

Integrate



THE OFFICIAL TRADE JOURNAL OF NSCA | SPRING/SUMMER 2020

Getting Through It Together

As the integration market shifts to reboot mode, NSCA has your back. Find business transformation success stories and business continuity tips. **PAGE 16**



Plus

40 Years of NSCA:
40 Ways We Can Help Your Business **PAGE 20**

Inaugural Edition

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Get Your Team As-a-Service Sales Ready

Free Training & Certification Program for NSCA Members

Sales Skills for Managed Services/AVaaS Training, presented by NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember Partner Sales Coaches

Self-paced training and certification program teaches:

- When/how to introduce managed services in the sales process
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- How to frame the value and impact of managed services to the prospect
- How to correlate business outcomes and user experience to managed services
- How to incorporate managed services into technology-as-a-service programs

Integration companies need these sales skills now more than ever.



Beginning July 1! Learn more and register:
nsca.org/sales_avaas_training

Tips for Entering the Recovery Phase



As we watch the COVID-19 pandemic intensify this year, most NSCA member companies have taken significant hits along the way: revenue streams dried up, important customers went out of business, staff counts were reduced, and more. While the downturn seemed to happen in a flash, the recovery period won't happen as fast as flipping a switch and reopening previously existing revenue streams.

Just as NSCA has been your partner through the crisis, we'll support you during the rebuilding stage, too. Here are some tips and resources to consider as you look forward to bringing things back ...

Jumpstart Product Purchasing

Just because projects come back doesn't mean your company is in a cash position to get back to normal. Some firms may need working capital for their supply chain. NSCA Business Accelerator **Tradecycle Capital provides supply-side liquidity** by remitting payment directly to suppliers on behalf of clients. This might help get recovery projects off the ground.

Beware of Legislation

An economic upturn is likely to result in lawmakers returning to backburner business after being consumed with COVID-19-related priorities. That often includes legislation or rules that could limit low-voltage integrators' legal rights to install PoE systems. Subscribe to NSCA's **Legislative Tracker** to keep up to date.

Build Managed Services

During the COVID-19 crisis, integration companies are seeing plenty of managed services revenue dry up. Still, companies with strong service businesses are better positioned to weather tough times and construction slowdowns. NSCA Business Accelerators, such as GreatAmerica and Corporate Sales Coaches, can help you create **customer financing processes** and **services selling strategies**.

Avoid Sensational Offers

It was disappointing (but not surprising) to see opportunistic vendors reaching out to vulnerable integrators. If an offer seems too good to be true, then it probably is. Work on long-term partnerships with reputable vendors (NSCA's manufacturer and solution provider members fall into this category).

Refocus on Personnel

Before this crisis, many integration firms' top priority was finding and hiring new talent. As companies rebuild project pipelines, they'll either bring back furloughed employees or hire. Lean on NSCA's **Ignite job board** to recruit industry-specific talent and its **library of online training and resources** for onboarding.

Retain New Revenue Sources

The rebuilding phase isn't a time to walk away from new revenue opportunities. Instead, it's a time for creative ideas like tapping into telehealth, offering streaming services, filling help desk roles, leveraging **NSCA Business Accelerator Defendify** to take on cybersecurity roles, becoming a PASS partner, and more.

Don't Neglect Business Continuity

One thing the COVID-19 pandemic is teaching us is that anything can happen. The momentum our industry market had during NSCA's 22nd annual Business & Leadership Conference in late February came crashing down in a matter of days. Most companies had to quickly learn best practices for business continuity. It was a good reminder to prepare your business crisis playbook so you're ready to go if you need it again.

There's one more business recovery tip we'd like to emphasize, too: Remember to lean on NSCA. As our focus on business continuity shifts toward business recovery, we offer webinars, articles, and resources to help you reach your recalibrated goals. Example: Our Pivot to Profit content will zero in on strategies for returning to profitability.

You can always pick up the phone and call any NSCA team member at (800) 446-6722. We're proud to assist members through the crisis — and we'll take even more pride in helping you through the recovery phase.

Chuck R. Wilson

Chuck Wilson, Executive Director

NSCA
cwilson@nsca.org

We're proud to guide NSCA members through the COVID-19 crisis — and we'll take even more pride in helping you navigate the recovery phase.



Pivot to Profit Virtual
Sept. 22-23

NSCA's 2020 Pivot to Profit has gone virtual: P2Pv. Here's what you need to know about the two-day event.

Shift to Survival

The "pivot to profit" premise of this annual NSCA business-transformation event has always been critical for forward-focused integration companies — but 2020 is even more vital. As the integration market looks to reboot from the COVID-19 crisis, NSCA guides members through the shift to survival. P2Pv content is focused on helping companies through their recovery and repositioning for new market demands.

Rebuilding Revenue — Integration companies saw revenue streams dry up during the COVID-19 pandemic. P2Pv content zeros in on company leaders' No. 1 concern: rebuilding revenue and identifying revenue strategies for 2021.

Emerging Technologies — At the heart of P2Pv content are the technology solutions that move the integration market forward. The business-focused event ties emerging tech products to revenue strategies.

P2P Content Series — No longer just a two-day event, P2P has evolved into a continuous conversation on critical business transformation issues — articles, webinars, whitepapers, videos, and more — via P2P Series content.

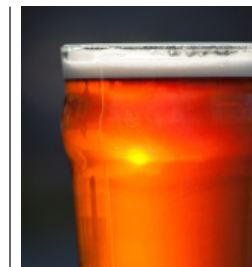
Litigation Readiness — Running an integration business in the post-COVID-19 era carries new legal concerns. P2Pv content educates leaders on avoiding and preparing for potential litigation.

Jobsite Logistics — Any post-COVID-19 reboot plan should include new policies and project management processes for jobsite health and safety precautions. P2Pv content has you covered.

Recalibrating Business Processes — Human resources, sales engagement, group gatherings — these are just examples of integration business elements that require revisiting post-COVID-19. P2Pv offers guidance.

Scaling Up (and Down) — Some NSCA members may be scaling their business up to take advantage of new customer demands, but many are scaling down post-COVID-19. P2Pv provides advice.

Register: nsc.org/p2p



Beer & Bull Podcast
Posted Quarterly

The concept of Beer & Bull is simple — getting together with likeminded individuals to talk about a topic they're passionate about while enjoying a beverage or two.

Working with our friends at AVNation, NSCA's Beer & Bull quarterly video and audio

podcast brings members of our Emerging Technologies Committee and the NSCA community together to have fun discussing the opportunities our industry offers.

NSCA introduced the Beer & Bull concept at its annual Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) several years ago. It was a lively discussion about business topics, usually situated toward the end of the three-day event (when attendees were particularly thirsty).

It was a great annual session that spurred memorable dialogue. Because BLC content constantly evolves, we haven't had a Beer & Bull session for the last few years. We still love the concept and decided to bring it back. Instead of enjoying our beers together at BLC, this podcast's host, panelists, and attendees are encouraged to tip a glass of their own during the discussions. (Yes, we might also discuss our beverage choices a little bit.)

Find the first and future episodes here:

nsc.org/tag/beer-bull/

Subscribe to AVNation podcasts on iTunes.

Webinar: How to Play and Win the Construction Game

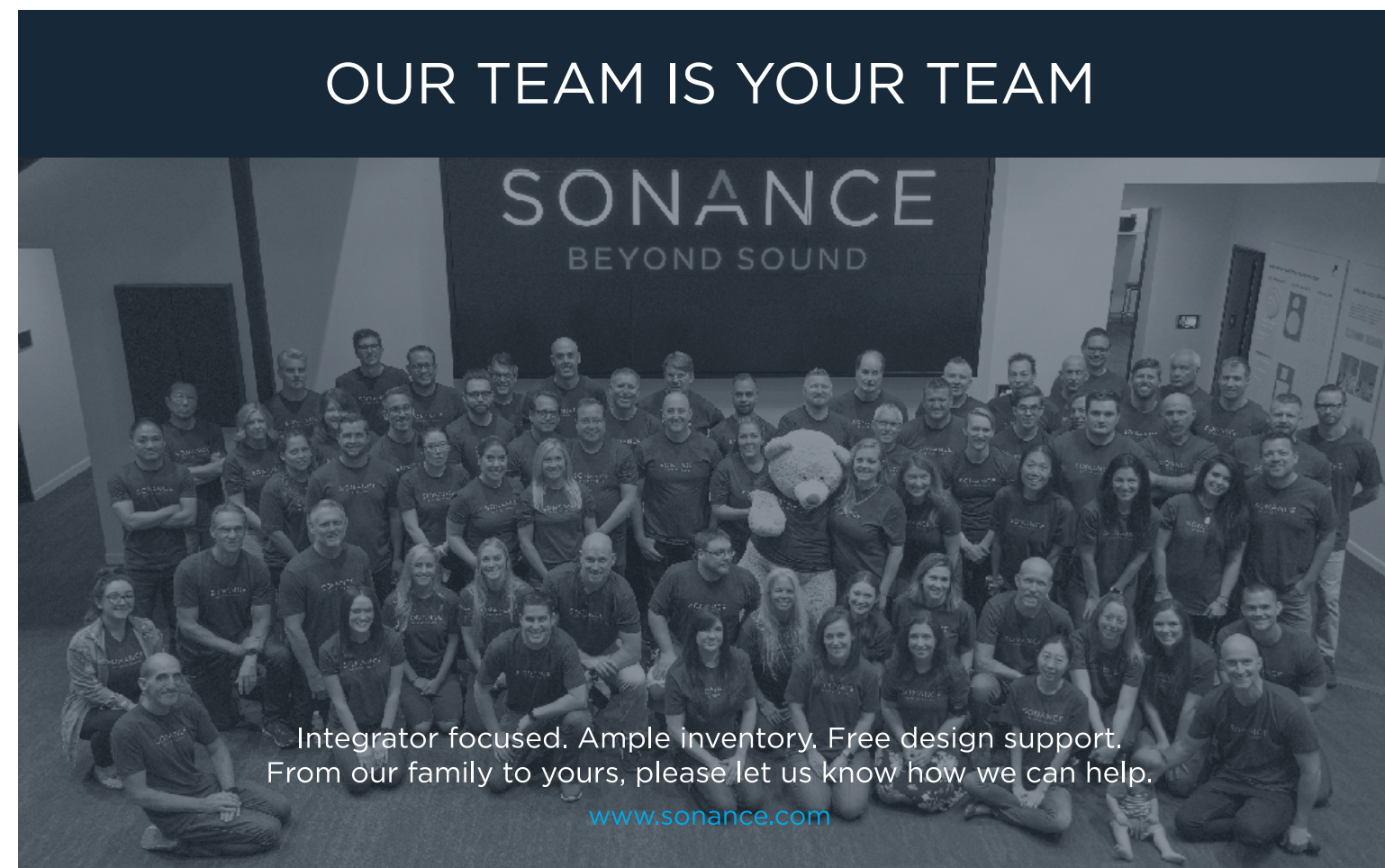
June 23, 2020



This one-hour webinar provides a practical guide to delivering projects on time and within budget — every time. We'll also cover best practices on pricing and successfully executing projects. After attending, you'll have a better understanding of:

- The impact of each specific project on your business
- How to capture costs related to projects
- What should be included and excluded in sales proposals
- What to look for in the bid documents' general conditions
- How a typical project plan should look
- How to define roles and responsibilities of project team members
- How to proactively manage installation work and get paid
- How to close out projects successfully and start warranties on time
- Your role in project success as the owner or senior manager

Register for all webinars at nsc.org/webinars



PASS Milestones: Impact on NSCA Members

This timeline shows the rise to prominence of the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) K-12 — and how it enables opportunities for NSCA members.

The first half of 2020 hasn't provided much positive news for the integration community, so it's valuable to recognize the silver linings that do exist. The Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) K-12 has already achieved two significant milestones this year, both of which elevate the importance of the not-for-profit provider of school safety guidelines. These milestones are extremely significant for NSCA members that aim to set the standard for school safety solutions.

Let's take a look at how these milestones fit in with what PASS has accomplished so far ...

Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) K-12 Timeline

Spring 2014: PASS is Born

NSCA Executive Director Chuck Wilson delivered a speech on mass notification emergency communication (MNEC) at a technology conference. He fielded several questions from Chicago Public Schools representatives about improving security and life safety systems, which led to site visits that same day to review school policies and procedures. Administrators discussed budget constraints and obsolete technology. Upon leaving one particularly challenged building, an administrator pleaded with Wilson: They needed security guidelines and best practices to follow to eliminate confusion and feelings of being "totally lost" on how to improve school security.

During Wilson's drive home, he called several industry leaders to share his experiences. Without hesitation, they offered to help. NSCA and the Security Industry Association (SIA) combined efforts, focusing on developing guidelines and best practices to create a toolkit for school leaders. They wanted to share their expertise with those who struggled with school security, life safety, and emergency communications.

Summer 2014: PASS Brings Experts Together

The first face-to-face PASS meeting took place in Atlanta. All stakeholder groups came together: subject-matter experts, school officials, educators, resource officers, parents, school board members, industry advocates, and others. They decided to develop guidelines based on a tiered, layered approach, including all hazards and critical safety factors present in K-12 schools. The group agreed on the name "Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) K-12" and to make the results of the volunteer-led effort available at no cost.



Spring 2015: First Edition of PASS Guidelines

It took hundreds of volunteer hours — organizing, writing, editing, reviewing, and discussing — but, in April 2015, the first edition of the PASS Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools was produced.

(In subsequent years, the guidelines have been revised; the fourth edition was released in December 2018.) In Spring 2015, PASS first became approved, recommended, endorsed, and accepted by lawmakers, industry groups, agencies, and a vast number of U.S. school districts.

Summer 2017: School Security Checklist

To help users track the security efforts of their school or district in comparison to best practices defined in the guidelines, the PASS School Safety and Security Checklist was released. This comprehensive list helps schools and integrators assess what may need to be implemented to improve security — as well as what may be needed for the future.

Fall 2017: First-Ever School Security Cost Estimates

Cost estimates from the Secure Schools Alliance Research and Education reference the PASS Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools to provide a realistic look at the resources needed for school security infrastructure improvements. These school security construction cost estimates are the first to be created based on a specific set of recommended guidelines.

Winter 2018: New Website Unveiled

To offer integrators, manufacturers, and school security leaders a comprehensive online resource — and easier access to the PASS Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools — a new website was unveiled. In addition to the guidelines, users can also find articles about up-and-coming school security technology, such as fever detection.

Winter 2019: Federal Government Endorses PASS

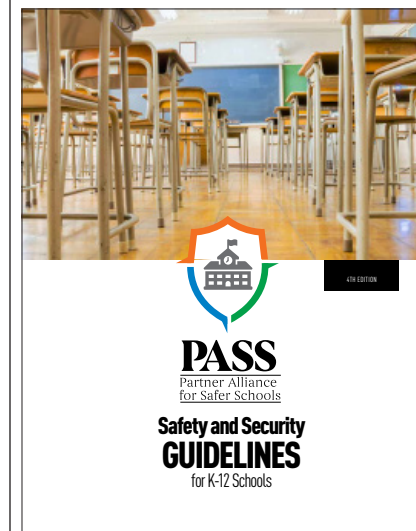
School administrators across the United States gained another reason to confidently choose PASS guidelines. *SchoolSafety.gov* — a new school safety website from the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and Justice — began featuring PASS guidelines as a recommended resource for developing and implementing physical security plans in schools. The site presents the fourth-edition Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools as its only non-government resource.

Spring 2020: PASS Becomes Standalone Foundation

The PASS organization transformed from an ad hoc group of committee members into a standalone 501(c)(3) foundation. This organizational structure launches another new chapter in the history of this alliance, enabling PASS to further fulfill its mission of making schools safer.

Where the PASS Guidelines Are Used

- 11 U.S. states
- NFPA 3000 Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response Standard, Chapters 5 & 9
- Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety
- National School Board Association's School Safety Center



Want More?
NSCA members can learn more about PASS by visiting passk12.org.

VC520 PRO

The VC520 PRO enterprise-grade video conferencing solution is perfect for mid to large conference rooms. With its high-quality camera and full-duplex speakerphone, the VC520 PRO results in crisp images and audio for an outstanding video experience.

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- Daisy-chain speakerphone

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Q&A

WITH PRESIDENT KEVIN MILLER

Coitcom
 Redwood City, CA
coitcom.com
 No. of Locations: 1
 Primary Focus: AV

Q: What makes your company's approach unique within the NSCA community?

I had zero background in AV when I joined Coitcom in 2005. At that time, Coitcom was a six-person, \$1.5 million company and lacked any type of training system. Knowing that we wanted to grow, I began reaching out to clients, asking them where their pain points were and how we could help. We then built the teams, systems, and offerings they needed.

To this day, we don't have dedicated salespeople or an advertising/marketing budget. Our employees constantly work together to explore every client use case and balance what the client needs, wants, and can afford. It is a custom and iterative process, but we have found it to be extremely effective in growing relationships and executing successful projects.

Q: You implemented some significant changes. Was there an adjustment period? How did it impact company culture?

There are always going to be adjustment periods. I think it is imperative that companies — specifically your frontline team members — have the flexibility to tweak and adjust plans after they have been implemented. I've yet to see the perfect plan drawn up or implemented. A military mantra I have adopted is: "Cover, move, communicate." It is essential that you protect your team and mission at all times. You do that best by constantly adjusting your position and tactics to fit the situation.

The COVID-19 situation has been a perfect example of where you need standards and flexibility. We have had to make tons of tough decisions as the COVID-19 timelines and regulations have changed. The keys to our success so far during this challenging time have been communication and role-playing every situation we can think of. Our management has been in constant communication with our team, other subcontractors, general contractors, and clients' teams. All of our plans now have multiple backup plans. We have additional slack built into our schedule because we know we are going to need it. We have also intentionally addressed the emotional component that comes with all of this change and uncertainty. We have stressed to each of our employees to expect rapid changes and not let frustration or disappointment take over their emotions. "Cover, move, communicate" and, in this case, I would add: "Don't worry."

We need everyone at their usual high level and not distracted or disappointed. While the COVID-19 disruption has had many scary moments, I am excited that we have put ourselves in a great position to grow and excel coming out of it.

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

Coitcom's biggest challenge is retaining nimbleness and responsiveness as the company continues to grow and the industry continues to change. With 60+ employees and a large backlog of projects, it would be easy to fall into a rut and not continue to explore new opportunities. Our response to this

challenge is to constantly force ourselves to come up with new ideas that can be prototyped quickly and inexpensively. We also encourage every one of our employees to bring any ideas that they think have promise to the table for discussion. The only limitation I put on idea generation is that the ideas must be legal and potentially profitable! We have received many of our best ideas from employees who have never set foot in a management meeting.

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

NSCA has a host of tangible resources, like technical training, economic outlooks, HR and salary guides, legal reviews, etc., that can save a company hundreds of hours and tens of thousands of dollars. Whenever we have a question about our business operations, the first thing we do is check the NSCA library for guidance.

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

Being part of a trade organization and the overall community is a huge plus for Coitcom's development. Because of NSCA, we have partners and friends throughout the country that we rely on for guidance, experience, and partnership. My team is constantly bouncing ideas and experiences off our NSCA friends to get feedback and improve our decision-making process. As the world continues to get smaller, we have also partnered with multiple NSCA companies to service clients throughout the country and internationally.

“We have had to make tons of tough decisions as the COVID-19 timelines and regulations have changed. The keys to our success so far have been communication and role-playing every situation we can think of.”

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

A lot of our success can be traced to two things. The first is that we focus on opportunities that are win-win for the client and Coitcom — and that have the potential to turn into long-term relationships. The second is that we are careful to make sure we don't fall into a herd mentality just because everyone else is doing it. Figure out your path and follow it. Take care of your team, your clients, and your plan, and everything will fall into place.

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

AV is a fairly straightforward industry, and we've been able to set a hiring mantra of looking for attitude and aptitude rather than established skills or accomplishments. As such, we have dozens of examples of Coitcom team members who joined us at the lowest level and climbed the ranks quickly to leadership positions.

We also pride ourselves on reducing bureaucracy by enabling our employees to make a large number of decisions on their own without being micromanaged. We are able to do this because so many of our team members have held multiple positions at Coitcom and know how we do things.

NSCA[®]
BEER & BULL

**BARS MIGHT BE CLOSED BUT ...
 BEER & BULL IS OPEN**

NSCA's Beer & Bull Podcast Tip back a beverage of your choice as NSCA Emerging Technologies Committee members debate the future of technology and the integration business in this quarterly podcast. Hosted by NSCA Director of Business Resources Mike Abernathy in cooperation with our friends at AVNation.

Listen and watch here: nsca.org/tag/beer-bull/. Subscribe to AVNation podcasts on iTunes.

Social distancing not required!



What has the COVID-19 crisis taught you about the integration industry and NSCA community?

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.

"The COVID-19 crisis has taught us that the integration industry is an essential service to the public. By providing communication tools, we help keep their businesses operating with technology. The NSCA community has provided amazing strategies and personal insight to help integrators get through these tough times and keep all our doors open. With the downtime everyone may be facing, there is a lot of opportunity for professional development, which we are encouraging all our employees to seek out."

Jesse Wintonyk, Project Manager
Hillman Audio Video Inc.
hillmanav.com



"I have been so impressed with our vendor partners. It was important for us to reach out and say, 'We are going to be fine, but if we can work on some flexible terms over the next 90 days, that would be amazing.' What I got back was quite beautiful. People reached back out to us and said they would be honored to help us out and push terms out to 60 days until Q3. People called me directly and thanked me for being a good customer. What I learned is that relationships matter — and both sides need to tend to them. In good times, we tend to our gardens. In bad times, we depend on them to live."

Lionel Felix, CEO
Felix Media Solutions, Inc.
felixmediasolutions.com



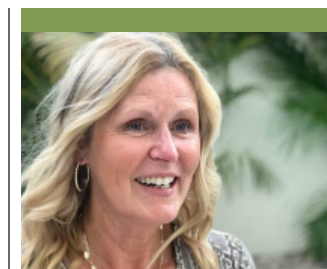
"This crisis has shown us that the integration industry is relevant and necessary today. Education institutions had to shift to distance learning, and enterprise businesses were challenged to develop remote workforces overnight. At HB, we needed to quickly enable remote working while simultaneously providing essential services to our clients during geographical lockdowns. It immediately became clear that, to get through this, we all must evolve together. Our teams, our industry, and people in general have shown their resiliency and willingness to adapt. Ultimately, we will all come out of this stronger and better prepared for the future."

Dana Barron, CEO
HB Communications
hbcommunications.com



"Constant Technologies has grown a thriving business over decades, and we have encountered and weathered our share of storms. This particular pandemic is presenting a unique set of challenges as travel is so vital for our successful deployment of operations centers. We have learned a great deal, including our internal success of a true remote workforce. Additionally, we have pivoted to continue the racking, interconnecting, and either storing or shipping goods for our current orders. Finally, our methodology of stressing the importance of uptime and service is really paying off in these uncertain times, as support teams continue to keep our clients' most valuable nerve centers functioning when needed the most. The support from our suppliers and from the integration community during these uncertain times has been remarkable."

Brad Righi, CEO
Constant Technologies
constanttech.com



"It is a stressful time as we face all of these unknowns. I am so humbled by the strength of my team and the industry as a whole. These talented folks have broad shoulders and show up under difficult conditions. The people in this industry care deeply about our communities. We are proud of the essential services we provide and the important role we play in safety and communication."

Kim Lehrman, CEO
CEC
cecinfo.com

"As integrators, I think we're trying to figure out the implications and potential opportunities we have at this unprecedented moment in our history. There's no playbook on how to deal with the uncertainty that COVID-19 has delivered to us. But we do know that we are not alone. We have found strength in communicating with industry peers across the globe, exchanging ideas together, and providing support for each other. And, to help us navigate and overcome the challenges we face going forward, I think the resources and programs offered by organizations like NSCA are going to be invaluable and critical."

Laurie MacKeigan, President
Backman Vidcom
bvcl.ca



Inside 6 Business TRANSFORMATION JOURNEYS

The 2020 Excellence in Business winners may be different — but they all share success stories on business transformation

2020 EIB panel discussion at the 22nd BLC in Dallas (from left): CTSI's Gino Ruta, AV Solutions' Matt Slack, Constant Technologies' Brad Righi, CEC's Kim Lehrman, Hillman AV Inc.'s Jesse Wintonyk, and HB Communications' Joel Harris.

The six individuals representing the 2020 Excellence in Business (EIB) winners sat on stage during the opening night of NSCA's 22nd annual Business & Leadership Conference (BLC), reflecting different types of integration businesses with varying geographic reaches.

There's something you can learn from each winning company's unique journey:

- **Business Performance:** Corbett Technology Solutions, Inc. (CTSI), Chantilly, VA
- **Customer Experience:** AV Solutions, Baton Rouge, LA
- **Differentiating Strategies:** CEC (Communications Engineering Company), Cedar Rapids, IA
- **Employee Engagement:** HB Communications, North Haven, CT
- **Strategic Transformation:** Constant Technologies, Inc., North Kingstown, RI
- **Talent Development:** Hillman AV Inc., Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada



“It's not just a touchy-feely type of HR where we hope that, by doing these things, something good will happen. We're very intentional about measuring and quantifying the impact.”

— Joel Harris, HB Communications

Improving Company Culture and Measuring Impact

Whether NSCA members choose to acknowledge it or not, many are in the same boat as North Haven, CT-based **HB Communications, Inc.** was after restructuring in 2018. When it took an honest look at its company culture, the company saw areas that needed improvement.

Led by new HR Director Erin Roesler, with support from executive leadership, the company created and implemented strategies to improve company culture. That has traditionally been a murky objective for integration firms. It's difficult to figure out which steps will have impact — and even more difficult to quantify those efforts, which is why many companies leave their culture objectives on the back burner.

For Roesler, however, the business case was clear — and punting on company culture wasn't an option. Upon joining the team in Fall 2018, she noted that HB was struggling with employee turnover and retention rates. “I started to pull some metrics and looked at ways to improve,” she says. “One of the things I wanted to focus on was culture.”

Programs launched to improve company culture at HB Communications include:

- Executive office hours at all locations
- A peer-to-peer recognition program
- Improved internal communication processes
- Bolstering of wellness programs
- Introduction of management training
- Streamlined processes
- A launch of new appreciation events
- A new hiring philosophy

The array of changes is by design because “there's not one answer to complex culture issues,” Roesler says. “It's important to come at it from multiple angles.”

Meanwhile, ROI is tricky when it comes to company culture, which prevents many from taking steps to improve it. For COO Joel Harris, measuring the results was vital. “I'm very bottom-line oriented and fact based,” he told 2020 BLC attendees.

Through a series of employee surveys, HB was able to set baselines for things like employee engagement. “The metrics come from those surveys,” Roesler says.

Indeed, the company saw the impact of its company culture initiatives:

- 5% average increase in overall engagement over the course of six months
- 8% reported increase in teamwork (due to the peer-to-peer recognition program)
- 5% increase in supervisor feedback (due to a streamlined and improved performance feedback process)
- 5% overall satisfaction increase
- Significant reduction in turnover — 14% from 2018 to 2019

“It's very quantified. It's not just a touchy-feely type of HR where we hope that, by doing these things, something good will happen,” Harris said. “We're very intentional about measuring and quantifying the impact.”



“We've been able to pivot into other verticals. The market has just exploded in terms of what every company deems as mission critical.”

— Brad Righi, Constant Technologies

Evolving Customer Needs Trigger Transformation

Constant Technologies Inc. didn't pursue a shift in strategy. Instead, customers dictated that the North Kingstown, RI-based integration company broaden its focus. Then the company demonstrated the nimbleness necessary to open up new markets and transform its business.

Constant Technologies has long been an extremely focused integration firm, carving its niche in mission-critical, 24/7 operations centers. The core of its business is built on being able to understand customers' mission-critical AV needs, designing solutions, and providing ongoing support.

As the mission-critical world rapidly changes, however, the company's focus has had to evolve as well. It's not that customer demand for mission-critical solutions is diminishing; in fact, it's diversifying across vertical markets and showing up in new industries. In other words, it's the definition of “mission critical” that's expanding.

“We've been successful in taking what people thought of as mission critical — like NASA and government installations — and pivoting [toward] what every corporation deems as mission critical now,” said Constant Technologies President Brad Righi at BLC. “Some of the centers we build today are very different [from] what you would think of five or six years ago. We've been able to pivot into other verticals. The market has just exploded in terms of what every company deems as mission critical.”

The company found itself serving clients that fell outside its comfort zone — with different vertical markets, types of customer contacts, timeline expectations, and measures of project success. As a result, the company (winner in the Strategic Transformation category) took a subtle but significant step that positioned it to succeed.

“One of the things we did — which is very atypical of the industry, but very strategic — is eliminate territories,” Righi says. That's partly because Constant Technologies saw demand for new types of mission-critical solutions. “We really wanted to go wide and deep within our existing client base.”

Ultimately, Constant Technologies transformed its business not just by diversifying its customer base, but also by being nimble enough to apply its time-tested approach to new applications without disrupting its successful business model.

2020 Excellence in Product Innovation Winners

The companies recognized for Excellence in Business awards weren't the only winners during NSCA's 22nd annual Business & Leadership Conference. The winners of the sixth annual Excellence in Product Innovation (EPI) awards were also honored. This program recognizes products that have a profound impact on systems integrators.

Learn more about 2020 EPI winners at [NSCA.org](https://www.nasca.org).

2020 EPI winners include:

- **Ease of Customization:** Roland VR-50HD MK II
- **New Revenue Potential:** Da-Lite Parallax® Stratos 1.0
- **Recurring Revenue Potential:** Crestron Flex
- **Retrofit/Installer-Friendly:** FSR Smart-Way Raceway System
- **Technology Platform:** BrightSign BSN.cloud
- **Trail-Blazing Innovation:** Digital Projection INSIGHT 4K HFR 360
- **Overall Grand Prize Winner:** Mersive Technologies Active Learning System



“Organizations want to spend their operating dollars and their people time on what makes them different in their industry.”

– Kim Lehrman, CEC

Bold Sales Strategy Includes Managed Services

CEC saw the integration market changing in a few significant ways, which led to the revamping of its sales strategy, says CEO Kim Lehrman. “Our customers do not want to talk about boxes and connections. They want to talk about solutions and problems they want resolved.”

The company needed a sales structure centered on that premise. “We start with a consultative selling approach where the technology is not even discussed at the front end,” Lehrman says. “It’s really about the pain points an organization is facing. What are they afraid of? What opportunities do they have? Then, based on that — and being a good partner — it’s about identifying technologies that could help with those issues within your organization.”

As such, CEC’s new customer-focused sales strategy reflects several organizational shifts:

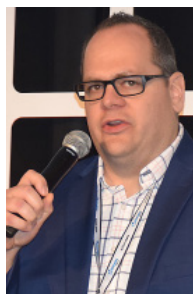
- The company redefined its ideal customer profile to focus on customers who see the most value in working with CEC.
- The sales organization was restructured so all salespeople can sell all solutions within their focused list of about 300 accounts.
- Sales teams underwent intense training with the use of product benefit/feature battle cards, vendor sessions, and biweekly product seminars.
- The company implemented weekly account planning sessions to better align goals and expectations with the focus of adding more value to five accounts each week.

Another significant shift for CEC is its commitment to managed services, which Lehrman says also reflects customers’ evolving needs. “Organizations want to spend their operating dollars and their people time on what makes them different in their industry,” she explains. “The knowledge transfer of what our systems do is not as interesting as it used to be. They don’t want to have that expertise within their organization or put capital expenditures into things that don’t really move their strategy along. With the move to [managed services], we can really partner with them to show them how to use this technology — but they don’t have to have somebody inside managing it for them.”

CEC’s Managed Systems Program (MSP) focuses on the customer experience. Rolled out in early 2020 with a new sales compensation plan to transition away from project-based selling, it includes a built-in refresh cycle so customers can stay current with their technology.

The solution bundle includes a “whole product solution,” Lehrman says. “We provide an expectation of the lifetime use of the system, how it will work with customer service, warranty repair, hardware upgrades, software upgrades, cybersecurity, and more. The buying organization can make a decision about how deep into that system they want us to be. They can add any of the menu items in terms of back-end service into that three- or five-year contract.”

Early returns are extremely positive, with the company seeing significant additional revenue from the program since it allows for better margins and quicker project payments.



“Do we feel that the right outcome was achieved? We have a number of clients who aren’t telling us when there’s a problem; however, a team member will point to a failure we may have fixed — but that shouldn’t have happened in the first place.”

– Matt Slack, AV Solutions

Creating Urgency Around Achieving Client Satisfaction

“Red Status” is a term used by AV Solutions that unites all employees around lofty client satisfaction goals.

It’s not that AV Solutions has a client satisfaction problem. By its constantly monitored metrics, the **Baton Rouge, LA-based integration firm** boasts a 95% client satisfaction rate.

The processes and policies that Founder and President Matt Slack put in place are a big reason for the high satisfaction ratings. Indeed, client satisfaction is a key metric for AV Solutions. The 95% number stems from a weekly client project satisfaction meeting during which the team reviews work in progress.

“At the conclusion of the meeting, each team member is asked to rate client happiness based on their experience from the week before,” explains Chief Marketing Officer Matt Preuett. “Negative and positive client experiences are recorded. From those, a total client satisfaction rating is calculated. The current goal is to keep this rating at 95% each week.”

The figure sounds high, but Slack adds that the system is skewed toward lower scores to preserve a standard of excellence. The culture at AV Solutions encourages employees to be hyper-sensitive to clients’ needs. Those weekly meetings serve as a platform for raising concerns. Team members rate every single client interaction as to whether they believe the client was satisfied. It goes beyond that as well, Slack says. “Do we feel that the right outcome was achieved? We have a number of clients who are not telling us there’s a problem; however, our team member will point to a failure we may have fixed — but that never should’ve happened in the first place. That team member will deem the client with a rating of ‘not thrilled.’”

Another process that creates urgency around client satisfaction is “Red Status.” Essentially, “any AVS team member at any point can nominate a client to be on ‘Red Status’ if they believe the client is having repeated issues,” Preuett explains. “Once this process begins, there is a documented plan of action involving internal team meetings, on-site meetings, standing weekly check-in calls with client, and interviews with users having issues. Until the issues are resolved, AVS leadership keeps the ‘Red Status’ item on their weekly meeting agenda to keep it a top company priority.”

In essence, “Red Status” is a formalized outcome that results from a formalized, tracked process. Having the processes in place is part of the solution; it’s AV Solutions’ culture of extreme focus on customer satisfaction and maintaining a 95% satisfaction rating that allows the process to be successful.



“We can go to a customer and say, ‘You can buy it for \$100,000,’ for example, ‘or you can get it as a service for \$95,000 over three years.’ Then we do an ROI that shows them the cost of support and the cost of capital.”

– Gino Ruta, CTSI

Anatomy of an As-a-Service Strategy

Three or four years ago, CTSI could see that customers were challenged with keeping workplace technology current and reliable — and delays in technology implementation and refresh were often caused by limited capital budgets, restricted resource availability, complex designs, and user experience considerations.

This led to a focus on growing the services side of CTSI’s business. At the time, about 8% or 9% of the company’s business stemmed from post sales or service with warranty coverage and some contracts, says President and CEO Gino Ruta. CTSI sought to elevate service levels and contracts, ultimately moving customers from time and materials to a services contract model.

To address these requirements, CTSI made a few significant moves. It transformed its customer care maintenance and managed services portfolio to deliver two-day support services, which enable proactive support, high availability, reporting, and analytics. These were deemed key steps for shifting customers to as-a-service with a monthly fixed subscription. CTSI launched its Subscription Services offer, enabling customers to subscribe to technology for a monthly as-a-service fee. In doing so, it fundamentally transformed the way its customers consume technology.

The as-a-service solution bundles design, engineering, installation, hardware, software, and CTSI Managed Services. No upfront capital or down payment are required. Customers can refresh or upgrade their systems at any time to keep systems current. CTSI Subscription Services are available in various contract terms.

CTSI provides customers with a total cost of ownership (TCO) calculator and analysis. Ultimately, it reduces ownership risk and expenses, saving the customer between 5% and 12% in capital expenses, according to CTSI. By reducing asset risk and ownership expenses, the integration company allows customers to budget more easily and provides more flexibility to accelerate technology into their business.

“There are other organizations that are delivering a lease and a service contract. I felt that really wasn’t a subscription service,” says Ruta. “It’s a lease and a service contract. I wanted one completely bundled solution with SLAs [service level agreements] on it.”

The cost had to make sense for the customer, too. “I wanted it to be cheaper than buying it for three years,” Ruta explains. “So we can go to a customer and say, ‘You can buy it for \$100,000,’ for example, ‘or you can get it as a service for \$95,000 over three years.’ Then we do an ROI that shows them the cost of support and the cost of capital.”

The rollout was an extremely ambitious undertaking, Ruta says. “We had to put legal agreements in place and understand the financial impact to us and the customer. It took the better part of a year to get that done. We rolled out at the end of 2018 with subscription services.”

Don’t underestimate the legal work, Ruta advises. “Having the wherewithal financially to pull it off is also a big hurdle,” he says.

CTSI Subscription Services have been in high demand in various verticals — healthcare, K-12, higher education, and corporate, for example — “with very significant corporations and institutions,” Ruta says. “We think it’s just getting rolling for us.”



Hillman AV technician training program participants “start as green installers and get their micro credentials through AVIXA before learning more broad, career-oriented skills.”

– Jesse Wintonyk, Hillman AV Inc.

Training Program Presents Sense of Purpose

Jarrold Hillman, president and owner of Hillman AV Inc., can relate to the countless young professionals who began careers in the integration industry . . . and then drift away. Many of those who remain just sort of end up here. That scenario doesn’t illustrate a compelling career path toward a dream job.

“I’ve been talking for quite a few years about the concept of people just ending up in the industry,” Hillman says. “I’m fairly young myself, and I didn’t grow up dreaming of becoming an AV technician or president.”

Since Hillman finds himself in that leadership position, he sought to create goal-oriented career paths for his team. There are “dream jobs” in the integration market — and at Hillman AV.

It starts with recognizing that those who “just end up” in the industry may lack direction or purpose, so Hillman AV put together a comprehensive training plan specifically for field technicians. “We designed it similarly to an apprenticeship format that is completed over a number of years with pay and responsibility increasing as each milestone and level is reached,” Hillman says.

Career structure is a critical element. The problem? “There is typically no route” in the integration market, Hillman says. Electricians, he points out, often go through apprenticeship programs, doing so with an end goal in mind. Young professionals often lack that groundwork. “They get the job, they make the money, and then they find something they think is better because it seems to give them a bit more purpose,” he says. “That’s why this industry probably has retention problems.”

Jesse Wintonyk, project manager for Hillman AV, told the BLC crowd that one aspect separating the company’s apprenticeship program is that it goes beyond integration. “They start as green installers and get their micro credentials through AVIXA,” he says; however, they also study things like ladder safety and first aid.

Hillman AV’s program is personalized. Personal booklets are made for each technician, designed to provide individualized motivation. “Inside, we compiled a list of industry sessions — online, in-person, and on-the-job training styles,” Hillman says. “This has given our technicians a sense of direction and achievement as they make their way through the process. To align the business with this, we look at growth as an opportunity to elevate each of our employees in sync with the growth of the company. This generated a team effort and understanding of why achieving milestones and targets were not just financially beneficial, but also personally beneficial to individual growth.” 🍌

Find expanded articles about each 2020 EIB winner at [NSCA.org](https://www.nscs.org).

7 Business Continuity Tips

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the importance of tried-and-true business continuity fundamentals. Here's a review of what we've been discussing with NSCA members. *By Chuck Wilson*

The term “business continuity” was thrust into the integration industry’s lexicon in early 2020, along with other unsavory words like “pandemic” and “force majeure.” Our members, along with the rest of the world, got a stunning reminder amid the COVID-19 pandemic of how vulnerable we really are.

Reality set in quickly. During NSCA’s 22nd annual Business & Leadership Conference, held on Feb. 26-28 in Texas, the industry outlook was extremely strong as we discussed growing market opportunities. Within a week or two, however, NSCA members found themselves dealing with halted revenue streams and making unenviable business leadership decisions.

During this time, NSCA’s role has intensified as we help integrators and manufacturers make nearly impossible choices to survive. We provide resources, advice, and whatever else the industry needs to run businesses successfully.

Over the past few months (or longer), NSCA has dedicated the bulk of its time to fielding phone calls from members as we try to help in any way we can. We also create and compile business continuity content for a website **landing page** that offers vetted and reliable business resources and advice to help everyone *stay in business*.

One big takeaway we hope the NSCA community retains: Business continuity *shouldn’t* be entirely reactionary. Integration firm leaders should rely on business continuity fundamentals to provide guidance through challenging times. The NSCA community takes pride in sound business practices, which include learning from rough stretches and seizing opportunities for improvement. With that in mind, here are seven business continuity tips we frequently share with members.

1. Leaders Should Over-Communicate

During this pandemic, we hear from respected integration company leaders about policies of communicating every day to keep employees updated. In many cases, they do so even when they *don’t* have concrete updates; employees crave communication from leadership.

We advise sending out a daily communication or using huddles as a platform for messaging. Employees need to know that the best way to keep their jobs is to continue doing them. Rather than giving orders that may create angst or panic, messages should reinforce the core values that drive the decisions you make.

2. Focus on Liquidity and Cashflow

Right now, the “cash-is-king” adage is even more accurate. Cash reserves, available financial resources, and a solid line of credit are priorities. Part of a business continuity plan includes a focus on the cash side of the business. Review all monthly non-essential expenses. An example of this in the context of the COVID-19 crisis is the need to define what “non-essential” means; articulate it throughout the company. Involve your entire employee base in finding ways to earn revenue and save money.

NSCA’s role intensifies during the COVID-19 crisis as we help integrators and manufacturers make nearly impossible choices.

As COVID-19 spreads, many NSCA members have been caught off guard — realizing they needed to quickly establish business continuity fundamentals. Savvy leaders now say they’ll be ready for whatever happens next.

3. Don’t Rush into Layoffs

When the COVID-19 crisis initially hit, it put many integration firms against the ropes. Our advice: *Try* not to panic. (This was before the passage of the CARES Act.) We knew there was a good chance that potential government aid would become available — but that companies may render themselves ineligible by laying off payroll before applying. Explore *all* options and variables before laying off employees.

4. Understanding Force Majeure

“Force majeure” is a contract clause or provision that excuses a party from performing its contractual obligations if it becomes impossible or impractical due to an event or impact the parties couldn’t have anticipated or controlled. You can verify suspension of liquidated damages based on force majeure. To preserve revenue streams, it’s important to study this concept and use it as hotels and many other industries do.



5. Find Small Wins

Report on small wins as you present what's happening. Don't sugarcoat, but balance one negative with several positives. Celebrate small wins as they happen. If you have a negative message to share, then mention it first — and follow up with what's being done to address it.

6. Set New Projections

It's important to see the big picture. For many NSCA members, times have been so good that we don't remember the bad times. A new reality — whether from COVID-19 or another business challenge — dictates that we establish new goals and strategies for achieving them. NSCA members have been running hard during this decade (or longer) of unprecedented global expansion.

During times of great challenge, it's important to report on small wins as you present what's happening. Don't sugarcoat, but balance one negative with several positives.

Challenging times can be leveraged to educate yourself, train your people, clean up, and catch up. Participate in webinars and training you've put off. Focus on and improve the handful of processes that drive customer and employee experiences. It's time to spring clean all aspects of the business. Look for ways to strip out needless activities and costs, making everyone's jobs easier and saving money.

Conduct several projections of what 12 months of reduced expenses look like with only nine or 10 months of anticipated gross profit. Or paint even worse scenarios. You need to know your sustainability factor. Implement those steps as soon as you get a clearer picture of the outlook.

7. Think Twice About Using Personal Assets to Backstop the Business

This is a difficult decision for owners and investors. When the ability to make payroll comes into question, it becomes an option on the table. The goal is to stay in business. When considering propping up the business with additional debt or personal investments, consider other options as well. One option we recommend is to turn to NSCA to help you run scenarios to guide you to a decision that's right for your company.

The No. 1 Rule of Business: Stay in Business

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the advice and resources NSCA have provided has been driven by this principle: The No. 1 rule of business is to stay in business. We hope these business continuity fundamentals will help NSCA member companies keep their lights on — whether it's through this pandemic or any macro or micro business challenges we face.

Chuck Wilson is executive director of NSCA. Contact him at cwilson@nsca.org.

How to Avoid M&A Failure

Due diligence, including the process of identifying red flags, is vital to merger and acquisition (M&A) success.

The first quarter of 2020 — particularly before the COVID-19 pandemic escalated — saw a steady stream of merger and acquisition (M&A) activity. From headline-grabbing mergers, such as AVI-SPL and Whitlock, and high-profile acquisitions (like Diversified purchasing Sensory Technologies) to more under-the-radar comminglings, NSCA member companies consolidated at an unprecedented rate. In 2019, for example, 30 NSCA member companies were acquired.

As the economy (and our industry) emerges from the coronavirus cloud and regains traction, we expect the M&A activity to continue. As always, NSCA recommends a pragmatic approach to strategic decision-making. While most recent NSCA M&A moves can be categorized as successful, some have not been. There are common red flags that integration firms should look for during their due diligence processes to minimize M&A risk.

M&A Red Flags

CULTURAL GAP Questionable Gut Feeling

Better Employee Benefits

VASTLY DIFFERENT CASHFLOW

Weak Leadership on the Ground

Expectation of (and Need for) Immediate Growth

Labor Issues

Lack of Accountability

Bad Margins



Mergers & Acquisitions: Don't Grow Your Business into the Ground NSCA



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MORE BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Visit NSCA's Business Continuity landing page for a full slate of content aimed at keeping your business going through challenging times.

NSCA CAN HELP

Learn from other NSCA members. We've gathered lessons learned from NSCA members' M&A success stories and failures. Download *Mergers & Acquisitions: Don't Grow Your Business into the Ground* to learn which steps to take and which missteps to avoid as you conduct your M&A due diligence. Download it at NSCA.org/research.

40 Ways NSCA Helps Companies



During the 22nd annual BLC, February 26-28, NSCA began a year long recognition of 40 years by unveiling this logo.

NSCA celebrates its 40th anniversary by sharing 40 ways we help integration companies run their businesses better every day.

This year, NSCA is marking its 40th year as a trade organization that serves the integration market. That milestone isn't likely top of mind for NSCA members who have struggled through the exceptional challenges of 2020 and relied on NSCA resources to battle through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We think the best way to recognize our 40th anniversary is to celebrate 40 specific ways NSCA helps integrators every day. "We're celebrating it our way," says Chuck Wilson, NSCA executive director.

With that in mind, here's a reminder of 40 ways NSCA is here to help you.

1. Optimizing Business Performance
NSCA provides tools to streamline operations, set better billing rates, and make the most of manpower — to name only a few tools we offer for member companies.

2. Providing Accurate Employee Compensation Data
NSCA's *Compensation & Benefits Report* helps you make informed decisions about salaries and benefits.

3. Reducing Risk
NSCA helps member companies understand compliance so they can avoid costly missteps.

4. Doing Things the Right Way
We demonstrate our core values in everything we do. We maintain a strict code of ethics. And we take great pride in representing our members through leadership and advocacy.

Master Video Systems (MVS) needed *industry-specific guidance* on job descriptions and payment structures so it could be competitive. In NSCA's *Essentials Online Library*, the company discovered sales plans, organizational staffing information, and the *Compensation & Benefits Report*.

Bogen Communications bulked up *specific vertical market focuses* after diving into the *Electronic Systems Outlook*.

5. Providing Financial Benchmarking
NSCA's *Financial Analysis of the Industry Report* identifies potential areas of overspending so you can cut costs.

6. Offering Much-Needed Templates
With over 650 industry-standard documents in our *Essentials Online Library*, NSCA takes the guesswork out of all the forms, templates, and contracts integrators need to know, have, and use.

7. Conducting Market Forecasts
NSCA's bi-annual *Electronic Systems Outlook* predicts vertical market and technology performance so you can better focus sales efforts and get more projects in the pipeline.

8. Helping You Weather the M&A Climate
Our *Mergers & Acquisitions* white paper and checklists offer advice and cautionary tales for those looking to dip their toes into merger and acquisition activity.

9. Advising on Succession Planning
As company leaders move to the next chapter of their lives, NSCA will help you confidently build transition strategies.

10. Saving You Money
By reducing your professional services expenses through identifying tax credits, streamlining benefits, and more, NSCA saves money for member companies.

11. Hosting You at Our Business & Leadership Conference
No product demonstrations. Very little tech talk. Your business challenges are at the forefront of this annual event, designed to help you run your business better.

12. Reading the Industry Tea Leaves
We constantly observe the industry landscape from a vantage point that allows for swift action. When customer demands shift, we make sure you are aware and prepared to evolve.

13. Boosting Your Revenue
Bottom-line revenue isn't everything. Optimize profit margins by using our resources and tools.

14. Being Your Business Transformation Partner
NSCA helps you understand and navigate industry shifts, such as managed services. NSCA members never have to go through a business transformation alone.

15. Helping You Understand What to Charge
Tools such as NSCA's *Labor Installation Standard* guidelines assist you with job costing and accurately estimating projects.

Evco Sound & Electronics needed an insurance provider with knowledge of the integration market. It turned to TrueNorth, an NSCA Business Accelerator, and found that not only did they understand the industry and its carriers, but their quotes saved the company 15%.

Simpatico needed to better understand loaded labor costs and turned to the *Labor Installation Standard* guidelines to discover how much labor and effort it takes to complete different tasks.

16. Collaborating with an Incredible Network
Members benefit from the relationships we build with adjacent industries to foster better collaboration. Plus, we are matchmakers who have immediate access to the finest systems integration firms, giving you access to like-minded, non-competitive partners for remote projects.

17. Helping You Recognize Impactful Regulations
Through tools like our constantly updated *Interactive Legislative Map* and *Legislative Alerts* emails, we make sure proposed laws on licensing, prevailing wage, and labor issues are on your radar — and keep you updated about any changes that may impact the way you do business.

18. Being Dedicated to the Channel
Our focus is 100% on you, the integration community. We protect and defend your company by advocating for systems professionals and our channel.

19. Offering Continuous Thought Leadership
Through our *committees and councils*, we keep our finger on the pulse of the industry. Our content, including monthly webinars, offers pragmatic positions on business issues you may be facing.

20. Improving Your Project Profitability
Is it worth it or not? Enter scenarios in NSCA's **Project Contribution Simulator** to find out how a project will impact your organization.

21. Evaluating Candidates' Technical Knowledge
Use NSCA's **Technical Assessment Tool** to gauge the proficiency of technicians and installers before you hire them. (Also great for your existing team.)

22. Helping You Hire Next-Gen Talent
NSCA Education Foundation's **Ignite program** is the answer to our industry's exasperating struggle to make qualified, young candidates aware of career opportunities.

23. Reimagining Your Business Model
To help you keep up with new business models, services revenue, and changing customer needs, we crafted an annual event, **Pivot to Profit**, which provides you with a step-by-step approach to transform your organization so you can keep up — and even get ahead.

24. Fighting Alongside You
You're not alone when local, state, and federal regulations threaten your profitability or right to work. NSCA organizes the industry against legal threats and advocates on your behalf.

25. Giving It to You Straight
We help integrators identify and remove constraints from their business that impede growth or profits: sales compensation structures, pricing policies, and project management shortcomings, to name a few.

26. Offering an Industry-Specific Job Board
Our research shows that most NSCA member companies have open positions. **Post jobs** on **IgniteYourCareer.org** to reach candidates already learning about great careers in integration.

27. Being a Phone Call Away
No member company is too small. Learn to better manage the business challenges of running an integration firm by spending one-on-one time with NSCA leaders.

Inteconnex worked with NSCA Business Accelerator GreatAmerica to create financing services and improve cashflow.



28. Providing Access to Trusted Advisors
NSCA will connect you with vetted partners through our **Business Accelerators** and **Member Advisory Councilmembers** — addressing marketing, sales, tax credits, ERP, discounts, and more.

29. Training Your New Employees
NSCA's **Certificate as a Systems Integration Professional (C-SIP)** program helps you get new employees started on the right foot with industry- and job-specific online training.

30. Giving Back to Our Industry
The **NSCA Education Foundation** advances educational opportunities by providing scholarships and awards to assist existing professionals and those pursuing careers in our industry.

31. Helping You Manage Inventory
NSCA's **StockroomExchange.com** is a centralized, online resource that integration firms can use to sell parts they no longer need to other integrators that do need them.

32. Providing Product Development Input
NSCA leverages strong relationships with our manufacturer partners to help them understand the solutions our integrator members need.

33. Helping You Make Schools Safer
Security Industry Association and NSCA's **Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS)** lays out best practices for securing school facilities, vetted extensively by experts across the education, public safety, and industry sectors. Adding further credibility, the PASS program was recently included on the U.S. federal government's **SchoolSafety.gov** as a recommended resource for developing and implementing plans for physical security in schools.

34. Helping You Recruit
NSCA Education Foundation's **Ignite** is much more than an internship program. It helps you educate your community — high schools, technical schools, employment fairs — about our great industry with PowerPoints, brochures, and more.

35. Paying It Forward with Us
You work hard and you deserve a little fun. NSCA organizes and hosts golf outings and concerts to raise money for our Education Foundation. These funds benefit **Ignite**, **Randy Vaughan Founder's Award** scholarships, and more.

36. Working for You — Our Members
We respect your privacy and strive to earn your trust.

37. Implementing Strategic Plans
Through one-on-one coaching and customized advice, NSCA helps you create goals and implement strategic plans so you know where your business is headed — and what you need to do to get there.

38. Improving Employee Morale
Creating and maintaining a positive corporate culture helps you recruit and maintain top talent. Our tools and resources help you shape an environment that employees love being part of.

39. Enhancing Specific Departments
Whether you want to redesign your project management department, help your sales team get to the next level, rethink your HR practices, or assist your marketing team in making the most of its limited resources, NSCA has connections to in-house and third-party experts to help every corner of your business excel.

40. Being Good Listeners
When times are tough for an NSCA member, we're there to help. When times are triumphant for an NSCA member, we're there to celebrate.

Integration company **PCD** leaned on **Nadim Sawaya of Enterprise Performance Consulting** through NSCA's **Member Advisory Council** to conduct a two-day session on setting project milestones, containing costs, managing labor, and understanding a project's full scope of work. The impact has led to better KPIs.

Focus on the Next 40 Years
We choose to recognize our past and appreciate the efforts of so many industry pioneers — but we're also celebrating what we offer members now and into the future. "We're thrilled about the capabilities we have today to help integration companies," Wilson says. "We're excited about the future and how bright it is."

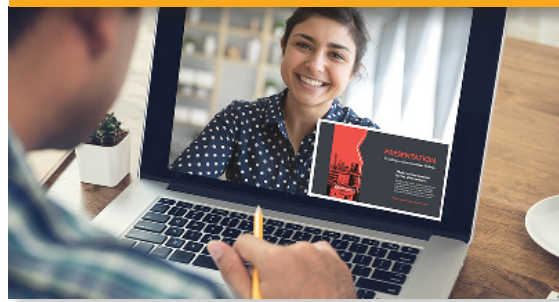
Certainly, there are business barriers. "We find ways to get over those barriers," he says. "We have the types of members who are true winners. We provide resources to help them, but it's this network, this community, and the relationships we build that will create excitement for the next 40 years." 📌

By the way: There are a lot more than 40 ways NSCA helps members. But, hey — it's our 40th anniversary. We'll list 80 for our 80th anniversary!



The Latest from NSCA's Solution Provider Members

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



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Tips for Video Conferencing

Like many these days, video conferencing has replaced nearly all face-to-face interactions. This paradigm shift comes with a variety of challenges, all focused around a single goal — how to communicate effectively. While virtually all computers can accommodate video conferencing natively utilizing onboard video cameras and audio, how *effectively* can they do it?

Here are some basic video conferencing solutions that can enhance your experience:

- **Microphones** — The microphone in your laptop is effective at picking up the sounds closest to it, which include both your voice *and* the sounds of your keyboard. A professional Vaddio microphone can be placed away from your keyboard so only your voice is heard — even if you stand up or walk around while speaking.
- **Video** — Web cams have limited quality, compounded by the fact that you may not have great lighting, especially when working from home. Higher quality cameras provide much better video, in addition to allowing you to place it at eye level. Vaddio cameras with PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) capabilities also allow you to show whiteboards with the ability to zoom in to the important content, clearly (nothing is worse than blurry words!).
- **Cablings** — C2G cables provide the solutions to your connectivity challenges, regardless of connector type or cable length.
- **Monitor Mounts** — Chief provides the solutions to handle any monitor mounting needs you have.
- **Power** — Desktop power solutions from Wiremold neatly address all laptop, screen and device power needs.

For more information on professional grade videoconferencing solutions [watch this video](#) and download this system diagram.

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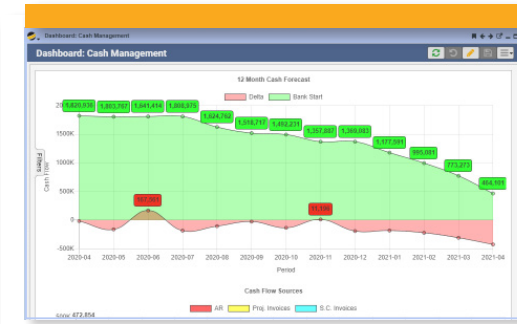
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Solutions360

Exploring Solutions360's Many Resources for NSCA Members

Many of the integrators we speak with are taking the opportunity of working from home, to focus on continuous improvement. This is a good time to catch up on all those things we wanted to do, but never had the time, because we were too busy.

Handpicked resources to help you be better than you were before:

- **Job Costing** — Q360 makes it easier than ever for integrators to develop accurate estimates. The NSCA Labor Installation Standard Guide is integrated with Solutions360, and their data is fully searchable within Q360 software.
- **Recurring Revenue by the Numbers** — What does recurring revenue mean when it comes to revenue recognition, cash flow, invoicing, administrative overhead, and forecasting? Brad Dempsey of Solutions360 explores the financial side of supporting recurring revenue.
- **How to Bring Your AVaaS Offer to Market** — What are the four steps you need to follow in order to bring your AVaaS offering to market? Ian Pugh of GreatAmerica and John Graham of Solutions360 walk you through each phase, sharing tips to help shape your story, gain buy-in, and outline plan specifics.
- **The Day of Revenue Reckoning Is Coming** — There are no quick and simple answers to the new revenue recognition standards. In this webinar, Brad Dempsey of Solutions360, and Eric Morris of Wayne Automatic, discuss the most pertinent questions to ask, and terms you need to communicate to your accounting firms.

If you would like to learn more, contact John Graham, Executive Vice President, Solutions360 jgraham@solutions360.com.

solutions360.com/request-a-demo-nsca/

legrand | AV

Legrand | AV

Legrand | AV Adds Online Training

Legrand | AV is ramping up its online training offering with new courses for RU credits, a partnership with AVIXA, and a new portal on the website for finding your next course — coming soon (as of press time)! Better known as AVU, Legrand | AV's online university is a one-stop shop for a wide variety of course options including: what's emerging in the AV industry, what you need to know about the intersection of AV and IT, plus installation how-to videos and troubleshooting tips and tricks. There's even a course demystifying the AV/IT lingo that trips people up the most.

All courses are free and many offer AVIXA CTS renewal credits. Legrand | AV prides itself on having the widest breadth of courses on both products and relevant topics in our industry. The best part is that the courses are available all the time, day and night; just pick your course and learn on your own time, at your own pace. Follow Legrand | AV on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn for updates on course offerings.

legrandav.com/training

AVer

Modern Meeting Space

AVer Information is focused on creating innovative and seamless collaboration technologies for the modern meeting space. AVer's CAM520 PRO, CAM540 and VB342+ are certified for Microsoft Teams and Skype for Business and all AVer's USB video conferencing products are Zoom certified. AVer is working hard to launch some new groundbreaking products including the all-in-one VB350 sound bar with Android OS. Additionally, we will be launching a partner portal where partners can easily submit deal registrations, access sales tools, marketing resources, co-branded templates, technical updates, new product announcements, support and much more. Contact an AVer representative for more information.

averusa.com/products/conference-camera

AtlasIED

More Online Training and Key Personnel

Due to increased demand, AtlasIED is continuously developing and adding new online/webinar training. Most offer AVIXA RU and BICSI CEC credits and are offered regularly.

AtlasIED announced the availability of the M1000A35. Complementing AtlasIED's best-selling sound masking speaker, the M1000, the new active/powered M1000A35 supports an efficient, economical, and self-contained sound masking system.

AtlasIED announced ASR Enterprises as a new manufacturer's rep firm for the Mid-Atlantic region, effective April 1.

Please join AtlasIED in welcoming Melissa Valenti as our new National Accounts Distribution Manager. Melissa has an extensive background in distribution business development. She can be reached at melissa.valenti@atlasied.com.


atlasied.com

BTX Technologies

Huddly Go | 34% Price Drop

BTX is pleased to announce a deep price drop on the versatile Huddly GO home office USB camera. Huddly is streamlining all of their GO products into a single SKU that can transform any home office into a professional video conference setup. The Huddly GO is now available for \$532 \$349. Dealer margins remain intact. Huddly GO's 150-degree wide-angle lens lets you capture your environment in crisp, immersive detail. Huddly's technology auto-adjusts to the harshest lighting conditions, ensuring you're always looking your best.

info.btx.com/huddly-home



Legrand | AV

Getting Started with Live Streaming
 Now that live streaming has become the new normal, especially for distance learning and online training, it's more important than ever to do it as effectively as possible. The biggest challenge now is, how do we do this from home?

Before we discuss equipment solutions for successfully live streaming your distance learning or online training, it's important to consider a basic question — how can instructors keep their students/participants engaged?

Here are some basic video conferencing solutions that can enhance your experience:

- **Using professional video & audio** — PTZ cameras paired with professional audio provide a much better experience than webcams and laptop audio.
- **Keep it lively** — Presenter movement and tools such as whiteboards and flip charts enhance the experience and keep viewers engaged.
- **Camera placement** — Keep the camera at eye level and speak directly into the camera lens as if you were having a real in-person, face-to-face conversation. This will create a more personal connection.

With Legrand | AV and the breadth of products, we can create multiple solutions to make your live streaming setup easy and engaging.

To learn how to create a system that can help enhance your live streaming, [download the system diagram](#) and watch this [video](#).

legrandav.com

HELLO NSCA SOLUTION PROVIDERS!

Want to communicate directly with NSCA member companies or optimize your platform? Contact NSCA Channel Partner Manager Max Johnson at mjohnson@nsca.org or 319.861.8629.

Sonance

IPOINT Completes iPad Deployments

Business is driven by Apps, and alongside this trend, iPad deployments have now become a necessity. The optimal solution for iPad deployments in business is the combination of the iPad, applications, and the method to hold, charge, and protect the device. IPOINT products complete the iPad, ensuring it is always charged, protected, and accessible... for any vertical market.

From connecting your clients to their hospitality customers and staff, the moment a guest walks through the door, to solving your client's lobby check-in, conference room signage and conference room control needs in a corporate headquarters, there's no end to where an iPad can create business opportunities.

iportproducts.com/for-business

NEC Display Solutions

NEC Offers a Clear Message

When robust communication tools are urgently needed, NEC Display Solutions can help support your efforts when and where you need them. Whether it's emergency alerts, mass communications, retail messaging or simple instructions, we can provide quick and easy solutions to get your message out and to the right audience quickly.

necdisplay.com


AV Design Labs

Improve Processes with Design-as-a-Service

Taking the service-as-a-subscription model one step further, AV Design Labs adds SKETCHUP™ and REVIT™ rendering services to their existing portfolio of services.

With an approach to partner and extend an AV Integrator's existing audio visual VISIO™ or AUTOCAD™ drafting, pre-sales engineering & programming resources to meet the seasonal requirements of the business that most integrators like about working with AV Design Labs, the addition of this service provides integrators access to a resource that they can use on an as-needed basis from AV Design Labs as part of their subscription service.

avdesignlabs.com



Realize the Promise of Technology™

Ingram Micro


How Ingram Micro Helps Integration Companies
 Ingram Micro continues to help pro AV business partners grow their businesses by leveraging our Extensive Line Card, Flexible Payment Solutions and Design Services. With access to our complete technology solutions portfolio our partners receive end-to-end support.

Our customizable Financial Solutions offer a variety of payment options and unmatched credit opportunities. Ingram Micro can help you convert price into payments to help you sell more technology.

Our 250+ certified experts along with our Design Services Team can answer in-depth questions about products, design, compatibility, and more. We are available to help with any solution and will work with you every step of the way.

As the industry looks ahead to future projects that may have been delayed, and/or innovative projects for explosive verticals such as healthcare, gaming and education; Ingram Micro is ready to help. If you are interested in learning more, we invite you to reach out to us ProAV@IngramMicro.com.

imagine.next.ingrammicro.com/it-solution-provider/technology/proav-digital-signage



Winsted
 Control Room Credenzas

Learn About Winsted Paramount Technology Credenzas
 Winsted's NEW Paramount Technology Credenzas are designed to organize and protect your electronics. Paramount is an elegant, functional solution that integrates nicely into any boardroom, conference room, control room or any other high-tech space. These versatile credenzas are modular, reconfigurable and expandable to meet changing technology needs today and tomorrow. The standard one-, two- and three-bay credenzas can be combined to create larger configurations.

Paramount Technology Credenzas Feature:

- High-Pressure Laminate Top Panel with Durable Rubber Edge
- Optional Versa-Trak Monitor Mounting System
- Front and Rear 14U Tapped Rack Rails in Each Bay
- Optional 11U Pullout/Swivel Rack
- Vented Base Allows for Optional 3" Casters and 120mm Fans
- Top Includes Six 50mm Fans and Cable Management Throughout
- Rear Panel Included — Optional Locking Front Doors Available
- Black Laminated Side Panels or Optional Steel Side Panels

winsted.com

Jeron

Learn About Jeron Provider® 700 Nurse Call System

Jeron Electronic Systems, Inc. manufactures and designs integrated healthcare communication solutions including alerting, notifications, and staff efficiencies in a variety of facilities. Jeron continues to expand the functionality and scalability of their multiple Nurse Call platforms to meet the evolving needs of their customers. With the recent introduction of the Provider® 700 Nurse Call System to the market, Jeron has expanded their reach into sub-acute facilities. Jeron's continued dedication gives their end-users flexible and scalable options for current and future facilities. As a U.S. based manufacturer, and during crisis situations, Jeron Nurse Call Systems can be ready-to-ship the next day.

jeron.com

System Surveyor

Streamline System Design and More

System Surveyor: a mobile, SaaS-based platform that streamlines system design, installation, and maintenance. Whether on site or remote, systems integrators visually collaborate with customers, gathering all system requirements. Extended teams then can collaborate on the digital design in one system of record, making the entire process easier, faster, and more accurate. Benefits: increased sales, higher customer satisfaction rates, quicker project completion times, enhanced long-term service levels. System Surveyor continues to innovate and recently added: Camera Advisor, Google Earth integration, and an expanded product catalog. Free trial available for NSCA members for 21 days for 5 team members!

systemsurveyor.com

System Surveyor

Free Trial of Intelligent System Design Software

System Surveyor provides Intelligent System Design Software that enables everyone involved in system design, installation, and maintenance to collaborate on an unprecedented scale. Working together, professionals can better plan and manage the systems organizations rely on every day: video surveillance, access control, fire alarm, IT, building automation, AV, healthcare, and more. From system integrators to end customers to subcontractors, the benefits are increased sales, faster project completions, higher satisfaction, and enhanced long-term service levels. Try all features and collaboration of the product for free with a 5-person team for up to 21 days.

systemsurveyor.com



Culture as Strategy

(Even in a Crisis)

The challenges of tackling the COVID-19 crisis have reframed the importance of building a healthy company culture.

By Dannie Diego
Strategic Alliances Manager, Insperty

Before the COVID-19 pandemic shook the global economy, American workplaces had changed dramatically from earlier times. Younger generations were reshaping employee expectations about employers and workplace culture.

Attracting and retaining top talent were a challenge, even for big-name companies.

Yet, it would be a mistake to assume that rising unemployment will now trigger a return to old ways of managing people — or to assume that managers and business leaders can mostly ignore the work of tending their workplace cultures.

Perhaps more than ever, it's vital to take your company's culture seriously.

That's because how you treat your people — before, during, and after a crisis — is about more than doing the right thing. It's actually a competitive, forward-thinking business strategy.

Why Culture Still Counts

If you grew up playing a sport or have a favorite team you've watched over several seasons, you have some idea of how having a good coach, the right equipment, and attractive venues can make players want to perform optimally.

Similarly, you've likely heard stories about how a collegiate-level sports team's exceptional year generated an uptick not only in top-notch recruits, but also in undergraduate applications made to the college itself.

It makes sense, right? People want to align themselves personally with and perform well professionally in places where there's an air of dignity, a winning mindset, and ample resources.

In the workplace, that's as true for attracting great job candidates as it is for retaining valuable current employees. Which is why, once the dust settles from the pandemic and current economic crisis, businesses that have been consistent in caring well for their people may be more apt to come out ahead. They may be better poised to benefit from the loyalty, commitment, and passion they've nurtured in their employees.

Plus, once the economy fully rebounds, they'll be less likely to find themselves scrambling to replace employees who jump ship in pursuit of more attractive options.

And that's why culture still counts.

Because your employees matter — in the middle of a crisis and years after it's over.

Culture: More than a Cornerstone

Contrary to popular opinion, workplace culture is about more than having the right snacks in the breakroom to attract junior employees.

Culture impacts performance, attraction, retention, and turnover rates.

And those things? They help shape culture. It's a symbiotic relationship, one rooted best with a strong HR strategy.

Imagine your culture as a building. Your mission, vision, and values form the foundation. Your organizational structure, policies, and procedures form the framing. The bricks or stones in your building? They represent everything else, including how you manage:

- Conflict
- Power and decision-making
- Job titles
- Pay structure
- Onboarding
- Payroll and timekeeping
- Promotions
- Communications
- Meeting management
- Celebrations

From operational decisions to when and where you celebrate key milestones for employees and your business, everything you do in your business shapes your culture. And, yes, that includes the look and feel of your storefront, office, logo, and website.

Meanwhile, just as buildings have inspectors to spot problems, there are federal, state, and local HR laws to ensure your workplace culture is safe for your employees. Staying compliant is critical not only to minimize risks, but also to ensure that your company stays strong and solid moving forward.

The Influencers

Managers, team leaders, corporate executives, small business owners — what do they all have in common? The power to shape their respective workplaces.

As much as culture can be felt through processes and the physical (or virtual) workspace, people's behaviors have a powerful impact on a culture. And that impact is felt by employees and customers alike.

Think of a brand you know and love. Maybe it's an airline, a clothing company, or a tech giant. Do they have great style, a fun media presence — maybe a can-do spirit? Is it as if the company has its own . . . personality? How does that impact your impression of it? Most importantly, does it make you want to give them your business, your money, your loyalty?

Now consider: What's your company's personality? Does it reflect your mission, vision, values, and goals? And who shapes that personality?

Yes, leaders shape personality. That's true.

But so, too, do other employees — from janitors all the way up to C-suite administrative assistants. They do this through their interactions with one another, with clients — even with friends, family, and strangers when they talk about their work in casual conversations or online.

A good, strong, multi-faceted HR strategy helps shore up those interactions while ensuring that engagement, processes, and procedures are functioning smoothly. Always, of course, while keeping a close eye on HR compliance.

Once the dust settles from the pandemic and current economic crisis, businesses that have been consistent in caring well for their people may be more apt to come out ahead.

The Takeaway

Invest the effort in building a solid, fully HR-compliant workplace culture, and your current employees may be more inclined to lean in with you a little harder when times are tough. Even better, you also may also see those positive cultural attributes — and your business' reputation as a great place to work — attract more top-flight employees.

Together, these people — *your* people — can help your company move forward confidently, long after the current pandemic is over.

WANT MORE?

Visit insperty.com/nsca for more useful HR tips and guidance that can help your business stay rock solid for years to come.





Matt Preuett
AV Solutions

avsolutions.com
Baton Rouge, LA

Chief Marketing Officer
@avsolutionsbr on Twitter

“There are many paths to take in this industry. It’s important to choose the one you can offer the most value in — and then make damn sure your market knows it.”

Q: What unique capabilities and perspectives do you bring to your role?

While this is my first major role in the integration world, I believe my B2B background in business development and marketing transitions well to how we’re actively pursuing new customers. Having operated my own marketing consulting firm, I am energized by finding answers to new problems in strategic ways. This industry certainly has no shortage of unique challenges and changes, which keeps us on our toes!

Q: What do you like about the integration market?

Having spent my career in communications roles, I can attest to the importance of the integration market. For me, the most interesting part of this industry is the effect it has on every workday. Needs drive technology, which drives decisions, which drive habits, which drive cultural shifts. I find it fascinating how you can almost see where the river of innovation starts, and then watch as it winds through changes and industries while the underlying current (end-user needs) stays virtually the same.

Q: What challenges do you recognize for companies in the integration market?

While I certainly do not have the tenure to speak to this question as well as my contemporaries, I believe that identity and perception are great challenges for integrators, especially in smaller markets. I’m a firm believer that differentiation in the eyes of the customer is key to winning and growing a business. With the advancements in easy-to-use or perceived DIY technology, integrators need to dig deep to communicate why they are an integral part of a customer’s success. There are many paths to take in this industry. It’s important to choose the one you can offer the most value in — and then make damn sure your market knows it.

Q: What do you value about being an NSCA member?

Resources. Content. Voice. NSCA has allowed me to accelerate my education and knowledge of the industry. The opportunities it grants members are valuable for building expertise, relationships, and reputation. I now have a reliable source of information concerning changes in the industry that could affect our business and customers. NSCA’s stamp of approval provides credibility that helps us stand out from the crowd.

Q: Which NSCA resource do you find most valuable and why?

I think the most valuable part of NSCA is the people. NSCA staff and members have been a great connection for answering questions, collecting data, and brainstorming. It’s easy to work in our own little silos and make assumptions about the outside world. We all think we’re unique. It’s another thing when you can speak with a peer in a different market who is going through the same exact challenges you are. NSCA provides this important connection.

Q: If you could give one piece of advice to your industry colleagues, what would that be?

Don’t keep your great ideas to yourself. We have an industry of professionals who are open to sharing knowledge and content. If you have insight that helps customers or others in the industry, then write it, email it, blog it, share it. Thought leadership is an excellent tool to help open the door to new opportunities.



Q: What do you love to do in your free time?

When I’m not trying to keep up with my energetic wife and three children, I enjoy camping, fishing, Netflix binging, and playing music.

Q: What’s one thing about you that will surprise people who only know you professionally?

I play drums and guitar in a rock cover band. We’ve been together for over four years and gig two to three times per month. I’m also only one of a handful of people who’ve been recognized twice as an advertising person of the year by the Advertising Club of New Orleans.



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Find more interviews with NSCA members on NSCA.org

P2P 2020

Accelerating Change to Reboot Your Business

“The stakes are too high for integration companies in 2020 to miss this critical, virtual business transformation conference.”

— **Chuck Wilson**, NSCA Executive Director

Pivot to Profit, Shift to Survival

The Leadership Challenge During the Most Unpredictable Time Ever

Finding New Opportunities with Today's Technologies

Cash is King! CFO Perspective on Understanding Liquidity and Cash Flow in the Managed Services Environment

Preservation of Culture and Team

Technology Lifecycle Management Using the Managed Services Model

Apps and Solutions that Differentiate and Drive Revenue

A World of Connected Devices ... And Threats This Presents

2020 Legislative and Regulatory Challenges with Emerging Technology

Customer Experience Linked to Innovation and Advanced Service Models

Generating YOUR Top 10 List of Priorities for Surviving and Thriving

Planning for the future - Insights from the Emerging Technologies Committee

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