

## Q&A with Christy Johnson, CEO of AchieveIt Online, LLC providing a Web-based Software Solution enabling Government Agencies, Healthcare and Education Companies to Accelerate Strategy Execution across the Entire Company



**Christy Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer

AchieveIt Online, LLC  
[www.achieveIT.com](http://www.achieveIT.com)

Contact:  
Kathy Siefert  
404-441-3669  
[ksiefert@carabinercomms.com](mailto:ksiefert@carabinercomms.com)

Interview conducted by:  
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor  
CEOCFO Magazine

**CEOCFO:** *Ms. Johnson, would you tell us the focus for AchieveIt today?*

**Ms. Johnson:** AchieveIt's focus is to empower companies to be completely successful in their execution efforts. Business leaders don't just need an abundance of insights; they need the ability to turn them into actions and the AchieveIt platform provides both. We enable organizations to align strategy, people and performance to drive better business results.

**CEOCFO:** *How do you help a company achieve that full success rather than almost good enough?*

**Ms. Johnson:** You would be shocked at how poor companies are at organizational execution. There have been plenty of studies, from McKenzie to Harvard Business Review, indicating 70% to 90% of all plans fail to deliver their intended results. The main reason they fail is because the tools that companies have to use are completely inefficient. Most companies, regardless of size or resources, are using Excel, Power Point and email to try to manage and drive execution of not just daily productivity and tasks, but of their most strategic, critical initiatives, and they simply don't work.

There are four main factors that drive execution for an organization. The first is alignment; it's crucial that all employees know how what they are working on is aligned to the organization's overall objectives. The second is accountability; people must know what they are responsible for, to whom they are responsible and when they are responsible for delivery. Third is a single place for collaboration of the team. And finally, visibility so leadership has a big picture understanding across all their execution efforts – where things are going well and where things may need intervention. Organizations can't leverage those drivers with Excel, PowerPoint and email. And that's where AchieveIt comes in; it activates each of these drivers, supercharging execution across the organization.

**CEOCFO:** *Are clients coming to you for IT and then recognizing that they have a much better deal because of your overall view of helping or are companies turning to you because they know you have that extra layer?*

**Ms. Johnson:** Every company knows that they are having trouble with plan execution, but they just put up with the poor performance because they don't know how to manage the process. They do not recognize that purpose-built software exists. We target prospects that look very similar to the use case and industries of customers we have already helped and describe how we have helped others with similar challenges. Once a customer starts using AchieveIt, they realize how effective the software is and start to identify additional execution needs and areas where they can also benefit using AchieveIt. Anywhere where an organization has multiple plans that roll into a larger, overarching plan, AchieveIt really

shines. Examples would be strategic and transformation initiatives, risk or compliance programs and post-acquisition integration plans.

**CEOCFO: *How do you help ease the trepidation of implementing something new?***

**Ms. Johnson:** Early on, Achievelt tried offering a low-touch, support model. However, improving the way an organization executes often involves a cultural shift or change in the organization. We recognized the low-touch model didn't offer the guidance our customers needed so we pivoted to providing deep best practice expertise and guidance that is on-going. Buyers are often concerned that they can't achieve the type of cultural or behavioral changes needed. No one wants to purchase another software solution that doesn't get adopted and implemented. So, we couple our software with the best practice execution expertise that comes from working with hundreds of customers and thousands of plans. We are partnering for the long-term and everyone benefits from the collective wisdom and best practice knowledge around setting up effective dashboards, using the platform to conduct the most efficient meetings, and understanding the most successful roll-out practices. For example, if you are trying to implement Achievelt across 26 locations, what is the pace and cadence that will set the company up for success? How many training sessions should be provided and at what intervals? It is as much about helping our customers with introducing and managing organizational change as it is with using the software itself, and we have an entire professional services staff supporting them through the process. Our goal is to make each and every customer wildly successful so they have a dedicated Customer Success Manager – not an 800 number but somebody who knows them, knows their company, knows their plans inside and out and is there to help them maximize value. That combination of offering very effective software and also providing execution expertise is part of our secret sauce and is a clear differentiator.

**“Achievelt is the only software solution that not only provides leaders with big picture visibility into their execution efforts but also the ability to drive that execution. Our solution goes deeper than software, providing our customers with execution best practice expertise and guidance – allowing them to consistently achieve their most important initiatives.”- Christy Johnson**

**CEOCFO: *Are you providing one solution on one platform where a company could choose to use some of the different features, or does everyone get the same features?***

**Ms. Johnson:** It is a singular platform that is very flexible. Organizations typically will begin with a specific use case, experience the power and effectiveness of the software and identify additional ways it can be used. Any execution effort where an organization is using Excel and PowerPoint to keep track of plans and is therefore suffering from lack of big picture visibility, Achievelt can dramatically improve.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the different industries you work with and some of the challenges in local government?***

**Ms. Johnson:** We quickly established value and acquired customers in industries that are heavily regulated, where the development and execution of a strategic plan is somehow tied to their revenue. You will see that in healthcare, education, and often in government. Not every commercial enterprise must have a plan, but regulated industries do and they are tracking metrics that they need to demonstrate improvement against. That is where we have strongholds, but I always say that we are industry agnostic. We can help any company in any industry because they all have similar needs. They are all trying to improve, they all have growth plans, have to manage risk initiatives, and have tactical operational activities that they are trying to accomplish. For the most part, even if they don't incorporate it into a formalized strategy, every business recognizes what they need to do to get better.

**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about recognition on the Inc. 5000?***

**Ms. Johnson:** It was a nice surprise for our company. It was validating since we spend all our focus and time helping organizations be incredibly good at execution that we are also good at execution and that we practice what we preach. We are always pushing to get better, faster and smarter about the way we operate. It was a nice reassurance and accomplishment for the team to take a moment to celebrate.

**CEOCFO: *How has Achievelt changed under your leadership?***

**Ms. Johnson:** Our go-to-market strategy changed because we were selling at a very low price point and were not charging for the value our product provided. It was very transactional but we were missing the big picture opportunity. At that time, the company had more of a start-up mentality and that goes part and parcel with not feeling comfortable about charging for the value of the product. I would like to think there is a clear north star now. I am very transparent and believe it is essential that everyone on the team knows what we are trying to accomplish, understands their jobs and knows we

have an environment that rewards A players. If you are not giving us everything you have and you are not in lockstep with everybody in what we are trying to achieve, it is going to be evident and you are not going to fit. That is what everyone can expect of me and of each other. I think that is what makes for a great place to work.

**CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential clients and jump off the page when someone is looking?***

**Ms. Johnson:** We proactively reach out to prospects with similar needs to current customers to demonstrate how there is a better way to drive execution for their organization and help them understand the opportunity cost of continuing to use sub-par tools. Since this is an emerging software category, businesses are not necessarily looking for a solution – we need to help them recognize better execution is possible with purpose built software.

**CEOCFO: *Why choose Achievelt?***

**Ms. Johnson:** Achievelt is the only software solution that not only provides leaders with big picture visibility into their execution efforts but also the ability to drive that execution. Our solution goes deeper than software, providing our customers with execution best practice expertise and guidance – allowing them to consistently achieve their most important initiatives.

The logo for Achievelt features the word "achieve" in a dark grey, lowercase sans-serif font, followed by "it" in a bright green, lowercase sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned to the upper right of the "t".

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