


Integrate



THE OFFICIAL TRADE JOURNAL OF NSCA | FALL 2024

Drive Business Growth *with these* Strategic Financial Strategies



Forward-focused NSCA members recommend preventive and proactive measures for lasting financial success.

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Chief Economist Dr. Chris Kuehl (pictured above) shares his latest economic insights for integrators. **PAGE 6**

The only industry event you need to prepare your next-gen leaders: NSCA's XBO Experience. **PAGE 4**

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TOM'S COLUMN

The New NSCA Site Is Designed Just for **You**

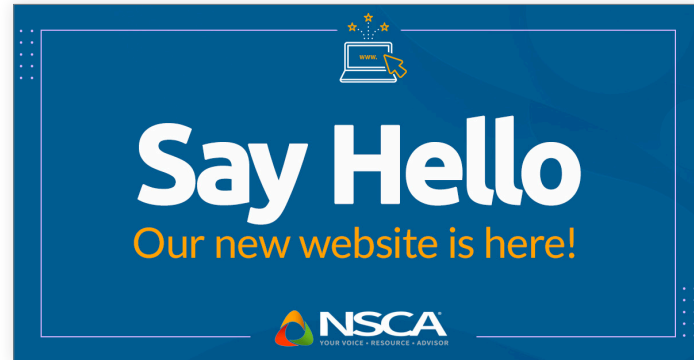
NSCA members like you will be able to easily find resources and connect with NSCA on our newly redesigned website.

By Tom LeBlanc

I hesitated to write this issue's column. Why? Because we don't like to brag about what we do. We like telling our members' stories. But, sometimes, we have internal news that's just too good *not* to share: a long-awaited update to **NSCA.org**.

We're extremely focused on providing resources to help you run your company better:

- Countless documents, templates, spreadsheets, videos, **how-to guides**, and more in our Essentials Library.
- A steady stream of industry-specific **research and guidelines**.
- **Instructional webinars** focused on different business topics.
- Vetted and trusted **Business Accelerators** and **Member Advisory Councilmembers**.
- **Events** like the Business & Leadership Conference or the XBO (Excellence in Business Operations) Experience, coming in November.



It's a challenge to organize all that content in a way that's easy for you to find and access when you need it. (After all, what good are the valuable resources we offer if our members can't find them?!) That's why we invested in a website redesign.

Here are some exciting examples of the improved user experience at the new NSCA.org:

1. Streamlined Access with All-in-One Homepage

Our redesigned homepage places essential documents and resources directly in front of you upon arrival. This all-in-one approach minimizes clicks so you can quickly find and access the information you need without wading through multiple pages.

2. Advanced Document-Download Capabilities

The new Research and Essentials Library sections offer enhanced capabilities for downloading research, templates, industry guides, documents, and much more. You can easily access and download whatever you need faster than you could before. Everything is easier to access.



3. Simplified User Navigation


We reduced the number of site navigation options to streamline the user experience. You can find desired content faster, and everything is in a place that makes sense (and if it isn't, we can easily move it!).

4. Prominent Newsletter Sign-Up

Our site makes it simple and straightforward to sign up for our newsletter and stay in touch with NSCA and our frequent news and updates.

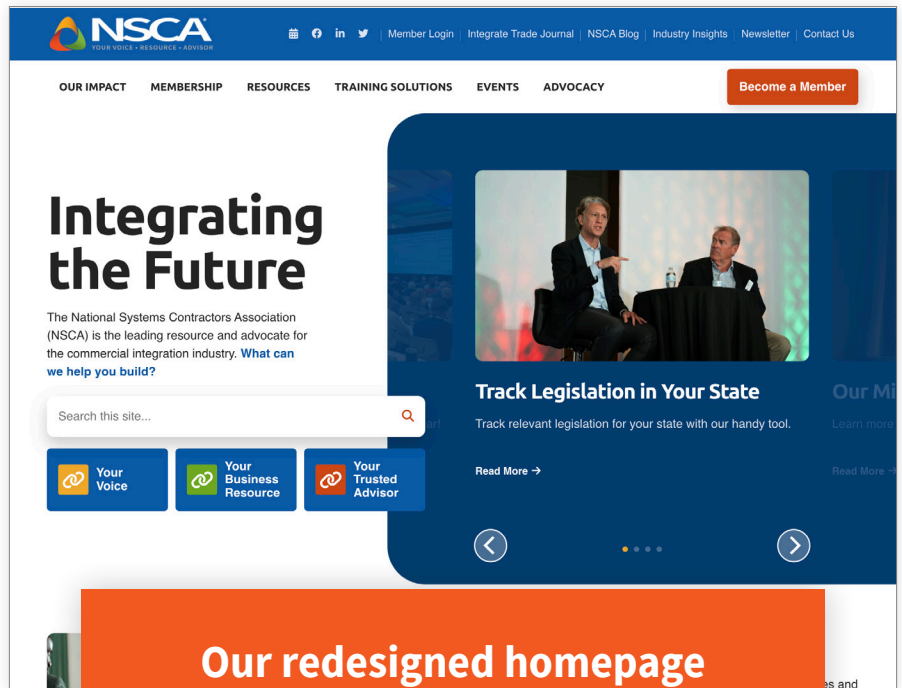
5. Enhanced Marketing Opportunities for Manufacturers Members

Our product and service provider members have more opportunities to showcase what they have to offer integrators. With rotating ad placement options and advanced tracking metrics, this group of members can more effectively reach and engage with their target audience to maximize their marketing efforts.

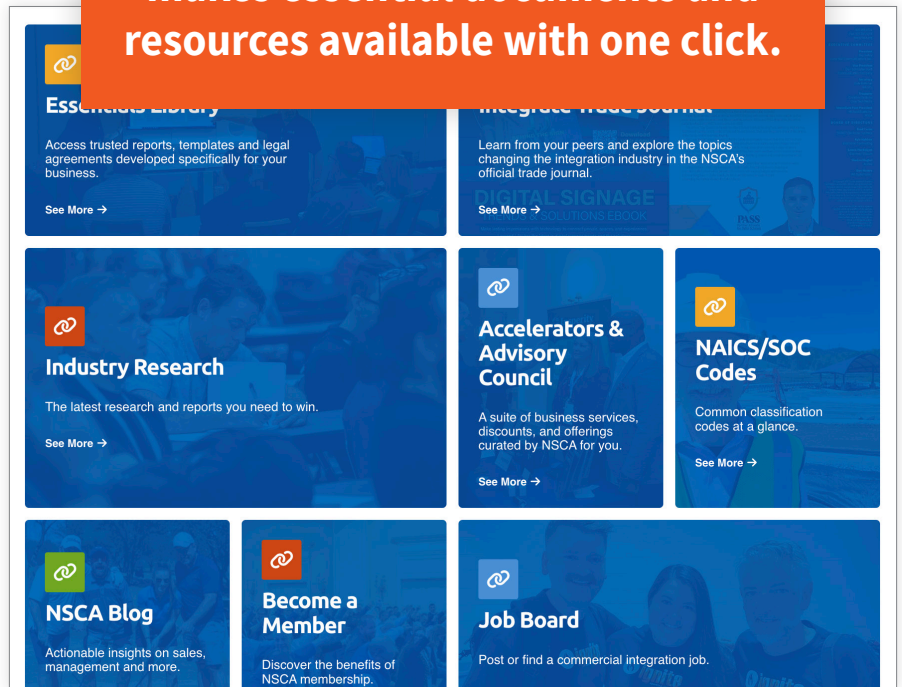
These enhancements collectively improve the overall user experience, making NSCA.org more intuitive, efficient, and valuable for you. Take a look and let us know what you think. 



Tom LeBlanc is executive director at NSCA.
Contact him at tleblanc@nsca.org.



Our redesigned homepage makes essential documents and resources available with one click.



Register for XBO Experience

Once you've identified the rising stars in your company, let them know about XBO 2024.

Nov. 12-13 • Georgia Tech • Atlanta

Register Now

Integrate

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XBO Experience: Prepare Your Next-Gen Leaders for Success

Nov. 12–13, 2024 • Atlanta

Whether you're new to the industry or rising fast, XBO Experience offers industry-specific development and networking opportunities made for the next generation of integration leaders.

XBO Experience isn't just another conference—it's an immersive experience designed *by* the next generation *for* the next generation. This event brings a new focus to ongoing and emerging trends that will impact the way future leaders operate their businesses, as well as educate these newer professionals about industry best practices and proven leadership methods.

XBO participants and supporters can expect:

- **Next-Gen Training:** Uncover how to develop the business and management skills that put you on track to leadership positions.
- **Interactive Learning:** Roleplay and experience industry challenges with real-world relevancy in an energized setting.
- **Career Insights:** Learn how fellow attendees and presenters entered the industry and how they're developing their own careers.
- **Ethical Explorations:** Dig into company ethics and core values and see how they play out in the real world.

Register Today



Business & Leadership Conference 2025: Reserve Your Spot Before It Sells Out!

Feb. 25-27, 2025 • Dallas

If you've experienced the Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) before, then you know you can't afford to miss it. It's the industry's must-attend business conference—one that boasts content planned specifically for integration firm leaders. You'll leave the beautiful Las Colinas Resort overflowing with inspiration and re-energized by new business strategies and ideas to implement.

BLC sells out every year, so register now to secure your spot!

If you haven't experienced BLC before, then you may be eligible for a **Randy Vaughan Scholarship**, which allows you to attend at no cost.

Not only will you get to experience keynotes about the future of technology and business—along with breakout sessions focused on finance, project management, and more—you also have the chance to join us for the NSCA Education Foundation Industry Charity Golf Outing the day before the event!

Register Now

Financial Leadership: Preventive Measures for Sustaining Success

On-Demand Webinar

We gathered financial leaders to discuss:

- Scenario planning so you know how your company will react to potential outcomes
- Gathering internal/external data about what's to come and knowing how to react to it
- Leading indicators that financial leaders need to study
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) that address preventive measures

NSCA Executive Director Tom LeBlanc hosts a discussion with input from members of NSCA's Financial Leadership Council and integrator panelists:

- **Joel Harris**, president of NSCA Business Accelerator Solutions360, shares insight to help integrators walk through scenario planning.
- **Jeff Bronswick**, CEO at Bronswick Benjamin, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember, discusses the impact he's seen preventive measures have on integrators.
- **Jerry Bernard**, president of KCAV, and **Kevin Miller**, president of Coitcom, explain how they use the best practices presented, along with the results they've realized.

Watch Now




Dr Kuehl's Mid-Summer Economic Update

On-Demand Webinar

Economic topics are heating up, and it's time for Dr. Chris Kuehl to talk to integrators about what it all means for our industry. The highly politicized election climate makes it difficult to know what to believe. As usual, NSCA's chief economist gives it to us straight. This webinar updates you on how global trends and economic factors will impact our industry.

Dr. Kuehl provides an integration-focused analysis on:

- Global matters, such as turmoil in the Middle East and Europe
- Employment numbers and what they mean for integrators facing escalating labor costs
- Political factors and the impact of the 2024 U.S. elections
- Expectations for the residential and commercial construction markets
- Vertical markets that appear on the verge of growth (and those that do not)
- Insight into consumer behavior trends and expectations
- Questions from NSCA members in the audience

This webinar is brought to you by  **LIGHTWARE**

Watch Now

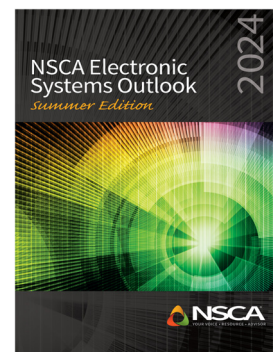
Electronic Systems Outlook Summer 2024: 10 Takeaways for Integrators

Sept. 26 • Webinar

The biannual *Electronics Systems Outlook* report that NSCA produces in conjunction with FMI provides invaluable market insight for integrators. As NSCA member companies battle for profitability in 2024, this reliable report helps them anticipate market and economic trends that will help them plan accordingly. This webcast serves as a companion to the written report, free to NSCA members. Market analysts from research firm FMI and NSCA leaders discuss 10 takeaways for integrators to consider, including:

- Reading into the Consumer Price Index and Consumer Confidence Index to analyze how it may impact inflation
- The vertical markets that are down and what that means for integrators
- The vertical markets that are up and what that means for integrators
- Economic factors that impact the integration industry, including employment projections

Register Now



What Dr. Chris Kuehl Has to Say About the Latest Economic Conditions

The Fed's official statement is that they won't lower interest rates until the end of the year. But that could change if inflation keeps falling while unemployment keeps rising.



It's an election year. And, during an election year, you'll find insights from economists around every corner. Their many opinions are amplified as United States citizens anxiously await November.

But as economists weigh in with their thoughts, you've likely noticed that what you hear from one contradicts another. If economists analyze the same data (in theory), then how is this possible?

This is one of the questions Dr. Chris Kuehl, NSCA's chief economist, answered during a recent webinar. When he talks, everyone has learned to listen. While he may not have a crystal ball, he does a great job of providing accurate and straightforward economic insight and analysis.

Here, we share just a snippet of what he discussed during his most recent update in July. To hear the full conversation, [watch the webinar on-demand](#).

[Editor's Note: Dr. Kuehl's comments came in July and, by press time, some publications were predicting interest rate cuts in September.]

Why Different Economists Have Different Opinions

"We pretend to be a science," Dr. Kuehl said. "We have charts and graphs and use math. But economists are trying to predict and forecast human behavior—and there's nothing more volatile and unpredictable than that."

During the webinar, he explained that American economist Milton Friedman established a taxonomy that outlined various levels of business, who should take what priority, and in what order. It went something like this:

1. **Owners/investors:** They take risks to launch new businesses and make decisions to keep companies intact.
2. **Employees:** They keep companies going.
3. **Consumers:** They want products/services at the highest quality possible for the lowest price possible.
4. **Community:** This group includes everyone listed above, as well as people who have nothing to do with the business, its consumers, its employees, or its owners/investors.

Within this taxonomy, every economist has their own point of view regarding who should “win” and who should “lose.” Even though they analyze the same data, economists come to different conclusions based on their opinions of who should reap what benefits.

“In the past few years, there’s been lots of pressure to be more attentive to community issues,” explained Dr. Kuehl. “It’s not that these issues are unimportant, but paying attention to them detracts from meeting consumer needs, meeting employee needs, and, most importantly, meeting owner/investor needs.”

Inflation: The Topic on Everyone’s Mind

During the webinar, Dr. Kuehl also spent time describing what inflation looks like today—and where it’s headed.

In every quarter of 2023, for example, most economists predicted a recession. But it never happened. Instead, the economy saw growth:

- **Q1:** 1.1%
- **Q2:** 2.4%
- **Q3:** 5.2%
- **Q4:** 2.5%

In 2024, most economists had expectations for a similar growth path in the first quarter. Wrong again. Instead, the first quarter saw a bit of decline, at 1.6%.

The latest GDPNow data from the Atlanta Fed predicted second-quarter numbers as high as 3% until just a few weeks ago (at the time of writing in July 2024). Then it fell to 1.2% before rising to 2%.

As Dr. Kuehl spoke, he predicted similar growth patterns in the third quarter of 2024. As for the final quarter of the year, he emphasized that no one is currently predicting a recession.

“When you look at the Fed and its attitude toward interest rates, a lot of things have changed in just the last month,” he described. “The Fed determines where it wants to be with interest rates based on inflation numbers and employment.”

But balancing these two factors is a nearly impossible task. The Fed has two mandates, which are given equal importance:

1. Maintain full employment by **keeping interest rates low.**
2. Control inflation by **keeping interest rates high.**


In other words: They need to raise and lower rates at the same time, which is not possible. As a result, he went on to explain, the mantra of the Fed is pretty simple: “They raise rates until they break something, then they lower rates to fix what they broke.”

As of late July, inflation numbers have shifted closer to the Fed’s goal (2%), while employment numbers reflect a bit more job stress.

“That’s enough to get them thinking about when they should lower interest rates,” Dr. Kuehl said. “The official statement from the Fed is that they won’t lower interest rates until the end of the year. But that could change to as early as September if inflation keeps going down while the unemployment rate keeps going up.”

One caveat, however: The Fed doesn’t like to change the interest rate before an election.

Hear More Economic Predictions

This is only one of the many topics Dr. Kuehl covered in his latest NSCA webinar. If you want to hear more about what he said, and his predictions for the rest of 2024 and beyond, then set aside an hour to listen to the **latest insights.** 

Get Business Insights Straight from Dr. Kuehl

Using intelligence methodologies and predictive analytics, Armada developed its Armada Strategic Intelligence System (ASIS) for NSCA members. This report provides a running intelligence estimate for integration firm leaders. NSCA Chief Economist Dr. Chris Kuehl monitors trigger events and market shifts and reports them straight to you so you can react and position your business accordingly.

Sign up to access these insights for only \$15 per month.



NEW



AXIS C6110 Network Paging Console

AXIS XC1311 Explosion-Protected Network Horn Speaker

Axis Communications, Inc.

WHAT'S NEW FROM AXIS?

AXIS C6110 Network Paging Console

AXIS C6110 complements network speakers to complete a public address system. The large color liquid-crystal display (LCD) is surrounded by 12 web-configurable buttons that enable callouts to as many audio zones as needed – from network speakers and intercoms to SIP-enabled devices. The buttons can also be configured to trigger actions on other IoT devices, such as access control or lighting systems, for smooth daily operations. Installation is easy and flexible. A single cable provides both power and connectivity (PoE), and the built-in beamforming mic ensures good sound whether the console is placed on a desk or wall mounted. Use it as-is, with a headset, or with AXIS TC6901 Gooseneck Microphone.

AXIS XC1311 Explosion-Protected Network Horn Speaker

Certified worldwide for hazardous areas (Class I Div 1, Zone 1 IIC), this all-in-one network horn speaker enables live, scheduled, and event-triggered voice messages. For example, real-time severe weather alerts, or prerecorded reminders to wear personal protective equipment when an analytics-equipped camera detects it's missing. Messages come through loud and clear – even in noisy environments – thanks to the horn and built-in digital signal processing. PoE makes installation easy, with one cable for both power and connectivity. Furthermore, AXIS Audio Manager Edge comes preinstalled so you can remotely monitor system health, set and prioritize content, and configure zones and user permissions.

[Learn More](#)



Ai-RGUS

Ai-RGUS is an RMR opportunity for camera system service providers. A 100% software solution, it automatically alerts of any problems, including cameras down/unclear views. It verifies camera liveness, image clarity and correctness, recording availability and alerts the security team otherwise. Ai-RGUS also enables keeping systems cyber-secure with its password and firmware version management tools. End-users buy surveillance systems and expect them to work when they need them, but finding out when they break or how to fix them is time consuming and not profitable. Now you can proactively earn from service calls and repairs to provide customers peace of mind.

[Learn More](#)

AtlasIED

AtlasIED announced the launch of Atmosphere Cloud at InfoComm 2024. AtlasIED's Atmosphere platform is an audio control system designed to enhance communication and improve the ambiance in commercial spaces. Simple to deploy and use but powerful in capabilities, Atmosphere combines digital audio processors, amplifiers, programming software, and controllers to set a new operational and performance standard for digital audio systems. The addition of Atmosphere Cloud expands upon the established flexibility offered by the platform, allowing integrators and end users to monitor and manage installations remotely.

[Learn More](#)

An Update on Right to Repair Laws

R2R legislation is intended to give consumers access to what they need to fix the products they own, but it signals trouble for manufacturers, distributors, and dealers of specialized electronic systems.

What started as a simple act to allow consumers to change their own cell phone batteries and farmers to repair their own farm equipment has grown to encroach on the technology our industry provides.

Right to Repair (R2R) legislation is intended to give consumers access to the tools, parts, documentation, and software they need to fix the products they own. We recognize the importance of providing consumers with effective ways to extend the lifecycle of their personal electronics, but this legislation signals trouble for manufacturers, distributors, and dealers of specialized electronic systems like NSCA members provide—which require specialized training or credentials in order to repair them.

If manufacturers are forced to make sensitive technical information and other information that compromises security systems available to the public, then the integrity of these systems are at risk. This is why we advocate to protect security, AV, and life safety systems from this legislation.

New York was the first state to sign an R2R bill into law in late 2022. Since then, the movement has gained momentum: More than 40 U.S. states have at least introduced Right to Repair legislation.

Within this legislation, our industry has been promised a “carve-out” that excludes the security and life safety systems, communications technology, and many other commercial products that manufacturers and integrators provide.

Here's an excerpt from one of many agreed-upon exclusions.

... commercial and industrial electrical equipment (including power distribution equipment, such as medium-/low-voltage switchgear and transformers; power control equipment, such as medium-/low-voltage motor control and drives; power quality equipment, such as uninterruptible power supplies, remote power panels, power distribution units, and static/transfer switches) and any tools, technology, attachments, accessories, components, and repair parts for any of the foregoing. (e) manufacturer, distributor, importer, retailer, or dealer.

Provisions addressing these concerns have been included in R2R laws in New York, California, Minnesota, Colorado, and Oregon.

New York

New York's law contains several provisions that are pertinent to our industry, including the fact that these obligations don't apply to companies that manufacture residential or commercial security devices or alarm systems. They also exclude non-consumer security or AV products that are sold to a business or to the government.

California

The California Right to Repair Act took effect on July 1, 2024, with a clear exemption for communication systems, alarm systems, and fire protection systems.

These exclusions protect most commercial AV and electronic security products that are part of our industry.

Minnesota

Minnesota's R2R law also took effect on July 1, 2024. It details the requirements that do not pertain to equipment used in work that could be performed under “relevant licensure” and exempts IT equipment for critical infrastructure.

Colorado

On Jan. 1, 2026, the Colorado Right to Repair law for consumer electronics will take effect. It provides multiple exemptions relevant to our industry, including provisions stating that the law does not apply to safety communications equipment for emergency response or prevention.


Provisions also exclude fire alarm systems, intrusion detection equipment, life safety systems, and access control equipment.

Oregon

Taking effect on Jan. 1, 2025, is the Oregon R2R law. The law does not generally apply to any commercial security products—only to consumer electronics sold by retailers and intended for personal, family, or household use.

We'll Keep You Up to Date

What's next? NSCA will continue to monitor this legislation in every state and watch for more bills like this.

Please let us know right away if you hear about similar legislation in your state. We're confident that we can help provide alternative language that will exclude our scope of work. 



A Deep Dive into Construction Spending Trends and Predictions

Highest-growth markets include manufacturing and government.

Twice a year, NSCA partners with FMI to produce the *Electronic Systems Outlook* report. The latest report—the Summer 2024 edition, which was released in August 2024—includes information based upon actual construction data from Q1 and Q2 of 2024, as well as a forecast for the remainder of 2024, 2025, and beyond.

Total U.S. engineering and construction spending is forecast to end 2024 up 6%, or in line with 2023 growth of approximately 6%. Spending in reported target nonresidential building segments is forecast to end 2024 up 6% from 2023, compared to up 21% between 2023 and 2022.

Most segments are realizing slowing growth, and a few are contracting after the strong growth experienced last year. Strong, double-digit investment growth in target building segments, including government and manufacturing, will drive a significant portion of increased spending through 2024.

Four markets were up by more than 5% as compared to 2023, but two stand out with double-digit growth:

- **Manufacturing** (up 21%), driven by investments in semiconductors, EVs, clean energy, and biomanufacturing.
- **Government** (up 18%), driven by public safety facility construction.

“With the U.S. election season heating up, it’s natural for NSCA members to brace for changes that will impact the economy and their businesses,” says NSCA Executive Director Tom LeBlanc. “The reality, however, is that indicating numbers influencing the Fed don’t signal significant change since the last *Electronic Systems Outlook* report. This report will be valuable for integrators that want to understand what’s happening so they can create a plan to respond.” ▲

NSCA Electronic Systems Outlook Summer Edition



The *Electronic Systems Outlook Summer 2024* report is free for NSCA members.

→ **Download it now.**

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Leading Financial Indicators of Company Success: Are You Tracking Them?

P&Ls aren't the best indicator of how well your company is performing financially.

Don't let big sales numbers distract you from what's really happening with your company's finances: That's the advice we got from Kevin Miller, Coitcom's president, when we asked how he measures the financial health of his integration firm.

NSCA recently invited Miller, along with other leaders within the commercial integration industry, to join a virtual roundtable conversation on the financial considerations that are critical to profitability.

If you missed it live in June, the discussion is worth **listening to on-demand**, with lots of specific information about how to lead company finances in uncertain times, as well as the sales KPIs you should track—and how to track them.

One of the most valuable topics we covered centered on profit and loss statements (the good old P&L): **Are they a good indicator of how well your company is performing financially?**

The answer from everyone seated at the virtual table: **No!**

"It took us a while to realize that a huge percentage of the numbers that hit the income statement and the P&L traces to orders that were booked six, nine, or 12 months ago—or even longer," explained Jerry Bernard, owner of Kansas City Audio-Visual (KCAV), during the webinar. "It doesn't

paint a real-time picture, and it can create a false sense of profitability and security."

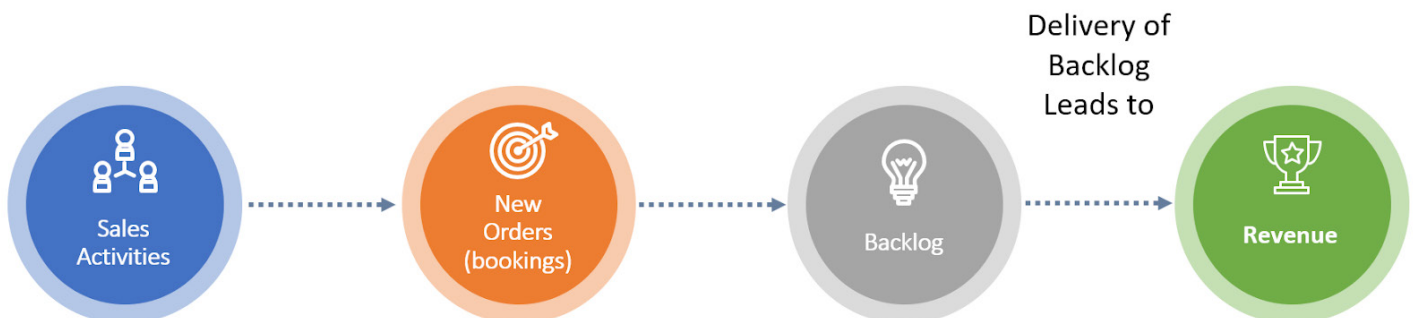
What should integrators be doing instead of relying on P&L statements? Here's what the experts we talked to say they trust instead.

Using Quick Ratios and WIP

At Coitcom, Miller uses a quick ratio or cash ratio to track how the company is doing, essentially evaluating the ability to pay short-term debts using liquid assets.

He also examines work in progress (WIP). "This could be something we are buttoning up tomorrow after working on it for six months, or it could be a \$700,000 signed PO for next summer." But he cautioned that it's always critical to look deep into your WIP. For example, 10% of a \$10 million WIP may not show up for another nine or 10 months.

He said this approach—evaluating WIP and relying on a cash ratio—has saved Coitcom from many headaches and hard times, especially within the past year. As the team watched business slow down, with little to no new work coming last summer before things started to ramp back up, there would have been many opportunities to misrepresent the situation or get lost in false senses of hope.





“If we had looked at it from a very high-level view, we would’ve thought, ‘We have great work in progress. We’re busy. Things are good.’ But they weren’t,” Miller described during the webinar. “We would’ve run out of cash in the middle of the summer and not made it to the fall and winter months, when all these great projects were coming in.”

Comparing New Orders This Year vs. Last Year

For Bernard and KCAV, it’s about tracking new orders—specifically comparing the orders placed this year to those placed last year at the same time.

“Depending on your vertical market, new orders can give you a pretty good lead time,” Bernard said. “If you’re working in healthcare, for example, then you’re probably not delivering that project for six to nine months after you receive that order. That means you have a six- to nine-month window to ramp up or scale down to drive the best performance from your P&L.”

To gather this information, said Bernard, it’s important to ask sales managers to share monthly sales commits: What’s the new order level for next month, the following month, and three months out? Then, you should measure whether these commits are coming to fruition—and keep your operations team in the loop either way.


“Rather than using a single month, my suggestion is to use an average of three or 12 months,” he emphasized. “A single month tends to look like the heart-rate chart of a very sick patient. It spikes. It dips. It goes all over the place, and you can’t learn a lot from it. One big order could skew your averages.”

Bernard also warned webinar attendees to remember this: When asked to report on sales activities, some salespeople will be optimistic, while others will naturally lean more toward pessimism. For this reason, the projected sales pipeline may not tell you as much as you need. Train your sales leaders to create forecasts based on what they see in the pipeline, and make it permissible for them to deliver news that you don’t want to hear. (In other words, keep your emotions in check if you’re receiving bad news.)

Your Source for Industry-Specific Financial Insights

Now more than ever, the key to coming out ahead is empowering your financial leaders to make changes that protect your integration firm from vulnerabilities while also supporting profitability.

If you want to listen to the entire conversation we had about financial leadership and driving profitability, visit [this link](#) at any time.

If you have any questions about what we covered in this article or the KPIs discussed in the roundtable conversation, we’ll be glad to connect you with any of the experts who joined NSCA for this vital industry conversation! 

5 Forward-Looking Financial Metrics to Measure

- 1 Sales commits (30, 60, and 90 days)
- 2 Bookings (trailing 3-month basis to prior period, trailing 3-month basis to prior year, trailing 12-month basis to prior year)
- 3 Total backlog gross profit
- 4 90-day cashflow forecast
- 5 Opportunities (3 to 9 months out)

15 Other Critical Financial Metrics to Track

- 1 Budget to actual
- 2 Snapshot analysis from last month
- 3 Over/under labor absorption
- 4 Utilization
- 5 Planned revenue (30, 60, and 90 days)
- 6 Labor plan vs. capacity (30, 60, and 90 days)
- 7 Accounts receivable (overdue by 30, 60, and 90 days)
- 8 Unallocated inventory
- 9 Invoicing trends (under/overbilled)
- 10 Operational effectiveness ratio
- 11 Customer profitability
- 12 ICO and CCO total (prior month)
- 13 Total payroll and total overtime
- 14 Total headcount
- 15 Revenue per employee



What is a rational approach for gluing disparate systems together? There's no easy answer, but don't be too proud to learn from others.
By Eric Morris

When It Comes to Finances, Don't Reinvent the Wheel

"I didn't know it was that bad!"

That was the reaction a mid-market company owner stammered when I delivered an assessment of his accounting processes and systems. He was devastated to learn that his existing systems were unsustainable due to an abundance of manual processes required to maintain connectivity between the applications.

In the past year, I've delivered three similar assessments to three different mid-market companies. Each company had its unique process challenges, but all three shared the same Achilles heel. Because their ancillary systems weren't adequately communicating with their ERP system, they had chokepoints in their processes.

Bringing All the Pieces Together

There are a host of characters and systems in this drama:

- CAD
- HRM
- Scheduling
- CRM
- Job costing
- Ticketing
- Dispatching
- LMS
- Utilities
- Estimating
- Payroll

If these subsystems are all encompassed within the same ERP, then congratulations! However, I have yet to see any ERP system that is robust enough to do justice to all these elements. Most ERP systems handle some of these tasks, but not all.

For example, you may employ a "best-of-breed" estimating system because it gives you a bid-day advantage. Although it serves your needs well, seamlessly integrating it with your ERP system may be an arduous undertaking. In an ideal world, your estimating system vendor would have an established API (application programming interface) to quickly and efficiently pass the information into the ERP system.

But we don't live in an ideal world. It takes two to tango, and getting the ancillary vendor and the ERP vendor to work together to create the API can be difficult and expensive (and perhaps not even possible).

If no API exists, then we must employ other means of connectivity to utilize data from the ancillary systems. This involves using scraping tools, system dumps, exports, imports, and data manipulation. This is a treacherous road indeed. The patchwork routines that move the data between systems can involve unstable, inefficient, manually intensive, and slow processes. Quite often, this choke point slows down the month-end close and produces unwanted surprises when the tenuous connectivity breaks.

Start with 'What,' 'Who,' and 'How'

What, then, is a rational approach for gluing these disparate systems together? There is no magic bullet here. It can be a difficult challenge. Fortunately, I can offer some practical words of wisdom.

Approach your challenge by addressing the:

- What
- Who
- How

The "What"

When you attempt to connect systems, don't reinvent the wheel. It's highly likely that someone has previously done what you're trying to do (or at least something similar).

Most mainline ERP systems (Sage, Microsoft Dynamics, Acumatica, etc.) already have APIs or export capabilities with leading payroll services, such as Paycor, Paycom, Paycheck, Paylocity, and others. This is also

true with connections to the leading CRM, LMS, estimating, and design systems.

Even if the connection path isn't ideal, find an approach that has worked for someone else before launching into an untested solution. A trial-and-error connectivity approach is expensive, frustrating, and time-consuming.

The "Who"

Seek out others from the industry to determine what systems they use and how they connect to each other. Even if they aren't using the same ERP system you have, perhaps you can use a similar connection strategy. You may learn about a scraping tool, an export utility, or another approach you hadn't previously considered.

Ask your ERP software vendors to share the names of their customers so you can consult them directly about connectivity issues. Even if the references aren't in your industry, they can still provide valuable information on what worked (and what didn't) for them. This is a scavenger hunt, and you may need to make many calls to find the kernel of wisdom you're seeking.

The "How"

Before you make inquiries to references, be organized. Prepare your list of questions. Ask about the software and databases they use. If they have an API, find out who developed it and at what cost. If they use exports and imports, determine the file structure (CSV, Excel, etc.). Was the mapping done on the ERP side or the ancillary application side? Are there value-added consultants who helped develop the connections? Determine whether you can converse with the reference's tech people and the CFO at the same time.

Don't Suffer in Silence

I'm not a technical guru, so my advice isn't esoteric. This approach has been battle-tested during many struggles with my own connectivity issues. When confronting client companies with their ineffective connective processes, I was stunned to learn that they suffered in silence. They hadn't consulted their peer group or voiced their frustrations to anyone.

If this advice is so obvious and practical, then why are companies still struggling with this issue? The reason is simple. Many of these individuals are too busy telling you what won't work rather than seeking solutions.

Don't be too proud to learn from others. System connectivity is an ongoing and pervasive issue, so borrow a page out of someone else's book. 📖

For the past 40 years, Eric Morris has held senior financial positions for private and publicly held construction companies. He's the president of Morris Executive Edge, LLC, where he spends his time advising entrepreneurs on ways to take their organizations to the next level of success. Prior to that, he served as the CFO at Wayne Automatic Fire Sprinklers, Inc. for 25 years. He has been a featured speaker and panelist at many national conferences and holds CPA, CMA, CIA, and CCIFFP certifications.

New NSCA Leadership Takes the Helm

Meet the new NSCA Board of Directors for 2024-2025.

We're excited to announce the election of new NSCA leadership as part of our executive committee for 2024-2025. This year brings a new NSCA president, as well as many other NSCA leadership changes and the addition of a new officer.



President

Dale Bottcher, Executive Vice President of Global Sales and Marketing at AVI-SPL



Vice President

Christina De Bono, President at ClearTech Media



Treasurer

Shedan Maghzi, Strategic Advisor at Avidex



Secretary

Don Mastro, Chief Revenue Officer at AVI Systems



Immediate Past President

Dan Schmidtendorff, Communication Company



Board Member

Ray Bailey, Lone Star Communications



Board Member

Laurie MacKeigan, President at Backman Vidcom



Board Member

Tina Peters, Executive Vice President at SVT (new member)



Board Member

Chuck Wilson, CEO Emeritus, NSCA (new member)

Meet Tina Peters, a New NSCA Board Member

We met up with Tina Peters, executive vice president at SVT and newest NSCA board member, to ask her a few questions.

Q: Can you describe the most rewarding parts of your role at SVT?

A: I love watching my team members discover their potential and grow in their roles. Coaching and supporting them to overcome obstacles is incredibly rewarding, as it helps them provide a premium customer experience while achieving personal fulfillment.

Q: What are the biggest opportunities that SVT and the industry face?

A: I see the convergence of AV and IT as a significant opportunity. Many IT leaders are now responsible for AV systems and need a reliable partner to help them understand their existing setups and consult on their specific needs, ensuring they have effective solutions in place.

Q: Are there things integrators should do to prepare for these opportunities?

A: Integrators must stay updated on the latest technologies to recommend the best products for their customers. Adopting a partnership approach and prioritizing the customer's needs over their own preferences is essential.

Q: What is the biggest challenge related to running an integration company right now?

A: There is a lot of competition and margin pressure in the industry. We must recognize the value we provide to our customers. To avoid diluting our industry, it's essential that we focus on selling based on value rather than competing solely on price.

Q: How does SVT lean on NSCA for help in addressing these challenges?

A: We send our leadership team to the Business & Leadership Conference annually. Each time, we gain valuable insights that we can apply across various functions within the company to drive improvement. The online resources NSCA provides have also been instrumental in helping us measure the right KPIs and stay aligned with industry standards.

Q: Why is it important to volunteer with NSCA?

A: NSCA has been vital to our business for many years. I look forward to sharing my industry experience to help others grow their companies and themselves.

Q: What's a fun fact that most NSCA members don't know about you?

A: I was a singer in my early years and have a passion for all types of music. Although I don't perform for audiences anymore, I still love to grab a mic at karaoke night and have a great time.





Belden

Lots goes on inside a smart building. Technology, digital systems and data are always working behind the scenes to automate, manage and control the built environment. The result is a more efficient, safe, sustainable and comfortable space.

To support capabilities like data collection and sharing, centralized control, predictive maintenance and energy efficiency, these technologies, systems and data must be supported by reliable communications infrastructure.

Beyond the obvious—local area networks (LANs) and wireless LANs—the systems in a smart building that manage and protect the facility and the people inside require communications infrastructure for functionality, data sharing and insights.

These systems typically use different protocols to govern

communication: DALI for lighting, KNX for access control and HVAC, and the list goes on—especially when you enter a smart building’s mechanical room, where you’ll discover communication protocols like ControlNet, DeviceNet, Modbus, CANbus, RS-232, RS-422, RS-423 and RS-485. Each of these protocols has specific transmission media requirements.

In a traditional building, all these systems work independently. In a smart building, these operational siloes are eliminated, despite differences in protocols and requirements.

[Learn More](#)



Audio-Technica

The Audio-Technica Engineered Sound® Wireless System is the simple, smart, scalable solution for high-quality audio. With automatic DECT-based frequency management, up to 96 simultaneously usable channels, and best-in-class battery life for all-day transmitter use, the Engineered Sound Wireless System has the power and versatility to continually adapt to your conferencing needs. The system is available in 8-channel Dante™ or Audio-Technica LINK audio output configurations, installs easily with Cat 5e cable, and can be centrally managed via Audio-Technica’s Wireless Manager software. Once installed, the boundary, desk stand, body-pack, and handheld transmitters are ready to use straight from the charger.

[Learn More](#)

AV Design Labs

Meet Vikas Modi, a dynamic individual who recently immigrated from India to join AV Design Labs’ US operation. With a robust background in managing departments back in India, Vikas brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role. His journey reflects a commitment to excellence and a passion for innovation in AV technology. Transitioning seamlessly into the diverse cultural landscape of the US, Vikas is poised to make significant contributions to AV Design Labs, leveraging his skills to drive success and forge new pathways in the ever-evolving field of audiovisual design.

[Learn More](#)



Electro-Voice

Maximum audio performance, minimum visual impact: Electro-Voice introduces LRC (Line Radiator Column) series loudspeakers.

The LRC series expands the Electro-Voice installed sound portfolio with three passive column loudspeaker models – the LRC-1060, LRC-1100 and LRC-2100. Based around purpose-built 2.5” drivers and proprietary PaSS (Passive Sidelobe Suppression) dispersion control technology, all models provide carefully controlled vertical dispersion and smooth frequency response for environments where both audio quality and clean aesthetics are required.

The LRC design concept is focused on easy installation, with a range of integrator-friendly features. The patent-pending SwiftTilt System incorporates a super-compact flush/pan/tilt bracket that enables the LRC to be mounted as close to the wall as possible. Passive designs with integrated 70/100V + Lo-Z transformers (LRC-1060 & LRC-1100) avoid the complexity of external Hi-Z adapters or active steerable systems. Sleek, paintable black or white enclosures blend easily into their surroundings, indoors or outdoors.

All models include EV’s proprietary PaSS (Passive Sidelobe Suppression) technology, which features custom-designed phase plugs to extend lobe-free high-frequency output beyond the range of human speech, maximizing intelligibility. Unique passive-radiators are used in the LRC-1060 and LRC-1100 to extend the low-frequency output to well below 100 Hz, making them appropriate for many musical applications. The higher-output LRC-2100 goes even further, using a two-way design and dual-6.5” woofers to extend LF response with authority down to 45 Hz, for true full-range performance in a single-column format. The LRC-1100 and LRC-2100 include switchable wide/narrow vertical coverage control settings and passive acoustic down-tilt, which focuses energy on the audience without physically tilting the loudspeaker.

The LRC-1060 and LRC-1100 are certified to IP56c and EN54-24 type B; the LRC-2100 is certified to IP55.

[Learn More](#)



Electro-Voice

Avocor

Avocor recently launched not one but two new products to market, showcased for the first time at InfoComm 24: the E92 and the K Series Prosumer display range. The E92 is a 92-inch interactive touchscreen display with a 21:9 aspect ratio, designed to enhance meeting environments with its superior image clarity, eliminating the need for dual-monitor setups. The K Series is a range of non-touch prosumer displays available in 55 to 98-inch sizes. These displays feature QLED technology and are designed for versatile use across corporate, educational, and public settings. The K Series offers advanced integration capabilities, such as wireless screen sharing and digital signage, providing high-performance visual and communication solutions for modern environments.

[Learn More](#)

How the SECURE 2.0 Act Can Help Your Business Succeed

The SECURE 2.0 Act requires employers to actively help enhance their employees' financial wellness—and provides tax credits for doing so. *By John Stanton*



In December 2022, the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement ([SECURE 2.0 Act](#)) was put in place. Its goal is to help American workers look ahead to retirement and better prepare financially.

For several reasons, many older U.S. workers have not been able to contribute to retirement savings. Without a predictable income, they're unsure about their financial future and ability to maintain their current lifestyle in the years to come.

The SECURE 2.0 Act requires employers to actively help enhance their employees' financial wellness and enables business leaders to:

- Provide extra financial benefits to balance out an organization's [compensation strategy](#)
- Stay competitive in a dynamic labor market
- Succeed in the battle for talent

About the SECURE 2.0 Act

The SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022 has over 90 provisions and spans 358 pages.

The law encourages people to save more money for retirement while also [stabilizing their finances](#). To help facilitate this, the law makes vast changes to the foundation of retirement preparation in the United States: [employer-sponsored 401\(k\) plans](#).

The SECURE 2.0 Act seeks to:

- Allow access to 401(k) retirement plans for more people
- Offer additional chances to save
- Provide financial incentives to save while eliminating common barriers and penalties

How Employers Benefit

There's never been a better time to initiate a 401(k) retirement plan for your company. In the past, offering 401(k) retirement plans, particularly when a [possible recession](#) forced businesses to reassess budgets, had small and midsize employers a bit apprehensive.

However, the SECURE 2.0 Act greatly decreases the cost deterrent of setting up retirement plans. Employers now have extremely compelling tax incentives:

- Companies with fewer than 100 employees that set up a new 401(k) plan receive a tax credit of up to 50% of the plan's administrative cost for the first three years.
- Companies with fewer than 50 employees that set up a new 401(k) plan receive a tax credit of up to 100% of the plan's administrative cost for the first three years.
- Over the first five years of the retirement plan, companies with 100 or fewer employees can receive a maximum tax credit of up to \$1,000 per employer match to each employee's retirement account.

Just remember, these are tax credits, not deductions. Bottom line: The U.S. government is paying employers to establish and contribute to retirement plans.

It doesn't matter if companies are beginning their own 401(k) retirement plans or adopting a current retirement plan sponsored by a [professional employer organization \(PEO\)](#): Either way, these tax credits apply.

Creating a Competitive Advantage

In addition, employers can't miss the competitive advantage related to improved financial offerings in their benefits package. Attracting top-tier talent in our ultra-competitive job market is hard enough, much less retaining valued employees for as long as possible. It's essential that your company deliver benefits that separate you from your peers and demonstrate a culture of caring for your people.

Many employees see a 401(k) as a standard offering—something that any credible and attractive employer should provide. Without question, meeting this minimum standard and complying with the required provisions of the SECURE 2.0 Act are important.

Yet, the optional provisions in the SECURE 2.0 Act present an opportunity to surpass expectations and provide an exceptional employee experience. Giving employees extra opportunities to increase the amount of

their savings and enhance their financial situation can be a difference-maker between you and a competitor.

At the end of the day, your business competitiveness in attracting and retaining talent depends on adopting a “total rewards approach.” This means that businesses strive to compensate employees outside of mere salary to safeguard and improve their physical, emotional, social, professional, and financial health.

Alongside retirement savings and coinciding financial benefits, total rewards may include:

- Performance rewards
- Insurance (medical, dental, vision, and disability)
- Paid time off
- Flexible schedules and work location
- Room for growth and development
- Wellness programs
- Additional perks

Team members who feel taken care of and valued, as well as confident and secure in their financial health, are more engaged, focused, productive, and loyal. Oftentimes, these employees stay put for the long term and add to your business growth as well as success.

Summing It Up

The SECURE 2.0 Act has changed the retirement savings landscape by broadening benefit options in many areas, such as student loan repayment, emergency fund support, broader catch-up opportunities, reduced exposure to tax penalties, and more.

As an employer, you can reap major benefits and become eligible for generous tax credits when you comply with the law's requirements and implement optional provisions.

Adding these financial benefits to a company's total rewards approach can decrease employees' financial stress and enhance the employer-employee relationship, thus cultivating employee engagement and retention. This can also rapidly boost a company's competitiveness in the job market. ▲

Want to learn more? [Read the full blog](#) for additional details or check out the Secure 2.0 Act updated provisions [here](#).

Looking for additional information or have questions? Visit insperity.com/nsca or email us at alliance@insperity.com.

John Stanton, vice president of retirement services operations at Insperity, has been a retirement plan professional for over 40 years—the last 20 of which have been with Insperity. In that time, he has provided recordkeeping, administrative, compliance, and consulting services to all types and sizes of retirement plans, including defined benefit, 403(b), nonqualified, and 401(k) plans. He works on his mission to help people have a secure, happy retirement by remembering that each person has an individual view of what retirement should be.

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Cleerline

At Cleerline, our commitment to education and innovation remains unwavering. We are thrilled to announce our updated Cleerline Academy, designed to empower professionals and enthusiasts alike with comprehensive knowledge about fiber optics and Cleerline products.

The Cleerline Academy is more than just a learning platform; it's a gateway to mastering the intricacies of fiber optic technology. With a robust curriculum that covers both foundational and advanced topics, our Academy ensures that learners at all levels can gain valuable insights and skills. Whether you're new to the field or an experienced integrator looking to refine your expertise, our courses are tailored to meet your needs.

Our enhanced Academy features interactive modules, detailed tutorials, and demonstrations that bring fiber optics to life. We delve deep into the principles of fiber optics, exploring

its superior speed, bandwidth, and reliability. Additionally, we provide in-depth training on Cleerline's innovative products, showcasing how our solutions can transform your AV installations and beyond.

At Cleerline, we believe that education is the cornerstone of progress. By equipping our community with the knowledge and tools to excel, we are fostering a culture of excellence and innovation. Our updated Academy is a testament to this belief, offering a dynamic learning experience that keeps pace with the rapidly evolving technology landscape.

Join us at Cleerline Academy and take the next step in your professional journey. Together, we can push the boundaries of what's possible with fiber optics and create a brighter, more connected future.

[Learn More](#)



Biamp

Simplify and Enhance Collaboration w/ MAX Connect. Now shipping, MAX Connect is an easy-to-use, yet powerful, content-sharing and collaboration solution that turns any space into a bring-your-own-meeting (BYOM) room. Now participants can use their own devices to share and interact with content, control room AV equipment, and open UC meetings using their app of choice — including Microsoft Teams and Zoom. With MAX Connect, users have unprecedented control over their collaboration experience, leading to more productive meetings and enhancing engagement, ideation, and decision making.

[Learn More](#)

Bogen Communications

Bogen Communications' newly introduced Wall Baffle Speaker boasts a myriad of features designed to elevate communication and streamline operations. The 8-inch speaker provides remarkable audio coverage of up to 600-feet to inform audiences efficiently. The Wall Baffle Speaker offers customizable single-color text, multi-colored flashers and event-based flashing lights for informational and critical communications. Featuring powerful scenario-based automated action sequences, known as Routines, the Wall Baffle Speaker boasts an enhanced user experience for simplified and streamlined mass communication. The Waffle Baffle Speaker features a 12/24-hour clock display with brightness control for optimal visibility.

[Learn More](#)

Bose

Here's what you missed from Bose Professional at InfoComm 2024, including our exciting new product announcements. Visit the link below to learn about EdgeMax being named Best in Show in AV Technology, as well as new product announcements.

[Learn More](#)

How to Tell Your Brand Story

A brand story is an essential tool to ensure that your team represents your organization accurately and compellingly.

When we meet with a prospective client and ask them to tell us about their company, they're seldom at a loss for words. But each member of their team tells the story differently. One begins by recounting history. Another focuses on products or markets. Often, they direct our attention to the organization's mission, vision,

Leadership seldom has a shared brand narrative at the ready, and the rank and file almost never do. That's unfortunate, because getting your message out to the right audience is a lot harder when you speak in multiple voices.

What Is a Brand Story?

You've heard the term "elevator pitch": a 30- to 60-second statement about who your company is, what it does, and why it's better at it than the competition. The purpose of an elevator pitch is to inform and evoke an emotional response along the lines of, "Wow, that's interesting. Tell me more!"

A brand story is almost the same thing—but as part of a brand platform. It's slightly more comprehensive and foundational (maybe half to three quarters of a page in length). You don't necessarily need to memorize it, but it's something you should expect your team to internalize—especially anyone in sales or marketing.

If you don't have a brand story, you're not alone. According to the Content Marketing Institute, only 52% of marketers understand and use a brand platform as the foundation for their marketing strategies. That figure is undoubtedly lower for pro AV, which traditionally has not been a brand-driven industry.

But having a brand story is an essential tool to ensure that your team and your website (not to mention your social channels) represent your organization accurately and compellingly. It's part of a larger brand platform upon which all your marketing is built.

Your Brand Platform as Your Foundation

We refer to it as foundational because, unlike a marketing campaign, your brand platform is essentially a permanent construction.

The personality of your business and the promise you're making are pretty much set. A brand platform captures, records, and leverages those qualities that make your company what it is so that any marketing you do in the near- or long-term tells the truth about who you are. Those truths are what your customers need in order to build a lasting relationship with you.

If your signature strength is your engineering prowess, then make sure that's communicated loud and clear. Perhaps you're distinguished by the quality of your partnerships or the comprehensiveness of your customer service. Maybe it's

the depth of your expertise in a particular vertical that makes you special. Or perhaps you live your values in a way that no one else does. It's more than likely that your company has an array of attributes; together, they make you who you are. A brand story captures those strengths.

And that's just for starters. It can also tell important truths about how you work and the kind of customers you're best suited to serve. A good brand story makes it easier for you to find the right clients—and for them to find you.

Taking the First Step

So, what's the first step in developing a brand story? Understand who your company is and what it brings to the table. Also understand that perception is reality. As an owner or leader, you'll undoubtedly have a strong sense of what your business is all about, but other perspectives may vary. Talk to a cross-section of employees and customers about who you are. The truth will be in the aggregate.

Next, take what you learned and shape it into a platform upon which your marketing efforts can be built. This is easier said than done, as branding is a specialized discipline. Moreover, branding and marketing are notoriously difficult to handle on a strictly internal basis, even for branding and marketing firms.

When you're so close to an organization, it's hard to see the forest through the trees. The minutiae can distract and overwhelm. Plus, your customers' needs always need to be met first. (Heard the adage about the shoemaker's children having no shoes lately?) That's why branding professionals exist. They have the expertise, focus, and perspective necessary to arrive at an actionable brand platform.

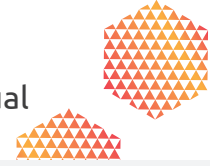
A word of warning: There's no shortage of brand and marketing agencies out there, and their prices can vary wildly. Some branding experts cast their work in almost mystical terms and charge otherworldly fees. Others bill lavishly for their research into your industry and competition. But we believe that branding should be available to all integrators—not as an end in itself, but as a component of marketing and sales strategy that is affordable and actionable in a highly competitive market.

One takeaway for you: When seeking marketing assistance, go with a partner that brings brand sensibility to everything they do, because branding is truly foundational. Each company has a story to tell, and branding is the discipline that brings your narrative to life so that you can leverage it to build lifelong customer relationships. ▲

Learn more about [Supervox](#), an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember.



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Exertis Almo

Learn, Network and “Plug In” With Exertis Almo This Fall

With another successful InfoComm already in the rear-view mirror, [Exertis Almo](#) is working hard behind the scenes to create more experiences that keep AV integrators networking, learning, sharing and growing.

Registration is OPEN for the fall leg of the [E4 Experience](#), Exertis Almo’s award-winning (recently named a [Commercial Integrator BEST](#)), traveling single-day event that is entirely free to integrators and their end user customers. Now in its 15th year, the E4 Experience continues to grow with record-breaking numbers this past spring at events in D.C and Chicago, with more than 1,000 attendees and 1,000 AVIXA CTS RUs earned.

The [E4 Experience](#) is coming soon to the following location:

October 8: Anaheim (Anaheim Marriott)

Covering a wide range of trends and topics relevant to integrators, the fall E4 tour includes an expanded version of the InfoComm sold-out session “[Autism and AV](#)” led by Rob Voorhees, Business

Development Manager II –Technical Specialist and newly inducted member of [SCN’s 2024 Class of The Nine](#). Voorhees will discuss how to further the conversation about neurodiversity in AV to maximize employee skill levels and attract a more diverse customer base. It includes his personal experience as the parent of a daughter on the spectrum and the process of helping her navigate her way through school and into her professional career.

Additionally, Exertis Almo is introducing its new Plug-In events. These localized, one-day networking opportunities give integrators the ability to “plug-in,” and expand their professional circle locally for an afternoon. Piloted in May with great success, the events will continue with the next one taking place in the Houston area in October. More information will be available soon at www.exertisalmo.com.

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Cornell Communications

Cornell Communications is a 40+ year designer and now is the leading technology manufacturer of two emergency response alarm systems. These products will supplement the revenue and profits of your business.

Both systems are now software based, allowing remote access and maintenance. We improve safety and security for the residents of Senior Housing Centers and employees and guests in Multi-Story Buildings.

If you’re interested in one of our now select exclusive territories, contact Kyle Giersch, our National Sales Manager, at 414-351-4660 or Kyleg@cornell.com to request an application for exclusive dealership.

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Vaddio

The Venture® VideoBAR is a 4K video conferencing solution with an optional expansion microphone for flexible installation in small to large rooms. A 6-element beamforming microphone array and high-fidelity speaker system ensure crystal-clear audio with lifelike voice reproduction. Optional expansion microphones increase flexibility by offering 20 feet of pickup range for various meeting room scenarios. The Venture® VideoBAR is a plug-and-play device with simultaneous USB and HDMI outputs. Seamlessly connect to your PC via USB 3.0, providing clear audio and 1080p/60 video. The 4K 2160p/60 HDMI output boosts confidence during presentations

or video conferences. With its all-in-one design featuring premium video and audio, remote management capabilities, and Vaddio's commitment to support, the Venture® VideoBAR is the ultimate conferencing solution that simplifies communication and fosters collaboration in today's dynamic work environment.

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Software & Services: Better management. Better collaboration. Better support. Poly software and services solutions deliver better collaborative experiences that keep your teams productive in any workspace.

[Learn More](#)

Jabra

PanaCast 50 – Video Your Way! Our award-winning Jabra PanaCast 50 has the winning combination of being simple to set up, manage, and use, as well as being equipped with the latest tech, for top-notch video meetings including being certified for both Microsoft and Zoom. Making video conferencing easier all around for everyone.

In addition to the PanaCast 50 plug-and-play BYOD (Bring-Your-Own-Device), Jabra also offers the PanaCast 50 Room System and PanaCast 50 VBS. PLUS! [Jabra+](#) for admins is now available for Panacast 50 and PanaCast 50 Room System. Remote meeting room management at your fingertips!

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Preparing next-gen talent for integration leadership positions



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Common Obstacles to Technology Financing and How to React

Make sure you know how to respond when these three hurdles get in the way of selling managed services.

Technology financing, while essential for businesses, can be a challenging sell.

You're likely to encounter obstacles with clients during the process. Here, we outline the most common obstacles we encounter, as well as effective strategies to address them.

Obstacle 1: Our Customers Always Pay Cash

Response: Customers face two choices when considering technology purchases:

1. Paying monthly installments
2. Cash

While cash may appear advantageous in certain scenarios—particularly for those who prefer to avoid monthly payments—it requires a substantial capital outlay. This lump-sum payment is less appealing for businesses with limited liquidity.

To address this, consider posing a question to your customer: **“Have you ever considered what you would do with this \$50,000 if you didn't have to pay for your technology all upfront today?”**

This inquiry prompts them to think about their goals and objectives. By exploring this idea, they may uncover valuable insights and how they aim to grow.

For instance, some customers might prefer to allocate that cash for hiring a new staff member or opening a new location. Armed with this information, you can tailor your approach and provide a monthly payment quote that encompasses all necessary services. Additionally, customers may be more inclined to invest in additional hardware, software, or other offerings when presented with an appealing monthly payment structure. By engaging in deeper discovery conversations beyond the immediate transaction, you can foster strong customer relationships and encourage repeat business.

Obstacle 2: Our Customers Don't Bring It Up

Response: Choosing not to offer technology financing simply because customers haven't explicitly requested it can be a strategic misstep. Some businesses fall into the trap of assuming that, if customers don't specifically ask for a financing option, then there's no need to provide it.

However, this mindset can hinder business growth and result in losing customers to more innovative competitors. Customers might also not be aware that this is even an option, which could be why they aren't asking for it.

Instead, you should actively listen to your audience, seek feedback, and remain open to change. For example, consider online retailers like Amazon. During the checkout process, they offer financing options such as Klarna and Afterpay. By providing different payment choices, Amazon makes their platform more appealing to customers. These options allow customers to split payments into smaller amounts, potentially encouraging them to purchase more items. Although customers may not have explicitly requested these payment options, Amazon's proactive approach demonstrates how businesses can better serve their customers and stay ahead of the curve.

Similarly, offering technology financing—even if customers aren't explicitly asking for it—can position your business as forward-thinking and customer-centric, potentially outshining competitors.

Obstacle 3: Our Customers Want to Own Their Technology

Response: Ownership holds significant value for many individuals, influencing their purchasing decisions. When people hear the term “ownership,” they often associate it with empowerment and assume that owning something outright is the optimal choice. However, this assumption doesn't always hold true, and it may cause them to overlook more advantageous opportunities.

Opting to finance technology through monthly payments can create a mutually beneficial scenario for customers and sellers. Some technology and hardware have a lifespan of around three years before reaching end of life. As the end of the term approaches, customers have the option to renew their equipment. This flexibility allows them to consistently access the latest and most updated technology.

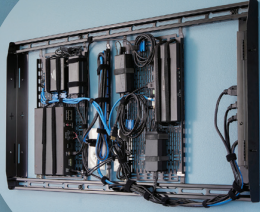
In contrast, paying cash upfront leaves them with outdated equipment until it breaks, necessitating another substantial lump-sum investment for an upgrade. Additionally, transitioning customers to a monthly payment model benefits sellers by familiarizing them with the process and getting them into the habit of always including a monthly payment, as well as fostering a lasting relationship.

While the allure of ownership may seem appealing, it can sometimes lead to financial pitfalls. Educating customers about the advantages of monthly payments not only saves them potential headaches but also contributes to building enduring customer relationships.

When engaging with potential clients, preparation for potential obstacles is crucial. Anticipating them in advance not only reduces stress but also enhances your credibility when you respond with well-informed answers. By carefully considering these hurdles, you significantly improve your chances of successfully closing a deal. 📍

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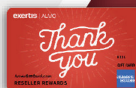
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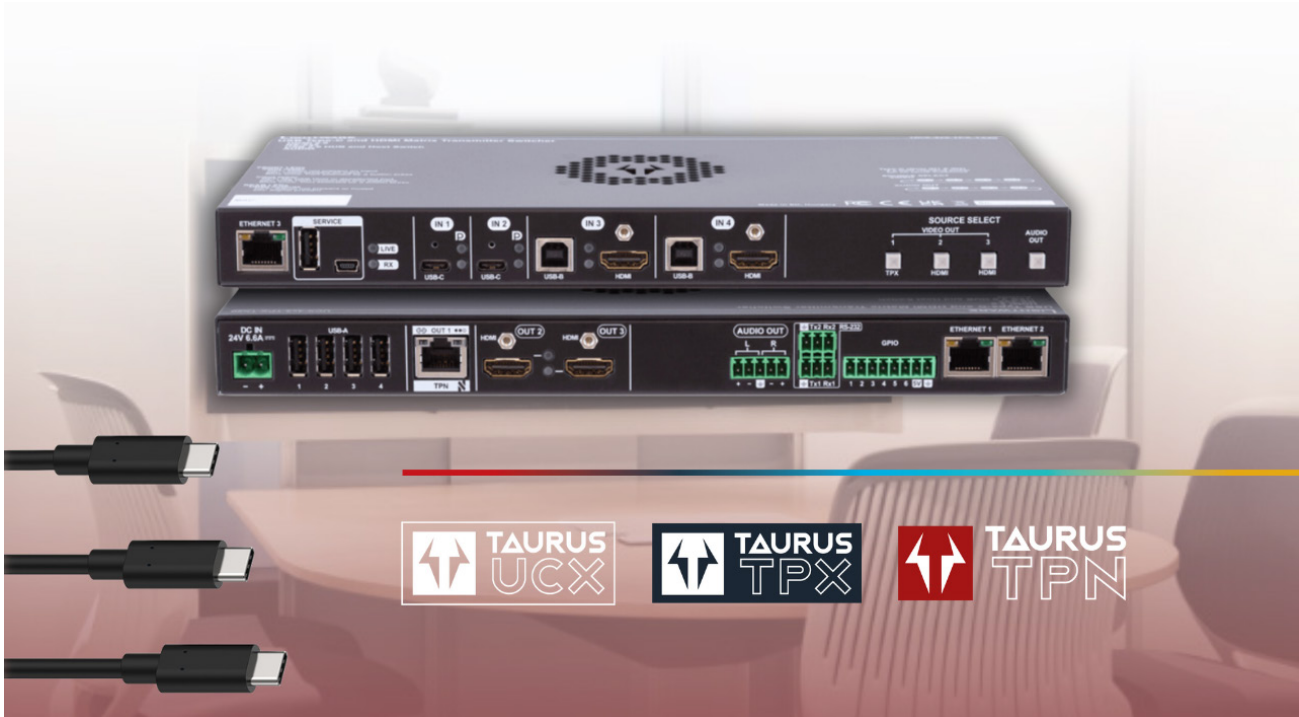
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Lightware

Problems with USB and USB-C? Lightware has a Taurus for that. Lightware continues delivering the most innovative solutions in USB and USB-C signal management and will soon introduce the latest editions of the market-leading Taurus product family. After inventing USB host switching in 2020 with the Taurus UCX and introducing USB extension three years later with the Taurus TPX, Lightware is upping the ante again with the Taurus TPN, expanding USB capabilities into network environments, allowing UC-over-IP applications. Lightware also presents its new Taurus UCX Dual

Screen, the first-ever ProAV solution enabling multiscreen extended desktop over a single USB-C cable.

Beyond the offerings in its USB-C connectivity technology, Lightware also introduces its new 1G AV-over-IP device, the Gemini GVN, to complement the AV manufacturer's wide range of cutting-edge signal management portfolio.

[Learn More](#)



Jeron

Jeron continues to enhance their products to make healthcare communications more efficient for clinical end-users. Jeron Electronic Systems, Inc. is now offering critical access, medium acuity, skilled, and rehabilitation areas, the new touchscreen Annunciator Station on the Provider® 700 Nurse Call System. This new station will visually show and audibly announce active calls, expired workflows, timers, and rounding reminders. It is typically located in any area that is readily accessible to staff and caregivers, including resident/patient corridors, utility rooms, or lounges. It is available now with no shipping delays. Jeron has been manufacturing Made-in-the-USA life safety communication systems for 60 years.

[Learn More](#)

Jetbuilt

Jetbuilt has appointed Steve Samson as the company's new Director of Vendor Partnerships. In this role, Samson will spearhead the management of relationships and partnerships with both current and prospective vendors, further solidifying Jetbuilt's position as the industry leader in providing powerful proposal generation and comprehensive 360-degree project management solutions. With a deep understanding of the needs of integrators, manufacturers and distributors, Samson brings invaluable expertise to Jetbuilt. Throughout his career, Samson has worked with industry-leading manufacturers such as Lightware Visual Engineering, Crestron, and Tweeter, and served as the board director for the Consumer Technology Association.

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Join the ranks of elite integrators with Lencore's NEW Certified Installer Programs. Our reputation for providing superior sound masking, paging, and background audio systems is unmatched, as is our commitment to superior service. While we encourage all integrators to become Lencore Certified Installers, we hand-select the best integrators to become Master Certified Installers, ensuring the highest quality experience for our customers and offering key benefits exclusively for this elite group, including but not limited to exclusive installation opportunities, priority design and quotation, a labor estimator tool, and limited certifications per region to ensure less local competition.

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Liberty

We're excited to announce the launch of our new website, Libertyonline.com! Liberty, established in 1981, is a trusted provider of advanced infrastructure systems for audio/video, security, surveillance, cable, connectivity, and wireless solutions across various sectors. With the highest Net Promoter Score among peers and 70% of customers rating us as reliable and easy to work with, we fulfill products from nine strategic distribution centers and offer centralized technical support. Explore our expanding product categories and experience seamless service at Libertyonline.com.

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ScreenBeam

Elevate Your Business with ScreenBeam Wireless Display and Collaboration. ScreenBeam's award-winning wireless content sharing and collaboration solutions enable easy collaboration in any work or learning space including hybrid environments. ScreenBeam creates wireless connections to all the USB peripherals in the room, making it easy for people to connect over content. Tested and approved with industry-leading AV partners for turnkey deployments.

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- Exclusive incentives

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SHURE



Shure

Leading audio technology provider, Shure, and pioneering provider of video devices, Neat, recently announced an alliance to deliver an enhanced meeting experience in large and acoustically challenging spaces.

The Shure and Neat collaboration ensures seamless integration between Neat Bar Pro, a powerful video meeting bar, and multiple Shure Microflex® Ecosystem Solutions. Together, these solutions provide uncompromised audio and video in complex workspaces.

The combination of Shure and Neat provides a simple, easy-to-install solution that is scalable to any room type. While Neat Bar

Pro delivers exceptional video quality that can auto-frame, zoom in on, and follow each in-room participant (no matter where they're positioned), devices from the Microflex Ecosystem extend Neat video deployments into larger and more complex spaces. This delivers clear, natural sound with different form factors to keep spaces aesthetically pleasing with reliable performance.

[Learn More](#)

SHURE

Sound Control Technologies (SCT)

Sound Control Technologies (SCT), the leader in camera integration solutions, announced Kelly Perkins as their new Director of Marketing. Perkins will develop and implement strategies to boost brand visibility, generate leads, and enhance customer satisfaction. She will focus on making SCT's value propositions clear and cohesive for customers.

SCT also introduced new camera extension kits and USB meeting room solutions at InfoComm 2024. New products include the RTK-AM1 single-cable table extension, RCU3S USB single cable camera extension, and USB-PDI enterprise BYOM solution.

[Learn More](#)

Sharp

Sharp Announces the Launch of the New P Series Projectors. The new P Series projectors are the first Sharp projectors developed leveraging more than 35 years of projector experience from NEC. These projectors provide viewers with a stunning 4K ultra high-definition (UHD) image that is bright enough for commercial use across a number of industries and signage applications, including in corporate conference rooms, museums, and higher education classrooms. The new Sharp P Series projectors create a picture that will leave a lasting impression, with the 6,000-lumen P601Q model and the 7,200-lumen P721Q model delivering incredibly sharp and crisp quality even in well-lit settings.

[Learn More](#)



Valcom

Valcom Launches the Sound360° speaker to Enhance Workplace Audio in Warehouses & Distribution Centers

Valcom, a division of Potter Global Technologies, has launched the Sound 360° speaker, designed to transform audio announcements and background music in expansive environments. Renowned for its expertise in emergency notification and audio communication solutions, Valcom's latest innovation promises unparalleled sound quality and coverage.

The Sound 360° speaker emits panoramic audio, ensuring clear and intelligible sound throughout large areas. This advanced technology enhances paging announcements and background music, making it ideal for warehouses and large facilities. Constructed with an aluminum alloy that is durable and lightweight, the speaker can be easily mounted from ceilings, efficiently covering extensive spaces.

The impact the Sound360° speaker will have on warehouses and distribution centers is a game-changer for customers seeking clear and intelligible audio in large open spaces. The Sound360°

delivers higher acoustical quality and greater reach than traditional speakers, reducing the number of speakers needed while maintaining exceptional sound quality.

In large facilities, the challenge of maintaining clear audio through a unified system is a common issue. Often, separate systems for announcements and music are required, leading to workers resorting to personal devices and potentially missing crucial notifications. The Sound 360° speaker effectively addresses this problem, providing clear and comprehensive audio coverage, ensuring all messages and music are heard without compromise.

Valcom's Sound 360° speaker is set to redefine audio communication in expansive environments, combining clarity, reach, and ease of installation.

[Learn More](#)



Stirling Communications

As of June 2024, Stirling Communications is now the official distributor of MSolutions in the US. Passionate about video distribution, MSolutions' founders developed the industry leading MS-TestPro, the only diagnostics tool approved by HDBaseT to certify CAT 6 installations to required video and data standards.

Their success has led then to developing a range of HDBaseT, USB and KVM extenders that perform to the highest measurable standards of performance, guaranteeing long-term reliability for their partners.

Learn More

TD SYNEX

Shure Announces Strategic Alliance With Td Synnex

TD SYNEX welcomes Shure, a leader in audio technology, as a new vendor partner. Shure has close to a century's worth of experience in the audio space. Together with TD SYNEX, Shure's solutions and services will reach a larger customer base and deliver an incredible experience to the audio technology industry. To learn more, contact visualsol@tdsynnex.com today.

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Techni+Contact

AMX completed its new N2600 series line-up with the release of its SVSI N2600D 4K60 Wall plate Networked AV Encoders and Decoders with Dante AV-A. In addition to the MUSE Automation Controllers, the VARIA family of touch panels and complete line-up of control extenders and the connectivity solutions from Hydraport, AMX offers the most powerfully robust AVoIP and control solutions for a wide range of applications.

Learn More

Visionary

Visionary has introduced the MV5 IP Multiviewer, a high-performance scaling and windowing appliance. Available for immediate shipping, the MV5 IP Multiviewer is the next generation of multiviewers, offering enhanced capabilities and seamless compatibility with Visionary's acclaimed 5 Series AV-over-IP endpoints. Building on the robust features of its predecessor, the MV4 IP Multiviewer, the MV5 IP Multiviewer retains all the advanced functionalities that users have come to expect, with an exciting new upgrade: the ability to output 4K60 4:4:4 video. This significant enhancement ensures the highest quality video output, meeting the demands of modern AV applications.

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

Do You Understand the True Costs of Taking on a Project?

To see how a specific project will contribute to your company's bottom line (or not), use our Project Contribution Simulator Tool.

Before you ever quote a job, you need to understand the true costs involved. This means answering questions like:

- What will it cost in labor to complete the job, including wages, benefits, workers' compensation, taxes, travel to and from the site, etc.?
- Do you have the in-house expertise to complete the work? If not, what will subcontractors or outsourcing cost? Can you get people lined up in time?
- Do you have the right tools and equipment to complete the job? If not, what will equipment rental cost? Can you get the equipment lined up in time?
- What will bonding and insurance cost?
- How much time will be spent managing and overseeing the project? Will this commitment sacrifice the quality of or resources dedicated to other projects?
- If upfront investments are required for the project, will they drain your working capital?

A quick and easy way to see how a specific project will contribute to your company's bottom line (or not) is to use our Project Contribution Simulator Tool.

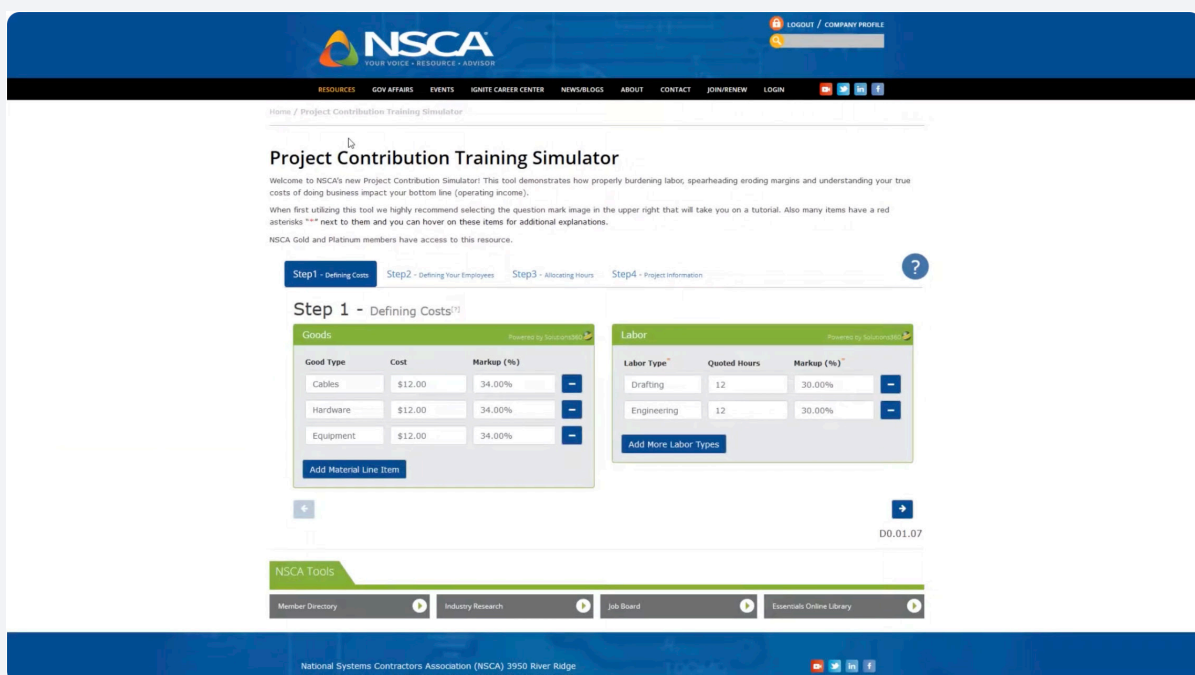
Built by NSCA Business Accelerator Solutions360, the tool demonstrates how properly burdening labor, spearheading eroding margins, and understanding the true costs of doing business can affect your bottom line (operating income)—long before you put a proposal in front of a customer.

4 Steps to Using the Tool

Using the Project Contribution Simulator Tool involves four simple steps.

1. Enter information about materials being used on the project
2. Determine how much labor will go into the project, including drafting and engineering
3. Evaluate billable hours dedicated to the project
4. View the information you provided and see the impact in real-time

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