



The **Lea**INg**** Edge

The Newsletter of the Imaging Network Group Spring 2022

ING, the Waterfall and the Desert



ING last gathered at the Ventana Resort in Tucson in 2017. Arizona is known for warm weather, so it was funny when those complaining about the lower-than-normal temps at an outdoor dinner one evening were from Minnesota and Michigan, places where weather has been known to get a tad chilly.

But no one really came for the weather. The conference sessions covered supply chains, paper shortages, labor woes, and global economics. Then there was “Speed Dating,” which some said was the ideal way to hear about the technology ING partners were offering in the context of member needs and goals. Speed Dating also set the stage for personalized, detailed, and more focused member/partner conversations that would take place after the conference. Forging such connections are one of the main reasons both members and partners keep coming back to ING.

The format was three full days of meetings that ranged from presentations to panels to group discussions to Speed Dating. Even though the urgency of business was always in the background, the content and pervasive interaction with peers kept attendees in their seats and participating right through to the closing ses-

sion Wednesday afternoon, which was nearly as well-attended as Monday morning’s opening session.

With constant interaction, networking, both new and prospective members in attendance, a house band and a desert waterfall, this year’s annual spring Forum proved once again there is nothing like an ING conference.

Turn the page for the key points of Episode 32 of the 2022 ING Spring Forum



What Keeps You Awake at Night?

This Leading Question

for business owners opens the door to a litany of woes and worries and that come out unbidden at 3:21 AM and make sleep an elusive luxury. The opening topic at the 2022 Spring Forum showed there's a lot to make the wee-hour darkness a time for pondering a host of overlapping and inter-related issues. **Fred Van Alstyne** of Content Critical Solutions and **John Delaney** of OSG Billing delved into some of these in an open discussion. One comment quickly fed on another and expanded further in small roundtable discussions and again in a broader session Wednesday afternoon.

Supply chain problems were among the key issues and seem unlikely to go away soon. These include delays and allocation problems that may lead to higher costs that cannot necessarily be passed on to customers. A key issue was paper, including the cost and supply of envelopes, which went under a closer microscope in a later session.

One pervasive issue is that consumers receive return envelopes yet typically pay bills electronically. While the obvious solution is programming and intelli-

gent inserters, many attendees said billers are reluctant to give up return envelopes, even knowing that up to 90% are thrown away unused. To print and mail means the underlying thought is economics: the paper being used for envelopes that are thrown away could be put to better use. This is a valid point, but old habits can be hard to break. Some studies (not attributed in the session) have indicated that inclusion of reply envelopes shortens the payment cycle. So how to replace that? Perhaps, Fred suggested, by placing a QR code that leads to an e-payment page that makes it easy for consumers to pay electronically.

About two-thirds of members said they had worked with customers to standardize some types of envelopes. This often entailed redesigning a document—a cost not all customers were willing to accept, but one definitely worth a conversation with customers. Be sure to bring in any cost advantages so the benefit is clear to them.

“With many consumers paying bills online, up to 90% of reply envelopes go unused.”

In a bigger picture, some of the concerns may be pointing to an eventual shift from print and mail to electronic (digital) delivery. While still a nascent trend, e-delivery is another sleep-stealing issue for bureau owners. On one hand, some end-customers are showing reluctance to opening electronically delivered documents, but such reluctance may only be temporary. “It’s important,” noted Fred, “to have a plan for e-delivery while paying attention to current demands.”

Why? Because banks, credit card companies, insurers, and the like are eyeing the rising costs of paper, labor and postage and wondering if there is a better way. Those may be worries keeping *them* awake at night!

And there's more...

Please turn to page 3



continued from page 2

A different supply issue is spare parts and delays in delivery of new equipment, slowing business and hampering growth. Microchips, for instance, are used in so many places that otherwise completed presses and inserters alike can be delayed because of delays in chip production and availability—in another country. This may not change until later this year or even 2023. Moreover, supply chain issues are unlikely to all ease at the same time, so delays will be with us for some time. Adding further frustration is that delivery costs are “...off the charts,” that one member put it. Meanwhile, fuel prices continue to rise, as do labor costs, both directly impacting delivery charges.

Speaking of labor, this is another dark hours worry. The economics of every business are different so there are no fast answers. Members said some workers think they are worth more (per hour) than they really are and not taking jobs being offered. Some want assurance of overtime, while others seek more family time. Another, perhaps more troublesome layer is that “... people don’t want to do print and mail,” one member noted. Some print service providers have cross-trained workers so they can be rotated among tasks. While increasing training costs and adding complexity to hiring, cross-training can provide flexibility in staffing and jobs and also help relieve some of the monotony of workers doing the same thing for an entire shift.

“Automation can solve some labor issues,” noted Fred, while his colleague **John Slaney** said Content Critical had automated much of order entry. Other firms have delved into AI, which can make some jobs more attractive or interesting to prospective employees. Both approaches showed up again in a later session where it was pointed out that transactional bureaus were becoming more like software companies, albeit a hybrid of software and manufacturing. This shift requires bureaus to think differently about their businesses and the types of people they hire.

In hopes of bringing in new talent some members said they had turned to older workers, usually

retired people seeking to supplement retirement income. “But they don’t want to work for \$20 an hour and their health costs can be high,” said one member. Moreover, it takes time to become fully competent at running a digital press or an intelligent inserter. Put a 65-year-old on one of these machines and she/he may bail out—often at about the time they become competent.

Other the terrors that come out of the dark showed that increasing operating costs were a complex and ongoing subject: Over the past year or so members saw cyber-insurance rates climb 41%. Healthcare jumped 20%. Paper rose 20–30%, a hike further compounded by allocation issues. And then there are postal rate increases that seem to arrive far too often. Bureaus’ customers are often not especially sympathetic.

In an economy that many say is upside down, there are no silver bullets for any of these issues, but there is one thing that may (or may not) help. Billers are often unaware of the issues facing the print and mail companies and the processes that help drive the billers’ cash flows. This may present an opportunity for both customer education and dialogues with customers who probably have awake-at-night issues of their own.

It may come down to some basic issues: For example, a conversation may begin with, “You make widgets/deliver electricity/provide insurance, etc. We make mail happen. Here’s how that works.” Bureaus and customers alike are essentially service/product delivery companies (which involves software) or manufacturing processes (producing widgets or print and mail), or even both.

A dialogue could begin, “We both face global challenges, what keeps you awake at night?” Then, “So how can we help each other?” Listening to the customer’s worries and sharing your own can help in finding solutions that work for both parties. Working together is not always the answer and there are customers who won’t engage in the conversation, but it may help address some mutual problems—and help everyone sleep a bit better.

continued on page 4





Speed Dating

Despite the Name, this was not a casual drink and snack event. Trysts and other surreptitious meetings were unlikely to be formed. Instead, for two hours on Monday and Tuesday member companies visited with each partner. A full schedule was provided in advance so all member companies knew when to be at the 18 tables held down by the partners that help deliver the value that helps make ING a vibrant force in the print and mail industry.

Sessions were just 10 minutes long, with two member companies at a time having the opportunity to hear what each vendor offered, seeing if there might be a fit. While the short conversations were introductory, they were predicates for more detailed discussions at the conference and later.

“Having sessions scheduled made Speed Dating at ING much better than at events where we had to sit down with whatever company didn’t seem busy.”

The partners knew there wouldn’t be a fit with every member but the format provided a better chance to talk about what their companies offered than a PowerPoint presentation or case study. One member, a veteran of several such meet-and-greet events noted, “Speed Dating at ING, with a real schedule to follow, was much better than having to walk around and sit down with whatever company didn’t seem busy. It kept things moving and we were better informed.”

The Paper and Envelope Supply Chain



Bidding wars for paper?

For paper? Did anyone see this coming? Some may have, but with paper demand decreasing and some paper mills shutting down it’s become an unpleasant new reality. And like cars and houses going for above asking price, some paper prices have become like auctions, with the winner getting a couple truckloads of paper.

For ING members, paper is a big part of what makes the world go ‘round. **Eric Hollingworth** of RevSpring moderated a panel comprised of **Steve McGinley** of Domtar, **Mike Ratcliff** of Midland (a new partner) and **Tim Plunk** of partner and envelope supplier Tension to explain the paper shortage facing printers around the world. Some problems of the paper industry are unique to the market.

- Some mills are not working at full capacity; others have closed. Demand is not necessarily aligned with the weight or grade of paper being produced at a given mill and most mills cannot easily switch from one type of paper to another.
- The panel noted that one can argue about the mismatch between demand and output, but this is not a simple problem to solve, and panelists did not expect the paper market to return to any semblance of normal until late in 2023.
- Broader supply problems, such as containers, also impact paper supply. Container costs have soared as container availability has declined. As for most industries, labor is another ongoing concern.
- Allocation, a phenomenon that grew out of a weakened supply chain, is a massive wrinkle in bureaus’ operations with no clear resolution in sight.

please go to page 5

So what should a bureau owner do?

For the most part, make sure each paper supplier is paying attention to your concerns, including those that supply finished products that you use, such as envelopes. As you do, realize that they are under similar constraints because they are really just a step or two further up the supply chain from print providers. Still, no matter what you do, you may be involved in the bidding wars which are becoming commonplace for many products print providers depend on. The underlying message in this session was to get more paper you may have to pay more—meaning higher prices than you—or your customers—may be accustomed to. Some is the dynamics of the paper industry, made more complex by allocation.

Allocation is a knotty issue and it was not clear exactly how it works partly because paper vendors take different approaches. Domtar’s paper output, for example, is scheduled up to two months in advance, meaning that to get paper in two months, you must place the order now or it is gone. This is as if you had to call the gas station before you left your house to make sure the gas would be available when you pulled up to the pump. With a subtle twist: the size of the order may be limited: half a truckload per customer.

“The paper market won’t return to any semblance of normal until late 2023.”

“The best solution to allocation,” said one panelist, “is to take business away from someone else.” That may help (in some cases) for local business but not so much in an age of national and global competition. Taking business away from a competitor 2,000 miles away doesn’t mean you get the four rolls of 20-pound uncoated he would have received. Those rolls are more likely to land at shops a bit closer to the competitor’s zip code.



Tim Plunk added other detail “We know what’s coming in but a customer may not. This is the same for small envelope companies. We are all buying sheets and rolls of paper but our production is fully committed and we are not insulated from price fluctuations.”

One member asked what seemed like an obvious question. “If I got you more paper, could you make more envelopes?”

“No,” responded Tim. “Workers and machines are already committed and machines could be offline [with fewer operators available].” He noted that staffing challenges at suppliers is not unlike those of some ING members: “Even if we had all the paper we needed, we could not get all work out the door.”

Other paper supply issues stem from demand in a different part of the industry. Packaging, the fastest growing and strongest segment of the print industry is a voracious consumer of paper. And paper companies follow demand. While the types of paper used in packaging are different than those used for print and mail, the sheer demand for various types of packaging papers is part of a supply problem for bureaus and could become a fact of business life. At the end of the day, allocation cannot end soon enough, but it may not end soon. As the saying goes, watch this space.



Combatting Rising Postal Fees
The ever-upward spiral of

postal costs may be a fact of life for bureaus, but **Gretchen Renaud** of PrintMail Solutions explained how her company crafted a sortation solution and

please turn to page 6

continued from page 5

made a change in their operational workflow that delivered value to PrintMail and its customers using WindowBook software, negotiation of rates with Pitney Bowes Presort, and smart use of BCC Software.

Gretchen led a panel that included **John Young** of Bluegrass Integrated Communications, **Christina Esparza** of InfoIMAGE, and **Kurt Smallhoover** from Pittsburgh Mailing. All offered comments and perspectives on their challenges and successes in the battle to combat ever-increasing postal fees.

Gretchen described how the added pre-sort process improved mail delivery times while helping increase the efficiency of inserter operators. The bigger result was a savings in postage costs which PrintMail applied to the purchase of new operational equipment and for strategic cost reductions for customers.

Part of the process was talking with customers and explaining that things were not as they once were and that costs for everything were rising. This is in line with the earlier recommendation that bureau owners should open dialogues with customers to help them understand how printing and mailing businesses are also plagued with rising costs, longer delivery times, and how they are handling the challenges.

Too often, customers only receive rate-change notifications from their service bureaus. These often lack context, so PrintMail provided customers with broad-based communications including newsletters and emails that were augmented by customized messages that addressed specific needs. All were part of a goal of helping customers understand how rising costs impact all types of businesses, including service bureaus, and how bureaus could work to mitigate some of the costs. It is an indication that keeping customers informed on a regular basis can be a good strategy for handling the problem of rising costs.

.....

Automation! Do More with Less!

Automating production processes can be a game changer in print and mail. Yet for all the hoopla automation is really just another tool that helps work go through a shop faster and more easily. Automation (and robotics, for that matter), for all the promise it may hold, is only as good as the planning and programming behind it.

Darryl English of Wolverine Solutions Group, having been there and done that, took the floor to lead a panel that included **Robert Tokarczyk**, also from Wolverine; **Henry Perez** from FSSI; **John Slaney** from Content Critical Solutions; **John Kline** of Bluecrest; and **Dave Loos** of MCS, all bringing their collective technical and production expertise to the discussion.

As other bureaus learned in early 2020, print and



mail was determined to be an essential service during Covid. But as things went

from bad to worse, shrinking staffs made obvious the need for increased efficiency. Wolverine saw revenue drop 50% by mid-year 2020, quickly followed by a 40% drop in employee head count. By September that year the decision was made to invest in workflow automation and high-speed equipment.

Wolverine’s focus on improvement had multiple dimensions, all with the goal of improving efficiency with a business model that fostered innovation. This meant:

- Improving internal and external communications
- Increasing staff training so teams were comfortable with the new technologies
- Having the right people in the right roles in each department
- Having an adaptable “technology stack” so the necessary tools were available
- Implementing high-speed equipment to deliver faster throughput with less effort
- Automating as many parts of the print and mail operation as possible
- Ensuring clients were on board with the changes and partnering with us to make the changes a reality

This process, noted Darryl, necessitated reinvention and communicating of Wolverine’s revenue model. This included helping customers see the company as an essential service rather than a commodity and having an internal focus on continuous improvement or *kaizen*, a Japanese term used in manufacturing. It

Please turn to page 7

also fostered a tighter focus on a KPI of revenue per employee, the nuanced relationship of sales and IT, and adopting a commitment of following through on the plan of increasing automation and throughput.



The panel jumped in with a series of comments:

- **Robert Tokarczyk**, Wolverine: “We had a lot of diverse equipment in our shop. About 40 machines in all. We trimmed equipment to better focus on what we do best.”
- **John Slaney**, Content Critical: “Our estimating department was a driver by showing how and where we had weaknesses. We used a workflow solution to move data to the postal system. What we had was okay 20 years ago and we are re-working it piece by piece. We have automated about 90% of orders, but this is a never-ending journey.”
- **Henry Perez**, FSSI: “Good tools helped us thru Covid, and when Covid first hit it verified we had been doing right things. For us, every device is a data collection point, and we use that data in different ways. We have [automated] tools that help streamline many processes and use templates that provide limits and allow for review.”
- **Dave Loos**, MCS: “All automation starts with data. Training really begins with what customers need, so processes can be simplified and automated. And you can’t forget about quality. It’s obviously very important and is where benchmarks come from.”
- **John Kline**, Bluecrest: “Automation is a moving target. It comes down to what the people doing the work can do and what can help make them more efficient.”

Software and hardware vendors are putting pressure on bureaus and other print providers to do more with automation. In last 2 years bureaus have raised the bar on both productivity and integrity by putting

more money into manufacturing improvements. It can all pay dividends but it’s vital to do what is right for your operation and to involve your customers to get the greatest benefits out of automation.

Software and hardware vendors are putting pressure on bureaus and other print providers to do more with automation. In last 2 years bureaus have raised the bar on both productivity and integrity by putting more money into manufacturing improvements. It can all pay dividends but it’s vital to do what is right for your operation and to involve your customers to get the greatest benefits out of automation.

Back by Popular Demand: The Always Great INg Band



Not every trade organization has its own in-house band, but INg isn’t an average trade association. We gathered at Coyote Corral for BBQ beef and chicken, veggies, yummy desserts, and live music from the world’s best pick-up band, featuring the talents of band leader Mike Mulcahy, COO of OBRIEN on lead guitar and vocals; Heather Mulcahy on vocals; George Promis, formerly of Ricoh and now a FOG, on drums; Scott Astheimer of RevSpring on bass; Ernie Crawford, CEO of Crawford Technology and Tim Legg (right) on guitar.



From country to soft-rock with the edge that only the INg band can deliver, the live music was a highlight of the conference. Even in the unseasonable chill of the evening there were members and partners in the Coyote Corral until the band played the last chord.

Firing a Client: Knowing How and When



please turn to page 8

Firing a Client: Everyone likes their “book”

of business, the list of customers that is kept close and not shared with others. Most are actually “good customers,” a term some define by how easy a company is to work with and whether they are profitable customers. Still there may be those who don’t “fit,” for one reason or another, and when the fit is not right it may be time to let them go.

Some may say, ‘there has never been a better time to do this’ But is this time truly representative of the “new normal” we will all be living in? It’s hard to tell, even though the past two years may be an indication of what’s to come. There are no one-size-fits-all answers on this topic. But there are key traits to watch for.

Putting this topic on the table, **Dave Henkel**, formerly president and CEO of Johnson & Quin, led a panel comprised **Jon Downing** of Impact, **Linda Woodward** of Hatteras/FocusOne, and **Mike Ertel**, president of Nahan (and a guest at this year’s conference). They rolled out the five top reasons for showing a customer the door.

1. Being abusive to your team or processes
2. Inflexibility on pricing
3. Not aligned with your growth plans or your company’s vision for future.
4. Not a match with the type of customers you want to work with
5. Quantitative and qualitative measures

Yet no matter the reason, you need to move carefully. For example, if you add up all a customer’s costs—prepress, production, in-office, shop floor, and shipping—you can measure that customer’s contribution to your business. And while the 80/20 rule may apply—the 20% of your customers who drive 80% of your gross margin revenue—the reality may be closer to 90/20, or 90/10, so care must be taken when deciding which customers you might be better without. Where you draw the line is not obvious and other questions abound:

- Which ones are most (and least) demanding of your customer service team?
- Which generate most (and least) revenue?
- Do any become (a kind of) cost center? (or are simply more trouble than they are worth?)

If you are shaking your head, you’re right: as you think about your own book of business there are no clear answers.

Unfortunately, it gets more complicated.

Andy Young from Keypoint Intelligence pointed out, “We are in an age when service bureaus are as much software companies as they are print and mail suppliers.”

“There’s no question that software is not a trivial matter,” agreed **Gretchen Renaud** of PrintMail Systems. “Software development and testing is three times the cost of print and mail.” Plug that into your P&L spreadsheet.

The interaction of data and software adds significant complexity here. Having a new flavor of software and implementing it correctly, combined with how a client ensures its data is compatible with changes in the software can be critical to how well the customer’s files run—and the costs of running those files. How does this impact the cost of a job? Has your IT team done all the training and testing to ensure customers’ files will run on the new software? Have customers done all they should do?

John Slaney of Content Critical noted that bureaus may need to “...change customer perceptions of how and what we do. For instance, custom programming and expertise is very important so customers need to know you have full capability in this area. Do they want print and mail? Electronic delivery? Both? Your pricing has to change based on that.” Some customers may not like this, which could make them candidates



for departure.

Firing a customer is not as simple as running some numbers. Begin by understanding what your customers are doing. Know their challenges and goals, their supply chain and labor issues. Then see if there is a way your company can add value. Can you do anything to ease their pain? While

Please turn to page 9

continued from page 8

you cannot possibly make everyone happy, by taking the time to understand each other the customers that should leave may become more obvious. And if you decide it is best to part ways, try to connect them with a firm that may be better suited to their needs. This way you add value by helping a former customer find a better fit.

Ten Things to do Better

You've been at this print and mail business for a while. You're probably pretty good at it. But just as probably there are a few things you could do better. **Elizabeth Gooding** from Inkjet Insights provided a list of 10 Things INg members might be able to do better. What they have in common is that they are all items you already do some or even most of the time, but making them all part of business as usual requires attention to detail—with a certain amount of pressure from the corner office—to ensure that the whole team is doing everything as well as possible all the time. Some things will probably still fall through the cracks but keeping Elizabeth's ten points in mind can help your business be more successful.

1. *Minimize the freebies.* Put a value on all the services you offer and don't let salespeople include anything "as part of the deal" unless you agree to it in writing and put it in the contract.
2. Although some salespeople can be aggressive, *you don't work for your salespeople.* Make sure they focus on the services that you decide are most profitable for the company.
3. *Know what is profitable and unprofitable* so you can avoid what Elizabeth termed "the pirates of profitability." Track costs of onboarding, servicing, and production so you know what makes sense in terms of these vital outlays. To be sure, there are instances when you will negotiate some of these but knowing the actual costs can keep you from giving too much away.
4. And speaking of onboarding, *improve and document your onboarding processes.* Be sure to understand all the assumptions your developers make and pull in software and equipment providers as needed to help ensure customer expectations can be satisfied.
5. *Standardize* anything that can be made repeat-

able. This includes automation, software integration, providing customer and staff dashboards, staff cross-training, and holding people accountable. The latter gives ownership of a task to an individual and can improve performance.

6. *Make testing easier.* You test anyway, so streamline the process and look for the "gotchas" that often crop up when processing new files.
7. *Spend money to save money.* Don't write your own software: it simply will not be as good or as versatile as what you can buy and probably won't have much documentation. Beyond that, automate manual processes, do the annual software upgrades, and pay the maintenance fees. And don't cheap out: the effort to avoid small costs can bleed you dry.
8. *Value your supplier contacts.* These companies won't know more about your business than you do, but they do know stuff you don't. Take advantage of their expertise. And let them know how important they are to you.
9. *Talk often with your customers.* The more you know about them, and vice versa, the stronger and more durable your relationship is likely to be.

please turn to page 10



10. *Eat your own cooking.* Make sure your invoices to customers are as good or better than the ones you send out for them. Use the same e-payment system you recommend to your customers. Follow the best practices you recommend on your blog or social media—and you do have a blog and use social media, right?

INg Membership and Performance Report

Andy Young from Keypoint Intelligence brought us the results of the 2022 INg member survey on critical areas of business performance. Keypoint used the legacy version of the survey, which will be extensively updated for 2023. Furthermore, all members need to respond, versus the 55% that did so this year, so we get a better measure of the group. Despite the small sample size, a few points stood out:



- A return to “normal” is not anticipated in 2022.
- Paper and envelope supply are significant concerns
- Erosion of skilled labor is a barrier to moving forward
- Customer Interest in digital delivery is increasing
- Managing cyber-security threats and the need to meet consumer privacy laws
- Rising costs of all types of insurance
- Need to provide integrated communications, i.e., email, text and paper

Watch your email for the 2023 survey and be sure to take a few minutes to answer the questions. with a full reponse Andy is better able to provide an accurate image of INg members and make recommendations about how members can navigate our rapidly changing times.

See More Pictures!

Spring Forum photos are available as high-res, ready-to-print files at

There are 150 or so high-res images here all free for the taking and printing!

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/efxTNRgYH3>

Modernizing MIS

According to some of those

who have been there, done that and acquired the T-shirts, changing one’s Print MIS system is about as much fun as a contentious divorce. And it gets worse when you learn that many Print MIS systems available are not intended for the rigors and variables of print and mail. Small wonder that many bureaus have slugged it out with old systems and been reluctant to make changes to a product that has been ready for duty ever since cut-sheet laser printers first landed on the shop floor. Still, times and technologies change, along with customer needs and expectations. A new Print MIS can be the best solution, even though it may raise stresses to divorce-levels. **Mike Mulcahy** affirmed that the decision to change to a new MIS was painful but worth it.

Mike, COO at OBRIEN, provided a fast look at the path his company took on when shifting from the legacy Kramer Smilko software that had been in use for over 25 years to cloud-based Midnight MIS from Virtual Systems (now Print Reach), recommended to him by INg member **Bill Nichols** of Bluegrass Integrated Communications. Mike and his team found Midnight MIS met their needs and those of their clients. Although the Kramer Smilko system did the job, it was DOS-based, not all employees could use it, no future development was planned, and reporting from it was difficult and inflexible.

The new system provided OBRIEN a seamless transition for clients, offered more control of key processes, simplified reporting, provided better control, and was better tailored to the needs of a busy transactional print and mail operation. The implementation also defined workflows, set up reporting processes and defined the steps for programming and requirements for automating order entry and client billing.

With some 75 clients already on-board Mike says the decision to change to a new MIS was worth the stress involved. “It put the company back in charge of the process,” said Mike, “and even employees who initially felt threatened by the change are actually happier with Midnight MIS.”

Got Security?

You’re going through the morning

stack of email when one wakes you up more than the mug of fresh-brewed coffee. Someone has locked up all your customer files and wants \$100-Large to unlock them. The first of this month’s five big runs starts in two hours. But its file is locked up and inaccessible. The coffee is forgotten as you call in your IT team.

please turn to page 11

continued from page 10

Ransomware attacks like this happen almost daily across the U.S. Many companies pay up and take action to prevent future intrusions but can you really afford to do that? And suppose the intrusion spills over to your customers, all of which are now known to the attackers. If an attack on your customers is traced back to data on your servers you may need more protection than your cyber-insurance policy can provide. Don't think it can't happen.

Steve Akers, CSO & CTO at Tech Lock, the security and compliance division of ING member RevSpring, noted that too many people think, 'It won't happen to me; I'll never be a target, I'm too smart, and security issues don't apply to us.'



Unfortunately, none of these are true.

"The bad guys don't care," said Steve. "All they are thinking is, 'If I shut someone down they will pay me to get them back up' Always follow the money!"

Steve noted that things can go from bad to terrible in seconds. In fact, some normal actions we've become conditioned to do can make things worse. For example, the mantra of "when in doubt, reboot" can be the worst thing to do if a security breach is suspected: the virus or hidden code may fully activate upon restart. Worried yet?

Moreover, a breach may have been resident on your system for 60-280 days before springing into the lap of your production manager who reboots, calls your IT guy, who then calls you.

Combatting breaches should begin before they happen. Penetration tests (aka, pen tests), while helpful often don't reveal enough. And people bringing in their own devices (BYOD) heighten the risk. Even "smart watches" can be entry points because they connect with a local network—probably yours!

An IT security specialist can identify weak points and suggest approaches that can work for your business, and help you implement changes that help make sure that morning coffee does not go to waste.



Using the Best Sources

"It's great when you have the best people." That's what the late Steve Jobs said after one of his IT guys rescued him when a presentation crashed at a major conference. And the same is true for efficiently and profitably running a service bureau. So what works for getting and keeping the best people?

Jennifer Dietz of FSSI shared her experiences in hiring and keeping developers, programmers and creatives on board in an age when job hopping and work from home has become the norm.

Developers and programmers often want more responsibility, and may not be shy about asking for it," said **John Slaney**. "They want to do cooler, more interesting stuff and use harder, more advanced programming languages such as Python."

Sometimes the best people prefer to be contractors, not employees. This can make for complex relationships while also opening the door to a wider pool of talent, which may add more value for your company and its teams.

Multiple Locations

If you choose to outsource or hire people in multiple locations Jennifer suggested a few points to keep in mind:

- Understand the skill set needed and hire a person who can do more, rather than one who has to "grow into" the job
- Whether the people are internal, remote, or off-shore, build a team and make them part of it, even (or maybe especially) if they are contractors.
- Have the entire team on one time zone. This makes everyone accessible during what are normal business hours. The exception is if your company already spans multiple time zones it can be OK to have people in different time zones. Just be sure the time zones they use match up

The Wrap

Fred Van Alstyne noted the range of content covered over the past three days, thanked everyone for staying for the entire event and noted that we have no idea of where the Fall Workshop will take place. Available venues are becoming scarce and many have raised their rates. But the always amazing **Shelly Anderson** is working on this and we'll soon know where the Fall Workshop will be, likely in mid-October.



The Leading Edge
is published bi-annually for
members of the Imaging
Network Group, its partners
and the imaging industry.

Executive Offices

Shelly Anderson
Executive Director
Imaging Network Group
404-310-2250
sanderson@datamatx.com

Renée Durre
INg Treasurer
redurre@yahoo.com

Noel Ward
Newsletter Creator & Editor
noelward1@icloud.com
603-566-0948

Board of Trustees

President

Fred Van Alstyne
Content Critical Solutions
Moonachie, NJ

Members

Bob Arkema
Johnson & Quinn
Chicago, IL

John Delaney
OSG Billing
Ridgefield Park, NJ

Jennifer Dietz
FSSI
Santa Ana, CA

Darryl English
Wolverine Solutions Group
Detroit, MI

Marianne Gaige
Cathedral Corp.
Rome, NY

Eric Hollingsworth
RevSpring
Livonia, MI

Mike Mulcahy
OBRIEN
Bartlett, IL

Gretchen Renaud
PrintMail Systems
Newtown, PA

Scott Stephens
DATAMATX
Atlanta, GA

The Imaging Network Group would not be all it is today without the enduring support of our valued partners. Thank you.



A special thanks to INg member FSSI in Santa Ana, California for printing and distributing this newsletter.



imagingnetworkgroup.org

