

B2B

BANKING & FINANCE

SOCAL'S TOP BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS



VISIONARIES: THE MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS



MBA INSIDER: IN-DEPTH LOOK AT PROGRAMS



Leader, visionary, collaborator... attributes of true achievers.

U.S. Bank salutes the banking & finance industry 2024 Visionaries by L.A. Times B2B Publishing, Erik Daniels, Kate Phalen and Hamed Tavajohi. Thank you for your leadership at U.S. Bank and for your commitment to the Los Angeles community!

Always open at [usbank.com](https://www.usbank.com) or with the U.S. Bank Mobile App.

CONGRATULATIONS



ERIK DANIELS

Senior Vice President
Head of SBA Lending



KATE PHELAN

Senior Vice President
Regional Director of Wealth
Planning and Trust Advisory



HAMED TAVAJOHI

Senior Vice President
Greater Los Angeles
Market Leader

Produced by
L.A. Times B2B Publishing

Anna Magzanyan
Chief Strategy & Revenue Officer and
Chief of Staff to Executive Chairman
anna.magzanyan@latimes.com

Sales Department

Helya Askari
Executive Director of Sales
helya.askari@latimes.com

Naz Bayazit
Senior Account Executive
naz.bayazit@latimes.com

Heidi Lawrence
Account Executive
heidi.lawrence@latimes.com

Special Projects

Karren Adamyan
Project Manager

Wendy Hultgren
B2B Marketing Coordinator

Sergio Zaldivar
B2B Marketing Coordinator

Marketing & Contributing Writers

Mike Kechichian
EVP, B2B Publishing

Christianne Bradley
Director, Client Solutions

Ellen Varvarian
Senior Marketing & Planning Analyst

Matthew Franco
Designer

Helen Chang
Senior Project Manager

Paul Williams
Contributing B2B Publishing Editor

Alan LaGuardia
Associate B2B Publishing Editor

David Chee
B2B Publishing Copy Editor

David Nusbaum
B2B Research Consultant

Production

Melinda Marquez
Director, Advertising Client Services

Maximiliano Enciso
B2B Publishing Art Director

Dave Novotney
Prepress Specialist

Kevin Chau
Designer

Larry Tomoyasu
Designer

Events

Jordan Harris
Vice President, Events

Kim Bueno
Director of Operations, Events

Alexandra Slifkin
Senior Manager, Events

Stryker Matthews
Manager, Events

Nicole Flores
Coordinator, Events

Kay Payne
Sr. Manager, Events Sponsorship

TABLE OF Contents

- 4** CEO Confidence Improved in Q1 2024
- 6** Federal Reserve Board Releases Hypothetical Scenarios for Annual Stress Test
- 8** Vast Majority of Large Enterprise Finance Teams Plan to Use Internal AI Platforms by 2026
- 10** M&A Activity Poised for a Rebound in 2024; Value of Deals Expected to Increase
- 12** Tokenization of Private Markets Explored by New Partnership
- 13** CFOs Will Be Challenged with EBITDA Margins Shrinking by More Than 30% by 2027
- 14** Climate Metrics Surge in Executive Compensation Plans – From 25% to 54% in Just Two Years
- 16** UCLA Anderson Forecast Data Indicates 'No Recession'
- 18** Bank Economists Express Cautious Optimism About Credit Conditions
- 19** CEOs Rank National Debt as the Top Geopolitics Threat in 2024
- 20** Leading Transformation is the Top Priority for CFOs
- 21** Busting the Myth that Affordable Higher Education is an Impossible Dream
- 22** Technology Extends Client Touch Points for Banks
- 24** Top 50 Banks in SoCal
- 30** Top Credit Unions in SoCal
- 33** Banking and Finance Visionaries
- 69** MBA Insider

Dear Reader:

In this fourth annual edition of our Banking and Finance Magazine, L.A. Times B2B Publishing is pleased to present the latest trends and updates along with profiles of the visionaries who are shaping the industry in Southern California.

2024 has started with more optimism than has been seen over the past few years as economic expectations improve (what recession?) even as political uncertainty and shrinking margins persist. As CEOs and corporations come to grips with the new business environment, strong growth remains on the not-too-distant horizon. And finally, regarding the implementation of generative AI in the finance arena, most experts agree that its use must be managed to ensure added value in daily operations across enterprise.

New for the 2024 Banking and Finance Magazine are two lists ranking Southern California's top 50 banks, as well as the top 25 credit unions, by total assets.

Finally, we shine the spotlight on several industry visionaries. These individuals are the thought leaders and innovators who are meeting today's challenges and charting the financial path toward a secure tomorrow for corporations and clients.

This magazine can also be read online and shared in the form of a digital flipbook at latimes.com/b2b/finance.



We will be promoting its publication and we invite you to follow us:

 [@latimesb2b](https://www.facebook.com/latimesb2b)

 [@latimesb2b](https://www.instagram.com/latimesb2b)

 [linkedin.com/showcase/latimes-b2b](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/latimes-b2b)

Best regards,

Anna Magzanyan
Chief Strategy & Revenue Officer and
Chief of Staff to Executive Chairman



To purchase additional copies of this magazine or back issues of other B2B publications, scan the QR code or visit store.latimes.com/collections/b2b-magazines.

Contact us with comments or questions at b2bpublishing@latimes.com.

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and striped tie, is smiling while talking on a black mobile phone. He is looking off to the side with a pleasant expression.

CEO Confidence Improved in Q1 2024

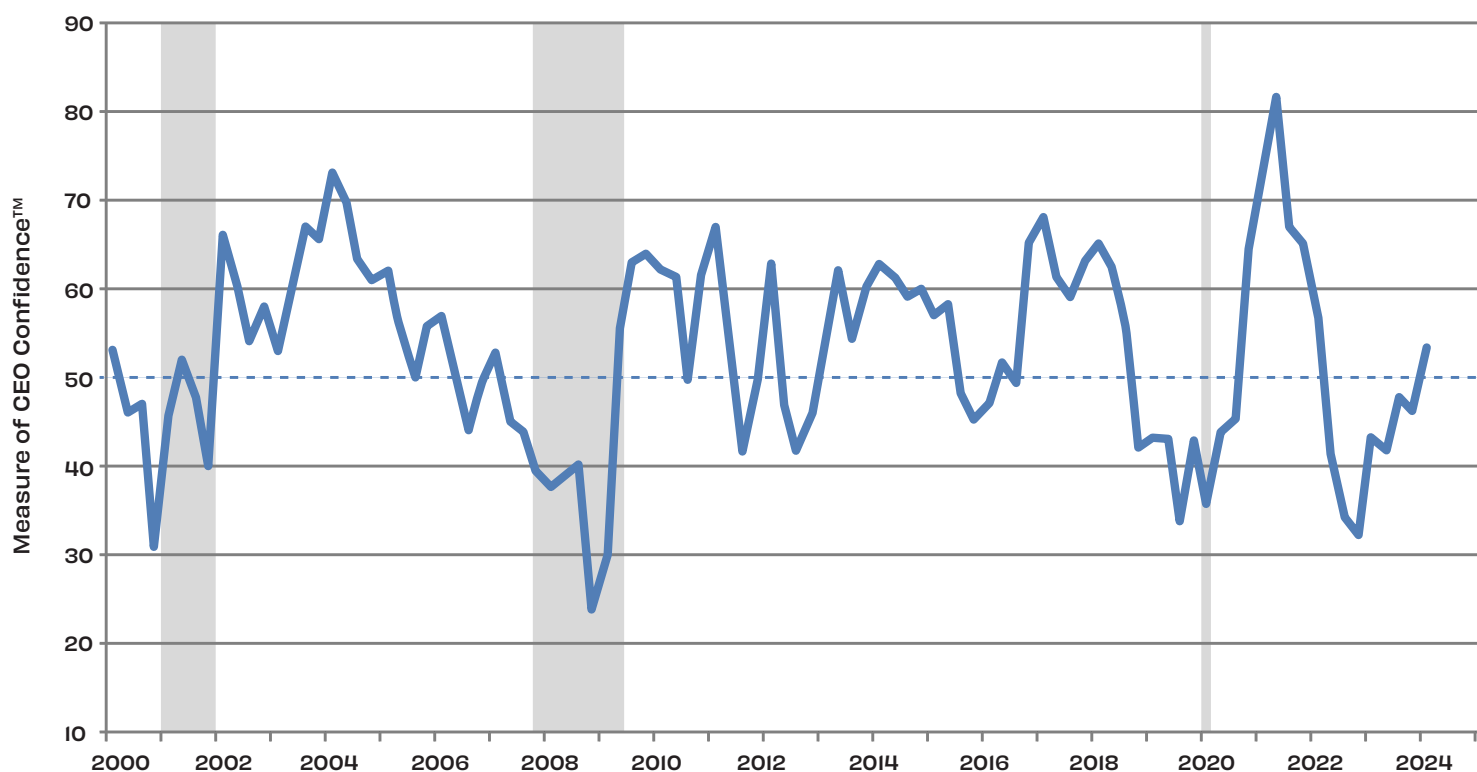
For the first time in two years, optimism outweighs pessimism among CEOs.

The Conference Board “Measure of CEO Confidence” report in collaboration with The Business Council improved to 53 in Q1 2024, up from 46 in the fourth quarter of 2023. The Measure is now above 50, a reading that suggests CEOs have become optimistic about what’s ahead for the economy. Importantly, this is the first time optimism has prevailed in the Measure since Q1 2022. (A reading above 50 reflects more positive than negative responses.) A total of 138 CEOs participated in the Q1 survey, which was fielded from January 16-29.

CEOs’ views of current economic conditions improved markedly. In the Q1 survey, 32% of CEOs reported general economic conditions to be better than they were six months ago, up from just 18% in Q4 of last year. Just 22% said conditions were worse, down from 32% in Q4. Similarly, future expectations strengthened: 36% of CEOs in Q1 expect general economic conditions to improve over the next six months, up from 19% last quarter. Moreover, only 27% expect conditions to worsen, down significantly from 47%. CEO expectations for conditions in their own industry followed a similar upward trend.

“CEOs are feeling better about the economy, but remain cautious about risks ahead,” said Roger W. Ferguson, Jr., vice chairman of The Business

The Conference Board *Measure of CEO Confidence*™



Note: Shaded areas indicate periods of recession.
Sources: The Conference Board; The Business Council; NBER

Source: The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council, 1st quarter 2024

Council and Trustee of The Conference Board. “In supplemental questions asked this quarter, CEOs overwhelmingly identified political uncertainty ahead of U.S. elections (51%) as the greatest U.S. challenge affecting businesses in 2024. Meanwhile, CEOs said the greatest global challenge affecting businesses this year is the spread of existing wars (46%). Deglobalization (19%) and U.S.-China tensions (15%) were also concerns. On the positive side, CEOs cited reduced inflation (34%) and Federal Reserve interest rate cuts (28%) as top U.S. developments that might benefit businesses.”

“The significant labor hoarding that occurred over much of 2023 showed some sign of letting up in Q1 2024,” said Dana M. Peterson, chief economist of The Conference Board. “While 35% of CEOs said they expect to expand their workforce over the next 12 months, down slightly from 38% in Q4 2023, 23% expect to lay off workers, up significantly from 13% last quarter. The proportion of CEOs anticipating little change in their workforce stood at 42%, down from 49%. Meanwhile, the degree of difficulty attracting qualified workers and CEOs’ plans on wage increases were little changed in Q1 compared to last quarter.”

Current Conditions

CEOs’ assessment of general economic conditions improved markedly in Q1:

- 32% of CEOs said economic conditions were better compared to six months ago, up from 18% in Q4.
- 22% said conditions were worse, down from 32% in Q4.

CEOs also assessed conditions in their own industries to be substantially improved in Q1:

- 31% of CEOs said conditions in their industries were better compared to six months ago, up from 27%.
- 25% said conditions in their own industries were worse, down from 37% in Q4.

Future Conditions

CEOs’ expectations about the short-term economic outlook improved in Q1:

- 36% of CEOs expect economic conditions to improve over the next six months, up from 19%.

- 27% expect conditions to worsen, down significantly from 47%.

CEOs’ expectations for short-term prospects in their own industries were also more optimistic in Q1:

- 39% of CEOs expect conditions in their own industry to improve over the next six months, up from 26% in Q4.
- 20% expect conditions to worsen, down from 29% in Q4.

Employment, Recruiting, Wages and Capital Spending

- **Employment:** 35% of CEOs expect to expand their workforce over the next 12 months, down only slightly from 38% in Q4. However, 23% of CEOs expect a reduction in their workforce, up from 13%.
- **Hiring Qualified People:** 31% of CEOs report some problems attracting qualified workers, but only in key areas, similar to the 32% in Q4. Only 15% report serious and/or widespread problems attracting qualified workers, unchanged from Q4.

[Continued on page 64]

Federal Reserve

Board Releases Hypothetical Scenarios for Annual Stress Test

The Federal Reserve Board released the hypothetical scenarios for its annual stress test, which helps ensure that large banks can lend to households and businesses even in a severe recession.

Additionally, for the first time, the Board released four hypothetical elements designed to probe different risks through its “exploratory analysis” of the banking system. The exploratory analysis will not affect bank capital requirements.

The Board's annual stress test evaluates the resilience of large banks by estimating losses, net revenue and capital levels – which provide a cushion against losses – under hypothetical recession scenarios that extend two years into the future. This year, 32 banks will be tested against a severe global recession with heightened stress in both commercial and residential real estate markets, as well as in corporate debt markets. The scenarios are not forecasts and should not be interpreted as predictions of future economic conditions.

In the 2024 stress test scenario, the U.S. unemployment rate rises nearly 6.5% to a peak of 10%. The increase in the unemployment rate is accompanied by severe market volatility, a widening of corporate bond spreads and a collapse in asset prices, including a 36% decline in house prices and a 40% decline in commercial real estate prices. Large

banks with substantial trading or custodial operations are also required to incorporate a counterparty default scenario component to estimate and report potential losses and capital effects associated with the unexpected default of the firm's largest counterparty.

In addition, banks with large trading operations will be tested against a global market shock component that primarily stresses their trading and related positions. The global market shock component is a set of hypothetical stresses to a large set of risk factors reflecting market distress and heightened uncertainty.

This year's exploratory analysis includes four separate hypothetical elements that will assess the resilience of the banking system to a wider range of risks. Two of the hypothetical elements include funding stresses that cause a rapid repricing of a large proportion of deposits at large banks. Each element has a different set of interest rates and economic conditions, including a moderate recession with increasing inflation and rising interest rates, and a severe global recession with high and persistent inflation and rising interest rates.

The other two elements of the exploratory analysis include two sets of market shocks that will be applied only to the largest and most complex banks. These shocks hypothesize the failure of five large hedge funds, with each under a different set of financial market conditions. Those conditions include expectations of reduced global economic activity with a negative outlook for long-term inflation and expectations of severe recessions in the United States and other countries.

The exploratory analysis is distinct from the stress test and will explore additional hypothetical risks to the broader banking system, rather than focusing on firm-specific results. The Board will publish aggregate results alongside the annual stress test results in June 2024.



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.



@erhui1979 / DigitalVision Vectors / Getty Images



All across Los Angeles, we're working to make a difference.

At PNC, our main street bank values are reflected in a commitment to making a difference in the lives of our customers and communities by helping them move forward financially. To do that, we innovate new products and tools that help make banking more convenient, accessible and in tune with our customers' needs. We build personal relationships that are open and honest. And we commit to being active, invested neighbors in the places we serve. It's the way we've done business for nearly 160 years. And it's why we're here to help make a difference for Los Angeles today.

SEE HOW WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU AT [PNC.COM](https://www.pnc.com).

Todd Wilson

Regional President
todd.wilson@pnc.com

Daniel Timmons

Head of Corporate Banking
daniel.timmons@pnc.com

Sandra Madden

Wealth Director
sandra.madden@pnc.com

Debbie Marshall

Client & Community
Relations Director
deborah.marshall@pnc.com

Tom Thompson

Commercial Banking
Market Leader
thomas.m.thompson@pnc.com

Raquel Bone

Institutional Asset Management
Managing Director
raquel.bone@pnc.com

VAST MAJORITY OF LARGE ENTERPRISE FINANCE TEAMS PLAN TO USE INTERNAL AI PLATFORMS BY 2026

By 2026, 80% of large enterprise finance teams will rely on internally managed and owned generative AI platforms trained with proprietary business data, according to Gartner, Inc.

According to Mark D. McDonald, senior director analyst in the Gartner Finance Practice, “The recent entry of large, well-established companies into the generative AI market has kicked off a highly competitive race to see who can deliver revolutionary value first.” McDonald continued, “Leadership teams do not want to fall behind peers; however, as the chief steward for an organization’s financial health, CFOs must balance the risks and rewards of tools like generative AI. There are three distinct conversations that CFOs should have across leadership circles to ensure that reasonable expectations are established, and the use of generative AI creates value without introducing unacceptable risks.”

According to Gartner, these conversations that CFOs must conduct include:

Discussion No. 1: Debunk the Hype to Avoid Inflated Expectations

Generative AI presents the potential for businesses to comprehensively navigate their data’s growing complexity and volume with ease. However, the technology’s limitations introduce several real challenges to this objective, leading Gartner to consider it at a peak of inflated expectations. CFOs should partner with senior technology leadership (e.g., CIO, chief data officer, chief information security officer) to distinguish hype from reality and share results with other executive leadership team members.

Current generative AI solutions represent a collection of modern innovations, including deep learning, natural language processing, reinforcement learning and graph networks, all of which deliver remarkable outcomes. However,

the extensive number of parameters and connections used to create these outputs prevent any transparent reconciliation of the algorithm’s response.

This observation includes an inability to determine if the algorithm has developed unstated objectives or if it is basing conclusions on inaccurate, irrelevant, unethical or even illegal information. “Such limitations form the backbone of conversations that CFOs must have with leadership circles when considering the use of generative AI,” said McDonald.

Discussion No. 2: Define Generative AI Use Cases That Are Aligned, Responsible and Actionable

With an understanding of generative AI’s limitations, CFOs can responsibly direct a conversation with management teams aimed at defining use cases. They must collaborate with operational management, executive leaders and representatives from the user community to define actionable generative AI use cases that align with the organization’s overall strategy and risk tolerance.

“As with any AI solution, the best use cases exploit a specific business’ strengths and defend its weaknesses,” said McDonald. “Copying use cases from other companies will likely not have the same impact in an organization with different circumstances. Instead, aligning generative AI’s fundamental capabilities to a business’ unique strategies and objectives delivers a value that differentiates a company from its competitors.”



Discussion No. 3: Develop Generative AI Governance and Guidelines for Acceptable Use

Generative AI requires human oversight to ensure that outcomes adhere to the nuance of human judgment and fairness. While generative AI’s output may appear human-like and compelling, the results may not always be accurate, unbiased or reliable.

“CFOs should engage legal, HR, audit, security and other relevant corporate support functions to establish usage guidelines to minimize security, compliance, regulatory and other intellectual property risk,” said McDonald. “This discussion must also include the potential impact to the workforce, company culture and necessary training.”



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

Inspiring Change in Banking with a People-Over-Profits Vision

For the last 20 years, CBC has been driven by our dedication to innovation and a people over profits vision. Ash Patel has championed that vision and led a team to create a bank that did not previously exist.

It is this approach that continues to deliver transformative financial products that enable entrepreneurs and business leaders to leverage our solutions to both help their business grow and to achieve their dreams.



Congratulations Ash Patel for being recognized
as a 2024 banking & finance industry visionary
by L.A. Times B2B Publishing



Transforming the Way You Think About Banking

www.cbcal.com



M&A Activity Poised for a Rebound in 2024; Value of Deals Expected to Increase

Deloitte recently released the findings of its “2024 M&A Trends Survey: Mind the Gap,” asking corporate and private equity (PE) leaders in the U.S. about their expectations for M&A activity in the upcoming 12 months as well as their experiences with recent transactions.

Executive sentiment toward M&A activity for the year ahead is optimistic with respondents across corporate and PE expecting a rebound in both volume and value. Eighty-three percent of these executives anticipate deal volume to increase over the next 12 months, and 82% expect the volume of their own organization’s deals to grow larger in the coming year as well.

A similar trend can be seen with respondent outlook on deal value with 82% indicating they expect the size of their own organization’s deals to increase in the coming year.

This is further substantiated by findings from Deloitte’s most recent 4Q23 North American CFO Signals survey with just over half (51%) of CFOs estimating 1% to 10% of their companies’ growth in the next three years to come from M&A while 19% indicated between 11% and 50% of growth could derive from M&A in that period.

Deloitte’s “2024 M&A Trends Survey” marks the largest cohort of respondents in its 10-year history, capturing insights from 1,500 U.S.-based executives representing both sides of the dealmaking process with a nearly 50/50 split between corporations and private equity.

Key findings:

- **A focus on internal transformation to lay the groundwork.** Corporations and private equity firms have invested more time and energy in internal transformations in the last year with more than two-thirds (68%) of leaders surveyed stating their organizations had restructured since the pandemic began in early 2020. Another 27% are focused on restructuring now or plan to be doing so within the next six months.
- **A penchant to pivot as new challenges have emerged.** With a slower M&A market during 2023, corporate and private equity respondents reported successful pivots in response. For example, 51% of respondents have pursued alternative

[Continued on page 60]



Helping California Small Businesses **THINK BIG** for 20 Years

JACKY DILFER

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Business Finance Capital

Business Finance Capital (BFC) congratulates **Jacky Dilfer** for being recognized as a banking & finance industry 2024 Visionary by L.A. Times B2B Publishing.

Under Dilfer's leadership, BFC has facilitated more than 1000 commercial real estate transactions for small and medium-sized businesses since 2012, totaling over \$5 billion in commercial and SBA loans. Also via her leadership, BFC consistently ranks among the top-5 SBA lenders in both California and the United States.



Jacky Dilfer
1-800-SBA-REAL
jacky@bfcfunding.com

Tokenization of Private Markets Explored by New Partnership

Citi has announced that it has successfully completed a proof of concept on tokenization of private funds along with Wellington Management and WisdomTree.

T

he proof of concept, which was conducted on the Avalanche Spruce institutional test Subnet, found that smart-contract capabilities could deliver new functionality and operational efficiencies, which are currently unavailable with traditional assets. These new functionalities could enable buy- and sell-side institutions to engage with distributed ledger infrastructure in a low-risk, low-barrier-to-entry manner that is consistent with regulations.

Private markets, although a \$10-trillion asset class, are characterized by an infrastructure that is complex and manual, with a lack of standardization and transparency, leading to inefficient distribution and operations. There are often complex legal and regulatory restrictions related to private assets.

With ABN AMRO simulating the role of a traditional investor, the proof of concept tested the tokenization of a Wellington-issued private equity fund by bringing it onto a distributed ledger technology (DLT) network. The underlying fund distribution rules were encoded into the smart contract and embedded in the token transferred to hypothetical WisdomTree clients. The proof of concept demonstrated how smart contracts could be used to enable greater automation and potentially create an enhanced compliance and control environment for issuers, distributors and investors.

As part of the experiment, Citi also evaluated multiple scenarios of transfers using smart contracts relying on simulated identity credentials issued by WisdomTree and using a private fund token as collateral in an automated lending contract with DTCC Digital Assets (formerly Securrency).

By evaluating relevant technical, legal and operational frameworks needed

to bring traditional assets onto a digital platform, Citi explored how to support clients issuing and accessing tokenized private assets in a controlled and scalable manner, while ensuring interoperability with the traditional ecosystem.

“Smart contracts and blockchain technology can enable enhanced rule enforcement at an infrastructure level, allowing data and workflows to travel with the asset. We believe that by testing the tokenization of private assets, we are exploring the feasibility to open up new operating models and create efficiencies for the broader market,” stated Nisha Surendran, emerging solutions lead for Citi Digital Assets.

“The Avalanche Spruce test network has proven to be an ample technical sandbox environment for coming together with partners and exploring the potential of blockchain technology within our industry. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Citi, strong long-term partners who are providing meaningful developments and thought leadership in the blockchain space,” said Mark Garabedian, director, digital assets and tokenization strategy, at Wellington Management.

Meredith Hannon Sapp, head of business development, digital assets, at WisdomTree said, “We believe blockchain-enabled finance is the future of the industry, and this proof-of-concept showcases the ability to explore the transferability of tokenized funds and related compliance in different markets. This will inform future in-production use cases of how blockchain technology and smart contracts can be used in on-chain transactions.”



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

CFOs Will Be Challenged with EBITDA Margins Shrinking by More Than 30% by 2027

By 2027, weak demand and rising costs will shrink earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) margins by more than 30% relative to 2022, according to Gartner, Inc.

Most corporations will find it tougher to attain growth through 2026 as elevated levels of consumer debt and weaker-than-expected corporate cash flow dampen demand by reducing both discretionary and nondiscretionary spending.

Tepid GDP forecasts for advanced economies pegging annual revenue growth at the 2% range, labor costs in the U.S. and Eurozone growing at approximately 5% annually, technology costs globally at 8%, and increases in

other categories capped at the U.S. long-term expected inflation rate of 3%, can result in shrinking EBITDA margins over the three-year period.

“Ongoing uncertainty and instability will expose organizations to sudden cost surges in the coming years,” said Randeep Rathindran, distinguished vice president, research, in the Gartner Finance practice. “CFOs must intervene early to mitigate margin squeezes and confront spiraling expenses driven by the labor market, climate change and digital transformation.”

CFOs Must Navigate Carefully Amid Current Market Conditions

Most companies will be unable to deliver the profitable outcomes investors have come to expect across much of the last decade, as the convergence of low rates, suppressed wages and steady economic growth that enabled those results no

longer exists. This will lead many organizations to seek out new strategies for hitting earnings targets.

Organizations will struggle to manage the gap between reality and perception of cost savings from continued investments in automation. Without true end-to-end process automation, any time savings from automation will be fractional (e.g., displacing one-third of a full-time employee but not a whole one).

Traditional sources of capital funding such as bank lending or bond issues will become less viable as lenders and investors put greater scrutiny on near-term payback risk. Small or midsize margin-tight companies may struggle to cover interest expenses and become “zombie” companies confronting the prospect of bankruptcy or acquisition.

“Reliable strategies that CFOs have employed to mitigate similar market conditions in the past, such as selling, general and administrative expenses (SG&A) cost reductions, are no longer as feasible or effective given that expensive investments in digital technology and skills are necessary for transforming corporate functions,” added Rathindran.

Recalibrate Expectations, Reduce Complexity, Right-Size SG&A Costs

In response to market conditions that will continue to shrink EBITDA margins for the foreseeable future, CFOs should recalibrate stakeholder expectations regarding financial models. Conducting a stress test of financial assumptions around run rates for revenue, volumes and costs can help identify potential gaps between reality and perception.

CFOs can consider right-sizing selling, general and administrative costs by taking a broader view of cost optimization. This is not exclusive to just cost-cutting but also cost-avoidance, cost-shifting and value optimization to find savings while protecting critical organizational capabilities and transformation investments.

“CFOs can help their organizations overcome reliance on high-interest debt by broadening their view of funding sources beyond bank lending and corporate bonds,” said Rathindran. “Financial leadership should explore secondary equity issues, venture capital and nondilutive financing options such as public-private consortia.”



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

CLIMATE METRICS SURGE IN EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION PLANS — FROM 25% TO 54% IN JUST TWO YEARS



@Pcess609 / Adobe Stock

The share of S&P 500 companies integrating climate-related metrics into their executives' compensation plans more than doubled over the past two years, according to a new report from The Conference Board based on disclosure data from ESGAUGE.

Executive compensation was tied to climate-related metrics by about 25% of S&P 500 firms in 2021 but rose to 54% in 2023. The percentage also doubled in the Russell 3000 index, going from 16% to 32%.

Moreover, as the rate of adoption of climate and other ESG performance metrics increases, companies have also started using them in long-term incentive (LTI) plans: The share of S&P 500 companies that use ESG metrics in both annual and long-term incentive plans grew from 7% in 2021 to 12% in 2023.

“Companies that have not yet adopted ESG metrics for driving environmental performance should explore this avenue, especially in industries that have a significant environmental impact,” said Matteo Tonello, managing director at The Conference Board ESG Center and author of the report. “When implementing such metrics, companies should tailor them to their unique environmental risks and opportunities, rather than relying on off-the-shelf emission targets.”

Additional findings and insights include:

The use of climate-related metrics in incentive plans is primarily a function of the business sector in which the company operates.

- Business activities with traditionally high environmental impact are increasingly turning to carbon footprint and emission reduction metrics. For example, in energy companies, the adoption of these metrics grew from 37% in 2021 to 68% in 2023, and in utility firms, it grew from 24% to 39%.

- Those in sectors, such as healthcare (9%), financial (9%) and communication services (15%), are less likely to include such metrics even though companies in these industries may have a significant direct or indirect environmental impact.

Larger companies are more likely to integrate environmental metrics in compensation plans.

- Two-thirds (67%) of Russell 3000 companies with annual revenues of \$50 billion or more use environmental performance metrics, a significant increase from 27% in 2021.
- Only 15% of companies with annual revenue under \$100 million use such performance metrics, a share virtually unchanged compared to 2021.

While considering ESG as part of individual performance assessments continues to be the predominant practice, large companies are moving toward more quantifiable and less discretionary objectives.

- 31% of S&P 500 companies use discrete, standalone ESG metrics, up from 26% in 2021. In the Russell 3000, the percentage rose slightly from 18% to 19%.
- The share of companies using strategic scorecards, which combine one or more ESG metrics, increased from 21% to 35% in the S&P 500 and from 10% to 18% in the Russell 3000.

Companies are starting to use ESG performance metrics in their long-term incentive plans.



@Pungu x / Adobe Stock

- A growing number of companies are using these measures in both their annual and long-term incentive plans – in the S&P 500, the percentage increased from 7% in 2021 to 13% in 2023, while in the Russell 3000, it grew from 5% to 8%.

“Thanks to the increased familiarity with ESG metrics and access to extensive benchmarking data, companies are better positioned to

incorporate ESG measures into their long-term incentive programs,” said Steve Cross, managing director of FW Cook. “Given the enduring nature of many ESG objectives, their inclusion in LTI plans can be a strategic and logical choice.”

The most frequently used ESG performance metrics reflect companies’ commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

- More than three-quarters (75%) of S&P 500 companies use DEI metrics, up more than 20 percentage points in two years. In the Russell 3000, the percentage rose from 29% to 49%.
- That pace outstrips more traditional operating metrics, such as customer satisfaction (which 37% of S&P 500 companies and 29% of Russell 3000 used, according to 2023 filings) and employee health and safety (31% in the S&P 500 and 27% in the Russell 3000).

Talent development metrics are prevalent across all sectors but are especially common in industries that rely on highly specialized skills and are in highly competitive labor markets.

- According to the business sector analysis conducted on the Russell 3000 index,

financial (32%), healthcare (28%) and information technology companies (20%) use performance metrics related to talent development.

- Metrics such as recruitment, retention and turnover are especially popular with healthcare (43%) and financial companies (37%).

“Compensation committees should pinpoint and prioritize ESG factors aligning with their company’s overarching long-term business strategy,” said Umesh Chandra Tiwari, executive director of ESGAUGE. “As companies embed sustainability more extensively into their operations, it becomes imperative to choose incentives that not only align with a broader societal purpose but also contribute to a competitive edge.”



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.



Recognized as a Financial Visionary

Donald E. Evenson CFA, Senior Vice President and Chief Investment Officer

cbbank.com | [in](https://www.linkedin.com)



A Financial Services Company

Equal Housing Lender | Member FDIC

02.24

UCLA Anderson Forecast Data Indicates ‘No Recession’

California’s slower-growing economy continues to outpace the weak growth of the U.S. economy.



@makibestphoto / Adobe Stock

In its fourth and final economic forecast of 2023, the UCLA Anderson Forecast reported that the threat of imminent recession has faded. This development results from expansionary fiscal policy, new national industrial policy and a consumer that continues to spend, despite overall economic uncertainty. However, growth in the U.S. economy will be tempered as interest rates remain high and inflation rates only slowly recede.

In California, employment growth slowed at a rate higher than expected. Though the state’s economy will continue to grow more quickly than the nation’s, the difference will, for the first time in several years, be quite small. This is in part because of slower U.S. economic growth, a slowdown in investment and slower logistics sector growth.

The National Forecast

A brief history lesson enables better understanding of the current national economic outlook: From January 1994 through March 1995, the U.S. economy was buffeted by a string of seemingly negative news, including rising interest rates and a sinking Treasury yield curve. The rising interest rates contributed to the bankruptcy of Orange County, and a 1995 government shutdown loomed.

All this negativity led some economists to forecast a recession, despite the fact that the data underlying the headlines indicated otherwise. Ultimately, the U.S. economy grew 4% in 1994, 2.7% in 1995 and 3.8% in 1996. Although the 1995 economy was very different from today, there are similar headlines.

The 2023 debt ceiling and government shutdown crises turned out to be short-lived, as did labor strife in the auto industry. Retail sales remained strong through September

and weaker in October, related to the temporary UAW strike. The backlog of durable goods orders continues to grow, and factory construction is soaring. Though core inflation is coming down slowly, the UCLA Anderson Forecast does not expect the Fed to increase the effective federal funds rate for the balance of the year. The Fed is expected to hold the rate where it currently sits until sufficient weakness in the economy (which Anderson economists forecast for mid-to-late 2024) results in some moderate rate reductions.

Circumstances in 2023 are different, but the current forecast shows a somewhat similar pattern to 1994 through 1996, when negative news overshadowed positive signs in the underlying economic data. The oft-predicted but never seen “recession next quarter” has now faded in the face of expansionary fiscal policy, new national industrial policy and a consumer who is happy to continue spending. The impact of higher interest rates will be felt in restraining growth in 2024. Inflation is slowly working its way back to the neighborhood of 2.8% per year, primarily because of residential rents, automobile repair and new health insurance premiums.





@VideoFlow / Adobe Stock

@Phata / Adobe Stock

Nevertheless, the Forecast expects Fed policy to take a neutral stance in the slow-growth 2024 economy. Economic growth is expected to rebound to trend rates by the end of 2025.

Nevertheless, there are risks to the forecast. A protracted government shutdown was averted until 2024, but the possibility still exists. In addition, geopolitical events might upset the current growth pattern. On the more distant horizon, uncertainty about the election in November might result in significantly weaker business investment and consumer spending. These risks are substantial and bear watching, as they could well drive the economy off its current growth path.

The December 2023 UCLA Anderson Forecast for the U.S. is similar to the forecast presented in early October. In September the forecast expected GDP growth in the third quarter of 2023 to be reported at 2.3%, and it came in at an astonishing 4.8%. That was owing in part to inventory replacement following a weak inventory accumulation the previous quarter. Less inventory adjustment is now expected in the current quarter, so the

forecast is slightly weaker than three months ago and is now at 1.7%. The balance of the forecast is much the same as the September forecast, featuring a weaker 2024 with three quarters of 1% growth which then accelerates back to 2.5% trend growth by the end of the forecast horizon in 2025. The weaker, under-trend 2024 growth reflects the impact of higher interest rates on consumption, housing and business investment.

The California Forecast

During the early part of this year, uncertainty about California's 2023 economic outlook was elevated because of the uncertainty in national economic policy. Even though recession worries have faded, increased military activity abroad and a sense of greater geopolitical risk has kept uncertainty about the future high.

This uncertainty factor, combined with a slowed U.S. economy in 2024, suggests a slower-growing California economy. There is some indication in the employment numbers that the fourth quarter of 2023 and the early quarters of 2024 will see small but positive growth. However, the data signals are mixed.

California's labor force has declined of late, and the unemployment rate has been inching up. While there are still tailwinds in the data, they have moved from relatively strong to a very mild breeze. As such, there is less confidence in California outperforming the U.S. in 2024 than there was three months ago.

A sector-by-sector analysis results in a forecast for the California economy to, once again, grow faster than the U.S., but not by much.

The unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2023 is expected to average 4.7%, and the average for 2024 and 2025 is expected to be 4.5% and 3.8%, respectively. The forecast for 2024 and 2025 is for total employment growth rates to be 0.3% and 0.9%. Non-farm payroll jobs are expected to grow at a 1.8% and 1.7% rate during the same two years. Real personal income is forecast to grow by 1.7% in 2024 and 2.7% in 2025.

In spite of the higher interest rates, the continued demand for a limited housing stock, coupled with state policies that induce new homebuilding, should result in the beginning of a recovery this year followed by solid growth in new home production thereafter. The current expectation is for 127,000 new units to be permitted in 2024 and permitted new units to grow to 155,000 in 2025. Needless to say, this level of home building means that the prospect for the private sector building out of the housing affordability problem over the next three years is nil.



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

Bank Economists Express Cautious Optimism About Credit Conditions

@Arsenii / Adobe Stock

While bank economists expect credit conditions to continue to weaken compared to the extremely strong position of the last few years, their outlook for the first half of the year is notably more optimistic, according to the American Bankers Association's latest Credit Conditions Index released recently.

The latest summary of ABA's Credit Conditions Index examines a suite of indices derived from the quarterly outlook for credit markets produced by ABA's Economic Advisory Committee (EAC). The EAC includes chief economists from North America's largest banks. Readings above 50 indicate that, on net, bank economists expect business and household credit conditions to improve, while readings below 50 indicate an expected deterioration.

The Credit Conditions Index improved to its highest level in six quarters as EAC members expressed cautious optimism about the

prospects for the U.S. economy this year, according to the Q1 2024 report:

- With job growth expected to continue, inflation forecasted to linger above the Federal Reserve's 2% target and interest rates expected to trend lower later this year, the near-term outlook for U.S. consumers remains positive.
- At the same time, credit quality and availability remain areas of concern, particularly for consumer lending.
- Overall, with economic growth predicted to slow this year, banks are expected to continue to exercise caution when extending

credit but to a lesser degree as recession concerns fade away.

"ABA's latest Credit Conditions Index indicates that the economy is on solid footing, and banks intend to continue prudently extending credit to both consumers and businesses," said ABA Chief Economist Sayee Srinivasan. "The prospect of lower interest rates later this year should boost confidence and credit demand to sustain business growth. However, banks will remain vigilant should signs of unexpected weakness develop."

For the first quarter release:

- **The Headline Credit Index** increased 14.8 points in Q1 to 19.2, reflecting a general improvement in optimism among bank economists. However, the sub-50 reading still indicates that lenders are likely to continue to exercise caution when extending credit to both businesses and consumers over the coming two quarters.
- **The Consumer Credit Index** rose 9.8 points from a series low to 11.5 in Q1. Though the index improved modestly, only one EAC member expects consumer credit availability to improve in the next six months, and no members expect consumer credit quality to improve. Overall, the sub-50 reading suggests that credit conditions for consumers will continue to weaken over the next two quarters, driven mostly by concerns about credit quality rather than credit availability.
- **The Business Credit Index** improved 19.8 points in Q1 to 26.9. Though the majority of EAC members still expect business credit quality to deteriorate over the next six months, nearly half expect business credit availability to improve. Overall, the sub-50 reading indicates that credit conditions for businesses are likely to weaken over the next two quarters.

The ABA Credit Conditions Index is a suite of proprietary diffusion indices derived by the American Bankers Association from surveys of bank chief economists from major North American banking institutions. Since 2002, bank economists have forecasted credit quality and availability for both businesses and consumers, indicating whether they expect conditions to improve, hold steady or deteriorate over the ensuing six months.



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

CEOs Rank National Debt as the Top Geopolitics Threat in 2024

Global uncertainty could play an outsized role, but the United States has an urgent need to reduce and address debt, say experts.

The global economy's continued challenges, including rising operating costs; labor challenges; trade tensions between the U.S., China and Europe; wars in the Middle East and Ukraine; threatening events in the Pacific; and political uncertainty in Latin America all make for a volatile and unsettling global picture in 2024. How can business leaders win through all the chaos and disruption and become tomorrow's leaders with future-ready organizations?

Since 1999, The Conference Board, a nonprofit business membership and research group organization, has surveyed CEOs and later C-suite executives across the globe to identify the most critical issues they face and the strategies they

are developing to meet them. Its latest survey, conducted in fall of 2023, asked 1,247 C-suite executives, including 630 CEOs, for their views on external and internal stress points, emerging AI technology, geopolitical risks, human capital management and sustainability through the lens of ESG.

Dr. Lori Esposito Murray, president of the Committee for Economic Development, the public policy center of The Conference Board (CED), said "U.S. CEOs say the geopolitical risk that concerns them the most regarding business operations is

[Continued on page 66]



©W.Scott McGill / Adobe Stock



It's personal



Michal Miron
California Regional Manager

Congratulations, Michal Miron!

IDB Bank salutes Michal Miron for her vision and leadership of our West Coast operations, and in recognition of her commitment to driving growth through the power of relationship-first banking.

More than
\$1 Billion
Book of Business

100+
New
Relationships

More than
\$320 Million
2023 New Financing

Creating opportunity for our community of clients and partners



Commercial Real Estate



Commercial & Industrial



Health Care



Private Banking



Leading Transformation is the Top Priority for CFOs

Leading digital transformation efforts in the finance function is the top area CFOs are focused on in 2024, according to a recent survey.

In a recent survey conducted by Gartner, Inc. of 185 CFOs conducted in September and October 2023 revealed that improving finance metrics, insights and storytelling, leading change management efforts and optimizing costs were also priorities that over 70% of CFOs considered to be critical to their success.

“The focus on transformation efforts aligns with the increased interest in GenAI and other disruptive technologies. This also speaks to the role the CFO plays in evaluating and aligning investment in these transformative technologies, both in finance and across the enterprise,” said Marko Horvat, vice president of research in the Gartner finance practice.

“Transformation and functional improvement are the predominant themes through the top 10 priorities for 2024,” said Horvat. “Leading change, improving the strategy design and function of the finance team, and leading transformation are three of the top five critical priorities.”

At the same time, however, CFOs foresee considerable difficulties ahead when modernizing finance department structure because efficiently deploying new finance technology into the function can be time-consuming and disruptive to day-to-day activities.

“Building technology delivery capacity in finance often requires finance executives to partner with external consultants and internal IT teams to advance projects while continuing to run the function in its current state,” said Horvat. “As the number and scope of these projects grow, it becomes increasingly difficult to find capacity within the finance function to adequately address the needs of these projects.

Gartner experts advised that successful transformation efforts in finance tend to require that the CFO actively leads technology delivery efforts, rather than simply engaging and collaborating with IT departments.

“What we hear broadly from CFOs is that digital initiatives aren’t meeting their expectations,” said Horvat. “Unless CFOs reassess how they and their teams lead digital initiatives, those initiatives will continue to disappoint.”

Gartner research shows that digital initiatives that have a better-than-even chance of realizing the intended benefits are those where finance leadership are focused on digital delivery: the actual creation or implementation and management of a digital system.



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

Percentage of CFOs selecting a priority as critical



Source: The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council, 1st quarter 2024

Busting the Myth that Affordable Higher Education is an Impossible Dream

We all know untenable student loan debt has been commanding the news since the last election cycle. Politicians are driven by the reality that an astounding percentage of Americans feel access to quality, affordable higher education is simply out of reach.

According to a national survey by the 2022 Lumina-Gallup State of Higher Education Study,¹ fewer than 10% of Americans not in college believe that quality, affordable higher education is available to those who want it.

A similar 9% of young people – whether enrolled in community colleges or post-secondary institutions – also feel that quality, affordable higher education is readily available to those who want it. The percentage remains the same with those who are not currently enrolled in such programs, showing that the affordability of higher education is not just experiencing a perception problem but is in the midst of a full-blown crisis of confidence.

The same study found that nearly 60% of students currently enrolled in college feel that a two-year or four-year degree is more critical for their careers than it was 20 years ago, while 30% believe it holds the same value as it did in the past. More than three-quarters of those not enrolled in school believe attaining a higher education degree is as important or more important than ever. The value of higher education has not diminished in the minds of American students and non-students.

So, given how vital education and attaining a degree are to the success and prosperity of Americans, what are universities and colleges



University of West Los Angeles School of Business Master of Science in Organizational Leadership degree recipient Anthony B. Mack celebrates his degree with a hug from a classmate. (Courtesy of UWLA)

doing to make access and affordability a priority? From the looks of it, not much.

“According to the researchers’ analysis² of the U.S. Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Center for Education Statistics data for the years 1980 to 2019, college costs have increased by 169% over the past four decades – while earnings for workers between the ages of 22 and 27 have increased by just 19%.”

Simply put, leading educational institutions are often out of reach due to the high costs. A June 2023 statewide poll suggests many Californians believe the University of California and California State University are unaffordable and that community colleges and vocational training are alternative paths to career success.³

Delivering Affordable Higher Education is Feasible

Delivering affordable higher education is not only feasible, but it’s also available today. At UWLA, our vision is “democratization of

education.” Part of our mission is to make quality higher and post-graduate education affordable and accessible to those who might not otherwise have the opportunity – especially those who must work full-time and study part-time.

As president of UWLA, I am working to bring this reality to our diverse student base in many ways.

First, we formed a for-profit organization that runs the business of education for UWLA. As such, we work continuously to keep our overhead down while providing personalized student services and high-quality faculty using a modern curriculum. We are private which allows our incentives to be focused around quality education and student success. We don’t have sports teams, nor the expensive facilities and salaries to support them.

We focus on practical, outcome-oriented education taught by esteemed faculty who are also practitioners in their field. With a student body that includes many working students, we ensure that

the education provided at UWLA is more than theoretical; it’s useful.

As I often say, our UWLA students can use what they learn on Thursday at their work on Monday.

So, what have we created? With the hard work of dedicated administrators, an exceptional professional staff and outstanding faculty members, we deliver a streamlined, high-touch learning experience that rivals institutions many times our size and cost.

We know our strengths as an educational institution, and we focus on the most meaningful things to our students. That means adding only a few extraneous studies or programs. Our students come to pursue degree completion of a Bachelor of Science in business administration or return to school to secure a Master of Science in leadership, management and technology to advance or catalyze their career in business.

Are our programs affordable? I challenge anyone to compare our costs against a comparable education. We will show we are markedly less, even before factoring in scholarship opportunities and access to Federal Financial Aid, which we can help with. UWLA is proof positive that the myth of affordable higher education is busted. Our graduates’ continuing success proves that our approach is making a real and impactful difference in the lives of so many who wish to better themselves personally and professionally.

Since 1966, UWLA has been privileged to help launch or enhance the careers of thousands of its graduates.

– Robert Brown, Esq., President, UWLA

¹ [gallup.com/opinion/gallup/392366/few-say-quality-affordable-higher-widely-available.aspx](https://www.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/392366/few-say-quality-affordable-higher-widely-available.aspx)

² [cnbc.com/2021/11/02/the-gap-in-college-costs-and-earnings-for-young-workers-since-1980.html](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/02/the-gap-in-college-costs-and-earnings-for-young-workers-since-1980.html)

³ strategies360.com/landing/californiapolling

Technology Extends Client Touch Points for Banks

◀ Chang Liu

◀ Ash Patel

◀ Kathy Jumper

▶ Nathan Rogge

▲ Christopher M. Naghibi

In a year filled with uncertainty in the banking sector, SoCal banks and their leaders remain optimistic and push for customer growth at the community level

The financial sector was rattled last year by rising interest rates, increased competition, and several nationwide bank closures. Nevertheless, there is optimism among many community banks who have withstood these challenges. The Southern California banking and finance industry is dominated by local community and ethnic institutions that typically have less than \$25 billion in assets.

While many local and ethnic banks confront the changing bank landscape, there has been renewed activity for bank mergers and acquisitions. These bank mergers may provide efficiencies of scale and expand the regions in which the banks operate. One of the largest bank mergers in the country last year involved two Southern California banks. Banc of California completed a merger with PacWest Bancorp in November that combined banks with a total of \$46 billion in assets as of September 30. The combined bank operates under the Banc of California name and is headquartered in Los Angeles.

“Higher interest rates have increased both our yield on earning assets and our cost of funds, but these impacts have largely offset each other.”

—Ash Patel

In January 2024, the parent companies for San Diego-based Bank of Southern California, which had \$2.3 billion in assets as of September 30, and Walnut Creek-based California Bank of Commerce, which had \$2 billion in assets, announced a definitive merger agreement that is expected to close in the third quarter.

While the changing economic landscape has led to consolidation in the industry, other banks reported that higher interest rates have not significantly altered their operations. Many banks stressed to shareholders in annual reports that had little exposure to the same factors that led to bank closures last year.

“Today’s higher interest rates have increased both our yield on earning assets and our cost of funds, but these impacts have largely offset each other,” said Ash Patel, chief executive of Irvine-based Commercial Bank of California. “We have not experienced a deterioration in borrower performance, in contrast to many other institutions.”

Banks recognize that customers may benefit from higher deposit rates, but their ability to borrow may be impacted by higher loan rates. In an effort to retain and attract customers, many have offered higher rates on financial products,

“We launched an upgraded mobile banking platform with enhanced features to improve user experience.”

—Kathy Jumper

such as checking accounts, savings accounts and CDs. And the numbers can be attractive following a prolonged period of low interest rates.

“By offering one of the highest earnings credit rates in Southern California, we have been successful in bringing new clients to the bank,” said Nathan Rogge, chief executive of First Pacific Bank in San Diego.

Nevertheless, the lending business has been altered by the lingering effects of lower overall commercial office usage, especially for those

“By offering one of the highest earnings credit rates in Southern California, we have been successful in bringing new clients to the bank.”

—Nathan Rogge

who have large commercial real estate portfolios, but many community and regional banks do not cater to that sector. Additionally, many borrowers were able to lock in low rates during

[Continued on page 66]

TOP 50 BANKS

in SoCal 

LA Times B2B Publishing is proud to present the list of the 50 largest banks headquartered in Southern California ranked by assets. Financial information is current as of September 30, 2023, and was provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp, which regulates banks.




In November, Banc of California completed a merger with PacWest Bancorp. The combined bank operates under the Banc of California name and brand and is headquartered in Los Angeles. It now operates more than 70 branches in California, Colorado and North Carolina. As of September 30, 2023, the banks held combined assets of \$46 billion. However, they sold assets worth approximately \$1.9 billion as part of a balance sheet repositioning strategy in conjunction with the merger. Furthermore, Banc of California separately sold a \$1.8 billion single-family residential mortgage portfolio.

On January 30, 2024, San Diego-based Southern California Bancorp, the holding company for Bank of Southern California, and Walnut Creek-based California BanCorp, the holding company for California Bank of Commerce, jointly announced the execution of a definitive merger agreement. The transaction is expected to close in the third quarter of 2024.

City National Bank, which is a subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada, leads the list with \$96.8 billion in assets. Overall, the 50 largest banks headquartered in Southern California hold \$415 billion in assets as of September 30. They employ more than 25,000 people and operate more than 900 branches.

To view this list online, visit latimes.com/b2b

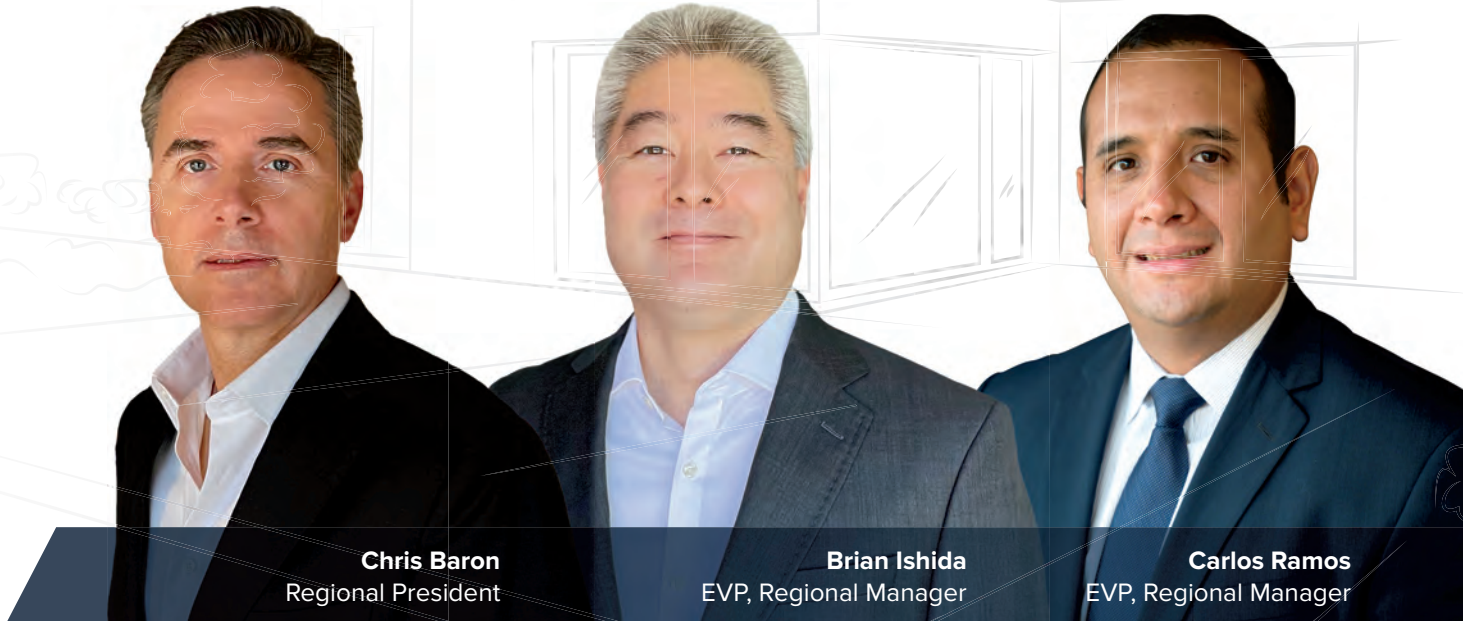
Please send corrections or inquiries about inclusion in future lists to b2bpublishing@latimes.com.

1		City National Bank cnb.com	Total Assets: \$96.8 billion Established: 1954 Employees: 6,500 Branches: 65 Headquarters: Los Angeles	Howard Hammond Chief Executive Officer
2		East West Bank eastwestbank.com	Total Assets: \$68.2 billion Established: 1973 Employees: 3,179 Branches: 126 Headquarters: Pasadena	Dominic Ng Chairman & CEO
3		Banc of California bancofcal.com	Total Assets: \$46 billion Established: 1941 Employees: 2,100 Branches: 80 Headquarters: Los Angeles	Jared Wolff CEO & President
4		Cathay Bank cathaybank.com	Total Assets: \$22.8 billion Established: 1962 Employees: 1,218 Branches: 64 Headquarters: Los Angeles	Chang Liu CEO & President
5		Pacific Premier Bank ppbi.com	Total Assets: \$20.3 billion Established: 1983 Employees: 1,356 Branches: 60 Headquarters: Irvine	Steven Gardner Chairman & CEO
6		Bank of Hope bankofhope.com	Total Assets: \$20.1 billion Established: 1980 Employees: 1,253 Branches: 54 Headquarters: Los Angeles	Kevin Kim Chairman, CEO & President
7		Axos Bank axosbank.com	Total Assets: \$19.9 billion Established: 2000 Employees: 1,218 Branches: 2 Headquarters: San Diego	Gregory Garrabrants CEO & President
8		Citizens Business Bank cbbank.com	Total Assets: \$15.9 billion Established: 1974 Employees: 1,046 Branches: 69 Headquarters: Ontario	David Brager CEO & President



**BANC OF
CALIFORNIA**

POWERFUL LEADERS. **EMPOWERING** BUSINESSES.



Chris Baron
Regional President

Brian Ishida
EVP, Regional Manager

Carlos Ramos
EVP, Regional Manager

Our standout professionals are changing the
landscape of banking.

Congratulations to Chris Baron, Brian Ishida, and Carlos Ramos for being recognized as 2024 Banking & Finance Industry Visionaries by L.A. Times B2B Publishing.

Their experience and expertise have helped to make Banc of California one of the most respected business banks in the country.

TOGETHER WE WIN[®]

[bancofcal.com](https://www.bancofcal.com)



Scan the QR code
to learn more about
what makes us
**CALIFORNIA'S
BUSINESS BANK.**

TOP 50 BANKS *in SoCal*

9



First Foundation Bank

firstfoundationinc.com
Total Assets: **\$13 billion**Established: **1990** Employees: **576**Branches: **30** Headquarters: **Irvine**

Christopher Naghibi
EVP,
Chief Operating Officer

10



Farmers & Merchants Bank

fmb.com
Total Assets: **\$12.5 billion**Established: **1907** Employees: **815**Branches: **26** Headquarters: **Long Beach**

Henry Walker
Chief Executive Officer

11



Hanmi Bank

hanmi.com
Total Assets: **\$7.33 billion**Established: **1982** Employees: **610**Branches: **43** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Bonnie Lee
CEO & President

12



Preferred Bank

preferredbank.com
Total Assets: **\$6.63 billion**Established: **1991** Employees: **305**Branches: **17** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Li Yu
Chairman & CEO

13



First American Trust FSB

firstamtrust.com
Total Assets: **\$6.22 billion**Established: **1985** Employees: **186**Branches: **10** Headquarters: **Santa Ana**

Matt McCreadie
Chief Executive Officer

14



Mizrahi Tefahot Bank USA

umtbusa.com
Total Assets: **\$5.81 billion**Established: **1923** Employees: **NA**Branches: **1** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Eitan Sapir
Head of U.S. Banking

15



CTBC Bank (USA)

ctcbankusa.com
Total Assets: **\$5.2 billion**Established: **1989** Employees: **375**Branches: **21** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Noor Menai
Chief Executive Officer

16



SMBC MANUBANK

smbcmanubank.com
Total Assets: **\$4.74 billion**Established: **1962** Employees: **745**Branches: **9** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Kazuhisa Miyagawa
Chairman & CEO

17



Royal Business Bank

royalbusinessbankusa.com
Total Assets: **\$4.07 billion**Established: **2008** Employees: **380**Branches: **25** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

David Morris
Chief Executive Officer

18



American Business Bank

americanbb.bank
Total Assets: **\$3.87 billion**Established: **1998** Employees: **241**Branches: **8** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Leon Blankstein
Chief Executive Officer

19



PCB Bank

mypcbbank.com
Total Assets: **\$2.57 billion**Established: **2003** Employees: **270**Branches: **16** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**

Henry Kim
CEO & President

20



Bank of Southern California

banksocal.com
Total Assets: **\$2.32 billion**Established: **2001** Employees: **201**Branches: **13** Headquarters: **San Diego**

David Rainer
Chairman & CEO

TOP 50 BANKS *in SoCal*


21  **Commercial Bank of California**
cbcal.com
 Total Assets: **\$2.25 billion**
 Established: **2003** Employees: **201**
 Branches: **7** Headquarters: **Irvine**
Ash Patel
 Chairman, CEO & President

22  **Open Bank**
myopenbank.com
 Total Assets: **\$2.14 billion**
 Established: **2005** Employees: **231**
 Branches: **16** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**
Min Kim
 CEO & President

23  **Montecito Bank & Trust**
montecito.bank
 Total Assets: **\$2.08 billion**
 Established: **1975** Employees: **283**
 Branches: **16** Headquarters: **Santa Barbara**
Janet Garufis
 Chairman & CEO

24  **CalPrivate Bank**
calprivate.bank
 Total Assets: **\$2.07 billion**
 Established: **2006** Employees: **200**
 Branches: **6** Headquarters: **La Jolla**
Rick Sowers
 CEO & President

25  **CBB Bank**
cbb-bank.com
 Total Assets: **\$1.86 billion**
 Established: **2005** Employees: **169**
 Branches: **14** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**
James Hong
 CEO & President

26  **Malaga Bank**
malagabank.com
 Total Assets: **\$1.55 billion**
 Established: **1985** Employees: **71**
 Branches: **6** Headquarters: **Palos Verdes Estates**
Randy Bowers
 CEO & President




Cathay Bank


Cathay Bank is proud to be recognized as a **Top Bank by L.A. Times B2B Publishing**

Your Financial Journey
Is Our Business

Founded in 1962 in Los Angeles



cathaybank.com
 800-922-8429

Follow Us   

WeChat ID: [cathaybankus](https://www.cathaybankus.com)

MEMBER **FDIC**
MEMBERSHIP SUBJECT TO CREDIT REVIEW



BANKING
 For Creators

We empower the people in entertainment as they bring their stories to life. Take advantage of our full suite of products and services designed to help you achieve financial success.




Membership eligibility rules apply.
 Federally insured by NCUA.

Learn more at FirstEnt.org

TOP 50 BANKS *in SoCal*

27



Provident Savings Bank

myprovident.com
Total Assets: **\$1.31 billion**

Established: 1956 Employees: 158

Branches: 14 Headquarters: **Riverside**
Donavon Ternes

CEO & President

28



American Riviera Bank

americanriviera.bank
Total Assets: **\$1.27 billion**

Established: 2006 Employees: 137

Branches: 7 Headquarters: **Santa Barbara**
Jeff DeVine

CEO & President

29



US Metro Bank

usmetrobank.com
Total Assets: **\$1.2 billion**

Established: 2006 Employees: 139

Branches: 9 Headquarters: **Garden Grove**
Dong Il Kim

CEO & President

30



First General Bank

fgbusa.com
Total Assets: **\$1.16 billion**

Established: 2005 Employees: 71

Branches: 5 Headquarters: **Rowland Heights**
Cliff Hsu

CEO & President

31



State Bank of India (California)

sbical.com
Total Assets: **\$1.15 billion**

Established: 1982 Employees: 91

Branches: 7 Headquarters: **Los Angeles**
Salila Pande

Chief Executive Officer

32



CommerceWest Bank

cwbk.com
Total Assets: **\$1.06 billion**

Established: 2001 Employees: 100

Branches: 1 Headquarters: **Irvine**
Ivo Tjan

Chairman, CEO & President

33



Nano Banc

nanobanc.com
Total Assets: **\$949 million**

Established: 2007 Employees: 76

Branches: 2 Headquarters: **Irvine**
Scott Racusin

Chief Executive Officer

34



HCN Bank

hcnbank.com
Total Assets: **\$920 million**

Established: 1974 Employees: 88

Branches: 6 Headquarters: **Riverside**
Kevin Farrenkopf

CEO & President

35



Evertrust Bank

evertrustbank.com
Total Assets: **\$887 million**

Established: 1995 Employees: 88

Branches: 8 Headquarters: **City of Industry**
Charles Hsieh

CEO & President

36



C3Bank

c3bank.com
Total Assets: **\$861 million**

Established: 1984 Employees: 54

Branches: 4 Headquarters: **Encinitas**
A.J. Moyer

Chief Executive Officer

37



First Commercial Bank USA

bankfcb.com
Total Assets: **\$848 million**

Established: 1997 Employees: 102

Branches: 8 Headquarters: **Alhambra**
Jacob Chen

Chief Executive Officer

38



Golden State Bank

goldenstatebank.com
Total Assets: **\$712 million**

Established: 2003 Employees: 60

Branches: 2 Headquarters: **Glendale**
Mercedes Herrera

CEO & President

TOP 50 BANKS *in SoCal*

39



American Plus Bank

bankplus.com
Total Assets: **\$670 million**Established: **2007** Employees: **45**Branches: **3** Headquarters: **Arcadia**
John Nerland

CEO & President

40



GBC International Bank

gbcib.com
Total Assets: **\$607 million**Established: **1976** Employees: **86**Branches: **8** Headquarters: **Los Angeles**
Dennis Lam

CEO & President

41



Mission Valley Bank

missionvalleybank.com
Total Assets: **\$587 million**Established: **2001** Employees: **90**Branches: **2** Headquarters: **Sun Valley**
Tamara Gurney

CEO & President

42



First Credit Bank

cafc.com
Total Assets: **\$555 million**Established: **1983** Employees: **24**Branches: **1** Headquarters: **West Hollywood**
Farhad Ghassemieh

Chief Executive Officer

43



Endeavor Bank

endeavor.bank
Total Assets: **\$554 million**Established: **2018** Employees: **60**Branches: **3** Headquarters: **San Diego**
Dan Yates

Chief Executive Officer

44



Liberty Bank

libertybk.com
Total Assets: **\$544 million**Established: **2001** Employees: **72**Branches: **4** Headquarters: **Irvine**
Don Griffith

Chief Executive Officer

45



New Omni Bank

newomnibank.com
Total Assets: **\$542 million**Established: **1980** Employees: **64**Branches: **3** Headquarters: **Alhambra**
Chris Huang

Chairman & CEO

46



Mega Bank

megabankusa.com
Total Assets: **\$471 million**Established: **2008** Employees: **54**Branches: **4** Headquarters: **San Gabriel**
Julian Fong

CEO & President

47

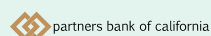


Chino Commercial Bank

chinocommercialbank.com
Total Assets: **\$465 million**Established: **2000** Employees: **58**Branches: **4** Headquarters: **Chino**
Dann Bowman

Chief Executive Officer

48



Partners Bank of California

pbofca.com
Total Assets: **\$458 million**Established: **2007** Employees: **43**Branches: **2** Headquarters: **Mission Viejo**
Michael Chambers

President

49



First Pacific Bank

firstpacbank.com
Total Assets: **\$422 million**Established: **2006** Employees: **47**Branches: **5** Headquarters: **Whittier**
Nathan Rogge

CEO & President

50



Balboa Thrift and Loan

balboathrift.com
Total Assets: **\$394 million**Established: **1980** Employees: **90**Branches: **4** Headquarters: **Chula Vista**
Debbie Escobedo

CEO & President

TOP CREDIT UNIONS

in SoCal 

LA Times B2B Publishing is proud to also present the list of the 25 largest credit unions headquartered in Southern California as ranked by assets. Financial information is current as of September 30, 2023, and was provided by the National Credit Union Administration, a government-backed insurer that regulates credit unions.

Credit unions typically operate as nonprofit organizations that require membership to join based on geographic or employment criteria. For example, Partners Federal Credit Union is open to current and retired employees of the Walt Disney Company. Membership at Valencia-based Logix Credit Union is based on where members live – eligibility includes residence in eight states, including California.

Tustin-based SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union leads the list with \$28.8 billion in assets. It serves educational communities in California and is open to school employees (and their immediate family members), as well as students pursuing careers in education and employees of companies whose primary business is to provide services to schools. SchoolsFirst had more than 1.3 million members as of September 30.

Overall, the 25 largest credit unions headquartered in Southern California hold \$117 billion in assets and have more than five million members as of September 30. As a group, they employ more than 13,000 people and operate more than 500 branches.

To view this list online, visit latimes.com/b2b

Please send corrections or inquiries about inclusion in future lists to b2bpublishing@latimes.com.

1		SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union schoolsfirstfcu.org	Total Assets: \$28.8 billion Established: 1934 # of Members: 1,346,457 Branches: 72 Headquarters: Tustin	Bill Cheney Chief Executive Officer
2		San Diego County Credit Union sdccu.com	Total Assets: \$12.7 billion Established: 1938 # of Members: 435,932 Branches: 42 Headquarters: San Diego	Teresa Campbell CEO & President
3		Logix Federal Credit Union logixbanking.com	Total Assets: \$9.81 billion Established: 1937 # of Members: 246,107 Branches: 20 Headquarters: Valencia	Ana Fonseca CEO & President
4		Kinecta Federal Credit Union kinecta.org	Total Assets: \$6.82 billion Established: 1940 # of Members: 262,869 Branches: 29 Headquarters: Manhattan Beach	Keith Sultemeier CEO & President
5		Mission Federal Credit Union missionfed.com	Total Assets: \$6.1 billion Established: 1961 # of Members: 300,116 Branches: 35 Headquarters: San Diego	Doug Wright CEO & President
6		Wescom Credit Union wescom.org	Total Assets: \$5.88 billion Established: 1934 # of Members: 227,345 Branches: 25 Headquarters: Pasadena	Darren Williams CEO & President
7		California Credit Union ccu.com	Total Assets: \$4.72 billion Established: 1933 # of Members: 192,814 Branches: 26 Headquarters: Glendale	Steve O'Connell CEO & President
8		Premier America Credit Union premieramerica.com	Total Assets: \$3.54 billion Established: 1957 # of Members: 115,213 Branches: 22 Headquarters: Chatsworth	Rudy Pereira CEO & President



TOP CREDIT UNIONS *in SoCal*

9



California Coast Credit Union

calcoastcu.org

Total Assets: **\$3.32 billion**

Established: **1929** # of Members: **200,156**

Branches: **26** Headquarters: **San Diego**

Todd Lane
CEO & President

10



NuVision Federal Credit Union

nuvisionfederal.org

Total Assets: **\$3.27 billion**

Established: **1935** # of Members: **160,438**

Branches: **36** Headquarters: **Huntington Beach**

Roger Ballard
Chief Executive Officer

11



Credit Union of Southern California

cusocal.org

Total Assets: **\$2.91 billion**

Established: **1954** # of Members: **154,108**

Branches: **24** Headquarters: **Anaheim**

Dave Edinger
Chief Executive Officer

12



Altura Credit Union

alturacu.com

Total Assets: **\$2.58 billion**

Established: **1957** # of Members: **187,192**

Branches: **22** Headquarters: **Riverside**

Jennifer Binkley
CEO & President

13



Orange County's Credit Union

orangecountyscu.org

Total Assets: **\$2.54 billion**

Established: **1938** # of Members: **131,184**

Branches: **10** Headquarters: **Santa Ana**

Kathy Jumper
Chief Executive Officer



2024 NOMINATION OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the year, L.A. Times B2B Publishing will recognize deserving business leaders who have demonstrated exceptional achievements in their fields.



Learn how to **NOMINATE** individuals for Leadership Awards events and magazines by visiting our nomination hub at:

latimes.com/b2b/nominations

The selection of profiles and honorees as well as the production of B2B events and magazines are organized by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing team. It does not involve the editorial staff of the L.A. Times.















California Credit Union is pleased to be among the Top Credit Unions to be recognized by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing group



ccu.com @ f i n X @californiacreditunion

TOP CREDIT UNIONS *in SoCal*

14		Partners Federal Credit Union partnersfcu.org	Total Assets: \$2.47 billion Established: 1968 # of Members: 178,189 Branches: 11 Headquarters: Burbank	Ricky Otey CEO & President
15		Arrowhead Credit Union arrowheadcu.org	Total Assets: \$2.47 billion Established: 1949 # of Members: 199,372 Branches: 20 Headquarters: Rancho Cucamonga	Darin Woinarowicz CEO & President
16		Financial Partners Credit Union fpcu.org	Total Assets: \$2.26 billion Established: 1937 # of Members: 89,227 Branches: 19 Headquarters: Downey	Nader Moghaddam CEO & President
17		F&A Federal Credit Union fafcu.org	Total Assets: \$2.22 billion Established: 1936 # of Members: 47,414 Branches: 2 Headquarters: Monterey Park	Tim Green CEO & President
18		First Entertainment Credit Union firstent.org	Total Assets: \$2.2 billion Established: 1967 # of Members: 90,134 Branches: 8 Headquarters: Hollywood	Stephen Owen CEO & President
19		Firefighters First Credit Union firefightersfirstcu.org	Total Assets: \$2.13 billion Established: 1935 # of Members: 63,421 Branches: 13 Headquarters: Los Angeles	Dixie Abramian CEO & President
20		Caltech Employees Federal Credit Union cefcu.org	Total Assets: \$2.03 billion Established: 1950 # of Members: 34,410 Branches: 4 Headquarters: La Cañada Flintridge	John Meeker CEO & President
21		LBS Financial Credit Union lbsfcu.org	Total Assets: \$1.97 billion Established: 1935 # of Members: 141,106 Branches: 9 Headquarters: Westminster	Sean Hardeman CEO & President
22		CoastHills Credit Union coasthills.coop	Total Assets: \$1.8 billion Established: 1958 # of Members: 76,901 Branches: 12 Headquarters: Santa Maria	Paul Cook CEO & President
23		Northrop Grumman Federal Credit Union ngfcu.us	Total Assets: \$1.64 billion Established: 1946 # of Members: 73,718 Branches: 24 Headquarters: Gardena	Mark Rabinowitz CEO & President
24		Farmers Insurance Federal Credit Union figfcu.org	Total Assets: \$1.51 billion Established: 1936 # of Members: 61,935 Branches: 10 Headquarters: Burbank	Laura Campbell CEO & President
25		Los Angeles Police Federal Credit Union lapfcu.org	Total Assets: \$1.41 billion Established: 1959 # of Members: 44,895 Branches: 4 Headquarters: Van Nuys	John Roemer CEO & President

Banking and Finance

VISIONARIES

In the complex world of banking and finance, the right commercial banker or a trusted advisor is an invaluable asset. More than providing services and advice, these individuals – and the institutions they represent – can genuinely prepare your organization for the next level of growth and beyond.

Here we present a select group of visionaries for 2024, each an expert who has demonstrated continued successes and achieved numerous accomplishments in the last 24 months – whether that's implementing an infusion of cash, serving as a steward to the CFO or finding the best ways to invest. In addition to shedding light on the right fiscal path, many also serve as pillars in their communities. We hope you enjoy reading about their individual backgrounds and experiences.



**Trever
Acers**

**Founder &
Managing Director**

Objective, Investment
Banking & Valuation
Investment Banking

Trever Acers, founder and managing director of Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation, leads the technology practice for Investment Banking with over 20 years of experience in investment banking, acquisition and strategy. At Objective, he has closed over 25 sell-side transactions in the past five years, driving revenue growth. Notable transactions include the sale of La Jolla Logic to Boecore, Beacon Mobile to DRB and Imagine Reporting to Lexitas. Acers is a central figure in Southern California's M&A market. He contributes to professional organizations and educates at events by Exit Planning Institute, Tech San Diego and the Association of Corporate Growth. Previously he directed financial and strategy consulting at TGG Capital, led private equity activities at The Oxford Investment Group and managed post-acquisition integration at EMC Corporation. Acers is a registered representative of BA Securities LLC holding FINRA Series 79 and Series 63 licenses.

Enrique Aceves, head of global enterprise marketing technology and analytics at Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America (TIAA), spearheads transformative initiatives in marketing technology and analytics. He manages a \$50 million budget and oversees three solution trains with over 200 resources, streamlining systems to save \$5 million annually. Aceves' leadership accelerated TIAA's growth, expanding Retire Plus series assets to over \$10 billion and increasing the client base by 32%. His work on marketing transformation has significantly enhanced the engagement of TIAA financial advisors, which facilitated 475,000 meetings and delivered 181,000 financial plans. This represents a remarkable increase of 38% in engagement over a three-year period. His expertise in marketing technology, analytics and AI is widely recognized as demonstrated by his speaking engagements at prestigious industry events such as Salesforce Dreamforce, Salesforce Connections, Domo Palooza and the Argyle Forum. Additionally, he serves on the Salesforce Data and Marketing Cloud Client Advisory Board.



**Enrique
Aceves**

**Global Head of Enterprise
Marketing Technology & Analytics**
TIAA
Asset/Investment Management



**Neto
Alexander**

Managing Director
Accenture
Private Equity

Neto Alexander, a seasoned senior advisor, specializes in driving corporate and private equity clients through complex growth and margin improvement initiatives, particularly in tech sectors. Notably, he led a \$2B tech services giant through a transformative overhaul, yielding \$180M in margin improvements. He bolstered EBITDA margins by 10% for a B2B services firm and orchestrated an \$80M cost reduction for a \$2B payments tech company. Alexander's expertise extends to post-merger integrations, securing over \$150M in synergies for e-commerce businesses and \$100M in benefits for HR tech mergers. Additionally, his collaboration with a \$700M UCaaS provider yielded \$75M in shared services benefits. Beyond his professional pursuits, Alexander is driven by a deep-seated commitment to leave a lasting, meaningful impact on society, and this passion finds its expression in his volunteer work with Cycle for Survival.

Visionaries

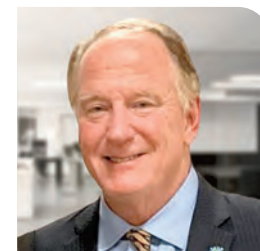


Addie Allison

SVP, Chief Experience Officer
First Entertainment Credit Union
Credit Unions

Addie Allison, senior vice president and chief experience officer at First Entertainment Credit Union, brings 30 years of financial services expertise. As VP of finance and accounting, she managed systems and safeguarded assets. Now, as chief experience officer, she strategizes and oversees daily banking experiences. During the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA strikes, Allison led her team to support affected members with compassion and empathy, providing financial guidance through digital, call center and branch channels. Under her leadership, First Entertainment provided a substantial \$7 million in vital financial assistance and meals during the 200-day strike, reinforcing community commitment. Allison's team offered financial education, emergency loans and fee waivers, onboarding nearly 200 members. Their tailored support establishes First Entertainment as a premier financial partner to entertainment professionals. Her leadership ensures that members receive assistance and empathy during economic fluctuations.

David M.V. Barnes, managing director and head of M&A at Palm Tree LLC, boasts over 30 years of expertise in investment banking, private equity and corporate development. With a track record of closing over 350 M&A deals valued at over \$10 billion, he is a seasoned professional. Formerly, Barnes spearheaded corporate development at Lumio, Inc., orchestrating the consolidation of five top solar companies, resulting in Lumio's emergence as a major player in photovoltaic solar sales. Notably, he secured \$110 million in acquisition capital through Houlihan Lokey for the consolidation. Previously, Barnes held pivotal roles at Cowen & Company and Houlihan Lokey, where he pioneered financial sponsor and hedge fund coverage groups, yielding substantial revenue. He also led M&A efforts at Protection One and held investing positions at Brentwood Associates and Hancock Park Associates. A Harvard graduate with an MBA from UCLA, Barnes is a licensed NASD member.



David M.V. Barnes

Managing Director & Head of M&A
Palm Tree LLC
Investment Banking



Christopher Baron

Regional President
Banc of California
Commercial Banking

Christopher Baron, president of Banc of California's Los Angeles region, boasts over three decades of exemplary banking and finance experience. Formerly president at Pacific Western Bank (PWB), he played a pivotal role in launching tax-exempt lending and focusing on affordable housing before the recent Banc of California acquisition. Leading a team of 75, Baron specializes in real estate and commercial sectors, offering high-quality treasury management products to diverse clients. His expertise spans negotiating structures from unsecured lines of credit to complex real estate transactions, including Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects and lender finance initiatives. Prior to PWB, Baron led significant divisions at MUFG Union Bank and U.S. Bank, facilitating over \$25 billion in credit facilities. He is dedicated to community service; serves on the board of Good Shepherd Catholic School and supports his wife's foundation, Henry's Hope, which has rehomed over 3,000 pets in need.

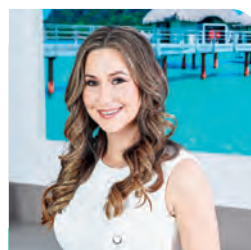


Darnel J. Bentz

Senior Wealth Advisor
Kayne Anderson Rudnick
Wealth Advisors
Asset/Investment Management

Darnel Bentz, senior wealth advisor at Kayne Anderson Rudnick (KAR), embarked on his financial journey after his father's passing during his college years at Arizona State University. Motivated to assist his family, he pursued finance courses, eventually earning an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management. With seven years at Charles Schwab and a stint at KeyBanc Capital Markets, he honed his expertise. At KAR, Bentz integrates alternative investment strategies and crafts customized financial plans, fostering lasting client relationships. In 2023, he attracted over \$41 million in new client assets. He focuses on the integration of alternative investment strategies to complement traditional investment portfolios and customized financial plans. Beyond KAR, Bentz volunteers extensively, coaches youth sports and supports various nonprofits with his family. He supports the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation as well as the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

Letitia Berbaum, partner and chief operating officer of The Zandbergen Group, manages \$330 million in assets, focusing on "true wealth" strategies and successful exit plans. She specializes in high-value business sales and acquisitions, excelling in asset transfer strategies for high-net-worth individuals and multi-generational families. Berbaum's expertise extends to full-service strategic planning for business owners, from startups to exit strategies. A seasoned speaker at prestigious wealth management events, she holds esteemed designations including Accredited Investment Fiduciary® (AIF®) and Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA®). Recognized as an Orange County Five-Star Wealth Manager for seven consecutive years, she advocates for women's advancement through the Brea Chamber of Commerce Women in Leadership Council. Berbaum's insights have been featured in Forbes Business Council, and she received the "Women of Achievement" honor from Senator Bob Archuleta's office for her community contributions.



Letitia Berbaum

Co-Founder & COO
The Zandbergen Group
Asset/Investment Management



Rick Barragan

Managing Director, Market Director for Los Angeles
J.P. Morgan Private Bank
Asset/Investment Management

Rick Barragan is a managing director and market manager in the Los Angeles office of J.P. Morgan Private Bank. He manages a team of bankers and specialists who deliver differentiated strategies that care for the unique requirements of significant wealth. In his more than 35-year career with J.P. Morgan, Barragan has amassed a strong track record in various senior leadership positions spanning various economic cycles. Currently, he plays an influential role in expanding the firm's presence in the Greater Los Angeles area. Barragan began his career in 1988 in the Global Credit Risk Management Group and soon moved to the American Depositary Receipt Group, responsible for client relationships in Latin America and South Africa. During this time, he traveled extensively and helped bring many foreign issuers to the U.S. marketplace. Barragan has also co-chaired and founded the Corporate and Investment Bank Black Leadership Forum.

Visionaries



Samuel Biggs

Partner
SingerLewak
Professional Services

Samuel Biggs, partner at SingerLewak, boasts a multifaceted career in corporate operations, trust and probate matters, M&A and reorganizations. With a tenure as a bankruptcy trustee for the Central District of California and experience as a receiver in both Federal District and California Superior Courts, he has adeptly managed numerous insolvency cases, overseeing troubled businesses, corporate winddowns and liquidations, often involving substantial assets. Founding Biggs & Co., he pioneered specialized services in commercial law, forensic accounting and business reorganization, expanding the firm's scope into a leading Southern California entity. Merging with SingerLewak in 2014, Biggs orchestrated the formation of SLBiggs, a prominent division offering comprehensive accounting, tax, financial management and advisory services. Armed with an MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a BSBA from Creighton University, alongside CPA credentials, he remains an active member of the California Society of CPAs.

Katherine C. Bissett, a commercial real estate finance attorney at Cox Castle, specializes in complex transactions, advising clients on loans exceeding \$700 million in 2022. Her expertise includes acquisition, bridge and construction financing, ground lease financing, mezzanine loans, revolving credit facilities and secondary market transactions. Recognized for her contributions, Bissett has received accolades such as Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch, Connect CRE New Generation Award and Super Lawyers' Up-and-Coming 100 Southern California Rising Stars. Notable representations include securing \$178 million in financing for agricultural farmland and facilitating a \$145-million loan for luxury "glamping" developments. Active in industry associations, Bissett is a member of the Commercial Real Estate Finance Council and engages with the Orange County Bar Association and Women's Lawyer Association. She also contributes to Cox Castle's committees, shaping firm policies, recruiting efforts and internal training initiatives.



Katherine C. Bissett

Partner
Cox, Castle & Nicholson
Professional Services



Kara Boccella

Partner
Certuity
Asset/Investment Management

Kara Boccella, a seasoned wealth manager with a 30-year career, oversees \$900M in client assets with a retention rate above 99%. Recognized by Forbes and the Los Angeles Business Journal, she's esteemed for her expertise and integrity. She extends her services pro bono to widows and widowers, offering both financial and personal guidance. Boccella has been actively involved as a member and contributor to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation (SMMEF) in support of her local public/private elementary, middle and high schools. In the past several years, she has worked tirelessly as a volunteer for the annual Franklin Elementary School Carnival raising \$200k and volunteered as a referee for the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). Boccella's holistic approach to wealth management includes investment, tax, estate planning, insurance and charitable giving, tailored to each client's needs.

KROLL

Congratulations on Being Recognized as Banking & Finance Industry Visionaries by L.A. Times B2B Publishing



Sherry Cefali
Managing Director
Transaction Opinions
+1 424 249 1650
sheryl.cefali@kroll.com



Steve Moon
Deputy Head of M&A, Americas
Aerospace Defense Government Services
Investment Banking
+1 424 249 1689
steve.moon@kroll.com



Farzad Mukhi
Managing Director
Consumer Investment Banking
+1 424 249 1661
farzad.mukhi@kroll.com

- ▶ Ranked **No. 1** for Global Fairness Opinions
- ▶ Ranked **No. 5** for Middle Market M&A Transactions

Select Recent Transactions

Transaction Opinions

SOLVENCY OPINION

completed the spin-off of

FAIRNESS OPINION

repurchased 6.5 million shares of common stock from

FAIRNESS OPINION

completed the roll-up of 17 retail and other properties in India related to an initial public offering of

FAIRNESS OPINION

has been acquired by

Aerospace Defense Government Services

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

has divested its Gardena Operations

to

SELL-SIDE ADVISOR

has been acquired by

SELL-SIDE ADVISOR

has divested

to

FINANCIAL ADVISOR

a portfolio company of

completed a refinancing of its senior credit facilities

Consumer

SELL-SIDE ADVISOR

received an investment from

SELL-SIDE ADVISOR

has been acquired by

SELL-SIDE ADVISOR

an affiliate of

has been acquired by

SELL-SIDE ADVISOR

has been recapitalized by

Visionaries



Peter J. Boyle

CEO & CIO

Clifford Swan Investment
Counselors

Asset/Investment Management

Peter Boyle, chief executive officer of Clifford Swan Investment Counselors since 2020, brings extensive expertise, serving as chief investment officer since 2010 and president since 2001. With a background in tax and estate planning, he enhances client and counselor support. Prior to Clifford Swan, he was a senior trust officer at Security Pacific National Bank. Established in 1915, Clifford Swan offers customized wealth management solutions. Boyle adeptly led the firm through pandemic challenges, fostering remote work transitions and expanding services. As a respected figure, he contributes to industry standards as a board member of the Investment Adviser Association and is affiliated with the CFA Society of Los Angeles. Actively engaged in his community, Boyle serves with the Tournament of Roses Association, Pasadena Rotary Club and is a board member of the Pasadena Police & Fire Pension and St. Francis High School.



Patrick S. Brown

Partner

Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
Professional Services

Patrick Brown, managing partner of Sullivan & Cromwell's Los Angeles office, brings over 25 years of experience advising on corporate matters globally. His expertise spans mergers and acquisitions, securities offerings, corporate governance and securities advice across diverse industries. Recently, Brown facilitated PacWest's merger with Banc of California resulting in a combined entity under Banc of California's name, with \$36 billion in assets and operations in California, Colorado and North Carolina. He orchestrated the negotiation of an all-stock merger of equals between PacWest Bancorp and Banc of California, accompanied by a \$400 million equity raise involving Warburg Pincus LLC and Centerbridge Partners, L.P. Brown's portfolio extends to advising prominent clients like Oaktree Capital Management and AT&T. He led Sullivan & Cromwell's team in Jacobs Solutions' \$500 million sustainability-linked senior notes offering in 2033.

Diane Cabo is a managing director at CriticalPoint, a firm that merges investment banking and private capital services. Since 2016, she's advised owners on M&A, debt and equity raises across sectors like apparel, consumer goods, healthcare and manufacturing. With over 17 years in lower middle-market transactions, she excels in client service and M&A. Cabo began at WestPark Capital and Greif & Co., transitioning from a Boston-based hedge fund after Boston College and obtaining an MBA from Pepperdine University. Her tenacity builds M&A success, fostering trust with owners and deal communities. Active in ACG L.A., she organizes networking events, spanning sectors and regions. Notable deals include Barton Perreira's acquisition by Thélios and Los Angeles Reproductive Partners' acquisition by InTandem Capital. Cabo excels in complex sale processes, anticipating client needs and bridging middle-market and capital providers with emotional intelligence.



Diane Cabo

Managing Director

CriticalPoint

Investment Banking



Richard Cabrera

EVP & Head of Middle Market Banking

Umpqua Bank

Commercial Banking

Richard Cabrera serves as executive vice president and head of middle market banking at Umpqua Bank, a top-30 U.S. bank. Responsible for mid-size company banking across eight states, he leads asset-based lending, debt capital markets and corporate banking. Joining in 2016, he expanded Umpqua's Middle Market Banking division from 30 to 350 bankers, focusing on relationship-driven banking. Cabrera's passion lies in helping clients achieve financial goals, especially in Southern California, where he inspires young Latinos to consider banking careers. His team excels in deals across sectors like entertainment, technology and healthcare, enhancing client relationships and business growth. Cabrera's insights on business strategy have been featured in prominent publications like CNN and MarketWatch. Previously, he held senior roles at California Bank & Trust and Bank of America, graduating from San Diego State University with a B.S. in business administration.

Tom Calahan serves as senior vice president and director of business development at Partners Bank of California. Prior to joining Partners in 2016, he began his career in financial services in 2011 and served as a business banker for U.S. Bank, leading the region in production. As director of business development at Partners Bank of California, Calahan leads a dynamic team of six client advisors. He headed the bank's regional footprint in Los Angeles, where he launched a new branch office location in Beverly Hills in 2018. While in Beverly Hills, Calahan led the team to source more than \$50M in production within the first 24 months of opening. In 2020, he moved back to Orange County and now operates out of the bank's Mission Viejo branch office, where he actively manages a nine-figure portfolio.



Tom Calahan

SVP, Director of Business Development

Partners Bank of California

Commercial Banking



Anthony R. Calobre

Partner, Finance

Blank Rome LLP

Professional Services

Anthony R. Calobre, partner at Blank Rome LLP's Los Angeles office, is a leading banking and finance lawyer in California, renowned for excellence on both borrower and lender sides of commercial loan transactions. Specializing in asset-based lending and fund finance, he represents major financial institutions and clients in commercial loan transactions across industries. Calobre heads Blank Rome's market-leading asset-based lending practice, serving prominent financial institutions such as Bank of America, PNC Bank and Wells Fargo. His recent successes include handling complex transactions for PNC Bank, East West Bank and Huntington National Bank, showcasing his expertise in intricate legal due diligence and innovative collateral structures. Calobre's achievements have earned him recognition, including the 2022-23 "Banking and Finance Visionary" by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing and consistent rankings in Chambers USA and Best Lawyers in America.

Visionaries



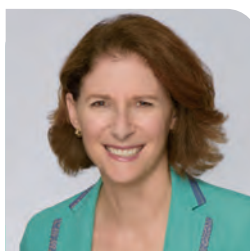
**David
Cameron**

**EVP, Personal &
Business Banking**

City National Bank
Commercial Banking

David Cameron, executive vice president of personal & business banking at City National Bank, has extensive experience in financial services having joined the company in 2005 and rising through the ranks. Since assuming his current position, he has overseen the bank's small business, consumer and business banking lines, including the branch network. Based in Los Angeles, he manages over 700 colleagues across California, Nevada, Georgia, Virginia, New York and Washington, D.C. Cameron's leadership led City National to become a top lender in the Small Business Administration 504 loans, aiding small businesses in purchasing and refinancing properties. Recognized for his contributions, he was named to the "Leaders of Influence in Banking" list and among the "Most Influential Lenders in Los Angeles County." Beyond banking, Cameron serves on prestigious boards like the Yosemite Conservancy Council and the Pacific Coast Banking School, where he graduated in 2018.

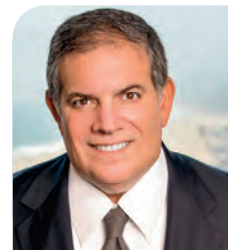
Sherry Cefali, managing director at Duff & Phelps Opinions Practice of Kroll, LLC, brings over 30 years of experience advising companies and boards on fairness opinions, solvency opinions and valuations. She chairs the compensation committee and serves on various committees at RF Industries. Notable engagements include providing opinions for Blackstone funds, WP Carey, Ecovyst and Genstar Capital's portfolio company, Sonny's Car Wash. Cefali has significant experience in REIT roll-up and REIT internalization transactions. She rendered fairness opinions in the three largest U.S. REIT IPO transactions in history, including Paramount Group, Douglas Emmett and Invitation Homes, and authored the articles "REIT Roll-up Transactions: How Much is Your Manager Worth?" and "Management Company Values in REIT Roll-ups." Cefali sits on Nareit's Dividends Through Diversity and Inclusion Initiative Steering Committee and co-founded the Women's Leadership Council.



**Sherry
Cefali**

Managing Director

Duff & Phelps Opinions
Practice of Kroll, LLC
Investment Banking



**Alexander L.
Cappello**

**Founder,
Chairman & CEO**

Cappello Global, LLC
Investment Banking

Alexander Cappello, founder of an esteemed independent investment bank, has over 50 years of experience, completing transactions worth \$160 billion in over 60 countries. As a director, he has served notable companies like Cheesecake Factory, Agnew Company, Nordic Group of Companies and startups such as SureCount Medical and Open4Sale Technology. He held leadership roles in organizations like Virco Manufacturing and Navidea Biopharmaceuticals and served on three bank boards. Cappello's influence extends to international leadership roles in the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO), where he served as chairman, founding charter member and chairman of multiple chapters. A graduate of the USC Marshall School of Business, he remains active in USC affairs and recently joined the Innovation Foundation at Oklahoma State University's board. His recent transactions include the sale of Golden Bridge International, Inc. to Invision Capital and Snow Valley, LLC to Alterra Mountain Company.



DAN MILLER

Visionary

**2024 Banking & Finance:
Trends, Updates & Visionaries Magazine**

L.A. Times B2B Publishing

MILLER | BARONDESS LLP

LITIGATORS

Trial | Appeal | Arbitration

2121 Avenue of the Stars, 26th Floor, Los Angeles
millerbarondess.com

Visionaries



**Cécile
Chalifour**

**Managing Director, Head of
West Region, Community
Development Banking**
JPMorgan Chase
Commercial Banking

Cécile Chalifour is head of the West Region for Chase Community Development Banking. As part of a global financial services firm with \$3.9 trillion as of December 2023, Community Development Banking is a leader in providing financing solutions that benefit communities across the country. The real estate lending team originates roughly \$3 billion annually in construction and permanent debt products to develop and revitalize affordable housing properties throughout the Chase retail footprint. With over two decades of community development and finance experience, Chalifour leads the West Regional team that originates over one-third of the national lending goal for community development real estate. Prior to joining Chase in 2017, she served as the director of the California Region for the Low-Income Investment Fund, leading lending activities related to affordable housing, charter schools and community facilities.

Michael Chambers, president and chief banking officer of Partners Bank of California, also serves on the bank's board of directors since 2023. He joined the bank as an original investor and employee in 2007, contributing to its growth as a leading business bank focusing on Orange and Los Angeles counties. The bank's value proposition includes giving entrepreneurs "one-stop shopping" for all their various commercial banking needs as well as "one point of contact" with direct access to a client advisor throughout the relationship. Before his tenure at Partners Bank, Chambers launched his financial career at MBNA America Bank, where he held key roles, including Western Region Operations Director. He also managed high-profile sports sector credit card relationships. In addition to his leadership at Partners Bank, Chambers chairs the Advisory Board for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Capistrano Valley.



**Michael
Chambers**

**President & Chief
Banking Officer**
Partners Bank of California
Commercial Banking



**Leon
Chen**

Managing Partner
Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors, L.P.
Private Equity

Leon Chen transitioned from senior associate to managing partner at Kayne Anderson Growth Capital in less than a decade, excelling in identifying investment opportunities and fostering growth in technology companies. He adeptly builds relationships with entrepreneurs, facilitating partnerships with Kayne. Chen's portfolio spans software, media, telecom, healthcare and logistics, with successful exits to financial sponsors and strategics like AT&T and Cisco. His keen understanding of technology's impact on industries fuels investments in disruptive ventures like You.i TV and 4C Insights. He spearheaded the Growth Credit strategy, offering flexible capital solutions for technology firms. Chen's mentorship cultivates junior talent within the organization contributing to internal promotions. He also serves on the broader Kayne Anderson DE&I counsel and works closely with the firm's ESG team in evaluating any potential risk factors with new investments and across the portfolio.



**Nick
Cipiti**

Managing Director
CriticalPoint.
Investment Banking

Nick Cipiti commenced his finance career at Deloitte in New York City, focusing on health plan and financial services clients, notably EmblemHealth. Later, he joined DH Capital, where he specialized in Internet infrastructure, telecommunications and SaaS sectors, advising on over \$10 billion in transactions, including Ascenty's \$2.0B sale to Digital Realty Trust, Vantage Data Centers' sale to Digital Bridge and Sungard Availability Services' \$1.2B restructuring. Cipiti joined CriticalPoint in 2020, enhancing its technology and communications capabilities and expanding into consumer products and business services sectors. He facilitated several significant transactions such as Vazata's division sale, AvSight's acquisition by Arcadea Group and Infinity X1's recapitalization with Main Street Capital. Cipiti was promoted to managing director, and consistent across his experience at both DH Capital and CriticalPoint is a history of representing family- and founder-owned businesses who are seeking institutional investors or going through an M&A transaction for the first time.



**Marco
Costales**

**Partner,
Corporate Group**
Nossaman
Professional Services

Marco Costales brings extensive expertise to business transactions, catering to diverse industries like hospitality, healthcare, manufacturing, technology and more. His proficiency spans corporate representation, including formations, financing, mergers, acquisitions, intellectual property licensing and employment issues. Currently serving as Nossaman's assistant general counsel, Costales manages crucial contracts, commercial agreements and credit facilities. He collaborates on engagement agreements, reviews client-generated terms and conditions and contributes to the Legal Opinions Committee, issuing third-party legal opinions in significant financing transactions. Notably, in the food and beverage sector, he represents major entities, handling matters related to alcoholic beverage licenses, compliance and regulatory issues for clients such as grocery chains, restaurant groups, hotels, breweries, wineries and airlines. His comprehensive skillset and strategic oversight make Costales an asset in navigating complex legal landscapes and ensuring optimal outcomes for clients.

Nishita Cummings, managing partner and co-head of Kayne Anderson Growth Capital at Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors, L.P., has advanced from associate to co-head of growth equity strategy and joined Kayne's Board of Directors during her tenure of 15-plus years. She played a pivotal role in 50 platform investments and 27 exits totaling over \$1.2 billion in assets under management. Cummings spearheaded The Women's Technology Circle Initiative in 2022, fostering collaboration among leading women in fast-growing tech firms. Under her leadership, Kayne launched a Growth Credit strategy in 2022, providing flexible capital solutions to tech companies. Some notable investments include FreightVerify and Knotch. She has overseen 17 realizations since 2020, including Circle Cardiovascular Imaging and Riviera Partners. She serves as a board director for the Cayton Children's Museum and volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and CoachArt, enhancing the community's well-being.



**Nishita
Cummings**

**Managing Partner &
Co-Head, Growth Capital**
Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors, L.P.
Private Equity

Visionaries



Erik William Daniels

Head of SBA Lending
U.S. Bank
Commercial Banking

Erik Daniels leads U.S. Bank's SBA Lending division, facilitating small business growth nationwide. Under his direction, the team secured over 2,200 SBA 7(a) loans in fiscal 2023, ranking fourth among all lenders. U.S. Bank claimed top lender status in California, both in loans made and dollar volume. Daniels played a crucial role in integrating MUFJ Union Bank's regional franchise acquisition, ensuring a seamless transition. He actively engages in industry associations, advising on financial services and legislation impacting small businesses. Daniels' community involvement spans mentorship, youth sports coaching, cancer research fundraising and educational outreach for first-generation college students. To help educate the next era of business leaders, he has served as a mentor in two programs serving first-generation college students like himself: guest lecturer in small business finance at the California State University system and guest speaker to the USC Trojan Investing Society and at the University of California, Riverside.

Brian Davidoff chairs Greenberg Glusker's Bankruptcy, Reorganization and Capital Recovery Group, specializing in guiding middle-market companies, creditors and distressed asset transactions. With a background in corporate law, he advises clients on insolvency matters and business growth strategies. Renowned for his expertise, Davidoff has received prestigious awards, including recognition as a Leading Lawyer in Bankruptcy/Restructuring by Chambers USA and Top Bankruptcy Attorney by the Daily Journal. Notably, he facilitated HyreCar Inc.'s Chapter 11 sale to Getaround, forming the largest gig economy carsharing marketplace in the U.S. Davidoff frequently speaks at industry events and provides expert commentary on bankruptcy law for various media outlets. He authored an amicus curiae brief for the U.S. Supreme Court and compiled a comprehensive guide on financially distressed businesses. Certified as a Business Bankruptcy Attorney, Davidoff holds a J.D. from the University of Witwatersrand and an LL.M. from the University of Miami.



Brian Davidoff

Chair & Partner, Bankruptcy, Reorganization & Capital Recovery
Greenberg Glusker LLP
Professional Services



James F. Davidson

Founder & President
Avant Advisory Group
Professional Services

James Davidson, with over 35 years in business and corporate management, is the managing director, president and founder of Avant Advisory Group, Inc. He specializes in distressed & special situations, mergers & acquisitions, forensic accounting and CFO services. Davidson has held various executive positions in over 25 companies, from entrepreneurial to multi-billion-dollar firms. He has presented to professional and business associations on topics like quality of earnings, distressed asset acquisitions and restructuring. In the past 18 months, he oversaw the sale of Elite Global Solutions, Inc. Davidson's extensive experience spans roles such as president, CEO, CFO and board member. He brings valuable insights into pitfalls in dealmaking, recovery strategies for underperforming companies and lessons learned from strategic planning failures. With a focus on M&A, due diligence and financial restructuring, Davidson is a seasoned professional in navigating complex business scenarios.

Congratulations

Prager Metis is proud to recognize



Kayo M. Elkner, CPA
Principal
Torrance, CA



Chikara "Ricky" Nagano, CPA
Managing Partner
Torrance, CA Office



Joseph Rust, CPA, CFP
Chief Strategic Innovation Officer
El Segundo, CA

for being honored as Banking & Finance Industry Visionaries by
L.A. Times B2B Publishing!

As a Top accounting firm with offices in North America, Europe, Asia, Prager Metis has experts around the world that can provide the level of advice and expertise you need to make **your world, worth more.**



Visionaries



Mark Steven Demos

Partner

Crowe LLP

Professional Services

Mark Demos started his career at Crowe LLP in Michigan after graduating from Michigan State University. Crowe, a top public accounting firm nationally, specializes in financial services and consistently ranks among Forbes' Top 100 Best Companies to Work For and Glassdoor's 100 Best Places to Work. Demos spearheaded Crowe's expansion in New Jersey and Los Angeles, where he's currently the audit lead for three Southern California offices. In 2020, he became Crowe's managing partner for Los Angeles, overseeing office expansions in Woodland Hills and Downtown L.A., and expanding to Sacramento, San Jose and San Francisco. He specializes in audit and consulting services for financial institutions, focusing on banks, credit unions and specialty lenders ranging from \$600 million to over \$10 billion in assets. Demos is an active member of professional associations, including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the California Society of CPAs, and contributes to industry conferences and publications.



Jacky Dilfer

Executive Director

Business Finance Capital
Lending

Jacky Dilfer is a commercial and SBA lending expert with over two decades of experience in the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California. As executive director of Business Finance Capital (BFC), she has led the organization's rapid growth, consistently ranking among the top national institutions in SBA loan volume. Under Dilfer's leadership, BFC has funded over 1,000 commercial real estate transactions and arranged more than \$5 billion in loans. BFC has been the No. 1 SBA 504 lender in Los Angeles County and among the top five SBA lenders in California and the United States. Dilfer ensures each transaction receives meticulous attention, upholding high business standards and compliance with regulations. Beyond her professional achievements, she serves as a trustee for AltaMed Health Care Services and a board member for the C5 Youth Foundation of Southern California, demonstrating her commitment to community service.

Tyrone Dinneen, a University of Idaho graduate in public communications, embarked on a career journey that blends purpose and financial expertise. With 11 years at After-School All-Stars, he fueled the program's growth from four to over 60 schools, focusing on bridging the opportunity gap for low-income students. Transitioning to the Department of Water and Power for economic stability, he missed the fulfillment of helping others. Joining Northwestern Mutual, Dinneen aimed to extend financial planning to nonprofit professionals, later expanding to business owners and tech professionals. As a mentor and leader at Northwestern Mutual, his team has grown to seven professionals delivering top-tier service. Dinneen's commitment extends to serving on the board for TEACH Public Schools and remaining active in After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles, advocating for children's education and empowerment. His dedication blends meaningful work with economic opportunity, enriching both clients and communities alike.



Tyrone Dinneen

Financial Advisor

Northwestern Mutual

Asset/Investment Management



Eugene N. Dunford

Senior Managing Director

Umpqua Bank

Commercial Banking

Eugene Dunford, as senior managing director of Umpqua Bank's Los Angeles Commercial Banking division, oversees approximately \$800 million in bank assets. With 25 years of experience in L.A.'s commercial banking, he established Umpqua's commercial team in Los Angeles in 2016. Leading a team of seasoned bankers in Los Angeles and Glendale, he recently expanded operations to Downtown Los Angeles, focusing on companies with international emphasis in Southern California. Recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal as one of the 500 most influential people in Los Angeles from 2018 to 2021 and one of the most influential lenders in 2018, 2020 and 2021, Dunford is esteemed as a financial visionary by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing from 2021 to 2023. His insights on the economy, banking and international trade have been featured in CNN Business, Los Angeles Business Journal and The Orange County Register.

Kayo M. Elkner, principal at Prager Metis, brings over 20 years of CPA experience to the accounting and tax departments. Specializing in services for individuals and closely held businesses, she prepares various tax returns for clients in the U.S. and abroad, notably Japanese clients in Hawaii and California. Fluent in Japanese, Elkner is integral to Prager Metis' Japan group. Originally from Tokyo, she moved to the U.S. earning a B.S. in finance from Seattle University and obtaining her CPA certification in Illinois. She held roles in major technology and beverage companies in Japan before joining Nagano Morita, which later merged with Prager Metis, establishing the Japanese Global Services Group. Elkner's leadership guides the Nagano Morita division, fostering cultural bridges. She is actively involved in the Japanese Business Association and the California Society of CPAs.



Kayo M. Elkner

Principal

Prager Metis

Professional Services



Donald E. Evenson

CFA, SVP & Chief Investment Officer

Citizens Business Bank

Asset/Investment Management

Donald E. Evenson, senior vice president and chief investment officer of CitizensTrust, brings over 30 years of industry experience. Before joining CitizensTrust in April 2016, he founded AVR Boulder Bay Capital, managing the AVR Opportunity Fund since its inception in 2012. His prior roles include managing director at Trust Company of the West (TCW), where he led the TCW large cap growth portfolio and co-managed the TCW growth fund. At Provident Investment Counsel, he managed significant portfolios and held leadership positions. Evenson holds a B.S. in finance and economics from St. Mary's College of California and an MBA from the University of Southern California. He is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and serves on Citizens Business Bank's CECL Committee. Actively involved in community service, he previously served on the board of Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles and volunteers as an advisor to the Student Managed Investment Fund at California State University, San Bernardino.

AVANT[®]

ADVISORY GROUP

SECURING VALUE

2024 Los Angeles Banking and Finance Visionary

SERVICES

- **Mergers & Acquisitions – Quality of Earnings / Sell Side Preparation**
- **Avant-Edge™ Profitability / EBITDA Improvement / Value Enhancement**
- **Post-Acquisition Working Capital / Earnout Disputes Resolution**
- **Corporate Governance, Interim C-Suite, CRO & CFO Services**
- **Distressed – Operational Turnarounds & Financial Restructuring**



JIM DAVIDSON

President & Founder
+1 213-943-1336

JDavidson@AvantAdvisory.com

AVANT LEADERSHIP TEAM



Rhett Kniep



Dave Stark



Carlos Freyre



John Oliver



Jim Hughes



John DeMartino

RECENT TRANSACTIONS



Los Angeles

213-943-1336



Newport Beach

949-417-5708



Sacramento

916-974-9733



Miami

949-417-5708



New York City

914-419-0032

Avant Advisory Group is a Biblically-based firm serving God and our clients with the highest honor and integrity.

Visionaries



Corey Eric Fischer

Managing Partner
Weinberg & Company, P.A.
Professional Services

Corey Fischer, managing partner of Weinberg & Company, brings over 20 years of CPA expertise to the firm's accounting and tax departments. He has spearheaded more than 200 initial public offerings, follow-on and secondary offerings, mergers & acquisitions, debt and restructuring transactions, collaborating with various industry players and publicly traded and privately held companies in banking, consumer products, technology, entertainment, energy and cleantech sectors. Fischer's commitment to transparency and diligence shines in his rejection of Special Purpose Acquisition Company IPOs during the pandemic, emphasizing Weinberg's ethical standards. Under his leadership, Weinberg has organically grown, expanding its clientele globally while maintaining a diverse workforce and community engagement initiatives. Weinberg & Company, a Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) and Canadian Public Accountability Board (CPAB) registered firm, specializes in assurance & audit, tax & accounting, private client services, business management and consulting for diverse industries, ensuring top-tier financial reporting and compliance services.

As managing director of private equity at McGuireWoods, Robert Fox drives business development initiatives, nurtures client relationships and leads groundbreaking programs for emerging managers and independent sponsors. His contributions have solidified McGuireWoods' reputation as a legal powerhouse in investment banking, particularly in mergers and acquisitions. Previously at O'Melveny & Myers, Fox excelled in generating deal flow and enhancing corporate portfolios. His expertise was honed through diverse roles, including as a director of business development in Southern California, where he expanded national influence and expertise in M&A and distressed business management. The genesis of his expertise in private equity business development was at a Dallas-based family office, where he led deal-sourcing activities, evaluated investment opportunities and identified capital sources for deal structuring. Fox's journey includes pivotal roles in independent investment firms and global financial institutions, showcasing his comprehensive understanding of finance and business leadership.



Robert Fox

**Managing Director,
Private Equity**
McGuireWoods
Professional Services



Mark Flewelling

Partner
Lagerlof, LLP
Professional Services

Mark Flewelling, a partner at Lagerlof, LLP, brings over 40 years of expertise in litigation and appellate law, particularly in banking and financial institutions. He has represented clients in various litigation matters, including real property purchases, investment fraud, import/export transactions and partnership disputes. Flewelling's banking practice encompasses consumer class actions, lender liability disputes and commercial lending matters. His notable achievements include precedent-setting decisions, such as establishing national banks' jurisdictional citizenship. He is renowned for his work ethic, customer engagement and professional demeanor, going above and beyond for clients and organizations. Flewelling, an Occidental College and USC Gould School of Law graduate, is deeply involved in community service, having served as mayor, councilman and trustee on school boards. His significant cases range from class actions against national banks to successful defenses in importer disputes, showcasing his litigation prowess and dedication to client success.



Dean Fredgant

Partner
SingerLewak
Professional Services

Dean Fredgant, partner at SingerLewak, boasts over 40 years of diverse public accounting experience, focusing on tax compliance, trust and estate matters, business consulting and dispute resolution. He collaborates closely with entrepreneurs, executives, high-net-worth individuals and small to medium-sized businesses. Fredgant's career trajectory includes founding Fredgant and Associates in 1990, which merged with Biggs & Co. in 2009. Subsequently, in 2014, Biggs & Co. integrated with SingerLewak, operating as SLBiggs, a division of SingerLewak. His expertise lies in tax, trust, estates, small business and consulting. Fredgant holds a degree in business administration from Western Colorado University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Management from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He is a proud member of the California Society of CPAs.

Steve Fried, principal at Mesa West Capital, assumed the role of head of originations in 2023, overseeing national loan teams in major cities and facilitating an annual \$3-billion mortgage origination. With 18 years of investment experience, he navigated challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and high-interest rate environments. Fried started as an intern at Mesa West during his studies at UCLA's Anderson School of Business, later becoming a principal in 2005. Instrumental in Mesa West's growth, he expanded its originations platform, which has closed over \$27 billion in transactions since 2004. Focusing on commercial real estate debt, Mesa West ranked 42nd among global real estate debt fund managers in 2023. Fried's leadership emphasizes moderate leverage, strong property markets and top sponsors, extending lending to institutional borrowers amid reduced bank lending. Previously he worked at Deloitte & Touche's Private Equity Group.



Steve Fried

**Head of
Originations**
Mesa West Capital
Private Equity



Elizabeth Fuchs

**Commercial
Banking Team Lead**
Umpqua Bank
Commercial Banking

Elizabeth Fuchs leads a team of commercial banking professionals in Southern California catering to large- and middle-market companies. With over three decades of experience in executive sales and credit leadership roles, she specializes in global business operations, adeptly navigating economic fluctuations. Fuchs has led the establishment of commercial banking offices, expanding loan portfolios from \$100 million to \$900 million. Her restructuring of regional commercial lending businesses demonstrates her adaptability to changing economic landscapes, enhancing loan portfolios from \$1 billion to \$1.6 billion in five years. Recognized for her ability to comprehend intricate business dynamics and mitigate risks, Fuchs fosters stability and growth in banking relationships and addresses challenges such as supply chain disruptions and volatile commodity prices, supporting clients with tailored financial solutions. Recently joining Umpqua Bank as a commercial team lead, she brings her expertise to bolster international commerce in Southern California.

Visionaries



Andrew H. Fuller
Partner & Managing Director
 Creative Planning Inc.
Asset/Investment Management


Andrew Fuller, MSF, CFP®, is a partner and managing director at Creative Planning in the L.A./Orange County region, boasting nearly 20 years in the financial industry. With oversight of \$2 billion in client assets, he specializes in investment management, retirement, tax, estate and charitable planning, serving on the firm's investment committee to shape strategy. Initially aspiring to be a diplomat, Fuller's career shifted toward finance during his tenure at Fidelity Investments, where he rose to senior advisory and leadership roles across the U.S. Notable achievements include rapid promotions, regional vice presidency and recognition with various awards. Transitioning to Creative Planning, he relocated to Southern California in 2013, expanding the firm's presence and achieving substantial growth. As a partner, Fuller consistently ranks among the top advisors, contributing over \$500 million in new client assets while continuing to develop the capabilities of the regional office.



Dustin Gale
Senior Wealth Advisor
 Kayne Anderson Rudnick
 Wealth Advisors
Asset/Investment Management

Dustin Gale developed a passion for finance early in life, inspired by his father. Starting as a teller while studying finance at the University of Arizona, he progressed through roles at Bank of America and Wells Fargo Private Bank before joining Kayne Anderson Rudnick. Gale specializes in holistic planning and investment management, providing clients with clear guidance amid life's complexities. He emphasizes proactive strategies, dedicating time to continuous education to anticipate client needs effectively. During the pandemic, Gale reinforced the importance of long-term financial planning, focusing on behavioral finance to guide clients through market volatility. Notably, he maintains a 96% client retention rate and has been featured in publications like Barron's Advisor and WealthManagement.com for his insights. Outside finance, Gale serves on the advisory board of Project ECHO, mentoring at-risk youth in entrepreneurship. He was also a finalist for ThinkAdvisor's Luminaries Award in 2023.

Chris Galeski transitioned from professional golf to wealth management, channeling his passion into helping families optimize their finances. As a leader, he directs wealth advisors and led 15 of the other advisors to bring in 84 new clients in 2023, totaling \$1.224 million of new revenue for the year. Galeski hosts "The Financial Commute," a podcast where he leads conversations with other wealth advisors, experts and fund managers on topics such as current financial news, bitcoin, real estate trends, student loan debt forgiveness and more to democratize financial advice and help listeners further understand complex financial topics and the importance of investment management. The podcast has reached over 60 episodes across platforms like YouTube, Spotify and Apple Podcasts since its 2022 launch. He also presented at Bob Veres' Insider's Forum on "How to Elevate the Client Experience."



Chris Galeski
Wealth Advisor
 Morton Wealth
Asset/Investment Management

Sanli Pastore & Hill congratulates
Nevin Sanli & Tom Pastore
 for being recognized as banking & finance industry 2024 Visionaries by L.A. Times B2B Publishing




Nevin Sanli, President & Founder
 Los Angeles & International
 310.571.3400
 nsanli@sphvalue.com



Tom Pastore, CEO, Founder, & Managing Director, Chicago
 310.571.3400
 tpastore@sphvalue.com

SANLI PASTORE & HILL



*Capital Raise Valuations | Business, Brand and IP Valuations
 | Transaction Support Services | Fairness & Solvency Opinions
 | Expert Testimony & Litigation Opinions*

Visionaries



**Jonathan L.
Gerber**

Partner
RVW Wealth LLC
Asset/Investment Management

Jonathan Gerber, embodying the “Beyond Beancounting” philosophy, showcases innovative client service and leadership. With degrees from NYU Stern School and USC, he provides comprehensive planning solutions, transcending conventional boundaries with creative problem-solving skills. Gerber fosters a vibrant firm culture at RVW Wealth, managing over \$1 billion with a stellar reputation. His philanthropic dedication extends from founding Moshava Alevy to raising service dogs for Canine Companions for Independence and supporting Ukrainian refugees. Gerber’s recent initiative, building classrooms in Kenya, exemplifies cross-cultural connection and learning. He plays a pivotal role on the student loan committee by contributing to boards, like the Jewish Free Loan Association which provides interest-free loans to individuals of all faiths, and serves on the board of Builders of Jewish Education, overseeing and supporting the Jewish educational system in Los Angeles to ensure the success and sustainability of these vital institutions.

Dennis Gilkerson is the senior vice president and regional manager in wealth management and private banking at California Bank & Trust. He aids affluent individuals, business owners and families with complex financial needs. Gilkerson collaborates with partners across the organization to identify clients’ banking and wealth management needs, working closely with advisors to develop comprehensive strategies. His achievements at CB&T over nearly eight years include managing revenue from wealth management and private banking, overseeing professionals in multiple locations and implementing regional revenue strategies. Gilkerson actively engages in investment advisory activities, generates leads among ultra-high-net-worth prospects and advises families, business owners and athletes on investment policies and lending structures. With formal credit training skills, he assists in analyzing, structuring and negotiating complex credit products. Gilkerson participates in internal committees and serves on community nonprofit committees to foster relationships with target-market prospects.



**Dennis
Gilkerson**

**SVP &
Regional Manager**
California Bank & Trust
Asset/Investment Management



**Kathleen
Gilmore**

Chair & President
Clifford Swan Investment
Counselors
Asset/Investment Management

In 2020, Kathleen Gilmore assumed the roles of chair and president at Clifford Swan Investment Counselors, which she initially joined in 2002. Established in 1915, Clifford Swan, an independent Pasadena-based wealth management firm, offers tailored portfolio management and personalized wealth strategies for clients’ lifelong goals. As president, Gilmore supervises investment counseling services for individuals, families and nonprofits. As a Certified Financial Planner™, she helps clients create a sound structure for stewardship over their assets, in addition to the investment portfolio at the core of that structure. During the pandemic, Gilmore adeptly led the firm through remote work transitions, new hires, technology upgrades and service expansions, positioning it for ongoing success. Active in the Pasadena community, she volunteers for local nonprofits and serves on various committees, including the Pasadena Community Foundation’s Professional Advisors Committee and USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology’s Board of Councilors.



**Austin
Glassman**

Partner
Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Professional Services

Austin Glassman, a corporate partner at Kirkland & Ellis’ Los Angeles Debt Finance Practice Group, specializes in financing transactions for private equity sponsors. In the past 18 months alone, he has overseen financings totaling nearly \$40 billion, ranging from mega-acquisitions to first-time financings for tech startups. Glassman’s recent notable transactions include the \$16.5 billion acquisition of Citrix Systems, Inc., the \$8.4 billion take-private acquisition of Avalara Inc. and the \$2.6 billion take-private acquisition of Duck Creek Technologies. He also advised on strategic investments and acquisitions for companies like EngageSmart and Monsido. He is a key advisor to Vista Equity Partners and its portfolio companies, leading efforts in refinancing and strategic investments. Glassman is deeply involved in mentoring junior lawyers and contributes to Kirkland’s recruitment and training initiatives. Additionally, he is committed to supporting charitable organizations locally and nationally.



**Eric Andrew
Gray**

Managing Director
Merrill Private Wealth
Management
Asset/Investment Management

As managing director and founder of the Gray-Polverini Team in Los Angeles, Eric Gray along with his team specializes in serving ultra-high-net-worth families as their trusted “thinking partner” in wealth management. With over three decades of experience, he offers personalized solutions tailored to each client’s unique needs and values. Their track record of integrity and national recognition includes Barron’s “Top 100 Financial Advisors” list from 2010 to 2022 and Forbes’ “America’s Top Wealth Advisors” list in 2023. Gray tailors the investment process for ultra-high-net-worth families and develops enduring knowledge of each family, walking them through their decision points. His educational background includes a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management. With wealth management experience since 1992, he brings extensive expertise to every client relationship.

Lloyd Greif, founder of Greif & Co. in 1992, boasts a distinguished career in investment banking. He served as vice chairman at Sutro & Co. Incorporated and was instrumental in its growth. Prior, he was a management consultant at Touche, Ross & Co. In 1997, Greif established the Lloyd Greif Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at USC’s Marshall School of Business, renowned globally for its entrepreneurial focus. He has held leadership roles in various organizations, including the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation and the California Chamber of Commerce. With degrees in economics, entrepreneurship and law, Greif’s expertise spans multiple domains. Notable honors include induction into the UCLA Bruin Business 100 and USC’s Alumni Service Award. As a sought-after speaker, he is recognized internationally for his insights in mergers & acquisitions and corporate finance. Greif is also a technical advisor and admitted to practice law in California.



**Lloyd
Greif**

President & CEO
Greif & Co.
Investment Banking

Visionaries



**Petra
Griffith**

**Founder &
Managing Director**
Wedbush Ventures
Venture Capital

Wedbush Ventures prioritizes operational expertise and a product-building mentality for evaluating seed or pre-seed companies, aiming to foster innovation in product strategy. Petra Griffith, with over 25 years of experience in technology and funding, founded Wedbush Ventures to nurture the next wave of tech companies. Her leadership at Netflix, Yahoo! and 24-Hour Fitness underscores her strategic insight. As a rare female leader in venture-backed funds, Griffith bridges Silicon Valley and L.A. tech ecosystems, drawing from experiences at Yahoo! and Netflix. She spearheaded Grandpoint Bank's venture banking division, pioneering tech development in Los Angeles. Griffith's diverse background positions her to propel innovation in Southern California's tech landscape. She received her undergraduate degree from Middlebury College and her MBA from London Business School. Additionally, she holds five technology patents that have specific interactions in B2B applications.

Eric A. Gronroos, MBT, CPA, boasts over 25 years in public accounting, specializing in federal and state income tax services across diverse sectors, like manufacturing, investment banking and real estate. His expertise extends to debt funds and private equity. Gronroos aids clients in trust and estate planning, catering to high-net-worth individuals and corporations. He advises on merger and acquisition transactions, optimizing tax strategies for sellers and navigating foreign tax planning. Gronroos' philanthropic contributions include roles as finance and investment chair for Union Station Homeless Services, finance chair for both Pacific Clinics and Villa de Vida. He frequently addresses tax topics for business groups. As a California CPA, Gronroos is affiliated with the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), the California Society of Certified Public Accountants (CalCPA) and the San Gabriel Valley Estate Planning Council.



**Eric "Tony" A.
Gronroos**

**Partner-in-Charge,
Los Angeles Tax Services**
Weaver
Professional Services



**Ronnie
Gul**

**Co-Chief
Executive Officer**
Mesa West Capital
Private Equity

Ronnie Gul, principal at Mesa West Capital, became co-CEO in 2023 with Raphael Fishbach, managing \$9 billion in loans. He led Mesa West to prominence as a top debt fund manager, expanding its reach nationwide. With roots at UCLA, Gul rose from a summer intern to principal shaping Mesa West's origination strategy. The firm's \$27 billion in transactions underscore its impact on commercial real estate debt. Mesa West's conservative approach focuses on high-quality loans, ensuring resilience through economic cycles. Gul's leadership diversified Mesa West's sponsor base, enhancing resilience amid market shifts. Leveraging its robust balance sheet, Mesa West seizes opportunities in the lending market. His prior experience spans media development and real estate management. Gul holds an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management and a B.A. in economics with Phi Beta Kappa honors and is actively involved in UCLA's Ziman Real Estate Alumni Group.

Accounting for *more* than numbers.

"Weaver is a collaborative firm,
and I value the camaraderie
when working with my team."

Mayur N.

Valued team member since 2016



Visionaries



Channing Hamlet

Managing Director
Objective, Investment
Banking & Valuation
Investment Banking

Channing Hamlet, managing director and co-owner of Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation, brings over 25 years of expertise in advising business owners on management, transactions and valuation. Leading the business services and valuation advisory practices, he has closed numerous sell-side transactions and valuation engagements, significantly impacting Objective's revenue. Noteworthy deals include the sale of Rocky Mountain Movement Disorders Centers to CenExel Clinical Research and Kirei to Carnegie Fabrics. Active in the Los Angeles M&A community, Hamlet fosters relationships with financial advisors and serves on boards such as the Association of Corporate Growth of Los Angeles (ACG LA) and Exit Planning Institute of Los Angeles (EPI LA). Recognized for integrity and fairness, he upholds clients' best interests, enhancing his reputation as an exceptional M&A professional. Previously at Cabrillo Advisors and Vistage, Hamlet holds a master's in operations research and a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from Cornell University.



Jeri J. Harman

Founder & Chairman
Avante Capital Partners
Private Equity

Jeri Harman, founder & chairman of Avante Capital Partners, has over 30 years of financing and M&A experience, exceeding \$1 billion in aggregate investments. Formerly with American Capital and Allied Capital, she started and led their Los Angeles offices. She holds board roles in over 20 middle-market companies, including NN Inc. and Engineered Performance Technologies. Harman initiated the Women's Operating Network, connecting over 200 senior female operators across a variety of industries for private equity-backed boards. Recognitions include L.A. Business Journal's L.A. 500 Most Influential People, Mergers & Acquisitions Magazine's Most Influential Women in Mid-Market M&A and the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Los Angeles Hall of Fame. As co-chair of the Association for Corporate Growth - Los Angeles Business Conference, Harman is also involved with the Private Equity Women Investor Network (PEWIN) and the Jewish Graduate Student Initiative (JGSI).

Michele Havens, president of Northern Trust's West Region, spearheads wealth management operations spanning from Washington to Texas. With a track record of success, she previously held pivotal roles including president of the Southern California and Los Angeles regions. Havens' journey began as a portfolio manager in Los Angeles before ascending through the ranks. Committed to community engagement, she serves on UCLA Anderson School of Management's Board of Advisors and leads philanthropic efforts in Los Angeles. Havens champions diversity and inclusion initiatives, previously contributing to organizations like United Way of Greater Los Angeles and Vistage International. Her educational background includes a B.A. in finance and marketing from Boston College, an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management and completion of Harvard Business School's Executive Education Program. Havens holds a CFP designation, embodying expertise and leadership in the wealth management sector.



Michele Havens

**West Region President,
Wealth Management**
Northern Trust
Asset/Investment Management



Gregory Hebner

Managing Director
Arixa Capital
Lending

Gregory Hebner, managing director of Arixa Capital since 2012, acquired majority ownership in 2023 with Seth Davis and investors. With over 25 years in real estate, he managed investment vehicles, completing hundreds of single-family projects. Recognizing developers' needs, Hebner built Arixa's lending platform, originating over 1,800 loans exceeding \$3.8 billion. Under his leadership, Arixa originated \$1.5B in the past two years, expanding into Arizona, the Pacific Northwest and Texas. Launching a \$100M joint venture with Oaktree Capital and securing \$250M in senior warehouse facilities, Arixa gained flexibility and recognition as a fastest-growing private company in Inc. 5000 and L.A. Business Journal. Hebner, a UCLA Extension instructor, holds a B.S. in accountancy from the University of Illinois and an MBA from Harvard. He's a licensed California real estate broker and NMLS mortgage broker. A sought-after speaker, Hebner contributes to industry reporting.

Jeremy Holland, managing partner at The Riverside Company, leads the origination team in North America with 26 years of private equity experience in Los Angeles. Known for his dedication to others' success, Holland transitioned to origination at Riverside in 2010, focusing on Western U.S. and Canada opportunities. He mentors professionals and supports their career progression while actively participating in conferences and events as a speaker. Riverside, a global private equity firm, targets growing businesses valued at up to \$400 million, with over 1,000 investments since 1988. Holland is involved in 51 Vets, aiding military veterans in transitioning to civilian careers, especially in M&A. Notably, he recently closed investments in Green Guard Services, Primary Intelligence, LANstar, busybusy and Miracle Method, primarily sourced through local relationships in California. He holds a B.S. in finance from California State University Northridge.



Jeremy Holland

**Managing Partner,
Origination**
The Riverside Company
Private Equity



Brent Horstman

Partner
Sheppard, Mullin, Richter &
Hampton LLP
Professional Services

Brent Horstman, who has spent his entire legal career at Sheppard Mullin, is a partner and former leader of the firm's finance and bankruptcy practice. Clients turn to Horstman for his expertise on real and personal property, secured financings and workouts. He represents lenders, corporate borrowers and private equity sponsors in a wide range of debt financing types, including single-lender and syndicated credits; senior-secured; second lien; mezzanine; unitranche; FF&E financings; merger and acquisition financings; recapitalizations and working capital loans; cross-border loans; and problem loan restructurings. Horstman has worked on a number of significant transactions in the hotel, gaming and leisure; media entertainment; mortgage banking (including warehouse facilities and other real estate lender finance transactions); and healthcare industries.

Visionaries



Maria Hunter
SVP, Relationship Manager Team Lead
 Enterprise Bank & Trust
 Commercial Banking

Maria Hunter, a Nicaraguan native, immigrated to Los Angeles at age 10, surmounting linguistic and cultural barriers. She pursued finance at Old Dominion University, Virginia and following graduation honed her banking acumen for five years on the East Coast before returning to her cherished Los Angeles. At Enterprise Bank & Trust, Hunter thrives as SVP, relationship manager team lead prioritizing personalized service for small- and family-owned enterprises, and advocates for diversity and inclusion within Enterprise's DE&I Council. Beyond banking, she champions youth development and social responsibility, notably serving at the Los Altos Family YMCA and Long Beach Rotary Club. Her recent membership in Vistage and ProVisors reflects her commitment to professional growth and community engagement. Hunter's journey exemplifies immigrant success, inspiring others through public speaking engagements, including mentoring initiatives and youth programs.



Brian Ishida
EVP, Regional Manager
 Banc of California
 Commercial Banking

Brian Ishida, EVP and regional manager at Banc of California, is renowned for delivering innovative, client-centric solutions in banking and finance. His career trajectory, from a management trainee to his current executive role, underscores his commitment to excellence. Notably, Ishida led initiatives at Banc of California, enhancing resource utilization and bolstering operational efficiency. Amid industry challenges, his leadership minimized disruptions, fostering stronger internal cohesion and client relationships. Leading a diverse team of 15 professionals, he facilitated over \$550 million in loan commitments in 18 months. With a rich background in relationship management and credit, Ishida's integrity and dedication have earned him accolades as a senior banker. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics from UCLA and is a Pacific Coast Banking School graduate. Ishida's journey began with Union Bank of California's Management Training Program in 1997.

Mollie Kaiser, an accomplished financial advisor at Strategic View Advisors, contributes invaluable guidance to clients and actively participates in key committees, including financial planning and investment. With a background in Bernstein Global Wealth Management and Credit Suisse, she brings extensive expertise in advising, planning and investment management. Holding an MBA from Pepperdine University and Series 7 and 63 licenses, Kaiser maintains prestigious designations such as Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU®), Retirement Income Certified Professional (RICP®) and Certified Financial Planner™ Certification. Transitioning from social services to finance, her passion for helping others shines through. Kaiser actively engages with professional associations like the Financial Planning Association and contributes significantly to the South Bay Estate Planning Council. Currently, she sits on the philanthropic committee of Strategic View Advisors ("SVA CARES"), where she collaborates with the team on ways to give back to the local community.



Mollie Kaiser
Private Wealth Advisor
 Strategic View Advisors
 Professional Services



Corey Fischer Managing Partner

Weinberg & Company congratulates Corey Fischer for being recognized as a Banking & Finance Industry 2024 Visionary by L.A. Times B2B Publishing

Weinberg is a leading international, full service CPA firm serving clients throughout the US, Canada and Pacific Rim.

Assurance & Audit, Tax & Accounting, Private Client Services, Consulting, Business Management
 PCAOB and CPAB Registered Public Accountants
www.weinbergla.com | 310-601-2200



CONGRATULATIONS DENNIS!
 DENNIS GILKERSON, California Bank & Trust Senior Vice President, Private Banking Manager, is a
2024 VISIONARY IN BANKING AND FINANCE

We celebrate all the innovative leaders who earned this special recognition

calbanktrust.com



Visionaries



**Nisha
Kanchanapoomi**

Partner

Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Professional Services

Nisha Kanchanapoomi, a corporate partner at Kirkland & Ellis, is an essential figure in the firm's Los Angeles corporate debt finance practice group. Her diverse practice encompasses representing private equity funds, hedge funds and corporate borrowers in complex transactions. Notable clients include Ares Management, Brentwood Associates and Fortress Investment Group, among others. Kanchanapoomi's expertise is evident in her involvement in over \$10.4 billion worth of financings in the past 18 months alone. She played a pivotal role in Bed Bath & Beyond's turnaround, securing critical financing and navigating a challenging bankruptcy process. Additionally, she facilitated significant transactions for companies like Envision Healthcare and the Neiman Marcus Group. Beyond her client work, Kanchanapoomi contributes to Kirkland & Ellis through leadership roles in recruiting, diversity and inclusion initiatives. She mentors junior lawyers and advocates for fair representation and professional development.

Karan Kapoor, a managing director at Cantor Fitzgerald's investment banking division, spearheads the global tech investment banking group. With nearly 20 years of experience, he specializes in advising tech companies on mergers & acquisitions and capital raising, particularly in software sectors like collaboration & workflow automation and data & analytics. His expertise extends to core verticals such as construction & real estate and healthcare. Previously, Kapoor co-led Kroll's Tech M&A team and worked at UBS and Stifel. He began his career in public equity investing at Brades Investment Partners and later transitioned to private equity at Wedbush Capital. He holds an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management, where he was actively involved in campus leadership and entrepreneurship initiatives. Kapoor's relocation from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 2019 leveraged his extensive banking experience to drive Cantor Fitzgerald's expansion in the tech sector.



**Karan
Kapoor**

**Managing Director, Tech
Investment Banking**
Cantor Fitzgerald
Investment Banking



**Bryan A.
Kenny**

**President
& Principal**
Bandon Capital Advisors
Commercial Banking

Bryan Kenny, a distinguished figure in mortgage banking and capital advisory, boasts nearly 25 years of expertise in commercial real estate finance. As president and co-founding principal of Bandon Capital Advisors, he has orchestrated over \$1.5 billion in transactions, focusing on tailored debt solutions to align with clients' investment goals. With a bachelor's degree from Bucknell University, Kenny transitioned from a career in filmmaking to founding Green River Funding in 2000. His tenure at Sunrise Mortgage & Investment Company, where he served as a partner, saw him originating over \$1 billion in loans, despite economic challenges. In 2022, he co-founded Bandon Capital Advisors, emphasizing a relationship-driven approach to mortgage banking and advisory services. The firm specializes in various financing structures and prioritizes long-term client partnerships. Kenny's recent accomplishments include securing significant loans for properties like El Monte Industrial, Inglewood Assets and Sherman Oaks Special Use.



**Anthony
Kim**

**Senior Executive Vice President
and Chief Banking Officer**
Hanmi Bank
Commercial Banking

Anthony Kim serves as Hanmi Bank's senior executive vice president and chief banking officer, overseeing revenue generation, new loan production and deposit gathering across 35 branches, two corporate banking centers and the specialty lending group. With Hanmi since 2013 he was promoted to his current role in 2020. Kim's leadership has been pivotal in achieving significant growth milestones, including Hanmi's asset base reaching \$7.4B by September 30, 2023, up from \$5.5B in 2018, with an 11% CAGR in average loan growth since 2013. Under his guidance, Hanmi has diversified its loan portfolio, reducing commercial real estate loans to 63% and increasing commercial & industrial loans to 13%. Kim's strategic initiatives, including the Corporate Korea Initiative, have enhanced client relationships and expanded Hanmi's market presence. He prioritizes ethical banking practices, mentorship and community impact, fostering a culture of integrity and service orientation within the institution.



**Amy
Ko**

**Regional Managing Director,
Senior Relationship Manager**
Fiduciary Trust International
Asset/Investment Management

Amy Ko, regional managing director at Fiduciary Trust International, has over 20 years of wealth management experience. As a first-generation Chinese American she draws from her upbringing to empathize with underserved communities and actively supports Bay Area nonprofits. At Fiduciary Trust International since 2020, Ko has increased the Bay Area team's assets and revenue over fivefold, exceeding sales goals by 110% and achieving 0% client attrition. She champions diversity with over 50% women and 65% minority representation on her team. Previously, at Silicon Valley Bank, Ko tripled assets under management and spearheaded innovative projects, including digital platform launches. She was previously a senior vice president and private client advisor at U.S. Trust/Bank of America Private Wealth Management in San Francisco, where she was responsible for cultivating relationships with strategic existing client relationships, in addition to new client acquisition, business development and community development activities.

Ken Kramer, appointed senior vice president and chief financial officer at First Entertainment Credit Union in 2020, brings over 20 years of banking experience. Responsible for financial planning, policies and accounting practices, he plays a vital role in steering First Entertainment. He also holds the position of president of the Media Benefits Corporation and serves as the staff liaison for First Entertainment's Asset Liability Committee (ALCO) and Finance Committees. In 2023, amidst financial challenges compounded by industry strikes, Kramer's leadership was instrumental. He facilitated \$7 million in financial solutions, including emergency loans and fee waivers, mitigating the impact on members during nearly 200 days of strikes. First Entertainment was able to provide stability and assistance during these uncertain times for many creatives and is going to continue to help all entertainment workers rebuild financial strength now that this historic strike has concluded.



**Ken
Kramer**

**SVP, Chief
Financial Officer**
First Entertainment Credit Union
Credit Unions

Visionaries



Jeffrey A. Krieger

Partner, Bankruptcy, Reorganization & Capital Recovery
Greenberg Glusker LLP
Professional Services

Jeffrey Krieger, a partner at Greenberg Glusker, specializes in bankruptcy and commercial law, serving both creditors and debtors. His expertise aids clients in navigating financial distress, offering strategic counsel to maximize opportunities and manage risks in bankruptcy proceedings. Krieger represents diverse clientele including lenders, borrowers and guarantors across various industries such as real estate, apparel and entertainment. Notable cases include representing the Chapter 7 Trustee in the bankruptcy of Dr. Alex A. Khadavi and facilitating the \$45.75 million auction of Khadavi's mansion. He also represents lessors in the Rite Aid bankruptcy and Vice Media's commercial leases. Krieger's accolades include recognition in Chambers USA and Best Lawyers in America®. He contributes to publications such as "Reviving the Financially Distressed Business" and the firm's bankruptcy blog. He also holds a J.D. from the UC Davis School of Law and a B.A. in economics from Swarthmore College. Krieger joined Greenberg Glusker in 1991 and became a partner in 1998.

Deborah La Franchi, founder and CEO of SDS Capital Group since 2001, leads a \$1.9 billion firm focused on affordable housing development. Her leadership drives impactful investments, including the \$190 million SDS Supportive Housing Fund providing housing for Californians. La Franchi's achievements, including recognition on the ImpactAssets 50 list, highlight her commitment to social change. Prior to SDS, she served as the first president and CEO of Genesis L.A., securing significant investments for low-income communities. As a mentor, La Franchi fosters a diverse workplace with SDS promoting female and minority representation. Notably, 30% of female and 33% of minority employees received promotions. Her dedication extends beyond business; she chairs the Sustainable Communities Fund and supports initiatives for women and minority entrepreneurs. La Franchi is a former director for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater L.A. and secretary and director of the National New Market Tax Credit Coalition.



Deborah La Franchi

Founder & CEO
SDS Capital Group
Private Equity



Brian Landau

Partner
SingerLewak
Professional Services

Brian Landau has over 20 years of public accounting experience in the areas of taxation, audit, insolvency, litigation support and consulting services for small to mid-size privately held companies. He has directed and advised clients through the handling of specialized business tax structures, acquisition and sales of companies, business expansion, banking and financing matters, as well as other operational challenges. Additionally, Landau has extensive experience in bankruptcy, receivership and litigation, including forensic accounting, preference and insider actions, and Chapter 11 Debtor-in-Possession reorganizations. He also has considerable trust and estate experience in the areas of tax preparation and probate and fiduciary accountings for complex trusts and estates.



fti Fiduciary Trust International

Congratulations, Amy!

We are honored to congratulate Regional Managing Director, Amy Ko, for being recognized as a 2024 visionary in banking & finance.

Amy Ko
Regional Managing Director
Fiduciary Trust International



(877) 284-2697 | fiduciarytrust.com | 1 Franklin Parkway, San Mateo, CA

© 2024 Fiduciary Trust Company International, headquartered in New York, (and its subsidiaries doing business as Fiduciary Trust International) and FTCI (Cayman) Ltd. are part of the Franklin Templeton family of companies. All rights reserved.



CONGRATULATIONS

MARK FLEWELLING & JEREMY SHULMAN




Mark Flewelling - Partner **Jeremy Shulman - Partner**

for being recognized as a **banking & finance industry 2024 Visionary** by L.A. Times B2B Publishing!

LAGERLOF.COM | (626)793-9400



Visionaries



**Dan
Landes**

Partner
GHJ
Professional Services

Dan Landes, CPA, partner at GHJ, excels in financial advisory services, notably in media and advertising revenue recognition. Leading GHJ's Media and Advertising Practice, his innovative consulting has guided clients through evolving financial landscapes. His deep industry involvement fosters stability and growth for clients. Landes champions knowledge sharing, lecturing at top universities and facilitating internal trainings. Actively engaged in the Ventura County Community Foundation, he upholds accounting standards beyond client work. He advocates for GHJ's culture of balance, reflected in his promotion to partner in 2021. As a thought leader, Landes shares insights through articles and podcasts, shaping financial practices. He is deeply passionate about serving his community and has actively participated in building meal kits for My Friend's Place, assembling bikes for the Boys and Girls Club and making blankets for the Assistance League, showcasing his commitment to societal betterment.

Homin Lee is a shareholder in Greenberg Traurig's Los Angeles Corporate Practice, where he specializes in financial transactions, advising banks, commercial finance companies, private equity sponsors and diverse companies. His expertise encompasses acquisition financings, asset-based lending, subordinated debt financings and refinancing transactions. A few of Lee's notable recent matters include assisting Cadiz Inc., a California water solutions company, in a registered direct offering of 10.5 million shares of common stock, priced at \$3.84 per share, with gross proceeds totaling \$40.32 million. He also represented Salm Partners (Salm), a portfolio company of Entrepreneurial Equity Partners, in connection with the sale of Salm to Johnsonville, LLC, a family-owned and privately-held manufacturer of premium sausage and other food products as well as Salt & Straw, Eureka Restaurants, Finney's Crafthouse and Hopdoddy Burger Bar in debt financing transactions.



**Homin
Lee**

Shareholder
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Professional Services



**Marissa
Arielle Lepor**

**Director & Head of Beauty
and Personal Care**
The Sage Group
Investment Banking

Marissa Lepor, director and head of beauty & personal care at The Sage Group, brings an entrepreneurial approach to investment banking. Raised in Los Angeles, she garnered diverse experiences, including internships with notable figures like Gillian Zuker and Joyce Azria. With a B.A. in economics from Columbia University, Lepor joined Sage, specializing in mergers & acquisitions for consumer brands. Her notable deals, such as Frankies Bikinis to Victoria's Secret, reflect her impact on the industry. Recognized for her expertise, Lepor contributes to publications like Vogue Business and fosters female founders through initiatives like the Female Founder Awards. Co-founding LADies in Finance, she supports women in male-dominated sectors. Outside finance, Lepor co-founded The Pink Pig, an award-winning tequila celebrating women's empowerment. Actively engaged in community organizations like LACMA and the Holocaust Museum, she mentors students through Ready to Succeed.



**Edwin
Loreda**

Partner
Core Innovation Company
Venture Capital

Edwin Loreda, a native of Burbank, California, and son of immigrant single mother Rebecca Andrade, embodies resilience and achievement. Despite humble beginnings, he was able to excel academically and athletically. He graduated from Princeton University in 2015 with a degree in economics and ventured into investment banking with GCA Advisors, specializing in fintech and digital media. Joining Core Innovation Capital in 2018, Loreda rapidly climbed the ranks from vice president to partner by 2023, a testament to his exceptional performance and strategic acumen. At Core, he focuses on investments that blend financial returns with social impact, targeting innovative startups that empower consumers and small businesses. Notably, he manages a real estate fund aimed at bridging the homeownership gap in Los Angeles and Dallas, a cause close to his heart. Through his endeavors, Loreda strives to foster financial stability and wealth accumulation, particularly among underserved communities.



**Andrew
Manier**

**Wealth
Management Advisor**
Sage Capital Wealth Management &
Insurance Solutions
Asset/Investment Management

Andrew Manier specializes in financial consulting for medical professionals, business owners, affluent families and CPAs, aiming to enhance their financial well-being. With over a decade of experience at Northwestern Mutual where he started as an intern in 2011, he founded Sage Capital Wealth Management & Insurance Solutions. His firm collaborates with clients leveraging Northwestern Mutual's resources to ensure long-term financial success. Specializing in business planning, fee-based planning and investments, they offer exclusive access to a diverse range of products and services. Manier holds Series 6, 63, 65 and 7 securities licenses along with several prestigious certifications like CFP®, RICP®, CLU®, ChFC®, AEP®, CAP® and REBC®. Additionally, he is a Chartered Special Needs Consultant (ChSNC®), uniquely equipped to assist families with special needs individuals. Manier aids business owners in various investment opportunities, including business risk management and succession planning.

Mastaneh Masghati has 30 years of experience in the banking industry. During her career, she has led several teams including IT, product management and global treasury management sales. Masghati is considered a strong and effective leader within her industry. Most recently she led a team of banking individuals to transition over 5,000 commercial clients from Union Bank to U.S. Bank due to the U.S. Bank acquisition. Currently, in her new role, Masghati leads a team of global treasury management sales individuals for Global General Industries services at U.S. Bank. She is an advocate for saving lives and works with Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer. She is also involved in many charitable initiatives, such as March of Dimes, Make a Wish Foundation and Families Forward, to name a few.



**Mastaneh
Masghati**

Senior Vice President
U.S. Bank
Commercial Banking

Visionaries



**Peter
Massumi**

Founding Partner
Massumi + Consoli LLP
Professional Services

Peter Massumi, co-founder and managing partner of Massumi + Consoli LLP in Los Angeles, specializes in representing private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies in various transactions. With a background as a partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP, he has guided MCLLP to become a leading private equity M&A practice on the West Coast since its establishment in 2015. The firm, with nearly 50 attorneys across multiple offices, offers comprehensive coverage for PE transactions and advisory work, emphasizing functional expertise rather than industry-specific deals. Massumi's influence extends beyond transactions, shaping the middle-market private equity landscape. He serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law and guest lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from UCLA and a Juris Doctor degree from Harvard Law School.

John Mavredakis is a seasoned senior managing director and the global head of Houlihan Lokey's Financial Sponsors Group. With over 35 years of expertise in mergers and acquisitions, leveraged buyouts, private financings, and ESOP buyouts, he has personally closed more than 500 transactions. Prior to his current role, Mavredakis managed investment banking operations and served as President of Houlihan Lokey Capital, Inc. He has been actively involved in ESOP Capital Partners and is a frequent speaker on mergers and acquisitions and corporate finance topics. Mavredakis holds a B.A. in economics from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MBA from the University of Denver Graduate School of Business. He has contributed significantly to the field, co-authoring a chapter in "Financial Valuation: Businesses and Business Interests" and publishing numerous articles on corporate finance.



**John G.
Mavredakis**

**Sr. Managing Director, Head
of Financial Sponsors Group**
Houlihan Lokey
Investment Banking



**Michael
Metzger**

Managing Partner
Drake Star
Investment Banking

Michael Metzger, a managing partner at Drake Star Partners, oversees a team of 100 professionals spanning the U.S., Europe and Asia. With over 25 years of expertise in M&A, financing and corporate development within the internet and tech sectors, he has facilitated 17 successful transactions since joining Drake Star in 2018. Renowned as a global thought leader in digital media and gaming, Metzger's notable deals include Echtra Games' sale to Zynga and Spiketrap's acquisition by Reddit. He holds five patents in communications and chairs the German American Business Association in Southern California (GABA). Before his tenure at Drake Star, he served as a senior investment banker at Houlihan Lokey, principal at MESA Global and co-founder of Covert & Co. Metzger held management roles at AT&T, IBM and Mindspeed and earned an MBA from UCLA and an MSEE from the University of Ulm, Germany.

CONGRATS TO MIKE SITRICK

on being named a 2024 Visionary,
by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing Group

"Even if you don't know his name, you know his work."

The New York Times writing about our founder, Michael Sitrick

Los Angeles Times: "The Wizard of Spin" - "LA's King of Crisis PR."

The New York Times: "The City's Most Prominent Crisis Management Firm"

Business Week: "Now (she) has hired Michael Sitrick, whose Los Angeles public-relations firm is known for going atomic on opponents using 'truth squads,' 'wheel-of-pain' tactics and high-profile journalists (who write profiles). "That's unbelievable," said the head of the firm opposite Sitrick in the case being written about in that article. "This is the heavy artillery."

SITRICK AND COMPANY
A UNIT OF SITRICK GROUP, LLC

LOS ANGELES | NEW YORK | WASHINGTON DC

Holland & Knight congratulates our Partner

Hamid Namazie

on being recognized as a
2024 Banking and Finance Visionary.

We celebrate Hamid and this year's honorees for their leadership and contributions to the financial industry.

Holland & Knight

www.hklaw.com

Los Angeles, CA | 213.896.2400



Visionaries



Karen Millerd Miles

Managing Director
Huron Consulting Group Inc.
Professional Services

Karen Miles is a managing director at Huron Consulting Group Inc., leading the firm's valuation practice within the business advisory practice. With over 30 years of experience, she specializes in valuations for various purposes, including transactions, fairness opinions and tax valuations. Previously at Houlihan Lokey and a Big Four accounting firm, Miles has been a guest lecturer in the M&A program at UCLA and has contributed to industry publications. She is a CPA with an ABV credential, holding degrees from the University of Southern California and UCLA Anderson School of Management. Since joining Huron in 2022, Miles has expanded the firm's valuation practice, adding services like fairness opinions and complex tax and financial reporting. Recent notable assignments include fund-to-fund fairness opinions in healthcare, de-SPAC opinions in transportation, cryptocurrency valuation and financial advisory in a large retail restructuring.

Alissa Miller, a distinguished finance attorney specializing in the entertainment sector, is renowned as one of Hollywood's premier dealmakers. As a partner at Akin, she orchestrates high-profile transactions between independent film production firms and financial entities, alongside spearheading innovative pro bono initiatives focused on media and entertainment. In 2022, Miller assumed leadership of Akin's Los Angeles office, advocating staunchly for the entertainment realm amidst unprecedented disruptions. Notably, she led efforts aiding over two dozen independent production companies affected by pandemic-related shutdowns, culminating in the establishment of the American Coalition for Independent Content Production (ACICP). Miller's recent accomplishments include facilitating multimillion-dollar credit facilities for prominent entertainment entities such as A24, Netflix and ABC Television. She also dedicates her expertise to pro bono endeavors, supporting institutions like the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and Public Counsel, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing civil rights and racial and economic justice.



Alissa Miller

Partner
Akin
Professional Services



Dan Miller

Partner
Miller Barondess, LLP
Professional Services

Dan Miller, a founding partner of Miller Barondess, LLP, specializes in litigation across California and nationally. Recognized among Los Angeles' top litigators and by Best Lawyers in America® for Commercial Litigation and Litigation – Real Estate, he excels in representing clients in banking and private equity. His successes include securing an \$11 million arbitration award and a \$20 million settlement for a global private equity firm. Miller represents Wave Investments in a breach of contract and fraud case against SecurCapital, scheduled for trial in 2024. He also represents plaintiffs, including a prominent private equity firm, against Vervent for breach of contract, seeking \$5 million in damages with a trial set in 2024. Miller also handles a multimillion-dollar shareholder dispute in Delaware Chancery Court. Beyond his legal practice, he lectures at UCLA, mentors law students and supports local charities, such as Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and UCLA.



Kevin Miller

Principal & CEO
Thorofare Capital, Inc.
Lending

Kevin H. Miller serves as the chief executive officer and founding member of Thorofare Capital, playing a pivotal role in shaping the firm's core investment philosophy. Under his leadership, Thorofare Capital has introduced private discretionary debt funds, institutional joint ventures, and separate accounts. Miller's strategic guidance has propelled the firm's assets under management (AUM) to surpass \$1.2 billion, with successful investments exceeding \$4.3 billion. In his capacity as CEO, Miller oversees all aspects of the firm, actively involved in capital formation and strategy execution. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in economics from the University of Southern California. With a wealth of experience and a commitment to excellence, Miller continues to drive Thorofare Capital's success in the financial landscape.



Michal Miron

EVP, California Region Manager
Israel Discount Bank (IDB Bank)
Commercial Banking

Michal Miron is the executive vice president and California region manager at IDB Bank, a New York-based private and commercial bank. She joined IDB in February 2023 from Bank Leumi, where she served as the West Coast market president. At IDB, Miron oversees West Coast operations, leading a team of over 30 banking professionals in commercial real estate, healthcare banking and private banking. During her tenure, she has driven substantial growth, increasing the regional portfolio by 10% in loans and 12% in deposits within the first year. Miron navigated the 2023 banking crisis, maintaining the bank's book of business and securing over \$100 million in new client deposits. She holds a bachelor's degree in economics and an MBA from Bar Ilan University, Israel and completed the Harvard Business School Women Leadership Forum. An active community leader, she volunteers for Kid Save.

As Northern Trust's market leader in Pasadena, Stephen Miyabe is responsible for the firm's investment management, trust, estate and private banking business. He joined Northern Trust in 2019 as West Region Practice Lead for Estate Settlement Services where he and his team assisted clients with their estate planning and trust administration needs. His expertise in building and leading a team of highly qualified professionals is known and respected throughout the community. Prior to joining Northern Trust, Miyabe devoted much of his career as a trust and estates attorney and represented ultra-high-net-worth clients with their estate planning and administration. He has been a featured speaker at events and symposiums on various topics related to estate settlement, trust administration, tax/estate planning and business succession.



Stephen Miyabe

SVP, Managing Director
Northern Trust
Asset/Investment Management

Visionaries



Brady Money

Managing Director
Greif & Co.
Investment Banking

Brady Money graduated magna cum laude with B.S. degrees in finance and economics from the University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business, earning accolades such as Outstanding Finance Scholar and The Wall Street Journal Scholar Awards. While studying, he worked full-time as an assistant financial planner & financial analyst for American Express Financial Advisors and later 4Site Financial Solutions/Rock House Financial. Money's career in investment banking began at Greif & Co., where he rose to managing director, specializing in mergers, acquisitions and capital raising for entrepreneurial clients across various industries. Notable transactions include the sale of Lugano Diamonds & Jewelry, Inc. to Compass Diversified and arranging growth financing for Lugano Diamonds. He also facilitated the sales of Energy Labs, Inc. to Vertiv Group Corporation and the management buyout of Bristol Farms from SuperValu by Endeavour Capital.

Christopher Montes, director at Walker & Dunlop's Multifamily Finance team in Los Angeles, brings over a dozen years of experience in commercial real estate finance, specializing in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac programs. He plays a pivotal role in the newly established CREUnited™ Alliance, focused on diversifying the commercial real estate industry by supporting underrepresented individuals. Montes facilitated financing for The Derby Apartments with CREUnited member Langdon Park Capital, exemplifying the alliance's commitment to urban minority communities. His engagement extends to corporate diversity initiatives at Walker & Dunlop, fostering inclusivity across functional areas. Montes actively navigates market fluctuations, leveraging treasury dips for client benefits and facilitating educational opportunities with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. He also serves in leadership roles for industry associations, AdelFi Credit Union, USC's Sol Price School of Public Policy and the Mortgage Bankers Association's Future Leaders Program.



Christopher Montes

Director - Multifamily Finance
Walker & Dunlop
Lending



Sandra Lee Montgomery

Partner
Proskauer Rose LLP
Professional Services

Sandra Lee Montgomery is a prominent figure in private capital, excelling in the banking and finance sector, with a track record of closing over \$5.5 billion in transactions in 2023. Her expertise spans complex finance structures for alternative lenders, involving cross-border transactions across various countries. Recognized by industry publications and organizations, Montgomery has been featured in esteemed lists such as Best Lawyers in America. As a thought leader, she authors chapters for notable publications like The International Comparative Legal Guide to Lending & Secured Finance and is a regular speaker at finance conferences nationwide. Noteworthy recent engagements include moderating panels at prestigious events such as the Markets Group Private Equity San Francisco Forum and LPGP Connect's Women in Private Debt Conference. Montgomery's recent advisory work includes transactions for MidCap Financial Trust, Apollo and Ares Capital Corporation.

Los Angeles Times
BUSINESS TO BUSINESS
PUBLISHING

NOMINATE A VISIONARY CEO



Select professionals will be featured in the
2024 C-SUITE MAGAZINE
Nomination deadline is April 12



latimes.com/b2b/CEO

The selection of visionaries and the production of the magazine will be organized by L.A. Times B2B Publishing and will not involve the editorial staff of the Los Angeles Times

Congratulations!

William Schoenholz
SHAREHOLDER

2024 NOMINEE
L.A. TIMES B2B PUBLISHING
BANKING & FINANCE INDUSTRY VISIONARY

Buchalter
www.buchalter.com

ARIZONA | CALIFORNIA | COLORADO | OREGON | UTAH | WASHINGTON

Visionaries

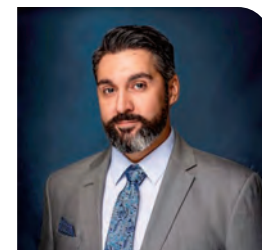


Steve Moon

Deputy Head of U.S. M&A
Kroll Investment Banking
Investment Banking

Steve Moon, a managing director at Kroll Securities for 24 years, serves as deputy head of mergers and acquisitions for the Americas and co-head of the Aerospace, Defense and Government Mergers & Acquisitions Group. With over 25 years of investment banking and corporate finance experience, he specializes in diverse financial transactions including mergers, acquisitions, divestitures and recapitalizations. Moon's recent notable transactions include advising on the sale of Magnetic Component Engineering to Dexter Magnetic Holdings, the divestiture of SGL Carbon's Gardena Division to TexTech Industries and the recapitalization of Turbo Wholesale Tires with Kingswood Capital Management. He has facilitated deals in various industries, such as aerospace, defense and manufacturing. Moon is actively involved in professional organizations and serves on the board of directors for ACG Los Angeles. Additionally, he supports TAS-SEL, a nonprofit organization aiding rural Cambodians through English education.

Jonathan Morales serves as the California head of community & business development at JPMorgan Chase. Leading the financial health strategy across the state, his focus lies on building trust in underserved local communities and providing resources to drive economic equity, particularly within Black and Hispanic/Latino communities. His team has organized over 2,000 financial health events and participated in and hosted over 1,000 community service events, with 787 financial health events and around 500 community events in the Greater Los Angeles Area alone. Morales recently moderated discussions on financial health at the JPMorgan Chase "Building Nuestro Futuro" Wealth Summit Series at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, emphasizing engagement with the Hispanic/Latino community. With more than 20 years of leadership experience in the financial services industry, he is a big believer in "paying it forward" as he is an advocate of empowering employees to pursue opportunities for community involvement and mentorship.



Jonathan Morales

Managing Director
JPMorgan Chase
Commercial Banking



Farzad Mukhi

Managing Director
Kroll
Investment Banking

Farzad Mukhi, a seasoned deal professional, specializes in advising business owners on sale transactions and capital raises. With a focus on project management, he handles various investment banking engagements such as sell-side and buy-side transactions, leveraged buyouts and debt and equity financings. Praised for his thoughtful and independent advice, Mukhi serves a diverse clientele ranging from entrepreneurs to multinational corporations. His expertise in the consumer products and services industry is evident in his leadership of Kroll's food, beverage and nutrition M&A practice. Noteworthy transactions include Turbo Wholesale Tires, Baja Fresh and Robbins Brothers. Beginning his career at Duff & Phelps in 2005, Mukhi has ascended to managing director, setting an example for his colleagues. He actively mentors founders of early-stage consumer and food/beverage companies and contributes to organizations like Naturally Los Angeles and the Association for Growth's Los Angeles chapter.



Bruce C. Munster

Managing Director
Merrill Private Wealth Management
Asset/Investment Management

Bruce Munster is a principal at the Munster Freeman Group, operating within Merrill Private Wealth Management with offices in Scottsdale, AZ, and Denver, CO. The group caters to a diverse clientele, including inventors, entrepreneurs, entertainers, investors and executives from investment banks and private equity firms. Munster and his team specialize in advising clients on personal wealth management concerns related to M&A transactions across various industries. Munster has been recognized nationally as a top financial advisor, appearing on Forbes' "Top Wealth Advisors" list from 2018 to 2023 and Barron's "Top 1200 Financial Advisors" list from 2017 to 2023. He holds a B.S. in business management and marketing from Cornell University. Munster supports charitable organizations such as the National Christian Foundation and Union Rescue Mission.

Hamid Namazie, a seasoned attorney, specializes in representing diverse clients such as banks, institutional lenders and commercial finance companies. His practice revolves around asset-based loans, senior-secured loans, second-lien loans and subordinated loans. With expertise in complex intercreditor issues, debtor-in-possession financing and cross-border lending structures, Namazie is a valuable addition to Holland & Knight. As the general counsel of the Southern California chapter of the Secured Finance Network (SFNet) and an executive committee member at the national level, he also chairs the advocacy committee. He joined Holland & Knight in 2023, earning praise from Jose Sirven, chair of the Business Section, for enhancing their national finance practice. Namazie's recent deals include facilitating multimillion-dollar secured credit facilities for various clients, such as a developer of photovoltaic panel systems, a retailer of electronic consumer goods and a distributor of toys and children's goods.



Hamid Namazie

Partner
Holland & Knight
Professional Services



Chikara Ricky Nagano

Managing Partner
Prager Metis
Professional Services

Chikara Ricky Nagano, a partner at Prager Metis in the accounting and attest department, leads the Japanese Global Services Group. Specializing in financial and business strategy consultancy for Japanese companies in the U.S. and vice versa, he offers services in accounting, audit, tax and consulting to Japanese-speaking American clients in a wide range of industries, including entrepreneurs, individual clients and information technology companies. Having been educated in both Japan and the U.S., Nagano is deeply committed to community service. He serves as treasurer of the nonprofit "Support-of-People-in-Need," which supports poverty-stricken families and communities in his local area. Additionally, he contributes to the Japanese Business Association of Southern California, aiming to enhance the business environment for Japanese companies in the region. Nagano is recognized for his expertise and regularly speaks on tax accounting topics, notably delivering lectures at the Japan External Trade Organization in Los Angeles.

Visionaries



David J. Nelson

Chief Operating Officer
Clifford Swan Investment Counselors
Asset/Investment Management

David Nelson assumed the role of chief operating officer at Clifford Swan in 2023 overseeing operations, technology and human resources. In his tenure, he has optimized operations through new technologies and initiated three employee incentive programs to drive transformative change and enhance client experiences. Before joining Clifford Swan, Nelson served as senior director at a subsidiary of Affiliated Managers Group, managing operations and accounting and handling over \$10B in annual derivative trades. He developed expertise in Python programming, creating custom software for data aggregation and insights. Nelson led major vendor software implementations and launched multiple fund vehicles with prior experience in auditing mutual funds with Deloitte. Dedicated to community service, he serves as a treasurer for a 501(c)(3) organization and co-runs a financial education program for high school students. Nelson also mentors students at USC's Marshall School of Business.

Wes Nichols leverages over a decade of experience in business development, commercial real estate and property tax reduction. His dedicated work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit have driven significant growth in his career and company. Paramount Property Tax Appeal, founded by Nichols, has expanded from two to 12 employees in five years, serving clients across California, Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada. Handling over 10,000 appeals and saving taxpayers more than half a billion dollars to date, his firm offers comprehensive property tax solutions. Before founding his company, Nichols excelled as vice president of loan origination at Johnson Capital and as a residential mortgage broker at Paramount Mortgage. His range of work experience also includes business development at FoxSports.com and in the ESPN programming department. Nichols holds a Bachelor of Science in business and sports communication from Indiana University.



Wes Nichols

Founder & CEO
Paramount Property Tax Appeal
Professional Services



Irene H. Oh

EVP, Chief Risk Officer
East West Bank
Commercial Banking

Irene H. Oh assumed the role of executive vice president and chief risk officer at East West Bancorp and East West Bank in October 2023, transitioning from her 13-year tenure as the company's chief financial officer. She joined East West in 2004 and has held various leadership roles at the bank in accounting and corporate finance. Prior to joining, Oh held positions at Goldman Sachs and Deloitte & Touche LLP. She serves on the board of Terreno Realty Corporation, the audit committee of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles and was a board member at PS Business Parks, Inc. American Banker recognized her as one of "The Most Powerful Women to Watch." Oh holds a Bachelor of Arts in art from California State University, Los Angeles, a Master of Accounting from the University of Southern California and is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

withum 
ADVISORY TAX AUDIT

empower others 

Withum proudly supports the Los Angeles local business community. Congratulations to Chester Ventura, CPA, Partner for being recognized as a banking and finance industry 2024 Visionary by L.A. Times B2B Publishing.

withum.com/los-angeles



Commercial Banking

Great leaders inspire us

We congratulate **Angela Yim-Sullivan** for being recognized as a 2024 visionary in the *Banking and Finance: Trends, Updates and Visionaries Magazine*.



Angela Yim-Sullivan
Market Executive -
Los Angeles Metro

Visionaries



**Scott
Olmsted**

**Technology & Green Economy
Industry Executive, Global
Commercial Banking**
Bank of America
Commercial Banking

Scott Olmsted heads Bank of America's National Technology Industry and Green Economy Executive within Global Commercial Banking. Since 2013, he has led industry strategies for advising technology and green economy companies nationwide. Based in Los Angeles, he oversees over 50 bankers, achieving record revenue and tripling the portfolio in four years. His team supports companies advancing clean solutions as part of a \$1 trillion environmental business initiative. Olmsted expanded the team across tech hub cities, doubling client numbers. In Los Angeles, they assist local tech giants in various industries, offering capital raising, cash management and risk management services. Previously, Olmsted led Bank of America Merrill Lynch's Technology Media & Entertainment Group and worked at The Walt Disney Company's Imagineering Group. Actively involved in the community, he chaired the American Red Cross and contributed to various organizations.

Kevin M. O'Malley joined Blank Rome LLP straight from law school in 2006, relocating to its Los Angeles office three years later to develop the finance practice. Promoted to partner in 2021, he expertly navigated the Paycheck Protection Program during the pandemic. Specializing in commercial finance and secured lending, O'Malley leads transactions across diverse industries and excels in distressed loan workouts and bankruptcies. Notable representations include advising PNC Bank on a \$1.3 billion unitranche credit facility for BDO U.S.A. and guiding Star Mountain Capital in a \$210 million syndicated unitranche loan to Klein Hersch. Recognized as a banking visionary and a "40 Under 40" honoree, O'Malley is deeply committed to combating homelessness and poverty in Los Angeles. He has served on advisory boards for Back on My Feet and MEND, was involved with School on Wheels and co-founded Indie Brewing Company.



**Kevin M.
O'Malley**

Partner, Finance
Blank Rome LLP
Professional Services



**Stephen
Owen**

President & CEO
First Entertainment Credit Union
Credit Unions

Stephen Owen, president and CEO of First Entertainment Credit Union, has over two decades of expertise in the financial sector. His leadership has been pivotal in positioning the credit union as the premier financial ally for entertainment industry professionals, cultivating a top-rated workplace environment. With a diverse career spanning integrated packaging and positions at Johnson & Johnson and Bank of America, Owen's executive roles underscore his exceptional capabilities. Notably, his tenure at Bank of America garnered him the prestigious Award of Excellence in 2007 and 2008. Transitioning to the credit union realm in 2013, he assumed roles such as chief retail and marketing officer and chief operations officer at credit unions in California and Oregon before assuming the helm at First Entertainment Credit Union in 2022. Tasked with revitalizing the \$2 billion organization, Owen strategically guided the credit union to financial prosperity while providing crucial support to members during industry strikes.



**Thomas
Pastore**

CEO & Founder
Sanli Pastore & Hill, Inc.
Professional Services

Sanli Pastore & Hill possesses extensive experience in financial institution valuation, offering services such as fairness opinions for mergers, financial advisory consulting, expert witness services and valuations for tax and financial reporting compliance. Their client portfolio includes prominent names in the banking, financial institutions, insurance, financial services and fintech sectors such as Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, AIG and Fidelity Mortgage Lenders. Thomas Pastore, CEO and co-founder, brings over 35 years of financial consulting expertise, specializing in intellectual property valuation, damages analyses, acquisitions and litigation consulting. His credentials include accreditation as a Senior Appraiser, Chartered Financial Analyst and Certified Management Accountant. Pastore is an active participant as both an instructor and student in continuing education classes on advanced topics of business valuation, taxation, eminent domain and redevelopment. He is an official instructor for the California Redevelopment Association and SP&H's Goodwill Loss Valuation Workshops.



**Anant
Patel**

Partner
GHJ
Professional Services

Anant Patel, a seasoned professional with over 25 years of public accounting experience in the U.S. and the U.K., is renowned for his expertise in facilitating transactions within the banking and finance sectors. As the driving force behind GHJ's Advisory and Transaction Advisory Services Practice, he has spearheaded global deals and served as the Global Transaction Advisory Services Leader for HLB. His role expanded to HLB Global Leader - Network Capabilities, advising professionals for cross-border solutions. Patel's vast experience includes billion-dollar deals, specializing in financial due diligence consulting and industry expertise in various sectors such as food and beverage, entertainment and technology. Under his leadership, GHJ's Advisory Practice has grown by 300%, emphasizing a client-centered approach and fostering innovation. Patel also shares his insights through various publications and serves on the board of directors for Step Up, a nonprofit supporting individuals in need. Notable deals include investments in M2 Ingredients and acquisitions by United Talent Agency and Yamaha.

Ash Patel, with over 30 years of banking experience, serves as chairman, CEO and president of Commercial Bank of California (CBC). He exemplifies an entrepreneurial spirit, now leading as a seasoned CEO, inspiring both his team and clients to pursue their aspirations. Patel prioritizes relationships and technology to enhance the client experience, focusing on human capital investments and fostering a culture of "Life Wealth" for all stakeholders. Under his leadership, CBC achieved remarkable growth, reaching \$2.3 billion in assets. Notably, CBC transformed into a billion-dollar bank in 2020, with further expansion to two billion dollars within Patel's first decade, earning recognition as "Best Places to Work in Southern California" in 2022 and 2023. His strategic vision includes supporting underserved communities and embracing financial technology. Patel also founded the Siksha Foundation, dedicated to providing education and opportunities for underprivileged children in India and Africa.



**Ash
Patel**

**Chairman of the Board,
CEO & President**
Commercial Bank of California
Commercial Banking

Visionaries



**Scott M.
Pearson**

Partner
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP
Professional Services

Scott Pearson is a partner and leader of Manatt's esteemed Consumer Financial Services group. With nearly 30 years of experience, he specializes in regulatory enforcement matters, class actions and regulatory compliance for clients in banking, fintech and other industries. Pearson's expertise extends to negotiating bank partnership agreements and transactions with significant regulatory implications. Recognized as one of the top consumer finance lawyers in the U.S., he has earned praise for his responsiveness and legal acumen. Chambers U.S.A. ranked him among the best consumer finance enforcement lawyers in 2023. Pearson's work spans various sectors, including real estate, sports, entertainment and retail. In addition to his client work, he speaks at industry conferences and contributes to leading publications. He also engages in community service, supporting organizations like Cedars-Sinai and the Exotic Feline Conservation Center and providing pro bono assistance to military veterans.

Kate Phelan, California regional director of wealth planning and trust advisory, leads a team overseeing wealth planning and trust advisory functions. Collaborating with senior executives, she specializes in wealth and estate planning, addressing wealth transfer needs and researching fiduciary strategies for high-net-worth individuals and families. With a career spanning banking, financial services and estate planning law since 2015, Phelan joined U.S. Bank Private Wealth Management to focus on designing and executing wealth transfer strategies. Her expertise includes crafting multi-generational estate plans, philanthropic strategies and advising on education and retirement funding as well as California and federal taxation. Outside her professional endeavors, Phelan actively engages in her community, serving on the boards of Girls Inc. of Orange County, the Laguna Playhouse and Public Counsel in Los Angeles. She is also involved in Emerging Leaders of the United Way of Greater Los Angeles.



**Kate
Phelan**

**Regional Director, Wealth
Planning and Trust Advisory**
U.S. Bank
Asset/Investment Management



**Ashley
Player, PE**

**Partner-in-Charge, ECS
Technical Services**
Weaver
Professional Services

Ashley Player, PE, is an experienced chemical engineer with over a decade of expertise. Serving as partner-in-charge of ECS Technical Services at Weaver and executive partner of the San Diego office, she drives business development and strategic expansion. Her specialties include independent engineering reviews and Quality Assurance Plan audits, particularly under the Federal Renewable Fuel Standard, covering renewable diesel, sustainable aviation fuel and renewable natural gas facilities. She holds a Bachelor of Science in chemical and biomolecular engineering from Clemson University and maintains active membership in AIChE and NSPE, where she remains engaged in industry trends and contributes to the engineering community. Player holds professional engineering licensures in California, Hawaii, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Washington and is an accredited lead verifier under the California Air Resources Board's Low Carbon Fuel Standard, demonstrating her dedication to environmental sustainability.



**Spuds
Powell**

Managing Director
Kayne Anderson Rudnick
Wealth Advisors
Asset/Investment Management

Spuds Powell, a Cornell University graduate in industrial and labor relations, rose to prominence as Barron's Magazine's Top Independent Financial Advisor. He joined Kayne Anderson Rudnick (KAR) in 2004 after roles at Franklin Templeton Funds and Financial Engines. As a managing director at KAR, Powell leads a six-person team managing over \$2.5 billion in client assets. Ranked in Barron's Top 100 Independent Advisors for 11 consecutive years, he was inducted into Barron's Hall of Fame in 2022 and listed on Forbes' Best-In-State Wealth Advisors. Powell is renowned for his defensive investment strategy, prioritizing client education and trust. He offers "Investing 101" advice to clients' children and supports various charities in Los Angeles. Powell's approach emphasizes tailored investment strategies aligned with client goals, navigating market turbulence while prioritizing client confidence and financial literacy for future generations.



**Bennett
Pozil**

**Executive
Vice President**
East West Bank
Commercial Banking

Bennett Pozil, executive vice president at East West Bank, heads the Corporate Banking division, leading U.S. commercial banking operations and overseeing specialized industries like entertainment, new media, sponsor finance and cross-border transactions. With a focus on cross-border finance and entertainment, he has positioned East West Bank as a key player in both U.S. and Chinese markets. Recognized as one of the Most Influential Lenders in Los Angeles in 2015 and consistently listed in the Variety 500 since 2017, Pozil is a prominent figure in the entertainment industry. He is a frequent speaker and panelist in Asia, appearing at numerous summits, including the BOAO Forum for Asia, the Beijing International Film Festival, the Shanghai International Film Festival, the Silk Road Conference in Xian and the Asia TV Forum in Singapore. Pozil is also a regular lecturer and adjunct professor at the Beijing Film Academy.

Paul Rahimian, CEO and founder of Parkview Financial, oversees a national debt fund specializing in construction financing for ground-up real estate development projects. Since its inception in 2015, the firm has facilitated over \$4 billion in financing for multifamily, retail, office, industrial and mixed-use projects across the United States with loan sizes ranging from \$5 million to \$200 million. With a hands-on approach, Rahimian has revolutionized loan origination and servicing integration, earning recognition as an industry pioneer. Prior to founding Parkview, he completed over \$350 million in commercial and residential projects as a third-generation real estate developer and general contractor. Parkview's exponential growth and reputation as a leading private construction lender stems from its ability to provide swift and innovative financing solutions. With offices in Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta and Las Vegas, Parkview's experienced team ensures flexibility and creativity even in the most challenging projects.



**Paul
Rahimian**

CEO & Founder
Parkview Financial
Lending

Visionaries



**Sindhu
Rajesh**

**Partner-in-Charge, Alternative
Investment Services**
Weaver
Professional Services

Sindhu Rajesh, CPA, CFE, partner-in-charge at Alternative Investment Services, boasts over 20 years of audit, review and compilation experience, specializing in serving the alternative investment funds sector. Having spent 15 years at Rothstein Kass (now KPMG), she catered to venture funds, private equity funds, real estate funds and hedge funds, along with private foundations, trusts, technology, entertainment and manufacturing clients. Rajesh is a sought-after speaker, addressing topics such as due diligence for fund managers, real estate structures, valuation and accounting updates. She is affiliated with esteemed professional organizations including the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, California Society of CPAs, and Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. Rajesh holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree with a focus on accounting and auditing from Bombay University, India. Her specialties encompass audit services for various investment funds and comprehensive advisory on organizational, accounting, and operational matters within the financial services industry.

Carlos Ramos, EVP, market manager at Banc of California, has over 20 years of commercial and corporate banking experience, leading a high-performing team covering middle-market clients. He specializes in various financing solutions including working capital, acquisitions and asset-based financing. Ramos has organized significant deals, securing multimillion-dollar credit facilities for high-profile clients. Notably, he facilitated a \$75 million senior secured credit facility and negotiated a \$40 million call facility for investment funds. Ramos' stellar career includes leadership roles at Woodforest National Bank and HSBC, earning recognition as one of L.A.'s Top Lenders in 2020. He is known for deep sector expertise and global transaction successes. Beyond banking, Ramos is deeply involved in community service, serving on boards of local nonprofits and educational institutions. He holds a bachelor's in business administration from Loyola Marymount University and an MBA from the Drucker School of Management.



**Carlos
Ramos**

EVP, Regional Manager
Banc of California
Commercial Banking



**Becky
Rang**

Investment Advisor, RMA
Avitas Wealth Management
Asset/Investment Management

Becky Rang, a Certified Private Wealth Advisor (CPWA®) and Retirement Management Advisor (RMA®), joined Avitas Wealth Management in 2021, boasting over a decade of wealth management experience. She is dedicated to providing tailored financial solutions that positively impact clients' lives, utilizing the AWM Total Wealth Organizer to align their goals with actionable plans. Rang specializes in collaborating with families, executives, and entrepreneurs to establish enduring legacies through comprehensive financial planning, charitable giving, and investment strategies. With a holistic and empathetic approach, she offers personalized wealth management services to address individual needs. Rang holds a CPWA® certification from the Yale School of Management and pursued business administration and management studies at California State University, Northridge. Her commitment to client success and education underscores her role as a trusted wealth advisor at Avitas Wealth Management.



**Roger
Recupero**

SVP, Senior Managing Director
Northern Trust
Asset/Investment Management

Roger Recupero, managing director of the Century City Wealth Management team, specializes in assisting high-net-worth individuals and their families in achieving financial goals through comprehensive wealth planning and investment strategies. Holding both the Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®) and Certified Private Wealth Advisor® (CPWA®) designation issued by the Investment Management Consultants Association, he serves a diverse clientele, including foundations, entrepreneurs and corporations. Affiliated with the Financial Planning Association and the Los Angeles Estate Planning Council, Recupero is committed to professional excellence and staying abreast of industry trends. He is an alumnus of Class 46 of the Riordan Leadership Institute, a program of the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce that focuses on service to Los Angeles-based nonprofits. Recupero served as the national co-chair of the Northern Trust United Way Campaign, which raised over \$3.8M for United Way chapters across America.



**Nathan
Rogge**

President & CEO
First Pacific Bank
Commercial Banking

Nathan Rogge serves as president and CEO of First Pacific Bank, leveraging 32 years of industry experience to rejuvenate the institution. Within two years, he revitalized operations, expanded the branch network and refocused on small- and medium-sized businesses in Southern California. Notable achievements include merging Friendly Hills Bank Payroll with Payroll Ready and rebranding to First Pacific Bank, raising over \$17 million in capital amidst market challenges. His leadership history includes growing Bank of Southern California through acquisitions and expanding from \$38 million to \$1.7 billion in assets. Rogge's career began at Wells Fargo Bank, followed by roles at regional banks like First National Bank of San Diego and First Republic Bank. Recognized as one of Southern California's youngest bank CEOs, he received the CEO of the Year Award from the San Diego Business Journal and was named Most Admired CEO.

Vanessa Roman is a prominent figure in Akin's entertainment team and the corporate entertainment domain, earning recognition for her leadership and expertise. She's renowned for advising esteemed clients like Comerica Bank, MUFG Bank Ltd., East West Bank and Bank of America on financing for various film and television projects. Notable deals include MUFG Bank Ltd.'s involvement in loans exceeding \$40 million for films like "Black Flies" and "Thug" and Bank of America's \$100 million credit facility with Electric Entertainment. Roman has also represented East West Bank in financing Hollywood hits like "Mothers' Instinct" and "Hellboy: The Crooked Man." Beyond her professional engagements, she contributes pro bono to organizations like the American Film Institute and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Roman's accomplishments have earned her prestigious acknowledgments, such as Variety's "Legal Impact Report" and Euromoney Expert Guides' "Rising Stars."



**Vanessa
Roman**

Partner
Akin
Professional Services

Visionaries



**Marissa Román
Griffith**

Partner

Akin
Professional Services

Marissa Román Griffith is a distinguished partner at Akin's Los Angeles office, recognized as a trailblazer and influencer in media and entertainment law. Over the past year, she has overseen significant transactions for top-tier clients such as Comerica Bank, MUFG Union Bank, N.A., Media Rights Capital (MRC), JPMorgan Chase and Anonymous Content, involving multimillion-dollar credit facilities and financing agreements for various film and television projects. Román Griffith's leadership extends beyond her legal practice, actively contributing to diversity initiatives and mentoring programs within Akin's Los Angeles office. She's a trustee of the Mexican American Bar Foundation and advisory board member of Female Executives in Media & Entertainment. Her expertise is recognized by industry publications and legal organizations, and she is consistently named among the field's leading lawyers by Variety and Euromoney's Expert Guides.

Shlomi Ronen, managing principal and founder of Dekel Capital, spearheads JV Equity, Capital Advisory and Correspondent Lending platforms. With over 20 years in real estate, he has shaped the commercial landscape. Dekel caters to elite commercial real estate stakeholders with tailored solutions. Ronen's deep market ties ensure top-tier financing solutions, having facilitated \$10+ billion in financing over two decades. In 2023, he launched Dekel Correspondent Lending (DCL), offering balance sheet and CMBS loans. Recent transactions include financing for multifamily developments and office buildings. As managing principal of Dekel Strategic Investors (DSI), Ronen fills equity investment gaps, particularly in senior housing. Under his leadership, DSI has developed cutting-edge senior living facilities. Ronen champions philanthropy, supporting local causes and charities. Additionally, he serves as an adjunct professor at USC teaching a graduate-level course on Real Estate Capital Markets in the Master of Real Estate Program.



**Shlomi
Ronen**

Managing Principal & Founder
Dekel Capital
Asset/Investment Management



**Stephen E.
Rossi**

**Managing Director & Head
of Investment Banking**
Palm Tree LLC
Investment Banking

Stephen E. Rossi, managing director at Palm Tree, heads the investment banking arm, overseeing M&A, capital markets and restructuring endeavors. As co-founder of Palm Tree Securities, he facilitated 12 transactions totaling nearly \$1 billion in closed transaction value since 2020. Since the inception of Palm Tree's investment bank, Rossi has grown the Palm Tree investment banking team to 17 members (based in Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas). Previously, he co-founded CounterPoint Capital Partners and managed capital markets for its portfolio. With Platinum Equity, he closed over \$9 billion in financing commitments and supported over 100 acquisitions. Rossi's philanthropic efforts include supporting charitable organizations, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and St. Jude's. He holds an MBA from Georgetown University and a B.A. from UC Berkeley. Rossi has received multiple M&A Advisor Awards and recognitions, including M&A Advisor 40-Under-40 and Los Angeles Business Journal Leaders of Influence.



**Joseph
Rust**

**Chief Strategic Innovation
Officer and Managing Partner
for the Western Region**
Prager Metis
Professional Services

Joseph Rust, chief strategic innovation officer and managing partner for Prager Metis' Western Region, brings over 35 years of accounting experience. In his role, he directs strategic focus and execution and fosters innovation within the organization. Collaborating closely with the team, Rust leads the implementation of innovative solutions to enhance client service and supports team growth. His dedication to high-value client service is evident in his strategic planning for business management clients and advocacy for royalty and profit participation clients. Leveraging decades of experience and technology, Rust has pioneered a unique process for royalty recovery, greatly benefiting clients. Beyond his professional endeavors, he actively engages in community service as a board member of the Alzheimer's chapter, Association California Southland. He not only serves on the board but also contributes to fundraising efforts and participates in events such as the Alzheimer's Beach City Walk.



**Trevor M.
Saliba**

Chairman & CEO
NMS Capital Group
Private Equity

Trevor Saliba is the founder, chairman and CEO of NMS Capital Group, a private equity investment firm with diverse investments in real estate, financial services, technology and more. He also serves as COO of NFG SA and founded NMS Consulting, a global management consulting firm with over 250 professionals across 15 offices worldwide. With a background at Morgan Stanley, he excelled in investment banking, specializing in mergers, acquisitions and structured financings. Recognized by the Los Angeles Business Journal, Saliba led a top Los Angeles investment bank through \$5 billion in transactions before its sale in 2018. Previously, he managed Asia Pacific for Platinum Capital, Ltd., advised a Los Angeles family office and worked in construction and engineering. An alumnus of Columbia Business School, Saliba's served in leadership roles for professional associations and is a Milken Institute Associate.

Sanli Pastore & Hill, led by president and founder Nevin Sanli, boasts extensive expertise in financial institution valuation, spanning local banks to international giants. Their services encompass fairness opinions for M&A, financial advisory consulting, expert witness services for commercial litigation and valuations for tax and financial reporting compliance. Noteworthy clients include Wells Fargo, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and AIG, among others, across banks, financial institutions, insurance, financial services and fintech sectors. With over 35 years in the industry, Sanli, an accredited senior appraiser, has valued over 2,000 businesses. He is an active member of business organizations and emphasizes fostering solid business relationships. Sanli's professional credentials include a Bachelor of Arts in honors economics, ASA accreditation and active involvement in continuing education, speaking engagements and expert witness testimony in over 60 trials and 200 depositions since 1992.



**Nevin
Sanli**

President & Founder
Sanli Pastore & Hill, Inc.
Professional Services

Visionaries



Martin Sarafa

Managing Partner
Century Park Capital Partners
Private Equity

Martin Sarafa, a founding member of Century Park Capital Partners since 2000, leads investment activities, specializing in leveraged recapitalizations and buyouts. He serves on the investment committee and holds board positions at Accelalpha, MCCi and NCP Coatings. Previously at Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin, Sarafa managed private equity investments and advised on mergers, acquisitions and financings. At Century Park he led over 70 acquisitions, notably GovBuilt by MCCi and the merger-forming Nova Advisory. Sarafa orchestrated NCP Coatings' acquisition, the firm's third platform in specialty chemicals. He facilitated Accelalpha's expansion and orchestrated successful exits, notably The Mochi Ice Cream Company. Sarafa champions sector focus on consumer products, IP-driven manufacturing and technical business services, recruiting industry leaders to the executive council. The firm acts as a value-added partner to its holdings, providing more than financial support including operational assistance, sales and marketing buildouts.

Greg Satz, an immigrant from South Africa, relocated to Los Angeles 38 years ago driven by his passion for the stock and bond markets. His journey commenced at a Fortune 500 bank where he specialized in structuring bond portfolios for high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth clients. Satz honed his expertise in tax-free municipal bonds and investment-grade corporate bonds, fostering enduring relationships with clients spanning over three decades. Beyond managing substantial assets, he extended his advisory practice to guide clients through liquidity events and devise long-term wealth strategies. In 2017, he co-founded Avitas Wealth Management in Century City, catering to the needs of ultra-high-net-worth clients. Avitas evolved its offerings to include financial planning and alternative investments in response to client demands. Satz played a pivotal role in Avitas' expansion, overseeing a team of 12 professionals managing over \$1 billion in assets.



Greg Satz

Principal
Avitas Wealth Management
Asset Investment Management



William Schoenholz

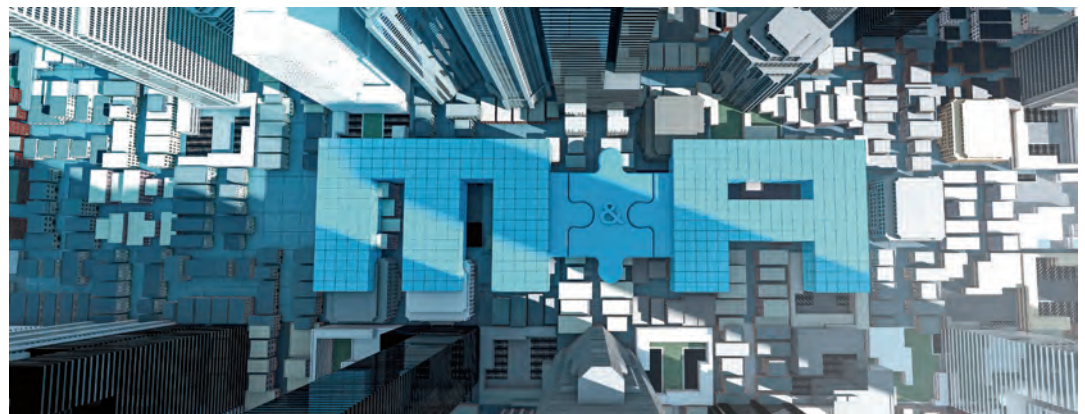
Shareholder
Buchalter
Professional Service

William Schoenholz boasts extensive experience in intricate domestic and international financing transactions, representing diverse entities like banks, commercial finance companies, funds and institutional investors. His expertise encompasses structuring and negotiating various financing arrangements, including acquisition financing, bridge financing and working capital financing. With a focus on multi-facility secured credit arrangements involving cross-border elements, Schoenholz also excels in syndicated and club loan transactions and inter-creditor arrangements. He has been recognized annually by Chambers USA since 2009 and rated AV Preeminent by Martindale Hubbell. He actively supports numerous nonprofit organizations and charities, participating in golf tournaments. Schoenholz's notable representations include Snak Club's investment by Insignia Capital, syndicated credit facilities, club tender-offer financing, international subsidiary acquisitions, intercreditor agreements, forbearance arrangements and foreclosures sales under Article 9 of UCC. He served as counsel for Bank of the West in the upsizing of Duckhorn credit facilities.

[Continued from page 10]

financing vehicles such as non-bank and non-traditional lenders while 46% have embraced deal structures beyond traditional M&A, such as JVs and other types of strategic partnerships.

- **Leaders seek deals that line up with larger enterprise goals.** Corporate (44%) and PE (47%) leaders alike prioritize defining a coherent and well-supported M&A strategy as the most important factor as they consider seeking and executing deals with a strong focus on deal valuation as the second-ranked aspect for corporate leaders (41%) and third-most for private equity (39%).
- **Advanced analytics and Generative AI take their place in M&A.** Nearly all respondents (99%) said their organizations have begun using advanced data analytics or Generative AI to enhance M&A lifecycle tasks such as identification, valuation, integration and divestiture, among others.
- **Organizations are still looking across borders to make deals.** Corporate and PE interest in international targeting to find value has increased 22% in the past two years (68% in 2021 vs. 90% in 2023).



@nespix / Adobe Stock

- **Sharing what works — and working together.** Knowledge exchange between the corporate and PE cohorts is on the rise as both realize their shared lessons can drive better returns. PE firms are also more likely to do business directly with corporate buyers with strategic sales seen as significantly more likely to be their primary exit avenue (56% vs. 33% in 2022).

“M&A deals happen when dealmakers feel confident. Market conditions can shape that sentiment, but strategy and preparation set the tone,” said Adam Reilly, national managing partner, mergers, acquisitions and restructuring services, Deloitte & Touche LLP. “As every

part of the M&A lifecycle becomes more complex, leaders are increasingly recognizing the path to success requires the strong foundation of a well-defined strategy as well as the use of advanced analytics and, in some cases, Generative AI to assess past decision-making and make better, faster decisions about future deals.”



To view or share
this content online,
use this QR code.

Visionaries



Artin Sedighan

President
Cappello Global, LLC
Investment Banking

Artin Sedighan, an investment banker since 2004, specializes in buy-side and sell-side mergers & acquisitions, capital markets, leveraged finance and restructuring transactions for companies across various industries. He ascended the ranks at Cappello starting as vice president and now serving as president since 2019 overseeing origination and execution activities. Notable mandates under his leadership include significant transactions, such as Golden Bridge International's recapitalization, Snow Valley LLC's sale to Alterra Mountain Company and Chef Merito Inc.'s sale to a private equity firm. Sedighan holds an M.B.A. from Columbia Business School and a B.S. from the University of California, Berkeley. As vice president of the Calabasas Country Club Men's Club, he contributes to community involvement. Sedighan is also a member of the Leadership Council for Viewpoint School and has volunteered and donated to the global educational nonprofit, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE).

Dan Shea, managing director at Objective, a top-tier investment banking and valuation firm, heads the manufacturing & distribution practice with nearly 30 years of experience in the sector. Recognized for his results-driven leadership, he excels in relationship building, strategic initiatives and executing high-value transactions. With over 100 closed sale transactions totaling \$2.1 billion, his recent successes include facilitating the sale of AEM, Inc. to Industrial Growth Partners and Fluid Components International to Process Sensing Technologies. Shea is a respected M&A thought leader, featured in prominent publications and honored as a Leader of Influence by the Los Angeles Business Journal. Actively involved in industry associations and philanthropy, he is committed to community impact. Shea's background includes roles at BDO Capital, Hadley Partners and Comerica Capital Markets, backed by a B.A. in economics from the University of Michigan and an M.B.A. in finance from Case Western Reserve University.



Dan Shea

Managing Director
Objective, Investment Banking & Valuation
Investment Banking



Jonathan Shenson

**Partner, Bankruptcy,
Reorganization & Capital Recovery**
Greenberg Glusker LLP
Professional Services

Jonathan Shenson, a partner at Greenberg Glusker, leads the bankruptcy, reorganization & capital recovery group and the corporate finance & securities department. With expertise spanning over 30 years, he navigates diverse bankruptcy matters representing debtors, secured creditors, committees and acquirers in Chapter 11 cases and out-of-court restructures. Shenson's corporate practice encompasses a wide array of credit transactions and mergers and acquisitions, notably specializing in assignments for benefits of creditors and Section 363 sales. Recognized as a thought leader, he speaks at prestigious industry conferences and contributes to prominent publications. Noteworthy accolades include recognition by Chambers USA as one of California's leading bankruptcy practitioners and The Best Lawyers in America® for Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law. Shenson holds a J.D. from UCLA School of Law and a B.A. in Economics from UC Santa Barbara.



Kevin A. Shields

Chairman & Co-CEO
Griffin Capital
Asset/Investment Management

Kevin Shields, founder of Griffin Capital in 1995 and its current chairman and co-chief executive officer, operates from El Segundo, CA. Griffin Capital sponsors Reg. D Private Placements, notably the Griffin Capital Qualified Opportunity Zone Fund and Griffin Capital Development Partners Fund series, with approximately \$1.4 billion committed to 30 multifamily communities. Formerly, Griffin Capital managed 40 Act Interval Funds and REITs, including Griffin-American Healthcare REIT II, III and IV, and Griffin Realty Trust, Inc. These entities amassed billions in assets before being merged or sold. Notably, Griffin Capital's fund advisors were acquired by Apollo Global Management, Inc. in May 2022. Shields served as CEO for various entities within Griffin Capital, overseeing significant mergers and internalizations, such as those of Griffin Capital Essential Asset REITs. Presently, he serves as the executive chairman of the board of directors for Griffin Realty Trust, Inc., a \$5.8 billion enterprise.

Lisa Simonetti, an attorney at Greenberg Traurig, LLP, specializes in defending complex litigation within the financial services industry. She advises regional and national banks, mortgage lenders and consumer finance companies on compliance with state and federal laws. Her successes include winning appeals and defending objections in class-action settlements under laws like the Fair Credit Reporting Act and the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act. A recognized leader in her field, Simonetti co-hosts the California Unfair Competition Defense Podcast, under Greenberg Traurig's media umbrella. Started during the pandemic as a way to connect with clients and colleagues around the firm, the podcast covers California's unique consumer protection statutes: the Unfair Competition Law, False Advertising Law and Consumers Legal Remedies Act. She also engages in pro bono work, recently representing a disabled veteran facing housing instability.



Lisa M. Simonetti

Shareholder
Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Professional Services



Jeremy Shulman

Partner
Lagerlof, LLP
Professional Services

Jeremy Shulman, partner at Lagerlof, LLP, specializes in litigation for banking and financial institutions. He handles a wide array of state and federal financial services litigation, emphasizing lender liability actions, loan origination and compliance with various statutes like the California Homeowner Bill of Rights and federal acts such as TILA, RESPA, RICO and FDICPA. Additionally, Shulman tackles complex commercial suits, real estate disputes and intellectual property litigation. His expertise spans all stages of litigation, including trial and appeals. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from the University of Michigan and graduated cum laude from Boston University School of Law. Shulman is admitted to practice in California, New York and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Beyond his legal practice, he is active in philanthropy, particularly in supporting educational access through the Los Angeles Chapter of the University of Michigan Alumni Association.

Visionaries



Ashley M. Simonsen

Partner
Covington & Burling LLP
Professional Services

Ashley Simonsen, a partner in Covington's class action and mass torts practices in Los Angeles, boasts a successful track record representing clients in finance, technology and consumer products sectors, including Afterpay, Capital One, Celtic Bank and others. With expertise in early dispositive motions, she defends financial institutions, notably securing a precedent-setting victory for Celtic Bank against "true lender" claims. Simonsen also led the defense in high-profile cases such as Capital One's pandemic-related fees class action dismissal and Navient's Second Circuit victory in a nationwide class settlement. In the fintech realm, she successfully defended Afterpay and PayPal against class actions, showcasing her prowess in arbitration and litigation strategies. Simonsen's recent achievements underscore her adeptness in navigating complex legal landscapes and delivering favorable outcomes for her clients.

For over 30 years, Michael Sitrick has been a prominent figure in strategic communications for global banking and finance sectors. Renowned for crisis management expertise, his firm excels in company launches, public offerings, growth initiatives and reputation restoration. His interventions have salvaged thousands of jobs and prevented corporate collapses, earning accolades such as a private equity executive's acknowledgment of saving their billion-dollar company. Among Sitrick's extensive client roster are Oaktree Capital, Guggenheim Partners and PIMCO, spanning diverse industries and geographies. His accomplishments have garnered extensive media coverage, lauding him as a pioneer in bankruptcy communications and strategic public relations. Sitrick's firm, Sitrick And Company, has served over 2,000 clients, including municipalities, celebrities and financial institutions. Noteworthy is his commitment to pro bono work, supporting causes like Pediatric AIDS and the International Organization of Women Judges, an organization advocating for prison reform.



Michael Sitrick

Founder, Chairman & CEO
Sitrick And Company
Professional Services



Aaron Thomas Solganick

Founder & CEO
Solganick & Co.
Investment Banking

Aaron Solganick, CEO and founder of Solganick & Co., has 28 years of experience in investment banking, specializing in software, IT services and healthcare IT. With a track record of over \$10 billion in transactions, he's a recognized authority in technology mergers and acquisitions, advising notable clients like Accenture, KPMG and Cognizant. Acknowledged as an industry influencer, Solganick recently facilitated significant deals including Accenture's acquisition of Nextira and the sale of Pandera Systems to 66 Degrees. Expanding his firm's reach, he inaugurated offices in Dallas and Austin. Solganick pioneered AI and machine learning in investment banking in 2017, reflecting his commitment to innovation. He supports educational causes through SMU Cox School of Business and actively engages with nonprofits combating cancer. As an ACG Los Angeles Committee member, Solganick contributes to shaping private equity and investment banking sectors.



David Sutton

Partner
GHJ
Professional Services

David Sutton, partner and private equity practice leader at GHJ, brings extensive expertise in M&A and financial due diligence, facilitating deals across various sectors from \$10 million to \$1 billion. As a mentor, he fosters emerging leaders, advocating GHJ's #BeMore ethos and supporting professional growth. Sutton's advisory spans performance improvement, restructuring and turnaround strategies, notably in retail, technology and manufacturing. Leading GHJ's Business Resiliency Taskforce, he navigates clients through economic uncertainties like bank failures and rising interest rates. A prolific speaker and writer, his insights into M&A dynamics and economic challenges are featured in prominent publications. Sutton hosts the Business Disruption and Resilience Podcast, showcasing leaders' responses to adversity. Committed to work-life balance, he enjoys flying and volunteers extensively for social causes, advocating for equality and healthcare access. Notable deals include acquisitions like Fromm International by Firelight Capital and Digital Media Management by Keywords Studios.



Jalal Taby

SVP, Group Manager
Comerica Bank
Commercial Banking

Jalal Taby, SVP and group manager of Comerica Bank, has over 18 years of experience in the commercial banking industry providing financing solutions to middle-market companies. Currently, he has the responsibility of managing and helping grow the San Gabriel middle-market region alongside a team of seasoned and talented commercial bankers. His team customizes financial solutions to privately held businesses with revenues ranging from \$30 million to \$500 million that match their unique needs. Taby received a master's degree in finance from the University of Michigan – Dearborn, and a bachelor's degree from Walsh College. In addition, he is the current president of the Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) Los Angeles chapter and chair of the board. Taby is also an active volunteer for Junior Achievement, a charitable organization dedicated to imparting business skills to underprivileged students.

Anna Tang, Nossaman's corporate group co-chair, is a distinguished corporate lawyer known for her practical approach to commercial matters and adept handling of complex legal issues and transactions. With a focus on mergers and acquisitions, commercial agreements and corporate governance, she advises both emerging and established companies across diverse industries. Her expertise spans entity formation, negotiation of commercial agreements and preparation of syndication documents. Notably, Tang's clientele includes healthcare and real estate entities for whom she facilitates facility development and restructuring efforts. With roots in Australia, she brings a wealth of experience in advising on Australian investments and international taxation matters. Her track record includes facilitating the entry of foreign companies into the U.S. market and representing stakeholders in significant acquisitions and refinancing transactions. Key highlights of Tang's career include representing real estate developers and overseeing high-value acquisitions in the healthcare sector.



Anna Tang

Co-Chair, Corporate Group
Nossaman
Professional Services

Visionaries



**Eric
Taslitz**

Managing Principal
Avtas Wealth Management
Asset/Investment Management

Eric Taslitz is a seasoned managing principal with over twenty-five years of experience in the financial industry. His extensive tenure has fueled his dedication to crafting effective financial solutions for clients. Taslitz finds fulfillment in engaging in substantive, complex discussions with families, leading to actionable insights and tangible results. He advocates for the use of the AWM Total Wealth Organizer to assist clients in planning for themselves and future generations. Beyond his professional endeavors, Taslitz has demonstrated his commitment to community service by serving as Treasurer at Temple Israel of Hollywood for six years, where he now chairs the Investment Committee. He also serves on the Hillside Council of Directors. Taslitz's career includes roles as a senior vice president at UBS and as a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch. He holds a degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Hamed Tavajohi, senior vice president and managing market leader at U.S. Bank Greater Los Angeles, oversees retail banking and small business teams across 100 branches spanning Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Leading the market's senior leadership team, he drives strategic initiatives to empower customers, communities and team members. Noteworthy achievements include orchestrating the acquisition and integration of MUFG Union Bank, propelling the firm to the fourth-largest market share in Greater Los Angeles. Tavajohi leads U.S. Bank's branch transformation endeavors, enhancing the banking experience with advanced technology and digital applications. With 25 years of financial services experience, he began his career at Union Bank, later leading Bank of the West's Business Banking Division. Tavajohi is deeply involved in local nonprofits, serving on the board of "A Place Called Home" and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles.



**Hamed
Tavajohi**

Managing Market Leader
U.S. Bank
Commercial Banking



**Gary
Teo**

**EVP & Chief Human
Resources Officer**
East West Bank
Commercial Banking

Gary Teo, EVP and chief HR officer at East West Bank for the U.S. and the broader Asian region, has a distinguished 14-year tenure marked by transformative HR strategies. He reshaped Human Capital Management into a strategic asset, reinventing total rewards and aligning pay with performance. East West Bank stands out for its profitability-compensation correlation, highlighted by the 8th Annual KBW Bank Proxy Analysis. Teo prioritizes employee well-being, offering superior benefits while maintaining costs. He established the Diversity Council and Employee Resource Groups, bringing diverse cultural programming and conversations to thousands of associates. Furthermore, Teo has significantly contributed to building a more diverse workforce at East West with women comprising 62% of employees and holding 58% of managerial roles. His efforts earned East West Bank accolades such as Fortune's Best Workplaces for Women™ and Newsweek's Most Loved Workplaces®.



**Britt
Terrell**

**Managing Director &
Head of Capital Markets**
Palm Tree LLC
Investment Banking

Britt Terrell, head of Palm Tree Capital Markets, offers over three decades of expertise in corporate finance, leveraged acquisitions and debt restructuring. With a background spanning both borrower and lender sides, he founded Backbone Capital Advisors, specializing in private debt and equity capital raises. After 12 years, Palm Tree acquired Backbone Capital, appointing Terrell to lead its capital markets service line in 2023. Previously, he served as head of capital markets at The Gores Group, managing \$2 billion in acquisition debt financings. His leadership extends to ACG where he contributes to finance discussions. A UC Santa Barbara alumnus, Terrell holds a B.A. in business economics. Committed to mentoring junior colleagues, he fosters professional growth within Palm Tree, Backbone Capital and The Gores Group. Active in nonprofit endeavors, Terrell champions meaningful philanthropy and serves as president of a UC Santa Barbara-affiliated organization.



**Cary H.
Thompson**

**EVP, Global
Investment Banking**
Bank of America/Merrill Lynch
Investment Banking

Cary Thompson, executive vice chairman of Bank of America Merrill Lynch, is a seasoned advisor renowned for his expertise in mergers and acquisitions, capital raising and restructuring, particularly in financial institutions, industrial, technology and media sectors. With a career spanning decades, Thompson has facilitated transactions exceeding \$1 trillion. Notable deals include the \$2 billion sale of the Los Angeles Clippers to Steve Ballmer and advising on FIS' \$9.2 billion acquisition of SunGard and Global Payments' \$4.8 billion purchase of Heartland. Formerly senior managing director at Bear Stearns, Thompson led investment banking on the West Coast and specialized in financial institutions and media. As CEO of Aames Financial Corporation, he navigated the company through the late 1990s liquidity crisis, overseeing its growth into a NYSE-listed entity with a market cap exceeding \$1 billion and annual revenue surpassing \$250 million.

Douglas Thompson, an adept litigator, specializes in defending class action suits and handling regulatory investigations for financial institutions and businesses. With over 250 class actions under his belt, he navigates complex federal banking and consumer lending laws including RESPA, TILA, FCRA and ECOA. His expertise extends to deposit operations, ACH and wire transfer fraud and BSA compliance issues. Thompson's practice also covers diverse industries like technology, retail and cosmetics, addressing statutory challenges and ESG considerations. He advises on regulatory investigations and implements risk assessment protocols and legal technologies. Previously, Thompson led litigation at financial institutions, managing enterprise-wide class actions. Dedicated to community service, he serves on various boards including the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Foundation and Harlem Lacrosse. At Snell & Wilmer, LLP, Thompson is a member of both the firmwide Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Pro Bono Committee.



**Douglas Andrew
Thompson**

Partner
Snell & Wilmer L.L.P.
Professional Services

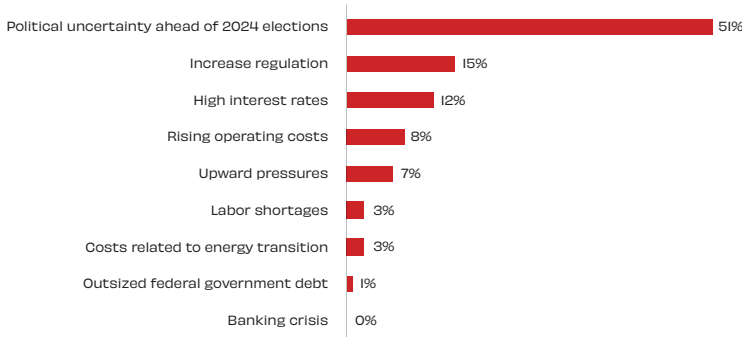
[Continued from page 5]

- Wages: 72% of CEOs expect to increase wages by 3% or more over the next year, virtually unchanged from 71% in Q4.
- Capital Spending: Most CEOs are not planning to revise capital spending plans (59%). 28% of CEOs expect their capital budgets to increase over the next year, a slight uptick from 27% last quarter.

U.S. Challenges for Business in 2024

CEOs cite political uncertainty ahead of the 2024 elections as the main challenge affecting business this year.

What will be the greatest U.S. challenge affecting businesses this year?

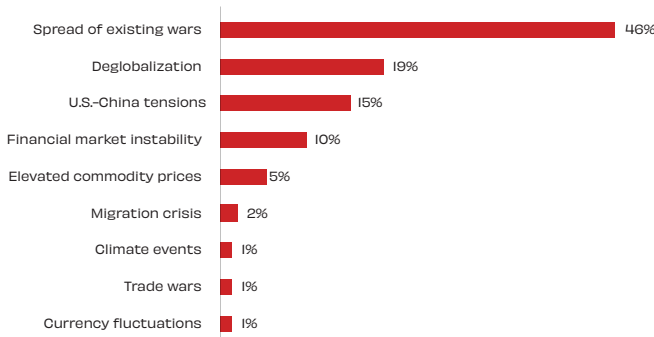


Source: The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council, 1st quarter 2024

Global Challenges for Business in 2024

The spread of existing wars was seen as the greatest global challenge for businesses this year, with deglobalization and U.S.-China tensions as distant runners-up.

What will be the greatest global challenge affecting businesses this year?

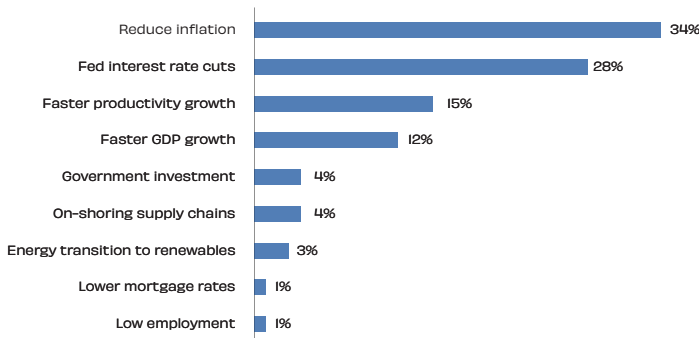


Source: The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council, 1st quarter 2024

U.S. Opportunities in 2024

CEOs look forward to reduced inflation and Fed interest rate cuts in the year ahead.

What will be the greatest opportunity in the U.S. economy to benefit business this year?



Source: The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council, 1st quarter 2024

Global Opportunities in 2024

The resolution of regional military conflicts was the greatest global opportunity for this year, followed by AI and other technological advancements.

What will be the greatest opportunity in the global economy to benefit businesses this year?



Source: The Conference Board Measure of CEO Confidence™ in collaboration with The Business Council, 1st quarter 2024



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.



©Reese/peopleimages.com / Adobe Stock

Visionaries



**Ivo A.
Tjan**

**Chairman,
President & CEO**
CommerceWest Bank
Commercial Banking

Ivo A. Tjan serves as chairman, president and CEO of CommerceWest Bank, headquartered in Irvine, California, focusing exclusively on serving the business community statewide, particularly in Orange, San Diego, Los Angeles and Riverside counties. A seasoned leader, his innovative vision propelled CommerceWest Bank to acclaim, and he has been recognized by Newsweek and OTCQX for excellence. Tjan's career spans management roles at Eldorado Bank and major institutions like Home Savings of America. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in business administration from California State Fullerton University. Actively involved in community and corporate spheres, Tjan is affiliated with prestigious organizations such as Young Presidents' Organization (YPO), CEO Affiliation Group, Bank CEO Network and the American Bankers Association. He is also a former board member of California State Fullerton University, New Majority, The Children's Museum, Advisory Board for CASA and American Bankers Association Government Relations Committee.

Mark Udis, partner at Certuity, specializes in serving individuals and families with significant financial resources, particularly in the family office practice. With a client base including technology entrepreneurs, professional athletes and prominent families, he offers tailored financial strategies and access to institutional alternative investments. Recognized as a Forbes Best-In-State Wealth Advisor three years in a row and listed on Barron's Top 1,200 Financial Advisors, Udis prioritizes communication and portfolio resilience amidst market volatility. He opened Certuity's Manhattan Beach office in 2019, expanding the company's reach in Los Angeles. Additionally, Udis is deeply engaged in his community, serving on the board of directors of Team IMPACT Los Angeles Advisory Board, which is an organization that tackles the emotional trauma and social isolation experienced by children facing serious and chronic illnesses by matching them with college athletic teams.



**Mark
Udis**

Partner
Certuity
Asset/Investment Management



**Chester
Ventura**

Partner
Withum
Professional Services

Chester Ventura, a partner at Withum, brings over 20 years of expertise in providing attestation services to privately held companies across diverse sectors. Joining Martini Partners in 2012, he quickly rose to become a partner in 2020. Following Martini Partners' merger with Withum in 2022, Ventura assumed leadership as the audit and assurance practice leader for the Los Angeles office. His clients commend his role in streamlining audit processes and facilitating effective tax coordination. Ventura's leadership extends beyond his team, contributing to the professional growth of many accounting professionals. Actively engaged in the community, he is an active member of ProVisors, a networking association for professionals, and a board member for Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA). As part of Withum's annual Week of Caring, Ventura organized and distributed care packages for underprivileged families who live in low-income housing communities in Downtown Los Angeles.



**Haze G.
Walker**

Managing Partner
Lawrence Financial
Lending

Haze Walker specializes in alternative commercial financing for SMEs. Joining Lawrence Financial in 2009, she led strategic partnerships and innovative funding solutions, earning recognition as a top member of OPUS Connect in 2024 and a Top Women Deal Maker by NACLB in 2022. Walker's initiatives led Lawrence Financial to be named among the most innovative companies in capital markets in 2023. She leads ProVisors' Capital Markets Affinity Group and co-founded the Transactions Networking Group. Also, she serves on boards for Financing Forum, OPUS Connect and SoCal IFA, demonstrating commitment to collaboration. In 2023, Walker focused on advancing women in finance, hosting events fostering professional growth and personal wellness. Lawrence Financial's success, financing over \$200 million in debt, reflects her commitment to businesses' sustainability and growth, exemplified by aiding a startup's growth from \$1 million to a \$25 million line of credit by 2023.

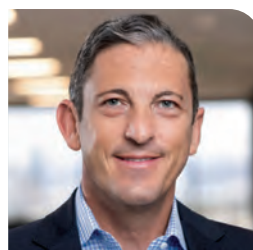


**W. Henry
Walker**

**Chief
Executive Officer**
Farmers & Merchants Bank
Commercial Banking

Henry Walker, who joined Farmers & Merchants (F&M) Bank in 1983 as a teller, now serves as its chief executive officer. Under his leadership, F&M instituted new programs to include regional managers who oversee the health and viability of their assigned branches and the Client Service Concierge program, ensuring top-notch customer service. With his guidance, F&M integrates technology for a client-centric approach. In 2008, Walker succeeded his father, expanding F&M into a regional bank with \$12 billion in assets and 27 offices from San Clemente to Santa Barbara, ranking among the top U.S. banks. Rooted in hard work and service, he believes in giving back to communities. Actively engaged, Walker serves on multiple boards including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County, Orange County Bar Foundation, Orange County's Pacific Symphony and the Long Beach Symphony and participates in YPO and the Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club.

Michael A. Waxberg, founder and private wealth advisor of Fortify Capital, part of the Northwestern Mutual Private Client Group, has over 25 years of experience in investment and financial planning. Specializing in retirement, investment and estate planning, his expertise spans legal, entertainment and business sectors. Holding designations including CFP®, ChFC®, CLU® and RICP®, he is equipped to navigate complex financial landscapes, offering tailored solutions to individuals and businesses. Waxberg has dedicated his career to Northwestern Mutual, rising to lead a comprehensive financial planning team. Active in clubs such as the Jonathan Club and Calabasas Country Club, he serves on the Collins-Katz YMCA Board of Directors. His team delivers timely, responsive communication and comprehensive planning, emphasizing a multi-generational approach. With a mission to provide "Expert Guidance For A Lifetime Of Financial Security," Waxberg ensures clients receive personalized care and strategic financial direction.



**Michael A.
Waxberg**

Private Wealth Advisor
Fortify Capital
Asset/Investment Management

[Continued from page 19]

homegrown – the burgeoning U.S. national debt and deficits.

“The U.S. fiscal outlook continues to deteriorate, with the deficit for FY2023 topping estimates at \$1.7 trillion. The game changer in our nation’s complacency about debt: The cost of servicing the debt is rapidly rising due to inflation and rising interest rates, consuming as much of the federal budget as defense spending and crowding out national priorities,” she continued.

The increasing practice of issuing U.S. Treasury securities to finance deficits and debt places tremendous strain on the financial system, potentially raising business borrowing costs, limiting access to capital and lowering standard of living, Dr. Murray said.

“The congressional debate this year over FY2024 spending levels has contributed to a historic collapse of governance in the U.S. Congress, a broken budget process, the brink of a national default, a looming government shutdown and the potential downgrading of the U.S. credit rating. U.S. global leadership and national security are at risk.”




@zimmytws / Adobe Stock

Dr. Murray says the need for bold action is urgent.

“A national strategic goal should be to reduce the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio to 70%. To begin to achieve this reduction, a Bipartisan Congressional Commission on Fiscal Responsibility should be established to immediately address the biggest drivers of deficits and the long-term debt: Medicare and Social Security, whose Trust Funds are becoming insolvent. To address the revenue challenge, the Commission should undertake comprehensive tax reform based on

the principles of fairness, efficiency and simplicity,” she continued.

“The debt crisis is here – not down the road. As a nation, we must act now.”



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

[Continued from page 23]

more favorable periods and have continued to perform well.

“The desire to refinance is also low unless there is a maturity or other cash out needs. Business owners are less likely to increase production lines or expand their business that would otherwise require the acquisition of real estate,” said Chang Liu, chief executive at Cathay Bank in Los Angeles.

“

It isn’t always easy to quantify a return on the investment of time with people, but that is what we are most proud of.”

–Christopher Naghibi

Some asset classes, such as multifamily, have performed well and continue to do so. In its 2023 annual report, First Foundation Bank in Irvine noted that it began originating multifamily loans in 2008 and had zero losses to date on its \$5.2 billion multifamily lending portfolio. The vast majority of those loans were made in California, but the bank also has branches in Texas, Florida, Nevada and Hawaii.

Technological Advances

One major issue identified by banks and credit unions was adoption of new and emerging technologies. Smaller organizations do not necessarily have the resources to invest and compete with large banks, but mobile banking technology is one area that has been a focal point in an effort to make banking more convenient and available anytime.

“We launched an upgraded mobile banking platform with enhanced features to improve user experience. It comes with advanced digital banking features, allowing members to manage their finances anytime, anywhere,” said Kathy Jumper, chief executive of Orange County’s Credit Union, based in Santa Ana.

At Commercial Bank of California, new technology focused on payment verticals that can assist clients with instant payment capabilities, traditional settlement times, and immediate funds accessibility. Other technology involves utilizing artificial intelligence to improve operations on the


back-end. The bank has started testing Microsoft’s Copilot software to help with training, fraud detection and documentation assistance.

“The desire in all instances is to streamline client operations as well as gain internal efficiencies,” said Commercial Bank of California’s Patel.

Technology, such as mobile banking, may help extend banking services beyond branch walls, but many banks have a renewed focus on community and personal relationships with clients. At First Foundation Bank in Irvine, executive vice president Christopher Naghibi described the need to prioritize customer relationships with concierge-level services that involve direct communication and personal attention.

“It isn’t always easy to quantify a return on the investment of time with people, but that is what we are most proud of. This extends both to being more engaged with our employees, but also the people and businesses who bank with us,” said Naghibi.

David Nusbaum



To view or share this content online, use this QR code.

Visionaries



**Jeff
White**

Managing Director
Skyview Capital
Private Equity

Jeff White, managing director at Skyview Capital, forefronts the company's M&A endeavors, leveraging extensive experience in private equity, investment banking and executive management. With pivotal roles at Merrill Lynch and Platinum Equity Holdings, he previously contributed to Platinum Equity's multibillion-dollar global business development and M&A initiatives. At Skyview Capital, White leads the business development team, driving growth through strategic acquisitions. Recognized by prominent publications, including the Los Angeles Business Journal, his accolades include being named one of the Most Influential Private Equity Investors and winning the M&A Advisor Emerging Leader Award. Actively engaged in philanthropy, he supports organizations such as the Union Rescue Mission of Los Angeles and Conservation International. An esteemed speaker and contributor, White shares insights at various forums, including the Turnaround Management Association, Association of Corporate Growth and Forbes Global CEO Conference, among others.

Todd Wilson, Greater Los Angeles Metropolitan Area regional president for PNC Bank, drives business development and client relationships while championing community commitment and philanthropy. Overseeing PNC's expansion, he has led remarkable growth, with a 900% business increase and a 30% workforce expansion in just two years. He has positioned PNC Bank as a leader in advancing women in business with 80 employees designated as PNC-Certified Women's Business Advocates. With nearly 30 years of financial sector leadership, including roles in private equity and corporate finance, Wilson joined PNC in 2021. He holds an M.B.A. from Duke University and a Bachelor of Science in economics from the University of Pennsylvania, along with a Private Equity Fellowship from the Kauffman Foundation. Wilson serves on the boards of the Los Angeles Sports & Entertainment Commission and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.



**Todd
Wilson**

**Regional President -
Greater Los Angeles**
PNC Bank
Commercial Banking



**Maz
Yafeh**

**Managing Director,
BofA Securities**
Bank of America
Investment Banking

Maz Yafeh, managing director at Bank of America's Investment Banking group, heads Bank of America (BoFA) Securities' Los Angeles Investment Banking office and West Coast Emerging Growth & Regional Coverage group. With over 20 years in investment banking, he leads a team of 30 bankers advising emerging growth and mid-cap clients across various industries in Los Angeles. Under his leadership, BoFA has become the largest bulge-bracket bank in L.A. with over 50 investment bankers covering diverse sectors. Yafeh's expertise spans \$80 billion in M&A transactions, IPOs, private equity raises and syndicated debt financings for public and private firms. As the longest-serving member of the EGRC, he oversees a team of over 200 bankers nationwide, representing one of BoFA's fastest-growing areas. Yafeh's team serves clients in industrials, consumer & retail, technology, media & entertainment, business services and healthcare.



**Angela
Yim-Sullivan**

**Managing Director
& Market Executive**
Wells Fargo Commercial Bank
Commercial Banking

Angela Yim-Sullivan serves as managing director and market executive for Wells Fargo Commercial Bank for the Los Angeles Metro market, part of the company's Greater Los Angeles and West Region. Leading a 125-member team across offices in Downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena and West Covina, she delivers tailored financial solutions to commercial customers with annual sales ranging from \$25 million to \$2 billion. During the pandemic, Yim-Sullivan displayed immense leadership in serving both her customers and her team as they worked together to ensure financial stability in the marketplace. She continued to guide business leaders across the community through the economic volatility arising out of the pandemic, providing creative capital structures to CEOs of key market drivers in Los Angeles. Yim-Sullivan's commitment extends to all customers as she coaches her team to provide thoughtful financial solutions aligned with clients' objectives.



**Guy
Zaczepinski**

Managing Partner
Century Park Capital Partners
Private Equity

Guy Zaczepinski has been with Century Park Capital Partners since 2005, where he sources, evaluates and structures buyout transactions as well as monitors portfolio company investments. He serves on the boards of CJ Pony Parts, MCCi, Accelalpha and Dominion Care. Specializing in the auto aftermarket industry, Zaczepinski led Century Park's recapitalization of CJ Pony Parts in April 2021, solidifying its position as the leader in Classic Mustang e-commerce. In August 2021, he oversaw Covercraft Industries, Inc.'s successful exit to Audax Private Equity. He led the initial investment in Covercraft in 2015, enhancing its growth and margin profile through a Value Creation Blueprint, including a direct-to-consumer channel and strategic acquisitions. Zaczepinski's management approach emphasizes flexibility and support for high-growth businesses. His extensive experience includes analyzing companies for recapitalization, leveraged buyouts, mergers and acquisitions and financial restructurings.

Bart Zandbergen, a renowned Certified Financial Planner (CFP), is the founder and chief executive officer of The Zandbergen Group, established in Laguna Beach amidst the pandemic. With over three decades of experience in wealth management, his firm has achieved substantial growth, boasting over \$330 million in Assets Under Management (AUM). He is recognized for his expertise in financial planning and investment advising, aiming to help clients attain "True Wealth" through tailored strategies. Zandbergen's insights have been featured in reputable publications like The New York Times, Riviera Magazine, Forbes and others. Holding designations such as CFP, Life/Health/Disability Insurance license and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst, he also hosts The Zandbergen Report Podcast, now in its sixth year. The podcast delves into finance and investments and features discussions with prominent figures in Orange County's entrepreneurs, philanthropic leaders and industry innovators.



**Bart
Zandbergen**

Founder
The Zandbergen Group
Asset/Investment Management

Los Angeles Times



2024 BUSINESS MAGAZINE SERIES

These upcoming magazines will spotlight trends, updates and visionaries who are impacting change in numerous industries across Southern California.

MAY

Commercial Real Estate: Trends, Updates & Visionaries

JULY

The C-Suite: Trends, Updates and CFO Forum & Leadership Awards

SEPTEMBER

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility:
Trends, Updates & Forum Recap**

NOVEMBER

**Business of Law: Trends, Updates, Visionaries
& In-House Counsel Forum & Leadership Awards**

DECEMBER

**Inspirational Women: Trends, Updates, Forum & Leadership Awards
Giving: The Philanthropy Issue**



Contact **Helya Askari** at Helya.askari@latimes.com
for sponsorship or advertising opportunities.
latimes.com/b2b

MBA INSIDER

**AN
IN-DEPTH
LOOK AT
MBA
SCHOOLS
AND THEIR
PROGRAMS**

The 2024 MBA Insider spotlights a variety of outstanding schools that have provided information about their MBA program accreditation, tuition, application deadlines and rankings as well as insights into each school's mission and learning environment. This special section is an invaluable guide for taking the first step in pursuing an advanced degree.

Today, an MBA program can help in developing management and leadership skills, which may be called upon in current or future positions while offering extensive networking opportunities with fellow students, tomorrow's business leaders. Ultimately, a degree can help you attain future career goals, such as salary increases and promotions.

Whether you're looking to advance your career or open new doors, an MBA propels you closer to achieving your dreams. Although it costs time and money in the short term, it will pay huge dividends throughout your career. Plus, many companies even offer assistance with an employee's tuition.

We look forward to presenting additional options in future special sections. And we thank all of the participating schools for taking part in this year's MBA Insider.

View this guide online at
latimes.com/mbainsider



Claremont Graduate University



THE DRUCKER MBA

The Drucker School of Management MBA infuses Peter Drucker's pioneering legacy into the curriculum to enhance the future of ethical business leadership. The MBA integrates liberal arts, technology and humanity to prepare students to lead in a complex world. Situated within the Claremont Colleges, the Drucker School offers an unmatched educational journey, emphasizing purpose-driven leadership, human-centered management and flexibility as core principles. The Drucker School is more than an institution; it's an incubator for those who aspire to lead with integrity, innovate with purpose and influence the world positively, following in the footsteps of Peter Drucker.

THE DRUCKER MBA OPTIONS

Flex MBA

The part-time Drucker Flex MBA is designed for full-time working professionals with at least six years of professional work experience. With a primarily hybrid core, the program allows for flexible customization with a mix of online and in-person elective options, adapting to individual career goals. Small class sizes with renowned faculty foster robust discussion and peer learning, resulting in the development of adaptive leadership skills with a global focus.

FULL-TIME MBA

Prepare for the future of business with the STEM-designated MBA in Management Sciences. The full-time MBA integrates comprehensive humanistic business principles with analytical and quantitative concepts, preparing leaders to excel in today's competitive business world. With no work experience requirement, the Drucker MBA prepares driven, early-career professionals to jumpstart their careers. Students can earn up to three certificates as part of their degree and enjoy access to classes and resources across the Claremont Colleges.

ONLINE MBA

The Drucker Online MBA is designed for professionals seeking career advancement while also balancing their personal pursuits without sacrificing our purpose-driven and human-centric approach to management. This program balances peer-to-peer learning with convenience; coursework is offered 50% asynchronously and 50% synchronously. Synchronous class time creates space for robust transdisciplinary discussions and building valuable relationships with colleagues. The liberal arts foundation and transdisciplinary approach foster critical thinking and creativity, equipping students with a broad

perspective and versatile problem-solving skills.

SOAR

What comes after success? The SOAR program offers a transformative experience with world-class instructors invested in your personal growth. The program is designed to provide accomplished people in mid-life the time, space, community and curriculum to create the next phase in their lives – one that inspires them, enables them to have an impact and supports a sense of purpose beyond what they have already achieved. Three on-campus workshops are held each year in Spring, Fall and Winter.

AND MORE ...

The Drucker School also offers specialized degrees in arts management, finance and leadership as well as numerous dual-degree options with programs across Claremont Graduate University. With a dual degree, you can earn two degrees simultaneously and create a customized path to pursue professional goals, such as an MBA paired with a Master's in Public Health or an M.S. in Information Systems and Technology. Nearly half of all current MBA students are seeking a second degree.

DRUCKER

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Claremont Graduate University

NAME OF INSTITUTION

Claremont Graduate University

NAME OF BUSINESS SCHOOL OR PROGRAM

Peter F. Drucker and Masatoshi Ito Graduate School of Management

BUSINESS SCHOOL DEAN

David Sprott, PhD

YEAR INSTITUTION WAS FOUNDED

1925

YEAR BUSINESS SCHOOL OR PROGRAM WAS STARTED

1971

TOTAL MBA ENROLLMENT

117 MBA students

MBA PLATFORMS OFFERED

Flex MBA, Online MBA, Full-Time MBA (STEM), MA in Arts Management, MS in Finance, MA in Leadership and MA in Management

MBA AREAS OF EMPHASIS OFFERED

Entrepreneurship, Finance, HR Management, IT Management, Leadership, Marketing, Strategy and Supply Chain

LENGTH OF PROGRAMS

MBA: 21-36 months

Specialized Masters: 9-16 months

SOAR: 3 months

PROGRAM CAMPUS OPTIONS

Claremont, CA and/or online

PROGRAM ACCREDITATIONS

- AACSB*
 - WASC
- *Excluding MA in Arts Management and SOAR

TOTAL COST OF MBA

Costs vary due to length of program; over 80% of applicants receive some CGU fellowship support

REQUIRED TESTING

GMAT/GRE required* for MBA in Management Sciences

*GMAT/GRE waivers issued based on admissions criteria.

No GMAT/GRE requirement for Flex MBA or Online MBA.

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS

Visit cgu.edu/visit-us/ for upcoming events.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Flex MBA:

- Fall Mod 1: August 15
- Fall Mod 2: October 1
- Summer Mod 1: May 1
- Summer Mod 2: June 1
- Spring Mod 1: December 1
- Spring Mod 2: March 1

MBA (FT or PT), MA in Management, MA in Leadership, PhD in Management:

- Summer: May 1
- Fall Round 3: April 1
- Fall Round 4: June 1
- Fall Final Deadline: August 1

MS in Finance and MA in Arts Management:

- Spring Final Deadline: January 1
- Fall Final Deadline: August 1

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Michael Mirabella
Director of Recruitment
michael.mirabella@cgu.edu
909.607.9049



DRUCKER

People-Focused, Purpose-Driven

We're Committed to Your Success and Impact

At the Drucker School, our MBA is designed to transform students and prepare them to have an impact on the world.

As a Drucker MBA, you will practice self-awareness and self-management in our courses and learn how to help people to perform at a high level. Our people-focused approach means that you will enjoy small classes with students from many backgrounds taught by faculty who are accessible and care about your success.

At the Drucker School, we are committed to your success and the impact you will make.

DRUCKER SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

 **Claremont Graduate University**



To read more about the Drucker MBA, go to cgu.edu/drucker

California State University, Northridge

CSUN NAZARIAN
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS



DIVERSE IDEAS FOR DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENTS

The MBA program of CSUN's David Nazarian College of Business and Economics takes pride in the achievements of its students and alumni. Nazarian College MBA graduates are accomplished professionals representing incredibly diverse backgrounds in a variety of industries in the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles County and Ventura County regions. Our graduate students view their MBA as a smart investment in understanding dynamic business environments so they may lead with diverse insights.

FLEXIBLE RELEVANCE

Classes are held Monday through Thursday from 7:00-10:00 p.m. and occasionally Saturdays. Students typically take two courses per semester and complete MBA coursework in about two years. While our students thrive with the networking and interactions via in-person courses, many courses are offered in a hybrid format, providing access flexibility for students and reducing drive time to campus. Students reduce or accelerate their academic

load commensurate with career and family demands. Elective offerings focus on providing timely and relevant topics that help differentiate a student in their workplace and add career value.

NAZARIAN CONSULTING

Nazarian College MBA students not only learn but also pay that knowledge forward by helping organizations as part of the culminating experience in the Nazarian College Small Business Consulting Program. Through continued support from the Wells Fargo Foundation, MBA student teams consult with and address the specific needs of small businesses and nonprofits in the region. As a result, students gain confidence and improve their networks, paying their investment forward to the community.

MATADOR PRIDE

Nazarian College and California State University, Northridge, are consistently ranked as among the best in higher education. U.S. News & World Review recently ranked Nazarian College's

MBA program as No. 2 among CSUs, and Princeton Review recognized the program as the "Best On-Campus MBA." In addition, the Wall Street Journal ranked CSUN as the eighth-best college in California (No. 2 among public universities behind the University of California, Berkeley) and the fifth in the nation for social mobility. The Wall Street Journal also ranks CSUN among the top three universities nationwide for diversity. Few MBA programs can equal the Nazarian College's in graduating MBAs prepared to work and lead in a diverse and global business environment.

Housed on a beautiful 365-acre campus, CSUN is the fourth-largest university in California. Its 400,000 alumni include prominent business leaders, such as the man for whom the business college was named, David Nazarian. The university is home to the award-winning Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts and the LEED Gold-certified Student Recreation Center.

NAME OF INSTITUTION

California State University, Northridge

NAME OF BUSINESS SCHOOL OR PROGRAM

The David Nazarian College of Business and Economics
MBA Program

BUSINESS SCHOOL DEAN

Chandra Subramanian, Ph.D.

YEAR INSTITUTION WAS FOUNDED

1958

YEAR BUSINESS SCHOOL OR PROGRAM WAS STARTED

1958

TOTAL MBA ENROLLMENT

182

MBA PLATFORMS OFFERED

Part-time evening MBA

MBA AREAS OF EMPHASIS OFFERED

Selected topics in a variety of relevant functional areas

LENGTH OF PROGRAMS

2.5 years

PROGRAM CAMPUS OPTIONS

On-campus (some courses hy-flex)

PROGRAM ACCREDITATIONS

WASC
AACSB

RANKINGS

Ranked #2 among CSUs by U.S. News and World Report
Best On-Campus MBA, Princeton Review

TOTAL COST OF MBA

\$33,000-\$45,000

REQUIRED TESTING

GMAT or GRE
(waivers are also available)

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS

March 12 and April 9

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Fall 2024: May 31
Spring 2025: October 31

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Sheila M. Brown, Assistant Director
sheila.brown@csun.edu
818.677.2467



Diverse Ideas. Dynamic Environments.

CSUN's David Nazarian College of Business and Economics offers a part-time evening MBA program designed for working professionals. Faculty expertise and student experience coalesce to produce innovative leaders who:

- Apply knowledge and create strategies to manage dynamic environments
- Contribute sustainable value to their organization, industry, and community
- Integrate theory and experiential learning to benefit career networks and trajectories

csun.edu/mba
(818) 677-2467

CSUN NAZARIAN
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Loyola Marymount University



Loyola Marymount University's graduate business programs develop agile, innovative and impactful leaders for a changing world. Small, intimate classes are led by faculty who are invested in their students' success.

Experiential learning illustrates key concepts, and hands-on projects

provide opportunities to apply new skills.

The LMU MBA Program, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, helps students hone their management skills, develop business acumen, understand global perspectives and expand their network. The program is designed for individuals with a bachelor's degree

and at least two years of professional experience. Classes are held in the evenings to accommodate working professionals.

LMU offers a variety of other graduate business programs in accounting, business analytics, entertainment leadership, entrepreneurship, management and taxation.

Take your next bold step and visit cba.lmu.edu/gradprograms to learn more.



NAME OF INSTITUTION

Loyola Marymount University

NAME OF BUSINESS SCHOOL OR PROGRAM

College of Business Administration

BUSINESS SCHOOL DEAN

Dayle M. Smith, Ph.D.

YEAR INSTITUTION WAS FOUNDED

1911

YEAR BUSINESS SCHOOL OR PROGRAM WAS STARTED

College of Business Administration: 1926
MBA Program: 1974

TOTAL MBA ENROLLMENT

85

MBA PLATFORMS OFFERED

MBA
JD/MBA
MS/MBA

MBA AREAS OF EMPHASIS OFFERED

Entrepreneurship
Finance
Marketing

LENGTH OF PROGRAMS

MBA: 21-36 months

PROGRAM CAMPUS OPTIONS

All programs take place on LMU's main campus in Westchester near Playa Vista.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATIONS

AACSB, WASC

RANKINGS

U.S. News & World Report graduate rankings

- Entrepreneurship: No. 12
- Marketing: No. 23
- Management: No. 27
- Business Analytics: No. 34
- Part-Time MBA: No. 63

The Princeton Review Entrepreneur Magazine

- Entrepreneurship: No. 27
(No. 6 in the West)

TOTAL COST OF MBA

\$93,476

REQUIRED TESTING

GMAT or GRE required. Waivers available to qualified applicants.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

May 31, 2024

CONNECT WITH US

To schedule a virtual appointment with an admissions recruiter, visit mba.lmu.edu/contact

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Dustin Cornwell, Senior Director
dustin.cornwell@lmu.edu | 310.258.8707
cba.lmu.edu/gradinquiry



IF YOU'RE NOT DONE, IT'S TIME TO GET STARTED

Take control of your future with a graduate business degree from Loyola Marymount University.

- MBA Program
- M.S. in Accounting
- M.S. in Business Analytics
- M.S. in Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Innovation
- M.S. in Management
- M.S. in Taxation
- Master in Entertainment Leadership and Management
- Joint Master in Global Entrepreneurial Management
- Doctor of Business Administration

Empower Yourself



Learn more



University of West Los Angeles



The University of West Los Angeles began as a private educational institution with just six students in 1966, when a visionary group of local educators resolved to address the need for educational programs geared toward the working adult. With a mission of democratizing education and broadening the greater community's access to top-notch education in law, UWLA was born. UWLA has been providing high quality education to budding legal professionals ever since. In July 2002, the law school expanded by acquiring the San Fernando Valley College of Law, located in Chatsworth. UWLA now has campuses near LAX in West L.A. and Woodland Hills.

In 2012, UWLA opened its School of Business with a similar opportunity mission – to democratize education by serving our communities with high quality, higher education for a more diverse population of students. Today,

UWLA proudly offers the Master of Science in Leadership, Management, and Technology, and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (degree completion program), along with the school's Juris Doctor program.

UWLA is a small private university that prides itself on its high-touch, hands-on learning environment. Students are supported by small class sizes and taught by professors who are not only scholars but are experts and professionals in their fields. The result is a practical program that prepares students for real-world work scenarios rather than purely theoretical learning.

A pioneer of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, UWLA has continued to perfect its online coursework and has added back an in-person hybrid model, allowing students the best of both worlds. UWLA is also an attractive option for international students, many of whom

find the affordability, the flexibility of learning options, the practical program applications and the school's focus on technology highly appealing. With both 15-month and two-year options, and rolling admissions throughout five starts per year, the UWLA School of Business Master of Science program opens a world of opportunity for the right student. There are no entry requirements or exams besides providing a documented bachelor's degree in good standing. Students interested in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration completion program only require proof of an associate's degree or equivalent credits. UWLA admissions counselors will help anyone assess their candidacy and walk them through the application and financial aid process.

NAME OF INSTITUTION

University of West Los Angeles

NAME OF PROGRAM

Masters of Science in Business, Leadership and Technology

DEAN

Talon Brown, Dean, School of Business

YEAR INSTITUTION WAS FOUNDED

1966

YEAR PROGRAM WAS STARTED

2012

TOTAL PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

25 (per cohort)

PROGRAM PLATFORMS OFFERED

Online: Coursework delivered fully online, hybrid or in-person lectures and meetings, plus online lessons and learning

AREAS OF EMPHASIS OFFERED

Leadership, Management and Technology

LENGTH OF PROGRAMS

15 months or 24 months

PROGRAM CAMPUS OPTIONS

West Los Angeles Campus
9800 S. La Cienega Blvd., 12th Floor
Inglewood, CA 90301

San Fernando Valley Campus
21650 Oxnard Blvd., Suite 200
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

In-person, virtual and hybrid instruction are available.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATIONS

The University of West Los Angeles is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. UWLA is a private institution approved to operate by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education. The California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education has approved the School of Business' Masters of Science in Leadership, Management and Technology degree, and the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

TOTAL COST OF PROGRAM

\$24,444. Scholarships and grants available through the UWLA Financial Aid Office.

REQUIRED TESTING

None

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS

Monthly virtual open houses; check uwla.edu for calendar listings. Contact vbaskin@uwla.edu to RSVP.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Rolling admissions; five term starts per year.

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION:

Talon L. Brown, Esq., Dean, School of Business Admissions Contact:
Verdel Baskin 310.342.5291
Admissions@uwla.edu
www.uwla.edu



UWLA

University of West Los Angeles

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

We are UWLA.

A community-based university led by its opportunity mission to democratize higher education. Since 1966, UWLA has changed the lives and professional trajectories of its students and graduates, one individual at a time.



If you didn't think a Master of Science Degree in business was attainable, or for you, think again.

**Stop DOUBTING. Start BELIEVING.
Take Yourself to the Next Level, Today! At UWLA.**

UWLA School of Business Offers These **10 Key Differences** Over Similar Programs:

- ◆ Flexible 15-month and 24-month Master's Degree program tracks
- ◆ Hands-on, high-touch student care and support (financial aid, tutoring, career development)
- ◆ Small class sizes and individualized attention - you're more than a number at UWLA
- ◆ Fully online and hybrid (in-person+online) course options
- ◆ Rolling admissions and flexible class schedules, all designed to help you get it all done, even while you're working
- ◆ Mentored, practical skill development from experienced faculty who are working professionals in relevant business fields
- ◆ Analytical, technological, ethics-based, and career-focused curriculum
- ◆ Friendly, understanding, supportive environment and team who guide you from admissions through graduation
- ◆ Relevant industry exposure, connections, networking, and job/ internship opportunities
- ◆ Affordable program (under \$25,000), with financial aid options available

UWLA School of Business helps open opportunities for diverse learners from all walks of life - college graduates, entrepreneurs, and working professionals - looking to jump-start their careers via its Master's Degree program and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree completion program. UWLA is accredited by WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

UWLA School of Business - Relevant for today and tomorrow!

CONNECT WITH US



UWLA.EDU | ADMISSIONS@UWLA.EDU | 310.342.5291

WEST LA CAMPUS, 5 MINUTES FROM LAX
9800 S. La Cienega Blvd., 12th Fl., Inglewood, CA 90301

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CAMPUS, JUST OFF THE 101
21650 Oxnard Blvd. Suite 200, Woodland Hills, CA 91367