

# Integrate



THE OFFICIAL TRADE JOURNAL OF NSCA | SUMMER 2023

## It's Time for Accountability

Despite market improvements, profitability is still tough. A 2023 BLC session led by Mark Fenner laid out 7 factors that impact profits and challenge leaders to make tough decisions.

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**PLUS:**

Learn more about the NSCA Education Foundation and its new board members.

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## TOM'S COLUMN

# Inside NSCA's Connection to PASS

NSCA members might wonder about the relationship between NSCA and the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS). A recent article on [PASSK12.org](http://PASSK12.org) reflects the connection. *By Tom LeBlanc*

As a trade association supporting the integration industry, NSCA enjoys many mutually beneficial relationships with other groups that share our objectives or values in some way. Among the most treasured is our relationship with PASS (the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools).

Recently, when we shared an article from [PASS K-12.org](http://PASS K-12.org) with our members, it occurred to us that some of you might not understand the connection between NSCA and PASS. Meanwhile, the article perfectly reflects why PASS is so important to NSCA.

The article, "Top Questions Parents Ask About School Safety & Security," was written by Michele Gay, PASS board member and founder of Safe and Sound Schools. She's also the parent of one of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy.

PASS was formed about two years after the Sandy Hook tragedy. Around that time, NSCA's Chuck Wilson had been spending a lot of time thinking about how our industry can play a bigger role and make a more important impact on school safety. During a tour of an inner-city, budget-strapped Chicago school, he noticed that what little budget they had could have been used in a more strategic way. He also realized that that school system likely lacked the guidance and consultation that would have helped them make better decisions.

During his long drive home, he mulled it over and called other association and industry leaders including the head of Security Industry Association (SIA). They talked about a shared goal to provide better school safety guidelines for schools with varying budgets and resources. Before arriving back in Cedar Rapids, IA, NSCA and SIA were on a path toward cofounding the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools.



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It's hard to imagine a better use of our industry's collective expertise than playing a consultative role in school safety.

PASS is always concerned about the *why* and wants everybody involved with presenting the guidelines, implementing the guidelines, or adopting the guidelines to know *why* it's so important. Michele Gay is always a big part of the *why* as well.

I remember seeing her speak at the NSCA Business & Leadership Conference in 2019, where she recounted everything about that horrible day in Sandy Hook. Now I have a son in middle school and another in elementary school. Whenever I can, I drop off the eight-year-old at school. As I watch him walk from where I stand into the building, probably about 30 seconds, I think about Michele's keynote.

This article isn't just about the *why*. It offers advice to parents on who they can talk to about making an impact on school safety and answers common questions about things like the use of barricades. It's exactly the type of content NSCA wants to share with you, our members.

Chuck is now the CEO of NSCA and executive director of PASS. I feel fortunate to play a small role by volunteering on a PASS committee. In NSCA's view, there is tremendous opportunity for integration companies that work with K-12 customers to make a meaningful contribution to improving school safety by learning more about the PASS Guidelines. This allows NSCA members to play a more consultative role in school safety. It's hard to imagine a better use of our industry's collective expertise. 🔥

Tom LeBlanc is executive director at NSCA. Contact him at [tleblanc@nsca.org](mailto:tleblanc@nsca.org).

VISIT [PASSK12.org](https://PASSK12.org) to read the article and learn more.

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## NSCA BizSkills at InfoComm 2023

June 13, Orlando, FL

Thousands of integrators will converge on Orlando, FL, to learn about the latest AV integration technologies and products at InfoComm on June 10-16. While you're there, you can also get business training from NSCA—your trusted advisor. We're leading a half-day BizSkills program on June 13.

Member registration for BizSkills is free for NSCA members. Use "ICBIZ" as the coupon code during registration.

### Check out the sessions:

- Technology Lifecycle Management Using the Client Journey
- Finance: Managing Cash and Targeting Profitable Projects
- Project Management: 10 Steps to Preserving Profitability



Join NSCA at InfoComm 2023. Register [here](#).

## TASTE OF HAVANA:

NSCA Education Foundation Fundraiser at InfoComm 2023

June 14, Orlando, FL

NSCA Education Foundation's annual fundraising event will be held at Cuba Libre in Orlando, FL, in conjunction with InfoComm 2023. It's a chance for integrators, manufacturers, NSCA members, and **InfoComm 2023** attendees to enjoy the tropical ambiance, vintage décor, upbeat Latin music, and delectable Cuban cuisine at a must-see, must-experience destination.



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### Jobsite Management Training includes:

- 2 hours of self-study prerequisite work
- 5 hours of instructor-led online sessions
- Audience: project leads, installers, technicians, and the project field team

Register [here](#).

## New Jersey Golf Tournament

August 7, Glen Ridge Country Club

You asked, we listened. For the first time, the NSCA Education Foundation is bringing its popular golf fundraiser to the Northeast, to the famed Glen Ridge Country Club overlooking Manhattan. Breakfast will be served at 8am, followed by a shotgun start at 9am. Not a golfer? Join us for lunch and the awards ceremony. Contact NSCA Director of Operations Teresa Solorio at [tsolorio@nsca.org](mailto:tsolorio@nsca.org) to learn more.



NSCA EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION

# 7 Powerful

## Financial Levers for Business Leaders

*Have you ever considered how an improvement of just 1% or one day could boost profitability?*



Small changes drive exponential bottom-line growth. But what changes are worth making? And how do you make sure those changes actually happen?

That's exactly what business coach Mark Fenner answered during NSCA's 25th annual Business & Leadership Conference earlier this year. He works with Verne Harnish, former BLC keynoter, on business growth strategies and provides coaching to many members of the NSCA Board of Directors.

In a breakout session, Fenner shared seven important levers to improve profits and cash flow—and much more. It was a jam-packed hour of actionable advice. Although there's no replacement for being there in person, we recapped some of his biggest takeaways here.

### 4 Decisions You Must Get Right

A blueprint for building a growth company, Harnish's Scaling Up methodology, which Fenner teaches, is built on the four decisions that every company must get right in order to scale:

1. **People:** having the right people doing the right things
2. **Strategy:** being unique and invaluable to the market you serve
3. **Execution:** driving gross margins to the bottom line and freeing up time to work "on" the business
4. **Cash:** becoming a cash-generating machine to invest in great people, take risks on strategy, and invest in strong processes

While Fenner says most companies begin with people, he believes that everything starts with cash. "The first place we must start is cash: getting centered on where and how you make money," he explains.

### 7 Factors that Impact Profits, Cash, and Enterprise Value

To drive home his point about cash, Fenner then shared the seven variables, or levers, that influence profitability and cash flow the most. When they work together, they can significantly contribute to your organization's financial situation.

These levers come from the **Power of One tool**, which helps owners consider how an improvement of 1% or one day could boost profitability. Here's what Fenner had to say about each lever.

#### 1. Price

"Price is the key to everything. Who controls price? You do. Gross profit is driven by the price you sell. Your operating profit is driven by gross profit less operating dollars. Your team needs to understand how the numbers flow. Teach them financials. Many leaders just think, 'Sell more stuff.' They don't understand the power of pricing to the organization. You can increase the price of your goods and services. This has the biggest impact. Or consider good-better-best pricing. The 'better' is where you would typically like to win, the 'good' can help you fend off ankle biters, and you can make the low-margin stuff work by stripping things out."

#### 2. Volume

"I'll go into an organization and the sales team will say, 'Boss, we need to discount these deals, but we're going to make it up in volume.' But how much more volume do you need to make up for the discount? When I ask that question, I get crickets. Nobody knows. The sales team says, 'If we can get 3% cheaper, we could crush it.' But how much more volume do you need in order to make up the 3%? If you give up \$1.26 million in profit with that discount, a 3% increase in volume won't get you there. Neither will 6%. To make it up on operating profit, it would be somewhere between 9% and 10%. Understanding volume sensitivity is important when you're working with your sales team. Calculate the ramifications of discounting so you can build a strategy and be sure it makes sense to discount in order to win business."

#### 3. Cost of Goods Sold/Direct Costs

"Reduce the price you pay for raw materials and direct labor. This is the second-biggest driver of increased profits and cash. It's where the big money is. When they have to get more profitable, people ask, 'Where do we have to cut?' And then they respond: 'Overhead.' But what drives more pricing power is reducing the cost of goods sold. Direct labor is a great place to improve profitability. Do technicians go out, forget a part, and have to go back to get it? Or do they install it and it doesn't work right so they have to go back to fix it? That's eating up your gross margin."

#### 4. Overhead

"You can reduce your indirect costs. And while there is opportunity in overhead, it's not always the first place to go when you need to improve profitability—despite what many people think."

#### 5. Accounts Receivables

"Collect from your customers faster. Each day's reduction is worth annualized cash flow. Three years ago, maybe your AR was down to 50 days. Then it crept up to 70 days. Last year, you let it go to 75 days. Putting your accounts receivable into days instead of measuring it as a bulk number allows it to be much more actionable for your managers because it blends with revenues. As revenues grow, days correlate with revenue. Getting paid sooner unlocks cash. I recommend setting a goal of 70 days on AR."

#### 6. Inventory

"Reduce the amount of inventory you have on hand or the amount of work in process. Here is another opportunity to free up cash if inventory days have been growing. If you look at inventory last year and see 154 days, but you're at 180 days this year, is there any reason you can't set a goal to get back to 154 days? Get focused and go get it."

#### 7. Accounts Payables

"You can slow down the payment of creditors. This may be an opportunity to work with your partners."

### How to Hold Your Team Accountable

As Fenner works with business owners, entrepreneurs, and leaders to help them scale their businesses, he often conducts a SWOT analysis to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Within second-tier management (one step down from the C-suite), lack of accountability always comes up as a weakness. And if management is frustrated with a lack of accountability, then so are their people. "But you can't force it," emphasizes Fenner. "Accountability is a personal choice." He says victim mindsets often get in the way, making people believe that certain circumstances or external factors prevent them from achieving their goals.

In *Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, author Patrick Lencioni talks about the concept of false attribution. It goes like this: When someone else makes a mistake, you tend to attribute that mistake to their character. But when *you* make a mistake, you tend to blame your circumstances.

### So where does that leave you as their leader?

Teach your team to live "above the line." Living below the line means they place blame. Everyone acts confused, and no one takes ownership. Living above the line is when people see the problem, own it, solve it, and get results.

### Want to move above the line? These five steps need to be followed:

1. **Clarify what you're responsible for.** Are goals specific and measurable? "You need to make it clear enough so that even Ray Charles can see it," he says. A fuzzy goal involves implementing a marketing plan to increase leads by the end of September. A better goal is to create a new marketing plan that generates 10 leads a week by the end of September.
2. **Ensure buy-in.** Are you willing to personally rise above? How committed are you to giving the physical, mental, and emotional energy necessary to achieve your goals?
3. **Ask for the plan.** What are the key milestones? What are the weekly activities?
4. **Keep ownership where it belongs.** "Good leaders ask, 'What are you going to do to fix the problem?' As soon as you solve the problem for an employee, guess who owns the accountability? You do. Now the monkey is on your back," says Fenner.
5. **Create consequences.** "You get what you tolerate," he explains. "If you tolerate low-margin business, then you are going to get low-margin business. If you allow your salespeople to sell business that doesn't make sense for your company, then you'll get more of that business coming in the door." To create consequences, recognize the person's strengths but explain the concerns. It's not about firing. It's about letting them know your expectations. If someone is working hard, taking responsibility, investing in their own development, and improving, then give them grace, time, and resources. Free them from their position when they no longer make progress or don't meet expectations and are unable to live above the line.

**Remember:** The more everyone understands how your business makes money, the more they can be part of the solution. Shovel the pile while the pile is small.

To learn more about Mark Fenner, visit [www.markfenner.com](http://www.markfenner.com). 📌



*The NSCA Education Foundation was formed in 2000 to support educational initiatives and workforce development.*

# REACQUAINT YOURSELF

with the NSCA Education Foundation

*The differences between NSCA and the NSCA Education Foundation, which is a charitable organization aimed at supporting industry workforce development, are subtle but significant.*

**W**ith all the industry acronyms you're already expected to remember, it's okay if you don't always remember the nuances of NSCA. But it's good for NSCA members to understand what the NSCA Education Foundation is relative to NSCA, the trade association.

NSCA (National Systems Contractors Association), as you know, is the leading not-for-profit association representing the rapidly growing systems integration industry. Simply put, NSCA is a powerful advocate for all who work within the communications technology industry, including systems contractors and integrators, product manufacturers, consultants, sales representatives, architects, specifying engineers, and other allied professionals.

**What Is the NSCA Education Foundation?**

The NSCA Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded by NSCA. Formed in 2000, the Foundation is committed to growing the industry by providing access to educational initiatives and experiences aimed at enhancing personal, company, community, and industry success.

**Here's a snapshot of what it has accomplished so far.**

- Provided funds for thousands of students in technical colleges and career centers throughout North America (over 4,000 to date).
- Supported the development of the Electronic Systems Professional Alliance (ESPA), an industry-wide communications technology consortium that develops basic training and certification curriculums for entry-level workers and offers apprenticeship programs.
- Offered Randy Vaughan Scholarships to incumbent industry professionals who want to develop leadership and business skills (over \$400,000 in scholarships to date).
- Funded valuable industry research projects, such as the Electronic Systems Outlook, Financial Analysis of the Industry, Compensation & Benefits Report, Labor Installation Standard guidelines, and Guide to State Licensing.
- Provided initial seed money to launch **PASS K-12 (the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools)**. To date, over 4,000 schools have incorporated PASS guidelines into their technology planning processes.
- Launched the Next-Gen Academy, a training program for rising integration firm stars that provides them with industry-specific curriculum so they're prepared to lead a company in this industry.

**NSCA EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

**What Is Ignite?**

The communications technology industry is currently plagued with a shortage of skilled professionals needed to grow our industry. Three major hurdles include the pandemic, unprecedented growth, and the industry "bubble" (only those inside the bubble know about our industry's great career opportunities).

While the pandemic negatively impacted nearly every person, company, community, and industry in many and varying ways, it also spawned what's now known as the "Great Resignation." Couple that with an industry that's experiencing tremendous growth, and it's easy to see how these two factors fuel the fire around the need for a larger, more qualified workforce. As a result, most companies are stuck with a new set of challenges: managing their current worker shortages and future workforce needs. When you add in the reality that the communications technology industry is a best-kept secret, evading the limelight at all costs, this crisis tops most companies' lists of critical issues.

Ignite is the workforce development initiative created by the NSCA Education Foundation to spark interest in technology. This is done through educational opportunities that improve the skills of current industry professionals and attract, engage, encourage, educate, and empower the next generation of professionals with a steadfast commitment to building and sustaining an equitable, inclusive, and culturally diverse workforce.

**What Are Ignite Ambassadors?**

**Ignite Ambassadors are the cornerstone of the Ignite initiative. Their key responsibility is to pave the way to improving our industry's workload and workforce needs by:**

- Advocating for and collaborating with local teaching institutions to develop and promote certifications and degree programs that meet the needs of our industry
- Facilitating paid internship programs at their places of work to help students learn about our industry
- Hosting special events to introduce students to our industry and connect them with the viable educational programs
- Serving as frequent guest speakers, offering company/installation tours, and conducting informational interviews

Plus, they get the opportunity to be part of a growing community of like-minded industry professionals who are sharing ways to help solve our current and future workforce needs.

**How Do You Become an Ignite Ambassador?**

Apply at [IgniteYourCareer.org](https://igniteyourcareer.org) or email [ignite@nsc.org](mailto:ignite@nsc.org).

**What Is the Ignite Internship Program?**

It's a toolkit that includes a TalentLMS portal to help integrators create a framework around their internship programs. It also includes a best practices guide and a \$1,000 grant. Complete the Ignite Grant Application at [IgniteYourCareer.org](https://igniteyourcareer.org) to get the ball rolling.



**What's the Ignite Job Board?**

An online resource of communications technology industry jobs available from every NSCA member company.

**What Is the NSCA Education Foundation Board of Directors?**

While Chuck Wilson is the executive director of the NSCA Education Foundation, he and his team take direction from a board of directors that represent integrator and manufacturer NSCA members.

These individuals volunteer their time to lead Foundation initiatives and tackle our industry's signature challenge: finding, developing, and training talent.

**The board includes:**

- **Tobi Tungl**, President, CTI
- **Lauren Simmen**, Vice President, Crestron
- **Ingolf deJong**, Treasurer, GenComm
- **Steve Greenblatt**, Secretary, Control Concepts
- **Laurie Englert**, Director, Legrand AV
- **Steve Emspak**, Director, Shen, Milsom & Wilke Inc.
- **Tim Hennen**, Director, Digital Labor Solutions
- **Gina Sansivero**, Director, AtlasIED

Englert and Emspak both wrap up their board terms on July 1, 2023, after contributing immeasurable value to the NSCA Education Foundation. On behalf of the NSCA community, we thank them both for their efforts.

**Meet the New Foundation Board Members**

**On July 1, 2023, the NSCA Education Foundation Board welcomes two new board members, both who have tremendous industry experience and credentials that will further workforce development efforts.**

**Dawna Payne** Executive Vice President, Texadia Systems  
Dallas, TX

**Why did you decide to volunteer as an NSCA Education Foundation board member?**

Our industry needs to attract bright new talent. NSCA is working hard with all trades in technology to make that happen. The NSCA team is dedicated and passionate about the same things I see and work through daily: education, growth, standards, business skills, and more. Together, we can accomplish great things. I believe in their mission and purpose. NSCA is a forward-thinking organization that wants to bring technology to the forefront through education. Learning is knowledge, and knowledge leads to growth.

**What unique capabilities or perspectives do you bring to this role?**

My unique perspective, and what really makes my day, is seeing through the day-to-day craziness and recognizing an individual who has potential—and then helping them see that potential. Creating a career path and encouraging every step of the way. My greatest success is not my own but the success and growth of others: a warehouse clerk who now does accounting, a technician who now runs the service department, a technician getting his CTS, CTS-I, and CTS-D or CIT, IST, or CCNS. Being passionate about others as well as our industry will help me bring change to our industry through NSCA.



*Dawna Payne of Texadia Systems.*

**Chris Reese** Chief Financial Officer, ASW  
Atlanta

**Why did you decide to volunteer as an NSCA Education Foundation board member?**

We have an exciting and important industry. Our member companies enable communication for collaboration and innovation, create amazing concert and worship experience, and provide valuable life-safety technology. The Foundation is an important part of creating awareness of career opportunities in our industry, as well as providing curriculum and skills guidance to members and education partners. As a champion and beneficiary of this industry, I feel a responsibility to make sure we keep a diverse and deep talent pool interested in our business.

**What unique capabilities or perspectives do you bring to this role?**

I am honored to bring my perspective from 10 years as an international organizational alignment and management development consultant and eight years as adjunct professor of entrepreneurial studies to this fantastic board team. I look forward to building on the work already begun to help recruit additional Foundation ambassadors and educational institution partners.



*Chris Reese of ASW*

# PASS K-12 Releases the 6th Edition of its *Safety and Security Guidelines*

The updated guidelines are streamlined, easy-to-use best practices addressing the evolving security challenges facing today's schools.



## It also includes updates like:

- More focused recommendations on best practices to identify areas that need improvement.
- Changes to security tiers for clarity—it's recommended that all schools and districts work to meet Tier One measures, regardless of location, budget, or risk profile.
- Enhancements to classroom security guidelines.
- A new section dedicated to enhanced technologies. It details solutions that show potential but haven't been widely adopted yet, including weapons detection, analytics, emergency communications, and biometrics.

They will also advise you on how to increase involvement from key stakeholders, such as community members, local law enforcement, parents, school board members, staff, and students.

As you work with K-12 clients to create safe school plans, including crime prevention tactics, tips for staff training, and guidance on creating a crisis preparation strategy, we strongly urge you to use the *Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools* as your true north. Bring these guidelines to the attention of your local schools to help them start their own conversations about school safety and security.

“When you pull out a roadmap, you're looking for where you are, where you've been, where you're going, and how to get there. Through our guidelines and checklist tools, we help stakeholders answer three questions: What should we do? How do we prioritize? Where do we start?” says NSCA CEO and PASS K-12 Chair Chuck Wilson.

Thanks to volunteer contributors and PASS Partners, these guidelines are free to download. They act as a tool to prioritize security needs and a roadmap to help you implement a tiered approach to school security.

## What Is PASS?

PASS brings together expertise from the education, public safety, and technology industry communities to develop and support an appropriate and coordinated approach to making effective use of proven and vetted security practices specific to K-12 environments, as well as informed decisions on security investments.

PASS resources are tools for objective analysis by school officials, community stakeholders, and solutions providers for assessing their current state and prioritizing school safety and security needs.

To learn more about NSCA's relationship to PASS K-12, read Tom's Column on page 3.

The primary focuses of the *Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools* are physical security and life safety; recommendations are limited to related policies, procedures, equipment, and technology. Modern and effective security infrastructure is an essential element of any comprehensive school safety strategy, but not the only element. When other prevention efforts fail, facility security measures are critical to protection, mitigation, and response.

The *Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools* approach school security through five physical layers:

1. Districtwide
2. Property perimeter
3. Parking lot perimeter
4. Building perimeter
5. Classroom/interior perimeter

Key safety and security components, such as policies and procedures, architectural components, communication, access control, and video surveillance, are outlined for each layer.

Download the **newest version** of the guidelines now. [↗](#)

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# EPIC MESH

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If your firm is involved with school security projects, then take note: The Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS K-12) just released the sixth edition of its *Safety and Security Guidelines for K-12 Schools*.

First released in 2015, these guidelines act as a how-to document for securing schools. As risks and technologies change, so do the recommendations.

This 2023 update improves on the previous five versions of the guidelines to make them even more streamlined, easier to use, and more reflective of evolving school security challenges.

# The Latest from NSCA's Solution Provider Members

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



## Cleerline

### Learn More about Cleerline Offerings

The cutting-edge technology in Cleerline HD cassettes, HDMI AOC cables, and Media Converters provide both efficiency and performance, making them ideal for applications such as conference rooms, surveillance, and infrastructure backbones.

Management of fiber strands is always an integral part of any installation. Cleerline™ HD Cassettes provide an efficient solution in a variety of applications. Whether you are doing high strand splicing inside a rack or enclosure, segmenting networks for ease in troubleshooting, or field terminating and installing the cassette behind a display/video wall with minimal space available, the Cleerline™ HD Splice Cassette is a one stop solution with its many available configurations and accessories.

Cleerline HDMI 8K 48Ghz AOC cables provide exceptional audio and video transmission. The cables utilize four strands of Cleerline SSF fiber for signal transfer and provide superior performance in lengths from 5 to 40 meters with up to 10K transmission in a durable construction. All cables are Plenum rated for your commercial installations.

Cleerline Media Converters are another great solution for anyone looking convert and/or extend ethernet over fiber. Indoor & Industrial rated options are available as well as with PoE+ and 1Gb or 10Gb options. These converters allow for seamless integration between different devices.

If you're in the market for a reliable and convenient solution for fiber optics including splicing, Active Optical HDMI® Cables, or fiber media conversion, be sure to check out Cleerline's extensive range of fiber optic solutions.

For more information about Cleerline Technology Group visit [cleerline.com](http://cleerline.com).



## Jeron

### UL2525 Listed Pro-Alert™ Area of Rescue Assistance Systems Ready to Ship Now

Jeron is proud to announce that the Jeron Pro-Alert 480 system has been tested and listed by Underwriters Laboratories under the new UL2525 Standard for Two-Way Emergency Communications Systems for Rescue Assistance. **The Pro-Alert 480 System is the first system to be UL2525 Listed by Underwriters Laboratories.**

Pro-Alert Area of Rescue Assistance provides life-saving alerting and communications during a building fire or evacuation. This rigorous evaluation by the independent Underwriters Laboratories assures that the Pro-Alert system will always be available and operational during an emergency situation.

Call Jeron Electronic Systems, Inc. for more information at **800.621.1903**.

## NETGEAR

### Stirling Distributing NETGEAR

Stirling is now distributing NETGEAR. There is stock in NJ and the ability to support projects immediately. We carry the M4250 and M3000 series, high-performance flexible switches engineered for AV over IP.

<https://www.stirlingcomm.com/netgear>



## Shure

### Introducing the MXA902 Integrated Conferencing Ceiling Array

We are excited to present our latest addition to the Shure Microflex Ecosystem: **The Microflex Advance MXA902 Integrated Conferencing Ceiling Array** – a complete ceiling-mounted audio solution for AV conferencing, ideal for delivering premium audio capture and reproduction for **small to medium-sized meeting spaces**, and with minimal setup required.

The MXA902 combines a next generation array microphone for **enhanced directional voice capture** with an integrated wide-dispersion loudspeaker for **natural sounding far-end speech reproduction** plus onboard **IntelliMix® digital signal processing** in a single ceiling unit, for the ultimate blend of superior sound quality and streamlined deployment.

It is **certified for Zoom and Microsoft Teams** when used with the ANIUSB-MATRIX Audio Network Interface and **starts to ship in June 2023**.

The MXA902 will be our flagship product at InfoComm. Visit us at the **Shure booth #3842** for a detailed introduction and live demo.

For more information, visit [www.shure.com/mxa902](http://www.shure.com/mxa902)



**CONNECT & DECLUTTER.**

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## C2G Docking Stations

Explore desktop connectivity solutions from C2G.

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Exertis Almo

**Exertis Almo Leadership Transition Complete**

InfoComm 2023 marked the official retirement of outgoing Exertis Almo EVP/COO Sam Taylor and the completed transition of successor Dan Smith.

Smith revealed what intrigued him most when making the decision to come to Exertis Almo, “True market enablement is what sets Exertis Almo apart. Products, services, training, education, and customer responsiveness are what help integrators succeed and we are experts in every one of these areas. The fact that we are a large business willing to be agile and refusing to be stagnant enables us to continue evolving with the changing market landscape, particularly in the areas of AVoIP, interactive digital boards and DVLED.”

Smith noted that Exertis Almo also has the benefit of leveraging the global resources of its parent company DCC, which allows access to more products, more services and more financial support.

He added that the company culture – a family-like environment – attracted him to Exertis Almo. “You see it outwardly but you feel it inwardly. This will continue – our employees, vendors and partners are our family.”

Sam Taylor chimed in, “Early on in our six-month transition, I felt a great sense of confidence knowing that Dan would be taking the helm and that Exertis Almo and its partners would continue to thrive. I look forward to seeing the new directions and achievements that will happen with Dan at the forefront.”

As for Taylor, he’s on to his next endeavor surrounding his passion for swimming. As the founder of “Swim With Purpose” a charitable organization focused on supporting the rebuilding of the indoor pool facility at Kentucky State University for students and the community, he’s found a new niche: fundraising to reach the goal of \$1M.

Learn [more](#).

SCT

**Meet SCT Camera Mounts**

You know SCT for our reliable camera and signal extension kit solutions, but did you know we also design camera mounts?

SCT manufactures a variety of on-wall, masonry, in-wall recessed, ceiling, and VESA compatible camera mounts designed to minimize their appearance, leaving only the camera visible whenever possible. Laser cut to contour the base of the camera; our mounts provide the cleanest mounting solution available in the industry. A uniquely simple and clean mounting solution for the SCT Camera-End Module provides cable management and ease of installation.

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Dynacord

**Dynacord presents V600:4, the new go-to multi-channel power amplifier for commercial installations**

- Versatile four-channel power amplifier at an attractive price point, recommended for BGM and announcements in small to mid-sized commercial installations
- State-of-the-art amplifier technology for reduced cost of ownership, with low energy consumption and flexible power usage
- Easy handling and trouble-free amplifier operation — even under demanding power conditions — in a compact 1RU form factor

The V600:4 offers the user high flexibility for many applications. This is enabled by multiple power drive options utilizing Dynacord’s patented **VLD (Variable Load Drive)** technology. It allows the amplifier channels to be driven in 4 ohms, 8 ohms, 70 V or 100 V without compromising the available output power.

The newly developed Dynacord **powerTANK** technology adds even more installation flexibility, working like a power reservoir for the amplifier. With direct access to the total power of 600 watts, the V600:4 can deliver asymmetric power across all channels (up to 300 W per single channel) as needed.

Dynacord amplifiers have a proven track record when it comes to supporting energy savings without sacrificing any performance. Overall power consumption can be significantly reduced thanks to **ecoRAIL**. This technology delivers almost a standby level of power consumption, whilst simultaneously delivering high quality background music ensuring performance and power saving.

**APD (Auto Power Down)** contributes to further optimize efficiency, reducing energy consumption by automatically powering down the amplifier when no audio signal is present. As soon as a signal is detected, auto wake-up will immediately enable the amplifier to be fully operational.

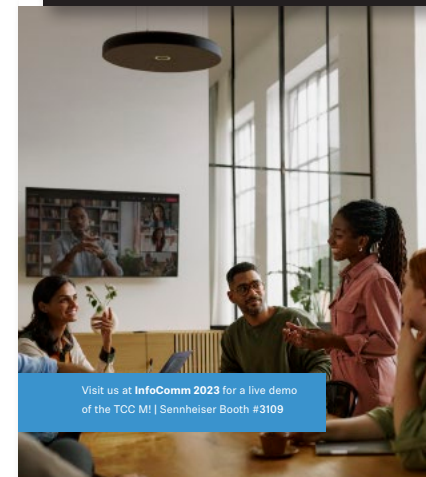
The V600:4 incorporates Dynacord’s new **dualCOOL** technology. Designed as a convection-cooled power amplifier, the device operates silently, making the V600:4 also suitable for installations in quiet environments.

<https://dynacord.com>

BrightSign

**Learn About BrightSign Series 5**

BrightSign will showcase our new Series 5 line of players at InfoComm in Orlando mid-June. Series 5 is the next generation of players delivering our most advanced technology to date including 8K, quad output, and advanced HTML capabilities. With five families to choose from, there is a solution for every digital signage experience and every budget desired. Visit [www.BrightSign.biz](http://www.BrightSign.biz) for more information or email [sales@brightsign.biz](mailto:sales@brightsign.biz).



**TEAMCONNECT CEILING MEDIUM**  
**Be heard in the room –everywhere.**

With a coverage of up to 40 m², TeamConnect Ceiling Medium is the right choice for mid-sized meeting rooms and lecture or collaboration spaces.

With this solution, Sennheiser provides an additional design option to seamlessly include our audibly superior ceiling microphone into your meeting room.

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SENNHEISER

Sennheiser

**Sennheiser Expands TeamConnect Ceiling Solutions**

Sennheiser has expanded the TeamConnect Ceiling Solutions family with the release of TeamConnect Ceiling Medium. With a coverage of up to 40 m², our new ceiling microphone TeamConnect Ceiling Medium is the right choice for mid-sized meeting rooms and lecture or collaboration spaces. With this solution, Sennheiser provides an additional design option to seamlessly include our audibly superior ceiling microphone in your meeting room. With all the great features of our trusted TeamConnect Ceiling 2 but in a more compact form, the TeamConnect Ceiling Medium microphone is a real problem-solver. It allows cable-free tables and flexible furniture arrangement while offering all the TeamConnect Ceiling Solutions benefits like Trusted Sennheiser Audio Quality, efficient setup, brand agnostic integration, simple management and control, a sleek design, and a sustainable impact.

Learn [more](#).



SENNHEISER



**How to Better Manage Your Internship Program**

**1. Help with Creating an Industry-Specific Internship Program Framework**

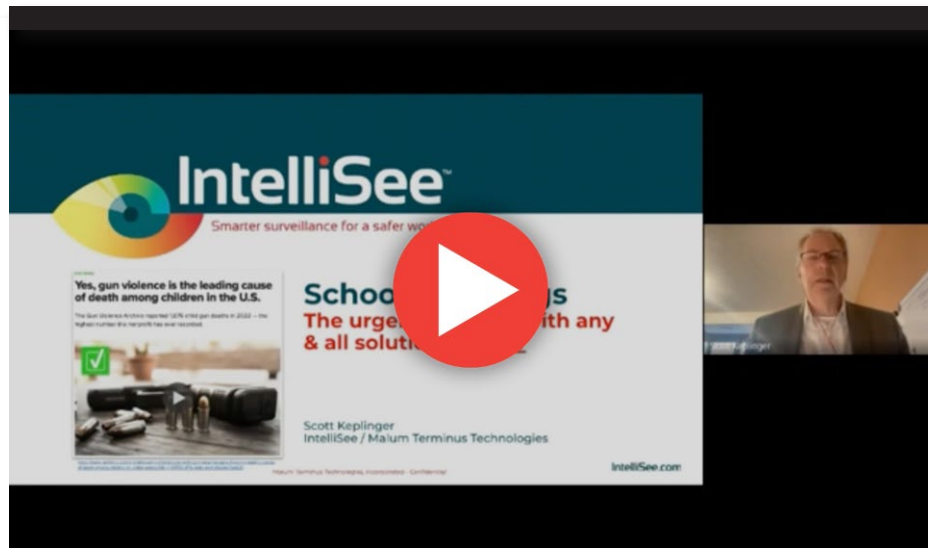
Creating an internship program is tough when you start from scratch. That’s why we created a four-phase framework and best practices guide you can follow.

Behind the scenes, you also have access to an online talent management platform we’ve customized for our industry. It helps you build out the four phases of your internship program and guides your interns through course content.

**2. Access Grants to Reduce the Costs of Hiring Interns**

To help NSCA members offset the costs of summer internships, NSCA’s Ignite Internship Grant offers \$1,000 toward the reimbursement of wages associated with hiring an intern.

Learn more at [www.igniteyourcareer.org/internships](http://www.igniteyourcareer.org/internships).



IntelliSee

**Talking School Safety with IntelliSee**

As details emerge with every new shooting, we ask: what can be learned to help prevent another tragedy so we can stop this madness?

To help, IntelliSee hosted a webinar examining Nashville's recent Covenant School attack. In every one of these instances, it's clear that *one* security measure can't mitigate every risk and a layered security strategy best protects schools and other organizations.

In Nashville, footage showed the attacker pulling into the parking lot and approaching the side of the building with a drawn assault rifle before shooting through glass doors. Locked doors, metal detectors, and similar safety approaches wouldn't have been enough. The released footage did show, had the school been equipped with active monitoring on its outdoor surveillance, IntelliSee would have detected the assailant approaching and real-time alerts could have given the school crucial forewarning.

Further, IntelliSee's ongoing alerts would have helped identify the assailant's location, enabling first responders to resolve the situation even more quickly. When every second matters, this extra time could save lives.

However, IntelliSee *cannot* detect concealed guns, meaning in a different situation, other layers, like metal detectors, are helpful in preventing a concealed weapon from entering. **Ultimately, layered security is necessary to cover all bases and to help stop these senseless acts.**

We *must* come together as experts to do more to keep people safe and to stop this horrific violence. If you would like a recording of this recent webinar, please visit <http://www.intellisee.com/K12-webinar>.



AV Design Labs

**AV Design Labs Expands**

AV Design Labs is excited to announce the appointment of Nipranch Shah, as a design/drafting engineer.

Nipranch has been an integral part of AV Design Labs offshore production setup. As the first employee, he is going on his 7th year with AV Design Labs and was instrumental in growing and streamlining operations in India.

Nipranch was always curious and eager to learn more on the engineering side of the business and with an opportunity arising for us in the US, we helped him emigrate and put him in a position of success with our customers.

Nipranch can be reached at [nipranch@avdesignlabs.com](mailto:nipranch@avdesignlabs.com) and/or by phone at (603) 260-8271.



Solutions360

**Are You Ready to Bring Your Integration Business to the Next Level?**

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

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

*Solutions360 now has a new tool that will revolutionize the way to plan your business, introducing the One Dashboard. The One Dashboard introduces reliable, highly accurate predictable forecasting. The One Dashboard consolidates all your revenue and cost sources mixed with your project plans to show you the profitability and cash reserves into the future.*

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

Learn more.



**HELLO NSCA SOLUTION PROVIDERS!**

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

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



# Let's Talk Trends

## in Digital Signage with Legrand | AV

*A rundown of digital signage opportunities for integrators and how Legrand | AV can help.*

In the world of commercial AV, digital signage is an ever-changing and growing market. With that comes a greater need to keep on top of trends to meet the individual goals of each project and tackle large-scale rollouts. As a manufacturer in the digital signage industry, Legrand | AV's unique perspective across digital signage applications puts us in a great position to see emerging trends.

Our engineers work directly with leading display manufacturers, content creators, and software providers to determine the best way to showcase and safeguard their solutions. By doing this, we can deliver solutions that solve the problems they're encountering in the field. We've put together all we've learned about the latest digital signage trends in a **free eBook** to help AV integrators make lasting impressions through technology that connects people, spaces, and experiences.

**For now, here are some highlights from what we've learned.**

### QSR

Quick-serve restaurants (QSRs) have perhaps seen the most dramatic shift into digital signage. Self-service kiosks can save on labor costs because customers can place the orders themselves through a touchscreen or kiosk.

Order status boards are another growing trend that improves the experience by giving customers the ability to check the status of their order. Between in person, kiosk, and ordering ahead by smartphone, QSRs are definitely catering the experience to individual preferences.

### Retail

The biggest push in retail right now is individualizing the customer journey. When a customer walks into an environment, they want to choose how to interact with digital signage. That may include speech or touch interactions, or maybe the display provides a code for the customer inspecting the physical product so they can order it from their phone for home delivery. Providing equity of experience through technology makes the entire customer experience better.

### Corporate

Return on investment is another big trend in digital signage. Corporations are facing high real estate costs and looking to maximize return on any investments. Businesses are shifting from experiential designs to "how do I sell the space?" Digital signage can help get the most out of spaces by measuring analytics. Signage can be set up to determine who is using a space, how they are using it, and how to manage downtime effectively.

### Transportation

Transportation is a notable industry where digital signage plays a major role in operational efficiency. Wayfinding and up-to-date, easily understandable schedules are vital in getting people where they need to be. At the same time, airports are basically giant malls these days with tons of opportunity for digital signage. A simple kiosk with a QR code for placing an order can have your purchase shipped directly to your home—no need to check any bags.

Of course, these aren't the only applications affected by shifting digital signage trends. We've seen changes in digital signage usage for outdoor applications, education, large venues, banking, hospitality, fitness, healthcare, houses of worship, manufacturing, and others. Legrand | AV is ready to help tackle the latest challenges in each of these areas.

### Where Legrand | AV Fits In

Once the content strategy and display selection are worked out, Legrand | AV is a key resource for everything else you need: mounting, storage, connectivity, power, and so much more for **digital signage systems**. Beyond solutions, we've made significant investments in teams and tools to help you realize your digital signage ambitions.

Legrand | AV's **Digital Signage team** specializes in providing end-to-end support throughout the entire process, including project design, completing site surveys, providing technical drawings, and offering technical support for solutions. For further assistance, the **Solutions Engineering team** is on deck to leap in with free system design, product swaps, diagrams, and training.

When it comes to direct view LED digital signage, we understand the unique challenges this technology presents. The **Tiled Solution Services team** helps with personalized design consultation, securing experienced labor, and mitigating risk.

Like we said, there's a lot to cover. Check out our **Digital Signage Trends eBook** for a deeper dive on this topic. 🍹

| Legrand | AV is a manufacturer member of NSCA.



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# ENGAGING TODAY'S WORKFORCE:

## The Importance of Employee Career Pathing

This article is an excerpt from a blog post on [Insperity.com](#). [Read the complete post here.](#)

By *Bonnie Monych*



Any organization can map career paths, but it's especially useful for companies that need people with a specific or hard-to-find set of skills and experiences.

**A** generation ago, the typical employee career path was the classic "ladder," with a series of clearly defined rungs for employees to climb. Now, according to a report by Gartner, with little physical time in the office, career paths aren't as clearly defined because there is less visibility of the options for growth.

In addition, employees have spent the last few years rethinking the role of work in their lives—and there's less drive to climb that classic ladder.

Your organization may benefit from defining career paths within your company to keep your people engaged and to decide how to invest in your employees' development. Without the old-fashioned ladder structure to guide you, career pathing requires a holistic approach and careful planning.

### What Makes a Career Plan Different From Employee Development?

Before mapping career paths, it's important to review the differences between employee development, succession planning, and employee career pathing.

**These three practices are related but each has its own distinct goals.**

- 1. Employee development**, also called career development, identifies each individual's role in the organization and the skills they need to keep fruitfully contributing. It also includes what their interests and goals are and how those align within the organization.
- 2. Succession planning** identifies the right people to step into leadership roles when the time comes and ensures that they develop the skills they need for those roles beforehand.
- 3. Career pathing** gives employees a map to the ways they can move within your organization based on their interests, skills, and personal career goals.

### When Is Employee Career Pathing Useful?

Any organization can map career paths, but it's especially useful for companies that need people with a specific or hard-to-find set of skills and experiences. This is even more heightened in a competitive job market, where the options for outside talent are especially limited.

For example, if your business needs people who are in short supply, like data scientists, or people with a particular set of certifications, like social workers, career pathing can help you build an internal pipeline for those careers.

Career pathing can also be helpful for supporting internal promotion from entry-level and junior positions.

With clear career maps in place, your organization may also have a recruiting advantage. When you can show candidates their options for vertical and lateral moves within your company over time, as well as cross-training options, they're better able to envision a long-term career at your organization.

In addition to workforce planning purposes, employee career pathing is a very useful tool for engagement. If employees see that their organization values their personal career goals by sharing different ways they can grow there, they will naturally feel more engaged and:

- Empowered to take ownership of their work
- Less likely to look for other employment options
- Encouraged to grow their leadership qualities
- More aligned and connected to broader company goals

### What Are the Potential Pitfalls Of Career Pathing?

One caution to keep in mind, especially if you're focused on career pathing to build internal pipelines, is this: Take steps to make sure you're also building a diverse culture.

If your internal career pathways are full of people with the same or similar backgrounds, educational experiences, and lifestyles, then your company's innovation and brand appeal can stall.

It's also important to leave enough room in your career paths to avoid creating overly restrictive requirements for education, experience, and skills. Career paths are about guiding, not gatekeeping.

Flexibility in your pathways allows managers to identify people who can move along the paths with the right training, coaching, and support, even if they don't tick every box.

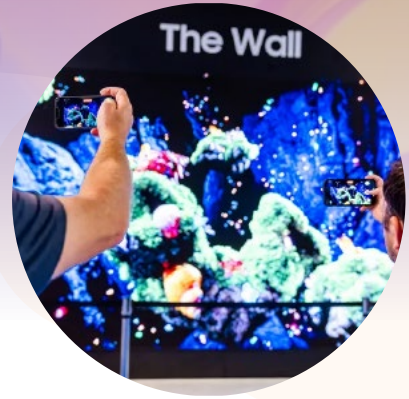
### How Do You Plan Employee Career Paths?

- 1.** Start with your organization chart to get an idea of the general career paths available within your organization for different roles.
- 2.** As you're mapping paths, use your company's compensation policy in conjunction to keep your pathways as consistent and fair as possible.
- 3.** It's a good idea to include your HR people in your career pathing exercises to help you identify the training and support that each pathway may require.
- 4.** Keep in mind that not all pathways will be vertical. There may be opportunities for someone to shift sideways in your organization.
- 5.** Finally, step back from your career paths to think about how employee progress along them will affect your whole organization. For example, how does moving someone from IT into data science affect your company's infrastructure?

Want to learn even more? [Read the full blog](#) to find out how to talk to employees about their career paths as well as set expectations.

Looking for additional guidance on how to engage today's workforce? Visit [insperity.com/nsca](#) or email us at [alliance@insperity.com](mailto:alliance@insperity.com).

*Bonnie Monych is a performance specialist for Insperity's Emerging Growth Market. Insperity is an NSCA Business Accelerator.*



## NSCA BizSkills at InfoComm 2023

Many integrators will converge on Orlando, FL, to learn about the latest AV integration technologies and products at InfoComm on June 10-16, 2023. While you're there, you can also get business training from NSCA—your trusted advisor. We're leading a half-day BizSkills program on June 13.

**Member registration for BizSkills on June 13 is FREE for NSCA members. Use "ICBIZ" at registration. Check out the sessions:**

### **Technology Lifecycle Management Using the Client Journey**

Recurring revenue and managed services are the most important trend in our industry today. The shift from capex to opex is moving quickly, and as-a-service models continue to grow. Meanwhile, revenue and success for many integration companies' service businesses hinge on the little things. What's your process for communicating updates? How do you handle service tickets? How do you deliver a seamless customer experience? Learn how to become a trusted advisor rather than just another vendor through lifecycle management practices in this integrators-only session.

### **Finance: Managing Cash and Targeting Profitable Projects**

Cash is the lifeblood of a company. For integrators navigating uncertain market conditions in 2023, it's essential not only to effectively manage cash flow but also to identify key metrics for selecting profitable projects. This integrators-only interactive training session will benefit any integration professional who has financial responsibility within their company. Learn best practices for creating financial, income, and cash-flow statements. Attendees will learn how to facilitate cash flow and important steps for de-risking projects. The financial lessons from this session are evergreen, but they're also specific to the challenges of battling supply chain and inflation in the current market.

### **Project Management: 10 Steps to Preserving Profitability**

It's no secret that profits are gained and lost based on effective and ineffective project management. This integrators-only session walks through 10 project lifecycle steps and how to manage them effectively to enable profitability. This begins with a project preparation plan and runs from sales initiation through project management closeout. Learn how integration project workflows connect to one another. Understand the efficiencies and constraints and how to weed out factors that prevent profitability. Above all, attendees will walk away with a better handle on project management—and a better chance to achieve profits in a challenging market.



**Join NSCA at InfoComm 2023. Register [here](#).**