



## **Making the Call: Leaders talk about the tough choices**

### **Michael Cardillo**

President, CEO and Co-founder  
Health Advocate, Inc.

#### **Best Business Decision:**

The best decisions my partners and I made were to take a chance on starting our business and then fund it with our own capital. Because we believed so strongly in the idea that health advocacy filled a void in the marketplace — that people needed help navigating the complexities of our healthcare system — we wanted to have complete control over the direction the company would take. Funding it ourselves gave us the freedom to do what we felt was right. Today, our suite of products and services provides a variety of solutions designed to lower healthcare costs, increase productivity and improve health outcomes.

#### **Toughest Business Decision:**

In the 10 years since Health Advocate was founded, we have endured two of the most dramatic hits to our economy in decades. The first was 9/11 and the second was the 2008 recession. September 2001 was the month we planned to launch Health Advocate. After the attacks, we had to decide whether we wanted to delay the launch or proceed as planned. Similarly in 2008, during the recession, we had to decide whether we could continue to sustain or make cutbacks. In both cases, we made the decision to “double-down” and commit 100% to our business, our employees and our investment. The result is that we’ve become stronger than we have ever been, and our perseverance has allowed us to usher in a new era of growth, which is evident in our suite of products and services, our employee numbers and our revenue.