

[Top vBlog Voting 2017 - Supporting Community Bloggers](#)

Every year we are seeing more and more community contributors in the blogging ecosystem. My own work here at DiscoPosse.com and through my role at Turbonomic in the community has been so enjoyable to be a part of because of the support that I continue to receive from readers and peers in many tech communities.

Eric Siebert has been [hosting the Top vBlog voting](#) for years, and it has grown from a handful of participants to a veritable must-read list that covers every aspect of virtualization, networking, scripting, and more. This year I am honoured to be among the contributors listed and am also very proud to have Turbonomic sponsor the voting.

I just voted for my favorite blogs at vSphere-land [#TopvBlog2017](#) Sponsored by [@Turbonomic](#) <https://t.co/uXeV1wCrEQ>

— Eric Wright (@discoposse) [June 4, 2017](#)

My blog is listed in the voting under my name (just search for DiscoPosse) and my podcast ([GC ON-Demand](#)) is also in the running for best podcast.

GC On-Demand Turbonomic (Eric Wright)

I would greatly appreciate a vote if you feel that I'm providing content that is valuable, and of course, please extend your votes to all of the great IT community who surrounds us all. For those who know the work that Angelo ([@AngeloLuciani](#)), Melissa ([@vMiss33](#)) and I do with [Virtual Design Master](#), you will know that [many of the participants](#) are also in the voting.

Your support of our amazing blogger and podcast community is always appreciated. Thank you!

Vote here for this year's event: <http://vsphere-land.com/news/voting-now-open-for-top-vblog-2017.html>

[On the Value and Importance of Personal Brand](#)

Over the last few days I've seen some chatting on Twitter about personal brand. I was very surprised by how many folks had a rather negative view of what it means to create and be proud of a personal

brand. Perhaps my connotation is different than others, but let's stop for a moment and think about what a personal brand is.

Brand, by [definition](#), talks about "a type of product" among many possible definitions. This could be the reason that people don't like the phrase "personal brand" being used as it may imply that you have created some product that is for consumption.

This is where I think we have to be especially aware of what it is that we do as we put ourselves out there online in any of a plethora of ways that we have available to us. Whether it's Twitter, Instagram, your blog, your forum posts, or any contribution you do even in person in the office, it is uniquely you. That, in my mind, is your stamp on your presence. That is your personal brand.

The oddity around the push back on the honesty and openness of a personal brand is that opponents to the concept probably have some disclaimer saying "opinions are mine" or "tweets are my opinion and do not represent my employer". They are right, because it is their personal brand.

You're Selling Yourself, so Be Proud

If we think of the phrase "selling yourself short", you have to also agree that the other side is true. Every single day we are selling ourselves, in the best of ways. Whether it's to sell an idea you have to a colleague, or to your family. Even something as simple as choosing dinner is really a bit of a sale and an influence that is being done to pitch some ideas.

I don't see this as a negative. In my mind, I'm proud of everything that I create. Even the things that don't always stick, I have a deep pride in the process of ideation to creation. What happens over time is that we start to be able to identify certain things such as writing voice, phrasing, vocal recognition, style, and other "isms" that can become immediately recognizable by others around you as coming from you. That's the reason that we start to read something from someone we know personally and you hear it in their voice, even just from the written words.

I'm proud to say that I have a personal brand. It's what I put out every day. I didn't create it for public consumption. It's me. I just happen to have made DiscoPosse the moniker that many people associate to it. As noted in the Wikipedia page "The experiential aspect consists of the sum of all points of contact with the brand". If you created an experience map of yourself, you'll find that it as the annotation of a development of your personal brand.

If nothing, we should sell ourselves TO ourselves every day. Stop and think about that sometimes, because it's important. Think about what you are doing to elevate yourself in some way every day. This can also stretch to how you impact others in your community.

Your brand is strong. It's your personality, not a product. Wear it proudly.

[Join the vExpert 2017 Community!](#)
[Application Process is Open until 12/16](#)

TL;DR

Are you a vExpert and want to re-up for 2017? Click here: <https://form.jotform.com/63124887851969>

Are you keen to join the vExpert community but aren't a vExpert yet? Click here:

<https://form.jotform.com/63124382084957>

Know someone who you want to refer as a vExpert? Click here:

<https://form.jotform.com/40285869039970>

Do you want to see who the current vExperts are? Click here:

<https://communities.vmware.com/vexpert.jspa>

For the slightly longer read:

The VMware vExpert community is a phenomenal way to find peers in the virtualization marketplace who are helping to evangelize solutions that can help us all. Most importantly, it is also a program that is entirely open for you to also be a part of and contribute to.

There are regular points within the year in which you can enter into the program. The next batch of vExpert entries are about to launch with the application process having opened very recently. Make sure that you take some time to head on over to the 2017 [vExpert blog that was published with the links for the 2017 program](#).

Being a three time VMware vExpert so far for me has been very exciting and fun. I'm always happy to contribute content and create community opportunities through online, and in-person meetups to help promote this very dynamic and enjoyable group of people and the technologies that we all use.

Creating content is both fun and easy. Being a community contributor is also very easy, and very fulfilling both personally and professionally. This helps me to learn about how I'm doing things in comparison to others in the industry, and you will find yourself with a new pool of friends as well as some extremely intelligent and helpful professional peers.

Good luck to all those who are submitting for new entries to vExpert in 2017, and I hope to join the ranks of the vExpert alumni to continue to evangelize all that we do!

[It's not Easy, but You're not Alone Feeling That Way](#)

It's the middle of [#vDM30in30](#) right now, and that means most of the participants in our 30 blogs in 30 days challenge are about to hit the proverbial wall. Why does that happen? Some call it writer's block, and most of the folks reading this have faced it at some time.

Regardless of what we do, it's not easy. If you push yourself to the "next level" with anything, it's not easy. It's not supposed to be. The important thing to realize is that you're not alone in feeling that way.

The worst thing that anyone can ever say to another person is "it must be so easy for you", because it's not. It's just different levels of difficulty and managing that difficulty. I wanted to take a few moments and share some quick things that stand out for me on this.

Impostor Syndrome

I won't go on long about [impostor syndrome](#), but it's very real for a lot of people, especially in IT based on my interactions with the community. I've faced some bouts of it myself on more than a few occasions.

Take some time out to speak with your colleagues and peer community. If you look around at an event, especially on stage at the presenter, you're going to find someone who has been struck by the feeling themselves as well. At the start of every bike race, every live gig I did with my bands, and every time I have to present at a technical conference, there is always a moment where a little fear sets in. What we get better at over time is being able to get through those moments more easily and comfortably.

Writing and Diagramming

Creating content regularly is something that I happen to do for a living. It ranges from general thought leadership to deeper technical content. Looking back at how much content has been created can be a little overwhelming sometimes. It's even more overwhelming when you look ahead at what needs to be done.

While writing this, I'm looking in my Evernote at 10 partially written articles or blog titles. I hit the wall and needed a break, but sometimes those breaks can be longer than healthy, and we don't know how to take them or come back from them. I'm incredibly lucky and inspired by my family every day to give me that extra push, but these are some quick tips on breaking out of the writer's block moments with writing and creating diagrams.

The biggest thanks go to [@vmiss33](#) on these tips:

- Pick an outside topic and just write a quick couple of paragraphs to warm up the engine.
- Can't get the diagrams from your mind to Visio? Write it out on paper and take a picture.
- Write for someone else to help them. When it's not your deadline, you may find it unlocks the writing engine.
- Read. The best writers are good readers. Find inspiration and content from others.

VCDX from the Sidelines

VCDX is the VMware Certified Design eXpert certification for those not already familiar. Having just witnessed the VCDX process that [@vmiss33](#) completed successfully as VCDX #236, it is a humbling process to watch unfold. There are countless hours that go into planning, diagrams, install guides, presentations, lab work, study, and much more.

Watching the mock defence sessions is also incredibly humbling. If you take any expert on any technology and then put them on the other side of the table and ask deep technical details about technologies, you can find that even the most comfortable technologists can hit the wall. It's much easier to imagine going through it when you're not being hit with the questions.

Get involved with the VCDX study groups and watch how they work. It is humbling and impressive. The VCDX designation is one that is well deserved when it's achieved.

Troubleshooting and Taking Breaks

My specialty is troubleshooting. Using techniques that I've picked up over years from my peers and

managers, I've worked very hard to be able to deal with stressful situations. In fact, I find them to not be stressful in many cases. When things are in disarray, I have been able to create a sense of calm for myself and my team which helps to center us in those difficult situations.

One trick that I learned along the way is to take mini breaks. It's as simple as literally getting up and walking around the office floor for a few minutes, or taking the elevator downstairs to walk around the building and back in. Those routine processes of getting up and using your muscle and process memory to step away from things can be enlightening, often giving you that "aha!" moment as you take a break from staring at the computer screen trying to find the issue.

Don't just leave without telling anyone though, but make sure to let the team know that you need a few minutes to take a break. We are in IT, not surgery. You can take a few minutes to refresh. There is a reason that we come up with some of our best ideas in the shower. It's a few minutes where you have nothing else to deal with and it frees your mind to solve things, even in a few short minutes.

And the next time that you hear someone say "it must be so easy for them" about someone else, you can smile a little inside because you know that it isn't easy, they just have gotten through some tough moments and made it look easy. Also, take some time to share your story with others. There is an incredible comfort that comes which is often met with the reply "wait, so it isn't just me that feels that?"

If it was easy, it wouldn't feel as rewarding ☐

You Call it Legacy. I Call it Production.

The IT world is moving fast according to the pundits. You may read the latest round of articles that tell you about microservices and cloud-first, or cloud-only organizations who are using development strategies to embrace DevOps and the inevitable shift towards next-generation platforms.

Containers, clouds, microservices, DevOps, Serverless...and Legacy!

Tired of buzzword bingo? You're not alone. One of the most common themes that we see among many of those who are pushing us toward the next platforms is that we keep hearing about "legacy IT". The word legacy is thrown around as if we are supposed to feel bad that it is still here. The reality is that what most leading edge pundits call legacy, is what 90+% of organizations call production.

As a firm believer in leaning forward, I may even be accused of being a little too far over my skis as some like to say. What I make a point of doing is keeping a foot firmly planted in today's infrastructure at the same time that I have the other foot on the path to something new and unknown. It's an important tactic that we all need to embrace IMHO.

The Path to Tomorrow Starts with Understanding Yesterday

I'm not trying to be all philosophical with saying that you can't understand tomorrow without understanding yesterday, but that is a very real issue that people can overlook. This comes in other ways that I like to phrase it:

- you can't automate what you don't understand
- process improvement implies you understand the process
- don't buy technology that is a "solution looking for a problem"

Don't even get me started on bimodal. Ok, I'll get started myself.

Welcome to Septimodal IT

Much of the punditry in our industry has landed on this concept of bimodal IT. What's frightening to me is that it's being treated as if it is new and that because it was given a name, that a consulting company is needed to help you understand it and get through it. We've been bimodal since the 1970s.

This is my picture of most IT shops in enterprise organizations:

1. Paper - don't knock it. More of your business is run here than you realize
2. Mainframe - centralized computing model with lots and lots of data
3. AS/400 and mid-tier computing - bridging the mainframe and the distributed platforms
4. Client/Server applications - common distributed systems architecture
5. Desktop-based - yes, MS Excel is keeping your finance department systems alive
6. Cloud-Native architectures - on-premises and cloud-hosted, but cloud-native architecture and design
7. SaaS-based - web and mobile access to SaaS platforms

When we roll one off of the bottom, it will inevitably be replaced by one at the top. Technically, there are six forms of real IT-based content in the list, but I would rather not call it Sexamodal because that just sounds creepy.

Embrace Legacy and Nurture it's Evolution

The more that we try to move forward, the more we tend to create abstractions to reduce the friction of interacting with the previous generations of IT systems. This is a great enabler for us to be able to keep the data and systems where they excel. Why should you move all of your data out of a distributed system into a web-based, cloud-native architecture when the cost to do so would far exceed the value gotten from the refactoring.

Make sure that you understand the real business requirements of the current systems before we race to replace them. Any decision around technology that is not made in the context of a business requirement will lead to costs and frustration. Plus, before we go around tagging everything as legacy as if it is a bad thing, remember that it is keeping your business alive.

[Interop ITX - Call for Presentations](#)

Interop has gotten a new name, some new branding, and I'm proud to announce that I've joined the Interop ITX Review Board for 2017! There are lots of things happening to make the Interop conference a true destination for both technical and business IT consumers which will get you information and interactive experiences at all layers of the IT stack.

Interop ITX will be from May 15-19, 2017 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Call For Presentations Open until October 31 - 10 Days Left!

At the time this publishes, there are 10 days remaining to [submit a call for proposals which can be done here](#). That gives you a chance to contribute your voice to the speaker lineup at a strong, community-focused event. This is the chance for us to shape what we want Interop ITX to be for us, and for our community at large.



The content streams are very exciting, so you won't want to miss this if you have the chance to attend.



Infrastructure

Stay up to date on emerging technologies in networking and IT operations while leveraging your existing systems.



Data and Analytics

Build support systems that can capture data from disparate locations, aggregate, correlate, and deliver insights in real time.



Cloud

Select and leverage the cloud resources that make sense for your businesses and manage them in a holistic approach.



Security

Learn more about potential threats and how you can mitigate them.



DevOps

Educate IT about development and building cross-functional teams, adopting agile methodologies, and implementing automation.



Leadership & Professional Development

Work hand in hand with business, build the teams you need to adjust to changing requirements, and provide guidance for navigating career development.

Before you go, here are the links that help you find out about the event and to submit your CFP:

LINK ALL THE THINGS!

These are the key links you'll need to get started:

- [Pre-Register for Interop ITX 2017](#)
- [Submit your Call for Proposals](#)
- [Interop Home Page](#)

I hope to see you at the event!