
CHRIS BLANDING

• Milwaukee, WI.

Dear Hiring Manager:

Hello! I am writing in response to the open CIO position. As a technology and business professional with 20 years of progressive leadership experience, I know my passion, creativity, and collaboration skills will make me an asset to your company.

As you will see from my resume, the first part of my career was spent gaining experience in all areas of IT, the second focused on progressively increased levels of leadership responsibility. Most recently I held the position of CIO for Journal Media Group in Milwaukee, a company formed from the merge and spin of Journal Communications, Inc. and the E.W. Scripps Company. I was responsible for building the IT department for the new company from the ground up. This involved but was not limited to defining the budget, building the teams, splitting and building data centers, applications, and all other facets of the IT operations.

I'm a competitive person who prides himself on fiscal responsibility, expense management, and aligning technology with business goals. I gain satisfaction in finding creative ways to improve workflow productivity through the effective and efficient use of technology, always with a focus on customer experience.

I'm excited about the possibility of being involved with your organization and welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the value I can bring. I appreciate the consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Chris Blanding

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TECHNOLOGY AND BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

Passionate, competitive and creative leader with 20 years of progressive experience building teams and aligning resources to achieve organizational goals with profitability, and efficiency. Skilled relationship builder and trusted advisor. Pivotal resource for M&A planning and integrations. Key proficiencies include:

- Budget Accountability
- Expense Management
- Talent ID & Retention
- Customer Experience
- Change Management
- Workflow Productivity
- Strategic Planning
- Collaboration
- Communication

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

JOURNAL MEDIA GROUP, INC. (NYSE: JMG) Milwaukee, WI.

Media company publishing newspapers and affiliated digital products across the U.S.

Chief Information Officer April 2015 - April 2016

Executive IT leadership position responsible for all company technology including applications, infrastructure, architecture, security, planning, process re-engineering, IT operations, support, and external relationships. Focusing on innovation, collaboration, customer experience and solving business challenges through the efficient and effective use of technology.

- Responsible for all post-close and year-long IT transition efforts related to the new Journal Media Group, Inc. company as well as all IT activities related to the spin-offs and mergers between Journal Communications, Inc. and the E.W. Scripps Company. Notable accomplishments included:
 - Contract reviews, negotiations, splits, and assignments.
 - Execution of approved transition and steady state designs for the new JMG IT.
 - Implementation of infrastructure, security, systems, and enterprise applications, as well as stand up of new primary and secondary data centers, failover testing, AD migrations, and email migration from Google to O365.
 - Execution of Transition Service Agreements ahead of schedule and below budget.
 - Recruitment and filling of positions for the new company IT org chart with continued review and refinement for further efficiencies and cost savings.
 - Preparation and presentation of weekly IT status updates to merger steering committee.
- Performed IT due diligence associated with the receipt of indication of interest from two third parties (Gannett Co, Inc. and Party A). Diligence included but was not limited to contract reviews, requests for information, and presentation of IT structure, proficiencies, projects, and processes.
- Oversaw IT integration efforts related to Gannett Co, Inc. acquisition of Journal Media Group, Inc. This included IT planning and preparation for Day 1 to meet business goals, as well as evaluation and knowledge transfer of IT systems, personnel, and processes to assist acquisition efforts.
- Successfully led publishing ERP migration and implementation for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel while simultaneously performing major version upgrades at 13 remote sites in 2015.
- Successfully migrated and implemented new advertising and CRM systems at 10 sites to meet an aggressive 10 month project timeline.
- Provided oversight and governance to company-wide Ceridian Dayforce implementation.
- 2015 year end IT expense budget finished \$2MM under plan due in part to reduced travel in favor of remote collaboration, reduced professional services, and staff re-alignments.

JOURNAL COMMUNICATIONS, INC. (NYSE: JRN) Milwaukee, WI.
Diversified business with expertise in television, radio, and publishing.

VP, Information Technology May 2014 - April 2015

Responsible for all IT operations. Focused on providing effective and timely solutions to help achieve business goals and improve user productivity.

- Responsible for all design and preparation of information technology systems, policies and plans for the new Journal Media Group, Inc. company, as well as all IT activities related to the spin-offs and mergers between Journal Communications, Inc. and the E.W. Scripps, Company. Notable accomplishments included:
 - Due diligence on budgets, contracts, personnel, technology inventory, and strategy.
 - Represented IT at merger kick-off summit to begin transition and project planning.
 - Created IT project charter with key decisions, risks, personnel assignments, and milestones.
 - Prepared transition and future state designs for JMG IT including direct and payroll expense budgets, new IT org chart, infrastructure, and application roadmaps.
 - Created month by month storyboards outlining technology transition work.
 - Defined costs and timelines for transition service agreements for the transition year.
 - Oversaw creation of detailed day 1 checklists, communications, and war room efforts.
 - Communicated new IT org chart, identified and filled positions with internal promotions and reassignments where applicable.
 - Prepared and presented weekly IT status updates and communicated to merger steering committee throughout transition.
- Responsible for onshoring initiative that reduced IT contract resource expenses by \$800k per year. Transition strategy included a roll-off of contract resources throughout the year while hiring internal resources on a cost neutral basis. Exceeded plan with 250k in savings that year with a moving forward annual cost savings of 800k.
- Led cloud initiative to move systems from company data centers to the cloud where applicable. Systems were independently evaluated for potential to improve redundancy, scalability, agility, and drive cost savings. Examples: Google, Coupa, 8x8, Call Center, Clickability, AWS, Wideorbit, CCI.
- 2014 year end IT expense budget finished \$1MM under plan due to reduction in professional services and reduction of software maintenance costs.

Senior IT Director June 2013 - May 2014

Corporate IT leadership position responsible for end user support, customer experience, application services, business systems analysis, and digital.

- Assumed leadership of publishing custom ERP implementation mid-stream and successfully led cross-functional project team to stabilize major disruptive issues, organize and communicate.
- Assumed leadership for digital team, worked with key stakeholders to identify support challenges, prioritize projects, and improve communication. Implemented after hours support and cross-training processes. Began daily stand up meetings with product managers.
- Responsible for build out of IT business analyst team with mission to add value efficiently by supporting business applications and processes while allowing business units to focus on their core competencies. Secured approval to move key individuals from business units into new team.

- Formed application support team from key help desk personnel to complement business analyst team. Built a feeders system for IT by hiring customer focused individuals to the help desk and utilizing where needed for flexibility.
- Reduced annual expenses by \$400K utilizing newly formed business analyst and application teams to minimize spend on contract professional services by tasking them with project management, planning, execution of patches, upgrades, and finding process efficiencies.
- Successfully led IT planning, integration, support, and training efforts for Nashville Newschannel 5 acquisition. This included personnel, systems, applications, network, security, and broadcast ops.

IT Director, End User Services June 2010 - June 2013

Corporate IT leadership position responsible for end user technology support, solution efficiencies, customer experience, process re-engineering, innovation, and collaboration.

- Successfully led company-wide project to migrate and implement Google email and apps for 3 company division and 3000 users in 3 weekends as planned.
 - Implemented pilot program within IT including users from diverse functional backgrounds across the company to test business use cases and platform viability.
 - Prepared executive proposal with outline of security risk evaluation and ROI model based on capex hardware costs vs subscription cloud model
 - Determined best fit for our business to migrate from on premise distributed Microsoft Exchange environment to Google Apps in the cloud.
- Developed executive proposal with feasibility model, transition plan, risks, and ROI to onshore contract resources with internal resources to improve customer experience, and provide “better, faster, cheaper” support. Secured approval from executive leadership and planned year-long transition to meet current contract end date.
- Developed and implemented a 48 month PC technology refresh plan to update technology and provide more flexibility to end users. Reduced unit price points year after year and cut annual spend in half for years 3 and 4.
- Designed a BYOD strategy that saved \$300K annually by implementing a mobile stipend policy that moved employees from company to individual responsibility plans.

JOURNAL BROADCAST GROUP Milwaukee, WI.

Division of Journal Communication focused on television and radio broadcasting.

IT Manager of Network, Security, & Telecom June 2005 - June 2010

Supervisor of IT Security June 2003 - June 2005

Supervisor of IT Help Desk March 1997 - June 2003

Co-founder of company IT Department, responsibilities and department grew with business needs. Ultimately responsible for all areas of IT including end user support, systems administration, applications, network, security, and telecom.

EDUCATION

B.S., Management Information Technology, Magna Cum Laude • Cardinal Stritch University

OTHER INTERESTS

- Former bass player for local Milwaukee band Pet Engine.
- Former motorcycle track day enthusiast.