

COA Honors Globant and Leaders of PepsiCo, Riverwood Capital and Inter&Co at BRAVO Awards

As the awards near their 30th anniversary, Daniella Levine Cava, the mayor of Miami-Dade County, declared October 30 as "BRAVO Day."



MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, November 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Council of the Americas held the [29th BRAVO Business Awards gala](#) on October 30 at

the Loews Coral Gables Hotel in Miami to recognize the achievements of business leaders in tech innovation, entrepreneurship, digital banking, sustainability, and gender equality.

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“Whether a Fortune 500 company with years of exceptional growth or a booming start-up ready for new opportunities, receiving a BRAVO Award has become the gold standard for recognizing excellence within Latin America’s private sector,” said Maria Lourdes Teran, vice president of AS/COA Miami and chair of the BRAVO Business Awards. “These are leaders who have redefined what is possible and embody the spirit of resilience and progress, showing us how dedication to the region can spark transformation on a global scale.”

Paula Santilli, CEO of PepsiCo Latin America, was honored with the BRAVO Visionary Leadership Award for her

positive impact to communities in the region, especially through job creation, sustainability practices, and empowerment of women.

“With every wise business decision that the men and women in this room take, there is magic happening,” Santilli said at the gala. “With that magic, we have the privilege of opening up better livelihoods for so many people out there in Latin America, especially women that have not had the same privilege that we have all had as we grew up in our cities in Latin America.”

The BRAVO Company of the Decade Award was awarded to Globant and accepted by Martin Umaran, co-founder and chairman of EMEA at Globant. The award recognized Globant's transformative efforts to reinvent the IT services sector.

“One the goals of the founders of Globant was to generate opportunities for the people, to have a company where people would like to work. And, of course, what we do is technology, but that is much more important,” said Umaran at the ceremony.

The BRAVO Investor of the Year Award was presented to Francisco Alvarez-Demalde, co-founder and managing Partner of Riverwood Capital, for his commitment to fostering the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Latin America.

“I feel very optimistic about what we can do together in the region. I feel that this is a community that really wants to thrive,” said Alvarez-Demalde. “With investment but most importantly with talent, I think that Latin America has an amazing future.”

João Vitor Menin, CEO of Inter&Co, received the BRAVO Innovative CEO of the Year Award for revolutionizing digital banking in Brazil and driving its strategic expansion to the United States' market.

“Innovation is about taking risks. Coming from the banking industry, we are used to managing risk. It's our daily routine, so we know how to handle it, but not all entrepreneurs know how to do that and in order to disrupt the status quo you need to learn how to take risks,” said Menin after receiving the award.

As the ceremony nears its 30th anniversary, the Mayor of Miami-Dade County Daniella Levine



From left to right: Martin Umaran (Globant), Maria Lourdes Teran (AS/COA), Paula Santilli (PepsiCo Latin America), Susan Segal (AS/COA), Francisco Alvarez-Demalde (Riverwood Capital), João Vitor Menin (Inter&Co).



Mayor of Miami-Dade County Daniella Levine Cava declaring October 30 as “BRAVO Day.”

Cava, presented a special proclamation declaring October 30 as "BRAVO Day."

"For nearly three decades, the BRAVO Awards have highlighted the most innovative leaders and companies in Latin America whose visionary work has worldwide impact," Levine Cava said. "Here, in Miami-Dade, we know, more than anywhere in the United States, the unique talent, the entrepreneurial drive, and the technological innovation that comes out of Latin America."

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Executives representing multinational corporations, multilatinas, Latin American tech unicorns, venture capital firms, academia, media, and NGOs addressed key themes such as the energy transition, Latin America's role in the world stage, digital inclusion, global mega trends, and the future of technology in the region.

In a first panel called "Unleashing Latin America's Potential on the Global Stage," Cristina Palmaka, president of SAP Latin America & Caribbean, spoke about AI and digital connectivity, among other topics.

"You see the number of startups that we have across the region, more than 30,040 unicorns, most of them bringing innovation, incorporating technology, AI, in many areas that sometimes we don't even know that we are using," said Palmaka. "I think that there is potential and this opportunity for this creativity that we have across the region to materialize in real business."

Ariane Ortiz-Bollin, vice president and senior credit officer for Latin America Credit Strategy and Research at Moody's Ratings, outlined the region's potential as a nearshoring partner but also pointed out its strategic importance in the global economy.

"We all know that Latin America is rich in minerals that are key for the green transition, and that will be a very good opportunity for the U.S. to counter China's presence, if that's what it wants," she explained.

During a second panel called "Key Imperatives for the Region's Clean Energy Transition,"

speakers spoke on how Latin America is a region well-positioned to lead the global shift to clean energy.

"Latin America is the most sustainable region in the world when it comes to energy," said Juan Ignacio Rubiolo, executive vice president and president of the International Business Unit and Infrastructure at The AES Corporation. "We generate roughly 65 percent of our energy from renewable sources. So we are not coming from scratch. We need to continue evolving and continue transitioning toward a much more sustainable environment," he said.

Shannon Kellogg, vice president of Public Policy, Americas at Amazon Web Services, spoke about how in order to build data centers in Latin America, companies need to feel confident that they will have clean energy.

"I do believe in the potential of the region. I think there's going to be a lot of growth. I think there are going to be a lot of places that become AI centers, but let's have the long-term strategy and plan to get there," said Kellogg.

Haim Israel, global strategist and head of Global Thematic Research at Bank of America, presented an analysis of the key megatrends set to reshape the global business landscape.

"Today, we are getting more data and stronger processing power for free," he said in a presentation about how generative AI and quantum computing will transform industries.

A panel about digital inclusion to foster economic growth was next. Paula Bellizia, vice president of Latin America at Amazon Web Services, discussed the adoption of technologies in the region.

"This is the biggest opportunity for Latin America. How are we going to use technology, technology for a purpose? How are we going to use technology to propel our business in terms of productivity and have an even bigger impact in the world beyond Latin America?" said Bellizia.

Alejandro Anderlic, head of Government Affairs and Public Policy for Latin America at Salesforce, mentioned how there is a digital imperative to have technology available to everybody.

"Technology is reaching every aspect of our lives. Every single organization is becoming a tech company, and we need to tackle these challenges, in which technology should be available to every single person," Anderlic said. "So this time requires us to lead by example."

Next, Susan Segal, president & CEO of AS/COA, spoke with Alvarez-Demalde, about the outlook of the business sector in Latin America. Segal also moderated a panel titled "What it Takes to Build Billion Dollar Companies in the Next Phase." Sebastian Mejia, co-founder and president of Rappi, spoke about the history and challenges of building of his company.

"There's just a beauty of being a founder, that you're so optimistic and you completely disregard how hard it's going to be," said Mejia, "You have to have that naiveté. Otherwise, you wouldn't just go and build a company".

The program continued with Martin Migoya, co-founder and CEO of Globant, who engaged in a conversation with Jorge Becerra, emeritus senior partner and senior adviser for BCG, about Globant's journey and goals as a digital transformation company.

"Globant is a vehicle to transmit what we have inside," said Migoya. "That's why it's such an authentic company. It's a vehicle to create what we have inside and that is a lot of entrepreneurship. Transmitting that for the next generation is essential for us."

In another conversation, the Vice President of the Dominican Republic Raquel Peña analyzed the country's rapid economic growth with Adriana Cisneros, CEO of Cisneros.

"Our goal is to continue promoting investments so that we continue to allow healthy economic growth, but this needs to be economic growth that can be translated into development so that we are able to raise the quality of life of all Dominicans," the vice president said.

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