Integrate

BUSINESS CHALLENGES DON'T STAND A CHANCE.

Tariffs. Sluggish project pipelines. Industry classifications. Ineffective marketing. Customer financing. Inside, we talk about the **biggest obstacles integrators face**—and how to overcome them.

PLUS: A look back at BLC 2025 and celebrating 25 years of talent development led by the NSCA Education Foundation.

EDITOR'S LETTER

Building a Better Business:
NSCA Focuses on Six Pillars in 2025

Find out how NSCA plans to help you elevate your company's performance this year.

Integrators continue to have many reasons for optimism. But, while opportunities are great, profitability continues to be tenuous.

As a result, NSCA's 2025 priorities reflect a focus on helping you turn obstacles into opportunities and problems into possibilities—and doing so cautiously, strategically, and profitably. This year, we're committed to helping you cultivate the best business climate possible by focusing on six key areas.

1 Improving Your Leadership Skills

Running an integration company isn't easy in any era, but it's increasingly challenging in a constantly changing environment like the one we're in today.

That's why NSCA plans to elevate support for leaders throughout 2025 in our webinars, research reports, *Integrate* content, and our Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience event for next-gen leaders. We're also working with RISE Performance Group to help integrators understand and apply "Scaling Up" principles to improve internal leadership.

2 Helping You Know When to Walk Away

NSCA members face go or no-go decisions daily. Is an upcoming project good for the bottom line or will it be a profit-killer? Is a demanding new customer worth the resources they require?

We want to help you make more informed decisions based on data from our many resources:
- "Go/No-Go" decision-making spreadsheets in our Essentials Library
- The *Financial Analysis of the Industry* report
- The *Compensation & Benefits Report*

3 Developing Your Next-Gen Talent & Leadership

Year in and year out, integrators recognize the need for new talent—both in the field and in the office—as well as the need to develop future leaders. This challenge doesn't make our industry unique, but it also doesn't make the talent shortage any less important.

In 2025, NSCA is doubling down on next-generation talent. Our XBO Experience conference caters to this need. Our Ignite program will also be highly prioritized to help you break through the industry bubble and hire new talent.

4 Providing Guidance on Regulations and Compliance

To help you stay on top of what's happening nationally and globally—and how it impacts your business—we partnered with NSCA Chief Economist Dr. Chris Kuehl to create the Armada Strategic Intelligence System (ASIS) Report, which features content for NSCA members. You can receive his insights every week, right in your inbox (and the best part: ask him questions about what he shares).

NSCA also monitors a steady stream of proposed laws and regulations that could hamper your right to provide limited-power solutions (Power over Ethernet, or PoE) to customers. You can monitor this legislation, too, by using our online legislative tracker.

5 Empowering Your Financial Leaders

As many integrators enter 2025 with strong backlogs, their financial leaders must be empowered to make sure opportunities are indeed opportunities—not double-edged, profit-killing swords.

NSCA will continually provide guidance on this topic through skills training, webinars and roundtable discussions, blogs and Integrate content, and our Financial Analysis of the Industry.

6 Helping the Industry Continually Evolve

Customer needs are changing and escalating. AI relevance is accelerating. Margin erosion is squeezing profits. Compliance issues are growing more complex. Industry consolidation is reshaping the competitive landscape. Interest rates are fluctuating and impacting financial strategies.

And NSCA is here to help you through it all with ongoing training; in-person conferences and events; monthly webinars; blogs and quarterly trade journal, Integrate; research reports; and business tools and resources.

Our AI and Cyber Committee and Emerging Technologies Committee also help us keep track of the enabling and disruptive technology our members provide and interface with.

A Special Note of Thanks

We want to thank you—our valued members who regularly leverage NSCA for business resources, advice, data, news, and community. We're honored to be able to help you do business better, and we're proud to be your voice when it matters most in our industry.

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

Find the Business Tools You Need

All the resources mentioned in this article can be found at **NSCA.org**. Use the search function to find what you need.

Integrate

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Celebrating 25 Years of the NSCA Education Foundation All Year Long!

We're celebrating a year-long recognition of a quarter-century's worth of work on industry-specific talent and workforce development initiatives. Twenty-five years ago, the NSCA Education Foundation was born. Today, it's responsible for the Ignite program, countless scholarships, seed funding for the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS K-12), the Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience event, and so much more.

Join us at these upcoming 25th Anniversary events:

- 25th Anniversary Party with Music and Networking on **June 11** at InfoComm in Orlando
- 25th Anniversary Golf Event on **Aug. 18** in New Jersey

All NSCA Community members can support the NSCA Education Foundation during this special year of recognition. Contact NSCA Director of Operations Teresa Solorio to learn how.

Financial Analysis of the Industry Report Coming Soon

The *Financial Analysis of the Industry*, a biennial research document that tracks key financial ratios among NSCA integrators, is an extremely valuable tool to benchmark company performance and set KPIs.

But before we can complete the 2025 update, we need you to complete our survey! Spend 20 minutes on this survey now and reap big benefits later. Every response we receive gets us closer to releasing the 2025 report everyone's waiting for!

Take the Survey

NSCA BizSkills at InfoComm 2025
Orlando, FL, June 10

Thousands of integrators will converge this summer to learn about the latest AV integration technology at InfoComm. While you're there, you can also get business training from NSCA!

Just like last year, we're leading a full-day BizSkills training session on June 10 (the day before InfoComm begins).

This comprehensive program delivers strategic business advice, empowering participants with invaluable insights and tools that are crucial to enhancing business operations. Attendees get to hear a midyear industry report on the 12 factors impacting the integration market. From there, they can choose to attend intensive sessions on:

- Project Management
- Finance
- Sales
- Operations

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

Register Here

Leading During Times of Uncertainty
April 29

Are you ready to lead with confidence and clarity in uncertain times? Join us and RISE Performance Group's Mark Fenner for an enlightening and deeply practical webinar where you'll gain timeless tools and philosophies to thrive amid chaos. Learn how the unique philosophy that "life happens for us, not to us" can turn adversity into a launching pad for personal and organizational growth.

Learn More

Dr. Kuehl Spring 2025 Economic Update | April 15

At the 2025 Business & Leadership Conference in late February, NSCA Chief Economist Dr. Chris Kuehl outlined what to expect from various economic influences, including the tax and tariff policies of the new U.S. Administration.

In April, he'll be back to deliver a virtual update to the NSCA Community. As always, he'll cut through the media spin and talk to integrators about what it all means.

Plan to join to learn more about:

- How tariffs may or may not impact costs, product availability, and manufacturing for integrators
- Global matters like turmoil in the Middle East and Europe
- Employment numbers and what they mean for integrators and escalating labor costs
- Expectations for residential and commercial construction markets
- Vertical markets are on the verge of growth
- Consumer behavior trends and expectations

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Visit the NSCA Community Events Calendar to Discover:

- NSCA events
- Industry shows
- Important updates from member companies

View the Calendar

By GreatAmerica

How **Financing Options** Drive Business Growth for Integrators

A powerful way to differentiate yourself as an integrator is by offering financing and subscription options to your customers.

It not only makes high-quality solutions more accessible but also addresses the common budget constraints that often hinder the decision-making process.

Why Should You Offer Financing Options?

Investing in communication, security, or AV solutions can be a big financial commitment. But you can give your customers a way to manage this investment without straining their budgets.

Financing is crucial for your customers:

- **It connects them to new technology.** Financing makes it possible for your customers to access the latest technology without needing to pay the full amount upfront. They can implement the best solutions immediately, rather than settling for less due to budget constraints.
- **It preserves cash flow.** By spreading out the cost over time, your customers can allocate funds to other areas of their business while still investing fully in the technology they need. This financial flexibility can be a game-changer for many businesses.

Providing financing options could be the deciding factor for customers. With financing, you can demonstrate that you're committed to meeting your customers' needs and secure more sales by making technology more accessible and readily available.

⬀ Learn more about the benefits of financing.

Make the Option of Financing Known to Your Customers

Effectively communicating the availability of financing options to your customers is very important. Many may not be aware that such options exist; informing them can significantly influence their purchasing decisions.

Make your customers aware of their financing options to ensure they understand the flexibility available for their purchases.

This communication is particularly important for integrators because it provides insights into how customers prefer to buy and what capital they have available. For example, a comprehensive security solution might cost $100,000, and businesses often have multiple priorities for their capital. You can open the door to deeper conversations about your customers' financial situations and priorities by discussing financing options with them.

This not only helps them but also allows you to identify where your financing options can fit into their plans.

Create a Comfortable Customer Environment with Financing Options

Offering financing isn't just about presenting an option; it involves having open, empathetic conversations that help customers feel comfortable with their financial choices. Being prepared for these discussions is essential. For example, having a connection with a financing company like GreatAmerica Financial Services can streamline the process. When the time comes, having the financing option already set up ensures a smooth transit ion for your customers.

Integrators play a big role in this process, and GreatAmerica technology equipment financing can present the options to your customers, simplifying the communication of these opportunities.

Take Advantage of Financial Discovery Tools

To further your capabilities as an integrator, GreatAmerica offers a valuable resource: its As-A-Service Operational Maturity Level (OML) tool.

This tool is specifically designed to assess integrators based on their OML level. In other words, it can measure your proficiency in selling equipment and offering financing options.

The tool assigns a score from one to five that reflects your effectiveness in specific areas. Based on this score, GreatAmerica can then provide tailored recommendations to help you improve your operations. These recommendations focus on enhancing your sales strategies, particularly in terms of financing and operational efficiency.

By leveraging the OML tool, you can gain valuable insights into your company's capabilities and identify areas that need improvement. It offers a clear path to becoming more proficient in selling equipment and utilizing financing options.

⬀ Ready to take your business to the next level? Discover AV as a Service with GreatAmerica.

GreatAmerica is an NSCA Business Accelerator.

Help Schools Find Funding for Security Improvements

A PASS K-12 whitepaper provides strategies to help schools secure financial resources and enhance their safety and security measures.

Protecting K-12 students, staff, and visitors requires more than security systems and technology. It demands persistence, planning, and funding.

A security master plan is necessary to map out specific paths to meet long-term goals and objectives. (This is something integrators can help schools and districts develop.)

But where will the money come from to pay for the improvements and upgrades outlined in the master plan?

Funding for school safety and security improvements can come from many places:

- Bond issues
- Capital campaigns
- Federal grants
- Mill levies
- State and national foundations
- State grants

To secure these funds, funding requests must be aligned with available opportunities. Schools must also communicate the urgency and importance of the request.

The Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS K-12) created a resource, Funding for School Security, to help schools find the right funding options to implement effective safety measures.

School administrators, safety officers, grant writers, integrators, and anyone else involved in creating safe educational environments can download this whitepaper to learn more about how to:

- Identify and access funding sources for school safety
- Develop grant proposals that align with funding requirements
- Conduct risk assessments to prioritize safety needs
- Formulate comprehensive security plans that address immediate and long-term goals

It's a must-read for anyone involved in school safety and security.

Read the Whitepaper
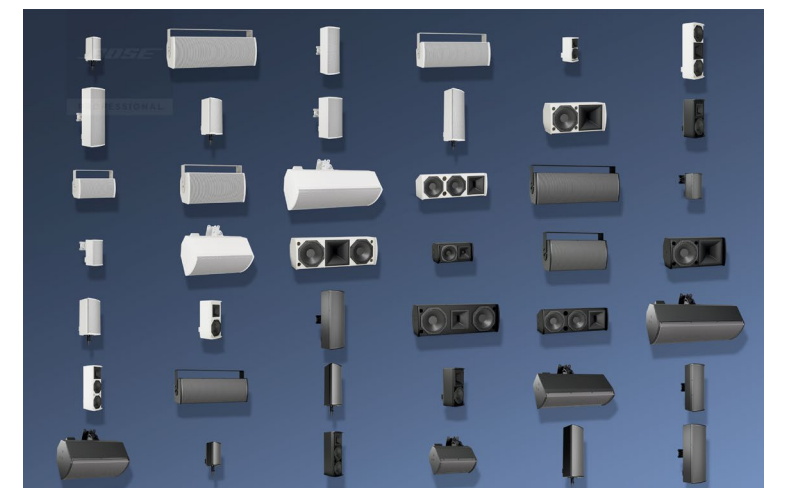
By Tom LeBlanc

Connecting the Dots
Between Obstacles & Opportunities

Find out how the industry's most pressing issues were addressed at the 2025 Business & Leadership Conference.

Planning content for the Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) is a daunting task, but NSCA's BLC Planning Committee is always up for it. As membership representatives, this committee is made up of your peers. They understand exactly what's happening in the industry, and what integrators struggle with most when it comes to employee culture and expectations, the economic roadmap, and technology. They use that knowledge to align current challenges and market conditions with strategic keynotes and breakout sessions that can give you different perspectives to consider as you plan for future success.

The content for this year's BLC was built around this theme: **Obstacles into opportunities. Problems into possibilities.**

Here's a look at some of the obstacles and problems we discussed at BLC, along with how they can instead become opportunities and possibilities.

- **Obstacle:** Dealing with Too Many "Oh S%#t!" Moments

Integration firm leaders are often ill-equipped to deal with curveballs. They're hard to plan for, which can leave integrators unprepared. Limited time and personnel also make it difficult to address problems that seemingly arise out of nowhere. And let's be honest: Not all leaders are skilled at pivoting when something unexpected happens. Some thrive on predictability and defined plans, procedures, and processes. The more these curveballs happen, the more they can shake up a business.

- **Opportunity:** Establish Accountability Measures

George Hedley is a construction business coach who spends his time consulting with contractors. He knows what integrators deal with, and he understands how to navigate big surprises on projects. His keynote dove into driving accountability from the boardroom to the frontlines to improve predictability and stability. When everyone knows what they're responsible for, problems can be identified faster. Instead of finger-pointing, solutions can be the focus.

- **Obstacle:** Managing Too Many Tasks at Once

Leaders are human, which means they'll eventually be overwhelmed by ever-expanding inboxes, continuous requests, and constant firefighting. "How do I get through 400 emails every morning?" "How can I spend my time more efficiently?" These are questions you likely ask yourself every day. But these shouldn't be rhetorical questions . . . there are answers!

- **Opportunity:** Replace Bad Habits with Healthy, Productive Practices

Keynoter Liz Bohannon showed leaders how to approach tasks by breaking them down into smaller steps. She also led a breakout session to dive deeper into the conversation and share tips on setting goals—and working more efficiently toward them—to reduce chaos.

- **Obstacle:** Knowing How to Apply AI

This topic is omnipresent. AI brings so many possibilities, but the discussions surrounding it are often theoretical. For integration firm leaders, understanding how to use AI in everyday processes and customer-facing solutions is a constant obstacle. Talking about it is one thing, but using it is another.

- **Opportunity:** Build a List of Ways to Use AI Right Now

Turning talk into action, NSCA President Dale Bottcher explored actual implementation stories at BLC. What are integrators actually doing with AI to improve operations and build efficiency? How is AI impacting product development and the customer experience? Attendees heard actual stories of implementation to inspire new ideas.

Obstacle: Addressing Demands Across Generations

Employee expectations seem to shift by generation. Baby Boomers often value job security and structured work environments, while Gen X focuses on autonomy, professional growth, and work-life balance. Millennials want to do work with impact, and they embrace technology. Professionals entering the workplace today seek innovation, the opportunity for fast career progression, and a supportive environment. Ignoring these unique requests will stunt company growth and diminish culture.

Opportunity: Prepare Future Leaders for What's Ahead

A breakout session led by BLC Keynoter Mary Kelly and NSCA Director of Workforce Development Laura Janssen helped attendees understand how to identify and develop the future leaders in their companies according to what they want and expect. It starts with succession planning to ensure that your business is equipped to thrive in the face of change.

Obstacle: Making the Right Decisions

Should your company pursue this project, or is it a profit killer? What's your company's role in the mergers and acquisitions market? Should your company be pursuing new customers or attempting to drum up more business with the ones it already has? Is this new hire worth the salary they want? Making decisions about questions like these have a major impact on business performance.

Opportunity: Learn to Weigh Risks and Rewards with Metrics

A keynote session by former U.S Navy Commander Mary Kelly tackled logical decision-making by using financial metrics. Once you understand which financial metrics matter most—and what these metrics are trying to tell you—the right decision becomes a lot more obvious.

Obstacle: Cultivating Healthy Growth

When you consider the industry's aggressive M&A climate, challenges related to talent recruitment, and the meteoric rate of technology change, the business climate is tough. These factors can strain financial resources, divert focus from growth initiatives, and make it hard to compete.

Opportunity: Implement Growth-Related Best Practices that Work

Mark Fenner of RISE Performance Group, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember, drew on the principles of Verne Harnish's Scaling Up to help attendees overcome growth obstacles. Three entrepreneurs from the NSCA Community shared how they've successfully navigated the journey from lifestyle business to scalable enterprise.

Obstacle: Running a Business Amid Economic Uncertainty

Regardless of U.S. election results, anxiety about the economy and its impact on the market was bound to continue. Everyone is paying close attention to the impact of tariffs and changes to tax codes. How do you prepare for things that may or may not happen?

Opportunity: Create a Plan Based on Facts

NSCA Chief Economist Dr. Chris Kuehl told it like it is, providing a non-political assessment of the policies, economic trends, market conditions, and geopolitical factors that will impact the industry and what you can do to work around them. He'll continue to keep integrators updated on these topics as he checks in every few months with his webinars for the NSCA Community.

Obstacle: Continuing to Increase Sales

NSCA members are constantly focused on improving sales operations. Ask any leader about what keeps them up at night, and sales will always come up—which is why the BLC Planning Committee wanted to be sure to cover it. Finding skilled workers makes it hard to take on new projects and meet customer demands. Economic uncertainty makes customers cautious and increases operating costs. Margins are slim, and some integrators get caught up in a race to the bottom (the lowest price). These all impact your sales.

Opportunity: Adjust Sales Tactics

During last year's BLC, we debuted a sales workshop spread across two breakout sessions. It was so successful that we did it again this year. The first day focused on new methods for efficient and effective prospecting, while the second day focused on negotiating and closing. Attendees learned about the sales tactics that work today and why the approaches that some of their sales professionals take are no longer effective.

Obstacle: Leading Effectively When You Can't Control Everything

Each day brings new challenges. It can be easy to get caught up in worrying about the things you can't control: market trends, the competition, customer decisions. But those outliers and distractions cause you to overlook the things that are within your influence.

Opportunity: Understand What's within Your Control

Keynoter Jeremy Anderson discussed proactive and strategic management to create a sense of stability and respond to unpredictable events by controlling what you can control (think team productivity, customer service, and operational efficiency). Then, Dr. Ivan Joseph doubled down on this notion by explaining the value of looking inward to determine whether your leadership and decision-making are negatively impacting your company. ∎

Meet the BLC Planning Committee

Members of the BLC Planning Committee work to report on and respond to the needs of the industry by planning BLC session topics and choosing speakers that provide the highest value to attendees.

Tina Peters, SVT

Laurie MacKeigan, Backman Vidcom

Matt Barnette, PSA Security

Mike Bradley, EDC Systems LLC

Brad Dempsey, Solutions360

Michael Tremble, Valley Communications Systems

Chuck Wilson, NSCA/PASS K-12

Inspiring Progress and Fostering Innovation through Impactful Leadership

At Exertis Almo, we recognize that effective leadership is paramount to the continued success and growth of any business, and we are committed to equipping leaders with solutions and insights to evolve and elevate their organizations. By fostering innovation, embracing emerging technologies, and empowering teams to achieve their fullest potential, we cultivate leaders capable of navigating complex challenges and driving sustainable progress.

Through our partnership, we ensure that leaders are not only prepared to advance their businesses but also become progress-makers, creating a lasting impact on both their teams and the AV community.

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Inspiring Insights from....

John Riley
Senior Vice President of Sales East

Kevin Welling
Senior Vice President of Sales West

How do your solutions empower business leaders to enhance operational efficiency and drive measurable growth in today's market?

At Exertis Almo, we help business leaders increase operational efficiency and drive growth by providing a full distribution experience with comprehensive solutions and support. As the nation's largest professional audio-visual distributor, we understand that every business is different, which is why we offer a wide variety of products to meet the diverse needs of industries like corporate, education, healthcare, and more. Our broad portfolio ensures that businesses can find the right tools to optimize their operations, improve productivity, and ultimately achieve measurable results.

What sets us apart is our people. We have a long-standing sales force with years of industry knowledge. A dedicated team of business development experts who work closely with customers to understand their specific goals and challenges. Additionally, our suite of professional services further elevates this approach by providing customized solutions and acting as an extension of your team. With our expertise, extensive product lineup, and tailored services, we help businesses stay ahead of the curve and take on larger projects.

What role do your technologies play in helping leaders adapt to industry trends such as hybrid work environments, smart buildings, and evolving customer expectations?

We play a key role in helping businesses stay ahead of emerging trends by providing a diverse lineup of advanced technologies that foster adaptability and innovation. As hybrid work environments become increasingly common, our solutions ensure seamless communication and collaboration across both in-office and remote teams. By integrating cutting-edge tools that support video conferencing, digital signage, and remote access, businesses can maintain productivity and connectivity, regardless of location.

Across many applications, we deliver advanced, interconnected technologies that streamline operations and improve efficiency. Additionally, as customer expectations shift, businesses rely on interconnected technologies to provide personalized, interactive experiences. From AI-driven solutions to connected displays, our technologies help businesses deliver innovative services and stay ahead of customer demand.

In what ways do your innovations enable leaders to foster a culture of innovation and position their businesses as forward-thinking market leaders?

Our commitment to bringing forward-thinking solutions ensures that businesses stay ahead of industry trends, giving leaders the tools they need to drive innovation within their organizations. By partnering with leading manufacturers, we ensure our customers always have access to up-and-coming products and solutions, helping them maintain a competitive edge.

Additionally, we help business leaders focus on new ventures and growth opportunities by providing comprehensive professional services. Our expertise and services act as an extension of your team, allowing you to pursue additional opportunities for business growth. At Exertis Almo, we are constantly evaluating the market, seeking out new partnerships with emerging vendors to bring fresh, impactful technologies that align with your goals.

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How BLC Translates to ROI for Attendees

NSCA members share the ways they get value out of attending the Business & Leadership Conference.

NSCA repeatedly hears from Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) attendees that the event is an invaluable experience: "It's the most important event I attend each year!" is something we hear a lot.

While some of you return to the event year after year, others attended for the first time in 2025. And whether you've been a BLCer before or not, you want to do everything you can to make sure you make the most of the experience.

We asked attendees to describe the most impactful outcomes from BLC, and they find value in two clear areas: networking opportunities and leadership skills-building. Here's what they had to say.

"Attending NSCA's Business & Leadership Conference is invaluable for me, particularly the networking opportunities. Engaging with other leaders in the integration space allows me to **exchange ideas, learn about emerging tech, and discuss best practices.** These interactions often spark innovative approaches that I can implement in my own company."

"My favorite part of BLC is definitely the keynote speakers. They are always incredibly diverse, bringing unique perspectives and insights. The keynote sessions on leadership strategies provide **fresh insights that help me refine our organizational culture** and drive team motivation. Overall, the conference is a catalyst for personal growth and business advancement. Plus, who wouldn't want to take a break from New York in February?"

Dawn Cagliano, President, IVCi

"It's a great opportunity to be with your peers and **talk about anything that's on your mind.** Whether it's talking about the presentations or just an idea. It's a good idea to show up at BLC with three or four things you want to ask everybody that's there. I did that when I was young because I didn't know anybody. It was my way of throwing myself out there. But now I've become a senior spokesman! I feel I have a different obligation to give back the same way that people gave to me."

"I've been thinking about the nuggets I've picked up at BLCs: things related to our service model, hiring dedicated salespeople for service, and approaches to operations, field technicians, and service technicians. There are so many things I picked up from participating in these leadership conferences that I was able to bring back and **make my organization better,** therefore making the industry better, but not necessarily threatening the same hand that gave me that."

Thomas Berry, Jr., CEO, Verrex

"Attending my first BLC last year was an **incredibly enjoyable experience.** As someone new to the systems integration industry, the conference provided a comprehensive overview of the challenges we face. Networking with colleagues who share similar interests helped me see how my healthcare background can contribute to this field."

"The leadership sessions offered **valuable insights** and learning opportunities from experts across various industries. I appreciate hearing their perspectives and realizing that many industries face similar challenges."

Regina Wysocki, Senior Informatics Program Manager, Lone Star Communications

"BLC's leadership sessions and breakout discussions give us real, actionable takeaways that help us run our business better. For example, the insights we've gained on focusing more on service contracts have helped us **increase our recurring revenue by 6x.**"

"Meeting other like-minded integrators has led to ongoing conversations where we share challenges, ideas, and best practices that benefit everyone. Every year, we walk away with fresh ideas that **make a real impact on how we lead, sell, and operate.**"

Reid Wylie, COO, S&L Integrated

"**Networking with like-minded integrators is invaluable.** There is no shortage of opportunity to make mistakes in our business, and an abundance of people that have made them or come too close! Learning from others through building relationships is like iron sharpening iron."

Matt Chitwood, Principal, Pivium

"[The leadership] sessions are incredibly informative and transformative. I left with so much new information and was able to put a number of strategies into place at my company. These sessions invigorated me and gave **clarity on many aspects of business management** and leadership skills."

"Attending BLC for the first time last year brought myself and my company value in a few different ways. As a small and fairly new company, networking is key to our success. At BLC, I was able to meet a number of like-minded people that we have been able to collaborate with over the past year. One person in particular guided us in a way that **helped us secure a sizable service contract.** To me, networking is No. 1."

Evan Grazi, COO, Harmony Studios

"The whole BLC experience has been valuable time after time. Dr. Kuehl's economic insight is valuable as we try to determine when to push and when to play it more conservatively. I typically get things to work on personally to **be more effective as an individual or leader** in the organization from the keynote sessions. Then we appreciate digging deeper in the breakouts."

Chris Reese, CFO, ASW

"The leadership sessions at BLC provide me with **practical strategies to enhance decision-making,** team development, and business growth. Learning from industry experts and thought leaders equips me with new approaches to tackling challenges and driving innovation."

"The networking opportunities with like-minded integrators allow me to exchange ideas, gain fresh perspectives, and explore potential partnerships. These interactions help me stay ahead of industry trends and **refine how I approach day-to-day operations** and long-term business strategies."

Jim Scalise, VP Engineering and Technology, Data Projections, Inc.

By Jason Knott

How Do You Accept Payment?

Integrators must weigh the pros and cons of accepting payments from customers via wire transfers and credit cards for deposits, progress payments, and service agreements.

In the not-too-distant past, it was rare to find an integration company that accepted credit cards as a form of payment. Today, you'd be hard-pressed to find an integrator that doesn't.

The payment processing world has certainly changed, and integrators are evolving also. Long gone are the days of only accepting remittance via checkbooks and cash. In the current business environment, most integrators recognize that it's critical to take payments via:

- Credit card
- Wire transfers
- ACH (automated clearing house)

> "It doesn't matter how you want to be paid. It matters how your customer wants to pay you," emphasizes Adam Holden, head of payments at D-Tools. "Integrators should not be dictating to clients how to pay them. The cost of doing business is the cost of doing business. You want your money from any avenue you possibly can, or you risk losing business with specific clients."

Here are four datapoints against which integrators can benchmark their payment processing experiences. This information was extracted from D-Tools Payments, a secure, fully integrated payment processing solution within the D-Tools Cloud platform.

① Average Payment Frequency & Amounts

According to the data, **integrators' clients pay via ACH at twice the frequency of credit cards**, with 67% of payments processed via ACH compared to 33% via credit card.

Moreover, the average ACH payment run through D-Tools Payments to date is more than double the average credit card payment. (The average ACH payment is $6,727, while the average credit card payment received by an integration company is $2,494.)
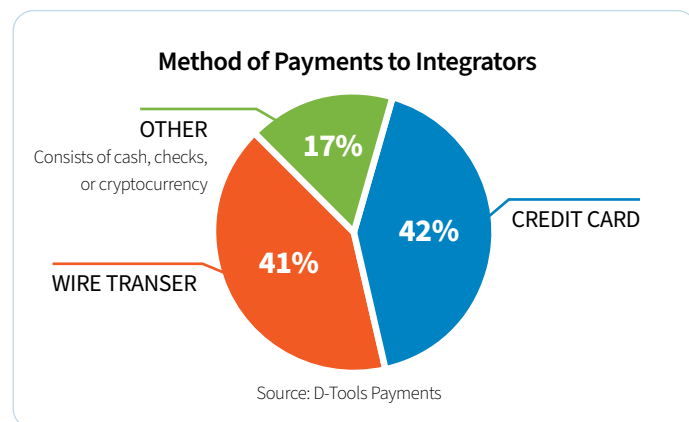
Have you optimized your company's payment processes for ACH transactions?

② Approval Times

ACH was created in the late 1960s, with the first ACH operated by the Federal Reserve to send "digital checks" between banks. There is typically no limit to the amount that can be sent. While credit cards have instantaneous approval (literally in milliseconds), **ACH approvals can take between two and three days**, with funding on the fifth business day, on average.

An integrator might not know if an ACH transfer is successful for several days (conceivably, four days after the initial transfer, the dealer could receive notification that it was denied).

Have you adjusted your payment timelines to account for the longer processing periods associated with ACH? Have you implemented strategies to mitigate the risk of transfer failures?

Method of Payments to Integrators

- OTHER — Consists of cash, checks, or cryptocurrency: 17%
- CREDIT CARD: 42%
- WIRE TRANSFER: 41%

Source: D-Tools Payments

③ Fees and Charges

ACH transfers are less expensive than credit card fees, which is likely a strong reason that integrators might recommend that form of payment vs. a credit card.

For example, D-Tools Payments charges 1% for ACH transfers with a cap of $10. So, any ACH transfer from $1,000 or more will have a maximum $10 fee. Meanwhile, **credit card merchant processing fees can range from 2.75% to 4%**, depending on several factors, such as volume, type of card, and information collected and sent to card brands.
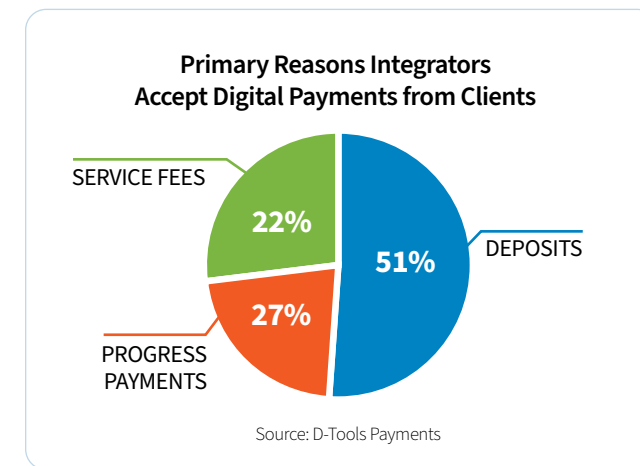
Have you educated clients on the financial advantages of using ACH payments? Have you adjusted your billing practices to encourage clients to choose ACH as their preferred payment method when it makes sense?

④ Deposits vs. Progress Payments vs. Service Charges

Data from D-Tools Payments reveals that integrators are comfortable processing digital payments for deposits, progress payments, and service charges.

To date, deposits represent 51% of payments, progress payments are 27%, and service agreement fees are 22%.

Has your company determined when digital payments can be accepted?

Primary Reasons Integrators Accept Digital Payments from Clients

- DEPOSITS: 51%
- PROGRESS PAYMENTS: 27%
- SERVICE FEES: 22%

Source: D-Tools Payments

Elevating the Payment Experience

Want to learn more about managing and collecting digital payments? Learn more about the D-Tools Payments platform.

Jason Knott is a data solutions architect and evangelist at D-Tools, an NSCA Business Accelerator. ■

By Mark Fenner

How to Structure a Meeting Rhythm that Drives Results

Meetings are a leader's best friend—if they're done correctly. Find out how to lead great ones.

"That meeting could've been an email."

How many times have you heard (or thought) that?

You've been involved in those kinds of meetings, right? Maybe you've even led some of them. If you've ever stepped out of the conference room after a meeting adjourns and wondered what the point of the last hour was, then you are definitely not alone.

Meetings will always be a part of every business, so the question is: **How can you make your meetings more effective?** After all, good meetings are the heartbeat of every successful organization. Structured with care and intention while focused on outcomes, great meetings can transform organizations and turn an entire industry on its head.

Walmart is a great example. Although it's the largest retailer in the world today, it hasn't always been that way. In 1974, the brand had 778 stores, while Sears had 851 stores and Kmart dominated with 1,326 stores.

Today, Walmart operates over 10,500 stores globally. In contrast, the last full-size Kmart in the continental United States closed as of October 2024, and Sears has sold many of its stores and is a shell of its former self.

In Walmart's early days, Sam Walton initiated Saturday morning meetings to reflect on the previous week's results, set goals, and discuss upcoming strategies. This discipline allowed the company to stay ahead of the competition.

These meetings also encouraged brainstorming. Store managers engaged in passionate debates, and failures were celebrated as learning opportunities. This consistent approach played a crucial role in Walmart's transformation into a retail powerhouse.

They fostered a culture of discipline, creativity, and hard work as well—values the company still upholds. In contrast, companies like Sears and Kmart lost their discipline and ultimately weakened their positions in the industry.

Why Meetings Matter

Meetings are a leader's best friend for these reasons.

They Instill a Form of Peer Pressure
Accountability among peers drives productivity. Meetings can become focused sessions where team members hold each other accountable.

They Cultivate Collective Intelligence
Harnessing the collective intelligence of a team can lead to better decision-making, problem-solving, and innovation.

They Can Facilitate Clear Communication
Focused meetings foster clear and concise communication from all participants. This ensures that the team stays on track and addresses what truly matters.

3 Types of Meetings to Master

How can you create a meeting rhythm that generates results, drives innovation, and instills discipline in your company so you can out-execute your competition?

Master the following types of meetings.

1. DAILY HUDDLE

This meeting closes the gap between decision-making and action. It addresses bottlenecks, eliminates delays, reduces mistakes, and ensures that no tasks are overlooked. This practice not only fosters accountability but also ensures that everyone is aligned and working toward the same goals.

Time:
5 to 15 minutes

Agenda:
- Daily numbers review (one or two at most)
- The No. 1 priority for the day
- Challenges and potential roadblocks

Best Practices:
- Avoid generalities; encourage each member to be brief but specific.
- Don't go past the 15-minute mark. If a longer discussion is required, schedule another meeting.
- Make sure key team members and stakeholders are present and have a voice.

2. WEEKLY HUDDLE

This meeting focuses on priorities and KPIs while gathering intelligence about customers, employees, competitors, and the marketplace. Leverage the team's collective intelligence to solve problems, make decisions, and deliver on your plan.

Time:
45 to 90 minutes

Agenda:
- Discover (15 minutes)
  - Good news (personal and professional)
  - Intelligence and trends (employees, clients, marketplace)
  - Review KPIs
  - Review the status priorities
- Discuss (15 minutes)
  - Issues: go deep into one or two KPIs or priorities
  - Brainstorm solutions leveraging the team's collective intelligence
- Decide (10 minutes)
  - Commit to solving problems and documenting decisions
  - Commit to a timeline for action and reporting
- Delegate (10 minutes)
  - Assign a point person
  - Determine necessary resources
- One-Phrase Close (5 minutes)
  - Wrap up with inspiration and motivation

Best Practices:
- Go deep in one or two areas instead of staying shallow in all areas
- Ask the accountable person to provide updates on KPIs and priorities. If they're off-track, they should then explain why and what needs to be done.
- Move long-term strategic topics and potential obstacles to a separate meeting
- Mine for conflict to drive discussion and debate

3. MONTHLY MANAGEMENT MEETING

This meeting should focus on assessing progress against the plan, ensuring alignment with objectives, and identifying areas requiring adjustment. Leverage the collective intelligence of the team to problem-solve effectively, fostering collaboration and innovative solutions. The meeting should also serve as an opportunity to educate and train leaders. Finally, share best practices and celebrate wins to create a positive atmosphere.

Time:
2 to 8 hours

Agenda:
- Share good news
- CEO update that sets the tone, drives focus, and states the meeting's focus
- Share success stories of customer success and employees who have lived and exemplified the core values of the organization
- Review progress against plans
  - Annual and quarterly targets
  - Rocks, critical numbers, and open tasks
  - Departmental dashboards
- Solve problems: leverage the collective intelligence of the team
- Education: share new knowledge, discuss values, connect to new ideas
- One-phrase or one-word close

Best Practices:
- Use this meeting as a way to align leadership with core values and objectives
- Focus on wins to build momentum and solve problems
- Debate the things that matter most
- Take as much time as needed but take breaks

Where to Go to Learn More

Establishing a meeting rhythm that drives problem-solving, decision-making, and accountability is the foundation of an organization's success.

If your team lacks accountability or is missing targets, evaluate your meeting rhythms. You may have too many unfocused meetings on too many topics.

Remember:
- Focus on the purpose and outcomes of your meetings
- Treat meetings as an opportunity to collaborate, solve problems, and make decisions
- Document commitments; public commitments tend to be lasting commitments
- Leverage meetings as an important tool to scale farther faster

If you'd like to learn more, the best next step is to schedule a consultation with Rise Performance Group. ∎

Schedule a Consultation

Mark Fenner is the founder of Rise Performance Group, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember.

NSCA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Strengthening the Industry:
The Critical Work of the NSCA Education Foundation

This year, the NSCA Education Foundation celebrates 25 years of building better futures and empowering tomorrow's leaders.

25 Years
NSCA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Since it was created in 2000, the NSCA Education Foundation has been committed to designing and supporting education initiatives and experiences that foster growth within the commercial integration industry. (It's no secret that seasoned professionals are retiring faster than new talent is joining the industry.)

While NSCA helps integrators do better business, the NSCA Education Foundation helps NSCA engage in charitable acts so we can give back to our industry.

This year, we celebrate 25 years of building better futures and empowering tomorrow's leaders. Here's a snapshot of what the NSCA Education Foundation has accomplished in the last 25 years—and we're still going strong!

Ongoing Education to Sustain Industry Growth

By providing financial support to more than 4,000 students so they can attend technical colleges throughout North America, it has helped prepare industry newcomers for a career in the commercial integration industry. This investment in education has cultivated a skilled workforce to ensure the industry's continued growth and innovation.

Entry-Level Certification Programs to Empower Workers

In 20026, it helped establish the Electronic Systems Professional Alliance (ESPA) as a communications technology consortium offering training, curriculum, and apprenticeship programs for entry-level workers. ESPA also created the universally recognized certification program for electronic systems technicians (ESTs) in the residential and commercial integration industries.

Scholarships to Build Leadership Skills

To help professionals develop leadership and business skills, the NSCA Education Foundation created the Randy Vaughan Leadership Awards program. So far, it has offered more than $450,000 in scholarships to industry professionals by helping them attend the Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) at no cost.

Data and Research to Boost Business

It funds valuable research projects that integrators use every day to run their businesses better. These reports include the *Electronic Systems Outlook, Financial Analysis of the Industry, Compensation & Benefits Report, Labor Installation Standard, and Guide to State Licensing*. All these resources can be found at NSCA.org.

Resources to Improve School Security

It offered funding to establish PASS K-12 (the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools) in 2014 and continues to support it today. As a result, more than 4,000 schools have integrated PASS guidelines into their technology and safety plans. PASS provides comprehensive information on best practices for securing K-12 school facilities, offering tools and insights to help school administrators, school boards, and public safety professionals implement effective security measures.

Training to Prepare Future Leaders

It launched the Next-Gen Academy, a training resource for rising stars who want to be better prepared to lead an integration firm. It offers guidance on building skills and knowledge, overcoming setbacks and challenges, and taking charge of your career.

An Initiative to Create a Qualified Workforce

The NSCA Education Foundation is responsible for Ignite, a workforce development initiative aimed at establishing a larger, more capable workforce. This is done by connecting students and new industry professionals with educational opportunities that let them experience careers in our industry. It also funds the Ignite Internship Program, which helps integrators create frameworks around their internship programs and offers $1,000 grants to subsidize the costs of bringing on interns.

Welcoming Veterans to the Industry

In 2006, it helped develop the Hester Scholarship Program. The mission of this program is to attract and recruit veterans to the commercial integration industry. Scholarships are offered to veterans who are entering the workforce and want training so they can be part of our industry.

Empowering Future Leaders to Excel

Through the newly created Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience event, the NSCA Education Foundation helps upcoming industry leaders get the training they need to excel in leadership. As part of XBO, the Jeff M. Kindig Future Leaders Scholarship covers registration fees for XBO attendees who see themselves as next-generation leaders.

Help Us Enable Industry Growth

The NSCA Education Foundation is committed to enabling industry growth by providing access to the best education and the latest practices available. As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, there are tax incentives for giving. (You may be able to deduct donations.) ∎
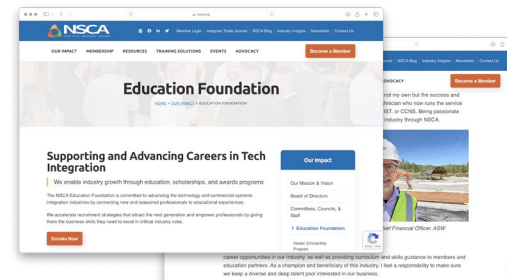
Learn more about the NSCA Education Foundation

Meet the NSCA Education Foundation Board of Directors

These NSCA Education Foundation's Board of Directors volunteer their time to lead Foundation initiatives. Without them, these initiatives wouldn't be possible.

Lauren Simmen, President

Ingolf de Jong, Vice President

Tim Hennen, Treasurer

Dawna Payne, Secretary

Michael Boettcher, Board Member

Chris Reese, Board Member

Gina Sansivero, Board Member

TD SYNNEX: Who Are We?

TD SYNNEX brings together the most well-known names in IT and emerging technology innovators supported by 23,000 co-workers around the world. We're an innovative partner that helps our customers maximize the value of IT investments, demonstrate business outcomes and unlock growth opportunities. At our core, we're a company that cares. We care about our partners, our co-workers, our investors and the world around us. And we're committed to being a diverse, inclusive employer of choice and a good corporate citizen. TD SYNNEX doesn't just offer products and solutions—it fosters long-term partnerships. TD SYNNEX aligns itself with the business goals of integrators, supporting them as they expand their customer base, enter new markets, and adapt to shifting industry dynamics.

Contributing to the Ecosystem of Ideas:

At TD SYNNEX, we partner with the entire technology ecosystem to manage relentless transformation, execute confidently, and evolve to capture opportunities up ahead. TD SYNNEX sits at the center of the technology partner ecosystem. Our unique position gives us the opportunity to lead as a solutions aggregator and an ideas aggregator. From thought leadership and global capabilities, to technology subject matter experts and local market insights, TD SYNNEX connects the IT ecosystem to useful and relevant stories, resources, insights, education and specialized knowledge. TD SYNNEX combines solutions for all types of ecosystem partners with global technology distribution and solution aggregation capabilities. We simplify the complexities, so that you may provide maximum value to your end users.

End-to-End Solutions and a Broad Product Portfolio:

The business environment for IT integrators has grown increasingly complex and competitive. Integrators are tasked with managing a wide range of technology solutions, delivering consistent quality, and finding ways to stay ahead of technological trends. TD SYNNEX has positioned itself as a powerful ally for integrators, providing a comprehensive range of solutions to help integrators scale, innovate, and differentiate their offerings. Integrators can tap into a broader network of partners to exchange knowledge, collaborate on projects, and extend their reach across the market. This environment helps integrators grow beyond their core capabilities and create more holistic, differentiated offerings. TD SYNNEX is also renowned for its extensive portfolio of IT products and solutions, spanning hardware, software, and cloud services from leading technology vendors in the industry. Whether integrators are working with cloud deployments, networking infrastructure, cybersecurity, or emerging technologies like IoT and AI, TD SYNNEX has the right mix of products to meet their needs. This broad product portfolio enables integrators to provide end-to-end solutions to their clients without the need to juggle multiple suppliers, making it easier to meet customer demands while ensuring reliability and compatibility across their offerings.

Access to Technical Expertise and Enablement Resources:

For integrators, providing state-of-the-art technology solutions requires continuous learning and expertise. TD SYNNEX provides access to a wealth of technical knowledge through dedicated support teams, on-demand training, and enablement programs. These resources help integrators stay up to date with the latest technologies, acquire certifications, and deepen their technical skills. In addition, TD SYNNEX's pre-sales support team assists integrators with solution design, architecture planning, and product demonstrations, which is especially valuable when working on complex projects that require tailored solutions. By offering this support, TD SYNNEX helps integrators present comprehensive solutions that effectively address customer pain points.

Marketing and Sales Enablement:

TD SYNNEX offers an array of marketing services to assist integrators in boosting their visibility and creating demand for their services, including partner marketing campaigns, access to customizable collateral, and digital marketing tools that enable integrators to promote their solutions more effectively. Through its Channel Marketing Services, TD SYNNEX provides integrators with data-driven insights and co-marketing opportunities that help generate new leads and convert prospects into customers. These marketing tools enable integrators to sharpen their competitive edge and focus on reaching new customers while leveraging the TD SYNNEX brand to build credibility.

Partnering for Long-Term Success:

In the ever-changing IT landscape, integrators need a partner that helps them grow, stay competitive, and deliver cutting-edge solutions to their clients. TD SYNNEX empowers integrators by providing comprehensive services, a vast product portfolio, financial flexibility, technical enablement, and cloud solutions that enable them to scale their operations, differentiate themselves from the competition, and succeed in a challenging market. By leveraging TD SYNNEX's resources and expertise, integrators can grow their businesses sustainably, meet the demands of their customers, and create value-added solutions that drive long-term growth. In an industry that's always evolving, TD SYNNEX is the partner integrators can rely on to reach new heights. ■

TD SYNNEX

VisualSolv™

A Letter on Fostering Passion & Fresh Perspective

When it comes to seeding the next generation of AV and IT professionals, it's important for companies to be intentional in their approach to investing in their expertise. There's an incredible opportunity in this industry for fresh perspectives and diversity of thought when you connect with the younger generation.

My advice to organizations looking to bolster their youth talent pipeline is to look at your workforce and determine your goals. Look to community for ways to get involved – through partnerships with schools, job fairs and other synergistic opportunities. Put yourself in a young person's shoes, and reflect on what attracted you to the industry and what kept you engaged. What could have been better?

Along with internships, one way TD SYNNEX helps young professionals find their passion is through our Discovery Representative Program, which allows recent graduates to rotate through departments to find their best fit. This program helps participants experience all facets of our business and launch their career, but also helps our company discover new efficiencies and ideas. It's a win-win.

Once you've attracted great talent, it's just as important to retain them. At TD SYNNEX, we often find that when you pour into employees' professional development, putting them on a path to success, they become the first to give back to the new up-and-comers, perpetuating the cycle. It's also important to allow employees to shape the culture they want. TD SYNNEX has Business Resource Groups, where co-workers can align on shared passions and engage on matters important to them. This kind of opportunity creates a culture where people want to stay.

To learn more about TD SYNNEX, contact our dedicated VisualSolv team at VisualSolv@tdsynnex.com!

By Tyler Ebnet

The Opportunity Hangover:
How to Sober Up Your Pipeline

By revisiting open proposals and refining your strategy, you can turn a sluggish pipeline into meaningful growth.

As last year's stalled opportunities begin to gain traction, integrators are starting to see more business coming in. Many clients that delayed projects in 2024 are now issuing purchase orders to turn proposals into live opportunities.

But the latest *Commercial Integrator + Security Sales & Integration* and NSCA State of the Industry Report reveals that backlogs are lagging. While they once exceeded 50% of annual revenue for many integrators, they've dropped to 30% to 40% today.

This, combined with labor shortages and rising costs, makes it harder to close deals.

Yet, these shifts bring new opportunities. By revisiting open proposals and refining your strategy, you can turn a sluggish pipeline into meaningful growth. Here's how to sober up and re-engage those hungover proposals from last year.

1. Kick the Year Off with Customer Business Reviews

Revenueify emphasizes the importance of three strategic account meetings to build customer lifetime value. The first in this sequence, which is typically conducted around this time of year, is the **evaluation meeting**. It offers a strategic opportunity to gather valuable feedback from your accounts while gaining clear insights into the status of outstanding proposals in a low-pressure environment.

A **customer business review (CBR)** is a strategic and customer-focused strategy for re-engaging with existing customers. It is designed as a way to re-evaluate the current needs of your customer, reassess the partnership, and establish goals for the year. By aligning with your customers' updated priorities, you reinforce your strategic value while closing hungover deals.

2. Leverage Subscription Tools to Remove Barriers

Clients that are parting with large amounts of capital create challenges, but subscription tools can make all the difference. Collaborating with financing partners can offer ways to package your solutions as subscriptions or with traditional financing.

This gives you a reason to meet with customers again, and it positions sales team members as consultants who solve problems. Discussing a subscription option using an ROI tool similar to what we cover in our RECUR Sales Certification could be an excellent opportunity to get your hungover opportunities back on track.

3. Refocus on the Impact and Implications of Your Projects

Any time opportunities are stuck, we recommend asking: "What business objective are you solving with this opportunity?" When discussing the outcomes your solution will achieve, as well as the implications of not moving forward with these solutions (what will occur if there is a delay in decision-making), it's important to highlight specific, measurable business objectives. Whether you sell security systems, IT solutions, or AV technology, focus on tangible objectives like cost savings, operational efficiency, and increased productivity.

Refocus the conversation by using:
• Impact-focused examples: "By implementing this solution, you could improve workflow efficiency by 35%."
• Implication-focused examples: "For every month this upgrade is delayed, you're losing up to 20% in potential ROI."

Sales professionals who can speak to the impact and implications of their proposals can maximize their pipelines at higher rates than others who focus on products.

Sober Up Your Pipeline Today

Integrators that position themselves as essential partners by focusing on delivering measurable client outcomes will thrive, even in challenging market conditions. By conducting CBRs, offering flexible financing, and focusing on the impact and implications of your solutions, you can build great customer experiences and sober up your hungover pipeline!

Want to fast-track your pipeline in 2025? Check out the upcoming REVUP Achiever Outcome-Based Selling Certification sessions, designed for NSCA members only.

This certification equips your team with the skills to guide clients through a consultative process and unlocks your pipeline's full potential. Don't let opportunity hangovers hold you back. Take the next step and turn your opportunities into measurable growth today.

Tyler Ebnet is the president and principal consultant at Revenueify, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember. ■

NSCA BOARD MEMBER Q&A

Meet Dale Bottcher, NSCA President

We met up with Dale Bottcher, NSCA president and chief revenue officer at AVI-SPL, to ask him a few questions.

Q: **Can you describe the most rewarding parts of your role at AVI-SPL?**

A: We view ourselves as a digital workplace solution provider and deal with about 22,000 projects a year and about 40,000 service engagements through our network of 70 offices globally. Before taking on the chief revenue officer role in February 2025, I held the role of executive vice president of global sales and marketing for a decade. I enjoyed being able to set the vision, lead the organization to what's next, and help us continue to be better. We view ourselves as a leader. And while it's fun to be the leader, it's also a lot of work to remain the leader. I love moving all the levers to see us achieve our targets and continue to grow.

Q: **What are the biggest opportunities that AVI-SPL and the industry face?**

A: As part of our global strategic accounts program, we formed a customer advisory board seven years ago. To kick things off, we asked our customers to tell us how many meeting room standards they had in place. At that time, on average, each company had 22 different meeting room standards. We went through that same exercise three years ago, and that number dropped to seven. The pace of change in our space is so rapid, and technology is becoming so capable. We can't sit still in terms of how we serve customers. We have to continue to be valuable and relevant to them. So many of our customers are looking to create a standard experience for their employees or technology users, especially as the workforce becomes more spread out. Technology serves as a way to bridge that gap. Some of the biggest opportunities we have are making complex things, like meeting room technology, easy and consistent. That also means wrapping services around it so customers don't have to worry about it or need extra staff to support it. We also have a big opportunity to help customers reimagine their workplaces. Part of that involves metrics and analytics around space management: how people are working with technology, how they are moving around and utilizing the space, etc. Based on that, we can help them do things like develop apps to manage parking, guest check-in, wayfinding, and hot desking.

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

A: We're at risk if we stand still. With the simplification of technology and capability improvements around the solutions we sell, it needs less integration. Technology is very capable. Applying the custom integration approach to meeting spaces doesn't always work anymore. We need to look at more tech-enabled spaces everywhere. There are still complex spaces; even in common areas, there is experiential technology, like large video walls that can be interacted with.

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

A: What we do matters. What we do touches lives. And NSCA helps affect change and has a hand in how we serve this space. It helps companies evolve so they stay relevant. How can you run a better business? NSCA has the answers and helps move the industry forward. Sometimes integrators need help with things that seem so simple: job costing, accounting and cash flow, and go-to-market strategies. NSCA can help with all of that. It serves as a source of best practices and a guiding light.

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

A: I grew up on a 700-acre dairy farm in Boone County, IL. We milked about 100 dairy cows. We used to show cows. I love the Boone County Fair. I understand how to work hard and commit to things. Growing up on a farm, you learn that you always need a plan, but those plans can quickly change. Every day presents you with opportunities to think on your feet. It's like Mike Tyson said: "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face." ■

Top 10 NSCA Tools that Made a Difference Last Year

Are you taking full advantage of your NSCA membership? Check out our 10 most popular services, resources, and initiatives.

NSCA has one goal: to help integrators and manufacturers run their businesses better.

From data and research to tools and training, our resources help you lead a better business. **NSCA is your business resource.**

Our team is here to answer your questions and find ways to conquer your toughest challenges. **NSCA is your trusted advisor.**

Finally, everyone in our industry should have a voice. **NSCA is your industry advocate.**

We understand exactly what you face when trying to establish, maintain, and grow a thriving, profitable integration firm.

Here are 10 NSCA tools that made a difference for integrators last year.

1. The XBO Experience Event Educated the Next Generation of Leaders

Dubbed an "un-conference," the very first **XBO (Excellence in Business Operations) Experience** event in November 2024 was the industry's gathering place for future integration firm leaders who see opportunities ahead—but need the right training and skills to succeed.

This is where rising industry stars begin to prepare for leadership positions, regardless of their job titles.

We knew the event was going to be special when we started planning it, but the outcome was beyond what we expected. And thanks to the Jeff M. Kindig Future Leaders Scholarship, some attendees were able to experience the event at no cost.

With more than 100 attendees and an outpouring of positive feedback, we're already well into planning for XBO 2025.

2. The *Compensation & Benefits Report* Helped Leaders Make Better Pay-Related Decisions

Every time we release an update to our ***Compensation & Benefits Report***, we brace ourselves for the incoming emails, texts, and calls from members who can't wait to get their hands on it (we're not kidding).

Updated every two to three years, leaders use this report to pinpoint wage trends, identify potential compensation discrepancies, consider the costs of adding to their benefits package, and determine appropriate wage levels for employees.

3. Our New Website Made Finding Industry Resources Easier

Until last summer, NSCA.org was a decade old—and many of you could tell. It's challenging to organize all the online content we have in a way that's easy to access:

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

But what good are the valuable resources we offer if our members can't find them? If you haven't spent much time on our site yet, the new **NSCA.org** simplifies navigation, makes many more resources available on the homepage, and offers faster download capabilities for the hundreds of guides and documents we have available to members.

4. The *Guide to State Licensing* Improved Project Readiness

Updating this valuable resource is a yearlong project that always involves hundreds of staff and volunteer hours to identify the most up-to-date license and credential requirements for integrators.

Our well-known ***Guide to State Licensing*** was revised within the last year to put the latest licensing requirements at integrators' fingertips. It presents a comprehensive overview of the licensing requirements and state code for each U.S. state. Instead of researching individual state laws, you can rely on this centralized resource to quickly find the information you need. And for integrators working across state lines, the guide outlines reciprocity agreements and differences in licensing requirements, making it easier to plan and execute projects in multiple regions.

5. Legislative Updates Helped Integrators Navigate Complex Legal Landscapes

NSCA's Codes and Compliance Committee meets regularly to tackle federal, state, and municipal regulations that have a major impact on how systems integrators perform their work. At any given time, we actively monitor hundreds of legislative bills on behalf of the commercial integration industry. Together, we monitor licenses and educate integrators on how to build the cost of licensure, registrations, and permits into their projects.

Currently, NSCA is **monitoring activity** about apprenticeship programs, artificial intelligence, Power over Ethernet, licenses, permitting, and cybersecurity. And when something happens in your area or field that you need to know about, we make sure you're aware.

6. The Business & Leadership Conference Connected the Industry

The 2024 and 2025 Business & Leadership Conferences (BLC) sold out, and we created wait lists. There were many integrators that wanted to attend but couldn't. But it's no surprise. This event has taken on a life of its own. It's the premier event for the systems integration industry, bringing together professionals to network, learn, and grow.

As one member shared recently: "I walked away with more than I could ever hope to give. Beyond the breakouts and discussions, we heard from some phenomenal speakers: the kind that make you pause, reflect, and even challenge some of the narratives we tell ourselves as leaders. These sessions were a wake-up call, a reset, and a reminder that leadership is about continuous growth and about redirecting when needed and staying grounded in what truly matters. This was a powerful reminder that true leadership isn't about standing still: It's about learning, adapting, and relentlessly striving for better. I'm leaving this conference energized, refocused, and ready to take action (and a little bit tired!)."

7. *Integrate* Gave Members the Info They Need to Stay Competitive

NSCA's trade journal, ***Integrate***, has been going strong since 2020. When the publication launched, our goal was to spotlight challenges, solutions, and success stories within the NSCA community—and to make sure members are aware of the NSCA resources available to help their companies. Each year, Integrate amplifies NSCA's business resources and shares insights about running successful businesses in the integration industry.

Each issue dives into key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the commercial integration industry, helping members stay informed and ahead of the curve. It also shares success stories and lessons learned from fellow integrators, offering inspiration and practical advice.

8. The *Financial Analysis of the Industry* Established a Benchmark for Company Health

Updated in late 2023 (and scheduled for another update in 2025), the ***Financial Analysis of the Industry*** is still used by hundreds of integrators annually to benchmark financial metrics, success measures, and best practices for financial oversight and organizational structure.

In the most recent version, modifications were made to the report, including the addition of questions about remote workforces and project review, to ensure that the content continues to reflect evolving industry conditions.

Take the survey now to help us finish our 2025 update faster!

9. PASS K-12 Cultivated Safer Schools

PASS K-12 (the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools) provides the most comprehensive information available on nationwide best practices for securing school facilities.

It brings together expertise from the education, public safety, and technology industry communities to develop and support an appropriate and coordinated approach to making effective use of proven and vetted security practices specific to K-12 environments. The initiative relies on hundreds of hours from NSCA staff and volunteers.

10. One-on-One Conversations Led Members in the Right Direction

Sometimes you just need to talk your business problem through with someone. And we're so honored that NSCA continues to be the organization you trust for insight and guidance on running your business. We fielded hundreds of calls over the past year, answering questions and offering advice and guidance. We value each and every conversation we have with our members.

Helping You Build a Better Business

NSCA will continue to bring you these valuable resources—and many more—to help you lead your business confidently and successfully.

Remember: We're always here whenever you have questions or need advice! We're your voice, your resource, and your advisor. All the resources listed here can be found at **NSCA.org**. ∎

Liberty AV: Driving Partnership and Innovation in 2025

As we embark on 2025, Liberty is thrilled to share transformative updates that mark a new era for our company. This progress signifies enhanced partnerships and sets the stage for mutual success, making it an exciting time for our valued customers and partners.

Over the past six months, Liberty has undergone an ERP migration and improved its warehousing system. While ERP transitions can pose challenges, this process has strengthened our capabilities and positioned us for greater success. This enhancement improves our ability to deliver exceptional customer service, including the introduction of sales teams located closer to your operations. This proximity enables us to take a more hands-on approach, ensuring top-tier service and responsiveness.

Key Initiatives for 2025

To support your business and drive shared success, Liberty is prioritizing several key initiatives:

1. **Enhance Your Profitability:** By offering competitive pricing, an expanded product range, and strategic alignment, we're dedicated to delivering greater value for your business. Our goal is to help you maximize profitability and achieve your financial targets.

2. **Streamline Support:** With increased resources, improved logistics, and a stronger focus on seamless operations, we ensure that we can meet your specific needs efficiently and effectively.

3. **Expanded Product Access:** Higher inventory levels and a growing selection of industry-leading solutions empower us to address your challenges and help you seize new opportunities. Whether you're navigating complex projects or exploring innovative technologies, we have you covered.

4. **Strengthen Our Partnerships:** Open communication and collaboration are at the core of our values. We strive to foster strong relationships, ensuring we remain your most reliable and innovative partner in the industry.

Liberty Evolution

Our journey began with a focus on wire and cable products designed to streamline installations and boost efficiency for professionals. Over the years, we've grown into a global leader in advanced AV infrastructure, serving commercial, residential, government, industrial, and academic sectors. Our product portfolio now spans professional AV, security and surveillance, cable and connectivity, wireless and DAS, metals, racks, and cable management. This diversification equips businesses and integrators with the tools to build adaptable, future-proof systems. Our ability to address varied market demands with user-friendly and innovative solutions distinguishes us as a trusted partner.

Affordable Innovation

Liberty is redefining value with security products that offer intelligent analytics and advanced features while prioritizing cost-effectiveness and reliability. These solutions ensure businesses of all sizes can access quality technology without compromise. Designed for simple installation and seamless integration, our products cater to both security and AV professionals, simplifying complex projects.

Liberty

Mission-Driven Expansion

Liberty's growth reflects a steadfast mission to foster more connected, collaborative, and productive organizations through advanced technology and expert services. We are committed to making technology accessible, easy to use, and highly reliable. This customer-centric approach drives every aspect of our expansion and innovation efforts.

In 2025, Liberty will continue to prioritize innovation, reliability, and customer satisfaction. By leveraging our enhanced capabilities and staying true to our core values, we are confident in our ability to help you achieve your goals. Together, we can tackle challenges, embrace opportunities, and drive shared success. ■
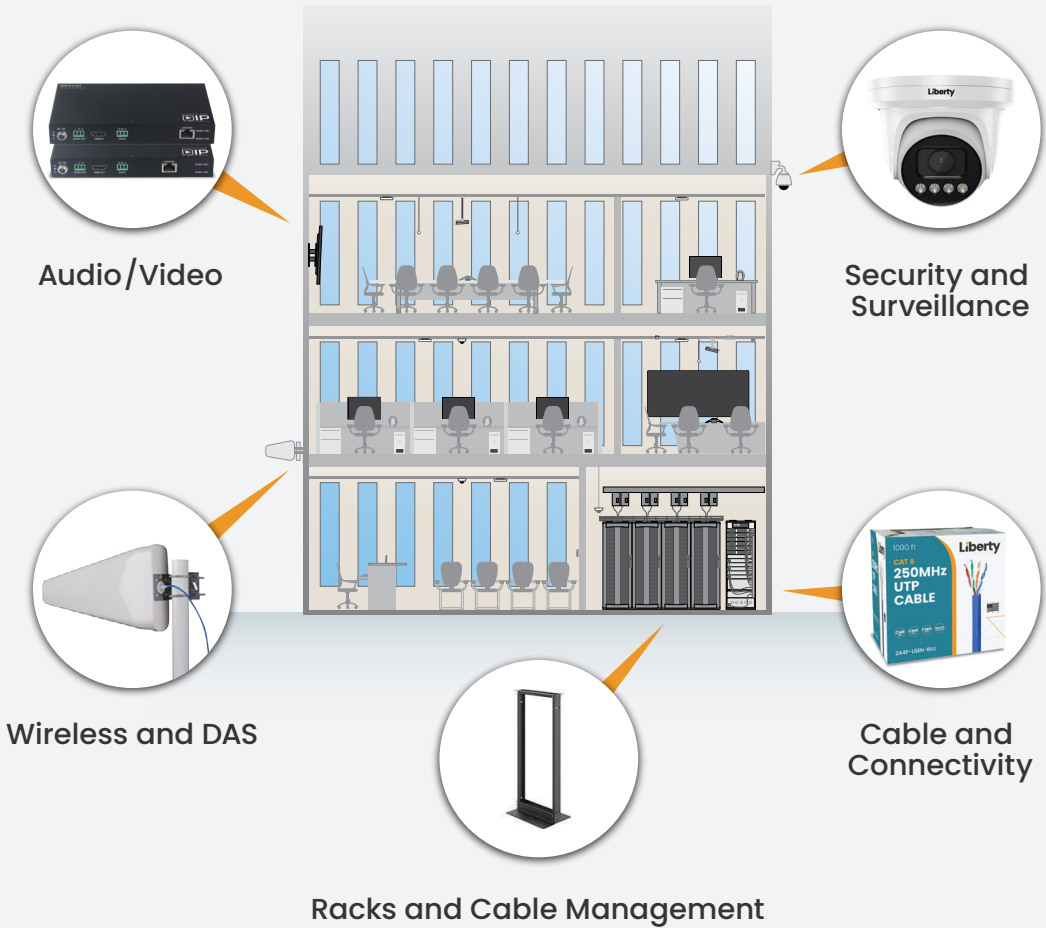
Liberty

Building Technology

AV | Security | DAS | Cable | Racks

Liberty offers adaptable, advanced infrastructure systems and services for commercial, industrial, government and academic environments.
Visit us at Libertyonline.com to learn more.

A Complete Ecosystem of Integrated Technologies

Audio/Video

Security and Surveillance

Wireless and DAS

Cable and Connectivity

Racks and Cable Management

Audio/Video
AV over IP, premium commercial and residential solutions

Security and Surveillance
Application enabled on prem video surveillance

Cable and Connectivity
Broad range of LV cable, connectors, and accessories for general infrastructure

Wireless and DAS
Distributed Antenna System infrastructure and wireless enclosures

Racks and Cable Management
Quality open infrastructure server racks, cable management and support

Libertyonline.com

By John Graham

Building a Compelling Business Case for ERP Implementation

Create an effective and persuasive argument for implementing ERP systems within your organization.

Creating a persuasive business case for an ERP (enterprise resource planning) solution is essential for organizations that want to streamline operations and achieve long-term success.

For systems integrators, it's crucial to articulate the tangible and strategic benefits that an ERP solution brings to the table for your business.

Below are key steps to building a compelling business case for ERP implementation in your own organization.

1 Understand Your Pain Points

Identify inefficiencies: Start by mapping out operational challenges, such as siloed data, manual processes, and redundant workflows, that are holding your organization back.

Assess current system limitations: Highlight the ways in which current systems fall short of your company's objectives, whether due to lack of scalability, poor integration, outdated technology, or insufficient real-time data.

2 Quantify the Benefits of ERP Implementation

Improve operational efficiency: Demonstrate how an ERP system can streamline your operations, reduce redundancies, and foster better cross-departmental collaboration.

Boost cost savings: Quantify potential savings through automation, reduction of manual errors, lower IT maintenance, and improved inventory management.

Spur revenue growth: Showcase how ERP will enable faster product launches, enhance customer service, and support data-driven decisions, all of which can lead to increased revenue opportunities.

3 Highlight Strategic Alignment with Business Goals

Supports scalability for future growth: Emphasize how the ERP solution supports your company's expansion by being flexible and scalable.

Enables digital transformation: Explain how ERP modernizes your IT infrastructure, aligning it with the company's digital transformation strategy.

Guides compliance and risk management: Discuss how ERP aids in regulatory compliance, reduces security risks, and supports auditing processes.

4 Showcase ROI with Detailed Financial Analysis

Explain initial investment vs. long-term gains: Provide a detailed breakdown of upfront costs (licenses, training, implementation) and compare them to long-term benefits.

Conduct a cost-benefit analysis: Where possible, use actual data to show how ERP can lead to savings over time by improving productivity and reducing expenses.

Estimate the return on investment (ROI): Use financial models such as net present value (NPV) or the internal rate of return (IRR) to demonstrate when the ERP will generate a return for your organization.

5 Address Stakeholder Concerns

Develop user adoption and training: Create a robust plan for user training and change management to mitigate resistance from employees.

Share implementation timeline and disruption mitigation plans: Present a phased rollout plan designed to minimize business disruption while delivering quick wins.

Showcase scalability and customization: Highlight the ERP's ability to integrate with existing systems, scale as needed, and be customized to meet your unique needs.

6 Use Case Studies and Industry Benchmarks

Share industry success stories: Share case studies of similar companies that successfully implemented ERP solutions, showcasing measurable improvements.

Establish benchmarks: Compare key performance indicators (KPIs) before and after ERP adoption to underscore its value.

7 Demonstrate Risk Mitigation

Share vendor information: Explain why the particular ERP vendor was chosen and how their solution meets your functional and technical requirements.

Emphasize previous experience: Highlight previous successful ERP implementations managed by the vendor and how they minimize risks like project delays or cost overruns.

Unified Software to Handle Your Operations

Your ERP can be a strategic enabler that aligns with your business goals, addresses pain points, and provides financial and operational value.

John Graham is the executive vice president at Solutions360, an NSCA Business Accelerator. ∎

Why **Industry Classifications** Matter for Commercial Integrators

Universal classification systems like NAICS, SIC, and SOC make accurate industry analysis possible.

By categorizing occupations, industries and organizations can be analyzed, reported on, and communicated with. This makes it possible to measure economic activity and trends, benchmark performance, identify skills gaps and employment rates, and so much more.

Classification systems are also used to determine things like:

- Taxes
- Insurance premiums
- Safety standards
- Economic incentives
- Regulatory compliance
- Funding access

Due to the unique nature of their work, systems integrators are often misclassified. These mistakes can erode profitability, hinder growth, and create unnecessary risk.

Proper classification ensures that integrators are recognized for the services they provide instead of being grouped with unrelated industries. NSCA plays a critical role in making sure your work is properly classified to minimize risk.

As a member of the Connected Technology Industry Consortium, we also work with state legislatures to support the industry's need for:

- Simplified occupational licensing laws based on scope of work
- Uniform licensing for trades and professions among states
- Eliminating unnecessary barriers to entry in the workforce

A Q&A with NSCA CEO Chuck Wilson explains why industry classification is so important and how NSCA is driving improvement.

We recently sat down with NSCA CEO Chuck Wilson so we could report on why industry classification is so important, and how NSCA is driving improvement as NAICS revisions approach in 2027.

Q: Why is industry classification so important for the commercial integration community?

A: Integrators are very different from other trades. When industry classifications lump everyone together, then licensure and credentialing become very confusing.

Through industry classification, we've created a unique identity for limited-energy systems and the integrators and professionals who work with these systems. Systems integrators have had their own CSI MasterFormat Divisions (27 and 28), which define their scope of services when it comes to communications, security and life safety systems. We also need an industry classification that matches those technical solutions.

Proper industry classification helps with proper insurance classification as well (especially workers' compensation insurance). To maintain lower premiums, integrators need to be identified as technology solutions providers, which have lower risk profiles than other industries. As a result, integrators also have lower safety and mod rates.

Q: Are there anticipated changes to the National Electrical Code for the 2026 and 2029 cycles that could impact our industry classification?

A: To stay abreast of these changes, we have representation on several code-making panels. Class 4 fault-managed power technology, or digital power circuits, are likely going to be the main topic of conversation as the code acknowledges this innovation. Power-limited circuits (Articles 725 and 800) are evolving with higher capabilities and innovations that need to be understood by systems integrators.

Q: What does the Connected Technology Industry Consortium hope to achieve through proposed changes to the upcoming NAICS revision in 2027?

A: Systems integrators are very different from other trades when it comes to training requirements, skillsets, certifications, compliance, and standards surrounding their scope of services.
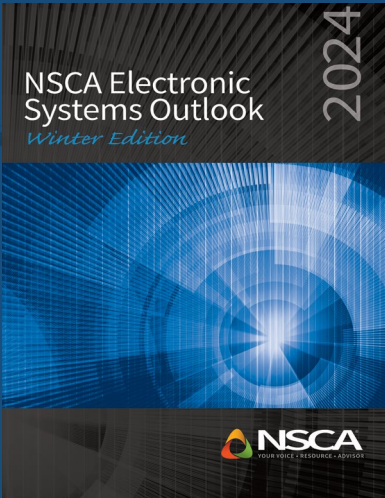
As buildings become smarter and the world becomes more connected, solutions become more integrated. This elevates the importance of integrators. An industry and occupation classification that defines this work is essential. To continue to advocate for those who provide mission-critical connected technologies, it's crucial that the industry has an identity of its own to better define the solutions integrators provide. ■

Industry Classification Systems

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which is the primary system for classifying businesses for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. economy.

Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC), which is used by U.S. government agencies to classify individual workers into occupational categories to collect, calculate, and disseminate data.

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), developed by the U.S. Department of Labor to classify industries.
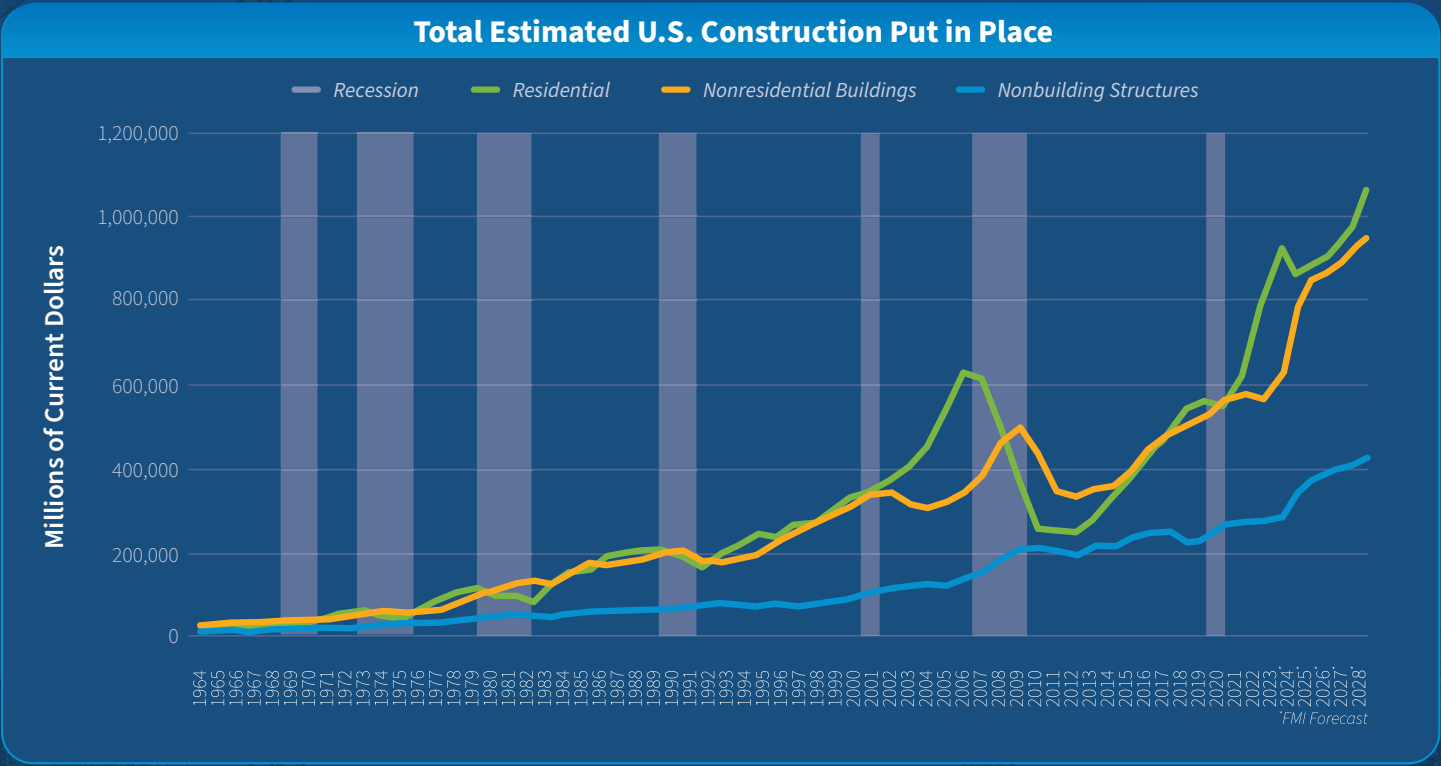
Forecasting the Future:
Key Commercial Construction Insights

An **inside look at the latest** *Electronic Systems Outlook* report: Find out what's ahead in commercial construction.
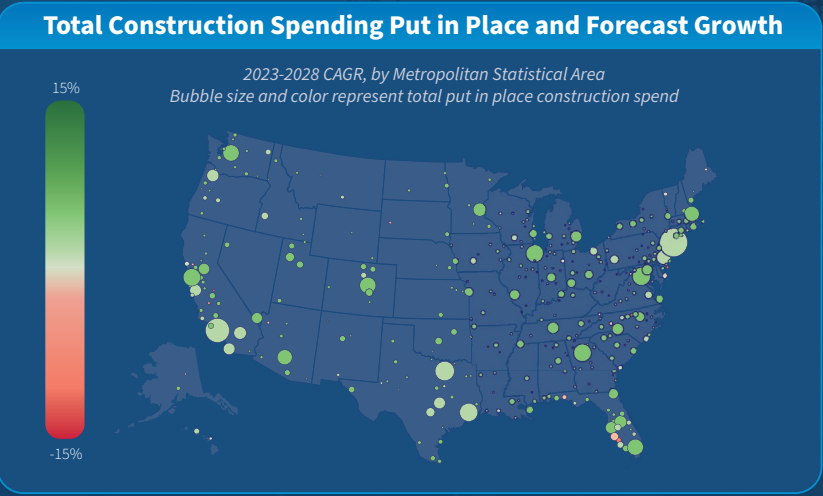
Twice a year, NSCA partners with FMI to produce the *Electronic Systems Outlook* report. The latest report—the Winter 2024 edition, which was just released in February 2025—includes information based upon actual construction data from January through November 2024, as well as forecasted information for 2025 and beyond.

In short:

- Total U.S. engineering and construction spending is forecast to end 2024 **up 6%**, in line with the 6% growth of 2023.

- For 2025, we forecast a **2% increase** in engineering and construction spending levels compared to 2024.

NSCA Electronic Systems Outlook
Winter Edition
2024

To help you target your sales and marketing efforts, the report also identifies:

- Top markets for new construction
- The most in-demand technologies
- Regions where significant technology growth is occurring
- New business opportunity potential

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

Download Report

Total Estimated U.S. Construction Put in Place

Legend: Recession — Residential — Nonresidential Buildings — Nonbuilding Structures

Millions of Current Dollars (y-axis: 0 to 1,200,000)

FMI Forecast

Construction Segment Performance

Spending level per segment, 2022 vs 2023 compared to 2023 vs 2024

	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
Manufacturing	↑	↑
Other Nonresidential	↑	↑
Houses of Worship	↑	↑
Education	↑	↑
Government	↑	↑
Corporate	↑	—
Healthcare	↑	—
Nonbuilding Structure	↑	—
Residential	↓	↑
Retail	-	↓
Lodging	-	↓

Total Construction Spending Put in Place and Forecast Growth

2023-2028 CAGR, by Metropolitan Statistical Area
Bubble size and color represent total put in place construction spend

15%
-15%

NSCA
Business & Leadership
CONFERENCE
27th ANNUAL

THE BEST OF THE BEST

Unveiling Our 2025 Award Winners

Meet the companies and individuals honored by NSCA at the 2025 Business & Leadership Conference.

While the annual Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) serves first and foremost as an education and networking platform for integrators, it's also a chance for NSCA to recognize the fantastic work being done in the industry.

During the opening night dinner, we recognize companies and individuals for their dedication, hard work, and innovation.

Here's who we recognized this year.

Excellence in Business Awards

This awards program recognizes integration firms that choose to address challenges head-on by implementing tactics and strategies to improve business performance.

CATEGORY
Business Performance

Winner: PTG

PTG made strategic adjustments to improve business performance in key areas. One example includes a company-wide initiative to improve the accuracy of job costing and time billing to maintain financial health and profitability. Using detailed dashboards and reporting tools to monitor job performance, PTG leaders can now make data-driven adjustments to optimize costs. This improvement has led to a steady reduction in expenses-to-revenue and also driven down net-payroll-to-revenue.

CATEGORY
Employee Engagement

Winner: Primary Systems

Primary Systems adopted meaningful practices to promote ongoing employee engagement as it acquires distribution territory and adds to its workforce. These practices include leadership development training. They also involve a new mission, vision, and set of values for the company to follow. By establishing an annual town hall meeting, all employees now hear directly from the company president, COO, CFO, and VP of sales regarding progress and updates. Primary Systems also demonstrates its commitment to fostering community among employees through a variety of social events.

CATEGORY
Talent Development

Winner: Verrex

Verrex is focused on onboarding new employees and developing "A players" through training and career development. From a mentorship program for new hires to establishing a new process for annual reviews, the company has taken critical steps to mitigate attrition. Verrex helps each employee set goals for the next year, including training and career development goals. The training goals ensure that employees are on top of the industry and knowledgeable when working with clients, peers, and coworkers. Career goals help employees understand their path for moving forward within the organization.

CATEGORY
Differentiating Strategies

Winner: ECC

ECC established a nationwide network of security integrators. This network enables ECC to respond effectively to numerous requests from correctional facilities for Imperium, its intelligent correctional and jail control service. By partnering with local integrators, Imperium can now reach correctional facilities across the country. This strategy not only supports local partners but also allows ECC to penetrate the correctional market more efficiently.

CATEGORY
Customer Experience

SOLUTIONZ

Winner: Solutionz, Inc.

Solutionz, Inc. significantly boosted help desk performance and client satisfaction through industry-leading best practices and valuable insights. By focusing on personalized service, the team has fostered stronger client relationships and streamlined support processes. Their success is reflected in the development of a nationwide support model that not only addresses client needs efficiently but also prioritizes tailored solutions to enhance overall customer experiences.

Excellence in Product Innovation Awards

This program honors manufacturers and products that have a profound impact on systems integrators. Any manufacturer that produces innovative technology for installation by commercial integrators is eligible.

CATEGORY
Ease of Customization

Winner: Shure Microflex Wireless neXt 4 and neXt 8

Since its launch, the 2-channel wireless system has been widely awarded and embraced by numerous organizations worldwide. In 2025, Shure further expands the new MXW neXt portfolio with Microflex Wireless (MXW) neXt 4 and 8 channel versions. Microflex Wireless (MXW) neXt offers fully reimagined wireless collaboration with industrial design, pristine audio quality, and groundbreaking speed of set-up.

CATEGORY
New Revenue Potential

Winner: Hall Technologies COMALERT

The HT-COMALERT by Hall Technologies is an advanced audio voice lift and digital safety system designed to enhance communication and safety in classrooms, conference rooms, and public spaces. This solution amplifies clear, natural voice projection for improved engagement while integrating emergency alert capabilities for real-time notifications during critical situations.

CATEGORY
Retrofit/Installer-Friendly

Winner: Sennheiser TeamConnect Bar

Part of the renowned Sennheiser TeamConnect Family, the TeamConnect (TC) Bars are the most feature-rich, all-in-one conferencing devices in their class. Available in two models for different room sizes—TC Bar S and TeamConnect Bar M—they scale from the small classrooms to large campus meeting rooms. They offer flexible setups, onboard Dante port, multiple mounting options, remote management, brand-agnostic integration, and advanced security.

CATEGORY
Recurring Revenue Potential
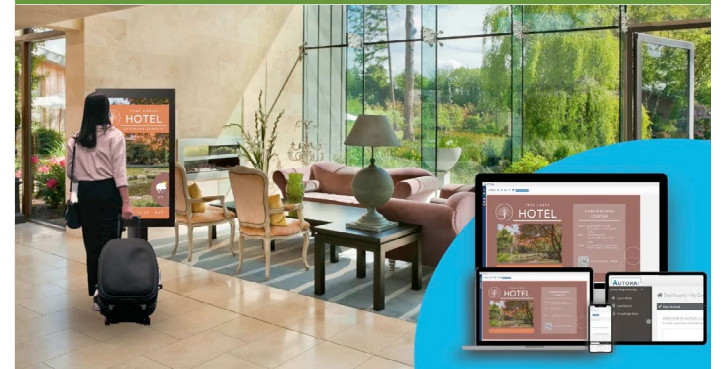
Exertis | Almo Autora DSM

Autora DSM is an intelligent digital signage content management system for effortlessly managing digital signage content across a diverse range of indoor/outdoor screens in retail stores, restaurants, hotels. corporate offices, transportation hubs, and public spaces. With its user-friendly interface and feature-rich capabilities, Autora DSM elevates the management of digital signage content, enhancing the impact and relevance of messages.

CATEGORY
Trailblazing Innovation

Jetbuilt Jetbot Service Desk

Jetbot Service Desk by Jetbuilt is an AI-driven solution that transforms AV service and support. Seamlessly integrated within the Jetbuilt platform, it provides instant, device-specific troubleshooting via QR code scans, empowering end-users to resolve issues independently. Jetbot Service Desk delivers 24/7 support, insights, and automated ticketing, reducing downtime and operational disruptions. Its integration with Jetbuilt's Service Calendar optimizes technician scheduling, ensuring rapid response for critical issues.

CATEGORY
Technology Platform

Winner: Xyte Connect+

Xyte Connect+ revolutionizes AV management by enabling dealers and system integrators to centrally monitor and manage AV and UC devices of multiple customers and multiple brands through a single pane of glass. Xyte Connect+ enhances collaboration across the audiovisual industry, simplifying hybrid technology management and integrating platforms like Zoom Rooms and Microsoft Teams Rooms, Crestron XiO, QSC Reflect, BrightSign, Domotz, Neat, Poly, and other cloud platforms.

John Greene Mentorship Award

Named after John Greene, a well-known industry educator and mentor, this award honors his legacy of helping others by recognizing those who carry on his mission of mentorship. He was passionate about helping others reach their full potential, and he was always willing to go the extra mile to support his students and colleagues. Greene was a role model for many during his 30-year career. He passed on May 13, 2021, at age 63 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Winner: Shedan Maghzi

Shedan Maghzi is committed to mentoring the next generation of professional technology integration leaders, fostering their growth and success in the industry. He's known for stopping whatever he's doing to share his experiences and insight.

> Early in my career, I was fortunate to receive mentorship from Jim Colquhoun, Mike Richardson, Paul Peck, and others who helped me see and reach a potential I had not yet recognized in myself. Their guidance shaped my professional journey, and I am grateful for the opportunity to pay that forward. There is no greater fulfillment than helping others navigate their own paths."

Per Haugen Lifetime Achievement Award

Per Haugen was instrumental in the launch of the NSCA Education Foundation and helped expand the influence of NSCA's mission. In his honor, the Per Haugen Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual who exhibits dedication to philanthropy and social responsibility; is an active leader in the financial well-being of the industry, NSCA, and his or her company; demonstrates high ethics, values, integrity, and honesty in all business practices; and holds strong values in every aspect of life.

Winner: Dave Ferlino

As a strategic sales/operational thought leader, Dave Ferlino has 45+ years of direct AV/IT leadership experience, which began with summer work as an installer when he was 16 years old. Most recently, Ferlino worked for CTI as a regional vice president, where he led the Northeast region in the quest to provide fantastic customer experiences before retiring in 2024.

> I am honored and humbled to receive such a prestigious award. From my perspective, this is the highest honor bestowed upon anyone in our industry. My experiences as part of the NSCA Board of Directors and attending 24 out of 26 BLCs were career- and life-altering. I learned the value of servant leadership, continuous learning, and lifelong friendships. My hope is that my volunteer work had a positive impact on all the great people I met and helped NSCA build better integrators."

NSCA Education Foundation Founders' Award

This award recognizes a lifetime of contributions to better our industry, celebrating those who inspire our community of professionals and build ladders to help others achieve success.

Winner: Brad Caron

Brad Caron has 30 years of experience in the commercial integration industry and oversaw SIGNET's growth from $1.8 million to more than $30 million in annual revenue. During this time, he also filled critical leadership roles with NSCA and the NSCA Education Foundation.

> The entire NSCA community has been very good to me. I have met so many caring people. I am humbled to receive this recognition. I would like to thank everybody who has advised and encouraged me over the years."

Volunteer of the Year Award

This award is given to someone who unselfishly and consistently donates their time, effort, and talents to NSCA and the NSCA Education Foundation.

Winner: Eric Morris

Eric Morris served for more than 40 years in senior financial positions for private and publicly held construction companies, including Wayne Automatic Fire Sprinklers, where he recently retired after 25 years of service. Today, he consults with emerging entrepreneurs.

> Collaborating with other NSCA members and sponsors to develop learning materials is an energizing endeavor. I sincerely appreciate that NSCA has provided me with the opportunity to share some of my thoughts on how to build a more dynamic organization."

The Evolution of AV Management in the Workplace

By Joe Andrulis, Executive Vice President, Corporate Development, Biamp

The professional audiovisual (AV) landscape has dramatically transformed during the past decade, fundamentally reshaping how an organization deploys, manages, and utilizes its respective AV investments and, by extension, how it operates day to day. This evolution reflects broader changes in how we work, communicate, and collaborate in an increasingly digital and distributed world.

At the heart of this transformation lies a fascinating paradox: while technological advances have simplified certain aspects of AV management, the overall ecosystem has grown substantially more complex. The proliferation of hybrid work models has created an unprecedented challenge for organizations, requiring them to maintain and manage an increasing array of AV systems across a vastly expanded geographic footprint.

Recent data from commercial real estate leader CBRE reveals that 92% of organizations it surveyed have embraced hybrid work arrangements, making it the dominant operational model worldwide. Furthermore, the global architecture and design firm Gensler last year conducted a Global Workplace Survey of more than 16,000 office workers across 15 countries and 10 industries. On average, surveyed workers spent roughly half of their work hours in the traditional office, while a fifth of the time was spent working from home. The balance of the remaining time was split between client visits, work travel, or working from a third place such as a coffee shop or co-working space. Consequently, the widespread adoption of hybrid work has led to AV equipment being dispersed across an unprecedented range of locations, from traditional office environments to home offices and various points in between. The resulting complexity has created new challenges for integrators, AV specialists, and IT managers who must ensure seamless functionality across these distributed systems.

The success of this transition will depend largely on the industry's ability to develop and implement solutions that balance sophistication with usability. Organizations must be able to maintain complex AV ecosystems without sacrificing the user experience or operational efficiency. This requires careful consideration of both technical capabilities and human factors in system design and implementation.

The impact of these changes extends beyond mere technical considerations. Organizations are also experiencing a fundamental shift in how they approach AV management, moving from traditional on-premises solutions to cloud-based platforms that offer greater flexibility and scalability. This transition requires a significant mindset shift for all stakeholders, from manufacturers and integrators to IT professionals and end users.

In response, cloud-hosted software management solutions have emerged as a vital component in managing this complexity. These platforms, such as Biamp Workplace, provide a unified dashboard accessible from anywhere, at any time, enabling stakeholders throughout the AV value chain to monitor and manage their respective technology investments effectively from control devices to AV peripherals such as loudspeakers, microphones, and conferencing cameras. This capability has become increasingly important as organizations strive to maintain operational efficiency across geographically dispersed teams working at home, at the office, at a client site, or a third place.

Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence and unified communication software has emerged as a crucial factor in addressing these challenges. These technologies are streamlining the processes of installing, provisioning, and managing AV equipment that has become mission-critical for day-to-day business operations. From conferencing bars to panel displays, modern AV systems require sophisticated management tools that can adapt to the demands of a hybrid workforce.

This shift in system management philosophy will empower forward-looking manufacturers to manage a given product's entire lifecycle more seamlessly, while integrators will be able to install and provision AV assets more efficiently. IT professionals will benefit from enhanced monitoring and management capabilities, leading to more effective system oversight. Perhaps most importantly, end users will experience improved reliability and functionality in their daily use of AV technology.

As we move forward, the integration of cloud-based management platforms will likely become a standard requirement for organizations with multiple sites along with those with at least a portion of hybrid or remote workers. These solutions will need to accommodate an ever-growing range of devices and use cases while maintaining security and reliability. The ability to manage AV systems remotely will no longer be viewed as a luxury but as an essential capability for modern businesses.

In the end, this evolution of AV management reflects broader changes in how organizations operate in an increasingly digital and distributed world. While managing complex AV ecosystems across multiple locations presents significant challenges, emerging technologies and management platforms are providing the tools necessary to address these challenges effectively. As organizations continue to mature their respective hybrid work models, the importance of flexible, accessible AV management solutions will only continue to grow. ∎

Axis Communications, Inc.

Visit and Utilize Axis Experience Centers

What is it?
A chance to experience and test network video, access control, and audio solutions developed for your industry in a simulated "real-life" environment.

Who is it for?
Axis Experience Centers provide area business leaders, security professionals, and system integrators with direct access to the latest in network solutions and dedicated technology specialists.

Why visit?
Utilize spaces to meet with partners/customers, become an Axis Certified Professional, take advantage of other classroom training opportunities, and demo the latest innovations in technology.

Find an Axis Experience Center Near You

AtlasIED

Debuting at ISE at the AtlasIED stand is a new range from the Atlas+Fyne premium brand, the IsoFlare™ FS Range of surface-mount loudspeakers. The FS represents a new benchmark in point source technology, and like all the Atlas+Fyne products, combines decades of expertise from acoustic and mechanical engineers with cutting-edge design and engineering techniques.

The FS's exceptional harmonic alignment between high-frequency (HF) and low-frequency (LF) sources sets it apart from standard discrete and coaxial offerings. The IsoFlare™ driver exhibits excellent harmonic alignment between HF and LF sources, the effect of which is to deliver accurate and natural reproduction with superb tonal balance, ensuring seamless integration in any environment with any combination of IsoFlare™ surface-mount or in-ceiling loudspeakers.

The IsoFlare driver propagates a spherical wavefront that is homogeneously aligned across all axes. This feature guarantees an even sound response throughout the listening area, offering a constant time delay across the entire frequency spectrum and exceptional off-axis performance. The FS features a low insertion loss 60W transformer, ideal for 70V or 100V distributed applications. The wattage tap selection and low impedance bypass can be easily adjusted via a rear-mounted slide selector switch, which includes a security cover for added safety.

Learn More

AV Design Labs

AV Design Labs, known for delivering top tier drafting, engineering, programming, and 3D rendering for the professional AV industry, is expanding! We're now offering drafting services for the entire low-voltage industry, including security systems, access control, and structured cabling solutions.

Our team ensures precise, code-compliant documentation to streamline your projects and save you time. Whether in AV or low voltage, AV Design Labs is your trusted partner for high-quality solutions.

Contact Us
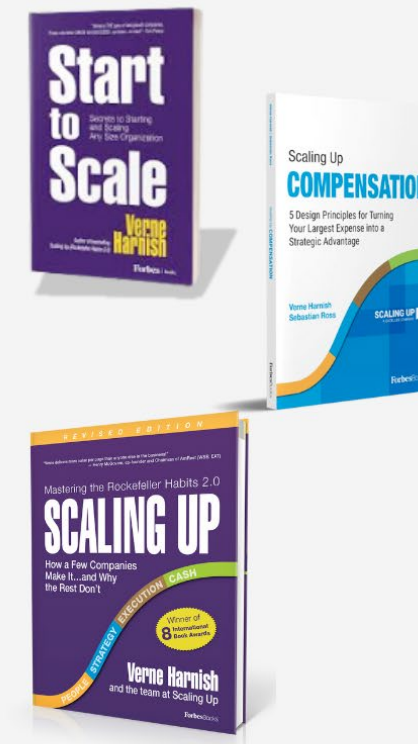
Belden

A New Era of Making Connections

We are in a transformative period at Belden. As we roll out our new brand platform and visual identity, we feel it's important to provide valuable context to the why behind the what. This is not about a new logo, tagline and website. Everything you see and hear from us going forward reflects where we have been in the past, where we are now and where we are going in the future.

Our story has always been about making connections. From the relationships we've built with our customers to the employee culture we've curated; from our ecosystem of partners to the innovations we enable and their impact on the world around us. It's time that we embrace this legacy—not only in how we work, but also in how we communicate and show up visually.

"Connect to what's possible" is the essence statement that sums up our promise. It embodies our belief that connections are not a simple "point A to point B," but a catalyst for growth and innovation. This reflects the work we do with and for our customers. When we deliver a solution that both answers the short-term challenge and enables new opportunities that advance their business, we provide a pathway to innovation that did not exist before. And this can lead to greater efficiency, security, clarity and confidence.

Our visual identity tells a similar story. Our logo represents the way we take disparate inputs and bring them together into something cohesive.

The three lines, representing our three pillars of connecting people, information and ideas, weave around to create a lower case "b."

But the most important aspect of our logo is what you don't see. It's the negative space at the center of the "b" that becomes the motif for the entire visual system. We call it the "window into what's possible."

Put it all together and you have our visual story—Belden connects people, information and ideas to unlock new possibilities for your business.

We hope you'll allow us this moment to reflect and share the story behind our new brand. For us, it's deeply meaningful because the story we share is not about the greatness of Belden alone but about the greatness we can achieve together.

Here's to a new era of making connections and enabling what's possible.

Learn More

Belden

Bose Professional

The newly expanded AMU multi-use loudspeaker series is your mix-and-match solution for both large distributed and small- to mid-sized audio systems in indoor and outdoor settings. A range of driver configurations, coverage patterns, mounting options, and orientations offers endless versatility for your installation needs. Every model is IP55-rated right out of the box—no custom orders or surcharges for weatherization. The surprisingly compact design and black/white color options blend seamlessly into any space. AMU Series loudspeakers combine total versatility with the high-output sound, exceptional vocal clarity, and rich musical depth that you've come to expect from Bose Professional.

Learn More

Christie

Christie is proud to introduce the Sapphire 4K40-RGBH, the world's first high-brightness hybrid RGB pure laser and laser phosphor projector. Delivering vibrant DCI-P3 color and stunning native 4K clarity in both 2D and 3D, Sapphire 4K40-RGBH is truly in a class of its own.

We're also excited to launch a TAA-compliant edition of the ultra-short-throw Captiva projector and unveil powerful updates to Pandoras Box, enhancing real-time media playback and control. For live events, sports venues, and broadcast, the new Spyder-S series raises the bar in image compositing and processing.

Learn More

SYNNEX

Desiree Cruz to Lead SYNNEX Visual Solutions Team

Desiree Cruz has been named Vice President of Business Management for Visual Solutions, a role previously held by Sandi Stambaugh, who transitioned to a new position within TD SYNNEX in December. In addition to leading the Visual Solutions business unit, Cruz will continue her leadership of the company's Print division. A seasoned member of the TD SYNNEX vendor management team, Cruz brings deep expertise, passion, and commitment to her new role. She and her leadership team will work closely with the TD SYNNEX AV and UCC specialty sales teams, led by Tommy Plumer, Vice President of Sales.

Learn More

TD SYNNEX

Daktronics

Daktronics NPN Series is our professional indoor narrow pixel pitch product offering. The series is available in three distinct, LED technologies to align perfectly with unique application needs. Engineered for industry-leading visual and operational performance, all options deliver exceptional color depth and contrast to optimize the viewing experience with vivid details and lifelike color.

We treat our partners as part of our team because your success is our success. Our partner portal was designed with AV Integrators in mind and features helpful design tools, product and technical information, training options and more to support your success when working with Daktronics.

Partner Portal

Jeron

Jeron's new Touchscreen Graphic Annunciators for the Provider® 700 and Provider 790 Nurse Call systems give staff everywhere visibility to active patient calls, staff emergencies, rounding reminders, and expired workflows. As part of a continuum of display options, including nurse consoles and large whiteboard displays, Provider nurse call supports the most flexible alerting and notifications available on any nurse call system.

The Annunciators are wall-mounted in key staff areas such as hallway intersections, lounges, and utility rooms; wherever mobile staff need to know the activity within their nursing unit.

Learn More

Valcom

Transform Communication with Valcom's Interactive Console

Effective communication is essential in today's fast-paced world. Valcom's Interactive Console redefines how mid-size and large organizations manage daily notifications and employee communications.

With just a few taps, the Interactive Console lets you control every aspect of your building's communication. Its intuitive touchscreen interface provides real-time control, streamlining workflows, delivering critical announcements, and enabling rapid emergency responses. This innovative tool saves time and ensures efficient communication.

From school campuses to corporate offices, hospitals, and industrial facilities, the Interactive Console adapts to your unique needs. For rugged environments like warehouses or manufacturing sites, the Building Communication Panel and Emergency Communication Panel offer durable, vandal-resistant designs with metal enclosures to withstand harsh conditions, including chemical exposure. The Emergency Communications Panel is also ShakeAlert Compatible for organizations located in California, Washington, and Oregon. The panel can send early earthquake warnings to on-premises devices such as speakers, horns, and LED signs alerting individuals to take care, drop and hold on, prior to an earthquake. The Building Communication Panel is designed around daily communication needs for organizations who need to provide one-way communication to their employees. The Building Communication Panel is equipped with a schedule so supervisors can schedule staff and break tones for manufacturing facilities.

All three consoles offer zone targeting and mass notification capabilities.

Safety and efficiency are non-negotiable. With the Valcom Interactive Console, you can boost productivity, enhance safety measures, and future-proof your communication strategy—today.

Learn More

VALCOM
Potter Global Technologies

ScreenBeam

We're in the final stretch before the end of the school year, and students are more likely than ever to be disengaged. Energize your classroom for that final stretch with the ScreenBeam 1000 EDU Gen 2. This next-generation smart wireless presentation platform offers enhanced memory, storage and performance, making it ideal for advanced interaction and collaborative classroom experiences. It features wireless screen sharing from any device, an integrated whiteboard application, digital signage and instant notification capabilities, all at an affordable price. You'll be amazed at the change in your classroom. Connect with our team to schedule an introduction or request a trial today!

Learn More

Sharp

When building out a space for a golf simulator, several factors should be considered to ensure a high-quality experience. Whether you're setting up a simulator at home, in a commercial facility, or for professional use, Sharp projectors ensure a visually stunning and high-performance experience that helps elevate every swing. Read more to learn how to elevate your golf simulator experience!

Key Benefits of Our Golf Simulator Projectors:
- Unmatched Visual Clarity
- Durability
- The Power of Connection
- Customization: Flexible options to suit various installation environments and simulator setups.

Don't settle for ordinary – transform your golf simulation into an unforgettable experience.

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Ai-RGUS is the AI-powered 100% software solution that provides visibility into the operation and cybersecurity of security systems. We have successfully completed the SOC 2 Type II audit and are HIPAA compliant. System Integrators can now use Ai-RGUS as part of their maintenance plans to generate Recurring Monthly Revenue (RMR) for their business and improve customer satisfaction from their security deployments. Also, we are pleased to announce that Joelle Grunblatt, MBA, M.Ed., was promoted to Chief Operating Officer. Choose Ai-RGUS, No Camera Left Behind.®

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Audio-Technica

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. audio-technica.com

Learn More

Cleerline

Cleerline SSF™ fiber is Easy-To-Terminate

Cleerline SSF Fiber Optic cable is fast and easy to install and terminate on the jobsite, with extreme bendability and unmatched durability, providing the bandwidth, speed, and security that commercial and residential technology integrators rely upon.

Cleerline's Basic Fiber Termination Kit enables integrators to field-terminate SSF fiber as efficiently as category cable, providing the many benefits of fiber without slowing down the installation process. Supported by exceptional training resources from the team at Cleerline, each kit includes everything required to achieve precise fiber termination and visual verification, with the kit stored in a convenient, portable case.

Cleerline SSF fiber uses an innovative Glass-Glass-Polymer design. The integral SSF polymer coating dramatically improves bend insensitivity and overall strength, and termination can be accomplished in as little as one minute. This simplified termination process requires far less training than traditional fiber, translating into further time savings and enhanced productivity for integrators.

Technically Speaking
Cleerline's innovative fiber optic connectors feature a hinge-based design that works seamlessly with both single-mode and multimode fiber networks. Available in LC, SC, SC/APC, and ST configurations, these connectors provide reliable connections for diverse optical network applications. Their unique design simplifies installation and ensures secure connections for every possible application. Additionally, the hinge mechanism allows for easy fiber insertion, visually confirmed through a large window. Whether for long-distance or high-speed local transmissions, Cleerline's assortment of connector types reduce insertion loss and enhance network longevity, maintaining high performance across even extreme environments.

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CLEERLINE TECHNOLOGY GROUP

Biamp

Revolutionize your AV system management with Biamp Workplace, our new cloud-based platform that unifies device monitoring, management, and space optimization.

This powerful solution transforms how you oversee your clients' Biamp ecosystems by enabling instant remote troubleshooting and updates, eliminating costly on-site visits. With real-time system health monitoring and proactive alerts, you can prevent downtime before it impacts your clients, while comprehensive analytics provide the insights needed to optimize both system performance and workspace utilization.

Experience Biamp Workplace, the next evolution in AV management.

Learn More

Bogen Communications

Emergency Communication Systems (ECS) are critical for ensuring safety during emergencies, providing real-time communication across multiple channels. ECSs use various technologies like public address systems, emails, and push notifications to deliver vital information, often allowing two-way communication. They can save lives, protect property, and instill public confidence. Key attributes include ease of use, clear instructions, audience specificity, and interoperability with other systems. An optimized ECS integrates seamlessly with safety platforms, enabling quick responses in environments such as schools, corporate offices, and manufacturing facilities. Bogen's Nyquist empowers advanced ECS capabilities with its IP-based platform and integration features.

Learn More

Solutions360

ClearTalk Podcast: The Must-Listen Resource for Technology Integrators

Success in the technology integration industry isn't just about technical expertise—it's about smart business strategy. The ClearTalk Podcast by Solutions360 delivers real-world insights to help AV, Security, Fire, and Life Safety integrators streamline operations, boost profitability, and stay ahead of industry shifts.

Each episode features candid conversations with industry leaders, integrators, and business strategists sharing practical advice on project management, financial strategy, and operational efficiency. No fluff—just actionable insights to help you scale smarter and run a more profitable business.

If you're looking for clear, expert-driven guidance tailored to the integration industry, ClearTalk is your go-to resource.

Learn More

Lencore

Sound masking should be included in every project quote as it delivers critical benefits like speech privacy, compliance, productivity, comfort, and security—key to enhancing any commercial space. Ideal for open offices, workstations, or breakrooms near private areas, sound masking creates a balanced, distraction-free environment. Installed alongside low-voltage, A/V, or IT systems, it integrates seamlessly while elevating the overall experience. Lencore's industry-leading solutions ensure privacy, boost productivity, and improve occupant well-being. Make sound masking a standard offering to meet modern demands and add value to every project.

Learn More

Niveo Professional

We have exciting news for the NSCA membership. To support clients better, Niveo Professional has opened its US entity. Solutions can now be sourced directly in the US. Equally exciting is that the new models are 30% less than the current marketplace prices. Combined with outstanding Client Support, this creates an opportunity to save on costs and time on the jobsite. As a reminder, Niveo Professional assists teams in configuring networks and testing them out to the endpoints. This offering saves integrators an average of half a day on the jobsite.

Please give David Stephens a call at 954-261-6582 or set a time to meet to explore whether these solutions would be of value.

Learn More

Legrand | AV

The brands of Legrand | AV lead the industry with innovative connectivity, videoconferencing, mounting, racks, networking, power, and display solutions for various audiovisual technologies. Our innovative products, sold principally under the C2G, Chief, Connectrac, Da-Lite, Luxul, Middle Atlantic Products, On-Q, Sanus, Vaddio, and Wiremold brands, are sold through numerous channels. As industry leaders and partners, our brands unite to form a union greater than the sum of its parts to provide a comprehensive offering that connects people through technology in education, corporate, house of worship, government, and more. We are committed to a culture of sustainability both globally and locally.

Learn More

Lightware

Lightware continues delivering the most comprehensive USB-C signal management solutions and will showcase the latest versions of the Taurus product family at this year's ISE. These new innovations include the Taurus UCX HCM40 that enables multiscreen extended desktop (two 4K video signals over a single cable), and the Taurus TPN that elevates USB-C capabilities to a network environment in a 'UC-over-IP' application. If you have problems with USB-C, Lightware has a Taurus for that. Can't make it to this year's show to see them in action?

Learn More

Extron

How Extron Training and Certification Prepares NSCA Members to Be More Competitive

NSCA members can gain the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the fast-paced Pro AV industry with Extron training and certification programs. Whether you are a veteran systems integrator or new to the profession, our award-winning courses focus on real-world applications and solutions for a competitive edge.

Extron makes it easy to fit learning into your busy schedule. Options include online instructor-led classes, on-demand training, and specialized workshops. Extron training covers a wide range of topics, including AV design and installation, control systems, and emerging technologies. Backing this up is an extensive library of resources: tutorial videos, design guides, and technical articles, so you always have the tools you need to succeed.

We have a track record of over 100,000 AV professionals worldwide who have sharpened their skills with Extron training. Our industry-leading expertise aligns directly with the association's mission of advancing commercial integration through education and leadership development.

Technology evolves every day, and the only way to stay competitive is not just to follow the changes, but to get ahead of them. Extron training will equip you to supply innovative solutions with confidence, respond to changing needs, and excel in the integration industry.

Ready to up your competitive level? Extron is here to help.

Learn More

Sony

Sony is pleased to introduce a limited-time promotion on the BRAVIA Profession Displays: Buy 10, Get 1 Free! Buy 10 BRAVIA Professional Displays from the "eligible list" and get 1 FREE from the "promotion list" that is equal to or less than the least expensive of the 10 eligible models purchased on the list price. You can now get all the BRAVIA Professional Displays you need for large projects at a great discount!

Explore the versatility of Sony's Professional Displays, offering HD and 4K resolution across a variety of screen sizes for any application. Engineered for excellence, our displays leverage innovative technologies to deliver superior image quality. With a commitment to reliability and robust support, BRAVIA Professional Display caters to your unique business needs.

Take advantage of this limited-time offer by contacting us to discuss your specific requirements and discover tailored AV solutions from Sony.

Learn More

SONY

Shure

MICROFLEX™ WIRELESS
neXt 4 and neXt 8

We are delighted to usher in the new age of wireless conferencing technology with the Microflex Wireless neXt 4 and neXt 8. Building on the success of the MXW neXt 2, these higher channel count offerings complete the refresh of the award-winning Microflex Wireless system.

Designed for a variety of Hybrid meeting environments from meeting rooms to classrooms, the neXt 4 and neXt 8 preserve the key characteristics that made the legacy MXW the premier choice in collaboration spaces worldwide while introducing re-imagined, state-of-the-art technology.

Feature Overview

- Single-Button Setup: Quick and easy installation linking the charging dock with the APX.
- Built-in IntelliMix DSP: Complete DSP functionality with USB and analog inputs for seamless user experience.
- ShureCloud Connectivity: Control and monitor features with license management options for added flexibility.
- Designer 6 Software Integration: Ensures faster setup, room optimization, and consistency.
- Upgraded Chargers: Dedicated Gooseneck Charger that can charge up to 8 microphones each, with daisy-chaining capabilities via Ethernet.
- Enhanced Microphones: Improved battery life, matrix display, higher dynamic range, and automatic gain control compared to the legacy MXW.

These systems offer a versatile and high-quality wireless audio solution for hybrid events, eliminating inconvenient audio cables and providing flexible controls and connections. Perfect for meeting rooms with flexible seating, the systems ensure flawless audio for both local and remote participants.

Learn More

SHURE

Q-SYS

Q-SYS is excited to introduce a new video endpoint to NV series, delivering high-quality, low-latency network video distribution. The Q-SYS NV Series NV-1-H-WE is a single-channel HDMI wallplate encoder optimized for spaces where traditional rack-mount enclosures are not ideal, including flexible and divisible spaces or spaces with reconfigurable furniture. This addition extends the Q-SYS NV Series portfolio to enable designers to customize and optimize their systems by mixing and matching endpoints to tailor their video distribution solutions based on connectivity requirements, I/O density and physical form factor. With intelligent bandwidth management through Q-SYS Shift™ and included AV Bridging, NV Series peripherals seamlessly integrate into your Q-SYS system no matter how large or complex, delivering no-code deployments and intelligent automation without additional management or control hardware.

Learn More

HP Poly

One size doesn't fit all. The Poly Studio G62 conferencing system features easy setup, seamless integration, and the customization you need. Powerful collaboration tools? Done. Advanced audiovisual options? Check. A flexible setup? You got it. Designed to connect. Made to expand.

Tailor every large conference room to your needs. Connect your Poly peripherals and controllers to the Poly StudioG62 video conferencing system and transform spaces with a modular solution designed for streamlined versatility.

Easy to install. Forget complex installations. With magnetic mounts and powered by PoE+, you can rest easy knowing installation is a breeze.

Learn More

By Jerry Abrams

Save Your Marketing Dollars & Reject the Fallacy of Sunk Costs

When you let the "sunk-cost fallacy" influence your marketing decisions, you often make bad choices that can impact your brand equity, company mission, and values.

Imagine that you hire a marketing agency to announce your new service offering. You found the agency online, and they seem to be aligned and engaged with your business, brand, and objectives.

You pay them 50% upfront (non-recoverable costs), but the deliverables they provide are falling significantly short of your expectations. It quickly becomes clear that hiring them was a mistake. They don't understand your strategy and can't translate it into compelling creative.

But a deadline is looming, and work needs to get done fast. Should you stick with them so you don't have to start searching for another agency this late in the game … or should you cut your losses and move on?

What 'Sunk-Cost Fallacy' Means in Marketing Terms

The sunk-cost fallacy is a phenomenon that occurs **when a company continues to invest time, money, and/or resources into a failing marketing initiative solely because they've already spent a lot on it.**

For example, maybe you signed a monthly retainer or made a deposit toward a project-based agency engagement. Maybe you spent money on hardware and software to support a campaign recommended by your agency.

Regardless of where the time and money went, the outcome won't be what you want when an emotional decision is made in order to "save" an initial investment or decision. Instead of achieving your goals, you'll be dealing with inefficient use of resources and the missed opportunities that an effective strategy would enable.

How Do I Avoid the Sunk-Cost Fallacy?

When you let the sunk-cost fallacy influence your marketing decisions, you often make bad choices that can impact your brand equity, company mission, and values. Most importantly, the decision to stick with a bad decision can harm the customer relationships you depend on.

Instead of making the rational decision to staunch the bleeding, you continue the cycle of marketing spend, with the results becoming increasingly difficult to undo. The more you invest, the more committed you are—and the deeper you sink.

"We've already invested so much into it—we don't want to waste the $50,000 we've already spent!"

In a perfect world, sunk marketing dollars wouldn't be relevant to future decisions. Why? Because decisions would be based purely on estimated future costs and business goals, not on old investments that can't be reversed. Unfortunately, that's not always how human nature works.

Before you hire an outside marketing resource or spend money on a marketing-based business strategy, make sure you know what success will look like when you're done.

Setting specific success metrics and measurable goals at the very beginning gives you a path forward. If your marketing strategy and tactics aren't working, then you have data to back up your decision to pivot. Your judgment will be based on facts, not emotions.

A Real Industry Example of the Sunk-Cost Fallacy

We know an integration firm that hired an ad agency and invested $50,000 in a marketing campaign to promote a new managed services offering. The campaign included online ads, a dedicated landing page, and paid social media promotion.

After several months, the campaign generated very few leads and no significant sales, indicating that the target audience wasn't engaging with or responsive to the approach.

Despite the poor performance, the integrator decided to spend an additional $20,000 to extend the marketing campaign. Their rationale was this: "We've already invested so much into it—we don't want to waste the $50,000 we've already spent!"

In reality, the company's additional spending happened because of the sunk-cost fallacy: the belief that previous investments justify further investments, even when it's clear the campaign isn't working. In this case, the $50,000 is gone and can't be recovered. The firm should focus instead on reallocating resources to a new strategy that might yield better results, such as targeting a different audience or revising the messaging.

By failing to cut their losses, the firm continued pouring money into an ineffective effort—when that money could be better spent on other, more promising marketing initiatives.

This scenario could have played out differently if integration firm leaders had reasonable and clear-cut goals. For example, if they determined that generating 15% more leads during a six-month period would likely yield a positive return on investment on the resulting two or three sales conversions, then the path to success would've been clear. And they would've had a data-backed reason to adjust their approach or disengage with strategy and the firm they hired, avoiding the sunk-cost fallacy entirely.

Always Get Off a Runaway Train

Sinking costs into a marketing strategy or idea once doesn't mean you have to keep the throttle down when it becomes evident that you're heading in the wrong direction.

Establishing marketing goals and clearly articulating a vision of success will enable you to let go of past mistakes and make decisions based on what's best for your company moving forward.

Jerry Abrams is a marketing strategist at Supervox, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember. ■

Extron

EXTRON
Q&A Chief Marketing Officer Casey Hall
www.extron.com

Q: What makes your company's approach unique within the NSCA Community?

A: Extron is an engineering-driven company. That might sound like corporate speak, but let me explain what it actually means in practice.

Some AV manufacturers source their core technology from third-party suppliers, piece things together, and call it a day. At Extron, we don't do that. We design and build almost everything in-house—from our video processing and control systems to our power supplies. That gives us a huge advantage because we can engineer products that work together seamlessly, maintain complete quality control, and, most importantly, support our customers better. If an integrator calls us with a challenge, we don't have to go back to a supplier and wait for answers—we built the technology, so we own the solution.

And speaking of support, when you call Extron, a real person answers the phone. No automated menus. No endless loops of hold music. Just an actual, knowledgeable human who is ready to help. That might not seem like a big deal until you're onsite in the middle of an installation and need an answer now.

We also believe in the value of effective training. Technology moves fast, and professionals need to stay ahead. That's why we've invested so much in our award-winning training and certification programs—so our customers not only get great products but also know how to use them to their full potential.

Our goal is to build the best technology, back it with the best support, and give integrators the knowledge they need to succeed. That's what makes Extron unique in the NSCA Community—and it's what keeps us pushing forward every day.

Q: What is the most important benefit or resource provided to you by NSCA, and how do you use it?

A: There are a lot of ways NSCA provides value. But if I had to pick just two, I'd say advocacy and industry leadership.

What I appreciate most about NSCA is that they don't just observe changes in the industry; they help shape them. They're out there advocating for the commercial integration industry, tackling issues like workforce development, cybersecurity, and business best practices. These are things that don't always get the spotlight but absolutely impact how integrators and manufacturers like Extron do business.

Another major benefit? The people. NSCA is a hub for some of the smartest, most forward-thinking folks in AV. Whether it's at an NSCA event, through their education programs, or just in day-to-day conversations, we're constantly exchanging insights with integrators, consultants, and other manufacturers. That kind of collaboration makes all of us better.

Also, NSCA provides an incredible training platform that complements what we do. They help professionals level up their skills, stay ahead of industry trends, and adapt to the ever-changing landscape.

NSCA helps us stay connected, informed, and proactive. In an industry where innovation never sleeps, those things are invaluable.

Q: Why is being part of a trade organization important to your organization?

A: Organizations like NSCA offer a community of like-minded professionals who are all working toward the same goal—pushing the AV industry forward.

At Extron, we take a big-picture approach to what we do. We're not just developing AV technology for today; we're thinking about what's coming next—where the industry is heading, what challenges integrators will face, and how we can help them navigate those changes. Being part of NSCA gives us a front-row seat to those conversations. We get to listen, learn, and contribute in ways that benefit both Extron and the larger community.

There's also the ethics and standards side of things. NSCA has a Code of Ethics that aligns with our values, namely high standards, professional integrity, and a commitment to ongoing professional growth. When the industry as a whole holds itself to these principles, everyone wins.

Trade organizations like NSCA aren't just about networking or industry events. They're about creating an ecosystem where everyone—manufacturers, integrators, consultants, and end-users—can thrive together. And that's something worth investing in.

Q: Why are your employees proud to be part of your organization?

A: Whenever I ask people at Extron why they like working here, I get a huge range of answers. Some love that we're at the cutting edge of AV technology, constantly pushing boundaries. Others talk about our strong commitment to customer service and how rewarding it is to solve real problems for integrators and end-users.

But at the heart of it, I think what makes people proud to work at Extron is our culture of excellence and innovation. We don't cut corners. We build products that work the first time, every time, and we back them with unparalleled support. That's something people can take real pride in.

We've built a team of incredibly talented, dedicated professionals who genuinely care about what they do. We've created an environment where people feel respected, valued, challenged, and motivated.

Q: How do you approach product design to stay ahead of industry trends?

A: As I mentioned earlier, we build our core technologies in-house. That means we're not just assembling parts from different vendors—we're actually developing the hardware, software, and firmware ourselves. This gives us complete control over performance, reliability, and security, which is a big deal in today's world.

Second, we listen—really listen—to our customers. Every new product or feature starts with real-world feedback from integrators, consultants, and end-users. We're not designing in a vacuum; we're solving real problems that AV professionals face every day.

And finally, we futureproof. Technology changes fast, but a well-designed AV system should be able to evolve. That's why we focus on scalability, interoperability, and long-term support. We're not interested in making disposable tech; we're designing products that will perform flawlessly for years to come.

We build products that deliver outstanding performance, make integrators' lives easier, and never compromise on quality.

Q: What emerging trends in the industry excite you the most, and how is your company preparing for them?

A: This is a great time to be in AV because so many great things are happening. But if I had to pick a few trends that are really compelling, here are three that are on my list:

1. **AV over IP** – We're seeing a shift toward scalable, IT-friendly AV solutions. The Extron NAV System delivers the performance and reliability AV professionals need while integrating seamlessly with enterprise networks.

2. **Hybrid Work & Learning** – The way people collaborate has changed forever. Whether it's corporate huddle rooms, HyFlex learning spaces, or remote collaboration tools, Extron is constantly evolving our UC, control, and streaming solutions to meet these demands.

3. **Cybersecurity & AV** – As AV and IT continue to converge, security is no longer optional. We're building robust security protocols, encryption, and authentication into our products to ensure that AV systems are as secure as they are powerful.

Those are just a few of the trends that make this industry so exciting.

Q: What's next for your company in the coming year? Are there any big developments or goals you're working toward?

A: We're working on innovations in the areas of signal distribution, AV over IP, control, and audio processing, just to name a few. Our engineers are always working behind the scenes on some game-changing solutions.

We're also expanding our training programs. We know that integrators and AV professionals need to stay ahead of the curve, and we're committed to delivering more online courses, in-person workshops, and certification programs to support that.

And of course, sustainability is a big focus for us. We're continuing to produce some of the most energy-efficient products in the industry while maintaining the performance and reliability our customers expect.

Beyond that? We're doubling down on supporting our customers with new resources, key partnerships, and continued innovation. Because that's our mission: to design and manufacture AV products that meet customer needs and provide the highest level of performance and value.

Stay tuned. 2025 is going to be a great year! ■

By Dr. Chris Kuehl

Understanding Tariffs:
Intentions, Impacts, and Risks for Integrators

With all this talk of tariffs, it's helpful to understand their basic concepts and consider how they impact different sectors.

Tariffs. Are you tired of hearing about them yet?

We're in an ongoing state of uncertainty when it comes to the fees imposed on goods or services being imported from other countries.

At any given time, it's not clear whether a specific tariff will actually be imposed—or for how long. If concessions are made, then the tariff may be delayed or abandoned. In reality, tariffs become a matter of determining who has leverage. Most nations need the U.S. market and are willing to do what it takes to preserve access.

For decades, the United States' approach has been to favor the needs of consumers at the expense of producers. The consumer must have the best product at the lowest price, no matter where the product comes from. In the process, however, we've lost billions in productive capacity, along with hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Now there's a push to get these jobs and capacity back, but it comes at a cost (higher prices for consumers). If we look a few years down the road, it's safe to assume that certain industries will return to the United States (primarily the sophisticated sectors that need to be close to their consumer base). It's also a safe bet that consumers will pay higher prices across the board (some estimates are as high as 20% in sectors currently dominated by imported goods).

The Real Intention of a Tariff

Tariffs are among the oldest trade manipulators in the world because they're simple. Use taxation (tariffs) to encourage consumers to buy domestically produced products instead of imported versions. This generally works like a charm when certain conditions are met, such as:

- **The need for a comparable domestic product.** If there is no acceptable rival for the import, then the consumer has no choice but to buy it and pay a higher price: The exporter simply passes the cost of the tariff on to the consumer.

- **The ability of consumers to pay higher prices.** The domestic alternative will likely be more expensive because U.S. production costs are generally higher. But tariffs ensure that the imported version will be more costly as well. Will U.S. consumers be able to pay more? Perhaps, but the most likely response is often a reduction in demand, delayed projects, and abandoned efforts altogether.

It's also important to understand the "real" intent of a tariff: It's a tool used to underpin negotiations and bargaining.

A nation is threatened with a tariff unless there is a concession granted. It is abundantly obvious that this tactic has already been deployed by the Trump Administration.

At the time of writing in late February, we were seeing one tradeoff after another:

- Mexico and Canada were threatened with immediate 25% tariffs but avoided them for the first month by agreeing to increase their commitment to border security.

- Europe was working to blunt a tariff on exported cars by reducing its 10% tariff on U.S. cars entering the market.

- Taiwan was hoping to avoid tariffs on the export of silicon chips by agreeing to build additional chip manufacturing capacity in the United States; South Korea was doing the same.

Now, by the time you read this article in April, it's impossible to say how much posturing has taken place with proposed tariffs and counter-tariffs between the United States, Canada, China, the European Union, and more.

During President Trump's first term, 18,200 tariff exemptions were granted as nations negotiated deals and U.S. companies pointed out the damage these tariffs would do. For example, steel and aluminum tariffs on every nation devolved as Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Europe, Turkey, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India, and Australia were exempted to one extent or another.

Net Effective Tariff Rates Explained

To mitigate risk, purchasing managers are learning to look at the net effective tariff rate when gauging the potential risk of a tariff on products. The net effective tariff rate occurs after currency exchange differences are factored in.

Consider this oversimplified example: a product worth $100 from a country with a 10% tariff imposed. The product cost is $110 under the applied tariff. If the country hit with the tariff devalues its currency by 10% (as is often the case), the product would then cost $90. After a 10% tariff is applied, it would cost $99 (an actual discount on the pre-tariff amount).

The tariff policy applied often considers this devaluation strategy. As a result, the tariff is often set high enough that there is a net impact even after currency devaluation. In addition, devaluation of currency carries with it other economic impacts to the country using this strategy: inflationary increases on inputs, higher cost of capitalization, negative impacts on Treasury rates, etc.

Estimates suggest that the tariffs applied to Chinese products during 2018 and 2019 were offset by currency devaluation in the yuan, making the net effective tariff rate for U.S. importers approximately 15% on 25% tariff categories and approximately 5% on 15% tariff categories. This is partly why inflation didn't move during this time (it increased by 0.2%).

Dr. Chris Kuehl is managing director at Armada Corporate Intelligence and also serves as NSCA's chief economist. ∎

Where to Turn for Up-to-Date Info

One of the most vulnerable U.S. sectors is commercial integration. By the very nature of your business, you must draw from products and resources all over the world to develop a unique offering. This means your vulnerability to tariffs and restrictions is high.

Many integrators rely on internationally sources equipment, technology, and materials. They also operate in price-sensitive markets with slim margins. Increased costs make it even harder to remain competitive.

To stay up to date on tariffs (and everything else happening in the economy right now), you can now sign up to receive our financial insights in your inbox.

When you sign up for the *ASIS (Armada Strategic Intelligence System)* Report specifically for NSCA members, you'll receive weekly:

- **Exclusive insights and intelligence** that translate current economics events into business impact for systems integrators
- **Alerts and early warnings** about market movements to help you react, adapt, and stay competitive
- **Running intelligence estimates** to help shape your business decisions

ASIS Report subscriptions are open to NSCA members for just $15 per month. The best part: Your subscription puts you in direct contact with me, so you can contact me at any time to ask questions, share concerns, or offer your comments and feedback.

Learn more

By Patrick Britton

7 Steps to Harness the Power of Pivoting and Find New Paths to Success

How to shift and still stay on course in the face of adversity.

Life rarely goes according to plan. Whether it's a sudden career setback, an unexpected financial challenge, or a personal crisis, adversity has a way of showing up uninvited. But this doesn't have to derail your dreams. In fact, it can be the catalyst you need for growth and change—if you learn the art of pivoting.

Pivoting is the ability to adapt, shift direction, and continue working toward your goals despite obstacles. It's not about giving up on your ambitions but finding new ways to achieve them when the old ways no longer work. It requires courage, resilience, and a willingness to embrace change.

When adversity strikes, here are seven steps to harness the power of pivoting.

1 Accept the Reality of Change

The first step in pivoting is accepting that change is inevitable. Fighting it only leads to frustration and wasted energy. Instead, acknowledge the situation for what it is. This doesn't mean you have to like it—but recognizing that change occurred is the foundation for moving forward.

Acceptance allows you to see the situation clearly, without the fog of denial or resistance. It puts you in a position of power, ready to assess your options and make informed decisions about your next steps.

2 Reassess Your Goals

Adversity often forces us to pause and re-evaluate your goals. Are they still relevant? Do they need to be adjusted based on new circumstances? Sometimes, the original goal may still be valid, but the path to get there needs to change.

Take this opportunity to reflect on what truly matters to you. Are you pursuing this goal because it aligns with your values and passions, or is it something you've been chasing out of habit or external pressure? Use adversity as a chance to realign with your core purpose and ensure that your goals are meaningful and motivating.

3 Embrace Flexibility

Flexibility is key to successfully pivoting. When adversity strikes, rigid thinking can keep you stuck, whereas a flexible mindset opens up possibilities. Instead of focusing on what's no longer possible, shift your attention to what is possible.

Being flexible doesn't mean lowering your standards or abandoning your goals. It means being open to alternative methods, new opportunities, and creative solutions. The ability to adapt and change course is a strength that will serve you well, not only in times of adversity but also throughout your journey.

4 Learn from Setbacks

Setbacks are inevitable, but they don't have to be permanent. Instead of viewing them as failures, see them as opportunities for growth. What can you learn from this experience? How can you use this knowledge to improve your strategy and approach?

Every setback contains valuable lessons. By analyzing what went wrong, you can gain insights that will help you avoid similar pitfalls in the future. More importantly, learning from setbacks builds resilience, making you better equipped to handle whatever challenges come your way.

5 Focus on What You Can Control

In the face of adversity, it's easy to feel powerless. To regain power, focus on what you can control. While you may not be able to change the situation, you can control how you respond to it.

Take ownership of your actions, decisions, and mindset. What steps can you take today, no matter how small, to move closer to your goals? By focusing on what's within your control, you regain a sense of agency and momentum, even in challenging times.

6 Seek Support and Collaboration

Pivoting doesn't have to be a solo effort. Sometimes, the best way to overcome adversity is by leaning on others. Whether it's seeking advice from a mentor, collaborating with colleagues, or simply sharing your struggles with a trusted friend, support can make all the difference.

Surround yourself with a network of people who believe in you and your goals. They can offer fresh perspectives, encouragement, and resources you may not have considered. Remember, asking for help is not a sign of weakness: It's a strategic move that can accelerate your progress.

7 Keep Your Eye on the Bigger Picture

When adversity hits, it's easy to get bogged down in the immediate challenges and lose sight of the bigger picture. Keep the long-term vision in mind to stay motivated and focused.

Remind yourself why you started on this journey in the first place. What is the goal you're working on? By maintaining a clear vision of your endgame, you can stay committed to your goals, even if the path to achieving them changes.

Find Strength through Pivoting

Pivoting isn't easy. When you're focused on how you originally planned to achieve your goal, it's easy to forget that there are different paths to get you there. By mastering the art of pivoting, you can turn challenges into opportunities and continue to move forward, no matter what life throws your way.

This is where coaching can help. If you want to learn more about how coaching can help you achieve your goals, **schedule a consultation** with Navigate Management Consulting.

Patrick Britton is a senior consultant at Navigate Management Consulting, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember.

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