BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Your Voice, Your Business Resource, Your Trusted Advisor

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION

p. 8

NSCA® YOUR VOICE • RESOURCE • ADVISOR

20th ANNUAL

Business & Leadership CONFERENCE

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A Message from the Executive Director

Get New Hires
Up and Running in 2018

It's no secret that hiring, training, and onboarding is one of the biggest challenges faced by integrators today. We hear about it daily at NSCA, and we're sure you have discussions about this very topic just as often.

So, to help you start the next year off right in terms of staffing, NSCA is offering deals on its testing, training, and onboarding tools.

Technical Assessment Tool

Save time, streamline hiring, identify current employees who have extraordinary technical skills, and find the best new candidates by using the online Technical Assessment Tool.

During the interview process, this online test can be administered to technicians and installers so you can gauge proficiency levels before you hire. How much do they know about fire alarm systems? Do they know the differences between different video signals? This test can tell you — so you'll know how much training the candidate may need beforehand (or how quickly they'll be up and running).

Topics covered include general industry knowledge, as well as proficiency for a variety of system types at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels. Based on the type of role you're filling, you can select which categories you want each candidate to be tested on. You have access to the test results right away, making it easy to identify strong candidates.

Each assessment is typically $75, but special pricing offered through Dec. 31, 2017, gives NSCA members access to the Technical Assessment Tool at these rates:

- 5 for $300 ($60/test)
- 10 for $525 ($52.50/test)
- 15 for $750 ($50/test)

Some of our integrator members are successfully administering the Technical Assessment Tool to every technical candidate they interview.

C-SIP Onboarding Program

Bringing new employees on board is an exciting process — but providing training to get them up to speed can be time-consuming and overwhelming. And whose responsibility is it?

The C-SIP program (which leads to a certificate as a systems integration professional) is a resource that helps you get new employees started on the right foot. It provides industry and job-specific training in an online, at-your-own-pace environment – without placing the training or information-transfer burden onto existing staff members. Online training is available in marketing, operations, sales, and project management tracks.

Each C-SIP program is typically $295, but special pricing offered through Dec. 31, 2017, gives NSCA members access to the online program at this discounted rate:

- $99/program

If you've been thinking about giving one of these tools a try, now's the time! Contact us to get started!

Charles R. Wilson

Chuck Wilson
NSCA Executive Director

Upcoming Events

Dec. 19
WEBINAR
How Integrators Benefit from Tax Credits
Presented by: alliantgroup

Jan. 24, 2018
WEBINAR
8th Annual Integration Business Outlook
Presented by: NSCA & *Commercial Integrator*

Feb. 20, 2018
WEBINAR
Leading through the Whitewater of Change
Presented by: Insperity

Feb. 28-March 2, 2018
CONFERENCE
Business & Leadership Conference
Irving, TX

March 12-16, 2018
CONFERENCE
PSA-TEC
Denver, CO

March 20, 2018
WEBINAR
How to Benefit From the Electronic Systems Outlook Report
Presented by: NSCA

NSCA GOES TO BATTLE on Your Behalf

Many people don't realize what NSCA does behind the scenes for its members (and for the entire integration industry as a whole) when it comes to legislation and regulations. Here are two recent examples of legal battles we've fought on behalf of integrators.

Payment/Collection After Fulfilling Project Obligations and Responsibilities

Zachry Construction Corporation v. Port of Houston involved a systems integrator, a general contractor, and the U.S. federal government. Specifics can't be disclosed, but it involved a Port of Houston Authority project. General Contractor Zachry Construction Corporation sued Port of Houston Authority for breach of contract. Zachry bid on a wharf project with a plan to build "in the dry" (sealing out water). After work began, however, a plan modification was needed — and the Port of Houston Authority rejected it. Zachry had to work "in the wet," which raised costs. Zachry sued the Port of Houston Authority, indicating that the contract didn't give them the authority to reject a plan modification.

After 11 years, two trips to the Court of Appeals, and two trips to the Supreme Court of Texas, the result is positive law for systems contractors. On Sept. 1, the Supreme Court of Texas refused the Port's petition for review.

When integrators do work for the government, they deserve to be paid. This case sets a precedent for other payment/collection disputes when an integrator fulfills project obligations and responsibilities.

A New Law to Keep Security Solutions in Check

A few months ago, after a year-long effort led by NSCA, the Security Industry Association (SIA), the Consumer Technology Association (CTA), and many other trade associations, Congress presented a bill to enact the Power and Security Systems (PASS) Act (S. 190). This bill provides an important provision that is critical to the operation of security and fire alarm systems in regard to federal energy-efficiency requirement.

The PASS Act extends a U.S. Department of Energy policy that exempts security and life-safety external power supplies (EPSs) from having to meet a "no-load mode" energy-efficiency standard (due to the fact that they're always connected and in active mode by design).

The new law, which took effect on Nov. 2, 2017, removes the July 1, 2017, expiration date on the no-load exemption for security and life-safety products, and authorizes the U.S. Department of Energy to retain this common-sense provision in any future updates to energy-efficiency standards that govern external power supplies.

Without the exemption, security manufacturers would've been forced to redesign power supplies and retool manufacturing processes, needlessly increasing production costs by 200 to 300 percent. This would have affected the entire chain.

4 Things to Look for in a Cyber Insurance Partner

As more and more integrators take on technology projects that subject them to risks, like cybersecurity, information, and communications exposure, they're investigating ways to safeguard against things that may threaten business and client relationships.

A cyber insurance policy, also called cyber liability insurance coverage (CLIC), helps integrators reduce risk exposure by offsetting the costs involved with recovery after a breach or other cybersecurity event. It typically covers expenses that are incurred as a result of an incident, including:

- Costs associated with forensics investigations to determine what happened — and how it happened
- Direct and indirect business losses, including monetary losses due to downtime or data recovery
- Costs associated with notifying customers or other affected parties
- Lawsuits and legal expenses

Given the type of work integrators are involved with today, and the access they often have to customer networks, cyber insurance is becoming more popular. It can cover your company if something were to happen to your network, but also cover you if something were to happen to a client's network while you had access to it.

Here are a few key things to look for when shopping for an insurance provider that offers cyber insurance:

1. Make sure the carrier understands your business. They should know the difference between what an integration firm and an electrical contractor does, for example. They should also understand the potential risks you're exposed to on a daily basis, what kind of access you have to client networks, and what you're doing on those networks.
2. A provider that not only understands your business, but understands the technology you work with every day. The more they understand low-voltage technology systems, such as life safety, fire safety, and nurse call systems, the better they'll understand the type of work you do and the potential cybersecurity risks you face.
3. Carrier rates that let you report total annual revenue under one umbrella instead of asking you to break out sales and payroll information into different classes (alarm installation, security camera installation, etc.).
4. The ability to purchase all types of insurance in one place. A carrier that offers cyber insurance along with property, general liability, worker's compensation, auto insurance, etc. can save you time and money.

To learn more about cyber insurance, or to find out if you need it, contact Business Accelerator TrueNorth, or visit **www.nsca.org/reduce-technology-risk-onebeacon**.

NSCA Benefits You May Not Know About

With all of the new tools, research, and resources available to NSCA members, it's easy to forget about the benefits you have at your fingertips. Some are more obvious — like our free monthly webinars and our Business & Leadership Conference — but others fly under the radar.

Make sure you're taking full advantage of your membership. Check out the most recent resources that are available to integrators!

Member Advisory Council

- Advice from experts with a combined 125 years of systems integration industry experience
- Learn to turn challenges into opportunities, and gain a solid foundation for the future
- Face sales, project management, financial, and operations challenges head-on and come out on top

Business Accelerators

- Access to free, money-saving programs from companies like UPS, Lenovo, Avis, Budget, and Office Depot
- Explore savings opportunities through tax credits and incentives
- Improve and streamline HR/benefits
- Using just two of these free programs offers savings that more than pay for membership

Project Contribution Training Simulator

- Discover how properly burdening labor and spearheading eroding margins impact your bottom line
- Test different scenarios to see the impact of specific projects on overall company health

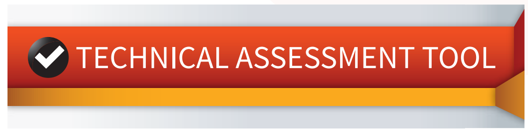
C-SIP (Certificate as a Systems Integration Professional)

- Efficiently and cost-effectively learn about the industry — and operations-specific roles — in an online environment
- Earn your C-SIP certificate, illustrating your dedication to the integration systems industry

C-SIP
CERTIFICATE AS A SYSTEMS INTEGRATION PROFESSIONAL
NSCA

Business System Assessment

- Understand the true costs (labor, effort, time, licenses, subscriptions, opportunity cost) of your business tools and processes
- Gain insight into how well your company uses its data to make intelligent and informed decisions
- Reign in your data and use it to make solid, informed, well-backed business decisions



Technical Assessment Tool

- Measure the technical proficiency and technicians before you hire them
- Assess knowledge of existing staff members who want to move into new roles
- Quickly and accurately screen pools of new candidates

Essentials Online Library

- Over 600 templates, contracts, and documents you can download — from HR handbooks to legal paperwork — to help you save

IGNITE Career Center

- Post job openings on the IGNITE job board to find your next superstar — Gold and Platinum members can post unlimited numbers of jobs at no cost
- Download free materials to use at job fairs and local colleges/high schools to promote the benefits of working in the integration industry

ignite
sparking interest in technology

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*NSCA's 20th annual **Business & Leadership Conference (BLC)** will change your way of thinking. Leadership is possible at every level — and is so much more than a role in an organization. It can be fulfilled at all levels inside a company.*

What started as a small conference has turned into one of the best networking events in the industry — and one that integrators look forward to. We hope to have at least one representative from each NSCA integrator member company at the 20th annual event. Register now to reserve your spot!

KEYNOTES

Economic Outlook 2018
This high-level economic overview analyzes long-term trends, current conditions, and the economic outlook for 2018 and beyond. Chris Kuehl explains how the government, businesses, and consumers play a role in a sustainable economy.

Scaling Up
Why do some companies make it while others don't? Hear about practical tools and techniques for building an industry-dominating business. These approaches have been formed after three decades spent by Verne Harnish advising tens of thousands of C-suite executives. Create a company where the team is engaged, the customers are doing your marketing, and everyone is making money.

The Age of the Customer, presented by Insperity
Maintain your relevance as clients begin to understand your technology solutions. This session, led by Jim Blasingame, will help you understand how to meet your customers' expanded expectations of value and relevance.

Innovation by Design: Digital Leadership
Erik Qualman, one of today's most respected social media experts, will provide invaluable lessons drawn from a wide variety of sources to deliver digital-leadership best practices that help you reach your full potential.

SESSIONS

Operations Track: How Rockefeller Habits Help Integrators Execute at Peak Levels
See how your company compares when learning how the very best businesses in the world execute using proven processes and methods as written in the best-selling book, *Mastering the Rockefeller Habits*. The book's author, Verne Harnish, helps you explore the concepts of the three pillars of success.

Sales/Marketing Track: The Power of Implications: Finding Growth Opportunity in a Disruptive Market
Learn how to benefit from the ripples of opportunity created by the sudden impacts we typically see as "catastrophic." We will be joined by legendary business expert Jim Blasingame, who'll help you turn your team around from being negative to opportunistic.

CEO/Finance Track: The Ever-Changing Role of the CEO
With a record level of M&A activity in the industry, you'll learn what's driving this activity, and understand what your business is really worth. You'll also get to keep the overview of the current buyer/seller valuation matrix you create.

Next-Gen Track: Bringing Digital-Native Secret Weapons to the Table
Learn how to develop career paths in your business that enable younger employees to experience a variety of roles. Hear about real-world applications of applying "rookie smarts" techniques and behaviors, and find out how to get all generations engaged and excited to contribute at high levels.

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FEB 28-MARCH 2, 2018

Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas

IRVING, TX

KEYNOTES

The Hero Effect

Be your best when it matters the most! Kevin Brown shares ideas, strategies, and principles to inspire and equip participants to show up every day and make a positive difference. At the heart of this message is a philosophy for life that drives every thought, action, and result you achieve personally and professionally.

Creating Business Value Using Third-Box Thinking

We'll cover how the very best companies redefine their ability to refine the customer experience and become co-innovators. Gary Kunath shares his "Third Box Thinking" model, which teaches you to quickly anticipate customers' needs and build a value proposition that aligns with what matters to them.

Storytelling to Fast-Track Trust

Businesses, brands, salesforces, marketing teams, and leaders at all levels are desperately trying to capture attention and resonate with consumers who expect more. Is there a secret weapon? A silver bullet to humanize and connect? Special guest Kindra Hall tells us that the answer is strategic storytelling.

Register Now!

www.nsca.org/blc **800.446.NSCA**

$1,099 (NSCA members) $1,399 (non-members)

SESSIONS

Operations Track: Process Improvements to Meet Schedules and Manage Cost Overruns

This session is a hands-on workshop for operations leaders. Metrics and benchmarks will be provided, and you'll see real-world examples of best practices using tools developed by industry experts that partner with NSCA and its member companies.

Sales/Marketing Track: Matching Sales Talent with Sales Strategy

Got questions about sales compensation plans? This session has answers. You'll also receive tips on identifying the candidates within your sales team that will align best with different types of transactions and approaches.

CEO/Finance Track: Leading from Within

Current research shows that over 70% of employees would sacrifice pay increases and promotions for family well-being. Gary Kunath shows us how great leaders inspire action and greatness within their people by positively affecting their lives inside and outside the walls of the corporation.

Next-Gen Track: What Makes You Great

This roundtable discussion covers the changing workplace and how we can effectively adapt, lead improvement processes, and compete for promotions within our companies. This session equips people with tools to take charge when given the chance.

Paying an Employee More than Yourself

By Rebecca Messina

When you own a company, it feels like every salary comes straight out of your pocket. So, what do you do when a prospective hire asks for big bucks? Maybe even more than you're making?

It may be hard to say "yes" to a salary that's more than you expected to pay, especially if you're growing the company and looking to reinvest profits. But there are compelling reasons to spend big to sign top talent.

1. **The Employee Lives in a More Expensive City or Region**
   If you're opening a new office in New York, and you're based in Little Rock, AR, be prepared to pay more. If your candidate is a heavy hitter who lives and works in a high cost-of-living city, you should be prepared to pay accordingly.
2. **The Position Generates Revenue**
   It's customary for people who bring in money — think sales reps — to earn commissions on top of their base salary. Remind yourself that signing big checks to your star salesperson is what you want.
3. **It's a High-Demand Job**
   The economic theory of supply and demand works for jobs and products. If there are more open positions than there are qualified candidates, expect to pay more. This can apply to engineering, accounting and IT positions, for example.
4. **It's a Temporary Situation**
   There may be times when you need to bring in a consultant or specialist to handle a specific project. This expert help may be expensive in the short term, but give you long-lasting results. An example: Someone who readies your business for sale or updates a manufacturing process.

Rely on Data, Not Emotion

To decide whether to pay a salary that's higher than your own, remove your emotions and look at the data. NSCA's Compensation & Benefits Report and Sales Compensation White Paper can provide you with guidance and advice on salaries, benefits, and commission structures.

Rebecca Messina serves as director of compensation services at Insperity. Looking for ways to offer a more robust benefits package? Contact Insperity, an NSCA Business Accelerator.

PREPARE FOR YOUR 2018 SALES MEETINGS

Preparation can make or break a sales meeting. If you enter the sales meeting ready to answer questions and address resistance, you'll strengthen the relationship and help your prospect or client increase their trust in you. If the meeting is unorganized and unprofessional, however, sales potential can slip away quickly.

NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember **Corporate Sales Coaches** has helped integration firms of all sizes prepare and plan for effective, successful sales meetings. As Bob Lobascio, senior associate at Corporate Sales Coaches, points out in his training sessions: Prior proper planning promotes peak performance.

Although most of the sales tips and secrets are revealed only in Corporate Sales Coaches' customized training sessions, there are a few takeaways we can share:

1. Consider the person you're talking to. Are you dealing with the CFO? The IT director? The sales manager? This will help form your focus and message.
2. Create consistent and impressive bios for each team member. When written the right way, these bios can quickly let customers know how qualified and knowledgeable your team is — and why they're well equipped to handle the project.
3. Educate sales professionals on the industry, different markets, and technology. There are many salespeople who know very little about what technology integration involves, why it's beneficial, and how to find the best solution for customers.
4. Pinpoint personality traits. Once you've identified their role, it's important to understand how they work, what's important to them, what motivates them, what causes them stress, and how they solve problems

"When I worked with Corporate Sales Coaches, I was able to indulge in their wealth of knowledge through the classroom training and eventually through one-on-one coaching to ensure that I was directing my teams toward success," says Mike Shinn, technology operations and marketing professional at Verrex. "In the time I was engaged with Corporate Sales Coaches, I could draw a direct correlation to the increased performance of my sales team (22%+). I was also able to coach through operational differences that were occurring between my teams by simply teaching all parties how best to interact with one another. The performance of my teams increased exponentially due to the training, and there was a recognizable increase in revenue and profits due to the program."

*To set up a training session for your sales team, **contact us!***

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