

A LIST 2022

*MEET SOME OF THE MOVERS
AND SHAKERS THAT MAKE
UP THE CHANNEL ELITE*



Agilitas are committed to act with impact and build a more sustainable future for our planet, people and partners.



Our charter outlines the elements of our services, operations and internal initiatives that contribute to our sustainability mission and supports a circular economy.

FOLLOW OUR SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY AT
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A passion to act with impact

Welcome to the CRN A-List 2022

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Well, well, well – here we are again with another *CRN A-List*.

Last year's edition was something of a "lockdown special", where we asked channel executives all about their favourite apps during the pandemic, their guiltiest lockdown pleasures and who they would invite to a celebrity Zoom party.

2021 was very much a year of two halves. With the first six months of the year continuing where 2020 left off, with lockdowns, self-isolation and so on, the second half saw a return to some form of normality with many liberties we enjoy (such as leaving the house and legally being indoors with more than five other people) being a possibility once again.

It's in this vein that we thought it would be apt for the questions for this year's instalment of the *CRN A-List* to focus on how the day-to-day lives of the good people that make up the channel will change in this (dare I say it) "new normal" we find ourselves in.

No doubt many of us used the pandemic to learn new hobbies or to reignite old passions as a way of keeping ourselves entertained (and sane). But how many of these have our channel executives kept going

now that life is returning to "normal"? The IT channel are still a bunch of fitness freaks, with a sizable portion of our A-Listers telling us that they plan to resume running, cycling and walking more regularly post-pandemic as a way to blow off steam.

We also discovered that the IT channel could very well form its own musical supergroup, with many of our A-Listers telling us that if they had time to learn one new skill they would learn musical instruments including the piano, guitar, drums and even try their hand at singing.

Staying with the musical theme, the go-to karaoke songs of our channel A-Listers was eclectic, ranging from Neil Diamond's *Sweet Caroline* to *I Want It That Way* by the Backstreet Boys. I think the IT channel

is due a karaoke sing-off at some point (at the next *CRN Channel Awards*, perhaps?).

Thanks to all of our A-Listers for putting up with our inane questions (which I think get more bizarre as each year passes).

As ever, the answers from our channel executives did not disappoint, and I'm sure you'll have as much joy and amusement reading through the report as I did.

*Josh Budd,
editor*



THE CHANNEL'S **NUMBER ONE** CHOICE FOR IT SERVICES

A-LIST 2022

The future looks green

Agilitas is delighted to be able to support the *CRN A-List* for the fourth consecutive year. It is always such an honour to celebrate the key players in the UK IT channel with this year being especially poignant as the channel emerges from a period of recovery and looks ahead to become stronger than ever. This esteemed list recognises channel leaders' vital contribution towards the ongoing growth and success of this ever-evolving industry.

It is especially rewarding to support *CRN A-List* this year as we have watched channel leaders demonstrate such strength and resilience under extraordinary circumstances. The role of channel leaders is not to be understated, they are relied upon to provide confidence, direction and inspiration which has become a greater challenge than ever amid such uncertainty. This year has highlighted that collaboration and resilience will help businesses prevail, even in the face of worldwide disruption.

It has been fascinating to watch channel leaders bounce back in the year following the pandemic, evolving to meet changing customer requirements whilst embracing innovative technologies, business models and services to fit the new landscape. The next challenge is how we can continue to learn from this experience. Channel leaders must continuously evaluate how we can evolve further and start shaping the future direction of our industry. The pandemic is not the only cause of transformation within the channel, as growing fears around the future of our planet have caused channel businesses to address sustainability and explore how they can actively contribute to creating a circular economy that benefits the planet and their partners.

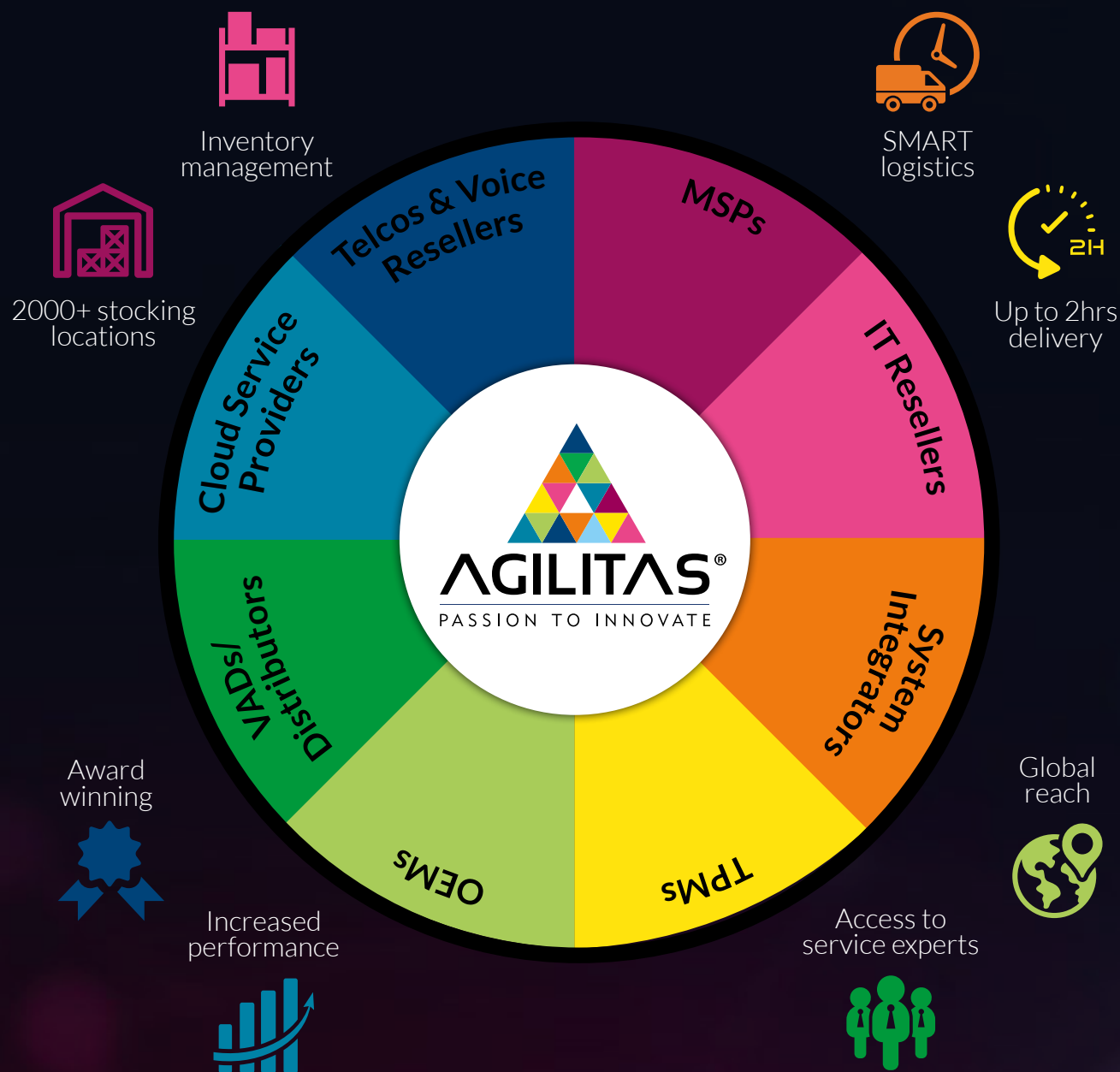
Here at Agilitas, we are proud to have committed to 'Act with Impact', launching our Agilitas eVentory Charter to mark the latest step in our ongoing commitment to providing sustainable inventory management services across the IT channel. The Agilitas e-Ventory Charter was formed as part of our commitment to delivering sustainable inventory management. The Charter outlines the elements of our services, operational and internal initiatives that contribute to this mission and support a circular economy. Our objective to minimise technology waste is at the heart of the Agilitas culture and we are determined to take action to create a greener channel ecosystem for our planet, people and partners.



This ongoing commitment to sustainability is also evident across the channel as the Agilitas Channel Confidence Index found that sustainability is high on the agenda over the next 12 months, with decision-makers ranking it 7.8 out of a possible 10. This is beneficial for everyone, as green-focused partners can expect to experience an increase in new business opportunities as customers increasingly factor sustainability into their requirements for channel partners. It is clear that sustainability is critical to the reimagining of the channel and it is encouraging to see how channel leaders are moving ahead with this in mind.

Agilitas and I are honoured to celebrate with all those channel leaders who made it onto this year's *CRN A-List*. It is extremely well-deserved and truly reflects the talent and influence in our industry. Looking ahead to the end of this year, and beyond, I am excited to see how these visionaries adapt and evolve, taking the lessons learned amid the pandemic and their commitment to revolutionising their approach to sustainability to continue the channel's transformation. The future of the channel looks green.

Shaun Lynn, CEO of Agilitas



SERVING THE CHANNEL FOR OVER 30 YEARS



A



SIMON ALDOUS
Channel director,
Google Cloud UK

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Being given the incredible opportunity to lead Google Cloud's Partner Programme. This is not only a massive personal highlight for me this year, but also a professional one.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? With Tesla's ongoing global success and the phenomenal achievements of SpaceX's missions this year, I think Elon Musk has really established himself as a leader in the industry. Both of these innovations will be of substantial value to so many people and the planet – I'm excited to see what the future holds for Elon and his ongoing initiatives.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? We got ourselves a lockdown puppy and one of the best things about having her is that we now spend quality time together as a family. We now go on long walks to new places we haven't visited before – and we'll definitely continue to do this beyond the pandemic. There really is such a thing as puppy therapy!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Obviously the CRN Channel Awards are at the top of the list, but I also can't wait to get back to attending as many industry events as possible. In the last year, we've really

been missing that physical engagement with people and the ability to catch up, discuss, debate and ask questions face-to-face, as well as listen to keynotes, watch demonstrations and just feel normal again.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Music is a big part of my life and I have always wanted to learn to play the piano. Although I've never found the opportunity to do so as it is a super complex skill, which will involve investing a considerable amount of time to learn it properly. There's always something keeping me busy, which might suggest that I need to get better at prioritising my time!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say?

Be your authentic self because you are special and you will be happy. It sounds so simple but it is so difficult to do, particularly when you look at the pressure young people have today through things like social media where everyone is striving to be seen as having a perfect lifestyle.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Frank Sinatra's *My Way*.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Challenging, transformational, exciting.



SIMON ASHALL
Alliances director,
Total Computers

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Getting married in October. What could beat that?

“ I started having cold showers in the morning – and I'll never go back to hot showers now. The first few are a bit of a shock, but once you get used to it, they're incredibly invigorating. I've heard wild swimmers say similar things – the cold water makes you feel so alive and you start the day on a bit of a high. **”**
Simon Ashall isn't giving up this lockdown habit

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?

Mine is probably quite a divisive choice since he seems to be a Marmite character, but I'd have to pick Elon Musk. I'm a huge sci-fi fan anyway, but his determination to get us from one planet to another is incredible and even though it's still early days he's already revolutionised space travel.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why?

All of them and none of them! I'm very much a people person and love the face-to-face interaction industry events bring. But the past 18 months have shown how much we can achieve virtually, and that we don't always need to be in the same room. Sustainability is increasingly important, so it'll be interesting to see who continues with the virtual events and who doesn't.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? If we can put aside environmental concerns for a minute, it would be learning to fly – I think the sense of freedom would be hugely exhilarating.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? As a child your life is full of changes and you

seem to be very accepting of them, but somewhere between childhood and adulthood that changes. I'd say to never lose your willingness to try new things. Don't be afraid to make changes, and if it doesn't work out, make another change.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

The Way It Is, Bruce Hornsby and the Range – although not sure anyone would say I can 'sing'!

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Unpredictable, progressive, rewarding.



ANNA ASSASSA
CEO, Tisski

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Without doubt, welcoming our team, their families and friends to Warwickshire in September for our 10th anniversary family fun day.

As a company, we have grown considerably over the past two years and so for many of us, this was the first chance to meet colleagues face to face.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?

I have been extremely impressed by Julie Cordua, CEO of Thorn, for their expansion and implementation of their software, which uses technology to make a tangible difference in fighting problems which technology itself has exacerbated (for instance, child pornography), particularly in the midst of a pandemic.

Julie Cordua's work is using technology to arm law enforcement worldwide with the tools to fight child pornography online. I believe in the last year Thorn's software has resulted in 21 children being protected from abuse, over 20,000 victims being identified and has resulted in 150,000 pieces of Child Sex Abuse Materials (CSAM) being identified and removed from the internet. Her resilience and unbending focus and her lack of self-promotion in assisting with such a great cause has to be admired.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?

To maintain the increased focus on the wellbeing of our team. Pre-pandemic, when not based on customer sites, 99% of our people worked remotely, so there was not as greater shift in working habits for them as individuals or as much change as other organisations may have experienced. However, that does not mean their families or people they live with were used to the new environment.

We made a concerted effort to put even more measures in place to look after our people's wellbeing, and offer support to their families should they require it. We made it clear that if anyone was struggling help was – and will continue to be – on hand.

By doing this, we made sure the levels of service our customers have come to expect from Tisski was maintained and most importantly, we had a happy, healthy workforce.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why?

Microsoft Inspire. Even in last year's virtual setting, it was still an exceptional event; however, it's an event about partnerships and having the ability to network, have face-to-face conversations and explore the art of the possible together is special.

Technology has enabled collaboration across geographic boundaries, but for an event like Inspire, a handshake, fist-bump, or

elbow to elbow greeting just edges it.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

I would like to learn about robotics; it is not an area I am very familiar with and I think it is a fascinating area which will change the world (hopefully for the better), particularly in health and social care.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say?

The only failure is not trying, have confidence and give it to others, it is a wonderful gift.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

When We Stand Together, Nickelback

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Teamwork eclipses challenges.



JON ATHERTON
Group commercial director,
CI Distribution

What has been your personal highlight of 2021?

My highlight has undoubtedly been watching the culmination of growth in my two distribution teams over the past three years to become a serious player in both Rugged and Client gaming solutions. I'm very proud of this amazing group of people and with all the vendors and customers who gave us this opportunity.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?

Katalin Karikó. Considering the healthcare havoc

created by Covid-19 and its impact on the world both socially and economically, I think Katalin Karikó, whose work inspired the founding of Moderna, is the most influential tech leader of our era. Her relentless pursuit of mRNA technology for 40 years – despite all the odds – shows the grit of a person who changed the world forever, speeding the pace of vaccine development from years to days.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I got into cycling during the various lockdowns, and it's one activity I can see myself doing for as long as I look good in lycra!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? After the unfortunate year(s) we've had, I'm honestly looking forward to returning to all of the tech events. I've missed the in-person interactions with the tech community – digital events, although necessary, don't compare. Starting with the CRN Channel Awards in November, of course.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to learn how to play the piano expertly. The hand-eye coordination is already there through my many years of gaming – so I think I could surprise myself. It would make for a cool party trick!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Make a lot of mistakes now, and learn from every single one of them. There's no greater teacher in life than experience. And I believe the ability to learn from our downfalls and persevere is what helps us grow as people.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Sweeeeeet Caroline*, Neil Diamond. I bet you're humming this now in your head.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Reconnect, faith, community.



RYE AUSTIN
CCO, Core

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My youngest lad starting school and remote working allowing me to not only be there then, but to be around to take him regularly.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk. He's demonstrated several great examples of breaking down very grand visions of an outcome by applying first principle thinking, then forming companies to address items like existing supply chain issues and generating fresh markets/new demand rather than merely following others. He's achieved this while opening his research for IP for others to consume royalty free, further supporting his aim to deliver against the goal, rather than monetising the journey and suppressing competition. Just imagine how much faster innovation could progress in many markets without IP ownership constraints.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Vitamin D. I was more conscious of diet, healthy eating and taking vitamins during lockdown. That's a habit I hope to maintain as getting older, I'd like all the help I can get.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Microsoft Inspire. It's such a valuable event in terms of networks

and relationships. The digital version is great for Microsoft to share updates and enable partners to consume the content but the real value in my eyes was always the relationships and a digital version will always struggle to recreate that.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? A new language. I've always felt lack of time is a justification for not doing it.

If you could go back in time and tell yourself as a child one thing, what would you say? Don't dismiss cryptocurrency as a flash in the pan when it comes along...

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Don't You Want Me Baby*, The Human League – but only due to my limited vocal range and hope that others sang over me.

Sum 2021 up in three words. The New Normality.

B



MIKE BACON
CEO, Academia

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Completing our first year trading with our new investor, Strive Investment, and the business has never been more successful.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Working from home more. We need the human connection and so we have agreed with Academia staff that some

office time is vital. However, we have embraced home working for most staff for ever more.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Canalys. It's a great event combining quality content and networking. And who doesn't love a trip to Barcelona?

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Cooking (and I do have the time so what's my excuse?).

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Buy Apple shares. Sell IBM shares. Back yourself more.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Another Brick In The Wall*, Pink Floyd

Sum 2021 up in three words. Life goes on.



ROB BARDWELL
Group CEO, Prisio

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Playing a part in leading North into new ownership, with huge opportunities.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Marc Benioff, and his ability to believe in an idea and drive through that as a technology and then adapt the base product to be so much more.

Which one lockdown habit do

you plan to keep going? Drink less coffee!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? It's not quite an industry event as such, but through the Welsh Government's Industrial Liaison Program membership with MIT, getting access to the world's thought leaders in technology with a week-long visit.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? A language, possibly Chinese.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? If in doubt wing it; your instincts are usually right.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Telegraph Road, Dire Straits.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, flexibility, opportunistic.

ANNABEL BERRY
CEO, Sapphire

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Getting back to see live music again. It's been one of the things I really missed during 2020 and so being able to go to gigs and concerts again has been a real joy. There's nothing quite like it – it feeds the soul.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? There isn't one person springing to mind, being honest. But I know there are so many inspiring entrepreneurs who have started businesses during the pandemic; some driven by purpose, some by necessity. It's always a brave leap to start your own business and I don't think enough small businesses get the recognition they deserve or the support they need. They are the backbone of the channel and the ones most likely to be pushing boundaries on what's possible.

Which one lockdown habit do



you plan to keep going? It would be exercising. I really enjoyed it during lockdown and it's become a positive habit and so that's set to continue now.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Well, it has

to be Sapphire's own NISC! The National Information Security Conference is in its 21st year and is stronger than ever. 2020 & 2021 are the only years it hasn't gone ahead so we are really looking forward to February 2022 and NISC XXI. Put the dates in your diaries!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Learn to play the guitar.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Not to care as much about what people think of you that it changes your decisions or stops you from doing things. A wise friend I know said recently, 'what other people think of you is none of your business' and I think that's very true and good advice.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Had to? Sign me up, I love karaoke! My go-to is Dusty Springfield's *Son of a Preacher Man* – it's a classic.

Sum 2021 up in three words. The little things.



ADAM BINKS
CEO, SysGroup

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Definitely our expansion into Manchester. Opening a new office in the middle of a pandemic was a huge risk to take; however, I believe it is going to be great for SysGroup. It is excellent to be at a point where we can establish a sales and marketing hub in the UK's second largest tech city, while retaining our Liverpool roots.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Richard Hayes, co-founder and CEO of Mojo Mortgages. I think what the business has achieved in such a short space of time in the fintech space, as well as being a huge disruptor in the sector, is commendable.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Remembering that I have a family too and spending time with them. It's been great for us all to become so close again. It's easy to let business commitments get in the way, and family is certainly one thing that you shouldn't take for granted.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The North West Dealmakers Awards ceremony is coming up at the end of October

and I am looking forward to having the business and finance community come together in one space to once again celebrate the successes of the growing businesses in the region. We were on an impressive acquisitive growth journey of our own pre-pandemic and have an active pipeline ahead of us, so it will be great to get face-to-face conversations kick-started once again.

“ I'd want to become an astronaut. I'm fascinated by space travel. It scares the life out of me, but I really think that space travel is going to be possible in my lifetime. ”

Adam Binks on what skill he would like to learn

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Be careful who you trust. I've trusted a few of the wrong people along the way in my career and it hurts when that trust is betrayed.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I wouldn't – it just wouldn't be fair for me to put other people through the pain of listening to me sing!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Chaotic, extraordinary, opportunity.

HANNAH BIRCH
SVP and managing director, Europe, Ensono

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? For me, it has to be the greater recognition of mental health in the workplace, and society at large. For far too long, talking about mental health was a taboo subject. After seeing colleagues juggling

families and their work life balance, I take great pride in being able to speak out and implement initiatives like our Mental Health Days that provide extra time off for employees – helping to foster a broader culture of positive mental health in the workplace.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Sundar Pichai. His affable and low key personality as well as his championing of other individuals' success and wellbeing – all while steering Google to another record year – is really something to behold.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? My daily morning walk with my wonderful springer spaniel Ralph through Ashridge Forest. Our new hybrid way of working affords me extra time to take in the beautiful local scenery of the Chilterns Hills, and it really helps to compose my mind for the day ahead.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I recently attended the Cloud Excellence Awards. Having Ensono recognised for its work with University Hospitals Birmingham on the Pioneer Data Hub is fantastic,



but of almost equal importance was seeing colleagues laugh and smile and reuniting with industry figures I hadn't seen in years. It was a real post-pandemic tonic and I'm looking forward to attending more events like it in the near future.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? In my personal life, open water swimming has quickly become one of my favourite hobbies and I intend to keep getting better at it – at least as long as the British weather makes it a possibility! On a professional level, I'm striving to be an accredited agile practitioner, as we look to make the internal workings of Ensono as nimble as possible.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Take more risks.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Glen Campbell's *Rhinestone Cowboy*. This was our team song during my 20 years in the oil and gas industry and it stuck. I can't imagine singing anything else!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Grounding, innovative, life-changing.



ALANZO BLACKSTOCK
Senior director, alliances and channel UK&I, ServiceNow

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Having started a new role at ServiceNow the previous year, 2021 was the first time I was able to meet with my entire team in the office. It was great to physically connect and to be in the office again, bumping into people that you have only met on a Zoom call.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Bill McDermott, CEO of ServiceNow. I know it's very predictable of me, but I really admire Bill's confidence, passion and his enthusiasm. This year he stated that ServiceNow will reach \$15bn in revenue in the next five years, tripling the business; a conservative estimate according to Bill. The growth in revenue and market valuation since his tenure as CEO indicates that his strategy is working.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I have spent a lot of time cycling during lockdown, both indoor and on the road. I plan to keep riding and I have a few challenges planned in the next few years.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I am looking forward to ServiceNow Knowledge 2022 in Orlando in May. The last two have been digital. So this should be the first face-to-face since lockdown. Knowledge has always been a great

event for customers and partners.
If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would want to learn to be competent in speaking another language. Probably Spanish. It is something that I am definitely planning to do in the next couple of years. Although I have been saying that for a while now. Mañana.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't give up! Be determined. Persistence wins the race.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? There are so many songs that could be on my karaoke list, but the stand-out song would probably be Stevie Wonder's *Superstition*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Remote, vaccine, hybrid.



PAMELA BLANCHARD
Director, ICA

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? During lockdown I completed on an overseas holiday home which had always been a big dream and during the summer of 2021 I was lucky enough to spend a few weeks there with my family.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Sharon White, Ofcom CEO who has taken BT to task over improving the UK's high-speed network and is now going after social media firms to remove offensive content much quicker.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Even though I perfected my baking, conditioned myself to exercising at home and forced myself to binge watching Netflix series I am glad to see the back of all three. What lockdown really gave me is the gift of gratitude, to be grateful and appreciate what and who we have in our lives.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The Comms Awards because it's an opportunity to get dressed up, spend quality time with the team and the wonderful businesses that make our industry so special.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would learn a second language, I worked in Spain when I was younger and picked up the language well and if I had kept it up I might be fluent now, which is a wonderful skill to have.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Invest in Microsoft.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Breathe Again*, Toni Braxton.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Adapting to change.

RICHARD BLANFORD
CEO, Fordway Solutions

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Not many really; like most of us, I'm pretty sure the easing of the pandemic has been the most significant happening this year. My band playing our first live gig for more than a year, the return of rugby and other sports and attending a couple of excellent concerts recently are all up there. Both children actually returning to university rather than logging on from home has also been welcome.

Which tech figurehead has



impressed you the most this year, and why? I couldn't say impressed, but the wrangling/willy waving between two of the richest men in the world, Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk has been entertaining, particularly over the space race they are both pursuing; it's like a playground spat with very expensive lawyers. Facebook's ongoing issues around privacy and its effects on society, which rightly need to be investigated and controlled, and the continual wrangling over who has/hasn't won US government cloud contracts has also kept me entertained.

On a more serious note, the work Tim Berners-Lee and his team with support from the BBC are doing to improve personal data privacy and security with the Solid initiative is worth keeping an eye on; I think this will be one of the breakout technologies in 2022.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Getting up later. I'm naturally an owl and a combination of working from home and less traffic on my commute, which since lockdown I now normally do on a motorbike or bicycle, has allowed me to set the alarm clock an hour later on weekdays. Bliss!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Any event that involves interesting content, face-to-face contact, a bar or decent restaurant and hopefully a round of golf or sporting occasion.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? After 35 years playing rugby, at the age of 46 I started playing five-a-side football, and more recently veterans 11-a-side. Even after some years of playing I'm pretty sure the opposition would be grateful if I could tackle cleanly and less physically.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Life is full of surprises and opportunities; your course in life is not pre-ordained. Embrace change and new experiences; if you don't try them, you'll never know if you enjoy them.

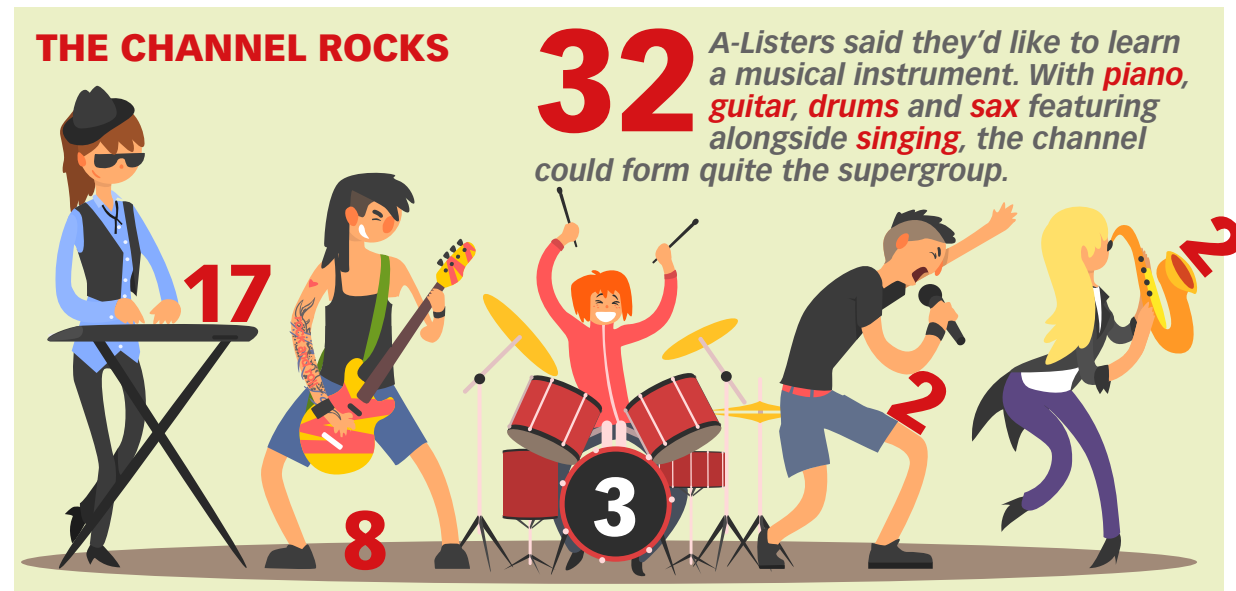
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? If I've had enough to drink then *Sweet Child O' Mine* by Guns and Roses; if less alcohol has been consumed then *Mustang Sally*, the Wilson Pickett standard that pretty much everyone has covered. I wouldn't say either would be that pleasant to the audience; I'm the drummer in a pub rock band that gigs regularly and they won't let me have a microphone when we're playing live, which should give you a fair idea of the quality of my singing.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Roll on 2022!

“ I couldn't say I've been impressed, but the wrangling/willy waving between Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk has been entertaining, particularly over the space race they are both pursuing; it's like a playground spat with very expensive lawyers. **”**

Richard Blanford hasn't been impressed by these two tech figureheads

THE CHANNEL ROCKS



BEN BOSWELL
CEO, D|OPS Digital

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? D|OPS Digital has successfully charted its way through the turbulence of the pandemic from concept, launch to a viable, profitable entity. Accelerating developer velocity has never been more important; our partners are seeing unprecedented growth, and the team we have built over the last 12 months has the potential to become a market and thought leader in our space.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Armon Dadgar, CTO and co-founder at HashiCorp. His vision and ability to simplify the complex

via a white board is an inspiration to me. It is the most exciting pre-IPO company on the market today.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Spending time with my four-year-old daughter, going with her to tennis and swim class, being present and in the moment, watching her grow.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I always enjoy seeing familiar faces at the CRN Channel Awards. I don't miss the trade shows in Las Vegas at all.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Electronic music production. I would love to write my own or remix a classic house or disco track on Ableton.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? What would you do if you were not afraid? Then don't look down, and try it now.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? A tone-deaf version of *I Would Die 4 U* by Prince.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Unprecedented, challenging, growth.



SUSAN BOWEN
CEO, Aptum

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? After having spent the last two years in Toronto, Canada with our Aptum North American team, which coincided with the pandemic, we decided to move back to the UK this autumn. Coming back to England was a highlight for me as I am now able to spend time with family, although I am grateful for all the new friends we made in Toronto.

As for a personal career highlight, the Globee Women World Awards named me 'Transformation Leader of the Year' 2021. It was an honour to be awarded for the work we've achieved at Aptum, supporting organisations

through the continually changing technology environment. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft, has impressed me considerably this year. As a leader, he enables his employees through clear communication and purpose. He also frequently shares his life lessons, which I have personally found inspiring. Under Satya's leadership, Microsoft has transformed its culture and influenced many of us in the industry. Through Microsoft's strong response to cloud, home working and company values, we have transformed the way we work and live. I admire him.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I must admit lockdown sparked many different habits, some of which I've stuck with and some which I haven't. But the one habit I plan to pursue is my re-ignited love for playing the piano. Back when I was a teenager, I learned how to play, but through adolescence and my early 20s, it was a hobby that fell on the back burner. But with the onset of lockdown, I bought a piano to reteach myself how to play. I am also tutoring my seven-year-old son, and it is something we love doing together!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Web Summit 2021 is happening in Lisbon this November – in person! I am a huge fan of Paddy Cosgrave, the CEO, and his team who run this event. I supported the Collision event back in 2020 at the start of the pandemic, which was all done virtually due to restrictions, so I am ecstatic to travel back to Lisbon and meet start-ups, innovators and tech industry experts.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't sweat the small stuff. I was born to worry and fuss about the minor details in everything. Over time, I've learned not

“ As a lover of books and an avid reader, one day I'd love to write one of my own. They say everyone has at least one book in them, and I certainly think this is true. **”**

Susan Bowen would like to learn how to write a book

to do this, but as a child, I would worry about things that didn't end up being important. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and looking back, I would tell myself not to worry so much.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Who doesn't know the words to *Livin' On A Prayer* by Bon Jovi – it is a karaoke must!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Still in transition.



MATTHIEU BRIGNONE
VP EMEA partners, Pure Storage

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Despite great Zoom meetings I've really been missing social interaction over lockdown. Getting back to face-to-face meetings and seeing people in real life has been amazing. It is personally very important to me to see and interact with people directly. **Which tech figurehead has**

impressed you the most this year, and why? The work Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon is doing with Stemettes is inspiring. It's an initiative that is designed to encourage more women and young girls into science, technology, engineering and maths careers. As a father of two daughters, I think everyone needs to proactively get involved in supporting it and I'm proud we do this at Pure.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I like making time for sports. When I get the chance I do something sporty early (running, cycling or punching my partner Bob – Body Opponent Bag) in the morning to get myself energised for the day.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I am really excited for the personal interactions, which are so important to me. I'm finding there's a real appetite from the field to get out and meet people again. Whether it's at a big industry event or a small meeting with one customer – I love being back meeting people face to face **If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?** I would love to learn more foreign languages. It makes such a difference to relationships – both working and personal. We live in an interconnected world and being able to engage on a level in someone else's language is a real advantage.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Keep being who you are and everything is going to be fine.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Queen's *I Want To Break Free*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, interesting (especially about people's behaviour in Covid times), amateurism (with regards to the way many governments dealt with the communication around Covid-19).



DARREN BRODRICK
MD, Paragon Micro

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? It must be the decision I made to join and re-build Paragon Micro's UK business, who I joined towards the end of January. What I underestimated was how different the role was from my previous gig. Don't underestimate the term 'rolling your sleeves up'. Moving to a start-up business has already taught me a lot, but it's been a very rewarding year despite a few challenges along the way and I've newfound respect for any start-up business out there.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Given the circumstances, we must all be really grateful that we work in the tech sector. It's unfair to single anyone out, as we've all had to adapt and make decisions to help both our employees and customers.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I became a keen cyclist a year or so before lockdown to be fair, but I've kept it up and in May this year, along with a couple of buddies, we completed a cycling event called Chase the Sun, which was 207 miles in a single day. It was hard graft, but a very rewarding experience.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Canalys is always a top event, so I'm looking forward to bumping into some old faces when that returns next year. The way unified communications technologies have

transformed the way we work and live has been great, but you can't beat a good vendor event, near a beach, in a decent hotel and preferably in the sunshine. A nice round of golf before, during and after is always a nice little bonus as well.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? It would have to be a language, most probably Spanish given the amount of golf trips I've had to Spain over the years. It could even be a retirement destination when I hang up (recycle) the PC and mobile.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Buy shares in Apple as soon as they become available. Take your education more seriously as you never know where you will end and the opportunities that will come your way.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Moving On Up*, M-People.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Resilience, teamwork, optimism.



PAUL BRYAN
MD, Exertis UK&I

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My family and I managed to get away for a week in the sun. It was great to see my family laugh and have fun with friends.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I guess it has to be Elon Musk as he relentlessly pursues the radical and reshaping of our future.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? From a personal point of view, cooking. I like to challenge myself with a new dish as I find it very relaxing. From a professional point of view, listening and helping to empower our staff to drive positive change.

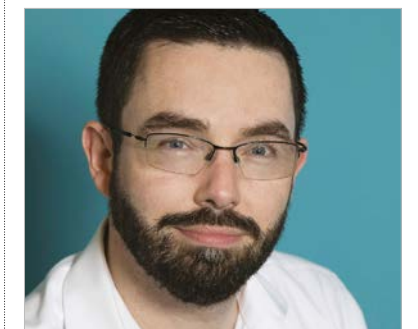
Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? To be honest, any event where we can finally do what we have all been missing – developing our relationships with our partners.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Painting – I definitely have some pictures in me – I just need to know the techniques.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Live on high ground and self-sustain as much as possible.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I love a bit of Neil Diamond cheese.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Belt and braces.



CHRIS BUNCH
COO, Cloud Technology Solutions **What has been your personal highlight of 2021?** Personally: relocating to the sunlit uplands of the North West. God's country, don't you know? Professionally: CTS winning a couple of Google Cloud partner of the year awards for Workspace and GCP. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this**

year, and why? The lazy answer would be Musk, as I'm dazzled by the engineering and foresight of Starlink – disrupting traditional sluggish infrastructure providers (I'm looking at you, BT!). But as I'm not a massive Tesla or Dogecoin fan, I'll say Anne Boden at Starling Bank for running a nimble but steady organisation that didn't need the razzle dazzle of Monzo to do a great job on delivering value to customers.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Whichever is first to take place overseas, perhaps Google's sales kick off, or maybe Next '22 if not. Beyond that, just getting out to some in person meetings is exciting enough at the moment!

“Using my under-desk treadmill, and bobbing around on video calls to the continual amusement of my colleagues. It's definitely healthier than sitting down all day, even if I have to accept some jokes!”

Chris Bunch doesn't plan on giving up this lockdown habit

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to do all my scuba certs and be ready for the world opening up again.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? On a personal level, “learn a second language”. If thinking professionally, probably to “not underestimate the importance of networking and relationships”. Note I've resisted any jokes about the lottery numbers or buying Bitcoin in 2010.

If you had to sing karaoke, what

would be your song of choice?

Something low and grunty by Mark Knopfler would be the sensible option with my voice. Reality? I only really sing at football matches, so I'll say *You'll Never Walk Alone*.



RICHARD BURKE
CEO, Arrow Business Communications

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Getting the majority of our business back together in person – and England getting to the Euros final.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Tim Cook. Continual excellence, and value creation despite all the global challenges.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Being around more for my family!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Comms Vision. It's a great way to catch up with everyone in the industry.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Playing the piano.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Trust your gut instinct and follow what it is telling you to do.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Progressive, challenging, dynamic.



ANTONY BYFORD
MD, Westcon

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? We are very people-centric at Westcon so getting back together with my team after such a long time out was huge boost, not just to my morale, but also theirs.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Jacqueline Gold, CEO of Ann Summers. Retail suffered the hardest when Boris closed the high street at the start of the pandemic.

Retailers had no warning or support at that immediate time. Where most revenues were from bricks and mortar, Jacqueline was quick to accelerate her digital presence, enabling a new wave of sales teams to sell online, keeping the business leading a market which no doubt had a boost with us all working from home.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Personally, the school run a few times a week.

I love the enthusiasm my kids have to learn and seeing them go into the school at the start of the day with beaming smiles is inspiring. Work, the frequency in which we talk to our people. This accelerated through the pandemic, sharing the plans and providing support at a difficult time and I believe a core contributor to our success showing greater transparency with our people.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to,

and why? It goes without saying, the CRN Channel Awards in November. Connecting with friends, partners and colleagues that I've built tremendous relationships with for over 25 years. It's the event of the year to celebrate the success with the best among us and to enjoy strengthening bonds.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Speak another language. It's embarrassing that all my colleagues and peers in Europe can speak so well to me in English but I just about manage to order two beers in Spanish.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Buy bitcoin and lots of them!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Duran Duran's *Hungry Like The Wolf*.
Sum 2021 up in three words. Wash, rinse, repeat.

C



CONOR CALLANAN
CEO, Core

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Core social events in August 2021 where I finally got to meet Core employees after almost 18 months of Teams calls. A good night was had by all.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?

No one individual stands out but the whole industry does. The way technology has enabled companies to quickly move to a remote working model has enormously helped the economy and bodes well for a fast recovery.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?

Flexible working – leave people to get the job done in the most flexible way for them. We're calling this smart working, not remote working.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why?

Microsoft Inspire – it's always a fantastic event and a great opportunity to meet up with our partners and peers in Microsoft.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Play a musical instrument.

If you could go back in time and tell yourself as a child one thing, what would you say?

The same thing my dad told me: get a job aligned to your passions and you'll be happier than most people who have to work to live.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Fairytale Of New York by The Pogues.
Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, interesting, rewarding.

ANDREW CARR

General manager, professional services, Six Degrees

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? From a work perspective, my clear highlight has to be joining an amazing team at Six Degrees who continue to inspire me and deliver fantastic client outcomes. On a personal level, my youngest daughter smashed her GCSE results, and my eldest daughter successfully completed her first year at Liverpool University.



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?

It has to be Satya Nadella and his leadership at Microsoft. He has been instrumental to Microsoft leading the way on cloud adoption and managed detection and response, both of which Six Degrees has had many successes with.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I have two: Candy Crush, where I have reached level 3,598, and walking a lot.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? To be honest, just attending face-to-face meetings has been amazing. You can't replace the physical and social interaction of being together in person.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

I would learn to be a bitcoin miner. It would just be cool to say I can do that!
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Enjoy the years that Nottingham Forest were being successful, as it may be a long time returning!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I didn't even have to think: *Ice Ice Baby*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Inspiring, hopeful, fun.



MARC CHANG
CEO, Block

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? It has to be the involvement of our team in setting up several mass vaccination centres across the country. Taking part in something like that was very rewarding and enabled us all to get back some of the normality that we have all missed such a lot.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Mathew Gould, CEO of NHSX, who oversees digital policy and programmes in NHS England. The NHS response overall has been outstanding. Though sometimes the digital heroes can be forgotten and many have worked tirelessly helping support the NHS in this for more than 18 months now. The way in which NHSX has helped with the NHS App, AI lab and digital programmes such as Global Digital Exemplars and Digital Aspirants is really starting to help a key sector that is real need and fully deserving of funding and support.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I have become a running bore/enthusiast during lockdown and have really enjoyed running through all the seasons. After physically struggling with it at first, I stuck with it and now find it tremendously helpful for both my mental and physical health.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I don't go to many but always enjoy Cisco Partner Summit, which is coincidentally in Las Vegas. This year is more hybrid and within country but should provide an opportunity to catch up with industry friends.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would like to learn music production. I love music and would really like to make and produce in the future.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Do what makes you happy, not what you think others or society wants you to do. You only live once and there is no rehearsal.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Montell Jordan, *This Is How We Do It*. R&B gold that would certainly get people bouncing if I didn't completely kill it (not in a good way).

Sum 2021 up in three words. Wellbeing, NFTs, supply-chain.



ADAM CLARK
National sales director, SCC

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? It's been a tough couple of years for everyone. Surviving the pandemic and being

in the fortunate position to work for a company that has traded well, delivered critical services when and where they matter most, and gone above and beyond in support of others gives me a sense of pride that will live long in the memory.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Call me biased but the female leaders we have within SCC have impressed me most this year. We recently attended the *CRN* Women in Channel Awards and among all the finalists were four outstanding women from SCC, each entirely deserving of their nomination. I believe diversity will play a huge part in the future success of our industry and others, and it was wonderful to see so many role models and future IT leaders celebrating their achievements.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Hybrid working. It's an obvious one but I think the opportunities presented by the pandemic will significantly improve the way we do business. Now more than ever we're practicing what we preach and seeing the real-world benefits of blended working models.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The *CRN* Channel Awards are always memorable and a great opportunity to catch up with your industry peers.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Do I have to learn a new skill or perfect an existing one? I'd quite like to knock a few more strokes off my handicap!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Work hard, have fun, be happy.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? It would have to be *Sweet Caroline* after this past year.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Relentless, unpredictable, hopeful.



DEBORA COADY
Legal Director & General Counsel, Softcat

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? We've recruited three fantastic lawyers into my team during lockdown. Despite the challenges of starting a new job remotely, they've all settled in brilliantly and our team calls are one of the highlights of my working week.

2021 has also been a powerful reminder of how lucky I am to have some incredibly supportive friends in my life, at home and at work, and how important it is to make time for each other.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Jacqueline de Rojas, TechUK. We were very lucky to have Jacqueline as one of our keynote speakers at Softcat's all-company conference, Kick Off, this year. She is always an incredibly engaging and inspiring speaker and a fantastic advocate for the tech sector and the importance of getting children and young people excited about STEM opportunities.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Running with my son and our friends most weekends. We're not very fast and don't go very far but it gets the children off Minecraft and gets us all outside – and we're supporting a local

business with our hot chocolate/coffee stop at the end!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I've said before that lawyers typically don't get invited to events outside our own profession but hopefully someone will read this and take the hint!

It's a virtual event again this year but I am looking forward to the Women in Tech Festival – it's just such a positive and supportive atmosphere.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To be fluent in a second language – I learnt a bit of British Sign Language years ago and would love to learn that properly.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? You don't have to be good at everything – and no-one else expects you to be – so don't feel bad about the things you can't do and be proud of the things you are good at because they do actually matter and will stand you in good stead.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Bitch* by Meredith Brooks

Sum 2021 up in three words. Thought-provoking, infuriating, empowering.

DINO COOPER
CEO, Viadex

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Having returned to the UK after spending 15 years in Cape Town, having my wife and our boy settle into our new surroundings during a really challenging time has been great to see. The fact we managed to make the move during a global pandemic was in itself an achievement!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this



year, and why? Love him or hate him, Elon Musk. The drive to electric self-driving vehicles, the improvements and efficiencies being driven into space tech, solar city, battery technology and the way of the future is truly impressive. He is a maverick visionary, who has taken some huge risks and seems to be on top of his game.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? There are many! Making time for daily exercise, it's great for body and soul.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Having been away in South Africa for so long, I don't have a favourite that I managed to frequently attend over these past few years. I am easing into it when it comes to channel events; the *CRN* Rising Star dinner is something I am looking forward to.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to play the drums.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't ever give up on your dreams.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I couldn't stick to one! *Fly Me To The Moon* by Frank Sinatra.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Crazy, productive, exciting.

**PAUL CUBBAGE****MD, Target Components**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Making the move to an employee-owned business – exciting times ahead for our team and for the business.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? The real superstars in science and technology are those making genuine breakthroughs in areas like medical science, and the irony is that most of us never know their names.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Socialising at

home, particularly in the garden when the weather's nice or round a bonfire in winter. Business-wise, more flexible working is here to stay.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I can't wait to put on our own events again. Things are still too uncertain with Covid-19 to plan a full-blown open day, but hopefully we'll arrange some smaller events in the new year. It seems like ages since we've been able to catch up face-to-face with our customers.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'd like to learn to speak French. So far I can order more beer and ask where the toilets are, so I think I'm about half way there.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? My childhood self would undoubtedly ignore my adult self so it would be pointless.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

It depends on mood and intoxication. We had karaoke at our wedding reception (I know, classy) and drunken *Mustang Sally* went down a storm.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Changing the future.

D**MIKE DANSON****CEO, Natilik**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Re-connecting face-to-face with people in both my personal and professional life. Uplifting and euphoric!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Not one person, but I would say anyone involved in the technology required to create, manufacture, distribute and administer the Covid-19 vaccines. Apparently 6.5 billion doses have now been administered in 184 countries (as of 10 October 2021).

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Hybrid working – I really do think we all need to make sure we find a new balance moving forward. Just going back to what we all used to do would feel like a wasted opportunity to change, improve and re-wire the way we work.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I enjoy golf and this has been one fantastic way to keep meeting business contacts during the pandemic.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? It would be picking up my musical skills. I was invited to Chetham's school of music as a kid, but much preferred

playing sport, so haven't done much musically for years and years, but would love to pick those skills up again – maybe in retirement!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Stay true to the motto 'do to others as you would have done to you'.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I discovered an old classic recently with some good friends. Hall & Oates, *You Make My Dreams*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Better than 2020!

**ADAM DAVIDSON****Chief strategy officer, Cloud Distribution**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Seeing Cloud Distribution into the next phase of its growth, by becoming part of The Nuvias Group.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk.

He's reinvented the car and space industries. He's now tackling trains and he's going to fix the rural internet.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Being more selective about which meetings I attend has had a positive impact on my productivity.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? It's impossible to single out

one specific event – but I am looking forward to being in the same physical location as colleagues and partners, enjoying the industry buzz and there's always the beer, of course!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'd learn to play the guitar.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Go with your instinct and don't be afraid to say what you think. Oh, and buy bitcoin the moment it comes out!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Bon Jovi, *Living On A Prayer*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. A positive challenge.

**SCOTT DODDS****CEO, Ultima**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My son's wedding that finally happened after a 414-day delay.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Prof Sarah Gilbert, who designed the Oxford vaccine.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Keeping up the exercising – even just walking more.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards! And more of our own customer and partner events.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Playing an instrument well – probably the piano.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Make sure to take the time to enjoy the journey and remember we work to live, not live to work.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Sweet Caroline*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Optimistic, energised, thankful.

**PAUL DOVE****Director, UK Services Business Development**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? As with many people this year, I am sure beating Covid-19 comes high on the list. On a personal note, thankfully the vaccination programme got to me before the virus. I am hugely grateful to our doctors, nurses, and all of the volunteers who reduced the impact of Covid-19 for so many of us. Thank you, NHS.

From a work perspective, we are adapting to the new normal with flexible working, working with Podium Fitness 23 to deliver fitness classes and investing in subsidised gym membership among many other initiatives. A huge thanks to all at SCC

who have supported our customers and importantly each other through the pandemic.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? This year we said a sad farewell to Sir Clive Sinclair. A true luminary who was instrumental in introducing so many of us to the home computer. A serial inventor, some which were unsuccessful, however Sinclair undoubtedly laid the foundation of today's personal computer and gaming industry. Rest in peace, Sir Clive.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan not to keep going? Last year I cited Teams as the app I could not have been without. Teams will continue to have its place but as we adapt to the new normal I want face-to-face meetings with our teams and customers, real awards ceremonies and dare I say it, good old fashioned telephone calls!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Is the right answer the CRN Channel Awards in November? **If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?** I'd learn the piano. I had a few lessons when I was younger but didn't dedicate the time to practice. Now more than ever it's important to find that time, maybe by this time next year.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Decisions can only be made on the information you have at the time. Live without regrets. **If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?** Not many people will know I was in the choir when I was young. Since my voice broke most people appreciate me not singing, but if I had to I'd ask some colleagues to create Fake That and blast out *Pray!*

Sum 2021 up in three words. neat.spill.gentle.



CHRIS DUNNING
Founder, TechQuarters

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Finishing lockdown and flying out to Lisbon, then taking the train to Porto. First holiday in a year and a half!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk, because he might make some strange decisions or comments, but he delivers on what he says. His rocket was a great achievement and, in hindsight, his comments about bitcoin farming power were good for the environment – but kind of necessitated because of Tesla.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? It would have to be my kettle bell exercises that I began during lockdown. I bought a set of 10 and have continued with the habit of doing various stretches and exercises each day with them.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I am looking forward to the next big Microsoft event, like Future Decoded. I think without these type of events, it becomes harder to gain all the knowledge in the latest updates, which help you formulate product strategy. It's also key to network with peers and MS people, which in this ecosystem is paramount. **If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?** I've

recently realised that I had some time to learn something new and have started doing some meditation and yoga. I intend to continue with this and enjoy listening to the podcasts by SadhGuru.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Success is the journey, and the fun that you have along the way with your colleagues is what's important. Also, probably less running more cycling – I've got to look after those knees.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Ring of Fire*, Johnny Cash.
Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, educational, thoughtful.

E



SIMON ENGLAND
CEO, Nuvias

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Marrying (even if we had to keep the celebration small). **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** Rami Rahim, CEO at Juniper, for boldness to re-engage enterprise in a big way and the innovation focus to make it happen. **Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?** Having dinner at home several evenings during the week. **Which face-to-face industry**

event are you most excited to return to, and why? Canals EMEA Channel Forum. It is simply the best independent channel event of the year extremely well prepared and run.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Singing. I have several great musicians around me. One day...

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Be more generous to yourself – enjoy!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Hey Jude* (corny, I know, but I just love the crowd belting this one out, and I never remember all the lyrics of *Bohemian Rhapsody*).
Sum 2021 up in three words. Care, focus, boldness.

G



YOLANTA GILL
CEO, European Electronique

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Finally being able to travel! Visiting Iceland was definitely a highlight. Getting close to an erupting volcano, close enough to touch hot lava was amazing and, in contrast but just as impressive, a trip to the glacier ice caves. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** I think for the second year

running I will choose Elon Musk, although Jeff Bezos has certainly made his mark this year. There's certainly never a dull moment where Elon Musk is concerned! Although always controversial and outspoken, I do admire his drive and desire to always push the boundaries.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Workwise I never quite locked down, attending the office daily while enjoying the freedom of empty roads! I definitely will continue with yoga, which I took up but unfortunately my enthusiasm for home hair cutting is not shared by the wider family!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? If they do return, then the Aruba/HPE Global Partner Summit and Discover is always a great event to attend. There are always great opportunities to network and explore what is up and coming in the industry. **If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say?** Be bold and trust your own judgement. **If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?** I am tone deaf so this would be a very painful experience for those having to listen, but if forced I would probably sing *Don't Stop Me Now* by Queen.

Sum 2021 up in three words. A definite rollercoaster.

“ Probably snowboarding, although as a skier I have been known to curse them for ruining the slopes! I really feel I should give it a go, perhaps next year... ”
Yolanta Gill fancies learning a new skill on the slopes



GUY GOLAN
CEO, Performanta

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Our investment by Beech Tree and the acquisition of Identity Experts to help us in pioneering cyber safety. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** Our chief development officer, Brendan Kotze. There are many reasons for it:

- Started at very early stage in security
- Has great knowledge of the defence and offence world
- Highly creative
- Seriously challenging the way the cyber world operates
- Built an incredible technology
- Respected by many
- Servant leader

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Plan properly so I can spend more precious time with my family.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Cybertech in Israel. It has a great amount of innovation and thought leadership. There are many people I would enjoy meeting with. It's a great chance to eat hummus in my favourite restaurant. And of course, see my parents and the rest of the family.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Skateboarding!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing,

what would you say? Listen more. Talk less.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Tequila! by The Champs – most challenging.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Teams, cyber-safety, shorts.



ETIENNE GREEFF

CEO, Flow Communications

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Closing Flow's first acquisition and getting to know some super smart new colleagues, all the while discovering a lot about the quality of beer in Cardiff.

“ I was extremely impressed with the way that Sudhakar Ramakrishna handled the Solarwinds hack. Newly installed as Solarwinds CEO after being CEO at PulseSecure, he literally received a hospital pass. Sudhakar handled the whole issue with transparency and grace and Solarwinds emerged from the whole experience stronger. **”**

Etienne Greeff talks up his impressive tech figurehead

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? My lightning quick reflexes to mute my microphone when the dog barks, doorbell goes or even worse sounds intrude on my video conference.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The RSA information security show in San Francisco.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

I would love to learn Chinese or alternatively learn to understand Kubernetes. I think I will go for the easy one and learn Chinese.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Spend more time learning about people than machines.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

In the current climate it has to be *Don't Stand So Close To Me*. With bonus points due to the fact that some people say I still dress in that 80s style with accompanying haircut.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Expected predictable unpredictability.



TIM GRIFFIN

MD, DCC Technology

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I think the highlight was getting my wife to agree to have another dog!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this

year, and why? There are a few contenders, but Michael Dell stands out with his excellent new book, *Play Nice But Win: A CEO's Journey From Founder to Leader*.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Fasting is the one habit from lockdown I'll keep.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? That's easy: CES – the Consumer Electronics Show, the global tech industry's biggest event of the year.

The 'why' is easy: it's in Las Vegas! **If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?** I'd love to learn to play the piano.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Pragmatically I'd say buy stock in Amazon, Apple, etc...

But seriously, my advice for my younger self would be: trust your gut, aim higher and go faster.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *If I Can Dream* by Elvis Presley

Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, rewarding, promising.



RICHARD WYN GRIFFITHS
MD, Softcat

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Seeing our team come together to achieve through a whole financial year in the pandemic.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Reed Hastings (co-founder of Netflix). I've read a few books this

year on the Netflix story and culture, and he's quite inspiring as a leader.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Dropping my kids at school on a Tuesday morning. It's been really nice to be able to do that once a week, and it's now diarised and I work my week around it.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? CRN's two big award nights, of course! I've missed seeing people from our industry and celebrating great businesses and people from across our industry.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Playing the drums.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Keep communicating. It makes everything easier!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Elton John's *Don't Let the Sun Go Down On Me* – I'd need a George Michael though...

Sum 2021 up in three words. Ups and downs.



JUSTIN GRIFFITHS
UK MD, Infinigate

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I have two:

1. Professional is seeing the Infinigate team thrive and deliver outstanding results. Building great relationships and finally getting to see people face-to-face in and out of the office.

2. Personal is spending quality time with family and friends. The pandemic has certainly heightened my values in keeping well and connected.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Prof Sarah Gilbert. Need I say more?

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards but unfortunately, I cannot attend as I am on holiday. Enjoy the night everyone. Post lost of drunk pictures!

“ If I had time to learn one skill it would be to drive an HGV lorry. **”**
Justin Griffiths likes the idea of taking to the road

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Never be a politician.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *The Ace of Spades*, Motorhead.

Sum 2021 up in three words. It's coming home.

MUKESH GUPTA

Founder and CEO, e92plus

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Personally, Chelsea winning the Champions League again was amazing. In terms of business, getting back to something approaching normal with our office return, partner meetings and customer events.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Rather than just the industry leaders, the incredible digital transformation that has taken place in the last 18 months enabling



organisations to deliver radical change and stay in business has been down to those teams of engineers on the frontline who don't often get the credit they deserve.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Probably working from home! More seriously, walking without the golf clubs will be a good habit to continue with.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Our own e92plus CyberSocial events with our partner and vendor community – they've always been fantastic nights, and we're very much looking forward to them returning.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Spending more time improving my golf game.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Other than to invest in either property or Apple, then I'd talk about the importance of target setting and planning in the early stages of business.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? The last time I did karaoke properly was badly singing *Kung Fu Fighting*, so that's the reason I've not done it since! **Sum 2021 up in three words.** When is Christmas?



H



HOWARD HALL
CEO, DTP Group

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Doing my first in-person event – a Yorkshire Tech Round Table Dinner in July – when the keynote speaker, a local software business founder and CEO opened her keynote with the statement: “Is anyone else absolutely knackered or is it just me?” To which most of the other attendees, including me, had a big sigh of relief, as the consensus is that the whole IT sector leadership is exhausted after the last 18 months. A quick *CRN* poll is needed.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Antonio Neri, HPE CEO, as he continued to successfully execute the transformation of HPE

around the edge to cloud as a service strategy, which is so relevant in the new world we find ourselves in. Many originally thought “WTF?” when he gave his Vegas keynote to launch it three years ago, but HPE now finds itself 18 months ahead of its major legacy competitors on that aaS journey after the HPE early pivot.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? It’s a toss up between showering only once a day – it’s not an OCD issue, it is just I liked to shower in the morning before going to the office and again in the evening, but who goes to the office these days? – and the second conundrum, my not buying a daily cappuccino, as now as a self trained Barista I make my own.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Outside of DTP’s own annual DTP Inspire Kick Off event, it’s either HP’s or HPE’s Global Partner Conference – for obvious reasons it’s difficult to pick between the two as a HP/HPE-only reseller.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Outside of enhancing my Barista skills, I always watch the *Groundhog Day* movie with envy around Bill Murray learning to play the piano to expert level in a “single day”. I say that with irony as lockdowns 1, 2 and 3 felt like my own *Groundhog Day* sequels.

If you could go back in time and

tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Invent a business that involves making short entertaining movie clips recorded on a mobile telephone, and patent the company name TikTok. My childhood self would reply: “Mum, there is a looney in the house.”

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? It’s a close call between Foo Fighters *Times Like These*, and Paul McCartney’s *Blackbird* (I love the lyrics).

Sum 2021 up in three words. *Groundhog Day* Sequel.



MARK HALPIN
CEO, Cloud CoCo

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I think seeing all the wonderful acts of kindness of people in my personal life and how my colleagues across CloudCoCo have embraced change in the face of the pandemic.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I don’t get too caught up with the major tech company figureheads. Anyone who adapted technology to an issue and made someone’s life better by it always inspires me. I think the community of small tech lead creative businesses that have accelerated through one of the hardest business periods in our lifetimes need huge recognition and investment.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Well, I did stop smoking for six months during lockdown only to fall off that wagon when I led a £2.1m raise event for our get bigger initiatives when we had just recently acquired Systems assurance and Morecomputers.com.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? It’s not an industry event so much but the chance to go and meet interesting and innovative businesses with ambitions to adapt with technology now that many more have realised the power of utilising the cloud and especially ways in which to collaborate more effectively. I think meetings have potentially transformed as well to be in far more social settings and build on the knowledge of each other’s backgrounds and circumstances rather than just the old school of meeting room 5 at a certain time with sleep-inducing powerpoint slides.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? 100% speaking Spanish, playing the guitar or ignoring the request for “one for the road”.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Go and find the other people with a raging fire in their hearts and share any ideas no matter how good or bad those ideas are to start with.

If you had to sing karaoke, what

would be your song of choice?

The one I can sing when there are the fewest people in the room.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Family, health, Netflix.



JAMES HARDY
MD, CCS Media

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Personally, a family summer holiday. Something we took for granted in the past and very much cherished the return. Professionally, it would be hard to isolate one stand-out highlight. We have made real progress by turning up together, whether that be in person or digitally. As always, the best is yet to come!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I have been impressed by many of the technology leaders relevant to our business. All for contrasting reasons and therefore unable to single one out.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I have developed the habit of relentlessly questioning how I allocate my time, especially on travel. I used to think I was positively working hard when the reality was more inefficient, albeit with good intentions.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Canals EMEA! Canals is the most efficient event I have attended in terms of breadth and depth of content and multi-partner engagement. I like the 5km morning run too!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? My short game is terrible.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Just do it! It will work out.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Sweet Caroline*... good times never seemed so good.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Intentional, clear, balanced.



JUSTIN HARLING
CEO, CAE Technology Services

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Opening the new headquarters in Hemel Hempstead. Outside of the practical benefits of having more space, the project has been fantastically positive for the whole business as a statement of intent for our future and having somewhere we can proudly call home. Feeling the buzz of being back in an office environment definitely elevates the whole work experience.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I don’t expect to be impressed by figureheads when it is people of action who can have the most impact on the business. There is nothing a figurehead can do to alleviate an issue such as product shortage, but there are people throughout UK and EMEA channel manufacturer channel organisations that have worked incredibly hard to keep communicating and support

us – their dedication is what has been impressive.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Getting out and walking in the morning – if it doesn't happen now, I miss it.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I actually think I have Vegas withdrawal! Any event that would allow some time in a different setting would be really welcome (plus anything *CRN* gets back to putting on, of course).

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Flying a helicopter – I'm hoping to make that investment at some point.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Trust in the decisions you make – it is not what you decide but how you follow through on them that really matters.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Ring of Fire* by Johnny Cash, hopefully supported with some audience participation.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Purpose, people, passion.



GARY HAYCOCK-WEST
CEO and founder,
Blue Cube Security

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Just like many other business owners across the globe, I have had to navigate the business through some challenging times throughout the Covid-19

pandemic and setting it on a path that we are comfortable with. It has led to us being able to start a new era joining forces with Next Generation Security (NGS) and Epaton to form a new group called Blue Cube Solutions. On a personal level, moving to the Channel Islands has set me off on a new journey in life.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk, with his constant development in emerging technologies. We typically think of electric cars but it's just so much more than that. Tesla seems to be making its way into our homes with solar energy generation and storage too.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? My fitness. Having paced the streets of Royal Tunbridge Wells over the last 18 months of lockdowns through necessity, I will continue to keep that consistent fitness going now in the Channel Islands for health reasons.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? InfoSec. Having attended for 20-odd years and having the opportunity to meet lots of friends, colleagues and acquaintances, it will be good to press the flesh again.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Jujitsu. It's far more than just a contact sport; it gives strength to the mind and body along with agility. Having embarked on this when younger, I got distracted by the normal teenage antics and as a result I didn't keep it up, so it's something I would love to revisit.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Work harder at school like my parents told me to.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *My Way* by Frank Sinatra.

Sum up 2021 in three words. Having a ball.



JOE HEMANI
CEO, *Westcoast*

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I've remained Covid free!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? None.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Empathy.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Canals for being very informative.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Play the piano.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Be kind and understanding.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *My Way* by Frank Sinatra.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Lockdown, horrible, good.

CARL HENRIKSEN
CEO, *OryxAlign*

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Moving home, closer to family. It was a long time coming and it was a major move. Fingers crossed my highlight of 2022 will be having successfully completed extensive renovations... and survived!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? It's hard not to be



impressed by Elon Musk and his many extraordinary achievements, but this year the success of SpaceX has been remarkable. The space race is well and truly back on and my money may be on the non-state actors.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I didn't pick up any specific new habits in lockdown, but the biggest change, possibly habit, was of course working from home. I do strongly believe the office is where the magic happens and is essential for building culture, but working from home for 1-2 days a week brings a good balance and richness to life.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Probably the *CRN* Channel Awards, which is always a cracking night and well-run event. Celebrating achievement across our industry and meeting new people at the same time makes for a great night out.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I've always been interested in the creative world of design. Everything from graphic to interiors, to exteriors and architecture. Having the technical skills to create and make things stand out from the norm – be it a sales proposal, a slide deck, a kitchen or an entire home – appeals. I know what looks good; it's the technical ability to create it I'd like to learn.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Nobody ever made history or achieved great things

by playing it safe. Be bold, be brave and work your hardest.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Mmmm... probably something by Neil Diamond or Cher. Let's go with *Forever In Blue Jeans*, but *If I Could Turn Back Time* is a close second!

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Turbulent, disordered, transformational.



MARTIN HESS
CEO, *Telefonica Tech UK&I*

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Selling the company, getting a great price and finding a great future home for the business.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? This is a hard one for me. There are a number of leaders within the tech industry who I admire – Mike Norris of Computacenter and the Rigbys at SCC – but I haven't been impressed with how many tech leaders have furloughed their staff over the past year or so. I felt they were too quick to do this – some organisations furloughed a third of their technical staff. We were determined that this was something we'd only do as a last resort, and thankfully things played out in a way that we didn't have to furlough anyone. And I think events have proved furloughing staff was an overaction.

Which one lockdown habit do

you plan to keep going? Watching TV and film classics and box sets that I missed first time around. My stand outs are *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul* and *The Godfather*.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Our Internal Kick Off. It's not an industry event, but it is a massively important event in my company's year, and one we missed holding in 2021. I love launching the year with a Kick Off – you can't beat getting everyone together, having a rah-rah event and giving out awards. We're planning our Kick Off for next January 2022.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'd learn to sing. I love being on stage, I love the performance, but I can't sing for toffee.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Learn to play a musical instrument because you can play it all the way through your life and have a lot of fun doing it. I gave it a go to learn the saxophone in my 30s, I got up to a mediocre standard, performed *Killing Me Softly* in a church hall and then dropped it because I ran out of time.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Mac The Knife*. With my bad voice I can get away with that one.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Frustrating.

JENNY HICKS
Group head of technology,
Midwich Group

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My professional highlight for 2021 has been the success of Midwich Live, our AV talk show hosted by myself and my stateside colleague Chris. There are real nerves and excitement for every show and the feedback, interest and



views we have received are humbling. However, my personal highlight for 2021 was watching phonic blending sink in for my five-year-old son, who is now reading fluently.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? For me this year it is Eric Yuan. In 2020, Zoom saw phenomenal success with what they already had, but through 2021 the development of the Zoom video platform to meet the demands of a hybrid workforce and smoothly transition us from home to office has been exceptional.

“ I'll be keeping my comfy feet! I work in smart dress from home but beneath the desk are either squishy crocs or fluffy slippers. I'm not ready to rock the crocs in the office just yet but I will be kicking my shoes off whenever seated. **”**

Jenny Hicks on which lockdown habit she'll be keeping

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? 2022 Infocomm in Las Vegas. While I am excited for ISE in Barcelona, it will be a new venue and the first industry event potentially back to big attendee numbers so

there's a lot of pressure on the event to deliver value, feel safe and find its feet at a new location. Infocomm will give the industry the familiarity it needs to feel firmly on the return to normal journey (plus it's Vegas!).

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Definitely another language, perhaps Mandarin.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? As impossible as it seems, spiders will not scare you in your 30s!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

The Beatles, *Hey Jude*. No matter how bad it was you know everyone would join in at the end.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Restricted, returning, rewarding.

GUY HOCKING MD, Utilise

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Many highlights, many challenges. But watching my children play sport again for the first time in nearly two years has been one of the huge highlights. I believe sport helps develop strong social bonds, helps create safer and stronger communities. The people who live in them are also generally happier and healthier; I see that in my own children. Its impact has been underlined by its absence and has made me even more passionate than ever to support it in whatever way I am able.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I think there are a handful of people that spring to mind that are specific to the past year or so. Most notably Sarah Wilkinson, who has the unenviable task of running NHS Digital and the delivery of its technology strategy during a time of immense pressure, public focus



and budget constraints. A job not for the faint hearted. Given the limited time they had to pivot, the UK is still streets ahead of a lot of countries.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Ocado! Online supermarket shopping is here to stay!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Getting back to face-to-face meetings this year has been brilliant. Whether that's with the team, clients or vendors – the energy and productivity in those meetings have been brilliant. The watercooler conversations, the fluidity and the multiple simultaneous participants during our conversations has been a breath of fresh air. So frankly any of the “usual” events will feel brilliant.

Personally, I am looking forward to more face-to-face Trust X Alliance meetings. Sharing best practice and experiences with other like-minded tech businesses has been invaluable during the past couple years; imagine the learnings now we can get back in a room together!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

More languages. Communicating with the rest of the world is so important and I'm always envious when I see people switching seamlessly from one language to another. To learn Italian, French or maybe even Chinese! You never know when that might come in useful.

If you could go back in time and

tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Take the time to think about who you want to be and the values that are important to you, and that you want to live by. Write them down and try to live by them. Use them as your North Star and don't be too hard on yourself if you wonder off the road.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? It's definitely not my thing. But maybe, just maybe, you might find me singing *Sweet Caroline* after a mighty Villa (or England) win!

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Resilience, persistence, opportunity.



CLAIRE HOPKINS Founding director, Ideal

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Hands down my highlight of 2021 has been taking part in the Equinox Skinny Dip organised by @vitaminseaswimming to raise money for Mind. Meeting 17 other women on the beach at 6am and swimming naked under the full harvest moon as the sun rose was magical and something I will remember forever.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Soma Sara who founded Everyone's Invited and has used tech to create a safe platform for survivors of sexual abuse in schools and universities to share their stories anonymously. Since 8 March 2021, more than 54,000 anonymous testimonies have been submitted

and shared on Everyone's Invited, which has forced conversations and institutional action to challenge rape culture and sexual harassment.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Online yoga.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Back in February this year, Yvonne Matzk had the brilliant idea of creating The Channel Community to connect people working in the IT channel who want to help support individuals reach their full potential through mentoring. We have spent most of 2021 meeting online to set up this community which now has 153 members, connecting mentees with mentors. Getting together in real-life last month was exciting and gave us an opportunity to celebrate what the community has become.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Piano.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Being right is over-rated. Listen and learn instead.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Jolene by Dolly Parton.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Just keep swimming.



MARY HUNTER Microsoft business group business applications lead for Europe, Accenture

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Swimming with dolphins with my children and husband.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Gavriella Schuster. She left her 25-year Microsoft corporate leader role to follow her passion to make a difference for a more diverse and inclusive technology sector.

#agentofchange

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Buying more robots to do more household chores.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Microsoft Inspire.

Networking with so many amazing technology leaders and I always make some cool new acquaintances too.

Within this event I love the women in tech luncheon and inspiring speakers sessions. It's the full package!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Play the piano.

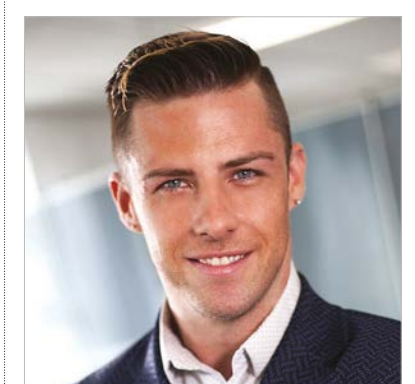
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Mindset

is everything... dream it, believe it, achieve it.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Sweet Caroline by Neil Diamond.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Emotional, rollercoaster, growth.



DONOVAN HUTCHINSON MD, SHI Corporation

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My personal highlight was joining SHI as a



company but also finally getting my new horse after giving up horse riding several years ago even though it did result in me breaking my back this year. Lessons learned, it has allowed me to focus and start my journey to adopting a better work life balance while realising we all have challenges that come our way. It's important to get back on the horse and keep going. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** Elon Musk continues to excel and has a great mind to continue to innovate and set very high goals despite some of the media backlash. **Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?** I think the one thing that I have enjoyed doing most during lockdown is making a full Sunday roast with all the trimmings for the family every week and sitting down with my loved ones with no distraction of technology and just enjoying the moment. It's something I will continue to do no matter what. **Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why?** It goes without saying, the CRN events are a great forum to meet and connect with peers across the channel and I for one am excited to return to those events specifically. The Women In Channel Awards is my favourite event of the year. **If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?**

I would have to say this would be forcing myself to switch off. Having a passion for my work does come at its costs. Being able to switch off completely is a skill I am trying to adopt more. **If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say?** I wouldn't want to change anything. I'm a firm believer everything happens for a reason and that life lessons allow you to navigate down the right path eventually. If I had the opportunity to tell my childhood self something it would be: "Never give up, Keep going down the path that feels right for you. Mistakes will be made but things will work out no matter what." **If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?** *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*, Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell. **Sum 2021 up in three words.** Resilience, discipline, growth.

J

GRAHAM JONES
Regional director UK&I, Exclusive Networks

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? A truly selfish one was getting back on the golf course. Getting four to five hours of exercise in the fresh air had been missed. This has been helped by the



slow lifting of restrictions which has meant more business golf, and more quality time spent on the course with our vendors and channel partners. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** No one specific. I see a lot of new technology companies knocking at our door but still, no one killer application. In our business there is a lot of technology innovation so picking the winners and building out sales momentum and go-to-market propositions is key. So, my vote goes to our tech team, who despite everything, kept their focus throughout very trying times. **Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?** Virtual meetings, especially when you consider how much "dead time" is spent travelling to and from physical meetings. Human, face-to-face interaction is still hugely important,

but we really should not lose the habit of virtual meetings where it makes sense. Also, with a lot of the team working from home, making sure we do video calls and not phone calls when we can. It needs to be a balance of course but we'll continue with more video than we did before for sure. **Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why?** One event that I'm really looking forward to is the return of our five-a-side charity football competition early next year. It simply cannot be beaten. Teams from vendors and channel partners playing five-a-side for charity will be a great day again. We might even invite competitors this year too! On the flip side, I don't see the appeal for F2F shows any more; I think Covid-19 has damaged these for good.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'm still trying to get to grips with the piano. It needs time and dedication but despite a) having an electric piano and b) having a lot of spare time at home over the last 18 months, I've managed no improvement at all. It's something I want to do, so will add it to my 2022 list.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Enjoy the day a bit more and slow down. Now in the 'Autumn' of my life, I try to enjoy each day as it comes. But when you're young there seems to be a rush to do everything as quick as you can. Also, maybe try to stay in one job a bit longer. Exclusive is now my longest tenure at more than nine years but again, when you're younger you feel that the grass is always a bit greener elsewhere.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Hey Jude*. It takes me back to my roots and nearly everyone knows bits of it! **Sum 2021 up in three words.** Time to rebuild.

K



KELVIN KIRBY
CEO, Technical Associates

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I was able to initiate an exit from two companies I invested in several years ago. Both are in cloud services and lockdown saw a massive increase in demand for remote and cloud services so both companies were sold to much bigger organisations that were interested in acquiring their unique IP as well as their customer base.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? That's a tough one, only because I have been impressed by so many in the last 12 months. Elon Musk is high in my list, only because he has advanced technology in so many different areas. Like him or hate him, you can't argue with his ability to innovate and challenge the norms in technology.

Richard Branson continues to impress, of course – I just love his

leadership style. There are many others, most of whom I suspect won't be known to your readers (at least not yet!). But there are some technology leaders that impressed initially but have failed to do so in the last 12 months – that might be a more interesting list!

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?

Lockdown has made our customers super aware that travel to site is not always necessary. As a review of company policy we only travel to site now where it's absolutely necessary. This 'habit' has now become policy. We worked out that we will save a staggering 380 hours of travel time per week across our team, which means we can be more productive *and* it means a significant reduction of our carbon footprint as well as vehicle and fuel expenses.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? For me, it would most likely be Microsoft Inspire. I haven't attended (for various reasons) in the last four years – the last two due to Covid-19 – but I miss the buzz and seeing the friends I've made from all over the world. I will be looking forward to next July!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Actually I have just started to learn to play the saxophone! (Like I needed the challenge of playing one of the most complicated instruments on the planet!)

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Believe in yourself and never give up!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Hmm, that would be decided by the song I'd like to sing (*Welcome To The Jungle*) and the one I possibly could sing (*Stairway To Heaven*).

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Introspective, opportunistic, rewarding.

L



JONATHAN LASSMAN

MD, Epaton

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? In my personal life, it is guiding my daughter through her first steps as a recording artist – watch this space. In work, it is still managing to grow our customer family – we have added more than 40 new customers so far with a quarter to go.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? To be honest I am actually underwhelmed this year. There has not been anything that has stood out as impressive, very little innovation at all and everything just seems to be more of the same.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Online poker – I love it.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I hope that Infosec is the catalyst for big shows again. We need them.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to ride a motorcycle but only with a guarantee of never falling off or getting hurt.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Buy as much property as humanly possible in the 80s and 90s.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Down to Earth by Curiosity Killed the Cat. It is my go-to...

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Back on track.



AMANDA LEE

Senior vice president, Global Communications, Pax8

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? In 2021, I am personally proud of my two boys, our incredible bond, and the challenges we overcame together. In the past 12 months, my nine-year-old son suffered some mental health challenges.

Through hard work and new learnings, he has come out stronger and happier. This year, he made the gifted and talented group, was awarded a spot on the mathematics team, and thrived in sports.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Leaders who continuously innovate and who welcome disruption are an inspiration. That is why I select Satya Nadella, CEO at Microsoft. Even though he is one of the most powerful CEOs globally, he continues to learn and shares his experiences with the world. He is also incredibly talented at providing clarity even

through the unknown, which was critical in the last 24 months.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Like many in the world, I bought a Peloton bike during lockdown. Even though the world is opening, I am grateful for the opportunity to continue connecting with others through exercise.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? This week, I am attending the CRN Women in Channel Awards event in London. I have been looking forward to this event for months.

The event recognises and celebrates women in tech, which is an incredible inspiration and something I am very proud to be a part of.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Each year I strive to learn a new skill. Most recently, I have been learning to code, and it has been firing up my imagination. Just like learning any new language, it has been interesting and exciting.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? As a child, I was always in a hurry to be the best at everything. I would tell my childhood self to take more adventures and enjoy the journey.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? ABBA's *Dancing Queen*, or anything to get the crowd singing along.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Focus, create, empower.

PAUL LLOYD

Owner, Sellerly

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My daughter getting married, postponed from the year 2020. Now all the children are married, all have their own homes and all three have a child each. My work here is done, and we move to the next chapter.



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?

Kerry Burns. He owns a small MSP/Microsoft consultancy in Stafford. Over the last 18 months he has grown his business profits more than 100% and has doubled his team from 40 to more than 80 people. As a small business, he has paid back a substantial amount of the government furlough money and also at the beginning of the pandemic extended the credit terms with his clients to help them keep moving forward.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? The plan was to keep walking the dog every morning for 2-3 miles. This has already passed me by. It also seems like all my clothes have shrunk.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I did not appreciate how important to me the various events were, and therefore missed all of them. But I have started to get back to it. The big one is the award evening in November which should be a good night as there wasn't one last year.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I did a woodturning course during lockdown and have promised myself that I will by a wood lathe and make bowls and apples.

I am going to learn to play the piano once people are comfortable to come to the house.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Beware of adults bearing gifts. Networking and networks are your most valuable asset and activity.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

My Way by Frank Sinatra.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Where did it go!



ALEX LOUTH

MD, Logicials

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? 2021 has been an emotional year. One son has gone to university, another to college and the youngest to high school. Watching them develop into good, nice, funny, thoughtful and hardworking people is fantastic and sometimes watching their highlights is as good as my own.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk. Even with the global pandemic, Elon has driven his business to new heights. Space X has continued to amaze, and Tesla is now viewed as a normal car rather than something different. He is a unique character with a wealth of more than \$222bn with \$52bn from the last year.

Now that's impressive even if he is not your cup of tea!

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? To keep some of the weekday family meals going. After years of only really eating together as a family at the weekend, lockdown provided a structure that allowed us to do it more often. I hope to keep it going!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Tough question!

There are so many! I'm really looking forward to the Cisco Partner Summit in 2022 (yes, another 12 months away). I have been in the Cisco world for three years now and I'm hungry to learn more! Their pivot into the new services world is impressive and definitely an opportunity for partners like Logicials.

The Partner Summit is a great way to learn more, engage better and drive our Cisco vision for tomorrow. Collaborating about the future is so much better in person, and it's in Vegas! (That had nothing to do with the shout out; they're all in Vegas or somewhere just as cool).

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Easy, a language. I was so lazy when I was at school with learning languages. I have asked my children to take languages seriously and learn from me. The youngest has just started Spanish in addition to French. *Mira este espacio.*

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Not to be lazy with languages.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Well, based on the 'if you have to', it would probably be *I Want It That Way* by the Backstreet Boys or *World In Motion* by New Order. And the England football team chant; come on, we all love the rap!

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Recovery, energised, transforming.



SHAUN LYNN
CEO, Agilitas

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Spending more time with friends and family.
Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Eden Full – she is the inventor of the SunSaluter, a low-cost, low-tech mechanism that optimises solar panels while providing clean water for rural, off-grid communities in the developing world (www.sunsaluter.org).
Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Golf.
Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The industry event we co-host with CRN as this always looks to discuss and debate the future trends and topics on channel leaders' minds.
If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Brewer – as I would love to run my own micro-brewery.
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Is it progress?
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Billy Ocean, *Red Light Spells Danger*.
Sum 2021 up in three words. Perpetual, reflective, opportunist.

M



IOAN MACRAE
CEO, Maintel

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? The continued transition of the business and with my team helping the Maintel business continue to grow revenues, expand our portfolio, solutions and services, despite the economic backdrop and post-pandemic effects.
How the Maintel team came through 2020, not only as a unified and determined team, but safely! As such, we have seen this team continue its unified approach through 2021.
The Maintel team winning some major customer contracts, especially on the new portfolio around Security, SD-Wan and public cloud offerings on UCaaS and CCaaS.
Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Satya Nadella for his transformation and vision at Microsoft, which has proven very successful over the past 18 months. I also continue to admire Elon Musk through his early vision on electric cars, to his wider ambitions on sustainability and environmental wellbeing.
Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Checking in on my team. It's been a long and hard 18 months, and I want to

continue with our efforts on team wellbeing and, as such, ensure I take the time to speak to my team and 'check in,' rather than always speaking about day-to-day business.
Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I have no one particular event, but rather meeting with wider industry colleagues and friends through social events, face-to-face meetings, events, and so on... it's time for normality to return.
If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To speak a foreign language.
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't try to do everything yourself. As I have matured and taken on more senior roles, I have appreciated the value of working as a team. The collective thoughts, the mix of skills and experiences, will always ensure you collectively make the right decision, believe in that decision and work through to the desired outcome.
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I have a terrible voice, so would sing *Sweet Caroline* in the hope the audience all joined in and masked my appalling singing!
Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, hopeful, rewarding.

YVONNE MATZK

Founder, Coachere; Co-founder, The Channel Community
What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Creating and launching The Channel Community along with other industry friends. The Channel Community was created to bring together like-minded people across the IT channel to provide free mentoring to the next generation of talent and a platform where people can network, connect, and share industry-specific challenges.



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Paul Shannon at ANS. Paul has worked so hard over the last few years to bring his vision for ANS to life. From burning boats to the MBO, he has worked tirelessly for both ANS and his team to take them on the next phase of their journey.
Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Long walks or runs in Epping Forest. I have appreciated what was on my doorstep and permanently took it for granted before lockdown.
Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Women of the Channel Awards because I am a judge and get to hang out with some of the industry's most inspirational women (and men, of course).
If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To speak and write fluent Spanish.
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't try and be something or someone you are not; stay authentic and proud of yourself.
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Gloria Gaynor's *I Will Survive*.
Sum 2021 up in three words. A thrilling rollercoaster.



ROB MAY
MD, Ramsac

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? The growth, demand and innovation that Ramsac has delivered right the way through the Covid-19 pandemic.
Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk, why? Because he's Elon Musk.
Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Writing with a pen and paper; I never did that before lockdown!
Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Canalsys. It was still a good event virtually but having a contained audience and an overseas venue with sunshine makes a real difference.
If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'd learn how to play the piano.
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Invest in Microsoft, work harder at school and save a small part of every pay cheque you ever receive.
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? The Monkees, *Daydream Believer*, every time!
Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenge, success, growth.



JOHN MAYNARD
CEO, Adarma

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Taking the role of CEO of a fast-growing cybersecurity company with 300 people and doing it all remotely. It's been incredibly challenging but extremely rewarding, especially as we begin to work and meet face-to-face and spend quality time with each other. That and finally completing my three-year house renovation!
Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? This would have to be the CEO of Microsoft, Satya Nadella. He represents a clear vision, purpose and mission and responsibility for the position Microsoft has in its community and the world. The turnaround at Microsoft has been nothing short of inspiring.
Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I bought a road bike just before lockdown. Fortunate as it's impossible to find one now, but I have really enjoyed getting on the bike, in the fresh air and just spending a few hours with my thoughts (or with a friend or two). It's amazing what fresh air, nature and a true break does for creativity and drive. I didn't picture myself as a lycra-clad cyclist, but I love it!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? This would have to be the RSA Conference in San Francisco.

I have a love-hate relationship with it now given its size but it is invaluable for reconnecting with people in the cybersecurity industry. Plus that was my last conference two years ago!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I gave up playing piano as a child in favour of football. I still love my football (more watching now!), but I marvel at natural pianists and the beauty and art of it all. With four young kids at home, I just struggle for time (and long for quiet!).

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? This has to be “don’t overthink it”. It’s an overused saying, “what will be, will be”, but try your best, make a plan (but be happy to deviate), say yes to opportunity and success will find you.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

I love country music from my time living in the US, so anything from Zac Brown Band. Or Luke Bryan! Go and check out *Chicken Fried*!

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Back. To. Life.

PAM MAYNARD

CEO, Avanade

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Hands down, it was welcoming the 50,000th member of our Avanade family in September. It was such a symbolic moment for us in a year that brought so many historic milestones. Looking back on the year, I am so inspired by our people and how they rallied during a challenging time to put our clients first. I’m also really proud of the work we did to strengthen our people-first culture, whether that was launching our Employee Value Proposition or



launching new ways of working that empower our professionals to choose alternative work schedules that fit their lives.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I am truly inspired by Microsoft US chief digital officer Jacky Wright. It was such an honour and privilege to accompany her earlier this month as she received her award for topping the Black Excellence PowerList for 2022, which recognises the UK’s most powerful people of African, African-Caribbean and African American heritage.

As one of the few Black female leaders in the technology industry, I know how important it is to have role models that look like you. As a London-born Black female leader, Jacky’s call for ‘monumental shifts’ to ensure that Britain is a more equal place is just one of the ways she is paving the way to build a brighter future where we are all encouraged to bring our diverse perspectives, experiences and backgrounds to our workplaces and communities.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? We’ve been focusing a lot at Avanade on cultivating our growth mindsets – and learning new things is such an important element of that. Since I’m a music lover, learning how to play

guitar is definitely on my bucket list. **Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?** I made it a priority during the lockdown to get outside everyday and take a walk. The fresh air helped to clear my head and was such an effective way to organise my day that I have made it a daily practice!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I’ve always enjoyed Fortune’s Most Powerful Women event – it’s incredible to be in the presence of so many women who have made a genuine human impact with the work they do. It’s so important for women professionals to see others making a difference in their workplaces and communities – I always come away from this event inspired and energised by the conversations I’ve had with other female business leaders and their stories of perseverance and resilience. **If you could go back and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say?** It’s a piece of advice that I give to other young women professionals all the time: just walk through the doors that present themselves – and don’t be afraid to pry open the ones that you feel are closed to you. I wouldn’t have achieved the successes I have in my own career if I hadn’t had the courage

to just walk through the doors that opened to me time and again.

One of my mentors once told me: “The success of your career will be down to you and no one else.” It’s a piece of advice that I took to heart early on in my career and gave me the confidence to get me to where I am today.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would your song be of choice?

My most memorable karaoke experience was when I was visiting the Avanade team in Japan. Karaoke bars are such a big part of the culture there, but I was reluctant to go. The area president there at the time, an Italian woman named Anna Di Silverio (who is now area president of Europe) insisted that this was one of the best ways to get to know the team (and vice versa). She and I ended up belting out a rendition of Gloria Gaynor’s *I Will Survive* and had such a blast.

I haven’t laughed so much in a long time – so that song would be my pick!

Sum up 2021 in three words. So many words come to mind, but I’d sum it up this way: Enlightening, exhausting and empowering.

Enlightening: The pandemic shone a spotlight on many social, racial and economic injustices in the world, and that brought about some very honest discussions at Avanade about the role we wanted to play in helping to leave the world better than we found it. We focused on three key areas: continuing to accelerate our efforts around inclusion and diversity; clarifying and fortifying our commitments and goals as a responsible business; and being clear how and where we want to make a difference in our communities and in the world.

Exhausting: It wouldn’t be honest

if I said this past year hasn’t been overwhelming and stressful – and I know so many are feeling the same. The blurred line between home and work life, added responsibilities brought about by the pandemic, and the weight of global and social issues on my heart and mind can take a toll. It’s also been a reminder of how important it is to focus on mental and physical wellbeing. As a business leader of a global organisation, I have made it my mission to make sure that our people are cared for in ways they value and have the support from Avanade to make their health and wellbeing their first priority.

Empowering: All the lessons of this past year have taught me one thing: we can do anything we set out to achieve. In the face of so much adversity, we came together to do some amazing things for our clients, whether it was to help the NHS and

The Felix Project use technology to adapt to the new world we were living or support SSE Renewables’ focus on sustainability.

But our people didn’t stop there! While they were simultaneously juggling their own personal and professional responsibilities and adapting to entirely new ways of working, so many donated time and energy to support the causes they were passionate about – and they took the time to be there for one another through virtual happy hours, mentoring and beyond.

Yes, the pandemic has brought with it so much tragedy and suffering – but it has also brought out the best in us. Witnessing the resilience of our people has been so inspiring, and it’s why I am so hopeful and optimistic about the future.



JAY MCBAIN
Principal analyst, channels, partnerships and ecosystems, Forrester

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? 2021 has been a continuation of a year like no other. Just when normalcy seemed to be returning, we were hit with a global Delta variant that shut things down again. The channel continues to persevere in these difficult circumstances and is leading its clients into the future of work – with increased automation, cloud acceleration, security and new business models.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I have been impressed with Satya Nadella at Microsoft. Not only surpassing the \$2 trillion mark in valuation, but keeping the channel front and centre as he imagines unlocking trillions of dollars of value for partners.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I had to stop playing hockey for the first time in 45 years, so I took up cycling which was good exercise and socially distanced. Each week I would ride 80km up and down the coast of Florida. I came up with a goal to ride from Miami to Toronto, Canada (virtually). Once I made it there, I turned west and headed to Vancouver. I am now (virtually) on my way home and just passed 5,000km!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? One of the larger conferences in the US is called Channel Partners and they awarded me Channel Influencer of the Year for 2021. I am looking forward to being there in person to collect the award!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to learn music. With four kids and a busy personal and professional calendar, there just isn't the 10,000 hours to make this a reality.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Probably to bet it all on Bitcoin in 2013. Seriously, I would remind myself to not take life too seriously and it is amazing how things unfold.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Bright on 2022!



ORLA MCGRATH
Global partner solutions lead,
Microsoft UK
What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Like so many of us, the pandemic has resulted in separation from extended family

and friends. In September, I had the opportunity to travel to Ireland, to spend time with my parents for the first time since Christmas 2019. We spent time on the southwest coast, visiting much loved places in West Cork and Kerry. Seeing them happy and healthy after so long and knowing it would not be long before we would see each other again, was a wonderful highlight.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? 2021 has been an immensely challenging year for so many organisations and industries, and perhaps none so much as health services. The UK in particular has done an impressive job of digitising the NHS and an individual at the heart of this, Tara Donnelly, is someone I have been very impressed with. The work she is performing as NHSX chief digital officer (CDO) has been instrumental in keeping the clinical staff workload at manageable levels, especially through the introduction of office 365 at the heart of the pandemic. Her work in 2021 on the "elective recovery tech fund" will promote tech solutions enabling remote recovery with virtual wards, pre-surgical digital support and use of robotic process automation to reduce the administrative burden on staff. I truly wish her and her team every success in this digital transformation programme.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? When I stopped commuting, I made sure to still get up and out every morning, running or walking. I am a morning exerciser – not an evening one. I intend to keep that up, even if it means pounding the streets in the pitch dark.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Microsoft Inspire is our annual global partner event. It's a fantastic moment for our partner

ecosystem to come together, celebrate and reflect on all our achievements and I'm excited for the day when we can come together in person.

Inspire gives us the opportunity to see how our partners are empowering customers to build more transformative, agile and resilient organisations with Microsoft technology. From equipping organisations with the collaboration tools they need to drive growth, to supporting them in migrating operations to the cloud, I'm in awe of what our partners achieve every year and we work hard to support them in their individual journeys, ensuring we can all succeed together.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To speak French or Spanish fluently. The former I have a good background in already, having lived in France early in my career, but I have gone rusty unfortunately.

By the end of 2021 I will decide which to take on. And then I just need to find the time too!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? There are so many things I have learned over the years that would have been great to know as a child. However, it is also very important to have learned so many of them myself. If I had been told that the tech industry was so exciting, I probably would have told myself to do a technology-related course at university and not civil engineering. Saying that, I do still enjoy looking at a modern road bridge and having a really good appreciation of how it was constructed. In some ways, it's much more challenging than tech.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I doubt anyone could ever convince me to sing karaoke, but if forced, maybe Oasis – *Don't Look Back In Anger*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Freedom, new beginnings, optimism.



TODD MCQUILKIN
Non-executive director,
board member, Air IT
What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Spending the last 12 months as a NED on the Air IT board. Having heard horror stories from previous business owners on their experiences working with PE, I must admit I was a little apprehensive on what may lay ahead. However, I have been pleasantly surprised how it has panned out and have enjoyed every interaction I have had with the board. I have learnt so much from a very experienced team. It also cemented my belief that we chose the right PE (August Equity) to work with. Long may it continue!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? James Healey, our COO. He continues to impress me on how he has dealt with the new challenge of having PE involved in Air IT. Even under immense pressure, he always finds a way to deal with the challenges that he is confronted with.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Treasuring my free time and spending it with my eight-year-old son. First time round I missed so much of my kids growing up and the same may have happened again if lockdowns were not around. I have enjoyed every minute of time I have had with him – well, most of the time.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to,

and why? ConnectWise's US event IT Nation in Orlando in November. I'll meet old friends and make new ones; the sessions in thought leadership and seeing all the vendors with exciting new products. Then of course there is the social scene which is quite simply the best – they know how to put a show on!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? The saxophone – I get asked this question a lot and the answer is always the same – the sax is so cool!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? You never know when you will find your purpose in your life. Just be loyal, be patient and keep your feet on the ground. It doesn't matter if you don't find what makes you happy when you are younger, and all good things come to those who wait. The harder you work the luckier you get and only take calculated risks in life. You will make mistakes but doesn't mean you will fail. If you learn from your mistakes, you won't fail!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Men at Work's *Down Under* – a great singalong song and not one most would pick!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Refreshing, challenging, transformational.

GARETH MEYER
Commercial & operations
director, Ultima
What has been your personal highlight of 2021? It has to be the day Ultima launched our own software products. It was an amazing feeling and one I will never forget. On a personal note, my eldest daughter competing at a global level while representing GB and ranking 7th at the world championships for modern pentathlon.



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Satya Nadella has to be one of the most recognised tech leaders of all time. I admire what he has achieved over the past seven years, managing to create a customer demand that continues to curve the industry into what we all know today.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I have to say I don't miss being stuck in traffic! Continuing to work remotely a couple of days a week has given me more time to spend with the family and doing things that previously wouldn't be possible with being on the go all the time.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards; it just wasn't the same last year. Everyone secretly likes to get into their finest outfits, enjoy the evening among peers/friends in the industry and of course celebrate another successful year gone.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to have the time to learn another language.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Technology is not just for nerds!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Me? Karaoke? You must be joking! I know my talents and that is not one but if I absolutely had to it would be

Sweet Caroline by Neil Diamond. My mom and I would sing this all the time. **Sum 2021 up in three words.** We're still here!



HAYLEY MOONEY

General manager, Crayon UK

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Without a doubt, my promotion to general manager of Crayon UK was probably the one that springs to mind. I'm so proud to have been given the opportunity to lead the UK team and forge our focus for the future. Through optimisation, we can deliver innovation and drive sustainability for our customers, all underpinned by our fundamental belief that the power of technology can deliver the greater good.

If you had asked me 20 years ago in the early days of my burgeoning career that as a female, I would be promoted to GM of one of the most exciting and innovative IT services companies in the UK by the time I was 40, I may not have believed you, but that may be why I love this industry so much, for the opportunities that it presents no matter who you are.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Our new global CEO Melissa Mulholland took the helm of Crayon Group earlier this year following 12 years at Microsoft. Since joining Crayon, she has been a

beacon of inspiration to myself and the wider Crayon family, championing that our fundamental values serve as the foundation for future growth and success of Crayon worldwide.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I think the lockdown gave so many of us an opportunity to evaluate our work-life balance and to actually do something about it. By regaining the hours ordinarily wasted sitting in traffic on the M25, we can now put them to good use and I am looking after my personal health for the first time in years. I am running and exercising on a daily basis and loving it!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Microsoft Inspire has got to be on that list somewhere, but more importantly, I am looking forward to seeing and sharing a drink with our customers, partners and suppliers this Christmas. **If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?** I would love to learn to play the piano. My son has lessons and I only wish I had the skill and time to join in! **If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say?** Slow down and enjoy the moment. Time flies. **If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?** Eminem, *The Way I Am* – ha ha ha! Anyone who knows me knows this to be true!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Wet, windy and wild.

NEIL MULLER

CEO, Digital Space

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? This year, I celebrated my 50th birthday – so I guess I am now officially an industry veteran.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this



year, and why? Mike Norris. As the longest-serving FTSE 350 CEO, he remains straight-forward and continues to evolve Computacenter's capability and geographic reach, building an international business and consistently delivering shareholder value. When faced with difficult circumstances or tough decisions, I can often find myself thinking: "What would Mike do?"

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I introduced a 'say hello' campaign during lockdown. It's a simple concept, merely to take the time to contact five or six colleagues directly every week. I just say hello and check both theirs and their family's wellbeing. It has been a great campaign to get to know more about colleagues' home life and personal circumstances, which has created closer relationships and teamwork. It has become part of my weekly routine.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I'm excited to be attending AWS' Re:Invent conference in November. AWS is our core public cloud offering. We're excited by the partnership and the customer issues that we're helping to solve via our AWS

migration and management capability across both edge and core computing, as well as AWS Connect contact centres.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I love music and would love to learn how to play the guitar one day.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Trust your instincts – both professionally and personally.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

As an 11-year-old brummie in 1982, I learnt all the words to *Pass The Dutchie* by Musical Youth. I still can't help a rendition every now and again.

“When faced with difficult circumstances or tough decisions, I can often find myself thinking: 'What would Mike [Norris] do?'.
Neil Muller”

Sum 2021 up in three words.

"Where's it gone?!" People say the years go faster as you get older, and 2021 epitomises that for me. It's been an exciting year for Digital Space, with the acquisition and integration of AWS consulting partner, Arcus Cloud Services; rebranding our business in line with our Secure Connected Cloud strategy; and launching our Cloud Management Portal. Our customers are emerging from lockdown and it's exciting to help them with their digital transformations.

NEIL MURPHY

CEO, Bytes

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I think when Janine returned to Albert Square –



RONAN MURPHY

CEO, CWSI

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My personal highlight had to be concluding our first acquisition. We worked through the pandemic remotely to get the deal done, which wasn't always ideal – but as advocates of the remote working business model, we stuck to the task and got the outcome required. The enthusiasm of the team in Twyford post-acquisition is another highlight for me!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I would have to say Satya Nadella at Microsoft – the relentless drive to cloud and the investment in security is amazing to be part of. I also admire the way he has brought accessibility to the forefront of Microsoft and its partner community – I have the utmost respect for this man.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I started sea swimming in the first lockdown in spring (when the weather was good) but kept it up during winter – swimming a few days a week throughout the winter, it's here to stay now!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Probably MWC in Barcelona – our DNA is in mobile

that was epic!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? There have been many that have impressed but Jeff Bezos has been out of this world...

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Avoiding watching the soaps on TV and being more productive.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The National Mirror Awards – I can really see myself going to that one...

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Accordion to recent science, an author can insert a musical instrument into a sentence and 97% of readers won't spot it.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? I would explain why it's so important to answer the question that was actually asked.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

For the sake of the audience, an instrumental version. **Sum 2021 up in three words.** Not quite 2022.

security and it's always a good place to meet with customers, channel partners and vendors. The keynotes are usually very good, too – and of course it's in Barcelona, which is always a fun city to visit.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Coding. I think what you can create and the art of the possible in this area is endless. I still struggle to understand why it is not higher on the list of priorities in the education system.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Never give up!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I am not a singer – so this does not constitute an offer to sing at our next company event! But if I had to sing a song it would be *Don't Stop Me Now* by Queen.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Interesting, opportune, educational.

N



JAMES NAPP
MD, Bechtel UK

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Seeing my daughters grow and develop academically and in sports. The youngest challenging herself with new hobbies and starting to find maths fun(!). The eldest settling into 'big' school with lots of smiles, discovering

different interests and helping others to find their feet along the way.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Vin Murria. She is relentless in search of new opportunities and challenges, and brings superb energy and drive to everything she does.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Walking while talking – whether in the office or outdoors. It's good for mind and body and mobility is ever more important for us older folk!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? People make the place, so the saying goes. It's not so much about which event, but more about meeting old friends and new faces, which will bring enjoyment and value in equal measure as things open up.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Piano. I'm not sure I have the latent talent to be able to pick it up, but hearing live piano played well is a really rather nice.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Street view, city view, global view.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Scooter's *Endless Summer*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Successful, rewarding, fast!

SCOTT NURSTEN
CEO, ITHQ

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Buying my campervan and taking to the open road with my wife, kids and dog. It's proved the perfect antidote to lockdown cabin fever. Despite the terrible weather, we had a blast.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Steve Wozniak,



for starting his new Privateer Space company to clean up space junk. The tech industry is fantastic at creating new stuff but notoriously bad at cleaning up after itself. Instead of joining Elon and Richard in putting stuff up in space, Steve is focused on clearing some of the junk orbiting Earth.

At ITHQ, we run CSR programs designed to help reduce the environmental impact of tech on the planet as well, so Steve's new venture is very much up our street.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I stopped drinking in August 2020. It has improved my life in so many ways, I'm pretty sure I will never drink alcohol again.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? All face-to-face meetings now carry a new sense of novelty, which is very cool. It's too easy to take meeting people for granted and lockdown has given me a renewed gratitude for the simple act of getting together and breaking bread. In terms of big events, I've missed InfoSec and IP Expo. It will be great to get in the room with other security pros and have inspiring conversations again.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to play the guitar. I've been a massive music geek for as long as I

can remember, but I've never learned to play.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? "In 1999, short sell tech."

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Something instrumental with nothing singable. Rap at a push.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Summer? What summer?

O



APAY OBANG-OYWAY
Partner sales director, corporate and SMB, Microsoft

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Early in 2021, I joined Microsoft UK to be part of the GPS Leadership Team. The transformation under Satya Nadella has been inspiring. Its values of human-centred innovation and culture centred around people-centric servant leadership spoke a lot to me. Our stance on social justice and equality for all was a huge factor in my decision to join and made it a personal highlight for 2021.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? This year it's certainly been Jacky Wright, Microsoft's chief digital officer, who topped the Powerlist 2022. She

continues to inspire so many and do so much for diversity and inclusion in our industry and beyond.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Dinner with the family. This has been a significant part of family life, ensuring you stay connected to the kids and has a very positive impact on wellbeing.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards. What a great opportunity to network and reconnect with old colleagues from the IT channel family.

“Recapture my FIFA skills to stop my kids from beating me by double digits, taking all bragging rights.”

Apay Obang-Oyway on what new skill he'd like to learn

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? In pursuit of success and happiness, always have the courage, tenacity and humility in all that you do; always consider those less fortunate than you. Be an ally; always take the time to lift someone else up.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Bon Jovi's *Living on a Prayer*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Teams, optimism, TikTok.

STEPHEN O'BRIEN
CEO, Pure Technology Group

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Finally closing the Fulcrum deal. Huge excitement across the PTG team for what the future holds!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Steve Blank at



Stanford University. He teaches and writes about 'customer serviceability'. He's worked with several high-profile tech companies. In a competitive marketplace, the quality of your customer service is the key differentiator. Customer retention is paramount.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Walking, learning, growing and developing! I got into the whole podcast thing late on. Throughout lockdown I started to do a lot more walking... I then added in the fact that I could learn, grow and develop while walking and taking in the fresh air at the same time!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Our very own PTG annual events! Check them out on our website! We've so missed showcasing new technologies, seeing customers, meeting potential new customers and obviously putting on a show for our PTG team to be proud of... the whole mix of business and pleasure!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

In lockdown I picked up the guitar again... I've not enough patience so that didn't quite get going.

I guess another language. I have ambitions of having a place abroad one day; South of France is the dream. So, I guess French would be the thing. Although I failed my 'O' level (showing my age!), so it should be fun...

Or, understanding where my kids are coming from sometimes... now that's a real skill to learn!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Everything happens for a reason. I lost my parents and then my grandmother who brought me up through my teens at a very early age. Those moments were pivotal drivers. They shaped a lot of what I stand for today.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? The Beatles' *I Want To Hold Your Hand*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Life changing year.



IAIN O'KANE
CEO, Xperience Group

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? From a professional perspective, not only has the business come through Covid-19 intact but we continue to grow. We've safeguarded jobs which has helped fuel our ambitions further. From a personal perspective, my daughter has started her university journey which has been huge highlight for me particularly as she moved out... but I do miss her already!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? This got me really thinking and I realised I didn't have a tech figurehead who was in the public eye. I do however have huge respect and admiration for the technical people that exist within our business.

The things we have achieved with their technical expertise is exemplary. For example:

- We moved our entire business to remote working within 24 hours
- We migrate clients from on-premise installations to cloud/hybrid on a weekly basis
- We help clients embrace digital transformation by rolling out solutions that incorporate new tools for collaboration, process automation and business intelligence. We're also helping clients harness the power of AI irrespective of their size
- We've built and maintain our own cloud compute platforms

How could I look outside the business for inspiration with such a talented team around me?

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I will continue to travel less, however still feel being present in the office is hugely important for our business culture.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? From an industry perspective, I've been fortunate in the past to attend Microsoft Inspire & Directions and look forward to attending them in person again. Pendulum Summit which is more in the 'thought leadership' space is another one I'd be excited to return to.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To be able to play the drums like Keith Moon or John Bonham!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't sweat the small stuff but I think that's more of a statement I'd make to a 30-something me.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Thunderstruck* by AC/DC.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Exciting, fast-paced, satisfying/successful.

P



ALEX PHILLIPS
MD, Northamber

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I got addicted to my Peloton bike; hoping to keep it going!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Any that involves leaving my house, seeing people and new technology! I have really missed the buzz and discovery of new ideas from these events!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Changing nappies one-handed while on Zoom meetings so that nobody notices!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Pay more attention in computing class!

If you had to sing karaoke, what

“ My first child was born in 2021. A beautiful little girl and apparently my new boss! ”
Especially at night!
A bleary eyed Alex Phillips shares his personal highlight of 2021

would be your song of choice? *Don't Stop Believin'* by Journey.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, disruptive, dynamic.



NATALIE PILGRIM
UK&I personal systems partner sale manager, commercial channel, HP Inc

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My highlight was returning to HP after a year of maternity leave to see my amazing colleagues, partners, and friends! While it was mostly a virtual return at the beginning, I'm enjoying finally starting to get out and about a bit more now and seeing everyone again in person.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Enrique Loes. On top of being an inspirational CEO, Enrique has an unwavering focus in driving HP to become the most sustainable and just technology company in the world, and inspires us all to play an active part in that journey.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Family walks to get out in the fresh air and have quality time together will be something I will definitely try to continue.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? My favourite event is the CRN Channel Awards, as you get to see so many of your industry friends

all in one night and get to celebrate the partnership and all the successes in the channel throughout that year. It's a fantastic round-up of the year in the channel!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Learning a new language... Spanish. I'd love to know more than the few words I do today.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Buy loads of bitcoin in 2010.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Respect* by Aretha Franklin.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Reuniting, challenging, hopeful.



ROBERT POOLEY
Solutions director, Saepio Information Security

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Business wise, Saepio's 5th birthday was a highlight especially with the company being in such rude health. Personally, sitting on the beach with a cold beer, watching the kids play, soaking up some sun, not wearing a mask!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Lindy Cameron, CEO of the NCSC. Cybersecurity has never been more essential to the nation's resilience and prosperity. Her leadership is driving cyber awareness from classrooms in schools through

to the boardrooms of critical national infrastructure.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Walking with my wife and kids. It's good for the mind, body and soul, especially when you throw in a few pub stops!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Infosecurity Europe – it's been a long time since seeing all the industry faces in one place and absorbing lots of knowledge.

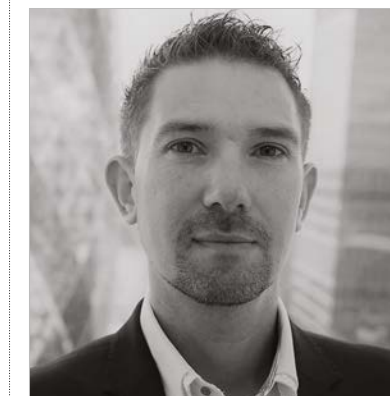
If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Coding. The future is automation and I'd love to be a part of developing super intelligence/whole brain emulation – safely of course.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Stretch.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Sweet Caroline*, in the hope others join in quickly!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Endure, overcome, prosper.

Q



ROB QUICKENDEN
Chief technology officer, Cisilion

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Professionally, launching (within Cisilion) my own 'fireside chat' with a panel of 8ish of our customers across different sectors

and size. I'd wanted to do this for a while to increase my 'personal brand' while working more closely with our key customers to help talk about various technology areas, new tech and how technology is helping (or not) solve key business challenges. Our marketing team at Cisilion did a fantastic job of recording and editing these. We are just about to start Season 2 and will be featuring more special guests this year from the tech industry, so tune in:

<https://youtu.be/Fmf3bM9e4Lo>

Personally, being able to get toilet rolls and petrol without queuing for two hours!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? That's a tough one – when you are passionate about all facets of technology, the figurehead(s) I admire are more than one. It's therefore a tough call but I'm going to call it...

The continued leadership and innovation of Microsoft under the lead of Satya Nadella continues to amaze – Microsoft is climbing the Gartner Quadrants in pretty much every area from collaboration (Teams, obviously) to ERP and CRM (with Dynamics) and across the security stack. What is outstanding is that many of the 'once' competition seem to be changing tact to a partnering approach rather than compete standpoint.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Not commuting to the office to 'just go to work'. Let me explain – I really do believe that the pandemic (let's be honest, it's still not truly over), has changed work for many for ever. The world (well my team, colleagues, friends, customers) have all done exceedingly well this past 18 months – productivity is up, sales up, time with family up. I do and will be going to see customers, my team and vendors but for focused work, this will not be in the office...

Of course, we are all different, but for me, working hours that suit, on an output basis rather than 9-5 slave fits me, my family and I truly believe, our company and our customers. "Work is a thing we do – not a place we go."

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Assuming I earn my stripes this year, the Microsoft Most Valued Professional Summit in Redmond, WA. I been an MVP for three years so far and it's not yet been in person. Everyone in the MVP community that has been in the flesh says it's fantastic – on topic, on-focus, and a small like-minded group.

Outside of that – there's going to be so much to choose from here in the UK.

Virtual is ok. The trouble is really 'being in the event' – when it's in person I feel more 'connected to the event'. Virtual, its easy to 'take that call' or 'attend that meeting', instead of really focusing on being at the event you intended to be at!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Yes time... I guess it is cheating to say time management isn't it! On a serious note, in my new role as CTO, I feel I need to learn from experts and more experienced individuals on how to tell, better solution focused, technology stories. I see keynotes and think "wow!". I know I can do better.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Professionally, if something you want seems too hard to achieve, that is good. It means you are halfway there. Find someone to help you focus on breaking down the barriers and make it happen.

Personally, always make sure you buy loads of toilet rolls... oh, and make sure the car is filled up with petrol (or buy a Tesla!)

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Please tell me we aren't doing this at the CRN Channel Awards this year! In my early 20s (the last time I probably did it), it would have been *Living Next Door To Alice* – and yes, that would be after a good glass of Dutch courage! **Sum 2021 up in three words.** "You're on mute."

R



PHIL RACE
CEO, ADEPT

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Adept winning the MSP of the Year award at the Comms Business Awards 2021 recently. This is an endorsement of everything we've been striving for over recent years and is a testament of the efforts of everyone across Adept during an incredibly challenging year. A truly 'wow!' moment.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I've been exercising regularly in the morning, on a Peloton and with the company of Joe Wicks! I plan to keep that going when I'm working from home.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? This is an easy one for me, its Commsvision at Gleneagles. This is a great event for so many reasons, not least the chance to meet with the great and the good

from across the industry in one place, alongside some thought-provoking presentations and workshops.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I started to learn the guitar when I was young, but didn't have the patience to become proficient. I think it would be great to play some of the great music from across the years. I'm a Stereophonics fan and would love to be able to play *Dakota*.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Seize the day; time flies!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I sang *With A Little Help From My Friends* by The Beatles in a Boston bar once – great fun!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Pandemic stress fading!



MELISSA RAMBRIDGE
CEO, SWEETHAVEN

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Watching both my 13-month-old son, Rafa and Sweethaven grow simultaneously.

A few people looked at me dubiously when I said I wanted to be a good mum and a good CEO – obviously time will tell on both of those accounts but I'm enjoying the journey so far.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year,

and why? There are a fair few but I'd have to go with Whitney Wolfe Herd, the founder of Bumble. Aged 31, she became the world's youngest self-made female billionaire when she took Bumble public in February, ringing the bell with her 18-month-old son on her hip. Her values in terms of making the internet and the workplace a kinder, more accountable place also really resonate. I hope she helps to prove to other women out there that career and family are possible, if that's something you aspire to.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Walking outdoors. I've always loved my sport so usually saved my outdoor escapades for when running or on a bike. When walking outdoors became the only activity we could really all do together, it made me realise going a bit slower and taking in your surroundings is also pretty enjoyable! **Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why?** The Network Group Gala. The close-knit NG community is such an important one for me – neither Sweethaven nor I would be where we are today without such a wonderful group of peers.

Though I have to add, my first event 'back' was the CRN Rising Stars dinner – which was fantastic and super inspirational to meet fellow ambitious companies.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? How to transition off my bike properly! Many thousands of miles cycled and a few triathlons later and I still can't seem to unclip without making a fool of myself...

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Enjoy the present day. I could do with telling my adult self that sometimes too! I've always been someone who's constantly looking at what's next to work towards; it's all too easy to

overlook everything brilliant that's happening in the moment.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Easy – the *Baywatch* theme tune. Takes me right back to university days on the dance floor.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Exciting, progressive... sleep-deprived (snuck in there with the hyphen).



RAFI RAZZAK
Chairman, Centerprise International

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Management of the effect of Covid-19 in changing the way we work.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Continue to use Teams as a quick method to communicate effectively.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? None. I have done them all.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? The world is a small place.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Frank Sinatra's *My Way*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Unsettling, exciting, innovative.

**HAYLEY ROBERTS****CEO, Distology**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My work-related highlight from 2021 has been securing investment in Distology. It's the best decision I've ever made to explore the PE route for growth and I'm so excited for our future as a business. I have some excellent key people in the business now and feel so well supported for our exciting journey.

Personally, it was getting away on holiday. I know I am lucky to be able to do so as we have all missed a break from the monotony in the last 18 months. I really appreciated that time to reflect and relax.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I've actually just googled tech figureheads to see if it sparked any 'oh yeah, them' thoughts... but sadly it didn't. Plus, they are all the same men every year, so we need a bit of a shake-up on tech figureheads! **Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?** Probably (and this is dull) but exercising more and upping my mileage running. Although I have balanced this out with not

getting up quite as early as I used to and appreciating the little things in life like taking time to have a breakfast.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? There are two that I enjoy and always see an ROI, not just financially but in terms of people engagement and idea sharing. The first would be Infosec as I get to see most of the people I have met in the industry and the second is NISC (National Information Security Conference) an event I always thoroughly enjoy!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? A language. We work in an industry where we're constantly speaking to people from different countries and being able to speak the local language plays a big part in building a feeling of trust in relationships. For that reason, I would love to be able to flit between several methods of communication and feel connected to a wider range of people.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Always trust your gut feeling! Any attempt to

swerve it will only ever bring you back to your initial thoughts.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Dignity by Deacon Blue.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Better than 2020.

**GLENN ROBERTSON****CEO, Purechannels - The Channel Agency**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? There are actually a few things that contribute to this answer. But top of the pile has to be seeing our agency, Purechannels - The Channel Agency, grow so well and double in size. Welcoming on new clients and doing more with existing ones has been incredible. We have maintained our shortlist and winning record at the CRN Sales and Marketing Awards, having been involved every year since they started and we also took a big step and opened our brand-new US office, which is already welcoming new clients too.

We did not take part in the furlough scheme, we didn't cut hours and we made no redundancies. Instead we invested in our existing people and employed more.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I always find this question interesting. For me, there is not one, and it is not really a 'figurehead' that has impressed me. More so,

people in channel who continue to innovate, respond and drive new technology through the channel, seizing the new opportunities that have emerged during the last 18 months. For example, Ashley Speight at Channelyze who launched a brand-new approach to PRM; Rick Van Den Bosch at Channext looking to reassess through channel marketing; Joe Chang and the team at Impartner; Daniel Graff Radford at Allbound; and Heather Tenuto and the team at Zift. Then someone I believe always deserves a mention is Jay McBain who is constantly at the forefront of all things channel, ensuring that everyone is as up to date as they can be with his many pieces of amazing work from the annual Channel Tech Stack to the best channel podcasts available around the world.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Easy: remote working, without doubt.

We now employ more people remotely than we do locally - so this will definitely continue! We have grown bigger and faster than ever through remote recruiting and working, so this will definitely continue. So there's that and probably the shorts and tracksuit bottoms!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I am actually looking forward to getting back together with clients and prospects, face to face. I like to attend the big events as they're always a great way to network and catch up. But I am not actually hanging my hat on all of them coming back in the way they were so prevalent pre-Covid. The interaction we have had over video calls this last 18 months has been great, but I am very excited about spending more time with clients/prospects face to face.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Probably golf. I have never played and think I should start to get into it. That

and piano. I would love to be able to just sit at a piano and play.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Play the long game - and play it in the tech channel!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Something by Bastille, or something country - Kenny Rogers or Rascal Flatts.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Experience, learning, growth.

S**FRANK SALMON****CEO, CMS Distribution**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? The biggest highlight for 2021 must be the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine, which helped to restore some form of normality in our lives, and on a personal level, acquiring Sysob (an Enterprise Security Distributor) in Germany was a great achievement by our team.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Zhang Yiming, the founder of ByteDance and creator of TikTok, the world's most downloaded app ever.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Video calls. I must admit prior to lockdown I was not a fan and did not know how to use Zoom or Teams. Thankfully today

video calls are the norm for both business and personal calls.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I haven't been to an industry event yet, however I do think 2022 will see normal resumption which I look forward to.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To type; we spend so long typing emails I suspect I would gain hours per week.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Value the stuff you can influence, and de-value the stuff you can't, and enjoy the journey.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

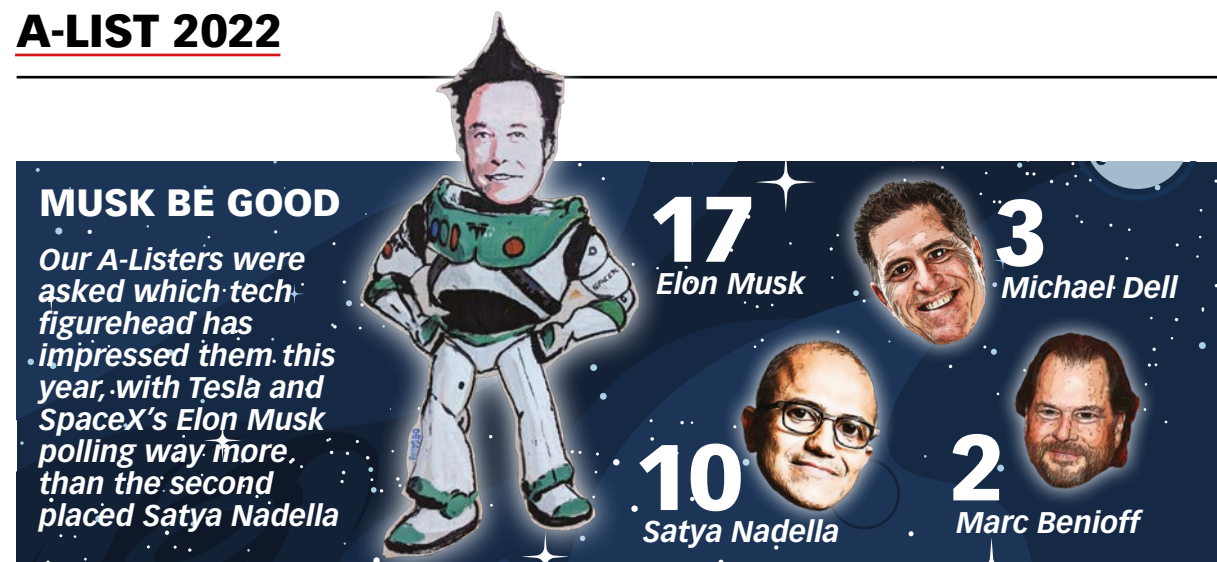
San Francisco, by Scott McKenzie.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Relentless, reflective, purpose.

**MATT SANDERSON****SVP UK & Ireland, Ingram Micro**

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? It's been a year of transition, and a real highlight was witnessing our teams coming back together in person, creating the office buzz and the energy 'real-life' collaboration brings. There's no going back, and the great acceleration in the use of technology, digitisation and new forms of working is now embedded, with the hybrid working model being refreshing in so many ways.



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk has led the way in technological innovation this year, making global headlines with SpaceX, while Tesla also continues to lead the way in electric cars, driving the clean energy message. As well as that his current project, Neuralink, deals with the enhancement of what the human brain is capable of. This minutely invasive brain computer interface is pioneering and speaks to the way in which artificial intelligence could materially reshape our world.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Getting my daily exercise out of the way before 8am.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The first overseas event as I need to escape this island even if for a short while!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Learn to Wingsuit Fly.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Get out of your comfort zone as often as you can.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *One Step Beyond* by Madness.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Appreciate the moment.



PAUL SHANNON
CEO, ANS Group

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Working with the ANS management team to lead an MBO of ANS. Many, many years in the making and the proudest moment of my career, most probably.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Mark Benioff taking a stand to facilitate staff out of Texas if they feel that the new laws that have been passed are incongruent to their own beliefs. This takes real fortitude to take the stand and commitment to follow through on the relocation assistance for an unknown number of people when the offer was made.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Cooking. I've absolutely loved learning to cook, but

I mostly think it is down to the fact that I only seem to cook anything that has wine in the recipe...

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Microsoft Inspire in Vegas is the marquee event for ANS and we've really missed the human interaction, not only missed Vegas.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Learn Spanish. I love Spain and am always impressed when I hear someone multi-lingual in action. I just need to do it.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Failing is not only okay, it is to be encouraged. The only people that achieve are those that are willing to fail.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Wonderwall*, innit.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Absolute, total, shambles.

SARAH SHIELDS
VP central and northern Europe channel, Dell

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Personally, I loved being able to hug my parents again... 18 months of no physical contact and a cuddle from my folks was just the best highlight ever...



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I have to say Michael Dell and the way Dell Technologies has been able to stand strong during the pandemic and supply constraints.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I've kept training three times a week despite never stepping foot in a gym. My long-term trainer switched to online and I absolutely love our sessions... I won't have a gym membership ever again!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards – obviously!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Given the current shortage of truck drivers, I may be tempted to get an HGV licence for the weekends.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Stop worrying about the future; you'll be healthy and happy. Just enjoy the moment.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I am the worst singer in the world! I'm not tone deaf, I simply fail to hit any note in the right order...

Sum 2021 up in three words. Same four walls.



JANE SILK
VP of distribution, EMEA, Climb Channel Solutions

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? This past year has been a really exciting one for our business but the highlight has to be overseeing the successful rebrand from Sigma Software Distribution to Climb Channel Solutions, bringing the UK business under the Climb global brand while still retaining some visual 'nods' to our heritage.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Naming one individual for me is always difficult as figureheads are sometimes exactly that and the magic is often conceived and delivered by a company's amazing individuals.

That said, what Netflix has achieved in terms of redefining home entertainment with Reed Hastings at the helm is pretty impressive.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Like many people walking my crazy dog a couple of times a day has really helped me get away from my desk, clear my head and appreciate the value of being outdoors for putting things into perspective.

Living on the edge of Dartmoor means there is a lot of the great outdoors on my doorstep, so this is something that I'll keep on doing!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I was really looking forward to attending the recent CRN Women in Tech Awards and it didn't disappoint. It was so good to spend time with friends and colleagues and to watch people experiencing and enjoying face-to-face human interaction once more.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'd like to learn to play the guitar properly, something that I attempted in my teenage years but didn't stick at partly due to the constant teasing from my two older brothers who sadly couldn't see my well-hidden natural talent for music!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? I'd tell myself that my adolescent insecurities wouldn't define who I was going to be and what I was going to achieve both professionally and personally.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Clearly it would have to be *Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves* by the Eurythmics featuring Aretha Franklin – great tune and fantastic lyrics!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Still loving life!



LEWIS SIMMONDS
UK channel sales leader, HPE

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? During FY21, SMB became part of my channel business, which gave me the chance

to build out a sales team. I took the opportunity to invest in our early careers and build out this business with a delivery model 100% channel route to market, creating the plan and winning business through the channel with our growing apprentice community.

On a personal note, completing my first (and probably last!) half marathon in Windsor.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Keith White, HPE GreenLake. He leads HPE's transformational journey with on-premises edge to cloud as a service. Keith's strategy to standardise our offerings and make them available through the channel, along with incremental channel investment funding is extremely impressive and is driving the future direction of the HPE channel.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I've enjoyed my own personal wellbeing, running, cycling and taking time out to read the odd book. I've also been working hard on rebuilding the record collection my mum melted when I left home in the 90s!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards! The event is really great to connect face to face with partners and peers in the industry.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I'd love to play the guitar or piano; only a couple of songs – just enough to get by at a party!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Eat more veg and drink more water.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Anyone who's seen me do karaoke knows I can't pick just one!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Mindfulness, inclusion, perspective.



DAVE STEVENSON

Group CEO, QBS Software

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? From a business perspective it has been the sheer volume of external recognition for QBS in the form of qualitative and quantitative awards – with the personal highlight being recognised as the CRN Sustainable Distributor of the Year.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? All the tech figureheads had a great year in my opinion, but yet again Elon Musk has impressed me the most by adding a whopping 91% on to the market cap of Tesla.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Definitely the Beechfield Road dog walking club – formed during lockdown by a group of my neighbours who all own/run businesses. We got together and built up a strong network and have some great conversations. It has grown a bit and two members don't even have dogs but just come for the conviviality.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? A bit of a leading question? There can only be one

answer: the CRN Channel Awards. Catching up with the entire industry in a tent in Battersea.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would like to learn touchtyping as I have taken the "point and peck" approach to typing as far as I can.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? "Software is going to eat the world."

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

I am neither good at singing or particularly enjoy it – but if I had to it would be something by The Clash – say, *London Calling*.

Sum 2021 up in three words. It has to be "The new normal".



PETER SWEETBAUM

CEO, Content+Cloud

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My personal highlight, probably like many people, was arriving at Heathrow Airport, sitting in the lounge knowing I was actually going to travel again! I've missed travelling during the pandemic and while still a challenge, is something we can increasingly do.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this

year, and why? It's hard not to go straight to Satya. Microsoft continues to ascend with incredible momentum, vision and energy as well as leading more than any of the other hyper-scalers on issues of real social importance. Whether it's the climate or diversity and inclusion, Microsoft is making this a central focus, not just paying lip service. I can't say I see the same from the others.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Dog walking.

I'm loving it. I never had time to do it during the week and it was always a weekend treat, but now it's something I get to do most days.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Other than the CRN Channel Awards? I can't think of any... Unfortunately, due to holidays and a cock up, we didn't enter this year... but that doesn't mean it wouldn't be great to see everyone.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? On a personal front, undoubtedly French.

I studied in an intensive French programme in Bruxelles when I was 16. I was even dreaming in French and then just lost it over time. On a professional front, I'd love to have time to increase my Power BI skills and data skills generally.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? That you will achieve more than you ever expected so relax and that you will do so much more than you ever could expect, so get ready to become something that you'd never bet on!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Ughhh... I can't sing. For everyone else's sake, nothing. If forced with a loaded gun, *Mr Brightside* by The Killers, at the top of my lungs after multiple vodkas...

Sum 2021 up in three words. Pfizer or [Astra Zeneca]?

T



ALEX TATHAM
MD, Westcoast

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Watching Westcoast's outstanding team performance of course! But also completing the Thames Trek charity walk across London for the NSPCC. Great team building, sense of achievement, money raised for our staff charity and memories. And a medal!

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Neil Sawyer – Channel Champion and prepared to make a big move.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? More local shopping for groceries.

“ I once challenged the head of a Japanese vendor that I would conduct our next meeting in a year's time in Japanese. I made a good start – but luckily he left before I could show him how poor I was. There is still time. Arigato!

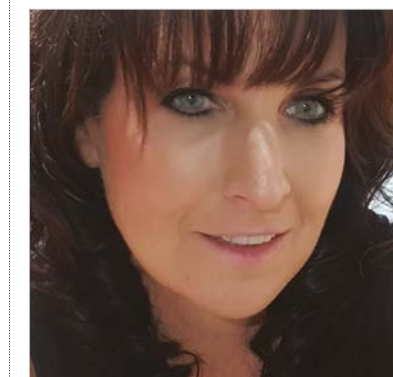
” Alex Tatham sets out the new skill he'd like to learn

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards – the original and the best.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? IT – it's the future! Get into sales quickly. Oh yes – and be enthusiastic – always!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *D.I.S.C.O.* by Ottowan. Obviously!

Sum 2021 up in three words. Better than expected!



DONNA TAYLOR
MD, ITB

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Seeing my 14-year-old daughter, who developed serious anxiety issues over lockdown, get signed for not one but four modelling/acting agencies! Just watching her self-confidence develop has been amazing.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Nick Moss of Saepio.

I don't know him very well but I understand he caught Covid-19 badly in the early days and is already back at the helm. Well done Nick. Good on you and fantastic for you and your family. I also have to say Nikki Stenson, who is my female role model. She is the most amazing market director and all-round most amazing person in the industry.

Which one lockdown habit do you

plan to keep going? Spending more time with my family and realising that working from home is not a crime. I was very much anti-home/remote working and did not believe that a work/remote life balance could be achieved. I do still struggle sometimes and love to have my office fix but certainly I have been proved massively wrong and my team of amazing colleagues work extremely well from home. I have certainly enjoyed being at home when my daughter gets back from school and being able to have that balance of craziness in the morning of driving her to school rather than putting her on the bus.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? All industry events, really. Networking is a dream for all IT colleagues/peers and I look forward to catching up with my IT friends again.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Archery.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Live your life the way you want to and don't trust so easily.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

I Am Woman by Helen Reddy. The words are inspiring. I sing this at the top of my voice in the car. So sad!

Sum 2021 up in three words.

It was interesting!

ROB TOMLIN
VP UK channel, Dell

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I committed this year to walk/run 3000km as part of our Poweritforward initiative. It's been a massive achievement for me, and at the same time, it has encouraged our teams and partners to join the journey and raise a huge amount for our chosen charities The Princes Trust, The Talent Foundry and MNDA.



Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? It has to be Michael Dell for his continued inspiring leadership during one of the most relentless years in our company's history.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I do my absolute best to be home for bedtime story, which means continuing to work remotely as much as possible.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards, of course.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? As a keen tennis player, I'd have to say a quality slice serve.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Do what you enjoy, as it usually leads to great things!

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Being a manc, it's got to be *Wonderwall* by Oasis.

Sum 2021 up in three words. You're on mute.



MARGARET TOTTEN
MD, Akari Solutions

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Seeing my grandmother again. During Covid-19 her care home was in total lockdown so we hadn't seen her in over 15 months and it was wonderful getting a hug again. Also, my son smashing his exams.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Microsoft Inspire! It has always been my favourite event as it gave me a chance to catch up with partners, Microsoft colleagues and let us have a look at what the landscape is looking like.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I wish I could drive! It has always eluded me

“It took many false starts but by the end of lockdown I became quite a good knitter and am now on my second scarf. Yes, it really does take me a year for a scarf but as friends will attest they are worth it.”

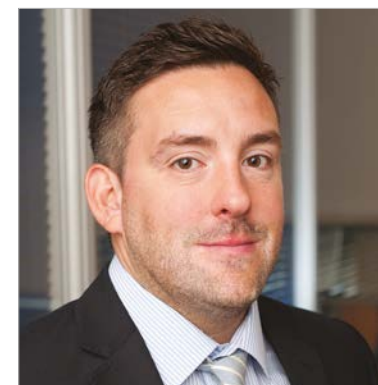
Margaret Totten explains how knitting is the lockdown habit she will be sticking with

embarrassingly but I would love to be able to do it easily, but my mind goes in too many directions while trying.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Everyone who told you that reading books would get you nowhere is completely wrong. Remember to always be yourself and don't let any one person or opportunity make you change you or your core beliefs.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I do, as many people who attended Inspire 2018 can attest. My song is usually Dolly Parton's *9 to 5*, which is ironic.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, revealing, resilient.



IAN TURNBULL
MD, Pentasec

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My highlight must be the launch of our Managed Security Services and Cyber Security Centre of Excellence. I am so proud of the work the team put in to get this up and running. Anyone who has been involved in such an exercise will understand the level of effort required to make these visions a reality. It is a fantastic facility, a great showpiece and is testament to the efforts of our fantastic team.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Q, from *James*

Bond. Why? Because he always has the right tools for the job and without him, James Bond would end up in stickier situations than he ever does. There are parallels between Q, James Bond and cybersecurity because without the right tools for the job, we can't protect customers.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Long walks in the countryside with the dog and my girls. There is hidden gold in those moments of calm away from any screens and just talking with two bright young minds. A great reminder of what life is about.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards of course! Why? Well, again, it's an honour to be recognised and shortlisted for Security VAR/MSSP of the Year for the third year in a row. When the marketing team put the entry in front of me to review this year, I was honestly blown away by how far we've come in such a short period of time.

Being able to get together as a collective is all part of the fun. I had one of my first face-to-face industry events in 18 months recently and it has reminded me how much I miss meeting with new people and getting the opportunity to expand your network and mindset.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? A language – probably Spanish as I have some family ties there. It's also easier to order more than one beer at a time when you speak the language!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Take a breath and savour the little moments.

My eldest has just transitioned to secondary school and her junior years have passed by in a blink. Taking time to enjoy those moments as small and as silly as they seem can alter your perspective.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Anything by Oasis – a good reminder of years gone by.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Another successful year.

W



DAN WATERS
Regional VP EMEA, Snowflake

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? After a fantastic journey with Arrow, my personal highlight of 2021 has been joining the Snowflake team to lead the Partner team for EMEA.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? With everything we've all been through with Covid-19, naming just one individual wouldn't be right.

So I would like to give tremendous credit to all the teams and talent from the tech and pharma industries that focused and executed on creating the vaccinations against this pandemic in such a short period of time. It's really phenomenal what they have achieved.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Running.

I got into a routine of three 5km runs per week in lockdown, which I very much enjoy. It's a great way to destress and refocus.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? We are a people-centric

industry and getting back to meeting face-to-face will be amazing, but at the same time I firmly believe the way we deliver these events will be forever changed. One of our core values at Snowflake centres around 'Putting Customers First' and it will be amazing to be able to eventually meet our customers and partners across the world at our Snowflake events in the near future.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would love to speak French or Spanish (or both!). I am working on this but it's taking some time to get to grips with the languages.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't worry about what you can't change; focus on the positives; and don't sweat the small stuff.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

For those that know me you will know that I love a bit of karaoke! *Drops Of Jupiter* by Train is my go-to song.

Sum up 2021 in three words.

Appreciate absolutely everything.



GRAEME WATT
CEO, Softcat

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Softcat's togetherness and performance.
Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Michael Dell – he is so

focused and knows how to bring sharp execution to a very large business.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Peloton.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards, of course – they are the Oscars of our industry.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? Speaking French.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Think before you speak.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *Let Me Entertain You* by Robbie Williams.
Sum 2021 up in three words. Challenging, fulfilling, exciting.



ROGER WHITTLE
CEO, Jigsaw24

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Realising how beautiful the British Isles are for fantastic holiday memories.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? Elon Musk, for his relentless innovation with cars, software, battery storage and space.
Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Talking about losing weight.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to,

and why? Every single industry event – Zoom and Teams play a valuable role, but nothing beats seeing people face-to-face.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? To have any kind of musical ability would be a bonus! I have none whatsoever.
If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? "Now then young Roger. You need to devote your life to this growing problem called global warming and impressing on everyone you can that we need to act, otherwise, by the time you are a parent, let alone 40 or 50, it will have haemorrhaged into a global emergency which will threaten us all."
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? It's always *Kung Fu Fighting* – everyone joins in and ends up collapsing in laughter – unbeatable!
Sum 2021 up in three words. Let's stick together.



MATTHEW WHITTON
MD, Grey Matter

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Since our acquisition by Wayside Technology Group in late 2020, 2021 was something of a fresh start. My biggest highlight this year has been launching Grey Matter in North America and the significant engagement that we

are already getting with the developer community.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? It has to be Satya Nadella.

I was interested to see how the pandemic and other global pressures would influence Microsoft's strategy. Satya has continued to set clear objectives around sustainability and inclusion, aligning his management team to scale this through the partner community. This shows the power of inspirational leadership and clear goals – long-term growth and relevance is dependent on more than just increasing the bottom line.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Focus time – going into lockdown led to more Teams meetings for all of us, as every small chat became a 'meeting' filling up the calendar. Using Outlook to automatically schedule in focus time each week has allowed me to build in space to follow up on actions, respond to messages and actually have some thinking time.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I have really missed running our ISV Partner day in person; the opportunity to meet informally with so many great people producing innovative tech products has been a big gap this year. I never thought I would say that I'm missing going to Las Vegas but not having Microsoft Inspire in person really shows the value of the event; the online sessions just don't enable the meetings or buzz that you get in person.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would learn another language. The last year has shown us the value of travel, connections and working together, both in and out of business. I would like to get myself more ingrained with other cultures and my GCSE French doesn't really cut it.
If you could go back in time and

tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? It's very basic but it would just be, "you are alright". I think that so many of us are held back by nagging doubts in our younger years and one of the benefits of experience is that you realise that nearly everyone is in the same boat. There are many things that I wished I did at an earlier age but luckily I plan on living for a long time so there is still plenty of chance!
If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Had to...? I would start with The Killers' *Mr Brightside*, an upbeat song with lots of energy.

Sum 2021 up in three words. It's getting better.



ANGELA WHITTY
Managing director, UKI Partner Organisation, Cisco

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? I'm not sure it's a personal highlight but definitely the highlight of the year for me was in April when life started to return to normality after Lockdown 3. Being able to go out, play golf and visit family for me was amazing.
Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? That's a tough one

“It's not easy on the ear drums and certainly not original but my go-to is Madonna's *Like A Virgin*.
Angela Whitty would belt out a 1980s classic if she had to sing karaoke”

as technology moves on so quickly but I would have to say Tim Cook and Apple – I can't seem to live my life without Apple products. My Apple Watch has become my motivation to be more active and I always said I would never get one.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Like many I had always been a keen walker and tried to do my 10,000 steps a day but over lockdown that has become a fairly rigid habit! I walk five miles with my son every morning before I sit down to work. That's what keeps me sane!

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? Cisco's Partner Summit for me has always been a favourite. The opportunity to get a mix of our partners together to share strategy and initiatives for the coming year and get their feedback. And of course the CRN Channel Awards, which always marks the start of the Christmas season!

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I love cooking and think that I am relatively good at it, but I am a disaster when it comes to baking!

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't settle for second best. Believe in what you can achieve.

Sum 2021 up in three words. Time for reflection.

**COLIN WILLIAMS**

Business line chief technology officer, Computacenter

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? My youngest daughter has signed for a Women's Super League (WSL) football team. **Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why?** François Locoh-Donou, the president and CEO of F5. He has transformed the organisation strategically and culturally to ensure F5 evolves and will remain successful and a great place to work in an ever-changing digital world.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? My one-hour walk every day is one of few good habits I started and will continue (about 9,000 steps). It might just about offset the vast amount of Orange Twirls I continue to eat (a less positive lockdown habit).

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? I said last year "never again", and whether I attend or not, the "RSA security event" in San Francisco remains one of the best events regardless of technology tower in the industry. Nothing beats walking the halls of the Moscone if you want to seek out tomorrow's winners and enhance current security vendor relationships.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I

have played football since my early childhood and still can't do kickups. One day I will learn (Umm, I said that a few times).

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Take more calculated risks (trust your judgement and back yourself).

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? *September* by Earth Wind and Fire (my favourite music band ever).

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Exciting, challenging, rewarding.

**GLEN WILLIAMS**

CEO, North

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Completing the sale of North to Livingbridge while buying Data Techniques at the same time. It was hard work, but worth it.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I don't have one specific person that has impressed me this year, but what I have been impressed with is the ability of the leaders of the many tech firms in our industry who have been able to keep growing their businesses and motivating their teams in challenging times.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? I will continue to get a good balance of working from home and going into the office.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return

to, and why? I tend not to go to industry events but have just attended the CRN Rising Stars dinner which was excellent, so I'm looking forward to attending this again next year.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? A black belt in a martial art.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Enjoy every day.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? Primal Scream's *Rocks*.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Challenging, now fun.

**LANCE WILLIAMS**

CPO, Distology

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? It might sound clichéd, but my personal highlight has been continuing the new level of closeness with my family developed during the lockdowns now that life has freed up. My eldest said to my wife: "I'm glad for one thing from lockdown and that's getting to know Daddy more – before, he came home every day from work, but we hardly knew him compared to now."

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? I cannot think of any in the mainstream, or up and coming tech companies... I can think of plenty of tech, but not figureheads. Perhaps it is because it's been a year of adjustment, where figureheads have,

“ My teenage years were in the 1990s and *The Matrix* was my favourite movie of the decade – when I chat with developers I see them looking at lines of code and reading like ‘the operators’ do in *The Matrix*. ”

Lance Williams explains why he'd love to learn to code

first and foremost, been focusing on the wellbeing of their people, rather than inspiring the industry? Closer to home, the channel figurehead who has impressed me the most is Hayley Roberts (now that really does sound clichéd!) – she stands for change and innovation in the distribution channel – it's why I got in touch with her this time last year, which concluded with me becoming CPO in her organisation. **Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going?** My morning prayer walks! Like most, I lost my commute, which means I lost my think time – that downtime in the car, when podcasts and phone calls happened without distraction – so I substituted it with walking for 30-40 minutes each weekday morning. I am a Christian man and I found the time was best used for prayer and meditation – thinking on the Bible lesson for the day and how to apply it to my day and the world around me.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? The CRN Channel Awards (in person)! I love the event for the networking, fun and celebration of the best businesses and people in the channel. It's great for rubbing shoulders with pals, for meeting new people and for learning about which businesses have floated the judges' boats in the past year.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be?

Coding. Python, possibly. My teenage years were in the 1990s and *The Matrix* was my favourite movie of the decade – when I chat with developers I see them looking at lines of code and reading like ‘the operators’ do in *The Matrix*. It'd be a great skill to learn in a world that is increasingly embracing STEM in education and coding is making it into the mainstream.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Nothing!

Everyone knows (thanks Hollywood) messing with the past can affect the future and I'm very content with my current. Every good and not-so-good thing that has happened in my life has contributed to who I am today.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice?

Great Balls Of Fire – such a cracking song to do, glorified by the movie *Top Gun*. It's not too difficult and everyone else normally joins in too.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Life is beautiful.

**ANDY WRIGHT**

Commercial director, XMA

What has been your personal highlight of 2021? Adding a second dog to the family in January. Stan the Rhodesian Ridgeback is now just over 10 months old and the size of a small pony (I might be exaggerating a bit) and currently finding his way into everything and anything he should not into. Currently, finding a pair of

unchewed shoes is tricky.

Which tech figurehead has impressed you the most this year, and why? None that I can think of.

Which one lockdown habit do you plan to keep going? Running. I have always been involved in sport and activity, but I had got out of the habit. At the start of the lockdown in the spring of 2020 I set myself some new targets to run 25 miles a week, which is basically 100 miles a month. I have now done that for 18 months in a row. The benefits to my overall mental and physical health have been massive, and to be honest I really enjoy it.

Which face-to-face industry event are you most excited to return to, and why? All of them and none of them. I think we all spend too much time at these things, and more and more in the modern world of communication these events struggle to deliver any value because the information is not and can not be new. I miss them all as I miss all the great friendships I have built up over the years and these events are a great focal point to allow everyone to catch up.

If you had the time to learn one new skill, what would it be? I would improve my cooking. I am an ok basic cook, but I would love to expand my knowledge and range of dishes.

If you could go back in time and tell your childhood self one thing, what would you say? Don't change anything; it turned out ok.

If you had to sing karaoke, what would be your song of choice? I was only saying to Diane (my wife) last night that I can't imagine ever singing in front of an audience. I am 100% tone deaf and downright awful. I might get away with something like *Born In The US* (Bruce Springsteen). It doesn't sound like the most difficult tune to have a go at.

Sum 2021 up in three words.

Tougher than 2020, which I think I might have predicated when I filled this in last year.

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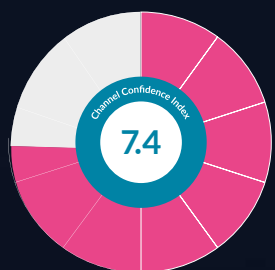
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