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DECEMBER 8, 2025

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

DISRUPTORS

— LA'S FASTEST 100 ★ 2025 AWARDS —

Honoring the 100 most innovative
privately held companies disrupting their
industries and the market

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2025 HONOREES & FINALISTS



DISRUPTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD HONOREE

IMPULSE SPACE

Impulse Space has been named this year's most significant disruptor in Los Angeles for 2025. The company's pioneering work in the space industry is not only transforming how we approach space travel and exploration but is also positioning Los Angeles as a central hub for innovation in aerospace technology.

The company's founder and CEO, Tom Mueller is a seasoned veteran of the aerospace sector, having spent over 30 years at NASA and SpaceX, where he played a pivotal role in the development of rocket propulsion systems. His extensive background has equipped him with unparalleled expertise in engineering and the intricacies of space technology. At Impulse Space, he is leading a paradigm shift in the way we think about space logistics and transportation.

Impulse Space has developed groundbreaking technology aimed at making space more accessible and sustainable. The company focuses on providing reliable transportation solutions for payloads to and from orbit, which is crucial for the expanding satellite industry and burgeoning space economy. With the increasing demand for satellite launches and interplanetary missions, Impulse Space is uniquely positioned to meet these needs with its innovative propulsion systems and operational efficiencies. Impulse Space's vision extends beyond mere transportation; it is committed to addressing the challenges of space debris and sustainability, ensuring that future generations can benefit from space exploration. By prioritizing green technologies in propulsion and advocating for responsible space practices, the company is setting a new standard for the industry.



CITY OF HOPE FINALIST

City of Hope is one of the nation's largest and most advanced institutions for cancer research and treatment, with a 110-year legacy of serving humanity through scientific innovation and compassionate care. As an independent academic medical center, City of Hope has built a national network of advanced cancer centers across five major metropolitan areas. Today, more than 86 million people live in communities with convenient access to City of Hope's advanced care, bringing lifesaving treatments closer to where patients live and work.

City of Hope is disrupting cancer care by embedding artificial intelligence across every stage of the patient journey – from diagnosis and treatment to supportive care and research. At the heart of this transformation is HopeLLM, a proprietary large language model that streamlines clinical decision-making, summarizes complex patient histories, and matches patients to clinical trials in real time.



INTER-CON SECURITY FINALIST

Inter-Con was founded in 1973 by retired LAPD Detective Lt. Hank Hernandez and his wife, Bertha. From its inception, the company has grown organically into one of the world's largest physical security providers, with more than 37,000 professionals worldwide. Still 100% family-owned and now led by the third generation of the Hernandez family, Inter-Con has built its reputation on stability, trust, and a 97% client retention rate, never once losing a domestic contract for cause.

Inter-Con is disrupting the security industry and addressing client needs through several key differentiators, including its dedicated service model. Unlike the traditional branch office model used by most competitors, Inter-Con employs this model, providing fully customized account management and security assets for each client. This consultative approach allows us to proactively identify opportunities for value creation and cost savings, ensuring high-quality, responsive and flexible service.



JB OFFICE FINALIST

JB Office's journey began with a clear purpose: to supply businesses with high-quality office supplies at competitive prices. As an authorized reseller, JB Office earned a reputation for reliability, exceptional service, and fast delivery. But as the workplace has evolved, so has the company. JB Office has expanded beyond office supplies and into a full-service solutions provider. Today, it also provides tailored office solutions designed for small-to-medium sized businesses.

JB Office is in the process of transforming from an authorized reseller to an office solutions provider called JB Office Solutions. JB Office Solutions offers a wide range of products and services to help businesses improve their efficiency and workplace environment, acting as a "one-stop shop." JB supplies everything from everyday office supplies, furniture and breakroom items to specialized services promotional products, technology equipment, and facility and maintenance supplies.



MUSE CAPITAL FINALIST

Founded in 2016, Muse Capital is an early-stage venture capital firm investing in overlooked and untapped consumer technology opportunities across the future of how we "care, play, and live." Muse is disrupting venture capital itself by challenging the traditional funding gaps that leave critical markets underserved. While only 2% of venture dollars flow to female founders and 95% of VC partners are men, Muse invests with the conviction that diversity is both a strategic necessity and a driver of superior economic outcomes, particularly when it comes to traditionally overlooked sectors like women's health or women's sports. Muse identifies "companies that should exist," and helps them redefine industries that have lagged in innovation.

On the lifestyle and wellness front, Muse has backed Beekeeper's Naturals in redefining natural remedies, and Cloud Paper in disrupting the single-use paper industry. Muse's approach is not only about providing capital but also driving commercialization.

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2025 HONOREES & FINALISTS



**INNOVATIVE
 SOLUTIONS**
 INSURANCE SERVICES

ACCELERATOR AWARD HONOREE

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS INSURANCE SERVICES

El Segundo headquartered Innovative Solutions Insurance Services has seen significant year-over-year growth for a number of reasons, including the company's dedication to advanced technology. Innovative Solutions is a leader in impaired risk underwriting. With direct access to the firm's in-house underwriter – a 30-year veteran of life insurance, disability insurance, and long-term care insurance – customers get a personal advocate with an unwavering commitment to ensuring the best possible outcome. The company has implemented innovative systems that vastly streamline processes, eliminating delays in getting the information customers need, when they need it, and without having to call a home office.

Innovative Solutions' platform includes streamlined application processing in a simple and efficient manner with multi-carrier platforms that include e-signature capabilities and paperless applications. It also provides accelerated underwriting programs that may eliminate the need for lab testing, medical exams, attending physician statements, etc. resulting in a policy issued in days. Customers also get full access to online tools and resources supporting every facet of their marketing efforts.

The company's Vive platform is the industry's fastest way to write term life insurance. The ease of using Vive translates directly into better productivity and profitability for customers. The system only takes five minutes to quote, compare and submit an order so that accelerated underwriting decisions happen in days instead of weeks. The "Vive Score" helps insurance companies sell more effectively by comparing the overall consumer value of each product. The ability to track the status of all cases at a glance also eliminates the hassles of case management.

BIRDY GREY

BIRDY GREY FINALIST

The Birdy Grey brand was launched in 2017 with one simple goal: make the bridesmaid dress shopping experience both enjoyable and affordable. This goal remains a part of the company's DNA to this day, now expanded to include groomsmen and the full wedding party. In leaps and bounds, Birdy Grey has become the go-to destination for stylish and affordable bridesmaid dresses. Starting at just an industry disrupting \$89, the company's collection features distinct options to suit every wedding vision.

Brides have been raving about Birdy Grey's extensive color palette, while bridesmaids appreciate the company's chic designs and inclusive sizing. The airy chiffon and sleek satin bridesmaid dresses are perfect for warm-weather celebrations. For spring, the company's mix-and-matchable pastel and dusty tones are a top pick. Fall and winter brides love the luxe velvet gowns in rich shades like emerald green and romantic cabernet.



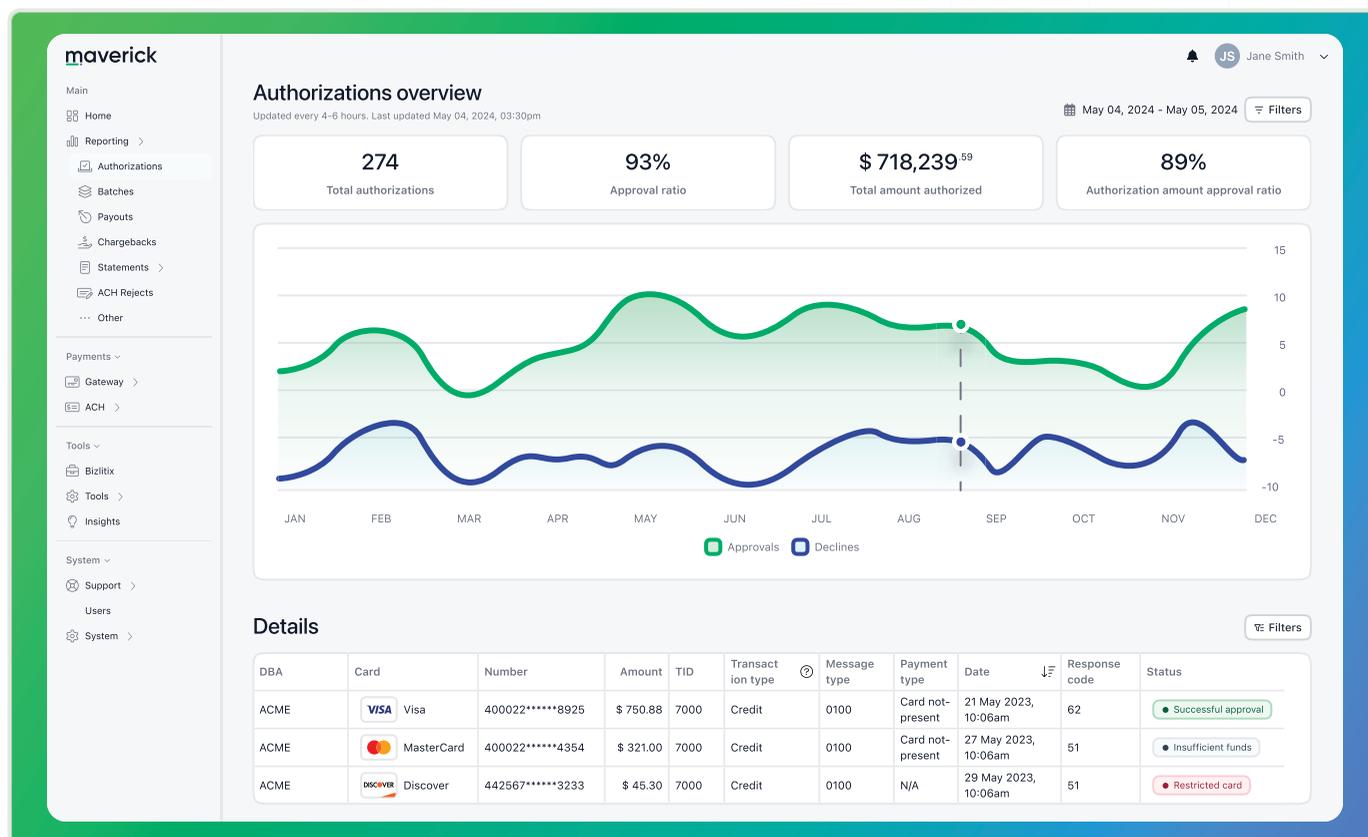
C.W. DRIVER COMPANIES FINALIST

C.W. Driver Companies is a multi-faceted builder providing general contracting, construction management and design/build services throughout Southern California. The powerful synergy created by C.W. Driver's technological edge and dynamic management teams is evident in the company's diverse portfolio of projects within the academic, entertainment and sports, retail, civic and cultural, commercial, office, hospitality and gaming, residential and senior living markets.

One of the things that truly differentiates C.W. Driver Companies from the competition is its people. All employees are charged with bringing integrity, commitment, and intellectual precision to each project. C.W. Driver also strives to retain its competitive edge among its peers. Rarely found in most construction companies, C.W. Driver has maintained a Quality Control Department that is dedicated to upholding its high standards for quality, starting from a project's design stage clear through project turnover. It's no wonder that the firm continues to see surging growth.

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2025 HONOREES & FINALISTS



INNOVATOR AWARD HONOREE

IDEAL LIVING

Ideal Living believes everyone has a right to pure water, clean air, and a solid foundation for wellness. As the parent company of leading wellness brands AirDoctor and AquaTru, Ideal Living helps bring this mission to life daily.

In an industry often criticized for an abundance of unverified wellness products, Ideal Living stands apart as a company rooted in scientific integrity and innovation. Since 1999, it has been dedicated to creating socially and environmentally responsible solutions that redefine air and water purification.

AquaTru embodies this mission by pioneering breakthroughs in clean water technology. It remains one of the only reverse osmosis countertop purifiers certified by IAPMO to NSF/ANSI standards, removing 84 contaminants, 15 times more than leading pitchers. In 2024, AquaTru reached a new milestone as one of the first purification systems certified to remove microplastics from drinking water, addressing an urgent global health concern. This certification highlights the company's commitment to science-based solutions at a time when research increasingly links microplastics to hormone disruption, cognitive decline, reproductive issues, and cancer. Building on this success, Ideal Living spent over three years developing a new shower filter, engineered to remove more contaminants than any other filter in its class. This innovation expands the mission into an entirely new category, ensuring consumers can protect their health not only at the tap but also in the shower. Together with AirDoctor, tested to capture particles as small as 0.003 microns and proven to remove live viruses and bacteria, Ideal Living continues to raise the bar for performance, accessibility and trust.



ASTROLOGIE CALIFORNIA FINALIST

Astrologie California, founded in 2003 and headquartered in Los Angeles, has grown from a small private-label supplier into a leading women's apparel company with both a strong wholesale presence and a fast-growing direct-to-consumer brand.

Astrologie California is disrupting the apparel industry by bridging the gap between fast-fashion speed and high-quality, responsibly made clothing. Traditionally, retailers have had to choose between quick-turn, lower-quality suppliers or slower, premium producers. Astrologie breaks this tradeoff by maintaining full in-house design and sampling capabilities in Los Angeles – allowing it to respond to emerging trends within days, while also leveraging global production for scale. This unique hybrid model enables both boutique flexibility and large-scale reliability, giving major retailers and consumers access to fashion that is trend-right, well-made, and delivered at the pace of today's market. Equally disruptive is Astrologie's approach to sustainability and inclusivity.



DDN FINALIST

DDN is the world's leader in AI and data intelligence solutions, empowering organizations to unlock the full value of their data. For over 25 years, DDN has sustained double-digit growth by delivering scalable, high-performance AI and data solutions that fuel innovation across industries and nations. Today, DDN manages tens of exabytes of data across more than 11,000 customers in 70+ countries, and its platforms power over two-thirds of the world's top AI supercomputers.

DDN's flagship solutions, EXAScaler and INFANIA, provide performance, simplicity and efficiency for the most data-intensive workloads across hybrid and sovereign environments. These platforms accelerate breakthroughs in areas that shape society such as drug discovery and life sciences, financial services, and space exploration. DDN also serves as the trusted data partner to the most innovative AI ecosystems. DDN is redefining what is possible in AI, data intelligence and scientific discovery.



PEAKMETRICS FINALIST

PeakMetrics is an AI-powered narrative intelligence platform revolutionizing how organizations detect, decipher and defend against online threats. In an era where adversarial influence campaigns, AI-generated false narratives, and coordinated disinformation attacks pose increasing risks to businesses, governments and individuals, PeakMetrics stands at the forefront of innovation. PeakMetrics leverages machine learning to cluster narratives, assess threat levels, and uncover emerging risks across mainstream, social, and fringe platforms.

PeakMetrics is disrupting the market by transforming how organizations detect and mitigate online threats. Traditional monitoring tools rely on keyword tracking and sentiment analysis, missing how narratives evolve and spread. PeakMetrics applies AI and machine learning to cluster narratives, identify bot-driven amplification, and surface high-risk threats across mainstream, social, and fringe platforms before they escalate.



SDS CAPITAL GROUP FINALIST

Since being founded in 2001, SDS Capital Group has been a force in commercial real estate through its ability to launch and manage exceptional impact funds across the United States.

SDS Capital Group's \$185 million SDS Supportive Housing Fund (SHF) is a first of its kind private equity impact fund that finances new and financially sustainable permanent supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. Unlike any other fund in the country, the SHF uses market-rate equity and zero taxpayer dollars to finance 100% of acquisition and construction costs for homeless housing developments. SHF is financing 2,500 units of PSH to provide healthy, safe, high-quality housing throughout California. The Fund's "one-stop," financing approach significantly reduces the usual time required to underwrite and close funding to approximately 24 months. To date, the Fund has financed ten PSH projects that will result in a total of 760 PSH units upon completion.

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SUSTAINABILITY AWARD HONOREE

MODEL/Z

Designed by SpaceX and automotive engineers, Model/Z is disrupting the construction industry in innovative and sustainable ways. The company is radically reducing cost, time and risk in affordable housing production through a fully integrated, technology-driven approach to modular construction. While traditional stick-built and modular methods require 20 to 36 months from site selection to building erection and cost \$300k to \$800k per unit, Model/Z delivers standardized, high-quality housing at less than \$250k per unit in just 12 months. Model/Z units are sustainable both from a production standpoint – 81% less materials waste and 47% less embodied carbon emissions – and an operating perspective – all electric and highly energy efficient units.

In Model/Z's first live implementation of its units, stacking was completed in just 10 days; this phase of construction would typically require 8 to 10 months using conventional methods. Throughout the process, unit set times were reduced from 42 minutes to just 16 minutes, demonstrating a significant improvement in operational efficiency, even when compared to other modular vendors.

This disruption is enabled by proprietary Z/Suite Technology, which streamlines design, permitting, and project planning using real-world data, turning what is typically a months-long process into weeks. Unlike traditional approaches that rely on fragmented coordination or vendor variability, Model/Z uses a dedicated in-house design team, fully integrated production systems, and standardized manufacturing to ensure consistent quality and accountability. To date, Model/Z has produced 439 modules and completed the setting of its first project with SoLa Impact in August 2025.



ANALOG EVENTS FINALIST

Analog Events is a Los Angeles based experiential marketing and event-production agency founded in 2016. Over the past nine years, Analog has grown from a boutique creative studio into a certified B Corporation recognized for producing high-impact, sustainability-driven activations for some of the world's most influential brands, including Peacock, Netflix, Olaplex, HBO Max, Glow Recipe, Capitol Records, Interscope, and Regeneration VC. By embedding environmental and social responsibility into its creative process, Analog has earned its reputation as a trusted partner for Fortune 500 companies and purpose-driven startups.

Analog is disrupting the event industry by proving that world-class, culturally resonant events can also be sustainable and measurable. Analog has redefined sustainability as a core creative and operational driver. Through proprietary tools, sustainability dashboards, and vendor intake forms capturing ESG metrics, Analog integrates impact tracking into every stage of event planning.



FRUITIST FINALIST

Fruitist was born from a vision to disrupt the commoditized fruit aisle and confront the silent epidemic of unhealthy snacking, especially among kids and teens. While processed snacks high in sugar, salt and additives became the default, fruit, nature's perfect snack, was too often ignored due to inconsistent taste and quality. Fruitist set out to change that. By managing every step of the supply chain from varietal selection to retail delivery, and operating in more than ten of the world's most optimal microclimates, Fruitist ensures consistent quality from seed to shelf.

This transformation is made possible by a proprietary technology platform that integrates field-level science, harvest timing, packing logistics, and retail demand forecasting. Through machine learning and predictive analytics, Fruitist optimizes every stage of the process to deliver consistent supply all year. Largely thanks to this work, consumers are finally switching from unhealthy snacking habits to fruit.



SUFFOLK FINALIST

Suffolk is a national enterprise that builds, innovates and invests. Suffolk is an end-to-end business that provides value throughout the entire project lifecycle by leveraging its core construction management services with vertical service lines that include real estate capital investment, design, self-perform construction services, technology start-up investment and innovation research/development.

Suffolk expanded to Los Angeles in 1998, recognizing immense opportunity in one of the most dynamic building markets in the country. Over the last three decades, Suffolk LA has become a trusted partner for clients across the region, with a specialty in luxury hotels, affordable housing and higher education projects. Leveraging Suffolk's national scale and local expertise, the LA office has built a strong track record of growth by embracing data, sustainability and innovative construction practices that deliver results. To date, Suffolk has led affordable housing projects in LA totaling more than \$1 billion.



VERDE CLEAN FINALIST

Verde is an eco-friendly, minority-owned facilities services company committed to creating cleaner, healthier workplaces and a greener world. The company has brought its 100% green, eco-friendly cleaning program, called Verde Earth, to customers around Southern California and the Southwest. Innovations include swapping customers' conventional paper products with post-consumer recycled products to using centralized trashing.

Verde Earth utilizes products, equipment, and techniques approved and tested by trusted third-party environmental entities, such as the EPA and Green Seal. Verde Earth's Green Cleaning Standard Operating Procedures work to emit fewer harmful compounds, improve indoor air quality for building occupants, mitigate cross contamination, reduce levels of chemical, biological and particulate contaminants that can compromise air quality, human health, building finishes, building systems, while also conserving energy, water, and chemicals while cleaning.

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2025 HONOREES & FINALISTS



START-UP TO SCALE-UP AWARD HONOREE

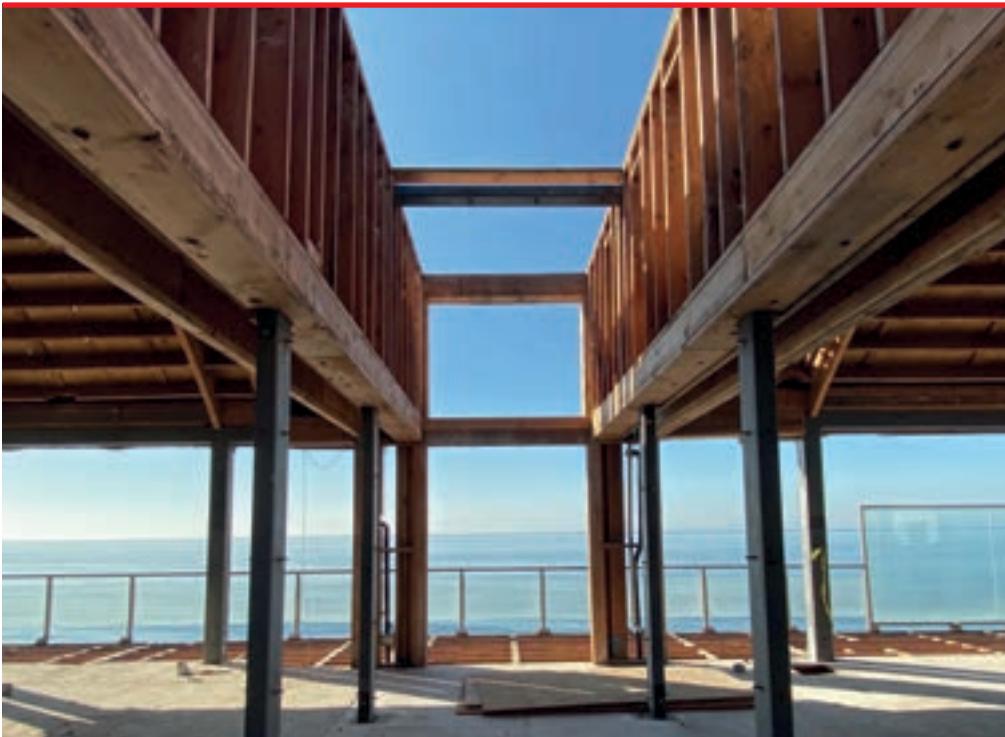
PLUG

Plug is the first wholesale auction platform built exclusively for used electric vehicles. Founded by Jimmy Douglas, the former head of North American Sales and Delivery Operations at Tesla, Plug introduces EV-specific data, valuation models and wholesale tools to a market that has historically priced EVs like combustion vehicles, an approach that leaves revenue on the table across the industry.

In less than two years, Plug has facilitated more than \$30 million in transactions, grown a nationwide network of over 500 dealers and consignors and launched new services, including EV Trade Desk, to support trade-in pricing and liquidation for dealers. Its rapid adoption underscores both the urgency of the challenge and the scale of the opportunity ahead, positioning Plug as the platform that will shape the future of the used EV market.

The company continues to launch services that address critical market gaps. Dealers can receive firm valuations in under 60 seconds and choose between an instant cash offer or a competitive auction listing, giving them a low-risk entry point into the EV market. Plug's rapid adoption underscores a pre-existing gap in the market. Plug is increasing wholesale competition, improving residual values and making it possible for more retail customers to access affordable EV ownership through their local dealers. With transaction volume growing, dealer confidence rising and new partnerships accelerating its growth, Plug is not only demonstrating early success but also helping to reshaping the economics of the used EV market for the long term.

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Frankies Bikinis

FRANKIES BIKINIS LLC
 FINALIST

Frankies Bikinis is a female-led lifestyle brand founded by Francesca Aiello in Malibu. Since its launch in 2012, the company has grown from a swimwear start-up into a globally recognized fashion brand offering ready-to-wear apparel, activewear, knits, and beauty products. Known for its inclusive sizing, trend-forward designs, and celebrity collaborations, Frankies Bikinis has built a loyal following and retail presence in stores like Victoria's Secret, Revolve, and Bloomingdale's. The company has expanded to six retail locations and continues to scale its digital and wholesale channels.

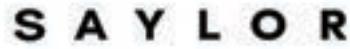
Frankies Bikinis disrupted the swimwear market by combining high-fashion aesthetics with eco-conscious production. Aiello was the youngest designer to debut at Miami Swim Week, and her early use of Instagram as a brand-building tool helped redefine how fashion brands connect with consumers.



PARC VENTURES INC. dba BUMO
 FINALIST

Bumo is a child care marketplace transforming how families access care and how providers offer it. The company helps parents instantly book trusted child care, camps, and enrichment programs, by the day, week, month, or year, on a flexible platform designed for modern life. From infants to teens, Bumo's services support kids aged 0-17 and include care options like after-school programs, microschoools, and seasonal camps.

What began as a single coworking and child care center in 2019 has evolved through pandemic pivots and relentless user learning, into a fast-growing platform that has a strong and growing presence in the LA metro area. Families have booked almost 500,000 hours of care on Bumo, and the company has partnered with renowned organizations like FC Barcelona, Learning Care Group, and Boys & Girls Club LA Metro.



SAYLOR
 FINALIST

Saylor was created to challenge the traditional agency model by building a structure that keeps strategy, creative and production under one roof. This eliminates silos and allows teams to move seamlessly from pitch to execution. The result is work that is cohesive, culturally relevant, and designed to spark conversation.

In just four years, Saylor has grown from a two-person startup into a more than 70 person agency working with some of the world's most influential brands, including Netflix, Disney, Paramount, Hilton, Anthropologie, Nike, Prime Video, and LEGO. Revenue has increased 25 times since launch, with a 140 percent year-over-year increase from the agency's top three clients in 2024. This success is driven by a focus on long-term partnerships, social-first thinking, and campaigns that flex across every format, from TikTok to TV.



SELLCORD LLC
 FINALIST

Founded in 2020 and headquartered in Los Angeles, SellCord has rapidly grown into a leading force in eCommerce enablement, scaling to over 100 employees and contractors globally within the last year. As an exclusive Walmart Agency Partner, SellCord supports both first party and third party sellers with full-service account management, advanced media and strategy services, and proprietary software. The team manages millions in Walmart advertising and operates across key markets.

SellCord specializes in launching and managing brands on Walmart.com. With extensive experience across all categories, it helps brands succeed by leveraging proven marketplace strategies. In the short amount of time SellCord has been established, it has managed \$1M+ skus, 2 billion managed sales, \$50M+ in ad spends, and 500+ brands.

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SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD HONOREE

FORENSISGROUP

ForensisGroup is a California-founded, national provider of expert witnesses known as “The Expert of Experts.” Since 1991, the firm has connected attorneys, insurers and related organizations with independent subject-matter experts across hundreds of disciplines from structural engineering and construction to medical, environmental, cyber, transportation and product safety. Core services include rigorous expert vetting, conflict screening, case-specific scoping and end-to-end coordination that support facts-first litigation and dispute resolution.

Founded by Mercy Tolentino Steenwyk, ForensisGroup was built on the principle that social responsibility and “nothing but the truth,” belong at the center of expert services. The firm has expanded its highly credentialed network, refined intake and matching for speed and precision, and shares plain-language insights that make complex issues understandable to individuals interested in understanding the case and outcomes of specific litigation. ForensisGroup is disrupting the expert-witness market by making independence, transparency and community impact the operating standard, not a sidebar.

Success is measured not only in expert placements, but also in achieving just outcomes, strengthening public trust, and elevating industry standards. Social responsibility is embedded in daily operations. ForensisGroup plants trees on clients’ behalf through One Tree Planted; dedicates All Hands Fridays to team performance and well-being; funds scholarships in the Philippines; and has supported a health initiative delivering essential medicines to more than 1,500 undernourished children. The firm also participates in programs like Skid Row donation drives and collaborates with Plogging LA on Rose Bowl cleanups, practical expressions of its commitment to community and truth.

Disruptors Award

Los Angeles Business Journal

"We are proud to share that PBS Engineers has been nominated for the Disruptors Award by the Los Angeles Business Journal!"

At PBS, innovation is not just what we do — it's who we are. From advancing sustainable infrastructure to enhancing the way people experience airports, hospitals, schools, and the spaces they rely on every day, our teams continually strive to deliver **WOW** Through Service.

This nomination celebrates the bold thinking, resilience, and collective creativity of the PBS community — and our commitment to building better environments for all."





CDC SMALL BUSINESS FINANCE
 FINALIST

CDC Small Business Finance is a nonprofit that is one of the nation's foremost mission-driven lenders – with the mission of helping small businesses obtain financing when they are unable to qualify for loans from traditional lenders. The company's work nationwide in several core geographic regions, including Los Angeles County.

By assisting these small businesses with what is considered "impact capital," CDC Small Business Finance is not only helping the entrepreneurs themselves, but also creating jobs and bolstering the economy and the quality of life in the communities these businesses serve. Two of CDC Small Business Finance's core products for the past 40+ years are loans backed by the US Small Business Administration. It also created its own loan product called Impower in order to help more small business owners than would otherwise be eligible. CDC Small Business Finance has deployed more than \$4.7 billion to small business owners.



HARPE VENTURES
 FINALIST

Panney Wei is a transformative force at the intersection of wellness, food & beverage, and entertainment. Through her company, Harpe Ventures, and her community leadership, she delivers measurable, meaningful impact – rooted in empowerment, equity and healing.

As a certified clinical hypnotherapist, Neurolinguistic Programming Practitioner, and Reiki Master, with a degree in Occupational Sciences and specialization in mind-body psychology, Wei supports the mental, emotional and somatic well-being of underserved communities – particularly women and communities of color. Her therapeutic practice is grounded in cultural intelligence, trauma-informed care, and results-driven healing. She offers one-on-one sessions, group workshops, and collaborative programs that help clients access deeper resilience, self-worth, and clarity. Wei's work in media, storytelling and entrepreneurship is a conscious extension of her healing practice.

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Experts Say Leaders Must Create Scenarios for Human-AI Collaboration

The pervasive use of AI is forcing business and IT leaders to rethink their workforce. Executive leaders must develop four scenarios where human and AI can collaborate effectively, according to Gartner, Inc., a business and technology insights company.

AI will indelibly alter how human workers perform work in the future, however there will not be a jobs apocalypse. Instead, starting in 2028-2029, there will be jobs chaos created by the need to reconfigure, redesign, splinter and fuse over 32 million jobs each year.

Speaking at Gartner IT Symposium/Xpo in Barcelona last month, Helen Poitevin, distinguished VP analyst at Gartner, said “Every day 150,000 jobs will evolve through upskilling, while 70,000 more jobs will need to be rewritten, reworked and redesigned. Executive leaders must plan their AI investments and goals to anticipate and manage these changes. They need to decide on their destination —whether to pursue human-first designs that emphasize supporting people in their work, or to select AI-first designs that aim to maximize efficiency by relying on AI to perform tasks.”

The goal is not a worker-free enterprise,

‘Executive leaders must plan their AI investments and goals to anticipate and manage these changes. They need to decide on their destination — whether to pursue human-first designs that emphasize supporting people in their work, or to select AI-first designs that aim to maximize efficiency by relying on AI to perform tasks.’

HELEN POITEVIN, Gartner

but a work-redefined enterprise: adaptive, creative, and profoundly human at its core. Because being “AI-first” only succeeds when it is, above all, people-first.

“The next era of enterprise performance will not hinge on the quantity of people employed, but on the quality of collaboration between humans and AI,” said Poitevin.

Gartner presented four scenarios illustrating how both human-first and AI-first strategies could shape the impact of AI on jobs and organizations:

Fewer workers doing the work AI

can’t: Humans want AI to do the work, and work is the same (but with AI). Humans want AI to do the work, yet work is not significantly transformed. People must fill in the gaps left where AI is not able to do certain tasks effectively. Higher degrees of automation lead to the need for fewer workers. This scenario is used in customer service where customer service employees are left to take on the work that AI could not accomplish.

Fewer to no workers running an AI-first enterprise (or part of one): Humans want AI to do the work, and work is transformed with

fewer workers than before. This represents autonomous business.

Many busy workers using AI to work better and do more: Humans want to do the work with AI, and work is the same (but with AI). This is what everyday AI looks like.

Many innovative workers combining with AI to surpass the frontiers of knowledge: Humans want to do the work with AI and work is transformed. It allows humans to go after bigger and more challenging questions to find solutions. This scenario could apply to personalized medicine — it can only happen if humans connect different fields, share information, and expand their understanding of health and well-being.

“No matter which scenario executive leaders pursue, they must be ready to support all four,” said Poitevin. “The ripple effects of AI will make each scenario a reality. Leaders need to invest in both types of designs but emphasize on what is possible with AI, embracing an abundance mindset – a mindset whereby AI helps leaders to tackle today and tomorrow’s challenges in new ways.”

Learn more at [gartner.com](https://www.gartner.com).

AI is Augmenting — Not Replacing — Customer Service Roles

While there is widespread speculation that AI will drastically reduce customer service headcount, currently only 20% of leaders have reduced agent staffing due to AI, according to a survey by Gartner, Inc., a business and technology insights company.

A Gartner survey of 321 customer service and support leaders conducted in October 2025 reveals a more nuanced reality: 55% report stable staffing levels while handling higher customer volumes—underscoring AI’s role in boosting efficiency rather than eliminating jobs.

“Customer service and support leaders should avoid framing AI initiatives solely around headcount reduction,” said Melissa Fletcher, Senior Principal, Research in the Gartner Customer Service & Support practice. “Instead, focus on incremental transformation and workforce augmentation. Leaders should plan for new roles, leverage central resources, and communicate transparently about AI’s impact to manage expectations effectively.”

The survey also found that 42% of organizations are hiring specialized roles—including AI strategists, conversational AI designers, and automation analysts—to support AI deployment and management. Looking ahead, Gartner forecasts that by 2027, half of organizations anticipating major AI-driven workforce cuts will abandon those plans as the vision of ‘agentless’ service proves elusive.

Gartner AI Use Case Insights is an interactive tool that helps technology and business



leaders efficiently discover, evaluate, and prioritize AI use cases to potentially pursue. Clients can search over 500 use cases (applications of AI in specific industries) and over 1,000 case studies (real world examples) based on industry, business function, and Gartner’s assessment of potential business value.

That said, as AI usage increases, Gartner experts also warn of the importance of being aware of possible AI-related blind spots stemming from overlooked risks and unintended consequences of generative AI (GenAI) adoption.

Gartner experts opine that Chief information officers (CIOs) must proactively address

these hidden challenges to ensure GenAI value realization and avoid AI project failures.

“GenAI technologies and techniques are evolving at an unprecedented pace, matched only by the surrounding hype, which makes it challenging for CIOs to navigate this dynamic landscape,” said Arun Chandrasekaran, distinguished VP analyst at Gartner.

While organizations often focus on immediate GenAI challenges such as business value, security and data readiness, they may overlook critical blind spots because these are second- or third-order effects that are not often visible upfront. Risks like shadow AI,

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ARUN CHANDRASEKARAN, Gartner

technical debt, skills erosion, data sovereignty demands, interoperability issues and vendor lock-in represent hidden undercurrents that can undermine long-term success.

Gartner predicts that by 2030 these blind spots will create the dividing line between enterprises that scale AI safely and strategically and those that become locked in, out-paced or disrupted from within.

“To address these risks, CIOs should define clear enterprise-wide policies for AI tool usage, conduct regular audits for shadow AI activity and incorporate GenAI risk evaluation into their SaaS assessment processes,” said Chandrasekaran.

Gartner delivers actionable, objective business and technology insights that drive smarter decisions and stronger performance on an organization’s mission-critical priorities. To learn more, visit [gartner.com](https://www.gartner.com).