

FROM THE INDUSTRY

How The Syndeo Institute IS AMPLIFYING INDUSTRY INNOVATION

BY MELISSA COGAVIN, BROADBAND JOURNAL

AT THE INTERSECTION OF CONNECTION AND INNOVATION, DIANE CHRISTMAN AND CAMILLA FORMICA ARE REIMAGINING BROADBAND'S FUTURE. FROM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO DIGITAL EQUITY, THEIR WORK AT DENVER'S SYNDEO INSTITUTE, ALONG WITH THEIR ANNUAL CABLE HALL OF FAME IN NEW YORK CITY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE US CABLE INDUSTRY AND WE ARE DELIGHTED TO BE FEATURING CAMILLA FORMICA AT OUR UPCOMING SCTE® PRESENTS: ACROSS THE POND. MELISSA COGAVIN FINDS OUT MORE.





DIANE CHRISTMAN

**President & CEO
Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center**

Diane Christman leads Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center, the industry's hub for leadership development, education and collaboration through Intrapreneurship Academy, the Cable Hall of Fame and Barco Library - the world's largest collection of industry archives, historical objects and oral histories.

Diane joined The Cable Center in 2006 and became president and CEO in January of 2022. Since joining Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center, Diane has been responsible for the creation of Syndeo's \$10 million Chairman's Fund endowment campaign (approaching completion); partnerships supporting The Cable Center's Mavericks Lecture Series, Cable Mavericks Masters Forum, and Cable Center Customer Centric Consortium (C5) initiatives; the Cable Hall of Fame events; and organisational re-branding.



CAMILLA FORMICA

**Chief Program Officer
Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center**

Camilla leads the development of immersive programmes and experiences designed to empower and inspire leaders, innovators and visionaries, and supports SI@TCC's mission to help shape the future of the connectivity industry. She applies her expertise to elevate SI@TCC's key initiatives: Intrapreneurship Academy, Cable Hall of Fame, the CX Collaborative and Syndeo Advisory Council, The Barco Library and Breen Technical Archives and the Hauser Oral History Project.

With over 30 years of experience, Camilla has held leadership roles at organisations such as NCTI (Chief Revenue Officer), International Fiber Communications (Corporate VP, Sales), Metromedia Communications Corporation (WorldCom) and ICG. She serves as Immediate Past President of The WICT Network-Rocky Mountain and is a board member and minority owner of NCTI. A member of the 56th Class of Cable TV Pioneers, a multi-year recipient of Cablefax Most Powerful Women award, she was honoured as The WICT Network-Rocky Mountain's 2022 Mentor of the Year. A breast cancer survivor, she has also served as a Model of Courage ambassador for Ford Warriors in Pink.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DIFFERENTLY THIS YEAR?

Diane: It was two years ago this month that we launched our new operating brand, Syndeo Institute at the Cable Center. We talk about the head and the heart of what we do. The head is about charting a path towards sustainable, high impact growth rooted in innovation, global partnerships and meaningful engagement. The heart is focused on the legacy; our mission to steward the history of the industry.

Camilla: 2025 marks our 40th anniversary and we're very excited about that. Even though our anniversary is in the month of March, we're going to celebrate all year long. It's been 40 years of stewarding the history and legacy of the industry, and we are looking forward to 40 more as we continue to provide thought leadership, skills and tools that support this dynamic, fast-paced industry.

WHAT KIND OF INITIATIVES ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

Diane: Some of our most impactful programmes include the Intrapreneurship Academy, where we harness the same entrepreneurial spirit, our industry was built on—taking risks, adapting to change, creating value and driving revenue—and translate it into the development of intrapreneurs: confident, cutting-edge leaders equipped to innovate, drive transformation and confidently navigate major shifts in the workplace. Another global programme with impact is our Customer Experience collaborative (CXC), a cohort of global MSOs that meet twice a year to share best practices, and solve customer experience problems and challenges.

HOW DID YOUR CABLE HALL OF FAME EVENT GO?

Diane: It was fantastic. We introduced a brand-new award – the Innovation and Intrapreneurship Award for Excellence, which was exciting. There were some truly inspiring men and women with very powerful, moving stories. We were delighted by the turnout and the reception, though you were of course missed!

WHY INTRODUCE A NEW AWARD?

Diane: We received feedback from many of our constituents including our Advisory Council, that we were missing the opportunity to highlight people that are taking risks, creating value and driving change every day within the industry. Our inaugural honoree Jake Perlman is a truly deserving industry figure. EVP at Charter Communications; Jake exemplifies everything we were looking to recognise with this new category.

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WHAT ELSE ARE YOU WORKING ON?

We are working on our Spring CXC Conference. The conference is being hosted by Cox Communications in Atlanta. Our global cohort includes members from Tier 1 and Tier 2 operators, and includes international partners such as Liberty Global, Telecom Argentina and Claro Brazil. We're in conversation with partners from Canada and Mexico as well.

WHAT DOES THIS GROUP DO?

Camilla: We recently rebranded. We were known as the Cable Center Customer Care Consortium, C5 for short. We're now a customer experience collaborative or CXC. For 20 years we have operated under a more academic model and in 2024 we relaunched the programme with an experiential perspective. The new experiential style allows us to share our expertise in new ways, including industry panels and a CX Journal in our Intrapreneurship and Innovation Report annually. One of the objectives of our CX group is to have a tighter relationship with the technical and engineering community. The power of this group is that they see their role as helping connect the dots between the business and the technical sides of the industry.

I HEAR THIS A LOT; IT SOUNDS LIKE C5 IS CREATING A HANDBOOK FOR THE INDUSTRY ABOUT HOW TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE.

Diane: Although there is not an actual handbook; together we work through challenges, do research and invite vendors and their researchers to come and partner with us. For the past year and a half, we've had a pretty heavy duty focus on AI, which has been interesting.

Camilla: It's a think tank focused on using data-driven insights to collaboratively solve complex problems.

Diane: The group came to The Cable Center nearly 20 years ago. Prior to that, it was operated by Cable Telecommunications Association of Marketers. In partnership with University of Denver, we created the curriculum for the MBA programme with an emphasis on customer experience; at the time it was the first of its kind in the country. This formed the cornerstone of our work in this area.

We've seen growth and momentum and much of what we talked about in the beginning has been implemented. We were talking about emotion and the customer journey years ago, before people really knew what they were. We are developing a CX archive collection for the Barco library. Our goal is to have the largest collection possible that tells the full and sometimes messy story of our industry's customer experience journey. We are proud of the great strides that the industry has made. It's very gratifying to see what this cohort has accomplished and what they've done for the industry.

PRESUMABLY BACK THEN YOU HAD A SET DIRECTION IN MIND, BUT TECHNOLOGY IS UNPREDICTABLE AND SO ARE CONSUMER HABITS; HAS THE DIRECTION YOU'VE TAKEN HAS BEEN A SURPRISE?

Camilla: Less of a surprise, it is more about a group whose time has come. What is clear, whether you're in the US or abroad is that growth is slowing down, and the customer experience is more important than ever to retention and growth. The real importance for customer growth and customer retention falls to the CX group. Our partners have been saying all along that this is critically important. They've been ahead of the curve.

WILL THE OUTCOME OF ALL OF THIS LEARNING BE AVAILABLE INTERNATIONALLY? AMERICANS HAVE ALWAYS HAD THE EDGE WHEN IT COMES TO CONSUMER EXPERIENCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE IN GENERAL.

Diane: Absolutely. In 2024 we published our third annual Intrapreneurship and innovation Report. We embedded an entire CX journal into that publication. All past I&I Reports are available on our website. <https://syndeoinstitute.org/learn/thought-leadership/intrapreneurship-innovation-report/>

Diane: Domestically our industry has made a huge investment in the customer journey. We used to talk about it when I first joined the industry as the differentiator. It's hard for some people to see the value of the emotional connection created by customer experience. Our members have known all along that you have to speak the language of the customer.

AI IS BILLED AS THIS INCREDIBLE PANACEA THAT'S EITHER GOING TO FIX EVERYTHING OR RUIN EVERYTHING, BUT WE AREN'T ANYWHERE NEAR WHERE WE SHOULD BE YET.

Camilla: Large organisations like Charter Communications, Liberty Global and Comcast are ahead of the curve. They are investing enormous amounts of money. Smaller companies and independent operators, to your point, are much further behind. Everyone is trying to understand how to balance the investment with making the customer journey even better.

Diane: We are proud to tell the story of the cable industry. We're working on another archive and collection for the Barco Library

Cable Hall of Fame Honorees: Ed Breen, Joe Cohen, Zenita Henderson, Pat Kehoe, Andrew Ross Sorkin, Bill Stemper

Bresnan Ethics in Business Awardee: Richard Parsons

Innovation and Intrapreneurship Award for Excellence Recipient: Jake Perlman



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focusing on women in cable. While this is going to have a bit of a lookback, what I love about it is it's also a forward-looking archive and collection. We're going to get the perspectives of some of the first women in the industry. We've got to start this collection now as many of our early founders have retired and some are no longer with us. It is important we start filming this year.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AT ANGA COM THIS YEAR?

Camilla: We have two panels at ANGA Com. One panel will feature female leaders, discuss generational leadership and how women are shaping the future of connectivity. We are excited to invite women to join us and share their stories. The second panel is more technical. The topic of network evolution in America including its opportunities and challenges is sure to be engaging and maybe even a little fiery.

ARE YOU LOOKING TO EXPAND INTO EUROPE WITH THESE INITIATIVES?

Diane: One of our major objectives for the next three years is to expand our international footprint. Our Board of Directors has representation from Liberty Global, Technetix and Liberty Latin America with more international members to come. To reflect the international makeup of our board it's important to open the doors to recognise achievement everywhere. Following in the footsteps of our last 40 years we look forward to a future of shining a light on the stories and legacies of our international partners.

Camilla: We are excited to be partnered with a UK consultant, Paul Cunningham. Paul is connecting us with opportunities in telecom, fibre and mobile. Our conversations with potential partners have shown that there is a gap in professional development and a need for leadership, innovation and intrapreneurial education. We see a great opportunity ahead of us in Europe and I am excited to announce that I will be presenting an award in June at the Telecom Fibre Summit in London.

Diane: Finally, we're producing a documentary that tells the story of the industry via its technological milestones. We debuted a sizzle reel at our Cable Hall of Fame in April and are planning to have the first section complete by the end of 2025.

YOU REALLY ARE BUSY. WHERE ARE YOU HOPING TO SHOW THIS DOCUMENTARY? HOW WILL IT BE RELEASED?

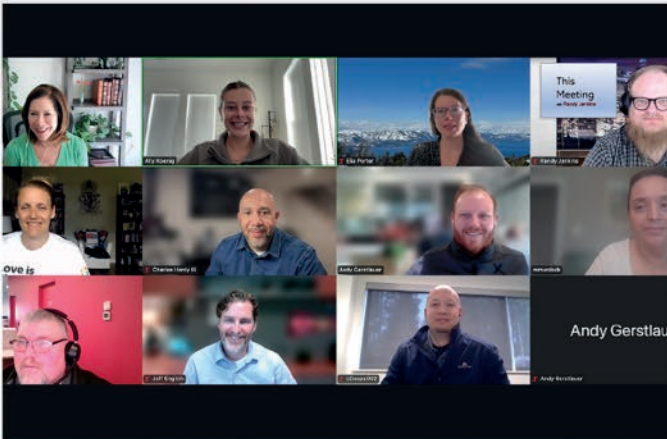
Diane: We are looking into independent film festivals; Sundance is going to be moving to Boulder in 2027. We also have the Denver Film Festival and many others that we are exploring. One of our goals is to have distribution with a streaming platform. As I mentioned before, this documentary will tell the story of the industry through technological milestones. We're starting with the development of the cable modem.

Camilla: As you can see, we have a lot in motion. Some initiatives are large and span multiple years, while others are smaller-scale efforts launching right now. Every project, no matter its size, is vital to our growth and success. We're not just going with the flow; we're making things happen and setting the stage for a bright future.

FROM THE TECHNICAL TO THE EMOTIONAL, FROM FUTUREPROOFING TO PROTECTING OUR LEGACY, IT SOUNDS LIKE NO STONE IS BEING LEFT UNTURNED AT THE SYNDEO INSTITUTE AT THE CABLE CENTER AND CAMILLA AND DIANE HAVE AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR AHEAD OF THEM. YOU CAN SEE CAMILLA ON JUNE 4TH AT 2PM AND 2:30PM ON THE INNOVATION STAGE AT ANGA COM IN COLOGNE.

www.syndeoinstitute.org

Syndeo Institute at The Cable Center



Intrapreneurship Academy

At Intrapreneurship Academy, we empower employees to work like entrepreneurs within their organizations—taking risks, adapting to change, creating value, and driving revenue. Enter the intrapreneurs: confident, cutting-edge leaders with the determination to innovate and impact change at work and the confidence to manage significant shifts. Intrapreneurs are your strongest asset, ensuring your organization is competitive and on the front lines of innovation.



Cable Hall of Fame

The Cable Hall of Fame celebrates the most innovative and influential leaders in the connectivity, content, and entertainment business. We recognize the top leaders and innovators for exceptional dedication to the industry and to their people. One of the industry's most prestigious and exclusive honors, inductees are selected from a large group of nominees by a committee of peers and leaders. Since 1998, 165 luminaries have been inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame.



CX Collaborative

The Syndeo CX Collaborative (CXC), formerly the C5, unites customer experience (CX) leaders in the connectivity industry to share insights, strategize, and innovate in pursuit of establishing and delivering a gold standard of service and experience both within and beyond organizations. CX is a pivotal element to a company's success, more important than product or service offerings.



Barco Library

The cable industry was built by entrepreneurs, risk-takers, innovators, and boundary-pushers. The Barco Library is where you can discover how they launched a groundbreaking industry through vision, innovation, and unwavering grit. It is the home for our rich history and a tribute to our industry's most influential leaders who keep the tradition of innovation alive.