

Meet the judges

2024 Florida program

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Entrepreneur Of The Year recognizes the most ambitious leaders who are building and sustaining successful, dynamic businesses around the world.

Entrepreneur Of The Year Award winners comprise a global network of visionaries, each on a transformational journey to create, innovate, grow, learn and build a better world.

About the judging panel

The success of the program relies on the efforts of our independent panel of judges. The panel comprises past Entrepreneur Of The Year Award recipients and civic and community leaders who devote significant effort to review and deliberate the merits of each nominee. We deeply appreciate their dedication to the program.

Click on the judges to learn more about them.

Meet the judges

The judges evaluate nominees on a variety of criteria, including, but not limited to:

Entrepreneurial spirit | Purpose | Growth | Impact | Financial performance



Michael Cassidy

Founder, M3: The Future of Brand Commerce

2011 regional winner

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Michael Cassidy is an entrepreneur who has started and exited multiple companies. He founded and served as Undertone CEO for 14 years (acquired in 2015 by Perion (NASDAQ:PERI)). He created a family office (August Spark) to make private investments, including purchasing BVA, the largest Shopify Plus agency in the US (acquired by Accenture (NYSE:ACN) in 2022). Michael launched his third company, M3, in 2023 to create new revenue streams for merchants, retailers, and e-commerce companies by capturing advertising and sponsorship dollars from Fortune 1000 marketers. Michael was an Entrepreneur Of The Year Award recipient in 2011 and subsequent judge for the competition. He has been a YPO member since 2008.



Ivana Ferreira

Nasdaq, Senior Managing Director and Head of Latin America and Florida Listings

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Ivana Ferreira is Senior Managing Director and Head of Latin America and Florida Listings at Nasdaq. In this role, she advises companies on the process and benefits of listing on the exchange. She also manages the relationship with listed companies to leverage Nasdaq's resources and optimize financing opportunities and brand visibility, ensuring long-term partnerships. During her 10 years at Nasdaq, Ivana has held key roles across the company and built Nasdaq's successful listings franchise in Latin America. She was named one of the 100 most influential Latinos around the world by Bloomberg Linea and recognized as one of the 2023 Most Powerful Latinas by ALPFA, Inc. She graduated from Northeastern University in Boston, MA.



Josh Fisher

CEO/President, District Partners LLC

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Josh Fisher, a native of the Washington, DC, area, relocated to St. Petersburg, Florida, in 2021 with his wife. In early 2020, Josh launched District Partners, an executive search and consulting firm specializing in talent solutions with a focus on working with C-suite executives and assisting them through strategic hiring decisions for their firms. District Partners connects elite accounting, finance and technology professionals with pivotal roles in rapidly expanding companies, igniting their growth trajectory. The firm was recognized as the No. 1 fastest-growing company in Washington, DC, on the Inc. 5000 list in 2023. Prior to starting District Partners, Josh served as the Executive Vice President for Addison Group, spending nearly 15 years in the recruitment and headhunting space. He played a key role in growing his previous firm from 40 employees to more than 2,000 with almost a billion in revenue before its exit to private equity. In his early career, Josh honed his finance skills at a top international asset management firm but soon realized his passion extended beyond spreadsheets and financials. This experience served as a foundation for his journey, solidifying his commitment to finance while inspiring a desire to approach it from a different vantage point. Personally, Josh and his wife, Stacey, have a 16-month-old named Live running around the house, and not to be forgotten is their firstborn, their golden retriever, Penny. Josh enjoys skiing, biking, playing tennis, traveling and watching golf tips on YouTube (though breaking 100 remains a challenge).



Suneera Madhani

Founder, CEO School

2021 regional winner

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Suneera Madhani is a true trailblazer in the business world. As the founder of Stax Payments, she built one of America's top 10 fastest-growing FinTech companies from an idea to more than \$160 million in recurring revenue, making it a billion-dollar technology platform, which she successfully exited north of \$1 billion. She is the first female CEO to lead a unicorn in Florida and has received numerous accolades for her success, including being recognized by Fortune's "40 Under 40," Entrepreneur Of The Year®, Entrepreneur magazine's "100 Most Influential Women" and Inc.'s "100 Female Founders," among others.

After facing countless challenges as a woman in business, Suneera has become a passionate advocate for gender equality and female entrepreneurship. She founded CEO School, a company empowering women to scale their businesses and change the statistics. With less than 2% of female founders ever breaking \$1 million in revenue, Suneera is on a mission to make sure her success isn't a unicorn but becomes the norm.



Greice Murphy

CEO, Stem Cell Miami

2020 regional winner

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Born and raised in Brazil, Greice came to America in 2003 to work as a currency trader for a finance firm in Atlanta. In 2010, Greice founded one of the fastest growing healthcare companies in America, Advanced Care Partners (ACP), w/ the purpose of raising the quality of homecare nursing services delivered to medically fragile children. In less than a decade, ACP extended its services to adult care and its footprint to GA, FL and TX. Under her leadership, ACP launched an international recruiting agency and grew organically and through acquisitions at an annual rate of 50%+ w/ a team of 1,200+ employees, becoming one of the few companies in the U.S. ever to make the Inc. 5000 list for 7 years in a row. In 2018, she sold majority interest of ACP to a private equity firm and stayed as the CEO for 3 years after the transaction. Today, she remains the second largest shareholder, board member and leads the company's M&A strategy. In late 2022, Greice moved to Miami and acquire Miami Stem Cell®, one of the leading Stem Cell Institutes in the US. The company provides top-notch treatments in the field of Regenerative Medicine and is expanding its presence nationwide through partnerships with renowned physicians. Greices' strategic mind, combined w/ a strong finance background and deep sense of care for people are the reasons for her success. In 2021, she received the Entrepreneur of the Year Award® SE Region, and the Legendary Award from EO. In 2022, she became a judge for EOY SE. She's a co-founder & board member to Biatch Tequila, SakeBomb, Joov, and Dogpark. She serves as a board member to non-profits Extra Special People and the Brazilian American Chamber of Commerce. She's a contributor to the Forbes Business Council and Inc Magazine. Other affiliations include member of the EY Board Diversity Cohort, the Tech Advisory Council of MMM, EO, GoldenSeeds and OnBoard. Greice received her bachelor's degree in Radiology from Ulbra and her master's degree in Business from UFGV.



Jim O'Leary

CEO, Haskell

2021 regional winner

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Jim serves as Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President of Haskell, a global architecture, engineering and construction organization, and maintains full executive leadership responsibilities of the over \$2 billion firm with more than 2,500 employees. Jim joined Haskell in 1989 and has held several key positions, including field engineer, project manager, senior project manager, director, vice president, senior vice president, and executive vice president and chief operating officer. Since starting with Haskell, Jim has worked on over 150 projects with Frito-Lay. In addition to Frito-Lay, Jim has worked with Nestlé, Gatorade, Kraft, Conagra, Procter & Gamble, Nike, Coca-Cola, General Dynamics, Boeing, Rolls-Royce, Starbucks, Ascension Health, the NFL, the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Coast Guard. He has also provided design and construction services for several other Fortune 100 companies in the past. Jim is also currently responsible for major offices in Florida, Georgia, Texas, North Carolina, Missouri, Oklahoma, Utah, California and Wisconsin, as well as international operations throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Education

Jim is a University of Florida graduate with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Construction Management. He received executive education at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. Jim is a certified general contractor.

Professional affiliations

Jim is active in civic and professional organizations, including the Design-Build Institute of America, Construction Industry Round Table, Leadership Jacksonville Class of 2003, Jacksonville Community Council, Jacksonville Civic Council, Florida Chamber, Jacksonville Speech & Hearing Center Board of Directors, Jacksonville University Policy Advisory Board, Thrive Scholars Northeast Florida Advisory Board, and several design and construction national organizations. He was chosen by Ernst & Young LLP as the Entrepreneur Of The Year 2021 Florida Award winner.

Personal

Jim and his wife, Sandy, live in Jacksonville, along with their three children, Katie Anne, Jimmy and Daniel. Jim is a very proud grandfather of his grandchildren.



Pearl Percy

Chief Development Officer, JM Family Enterprises

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Pearl Percy is Group Vice President and Chief Corporate Development Officer of JM Family Enterprises, Inc. In her role, Pearl reports to JM Family's chief executive officer and works closely with the chief financial officer to drive the company's expansion strategy by identifying industry trends and maintaining relationships with relevant external partners. In addition, Pearl's team focuses on sourcing, negotiating, structuring and executing strategic acquisitions/investments in order to drive the company's growth beyond its automotive roots. She also works with existing business units to develop strategic partnerships and mergers to support their continued growth. Pearl is a seasoned corporate finance executive with more than 20 years in strategic advisory, corporate development and financial transaction management. She has a track record of identifying growth opportunities for customer-centric Fortune 500 companies. Most recently, Pearl served as Vice President of Strategic Growth for retailer Nordstrom, responsible for advancing the company's growth and digital transformation through acquisitions, investments and commercial partnerships. In this role, she served as strategic advisor to and represented Nordstrom's investment interest in 11 Honoré, Peek Kids, Sole Society, PlatformE, DSCO and Attabotics. She held similar roles at the Clorox Company and the Walt Disney Company. Earlier in her career, she focused on mergers and acquisitions at global investment banks J.P. Morgan, Lazard Freres and Banc of America Securities. Originally from Chicago, Pearl earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Mathematics and Sociology from Northwestern University, and a JD/MBA from the Northwestern School of Law and the Kellogg School of Management. An active member of the local community, Pearl serves on the Board of Trustees for the YMCA of South Palm Beach County. She, along with her husband and two sons, resides in Boca Raton, Florida.



Mark Volchek

Founder, Las Olas VC

2010 regional winner

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Mark Volchek is a founding partner of Las Olas Venture Capital, which he started in 2016, and is now investing out of its second fund. Prior to starting Las Olas Venture Capital, Mark spent about 15 years at Higher One, a company he cofounded in 2000 while a senior in college. In his roles as CFO, Chairman and then CEO, Mark has had a major hand in steering the company from its first round of seed funding and multiple rounds of venture funding all the way to its successful IPO in 2010, and beyond. He helped grow Higher One from just three founders to profitability, more than \$250 million of revenue and more than 1,000 employees. When Mark left in 2014, Higher One's products and services supported more than 1,900 schools and approximately 13 million enrolled students. Since 2008, Mark has been an active angel investor and has invested in more than 30 companies. Mark is the Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2010 New England Financial Services Award winner and was an Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2011 National Award finalist. Mark holds a BA and an MA in Economics from Yale University. He was a founding officer of the Yale Entrepreneurial Society and on its board from 2000 to 2010. This nonprofit organization promotes entrepreneurship among Yale students, faculty and alumni, and sponsors an annual business plan competition. Mark's past civic roles include serving as Chairman of the Tweed New Haven Airport Authority, and positions on the Florida Board of Take Stock in Children and the New Haven Economic Development Committee. He currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Florida Venture Forum and is also the Chair of the Fort Lauderdale Aviation Advisory Board.

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About Entrepreneur Of The Year®

Entrepreneur Of The Year® is the world's most prestigious business awards program for unstoppable entrepreneurs. These visionary leaders deliver innovation, growth and prosperity that transform our world. The program engages entrepreneurs with insights and experiences that foster growth. It connects them with their peers to strengthen entrepreneurship around the world. Entrepreneur Of The Year is the first and only truly global awards program of its kind. It celebrates entrepreneurs through regional and national awards programs in more than 145 cities in over 60 countries. Winners go on to compete for the World Entrepreneur Of The Year® title. ey.com/us/eoy

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