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HBJ C-Suite Awards 2017: Outstanding CEO of a large company

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Winner: Mark Parrish, CEO, Igloo Products Corp. LLC

When [Mark Parrish](#) took over as CEO of Igloo in 2015, he sat down with nearly 50 associates at the company and interviewed them. He asked them about their own individual motivations and values, and used that information to fuel “Operation Rejuvenation,” Igloo’s approach to operational and financial excellence.

The extensive leadership power move isn’t surprising from Parrish, who’s held a total of six C-level positions across almost 20 years. He grew up in West Virginia in a family with deep coal mining roots, and graduated 10th in his class at the U.S. Military Academy, then serving for about six years flying [Apache](#) gunships, earning a Bronze Star Medal and the Air Medal for [Valor](#).



DANIEL ORTIZ/HBJ

Outstanding CEO of a Large Company Winner: Mark Parrish, CEO, Igloo Products Corp.

Whether its running a military operation or running a private company, it’s all about the people.

“Every enterprise is made up of people, processes and technologies. The latter two can be bought or replicated. But the true competitive advantage is people.”

And it’s clear the effect his people-focused leadership has had on the company.

“Mark’s expertise and hands-on approach has benefitted Igloo’s culture, sales growth and financial strategies,” said Michael McCaul, member of the U.S. House of Representatives. “I have seen this firsthand while touring the Igloo facility and through my conversations with Mark about their history, operations, and goals.”

Oversees: 1,200

Education: Bachelor's, United States Military Academy; Master's, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Finalist: William Caesar, CEO, WCA Waste Corporation

In the three years since [William Caesar](#) became CEO of [WCA Waste Corporation](#), the company has had 15 acquisitions worth almost \$75 million and two divestitures worth \$50 million in revenue. He also refinanced the WCA's primary debt facility. Thanks to reduced interest costs and an improvement in terms, WCA will be spending \$2 million less this year and for the foreseeable future.

WCA is in 10 states, including Texas, Florida and Missouri, and serves more than half a million residential and industrial customers. Caesar's goal is to consistently provide a sustainable and efficient high level of customer service. And others are taking notice. Recently, the company received an award from Lone Star Natural Gas for expanding the company's fleet of natural gas vehicles in Houston. There are now 50 vehicles that run on natural gas in Houston and another 70 in Florida.

"Because of Bill's vision and efforts, we have a very positive financial outlook, an industry leading safety record, and we are building a culture of success that didn't exist before," said [Antonio Marin](#), vice president of IT and IS at WCA Waste Corp.

Oversees: 1,421

Education: BA Russian Studies, [Colgate University](#); MA Russian Area Studies, Georgetown University; MBA Fuqua School of Business, [Duke University](#)

Boards and affiliations: Member, Council of Overseers for Rice University Jones School of Business

Finalist: Swapnil Agarwal, CEO, founder and managing principal, Nitya Capital

Swapnil Agarwal emigrated to the United States from India when he was just 16. The son of working-class parents, Agarwal knew the way to succeed was through hard work and perseverance. He paid his way through college by working part-time and full-time jobs, while earning a near-perfect grade point average.

His first years in Houston were spent in an old and crumbling apartment in southwest Houston. It was here that he realized the need for affordable but high-quality residential properties for all those chasing the American dream.

Agarwal founded Nitya Capital three short years ago. Nitya Capital selects and renovates older properties that are zoned to good school zones, have walkable streets and are close to areas with employment opportunities. His property's employees are also tenants, and he goes beyond what is expected as a boss; Agarwal has personally paid for green cards and educational costs for 20 of his employees and tenants.

Nitya Capital has grown to become a \$650 million business and manages almost 10,000 apartment units across Texas.

In the near future, Nitya Capital looks to expand to other cities, such as Dallas, Phoenix and Atlanta.

Oversees: 380

Education: BBA The University of Texas at Austin

Boards and affiliations: Board of directors for Magic Bus, a nonprofit that supports educational advancement in 272 of India's poorest villages and slum settlements. Board member of Pratham USA; on board of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston.

Finalist: David Turner, president and CEO, Equipment Depot

David Turner, president and CEO of Equipment Depot, takes time to visit every one of his 35 locations in 13 states and meet with his employees, from salespersons and field technicians to customer service support.

Turner was the vision behind the technological advancement of the company. He was the catalyst to using IBM Watson for marketing and to develop an industry-leading website. Under his guidance, Equipment Depot grew its market share by 24 percent, exceeding the company's target by 380 percent and increased its unit volume sales by 22 percent year after year in 2016.

In 2017, the company won four American Marketing Association Crystal Awards and one Association of National Advertisers B2 Award.

Giving back to the community is important to Turner. With the company's Time2Help initiative, all employees are given paid time during their work day for volunteer hours. In 2016, Turner donated 125 bicycles to CYCLE to promote children's literacy. This year, employees painted and redecorated 10 bedrooms at DePelchin Children's Foster Home.

"David loves to say it is all about people. He is right," said Jack Guidry, president and CEO of PVI Holdings. "What he rarely says, though, is that his people feel the same way about him. The business world needs more people like David."

Oversees: 1,500

Education: BS Accounting, University of South Carolina

Boards and affiliations: Changing Young Children's Lives through Education, donor; DePelchin Children's Foster Home, volunteer