



The **Lea**ING**** Edge

The Newsletter of the Imaging Network Group Fall 2022

If there's ever a zombie apocalypse, let's hope it starts in Vegas.

Because what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas!

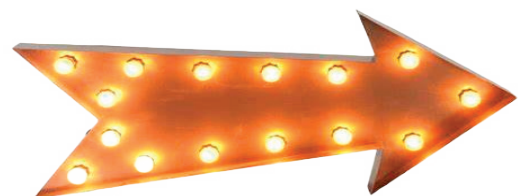
Hopefully what INg members learned at this year's Fall Workshop in Las Vegas will not stay there but will work its way into the thinking and actions of members' businesses!

Some 41 members and 19 partners were on hand, with some staying an additional day to attend the Printing United trade show held a few miles away at the Las Vegas Convention Center. When not occupied by the details of print and mail, INg member and partners at the 32nd Annual INg Executive Workshop were going to shows, strolling a couple blocks to House of Blues, hitting a few casinos, eating some great food, and people-watching on the Strip.

All normal Vegas stuff, capped off by a good hotel with an open-air bar atop the adjacent Mandalay Bay hotel. After 32 years, there few trade events as compelling as an INg Fall Workshop. Stretched this year to span full three days it included a host of participative sessions that brought out abundant member and partner participation on topics ranging from data security to labor, the economy, to print and mail, and more. Here are just some of the high points, with more detail inside:

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Look inside for the details!





The INg Board of Trustees and some members met with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy on Thursday, October 20 to gain a closer perspective of ongoing and proposed changes in the United States Postal Service

A HOT TOPIC AT THE WORKSHOP

was the U.S. Postal Service. We depend daily on the USPS. Its actions and inactions have been recurrent topics at INg meetings. Following the Fall Workshop, the INg Board was able to spend time with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, shortly after hearing his presentation as a keynote speaker at the Printing United trade show. This provided the opportunity discuss his strategy of changing the way the U.S. Postal System works. Here's a hat tip to **Kim Waltz** of Cathedral Corporation providing the following summary of the meeting the INg Board meeting with Mr. DeJoy.

On Thursday, October 20th the INg Board of Trustees met with Postmaster General Louis DeJoy following his keynote presentation at the Printing United trade show. Much of the discussion centered on points he had made during his keynote address in which he spoke about the challenges he faced coming into the role in July 2020 and moving forward with his "Delivering for America" plan. He reiterated his vision to re-align the postal network, taking out costs and giving regional processing facilities the capability of reaching millions of people in one or two days while delivering both mail and packages six days a week. Mr. DeJoy described his mission is to make USPS the nation's premier delivery service, and reversing the poor strategies of the previous management teams.

Mr. DeJoy said he hoped to introduce whoever is the next Postmaster General to organizations and associations that were his postal advocates. When opening our private meeting with Mr. DeJoy, the **INg Board of Trustees**, led by **Fred Van Alstyne**, suggested INg should be among those advocates because of the depth of transactional and direct mail experience in the organization which accounts for approximately 7% of the total mail volume in the United States.

- Based on our interactions, Mr. DeJoy agreed to figure out a better way to work with INg in the future. He noted that when discussing INg member concerns, he could see the value of having a better way to share postal communications with us that we could share with our clients. He also added that he could see having future interactions with INg, related to industry communications.
- When asked about workshare discounts Mr. DeJoy said that he had no intention of changing these discounts.
- Mr. DeJoy works with many unions and said he has been very fortunate to not have had union members refuse any of his asks and is working on cohesive relationships internally to better the USPS overall. His plan includes continued hiring and improvement of work environments to help make

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HOT TOPIC *Continued from page 2*

USPS a good career prospect for new hires.

- When asked about an opportunity for outside companies to assist in his vision, Mr. DeJoy stated they are reviewing partnerships with other transportation companies to build a more efficient infrastructure to provide timely deliveries.
- A return to the familiar once-annual rate increases is somewhat complex. Right now, Mr. DeJoy said due to regulation restrictions, it could not presently be done in with a single annual increase. The INg Board asked how long he foresaw needing to have multiple increases. The Board explained that members' need to be able to advise clients why multiple increases are necessary and when USPS will return to annual increases. They explained that doing so will help educate clients and help secure business from leaving. Mr. DeJoy said this year (2022), would give him the insight he needs about the effectiveness of the changes made so far. The INg Boards' input showed Mr. DeJoy why providing that information would be valuable to our companies and the industry.

Following the meeting, INg President Fred Van Alstyne said DeJoy is not only a master of logistics but possesses a solid understanding of mail and the process of moving it around the U.S. He now understands that INg companies collectively account for about 7% of the domestic first-class mail volume. Four INg members who attended the meeting had generally positive views of the time spent with Mr. DeJoy and his plans for the USPS.

Chris Kropac, President of PCI said, "We need a strong USPS to support our industry. Mr. DeJoy's first interest is stabilizing the USPS, which in the long run, is in the best interests of INg and our customers. Today, he understands the package and logistics business better than he does print and mail service bureaus. However, he asked several questions and listened to and learned from our group and I believe this will help him transform USPS."

Bob Arkema, EVP at Quin & Johnson noted, "He believes that changes in delivery standards and pricing increases are facing reality rather than changes that could adversely impact mail and believes clients will adapt to changes in pricing and delivery."

Adam LeFebvre, President of Specialty Print Communications, saw it much the same way. "Plain and simple, Mr. DeJoy is focused on creating a sustainable United States Postal System. This will certainly come with increased postage costs. Still, I've never seen a change or cost increase that doesn't come with headwinds and



criticism. We need to continue to make sure the communications we produce provide the best value possible to our customers."

Cost increases are a fact of life for businesses and consumers alike. "Costs will rise, as they do in any business," noted **Gretchen Renaud**, VP of Operations at PrintMail Solutions. "We need to be prepared to educate our customers and adjust to any increases to ensure we are partnering with the USPS for long-term success and viability. It's clear to me that Mr. DeJoy is making decisions and running the USPS like the business it is to accomplish these directives."

Bob agreed. "The changes he is making are positive and in our collective best interest because we all need a sustainable and efficient USPS going forward. We should all be promoting to our clients the positive aspects of what Mr. DeJoy is doing. After all, our clients are the ones who pay the postage, so it is important they see the USPS as a viable option for delivering their messages. Otherwise, if they do not have confidence in the USPS they will seek alternatives."

"It is certainly in the best interest of bureaus and their customers to have a stable USPS that delivers mail accurately and timely and can be relied on in the future," said Gretchen.

INg will keep you posted to any updates on working more closely with the PMG and his team.



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It's Not Just You



Every Other Business Owner is Lying There

with you, at 3:23 AM, dwelling on all the terrors that make sleep an elusive pastime. The opening topic at the 2022 Fall Workshop was carried over from the opening session of the Spring Conference, continuing showing again how INg members ponder the imponderables of business in 2022.

John Slaney & Eric Hollingsworth led the perennial session about things that keep INg members awake at night. Comments from the spring conference affirmed that the USPS and labor were top concerns, so these were covered in separate sessions of the Workshop. The topic that occupied the entire “Awake at Night” session was digital security, especially cyber-attacks.

As CTO at Content Critical Solutions, John is an advocate of rock-solid data security. These days you cannot be too careful. He noted four points of cyber attacks that must be considered.

- What do you do when the dragons come to call?
- How are you preparing for things going south?
- Where can you seek help?
- How can you get back-up running (and how quickly)?

Your IT guys may not have the best answers to these questions, so it is worth talking with an outside data security firm. If you don't know one, call the company that provides your cyber-attack insurance. If you don't already have a data security provider, set up a contract with one immediately so there is someone to call when things go sideways. Because they probably will.

These are all things you need to do now.

One illusion, noted John and Eric, is that you are safe if you are using the “Cloud.” Nice idea, but the Cloud is just a remote server or two in places other than your IT room. While presumably well-protected against intrusion, it can still be infected with some flavor of nefarious virus that may not show up until a file or application is loaded and used on your system/network. The only way to know for sure is testing in advance from multiple locations. Your facility in State A may be fine, for instance, but the same file being opened in State B may be a problem. It depends on what the bad guys have done—and it's hard to know in

advance. Use a pro to help you.

To help keep intruders away, back up daily, test all measures of security in all locations. And while you're at it, make a practice of testing your ability for moving data and jobs from one location to another while looking for data breaches or holes in your security.

**The Cloud is not a satellite.
It is just a server or two that (may)
be a long way from your IT room.**

A few points to remember:

- Some data restorations can take days because you may be dealing with terabytes of data.
- Restorations can also restore the virus, which arrives ready to pounce, putting you back to square one.
- Everything must be documented so you can track what to do should things go sideways again, and also where to look for other problems that can be addressed *before* they occur.
- Once the bad guys have the data, what do they have? For example, getting your customers' account numbers is bad. But suppose the bad guys have customers' Social Security numbers? (those, by the way, can sell for as little as \$5 each on the Dark Web.)
- Be aware that some bad guys go after disgruntled employees to gain access to your systems. Those unhappy people may still work for you—and you may not know who they are.
- \$5 Million cyber-attack insurance may not be enough coverage yet may be the limit some insurers allow. While you may be able to stack multiple insurers' policies, be sure to read the fine print understand any limitations.
- A member pointed out that cyber insurance claims *are not always paid* by insurers. Use an attorney who is recommended by a trusted cyber insurance company or software security firm so you know what you are covered for and how comprehensive the coverage is.
- Cyber insurance is a moving target. It will probably move more. *There are no dumb questions.* Be thoroughly prepared in advance.



A Paperless Future?

An enduring question among bureau owners is how soon paper goes away. Managing through paper shortages is hard, but how would your business change if bills, statements and direct mail were all sent electronically? This will probably not become an either/or issue in this decade but could well be a major concern by the middle of the next one. The extent to which such a future becomes a reality is hard to predict, but bureau owners still have to be thinking about it now.

Andy Young from Keypoint Intelligence pulled together a panel to dig into this and offer up some thoughts on how



bureaus may be able to deal with a future where print gives way to electronic delivery. He positioned the panel's comments with a short presentation that encompassed industry trends:

- Print is facing multiple headwinds including technology changes and customer resistance to price increases.
- Electronic versus print volumes have not yet changed, with 95% of transactional communications still being printed. But the tipping point to e-delivery may be approaching.
- Paperless policies are happening at the corporate level: many businesses planning on a paperless future.
- Most print and electronic delivery is outsourced because companies don't want to do this work internally.
- 89% of respondents to a recent Keypoint study said they use the same PSP for print and electronic delivery. This tells us bureaus should be talking to customers about how to use print and electronic delivery together.
- You can grow your print business by doing more electronic delivery.

Some comments from the panel were interesting, especially when mixed with points from another presentation.

Matt Mahoney: Print existed before electronic. Bureaus still control the content and it is much easier for them to do that than it is for a company with an entirely different focus. Businesses don't understand print and mail the way bureaus do. It's not as simple as it seems. And bureaus can offer channel-appropriate messages. Furthermore, if you aren't already doing *both* the electronic and the printing parts and the customer turns off the paper, how would you reconnect with that customer—while retaining your credibility?

"It gets more complicated," said one member, "if we have to layer electronic on top of print."

But it can also bring better results. **Ernie Crawford** noted, "All documents have to be accessible. A company that creates



files that can go either way will have it easier."

A related session (on Tuesday) pointed out that print and electronic documents, as in email and print, can work closely together within the limitations of all-digital campaigns in real-life scenarios. In that session guest speaker **Tim Curtis**, president of CEO CohereOne, said his company increased mail volume by as much as 10x by showing the value of print in a



electronic age. Tim said postcards can be very effective tools for maintaining contact and encouraging interaction. He cited a program his company ran that included an email solicitation followed up with a postcard. He said the printed piece has power because print better engages the brain's response centers. This is science—drawing on sight and

tactility, which combine to deliver the stronger recall associated with printed pieces.

The matters because electronic documents (primarily email) tend to have poor reactivation capabilities—the recall that drives action. This means recipients need a physical mail reminder such as direct mail, and postcard reminders can act as

We must use both paper and electronic. There is a much larger chance of a poor outcome if we don't use print.

a call to action. Tim noted, "A consumer is 40-50% more likely to act if s/he is "hit" another time, especially via a different medium. Bureaus, especially direct mail shops, should encourage customers to structure offerings to take advantage of this tendency."

Transactional bureaus may want to think about how postcards or direct mail could augment electronic statements or bills by offering services that might have gone unnoticed on a statement.

Then Andy Young asked, What's next big thing?

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A Paperless Future, continued from page 5

Ernie Crawford: “More security on electronic and digitally printed documents, with multiple formats based on user choice.”

Chris Petro: “Electronic delivery using a mix of digital presses and software. Print service providers must be able to handle both if they want to compete in the future.”

John Slaney: “Print service providers must be helping customers. Most are not about to suddenly switch to electronic delivery. A PSP has to show how both mediums complement each other, be alternatives, and provide options for handling both print and electronic delivery.”

Speaking from the floor, Tim Curtis reiterated the need for both print and electronic delivery. “Only 18% of consumers are opting-in to electronic delivery of business communications. This means 82% are not. But if you don’t use e-delivery you don’t reach that 18%.”

While customers’ egos and biases can be a barrier to success, print is still a digital champion. And it is even stronger and more relevant when “...offline and online integration are empowering the next iteration of sophistication and data actionability,” concluded Andy.

Got ESOP?

This session could easily be entitled

“Is an ESOP right for You?” or “The ESOP Path to a More Dynamic Business.” But while the focus was on creating an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) the session provided an enlightening look at a compelling way of transferring ownership of, and responsibility for, a going concern to its most valuable assets—its

employees—while keeping the owners in place and giving them latitude to pursue other interests.

Jennifer Dietz brought in Michael Harden, Managing Director of Ambrose Advisors, which had worked with Jennifer when creating an ESOP for FSSI. Jennifer said Ambrose was an excellent communicator through every step of the project, stuck to the stated budget, and talked her in off the ledge a few times. As an advisor, Ambrose took charge of planning, understanding the financials and the market FSSI was in, and aligning objectives for all involved.

Michael noted that one factor making any ESOP challenging is that business owners often have many of their assets tied up in their companies. This can make it difficult to measure and accurately ensure value, provide estate planning, and so on. Adding to that, owners of privately held businesses typically pay a lot of attention to employees, often treating them like family. Not infrequently, many employees have been around for a several

years. This all has to be sorted out when creating a fair and equitable ESOP, a process that takes about four months to complete.

Business owners’ assets may tied up in a business, making it difficult to measure accurate value when setting up an equitable ESOP.

Michael said there are only about 7,000 ESOPs in U.S., yet companies that become employee-owned frequently outperform similar firms, often competing with private equity, both as the deal comes together and in the market at large. The best candidate firms are profitable mature businesses, said Michael, although the owners, competitors, and various characteristics of the market can mean not every such company is suited to offer an ESOP.

Michael offered up some further points of interest:

- Sometimes an ESOP advisor will pull in an accounting firm to do a closer check on the company seeking an ESOP.
- Banks look at how *safe* a deal will be, not simply how much they can make, and prefer relationship lending. In other words, plan on doing business with the bank that helps make the deal happen.
- If an ESOP is structured correctly, a business owner may be able to avoid capital gains taxes (varies by state).
- Buyers in a ESOP do not have rights to see details, such as how much the owners have been pulling out, allowing such info to be taken out of the equation.

When your time to bow out of your business arrives, an ESOP might be a good path to the exit—and a way to ensure your legacy.

Managing Seasonality

All shops have busy periods. In transactional bureaus it’s quarterly and annual taxes, payments and reports, monthly filings, and more. Direct mailers face a plethora of holidays. Print and mail volumes vary with each as does the number of people required. A fact of life for mailers, this “seasonality” should be managed with a plan, strategy, or a set of ideas for getting through the next peak period. Use the data you already have about peak periods to help determine what you may need to for the next one—and what didn’t work so well last time. Be proactive.

To share some ideas Gretchen Renaud of PrintMail Solutions, Jon Downing of Impact, and Sean Gebbie of Midwest Direct talked about the people, processes and technologies that can make seasonality less of a challenge.

Sean said Midwest Direct had success with cross-training

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Passing the Buck\$

This is not what you think. At issue is the constant stress of passing supply and service price increases on to customers. **Jennifer Dietz** posed a series of questions to **Tim Plunk** of envelope maker Tension, new member **Angel Kemlage** of D4, and **Linda Woodward** of Hatteras Focus One to learn how different companies approach the persistent challenge of prices that may seem to never stop rising—even though it’s not always possible to pass them along to customers. As you might expect, there are no one-size-fits-all approaches.

Do you have language in your contracts that allows you to increase prices?

Each panelist has their own version of contract language that can provide some pricing flexibility. Angel, for example, said D4’s contracts cover changes in paper, envelopes, and postage, and are reviewed periodically. Linda noted that while her company tries to accommodate cost increases it is no easy task after the pandemic and supply chain issues. Some items, like paper, may have “blanket” statements that note prices apply at time of contract and could vary in the future.

Speaking from the floor, Fred Van Alstyne noted how it is important to be aware of clients’ budget cycles. Many companies lock in an amount for services such as print and mail. It can be difficult for them to vary from their budgeted amount and advance notice is always appreciated.

Have you increased prices across board?

Linda said Hatteras Focus One did overall increases that encompassed professional services, onboarding, materials, etc. “All went up,” she said, “We looked at the overall margin for the company, not individual jobs or customers.” This enabled the company to look at the real ROI for everything at the customer level. Not all customers liked the additional scrutiny this approach allowed and some departed. This was not necessarily a bad thing, a fact of business that more companies should realize.

Be conscious of clients’ budget cycles so they know what is coming.

Are you considering another across the board price increase?

Linda said her company was not anxious to make a change, noting that their “Revenue-based model protects us more.”

Members speaking from the floor said setting expectations and maintaining ongoing communications was essential. Most customers know, and even understand, that some prices will go up. How much is always a question, so it makes sense to include language in a contract that allows for increases beyond a bureau’s control and keep customers informed as costs rise.

Managing Seasonality, *continued from page 6*

existing employees (perhaps including some knowledge workers) to provide extra flexibility during peak periods. You may find that some production staff may enjoy learning new skills, such as machine set-up and operations. Setting machines up in advance can also be a way of using temps more effectively because a machine can be ready when they come in the door.

While neither Gretchen’s nor Sean’s companies uses temporary employees for peak periods, others do. Judicious use of

Supplier relationships are critical. Be sure suppliers understand your need for supplies during busy periods.

temps, especially ones used previously, who are trained, and who have proven reliable and productive can be an effective option. This is particularly where having presses, inserters or other devices set up and ready to go can help temps be more productive, although the success of this approach will vary for each shop.

Another approach to consider is using workers who have

some type of disability. One member received an ovation for her repeated use of cognitively challenged workers who not only appreciated the work but who generally proved to be reliable and accurate. There are agencies in many locales that can help in identifying and placing such workers.

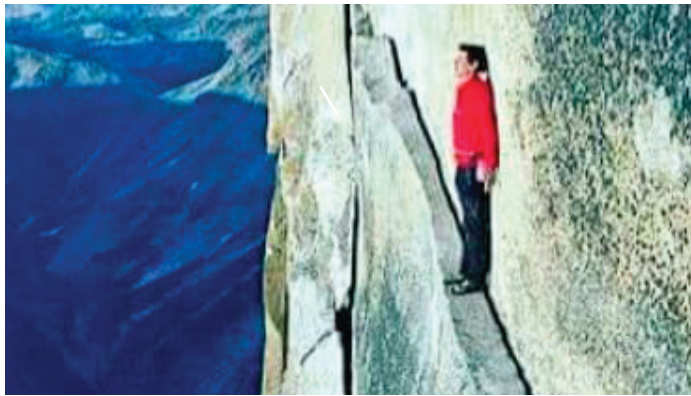
Finally, in these times of supply irregularities, simply having materials available for peak periods is essential. The panel suggested being proactive, impressing on suppliers the need sufficient paper and envelope supplies in peak periods (having strong relationships is critical), that equipment is serviced ahead of time, and even see if it is possible to use fewer machines. Also take a look at scheduling of regular, part time and temporary employees: in some instances it may be possible to get productivity advantages by altering who is on each shift.



Get In Off the Ledge!

Chris Kuehl, plain-language economist

extraordinaire, opened this second talk to INg this year explaining that he has been spending a lot of time in 2022 myth-busting and talking people in off the ledge. He went on to explain that most economic commenters and pundits in mainstream newspapers and TV new shows are too glib, provide little context for their claims, and may have only limited knowledge of the economy and how it really works. What they fail to note is that the US still has one of the strongest economies in world. Yes, “Some parts of it will tank while other parts are booming but, on the whole, it will be OK,” said Chris. The end is not imminent.



Chris gave the example of inflation, which is a heavily influenced by supply and demand. The latest iteration of inflation is influenced by the pandemic-induced supply chain disruptions. Despite shortages, demand did not decrease, so prices went up. The result is inflation. The changes wrought by the pandemic are a totally new scenario and no one really knows what to expect. Interestingly though, Chris said how consumers approach the Christmas season could actually make a difference. He suggests that if people buy a lot of stuff (even with inflation) it can actually help get the economy back on track and politicians of any flavor will not be able to say economy is in the tank. So build the addition, install a pool or buy a loaded Porsche Cayman S for Christmas to do your part in helping the economy.

Chris also noted, “We are closer to normal than many people, or the media, may think.” For example, people entering the housing market for the first time thought 2% interest rates were normal, and that current rates of 7% are usurious. But today’s rates are actually closer to normal. The ones complaining never lived in an age of 10-16% mortgage interest, like in the 1980s. *That* was a time of inflation.

Oil prices are a hugely visible (and volatile) part of the economy and we see them at nearly every gas station. Denying the angst in the media, Chris noted that Russia and Saudi collusion is unlikely to have a significant impact on U.S. oil prices. The United States uses relatively little oil from Russia or Saudis. Still, the U.S. is not immune to increased oil prices in global market. Any U.S. president, though, has little or no influence on global oil prices (or the global economy) despite what some people believe. Chris also noted that North America

“The U.S. has one of the strongest economies in world. Some parts will tank while other parts are booming, but on the whole, it will be OK. ”

(the U.S., Canada, and Mexico) could be energy independent and all but immune to the fluctuations and machinations of Russia and OPEC. But some political will in all three nations would be required.

Speaking of Russia, Chris said the Communist administration during the Cold War liked to point out that they kept prices down. But they did so by making things unavailable or far too expensive. This drove prices down because there was low (or futile) demand.

Chris also cited some economic realities:

- People believe we are heading into a recession, so we’ll have one. *(Another presenter noted that 72% of INg members believe we are in a recession. 93% say we are in one now or will be in one by this time next year.)*
- We need to get through three to four quarters of weak growth before we get to “good growth” again.
- The “Quit Rate” seems high. However, many of those quitting jobs are in IT, a high demand (and high turnover) sector, and quickly land another job—usually in IT.
- There are 6-10 million people not working who could. But some are employed in the gig economy, which is not tracked, so they *are* working, just in a very different job.
- About half of all gift cards for Christmas are bought in convenience stores. And the best values for many items arrive in March! So look for a spike in consumer spending, fueled by gift cards, in March.



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The Cyclone of Complexity

It's not slowing down.

Francis McMahon, EVP of Canon Solutions America (formerly Océ) talked to members about the challenges of running a business in this era, focusing on what he termed the “Cyclone of Complexity” which is at the core of how people should be making decisions today.

He noted that for many, perhaps even most, companies, partial remote work is here to stay. Not everyone is a fan, meaning discipline is required for both leaders and employees.



“This is part of the cyclone of complexity, and the cyclone,” he said, “is not slowing down.” Change will continue to happen.

“Too many companies in America,” said Francis, “have created a can’t culture. “And too many managers and leaders are

buying into this.” As a result, they are having trouble navigating in the business world today.

“Every business has a ‘can’t person,’ he noted. “It’s important to show each person the value they have, that you have brought them onboard because they can do something. It changes the conversation when you talk about what they can do and how it adds value.”

“So are you a Can Person or a Can’t Person?” asked Francis. “Either way you are right, because you’ll convince yourself.”

He also asked, “Why do some people succeed?” Francis maintained that leadership, which is a blend of inspiration, influence, and perspective, in its most basic form is getting someone to do something because they *want* to, not because they are *told* to.

Are you
a **can** person or
a **can't** person?
Either way you're right.
Because you'll
convince yourself.

It is important to change the mindset of people who work for and with you. Doing this is embracing the cyclone of complexity and setting your mind up to overcome the barriers to success in your business. Francis cited ten ways of doing this. All are important:

- **Drop the job title:** it gets in the way of getting things done.
- **Admit your flaws:** no one is perfect, no one can do everything, or has all the answers.
- **Listen and be inclusive:** this helps build a team and aids group thinking.
- **Care:** about the people you work with.
- **Elevate people, build them up:** Give public credit for achievement.
- **Set people free:** provide ownership and responsibility for the work they do.
- **Reach for the stars:** strive to do things thought to be “impossible.”
- **Be positive:** don’t be a can’t person.
- **Walk with purpose:** because it conveys a positive attitude—which is contagious.
- **Earn trust:** Be honest, open and supportive and people will do more for you.

“Leadership is a soft skill,” said Francis. “Take your role seriously. And lead.”



Need Talent?

How do you get and retain it?

Jim LaPrade of BMS Direct and **Kevin Svenson**, of Doxim took the floor to talk about labor & staffing, topics that all INg members think about because these issues seem to be re-visited on what to some may be a too-frequent basis. In preparing for the session Jim and Kevin talked with other members, finding several key ways to keep people around.

- **Retention:** Keep the best people around by showing that you care, encourage cross-training, and finding out what people want to do beyond their normal job.
- **Raising pay levels:** Be aware that this does not necessarily help because you may wind up competing with bigger companies. However, it works in some markets, so understand your local your market before you try.
- **Culture, opportunity:** Remember, a high school grad brought in to run an inserter is probably not expecting to be president of company any time soon. S/he just wants a steady job s/he can count on.

**Know your employees.
Paying attention to
their foods, holidays,
and religions matters.**

Actions aimed at attracting and bring in new hires included

- **Increasing local advertising on billboards.** This is said to promote awareness about your company. Placing wage ranges on billboards may also be useful in some markets.
- **Career fairs** can show off the opportunities available. Remember print and mail can offer long-term opportunities for people who are not seeking higher education.
- **Bonuses for employee referrals** including former employees.
- **Using social media & video** to promote company culture. Let employees make the video. Not only does this involve them, they are younger and probably better at it.
- **Targeted wage increases.** Make these visible to employees so they know why the increase has been granted. Show that working hard pays off.
- **Sign-on & retention bonuses.** Like it or not, a sign-on bonus has almost become a fact of business life. A retention bonus honors persistence, longevity and can be an incentive for employees to stay on board.



Your crew may be a mix of Arabic, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and others. In Africa, for instance, there are 54 independent nations, all with different customs and cultures. If you don't know, ask. Never assume! You can find out what matters to employees by asking. And they will tell you—perhaps more than you really want to know. What you may find includes:

- **Increase training** so people can move up
- **Praising employees** with public recognition, bonuses, days off, thanks cards, gift cards,
- **Promoting from within**, even when training is required.
- **Fringe benefits:** 401k program, allowing more hours or flexibility for sick time, longevity bonuses, fruit/snacks for employees,
- **Having a TV** in break room, a full kitchen, massage chairs, First-Friday events.
- **Embracing** new and/or competitive technologies such as implementing a digital workflow, increasing automation, mobile communications, etc. All can make a difference in attracting younger employees who see digital technologies as both current—and the future.

Hiring has never been tougher. There is no magic bullet for attracting and retaining the people you need. But making a genuine effort to understand your crew, the people you bring on board and what will make your company one they want to be a part of goes a long way towards building a strong and reliable workplace and a workforce you can count on.



Speed Dating



Speed Dating, or maybe better called Speed Meeting, is a concept adapted from other conferences, and is continuing to change at INg to best fit the needs of members and partners. As at the Spring Conference, members and partners had schedules that provided them with 10 minutes together before each rotation.

On one hand this is proving a good way for partners to share the highlights of their offerings but your input is still needed. The board is seeking ideas for how this vital session can be improved, so if you have ideas please make your voice heard. Let Shelly Anderson and the board know how you think this session could be improved.

The Wrap

Fred Van Alstyne

wrapped up the workshop announcing that the spring conference will be at Atlantis in the Bahamas April 13-15. The event will all day Thursday; conference sessions on Friday morning; followed by a half-day event; and wrap up with a half day of meetings on Saturday. This allows attendees to spend extra time in the Bahamas before flying home. The rate for the hotel is \$379+/-/night.

Our 2023 Fall Workshop will be two days in middle of country, location TBD, possibly Chicago, and won't be co-located with a tradeshow.



Welcome to INg,



Ryan Gutman CEO) and **Owen Lawson** (CTO) are owners and founders of Planet Direct, based in Manassas, VA. For more than two decades Planet Direct has helped non-profit organizations, political action committees, and other businesses achieve their marketing and fund-raising goals.

Want More Pictures?

2022 Fall Workshop photos are available as free, high-res, ready-to-print files at

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/3dAFgaR6ar>

Pix from other events are here:

Tuscon:

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

Denver:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/63QqOcCcSk>

Orlando:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/qXG9kaYucN>

All are free for taking and printing!





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