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## Letter from the Editor: The Final Stretch

By: [Scott St. John](#)

I may be the only person who is saddened to see the end of 2020. I fully realize the challenges many people have faced over the last year and the devastating impact COVID-19 pandemic has had around the world. My sympathy goes out to everyone effected by the coronavirus in so many different, challenging, and tragic ways. I just had a different experience. For me, this year was full of unique opportunities that would not have occurred if it had not been for the unique challenges presented by the pandemic.



Saddened, is probably not the right word to describe my sentiment as 2020 came to a close. Grateful is. I am grateful for all that 2020 brought so that we could survive and thrive through a historic, global catastrophe. I am thankful for all the people that made it possible, and for those we were able to protect. And for those who made it their mission to protect others. The companies, services and technology that made it all possible. The regulators and innovators, who brought to bear a vaccine in a fraction of the time a vaccine has ever been produced – in months not years.

At *Pipeline*, we had the opportunity to creatively transform and expand our business. *Pipeline* had already been virtual with remote workers around the world for many years, but we had to look at new ways to provide more value to our customers who had been impacted by the pandemic. We had to invent new services to help them grow, and *Pipeline* grow as a result too. This was backed by government programs who supported small businesses through this challenging time, when new customer revenue seemed scarce.

At home, we had to get creative as well. I had the opportunity to spend much more quality time with my family doing the things indoors and outdoors that we love to do, and to discover new gems like going to the drive-in movies. We had to reinvent our retail experience, and uncover new ways to get the things we need delivered to our door. We had to quickly learn how to keep

ourselves safe, sanitizing everything that came into our home and donning personal protective equipment (PPE) if we had to go out. We stocked-up on Clorox wipes and bought UV lights for incoming packages and outerwear. We got n95 masks, respirators, and gloves which we distributed to family, friends, and healthcare workers - many of whom are working on the front lines fighting the pandemic. And, most of all, nobody got COVID-19. It wasn't luck, I did the research early on, was able to acquire what we needed, and chart a course to do what we needed to do to circumnavigate what could have been a complete travesty and turn it into opportunity.

If you have been reading my Letters from the Editor articles since [March 2020](#) in the [past issues](#) of *Pipeline*, you've have a front-row seat to my journey and perspective as we as an industry navigated through the pandemic. They are a good read, and I recommend everyone read them in retrospect, reflection, and contemplation as we move into the new year. As I wrote in my April, [COVID Tipping Point](#) article and Letter, the pandemic will have lasting impacts. Some good, some not so good. The transformation some businesses have undergone has the potential to help both customers and shareholders. But the impacts and transformation projects require deep consideration, and a new path needs to be charted.

We are now coming down the final stretch of this journey, it's time to look to the future, and define exactly what we want that to be. This may be our last chance to capitalize on the unique opportunities, trends, and technology that 2020 has brought to bear, and to transform with it. This is the final stretch, and it may be darkest before the dawn. But one thing seems certain, the end is in sight and now is the time to prepare. It is not dissimilar to the beginning of the pandemic. it's time to do the homework and define a roadmap to prosperity. Which is why this issue of *Pipeline* is so important.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we start with Intel and the [use case for high-performance computing \(HPC\) and AI for data center optimization](#). NordVPN Teams' CTO shares insights on securing enterprise cloud environments utilizing [an alternative to VPN split tunneling](#) and Aryaka explores the benefits of a [cloud-first WAN architecture](#). Windstream Wholesale demonstrates [intelligent CDCF networking](#) and agile fiber-optic architectures. Bluebird Network talk [trends for data centers](#) for 2021 and beyond. We look use cases for [monetizing 5G, edge and cloud](#) through the lens of IBM Digital Transformation Solution team. ORBCOMM describes the new, [vital role of satellite](#) for industrial IoT, PacketLight shows us [the path to 400G migration](#), and CommScope gives us a look at [what DOCSIS 4.0 means for broadband](#). All this plus the latest [industry news](#) and [more](#).

Wishing you all the best, health, and prosperity in the new year,

**Scott St. John**

Managing Editor

*Pipeline*

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