

TOP-PERFORMING CEOs

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The 25 Georgia CEOs who produced the greatest stockholder returns over five years

Atlanta Business Chronicle reports in this special section on the top-performing CEOs of Georgia's publicly owned companies.

We rank CEOs by a single — yet most significant — standard: return they produced for shareholders during the five-year period Dec. 31, 2003, to Dec. 31, 2008.

If you had invested \$100 in these companies' stocks at the end of 2003, by the end of 2008 your stake would have been worth from \$71 to \$583. (Reflecting the economy, investments in seven companies would have lost value.) See Page 4B for the list.

We have included only CEOs who have served at least since 2004. This ensures those selected have a five-year track record on which to base rankings.

But with high turnover in the top executive ranks, this also eliminates many CEOs of Georgia public companies, including those of the largest, most well-known companies.

For example, you won't find on the list the CEOs of The Home Depot Inc., United Parcel Service Inc., The Coca-Cola Co., Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc., Delta Air Lines Inc., SunTrust Banks Inc., or Newell Rubbermaid Inc. because all of their CEOs took office since 2005.

A testament to the skill of the CEOs on the list is that it includes many for the second or third year in a row.

Most noteworthy is No. 1 ranked Robin Raina, CEO of Ebix Inc., who was also ranked No. 1 last year.

Also making repeat appearances are Richard A. Hubbell of RPC Inc. and Marine Products Corp. (ranked No. 3 and No. 17 this year, respectively, and No. 4 and No. 11 in 2008, respectively); James A.

Rubright of Rock-Tenn Co. (No. 4 this year and No. 18 in 2008); Gary W. Rollins of Rollins Inc. (No. 8 this year and No. 10 last year); Paul R. Garcia of Global Payments Inc. (No. 10 this year and No. 7 in 2008); Daniel P. Amos of Aflac Inc. (No. 12 this year and No. 15 in 2008); Robert J. Stanzione of Arris Group Inc. (No. 18 this year and No. 8 in 2008); Boland T. Jones of Premiere Global Services Inc. (No. 19 this year and No. 5 in 2008); Stratton J. Nicolaides of Numerex Corp. (No. 21 this year and No. 6 in 2008); Daniel T. Hendrix of Interface Inc. (No. 22 this year and No. 2 in 2008); R. Daniel Blanton of Southeastern Bank Financial Corp. (No. 23 this year and No. 22 in 2008); and David P. Stockert of Post Properties Inc. (No. 24 this year and No. 20 in 2008).

On Pages 2B through 8B you will find profiles of the 10 CEOs who produced the highest shareholder return between 2003 and 2008.

➤ CALENDAR & LEADS • 12B, 13B

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES C. WATTS

1 Robin Raina

Ebix Inc.
Nasdaq: EBIX

**Five-year total shareholder return:
\$583.16**

Robin Raina takes the top spot again this year on Atlanta Business Chronicle's list of Georgia's Top-Performing CEOs, a spot he also claimed last year.

He's the CEO of **Ebix Inc.**, an Atlanta-based supplier of software and e-commerce services to the insurance industry. The company's goal is to be the leading powerhouse of back-end insurance transactions in the world, converging all insurance channels, processes and entities so data can seamlessly flow once a data entry has been made.

Under Raina's leadership, Ebix turned \$100 invested at the end of 2003 into \$583 at the end of 2008.

As many companies' shares fell during the tough economy of 2009, Ebix



shareholders have doubled their money. Ebix's shares began 2009 at about \$23 and have recently been trading above \$50.

Perhaps it's no surprise that Fortune magazine on Aug. 31 ranked Ebix second

on its "Best Investments" in the world list. Ebix was ranked No. 4 among the 100 fastest-growing companies, named "the world's supercharged performers" by Fortune. Fortune also ranked Ebix the No. 1 fastest-growing company from Georgia in the list.

Raina led a turnaround at Ebix, from \$19 million in losses in 1999. Today, the company has enjoyed 35 quarters of sequential growth in revenue, earnings, net income and net margins.

It is growing both internally and through acquisitions. It completed four acquisitions in 2008. On Oct. 1 it made a \$50.3 million acquisition, buying E-Z Data Inc., a provider of customer relationship management services to the life insurance industry. Raina called the deal "one of our most strategic acquisitions."

On the charitable side, Raina describes himself as a "compassionate capitalist." He founded the Robin Raina Foundation which is building 6,000 free homes (a \$20 million charity project) for slum

dwellers of Delhi, India, with 725 homes already handed over — in excess of 3,500 children adopted in terms of their education, food, clothing and health-care needs. One of Raina's favorite quotes is "I want to make charity fashionable and cool."



2 Vernon J. Nagel

Acuity Brands Inc.
NYSE: AYI

**Five-year total shareholder return:
\$319**

Vernon J. Nagel runs **Acuity Brands Inc.**, one of the world's leading providers of lighting fixtures. He just celebrated his fifth anniversary as Acuity Brands' CEO, a post he took in September 2004.

It's been a roller-coaster ride. Acuity is heavily dependent on construction, and it did well during the recently ended housing and construction boom. But demand for its products has been hurt by the economy during the past year.

Sales climbed from \$2.2 billion for the year ending August 2005 to \$2.5 billion for the year ending August 2007, and then dropped to \$2 billion for the year ending August 2008.

Acuity was scheduled to announce results for fiscal 2009 on Oct. 7.

Last October, it announced it would accelerate its ongoing streamlining, including the consolidation of certain manufacturing facilities and the reduction of overhead costs.

Sales continue to be hurt by the significant decline in construction activity, particularly in key markets such as commercial and office buildings.

"Looking ahead," Nagel told investors on July 2, "we continue to foresee a very difficult economic environment, particularly for non-residential construction activity, a primary market for us. Key indicators continue to signal declines for both residential and non-residential construction activity for the balance of 2009 and into 2010."

The company is continuing to invest, expanding into the market for environmentally friendly products. Last April it completed a \$205 million acquisition of Sensor Switch Inc. That deal, along with Acuity's other acquisition of Lighting Control and Design, accelerated the company's strategy of offering more sustainable lighting products at a time when energy management is critical.

Acuity's shares soared during 2005, 2006 and into 2007, when they began a sharp decline that lasted into 2009. An investor who bought \$100 worth of shares at the end of 2003 would have seen them triple in value to \$319 by the end of 2008. The stock has recently been about where it started 2009, in the low \$30s.



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