BUILDING CONNECTIONS

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A Message from the Executive Director

Maybe it was just the size of this year's Business & Leadership Conference (BLC), but nearly four months have passed — and I still can't stop thinking about how I've never seen so much demand for additional information from BLC attendees before.

From the products and businesses that won NSCA awards to people wanting contact information for other attendees, everyone just wanted more. (The new BLC app we unveiled this year was a huge help in that area — people are still visiting the app to find information.) On pages 6-7 of this issue, you'll find an up-close look at the Excellence in Product Innovation award winners that were announced at BLC back in February.

As I look back on the topics that seemed to strike a chord, I come back to the 4 Disciplines of Execution concept (Chris McChesney) and the discussion on career lattices (Cathy Benko). I've talked to integration firms that implemented both concepts as soon as they returned to their offices. It turns out that neither concept is terribly difficult as long as someone stays committed to making them happen.

Simplifying Strategy

The idea behind McChesney's 4 Disciplines of Execution is to simplify strategy to make action items easier to understand and execute. Taking the many good ideas you have and allowing your team to focus on just a few of them — rather than all of them — is a core principle. Ever since McChesney presented this idea back in early March, we've been helping members figure out ways to incorporate the ideas using lead measures instead of lag measures to simplify the executable actions taken to achieve results. It truly makes a remarkable difference.

Lattices vs. Ladders

Cathy Benko led us through a very academic lecture on a topic that makes so much sense — but most of us had never been exposed to this type of talent development approach. Almost daily, people now ask me to review how they might implement this cross-training and onboarding approach into their integration business. Once you compare it to the more traditional career-ladder approach, you begin to see how valuable this could really be.

Looking Forward

I was also in awe of James Kane and Mark Scharenbroich. How can people present their content that well? It blows me away how they command the platform, and how easily they can capture everyone's attention for that period of time. The messages they each had were so different, but they tied together perfectly.

As we review the BLC feedback and evaluations we've received, it's easy to see that our integrator-led planning committee truly understands the pulse of this industry. We always aim to improve upon what we did the year before — and, somehow, I bet 2018 is even better.

And, by the way, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the **Business & Leadership Conference**, I would like to have someone from each NSCA integrator member company represent his or her firm. So don't be surprised if I give you a call!

And don't miss our second annual Pivot to Profit event — the other in-person event we're hosting this year. Meet us in Chicago on Sept. 28-29 for two full days of step-by-step information on how to move your firm into managed services. You won't want to miss it! Visit **www.nsca.org/p2p** for more info (and check out pages 8-9 in this issue).

Male R. Wilson

NSCA Executive Director

Upcoming Events

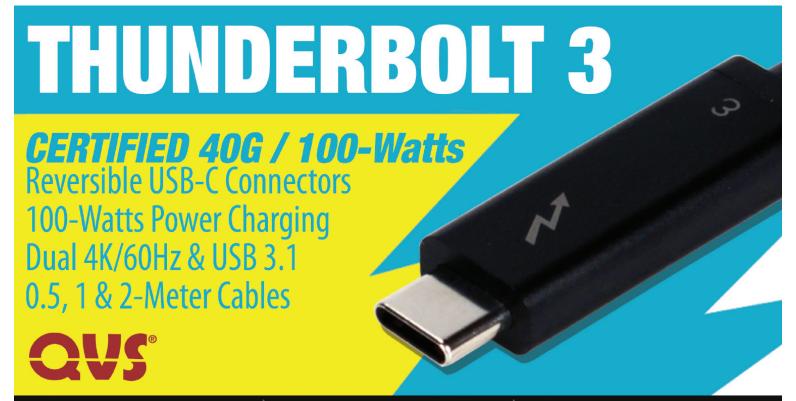
July 18 WEBINAR
Setting Goals and
Reviewing Results
Presented by: Insperity

Aug. 14 INDUSTRY EVENT IGNITE! 2nd Annual Golf Tournament

Aug. 15 **WEBINAR**The Power of Quoting
a Monthly Payment
Westminster, CO
Presented by: GreatAmerica

Sept. 28-29 **CONFERENCE** *Pivot to Profit*Rosemont, IL

MEMBER ADVERTISEMENT





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The No. 1 Issue

Keeping CFOs Up at Night By Bronswick Benjamin

If your CFO appears to have a lot weighing on his or her mind, there's a good chance that it's because of a concern rooted in dysfunctional culture and disjointed team communications — not necessarily business financial health. That's one of the key findings from a recent survey of more than 2,000 U.S. CFOs conducted by Robert Half Finance and Accounting.

The survey reveals that, as today's CFOs become more involved in strategic thinking and building on initiatives from the C-suite, they must frequently deal with financial talent across a broad demographic mix: eager and promising 20-somethings, emerging leaders at the managerial level, and senior leaders with retirement on the horizon.

These employees all have to align for success, but the differences that come with generational gaps can cause tension. One group may favor communication from a manager who tells them exactly what to do. Another group may favor team collaboration to arrive at new solutions.

The CFO must find ways to bridge these divides to not only keep the peace, but also show individuals that their voices are heard. This "open door" will go a long way in determining how much of your financial talent is consistently retained — which leads to another significant issue: hiring.

Keeping the Talent Pipeline Full

When open positions for financial talent go unfilled for extended periods of time, your CFO may begin to feel the pressure of luring new employees into the fold while retaining existing employees by offering fresh opportunities for growth and recognition.

The default response may be to offer a highly attractive salary, but that won't solve it all — particularly among Millennials who want more in terms of benefits from employers. What are you offering beyond dollars and cents?

How Your CFO Can Sleep Easy Tonight

First, don't pretend that conflict doesn't exist — meet it head on. It's natural to have disagreements in the workplace, but you don't want to see those disagreements escalate. Talk about them with your team. In many cases, people simply want to know they've been heard. This can bring the temperature in the room down quickly.

Secondly, communication is what your team wants ... so give it to them. Many Millennials crave instruction; by holding back, you're preventing them from helping you meet the goals you've set. This isn't license to micromanage, but to talk with them regularly to ensure that all parties are on the same page as far as expectations.

Third, hire for personality as much as skill. If building a collaborative culture is a big priority, paint a picture of the kinds of individuals you want to hire and retain. What qualities do they have? How passionate are they about certain things? How important is it that they're fun to be around? The way you hire leaves an imprint on the culture, which has implications for how long you'll retain your best people.

Bronswick Benjamin is a firm of certified public accountants and advisors.



4 Manager Mistakes THAT DESTROY TRUST By Pete Hinojosa

When you're leading employees along the path to success, are you getting the results you want? Are they open to suggestions, engaged, and giving it their all? Or do they push back, miss the mark, and second-guess advice?

Before you make permanent decisions about whether you hired the right person, consider a less obvious problem: a lack of trust.

Trust is the foundation of all relationships — nowhere is this more evident than in the workplace. And trust begins with managers. Without it, employee engagement, morale, and productivity go down the drain.

Here are four scenarios that can destroy trust and create workplace chaos.

1. The Hiring Switch

Kathy, a skilled graphic designer, is hired to design your new website. She has years of experience in web design and does an excellent job. Once the website is complete, you place her in a new position as project manager over your writing team. But the writing team starts to miss deadlines and becomes disengaged; Kathy is calling in sick, cancelling meetings, and mishandling projects.

Most likely, Kathy is not happy in her new role. She was skilled at web design — not managing people. Successful leaders hire people for experience and strengths, and let them shine. Your employees trust that you value their skills and experience, and appreciate their areas of expertise. Moving them into unknown territory, and then expecting them to meet the challenge, can create distrust, disengagement, and low morale.

Open communication is key. Telling Kathy that you know her new role is a big change, and offering support through management training or mentoring, would be a big step toward rebuilding trust.

2. Unclear Communication

Robert, your new salesman, hits the ground running and is excited to connect with potential clients. At the end of the week, he has uncovered a lot of new leads and feels good about his success.

You ask him for details, and realize that the leads he found are not in your market. He feels confused, misled, and frustrated. You question his ability to get results, and think you might have misjudged his capabilities. Is it him? Or is it you?

Good managers know the importance of clear communication. The clearer you can be from the start, the better. Don't assume your employees understand what you're asking them to do. Just because it's clear to you doesn't mean it's clear to them.

Sending Robert out to meet potential customers without providing training on his target audience is a big misstep. Taking the time to consider what he needed to be an effective salesman prior to sending him out would help him be better prepared.



Promote open communication by encouraging employees to tell you if something is unclear before they start a project. Suggest that they come to you for additional direction if they feel confused during a project.

3. Leaving Out "Why"

When we give people a task, we often leave out the most important piece — the "why." You give them the "what" and "how," but it's easy to misunderstand your request without the "why."

Mary is asked to develop a new marketing campaign. She is a seasoned marketing professional who draws on her experiences to create a marketing strategy. You meet with her two weeks later, expecting to look at her marketing proposal — but she doesn't have one. Instead, she met with the writing and design teams to create messaging and a webpage, and is ready to launch the campaign.

Unfortunately, there is a process that needs to be followed — the proposal, management approval, etc. Mary feels misled after she finds out. Trust is broken. Why? You didn't explain the expected process and why it must be followed. If you had spoken with Mary about all the steps, and why they're in place, you would've avoided confusion. At the same time, you would've validated that her way isn't wrong, it just isn't done that way in your business.

4. Allowing No Room for Differences

Varied behaviors can cause a multitude of problems, including lack of productivity, friction between employees, and low morale. Ted might like to talk things out while Mike prefers to create checklists alone. Half the team wants a quick decision; the other half needs time to consider the options.

One way to gain insight into work styles is through personality and style assessments like DISC. This behavioral analysis method helps leaders and employees understand default behaviors and preferred work styles. DISC represents four common behavior styles:

• Dominance • Influence • Steadiness • Conscientiousness

When everyone understands each other's behavioral tendencies and preferences, it's easier to find middle ground for better working relationships, higher productivity, and trusting relationships. \triangle

Pete Hinojosa is director of sales leadership development at Insperity, an NSCA Business Accelerator

2017 Excellence in WINDERS



Each of these products helps you offer something different and creative to clients

There are lots of product awards programs in our industry. But NSCA's Excellence in Product Innovation awards is focused on finding and recognizing products that make integrators' lives easier.

In February 2017, the winners of the third annual product competition were announced at the Business & Leadership Conference. One winner was named in each category, along with an overall Grand Prize Winner.

Middle Atlantic

DC Power Distribution

Winner: Ease of Customization

Middle Atlantic's DC Power Distribution is the first centralized DC power solution that balances power demands with space constraints and



small numbers of power outlets. This universal power solution eliminates messy, space-consuming wall warts and other power clutter, and powers devices like extenders, scalers, converters, and media players while eliminating space and outlet challenges.

Benefits:

- Available as 45W DC compact and 125W DC 1RU systems
- Support for multiple voltage outputs in one unit
- USB ports conveniently power compatible products

Belden **REVConnect**



core components to perform any connectorization. From Category 5e to Category 6A jacks, shielded or unshielded, and even Category 6A field-mountable plugs, one core termination is compatible with eight connectors.

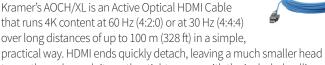
Benefits:

- Terminate a jack or a plug onto the same core interface
- Supports 100W devices, such as LCD monitors and next-gen security cameras
- 30% to 60% termination time savings

Kramer

CP-AOCH/XL Active Optical High-Speed Pluggable HDMI Cable — Plenum Rated

Winner (tie): Interoperability



to run through conduit or other tight spaces with the included pulling capsule. Cables are thinner, lighter, and more flexible than copper or standard optical cables.

Benefits:

- High data-transfer rate of up to 10.2 Gbps
- Removable HDMI connectors
- Available in lengths from 33 feet to 328 feet

SoundTube

Dante-Enabled IP Loudspeakers

Winner (tie): Interoperability

With SoundTube Dante speakers, audio system control and management extend to the end point, even for in-ceiling speakers. The speaker connects to a PoE, PoE+, or SoundTube's STNet

Ethernet switch using a category cable; the switch then connects to a Dante DSP. Once the initial connection is made, the wiring to the speaker never needs to be changed, even if zoning or audio feed requirements change.

Benefits:

- Zoning and volume control are managed via software
- Self-monitoring, reporting any faults back to monitoring software
- BroadBeam Ring technology for broad high-frequency dispersion











Williams Sound **Hearing HotSpot Real-Time** Audio via Wi-Fi

WILLIAMS SOUND ® (<u>0</u>) (<u>0</u>) (

Winner: New Revenue Potential

The Hearing HotSpot allows any venue to stream real-time audio via Wi-Fi from TVs, music sources, or live programs to personal smartphones or tablets. Connect to the local Hearing HotSpot provided by Williams Sound, download the free Hearing HotSpot app from Google Play or the Apple App Store, and select the audio channel you want to hear. The Hearing HotSpot Server includes everything needed to stream multiple channels of audio in real time over an enterprise wireless network.

Benefits:

- User-friendly LCD front panel for set-up, status, and audio-level adjustment
- Advanced software algorithm delivers audio with ultra-low latency
- Reliable, clear connection via Wi-Fi with better-than-MP3 audio quality

Department 60

Visualz Digital Signage Platform

Winner: Recurring Revenue Potential

With no hardware to purchase, no software to install, and centralized management, control, and delivery of content, you can now turn any monitor into a digital signage display. Visualz offers an



VISUALZ

affordable monthly fee per display license, providing unlimited user access to the Visualz Management Portal to upload content, schedule programs, initiate an emergency override, and manage content and users. Visualz is the first digital signage service sold exclusively through integrators.

Benefits:

- Turn content on or off with a simple mouse click
- Pick and choose which monitor displays content and for how long
- Emergency override feature for emergency messaging

AtlasIED

Strategy III Series Ceiling Loudspeaker

Winner: Retrofit-Friendly

AtlasIED Strategy III Series loudspeakers address a common failure point: "dogleg-style" mounting tabs, which become damaged during



Atlas IED M

installation due to over torqueing by power drills or screw drivers. Mount tabs won't properly support ceiling loudspeakers, and speakers may fall from the ceiling. Strategy III speakers feature a new Safety-First- Mounting-System (SFMS) innovation. Speakers also feature an environmental coating option to protect against dust and moisture contamination.

Benefits:

- Safe mounting system that meets all certification standards
- Meet UL1480 and UL2043 standards
- Edgeless grilles come in square or round designs with stock choice of black or white finish



Shure

Microflex Advance Conference Room Audio

Winner: Overall Grand Prize





Shure's Microflex® Advance™ premium networked array microphones for AV conferencing applications provide an "invisible audio" solution, providing state-of-the-art audio. With the ability to flush-mount the array alongside standard ceiling tiles, and the innovative "toroid" polar pattern in the Microflex Advance Table Array, Microflex Advance microphones offer a dynamic package of technological features to ensure a best-in-class experience. Using the Dante Audio Networking protocol, all control, audio, and power signals are carried through a standard Ethernet cable connection.

Benefits:

- · Hardware offerings feature built-in control software
- Intuitive interface simplifies the process of adjusting microphone attributes
- Incredibly accurate control of audio capture







Technology is being bought and sold through financing — solutions are no longer being sold as large capital expenses, but as services with ongoing monthly payments.

Pivot to Profit 2017, Sept. 28-29 in Chicago, will help you learn how to sell everything as a service:

- What solutions to offer clients that add value and maintain relevancy
- How to protect yourself and your customers as systems connect to networks and are exposed to security risks
- The differences between annual/perpetual paperwork and licenses
- Back-office financial considerations of moving to services-based models
- How to help customers understand the benefits of technology as a service

Our onsite innovation hall connects you to service providers and partners that can move your managed services forward.

HERE'S A GLIMPSE AT THE SCHEDULE:

GENERAL SESSIONS

Are You Selling or Building?

- Ways to be viewed as an "asset builder" instead of a "salesperson"
- How to handle clients who say they no longer need you for certain services
- What to offer clients to add value and stay relevant

Pay for Performance: Good Idea for RMR?

- Compensation needs of today's employees and companies
- Designing compensation plans to reward performance
- Ways to align employee goals with organizational goals

What Will XaaS (Everything as a Service) Bring in the Future?

- What may be moving to "XaaS" soon
- The "botnet of things" and its side effects on IoT
- Infrastructure required to support XaaS

SESSIONS

What to Measure for Better RMR

 How to determine whether RMR is impacting revenue growth, gross margin, and operating income

 Pinpointing the customers that truly make you money

 Processes for preparing and sending a managed services quote

Pivot to Profit Conference

Sept. 28-29 Chicago

\$295 per attendee

*price increases to \$495 after July 31

Why You Should Offer Telecom as a Service

- Pros and cons of providing telecom as a service
- How to get clients interested in telecom as a service
- What's pushing on-premises phones and pricing-per-station models out of the picture

Don't Take on Cyber Risks

- Advice on protecting your organization from content and data loss
- · Defending against liability
- Preventing attackers from gaining control of equipment

Creating a One-Stop Digital Signage Shop

- Establishing your business as a one-stop shop for digital signage
- How to offer content and graphic design services as part of the digital signage package



SIGN UP FOR PIVOT TO PROFIT NOW!



Annual or Perpetual Paperwork? Which is Best?

- Basics of each choice: annual and perpetual paperwork
- What should be included in contracts and licenses
- Which paperwork options are viewed as assets by clients

Moving Security to the Cloud

- Moving beyond information security or IT security to a concept that includes other security forms
- How to prepare to offer security services to clients in the cloud

Video in the Cloud: Friend or Foe?

- How cloud storage for video is changing video quality, file size, and compression codecs
- Ramifications of moving video workload to the cloud

The Lowdown on Financing for Managed Services

- Analyzing the cash flow and back-office financial considerations of moving to a services-based model
- Options for financing endpoint pricing

MEMBER ADVERTISEMENT







NSCA's Business Accelerators connect you to trusted, well-known organizations that save you time, reduce your expenses, and help you focus on managing and growing your business.

Many members already use these services, and are experiencing impressive discounts, money back, and time savings as a result.

alliant group

- Take advantage of available tax credits
- Reduce pending and past tax liability
- Receive cash for work-related activities

AVIS Budget

- · Reduce travel expenses with access to discounts
- Save on car-rental rates
- · Efficiently manage business trips



- Differentiate services through financing
- Improve consistent cash flow
- Cut down on price wars



- Offer competitive benefits at an affordable price
- Maintain HR compliance to avoid fees and claims
- Streamline payroll

Lenovo.

- Reduce IT expenses
- Ensure the best PC pricing possible
- · Speed up computer deployment

Office DEPOT

- · Reduce office supply costs with access to discounts
- · Get print jobs done quickly and inexpensively
- · Lower operating costs



- Protect yourself and clients against security breaches
- Anticipate future security threats
- Manage all insurance (including technology insurance) in one place

SOLUTIONS369

business.managed

- · Execute client work faster
- · Unify data for an improved look at finances
- Prevent lost revenue and slow billing cycles



- · Buy and sell discontinued products at a discounted rate
- Reduce stock that's no longer needed



- Reduce shipping and freight costs by up to 34%
- Consolidate shipping services and communications

TIPS FOR CLOSING SALES

with Financing By Great America

Businesses are using financing to pay for their technology. As your organization moves along the path toward recurring monthly revenue and managed services, here are some tips on landing projects that involve financing.

1. Ask your customers questions to determine whether they should buy or finance new technology.

- "Where else can you use your cash or credit lines?" Your customer can likely put cash to better use by hiring employees, investing in marketing, applying cash to company growth, or setting money aside for an emergency. If your customer doesn't have a spending need in any of these areas, they should use cash to purchase technology.
- "Are you prepared to make another large cash purchase to upgrade your system in a few years?" Phone and IT systems don't last as long as they used to since they rely on software. Technology is evolving quicker than ever, making new purchases outdated after just a few years. If your customer pays for technology on a monthly budget, you can upgrade their system in a couple years with the same monthly payment.

2. Financing isn't just for large enterprises or cash-strapped companies.

According to the Equipment Leasing and Finance Association, seven out of 10 U.S. businesses use financing to acquire equipment (excluding credit cards).

3. Financing provides benefits to large and small businesses.

Financing can help you increase margins. Offering a monthly-payment option to customers can avoid sticker shock and reduce negotiating. Bundling services, such as risk-of-loss coverage and maintenance programs, will increase monthly payment value. When offered financing, end-users are more likely to upgrade and make larger purchases.

4. Section 179 can boost the benefits of a \$1 buyout agreement.

A \$1 buyout agreement qualifies for favorable tax treatment under Section 179. Depending on the Section 179 expense limit, your customer may take the full depreciation of the equipment in the first year. It's the same benefit as a cash purchase, but without the large capital expense. Consult your tax advisor to discuss your specific situation.

5. Use a rental agreement to sell against a hosted or cloud competitor.

Much like a cloud or hosted solution, a rental agreement is generally considered an operating expense, which allows assets to act as day-to-day expenses. Many companies prefer not to have capital tied up in equipment when they could use it for revenue-generating activities.



6. Financing can help you upgrade more customers.

Technology is evolving and depreciating at an accelerating pace, which is really to your benefit. Getting customers on a finance program, such as Fair Market Value, \$1 buyout, or rental, sets the stage for future upgrades. The chances of upgrading decreases when customers buy with cash.

7. You can add equipment to customer agreements throughout the term.

Adding equipment to the lease anytime during the term is simple. Add-ons can be folded into a payment and scheduled to end on the original end date of the agreement. When a large amount is added, you can extend the term to keep payments lower.

8. The lowest lease rate isn't always the best.

Make sure you understand what is and isn't included in a low rate. Many banks and financial institutions have hidden fees in finance agreements, including automatic renewal payments (some up to a year), fees to process taxes, interim rent, and inflated fair market residuals. Before making a decision, read through the proposed finance agreement and be sure customers aren't surprised with hidden fees.

9. Financing will help you sell more maintenance contracts.

Many solution providers make the mistake of pitching two sales to every customer. The first sale is for the technology (probably for a cash price). Then, if they agree, they make a second sale for the maintenance contract. Bundle the equipment and service into one monthly payment.

10. Financing is a great way to differentiate your company.

Financing can help you become a total solution provider and tailor your sale to the way customers buy. Offering a monthly payment that includes new equipment and service will increase value proposition. Additionally, freeing up customers' cash may make them more profitable and more likely to view you as a trusted business advisor. \triangle

GreatAmerica, nationwide provider of commercial equipment and technology financing, is an NSCA Business Accelerator.

From 'Why' to 'How'

How to sell everything as a service



Sept. 28-29 Rosemont, IL www.nsca.org/p2p







