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One Strategy Vision

Editor's Letter

Welcome to the September 2026 issue of Acquisition International magazine, where we bring you the latest news, features, and success stories from around the globe.

This month's instalment covers an assortment of articles and insights across a plethora of articles. Thee businesses and individuals featured here are positively impacting the world around them through the careful treatment of their clients and teams, as well as their fine contributions to their industries.

Our cover feature Think Strategic UK, awarded with the prestigious title of Most Innovative Strategy & Business Education Consultancy 2026 – UK, continually demonstrates what it means to be dedicated to truly supporting best practice in the design and development of clear strategy. Within these pages you'll find much more on what it means to lead a business and reach greater heights of success.

We wish you an excellent September and look forward to welcoming you back again in a month's time.



Sofi Parry, Senior Editor



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Nasuni Acquires DryvIQ, Enabling Organizations to Classify, Secure, and Activate Unstructured Data to Unlock AI Business Value

As Enterprises Move to Modernize Data Management Strategies, Adding Content Intelligence and Governance Will Enable Visibility and Control at Scale

Nasuni, the unstructured data platform for enterprise teams and AI, announced it has acquired DryvIQ, a leader in intelligent unstructured data management. The acquisition adds AI-powered content intelligence and governance capabilities to the Nasuni File Data Platform — including content-level discovery and classification, sensitivity detection, and automated policy-driven governance — giving organizations greater visibility and control over unstructured data, not just within Nasuni, but across more than 40 cloud and on-premises repositories.

“Our customers are looking to us for help with data strategies to support safe AI access in a world of rising infrastructure costs. To meet that need, this year we’ve added best-in-class edge performance with Resilio, permission-aware AI access

with AI Activate, and now content intelligence and governance with DryvIQ,” said Nick Burling, Chief Product Officer at Nasuni. “With UniFS as the foundation, no other solution manages, moves, classifies, governs, and activates enterprise file data in a single platform. Customers have been attempting to stitch together a solution across multiple vendors for years. Now Nasuni provides one platform to manage, protect, and activate unstructured data with proven impact on both cost reduction and productivity gains.”

With the addition of DryvIQ, Nasuni enables enterprises to:

Manage

- Discover and classify content: AI-powered models scan file content across more than 550 file formats,

over 100 entities, and over 1,000 business document types, detecting PII, PHI, and PCI data across more than 175 languages.

- Identify, organize, and take action based on file content: Customers can continuously discover, classify, and manage unstructured data in-place and at scale. This helps organizations fuel AI initiatives with high-quality data, support regulatory compliance, and eliminate redundant, obsolete, and non-critical data.
- Optimize infrastructure costs with data-driven decisions and hybrid cloud flexibility: DryvIQ provides the content-level intelligence to make informed decisions about how data is managed, classified, and governed. Nasuni provides the flexibility to place data where it makes the most strategic sense, whether on-premises, in the cloud, or both, optimized for team and AI access as well as infrastructure cost.

Protect

- Enforce governance automatically: Configurable policy rules quarantine high-risk content, apply retention and sensitivity labels, remediate permissions, and support defensible deletion across more than 40 cloud and on-premises repositories. Policy enforcement can be mapped to GDPR, HIPAA, PCI-DSS, and other regulatory frameworks.

Activate

- Activate data for AI with confidence: By classifying content, detecting sensitivity, and enforcing policy before data is exposed to AI, DryvIQ ensures organizations can activate unstructured data for enterprise teams and the AI that supports them safely and at scale.

“Organizations are increasingly focused on turning unstructured data into a strategic asset, but content is scattered across dozens of repositories, and most of it has never been classified,” said Mark Brazeau, Founder and Chief Strategy Officer at DryvIQ. “By joining Nasuni, we can bring our content intelligence and governance capabilities directly into a cloud-native file platform, giving customers a single, governed foundation to classify, protect, and activate data wherever it lives.”

DryvIQ is available to use immediately, and Nasuni plans to deepen the integration with its file data platform over the coming months. To learn more about the acquisition, [click here](#).



Heron Intelligence and Paragon Intel Merge to Create the World's Largest Management Insights Provider

Combination establishes a new global leader in management intelligence, giving institutional investors unprecedented insight into the executives driving company performance

Heron Intelligence announced that it has completed its merger with Paragon Intel, creating the world's largest management insights provider and a new global leader in management intelligence.

The combined company is operating as Heron Intelligence and brings together two pioneers in the systematic evaluation of business leadership. Its research foundation includes more than 80,000 proprietary interviews spanning more than 5,000 public and private companies, with more than 250 investment firms relying on Heron's intelligence and diligence capabilities.

Heron Intelligence brings more than two decades of management and business diligence experience, an extensive archive of proprietary executive interviews, public records capabilities and a platform that transforms qualitative research into structured intelligence. Paragon Intel brings ManagementTrack, a management-first platform powered by a proprietary data engine developed by former buy-side investors. Drawing on 16 data sets, including its proprietary Earnings Call Evasion Analysis, ManagementTrack helps asset managers and hedge funds evaluate executives and inform investment decisions.

Together, the businesses create an end-to-end system for understanding what executives have done, how they lead, whether their capabilities match the challenges facing their companies and how management may influence future performance.

"This merger creates an entirely new standard for evaluating business leadership," said Nate Singer, CEO and chairman of Heron Intelligence. "Investors have built sophisticated systems to analyze nearly every dimension of a company, yet the people making its most important decisions have remained remarkably difficult to assess. We are changing that by making management a structured, measurable and actionable investment input."

Paragon Intel emerged from a gap its creators experienced firsthand on the buy side. Investors had access to growing volumes of data about companies, industries, transactions and consumer behavior, but comparatively little structured intelligence about executives and management teams.

"At a time when investors were seeking to measure every aspect of a company, there was almost no scalable data on the people actually running those companies," said Ty Popplewell, co-founder and former CEO of Paragon Intel and now president of ManagementTrack at Heron Intelligence. "We believed management

should be its own institutional data category. By joining Heron Intelligence, we now have the research depth, proprietary information and scale to fully realize that vision."

The combined company brings together complementary capabilities spanning management analysis, investigative diligence and structured data. These capabilities will be integrated across ManagementTrack, Blue Heron Research and the Heron Analytics Platform.

"There is no better outcome for our clients than the combination of the two preeminent management diligence firms," says Colby Howard, co-founder and former President of Paragon Intel.

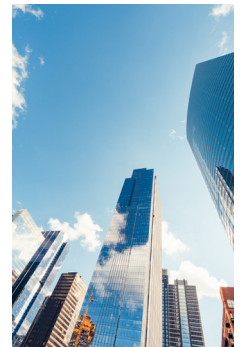
The integrated platform will help investors evaluate and compare management teams, determine whether executives are suited to a company's strategic priorities, identify leadership and operational signals before they are reflected in financial results and incorporate management intelligence into fundamental, quantitative and systematic investment processes.

Under the combined leadership structure, Nate Singer is CEO and chairman of Heron Intelligence; Paragon co-founder Ty Popplewell is president of ManagementTrack; David Rynecki is founder and president of Blue Heron Research; Anuj Jaithliya is chief financial officer of Heron Intelligence; and Paragon co-founder Colby Howard will serve as president of a new Heron Intelligence division, with additional details to be announced later this year.

The merger significantly expands Heron Intelligence's research capabilities and executive and company coverage while strengthening its ability to serve investors across strategies. Existing client services will continue without interruption as the businesses integrate.

"This is more than the combination of two companies," Singer added. "It establishes management intelligence as a fundamental category of investment research—and positions Heron Intelligence as the company that will define it."

Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.



Brompton CEO William Butler-Adams: ‘You Need to Recruit People Better Than You’

This exclusive interview with Will Butler-Adams was conducted by Tabish Ali of the Motivational Speakers Agency.

AI, robotics and digital systems are changing how manufacturers work. Their value depends on what customers need, whether employees have room to learn and whether leaders are prepared to hear uncomfortable truths.

William Butler-Adams OBE is Group CEO of Brompton Bicycle and a Chartered Mechanical Engineer. He joined Brompton in 2002 and became CEO in 2008, leading its growth from £2 million in turnover and 27 employees to an estimated £130 million and more than 800 staff.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in 2024 and received an OBE for services to manufacturing. Read his Royal Academy of Engineering profile.

In this exclusive interview with the Inspirational Leadership Speakers Agency, William explains why humility matters in leadership, why box-ticking courses fail to develop people and how manufacturers can find the right mix of AI, robotics and skilled human work.

Question 1: What does credible leadership look like in engineering and business?

Will Butler-Adams: “We see this coming out of the great United States of America leadership, and you see it in The Apprentice, where it’s about, “You’re fired,” “I know best,” “I’m the big guy” and “I got to be a really nasty person to succeed.” To me, that is everything that is wrong about leadership.

“Leadership should be about self-sacrifice, leading by example and serving others. It should be true leadership, where you earn respect through what you are doing and people can rely on you to support them, to give them space to be honest and to share challenges.

“If you’re Mr Perfect and you’re wandering around shouting at people, no one else is going to tell you the truth. That’s very dangerous in business. You need to recruit people better than you and give them the space to flourish.

“You need to be humble. You need modesty. You need drive and ambition, but not by shouting from the rooftops.”

Question 2: Why do workplace training programmes often fail to create a genuine learning culture?

Will Butler-Adams: “Governments time and time again are encouraging us. We’ve got the apprenticeship levy. We have endless things that float in to train your staff. Training needs to be bottom up, not top down.

“If you’re training people to tick boxes and you send them off to yet another two-day course, where they sit there and fill in a questionnaire at the end and wonder why they ever bothered, that might look good on their CV. It might even look good for the company. You’ve done all this training, but what is it all for?”

“You’re much better to set your team really challenging objectives, pushing them outside their comfort zone. Then they come to you and say, “Listen, if you want me to deliver that, I need skills, I need to learn, I need to understand.”

“That might not just be training. It might be mentoring. It might be going and visiting another company that’s doing a better job than us. How do we learn from them?”

“Training is much more than just a course. It’s about learning, networking, becoming more confident and having an understanding of where to reach when you need to find new answers. It is very important, but just having training in the organisation isn’t enough.”

Question 3: How should manufacturers balance AI, robotics and skilled human work?

Will Butler-Adams: “We’ve got AI, robots and humans.

“Like most things, if I look at my house, I have some piece of furniture that belonged to my great-grandmother. Like a city, you have some buildings that are 600 years old and you have the latest architecture from Thomas Heatherwick. Mix matters.

“We need to be careful that we don’t think AI is going to be the silver bullet and everything’s going to be AI, or robots are going to do everything, or you’re not allowed to use digital and it has to all be handmade.

“It’s about finding the very best of everything out there to deliver the best value to the customer. We use all of it. We use some skills that are highly skilled, take a lot of training, a lot of apprenticeship, and other things like robots, AI and digital.

“Finding the mix that fits your organisation and not being afraid to go for the thing that delivers the most value to the customer: that has to be the absolute key. When you understand what your customer values, then you can deliver the right mix.”

Question 4: What do organisations gain when people feel able to speak honestly and pursue greater ambition?

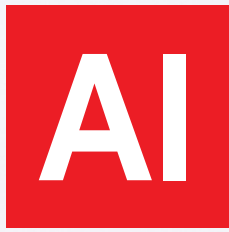
Will Butler-Adams: “I think we need to remember life is short. Too many people are too afraid to say what they think. They are turning up to work, doing their job, and they finish work.

“We’re going to be dead soon. We’ve got stuff we can contribute and we need to be heard.

“If people have the confidence to go out and be more honest, more driven and more ambitious, even if they decide, “The job I’m in sucks and I’m going to go and do something completely different,” great. That’s better for the business and that’s better for them.

“We don’t have time. We need to move faster. We need to be more ambitious and we need to tell people honestly what we really think, and we’ll get there faster.”





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One Strategy Vision

Founding of One Strategy Vision is to better support best practice in the design and development of strategy. There is a cross section of instrument that are missed by Founder and Chief Executives in businesses, organisation that are not making full use of strategy instruments available to design their strategy for their business. A cross section of concepts that would help chief executives with the design of execution, capability, and resource of a strategy to enable growth and market dominance.

"A Chief Executive's missing instrument: Knowledge on Strategy Execution & Realising its Resource and Capabilities"

Why One Strategy Vision – designed to integrate two pivotal thinking "standards" and "school of thought". A missing purpose is a standard and school of thought designed for strategy spelling out missed instruments in the design of execution, resource, and capability, these areas support the thinking for a Chief Executive with designing their strategy execution, option for resource required to maintain direction and growth, and identifying a business capability are knowledge based that reside in people, in a business intellectual capital, and embodies tacit knowledge.

One Strategy Vision sets out a thinking for setting **Standards** and **School of Thoughts**. *Why is this separation of Standards and School of Thoughts a bold step?* A requirement for clear perspective and grounding for businesses when it comes to using the word "Strategy" and "Strategic". Confusion is a factor in organisations during the design, development of strategy and strategic actions, priorities that are letting organisations down to strive for success.

Setting the foundations for understanding "strategy" and "strategic" the differences between these two words that was founded by the military. The standards will adopt a military context that is missing from organisations reasoning for both strategy and strategic. The standard set out a doctrine that could help organisations of all size to adopt during the design, priorities needed for an organisation's strategic direction and action to be taken.

With the school of thought is setting the fundamental thought process on different strategy concepts like resource and capability, executing strategy. The school of thought is to engage the brain of a chief executive to think of the construct of their strategy execution and resource and capabilities. The existence of strategy execution and resource and capabilities as concepts play a critical role for the chief executive to think about the questions for strategy execution and for resource and capability. This is context that is missing from people and organisations though the process around strategy

The techniques of evaluating a company's resource capability, relative cost position, and competitive strength versus rivals, a company situation analysis prepares the groundwork for matching the company's strategy both to its external market circumstances, to its internal resources and competitive capabilities.

In evaluating how well a company's present strategy its working starts with what the strategy is. The focus is to pin down the company's competitive approach. The company needs to consider if it's striving to be a low-cost leader or emphasizing ways to differentiate its product offering from its rival.

Executing Strategy starts with customising a company strategy to fit with clear set of action these are resource (staff and teams) also capabilities to deliver services and products, also understanding the company's own environment, the market a company operates within. Differences in executing strategy is important as these differ low-cost provider strategy, and high-end differentiation strategy.



Action setting for strategy execution by a company that enable people to carry out a probing assessment of what the organisation must do differently to carry out strategy successfully.

Questions to ask What needs to be done in a team's area of responsibility to implement the company's strategy, and what the team should do to accomplish.

At the core of One Strategy Vision is to take out the confusion factor taking place in businesses when developing and designing strategy. To broaden the horizons One Strategy Vision is bubble bring together "standards" and "school of thought". This distinction between standards and school of thought represents a bold move providing necessary clarity, foundation for all size of businesses discussing the importance of having a well described "strategy" for its business.

Recently awarded with Most Innovative Strategy & Business Education Consultancy 2026 – UK, Think Strategic UK continues to add to its selection of prestigious accolades. Going forward, it is moving away from conventional thinking to redefining the design by incorporating a UK One Strategy Vision.



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Infinity Group Coaching: Rebuilding Your Financial Future

A clear and successful financial future is something that feels unobtainable for many households across Australia, but one financial services company has set out to shift the sector. Infinity Group Coaching is leading the way in advocating for financial education and accountability, delivering unrivalled services that do not only improve client's finances but welcome them into a future-focused community that keeps them motivated and accountable as they take control of their finances. We heard more from Alex Hyndman-Hill below, Head of PR and Events, as Infinity Group Coaching is named in the Global Excellence Awards 2026.

**“
We pride ourselves on changing
lives, not just balance sheets.”**

Infinity Group Coaching is a financial coaching and mortgage broking business that was built to help everyday Australians take control of their money, pay down debt faster, and build lasting generational wealth. Alongside home and investment lending, the company offers one of the broadest suites of financial services in the country, spanning credit advice, financial planning, and real estate services, supported by its own coaching programme, client portal, and Money Mentor education platform.

“Our mission is simple: to give Australians the education, accountability, and strategy they need to break free from debt and secure their financial futures,” Alex told us. “We don’t just arrange a loan and move on; we coach, educate, and guide our clients on their journey to financial freedom.”



This is a mission steered by Co-Founders Graeme and Rebecca Holm. Together, the husband and wife duo established Infinity Group Coaching from Rebecca's grandparents' home in Port Macquarie, New South Wales, in 2012. Within just one year, their expertise in financial services, real estate, development, and project marketing had amassed more than 250 loyal clients, facilitating an expansion into a Sydney office in Bella Vista.

Today, Infinity Group Coaching has settled over \$3.359 billion in loans and \$4.031 billion in real estate transactions. The company's upward trajectory has been carefully shaped by the three core principles of education, empowerment, and community. These values guide its team to help clients build the confidence, control, and mindset to change their lives, teaching them to make informed decisions for themselves and welcoming them into a movement that values real, lasting change.

These principles directly inform every aspect of Infinity Group Coaching's services. Where most of the industry competes on interest rates, Infinity Group Coaching competes on proof, personalisation, and genuine accountability. Every client is assigned a dedicated coach who guides them through tailored budgeting and debt reduction strategies, with regular check-ins and support that continues long after the loan settles.

**“
Our clients understand that when
they come to us, they get education
and guidance rather than just a
product.”**

The newly upgraded client portal is central to this process. Clients can access a live dashboard of their loan balances, budgets, and progress, with automated monthly results reports keeping them accountable between check-ins. This automation has proven to be an incredibly beneficial investment; Infinity Group Coaching notes a 60% increase in monthly logins, and more than 250 hours saved per month.

By empowering clients to understand their money and make decisions that work for them, rather than selling them a product, Infinity Group Coaching's financial coaching programme effectively safeguards the future for the client and their families. Clients pay off their debts in a fraction of the projected and develop a mindset that opens doors they never thought possible, going on to build generational wealth and pass healthy financial habits to their children.

“One family of six used the client portal to cut their weekly spending down from \$1,000 to \$750 and sustain it,” said Alex. “Another joined us



with \$450,000 in debt and a business paying no wages, super, or tax, and we built them a clear path to become debt-free in four years."

Of course, Infinity Group Coaching's clients can tell their stories far better than anyone else. Through its Money Mentor podcast's Changing Lives series, the company has shared approximately 90 real client journeys, amplifying their voice on a national scale and breaking down the barrier of distrust that often stands between potential clients and financial service providers.

Infinity Group Coaching connects with these sceptical clients through stories such as Megan and Jeremy's, who went from being heavily-in-debt forklift drivers who lived above their parents' garage to the outright owners of a beachfront home, or Oscar Cherry, who started investing his money as a teenager.

In its own client research, Infinity Group Coaching reports that 68.2% of clients say the company has significantly reduced their financial stress, with 83.4% noting that its services had improved their budgeting skills. A shining example of this success has been with clients Sarah and Bill, whose family has cut their mortgage from \$550,000 to \$32,000 in just 13 months whilst growing their investment portfolio from \$450,000 to over \$2 million.

They shared: "There are no words that will ever truly be able to explain our experience and heartfelt thanks for the way Infinity Group Coaching has absolutely changed our lives. Infinity didn't just provide a service – they provided us with an entire team of professionals, a beautiful community, ongoing education, and continuous motivation to strive for more. Our dreams became goals, and our goals became reality."

Looking to the future, Infinity Group Coaching intends to put financial education into the hands of many more Australians. This mission will see the team extending its financial literacy programmes onto new digital coaching platforms to provide clients with unlimited access to the tools that will help them break free from debt and understand how to take control of their financial future.

The financial industry evolving at a rapid pace, with interest rate volatility, changing lending regulation, and a rising demand for transparency all reshaping the landscape. By investing early in its technology and maintaining its focus on providing reassurance, education, and coaching through every change, Infinity Group Coaching has embraced these changes to adapt quickly and provide certainty to clients in these uncertain times.

"The shift towards more transparency and financial literacy in our industry has given us a clear advantage," Alex shared. "It's exactly what we've always advocated for. Our rapidly growing client base comes to us looking for trusted guidance, rather than just a product."

Infinity Group Coaching's growing community is being brought together through more face-to-face events, which is particularly important in an age when so much real-life connection is lost. Alongside growing its team, the company has committed to expanding its community events and hosting more clients than ever across the country, bringing together staff, experts, and clients to share their wins and build genuine connections.

Together, these endeavours underline precisely how the team intends to continue enriching the Infinity experience. The company will scale each initiative nationally, ensuring to protect that uniquely personal element that defines Infinity Group Coaching's DNA and has earned it the title of Australia's Leading Debt Reduction and Money Management Company 2026.



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Improving Employee Engagement Through Listening and Action

Helping organisations give their people a voice, understand how they feel, and build healthy, high-performing cultures, the People Experience Hub offers an employee engagement survey and experience platform that goes beyond collecting employee feedback. Turning insight into meaningful action, its listening platform and helpful resources improve outcomes for employees and businesses alike. As its very own Naomi Tipton is named **Most Strategic Commercial Growth Leader 2026: Employee Experience SaaS (United Kingdom)**, we caught up with her for more.

The People Experience Hub (PxHub) was founded in Northampton in 2018. For the last eight years, it has been living its mission of helping organisations better understand, engage, and support their people, guided by its values of caring, doing the right thing, making it happen, and dreaming big. Putting people at the centre of everything it does, acting with integrity and accountability, turning insights into action, and continuing to challenge convention, PxHub continues to use employee feedback as the foundation of meaningful action.

Specialists in helping organisations to understand and improve the employee experience, the team behind PxHub deliver employee engagement surveys, employee listening programmes, lifecycle listening (like onboarding and exit surveys), benchmarking, performance improvement, people science consultancy, AI-enabled employee analysis, and always-open employee feedback channels. They do this through PxHub's employee experience platform, which meshes technology, people science, and expert support.

This employee listening platform reflects the evolution of the company, which, whilst dedicated to improving how organisations manage their people from day one, has gone from an employee survey provider to a comprehensive employee experience platform supporting organisations from across a range of industries. Naomi explained: "Today, People Experience Hub partners with organisations across the UK and internationally, helping them create cultures where people can thrive and organisations can perform at their best."

In charge of sales and marketing at PxHub, a role that sees her manage and drive strategy across both departments, Naomi plays an invaluable role in helping the company and its platform to thrive. Naomi brings almost a decade of experience with her to the position, having worked as a sales executive for a nearby plastic-card company for nearly two years before joining PxHub to head up its sales in 2019. Becoming head



of sales and partnerships in 2024, Naomi has been its head of revenue and growth since last November.

Arriving at the company when it was still very much finding its feet, Naomi has played a central role in building and scaling the commercial function of PxHub, aligning its sales, partnerships, and marketing efforts. Highlights from across her tenure include establishing the sales function as the first commercial hire, creating PxHub's marketing function, building its partnerships programme from the ground up, and working closely with other teams to align commercial activity with delivery. As a leader, Naomi also prioritises clear communication, straightforward processes, and strong working relationships.

She told us: "We believe organisations achieve better outcomes when employee feedback is not treated as a standalone activity but as part of a continuous cycle of engagement, communication, and improvement." By bringing together listening, communication, recognition, resources, and action into its employee engagement survey platform, PxHub continues to add value for its clients. The recent introduction of AI-powered insights into its work is supporting this, enhancing the efficiency of its team.

“

Our goal is to help organisations identify emerging trends, risks, and opportunities more quickly, enabling leaders to make informed decisions and take meaningful action based on employee sentiment and feedback.

”

Lastly, Naomi stressed: "We are also committed to helping organisations move from insight to impact. This includes developing tools that make it easier to track actions, measure progress, and demonstrate the return on investment from employee experience initiatives." This positions PxHub favourably in a world where results increasingly speak for themselves, and where the organisations that invest in a platform like this expect to see concrete results in return. It is not always easy, but it is a challenge that PxHub welcomes.

As the company continues to transform how organisations receive, understand, and act on the feedback of their employees, moving beyond traditional surveys to offer a more connected employee experience, Naomi remains a crucial piece of the People Experience Hub puzzle. On the back of this, we are delighted to recognise her here in this feature.

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Health Innovation Advocate of the Year 2026

PBM Foundation

Photobiomodulation (PBM) is a non-invasive, FDA-cleared medical technology that successfully manages pain and treats a variety of medical conditions. It uses red and near-infrared light to stimulate mitochondria, helping to repair and restore cellular function and reduce inflammation. It is a natural treatment that supports the body's own natural processes.

Leading the charge in this revolutionary treatment is The PBM Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation that supports research into, and the worldwide adoption of, photobiomodulation therapy. We take a deeper look at its groundbreaking work below, following The PBM Foundation's recognition in the Non-Profit Organisations Awards 2026.

There are approximately 32 trillion cells in the average adult body, each performing specific tasks that collectively sustain life. Every process that keeps us alive, from breathing and healing to ageing, occurs because of these cells. Therefore, cellular function and dysfunction lie at the root of most diseases; 80% of what injures, ails or ages us is related to our cellular function.

Photobiomodulation (PBM) therapy restores cellular function at the molecular level and is increasingly recognised for successfully addressing a wide range of musculoskeletal and neuropathic conditions.

PBM uses red or near-infrared light that penetrates the skin and tissue, where it is absorbed by mitochondria. This triggers a chain of biological effects that can accelerate healing, alleviate pain and improve function.

More than 110 million patients have been treated with PBM without any documented side effects. A total of 2,466 clinical trials and 12,000 published studies have demonstrated that PBM is an effective therapy.

The core mechanism of this process centres on a specific protein inside the mitochondria called cytochrome c oxidase (CCO). This protein sits at a critical point in the chain of reactions that cells use to produce adenosine triphosphate (ATP), a nucleoside triphosphate that provides the energy needed to fuel cellular processes. CCO's role is to transfer electrons to oxygen molecules, creating a proton gradient that drives ATP production.

When red or near-infrared light reaches CCO, it affects a molecule called nitric oxide, which naturally binds to CCO and slows it down. Without nitric oxide binding to it, the mitochondria accelerate respiration and produce ATP at a faster rate. The displaced nitric oxide enters the surrounding tissue, dilating blood vessels and improving local circulation.

At the same time, the light triggers a small, controlled burst of reactive oxygen species, which act as signalling molecules to activate pathways that influence gene expression, reduce inflammation and stimulate tissue repair. In cells already experiencing oxidative stress, photobiomodulation reduces harmful reactive oxygen species whilst boosting energy output, playing an instrumental role in helping damaged cells recover their normal function.

Clinical and real-world evidence is disseminated by The PBM Foundation, an organisation that supports the research and worldwide adoption of photobiomodulation therapy. It also develops and implements PBM curricula at leading universities.

The Foundation facilitates collaboration among 500 scientists and practitioners across 30 countries. It aggregates, curates and disseminates their clinical research to global decision-makers, influencers and the media, helping to expand collective awareness of this revolutionary medical technology.

As the only non-profit organisation promoting the use of red-light therapy to the public, The PBM Foundation works closely with the scientific networks managed by the World Association for Photobiomodulation Therapy (WALT) and the North American Association for Light Therapy (NAALT).

These two established scientific societies bring scientists together to share their latest research. Both enthusiastically collaborate with The PBM Foundation to ensure their members' findings reach a broader audience, inform policy decision-makers and become actionable within healthcare settings.

The PBM Foundation has achieved strategic success in securing formal recommendations for the use of PBM treatments from United States government agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense.

It has also received formal approval for use from the International Olympic Committee, as well as endorsements from various medical associations, including the American Dental Association, the Academy of Laser Dentistry and the Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer.

Despite operating with limited resources and relying on volunteers, The PBM Foundation has achieved historic strategic change in the field of healthcare innovation. Many experts within the PBM field have stated that the expansion of PBM usage over the past eight years has occurred because of the Foundation's revolutionary messaging and outreach efforts.

The PBM Foundation's work has been formally presented to the White House, executive branch agencies, medical forums and the United Nations.

In recognition of its tireless efforts to expand access to photobiomodulation therapy and improve and save millions of lives through its exceptional work, The PBM Foundation has been named Health Innovation Advocate of the Year 2026.

Purposeful Leadership for Sustainable Operational Excellence

Founded in 1968, Labina is a Portuguese company specialising in the production of aluminium technical parts for the automotive market and other demanding industrial sectors. Over recent years, the company has experienced growth of approximately 40%. With Manuel Machado, Labina's COO, being named Most Transformational Operations Leader 2026: Sustainable Industrial Operations (Portugal), we spoke with Manuel about purposeful leadership, people development, and sustainable operational excellence.

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Although he is now COO of a Portuguese company specialising in aluminium die casting for the automotive sector, Manuel Machado's journey began far from the boardroom. The youngest of seven children, Manuel entered the world of work at the age of 14, where he learned early the importance of responsibility, discipline, commitment, and perseverance.

His professional journey took him through several industrial sectors, including textiles, food and automotive, covering automotive covers, plastic injection and aluminium die casting, as well as international professional environments. Over more than three decades, these experiences gave Manuel a broad understanding of the challenges faced by people and organisations working across highly demanding and constantly evolving industrial contexts.

At the age of 32, Manuel decided to return to education, eventually graduating in Industrial Engineering and Management. He complemented his professional experience with specialised training in Lean Manufacturing and Lean tools at Porsche Academy in Stuttgart, Germany, as well as certification in coaching and people development.

Across his career, Manuel has led, directly and indirectly, more than 2,000 people. These experiences taught him that sustainable performance depends not only on efficient processes, but on the ability to align people, organisational culture, leadership, and decision-making around a common purpose.

For Manuel, leadership is not about having all the answers or doing everything oneself. One of his most important professional lessons came from recognising that leaders can

unintentionally create dependency when they assume too much responsibility. Sustainable leadership means developing people who can think, decide, take responsibility, and continue improving.

"A leader's role is not to make people dependent on them, but to create the conditions for people to think, decide, take responsibility, and grow."

Manuel's understanding of sustainability extends beyond environmental responsibility or financial performance. For him, sustainable operations begin with reducing waste in all its forms: materials, time, energy, talent, communication, conflict, and ineffective decisions.

He believes that strategy, alignment, specific indicators, effective processes, and people must work together. When organizations provide clear direction and reliable information, people are better prepared to make decisions based on facts—rather than assumptions—identify problems, take action, and improve results.

This philosophy is particularly relevant as artificial intelligence, automation, and robotics reshape the industrial landscape. Manuel recognises the potential of these technologies, but believes that technology alone cannot create sustainable transformation. Organisations must also develop people and leaders capable of adapting, learning, and working effectively alongside increasingly automated systems.

"Technology should serve people and the strategic purpose of the organisation. The future of industry will not be defined only by how much technology we introduce, but by how well our people and organisations evolve with it."



Manuel's approach has also been shaped by difficulties and mistakes. Rather than seeing problems as reasons to give up, he considers them opportunities to learn and strengthen both individuals and organisations.

"Throughout my career, I have learned that we only truly improve when we accept responsibility for our own development. Problems can become the circumstances that teach us what we need to change."

This experience is now leading Manuel to develop a framework of his own around organisational transformation, bringing together strategy, people, processes, indicators, decision-making, technology, and sustainable results. Still under development, the approach is based on a simple belief: organisations become stronger when they create the conditions for people to learn, evolve, assume responsibility, and contribute to collective performance.

For Manuel, the recognition from the Business Leader Awards 2026 is more than an individual achievement. It represents a philosophy built over decades of industrial experience and continuous personal development. He also considers the recognition inseparable from the people who have contributed to his journey, particularly his family, colleagues, teams, mentors, and all those who have influenced his professional and personal growth.

"We do not grow alone. The people around us are also part of our success."

Ultimately, Manuel Machado's journey demonstrates that our starting point does not determine our destination. From beginning his working life at 14 to becoming an Industrial Management Engineer, an international industrial leader, and COO, his career has been defined by learning, responsibility, people, and the willingness to change.

His recognition as Most Transformational Operations Leader 2026: Sustainable Industrial Operations (Portugal) reflects the vision he has developed throughout that journey: sustainable results are achieved when people, processes, technology, and leadership move forward together, guided by purpose, better decisions, and a shared responsibility to continuously improve.

Best Field Service Management & Job Management Software 2026 – UK

Software companies talk a lot about digital transformation, but the trade businesses they look to work with are rarely seeking transformation just for the sake of it. They want jobs finished properly, customers kept informed, paperwork reduced, and to get paid. It is with this in mind that Xpress FSM was created. Challenging the idea that good field service software needs to be expensive or tough to implement, Xpress FSM is the field service and job management software that UK trade businesses need. Xpress FSM's Ashley Marks was on hand for more.

Created around the simple idea that field service management software should make a trade business easier to run, not be just another system for the office to have to manage, Xpress FSM is a UK-based field service management platform and app built specifically around the way UK trade and maintenance businesses operate.

From plumbing and heating companies to electricians, gas engineers, HVAC businesses, fire/security companies, drainage contractors, and property maintenance teams, users of this job management software for trades span small businesses moving away from paper or spreadsheets to more established operations in need of a proper office dispatch function to accommodate their growth.

All of these customers benefit from job scheduling software designed and built according to the values of simplicity, practicality, and responsiveness. With Xpress FSM, a customer can simply sign up, import their existing data, and begin sending engineers to jobs as quickly as possible. However, this is not all. Recognising that these UK businesses have specific requirements often missed by international software, the platform offers UK VAT invoicing, trade-specific compliance documentation, and straightforward GBP pricing.

Given there is a lot of choice currently on the market, these features help set Xpress FSM apart. Many platforms have been designed around a generic workflow, and others still are aimed at much larger organisations. For smaller business navigating current cost pressures, a software is only useful if it gives a noticeable return.

So, rather than competing to offer the most features, Xpress FSM focuses on areas that genuinely save time: job dispatch, live job visibility, mobile job completion, automatic updates, professional invoices, and digital compliance documentation. All have a direct operational benefit for customers.

This field service management software is also set apart as a result of its pricing, which is deliberately kept realistic for smaller businesses. Plans start at £19.99 a month, and a 30-day free trial with no card required means customers avoid the usual trap of forgetting to cancel and subsequently being charged. As well as there being no annual contracts with Xpress FSM, the platform has also been built so that individual technicians and

optional features can be added as a business grows, rather than having to switch to a new package.

Ultimately, Ashley explained: "Our main advantage is that we are not trying to be a generic piece of software that happens to work for trades. Xpress FSM is designed specifically around UK field service operations." Be it supporting 38 digital compliance forms (which engineers can complete in the field), putting emphasis on the relationship between the office and the engineer, or making switching a breeze thanks to its free data migration and free onboarding call, everything the platform does is designed to add value.

“

Our USP is not one flashy feature; it is having the right tools in one place without making a small- or medium-sized trade business feel like it has bought enterprise software.

”

Behind the platform is a team who pride themselves on keeping Xpress FSM close to the customer. The support they provide is straightforward and deliberately human, and a refusal to implement a maze of ticket queues or layers of account management sees a refreshingly simple process for engineers or office staff. Customers speak to people who understand the product and that downtime in a field service business costs real money. This level of awareness is truly appreciated.

Looking ahead, the future for Xpress FSM is about becoming a platform trade businesses can rely on from their first job through to them becoming a much larger operation. The same approach will hopefully find its way to more field service sectors facing similar problems, but this growth must not come at the sacrifice of the platform's simplicity.

Growth should not mean becoming another complicated enterprise system, and for Xpress FSM, it will not. Recognised as the Best Field Service Management & Job Management Software 2026 – UK as part of The SaaS-ies, we urge those looking to know more about its platform to visit the link below.

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Your Partner in Digital Transformation Across Defence, Security, and Critical Infrastructure

In the world of defence, ‘C5I’ covers six critical domains: command, control, communications, computers, cyber, and intelligence. It is also the name adopted by Italy’s leading digital innovation partner for defence, security, and critical infrastructure, C5I S.r.l. (C5I). As Claudio Santo Malavenda, founder and CEO of C5I, is named Most Strategic Digital Transformation Leader 2026: (Italy), and C5I is recognised as the Leading Digital Innovation & Industrial Transformation Consultancy 2026 – Italy, we sat down with Claudio for more on this digital innovation partner.

Combining a pioneering spirit with multidisciplinary expertise, primarily gained in the military sector, C5I S.r.l. designs and delivers advanced technologies to enhance operational awareness, security, and decision making. Its focus is particularly strong across defence, security, and critical infrastructure, where its innovative technologies and specialist experience translate into reliable, interoperable, and practical systems.

C5I was founded in 2021 as an engineering practice, initially providing operational management, technology support, and business development services to growing SMEs, both at home in Italy and across Europe. In 2025, it was officially incorporated as C5I S.r.l., a transition that marked an important step in the company’s evolution. Having strengthened its role as a technology integrator and expanded its capabilities in the development of advanced defence, security, and automation solutions, C5I was ready for its next chapter.

In the months since, it has continued to build its established network of trusted partners, and has even created and become the lead company of the C5I Alliance, a national network of specialised Italian companies encompassing around 350 professionals and €33M in combined annual revenue. This network sees C5I bring together complementary expertise and technologies, whilst maintaining the agility and responsiveness of a specialist organisation.

Where this becomes particularly valuable are the projects of smaller businesses, as the advanced technologies C5I specialises in are often considered accessible only to large organisations. In most cases, the high costs associated with niche technologies stem from the initial engineering expenses and by requirements not necessary for the intended application. C5I and the C5I Alliance’s agile design changes that, making technically advanced solutions accessible to a broader range of organisations and tailoring them to their needs.

Today, C5I combines the experience it has gained over the last five years with this increasingly structured industrial network, international partnerships, and proprietary technological capabilities, allowing it to deliver innovative, integrated, operationally effective solutions to customers in Italy and abroad. These range from command control systems and military robotics systems through to cybersecurity solutions for defence.

The work carried out by this digital innovation partner is guided by a handful of fundamental values: innovation with purpose, technical excellence, reliability, collaboration, and agility. Similarly, Claudio explained: “We believe technology creates real value only when it solves concrete operational problems. For this reason, we favour open and

modular architectures, interoperability, cybersecurity by design, and close cooperation with customers and partners. A lean decision-making structure also enables us to react quickly, develop tailored solutions, and transform new ideas into working capabilities in a short timeframe.”

All of this also feeds into C5I’s philosophy, which is based on a proactive, structured, and pragmatic approach. There is a strong focus on identifying and addressing problems as early as possible in a system’s lifecycle, as the company recognises that the most effective way to manage the complexity inherent in this industry is to consider integration, interoperability, and security from the very start of the design process. Security and cybersecurity, for example, are developed alongside a system’s core functions, rather than being added later.

Modelling, simulation, and digital twin technologies are also used as far as possible, allowing C5I to reproduce systems and operational scenarios in a virtual environment. This enables its engineers and customers to visualise issues before they occur, as well as to validate their design choices and test alternative solutions early on. Benefits of this method include reduced technical risk and development time, as well as saving on the cost of later modifications.

The customer remains at the heart of this approach, and every challenge is assessed holistically, with continuous dialogue and validation with the customer maintained throughout the process. Since engineering is bound by real-world constraints, including pre-defined budgets, schedules, and technological boundaries, this allows for pragmatic outcomes where an achievable balance is struck between performance, security, risk, and cost.

A fitting example of this in action comes from the development of AEGIS, C5I’s command and control platform. Originally conceived as a complementary system to traditional C2 (the command and control framework) platforms, this creation was designed to visualise and manage threats, events, and objects that exist within the non-physical layers of the operational environment, like the electromagnetic spectrum and the cyber domain.

Discussing the importance of these areas, Claudio told us: “These layers are extremely rich in information and can generate significant operational effects even when nothing immediately visible is happening in the physical world. Communications can be intercepted or disrupted, navigation systems can be affected, networks can be compromised, and adversary activity can develop well before any conventional threat becomes apparent.”

AEGIS, therefore, was designed to provide operators with a clearer representation of these less visible domains and to correlate them

with the wider operational picture. It has evolved significantly beyond this original scope, however, progressively integrating systems able to detect and geolocate satellite communications and electromagnetic emissions. The next major evolution came with the integration of unmanned ground and aerial systems, which became an opportunity to extend the original architecture and create a broader family of interconnected C2 solutions. This represents C5I's wider approach to innovation.

Claudio added: "What began as a specialised platform for electromagnetic and cyber situational awareness has evolved into an integrated command and control ecosystem capable of combining cyber, electromagnetic, sensor, and robotic information within a common architecture. Rather than creating isolated systems for each new requirement, we aim to develop interoperable C2 layers that can work together across tactical and strategic levels. The result is a more compact and integrated C2 stack, where information gathered at the tactical edge can contribute to higher-level situational awareness."

The insights Claudio shared with us stem from him having his finger on the pulse of C5I, something expected of the founder and CEO of a company of this nature. Claudio chose to work in this area as he always found himself interested in how advanced technology could support real operational needs. Thus, his background is in electronic engineering, automation, and robotics, and he has worked extensively within the defence electronics sector over the years, combining technical expertise with business and programme responsibilities.

He shared: "What has always attracted me most is the challenge of turning complex technologies into reliable, integrated, and usable systems. Defence and security are particularly demanding environments: innovation must not only be advanced, but also secure, interoperable, resilient, and capable of performing when conditions are difficult. After more than 20 years of experience across major technology and defence organisations, I decided to channel that experience into C5I, with the aim of creating a more agile organisation."

Claudio has certainly taken steps towards this already, and his ambition over the next five years remains to challenge the conventional approaches of this space and make high-quality, technologically advanced C5I solutions accessible to a much broader audience, both in Italy and beyond. As this shows, innovation for both this leader and his company is about finding that balance between sophisticated technology, advanced functionality, and real value.

The continued development of the C5I Alliance continues to be a central part of its strategy looking ahead, and as C5I brings together complementary capabilities within a shared ecosystem, the aim is to accelerate innovation, reduce unnecessary complexity, and bring advanced technologies to a wider market – all without compromising performance, security, or engineering quality.

“Our long-term goal is to build an environment in which sophisticated technologies can be integrated, verified, and validated more rapidly, used more intuitively, and made available to organisations that would traditionally have considered them too complex or too costly to adopt.”

Combining strong technical expertise with a practical and highly responsive approach, C5I is agile, trusted, and has access to a wealth of specialist expertise when larger programmes require it. Its customers



and partners continue to involve this defence system integrator in Italy into their activities, demonstrations, trials, and follow-up projects, and this, Claudio said, is the clearest indicator of the confidence people have in its team and abilities.

Receiving two awards for its contributions to the increasingly complex defence, security, and critical infrastructure requirements, both Claudio Santo Malavenda and C5I S.r.l. more broadly are combining innovation, system integration, quality, and cybersecurity with the ambition to become a trusted technology partner. Their objective is not to develop isolated products, but rather to create integrated, interoperable and mission-oriented solutions, bringing together software, sensors, secure communications, cybersecurity, AI and robotic platforms within coherent operational architectures.

More on these C5I solutions in Italy can be found by visiting this award-winning defence system integrator using the web address below.

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