H. Litwin, president and managing director

2017 Revenue: \$46,900,000

2015 Revenue: \$39,600,000

Revenue growth: 18.4%

5TH PLACE

FOR SIGNS OF GROWTH when it comes to **Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd.**, you need look no further than the recent expansion and renovation of one of its five offices – in Boston's Financial District – or to the fact that it's in the Top 100 U.S. accounting and business consulting firms, according to Inside Public Accounting magazine.

The Providence-based firm manages to do a lot well, with a broad scope of expertise beyond accounting, including executive-search services, information technology consulting, information security and business valuation, and litigation support. Industries

it serves run the gamut, as well – health care, hospitality, real estate and renewable energy, to name a few. KLR President and Managing Director Alan H. Litwin is a leader with more than 30 years of experience in public accounting, most of them at KLR.

In an article on KLR's website, Litwin noted that "in order to continue to grow, we need to attract the best and brightest talent." The company of more than 250 finds human contributions a key to its success and brings that value full circle – KLR has been named to PBN's Best Places To Work list every year it has been produced. ■

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1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent):

John J. Rizzo, CEO

2017 Revenue: \$17,069,916

2015 Revenue: \$4,828,850

Revenue growth: 253.5%

MIKE HARDMAN |
Contributing Writer

WHEN ADI ENERGY LLC

President and CEO John J. Rizzo was looking for a new opportunity in the energy field in 2002, he knew the business well, and figured out that efficiency delivered by careful design was going to drive the industry.

Rizzo had been in the energy field since graduating college in 1986. With 16 years of knowledge in the industry and a willingness to take a risk, Rizzo started the company that would become one of the fastest-growing companies in Rhode Island and the country.

"I saw what was happening, and the opportunity was there," Rizzo said.

The Smithfield company has since received several honors, including from the R.I. Office of Energy Resources at the inaugural Lead By Example Energy Awards ceremony in 2017. **ADI Energy LLC** has also been recognized for its achievements in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Rizzo's plan was to deliver higher-value projects to clients, using flexibility, clarity, cost-consciousness and customer focus that a small company can offer.

"We were dedicated to being a leader in the industry," said Rizzo about the beginnings of the company. "We were laser-focused on

the energy market."

At first, ADI was an energy-services consulting firm. That expanded in 2008, when the company started to provide integrated design and build services and then, in 2011, ADI Energy became a comprehensive energy-services company.

ADI Energy is now billed as a specialized design and build energy engineering firm with an in-house project-execution company that builds and delivers complex capital projects to save companies money. ADI provides technical energy solutions, with design and engineering.

ADI's growth has been recognized nationally and in Rhode Island. The company was recognized as one of the fastest-growing companies in America for the last five years and is an Inc. 5000 member.

Lockheed Martin also honored ADI Energy as its "subcontractor of the year" for its contribution to the company.

Included in the recent projects for ADI Energy are two major efforts in Massachusetts.

Holyoke Community College hired ADI to execute a major reduction of its carbon footprint, which it did with a \$5.2 million Energy Conservation Project. The college was able to reduce its electricity and natural gas use, which allowed for a reduction of carbon emissions by 672 tons annually and

nearly \$200,000 per year in utility costs, according to the college.

ADI also completed a \$103 million energy-efficiency program for the Bristol County Sheriff's Office, working with the Enterprise Equipment Co. The project covered the New Bedford Ash Street Jail and Regional Lock-up, the Bristol County House of Corrections and the North Dartmouth Jail. In total, there were nine buildings included in the project, covering more than 400,000 square feet of secured facilities. Ash Street Jail is one of the oldest in the country, originally built in 1888.

The improvements are projected to save \$650,000 annually, according to the Bristol County Corrections' press release. The project was completed three months ahead of schedule.

ADI Energy was also involved in a project at the U.S. Department of Energy's James Forrestal

ENERGIZED: ADI Energy staffers review a client's energy-use analysis. From left: Joe Palumbo, senior project manager; Jeanette Coleman-Hall, project manager; Brenda Konopelko, controller; and John Rizzo, president and CEO.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY



Building in Washington, D.C., completing the construction of an LED lighting upgrade, cutting energy consumption by the affected lighting system by 45 percent and improving the life span of the equipment.

ADI Energy is a member of the National Association of Energy Service Companies, the leading national trade organization representing and promoting the energy-efficiency industry in the energy marketplace in the media, and the government of state and federal levels. ADI will support NAESCO in promoting energy efficiency and renewable-energy efforts for its customers.

"Our growth will be continuing," said Rizzo. ■

'We were dedicated to being a leader in the industry.'

JOHN J. RIZZO, ADI Energy LLC president and CEO

Startup rebuilds family legacy

BY MIKE HARDMAN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Fred Magnanimi, founder and CEO

2017 Revenue: \$7,345,245

2015 Revenue: \$2,183,637

Revenue growth: 236.4%

2ND PLACE

EVERY DAY WHEN the doors open at **Luca + Danni Inc.**, memories are being made, while a family tradition continues at the Cranston company. Its 44 employees are hand-crafting jewelry.

“Our brand’s purpose is to remind people to own the moment and embrace the journey of life,” said Fred Magnanimi, founder and CEO of the company. “Jewelry is an amazing form of self-expression, and I hope that through our brand’s story and the community that we are creating, we can allow [the customer] to express those important memories, moments and milestones of life in a way that transcends jewelry.”

Growing up, Fred and his late

brother Danny watched their father create one-of-a-kind jewelry, watching how he turned a design into a finished product. Before dying of cancer in 2013 at the age of 33, Danny had dreamed of reinventing the family’s business, which had been hurt by overseas competition. Fred had been working as an investment banker but decided to return to Rhode Island and continue his brother’s dream. He named the company after his son Luca, his brother and his daughter Stella Dani.

“We know that the marketplace for meaning-based jewelry is large and growing every day,” said Magnanimi. “We want to be the next great jewelry brand.” ■

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Results-oriented, target marketing

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Chris Ciunci, managing partner

2017 Revenue: \$6,058,121

2015 Revenue: \$3,779,868

Revenue growth: 60.3%

3RD PLACE

WHEN CHRIS CIUNCU started **TribalVision LLC** in 2010, he had a couple of big things going for him.

First, being an entrepreneur was in his blood, as both his grandfather and his father started businesses. Second, he knew how to build a better mousetrap, in this case, a better marketing business.

Ciunci, the managing partner of the Warwick-based company, was working as the marketing director at a bank when he imagined how to give clients a better return on their investments. Instead of spending on programs that don’t produce reliable results, TribalVision would use digital technology and a hands-on approach, working in three-person teams, to guide

clients through the process and to develop strong brands.

“We could make it results-orientated rather than a creative vision,” said Ciunci.

Now about the name: The Tribal part comes from what the company says is the new approach to marketing. Instead of trying to reach everyone on the planet, you focus on reaching out to interested prospects and customers, turning them into brand advocates.

The Vision part illustrates the approach the company takes to what works best for its clients, providing them with a “detailed tactical roadmap,” which is designed to be specific to their marketing needs. ■

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Big data improves personal medicine

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Steven Mason, president and CEO

2017 Revenue: \$6,330,941

2015 Revenue: \$4,045,716

Revenue growth: 56.5%

4TH PLACE

MEDICARE USES CLINICAL

documentation and coding to issue reimbursements. When hospitals get this information wrong, they ultimately lose out on revenue.

That's where **ChartWise Medical Systems Inc.** comes in. The company's software improves clinical documentation in order to maximize reimbursements. Among other things, the software can quickly analyze patients' medical histories, lab results and medications, and flag potential undocumented conditions.

"If a patient is on insulin but diabetes has not been noted by the physician, our application will alert the user to consider whether the patient has diabetes," said Executive Vice President Mary

Cooper.

The company has grown 170 percent since 2014 and doubled its hospital user base.

Cooper credits the company's superior product for its success. ChartWise has received a Best in KLAS award in the software and services category three years in a row. It will soon integrate natural language processing and machine learning into its product.

Maintaining relationships with hospital executives has also helped ChartWise compete with larger companies. Founder Dr. Jonathan L. Elion regularly publishes articles and presents on medical documentation at state and national meetings. ■

Copy machines to IT and telecom

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):

Alan P. Albergaria, co-founder and president

2017 Revenue: \$11,653,779

2015 Revenue: \$10,167,184

Revenue growth: 14.6%

5TH PLACE

TWO YEARS AGO, 15 people worked for **Automated Business Solutions** in Warwick. Today the company boasts nearly 80 employees servicing 4,000 clients in Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

In addition to growing the company's customer base organically, President Alan P. Albergaria credits ABS' growth to its expanded services. The company's core business was selling copiers, but it now provides phone and information technology services – everything from virus protection to cloud storage to hardware and software.

"We offer any service a customer could need," Albergaria said.

Albergaria expects to continue

aggressively growing the company's IT services division, in part because it's turned out to be an especially lucrative part of ABS' offerings.

"The IT revenue will account for close to 10 percent of our total revenue, with 2 percent of our customer base," Albergaria said. "It's a crazy number. We expect that in five years we'll be doing as much in IT as we are in our core business." ■

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**Building
Enclosure
Science LLC**

1ST PLACE

CEO (or equivalent):

Charles Antone,
co-founder and chief operating
officer

2017 Revenue: \$2,597,422

2015 Revenue: \$556,478

Revenue growth: 366.8%

BY MIKE HARDMAN |
Contributing Writer

OLD BUILDINGS, SUCH AS Providence's City Hall, don't necessarily have to be torn down and rebuilt, according to **Building Enclosure Science LLC**, a Providence-based construction consulting firm. In fact, City Hall is one of the historic-preservation projects Building Enclosure Science is working on.

"Some of these buildings have had five decades of Band-Aids put on them," said Charles Antone, co-founder and chief operating officer of the company. Building Enclosure can offer the owners of buildings solutions that don't require starting over with an expensive building project.

Founded in 2013, Building Enclosure Science provides designs to help with the rehabilitation of buildings, prepares plans based on its expertise in building materials, and provides research and testing. The company gives clients project budgets and schedules, handles the competitive bidding process, and performs contract administration, quality control and management during the rehabilitation design.

BES works with architects and engineering companies on solutions to find ways to preserve the buildings by looking at the structure, then providing design solutions for rehabilitation of the building enclosure.

Some of the buildings and projects it is working on or has worked on include the new engineering building at the University of Rhode Island's South Kingstown campus, the Brown University Molecular Medicine Building and 101 Foun-

tain St. in Providence.

The growing company has been participating in groundbreaking work in the American Society of Testing and Materials, and the American Architectural Manufacturers Association.

Before starting the company, Antone and his co-founder Michael E. Kenney, also president, worked with family-owned businesses and wanted to go out on their own. Rhode Island offered a wide-open market for them.

"No other firms were operating in the Greater Providence area," said Antone. "It was logical to open up here."

Building Enclosure Science recently purchased its building at 1 Thayer St. in Providence and has set down roots in Rhode Island.

"We hired people from Massachusetts because that is where the people doing the business were located," said Antone. "Our employees are now relocating to Rhode Island."

"We're in a competitive market and these are well-paying jobs we are bringing here," he added. "This is technical work and a lot of expertise is required."

After going from one to 16 employees since starting in 2013, Antone expects the company and the industry to grow as more businesses look at making changes in their current structure, rather than opt for an expensive rebuild.

"We hired our first employee

after 10 months," said Antone. "Then we started to explode."

In the first year of business, BES spent most of its time, money and energy on getting the word out about its company and educating the public on what services it offers.

BES is now growing through the phase new companies go through when they try to catch up to their growth and develop their teams. Antone said there is plenty of work available, and he expects his company to be very busy in the long term while adding more employees.

"We are always recruiting and go to college engineering fairs," he said.

Antone says he has a robust internship program, attracting students from schools that include

SEAL APPROVAL: Michael Kenney, co-founder and president of Building Enclosure Science, tests the front wall of a condominium complex in Chelsea, Mass., to see if there is moisture inside the walls, part of a test to make sure the building is keeping out the rain.

COURTESY BUILDING ENCLOSURE SCIENCE

Worcester Polytechnic Institute, the University of Connecticut, Brown University and the University of Rhode Island. The uniqueness and the chance to be involved in a growing industry are attractive to future employees.

"There is a lot of training time involved," said Antone. "We are getting students from architectural and engineering schools. They aren't being taught what we do."

After two years of growth, Antone expects his company to slow down this year, but to start growing again next year.

"There is a tremendous amount of work available," he said. ■

'Some of these buildings have had **five decades of Band-Aids put on them.**'

CHARLES ANTONE, Building Enclosure Science co-founder and chief operating officer

Staffing service made reliable

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



Available Staffing Network

CEO (or equivalent):
Danilo Reyes, CEO
2017 Revenue: \$4,218,955
2015 Revenue: \$2,414,991
Revenue growth: 74.7%

2ND PLACE

BACK IN 2013, after helping other staffing companies grow their businesses for more than 10 years, Danilo Reyes took the leap and decided to put his mind and work ethic into a project of his own.

Reyes unveiled **Available Staffing Network LLC** in Providence in 2014, focusing on light industrial and manufacturing placements.

Starting from scratch with zero sales, zero customers and zero candidates, Reyes, the CEO, worked tirelessly with the support of his wife and children to grow the company, often spending four hours a day focusing on sales and another four hours training his team and recruiting.

"I knew that if I could start a

company and hire the right team members that my formula of investing in good people and partnering with solid client companies would work," said Reyes, an alumnus of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program.

The hard work and determination appear to be paying off, as Available Staffing Network surpassed \$4 million in revenue last year and is now the preferred vendor for more than 20 companies in Rhode Island. The business is also set to open a new location in North Kingstown in November.

"Clients know that they can count on us for short- and long-term assignments," Reyes said. ■

Keeping clients connected

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Robert O'Connor, president
2017 Revenue: \$579,103
2015 Revenue: \$352,412
Revenue growth: 64.3%

3RD PLACE

INCORPORATED IN 1990 as a provider of voice and data services to business, educational and residential customers, Warwick-based **J&B Communications Inc.** has steadily grown and expanded both its reach and service offerings.

Today, the family-owned and-operated company not only represents vendors from Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts but also provides indoor structured wiring, closed-circuit television cameras, video-management installation and access control, plus outside plant services running copper and fiber cables.

"Over the years, J&B has become proficient in providing and installing large and small telephone systems and also installing

data systems and repairing them," said Robert O'Connor, president. "Our techs are trained for the latest innovations in cabling and fiber installations."

In addition to completing a cabling job for a large retail store at the Providence Place mall, J&B recently wrapped up a large project at Providence College, converting 100 existing analog surveillance cameras to digital and installing nearly 50 new Axis digital cameras. The company also entered into a new relationship with a major national company that manages information technology for larger retail stores and restaurant chains where J&B will troubleshoot, repair, and install cable and equipment. ■

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BY MIKE HARDMAN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Bryan Yagoobian, president
2017 Revenue: \$3,159,732
2015 Revenue: \$1,926,611
Revenue growth: 64%

4TH PLACE

WITH THE CHANGES in deregulation and improvements in technology, **Best Practice Energy LLC** is strongly placed for growth in Rhode Island.

Located in South Kingstown, Best Practice manages the market participants to get its clients the lowest price available for their energy needs. The company creates a competitive environment to get the best deals available, while making sure to give a high level of services and transparency through its negotiation strategy and exclusive supplier contracts.

"We bring millions of dollars of commodity contracts to market annually. Our volume commands proper treatment for commodity contracting needs. For unparalleled access to competitive sup-

pliers, watch the action with our online reverse auction, see the absolute lowest price manifest," said Best Practice on its website.

Best Practice works with municipalities and local agencies to look at what program works best for the customer's budget and risk profile.

The company says it's important to look beyond the amount of kilowatt hours you use to where energy is being wasted, how much is that costing you and whether you're using outdated equipment. Lighting, motors, compressed air, HVAC and refrigeration are among the sources of waste.

Best Practices uses a facility analysis, optimization tools and resources to locate the sources of energy waste. ■

Security firm keeps it personal

BY MIKE HARDMAN | Contributing Writer



CEO (or equivalent):
Jon Volatile, CEO
2017 Revenue: \$3,792,175
2015 Revenue: \$2,505,606
Revenue growth: 51.3%

5TH PLACE

AS HACKING THREATS continue to present huge risks to companies all over the world, **SecurityRI.com** is there fighting the problem, providing 24/7 protection, 365 days a year.

In its more than 35 years in business, SecurityRI has provided uniformed security services, consulting, investigations and security solutions to New England businesses.

Facing constant changes, SecurityRI has had to constantly learn and grow to keep up with the technology, but it hasn't forgotten the personal touch.

"Clients hate to be left in limbo," said Jon Volatile, the company's CEO. "Everyone from the CEO to the janitor puts the client first. We love working with

people."

Founded in 1981, the North Providence-based company has taken years of experience in the industry and the use of technology to develop the "Complete Security Solution" for clients to secure their network from potential hackers. The company manages information technology services, email security, cybersecurity, virtualization, secure website development, and the securing of clients' networks to provide lost files, information and profits.

Given all the current challenges, said Volatile, it's a "great industry" to be engaged in.

And one that combines being on the inventive side while always being aware of the importance of the personal touch. ■

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FASTEST GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES, \$75 MILLION AND ABOVE

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2018 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2017 revenue 2015 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1 2017: 2	Blount Fine Foods blountfinefoods.com Todd Blount, president and CEO	630 Currant Road Fall River, Mass. 02720 (774) 888-1300	\$338,253,858 \$233,695,825 September	44.7% \$104,558,033	Food manufacturing
2 2017: 9	Carousel Industries of North America Inc. carouselindustries.com Jeff Gardner, CEO	659 South County Trail Exeter, R.I. 02822 (800) 401-0760	\$506,238,955 \$384,116,045 December	31.8% \$122,122,910	Communication and network technologies, professional and managed services
3 2017: NL	Navigant Credit Union navigantcu.org Gary E. Furtado	1005 Douglas Pike Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 233-4700	\$77,376,245 \$59,807,687 December	29.4% \$17,568,558	Credit union
4 2017: NL	The Town Dock towndock.com Ryan Clark, CEO	45 State St. Narragansett, R.I. 02882 (401) 789-2200	\$91,814,388 \$71,208,756 December	28.9% \$20,605,632	Seafood manufacturing, processing and distribution
5 2017: 7	Woodard & Curran woodardcurran.com Douglas McKeown, CEO	33 Broad St., Floor 7 Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 273-1007	\$203,086,116 \$160,483,703 December	26.5% \$42,602,413	Engineering, science and operations
6 2017: 6	Arden Building Cos. LLC ardenbuildingcompanies.com Robert M. Bolton, CEO	505 Narragansett Park Drive Pawtucket, R.I. 02861 (401) 727-3500	\$120,811,529 \$103,235,691 December	17.0% \$17,575,838	Construction, design and engineering firm
7 2017: 11	Fidelity Investments fidelity.com Abigail P. Johnson, chairman and CEO	900 Salem St. Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 292-5000	\$18,200,000,000 \$16,100,000,000 December	13.0% \$2,100,000,000	Financial services
8 2017: 10	Lifespan Corp. lifespan.org Dr. Timothy J. Babineau	167 Point St. Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 444-4000	\$2,222,075,000 \$1,968,929,000 September	12.9% \$253,146,000	Health care system
9 2017: 5	Gilbane Inc. gilbaneco.com Thomas F. Gilbane Jr., chairman and CEO	7 Jackson Walkway Providence, R.I. 02903 (401) 456-5800	\$5,009,000,000 \$4,531,000,000 December	10.5% \$478,000,000	Construction
10 2017: NL	Dimeo Construction Company dimeo.com Bradford S. Dimeo, president	75 Chapman St. Providence, R.I. 02905 (401) 781-9800	\$479,240,000 \$440,000,000 June	8.9% \$39,240,000	Pre-construction, construction services
11 2017: NL	Ocean State Job Lot oceanstatejoblot.com Marc Perlman, CEO and principal owner; Alan Perlman, principal owner; Steve Aronow, principal owner	375 Commerce Park Road North Kingstown, R.I. 02852 (401) 295-2672	\$664,000,000 \$623,000,000 December	6.6% \$41,000,000	Retail chain
12 2017: 1	Embrace Home Loans embracehomeloans.com Dennis F. Hardiman, CEO	25 Enterprise Center Middletown, R.I. 02842 (401) 846-3100	\$145,200,000 \$138,600,000 December	4.8% \$6,600,000	Residential mortgage lending
13 2017: NL	FM Global fmglobal.com Thomas A. Lawson	270 Central Ave. Johnston, R.I. 02919 (401) 275-3000	\$5,568,800,000 \$5,458,200,000 December	2.0% \$110,600,000	Commercial and industrial property insurer for multinational businesses

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1
Embrace Home Loans
- 2
Blount Fine Foods
- 3
The Claflin Co.
- 4
Shawmut Design and Construction
- 5
Gilbane Inc.

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

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FOOTNOTE
Ⓢ Navigant Credit Union was ranked No. 10 in the \$25 million to \$75 million category in 2017.

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

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2018 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2017 revenue 2015 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1 2017: 8	E.W. Burman Inc. ewburman.com Edward W. Burman Jr., president	33 Vermont Ave. Warwick, R.I. 02888 (401) 738-5400	\$35,387,366 \$16,610,766 December	113% \$18,776,600	Construction manager and general contractor
2 2017: 1	ParsonsKellogg LLC parsonskellogg.com Thomas P. Kellogg III, president	2290 Pawtucket Ave. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 438-0650	\$37,745,617 \$20,867,066 December	80.9% \$16,878,551	Sports marketing and premium co-branded merchandise
3 2017: NL	Case Snow Management Inc. casesnow.com Jason Case	356 John L. Dietsch Blvd. North Attleborough, Mass. 02763 (508) 316-0045	\$36,045,533 \$29,063,732 December	24% \$6,981,801	Snow and ice management
4 2017: 7	Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc. starshep.com Lawrence E. Keefe	60 Catamore Blvd. East Providence, R.I. 02914 (401) 435-3600	\$55,000,000 \$45,238,000 December	21.6% \$9,762,000	Insurance
5 2017: 3	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	\$46,900,000 \$39,600,000 December	18.4% \$7,300,000	Certified public accountants and business advisers
6 2017: 5	BankNewport banknewport.com Sandra J. Pattie	10 Washington Square Newport, R.I. 02840 (401) 846-3400	\$73,578,058 \$62,527,542 December	17.7% \$11,050,516	Financial institution
7 2017: 6	Altus Dental Insurance Co. altusdental.com Joseph A. Nagle	10 Charles St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 457-7200	\$62,822,000 \$53,569,000 December	17.3% \$9,253,000	Dental insurance
8 2017: NL	Douglas Lumber Corp. douglaslumber.com Steven Carlino	125 Douglas Pike Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 231-6800	\$30,000,000 \$26,000,000 December	15.4% \$4,000,000	Lumber, kitchen and home center
9 2017: 4	John Matouk & Co. matouk.com George Matouk Jr., CEO	925 Airport Road Fall River, Mass. 02720 (508) 997-3444	\$30,000,000 \$26,039,752 December	15.2% \$3,960,248	Manufacturer of fine bed and bath linens
10 2017: 9	Pawtucket Credit Union pcu.org George J. Charette III, president and CEO	1200 Central Ave. Pawtucket, R.I. 02861 (401) 722-2212	\$72,588,035 \$63,329,665 December	14.6% \$9,258,370	Credit union
11 2017: 2	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	\$67,983,004 \$64,475,000 December	5.4% \$3,508,004	Engineering services

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

1
ParsonsKellogg

2
Systems Engineering Associates Corp.

3
Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd.

4
John Matouk & Co.

5
BankNewport

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

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2018 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2017 revenue 2015 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1 2017: 6	ADI Energy adienergy.com John J. Rizzo, CEO	37 Thurber Blvd., Suite 107 Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 349-4420	\$17,069,916 \$4,828,850 December	253.5% \$12,241,066	Energy solutions for commercial and industrial customers
2 2017: NL	Luca + Danni Inc. lucadanni.com Fred Magnanimi, founder and CEO	838 Dyer Ave. Cranston, R.I. 02920 (401) 942-1840	\$7,345,245 \$2,183,637 December	236.4% \$5,161,608	Jewelry brand
3 2017: NL	TribalVision LLC ® tribalvision.com Chris Ciunci, founder and managing partner	2346 Post Road Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 272-1300	\$6,058,121 \$3,779,868 December	60.3% \$2,278,253	Marketing, public relations
4 2017: 2	ChartWise Medical Systems Inc. chartwisemed.com Dr. Jonathan L. Elion, founder and chief innovation officer; Steven Mason, president and CEO	1174 Kingstown Road, No. 201 South Kingstown, R.I. 02879 (401) 473-2003	\$6,330,941 \$4,045,716 December	56.5% \$2,285,225	Software development for the health care industry
5 2017: 10	Automated Business Solutions absne.com Alan P. Albergaria, co-founder and president	415 Kilvert St. Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 732-3000	\$11,653,779 \$10,167,184 December	14.6% \$1,486,595	Office equipment sales and service, technology equipment and service
6 2017: NL	Purvis Systems Inc. purvis.com Stephen Massed, president	88 Silva Lane Middletown, R.I. 02842 (401) 849-4750	\$24,034,527 \$21,500,902 April	11.8% \$2,533,625	IT systems provider in the defense and public safety industries
7 2017: NL	Bayada Home Health Care bayada.com David Baiada, president	171 Service Ave. Warwick, R.I. 02888 (401) 330-2535	\$16,915,953 \$15,940,526 December	6.1% \$975,426	Home health care company
8 2017: NL	SyNet Inc. synetinc.com Stephen P. Beauvais, president	205 Hallene Road, Suite 101 Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 736-6450	\$5,019,893 \$4,763,023 December	5.4% \$256,870	Design and installation services for communications and security systems
9 2017: NL	The Preservation Society of Newport County newportmansions.org Trudy Coxo, CEO and executive director	424 Bellevue Ave. Newport, R.I. 02840 (401) 847-1000	\$22,000,000 \$21,000,000 March	4.8% \$1,000,000	Preservation of architecture, cultural heritage and landscape
10 2017: NL	Russell Morin Catering & Events morins.com Russell Morin Jr., CEO	95 Frank Mossberg Drive Attleboro, Mass. 02703 (508) 226-6600	\$15,299,649 \$14,644,142 December	4.5% \$655,507	Restaurant/catering

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

- 1
Life Wear Technologies
- 2
ChartWise Medical Systems Inc.
- 3
Qualified Resources International Inc.
- 4
Envision Technology Advisors LLC
- 5
Site Specific LLC

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

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FOOTNOTE
® Tribal Vision LLC. was ranked No. 6 in the \$250,000 to \$5 million category in 2017.

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

(ranked by revenue-growth percentage)

2018 rank	Company Website President/CEO	Address Phone	2017 revenue 2015 revenue FY ends	Growth percentage Revenue growth	Type of business
1 2017: 2	Building Enclosure Science LLC buildinges.com Michael E. Kenney, co-founder, co-owner and president; Charles Antone, co-founder and chief operating officer	859 North Main St. Providence, R.I. 02904 (954) 288-9640	\$2,597,422 \$556,478 December	366.8% \$2,040,944	Consulting engineering firm
2 2017: NL	Available Staffing Network LLC availablestaffingnetwork.com Danilo Reyes, founder and president	500 Broad St. Providence, R.I. 02907 (401) 274-9300	\$4,218,955 \$2,414,991 December	74.7% \$1,803,963	Staffing and recruiting
3 2017: 7	J&B Communications Inc. myjbcomm.com Robert O'Connor, president	60 Power Ave. Warwick, R.I. 02888 (401) 461-6677	\$579,103 \$352,412 December	64.3% \$226,691	Telecommunications installer and repairs
4 2017: NL	Best Practice Energy LLC bestpracticeenergy.com Bryan Yagoobian, president	24 Salt Pond Road, Suite H3 South Kingstown, R.I. 02879 (401) 594-2300	\$3,159,732 \$1,926,611 December	64% \$1,233,121	Energy-management consultant
5 2017: 9	SecurityRI.com securityri.com Jon Volatile, CEO	50 Waterman Ave. North Providence, R.I. 02911 (401) 231-8130	\$3,792,175 \$2,505,606 December	51.3% \$1,286,569	Security services
6 2017: NL	CakeSafe LLC cakesafe.com Scott Chapin; Julianne Chapin, owners	1305B Kingstown Road, Unit 2 South Kingstown, R.I. 02879 (401) 378-8766	\$422,060 \$281,767 December	49.8% \$140,293	Invents and manufactures products to make bakers' lives easier
7 2017: NL	IT Support RI itsupportri.com Paul Riendeau; Nick Bernfeld	70 Woodland Road North Smithfield, R.I. 02896 (401) 522-5200	\$1,942,755 \$1,359,944 December	42.9% \$582,811	SMB IT consultation, service and support
8 2017: 12	East Coast Technology Group ectne.com Steven J. Gietz, president	1300 Highland Corporate Drive Cumberland, R.I. 02864 (401) 464-9005	\$2,800,000 \$2,000,000 December	40% \$800,000	Business IT consulting and networking services, cabling services, CCTV, cybersecurity implementation and auditing
9 2017: 13	Technology Advisory Group techadvisory.com Gary Harlam, owner	250 Centerville Road, Building F Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 228-6400	\$3,034,100 \$2,365,500 December	28.3% \$668,600	Cloud-hosted infrastructure, full-service IT support, IT security services
10 2017: NL	Compass IT Compliance LLC compassitc.com William DePalma, managing partner, vice president of sales; Jerry Hughes, managing partner, vice president of operations	2 Asylum Road North Providence, R.I. 02904 (401) 353-3024	\$3,134,000 \$2,474,717 December	26.6% \$659,283	IT security, audit and compliance
11 2017: NL	Nathan Clark & Associates nathanclarkteam.com Nathan Clark, CEO	39 Cedar Swamp Road Smithfield, R.I. 02917 (401) 232-7661	\$2,967,733 \$2,582,429 December	14.9% \$385,304	Real estate brokerage
12 2017: 17	Coutu Bros. Moving & Storage coutumovers.com Robert S. Romano, president	2 Greco Lane Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 739-7788	\$849,816 \$786,500 December	8.1% \$63,316	Moving and storage
13 2017: NL	Bryant Associates Inc. bryant-engrs.com Jeffrey C. Bryant, CEO	640 George Washington Highway Lincoln, R.I. 02865 (401) 722-7660	\$1,600,332 \$1,490,442 December	7.4% \$109,890	Civil, structural, traffic and marine engineering, surveying and mapping, and construction-management firm
14 2017: NL	Brave River Solutions braveriver.com Jim McAssey, president	875 Centerville Road Warwick, R.I. 02886 (401) 828-6611	\$3,387,000 \$3,300,000 December	2.6% \$87,000	Cloud computing, custom software development, IT managed services, outsourced CIO/CTO

CLOSER LOOK

Last year's top 5:

1

Premama

2

Building Enclosure Science LLC

3

Predicata

4

Technology Therapy Group LLC

5

RE/MAX Flagship

LIST RESEARCHED BY
James Bessette

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Many disciplines, specialized design

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



ARCHITECTURE, CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING

PROVIDENCE-BASED ARCHITECTURE, construction and engineering firm **ZDS Inc.** has grown as a result of its innovation. With a multidisciplinary approach, the 3-year-old firm has doubled its revenue and expanded from one to 20 employees.

With most of its clients in the hospitality, commercial or residential sectors, the company provides design or architecture services – or a mix of the two – targeting solutions that are appropriate for the location and fueled by the marketplace, ZDS Managing Principal Eric N. Zuena said in a statement. “Commercial projects that we have designed not only contribute to our regional fabric but [create] a memorable experience for all visitors,” he said.

In addition to spas and hotels, its work can be seen at the Mare

Rooftop restaurant and the Case-Mead micro-lofts in Providence, and Providence Coal Fired Pizza in Westerly.

“From the very beginning of a concept, we strategize together with team members of all passions and skill sets. We maintain the same people throughout the process to provide consistency and a sense of ownership both to our client and our team,” said Zuena.

In addition to this “cross-pollination,” excellent execution of design is key, Zuena said. The company believes in luxury as something more than just an exorbitant price tag but an emotional pull, and works to keep projects on budget and on schedule.

“Every project starts with unique programs, goals and requirements,” he said.

ZDS also relies on a global perspective to drive its problem-solving, creativity and innovation. Zuena, a graduate of Roger Williams University in Bristol, has led projects overseas, as well as in the U.S. – luxury hotels in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, for example – allowing him a world-class scope of options, opportunities and experience. ■



DEDICATED DESIGN: Eric Zuena, managing principal at ZDS, speaks with Julie Jancewicz Bartlett, project manager/associate. The wall behind Zuena features designs from many of the company’s clients.

PBN PHOTO/MIKE SALERNO

‘We strategize together with team members of all passions and skill sets.’

ERIC N. ZUENA, ZDS Inc. managing principal

Beating tumors on their own turf

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



BIOTECHNOLOGY AND LIFE SCIENCES

WE’VE ALL HEARD of data analytics. But what if this data could be used to treat what may well be the biggest medical beast of our time, cancer?

Looking at tumors’ unique, individual composition to find information leading to lasting treatment is the work of **Medley Genomics** of Providence and its co-founder and CEO, Patrice Milos.

“By truly treating the whole tumor ecosystem, we should be able to avoid cancer relapse, providing lasting cures for patients. This is where the innovation is going. It’s cutting edge, making genomics integral to health care,” she said.

Milos is the former president and CEO of Claritas Genomics in Cambridge, Mass.

Along with co-founder Ben Raphael, formerly of Brown University – a cancer researcher and

Princeton University computer science professor – Dr. Barrett Bready of Brown, and other colleagues, she is excited about the possibilities that can be accessed by looking at cancer in a targeted, detailed way.

“It’s the next phase of precision oncology – really, truly using data analytics to understand individual patient tumors,” Milos said.

Tumor cells have unique molecular makeup, Milos explained. This information is needed to maximize the impact of targeted therapies, personalized cancer vaccines and immunotherapies, rather than trying treatments such as radiation and chemotherapy, without a defined roadmap. Algorithms and software have been exclusively licensed for commercial use by Medley Genomics from Brown, based on Raphael’s work.

Medley Genomics is talking with investors and raising funds and awareness.

It received a Slater Technology Fund grant last year for \$250,000. This spring, the company was awarded a nearly \$300,000 Phase I Small Business Innovation Research grant by the National Cancer Institute to help develop its



ACTIONABLE DATA: From left, Niru Chennagiri, director of informatics at Medley Genomics, and Patrice Milos, CEO, review notes on genetic information at the company’s Providence office.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

software platform that will customize cancer treatments according to characteristics of a patient’s tumor. A commercialization path is progressing.

“This emergence of targeted therapies and looking at mo-

lecular properties is making great strides,” Milos said. She hopes the process can raise the Ocean State’s life science ecosystem’s stature, as well. ■

‘It’s the next phase of precision oncology.’

PATRICE MILOS, Medley Genomics CEO

Practical experiences power studies

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



EDUCATION

THINGS THAT SET Wheaton College in Norton apart from its competitors in the private, liberal arts, higher education marketplace are its global diversity, social-entrepreneurship focus and an abundantly engaged president.

Diversity comes in the form of a 1,750-student institution with 40 states and more than 70 countries represented – all living at Wheaton.

“That brings all kinds of experiences” living and working together, said President Dennis Hanno. “It brings backgrounds and cultures to campus; it brings something to everyone here. That international focus is always here.”

Named a Top 50 liberal arts college by The Wall Street Journal and Times Higher Education, Wheaton is also one of The Princeton Review’s Top 200 Colleges That

Pay You Back.

Its educational model combines rigorous curriculum with real-world experience focused not only on job skills but also on skills to solve social, cultural and environmental issues, and make an impact on the world at large. And the world at large is one Wheaton students are out in – with a strong Study Abroad program and other initiatives.

Hanno is founder of IDEA4Africa, which strengthens economic development by working with African youths who are addressing community needs and building local businesses. A Wheaton accounting professor in addition to his presidential duties, he leads trips with students to Rwanda, Ghana and Burundi.

The Wheaton Innovates Now program includes a Social Entrepreneurship Launchpad, intensive boot camp, and internships at startup incubator MassChallenge in Boston. A pitch contest and partnership with Social Enterprise Greenhouse in Providence help Wheaton’s students become influencers.

Closer to home, the school plans



DRONE HOME: Phuntsho Norbu, right, a senior majoring in computer science and math-economics, and Christian Joachim, a senior majoring in computer science, build a racing drone in Wheaton College’s award-winning Maker’s Space.

PBN PHOTO/MIKE SALERNO

a new residence hall next year, and is renovating another building.

Even with enrollment growth and success in other areas, students are Hanno’s first priority.

“I try to take a walk around campus a couple of times a day. It allows me to really hear firsthand what’s on people’s minds.” ■

‘[Diversity] brings something to everyone here.’

DENNIS HANNO, Wheaton College president

Worms turn waste into fertilizer sales

BY MIKE HARDMAN | Contributing Writer



ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT

WORM MANURE, known as castings, helps cannabis grow, the minds behind North Kingstown-based **Earthly Solutions Inc.** have discovered.

Frank Mastrobuono, co-founder, president and CEO of the company, tested his product out from his fifth-floor apartment in Boston.

An environmental scientist by training, Mastrobuono was studying for his MBA when he tackled the project. He started growing worms in a cabinet in Tupperware containers, and used them to reduce the organic waste he was throwing out. The product of the worms’ appetite has additional benefits, it turns out.

“We divert food waste from landfills by feeding it to certain types of worms to create worm castings, an all-natural form of high-quality fertilizer widely popu-

lar among cannabis growers,” said Mastrobuono. “Worm castings are valued not only because they contain a high density of nutrients vital for plant growth but they also contain an entire ecosystem of life beneficial to plants.”

As a result, worm castings are sought out by growers seeking to avoid the use of chemical fertilizers and are even a staple ingredient in most bagged soil mixes purchased at garden stores.

“Our worm castings sell for three times the price by volume as compared to the market leader and are able to command such a price because of their high quality, which derives in part from the worms’ diet of food waste,” he said.

Earthly’s approach allows cities to lower the cost of transporting food waste to large composting facilities while also keeping material out of landfills.

“We also are working to make an entirely new industry greener – cannabis presents a huge opportunity to set our best foot forward into new territory, so we’re passionate about advocating for more sustainable growing practices that enrich soil health and focus on



WASTE NOT: Earthly co-founders Frank Mastrobuono, left, and Mike Kowalczyk, center, pick up food waste at Empire Tea & Coffee in Newport. Earthly produces worm castings, a natural fertilizer. Mastrobuono shows the finished potting mix, as Kowalczyk and Empire manager Josh Unorski talk.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

‘Our worm castings sell for three times the price ... compared to the market leader.’

FRANK MASTROBUONO, Earthly Solutions Inc. co-founder, president and CEO

closed-loop food production. We’re currently fundraising to develop the infrastructure to serve the New England cannabis industry

as it begins to spread its roots,” Mastrobuono said. ■

Guiding family finances for the poor

BY MICHAEL HARDMAN | Contributing Writer



FINANCIAL

RUNNING INTO FINANCIAL ISSUES or attempting to get out of bad situations can be daunting. Providence-based **Capital Good Fund** can come in to help out.

"It is not easy to escape from poverty," said Wally Okby, vice president of investor relations. "Low-income Americans face numerous obstacles to building better lives for themselves and their families. For many, the promise of the American dream seems to be slipping away. That's where we come in."

The Capital Good Fund, a non-profit, certified Community Development Financial Institution, is in business to help people straighten out their finances and help create "pathways out of poverty." The company says it is the only nonprofit alternative to the "\$141 billion predatory financial-services industry."

The Capital Good Fund is one of the few CDFIs nationally, and likely the only one in four markets in Rhode Island, Delaware, Massachusetts and Florida, that specializes in small-dollar personal loans, Okby said. Its primary competitors are payday lenders, loan sharks and other predatory lenders. CGF doesn't compete with credit cards and bank loans.

"Given the prevalence of predatory financial products in low-income neighborhoods, Good Fund does compete directly with for-profit payday lenders and illegal loan sharks and other predatory lenders, and considers part of its role to take market share away from predatory lenders by offering a more equitable product," Okby said.

Low-income families and immigrants can become targets of financial predators, and that's where the Capital Good Fund steps in to provide help.

The Capital Good Fund has extended more than 3,000 loans totaling nearly \$5.6 million and with nearly 1,500 people completing their financial and health coaching programs. CGF also reported as of



SAGE COUNSEL: From left, Nacor Matos Custodia, financial coach at Capital Good Fund, and Wally Okby, vice president of investor relations, counsel clients Ann-gel Mitchell and Charles Isler in managing their finances.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

August, 99 percent of the principal it has loaned is paid on time and in good standing. ■

'For many, the promise of the American dream seems to be slipping away.'

WALLY OKBY, Capital Good Fund vice president of investor relations

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Smoothing bakers' deliveries

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



FOOD, BEVERAGES & AGRICULTURE

THE STORY OF CakeSafe LLC starts nearly 30 years ago during a nail-biter of a car ride.

Juli Chapin, a professional baker, asked her husband, Scott, to bring a wedding cake she had made to the East Greenwich Country Club.

"It's moving around in the back of the car, and I'm driving as slow as I can, navigating pot holes," Scott recalled. "It was extremely nerve-wracking."

So Scott, an engineer, designed a tip-proof cake box the following weekend. When he lost his job in 2009, he decided to turn his prototype into a full-fledged business.

The patented CakeSafe transport system now comes in 11 sizes – the largest can fit an adult person inside. The boxes keep cakes cool while protecting them from hills,

slammed brakes and any other bumps in the road that may arise. Scott said the company is growing at about 35 percent each year and selling all over the world.

CakeSafe not only protects expensive tiered cakes, it saves bakeries time. Without CakeSafe, many bakers are forced to pack each tier of a cake individually, bring all their decorating equipment to a venue, and assemble and decorate the cake on-site.

"For a bakery you've just lost your baker for five to six hours," Scott said. "These bakers now have our product, they can finish the entire wedding cake, put it in a CakeSafe and have anybody deliver it. It saves them a lot of money and a lot of time."

CakeSafe now offers other baking hacks, too, such as acrylic cake-icing discs and spray booths that protect bakers who are air-brushing cakes or making chocolates.

"People come up with problems, and say 'Can you fix it?'" Scott said. "We do our best to do something about it, and so far, it's worked out well." ■



CAKE WALK: Juli Chapin, co-owner of CakeSafe, which produces a transportation system for safely moving cakes. Chapin is pictured on Torrey Road in South Kingstown, one of the town's steepest hills, using a CakeSafe to keep a cake in check on the steep incline.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

"We do our best to do something about [bakers' problems], and so far **it's worked out well.**"

SCOTT CHAPIN, CakeSafe co-owner

Health care insights pulled from data

BY SARAH PARSONS | Contributing Writer



HEALTH & WELLNESS

ABOUT 30 PERCENT of the world's data is stored in the health care industry, said Shannon Shallcross, co-founder and CEO of **BetaXAnalytics**.

Her company wants to use it to lower costs and improve quality.

Founded in 2016, BetaXAnalytics builds tools to collect and analyze health care data for employers, insurers and health care providers. Insights gleaned can help BetaXAnalytics' clients identify inefficiencies, reduce costs and set more-effective strategies.

"The cost of health care in the United States is 18 percent of [gross domestic product]," Shallcross said. "If you compare that to countries with similarly developed health care systems, we have the most-expensive health care system, but the least-healthy people. We believe the solution to a lot of these problems lies in health

data."

Shallcross works with co-founders Chief Epidemiologist Mark Regine and Chief Technologist Phillip Murray to translate complicated data into meaningful insights. This can mean everything from using predictive analysis to target treatments at high-risk patients, to helping employers audit their health care expenses and identifying wasteful expenditures.

The team built a tool that uses artificial intelligence and natural-language processing technology to scan through millions of electronic medical records and identify areas in which patient coding is missing or incorrect. Medical coding affects patients' risk scores, which Medicaid and other insurers use to determine reimbursements. Incorrect or missing codes can result in lower payouts to health care providers. One New York-based physician group discovered \$1.3 million in coding errors by using BetaXAnalytics' tool.

"Any health care provider system usually has a team of coding auditors looking through files and records," Shallcross said. "Our tool shortcuts this process."



DATA-DRIVEN: Shannon Shallcross, CEO, and Mark Regine, chief epidemiologist for BetaXAnalytics, with a spreadsheet showing health spending. The data report is used to help companies identify where they can save money on health care spending.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

Shallcross attributes BetaXAnalytics' success to its experts (the company is affiliated with the

University of Rhode Island) and its individualized approach. ■

"We believe **the solution** to a lot of these problems **lies in health data.**"

SHANNON SHALLCROSS, BetaXAnalytics co-founder and CEO

Animatronic pets comfort the elderly

BY MIKE HARDMAN | Contributing Writer



INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION

CHILDREN AREN'T THE ONLY ONES who can benefit from being engaged with toys and products, according to Pawtucket-based **Ageless Innovation LLC**.

The company, spun out of Hasbro Inc. in 2018, realized a need for a brand focusing on the 50-plus market to develop fun and engaging products for older adults.

"The company is uniquely focused on the health and wellness space recognizing the positive impact and meaningful connections that can be fostered through play," said Meghan Gamboa, senior vice president of marketing.

Pets can provide comfort to older adults but they're not always able to care for live creatures. Ageless Innovation has created a toy to provide the experience of having a pet without having to worry about the litter box or walks.

"Developed with extensive input from older adults, Joy for All Companion Pets look, sound and feel like real pets," said Gamboa. "A critical insight that influenced the unique design of these pets was that older adults wanted interactive, two-way companionship, and pets that could give love and receive it."

Joy for All Companion Pets introduced its cat in 2015, which has sounds and movements mimicking the real thing. Its cat features VibriPurr technology, which allows the cat's purr to be seen and felt with a gentle touch or even while sitting on a person's lap.

That was followed in the next year by the Companion Pet Pup, which responds to the owner's voice with head movements and acts like a puppy.

"We are committed to filling the void in the older-adult marketplace for products that promote happiness, companionship and well-being," said Gamboa.

Ageless Innovation says it experienced triple-digit percentage revenue growth from 2017 (while still a part of Hasbro) to the comparable 2018 period, and has



GIVEN PAWS: From left, Ageless Innovation co-founders Andrew Jeas, chief operating officer; Ted Fischer, CEO; Tom Canterino, vice president of business development; and Meghan Gamboa, senior vice president of marketing, review software governing their animatronic cats and dogs in the company's Pawtucket office.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

expanded globally, selling products in Canada, Europe, the United

Kingdom and Australia. ■

'We are committed to filling the void in the older-adult marketplace.'

MEGHAN GAMBOA, Ageless Innovation LLC senior vice president of marketing

IT engineers get creative for clients

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer



IT SERVICES

EXETER-HEADQUARTERED information technology services provider **Carousel Industries of North America Inc.** has 1,300 employees and multiple locations. It helps more than 6,000 businesses across the globe create and maintain innovative IT environments so their people can work quicker and improve productivity.

But its innovative nature, said Jason Viera, the company's technology officer, has more to do with freedom given to Carousel technologists and the company's culture overall.

"Innovation – that term is overused," said Viera. "A lot of what we've done is enabled our engineers, given them creative liberties. It's less about creating innovation and more about enabling technologists ... allowing them to use creative solutions rather than making it a specific emphasis."

On its website Carousel calls Viera the driving force behind its new Office of the CTO program.

"We see it as serving one function: looking around the corner on what's emergent for our customers," he said. The mission of the new office is to line up engineering talent with Carousel customers – a kind of white-glove service – to strengthen business outcomes, whether that be for a company's manufacturing clients or any other niche.

That doesn't mean automatically matching clients to the latest-and-greatest technology out there, such as artificial intelligence, said Viera. Carousel is wary of recommending technology for technology's sake.

Viera uses autonomous vehicles as an example.

On a scale of 1 to 5, the technology may be at a Level 1 or 2 in terms of development. But is it practical and effective for a particular company?

"It's not necessarily ensuring technology is solving a business problem. We've got to make sure we are being realistic with the hype of solutions ... looking out for



IT CROWD: Carousel Industries of North America executives meet in Windsor, Conn., to inspect the company's new conference center. From left: Jason Viera, chief technology officer; Jeff Gardner, CEO; and Kristen Weschler, executive assistant.

COURTESY CAROUSEL INDUSTRIES OF NORTH AMERICA

the best interest of customers and not getting them into something

where the paint is still wet," he said. ■

'We [are] looking around the corner on what's emergent for our customers.'

JASON VIERA, Carousel Industries of North America Inc. technology officer

Safeguarding critical environments

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



MANUFACTURING

WHEN AVTECH SOFTWARE INC. opened its doors 30 years ago, the company's focus was on providing monitoring services for local software and information technology systems.

But with a data center boom in the late '90s, the team at **AVTECH Software Inc.** identified a largely untapped and timely business need – data center operators had to be able to monitor the critical environmental factors, such as temperature, humidity, flood, power and smoke that could result in significant downtime for companies if left unchecked.

In response, AVTECH unveiled its Room Alert line of environment monitors and sensors. Over the past couple of decades, Room Alert has monitored critical facilities and assets in nearly every country and on all seven continents.

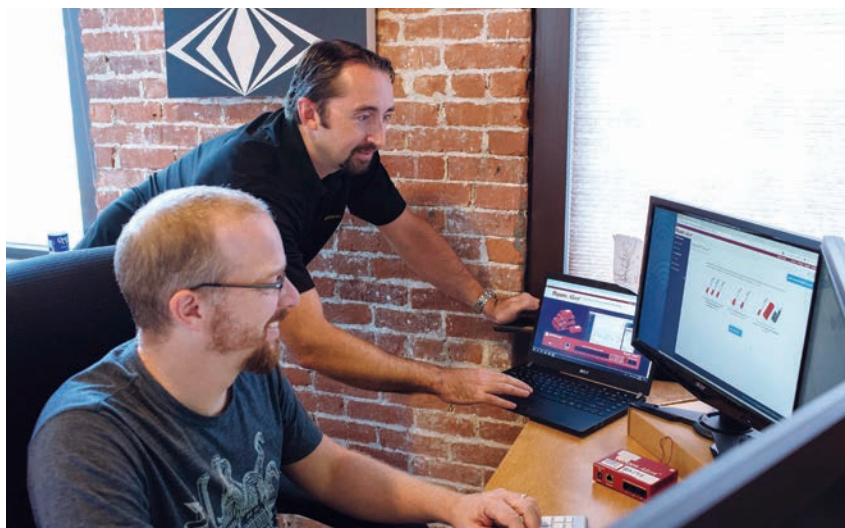
"We get messages from custom-

ers almost daily letting us know that their Room Alert notified them of an environment problem and that notification helped prevent downtime and, in some cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars in potential damage and losses," said Russell Benoit, marketing and channel communications manager.

AVTECH experienced 15 percent growth in revenue in 2017, a figure Benoit expects to double this year.

In 2017 the company introduced the patent-pending Digital Active Power w/Temperature Sensor, a device that enables customers to monitor the power status of nearly any AC-powered device while also providing a temperature reading. AVTECH continued its Room Alert innovation by unveiling its patent-pending Monitor360 technology, which will allow any Room Alert user to create their own custom virtual sensors, alerts and reports based on the Room Alert hardware they have installed in their facility.

Thanks to strong international sales growth, AVTECH is slated to open a brand-new distribution



CONSULT RESULTS: Lee Sala, left, lead developer, and Rich Grundy, president, demonstrate AVTECH's Monitor360 software sensors operation in the company's Warren office.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

center in Ireland in September, the company's first corporate location outside North America. The new center will allow customers in the

EU, Africa and the Middle East to receive products faster and at a lower price point, thanks to reduced shipping and import fees. ■

'We are constantly learning from our customers.'

RUSSELL BENOIT, AVTECH marketing and channel communications manager

Clearing obstacles to adult learning

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer



NONPROFITS

COLLEGE UNBOUND'S STORY began in 2009 as an initiative of Big Picture Learning, a nonprofit with more than 20 years of success building and sustaining a network of more than 150 high schools spread across 27 U.S. cities and around the globe.

"We originally set out to reinvent college for 18-22-year-olds," said Dennis Littky, **College Unbound** president, "But when we posted on Facebook asking for new students, 75 returning adult learners responded, and a new model for adult learners was born."

College Unbound enrolled a cohort of 25 adult students in the fall of 2011, and in 2015 the R.I. Council on Postsecondary Education granted approval for the school to offer the Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership and Change.

Currently pursuing regional accreditation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, College Unbound has graduated more than 100 students through its partner institutions, and this spring graduated its own first independent cohort of students.

"Our mission is to reinvent higher education, using a model that is individualized, interest-based, project-driven, workplace-enhanced, cohort-supported, flexible, supportive and affordable," said Littky.

College Unbound has been active in forwarding its mission with the creation of several innovative programs, including CU@Work, in which the school partners with employers to offer one year of college within the workplace. The relationship, which benefits both the employer and the student, is not an internship or tuition-reimbursement program but an

education plan embedded directly within the organization.

"College Unbound exists because a decade ago adult learners showed up and demanded a better option for college," Littky said. "When our students identify a barrier, we work with them to remove it. We disrupt the traditional model of education, even disrupt current innovative models of adult education. Our goal is to have a College Unbound cohort in every small and medium business across the state of Rhode Island." ■

'When our students identify a barrier, we work with them to remove it.'

DENNIS LITTKY, College Unbound president



BREAKING BARRIERS: College Unbound provides access to college for busy adults, offering babysitting service and dinner to save time so they can go direct to class. Charlene Howie, of Providence, eats dinner while studying before class.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

'Mixed reality' boosts training

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer



PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

BRIAN BOYLE'S COMPANY, Cross-Trainer, earned a 2018 PBN Innovative Companies Award by branching out from the graphic-design agency he started in 2005 to create corporate training programs using augmented-reality and virtual-reality technologies.

"AR/VR was my growth plan," he said. "We now have a suite of products geared toward the training industry, taking established training techniques and putting an AR or VR spin on them to make them more immersive, engaging and memorable."

VR training means a multidimensional immersion experience via goggles. AR means augmenting a real-world interactive experience with computer-generated additions, which could be people or other representations.

In partnership with other

industry specialists, his company, technically two entities, Cross-Trainer eLearning (founded 2013) and CrossTrainer Mixed Reality (founded 2017), has developed AR/VR training programs for Fortune 500 companies across the country.

Soon, the programs will be marketed globally in a variety of industries in which people need to see all sides of the equipment they are learning to sell or manipulate, or even all the angles of the human anatomy that a pharmaceutical product will affect.

CrossTrainer started designing and developing e-learning mainly for the life sciences and pharmaceutical industry, he said. "But lately we've been hearing from a variety of different industries: retail, fast-food, insurance, engineering, construction," he said.

The results have included a quickly expanding customer base and the need to double his Mixed Reality team since the program began in 2017. He expects his client base to increase by 40 percent in the last quarter of 2018. He is working with potential clients in Europe and Asia on translations for his programs.



TECH TAUGHT: CrossTrainer Creative Services Manager Tiffany Yee demonstrates an augmented-reality training session, showing a life-sized skeleton alongside company founder Brian Boyle in an augmented-reality environment.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

He said the technology's success "is just the tip of the iceberg. We have a lot of new and exciting tech in the development pipeline.

Mixed reality is going to change the way we live, work and do business. I've seen the future and it's going to be exciting." ■

'Mixed reality is going to change the way we live, work and do business.'

BRIAN BOYLE, CrossTrainer founder

Safeguarding boaters' investment

BY MICHAEL J. DECICCO | Contributing Writer



TECHNOLOGY

THE TERM "CONNECTED BOAT" best describes the new electronic boat-system monitoring technology on the market today.

It's only natural that **Siren Marine LLC** in Newport owns the copyright trademark on those words. The company's new MTC (Monitor, Track, Control) 3G app and remote-monitoring system connects to hardware that physically attaches to boat-system sensors to supply critical, real-time information to a boat owner or pilot anywhere in the world.

Siren Marine Marketing Manager Sam Handy said the MTC's uses include monitoring the boat's battery power, whether its anchor is dragging or the boat has been stolen by someone, whether the bilge water-overflow release system is working and whether the engine is functioning properly. It

will track the boat's GPS position and set its geo-fences to show the owner where their boat is at all times. It will remotely control a boat's lights, air-conditioning and countless other systems.

The MTC's customers are mainly recreational mariners, Handy said, though some commercial fleets have started using them as well. Since its debut in June 2017, 1,000 units have been sold, he said. Its customer base is spread throughout the country, Australia and New Zealand.

Handy said the opportunity to further expand overseas will come in November at a Marine Equipment Trade Show in Amsterdam, where Siren Marine will exhibit.

"It's a brand-new category for the marine industry," he said. "There are similar products in the home and auto fields. ONSTAR, for example. But the marine industry tends not to adapt early to new technology. Our competitors have cellular-satellite systems, which are more expensive to operate. We have separated ourselves from our competitors with our 3G technology and our big success." ■



BOATING CONNECTION: Siren Marine founder and CEO Daniel A. Harper, left, discusses marine electronics for a customer's boat with test engineer Rob Young.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

'It's a brand-new category for the marine industry.'

SAM HANDY, Siren Marine marketing manager



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