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NEXTGEN

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INDUSTRY INNOVATORS TAKE HOME NEXTGEN SUPPLY CHAIN AWARDS

At the 2022 NextGen Supply Chain Conference, Supply Chain Management Review recognized the companies shaping tomorrow's supply chains.

BY BRIDGET McCREA, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The supply chain industry has been through a lot over the last few years. There have been new roadblocks to clear, emerging opportunities to leverage and a lot of new innovations to test. Whether they're products, services or a mix of the two, these advances are helping organizations navigate the complexities of the modern supply chain while also preparing them for success in the future.

For the fourth year in a row, *Supply Chain Management Review* recognized four innovative solution providers and four supply chain practitioners who are putting those solutions to work in their supply chains at NextGen 2022, which was held at the Chicago Athletic Association hotel in October. The awards are sponsored by the Association for Supply Chain Management and the ceremony was hosted by Abe Eshkenazi, ASCM's CEO.

It's important to note that these are not popularity contests: The awards are project based and recognize achievements with the integration of robotics, data analytics and AI into different areas in the supply chain, from planning to order fulfillment, as well as the digital transformation of the supply chain. Solution provider submissions are voted on by the conference advisory board; the end user awards are selected by the editors of *Supply Chain Management Review*.

In both instances, honorees were invited to give a seven-minute presentation on their project and then participate in a 30-minute panel discussion moderated by Eshkenazi.

The awards ceremony also included two special awards. Launched in 2022, the Visionary Award, recognizes an organization that is taking supply chain management to the next level. This year's winner was Procter & Gamble, one of five companies included in the supply chain masters category on Gartner's annual list of the Top 25 supply chains. And, this year, we introduced a Startup Award to highlight the energy and innovation that startups are bringing to the field. This year's winner was Covariant.

Here's a look at the companies that took home the awards and why they're being honored for the achievements and/or contributions that are helping to shape tomorrow's supply chains.

End user awards

As robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things and other advanced technologies make their way into the supply chain, forward-thinking organizations are putting these innovations to work in their operations.

At the Next Gen Supply Chain Conference, four different end users were honored for their use of these technologies.

The winners were NorthShore Care

embrace automation in a major way. That included case-handling autonomous mobile robots from Locus Robotics in his picking operations and robotic palletizing at the receiving dock. Robotics and automation have enabled Greenberg to serve more than 2.5 million customers since the company was founded in 2002.

HNI Corporation, a leading manufacturer of workplace furnishings, is using an analytics platform from LeanDNA to proactively plan its complex manufacturing processes and rapidly respond to unforeseen issues in the supply chain. For instance, Jay A. Senatra, the company's director of supply chain, noted that some products can be configured in tens of thousands of ways. The tool

enables HNI to both plan production and optimize inventory.

IBM AI Project Leader Tom Ward accepted his company's end user award and discussed an AI-related project that the company recently initiated, and Satish Vadlamani, Kenco Logistics' direc-

tor of data science and business intelligence was on hand to accept the logistics provider's NextGen award.

Solution provider awards

The Solution Provider awards showcase not just innovative products, but also how

a select group of solution providers are enabling their customers to tackle real-world challenges that lead to supply chain success.

The year's winners were Körber Supply Chain Software (robotics), AutoScheduler (analytics), Verusen (AI) and ConverSight (digital transformation).

The visionaries behind tomorrow's supply chains

Now more than ever, supply chain leaders could really use a crystal ball to tell them what's going to happen next and maybe even share some insights into how to best navigate the new crop of challenges waiting around the next corner. This isn't feasible, of course, but that doesn't mean companies can't be true visionaries within their own right.



Supply (robotics), HNI Corporation (analytics), IBM (AI) and Kenco Logistics (digital transformation). Selected by *Supply Chain Management Review*, the winners included a mix of small and large corporations.

Adam Greenberg, the president and founder of NorthShore Care Supply, explained that given the competition for labor near his facility, the fast-growing, small-to-mid-size e-tailer of incontinence supplies had no choice but to

And the awards go to...

Launched in 2019 to recognize industry leaders in the adoption of the technologies that will power the supply chains of the future, the NextGen Supply Chain Awards recognize organizations across four categories—robotics, analytics, AI and digital transformation.

Winners in the solution provider category are voted on by an advisory committee and based on the merits of a submitted project. Honorees in the end user category - the companies that are putting technology to work in their operations - are chosen by Supply Chain Management Review.

In 2020, we launched the Visionary Award, which recognizes an organization that is blazing the path for the other companies

in its vertical. The first honoree was Honeywell, recognized for going above and beyond to produce PPE in the early days of the pandemic. In 2021, we recognized American Eagle Outfitters for the introduction of a unique, shared e-fulfillment and delivery platform for specialty retailers.

For 2022, we added a Startup Award to recognize the contributions of the startup community to supply chain management.

This year's winners were:

2022 NextGen Solution Provider Awards

Robotics Winner: Körber Supply Chain Software

Carl Oreckback, Senior Solutions Consultant, Körber Supply Chain Software

Analytics Winner: AutoScheduler.AI

Jeff Potts, Chief Revenue Officer, AutoScheduler.AI

AI Winner: Verusen

Mary Kate Love, Director, GTM Strategy & Execution, Verusen

Digital Transformation Winner: ConverSight

Jordan Howard, Director of Sales, ConverSight

2022 Visionary Winner

Visionary Winner: Procter & Gamble

Ignacio Arranz, Senior Vice President, North America Product Supply Innovation and Global Physical Distribution, Procter & Gamble

2022 NextGen End User Awards

Robotics Winner: NorthShore Care Supply

Adam Greenberg, President, Owner and Founder, NorthShore Care Supply

Analytics Winner: HNI Corporation

Jay A. Senatra, Director of Supply Chain, HNI Corporation

AI Winner: IBM

Tom Ward, AI Project Leader, IBM

Digital Transformation Winner: Kenco Logistics

Satish Vadlamani, Director of BI and Data Science, Kenco Logistics

2022 NextGen Start Up Award

Start Up Winner: Covariant

Ally Lynch, CMO, Covariant

The NextGen Supply Chain Conference's Visionary Award recognizes a company that's made great strides with its own supply chain, and also advanced the profession. The 2020 winner, the first year for the award, was Honeywell, and the 2021 winner was American Eagle Outfitters. The former converted its facilities and assets to produce badly-needed PPE during the early days of the pandemic, while utilizing NextGen technologies and strategies to create a shared order fulfillment and last-mile delivery platform designed to level the playing field for small-to-mid-size specialty retailers.

This year's Visionary Award was presented to Procter & Gamble and accepted by Ignacio Arranz, senior vice president of supply innovation and global physical distribution. During a 30-minute fireside chat, he discussed P&G's self-stabilizing supply chain; the investments it is making in digitalization and the CPG leader's vision for Supply Chain 3.0, described as "an end-to-end synchronized, sustainable and resilient supply chain, amplified by data analytics and enabled by an organization that is at the leading edge of transformation, mastery and leadership."

Right out of the starting gate

Supply Chain Management Review's final award went to a startup company that illustrates the best of where supply chain management is headed next. Entries for this award were limited to submissions from supply chain startups that have a market-ready product that's already being used by at least one customer.

It was an active year for startups as companies worked to develop new solutions to solve pressing supply chain problems and also contribute to the future of supply chain management.

Silicon Valley, the 128 Corridor around Boston and the incubators in New York have all discovered supply chain; collectively they're bringing a new energy to the industry. The publication wanted to acknowledge that energy with a startup award that recognizes one company in the space that stands out from the pack.

Supply Chain Management Review received 14 submissions for this award category and whittling

that number down to just one winner—a task handled by the publication's advisory board—was challenging. In the end, Covariant was the clear favorite based on its contribution to the piece-picking robot space. Ally Lynch, the company's chief marketing officer, accepted the award and participated in a 30-minute fireside chat.

The Berkeley-based AI software company specializes in creating products that can be used to teach robots new skills. In doing so, the company is bringing AI out of the lab and into its customers' real-world operations.

Here at *Supply Chain Man-*



Satish Vadlamani

agement Review we salute all of the 2022 NextGen Supply Chain award winners and

the inroads that each of them is making within their respective area of supply chain management. As global supply chains continue to expand, interconnect and become even more complex, the need for advanced technology that can run them effectively and efficiently will expand exponentially. As this unfolds, *Supply Chain Management Review* will be standing by, ready to recognize those end users, solution providers, visionaries and startups that help drive the world's supply chains to new levels—both now and in the future.

Finally, if you're part of an award-winning supply chain team, be sure to fill out a submission on nextgensupplychainconference.com. The website will be open for 2023 submissions in April. We wish you luck, and hope to see you at next year's conference. ☯



Abe Eshkenazi, Satish Vadlamani, Tom Ward, Jay A Senatra & Adam Greenberg



Carl Oreback