

2019 OTT Accolades Finalists Announced

By: Brian Mahony

We are excited to announce the 2019 “OTT Accolades” (OTTA) finalists. Each year, we honor the executives and companies that stand above the crowd representing the best of the OTT industry. Winners for each category will be announced live and crystal “OTTA” trophies awarded at OTT Executive Summit, May 29th in New York City (www.OTTExec.com).

We had huge interest in this year’s OTT Accolades awards program (OTTA is pronounced “otter” with a Boston accent). Based on feedback, we also made a few changes. First, we combined the “Product of the Year” and “Company of the Year” categories. There really wasn’t enough differentiation since companies that excel usually have a good product behind them. In the case of a company that is part of a larger conglomerate (e.g. Comcast) we’ll duly note the product or division deserving the kudos. Second, we have separated the announcement of the OTTA finalists, who will now get deserved recognition by being highlighted in the Spring/NAB issue of the magazine every year, from the award winners, who will receive their crystal trophies in person at OTT Executive Summit. Winners will then have their profiles featured in the Summer issue of the magazine.

Full disclosure: some of the companies on this list, including Roku, Amazon, and Netflix, are part of my current stock portfolio, or may be at some point in the near future.

Without further ado here is the list of OTTA Finalists.

2019 OTTA Executive of the Year Finalists

This year’s batch of OTTA executives represent a mix of innovators, survivors, and leaders guiding their companies through re-birth. Perhaps most famous of all is Netflix’s Reed Hastings. Love ‘em or hate ‘em, Reed has guided Netflix from a DVD mail order company into the worldwide streaming giant that it is today. All new services must use the Netflix strategy as a competitive benchmark, including new services from industry behemoths Apple and Disney. Netflix’s billion dollar investments in original content, and cold shoulder to the recent Apple TV+ launch, will shape the OTT landscape for years to come.

Other executives deserve praise for guiding their companies through various types of acquisitions, spin-outs, or re-launches. Take for example Synamedia CEO Yves Padrines and MediaKind CEO Angel Ruiz, who find themselves at the helms of the former video divisions of Cisco and Ericsson, respectively. Unencumbered by the larger conglomerates, they are now focusing like a laser beam on the burgeoning OTT space. Then there are those execs growing their companies through acquisition, namely CEO Jeff Ray of Brightcove (acquired Ooyala) and CEO Scott Puopolo of Telestream (acquired IneoQuest). Building scale and a more complete OTT product offering is a good way to survive the consolidation happening in the industry.

Speaking of consolidation, how about those executives who have lead their



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companies to stay the course and NOT get acquired? Kaltura CEO Ron Yekutiel and JW Player CEO Dave Otten stand out for surviving and thriving despite competitors around them getting picked off like flies.

Then there are those leaders growing through innovation. Tru Optik CEO Andre Swanston presented at the 2015 OTT Executive Summit when his company was just getting started. Now his viewer analytics company is signing big deals and growing rapidly. Other innovators include Ken Klaer, EVP & President at Comcast Technology Solutions, who is valiantly tackling the challenge of bridging the gap between the worlds of OTT and cable.

Finally, BritBox President Soumya Sriraman earned our praise for leading the charge for this new joint venture by the BBC and ITV. Can she carve out new space in an OTT world dominated by the likes of Reed Hasting’s Netflix?

Executive of the Year Finalists



Reed Hastings
CEO, Netflix



Ken Klaer
EVP, Comcast
Tech. Solutions



Dave Otten
CEO, JW Player



Yves Padrines
CEO, Synamedia



Scott Puopolo
CEO, Telestream



Jeff Ray
CEO, Brightcove



Angel Ruiz
CEO, MediaKind



Soumya Sriraman,
President, BritBox



Andre Swanston
CEO, Tru Optik



Ron Yekutiel
CEO, Kaltura