

# Integrate



THE OFFICIAL TRADE JOURNAL OF NSCA | SPRING 2022

## 2022 Is a Great Time to Be an Integrator, **BUT...**

NSCA is extremely optimistic about opportunities for integrators this year. To help you take advantage, we've got resources to overcome your biggest business obstacles.

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**YOUR TRUSTED ADVISOR**

# The **Ideal** High-Performance Workplace

**How can you create a desirable workplace culture that attracts and retains top talent?**

*By Chuck Wilson*

**A** top question we've heard throughout the pandemic has been: "How can we create a desirable workplace culture that attracts and retains top talent?" I asked a highly successful integrator this question (the company has created an excellent workplace culture). How did they do it?

The response: "It's pretty simple. You just have to make your place *the* place to be. You have to do two things: make sure your high performers stay, and your low performers have to go."

As many of you have seen as part of NSCA's **strategic planning process**, we sort performers into three categories:

- 1. Exceptional**
- 2. Acceptable**
- 3. Unacceptable**

View these as your A, B, and C players. Leadership's tolerance for and acceptance of those who operate in the "unacceptable" range is what drives exceptional people away. It shows up in the form of: "I quit because of my manager, not because of the company, the work, or the compensation."

## **Turning Managers into Leaders**

Managers and newly appointed leaders sometimes *undermine* vs. *emphasize* authority. High performers placed in positions of authority will not tolerate this. Low performers don't really care one way or the other.

When the executive team swoops in to address a problematic situation, it should be done in a way that reinforces—not undermines—the authority of managers or fixes the problem for them. Imagine micromangers coming to a project meeting simply to reinforce the authority that project managers have been given vs. overruling a decision they made. That's a big step and key element of building an ideal workplace.

## **An Ideal Workplace Is an Innovative Workplace**

The career development and talent management model used to build out the ideal workplace can be viewed like the flywheel principle illustrated in *Good to Great*.

**Elements that require intentional and constant positive momentum include:**

- Engagement and inspiration (as opposed to ignoring and constant belittling)
- Good compensation and benefits
- Respect and support
- A team environment (especially as the workplace becomes more diverse and generational)
- A culture of good (community, environment, sustainability, DEI)
- The opportunity to move around the company (using the career lattice model)
- Personal and professional growth (education and training)
- Innovative solutions and tools for success

## Teams and Teamwork are Key Motivators and Success Drivers

When structuring a team, one common mistake is often made: placing the same types of thinkers together. For example, asking the top three engineers, three leading designers, or three skilled technicians to join the team. They'll likely come to the same conclusions in the same manner.



**You have to do two things:**  
make sure your high performers stay,  
and your low performers have to go.

Instead, there's another collaboration model that is proving effective.

Try putting these three types of people together:

- 1. The Hippy.** This is your “wait-a-minute” person—the one who asks everyone else to slow down and think things through before spending time and money. Generally, this person is the calmest and most experienced person in the room, and they serve as the voice of reason.
- 2. The Hacker.** This is the person who will always say, “Sure, we can do that. Give me a week, and I’ll have that ready for market.” Typically, they’re the least experienced and are also highly energetic and tech savvy. They don’t like sitting still—even for a minute.
- 3. The Helper.** This person is cautious. They’re often the ones saying, “Let’s document all of this and be ready to present to management once everything is tested.” They follow the rules; they’re disciplined and process driven. They’re deep thinkers who take notes and have already sent updates by the time the others return to their offices after a meeting.

## High Performance Requires Constant Communication

Many companies with high turnover have owners, leaders, and managers who don’t want to deal with things. This culture of conflict avoidance leads to unwanted churn and frustration.

Think about two or three people and two or three recurring problems that have been ongoing sources of frustration. Now think about the desired situation. Your life will be better once you figure out how to resolve these situations—and the workplace will become far better for it.

*Chuck R. Wilson*

**Chuck Wilson, CEO**

NSCA

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## Integrate

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## TEC 2022

Live in Denver: May 16-19  
Virtual May 24-26

Much like PSA is an endorser of NSCA's Business & Leadership Conference and Pivot to Profit, NSCA is a partner to PSA with its annual TEC conference for integrator training and networking. NSCA members are encouraged to check out [PSATEC.com/TEC2022](https://PSATEC.com/TEC2022) to determine if it makes sense for their businesses.

NSCA CEO Chuck Wilson is featured on a panel discussion, "How to Utilize the PASS Safety and Security Guidelines with Your K12 Clients." In general, you can find sessions on cybersecurity, finance, cloud-based services, corporate social responsibility, company valuation, emerging technologies, digital transformation, and more.

Register at [PSATEC.com/TEC2022](https://PSATEC.com/TEC2022)



## AV Network Nation (AVN2)

April 5

AVN<sup>2</sup> is a one-day virtual experience designed to answer the question, "What's next for Pro AV?". Brought to you by AVNetwork and AVNation, AVN<sup>2</sup> aims to bring the Pro AV community together through advanced virtual networking, future-focused education, and an exhibit hall featuring the technologies you need to do your job today and tomorrow. NSCA plays a role in a key session: "Better Business Practices for Pro AV."

Register at [avnetworknation.com](https://avnetworknation.com)

## FIND UPCOMING EVENTS

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

## Roundtable: Your Managed Services Journey — A Peer-to-Peer Discussion

Sponsored by:  **LIBERTY**  
AV SOLUTIONS

April 5

What stage are you at in your journey toward making managed services a bigger part of your business?

This interactive NSCA roundtable discussion offers an opportunity for you to join a frank discussion of obstacles and opportunities with integrators at a similar managed services stage. You'll also receive customized guidance from NSCA partners on how to make smart decisions and propel you to the next level.

While many NSCA integrators are moving toward managed services, there are various stages of that transition:

- **Pre-Stage:** These integrators are technically still on the sidelines as they consider managed services and try to understand how it will impact their business.
- **Building Stage:** These integrators are in the process of developing their services programs and doing due diligence when it comes to financing and legal.
- **Market Stage:** These integrators have rolled out their programs and are doing their best to achieve success.

As you register for this interactive roundtable discussion, choose your stage. We'll group you into breakout discussions with peers and provide stage-specific advice. This is an opportunity to learn from others and optimize your managed services success.

Register: [nscav.org/webinars](https://nscav.org/webinars)

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# A CASE FOR Optimism

It's not all good news in the latest *Electronic Systems Outlook* report, but the data offers reason for realistic confidence.

Twice a year, NSCA partners with FMI to produce the *Electronic Systems Outlook* report. The latest report—the Winter 2021 edition—includes information based upon actual construction data from January through November 2021, as well as forecasted information for 2022 and beyond.

As the construction market, economy, and our industry continue to contend with a two-year-old pandemic, few were expecting a glowingly optimistic report; however, the NSCA Community can feel good about total U.S. engineering and construction spending being forecast to end 2021 up 8% compared to up 6% in 2020. They can feel less good about that growth being driven largely by residential.

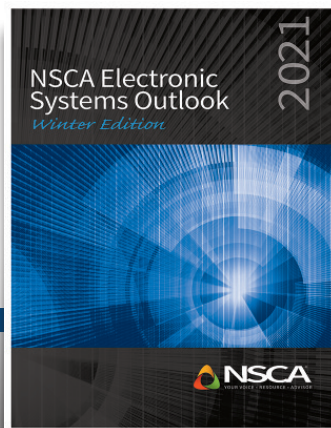
The retail and manufacturing markets were up in 2021 compared to 2020. Down were lodging, corporate, education, and houses of worship. Looking on the bright side, these down markets are poised to come back strong in 2022 with return-to-work, return-to-school, and return-to-travel strategies requiring integrated solutions.

“We’re seeing an economy that should continue to improve in 2022—despite a resurgence in COVID-19,” says NSCA Executive Director Tom LeBlanc. “Integrators will be challenged, however, by the unpredictability of consumer confidence in their respective markets. But the Conference Board is seeing consumer confidence trend upward as this report is released. We recommend that integration companies use this time to emphasize backend operations and ensure profitability.” ▲

## Continued Optimism for Construction in 2022

2020: up 6%  
2021: up 8%  
2022: up 5%

Read the full report for a breakdown of vertical market and technology category trends.



### LEARN MORE

The *Electronic Systems Outlook Winter 2021* report is free for NSCA members. [Download it here.](#)

# Introducing NSCA's Next-Gen Academy

Many of today's integration firm leaders wish somebody had told them how to better prepare for their executive roles. This program aims to do just that for future leaders.

One of the long-running narratives in our integration industry is this: We need to continuously develop the next generation of leadership. So many NSCA member companies are run by long-time industry veterans, many of whom are focused on identifying the next wave of leadership to guide their organizations.

Leading an integration company isn't easy. While there are no simple formulas for success, the NSCA Education Foundation recognizes an opportunity to nurture it. Invariably, veteran leaders tell us they wish they knew then what they know now. They wish they were more prepared for their leadership roles.

That's why the NSCA Education Foundation launched its Next-Gen Academy with a kick-off orientation event at the 2022 Business & Leadership Conference. NSCA CEO Chuck Wilson has been instrumental in working with the Foundation to develop the Next-Gen Academy. He shares insight on the program.



## TO LEARN MORE,

or nominate someone for NSCA's Next-Gen Academy, email Teresa Solorio at [tsolorio@nsca.org](mailto:tsolorio@nsca.org).

### Why is the Next-Gen Academy needed?

It's becoming more apparent each day that our changing workforce requires us to adapt our companies to develop positive employee experiences tailored to the next generation. Likewise, we need to focus on critical skills for success. This is the basis for the Next-Gen Academy. Meanwhile, we're finding that STEM programs and technical training are new industry entry points and becoming very popular; we welcome those students into the family. Yet, we're finding that many of these students lack the soft skills necessary to be considered for key positions beyond installation and technical roles.

As employers, many of us rush them into the workforce as quickly as possible, never taking the time to help them develop customer-facing communication skills or articulate the company's culture and desire to create exceptional experiences for the clients they serve. This is where the Next-Gen Academy will offer the greatest value.

### What will Next-Gen Academy content cover?

Our role is to guide the next generation of systems integration professionals through the steps needed to move forward and make a difference in this changing landscape.

#### We'll offer guidance on:

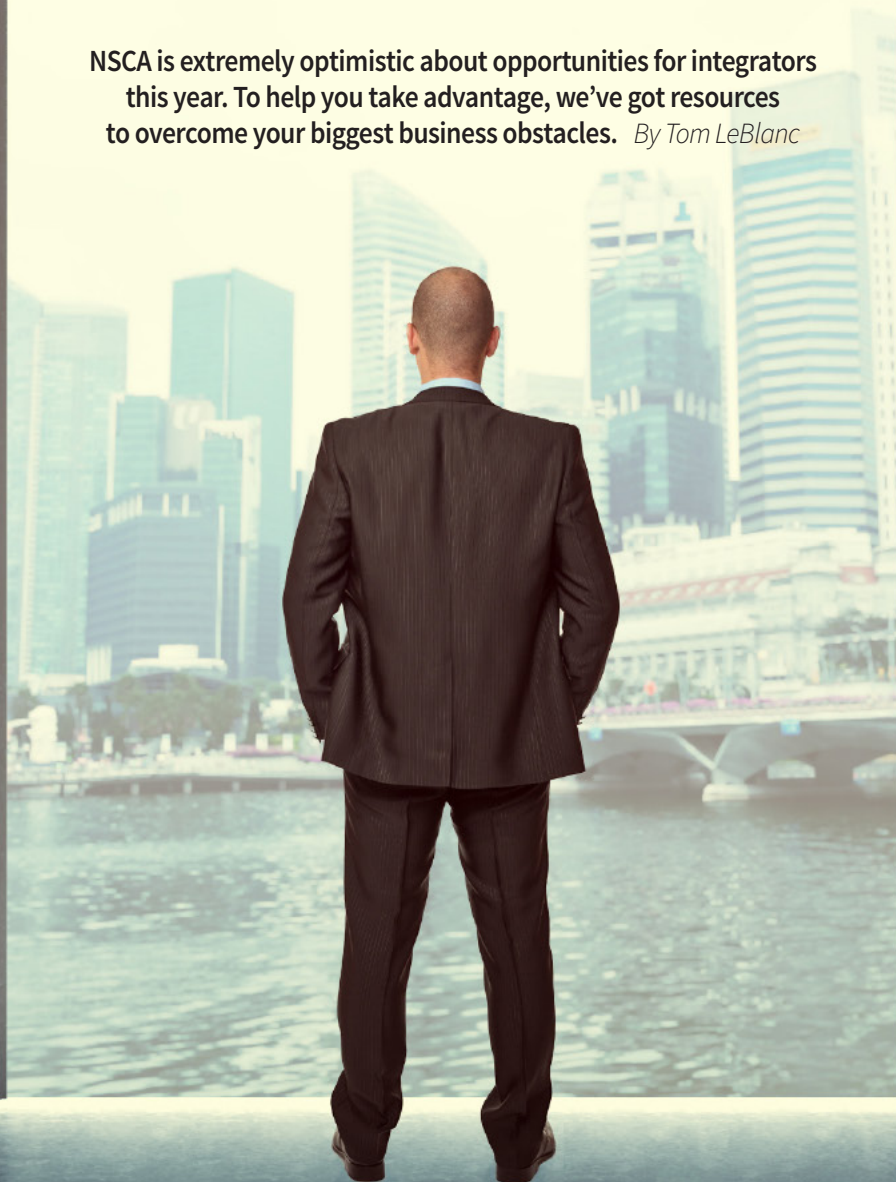
- Matching individual interests with innovation and enabling technologies
- Proven processes and methods for taking charge of your career
- Thought-provoking methods to find a right role for you in a vibrant business
- Emerging skills that enable success and sustained relevance
- Technology advancements and tools that enable growth
- Research that supports the need to "pivot" as an individual
- Building skills and knowledge to match our industry's future
- Overcoming setbacks or challenges and continuously moving forward

### What is Next-Gen Academy's mission?

This program will inspire positive change and intelligent understanding to help our industry—including integrators, consultants, and manufacturers of AV, communications, life safety, and electronic security solutions—be well positioned to maintain and grow their relevance through proactive talent management. 🌱

# 2022 Is a Great Time to Be an Integrator, **BUT...**

NSCA is extremely optimistic about opportunities for integrators this year. To help you take advantage, we've got resources to overcome your biggest business obstacles. *By Tom LeBlanc*





Integration firm leaders, this is your moment. There is so much opportunity amid new business challenges, and your companies need your guidance now more than ever.

During the recent State of the Industry webinar, led by *Commercial Integrator* and NSCA, a consistent theme could be captured in a single word: **but**.

**It comes down to this: The integration market offers tremendous opportunities right now: Integrators' services are much needed, mission critical, and in high demand. There are plenty of reasons for integration company leaders to be optimistic ...**

- **But** the supply chain creates project profitability challenges.
- **But** product availability puts project timelines and customer satisfaction at risk.
- **But** labor costs make healthy margins more difficult to attain.
- **But** the pandemic continues to create workplace and talent management challenges.

less room for error now, and profits are very much at risk. Often called “the race to the bottom,” many integrators get caught up in this web—but you *can* avoid it.

### Emphasize Value vs. Price

NSCA encourages integrators to reframe their approach to competition. Don't be part of the so-called “race to the bottom” by competing to land jobs based on razor-thin margins. Instead, understand the true value that your expertise and skills bring to customers—and project *that* value.

During NSCA's 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference, there were several sessions that challenged leaders to rethink the distinct value they offer.

The sessions led by Scott McKain, an expert on customer experience and client retention, were great examples. His closing keynote, “The Collapse of Distinction,” and his breakout session, “Culture Renovation: Rebuild or Reinforce?,” guided integration company leaders toward understanding what makes their offerings distinct vs. competitors.

# The overriding reason for our optimism? **The mission-critical nature of your services and solutions.**

In January, I was honored to be part of the State of the Industry webinar, along with NSCA Board Member Christina DeBono of ClearTech and *Commercial Integrator* Editor Dan Ferrisi. Leveraging data from our joint research, we tried to paint an accurate and optimistic picture of the opportunities that await ... but one element of the research provided a sobering dose of reality: the typical hardware margins seen by integrators.

NSCA has long emphasized the need to operate with higher profit margins. The 2022 State of the Industry report shows a “distressingly high number of survey respondents,” as Ferrisi wrote in the January 2022 issue of *Commercial Integrator*, reporting hardware margins that “arguably indicate a failure to cover overhead.”

Covering that overhead is likely to be even more difficult in 2022. Supply chain challenges are well documented. Meanwhile, integrators report that the job market has led to escalating labor costs. There's even

**The flip side of this topic is avoiding the unhealthy hardware margins reflected in the State of the Industry report. Here are some points we discussed during the webinar:**

- The margin challenge is great evidence of why it's so important to project the value of your offerings and never devalue what integrators do.
- The companies in the survey indicating that they earn less than 5% hardware margin are at risk of not being around to take the survey next year.
- Around 30% margin is the average that NSCA members see anecdotally and independent of the State of the Industry survey. The majority of NSCA members have overhead in the high 20%. According to very simple math, a typical project has very few points of wiggle room.
- A few years back, many integrators found themselves in this race to the bottom. They saw opportunities for rebates on the back end and took on more volume, leading to trimmed profit margins. This often leads to cashflow problems.
- It all comes back to how you value your company and its services. If you're selling equipment at 5% or 10%, then you're missing the point of how important it is for end users to have the level of technology you're capable of providing.

This is your moment.

# How can your company seize these opportunities while making sure cash flow is healthy?

## Why Are We So Optimistic?

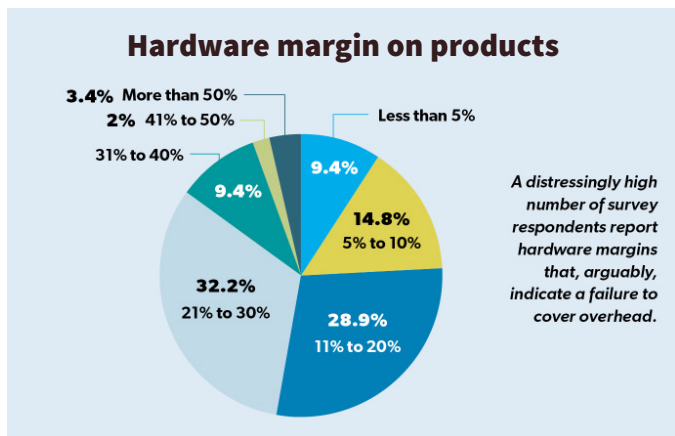
The State of the Industry report reflects substantial optimism among integrators. In fact, fewer than one in five respondents said the environment is “fair” or “challenging.” As your trade association, NSCA sees good reason for that optimism.

Many NSCA members have more backlog than resources to deliver. It’s dismissive to say, “that’s a good problem to have,” but it’s definitely better than other problems that could impact your business. There’s lots of pent-up demand for the work you do. Organizations are trying to get back to the office, and the communications, security, and life safety solutions you provide help them do that.

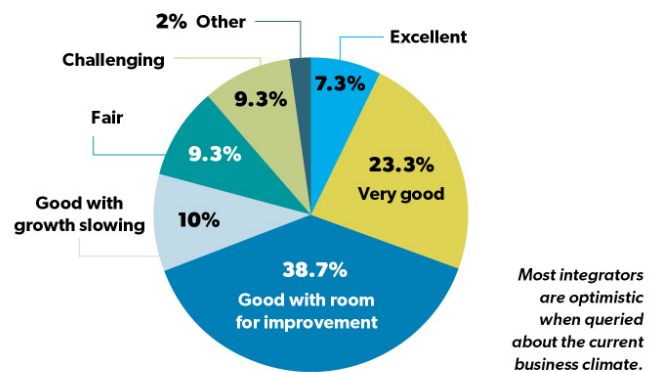
We do have to circle back to “**but**,” though. There are lots of reasons for optimism, **but** there are challenges related to getting the talent you need to deliver on projects in the pipeline. Major supply chain challenges make it difficult to deliver on those projects.

NSCA doesn’t take these “**buts**” lightly. CEO Chuck Wilson often emphasizes the “4 Ps” (or “**buts**”) that integrators need to overcome:

**Pandemic:** There are many business challenges related to the pandemic. Recently, integration companies with 100 or more employees were scrambling to figure out business plans related to a proposed U.S. mandate that all employees be vaccinated (with some exceptions). It required companies to react and face difficult talent decisions.



## Describe the overall business climate



That proposed rule was voted down in the Supreme Court, but many other pandemic-related challenges remain for integrators and their customers—and they factor mightily into business in 2022.

**People:** While this is about talent recruitment, it’s not *just* about talent recruitment. Labor is in such high demand that labor costs are through the roof.

**Products:** Product delays go hand in hand with people challenges. They both make it harder for integrators to take care of the back end due to unpredictable costs. If you don’t know when you can work on a project, then it’s hard to plan on billable time for employees working on those projects—and hard to manage profitability on those projects.

**Payment:** Getting paid at the end of a project often drags out due to these other three factors, making a big impact on cashflow.

There are many reasons to be optimistic, but also many challenges unique to this point in time.

Our overriding reason for being optimistic? The mission-critical nature of the solutions and services that integrators provide. In the past, only certain types of projects and venues were considered “mission critical.” With unified communications, automation, and communication-based signage being so important in helping people return to work, so *much* of what you do is now mission critical.

## Positive Outlook for 2022

We'll say it again: Integration firm leaders, this is your moment.

- Think about the clients you serve and what you need to do to make sure you're properly aligned with them.
- Think about the people on your team and make sure they're ready for the future. Do they have skillsets that can evolve? They also need to be willing to continue to evolve as customers' needs evolve.
- Think about your go-to-business strategy. What do you offer that's unique and necessary for customers vs. your competitors? How do you convey those differentiators? We often hear from Business & Leadership Conference speakers as they research our industry that, when they look at integrators' websites, too many say essentially the same thing. There's a lack of differentiation when it comes to how integrators present themselves.
- Perhaps especially in 2022, think about your internal business processes. How are you managing your cash? Do you have business rules that prevent you from wasting money on projects?

How can you improve processes to create better profitability? Is now a time to work with a business consultant, such as NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember **Navigate Management Consulting**, a cybersecurity consultant such as **Defendify**, or a business software provider like **Solutions360**?

- Think about services-based revenue. More integrators are beginning to lean on **GreatAmerica** to establish financing programs. And in a recent whitepaper created in partnership with PSA Security Network—**Anatomy of a Successful MSP**—one big takeaway: Commit to pursuing more services-based revenue. Not one company regretted making that commitment.

There are lots of opportunities out there, and your customers need you more than ever. But there are also lots of challenges. For integration firm leaders, this is your moment. How do you seize those opportunities while making sure your cash flow is healthy?

NSCA members are up to the challenge in 2022—and we're here to support you. [△](#)

| Tom LeBlanc is executive director at NSCA.

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# 5 REASONS

## Why As-a-Service May Not Be Working for You

As more integrators become primed to do as-a-service work, are you figuring out how to handle this new business model?

**F**or the last year, NSCA has seen signs indicating that integrators are preparing to do more as-a-service business.

Our most recent *Financial Analysis of the Industry* research reveals that the average percentage of recurring revenue sales jumped from 10.83% in 2018 to 17.32% in 2020. **State of the Industry** research conducted in conjunction with *Commercial Integrator* indicates growth in services as well. And GreatAmerica Financial Services, an NSCA Business Accelerator that revolutionizes customer financing for integrators, has seen record-breaking numbers when it comes to new integrator partnerships.



### Are these all signs of what's to come?

AVI-SPL Senior Vice President of Technology and Innovation John Bailey says yes. "It's the ultimate irony," he says. "We're finally coming out of a pandemic and waking up to find ourselves in a difficult supply chain situation. Now the challenge is getting product in a timely manner to satisfy demand. Once we stabilize the global supply chain, I think as-a-service will accelerate. The demand is definitely there, and our industry will have to figure out how to catch up."

AVI-SPL is gaining traction in situations where customers want to transition to a new platform or implement new tech standards to support hybrid and remote work.

"Many times, that means IT departments need to support not only a new technology standard, but also the migration, rollout, and implementation of a new standard. They may be moving from solution

A to solution B, but they have trouble getting there fast enough. They may not have the expertise. That's where we step in," Bailey explains. "We support migration processes and bring users along so that, when they're presented with new technology, they're comfortable with it and can use it."

He says the company has also helped customers centralize solutions via a software platform that ties everything together so they can monitor, manage, and operate technology in one place.

"There's definitely upward momentum when it comes to as-a-service," says Nick Nielsen, vice president of sales for GreatAmerica Financial Services. "We've got more integrators making an attempt to sell AV-as-a-service as more buyers adopt that style of consumption."

Yet, NSCA still talks to some integrators that haven't been successful at selling services. Are you one of them? If so, one of these five reasons may be holding you back.

### 1. You're trying to do as-a-service alone.

"Whenever you're making a decision to do something new in business, you have three choices," says Ian Pugh, director of strategic partnerships at GreatAmerica Financial Services. "You can choose to build, partner, or buy. When as-a-service first hit the industry, people tried to build out their own programs by themselves. But now there are options for partnerships that can expedite the process for integrators that want to take a solid run at this."

There are platforms available to develop as-a-service and financing options. For example, GreatAmerica Financial Services helps integrators build custom financial plans, create recurring revenue, eliminate budget barriers, and bundle recurring contracts with product lease payments.

"Many AV integrators find monthly billing models difficult to deal with. The industry has traditionally been very transactional," says Bailey. "We take on projects. We build things. We give things to our customers and then we move on to another project. But this model breaks that mold and forces you to think about things differently. The more you start to uncover the ways in which your systems can be built around an as-a-service model, the more you realize that it can happen all over."

Sometimes, all it takes is the right partner to show you where and how it can be done.

### 2. You're not having the right conversations with customers.

Customers may not be asking you for monthly payment options yet—but that doesn't mean they're not interested.

"A lot of customers want to talk about it," says Bailey. "They at least want to explore it. We just need to make it easy for them to transact—however they choose to do so. The more we can reduce transaction and deployment costs, and make things simpler and less expensive, the better."

The trick, says Nielsen, is to offer it—not force it. Simply providing the choice gives customers a chance to explore the idea. He points to an RBC Capital Markets study as a good reason to do so: Making customers aware of BNPL (buy now, pay later) plans has been shown to increase conversion rates by 20% to 30%—and increase sales as well.

"Perseverance pays off," says Pugh. "It may take weeks, months, or even years of having these conversations. It takes time for end users to figure out how things work, but it will happen—and, when it does, it will help you win."

An interesting side note: Recent research conducted by NSCA and PSA reveals that 33% of end users are now requesting some sort of as-a-service subscription model for AV. (Download the report [here](#).) When you provide options and let the customer choose how to make a technology investment, you may be surprised by their decision.

### 3. You haven't made the right changes to your sales team.

"Compensating salespeople from a recurring-revenue perspective isn't something that integrators have had to do before," explains Mike Abernathy, NSCA's director of business resources. "Changing the behavior of sales reps is really difficult to do without also requiring changes to compensation plans and quota attainment."

In addition to compensation, sales teams likely need some coaching to handle the new types of conversations they're having. When discussing as-a-service, they're no longer leading IT procurement conversations or solutions-based discussions with

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—Ian Pugh, GreatAmerica Financial Services

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–John Bailey, AVI-SPL

end users—they’re having financial discussions with CFOs, finance directors, and controllers. The value proposition now needs to be compelling for these top finance leaders, which requires a different talk track and skill set.

#### 4. You’re not marketing as-a-service effectively.

Despite the fact that your salespeople should be having as-a-service discussions with clients, you can’t put the burden entirely on them. In many cases, Nielsen says buyers need to be 90% of the way to making a decision about as-a-service *before* they talk to a sales rep.

“The integrators that are winning right now are the ones that have marketing campaigns in place to educate their end users about as-a-service,” says Pugh. “If the marketing is done right, then you can have some customers salivating over this type of offer.”

Creating as-a-service demand starts by letting your customers know it exists through emails and e-newsletters, blogs, videos, webinars, white papers, social media, etc. In other words: Don’t keep it a secret that clients can purchase technology via a monthly payment.

When marketing takes the lead, the customer already knows about the program by the time a salesperson sits down with them—so it doesn’t come as a complete surprise. To get your marketing started, GreatAmerica Financial Services offers a **toolkit** with resources you can customize and build from.

“Talking about how customers are going to pay for technology is a little different, but what resonates is the ability to have hardware, software licensing, and managed services bundled together,” says Bailey, “and knowing the solutions and services can be adapted over time.”

He says clients want flexibility to integrate new technology and swap out components as new features become available. Your marketing should communicate the fact that end users won’t have to continue to work with technology just because it never feels like the right time to make a change.

“If the licensing goes for three more months but the technology is already obsolete and the managed services contract is good for another year, how do you line all that up?” asks Bailey. “Letting the customer know you can bring it all together shows them how they can be more agile and make changes as needed.”

#### 5. You’re not paying attention to what other integrators are doing.

For many integrators, once they realize the growth of as-a-service across the industry, FOMO (fear of missing out) quickly sets in. No one wants to be left behind. If the market changes, then you have to change with it. You’ll become stagnant if you don’t keep moving forward.


Can you imagine a company choosing *not* to use electricity or computers? Those are extreme examples, but they’re real decisions that businesses had to make along the way. Adopting as-a-service may seem like a big (and possibly unnecessary) leap from where you are now, but it will eventually become a necessity.

#### As-a-Service Doesn’t Have to Be Overwhelming

Just a few years ago, Nielsen says AV-as-a-service could’ve been compared to a dressed-up lease. Today, more sophisticated bundling of recurring services is possible—but it doesn’t have to be all or nothing.

“The marriage of hardware consumption and the ability to deliver ongoing services is what creates as-a-service,” says Pugh, “but that combination isn’t required for success.”

Don’t sit on the sidelines because you don’t think you’re ready or don’t have the ability to monitor 24/7. To get started, you can sell services when customers need them—and you can finance hardware purchases.

It all comes down to making buying easier for clients by selling technology via monthly payments. Where it goes from there is really up to you. For integrators, the as-a-service model is just getting started. 

# OUTSOURCING Technical Talent Closes Skills Gaps & Boosts Productivity

Partnering with AV Design Labs, an NSCA Business Accelerator, has given members the opportunity to increase manpower—for a fraction of the cost of bringing in a full-time engineer.

**T**echnical talent is hard to find—that’s no secret around here. (Time seems to be in short supply, too. Does anyone know where 2021 went!?) But some NSCA members say they’ve found a secret weapon to keep business moving despite these obstacles.

For David Riberi, CEO at LightWerks Communications, outsourcing was one way to make business more efficient. “Here along the West Coast, technical resources are even more difficult to find—and they’re extremely expensive,” he says. “We had already embraced remote work and were looking for other ways to be more productive.”

The solution he found: Partnering with AV Design Labs, an NSCA Business Accelerator, for a fraction of the cost of bringing in a full-time engineer.

For LightWerks, AV Design Labs provides CAD and AV system design. (They’re discussing the possibility of providing security system design as well.) These services don’t replace in-house engineering; instead, AV Design Labs acts as an extension of the team. LightWerks leverages the strengths of its employees and fills in the gaps with outsourced resources—without expanding headcount or increasing overhead.

“I think we have an economic imperative to do these types of things,” explains Riberi. “There’s a fiduciary responsibility, and you’ve got to do what’s best for the business. Outsourcing CAD and AV system design work has given us the opportunity to grow while lowering our costs and being more efficient at the same time. It was an obvious answer to a resource constraint.”

From Riberi’s point of view, one factor that made the strategy work so well was the decision to centralize the engineering department. The team is overseen by a chief engineer and provides engineering services to the entire company. Without that centralization, he says outsourcing may have created unnecessary chaos and additional challenges.



**“We freed up internal resources to provide more value-add to customers rather than having employees do repetitive work.”**

–John Mitton, Red Thread



Several years ago, Red Thread faced a similar productivity issue: Designs and CAD drawings were holding up projects because they weren't being delivered on time. The team was busy doing installation work based on preliminary designs. CTO and VP of AV John Mitton also worried that the talents of CAD department workers weren't being fully utilized.

It was a battle the company fought for a while, but Mitton knew there had to be a way to get designs and drawings back on track while also finding ways employees could contribute more value.

After reading *The Whole New Mind*, authored by Daniel Pink, a 2014 Business & Leadership Conference keynoter, Mitton had an idea: They could find talented people externally to do this work for Red Thread.

AV Design Labs acts as the company's CAD department, specifies products, and fills out coding and specification tools for engineers to review. Red Thread no longer has CAD employees on staff—their roles were repurposed.

"Many of the CAD people we had on staff went on to become really successful engineers, which was one of the best things that happened," says Mitton. "We freed up internal resources to provide more value-add to customers rather than having them do repetitive work."

Confident that CAD work is now taken care of, Red Thread shifted its focus from timeline concerns to growing the business and improving the customer experience.

Mitton also appreciates the consistency of working with an outsourced technical provider. Purchasing a certain number of hours each month allows the company to budget accordingly. "We do a lot better with reducing and controlling costs by working with them."



**“Outsourcing CAD and AV system design work has given us the opportunity to grow while lowering our costs and being more efficient at the same time. It was an obvious answer to a resource constraint.”**

—David Riberi, LightWerks Communications



The road to discovering the right partner was long and winding—including a few companies that didn't work out—but Mitton believes that one key to success was clear communication of the change once the company decided to partner with AV Design Labs.

Even though the decision made logical sense, some employees worried that their jobs were at risk. Others were concerned about the quality of work. "It can be frightening, and there were emotions involved. You have to have conversations with people so they understand what's happening. We explained exactly what was going on and why we were doing this."



Sunil Botadra, AV Design Labs

### Is Outsourcing Technical Services Right for You?


**How do you know whether your company is a good candidate to outsource engineering, drafting, or programming work?**

- ✓ You struggle to stay on top of proposals
- ✓ You can't keep up with production drawings
- ✓ Delays prevent installers from getting to jobsites
- ✓ You experience an influx of projects that your existing team can't handle
- ✓ You need more manpower but can't grow headcount or overhead
- ✓ Peak times of the year routinely put you behind
- ✓ You need to reduce the amount of time it takes to complete a project

Once an integrator decides that outsourcing might be a good option, Sunil Botadra, VP of engineering services for AV Design Labs, says the first order of business is to talk about how the organization runs.

"We're not here to change the entire process," he explains. "Instead, we talk about how we can become an integral part of the workflow, helping you scale and be more productive without having to change anything."

Botadra says there's a difference between subcontracting and outsourcing—and AV Design Labs falls into the "outsourcing" category. While subcontractors work on an as-needed basis for transactional projects, outsourcing allows an integrator to transfer a specialized set of skills to a dedicated service provider. A long-term relationship is established, and outsourced providers become part of your process, your team, and your company. Regular check-ins and meetings give you the chance to talk about what's working—and what isn't.

"After an integrator works with us, they quickly realize how we can help them be more productive," he explains. "Once they sign on, they keep adding hours. For example, a few years ago, one company started out by assigning us 65 hours of work per month. Today, we do 1,038 hours of work per month for them—basically the work of six full-time employees. We're here to help integrators when they need it most." 

# Are You **CONFIDENT** in Your **Cyber Resiliency?**

The state of cybersecurity and best practices  
to improve your security posture. *By Chad Henry*



**A** daunting *emerging risk* facing the business community centers on people's use of technology and data. Today, cyber attacks can be triggered via clicking, opening, or even by pressing play. Cybersecurity and IT experts will never be able to invent something to stop every kind of cyber attack. This is because **black hats**, or cyber criminals, are constantly evolving the tactics used to steal and sell our most sensitive information.

Hopefully your organization has made an investment in developing a cybersecurity program. If not, the U.S. Department of Labor's **Best Practices Guide** is a good place to start. While cybersecurity focuses on protecting data, it is no longer sufficient by itself. Businesses need cyber resilience.

In this article, you will find statistics and facts about the current state of cyber attacks, as well as benefits and tactics to increase cyber resiliency.

### Types of Cyber Attacks and Victims

*Former Cisco CEO John Chambers: "There are two types of companies: those that have been hacked, and those that don't yet know they have been hacked."*

# With cyber attacks hitting businesses every day, **it's important to understand the most common types of attacks that occur.**

## Is there a certain size or industry that cyber attackers target?

**Put simply, yes – any and all.** Hackers understand that the more potential victims they target, the higher chance their attacks are successful. With cyber attacks hitting businesses every day, it's important to understand the most common types of attacks that occur.

- 1. Malware:** Used to describe malicious software, including spyware, ransomware, viruses, and worms. Malware targets vulnerabilities in a network, typically when a user clicks a dangerous link or email attachment that then installs harmful software.
- 2. Ransomware:** Ransomware is a type of malware that prevents users from accessing their system and requires a payment, or ransom, to regain access.
- 3. Denial-of-Service (DoS):** A denial-of-service attack targets systems, servers, or networks, flooding them with traffic to exhaust resources and bandwidth. As a result, the system is unable to fulfill legitimate requests.
- 4. Phishing:** Phishing is a type of cyber attack that uses email, SMS, phone, social media, and social engineering techniques to entice a victim to share sensitive information — such as passwords or account numbers — or to download a malicious file that will install viruses on their computer or phone.

## Did You Know?

- A report by research firm *Canalys* revealed that over **31 billion records** were compromised by a variety of data breaches throughout 2020, with an average of **101 million of those lost to victims**.
- According to the University of Maryland, cyber attacks occur every **39 seconds**. However, research shows that negligent insider breaches have decreased in number and cost simply due to **proactive training and awareness programs for employees**.
- Data breach costs rose from \$3.86 million to \$4.24 million, the highest average total cost in the 17-year history of IBM's *Cost of a Data Breach* report.
- Also from IBM, human error was a major contributing cause in 95% of all breaches. In other words, had human error not been a factor, the chances are that 19 out of 20 breaches analyzed in the study would not have happened at all.

Thankfully, it's not all bad news. Cyber resiliency. Data security. Colleague education. Awareness. By familiarizing your leadership and workforce with these strategies, we can take a stand against these threats together.

## SOURCES

- [Hacker News](#)
- [Cisco](#)

## What Is the Difference Between Cybersecurity and Cyber Resilience?

Cybersecurity is comprised of the strategies and actions taken to strengthen an organization's defenses against any attacks to its network, data, and IT infrastructure. The goal of cybersecurity is to keep threat actors at bay and protect a company's assets.

Even with the proper cybersecurity measures in place, cyber attacks continue to become more sophisticated and much more frequent. This is where cyber resilience comes in. The umbrella of cyber resilience includes things like company policies, a robust cyber liability insurance policy, tabletop exercises and penetration testing, and clearly defined steps to take following a cybersecurity breach or incident.

When done right, cyber resilience enables businesses to remain operational during and after cyber attacks or technical failures.

### TrueNorth's Capabilities

**1. Cyber resiliency and data security assessments led by our on-staff certified ethical hacker.**

Identify, assess, and document how cyber risks or threats are evaluated and categorized. Establish criteria to evaluate your current security controls and security measures.

**2. Identification of weak spots within your workforce and supporting education and awareness efforts.**

TrueNorth's approach does not start and end with an assessment. Knowing that human error remains the biggest threat to cybersecurity, educating your employees on the ways cyber criminals prey on vulnerabilities is fundamental to a company's cyber resiliency.

Phishing simulations and training coupled with a hands-on technology audit guided by our team are just a few ways we assist clients in this space.

**3. Coordination with and oversight of cybersecurity service organizations.**

There has always been a divide between IT and the C-suite. By partnering with a reputable advisor, you can confidently bridge that gap and work together toward a common goal. For smaller organizations, IT and security are often outsourced or lacking due to financial constraints. Our team is designed to be an extension of your operations in this regard.

**4. Assistance with development and ongoing management of cyber risk management plans.**


The most important factor in improving cyber resiliency is creating a framework for your organization based on where you stand today, and developing a road map of actionable items to address.

**5. Cyber insurance program architecture based on industry-specific coverage, benchmarking, and account management.**

Ever wonder how your cyber liability insurance limits compare to others in your industry? We partner with a leading insurance tech firm called CyberCube to deliver analytics based benchmarking and specific threats facing your organization.

**6. Claims advocacy and mitigation support.**

Take the guesswork out of how to report and manage a cyber claim by partnering with a team that specializes in this space.

It's difficult to be optimistic when discussing a topic as concerning as cybersecurity. However, staying informed and seeking support from industry experts who are leading the charge against these threats is a huge step in the right direction. 

*Chad Henry is a risk management specialist for TrueNorth, which offers expertise and solutions for small and middle-market business owners.*

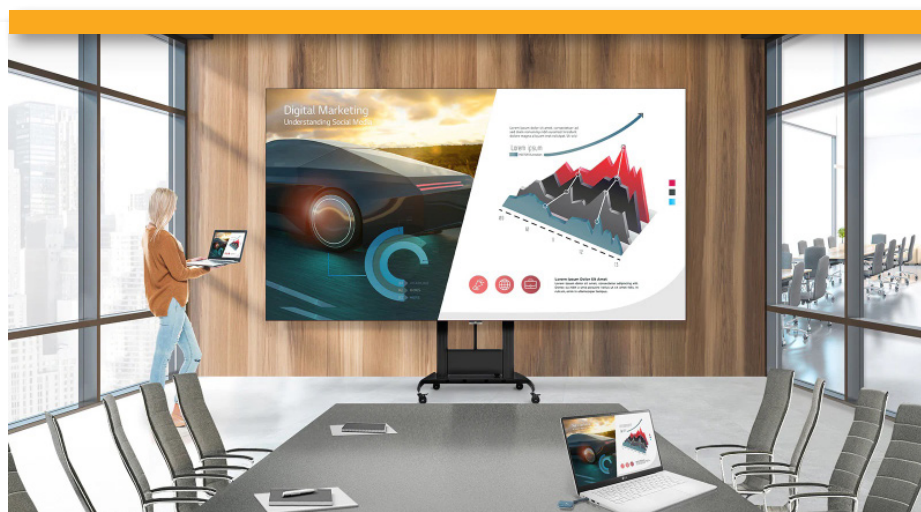


**WANT MORE?**

Contact NSCA Business Accelerator TrueNorth by visiting [here](#).

# The Latest from NSCA's Solution Provider Members

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



LG

## All-in-One Day's Work -- LG's 136-inch All-in-One DVLED Display

Empower your clients to lead smart meetings with LG's new 136-inch All-in-One DVLED display.

Equipped with built-in speakers, an on-board webOS™ controller and a 1080p screen, the display can be easily and quickly deployed in virtually any meeting environment including conference rooms, huddle rooms, classrooms, lecture halls, or Command & Control facilities. Clients can easily take control of the large-format display with an embedded controller designed to function like any other TV remote, so teams can get up and running quickly.

Manufactured on a secure supply chain, the 136" All-in-One DVLED display makes the installation process simple—the display is shipped ready-to-assemble in a professional, wheeled flight case for easy delivery and transportation once inside the facility. The case includes every component necessary to install the display as quickly as one day—simply secure the two pre-built cabinets using the included hardware, attach each LED display module and plug in the power cable.

Because the LED modules attach to the cabinet from the front, long-term maintenance is simplified as individual modules can be removed and replaced quickly without affecting other parts of the unit.

Experience a streamlined installation with LG's new 136-inch All-in-one DVLED display.

Learn more [here](#).



## AV Design Labs

### AVDL Partners with Jetbuilt, Launches 'Jetbuilt Engineering Lab'

AV Design Labs is proud to partner with Jetbuilt, the global AV, Security and IT project platform, to offer engineering services with the addition of JEL, the Jetbuilt Engineering Lab. JEL provides access to CAD drawings, presale engineering, 3D renderings, REVIT and more as an effective solution for companies of all sizes. The service reduces the cost of hiring in-house personnel with the proper skill set, while allowing experienced staff more effective use of their time.

After a project is designed in Jetbuilt it can be shared with the JEL team along with notes, scope of work, and any relevant files, such as hand-drawn system flow, images and floor plans. The JEL team can ask questions directly in the project's Discussion thread and be given direction as needed for accuracy. Professional CAD drawings are created with respect to a company's formatting preferences.

Utilizing AVDL in tandem with Jetbuilt creates a seamless workflow within one platform, making Jetbuilt a comprehensive project solution from sales, design, estimating, rendering proposals and RFP's, to managing installations.

With respect to Jetbuilt's mission to reduce bottlenecks and create efficiencies in an integrator's office, Jetbuilt Founder and CEO Paul Dexter remarks, "When it comes to technical documentation we wanted to do far more than build yet another drawing tool. We deliver those drawings and many more engineering services within a truly integrated solution."

JEL is set to release in March.

[avdesignlabs.com](http://avdesignlabs.com)



## Sennheiser

### Learn about Sennheiser TeamConnect Intelligent Speaker (TC ISP)

The TeamConnect Intelligent Speaker is the ultimate audio solution optimized for mid-sized Microsoft Teams Rooms for up to 10 people. It is designed specifically to give teams a whole new way to collaborate in hybrid meetings: smart, focused, inclusive and as if everyone is in one place. The TC ISP's powerful speaker and 7 beamforming omnidirectional microphones cover a 3.5 – meter radius and ensure perfect speech intelligibility in every meeting with excellent double-talk performance.

Installation and connection have never been easier. You can fully utilize the speakerphone right away after installing it in your Microsoft Teams Room. With this immersive and user-friendly setup, there is no audio preparation or additional devices required to make it work seamlessly.

Microsoft Teams users can join Microsoft Teams instantly and without touch. The TeamConnect Intelligent Speaker understands voice commands and responds seamlessly to them. The Microsoft Cortana voice intelligence allows users to control the mic verbally for video conferencing and team meetings.

The speaker will also transcribe the meeting in real-time while identifying up to 10 different voices in the room. For remote participants or those who are hard of hearing, live transcription gives them a new seat at the table for immersive and supportive collaboration. The corresponding transcription documents are available immediately after the meeting - for teamwork without any barriers at any level.

Together, Sennheiser and Microsoft continue to push boundaries, and Microsoft Teams Rooms are now a much more collaborative environment with the TeamConnect Intelligent Speaker.

Learn more [here](#).



## Legrand | AV

### The Ultimate Lecture Capture Guide

As education learning models evolve to accommodate different learning styles and strengths, professionals are increasingly seeing the benefits of a good lecture capture system.

What's more, students at colleges and universities have grown accustomed to attending classes remotely and presume lecture capture offerings will continue. Why? Recorded lectures are essential for reviewing complex materials, since recordings allow students to re-visit sections they may have missed in the live lecture. A 2019 study reported that students felt reduced anxiety with lecture capture available, especially for students with disabilities. Lecture capture is especially useful for students who have English as their second language.

Lecture capture technology is quickly becoming a key feature that students look for when scouting schools.

Having a reliable lecture capture solution available for any classroom on today's campus is a great way to maintain flexibility in changing environments. This is why we thought you'd like to have a quick primer on lecture capture – what it is, setting up large spaces for success, benefits for students, advantages for universities, and all the tools we have created to help drive lecture capture success.

Learn **more**.

## Daktronics

### Partner with the World's Leading Manufacturer of LED Video

In a world full of digital experiences, it is important to harness LED display technology. It empowers employees to work better, entertains spectators to create life-long memories and shares important, time-sensitive messages to audiences. Thus, Daktronics offers direct-view LED displays to fit any size, space or application.

We're a US-based company providing high-performance LED display solutions focused on solving our customers' challenges while standing behind our promises with quality products, reliable services and unmatched experience.

Daktronics Solutions partners receive access to exclusive tools and resources, and a dedicated team to support you throughout your projects, all free of charge.

Visit **[partner.daktronics.com](http://partner.daktronics.com)** to request pricing, training and to learn more about our products.

## Liberty AV Solutions

### Liberty AV Solutions' Role at 2022 BLC

Liberty AV Solutions was proud to sponsor the NSCA Education Foundation Industry Charity Golf Outing, part of the 24th annual Business & Leadership Conference.

With an ever-growing portfolio of products, Liberty AV has maintained both their quality and their personal connection to the installer. Liberty now offers programs designed to provide integrators with tools necessary to become successful and profitable throughout the lifecycle of the customer relationship. These include call center and monitoring services, consignment inventory solutions, and AV as a Service. Liberty continues to offer point-to-point electronics, BYOD content sharing solutions, digital signal management, cables, and connectors.

**[www.libav.com](http://www.libav.com)**



## Biamp

### What's New at Biamp?

Biamp's newest products extend extraordinary audiovisual experiences into more applications than ever before. With a commitment to developing technology that is easy to use and easy to install, our products empower true human connection in any space.

Biamp's new DX Series of premiere ceiling and surface mount loudspeakers have been designed with enhanced aesthetics and improved mounting features while maintaining the extraordinary acoustics expected from our loudspeakers.

Our Parlé conferencing bars bring extraordinary audiovisual experiences to life in small to medium sized conference rooms. They're equipped with 27 microphones and an optional 4K camera in a convenient all-in-one form factor.

Learn more [here](#).

## Electro-Voice

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

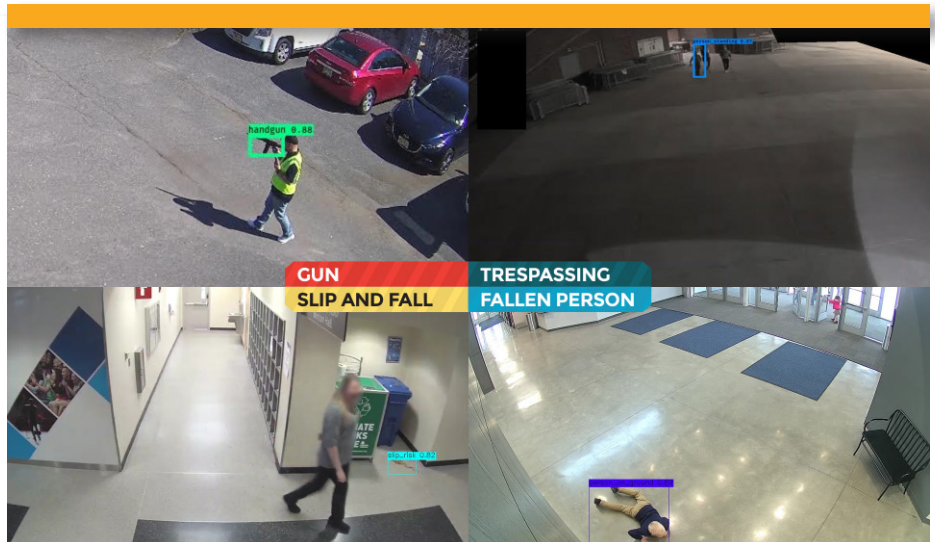
Electro-Voice expands its portfolio of large-venue sound solutions with the MTS series—designed to deliver an unprecedented combination of massive output and precise coverage.

- 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 launch video**

**Watch the MTS overview video**

**Visit the MTS webpage**



## IntelliSee

### IntelliSee's AI Technology

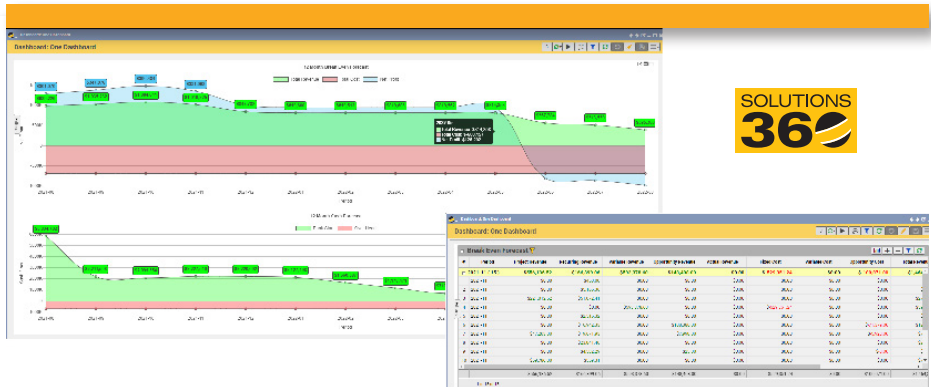
IntelliSee continues to demonstrate the power of AI technology in proactive risk detection across industries. IntelliSee's growing number of detected risks is provided to all end-users and several customers have said they installed the platform for one primary purpose but then found the other detections to be just as beneficial. Two additional risk detections are being added in its next release.

Campus safety continues to be a significant focus in IntelliSee's mission to create a safer world. One of Iowa's largest and fastest-growing school districts has recently moved from the testing phase to permanent installation. The platform has helped increase campus safety during school hours and secures the facility after-hours while also providing a safety net for solo workers. Because IntelliSee does not store footage, PII, or use facial recognition, there are no FERPA or other privacy issues.

IntelliSee continues to grow with the addition of a Chief Technology Officer (CTO), the pending addition of a Ph.D. Computer Vision Research Scientist, and a Customer Success Manager (CSM). The CSM will play a vital role as more end-users move from testing to permanent installation and will work closely with both Key Distribution Partners (KDPs) and end-users. This will help ensure customer adoption and retention is seamless for all IntelliSee partners. IntelliSee has also expanded its commercial insurance carrier and broker partners as interest in its ability to prevent and reduce claims becomes more known.

[intellisee.com](http://intellisee.com)





## Solutions360

### Taking One View of the Business

Solutions360 is the leading provider of Professional Services Automation software, creating **One View of the Business**

- One solution with real-time information driving one version of the truth
- Managing your company's projects, services, and resources to achieve forecasted and predictable results
- Drives highly predictable revenues, cashflow and profits through forecasting
- Allows for an information driven management approach driving data backed decisions
- Improved visibility into process efficiency to drive increased margins
- Eliminates duplicate data entry
- Automated workflow across all departments
- Real time data-driven interactive dashboards

*Solutions360 has just released the One Dashboard. The One Dashboard introduces reliable, highly accurate predictable forecasting. The One Dashboard consolidates all your revenue and cost sources mixed with your project plans to show you the profitability and cash reserves into the future.*

*The power of the One Dashboard is that it points out the problems in various departments and shows you which lever to use to course correct. This tool changes how you manage and approach planning, it points out surprises along the way. With the One Dashboard your managers can steer your business by the numbers with confidence. It's a game changer for the industry!*

**Learn More**

## Kramer

### Kramer Acquires UC Workspace

In a strategic move to expand the boundaries of collaboration, Kramer announced the acquisition of UC Workspace (UCW), a pioneer and leader in unifying collaborative experiences.

Uniting UCW's and Kramer's technology and product portfolios creates unique opportunities to bring a new level of simplicity, automation, and collaboration to Enterprise and Education customers.

Kramer's CEO, Gilad Yron, stated: "Bringing UCW into the Kramer family accelerates our drive to build a market-leading product and R&D organization. It's a perfect fit with our existing technologies and our innovation plans for the new physical-digital world."

Learn more [here](#).

## Jetbuilt Sales & Project Management

### Is Jetbuilt Right for You?

**Global Initiative** — Jetbuilt continues their Global initiative to serve the international community with the ability to render a proposal in American English, British English, German, French and Spanish. The UK hub is now staffed and serving the EMEA community.

**Jetbuilt Engineering Lab** — With JEL, companies can now access cost-effective engineering services as part of the project workflow, including CAD drawings, presale engineering, 3D renderings, REVIT and more.

**Engineering Scrub** — This functionality empowers companies to require that every project is reviewed by an engineer and edited as needed, either before presentation or purchase release.

[jetbuilt.com](http://jetbuilt.com)

Cornell Communications, Inc.

### Learn About Cornell Communications' Nurse Call Solution

Cornell Communications, Inc. is excited to announce our re-branded nurse call solution for every level of care. Our *inform* family of systems include the *inform* Visual 4000 UL listed system that offers the same reliability Cornell has always been known for, *inform* Wireless IndePendant solution to add wireless devices and pagers, and our *inform* AIMobile creating accountability with an interactive mobile nurse call; full business solution. As always, each customer can choose the solution that best fits their community, mixing and matching as needed and Cornell will be there to support the installation of even the most complex solutions.

[cornell.com](http://cornell.com)

## Sharp NEC

### Who Is Sharp NEC Display Solutions?

Our company name underlines our leading position in the display market and our role as a complete display solutions company. Whatever your needs are, Sharp NEC Display Solutions has the right product. No other vendor today can offer such a comprehensive and solutions-oriented portfolio as Sharp/NEC. We bring together experts in the industry and offer a single point of contact to provide total display and projection technology for a variety of vertical markets. Sharp NEC Display Solutions offers the personal touch of a small business with vast global outreach capabilities.

[sharpnecdisplays.us](http://sharpnecdisplays.us)

## Aquaseal®

### Learn About Aquaseal®

Aquaseal® Water Resistant Cables are superior UL-rated cables for indoor/outdoor in-conduit and direct burial applications. Featuring water blocking tape and a jacket that resists sunlight and moisture, Aquaseal® Cables assures the integrity of your signals.

#### Benefits

- Seamlessly connect outdoor security and building management devices
- Install in any environment including water, moisture, or humidity
- Interconnect campus building management systems indoors, outdoors, or underground
- Support fire alarm, security, access control, audio, sound and CCTV/CATV systems

Available in more than 40 varieties to meet the specification requirements of direct-buried and in-conduit access control, audio, communications, fire alarm, intercom, and video applications. Whether your application has low voltage cables running from one building to another in a wet location, or conduit running between locations in a single building, choose Aquaseal® Water Resistant Cables.



#### Features

- Multiple construction options
- Water and sunlight resistant
- CM, CL3, PLTC, and FPL ratings available
- 2-ply tape for exceptional swell height

## 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.



### AXIS

#### Safeguard Your Client's Investment with Perimeter Protection

Whether you are installing a project inside or outside at a client site, you can offer your customers protection for their investment. Network cameras, speakers and analytics integrated with a video management system can provide automated or live deterrence alerts, monitoring and response.

#### AXIS Perimeter Defender

- Edge-based intrusion detection to protect the perimeter of a site
- This analytic allows Axis network cameras and speakers to detect and respond to activity
- Application: automobile dealerships, critical infrastructure, school grounds, parking lots

#### Network Thermal and PTZ cameras

- AXIS Q Series thermal cameras are ideal for heat detection and perimeter security
- These cameras include AXIS Guard Suite, a license-free analytic that provides motion, intrusion, and loitering detection

#### AXIS C1310-E Network Horn Speaker

- For outdoor, long-range use
- Deter intruders once they have been detected
- Emit warnings, alerting intruders that they are being watched, the police have been called
- Supports live or pre-recorded voice messages and two-way communications

These solutions integrate with video or access management software or mobile devices for easy control and response to notifications.

Combined with high-quality Axis network cameras and speakers, AXIS Perimeter Defender provides a flexible and scalable solution that protects staff, visitors and property.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.axis.com/products/axis-perimeter-defender>

For local assistance, contact your Axis Communications representative at **800-444-2947**.

### Eagle Eye Networks

#### Why Become an Eagle Eye Partner

Commercial integrators who become an Eagle Eye Networks Certified Channel Partner can rapidly grow recurring revenue, strengthen their business, increase their customer base, and deliver the very best cloud video surveillance solutions to their customers.

We're proud to be the fastest-growing video surveillance provider for the past three years, according to the Deloitte Technology Fast 500. We're dedicated to helping our partners succeed with award-winning technical support, a cyber security-conscious product portfolio, and the backing of a constantly innovating engineering team.

Is Eagle Eye Networks right for you? Learn why integrators all over the globe are leading with the leader in cloud video surveillance, **here**.

### CLOUDWORK|PRO

#### Learn about CLOUDWORK|PRO

CLOUDWORK|PRO announces the launch of their new on-demand IT Field Services marketplace that connects companies with top-quality field technicians. The new marketplace eliminates fees for IT Field Services technicians, provides access to a dependable and professional workforce, and helps to automate project management tasks. With features like Your On-demand Workforce™, which provides intuitive workflows, instant messaging, and auto-matches technicians to work orders, you'll spend less time managing techs and more time growing your accounts. When you need dependable and professional IT Field Services technicians, think CLOUDWORK|PRO. Please visit their website for more information: [cloudworkpro.com](https://cloudworkpro.com).

# Integrate

READ *Integrate*  
EVERY QUARTER  
ON [NSCA.org](http://NSCA.org)



**NSCA**<sup>®</sup>  
YOUR VOICE • RESOURCE • ADVISOR



# Q&A

with **President  
Shaun Trudell**

Automation Arts  
Madison, WI

[www.automationarts.com](http://www.automationarts.com)

**Executives:** Shaun Trudell, President;  
Ron Moore, Vice President

**Primary Focus:** AV

**Q:** Why is your company's approach unique within the NSCA community?

I'm not sure it's unique, but we focus only on AV so we don't get distracted with trying to be everything to everyone. We focus on being the best in AV—and we find quality partners for the rest.

**Q:** What are the biggest business challenges that lie ahead for your company? How will you overcome them?

Right at this moment, it's supply chain issues. We have been looking at alternative manufacturers or redesigning systems to meet needs. This poses new challenges for service, however—learning new systems and issues that come with them.

**Q:** What's the most important benefit or resource provided to you by NSCA? How do you leverage it?

I use a lot of the data reports, especially the wage report and resources in the Essentials Online Library. It helps us understand baselines and allows us to use actual data to back things up.

**Q:** Why is being part of a trade organization and industry community important?

It's important to keep connected with other industry leaders and companies; they may have new or alternative ideas on how to handle certain business practices or issues. Looking at different ways to solve a problem or how to manage and grow a company helps avoid pitfalls in your own company.

## WANT MORE?

Find the **NSCA.org** version of this article in the “blog” section and watch a video of Shaun Trudell explaining the A2U program.

**Q:** What is one lesson the NSCA community can learn from your company's approach to business?

Strategic planning and working *on* the business, not just *in* the business. Having significant growth over the past 10 years was doable only because we proactively wanted to foster growth and be successful in the process.


**Q:** Who is your company's NSCA "Champion"?

I'm that champion, but I need to do a better job of creating more champions in the business to help manage the number of things I'm trying to push to the team.

**Q:** You recently won an Excellence in Business Award in the category of Talent Development. What did you do that was unique?

We created an apprenticeship and training program called A2U (Automation Arts University). This program is meant to bring awareness to the community about our industry and help drive talent to our company.

**Q:** Why are your employees proud to be part of your organization?

Because it's an amazing team, and they're all passionate about the work they do and the people they get to do it with. 

**“We created an apprenticeship and training program called A2U (Automation Arts University). This program is meant to bring awareness to the community about our industry and help drive talent to our company.”**

–Shaun Trudell, President



*Automation Arts President Shaul Trudell talks to attendees at the 2022 Business & Leadership Conference about steps his company took to build Automation Arts University.*

# Getting Real

## About the Supply Chain

NSCA can't solve product availability challenges, but we can offer our best advice on how to navigate these rough waters. *By Tom LeBlanc*





# NSCA members

are doing a pretty good job of being transparent with clients to eliminate surprises (or at least mitigate them).

**T**hey say it's good to end on a high note—but let's end this edition of *Integrate* by discussing the supply chain instead. It's clear that the supply chain is your No. 1 or No. 2 business challenge this year.

Although we can't solve this problem, we can do our best to gather and offer business advice to mitigate the negative impact it has on your business. During a recent State of the Industry webinar, hosted by NSCA and *Commercial Integrator*, Editor Dan Ferrisi asked me what integrators can do to overcome supply chain obstacles.

**To answer, I shared these insights and recommendations from leaders within the NSCA Community ...**

## **Remember: Supply chain issues extend far beyond our industry's products.**

It's not just amplifiers or speakers (or whatever you're selling and installing) that are hard to get. Projects are seeing supply chain issues with all types of materials. This unpredictability creates pause for customers thinking about what it will take to build a new building or create a different space. A specific material may cost exponentially more than it did a year or two ago—and it might be sitting at a harbor waiting to be unloaded. In other words: It's not only the supply chain creating confusion about when you can get the materials you need, but also the labor shortage issue.

## **The most important thing is communication.**

NSCA members are doing a pretty good job of being transparent, letting customers know about potential product delays and how they might impact a project to eliminate surprises (or at least mitigate them). Overpromising and apologizing later won't lead to a happy ending for you or the customer that's depending on the solution.

*Supply chain issues coupled with labor challenges may mean that many of the products you need are sitting on docks.*

## **Relief is hard to predict.**

Economists seem to think that supply chain issues will be around for a while. Go through 2022 with a mindset focused on overcoming these challenges—not wondering when they'll go away (you might be waiting a while).

In a [previous \*Integrate\* article](#), NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee collaborated on how to approach supply chain challenges. They talked about communication and making sure your sales team aligns with overall company direction on transparency. They also emphasized the importance of planning for alternative products so you have options to choose from.

The bottom line: There is no bottom line. This is an evolving situation, and it's one that brings out the best in leadership. In the NSCA Community, we use the words "nimble" and "pivot" a lot—but those words have never been more appropriate as integrators navigate availability challenges to meet growing demand after watching project pipelines dry up in 2020 and 2021.

**NSCA continues to be here to help in any way we can. 📍**



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

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