

# Integrate



THE OFFICIAL TRADE JOURNAL OF NSCA | WINTER 2021

## Back to Work!

Enter 2022 with optimism and get ready to play a critical role in helping your customers return to work. NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee offers tips. **PAGE 6**

Plus: What will be your company's biggest obstacle next year? The NSCA community weighs in.

**PAGE 26**

**SPECIAL SECTION: BLC+**

A companion reader to the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference on Feb. 23-25 **PAGE 11**

**PUBLISHED BY**

NSCA  
3950 River Ridge Drive NE, Suite B  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402  
800.446.NSCA • 319.366.6722  
Fax: 319.366.4164  
www.nasca.org

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**President**  
Mike Boettcher  
New Era Technology

**Vice President**  
Ray Bailey  
Lone Star Communications

**Secretary**  
Tim Hennen  
IVCi

**Treasurer**  
Dan Schmidtdorff  
Communication Company

**Immediate Past President**  
Josh Shanahan  
Sport View Technologies

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Dale Bottcher**  
AVI-SPL

**Brad Caron**  
SIGNET Electronic Systems

**Christina De Bono**  
ClearTech Media

**Kyle Habben**  
Electronic Contracting Company

**Laurie MacKeigan**  
Backman Vidcom

**Don Mastro**  
AVI Systems

© Copyright 2021 by the National Systems Contractors Association (NSCA). All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. Except as permitted under the United States copyright act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, be manipulated or entered into or stored in a database system without the prior permission of NSCA.

Statements of fact and/or opinion are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not imply an opinion of the officers or board of the association. Send letters regarding materials to: NSCA, c/o Integrate Editor, 3950 River Ridge Drive NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402.

# How This Year's BLC Sessions Translate to Your Business

**The goal of NSCA's Events Committee is to link every Business & Leadership Conference session to strategic planning.** *By Chuck Wilson*

**Y**ou've come to learn—and expect—that Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) outcomes directly impact your strategic planning. We hear all the time about the ways that integrators have embedded the growth strategies, talent management approaches, and culture initiatives they learned about at BLC into their plans. The same goes for improving operational procedures, processes, and workflows.

The ongoing value of the Business & Leadership Conference can be found in the people you meet, the knowledge that's shared, and the takeaways that can be implemented when you get home.

Think back to Verne Harnish, who delivered his "Scaling Up" keynote at BLC 2018. The NSCA members that rely on NSCA for strategic planning know that his four principles for scaling business involve strategy, execution, people, and cash. Using these guiding principles, we help them follow the proper meeting cadence and steps toward strategy implementation.

BLC veterans will also remember the "4 Disciplines of Execution" session at BLC 2017. Chris McChesney shared lead and lag measures, WIGs, accountability models, and scorecards. This information made an immediate and measurable impact on the companies that implemented those principles. To this day, they're used by NSCA and nearly 100 member companies to execute on strategic plans.

Then there was Morten Hansen, author of *Great by Choice*, in 2016. Many NSCA members benefitted from implementing his "hedgehog concept" (an operating model that reflects understanding of three intersecting circles: what you can be the best in the world at, what you are deeply passionate about, and what best drives your economic or resource engine) along with the flywheel principle to get everyone moving in the same direction. I still hear members refer to the 10Xers in their companies who take the 20-mile march and fire cannonballs.

And what about Liz Wiseman, author of *Rookie Smarts*, who spoke at BLC 2015 and is now one of the most highly revered business leaders in the world? She helped us understand multigenerational workforces and how to create environments where new employees can become successful and thrive in this type of business. Our members still use her career lattice platform to onboard and develop true talent.

In 2014, we welcomed Dr. Lisa Lang, who admittedly spoke over my head from the very start. But, eventually, her teachings showed us how to stop throwing more people at a bad process. Her work made a profound difference for the companies that understood how to identify capacity issues and resolve them.



Our challenge is to make each year better. Once you reach the level we have, that's a very tall order—but we accept the challenge (and delivered on it this year)!

We've also led innovation-focused sessions where speakers like Brian Solis (2021) and Nicholas Webb (2016) amazed us at the time—and now we see their predictions in our everyday lives.

Meanwhile, we continue to inspire and motivate through memorable speakers like Michele Gay (2019), Jim "The Rookie" Morris (2016), John O'Leary (2013), and Kevin Carroll (2009).

I think back to Daniel Pink standing on the table to drive home the concept of culture being everything. I think about the early days when we welcomed Jack Canfield after he penned a book called *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. (He went on to do okay with that title, in case you were wondering.)

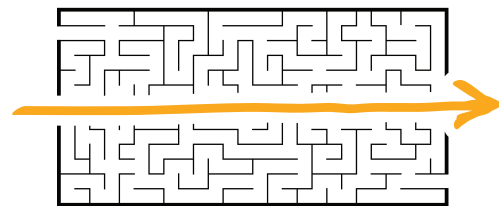
The list goes on and on, and it's been such a rewarding experience to create an environment where members get to learn from such great business leaders. The challenge for NSCA's team is to make each year even better. Once you reach the level we have, that's a very tall order—but we accept the challenge (and think we definitely delivered on it this year)! Learn more about BLC 2022 sessions and presenters [here](#).

*Chuck R. Wilson*

**Chuck Wilson, CEO**  
NSCA  
cwilson@nsca.org

## Integrate IN THIS EDITION

- 2** Chuck Connects the BLC Dots
- 4** Calendar: BLC 2022 is Around the Corner!
- 6** Cover: Back to Work!
- 11** BLC+ Special Section
- 26** On Members' Minds: What's Your Biggest 2022 Obstacle?
- 28** Marketing Tips for Integrators
- 30** Account Mapping 101
- 34** Can "Reskilling" Mitigate Talent Challenges?
- 36** NSCA Member Updates
- 44** What Makes Successful Service Integrators Tick?



# POWERFUL STRATEGIES

for an EVOLVING WORLD



## 24th Annual Business & Leadership Conference

Why are we calling the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference the most-anticipated BLC ever?

Although last year's virtual event was a success, NSCA has heard from countless members who can't wait to reunite in person to share stories, learn from other leaders, talk about overcoming challenges, and discover new ways of doing business.

BLC 2022 keynotes reveal powerful strategies to keep up in an evolving world:

- Beyond the Pivot: 4 Investments the Best Teams Use to Build the New Future by Jon Acuff
- The Fusion Formula: Brand + Culture = Results by Denise Yohn
- Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance & Productivity by Joseph Allen
- Because Everyone Can Be Great by Calvin Mackie
- Leading with Emotional Courage by Peter Bregman
- The Collapse of Distinction by Scott McKain
- Economic Outlook 2022 and Beyond by Chris Kuehl

Beyond the keynotes, BLC attendees can also choose from eight workshops designed to tackle key industry issues:

- Talent Pipelines: Attracting, Recruiting, and Retaining
- How the Best Teams Overcome Overthinking to Navigate Change, Increase Productivity, and Win Consistently
- Improve Predictable Labor Resource Modeling
- Understand Contracts and Intellectual Capital
- Playbook for Brand-Culture Fusion
- Change without Resistance
- What Customers Really Want
- Culture Renovation: Rebuild or Reinforce?

NSCA members can attend for \$899; non-members can attend for \$1,299.  
Learn more or register now at [www.nasca.org/blc](http://www.nasca.org/blc).

## Webinar: State of the Industry 2022

Coming in January

Each year, NSCA teams up with *Commercial Integrator* to conduct a survey of integrators and use the data to provide a State of the Industry report. The annual feature in the January 2022 edition of *Commercial Integrator* will crunch the numbers—including analysis by NSCA—and take the pulse of the integration market as we enter a new year. The webinar that follows provides even more frank discussion about industry opportunities and challenges. This is a must-attend webinar for all integrators—and a great preview of what's to come at BLC 2022.

Register at <<LINK TO COME>>

## FIND UPCOMING EVENTS

on our event calendar at [NSCA.org](http://NSCA.org).



# Calculate your ROI.

## See the proven value of Ascom workflow solutions.

Ascom customers are achieving dramatic return-on-investment with our healthcare solutions. Use our Self Service ROI Calculators or read the ROI White Papers.

> [ascom.com/north-america/roi-tools](http://ascom.com/north-america/roi-tools)



# EXPLORE HYBRID LEARNING SOLUTIONS

THAT KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED

Visit [legrandav.com](http://legrandav.com)





# THE INTEGRATOR'S ROLE

## in Getting Customers Back to the Office

The questions you should be asking, the technologies you need to offer, and the changes you need to make to help customers return to in-person work.

It's not an integrator's job to tell customers whether their employees should shift from remote to in-person or hybrid work; however, it's *very much* an integrator's job to make sure it's possible for customers to get back to the office safely and productively if they want or need to do so.

Meanwhile, increasing evidence and analysis suggest that companies and employees will benefit greatly from returning to the office.

NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee has discussed this topic at length—due in part to these two articles:

1. **The Real Reason to Go Back to the Office (Hint: It's Not For Your Employer)** via *Forbes*
2. **The Office is Not Dead. Here's Why** via *Fast Company*

The topic is a tricky one. You strive to position your organization as a business partner for your customers. As such, you may be in a position to encourage clients to get back to in-person, face-to-face collaboration. Of course, integrated technology solutions play a role; however, there's an additional challenge stemming from the fact that many customers returning to the office are doing so with less square footage to play with.

This decreasing footprint can be disruptive. You may view this change as a shrinking opportunity to make an impact on a customer's business. The lack of physical space also inhibits educational opportunities like lunch-and-learns, leaving customers lagging in understanding how technology can optimize business.

So what should you do? Members of NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee answer the most common questions.

### Q: What should integrators ask clients about their plans to return to the office?

It's important to get them thinking about the flexibility of the technology they use inside and outside the office, says Ryan Towner, president at Towner Communication Systems. This is an opportunity to help customers consider the logistical challenges related to hybrid or remote collaboration. Along those lines, says Patrick Whipkey, vice president at USAV, integrators should also ask customers how well-equipped their offices are to handle hybrid meetings.

Consider guiding the conversation by asking your clients questions like:

- *"What's your office's COVID-19 policy?"* Asking this can lead to a discussion about the technologies that support these new policies. For example: More digital signage may be needed to reinforce social distancing protocols or additional displays may be needed to report on air quality.
- *"Will everyone return to work full time or in a hybrid arrangement?"* If hybrid, then you should consider the opportunities for technology upgrades in conference rooms to bring remote and onsite workers together, recommends Harry Aller, CTO and general manager at Innovative Lighting.
- *"What percentage of workers will come back?"* Depending on the percentages, Jeff Brum, director of marketing and sales operations at Mechdyne Corporation, says it may mean they need to reconsider usage of meeting room spaces.
- *"What types of challenges do you anticipate related to employees coming back to work? How can we help you minimize these worries?"* Tom Kibler, vice president and general manager at Newtech Systems Inc. says that, by gathering this information, you can develop solutions unique to a customer's specific concerns.
- *"How is the remote or hybrid experience going so far? What are remote participants saying about it? What issues do they have with audio/video or bandwidth? What has been helpful?"* The barriers experienced by the workforce are important to determine, says Bill Fons, executive vice president at PTG. Every company is different when it comes to things like culture, safety, local/state rules for contact tracing, etc.

As you work through these conversations, it's also crucial to make sure you take steps to ensure that sensitive data is well protected in a remote work environment.



**Q: Should integrators forge partnerships to better address customer transitions?**

Brum recommends that integrators consider a financing partner that can offer an as-a-service approach that helps clients turn technology investments into operating expenses. “A large capital cost might be a barrier for organizations that did not grow in the last 18 months but still acknowledge that they need technology upgrades,” he explains.

From Kibler’s point of view, partnerships with automation companies can make a valuable impact—and also be a differentiator for you. “The pandemic caused fear. Nobody wants to ‘touch’ anything. This includes doors, light switches, remote controls, etc.”

When seeking out partnerships, be sure to think beyond technology and consider the business challenges associated with returning to work, suggests Fons. “Align yourself with other groups that rely heavily on a workforce return: office furniture dealers, facilities departments, commercial leasing and real estate, etc.”

**Q: Which enabling technologies can boost return-to-work productivity?**

It goes without saying that employees have become accustomed to using many different types of conferencing and collaboration platforms. The trick, Whipkey says, is to create “simple, easy-to-use hybrid meeting rooms.”

This may require new levels of automation. “Voice and gesture control solutions and meeting room management tools are helpful and will play a key role in getting people back,” says Fons. Things like voice activation and installing wave switches or occupancy sensors that eliminate the need to physically touch a switch can help manage fear.

Also consider sensors that can capture data about air quality, temperature, and occupancy, adds Whipkey. This can be valuable information that helps your customer maintain a safe and comfortable work environment—and prove to their employees that they’re making an effort to do so.

**Q: Will artificial intelligence (AI) play a role in getting back to the office?**

A study from PwC a few months ago found that 52% of companies accelerated AI adoption plans because of COVID-19. In the wake of the crisis, nearly three-quarters of business leaders feel positive about the role that AI will play in the future, says a survey from *The AI Journal*.

The short answer? Yes, AI may play a role. “Where possible, AI-powered knowledge bases/chatbots may help users self-service on technology issues, reducing wait times and impact on IT teams,” Brum says.

Companies have also developed AI virtual applications that show contact tracing, explains Fons. Heat maps that report where and when touch surfaces need attention based on usage can be pivotal.

When the sensors and monitoring systems we mentioned earlier are backed by AI software, this will also allow analytics to tell helpful stories about space and tech usage.

**“With the work-at-home movement, careers have become more personal as they’ve been brought into the home. People are likely to hold onto those feelings when returning to work and therefore be more emotional when things do not go as planned. Integrators need to be aware of this.”**

–Harry Aller, Innovative Lighting

**Q: How can integrators use data and advanced analytics to better serve clients?**

When decisions are made without reliable insight to support them, you’re essentially playing a guessing game. Information is available to help your clients make confident choices about their buildings, assets, and personnel—and you can help them capture and apply it.

Some collaboration technologies come with built-in analytics, Towner points out. “If you can measure it, then you can track it, learn from it, and adapt.”

The sensors and room monitoring systems we’ve mentioned can provide information about room and technology utilization, Brum says. With that data in hand, effective investments can be made based on required space and systems. Meanwhile, remote technology monitoring can make IT teams more effective, alert about failures, and enable a proactive service approach when performance metrics are analyzed.

**Q: Are integrators equipped to solve the people- and technology-related challenges that come along with the return to the office?**

Prior to the pandemic, technology decisions were often made based on spaces and rooms: What does this room need?

Now it's time to take a step back and think about the environment as a whole—including the people who work within it. Who will be there? What will they need to accomplish? What will make them feel comfortable? "Furniture, the environment, flexibility, and fun are all factors to consider when designing a space," says Whipkey. "It's a mindset change. No longer do you go to a client with technology pitches. You need to have holistic conversations and dig deeper to understand their goals."

With the work-from-home movement also came a personalization of careers. Virtually, coworkers were brought into each other's personal spaces. "People are likely to hold onto those feelings when returning to work and, therefore, be more emotional when things do not go as planned. Integrators need to be aware of this," says Aller. He even suggests doing research on emotional intelligence so you're prepared for these conversations.

Consider just how personal technology has become. "People in an organization are impacted by office technology every day," Brum points out. "Interfaces should be intuitive so that users are confident with technology. Tickets are minimized when technology is easy to use. The IT team is made up of people, too. Reducing their workload will be appreciated just as much." ▲

*This article reflects a discussion led by NSCA Director of Business Resources Mike Abernathy with NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee.*

Meet and network with members of NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee at the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference on Feb. 23-25 in Irving, TX. Register at [www.nasca.org/blc](http://www.nasca.org/blc).

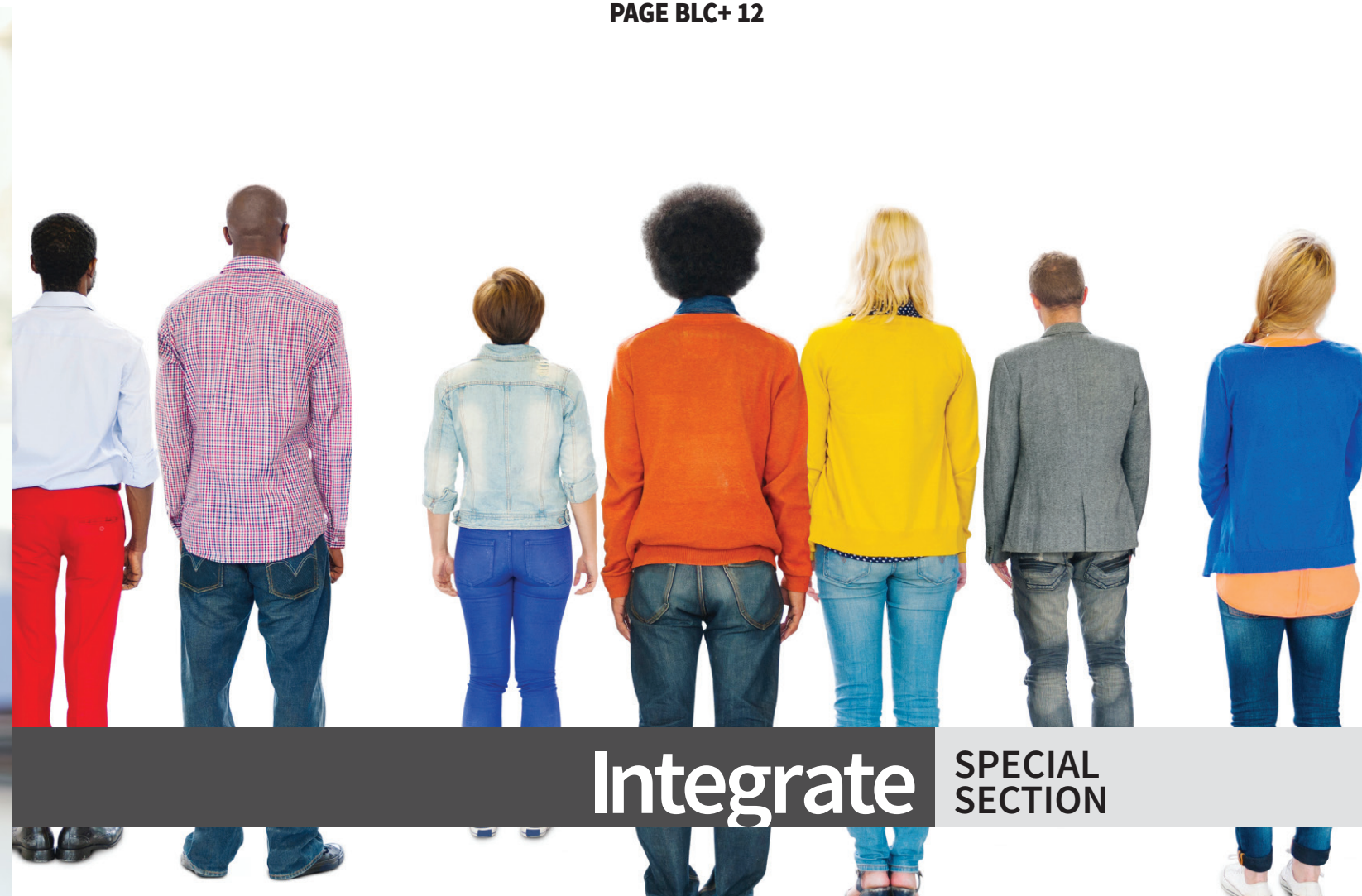
# Business & Leadership Conference+



## POWERFUL STRATEGIES for an Evolving World

NSCA board members outline the business priorities that take center stage at the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference on Feb. 23-25, 2022, in Irving, TX. **PAGE BLC+ 14**

Plus: The Secret Behind How BLC is Planned **PAGE BLC+ 12**



# THE SECRET SAUCE that Makes Up BLC

The Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) has earned the reputation of being a must-attend event in our industry—and it's now one of the best leadership conferences in the country. Professional speakers, authors, and speakers bureaus report that our conference is known for offering some of the most-desired speaking engagements around. That reputation didn't come easily. It took years of trial and error, listening and learning, and experimenting with content, scheduling, logistics, and tweaking of even the smallest elements to create this

unmatched attendee experience. It also took a planning committee made up of your industry peers, a staff of voracious readers, countless hours of watching videos, and the alignment of industry issues with content lanes. The content "swim lanes," as we call them, attach your leading concerns and opportunities with the top three speakers in the world on that subject. I'm thankful for the event sponsors that allow us to attain the caliber of presenters we enjoy today—and that's just the beginning.

**The content "swim lanes," as we call them, attach your leading concerns and opportunities with the top three speakers in the world on that subject.**

**"Of Course!"**  
The phrase "Of course!" has come to be known by BLC attendees as the first thing they hear from NSCA team members. We receive countless remarks from attendees in our evaluations about the nature of our staff, how they handle themselves, and how they deal with requests and issues. The secret behind our approach is the lessons we learned from an event team at the Four Seasons Resort in Los Colinas, TX. We went behind the scenes to study their methods and see how they train. We left in awe of their achievements—and with a goal to match them.

### Flawless Execution!

Before BLC even begins, a pact is made among the NSCA team and everyone involved—from logistics, technology, food and beverage, facilities, and kitchen staff to golf pros and housekeeping. That pact is simple: It's a clear expectation that NSCA and the conference facility are in this together. We act as a team to serve attendees the absolute best experience possible without placing blame. You'll never hear an NSCA staff member blame the hotel for a problem—and you'll never hear the hotel or facility blame us if we slip up. Issues are simply fixed (with an "of course!"). That little secret has directly influenced the reputation we enjoy today. To a large degree, networking and relationship building are the highest-value elements of BLC. More specifically, the people who attend are the reason why the others want to attend. The very carefully planned sessions, the "of course!" attitude, and the flawless execution are just bonuses. NSCA members who attend the event are simply the best! 📍

### What's Inside BLC+?

- BLC+ 14:** Battling Commoditization
- BLC+ 15:** Data-Driven Decision Making
- BLC+ 16:** Connecting Culture and Brand
- BLC+ 18:** Leading with Emotional Courage
- BLC+ 19:** Connecting Company Culture and Talent Experiences
- BLC+ 20:** Frictionless Client Experiences
- BLC+ 22:** Avoiding Leadership Burnout
- BLC+ 23:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- BLC+ 24:** Getting Company and Culture on Same Page
- BLC+ 25:** Your BLC Workbook

## WHAT IS BLC+?

Consider this to be a companion reader to the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference.

All chosen sessions and speakers align with the "swim lanes" Chuck describes in his column. NSCA works closely with its integrator-led Events Committee and its board of directors to identify BLC topics and goals each year. In this special section of NSCA's quarterly trade journal, *Integrate*, board members offer their takes on the topics that drive this year's BLC. Whether you attend this year's in-person event or not, you can use BLC+ content to add a layer to your strategies for 2022 and beyond—and use the workbook on the last page to jot down your notes.

As always, thank you for being an NSCA member.



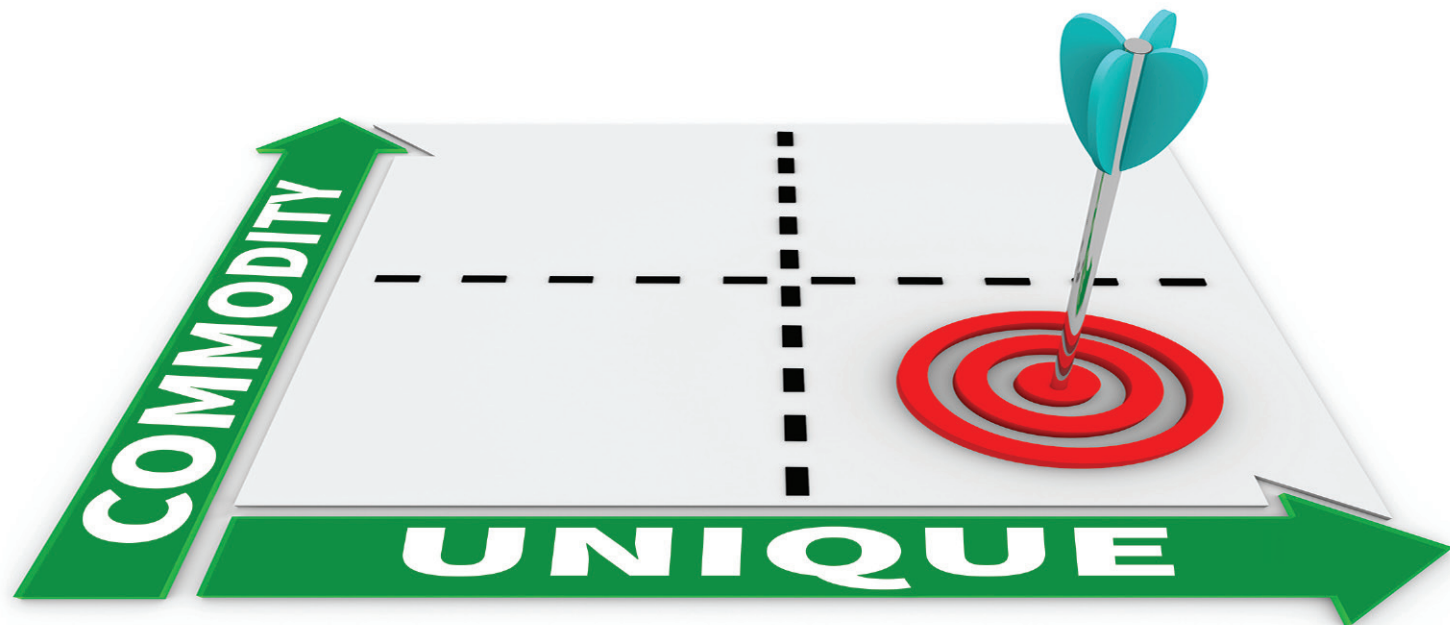
*Tom LeBlanc*

Tom LeBlanc  
Executive Director, NSCA



Business & Leadership  
CONFERENCE





## Tips for Battling (or Not Battling) Commoditization

Explore strategies to protect your margins amid commoditization. *By Tim Hennen*

Commoditization is inherently good. What's that? You thought it was all about margin erosion, which is obviously bad? If that's what you think, then think again. Commoditization is a sure sign that there's a significant want or need for a particular product or service. Take that sign as an indication of opportunity and rise to the challenges that come with it.

Any time a product or service becomes a commodity—and there is adequate supply in the marketplace—margin will erode. Don't fight it (you'll lose). Instead, learn to leverage it. It's a lot easier to sell people things they want rather than trying to convince them to buy something else. So how do you protect the margin? Here are a few strategies you can apply based on your situation.

### Buying Better is the First Step to Combating Margin Erosion

If you've got consistent sales and cash flow, then take advantage of every deal possible when purchasing. Use your sales data and analytics. Plan your purchases and buy in bulk. Prepay, pay early, or take any other deal you're offered. If you know you're going to sell, then don't be afraid to buy.

### Improve Your Processes

When a service is the commodity, buying better isn't really an option—but doing better is. Look at what you're doing and how you're doing it. Find ways to optimize all your processes and focus on training, documentation, and tools. Your team will work smarter and faster, ultimately helping you keep more profit in your pocket.

### The Key to Winning the Commoditization Battle is Innovation

Innovation allows you to go beyond what everyone else is doing, stand out, and create opportunities for better profit. Innovation relative to commoditization is all about leveraging the commodity.



**“Any time a product or service becomes a commodity—and there's adequate supply in the marketplace—margin will erode. Don't fight it (you'll lose). Instead, learn to leverage it.”**

—Tim Hennen, NSCA Board Secretary

What does that mean? Accept the commodity for what it is. Take the reduced margin, but wisely use the commodity to carry along other, more profitable products or services. Confused? Here's an example: Create product bundles that incorporate the commodity product. The want or need for the commodity will help pull the other higher-profit products in the bundle through to keep your overall margin where you'd prefer it to be.

If you're in a situation where your service has become a commodity, then you can apply the same tactic. Bundling complementary services together allows you the same opportunity to pull through your more profitable services to offset the margin erosion you face. While these ideas are simple, they're also highly effective in keeping profit in your pocket.

True innovation—trying something new—is one of the best (but hardest) ways to fight commoditization. True innovation is a risk that takes courage and effort. It's hard to do something new. If it wasn't, then everyone would do it. When risks pay off, the rewards are bountiful. If you really want to get past commodities, then innovation is a must. You never know: You may just create the next great commodity, and everyone else will be trying to figure out how to keep up with you!

*Tim Hennen is CEO of Digital Labor Solutions and NSCA secretary.*



## Data-Driven Decision Making

What are the right key performance indicators to analyze? *By Ray Bailey*

Lone Star Communications uses data in most of its decision-making—and we have for years. In the last few years, however, we've identified a number of KPIs (key performance indicators) we focus on for the parts of the business we're trying to measure or improve. In particular, we've identified KPIs that employees can immediately impact and use to drive decisions.

For instance, project managers have a direct impact on a project by adding costs via additional labor or adding or removing parts. We have a KPI that tracks the percentage of change a project manager makes each month (up or down) affecting the total cost of their jobs. Then we rank them by that change. Some of these changes are beyond their control, but others are within their discretion. We want them to be able to compare discretionary changes. We also track gross profit per employee. This is a lagging indicator and is also affected by the project manager's decision to add costs to or delete costs from a project.

To get a feel for some of the other data we use to drive decisions, I asked the COOs in each of our offices to give an example of one thing they track and use in everyday decision making.

### Ron Kruse in Houston says:

“One of the components of using evidence-based data to make decisions is the visual sharing of information with people who can have an effect on that data. That display can be daily, weekly, or monthly. In the Houston office, for example, we started displaying our days-outstanding collection number to a number of people weekly in an effort to help our cash conversion cycle. The understanding and display of this number changed our behavior in the way we related to our late-paying customers. As a group, we became more proactive as we saw that meter weekly. We shaved off 20 days in a matter of five months.”

### Victor Gonzalez in Central Texas says:

“We use data to monitor technician utilization. As a company, we've been tracking technician utilization for almost two years. As a lagging indicator, it has been useful for us to better understand the effects of scheduling training and using the long-term labor forecast to keep

utilization above 85%. As each region reviews data, we continue to see this number improve week over week. It has now seemingly stabilized in the 90% range.”

### Kevin Henderson in Arkansas says:

“We use Emplify to gather engagement data from our employees so we can continue to work on the employee experience. That information is brought into executive discussions on anything from benefits and communication to training and COVID-19 response. Really understanding what the employees are looking for and how they connect to our purpose and values—especially across generations—has had a positive impact. The more your employees are engaged, the better your customer experience is going to be. One of the biggest business health leading indicators we track is sales pipeline. Having a real-time view of the potential work we have coming in by percentage chance of close and close date helps us in several aspects of decision-making: budgeting, manpower, and revenue are right at the top. You can then take that data a step further and analyze by sales rep and/or vertical, closing percentage, average gross margin, per customer, etc. We also use this data to plan with our sales reps for target goals per quarter to keep them on track individually and as a team.”

### Dan Hiatt in North Texas says:

“We're very detailed about labor forecasting and have taken it to a new level with the creation of a labor forecasting tool built within Q360, our project management system. Labor and material forecasting helps on many fronts. Our project managers forecast the labor within a given month, as well as material delivery dates. This data drives several aspects of the business: labor needs, marketing to highs and lows for labor availability, and insight into when to expect revenue realization. This is real data from our project plans.”

From basic job costing to predicting our performance a year out, we use data in every aspect of our business. We now track 90+ KPIs, with each department having its own leading and lagging indicators.

*Ray Bailey is president of Lone Star Communications and NSCA vice president.*



**“We have a KPI that tracks the percentage of change a project manager makes each month (up or down) affecting the total cost of their jobs. Then we rank project managers by that change. Some of these changes are beyond their control, but others are within their discretion.”**

—Ray Bailey, NSCA Board Vice President





## Connecting Culture and Brand

Many integrators need to do a better job of valuing their services, solutions, and expertise. This starts by better connecting culture and brand. *By Laurie MacKeigan*

For many, the terms “brand” and “branding” are simply terms used by the marketing team within an organization. But what do these words really mean? And what amount of significance do they really have?

For many, “brand” and “branding” are abstract concepts. They involve image, behavior, and how companies want to be perceived by their customers. They involve strategic alignment of an organization’s purpose and core values. They also provide clarity around business strategy. In simpler terms, “brand” is the personality of an organization.

How an organization operates on the inside should be inextricably linked with how that organization behaves and wants to be perceived on the outside. For that very reason, brand is important.

For culture and brand to align, your organization must first determine its core values. At Backman Vidcom, everything we do in our professional work is guided by these four core values:

1. Exceptional service
2. Unwavering integrity
3. Continuous improvement
4. People, planet, profit

Several years ago, we embarked on a process to identify the distinct cultural elements that enable us to achieve the vision we had for our company to be successful. To do this, we needed to determine who we are, what we stand for, what we believe in, what our strengths are, and what our place is in the world, in our market, and in our industry. The process allowed us to create the brand identity we desired. Then, over time, we cultivated that brand identity and aligned it with our core values. It wasn’t just communicated but championed by our leadership and shared mutually and frequently throughout our organization.

When a company is guided by the principles of its core values, then every action, situation, challenge, and difficult decision becomes so much easier to deal with. Your core values are essentially your moral and professional compass. If you don’t live by your core values, then you cannot live up to your brand promise.

At Backman Vidcom, we wanted to be known as a highly regarded integrator—among the best in the industry. A company that gains its strengths through the ability of its people. We wanted to be the firm that’s reliable and known for quality of work—an entity that can be trusted to take on large, challenging, and complex projects and deliver results that exceed expectations. This meant that we probably wouldn’t be the firm offering the best price. Instead, we deliver the best, most desirable results. To do this, we had to make a significant investment in our people to provide the best training, certifications, and professional development opportunities offered within our industry so they have the required skills and ability to live up to our brand promise.

When we take on any project, large or small, we critically evaluate whether we have the time, ability, and resources available to deliver results expected. As difficult as it is to turn down work and project opportunities, we will do so if we cannot deliver the expectations that our brand promises. Our core values help guide us in these matters.

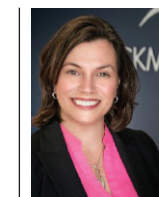
That all changed in 1996 when *Life* published a story that included a photo of a child stitching footballs carrying the Nike logo. As a result, Nike was quickly defined by “sweatshop labor.” The company had outsourced production to a network of suppliers in parts of the world where costs were lower. When this became known, Nike’s brand became synonymous with slave wages, forced overtime, and arbitrary abuse. At that time, Nike did not have a set of core values.

### They had to change. So what did they do?

The company created a new brand promise that was tied to a set of core values. And Nike committed to living by these core values—not just saying them.

Today, Nike finds itself more often at the top of lists recognizing sustainable companies—particularly within its sector. It appears in the top 10 of *Fortune’s* Most Admired Companies. Its commitment to improving environmental impact, providing transparency about processes, and ensuring decent working conditions in its supply chain eventually turned the tide of public perception.

While Backman Vidcom is not the behemoth that Nike is, the lessons learned here still apply. What you do is more important than what you say! You must live your core values; you can’t just say them.



**“We wanted to be the firm that’s reliable and known for the quality of its work—an entity that can be trusted to take on large, challenging, and complex projects and deliver results that exceed expectations. This meant that we probably wouldn’t be the firm that offered the best price. Instead, we delivered the best, most desirable results.”**

—Laurie MacKeigan, NSCA Board Member

By living up to our brand promise, we can make an emotional connection with our customers in a unique way. You can’t just announce a set of core values—you must commit to living by them. We’ve been able to make an emotional connection to clients by doing so. Our customers know exactly who we are and what we represent. As a result, we can achieve our brand promise. We earn our customers’ trust. We offer reliability. The relationship gets stronger. Loyalty is established, and we continue to work with them.

One of the most widely recognized brands in the world is Nike. The “Just Do It!” slogan is one of the most successful in all of marketing. It not only created an emotional connection with customers, but also compelled people to buy a pair of Nike shoes, driving up sales and putting Nike at the top of the consumer market.

If there’s a gap between customer perception and brand reality, then companies need to reduce that gap. This is especially true in our industry, where complex selling requires lots of trust and communication. Customers often weigh the evidence they have and decide based on an outcome they cannot prove. Essentially, they take a leap of faith. As the price and complexity of a project go up, so does the customer’s apprehension. Customers often live in fear of making bad decisions. They look for clues to guide their decisions.

Companies guided by a strong set of core values that help them live up to their brand promise make the decision-making process so much easier for their customers.

*Laurie MacKeigan is president of Backman Vidcom and an NSCA board member.*

### WANT MORE?

Learn about Backman Vidcom’s four core values [here](#).



## Leading with Emotional Courage

BLC keynote Peter Bregman will challenge integration firm leaders on emotional courage—and we all need it. *By Josh Shanahan*

As humans, we don't choose to be emotional—it's simply in our nature. At any moment or in any situation, we may feel happy, frustrated, angry, jealous, sad, scared, excited, bored, inspired, and so much more. While things we have no influence or control over may trigger an emotional response that we simply have to deal with, what about instances when, as leaders, we *do* have influence or control?

While it seems like we all have enough courage emotionally to make others laugh or exhibit positive emotional responses, do we possess enough emotional courage to make decisions that may trigger undesirable emotional responses, like anger? As leaders, we must have enough courage to step outside our comfort zones, make decisions, or have mission-critical conversations.

Conversely, without enough emotional courage, we can decide to ignore the situation, place the conversation on the backburner, and otherwise procrastinate to the potential detriment of the entire team or company. We often call this “the avoidance maneuver”—a tactic we all know prolongs the inevitable and likely leads to additional undesirable emotional responses in the future.

Peter Bregman, author and 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference keynote, says that emotional courage is “the willingness to feel.” As leaders, confronting the brutal facts with a person or team often produces an overwhelmingly uncomfortable feeling. These types of conversations require tremendous emotional courage and control to not only entertain, but also—and perhaps most importantly—remain effective.

As leaders, we often make decisions that aren't in the best interest of the organization. We might feel emotions like failure or perhaps anger or fear. We must possess the emotional courage required to express vulnerability to the extent that we are able to admit our mistakes and motivate the team to move forward in a different direction.

We must take action every day, every month, every year. We must confront challenges, have brutally honest conversations, and express extreme vulnerability. We must have emotional courage to overcome our fears, anxieties, and other emotional responses so we can grow and reach our full potential—and help our teams do the same. 📍

*Josh Shanahan is president of SVT and NSCA immediate past president.*



**“As leaders, do we possess enough emotional courage to make decisions that may trigger undesirable emotional responses, like anger? We must have enough courage to step outside our comfort zones, make decisions, or have mission-critical conversations.”**

—Josh Shanahan, NSCA Board Immediate Past President



## The Connection Between Company Culture & Acquiring Top Talent

The Great Resignation means that your culture is more important than ever. *By Don Mastro*

A quick online search of “company culture” yields millions of results, all of which define the concept a little differently. But, in the simplest terms, culture is how an employee feels on Sunday night. Do they look forward to Monday morning and the week ahead? Or do they dread it?

### Getting Clear on Culture

For years, we've been sold the idea that culture is workplace extras—things like colorful and fun workspaces, free meals, ping pong tables, and relaxed dress codes. Many of the great company cultures of the world, like Apple, Salesforce, Google, Microsoft, HubSpot, and Facebook, offer perks like these.

Yet when you listen to employees talk about why they leave their jobs, you'll hear reasons like poor leadership, compensation, lack of challenges, the need for a more meaningful career path, better work/life balance, and the ability to learn, develop, and grow on the job. These are the cultural attributes that actually help companies attract and retain talent.

### Listening Carefully

The best ideas about how to innovate and meet your customers' needs usually come from your team. Making sure employees have the opportunity to share their ideas—especially with leadership—is another cornerstone of a healthy culture.

Provide big, meaningful opportunities for employees to share what's on their minds and back them up with your day-to-day behaviors. You'll make a difference.

### Leading Thoughtfully

Employees who work under great leaders tend to be happier, more productive, and more connected within their organizations. This has a ripple effect that contributes directly to the company's bottom line. Yet so many employees feel under-appreciated right now for a variety of reasons, including:

- Not getting clear direction
- Not sensing their manager's trust
- Not having enough feedback or support
- Not feeling that their efforts and time are respected

Great leaders hire the right employees for the right positions. Then they provide clear objectives, offer regular coaching and feedback, empower employees to meet these objectives, and get out of the way.

### Setting the Tone

Employees feel more motivated to achieve their goals when their managers help them thrive and provide positive reinforcement. This doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as an uplifting email about their performance.

You can also be positive when things aren't going well. Here's where leaders in the most successful company cultures make a considerable impact. They're confident enough to transparently admit their own mistakes—and they're confident enough in their team to graciously accept when others make mistakes, too.

Are you setting an open tone? Are you transparent and candid? Are you providing the kind of positive energy employees look for in their careers? Doing so helps you build the type of culture required to retain top talent.



**“When employees talk about why they leave their jobs, you'll hear reasons like poor leadership, compensation, lack of challenges, the need for a more meaningful career path, better work/life balance, and the ability to learn, develop, and grow on the job.”**

—Don Mastro, NSCA Board Member

### How Are You Contributing?

True culture—the kind that isn't manufactured or only appears as words on the wall—is inherent in everything a company does.

As we move out of the pandemic and wait to see how the Great Resignation unfolds, we're sure to face challenges ahead. But there will also be opportunities to create and sustain flourishing cultures that demonstrate our value for employees and customers.

In my experience, this begins with asking yourself one simple question: “How can I contribute to this culture today?” Ponder this question frequently. Then take personal responsibility to make your organization a great place to work. This is how you can build an organization with a true competitive differentiator for talent. 📍

*Don Mastro is vice president of sales at AVI Systems and an NSCA board member.*

Customers Satisfaction

FEEDBACK

ONLINE: USER A  
08:54:30

## Creating a Frictionless Customer Experience

One key to success may be to optimize the customer journey. *By Dan Schmidtendorff*

Defined as “dissension or conflict between persons because of differing ideas, wishes, etc.,” friction within the customer experience can make all the difference when it comes to customer loyalty. While the causes of friction are not always within our control, providing a positive experience for the consumer is imperative to not only making a sale, but also retaining that customer for years to come.

The customer journey begins with the marketing of a product and/or service and continues throughout the sales process. It does not simply end at the close of a sale—it should be constantly nurtured and developed to create strong customer loyalty over time. It’s imperative to establish a strong relationship with the customer from the first contact and maintain that same level of communication throughout the entirety of the relationship.

Unfortunately, lack of communication tends to be a major cause of friction, resulting in loss of sales and customer relationships. By not following up after an initial proposal, sales representatives reduce the potential to make the sale by 98%.



**“Customers set their own expectations for your services—and when they fall short for any reason, it creates friction. If a customer calls your service team and they respond at a leisurely pace, then this tells the customer they’re not a priority.”**

—Dan Schmidtendorff, NSCA Board Treasurer

unexpected or uncontrollable situations, such as product or service delays. While every company strives to move a project along without creating delays in the process, if these delays do occur, then the ability to clearly communicate the issue is crucial to maintaining the customer

relationship. Despite this statistic, nearly 50% of sales reps don’t follow up after the first point of contact, and only 8% follow up more than five times, which is where the vast majority of overall sales are made.

In addition to increasing the likelihood of a sale, maintaining a strong line of communication with customers is imperative when dealing with

relationship. While it may seem counterintuitive to communicate bad news to the customer, clients appreciate transparency over silence and view honest communication in a more favorable light than no communication at all.

Moving the project forward quickly with good communication is the key to creating a positive and frictionless experience. Customers set their own expectations for your services. When those fall short for any reason, it creates friction. If a customer calls your service team and they respond at a leisurely pace, then this tells the customer that they’re not a priority, creating friction. If a problem continues to occur without being adequately addressed, whether through live or automated customer interactions, friction occurs again.

With 80% of sales made after five points of contact, it’s very likely—and encouraged—that sales representatives have multiple interactions with a customer prior to the sale. Each interaction is just as important as the first, and the sales rep needs to continually demonstrate the

importance of the customer throughout each conversation. The minute there are delays in customer expectations, friction occurs—and the customer becomes more likely to share their negative experience with their peers. In fact, customers are twice as likely to share their negative experiences with a company than their positive experiences, so the slightest amount of friction can cost your company potential business deals with multiple customers.

To maximize efficiency while reducing friction along the customer journey involves tracking and analyzing any challenges via a robust CRM system. This allows the organization to prepare for any problems and respond accordingly. Sales representatives can use the system to sort through accounts and create a systematic follow-up plan for each customer so that no one slips through the cracks. Understanding the customer experience and managing along the way will move the sales process forward, creating a positive experience for the customer and, as a result, increasing overall company success. ▲

*Dan Schmidtendorff is president and CEO of Communication Company and NSCA treasurer.*



## Thoughts on Avoiding Leadership Burnout

Integration firm leaders typically carry a heavy load of responsibilities—and the pandemic piled on even more. BLC aims to help leaders look internally. *By Bradford Caron*

**A**voiding leadership burnout is a challenge that many leaders face. I offer these career reflections with the hope that perhaps my experiences will intersect with yours and help you think about leadership burnout challenges.

I started my career 35 years ago with a five-person electronics company. Over the decades, we've morphed from a low-voltage contracting company to a systems integrator—and now to a technology solutions provider with more than 150 employees.

I've been most content and satisfied in my career when I perform the responsibilities I excel at, which tend to include working in the trenches on a day-to-day basis.



**"I went from being a seasoned and excellent day-to-day manager to an inexperienced long-term thinker. For me, trying to balance two roles led to the onset of burnout."**

—Bradford Caron, NSCA Board Member

Early in my career, I had no formal responsibilities. Whatever needed to be done is what I did. Every day was a new experience and challenge. I loved the thrill of the daily chaos and figuring out solutions. Each day presented something new, and I enjoyed my role for 20 years. But, over time, my leadership responsibilities changed—and this change brought anxiety and burnout.

Over time, my leadership role shifted from a short-term, day-to-day role to a long-term strategist role. Throughout most of my career, I felt like I impacted the company and accomplished tasks every day; however, working on strategy and long-term initiatives made me lose that feeling of actually contributing to the company. I went from being a seasoned and excellent day-to-day manager to an inexperienced long-term thinker. For me, trying to balance both roles led to the onset of burnout.

So many times, we learn about people who love their careers after decades and are thoroughly motivated to come into work every day. They never experience burnout. If you're good at what you do, and you're an expert in your leadership role, then enjoying your leadership career is very attainable; however, over time, an organization can demand that a leader take on new responsibilities while still maintaining their existing role. The steps I took to curb burnout were to delegate day-to-day responsibilities to future leaders and learn and understand that my value as a leader can't be judged by day-to-day wins but by year-to-year wins.

I wish there was a magic pill that leaders could take to avoid the onset of leadership burnout—but there isn't. Leadership burnout is damaging to your health and your organization. It's infectious and will create a poor corporate culture. We're blessed to be considered leaders. We have the power to impact and influence people.

The question is: When have you been most satisfied and content in your leadership career—and what has changed? ▲

*Bradford Caron is president and owner of SIGNET Electronic Systems and an NSCA board member.*



## ROI from DEI: Realizing the Power of Diversity

Embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion is not only the right thing for integrators to do, but also increases business value. *By Christina DeBono*

**B**usinesses don't like to give away their trade secrets, but I'm going to let you in on ClearTech's secret weapon: We don't just *practice* diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—we *embrace* it. Every ounce of energy we put into DEI has been returned to us many times over.

Diversity isn't an uncommon topic in our industry but, most of the time, business leaders view DEI efforts as "the right thing to do" for employees and society—and perhaps as an enhancement of the company brand. We often trumpet the benefits of a diverse and inclusive work culture not only in creating a positive, encouraging work environment, but also in making business more profitable and competitive.

How do you realize the potential of DEI? As Employers Council Attorney Alexander Sediva writes, "DEI planning is an organizational journey, not a 'check-the-box' type of project." ClearTech, for example, doesn't have a DEI officer. What we *do* have—and this is essential—is a fundamental commitment to nurturing the talent, imagination, and insights all around us.

"Before we ever heard of DEI, we always valued the contributions of people with different backgrounds and perspectives," says ClearTech CTO Joe Perez. "We want people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives who share a work ethic, are fresh thinkers, and have a shared sense of ownership over our company's future."

We unlock those qualities by creating a work culture that values our differences, treats people fairly, and involves and empowers team members to realize their potential. For ClearTech, it's about creating a culture of opportunity.

One way we put our convictions into practice is by opening our hiring and training programs to people who come from outside the industry. Says Operations Manager Thuy To, "Our requirements aren't hard and fast. A job candidate might not have every credential or qualification but, if they're capable and competent and have a great attitude and work ethic, then they'll be in the running to get hired."

This leads to another practice that's core to our success: We strongly believe in training across disciplines. If a team member in one area has an interest in gaining expertise in another, we'll do everything we can to satisfy their curiosity and provide a path from A to B. In fact, we actively encourage our team to expand their knowledge and capabilities.

It's tremendously important to enable people to explore their interests and discover their strengths and passions. To do that, we strive to create an environment that champions every individual and rewards curiosity. ClearTech is a small company, but we are often chosen over larger integrators and have the blue-chip clients to prove it. The No. 1 thing that universities, utilities, and technology powerhouses love about ClearTech is our team—the breadth of our strengths and the depth of our commitment.



**"We often trumpet the benefits of a diverse and inclusive work culture not only to create a positive, encouraging work environment, but also to make business more profitable and competitive."**

—Christina DeBono, NSCA Board Member

"Each of us feels accountable not only for ClearTech's success, but also for our customers' success," says To, "and that's a big part of what has made our company successful."

How do you assemble a team with this kind of dedication to their customers and this level of commitment to their craft? By clearing away all the obstacles that stand in the way of finding the right people—and then removing the barriers that prevent them from reaching their potential. For ClearTech, that's what DEI is all about. ▲

*Christina DeBono is president at ClearTech and an NSCA board member.*



## Getting Your Company and Your Customers on the Same Side

Focus on ways to get your teams and customers on the same page during each interaction. *By Kyle Habben*

In this ever-changing world, end-users now rely on integrators to serve as an extension of their team and solve their toughest business challenges.

It's no longer about the technology you can offer. Instead, customers want to know how you'll partner with them to accomplish their goals. This shift in client expectations has pushed industry leaders to focus on ways to get their teams and customers on the same page during each interaction. These partnerships can be built in several ways.

### Developing a Customer-Centric Sales Processes

As the first point of contact, your sales team sets the stage for the future of the partnership. From prospecting through a closed order, a sales process should be created to align with customer expectations. This process should include ways to find and engage the right stakeholders, utilize key discovery questions that uncover the business challenges and priorities of your clients, and offer recommendations and solutions.

Based on these recommendations and client interests, you can then initiate the design process. To assist in the design process, tools should be developed that serve as guidelines for your team as they interact with customer stakeholders. Facility and technology questionnaires, checklists, assessments, site surveys, clear scopes of work definitions and responsibilities, and available support options are all critical pieces of information that can be collected and delivered as part of the project packet. The packet will be delivered as part of the project handoff to the operations team once the project is sold and the partnership starts.



**“More and more clients are turning to integrators to establish a technology plan they can follow now and in the future.”**

—Kyle Habben, NSCA Board Member

### Operational Alignment with Customer Expectations

Operational alignment begins with having a structure in place that serves as a foundation for each customer interaction. This foundation allows you to develop processes that evaluate each internal and external customer touchpoint for successful execution.

The structure also serves as an outline for technical and non-technical roles to properly identify the customer requirements for each role. Putting the right people in each of these roles plays an integral part in keeping the client and your team headed in the same direction.

Each customer should have an operations-based point person who serves as the communication liaison and organizational specialist to assist in keeping everything on track and updating the rest of the team throughout the process.

With a customer liaison in place (this could be one of many titles or roles), technical teams can focus on integrating and supporting the technologies on time, per budget, and as specified to address customer technology needs and desired business outcomes.

### Client Support Throughout the Technology Lifecycle

More and more clients are turning to integrators to establish a technology plan they can follow now and in the future. This plan could be in the form of a technology roadmap, budgeting and financing options, or continual service and support.

As an organization, it's important to create a program that defines your offerings, build a team dedicated to support, and document support procedures to meet the needs of your customers with every interaction. This dedicated team gives you additional customer interactions to ensure that technology systems and customer teams are up to date, trained, and running efficiently.

In order for these partnerships to evolve, it takes a concerted effort, excellent communication, and a willingness to change and adapt to the needs of clients. Focusing on the long game, aligning people, processes, and systems with the customer will be a work in progress that continues to pay dividends to your company *and* the clients you serve. 📈

*Kyle Habben is president of Electronic Contracting Company and an NSCA board member.*

# Business & Leadership Conference 2022 Action Items

BLC+ is your companion to the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference. Use it to jot down your most important actions.

## Keynote Takeaways

Title	Action Steps and Key Contacts
<i>Beyond the Pivot: 4 Investments the Best Teams Use to Build the New Future</i> by Jon Acuff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>The Fusion Formula: Brand + Culture = Results</i> by Denise Yohn	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance &amp; Productivity</i> by Joseph Allen	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Because Everyone Can Be Great</i> by Calvin Mackie	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Leading with Emotional Courage</i> by Peter Bregman	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>The Collapse of Distinction</i> by Scott McKain	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Economic Outlook 2022 and Beyond</i> by Chris Kuehl	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Session Takeaways

Title	Action Steps and Key Contacts
<i>Talent Pipelines: Attracting, Recruiting, and Retaining</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>How the Best Teams Overcome Overthinking to Navigate Change, Increase Productivity, and Win Consistently</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Improve Predictable Labor Resource Modeling</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Understand Contracts and Intellectual Capital</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Playbook for Brand-Culture Fusion</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Change without Resistance</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>What Customers Really Want</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Culture Renovation: Rebuild or Reinforce?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Post-BLC To-Do List

---



---



---



---



---



---

# “What’s the No. 1 challenge your business faces as we enter 2022?”

NSCA’s membership is a community. The individuals and companies that make up NSCA share common challenges. We take pride in providing a community where you can discuss shared obstacles and successes. “On Members’ Minds” is just one platform to share thoughts on the integration market.



“Post-pandemic, we are optimistic about SIGNET’s growth opportunity. Heading into 2022, we see talent as our top challenge— attracting it and retaining it. To stay ahead of the talent demand, we are investing in upskilling staff and leadership development, highlighting career progression opportunities during recruitment, offering increased workplace flexibility, and keeping employees motivated, happy, and engaged. We are focused on building a strong employer brand and winning the battle for talent!”

Susan Stewart,  
Chief People Officer, SIGNET Electronic Systems



“Our biggest challenge will be to continue adapting to our new normal: constant change. This requires us to shift the way we do nearly everything—hiring talent, for example. We cannot only hire for specific skillsets. Instead, we must consider hiring smart, qualified people who can learn new skills. We also need to be open to hiring great people when we find them rather than only hiring for open roles. We must continue shifting away from traditional habits, start getting comfortable with constant change, and be able to adapt quickly. It’s not always easy, but agility will be vital to growth and success in 2022.”

Alyse Ferranti  
President, Fusion Digital

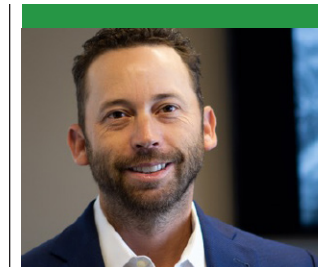
“One of the biggest challenges our organization faces in 2022 is adapting to the post-pandemic business environment. Some trends triggered by the pandemic, like supply chain delays and heavily restricted business travel, will likely be temporary. Other trends, like holding virtual meetings over in-person meetings, utilizing automation technology to increase productivity and efficiency, and giving employees flexible work options, will likely be permanent. This provides our organization—and the industry at large—an opportunity to not only benefit from the evolution of the modern workplace, but also be actively involved in it. Changing long-standing business operations and workplace culture will be difficult, but these are changes we need to make—and we need to help our customers make—to adapt to the post-pandemic world.”

Lauren Mastro  
Vice President, Legal, AVI-SPL



### WANT MORE?

Register for the State of the Industry 2022 webinar presented by NSCA and *Commercial Integrator* in January. We’ll tackle the biggest obstacles facing integrators, including the ones mentioned here. <<LINK TO COME>>



“The No. 1 challenge we face heading into 2022 is skilled labor workforce. This year has been challenging due to product delays and labor shortages. In most cases, we can substitute the product or find a way to keep systems going while we wait for the correct parts to come in. With a labor shortage, there is no backup plan. You have to build a culture that attracts and keeps talent. As we move into 2022, we are re-evaluating how we recruit, hire, and keep all our employees. I think the company that has the resources and manpower to grow will win in 2022.”

Chris Shafer  
CEO, EKC Enterprises, Inc.

**LENCORE**  
SOUND MASKING. PAGING. AUDIO.

Make Your Clients' Space Feel More Comfortable With Essential Solutions

FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE AND CONFIGURABLE TO ANY SET-UP

[www.lencore.com](http://www.lencore.com) [info@lencore.com](mailto:info@lencore.com)

# 5 Realistic Marketing Tips You Can Use Today

Would your company benefit from implementing these marketing strategies?

Some integrators within the NSCA community are extremely focused on marketing; others—not so much. Regardless of which category your company best aligns with, NSCA’s Marketing Communications Committee contends that these marketing tips might be helpful. If they’re already in play, consider whether your company is fully leveraging these marketing concepts. If they’re not, perhaps they’re suggestions you should implement in 2022.



## 1. Create a Content Calendar

Generating a healthy mix of marketing content keeps your brand looking fresh and energized. The best way to maximize exposure on social media is by creating a content calendar: a roadmap that outlines what you’ll post and promote during a 30-, 60-, or 90-day period.

Sticking to the calendar ensures a good messaging cadence, and your audience will frequently see the content you promote. It helps to mix up the type of media you use as well. While it’s easy to incorporate pictures, graphics, and videos, utilizing clickable metadata links and PDFs when available increases the value you extend to your customers.

*Brandon Breznick is cofounder and marketing strategist at Apex One Agency.*

## 2. Leverage Multimedia Tools

A tool that every marketing team should have in its arsenal is **Canva**. Whether you’re using the free version or upgrade to a business license, Canva empowers teams to collaboratively design presentations, promotional graphics, social media landing pages, and so much more. Canva even released animation capabilities so you can create GIFs for web and social in seconds.

Rather than outsourcing design to external parties or always relying on a dedicated in-house resource, this is an easy, intuitive resource that anyone on your team can use to start designing today. This makes turnaround time on marketing assets faster, less expensive, and completely within your control.

*Blair Rubio is VP of marketing at T1V.*

## 3. Let Your Customers Do the Talking

Don’t overlook the impact that a case study, project profile, or success story can have. Name-dropping helps potential customers get to know the types of organizations you work with—and the type of work you do. It also lets potential customers know that there are workable solutions out there to address challenges similar to theirs, whether it’s dealing with the struggle of finding technology to support hybrid learning or integrating a nurse call system with wireless devices to improve workflow.

Ask your sales professionals to share their best customer anecdotes and get your customers to share their side of the story, too. You’ll get lots of mileage out of that case study content: feature it in newsletters, share it on social media, distribute it to potential customers, turn it into a blog, share it with an industry publication, etc.

*Leah Grout Garris is director of marketing & communications at NSCA.*

## 4. Optimize Your Consultative Role

Marketing and communications initiatives play a vital role in educating customers and should consistently showcase your company as a resource. You can act as a guide for customers by offering up valuable information about new technologies, trends, industry research, best practices, and general thought leadership.

### To optimize this outreach:

- Share information with customers through a mix of digital and traditional mediums
- Give presentations and guide educational sessions for customers who want to learn more about the current landscape or challenges
- Shift your message from products to education and solutions
- Provide educational resources, including handouts, videos, and links to industry information
- Identify and manage return on objective as well as return on investment

*Kyle Habben is president at Electronic Contracting Company and an NSCA board member.*

## 5. Use Social Media to Amplify Your Brand

I know, I know. (Almost) everybody does social media—and some do it better than others. The fact remains, however, that you can effectively leverage social media platforms—Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook—to put your company on the map. Not everyone consumes information in the same ways, so you need to put your messages in the channels your customers use.

Work with your team to develop a weekly schedule by looking at user data provided by social media platforms. Pinpoint the peak days and times that your users tend to look at your content and start scheduling based on that.

Once a schedule is developed, create captivating content. What’s so interesting about that new technology? Who is that new technician on your team? You’ll see an increase in engagement, and your followers will turn into a community. With the next generation already using social media for their source of news and technology, our industry needs to make sure we’re all doing our part to put our best foot forward on social media.

Want to learn more about how to develop a social media schedule? Send a message to [memberservices@nsca.org](mailto:memberservices@nsca.org) to get in contact with our Marketing Communications Committee!

*Max Johnson is senior marketing and channel manager at NSCA.*

# Let's Talk: The Importance of Account Mapping

Creating a strategic account map is beneficial for integrators and manufacturers. Here are some tips to get started.

**N**SCA isn't afraid to play matchmaker from time to time. For manufacturers and integrators, there's a huge conversion opportunity when it comes to prospects. Creating the right relationships aligns manufacturers and integrators so both parties can work together to implement a strategic account-mapping program.

## What is Account Mapping—and How Can NSCA Help?

When a manufacturer meets with an integrator to target key account prospects, that's what we call "account mapping." These key prospects are chosen because:

1. They fall within one of the manufacturer's key vertical markets
2. They can be aligned with the specific integrator
3. They need the specific manufacturer's solutions for a specific project

As an example, to improve school safety, NSCA can help align a security manufacturer with security integrators that are focused on the education market.

After NSCA aligns a manufacturer and integrator, the two parties meet one-on-one for lead sharing, to learn about different solutions, and discuss how each solution can be applied to primary vertical markets. Reinforcing a strong relationship, this is a win-win for the integrator and manufacturer. Trust is naturally built between both parties due to the cross pollination of leads.

Because we serve both parties, NSCA is well-equipped to align manufacturers and integrators on shared objectives.


Account mapping is complex. Because there are many moving parts, it's easy for a process or step to fall through the cracks. This is where NSCA can help.

## Best Practices for Account Mapping

Account mapping focuses on building long-term partnerships among manufacturers, integrators, and end-users. It requires planning and persistence.

Whether you already have a plan in place or need to implement a new account-mapping program, these best practices—created by the NSCA Membership Committee—can put your organization ahead of the curve.

- **Take an account overview.** Work with NSCA to identify preferred key performance indicators and figure out how we can help align appropriate integrators/manufacturers.
- **Outline objectives.** What does your product achieve (and how can integrators benefit from it)? Identify key integrators within specific vertical markets that support these objectives.
- **Create an action plan.** Decide on a course of action and list the steps needed to achieve the goal. Work with dealers and start defining key end-user prospects.
- **Implement.** Begin sharing leads and focus both teams on key end-user prospects.
- **Manage change.** Prepare, support, and help the individuals and/or teams who are working together. Are they moving toward the goal or is something in their way?
- **Review.** Regularly review and adjust the plan with dealer/manufacturer to ensure that goals are met.
- **Achieve final goals/outcomes.** It goes without saying that this planning and persistence needs to culminate in the desired outcome.

Account mapping is complex. Because there are many moving parts, it's easy for a process or step to fall through the cracks. This is where NSCA can help. NSCA is committed to helping members operate their businesses at peak performance. From account-mapping creation to improving financial stability, we've helped members enhance their businesses for more than 40 years. 

*This article was prepared by members of the NSCA Membership Committee, including Christina DeBono of ClearTech Media and an NSCA board member, Bradford Caron of SIGNET Electronic Systems and an NSCA board member, Don Mastro of AVI Systems and an NSCA board member, and Michael Bridwell of Sonance.*

**ClearOne**

**Versa™  
Mediabar™**

- High-quality USB Mediabar with natural sounding audio and true-to-life video
- Compact design with single USB connection



**HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT  
NSCA MEMBERSHIP?**

Reach us any time at [memberservices@nsca.org](mailto:memberservices@nsca.org)  
or call 800-446-6722



# Streamline SHIPPING LOGISTICS FOR SAVINGS & SUCCESS



Staying on the leading edge of technology means getting products delivered quickly and efficiently. You rely on suppliers and customers nationwide—and sometimes worldwide—often involving complicated and specialized supply chain processes and knowledge.

Jeri Rogers, the purchasing coordinator at Peoria, IL-based Pearl Technology, was struggling with an all-too-common challenge: shipping carriers that weren't delivering products on time. Instead of focusing on growing the business or negotiating new deals and contracts, she was dedicating lots of time, money, and resources to chasing down packages in an effort to keep projects on track and customers happy.

Given the costly impact of these product delays, she knew she had to find a new solution quickly. Rogers found the answer she was looking for when she discovered the UPS® programs that all NSCA members—manufacturers *and* integrators—have access to. While Pearl Technology has been enjoying discounted shipping rates for nearly 20 years through NSCA's partnership with UPS, Rogers also discovered other UPS perks as well.

## A Game-Changing Conversation

After consulting with a trusted UPS logistics advisor, Pearl Technology adopted new shipping practices and internal technology that improved time-in-transit and staff efficiency.

Rogers was able to simplify shipping by using UPS WorldShip. This shipping software uses existing customer data to generate shipping labels, helping to easily manifest air, ground, international, LTL freight, and air freight shipments. It streamlines business processes by connecting to existing business systems. ODBC and XML integrations allow WorldShip to import information from—and export shipping details back to—critical business systems and databases.

With the help of UPS, Rogers was also able to create a better customer experience and boost client satisfaction with Quantum View Notify®, which automatically notifies staff and customers via text message about shipment status. “[Now] I prefer UPS to other carriers because my ground packages are usually delivered here before noon,” she explains. “If you have techs waiting for equipment to do a job, then that makes a big difference vs. having to wait until late afternoon for packages to arrive.”

Following advice from UPS, Pearl Technology was able to streamline and simplify shipping processes to reduce errors and delays—adding even more benefit to the discounted shipping rates it already enjoyed. Rogers says these seemingly small changes have made a big impact to help Pearl Technology stay at the top of its game. “These savings really do add up,” she emphasizes.

## Get Started with Your Own UPS Discounts

UPS offers all NSCA members a flat-rate discount that applies to every shipment, regardless of volume:

- 10% on UPS Next Day Air® Early
- 50% on Domestic Next Day/Deferred
- 30% on Ground Commercial/Residential
- International: 50% on Export/40% on Import/25% Canada Standard
- Savings begin at 75% on UPS Freight® shipments over 150 pounds

In addition, NSCA members can rely on UPS Smart Pickup® at no cost. This service combines the convenience of recurring pickup with the flexibility of on-demand pickup. UPS comes to your business whenever you have a package to ship. 📦



All you have to do to take advantage of these UPS programs is sign up! Visit [this link](#) to get started.

# How Reskilling CAN HELP YOU FILL ROLES FAST

If you face recruitment and hiring challenges, then get ready to equip existing employees to fill pivotal positions. *By Dannie Diego*

*Effective reskilling not only helps fill important positions, but also may lead to better retention of top employees.*



Want to learn more about how Insperity provides guidance and tools to enhance employee training and talent development? Visit [www.nasca.org/insperity](http://www.nasca.org/insperity) or email [alliance@insperity.com](mailto:alliance@insperity.com). This article was adapted from the Insperity blog, “Reskilling: What is It and Why is It Important?”



“When reskilling is incorporated into your culture, it shows that you’re invested in your employees’ future. This can attract premium talent: Workers who are looking for companies that value their employees.”

–Dannie Diego, Insperity

**W**hen your business experiences massive change, and you need to pivot quickly (the events of the past year and a half are a good example), then consider “reskilling”: training existing employees to fill new positions. This lets you keep your company going without spending time and money on recruiting new employees.

Best of all, reskilling can help you not only retain stellar employees, but also attract more top talent. When your business demonstrates a commitment to professional employee growth, it boosts your brand and makes you a more attractive employer to candidates.

## What is Reskilling? Why is It Beneficial?

Reskilling involves teaching your employees new skills so they can fill different roles. For instance, in order for a retailer to shift from in-person to virtual sales, the employer can teach employees new skills needed to sell in a virtual environment rather than looking to hire new workers with that specific skillset.

There are multiple benefits to reskilling:

- 1. Save time and money when filling new positions.** Deciding to train current employees means you don’t have to manage the recruiting process: run ads, go through applications, onboard, etc. Instead, you can spend time getting existing employees up to speed. Plus, with reskilling, no hard costs are involved. You’re saving time *and* money.
- 2. Appeal to new talent.** When reskilling is incorporated into your culture, it shows you’re invested in your employees’ future. This can help attract premium talent: Workers who are looking for companies that value their employees. In return, team members who take advantage of continuous training and development are often eager to share their great experiences with their network, helping to grow your list of possible candidates.
- 3. Keep top employees.** A great example of how reskilling can help retain top employees comes from Dorothy Vaughan, depicted in the film *Hidden Figures*. She managed a group of female mathematicians working as “human computers” for the U.S. space program in the 1950s. During this time, NASA purchased an IBM electronic computer that could possibly take over not only Dorothy’s job, but also her entire team. Dorothy decided to learn the programming language and reskill her team, ultimately saving their positions.

## How Quickly Can You Reskill Employees?


For fast results, it’s good to begin training employees as soon as you realize a need. You don’t want to hold on to outdated practices and then become forced to adopt new methods. Instead, make reskilling an ongoing process. When it’s time to actually fill the position, your people will be prepared.

## Ready to Build a Reskilling Program?

For starters, make reskilling part of your company culture. This means the embrace of a learning culture. Build a program that involves employees setting goals centered on education and development.

To help them reach these goals, make sure your program includes various resources:

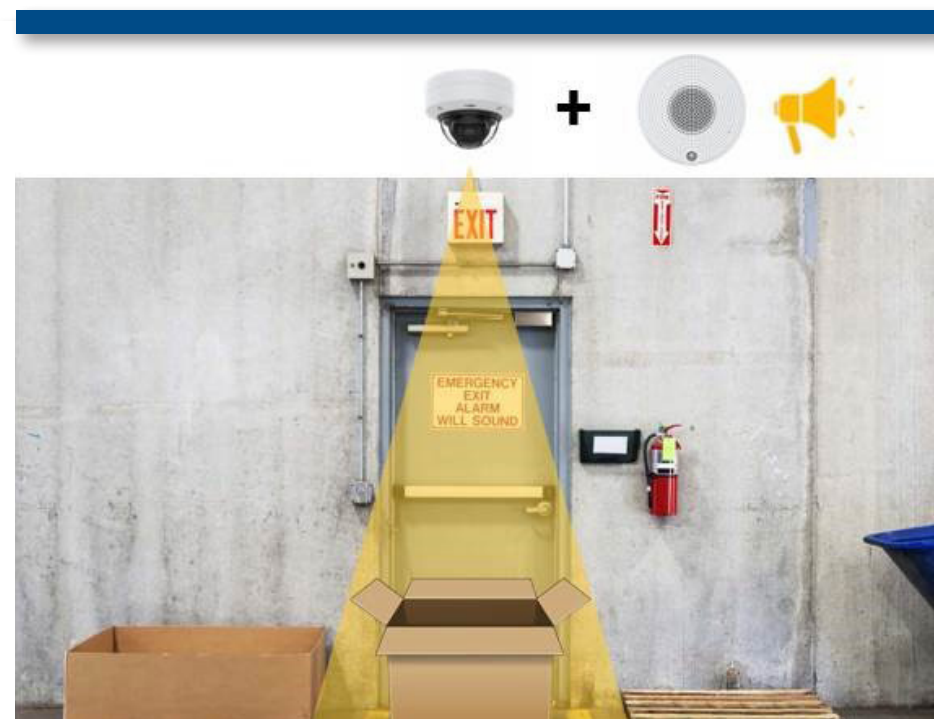
- 1. Invest in a training platform.** Help your team pinpoint skill gaps and set learning goals by using an online educational platform specific to your company’s needs. This way, you can keep up with employee progress while making it easy to reskill several people at once.
- 2. Promote job shadowing.** Typically, job shadowing is heavily promoted for new hires. But encouraging current employees to shadow each other could make reskilling much easier when the time comes for an employee take on a new role. For instance, when an employee shadows someone in a different department, that employee not only learns the skill, but also can teach team members in their current department.
- 3. Encourage employees to tap into their own expertise.** You may have employees who already have the knowledge and skills needed to take on a new role. For example, you may have a graphic designer who’s also a great proofreader. Instead of hiring a proofreader for your marketing materials, your graphic designer may be able to take on the task, depending on workload.

This also demonstrates that employees don’t necessarily need to leave an existing position for a new one. Some may be eager to do both without issue. Even when you offer a title change and salary increase, you’ll still save more time and money as compared to the traditional recruiting route. 

*Dannie Diego is a strategic communicator and relationship manager with professional experience in the federal government, non-profit, and private sector industries. As a senior strategic alliances manager, Dannie leads marketing strategy and business development efforts with national partnerships for Insperity, a leading provider of human resources and business performance solutions.*

# The Latest from NSCA's Solution Provider Members

Unfiltered content provided directly from NSCA's manufacturer and solution provider members to keep integrators updated.



## Axis

### Increase Workplace Safety and Reduce Fire Safety Compliance Fines

Axis Emergency Exit Monitor Solution is designed to help businesses reduce OSHA fines and ensure Fire Safety compliance and increase workplace safety by notifying, audibly or through a system alert, that a monitored emergency is blocked.

The Axis Emergency Exit Monitor Solution runs onboard the AXIS P3245/P3255 Network Camera Series and is configured in conjunction with an Axis network audio speaker. The Emergency Exit analytic will identify when objects are left in an area of interest for a configurable period of time. Possible areas of interest could be an emergency exit, access aisle, circuit control panel, or sprinkler valve area. Upon detection of objects blocking the identified area, the analytic will trigger the internal event engine and play a pre-recorded audio message via a configured Axis network speaker such as the AXIS C1004-E Network Cabinet Speaker or AXIS C1410 Network Mini Speaker.

To request more information, contact your local Axis Communications representative at **1-800-444-2947** or visit: <https://www.axis.com/professional-services-us>.



## Sharp

### Building a Digital Learning Environment Connectivity Tools for K-12 and Higher Education

Digital technologies do more than improve the overall classroom experience. They also enable institutions and teachers to better serve individual students, using interactive and personal devices to customize learning on a one-to-one level.

The digital classroom should embrace integrated technologies that boost student connectivity throughout the school day. A combination of collaboration and communication tools can support learning for every student while increasing engagement.

Click the link to see a general overview of the solutions that will help build a seamless experience for teachers and students alike.

Learn more [here](#).

## Visionary

### Visionary: Resorts World Las Vegas

Visionary introduces a new era of connectivity with the largest global installation of AV-over-IP. Visionary's Duet Wallplate Encoder is empowering a state-of-the-art connected experience for guests of Resorts World Las Vegas, a new 87-acre property on the Las Vegas Strip. The fully digital AV-over-IP system powered by Visionary spans across the entire property, including 3,506 guestrooms and suites, over 40 world-class eateries, a 5,000-capacity theater, and a two-story retail promenade. With Visionary, Resorts World Las Vegas can reliably connect any audio and video source on the property to any location with less than a millisecond of latency end-to-end.

Click to learn more.



## West Penn Wire

### Your Connection to Network Cables & Much More

At West Penn Wire, our Cat 6A Unshielded Twisted Pair Cables set the standard for excellence in IP access points and network security applications exceeding 10 Gigabit (10G) Networking bandwidth.

We also have an outstanding lineup of additional products and solutions, including:

- **Audio & Communication Cables** (Speaker Level, Line Level, Low & High Impedance) that provide superior sound quality in a wide range of settings
- **Fiber Optic Cable** (Indoor, Indoor/Outdoor, Bulk) that can handle Audio, Video and Data signals individually or simultaneously
- **Access Control Cables** (Reader, Door Contact, Lock Power, Request-to-Exit (REX)) compatible with Barcode, Magnetic Stripe, Wiegand, Proximity, and other reader technologies
- **Fire Alarm Cables** (Initiating Devices, SLC Lines, NAC) that enable visual and audio warnings that help keep people safe when smoke, carbon monoxide, or other hazardous conditions are present
- **Video Cables** (HD-SDI, CATV/DBS, HDBaseT, IP AV Networks) that improve picture quality in commercial and institutional settings, such as offices, entertainment venues, colleges and universities, and houses of worship
- **Low-Voltage Cable Solutions** for reliable computer networking, phone & intercom reception, and security & backup lighting in commercial, government, and residential environments

Having been in business for 50 years, our success in serving small, mid-sized, and Fortune 500 companies worldwide, including security and AV integrators, puts us in a strong position to meet your needs in a timely, knowledgeable, and cost-effective way.

To learn more or place your order by calling **800.254.4964** or e-mail [sales@westpennwire.com](mailto:sales@westpennwire.com) or visit [westpennwire.com](http://westpennwire.com).



## IntelliSee

### IntelliSee Leads Conversations at Pivot to Profit

IntelliSee continues to grow its network of systems integrators and industry leaders through dealer programs and conferences such as NSCA's Pivot to Profit and CEC's Business Technology Conference.

During such events, a consistent theme has been how to build recurring revenue streams for systems integrators. IntelliSee, an AI risk mitigation platform, is uniquely positioned to offer integrators built-in, justifiable recurring revenue through its subscription-based (SaaS) model. In addition, the longer the platform is used, the smarter it becomes, making its features highly beneficial for both customers and integrators.

IntelliSee is continually expanding the types of risks detected. The platform recently added vehicle and loitering detection to its growing list of monitored risks. IntelliSee's ability to add customer value was recently proven by the University of Iowa where, after implementing IntelliSee to its existing security for just one football season, they are now saving more than \$100,000 annually in security costs. IntelliSee's proactive monitoring and detection achieved significant labor savings and enabled faster response when and where actual problems occurred. The savings also enabled the University of Iowa to redeploy resources and invest in additional surveillance.

As IntelliSee continues to rapidly grow, its commitment to systems integrators as its channel partners remains unwavering. IntelliSee also recently added three regional sales managers to foster and support systems integrator partnerships across the country.

Learn more about IntelliSee and becoming a channel partner at [intellisee.com](https://intellisee.com).



## SureCall

### Learn More about ShureCall

SureCall is the multi-patent, performance leader for commercial-grade cell signal boosters. Since 2001, SureCall has quickly grown to innovate at the cutting edge of the industry, winning back-to-back Inc. 5000 awards every year since 2016, as well as 2017, 2020, and 2022 CES Innovation Awards, among many other accolades. SureCall's award-winning boosters are enterprise-ready and built with the industry's most advanced technology to deliver best-in-class 5G/4G LTE cellular solutions for all US carriers and devices. As a result, industry leaders Chrysler, Marriott, NASA, and HP all trust SureCall's FCC-approved boosters for their quality, reliability, and performance.

Learn more at [SureCall.com](https://SureCall.com).

## BrightSign

### BrightSign's Software and Network Services

BrightSign, the global market leader in digital signage media players, offers a free online training program via SmarterU called BrightSign Academy. Sign up to learn or even become an Authorized Reseller by emailing [bsa@brightsign.biz](mailto:bsa@brightsign.biz) for your personalized invitation. We hope to see you there!

## Liberty AV Solutions

### Learn About CXDetect®

**CXDetect®** allows you to efficiently manage UC, USB, and AV devices over multiple locations in one place with self-healing technology, proactively fixing issues to eliminate system downtime. This cloud-based management platform by Liberty AV Solutions is designed to provide insight, manageability, and support to simplify AV/IT Unified Communication and Collaboration (UCC) monitoring complexity from a single user interface. The CXDetect® cloud-based SaaS platform was strategically created for the AV/UC space—providing analytics and the ability to manage multiple vendor-related UC software and hardware devices, all at the same time from one dashboard.

Learn more here.

## AtlasIED

### Can You Hear Me When It Counts?

The public address system is the most important building system for situational awareness and crisis management processes. Integrators and installers have the tools and technical knowledge necessary to support clients' daily and critical PA requirements. But traditional PA systems can rely too much on human interaction, causing the increased potential for error during high-stress situations. Learn how an IP-based system can become the hub for both routine and life-safety announcements, automating processes and saving lives. Integrators can also leverage AtlasIED's complimentary design assistance service to design and install these essential systems more efficiently.

Learn more here.



## Legrand | AV

### Flexible Conferencing Solutions for the Hybrid Workforce

As the workplace adjusts in the post-pandemic age, the right AV technology can make the transition smoother for everyone. Setting up flexible mobile conferencing solutions is all about raising the bar for a superior user experience, resulting in better engagement and collaboration for your hybrid workforce—no matter where people are working.

With hybrid work now the norm, pre-pandemic conference rooms may need to be upgraded to support Microsoft Teams, Zoom calls, and other forms of virtual collaboration. Meeting rooms need technology that allows everyone to be seen and heard clearly, especially when meeting participants are socially distanced within the room, or not in the room at all.

For example, installing more than one microphone on the table or multiple microphones in the ceiling ensures that remote participants on a conference call can hear everyone clearly—even someone who's sitting farther away from the microphone.

Adding multiple professional PTZ cameras will help everyone be seen during the call. Camera pre-sets allow for switching views of the presenter to the participants and to content such as presentation slides for an overall better meeting experience.

To accommodate employees who are both working from home and the office, companies will likely have to convert additional spaces such as lobbies and common areas into ad hoc meeting rooms, so they need mobile conferencing solutions that can quickly make any space ready for impromptu meetings.

Explore the **Flexible Hybrid Conferencing Solutions Guidebook** from Legrand | AV for ideas that elevate the conferencing experience for your hybrid workforce.

## HELLO NSCA SOLUTION PROVIDERS!

Want to communicate directly with NSCA member companies or optimize your platform?

Contact NSCA Senior Marketing & Channel Manager Max Johnson at [mjohnson@nsca.org](mailto:mjohnson@nsca.org) or 319.861.8629.

## DYNAMIC SOLUTIONS FOR BROADCAST APPLICATIONS



### Cleerline

#### Dynamic Solutions for Broadcast Applications—Tactical Solutions from Cleerline SSF™

A broadcast integrator's competitive advantage lies in how fast and successfully they can deploy cable. Cleerline SSF™ Tactical Solutions are ideal for broadcast applications and projects.

**Tactical Fiber:** Fiber optic cable is an excellent solution for broadcast networks. It provides greater bandwidth over any distance, resulting in reduced latency and better signal to noise ratio. This means large files can be transferred faster, farther, and with less packet loss. Cleerline SSF™ is built with the SSF™ patented polymer which increases the fiber's strength and flexibility compared to traditional optical fibers. SSF™ tactical cables feature a robust polyurethane jacket for even greater durability, plus UV and chemical resistance.

- Tactical Breakout
- Tactical Micro Distribution

**Reels:** Moving from site to site requires maximum portability. Cleerline Portable Reels provide easy cable transportation and reeling for all Cleerline cables (and other cabling).

**Tactical LC Connector System:** The rugged housing of the Tactical LC Connector is paired with a metal socket and locks securely together (release with push tab) meaning integrators can avoid cable issues. The SSF™ LC Connector System can easily be installed in-wall if needed. Sockets are available color-coded for use with single mode or multimode fibers.

**Pre-Terminated:** Cleerline also stocks duplex patch cables in multimode OM3, OM4, and single mode OS2. Custom patch cable configurations are also available for all Cleerline bulk fiber types.

- Duplex Patch Cords
- Bulk Fiber

Read the full article to learn more, or contact Cleerline.



### Kramer

#### Kramer Engages at InfoComm 2021

Thank you to everyone who visited Kramer's booth at InfoComm21. We enjoyed meeting in person once again in Orlando, discussing particular needs clients wanted to solve, and showcasing our lineup of award-winning AV technology solutions.

For those who didn't make it this year, we invite you to take a **virtual tour of Kramer's booth!**

**Learn more** about the 4 awesome awards Kramer's product and personnel won, and how Kramer can help YOU overcome all of your AV/IT challenges.

We hope to see you at an in-person event soon!

### TechLink

#### TechLink Introduces CLOUDWORK | PRO

TechLink Services is proud to introduce a new marketplace for sourcing on-demand workforces called CLOUDWORK | PRO. This new marketplace will allow companies to easily source and hire highly skilled and qualified technicians. It accomplishes this by creating an intelligent field service management platform that makes sourcing, deploying, communicating, and paying techs as simple as clicking a button. The founding team has spent more than 20 years recruiting and dispatching techs around the country and has used their knowledge and industry experience to create a platform that will be hands down the best in the industry.

Find out more at [cloudworkpro.com](https://cloudworkpro.com).

### Jeron

#### No Delays for Provider® Nurse Call Customers

Jeron Electronic Systems, Inc. has had no delays in supporting new and existing Provider® nurse call customers throughout 2021. Unlike others who have scaled back production capacity in the last year, Jeron planned for the future and added increased production to meet growing demand for nurse call. This continued availability has allowed healthcare facilities to keep their existing systems running and enabled Jeron to replace aging and obsolete systems in a timely manner.

As a Made-in-the-USA business, Jeron can continue to manufacture and stockpile the components needed to produce Provider® Nurse Call Systems.

For an overview of Jeron's design and manufacturing capabilities, please click on the video [here](#).



### Jabra

#### Jabra PanaCast 50 Certified as Microsoft Teams Room (MTR-W) Content Camera

Prepare your meeting rooms for hybrid work collaboration with Jabra PanaCast 50 and Microsoft Teams Rooms. Jabra PanaCast 50 enables everyone in the meeting to see the whiteboard content, whether they're physically in the room or not—and all without the need for an additional content camera. Check out the industry's only Teams Certified intelligent video bar delivering an unobstructed 180° field of view for your participants, while simultaneously enhancing and sending your whiteboard content.

[Click to learn more.](#)



### TEAMCONNECT CEILING 2

## Hear better – with TruVoicelift.

The activatable and configurable algorithm behind TruVoicelift, in combination with the most flexible beamforming and advanced zone control, make TeamConnect Ceiling 2 the most powerful beamforming microphone on the market. The TeamConnect Ceiling 2 represents the best audio solution both as a conference or video conference microphone as well as a room microphone for classrooms, lecture halls, seminar rooms, meetings and more.

Learn more at [sennheiser.com/truvoicelift](https://sennheiser.com/truvoicelift)



SENNHEISER



LG

**LG Education Solutions: Guiding the Future of Learning**

Help education clients engage the next generation of thinkers, creators and leaders with LG's education solutions. LG's cutting-edge display technology caters to a wide range of learning styles and teaching methods, keeping students and staff connected, informed and protected—from the classroom to the meeting room.

Inside the classroom, the new TR3DJ Interactive Touch Solution provides a versatile platform for teachers to leverage the learning management system or cloud drive of their choice. Featuring a 4K anti-glare tempered glass screen and a 20 point multi-touch functionality, the TR3DJ creates a smooth writing experience for users to write and annotate on all sources for easy collaboration.

Within a larger learning environment, LG's All-in-One essential series 136" Direct View LED display is designed for versatility—whether instructors are teaching in a lecture hall or students are studying in a meeting room. Manufactured on a secure supply chain, the display is shipped ready-to-assemble in a professional wheeled flight case for easy transport, streamlining the installation process. The case includes the required components necessary for installation—simply secure the two cabinets, attach each LED display module and plug in the power cable.

LG's robust partner, service and support network helps keep institutions focused on educating and inspiring students, not troubleshooting IT. Confidently provide solutions knowing customers will receive quick response times with authorized LG technicians who come straight to campus to perform maintenance and repairs and ensure all devices are working properly.

**Learn more.**

# Integrate

READ *Integrate*  
EVERY QUARTER  
ON NSCA.org



## Electro-Voice

**Learn About Electro-Voice's Expanded Large-Venue Solutions**

Electro-Voice expands its portfolio of large-venue sound solutions with the MTS series—designed to deliver an unprecedented combination of massive output and precise coverage.

- Full-range horn-loaded loudspeaker with four 15" woofers and dual coaxial mid/high frequency compression drivers generates more than 151 dB peak SPL
- Proprietary, state-of-the-science, dual lossless Hydra waveform converter feeds a coherent arc source into a large constant directivity waveguide to ensure pattern control to below 350 Hz
- Equipped with two additional 15" woofers, cardioid versions deliver full-bandwidth directivity control that reduces sound spill outside the pattern, enhancing dynamics, improving sound quality and clarifying speech intelligibility

**Watch the MTS overview video**

**Visit the MTS webpage**



## Primex

**Delivering Solutions to Provide Safe and Efficient Environments for Our Customers**

As we continue to fight through the effects of the pandemic, customers are faced with even more demands to provide safe environments whether it's through proper temperature and humidity levels to prevent the spread of infection and to help bolster productivity and academic success; or accurate storage temperature for crucial medications, vaccines and food supply; or even mass communications in emergency situations. No matter the type of facility, the Primex OneVue technology platform provides impactful solutions that help customers improve safety and efficiencies to protect against risks while meeting compliance regulations and guidelines.

- Minimize risk of unsafe conditions through proactive alerts from **OneVue Sense™** environmental monitoring sensors
- Deliver visual, critical mass notifications, schedules, and safety messages with **OneVue Notify™** displays
- Provide accurate time and schedule changes with **OneVue Sync™** timekeeping solutions

Visit our **blog page** to learn more about how Primex solutions can help customers address the many challenges they are facing. Here are a few recent blogs:

**Document Less, Provide More: Staff Efficiency During Delta and Other COVID-19 Variant Spikes**

**Optimizing Technology During New Hospital Design for Health and Safety**

**How Improving Environmental Conditions in Schools Can Bolster Academic Success**

**Why Safeguarding Food Storage Can Save Money and Cut Down Food Waste**

**Mass Notification Systems Explained: Strengthening Communication with OneVue Notify**

Interested in partnering with a company committed to helping customers provide safe and efficient environments? **Contact us** today!





**Here's a small sample of the findings ...**

**It's important to understand the focus group.** About two-thirds are under \$50 million in revenue while the remaining one-third of respondents are larger. Some offer as-a-service, some offer managed services, and some offer service contracts; the group includes AV, life safety, IT, and security companies.

**It takes time.** These companies didn't necessarily become successful right away. The largest percentage of respondents say they've been offering managed services or as-a-service for more than five years. Very few are demonstrating success in the first few years. "In order to really get started with hosted access control and video managed services, we had to make *at least* a two-year commitment to change the path of what we were going to do," says Trevor Stewart, president of Security Control Integrators.

**It takes a nimble sales approach.** It goes without saying that, if your sales team can't sell your service offerings, then you're not going to be successful. "There's risk of reluctance on the part of sales teams to embrace the service-based program," says Jim DeStefano, senior VP at Unlimited Technology. Respondents indicate that structuring incentive programs is necessary. About two-thirds created different sales incentive programs for service-based sales; however, it doesn't appear that a separate sales team is necessary. Only 25% split up their project- and service-based sales personnel. "We've been fortunate that most of our employees and most of our salespeople have embraced managed services," DeStefano says.

**It takes a village.** Most integration companies can't make the transition from project- to service-based offerings without third-party help. About two-thirds work with a company to create or deliver monthly financing. Companies also tend to lean on their ERP or CRM providers or turned to new ones to create customized solutions.

**Respondents indicate that structuring incentive programs is necessary. About two-thirds created different sales incentive programs for service-based sales; however, it doesn't appear that a separate sales team is necessary.**

# ANATOMY

## of a Successful Service Integrator

**What makes some integrators successful in their shift to service-based revenue? A joint NSCA/PSA research piece provides a glimpse.** *By Tom LeBlanc*

**E**ven before I worked for NSCA, integrators were tired of me writing and talking about the importance of shifting from project- and product-based revenue to recurring revenue, like a service-oriented business model.

Integration company leaders would shout at me jokingly (I think?!): "Enough already! We get it!" But, still, many integrators weren't implementing it.

When NSCA and PSA decided to work together on a research project tackling recurring revenue, we sought to evolve the conversation. Instead of making a case for *why* integrators should shift to service, we focused on *how*. We identified integration companies that have demonstrated success in selling service and conducted a small, targeted survey among them to uncover commonalities. The results were revealed in an exclusive research report: *Anatomy of a Successful MSP*.

**It takes research.** Virtually every company in our focus group—96%—dedicated a significant amount of time to research pricing, structure, and offerings.

**It takes training.** A critical building block in a successful service integration company seems to be training. Much of the training these companies implemented focused on sales (how to sell managed services or as-a-service vs. traditional projects). More than half of respondents trained their accounting departments on how to handle financing and billing.

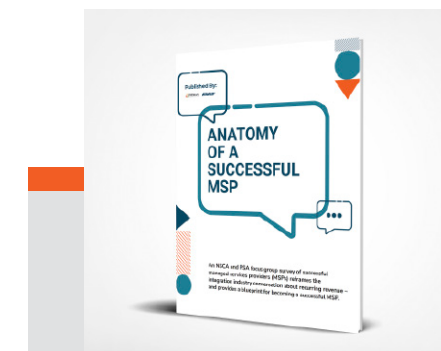
**It doesn't necessarily require lots of new talent.** Perhaps the aforementioned training has something to do with the fact that the majority of respondents *didn't* hire new employees to implement a service program.

The final takeaway we'll share is that "set it and forget it" doesn't seem to work. For one thing, the ongoing needs of customers evolve; therefore, an integrator's service offerings need to adapt. M3T Corporation is in "version two of its managed services offerings," says President John Maffey. That's a result of the company listening to customers, recognizing areas in which its program can improve, and pivoting.

The focus group reflected in *Anatomy of a Successful MSP* might not provide a step-by-step blueprint toward building a recurring revenue program—but the information presented here is a big step in the right direction. ▲



*Tom LeBlanc is executive director of NSCA. Reach him at [tbleblanc@nsca.org](mailto:tbleblanc@nsca.org).*



**Download *Anatomy of a Successful MSP* here.**



# Business & Leadership CONFERENCE

FEB. 23-25, 2022 • IRVING, TEXAS



## 2022: NSCA's Most-Anticipated Business & Leadership Conference *Ever*

*Meet this year's motivating keynotes*



The best teams lean into four investments. They double down on skills, character, relationships, and hustle in intentional ways that bring clarity to chaos. Learn how to use these investments to build your future.

**Jon Acuff, New York Times Best-Selling Author of Soundtracks: The Surprising Solution to Overthinking**



Infuse your culture with core values and align your people with your unique identity so you can produce a healthy organization and valuable brand. Get the secrets behind the world's greatest organizations and take a peek at the playbook for achieving brand-culture fusion to power performance and futureproof business.

**Denise Yohn, Author of FUSION**



Uncover what it takes to harness the power of offices, businesses, and schools to protect health and boost performance. Walk away with a better understanding of how you can impact your customers.

**Dr. Joseph G. Allen, Director of Harvard University's Healthy Buildings Program and Co-Author of Healthy Buildings: How Indoor Spaces Drive Performance and Productivity**



A frank discussion about poverty-driven challenges that impact education and career opportunities. If you're ready to be motivated and inspired when it comes to your organization's talent, then this session is for you.

**Calvin Mackie, Founder of STEM NOLA**



There's a massive difference between what we know about leadership and what we do as leaders. What makes leadership hard isn't theoretical—it's practical. The critical challenge of leadership is the challenge of emotional courage. Learn how to lead with it.

**Peter Bregman, CEO of Bregman Partners and Author of 18 Minutes: Find Your Focus, Master Distraction, Get the Right Things Done**



Three ominous factors pull every company back to the pack like a magnet. Without understanding these "destroyers of differentiation," a voyage on the sea of sameness is inevitable. Uncover four cornerstones of distinction—and how to stand out and move up through the creation of the ultimate customer experience.

**Scott McKain, Founder of Distinction Institute and Author of ICONIC: How Organizations and Leaders Attain, Sustain, and Regain the Highest Level of Distinction**



Supply chain challenges, inflation, skilled worker shortages, and decline in commercial office space will impact your success. This vital planning session will help you prepare for what the upcoming year(s) will bring.

**Chris Kuehl, Economic Analyst and Business Strategy Expert**

## REGISTER NOW

[www.nasca.org/blc](http://www.nasca.org/blc) **Members: \$899 Non-Members: \$1,299**