

SMS hires product chief from Amazon

By John Pletz | March 07, 2018 6:00 AM

SMS Assist, one of Chicago's most promising IPO candidates, just made a big hire, bringing in Amazon veteran Peter Commons as its new chief product officer. The 49-year-old has held a variety of roles, most recently leading a 400-person staff that handled product and technology for Amazon Fresh, the e-commerce company's foray into grocery delivery. He also was an early member of the team that produced the Kindle tablet.

SMS, which helps commercial and residential customers schedule maintenance from all sorts of vendors, is in the midst of an upgrade as it gets bigger. It [hired Taylor Rhodes as CEO](#) last year to take over day-to-day management for founder Mike Rothman, who grew the company to about 750 employees and remains chairman. Rhodes was CEO of Rackspace, a cloud-hosting company based in San Antonio.

Commons, who recently moved to Chicago from Seattle, will help SMS improve its data-analytics capabilities. "We want to be the data and analytics leader for property management," says Rhodes. "We collect a ton of data about what happens in these buildings. The combinations of things that can break—analyzing how to prevent them from breaking is complex."