



FAMILY OFFICE INSIGHTS  
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# Peer Insights

R E P O R T

## Q&A with Denise Hayman-Loa & Chris Davino

CEO and Executive Chairman of Carii, Inc.



### Principle Series:

*Family Office Insights sits down with Denise Hayman-Loa, CEO, and Chris Davino, Executive Chairman, to discuss their end-to-end communication and collaboration platform branded for complex internal and external networks and communities all over the world.*

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Family Office Insights is a voluntary, “opt-in” collaborative peer-to-peer community of single-family offices, qualified investors and institutional investors.

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**Q:** Tell us about your background and your company, Carii, Inc.

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**A:** Prior to becoming CEO of Carii, Inc., I was [Denise Hayman-Loa] a Wall Street professional for over 30 years, working at Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley in technology, private equity and venture capital, and as a business strategy management-consulting partner at Ernst & Young. While at Goldman Sachs in 1996, I started an early Internet B2B platform that provided risk management technology and services to institutional clients like Microsoft's Treasury division. Focusing on the technology sector in my early career, the B2B platform opened my eyes to what a web-based solution can provide to clients, strengthening my interest in client-facing services and business building. Years later, while I was attempting to retire and serve in the non-profit sector, my husband birthed the idea of creating a community-based platform that connected local communities to global ecosystems, which became Carii, Inc. In 2013, I began advising the company on the side, but was then asked by the Carii team to lead as CEO. Ultimately, with my passion for business building, I couldn't help but accept the position and eagerly started clarifying our mission and presenting to clients and at investor conferences to get our word out. A year and a half ago, I presented the Carii platform at a client conference. Some of Chris Davino's clients liked our solution and invited me to present at one of their media companies.

For over 25 years, I've [Chris Davino] been advising and running organizations in more than 20 industries including retail, technology, consumer products, media and entertainment. I was just coming off of being President, CEO and Director of Premier Exhibitions, Inc. and its subsidiary, RMS Titanic Inc. when I met Denise and thought she really had a big idea with Carii, so I joined the team as Carii's Executive Chairman. From 2009-2012, I took on two significantly financially distressed businesses operating in the oceanographic and exhibition industries. My strategic focus was to build a dynamic brand around Titanic with a new narrative to revamp the tired story; create new intellectual property that would form the basis of a 360 degree business model; craft strategic relationships with the world's leading oceanographic and scientific organizations and agencies to bolster credibility in our brand; and connect with the multitude of Titanic fans around the world.

Following my Premier CEO role, I was looking for my next opportunity when I heard Denise pitching the Carii platform to one of my media companies. Listening to her made me recognize how useful this tool would've been as a solution for my Titanic business. I clearly understood how Carii would have facilitated building a branded, ring-fenced digital and social ecosystem around Titanic, allowing me to "community manage" a dynamic and far flung consortium of partners, subject matter experts, and stakeholders, and, further, how the Carii platform would have allowed me to leverage those groups in engaging with millions of fans online. As Denise was walking out of the room, I put my arm around her and said, "Meet your new partner." It's a great story and we like to share it with everyone.

Carii, Inc., is an award-winning collaboration and communication platform for creating complex networks of internal and external communities - available on web and mobile apps. It's a highly-functional platform that focuses on providing an end-to-end digital community for developing private and public networks, as well as creating social engagement around content. Uniquely, Carii can be fully branded with ease for each client, and provides clients with multiple avenues for generating digital business revenue, which Carii shares in.

Most clients are utilizing 6-7 different digital tools to accomplish what Carii can do all in one. It houses the backend communication functionality of an inter-office app like chatting and file sharing, while providing an external communication functionality for brand building and customer outreach. Carii can also be used as a social CRM system where sales people can communicate with customers, instead of just tracking sales like a traditional CRM

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system. There are complex ecosystems in most organizations today with lots of moving parts and different parties that need to effectively exchange value and information with one another. The platform provides that unique opportunity to address the notion of value exchange and an enriched experience to foster collaboration, ideation, and successful execution.

## Q: Who is your target audience?

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A: The more multi-dimensional and complex an organization is, the better Carii functions to target and serve those needs. Our patented affiliation technology gives Carii the cross-functionality to dive across different webs to link together multiple communities. For smaller companies, we offer a free version of Carii to fulfill the simpler demands of a growing business, while Carii's sweet spot is larger companies with a diverse network of connections and categories.

Large institutions such as global law firms, banks, and insurance companies all have similar challenges with the same goal and intent. There are 3 levels of what a large institution needs: (a) internal communication to make the firm more successful; (b) deal teams for clients that cross multiple offices and industries as well as including a variety of third parties, such as investment bankers; and (c) a way for the firm to engage with the marketplace to reach new audiences and leverage other partners. We are currently in talks with a law firm that has 60 offices around the world, with 10 different areas of practice, in 11 different sectors, with a plan to expand cross-office revenue. The issue they run into is not being able to connect and communicate effectively and efficiently with their multitude of talent in different countries. The challenge of connecting the best healthcare lawyer in Singapore, with the best Patent Lawyer in manufacturing in London, with the Public Relations Representative in NYC, is something that can't be done on a string of emails. Carii helps to bridge all those gaps and build client-team channels so as to connect the firm's best assets from around the globe and those of the firm's partners.

## Q: What are some of the challenges you face in this industry?

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A: Digital communication is still a fragmented process with organizations cobbling together multiple silo-ed platforms, such as email, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, WebEx, Slack and others. With many of those tools, trust is an issue as organizations don't own or control their data, nor most importantly, their relationships. Over the last 6 months we have had two successful technology trajectories, the first has been developing the core Carii toolkit with a multitude of award-winning upgradeable features; the second has been deploying the platform for a dozen clients, integrating the technology to address each client's specific strategic and operational needs. What we found is that a feature developed for one industry can be easily applied to a completely different industry and use case. As a result, the technology value proposition has evolved incredibly in a very short period of time. The tool evolves a business in the digital world and can be used in so many different ways by showing clients and prospects that Carii's functionality is easily implemented end-to-end.

What's interesting is that many traditional investors advisors have suggested that we should just focus on one thing instead of building Carii to address so many different industries. To us, given how versatile the platform is, and how far our relationships span across various industry verticals – in each case – with a clear value proposition, has lead us to target a wide array of prospects. Our ethos is not to sticking to just one thing. By ignoring our reach in the marketplace, we simply would not be able to maximize our potential. We know that one thing we are doing in the

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moment can lead to ten new things. It goes to show that it pays to do everything well, not just one thing.

## Q: How is Carii, Inc. different from its key competitors?

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**A:** Carii is the first end-to-end digital platform for creating **branded** connected communities and deepening engagement and relationships – on both web and via mobile apps. **Simply stated, no other platform does that.** And that’s not only our view. It’s been the conclusion of every analyst group that has reviewed Carii, and the reason we have won multiple awards. Our clients enjoy a complete digital eco-system, branded to their visual identity, facilitating social and chat style communications – one to one, private groups, community to community, communities to multiple communities, public or private. For instance, lawyers producing white papers and posting them on a Twitter link in the hope that someone reads them is neither effective nor productive. The Carii system is set up in such a way that an expert in any given ecosystem has their own profile storing articles that he/she has written, posted, and engaged in. Carii helps to create engagement in real time, leveraging partners like accounting firms with their own connections to push the white paper to prospective partners and clients and to bring them in to the fold.

We are getting a lot of feedback from businesses saying that they want more control over their online relationships, and having their own branded platform solution provides them with the ability to communicate and engage while in the ecosystem of their own brand. This system brings together the best aspects of WordPress, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and marketing/advertising in a single branded business management tool. Although the other social media platforms engage with communities across platforms, we choose not to bring the outside noise into Carii, but to maintain a richer, more focused conversation. However, we do provide the option to push out posts from Carii to Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. We leverage those tools to reach a wider audience and then bring the invested people back into the Carii community where these relationships can be engaged more effectively – and more actively. If a post was shared on Twitter, we don’t bring back the clutter of Twitter into Carii, instead, we bring back the engaged commenters and Twitter users back into our eco-space.

Carrii also serves the “fandom” – the broader audience that follows a story or a company. There is a massive value exchange between partners in the curated ecosystem that benefits brands looking to target a very tight demographic. In the RMS Titanic example, we faced a brand building challenge: the public viewed us as Hollywood people wrecking a historic spot for a commercial. I [Chris Davino] had to leverage my network of the most respected individuals in the oceanographic and archeological sector, from experts to museums, in order to pull ahead of negative perception. I brought together the History Channel, the Weather Channel, and 30 of the most important museums in the world into the Titanic ecosystem. If we had had Carii during the RMS Titanic recovery, we would have had all these members weighing in on the project at large, giving historical perspective, all of which would have been relevant to this topic. If James Cameron is working on a 3D version of Titanic he can just partner with Fox to produce that, but if he’s in this Carrii ecosystem, then he’s interfacing with historians and museums that curate everything Titanic-related, as well as, engaging with millions of Titanic fans just by being on Carrii. It’s so much more powerful.

There is no other platform that offers what Carrii does. While there are many companies in the market, such as Jive, Lithium, Slack, and MailChimp with plug-ins and options to integrate other add-ons, no one has the easy-to-use toolkit providing – and this is the important bit – an end to end branded digital ecosystem like we provide. We have a far-reaching ecosystem that the market is already seeing the benefit from and we have the affiliations to accommodate the groups that want to get together. This is just the beginning.

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## Q: How are you changing the landscape of your industry?

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A: The ability to easily customize a unique end-to-end solution for a business or organization is one of Carii's key features. Our experience is that you can't fit everyone in one box. We can walk into a business and assess whether it requires additional features, a custom look, and targeted advertising and successfully customize that for them if necessary. We ask what is going to engage their audiences most effectively and then rapidly create a unique branded solution for that client, leveraging each aspect of our platform technology. We are also experts in digital monetization – we know that works for different industries, different business models and transactions, because we have seen it all. With this, we also advise our clients accordingly and help them stay ahead of the game. We are unique enough from what's out there that we know we're facilitating this dynamic digital ecosystem of an ever-growing network in a way no one else is.

## Q: Who is your ideal investor?

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A: [Denise Hayman-Loa]: The ideal Carii investor is someone who understands what we are doing in terms of how it applies to businesses and organizations and sees the vision and potential of Carii. Ideally, our investor would be someone with an operating background like Chris. There are many early stage companies out there, so the ideal investor would be someone able to use their reach to enrich the Carii community and assist with his/her rolodex, or footprint.

We are at a different growth stage than many early stage companies out there raising funds. It's important to note that at this point there is no technology risk. We have internally funded our development and have been mostly bootstrapped and accomplished incredible things on a very modest budget. We've been at the trough before but it's hasn't been easy to find the ideal investors at the right time, especially institutional investors. We like Family Offices because they're independent decision-makers with the freedom to be more opportunistic, because they have been backers before and understand how to solve real problems.

## Q: How much capital are you looking to raise?

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A: Ideally, we would have 2-4 investors for \$2-3M. We like a small club of interested like-minded individuals. The target at the moment is \$2M, but we could responsibly deploy ten times that amount given our reach and business experience. Although we are targeting an achievable amount in the immediate future, we have a bigger vision and goal.

We have existing clients, a strong sales pipeline, and recurring revenue in front of us, so we believe that revenue and profitability can carry us beyond this initial investment. That said, we could responsibly deploy \$10mm-\$15 mm given our reach, but we want to raise strategically.

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**Q:** What's your mission?

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**A:** We are disrupting the landscape in media, entertainment, and technology in a way that engages and fosters a brand and manages their communications. We see many verticals evolving and impacting other verticals, and we envision ourselves being at the epicenter of all of this. If we can do all of that personally and professionally, then that's great. There's an incredible opportunity here and we want to make it come to fruition together. Chris and I love what we are building, working together, and working with our team. It's so much more fun to do this together than alone and it works extra well with our different areas of expertise.

**Q:** What's next for you?

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**A:** We are ready to deploy the raise of \$2-3M by hiring sales people to support our partner channels and assist on onboarding. Additionally, we will be developing more technology and infrastructure to make sure everything is running optimally, and will make some strategic marketing spends. Our main focus now is growth. With the maturity of the product, our existing business, and the significant near term pipeline, we expect that growth will be very rapid.

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**Denise Hayman-Loa** has over 30 years of strategy and business building, technology, sales and management experience, while working at prominent firms such as Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and Hamilton Lane and as a management-consulting partner at Ernst & Young. At Goldman Sachs, in 1996, Ms. Hayman-Loa founded an early Internet B2B platform delivering risk management technology, data and services to clients, such as Microsoft's Treasury division, and started the Equity Divisions' initiative to support institutional clients. In the early part of her career, Ms. Hayman-Loa managed complex technology projects and teams for front office financial services applications. A frequent public speaker and a published author, she has demonstrated expertise. Hayman-Loa has non-profit board experience as a co-founder of a Private Equity Women's Investor Network and as Board President at Appel Farm Arts & Music Center.

To learn more information, please follow Denise at [@JoinCarii](#), or reach out to her directly at [Denise.Hayman-loa@carii.com](mailto:Denise.Hayman-loa@carii.com).

**Christopher J. Davino** is an executive and a proven leader with 25 years experience advising and running organizations in more than a twenty industries, including: retail, healthcare, consumer products, gaming, transportation, technology, media and entertainment. Trained as turnaround professional, he has acted in capacities ranging from restructuring advisor, investment banker, Independent Director, Chairman of the Board, and CEO for companies small to large cap, public and private, domestic and international.

In these roles he has achieved extraordinary results guiding companies through every stage of the business cycle: from conceptualization and start up, to development stage and growth, with a substantial amount of experience leading companies through the most challenging of circumstances – addressing substantive viability issues and acute financial distress. Through these diverse experiences, Mr. Davino has demonstrated an ability to step into a senior role with little or no prior industry experience and immediately grasped the fundamental nature of a company's business, to critically assess the key drivers of success – from strategy and tactics, operations, and resource needs, both human and capital – and to craft and implement plans to transform businesses – with a proven track record in developing and executing creative and complex strategic plans intended to significantly increase enterprise value for the benefit of a company's stakeholders.

To learn more information, please reach out to him directly at [Chris.Davino@carii.com](mailto:Chris.Davino@carii.com).

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“Working with family office investors is rapidly becoming a relevant strategy for accessing investment capital from the ultra-wealthy and their investment offices.”

Arthur Andrew Bavelas

