



## A LAYERED APPROACH

Relativity Space's 3-D Printing And Its CEO Tim Ellis Are Revolutionizing Aerospace

## VISIONARIES

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S MOST ACCOMPLISHED CEOs

THE 2024 CFO AWARDS HONOREES AND FINALISTS

Photos from the Event  
Panel Recaps and More

# CEO VISIONARIES

No matter the industry, the buck always stops at the desk of the chief executive officer. Tasked with making vital decisions as they relate to every facet of running a business – from production to marketing to human resources, to name a few – the CEO must possess a multitude of qualities that define a captain of industry.

The nominees listed on the following pages in alphabetical order have all been acknowledged by peers and colleagues for their intuition, resilience and their ability to lead. Time and time again, they deploy these qualities and numerous others to inspire their employees, connect with consumers and push their companies to achieve ever loftier goals.

It's not a role for everyone, but the ones who embrace it and can deliver year after year deserve special recognition – just like the ones here.



**Adam Bass**

*President & CEO  
Buchalter, APC*

**A**dam Bass, president and CEO of Buchalter since January 2013, has led the firm to substantial growth, expanding to over 480 lawyers and establishing new offices in Napa Valley, Sacramento, Seattle, San Diego, Portland, Salt Lake City, Denver and Nashville. Under his leadership, Buchalter has advanced significantly in industry rankings, achieving spots on The American Lawyer's AmLaw 200 and Law360's 400 Largest Law Firms lists. The firm has earned a 100 out of 100 score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index and various diversity awards. As a member of the American, California and Los Angeles County Bar Associations, Bass has also served as an arbitrator for the Los Angeles Superior Court and worked with the Dispute Resolution Section of the Bar Association.



**Michael J. Beals**

*President  
Vanguard University*

**D**r. Michael J. Beals has served as president of Vanguard University (VU) for 10 years, guiding Orange County's oldest four-year university to significant growth and achievement. Under his leadership, VU has become a leading institution for Christian higher education in California. His student-focused strategies have driven record enrollment, earning VU the U.S. Department of Education's Hispanic Serving Institution designation and over \$9 million in grants. Dr. Beals has overseen the creation of multiple academic schools and new STEM programs, leading to the launch of the Patty Arvielo School of Business and Management. His tenure has also brought a 412% increase in net assets, extensive campus expansion and success in athletics.



**Trever Acers**

*Founder & CEO  
Objective, Investment  
Banking & Valuation*

**T**rever Acers, founder and CEO of Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation, has over 20 years of experience in investment banking, acquisitions and strategic advice. Leading Objective since 2006, he has driven its growth and innovation, establishing the firm as a middle-market leader. His strategic acumen and commitment to fostering an inclusive corporate culture have earned him a nomination for the "CEO Visionary" award. Previously, Acers held key roles at TGG Capital, The Oxford Investment Group, Passage Venture Capital Partners, EMC Corporation and KPMG Consulting. He holds an M.B.A. from UCLA Anderson School of Management and a bachelor's degree from the University of San Diego. Under Acers' leadership, Objective has excelled in operational efficiency and employee development, emphasizing transparent communication, professional growth and a strong mentorship program.



**Patty Arvielo**

*CEO & Co-Founder  
New American Funding*

**P**atty Arvielo, co-founder and CEO of New American Funding (NAF), has led the company to remarkable success in the mortgage industry. Since its inception in 2003, NAF has thrived under her guidance, promoting sustainable homeownership and generational wealth. Arvielo's initiatives, such as Latino Focus and NAF Dream, have significantly increased homeownership among Hispanic and Black communities. She also established partnerships, like with Uqual, to assist potential homeowners in improving their credit. Recognized for its DEI efforts, NAF received the Mortgage Bankers Association's Residential Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leadership Award. Arvielo's visionary leadership and commitment to inclusivity have solidified NAF's reputation as an industry leader, transforming lives and communities.



**Melissa Beck**

*President  
Anonymous  
Philanthropy*

**M**elissa Beck joined Big Brothers Big Sisters Orange County & Inland Empire, applying entrepreneurial strategies that tripled the nonprofit's size and impact. Her innovative leadership garnered numerous accolades, including Best Place to Work in OC and Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year. In 2018, Beck joined Anonymous Philanthropy to revolutionize philanthropic practices. She has played a crucial role in the company's growth, overseeing operations, culture and finance, while developing impactful campaigns such as "End the Misinformation" on childhood drowning. Today, she leads initiatives like the Skilled Careers Coalition and Talent Nova, striving to maximize philanthropic impact. Beck also serves on UC Irvine's Board of Trustees, chairing the Alumni Association Board of Directors and guiding the search for the university's new dean.



**Anuj Bhalla**

*Founder & CEO  
serviceMob*

**A**nuj Bhalla is a distinguished entrepreneur, data scientist and consultant with over 15 years in the customer service industry. He has worked with top companies like Google, Microsoft and Facebook, enhancing their operations through his expertise in analytics. At Accenture, he led the service analytics practice, filing three patents and leveraging data-driven strategies to improve customer experiences. Bhalla holds a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics and computer science from UC Berkeley and an M.B.A. from MIT Sloan School of Management, where he was a Sloan Fellow. Inspired by his entrepreneurial spirit, he founded serviceMob, aiming to revolutionize customer service with AI and machine learning. Bhalla's innovative product development has significantly improved service experiences, earning serviceMob recognition as a top MIT startup in STEX25.



**Tommy Oliver**

*CEO & Founder  
Confidential Films*

**T**ommy Oliver is a filmmaker and CEO of Confidential Films, dedicated to amplifying underrepresented voices in film and television. His leadership at Confidential has secured significant funding to support Black creators, highlighted by a recent \$100-150 million production fund with Goldman Sachs. Oliver's producing credits include the award-winning HBO documentary "Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project" and Apple TV+'s "Fancy Dance," premiering in theaters this June. He's also involved in projects like "Young, Wild, Free," and "To Live and Die and Live." As a mentor at Sundance and Doc NYC and a board member of The Philadelphia Film Society, Oliver shapes the next generation of storytellers while documenting Black joy in his photography series "Father Noir."



**Ash Patel**

*Chairman,  
CEO & President  
Commercial Bank  
of California*

**A**sh Patel, chairman, CEO and president of Commercial Bank of California (CBC), brings over 30 years of banking experience to his role, driving CBC's transformation into a billion-dollar institution. Under his leadership, CBC's assets grew from \$200 million to \$2.5 billion by 2023, propelled by strategic acquisitions and a focus on community impact. Recognized as a "Best Places to Work in Southern California" in 2022 and 2023, CBC under Patel's guidance prioritizes a high-touch client experience merged with cutting-edge financial technology. He champions financial literacy and community service, with CBC donating 10,000 volunteer hours in 2023 and launching educational programs. Recently, he orchestrated CBC's acquisition of Community Bank of the Bay, positioning CBC to reach \$3.5 billion in assets and embarking on a journey towards \$5 billion.



**Regan Phillips**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Court Appointed Special  
Advocates of Orange County*

**R**egan Phillips' journey advocating for children began in 2001 with CASA-NYC, leading her to champion minors as an investigator at the Law Office of Harold LaFlamme during law school. Graduating in 2005 and joining as an attorney, she represented foster youth at the Lamoreaux Justice Center in Orange. Her advocacy expanded as minor's counsel and appellate lawyer, bolstered by CASA volunteers' invaluable insights. Post-parenthood, Phillips aided private adoptions and joined Rigg & Dean, later serving on CASA of Orange County's board. Appointed CEO in 2017, she drove CASA OC's transformation, doubling revenue to \$56 million and children served to 1,600 annually. Collaborating with courts and donors, she addressed OC's foster care crisis, enhancing CASA's impact through expanded family finding and early intervention programs.



**Michael John Plaksin**

*President & CEO  
Alchera X, Inc. (dba AX)*

**M**ichael Plaksin, currently serving as president and CEO of Alchera X, brings a wealth of experience and leadership to the forefront of AI SaaS innovation. Under his direction, Alchera X has redefined wildfire detection and mitigation solutions, leveraging groundbreaking FireScout AI technology. Plaksin's tenure at the company has been marked by significant achievements and global recognition. Notably, Alchera X has been selected by the California Governor's Office to participate in key international forums and sustainability conferences, highlighting their pivotal role in global wildfire management. Plaksin has also spearheaded strategic partnerships with organizations like RAIN and SIKORSKY to integrate early detection cameras as using FireScout AI on Black Hawk helicopters.



**Vera Quinn**

*CEO & President  
Cydcor, LLC*

**V**era Quinn, CEO of Cydcor since 2020, has driven the company to consistent double-digit revenue growth by fostering collaboration and empowering its independently owned offices. Her focus on increasing sales agents' take-home pay by over 50% has enhanced campaign effectiveness, securing Cydcor's position as a top dealer for clients like AT&T and DIRECTV. Recognized repeatedly by the Los Angeles Business Journal as a "Best Place to Work," the company under Quinn's leadership combines business success with philanthropy. She personally supports Liberty Children's Home in Belize, reflecting her commitment to corporate social responsibility. She also champions local community engagement through initiatives like volunteering at nonprofits twice yearly. Continuously advancing Cydcor's capabilities, Quinn recently completed an Executive Education program on AI Applications for Growth, underscoring her dedication to innovation.



**Nathan Rogge**

*President & CEO  
First Pacific Bank*

**N**athan Rogge serves as president and CEO of First Pacific Bank (formerly Friendly Hills Bank), leveraging his 32 years of industry experience to transform and expand the organization. Since joining in December 2021, he has revitalized First Pacific Bank by restructuring leadership, enhancing infrastructure and realigning its focus on small- and medium-sized businesses across Southern California. He strategically bolstered the bank's presence by opening a regional office in San Diego, effectively serving key metropolitan areas. Under Rogge's leadership, First Pacific Bank underwent significant rebranding, aligning with its expanded footprint and enhancing lending capabilities, with the bank successfully raising \$14.1 million in capital amidst economic challenges, reinforcing its financial position.



**Daniel Rosen**

*CEO & Founder  
Credit Repair Cloud*

**D**aniel Rosen, CEO of Credit Repair Cloud (CRC), pioneered the world's first credit repair software after personal financial hardship. Founded in 2013, CRC has empowered over 20,000 entrepreneurs to build profitable credit repair businesses, processing \$200 million in transactions. Recognized in the Inc. 5000 list for four years, CRC's impact extends globally with a team of 80 employees. Rosen's journey began in entertainment, mastering juggling and performing on iconic shows. After a bank error devastated his credit, he developed Credit-Aid and later founded CRC. Beyond business, he authored "The Ultimate Guide to Starting a Credit Repair Business," inspiring over 100,000 entrepreneurs. Rosen's mission-driven leadership and commitment to community partnerships, like Chrysalis, underscore his vision for CRC's role in transforming lives worldwide.



**Angie Rowe**

*President & CEO  
Beyond Blindness*

**A**ngie Rowe is a seasoned nonprofit leader renowned for her strategic acumen in enhancing organizational performance, community engagement and fundraising. Currently serving as president and executive director of Beyond Blindness for 26 years, she has spearheaded initiatives that significantly boosted revenue and expanded the donor base. Her influence extends through roles on various boards, including as a board member at the California Association of Private Special Education Schools (CAPSES) and founding member and treasurer at the California Agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CAABVI), where she chairs the Children and Youth Policy. Rowe is also active in the Orange County Disability Collaborative and the OneOC Non-Profit Advisory Council.