

Empowering Teams: Transforming Your Organization with a PowerShell and Toolmaking Community

Frank Lesniak

X: @franklesniak

Danny Stutz

X: @danny_stutz

April 7-10, 2025

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```
C:\Users\flesniak>whoami  
Frank Lesniak (@franklesniak)  
Tech enthusiast; Microsoft 365 consulting team lead at West Monroe
```

Experience:

Almost 20 years in consulting. PowerShellin' since 2006. Focused on corporate M&A.

**Credentials:**

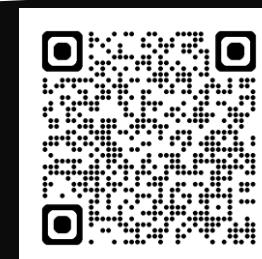
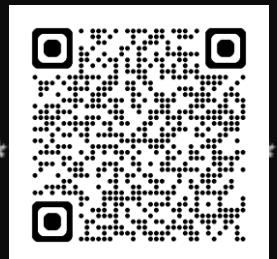
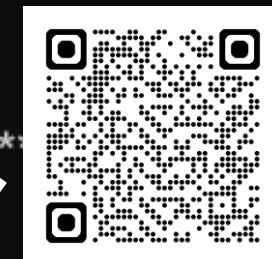
MCSEs. Co-leads Chicago PowerShell Users Group. PowerShell + DevOps Global Summit speaker alumnus.

Ask Me About:

- PowerShell automation (duh!)
- Executing corporate divestitures and integrations – where I spent most of my consulting client time
- File server modernization – moving to Azure Files, Teams/SharePoint, etc.
- Retro video game software and FPGA emulation
- My upcoming home construction project

Contact:

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- linkedin.com/in/flesniak
- github.com/franklesniak
- infosec.exchange/@franklesniak
- flesniak ATSIGN westmonroe.com



```
C:\Users\flesniak>
```

```
C:\Users\dstutz>whoami  
Danny Stutz (@danny_stutz)  
Computer nerd, M365 consulting and automation leader at West Monroe
```



Experience:
6 years working as a M365/Entra/Azure/AWS technical lead

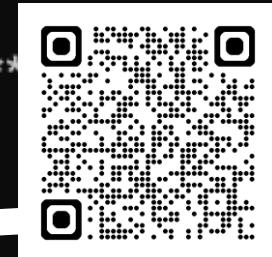
Credentials:
West Monroe PowerShell Interest Group lead.
PowerShell + DevOps Global Summit alum

Ask Me About:

- My mechanical keyboard! (Keychron K2, Boba U4's)
- Migration tool automation with PowerShell (ShareGate, MigrationWiz, azcopy, etc...)
- Threat hunting, M365/Entra/Azure/AWS security
- Executing corporate divestiture & integration migration work (where I spend the majority of my consulting time)
- My music taste (send me your favorite tunes on Discord or Slack!)

Contact:

- x.com/danny_stutz
- linkedin.com/in/daniel-stutz
- github.com/danstutz
- dstutz ATSIGN westmonroe.com





DevIT:>_
[DevITJobs.com]



Thank you Sponsors

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to identify organizational needs, secure leadership buy-in, and create an inclusive environment that **encourages knowledge sharing and innovation** within your PowerShell and toolmaking community.
- Discover how an internal interest group can enhance cross-team communication, streamline resource sharing, and boost efficiency through standardized tools and best practices, resulting in **measurable improvements** in your organization's automation efforts.



Learning Objectives

(continued)

- Gain effective strategies to maintain your group's momentum, including fostering continuous learning, celebrating achievements, and empowering members to lead impactful automation projects, ensuring **sustained growth and active participation**.



Agenda

- Definition + Why?
- Our Journey
- Our Advice
- Questions + Audience Discussion



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Definition

- PowerShell Interest Group
 - Meets every four weeks for one hour via Microsoft Teams
 - The format can vary, but typically, we have 10 minutes of open discussion followed by 1-2 informal presentations of a new script/tool, a module showcase, or some other “learning.”
- Toolmakers
 - Meets weekly for two hours (or more if people stay on late) via Gather
 - People join as they are able and dive right into working on tool-building/tool updates

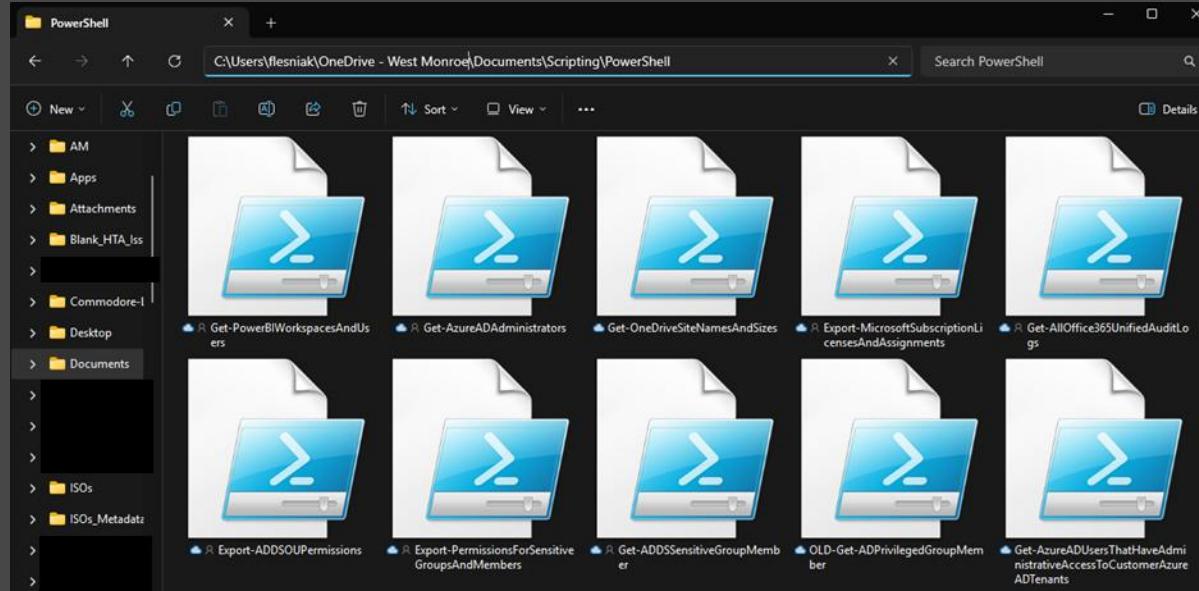


Why?

- Encourage knowledge-sharing (avoid rework)
- Develop skills
- Provide employee engagement (this stuff is fun!)
- Foster innovation
- Improve our consulting delivery (better, faster, stronger)



2019 and Prior



“version control”



Automated Build Environment (ABE)
(+ many other smaller, product-like tools)

Late 2019: Our Start



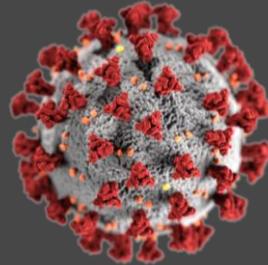
ABE++ Needed!

- Cybersecurity incident recovery business was booming
- Needed more contributors
- Complexity of product required “deep-dive” style teaching method



In November 2019, we started the “ABE Brigade”

1H 2020: Changes!



- Something happened in early 2020... 🤔
- Many of our PowerShell enthusiasts helped host a virtual Chicago PowerShell Users Group meetup on April 29, 2020
- ABE Brigade started meeting weekly on May 13

Sept 2020: An Idea

Frank Lesniak 9/29/2020 2:41 PM 

PowerShell Interest Group?

Team - I assume that many of you did not attend last week's quarterly Process and Technology Automation competency meeting. If you did not attend, one of the things we discussed was the possibility of having regular internal sessions focused on PowerShell automation. **If monthly PowerShell meetings (roundtables, discussions, show and tell, KTSes) sound like something you would attend 80%+ of the time, please reply here or send me and/or Ryan Kellerman an IM. Thanks!**



Reply



Sept 2020: An Idea



Frank Lesniak 9/29/2020 2:41 PM 📲

PowerShell Interest Group?

Team - I assume that many of you did not attend last week's quarterly Process and Technology Automation competency meeting. If you did not attend, one of the things we discussed was the possibility of having regular interest groups focused on PowerShell automation. **If monthly PowerShell meetings (roundtables, discussion groups, KTSes) sound like something you would attend 80%+ of the time, please let me know.** I will reach out to Kellerman and IM. Thanks!



Reply

OK, maybe that wasn't the best idea? 🤔



March 2021: IG Meets

- Our PowerShell Interest Group first met on Tuesday, March 2, 2021
- Every four weeks
- Prep meetings two weeks before

From flesniak@westmonroe.com

Title

Send Update

Required

Optional

Recurrence

Location

Agenda:

- Check next two PowerShell IG meetings for conflicts and remediate
- Firm up actual upcoming PowerShell IG session's agenda
- Line up speakers/topics
- Check upcoming prep meeting for conflict and remediate

Standing PowerShell IG agenda:

- Roundtable (5-10 mins)
 - Anyone working on anything interesting?

Value Prop: Skilling Up

Ryan Kellerman 3/27/2021 5:54 PM
Added a new tab at the top of this channel. Here's a link.
[PowerShell in a Bunch of ...](#)
Reply

- Right around the same time, our coworker Ryan Kellerman started a self-service internal training video series called **PowerShell in a Bunch of Lunches**
- We met once a week during lunch (CT) to go over the training content and work on exercises

Ryan Kellerman 7/7/2021 9:31 AM Edited
PowerShell in a Bunch of Lunches are caught up on the video recordings again! You can even watch this afternoon's session now if you wanted to do so. [PowerShell in a Bunch of Lunches](#)
Reply

Jan 2022: Going Strong



Frank Lesniak 1/11/2022 11:00 AM

PowerShell Interest Group

The PowerShell Interest Group meets monthly for one hour, usually with an agenda packed with demonstrations and discussions about automating our work. **If anyone is interested in PowerShell automation and not currently on the invite, please shoot a message to Sam Hansen or me, Frank Lesniak.** Our first meeting for 2022 is Tuesday Jan 25 from 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM CST.



Reply

...But Then, Trouble!



- In January 2022, West Monroe made the business decision to exit the cybersecurity incident recovery business



- ABE Brigade became Toolmakers!

Formalizing Toolmakers
helped ups work toward:

- Tool centralization
- Pervasive upskilling and knowledge-sharing
- “Meta” efficiency



Formalizing Toolmakers
helped ups work toward:

- **Tool centralization** 
- Pervasive upskilling and knowledge-sharing
- “Meta” efficiency

Centralization helped us with:

- Problem identification
- Backlog definition (even informal)
- Coordinated development
- Maturity (tool to solution)

Formalizing Toolmakers helped ups work toward:

- Tool centralization
- **Pervasive upskilling and knowledge-sharing**
- “Meta” efficiency



By participating in the community:

- New hires are thrust into a mature toolchain (VSCode, Git, Azure DevOps/GitHub)...
- ...and various languages, namely PowerShell, Terraform, and Ansible

Community = learning & adoption!

Formalizing Toolmakers helped ups work toward:

- Tool centralization
- Pervasive upskilling and knowledge-sharing
- “Meta” efficiency



Lots of artifacts creates challenges:

- We needed an overall tracker to keep things organized and help employees find tools efficiently
- Also helps with discussions with leadership!

Late 2024 – 2025

- Gather
 - <https://www.gather.town/>
 - Started using Gather as a virtual meeting space to talk about different topics and work on different things while all being in the same "meeting"
- External speakers
 - Invited external speakers to demo their scripts and/or present their talks
- Started a conference presenting interest group
 - This talk was a result of that group!
 - After a successful run in 2024, we started a small cohort of people interested in speaking at conferences

Our Advice

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Our Advice

- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good
- Keep the momentum
- Git gud



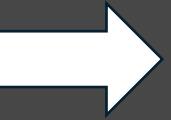
Our Advice

- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good
 - Keep the momentum
 - Git gud
- 
- Don't try and create a perfect backlog of things
 - Follow organic adoption and growth patterns



Our Advice

- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good
- **Keep the momentum**
- Git gud



- Schedule recurring meetings with those who are interested and make sure you hold the meetings (showing up is half the battle)!
- Hold prep calls with key group contributors before each meeting to help set the agenda and **publish the agenda!**
- Create a list of ideas and topics to present so you aren't scrambling to find topics last minute

Our Advice

- Don't let perfect be the enemy of good
 - Keep the momentum
 - **Git gud** 
-
- Git is the best way to organize and manage your group's scripts and helps avoid rework
 - Start with a single repository to facilitate centralization
 - Azure DevOps is a great solution for many orgs; easy to get started
 - Create a training video and readme for environment setup

Quick Recap Before Discussion/Q&A...



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Questions + Audience Discussion



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THANK YOU

FEEDBACK IS A
GIFT. PLEASE
REVIEW THIS
SESSION

