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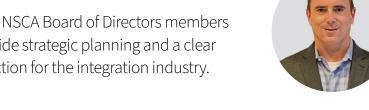
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Your Board Is Focused on Your Future

New NSCA Board of Directors members provide strategic planning and a clear direction for the integration industry.



very year, NSCA's board of directors gathers with our team leadership for a strategic planning summit. It's a much-needed opportunity to reflect, recalibrate, and recommit to our mission of serving NSCA members.

The goal is simple but powerful: to make sure we're using your dues to focus on the issues that matter most to you. We lean on the board's insight to ensure that our efforts are targeted, impactful, and aligned with the challenges you face.

Our board members are a true reflection of the industry. They include leaders from large, midsized, and small firms. They represent AV and security, companies in densely populated regions, and firms in rural markets. This diversity ensures that our strategic direction is shaped by a wide range of perspectives and grounded in real-world experiences.

During this year's strategic planning summit, we spent time understanding the business challenges board members see in their own companies and markets. We talked about how technology and customer demand are evolving—and where integrators may be at risk of falling behind. By the end, we walked away with updated priorities that give the NSCA team clear direction.

One major takeaway: Al is no longer a future consideration. The board made it clear that NSCA must lead the way in helping members use AI safely, legally, and responsibly. That means providing resources to help you incorporate AI into your operations and into the systems and solutions you deliver to customers.

As a result, you'll be hearing a lot more from NSCA's AI & Cyber Committee. Expect new tools, insights, and guidance to help you innovate with confidence.

Board members also emphasized the unique challenges facing industry leaders today, from economic uncertainty and shifting customer expectations to evolving workplace culture. They want NSCA to continue building resources that help you get back to basics: sound financial planning, contract management, and leadership development.

You'll see this reflected in the schedule for the 2026 Business & Leadership Conference, which is packed with leadership content.

You'll also see it in the resources we continue to build, like our Financial 101 checklist, Financial Analysis of the Industry, Product Procurement Checklist, and more (all available in our Essentials Library).

And you'll see it in our second annual XBO Experience, coming this October to Austin, TX, where we'll help train the next generation of industry leaders.



Tom LeBlanc is executive director at NSCA.

Contact him at tleblanc@nsca.org



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NSCA's XBO Experience is quickly becoming a must-attend event for integrators that want to invest in their future leaders. This two-day immersive experience equips emerging professionals with the skills, insights, and confidence to lead in our unique and fast-evolving industry.

XBO blends interactive learning with real-world relevance. Attendees engage in real-world scenarios, explore ethical decision-making, and gain career insights from seasoned professionals in a dynamic setting. Our 2025 event is full, but you can join a waitlist for 2026.

Join the 2026 Waitlist



If you've experienced the Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) before, then you know you can't afford to miss it. As the industry's must-attend business conference, attendees leave inspired and re-energized by new business strategies and ideas. But BLC sells out every year, so register now to secure your spot!

If you haven't experienced BLC before, then you may be eligible for a Randy Vaughan Scholarship, which allows you to attend at no cost. (More about that on page 30.)

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

Register Now









Fueling the Future of Systems Integration: 25 Years of Impact

For more than two decades, the NSCA Education Foundation has helped people discover opportunity, grow their skills, and strengthen the industry.



This year marks a milestone worth celebrating: 25 years of the NSCA Education Foundation. For a quarter of a century, the Foundation has been shaping the systems integration industry by developing tools to tackle real-world challenges unique to commercial integration.

Here are some examples of how our work has played out since 2000.



Igniting New Careers

The NSCA Education Foundation is responsible for Ignite, a workforce development initiative aimed at establishing a larger, more capable workforce.

Over the past few summers, we've welcomed interns through Ignite," says Dawna Payne, executive vice president at Texadia Systems. "The grants have helped us open doors to careers in technology and show students the real-world possibilities that exist within our industry. One of our interns is joining us as a full-time programmer after he graduates.



Fueling Leadership Growth

To help professionals develop leadership and business skills, the NSCA Education Foundation established the Randy Vaughan Leadership Awards. So far, we've offered more than \$500,000 in scholarships to industry professionals so they can attend the Business & Leadership Conference (BLC) at no cost.

Attending BLC through a Randy Vaughan scholarship helped shift my perspective from designer to ownership and sales, which gave me valuable insight into areas where my organization can grow," says Greg Stewart, director of engineering at Valley Communications. "The opportunity to have focused conversations with peers about business strategy and challenges provided a broader view of the industry and reinforced the importance of cross-functional thinking.



Preparing Tomorrow's Trailblazers

Through the Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience event, the NSCA Education Foundation helps upcoming industry leaders get the training they need. The Jeff M. Kindig Future Leaders Scholarship is funded by the Foundation and covers registration fees for XBO attendees who see themselves as next-generation leaders.

At XBO, learning about the importance of trust in the workplace, building a strong foundation for future success, and understanding the impact of global leadership broadened my perspective and inspired me to strive for excellence," says Gabby Miller, customer experience manager at SVT. "The event boosted my confidence and prepared me for a future in the industry.

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. If you've been impacted by the NSCA Education Foundation, we'd love to tell your story.



Reach out to NSCA Director of Workforce Development Laura Janssen.



Exciting News for the NSCA Education Foundation

In June 2025, long-time NSCA supporter **Ray Bailey** presented a donation to the

NSCA Education Foundation. This significant
contribution will launch NSCA's Legacy Program.

He presented the substantial gift during his final

NSCA Board of Directors meeting.

"I chose to support the NSCA Education
Foundation because I believe deeply in the importance of ongoing education in our industry. Most of what we do isn't taught in traditional schools or colleges—it's learned on the job, through companies or through NSCA. But many companies are simply too small to offer consistent training programs. That's where NSCA can step in and make a real difference," says Bailey.

With his contribution, the NSCA Education Foundation will expand the reach and impact of its programs to grow, educate, and sustain the industry workforce.



The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (BBB), signed into law on July 4, 2025, ushers in sweeping changes to federal taxes, employee benefits, and R&D credit rules. And these implications extend to integrators.

Many of the bill's provisions will provide incentives for some industries and types of business while eliminating government investment (or trimming it substantially) for others.

Here's a breakdown of the most impactful changes set to reshape how integrators do business.



Restoration of the Full R&D Tax Credit

Under the new law, integrators and manufacturers can now write off 100% of their R&D tax expenditures in the year they're incurred, retroactive to Dec. 31, 2021. All qualified domestic R&D expenses may be deducted fully in the year incurred for tax years after Dec. 31, 2021, and before Jan. 1, 2026.

Since 2022, corporations have been required to amortize and expense their research and development expenses over time. However, this bill allows U.S. R&D to be immediately expensed, eliminating the wait for future deductions. R&D performed by U.S. corporations outside the country will continue to be subject to amortization rules.

If companies have annual gross receipts of less than \$31 million, then expensing can occur right away. All other companies can recognize expenses over the next two years.

By recognizing expenses earlier, integrators can enjoy better cash flow and an improved ability to reinvest in engineering, design, and software improvements.



Education Funding Redefined

The BBB adds flexibility to 529 educational savings plans, which were previously restricted to college tuition. Now, families can now use 529 funds for career-aligned learning like:

- · Industry-recognized apprenticeships and career technology education programs
- · Certifications for technician training
- · Credentials for industry-specific skills advancement

This change will allow NSCA members to recruit and retain workers who may otherwise have gone to fouryear institutions.



Expanded Bonus Depreciation for Equipment and Facilities

Investments in vehicles, IT infrastructure, technology, warehouse automation, and property used for integration and manufacturing are now eligible for **immediate and 100% depreciation** (up to a generous cap).

BBB reform enables:

- 100% bonus depreciation for qualified production **property** placed in service after Jan. 19, 2025, including non-residential real estate used for manufacturing or assembly. This dramatically accelerates tax relief for capital investments.
- Section 179 expensing cap increases from \$1 million to \$2.5 million, with higher phase-out limits. This significantly expands the deduction for small and midsize integrators.

These changes can help integrators modernize facilities, add technical assets, and launch new workflows with immediate cash savings on federal taxes.





Breakthroughs in Employee Benefits

The BBB makes several changes to health and benefit plans that affect integrators. These changes present opportunities to refine benefits strategies and enhance value propositions to employees, empowering integrators with more flexible and attractive benefits.

Here are a few examples of what's changing:

- **Permanent telehealth access:** High-deductible health plans (HDHPs) can continue waiving deductibles for telehealth services without risking HSA (Health Savings Account) eligibility. Integrators can include remote health services in high-deductible plans.
- **Dependent care FSA increase:** Starting in 2026, the annual limit is increasing to \$7,500 for single/married joint filers; \$3,750 for married filing separately. This is helpful for integrators that want to offer more competitive family benefits to improve retention and morale.
- Trump savings accounts: New tax-advantaged savings accounts for children under the age of 18 are available to all employees. The ability to contribute tax-free up to \$2,500 per year to these accounts offers a distinctive way to support employee financial wellness.
- Expanded HSA eligibility: The new law broadens eligibility for HSA contributions by allowing certain marketplace plans and direct primary-care arrangements to qualify, giving integrators more ways to help employees access tax-favored health savings options.
- Deferred compensation plan flexibility: The BBB loosens previous restrictions on certain non-qualified deferred-compensation programs, allowing employers to offer greater flexibility and choice for executive and employee compensation planning.

Strategic Priorities Ahead

As policies evolve, NSCA members should stay vigilant, educate their finance and HR teams, and leverage NSCA resources to maximize tax and workforce benefits in 2025 and beyond.

As new rules come into play, you have an opportunity to maximize tax savings, modernize employee offerings, and strengthen recruitment strategies.. ■

Action Steps for Integrators: How to Maximize the BBB's Potential

- **Stay informed:** Stay up-to-date on what's happening by using NSCA's advocacy alerts and online bill-tracking tools.
- Audit R&D activities: Identify qualified activities in software, engineering, and technical services since 2022 and prepare amended returns for immediate cash benefit.
- Assess education benefits: Create a strategy to take advantage of 529 plan flexibility to attract talent.
- **Update benefit materials:** Confirm plan compliance and communicate HSA, telehealth, DCAP, and Trump Account changes to all staff members.
- Coordinate with NSCA Business
 Accelerators and Member Advisory
 Councilmembers: Use resources like
 alliantgroup and <u>TrueNorth</u> to review tax
 strategy, maximize credits, and ensure
 compliance.





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By Jason Knott

How to Structure a Risk-Resistant **Policy for Progress Payments**

What to consider when determining payment terms and collection practices.

n the world of low-voltage integration, one size does not fit all—and that even applies to getting paid by clients.

For integrators, the structure and timing of progress payments can mean the difference between being underwater for months on end and healthy, robust cash flow.

To navigate this tricky terrain, we tapped the expertise of Jason Sayen of <u>IAmSayen</u> and Emily Morgan of <u>VITAL</u>, two seasoned industry consultants who work closely with integration firms across North America, to provide a list of best practices to consider when determining payment terms and collection practices.

Why Progress Payments Are Necessary

"Progress payments ensure steady cash flow throughout multiple phases of a project, enabling funds to be available to pay suppliers and labor resources," says Morgan.

Instead of relying on a lump-sum payment at the end of a project, staggered payments ensure you can cover the cost of materials, labor, and overhead at every stage of a project without accessing money designated for overhead or profits or comingling funds from another project to cover costs.

They can also reduce risk. Getting paid as you go significantly lowers the likelihood of project abandonment or client default.

"If a client has already paid 50%, they're less likely to walk away," Morgan notes. "It's harder to abandon something halfway through if you've already paid a non-refundable sum."



If you plan to leverage progress payments to structure your contracts and charge your clients, here are 10 best practices to consider along the way.

1. Map Out Your Progress Payment Structure

Map out payment terms based on project milestones. For example, when do you want to collect the deposit? In a perfect world, work shouldn't start until the deposit is cashed, but some integrators admit they start working on a project before they get paid, says Sayen. "Map how you want it to happen. Set your process, then stick to it."

2. Clarify Internal Roles and Invoicing Triggers

Who will be involved? For example, to avoid costly payment delays, you must clearly establish who will determine when a phase is complete and inform the back office when it's time to invoice the client. Make it part of your standard operating procedure (SOP) to assign clear responsibility for requesting that an invoice be sent.

3. Base Payment Schedules on Project Type or Size

Let project complexity and the timeline guide your structure. New builds often call for anywhere from four to eight payments, while retrofits might only require two.

For instance, a large multi-phase project with design/engineering, prewire, trim, and finish stages likely calls for progress payments. A single-phase installation may simply require a deposit and final payment.

4. Cover Equipment Costs Upfront

More expensive equipment requires a higher deposit. "If you're ordering a \$250,000 projector, a 50% equipment deposit may not cut it," warns Morgan. Sayen adds that many integrators collect 100% of equipment prices upfront, then structure labor payments separately. If necessary, use an "equipment deposit" to secure funds before ordering.

INVOICE

5. Define Payment Phases

There's no rule on how many progress payments you should receive on a project. Morgan says that most of VITAL's clients break up payments into three to four increments. Four phases can keep payments manageable and aligned with project milestones without overcomplicating things.

Here are some options to break down your payment structure. (None of these options includes an initial design fee.)

50% / 40% / 10%

- For: Mid-size, multi-phase, and equipment-heavy projects
- Why: Front-loads cash flow to cover parts while allowing the client to hold 10% to ensure successful project completion

30% / 30% / 30% / 10%

- For: Large projects with four or more clearly defined phases
- Why: Even distribution accommodates extended timelines and complexity

100% (equipment) + 50% (labor) / 50% (labor)

- For: Projects with highly customized or high-cost equipment
- Why: Eliminates financial risk from unapproved equipment outlays

60% / 30% / 10%

- For: Projects where cash-flow needs are high or equipment procurement must happen early
- Why: Offers security up front for small to mid-size integrators

80% / 20%

- For: Clients with a poor payment track record or single-phase, fast-
- Why: Minimizes risk; suitable for jobs with minimal post-install follow-up

6. Tie Payments to Milestones, Not Calendar Dates

Milestone-based invoicing is the industry norm for a reason. Contract approval, prewire completion, equipment-rack delivery, and final walkthroughs make logical billing markers. Time-based schedules only make sense for long-term commercial projects, according to Sayen.

7. Keep Projects Financially Isolated

The practice of using money from one client to finance the purchase of equipment and/or pay for labor on another project is a bad idea.

"Integrators often think they're profitable because they have cash," says Sayen, "but it doesn't work that way." Avoid the trap of funding Job A with Job B's deposit. Track cash flow and profitability on a perproject basis.

8. Align with Accrual Accounting

"Cash accounting is reactive," Morgan explains. "Accrual accounting aligns revenue with work performed and gives you a true P&L."

Deposits should be logged as liabilities until work is completed. This ensures accurate financial reporting, better forecasting, and more credibility with lenders.

9. Avoid Progress Payments for Service Calls

Sayen recommends that integrators don't institute progress payments for service calls.

"Ideally, your service technicians should collect service payment when they're on the jobsite," he explains. "Some integrators even get credit card information and authorization prior to arriving onsite. That way, they're getting paid as soon as they are done."

10. Protect the Final 5% or 10%

The last payment is often the most elusive. Bake your minimum profit into the first 90% to avoid missing your profit margin if a client refuses to make the final payment. Often, integrators tie the final 5% or 10% to customer walkthroughs, keypad engraving, training, and signed approvals.

When should you ask for that final payment? It varies. Some integrators invoice the final payment upon "substantial completion" or being "reasonably complete." The definition of these terms can be murky, so defining them in your contracts is advised.



Your Payment Policy Is Your Survival Plan

A well-structured progress-payment policy is essential for survival. By tying payments to project milestones, clearly defining internal roles, and isolating finances per job, integrators can maintain healthy cash flow and reduce risk. Set expectations early, invoice consistently, and always collect enough upfront to avoid playing financial catch-up.

Jason Knott is a data solutions architect and evangelist at <u>D-Tools</u>, an NSCA Business Accelerator.



By Chuck Wilson

The Project Doom Cycle Is Real. **Ready to Stop It?**

Lessons in project management and teamwork emerge during a real-world rollout of a routine school security upgrade.



After retiring from NSCA full-time last year, I spend a lot of my time volunteering with the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS). In that role, I was invited to observe a two-day system installation by a very reputable company doing a security upgrade at a school.

A three-person crew—two installers and one supervisor—was sent out to complete a fairly simple project. This particular crew had been together only a few months and was considered by the company to be a small project team. But they were young and very excited to complete the project.

Sixty hours total was the bid, based on bestcase assumptions. Here's how it actually played out.



Day One: Cautious Optimism Fades

Work began slowly. My first observation was that, at any given time, at least one of the three crew members—sometimes more—seemed to be on their cell phone throughout the entire day. I happened to ask the project sales rep if this was typical. He said: "It happens every day, and it's mostly personal calls and unrelated matters." Progress at the end of Day One was, to put it mildly, minimal.



Day Two: Momentum Is Lost

The project supervisor was called to a different site, leaving the two remaining installers alone to finish the project. They were both on their phones most of the day, this time asking for directions and support **from the supervisor** who was now in a different city. Not much work was accomplished, and they were far from being done in two days as promised.



Day Three: Work Starts Over

A new three-person crew showed up, describing themselves as "the crew that should've been on this project in the first place." They were very experienced, very professional, and very hardworking. They proceeded to undo everything that had been done so far, including:

- Taking down cameras that were poorly installed
- Running a few different cable routes
- Moving the server rack

In other words, they basically had to start over.



Day Four: The Project Recovers

The experienced crew came back again and had the entire project done perfectly by the end of the day. **Total installed time was about 120 hours against the original 60-hour estimate.** I asked the sales rep how often this happens. He said: "Pretty much any time there's a firm deadline." The first crew was sent out in hopes that they could deliver the project on time, or at least make the school feel like someone showed up on the right days. But the project was set up for failure.



As I considered the time lost during this project, it occurred to me that I wasted four days observing the scenario play out, much like a project manager might do.

Then I thought about the time the sales rep wasted by coming to the site multiple times to check on the project since he knew it wasn't going well. (He, too, was very professional and experienced and wanted the client to be happy with the work.)

In the end, the project was done really well. But the integrator lost tons of money in the process, and the overrun disrupted other projects on the schedule for that week.

This whole situation reminded me of the importance of great project management, proper crew mix, and realistic scheduling.

We see this story repeat itself across the industry, which is why we often talk about the "project doom cycle": a perfect storm of underestimating labor, assigning the wrong team mix, and putting unrealistic deadlines on already-stretched crews. Once this cycle starts, it's hard to stop.

But it doesn't have to be this way. With deliberate project management discipline, realistic job costing, and the right resources in place, integrators can break out of the cycle.

NSCA provides tools and guidance that help companies get projects right the first time—from standardized labor units and workload forecasting, to peer connections, to project management training for field leaders.

The cycle won't fix itself. It takes intention, training, and the right tools to break free and start building predictable, profitable outcomes. But that's what we're here for.

Chuck Wilson is CEO emeritus at NSCA.



NSCA Resources to Break the Project Doom Cycle

We offer members the resources and training they need to avoid the profit-eroding mistakes of bad estimates, poor management, and compliance oversights.



These courses are designed for new and seasoned project management professionals. They cover everything from job costing and scheduling to team leadership and customer communications, helping build confidence and skills to manage projects successfully.

Labor Installation Standard Guidelines

These guidelines provide benchmarks on labor productivity and precise labor units for different tasks to help accurately estimate and control the largest project cost: labor.

Guide to State Licensing

This resource offers a comprehensive understanding of state-specific licensing, code, and compliance requirements. It explains which licenses are mandatory for different scopes and describes how to apply or renew.

Project Contribution Simulator

This powerful online tool is designed to accurately forecast the financial impact of projects before resources are committed or a proposal is submitted. By inputting job details, labor rates, material costs, and expected overhead, users can instantly see projected margins, break-even points, and financial risks.

XBO Experience

This event for next-gen leaders provides immersive learning, hands-on workshops, and executive mentoring that focuses on leadership development, strategic thinking, and networking, giving rising talent the skills and confidence to manage projects and



By Mark Fenner

The Power of Focus, Finish Lines, and Fun

Three simple ideas to transform your life and work.

What if you could go from stuck to doubling your company's revenue, quadrupling your operating margin, and positioning your business for a premium recap . . . all under four years?

That's exactly what Tim Zacharias and his team at Cougar USA achieved. Based in Houston, Cougar USA designs, installs, and services water control systems for commercial buildings. Its growth journey is a blueprint for what's possible when you master the interplay of three elements: focus, finish lines, and fun.

1 Focus: The Unifying Force of an Aligned Team

One of the pivotal decisions that ignited Cougar USA's accelerated growth was a deliberate shift in focus. The company moved beyond the conventional pursuit of top-line revenue, elevating gross profit dollars as the ultimate non-negotiable KPI. This was a profound strategic realignment that provided the entire organization with an undeniably clear and measurable definition of true success.

Many mid-market companies often default to metrics like revenue or bookings. While these can offer some utility, they frequently fall short of reflecting the authentic drivers of sustainable, truly profitable growth. Cougar USA recognized that its success wasn't merely about the volume they sold but the value they retained. By elevating gross profit dollars as the metric that mattered most, it galvanized sales, operations, and leadership teams around a singular, common objective that directly amplified the bottom line.

Of course, gross profit dollars may not be the right KPI for every organization. In some cases, contribution margin, EBITDA, or operating cash flow may better reflect the company's economic engine. For others, the focus may be on a leading indicator that drives future profitable revenue.

RISE has empowered dozens of leadership teams to precisely identify and align around the right KPI: the one metric that cuts through complexity, eliminates ambiguity, and unequivocally defines what "winning" looks like for their unique business. The most successful companies define performance with precision. The right KPI is a powerful rallying point that sharpens collective focus, profoundly shapes behavior, and unites the entire team behind a shared, compelling goal.

2 Finish Lines: Turning Goals into Momentum

Each year, Cougar USA's leadership team sets a bold annual target and breaks it down into clear quarterly and monthly milestones. These finish lines became powerful rally points that energized the entire team. Every month and every quarter transformed into a thrilling opportunity to compete, win decisively, and reset with renewed purpose.

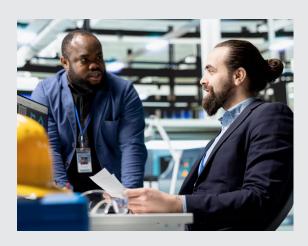
This rhythm cultivated urgency without chaos. It empowered the team to maintain laser-sharp focus on near-term execution while steadfastly keeping their long-term aspirations firmly in sight. More importantly, it established an unbreakable culture of accountability and celebration. When teams see progress in real-time and know exactly what it takes to win, performance accelerates. RISE has seen this structure transform organizations. When the finish line is clear, the path becomes a lot more powerful.

3 Fun: Creating a Culture Worth Winning In

At Cougar USA, fun is a strategic tool for robust culture building and sustained amplification of performance. With optimal KPIs firmly established and clear finish lines guiding execution, the leadership team ensured that progress was celebrated in meaningful and memorable ways.

Each year culminates in "Catch the Bus," an all-team celebration where employees board a charter bus destined for Lake Charles, LA, for a weekend of connection, recognition, and well-earned fun. It's a powerful signal that the company values its people and the journey they're on together. In addition to the annual trip, the team also holds quarterly celebrations, such as go-kart racing, Top Golf, or bowling. These smaller milestones keep morale high and momentum strong throughout the year.

Too often, growing companies push hard without pausing to recognize the wins. Cougar USA proves that you can drive serious results and have a great time doing it. RISE has seen that, when fun is woven into the fabric of company culture, it energizes teams, strengthens loyalty, and turns ambitious goals into shared victories.



Lead with Clarity, Win with Intention

Cougar USA's story is a powerful reminder that scaling a business demands working smarter. By investing time to strategically align around the right KPIs, breaking big goals into beatable milestones, and celebrating the journey along the way, it created a culture of performance that delivers results year after year.

RISE believes that every growth-minded company can harness this same formula:

- Focus gives your team clarity
- Finish lines build momentum
- Fun sustains energy and culture

When you bring all three together, you scale with intention.

If you're ready to unlock this kind of clarity and cohesion in your organization, let's talk. The results speak for themselves, and so do the teams that get to truly enjoy the ride.

Mark Fenner is the mastermind behind <u>RISE</u> Performance Group, an NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember. ■







hen it comes to mergers and acquisitions (M&A), commercial integrators have become a focal point for private equity firms. The announcement of one M&A deal often triggers a chain reaction, prompting other business owners to evaluate their company's worth.

As tenured owners explore exit options, they're realizing the potential attractiveness of their successful ventures to investors.

The Driving Forces Behind M&A Activity

Several factors are contributing to the surge in M&A activity within the integration industry:

- The **rapid evolution of technology**, particularly the Internet of Things (IoT) and IP-enabled devices, has created new investment opportunities. The increasing complexity of IT integration requires skills that not all teams possess, leading some companies to merge with others that can fill these gaps.
- As businesses expand, they seek integrators capable of scaling their services beyond local areas. Global customers prefer working with global providers, eliminating the need to engage different integrators for various regions.

The Importance of Business Valuation

Over the past decade, the buying-and-selling frenzy has underscored the importance of business valuation. M&A activity acts as a catalyst, prompting owners to closely evaluate their businesses, regardless of their interest in a deal.

Buyers are particularly focused on risk, and one of the critical factors they consider is recurring monthly revenue (RMR).

RMR: A Critical Piece of Business Valuation

Recurring revenue has long influenced business value, but the rise of the as-a-service business model has cemented its importance. Every integration deal represented by Kelly Bond, a partner at Davis Mergers and Acquisitions Group, includes an element of RMR. Investors consistently favor deals with RMR components, as they provide a predictable and stable revenue stream.

Buyers evaluate several factors when considering RMR capabilities, including:

- Revenue mix
- Inventory levels
- Business mix
- Existing contracts
- Client base
- Types of projects
- Employee skills
- Sales approach

RMR minimizes risk for owners and investors by providing stable cash flow, creating customer stickiness, making upselling easier, and enabling accurate forecasting.

Different Buyers Value Different Forms of RMR

Not all recurring revenue is created equal. Different buyers value various forms of RMR differently, such as:

- Standard managed services contracts
- Monthly service contracts
- Pass-through licensing arrangements
- Staff augmentation

The sustainability and renewal of these revenue streams are crucial considerations for all buyers.

RMR-Based Business Valued at 8x to 10x Earnings

The valuation of a business with RMR is significantly higher than that of a project-based business. Investors typically value RMR-based businesses at eight to 10 times earnings, compared to three to four times earnings for project-based businesses.

This substantial difference highlights the importance of incorporating RMR into a company's revenue model.

Always Look Through the Lens of an Investor

Building business value is critical, regardless of when or why you plan to sell your business. Investors value recurring revenue for its stability and predictability. By focusing on growing and building business value, you can make better business decisions and foster a culture of teamwork and collaboration.

Prepare for Your Company's Future Now

Even if you have no immediate plans to sell, there are steps you can take to prepare for the future. Verify your entity type, track EBITDA and P&L, and assess where you are and where you need to go. Understanding how RMR affects business value can help you make informed investment decisions and drive maximum value from your business.

For a more detailed exploration of these concepts, refer to the full whitepaper available on our website: <u>Beyond One-Time Deals: Why RMR Matters for Business Valuation</u>.

Jon Ray is the chief revenue officer at NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember Revenueify. ■



5 Quick Tips to Get Started with RMR

1. Invest in RMR for the right reasons:

Create an RMR program because your clients want and value the services, not just to increase business valuation.

2. Don't go too far off course:

Ensure that the RMR component complements your existing work.

3. Set up contracts the right way:

Clearly detail what your customer receives and involve an attorney in contract development.

4. Prepare your sales team for the change:

Equip your sales team with the skills and mindset needed for selling managed services.

5. Find a trusted RMR partner:

Work with a subscription solution specialist to provide monthly payment options while generating immediate revenue.



PARTNER CONTENT

By Jeff Bronswick

Building Better Budgets Starts with the Right Support

Together, a CPA and fractional CFO can help you build a realistic, informed budget that aligns with your operational strategy and identifies risks before they become problems.



As a result, it's often deemed one of those "important but not urgent" tasks that gets pushed aside until it's too late to course-correct without disruption.

This leaves many integration firms rushing to cobble together an annual budget in late January (or operating with no budget in place at all, which is even worse).

We've seen the difference that intentional, strategic budgeting can make, which is why it's time for integrators to stop doing it alone.

The Case for a Smarter, Collaborative Budgeting Approach

A budget is your roadmap for revenue goals, cash-flow projections, hiring plans, and profitability. But, too often, budgets fall flat. They're either overly optimistic or disconnected from the day-to-day financial realities of your business.

In many cases, the people creating the budget are simply too close to it. It's hard to challenge your own assumptions or identify blind spots when you're knee-deep in the business every day.

But that's where your CPA comes in.

A CPA brings something to the table that you and your internal team may lack: **an objective, informed perspective**. A CPA can help you ask better questions, like whether your budget accounts for rising healthcare costs, or how and when your cash flow will be impacted by hiring additional employees.



Many integrators with fractional CFOs in place believe they're already covered when it comes to financial leadership. But CPAs and fractional CFOs are not the same thing. You don't need to choose between them. In fact, they often work best as a team.

While a CPA focuses on historical accuracy, tax compliance, and financial reporting, a fractional CFO looks forward, helping you interpret those numbers, model future scenarios, and align financial strategy with business goals. They can dig into the numbers with your CPA, but they also help you answer questions like:

- Are your margins improving across project types?
- Is it time to restructure how you bill clients or manage receivables?
- Are you building reserves to match your future goals?

Some CPA firms, including us, offer fractional CFO services. Others coordinate with an external fractional CFO to guide budget creation, financial forecasting, and ongoing decision-making. In either case, fractional CFOs should work *with* your CPA, not in place of them.

Together, they can help you build a realistic, informed budget that aligns with your operational strategy and identifies risks before they become problems.

Budgeting Is Too Important to Wing It

A well-structured budget is flexible and forward-thinking, giving you room to adjust based on market conditions while setting a baseline for measuring progress and making decisions.

If your strategic plan is your roadmap, then your budget is your compass. It tells you whether you're on track, and what it will take to reach your destination.

When you involve your CPA and fractional CFO early in the budgeting process, you're more likely to:

- Spot cash-flow gaps before they create problems
- Identify realistic growth targets
- Understand how tax changes and regulatory updates could impact your bottom line
- Stay accountable to strategic initiatives

In fact, the most successful NSCA integrators take budgeting just as seriously as client proposals or sales forecasts.

The Cost of Not Doing It Right

If you're worried about the time or expense of involving a CPA or fractional CFO in your budgeting process, consider the cost of not doing it at all.

Inaccurate or rushed budgets can lead to:

- Poor hiring decisions
- Mispriced projects
- Missed revenue opportunities
- Short-term decisions that hurt long-term growth
- Cash-flow problems

As we like to put it, the real cost of accounting can be found in the damage caused by financial missteps that could've been prevented with better information.

Fractional CFO services give you access to smart, strategic guidance without adding a full-time salary to your books. And, by partnering with your CPA, you get a complete financial picture of the past, present, and future.

Budget Smarter with Help from Experts Who Know the Industry

Budgeting doesn't need to be overwhelming. With the right partners, it can become one of the most strategic, high impact processes your business completes each year.

If you've struggled with budgeting in the past (or you've outgrown the DIY approach), it's time to consider support tailored to your size, industry, and goals.

We specialize in working with integration firms like yours, offering fractional CFO services, budgeting guidance, cash-flow forecasting, KPIs, variance analysis, and more—all without the overhead of hiring a full-time financial executive.

Our customized accounting solutions are built to evolve with your business, whether you're growing, scaling, or stabilizing. From day-to-day operations to big-picture financial strategy, Bronswick Benjamin's team acts as an extension of your business, helping you make confident, data-informed decisions.

We can start with a no-cost assessment to evaluate where your financial processes stand and how they could be improved.

Jeff Bronswick is the CEO at NSCA Member Advisory Councilmember Bronswick Benjamin. ■

Disclaimer: The information contained in this article is intended solely to provide general guidance on matters of interest for the personal use of the reader, who accepts full responsibility for its use. In no event will NSCA, Bronswick Benjamin, or their partners, employees, or agents be liable to you or anyone else for any decision made or action taken in reliance on the information in this article or for any consequential, special, or similar damages, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.



By Mike Castiglione

Meet the Integrator Built for Tomorrow

As the landscape continues to shift, there are two mindsets you can adopt: one of threat, or one of opportunity. Which will you choose?

o understand where our industry is headed, it helps to remember where we started.

Historically, systems integrators were technical experts: firms that installed and connected devices. In many ways, their value was rooted in hands-on knowledge and specialization in specific technologies (AV, physical security, low-voltage wiring, nurse call systems, etc.). Clients typically engaged these domain experts to install and maintain disparate systems across localized footprints.

But the landscape as we know it has shifted. Today's clients operate across geographies and are governed by IT departments. This change has fueled:

- Supplier and integrator consolidation
- The convergence of IP-based systems
- A rising expectation for interoperability

At the same time, rapid technological advancement, growing cybersecurity requirements, and the rise of AI are pulling the evolution of integration firms at a plastering pace.

Change may be uncomfortable, but it's inevitable. As with any disrupted industry, there are two mindsets you can adopt: one of threat, or one of opportunity. Successful next-generation integrators will embrace opportunity and capitalize on the shift by focusing on five key areas.

1. Taking a Posture of Readiness

Success isn't about perfectly forecasting the next big thing but about building the capability to respond rapidly when it arrives. This means creating flexible systems, developing scalable teams, and fostering a culture that can adapt quickly. The next-generation integrator is built for resilience and thrives on change.

2. Curator Over Systems Expert

The next-generation integrator must shift from being a narrowly focused technical expert to a curator of business-aligned solutions. Clients are looking for integrated outcomes, not point solutions.

This requires:

- A deep understanding of business goals
- The ability to orchestrate across vendors and technologies
- The judgment to recommend scalable, cross-disciplinary solutions

Success depends on evolving into a master systems integrator: one that's fluent in many technologies and focused on how those technologies work together.

3. Service-Led, Not Product-Led

Today's IT-centric buyers are focused on lifecycle value. They're buying outcomes and services. Clients expect managed services, proactive lifecycle support, and advisory capabilities that prevent obsolescence and ensure performance. Technologies once seen as "set and forget" are now mission-critical, and uptime is paramount. This shift opens the door to recurring revenue through managed services across formerly static technology categories.

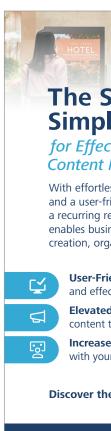
4. Mindset Shift: Partnership Over Independence

The days of doing it all yourself may be over. Clients expect bundled, multi-technology solutions across regions. That may mean partnering with other firms for geographic coverage or complementary capabilities. Knowing when to partner, build internally, or acquire is more important than ever. Strategic collaboration will be essential to meet the pace of change and client demand.

5. Navigating Licensing and Regulatory Shifts

Licensing requirements in security, life safety, low voltage, and electrical systems have grown significantly. These evolving regulations protect clients and raise the bar for providers. Compliance can be a competitive differentiator. Firms that get this right will be better positioned to lead in a complex, regulated environment.

Mike Castiglione is the president and COO at <u>Automated Systems</u> Design (ASD). He is a chair of NSCA's Emerging Technologies Committee.



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Meet Shedan Maghzi, NSCA Treasurer

We met up with Shedan Maghzi, NSCA treasurer and corporate strategic advisor at Avidex, to ask him a few questions.



Can you describe the most rewarding parts of your role at Avidex?

A: I used to be in an executive leadership position, and it was a challenge to do the day-to-day, tactical things plus our strategic planning and making sure we weren't launching and then later abandoning key initiatives. I always thought, "Wouldn't it be cool if I had someone who could focus on that work all the time?" Now. that's what I do, and I love it. It's similar to the mission of NSCA: making our people, our processes, and our technologies better. I don't decide what initiatives and strategic imperatives I work on; I take on an advisory role when they're being developed. One of the initiatives we came up with is about developing next-generation leadership. We identify high-potential people who don't have the experience yet, or their jobs don't allow them to do certain things. We give them stretch assignments and projects that are important to the company and eventually implement them. Obviously, part of that program includes making sure they go to NSCA's Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience event.

What are the biggest opportunities that Avidex and the industry face?

A: Leveraging the power of AI, both internally and customer-facing.

How can we take our data, summarize it, and put it into a visual format so it can be consumed? Managed services practice is also a big opportunity. It's like getting up every morning and brushing your teeth: It's something you've got to do, and you've got to do it well. After you build that managed services practice, you have to continue to improve it, polish it, and make it better.

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

A: We are at the peak of Baby Boomer retirements. Identifying engineers, technicians, managers, and salespeople, to backfill and replace the very talented folks who have been in the industry for many decades is a challenge. Once you bring in new talent, retention is key. We're committed to investing in the young talent that comes into our company. If you feel invested in, then you're going to give it your all. They get excited about the company, because it's excited about them.

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

A: NSCA helps us make our business better. You have to have some humility and openness to recognize that you're not perfect, and that you can learn from an organization that shares and cross-pollinates at the Business & Leadership Conference and the XBO Experience event. We love the learning, networking, and cross-pollination of ideas that those events provide. NSCA is also the only organization that has a major focus on legislation and coordinating other organizations to help with the state and federal legislative activity. And, of course, we all enjoy reading Integrate!

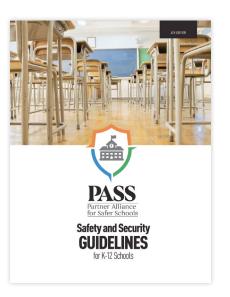
What's a fun fact that most NSCA members don't know about you?

A: Videography ignited my interest in AV. By the time I was 13, I had a black-and-white turret camera I wanted to tear apart to see how it worked. When I got into college, I studied broadcast electronic arts and minored in electronics. It's been almost 50 years since I started in the AV industry. I still love what I do, even though it changes all the time.



Elevate School Security Strategy with the Latest PASS Guidelines

While many aspects of the PASS Guidelines remain consistent, several updates have been made to address current threats and modernize approaches.



S chool districts nationwide are grappling with uncertainty when it comes to how to protect students and staff.

Integrators must be ready to step in as trusted advisors who are capable of guiding schools through complex physical and digital threats ... especially when they have the most recent version of the Partner Alliance for Safer Schools (PASS) Safety and Security Guidelines to inform their recommendations and solutions.

This summer, the guidelines were updated once again, and Version 7 is now the most recent standard. One of the things that makes this edition stand apart is its recognition that today's schools exist in two overlapping worlds: the physical and the digital. It gives school security leaders a framework to navigate these converging challenges.

A Shared Standard for Safer Schools

Threats facing K-12 schools are not only increasing but diversifying. As physical safety remains critical, vulnerabilities stretch into areas like network security, connected devices, and identity management. PASS Version 7 merges lessons learned from recent incidents with proactive planning for risks that are on the horizon.

It also establishes a shared language and credible, product-neutral standard to guide recommendations to rally around. This enables you to position your company as as strategic advisor on comprehensive safety when you're working with school leaders, public safety officials, and community stakeholders.

Critical Changes in Version 7 of the PASS Guidelines

While many aspects of the PASS Guidelines remain consistent, such as the emphasis on layered protection, several updates have been made to address current threats and modernize approaches. A **new Digital Infrastructure layer** recognizes the convergence of physical security and cybersecurity and calls attention to data protection, system monitoring, device management, and secure remote access.

Consolidated campus perimeter guidance merges the site perimeter and parking lot guidelines into a single, coordinated approach to control entry, vehicle flow, and outdoor surveillance.

Refined visitor management protocols expand beyond simple check-in requirements to consider movement patterns, technology integration, and human interaction points.

Expanded guidance on facility hardening and emergency systems with deep, practical direction on strengthening physical protections and life-safety systems. This includes best practices for doors, locks, glazing, and wall reinforcements; updated recommendations for panic alarm systems; and requirements for door hardware.

Your Evolving Mission in School Security

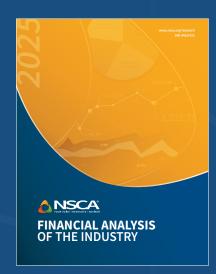
By following PASS's updated framework, you can:

- Build consensus among administrators, teachers, and safety officers
- Help physical and digital security measures work together for stronger, more resilient systems
- Help districts plan phased improvements that fit their budgets and timelines

Using this resource gives you an opportunity to elevate your role from technical vendor to trusted partner, guiding the long-term strategy for keeping students, staff, and the learning environment secure.

Download the Guidelines





NSCA's updated Financial Analysis of the Industry (FAI) report offers you an inside look at where your company stands when it comes to industry benchmarks like:

- Profitability
- Operational efficiency
- Revenue mix
- Staff productivity and utilization
- Overhead and administrative expense ratios

Even more importantly, with these data-driven insights in hand, you can decide what steps to take next.

Download Report

Key Takeaways from Our Financial Analysis of the Industry Report

An updated guide to help you understand market trends, margin pressures, and growth opportunities.

What Can You Do with the Data?

- **Set Actionable KPIs:** Compare metrics like revenue per employee, gross margin, and profit to industry benchmarks to set meaningful improvement goals and track the impact of changes over time.
- Tune Sales and Pricing Strategies: Analyze the shift toward negotiated/direct sales to shape your business development and client engagement plans.
- Spot and Fix Inefficiencies: Use segmented data on labor costs, expense ratios, and job review habits to flag weaknesses, and then revamp scheduling, cut overtime, and tighten project management for stronger margins.
- **Guide Workforce Planning:** Translate trends in staffing patterns, remote/hybrid models, and compensation to align hiring, retention, and benefits policies with industry best practices.
- Monitor Financial Health: Track critical ratios, like liquidity, profitability, and working capital, to see how your company stacks up against peers by size, region, and business model.

Here's just a glimpse of the data included in the report...

Competitive Bid vs Negotiated/Direct Sales

% of total company revenue dedicated to competitive bid projects vs. negotiated/direct sales indicates a shift toward relationship-driven sales strategies

	2023	2025
Competitive Bid Projects	30.5%	30.5%
Negotiated/Direct Sales	69.5%	71.9%

Median Gross Profit Margins

Gross profit margins are on the rise, signaling better cost control and pricing across the industry

	cost control and pricing across the maustry		
2025			
34.2%			

Median Days Sales Outstanding

Integrators are now collecting payments faster, reflecting stronger receivables management and healthier cash flow

2023	2025
59 days	46 days

Managed Services Percent of Revenue

Growth in recurring revenue indicates a dramatic move toward contract-based revenue streams, especially for smaller companies

2023	2025
1.4%	47.5%



Business Intelligence You Can Use, Straight from Economic Experts

Get industry-specific economic insights and action steps delivered right to your inbox.

f you want early-warning business intelligence and practical economic guidance, then your go-to experts are Dr. Chris Kuehl and Keith Prather.

Hundreds of integrators have heard from these two leading economic analysts directly over the past several months as they keep NSCA members updated on economic trends, sector volatility, and emerging threats.

But did you know you can connect with them beyond the webinars and live presentations offered by NSCA?

You can receive their insights and intelligence reports in your inbox. These reports are full of tangible, actionable observations you can apply to your business strategy.

Here are a few examples of what's included inside these intelligence highlights, pulled from recent reports sent to NSCA members.

1. Supply Chain Costs Are Rising

Global supply chain costs are projected to increase by as much as 7% above inflation through Q4 2025, far higher than last year's 2% rate. This means integrators can expect continued margin pressure and must intensify cost control and contract management in upcoming bids.

2. Seasonal Demand Requires Action

The fall peak shipping window is crucial; missing sailings in September and October will prevent goods from reaching shelves in time. Integrators supporting retail, logistics, or tech rollouts should prioritize projects now to avoid delays.

3. Cyber Threats Are Escalating

Ransomware activity is surging, fueled by new attacker groups and the fragmentation of others. Attacks via platforms like Microsoft Teams, evolving phishing strategies, and malware targeting mobile banking apps and PDFs are increasingly sophisticated and frequent. Cyber resilience is a must for all integrators, with an emphasis on rehearsing incident response plans and reviewing cyber insurance policies.

4. Labor Market Weaknesses

U.S. payrolls may have been overstated for the previous 12 months, with a recent revision suggesting nearly a million fewer jobs. This could potentially impact project demand and hiring plans for integrators. ■



Dr. Chris Kuehl



Keith Prather



Stay Ahead of Market Shifts

Want direct access to intel like this? Sign up for ARMADA Intelligence reports and get industry-specific economic insights and action steps delivered right to your inbox to safeguard projects, spot risks early, and stay ahead in a changing market.

Every week, you'll receive:

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

Your subscription also puts you in direct contact with these experts, so you can contact them at any time to ask questions, share concerns, or offer your comments and feedback.

Sign Up Now





SIMPRO

Q&A with Field Marketing

Manager Tony Venturella

www.simprogroup.com

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

A: We focus specifically on the workflows of AV and security integrators—everything from multi-site project delivery to service/ MAC work and RMR. Our platform connects sales, projects, field service, inventory, and invoicing so integrators can manage projects and service in one place. Just as important, we pair the software with hands-on change management and training so crews in the field actually adopt it and see the value fast.

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

A: NSCA gives us direct access to the integrator community: peer insights, education, and research on business/market trends. We use that input to validate our roadmap, create best-practice content for members, and make sure our integrations and workflows reflect how NSCA firms really operate.

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

A: It keeps us grounded in the needs of the industry we serve.

Membership builds credibility, accelerates learning across firms, and creates a feedback loop so we solve real operational problems (labor constraints, margin pressure, change orders, service profitability) rather than building features in a vacuum.

Why are your employees proud to be part of yourorganization?

A: Because our work measurably helps contractors run stronger businesses. Teams love hearing customers say things like:

- "We invoice faster"
- "The field and office finally see the same data"
- "We're growing without adding admin"

That real-world impact—and our customer-first culture—are big pride points.

SIMPRO

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

A: Customer-in, not feature-out. We prioritize work that moves the needle on profitability (quoting accuracy, scheduling/dispatch efficiency, inventory control, and service renewal workflows). We also invest in secure, open integrations so firms can connect accounting, design tools, and monitoring platforms without duct tape.

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

A: There are four we focus on.

- Al-assisted operations (quoting, scheduling, and service recommendations). We're building guided workflows that reduce admin and help leaders make faster decisions.
- **Service & RMR growth.** We're enhancing contract management, renewals, and automated billing to help firms scale recurring revenue.
- Convergence & interoperability across AV, IT, and security.

 We're expanding integrations/APIs so data flows cleanly between field, office, and customer systems.
- **Labor constraints.** We're doubling down on mobile usability and training so techs are productive from Day One.

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

A: We have three main priorities:

- **Deeper analytics and job profitability** insights for project and service leaders.
- **Al-powered assistance** across estimating, scheduling, and invoicing.
- More out-of-the-box integrations and implementation accelerators tailored to AV and security integrators so members can realize value faster and grow RMR with less friction.



Opening Doors for New Leaders:

How the Randy Vaughan Founder's Award Came to Be

For many integration firm leaders, the **NSCA Business & Leadership Conference (BLC)** is the most impactful professional experience of their careers. They gain insights on leadership, new approaches to strategy, and opportunities for collaboration.

The Randy Vaughan Founder's Award, established in 2009, **gives first-time BLC attendees the opportunity to participate at no cost,** exposing them to the skills and connections they need to help build strong companies.



To learn more about how the Randy Vaughan Founder's Award came to be, we sat down with NSCA CEO Emeritus Chuck Wilson.

For people who never had the chance to meet him, who was Randy Vaughan?

A: Randy was someone everyone loved. He owned Ambassador Enterprises, a systems integration company in Portsmouth, VA. He was also a teacher, mentor, and volunteer. He served on the NSCA Board of Directors from 1997 to 2008, including two years as president. He also chaired our Education Committee at one point.

He had a natural way of bringing people together. He was a great leader, a good person, and a good friend. His heart was always in the right place.

• Where did the idea for NSCA's Business & Leadership Conference come from?

A: It started with a conversation that Randy and I had years ago, in the late 1990s. We were talking about the state of the industry at the time. Most of us came from very technical backgrounds: We were audio engineers and system designers, and we knew installation like the back of our hands. What we didn't have were business skills.

Randy and I both recognized that there were integrators that wanted to start their own companies but wouldn't know how to run them. It's one thing to be an excellent engineer, but it's another to lead a team, manage finances, build processes, and steer long-term growth.

That conversation is what led to what's now known as the Business & Leadership Conference. We wanted to create a place where people could come together to become better business leaders.

What role did Randy Vaughan play in the early days of BLC?

A: He was at that very first event. He was our industry's ambassador in every sense of the word. As we put together the content, Randy pushed us to think about education differently. We started to develop integrators as leaders, not just technicians.

He believed in teaching critical skills that weren't naturally part of industry's DNA, like managing employees, creating organizational structures, and building financial acumen.

Randy passed away suddenly in 2008, which was heartbreaking for all of us. Before that, he saw the conference evolve from a simple business workshop held in the fall into the event people know today.

As the conference grew and gained recognition, we had to shift schedules to accommodate other shows, like InfoComm and CEDIA. That's when we landed on late February for BLC, and it became a tradition. He would be proud of how it has grown.

What is the significance of the Randy Vaughan Founder's Award?

A: This award is our way of not only honoring Randy's legacy but also ensuring that the next generation gets to experience what he helped inspire.

We didn't want the cost of entry to BLC to be a barrier that stopped promising leaders from getting the professional and personal growth opportunities that come from this event. It's a way to open the door for people who might otherwise hesitate due to cost. Once they experience it, it often transforms how they lead their companies.



Why is it important for first-time leaders to attend BLC?

A: Leadership is a learned skill. A lot of integrators think, "I'm really good at what I do technically, so I can run a business." But running a business requires a whole different skillset.

At BLC, you're immersed in sessions on strategy, leadership, finance, organizational development, and more. Just as important, you get to network with peers who face the same challenges you do.

For first-time attendees, this is eye-opening. They realize they don't have to figure everything out on their own.

What would Randy say about today's BLC event?

A: I think he'd say, "This is exactly what I envisioned all those years ago." It was his idea to focus on business acumen, not just technical training.

The fact that the conference is still going strong more than 25 years later speaks to the impact of Randy's insight. It's a testament to his heart for the industry.

Carrying the Legacy Forward

Through the Randy Vaughan Founder's Award, NSCA makes sure the spirit of mentorship and leadership that defined Randy's career is passed along to tomorrow's integrators. Every first-time BLC attendee who walks away inspired and equipped to be a better leader is living proof that his vision still matters.

Randy Vaughan was a colleague, friend, teacher, and example. His influence is always in the room, helping shape the leaders who are building the future of the industry and creating pathways to help them succeed.

Business & Leadership CONFERENCE

Apply for the Randy Vaughan Founder's Award Today!

First-time BLC attendees can <u>apply for the Randy Vaughan</u>
<u>Founder's Award here</u>. **Applications are being accepted now through Nov. 7, 2025.**

Applicants must be:

- Currently employed by an industry-recognized commercial integrator
- In a management or decision-making role
- Recommended by the owner or president of the company
- A first-time attendee

Apply Today



"I really appreciate the fact that the NSCA Education Foundation provides scholarship opportunities for leaders who want to better themselves by attending BLC. The Randy Vaughan

Founder's Award has been utilized by many different company leaders in the past, including myself, to accelerate and amplify our leadership abilities."

Matt Thorne, Executive Vice President at ECC



"Programs like the Randy Vaughan Founder's Award have a huge impact on future leaders—myself included. I'm probably in the position I'm in today because of that scholarship and the

opportunities it created for me when I was working for a commercial integrator. That first BLC, and the way NSCA engaged with me after, truly changed my life."

Tyler Ebnet, Founder and Principal Consultant at Revenueify



Extron





UCS 504 Four Input 4K/60 Collaboration Switcher and Scaling Receiver Kit

The UCS 504 is a 4K collaboration switcher and receiver kit that combines AV and USB switching with twisted pair signal extension. The transmitter supports USB-C and dual HDMI with USB inputs for BYOM laptops. The scaling receiver provides an additional HDMI with USB input for a dedicated UC computer and an HDMI output to the room display. Six USB device connections support cameras or mics up to USB 10Gbps and HDMI outputs enable resolutions up to 4K/60. The system supports auto-switching and automation capabilities including CEC, RS-232, or IR control to a display. The compact half-rack width transmitter can mount under a table while the 1" (2.5 cm) high receiver easily mounts behind a display. The UCS 504 makes it easy to integrate AV sources and USB cameras for Teams[®] and Zoom[™] meetings into conference and collaboration spaces.

With USB cameras, microphones, and other peripheral devices becoming more common in small meeting spaces, the ability to connect users' laptops to these devices has become critical to a successful meeting experience. The UCS 504 supports switching up to six USB room devices, one that supports rates up to USB 10Gbps while providing 5V, 900 mA power, and five that support rates up to High Speed (USB 2) while providing 5V, 500 mA power per port. Integrating traditional AV display switching with USB peripheral device switching in one unit takes collaboration between local and remote users to a new level.

Learn More



AtlasIED

AtlasIED is proud to announce that our Vice President of IP Endpoint Technology, Alex Puorro, has been named a 2025 Security Business Innovator. This prestigious recognition celebrates individuals advancing the security industry through vision, action, and leadership.

Alex's recent work leading the School Safety Lab at Wichita State University exemplifies the innovative mission this award recognizes. By collaborating with top partners in security and communications, Alex has helped create a hands-on learning environment where students can explore and tackle real-world challenges related to safety and security.

Under his leadership, AtlasIED contributed <u>advanced IP</u> <u>endpoint solutions</u> to the lab's infrastructure. More importantly, Alex acted as a connector, bringing together industry stakeholders, supporting integration efforts, and mentoring students as they translated technology into meaningful safety outcomes. The initiative fosters a new generation of critical thinkers who are validating real-time solutions for campus safety, emergency response, and systems integration.

Learn More

Liberty

Multiscreen BYOM Simplified

An industry first, the Liberty TeamUp+TU-DS42U3-H3 brings personal workstation simplicity to larger meeting and learning environments. This table-side switcher/extender enables multiscreen BYOM presentations over a single USB-C connection—delivering video, audio, USB 3.2, Ethernet, and 60W charging, all while extending signals up to 100 meters. No converters, no proprietary cables. With dual USB-C inputs, built-in Dante audio, auto USB host switching, and support for DP-MST and DisplayLink, it's the ultimate BYOM experience for hybrid-ready spaces.

Learn More

HP Poly

Turn any small room into an Al-driven AV experience with the Poly Studio V12 USB video bar.

The HP Poly Studio V12

The Poly Studio V12 USB video bar has you covered for successful conferencing in any small room. Users will feel empowered when walking into BYOD rooms with superior Al-driven AV capabilities, simple deployment and centralized management.

A smarter way to collaborate

Equip your small meeting spaces with a USB video bar boasting camera and audio technology that ensures smoother hybrid meetings.

Small room, simple setup

The V12 is compatible with leading platforms and comes with built-in speakers, microphone, and camera.

Built for a better tomorrow

Containing at least 65% recycled plastics1 and with recycled packaging2, these USB video bars enable more impactful meetings with less impact on the planet.

Learn More

Niveo Professional

Looking for a reliable switch manufacturer that stays consistent during uncertain times—no surprise price hikes, no chip shortages, and full transparency around tariffs?

Look no further. The Niveo Professional team, led by David Stephens, is here to support you now and into the future.

- 954-261-6582
- david@niveopro.com

Let us know how we can help your business thrive.

Learn More



At IntelliSee, we leverage Al-powered video analytics to turn any camera into a 24/7 safety sentinel. Through our new partnership with RapidSOS, verified emergency call data integrates directly into our alerts—so security teams and first responders act faster and smarter.

We've relaunched our monthly webinar series, open to all! Join live demos, expert panels, and Q&A sessions to see our tech in action and earn industry credits. Sign up anytime and invite your network.

- **Gun detection:** Spot concealed weapons in seconds to neutralize threats.
- Slip-risk: Flag slippery surfaces early, cutting falls and liability
- Fallen-person: Send instant medical alerts to reduce injury severity
- **Perimeter control:** Secure boundaries 24/7 and block intruders.
- **Loitering identification:** Detect suspicious gatherings before incidents.
- **Vehicle movement:** Optimize traffic flow and enforce access rules
- **No-person-present:** Confirm empty zones to save energy and ensure safety.

Coming soon: fire and smoke detection for earliest hazard warnings, plus cell-phone and backpack recognition to tighten access control.

We've grown our nationwide sales team; more regional experts are ready to tailor, install, and support your IntelliSee solution. And our Competitor Buy-Back Program offers credit for servers or units from other vendors to lower upgrade costs and accelerate ROI.

Discover how IntelliSee and RapidSOS keep people safe, assets protected, and operations smooth.

Learn More





XTEN-AV

XTEN-ΔV[®]

Meet XAVIA - Your AI Agent for AV Design, Sales and Project Management

XTEN-AV's XAVIA is **the first-ever AI agent for AV**. It automates your AV workflow, from designs, BOMs, proposals, and reports to post-sales project management tasks, **through simple voice or chat commands**.

You can just simply **ask XAVIA to create a system design, generate documents, or create tasks, and it delivers in seconds**. Best of all, you can train XAVIA on your preferences, products, and workflows, making it smarter and more efficient for your team every day.

Discover how to put XAVIA to work for you with a free trial!

Learn More

Sharp

Sharp's commitment to delivering innovative, highperformance display solutions was on full display at InfoComm 2025. We invited customers and partners to explore our expanded lineup, featuring next-generation large format displays, projectors, collaboration tools, and dvLED innovations.

Sharp proudly brought home 5 major awards, recognizing innovation and outstanding performance:

- Readers' Choice Award Favorite New Digital Signage
 Product: All-in-One dvLED
- Projector Central Best of Show XP-P721Q-W Projector
- Higher Ed AV Awards University of Virginia McIntire Case Study
- Commercial Integrator BEST Award PN-LM Series
- Future's Tech & Learning Best of Show PN-LM Series

Discover how our interactive technologies are pushing boundaries and shaping the future of visual communication.

Learn More

Lencore

In a new podcast with *Commercial Integrator*, Frank McCormack, Lencore's VP of Sales, explores why acoustics deserve a front-row seat in architectural design. The discussion breaks down the ABCs of acoustics—Absorption, Blocking, and Coverage—and emphasizes how sound masking offers a costeffective, transformative solution for today's open, hybrid, and acoustically challenging spaces. From addressing noise issues caused by modern building materials like glass and concrete to adapting to fluctuating occupancy levels, McCormack makes the case for integrating acoustics early. Whether you're designing for offices, healthcare, or government, sound masking can enhance comfort and productivity.

Learn More



Axis Communications recognized for outstanding audio innovations

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

These innovative network audio solutions have been recognized with multiple awards at InfoComm 2025 and in Campus Security Today's Secure Campus Awards. The accolades underscore our commitment to delivering cutting-edge technology that enhances communication and security across various industries.

AXIS C17 Network Display Speaker Series received an InfoComm Best of Show 2025 by AV Technology. The C17 Series provides clear, intelligible audio and visual messaging, ideal for a range of applications, from emergency notifications to everyday communications.

AXIS C1710 Network Display Speaker has been recognized with the 2025 Secure Campus Award for Best Communications Device by Campus Security Today. AXIS C1710 is an all-in-one solution combining high-quality audio with bright, clear text and light display, ensuring critical messages are heard and seen.

AXIS C1720 Network Display Speaker received the 2025 InfoComm BEST Award for Best AV Product for Hospitality or Education from rAVe Pubs. AXIS C1720 combines high-quality audio with vibrant text and light display, ideal for delivering clear, impactful messages in a variety of settings.

AXIS D4200-VE Network Strobe Speaker has been named the Best Mass Communication/Mass Notification Product in Commercial Integrator's BEST of InfoComm 2025 Awards. AXIS D4200-VE is designed to ensure critical messages reach intended audiences, even in challenging environments. Advanced audio capabilities and integrated strobe light make it a powerful tool for integration in mass notification systems.

For more information about these award-winning products, visit our <u>website</u> or contact our sales team at 800-444-2947.

Learn More



Bose Professional

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

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

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

Learn More

Christie

Big on impact. Built for security. Introducing Secure Series III LCD panels.

Our Secure Series III is our most advanced large-format LCD panels yet. Engineered for TAA and NDAA compliance, these 4K UHD displays are purpose-built for control rooms, situation rooms, training centers, and mobile command units where 24/7 performance is mission-critical.

Available in 55", 65", 75", 86", and 98" models, Secure Series III is available to order now in the U.S., exclusively through Almo Pro AV, with products shipping as early as September 2025.

Ready to elevate your secure display strategy?

Learn More





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

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

Why OSDP?

OSDP provides:

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

Built on RS-485 Infrastructure

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

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

Learn More



TD SYNNEX

Join us for the TD SYNNEX VisualSolv ExecConnect on December 9-11, 2025, at the New York Hilton Midtown. This exclusive event offers networking with industry experts and top vendors, enhancing your leadership skills through curated sessions. Attendees will enjoy an unforgettable experience, including a ticket to see the Rockettes! A special keynote by a certified StoryBrand facilitator will provide actionable strategies based on Donald Miller's framework. Each attendee may bring one guest to share in this enriching opportunity. Don't miss this chance to connect with TD SYNNEX leadership and fellow executives in New York City!

Learn More

Jeron

All Jeron systems are proudly designed, manufactured, and assembled in the USA with 97% of all components sourced in the U.S.

One of Jeron's recent enhancements to Provider® nurse call and workflow solutions is the Touchscreen Graphic Annunciator that gives mobile staff at-a-glance views of active patient calls, staff emergencies, rounding reminders, and expired workflows. The Annunciators are wall-mounted in key staff areas such as hallway intersections, lounges, and utility rooms.

Provider nurse call and workflow solutions offer the most flexible alerting and notifications of any system on the market today.

Learn More

Solutions360

Simplifying Complexity for Technology Integrators

At Solutions 360, we're helping integrators take control of their business by unifying operations under one purpose-built ERP platform: Q360. From project estimating to resource management, job costing to invoicing, Q360 connects every department and function into one seamless system - eliminating silos, improving decision-making, and boosting profitability.

Lately, we've been focused on helping integrators master the natural ebbs and flows of the business cycle. Through strategic content like our "ClearTalk" Podcast and ongoing educational resources, we're sharing insights on when to throttle up, when to throttle down, and how to stay financially resilient no matter the season.

We're also digging deeper into the operational challenges integrators face—like misalignment between technical readiness and user adoption—and providing tools and strategies to overcome them. With decades of experience working exclusively with integrators, we understand the pitfalls and the pressure points, and we're here to help businesses grow with confidence.

Whether you're looking to streamline processes, scale operations, or build a more predictable business, Q360 is the foundation you need to run a healthier, more agile integration company.

Learn More

Valcom Signature Signatur

VL550BK-F-FC LED Sign: An LED Sign Built for Instant, Impactful Communication

Enhance your facility's communication capabilities with Valcom's VL550BK-F-FC, a high-performance LED sign with flashers designed to keep your eyes on the messages while delivering crystal-clear audio for both daily and emergency notifications. Whether in a K-12, hospital, or manufacturing setting, the VL550BK-F-FC ensures messages are heard and seen clearly and immediately. Featuring a modern black finish and seven colors, the VL550BK-F-FC blends seamlessly into any setting while providing eye-catching, scrolling LED text for day-to-day and emergency notifications.

The VL550BK-F-FC sets a new standard in design – it's lighter, more colorful, and multilingual. Available in an array of seven colors, including the primary hues and green, cyan, white and magenta. The VL550BK-F-FC fully supports Spanish and other languages and seamlessly accommodates accented characters.

Key Features of the VL550BK-F-FC:

- Full-color LED display for dynamic messaging
- Customizable text
- Seamless integration with Valcom's IP paging systems
- Supports emergency alerts and routine notifications
- Durable design

The VL550BK-F-FC is designed to work in harmony with Valcom's emergency and daily communication platforms, making it an essential addition to any facility focused on real-time, reliable messaging. The VL550BK-F-FC is the latest addition to Valcom's visual alerting devices, delivering full-color, high-visibility messaging for alerts and updates.

Learn More



MANUFACTURER MEMBER UPDATES



The Cleerline Technology Group has introduced a web-based B to B configuration tool to streamline the ordering process for prefabricated fiber patch cables of any length or quantity. Integrators simply select the desired fiber optic cable, connector style, cable length, and any available options from easy drop-down menus to obtain a quote and complete their order. All cables are tested to exceed industry standards prior to shipping.

The Ultimate Fiber Solution for Technology Integrators

Cleerline offers prefabricated patch cables in any length, constructed using their SSF™ or their BendSafe® fibers to significantly improve efficiency on the jobsite. Now integrators can use an intuitive web-based configurator to quickly design, and order fiber patch cables tailored to perfectly suit each project. Choose from multimode or single-mode fiber, add options such as staggered connectors and pull-eyes, making it easier to pull the cables through conduit. Every cable is expertly assembled, polished, and tested to exceed industry standards. Single-ended termination is also available, allowing technicians to snake the unterminated end through constricted spaces, with only one end to terminate on the jobsite. For every network or AV installation, Cleerline makes it easier than ever to get the job done right.

Learn More



Sony

Sony Electronics Professional Display Solutions unveiled the version 3.0 firmware update for our SRG-A40 and SRG-A12 4K/HD PTZ cameras at InfoComm 2025, bringing intelligent automation to the next level. Our ground-breaking PTZ Auto Framing function allows your PTZ camera to consistently track subjects and comfortably maintain the framing you choose, thanks to proprietary AI technologies and deep PTZ camera expertise. Sony's PTZ Auto Framing is an advanced, AI-based tracking function. It employs deep learning to increase the accuracy of human recognition, more effectively identifying subjects and capturing more details of their appearance.

Key New Features:

- **Tracking Range**: Auto-framing is now limited to a defined area, avoiding unintended subjects.
- **Fixed Angle Position**: The camera pauses and holds a predefined view for consistent framing.
- **Lead Room Effect**: Composition adjusts naturally to provide space in the direction of the subject's gaze.
- IR Remote Preset Recall: New composition presets can be recalled using assignable buttons on the included IR remote.
- Flexible Preset Views: Choose from 'full body', 'waist', or 'close-up' for optimal viewing.

Sony remains committed to delivering connected solutions that empower our customers, integrators, consultants, resellers, and channel partners across the AV industry. That's why we continue to invest in firmware upgrades for our PTZ and remote camera systems.

Learn More

Biamp

Vidi Content Cam 250

End whiteboard invisibility in hybrid meetings with the Vidi Content Cam 250, our specialized 4K content camera that delivers crystal-clear whiteboard visibility to remote participants—even when presenters obstruct the view. This powerful solution transforms inequitable hybrid experiences by ensuring every participant sees whiteboard content with perfect clarity.

Powered by Microsoft Teams Content Camera feature with translucent layering and keystone correction, the Vidi Content Cam 250 eliminates distortion and blocked views that plague traditional setups. Complete with flexible mounting options and seamless Biamp UC integration, this proven solution creates truly equitable collaboration where location never compromises visibility.

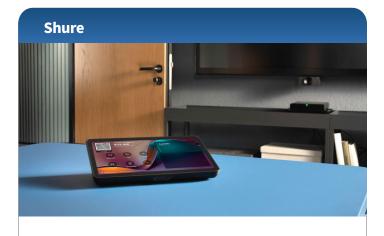
Experience the Vidi Content Cam 250—superior hybrid collaboration.

Learn More

ScreenBeam

Higher Education institutions need flexible, intuitive technology to support instructors and students in lecture halls, labs, and hybrid environments. The ScreenBeam 1100 Flex is designed to meet those evolving demands. This next-gen wireless presentation system offers powerful performance with enhanced memory, broad device compatibility, and classroom control features. Instructors can present wirelessly from any device, use an integrated whiteboard, enable digital signage, and send notifications—all without apps, cables, or IT delays. Simplify your AV environment, reduce support needs, and enhance campus engagement. Contact our team today to schedule a demo or request a trial of ScreenBeam 1100 Flex.

Learn More



IntelliMix™ Foundation System for Collaboration

In January, Shure introduced its IntelliMix™ Room Kits: complete, Certified for Microsoft Teams Room Kits with class-leading audio and video performance for small to large meeting rooms. Now, the Company announces that the powerful compute and touch panel included in the room kits will be offered as a standalone base kit—the IntelliMix Foundation System - enabling qualified AV professionals to mix and match with Shure's versatile Microflex® Ecosystem portfolio of microphones and loudspeakers and complementary third-party camera and control products.

"Shure has been offering superior, durable, and state-of-the-art technology that addresses unique user demands for 100 years. We maintain continuous conversations with our customers and partners, enabling us to integrate their input into our solutions, as we have done with the new IntelliMix Foundation System," said Sam Sabet, Chief Technology Officer, at Shure. "With the new base kit, AV installers have even more flexibility to build their dream team of conferencing products to create peoplecentric meeting experiences, which is what organizations are looking for."

The IntelliMix Foundation System is Certified for Microsoft Teams, with the compute featuring comprehensive, built-in IntelliMix® Room digital signal processing (DSP) optimized for Shure solutions, and the high-resolution touch panel providing intuitive meeting control.

Paired with Microflex Ecosystem solutions and effortlessly configured using Shure Designer software, the system delivers pristine and secure audio quality, while being quick to install and scale. Integrators and AV professionals are able to easily manage bespoke Shure solutions from anywhere via ShureCloud.

Learn More



Microchip



Introducing Microchip's Power Over Ethernet (POE) solutions—the smart choice for powering and connecting your devices in today's interconnected world. Designed for versatility and efficiency, Microchip's POE product line supports a broad spectrum of applications, from telehealth and IoT to commercial and industrial systems. With a focus on security, reliability, and ease of integration, Microchip provides the tools and support you need to accelerate development and deployment, helping you stay ahead in a competitive market.

Learn More



Jabra

Jabra is adding to their video portfolio with their newest product!

It's time for a video conferencing solution that helps you make the most of your small meeting spaces. From huddle rooms to small meeting rooms, PanaCast 40 VBS can maximise every small meeting space. Its unique 180° field-of-view ensures everyone is seen and included – even those close to the screen, in the corner or sitting against the wall. No distortion. No blind spots. Just a 4K panoramic view of every in-room participant and a 4X digital zoom that captures the entire meeting space.

Whether you want to maximise medium-sized meeting rooms, or make the most of smaller spaces, there's now a PanaCast video bar to match. PanaCast 50 VBS is specially designed for medium meeting rooms. And brand new PanaCast 40 VBS is expertly engineered to make the most of small meeting spaces, with the same cutting-edge features but in a more compact form with price tag to match. With a unique 180° field-of-view in 4K and crystal-clear audio, they are the only Android video bars that capture the entire room. No distortions. No blind spots. Just fully inclusive meetings where everyone is seen and heard.

Learn More

Audio-Technica

Engineered Sound® Wireless System

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

Learn More

Simpro

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

Learn More

STI

Enhance your building's safety and security with STI's G3
Multipurpose Push Button. Offered in three configurable
modes—Key-to-Reset, Momentary, or Turn-to-Reset—the button
offers maximum flexibility. Choose from six shell colors, standard
or custom labels, and protective covers. The next-generation
access control solution helps ensure reliable performance in
demanding indoor environments.

- Six color options
- Custom or standard labeling
- Polycarbonate housing
- Flush or surface mount
- Optional cover with or without sound

Learn More

Lightware



Lightware continues to expand its award-winning Taurus product family, reinforcing its leadership in USB and USB-C signal management. Designed to address the growing demand for seamless connectivity and intuitive room control, the Taurus lineup now includes two powerful new additions: the Taurus Smart Dock and the rack-mounted Taurus TPX, each bringing advanced functionality and flexibility to modern AV environments.

The Taurus Smart Dock (UCX-1x1-C40) is a compact yet professional-grade docking solution tailored for hotdesks and small meeting rooms. With a single USB-C connection, users can access video, audio, USB peripherals, Ethernet, and charging — all through one cable. Supporting 4K60 video and up to 100W charging, the Smart Dock ensures reliable performance for both Windows and macOS devices. Beyond connectivity, it also offers built-in room automation, monitoring, and control features, making it a highly versatile choice for integrators. Whether enabling BYOD workflows or automating everyday meeting scenarios, the Smart Dock simplifies user interaction and streamlines the meeting experience.

The new rack-mounted Taurus TPX transmitter further elevates USB and AV extension capabilities within the Taurus ecosystem. Designed for integrator-friendly installations, it features rearfacing I/O ports, an internal power supply, and PoE for powering connected touch panels. Leveraging Lightware's TPX technology and SDVoE, it transmits 4K60 video, USB 2.0, and control signals over a single CAT cable up to 100 meters. This solution brings greater design freedom to AV systems by overcoming cable distance limitations and supporting centralized equipment rack setups in corporate, education, and enterprise environments.

With these additions, Lightware continues to push the boundaries of connectivity and integration.'

Learn More





egislative shifts are constant and complex, and integrators can't afford to operate on misconceptions or myths about them.

Staying well-informed and understanding the real impact of regulatory changes is essential to protect your business and ensure compliance.

In a recent webinar, hosted by *Commercial Integrator* and *Security Sales & Integration*, we joined industry experts to discuss regulatory realities and provide context to help NSCA members be smart and riskaware in their business planning. Taken from that webinar, here are five regulatory myths that integrators often believe to be true ... but aren't.

Myth #1: "Right-to-Repair Laws Don't Affect Professional Integrators"

Reality: Expanding right-to-repair legislation could have industry-wide consequences if not closely monitored. Without explicit carveouts, these laws could permit unqualified personnel to work on fire alarms, nurse call, and other critical systems. As a result, manufacturers and integrators must work alongside NSCA to advocate for ongoing exemptions that recognize the need for factory certification, proper training, and licensing in these sectors.

What You Can Do:

- Review pending bills for sector carveouts
- Support measures that ensure only trained, certified professionals work on essential systems

Myth #2: "Prevailing Wage Only Applies to Onsite Project Work"

Reality: We see the scope of prevailing-wage policies evolving across multiple states. No longer limited to field labor, prevailing-wage requirements are increasingly extending to things like rack builds and assemblies performed offsite. Integrators often find themselves forced to choose between risking the bid on a low-wage assumption, or defaulting to the highest category, which can squeeze bids and increase risk. Lack of consistent classification (especially for low-voltage, limited energy, or integrator roles) only complicates compliance.

What You Can Do:

- Always clarify wage categories and requirements before submitting bids, especially for cross-border or public works projects
- Seek clear, written determination of work classification

Myth #3: "Industry Classification Doesn't Impact My Business"

Reality: How an integrator is classified (by CSI MasterFormat, for example) determines everything from project eligibility to insurance costs and competitive standing. Ambiguous or unfavorable classification can lump integrators in with higher-risk or unrelated trades, which can drive up labor and insurance costs, reduce bid competitiveness, and create regulatory confusion. Making sure integrators continue to be recognized with their category is crucial for maintaining the value and visibility of integration work.

What You Can Do:

- Monitor and participate in standards revisions or industry coalition advocacy
- Promote clear, integrator-specific classifications in all relevant regulatory and industry frameworks

Myth #4: "Integrators Will Always Have Access to Low-Voltage Projects"

Reality: Proposals to redefine "limited energy" and "high voltage" are happening. In some cases, legislation is seeking to place restrictions on who can perform work that involves technology like Power over Ethernet (PoE), LED lighting, and fault-managed (Class 4) power. This regulatory capture can limit business opportunities for integrators, even when they have a proven track record of safety and expertise. In some cases, work historically performed by integrators is reclassified, which can make you ineligible to take on certain projects.

What You Can Do:

- Track proposals affecting voltage definitions and project eligibility
- Document your firm's training, safety, and compliance history

Myth #5: "Licensing Is Standard Across States"

Reality: Licensing requirements for integrators vary dramatically state to state, and reciprocity is rare. These requirements also change over time. Some states require local offices or long approval timelines, making it impractical or impossible to execute projects won in good faith. Bidding before confirming licensure is a recipe for costly surprises, lost margin, or legal complications.

What You Can Do:

Always check local licensing rules before submitting a bid for outof-state projects using NSCA's *Guide to State Licensing* as your north star.

Paying Attention Pays Off

When industry groups are proactive, positive outcomes are possible.

For example, integrators have continued to retain the ability to perform PoE work without facing unnecessary licensing hurdles after NSCA worked alongside industry partners to monitor and respond to legislative threats that could have prevented AV and communications professionals from installing PoE cable and equipment.

NSCA's efforts also recently helped ensure that integrator classifications in CSI MasterFormat Division 27 remained intact and independent, preventing a rollback to the confusion of grouping low-voltage/limited-energy projects under electrical contracting. This safeguarded integrators' scope of work and their professional identity.

Staying on top of legislation, regulatory changes, and industry standards—and taking disciplined action—positions you to thrive amid regulatory change in 2026 and beyond.

Watch the Webinar Here







Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders: Inside Our XBO Experience

Real feedback from the first class of XBO attendees.

Many integration firms have rising stars in their midst: individuals who have leadership potential but lack formal leadership training. To address this gap, we designed the Excellence in Business Operations (XBO) Experience. It equips professionals with the skills and insights needed to step confidently into leadership roles.

With the second year of XBO coming up in October 2025, we asked last year's attendees to describe what they enjoyed most about the very first XBO. Here's what they had to say.



"It was clear from XBO 2024 that there's a very strong desire from emerging leaders in our industry to develop and hone their leadership skills. But figuring out where or how to start to get help can be overwhelming. XBO helps cut through the noise and delivers valuable, relevant, and tangible topics to attendees in order to make that first jump not so high. XBO arms you with the concepts, skills, and resources you need if you're going to succeed."

Brandon Conick, Chief Operations Officer at CTI



"XBO Experience provided me with a rare and invaluable opportunity to reflect, learn, and grow, not only as a professional but also as an individual striving to make a lasting impact. Leadership is the foundation on which successful cultures are built. Organizations that invest in leaders of tomorrow are ultimately investing in their own longevity and success. Unlike any conference I've attended before, XBO fosters an environment where authenticity and connection take center stage."

Xzavia Killikelly, Senior Business Development Manager at T1V



"XBO 2024 was a valuable and transformative experience, leaving me with new perspectives, actionable insights, and a renewed sense of purpose. Sessions were thoughtfully designed to be intimate yet interactive, fostering an environment where open discussion came naturally. One of the most impactful insights I gained was the affirmation that **leadership** is **not** defined solely by managing people.

There is also great opportunity to thrive by focusing on individual strengths and passions—in my case, creating exceptional customer experiences as a customer manager."

Jessica Thierrin, MVE Customer Account Manager at IVCi, LLC



me grow professionally and personally. Events like these help the next generation achieve success."

"XBO put me in a room with other

young leaders I will be working with

for the next 20+ years and beyond. I

left the event feeling **more confident**

in my current role and prepared to

take on even bigger future challenges.

It provided the very rare opportunity

leadership, tailored to the commercial

to get a crash course in executive

Maura Fitzgerald, NYC Account

integration industry."

Manager at Planar

Gabrielle Miller, Customer Experience Manager at SVT



"The XBO Experience is all about taking next-gen leaders to the **next level**. Seeing everyone learn to tackle issues they weren't handed a playbook on has been an incredible opportunity."

Aaron Niemann, *Senior Market* Development Specialist at Shure



100% say course content was relevant to them



100% say presenters were engaging

FALL 2025 45

Streamline Your Daily Operations

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

- ✓ Accurately estimate labor units for better project profitability ✓ Get trusted installation estimations based on difficulty, installer experience, Labor Installation Standard

 - ✓ Find the middle ground between over-estimating and under-estimating

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

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

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



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