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**NXTSTAGE Pilot Competition Crowns 2022 Financial Technology Winners**  
*Finalists' Tech Tools Available to Area Banks, Credit Unions, Financial Services Firms*

**Wichita, Kan.** – Sept. 15, 2022 – Alongside **Emprise Bank** and **Fidelity Bank**, **NXTUS, Inc.'s** NXTSTAGE Financial Technology Pilot Competition announced two winners – **upSWOT** and **V2Verify** – during its [Innovation Showcase](#) Wednesday, at which eight finalists pitched their tech solutions to Kansas financial institutions.

**upSWOT**, based in Charlotte, which helps small businesses grow and make better decisions by giving them access to business-critical applications and real-time insights, was selected for a pilot project with **Emprise Bank**.

**Matt Michaelis**, Chairman, President and CEO of **Emprise Bank** said, “We are thrilled to move forward with **upSWOT**. Their innovative solution that empowers businesses to make better decisions by giving them API-enabled access to business-critical applications and real-time insights emerged as the leading pilot concept for us. It aligns perfectly with our mission of empowering people to thrive and advances our focus on supporting small businesses.”

**Fidelity Bank** is continuing to pursue potential pilots with leading finalists. “Our business continues to rapidly shift with new technologies that allow for secure, on-demand banking relationships,” said **Aaron Bastian**, **Fidelity Bank** President and CEO. “The NXTSTAGE finalists are offering solutions that will advance the entire sector and improve customer experience across the board. We are eager to collaborate with these innovators.”

**INTRUST Bank**, the competition's third founding partner, reported they are exploring a collaboration with Omaha-based **V2Verify**, which replaces passwords, PINs and multi-factor-authentication by verifying someone's identity using two seconds of natural speech. “Stimulating and facilitating innovation is critical for community banks. We are pleased to see two companies back in the competition - they've made some great improvements since we saw them last,” said Steve Castro-Miller, **INTRUST Bank's** Managing Director of Technology. “Innovations like those offered by V2Verify, BOSS Insights and the other finalists can help us thrive in the modern landscape of deeply engaging and serving customers digitally.”

The competition attracted **94 competitors** from **27 states and 13 countries**, and NXTUS staff partnered with leaders from founding partners Emprise, Fidelity and INTRUST banks to curate this group of leading startups to host in Wichita.

“Thanks to NXTSTAGE, over the last three years Emprise Bank has had the opportunity to engage with FinTech startups from around the world, with each bringing an innovative solution and diverse perspectives. Ultimately this has been a huge help in fueling our innovation to deliver personalized and relevant experiences to our customers and continuing to develop our region’s startup ecosystem,” **Michaelis** added.



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The banking partners, along with support from the **Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation** and **Greater Wichita Partnership**, help NXTSTAGE power the growth of entrepreneurs, accelerate innovation in Kansas and foster inclusive prosperity in the region. The finalists visited Wichita to get to know the community and are offering their next-generation technology solutions to help regional banks, credit unions and financial services companies enhance security with modern identity verification tools, build customer engagement and loyalty with advanced digital banking offerings and help business owners manage tax compliance and offer employees personalized benefits and incentives.

The competition's applicant pool was very diverse; 53 percent had either minority or female representation on their founding teams. Of the finalists, 100 percent are led by minority or female founders. The finalists hail from Canada and four states: California, Nebraska, New York and North Carolina, but with roots as far away as France and the Ukraine.

Area companies can watch the finalists' three-minute pitches in the [Showcase](#) or connect with them through NXTUS.

#### **2022 NXSTAGE FinTech Pilot Competition Finalists:**

- [Agora Services \(New York City\)](#) is the next generation of Bank as a service provider, offering a complete Fintech ecosystem that allows banks, credit unions or fintechs to build advanced digital solutions or leverage Agora's existing white-label solutions.
- [Array \(New York City\)](#) is a financial enablement platform specializing in embeddable tools and white label credit and identity products, used by fintechs and financial institutions to drive greater engagement with customers.
- [Boss Insights \(Toronto, Canada\)](#) is a leader in open banking, linking fintech and financial institutions to their small and medium-sized business clients' financial accounting, commerce, payroll and tax data in minutes. Boss Insights was a 2021 NXTSTAGE finalist.
- [Complyant \(Los Angeles\)](#): Meet your new digital business tax assistant. We help small business owners remember tax deadlines, budget & save for future bills, and much more.
- [Maxwell \(Omaha, Neb.\)](#) makes it easy for employers to offer personalized benefits & rewards that attract and retain the talent they need.
- [Photon Commerce \(San Francisco\)](#) provides instant straight-through-processing of real-time payments, remittances, checks, invoices, and statements to financial institutions, standardizing ISO20022 data automatically.
- [upSWOT \(Charlotte, N.C.\)](#) serves banks and FIs by helping them build loyalty and expand engagement with their SMB clients, thanks to its white-labeled financial management solution.
- [V2verify \(Omaha, Neb.\)](#) *Simplifies Life* by replacing MFA, Passwords, and PINs with a simple-to-use voice authentication solution. V2Verify was a 2020 NXTSTAGE finalist.

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*NXTUS, Inc helps entrepreneurs grow companies of significance. The organization works to connect startup founders with community resources, capital, and customers. NXTUS manages NXTSTAGE programs, which are aimed at connecting startups to mature businesses and regional partners looking to become customers for their innovations and to help accelerate the pace of innovation and startup growth in the region, as well as Accelerate Venture Partners, a fast-growing regional Angel investor syndicate.*