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THE OFFICIAL TRADE JOURNAL OF NSCA WINTER 2025

plan today, succeed tomorrow

How BLC 2026 Will Help You Shape the Future

PLUS:

Is Your Business Built for What's Next?
5 Financial Metrics to Track

"Good Enough" Really Isn't:
Turning Consumer Creep into Opportunity

And much more!

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EDITOR'S LETTER

The "Sweet Spot" on the NSCA Calendar

We're thankful for the NSCA Community as we reflect on the success of the 2025 Excellence in Business Operations Experience event and look forward to the 2026 Business & Leadership Conference.

As we close out another busy year, I'm once again reminded that we're in what I like to call the "sweet spot" on the NSCA calendar. We just wrapped the second annual Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience. Now, we're focused on the upcoming Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) in late February 2026.

XBO has quickly become one of the most energizing things we do. Built on the foundation of NSCA's Next-Generation Academy, it reflects countless conversations with seasoned leaders about what they wish they understood earlier in their careers. Those insights became the backbone of XBO's content: practical leadership skills, honest discussions, and opportunities to stretch rising stars in ways that help them see their future differently.

The event is intentionally informal, interactive, and a little loose, and the attendees bring incredible energy. It's been rewarding to watch companies send their emerging leaders to build skills and confidence.

As we shift gears to BLC, we're excited to help the industry continue to define what leadership development looks like. Our planning committee, made up of integrators, has shaped a program that zeroes in on what organizations are navigating right now:

- AI's accelerating influence
- Resilient leadership
- Succession planning
- Financial strategies for uncertain times
- Operational efficiencies through automation
- The larger forces shaping business

There's a reason BLC sells out every year: Integrators walk away with notebooks full of ideas they can put to work immediately. It's the must-attend business event for our industry, and this year's discussions may be more relevant than ever.

Being in the "sweet spot" in our calendar between XBO and BLC reminds me that NSCA exists to support leaders at every stage—from rising stars who are just getting their footing to executives who are steering complex organizations. It's a privilege to be part of both conversations. ■

Tom LeBlanc is executive director at NSCA.
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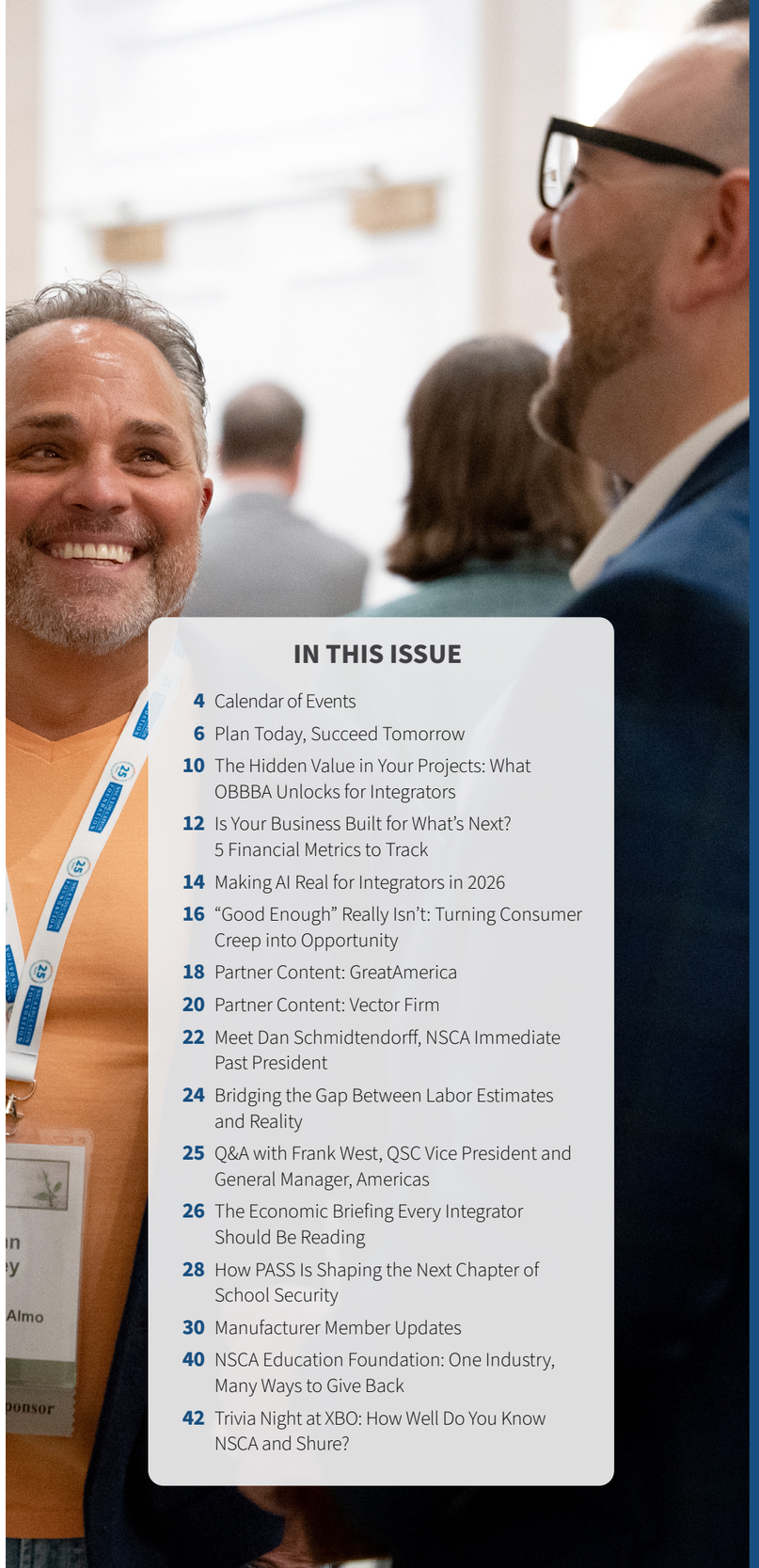

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Recognizing the 2025 Excellence in Product Innovation Award Winners

This year marks the first time the Excellence in Product Innovation Awards were announced at XBO instead of BLC. It was an intentional shift to put innovative manufacturers in front of emerging leaders.

We want to once again congratulate this year's winners.

- **Best Installation Tool for Integrators:** QuickSwitch from Gallagher Security
- **Best Cyber-Protected AV Product for Education:** MXW next from Shure
- **Best System Design Tool:** Intelligent Video Room Designer from Crestron
- **Best Project Management Tool:** System Integrator v23 from D-Tools
- **Best RMR-Generating Corporate AV Solution:** pivot AV Lifecycle Management Platform from pivot
- **Best AI-Infused Digital Signage Solution:** Bluefin Flex-OS with BrightSign Built-in XS156 from Bluefin International
- **Best AI-Infused Enterprise Solution:** IntelliMix Room Kits from Shure
- **Best AI-Infused Classroom Solution:** C-Pro Infinity Camera Family from Laia Technologies
- **Best Centralized Platform for Command & Control:** Q-SYS Full Stack AV Platform from QSC
- **Best Next-Generation Networking & Wireless Tool:** C17 Network Display Speaker Series from Axis Communications

Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) 2026

Irving, TX, Feb. 24-26, 2026

Make sure you're signed up for NSCA's 2026 Business & Leadership Conference (BLC). The BLC Planning Committee, a group of your peers, has done an insightful job of planning content to help you tackle business challenges.

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

In addition to hearing industry-specific keynotes and breakouts, you also have the chance to join the NSCA Education Foundation Industry Charity Golf Outing the day before BLC kicks off. It's a great chance to network and give back to the industry.

Register Now

The Integrator's Advantage: An NSCA Townhall at InfoComm 2026

Las Vegas, June 16

If you're attending InfoComm 2026, get your money's worth by making sure you attend this NSCA event before setting foot on the show floor.

We kick things off with a keynote titled **Framing the Future: Top Challenges and Keys to Success for Integrators.** The demand for connected, intelligent, and secure technology solutions continues to accelerate across every vertical market, placing integrators in a tremendous position of opportunity. But this growth is tempered by real-world challenges: evolving customer expectations, AI-driven disruption, cybersecurity readiness, workforce shortages, and new legislative and regulatory pressures. We'll discuss how to navigate obstacles and seize opportunities during this session.

We're also hosting several smaller, breakout-style conversations:

- **Technology, AI, and Cyber Readiness: Are You Prepared?** Explore how emerging technologies are reshaping integration businesses and client expectations. Learn how to balance innovation with responsibility, manage cybersecurity risk, and elevate your technical posture to win and retain customer trust.
- **Evolving Your Business: Talent, Leadership, and Resilience.** Explore strategies for talent development, leadership succession, and business assessment. Find out how to identify operational gaps, align with new skill requirements, and stay ahead of licensing, regulatory, and legislative changes that impact profitability and growth.
- **Rethinking Sales and Storytelling: Staying Relevant in a Changing Market.** How do you communicate your company's unique expertise as customer needs evolve? Explore how to align messaging with clients' business outcomes, refresh sales strategies, and differentiate your brand in a crowded, rapidly changing marketplace.

Mark Your Calendar!

Webinars

Q1 2026

We've got a great slate of webinars coming up. Mark your calendars and be sure to visit **www.nsca.org** as the dates get closer to grab your seat!

NSCA and *Commercial Integrator's* State of Industry Report
Jan. 20, 11am CT

HR Updates from Insperity
Feb. 17, 11am CT

A Spring 2026 Economic Update from Dr. Chris Kuehl
March 24, 11am CT

The Latest Financial Benchmarks for Integrators
April 21, 11am CT

Plan Today, Succeed Tomorrow

How BLC 2026 Will Help You Shape the Future

This three-day working session helps you turn economic insight, leadership lessons, and fresh ideas into a 12-month plan your team can execute.

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28th ANNUAL
Business & Leadership CONFERENCE

If you had just three days to reset the next 12 months of your business, how would you use them?

You should start by attending NSCA's 28th annual Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) in Irving, TX, on Feb. 24-26, 2026. This time around, BLC is all about this guiding theme: **Plan Today, Succeed Tomorrow.** We've planned these three days to serve as the start of your company's real and working plan.

You'll walk away with more clarity about what you need to do differently as a leader—and how to execute on those priorities over the next year.

Here's a look at what you'll learn at BLC 2026. →

Guidance to Better Understand the World You're Planning In

To build a plan that holds up over the next 12 months, you first need to understand the economic ground you're standing on. That's exactly what Dr. Chris Kuehl will deliver: **an outlook that helps you translate information about inflation, interest rates, construction trends, and labor dynamics into clear business implications.**

His session gives you specific assumptions you can plug into your plan, like:

- How aggressive to be with revenue
- Where margin pressure is likely to show up
- How different construction and market scenarios could affect your backlog and cash flow

Instead of guessing what the next year might look like, you'll have a fact-based starting point to help shape every decision you make after BLC.

Strategies for Building a Team that Can Execute the Plan

A solid plan doesn't mean much if your team can't execute it. BLC 2026 will help you **create the environment and leadership bench you need to carry out your business plan.**

For instance, entrepreneur and author Frankie Russo will explore how leaders can embrace change amid technology shifts, make bolder (but smarter) decisions, and keep people aligned as the business pivots. He'll give you tools to help you communicate direction, changing expectations, and strategic transformation in ways your team can rally around.

Team-connection guru Amanda Gore takes a close look at the human side of execution: engagement, emotional intelligence, and the everyday communication habits that can support or sabotage your plan. She shows how trust, recognition, and honest feedback connect to outcomes like retention, performance, and client loyalty (which are all critical as you ask people to do hard things over the next year).

Trust-builder Colonel DeDe Halfhill is an expert in this area, too, drawing on her Air Force leadership experience to share with you what it means to lead and communicate honestly through uncertainty. She'll give you practical tools you can use to build accountability and encourage candor when choices are high stakes and information is incomplete—but decisions still need to be made and owned.

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Advice to Turn Plans into P&L Decisions

Understanding your starting point and building a healthy culture don't automatically translate into a better P&L. You also need to zero in on the **business mechanics that will make or break your plan:**

- Sales
- Pricing
- Profitability
- Operations

The sales-focused breakouts at BLC explore how integrators can build and manage the pipeline, better structure sales roles, and grow key accounts, with a push toward creating a more repeatable and less personality-driven sales engine. You'll have a better understanding of what needs to change in your go-to-market approach over the next year, whether it's redefining territories, tightening qualification, or implementing a more disciplined sales process. You'll also know which levers to pull—and in what sequence—to create results.

Our breakout sessions on profitability and margin dig in to specifics on estimating, change orders, contract terms, and job costing. We'll cover topics like:

- **Handoffs between departments**
- **Standardizing processes**
- **Using metrics to keep teams aligned with schedules and profit targets**
- **Improving project close-out and cash collection efforts**
- **Sharpening service offerings to build recurring revenue**

These workshops are also where you can build out your own specific initiatives, whether that means a refreshed focus on sharpening estimates and scopes, a rollout of improved project handoffs, a push on services, or a tune-up of dashboards and KPIs.

Insights to Help You Make Innovation a Planned Advantage

No plan is complete without accounting for technology and innovation. At BLC 2026, this conversation centers on **AI, cybersecurity, and the evolving role of integrators in shaping how clients work, collaborate, and secure their spaces.**

The experts we bring together will help you move beyond buzzwords and into practical planning questions that will help you narrow in on the technology that fits your strategy (and how to use it properly):

- Where can AI help inside your business—in design, proposals, service triage, or forecasting?
- What data, training, and guardrails do you need in place before you deploy it?
- How will you measure whether these tools are creating real value?
- What risks or dependencies do you need to manage as you roll them out?
- Which markets and offerings should be your priorities right now?
- Where can technology help you differentiate from competitors?

Tech expert Jimmy Vaughan will help integrators cut through the hype and face AI head-on, drawing on deep experience building collaboration and IoT solutions to show what it actually takes to adapt and stay competitive. His session walks you through where AI can genuinely enhance AV, security, life safety, and other systems—and how to turn those opportunities into realistic, staged initiatives that fit your plan.

Finally, you'll get to hear about how firms are using AI to differentiate themselves in competitive bids, deliver better outcomes for clients, and create recurring revenue streams to overcome project volatility. When those choices are built into your plan with clear owners, timelines, and success measures, innovation becomes part of how you can win.

Tips to Help Teams Stick with the Plan

Even the best-laid plans will face resistance, setbacks, and fatigue. That's why BLC focuses not only on building the right team but also on **ensuring that your employees are resilient enough to stick with the plan.**

Resilience expert Josh Sundquist talks about his "One More Thing, One More Time" philosophy, giving you and your team a simple, memorable framework to keep going when sales cycles drag on, projects get complicated, and early efforts don't deliver instant results. You'll learn how to establish a shared language that prevents employees from giving up too soon on the changes being made.

Hope dealer Carlos Whittaker builds on this message by talking about the emotional climate inside your company (helping teams work "humaner"). He invites leaders to be intentional about how they create connection, honesty, and optimism so people feel safe enough to try new things and honest enough to surface problems early. When you cultivate that kind of environment, your plan will live far beyond Q1, and you'll be able to celebrate progress, handle and respond to setbacks, and keep your team energized when the work gets hard.

Leave with a Framework You Can Actually Use

After spending three days with us at the Ritz-Carlton Dallas, Las Colinas, for BLC 2026, you'll have the **core ingredients for a real plan:**

- Understanding the economic context
- Defining how you'll lead and communicate
- Deciding how your business model needs to evolve
- Choosing where to place your technology bets
- Preparing your team to stay the course

By the time you leave, you'll have a clearer view of the world you're planning in, a sharper sense of the team members who will carry that plan, a concrete path to a healthier P&L, a focused set of innovation moves, and a better understanding of how to keep your people engaged through it all.

If you spend time at BLC to plan for today, then your business, your people, and your clients can succeed tomorrow. ■

Start BLC on the Fairway

Kick off BLC 2026 on the course at TPC Las Colinas during the NSCA Education Foundation Industry Charity Golf Outing on Feb. 24, 2026. All proceeds support the NSCA Education Foundation's workforce and talent initiatives, including the Ignite internship program and Randy Vaughan Founder's Award scholarships, so **you can network with peers, enjoy championship golf, and give back to the industry at the same time.**

Register Today

Meet the BLC 2026 Speakers

NSCA Business & Leadership CONFERENCE 28th ANNUAL

Amanda Gore is a connection and communication expert who uses humor, neuroscience, and emotional intelligence to show leaders how joy can become a real competitive advantage. She helps organizations "re-wire" their culture by focusing on mindset, engagement, and the everyday behaviors that reduce burnout and boost performance.

Colonel DeDe Halfhill (USAF, Ret.) is a seasoned combat and Pentagon leader who teaches executives how to "master the unseen" human dynamics—trust, emotion, and unspoken resistance—that quietly make or break plans. Her work turns messy, real-world leadership challenges into practical tools for building courageous, accountable teams.

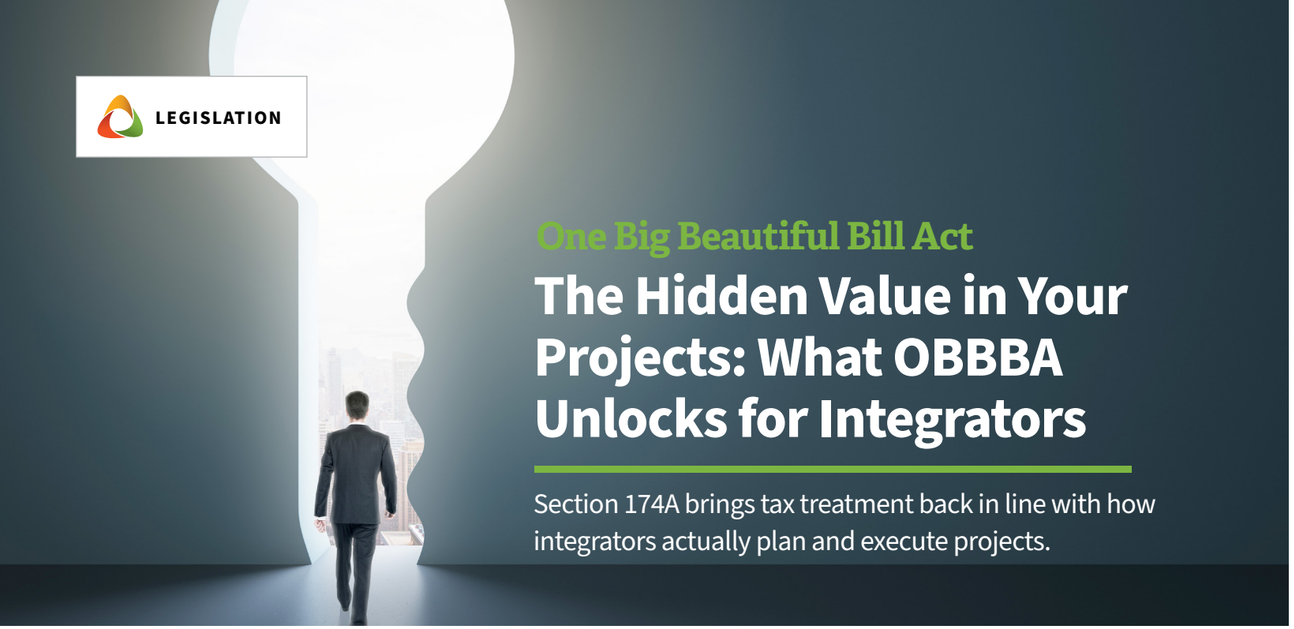
Dr. Chris Kuehl is NSCA's chief economist and managing director at Armada Corporate Intelligence, known for translating complex economic data into actionable guidance for integrators. He brings NSCA-specific research and industry insight to help leaders plan around inflation, tariffs, labor, and construction trends.

Frankie Russo is a serial entrepreneur, investor, and author who helps organizations unlock rapid, sustainable growth by "loving their weird"—leading with authenticity, imagination, and generosity. Having scaled multiple companies onto the Inc. 500/5000 list, he shows leaders how to turn AI, cybersecurity, and workforce shifts into strategic advantages.

Josh Sundquist is a Paralympian, bestselling author, and Emmy-winning storyteller whose 1MT1MT ("One More Thing, One More Time") mantra gives teams a simple framework for resilience. Blending comedy with candid storytelling, he helps audiences reframe setbacks, stay forward-looking, and maintain a growth mindset in volatile conditions.

Carlos Whittaker is an author and speaker who helps leaders intentionally shape the "emotional climate" inside their organizations by fostering connection, honesty, and hope. He challenges teams to confront hard truths while still believing in what's possible, creating cultures where people feel safe to try, fail, and grow.

Jimmy Vaughan brings a rare combination of engineering depth and storytelling talent, backed by nearly two decades inventing and leading development of widely adopted collaboration products. Recognized as a Microsoft MVP and Master programmer, and with past experience producing award-winning TV and digital content, he helps integrators see how emerging technologies like AI can be translated into real-world solutions their teams and customers will use.



LEGISLATION

One Big Beautiful Bill Act

The Hidden Value in Your Projects: What OBBBA Unlocks for Integrators

Section 174A brings tax treatment back in line with how integrators actually plan and execute projects.

It's not often that tax policy can be framed as a competitive advantage, but that's one of the ways the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) changes the conversation for integrators. These recent tax changes can help you cash flow and reduce tax liability so you can reinvest in future projects and growth initiatives.

In 2017, Section 174 of Internal Revenue Code was amended to require that specified R&E (research and experimental) expenditures be capitalized and amortized over five years for domestic research and 15 years for foreign research. The immediate expensing option was eliminated. Because expenses tied to designing, testing, and refining solutions had to be spread over time, this often made companies look less profitable on paper and drove larger-than-expected tax bills, putting strain on cash flow and investment plans.

But the OBBBA act restored Section 174 to its original intent with Section 174A, which now permanently allows the full expensing of domestic R&E expenditures for tax years beginning after Dec. 31, 2024, while leaving the old Section 174 framework (and its 15-year amortization) in place for foreign R&E costs. This creates a new runway that integrators can use for investments, cash flow, and long-term planning.

By restoring the option to fully expense qualifying R&E costs in the same year they're incurred, Section 174A brings tax treatment back in line with how integrators actually plan and execute projects. It also helps them free up cash so it can be reinvested into talent, tools, and growth.

Translating Project Work into Tax Credits

Additionally, the act reinforces the connection between Section 174 and Section 41, the Research & Development (R&D) Tax Credit. While Section 174 is the broad category that captures research and experimental work, Section 41 targets the specific work that meets more stringent criteria to generate a dollar-for-dollar R&D tax credit.

This is where you can benefit significantly. Section 41 often touches work you already perform, such as:

- **Solution design**
- **Controls or AV programming**
- **Custom software configuration**
- **Prototyping in a lab environment**
- **Troubleshooting**
- **Commissioning new systems**

If your firm is still considering this kind of work to be "project tasks" instead of R&D work, you're missing a significant opportunity to explore the R&D Tax Credit.

Deadlines to Know

OBBBA creates strong opportunities for integrators with average gross receipts under $31 million across tax years 2022–2024. These integrators may be able to:

- Amend prior returns
- Reverse the amortization of R&E costs
- Claim R&D credits that were never captured in the first place

When done correctly, you can turn three difficult tax years into a source of refunds or future tax offsets (subject to specific IRS procedures and elections that govern how and when those changes can be made).

But this opportunity is temporary. Standard statutes of limitation on amended returns mean that 2022 filings will begin closing out as early as March 2026 for many calendar-year businesses.

On top of that, the OBBBA's R&E fix comes with a hard deadline in early July 2026 for certain elections. This establishes a firm end date for integrators that want to recapture prior benefits.

Larger firms with more than $31 million in average receipts don't receive the same retroactive flexibility, but they still have options. The law allows them to accelerate remaining non-capitalized R&E costs into 2025 or to split that acceleration between 2025 and 2026, reshaping taxable income during those years.

Deciding whether to compress deductions into a single year or spread them across two should be an intentional planning exercise that reflects expected earnings, major upcoming investments, and owner distribution plans.

Make Tax Credits a Growth Strategy

Remember: Tax rules can be a cost of doing business or a tool for funding the next stage of growth. You get to decide.

Many meaningful opportunities around R&E expensing and the R&D Tax Credit are often overlooked when you're focused only on accurate filing instead of analyzing how day-to-day project work can map to the tax code.

Now's the time to push for a structured review of how your company's research costs were treated from 2022 onward, what types of innovation work your company is performing, and which deadlines matter most.

To make the most of this window, consider working with advisors that understand the nuances of project-based commercial integration and can translate your real-world project activity into a tax strategy that captures the incentives you're entitled to. Reach out to NSCA Director of Business Resources Mike Abernathy to get connected with partners who can help. ■

To listen to NSCA, alliant, and Bronswick Benjamin discuss these changes in detail, visit our Essentials Library and listen to our recent webinar on-demand: **Understanding the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA): What It Means for Integrators.**

Visit Library

FEATURE STORY

Is Your Business Built for What's Next? 5 Financial Metrics to Track

Use these financial signals to determine whether your financial position can withstand the next shift in the market cycle.

In today's unpredictable market, even healthy backlogs and strong relationships can give owners a false sense of security. Integrators are looking for reassurance that the way they price, staff, and sell will hold up in the next cycle. That's where our *Financial Analysis of the Industry* report comes in: It's like a stress test that can reveal whether the current state is sustainable.

In a recent webinar, Solutions360's Joel Harris and FORTÉ's Chris Mounts joined us to highlight the top financial metrics you should track if you want to determine whether your business is resilient, vulnerable, or leaving money on the table.

1. Revenue Growth and Price Per Hour

Is your company's revenue outpacing inflation and its own rising costs?

According to survey respondents, the median topline revenue sat at about $10.3 million, the highest seen in the report yet. But that growth curve doesn't mean integrators are keeping up with inflation. This could be an early signal that many are going backward.

That is where price per hour comes in. Compare your technical labor charges to other skilled trades and to their own wage and overhead increases. If your revenue graph looks flat, it's time to revisit your hourly rates (especially for services) to make sure they match the value of your expertise.

2. New-Customer Share and Concentration

How much revenue comes from new vs. existing customers?

The report reveals that the median new-customer share is hovering around 19%, which confirms that commercial integration is a relationship-driven industry where most revenue still comes from the installed base.

While that "stickiness" is attractive, it can hide risk if too much of your business comes from one customer or project. To surface that risk, track these data points:

1. Percentage of revenue from new customers
2. Percentage from your single largest customer
3. Revenue share from large, one-off projects vs. repeatable work

If the bulk of your future rests with a small number of buyers, then make diversification a priority.

Watch the Webinar

Visit www.nsca.org and login to watch Inside the *2025 Financial Analysis of the Industry* and find out how to unlock the data in this valuable report.

3. Utilization and PM Workload

Are your most critical people fully utilized—or stretched too far?

Nearly three-quarters of respondents now track utilization, but that leaves nearly one-quarter still running blind on how much of their technical time is billable.

Utilization should be measured not only for field staff but also for engineers and project managers. Why? Because their capacity often becomes a hidden bottleneck. Consider project managers, for example: The report shows an average of approximately $2.3 million in active job value per project manager, with much higher loads in some size bands. This workload could lead to burnout and stalled growth if you wait too long to hire. To catch potential problems, track project management hours: If the data shows overload, add capacity or change your delivery model.

4. Backlog and Billings in Excess

Will future work and cash flow be strong enough to support your overhead?

The median backlog eased from roughly $4.7 million to about $3.75 million. Smaller firms in particular are showing thin backlog relative to overhead.

In this environment, "billings in excess" is a hallmark of financial maturity: It's proof that your contracts and milestones are written so you collect cash before you incur all the costs. By structuring contracts so you can bill ahead of delivery, you can use customer cash to fund projects instead of leaning on credit lines. If your backlog is light or poorly documented, and your billings consistently lag your work, then revisit how you:

- Scope milestones
- Negotiate payment terms
- Track committed work

5. Recurring Revenue and Services Mix

How much of your revenue comes from managed services?

Recurring revenue is starting to move the needle, but it's still far from dominant, with RMR sales averaging about 21% of total revenue.

To get a clearer picture of your services revenue, stop counting "everything that happens after a project" as managed services and separate activity into three financial buckets:

1. Warranty (included or embedded support)
2. Time and materials service
3. True recurring contracts with defined entitlements and terms

An even more meaningful metric to watch is the percentage of gross profit generated by true recurring contracts. Well-designed services often carry stronger margins than one-off projects.

Make the Numbers Work for You

The *Financial Analysis of the Industry* gives you a starting point to better understand:

- Are rates keeping up?
- Is revenue too concentrated?
- Are people fully and sustainably utilized?
- Is backlog deep and well financed?
- Is a real services engine being built?

Integrators that routinely track and act on these five metrics will be better positioned to make decisions with intention. ■

Making AI Real for Integrators in 2026

Tools from NSCA to help you put AI to work across your business.

We have a goal for 2026: It will be the year that NSCA members stop thinking and theorizing about AI and start using it more confidently, profitably, and safely. As always, we'll be here to lead you through this transition, giving you resources you can use to unlock real value from AI while adopting it responsibly.

Here's what will be available to you to help you put AI to work across your business.

Offering Updated Guidance through Quarterly AI Webinars

To keep pace with change, NSCA is rolling out a quarterly series of AI-focused webinars, building on the momentum of our recent "How Will AI Change Your Business in 2026?" discussion with CTI, Electronic Contracting Company, and *Commercial Integrator*.

Each conversation will feature integrators and industry experts sharing up-to-the-minute insights, practical use cases, and candid stories: what worked, what failed, and what they'd do differently. Expect clear takeaways on implementation strategies, overcoming resistance to change, and navigating evolving policies and regulations so you can make smarter, faster decisions.

Putting AI Front and Center at BLC

AI runs through the core of 2026 Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) programming, with multiple sessions aimed at helping owners, executives, and functional leaders work with AI. Be sure to join us in Irving, TX, in late February to hear about:

- **How your peers are using AI** to streamline compliance, improve sales enablement, boost productivity, and create new revenue, while also addressing policy development and information security
- **Why future relevance depends on how well integrators embrace and adapt to AI** and use it to impact AV, security, life safety, and beyond
- **How today's integration leaders must set the tone for AI adoption,** become trusted cybersecurity partners, and guide customers toward solving bigger business problems
- **Ways to address the people side of the AI equation** and get teams ready for AI to work alongside them
- **How to use AI to sharpen sales targeting** and communication without eroding customer trust

Also, get your hands on an AI playbook at BLC that will help you integrate AI, cybersecurity, and evolving workforce demands.

Getting a Head Start on AI Governance

To help members move to safe and governed AI use, we developed an AI policy handbook to add to our Essentials Library. Instead of starting from a blank page, you can adapt the handbook to set employee expectations, clarify acceptable use, and align AI efforts with cybersecurity and data privacy requirements. It's full of practical examples, language, and best practices that can be used as a starting point for building or updating internal AI policies to fit your size, risk tolerance, and service mix.

Partnering for Smarter, Safer AI

We also added an AI-powered field service tool to our list of vetted and trusted providers. Core Consultor is an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember that can give technicians real-time troubleshooting support, safety guidance, and access to job-critical data on their mobile devices. For example, giving field technicians access to AI-driven scheduling and mobile apps eliminates paperwork, reduces response times, and delivers proactive service that can boost customer satisfaction.

Step into Your AI Future

AI is going to shape your business whether you plan for it or not. NSCA wants to make sure you're using it on your terms, supported by education, playbooks, and partners you can trust. ■

Upcoming 2026 AI Webinars

- Tuesday, May 5, 2026, at 11am CT
- Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 11am CT
- Tuesday, October 20, 2026, at 11am CT

Visit www.nsca.org to learn more about each of these resources.

FEATURE STORY

"GOOD ENOUGH" REALLY ISN'T

TURNING CONSUMER CREEP INTO OPPORTUNITY

While it may seem like the start of an existential crisis, there's another side to consider with consumer creep: an opportunity to evolve, expand, and redefine value.

You've probably noticed: Your clients are increasingly convinced that the same technology they use at home should work just as well for them in the office.

This trend, called "consumer creep," reflects a new attitude among tech users: If the affordable, simple devices they use every day are reliable enough for at-home use, they must also be "good enough" for commercial environments … right?

As your clients face tighter budget pressures at work and draw confidence from positive experiences with consumer tech, they're left to question why commercial systems are so complex and costly … especially when a cheaper, more straightforward alternative appears to fit their needs.

What they likely don't realize, however, are the risks associated with settling for "good enough":

- Reduced reliability
- Limited scalability
- Short product lifespan
- Increased security vulnerabilities
- Lack of compliance with industry standards
- Difficulty integrating with other commercial systems

BUILDING A STRONGER BUSINESS IN THE AGE OF CONSUMER CREEP

While this type of consumer creep may seem like the start of an existential crisis for integrators, there's another side to consider: an unprecedented opportunity to evolve, expand, and redefine value.

Here are some examples of what we mean.

STANDARDIZE SOLUTIONS FOR SCALABLE GROWTH

The move toward simpler, consumer-like solutions opens doors for volume-based business. Instead of fighting a losing battle to preserve complexity, you can pivot to offer scalable, repeatable, low-complexity systems (think preconfigured "room-in-a-box" AV solutions or standardized, cloud-managed security deployments).

This helps you create solution "templates" that are fast to install and easy to replicate for efficient, high-volume business. This may also position you to better serve price-sensitive SMB clients or manage rollouts across hundreds of locations.

MAKE YOUR EXPERTISE AND INSIGHT MATTER

When end-users can buy "professional" displays, cameras, or other systems online, technology is no longer the most valuable service and capability you offer—your guidance and advocacy are.

Integrators can add real value by:

- **Educating buyers** about the differences between short-term savings and long-term performance and risk reduction. Help them realize the cost of technology failures and disruptions. Audio especially is an area that should not be compromised since so much is done via videoconference. Microphones and speakers are core components of doing business online.
- **Diagnosing and correcting reliability issues** caused by DIY or consumer tech, often before they become expensive failures or safety problems.
- **Helping clients choose** the right combination of off-the-shelf products and enterprise-grade solutions.

TURN INSTALLS INTO RECURRING REVENUE

Hardware margins are shrinking, but service opportunities are expanding. As systems become easier to deploy and maintain, what can you offer after the project is "finished"?

Service-based models can create a powerful revenue engine through:

- **Remote management and monitoring** like health checks, patching, and analytics to catch and resolve issues before they disrupt operations or affect end-users
- **Lifecycle upgrades** to proactively replace aging hardware and software, preventing obsolescence and minimizing downtime
- **Hands-on training** for end-users and their staff, giving them full access to their systems
- **Compliance audits** to identify gaps and ensure that all technology meets regulatory, industry, or insurance requirements

Services like these ensure that your clients keep coming back, confident that their technology investment will stay current, resilient, and effective as long as your expertise is behind it. Subscription models (SaaS) can wrap all of these points into a service (consider a hardware and software package preconfigured for a small/medium/large conference room and ready to deploy).

YOUR FUTURE ADVANTAGE AS CONSUMER CREEP GROWS

While consumer creep requires integrators to adapt, it also provides the spark for transformation, innovation, and renewed growth.

By meeting clients with clear options, selling outcomes instead of complexity, and providing trusted guidance every step of the way, you can not only weather the disruption but also secure an essential role supporting your clients' success for years to come. ■

This article was written by members of *NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee.*

4 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR VALUE AS AN INTEGRATOR RIGHT NOW

There's no denying that consumer creep is changing the landscape. But it also gives you a chance to deliver smarter value, broaden your influence, and secure stronger customer relationships in key ways.

1 MATCH SOLUTION COMPLEXITY WITH CLIENT REALITY

Consider building out "good-better-best" proposals to educate clients and let them see the value differences between simple and advanced solutions. Where possible, bundle services that highlight lifecycle value—remote monitoring, annual refresh planning, compliance reporting—as the real differentiator.

2 SELL RESULTS, NOT SPECS

Move customer conversations away from technology speeds and feeds and toward business outcomes like:

- Reduced system downtime
- Improved collaboration and communication across teams and locations
- Lower operating costs
- Enhanced customer experiences

This helps your clients see you as a partner in avoiding pain points (downtime, risk, hidden costs) and meeting goals (productivity, growth, compliance), which makes price less of a sticking point. Sell this value for their critical meeting spaces where downtime really costs money. And many competitors in the plug-and-play market (copier dealers, electricians, DIY tech providers, etc.) can't offer this level of know-how.

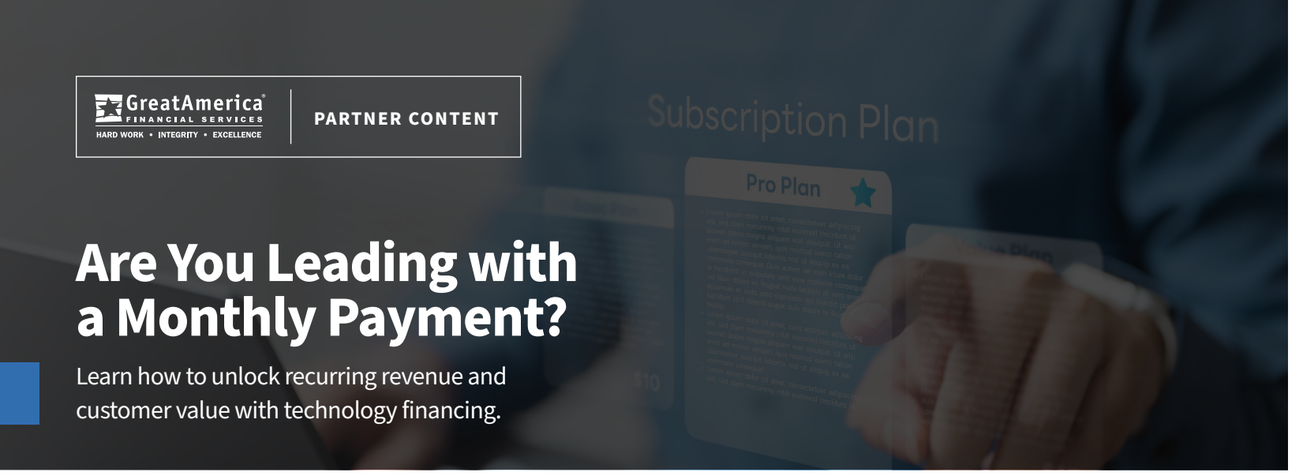
3 PUT A PRICE ON YOUR EXPERTISE

Too many integrators undercharge for their design, project management, and support services. The shift to consumer-grade solutions is a chance to reassert the value of your professional services by putting them front-and-center in every proposal and invoicing appropriately. Consider offering design services that allow you to charge for a system design and provide deliverables like drawings, bills of material, and scope of work that can be used for bid purposes (hopefully not required).

If the customer goes with your design, then you can credit the amount spent on design services to the project costs.

4 STEP INTO THE MASTER SYSTEMS INTEGRATOR ROLE

The acceleration of simple, interconnected device deployment means you are uniquely positioned to become a master systems integrator. By integrating AV with security, paging, access, and IoT, for example, you can own the consolidated supplier relationship that clients are starting to demand as they seek out a company that can take sole responsibility for all their tech systems.



GreatAmerica FINANCIAL SERVICES
HARD WORK • INTEGRITY • EXCELLENCE

PARTNER CONTENT

Are You Leading with a Monthly Payment?

Learn how to unlock recurring revenue and customer value with technology financing.

The commercial integration industry is growing fast as its customers face rapid technology changes, tighter budgets, and higher expectations. But many integrators still rely on cash-based sales models, overlooking the shift toward recurring monthly revenue (RMR) that better meets buyer expectations in today's world.

Why Integrators Aren't Selling Technology Financing

Many integrators miss out on recurring revenue simply because they don't offer technology financing to their customers—or they don't know how. Structuring monthly payments, presenting them effectively, and managing objections requires new skills and tools.

There's also a mindset challenge to overcome. Many buyers operate in line with "use it or lose it" budgets, making them hesitant about long-term payment plans, even if those plans deliver more flexibility and value. The key is introducing technology financing in a way that feels natural, beneficial, and aligned with customer goals.

Technology Financing as a Strategic Path to RMR

Monthly payments are the gateway to predictable recurring revenue. When integrators lead with technology financing, they:

- **Reduce upfront costs** for customers, making it easier to close deals
- **Create recurring revenue** that stabilizes cash flow and boosts business valuation
- **Build long-term relationships** by aligning with customer budgeting cycles and refresh needs

But the true advantage lies in bundling multi-year maintenance contracts into lease payments. Instead of selling one-year maintenance plans that customers pay upfront, integrators can bundle three- or five-year support contracts directly into the monthly payment. This transforms a one-time sale into a long-term revenue stream.

Financial Discovery Conversations: Shaping the Money Talk

A financial discovery conversation is a consultative approach that helps uncover whether a monthly payment model is a good fit for your customer. It's not about pushing technology financing but understanding customer needs and offering a solution that aligns with their goals.

Here are a few questions that can guide this conversation:

- How do you typically budget for technology purchases?
- Would spreading payments over time help preserve capital for other priorities?
- Are you planning for future upgrades or refreshes?
- Would predictable monthly payments make it easier to manage cash flow?
- Have you considered bundling services and support into a single monthly cost?

These questions position your salespeople as trusted advisors, not sellers, building credibility and trust.

How to Build RMR: Bundle Maintenance into Monthly Payments

Maintenance contracts are a major missed opportunity. Instead of one-year plans that are hard to renew, integrators should bundle multi-year maintenance into every project.

By integrating 3- or 5-year support contracts into lease payments:

- You sell multi-year plans upfront, with no need to chase renewals later
- Customers get better service continuity with no surprise costs
- You build true RMR, improving revenue stability and forecasting
- Your business valuation increases, thanks to predictable revenue

This model benefits integrators and customers. Systems stay supported, downtime drops, and relationships grow stickier.

Why Monthly Payments Work

From SaaS to infrastructure purchases, recurring payments are now the norm across B2B. Flexibility and predictability win, even in uncertain times. Zuora's 2025 Subscription Economy Index shows subscription-model companies outpacing S&P 500 revenue growth by 11% over the past two years.

Integrators can ride this wave by offering monthly payments that match how buyers now operate.

The Business Case for Recurring Revenue

Here's what monthly payments (and the RMR they create) can do for your business.

Stabilize Revenue
RMR provides a consistent income stream, reducing the stress of unpredictable sales cycles. This stability allows you to focus on growth, innovation, and customer service.

Increase Valuation
Businesses with strong recurring revenue portfolios command higher EBITDA multiples. Investors and buyers value predictability, and RMR delivers it.

Strengthen Customer Loyalty
Monthly payments make it easier for customers to refresh technology regularly, stay current, and remain engaged with your services. This leads to longer relationships, more upsell opportunities, and greater lifetime value.

Getting Started with a Simple 3-Step Plan

Build monthly payments into your standard sales process so financing becomes the default, not the exception. Here's how to do it.

1. Identify Opportunities
Start by identifying which products and services can be bundled into a monthly payment. Look for areas where customers are already spending regularly, like support, maintenance, or upgrades.

2. Master the Financial Discovery Conversation
Equip your sales team with the discovery questions listed above. Focus on understanding the customer's goals and offering technology equipment financing as a solution, not a sales tactic.

3. Work with a Trusted Finance Provider
Choose a finance provider that offers flexible payment options and equips your team with training, educational resources, and personalized support. The right provider will help your sales reps feel confident discussing technology financing, ensuring your offers are structured for long-term success.

Lead Every Deal with a Monthly Payment

If you're not offering monthly payments yet, now is the time to start. It's better for your customers, better for your business, and key to staying competitive in a shifting market.

Once you experience the benefits of financing, especially in conjunction with bundling in multi-year maintenance, going back to cash sales won't make sense. Leading with monthly payments helps you close more deals and builds a smarter, more sustainable business. ■

GreatAmerica is an NSCA Business Accelerator.

VECTOR FIRM ENABLING STRATEGIC ACTION | PARTNER CONTENT

By Chris Peterson

Stop Selling Your Customers What They Need

Try these three strategies to help salespeople work beyond needs and price to sell the very best solutions to their customers.

In 1997, I conducted an extensive search for a new automobile. I probably looked at 10 different brands and spoke to 15 different salespeople. Since I was young, most of the salespeople focused on keeping the price low.

Then I met David at a Toyota dealership. Of course, he asked about my budget, but he didn't stop there. He asked me about:

- My work
- The number of miles per month I was going to drive
- How I was going to use the vehicle
- Why certain things were important to me

He then proposed a Toyota 4Runner. Because this model was above my budget constraints, I assumed David was going to suggest a stripped-down version. Not even close. In fact, David proposed that I include premium tires and lumbar support, and that I wait six weeks so I could have the color I wanted. After beating him up on price a little bit, the total monthly payment was $533. My budget was $400. Guess what? I bought it, including the premium tires and lumbar support.

Why would I do that? I didn't need a 4Runner, and I certainly didn't need lumbar support or premium tires. I bought it because it was the most valuable solution for my situation. Almost 30 years later, that 4Runner is still my favorite of all the vehicles I've owned. I didn't need it, but my life was better because I bought it.

The moral of the story? **Stop selling your customers what they "need."** A professional gets past their customers' needs to understand their situations and design the very best solution for them. That's the meaningful value great salespeople bring to their customers, and why their customers are loyal to them.

Reality check: Price is always a factor, and the most valuable solution almost always has a higher sales price. So, how can salespeople work beyond needs and start selling the very best solutions to their customers?

Here are three steps that will help you become an amazing sales professional who delivers the very best solutions to their customers.

1 Develop the Right Mindset

One of the most common things we hear from our clients is: "If our customers don't need something, we don't sell it to them."

While I understand the intention behind this comment, it's the wrong mindset to have if you want to deliver meaningful value to your customers. If David at the Toyota dealership had this mindset, I would've purchased a vehicle and grown out of it in a couple of years. Instead, I kept the 4Runner for seven years and loved every minute of it! The experience was better and made more financial sense than the other (cheaper) options. I didn't need a 4Runner, but I was better off because I purchased it.

The first step is to create a self-concept that you provide the very best solutions to your customers, even if those solutions are the most expensive. This can be difficult because salespeople have been conditioned to believe that they'll lose if they charge more. If you're doing your job and identifying the best solution, both of those beliefs are false. You must do your best to make this shift in self-image because confidence will follow.

2 Understand Everything About Your Customers

Many salespeople show up to a discovery call and simply ask questions to clarify customer requests. This is okay if you hope to have the best price on needs. However, if you're going to deliver the very best solution to your customers, then you must understand everything about them.

First, know the marketplace. Understand the trends and problems in their marketplace. This could mean:

- Geographic location
- Vertical market
- Business size

Next, get to know the account:

- How are they organized?
- Who is on the decision-making committee?
- What are their problems?
- Why are they meeting with you?

Finally, and most importantly, get to know the people involved in the decision and their influences. Feel their pain. Ask them how the problems impact them individually. Ask "why?" a million times:

- Why do you need to update your conference room?
- Why is the IT department so heavily involved?
- Why don't you think it's okay to propose a cloud solution?
- Why does this matter to the business?
- Why does this matter to you and your department?

Get to the bottom of their answers. While other salespeople are asking technical questions about customer requests, you should be asking about the request: who is influencing it, what pain is behind the request, why, why, why?

Once you have answers at this level, you'll be able to deliver a solution that provides the most meaningful value to them.

3 Start Doing It Now

Don't wait to have the right mindset or know everything about your customers. Get started now. Your mindset will shift as you do more. Your knowledge will grow as you work with this concept. Starting right now, sell your customers the very best solution for their situation, not just what they need. How?

You must get past their needs and get to the level of solutions that make their situations better. Most of the time, these solutions are more expensive, but the overall experience and value are more than worth it. ■

Chris Peterson is founder and president at NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember Vector Firm.

NSCA BOARD MEMBER Q&A

Meet Dan Schmidtendorff, NSCA Immediate Past President

We met up with Dan Schmidtendorff, NSCA immediate past president and president and CEO at Communication Company, to ask him a few questions.

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

A: I love designing a plan and then bringing that plan to fruition: implementing and taking it to action. Seeing that kind of growth inside and outside the company within our customers is extremely rewarding. We're in the life safety and security business, so any time we can help customers address their challenges is extremely rewarding. We also try to promote within, and I love to help people grow. I had mentors who helped me do that. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. Some of the best mentors I have are people I met at NSCA's Business & Leadership Conference (BLC). That's what I want to be for future leaders.

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

A: Managing growth. There's so much opportunity in the security industry. Right now, for example, healthcare is growing like crazy, so it's critical to have a niche we can offer to that market. This also gives integrators the opportunity to create something that differentiates themselves.

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

A: It's an ongoing challenge to find the right people—and know where to look for them—to help us keep up with the growth in our sector. We want them to align with our mission, vision, goals, and values. It's very difficult to grab someone out of the marketplace and insert them in what we do. When you're dealing with positions like engineers or project managers, this becomes even more difficult: You want them to have experience in the industry, a certain number of years of service, knowledge about what customers are looking for, etc. Education in these roles is huge, whether you're talking about a technician, an engineer, or an accountant.

Q: How can members lean on NSCA for help in addressing these challenges?

A: Partnering with some of NSCA's Business Accelerators and Member Advisory Councilmembers can be great resources to help bring your people up to speed. The Essentials Library is also a great resource, especially for those newer to the industry. You could enter into this industry, connect with NSCA, and gain access to all the documentation you need so you can put processes and policies in place. It gives you a baseline to start from. The networking events and webinars that NSCA offers is another way to educate newer employees.

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

A: My first sales job was to sell diamonds. My mentor at the time told me that there's always a customer out there somewhere, and he was right. Also, I'm an adrenaline junkie. You name it, and I'll take it on and do it. I also love everything about being outside. I love to ski, hunt, and scuba dive. ■

RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

Bridging the Gap Between Labor Estimates and Reality

NSCA's Labor Installation Standards can be integrated with Solutions360's Q360 business management platform for more accurate estimating.

From handling materials to installing equipment and reviewing drawings, integrators and their project teams benefit from a common language and benchmark for how long typical project tasks should take.

But rather than relying on gut feel or outdated rules of thumb, integrators can use information in NSCA's *Labor Installation Standard* guidelines to build more accurate estimates and protect project margins.

What the Standard Does

The *Labor Installation Standard* outlines expected labor hours for a wide range of project activities, including:

- Material handling
- Understanding plans and layouts
- Device installation
- Environmental variables

This data can also make it easier to compare projects, spot trends, and refine estimating practices using historical performance data.

The guidelines also give firms a structured way to account for project management, turning what is often "absorbed" time into clearly calculated, billable hours grounded in the data.

How It Works with Q360 Software

To embed these guidelines into everyday workflows, NSCA's *Labor Installation Standards* can be integrated with Solutions360's Q360 business management platform. Users can quickly look up standard labor units while estimating, and then cross-check quoted hours against the NSCA benchmarks without leaving the software.

This integration helps minimize risk in the estimating process by flagging labor assumptions that don't align with the Labor Installation Standards before a proposal goes out the door.

Users can also search and manipulate the Labor Installation Standards data to better understand how labor assumptions affect project performance and margins.

Aligning Labor Standards with Real-World Project Performanc e

For integrators, this closes a long-standing gap between how jobs are sold and how they are delivered.

Connecting NSCA's *Labor Installation Standards* with Q360's job-costing capabilities shortens the feedback loop between estimating and execution. Instead of waiting weeks or months to see how labor actually hit the job, integrators can use real-time and historical data to refine future estimates.

As more NSCA data is added to Q360, integrators gain a centralized place to apply industry benchmarks directly to their day-to-day operations. ■

MANUFACTURER Q&A

QSC

Q-SYS

Q&A with Frank West

Vice President and General Manager, Americas

www.qsc.com

Q: What inspired QSC to support BLC?

A: I attended BLC for a few years prior to joining QSC. I was able to secure QSC attendance for the event to help them understand how great the event is. QSC was initially drawn to BLC because it's a space dedicated to leadership, strategy, and the bigger picture of where our industry is headed—not another tradeshow. Our sponsorship has grown from supporting individual sessions to taking on the role of BLC Host Sponsor, which reflects how deeply we value the conversations and connections that happen here.

Q: How many BLC events have you attended?

A: I've attended several BLCs now, and the shift has been significant. As a Session Sponsor, QSC was focused on contributing to specific discussions. As the Host Sponsor, we're ensuring that attendees feel welcomed, engaged, and inspired throughout the event. The event is always a great opportunity to get a pulse on the business matters that really resonate with our integration partners.

Q: Can you share a standout BLC moment or memory?

A: Any roundtable or breakout where integrators and manufacturers openly exchange information and ideas. It's nice to see the industry come together and share ideas to solve problems.

Q: How has BLC influenced QSC's business strategy?

A: BLC has challenged us to think beyond product innovation and focus on leadership, collaboration, and long-term strategy. It has influenced how we approach partnerships, how we invest in training, and how we position ourselves as a thought leader in the commercial integration industry. During the pandemic, we learned a lot about how our channel partners were handling supply chain, cash flow, and labor issues. All of this was valuable in our sourcing strategy and various educational initiatives.

Q: What value does BLC provide that you haven't found at other industry events?

A: The difference is the depth of conversation. At BLC, it's not about product demos or quick networking. It's about leadership, strategy, and building a stronger industry. I'm always blown away by the quality of the presenters and the content. I'm also a huge fan of Dr Chris Kuehl's annual presentation. I find him to be incredibly entertaining and memorable.

Q: What are you most excited to contribute to BLC 2026?

A: We're excited to create an environment where attendees feel challenged and supported. Our hope is that people leave with fresh ideas, stronger connections, and a sense of momentum they can carry into their own organizations.

Q: Has BLC had a measurable impact on QSC's industry visibility?

A: Absolutely. Our presence at BLC has elevated QSC's role as a thought leader. We've seen increased engagement in follow-up conversations, more invitations to collaborate on industry initiatives, and stronger recognition of our leadership voice.

Q: What advice would you give to prospective BLC sponsors?

A: Don't think of it as a sponsorship: Think of it as an investment in leadership. The conversations you'll have here are unlike any other event, and the relationships you build will pay dividends long after the conference ends. ■

ECONOMIC INSIGHTS

The Economic Briefing Every Integrator Should Be Reading

Get an integrator-focused read on interest rates, construction, labor, and demand.

Dr. Chris Kuehl

Economic forecasts can feel abstract … until they start showing up in your backlog, margins, and staffing plans.

For NSCA members, Dr. Chris Kuehl's reports bridge that gap, turning big-picture trends into practical guidance tailored to integrators. Did you know you can get his insights straight into your inbox, with each update giving you a clear read on what's coming next and how to prepare for it?

Inside Dr. Kuehl's Intelligence Briefings

His regular briefings dig into the economic forces that most directly affect commercial integrators, such as:

- Interest rates
- Inflation
- Construction activity
- Business investment
- Consumer confidence

Instead of treating these as standalone stats, he explains how they interact—and what these interactions mean for project timing, financing, and customer decision-making. For example, in a single issue, you might see Dr. Kuehl connect delayed industrial production data, shifting manufacturing surveys, and changing consumer sentiment to explain why some sectors feel "soft but stable" while others are clearly slowing.

He also tracks developments like policy shifts, geopolitical risk, and sector-specific developments in markets like commercial real estate, manufacturing, education, and healthcare.

Guidance to Run Your Business On

Commercial integration is a long-cycle, capital-intensive business; decisions you make today on hiring, inventory, and market focus may not pay off for a year or more. Having a trusted economic advisor in your back pocket (or your inbox) helps you decide when to lean into growth and when to prioritize resilience. For example, he recently highlighted how wage growth is still outpacing inflation and how certain discretionary categories are softening—signals that can guide how aggressively you pursue higher-end customers versus more price-sensitive segments.

Rather than focusing purely on financial-market metrics, Dr. Kuehl's reports speak the language of project backlogs, utilization, and recurring revenue. The "Watch" section, which models key indicators that cover more than 85% of U.S. GDP, gives integrators an 18 month view of areas like retail sales, manufacturing output, housing starts, and private nonresidential construction—exactly the trends that shape technology spending.

This helpful context makes his perspective more actionable (and more interesting) than generic forecasts that don't take into account how integrators work.

Turn Intelligence into a Strategic Advantage

The real value of the subscription shows up in how often the content can be put to work inside the business. Leadership teams can:

- Use sector outlooks to adjust revenue targets, shape sales focus, and refine backlog expectations
- Align hiring, compensation, and subcontractor strategies with his read on labor markets and wage pressures
- Rebalance the mix between large capital projects and more resilient, services-led offerings when the macro picture looks uncertain
- Bring reports into quarterly planning or leadership meetings to help reach alignment faster

With Dr. Kuehl's briefings in hand, you can move from reacting to the economy to actively planning around it. ■

How PASS Is Shaping the Next Chapter of School Security

A three-year strategic plan, new executive leadership, and updated tools are positioning PASS to drive more consistent, effective K-12 security practices.

As the school safety landscape evolves, PASS is entering a new phase: a more formalized, better-resourced, and more scalable organization that will depend heavily on integrators, manufacturers, consultants, and technology partners to advance school safety.

Amid this chance is a clear opportunity for NSCA members to help shape how safety and security investments are planned, specified, and implemented in K-12 environments.

From Volunteer Effort to Structured Organization

For years, PASS has been powered entirely by volunteers from education, public safety, and industry, including many familiar faces from the NSCA community. The organization's network now includes than 85 professionals working across nine committees and councils. These groups focus on topics such as access control, video surveillance, classroom door locks, lockdown drills, and other areas to lend their critical expertise.

This model helped build credibility and create widely respected guidelines, and these volunteers are still very needed … but it's time to strengthen the organization to keep up with what schools need today.

PASS' three-year strategic plan indicates a shift toward a more structured nonprofit with clear priorities, governance, and accountability. This will help schools implement best practices more consistently and give industry partners a more predictable framework for engagement.

New Leadership

PASS will be bringing on a dedicated executive leader to guide the organization into its next phase.

For NSCA members, this change should make it easier to collaborate with PASS on initiatives such as guideline adoption, pilot projects, and state or district-level advocacy. Expect more defined programs, clearer points of contact, and a more coordinated approach to how integrators and manufacturers plug into PASS efforts.

Certification and Training on PASS Guidelines

PASS is also introducing a new certificate program designed for all school safety stakeholders, including school security personnel, administrators, and the integrators and consultants who advise them. The program will assess participants' knowledge of the PASS School Safety and Security Guidelines and Checklist, creating a common language for school safety planning.

Complementing this will be companion training modules based on Revision 7 of the PASS Guidelines, providing a structured way to learn and apply the framework.

PASS is also developing a more user-friendly digital version of the School Safety and Security Guidelines and Checklist, which should simplify field use, project planning, and documentation for NSCA members working in K-12.

What This Means for NSCA Members

These changes point toward deeper collaboration opportunities for NSCA integrators, manufacturers, and consultants that serve the education market.

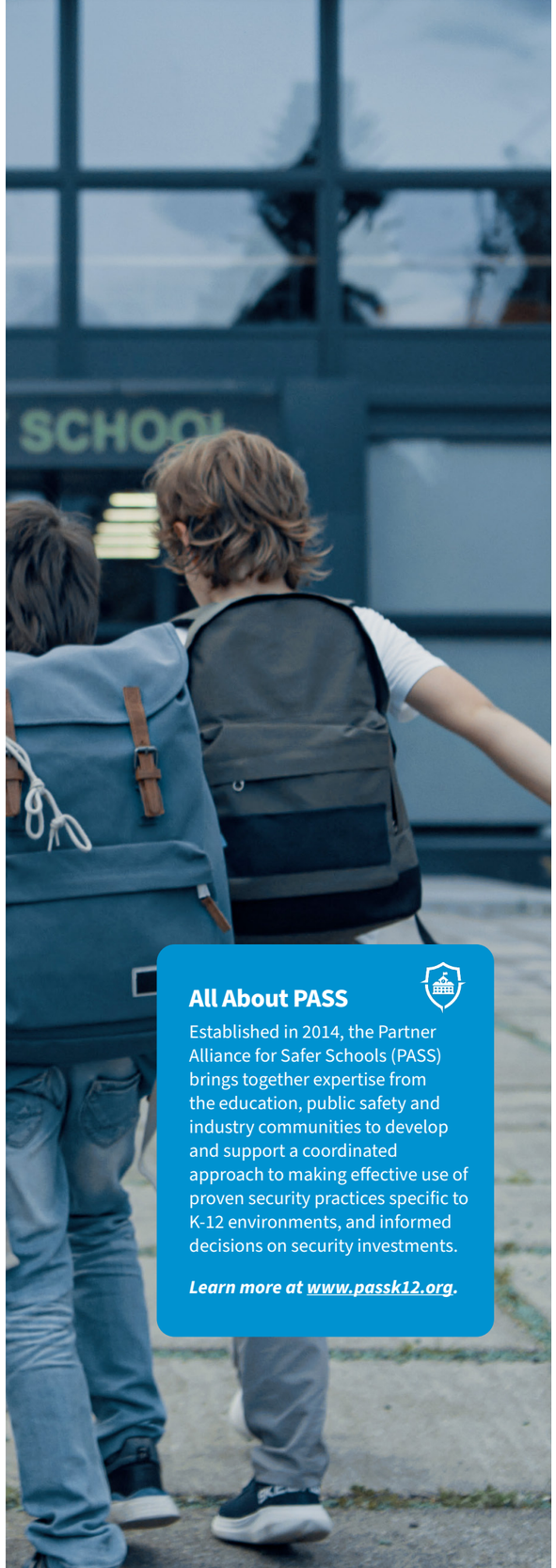
On behalf of PASS, NSCA invites integrators, consultants, manufacturers, parents, and educators to join its mission of making schools safer learning environments.

There are many opportunities for NSCA members to get involved by:

- Participating in PASS committees and councils to share technical depth
- Using the PASS guidelines, checklists, and digital tools to align proposals and designs with vetted best practices
- Adopting the new certificate program and encouraging schools to do the same
- Supporting PASS as a 501(c)(3) partner to ensure that its resources remain freely available and vendor-agnostic

Keep the PASS Mission in Motion

At its core, PASS remains committed to a simple mission: protecting students and faculty by helping schools make informed, effective safety and security decisions. As PASS enters this next chapter, NSCA members are uniquely positioned to turn that mission into on-the-ground reality in districts and campuses across the country. ■



All About PASS

Established in 2014, the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) brings together expertise from the education, public safety and industry communities to develop and support a coordinated approach to making effective use of proven security practices specific to K-12 environments, and informed decisions on security investments.

Learn more at www.passk12.org.

Almo

almo PRO AV

When opportunities arise, LinkLab is here to help you handle them. Whether you're scaling quickly or looking to take on complex projects, we make it simple for you to handle new business opportunities without the hassle.

As the latest addition to our suite of service offerings, our comprehensive provisioning services are designed to provide you with flexibility to prioritize other business activities by streamlining your operations. Including risk fabrication, asset tagging, custom configurations, and more, our provisioning services guarantee that your devices are deployment-ready, right out of the box.

We're proud to help you focus on what you do best while we handle the details. With cutting-edge expertise and innovative resources, consider LinkLab your trusted partner for getting things done.

loudspeakers in the commercial market, utilizing IsoFlare™ point-source technology to deliver outstanding off-axis clarity across all frequency ranges.

Learn More

AtlasIED

The Seabird Resort Takes Flight with Atlas+Fyne IsoFlare™ Premium In-Ceiling Loudspeakers

It's no secret that ambiance and audio are critical elements to a bar's success when everyone's having a good time, people tend to stay longer and spend more money. Management wanted "to get the activity level up" in The Shore Room, so they contacted David Schwartz, Founder and President of Essential Communications, to improve the audio. Schwartz immediately recommended AtlasIED's Atlas+Fyne in-ceiling loudspeakers. The Atlas+Fyne FC Series is the benchmark of premium loudspeakers in the commercial market, utilizing IsoFlare™ point-source technology to deliver outstanding off-axis clarity across all frequency ranges.

Learn More

Audio-Technica System

Audio-Technica System 20 PRO Digital Wireless Systems

Building on the success of the System 10 PRO, which took 2.4 GHz wireless microphone systems to a new level of functionality and convenience, the new System 20 PRO goes even further, offering a self-managing, plug-and-play 2.4 GHz system that's scalable to 20 channels and delivers the same dependable, high-quality audio, regardless of where you set it up. Each remote-mountable receiver unit can be paired with two transmitters in standard mode (to minimize latency) or four transmitters in HD mode (to maximize channel count). Audio-Technica's Wireless Manager software provides easy setup and control of systems with body-pack, handheld microphone, boundary microphone, or desk stand transmitters.

Learn More

Axis Communications, Inc.

Axis Communications recognized for outstanding audio innovations

AXIS C17 Series and AXIS D4200-VE recognized with multiple industry awards

These innovative network audio solutions have been recognized with multiple awards by AVIXA, NSCA, Commercial Integrator, Campus Security Today, Security Today, AV Technology, and rAVe Pubs. The accolades underscore our commitment to delivering cutting-edge technology that enhances communication, safety, and security across various industries.

AXIS C17 Network Display Speaker Series received a 2025 Excellence in Product Innovation Award from NSCA. These speakers combine visual and audio communication with a strobe bar, powerful speakers, and a color display for text, ideal for schools and commercial buildings.

AXIS C17 Series also won The Security Today New Product of the Year in the Mass Notification category. A panel of industry judges selected by Security Today reviewed the submissions to determine the winners. Additionally, the series received an InfoComm Best of Show 2025 award from AV Technology.

AXIS C1710 Network Display Speaker was recognized with the 2025 Secure Campus Award for Best Communications Device by Campus Security Today. It is an all-in-one solution combining high-quality audio with bright, clear text and light display.

AXIS C1720 Network Display Speaker received the 2025 InfoComm BEST Award for Best AV Product for Hospitality or Education from rAVe Pubs. It combines high-quality audio with vibrant text and light display, ideal for various settings.

AXIS D4200-VE Network Strobe Speaker was named the Best Mass Communication/Mass Notification Product in Commercial Integrator's BEST of InfoComm 2025 Awards. It ensures critical messages reach intended audiences with advanced audio capabilities and an integrated strobe light.

Learn More

AXIS COMMUNICATIONS

Biamp

The new EasyConnect MPX 250 eliminates meeting room chaos with one simple USB-C connection that instantly links laptops to displays, cameras, microphones, and speakers. Teams can share content in seconds, charge devices up to 100W, and use any UC platform — from Teams to Zoom — without adapters or delays. With dual-display support, enterprise management via Biamp Workplace, and a sleek design that simplifies installation, the MPX 250 ensures meetings start on time, every time.

Learn More

Bogen

Bogen Communications has launched Bogen University, a free online learning platform offering professional-grade training in audio and communications. Designed for all experience levels, it provides 24/7 access to interactive tutorials, from quick-start guides to advanced product knowledge, plus an app for on-the-go learning. Courses cover Nyquist systems, Platinum Series Amplifiers, Multicom 2000, and Quantum IP. In addition, Bogen hosts free monthly webinars led by National Training Manager Scott T. Hepler. ES Dealers gain extra resources, including exclusive training and annual "Path-to-Success" webinars, ensuring professionals can expand expertise, stay current, and drive innovation in the industry.

Learn More

Jabra

Jabra PanaCast 40 VBS: Room for More

Maximize even the smallest meeting space with PanaCast 40 VBS. The only small room Android video bar that captures the entire room. Its 180° field-of-view and impressive audio ensure every participant is seen, heard, and included. AI-powered video features make hybrid meetings more collaborative, productive and lifelike. And its straightforward set-up means you can go from box to first meeting in under 12 minutes with a secure, wall-mounted installation.* Plus, with easy and secure management using Jabra+, you can get more from your small rooms today and tomorrow.

Learn More

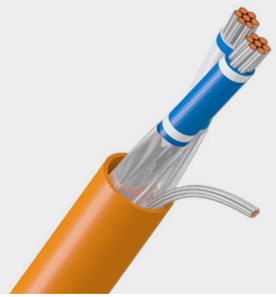
Jetbuilt

Jetbuilt's Radar transforms project management by bringing every update—comments, tasks, alerts, and emails—into one centralized feed.

Designed for AV, IT, and security professionals, Radar gives teams complete visibility without the clutter of multiple dashboards or email chains. Users can reply, sign off, or update tasks directly within Radar, while customizable notifications ensure critical updates never slip through the cracks. Supervisors gain a high-level view of progress, identify bottlenecks, and allocate resources efficiently. By streamlining communication and execution, Radar empowers integrators to keep projects on track, clients informed, and teams aligned in real time.

Learn More

Belden



Open Supervised Device Protocol (OSDP): Secure, Flexible, and Future-Ready

OSDP is a modern access control communication standard that enhances interoperability and significantly boosts security over legacy Wiegand systems. Designed with today's cybersecurity challenges in mind, OSDP supports advanced features and streamlined system management, making it ideal for high-security applications.

Why OSDP?

OSDP provides:

- Stronger protection against cyber threats
- Advanced functionality for modern access control systems
- Simplified installation and configuration
- Enhanced interoperability across multi-vendor environments

Built on RS-485 Infrastructure

OSDP uses RS-485, a robust cabling standard that supports long-distance communication and reliable data transmission. Together, OSDP and RS-485 create a secure and efficient communication backbone for all your access control devices.

West Penn Wire was established in 1971 and is part of the Belden group of companies.

Learn More

Belden

Bose

Bose Professional is thrilled to introduce two new additions to our product lineup.

The Veritas series of amplifiers feature Bluetooth® 5.0 wireless input and user-intuitive OLED screen, making it easier to bring superior professional sound to more commercial spaces.

The Forum Loudspeaker series combines exceptional fidelity and surprisingly high output in a compact, install-friendly form factor that's perfect for mid-to-large installations. Available in 8" and 12" models, the Forum series delivers all-angle consistency and coverage for diverse applications including corporate, performance, and retail spaces.

Learn More

HP Poly

HP Poly Studio A2: Next-Gen Audio Solution - HP Poly's new modular audio solution that seamlessly integrates with the latest generation HP Poly Studio video solutions, including the Studio G62, Studio X72 and V72, Studio X52 and V52, Studio X32, and Studio V12.

The Studio A2 Audio Bridge and Studio A2 Table Microphone deliver:

- Best-in-class audio: High-quality audio for clear, natural sound and exceptional voice pickup
- Seamless scalability: Effortlessly extends audio coverage across any meeting space
- Effortless setup: This simple plug-and-play solution offers a streamlined and hassle-free setup

Engage our TD SYNNEX HP/Poly Team for more information at HPPSG@tdsynnex.com.

Learn More

Cleerline

Cleerline SSF™ 10K UHD HDMI Active Optical Cables

Cleerline's range of 10K UHD HDMI cables represent the ultimate in high-definition connectivity, perfect for the demands of modern audiovisual installations. The Cleerline SSF™ 10K UHD HDMI Active Optical Cables (AOC) deliver exceptional performance, supporting up to 10K resolution and 48 Gbps bandwidth while offering best-in-class durability and flexibility. They are designed with a plenum-rated jacket for in-wall installations and feature directional connector heads for easy identification. Cleerline AOC HDMI cables excel in reducing EMI and latency, making them ideal for environments where significant electrical interference may be present. Available in lengths from 5 meters to 60 meters, these 10K HDMI solutions bridge the gap between traditional HDMI installations and fiber optic solutions without the need for additional extenders.

The Cleerline SSF™ AOC HDMI cables are equipped with the latest HDMI 2.1 features, including High Dynamic Range (HDR), Variable Refresh Rate (VRR), and support for up to 120 fps/Hz. They provide a seamless audio-visual experience with support for ARC (5-60m) and eARC (up to 10-meters), ensuring that audio quality matches the stunning visuals. These SSF AOC cables also offer the unique advantage of being re-terminable, accommodating future modifications without replacing the cable.

CLEERLINE TECHNOLOGY GROUP

Shure

Introducing the ANX4 Scalable Wireless Receiver from Shure

ANX4 is a scalable device which can be operated in either Axient Digital or ULX-D mode, supporting all available transmitter options in those platforms. It ships without preconfigured wireless channels and can be activated to support any channel count up to its maximum capacity using ShureCloud. This innovative design empowers users to buy channel licenses in the quantity they need and provision these across multiple ANX4 hardware units, enabling unmatched flexibility for high channel count productions. Available in AC and DC powered versions, the ANX4 includes a wide tuning range of 174 MHz to 2 GHz and two pairs of antenna inputs that can each be tuned up to 72 MHz wide.

The single rack receiver maximizes efficiency by using less space and reducing heat, offering a cost-effective solution at high channel counts, without compromising on Axient Digital's and ULX-D's existing features. This is ideal for audio rental companies, fixed installations, and location sound mixers, as it reduces the space and weight typically required for high channel count solutions.

Learn More

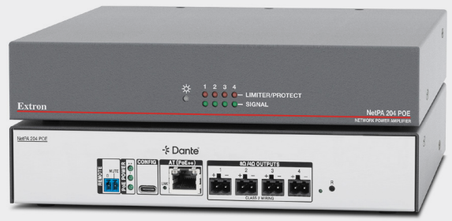
SHURE 100 YEARS

Lencore

Commercial Integrator recently sat down with Lencore CEO Chase Rupe and CEC's Mike Young to explore why sound masking has become a must-have in today's workplace. Hybrid trends are shifting, and fluctuating occupancy, open layouts, and hard surfaces like glass and concrete often lead to offices that are either too noisy or uncomfortably quiet. Both extremes can negatively impact productivity, comfort, and speech privacy. Lencore's Green Sound® offers an adaptable, cost-effective solution that helps organizations create secure, comfortable environments while keeping pace with modern workplace demands.

Learn More

Extron



The Extron NetPA 204 POE is a Dante-enabled, PoE po wered, four channel audio power amplifier that delivers up to 20 watts per channel. It is designed to be mounted above ceiling tiles, out of sight and near the speakers. Receiving audio and power over a single cable, the NetPA 204 POE automatically recognizes connected PoE, PoE+, or PoE++ to deliver the corresponding amount of output power. The NetPA 204 POE includes integrated digital signal processing with support for both Dante Domain Manager and AES67. This ensures compatibility with a wide variety of system configurations and other network based audio devices. The NetPA 204 POE is housed in a half rack, 1U, plenum rated enclosure that is fanless for silent operation.

Learn More

Extron

Liberty

CX Unify: Smarter Remote Monitoring and Management for AV

Liberty introduces CX Unify, a next-generation platform that transforms how integrators support college campuses and corporate environments. From classrooms to boardrooms, CX Unify delivers real-time monitoring, remote remediation, and AI-powered automation through a single, intuitive dashboard. Proactive alerts, secure access controls, and executive-ready analytics help reduce downtime and truck rolls, while template-driven deployments ensure consistency across sites. Purpose-built for AV, CX Unify integrates seamlessly with Liberty hardware and supports multi-vendor devices—empowering integrators to simplify complexity, scale support, and deliver measurable value for education and enterprise customers alike.

Learn More

Niveo Professional

Switch manufacturers are in trouble with chip sets again. Lead times are extending dramatically. BUT NOT FOR NIVEO PROFESSIONAL! We have stock and our new pricing is transparent about the costs of tariffs.

Please contact David Stephens at 954-261-6582, david@niveopro.com, or www.niveoprofessional.com for details.

Learn More

Q-SYS

Q-SYS shared some new updates to VisionSuite. Featuring Speaker Spotlight and Presenter Spotlight, VisionSuite delivers dynamic camera framing without static presets as well as predictive presenter tracking. The new VSA-100 VisionSuite AI Accelerator powers full-room automation, enhancing remote collaboration and simplifying operations. Also introduced is VisionSuite Designer, a 3D visualization tool within Q-SYS Designer Software, enabling precise modeling and deployment of AV spaces. Together, these innovations redefine smart environments for integrators, administrators, and end users.

Learn More

Lightware

Lightware Taurus UCX-4x3-HC40-BD: A New Benchmark in Integrated AV and Audio Connectivity

Lightware's Taurus family continues to evolve with the addition of the UCX-4x3-HC40-BD, a next-generation switcher that redefines versatility in hybrid collaboration spaces. Expanding beyond traditional video and USB signal management, this latest model integrates professional Dante and AES67 audio capabilities.

Engineered for seamless BYOD and BYOM experiences, the UCX-4x3-HC40-BD combines USB-C switching, HDMI routing, and multichannel audio processing in a single compact device. Its built-in Dante interface enables direct connection to networked microphones, DSPs, and speakers, removing the need for analog adapters or external audio bridges. With configurable gain, mixing, and mute settings, system designers can fine-tune audio performance using either Dante Controller or Lightware's own intuitive tools.

Beyond audio, the UCX-4x3-HC40-BD delivers 4K60 4:4:4 video, up to 100W charging, multi-USB host switching, and powerful automation via an open API - making it a cornerstone for future-ready, IT-aligned AV environments that demand simplicity, flexibility, and reliability.

LIGHTWARE

Microchip

Power the Future with Microchip's Energy-Efficient PoE Midspans

Be part of the initiative to shape a future where technology and sustainability intersect. Microchip demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing innovative designs that emphasize energy efficiency, as reflected in their PoE midspans.

Microchip's Green Sustainable (GS) PoE midspans deliver reliable network power and actively support the creation of a more environmentally friendly world.

- Energy Star® products that minimize energy consumption when in no-load mode
- 100% recyclable packaging
- PVC free
- Halogen-free products designed for your specific requirements
- ROHS and REACH compliance addressing the use of hazardous substances

Learn More

MICROCHIP

XTEN AV

XAVIA has already helped integrators save 500+ hours and $120,000 in just 3 months. Are you next?

XAVIA, the AV industry's first AI Agent, has been live for an entire quarter and its impact is already unmistakable. Designed to take the load off manual tasks, XAVIA empowers integrators to generate designs, BOMs, proposals, and even project management tasks with simple voice commands.

Early adopters like Experience AVL are seeing measurable results. In just three months, they saved over 300 hours of manual work and reduced proposal turnaround time by 40%, enabling their team to respond faster to client needs and take on more projects without adding extra resources. That's the true power of AI built for AV.

Learn More

ScreenBeam

Limited-Time Offer with ScreenBeam 1100 Plus and ScreenBeam FLEX

For a limited time, customers who purchase 15 or more units of ScreenBeam 1100 Plus, ScreenBeam FLEX, OR ScreenBeam 1000 EDU GEN 2 will get a FREE three-year subscription to ScreenBeam Administrative Tools, which includes:

- **Messenger Manager:** Deliver non-urgent messages and communications across multiple rooms and buildings.
- **Alert+:** Emergency communication solution designed to take over any screen.
- **EMS Support:** Use a single system to trigger and manage alerts across campus.
- **Digital Signage:** Advanced signage capabilities to enhance your messaging to customers and employees.

Contact your ScreenBeam representative or authorized reseller to confirm eligibility and secure this special offer.

Learn More

Sharp

Sharp Introduces Newest PN-E Series Displays to Power the Next Generation of Visual Communication

Meeting today's demand for smarter, more adaptable display technology, Sharp has unleashed the new PN-E Series, a powerful new lineup of commercial-grade displays, built to meet the evolving needs of digital signage, workplace collaboration and dynamic information sharing. The PN-E Series packs seven screen sizes—32", 43", 50", 55", 65", 75" and 86" Class sizes—into a sleek design that looks just as sharp as it performs. Whether lighting up retail spaces, energizing classrooms, or commanding boardrooms, the PN-E Series is engineered for flexibility and visual impact.

Learn More

Simpro

Simpro is the leading field service management software built for trade service businesses ready to streamline operations and drive growth. Whether you're managing multi-phase projects, preventive maintenance, or asset management, Simpro offers a complete solution to boost efficiency. From quoting and scheduling to inventory tracking and invoicing, our powerful platform simplifies every step of your workflow. With over 20 years of industry expertise, Simpro is the trusted partner for businesses aiming to improve productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

Learn More

Jeron

Nurse call systems are often viewed as simple "call bell" alerting systems, but the latest generation of Jeron's Provider® nurse call offers so much more including important staff safety and patient satisfaction tools. Provider nurse call supports multiple real-time mobile alerting and communications options for instant staff-to-staff and patient-to-staff communication. Provider's integrated workflow features save time and steps by automating tasks and follow-up reminders between caregivers.

These tools are not just patient lifelines; they serve as the backbone for staff safety systems by providing streamlined communication to and from each patient room.

Learn More

Valcom

Valcom's latest LCD offerings represent a significant step in combining visual messaging with robust audio notification in IP-based systems. Our flagship **22-inch LCD range of products is equipped with speakers and flashers, delivering** not only high-resolution text and graphics but also integrated paging, intercom, clock, and emergency alerting functions—all packaged in both single- and dual-sided options, as an ADA-compliant device. The displays support customizable templates, adjustable scroll speed, multilingual messaging, and synchronized RGB flashers, making them ideal for schools, auditoriums, and other public indoor environments.

Complementing these display units is Valcom's **VIP-VAF IP Multi-Color Flasher**, a high-visibility visual alerting device designed to integrate with VoIP and paging systems. The VIP-VAF supports fully software-programmable RGB colors and flash patterns and can be addressed individually or in grouped zones over PoE+ networks. Because it is SIP-enabled, it works seamlessly with modern communications infrastructure, adding a flexible and attention grabbing layer to emergency or general notification systems.

Together, these innovations reflect Valcom's push toward unified audio/visual alerting, where text, sound, and light work in concert to communicate in both everyday and crisis scenarios.

Learn More

VALCOM
Potter Global Technologies

Sony

Professional display systems thrive in a 360-degree ecosystem that is designed from the start with scalability and flexibility in mind. Key elements include:

- Scalable solutions that adapt to growing needs
- Flexible integration with partner technologies
- Remote management and seamless updates
- Efficiency gains through automated support services
- Simplified upkeep with less downtime and effort

Sony's Professional Displays deliver these advantages out of the box, with built-in smart display features and an open platform ecosystem. This simplifies deployment, streamlines setup and management, boosts operational efficiency, and reduces system complexity.

Backed by over 100 partners in Sony's ecosystem across CMS, UCC, RMS, and hardware providers, we connect teams, spaces, and functions more seamlessly than ever. Discover how our professional displays bridge the gap between technology and productivity.

Learn More

SONY

STI

STI's G3 and GF push buttons deliver fast, reliable alerts when every second matters. Available with or without built-in cameras, they not only signal emergency response but also provide real-time visual awareness. These button solutions help students, staff, and first responders react quickly and confidently in critical situations. The effective durability and advanced monitoring features allow the G3 and GF push buttons to help create safer learning environments. With technology created to protect what matters most, communities gain peace of mind and education remains the focus.

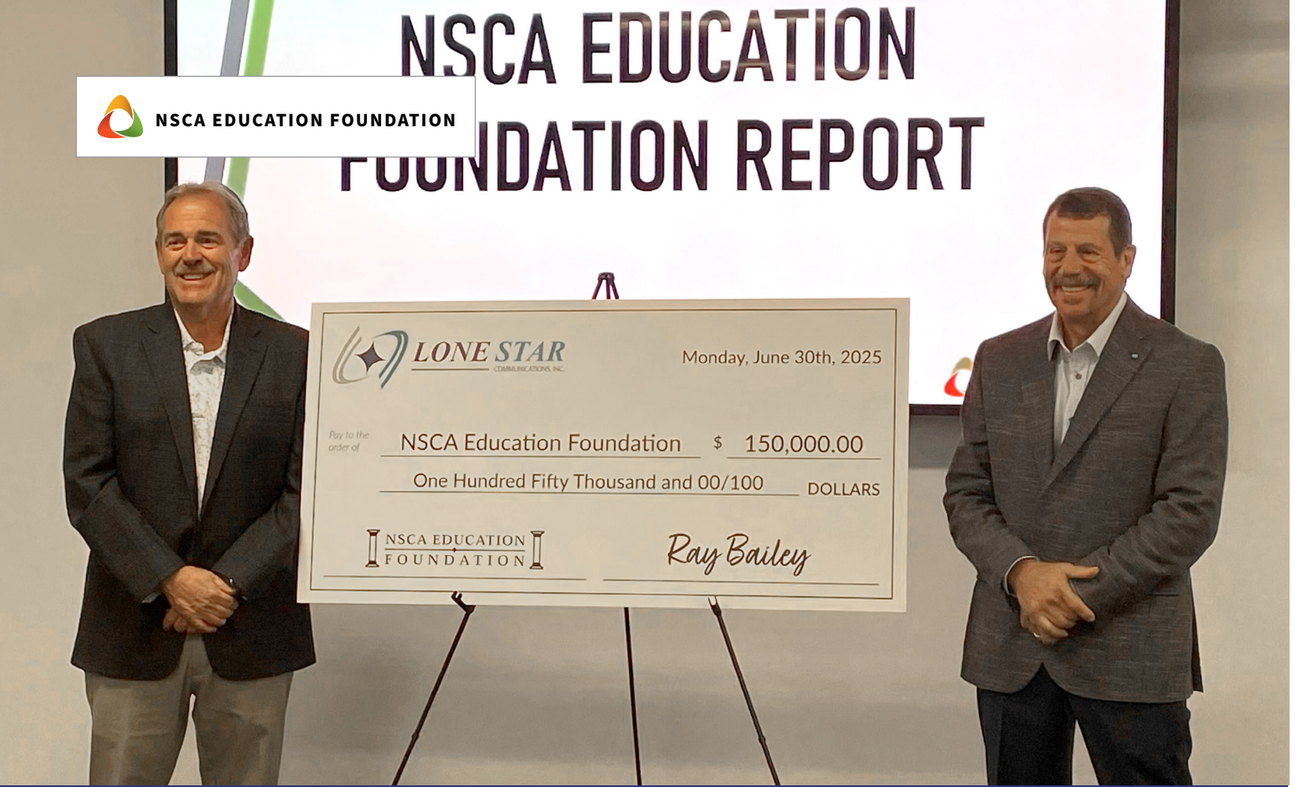
Learn More

TD SYNNEX

InVision 2025 brought partners, vendors, and TD SYNNEX teams together in Dallas for three days of insights, innovation, and collaboration. The event featured thought leadership from TD SYNNEX leaders, a keynote from Gary Kayye of rAVe on market trends and sales strategies for integrators in an AI-driven world, and a session with Tyler Pigott of StoryBrand on clearer communication for sales and marketing. Attendees connected with 38+ leading AV & Collaboration vendors, explored emerging technologies, and gained best practices for growing their ProAV and UCC practices. We've seen such success with InVision for our AV and Collab partners, we have plans to expand this exclusive TD SYNNEX event to include additional endpoint solutions like print, imaging, client devices and more.

Explore more insights, trends, and vendor updates from TD SYNNEX. Sign up for our newsletter HERE.

Learn More



One Industry, Many Ways to Give Back

Lone Star Communications CEO Ray Bailey talks about why he believes that backing the industry is one of the most impactful ways to make a difference.

NSCA's success rests on how industry leaders choose to step up, of course, but also on the ways they choose to keep giving back.

We see this commitment in action over and over within the NSCA community, as members donate their time, talent, and financial support to better our industry. Some volunteer their expertise, some opt to mentor emerging talent, and others invest in specific initiatives meant to strengthen the future of commercial integration

Ray Bailey, CEO at Lone Star Communications, is one of these veteran leaders. Through his Legacy Program gift, announced in September 2025, and his ongoing industry involvement, he's helping NSCA and the NSCA Education Foundation bring new people into the industry, support curriculum and career pathways, and create opportunities for the next generation of integrators and veterans alike.

We sat down with Ray to reflect on his decision to support the Legacy Program and why he believes that backing the industry is one of the most impactful ways to make a difference.

25 Years NSCA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Q: When you think back on your time with NSCA and the NSCA Education Foundation, what are you most proud of contributing to or influencing?

A: Being part of the group that helped NSCA become the voice of the industry is probably one of the things I'm most proud of. Once we sold the show, it took a long time for us to find our place in the industry. Being the voice of the integrator is a really good cause.

Q: What inspired you to make a major gift to the Legacy Program this year?

A: NSCA's mission to bring new people into the industry is a really good one. At a time in the world where everyone is computer-focused, AI-focused, and working in offices, there are a lot of jobs within our industry that require working in the field. It's a really great industry … if people can find us. I am happy to fund an initiative that helps find people learn about commercial integration.

Q: When you picture the Legacy Program funds being put to work, what kinds of initiatives are you most excited about?

A: Bringing people into the industry, helping fund curriculum about our industry that can be taught in college, helping new people find a career in our industry, and helping veterans find their place in our industry.

Q: How do you hope your example will shape the next generation of NSCA leaders who will be stepping into leadership roles?

A: It's far more valuable to share what you know and help all companies become better than to work alone, keeping everything you've learned to yourself.

Q: What impact do you most hope NSCA and the NSCA Education Foundation will have on the industry over the next five to 10 years?

A: I hope NSCA can continue its mission of making all companies better. NSCA was instrumental in helping create a standard of quality within the industry, as well as a standard of pride. I think both of those are very important to our industry. As a result, we're seen as a great industry to be part of and can be confident that the product we provide to our customers is a quality product. Over the years, NSCA has excelled at helping and encouraging new or burgeoning businesses to take that leap to the next level—from a one-man shop to an organization that provides a quality product and service. That support helps those companies become leaders in their local communities and provide jobs and career paths for the people who live there. ■

XBO

Trivia Night at XBO:

How Well Do You Know NSCA and Shure?

A night of nostalgia, bragging rights, and plenty of "I swear I know this!" moments.

It wasn't a surprise that the emerging leaders who attended NSCA's Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience this fall are smart, curious, and forward-thinking—but we learned something else about them, too: They're pretty competitive when it comes to trivia!

In the middle of a packed schedule, XBO attendees made time to join in our first-ever Trivia Night. The event was co-hosted by two industry pillars:

- NSCA Education Foundation, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2025
- Shure, which is celebrating 100 years of audio innovation in 2025

This was a fun and different way for young professionals to engage with NSCA and Shure's shared history. While they spent lots of time in breakout rooms learning about leadership, business strategy, operations, and finance, Trivia Night gave them time to bond and relax over food, drinks, and a friendly clashing of industry and pop-culture knowledge.

We used the evening to spotlight the NSCA Education Foundation's 25-year legacy of supporting workforce development, as well as to thank sponsors like Shure for backing the next generation of leaders just as wholeheartedly as we do.

To mix things up, we asked a mix of trivia questions about the Foundation, Shure, and the industry as a whole. History turned into a team sport, giving young leaders a crash course in NSCA and Shure milestones.

The result was a night of nostalgia, bragging rights, and plenty of "I swear I know this!" moments. If you weren't there, we wanted to make sure you don't miss out on all the fun.

Ready to see how well you can do? Here are some of the questions we asked that night.

1. NSCA's flagship Business & Leadership Conference launched the same year The Matrix hit theaters. What year was it?
2. Shure's original Unidyne microphone grille was inspired by the front of which 1937 automobile brand?
3. Ignite kicked off the same year the Chicago Cubs broke their 108-year championship drought. What year was it?
4. Before Shure became synonymous with microphones, what was the company known for when it was founded in 1925?
5. **There was also one hotly debated question that evening:** NSCA is one of the few trade associations that started in the Midwest rather than on a coast. In what state did it originate in?

If XBO Trivia Night is any indication, we think this group of up-and-comers is more than ready to help Shure and the NSCA Education Foundation shape the industry's next chapter.

And congrats to the winners of Trivia Night:
The Crimper Tantrums:

- Will Pettus, Jeremy Blackstock, and Pooven Naidoo of M3 Technology Group
- Ned Coleman of Smarter Systems
- Mariana Pinho from OfficePro
- Hannah Saunders and Graham Kelly from TD SYNNEX ■

ANSWERS: 1989, OLDSMOBILE, 2016, RADIOS, ILLINOIS

Streamline Your Daily Operations

Your NSCA membership puts hours back into your day with free access to time-saving tools and resources that help you run your business better.

Labor Installation Standard

- ☑ Accurately estimate labor units for better project profitability
- ☑ Get trusted installation estimations based on difficulty, installer experience, and site conditions
- ☑ Find the middle ground between over-estimating and under-estimating

Technical Assessment Tool

- ☑ Streamline hiring and find the best new job candidates
- ☑ Gauge proficiency of technicians and installers before you hire them
- ☑ Evaluate internal candidates who express interest in roles requiring technical knowledge

Essentials Online Library

- ☑ Access industry-standard reports, agreements, contracts, and more
- ☑ Find templates for everything from scheduling matrices and system checklists to change orders and close-out forms
- ☑ Download and customize your own business documents

Project Contribution Simulator

- ☑ Determine accurate pricing to identify a project's breakeven point
- ☑ Follow a four-step process to determine whether your project will be profitable
- ☑ Discover how labor units impact project profitability

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