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Indy-based BCforward invests \$1M in Indianapolis AI consulting startup

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Indianapolis-based consulting and staffing firm  **BCforward** has invested \$1 million into Stellar Technology Services Inc., in an arrangement aimed at creating growth opportunities for both companies.

In connection with the investment, BCforward founder and CEO Justin Christian will join Stellar's board of directors.

Christian told IBJ the investment closed last week.

BCforward is the doing-business-as name for Bucher and Christian Consulting Inc., which launched in 1998 and has grown to become one of the largest Black-owned professional services and workforce management services companies in the nation. The company has \$500 million in annual revenue.

Its workforce includes more than 4,000 global employees, about 800 of whom are Indiana-based.

Stellar, which launched in 2023, is also based in Indianapolis. The startup helps its clients incorporate artificial intelligence in their operations. It can help clients assess their readiness for AI and identify ways in which they might best use the technology; and it can design and build solutions to help clients integrate AI and related technologies into their operations.

Stellar has about 25 full-time employees, roughly half of whom are Indiana-based. The company also uses a fluctuating number of outside contractors.

This is the second investment announced for Stellar in recent months. Late last year, Stellar closed on a \$2.7 million round of seed funding. The investment from BCforward is in addition to that seed round.

Christian said the deal gives BCforward access to AI expertise that it did not have before—which in turn gives it new capabilities it can offer to its customers. “It is yet another tool that we are able to bring to our customers to enhance our service offerings.”

Kunal Gill, who joined BCforward last month as president and chief revenue officer, said the arrangement with Stellar will allow BCforward to position itself as an AI thought leader for its customers. In other words, Gill said, BCforward will now be able to proactively advise its clients on AI-related topics.



Justin Christian

“It’s just going to change the conversations we have with our customers,” Gill said. “Being able to be consultative and drive different kinds of conversations with our customers is the thing that excites me the most.”

For his part, Stellar co-founder and CEO Brett Flinchum said the arrangement gives Stellar better access to customers. When it comes to AI, Flinchum said the technology has so much hype around it that prospective customers can be reluctant to commit to a project unless they have built trust with the company offering a solution.

“What I’ve been finding in my journey at Stellar over the last two years is, where we are winning [customers] is where we have trusted relationships,” Flinchum said. “And so that connection with BCforward just seems so valuable because they have those trusted relationships.”

Flinchum said Christian’s joining Stellar’s board will be “enormously valuable for us” because Christian built BCforward from the ground up—so he has the expertise to help Stellar as it scales and grows.

Christian said the Stellar investment is one of several moves BCforward has made over the past year or so to position the company for future growth.

Last year, Christian [acquired New York-based information technology staffing firm TSR Inc.](#) for \$29 million. TSR and its subsidiaries, Geneva Consulting Group and LOGIXtech Solutions, are now affiliates of BCforward that continue to operate under their own names.

And in December, BCforward announced it had expanded its Hyderabad, India, office, which it calls its Asia-Pacific Global

Capabilities Center.

“The big things from our perspective right now are ‘global,’ ‘digital’ and ‘AI-enabled,’” Christian said. “Those are the things that are just paramount to our success going forward.”

About the author



Susan Orr



Orr joined IBJ in 2016. She’s been a reporter since 1995 and has worked at four newspapers in three states. Before moving to Indianapolis, she wrote for the Courier & Press in Evansville. When she’s not working, she enjoys cooking, travel and spending way too much time on Twitter.

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