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## Letter from the Editor

By: [Scott St. John](#)

The New Year is burgeoning with optimism. I mean, how much worse can it get?

For many, including those in and close to the *Pipeline* family, the year started with a harsh surprise that the COVID-19 vaccines actually don't prevent you from getting or transmitting COVID. Which, if you've been reading my letters, shouldn't really come as a surprise at all.



In my [March 2021 letter](#), I raised that very question. [In August 2021](#) and [September 2021](#) I raised the issue again when an alarming number of break-through cases began to emerge among fully vaccinated groups and individuals. In September, I wrote “What’s worse is that vaccinated people felt protected. The narrative gave them a warm, fuzzy safety blanket. Many people believed not only that they could not get COVID, but they could not transmit COVID, creating a super-spreader army hundreds of millions strong.”

Only recently, government and health care officials have begun to change their narrative around vaccines (to primarily reducing severe disease) and the importance of masking. And not just any masks, but n95 or better. Another issue I have been promoting through virtually every channel I have, including underscoring in my [February 2021](#) letter and again in [September 2021](#). I have literally been handing out n95s like Halloween candy throughout the pandemic. But sadly, the list of COVID infections grows and grows. And the pandemic seems to creep closer and closer to home. So, what about that optimism?

Well for starters, it's always darkest before dawn. What is being called [“natural immunity,” as defined as immunity from natural infection\) is proving to be more protective than two doses of the vaccine](#) (but not three). And we already know that the vaccine reduces severe disease and

seemingly hospitalizations, so far. So it stands to reason that two or three doses of the vaccine and natural infection might just do the trick. As the new variant, Omicron rips through the population we should – at least in theory – be rapidly approaching the fabled herd immunity.

Maybe – just maybe – this is it. Perhaps the pandemic will soon be behind us. It’s a possibility, and not unlike what happened with the Spanish Flu. However, that’s not where the optimism ends, but where it begins.

The New Year is nothing but full of possibilities. Despite the pandemic, we have continued to live, work, and thrive. The industry has continued to innovate and impressive technical progress continues to be made. And it is all being done with people in mind.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we explore the many facets of network transformation. Colt demonstrates how [AI and ML can be applied to RPA](#) for automated network management and monitoring to improve CX and better harness the human element. We chat with CloudSmartz about how to [achieve CX Nirvana](#) by leveraging legacy systems and networks versus rip-and-replace strategies. RouteThis explores the proliferation of in-home connected devices and how ISPs can address [CPE fragmentation](#) for a better customer experience. CableLabs and SCTE tell us about the evolution to DOCSIS 4.0 and Telit shows us how to [foolproof IoT network connectivity](#). Nokia demonstrates how CSPs can [unlock 5G network services and opportunities](#), DataStax explores [cloud-native best practices](#) for migrating to the cloud, and NFINIT reveals common [ransom risks and a multilayered approach to protect data](#). All this plus the latest industry [news](#) and [more](#).

We hope you enjoy this and every issue of *Pipeline*,

**Scott St. John**

Managing Editor

*Pipeline*

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