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THE A TMB Publication

OCTOBER 2011
VOL 66, NO. 10

WHOLESALER

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution



Ta Chen International has significantly invested in its PVF hub in Houston. This 17-acre, 225,000-square-foot operation houses about \$50 million in inventory. Between 80 and 100 trucks are loaded at TaChen's Houston facility every day, with an average turnaround time of less than 25 minutes. To learn more, see the exclusive interview on page 56.

Cowan Supply opens luxury showroom

ATLANTA — Cowan Supply, a long-time provider of commercial and residential plumbing materials to the Atlanta area, opened a new, luxury showroom and expanded commercial sales area at 3032 Bankers Industrial Drive, Suite A, Atlanta. The new location represents a significant step forward for the 65-year-old company.

(Turn to Showroom, page 62.)

Zurn Industries continues investment in distribution centers

ERIE, PA. — Zurn Industries LLC, manufacturer of engineered plumbing products, has opened a new West Coast distribution center, located at 3690 Jurupa St., in Ontario, Calif. This investment expands service capacity to a state-of-the-art, 115,000-square-foot facility, including regional training facilities and capability for future capacity expansion.

(Turn to West Coast, page 62.)

\$418-million deal

A. O. Smith completes acquisition of Lochinvar

MILWAUKEE — A. O. Smith Corporation has completed its acquisition of Lochinvar Corporation. The purchase price was approximately \$418 million, which was

funded from A. O. Smith's cash and revolving credit facility. A. O. Smith received notification from the Federal Trade Commission that it had terminated the Hart-Scott-Rodino waiting period pertaining to the transaction.

Privately held Lochinvar is a leading manufacturer of high-efficiency boilers used in commercial and residential hydronic heating and hot water applications. A. O. Smith expects the acquisition to be accretive to earnings per share in the amount of approximately \$.10 in the fourth quarter of 2011, excluding one-time purchase accounting charges and professional fees related to the acquisition and in the range of \$.40 to \$.50 per share in 2012.

(Turn to Lochinvar, page 62.)



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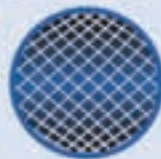
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Traditional Gastite CSST is also available.



See contact information on page 102



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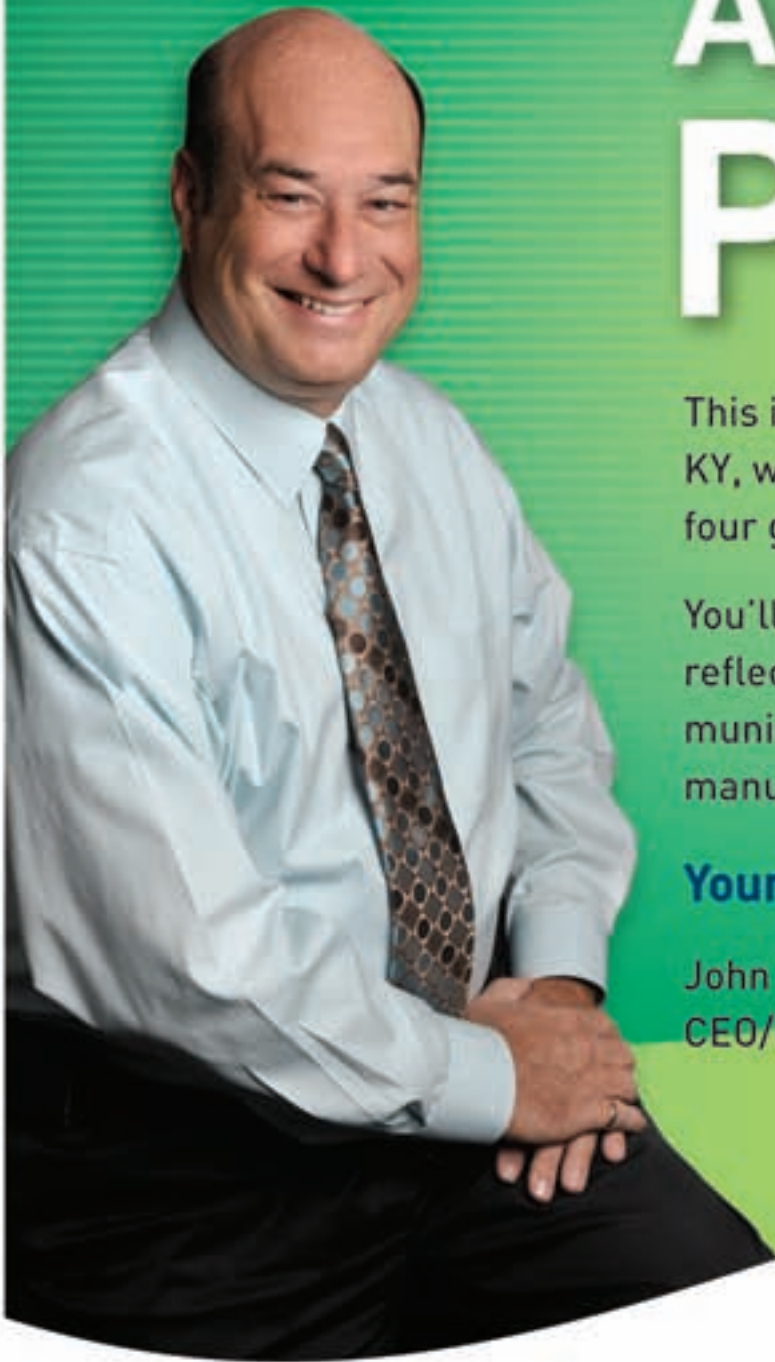


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Ta Chen International's history extends back only to 1986, but the master distributor has wasted no time building a world-class operation. Its 17-acre PVF hub in Houston has received substantial upgrades and houses about \$50 million in PVF inventory. Each day, 80 to 100 trucks pick up loads there with an average turnaround time of less than 25 minutes. Page 56.

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Q&A with Mary Jo Affiliated Distributors

Mary Jo Martin interviews Bill Weisberg, Roy Weaks, Gary Jackson and Justin Dunscomb of Affiliated Distributors, a leading buying/marketing organization dedicated to strengthening independent distributors. 48



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Next Month

Green building is in the forefront of the industry, and our November issue examines the trends in the green movement.

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Help your customers succeed

This month, John Messenbrink, editor of *Phc News*, a sister publication to *The Wholesaler* that targets contractors, asked if I would write a column from the perspective of the wholesaler. As I was thinking about the wholesaler/contractor relationship and how to make some helpful comments, it occurred to me that wholesalers don't spend as much quality time with contractors these days. Maybe my memory is incorrect but I remember that some wholesalers used to be trusted advisors to their contractors in addition to supplying products.

Now the pace of business seems so fast that I seldom hear of substantive business discussions between wholesalers and contractors. Of course, I may just be out of the loop and it may be happening, but what I hear about are very transactional conversations like the example that follows:

Wholesaler: "What do you need?"

Contractor: "I need 8" widgets"

Wholesaler: "When do you need them?"

Contractor: "Your price is too high!"

Wholesaler: "I asked when you

- Communicate with your customers!
- Show them what you can do for them
- Offer resources
- Don't be the low-cost provider

needed them. I haven't told you what the price is yet."

Contractor: "Sorry, I need them tomorrow and your price is too high."

Wholesaler: "I still haven't told you what the price is."

Contractor: "Sorry, I forgot. What is the price?"

Wholesaler: "\$12.00 or \$11.75 by the case."

Contractor: "See, I knew your price was too high. You obviously don't care about my business. I buy those for \$1.00 every day."

Wholesaler: "Can you get me an invoice to show my sales manager?"

Contractor: "The dog ate that invoice. I mean he ate all the invoices with that product but trust me it was \$1.00 or the price had a "1" in it. I wouldn't lie to you."

(Note: The actual competitor's price had two "1s" in it..It was \$11.00.)

Wholesaler: "I can get down to \$9.00 if you buy a case."

Contractor: "Can you get me 3 cases? Also, can you lock that price into the computer so the knuckleheads at your counter don't try to gouge me next time?"

Notes:

- \$9.00 is 12% gross margin.
- 12% is far below break even for the wholesaler.
- I'll bet \$11.00 would have gotten the order.

My concept for the *Phc News* column was to ask some wholesalers

what they would like to say to contractors if they could. I asked those wholesalers one question:

"If you could suggest just one thing to your contractor customers that would help to make them more successful, what would it be?"

Here were their responses:

- *We want you to succeed* — One common thread that I heard from every wholesaler was, "We want contractors to succeed. As a wholesaler, our success is directly related to their success. When contractors fail, we often suffer too. Successful contractors are better long-term customers."

- *Don't be afraid to ask for our help* — "We won't always be able to help but we always want to help."

- *Take advantage of the training we offer and take it seriously* — "We work hard to provide our contractors with good product and business training. We know that properly trained techs do a better job. The job is done right which makes the end customer happy with fewer call-backs. The job



BY RICH SCHMITT
Management specialist

the same mistakes over and over. If you need more information from us, tell us what you need."

- *Take time to upsell so you can make more money* — "My most successful contractors are not high-pressure salespeople but they take time to show customers a few options (Good, Better and Best). I know it takes more time but it is often worth the effort. If a homeowner needs a new faucet, most contractors charge for the install and they also mark up the faucet. The homeowner only needs one faucet. So why not make the best possible return on that faucet install?"

	Labor Charge	Faucet Cost +50%Markup	Amount Billed	Amount Billed less faucet cost
Job 1-Good Faucet	\$125	\$100 + \$50	\$275	\$175
Job 2-Better Faucet	\$125	\$200 + \$100	\$425	\$225
Job 3-Best Faucet	\$125	\$300 + \$150	\$575	\$275

is done faster and that makes it more profitable for the contractor.

"We offer business training because we know that owners with good business skills are stronger long term customers and that's good for both of us. Contractors seldom get into trouble because they aren't good with their tools, they get into trouble because they don't control their business.

"Also, if our training is missing the target, contractors need to let us know. If we are not covering the right topics, tell us what is needed. If you have suggestions, we are eager to do better but most contractors don't even take time to fill out the course review."

- *Stay on top of your job costs* — "The best contractors do a good job of understanding their costs so their bids are solid. They know the labor side and the material side PLUS they understand their business has to cover its overhead. Some of my customers seem to need help with every job they win because they bid it wrong. You know the drill — they forgot something, they used old costs, they missed on the hours required. The most successful contractors occasionally make mistakes but their bidding process is solid. They take time to get it right. Frankly, I'm less willing to help a guy who makes

"By upselling to the "Best" option, the contractor pockets an extra \$100 for the install and the homeowner gets the faucet he/she wanted. I know some of my contractors have given up and just send the homeowner to a big box to buy the faucet. Sure it's less hassle but they lose the profit that they could make on the product itself. Plus with the weak economy, there

When wholesalers have a strong relationship with their customers, they can not only make these kinds of suggestions, their customers may even ask them for suggestions and ideas.

are just not as many installations out there, so you try to make the most of the installs that you do get. One more thing, we sell enough high-end faucets that we know, even in this economy, some homeowners are spending money on upgrades."

- *Pay on time* — "I know this probably sounds like I'm being selfish but I see good contractors get into trouble as they get behind with their wholesalers. I work with my contractors so they stay current.

(Turn to Do you?... page 98.)

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Billtrust buys Invoice Connection

MONROE TOWNSHIP, N.J. — Billtrust, a premier provider of outsourced billing services, has acquired Invoice Connection, a leading automated invoice and statement delivery company headquartered in Carlsbad, Calif.

Invoice Connection has a significant presence in the wholesale distribution vertical. Billtrust's suite of services is particularly aligned with the unique needs of that market, and the acquisition provides additional value to the customers they serve.

"Our respective companies have a great deal of respect for each other because we share the same unwavering commitment to client service," said Flint Lane, Billtrust CEO and president. "Customers coming into the Billtrust fold will have access to an even broader range of print/mail and electronic billing services."

Colleen Stempien, president of In-

voice Connection, added, "I'm confident our customers will be well-served by Billtrust. Their reputation for excel-



lent service and their state-of-the-industry capabilities will be invaluable to our customers' continued success."

Billtrust is aggressive in winning new customers and growing revenue in the outsourced billing market. The company has been listed on the *Inc.* 500/5000 for five consecutive years, and their CEO was recently named one of the 25 Most Influential Financial Operations Professionals by the Institute of Financial Operations.

Billtrust will begin to transition Invoice Connection customers immediately. Both companies declined to disclose financial details of the transaction.

Visit www.billtrust.com.

OBITUARY

Julian Lehman, former CEO of Lehman Pipe and Plumbing Supply

MIAMI — Julian Lehman passed away August 17 at the age of 92. Lehman lived a great and full life because he worked hard and earned it. His conduct, values and elegance enriched everyone fortunate enough



Julian Lehman

to be associated with him.

A World War II veteran, Lehman fought at the Battle of the Bulge and was the recipient of the Bronze Star. He started Lehman Pipe and Plumbing Supply, one of Miami's oldest family businesses, a day after taking off his uniform, with \$2,500 that his wife Betty had saved, along with money he won shooting dice on the troopship's return from Europe.

Working together with his son Dennis, this "little family business" grew tremendously and now spans close to four acres of inventory.

The family suggests donations in memory of Lehman to Juvenile Diabetes Foundation—South Florida Chapter, 3411 N.W. 9th Ave, Suite 701, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309 or the Kessenich Family MDA/ALS Center 1120 N.W. 14th Street, Suite 831, Miami FL 33136.

Oasis reintroduces heavy-duty dehumidifier

COLUMBUS, OHIO — There are 45 locations in the U.S. currently experiencing flooding conditions, with approximately 22 in moderate or major flooding conditions. Flooding damage is a serious issue that damages buildings and can lead to mold and mildew build-up. Oasis International encourages home and business owners to visit The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website for real-time infor-

mation on flooding and flood alerts.

For those living where flooding occurs and in areas with high humidity, a durable, heavy-duty dehumidifier is necessary. While there are a lot of dehumidifiers on the market, there aren't many that are built to last. To address this, Oasis is reintroducing its dehumidifier (model D165) back into the North American market. Designed to safeguard people, places and goods from potentially damaging



Menard and NIBCO winners at Indy track

ELKHART, IND. — In a spectacular finish, Paul Menard earned his first Sprint Cup victory, driving the NIBCO-sponsored No. 27 Chevrolet Impala at the Brickyard 400 that kicked off the Sprint Car Summer Shootout on July 31.

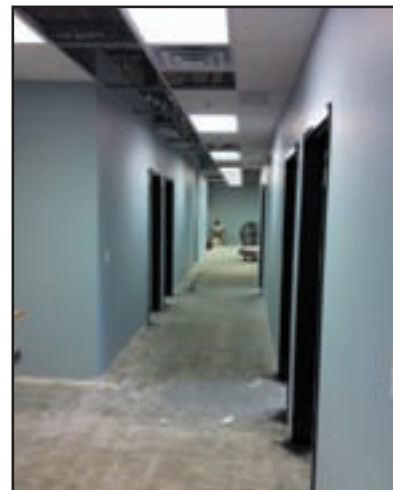
In a risky turn of events, Menard deliberately stayed on the track through green-flag pit stops, throttling to save fuel and held the lead with 15 laps remaining. The triumph marked an eventful day at the Indianapolis track, where NIBCO representatives and a group of its Indiana-based plumbing contractors and wholesalers witnessed the historical win. The NIBCO logo is emblazoned across

the hood of car No. 27, a testament to NIBCO's long-standing relationship with the retail super center Menards.

"We are very pleased to be a part of the Richard Childress Racing sponsorship and especially proud to be out front on car No. 27," said Mark Hamilton, NIBCO vice president-sales and marketing. "It's this spirit of winning that makes this sponsorship a good fit for NIBCO. The NASCAR sponsorship complements the NIBCO brand message of teamwork and customer focus. And it's a great way to provide promotional support for our network of contractors."

Visit www.nibco.com.

Val-Fit expands operations

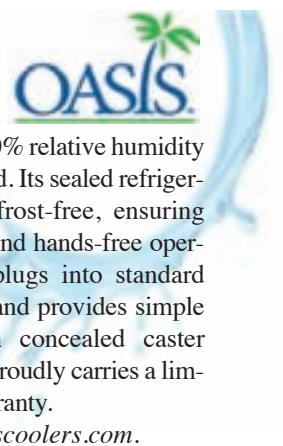


Val-Fit is continuing its expansion mode. The company opened its Houston stocking facility earlier this year, and are also in the process of expanding their Atlanta office space. At the Atlanta facility, Val-Fit is building an extra 2,200 square feet to house their employees while changing some of the warehouse racking to accommodate more inventory and make the space more efficient. Also, Dave Young has been promoted to inside sales manager in Atlanta.



Dave Young

Val-Fit is continuing its expansion mode. The company opened its Houston stocking facility earlier this year, and are also in the process of expanding their Atlanta office space. At the Atlanta facility, Val-Fit is building an extra 2,200 square feet to house their employees while changing some of the warehouse racking to accommodate more inventory and make the space more efficient.



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Near-record heat unable to stem 5-mo. decline in distributor growth

COLUMBUS, OHIO —HARDI announced North American HVAC/R average distributor sales for July



2011 up 4.9% from the same month last year, a decline from last month's

6.8% growth. July marked the fifth out of the last six months in which the annual distributor growth rate declined. HARDI's monthly *Targeted and Regional Economic News for Distribution Strategies (TRENDS)* report showed growth in five of seven U.S. regions, only one experienced double digit improvement compared

to July 2010. Canada, however, had its best month of the year, up over 10%, a sharp contrast to U.S. distributor sales average of 4.8%.

Inventory levels were up in every North American region for the third consecutive month. Days Sales Outstanding (a measure of how quickly customers pay their bills) finally retreated to under 50 days, after five months of consecutive increases. Last month's strong 30% increase in distributor productivity reflected by

sales per employee backtracked by nearly 10% as July sales failed to meet distributor expectations.

"The West Region has consistently reported weaker sales growth in 2011 than the other HARDI regions. The slower growth in the West is likely due to the relatively higher foreclo-

"2011 is shaping up to meet our forecast of modest growth and eroding margins...[but] those who are doing it right are starting to separate farther from the pack."

sure rates and falling home prices that are depressing the housing markets in that area. Home foreclosure rates in Arizona, California and Nevada are at more than one in every 300 homes, versus the one in 600 homes average for the U.S. We expect the diverse set of housing market dynamics across the U.S. and Canada to continue to play a role in future distributor sales this year," said HARDI economist, Andrew Duguay of the Institute for Trend Research (ITR).

HARDI executive vice president and COO Talbot Gee, added, "July shows a shift in growth away from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic to the middle of the country. Unfortunately, 2011 is shaping up to meet our forecast of modest growth and eroding margins on average; however, those who are doing it right are starting to separate farther from the pack."

HARDI has already begun advising members to quantify the impact the \$1,500 tax credit expiration last year had on fourth quarter sales, since Q4 2011 is likely to significantly lag.

"July's unitary sales data continues the monthly rise in R-22 unit sales but, perhaps more enlightening, overall unitary sales are effectively flat with this time last year," said Gee. "Unitary sales volumes are not growing and may even fall below our forecast for 2011."

Visit www.hardinet.org.

M&M controls to open third store

TIMONIUM, MD. — The new M&M Controls branch, located at 11237-B Leadbetter Rd. in Ashland, Va., is scheduled to open in mid-to-late fall. M&M Controls is looking forward to the expansion to the greater River/Tidewater area.


Brian Bromseth will be running the new M&M Richmond branch. Brian possesses significant experience as an HVAC technician. Until the new M&M Richmond branch is open, he will be based in Aireco's Richmond branch at 3100 West Clay Street.

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HD Supply: positive 2Q results

ATLANTA — HD Supply Inc. reported net sales for the fiscal 2011 second quarter ended July 31, 2011 of \$2.2 billion, an increase of \$195 million, or 10.0%, as compared to the second quarter of fiscal 2010. Gross profit for the second quarter of fiscal 2011 increased by \$57 million, or 10.5%, to \$601 million compared to \$544 million for the second quarter of fiscal 2010. Gross profit for the second quarter of fiscal 2011 was 27.9% of net sales versus 27.7 percent of net sales for the second quarter of fiscal 2010.

Operating income for the second quarter of fiscal 2011 was \$73 million, an improvement of \$46 million compared to operating income of \$27 million for the second quarter of fiscal 2010. The improvement in operating income reflects the 10.0% sales

growth and a 110 basis point decline in selling, general and administrative expenses as percent of sales despite inflationary pressure, including medical costs, fuel costs and a resumption of the company's 401(k) match. Liquidity at the end of the second quarter of fiscal 2011 was \$1.2 billion.

Loss from continuing operations before income taxes was \$86 million in the second quarter of fiscal 2011, an improvement of \$41 million as compared to the second quarter of fiscal 2010. Loss from continuing operations for the second quarter of fiscal 2011 was \$101 million, compared to a loss from continuing operations of \$115 million for the second quarter of fiscal 2010.

On August 25, 2011, the company entered into a definitive agreement to sell all of the issued and outstanding

equity interests in its Plumbing/HVAC business to Hajoca Corporation. The transaction is expected to close in September 2011 upon the satisfaction of customary closing conditions, including obtaining requisite government approvals. Upon the closing of the transaction, the company anticipates recording a modest gain and expects to utilize the funds from the transaction for growth initiatives. The results of the Plumbing/HVAC operations will be reflected as discontinued operations beginning in the third quarter of fiscal 2011.

Net sales for the six months ended July 31, 2011 were \$4.0 billion, an increase of \$283 million, or 7.5%, compared to the six months ended August 1, 2010. Gross profit in the year-to-date period of fiscal 2011 increased by \$83 million, or 7.9%, to \$1.1 billion compared to \$1.0 billion for same period of fiscal 2010. Gross

profit for the year-to-date period of fiscal 2011 was 27.9% of net sales versus 27.8% of net sales for the same period of fiscal 2010.

Operating income for the six months ended July 31, 2011 was \$85 million, an improvement of \$79 million compared to an operating income of \$6 million for the same period of fiscal 2010.

Visit www.hdsupply.com.

Merit Brass opens 3rd Birmingham DC

CLEVELAND — Merit Brass recently opened a 33,000-sq-ft facility at 280D Oxmoor Ct. in Birmingham, Ala. Merit will have an inside sales representative, Luke Webb, at the facility. Webb joined Merit last August. Merit's other distribution centers are in Sparks, Nev., and Dallas, with headquarters in Cleveland.

TRILAD launches new website

HOUSTON — TRILAD Flanges and Fittings, Inc. recently debuted its new website. The site features TRILAD's extended range of products and in-



cludes useful resources such as printable drawings, an industry-related FAQ section, and conversion calculators. The quality section provides access to a Vendor Approval Portal which is used to communicate with potential suppliers throughout the quality review and approval process. You can also consult our metallurgist for answers to technical questions.

As part of the Allied Group of Companies, the new TRILAD website also shows information about the group, latest news, and locations throughout the world.

TRILAD manufactures high pres-

sure and large diameter flanges up to 7" as well as custom forged products up to 110" in carbon, low temperature and high yield. TRILAD has recently introduced stainless and chrome to its product offering. TRILAD is capable of machining butt weld fittings up to 72" from each location.

TRILAD operates from three locations in North America: Houston; Edmonton, Alberta Canada; and Paris, Ontario Canada (near Toronto). All locations are ISO 9001 certified.

Visit www.trilad.com.

Platform Management acquires Cooper Valves

HOUSTON — Platform Management LLC, a Texas privately owned company, has acquired the stock and general partner control interest in COOPER® Valves LP ("COOPER®") from Newco Valves dba Newmans, a Joint Venture company of Cameron International and from M&N Management Systems, a privately owned corporation. COOPER® is a U.S. manufacturer that specializes in exotic alloys valves, serving the downstream and mid-stream chemical, petrochemical, oil and gas, water, and refining industries for over 50 years.

Visit www.platformmanagement.us.

A.O. Smith, David Gooding honored by Supply New England

ATTLEBORO, MASS. — Supply New England recently presented its annual Manufacturer and Manufacturers' Rep Agency awards. The 2010 winners are:

- Manufacturer of the Year — A.O.

Smith Corporation, Milwaukee

- Manufacturers' Rep Agency of the Year — David Gooding Inc., Brockton, Mass.

Award recipients are determined by voting among branch personnel at

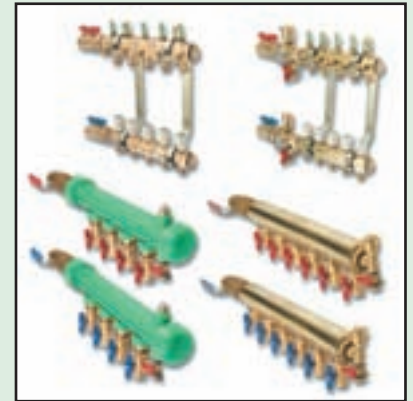
Supply New England's 14 supply house locations on the basis of overall customer service and support experienced throughout the year.

Visit www.supplynewengland.com.

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Above: Craig Varquez, regional manager for A.O. Smith, accepts the Manufacturer of the Year Award from Supply New England owners Jason Reardon (left) and Jamie Reardon. They are flanked by Supply New England management and Emerson-Swan personnel.

Right: Jeff Gooding, vice president of sales & operations for David Gooding Inc., accepts the Manufacturers' Rep Agency of the Year Award from Jamie Reardon of Supply New England.





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Q&A with Delany Products

Building on reborn company with clear focus

BY JOHN MESENBRINK
Editor, *Phc News*

Twelve questions with Scott Delany, vice president of Coyne & Delany Company.

1. Please provide a brief history of the company.

Coyne & Delany Company was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. It was in 1879 that John J. Delany decided to risk



Scott Delany

the job security of being a horse-drawn streetcar driver to — along with his partner, Thomas Coyne — found a manufacturing company of plumbing products. In those days, the business manufactured copper-lined wooden bathtubs and wooden overhead tanks for water closets. By the early 1900s, a wide variety of plumbing products were being produced, among which were cast iron bathtubs, brass plumber's trim, wooden flush tanks and fittings and ballcocks.

By the 1900s, the product line had expanded to the point where Tom Coyne and John Delany were starting to see the fruits of their labor with their salaries rising to \$25 per week. Then in 1910 Tom Coyne suddenly died. The Coyne family, with no male heirs, sold their interest in the business shortly afterward to John Delany. It was in 1928 that the company designed its diaphragm-operated first flush valve, the Flushboy, considered to be the simplest (and thus most reliable) design for direct pressure flushing.

The company suffered like the nation through the Great Depression. Over this time and leading up to World War II, many design improvements and Delany patents refined our basic diaphragm flush valve to where it required only six moving parts. Slowly, the copper-lined bathtubs and other product lines were replaced by the flush valve line. At this time, Coyne and Delany was a leading manufacturer in the Mid-Atlantic

and Northeastern states. World War II brought such huge demand for flush valves that by the end of the war the company was no longer just a regional supplier, but a national manufacturer specializing in diaphragm flush valves.

In 1969, Coyne & Delany moved from its home on Kent Avenue in Brooklyn to Charlottesville, Va., where they purchased 7 acres of land and built an expanded state-of-the-art manufacturing plant. At this time, the transition to the company's fourth generation of family ownership and leadership was underway. In 1979, the company celebrated its 100th year in operation. A huge accomplishment shared by only a few other American companies.

In the 1990s, as globalization began changing the world economy, competitors began importing cheaper produced products from overseas. These firms changed the commercial plumbing landscape forever, often by grabbing market share via discount price strategies, and not based upon quality. These imported products posed a significant threat to smaller



At left, the Impulse hands-free system installs easily with no electrical hookups and operates for years on one lithium battery; while the SmartHandle retrofit converts a flush valve to dual mode operation to reduce water usage as much as 30%.

ping point. As other firms absorbed the commodity price increases, the small family-run Delany saw slim margins erode into losses. The culmination of this was probably the darkest day in company history when it was forced to close its foundry in November 2007 and lay off two-thirds of its workforce.

As the company limped along in 2008, a rebuilding plan was underway. The company's rebirth began in 2009 following a restructuring in the early part of that year, which resulted in the company cutting to the bone. Another 40% of staff was laid off and management took pay cuts. During this time the company transitioned itself to a lean efficient model that was focused on R&D, marketing and distribution, while 100% of assembly and 100% of product testing were performed in Charlottesville, Va. The company also took on its first ever financial officer.

In the fourth quarter of 2009, the company unveiled its new name and logo, Delany Products, providing a clean, simplified image of "Changing for the Better." By that time, the implementation of a new state-of-the-art CRM system was already under way, and the company began to add back employees. The company also set up both an Advisory Board to instill proper corporate governance as well as its first-ever Representative Advisory Board

in order to get better feedback from the market. For 2010, the focus for the company was timely deliveries in order to rebuild the faith in the company. After successive years of losses, the company turned a profit in 2010 and with new products coming in 2011, the future is brighter than ever.

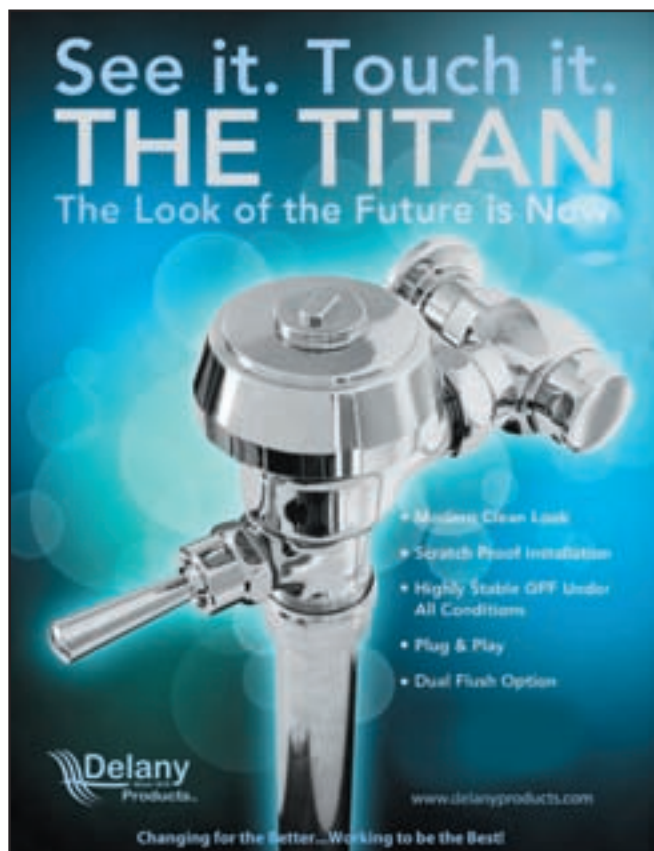
2. How did you get involved in the industry?

Honestly, I have never been in the industry. I have never worked for the company and in fact I have been living in Asia, working in Japan since 1997. My career took a very different path from my brothers. But it has been from this vast wealth of experiences that I am now drawing on to help the team today. I started on the floor of American Stock Exchange before becoming an original member of a global brokerage firm called TIR in 1987.

Having built TIR from scratch, we sold ourselves for \$125 million to E*Trade. Along the way, I moved to TIR/E*Trade's Tokyo office to run the trading desk there. From there, I left to establish a Real Estate investment fund, investing and running small to medium sized hotels throughout Japan. Our focus was creating a high-end product at an affordable price while establishing our new brand.

During this time, I was not aware of the magnitude of the company's downturn. I first became aware of the problems in 2008 and began consulting from Japan at night. By the end of that year, I saw the opportunity to return and help turn this sleeping giant around.

3. Explain your involvement in (Turn to Delany... page 18.)



Delany Products is moving ahead with new products for today's market, such as the innovative Titan flush valve.

family owned U.S.-based manufacturers like Delany.

As these changes were occurring, the old Coyne & Delany struggled to adapt. The run-up in copper prices in the mid-2000s provided the final tip-



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Delany Products looks to a promising future

(Continued from page 16.)

the company.

I am working every day to implement and live our motto of “Changing for the Better.” I principally have taken full responsibility for the company’s finances, making sure that we have the capital necessary to expand and that we are focused on profitability first. I am also involved in the both our short-term and long-term strategic planning, planning for the next markets, next products and systems, and the next market trends.

4. What are your initiatives for the company? (What are your business philosophies instilled in the company?)

I believe that a company is like a shark. If you are not aware, a shark cannot breathe on its own. It needs to always be moving forward in order to have the water move through its gills. A company is the same — if it is not moving forward, then it’s dying. I also feel strongly in the importance of being #1. People don’t have a lot of time and don’t want to take risk. Thus, they naturally favor the #1 player in any given market. We are looking up at our competitors at the moment, but striving to be #1 will always be our primary goal.

Our initiatives this year remain centered around building a solid foundation for delivering the highest-

Engineers and builders can feel confident in specifying any Delany Products item due to our focus on simplicity and dependability. The quality of our product is among the highest in the industry from the DZR alloy we use to the precision machining of every flush valve.

quality products on time at a fair price, and for introducing new innovative products. We will soon be implementing a new inventory system across all of our products, allowing us to more easily integrate with our customers as well as with our supply chain. By the end of the year, we are looking to add at least one new product to our line-up. From a systems standpoint, I immediately saw the need for the firm to upgrade its systems to something that was PC based, cost effective, and flexible to our needs as well as our customers, thus helping improve both the accounting as well as customer service.

5. Can you explain the process and importance of getting product to customers in a timely fashion?

For every manufacturer, timely delivery is important. For the new Delany Products it is crucial. From 2007 through most of 2009, the old Coyne & Delany let down its customers with delivery times that were, well, unacceptable to say the least. Since our return, it has been our focus and I am proud of what my brother Peter, our head of manufacturing, has achieved in this respect. We are not quite where we want to be but have come a long way and are moving in the right direction. As we told all of our agency representatives at our first-ever National Sales Meeting at this past year’s ASPE convention, as of Sept. 30, 2010, the average delivery time across all items was 9.8 days.

6. How can engineers/builders benefit from spec’ing your product — through quality, innovation, on-time shipping, customer service and satisfaction?

Engineers and builders can feel confident in specifying any Delany Products item due to our focus on simplicity and dependability. Our 130-plus years in existence and 80 years of focus on the flush valve speak loud and clear to these points. The quality of our product is among the highest in the industry from the DZR alloy we use to the precision machining of every flush valve. A drop of water in their valve is our customer’s assurance that each and every valve has been water tested before it leaves our Charlottesville, Va. facility.

Our on-going upgrade of systems for inventory, customer relations management, and accounting are all focused on providing the best customer experience possible while still maintaining the friendly warmth of a family-run business.

7. Are Delany products certified through a third-part certification process? Explain the process.

The new Delany Products has built a relationship with Canada’s CSA International. CSA International is a leading provider of product testing and certification services. Products are tested for compliance to international and United States standards, and issued certification marks for qualified products. The CSA mark is a sign of confidence for millions of people globally. Currently, two of Delany’s mainstay products have been given certification.

As for the process, I will answer this from the perspective of a new product. For us, all of our new products go through a rugged internal approval process. This starts in the lab

where we torture test a new product with at least 150,000 flushes and detailed documentation along the way. After making a production prototype, we then will field test a product in several locations for weeks at a time. Once this is done and we are satisfied, at this point we send that product to the CSA for their approval, which should be a formality at that point.

8. What are the top three obstacles your company faces(d)? How do(did) you overcome those challenges?

The three largest hurdles that we have faced as a company were our outdated systems, poor corporate communication and broken trust. From a system standpoint, we have gone through a painful transition beginning in 2009 and through most of 2010 to our new state-of-the-art PC based CRM system. For 2011, we are already in the process of upgrading to the next level of the software as well as adding a new inventory feature to it. In terms of our corporate communication, we are streamlining our corporate message under the single name of Delany Products.

Prior to 2009, the company was using several names at the same time: Coyne & Delany, Delany Flush Valves, Delany and Delany Products. It was even maintaining two completely separate websites, www.coynedelany.com and www.delanyproducts.com. Today it is just the one name, Delany Products, streamlined, simple and delivering one message. But our greatest hurdle to overcome was rebuilding the trust of our customers.

Being unable able to deliver complete valves for nearly two years took a toll on our valued customers’ belief in us. Thus the reason for our concentration on timely deliveries and my subsequent pride in the results that Peter has been able to obtain in getting our average times down to under 10 days. This has gone a long way toward rebuilding our customer’s trust. We know that we are nowhere near where we want or need to be.

There are several items that still have unacceptable delivery times, but one by one we will tackle all of these issues. This brings us back full circle to our new systems, which will be a key tool towards our achieving additional improvements.

9. How does (did) the economy affect your business?

With the fall off in new construction, our sector of the economy has been hit particularly hard. In some ways though, this has been fortuitous for us as we have been able to use these slower times to restructure and reorganize, preparing ourselves for when demand returns. Our return to

profitability during such a difficult time is also a testament to our loyal customers and



changes that we have been able to make to date.

10. Do you deal

Flushboy’s Blu-Shield handle coating provides a fungus-free, bacteria-resistant surface for improved sanitation and user confidence.

entirely with wholesalers? Describe the importance of the wholesaler/manufacturer relationship.

Yes, we deal almost entirely with wholesalers. The wholesaler/manufacturer relationship is an important one, as the wholesaler is a key piece of the puzzle for us, the manufacturers, to get our products through the supply chain to the end user. It is for the wholesaler that timely deliveries are of the utmost importance. If we cannot provide dependable support for the wholesaler, they cannot build confidence with their customers that they can get our product on time.

11. Any new products (updates), service offerings, incentives, etc.?

We are still strengthening our core, working on continuing to reduce production costs and delivery times. Still, it is our aim to introduce several new products in the later half of this year. One such product will be the Titan. The Titan will be a major departure for the company in both its look and feel. It will have the features that Delany is known for and yet changes that will excite the engineer. It will have quality and other elements that will simplify the life for the wholesaler, and it will be easy for the contractor to work with and install. In addition to the Titan, the Implus — the market’s first ever hands-free battery operated flush valve — will evolve into an improved and more user friendly version, called the Pulsar.

12. Describe Delany’s presence globally?

Delany has been traditionally strong in Canada, South America and the Caribbean. We are looking to strengthen relationships in Asia with new product offerings and begin expanding into select markets there. ■

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See contact information on page 102

Columbia Specialty Company hosts Open House at new facility

Southern California pipe fabricator and distributor opens 44,000-square-foot facility in Long Beach

LONG BEACH, CALIF. — Columbia Specialty Company, a distributor of carbon, stainless and alloy piping materials, opened a new 44,000-square-foot facility in Long Beach, Calif., in September. The new site, located at 5875 North Obispo Avenue, is triple the size of the former building in Paramount, Calif., and will allow the company to significantly grow their inventory and fabrication capabilities. According to John Fitzgerald, CEO of Columbia Specialty Company, “The new

facility is in the right location with the right size, en-



Columbia Specialty Company Inc

abling us to grow and serve both the local distribu-

tion channel and our national customers.”

Having outgrown their old facility, the new location allows the company to be consolidated under one roof, further enabling a larger on-hand inventory and more cost-effective products to its customer base. The new facility will permit the company to enhance their fabrication division and will lead to expedited services for refineries, food processing, and both power and chemical plants. Columbia Specialty Company’s fabrication capabilities include machining, welding and bending.

Mike Taylor, president of Columbia Specialty Company,



commented, “We are proud of our reputation for providing best-in-class customer service and for our ability to solve our customers’ special fabrication needs. If you can’t find it, we’ll make it for you, and at an affordable price.”

Columbia Specialty Company is an industrial piping distributor and fabricator dedicated to superior service, knowledge and support of its customers’ needs. Columbia Specialty Company has a Northern California branch located in Sacramento and two subsidiaries in California — Azusa Pipe & Tube Bending located in Azusa, and Plumbing World, also located in Long Beach. The company has recently been recognized

John Fitzgerald, CEO, and Mike Taylor, president.

as one of the 500 fastest-growing companies in the U.S. and was recognized in 2010 as one of the top 150 piping wholesalers nationwide.

A grand opening celebration of the new facility was held on September 22.

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Some products shown in their next generation design



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Epicor® announces cloud computing solution now available for distributors

IRVINE, CALIF. — Epicor Software Corporation unveiled Epicor Distribution Express Edition (Epicor Express), the on-demand version of its award-winning, next-generation Epicor enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution. Epicor Express offers a comprehensive end-to-end Cloud ERP solution designed specifically for the needs of today's distributors. Epicor's new cloud offering for distributors builds on the success of Epicor Manufacturing Express Edition, Epicor Prophet 21® and Epicor Eclipse™ on-demand solutions for distributors.

"Growing, independent distributors often face capital constraints and operational challenges," commented Kevin Roach, executive vice president and general manager, ERP Americas, for Epicor. "We developed Epicor Express specifically to ad-

dress these issues; so they can realize world-class capabilities, but in a model that dramatically reduces the cost and complexity of implementing a business system."

Chad Meyer, director-product marketing at Epicor, added, "Epicor Express can help distributors that have outgrown spreadsheets and manual processes achieve improved operational efficiency and profitability. Epicor Express provides everything a distributor needs to manage their business successfully in one integrated system, without the need for separate applications, and 'manual workarounds' that burden so many small businesses today."

The Epicor Express solution includes functionality for managing:

- Customers
- Sales orders

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- Inventories
- Operations
- Accounting.

It embeds business intelligence functionality for real-time insight into a distributor's performance and key metrics.

It is delivered in the Software as a Service (SaaS) model, licensed on a simple, straightforward subscription basis with minimal up-front costs and an affordable monthly fee for software, hardware, support, training resources, system maintenance and upgrades. Epicor also manages and maintains the service so customers can focus on business.

Epicor offers a solution for all business sizes and deployment models (i.e., multi-tenant SaaS, hosted and

on-premise) from a single code-line, providing the choice and flexibility of both on-premise and Cloud Computing. As customers evolve and grow, Epicor Express can scale with them or they can easily upgrade to another edition of Epicor ERP.

Follow Epicor on Twitter: @Epicor, @EpicorEMEA; @EpicorAU; @Epicor_Retail and on Facebook.

LAUFEN recognizes innovation, excellence as award sponsor

BASEL, SWITZERLAND — LAUFEN, Swiss innovator of the bathroom as a living space, continues to promote residential modern architecture with their sponsorship of the AR House Awards, a highly regarded vision of contemporary architecture hosted annually by *Architectural Review* magazine. Now in its second year, the program surpassed expectations with entries from nearly 200 global participants that excelled in both quantity

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and quality.

Judged by a distinguished international jury chaired by AR editor Catherine Slessor, the winning project, a zero energy home named Just K, was conceived and built by the young German practice of Björn Martenson, Sonja Nagel and Jan

Theisse. Impressed by its innovative approach to materials, form, context and energy use, the jury awarded them the first place prize. Four second prize winners were also named.

Visit www.arhouse.co.uk/ARHouse, www.laufen.com/usa or www.laufen.com/canada.

First Supply receives award

LA CROSSE, WIS. — First Supply received the prestigious Diamond Recognition – Business of the Year award presented by the La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO) at the 15th annual Industry Appreciation Breakfast in La Crosse.



The award recognizes First Supply as a local, family owned and operated business in the La Crosse area since 1897. First Supply has been actively involved in the community and Wisconsin and attributes their success to their customer partners.

First Supply's signature showroom,

Gerhards, is now located in 12 cities. They focus on the best products, including those from Wisconsin-based companies such as Kohler, A.O. Smith and InSinkErator, and specialize in the most innovative green products available.

Joe Poehling, president, accepted the award on behalf of First Supply: "I am much honored to accept this award, which belongs to all the employees at First Supply. Without their dedication and drive we wouldn't be the company we are today."

Visit www.1supply.com.

GeoExchange website a valuable tool

CHICAGO— GEO's website is a robust Internet portal, aimed at the public and Geothermal Exchange Organization (GEO) members alike. It provides valuable information to decision makers and, more importantly, to potential customers, about the technology. The website is finely tuned to draw maximum traffic from Internet users, showing up high on search results for major engines such as Google and Yahoo. At current rates, the combined effect of GEO website functions draws an outstanding million+ hits per year by over 300,000 unique visitors.

A popular feature of the site is the Find A Pro directory of GEOEXCHANGE® companies, which drives thousands of potential customer inquiries to GEO members. With typical pricing, even one lead from Find A Pro that generates a geothermal heat pump sale easily pays back annual dues for most GEO members.

The website also provides important updates to current GEO activities to promote the industry, including current legislation being considered by Congress, programs



sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and pertinent local and state-level activities.

The GEOEXCHANGE Forum provides a convenient way for potential customers to interact with geothermal heat pump experts and find answers to their questions.

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First HVAC/R Congressional reception a huge success

COLUMBUS, OHIO — Heating, Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Distributors International announced the success of the first-ever joint HVAC/R Congressional reception. More than 250 Congressional staffers attended

the August 3 reception on the Hill, sponsored by HARDI, ACCA, AHRI, PHCC and NATE.

Many staffers in attendance commented on this event being the first they could recall being truly channel-wide, a great testament to the partnerships within the HVAC/R industry.

The reception featured an incredible, 250-pound cake from the famous Carlo's Bakery, shaped like a city block, complete with commercial and residential buildings equipped with lifelike HVAC and water heating systems.

"This event pro-

vided our industry a large forum to explain who we are and what type of economic contribution the HVAC/R industry makes to our nation," said HARDI EVP/COO Talbot Gee. "Attendees were particularly interested in hearing suggestions on what HARDI members would like to see done to spur growth."

HARDI manager of government affairs Jon Melchi added, "Part of the success of this event comes from the fact that there is a HARDI member company or branch in nearly every congressional district in the country. Our membership touched the offices of every attendee at the reception."

Visit www.hardinet.org.

LAUFEN recognizes innovation and excellence as award sponsor

BASEL, SWITZERLAND — LAUFEN, Swiss innovator of the bathroom as a living space, continues to promote residential modern architecture with their sponsorship of the AR House Awards, a highly regarded vision of contemporary architecture hosted annually by *Architectural Review* magazine. Now in its second year, the program surpassed expectations with entries from nearly 200 global participants that excelled in both quantity and quality.

Judged by a distinguished interna-

tional jury chaired by *AR* editor Catherine Slessor, the winning project — a zero energy home named Just K — was conceived and built by the young German practice of Björn Martenson, Sonja Nagel and Jan Theisse. Impressed by its innovative approach to materials, form, context and energy use, the jury awarded them the first place prize.

Visit www.arhouse.co.uk/ARHouse, www.laufen.com/usa or www.laufen.com/canada.



Bill Anaya and Karen Meyers, Rheem government affairs; Jon Melchi, HARDI manager of government affairs; Betsy Keating, HARDI member Aireco Supply.

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Improve gross margins – without harassing your suppliers

Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series.

When I work with private distributors or groups, I almost always hear someone complain about shrinking margins or margin squeeze. They want to point fingers all over the place: the infidelity of the suppliers, the cost of transportation, the saturation of distribution in the market, etc. I always find it humorous when every city I visit is “a really competitive market” — as if there were some utopia where competition didn't occur.

While it is true that there has been clear margin erosion over the last several decades, I feel that distributors have become narrowly focused on the silver bullet of improving gross profit percentages, negotiating better buys with their suppliers. This “club in hand” approach to margin improvement may buoy margins temporarily, but it doesn't produce lasting results. Perhaps a shotgun approach would be more effective.

Over the last several years, I have been exposed to several ways to improve gross margins in a distribution organization without asking the suppliers for lower prices. Over the course of this two-part article, I outline several ways to improve gross margins using internal operating methods. All of these methods are time tested and can be implemented with very little cost. It will just take some concentrated effort and diligence.

Promote a pricing matrix guru

One of the most underutilized features in any software package is the pricing matrix. In most packages, this module has a huge capacity for capturing additional gross margin. A good matrix can handle 80% to 85% of the transactions. The remaining transactions will need some sort of sales pricing intervention. Unfortunately, most distributors run out of steam when they are setting the matrix up and settle for something less simple and ultimately less effective. It's time to reenergize your pricing matrix.

The first step is to create a pricing matrix guru. This person must be detail oriented and profit motivated. They must be willing to get into the matrix and figure out how it really functions. The guru will be responsible for updating all pricing from the suppliers, implementing price increases and creating special pricing agreements. This will probably re-

quire some additional training with your software provider, but the return on investment will be phenomenal.

One of the best ways to maximize gross margin potential is to adopt a velocity-based, or popularity-based, pricing model in the company. For example, many of us set up our matrix so that a particular customer type receives a flat discount off of list price, or multiplier on cost, for the entire line. Unfortunately, we tend to base this discount on the most popular item in the line. What percentage of a vendor line do you think your customers know they should be paying? I suspect that it is less than 5% of the line. It is the most popular items that get shopped around. These items should receive an attractive discount. Everything after that should receive a lesser discount or a higher gross margin. This is what a good price matrix setup can do for you.

Building packages

Individual items on a quotation can be scrutinized and shopped around, but bundles and packages tend to make your customers look more at the

I have said this for years: managing salespeople is not difficult — simply grab them by their wallets and direct them where to go... Productive salespeople will focus on individual compensation opportunities.

total value versus the cost of the components. In order to create effective packages, sales teams need to understand how the customer will utilize the products. How can the package reduce the cost of implementation or utilization? When creating a package, think in terms of application.

As many of you know, I grew up in the construction supply business. On job sites, OSHA requires that contractors regularly test electrical extension cords for grounding. Specific colors are used for each quarter. The cords are generally marked with colored electrical tape around one or both ends. This shows the inspector that the cord has been tested and is fit for use.

In order to help contractors stay in compliance, we put together a little kit that included the different colored electrical tape and a card with the chart for each quarter. The idea was to sell tape. Rather than slugging it out with every other contractor supply house on tape, the kit masked the price of the tape and created an overall improved gross margin.

When doing bid work, resist the urge

to show component prices. Bid the entire package when applicable. This may require reviewing building plans or drawings. You may be successful bidding individual details on a drawing. If you can include light fabrication in the package, it just helps improve the overall value of the bundle.

Sales compensation

Sales compensation plans can be fairly complicated and are generally a pain to administer. A well-thought-out plan, however, can help you achieve goals in your organization. I have said this for years: managing salespeople is not difficult — simply grab them by their wallets and direct them where to go. OK, this is overly simplified, but the basic premise is true. Productive salespeople will focus on individual compensation opportunities.

When designing compensation methods, distributors have a tendency to flat line the percentage of compensation. They may offer short-term rewards for promoting specific products but, most of the time, compensation is based on some fixed percentage of gross profit. Why don't we

reward those who help us improve our overall gross margin percentage?

I would like you to focus on a graduated compensation plan based on improvement in gross margin. For example, the current plan pays 5% of the gross margin at an average of 25% gross margin. The salesperson that averages 22% gets the same rate as the salesperson who achieves 28%. Establish a base line gross profit average for the company. In this example, it is 25%. Reward those who are pushing the average. Offer a rate of 5.5% to a sales rep who hits 27%. Offer a 6% rate to anyone who hits 29%.

A graduated compensation methodology helps drive your overall margin improvement, rather than promoting the status quo. Salespeople are the catalyst to margin improvement. We just need to get creative and give them the opportunity to shine.

Promote education

Several times a year, I teach a class designed to help manufacturers' sales reps work with distribution companies. We talk at length about margin erosion



BY JASON BADER
Inventory management specialist

and what they can do to help sell through distribution. I remind them that it all boils down to mindshare with the salespeople. Product knowledge is the cure for weak margins.

A salesperson who doesn't understand the features and benefits of a product generally resorts to price reduction. This is a zero sum game. Someone will always have a better price or a lower cost of distribution. Unfortunately, price wars establish low price points throughout the market, and it takes a long time to recover from them.

When a salesperson understands the application of the product and can speak intelligently on the value proposition, margins can improve. As familiarity becomes stronger, the salesperson will learn to recognize new opportunities for the product or group. The value of product knowledge can't be discounted. As I am constantly reminded, distribution is still a face-to-face business. People buy from people — from educated, confident, solutions-oriented people.

Every one of these solutions is an internal change in the status quo. The good news is that you are not reliant on asking for some price concession from your suppliers. Rather than bemoaning the poor economy or lamenting the good old days, refocus your energy on the internal opportunities. Don't let the market dictate how much money you are going to make. There are plenty of nickels, dimes and quarters available for those of you willing to look. If you missed Part 1, please drop me a note, and I will send you a copy. As always, I am here to help.

Good luck. ■

Jason Bader is the managing partner of The Distribution Team. The Distribution Team specializes in providing inventory management training, business operations consulting and technology utilization to the wholesale distribution industry. Jason brings over 20 years of experience working in the distribution field. He can be reached at 503-282-2333, Jason@distributionteam.com, or at www.thedistributionteam.com.

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Ferguson awards Dream Bathroom Giveaway grand prize

HOWELL, MICH. — Michigan resident Cynthia Weaver was selected from more than 1.2 million entries to receive a \$50,000 bathroom remodel from Ferguson Bath, Kitchen and Lighting Gallery. Weaver will receive the bathroom of her dreams, featuring premium Kohler® products. The re-

model will include a new toilet, sinks, faucets, showering system, bathtub, cabinets, countertops, lighting, wall covering and flooring. A Ferguson showroom consultant from Ann Arbor, Mich., as well as professional remodeler Paulson's Construction, will execute the renovation project.

"I was right in the middle of an unsuccessful bathroom remodel, so went online to look for ideas and came across the Ferguson Dream Bathroom Giveaway," said grand prize winner Weaver. "I entered the contest almost every day, but didn't

"Cynthia has a lot of great ideas about the design of her dream bathroom, and our role is to educate and guide her Kohler product selections to fit the design scheme. The bathroom is going to be amazing; we can't wait to see the end result when it's complete."

think I would ever win. I cannot put into words my level of excitement when I received the news that I had actually been chosen!"

Paul McClorey, president of Paulson's Construction, commented, "We look forward to working with Ferguson on this job to make Cynthia's dream bathroom a reality. Her current bathroom is rather small and cramped, typical of homes built in the mid-1970s. We will completely



Cynthia Weaver delightedly shows off the \$50,000 check awarded to her by Ferguson Bath, Kitchen and Lighting Gallery to build a dream bathroom. With her is Paul McClorey, president of Paulson's Construction, who will work with Ferguson to complete the Dream Bathroom project.

change the space and create a spa-like experience."

Heidi Gillespie, Ferguson showroom manager in Ann Arbor, added, "Cynthia has a lot of great ideas about the design of her dream bathroom, and our role is to educate and guide her Kohler product selections to fit the design scheme. The bath-

room is going to be amazing; we can't wait to see the end result when it's complete."

This is the second year Ferguson has sponsored the Dream Giveaway contest. Last year, a family from Delaware won a \$75,000 kitchen remodel.

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See contact information on page 102

HARDI mourns recent losses from two member firms

COLUMBUS, OHIO — HARDI sends its deepest sympathy to the Neslony family as they mourn the loss of Geraldine (Rejcek) Neslony, beloved wife, mother and grandmother. Geraldine passed away peacefully on August 12 at the age of 64 at her residence after a courageous five-year battle with brain cancer.



She was married to James J. Neslony in 1968 in Penelope, Texas, where she worked in the mortgage and insurance industry until the births of her two sons. Since 2002, she was the co-owner of HVAC Plus in Oklahoma City. She enjoyed photography and

volunteered taking school pictures for student yearbooks at her sons' schools.

Geraldine had a zest for life and loved being near her family and friends. She will be remembered by many people for her gracious attitude, jovial laugh, sparkling eyes and beautiful smile.

The Neslony family wanted to give special thanks to M.D. Anderson Brain and Spine Center, acknowledging Dr. John DeGroot and also a thank you to Autumn Bridge Hospice, recognizing Emily Vorderlandwehr, R.N., for all their work and support.

In addition, HARDI announced that Curt Brown, 60, passed away August 10, with his wife by his side in his home in Tallmadge, Ohio.

Always there to assist and provide valuable feedback in HARDI's efforts to develop new products and

services, Brown was born May 30, 1951, in Akron and graduated from Tallmadge High School in 1969. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps, proudly served in Vietnam and later graduated from both the University of Akron and Case Western Reserve University, where he received his MBA.



Curt Brown

Brown spent most of his career in finance, where he was most recently the chief financial officer of Famous Enterprises Inc. He was a busy person who enjoyed family, friends and work. In his free time he enjoyed movies, reading, running and fine dining.

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The shower's European secret

BY JEFF SILVERSTEIN
Special to THE WHOLESALER

We've all heard stories of how Europeans lag behind Americans in shower technology. The truth is that nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, it is a not-so-secret secret of the decorative plumbing industry that Europeans enjoy the latest and greatest shower technology and design. And they do so at the most reasonable price points.



This is especially true of thermostatic shower valves, which are widely used in homes and hotels at all price levels throughout Europe.

Traditional pressure balance valves — the standard in the U.S. — are rarely used in Europe. Instead, Europeans utilize thermostatic valves in all types of installations—from entry-level to luxury. Thermostatic valves are well known for their safety, comfort, performance and flexibility. But they have typically carried very high price tags in the U.S., so our domestic market has evolved to perceive thermostats as strictly a luxury item.

A bit of shower history

But let's take a step back to understand why the market developed the way it did. Why did pressure balance become the de-facto standard in the U.S., while the Europeans went by the way of the thermostat?

In the early part of the 20th century, two-handled valves were the norm for mixing hot and cold water in the shower. However, these valves offered little protection to the dangers of scalding or thermal shock, the sudden change in water temperature due to a change in water pressure, such as when a nearby toilet is flushed.

In 1939, Symmons® Industries Inc. developed the first pressure balance valve and over time, other manufacturers developed their own pressure balance valves. This led to more affordable price points, which helped pressure balance become the U.S. standard.

But while pressure balance valves succeeded in protecting against thermal shock, they did not control the maximum water temperature, which led to the development of a variety of mechanical means by manufacturers, such as limit stops or cams.

Early federal plumbing standards mandated the use of single handled shower valves, including pressure balance, thermostatic and simple mechanical valves (which offered no thermal shock protection). Ultimately, the American Society of Sanitary Engineering (ASSE) developed a cohesive national standard (ASSE 1016), which eliminated simple mechanical valves and required either pressure balance or thermostatic valves specifically to protect against thermal

shock and scalding. Due to wide availability and low-cost, pressure balance valves became the U.S. standard.

Meanwhile in Europe, the showering public was facing a different problem. Most water systems in Europe were gravity fed, low-pressure affairs, so guarding against changes in pressure was less an issue. The bigger challenge was protecting against large deviations in temperature, as most water heater and storage systems had poor consistency and control. The need to control fluctuations in water temperature meant that thermostatic valves were the technology of choice to create a safe shower experience and the codes and standards developed in Europe reflected this.

Early thermostatic valves utilized either a bimetallic element or a gas-filled element to control temperature, methods that were relatively expensive and unreliable. This led to the advent of low-cost, reliable and long-lasting paraffin wax elements in the early 1990s, which helped usher in an new era of moderately-priced thermostatic valves in Europe.

The thermostatic advantage

While thermostatic valves gained acceptance in Europe for everyday use, in the U.S. they became almost the exclusive province of luxury installations. Manufacturers were able to provide a long list of fea-

tures to justify the luxury price point, including:

- High flow rates allowing for creation of multiple showerhead "car-wash" systems
- Ability to precisely control each showerhead independently for on/off and flow rate
- Ability to "dial in" a precise temperature setting for each user (e.g. 99° for him, 103° for her)
- A 100° safety stop button to prevent accidentally setting an excessively high temperature
- Protection against scalding.

New developments

Recently, California Faucets has tackled the long-standing perception that thermostats are luxury items with the introduction of the StyleTherm® thermostatic valve program. StyleTherm features price points that are identical to the company's pressure balance valves systems. How is this possible? Rather than buying their thermostatic valves and technology from subcontractors in Europe — thereby suffering from the disadvantageous exchange rate between the dollar and the Euro — California Faucets embarked on an ambitious three-year process of rigorous engineering and development to produce a high-quality, world-class thermostatic shower at an affordable price.

California Faucets' goal in creating the StyleTherm program was to retain all of the advantages of thermostats, while keeping it in the same price category as pressure balance.



We achieved this goal with intelligent American design and engineering, controlling every step of the manufacturing process and eliminating the European middleman.

StyleTherm boasts a lengthy and unique list of features. Besides the ability to dial in exact temperatures, StyleTherm requires no diverter valve to toggle between shower applications, such as showerhead to handheld shower. Each shower application is operated via its own volume control, allowing for flexibility to use each application independently or in concert with one another. The system includes anti-scald temperature protection with a safety temperature override button, a

feature especially comforting to parents of young children, and the elderly. Moreover, a higher water flow rate satisfies even the most challenging design requirements, and can easily supply a variety of shower options, including rain showerheads, body sprays, handheld showers, tub spouts and a myriad of other applications.

StyleTherm program offerings

The StyleTherm program is powered by three unique valve bodies:

- TH75-R — traditional 3/4" valve body that requires separate and independent volume controls for maximum flow rate and design flexibility.
- TH51-R — 1/2" valve body that features a single volume control built right into the valve body. (This is the thermostatic equivalent of a basic pressure balance shower, with all the added benefits of thermostatic technology.)
- TH52-R — 1/2" valve body featuring two volume controls built into the body. (This configuration allows for replacing diverter pressure balance valves in tub/shower applications, as well as dual showerhead or showerhead/hand shower combinations.)

The StyleTherm program is completed by a wide variety of trim options — including traditional and contemporary styles to match the 30-plus series in California Faucets' collection. Each item is available in more than 30 decorative finishes, including 12 offered in ultra-durable PVD. ■

For more information, please visit www.calfaucets.com

RectorSeal acquires Airtec assets

HOUSTON — RectorSeal purchased the assets of Airtec Products Corporation of Fall River, Mass., on August 8. Airtec offers a line of uniquely designed and patented diffusers that incorporate a quick and easy to install grill, box and multi-size boot and damper all in one, as well as a group of accessory items to help in the ceiling diffuser installation.

Also included in the Airtec line are:

- EZ Trap® products for condensate removal from air conditioning and refrigeration systems

- Novent® locking refrigerant caps
- Aspen condensate pumps for use in minisplit air conditioning systems
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Heat-Flo opens new facility

UXBRIDGE, MASS. — Heat-Flo Inc. recently moved into a larger, more modern manufacturing facility, located in the heart of the Northeast hydronic heating market with easy access to major highways. The plant includes the latest state-of-the-art automated processing equipment, custom designed machinery, and tooling and fixturing to assure high-quality products and improved productivity. Heat-Flo product distribution is supported by multiple

The investments in advanced manufacturing equipment and factory processes such as welding, quality assurance and factory training have paid off.

warehouse locations.

Heat-Flo Inc. was established in 1998 with the initial goal of developing and manufacturing a line of indirect water heaters that delivered the performance and features that contractors and end users required, while providing installation and service benefits that would make their products easy to install and the clear choice of heating professionals.

The two most important features of Heat-Flo products are quality and ease of installation.

The initial line consisted of 40-, 60- and 80-gallon indirect water heaters, which were soon followed by 30-, 50- and 115-gallon models. While new models and a commitment to continuous product enhancements were added over the past decade, many of the original key product features are carried through to the present:

- All stainless steel construction
- Large smooth wall coils with no finned tubing to collect lime and sediment
- All connections are on top, for a



Heat-Flo Inc.'s larger, more modern manufacturing facility in the heart of the Northeast hydronic heating market has easy access to major highways and boasts the latest, most up-to-date automated processing equipment.

neat, clean installation.

- Durable thermoplastic jacket with two inches of insulation, resulting in a product that has low standby losses and resists dents and scratches.
- Drain valves and T+P valves are factory installed to reduce installation time.

2005 saw new products, enhance-

ments and Heat-Flo's entrance into the solar market with the introduction of the dual-coil units. These tanks are quickly becoming a standard in the solar market. Heating professionals

also found other uses for the second coil, including feeding small hydronic heating zones, connecting the bottom coil to wood boilers and connecting both coils to a boiler for double heat transfer.

In 2006, Heat-Flo launched a line of hydronic buffer tanks. These tanks (*Turn to Water heater... page 36.*)

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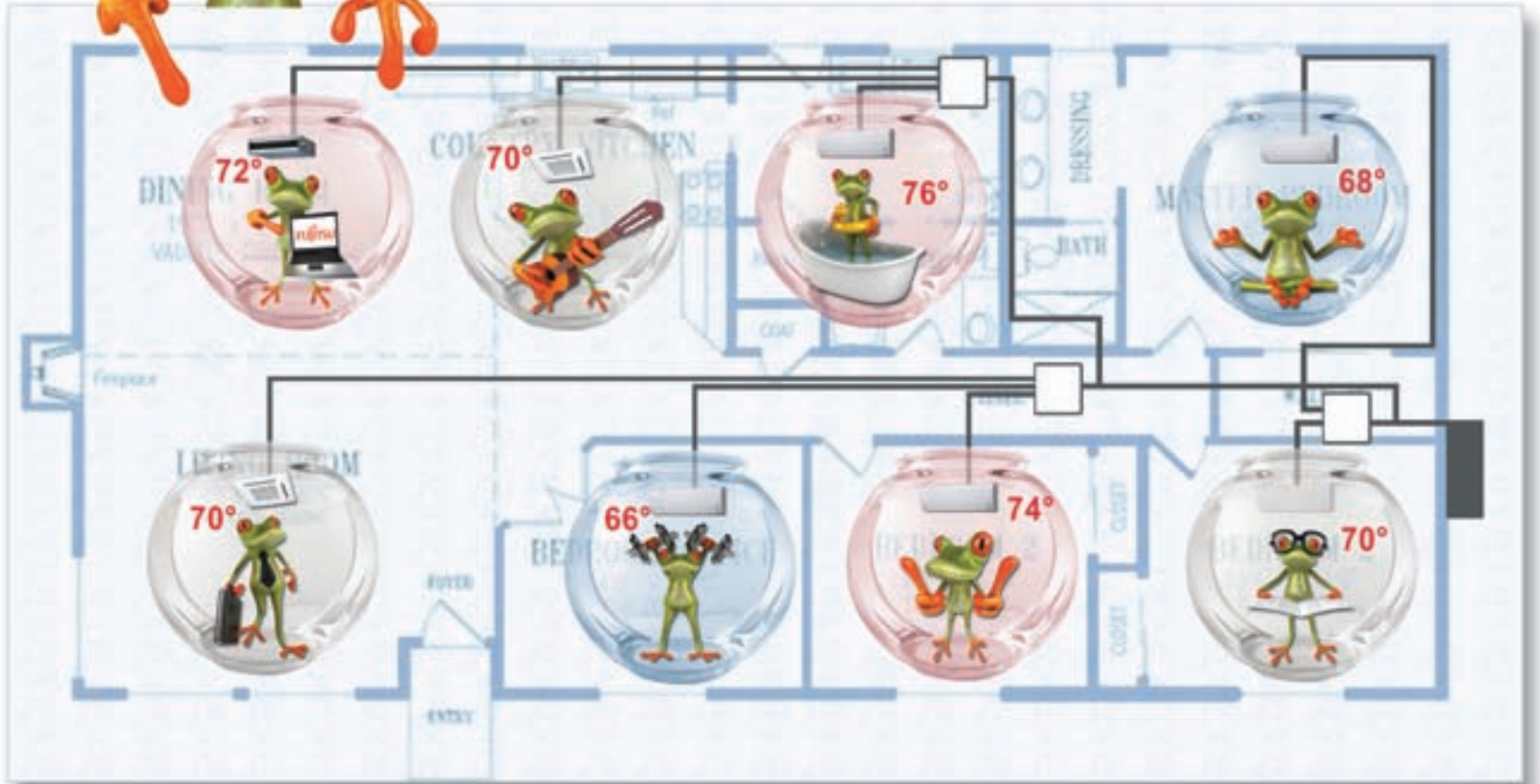
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With Fujitsu's line of Halcyon Hybrid Flex Inverter systems, you really CAN please everyone.



To find out how you can please everyone and how to become a Halcyon Dealer visit www.fujitsugeneral.com

Water heater mfr. moves to bigger NE facility

(Continued from page 34.)

are used to reduce cycling in hydronic, chiller and heat pump systems and to hydraulically decouple the heat source from the distribution system. This product does the job of a hydraulic separator with volume and is a must-have in a water-to-water heat pump application. Hydronic buffer tanks are now offered with the option of one or two built-in coils. In a water-to-water heat pump application, the bottom coil can be used to

add solar energy and reduce heat pump on time, and the top coil can be used to preheat domestic hot water and reduce water heater on time.

The investments in advanced manufacturing equipment and factory processes such as welding, quality assurance and factory training have paid off. All factory-threaded connections are both Teflon taped and doped and factory tested. Every Heat-Flo tank undergoes a stringent double leak check and quality inspection to

assure the highest-quality product gets delivered to the job site.

A philosophy of continuous im-

provement has resulted in Heat-Flo products that are among the best in our industry in regards to design, performance and dependability.

Visit www.heat-flo.com.



Heat-Flo's philosophy of continuous improvement has resulted in the highest-quality products, with factory-threaded connections that are Teflon taped, doped and factory tested. Every Heat-Flo tank receives a stringent double leak check and quality inspection before it gets delivered to the job site.

Gerber products selected for green neighborhood

MOUNTAIN HOUSE, CALIF. — Gerber Plumbing Fixtures LLC announced the inclusion of its highly efficient faucets and toilets in the new ENERGY STAR® qualified homes in the Montalcino Questa neighborhood in California. Completed on June 11 with an official grand opening, Montalcino is a lush community of 73 sustainable homes built by Standard Pacific Homes.

The homes at Montalcino were built to use nearly 50% less energy compared to a typical resale home. In addition to being ENERGY STAR qualified, all the homes include water-conserving plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems. Moreover, the homes

used low-VOC interior paint and installed radiant barrier roofing to further reduce energy consumption.

Each home features Gerber's water-conserving plumbing products. The contractor chose Gerber's eco-friendly, high efficiency toilets and faucets because of the company's strong reputation for delivering top-performing plumbing products.

"Gerber is concerned about wasting water and seeks to be a part of a new community like Montalcino, which focuses on water reduction," said Gary Cardono, director of hospitality sales for Gerber. "This is a prime opportunity for us to help conserve water in Northern California."

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Peerless and friends do it again for Riley

INDIANAPOLIS — Celebrating the 12th anniversary of their Camp Riley Golf Outing, the employees, suppliers, customers, family and friends of Peerless Pump Company raised more than \$60,000 for Riley Hospital's camp for children with physical challenges.

Camp Riley helps inspire youth

with physical disabilities to realize their potential as they become increasingly independent. Every summer, nearly 250 children, ages 8–18, from throughout Indiana and several other states, come to Camp Riley.

During their time at camp they prove to themselves and others that their

strength and willpower define them — not their physical circumstances. From horseback riding to swimming to conquering the high ropes course, campers discover new confidence and make lifelong friends. Camp Riley holds six different camp sessions during a five-week period each summer at Bradford Woods, Indiana University's 2,500-acre universally accessible outdoor recreational facility.

"Our 12-year total is now over \$440,000, which shows the generosity of all the people associated with Peerless and Grundfos (which acquired Peerless in 2007)," said Meredith Mills, who coordinates the tournament in addition to her job in the Grundfos information technology department. "There were eight golfers on every tee of the 27-hole Ironwood Golf Course (Fishers, Ind.), which was nearly unplayable the day before, due to the heavy rains. The course managers and their team deserve a great deal of credit as well."

"This event epitomizes the Grundfos value of being 'focused on people,' and the participation of so many of our colleagues and partners, shows that our values are shared by many," said Fred Bock, vice president of marketing for Grundfos North America. "The hard work of so many people — much of which is done on their

"This event epitomizes the Grundfos value of being focused on people."

own time — has made this a capstone event, which continues to reach its goal of sending as many kids to camp as possible."

The Peerless team is already talking about the 2012 event, which will most certainly take the event's total to more than a half-million dollars raised since its inception.

Visit www.peerlesspump.com, www.grundfos.com or follow us on Twitter and Facebook.



Dahl events build relationships with key industry partners

MISSISSAUGA, ONT. — Dahl, a family-owned manufacturer of top-quality plumbing and heating valves and specialties for more than 58 years, recently launched a series of "Day with Dahl" events to further

"We know the key to our growth is building strong, lasting partnerships with our distributors and their contractor customers by delivering quality production time, every time, and these events are an excellent way for us to continue to forge those relationships."

develop relationships with distributors and contractors. From the first "Day with Dahl" event on June 1 in Las Vegas to the upcoming events planned at distributors from Oklahoma City to Ocean City, Md., Dahl

plans to host more than 50 events across the country showcasing the company's innovative product offering to local partners.

Prior to the event, each distributor's local contractors receive information about the "Day with Dahl" event, along with promotional items such as educational brochures and a free sample of a Dahl valve to utilize at a current job site.

At the event, Dahl offers its industry partners a complimentary breakfast or lunch, hosts brief informational sessions about new products and provides all attendees with a Dahl "I Can't Take a Leak" slogan T-shirts. Dahl also provides distributors with an array of marketing elements and promotional items to use at the event and in the future.

Josh Jamieson, Dahl regional sales manager, noted, "We are excited to host this series of 'Day with Dahl'



Josh Jamieson (r), Dahl regional sales manager, with Butch Kaltreider from ASK Plumbing at local "Day with Dahl" event in York, Pa., on June 14.

events as a small way to thank our industry partners from coast to coast. We know the key to our growth is building strong, lasting partnerships with our distributors and their contractor customers by delivering quality production time, every time, and these events

are an excellent way for us to continue to forge those relationships."

Local distributors interested in hosting a "Day with Dahl" event in their area should contact Josh Jamieson at joshj@dahlvalve.com.

Visit www.dahlvalve.com.

Falcon to donate to troops during November promo



SUN VALLEY, CALIF. Falcon Stainless announced a Veterans Day Promotion in support of our troops at home and abroad.

For the month of November, all orders placed with Falcon Stainless will generate donations to the following 4-star-rated charities purposed to assist our troops while serving and after returning home. The Charities selected are: Homes for Our Troops, USO,

Navy Seal Foundation, Army Emergency Relief, Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund and Mercy Medical Airlift.

Falcon Stainless' water connectors are also currently serving U.S. troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and at home providing clean drinking and bathing water.

For more information on Falcon and this promotion, contact Falcon Stainless at 800/814-8444.



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INDUSTRY NEWS

•THE WHOLESALER®—OCTOBER 2011

New study analyzes impact of food waste

RACINE, WIS. — Consider the apple core. From an environmental perspective, what's the most responsible way to dispose of it, or of a banana peel, or of any food waste?

A new study about the impact of various food waste disposal systems has shown that putting it into a garbage disposer results in lower global warming potential than putting it in the trash and sending it to a landfill. That's a key finding of the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) commissioned by InSinkErator, a division of Emerson and a leading manufacturer of food waste disposers.

As set forth in the report, if a community of 30,000 households (the size of Newport Beach, Calif.) switched from sending food scraps to the landfill to using a disposer instead, the reduction in global warming potential would be the equivalent of eliminating nearly 2,100 tons of carbon dioxide emissions. This is akin to eliminating about 4.6 million miles of car traffic.

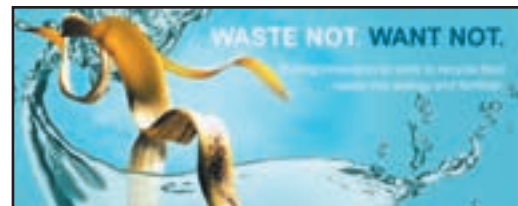
According to the EPA, landfills are a major source of methane, a greenhouse gas at least 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Because food scraps are a significant component of waste that municipalities send to landfills, diverting it for recycling into resources is becoming a major goal of cities worldwide. Enter food waste disposers, which pulverize food scraps and send the resulting slurry to the various wastewater treatment systems evaluated in the LCA.

Many advanced wastewater treatment plants can convert food scraps into renewable energy through a process called anaerobic digestion. At these plants, food scraps can also be turned into fertilizer products, known as biosolids, that can help build healthy soils.

"The LCA confirms a multitude of research and validates that food waste disposers are more than just convenient; I like to think of them as an environmental appliance," said Tim Ferry, president of InSinkErator. "After people look at the environmental benefits of using disposers instead of landfills, we think they will be compelled to bypass the trash can and put food scraps down

the disposer instead."

Unlike studies that review and compare competing products, the LCA assesses the environmental impact of the four primary systems for managing food scraps — wastewater treatment, landfills, incineration and advanced composting. Camp Dresser & McKee conducted the initial analysis used by PE INTERNATIONAL Inc.



(formerly PE Americas) to produce the LCA, following ISO 14040 standards, including review by an independent panel of experts.

The LCA analyzed several critical environmental impacts: global warming potential (trapping heat that would otherwise pass out of the earth's atmosphere); eutrophication potential (excessive vegetative growth in bodies of water from high concentrations of nutrients); acidification potential (increase in the acidity of water and soil); smog formation and the energy demands associated with each system.

The report states that food scraps processed through a wastewater treatment plant with anaerobic digestion and cogeneration (e.g., San Francisco, Milwaukee and many others) can even result in a reduction of global warming potential. It also concludes that processing of food scraps at these advanced wastewater treatment facilities has lower energy demand; less than landfills, incineration and centralized composting.

"In thinking about systems for managing food scraps, wastewater treatment systems are often overlooked, despite their surprisingly effective role in turning liquid waste into valuable resources," said Michael Keleman, senior environmental engineer at InSinkErator. "Composting is good, but it isn't the only option."

Visit www.insinkerator.com/green.

Knauf insulation lines verified as formaldehyde-free

SHELBYVILLE, IND. — Satisfying the growing indoor air quality needs of the commercial and industrial marketplace, Knauf Insulation North America's pipe and equipment insulation line products are now verified as formaldehyde-free through the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute. Knauf Insulation provides a full line of formaldehyde-free insulation for the pipe and equipment market. Verified products include Earthwool™ 1000° pipe insulation, insulation board, Friendly Feel® duct wrap, and elevated temperature products.

"This is a unique step that goes beyond our certification to the GREENGUARD Children and SchoolsSM low emissions standard. With the increasing number of specifications for formaldehyde-free insulation, we wanted to have a credible, third-party organization verify that

our products exceed the strictest formaldehyde-free testing," said Glenn Brower, director of technical marketing for Knauf Insulation.

From copper pipe and sheet metal ducts to industrial furnaces and tank storage, Knauf Insulation's full suite of pipe and equipment insulation products provides commercial and industrial facilities with proven insulation solutions delivering energy efficiency and operational-cost savings. At the same time, the products help contribute to superior indoor air quality.

Knauf Insulation products that have received verification feature the patented ECOSE® technology, a bio-based binder made from rapidly-renewable materials, doing away with chemicals and gases such as phenol, formaldehyde, acrylics or artificial colors that have been traditionally used in fiber glass commercial and industrial insulation.

Visit www.knaufinsulation.us.

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Global outlook appears murky through 2012

The greatest satisfaction that anyone can receive at the apex of a lifelong career is the approbation of those with whom he has fulfilled his chosen career commitment. It's a particular blessing when one has had the good fortune to fulfill his chosen life's work with the overwhelming majority of plumbing-heating-cooling-piping distributors, manufacturers, contractors, end-users, specifiers, etc., who comprise one of the greatest slices of America's world-leading economy.

When first entering the industry as assistant sales and advertising manager of Hammond Brass Works at the fall meeting of the annual Central Supply Association meeting on October 1, 1956, it would have seemed unthinkable that I would still be going strong after being enriched by involvement in just about any challenge that this great and multi-faceted industry has to offer.

This has included assuming the presidency of small, but fast-growing Hammond Valve at the age of 33.

- *Worldwide events a drag on recovery*
- *Renewables under fire after Solyndra*
- *EPA in opposition to energy initiatives*
- *U.S. economy still huge*

Even though I had been active in sales with the company for six years — during which time the company's revenues had tripled — I didn't have any particular expertise in production, accounting, personnel, labor relations, et al. But I was fortunate to assemble the best team of available associates, who became the major contributors to my eventual success.

I also learned quickly that my primary obligation was to contribute to the overall PHCP industry's progress, which was evolving into product mechanization, automation and upgrading in my early years. In addition, our industry as a whole was becoming global, both in imports, exports and shared expertise. This was also the time when independent manufacturers were selling out in droves, and the traditional career-life commitments were being replaced by bottom-line devotees.

This gave me the impetus early on to become involved in the Valve Manufacturers Association, as its youngest-ever Board member, and eventually four-year chairman; seven-year chairman of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Information

Bureau; founder of the Association of Industry Manufacturers; and its first-ever organization for the indispensable members of the industry's distribution channel, the manufacturers' reps.

I'm proud to say that in the 25 years of my involvement, Hammond Valve revenues grew from \$5 million annually at the time of my presiden-

tial appointment, to a \$120-million empire made up of six acquisitions, but with 40% of the growth internally.

But I'm even prouder that while conscientiously involved in guarding the stewardship of my businesses, an equal amount of time was spent in commitment to the plumbing-heat-
(Turn to Don't bet... page 42.)



BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS
PVF and economic analyst emeritus



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Don't bet against U.S. economic future

(Continued from page 41.)

ing-cooling-piping industry's growth, and accommodation to the evolving challenges that arena faced.

Although my industry involvements did not shirk from the promotion of my company's flow control products, I spent at least equal time in meeting a much broader spectrum of industry shakers and movers, by helping to promote the greatness and indispensability of the industry as a whole.

After my parent corporation was taken over in 1985 by another conglomerate, I chose to continue my industry involvement by using my major capabilities in economics and communication to work with the industry. It allowed me to commit my accumulated experience for the benefit of our great industry in totality.

In many ways, my past 25 years have proven the most satisfying, since I could spend all of my time in consulting with both industry associations, professional leaders and individual companies who felt my long-term expertise, both historical and experience-tested, could be of value to them.

And since 2001, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as PVF, economic and industrial editor emeritus for TMB Publishing. Actually my outstanding impetus came from joining Tom Brown's TMB Publishing Company and its flagship, The Wholesaler. In addition to founding The Wholesaler's PVF Hall of Fame nine years ago, Tom's unequalled support has given me the opportunity to provide coverage of the PVF sector's expansion and its dynamism.

Although having served in all segments of this wonderful \$120-billion-per-annum industry today, I'm now intensely committed to the fast-growing PVF sector, the nexus of America's incomparable industrial construction and energy arena.

As an architect of the 41-year-old Industrial Piping Division of ASA, I am committed to continuing to use whatever talents and influence are at my disposal to further the bright future this sub-sector is now confronting. An additional opportunity has been made available to me through the PVF Roundtable, a vertical Houston-based focus including all aspects of this sector. I'm proud to have been honored as its Director Emeritus, at the aegis of founder, Sid Westbrook of Westbrook Manufacturing.

I was extremely honored at the recent ASA Convention to be presented with the IPD's "Award of Excel-

lence" by the unanimous vote of the Executive Council of that prestigious organization. I will always cherish this honor.

As a self-appointed champion of American industry's independent businesses, which define the overwhelming number of PVFs multi-generational distributors, I will spend all the years remaining to me to protect, nurture, and work with this fabulous IPD group, and its constituents, in perpetual partnership.

Global outlook murky

In sifting through various projections analyzing the world economy through 2012, what becomes apparent is the almost unanimous scaling back of forecasts posted at the beginning of 2011, regarding the growth of the world's gross domestic product.

The glimmers of optimism that seemed to pervade most economic futurists earlier this year have since been tempered by the following factors:

- The impact of the earthquake/tsunami that devastated the Japanese economy in March. Although stochastically rebounding from this catastrophe, the Japanese economy, which slipped to the world's third highest annual gross domestic product last year, is on track for a drawback from last year's results. However, a comeback is in the cards for next year. But China is solidly positioned as runner-up to the still-dominant U.S. gross domestic product.

- The heavy-duty global economic recovery (the purview of the U.S. over the years) is now dependent on the phenomenal growth experienced by China and India. Both are expected to equate this year's results in 2012. China will continue to surge at a 9% growth rate, while India will see its growth stay at a 7.5% clip.

- The global economic drag will be occasioned by the Western developed world of Europe and the U.S. America is expected to keep its head above water with an anemic 2% this year, with only a slight improvement in the following 12 months.

- The Eurozone, caught in the warp of banking problems and weak economies, will be lucky to stay positive. Only Germany's strong export economy will provide the strength needed to maintain that hapless area in the plus column.

- The United Kingdom shares the Eurozone's weakness, but is doing better than expected this year and 2012. Next are Brazil, Russia, Mexico and South Korea, projecting a 4% improvement through the end of

2012.

- Canada — heavily dependent on exports to the U.S., especially in oil, natural gas and other natural resources — will see its growth stunted by America's expected demand downturn. But our northern neighbor is still expected to reach growth in the 2.5% range.

The world as a whole will fall short of the 4% growth estimated earlier. However, internal expansion by emerging nations should create the impetus for some improvement in 2012.

Solyndra bankruptcy dramatizes exaggerated emphasis on renewables

The highly-publicized bankruptcy of solar-panel maker Solyndra LLC of Fremont, Calif., which received a \$535-million Federal loan, and another \$1 billion in venture capital proceeds, is the latest of a failing Administration energy policy placing its overall fuel independence bets on wind, solar and geothermal.

Along with its big bets on ethanol, and even the potential of natural gas

While the U.S. economy continues to linger at a subsistence pace, a stealth energy boom has been exploding nationwide this year unheralded and unannounced.

for the fueling of the nation's over 100 million cars and trucks, the White House has justified its multi-billion-dollar commitments on practically eliminating the need for oil and coal within the next two decades.

The Administration's tentative OK to extend the Canadian oil pipeline from Cushing, Okla., to Texas-based refineries is being accepted begrudgingly by President Obama. This is happening ostensibly because a thumbs down on this project would cut back on refineries' oil product input, as well as the thousands of jobs this additional Canadian oil availability will be generating.

Solar power has achieved mixed success in such sun-drenched areas as Southern California's Coachella Valley, but is limited in its commercial and industrial applications. Increasing doubt on solar viability is being cast in various parts of the country. The same can be said for geothermal power capability, whose harnessing so far has been few and far between.

Despite the fact that coal is still providing half of the powering source for the nation's power generating utilities, Lisa Jackson, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, and its



BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS
PVF and economic analyst emeritus

Sierra Club allies are currently a major thorn in the side of America's coal potential, as well as the fracking breakthrough of natural gas and oil. At this time, EPA has issued an order to terminate coal usage in eight existing power-generating stations. If this order is carried out, it could lead to brownouts, blackouts or even permanent cutbacks in the areas impacted.

A world-leading and successfully published energy expert, Professor Michael J. Economides of Houston University, postulates that coal, oil and natural gas will still comprise 85% of world usage at the end of this century. Although America's leader-

ship may not believe in this thesis, China, India, Brazil, Russia and other emerging nations are putting heavy bets on Economides' premise.

America still faces a bright economic future

Mark Steyn, the famed ex-Canadian columnist, author, lecturer and sometime substitute for controversial radio commentator Rush Limbaugh, is celebrating the *New York Times* bestseller status that his new book, *After America* is currently enjoying.

The book's premise is postulating the U.S. demise as the world's leading superpower, eventually being relegated to the pathetic status of a second-tier European survivalist economy living at the behest of the newly-empowered developing world. This new global power source is described as calling the world leadership shots, "literally" and figuratively in the future. But Steyn's basic interpretation of America's current economic and political woes indicates a certain misunderstanding as to what makes the heart of the U.S. tick.

The author tends to give a sense of permanence to this nation's eco- (Turn to U.S. economy... page 44.)

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JADO announces new leadership initiatives

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — After in-depth research of key customers, architects and designers, JADO® announced a major strategic initiative to ensure that the iconic and dynamic luxury brand continues to develop and grow into the 21st century while maintaining its enviable heritage and strong commitment to customer service.

Under the leadership of Carter J. Thomas, senior director of Luxury Business, expanded product development teams have streamlined JADO's product lines into six new design collections, including two to be launched in the next few months. Simplifying the number of choices in this way will provide the consumer with a straightforward, pleasant and

unsurpassed shopping experience.

The trimmer JADO style continuum can be broken into three basic categories:

- Historic/Authentic
- Casual/Transitional
- Modern/Contemporary.

Achieving complete bathroom project solutions is made even easier when JADO products are teamed with Porcher® fixtures, the two brands complementing each other perfectly, thanks to shared design values, superior performance standards and high-quality materials.

A new customer care team, focused exclusively on the JADO and Porcher brands, offers dedicated resources and support to dealers and con-

sumers. Emphasis is placed on maintaining and improving prominent product availability in key cities across the U.S. and Canada. Brand-building strategies already underway include the New Product Design Center in Piscataway, which incorporates a showroom, classrooms and testing laboratories to help educate wholesale and retail professionals, designers and architects.

The two new JADO collections were previewed at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show last April and have been supported by a series of introductory mailings.

Visit www.jadousa.com or www.porcher-us.com.

HARDI announces mobile app for 2011 annual conference

COLUMBUS, OHIO — HARDI will be using a web-based mobile conference app to deliver attendee information, messaging, presentation materials



and keynote speaker bios, and to conduct polls and surveys for their 2011 annual conference taking place October 23–26 in Maui, Hawaii.

The application also includes an array of modules that will allow attendees to choose agenda items they plan to attend, populate their schedules, navigate their way through the hotel, take presentation notes, network with peers and update their social media platforms in real time from the conference.

“We received numerous calls from members planning to participate in the booth program inquiring about alternative options of message delivery. Most of the discussions related to alleviating

shipping costs and concern that customers would not bring back materials to share with their internal teams,” said Susan Little, HARDI's director of marketing. “This technology provides our members with the option to not ship and, literally, to put their brand messaging and product information in the palms of their customers' hands.”

In addition to uploading product brochures, which can be attached to e-mails and distributed instantly or printed later, booth participants will be able to share their contact and social media information, company bios and links to their websites.

“We're thrilled to be able to provide the opportunity for members to save money and interact with their peers and customers,” Little added. “The reduced waste and printing allows us to get closer to realizing our goal of eventually running a paperless event. For the attendees, it means that there is no more shuffling paper

U.S. economy down, not out

(Continued from page 42.)

conomic, political and social travail, by turning a blind eye to America's amazing achievements in the arena of technology, entrepreneurial inventiveness, and a continuing sense of global philanthropy that transcends that of any nation in human history.

There is no question that the U.S. is experiencing a debilitating government leadership crisis that is impacting both global influence, as well as internal growth. Although most voices are dwelling on the negative, the U.S. economy still generates the world's leading \$14.5 trillion gross domestic product, four times the size

of runnerup China, whose population exceeds the U.S. by 4.5 times.

America's independent businesses fill two-thirds of a 153 million jobs potential and sit on over a trillion dollars of cash. Only the fear of indiscriminate and perceived anti-business hostility are preventing this outstanding source of U.S. dynamic growth to again exercise its expansionism of past eras. A bright American future still lies ahead. ■

Morris R. Beschloss, a 55-year veteran of the pipe, valve and fitting industry, is PVF and economic analyst for THE WHOLESALER.

or carrying around a tote bag full of printed materials.”

The 2011 HARDI Conference App is an optimized platform that does not require any download. Members will receive a link that, when accessed, will detect the device and run automatically, ensuring access regardless of the mobile device being used. Access to the app is exclusive to conference attendees.

Visit www.hardinet.org.

American Standard streamlines specifying

PISCATAWAY, N.J. — Commercial specifiers can now easily select and save on the most popular American Standard® fixtures and flush valve systems in one streamlined process. Thirty-four pairings of commercial urinals, toilets and flush valves are designed to make commercial specifying more efficient, while yielding a combined savings over the individual component prices for contractors and wholesalers. One item number, one order, one price, one shipment, one invoice — it's as simple as that.

Moreover, these design-matched systems are specifically engineered to work together to provide the best performance, water efficiency and no call-back operation. Specifiers may select among standard or high-efficiency fixture models, manual or Selectronic® hands-free flush valves in varying flush volumes, wall or floor mounting fixtures, as well as products that feature the EverClean® antimicrobial surface.

These combination systems come with a five-year warranty.



OBITUARY

Timothy A. Dolan, VP, Dolan & Traynor

Timothy A. Dolan age 55, vice president of Dolan & Traynor Inc. of Wayne, N.J., passed into life eternal on Saturday, September 3, 2011 at the Chilton Memorial Hospital in Pompton Plains. His family was at his side.

Dolan began working for the family business, Dolan & Traynor Inc. in



Timothy A. Dolan

Wayne with his father Bernard Dolan, brothers Mike and the late Brian as a warehouse assistant and worked his way to the position of vice president. Dolan served on the advisory councils of several plumbing industry associations and was also a member of the American Society of Plumbing Engineers for many years. He was very dedicated to his family and the community in which he lived. For 12 years he has run the golf outing dubbed the Dolan Cup for the Packanack Lake Athletic Association and was recently inducted into their Hall of Fame.

He was the loving husband of Lynn (Peters) Dolan; devoted father of Peter Dolan of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Timothy Jeffrey Dolan of San Diego, Calif., loved brother of Robert Dolan and his wife Mary Ann of Toms River, N.J., the late Brian Dolan (2003) and Brian's wife Jeanette of Barry Lakes, N.J., B. Michael Dolan and his wife Lynn of Wayne, N.J., Patrick Dolan and his wife Carol of Glen Rock, N.J., Mary Dolan-Majeski and her husband Richard of Princeton, N.J., and Thomas Dolan and his wife Cary of Minneapolis - St. Paul, Minn.; cherished uncle of many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by both his father, Bernard R. Dolan and his mother, Geraldine (Broderick) Dolan.

Dolan & Traynor Inc. is the distributor of Jay R. Smith Mfg., Co., Orion Fittings, Guardian Equipment and Leonard Valve Company, among other commercial plumbing products. The company also carries many Section 10 products and is the exclusive authorized distributor of DuPont Surfaces—Corian® and Zodiaq® in the NY/NJ Metro Area. The company was founded by Tim's father, Bernard R. Dolan and John Traynor in 1953.



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NYSE marks National Tradesmen Day with ceremony

HUNTERSVILLE, N.C. — America’s tradesmen were the honored guests on Wall Street during the ringing of the opening bells at the New York Stock Exchange, thanks to IRWIN® Tools, who showcased “The Hands that Build America.”

IRWIN Tools, a brand of Newell Rubbermaid, Inc., and a global manufacturer and marketer of a broad line of professional-grade hand tools and power tool accessories, opened the world’s largest financial marketplace by paying tribute to the men and women who build our homes, our roads and our schools, and who keep America productive and running strong.

The NYSE event was a prelude to “National Tradesmen Day,” slated for September 16, the beginning of an annual day of recognition for America’s professional tradesmen. This year’s inaugural event will celebrate the role of tradesmen in events across

the country, with cookouts at local jobsites and recognition at retail locations and schools. Individuals are encouraged to say ‘thanks’ to a tradesman who has touched their lives in an important way.

According to Ross Porter, president of IRWIN Tools, “Tradesmen aren’t typically the focus of the Stock Exchange, yet they are a vital part of our lives every day. That’s why we invited several tradesmen to be a part of the notable tradition that opens the U.S. trading markets. If we don’t have a strong work force, America can’t function and thrive as it has for the last 200-plus years. We applaud what these skilled men and women contribute, often without the thanks that they deserve.”

Among the honored tradesmen at today’s ceremony was Delwyn Thornton of Brandon, Miss. — the North American Champion of the 2010 IRWIN Tools Ultimate Trades-

man Challenge. In ringing the opening bell, Delwyn stood shoulder-to-shoulder with tradesmen from across the nation, as well as leaders of IRWIN Tools.

Visit www.nationaltradesmenday.com.

“If we don’t have a strong work force, America can’t function and thrive as it has for the last 200-plus years. We applaud what these skilled men and women contribute, often without the thanks that they deserve.”



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Affiliated Distributors turns 30

Dynamic and innovative practices bring leaders together

BY MARY JO MARTIN
 Editorial director

Thirty years ago, after observing the inequalities that some of his large independent lighting fixture distributors were experiencing, David Weisberg decided it was time to level the playing field. Weisberg, who had been president of a lighting fixture company, saw that some of his best customers — despite supporting the lines, introducing new products and adding value — weren't getting the best programs, and realized it wasn't a healthy situation for the channel as a whole.

So, armed with his own entrepreneurial spirit and a small group of electric distributors, Weisberg formed Affiliated Distributors. From the beginning, it was all about great independent distributors who saw value in a healthy

“The primary things that separate A-D from the other groups in my mind are:

- Selective membership including only those independent distributors that are market leaders in their respective geographic area

- Marketing programs that are extremely effective and unparalleled by the other groups

- The best staff and infrastructure in the industry

What this means to us as an A-D Affiliate is that we get the opportunity to network and develop relationships with other market leaders that aren't competitors, sharing ideas and best practices to make our organizations the best that they can be. We don't have multiple direct competitors in our marketplace with access to the same programs and resources we have. We have unique marketing tools and other support services available through A-D's top notch staff and technology. To sum it up, membership in A-D is a competitive advantage.”

— Lance Malone, COO, Standard Supply

competition, and together, they — and A-D — grew.

As CEO Bill Weisberg, the founder's son, so appropriately noted, “From the start, in the DNA of A-D is the under-



standing that distributors need to be treated right, and suppliers need to be supported. It's always been a two-way street here. Suppliers realize accelerated growth, and distributors get opportunities for growth and enhanced

profitability.”

Bill Weisberg joined his father about 18 months after A-D began. He didn't plan on making A-D his career; at the time he was unsure the direction he wanted to go in and thought that, at the very least, working at A-D would give him the opportunity to meet a lot of people. Nearly three decades later, Weisberg remains at the helm, dedicated to the mission of supporting members and suppliers, and to creating an atmosphere of service among his staff.

Today's A-D operates across six divisions, is comprised of 550 suppliers and 3,000 branches, and tallies \$20 billion in sales annually.

Recently, I was invited to visit A-D's headquarters in Wayne, Pa., where I spoke with several of this prestigious organization's key executives about its past, present and future. Following is my interview with CEO Bill Weisberg; Senior VP-Plumbing, PVF and HVAC Roy Weaks; VP-PVF Division Gary Jackson; and VP-HVAC and Plumbing Justin Dunscomb.

MJM: What do you feel were some of the major factors in A-D's growth over the years?

Weisberg: Our growth has been pretty organic. We're an organization of people who want to be better — and that's contagious. The entrepreneurial drive of our members has rubbed off on our staff, and it inspires us to do great things. Everything we've done — whether it's a new division or a marketing program — has been well-planned and driven by the needs of our members as well as encouragement from our suppliers.

One of the things that is unique about A-D is how collaborative we are. It is integrated into our systems, our boards, our committees and our advisory groups.

MJM: Over the last 30 years, your organization has survived and thrived during several difficult periods of economic struggles, some unfriendly political environments for business, and the unrest that these conditions have brought both at home and abroad. How have you managed to not only survive that but to continue to gain momentum?

Weisberg: What gets you through challenging times is strong leadership



Bill Weisberg, CEO of Affiliated Distributors since 1991, addresses the membership at last year's North American Meeting — the organization's premier annual event.

and faith. Strong leadership ultimately is the ability to look at a situation and say “We trust our people, our members, our capabilities and we're going to do our best in spite of all the things going on around us.

When people see wild swings in the economy, it doesn't have to change their strategy. For independent distributors, it's a huge advantage. Our members have been growing at a rate 1½ times more than the industry average. We've surrounded ourselves with great companies of all sizes and they are outperforming the market.

One of the challenges throughout the course of our 30 years has been consolidation. There has been speculation that the independents would disappear. But really, the number of wholesalers in this country hasn't changed much. We've found that when one company is acquired, another pops up. And the new firms tend to grow at a greater rate because they are opening new locations, hiring people who don't want to work for the large corporations anymore, and picking up customers who aren't satisfied with the service of the national chains.

When we look at what makes A-D so special, there is, of course, the financial allure, but it really comes down to being surrounded by so many great peers. We wanted the best members and suppliers, and that is not a function of size. It's whether a company wants to be better and has a management team that wants to grow the business — and

There is a difference between buying and marketing groups — selling. We dif-

“A-D is an organization that truly listens to the membership and, more importantly, acts upon their recommendations. While I was on the Plumbing Supplier Advisory Council, we recommended that A-D form supplier networking groups similar to what they have for wholesaler members. By the next meeting, it was done, and the supplier networking groups have become one of the most valuable benefits of A-D membership.”

— Bruce Carnevale, Senior VP-Sales & Marketing, Bradford White Corp

ferentiated ourselves early on as a marketing group. We are focused on selling, not purchasing. At the end of the day you have to get out there and sell.”

MJM: As you mentioned, A-D has outpaced the industry year-over-year in



From top left: Roy Weaks, Senior VP-Plumbing, PVF and HVAC; Gary Jackson, VP-PVF Division; and Justin Dunscomb, VP-HVAC and Plumbing.



providing significant ROI for your members. What, do you believe, has made this possible?

Weisberg: Probably the biggest driver for that growth is their chance to spend time together twice a year with other growth-oriented companies. Our meetings are focused on how we can help each other grow. We bring together entrepreneurs from all over the country and give them an opportunity to share their ideas together. We even train members how to be facilitators at these meetings.

Many of our members have shared with us their best practices, and we sometimes turn them into programs within A-D. For example, our Field Mar- (Turn to Affiliated... page 50.)

“A-D is comprised of top-tier distributors who provide their vendors with excellent coverage throughout every major market, as well as unique local sales and marketing efforts. Support of the vendor is key. A-D members know the value of working to develop partnerships with all approved vendors, and strive to grow their business each year.

At our review meetings, if a member's purchases are down with us, they are almost apologetic and show real disappointment they could not grow from the prior year. The main focus is on growth through conversions and new product support sales. There are few in this business who truly embrace this important concern of the manufacture. A-D does — and they deliver.”

— Jim Hilfinger, VP-Wholesale Sales, NIBCO

not all do. If you gather those folks and share those ideas, everyone can benefit and see improved results.



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Affiliated Distributors celebrate 30 years, far-reaching leadership

(Continued from page 48.)

keting Summits started out with a member idea, then grew to a few more trying out the idea, and now we have hundreds doing it. Our concept is that shared practices enable people to grow faster without the learning curve.

MJM: Tell me a little more about these Field Marketing Summits?

Dunscomb: They are grass roots programs that gather local reps, branch

“Munch’s Supply joined A-D about five years ago. Prior to joining, we spent a great deal of time evaluating all the buying groups to determine which was the best fit for our company. It was through that evaluation when it became clear that A-D was much more than a buying group. One of the biggest things we like about A-D is how it helps its members grow their businesses and how this focus extends beyond the bottom line of a purchase order. In looking back over the past five years, we can clearly see the positive impact this has had on our company’s performance.”

— Robert Munch, President, Munch’s Supply

managers and salespeople who are all focused on growing sales of their products in the marketplace. Distributors select at least a minimum number of suppliers, most of whom are our endorsed suppliers. They’ll set up a day

and bring together teams from their branches to meet in a round-robin format with each of the selected suppliers. They discuss business plans and often set up a call schedule so they can go see contractors together. Companies that are doing these activities are performing better than those who aren’t. About 60% of our membership is now participating in this program.

Jackson: We chose to use the term Field Marketing because we wanted the people in the field, the salespeople at the wholesaler and the local rep or supplier to interact. That’s really where things get done. These aren’t typically the people who come to our national meetings, so we wanted to bring the value of our meetings to them.

MJM: Are there any other new programs that you’ve launched recently?

Jackson: Knowledge@Noon is a lunch and learn type of program with webinars from suppliers. We help them publicize it and give folks advance topics. It’s done in several time zones to maximize participation from various

areas of country. Wholesaler staffs can gather in their conference room, watch on a TV monitor, and get 30 to 45 minutes of interactive training, including a Q&A with the presenters. We’ve had as many as 250 people from across the country tune in to a single event. It’s a very efficient way of getting in front of those groups for an hour. They are archived on our website so people can go back and review them later or be used as part of a new hire’s orientation and training.

MJM: You have a very unique structure compared with many other buying/marketing groups because of your diverse divisions and shared corporate staff. Talk about some of the benefits this brings?

Weisberg: We operate across six in-

“A-D has helped take our company to the next level when it comes to marketing ideas and then implementing those ideas and measuring the success. Our association with A-D has opened doors with vendors in ways that has made our dialogue process to partnerships in growth meaningful for both ourselves and the vendor.”

— Ted Green, President, PACE Supply

dustries and in two countries. Big can have its challenges too; it’s not for the faint of heart. But at the end of the day, all the big ideas come from the local markets. We don’t make a decision here across all our industries; we’re actually very decentralized and have (member-led) divisional decision-making. It all comes down to sharing information among staff, wholesalers and suppliers.

However, we do observe what is working in one industry and look at whether it might be applicable in others. And there are times that, say, electrical and plumbing members in a local market will connect through A-D to share best practices or work together in other ways.

“Affiliated Distributors is more than a buying group. Affiliate brothers and sisters band together to help each other all year long. The networking does not end after the meetings are over. The Service Providers Division has resulted in great saving for Consumers Pipe in the insurance provider EDIC/Captive Resources and the 401k provider with Alerus.”

— Mike Abeling, President/CEO, Consumers Pipe & Supply

The team back at A-D headquarters allows the divisions to share non-customer-facing functions such as finance, accounting, IT and marketing. Benefits are really two fold: it’s very cost efficient and also allows us to provide more checks and balances and financial controls. We have very sophisticated buying controls — including certified audits, multiple check signers, etc., because we handle quite a large volume of dollars.

MJM: Over the years, I’ve observed the loyalty your members have toward their networks, councils and committees, and the close relationships they forge. How did that start and could you describe just how important these opportunities are?

Weeks: We’ve got a number of dif-

ferent ways for members and suppliers to come together and exchange ideas in small groups. In putting together these groups, we try to select key decision makers from different geographical areas.

“Congratulations to the A-D staff, and their membership on 30 years of excellence! Through our valued partnership, Ward Mfg. salutes all of you and wishes you continued success for the next 30 years!”

— Kieran Young, National Sales Manager-Piping Products, Ward Manufacturing

These opportunities include:

- Board of Directors — There are nine members that include a representative from each of the divisions and Bill Weisberg who discuss high-level, group-wide issues that will affect all the divisions. Each quarter they go over financials and new initiatives, and discuss the metrics of how A-D is performing according to plan.

- Divisional Boards — Each division within A-D has its own Divisional Board. They deal with issues that are specific to their division and industry.

- Product committees — Each division has its own committee made up of roughly six to nine members who look for and review product categories and companies that are not currently within the group.

- Networking groups for both members and suppliers — Small groups of 10-15 non-competing members who talk about best practices. Often members form long-term relationships that go far beyond their service on these groups. They really build a foundation of respect and trust with each other.

- Supplier advisory councils: Six to nine suppliers in each division who bring forward ideas/direction for engagement between members and suppliers, and provide guidance on how A-D can better serve suppliers.

- CEO councils — These councils give CEOs a chance to talk about topics that are of primary interest to them, because they have a different level of concerns than those in sales and marketing functions.

Jackson: This structure keeps decisions from being made by a select group of members; rather it’s driven down through the committees. We believe strongly in our Networks. Our Spring Meeting is dedicated to our wholesaler members only. It’s a chance for the best minds in the business to connect through their networking groups and share best practices. There is a social aspect as well, but it’s really all about getting down to business discussions and best practice sharing.

People want to be part of the best. It’s all about learning from other people and trading ideas. Looking back at the last couple of years the macro economy has been horrible and many companies were looking at changing business models and

(Turn to A-D... page 54.)

A-D emphasizes giving back

In celebration of Affiliated Distributors’ 30th anniversary, the group decided to give back to the Greater Philadelphia community through local charity organization, Cradles to Crayons.

Cradles to Crayons provides children living in low-income and homeless situations from birth to pre-teen the basic essentials, free of charge, that they need to feel safe, warm, ready to learn and valued.



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 116,298 children in Philadelphia live in poverty.

“Working hard and helping others in our community are the two most important things we as a company and nation can do,” said Affiliated Distributors CEO Bill Weisberg. “We can’t afford to solely rely on the government to provide these services for our most vulnerable population or our families. Cradles to Crayons is an excellent model of locally organized help.”

Affiliated Distributors’ staff spent half a day volunteering their time,

cleaning, sorting and organizing donations into age- and gender-appropriate packages.

Cradles to Crayons’ executive director Michal Smith added, “I think that Affiliated Distributors were one of the nicest groups that we have had in the warehouse... They worked diligently and with very good humor during their volunteer session.”

In addition to volunteering, the staff donated or collected three car loads of toys, clothes and school supplies along with \$800 to help the organization keep the lights on.

Recent studies have shown that one of the most measurable impacts volunteer programs have is on attitude, productivity and job satisfaction. The Points of Light Foundation* found that 76% of young workers said volunteering helps them hone their leadership skills and 75% said volunteering lets them develop skills they can use at work.

Anyone interested in getting involved in one of Cradles to Crayons Philadelphia or Boston locations may visit www.cradlestocrayons.org.

*Deloitte/Points of Light. (2007). Volunteer IMPACT Study. Washington, DC: Deloitte & Touche USA LLP and The Points of Light Foundation.

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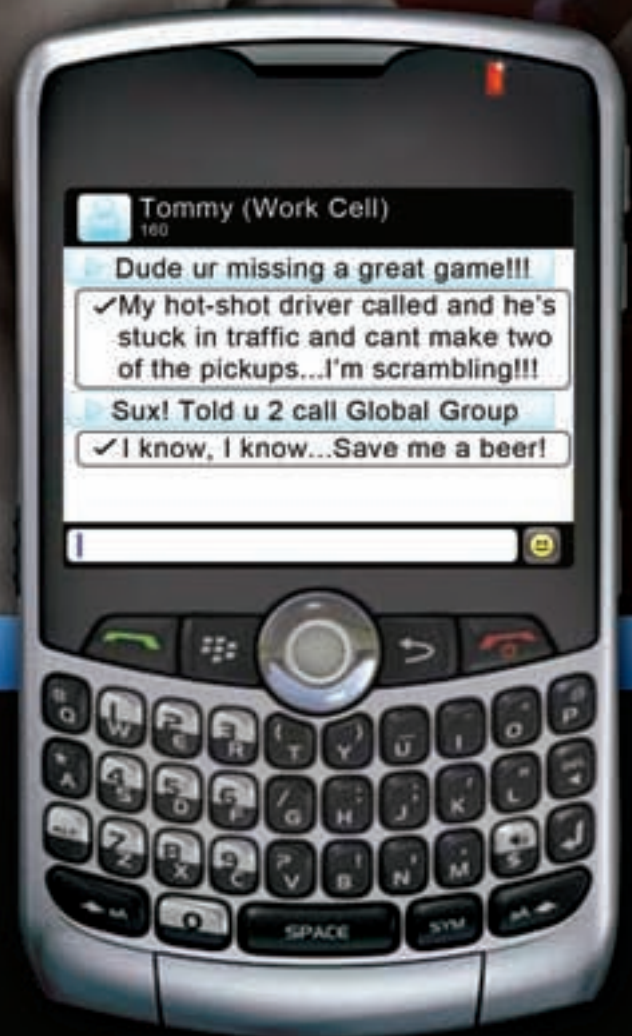
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A-D: Three decades of advocacy for the distribution industry

(Continued from page 50.)

reworking their businesses. Our networks were a great venue for them to exchange ideas to help them navigate that situation.

Dunscomb: We have a rotation so no one serves on a committee indefinitely. We have six to nine people on each committee, with several rotating off each year. Typically, they serve three- to five-year terms, which allows more people to participate. It takes a lot of talented and dynamic people to make it all happen; people who are constantly looking to improve and push for greatness.

Weaks: There is a high level of confidentiality among these groups that frees participants up to talk about very

“Since joining A-D’s PVF Division when it was a start up in 1995, our company (Anvil International) has not had a down year in total volume when compared to prior year calendar. Knowing all that has happened year to year since 1995, that is quite a statement and confirmation of what A-D as a group and a real marketing group can do to help pull and motivate people and companies together to have one dedicated focus to market and sales growth. Since Gary Jackson has been on board as the VP of that division, the thought processes and ‘pull together attitude’ has grown even tighter with key vendors.....We are very proud to be among that list!”

—John Martin, VP-National Account Sales
Anvil International Mechanical Products Division

specific things about their business. They can feel free to trade metrics and send people to each other’s operations because there is such a level of trust and confidentiality.

Not only is A-D staff not in these meetings, but each group is led by one of their own members who serves as a facilitator. We want them to drive their own agenda; not what we tell them to. We actually provide training for these facilitators because they serve as group leaders for the year, reaching out to their members to get input, going through the list of issues and prioritizing. They compile an agenda and share it with the entire group. If there are topics they don’t get through, they’ll table them until the next meeting.

Dunscomb: We also have 13 supplier networks in the PHCP Divisions, each of which has 10 to 11 members. Suppliers had told us they had heard such good feedback on the wholesaler networks that we decided to try it with

“The traditional benefits of buying group membership aside, our association with A-D has made us a better company. The best practices, open discussion forum of our Networks has enabled us to explore meaningful and important issues with our peers in a noncompetitive environment where no subject is sacred. The true friendships that have developed over the years with fellow Network members makes the relationship with A-D that much more important to me and our company.”

—Charlie Murray, CEO, Murray Supply

them as well. That was four years ago, and they’re going strong. Notes are taken at the supplier networks and are fed back through A-D. These are then shared with the Divisional Board, and to complete the loop, the networks chairs receive actions plans for addressing any issues brought up at the network meetings.

Jackson: We sometimes perform a conduit function to assist an affiliate and supplier in sorting through an issue. We try to get to the root cause. Sometimes one party will not want to address it with the other party directly, so they will talk with us and we help them find a solution.

MJM: Many of your members serve in volunteer leadership roles with ASA. Talk about your relationship with ASA, and how your organizations work together?

Jackson: I’ve spent a lot of time working with ASA’s [executive vice president] Mike Adelizzi and [executive director] Chris Murin along with others on the staff. Certainly we support all their meetings and functions. We feel a true partnership with ASA and it lends itself across all our divisions. They share the same energy and passion for this industry that we have at A-D.

Our conversations with them have been to interact, but not necessarily overlap. We recognize what they are good at and we want to capitalize on each other’s strengths. Specifically, they do a very good job with training. We actually reward members who participate in an ASA training activity through the A-D marketing program. We encourage our members to get training.

Dunscomb: The type of people we’re looking for and that make us strong are quite often the same people participating in industry organizations. Every one of our members in the HVAC division are members of HARDI, including a number of past presidents. There are a lot of synergies, and it’s important for our groups to work together. We’re excited that industry leadership looks a lot like our membership.

MJM: You are getting ready to host your North American Meeting for the Plumbing, PVF and HVAC divisions in Las Vegas next month. What are some of the highlights of the meeting that you can give us an advance look at?

Weaks: We’ve got a lot going on to celebrate 30 years of A-D. The meeting will be an overall highlight of the last 30 years. We’ve created a special 30th anniversary commemorative plate. Spouses are invited to come and we have designed special events for them. But the highlight of the

meeting, as it is every year, is the awards banquet when we recognize and honor our members and suppliers who are outperforming the best of the best. And even though our 30th anniversary is certainly a time of celebration for our members and suppliers, the hard-hitting networking meetings, strategy-setting one-on-one sessions between members and suppliers and access to industry trends provide a value that our commu-

“Coleman Cable’s experience has been that the Affiliates and A-D are genuinely committed to best practices and the sharing of excellence with each other through the many events, summits and business tools that A-D manages and creates. It has been our experience that A-D and its affiliates personify the idea of partnership between the members and their suppliers. A-D is more than the pooling of buying power; it is a demand of business excellence and the results of its members year over year show that it can be achieved. During volatile times in a volatile marketplace, it is something special to see the stability of A-D and its affiliates not only weathering the storm as many do, but navigating through it with determination and steadfast leadership.”

—Dan Jones, Vice President-HVAC, Coleman Cable Inc.

nity has come to expect.

MJM: In your opinion, why are buying groups so important to this industry?

Weaks: We bring value, including a financial value thanks to leveraging our buying power that wholesalers can’t get on their own. When you’re working with the best of the best, it elevates things from what you can accomplish in your own conference room.

Dunscomb: Group dynamics bring

“In the 38 years of All-Tex Pipe & Supply Inc.’s existence there have been a few pivotal events that have truly shaped who we are as a company. Our joining A-D in 1999 and, most importantly, our active involvement over the last 12 years would certainly top the list of those pivotal events. A-D, under Bill’s capable leadership, has given us a vehicle through which we have been exposed to the best-of-the-best in distribution and challenged to meet that high level. Our growth from a single location when we joined A-D to six throughout the state of Texas would probably not have occurred without the knowledge we have gleaned from our extraordinary peers, the strong relationships we have forged with our suppliers and the support we have received from the A-D leadership (Thanks, Gary!)”

—Jill Brock Hurd, President/CEO, All-Tex Pipe & Supply Inc.

it together. One unified voice provides a strength that, individually, a wholesaler wouldn’t have.

Jackson: And the A-D team is very good at our piece, too. Our members have the whole group behind them if they’re trying to implement new practices or are struggling with an issue. That goes for A-D supplier opportunities and support too.

Weaks: Because we are in multiple industries across multiple divisions, we have ability to share best practices within our divisional areas but also across divisions. We can get electrical and plumbing distributors together to share thoughts. We actually have Philadelphia-based distributors in our Plumbing, PVF and Electrical divisions that are working together and sharing warehouse space to cut down on expenses.

Jackson: And we continue to look for good, quality wholesalers and suppliers. While we are very selective, we’re certainly open to talking with folks that are interested in joining us.

MJM: What are your biggest concerns today regarding the economy, the political climate in Washington, and its affect on our industry?

Weisberg: We take very seriously the responsibility to serve our members and suppliers. We know they want to have a business-friendly climate in Washington, and to have government stay out of their businesses and stop threatening their livelihoods. We have

to speak up and let our voices be heard. The people who represent us today don’t seem to have our best interests in mind. So getting involved is more important than ever, and I’m confident that we can make a difference.

We support those associations and lobbying groups that represent the interests of our members, including NAW, ASA, HARDI and some of the manufacturing entities. We work through them nationally, and on a local level, we engage with congressmen and senators in key races and specific issues.

MJM: How will A-D continue to evolve and be even more relevant in the future?

Weisberg: We believe in being close to the market; we’re focused on HVAC, PVF and Plumbing, and are specifically looking at growth opportunities in those areas.

If there is anything that we want to be known for, it’s the ideas that are shared within our group that help our members and suppliers become better companies.

Along the way, there have been many special memories, and hopefully there will be many more. We believe we’re doing good things for good people, and fighting the good fight for the good guys. That’s really gratifying. And we’ve been joined every step along the way from the people who share ideas with us and give us encouragement.

I get excited seeing the next generation of people coming up in these businesses and starting to engage with each other. I was in my mid-20s when I came here, and there were so many people my dad’s age that mentored and encouraged me. I’m excited at the opportunity to do that for that for the next generation of our members and vendors. ■

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See contact information on page 102

Ta Chen strengthens PVF hub in Houston

Exclusive Q&A

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

Since its initial founding in Taiwan in 1986, Ta Chen has grown dramatically with integrated manufacturing facilities, large warehouses, a network of U.S. sales and distribution operations, a cutting edge in-house IT platform, and specialty value added services.

With roots as a mill for stainless steel welded pipe, tube, butt weld fittings, 150-lb castings, nipples and valves, Ta Chen went public in the mid-1990s, and now tops \$1 billion in global revenues. In the ensuing years, Ta Chen's product line has expanded to include aluminum flat-rolled, aluminum extrusions, nickel alloy long products and 17-4 long products.

In the last 15 years, Ta Chen has built new facilities overseas and continued to invest in their worldwide headquarters to ensure their ability to meet production demands — and to make the best use possible of all of their raw and scrap materials with

virtually no waste.

In the U.S., the company's master distribution operation is known as Ta Chen International. They have roughly 500 employees, eight warehouses that offer a full line of inventory, as well as sales offices in seven of those locations. These include:

- Long Beach, Calif., a 260,000-sq-ft location that serves as TCI's headquarters, and serves the Southwest.
- A 122,500-sq-ft branch in Seattle that handles the Northwest.
- The Chicago branch is 215,000 square feet that serves the Midwest.
- A 90,000-sq-ft shipping warehouse in Cleveland that handles the lower Midwest, and facilitates shipping and transfer points.
- The Burlington, N.J., branch has more than 100,000 square feet and serves the Northeast.
- The nearly 160,000-sq-ft Atlanta branch handles the upper Southeast.
- Lakeland, Fla., is home to a 195,000-sq-ft branch that serves Florida and the lower Southeast.
- And, as Vice President Danny Tu describes it, the company's PVF hub is a 17-acre operation in Houston that

not only handles the Gulf Coast region, but also meets the demands of the company's other branches — thanks to its depth of PVF inventory on hand. In fact, 30% of Houston's current orders come from other Ta Chen branch locations.

Recently I had the pleasure of speaking with Tu, along with branch manager Bob Hunter and sales manager Bobby Sommerville of the Houston location, to get some insight into the latest developments with Ta Chen — and how they've continued to carve out such a successful niche. Following are excerpts from that interview.

MJM: *Talk about the importance of your Houston branch within the Ta Chen organization?*

Tu: The majority of our total PVF inventory is housed in Houston, so there is a much wider range and quantity of product at this location. Because of that broad inventory mix, it has become a hub for our pipe, valves and fittings offering. The Houston operation services the entire Gulf Coast region, which is where most of the refineries, chemical plants and gas companies are located in the U.S. We also service the Mexican market from this location. Most importantly, about a third of Houston's daily orders come from other Ta Chen branch locations. Houston really functions a little differently than our other locations.

Hunter: We make weekly shipments to Canada from here, primarily for the oil sand region in Edmonton, Alberta. We've found a very economical trucking route that runs between Houston and Canada. In addition, we send products for export to companies in South America.

MJM: *Give us a thumbnail view of the Houston operation today?*

Tu: We are situated on a 17-acre facility with 225,000 square feet under roof. Currently, we stock about

\$50 million in inventory, primarily stainless, aluminum and nickel, in flat rolled, long product, and pipe, valves and fittings.

Hunter: Our 60 employees process more than 10,000 line items of material a month. We average between 80 and 100 trucks a day in and out of this facility. The time it takes for a truck to pull in, get loaded with materials and get out is less than 25 minutes. Every employee here is very proud of that. With the type and amount of product that we load, a turnaround time of 25 minutes or less is very efficient.

MJM: *What type of investments have you made in the Houston facility in recent years to improve efficiencies and your ability to serve customers?*

Sommerville: I would say that the amount of time, effort and money that Ta Chen spent to develop and maintain its highly functional computer system is much more than any other company I've worked with.

“The time it takes for a truck to pull in, get loaded with materials and get out is less than 25 minutes. Every employee here is very proud of that.”

The investment shows in how effective and customer friendly our website is.

We've also worked hard to source a very impressive range of products that you can't find at most of our competitors.

To increase our storage capacity, we've added to our racking system. We also put in concrete all around the 17-acre property, plus added an exit driveway. In the past, trucks were bottlenecked having to share the same entry and exit. It caused a huge amount of problems; it was very common to see 10 or more trucks stuck there with no one moving because the lead truck was still being
(Turn to Houston... page 58.)

Ta Chen International has about 500 employees, eight full-line warehouses and sales offices in seven locations.



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ALAN FEIG, Warehouse Manager



See contact information on page 102

*NOT APPLICABLE IN ALL STATES

‘Houston, we have PVF’

(Continued from page 56.)

loaded. Now it is a U drive that accommodates all sizes of trucks in and out and they don't have to wait.

Tu: We've also added more U.S. domestic and Western European products which have helped us gain additional sales. And we've brought on more experienced salespeople. Bob [Hunter] has 35 years of experience in the PVF industry and Bobby [Sommerville] has been in the business since 1986. We have several other salespeople in Houston who have been in the business more than 26 years. But our push to improve the caliber of our salespeople doesn't just stop in Houston — in the past two years, we've added over 100 years of PVF experience to the sales team at Ta Chen.

MJM: *I know that one of the value added offerings you provide through your Houston location is a Machine Shop. Tell us more about that, and its capabilities?*

Hunter: We added the Machine Shop about a year ago. It allows us to modify fittings and flanges to our customers' specifications. We can also do pipe beveling, threading and cutting. Recently, we brought in high-pressure flanges and we are able to do modifications on them in-house as well.

lathe this fall at our Machine Shop here in Houston. This will double our capacity and mean even more efficient service for our customers. Currently, our turnaround is one week or less — but special requests can be handled in a day if needed.

MJM: *How have all of these investments improved service to your customers?*

Tu: We definitely have much happier customers today. Many years ago, Houston customers were getting frustrated because we had overgrown our capacity and couldn't handle the business with the old infrastructure we had in place.

These investments have cut down on the waiting period for our customers to receive product and we've seen many old customers come back to us as well as added many new ones.

It's also helped us cut down on customer returns — in 2008 we had about 15 return cases per month. Today we are down to only two or three per month, and some months we don't have any.

Undeniably, we've had some growing pains in the past, but we have learned from our mistakes and built a stronger operation with continued



Much of Ta Chen's total PVF inventory is housed in Houston, which has a wide range and quantity of product.

24" and down in approved and non-approved products. We're not a typical master distributor; we actually have our own mills and produce most of the products that we carry.

However, we also have the capability to do a lot of sourcing for customers if necessary.

Sommerville: We are capable of providing products for any large project, but I want to emphasize that we only sell through distribution, we do not sell to the end users. We have a lot of loyalty and respect for our distribution customers.

Some applications of our products are for the pulp and paper industry, tank manufacturing, chemical plants, machinery tooling, waste-water treatment facilities and oil refineries. In addition to all the typical flow control PVF products that most people think of, our beams are used in a structural capacity for their buildings.

MJM: *Could you share with our readers the type of approved product that you carry?*

Hunter: We stock product that meet all the major AMLs — specifically Exxon- and Shell-approved materials. Major end users publish their own AMLs; and to successfully sell and service our customers who sell to those end users, you've got to have those products in stock. And you also need an experienced salesforce that knows the specs, country of origin and detailed information on this product. It's very specialized, almost like technical sales. This type of product sells at a higher margin because it's so specialized, so it's a very good market for us.

MJM: *Talk about the relationship you maintain with your suppliers to continue to ensure that you are bringing the highest quality product to your customers?*

Tu: Before we commit and start working with a supplier, we have our own team of people to audit the mill. The mills we work with are proven

quality vendors, have an ISO system, and produce products that meet the major AMLs. We don't source the cheapest product we can find; we go out to find the quality product. Cheap product means a lot of returns, and as we said before, we have a very low return rate.

We do business with quality partners that provide quality products. We have a relationship of mutual respect with our vendors. We look for partners who will participate in production planning

“The Internet allows Ta Chen to be accessible to our customers 24/7 with virtually any information they need. A lot of our customers use our system in the evenings and on the weekends... currently, about 75% of our sales are done online.”

and cost reduction initiatives but still strive to improve product quality so we can offer our customers the best value. We receive regular shipments from our vendors every month.

MJM: *You have a great balance between a talented sales staff and internet sales. Talk about the importance of both within your business and how they work together and complement each other?*

Tu: For us, Ta Chen is unique when it comes to e-commerce. Some orders come in from Internet, others from EDI. We are big into automation. We have the mentality that if a task can be done by a machine, we let the machine handle the task. The Internet allows Ta Chen to be accessible to our customers 24/7 with virtually any information they need. A lot of our customers use our system in the evenings and on the weekends. They appreciate how comprehensive it is and they trust the integrity and consistency of our system. Currently, about 75% of (Turn to Going the... page 60.)



Between 80 and 100 trucks easily flow through the facility because of concrete all around the 17-acre property, plus an exit driveway, and a U drive that accommodates all sizes of trucks — no waiting.

All of this means a quick turnaround for our customers.

Sommerville: Before we had the Machine Shop, customers would purchase pipe from us and they'd have to ship it out to a third party to get it threaded or beveled. That meant they incurred additional freight charges, as well as taking more time. By doing it in house, we offer customers a much better package, saving them significant time and money.

Hunter: We are adding another

investment in equipment and personnel. Now we are one of the best houses in town.

MJM: *You've described Ta Chen as a “one stop shop.” Give us a range of the products that you carry?*

Tu: We carry a full line of structural and fluid control PVF products. There aren't a lot of companies that have this type of offering. Customers can easily source everything they need right here under one roof.

When it comes to PVF, we stock



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Going the extra mile at Ta Chen's Houston facility

(Continued from page 58.)

our sales are done online.

Also, our web prices are firm; customers won't get a different price from their sales rep. We set different pricing for each customer account and the prices set depends on volume, credit history, etc., but their prices will not change by ordering from our sales reps rather than via the Internet.

With that said, we do have a great sales force and we still want to continue to build personal relationships with our customers. By having so much of our business done online, it frees up our salesforce to really spend quality time with customers rather than just being order takers. We have about 4,000 online inquiries that come in every day; if our salesforce had to handle all these quotes, they wouldn't have any time for follow up, special sourcing or other interaction with customers. Instead, our online system does a great job of managing the quotes.

Sommerville: The Internet allows our customers the ease of doing business at their convenience. Our system basically handles every function that a salesperson would for a customer. And for those who still want to call in, we still have a sales team here to service them.

Hunter: The Internet is a powerful tool for our salesforce — it empowers them to do their jobs more efficiently.

MJM: *How do you maintain your website to ensure it is current, and user friendly?*

Tu: We have a team in Taiwan of about 20 programmers plus 10 more in the U.S. Our system is completely designed, programmed and maintained in house. This capability is one of our biggest competitive advantages.

It's easy to use and information is readily available. Even more important, the system is very accurate. Today's customers are more demanding than ever, and we have to have



A new racking system increases storage capacity.

the confidence in what we offer with our product and our service.

MJM: *What do you see as the potential down the road?*

Tu: We're still working to perfect our online system even more. We're adding more approved products into our portfolio. And we're increasing our machine shop capabilities.

It takes a little time for all of these new capabilities or added offerings to filter down to customers, so we still have to focus more on marketing to properly introduce them.

Down the road, I feel that we are the most efficient master distributor in the U.S. We'll continue to look at customers' needs and cater to them. We have plans in the works to expand in next few years with new product offerings that will cater to our customer needs in different region.

is pulling the fitting probably knows more about the product than the guy sitting in the office. Our management is very horizontal, rather than hierarchical. It's more like a team. We believe people on the floor know what they are doing and our salespeople know what they are doing.

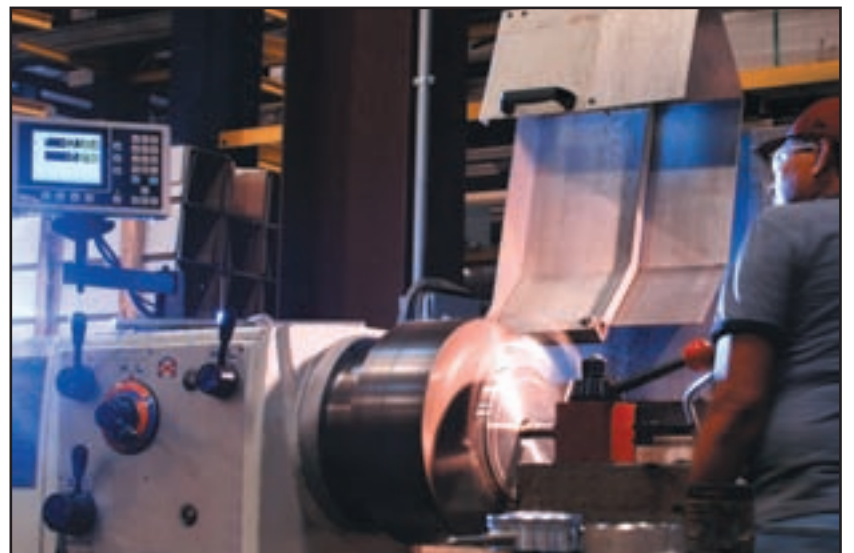
“The warehouse guy who is pulling the fitting probably knows more about the product than the guy sitting in the office.”

We encourage involvement from all levels of our staff. They see their suggestions being used, which encourages them to make more constructive suggestions.

We hire the best people, train them



‘We believe people on the floor know what they are doing and our salespeople know what they are doing. We encourage involvement from all levels of our staff. They see their suggestions being used, which encourages them to make more constructive suggestions.’



The company added its Machine Shop late last year, allowing it modify fittings and flanges to customers' specifications, as well as doing pipe beveling, threading and cutting.

MJM: *Last year when we talked, you told me that the Ta Chen management style is not from top down, but rather from the bottom up. That is very different than the typical business. Why, and how, does this work for Ta Chen?*

Tu: We believe in employee empowerment. The warehouse guy who

well and empower them. We are able to have this type of organizational structure because our people are dedicated and work very hard to perfect what they do. ■

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Showroom

(Continued from Cowan, page 1.)

“The idea is to continue to offer the quality service we’re known for but with even more variety,” said company manager Mike MacFarlane. “This is a place where consumers can find the widest range of luxury products for the home available. At the same time, the trade professionals who have come to know and trust us

equipped with areas for designers and home builders/remodelers to meet



with their clients, as well as areas for industry training and events. The company plans to offer several events throughout the year for designers, trade professionals and consumers.



will have an even better and more comprehensive selection.”

The new 4,000-square-foot showroom includes the latest in plumbing products, which can be experienced firsthand by homeowners and trade professionals. The facilities are

Counter sales are open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Showroom hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and it is available for appointments or for walk-in clients.

Contact mike.macfarlane@hajoca.com.

West Coast

(Continued from Zurn, page 1.)

Zurn continues to make investments and changes that are consistent with their mission statement: “Zurn



places the customer first, building value and trust through superior knowledge of the global markets we serve. Our products and services will

continue to provide innovative water solutions delivered by exceptional people.”

The new facility allows Zurn to serve customers quicker, while increasing on-time delivery and single shipment on-time delivery.

“We are excited about bringing this capability to our customers on the West Coast. This facility expansion is only one of many investments Zurn will be making for improving service levels across all regions for our customers,” said Craig Wehr, GM of the specification drainage group at Zurn.

Visit www.zurn.com.

Lochinvar

(Continued from A. O. Smith, page 1.)

“The addition of Lochinvar represents an excellent fit with our strategy to become a leading global water technology company,” said Paul Jones, chairman and CEO of A. O. Smith Corporation, in announcing the completion of the sale transaction. “Lochinvar is a well-known and widely respected brand in our industry, and their emphasis on energy ef-

ficient products, world-class quality and outstanding customer service fits well with our existing water heater



business. We’re excited about the opportunity to grow the Lochinvar business, both domestically and outside of the U. S.”

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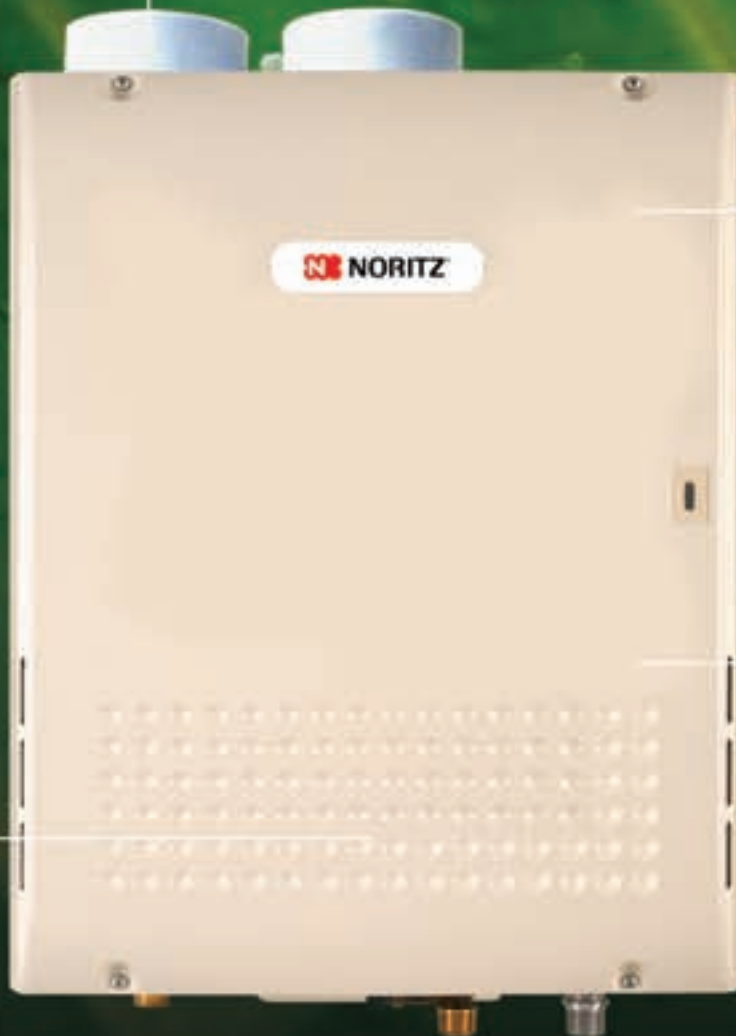
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ThermaSol remains dedicated to producing quality product in America

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

ThermaSol CEO Mitch Altman is passionate. Passionate about his company, his product, his team and his legacy. As the third generation of his family to lead this manufacturer of steam bathing systems, Altman has stayed true to the philosophies of his grandfather and father before him. “My

“I’m an American, and I’m dedicated to keeping jobs here in this country.”

— Mitch Altman

grandfather [David Altman], who founded the company in 1958, instilled in me the belief that no matter what you do in this world, be the best,” Altman said. “My father [Murray Altman] lived by that philosophy as well. They believed that if you did your best, you would reap the rewards this amazing country offers.

“I started helping my grandfather and father at ThermaSol when I was a kid. My grandfather died in 1971, then my father took over. I have done about every job in this company, and helped my father run the company for about nine years before taking over in 1989. Leading the company was something I always wanted to do. I have always been so proud of our products and felt this company was our family legacy.”

Altman said that the ThermaSol team remains focused on the product they bring to market — its design, function, features and benefits to the end user.

“Our first priority is delivering a superior product,” he said. Because our focus is on the product, we have tangible features and benefits that lead the

industry. We are committed to being the leader and bringing our distributors and end users, products we can be proud of.

“All of our products are designed and manufactured in house and we have one of the most comprehensive steam bath testing labs in the U.S. It’s important to note that all of our components and systems are designed and tested here in Simi Valley, and made specifically for our industry. We do not purchase off-the-shelf items that we manipulate to work with a steam bath.

and labor warranty through the factory.

- The Pro Series, provides a three-year in-home warranty, along with the same lifetime factory warranty.

“This all translates into how much we believe in our products,” Altman explained. “We know the products are going to last, and we’re committed to our customers. We believe strongly in word-of-mouth recommendations, and we know people share bad experiences as well — so we want to be certain people know we always stand behind our



Third-generation ThermaSol CEO Mitch Altman carries on the traditions of his grandfather David Altman and his father Murray Altman, who fervently believed that ‘no matter what you do in this world, be the best.’

Among our staff we have two mechanical engineers and an electronic engineer who ensure we are using cutting-edge components and technologies. Everything is built to our specifications; for example, the new light and music system recently launched was designed specifically to work seamlessly with all our digital products.”

ThermaSol offers two digital product lines:

- The AF Series, features a two-year in-home warranty on parts and labor, and a lifetime no-questions-asked parts

products.” In what might be an industry first, ThermaSol’s lifetime warranty transfers to the new homeowner should they sell their home.

Made in the USA

One of the reasons that ThermaSol is able to ensure the quality of its product is the consistency it emphasizes in the manufacturing process. They have developed procedures and specifications on how to build these systems — which employees take very seriously. During the manufacturing process the units go through two live run tests — once to be certain there are no leaks in the inner tank or any of the fittings. The second full run test is at the final assembly stage, the units’ electronics, steam function and digital controls are tested. Each test takes a minimum of 20 minutes and every unit they manufacture goes through both running tests — yes, every unit.

Over the years, Altman has had a number of opportunities to move his operations overseas, but he’s chosen not to because he feels very strongly about keeping ThermaSol’s manufac-



ThermaSol CEO Mitch Altman sits down for an interview with Mary Jo Martin on the grounds of the Ronald Reagan Library in Simi Valley, Calif.

turing in the U.S. “There have been a lot of people who have mentioned about how much money I’d save if I moved some of my production or sourcing to China, etc.,” Altman noted. “But I’m an American, and I’m dedicated to keeping jobs here in this country. I don’t want to be part of the water going out of the bathtub; I want to be part of the water we use to fill it back up. The business climate here right now is difficult, I think that Washington is too focused on taxation and regulations, which are really slowing the economy. The free market is truly a dynamic concept. The more we set the free market free, the better off our country — and our businesses — will be.”

ThermaSol holds a number of patents for its steam systems, including the new Smart Steam system that Altman describes as the ultimate in temperature maintenance. “It’s a game changer,” he said firmly. “It makes for the most relaxing quiet steam bath on the market. Another of our patents is a thermostatically controlled steam head. As the heat hits the steam head the center protrudes from the wall and the steam moves from the head in a 360° pattern.

“We’re doing our best to protect our engineering and product development with these patents, and want to remain at



Employees assemble steam-shower generators from components that are designed specifically for ThermaSol products.

the forefront of this category. Ideas for our products are generated in a number of ways — from customers, internally, what’s happening in the marketplace, features consumers might want.”

National sales manager Mike Straw
(Turn to Full steam... page 66.)

Building the first steam shower

Back in 1956, David Altman was a partner in D&A Plumbing in the Bronx, and his son, Murray, served as his apprentice. One day, a French diplomat who was living in Manhattan called their office and asked if they could design and build a steam bath for the bathroom in his penthouse apartment.

“My grandfather was never one to say no so he and my father figured out a way to make it work,” said ThermaSol CEO Mitch Altman. “They put in an old boiler-type system and ran steam lines to the penthouse. The job cost about \$10,000 in 1956 — which was a lot of money. About two weeks later, my grandfather got a call from the diplomat’s friend, who wanted one, too. So my grandfather figured there might be something to this new idea, and after a couple years of experimenting, came up with the first mini electric steam generator.

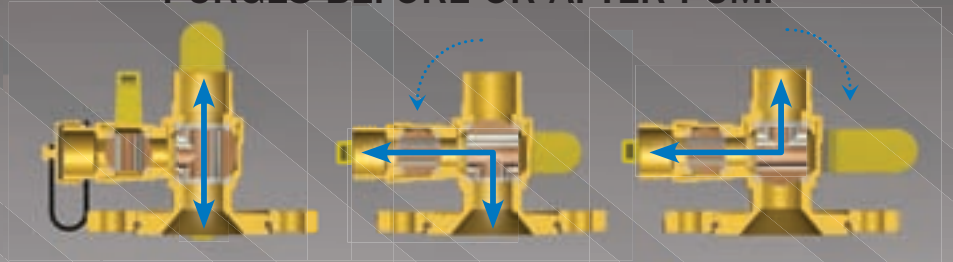
“Since no one really knew what a steam bath was my father decided that the best way to get the masses to understand the concept was to equip hotels and motels so travelers could experience them. He did that quite successfully for a number of years. Then whirlpools became extremely popular and we approached Riviera Spa about branching into the whirlpool bath business. But in the late 1980s, I spun off the steam bath portion of the business — I felt the shower was the next boom area for the bathroom.” ■

INNOVATION INSIDE & OUT

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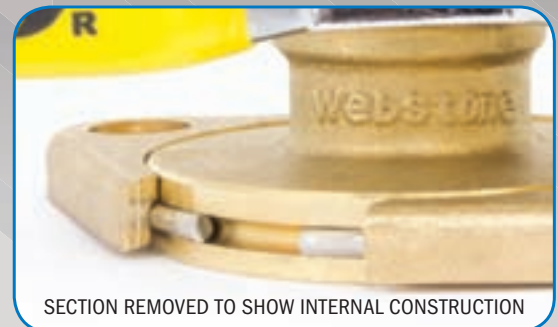
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Full steam ahead at ThermaSol

(Continued from page 64.)

praised Altman, noting, “Mitch is a visionary. He’s one step ahead of everybody all the time. He’s the kind of guy who pushes the chair back and makes it happen. And he’s instilled in all of us the philosophy to say what we do and do what we say, and we’ve been very successful embracing that philosophy.” Straw added that ThermaSol recently won a Design Award for its steam head, which is now on display at the Athenaeum Museum in Chicago. He went on to note that “there aren’t many opportunities for a manufacturer in our niche to be considered world-class, but being selected when competing against companies like BMW, Bosch, Dornbracht and Duravit is an extreme honor.”

Wholesaler partnership is critical

Altman is quick to point out the importance of ThermaSol’s relationship with their wholesalers.

“We feel that the distributor is key,” he explained. “We do our very best to

support our distributors by providing them with superior products and technologies – but critically important for us is spending time training and educating so they’re able to effectively share the features and benefits of our products with their customers. This is a product with such a high value rating that distributors are able to garner much larger margins and it doesn’t need to be sold on price. It’s leading-edge, five-star quality that brings a discernible value to the consumer and our partnering distributors.”

In an effort to better support distribution — and make the showroom teams’ jobs easier — ThermaSol developed Simple Sizing, a groundbreaking new method of sizing steambaths. “For many years a complicated formula was used to size steambaths,” Altman noted. “You took the length by width by height and then had to add extra cubic footage for the outside wall, material on walls, etc. People would end up getting very

(Turn to Made in... page 68.)



A bronze statue of the late president greets visitors at the Reagan Library — an ideal backdrop for Mary Jo Martin to interview (from left) ThermaSol national sales manager Mike Straw, CEO Mitch Altman and Western regional manager Martin Siwy.

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Made in the U.S.A: ThermaSol

(Continued from page 66.)

frustrated, which led to errors. Simple Sizing allows people to use a simple formula of length times width times height, which gives the cubic feet needed. That figure tells showroom personnel which

model to specify. Simple Sizing takes all the factors into consideration, and sizes for the room, not a specific material which is a lifesaver should a client change their wall material."

ThermaSol is also very committed to

training, and hosts regular educational sessions for their distributor showrooms.

"I've been in this industry almost a decade now, but before I joined ThermaSol, I didn't really even think of steam," said Western regional manager Martin Siwy. "I came onboard two years ago, it's become a passion to ed-

ucate people on the benefits of steam and the spa experience. With the economy the way it is, people have become much more focused on how they are spending their money. We're finding that rather than re-doing an entire bathroom, they're adding a steam shower. In addition to the personal benefits these systems offer, they also meet the new code requirements in California of using no more than 2 gallons a minute of water flow in a shower system. This has also helped us sell our systems, because users can have a 20-minute session of relaxation while still being environmentally friendly and meeting the code requirement."

In June, ThermaSol launched Project Steam — a promotional campaign set to run through January 31, 2012. It was developed to incentivize distributors, designers and builders to use steam in a project — and to share their stories with the company. These customers are invited to submit an interesting bathroom design and tell the story of what they were creating. Those who are selected will receive a free ThermaSol steam generator. The rewards for ThermaSol are two-fold:

- It gets more customers interested in recommending and designing steam system for their clients
- It will help ThermaSol and their sales team put together a great portfolio that can be used to sell future projects.

At this year's Distributor Vendor Con-

All units go through two live run tests — once to be certain there are no leaks in the inner tank or any of the fittings. The second full run test is at the final assembly stage; the units' electronics, steam function and digital controls are tested.

ference, ThermaSol received its 20-year recognition for being a WIT & Co. vendor. They are also involved as a Platinum Sponsor with the Decorative Plumbing & Hardware Association.

Altman believes strongly in the health benefits of a steam shower — and the fact that they use such a small amount of water in the process.

"This is a product that leaves users feeling better because it effectively detoxifies their bodies and brings a relaxing state of mind," he said. "And because it uses only a gallon of water for a 20-minute session, it's a great green product for relaxation and health. I like to think of it as a full-body facial. There lot's of detoxification because it opens pores and helps expel grime and toxins. If you take a cool shower after a steam bath, it's very invigorating; while if you take a warmer shower, it relaxes you for a good night's rest. It's a wonderful way to cleanse your body and purify your soul." ■

For additional information, visit www.thermasol.com.

Meet 'Sol'

Perhaps the best-known face at ThermaSol is that of the one-and-only "Sol."

The "real Sol" was the father-in-law of a former ThermaSol employee, and the company's marketing team used him as the inspiration for a character to promote steam baths. In the early years, Sol was often shown in ads and other materials sitting in a steam bath, as well as on signage at hotels around the country.

"Sol has always been a great character," said CEO Mitch Altman. "But he was decommissioned in the late 70s because he was an older-looking icon. I've always loved Sol and really wanted to bring him back. So we sent Sol for a facelift."

The company uses Sol throughout their marketing and social media efforts, and he is more popular than ever. Sol "conducts" the company's training videos, and he's also got a great following on FaceBook, Twitter and YouTube.

At every opportunity those affiliated with ThermaSol pass out 12-inch cut-outs of Sol, complete with his glasses, tie and towel and looking refreshed from taking a steam. And they encourage customers, end users and Sol fans to take him everywhere. In fact, ThermaSol conducted a "Sol spotting" contest this year, and customers responded in

droves, submitting pictures of Sol at landmarks around the world, with celebrities and at all kinds of unique venues.

The winner was announced at the end of August, Carlos Rodriguez From Farrey's in Florida.

"Sol has been a great asset to us," said national sales manager Mike Straw. "All companies are trying to find new ways to reach customers



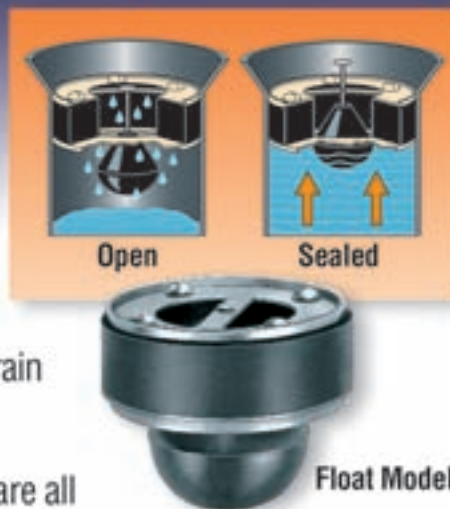
and grow their business, and Sol has really helped generate a lot of interest in ThermaSol. In our videos, Sol narrates and demonstrates to our showroom people how our products work, along with the features and benefits. And the Sol cutouts are a perfect lead-in for people to tell others about ThermaSol. Showroom personnel often keep Sol on their desk and so when their customers sit down for a meeting, they'll ask about Sol. It's a perfect lead-in for them to share information about ThermaSol and our products. He's a real door opener — a visual icon that helps us promote the name, features and benefits that we have worked hard to bring to market." ■

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How to keep you and your family from succession planning mistakes

Got a phone call, the kind I dread. It was Sam, the 37-year-old son of a family business owner (Joe). By any definition, Joe was a “success.” So was his business, Success Co.

Although Joe was a planner, after he went to the big business in the sky, his estate plan and business succession plan (for Success Co.) turned into an economic and tax tragedy — for Sam, for his mom Mary and for the rest of the family.

Sadly, I regularly get calls with the same or similar facts, always followed by painful and costly results. This article has a singular purpose: To make sure that not even one business owner/reader of this column who wants to sell his business to one (or more) of his kids falls into the same economic nightmare and tax trap as Sam and Mary. So, listen up! Chances are you’ll be saying, “I’m Joe,” more than once.

Joe’s facts, before he died

Joe and Mary have three kids: Sam, who started working at Success Co. after college, and two adult non-business kids. The three core goals Joe and Mary told their advisors were:

- Sam should ultimately own 100% of Success Co.
- Treat the three kids equally
- Pay as little as possible in taxes to the IRS.

Joe’s advisors (his lawyer and CPA) completed his estate planning in early January 2005. As part of the plan, Success Co. (an S corporation) was sold to Sam for \$12 million (its fair market value). Sam paid his dad in full with a \$12-million note, to be paid in semi-annual installments over 10 years, plus 4.5% interest on the unpaid balance.

In January 2005, immediately before the sale of Success Co., Joe’s significant assets were (in \$ millions):

Success Co....\$12.0	401(k)Plan ...\$2.1
Investments:	
Cash/cash-like/stocks/bonds.....	\$9.1
Real estate leased to Success Co....	\$1.4
Other investments.....	12.1
2 homes.....	\$1.6, \$1.5
Total.....	\$27.7

Now, stop reading for a moment and substitute your own numbers. Then follow the solutions later in the article. You’ll strike tax gold.

The lawyer created a traditional estate plan with an A/B trust (often called a “family trust” and a “marital deduction trust”). Since Joe and Mary

had a \$2-million second-to-die policy and \$9.1 million in liquid assets, plus the future cash from the \$12-million note and interest from the sale of Success Co., the professionals figured there was plenty of liquidity to pay estate taxes. So, the lawyer and CPA agreed that no additional planning was necessary.

Note: Both Joe and Mary were healthy in 2005.

Now the horror story

Joe died suddenly of a heart attack in 2007. Let’s take a look at the economic and tax impact of Joe’s death on each of his family members.

Sam

Sam’s situation was a disaster from the day the Success Co. sale papers were signed. Here’s why:

- The price. The \$12 million value for Success Co. was fine. Joe got a well-done professional appraisal. But the \$12 million price, between father and son, is wrong. Why?

The IRS allows a 35% discount — for lack of marketability — for non-public businesses such as Success Co. So, for tax purposes, the right price should have been \$8 million (rounded), reducing Joe’s taxable estate by \$4 million. Also, this would make Sam’s note payments much easier.

- Difficulty to pay the price. For ease of explanation, let’s say the price is \$1 million. How much Sam must earn to pay that \$1 million? Would you believe \$1.7 million (the amount varies depending on the income tax rate of the buyer’s home state)? Sam lives in a high tax-rate — over 7% — state. Result: Sam must pay \$700,000 in federal and state taxes in order to have \$1 million left to pay his dad.

Let’s apply the \$1-million example to Sam’s situation. He will ultimately pay over \$8.4 million (12 x \$700,000) in taxes to pay off the \$12-million note. Simply put, Sam must earn in excess of \$20 million, before tax, to pay off the note. Plus interest. Outrageous!

- Destroys Sam’s personal balance sheet. Sam has done great, both before and after his dad died, as the owner/manager of Success Co. He increased sales and bottom line net profit. He could have increased sales more, but the bank (the same bank Joe had used for years) refused to increase Success Co.’s line of credit without Joe’s usual guarantee. Why? Sam’s obligation to pay off the \$12-million note destroyed his personal balance sheet. As a result, Sam’s guarantee (required

by the bank) was worthless.

Note: Of course, if Success Co. had redeemed Joe’s stock, the result would be the same, because the liability on Success Co.’s books would destroy its balance sheet.

Mary

Fortunately, the 100% marital deduction (everything to Mary, except \$2 million to the family trust) spared Joe’s estate from any tax due at his death. But the entire family, especially Mary, was in a state of shock when their lawyer told them that the loss to estate taxes would be in the \$10 million range; the exact potential estate tax liability could not be determined because the estate tax rate depends on the year of Mary’s death.

Here’s the final blow: As explained above, Sam must earn \$1.7 million, pay \$700,000 income tax to have \$1 million to pay down the note. Joe is socked with a 15% capital gains tax. There is only \$850,000 left. Estate tax on the \$850,000 in Mary’s estate (when she dies) will be about \$300,000. Then, only \$550,000 remains. The full lost-to-taxes picture: For each \$1 million of the note, Sam must earn \$1.7 million for the family to wind up with only \$550,000. Unbelievable!

For the entire \$12 million, Sam’s earnings must be over \$20 million for the family to receive \$6.6 million. Lousy tax planning.

The two nonbusiness kids

They were forgotten in the plan, until Mary died.

What Joe and Mary should have done:

Lack of room prevents me from covering every point, issue and possibility. Following are the most important strategies that would have allowed all of Joe’s \$27.5 million to go to his family, all taxes paid in full.

- An intentionally defective trust (IDT). First, a recapitalization of Success Co.: 100 shares of voting stock, kept by Joe and 10,000 shares of non-voting stock to be sold to the IDT. Now the discount is 40%, resulting in a price to Sam of only \$7.2 million. The entire transaction is tax-free to Joe; no capital gains tax, no income tax on interest received. What’s the cost to Sam? ZERO, not one penny. Profits (really cash flow) of Success Co. are used to pay the \$7.2 million note.

- Life insurance. Since Joe and Mary were insurable in 2005, we would have bought about \$11 million (set up to be free of all taxes) in sec-



BY IRVING L. BLACKMAN
Tax/succession specialist

ond-to-die life insurance. The 401(k) funds would be used to implement a strategy called “retirement plan rescue” to purchase \$6 million of life insurance, while the IDT would purchase \$5 million.

Note: My insurance consultant said the premiums would be about \$10,500 per \$1 million.

- Family limited partnership (FLIP). The “investment” assets total \$12.1 million, but only \$11 million would be transferred to a FLIP. The IRS allows a 35% discount, making the FLIP assets worth only \$7.15 million for tax purposes.

- Gifting program. Joe and Mary have eight grandkids and three kids — 11 noses. In 2005, the maximum tax-free gift was \$11,000. So, Joe and Mary together could make a \$22,000 gift to each nose, for a total of \$242,000 per year.

What’s most interesting is that every strategy listed above is easy to do and, when done right, accepted by the IRS. Just how can you protect yourself, your business and your family from becoming a victim like Joe, Mary and Sam?

Here’s how: When your professionals are finished with your estate plan, which must include a succession plan if you own all or part of a closely held business, ask them to show you how the plan passes all of your wealth — intact — to your heirs. For example, if you are worth \$5 million, the entire \$5 million will go to your heirs, all taxes, if any, paid in full. If \$50 million, the entire \$50 million. Just substitute your own numbers. What if 100% of your wealth is not passed intact? Get a second opinion!

Want to learn more about this fascinating subject? Browse my website. ■

Irv Blackman, CPA and lawyer, is a retired founding partner of Blackman Kallick Bartelstein LLP (CPAs) and chairman emeritus of the New Century Bank (both in Chicago). Want to consult? Need a second opinion? Contact Irv by phone at 847/674-5295, email blackman@estatetaxsecrets.com or visit his website, www.taxsecretsoft-hewealthy.com.



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Selling luxury goods in a tough economy

- Customers with cash are still buying
- Build a website that brings them in
- Sell the sizzle, not the steak
- Relationships = trust

I know that these tough economic times are challenging for you and your families. Most of us have downsized our budgets and spending, yet the market for high-end luxury goods is still going strong. One might assume that downsizing for the average consumer might mean not purchasing a new auto. For the wealthy, as an example, the price of a Ferrari

is about \$200,000, and the fact that the Italian automaker is only 4% down proves that even in these tight times the luxury market lives on.

Take a good look at airports and travelers going to exotic destinations and walk the upscale luxury mall or stores, and you will see people buying luxury items. There are around 15 million very wealthy, affluent house-



BY PETER SCHOR
Showroom specialist

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holds in the U.S. A large percentage of them are Baby Boomers between the ages of 46 and 68. Today's affluent consumers are extremely busy; two of their biggest desires are:

- Saving time and effort. "Technology is the ultimate luxury" is an understatement. Shopping on the Internet to decide what to buy before visiting a showroom or buying online happens. So I advise you to stop fighting this trend and put up a great website.

- One-stop shopping. You need to have more "completeness" in your showroom offering.

Don't let the economy be your excuse. Use the down economy as a warning and motivation to work harder and smarter. As the saying goes, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Real-world tips for selling luxury

- Find affluent buyers in your market who are less affected by the economic downturn. Think about where these affluent people hang out and

Luxury is not the 'product' but the buyer's 'experience.' Creating experiences and making consumers feel that having enough money can buy what they want will increase your profits.

find out the best vehicle for reaching them, i.e. the opera, ballet, country clubs, art galleries, day spas, etc.

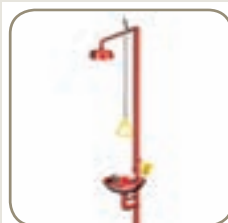
- Sell the benefits that your products represent — reduces stress, feels better, improves health, offers a safer existence — rather than the products themselves. Luxury is not the "product" but the buyer's "experience." Creating experiences and making consumers feel that having enough money can buy what they want will increase your profits. Showrooms are not a bunch of faucets on mounting blocks on the (Turn to You can sell... page 75.)

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**Sure, the economy's rotten, but...
You can sell luxury
when the chips are down**

(Continued from page 72.)

wall; they are faucets in glass jewel cases. Visit *The Wholesaler* website (www.thewholesaler.com), click on Archives and go to my October 2008 Showroom column, "Creating the experience in your showroom."

- Sell beyond the features/benefits bullet points of a product. Potential buyers need to hear emotionally charged stories connected to the product; stories that make them feel something, like "I need that." In tough times, emotional appeal is king and queen.

- Build relationships and trust. People who buy "luxury" look for specialized, personal service and crave the attention that goes with their purchases. You won't find this experience by walking the aisles of The Home Depot.

- Sell a luxury product. Many fashionable items today are disposable and not made to last. People are willing to pay for excellent quality; quality never goes out of style. Sell the products with confidence, courage and certainty. Adopt a positive mental attitude and stay positive and upbeat. An industry friend, a director of showrooms for a plumbing wholesaler, told me, "My competitors are so busy buying in to the fact that selling could be particularly difficult in this climate.

Every sales professional must find out exactly what the prospect values and ask the questions that reveal what he or she actually wants.

They portray this fear to clients, ending up overselling, apologizing for the high price or discounting like a street vendor. They kill the sales of luxury items to their clients."

- Before seeing a client, ensure that your head is clear of negative market news. Go to Archives at www.thewholesaler.com and read my November 2008 Showroom column, "Your attitude will control your altitude in these economic times" and "A check up from the neck up!"

- Be Internet and technology savvy. Most affluent consumers will research the Internet before coming to your showroom. You must learn how to sell against e-commerce sellers and how to entice the consumer with your website.

- Be more creative when marketing and advertising your showroom. Tap into professional interior designers (ASID/IIDA). Affluent people who buy luxury goods hire designers to create their "experience." Have a fun open house in your showroom. Get creative! Have a palm reader and massage therapist doing reflexology for the guests.

- Combat the reluctance to buy luxury by appealing to a different emotion. Try patriotism; prosperity is money in motion. Convince buyers that they can save jobs, stimulate the economy

and enjoy their purchases, all at the same time.

- Sell value by differentiating your services. What is value? The truth is that value, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Every sales professional must find out exactly what the prospect values and ask the questions that reveal what he or she actually wants.

To decision makers, we often appear to offer the same products and services. A commodity

Showrooms are not a bunch of faucets on mounting blocks on the wall; they are faucets in glass jewel cases.

is defined as a product or service with no discernible differences, one that is available from multiple sources. Your prospective customers may be busy commoditizing your solution, in which case you must be differentiating it. The bottom line is that, unless you can create a powerful and distinct difference to the customer, your product or service will not stand out. Set yourself apart from the competition by differentiating in the following areas: price; relationship; process; technological, experiential and marketing knowhow. This is all about creating a better "experience" for clients and, most of all, for affluent buyers. ■

Peter Schor, president of Dynamic Results Inc., is a bath/plumbing industry speaker, educator, author, columnist and consultant in the many segments of our industry. For the past 20 years, he conducted seminars and speaks at numerous conventions. Schor has great expertise in the field of showrooms and hotel bathrooms and has won many industry awards. He also consults manufacturers in taking their products to market in the areas of sales, marketing and public relations. Schor can be reached at 1302 Longhorn Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648, phone 916/408-5346, fax 916/408-5899, e-mail pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com or visit www.dynamicresultsonline.com.

Dear readers of my Showroom Column, A request! I have been in our industry for over 40 years and have spent the last 23 years in full time education. I've been writing this monthly showroom column since 2005. I have five good years ahead and have many things that I would like to accomplish. Can you please give me some quick email feedback on the value of my column or some words of encouragement to continue to write it? If there are some challenging subjects or questions that you would like me to address, please let me know.

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turing, Rheem/Ruud, Stockham Valves,
Trenton Pipe Nipple, Ward Manufac-
turing, Welded Tube
of outside sales people: 7
of warehouses: 1
Industry Orientation: Plumbing,
Piping, Valves & Fitting

Preferred Sales Inc

Principal Contact: Alan Guidish
1 Industrial Rd
Hermitage, PA 16148
Phone: 724/981-5500
Fax: 724/981-5560

Email: guidisha@preferredsales.com
Territory: OH, Western Pennsylvania,
West Virginia, Northern Kentucky
Counties of Boone, Kenton and
Campbell
Lines: 3M Purification, AK Industries,
Aquatic, Backstop, Bradford White,
Danze, Dura Trac, E.L. Mustee,
Gastite/Flexsure, Heritage Plastics,
Houzer, Hydromatic Pump, Lenox,
Nomaco, Oatey SCS, Raywal, Red
White Valve, SJE Rhombus, Tigre,
Uponor/Wirsbo, Vitra
of outside sales people: 11
of warehouses: 1
Industry Orientation: Plumbing,
Piping, Valves & Fittings, Hydronic
Heating

RG Marketing Group, Inc.

Principal Contact: Rory D. Gehman
1916 Crain Hwy South, Suite 20
Glen Burnie, MD 21061
Phone: 410-787-8744
Fax: 410-787-9449
Email: RGMGroup@rgmgi.com
Website: www.rgmgi.com
Territory: MD, PA, VA, DE, NJ
Lines: Blake Protective Coverings,
Central Brass, Colonial Bronze,
Mansfield Plumbing Products,
Olympia Faucets Inc., Pioneer
Industries
#outside sales people: 5
Industry Orientation: Plumbing

S.E. Taylor & Associates, Inc.

Principal Contact: Matt Morries
7609 Energy Parkway, Ste 801
Baltimore, MD 21226
Phone: 410/255-7620 Fax: 410/255-
3033
Email: Matt@setaylorassoc.com
Lines: Acorn Engineering, Acorn
Aqua, American Specialties, ASI
Storage Solutions, Acorn Safety,
Aquabath Co, Inc., Eemax, Elm-
dor/Stoneman, Global Partitions,
MIFAB, Neo-Metro, Penguin, Potter
Roemer, Symmons, T&S Brass,
Tyco HWAT, Whitehall, Zero Flush

East North Central

Meek Beck and Associates

Principal Contact: Ross Beck
11875 Belden Court

Livonia, MI 48150
Phone: 734/458-2950
Fax: 734/458-2953
Email: Ross@meekbeck.com
Territory: Michigan, Detroit/Grand
Rapids
Lines: American Standard, Bradley,
Froet, Halsey Taylor, Hamilton
Aquarius, Scale Blaster
of outside sales people: 4
of inside sales people: 2
Industry Orientations: Plumbing,
Heating, Hydronics

Mid-Continent Marketing

Principal Contact: Vince England
1275 Lakeside Dr
Romeoville, IL 60446
Phone: 630/953-1211
Fax: 630/953-1067
Email: vengland@mcmsl.com
Website: www.mcmsl.com
Territory: IL, Northwest Indiana
Lines: American Standard, Dormont,
FEBCO, FIAT, Blucher, InSinkErator,
IPS, Jado/Porcher, Just Mfg,
Normac, KSD, Oasis Water Coolers,
Powers, Rheem, Praxis, Turbo
Torch, Watts Water Technologies,
Watts Drainage
of outside sales people: 7
of warehouses: 1
Industry Orientation: Piping, Valves &
Fitting

RC Frey & Assoc Inc

Principal Contact: Chip Frey
9263 Ravenna Road A-10
Twinsburg, OH 44087-2469
Phone: 330/425-2555
Fax: 330/425-2534
Email: rcfreyco@windstream.net
Territory: Central and Northern OH
Lines: Encon Safety Products, Topp
Industries Inc., Froet Industries
LLC, Zoeller Engineered Products,
Precision Plumbing Products,
Zoeller Pump Company, RCF
Plastics Inc.
of outside sales people: 3
of warehouses: 1
Industry Orientation: Plumbing

West North Central

MDN Sales Co

Principal Contact: Jim Marten
1701 American Blvd. E., Ste #11
Bloomington, MN 55425
Phone: 952/854-7070

South Atlantic

Marsh & Moore, Inc.

Principal Contact: Mark Marsh
3380 Agricultural Center Dr.
St. Augustine, FL 32092
Phone: 904/827-8788
Fax: 904/827-8795
Email: mark@marshmoore.com
Lines: Armstrong Pumps, CTS
Flange, Elkhart, Froet, HTP,
Holdrite, Integrity Fusion, Josam,
KBI, Lasco Fittings, Liberty Pumps,
Macon Plastics, MCC Tools, Multi
Fitting, NAPAC, Niagara, Norwesco,
OateySCS, Sanderson Pipe, Seisco,
SJE Rhombus, Topp, TSM, Uponor,
Water Control
of outside sales people: 11
of warehouses: 1
Industry Orientations: Plumbing,
Piping, Valves & Fittings
See ad on this page

Mountain

Dalcart & Associates Inc

Principal Contact: Bob Meuller
5301 N Vasquez Blvd
Commerce City, CO 80022
Phone: 303/292-5616
Toll Free: 800/852-1173

Fax: 303/292-4913
Email: meganmyers@dalcart.com
Website: www.dalcart.com
Territory: CO, WY, MT, UT, NM
Lines: Arrow/Duratrak, Barnes
Pumps, Beneke Seats, Black Swan,
Cello, Emmeti, Genova Products,
Haydon Baseboard, Houzer Sinks,
Kingtron Valves, Lubrizol, Mansfield
Plumbing, NAPAC, Pannext
Malleable Fittings, Oxy Pex,
Pioneer/Olympia/Central Brass
Faucets
of outside sales people: 5
of warehouses: 2
Industry Orientation: Plumbing, Pip-
ing, Valves & Fitting, Hydronic Heat-
ing, Warm-Air Heating, Ducted Air
Conditioning, Refrigeration and
Sheet Metal

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Principal Contact: Chris Dilg
14209 E. 35th Pl., STE 100
Aurora, CO 80011
Phone: 303/322-0165
Toll Free: 877/626-3846
Fax: 303/322-0374
E-mail: cwddilg@att.net
Website: www.mcnevinco.com
Territory: CO, WY
Lines: ITT Bell & Gossett, ITT Domes-
tic Pumps, ITT Hoffman Specialty,
ITT McDonnell & Miller, PB Heat,
ITT Goulds, ITT G&L, Vertiflow
Pump, Cermine, Weksler Glass,
Camus Hydronics, Kadant-Johnson
Fluid Handling, Minnesota Flexible,
Holby Valve, Apricus Solar Co.,
Eaton Cutler-Hammer
of Outside sales people: 6
of Warehouses: 1
Industry Orientation: Plumbing and
Hydronic Heating

Ridgway & Associates, Inc.

Principal Contact: James Ridgway
80 Gold Pan Lane, Billings, MT 59105
Phone: 406/245-5381 Fax: 406/245-
6161
E-mail: jridgway8@bresnan.net
Territory: MT, ID, Northern WY
Lines: Cresline N.W., Fludmaster,
Liberty Pumps, Knaack & Weather
Guard, Wheeler Rex, Mill Rose,
Missions Couplings, Nupla, Takagi,
Trac Pipe, CSST, Rectoseal, Turbo
Torch, Jason, Camco, Bemis
of outside sales people: 2
Industry Orientation: Plumbing,
Piping, Valves & Fittings, Warm-Air
Heating, Ducted Air Conditioning,
Refrigeration and Sheet Metal

Pacific

Mega Western Sales

16200 S. Maple Ave.
Gardena, CA 90248
Tel: 310-323-7900
Fax: 310-323-9421
Website: www.megawestern.com
Principal Contact: Mike S. Smith
Email: msmith@megawestern.com
Territory: N and S CA, NV
Lines: Aquaglass, Aqua Rex, Arm-
strong Pumps, Bemis, Bobrick,
Bonomi, Brasscraft, Brizo, Delta,
Hadrian, InSinkErator, IPS Corp,
Josam, Liberty Hardware, Neoperl,
Pacific Plastics, Rheem/Ruud,
Vortens, Wheeler Rex
of outside sales people: 30
of warehouses: 1
Industry Orientation: Plumbing, Pipe/
Valve & Fitting, Hydronic Heating

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Lessons to learn from Apple's Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs, the consummate business legend and maverick, resigned recently as CEO of Apple after an undisputed career of success. Although it didn't come as a surprise due to his recent health challenges, it is very sad for many of us.

I've never met Steve Jobs. I hope I can sometime in the future. However, I've monitored his career since the early days of the Apple II with Steve Wozniak (known affectionately as "the Woz"). We both have grown up in this historically delightful era of the microcomputer and the PC. (Side note — "PC" stands for Personal Computer and really had nothing to do with Windows at its inception. A PC can be a Windows machine, a Mac, a Linux machine or another that is both "personal" and a "computer" — but I digress!)

I have to admit a twinge of sadness as I see Steve Jobs following his arch rival — and probably real life aspiration and buddy — Bill Gates, into retirement. Yes, it is the end of an era. Both of these geniuses changed our

world. Love 'em or hate 'em, you have to admit they made profound changes on the world now and into the future.

However, as a communicator who speaks and writes professionally, I have to draw some observations about what you and I can learn from this dynamic, brilliant, and yes, sometimes rascal called Steve Jobs.

Success Principles Learned from Steve Jobs (in my humble opinion)

- **Don't be afraid to follow your dreams.** It was the dream of Jobs and Woz in their Silicon Valley garage to create a real personal computer. They did it at a time when they were looked down upon by the "grown-ups" in the computer industry. Nevertheless, they pressed through, even in the face of hardship and difficulty, to become a company which is admired world-wide.

- **Have a big vision.** They didn't just try to "build a better mousetrap." Jobs and Woz set out to change the world — literally — and they did. When Steve Jobs invited John Scul-

ley, the then-CEO of Pepsi, to come on board with Apple Computer (as the company was called then), his now-famous challenge to Sculley was "Do you want to just continue to sell sugar water, or do you want to change the world?" For you and me we have to have that "fire in the belly" in order to keep going through the inevitable challenges. Keep that "eye of the tiger" — and never let it go.

- **Create "insanely great" products.** Too many people have tried to produce junk (Steve would use another word here) but Steve Jobs kept pushing Apple to produce high-quality products that people would go nuts over using them. I'll admit that I have moved from the Windows side to now having 2 MacBook Pros, an iPod, 2 iPhones and my beloved iPad. Think about it, there is a reason that so many users of Apple products are heard to say, "I love my ___ (fill in with your Apple iPod, MacBook, iPad or other Apple product here)." They take the time and effort to produce products that people want. They do their home-



BY TERRY L. BROCK
Technology/marketing specialist

work and Apple is not afraid to try — and sometimes fail (remember in the Lisa computer?).

- **Create magnetic customer service.** Ever been to an Apple store? You know what I mean. Those bastions of technology and fun are usually packed with devoted fans clamoring to buy products from Apple. Why? Well, those stores are more than just another retail store. Being there is an experience where you get to learn about new technology that really makes your life better. For me, I love the practical, bottom-line business benefits I get from visiting the Apple store. Think about how you can create a powerful experience in your own "store" however you define that in your work.

- **Continue to amaze.** They have never, and I hope they never rest on their laurels at Apple. Yes, Apple has been great — insanely great is the term often used for them. Each new product announcement brings a crowd of devoted fans around the world to see the next Apple product they "just gotta' have." Keep that flame burning in your business with a continual stream of dazzling new products and services.

Yes, we'll miss Steve Jobs as CEO. I wish him the very best and thank him for setting a good example in many ways. Yes, Steve can be, and has been, a rascal from time to time. He's human! But the lessons we can learn from this business genius can help us.

Even more than the business lessons, Steve Jobs helps us to see how we can live life fully, with gusto, going for it and never quitting. No, he's not quitting now. I think he's just shifting gears for a new adventure. Time will tell. For now, we pause, raise a respectful salute to the boy-wonder genius of Apple and wish him the best. Thank you, Steve Jobs, for teaching us some great principles! ■

Terry Brock is a marketing coach who helps business owners market more effectively leveraging technology. He shows busy professionals how to squeeze more out of their busy days using the right rules and tools. He can be reached at 407-363-0505, by e-mail at terry@terrybrock.com or through his website at www.terrybrock.com.

WHOLESALING

100

Wholesaling 100 update

Because of an unfortunate glitch in our database, APR Supply Company was not listed in the 2011 Wholesaling 100 section. Had the company been included, it would have been ranked at Number 86:

86 APR SUPPLY CO.

749 Guilford St
Lebanon, PA 17046
717-274-5999
Fax: 717-273-2749
Email: zderr@aprsupply.com
Employees: 158
Outside Sales: 16
Inside Sales: 66
Showrooms: 3
Total Locations: 23
Locations to be opened 2010: 2
Member of a Buying Group: yes
Sales Mix:
Industrial PVF: 10

Plumbing: 28
Refrigeration: 1
HVAC 58
H/C Controls: 3
Sales by Market Sector:
New Construction: 25
Remodel/Renovate/Rebuild/Rehabilitate/
Replace: 75
Sales Volume by Market:
Residential/Light Commercial: 97
Comm./Institutional (Incl. High-Rise
Residential): 3
Top Plumbing Lines: Bradford White,

Navien, Taco, Moen, Gerber
Top Heating & HVAC Lines: Nordyne,
Fujitsu, Seal-Tite, Utica, Johns
Manville
Top PVF Lines: Viega, JM Eagle, Nibco,
Merit Brass, Watts

Officers: Scott Weaver, President CEO,
John Tice, VP Purchasing & Market-
ing, David Robinson, CFO/COO, Terry
Ludwig, Director of Sales, Jeff Thomp-
son, Director of HVAC, Christopher
Bohn, Director of IT

National Oilwell Varco's data was incomplete. Here is the firm's correct listing.

6 NATIONAL OILWELL VARCO DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

7909 Parkwood Circle Drive
Houston, Texas 77036
713-375-3833 Fax: 713-346-7609
Email: Greg.resa@nov.com
www.nov.com/supplychain
Employees: 2900
Showrooms: 220

Total Locations: 220
Territory: Global Marketplace
Sales Mix: Industrial PVF: 55%
Pumps/Private Water System: 5%
Industrial MRO Supplies: 30%
Electrical: 5%
Tools & Equipment: 2%
Other: 3%
Sales by Market Sector:
Service/Maintenance/Repair/Operation:
100
Sales Volume by Customer Type:
Industrial and Facilities: 100

Sales Volume by Market:
Residential/Light Commercial:
Industrial and Facilities: 100
Top PVF Lines:
Pipe, Valves, Fittings, Flanges, Electrical,
NOV OEM parts and MRO
Officers:
Robert Workman, President Distribution
Services; Burk Ellison, Senior V.P. Sales
& Operations; Noel Connolly, Senior
V.P. Supply Chain Management; San-
tosh Mathilakath, Senior V.P. Mono;
Logy Aviles, V.P. Global Sourcing

5th FOR 5th



For the fifth straight year, Bradford White is the tank water heater brand most purchased by professional contractors. And again, we are the most recommended brand.

"We made the switch to Bradford White almost 15 years ago when we started having problems with another brand. Our reputation depends on the products we recommend so quality and reliability are critical. We couldn't be happier. Bradford White is loyal to the plumbing profession. Their products and people are top notch." Kevin and Ryan Carney - Carney Plumbing – Heating – Cooling, Line Lexington, PA

The results of the 2010 CLEARReport*, an independent water heater study by Clear Seas Research, revealed that product quality, service, technical support, and the fact that Bradford White is not sold in retail stores were the most important factors to contractors when selecting a brand of tank type water heater.

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*Ranking is based on the 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 CLEARReports by Clear Seas Research. Please visit www.clearseasresearch.com for additional information. © 2011, Bradford White Corporation. All rights reserved.

See contact information on page 102

CONGRATS!

Ed Eldredge was promoted from VP-sales to executive VP-U.S. sales for **Aquatherm Inc.** Eldredge has



Ed Eldredge

more than 40 years of PVF experience. He began his career in the mechanical contracting field and has gone on to manage worldwide sales, management and training organizations with various

PVF manufacturing companies.

Eemax made the following announcements:

- *Aaron Siegel*, former VP-sales, has taken on the newly created role of VP-strategic accounts and business development. Siegel will formulate plans to expand business through strategic partnerships and negotiate national accounts programs with leading plumbing wholesale distributors.

- *Rich Corcoran* joined the company as VP-sales. He will develop and cultivate dynamic customer relationships and help execute strategic plans to increase revenue, market share and profitability. He most recently served as general manager with Viessmann Manufacturing Co., where he was responsible for managing U.S. operations. Prior to that, he was OEM sales director with Grundfos for eight years.

Ferguson Integrated Services, a Wolseley Industrial Group company and division of Ferguson, announced that four associates have earned distinguished supply management designations:

- *Theresa Bell* earned the Certified Purchasing Professional (CPP) certification from the American Purchasing Society. The CPP credential is for professionals who have demonstrated the skills to successfully implement improved purchasing and supply chain practices as part of a business solution in an organization. It also



Theresa Bell



Jake Bodine

stresses the importance of integrity and practical on-the-job knowledge. Bell has been with Ferguson Inte-

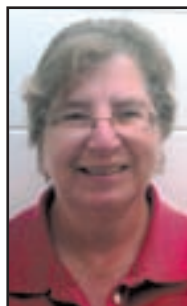
grated Services for 11 years.

- *Jake Bodine* earned the designation of Certified Professional in Supply Management (CPSM) from the Institute for Supply Management. The CPSM credential is specifically designed for experienced supply managers, focusing on managerial and leadership skills in areas such as finance, supplier relationship management, organizational global strategy and risk compliance. Bodine has been with Ferguson Integrated Services for 16 years.

- *Dan Loucks* also earned the CPSM designation from the Institute for Supply Management. He has business experience in manufactur-



Dan Loucks



Norma Henning

ing, distribution, and procurement. Loucks has been with Ferguson Integrated Services for more than two years and recently joined the business implementation team.

- And *Norma Henning* earned the CPSM designation from the Institute for Supply Management. Henning has 20 years industry experience.

These four associates join over 60 other Ferguson Integrated associates who have earned a professional supply management designation.

Art Shelton joined **Global Stainless Supply Inc.** as president and COO. Shelton has more than 30 years experience in the supply of products to the energy sector and his knowledge, expertise and professionalism will be cornerstones to the continued growth of the Global companies.

Haws Corporation® announced two key promotions:

- *Sam Sarver*, formerly director of



Sam Sarver



Vic Strandberg

sales-industrial, has been promoted to director of sales-North America. With Haws since 2005. Sarver will assume

responsibility for all domestic sales activities including the regional sales and customer service teams and will continue to successfully drive Haws' extensive line of products. He was a leading force behind the growth of Haws' safety division and he will continue to strengthen new initiatives and strategies.

- *Vic Strandberg*, formerly the engineering manager, was promoted to director of research and development. He will assume all responsibilities for R&D project management and will continue his management of all operational aspects of product engineering. Strandberg brings over 25-years experience in product development and management.

The Industrial Group appointed *Alvin Pfeifer* to the newly created position of manager of information technology. Pfeifer was most recently chief information officer for Central States Industrial Supply.

Keith Werner, chairman of the board of **Independent Supply Company Inc.**, Burnaby, British Columbia, was appointed chair of the HRAI Wholesalers Division. Werner has served on the HRAI Wholesalers board of directors since 2004.

In addition to Werner, the HRAI board of directors elected for 2011–2012 include:

- Past Chair — *Gerry Cellucci*, Yorkland Controls, Toronto,

- Vice Chair — *Peter Henderson*, Kerr Controls Ltd., Truro, Nova Scotia

- Secretary Treasurer — *Peter Olierook*, Don Park, A Noble Company, North York, Ont.

- Director — *Denis Fraser*, Descair Inc., Montreal

- Vice Chair — *John Bonus*, Wolseley Canada Inc., Frontier-Wolseley HVAC/R Group, Mississauga, Ont.

Peter Cook of **IPEX Inc.** was presented with the 11th J. K. Seidner award. This honor acknowledges the outstanding commitment of a plumbing industry volunteer who has devoted time, knowledge and expertise to improving plumbing codes and standards. Cook joined IPEX in 1974, and since then, he has made many contributions to the improvement of codes and standards by serving as chair on various CSA and ASTM committees. He also served as a member of the National Plumbing Code Standing Committee for 17 years and continues to be an active member of PIAC.

Mitsubishi Electric Cooling & Heating appointed *Kella Brown* director of organizational development. Brown will have a wide range of employee development responsi-

bilities, including enhancement of internal projects and processes. She will work to create initiatives to improve employee engagement. Brown has more than 15 years of practical experience in organizational change, organizational development and strategic leadership.

C.J. Lagan is the newest addition to the **Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI)** board of directors. A senior manager of compliance engineering for American Standard Brands, Lagan began his appointment in July. His term expires at the end of 2012, when he will be eligible to run for a full three-year term. He recently completed a term as the co-chair of the Water Efficiency and Sustainability Issue Committee.

Rheem appointed *Joseph A. Fristik* corporate VP-national accounts and marketing. Fristik will be responsible for developing new residential and commercial national sales accounts and expanding existing accounts. He will oversee business-to-business initiatives that promote the company's integrated air and water technologies and its comprehensive support network. He will also lead the Rheem corporate marketing team and will be responsible for brand strategy, communications, Web development, trade show management, merchandising, advertising and promotions. Fristik is a 30-year veteran of Penton Media, most recently as VP/group publishing director for the mechanical systems and design engineering groups.

Saint-Gobain appointed *John Crowe* president and CEO of both Saint-Gobain Corporation and CertainTeed Corporation. Crowe will oversee the company's North American businesses and chairing the company's executive committee. In addition, he will assume operational responsibility for CertainTeed. For 30 years, he has served in a wide range of leadership positions within Saint-Gobain group, most recently as president of its global abrasives business.

Slant/Fin has hired *Chris Anastasi* as factory sales rep to Connecticut and Westchester. Anastasi's primary responsibility will be to provide service and factory representation to wholesalers and contractors. He will initiate training and programs to drive contractor business through Slant/Fin distributors within the area.



Chris Anastasi



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LOS ANGELES ■ LAS VEGAS ■ ATLANTA

Embassy Shareholders Meeting perfectly blends business with fun

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

The Embassy Group Ltd. held their Annual Shareholders Meeting at the historic Hotel Del Coronado near San Diego August 17-20. Ap-

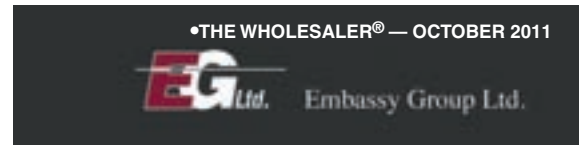


proximately 68 shareholders participated, with a total of 221 in attendance, and I was delighted to be invited by the Embassy staff to attend. The event was generously co-sponsored by InSinkEerator and OateySCS.

Embassy president Wally Gumm welcomed everyone to the meeting at the opening session, followed by vendor presentations by Rob Grim and Bob Bender from InSinkEerator and John McMillan and Tom O'Flaherty from Oatey. Several reports were presented, included an update on the progress



of developing a stronger HVAC Division by Embassy's director of business development Mike Lepley. They also unveiled a fresh new look that includes a new logo, trade show booth display and



newly printed marketing materials to help facilitate Embassy's anticipated membership expansion in select geographic territories.

Following that, well-known tax and succession specialist Bart Basi gave an in-depth look at changes in the tax laws and how they could affect wholesaling companies.

That evening, Embassy hosted a lovely reception on the Windsor Lawn of The Del, with a breathtaking view of the ocean and sunset.



The following day, shareholders got to work early with a newly introduced addition to the traditional meeting format — ENet Sessions. Members were assigned to particular sessions that were de-



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signed to promote open and candid communication regarding some of the challenging issues facing distributors today. ENet sessions received very positive reviews from shareholders, and these groups will continue to meet going forward. According to Lepley, the feedback was extremely positive, with shareholders appreciating the new, smaller size of the groups and the genuine flow of ideas everyone shared. Each facilitator had talked with group members prior to the meeting to develop a list of 8 to 10 topics to discuss; most groups were able to tackle about half during these meeting, and will be arranging follow up conference calls and future meetings to discuss the remaining topics of concern.

In the afternoon, shareholders were offered the option of playing golf at the Coronado Golf Course or going on a Gotta Regatta! sailing tour.

That evening, InSinkErator and OateySCS sponsored what was sure to be a memorable evening for all who attended — a reception and dinner onboard the USS Midway aircraft carrier. The Embassy

staff — including Wally Gumm, Maureen Cosyns and Mike Lepley — had, as always, thought of every last detail:

- Charter busses that had *Top Gun* playing on the video monitors
- Cardboard cutout “fly boys” scattered around the deck
- A fabulous 11-piece band that performed music ranging from the Black Eyed Peas to Adele
- A delicious buffet dinner with plenty of choices for everyone’s palate
- Veteran docents on hand to give tours and point out features of the ship and the numerous aircraft on the flight deck
- An opportunity for everyone to bring out their inner aviator in flight simulators below deck..

The following morning, shareholders gathered for a final session that included a Member Profile by Henry Quentzel Supply and ASA and Lobbying Reports by Mike Adelizzi and Dan Hilton. ■

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Any size — from 1 gallon to 50,000 gallon, including double-wall construction!

REP RAP

A new manufacturer's representative firm, *5Marketing Inc.*, has opened its doors to the water treatment and waste water management industry. Founded by industry veteran *Bob Nicol* of Infrastructure Products Inc. and accomplished sales and distribution professional *Tom Nicol*, *5Marketing* will serve national industry representatives from its Plymouth, Minn., headquarters. Leveraging previous wastewater management experience *5Marketing* will provide a variety of new strategies and solutions for a variety of waste water, sewage and water treatment applications.

"We founded *5Marketing* with the desire to locate and market solutions for industry problems that standard epoxy and paint products haven't solved," said *Bob Nicol*. Offering representatives the organizational advantages of a national manufacturer's network and customized field sales assistance, *5Marketing* aims to provide superior service to partners. "We are pleased to have the opportunity to offer high-level support to our representatives and distributors," added *Tom Nicol*. "We have an exciting product line in the works and look forward to sharing it with water or waste water operators nationwide."

American Standard Brands honored two manufacturers' rep firms for outstanding achievement and execution in the company's second annual sales awards:

- Top Sales Performance – Overall, *Davenport Associates*. This award recognizes the agency that most exceeded its sales target throughout the country. *Ryan and Dan Davenport* accepted the award.

- Top Sales Performance – Territory, *McGregor & Associates*, West Jordan, Utah. This award recognizes the firm with the highest gross margin/product mix in its territory. *Ken McGregor* and *Rocky Young* received the award.

BrassCraft Manufacturing has added to its Central region sales efforts with the addition of *Triumph Sales*. Headquartered in Pittsburgh, *Triumph* has been a highly regarded representative of plumbing products manufacturers for over 20 years and will represent *BrassCraft* in the Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia markets.

CRANE Energy Flow Solutions' North American Valve Group an-

nounced new *Stockham* valve sales contacts for the listed territories:

- New York City/North New Jersey — *Scott Dellon*, **Dellon Sales Co.**, Albertson, N.Y.

- Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut — *Ryan and Dan Davenport*, **Davenport Associates**, Wallingford, Conn.

- West Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky — *Rick Hildebrand*, **Output Sales Corporation**, New Kensington, Pa.

- Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan — *Dan Bellezzo*, **Kast Marketing Inc.**, Bensenville, Ill.

- Louisiana — *Paul Prouet*, **Brennan Bros. Inc.**, Kenner, La.

- South California, Clark County, Nevada, Hawaii — *Phil Harrigan*, **Carrhill Company**, Commerce, Calif.

- Kansas and Missouri — *Rusty Johnson and Dan White*, **Johnson & White Sales Co.**, Olathe, Kan.

DURATITE Systems LLC has selected three new rep firms:

- **Moore Sales Corporation** will cover the Midwest region, including North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky and western Pennsylvania. *Moore* has eight reps and



is headed by *Lonnie Moore*, who has over 32 Years HVAC wholesale and OEM experience.

- **Mechanical Sales Company** was assigned the Southwest territory, including New Mexico, Arizona, El Paso, Texas and Las Vegas. *MSC* has over 200 distributors in their service area.

- **JC Marketing** will handle the Virginia and Maryland markets. *Chuck Feldman* and *Lee Suggs* represent an impressive line.

DURAVIT hired two new agencies to assist with its expansion in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions:

- **The Joyce Agency** in Washington D.C. will cover its Maryland, Washington D.C., southern Delaware

Marshall Rodeno educates customers on new Sloan line



Jeff Baylor of *Marshall Rodeno* conducts a Lunch and Learn for *BCER Engineering*, one of the larger Mechanical Engineers in the Denver area.

Denver-based rep agency *Marshall Rodeno Associated* actively supports their customers and manufacturers, and has recently been hosting educational training on the the *BASYS* line, a new platform of innovative faucets from *Sloan*. *Marshall Rodeno* is actively involved with industry events to get the word out about *BASYS*. Lunch and Learns, counter days and on-site trainings are just part of the way *Marshall Rodeno* is training Colorado industry professionals.

This faucet line allows for many

different types of operation. There are different ways to power the *BASYS* — battery operated, hard-wire and solar — and two different ways the faucet senses its users — active Infra-red and Capacitance. Capacitance activates the faucet when a users' hands get near.

According to *Marshall Rodeno's* *Jeff Baylor*, "It doesn't matter if your hands are in the water plane, on top of the faucet, or in back of the faucet, it will activate. This line is very exciting and is going to be a hit in the marketplace."

and Virginia markets.

- **Russ Walk Group Ltd.** will support the company's growing list of projects in Chicago.

This strategic move, combined with *Duravit's* existing sales relationships and the recent hire of *Alison Provenzano* in New York City, solidifies the company's strong growth position in the key American markets.

Froet Industries LLC congratulates **K Ross Company**, the winner of the 2010 Froet Rep of the Year



award. Their hard work, determination and exceptional product knowledge has been their path to success. *K Ross* is also celebrating their 20-year anniversary.

GRAFF® has added *Aurora, Colo.-*

based **Dublin Sales LLC**, co-owned and operated by *Valerie Kilpatric* and *Linda Dismang*, to their family of manufacturers' reps. *Dublin Sales* offers a sales staff with over 27 years of industry experience. Their territory will be the state of Colorado.

Mike Donovan, principal of **HTS Texas**, was named one of Houston's 40 most innovative leaders under the age of 40. More than 150 nominees were reviewed before the contenders were narrowed to the top 40

young business leaders in the nation's fourth largest city. *Houston Business Journal* staff chose individuals responsible for noticeable changes in the Houston business community. *Donovan* heads *HTS Texas*, one of the largest independent, built-to-order commercial and industrial full-service HVAC manufacturers' representatives in Texas. As principal of *HTS Texas*, he has incorporated market-changing concepts and grown the company 6,200%, to gross \$55 million in distributed sales in 2009.

(Turn to REPRAP... page 96.)

THE SHARKBITE® LINE KEEPS GETTING DEEPER...



...AND SO WILL YOUR POCKETS

When a water distribution project requires low cost materials, SharkBite's® polymer barb fittings are a good solution. In addition to being cost effective, this system simplifies the installation compared to copper or rigid plastic pipe systems. The polymer fittings are

impervious to biofilm deposits, corrosion and do not contain heavy lead or metal. The durable design is crimp and clamp compatible and has superior thermal insulation. Fittings available in sizes 3/8", 1/2" and 3/4". ASTM F2159, ASTM F2098 and NSF 14 certified.



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Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co.

Celebrating 85 years of leadership & commitment

BY JOHN MESENBRINK
Editorial director, Phc News

Eighty-five years is witness to a lot of history, some of it coming with its share of uncertainty — The Great Depression, WWII, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, '70s OPEC, Reaganomics, No-Fly Zones, 9/11, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the most recent economic turmoil. Yet, through it all, one thing has been certain — Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. has been ready, strong and staying the task.

Prospering under the fourth generation of Smith management, venerable Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. has been developing innovative, engineered plumbing and drainage products for decades. 2011 marks 85 years of successful business for the company, and this prosperity is the direct result of its commitment to customers, representatives, vendors and employees.

Steve Chromey, executive vice president and a 41-year veteran of the company, said, "I've seen our company grow over these many years

and am humbled by the generosity of founder Jay L. Smith to his employees, and that he allowed me to help lead his company. It wasn't just a place to work; Jay made you feel part of the organization. I'm not only

proud of our physical growth and growth in the industry but proud of seeing people grow, as well. I can look at supervisors who started as welders, clerks, etc., and now have leadership roles in our company."

Chromey actually worked for Smith when the company was still

located in New Jersey. During the

summers while he was in high school and college he worked in the plant and then, in the summer of his sophomore year in college, he was

asked to fill in at the office. During his senior year, Jay L. Smith called and offered him a full-time position upon graduation. "I liked the people and the company; I figured I could do it for a couple of years, live at home, save some money and then

move on. Well, here I am 41 years later. I've been an order expeditor, order scheduler, credit manager, customer service supervisor, production and inventory control supervisor, materials manager, general manager and now I'm in my current position of executive vice president ... I guess they just can't find something I'm good at," Chromey said jokingly.

Talking with Smith management and employees, you can sense an underlying theme of loyalty. "I was here when the doors opened [in Montgomery, Ala.] on January 2, 1979," said Jerry McDanal, vice president-engineering. McDanal has held his position for 32+ years, ever since the plant moved from New Jersey to Alabama. "I first interviewed with Smith in October 1978. It is a special feeling to be part of and to have contributed to the growth and prosperity of Smith. It has been gratifying to watch the younger employees grow and take responsible roles and become contributors

to our growth. My initial thought was to work for Smith for about five years and return to the consulting engineering field. It did not take long working for Smith to realize that this is where I wanted to be; therefore, I made a commitment to Jay Smith, Steve Chromey and the company to remain a long-time employee."

"It has been gratifying to watch the younger employees grow and take responsible roles and become contributors to our growth."

Amazing in its own right and a testament to the business philosophies of Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co., one-third of the personnel have held employment tenure for more than 25 years. "It's a real tribute to dad's [Jay L. Smith] leadership style. All ideas were frequently considered. He was a true role model," said Dr. Holly Roth, secretary/board of directors and daughter of Jay L. Smith.

While employee loyalty is held in high regard, Smith takes its customer service to another level.

(Turn to Since 1926... page 88.)



How Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. does it

Aside from the office, the Smith manufacturing facility is made up of receiving, shipping, warehousing, assembly, plating, polishing, enameling, painting, a machine shop and a fabricating facility.

Millions of tons of finished cast iron, stainless steel, brass, nickel and steel products are shipped from the plant each month to a network of representatives, who warehouse these plumbing and drainage products for sale to local markets. Products in the Smith line include closet and lavatory supports, floor and roof drains, sanitary floor sinks, cleanouts and access covers, interceptors, hydrants, trench drains, water hammer arresters, trap primers and backwater valves.

Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. is also able to create plumbing and drainage products to meet specific customer requirements, which are called Special Quote items. Along with Smith's "special quote" products, some of the specialty product lines available from Smith are:

- the Smith/AGO Trench Drain Series (polymer concrete and fiberglass surface drainage systems)
- the Enviro-Flo® Trench Drain Series (a polypropylene surface drainage system)
- the Ultracapt® Oil/Water Separator (separates oil, grease, and other hydrocarbons from wastewater)
- the Labor Saver® Fixture Support (a one-piece rigid frame fixture support)
- the Guardian Dual Check Hydrant (provide positive non-freeze protection with an integral vacuum breaker and dual check valve)
- the Flood-Gate Automatic Backwater Valve (closes automatically when backup is detected in sanitary sewer line)
- the Remediator® Grease Treatment System (designed to eradicate suspended fats, oils, and grease at the source)
- Rainwater Harvesting Systems (residential and commercial water preservation for potable and non-potable applications).

Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. continues to expand its product offerings to meet the needs of today's changing construction demands, as well as expanding interaction methods to meet customer needs. In 2005, the company introduced JRS Products. This product line is designed for light commercial and design-build projects. The product group features roof drains, floor drains, cleanouts, sanitary floor sinks, hydrants, trap primers and interceptors. These products are offered in cast iron, plastic and polypropylene. Between 2007 and today, Smith has introduced rainwater harvesting products and green and cool roof drains.

To support their sales, marketing and engineering efforts, Smith maintains an extensive website to include technical data, submittals, pricing, literature and numerous other tools and resources. There are now more than 150 new BIM 3D family model objects for use by design professionals.

These objects, in concert with Autodesk's Revit® MEP, will allow users to integrate Smith's wide array of products into their virtual 3D project spaces. Through the advent of BIM technology, designers can work in a collaborative environment, making use of 3D models embedded with relevant and reliable design information. The Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co.'s 3D BIM models can be easily accessed at www.jrsmith.com. ■



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TAKE THE FIELD.

See contact information on page 102





Jay R. Smith's plant occupies a 33-acre site in Gunter Industrial Park and contains more than 250,000 sq ft of office, manufacturing and warehouse capacity, with plans to expand 50,000+ sq ft later in 2011.

Since 1926, Jay R. Smith delivers quality engineered plumbing, drainage products

(Continued from page 80.)

"The best part of my job is working with so many dedicated people who strive to do what it takes to do better and to address the needs of our customers and representatives. The energy and dedication of everyone here makes you feel that Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. is one of the best at servicing the market, listening to customer needs and producing products that solve problems," said Charles White, vice president of marketing and 25-year Smith veteran.

Marketing, headquartered in Montgomery, is directly responsible for all



At left: Jay Smith and Don Morris. Below: Jay L. Smith, a salesman for the National Lead Company, saw a need for brass and bronze specialties and started his business from his basement in 1926. He named the company Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. after his son.



marketing for the Acorn Family of Companies after a recent merger between Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. and Acorn. One of the first collaborative marketing projects has been a recently launched, all-new branding campaign and new collateral for AcornVac to better position the company for sales and growth.

Loyalty, commitment and growth are all underlying factors in Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. reaching 85 years of industry leadership and positioning the company toward the 100-year milestone.

The early years

Based on the business principles of customer service and fairness, Jay L. Smith started the business out of his basement in 1926 and named the company Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. after his son. Jay L. was a salesman for the National Lead Company and realized a need for brass and bronze specialties. By 1930, the brass fittings business was successful enough to justify bringing on its first employee, the 19-year-old Jay R.

trial and domestic construction boom. Growth after WWII forced a move to a new facility in Union, N.J., and later to Piscataway, N.J. In 1978, Jay R. Smith retired and the company moved to its present location in Montgomery. The plant is situated on a 33-acre site in Gunter Industrial Park; the plant contains over 250,000 square feet of office, manufacturing and warehouse capacity, which, as a matter of fact, is expanding 50,000+ square feet later this year.

Moving forward

Through a series of bold business decisions and maneuvers, Smith has always stayed ahead of the game. One such maneuver took place last June when Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co., a division of Smith Industries, joined

Acorn Family of Companies, making Acorn a 50% owner of Smith Industries. The vision of the new alliance of Acorn Family of Companies and Smith Industries was to create the foundation for an exceptionally strong company that will be competitively anchored in the industry.

"The goal is to take the strength of Acorn and its engineering excellence and combine it with Smith's customer service and industry relationship strengths and build a better company moving forward," said John Roberts, vice president of domestic



John Roberts (left), vice president of domestic sales, and Charles White, vice president of marketing, for Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. and Acorn family of companies.

Jay R. Smith's family of products has expanded upon its alignment with Acorn Engineering.



sales, Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co.

Mutual dedication between company and employee is unmatched with Smith, illustrated through its base of long-term employees. "The growth success relies on common vision, staying the task and reciprocating employee loyalty," said Don Morris, CEO, Acorn Family of Companies. "It's a seasoned team put together with a new head coach; it's business as usual."

Aligning with Acorn's Family of Companies — strategic positioning in the marketplace

Although the companies didn't merge until recently, they have had a long-standing relationship throughout the years. Jay R. Smith and Earl L. Morris (Elmco Sales Inc. and Acorn Engineering), both modern-day industry pioneers, each developed strong companies and were partners and friends from 1954, when Elmco became a Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. representative. The



instant relationship and personal bond transcends three generations and continues with the Smith and Morris families. In the early days, Acorn was a manufacturer's rep for Smith. Working off a standard representative con-

tract, "We signed a 30-day contract that has lasted nearly 60 years," said Don Morris.

Working together comes naturally for Smith and Acorn in all areas. The Elmco group, Acorn's representative organization, is a huge distribution arm for Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. The two companies also have 50 additional common reps besides the Elmco group. In addition to shared distribution, Smith and Acorn are working together operationally. "Smith has already started doing a bit of machine work for Acorn — they do plastic molding for us, we are doing some R&D on one of their products, and we will be jointly marketing another. We are complementing each other, and we will continue to do even more," said Chromey.

Now this 85-year-old company has a chance to reinvigorate and reinvent itself with the recent 2010 alignment with Acorn.

"In the last seven years, Acorn has doubled its business," said Jim Widmer, vice president of sales, Acorn Engineering. Logistically, the merger just made sense. With Acorn's leadership, the (Turn to Jay R. Smith... page 90.)



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Jay R. Smith looks to the next 85 years

(Continued from page 88.)

alliance features state-of-the-art engineering, manufacturing, more of the “right people” and the ability to turn things around faster. Distribution is now much greater, with major points in Miami, Dallas, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago and Union, N.J., in addition to 46 Smith Service Centers across the U.S. The



At top, a selection of floor drains and at bottom, just a sample of roof drains offered by Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co.



company offers the same outstanding quality in products and is able to remain competitive with its low-cost opponents. The alliance has afforded the two companies more buying power and more resources to meet the demands in the market. The key, then, is to provide consistent product reliability and on-time distribution.

Also, Acorn's successful alliance with Potter Roemer exemplified the strength of Acorn, making Potter

Roemer a leader in the industry. Potter Roemer, a subsidiary of Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. since 1972, formed a partnership with Acorn Family of Companies in 2003, relocating to City of Industry, Calif., near the headquarters of Acorn. This partnership further demonstrated Acorn's commitment to the industry and devotion to providing the best possible products and services.

Operating from its new 110,000-square-foot headquarters and manufacturing facility, Potter Roemer remains dedicated to its core business of fire protection equipment, while changing dramatically from the company that was founded in the 1930s. Over the years, their prod-

uct range has grown to cover a wide variety of fire protection equipment and accessories, including fire extinguisher hose and valve cabinets, fire hose and accessories, fire extinguishers, fire department valves, connections, specialty equipment and a refined line of architectural products. Acorn's alliance with Potter Roemer, the Smith subsidiary, is just another example of the intertwined and fruitful Acorn and Smith history.

From 1954 to now, Acorn and Smith have had a past of successful relationships; the new alignment of companies will only help strengthen the position in the marketplace.

To the 100 benchmark

Jay L. Smith, Don Morris and Don's brother, Dennis Morris, third- and second-generation sons of Jay R. and Earl, respectively, have continued their business and personal relationships for more than 50 years. The next generation of Smiths and Morris (Jay L. Smith's daughters, Dr. Holly L. Roth and Debbie Smith and Don Morris's children, Kristin Kahle, Randall Morris and Barrett Morris) pledge to continue what their grandfathers started. The Smith and Morris families will be represented on the new board of directors.

For the realignment, Don Morris assumes the role of CEO of Smith Industries, Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. Division and the Canadian subsidiary. Jay L. will continue as president and chairman of the board of directors. The



Employees assemble products in their stations, working in Jay R. Smith's manufacturing cells. Employee loyalty is high, with 33% having been with the company more than 25 years.

management teams of both Acorn Engineering and Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. will remain the same.

“The partnership with the Acorn Family of Companies is the next great adventure. There is such great energy coming from the merger and from the leadership of Don Morris. I am excited and honored to be a part of it. This will make the Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. even better; we are already seeing the changes,” said White.

To this day, the company remains a privately held business, and it plans to stay that way. “People ask me whether I would be

“The goal is to take the strength of Acorn and its engineering excellence and combine it with Smith's customer service and industry relationship strengths and build a better company moving forward.”

willing to sell the company some day. To that I tell them, ‘Drop off your business cards at my funeral,’” said Don Morris. “Privately held companies have much more loyalty from their employees.”

Four generations of family ownership, a base of loyal employees and a nationwide network of committed sales representatives and service centers have enabled Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. to meet the demanding requirements of wholesalers, engineers, and contractors for 85 years. These attributes and the strength of the Acorn Family of Companies will lead Smith to the continued success of adhering to its mission: “To be the Company of Choice in the Specification Plumbing and Drainage Industry.”

The new alignment in 2010 marked a milestone in the history of Smith

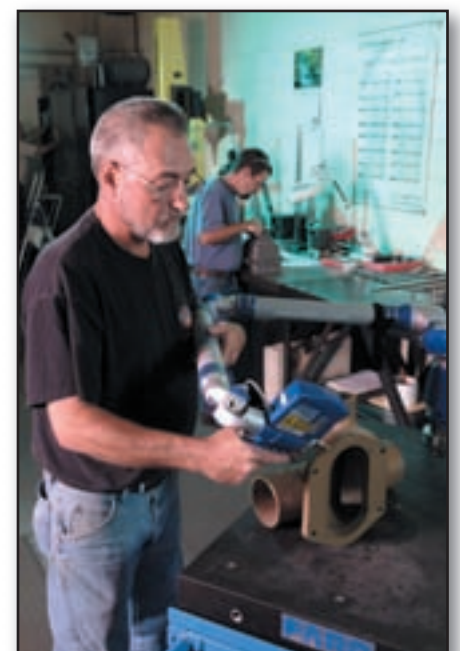


and 2011 marks 85 years of prosperous business. Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. is once again reinventing itself and is poised soon enough to celebrate a successful 100 years. ■

For more information, log on to www.jrsmith.com.



Jay R. Smith Mfg. Co. recognizes the value of green construction and offers a line of drains geared toward green roofs.



A technician inspects a product using state-of-the-art equipment in Jay R. Smith's test lab.

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Even in the harshest of Alaskan winters

If a high efficiency, gas-fired boiler can heat a home reliably in Alaska, year after year, it can heat a home anywhere



Substantial savings and proven performance, year after year, make the modulating, condensing Baxi Luna the preferred sustainable heating solution. No bigger than a kitchen cabinet, this whisper-quiet wallhung appliance saves valuable living space. It normally reduces fuel consumption by up to 50% and greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90% over conventional boilers.

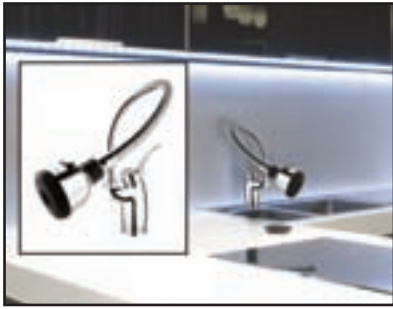
- ◆ **Range:** Up to 98% thermal efficient, Baxi Luna is ideal for new construction or retrofit applications – from in-floor radiant, heated towel racks and snow melt systems to forced air with a hydronic air handler. In addition to heating-only models, Baxi offers a combination heating and domestic hot water boiler, the first of its kind in North America. The modulating, condensing Baxi Luna HT 380 satisfies a heat load up to 113 BTU/hr, fully modulating to 32 MBTU/hr. The unit prioritizes to domestic hot water demand, producing endless hot water at a rate 3.9 gallons per minute (ΔT_{80} F) – enough for two concurrent showers.
- ◆ **Quality and Safety:** Baxi Luna is CSA and Energy Star approved. The boiler's nickel chrome stainless steel pre-mix burner (AISI 316L) bears the ASME H-Stamp.

Other Baxi residential boiler built-in safety features include: electronic, gradual ignition (no open flame); flue high limit, central heating high limit, fan pressure and differential pressure switches; flame sensing electrode; back flow prevention; circulator pump with integrated air vent; expansion tank; automatic self-diagnostics; frost protection and a Legionella prevention function.

Baxi Luna wall-hung boilers must only be installed by qualified plumbing and heating contractors who are Baxi trained and certified, and who purchase Baxi supplies through authorized regional Baxi distributors. The manufacturer and Marathon International, the exclusive Baxi products distributor in North America, are committed to quality, safety and environmental protection, and will not authorize the sale of Baxi equipment over the Internet.

www.wallhungboilers.com





Commercial kitchen faucet

The innovative Cobra kitchen faucet offers a solution for commercial kitchen sinks; it's the first of its kind to have a flexible 20" spout and a rotating head, with multiple spray options. The cobra kitchen faucet uses Neoperl's® Perlator® Honeycomb aerator, which reduces splashing and saves water. **Quietside.**

www.quietside.com

Remote thermostat

AccuLink™ Remote Thermostat and Schlage LiNK™ web-based interface allow a high level of HVAC control



and efficiency. Allows remote control of a home's temperature from most web-enabled cell phones or computers. Allows 7-day programming with 4 settings per day for personalized home comfort. Sends text alerts for filter changes and seasonal maintenance reminders. **American Standard.**

www.americanstandardair.com

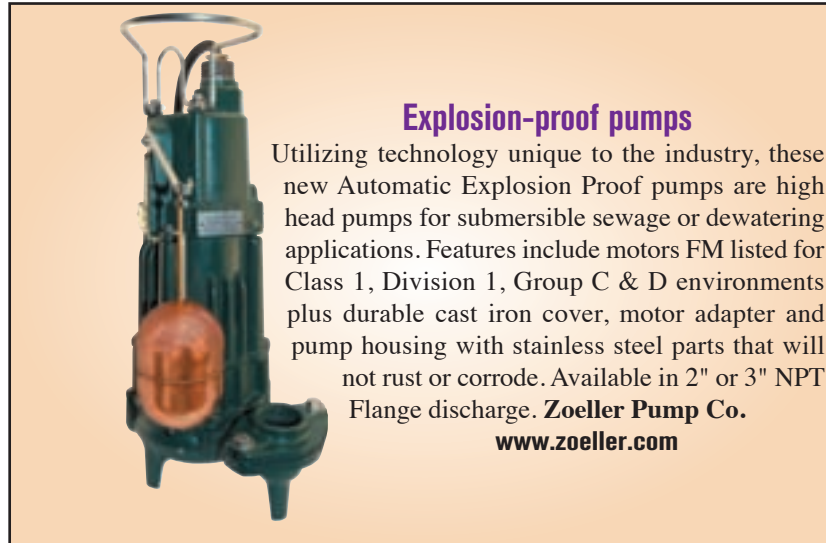
Standard buffer tanks

Any primary/secondary hydronic system utilizes some form of decoupling when system design includes periods when primary flow may exceed secondary. For commercial systems, the



correct size usually is 40–139 gal. Application/sizing guide describes where the tanks may be needed. Simple sizing formula accounts for minimum individual loop loads, while retaining the fuel economy and rapid response of high recovery boilers. Typical system layouts and buffer tank dimensions are included. **Raypak.**

www.raypak.com



Explosion-proof pumps

Utilizing technology unique to the industry, these new Automatic Explosion Proof pumps are high head pumps for submersible sewage or dewatering applications. Features include motors FM listed for Class 1, Division 1, Group C & D environments plus durable cast iron cover, motor adapter and pump housing with stainless steel parts that will not rust or corrode. Available in 2" or 3" NPT Flange discharge. **Zoeller Pump Co.**

www.zoeller.com

New tank material

Water heaters and storage tanks are now being manufactured from AquaPLEX, an engineered duplex alloy. AquaPLEX combines the grain structures of both 300 and 400 series stainless steels, offering the benefits of both and exceeding the performance of either material alone. Tanks made from AquaPLEX require no lining and no anode rods. Water can be stored at greater than 200°F continuously with no effect. **PVI Industries.**

www.pvi.com



Condensing tankless water heaters

These 180,000-Btu condensing tankless models, available in natural gas or propane and in indoor and outdoor configurations, offer continuous flow rates of up to 8 gpm. Highly efficient condensing technology allows the units to operate with a .91 EF. Use inexpensive PVC venting and are federal tax credit eligible. Easy-to-read built-in display shows temperature, diagnostics and error messages. Optional remote temperature controller and a full line of accessories. **A.O. Smith.**

www.hotwater.com



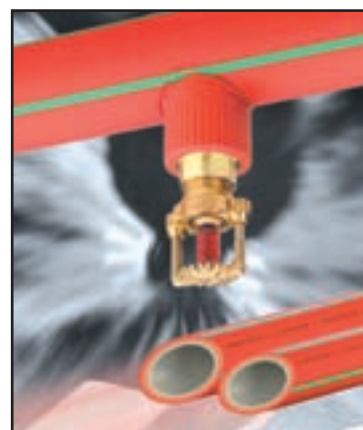
age terminal strip provides easy connection to a 120-volt power source, control contacts for system pump, boiler pump and DHW pump. Low voltage terminal board allows for connection to an array of control and safety features. **Lochinvar Corporation.**

www.Lochinvar.com

PP-R pressure pipe

Aquatherm Red Pipe is now available in the North American market; this fire protection product has been approved by FM Global for use in wet pipe automatic sprinkler systems in light hazard occupancies. Polypropylene-random (PP-R) pressure pipe has approval in the FM 1635 class. Offers constant flow, reduces the need for costly maintenance. Connected by heat-fusion welding; no sealants, or adhesives are required for leak-free, permanent connections. Reduces installation time and labor costs. **Red Pipe Industries.**

www.rpi-na.com



Specialty equipment legs

The A60 Series slide-resistant appliance leg and the A10 Series seismic restraint bullet foot provide added security and restrict dangerous movement of commercial kitchen equipment. A60 Series leg is engineered to minimize slippage of countertop equipment on a variety of work surfaces. A10 Series bullet foot secures worktables and sinks to the floor to prevent toppling during seismic activity. **Component Hardware Group.**

www.componenthardware.com



Electric actuator models

Two models have been added to the EPM Series of quarter-turn reversing electric actuators. The EPM-4 and EPM-6 are designed to eliminate wiring errors, increase reliability and provide simplicity during installation. Can be factory or field mounted on most manufacturers' ball or butterfly valves. EPM-4 provides a torque output of 455 in-lb; EPM-6 has an output of 600 in-lb. Position indicators and clutchless manual override are standard. **Hayward Flow Control.**

www.haywardflowcontrol.com

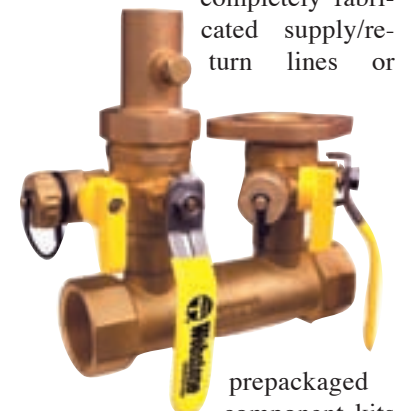


Enhanced product line

All models in the Copper-Fin II family of products are now equipped with the SMART SYSTEM™ control, an advanced integrated operating control designed to simplify installation, system sequencing, setup and troubleshooting. A more conveniently positioned high volt-

Boiler installation kits

The Hydro-Core line of hydronic manifold systems now includes boiler installation kits for well over 100 different models. Choose from completely fabricated supply/return lines or



prepackaged component kits and shave hours off any boiler installation with expert-looking results. Designed specifically for hydraulic separation, pump isolation and purging the near boiler piping or secondary circuit loops. **Webstone.**

www.webstonevalves.com/hydrocore

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- G-PRESS Couplings, Fittings and Valves

tyco



Bulkhead connectors

Bulkhead connectors for beverage dispensing systems have quick connections on both sides and a threaded nut and go through cabinets or panels; range in tube OD from 5/32" to 1/2". Metric bulkhead connectors are brass and black acetal copolymer, which comes with nitrile food grade O-rings. Reducing connectors available. **John Guest USA.**

www.johnguest.com

Air handler options

A side-by-side arrangement with energy recovery wheel (ERW) option and a dual belt-drive plenum fans option are now available for Vision™ indoor air handlers. Alternative for height-restricted energy recovery applications, saving up to 70" of height. More flexibility to suit building needs. Ideal for new construction applications with restricted access areas. **McQuay International.**

www.mcquay.com

Vapor charging device

VaporVue™, a visible vapor charging device, absorbs heat naturally, flashes the liquid refrigerant from the cylinder and charges it into the system as a vapor. Connecting it to the low side of charging manifold increases the charging rate up to 8 times faster. The liquid is controlled by adjusting the manifold valve and monitoring the vapor rate through the double-sight glass. Factory pressure tested at 8900 psi. **Uniweld Products Inc.**



www.uniweld.com

Sensor faucet line

BASYS™, a major new platform of sensor-activated faucets for commercial applications, emphasizes faucet functionality, interchangeable components and improved serviceability. Simplified service with above-deck access; advanced features include full stream aerated water flow and selectable operational modes. Line includes 5 body types, 3 spray modules, 2 sensing technologies, 4 crowns and 4 power choices. Faucets come complete with all electronics in the spout and the water lines attached, enabling installation in minutes. **Sloan.**

www.sloanvalve.com/basys



cryo-tek listed by ECR

ECR™ International has listed cryo-tek™ -100/AL for aluminum anti-freeze as compatible with all of ECR's aluminum high efficiency gas-fired water boilers for residential and commercial buildings. ECR International markets boilers under the brand names of Argo, Dunkirk, Pennco and Utica Boilers. Cryo-tek -100/AL aluminum anti-freeze is available at plumbing wholesalers through OateySCS. **Hercules Chemical Company.**

www.herchem.com



PEX coils packaging



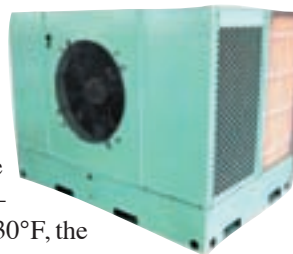
Packaging shrink-wraps LDPE film around a coil of tubing and adds a circular perforation in the center; simply punch through the perforation and pull the required amount of PEX tubing. When finished, tuck the end back into the center for easy transport. LDPE film is easy to recycle, and there is no corrugated cardboard so special recycling pickups at the jobsite are eliminated. **Uponor Inc.**

www.uponor-usa.com

Hybrid air conditioner

Designed for hot and dry climates, Quattro™ combines the low energy cooling benefits of economizers and evaporative cooling with a high efficiency air conditioner to provide cooling energy savings from 50%-70%. Smart control monitors outdoor ambient conditions and chooses the most economical mode to maintain the indoor climate. In areas where low temperatures are above 30°F, the unit has a heat pump. **Speakman Co.**

www.speakmancompany.com



Eco-friendly tankless water heater

The ENERGY STAR®-rated NRC98 gas-fired residential condensing tankless water heater has a 0.93EF and features a standard Btu input range of 16,000-180,000. Max flow rate of 9.8 gpm and temperature settings from 100°F to 140°F. Lower emissions, reduced electrical use, smaller amounts of potentially hazardous construction materials and easier recyclability. Indoor and outdoor models. **Noritz America Corp.**

www.noritz.com



Mini leak detection flashlight

Compact, cordless, Spectroline® OPX-500CS OPTIMAX Jr™ leak detection flashlight is 7 1/4" long and 5 oz.; reveals refrigerant leaks in cramped areas. Makes fluorescent dyes glow brightly, to pinpoint leaks in AC/R systems. Operates 4 hours and has an inspection range of up to 6 ft. **Spectronics Corp.**

www.spectroline.com



Transition fittings

Stainless steel transition fittings are now available for connecting the Pro-Press® system to existing piping systems; connect directly from welded or grooved pipe systems. In 2 1/2", 3" and 4" sizes; made from 304 or 316 stainless steel with an EPDM sealing element. 6 sizes each for P×weld and P×groove. Rated at 200 psi; temperature rating 0° to 250°F. **Viega.**

www.viega.com

Solar pump line

Variable speed 00™ solar pumps increase solar system performance by 20%; integral solar controls include the 009 solar drain-back circulator and several cast iron and non-ferrous pump sizes. Wiring for power and sensors is done directly to the circulator; LED status panel makes it easy to check function. Dip switch settings offer easy setup. Continually adjust speed to reduce short-cycling. Pre-plumbed and pre-wired. **Taco.**

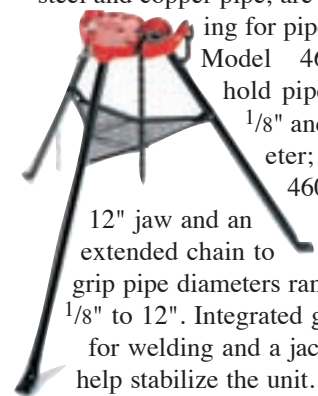
www.taco-hvac.com



Portable chain vises

TRISTAND chain vises hold PVC, steel and copper pipe; are self-hooking for pipe up to 4". Model 460-6 can hold pipe between 1/8" and 6" diameter; Model 460-12 has a 12" jaw and an extended chain to grip pipe diameters ranging from 1/8" to 12". Integrated ground lug for welding and a jack screw to help stabilize the unit. Leg chain and rugged tool tray provide prolonged stability. **RIDGID.**

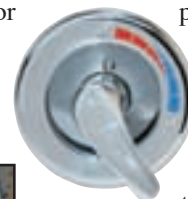
www.RIDGID.com



Shower valve products

Pressure balancing shower valve packages include a solid range of products; can be sold as a package with all pieces or separately to meet a particular application. Shower valve features solid brass body construction, metal handle and trim, and a replaceable ceramic cartridge and adjustable temperature limit stop. Package includes integral supply stops with spring checks; 1/2" sweat connections; 2.5 gpm showerhead. ASSE 1016; ADA. **T&S Brass.**

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A Watts Water Technologies Company

Viewpoint

(continued from page 102.)

even during tough times because people still want quality,” Ent commented. “The bathroom is the second most important feature of a hotel room to travelers, just behind the bed. So keeping our bathrooms current and inviting is very important.” He encouraged wholesalers to pursue doing business with older hotels in need of renovation, as well as hotels that have changed hands because the new owners will want to put their own “look” on the guest rooms. Ent added that installing high efficiency

and water conserving products are very important to hotel owners.

- At the InSinkEerator-sponsored Annual Luncheon Meeting, ASA chairman Bill Kenny announced a 41% increase in attendance at the convention over last year, and also noted that ASA had bettered their goals in a number of other benchmarks: new membership, and participation in the Washington Fly-In, OPR, Education Foundation programs and sponsorships. “It’s been a great year by any measurement,” Kenny noted.

- Mark Hanley, president of the ASAEF Board of Trustees, encouraged attendees to share information

on enhancements to training programs with their employees, including two new colleges for ASA University (Sales & Sales Management and Leadership & Executive Management), and the new option of developing tailored solutions for individual companies.

- Incoming ASA president Scott Weaver gave a fantastic speech on his hopes for the future of the association. “We’ve come a long way in a few short years to strengthen ASA,” he said. “I want to commend the staff for making the provisions needed to improve the association. We are now very focused on the important value propositions of our membership: Net-

working, Education, Benchmarking and Advocacy. ... ASA is a vibrant organization that delivers value to members. We want to become indispensable to the industry be a repository of information that is critical to all members.”

Weaver closed by saying: “If you could do one thing in 2012 to better our industry, what would it be? I look forward to talking with each of you about your answers.”

Stay tuned for photo coverage of Network 2011 next month! ■

Mary Jo Martin is editorial director of *THE WHOLESALER*. She can be reached at 972/315-9803 or by email at editor@thewholesaler.com.

REP RAP

(Continued from page 84.)

Intermatic Inc. is bolstering its talented sales team with three new HVAC/R appointments:

- **Jimmy Reeves, Jim Reeves & Associates**, representative for the state of Florida, including the Panhandle.

- **Dan Potter, Refrigeration Solutions Inc.**, adds Michigan and the Upper Peninsula to his Grässlin territory of Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Southern Illinois.

- **John Albritton, The John Albritton Company**, adds Northern California and Northern Nevada to his current Grässlin territory of Southern California and Southern Nevada.

Oasis International welcomed **Fusion Sales and Marketing** as a representative for its Oasis drinking fountain and pressure cooler product line. The Fusion management team brings over 100 years of combined experience and professionalism to the plumbing industry. The team includes:

- **Jon Adamek**, senior partner, has owned rep agencies for over 25 years and has over 40 years experience in the industry

- **Jim Cutter**, managing partner, has over 20 years experience in the plumbing industry

- **Markos Mikelatos**, managing partner, considered an expert in both commercial and residential markets, has over 20 years experience in the industry and is considered an expert at launching new products

- **Jim Simpson**, managing partner, has 20 years experience working with distribution, contractors and builders throughout Southern California.

Prier Products appointed **Diversified Sales Group** as their exclusive manufacturers’ representative for the state of Indiana. With over 120 years of combined sales experience in the wholesale and retail markets, Prier anticipates Diversified Sales Group

to be a strong addition to their sales team. This agency brings to the table extensive experience and long term relationships with plumbing wholesalers. **Kevin O’Kane** (CPMR) is principal of the agency and interestingly, this will not be his family’s first interaction with Prier Products. Kevin’s father, **Paul O’Kane**, was one of Prier’s first representatives, and during his service from 1954 to 1980 sold one of the first frostproof hydrants in Indiana.

Speakman Cooling appointed two new manufacturers’ representatives:

- **WESCOR** will cover Oregon, Idaho and Washington.

- **DMG North** will handle Northern Nevada and Northern California.

Both agencies will represent Speakman Cooling’s entire line of indirect/direct evaporative coolers, which include the Air20™ and their latest hybrid unit, the Quattro™.

Steamist named **Quality Marketing Inc.** the recipient of its Rep of the Year award. Based in Anthem, Ariz., Quality Marketing was selected from Steamist’s 26 North American sales representative agencies for their outstanding market development. With a challenging marketplace and a hard-working team of two, QMI has taken great strides in increasing Steamist’s presence in Arizona and Las Vegas. The agency prides itself on outstanding customer service and superior technical knowledge of the products they represent.

UniTherm International, a designer, manufacturer and provider of innovative industrial products and solutions for water treatment, plastics and petroleum, announced that **5Marketing Inc.** will represent its interests in the wastewater, sewage and water treatment industries. 5Marketing Inc. will sell and support UniTherm’s SolarShell, a UV-curing glass-reinforced plastic laminate, to representatives and distributors across the U.S.



Cooper New England Sales honored by Liberty Pumps

During the recent Liberty Pumps National Sales Meeting held in Nashville, Cooper New England Sales was recognized for being Liberty’s top sales representative for 2010. Pictured (from left) are: Randy Waldron, VP-sales and marketing for Liberty; Chuck Shaver, Dave Kinnier and Scott Cooper of Cooper New England Sales; Chuck Schwabe, national sales manager for Liberty Pumps; and Steve Ritsema, regional sales manager for Liberty Pumps.

J.C. Whitlam Manufacturing Company recently recognized **Dierks Equipment Sales Ltd.** of Vancouver, B.C., for over 30 years of service. **Ted Dierks**, the original founder of Dierks Equipment Sales Ltd., began representing Whitlam in 1981. Dierks Equipment, now managed by Ted’s son **Al Dierks**, markets

Whitlam Specialty Chemicals and Plumb-Pro Tool Divisions in the wholesale distribution market for plumbing, HVAC/R, fire protection, irrigation and waterworks in both British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. **Russ Guest** and **Beth Dierks** are also part of the Dierks sales team as inside sales. ■



Mark Whitlam, senior vice president-sales at Whitlam, is shown here presenting **Al Dierks** and **Phil Gamache** of Dierks with a plaque honoring their ‘30 Years of Successful Representation.’



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See contact information on page 102

General redesigns Jet-Set™ Water Jets



General Pipe Cleaners has completely redesigned its line of Jet-Set™ water jets to offer more power, portability, and ease of use. From the JM-1450 compact electric jet, to the JM-2512 Typhoon™ trailer jet, General has a jet for any job. The powerful JM-3080 gas jet generates 3000 psi at 8 gpm for plenty of drain cleaning power to break up tough stoppages and flush them away. The machine is perfectly balanced so it can be tipped back on its rear wheels to more easily maneuver it into position. A removable 300 ft. capacity

hose reel to allows use on remote or indoor applications.

www.drainbrain.cpm/jets

AcornVac vacuum plumbing for supermarkets



AcornVac, designer and manufacturer of environmentally friendly vacuum plumbing systems, has released a brochure on its Championship Series vacuum plumbing for supermarket applications. Offers extensive information on the application, features and advantages of vacuum plumbing for supermarkets, convenience stores and wholesale clubs. Explains cost and construction benefits of vacuum plumbing in supermarket applications, expanded product descriptions, prepackaged or custom designs, tips on choosing the right system and buying information.

www.acornvac.com

New SharkBite® catalog

The new SharkBite® catalog from Reliance Worldwide features complete details on the industry-leading line-up of push-fit products including fittings, valves, and specialty products such as flexible water heater connectors and temperature gauges. Also includes the SharkBite range of PEX tubing and barb fittings, plus listing and certification details and product applications. Contact customerservice@cashacme.com or call 1-877-700-4242 for a copy.

www.relianceworldwide.com.au



Merit Brass offers new lines

Merit Brass is expanding its offering to include the following new product lines and product line enhancements: Carbon steel A105-N fittings (2000# threaded and 3000# threaded and socket-weld), Carbon steel A105-N & Stainless Steel outlets (threaded, butt-weld & socket-weld), Expansion of Stainless Steel 3000# threaded and socket weld fittings to include 2 1/2" and 3", lead-free brass meter flanges in 1 1/2" and 2" ; and Stainless steel PTFE thread tape in 1/2" & 3/4".

www.meritbrass.com



Do your customers know what you can do for them?

(Continued from page 8.)

“At first, some may think I am just being a jerk but I know from experience that getting behind is bad for the contractor and for the wholesaler. Some of the contractors who stayed current have thanked me because they developed good business habits. Those who didn’t stay current are mostly out of business.”

• *Pay attention to your truck* — “A lot of the trucks that come to our lot every day are pretty ratty looking. I’m not suggesting that you buy a new truck. On the wholesale side, we aren’t buying new delivery trucks but we try to keep them clean and painted — even if it’s just using a can of spray paint. I think the contractors with clean trucks and their phone number on the side seem to do better overall. It isn’t a big thing but in this economy, anything that can give you an edge matters.”

• *Consider a basic website or at least get registered with Google* — “A lot fewer consumers seem to use the Yellow Pages these days and the trend toward online shopping for services is increasing. People are using Google or online advisors like angleslist.com to find local tradespeople.”

• *When a customer calls, answer the phone or return the call* — “In an

effort to help our trade customers, we used to keep a list of area contractors on our website. We got calls from homeowners asking why they can’t get contractors to return their call. They were mad at us for listing these guys on our site.”

• *Hire better people* — “Some of the techs who come to our counter are pretty messed. Some of these employees don’t know what they’re doing. Others have substance problems that we see when they come in hung over or under the influence. I bet some are stealing from the company’s owner. When the economy was booming we all hired some lesser people to quickly fill a job. While most of those people are gone, there may still be instances where contractors should consider trading-up.” (Rich’s note: As you make any changes be sure to check with your labor attorney.)

I hope the above suggestions will be thought-starters for wholesalers as they attempt meaningful conversations with a select group of contractors with whom they want to build long-term relationships.

As an aside, I found it interesting that several of the wholesalers indicated that they would rather not have their name attached to the sugges-

tions since the suggestions might aggravate some of their customers. Apparently, some of their contractors already know everything and don’t want to be distracted by other ideas.

When wholesalers have a strong relationship with their customers, they can not only make these kinds of suggestions, their customers may even ask them for suggestions and ideas. The key is to get beyond the transactions and earn their trust so you can suggest ways for them to be more successful. The highest level of relationship that a wholesaler can achieve is to become a trusted advisor to his customers ■

Rich Schmitt is president of Schmitt Consulting Group Inc., a management consulting firm focused on distribution and manufacturing clients for:

- Pricing
- Consulting Seminars
- Profit improvement

www.go-scg.com

Rich is also the co-owner of Schmitt ProfiTools Inc.(SPI), providing:

- Web Storefronts and Handheld tools
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www.go-spi.com

ThermaSol® joins Forte Buying Group

SIMI VALLEY, CALIF. — ThermaSol®, the industry leader in state-of-the-art steam shower products and technology since 1958, has joined the Forte Buying



Group, an elite organization of decorative plumbing and hardware product manufacturers sold in limited distribution venues throughout North America.

“It is an honor to be a Forte Preferred Vendor since only those vendors who can bring value to the group are selected,” said Jari Ristola, president of ThermaSol. “Our membership gives us the opportunity to introduce the ThermaSol brand to their loyal customer base of over 250 showrooms throughout the United States and Canada.”

“ThermaSol’s innovative line of steam shower systems aligns perfectly with our group’s mission to advance the interests of the independent decorative plumbing and hardware industry,” said Jeff Valles, a spokesperson from Forte Buying Group. “We look forward to helping them bring their products to even more luxury homes, hotels and spas.”

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Ruben Klein (rk@united-pipe.com), CFO/Director of Human Resources.

Visit www.united-pipe.com to learn more about United Pipe & Steel Corp.

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New energy, enthusiasm prevails at ASA's Network 2011



BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

It was so refreshing to once again see ballrooms filled to capacity and feel a new energy at the ASA Convention/Network 2011, held recently at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas. Appropriately themed “All In,” the success of the meeting is a true reflection of the efforts and ideas brought by the new crop of volunteer leaders and supported by ASA staff.

The meeting was, by far, the best attended and most positive in recent memory, and everyone who attended seemed to be of the same opinion that the organization is moving in the right direction. A number of manufacturers generously sponsored events at the meeting, including A.O Smith, Bradford White, InSinkErator, Kohler and Weldbend.

As always, it was a delight to reconnect with so many great friends at this meeting, and to learn what is new at their companies. While business is undeniably still tough in many markets, there was an overall attitude of cautious optimism regarding the near future.

Among the highlights for me were seeing two very deserving people receive prestigious industry honors:

- Nick Giuffre, president and CEO of Bradford White, was presented the Fred V. Keenan Lifetime Achievement Award for his tireless dedication to his company, customers and the industry as a whole. Karla Neupert Hockley of Consolidated Supply in Portland, Ore., provided a comprehensive introduction of Giuffre, his career and the impact he has had on the industry as a whole. Giuffre has been with Bradford White for 33 years, holding a variety of positions as he moved up the ranks. Hockley noted that Giuffre’s “energetic style and uncanny grasp of this industry” has helped Bradford White build a significantly larger and highly loyal customer base. “As his role and responsibilities grew, Nick maintained and even increased his personal level of commitment to our industry,” she said. “He has been a stalwart champion of wholesale distribution and the independent plumbing contractor. He has also been devoted to ASA, having a constant presence at conventions, giving countless hours and traveling tens of thousands of miles on behalf of ASA and the Education Foundation. He has been an advocate of education within our industry. ... When it comes to the needs of our industry, Nick’s answer is always ‘yes.’”

Greeted with a standing ovation, Giuffre gave a heartfelt acceptance speech, in which he spoke movingly of how much this industry means to him. He also gave a great deal of credit to the entire team at Bradford White, including chairman Bob Carnevale, and to the contributions of those who came before him in being presented this honor. It was especially heartwarming to see the award’s namesake, Fred Keenan, and his wife Betty there for the presentation, along with several past award recipients.

- *The Wholesaler’s* columnist Morris R. Beschloss was presented the IPD Award of Excellence for his lifetime of contributions to the industrial pipe, valves and fitting market. United Pipe & Steel’s Gerry Slattery introduced Beschloss, recounting his legendary career with Hammond Valve and the influence he had on the formation of a number of industry organizations. (See remarks from Beschloss on page 42.)

I was also incredibly impressed by the terrific presentations made both by ASA volunteer leaders and keynote speakers. Among them were:

- At the A. O. Smith-sponsored Future Trends Luncheon, Chris Wallace of Fox News gave an inside view into the current political climate in Washington, the candidates vying for the Republican nomination and how all of this might affect U.S. businesses and the economy. He used great humor in sharing his thoughts on current events and happenings inside the Beltway.

- KISS frontman — and marketing genius — Gene Simmons was the featured speaker at the Weldbend-sponsored IPD Breakfast. Simmons praised the Coulas family for their warmth and the way they conduct their business and treat their employees. “I have been profoundly touched by the Coulas family — they actually care about what they do. This is the kind of business America needs. They make a quality product and they stand behind it.”

He also talked about what he believes are the keys to building a brand. “The only way you’re going to get anyone’s attention is by getting out your message and repeating it over and over,” he said. “A brand has to stand for something. It’s your flag, your calling card. You’ve got to be consistent and stand behind your product. I encourage you to treat everyone who is involved with you the way that the Coulas family has treated me. You’ve got to have integrity and pride. And at the center, you’ve got to have heart. It’s simple — be authentic. People buy from people.”

- Ted Ent, vice president and managing director of development for the Southwest with Hilton Worldwide, talked about market potential at the Kohler-sponsored Plumbing Industry Breakfast. “You must maintain brand standards

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