

LIMITLESS  
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TRACE3  
2021 Playbook

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## Introduction: The Future Is Limitless

By Rich Fennessy

When I think about the word “Limitless,” I’m naturally drawn to consider our future. What could the future of Trace3 look like? How much control do we have to shape that future? How do we build a future that is free from convention or fear?

A future without limits is certainly compelling, and it fits the kind of entrepreneurial spirit that Trace3 is known for. At the same time, a future without limits can create an overwhelming set of options – the opposite of what we have come to appreciate as Essentialism. Organizations that attempt to focus on everything while becoming expert at nothing are quickly commoditized if not marginalized.

So, how do we balance these two notions – Limitless-ness and Essentialism? How do we give some constraint to future possibilities without stifling our imaginations or creativity? The answer is COLLABORATION and FOCUS.

In his best-selling book “The Future Is Faster than You Think,” Dr. Peter Diamandis outlines the coming prospects of a number of industries, from Retail to Education to Health Care, through the convergence of technologies like the Internet, Artificial Intelligence, and 3D Printing.

For example, using the internet and AI, Uber plans to offer fully operational aerial ridesharing in Dallas and Los Angeles by 2023. That’s two years from now! Imagine, you pick up your phone, open the Uber app, and hail a flying car to take you from Point A to Point B.

Or, consider the use of AI and 3D printing to make human organs. Sound unreal? It’s already here – veins have been printed and scientists have partnered with technologists and physicians to actually bioprint and transplant a human bladder.

The integration of these technologies highlights the power of COLLABORATION. AI, the Internet, and 3D Printing are all very powerful in their own right. But, when integrated with each other, they result in a form of exponential growth that shatters any previous concept of so-called technological progress.

It’s this same thinking that now drives the integration of our new Groupware team. Alone, both organizations have achieved incredible things; together, we can aspire to extraordinary things. And, together as one company, we will amplify our collective performance toward the Trace3 Vision: “To always be an innovator in the industry with a commitment to business value for our clients.”

To succeed, we must show our clients a future without limits. This will require that we make investments to:

- Further Trace3's differentiation around Innovation and Emerging Tech
- Help our clients become more agile, more competitive, and more trusted by their own customers
- Advance our people through programs like Legends to help us become better business consultants
- Strengthen partner engagement initiatives to ensure we are the industry's most-preferred

If we excel at addressing the needs of our brand, our clients, our people, and our partners – and we do it in a repeatable way that can scale – our own future will be Limitless.

So, what exactly will we do in 2021 to achieve this vision? This is where FOCUS comes in.

In the following pages, your Trace3 senior leadership team outlines our annual operating objectives for the next 12 months. We'll start with a review of our Big 6 Strategic Objectives:

- **GROW** – be a market share taker
- **LEAD** – through emerging tech and Innovation
- **DIFFERENTIATE** – with engineering and services excellence
- **EXPAND** – client and partner relationships
- **ENHANCE** – our teammate talent and experience
- **SCALE** – through operational efficiency

From there, each executive will cover the vision and strategy for his or her functional area, addressing in their view why Trace3 has Limitless potential if we all work together (COLLABORATE) and how their team will demonstrate Trace3 Essentialism by being outcome-driven (FOCUS).

It is my sincere hope that this playbook leaves you with a good dose of inspiration to accomplish our 2021 goals. I also hope it provides you the necessary context to connect the dots from your day-to-day work to Trace3's overarching mission, vision, and values. I want to challenge all of us to hold each other accountable to what we are memorializing in this playbook. Collaboration and Focus will ensure that we have the right balance to achieve our Vision.

After a very wild ride in 2020, I can't think of a better team to be a part of as we head into 2021. Here's to building an organization blessed with Limitless potential.

## Vision Statement

To always be an **innovator** in the industry with a commitment  
to business **value realization** for our clients

## Strategic Objectives – The Big 6

**GROW** ... Be a market share taker.

**LEAD** ... Through emerging tech & innovation.

**DIFFERENTIATE** ... With engineering and services excellence.

**EXPAND** ... Client & partner relationships.

**ENHANCE** ... Our teammate talent and experience.

**SCALE** ... Through operational efficiency.

## 2021 Financial Measures & Goals

By Kevin Manzo & Rich Fennessy

Given that our first strategic objective is to **Grow** and “**Be a market share taker,**” we are establishing financial goals for 2021 to ensure that we grow faster than the industry as a whole.

From a top line revenue perspective, we are projecting that Trace3, with the integration of Groupware, will generate more than **\$1.6B** in sales in 2021. This represents significant growth year over year, but top-line revenue, while obviously important, is actually not our preferred growth metric.

The more critical growth metric for our business model is the ability to consistently improve bottom-line profitability or, said another way, our Contribution Margin. As a result, the financial goals we are putting in place for 2021 can be best summarized with this formula: **12:10:15**.

Specifically, we want to ensure that our Gross Profit (GP) generation grows **12% +** in 2021. Fueling this level of performance will be the continued double-digit growth of our services business, supported by a return to growth within our product business, as we assist our clients in their overall IT transformation initiatives.

With the help of our new systems and related processes, we will continue to drive improvements in our operational efficiency as a company. We are targeting our Operating Expenses (OPEX) to grow **10%** year over year, ensuring that our GP growth always exceeds our OPEX growth. With this difference, we can make focused investments across the business, including new Sales talent, increased Services delivery and operations resources, expanded Cloud, Security, and Managed Services capabilities, enhanced skills for team Trace3, and a doubling down of our Innovation and Emerging Tech value proposition.

At these levels of growth in GP and OPEX, we will generate Contribution Margin (CM) growth of **15% +** compared to 2020. And, with this level of CM growth, we will continue to position Trace3 as a leader in our industry.

To ensure we have the insights and visibility to lead us to this level of performance, the Finance and Operations teams will leverage our new systems to provide regional and business unit dashboards and near real-time reporting.

As a team, we have proven that we can execute even in the toughest of environments, and 2021 will once again require a true team effort to ensure we meet our financial goals for the year.

## The WHY

Author and inspirational speaker Simon Sinek gave a TED talk in 2010 that still resonates today. In his speech, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action,” Sinek outlined his principle of the Golden Circle, a layered approach to measuring successful companies.

The Golden Circle is actually the center of a three-ringed model. The outer ring depicts the “What” your company does, the middle ring represents the “How” your company does it, and the inner ring – the Golden Circle – stands for the “Why” your company does what it does.

Sinek proposes that the world’s most successful companies have an extremely clear view of their WHY. Their WHY is a noble, higher purpose that permeates throughout the organization, from the CEO to the front line to the back of the house. With this higher purpose driving the day-to-day decisions and actions of every employee, these companies – who may look identical to their competitors on paper – elevate themselves to extraordinary growth and brand value. Conversely, companies who can only explain their WHAT and, if they are lucky, their HOW, perform with lesser success and indeed often fail.

Sinek, in fact, calls out companies who focus solely on financial metrics as a measure of their “success.” So it’s within this context -- our growth and financial goals -- that we must remember our WHY: “To elevate and secure the lives of our clients, employees, partners, and communities through technology.” Our collective WHY will propel us to achieve our desired strategic objectives – the **Big 6**.

We encourage you to take a minute to reflect on the Growth model – **12:10:15** – in parallel with this line from Sinek: “People don’t buy WHAT you do, they buy WHY you do it.” If we are mindful of our WHY, we most certainly will deliver on the HOW and the WHAT, and we can be confident our strategic Growth objective will be met.



## Sales

By Tyler Beecher

I have always believed in two core principles in our industry:

- “Little happens in a company until a sale is made.”
- “We are all in sales.”

For some, the idea that “We are all in sales” can have a negative connotation, conjuring up images of some high-pressure, bad-breathed buffoon coercing some poor soul into doing something they don’t want to do. Nothing could be further from who we are, or that of our mission!

Here at Trace3, our client teams bear the duty of bringing light and knowledge (choice, freedom, optionality) to people wrestling with issues that plague their organizations and hold them back from their potential. And, if we do things right, we “lose ourselves” in service of those who are betting on us, demonstrating a pure focus on lifting and securing their futures. We do this by delivering game-changing thoughts, technologies, and services that allow them to overcome debilitating challenges, freeing them to navigate toward a much brightened and expanded future.

**For 2021 we have four core priorities:**

### 1. Double the Diamonds!

Although 2020 was a very challenging year, we gained many new clients with big logos who are eager to work with us. We cannot let them down! “Doubling the Diamonds” means we will seize on this momentum and grow three clients in each region that are equal in production to the top three clients in each region today.

You all know the story of the child scrambling up and down the beach hurling washed up starfish back into the surf in order to save them from the rising sun. When challenged by passersby by who pointed out, “You can’t get to all of them!” she joyfully shouts back, “But I can get to these!” 😊

We can’t bring choice, optionality, and freedom to everyone, but to the clients who are betting on us, we will deliver in 2021. We will “Double the Diamonds!”

### 2. Southwest Rebound!

Since the inception of Trace3, the Southwest Region has been the core of our business, with the most existing clients, client teams, and strongest partnerships. Over the last couple of years, we have seen our dominance challenged in certain accounts and underperformance in the overall region.

In 2021 we will all commit to restoring the Southwest Region to where it belongs. We have the right sales and technical leadership in place, and in 2021 we will regain the region’s growth trajectory. This will take all of us “owning” the success of this business, and we are asking each of the Business

Units and all HQ Teams to deliver on a 2021 support plan specific to the region. By creating a large virtual team outside of the local teams, we will grow this business 25 percent in 2021 and get the SouthCoast and Desert markets back where they belong!

### **3. Share Best Practices across Regions**

“Success leaves clues” is a saying that is often repeated around here, and although we may look a little different from market to market, there are plays being run by our best teams that are simply too effective to ignore. In 2021, sales leadership will ensure through weekly and monthly BP (best practice – batting practice) meetings that our best and most effective plays are well understood, digestible, and repeatable throughout all regions.

### **4. Legends!**

It’s been several years since I felt the ground shake (herds of people moving our way) like it has since moving to Phase 2 of our Legends program. As our clients engage in bettering themselves by gaining “Legends” status and certs, we on the client teams are going to help create, support, and sponsor hundreds of our clients through the program. Our goal is to help lift and secure our clients’ careers and to create champions in key accounts who can help move projects forward much faster and with greater impact and outcomes to their overall businesses.

Now for those of you who read one of our favorite books, “Essentialism,” it has probably dawned on you the idea of four (multiple) priorities can be a bit of a contradiction, but that logic only holds true if your priorities are competitive with each other. Ours are highly complementary and success in any of the four areas listed will have a powerful positive effect on the other three.

Thanks to all of you for going “all in” to make 2021 and beyond Limitless!

## Engineering & Services Ops

By Tony Bushell

ATS, Managed Services, and Service Operations will further refine our messaging and approach going into 2021 to ensure that we continue to drive the growth, quality, and profitability of our service offerings.

While we will always ensure some product alignment, additional emphasis and focus will be placed on developing service offerings within partner or technology domains that are not necessarily tied to existing sales motions. This will provide our account teams new conversations to have with our clients and allow us to continue to drive value.

We also will maintain a maniacal focus on making it easier for our account teams to sell our services, to make it easier for our clients to consume our services, and to continue building the number, type, variety, and quality of the offerings that we take to market. We know for sure that there are conversations happening within our clients that we aren't – but could be – taking part in. Or, conversations aren't happening at all because our account teams are unaware of our capabilities or offerings in that space. Those two realities have to be remedied.

To do that will require us to improve the level of strategic integration that we have with the General Managers and account teams, as well as an increase in field-level understanding of our offerings, capabilities, and ideal conversations. We also need to focus on the revitalization of existing offerings to address technology change and client needs. Putting a focus on something like hybrid-cloud allows us to refocus our conversation with the clients and potentially put us in a new space with them.

### 2021 Priorities

To ensure we continue to drive change with and for the account teams, we will provide a greater level of consistency and thought leadership while reintroducing ourselves and reinforcing what we can do. Although there are multiple priorities and various initiatives we need to undertake, they all tie back to the same things:

#### 1. Empowering the Edge

Last year we made a decision to continue our “Juice at the Edge” philosophy and essentially cut the number of HQ resources by half, reallocating that headcount back to the field. We saw exactly what we had hoped – better alignment and more focus on our clients' needs. We want to ensure that the resources we retain at HQ are more specialized skillsets that all teams can take advantage of, but don't make sense to have as part of a regional budget. If we can continue to find outstandingly talented people who can bring “thought-leadership in a box” to our clients around some of the subjects that are most impactful and meaningful to them – like Security or Managed Services – then

we can continue to live up to the second half of the “Juice at the Edge” philosophy by providing “Strength at the Core.”

## **2. Regional Engagement**

To gain better regional alignment requires us to revisit how we’re engaging, and we need to ensure that everyone who is client facing has an understanding of the different offerings and capabilities of the resources within the BU’s. If someone is meeting with clients, we need to ensure that they know what to listen for and when to bring the BU’s in. Additionally, as we spin up new offerings within the groups, we need to ensure that we are training and truly empowering the teams at the edge, consistently working with our clients.

## **3. Process Refinement**

This business is constantly evolving, and we need to evolve with it from both a capability and a process perspective. With 27 percent YOY services growth, we saw some creaks and strain in our processes in 2020 that we intend to address this year with the end goal of providing a smoother and more fluid engagement model to the field, and thereby to our clients. If we can remove some of the “wind resistance” as we book and execute on services engagements and find all the right hand-off interlocks, we can continue to grow our services number in 2021 and beyond.

## **4. Continue to Innovate**

None of the areas within our business remain static for long and we need to continue the evolution of our offerings and capabilities around various technologies we support. Being thought leaders within our fields will require us to ensure that we continue to support and provide vision around the areas that are most relevant to our clients.

## Office of the CTO

By Tony Olzak

### Here be Dragons

“Great strategy comes from curiosity and a desire to do things better—to push the boundaries of what can be done.”

Early mapmakers used terms such as Here be Lions, Here be Beasts, or Here be Dragons, to depict unexplored areas and the unknown. Humankind’s fear of uncertainty inspires the imagination to mythical and very real beasts as a warning to those who would challenge what is unknown.

Conversely, when I think of our theme this year—Limitless—I think of those who push the boundaries of what is possible. "Here Be Dragons" inspires hope and a spark of excitement of journeys to begin. Whether that is creating things that have never existed, or thinking differently about what is generally accepted, I am reminded of early explorers and the thrill of excitement and discovering new worlds.

The future is uncertain and can be scary for many, but what I *know* is we were built for this type of situation to truly thrive. Innovation is in our core DNA. Healthy change is what we champion. Curiosity is king and our desire to challenge accepted thinking is what makes us truly prepared to tackle the future.

As we enter 2021, the overarching vision for the Office of the CTO aligns to the Big 6 Strategic Objectives through three main priorities:

1. Scale and evolve the Innovation value proposition.
2. Enhance our ability to drive client delivery success through effective project leadership.
3. Improve the talent-gap for in-demand skills which are needed for Trace3’s future success.

### 2021 Priorities

#### 1. Scale and evolve our ability to drive the *Innovation value proposition*.

In 2020, Trace3 had more Innovation touch points than in any prior year, including briefings, research analyst readouts, virtual events, etc. The team also worked very closely with Sales to help secure many net new Fortune 500-sized clients, who had never done business with Trace3 before. This was part of our maturation in how we benchmarked and purposefully plotted success for the Innovation team as a whole:

- Facilitate new *revenue streams* by connecting clients with emerging problems to emerging technologies.
- Use Innovation plays to land net new clients and/or new stakeholders in existing clients.
- Release primary research studies, and other high-value knowledge pieces, to provide thought leadership on emerging problems and solutions.

As we continue in a pandemic-state and emerge into a post-pandemic world in 2021, the need for Innovation to accelerate the evolution of how we conduct business will be needed more than ever before. This will require us to scale our existing capabilities while introducing digital experiences to create new channels with our clients.

### **Related “Big 6 Strategic Objectives”**

#### **Grow**

- *Scale the Innovation team* by doubling the number of researchers, expanding our subscription services, hiring additional Innovation Principals for client-facing business development activities, and leveraging new collaboration and workflow platforms to streamline interactions.
- *Increase market share* by leveraging Innovation resources and assets to acquire new logos and expand into new stakeholders at existing clients.

#### **Lead**

- Use digital platforms to expose more clients to Innovation assets and thought leadership through self-service access. Trace3 will release a Digital Experience Platform (DXP) for client-facing interactions this year.
- Improve collaboration between OCTO and the BU’s to become more prescriptive for mid- and long-term planning.

## **2. Enhance Trace3’s ability to drive client delivery success through effective project leadership.**

Over the years Trace3 has matured services capabilities from “Elite Engineering” to “Elite Architecting” to “Elite Consulting.” Two years ago, we created the Management Consulting team to bolster our advisory functions and improve “Elite Execution” as we continued to win opportunities to help business stakeholders drive success across large programs.

As our clients continue to raise the bar on delivery expectations, this year we will merge the Project Management Office, and its associated Project Managers, into the Management Consulting team in a new Practice called Strategic Program Delivery.

### **Related “Big 6 Strategic Objectives”**

#### **Differentiate**

- Unifying Program/Project Management with the Management Consulting team will allow Trace3 to act as *prime contractor* for all technology-related outcomes and exponentially improve our chances of delivering a 7-star experience.
- Services continue to grow more quickly than product sales and the two are becoming more entwined. Integrating the PMO into the greater Management Consulting team gives Trace3 the best opportunity to build a world class project delivery capability by standardizing on best practices and a unifying approach.

### **3. Improve the talent gap for in-demand skills which are critical to Trace3's future success.**

Technology will always introduce trends or entire movements where certain skills will become in demand or almost impossible to find. As Trace3 prides itself on Innovation and Elite-level talent, we will always find ourselves in situations where we need to re-skill and evolve our employees, create towering pipelines of new talent, and maintain pools of pre-approved contractor talent who can be greenlit at a moment's notice.

In order to capture and fulfill opportunities in growth topics, we will need to enhance our ability to identify and secure new talent in a continuous lifecycle.

#### **Related "Big 6 Strategic Objectives"**

##### **Enhance**

- Continue to evolve Legends Program to re-skill existing employees into Cloud and Security with new topics to be introduced in Phase 2.
- Turn the Legends program outward toward clients and prospects to uplift their own skills in high-demand areas and continue to demonstrate thought leadership and value.

##### **Scale**

- Introduce a Staffing Management function for the Cloud team to identify and maintain a talent pool for staff augmentation, contract project workers, and contract-to-hire FTE's that results in immediate access to new skills.
- Acquire full-time technical interviewers to work alongside Staffing Management to accelerate vetting of talent, standardization of interview methodology, and reduction of billing and selling resources in the interview process.

The only thing that is certain is that the future is uncertain. But that is why many of us came to Trace3... to pursue that spark of hope and explore what is over the horizon; to embrace emerging solutions and Innovation to solve tomorrow's problems.

And when others find the courage to follow in our footsteps and brave those uncharted waters, they will find us already there waiting for them to discover where we've already been.

## Marketing & Partnerships

**By Sandy Salty**

Our company's incredible success over the past two decades has been predicated on our ability to evolve our value proposition in the market faster than others and, in essence, redefine what clients and prospects should expect from a technology partner.

That unyielding desire to be different and to stay different is what led us toward developing many of the powerful brand levers we enjoy today — our VC network and briefings, the Evolve technology conference, our Executive Services offerings, our Founders Formula podcast, the Legends program, and more.

In 2021, we intend to amplify our efforts around differentiation by a) leaning into key areas that separate us from others in the industry and b) expand our efforts around sales enablement to capture more market share.

Differentiation includes aligning our brand to greater causes such as Trace3 Cares and the Legends program. These programs are designed to lift people and align their skillsets to evolving and growing markets. We have the brand, the influence, and tenure as a company to lift our communities and play a part in shaping the next generation of talent and we are starting with our people through the Legends program. In the process of lifting our people, we are also lifting our partner community as we double down on partnerships like Palo Alto Networks, Microsoft Azure, Cisco, and Netapp who align to our investment markets and will be gaining more executive leadership attention. We also will leverage industry awards, social engines, and multi-pronged campaigns to amplify the expertise in our investment markets, specifically Security, Cloud, and Managed Services.

Sales enablement includes continuing to garner the mindshare and bias of partners and emerging manufacturers through campaign strategy and unique programs like the Velocity Partner Program (VPP). This includes building marketing and sales tools to source new accounts and new business as part of our demand generation focus. As part of our sales enablement efforts, we will expand Trace3's dedicated ecommerce portals capabilities, establish a presence on the Azure marketplace, win wires, and continue building content and sales tools within focus areas.

### **2021 Priorities**

#### **1. Brand Differentiation & Amplification (Grow)**

- Human Impact" Approach to PR (T3 cares, Legends, Intern program created by POH)
- Brand of Excellence – double the pursuit of industry awards
- Refresh and relaunch Trace3 Website and make it different, elegant, and smart
- Define digital experience platform strategy with Office of CTO
- Reinforce messaging of expertise in Cloud, Security, and Managed Services through industry awards, social strategy, and thought-leadership content
- Continue focus on Legends Program and take Legends marketing externally



## **2. Partner Engagement (Expand)**

- Capture partner mindshare with multi-pronged campaigns in security and cloud
- Leverage Demand Gen to bring new business to the partners
- Heighten focus on partner growth through the Velocity Partner Program, “All for One” approach to partnerships

## **3. Demand Gen (Grow, Expand)**

- Cement Demand Gen & Content Strategy to drive new business (define tools/MarTech stack to achieve this)
- Focus efforts where there is appetite and on growth regions
- Repeat & refine marketing campaigns and sales tools for Cloud, Managed Services, Security
- Expand Ecommerce Capability
- Implement Microsoft Azure Marketplace
- Continue to build Win Wires – awareness and usage

## IT Systems & Processes

By Danny de Hoyos

The Operations team's overarching vision for 2021 and beyond is to develop a framework in our processes and systems that allow for maximum efficiency and scalability while providing a consistently superior experience for our internal and external customers. The Operations team sees themselves as a "mini Trace3" within the company, and our goal is to serve internal client teams as we assist our end-user customers.

Solving our internal business challenges with smart technical solutions is crucial to allow flexibility at the edge for each local business market. Our team serves each customer's individual IT needs while providing a framework that delivers consistently superior results from market to market.

We believe using technological solutions and internal systems with our processes embedded will prevent a bottleneck, red tape, and bureaucracy while providing a structural framework that will allow us to scale as a business for explosive growth in the years to come.

### 2021 Priorities

Our top three priorities for 2021 will be to fine-tune our new NetSuite system by taking us into a walk and then run phase by Q4, complete project "Amplify" by integrating the Groupware acquisition, and ensure resources are used effectively to maximize the benefit of the organization.

#### 1. NetSuite

As we complete the list of priority two and three requests in the system by the end of Q1, we will effectively have all the capabilities of our old systems with some significant "real-time" enhancements and reporting functionalities we have never had in the past. In Q2, we will slow down to focus on our Amplify project but will be back into full swing in Q3 to aggressively complete the new enhancements requests allowing us to be more nimble and have access to information in ways we never have before. In addition to continuing to upgrade and fine-tune our systems, we include in this priority the full-scale completion of our internal security roadmap. This roadmap will allow Trace3 to pass certifications such as SOC2, PCI, and CMMC as well as others.

#### 2. Project Amplify

Our team will focus on integrating Groupware into Trace3 by the end of Q2, allowing both companies to amplify their results. This focus will be on four main areas: systems, processes, portfolio, and people. With regard to systems, this will include moving Groupware onto our newer version of NetSuite, evaluating what system tools both companies are using, and extending our internal security roadmap to include Groupware.

Systems are closely tied to process, so we will seek to merge our redundant processes into a single group such as financial, legal, marketing, and partner processes. Improving and enabling one set of service capabilities within the company.

To function as a single business, we will merge the two companies' portfolios and create a single recruiting process and employee handbook. We will also be reconciling our sales engagement to have the ability to leverage our Service Ops and PMO functions across both companies. This will also tie into the "people" aspect of the project, where we can come to a unified position on margins for products and services.

### **3. Maximize Efficiency**

As we improve our systems and integrate Groupware, our team will be focusing on effectively utilizing our most crucial resources in the company, our people. We will be analyzing our scorecards and dashboards for efficiency to guarantee we have accurately provided engineering and delivery support to our sales teams to serve our customers.

Our team will ensure our resources are fully utilized to guarantee we are spending our investment dollars effectively. The evaluation will allow us the visibility to know where we need to provide additional investments. We will hold regular investment committee meetings to assess our current state and develop action plans as needed. Our team will see to roll out an internal survey program to our client teams for feedback, providing insight to make improvements to better serve our end-user customers.

Twenty-twenty was the year of laying the foundation for us to build something special in 2021. We spent a lot of time improving our infrastructure, putting us in a position for explosive growth both organically and through acquisitions. Our new tools provide more streamlined processes and access to real-time data, allowing us to make better decisions at a faster pace. 2021 is our year to fully integrate and fine-tune the resources and tools we have, to be the best we have ever been!

## Finance & Sales Operations

By Kevin Manzo

Finance and Sales Operations exist to support profitable growth by building and supporting financial and operational excellence at Trace3. Our function is like many of our clients – we are being challenged by digital transformation, and we continue seeing the roles of our teams broaden from the basics to business and value creation.

This is both exciting and potentially overwhelming. On the one hand, we are pushing our teams toward a higher level of customer service and collaboration, a bias for sales (find a way to say “yes”), and a greater integration of technology and automation. On the other hand, we expect our teams to exhibit continued rigor in ethics and integrity to deliver a consistent and predictable outcome. It’s a lot to ask, but we are up for the challenge.

It’s our Vision is to assist Trace3 in achieving sustainable, long-term growth and value creation through a client-focused mentality that features timely and insightful reporting and analysis, recommendations for resource alignment, customer retention and satisfaction, and appropriate risk management.

### 2021 Priorities

#### 1. Reporting

Enhance the timeliness and accuracy of financial reporting

- a. Decrease time to close and report on monthly financials
  - Increase automation of underlying processes
- b. Improve the accuracy of technology-based BU reporting
  - Focus on front-end item/SKU setup, leveraging automation where possible
- c. Reduce inconsistencies in regional and BU reporting
  - Create a closed loop training process to improve front-end process discipline, therefore limiting back-end reporting issues

#### 2. Investment

Further enhance the financial acumen of the Trace3 organization, helping to align resources with financial return

#### 3. Purchasing

Drive consistency in the order management and purchasing processes across Trace3, partnering with Sales to drive positive client outcomes

4. **Renewals**

Leverage enhanced processes with NetSuite, drive further alignment of the Renewals team with the Sales teams that we support to maximize renewals profit and refresh opportunities

5. **Risk Management**

Support Trace3 from a Legal perspective by effectively managing company risk while partnering with internal and external customers to support profitable growth.

## People & Organizational Health

By Danielle Rodriguez

People always ask me why I chose HR. I laugh because people rarely ask, “Why sales?” or “Why did you choose to be an engineer?” But HR professionals get, “Why HR?” all the time. It’s like we lost a bet or something. I’ll tell you, though. I chose HR to make a difference in your life. I might not have fully realized it at the time, but I can pinpoint the moment I knew this was possible.

Early in my career, I was lucky enough to work with a mentor who ran my HR department. She was great at what she did; ran her department like clockwork, made the time to teach me all she knew, even leaped tall buildings in a single bound. Well, not that last part, but you get the drift. However, none of that was what made her truly special. The more time I spent around her, the more I realized she genuinely cared about people, not only in her group, but all across the organization. And they knew it. They liked her, included her, came to her directly for help, comfort, and laughter. This mentor created a bond with those around her, not as employees but as human beings. She wanted to make a difference in each of their lives – and she did. Seeing that, I knew HR could make a true difference. Not just in compensation, or policies, or how to help file your benefit claim without tearing your hair out. HR, run the right way, can change lives.

Let’s face it, Trace3 can be a different beast. We’re a proven success, but like any good family, we sometimes push and pull and rail against the wind as we do. But amidst it all, we care. We care for each other. That belief drives me. I strive for HR to embody this. Positive change through individual care. As such, I’m a big believer in the inside out effect of culture at Trace3. Our internal culture undoubtedly influences our external brand, product, and client experience. This is vital to differentiating ourselves as a business. For that reason, our culture and employee experience – the sum of everything an employee experiences throughout his or her connection to the organization – is essential.

My vision, not only for the health and culture of our organization but also the POH team specifically, is to continue to innovate with the purpose of creating a deeper understanding of our business and people. We will be an ever-evolving department with a charter to protect the “magic” of our special culture, strengthening teams, and continually stoking the passion to be a top place to work. The backbone of this directive will be our employee feedback strategy, utilizing continuous feedback mechanisms to ultimately serve both the existing employee and the future talent experience.

The POH team exists to help you thrive. Our charter is to be the weather by being a role model of our core values, demonstrating leadership, character, and building positive working relationships with our people and managers. I believe changing lives individually enables our business to grow collectively. You have my word POH will represent this always. I chose HR to make a difference in your life. So, of course, the question isn’t “Why HR?” It’s “Why not HR?”

## 2021 Priorities

### 1. Employee Experience: Improve life at Trace3 throughout full employment lifecycle

- a. Execute on Employee Engagement Survey Action Planning
  - Strengthen our management team through effectiveness training focusing on ownership, accountability, people development, and teamwork
  - Work with leaders/managers to execute action plans from 2020 Employee Engagement Survey
- b. Enhance the Trace3 New Hire Onboarding Experience through a program called “Trace Your Way”
- c. Employee Development – Support the next phase of our Legends project
- d. Design and roll-out a company-wide Employee Recognition Program
- e. Distribute Commission and Compensation Plans within first 60 days of the new calendar year
- f. Improve employee retention by working with departments experiencing higher than average turnover
- g. Align the Trace3 brand to greater causes such as Trace3 Cares

### 2. Talent Acquisition: Improve the Trace3 employer brand and help shape our next generation of talent

- a. Entwine our brand in Trace3’s magic to source and attract top talent
  - Create a “Why Work for Trace3” recruitment brochure through enhanced employer branding and optimizing the Trace3 LinkedIn Career Page/Life Page
  - Further implement an effective Diversity and Inclusion program
    - Execute on the Trace3xperience program:
      - Internship program
      - Hiring our Heroes
      - Execute on strategies focused on women in engineering
- b. Support contingent talent needs
  - Work with the BUs to design a Contingent Talent Program Strategy with heavy focus on Cloud Resources in 2021
  - Improve onboarding of contractors and services partners by executing on a full Extended Workforce Screening program
  - Implement a Vendor Management System to improve onboarding of new contractors and services partners while gaining greater transparency and control over our contingent workforce
- c. Improve speed and ease for requesting headcount through an automated new hire justification process

### **3. Operational Efficiency**

- a. Execute on “Project Amplify” Groupware Integration allowing both companies to look and feel like one company
- b. Roll out annual merit review process in March/April
- c. Annual policy distribution (Trace3 Employee Handbook, AUP, T&E, Anti-Bribery, etc.)
- d. Evaluate and Implement Commission Module to give sales reps a handy tool that optimizes the commission administration process and gives more visibility into commission earnings
- e. Implement UKG Ready Timekeeping Module to eliminate the hassle of duplicate time entry
- f. Continue focus on healthcare benefits strategies to limit 2022 healthcare plan rate increases



## Organizational Clarity Questions

### Why Do We Exist? (Core Purpose)

- *To Elevate and Secure the lives of our clients, employees, partners, and communities*

### How Do We Behave? (Core Values)

- *We seek first to understand*
- *Authentic & Humble*
- *Smart*

### What Do We Do? (Business Definition)

- *We solve Business problems with Technology*

### How Will We Succeed? (Strategic Anchors)

- *Innovation & Emerging Tech*
- *Client Intimacy*
- *Elite Engineering*

## Closing Remarks

By Tyler Beecher

At the opening of our 2021 Kickoff, I shared some thoughts around a “choose your hard” mindset. Below are some quick personal examples:

- Getting fit is hard – Being out of shape is hard. Choose your hard!
- Saving or investing money is hard – Being broke is hard. Choose your hard!
- Being a friend is hard – Not having friends is hard. Choose your hard!
- Taking responsibility is hard – Being irresponsible is hard. Choose your hard!

Last year was not simply a time that we persevered through, but one in which we sacrificed together and chose to do really hard things. In the midst of wild uncertainty, we chose to do the heavy lifting of systems, operations, talent acquisition, and to launch our Legends Program. We did all of this without losing sight of our mission statement — to lift and secure our clients. Those hard lifts have laid the foundation for success in 2021 and the coming years.

Twenty-twenty-one will have its own set of challenges and adventures, but I very much believe we are headed into a year where many of the “macro” dynamics that are out of our control will stabilize. The real question will be, “What kind of hard will we choose for ourselves?”

- Growing a business is hard – Shrinking ... harder!
- Evolving a brand and go to market is hard – Stagnation and commoditization ... harder!
- Building a national powerhouse is hard – Being limited or passed-over ... harder!

We could go on and on with examples, and I invite you to play the “choose your hard” game with yourself, your loved ones, and your teams. I would love to see your lists!

Now as it relates to our goals for 2021, some of you might say: “I get it, but I can’t see it.” – meaning you can’t see how we can accomplish the hard things we are choosing to do in 2021. For those of you who feel that way, you are in good company.

I have been doing this since 1994, and a year where I could visualize “how I could get there” at the start of the year doesn’t exist. In other words, I have never looked out over the horizon in early Q1 and have been able to see a successful year-end with all of my goals and objectives met. As much as I try to visualize it, and plan for it, I can’t see it.

It’s like standing on the sand of one of our West Coast beaches and straining to see a far-off destination like Hawaii. I know Hawaii is there, but I can’t see it. Just as we would on a sailing journey, we are setting a course and trusting our crew and instrumentation to get us there.

Is the thought of navigating towards the end goal scary? Yes! Have we done it many, many times in the past? Yes! We have people piloting our ship that know how to overcome the winds, currents, and storms along the way.

Will there be challenges? Yes! Adventures? Yes! But we have chosen our kind of hard, our path, and I am always bolstered by the thought that *“we don’t have to do it, we get to do it!”* All of the challenges, the storms along the way, are not happening to us, they are happening for us. Attacking them together is what makes the journey so worthwhile.

Thanks to all of you for battling the expected and unforeseen challenges of 2020. You are why we are still here. You are why our choices in 2021 and beyond are greater than those we had in the past. **Yes, we choose to do hard things. Not because we have to, but because we get to.** 2021 is going to be great! **Our future is LIMITLESS!**

And, in the words of our good friend Jocko: **“LET’S GO GET SOME!”**