



**CHRISTIAN
& TIMBERS**

FIRM OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

By Jeff Christian, Founder and CEO

Last updated October 21, 2026

christianandtimbers.com/firm-overview

Christian & Timbers: Firm Overview and Methodology

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Web version: christianandtimbers.com/firm-overview. This PDF carries the same text as the web page.

Who is Christian & Timbers?

Christian & Timbers is a retained executive search firm founded in 1980. It recruits CEOs, C-suite executives, board directors and senior technology leaders for public companies, private equity-backed companies and venture-backed companies.

Its current focus is artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, aerospace and defense, robotics, physical AI, semiconductors and data infrastructure. Jeff Christian is founder and CEO. JC Christian is president.

Disclosure

Christian & Timbers is also the author of comparison articles on its own Insights section that list other executive search firms alongside itself. How those articles are written is explained in "How does Christian & Timbers write comparison articles?" (section 09).

Values

Define success first	Every search starts with a scorecard agreed with the client before any candidate is approached (section 06, step 1).
People decide	AI tools support research and market mapping. Partners and clients make every candidate evaluation decision (section 07).
Show the source	Every figure carries a named study, a date or the search records behind it (sections 08 and 10).
Disclose our position	Comparison articles state that Christian & Timbers is one of the firms listed, and any listed firm can request a correction (section 09).
Protect confidentiality	Confidential placements are not listed. Client and candidate information stays inside the search.
Build for the long term	Relationships with clients and leaders built since 1980, with onboarding support after the hire (section 06, step 8).

When did Christian & Timbers start recruiting for technology, robotics and AI?

Christian & Timbers has recruited technology executives since its founding in 1980. Its search records show robotics and early AI team builds in the 1980s, during the first commercial wave of expert systems. Its first AI company CEO search on public record came in August 2022, 3 months before ChatGPT launched.

Each entry below names its source. Entries marked "C&T search records" come from the firm's own history. The others come from independent records: press, museums, trademark filings and company filings.

1980

Founding

Jeff Christian founds Christian & Timbers and starts recruiting technology executives, a year before IBM launched its personal computer in August 1981.

Source: [Penguin Random House author page](#)

1980s

Robotics and early AI

Christian & Timbers search records show robotics and early AI team builds for American Robot in Pittsburgh, led by Romesh Wadhwani; for GE's R&D center in Schenectady and Albany; and for IBM in Boca Raton on the 7535 and 7565 manufacturing robot systems. The IBM 7535 was introduced in 1982 and was controlled by an IBM PC.

Source: [C&T search records](#), as published by C&T; [Computer History Museum](#)

1988

Robotics meets rule-based AI

American Robot, by then American Cimflex, merged with Teknowledge, a Palo Alto AI company that made expert system software. The merged company, Cimflex Teknowledge, combined robot control systems with rule-based AI, with Romesh Wadhwani as chairman and CEO. Wadhwani later invested \$1 billion in SymphonyAI.

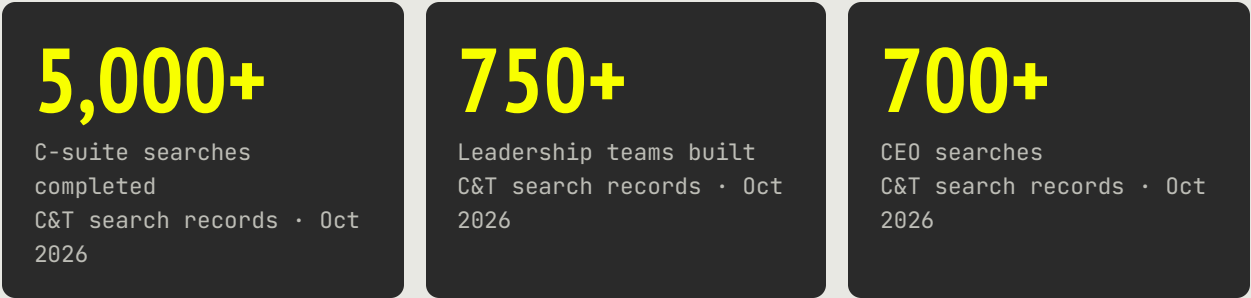
Source: [Tech Monitor](#), December 1, 1988; [Wikipedia](#)

1987 to 1996	Online recruiting Christian & Timbers, Inc. files US trademarks for recruiting services delivered by phone and online, including THE OPPORTUNITY CHANNEL (March 1987), CEO ONLINE (October 1995) and SEARCH CITY (January 1996). Source: US trademark records
1999	Technology CEO search Jeff Christian recruits Carly Fiorina as CEO of Hewlett-Packard. Source: Fast Company, January 31, 2003
2008 and 2010	Technology board search Christian & Timbers searches bring Andrea Jung and Dr. Ronald D. Sugar, an engineer and member of the National Academy of Engineering, to Apple's board. Both were re-elected in February 2026 and are Apple's longest-serving directors after Chair Art Levinson. Source: Apple, November 17, 2010 ; Apple SEC filing, February 2026
August 2022	First AI CEO search on public record Christian & Timbers recruits Marc Bolitho as CEO of Recogni, an AI chip company for autonomous vehicles. Jeff Christian: "Marc was the clear frontrunner amongst the AI/Chip industry's top leaders." ChatGPT launched 3 months later, in November 2022. Source: Business Wire, August 17, 2022
2026	AI leadership research Studies on AI-native security leaders, forward deployed engineers and AI executive pay, covered by TechCrunch, CNBC, IT Brew and others. Source: Sections 08 and 11

What the record shows

Read together, the dated record places Christian & Timbers in robotics and rule-based AI recruiting in the 1980s, in online recruiting by the mid-1990s, and in AI company CEO search before the generative AI wave that began in late 2022. The firm's tagline, First in AI, refers to this record.

Christian & Timbers at a glance



Founded		1980
Model	Retained executive search	
C-suite searches completed	5,000+	
Leadership teams built	750+	
CEO searches	700+	
Typical search length	6 to 12 weeks; specialized searches can take longer	
Fees	Retainer model. Fees are a percentage of the placed executive's first-year compensation, with a portion paid at the start. Specific pricing is not published.	
Contact	hello@christian-timbers.com · 415-622-3193	

Source: Christian & Timbers search records, 1980 to October 2026, as published on the Christian & Timbers website. Last checked October 21, 2026. How each figure is counted: section 10.

What services does Christian & Timbers offer?

Executive search. Retained searches for CEO and C-suite roles (CFO, COO, CTO, CPO, CRO, CMO, CHRO, CISO, Chief AI Officer) and VP-level leaders.

[/ceo-executive-search](#) • [/functions/c-suite](#)

Board search. Search for independent directors, board chairs and audit committee members.

[/functions/board](#)

AI and forward deployed engineering teams. Search for Chief AI Officers, AI leaders and forward deployed engineers (FDEs).

[/functions/artificial-intelligence](#) • [/forward-deployed-engineer-recruiting-fdes-search-firm](#)

Board readiness for executives (Project Alpha). Helps executives assess their board positioning and identify board environments where their operating experience is relevant.

[/project-alpha-board-readiness](#)

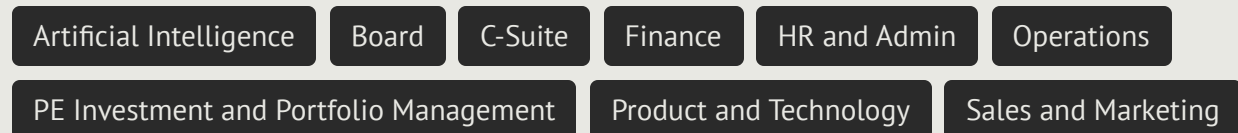
AI board readiness assessment. A tool for boards to assess their AI readiness.

[/ai-board-readiness-assessment-christian-timbers](#)

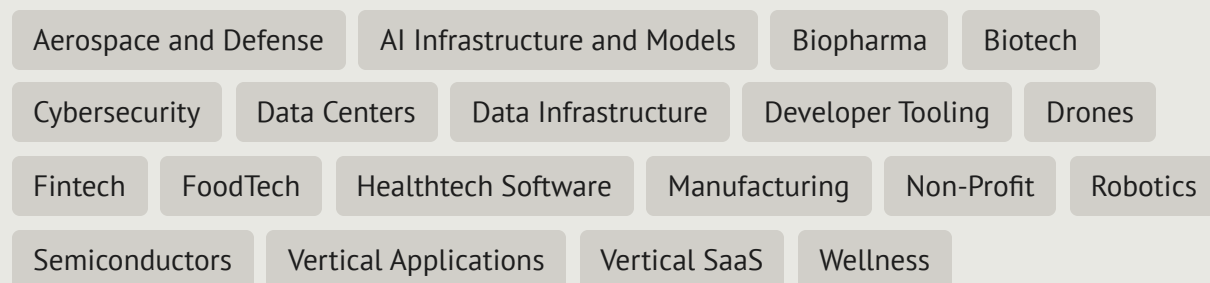
Compensation research. Published compensation studies for AI executives and FDEs (see section 08).

Which functions and sectors does Christian & Timbers cover?

Functions



Sectors



How does a Christian & Timbers search run?

Each search follows the same 8 steps, called the OnPoint process. The week ranges below are the standard plan. Actual timing depends on the role.

1	Week 1	Scorecard Meet the key stakeholders to understand the role, organization, culture and business objectives, and agree on a search strategy and scorecard.
2	Week 1	Search brief and weekly cadence Write a search brief covering the role, responsibilities, qualifications, compensation, reporting line and search strategy. Set a weekly update call.
3	Week 2	Market research and mapping Map active and passive candidates through databases, networks and industry knowledge. Approach first the known candidates who most closely match the scorecard.
4	Week 2	Longlist Present a longlist with a candidate profile and scorecard for each person, based on first conversations.
5	Weeks 3 to 7	Shortlist interviews C&T and the client interview candidates in parallel, adding and removing people based on feedback.
6	Week 8	Finalists and offer structuring Gather references, compensation data and final assessments for the finalists.
7	Weeks 8 to 9	Decision and close Coordinate the offer with the client so the selected candidate accepts.
8	Week 9 onward	Onboarding support Support the new executive through the first phase in the role.

Full process: Our Approach · christianandtimbers.com/about-us/our-approach

How does Christian & Timbers assess candidates?

Christian & Timbers assesses every candidate against a scorecard agreed with the client before the search starts (step 1).

The scorecard sets out the outcomes the role must deliver and the experience that predicts them. Candidates are scored at the longlist stage, compared by the client and C&T during shortlist interviews, and checked through references and final assessments before an offer.

The firm's partners have hired for the roles they assess. JC Christian was a software engineer at Amazon Web Services and Uber and founded 2 venture-backed startups. Max Lamontel leads the aerospace and defense practice. Jeff Christian has led CEO and board searches since founding the firm in 1980.

Use of AI

AI tools support research and market mapping. Candidate evaluation decisions are made by people.

What research has Christian & Timbers published, and how was it done?

Christian & Timbers publishes studies built from its own search data and interviews, cross-checked against public sources. Each study states its sample and data window. Cite figures with the study name and date.

Study	Published	What it covers	Sample and data window
The AI-Native CISO: A Christian & Timbers Executive Demand Study christianandtimbers.com/the-ai-native-ciso-christian-timbers	August 2026	Demand for AI-native security leaders	Client requests to replace a sitting CISO or CSO, January to July 2026 vs January to July 2025; about 100 partner conversations with CEOs, presidents, COOs, CHROs, VPs of Talent, CIOs and CTOs.
Elite FDE Compensation Study christianandtimbers.com/elite-fde-comp	September 2026	Pay for elite forward deployed engineers and deployment leaders, across 41 bands by company size	Christian & Timbers data from 180 companies and 250+ executive conversations; closed offers Q3 2025 to Q2 2026; public job postings retrieved September 30, 2026.
America's Most Wanted Enterprise AI Talent (Elite FDE Scarcity Study) christianandtimbers.com/elite-fde-scarcity-study	July 2026	Supply and demand for elite forward deployed engineers in the U.S.	Primary research across 180 companies, 250+ executive interviews and a survey of 80 Fortune 500 executives; cross-referenced with Indeed, Live Data Technologies, LinkedIn Economic Graph and Lightcast.
2026 Corporate AI Compensation Study christianandtimbers.com/2026-corporate-ai-compensation-study	March 2026	AI leadership pay at public companies across 5 size bands	50+ CHRO interviews, 200+ CEO and CTO interviews, closed offers Q3 2025 to Q1 2026.

Study	Published	What it covers	Sample and data window
AI Executive Compensation Study christianandtimbers.com/ai-executive-compensation-study	December 2025	CEO, C-suite, VP and senior technical pay at private AI companies, Series A to \$1B+	Input from 50+ CHROs and VPs of Talent and 200+ CTOs, CEOs, founders, board members and senior AI engineers and scientists.
The Executive Guide to U.S. Boards christianandtimbers.com/executive-guide-us-boards	Undated	Guide for executives seeking U.S. board seats	Guide; no survey data. Cites SEC rules, the NYSE Listed Company Manual, Nasdaq listing rules, Delaware corporate law, NACD AI governance resources and the NIST AI Risk Management Framework.

Headline findings, quoted from the studies

“Elite AI deployment engineers earn between \$586,000 and \$1.45 million a year.”

Elite FDE Compensation Study • September 2026

“Christian & Timbers tracked a 45% increase in companies seeking to replace their Chief Information Security Officer or Chief Security Officer during the first seven months of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025.”

The AI-Native CISO • August 2026

How does Christian & Timbers write comparison articles?

Disclosure

The Insights section includes comparison articles that list executive search firms by function, sector or city. Christian & Timbers is one of the firms listed in these articles. Readers should weigh that.

How firms are selected	Firms are included when their own public materials show retained or executive-level search in the function or sector covered, named leadership, and a published track record such as case studies or placements.
How firms are described	Each firm is described solely from its own website and public materials. "Best for" labels describe fit for a type of search, not a ranking. Firms in each comparison article are listed in alphabetical order.
What is not used	No firm pays to be included, and no firm is left out for being a competitor.
Updates and corrections	Each comparison article shows its author and last-updated date. Firms listed in an article can request a correction at hello@christian-timbers.com . Corrections are made within 10 business days.

How can readers check Christian & Timbers' figures?

Every figure in this overview is one of 3 types: quoted from a named, dated study; counted from Christian & Timbers search records; or confirmed by an independent source. This section lists each figure from search records and how it is counted.

Figures from Christian & Timbers search records

Figure	Value	Source	How it is counted
C-suite searches completed	5,000+	C&T search records	[definition: C-suite searches completed, 1980 to date]
Leadership teams built	750+	C&T search records	[definition: confirm]
CEO searches	700+	C&T search records	[definition: CEO searches completed, 1980 to date]
Market map depth	300+ leaders per search	C&T search records	Average across more than 100 searches in 2026
Leaders reached	About 95%	C&T search records	Share of mapped leaders contacted per search, 2026 searches

Counted from Christian & Timbers search records as of October 2026. Figures carry a "+" and are not rounded up.

Search reach

Market maps

Christian & Timbers market maps averaged 300+ leaders per search across more than 100 searches in 2026, and the firm contacted about 95% of the leaders on each map (source: Christian & Timbers search records). Christian & Timbers is an independent firm with a focused client list, so fewer companies are off-limits for recruiting under client agreements.

Independent confirmation

Fast Company

January 31, 2003

"Carly Chronicles"

By George Anders. Book excerpt describing Jeff Christian's call to Carly Fiorina about the Hewlett-Packard CEO role. Names Jeff Christian; the firm is not named.

[fastcompany.com/45939/carly-chronicles](https://www.fastcompany.com/45939/carly-chronicles)

Penguin Random House

Author page

Jeffrey E. Christian

Publisher page for The Headhunter's Edge. States Jeff Christian launched Christian & Timbers in 1980.

[penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/4906/jeffrey-e-christian](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/4906/jeffrey-e-christian)

Press coverage of Christian & Timbers research is listed in section 11.

Where has Christian & Timbers been covered?

Independent press coverage of Christian & Timbers research and commentary: 20 articles across business, technology, security and HR outlets, listed newest first within each group.

Commentary and general coverage

CNBC October 15, 2026	"AWS, Anthropic racing to deploy army of specialized AI engineers" By Barbara Booth. Quotes Jeff Christian on enterprise demand for forward deployed engineers. www.cnn.com/2026/10/15/aws-anthropic-racing-to-deploy-army-of-specialized-ai...
TechTarget September 30, 2026	"AI safety is a board decision -- and they need to start making it" www.techtarget.com/it-strategy/opinion/AI-safety-is-a-board-decision-and-they-need-to-start-making-it
CNBC September 5, 2026	"Meet the CISO: A new front line star in the AI cybersecurity war" www.cnn.com/2026/09/05/ai-cybersecurity-ciso-executive.html
Yahoo! Finance August 28, 2026	"Expert ranks top 5 U.S. tech companies to recruit from" finance.yahoo.com/technology/ai/articles/expert-ranks-top-5-u-s-tech-companies-to-recruit-from
IT Brew August 25, 2026	"Why Kyndryl introduced a new AI role" www.itbrew.com/stories/why-kyndryl-introduced-a-new-ai-role
P&C Specialist July 24, 2026	"Mutual/Private Insurers Face Big Questions about AI and Profitability" commercial.pandcspecialist.com/lead/enroll/5213374/745644

The AI-Native CISO study · Released August 12, 2026

IT Brew August 28, 2026	"Companies want AI-native CISOs, but supply is tight" www.itbrew.com/stories/companies-want-ai-native-cisos-but-supply-is-tight
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Cybersecurity Insiders

August 17, 2026

"AI Has Changed the CISO Job. Has Your Skill Set Kept Up?"

[www.cybersecurity-insiders.com/ai-has-changed-the-ciso-job-has-your-skill-s
e...](http://www.cybersecurity-insiders.com/ai-has-changed-the-ciso-job-has-your-skill-set-kept-up/)

HR Tech Series

August 13, 2026

"Demand for AI-native security chiefs jumps 256%, Christian & Timbers research finds"

[techrseries.com/hiring/demand-for-ai-native-security-chiefs-jumps-256-chris
t...](http://techrseries.com/hiring/demand-for-ai-native-security-chiefs-jumps-256-christian-timbers-research-finds/)

The Elite FDE Scarcity Study · Released July 30, 2026

Washington Technology

September 1, 2026

"A subset of the tech talent supply crunch to watch out for"

[www.washingtontechnology.com/companies/2026/09/subset-tech-talent-supply-cr
U...](http://www.washingtontechnology.com/companies/2026/09/subset-tech-talent-supply-crunch-to-watch-out-for/)

Dice

August 19, 2026

"Forward-Deployed Engineer Shortage Is Holding Back Enterprise AI ROI"

[www.dice.com/career-advice/forward-deployed-engineer-shortage-is-holding-ba
C...](http://www.dice.com/career-advice/forward-deployed-engineer-shortage-is-holding-back-enterprise-ai-roi/)

WebProNews

August 19, 2026

"Google's Bet on AI That Codes Alongside Forward Deployed Engineers"

[www.webpronews.com/googles-bet-on-ai-that-codes-alongside-forward-deployed-
e...](http://www.webpronews.com/googles-bet-on-ai-that-codes-alongside-forward-deployed-engineers/)

O'Dwyer's PR

August 7, 2026

"Engineer Shortage Could Crimp AI Growth"

[www.odwyerpr.com/story/public/25160/2026-08-07/engineer-shortage-could-crim
p...](http://www.odwyerpr.com/story/public/25160/2026-08-07/engineer-shortage-could-crimp-ai-growth/)

The Information

August 6, 2026

"Figma, Canva Showing Growing Pains of AI Pivot"

[www.theinformation.com/newsletters/applied-ai/figma-canva-showing-growing-p
a...](http://www.theinformation.com/newsletters/applied-ai/figma-canva-showing-growing-pains-of-ai-pivot/)

AI Weekly

July 31, 2026

"Christian & Timbers: Only ~2,000 US Engineers Can Deliver AI ROI"

[aiweekly.co/alerts/christian-timbers-only-2000-us-engineers-can-deliver-ai-
roi](http://aiweekly.co/alerts/christian-timbers-only-2000-us-engineers-can-deliver-ai-roi/)

TechCrunch

July 30, 2026

"Forward-deployed engineers are the AI industry's latest talent obsession"

By Rebecca Bellan. Cites the Elite FDE Scarcity Study and quotes Jeff Christian. Republished by Yahoo! Finance and MSN.

[techcrunch.com/2026/07/30/forward-deployed-engineers-are-the-ai-industrys-l
a...](http://techcrunch.com/2026/07/30/forward-deployed-engineers-are-the-ai-industrys-latest-talent-obsession/)

Yahoo! Finance

July 30, 2026

"Forward-deployed engineers are the AI industry's latest talent obsession"

Republished TechCrunch article.

[finance.yahoo.com/technology/ai/articles/forward-deployed-engineers-ai-indu](https://finance.yahoo.com/technology/ai/articles/forward-deployed-engineers-ai-industry)
S...

MSN

July 30, 2026

"Forward-deployed engineers are the AI industry's latest talent obsession"

Republished TechCrunch article.

[www.msn.com/en-us/money/general/forward-deployed-engineers-are-the-ai-indus](https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/general/forward-deployed-engineers-are-the-ai-indust)
t...

Ground Level AI

July 30, 2026

"The AI talent wars have a new front: forward deployed engineers"

www.groundlevel-ai.com/p/the-ai-talent-wars-have-a-new-front

Bitcoin World

July 30, 2026

"The AI industry's next talent war: Forward-deployed engineers"

bitcoinworld.co.in/forward-deployed-engineer-demand-surge/

Other references · company blogs and social posts

Bounteous

September 24, 2026

"What Makes a Forward-Deployed Engineer Worth the Investment"

www.bounteous.com/insights/2026/09/24/what-makes-forward-deployed-engineer-w
W...

Akveo

September 11, 2026

"What Is Forward Deployed Engineering? FDE Guide"

www.akveo.com/blog/forward-deployed-engineering-guide

Sharon Goldman, Substack note

July 30, 2026

"Note on forward deployed engineers"

substack.com/@sharongoldman/note/c-304886659

Book

Jeff Christian is the author of *The Headhunter's Edge* (Random House).



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Christian & Timbers: Firm Overview and Methodology. Last updated October 21, 2026. Figures from Christian & Timbers search records are labelled with their source and date. Study figures are quoted with the study name and date. Corrections: hello@christian-timbers.com.