



BUSINESS, NEWS, SUCCESS

# THE EY ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXCELLENT BUSINESS IN ORANGE COUNTY

JUNE 2, 2015 SMART MONEY STAFF

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The *EY Entrepreneur of the Year Awards Program* recognizes entrepreneurs who demonstrate excellent and extraordinary success in areas such as financial performance, innovation, commitment to their businesses and communities.

**Kim Letch** is an assurance partner with more than 21 years of experience. She currently serves as the Orange County / Inland Empire Program Director for the Entrepreneur of the Year Program. Listen to her tell *Smart Money* more about the upcoming EY Awards.

## **What is your role at Ernst & Young?**

Entrepreneur Of The Year Program Director and Partner for the Orange County and Inland Empire regions.

## **What are the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards?**

The EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Awards program recognizes entrepreneurs who demonstrate excellence and extraordinary success in such areas as innovation, financial performance and personal commitment to their businesses and communities. The unique award makes a difference through the way it encourages entrepreneurial activity among those with potential and recognizes the contribution of people who inspire others with their vision, leadership and achievement. As the first and only truly global award of its kind, Entrepreneur Of The Year celebrates those who are building and leading successful, growing and dynamic businesses.

## **Tell us about how the program started.**

At the program's inception in 1986, a single awards ceremony was held in Milwaukee. Today, the Entrepreneur Of The Year program spans more than 145 cities and 60 countries and has grown to 25 regional programs in the U.S. Globally, we have recognized more than 10,000 business leaders, and in Orange County, we have honored more than 180.

### **What sets the Orange County region apart from others?**

In Orange County and the Inland Empire, we have a unique spirit of entrepreneurship. People here just tend to think “bigger,” and that attitude, more than anything else, is what’s celebrated through our annual program with EY. Each year, the program gets better and more competitive, and this year’s class of entrepreneurs is the best yet.

From the innovators behind El Pollo Loco, Pieology and the Flame Broiler to the heads of biotech leaders such as Ambry Genetics, Edwards Lifesciences and Proove Biosciences, we’ve attracted nominees from all sectors. They have proven themselves as true disrupters of their industries and drivers of employment as well as the broader economy.

### **Who is nominated and how did they submit?**

Business leaders eligible for consideration include not only company founders, but also leaders who have transformed an existing business, multi-generation family businesses and both public and private company CEOs. Each nominee’s company must be at least two years old and he/she must have been in the leadership position for at least two years. Nominee applications included basic information about the nominee and company, four essays and financial information.

### **Describe the judging process and criteria.**

Judges chose a group of semifinalists and subsequently finalists based on both the application and in-person interviews. Finalists recently underwent an additional round of video interviews as well. The judging criteria include a thorough assessment of recent financial performance, strategic direction, product or service innovation and company leadership, including personal integrity and risk-taking, values, key employee initiatives and community involvement.

### **Who are the judges for 2015?**

Reynolds Bish, CEO

Kofax Ltd.

OC Software Winner: 2003 (Captiva Software)

OC Judge: 2014

Jonathan Ord, Co-founder & CEO

DealerSocket, Inc.

OC B2B Winner: 2014

Steve Layton, Co-founder & Principal

LBA Realty

OC Judge: 2009-2012, 2014

Steele Platt, Retired Founder  
Yard House Restaurants  
OC Retail Winner: 2003  
OC Judge: 2013-2014  
National Judge: 2014

Anand Nallathambi, President & CEO  
CoreLogic, Inc.  
OC Financial Services Winner: 2013  
OC Judge: 2014

Bob Holmen, Co-founder & Managing Director  
Miramar Venture Partners  
OC Judge: 2009-2012, 2014

Craig Boundy, CEO  
Experian North America

Dan Lubeck, Founder & Managing Director  
Solis Capital Partners  
OC Judge: 2013-2014

Heidi Golledge, Co-founder & CEO  
CareerBliss  
OC Business Services Winner: 2013

Jeff Frieden, Co-founder & CEO  
Auction.com  
OC Real Estate Winner: 2014

Kim Kovacs, Managing Director  
Arroyo Ventures

Liz McKinley, Founder & CEO  
Pinnacle Petroleum, Inc.  
OC Distribution & Manufacturing Winner: 2010  
OC Judge: 2014

Michael Hajeck  
Retired Founder, SiliconSystems  
Retired Sr. VP & GM, Western Digital  
OC Technology Winner – 2008  
OC Judge – 2012-2013

Reggie Gilyard, Dean  
Chapman University, The George L. Argyros  
School of Business and Economics  
OC Judge: 2013-2014

Steve Plochocki, President & CEO  
Quality Systems, Inc.  
OC Health Sciences Winner: 2002 (InSight Health Services)  
OC Judge: 2003-2005, 2009-2012, 2014  
National Judge: 2010-2011

### **What are the categories for the EY Awards?**

The categories are chosen each year by the judges based on the quality and quantity of applications. This year there is a pre-designated “Emerging” category, which is open to CEOs who have been with the company between two and five years with a preferred company growth rate of 20 percent.

### **What do the winners of the awards receive?**

Regional award winners are eligible for consideration for the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year national program. Award winners in several national categories, as well as the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year Overall National Award winner, will be announced at the annual awards gala in Palm Springs, Calif. on Nov. 14, 2015. The US Entrepreneur Of The Year Overall Award winner then moves on to compete for the World Entrepreneur Of The Year Award in Monaco in June 2016. Additionally, venture-backed companies that win an Entrepreneur Of The Year Award regionally are also eligible for the Venture Capital Award of Excellence at the national level. The awards are the culminating event of the EY Strategic Growth Forum®, the nation’s most prestigious gathering of high-growth, market-leading companies.

### **When and where does the OC region awards ceremony take place?**

Thursday, June 11 at the St. Regis Monarch Beach in Dana Point, Calif.

### **How can people get updates from your company online? (Website, Social Media)**

Find out more about the Orange County Entrepreneur Of The Year Awards program at [www.ey.com/us/eoy/oc](http://www.ey.com/us/eoy/oc), or learn about EY at <http://www.ey.com/>. Follow us Twitter at @EY\_Growth.