



Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers

12 stories of visionary CIOs changing the game through digital transformation.





## Table of Contents

### Game Changers

Jennifer Terrill

Don Schuerman

Andre Wei

Dan Doggendorf

Robert Fort

Jacob Gammelgaard

Doug Edwards

Mike Verdeyen

James Greene

Ron Blahnik

Phil Bute

Rakesh Tondon

### Industry

iPayment.....3

Pegasystems.....7

Group Chantelle.....11

Dallas Stars.....15

BCBG Max Azria Group, LLC.....19

FLSmith.....23

PGA TOUR.....27

Aptos.....31

SAS International.....35

Hibbett Sports.....39

Clay County Hospital.....43

Le Tote.....47



# What does a CIO do?

What does a CIO do? For years, that answer was simple: manage IT, and make sure the lights stay on. As recently as 2014, CIOs were seen as order takers rather than change agents and cost center managers rather than strategic drivers, according to a CIO/IDG survey.

But that perception is evolving. CIOs – and other technology leaders – are taking on more important roles in their organizations. They have become key decision makers who not only have a seat at the table but are relied upon to set an agenda for how technology can help drive their organizations' futures.

CIOs' investments in IT are doing a lot more than helping their companies get work done. They're changing the way companies work. IT projects are supporting business goals and enabling business transformation.

**In short, IT leaders are becoming Game Changers.**

*How are they doing it?*

*What kinds of strategies are they following?*

*What challenges are they facing?*

*What kinds of tools are they deploying?*

*What impact are they creating?*

*We all hear stories about CIOs stepping up and making a difference.*

*Here are a few that got our attention.*





What can a payment processing company teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of

***iPayment***<sup>®</sup>

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers



## iPayment CIO: A Game Changer with Short-Term and Long-Term Playbooks

**When Jennifer Terrill joined iPayment as CIO in late 2014, the company needed an IT infrastructure overhaul.**

The Los Angeles-based payment solutions and processing services provider had just made several acquisitions, and the systems and infrastructure were far from integrated. iPayment needed to sort out which systems to rebuild, replace or keep, and refocus the IT staff on the process of driving change going forward.

"The last couple of years, we've had to make significant changes, not only in the tools we pick but in how we put them together and how we think as an organization," Terrill said. "It's been a long process. We've started to become problem solvers, and that has opened up a whole new range of possibilities for us."

### Experienced with Turnarounds

Terrill drew upon her work leading IT turnarounds at different kinds of organizations — small ones operating on shoestring budgets, large ones with resources to be strategic — to prioritize tasks.

"Since I've had both experiences, I had a playbook of things of things I could do quickly," she said. "I was able to communicate why and how we could do certain things now and how some things would be done over a longer term and make sure that we had the proper foundation in place so we could build on it over time."



"We've started to become problem solvers, and that has opened up a whole new range of possibilities for us."

One of the first priorities was to replace the customer service support ticketing system with Zendesk, a cloud-based customer service platform. From there, iPayment shifted its email to the cloud and shopped for other services that could lighten the load on IT and integrate with internal IT functions.

"As we started that journey, we looked at different technologies," Terrill said. "The way software development has changed, if you pick the right suppliers, you can plug and play and stay best of breed with all of those tools and technology and mash them up and make them work for you. You can orchestrate using those tools in a way different than another company if they're using those set of tools."



## Improving Communication

In her second year on the job, Terrill focused on developing internal software solutions and what she called “people process automation.” She started by creating a local intranet.

“The challenge was: How do we get people to communicate better?” she said. “You could see there were different parts of organization that didn’t understand what the other parts do. Like, I do this particular thing and hand it off, and I don’t know what happens to it. When you bring people together, and people can see the process end to end, that’s when really good questions come up. People start to look at it and are not afraid to ask about possibilities.”

To streamline communications, iPayment replaced the organization’s old phone systems and chat programs with Fuze.

“When one team is using one form of conferencing and another is using a different one, it’s difficult to gain best practices and knowledge across organization,” Terrill said. “Once we replaced all that, people started thinking about other things we could do to increase productivity and make ourselves stronger in the marketplace and more competitive.”

Centralizing on one collaboration platform also helped improve the culture at iPayment. It solved a problem where employees of companies iPayment had acquired were using different collaboration tools and feeling distanced from the rest of the company.

“Keeping those systems separate does have a cultural impact,” Jennifer Reichenbacher, iPayment’s senior vice president, marketing and direct sales, told the Boston Globe. Working on the Fuze platform, she said, makes iPayment feel more like “one company.”

The Fuze system helped iPayment advance a plan to give the company’s 450 workers more flexibility to work remotely and take care of basic communications outside of the office. The number of dedicated remote workers doubled over the past year to about 50, and Terrill said that number could double again in 2018.

“The tools we give them have to be super easy,” she said. “One person on the remote team could be in a car somewhere, another person could be in an airport, another could be at home on wifi, and a fourth person could be at the Boston office, LA office, or their office in Minden, NV. They can’t have connection issues, they can’t have a situation where I’m in this office I need to use a VPN, and in this other office I use something different. It’s got to be simple.”

The Fuze platform makes iPayment  
feel more like one company.





## Turning IT into Advisors and Teachers

In just three years, iPayment has improved its internal IT processes in terms of metrics and perception. For metrics, Terrill said, average uptime of its systems has improved from “pretty poor” to “over 99.9 percent,” average page load times are nearly a second faster, and the monthly paper applications are down from 800 to about 65. For perception, she said, IT has evolved into a strategic resource.

“It used to be you knocked on IT’s door and asked if they could do it and when they could do it,” she said. “Now we’re advisors and teachers where we can talk about delivery options. IT’s mindset has really changed. They can solve for their own challenges, and they’ve become tool seekers. Their field of vision has increased, and they don’t just see challenges anymore. They see opportunities to create some differentiation for us out in the marketplace.”

**NAME:**

Jennifer Terrill

**COMPANY:**

iPayment

**TITLE:**

Chief Information Officer

**PREVIOUS GIGS:**

VP of IT at True Religion Brand Jeans and  
VP of IT and CISO at Frederick’s of Hollywood

**INDUSTRY:**

Payments processing solutions and services

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

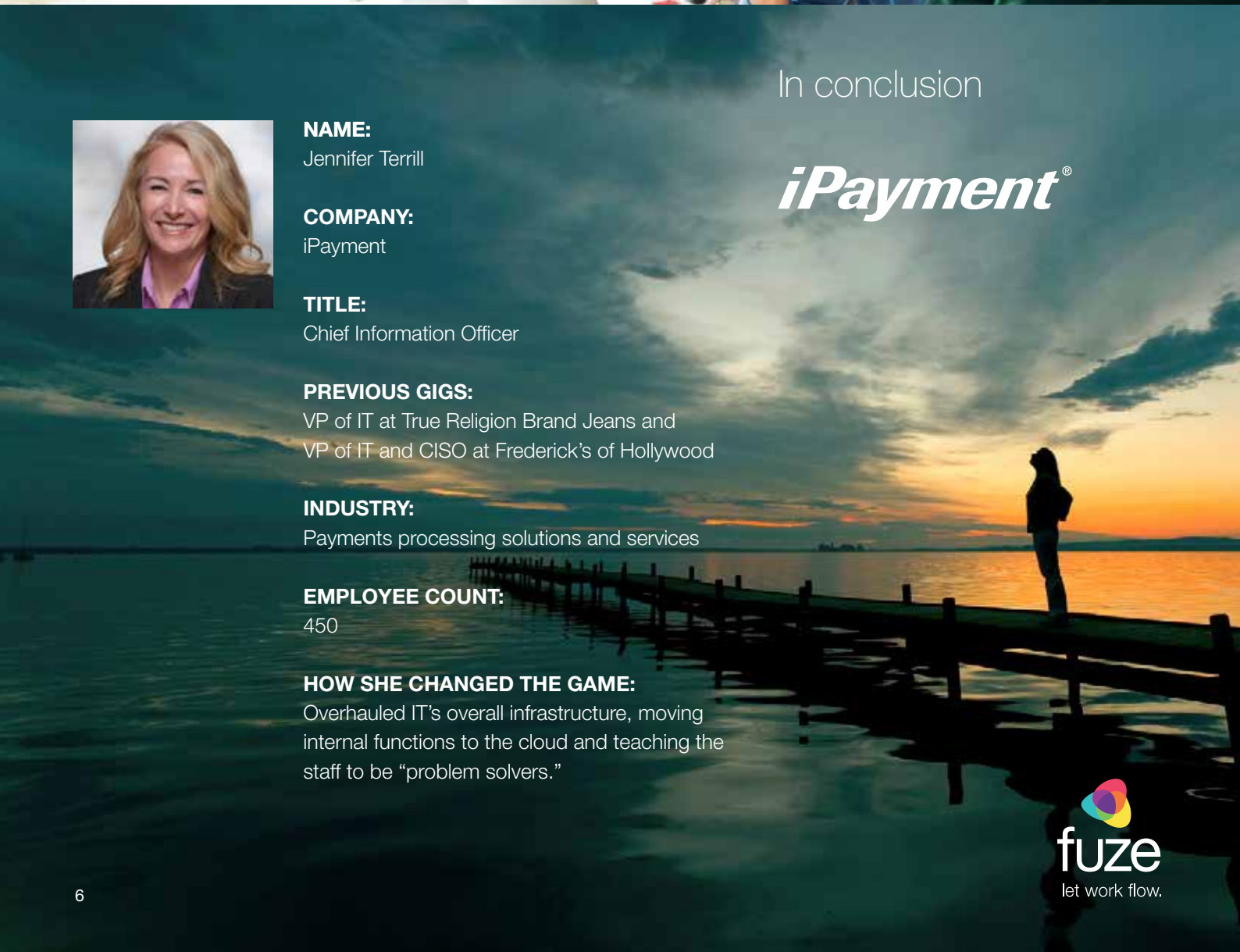
450

**HOW SHE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Overhauled IT’s overall infrastructure, moving internal functions to the cloud and teaching the staff to be “problem solvers.”

In conclusion

***iPayment®***





What can an enterprise software company teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of



Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## Pegasystems CTO: A Game Changer Who Practices What He Preaches

Pegasystems is in the business of powering digital transformation with industry-leading software. Thousands of customers around the world use its platform and CRM applications to engage customers, streamline their operations and build more agility into their organizations.

Inside the company's own business, CTO Don Schuerman is pursuing the same kind of transformation projects Pegasystems does for its customers.

In the 20 years Schuerman has been with Cambridge, Mass.-based Pegasystems, he has seen the company transition its own technology platform several times – shifting from mainframes to minicomputers to client-server architectures. Today, Pega does most of its work in the cloud and on web and mobile channels.

"In a lot of ways, our customers expect us to be innovators," Schuerman said. "We're on the front line, thinking about how customer engagement is done, how process automation is driven. Given that a lot of our business is helping customers drive their transformation efforts, we have to 'drink our own champagne' and follow the same principles internally."

### Pega Express

A key driver in Pega's own internal transformation is the use of "low-code," or in many cases "no-code," app development. Low-code has become a popular development method in recent years, substituting model-driven methodology for coding in an effort to build faster and reduce complexity. Pega created a program called Pega Express several years ago for customers to build low-code apps on its platform – and now the company is using it for its own operations.

Schuerman described how his team used Pega Express to create an app that automated the end-to-end launch process for new and updated Pega products.

"For many years, we didn't have a standard, repeatable process for launching new products," he said. "I brought someone in to help us standardize that process and make it more efficient, more effective. Even though he wasn't a programmer or coder, he was able to use Pega Express to turn that process into an app used by our marketing, product, and engineering teams. We do 20-30 launches a year, some small, some big, and this app helps us make sure we operate consistently and effectively."

The company has set up a process so business leaders don't have to wait for IT to create an internal app. If they need something for their department, they can add it to the "Playground" on the Pega cloud and follow instructions about how to create apps. The company has rolled out more than one dozen apps that manage internal processes such as the way in which the company manages charitable contributions.



"That used to be done with emails and a spreadsheet," Schuerman said. "Now we've got an app that helps people sign up to donate, choose what they're going to commit to donate, and get automatic reminders of when they have to bring in their gift bags or the things they're donating. We rolled that out quickly, and not only did we drive an improved process, we also enabled the company scale up our charitable impact."

## Staying ahead of competitors

Pega's CTO said the company needs to constantly transform its own operations to compete with much larger players in the enterprise software market – everyone from IBM and Oracle to Salesforce and Microsoft.

With the organization now close to 4,500 employees worldwide, Schuerman said Pega's IT leaders are constantly looking for ways to improve productivity and help staff communicate better. This includes providing collaboration tools like messaging and video conferencing applications to help development teams across the U.S., India and Poland feel like they're in the same room. It also means designing internal apps to run on mobile platforms so employees can process everything from expense reports to time sheets to sales data on their phones.



"We have to win by being smarter, more innovative, more efficient, and faster," he said. "From a competitive perspective, that's really important. Also as a company that's growing really fast, we constantly have to think about how we scale up and improve operational margins. These kinds of transformations help drive that process."



It also means designing internal apps to run on mobile platforms so employees can process everything from expense reports to time sheets to sales data on their phones.

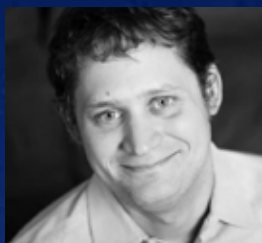
Schuerman said the company has done a good job using technology to transform its operations to become efficient and competitive.

"There are always opportunities to make technology better," he said. "But, as a company, we have moved pretty far along that track."

"There's been a big shift over the last few years for both our own employees and our customers – an expectation that the applications they use in business should be as easy to use as the applications they use in their personal lives," Schuerman said. "The days where they suffer through a hard-to-use app in their workday has gone away."



## In conclusion

**NAME:**

Don Schuerman

**COMPANY:**

Pegasystems

**TITLE:**

Chief Information Officer

**INDUSTRY:**

Enterprise software

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

4,400

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Promoted technology that helps the company engage with customers, streamline operational efficiency, and build more agility into its own organization.







What can a world leader in French lingerie teach you about the future of work?

## The digital transformation of Chantelle

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers



## Groupe Chantelle CTO: A Game Changer Focused on Collaboration, Breaking Down Silos

**In the latter half of the 2010s, Groupe Chantelle's top priorities have been to expand the reach of its brands and break down internal communication silos.**

"That's where my job is focused," CTO Andre Wei said. "We're growing as a company, doing more internationally, adding more stores, and building up our brands. That's why people need to talk to each other. We still have silos in the company, and we're working very hard to break those down."

Groupe Chantelle is a global lingerie powerhouse. It designs and manufactures its own lingerie, corsetry, swimwear, and tights, and sells them under eight different brand names, including Chantelle, Passionata, and Darjeeling. It generates \$500 million in annual sales and operates 16 subsidiaries, seven e-commerce sites, 10 manufacturing establishments, and 240 directly-owned shops. It also sells products in 10,000 other retail outlets throughout the world.

As the company expanded, it launched a series of initiatives to transform its business practices and its delivery of IT resources. Several projects focused directly on communication and information sharing. Others pushed what Wei called a traditionally focused enterprise to embrace the cloud. "I convinced management that collaboration is not going to make sense unless you implement it for the whole group and bring everybody together," Wei said.

### A New Communications Toolset

Groupe Chantelle's first communication-focused move took place before Wei joined the firm in August 2017. The "My Groupe Chantelle" project addressed the challenges the company had faced with email usage, file sharing, and calendars. The company was looking to replace its old communications toolset – Lotus Notes, an internet portal, an older generation of Microsoft Office, a Windows file server for sharing files – with new tools that did a better job promoting collaboration across the organization.

The company rolled out a new Universe brand collaborative platform that integrated with Google's Suite tools, bringing together email, document editing and sharing, and shared calendars. This enabled employees to create and develop interactive communities and collaboration spaces without involving IT, improving productivity across the board.

One of Wei's first moves when he joined the company was to build on the collaboration platform. He did this by adding Fuze to the mix. His plans call for Groupe Chantelle to deploy Fuze's cloud-based telephony capabilities to its Cachan, France, headquarters in 2018 and gradually expand the footprint to serve the whole global staff of 2,500 by the end of 2020. When this is complete, it will be the first time that the stores have a direct connection to HQ.



"A collaboration tool like Fuze will help us deal break down silos and share information better."





## Moving from B2B to B2C

Leveraging new technologies has been a priority as the company changes its business model, from selling exclusively on a B2B basis to incorporate more B2C elements.

"The whole goal is to create a new way of omnichannel selling," Wei said. "We're putting more of an emphasis on retail sales, both in stores and online, and we needed to adapt the organization to a new way of doing business. We've added new technology in the stores and creating new web sites for all of our brands. It's all about digitization, making things more efficient for the company, and providing a better user experience."

Groupe Chantelle is also launching an initiative to reposition itself as a younger, fresher brand. Integral to the effort is a mix of IoT, big data, and other modern technologies.

"We're refreshing the whole image of the company with new logos, new features, and a whole new omnichannel experience," he said. "It's a revolution for us. To do it right, we've had to change the way we look the cloud and other technologies, helping us connect with the use cases we have in terms of business."

The company is adding RFID tags in new store prototypes to track the availability of merchandise, improving supply chain functions. It is adding devices in dressing rooms that will enable shoppers to pay for goods as they try them on, improving the overall customer experience. And it's amping up its uses of BI and CRM technologies, gathering data about shopping patterns and targeting new waves of discounts and promotions to drive more sales traffic.

"It's all about digitization, making things more efficient for the company, and providing a better user experience."





## Giving the Workforce More of a Say

Wei said one of the company's principal goals is to change the organization approach to give business users more say in how they develop processes, what kinds of tools they want to use and how they choose to use them.

"Changing from a top-down approach to embrace real collaboration with the business is a top priority. We still have a gap. But showing our value with the projects will be critical for us to reach that target."



"It's something that the employees need to be a part of – for them to know our roadmap and understand the capabilities we are offering, so they can imagine things their own way."



**NAME:**

Andre Wei

**COMPANY:**

Group Chantelle

**TITLE:**

CTO

**INDUSTRY:**

Lingerie designer and fashion house

**PREVIOUS GIGS:**

IT manager at Givaudan, a manufacturer of flavors, fragrances, and active cosmetic ingredients; IT manager at global consultancy Bain & Company

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

6,200

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Promoted a new business strategy based on collaboration, empowering the workforce to take a more active role in the way they deploy and use IT

In conclusion

# Chantelle



What can a professional hockey club teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of



Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## Dallas Stars CIO: A Game Changer Wearing Many Hats

Dan Daggendorf cheers for power play goals and flashy glove saves as hard as anybody in the Dallas Stars organization. But the pro hockey club CIO's main focus is on other "game-changing" events. Like streamlining teamwide mobile communications so none of the players miss a bus. And tapping analytics to understand which merchandise items individual fans are buying, and when.

Daggendorf has led an IT transformation that's helped the Dallas Stars improve internal functions and connect more directly with external stakeholders: fans, sponsors, and the community at large.

Some initiatives involved digitizing basic processes and upgrading antiquated equipment. A new document imaging system automated accounts payable invoices, reducing processing time from 3-4 weeks down to 2-3 days. A new finance system has given managers the ability to analyze budgets in real time. Standardizing on Microsoft Surface tablets helps the whole organization – 225 full-timers, up to 900 including part-timers in season – share information in the office, from home, and on the road.



"When I started here, back in 2012, the organization was pretty far behind the curve in terms of use of IT," Daggendorf said. "No one had portable computers except IT. If you wanted to work, you had to be in the building. There was no wifi to speak of. But we've made a lot of progress, and we're continuing to move forward."





## An up-close view of the customer

Data integration is a big priority for all pro sports teams, and the Stars are no exception. The club now feeds information from Ticketmaster directly into its CRM system to help its sales team track buyer behavior. With an up-close view of the customer, the team can avoid double-pitching customers for sponsorships and ticket packages.

Hockey personnel have gotten into the action, too. Scouts no longer file individual player reports by email; they enter observations into a program called RinkNet that integrates player information from 13,500 amateur teams, and share it with team management in real time.

The Stars' video coach has command centers in his office, at home, and on the road where he can tag relevant sequences and share clips with coaches during game intermissions. Speed is critical for in-game strategy shifts. If the video coach can identify a vulnerability in an opponent's defensive alignment and send a clip to another coach over a secure network, the move could lead to a goal.

A key part of the digital transformation involved replacing an antiquated PBX phone system with the Fuze platform. The change gave the club's call center a dashboard the ability to track inbound and outbound calls, and opened up different lines of communication – voice, video, and messaging – within a single platform.

"The old system was out of date. We really needed a new platform to communicate better across the organization,"  
Doggendorf said.

## Connecting the digital workforce

Fuze's mobility features have opened up a whole new way of work for what had been a desk-bound organization. Rather than wait for important phone calls or miss them altogether, workers in operations, sales, marketing, and customer service are using the Fuze tools to connect from anywhere. They're taking advantage of the features to dial into meetings at home and on the road, relay information through group chats, and be on call for important, breaking business items.

"When I first got here, 5-6 years ago, to work you had to be in the building," Doggendorf said. "We added some new tools and changed some processes, and now it's much easier for people to work wherever they need to be working. They're not tied to their desks anymore."

The Stars' next digital transformation priorities are to expand the use of the club's digital imaging system and leverage more Business Intelligence in the everyday operations.

On the imaging side, the club is working to automate all aspects of contract management. Digitizing all the information gives management the ability to add workflow functions, like sending reminders to designated parties to speed up approvals and ensure key steps in the process aren't missed.

Doggendorf said the club is planning other moves to collect and leverage data. Integrating data from in-rink merchandise point-of-sale systems will help officials better understand ticket-holders' buying patterns. Also, the shift from paper to digital tickets helps the club identify new fans and track season ticket holders' attendance patterns.

"I feel like I am to the point, and organization is to the point where they want me to push them harder now," he said. "What we're doing right now, I do IT, facility management, security, office services. We're trying to free me up from the other hats I wear so I can push IT more, to get to the next level and be creative."



**NAME:**

Dan Doggendorf

**COMPANY:**

Formerly with the Dallas Stars

**TITLE:**

Chief Information Officer

**PREVIOUS GIGS:**

Information security officer for GameStop and director of information security for Penson Financial Services

**INDUSTRY:**

Professional hockey

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

900

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Data integration initiative helped sales team track buyer behavior; new unified communications system enabled employees to work from anywhere

In conclusion







What can a global fashion retailer teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of

BCBGMAXAZRIA

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## BCBG Max Azria CIO: Fashion Retail Game Changer Drives Omnichannel Transformation

**It's no secret that times are tough in retail, and the time for retailers to digitally transform is now. Just ask the man behind the digital transformation at BCBG Max Azria.**

**"When I joined the company, I knew what needed to be done," said Robert Fort, former Chief Information Officer of the fashion house. "I started working with our e-commerce team to flesh out the details of our omnichannel strategy so that customers could enjoy a truly seamless shopping experience."**

### E-commerce Alone Isn't Enough

BCBG already had an e-commerce platform in place, but it operated independently from store operations. So, in their first move toward digital transformation, BCBG managers rolled out tablets to all the stores. At first, in-store employees helping customers with online orders was the primary use of the tablets. That wasn't ideal, and the company wanted to push for a more unified, omnichannel experience for customers.

To execute that vision, the e-commerce team launched an Endless Aisle application that was available in all stores on the tablets.



"But, it wasn't what you typically consider a classic Endless Aisle application," Fort said. "If a customer in-store has a couple of physical items in hand and there's one item that an associate would either have to custom order, get from another store, or obtain from our e-commerce or main inventories, you ideally want the customer to be able to ring it up as one transaction, with one credit card swipe. We aren't there yet, but that's what we're aiming for in the future."



## Mobile Becomes a Must-Have in Retail

Another part of the retail future, according to Fort, is even more mobile use in stores.

"That's the future of point-of-sale (POS) at BCBG," he said. "We'll have one fixed station but then the rest of the POS moments will be tablet-based. One challenge to overcome in mobile retail, though, is Payment Card Industry (PCI) rules. Specifically, retailers can use mobile technology to accomplish POS, but can't include other corporate applications on the device because the networks would be overlapping, which isn't allowed."

Fort added, "The other interesting feature we are seeing emerge is retailers using mobile applications built for persistent selling. It's almost like employees are carrying the website on a tablet around the store. If they encounter a customer in the aisle, they can visually show them what's available in inventory and start a conversation with them about it."

## Connecting with Employees and Partners

BCBG also took time to focus on improving communication and collaboration with their employees and partners.

"We launched a brand-new online human resources system that covered benefits, so employees now have portals to use to understand that information," said Fort. "We also implemented a centralized online labor scheduling platform to replace the existing ad hoc scheduling that was organized on spreadsheets in each store."

BCBG is a vertically-integrated fashion retailer, which means they're also designing and making their own products as well as selling them. "Because we do a significant amount of wholesale business," said Fort, "we need to communicate with partners around the world."

The company implemented a collaboration platform that's specifically designed to handle massive amounts of high-res image files that can accurately represent things like the texture of a fabric, for example. "Those files take up tons of space – almost the equivalent of video," added Fort.





## The Future Is Unified Commerce

All of these efforts reflect an ambitious personal vision that Fort has for the future of retail: unified commerce. Ultimately, instead of having separate systems for point-of-sale, call centers, e-commerce and mobile, what Fort hopes to someday deliver to the industry is one core commerce system. It would support a unified set of data for inventory and customer records, which are then viewable using different presentation maps. Because all workflows draw on the same set of data, everything works faster, and the information everyone is looking at is consistent and up-to-date. There are fewer miscommunications and hand-off glitches that can ruin a customer experience.

When a sale is recorded on any platform, it's recorded across all of these environments and starts to facilitate almost real-time analytics. "When you start putting in a unified e-commerce system together in the future, you start reducing the duplicity of systems – and that's just going to solve so many problems facing retail today," said Fort.

"Today, it's possible to design and create applications that can work on a mobile phone, a tablet, and browsers," Fort said.



"The customer who is sitting at home, looking at their browser, should be seeing the same data that your associates see at the register and your call center employees see on their interfaces."

## In conclusion

**NAME:**

Robert Fort

**COMPANY:**

BCBG Max Azria Group, LLC

**TITLE:**

Former Chief Information Officer

**INDUSTRY:**

Retail

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

2,650

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Working to bring the concept of unified commerce to retail, where all systems work together to drive speed and efficiency.







What can a 130+ year old engineering company teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of **FLSMIDTH**

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers



## FLSmidth IT Leader: A Game Changer Focused on Streamlining Operations, Creating a 'New Way of Working'

**Throughout its 136-year history, FLSmidth has made dozens of acquisitions, growing into one of the world's largest providers of engineering, equipment, and services solutions to the global minerals and cement industries. These units joined the company over time, but kept their former names and ran their own back-end technology systems.**

Several years ago, FLSmidth unveiled a plan to unify its far-flung operations. Along with rebranding the units under the FLSmidth name, the "One Company/One Name/One Source" initiative called for an overhaul of IT resources, business processes, and modes of work.

"The key goal has been to become one company working in united ways," said Jacob Gammelgaard, VP and Head of Solution Design and Onsite IT at FLSmidth. "We've bought a lot of companies with the main goal of adding new products and expanding into new markets. But we didn't pay much attention to the impact the addition of all these new companies and IT systems would have on our

IT landscape and the business overall. Now, we're on a mission to integrate all these pieces from an IT perspective and a process perspective."

It's a complicated process that takes time. The IT initiative started shortly after Gammelgaard joined the company in 2010 with launching of a global CRM platform and unified email infrastructure, followed by share ERP and PLM platforms. He estimates that his team still has three more years of work before all entities are enrolled in the new systems. In parallel, his teams are also working on moving from on-premises to cloud to embrace the new technology and innovation available in the market today.

"The key goal has been to become one company working in united ways."





## Simplification Is the Name of the Game

The biggest IT overhaul has involved shrinking the company's use of ERP platforms from more than 30 down to a 2-tier strategy based on Oracle and Epicor and over 50 Product Data management system into one, based on Enova.

Working on common ERP and PDM systems has helped, deploy global changes faster as well as increasing the transparency and data availability towards faster and better decisions across the value chain.

The company's transformation is also streamlining a long list of business functions — everything from human resources (HR) to product engineering and customer services. Gammelgaard said the long-term plan is to move each of these functions to the cloud.

"By moving to the cloud, we will eliminate a lot of issues," he said. "It means we don't have go through a long requirement phase and coding for six months or more. We will apply industry best practices processes directly from the cloud and by doing so, we can get access to new features and enhancements directly from the providers, several times per year. The changes can be applied to our entire group in only a matter of days. The new technology will ensure that our business applications reflect the newest and smartest way of working. Today many companies struggle with heavy customized applications, which can't be upgraded, and in many cases prevent them from reacting on new market trends which are moving fast due to the global agenda on digitalization."



## Preparing for the Future

One cloud-based system that is in the process of being rolled out is Fuze's communications platform. The platform replaces dozens of older PBX-based phone systems with cloud-based communications and adds other features like conferencing, messaging, and call-forwarding to mobile phones. The move to Fuze has eliminated the need for desk phones, with its access to a softphone on desktop computers. About 4,500 of FLSmidth's 11,000 workers use the system, and plans call for an additional 4,500 to come on line throughout 2018.

"The new platform will help employees work even more seamlessly from outside of the office, collaborating with internal teams, customers, and suppliers," he said. "As an IT function, we have to enable people to work efficiently wherever they are."

Overall, Gammelgaard said, his IT group has used the transformation plan to up-level its own role in the operation.

"Part of IT is fixing stuff and taking care that the lights are on," he said. "That's still a top priority. What I'm working with is to embrace the future and design a future way of working. That involves close collaboration together with the business. Based on that, we're trying to envision what our business will look like in five years, 10 years, and then design our IT platforms and technologies around that. That's where we always need to focus to be relevant."



In conclusion



**NAME:**

Jacob Gammelgaard

**COMPANY:**

FLSmidth

**TITLE:**

VP and Head of Solution Design  
and Onsite IT

**PREVIOUS GIGS:**

Line of Business solution manager, and manager of  
corporate planning and analysis at Coloplast

**INDUSTRY:**

Global cement and minerals industries

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

11,700

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Crushed the challenges of integrating a newly-acquired global workforce by leveraging cloud-based solutions to drive communication and collaboration.





What can a professional golf company teach you about the future of work?

## The digital transformation of **PGA TOUR**

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## PGA TOUR Information Systems Director: A Game Changer Who Won Over the Skeptics

**For the average golfer, an afternoon on the links presents a good opportunity to put phones, computers, and other technology devices on hold for a few hours.**

The PGA TOUR has a different relationship with technology. The organizer of six pro golf tours, including most of the high-profile tournaments that beam live on televisions, sees tech as a mechanism to streamline business practices and promote collaboration among its workers.

Over the past four years, the organization has undergone a digital transformation, building a more robust, flexible IT infrastructure leveraging multiple resources in the cloud.

### Transitioning from Legacy Systems

Until recently, the PGA TOUR has relied on a legacy system of on-premises hardware to manage its information technology needs. It operated email, voice, and document sharing tools that had served their purpose for a long time but recently started requiring more work and investment to keep them up and running.

The organization decided to move these resources to the cloud to promote both efficiency and collaboration. With 800 employees located in PGA TOUR's Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, headquarters, another 150 full-time remote staff, and the 400+ team members working for 17 TPC golf clubs, it became critical to find solutions that not only enhance collaboration but also enable employees to work from anywhere.

Getting employees on board with the cloud initiative provided a micro-study of human behavior.



“Without the buy-in from senior leadership and widespread adoption from employees, we’d essentially be deploying a business tool that is ultimately ineffective at meeting the needs it was designed to satisfy,” said Doug Edwards, senior director, Information Systems and Customer Services, at PGA TOUR. “This was particularly tricky for us given the average employee tenure is 12 years. With some employees having been with PGA TOUR for nearly 30 years, people certainly have their go-to tools. Any change to that and you can expect to be met with some resistance.”



## Overcoming Divisions

Replacing a 25-year-old Lotus Notes email function divided the company. A third of the company loved the new cloud tool, another third loved it but had no idea how to operate it, and the remaining third considered it a step in the wrong direction.

The IT team eventually won over the dissenters by identifying early adopters within the organization and turning them into advocates.

“Adoption never takes place overnight,” Edwards said. “It’s a snowball effect, one that quite often succeeds when initiated at the highest level of an organization. It signals to staff that the decision isn’t just a new tech initiative or something solely owned by IT, but part of a larger culture shift. This two-pronged approach is critical in not only signaling to employees that the business is taking this seriously, but they have ambassadors to turn to with a deep understanding of why this is beneficial to them.”





## Facilitating Communication and Efficiency

Edwards said clear communication is critical to the success of any digital transformation initiative.

"You'll find that over time, your employees will cross a threshold," he said. "They won't come to you looking for a new tool — they'll look to see how their current tools can help solve their everyday problems."

Ultimately, Edwards said, employees and staff are naturally

going to adopt the tools and processes that help them get their job done. In today's environment, that translates to seeking out applications that mirror the consumer experience. It boils down to functionality and an intuitive user interface.



"Without either, employees may very well opt to use unsanctioned apps instead," he said. "By rooting these tools in the cloud, you are enabling them with the flexibility they need to succeed in a rapidly changing environment."

In conclusion

## PGA TOUR



**NAME:**

Doug Edwards

**COMPANY:**

PGA TOUR

**TITLE:**

Senior Director, Information Systems and Customer Services

**INDUSTRY:**

Professional golf

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

1,350

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Presided over a digital transformation that replaced legacy hardware with cloud tools, enhanced collaboration and enabled employees to work from anywhere.





What can a retail tech company teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of

aptos®

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## Retail Technology Game Changer Connects and Empowers Global Workforce

**The new world of retail is digital, borderless, and connected, and Mike Verdeyen knows that seamless communication and collaboration are crucial to his growing company's future.**

"As our employees and customers now span many geographies, tools that enable collaboration are critical," said Verdeyen, CTO and Product Leader at Aptos, which provides customer engagement and merchandise management solutions for retail brands like adidas, Billabong, Build-A-Bear Workshop, Cole Haan, Dior, Guess, Lacoste, Louis Vuitton, Sephora, Tesco, Tod's, TUMI, Urban Outfitters, WH Smith, and Zalando.

Aptos acquired TXT Retail in October of 2017, and now serves more than 1,000 of the world's leading retail brands across 60 countries. The company is thriving and growing around the globe.



"We wanted everything to be cloud-based and accessible from a variety of devices in any global location."

### Engaging a Global Workforce

Since the acquisition, Aptos' workforce has nearly doubled in size and shifted from a predominantly North American base (95%) to a nearly even split of 55% located in North America and 45% located in the rest of the world. This growth has made Aptos a retail technology powerhouse, but it has also created new complexities in global communication.

Specifically, providing dependable, scalable communication and collaboration solutions for employees in different global time zones and on different platforms was an urgent priority. But Verdeyen had a winning game plan in mind for effectively connecting his new global workforce.

"When Aptos was first spun off from our parent company Epicor Business Solutions in June of 2015, we decided to move all of our systems to the cloud," he said. "From email, to finance, to human resources, to communications, we wanted everything to be cloud-based and accessible from a variety of devices in any global location."

Since Aptos was already working in the cloud, Verdeyen looked for cloud-based solutions to effectively connect employees located around the world.



## Choosing the Right Partners

Aptos searched for best-in-class solutions to support its growing organization. It chose Google for written communications, including Gmail and Google Docs.

“Google Docs adoption has been significant. It’s much more powerful than simply a file share,” explained Verdeyen. “Simultaneous editing of documents and spreadsheets eliminates the ‘which version are you looking at’ confusion that often happens at the start of every call.”

The addition of robust video conferencing software has helped make conference calls and collaboration efforts more efficient, too. “It’s significant how much more productive video conference meetings are since you tend to hold everyone’s attention and avoid the natural multi-tasking distraction that comes with audio-only conference calls,” he said.

Aptos implemented both group and person-to-person instant messaging (IM) tools to drive real-time interactions between employees. These new work-stream collaboration tools have effectively eliminated many multi-person email chains and they also streamline internal support. For software development and collaboration, Aptos turned to Atlassian; JIRA for issue tracking and Confluence for formal information sharing.

## Managing the Change

Verdeyen acknowledges that, as with many large-scale rollouts, there were some growing pains associated with the enterprise-wide implementation of new tools.

“There was, of course, a learning curve as we first made the transition. We were a very traditional, Microsoft-oriented, on-premises focused organization. Even as we moved everything to a cloud-centric, mobile-optimized approach, there was some confusion around when to use which resources,” he said.

While Verdeyen says he could have mandated how to use the tools to mitigate that confusion, he decided instead to observe how his users behaved and support those trends. “In today’s consumer-oriented world, IT leaders can educate users about the tools designed to help with problems,” he said. “But, the days of ‘command and control’ IT are largely over.”

“It’s significant how much more productive video conference meetings are.”



## Reaping the Rewards

Aptos' decentralized, app cloud-based approach to communication and collaboration is paying off. According to Verdeyen, IM chat groups are perhaps the best example of how the strategy benefits both employees and customers.

For example, anyone in the company can join Aptos' product-specific chat channels, and they often include members of the development team. When associates are working with customers in the field and support teams are working through an issue, employees ask a question on the group chat platform and get instantaneous feedback from developers and other team members.

Long gone are the days of one-to-one email requests or support tickets, with all the normal batch-oriented delays. Today, problems are solved collectively, in real time, leveraging the cumulative expertise of the organization.

## Decentralized IT Is the Future

"At Aptos, we pledge to engage our customers differently, no matter when, where or how they shop," said Verdeyen. "This promise is hard-coded into our corporate DNA, and we aim to treat our employees the same way. My overarching objective is to provide solutions that empower our employees, no matter when, where, and how they work. In a perfect world, IT should enable and support this reality, rather than attempt to control or dictate how problems get solved."

**NAME:**

Mike Verdeyen

**COMPANY:**

Aptos

**TITLE:**

Chief Technology Officer  
and Product Leader

**INDUSTRY:**

Retail

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

1,250

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Crushed the challenges of integrating a newly-acquired global workforce by leveraging cloud-based solutions to drive communication and collaboration.

In conclusion

# aptos®







What can a manufacturer of interior products teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of



Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## SAS International IT Leader: A Game Changer that Has Carte Blanche to Replace Systems, Change Work Styles

SAS International is celebrating its 50-year anniversary in 2018, but the company is devoting more of its energies positioning for the future than looking back at its past.

SAS International supplies state-of-the-art ceilings, bespoke architectural metalwork, and lighting systems for some of the most futuristic buildings in the world. The company has equipped hundreds of large buildings over the years across Europe and Asia, including airport terminals in London and across the globe, a Google complex in Dublin, and the London Bloomberg headquarters which opened in October 2017. The new Bloomberg building, for instance, has environmentally-friendly ceilings featuring 2.5 million polished aluminum petals that reflect light, sound baffles that soothe interior work settings, and coolers that are chilled and heated by water from above.



"It's been called the most efficient building in Europe. And we're right in the middle of it."

### From Futuristic Buildings to a Futuristic Way of Working

SAS is also extending its look-ahead strategy to internal practices — creating a plan to change the way employees work.

"People have worked how they've worked for years because they were using the tools they had," Greene said. "But now we have a lot of different ways of working. We're going to look at each team and department internally. See how they're working, see how we can bring in modern tools to see how we can work together."

"It was an incredible challenge because what they were looking at was a complete overhaul," Greene, who joined SAS as Group IT Manager, recalled. "We had carte blanche to replace everything in terms of infrastructure, applications, and hardware. I approached it with a cloud-first strategy, with a focus on getting value from the new investments and bringing in modern technology to create different ways to work."

Two and a half years into a three-year transformation project, Greene is excited about the changes SAS has made and optimistic about plans for future innovations. He and his six colleagues in IT revamped the technology platforms that serve 600 IT users in a company of 900, and now the team is focused on creating new ways for employees to work.

"The biggest issue we had to deal with was uptime and performance," Greene recalled. "Systems were regularly going offline and not performing. It was causing supreme bottlenecks in the processes."



## Connecting Offices Across Oceans

Collaboration is important to SAS. Drawings and other work documents are shared regularly between the Reading home office near London, SAS's three factories in Wales, Scotland, and England, and four satellite offices in Dubai, Ireland, Hong Kong, and Australia. But, with phone systems going down and servers unable to scale with the business, Greene knew he had to rebuild the IT infrastructure quickly.

He replaced the company's network with a managed cloud-based network. He moved most data held by SAS International to a hybrid cloud storage platform that snapshots data every two to five minutes and allows for easy restoration of files. He moved the company's email and business applications to the cloud, with Microsoft Office 365 and a private cloud initiative for the company's ERP platform and applications. The company replaced its phone systems with a unified communications system from Fuze which centralizes phone, email, messaging, and other collaborative processes on one platform. All of these moves solidified the basic infrastructure.

## A New Flexible Way of Working

Next, the team moved to a more complicated task: changing the way the organization worked. Rather than fall back on processes of the past, Greene and his team embraced the innovative culture of the business and the passion of the cutting edge design teams.

"We've replaced the failing systems with something that's state of the art. Now we have to try to get the full value out of what we've created," Greene said. "The next stage is the biggest stage, which is an end-to-end review of how people work."

Greene equipped executives, design, and sales teams at every site with Microsoft Surface tablets and Surface Hub devices, both with high-speed video connections and touch-screen technology. This enabled them to share documents more readily, iterate on changes, and hold more productive meetings from long distances.

SAS is using Fuze to support its mobile workforce by providing the same communication features and experience regardless of where workers are and what devices they're using. The company's number of mobile workers has grown by 25 percent over the past two years and is expected to increase further with the introduction of the new platform.

"We still pretty much have everyone on site, except for our sales and some project teams, but we are looking at making work more flexible for all," Greene said. "We've enabled that change. We're going to invest time in how we would achieve that for an organization that's historically very set in the way it works. Culturally it would be a quite a change to allow people to work from home and remotely, and that's something we're going to look at this year."





Greene has several data-related projects on tap for the next year, as well. He's working with teams to leverage the analytics from the Fuze system to do a better job tracking and routing calls using Microsoft's PowerBI platform. He's also looking at purchasing a CRM system to funnel the vast amounts of data in the organization, from Fuze and other applications, into customer service functions. "Data," Greene said, "is going to be huge for us next year."

So will the Internet of Things. Greene said he's working with R&D teams to enable IoT-related processes to make factories "smarter." That, he said, can involve automating paper processes, flagging managers when machines need maintenance, and integrating sensor technologies to create "smart ceilings." The latter is an exciting design challenge in the era of smart building technology and what Greene sees as the technology of the future.



"We're looking at doing a lot of work with where people are, what they're doing, how to service them better," he said. "It's incredibly exciting. I'm a huge techie anyway, so that's one of the areas I'd like to dedicate a lot of my time next year — get involved in the R&D side of the business."



**NAME:**

James Greene

**COMPANY:**

SAS International

**TITLE:**

Group IT Manager

**PREVIOUS GIGS:**

Senior Systems Analyst at Kemp Little LLP  
and Fabric technologies

**INDUSTRY:**

Manufacturing

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

900

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Executing a complete overhaul of IT functions, using a cloud-first strategy to eliminate system downtime and enable more flexible ways to work.

In conclusion

**SAS**  
International





What can a sporting goods company teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of **HIBBETT**  
SPORTS

Welcome to the era of:

Game  
Changers





## Sports Retail Game Changer Meets Customers Where They Are

**Omnichannel retailing — the ability to deliver a seamless and consistent shopping experience across all channels including in-store, online, and mobile — is simply expected by consumers today. And Ron Blahnik, Chief Information Officer of Hibbett Sports, knew that's what he had to deliver when he joined the company in late 2016.**

### Connecting Employees and Customers

Hibbett's new, transactional e-commerce website provides customers with a robust, user-friendly experience and features an expansive assortment of footwear, apparel, and equipment items. The site is fully integrated with company stores, including visibility of in-store inventory, the ability to fulfill online orders from stores, and the capability to return online purchases in stores. Plus, it all syncs with the sporting goods retailer's rewards program.

The emphasis the company places on delighting its customers extends to its employees as well. "We operate as part of a 'WOW Experience' culture that empowers us to do the right thing for our customer and each other," Blahnik said. "While there are numerous pathways in our communication architecture, the most favored is the human voice — employees are encouraged to make the call, solve it quickly, and move on."



"Hibbett had spent the last few years modernizing its tech infrastructure to include store, merchandising, and warehouse management systems," he said. "When it came time to launch our e-commerce initiative by late summer of 2017, we had a great foundation on which to build."

Hibbett also plans to expand features on its Store Portal, as well as provide its store associates the option to leverage their preferred mobile devices as part of the company's "bring your own device" policy. Allowing real-time collaboration through this convenient medium will encourage employees to become much more proactive in their problem-solving with customers.



## Taking Collaboration to the Next Level

Hibbett has leveraged agile methodology and principles to build a flexible organization capable of reacting quickly to unpredictable changes. Individuals have growth mindsets and are allowed autonomy, continually focusing on improving the delivery process. Teams and groups have strong communication skills, allowing them to make adjustments rapidly. As a result, employees become active stakeholders, feeling engaged and willing to respond and adapt their processes to meet new business demands.

To support internal digital collaboration, Hibbett is testing Microsoft Office 365 and is evaluating the potential to leverage the many apps in its connected framework. "A centralized or hub-based communication platform will let our employees more easily share documents while reducing the confusion caused by multiple updates and cumbersome version control," he said. "It's definitely a step in the right direction since speed is essential, particularly in modern retail."

"The exercise has taught us that all of our learnings are important; it's not about right or wrong, good or bad," said Blahnik. "It's more a matter of determining just the right time to expose a particular feature innovation as part of the overall customer experience."

In the future, Blahnik is planning for store-to-store communication via chat channels for the purpose of sharing best practices and product positioning ideas that might drive higher item turn on sales floors. He said, "The ability to test, learn, and share across our 1,000+ stores is powerful. An idea channel monitored by our corporate team would allow innovative ideas to be rapidly shared and implemented across the chain, quickly and directly enhancing our customers' shopping experiences."

## Being Smart About Innovation

Regarding innovation, Blahnik has this to say: "Many of our new business efforts follow a 'test and learn' pilot approach to validate a business case. We subscribe to a concept of ideation and learning in a sandbox or lab environment in order to tease out only those solutions which represent the greatest potential for a solid return on investment."

For example, in designing and building its e-commerce site, the "feedback" tab was extensively storyboarded. This feature was originally positioned in several ways, from a fairly traditional location to a more innovative placement. Invitation-only crowdsourcing and facilitated focus group testing allowed the team to rapidly determine the optimal specifications for the feature, as well as accelerate many other parts of the online prototyping design journey.





"Being smart and efficient about how you design your customer experience is key. "Resource constraints will not allow you to execute as many proof of concepts as you might like in any given year," said Blahnik. "You need to choose wisely."

In conclusion



**NAME:**

Ron Blahnik

**COMPANY:**

Hibbett Sports

**TITLE:**

Chief Information Officer

**INDUSTRY:**

Retail

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

9,200

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Successfully transformed a traditional brick-and-mortar athletic specialty retailer into an omnichannel enterprise.

**HIBBETT**  
SPORTS





What can a critical access hospital teach you about the future of work?

The digital transformation of



Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## Clay County Hospital CIO: How a Critical Access Hospital Is Embracing the Future of Work

Clay County Hospital is located in a farm belt in Flora, Illinois, about 100 miles east of St. Louis. It's known as a rural "critical access" hospital which handles basic trauma services and a range of labs, radiology, and testing. It does not have lucrative businesses such as cardiac care or birthing units. Its clinics provide outpatient services.

### Upgrading the IT Infrastructure

One of CIO Phil Bute's major transformation initiatives at the hospital has been to move resources to the cloud. Rather than reinvest in new servers, he just completed a six-month project to shift electronic medical records to a cloud service, saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in the process. He's also looking at cloud storage options and SaaS programs to run a number of internal business functions.

In addition, Bute has initiated to upgrade Clay County Hospital's IT infrastructure and improve its overall business delivery mechanism. He has replaced computers, leveraged the cloud, and revamped his own IT department's way of handling tasks.

"I inherited a real IT mess here," he said. "It's been quite an effort, and, being a small, remote hospital, we didn't always have the resources to do what we needed to do, but we're making a lot of progress."

"I was at a conference three years ago, and I did a presentation for the county board on cloud-based services," he said. "At the time, I said I don't really think we're going to be in a position to use the cloud anytime soon. But, here we are, three years later: We're doing it."

### Modernizing its Communications Approach

Before it shifted to a modern, VoIP-based phone system, Clay County Hospital had communication problems — on multiple levels.

To start with, people were having trouble actually connecting with each other by phone. The three analog phone systems that served the rural hospital and its four clinics operated on separate networks, so workers couldn't transfer between buildings, create conferences or forward calls.

The calls hospital employees did try to make often fell into what Bute called "phone hell." A study by the southeastern Illinois institution's phone service provider revealed that 67 percent of the company's outgoing calls disconnected at some point in the conversation, creating business problems and issues with customer service.

Since Clay County Hospital installed Fuze, the dropped-call problem has been solved. Calls are connecting, inside and outside, and according to Bute, a larger set of communication-related issues the organization identified are improving, too.

"The fact we were losing two thirds of our calls was brutal," Bute recalled. "It was really getting in the way of our ability to do business."



## Working from Anywhere

The unified communications system has helped with communication in other ways by connecting the digital workforce in a modern way. Call-forwarding features give workers the ability to make calls and get messages anywhere — from home, from conferences, in transit from department to department. Night workers can dial into Fuze meetings from home rather than come in during their off hours. If someone's on vacation, departments record meetings to keep the worker up to speed.

"In the yearly employee satisfaction surveys, one of the things we always got dinged on was communication," Bute said. "You'd hear administration or management wasn't communicating enough with the frontline staff. This makes it so much easier to communicate with them all the time. You can send them those messages, you can do those Fuze meetings. They don't have to physically be in the building, but it makes them feel like they're still part of the team."

The CIO said follow-up surveys have shown a sharp increase in employee satisfaction on matters of communication.

The ability to connect better from home allowed Clay County Hospital to indirectly create more space for expansion. The hospital assigned 30 of its 325 employees to work remotely, hooking up billing personnel and coders to home-based systems and freeing up room for more workers in clinical services.



"It allowed us to expand the hospital without spending millions of dollars to actually rebuild it," Bute said.



## Adapting Work Styles

The new system has required workers to make a few changes in their work styles. Network constraints forced the hospital to start with 100 physical phones, down from 250 in the previous set-up. The new phones were placed in shared work spaces like clinical departments, radiology, the ER and laboratories, where workers needed ready access to handsets. Offices don't have dedicated phones; workers use softphones on their computers or forward calls to their cell phones.

"We had some growing pains with the transition, but people are much more comfortable with the new set-up now that they see how much more productive they can be."



## In conclusion

**NAME:**

Phil Bute

**COMPANY:**

Clay County Hospital

**TITLE:**

Chief Information Officer

**PREVIOUS GIGS:**

Technology director at North Clay Community Unit School District #25 in Louisville, Illinois, and system administrator at The Republic newspaper in Columbus, Indiana

**INDUSTRY:**

Healthcare

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

325

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Using the Fuze platform, he streamlined internal and external phone communications, enabled 30 employees to work at home, and drove improvements in employee satisfaction. He also upgraded servers, shifted legacy IT functions to the cloud, and revamped IT's process for handling tasks.







What can a global fashion subscription service teach you about the future of work?

## The digital transformation of LE TOTE

New outfit?  
Bring on the

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers





## Fashion Subscription Service Game Changer Moves First into China

**Often called the Netflix of Fashion, Le Tote is the first U.S.-based subscription service to launch operations in China. While debuting in the largest e-commerce market in the world is both humbling and exhilarating for Le Tote CEO Rakesh Tondon, one of the biggest challenges on his mind is communication.**

### Connecting a New Global Workforce

As Le Tote scales globally, Tondon wants to integrate and align the company's international engineering and product development teams to fully leverage shared resources and drive collaboration and product refinement for both global and local markets.

"There are always challenges when rolling out tools that work seamlessly in the U.S., but not as well in other countries," said Tondon. "Right now, we're using Slack as our instant messaging platform for all geographies, and it's been performing well."

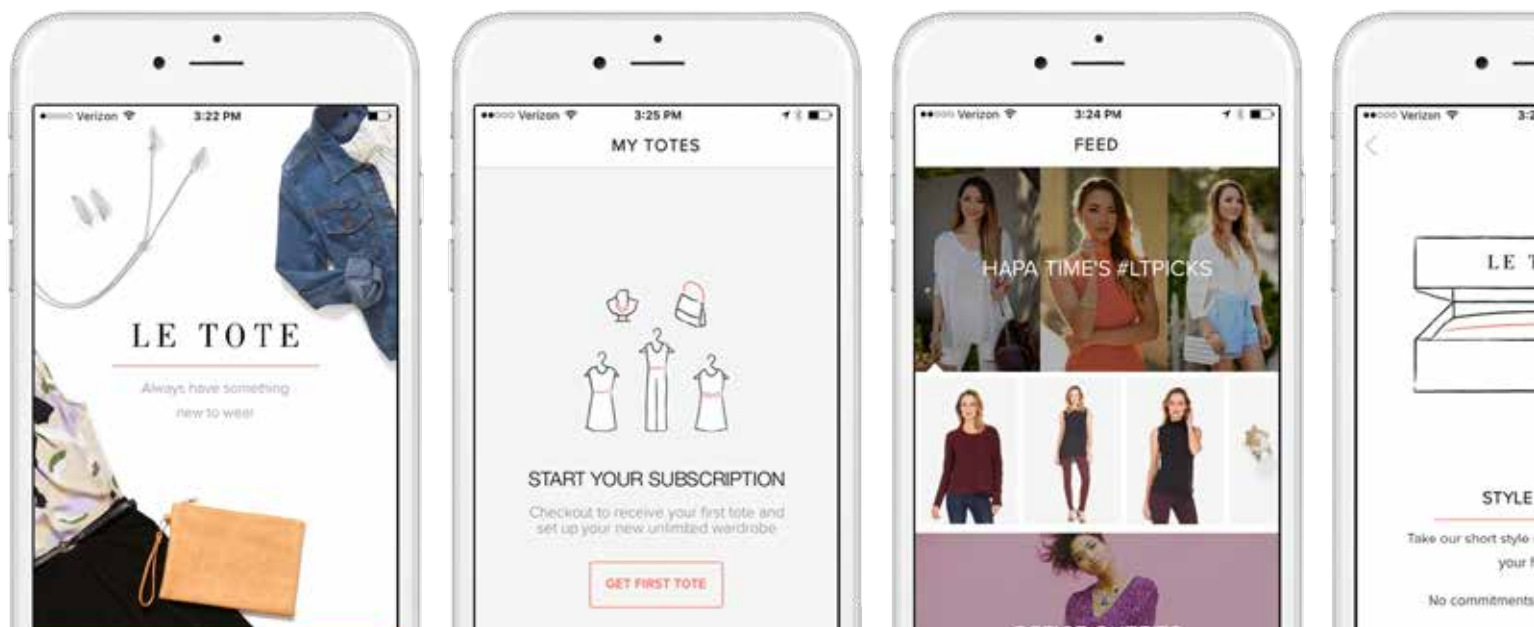
For internal file and document collaboration, Le Tote uses content collaboration platform Quip. "It works well in China and has a lot of features that Google Docs doesn't have," said Tondon. The company is also planning to roll out additional resources like central repositories for customer care and knowledge transfer soon.



"The company today is very different from what it was even two years ago," Tondon explained. "Back then, we had 80 to 90 employees globally; now, we have 500 U.S. employees and about 150 employees in China and the Philippines. Communication and collaboration are my top priorities."

Coinciding with the introduction of new collaboration tools, Tondon says that he's also personally focused on doing a better job of communicating with employees and using new technology to keep them informed of major critical issues that are being discussed and decided in different departments.

"We're building internal wikis; we're creating FAQs about the company and promoting perks that we offer to employees," reported Tondon. "We want these communications to live right alongside important information about the critical deadlines for projects that they're working on."



## Customization Is a Core Value

This individualized focus on employees' needs is a natural extension of the technology-driven customer personalization that defines the Le Tote brand. After a customer signs up for Le Tote's subscription service, the company delivers a highly personalized fashion rental experience. Women create and receive a customized box of apparel and accessories that they can wear out and about, for as long as they like. When they're ready for their next box, they keep any items they want to buy and return the rest. The company then sends out their next box within days. No matter how many boxes a customer gets per month, they pay just one flat monthly fee.

"With every single email message and every touch point we have with our customers, we're using technology tools and artificial intelligence to dynamically create a completely personalized experience," said Tondon. "It's at the heart of what we do, and we are prepared and highly motivated to adapt as our customers' needs change."

But, global expansion has brought some challenges with customer communication overall. On the customer service front, U.S. customers primarily use email for communication, while in China the platform of choice is WeChat, which is like a combination of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Snapchat.

"Ideally, we'd like to communicate from our desktop devices and have that message automatically land on a Chinese customer's WeChat or a U.S. customer's email account," explained Tondon. "However, it's highly challenging to communicate with our customers in this way given the existence of multiple platforms. We're working on achieving this kind of unified communication, but we're not there yet."





## An Agile Approach Pays Off

According to Tondon, Le Tote is always trying to build faster and build smarter. "When you're growing 100% to 200% per year like we are, the trick is to strategically anticipate your customers' evolving tastes and needs," he said. "We think about what it is that our customers will want in two to five years, rather than what they want right now or within the next 12 to 18 months. Because of that, we're focused on building tools that our customers will want to use both today and far into the future."

This ability to dynamically respond to shifting customer needs is powered by Le Tote's approach to tech infrastructure and development. Every resource used at

the company is one that Le Tote built in-house for the company's specific needs. For example, it built custom warehouse management and inventory management systems and even built its own hardware.

So, what other challenges does Tondon see on the horizon?

"As we scale the business around the world, it becomes harder and more expensive to hire people to respond to customers' straightforward requests," says Tondon.



"I'm looking forward to a future where bots will become smart enough to effectively communicate with customers and automate some processes around getting basic information from them. That technology is still being developed, but we're definitely on the right track."

In conclusion,

# LE TOTE



**NAME:**

Rakesh Tondon

**COMPANY:**

Le Tote

**TITLE:**

Co-Founder and  
Chief Executive Officer

**INDUSTRY:**

Apparel

**EMPLOYEE COUNT:**

650

**HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:**

Uses data and AI to deliver a personalized fashion-rental experience around the world and achieve 100% year-over-year business growth.

Welcome to the era of:

# Game Changers



So, now we see what IT leaders do. The standouts have the vision to drive true transformation within their companies. They are the game changers.

They help pro hockey coaches share video clips between periods. They provide technology tools so departments can create their own charitable contribution apps. They roll out cloud-based communication systems, so night-shift workers can join all-staff meetings by video rather than drive in during the day. They set up IoT processes that flag managers when machines need maintenance. They equip organizations with technology to improve customer experience through digitization.

**In short, CIOs change the game.**

They make the game winnable for individuals, helping them work smarter and more flexibly. And they help organizations win the long game, positioning them to compete more effectively on the world stage.





#1 Global Platform for Voice, Video, and Messaging.

## About Fuze

Fuze is a global cloud communications and collaboration platform connecting the digital workforce. Through ONE simple, secure platform with a best-in-class user experience, enterprise technology leaders can transform communications, reduce complexity, and empower people to seamlessly collaborate on any device, whenever and wherever they want.

[fuze.com](https://fuze.com)