



# Industry Award Winners Hit the JACKPOT at HDI 2011

There are leaders at every level of an organization, from the analyst level on up to the C-suite. “True leaders have the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others,” said Sophie Klossner, HDI’s director of membership. “They might not set out to be leaders, but they become so by the quality of their actions and the integrity of their intent.”

HDI has long recognized the value each individual brings to a team and each team brings to the organization. The industry awards presented each year at the annual conference reward individuals and teams for excellence. This year, HDI announced the addition of the Desktop Support Technician of the Year Award to the industry award family, which includes Analyst of the Year and Manager of the Year (sponsored by Robert Half Technology), the Internal and External Team Excellence Awards, and the Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Congratulations to all of this year's winners!*

## 2011 HDI Analyst of the Year: Elio Irizarry



LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Sophie Klossner, HDI; Elio  
Irizarry; John Reed, Robert  
Half Technology.

Elio Irizarry began his career seventeen years ago as a technical analyst with Salomon Brothers, Inc., managing the equipment inventory and keeping the file server rooms clean. Now, in his seventh year with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York, Elio is a senior help desk analyst. He attributes his success to his family, his managers, and his teammates.

A prime example of Elio’s team focus is his approach to knowledge sharing. As a major contributor to the help desk’s knowledge base, Elio makes sure that when he comes up with a solution, his entire team knows about it. According to his nominating supervisor, Jo-Ann Fuentes-Gonzalez, he is always

looking for ways to improve daily processes. With responsibility for supporting more than 200 applications, Elio takes pride in resolving the clients’ issues on the first call so that he does not have to escalate the ticket. “He is adamant about having a full understanding of what he supports over the phone and is careful about following the SLAs that are in place,” Jo-Ann says.

Over the years, Elio admits that there were several points where he felt depleted and often found his work to be unrewarding. He joined HDI one year ago, though, and found renewed energy. For those of you who aspire to be future award winners, Elio urges you to never give up. “The path is in front of you; you just have to see it,” he says. “This award is reflective of the journey of life, and I’m very grateful to have been on this road.”

Elio is from the New York City local chapter and he represented the Northeast region. Nominees are selected by their chapters. They then compete at the regional level before moving on to sit for final interviews and evaluation at the annual conference. Candidates must demonstrate a commitment to excellence in a range of key competencies, including customer service, performance, quality of work, process knowledge, team orientation and leadership, and problem solving.

## 2011 HDI Manager of the Year: George Reichert



LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Sophie Klossner, HDI;  
George Reichert; John  
Reed, Robert Half  
Technology.

George Reichert is the help desk manager at the Parker Hannifin corporate headquarters location, where he shares responsibility for managing the Parker Data Center. He has watched the service desk evolve from the early days of “dumb” terminals and printer resets to today’s more complex service organizations, which at Parker means supporting the hundreds of software applications and enterprise systems used by Parker’s more than 38,000 employees. Under George’s leadership, the service desk has grown into a department that is highly valued by its customers, consistently achieving greater than 98 percent customer satisfaction.

George firmly believes that to be an effective leader, you need to understand and embrace the value of people, something he learned from his past managers. “We are a customer service industry, and we all know how important it is to treat our customers with respect,” he says. “We have to start that at home with our own staffs.” It’s a testament to George’s leadership that his team prepared his nomination without his knowledge. Tammy Zadell, technical resource supervisor, sums it up: “He understands each person’s individual personality, strengths, and needs and utilizes this information in ways that enable him to blend the needs of the individual, the needs of the team, and the needs of the business. He is indeed a unique manager.”

Manager of the Year Award nominees undergo a rigorous evaluation process and are judged on a number of criteria, including innovation, customer focus, leadership, communication, ethics, and professionalism. This award recognizes George’s tireless contributions to his community, his organization, and his peers. As an active HDI member with the North Coast local chapter in Cleveland for the past seventeen years, George has been a local chapter officer for the past six years, five of those as president.

## 2011 Team Excellence Awards: Volkswagen Group of America and Technisource

The HDI Team Excellence Awards honor world-class support organizations that have enhanced the image of the industry by achieving the highest standards of excellence in customer service

and support delivery. Both the internal and external categories are judged according to the same rigorous criteria, including people, process and procedures, technology, and resources, supported by measured and reported performance results.

## 2011 HDI Team Excellence Award, Internal: Volkswagen Group of America



LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Craig Baxter, HDI; James  
Summers, Chuck Kukla,  
Dan Wilson; Brian Fox,  
CompuCom; Sophie  
Klossner, HDI.

Eighteen months ago, Volkswagen Group of America’s IT service organization was given the opportunity to build an IT service desk model and support team from scratch. After years of struggling to meet service quality standards and performance goals, its leaders knew it was time to end the “nightmare,” as client services manager Dan Wilson describes it. Starting over began with a comprehensive search for a partner. “It was a significant effort, and we picked an amazing partner in CompuCom, who is our staffing and services arm for most of the services we offer,” Dan says.

The IT service desk’s mission is to create trusting relationships with its customers and provide the highest level of support for approximately 4,000 internal corporate employees and contractors and 1,100 Audi and Volkswagen dealerships in the United States and Canada. The twenty-eight employees on the support team handle 6–7,000 phone and e-mail interactions per month, and some 78,000 interactions per year. The team is measured on its ability to deliver superior service as well as effective and sustained problem resolution. Key departmental metrics include quality assurance, customer satisfaction, and average speed of answer. Individual KPIs include first call resolution, quality assurance, interaction tickets updated, knowledge base contributions and usage, number of interactions, case-to-call ratio, and average talk time. According to Dan, the team consistently exceeds the 75–80 percent first-call resolution rate by leveraging administrative rights in the environment, keeping the knowledge base up to date, using the latest in remote-control software, and ensuring that all staff members have sufficient technical expertise. “Our performance metrics have proven our worth to the organization and has earned us the autonomy to run it,” he concludes. “We have great synergy, great teamwork, and it’s fun.”



The group attributes much of its success to their people and the culture they have created. Recognizing that it's much easier to build a culture than to change one, Chuck Kloka, service desk manager, says, "We hire nice people who happen to be technical. We work hard; we play hard. It's fun to come to work, hanging out for a common goal."

## 2011 HDI Team Excellence Award, External: Technisource



**LEFT TO RIGHT:**  
Craig Baxter, HDI; Brad Trout, Vikki Jansen, Pam Zimmerman, Rebecca Maher, Ken Hayes; Sophie Klossner, HDI.

Technisource has been providing multitier, global service desk outsourcing services for more than twenty years, from both its own support centers and its client sites. For the award nomination, the company nominated its Mechanicsburg, PA, support center, from which the company supports more than fifty clients and handles more than two million customer interactions per year.

Technisource's support center mission is "to partner with our clients to resolve every issue on the first contact." Brad Trout, Technisource's national delivery director, explains that although it sounds simple, the mission statement has a tremendous impact on the support organization and its customers. "Resolving interactions on the first contact drives all other metrics in the operation," says Brad. "As a result of our focus on first contact resolution, our support mission complements our overall company mission of delivering quality, flexibility, and continual service improvement to each of our customers."

Technisource also extended its commitment to analyzing and improving operations, internally and externally through single-point-of-contact services. The center's quality assurance program reinforces the employee's responsibility to not only provide technically accurate, procedurally compliant services, but also actively identify and eliminate service defects. The support center conducts approximately 20,000 surveys per month and has averaged a 4.6 rating (on a 5-point scale) over the past two years. "Our continued ability to deliver service excellence is based upon our passion and core values of integrity, respect, service excellence, unity, and intrapreneurship," says Rebecca Maher, director of quality assurance and training.

After qualifying as a finalist in the 2009 award season, the organization identified areas for improvement, focused on what they needed to do to win, and created a dedicated project management office for its continual service improvement (CSI) initiative. The plan clearly worked. "Be patient and persevere. Winning is not a one-time thing," reflects Ken Hayes, director of strategic initiatives. "Love what you do, get your whole team involved, and have fun doing it. Even if you don't win, you're going to learn from the experience and make your support center better."

## 2011 Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award: Katherine Spencer Lee



**LEFT TO RIGHT:**  
Craig Baxter, HDI, and Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award winners Katherine Spencer Lee (2011) and Char LaBounty (2010).

Char LaBounty, the 2010 winner, presented this year's Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award to Katherine Spencer Lee, who has brought strategic vision and leadership to the IT service and technical support industry throughout her career. As an advocate of professional training and certification, Katherine led the transition away from the old practice of just hiring anyone to fill open positions, to bringing on board the most qualified support professionals, with proven customer service skills, technical knowledge, and professional certification. She has been an HDI member since 2001, serving on the HDI Strategic Advisory Board for three years, for one year as chair. She was instrumental in growing the local chapters at the grassroots level, bringing thought leadership to the meeting agendas, and encouraging many of her colleagues to run for local chapter leadership positions. "She has been an incredible asset to HDI and the industry. Because of her vision and commitment, our industry is vibrant and growing today," says Char.

The Ron Muns Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes individuals for their contributions, enthusiasm, and tireless efforts to advance our industry. "It is a privilege to receive this award, but I also see it as a reason to continue to give back," reflects Katherine. "It's not a one-time thing to win. It is a lifetime responsibility that I'm looking forward to fulfilling."