

# ROSS COMSTOCK

70 West Michigan Avenue  
Battle Creek, MI 49017  
Phone: 269-967-4237  
Email: rgcomstock@yahoo.com



## OBJECTIVE

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**CIO, CTO, or SVP role for an organization that is helping to create a better world.**

## SYNOPSIS

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Leadership	Enterprise Applications	Software Development	KM, Data, Analytics
Executive	Grants Management: Fluxx	Websites & Portals	KM: IssueLab, Jive
Enterprise IT	Financials & ERP: SAP	GIS & Interactive Maps	DB: SQL Server, Oracle
Entrepreneur / Start-up	CRM: Salesforce, SAP	Video Games	BI: Tableau, PowerBI
Design Thinking	Collaboration: Slack, Jive	Embedded, Real-Time	Big Data: Palantir
Agile & Lean Methods	HCM: Successfactors	Defense Applications	GIS & Geospatial: Esri

## SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

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- **Listens:** Always starts by listening and understanding the problem or challenge.
- **Responsive:** Able to identify and deliver quick wins. Strives for same-day resolution for most issues.
- **Visionary:** Can see what's possible. Connects dots. Creates a clear roadmap based on priorities – 90 days, 1 year, 3 years, 5 years. Synthesizes internal needs of organization with external needs of partners.
- **Leader:** Leads through influence, not hierarchy. Sets clear direction, seeks alignment, and encourages commitment. Utilizes mix of traditional project management with agile methods. Sleeves rolled-up.
- **Mentor:** Believes people work best when they are inspired and enabled. Works to understand the passion of team members. Supports growth. Mentors and coaches. Challenges. Not a micro-manager.
- **Collaborative:** Works well with teams. Supportive peer to other organizational leaders and to members of my team. History of creating shared value through partnerships.
- **Connected:** Strong, cross-sector relationships with philanthropy technology leaders, nonprofit and NGO leaders, learning and impact leaders, higher-education, government, UN, and tech CSR leads.
- **Optimistic:** I have been on many long and difficult journeys. Always confident that we will arrive at our destination, and I share that optimism with my team and with stakeholders. Unsinkable. Resilient.
- **Communicator:** Likes to keep things simple. Communicates the plan. Repeats until well understood.
- **Originator:** Comfortable leading positive change. Works well with guardians and integrators.
- **Driven:** A good fit for organizations that want to make a leap forward. Resourceful. Accountable.
- **Responsible:** Technology is built upon a foundation of basics – security, policies, processes, customer service, ITIL, contracts, controlling costs, change management. Understands all are critical for success.

## EDUCATION

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**B.A. COMPUTER SCIENCE:** with distinction, University of Maine, Orono ME, 1987

**B.A. DISCRETE APPLIED MATHEMATICS:** with distinction, University of Maine, Orono ME, 1987

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

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Under my leadership, Direct Relief received the **Peter F. Drucker Award for Nonprofit Innovation**, the **Esri President's Award for GIS**, and was selected twice as a **Computerworld Honors Laureate**.

## EXPERIENCE

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### **W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION: Vice President of Information Systems and Technology**

*Battle Creek MI, 2014 – Present*

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), was founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg, and is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to improve conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work, and life.

- **Cohesive Leadership Team:** Member of the WKKF Executive Council, comprised of our CEO and ten divisional vice presidents. The Executive Council provides cohesive, strategic leadership across the entire organization. Our executive team worked extensively with the Center for Creative Leadership to forge a cohesive, aligned, and high-functioning leadership team. Over the past 18 months we have extended these tools, methods, and our common leadership language across all of our fifty-five people leaders.
- **Board Governance and Organizational Performance:** In 2014, WKKF transitioned to Policy-Based Board Governance, commonly known as “The Carver Model.” The board developed and shared a set of policies for the organization to follow – an “Ends” policy, and a set of “Executive Limitations.” Our tech team worked with our Organizational Performance lead and area VPs on the creation and maintenance of dashboards and reports to monitor and assess organizational performance.
- **Networked Organization:** Working closely with Deloitte, The Kellogg Foundation adopted a powerful new organizational structure (Networked/Agile Organization) to transform the foundation, with an aim to become “the best foundation to work for” and “the best foundation to work with.” Reorganized as core teams and pods, sub-teams called squads, skills-based chapters, and cross-chapter learning guilds. Implemented new business cycle and tools to support the networked organization.
- **Vision, Strategy, and Building our #NewHouse:** Conceived of, developed strategy for, pulled together team, implemented, and delivered a comprehensive technology update to serve the organization and our partners for the next decade. Multi-year, capital project included four facets: 1) Infrastructure and Security, 2) Enterprise Systems, 3) Digital Communications, and 4) Knowledge, Data, and Learning. Managed cross-functional team of 25 staff and 25 consultants and contractors.
- **Cross-Sector Innovation:** Our founder, W. K. Kellogg, believed the best way to achieve sustainable change in communities is through cooperative planning, intelligent study, and group action. With this as inspiration, I developed and championed our #OpenChange initiative. #OpenChange supports collaborators from twenty or more foundations and hundreds of nonprofit organizations. Currently working with The United Nations, Esri, The Pvblic Foundation, and other partners on an open partnership in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Aiming to launch in conjunction with the United Nation’s “Decade of Action, Ten Years to Transform our World.”

## **DIRECT RELIEF: Director of Information Technology and Quality**

*Santa Barbara CA, 2006 – 2014*

Direct Relief, a leading international NGO, works to help people affected by poverty or emergency situations by mobilizing resources and providing life-saving medicines. In my role as the senior IT leader for the organization, I was responsible for the conceptualization and implementation of a completely new IT infrastructure and platform to enable and support the continued growth of the organization.

- **Vision and Strategy:** Worked with CEO, CFO, COO and members of our Board of Directors to develop an IT strategy that would enable and support growth from \$200 million to a strategic goal of \$1 billion. As of 2020, Forbes lists Direct Relief as the third largest charity in the U.S., at almost \$2 billion.
- **Enterprise Applications:** Authored RFP, coordinated review of vendors, selected ERP vendor and implementation partner and managed full-cycle SAP implementation. SAP project included FI, CO, FM, GM, WM, MM, SD, CRM, BI, and EP modules. Selected HP blade servers and SAN for our enterprise systems, running VMware. Created separate development, test, and production landscapes.
- **Governance, Risk Management, and Compliance:** As a nonprofit and a wholesale distributor of pharmaceuticals, Direct Relief must adhere to complex requirements such as FASB 116 and 117, FDA PDMA, 21 CFR Part 11, 203, and 205, NABP VAWD, and various state pedigree laws. Systems and processes were audited more than 30 times. Became first VAWD-certified non-profit organization.
- **Scalable Infrastructure:** To accommodate planned growth, the systems need to be easily expanded. Implemented server virtualization with VMware, including clustering and VMotion. Added an HP Storage Area Network (SAN) for scalable storage. Deployed Microsoft Virtual Desktop Infrastructure for desktop virtualization. Full-featured servers or desktops can be deployed in a matter of minutes.
- **ITIL Framework:** Able to make a big leap forward with our IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) capabilities by leveraging the ITIL features built into Microsoft System Center, and by making use of the hosted tools provided by SunGard. The combination of System Center and our SunGard hosted services provides service desk, incident management, problem management, change management, release management, configuration management, and service delivery, including service level management.
- **Automated Distribution Center:** One of the biggest challenges we faced was a complex warehouse and distribution environment that had little support from technology. Designed and implemented a fully-integrated SAP warehouse management (WM) solution that utilizes wireless handheld computers, printers, and scanners. Provided full complement of DC capabilities including goods receipt, quality check, put away, storage unit management, delivery order management, pick, pack, and goods issue.
- **Partner Extranet/Portal:** Direct Relief needed to be online and available to our partners 24/7/365. To support this need we built a fully-integrated customer portal using SAP NetWeaver and SAP CRM. The portal, or partner extranet, provides a secure login for pharmaceutical industry partners including Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, and GSK to donate medicines. The portal also allows a network of more than 2,000 hospitals and clinics from more than 90 countries to order free life-saving medicines.
- **Customer Relationship Management:** Our highly-leveraged model relies on a network of partners to achieve business efficiency. Unlike many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) we do not have staff located in most of the 90 countries where we work. We use technology to efficiently link our supplier/donor partners with our hospital and clinic partners. SAP CRM allows us to efficiently manage these two partner communities and provide top-notch, customer-focused support.
- **Business Intelligence/Big Data:** For an organization to be truly efficient, business decisions need to be made from a foundation of knowledge. Our integrated SAP, Palantir, and Esri ArcGIS systems allow staff and key partners to gain insights from our SAP transactional data alongside third-party global health information from sources such as CDC BRFSS, Google Flu Trends, HRSA UDS, OSHPD, and Gapminder. Direct Relief is a leader in data-driven disaster response and NGO transparency.

## **CIANBRO CORPORATION: Manager of Network Systems and Systems Engineering**

*Pittsfield ME, 2003 – 2006*

Cianbro Corporation is one of the East Coast's largest and most diversified civil and heavy industrial construction companies, with gross annual sales in excess of \$450 million and over 2000 team members throughout the eastern United States. As the Manager of Network Systems I had oversight for all corporate, regional office, and branch office technology infrastructure including data centers, voice systems, switches, routers, firewalls, network security, network servers, storage, video conferencing, and cabling infrastructure. Notable projects or improvements include:

- **Converged Networks:** Redesigned LAN and WAN infrastructure to support converged voice, video and data utilizing Cisco switches/routers, a Siemens phone system, and Polycom video conferencing.
- **Disaster Recovery:** Designed and built a secondary data center that was fiber-connected to our primary data center. Established redundant Oracle CMiC ERP environment for failover.
- **HIPAA Compliance:** Helped organization to improve network security and compliance in an effort to achieve HIPAA compliance. Authored related policy documents and administered log files.
- **Systems Engineering:** Managed several technology-related construction projects including communications and technology systems for private businesses, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, defense contractors, and the federal government. Maintained highest average margin on projects.
- **Budgeting:** Managed most elements of approximate \$4M annual budget. Reviewed communications costs, renegotiated contracts and saved over \$200K/year on an approximate \$1M/year telecom budget.

## **NETWORKS NORTHEAST: Business Co-Owner and Director of Engineering**

*Orono ME, 1999 – 2003*

Network Northeast offered a variety of technical products and services including technology design and consulting services, high-speed data networks, telephone and intercom systems, safety and security systems, audio/video systems, and technology infrastructure. As a co-owner of the business I was responsible for a variety of tasks including the management of a staff of 25 engineers and technicians. Networks Northeast was purchased by Cianbro Corporation in January of 2003.

- **Business Owner:** When you own your own business you gain valuable experience in what it takes to build a successful organization from scratch. I was involved in all aspects of the business including business concept, business plan development, product and service development, financing, branding, marketing, hiring, HR and administration, contracts, operations, and vendor and customer relationships.
- **Built Customer Base:** As a small company, our business reputation was critical to our success. We were able to generate over \$1M in revenue in a little more than 12 months with customers ranging from K-12 schools, universities and colleges, private businesses, retail, manufacturing, defense contractors, and the federal government. We built a loyal customer base by providing excellent customer service and delivering quality. Every one of our customers was a reference customer and this helped us to sell our company to one of the largest construction companies in the United States.
- **Value-Added Reseller/Channel Partner:** As a leading systems integrator in the state, Networks Northeast was an authorized reseller for Microsoft, Panasonic, Cisco, Siemon, Panduit, CommScope, Valcom, Primex, Pelco, Blonder-Tongue, Comdial, 3COM, and APC. Each of these companies required some type of training or certification to become an authorized reseller or partner.
- **Complex Scheduling and Deadlines:** Because we were a technology contractor, we were frequently involved in larger construction projects that involved multiple trades. In many cases we worked closely with the project architect, general contractor or electrical sub-contractor. Coordinated a team of 25 individuals to complete two major school renovations over the course of a 12-week summer break. Systems were fully installed and ready for the start of school.

### **MBL RESEARCH: Development Director and Game Developer**

*Blue Hill ME, 1997 – 1999*

MBL Research was a third-party game development company, under contract to Electronic Arts, Inc., the largest publisher of electronic games in the world. While at MBL Research I worked on a total of three games, including EA Sports Supercross 2000 for the Nintendo 64 and Sony PlayStation, EA Sports NHL 99 for the Nintendo 64, and EA Sports NHL 98 for the SEGA Saturn. As the Development Director for Supercross 2000, I handled all coordination with the publisher, Electronic Arts, and managed a development staff of eight software engineers, eight artists, and two quality assurance testers.

### **UNIVERSITY OF MAINE: Computer and Communications Technology Coordinator**

*Orono ME, 1994 – 1997*

Responsible for providing technical direction and leadership in the development of computer and communications solutions for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service. Cooperative Extension is the primary outreach arm of the University of Maine, and has offices throughout the state. While at UMCE I implemented over twenty local area networks (LANs) and a wide area network (WAN) which linked the offices. I was responsible for all cabling infrastructure, network switches, servers, and network security and the development of a collaborative web-development environment to support our internal and external web sites. Supported over 200 people in 25 offices around the state.

### **KORK SYSTEMS: Senior Software Engineer**

*Bangor ME, 1992 – 1994*

Kork Systems (now Boeing Autometric) is the leading developer of spatial data production and visualization and analysis tools for the defense industry. Worked with a multidisciplinary team to develop, from product conception to beta-site installation, an image-based, digital orthophoto map production system called OrthoKork. OrthoKork, now part of the SoftPlotter product, is used to automatically remove distortions due to terrain relief and camera orientation in a scanned aerial photograph to produce a digital image in which features appear in their true map positions.

### **HAMPSHIRE INSTRUMENTS: Senior Software Engineer**

*Marlboro MA, 1989 – 1990, 1991 – 1992*

Developed real-time, multitasking, multiprocessing software for control and monitor of the Series 3500 X-Ray Lithography Stepper. The Series 3500 is the most advanced in Hampshire's line of semiconductor manufacturing equipment. Played major role in laying out the overall software architecture and selecting the platform and development tools. Worked on user interface, process control, laser diagnostics, robotic material handler, database manager, and communications software.

### **AAI CORPORATION: Software Engineer**

*Pasadena CA, 1990 – 1991*

Developed Ada code for the Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) Generic Principals Trainer (GPT). Worked for AAI, a defense contractor specializing in simulation and training systems, as a subcontractor to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena California. DSCS GPT is a complex simulation and training system, developed for the Army.

### **RAYTHEON CORPORATION: Software Engineer**

*Sudbury MA, 1987 – 1989*

Raytheon is a large defense contractor specializing in Radar applications. While at Raytheon I worked on the TARTAR Fire Control Radar System, the NATO SeaSparrow Surface Missile System, and the NEXRAD Next Generation Weather Radar. Software was developed in Ada, C, and Assembler for complex, real-time, multitasking and multiprocessing systems.