



**Sample MHTA Tekne Awards Application**  
**Agosto - 2018 Tekne Awards Recipient**  
**(Software – Small & Growing Category)**

**Please provide a description of your organization**  
**(<100 words)**

Agosto is a cloud services company that helps organizations leverage Google Cloud products in the private and public sectors, providing technical solutions, change management, custom development, migration and deployment from legacy systems, and product development. Agosto is one of the largest Google Cloud Platform partners globally, and was named Google Partner of the Year for Cloud in 2013 and 2016. Founded in 2001, Agosto has headquarters in Minneapolis and a sales office in Toronto. Agosto's clients include 1-800-Got-Junk?, the State of Wyoming, Unilog, Groupon, Jaguar Land Rover, and the Library of Congress, among others.

**Overview**  
**(<250 words)**

*Describe your project and how it aligns with your company's mission and priorities. Include a key feature that makes it a marketplace standout.*

Agosto is made up of account managers, analysts, developers, architects, and subject matter experts, all of whom are professionally invested in understanding Google products inside and out.

The company is a tier one Google Cloud Premier Partner, and has one of the largest Google Cloud Platform (GCP) development teams in North America. Agosto brings its deep knowledge about Google technologies, as well as the cloud ecosystem, to every customer they work with. In 2016, after Agosto built an application for a large global retailer supporting a Chrome rollout to 9,000 stores in North America, a product concept was sparked. The idea was to create an enterprise-grade content management system (CMS) that would be affordable, intuitive, and infinitely scalable. Agosto set out to create a unique Digital Signage content management system (CMS) using Google's DNA, and Skykit was born.

## **Innovation**

**(<250 words)**

*Describe what makes your project innovative. What differentiates your organization from your peers?*

Skykit is the first and only end-to-end Google-based digital signage solution. It easily distributes content to any screen, anywhere in the world. Using a powerful browser-based CMS built on the Google Cloud Platform to run all centralized services for Skykit, end users have the ability to control, collaborate, and quickly send content to any number of displays from Google Drive and Apps. Users can create content in the platforms they already use today, which speeds up the content approval process that can be a bottleneck for other digital signage CMSs. Users control what to share and when to share it, creating seamless transitions in their displays. Content updates can be made in real-time using mobile devices. Skykit is native to the cloud, so it grows with your business. All you need is Skykit, a screen, a Chrome Player and your content. There is no maintenance and nothing to install, ever.

## **Value Proposition**

**(<250 words)**

*Describe your project's value proposition. How has this innovation added value or improved the experience of customers/end users? What problem does your project mitigate or solve?*

The simplicity of Skykit is a huge value to companies of all sizes. It's as easy for an enterprise to install and use globally, as it is for a local pizza chain like Davanni's. All that's required is the Skykit CMS, a screen, a Chrome Player and your content. Users control what to share and when to share it, creating seamless transitions on their displays. Content updates can be made in real-time using mobile devices.

A Twin Cities-local customer, Davanni's has digital displays in every location next to its menu boards for promotions. They also offer party and meeting rooms which can be used for birthday parties, dinners, team events and business meetings. Most rooms have large HD TVs with video hook-ups. Before they used Skykit, Davanni's utilized three different CMS programs to manage content for its digital signage. This made administration, content development, distribution and auditing for each location time consuming and cumbersome. Skykit enabled Davanni's to unify its digital signage communications across all 22 locations. Another big issue with the old systems - they could not host video content for in-store displays. This was significant, as video is one of the most compelling content types a restaurant chain can offer for promotions. When Davanni's launched Skykit for all of its locations, they were able to introduce video to promotional displays. Now, it's not unusual for Davanni's to see sales more than double on items that are promoted with Skykit.

## **Business Impact**

**(<250 words)**

*Describe your market potential for this project. Include supporting data. Highlight aspects of your business model that will demonstrate scalability.*

Digital Signage has revolutionized the way businesses communicate with customers, and Skykit has revolutionized digital signage. The market potential for Skykit is infinite, as is its scale for the businesses that use it. Since it's a communications tool, and flat screens have become a ubiquitous asset for every type of business, content management systems are being used as widely as PowerPoint slides were in the 90s. Industries like retail use screens in-store to display products and promotions, while using them for training and team updates in the back room. Restaurants can update menu boards as soon as they know an item is no longer available, and they can promote items at multiple locations with one click. Corporations use digital signage to share company updates for employees and to personalize lobby welcome screens for clients. Hospitals use it to create communications and manage content in waiting areas such as videos, wellness tips, weather and more; and for staff they can share work calendars, training, safety info or compliance paperwork.

Digital signage is being leveraged by schools - in classrooms and on campuses; by the manufacturing industry, in the public sector by government agencies; in banks, airports, hotels - the list is endless. And as for the scalability of Skykit - it truly is infinite because it was built to run on Google Cloud Platform. There is no limit to the amount of data or the number of screens, Skykit works just as well for global corporations as small startups.

## **Outcomes & Important Accomplishments**

**(<250 words)**

*Identify three examples that illustrate your success within the last year (e.g.: industry recognition, patents, program metrics, milestones achieved, committed partnerships, significant obstacles overcome, etc.). Include evaluation criteria by which success is defined, measured and evaluated. What is the benefit/contribution to the science and technology economy?*

In 2018, Agosto rolled out the largest single Skykit deployment to date, with more than 8,000 digital displays (and counting). This large enterprise rollout for direct-to-patient ad network in medical offices across the U.S., solidifies Skykit as a truly scalable solution that works just as well for large enterprises as small businesses.

As one of only a handful of tier 1 Google Premier Partners in North America, Agosto is leveraging the best of Google and Chrome throughout Skykit (see attached diagram). Built with the material design of Google, Skykit worked with Google and UI experts both internal and external to create the most user friendly CMS platform on the market. Through Agosto's Google partnership, Skykit is being positioned as an enterprise solution to Google customers.

Skykit has established strategic partnerships with some of the digital signage industry's most relevant AV companies, integrators, and hardware manufacturers, including Synnex, CDW and Best Buy. These partnerships continue to establish Skykit as a leader in the digital signage space.

Success and customer satisfaction for Skykit is linked closely with renewals, which we currently hold annually at 98%+. In addition, end-user customer satisfaction calls are used to glean feature set insights, use cases, testimonials, and more. In 2017, Skykit launched a Customer Satisfaction team focused on expanding our footprint with G Suite customers and educating on-prem customers about the value of cloud solutions and the migration to the cloud.

## **Project Contributors & Leadership**

**(<250 words)**

*Describe experience, special skills and accomplishments of key management team related to this project and how the team's approach contributed to the success of this project.*

Linda Hofflander, VP Skykit Strategy, Global Channel and Alliances, is a digital signage veteran who brings nearly two decades of industry experience to Agosto. Linda has worked on all sides of a digital signage deployment: hardware, software, services, consulting, and even from the end-user perspective. She is a tremendous team asset, developing partnerships to grow Skykit. Hofflander has served on industry associations and boards including the ICX Association and the Digital Signage Federation. A noted public speaker, she is currently on the Speakers Bureau for ICX Association, and is a regular face at the Digital Signage Expo, participating in roundtables and leading education sessions. Hofflander has co-hosted the Digital Signage Awards multiple times, and has published articles on digital deployments in industry magazines and blogs.

Irfan Khan, Chief Executive Officer, is an entrepreneur with a successful track record of taking companies and products from concept to reality. Khan co-founded Agosto in 2001. Under his leadership the company has evolved into a widely recognized and respected leader in the B2B cloud marketplace and the Google ecosystem. As CEO, Khan sets the strategic direction of both Agosto and Skykit. He is responsible for identifying emerging opportunities that leverage Agosto's market position as a leading cloud broker and product development expert, curating and managing delivery teams to support Skykit's accelerated growth.