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Cardiff Founder, William Stern, Earns Gold Stevie® Award for Lifetime Achievement in Financial Technology

After funding more than $12 billion to small businesses, Cardiff's William Stern wins the Gold Stevie® Award for Lifetime Achievement in Financial Technology.

Stevie® 2026 Technology Excellence Awards®

William Stern, Founder and CEO of Cardiff

DEL MAR, CA, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than two decades after founding Cardiff with the belief that small businesses deserved a faster, more transparent way to access capital, Founder and CEO William Stern has been awarded the Gold Stevie® Award for Lifetime Achievement in Financial Technology in the third annual Stevie® Awards for Technology Excellence.

The honor recognizes Stern's 22-year career helping reshape small business lending through technology, combining rapid digital underwriting with a relationship-first approach that has enabled Cardiff to fund more than $12 billion to businesses across the United States.

The Stevie Awards for Technology Excellence celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of individuals, teams, and organizations shaping the future of technology across all industry sectors.

Over the past two decades, Cardiff has grown from a startup into one of the country's leading technology-enabled small business lenders. Under Stern's leadership, the company has introduced AI-powered underwriting, approvals in minutes, same-day funding, borrower-first technology, and a service model built around helping entrepreneurs access capital when they need it most. The company has continued expanding through every major economic disruption since 2004, including the Great Financial Crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and multiple

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interest-rate cycles.

Judges recognized not only Cardiff's business growth, but the consistency of Stern's leadership through changing markets.

"William Stern's leadership in building Cardiff from the ground up and creating lasting value for small businesses is exceptional. His vision, impact, and sustained contributions make him a highly deserving candidate for lifetime achievement recognition," one judge wrote.

Another described Stern's leadership as "a masterclass in founder resilience and industry leadership," while another praised Cardiff's ability to blend technology with a relationship-based approach to serving small businesses.

"I'm honored to receive this recognition, but no one builds a company like Cardiff alone," said Stern. "For more than 22 years, we've stayed focused on one thing: helping entrepreneurs get access to capital quickly, transparently, and with people who genuinely understand what they're building. This award reflects the work of an incredible team and the trust thousands of business owners have placed in us over the years."

The recognition follows another milestone year for Cardiff. In addition to surpassing $12 billion funded, the company expanded its digital lending platform, earned Great Place To Work® Certification with 98% employee approval, and continued serving as a trusted voice on small business finance in publications including Reuters, Barron's, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Yahoo Finance, and hundreds of other media outlets.

More than 700 nominations from organizations in 37 nations and territories were considered in this year's Stevie Awards for Technology Excellence. More than 180 executives and technology professionals participated in the judging process.

"We congratulate all of the winners in the third annual Stevie® Awards for Technology Excellence for their outstanding achievements," said Stevie Awards President Maggie Miller. "Their innovations are helping shape the future of technology across every industry, and we look forward to celebrating their success on October 28."

Winners will be honored at a red carpet awards ceremony on Wednesday, October 28, 2026, at the Pullman Paris Montparnasse in Paris, France. Details about the Stevie Awards for Technology Excellence and the complete list of 2026 winners are available at Tech.StevieAwards.com.

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About Cardiff

Founded in 2004, Cardiff is one of America's leading technology-enabled small business lenders, helping entrepreneurs borrow better through fast, transparent financing. The company has funded more than $12 billion to businesses nationwide through working capital loans, equipment financing, and other commercial financing solutions. Combining AI-powered underwriting with relationship-driven service, Cardiff delivers approvals in minutes and funding as fast as the same day while helping business owners confidently access the capital they need to grow.

About the Stevie Awards

The Stevie® Awards, widely recognized as the world's premier business awards, are nicknamed the Stevies, derived from the Greek word stephanos, meaning "crowned." The Stevie Awards are conferred through nine programs: the Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards, the German Stevie Awards, the Middle East & North Africa Stevie Awards, The American Business Awards®, The International Business Awards®, the Stevie Awards for Great Employers, the Stevie Awards for Women in Business, the Stevie Awards for Technology Excellence, and the Stevie Awards for Sales & Customer Service.

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