The Top 30 Software CTOs

European Edition
2024

Introduction

Following the success of our 2023 report into the Top 30 Software CTOs we are delighted to share with you an updated version for 2024.
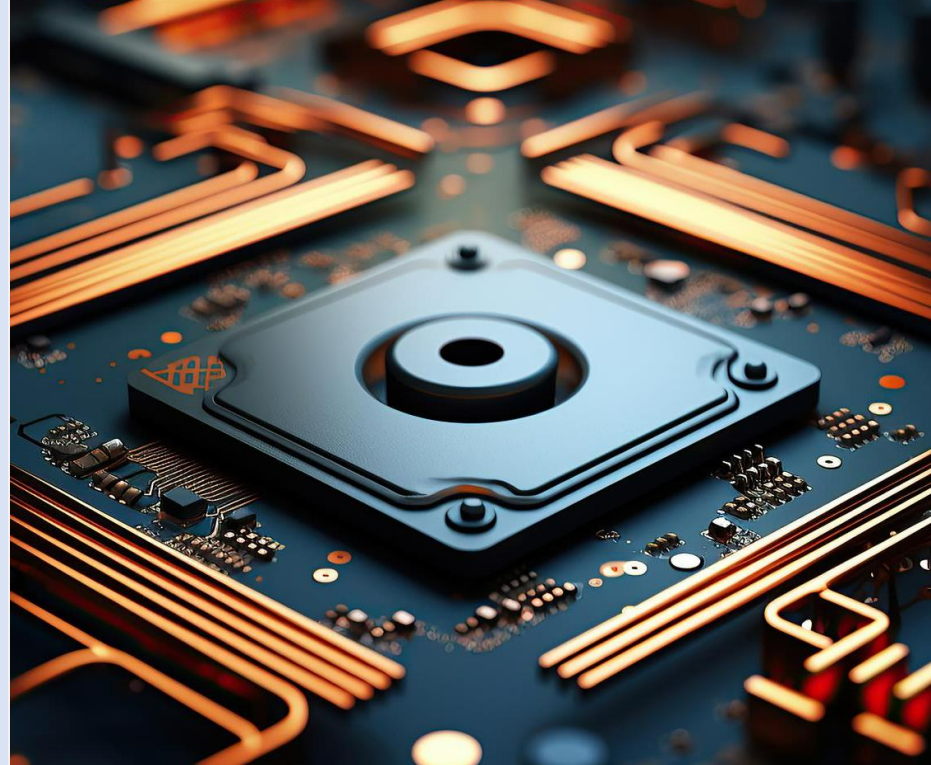
This year's report features a strong focus on private equity backed software companies with the majority of candidates on the list working with PE-backed portfolio companies and funds.

Of course, any list like this is subjective and there are many deserving CTOs who aren't on the list. This year's list focuses on CTOs from some of the largest and most influential PE backed software companies in Europe.

We hope you find it an interesting read and congratulations to all the CTOs included in this year's list.

If you have any suggestions for future editions, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Peter Franks
Founder Neon River

About Neon River

Neon River is a headhunting firm that specializes in working with software and technology companies, helping them find and attract the best leaders in the industry.

We have deep experience of working with entrepreneurial VC and PE backed companies. If we can help you in the future – don't hesitate to reach out us hello@neonriver.com

Marko Perisic

Chief Products and Engineering Officer
The Access Group

Backed by leading private equity firms Hg and TA Associates, The Access Group has reached a valuation of over £9bn. The company provides a suite of business management software tools across areas like finance, project management, accounting and procurement. The business was originally founded in 1991 and has over 7,500 employees.

Before becoming CPTO for The Access Group, Marko Perisic was CPTO for Zellis, a leading provider of HR and payroll software. He also spent twelve years working for Microsoft, including being GM for their SMB products. Perisic holds a BEng in Computer and Systems Engineering from Carleton University.

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Alesia Braga

Group Chief Product and
Technology Officer
Cint

Cint is a developer of market research software. Based in Stockholm, Cint operates a large consumer network for digital survey-based research with over 149 million engaged respondents across more than 130 countries.

Cint was bought by Nordic Capital in 2016. The company completed a successful IPO on the NASDAQ stock exchange in 2021.

Braga served as CTO at Quandoo and SmartRecruiters before joining Cint as Group CTO in 2023. In 2024, she was promoted to the role of Group CPTO at the company.

She holds a Masters in Applied Mathematics and Computer Science from Belarusian State University and a Masters in Economics and Computer Science from AKAD University.

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Daniel Becker

Former Chief Technology Officer
Dedalus Group

Daniel Becker has recently stepped down as CTO of Dedalus, an Ardian PE backed provider of software to the healthcare sector. He led a large team of 2,000+ engineers across various international locations.

Prior to Dedalus, Daniel spent five years working with the open source software provider Red Hat, where he led the Open Stack Engineering team. Previously he held other technology leadership roles including CTO for the early stage software business SourceDogg.

Daniel Becker holds a BEng in Computer Engineering from the University of Limerick, an MBA from University College Dublin and is currently pursuing a PhD in Computer Science from University College Dublin. Current focus areas include the future impacts of cloud and AI on healthcare.

Mark Spiteri

Portfolio CTO
Montagu

Dr Mark Spiteri is a Partner and the Portfolio CTO at Montagu, a leading Private Equity firm. In this role, he advises portfolio companies on product and technology strategies, champions engineering best practices, and oversees technical due diligence for new investments.

Mark previously served as SVP of Software Engineering at Experian. Prior to that, he was the Chief R&D Officer at FinancialForce.com—a provider of ERP software solutions backed by Advent, TCV, and Salesforce. Earlier in his career, he held the position of SVP of Engineering at Software AG and before that, at Progress Software, managing multiple acquisitions and their successful integrations.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from the University of Malta and a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Cambridge.

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Vicky Wills

Chief Technology Officer
Exclaimer

Headquartered in the UK, Exclaimer is the leading global platform for centrally creating, managing and applying email signatures, with ambitious product expansion plans in the coming year.

Their software integrates with Microsoft 365, Google Workspace and Microsoft Exchange to enable over 65k organisations to protect and promote their brand. Exclaimer is PE-backed, and Insight Partners purchased a majority stake for over £100m in 2020 with participation from Farview Equity Partners and Livingbridge.

Wills joined the business in 2023. Prior to joining Exclaimer, she was the CTO at UK Insurtech Zego and has worked in hands-on engineering and leadership roles at several high-growth companies.

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Yaron Shaer

Chief Technology Officer
Klarna

Originally founded in 2005, Klarna has become one of the leading providers of payments software to e-commerce companies. Klarna is perhaps best known for its "buy now, pay later" functionality. Today, the company has over 6,000 employees.

Yaron joined the business as Senior Engineering Manager in 2014, before being promoted to VP Engineering in 2018 and CTO in 2022. In his earlier career, Yaron held engineering leadership positions at Camelot and Nokia.

He holds a BSc in Software Engineering from Tel Aviv University.

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Stuart Pearce

Portfolio CTO
Hg

Hg is a leading private equity firm, specializing in buyouts of technology companies. Hg has a number of high profile investments in the software industry including Visma, Access Group and Dext. Stuart provides Hg's portfolio with advice on engineering best practice.

Prior to Hg, Stuart was Director of Application Development for Sophos, a security software company acquired by Thoma Bravo for $3.8bn in 2019.

He holds a BEng in Software Engineering from the University of Manchester.

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Martin Klenk

Co-Founder and Chief
Technology Officer
Celonis

Headquartered in Munich, Celonis specializes in process mining and execution management software. Process mining can be used to help automate manual processes. In August 2022, the company raised a further $1bn in funding at a valuation of over $13bn.

Investors include the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA). The business has over 20 offices around the world and is one of the largest software companies in Europe.

Klenk is a co-founder of the company, joining the business in 2010. He holds a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Munich.

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Victoria Normark

Chief Technology Officer
Tradedoubler

Tradedoubler provides a digital marketing platform connecting brands and publishers. The company primarily serves clients in industries including e-commerce, technology, and digital media. Tradedoubler was founded in Stockholm in 1999 and has 15 offices in 12 countries. The company has been listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange since 2005.

Normark joined Tradedoubler as CTO in 2022. Previously, Normark served as CTO at Privitar, a data access management software company backed by Warburg Pincus and Accel. The company was later acquired by Informatica in 2023. She also served senior engineering leadership roles at Snow Software.

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Johannes Schaback

CTO
SumUp

SumUp is a payments software and hardware business, with over 3,000 employees around the world. The company is valued at over €8bn, with investors including Bain Capital and Goldman Sachs. Schaback joined the company as CTO in 2021.

Previously he was co-founder and CTO of Visual Meta, who operate a number of shopping portals across Europe.

Schaback holds a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Berlin and an MSc in Computer Science from Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Patrick Chatain

CTO
Contentsquare

Contentsquare are best known for their digital experience platform that helps companies to create better online experiences for their customers. Headquartered in Paris, Contentsquare raised $600m in funding in July 2022, at a valuation of $5.6bn.

Chatain became CTO of Contentsquare in 2017 and was previously CTO of FullSix Group, a marketing agency that is part of the Havas Group. He spent much of his early career at the French telecoms operator Bouygues.

Chatain holds a BSc in Physics from Pierre and Marie Curie University.

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Meri Williams

Chief Technology Officer
Pleo

Meri Williams is Chief Technology Officer at international fintech unicorn Pleo, a cloud-based spend management system that issues smart company cards to employees to automate expenses, pays invoices and provides real-time insights into businesses end-to-end spending.

Meri's role involves leading the technology team, spanning engineering, IT, security, data and analytics, with an especial focus on technical innovation within Pleo's product.

Meri can talk about a broad range of topics and their areas of expertise include the role of technology in changing the current business landscape, AI and how it is driving innovation within finance, building & scaling tech teams, recruiting engineers, LGBTQ+ inclusion, STEM education & career paths for CTOs.

Paolo Negri

Chief Technology Officer and Co-founder Contentful

Paolo Negri is CTO and co-founder of Contentful, a software company best known for their headless content management platform. In 2021, the company raised Series F funding of $175m at a reported valuation of close to $1bn.

Before co-founding Contentful, Paolo worked for the online games company Wooga, and the online homeware retailer Home24. An Italian by background, Negri has spent much of his career working in the UK and Germany.

He holds a BSc in Engineering Management from the University of Milan.

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Richard Rosenberg

Chief Technology Officer
Spendesk

Richard Rosenberg is currently CTO for Spendesk, who specialize in developing cloud-based software for helping companies to manage their expenses and broader costs. Headquartered in Paris, Spendesk raised $114m in Series C funding in January 2022, valuing the business at over $1.5bn. Investors include General Atlantic, Eight Roads and Index Ventures.

Rosenberg is a highly experienced CTO, having previously been CTO for the Financial Times and leading online travel site Hotels.com.

He holds a BEng in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Salford.

Luca Martinetti

Co-Founder and CTO
TrueLayer

TrueLayer is an open banking payments network – helping to power faster and more secure online payments. The company raised $130m in 2021 which valued the company at over $1bn. Investors include Tiger Global and Stripe.

Martinetti co-founded TrueLayer in 2017, and previously worked as an engineer for Plaid.

He is currently based in London having spent much of his early career in San Francisco.

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Alexander Lystad

CTO
Visma

Visma is one of the largest PE backed software companies in Europe with over 14,500 employees. The company is best known for its ERP software which is used by SME, enterprise and public sector customers. The business has revenues of over €2bn.

Visma is majority owned by PE firm Hg Capital, with minority stakes being held by Warburg Pincus and TPG. It is reported the company is valued at over €20bn.

Lystad was appointed CTO in 2023 having previously been Director of Cloud and Engineering for the company. He holds a BSc in Computer Science from NTNU and a MSc in Embedded Systems from the University of South-East Norway.

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Timothy Goodwin

Chief Product & Technology Officer
Planet

Planet provides retail and hospitality businesses with a modular payment partner for accepting online payments. With global headquarters in London and regional headquarters in Paris, Galway, Dortmund, Zurich and Madrid, Planet operates in 64 markets across 5 continents. Eurazeo acquired a majority stake in the company in 2015, valuing it at €550m. In 2021, Eurazeo sold its stake to Advent International while reinvesting alongside Advent, which valued the company at €1.8bn.

Goodwin served as the CEO of 3C Payment before its merger with Planet, after which he assumed the role of CPTO at Planet in 2020. He holds a BSc in Physics from University of Nottingham.

Frank Soetebeer

Chief Technology Officer
EcoVadis

EcoVadis is a SaaS company that helps companies to manage their ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) risk and compliance in global supply chains. It also provides an e-learning platform to support sustainable growth. Headquartered in Paris, the company was founded in 2007.

In 2020, the company received around $200m in funding from CVC to help drive further growth, followed by a $500m investment led by Astorg and BeyondNetZero in 2022.

Soetebeer joined EcoVadis as CTO in 2021. Before this, he served as a long-standing software engineering leader at Adobe for nearly 20 years. He is based in Hamburg.

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Dan Matthews

Chief Technology Officer
IFS

Headquartered in Sweden, IFS is a provider of enterprise software for enterprise resource planning (ERP), enterprise asset management and enterprise service management. The leading product, IFS Applications, has over 1,000,000 users. It has more than 7,000 employees in more than 80 countries.

IFS has been owned by EQT since 2015, with minority stakes held by Hg and TA Associates.

Matthews has spent his entire career of more than 28 years with IFS. He was promoted to become CTO in 2020. He holds a MSc in Computer Science and Software Engineering from Linköping University and is based in Sweden.

Jeroen van der Heijden

Chief Technology Officer
Exact

Exact is a Dutch software company that offers accounting, ERP, and other software for small and medium sized enterprises. Exact develops cloud-based and on-premises software for industries such as accountancy, wholesale distribution, professional services and manufacturing, serving more than 500,000 companies.

Exact was acquired by Apax Partners in 2015 for €730m. In 2019, Apax sold its stake to KKR. Since 2021, Silver Lake has held a minority stake in Exact.

Before joining Exact as CTO in 2018, van der Heijden served as CTO for software companies Raet and Cegeka, having worked at Exact earlier in his career as well. He holds a Masters in Classical Literature from Radboud University and a Masters in Literacy Theory from University of Utrecht, Netherlands.

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Céline Bayer

Chief Technology Officer
Lemonway

Founded in 2007, Lemonway a payment platform developer headquartered in Paris. The company specializes in collecting money on behalf of third parties in a secure framework and holding funds in escrow accounts.

Lemonway has raised series B funding of €50m from Breega, SpeedInvest, and Toscafund.

Bayer was previously Deputy CTO at Mangopay until 2022 and Head of Technology at BforBank before joining Lemonway as CTO in 2023. Earlier in her career, she worked at Dassault Systemes.

Bayer holds a Master's Degree in Engineering from ECE Ecole d'ingénieurs.

Hanspeter Wolf

Chief Technology Officer
FNZ Group

FNZ develops software for financial institutions and wealth management firms. FNZ's platform helps customers to integrate operations from front to back office. FNZ was founded in New Zealand in 2003 by Adrian Durham.

In the most recent funding round in 2022, FNZ raised $1.4bn by Motive Partners and CPP Investments. Summit Partners also became a minority shareholder in FNZ that same year.

Previously Wolf founded Appway, a company creating business process automation software focused on customer onboarding and customer lifecycle management for financial institutions in 2003 and served as CEO. When Appway was acquired by FNZ in 2022, Wolf transitioned to the role of CTO at FNZ.

Andrew Henderson

Chief Technology Officer
Advanced

Advanced is a British software company originally founded by Vin Murria in 2008. The company specializes in developing and acquiring software businesses targeted at specific sectors such as healthcare, education, legal and manufacturing. Through various acquisitions, the company now employs more than 2,400 people.

The company was bought by Vista Equity Partners in 2014 at a value of £756m. In 2019, Vista sold half of its stake to BC Partners for £2bn, including debt.

Henderson joined Advanced as CTO in 2023. He has held several senior leadership roles previously including Chief Information Officer at Westpac New Zealand, Managing Director and Head of Engineering & Architecture for CCB at JPMorgan Chase in the US, and CTO at ING in the Netherlands.

Ulrika Allén

Chief Technology Officer
AddSecure

Founded in 1975, AddSecure provides IoT connectivity solutions throughout the Europe. The company also offers alarm signalling and fleet management systems. Its IoT is used in buildings, alarms, transportation and logistics, security, healthcare and other sectors. AddSecure is headquartered in Stockholm and has more than 1,100 employees.

Castik Capital Partners bought the company from Abry Partners in 2019.

Before joining AddSecure as CTO in 2022, Allén held engineering leadership roles in the automotive manufacturing industry, mainly in Volvo and WirelessCar, a connected car technology company which was a subsidiary of Volvo. Most recently, she served as Director of Advanced Tools, Operational Efficiency and Technical Support at Volvo Group.

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Mathias Verhoeven

Chief Technology Officer
Lighthouse

Lighthouse (formerly OTA Insight) provides market analysis, BI and pricing tools for the travel and hospitality industry. They help predict demand for hotels and flights, track pricing of competitors, monitor performance and solve parity issues in a single platform. Their clients range from AirBnB hosts to major hotel chains.

Founded in Belgium in 2012 and now headquartered in the UK, Lighthouse raised a $370m Series C funding in 2024, achieving unicorn status with a valuation exceeding $1bn. The funding round was led by KKR and other existing investors.

Verhoeven joined the company in 2014 as a software engineer and was promoted to become CTO in 2022. He hold a BS in Computer Sciences and an MS in Computer Science from Ghent University.

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Beccy Weeks

Group Chief Technology Officer
The Citation Group

The Citation Group is a provider of compliance software and services to SMEs. The company specializes in HR and employment law, health and safety, ISO certification, background screening and related areas. Founded in 1995 and headquartered in the UK, it employs around 2,000 people.

In 2020, the company was bought by KKR from Hg. Hg reinvested in the company, resulting in co-control of the business.

Weeks served as CTO / CIO of Citation Professional Solutions, a consulting division specializing in legal, HR, health and safety, and administrative fields before becoming CTO of the entire group in 2020. Prior to that, she held the role of Group IT Systems Development Director at SIG. She holds a BSc in Business Economics from the University of Salford.

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Allan Bech

Chief Technology Officer
EG A/S

Founded in 1978 and headquartered in Denmark, EG makes industry-specific software for private and public customers in the Nordics. They have customers in the manufacturing, building and construction, retail, wholesale and transportation, public sector and professional services industries.

Nordic Capital sold the company to Danish PE firm Axcel for $209m in 2013 and Axcel sold the company to Francisco Partners for $560m in 2019.

Bech was appointed CTO in 2019 and has served the company for more than 12 years. Bech has been with EG since 2011 and was promoted to become CTO in 2019. Prior to EG he worked for Thg:data which was acquired by EG in 2011.

Alex Kaluzny

Chief Technology Officer
Doctolib

Founded in 2013 by Stanislas Niox-Chateau and his three co-founders, the software firm assists healthcare providers with administrative tasks, primarily appointment booking and management. Rather than having to contact practices directly, patients can use Doctolib to check availability and book medical appointments online.

In 2022, Doctolib raised $549m in equity and debt, with the investment led by Eurazeo and participation from Bpifrance and General Atlantic. This brought the company's valuation to $6.4bn, making it the highest-valued French startup.

Before joining Doctolib in 2021, he served as CPTO at Egencia, which was later acquired by Amex. Kaluzny holds a BS in Computer Science from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and an MBA from Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

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Claus Jepsen

Chief Product and Technology Officer
Unit4

Founded in 1980, Unit4 is a global provider of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software headquartered in Denmark. Unit4's next-software is designed to help mid-market businesses manage their financial, operational and human resources processes. The company has more than 6,000 customers across a number of sectors, including professional services, public sector, nonprofit and education.

In 2021, Advent International sold Unit4 to TA Associates for more than $2bn with participation from Partners Group.

Jepsen joined Unit4 in 2014 as Chief Architect and Head of Innovation, eventually becoming CTO in 2020. In 2023, he transitioned to the role of CPTO. Prior to that, Jepsen led software development at Infor for more than 8 years. He is based in Denmark.
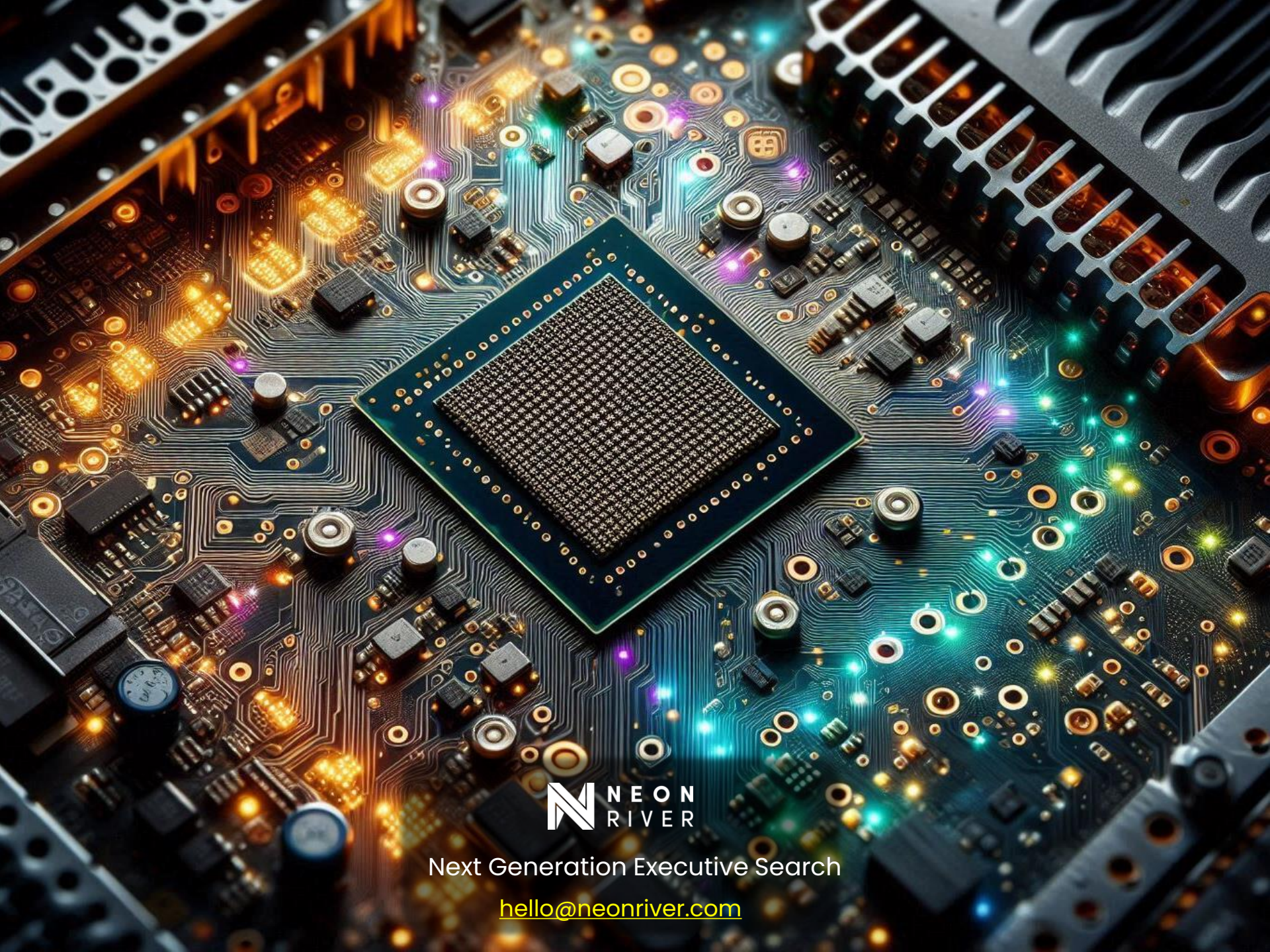
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Markus Noga

Chief Technology Officer
IONOS

IONOS by 1&1, based in Montabaur, Germany, is Europe's largest web hosting company and 2nd largest domain registrar globally. IONOS offers mass market hosting services, domains, managed hosting and cloud applications to consumers and SMEs.

In 2023, IONOS went public on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. The annual revenue was €1.42bn in 2023.

Noga joined IONOS in 2023 as CTO. Previously, he served as VP Solutions Technology and General Manager Linux at SUSE, a German open-source software company. He also led machine learning team and cloud platform business services team at SAP until 2020.

He studied computer science at the University of Karlsruhe, where he also completed his doctorate.

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