

John Thornton

Chief Executive Officer, Astrobotic

Biography

John Thornton co-founded Astrobotic in 2007 with the mission to make space accessible to the world. Under his tenure as CEO, Astrobotic has become a world-leading lunar logistics company delivering cargo to the Moon for companies, governments, universities, non-profits, and individuals. The organization has secured more than \$600M in NASA contracts to deliver instruments to the lunar surface, and launched America's first commercial lunar lander in 2024. Additionally, the company has expanded its lunar rovers, space robotics, and lunar power infrastructure offerings with more than 70 commercial technology contracts. John founded and is the Chairman of the Board for the Moonshot Museum, a Pittsburgh-based non-profit dedicated to career development and access to the burgeoning space industry.

Curriculum Vitae

Astrobotic Technology, Inc. – Pittsburgh, PA

Chief Executive Officer: 2013 – Present

Strategic Leadership & Growth:

- Orchestrated the company's evolution from a startup to a premier lunar logistics provider, expanding the workforce to over 230 employees across facilities in Pittsburgh, PA, and Mojave, CA.
- Secured 60+ contracts with NASA, the Department of Defense, and commercial clients, amassing a total value exceeding \$600 million.

Mission Development:

- Led the successful booking of three lunar missions utilizing the Peregrine, Griffin, and MoonRanger spacecraft, positioning Astrobotic at the forefront of lunar exploration.
- Under John's leadership, Peregrine became the first NASA CLPS (Commercial Lunar Payload Services) launch. The mission facilitated groundbreaking agreements with international space agencies such as AEM (Mexican Space Agency) and DLR (German Aerospace Center), alongside commercial partnerships with companies like international shipping giant DHL.
- The payloads carried by Peregrine yielded scientific papers and research findings for NASA, contributing to advancements in planetary science and lunar exploration.

Partnerships & Collaborations:

- Built a Pittsburgh, PA company that contracts 188 local suppliers, creating and bolstering the space industry within the Keystone state region

John Thornton

Chief Executive Officer, Astrobotic

Innovation & Technology Advancement:

- Spearheaded the development of the ‘LunaGrid’ service, aiming to provide sustainable power solutions by the Watt on the lunar surface through the integration of landers and rovers equipped with Vertical Array Solar Panels.
- Oversaw the acquisition of Masten Space Systems, enhancing Astrobotic’s propulsion capabilities and expanding its technological portfolio.

President: 2011 – 2013

- Led the company’s transition from research-focused initiatives to commercial lunar logistics development.
- Secured Astrobotic’s first major NASA contracts, enabling the design and early development of Griffin lunar lander.

Founder & Chief Engineer: 2007 – 2011

- Directed the engineering development of systems for lunar exploration, including mobility, precision landing, and hazard detection technologies.