Leading in a Crisis

Without fear of hyperbole, the current COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-generation crisis that will define us all. The disruption to individuals, companies, even entire industries has not been seen since the 2008 financial crisis, and we are just in the beginning acts of this macabre play.

I, like many other leaders, are going through a major event like this for the first time. I managed a small team during the financial crisis, but now I lead a large global team of IT professionals and production operations for an industry – legal services – that has transitioned overnight from a traditional brick-and-mortar business to a fully virtual workforce.

What is needed most at this time is the steady hand of a mature leader. And that is personally daunting. Never have I had the pressure of so many looking up to me for guidance and reassurance, and never have I been so afraid that I wasn’t up for the task. What if I fail? You may be thinking the same thing. The solace? We’re all in this together. For most of us, this is our first rodeo.

Thankfully, history remains a great teacher. I am an avid reader and have distilled lessons from dozens of leaders thrust into trying times, and what has emerged are key themes and tactics I have been using in this crisis. I share these lessons with you in hopes they will be similarly helpful.

Lesson 1: Start with Self-Care

First and foremost, you must take care of yourself. Health is critically important when you are facing intense pressure. I have worked harder these past few weeks than I have in recent memory. I have had to make significant decisions with very limited information and even less time. It’s all admittedly exhausting and saps my motivation. But I still force myself to get a decent night’s sleep, work out most mornings, get some fresh air during the day, and eat healthy as much as possible. I know my mental prowess depends on my physical health. Sound body, sound mind.

Lesson 2: Be Prepared

From a management perspective, preparation is key. Having business continuity and disaster preparedness plans drawn up before a crisis is far preferable to scrambling once the crisis has started. Thankfully, I work in a compliance-minded industry and with managers who take preparedness seriously. When this crisis started, we were able to refer to a playbook for the basics, letting us focus on the truly novel and complex. If you do not currently have a business continuity plan, document what you learn in this crisis and build a plan so that you and your company are better prepared for the next event.

Lesson 3: Command, Control, Communicate

I have also been heavily involved in command, control, and communications. These functions are too critical to just delegate and walk away. We conduct daily management standups and team meetings where we monitor key initiatives, address emergent needs, and ensure all are aligned on approach and priorities. We send out formal and informal communications regularly and proactively, whether it be our internal team, clients, partners, or vendors. Events will always threaten to overtake you, so you need to move quickly, stay organized, and have clearly defined roles so that people are not tripping over each other or sending conflicting messages.

Lesson 4: Be Mindful of How You Show Up

Last, from a leadership perspective, be mindful that everyone is watching you. How you act and how you manage your own stress and anxiety will influence large groups of people – for better or worse. I have found it most effective to strike a balance. Be realistic and transparent with your team, sharing both the good and bad news. They are aware of the gravity of the situation, and sugarcoating things will just insult their intelligence. Keep the team engaged and busy where possible, as that can be a helpful outlet for their anxiety. Finally, be sympathetic and flexible where able, knowing their personal lives are likely impacted as well.

It is said that leaders are not born, they are made. In the coming months, we all will have the opportunity to stand up to this challenge and help navigate our organizations through a difficult, turbulent time. I for one can think of no nobler cause as a leader.
UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY
Special "Super SIG" Event
Virtual COVID-19 Response Panel
Thursday, May 7 | 11:30am-1:00pm
Featuring Panelists:
- From W4T: Danielle Chaney, Account Manager-Network Infrastructure and Information Security, TEKsystems
- From W4T & the CEO Council: Lisa Couture, VP of Operations, Edge Webware
- From the CIO Council: Treg Gilstorf, CIO, Yaskawa Motoman Robotics
- From the IC SIG & Security: Jon Scruggs, Infrastructure Manager, Hobart Service
- From the DA SIG: Tim Wells, Speedway

Virtual Data Analytics SIG Meeting
Optimization - The Most Powerful Recommendation Engine
Facilitated by: Jeffrey Camm, Wake Forest University
In this talk, we discuss how to use optimization models to improve decision-making and drive positive change. By using optimization models to generate multiple alternatives, some optimal to the model and some not, we discuss via real-world examples how to provide valuable alternatives for solving real-world problems. We discuss real applications in supply chain optimization, bank branch location, biodiversity conservation, textile mill planning, marketing, and data science.
Friday, May 15 | 8:30am-10:00am

Virtual Infrastructure/Cloud SIG Meeting
Journeys to the Cloud
Facilitated by: Nick Enger, ATC
Real-world experiences and lessons learned from IT executives with Mike's Carwash, Curiosity Advertising, Henny Penny and more.
Friday, May 15 | 12:00pm-1:00pm

Virtual CIO Council Meeting
Digital Customer / Employee Experience
Facilitated by: J.D. Whitlock, Dayton Children's
Thursday, May 21 | 11:30am-1:00pm

JUNE
Virtual CIO Council Meeting (Rescheduled)
Data Panel
Friday, June 12 | 11:30am-1:00pm
Featuring:
- Steve Motil, Director of Analytics & Population Health, Kettering Health Network
- Mark Johnson, Executive Director Client Solutions and Executive Leader of Strategic Data Management and Analytics, Fusion Alliance
- Dan Whitacre, Senior Director Transformation and R&D, Kroger
- Jan Wenda, General Manager, North America Lingaro

Keep it on Your Radar...
14th annual Taste of IT Conference
Wednesday, November 18 | Southwest, OH
Call for Presentations due June 30th
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TOIT20CFP

7th annual TECHIES Awards Celebration!
Postponed to a future, safe date - TBD
Categories:
- Outstanding Technology Team
- IT Project of the Year
- Best IT Services Company
- IT Executive of the Year
- Emerging Technology Leader
- Most Promising Startup
- Award of Excellence - Student Project

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!
Optimization Beyond Data Analytics

One of my recent LinkedIn posts: “Was fortunate to see one of my favorite Quantitative Analysis Professors, then of the University of Cincinnati, Jeff Camm, speak at the University of Dayton, on Optimization: The Most Powerful Recommendation Engine. What a fascinating discussion on the movements from Operations Research to Management Science to Data Analytics, potentially back to Optimization beyond Prescriptive Analytics. And about not only finding the most optimal answer, but also the alternative sub-optimal solutions for consideration. Thank you Jeff! It was an enlightening and enjoyable trip down memory lane and a nice vision of the future.”

Jeff Camm, currently Inmar Presidential Chair, Associate Dean of Business Analytics, Wake Forest School of Business, is also speaking at our Data Analytics Special Interest Group (SIG) on the same topic in a virtual meeting on May 15th. The history from Operations Research to Management Science to Analytics is fascinating.

My journey started during my freshman year in high school. Several Universities were visiting and presenting the majors they offered. That year, the University of Cincinnati presented a brand new major they were offering out of their college of Business called Quantitative Analysis, and I was immediately sold. They were combining Mathematics, Computers / Programming and Business, what could be better? Ten years later, I had both a Bachelor’s Degree and an MBA with a concentration in Quantitative Analysis (or was it Operations Research or Management Science?). I also added a Certificate in Economics, along with a few of my favorite electives in Logic and Artificial Intelligence, and I was ready to test my abilities in the business world.

It was a career in Software Applications, Systems Integration, Project and Program Management that led me to a leadership position in Information Technology. I had a bit of fun along the way working at BDM with the DOD/Air Force on the Mathematical Programming models of the Variable Safety Level (VSL) and the Aircraft Availability Model (AAM), which today I would call a homegrown ERP.

And where are we today? As a former Global IT Director and now VP, IT in Manufacturing, my primary focus is still ERP (specifically Epicor). However, my passion remains with Data Analytics. So what does Data Analytics have to do with Quantitative Analysis? And is all of this headed back to the Quants or Optimization? You might be surprised. Jeff and I feel as though this may be coming full circle.

Let’s talk about an organization that I have been a member of for my entire career since college. When I originally joined, it was called ORSA/TIMS (Operations Research Society of America / The Institute of Management Sciences). Prior to that, ORSA & TIMS were separate organizations. Today, it is called INFORMS (Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences - and Analytics). Analytics?

From Wikipedia, Operations Research, Management Science and Analytics are defined as:

“Operations Research is a discipline that deals with the application of advanced analytical methods to help make better decisions. Employing techniques from other mathematical sciences, such as mathematical modeling, statistical analysis, and mathematical optimization, operations research arrives at optimal or near-optimal solutions to complex decision-making problems.” This became popular in the military world.

“Management Science is the broad interdisciplinary study of problem-solving and decision-making in human organizations, with strong links to management, economics, business, engineering, management consulting, and other fields. It uses various scientific research-based principles, strategies, and analytical methods including mathematical modeling, statistics and numerical algorithms to improve an organization’s ability to enact rational and accurate management decisions by arriving at optimal or near-optimal solutions to complex decision problems.”

Now the disciplines are moving to the business world.

“Analytics is the discovery, interpretation, and communication of meaningful patterns in data. It also entails applying data patterns towards effective decision-making. In other words, analytics can be understood as the connection between data and effective decision-making within an organization. Especially valuable in areas rich with recorded information, analytics relies on the simultaneous application of statistics, computer programming and operations research to quantify performance.” So is it really about data or is it about math?

Analytics progresses from Descriptive (what happened) to Predictive (what will happen), to Prescriptive (what to do about it), but where does it go from here? What if the next step takes us back to Optimization? We are simply trying to help businesses with problem-solving and decision-making. Is that not Optimization? Operations Research leads to Management Science, which leads to Analytics and then back to Optimization.

Again, from Wikipedia: “Optimization or Mathematical Programming is the selection of the best element (with regard to some criterion) from some set of available alternatives. Optimization (issues) arise in all quantitative disciplines, from computer science and engineering to operations research and economics. The development of solution methods has been of interest in mathematics for centuries.” For centuries, in military and business.

It continues with: “In the simplest case, an optimization problem consists of maximizing or minimizing a real function by systematically choosing input values from within an allowed set (of data) and computing the value of the function. The generalization of optimization theory and techniques to other formulations constitutes a large area of applied mathematics. More generally, Optimization includes finding “best available” values of some objective function given a defined domain (or input), including a variety of different types of objective functions and different types of domains.” Solving a problem or making a decision about data utilizing mathematics.

As Jeff pointed out in his presentation, sometimes a sub-optimal alternative is the best solution. This is a powerful point. As I reference some of my old textbooks (yes, I still have a few on both Management Science and Operations Research), some of the methods I recall include Linear, Integer, Dynamic and Nonlinear Programming, Network Analysis, Queueing and Inventory Models and Simulations, to name a few. You should check them out, all very powerful tools when applied properly.

This has been my life and career journey from Quantitative Analysis to Data Analytics, and I live some form of it every day as an IT Leader. I just wonder when it all goes back to Optimization. I thank you again, Jeff, for reminding me and validating how all of this has unfolded. Hopefully, all of you can see how it ties Data Analytics and Optimization together. And more importantly, hopefully, you will all investigate how it can help you and your organizations.
Learning From and Adapting to Change During COVID-19

Paul Rothwell, Co-Founder
Onebridge (www.onebridge.tech)

We like to say around here that change is a journey, not a destination...but we got on this current journey pretty quickly! Specifically, the immediate transition of 100% remote delivery. While it sounds easy (you just have the people working from home instead of onsite with the client), it’s not.

But like every challenge that presents itself, it can be an opportunity. And that’s the way we’ve tackled it here. We already had the necessary infrastructure - ticketing system, collaboration platform, professional service automation systems...and most of all great people. Our delivery has always been based on people and service, underpinned by our culture and values. And this has lent itself well to tackling the change in front of us.

But the most interesting thing is that this has been a great opportunity to fight complacency for both us and our clients. This shift in working together has forced greater communication and collaboration to really understand the needs on both sides. Which has led to a common interest and focus on outcomes, which is all any of us care about. Clients no longer care about seeing the “butt in the seat”, they just need the outcome. We no longer care about trivial things, just the outcome. It’s easy to focus on things like hours or where someone does the work, but results are ultimately all that matter in the end. This forced break of onsite delivery has really given us all a chance to evaluate what matters and do things better. And in large part, we think (and hope) it’s here to stay.

Why? We firmly believe that remote work has inherent advantages when coupled with the right people, culture, and infrastructure. Our mission statement is “empower good people to do great things.” This has nothing to do with technology. And that’s for a reason. We believe the backbone of great delivery – of a great company – is the people. And the reason we get out of bed every morning is to hire good people – good skills, good character, good culture fit – and empower them to do great things for their co-workers, for their community, for the company, and most importantly for our customers. When you bring the right people, with the right culture, and the right remote approach, clients benefit from the greater responsiveness, better focus, higher availability and productivity, and ultimately greater insights into their data. Ultimately, all sides are more effective and efficient.

At some point in the future we will be cleared as a country to go back to the office - and some things will go back to how they were before. Some things won’t. I don’t believe onsite delivery of application and data services should go back to normal. If this situation has taught us anything it’s how quickly and drastically things can change. Businesses owe it to all their stakeholders – employees, customers, shareholders, community, suppliers, and financial partners – to be fully prepared for rapid change. A big part of our value proposition to customers is to provide the solution they need with the delivery model they want. And combining remote delivery as a utility that you can dial up and down as necessary seems like a key tool in combating uncertainty in the future.

This is an opportunity. A unique time in history when we can all come together and reasonably question the way we have worked in the past and ask if it makes the most sense going forward. We’ve learned a lot – best models, best areas, and engagement to make this successful. We’d welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge and help. And we’re here for you any time – preferably remote.

People are at the heart of every successful business initiative. At TEKsystems, a leading provider of IT staffing and IT services, we understand people. Every year we deploy over 80,000 IT professionals at 6,000 client sites across North America, Europe and Asia. Our deep insights into the IT labor market enable us to help clients achieve their business goals while optimizing their IT workforce strategies.
The Culture Equation: \( Cu = Cl(\text{Co}) + Cl(\text{Ch}) \)

There’s a lot of extra stress being dragged into work these days. The pandemic and accompanying shutdowns add plenty of extra demands on us. A healthy workplace is always important, but for most people it’s more important than usual now. That means any small dysfunctions at work like distrust, feeling unappreciated, or uncertainty about standards will be heightened as staff attempt to manage the additional bandwidth demanded of them. Limited attention for additional change may make job-hopping less likely in the short term, but as basic life stuff becomes more routine again, your staff will be branded by the impact work had on them during this time.

Leading a thriving work culture is a huge, ambiguous chore in any state. It’s difficult to know what issues deserve attention, where to compromise, and the fluff that can be cut from all the noise on the subject. Protecting the goodwill within the organization is critical, while the demand for success on financial and other measures doesn’t yield. Leaders have a lot at stake.

Care - The Foundation

You can try to fake it, but it probably won’t work. If you want a culture that fosters high performance, an organic appeal to the best talent, and a highly engaged team, then it starts with one fundamental: a leader that genuinely cares. Your work culture will mimic the things that are valued by its primary leaders.

If your primary concern is building your resume, money, or getting other people to do your bidding, start by assessing what you want your legacy to be. Get grounded first. It’s harder than ever to be successful insincerely. Building a phenomenal culture is no exception. But if you truly care about delivering great results to your customers and fostering a great place to work, you’re ready to build on a solid foundation.

Clarity - The Multiplier

It sure would be nice if workplace culture had some kind of linear measure like the setting on the office thermostat. It’s more like “love” in a relationship, or “success” in a career, with each instance full of nuance. A helpful framework to give substance to workplace culture is what I call the Culture Equation. Workplace Culture is the sum of your Clarity about Competency standards and your Clarity about Character values. More simply expressed:

\[ \text{Culture} = Cl(\text{Competence}) + Cl(\text{Character}) \]

Uncertainty brings out the narrators in us. In the absence of a story, we create one. So when the criteria for hiring, firing, and other big changes are left ambiguous, the story-based mechanism in our minds go to work. The impact of your standards, vision and values are multiplied (or limited) by how clearly your team understands them.

Consider these situations:

- You’re sitting at your desk when a calendar invite for a “Welcome Lunch” arrives. You’re asked to come get acquainted with a new hire to the team. It’s the first you’ve heard of it. Immediately you envision what role they’ll play and a scenario that impacts your goals and influence.

- You’re at home over the weekend. A friend from work texts you and asks if you knew anything about another colleague being terminated. You hadn’t heard. Your mind effortlessly speculates, about why it happened, how it was done, and who might be next.

Clarity is the great multiplier. When big decisions are made without clarity, the cultural impact is lost. Conversely, big changes are the window of opportunity to create anchors in the mind of a team of people. Even when committed to communicating, it’s easier with positive changes, like hiring new people, expanding a project, or upgrading the benefits. But great leaders shape organizational culture the most in the worst circumstances; when budgets are reduced; when a customer sues you; when a coworker dies. Those are unforgettable experiences. People will always remember how they felt about their leaders and about the organization during those moments.

Perhaps nothing says more about your company culture on a regular basis than how and why people are terminated. There will be a story in the minds of all stakeholders. So, when those unfortunate times come, be sure your team understands the relevant details.

A point of clarity about clarity - Clarity is not measured by the words said, the platform used, or the nonverbals. Clarity is measured by what is understood and what is felt. That is the multiplier that will define your cultural standards.

Competence - The Deliverable

An organization that’s broke is rarely the kind of place anyone wants to work long-term. Underachievement breeds more of the same. On the other hand, there’s nothing better for the morale of a team than to achieve goals together. It doesn’t matter if it’s overcoming a challenge together or ambitiously hitting new highs. What matters is achieving. A talented team that can produce results is critical for a great culture, in good times and bad.

Most of us are compelled by a variety of incentives to focus on competency. As technology leaders, our tendency is to prioritize skills when building and promoting teams. The exceptions are where there are risks.

In teams with low accountability for specific results, the accompanying lack of accomplishment can be a crushing demoralizer. People want to know where they stand, and they want to be valued for meeting goals and standards.

Another risk can be hiding poor performance. Teams that succeed collectively can both hide poor performers either out of sympathy or indifference. As a team comes to understand the tolerance of poor performance, the tendency will be for the general standard to fall, creating cascading detriments to a strong culture.

Character - The Vibe

The character of an organization isn’t just about how well they obey the rules. It’s about what matters being front and center. It’s trendy to talk about collaboration or having fun at work, but those are not and should not be every organization’s core values. Even within a larger organization, a subsection may embody some unique priorities that pertain specifically to them.

There’s a universe of content written about how virtues impact culture. What’s important to the Culture Equation is balance. Like any equation, it has to add up. In the Culture Equation it is a matter of comparing the character values that matter most against the competency standards that matter most. The risk is in overvaluing one in a way that compromises the other. The classic example is the brilliant jerk who is exceptionally competent, but impossible to work with. There may be a few places where that’s tolerable, but in a customer-facing role or when collaboration is critical, that’s an obvious imbalance.

So What? - The Application

Big changes are where culture is made. Hiring, firing, new business models, crisis, promotions, budget cuts, large investments, etc. When leaders are making moves, they’re making culture, whether they’re attentive to it or not. So be attentive. Consider the Culture Equation framework in these moments.

“What are we saying about our competency standards with this decision?”

“How clear are our values being understood with that move?”

Plug the variables in as you lead, and make sure they add up to the environment you intend to produce.
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WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
We recently co-authored and released a book on leadership, called The Coach and The Geek. We wanted it to be a fun, easy-to-read fictional book that incorporates personal and team leadership lessons, many of which are from our lives.

The story follows the challenges of a college basketball coach who is about to lose his job. The team has talent, but the culture is trapped within a history of failure, negativity, and blame. Through fate, he meets a senior software manager (aka The Geek) who was facing similar challenges and just got fired. They come together through happenstance and begin to apply Agile software development, metrics, and software quality principles to help transform the basketball team. Together, through this unlikely partnership, they develop a new approach that changes their team, their season, and their lives.

For those of you that know us, you know that Mark and Jeff think and process information differently. Mark is a “Ready, Fire, Aim” creative guy and Jeff is a “Think about it, strategize, experiment, collect data and analyze” logical guy. Turns out that diversity of thinking is a really great thing IF you stay open and honest and respect each other’s opinions. It has allowed both of us to try new things and stretch ourselves well beyond what we would have without each other.

We selected a few excerpts from the book to share with you that we felt were relevant to many of us. We hope you enjoy this sample of our book.

**Introductory note - One of the story’s main characters, Ron Marshall (The Geek) works in a dysfunctional corporate environment. The next two chapters detail how dysfunction and frustration can yield personal and professional failure, while also leading to a possible path back to success.**

**Chapter Six: Truth hurts**

Ron quickly checked his emails. Only 200 emails since closing time yesterday. How in the heck can you get 200 emails overnight?

The answer is simple, India. The country never sleeps. He was overwhelmed again, and the day had just begun with his outsourced partner in India sending plenty of bad news and plenty of re-work for his US-based team to review and correct.

Leola Data Systems has an “open-door policy”, but doors were often closed, especially when multiple projects were taking twice as much time as projected and costing twice as much money. And those were the good projects! Ron had learned over time that deadlines were merely a suggestion. Excuses were commonplace as finger-pointing was always the norm.

The CIO hated the CFO, who really hated the CMO, and all of them hated the CEO who was a sales guy by trade. The organization was a mess and blame easy to assign. Accountability was lost in the confusing data-driven abyss, which provided a safe haven for the ‘cover your ass’ crowd.

Everyone wanted more money for their department. Everyone wanted more electronic toys to sell to enhance the customer experience, but none were willing to ask the customer what they really wanted or needed. Everyone wanted credit when things went well. No one accepted responsibility when projects went south, lost $3M and crashed their system. With this “culture” and management’s egos, nobody was encouraged to peel back the covers and look at the core problems. If someone tried – and Ron tried in his first couple of years – they were called a “smokestack” and were told to focus on their department and quit looking for stuff to fix. Ron remembers thinking, how the heck can we get better if we’re never allowed to talk about the problems?

Oh well. That was a long time ago, and now, Ron Marshall hated his job. He hated the political CYA mentality. He hated the top-down-driven culture. Most of all, he hated that he had become one of them. He was about to show everyone just how much he hated his job.

The weekly status meeting that was about to start would surely be a disaster. The leadership team decided to join the meeting and Ron would be presenting a status update on the Win-To-Fin (WTF) Project. Never did an acronym fit so well for a Windows integration to a financial tool software project. This gave him a bit of secretive pleasure.

Ron opened the meeting with an update that the development team was behind schedule. He explained that the business had changed requirements and now the dev team was in reaction mode. Immediately, the VP of sales and marketing, Vance Palm, went on the attack.

“Our customers are clamoring for this new edition. Why is it taking so long?” Palm asked.

Ron took a deep breath, “This project was planned but we could never get the stakeholders attention long enough to figure out what they really wanted, and we had to get started. There has been constant change. Every time we finish some functionality and think we have a clear path forward someone new from your team gets involved and changes their mind about what we already built. All of these new demands constantly change our team’s direction and creates a bunch of churn!”

Palm leaned forward and pointed his finger, “So it’s our fault you can’t keep your promises? Maybe, just maybe it’s your fault for not managing the project properly. Every time we ask for a date, that date passes and all we do is make excuses to our customers. We promised WTF six months ago, WTF?”

While some laughed, others recoiled. Ron knew there was some truth to what Palm was saying, but it wasn’t all his team’s fault. He pulled up a slide that documented all the changes others had thrown their way along with the impact in time, money, and extra effort his department absorbed. He explained that their process was flawed and too reactive. All the business’ stakeholders felt like they could walk over to their favorite developer and ask them to prioritize their pet feature over all others. It created a chaotic mess!

“As a management team, aren’t you concerned about the ad hoc nature of our internal processes?” Ron asked. “You can blame us but maybe you should look in the damn mirror!”

A sudden hush fell over the room. Ron had just challenged the entire leadership team. Every director made a concerted effort not to make eye contact with anyone in that room. Ron sat down and...continued on page 9
he could feel the eyes staring a hole in him from all directions. Then he looked at the CIO who mouthed, "SEE ME".

About an hour later Ron met with his boss. It wasn’t a long meeting. Five minutes later, Ron was packing up his belongings in a cardboard box and heading home to find a new job. WTF!

**Lesson 6**

As real coaches, we often face the challenge of dealing with self-centered CVA managers. Teams will surely lose with selfish egocentric leadership.

Chapter Seven: Sometimes opportunity comes wrapped in strange packages

As Ron Marshall drove home on that fateful day, he was discouraged and frustrated and frankly, pissed off. He didn’t deserve this. He had worked his butt off, well, at least for a while. Then the "system" got to him and he began acting like the rest of them. “Damn it! I just got fired!” he said out loud.

Now, he was upset with himself and shame came slipping in. “I became part of the problem, too.”

However, the long drive home started to clear his head a little and a thought from a long time ago came creeping back in. It was a saying by his high school basketball coach, and it kept rotating through his thoughts, sometimes opportunity comes wrapped in strange packages.

Ron’s high school coach taught him that philosophy on the day he was demoted as a starter on the Saint Benedict High School team in 1995. That was a hard day, but over time it turned out to be a good one. Ron learned how to compete that day, how to fill a role, and how to help his team win. He accepted the challenge of his new role as the 6th man, and he began to embody the team motto: Every day in every way, we get a little better.

Ron also learned that hard work doesn’t always get rewarded, but focused work for the good of the team was usually rewarded in positive team results. Not only did his high school team win their district championship, but Ron also dedicated himself to better academic performance and eventually earned an academic scholarship to Bozeman Tech. In every way, Ron got better!

“How did I forget all those lessons about teamwork?” Ron reflected on his way home. He was upset, but not with his boss, or his development team, or his company. He was upset with himself. He became a blame agent just like everyone else at the precise time when he could have set the right example.

Why didn’t he take the blame, or take the time to develop some well-thought out solutions, and why didn’t he support and protect his team like he did in high school? Ron thought to himself, Damn it.

This was a tough day and a very hard lesson learned but as he drove, he came back to Sometimes opportunity comes wrapped in strange packages.

**Lesson 7**

If/when you lose your job, take some time to mourn, but only a short time (no more than 5 days, but ideally only 24 hours), then start plotting a path forward. Opportunity truly does come wrapped in strange packages!

Introductory note: Now, we fast forward several chapters to where Ron Marshall (The Geek), through fate, met an assistant coach named ‘Jason’. Eventually, both were asked to apply some of The Geek’s software background and assess Scott Woodward’s (The Coach) losing college basketball program.

Chapter Eighteen: Accepting the truth

Jason and Ron walked into Coach Woodward’s office the afternoon of December 22. “Coach, before we share the full Assessment report, I want to share a sensitive point,” Jason stated. “As you know, we interviewed all our coaches and players. We have captured every conversation, but there was one specific conversation I want you to focus on,” Jason explained.

“One of our objectives was to keep the results anonymous so everyone felt safe to give their honest input. However, when you read the report, I think you’ll be able to associate some of the comments to specific people. And, some of these findings aren’t pretty,” Jason shared, uncomfortably.

Finally, Coach Woodward interrupted, “Listen guys, I asked you to put together an honest report and I expect there is bad news. If there wasn’t, we probably wouldn’t need this assessment. So, just tell me what you need to tell me.”

“Coach, we asked the players questions around how we could get better and while we’ve captured all of the player’s comments, Brian Clark was able to provide what I believe is a brutally honest and mature approach to what we really need in order to be successful both on and off the court,” Jason continued.

Brian Clark was a starting forward for the team and his Dad had played for the Lakers. Brian had a lifelong history around the game at the highest levels. He was smart, thoughtful, and perceptive. Brian never mixed words and was seen as a team leader.

“I asked Brian, ‘What do you think the team needs to do to be more productive and become more successful?’”

Recounting Brian’s answer, Jason swallowed hard and paused for a second. Then he shared, “Coach is a fraud when it comes to what he says and how he acts sometimes. I love Coach but think about how he challenges us. Everyday Coach challenges us to concentrate on the little things. He talks about executing the little things versus winning and losing. He says winning takes care of itself when you prepare well and execute the little things. Don’t worry about wins and losses, instead trust each other and trust the process. Yet, at the end of every timeout, we say ‘1-2-3 WIN!’ That is an insult to me and every player. Doesn’t he know we all want to win? He teaches us to trust each other and trust the process, yet all he is really focused on is winning.”

Jason stopped reading as he watched his head coach drop his head into his hands and covered his eyes. There was still one last thing Brian had to share and so Jason read on, “If trusting the process is really where Coach Woodward is focused, then why can’t we all focus on the same things, and then maybe winning will actually begin to take care of itself?”

Coach Woodward stood up and looked out his window that overlooked their practice facility. There was Brian Clark in the gym working on his game. Woodward knocked on the window and got Brian’s attention. The head coach waved to Clark, smiled, and gave him a thumbs up!

**Lesson 18**

Jason delivers a hard message to Coach Woodward. Notice Coach Woodward never challenged the perception of himself as a ‘fraud’. As a leader, ask for the truth and be prepared to hear the truth.

As I’m sure you can imagine, the story continues on as they work through the ups and downs of life and leadership. Whether you are a business leader, ScrumMaster, or 3rd grade coach, we hope you will find a few lessons in here that resonate with you and that you can apply right now to help you move forward, make better decisions, and build your own kick-butt culture. If you are interested, you can find The Coach and The Geek on Amazon, and if you’d like a signed copy, track us down and we’d be happy to sign it for you.
In beginning to craft this article, I thought “How can I possibly keep people awake while reading this topic?” Then I remembered a quote from Thomas Jefferson, “People, like nations, are motivated by self-interest.” I understand that! I also understand it’s only human nature for people to tune into WII-FM (“What’s In It - For Me”).

So I began thinking “How am I going to pique their WII-FM interest?”. Well, I don’t know how successful I’ll be, but let me just start off with this statement: I guarantee you…we need more good leaders!

About now, some readers are thinking “Are you talking to me?” and a whole lot of others are thinking “You got that right!”. So we’re going to chat about Leadership and IT Culture for a while, and as we’re doing so, I want you to ask yourself…are you part of the solution, or part of the problem.

Let’s begin with one of the greatest myths - leaders are born and not made. Here are many examples of learned leadership capacities and competencies, and I’d like to address a few…

**Accountability** - Leaders have no problem being held accountable - for the acts, deeds of themselves and their people. Yep – it’s painful sometimes, but it’s wrong to take the credit when things go well then pass the buck when they’re not!

**Character** - People of exceptional character stand out from the crowd because they develop the wisdom and strength to know and do the right thing! Consider the ‘Seven Cs’ of character: conscience, compassion, consideration, confidence, control, courage, and competency; as these are what make a difference to those we lead, train, motivate, and mentor.

**Persistence** - Calvin Coolidge expressed the importance of persistence: “Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with great talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.” (I couldn’t have said it better!)

**Vision** - The leader has the vision to see the potential in every situation, Wayne Gretsky, the great hockey player, said that to be good, he skates to where the puck will be rather than where it is. Vision is seeing where you want to be, then designing a course to get you and your team there.

So, does your leader see these capability and competency traits in you – and if not, why not?

If you’re still reading, then THANKS; and please allow me to share some other leadership traits I know lead to success!

**Leaders multitask** - What element is in the shortest supply today, and tomorrow? Time! The future belongs to the leader who can juggle a dozen enigmas at once. And with the greatest of respect to all those with testosterone still reading this article, if you think about it…who usually manages more things at once? Who usually takes care of the details? Who finds it easier to meet new people? Who asks more questions in a conversation? Who is a better listener? Who encourages harmony and agreement? Who works with a longer to-do list? Who’s better at keeping in touch with others? It’s often the women, not the men. That’s why we’re seeing more and more women selected for leadership positions; and I’ve learned that we, as men, could often improve our multitasking skills. (…and as a guy, I know this is sad but true!)

**Leaders make mistakes, and own them** - Nobody, repeat NOBODY, gets it right the first time, every time. I rarely, if ever, tell my boss what I do right, but when I mess up something, I have no qualms about saying “Hey, boss I didn’t get that right and I know what I did wrong” Winston Churchill said it best: “Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.” Most mistakes are unintentional; however, when they occur…recognize them quickly, deal with them quickly, then move on quickly. (That’s NOT a sign of weakness, it’s a sign of strength!)

**Leaders love variety** - Unfortunately, I think a word which somehow transitioned from good to bad is “diversity.” The 20+-year-old case for diversity has always been “it’s the right thing to do.” Well, diversity isn’t a ‘right thing’ - it’s the essential thing. If I have any success as a leader, it’s because of the diversity experienced in my military career, as well as the diversity of different cultures I’ve lived in; such as Saudi Arabia, Germany, Korea…and yes, even Texas. When the world is undergoing sudden change, having diverse people contributing different thoughts, ideas, and feedback truly leads to smarter outcomes!

**Leaders recognize the importance of soft skills such as integrity, values, character, etc.** – Yes, operations are important; yet it’s the soft stuff that real leaders know are equally, if not more, important. That’s why leadership is an art, not a science. If leadership was just about ‘hitting your numbers,’ it’d be a math problem. But leadership isn’t math, it’s a human challenge, and great leaders love solving challenges to drive positive change!

Now, leaders who exhibit the competencies and traits mentioned above can best show the way when they’re in the right environment to foster greatness. Let’s be honest, our technically-focused IT world doesn’t typically exude a culture of organizational greatness. If we’re really honest, most IT cultures are fairly reactive (due to the constantly changing business world), siloed (as technical competency de-emphasizes teamwork), as well as inflexible (as we’re focused on technical IT tasks); making us hesitant to think creatively, act quickly, and properly manage risks.

*This is the norm in way-too-many IT organizations. In my decades-long research in leadership, organizational culture, and change management, I think the following graphic (from Deloitte) is an awesome template exemplifying how leaders can create a customer-focused IT culture.*

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David Babcock
The Greentree Group

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**BELIEFS**

- Technology is a primary driver for a better customer experience
- It can best serve the end customer by partnering with business and functional leaders

**BEHAVIORS**

- Prioritize customer experience
- Know the end customer
- Collaborate cross-functionally on customer-centric projects
- Hold teams accountable
- Measure impact on customers

**OUTCOMES**

- Improved customer experience and satisfaction
- Increased revenue
- Better prioritization of technology investments
- Collaboration across silos

...continued on page 11
...continued from page 10

If you want a great IT-corporate culture, I believe using templates as a foundation will produce some amazing results; such as product stability, timely and cost-effective delivery of goods and services – and yes, even cost benefits. In my opinion, this cultural framework also supports both visionary thinking and risk-taking. Personally, I think this ‘Beliefs > Behaviors > Outcomes’ framework can transform our IT-focused companies to achieve greater success. (Go ahead - give it a thought, then give it a shot!)

In summary, as John Quincy Adams said "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." So stop talking about change…be the change! Good leadership requires you to surround yourself with people of diverse perspectives who can disagree with you without fear of retaliation. Likewise, a company’s culture is the foundation for future innovation. A leader’s job is to build that foundation in both people and organizations with their beliefs, behaviors, and vision for the outcomes.

So, as I asked earlier, are you part of the problem, or will you be part of the solution?

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Three keys to Unlocking Lasting Cultural Change: Embracing diversity, a people-centered approach, and agile principles

Ingage Partners is a purpose-driven Technology and Business Consulting company. We take a people-centered approach to designing, building and delivering strategic business solutions. We aim to help our clients reach their business and transformation goals, while also trying to conscientiously design solutions that also serve the customer. Our approach to delivering solutions often leads to even more significant impacts. We’ve seen silos breakdown, innovation and collaboration improvements, and strategic shifts to be increasingly customer-centric. We’re going to walk through three proven keys to unlocking lasting cultural change for your business:

1. **Diversity that is multidimensional leads to meaningful mindset and cultural shifts**

   To deliver inclusive and innovative people-centered solutions, increasing diversity across technology teams is more important than ever before. Team diversity is multidimensional and should reflect race, gender, socio-economic status, education, age, or other ideologies to best reflect a customer base. Our Thrive Accelerator program addresses the Tech Talent gap to support companies all over the region while developing a more diverse tech sector. We actively recruit, coach and develop new talent from underrepresented and broad backgrounds to jumpstart a successful career in technology. Like many companies in the US, our partner, a major Cincinnati insurance provider, has challenges finding quality IT talent. An executive there expressed interest in the Ingage Thrive Accelerator program as a way to address the shortage of IT talent. We were able to recommend an apprentice, paired with a mentor, for an open quality assurance position. Our mentor onboarded quickly, helped train the apprentice, and recommended quality assurance process improvements. The training worked so well that the apprentice was hired ahead of time. And has since been promoted. Our mentors learn critical leadership skills and our client partners are increasing the diversity of their technology teams without disruption to their business, while also filling staffing needs in a competitive marketplace. After witnessing the success and impact that our program can have, our client partner is now a huge advocate and proponent for our accelerator program.

2. **User Research and Empathy increases team motivation, cohesiveness, and an awareness of impact**

   When we first started working with this major grocer, the product team was focused on getting to parity with the competition. Our client partners didn’t realize they were overlooking incredible opportunities to better serve their customers and employees. An Ingage experience design consultant partnered with user research to create personas that increased empathy and served as reminders to the product team. Our consultant led the team through design sprints, sketching, prototyping, and usability tests to create collaborative and cross-functional solutions that better serve both employees and customers. We witnessed increased team motivation and cohesiveness because of an increased understanding of “the why” behind every product change. The team’s strategy shifted from a focus on the competition to focusing on customer experience. And exposing the full product team to user research has enabled everyone to connect their work to the customer and business impact.

3. **Embracing agile principles and design thinking increases transparency, flexibility, and accountability**

   We’ve witnessed the fastest and most dramatic transformations from client partners that have come to us for full product or project team solutions. We adapt agile and design thinking to their team needs, and coach and train our clients along the way. A major fleet management company reached out to us for help because they were stuck in analysis and needed to modernize their software development process to better fulfill the pressing needs of the business. We not only adapted our process to fit their existing culture, but we continued to flex our team makeup to meet the evolving needs of the business. During the project, we witnessed that light bulb moment, when the team realized that it is possible to deliver something of tremendous value in short sprints. We’ve also witnessed increased transparency and accountability, as stakeholders feel like they are helping to shape the product.

   Our project teams are especially embraced by client partners with a growth mindset; that truly believe that people can adapt, learn, and grow into new roles, new mindsets, and new ways to create innovative product ideas and solutions. We’ve helped a major ministry client partner adapt their agile methodology, their user-centered discovery process, and have enabled them to scale their website and ministry program to serve all their tremendous growth over the past few years. This work prepared them to better fund missions through vendor recommendations and integration efforts, and increase community engagement and service by improving and innovatively updating existing products. But the biggest impact has been to the team culture with an increase in transparency, autonomy, and innovation.

   These agile project teams have adopted agile principles and design thinking in different ways. However, what they have in common is incorporating user research, UX, and design into the SCRUM process distinctly. The ability to be flexible and adaptable is essential for implementing changes with staying power and impact.

   The approach to delivering business solutions is key to unlocking the innovation potential of your teams. To truly partner with a client takes bravery, passion, and the ability to influence to introduce new ways of filling IT Talent gaps, and new ways to deliver people-centered software. At Ingage, we are passionate about our craft, improving team culture, and fueling positive change. This passion extends to passionately pursuing success with our client partners, and leaving a lasting impact on culture.

*About the Author*

Shannon Lewandowski is a Managing Consultant and Design Practice Lead. Passionate about customer experience, Shannon combines her technology acumen, customer empathy, and IT software development and management experience to create meaningful product experiences for Technology leaders.

*About Ingage Partners*

Ingage Partners is a purpose-driven Technology and Business Consulting company. We take a people-centered approach to designing, building and delivering strategic business solutions. We design and build applications that strengthen connections with your customers and improve the way your company works. As an employee-owned B Corp, we aspire to set an example of how business can be a force for good in our community.

https://ingagepartners.com/

For additional information please contact Leslie Peterson, Client Success Director. leslie.peterson@ingagepartners.com or call 513.533.2104
Does the conventional CIO role include responsibilities it should not hold? Should the role have additional responsibilities it does not currently include?

The role of the CIO is certainly shifting. It’s not about just running the network (although that definitely matters!). I consider myself a business leader, first and foremost. I happen to specialize in technology and my role is to be an enabler and create an organization that’s a market differentiator for CareSource.

What does a good culture fit look like in your organization? How do you cultivate it?

I think about culture on two dimensions: you need to get really clear about what we are all about and how we expect every person in the organization to “show up”. Cultivating culture takes a lot of intention. It’s about every interaction you have - all the small stuff - and creating space and time to talk about it with our leaders and everyone in the organization.

What advice would you give to aspiring IT leaders?

Be really clear about what matters to you. Take chances in your career – you never know where they might lead. Your career should be one that brings you joy, not one that meets a mold that someone else creates for you.

What has been your greatest career achievement?

I’m very proud of a lot of things and there are a lot of failures that have given me my best life lessons. I think I’m most grateful for the relationships I’ve made along the way. I have an amazing network of brilliant, honest and genuine people who challenge me, make me laugh and help me figure out the really hard stuff.

Looking back with 20/20 hindsight, what would you have done differently?

Don’t worry so much – it’s all going to work out just fine!
Announcing the 14th Annual Taste of IT Conference
November 18, 2020 | Southwest Ohio

Call for Papers – Proposals are due by June 30, 2020
www.surveymonkey.com/TOIT20CFP

Technology First is seeking proposals for speaker participation in the 2020 Taste of IT Conference. A session can be a formal presentation of a successful implementation, administrative solution, or technical solution. Topic content must focus on information technology and may range from introductory to advanced or from operational to strategic.

Each program session will last 50 minutes, including 10 minutes for Q&A. All proposals will be reviewed by the TOIT20 Conference Committee and proposal respondents will be notified of decisions on or after July 31st.

Wondering if you should submit? Here are a couple reasons we think you should!

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» Speaking to current and leading edge topics builds **brand exposure** AND positions you and your company as thought leaders in technology

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Technology First | MAY-JUNE 2020
What are your fellow Members doing for You & the Community?

Advanced Technology Consulting (ATC)
Advanced Technology Consulting (ATC) has been working diligently with clients and community organizations to assist with their work-from-home (WFH) initiatives. ATC has deep expertise within the cloud communications (VoIP, UCaaS, CCaaS) and conferencing space (Webex, Zoom). ATC has also been assisting with networking and bandwidth upgrades necessary to support WFH. Check out these 30 COVID-19 promotions—many free—offered by ATC providers.
Contact Louie at ATC to see what fits your needs and if ATC can help (513-323-1131 or louie@4atc.com)

BBC Technology Solutions
BBC Technology Solutions is helping companies across the US by providing refurbished, business-class IT hardware to employees who are working remotely. Laptops, Desktops, and LCD monitors can be configured to your company’s needs and delivered plug and play ready.
Contact Michael Sutter msutter@bbctechnologysolutions.com for more details!

Chi Corporation
Chi Hot Buys - In these uncertain times, one thing is certain – manufacturers are ready to deal.
It’s a buyer’s market and if you have an IT project scheduled for 2020 you could save a considerable amount of money by taking advantage of these vendor incentives now. Financing, special terms, and leasing are available. Chi Hot Buys will be updated regularly so check back often.
https://chicorporation.com/company/hot-buys/
Jeff Turner: jturner@chicorporation.com

Cincinnati Bell
Existing Customers: Effective Monday, March 16th, all Hosted UC customers are eligible for work-from-home features, for all of their users, at no additional cost through June 15, 2020. Employees will be able to answer their business line from home, along with placing and transferring calls, over the internet using the UC-One application installed on their mobile device or PC.

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Ellen Miller: Ellen.Miller@cinbell.com or 937-344-1196

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Kyle Louder: Kyle.louder@kizan.com or 513-618-8988

Library Resources for You!
In accordance with Governor DeWine’s stay-at-home order, public libraries are closed until further notice. While the physical libraries remain closed, there is a wealth of digital content available from the online libraries of Washington-Centerville Public Library, Dayton Metro Library, Greene County Library and others.
With your library card, you can learn a new language, take classes through Lynda.com, read books, watch movies, get homework help, and more. Check out the resources your local library has available and apply for a library card online:
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Info-Tech Research Group
At this critical time, Info-Tech Research Group wants to help IT leaders make a difference within their organization.
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Jessica Jenkinson: jjenkinson@infotech.com

TECHNOLOGY FIRST MEMBER BENEFIT:
Info-Tech’s COVID-19 Recession Resource Center includes over 500 pages of power point strategy guides, 16 communication ready templates and 8 excel tools.

Vartek
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Click here for job opportunities to support educators.
COVID-19
RESPONSE PANEL
Thursday, May 7th | 11:30am – 1:00pm
Virtual

From Women 4 Technology:
Danielle Chaney
Account Manager - Network Infrastructure and Information Security, TEKsystems

From Women 4 Technology & the CEO Council:
Lisa Couture
VP of Operations, Edge Webware

From the CIO Council:
Treg Gilstorf
CIO, Yaskawa Motoman Robotics

From the Infrastructure/Cloud SIG & Security:
Jon Scruggs
Infrastructure Manager, Hobart Service

From Data Analytics:
Tim Wells
Manager IT Development, Speedway

What questions do you have for the panel?
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COVIDPanelQuestions

Modern Office Methods / Full Service Networking
Time to sanitize?
MOM & FSN have some advice on how to clean your printers and copiers and how to stay safe at home!

Cleaning Guide // Staying Safe at Home
MOM: Leah Seymour at leah.seymour@momnet.com or 937-313-4863
FSN: Bill Baele at Bill.Baele@FullService.net or 937-623-6804

Nutanix
During these unprecedented times, remote working has become more important than ever. IT teams need to provide their employees the tools and solutions to be able to telework. In this story, learn how virtual desktop technologies such as Nutanix Xi Frame are enabling employees to work from anywhere on any device.

Nearly three-quarters of IT respondents to the 2019 Enterprise Cloud Index Survey by Nutanix reported moving applications back onto private infrastructure from the public cloud, but why? In this story check out some of the challenges teams are facing with the public cloud and why they are moving away from it.

Nate Pache: nate.pache@nutanix.com

Robert Half Technology
As action plans are forming for COVID-19, Robert Half Technology / Creative Group is helping to support clients and candidates with the transition to remote work. We’ve developed procedures to help with this real-time initiative, procured laptops and have candidates ready to help with any work that allows remote access. Additionally, we are currently offering four hours of complimentary training for Microsoft Teams (free, six-month trial) through our subsidiary Protiviti. We’re here to help anyone who has been impacted and finds themselves without a job during this challenging time.

For more information, call us at (937) 224-7442.

Red Hawk Technologies
Red Hawk Technologies Offers a Low-Cost Text Messaging Service to Assist Businesses During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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TEKsystems
Support COVID-19 call volume with digital solution

With the announcement of the various economic relief programs, the average call center is experiencing an increase upwards of 75% in call volume due to questions concerning COVID-19.

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Writers: Our mission is to support the growth of Greater Dayton's information technology industry. Technology First provides a forum for educators, business and technical professionals to communicate their expertise and lessons learned while working in the field. Please submit the article in Word, preferably with 500 to 700 words, with any graphics in pdf form to info@technologyfirst.org. Please include your name, business organization, business address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and a brief description of any professional accomplishments. Please also include a digital photograph if available.

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CREATING A COMMUNITY TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE, GROW BUSINESS AND BUILD FOR THE FUTURE.

Established in 1997

20 BOARD MEMBERS
- 4 Quarterly Meetings

170+ CORPORATE MEMBERS

12 ANNUAL PARTNERS

CREATING A COMMUNITY

SHARE KNOWLEDGE

DATA ANALYTICS
- 20+ Attendees Each Session
- 7x/year
- Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning
- Analytical Algorithms
- Data Strategy & Analysis Tools
- IoT Applications

INFRASTRUCTURE/CLOUD
- 15+ Attendees Each Session
- 7x/year
- Trending Infrastructure and Cloud Topics
- Maintenance & Security

WEBSITE
- 26,000+ Unique Annual Visitors
- Helps IT Buyers find Suppliers
- Locate Resources in our Region
- RFP & Referral Requests

TECH SOURCE
- Expert Articles contributed by Members
- 1,000+ Mailed to IT Professionals
- 70,000+ readers

E-NEWSLETTER
- 4,000+ Subscribers
- Event News
- Job Opportunities
- Member Highlights
- Annual Partner Recognition

SCAN TO SIGN-UP FOR EMAILS

TECHNOLOGY FIRST LEADERSHIP AWARDS
Recognizes contributions of Technology professionals (each May)
- Outstanding Technology Team
- Best IT Services Company
- IT Executive of the Year
- Emerging Tech Leader
- Most Promising Startup
- Award of Excellence - Student Project

TECH THURSDAYS
- Casual After Hours Networking
- 5x/year

WOMEN 4 TECHNOLOGY
Both in Dayton and Cincinnati (7x/yr)
Four Areas of Focus
- Leadership
- Networking
- Professional Development
- Mentoring

MUNICIPALITY IT
- IT Leaders, City Managers, and MSP’s of Municipalities
- Smart Cities and Leading Edge Topics

TECH FORUMS
- 50+ Attendees Each Session
- CIO Council open to all of membership
- 3x/year (January, April, October)
- Recognized Thought Leaders

2 ANNUAL CONFERENCES

TASTE OF IT
- 14th Annual 11/18/20
- Tracks: Executive, Strategy, Security, Analytics, Infrastructure/Cloud, Dev/Programmers
- 400+ Participants
- 30+ Speakers
- 40+ Exhibitors

OHIO INFORMATION SECURITY CONFERENCE
- 17th Annual 3/11/20
- Tracks: Executive, Technical, Operations, Resiliency, Governance, and Workforce
- 350+ Participants
- 30+ Speakers including Expert Panels
- 30+ Exhibitors

BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

DIGITAL MIXER
- Annual Casual Career and Networking Night (February)
- 35+ Employers
- 200+ Students
- Local Colleges and Universities

TECH FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS
- $5,000 in Scholarship Money to 5 students
- 2019 Winners from Sinclair College, Wright State University, and Cedarville University

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS
K-12 ENGAGEMENT

JOB POSTINGS
- Unlimited Position Postings for Members
- Full-time, Part-time, and Internship Opportunities

WORKFORCE FORECAST & SALARY SURVEY

Technology First | MAY-JUNE 2020
2020 EVENTS

CIO COUNCIL
(Executive Leadership Only - 11:30-1pm)
January 16 - Tech Forum (Open Event)
    Annual CIO Forecast Panel: Dayton Children's, Speedway, Central State University, WPAFB
February 20 - Bracketology: March Madness Analytics
April 14 - virtual: CIO Strategies in COVID-19
May 7 - virtual: ALL SIGS: COVID-19 Response Panel
May 21 - virtual: Digital Customer/Employee Experience
June 12 - virtual: Data Panel
July 9
August 14
September 10
October 8 - Tech Forum (Open Event)
December 3

CONFERENCES
(Open to ALL)
OISC (Security) - March 11
Taste of IT - November 18
(TOIT Call for Presentations open until June 30)

SPECIAL EVENTS
(Open to ALL)
Digital Mixer - February 12, 2020
Leadership Awards - TBD

TECH THURSDAYS
(Open to ALL - 5-7pm)
February 13 - Firebirds @ Austin Landing
June 11 - TBD: this event may be affected by COVID-19
July 9 - TBD: this event may be affected by COVID-19
August 27
November 5

DATA ANALYTICS
(Open to ALL - 8:30-10am)
January 10 - Sports Analytics
February 28 - Jupyter Notebooks
May 7 - virtual: ALL SIGS: COVID-19 Response Panel
May 15 - virtual: Optimization Recommendation Engine
August 21
October 2
December 4

INFRASTRUCTURE/CLOUD
(Open to ALL - 11:30-1pm)
January 10 - Trends in Cloud Native Approaches for New App Development & Legacy Production Apps
February 28 - Agile Methodology in Infrastructure
May 7 - virtual: ALL SIGS: COVID-19 Response Panel
May 15 - virtual: Journeys to the Cloud
August 21
October 2
December 4

WOMEN 4 TECHNOLOGY
DAYTON:
January 22 - Meaningful Mentoring
May 7 - virtual: ALL SIGS: COVID-19 Response Panel
June 3 - TBD: this event may be affected by COVID-19
September 16
CINCY:
February 5 - Roadmaps to Mentoring
May 7 - virtual: ALL SIGS: COVID-19 Response Panel
August 12
December 9

MUNICIPALITY IT
City Managers & Muni IT Leaders
Spring meeting cancelled due to COVID-19
September 24
December 10

CISO COUNCIL * SMALL-MEDIUM BUSINESS * DEVELOPERS
For Registration and Membership information, visit www.technologyfirst.org or call 937-229-0054

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