



Curtis Hite (Moderator)

CEO, Improving

Curtis A. Hite, CEO and Chairman of Improving Holdings, LLC. (Improving) graduated from Texas A&M University in 1994 with a B.S. and M.S. in computer science. At Texas A&M, he was a member of the Corps of Cadets, serving as commanding officer of Squadron 6 and as a member of the Ross Volunteers. In 2007, Curtis was honored by the Department of Computer Science as a CSE Distinguished Former Student. Later in 2013, he received the inaugural Outstanding Early Professional Achievement

Alumni Honor Award from the Dwight Look College of Engineering.

Curtis began his career as a software engineer building systems in the Defense industry – first with Rockwell International and then at E-Systems (later acquired by Raytheon). In 1998, Curtis and several partners founded Expede, a software development consulting and training company. Its quick growth drew the attention of a French company, Valtech, which acquired them in 1999. Curtis soon became CEO of Valtech's North American operations and remained in that position until late 2006. In early 2007, Curtis and many of the same partners established the Blue Ocean Group, which quickly acquired a small training company called Improving Enterprises and adopted the Improving name. The company has been blessed with continued growth since then — repeatedly receiving accolades including the Inc500/5000, Dallas 100, and Aggie 100. More importantly, the company has received recognitions from its employees as one of the best work places in Texas as noted by the Dallas Morning News, Dallas Business Journal, and Texas Monthly.



Jason Craven

President & CEO, Southern Botanical

Jason Craven is the founder of Southern Botanical. He plays an active role in all daily facets of the company. Beginning his career in high school, Jason was so successful in running a small landscaping team that he chose to follow his entrepreneurial aspirations of starting his own company.

In 2012, he was named the Young Leader of the Year for the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. He was elected and remains the Director of Region IV for the Board of Directors of this association. In addition, he currently serves on the Finance Committee.

His career has been critiqued by MBA students at the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University.

He is also active in his church and community through many volunteer efforts including St. John's Episcopal School and the Dallas Center for the Developmentally Challenged.



Susan O'Brien

CMO, Hail Merry

Susan O'Brien, native Houstonian and UT Austin design graduate started Hail Merry Snacks in 2006 after traveling to Maui where she fell in love with the raw food lifestyle. For Ms. O'Brien "Going Raw", an evolution of Vegan, seemed a natural progression from her decade-long yoga practice.

Her journey would take her to California where she trained with famed raw food chef, Juliano. Back home in Dallas, her cabana would be transformed into a test kitchen for raw snacks, which were then sold into a local natural foods market

Hail Merry quickly gained a devout following of vegan, gluten-free and raw enthusiasts who share a love for fresh, great tasting, pure ingredients which heal the body.

Ms. O'Brien spent years designing clinical laboratories and feels right at home in a commercial kitchen. "I get to use my design skills nearly everyday designing packaging, new product development and the expansion of our commercial kitchen," states Susan. She also exclaims "Don't mess with a mother when it comes to the health of her children." She is adamant about seeing to it that her kids are not riddled with toxic food additives and dyes.

Along with writing for the Hail Merry blog, Susan also is an expert blogger on Brooke Burke's ModernMom.com site as their Pure Food Expert.



Brian Schultz

CEO & Co-Owner of the Studio Movie Grill

Brian Schultz is the founder/owner and CEO of Studio Movie Grill, a modern in-theater cinema-dining concept combining first-run movies with table service restaurants. Schultz is credited as the leader and innovator of this growing segment of the exhibition industry. He championed and won the ability to show first run movies for his Movie Grill concept in the late 90's, opening the original Studio Movie Grill in 2000, and allowing for the cinema-dining segment of the movie exhibition industry to see enormous growth in recent years.

Currently, Studio Movie Grill has theaters in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas. Studio Movie Grill offers state-of-the art sound and projection capabilities, 100% reserved seating and an eclectic menu featuring its own signature STUDIO wines. SMG attracts more than 10 million patrons annually and hosts thousands of corporate and special events. Alongside regular programming, SMG hosts special needs screenings, outreach and fundraising events as part of its conscious business initiative.

Schultz, who received a Bachelor of Science in Business Finance from California State University, is a founding member of the Young Entrepreneurs Organization. He was the recipient of the 2013 Regional

Brian Schulz, con't

Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year®. His business accomplishments have been recognized by D Magazine, which named him one of the area's Top Entrepreneurs Under 30 in 1999, and one of the Top Entrepreneurs Under 40 in 2004. He is currently a member of YPO and Conscious Capitalism.



Veronica Londono

Chief Operating Officer, American Leather

Veronica Londono is the Chief Operations Officer for American Leather, a Dallas-based manufacturer of custom-ordered furniture. In her role, she has responsibility for all operations including; manufacturing, supply chain, product development and engineering. At American Leather, Veronica has held positions of increasing responsibilities in all operational areas and was promoted to the Company's top position in Operations. Learning the business from the ground up has provided the opportunity to understand how decisions impact other areas of the business and with a business model that assures its customers a quality product in less than four weeks, the strive for excellence is a daily challenge."

A native of Colombia, Veronica obtained her Bachelor's degree in Production Engineering from EAFIT University in Medellin. She immediately began working as consultant for KPMG where her initial business challenge was to troubleshoot issues for manufacturing firms in the areas of process reengineering and cost accounting.

Veronica completed her Masters in Business Administration from the University of Texas at Arlington while working at American Leather. "The pursuit of an MBA was driven primarily by my interest in learning more about the financial side of business and a deeper appreciation for how the business is run from a profit and loss perspective."

Veronica is not only passionate about her contributions at work but also to her community. She is an active member of Young Professionals of Greater Dallas. She also developed an internship program at American Leather designed to provide practical work experience to future women engineers from her alma mater in Colombia.