

# Blackbaud's Conference 'A Game Changer' for Social Good Community

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by Geeks News Desk



CFPA Director of Finance & Operations Bruce Kariya, third from left, and team accept the 2016 Blackbaud "Off the Grid" innovation award.

CHARLESTON, S.C., Oct. 28, 2016 /PRNewswire/Blackbaud, Inc. (BLKB), the world's leading cloud software company powering social good, wrapped up bbcon 2016 after showcasing its next generation cloud solutions and making dozens of announcements related to its solution portfolio.

bbcon is the largest annual conference of its kind, bringing together nonprofits, education institutions, foundations and corporations to network, share best practices, interact with industry experts and experience the latest in technology innovation as part of over 200 sessions. During the first two days of bbcon, Blackbaud unveiled the **Blackbaud Institute for Philanthropic Impact** and made **more than 40 product announcements**. Attendee sentiment consistently reflected rave reviews in the areas of sector leadership, listening culture and innovation:

"There is a lot of exciting information to take in at bbcon, and it is a great opportunity to learn from Blackbaud and others. I'm most enthusiastic about the next generation of Luminate Online. It is an insanely robust product, the new UX looks amazing, and the automated reporting and all the marketing automation is going to cut peoples' workload by half or more. I'm thoroughly impressed."

*Caden Burross, Digital Marketing Manager, Texas Food Bank*

"I think more and more, bbcon is seen as an accelerator for the way people work. There is a real willingness to engage the nonprofit community and bridge the gap in understanding how technology can serve it." *Kyle Haines, Information Strategist, America's Promise Alliance*

"Blackbaud has invited partners to freely develop through a new level of openness and transparency. Its roadmaps showcase how, for example with SKY API, the company wants to create and provide new tools that ensure innovation can be shared by everyone. Blackbaud, its partners and ultimately the mutual clients we are here to serve." *Jeff Gignac, President & CSA, JMG Solutions*

"bbcon 2016 has been a game changer. The level of amazing innovation is unprecedented in Blackbaud's history. Blackbaud's culture has totally changed to one that is open and packed full of integration opportunities. SKY API enables us to offer fully-integrated data and web solutions that have significantly increased mission effectiveness for our mutual clients." *-Carl J. Diesing, Managing Director, DNL OmniMedia, Inc.*

"bbcon is important because it brings the social good sector together and pulls out a very clear picture of what organizations need, what their constraints are and what they are hoping to achieve. Microsoft is committed to partnering with Blackbaud to deliver the technology that enables these organizations to achieve their missions, and to ultimately make a difference for those they serve." *Andy Norris, Partner Business Evangelist, Microsoft*

"I heard a lot about analytics and outcomes at bbcon this year. As a conference that raises questions and looks to answer them with technology, bbcon is a place where Blackbaud actively listens to the social good community." *Peter Gross, Partner, Build Consulting*  
On Friday, following an inspiring keynote address by Humanitarian activist Ronan Farrow, Blackbaud announced the recipient of its annual "social media give back" donation. "We're proud to support local charities in the cities where we host bbcon each year," said Mike Gianoni Blackbaud president and CEO. "This year, we've matched conference attendee tweets with a gift of \$5,000 to Bread for the City, a nonprofit that provides residents of Washington, D.C. with comprehensive services like food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services."

Blackbaud also announced the winning "Off the Grid" innovation that would be built into future product roadmaps. Off the Grid is the company's major innovation marathon in which Blackbaud employees step outside of their day-to-day roles for 24 hours to collaborate on creative projects that solve customer challenges. In July, more than 200 engineers participated with 20 customers providing input. The top three innovations were revealed at bbcon and attendees voted for their favorite high-potential creation. The winning team developed an initiative to help Financial Edge NXT customers protect their financial resources against internal and external threats by leveraging machine learning and Blackbaud's confidential and proprietary statistical analyses to identify anomalies in financial records.

Bruce Kariya, the board finance committee chair at California Food Policy Advocates, explained why he and other nonprofit leaders are so interested in this innovation: "Budgets are tight all over and that has led to smaller staffs handling accounting and finance functions. The downside of smaller staffs is that it becomes harder to have adequate internal controls over the finances of a nonprofit. Having some automated checks built into Financial Edge NXT allows executive management and nonprofit boards to more easily balance their fiduciary duties with their fiscal responsibilities."

"Off the Grid is one of many ways we are embracing relentless and disruptive innovation on behalf of our customers," said Gianoni. "This process has delivered some of our most forward-looking innovation and momentum with artificial intelligence and more. We take customer votes very seriously, accelerating what they are most excited about within our roadmaps."

Blackbaud also announced that next year's event, bbcon 2017, will be held in Baltimore on October 17-19, 2017.

As the conference came to a close, Gianoni added: "We packed so much innovation into this year's conference because our customers are at the center of everything we do. We wanted social good organizations to see first-hand the powerful new capabilities we're adding to help them improve time to value, decrease operating costs and improve mission impact. We're excited about the positive feedback we received from bbcon 2016 and look forward to seeing these innovations come to life for all the remarkable organizations who choose Blackbaud as their partner."