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 VOL 67, NO. 6

WHOLESALER

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution



Standard Plumbing Supply has thrived thanks to a history of innovation. Shown here is their advanced sorting system, which plays a key role in the company's efficiency. As president Richard Reese describes, 'We have a DC that follows the WalMart platform on inventory. We don't put it on the shelf and pull it again... We sort product the minute it comes in and send it right back out.' (See more on page 32.)

Tyco acquires Shurjoint Piping Products

LANSDALE, PA. — Tyco has acquired Shurjoint Piping Products, a leading OEM manufacturer for grooved and threaded piping components. Shurjoint will be integrated into Tyco's Fire Protection Products business unit. Financial terms were not announced.
 (Turn to OEM Shurjoint... page 81.)

Irr Supply Centers buys Inland Supply

NORTH TONAWANDA, N.Y. — Irr Supply Centers Inc., a regional distributor of plumbing, heating, cooling, refrigeration and electrical supplies, has acquired the assets of Inland Supply, which has one location in Syracuse, N.Y., servicing the supplies and equipment needs of contractors, institutional, industrial and municipal accounts.
 (Turn to Inland, page 81.)

An exciting new package of products

TOTO, Villeroy & Boch announce sales alliance



MORROW, GA. — Under the terms of a new alliance, all Villeroy & Boch USA bathroom products available in the North

American market will be sold exclusively through the distribution and sales channels of TOTO USA. This will include a complete range of products such as toilets, decorative lavatories and washbasins,

tubs, showers, accessories, vanities and bathroom furniture.

By combining TOTO USA's innovative technology and Villeroy & Boch USA's sleek European style, this alliance offers North American consumers, architects, designers, distributors and premium kitchen and bath showrooms an exciting new package of products from which to choose when designing or remodeling high-end bathrooms.

(Turn to Sales alliance... page 81.)

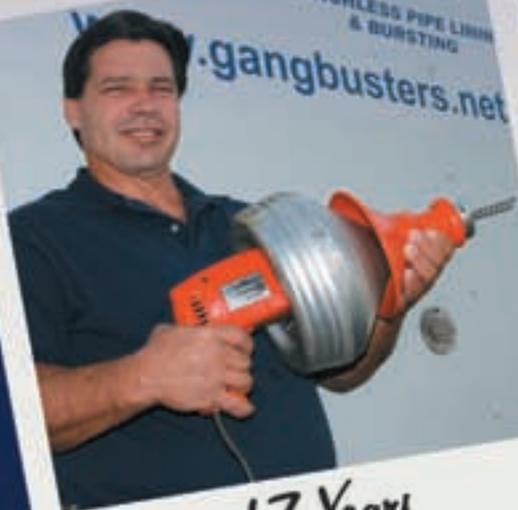


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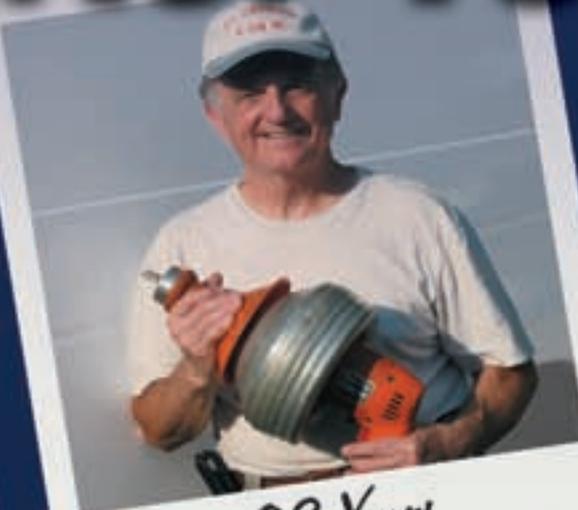
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10 Years

12 Years



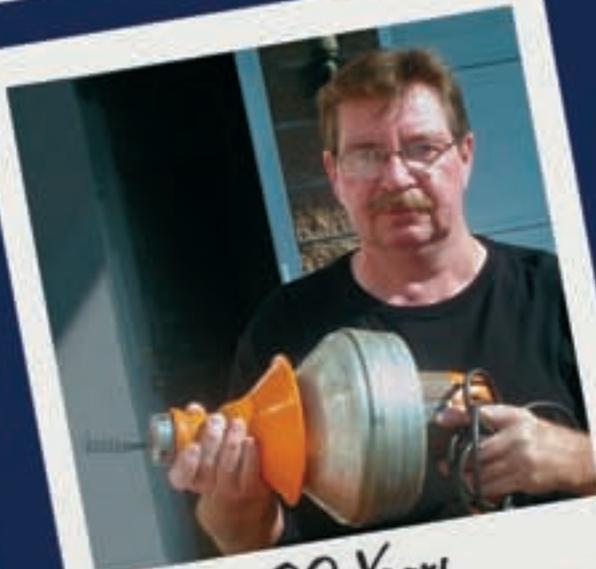
17 Years



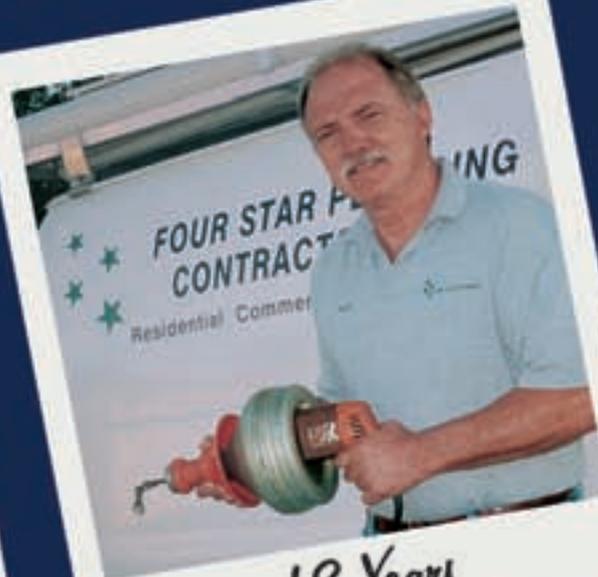
28 Years



12 Years



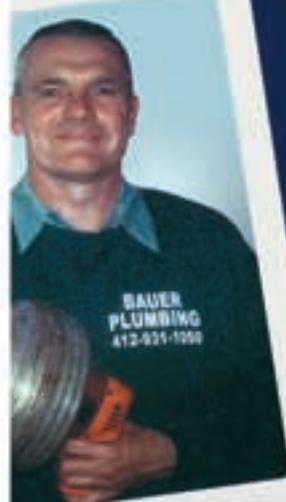
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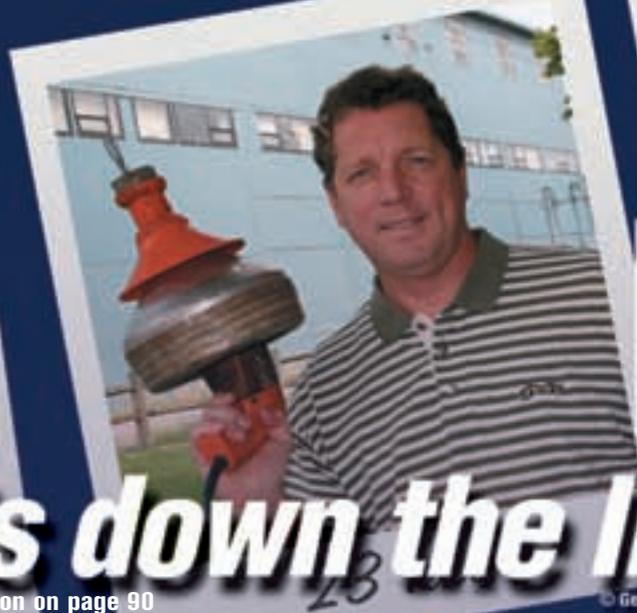
18 Years



22



3 Years



18

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See contact information on page 90

Danze repositions its branding

WOODRIDGE, ILL. — Danze Inc., the creator of stylish and affordable kitchen and bath solutions, is initiating a new repositioning of its brand within the plumbing products category — “Delight people every day with refreshing experiences and well-designed products.” This redefined customer commitment represents not only why Danze first opened its doors back in 2001, but how its products directly impact the lives and homes of today’s Americans.

Long known for its combination of fresh styles, finely crafted products and affordable price points, Danze was impacted (like many other kitchen and bath manufacturers) by the challenges of the housing crash.

“Instead of panicking, we did what any strong organization would do. We stopped and listened again to what our customers were saying,” explained

“The language we use to describe ourselves and visual elements of the new logo and identity hopefully demonstrate our commitment to deliver refreshing experiences at every turn, in a playful and inspiring way.”

Michael Werner, president and CEO. Danze discovered that homeowner preferences had changed and roles had shifted with the times. “Thanks to the information-rich Internet, the industry wasn’t leading the way any more — consumers were. Today’s consumer wants products that reflect the way they live. They want products that improve their lives. And they want it all at a better value,” Werner added.

“And they’ll keep searching until they find exactly what they want.”

To help deepen their understanding of consumer marketing as they began a vigorous brand refinement process, the Danze marketing team partnered with consumer marketing professionals at Chicago-based firm Y&R Midwest (owned by Young & Rubicam).

“Danze is a wonderful brand with a huge opportunity to bring style and functionality and a real smile into the homes of millions, we are thrilled to help them get there,” said Kary McIlwain, president of Y&R Midwest.

After a series of strategic brainstorming sessions, the Danze and Y&R teams consistently found themselves reflecting on how, day-in and day-out, Danze products impact the lives of families and individuals on an emotional level.

This creative process led Danze to develop a new and dynamic belief system: “We believe everything we do helps people feel better about their homes, their lives and themselves. We knew we hit on something that not only felt right, but would be extremely relevant to the Danze end user,” noted McIlwain.

With this exciting belief system as its source of inspiration, Y&R created a new logo and identity that would visually express who Danze is, and the way Danze makes people feel.

“Our new logo and identity better capture the freshness, youthfulness and relevancy of Danze,” according to Kevin McJoynt, vice president of



brand management at Danze. “We also love how in both style and messaging it reinforces our difference from others in the plumbing products category. The language we use to describe ourselves and visual elements of the new logo and identity hopefully demonstrate our commitment to deliver refreshing experiences at every turn, in a playful and inspiring way.”

Personality brought to life – anatomy of the logo

Danze set out to transform its logo into a symbol of refreshing ideas and to stand out from the competition. Here are some of the elements that brought it to life:

- Moving to a more contemporary font in lower case form aligns with the Danze culture — fun and approachable.
- The addition of the splash mark provides a visual hook, which represents not only the brand’s industry, but their excitement.

After a successful introduction of the brand’s new identity to the trade at this year’s Kitchen & Bath Industry Show, Danze plans to jump-start a direct relationship with homeowners this summer. The goal of this strategic initiative will be to help drive those homeowners to trade partners — a win-win scenario for all Danze partners.

Visit www.danze.com.

Fourth-generation family business expands with Phoenix showroom



MESA, ARIZ. — Central Arizona Supply marked its 10th location in Arizona and the expansion of its fourth-generation family business with the opening of a 10,000-square-foot showroom in Phoenix offering waterware, hardware and lighting. The Studio in Phoenix, located at

4750 N. 16th Street, carries everything from the basics in plumbing, hardware and lighting to the most unique, hard-to-find national and international brands on the market.

What began as a simple parts supply store founded by the brothers Bob and Harry Smith 44 years ago in

Mesa has grown into one of the plumbing industry’s largest independently owned family businesses in the Southwest, with four divisions, including plumbing, showroom, commercial and heating and air.

“We saw an opportunity to expand in an area that was previously underserved, especially for people remodeling their homes,” said Jeremy Smith, director of Studio services. “My vision has been to bring high-level design at all price points from around the world to Phoenix first. You don’t have to go to Los Angeles, New York or buy online to have access to what’s new and what’s next. You can stop into our showroom to see it and try it before you buy.”

In 1975, Central Arizona Supply was the first company to introduce the idea of a plumbing showroom in the Valley when it opened its first

showroom in Mesa. “My dad and uncles made a name for themselves in the 80s by introducing people to the newest products that were extremely well made and at an honest price, which made Central Arizona Supply a household name in the Valley,” said Smith. “My brother and I want to continue that tradition. Our new showroom is about making people feel comfortable, at home and excited about the thousands of options and brands we offer.”

The Studio showcases faucets, bathtubs, toilets, fixtures, hardware and lighting options, starting from a \$50 Delta faucet to a \$5,000 TOTO Neorest toilet. Another differentiator unique to the traditional showroom experience, Central Arizona Supply created a Demonstration Bathroom at its new location where customers can not only see and touch, but also experience new products. Customers can bathe in the much-buzzed-about micro-silk technology bathtub by Jason International that infuses oxygen into the skin, experience three different showers with customizable features including scent-infused steam or try a top-of-the-line TOTO Neorest toilet with remote controls and warm air dryer.

The Studio is now open to the public and also caters to plumbers, interior designers, builders and contractors.

Visit www.centralazsupply.com.

Ferguson acquires Reese Kitchens

NEWPORT NEWS, VA. — Ferguson has acquired Reese Kitchens Inc., a prominent Indianapolis cabinet designer catering to the residential remodeling market, in an asset transaction completed April 23. Ferguson will continue to conduct business from the former Reese Kitchens’ locations under the name Reese Kitchen, Bath & Lighting

Gallery, a Ferguson enterprise.

Three showrooms — Broadripple, Greenwood and Zionsville — will operate as satellite locations of Ferguson’s main showroom in the Indiana Design Center. Product offering at these locations will be expanded to include kitchen and bath plumbing products and fixtures, appliances and lighting.



“We believe that Ferguson can build on the legacy of our family business,” said David Reese. “They will also be able to offer the best opportunities to our employees, so we felt it was the best decision we could make.”

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THE WHOLESALER



The Front Page

Standard Plumbing Supply's advanced sorting system is just part of the company's commitment to innovation that has carried the Master Distributor through 60 years of success. President Richard Reese says, "We don't put it on the shelf and pull it again... We sort product the minute it comes in and send it right back out." Story on page 32.

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K/BIS Keynote Address

Michael Werner



Michael Werner, CEO/president of Globe Union and Danze, outlines the challenges facing the industry, and how the industry can face them in a positive way to move confidently into a future that is all about change50

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Effect of Amazon Supply uncertain

Amazon – [am-uh-zon] noun

1. River in Northern South America; the largest river in the world
2. Fabled mythical race of female warriors of Scythia near the Black Sea; also in South America
3. Mostly green parrot
4. Large, strong and aggressive woman
5. Large, strong and aggressive \$48B internet company; changed the way books and other products are sold throughout the world; See bookstore: extinct, quaint vestige of another era where books made from paper were once sold.
6. Recent entrant into Internet hard-goods market; DBA amazon-supply.com

For the last two years, I have been saying that Amazon is the wild card in our industry. On occasion, I have lovingly called them the “deathstar.” Their strategy is to grow through disruptive innovation. In other words, they are not looking for ways to adjust or tweak their target markets, they are looking for game-changing, revolutionary

- **Inconceivable concept just 20 years ago**
- **It's all in place now**
- **Web-savvy customers**
- **Find ways to partner**
- **Change is constant**
- **DEAL WITH IT!**

changes that eviscerate the existing players. Frankly, I wasn't smart enough to know how or if they would get aggressively into our industry. I just knew that someone would.

Can their strategy succeed? Time will tell. Years ago, I had a strategic marketing job with a large company. We attempted to chart a direction for our part of the company by combining what we knew, what we could see on the horizon and what we could then imagine. We discussed business strategies of the future based in technology and came to the conclusion that many of the potential world changing strategies could not succeed without costly, unimaginable technological advances:

- The cost of high-speed communications would need to be essentially zero. Access would need to be readily and pervasively available (at the office, at home and in the car).
- The computer equipment and storage needed for commerce would need to be widespread at essentially zero cost.
- The interfacing technology would need to be extremely convenient, easy-to-use and broadly available to all types of customers.
- Broad adoption of the interfacing technology would need to be in place prior to launching such a strategy. (The cost of introducing such bleeding edge, business altering technology would be expensive and risky for the early entrants into this arena. Mistakes and problems might risk the company's future.)

• The actual product delivery process would need to allow landed product costs for the buyer that would be equal to or less than a local brick and mortar physical distribution infrastructure. Said another way, you build warehouses to minimize transportation costs associated with getting the hard-goods to the installer in a timely manner. As delivery processes improve, many customers' needs can be adequately served through more distant distribution centers and thus there is less need for a local presence. (This has been at the heart of physical distribution theory since there was physical distribution theory.)

• Transportation would need to be able to deliver product across great distances for delivery in 1 to 2 days.

You need a webstore, if only to retain your existing customers who want to order online and will switch over to competitors who have a webstore. If your competitors are sleeping or bucking the trend, you might even take some of their tech-savvy customers in the process.

At the time we pretty much came to the conclusion that all 6 fundamentals were impossible.

What a difference a couple decades can make. Our crystal ball didn't see the Internet becoming a pervasive utility like electricity, water and sewer, the cost of storage and computers dropping to a fraction of the cost nor did we see logistics companies who could deliver next-day or 2nd-day across the country at reasonable costs.

So here are my thoughts on the topic:

• **The infrastructure is in place** — As I described above, if you had asked me years ago whether their approach was viable, I would have said, “no.” Now, however, they are inheriting many of the ingredients required for this strategy to work and to be fair, they have pioneered and evolved some of the ingredients themselves.

• **Don't Panic** — Frankly, I don't expect that there will be widespread panic throughout hard-goods wholesaling. Even today, our industry moves pretty slowly in adopting new products and technologies. I don't expect we will see the impact of this new entrant for years — but I always take note when a \$48-billion company makes a very dramatic leap into our industry.

• **Don't bury your head in the sand hoping that they will go away** — The hard-goods world is changing at a faster rate than ever before. There is clear direction toward the use of the internet and technology. Grainger and



BY RICH SCHMITT
Management specialist

others have built significant internet businesses that already skim some of the highest margin business off the top. I think they will probably be the first target for AmazonSupply but I am certain they are after a lot more than Grainger's business.

• **Don't give up Internet sales to e-wholesalers without a fight** — Some of your customers already want

to use the Internet to buy product, to prepare quotes or to review information about their account. Some of them, currently or very soon, will want to access this information from their Androids and iPhones or tablet computers. Amazon Supply is bringing additional focus to the concept of buying hard-goods products and supplies on the Internet. You should not ignore this change. You must consider how you will address this reality to defend your customer base. (Daughter Jen, our unabashed director of sales, asked that I remind readers that Schmitt ProfiTools helps wholesalers to get online or to upgrade your existing store with readable, searchable content and pictures. You can complain to her about this gratuitous plug at jen@go-spi.com.)

• **Industry changes are being driven by sinister outside forces** — Namely, customers in the form of consumers and purchasing agents. Can you believe it? The manufacturers and wholesalers controlled everything from product to pricing for decades. Now the access to information is allowing customers to assert their will to demand and purchase what they want. Like the weather, you can adapt to it but you cannot change it.

• **Don't discount Amazon Supply's sincerity and abilities** — If you look at their webstore, you can quickly see that they have invested a bunch of money in developing their site and store.

(Turn to Amazon is here... page 86.)

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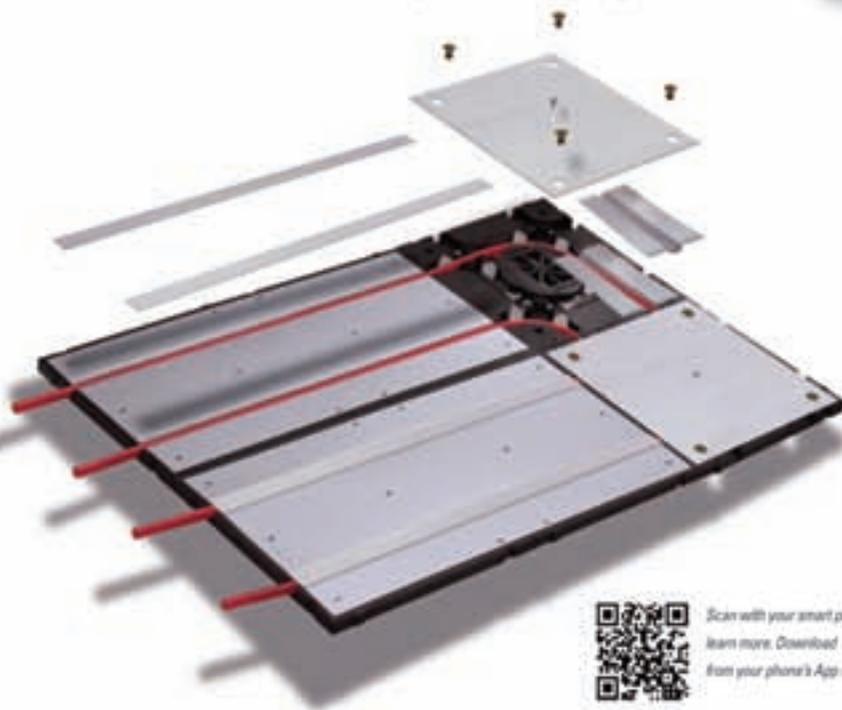
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Hansgrohe: Exciting new products, bright outlook

ALPHARETTA, GA. — Hansgrohe headed into the second quarter of the year with positive momentum and upholding its pledge to the environment, its community and its employees. It is investing in its U.S. workforce and exporting many of its American-assembled, German-engineered products to emerging markets overseas.

Describing itself as “always moving forward,” Hansgrohe is also launching a number of game-changing offerings including the Comfort-Zone concept featured in the Metris and Focus lines, new showerpipes, additions to the popular PuraVida collection and pressure balance trims with diverters in different styles and finishes. In May, Hansgrohe’s designer brand, Axor, debuted its highly anticipated Axor Bouroullec collection in the U.S.

Russ Wheeler, president of Hansgrohe North America, commented, “Four months into the year we had already achieved many of our goals. Business is exceeding our expectations, and the forecast overall looks positive.”

Hansgrohe has hit several milestones so far in 2012, including assembling its 100,000th iBox all-in-one rough and launching two

Eastern Penn honors vendors, reps



Pictured left to right: Steve Ritsema, regional sales manager, Liberty Pumps; Gary Jones, marketing manager, EPSCO; Curt Chad, Efkay Sales; and John Minor, Water Systems product manager.

WILKES BARRE, PA. — Eastern Pennsylvania Supply named Liberty Pumps of Bergen, N.Y., its Affiliated Distributor MVP (Most Valuable Partner) Vendor at their 2012 Field Marketing Summit. Also honored at the event were Cash-Acme/Sharkbite, Birmingham, Ala., as the EPSCO MVP Vendor and Bob Fisch, NH Yates Company, Cockeysville, Md., as the John Grothaus Memorial

Award winner for most valuable manufacturing representative.

All three were recognized for their aggressive sales efforts through training, contractor calls and participation in counter days, dinner meetings and EPSCO’s annual Silver Dollar Days trade show. Their efforts, along with the sales team of Eastern Penn, resulted in sales growth with each EPSCO salesperson.

successful Manhattan and Atlanta-based product sample libraries, which offer local A & D the opportunity to loan popular models for up to a week at no cost. Hansgrohe’s Facebook fan base has also grown from 3,000 “likes” at the end of 2011 to close to 12,000. The recent Twitter re-launch

looks to garner similar results.

With increased production at the factory due to more business abroad, the Hansgrohe Alpharetta-based team has grown in numbers. With that in mind, the company has implemented additional employee benefits, including resource centers, on-site classes, such as English as a Second Language and 100% tuition reimbursement for those who are in school and qualify. In addition, Hansgrohe offers a scholarship program for college-aged junior and seniors. The company also continues its support of several local charities and regularly donates to national nonprofits.

Visit www.hansgrohe-usa.com.

OBITUARY

Jack Guterman, retired president of American Valve

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Jack Guterman, retired president of American Valve Manufacturing Corp., died on April 30 at the age of 93. He was married to Fernanda K. Guterman for 59 years until her death in 2000. A son, Steven P. Guterman, also predeceased him in 1973.

Guterman grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business in 1940. He then enlisted in the Navy and went to Officer’s Training School in Annapolis, Md. He saw action in the Pacific and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

Following World War II, Guterman moved to Catskill, N.Y., to take over management of the family business, American Valve Manufactur-

ing Corp, where he served as president for more than 30 years. After his retirement from American Valve, he started his own successful consulting company, which he ran until his death.

He was extremely active in the Catskill community, where he lived for more than 60 years. He leaves a legacy of leadership, integrity, community service and devotion to his friends and family, who will miss him dearly.

Donations may be made to the Nan Guterman Foundation.



Jack Guterman

DDI System’s Inform software Version 77 released

SANDY HOOK, CONN. — DDI System’s inform software has expanded its support of multi warehouse functionality, gaining added tools in pricing and overall profitability and more ways to improve inventory efficiency and expand product lines than ever before. DDI continues its tradition of innovation and exceptional value with this free upgrade for DDI System inform subscribers.

New integrated features of Version 77 include: Warehouse Specific Pric-

Distributors see strong '12 start

COLUMBUS, OHIO — HARDI announced North American HVAC/R average distributor sales for March 2012 were up 11.5%. HARDI’s monthly *Targeted and Regional Economic Dews for Distribution Strategies (TRENDS)* report showed growth in six of seven U.S. regions; in fact, five were in double digits.

“The annual growth rate improved for the third straight month, rising above 3.0%,” said HARDI economist Andrew Duguay. “March sales, on average, were 11.5% higher than March 2011, building off the 9.6% February gain. The activity at the distributor level is also being reflected in national consumer data. Retail Sales (deflated ex autos) has also shifted to higher growth rates in 2012 (from 1.7% in January to 1.9% in March). This is a positive confirming indicator for the current HARDI distributor growth rate trend.”

Days Sales Outstanding (a measure of how quickly customers pay their bills) crept up for the seventh time in eight months, increasing to over 52 days. Distributor productivity reflected by sales per employee bucked a seven-month decline by rebounding more than 22% from last month’s figures.

“Optimism is high as we see distributors stocking up more strategically for strong anticipated demand this summer,” said HARDI executive vice president and COO Talbot Gee. “Light commercial markets appear to be a source of unexpectedly strong growth, and the early heat has provided a nice jump start to the cooling season.”

“Distributors’ unitary sales are also starting off 2012 strong across most product groups, but with an accelerating movement to 13 SEER and R-22 products. Recent OEM reports of exceptional preseason order volumes support our forecast for a strong unitary market in 2012,” concluded Gee.

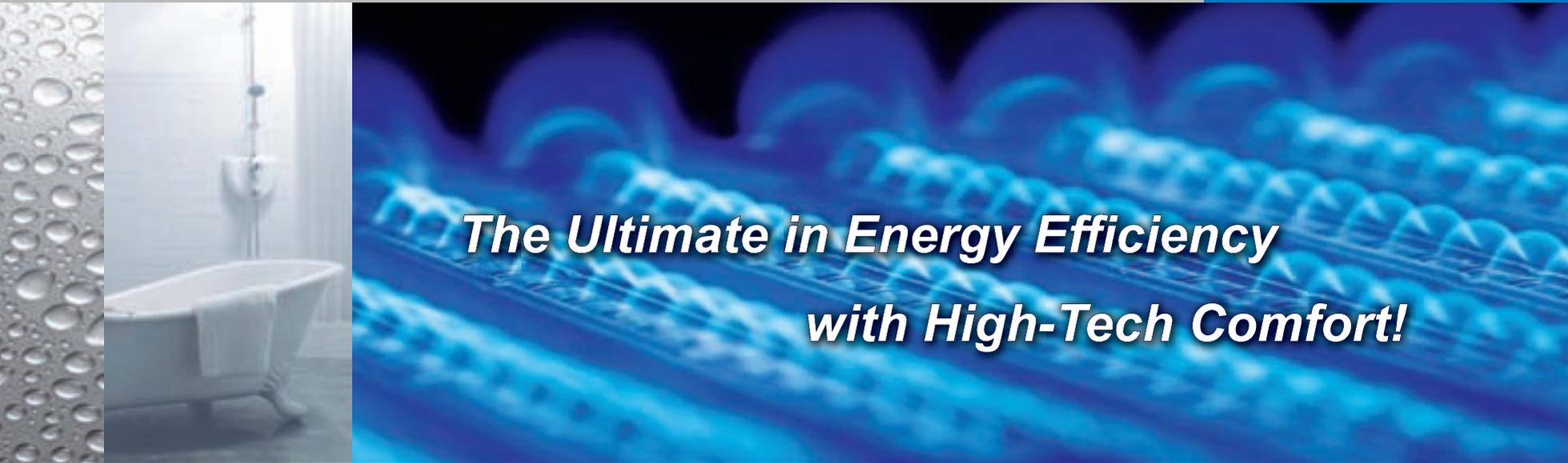
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ing (maintain separate costs and list prices by warehouse location to increase gross profits); Restricted Items by Customer (using certification codes, identify products on hand for specific customers); Consignment Warehousing (create and replenish consignment warehouses for customers); Cut Material Handling (break products into smaller component products while factoring in costs) and much more.

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Storehouse of World Vision presents Crystal Vision Awards



CHICAGO — The Storehouse of World Vision held its annual Crystal Vision Award presentation during the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in Chicago. The event is an opportunity for businesses and individuals throughout the kitchen and bath industry to join together in celebration of the impact they make by giving their resources to improve the lives of American families in need.

Efrain Perez, corporate relations director of World Vi-

Lyle Hunnicutt, president of RainTree Associates LLC, accepts the Robert P. Atkins Lifetime Achievement Award.

sion, gave the invocation and was followed by an official welcome from Suzie Williford, past president of the NKBA. Guest speaker Lou Rohl, COO of Rohl LLC, presented reflections on Rohl's efforts to give back.

The Crystal Vision Award was presented to Kohler Co. and accepted by Rachel Kohler, group president — interiors, who spoke of Kohler's commitment to tackling poverty and serving those less fortunate. In the past year alone, Kohler donated \$6 million worth of products to the Storehouse.

HD Supply was recognized as Partner of the Year. Daniel G. McNerney, director of regional distribution for the Northwest, accepted the award. The Robert P. Atkins Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Lyle Hunnicutt, president of RainTree Associates LLC.

Sponsors of the Crystal Vision Breakfast were Elkay, Fortune Brands, Globe Union/Gerber/Danze, Grohe America, Inglis Foundation,

Kohler, Nielson Expositions, Snyder Diamond, SharkBite & Reliance Worldwide, Your Other Warehouse/The Home Depot and NKBA.

In the past year alone, Kohler donated \$6 million worth of products to The Storehouse.

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Habegger – 60 years and going strong

CINCINNATI — The Habegger Corporation was founded by Fred Habegger Sr. in 1952. Over the next 18 years, Fred established a legacy that he hoped would survive him by many years. According to a statement issued by the company, just before Habegger died in 1970, he told his

HABEGGER
THE HABEGGER CORPORATION

son Fred Jr. that the long-term survival of the family business was now in his hands. He was confident that Fred Jr. would not only be able to lead the company through the second generation but also to transition it successfully into the third generation. Those are pretty good marching orders for a young man of 31.

With the partnership of brothers Tom and Jim and sister Sue, the com-

pany was successfully managed for the next 32 years. Their success was historic as the second generation of Habegger grew the company from a single back-alley warehouse into one of the most dynamic Bryant and Carrier distributors in the country.

It's been said that transitioning a family business successfully into the second generation is very difficult and into the third almost impossible. With that in mind, John Dorr was hired in 2002 as the new CEO and the potential bridge to the third generation. In the past nine years, Dorr has led the company to new heights of performance and, at the same time, has prepared Brian Habegger and the entire management team for the challenges ahead. Brian was promoted to president of The Habegger Corporation on January 1, and the transition to the third generation continues.

Hopefully, some time in the dis-

tant future Fred will be able to say to his son Brian, "You've done a nice job leading the third generation; now it's about time to begin thinking about the fourth."

Nu Flow San Diego relocates

SAN DIEGO — Nu Flow's San Diego office and corporate headquarters recently moved to a larger lot at 7710 Kenamar Court to accommodate the extensive growth of the company. The new office is 3,550 square feet bigger than the old building and is two stories tall. The new warehouse is bigger and the parking lot is twice the size of the old lot. This increased space has allowed the San Diego installation team to add more crews to better serve customers.

The office building will house Nu Flow's international training center, where a growing number of techni-

The Habegger family would like to thank their wonderful customers, employees and vendor partners for their friendship and loyalty over these past 60 years. Those are two special gifts that will always be cherished.

Visit www.habeggercorp.com.

cians and licensees throughout the world will be able to visit, learn and train to use in-place technologies. This training center will prepare employees and global partners' crews to fill the international demand for the company's unique solutions.

Nu Flow continues to expand in the southern California market and emerges as an industry leader for small-diameter pipe system rehabilitation. Within the past year, Nu Flow has been able to change its focus from residential properties to commercial properties, where interest and business has greatly expanded.

Conyngham receives award

WILKES BARRE, PA. — Local businessman George G. Conyngham Jr. received the Outstanding Commitment to Children award, presented by Children's Service Center (CSC) on April 11 at the organization's 150th anniversary luncheon at the East Mountain Inn. The award was presented annually between 1983 and 2007 at CSC's annual meeting and was revived this year in honor of CSC's sesquicentennial.

Conyngham is president of Eastern Pennsylvania Supply Company in Wilkes-Barre. He has been active with

Children's Service Center since 1983, following in the footsteps of his father, Guthrie, his uncle Jack and his grandfather William H. Conyngham, who was one of the early directors of CSC's predecessor institution, the Home for Friendless Children.

The Conyngham family has served the children of Wilkes-Barre and northeast Pennsylvania for more than 100 years. George Conyngham has been a member of CSC's board of directors since 1985 and served as chairman of the board from 1989 to 1991.

OBITUARY

William 'Bill' Barto 1941-2012

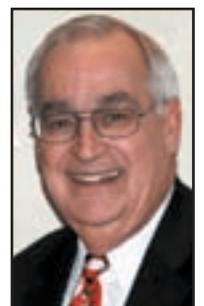
William Barto, a highly respected sales professional in the stainless PVF market for over 50 years, passed away on May 7 in Niagara Falls, N.Y., after a brief illness. He was best known for his 35-year career working for Robert-James Sales, retiring in 2007 as executive vice president. He also served on the company's Board of Directors.

The company hired Barto in 1973 soon after it was founded by partners Robert Glidden and James Bokor, the source of the company name Robert-James. Barto often commented that he stood for the "dash" between these two names. He began as the first outside salesman based in Buffalo.

Next he opened the Cleveland office and served there as branch manager for a few years. At his retirement, Robert-James Sales had grown to be the largest stainless PVF

distributor in the field with regional warehouses and offices in eight cities from Minnesota to New Jersey.

Barto was known for his professionalism, which he instilled in the many salesmen he trained and managed over his 35-year career with Robert-James. During that time he also served eight years on the board of the Industrial Piping Division of the American Supply Association. His first jobs in the piping field prior to joining Robert-James were in the warehouse and outside sales for Case Elderfield and Hyson Supply, both in Niagara Falls, N.Y.



William Barto

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Bruce Martin announces release of his newest book, 'Tiger in the Toilet Tank'

WEST CONSHOHOCKEN, PA. — Bruce Martin, inventor of the pressurized flushing device technology (a.k.a. flushometer tank), has recently released his latest book entitled *Tiger in the Toilet Tank*. It's an in-depth look into Martin's journey as he searches for a less wasteful way to flush toilets with the invention of his flushometer tank, which eventually came to spawn a revolution in North American toilet design and led to better than a 20% overall reduction in domestic water usage.

Spread out over 14 chapters in three parts, Martin's well-told and expertly documented story is one of resolute persistence and entrepreneurial adventurism. Readers will quickly come to realize that without his vision and dedication to his cre-

ation, Martin's pressure flush might never have been launched, and it probably would never have become the viable product that is today, by serving an important need in the plumbing industry.

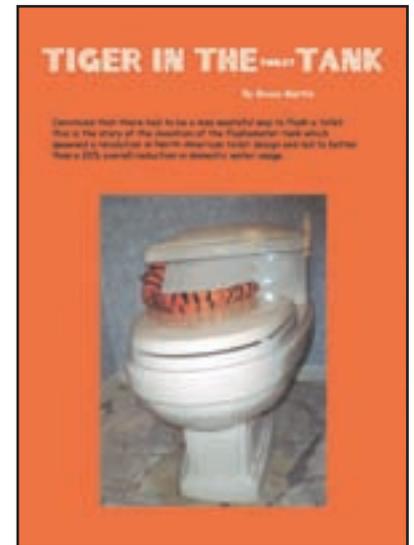
As mentioned in the foreword, Martin doesn't ponce and he doesn't pose. His writing throughout the book pulls no punches and models his management style — it's straightforward, forthright and is very witty. Readers will be delighted to read about the artistic voyage he undertook while developing the product throughout the late '70s, as his original plan was developed and then failed before being reinvented with a new purpose and marketing plan, which ultimately lead to its reintroduction in the early 80s.

Armed with that early marketing success, Martin was able to sell the rights to his Flushmate flushometer-tank to the Sloan Valve Company in 1986.

Stories, recaps, personal observations and historical narratives are ripe for the taking in *Tiger in the Toilet Tank*. Surely, this book will prove to be a very interesting and informative read for both product managers and engineers, but really anyone with a penchant for product design and function will come away with an appreciation for Martin's vision and skill as an inventor.

At the very least, this book should be required reading for anyone who has spent any amount of time working in the plumbing industry.

Tiger in the Toilet Tank is avail-



'Tiger in the Toilet Tank' follows Bruce Martin's search for a less wasteful way to flush toilets, culminating in the Flushmate flushometer tank.

able directly from the publisher at www.infinitypublishing.com and online in print or electronic versions at Amazon and Barnes and Noble websites.



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Creating a powerful sales plan

Field salespeople have a unique aspect to their jobs: They must decide what to do every moment of every day. The need to make these decisions — where to go, who to see, who to call, what to do — distinguishes the sales profession from most others.

I've often thought that the quality of decisions, more than any other single aspect, dictates the quality of a salesperson's results. Consistently make effective decisions, and your results will improve. Make thoughtless, habitual or reactive decisions and your results will be sub-par.

One of the ways to ensure that you make good decisions about your selling time is to create a comprehensive sales plan, a written, thoughtful set of decisions about the most effective things you can do. A sales plan should be the result of some good thinking, wherein you analyze and prioritize a number of different aspects of your job.

Annual planning retreat

The first part of a good sales plan is a personal annual planning retreat. Set a day or two aside every year to engage in some serious planning. Turn off the phone, shut down the e-

The creation of a sales plan is not a simple, one-time event. Rather it is a discipline that involves a commitment of time and thoughtfulness at specific intervals in the year. It is also not just an administrative requirement but a powerful tool that enables a professional salesperson to consistently make good decisions about the most important question he/she faces: Where to go and what to do?

mail and immerse yourself in deep thought about the coming year.

Begin by specifying a series of annual sales goals. What, specifically, do you want to accomplish this year in your job? I recommend no more than five specific goals. Typically, one of these goals describes the total volume of sales dollars you want to create; another may describe the number of new customers you want to acquire; yet another may relate to

- Sales plan is a written document, thought out
- Set specific, realistic goals for each year
- Plans should be monthly, weekly, daily
- A good plan is power!

the number of high-potential customers with whom you want to increase your business. Regardless of what your goals are, an annual, written, specific set of goals is the beginning of a sales plan.

Next, give some thought to your basic strategy for accomplishing those goals. If you are going to acquire 20 new customers, for example, exactly what are you going to do in order to accomplish that annual goal? Express those thoughts on paper.

Classify all your accounts by their potential. Rank them in order, identify those with the highest potential and then plan to spend more time with them.

Re-organize your filing system; throw out the obsolete hard copies and delete the unnecessary electronic files.

Monthly plan

You should develop a more detailed plan every month. Produce a one- or two-page document that contains your specific commitments to the most effective actions. Once again, you need to analyze and prioritize your efforts in regards to a number of issues.

First, your monthly objectives:

What do you want to accomplish relative to the annual goals that you set? If you said you wanted to sell \$2 million worth of goods this year, how much do you have to sell this month? Each of your annual goals should have a monthly component.

Next, address your prospects and customers. In order of priority, in which prospects and customers should you invest your time? That priority often takes the form of a methodical and objective ranking into categories — typically A, B and C — based on potential. The sales plan then describes your plan for coverage of the As and Bs.

Analyze and prioritize your efforts related to those CTM (Closest to the Money) opportunities within your territory. What are you going to do to bring each of them to fruition? Spec-

ify each, the dollar amount of the opportunity, and what your actions should be.

Your company may have certain key products or product lines that it wants to emphasize. What will you do this month to increase sales of those product lines? What specific actions will you take, in which specific accounts?

Finally, what will you do this month to improve yourself? What classes or seminars will you attend? What books will you read? To which CDs will you listen?

This plan does not address every action you will take, but rather the most effective actions. You can note these things on a page or two. Don't think that you can keep everything in your head and skip the discipline of writing it down. Writing down each specific action and strategy, whether it's on a yellow pad or in a computer document, forces precise thinking. The written word also makes your commitment much deeper than if the idea is locked in your head.

After you have completed this monthly sales plan, it's time to work out your schedule. Lay out a plan for each day for the next 30 days. Where will you plan to be, and who will you plan to see? Concentrate first on the priorities from your monthly plan. Then fill in the non-priority calls.

You and I both know that your days will rarely go according to plan. Without a plan, however, you will have totally given up the ability to control and manage your time. A plan gives you something to fall back on, something to refer to, some benchmark by which to measure the constant and urgent demands on your time.

So, there is an annual component to your sales plan, as well as a monthly discipline. But you are not finished yet.

Weekly plans

You need to reorganize and recommit to your monthly time and territory plan each week. Adjust your plan based on what actually happened the previous week. For example, if you didn't get to see an A account last week, can you see them this week instead? Make your adjustments and, at the end of the week, spend some time planning and preparing for the upcoming week.

Daily plans

Finally, you need to plan each sales call. What do you want to accomplish? What do you need to prepare



BY DAVE KAHLE
Sales specialist

in order to accomplish it? Again, you'll be more focused and more committed if you write down a specific outcome that you would like to achieve. Keep in mind that sales is a process, consisting of a series of steps

Regardless of what your goals are, an annual, written, specific set of goals is the beginning of a sales plan.

that the buyer and seller take to come to a good decision. Your planned outcomes should be narrow and specific. "Acquire the information I need in order to structure a proposal" is much more specific than, "Sell this account."

The creation of a sales plan is not a simple, one-time event. Rather it is a discipline that involves a commitment of time and thoughtfulness at specific intervals in the year. It is also not just an administrative requirement but a powerful tool that enables a professional salesperson to consistently make good decisions about the most important question he/she faces: Where to go and what to do?

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Consultant and trainer Dave Kahle helps distributors and wholesalers boost sales and sales productivity. His well-regarded book, "How to Excel at Distributor Sales," is available from the National Ass'n of Wholesaler-Distributors. His free online newsletter, "Thinking About Sales," is available at webpage www.davekahle.com/maillinglist.htm. He can be reached at The DaCo Corp., 15 Ionia S.W., Ste. 220, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49503; tel. 800/331-1287, fax 616/451-9412, e-mail info@davekahle.com, website www.davekahle.com.



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Acrylic with Innovex® Technology

Aqua Glass gains ground with new shower and bath products

CHICAGO — Since Aqua Glass introduced its new Acrylic with Innovex® material in 2011, its new products are gaining momentum in the marketplace. Mary Jo Martin, editorial director of *The Wholesaler*, caught up with Chris Yankowich, president of Masco Bath, during KBIS to talk about the success of INNOVEX technology.

Acrylic with Innovex® technology has had a strong impact on the Aqua Glass business. “Our wholesale partners and all of the customers in the supply chain (plumbers, builders and consumers) have experienced immediate improvements to their business and their baths as a result of investing in Acrylic with Innovex technology. Specifically, INNOVEX is a higher

quality product which allows for fewer callbacks for the wholesaler and the plumber and an overall more satisfied customer base,” said Yankowich.

According to Yankowich, the INNOVEX technology has helped improve the profitable product mix for wholesalers, which has favorably impacted their revenue generation. Selling INNOVEX technology products means that wholesalers no longer need to compete at the contractor gelcoat price points.

Aqua Glass wholesalers agree. In speaking with Mark Nicklas, vice president of sales at Nicklas Supply in Cranberry, Pa., he confirmed the positive impact INNOVEX technology has had on his business. “The Aqua Glass INNOVEX [product] has

been a tremendous success for Nicklas Supply,” he said. “It’s half the price of acrylic and the product is appealing to consumers. Contractors find it appealing because it doesn’t have that fiberglass rough backing. It’s stronger and there is less potential damage at the job site. Builders also like it for all those reasons and the fact that it comes now in white and biscuit color options.”

Clay Taylor of Southern Pipe in Jackson, Miss., summed up his description of the new Aqua Glass INNOVEX technology product by saying, “In my opinion, INNOVEX is the only new product introduced recently that benefits the plumber, the wholesaler, the builder and the consumer. We’ve gotten behind it and discontinued gelcoat last year. We sold 300-400 units with unbelievably low damage to the product during installation. It’s a great product.”

And Don Maloney, president of Coburn Supply also weighed in on how it has affected their builder business: “[INNOVEX technology] fits real well with the builder because of the ease of installation and it has little damage arriving at the job site and during the installation. We’ve had good success with builders.”

Wholesalers are not the only ones to see a change in their business due to the introduction of Acrylic with Innovex® Technology. Masco Bath, owner of the Aqua Glass brand, has also been impacted by INNOVEX technology. “There are three strong areas of impact to the Masco Bath/Aqua Glass business since the introduction of Acrylic with Innovex® Technology: manufacturing, quality and innovation,” explained Yankowich.

Aqua Glass took the opportunity to reduce its overall manufacturing footprint, eliminate outdated manufacturing operations, improve environmental areas and reduce overhead where it made sense as it invested in the new technology.

“Aqua Glass has exited the one-piece contractor gelcoat category,” said Yankowich. “Our investment and our wholesale partners’ success in converting builders and plumbers to INNOVEX have allowed us to



The Aqua Glass I 500 Series bathing products, now available in biscuit color, are available in shower and bathtub shower configurations.

make this smart decision. Customers concerned about environmental quality can specify Acrylic with Innovex® technology with confidence, knowing it carries the independent GREEN-GUARD™ certification. INNOVEX is our future and we believe it is beginning to revolutionize the bathing category.”

The second area of impact to Aqua Glass is in product quality. “Improving quality is one of the best ways to enhance customer satisfaction,” noted Yankowich. “Acrylic with Innovex® technology provides the platform for a stronger product that significantly reduces quality issues in our factory and in the field.”

The third area of impact is innovation. Yankowich explained how its parent, Masco Corporation, encouraged Masco Bath to invest in new INNOVEX material technology. “And, we’re not stopping with just the material,” he said. “This research and development has opened the door to new products, new applications and new ways of delivering profits to our customers. It is not just about INNOVEX. We are listening to what our customers need and will continue to develop innovative solutions.”

What is next from Yankowich and his team? Acrylic with Innovex® technology is just the beginning of Masco Bath’s “Next Generation Innovation Product Pipeline.” Keep reading *The Wholesaler* for more exciting news in the coming months.



Editorial director Mary Jo Martin catches up with Chris Yankowich, president of Masco Bath, at KBIS in Chicago in April.

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Achievement update with Terry Brock

For business success — make it easy!

You and I both know that today's world keeps us very busy and we don't want to get into the complicated. When something is complicated, we tend to avoid it.

For you in business, you want to make it very easy for people to deal with you:

- Think smooth.
- Think easy.
- Think fun.

This is the way people gravitate to you and want to be around you, know you and yes, do business with you. The less smooth, easy and fun it is to do business with you, the more they will shy away from it.

This means you also want to make buying from you very easy.

Think about Apple. As I type this, they have announced yet another new, cool, gotta-have-it-yesterday product. We love how easy Apple makes it to use their products. When they have something, we think of many ways that using that iPhone, iPad, MacBook Air, etc. etc. makes our life easier.

Price is a third or fourth consideration. And it is not just about the "coolness" factor (which is diffidently there). It is about the enhanced productivity we get and things we couldn't do before that make life better.

You also have to make it easy for you to learn and get something done. For instance, I send a lot of personal videos to individuals I know. I do this now because I have experimented a lot with various options. Now I can send a video that is very impressive to a prospect and make it meaningful to that prospect.

This is something that gives me a competitive advantage.

However, I had to pay the price in learning how to do it. Most people will not. I sure hope my competitors are too lazy to try and try and try to get something right. Most people give up after a few failed attempts.

Make it easy in business for people to do busi-



BY TERRY L. BROCK
Technology/marketing specialist

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This week I've made it extra special for you. You can choose between reading the text, listening to an enhanced audio podcast (MP3 streaming or download) or watch a video. Hey, you can experience any or all you want! You're welcome! Enjoy, share this with your friends and staff. I really look forward to your comments on the blog post. Thank you! Here's your link to all the goodies: terrybrock.com/make-it-easy/?awt_l=7oYoJ&awt_m=Ij6xI3fnAjplZ4 ■

Terry Brock is an expert in Relationship Marketing showing business leaders how to establish, build and maintain mutually-beneficial relationships. He leverages Social Media to help generate serious business. Find out about what he can do for you at www.TerryBrock.com or connect on Twitter @TerryBrock or facebook.com/MarketerTerryBrock.

Prosource Supply opens new facility

GREENVILLE, S.C. — ProSource Supply, a plumbing and hardware supply house with locations in upstate South Carolina and western North Carolina, opened its newest location in Anderson, S.C. The 15,000-square-foot facility, located at 1104 Salem Church Road on the previous site of Community Supply, provides an extensive range of plumbing parts and supplies for both commercial and residential projects.

Shawn Dawson will serve as the general manager for ProSource in Anderson. Dawson has 22 years of experience in the industry.

"The Anderson location will enable us to better serve our customers throughout the Upstate," said ProSource president Grover Martin. "Our

goal is to open the plumbing showroom by the third quarter of this year."

ProSource Supply is locally owned and independently operated, with four locations serving the Carolinas. The Greenville, S.C., and Hendersonville, N.C., locations offer full counter service as well as showrooms featuring luxury products for kitchens and baths. The Anderson and Spartanburg locations offer full counter service to provide a complete line of plumbing parts and supplies for commercial and residential projects.

The ProSource Anderson supply house is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Phone 864/225-0012.

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John Martin's message to readers of Martin's Corner

Editor's Note: As many of you now by know, John Martin was involved in a very serious accident in Vernon, Texas, in early April. A hitch for a horse trailer on a pickup in the opposite lane failed, and the runaway trailer struck Martin's vehicle head on with a major impact.

Martin wanted to share an update with all of you, and also to pass along his sincere appreciation for all of your positive thoughts, prayers and well wishes during his recovery.



BY JOHN E MARTIN
PVF industry veteran

“I came home from the rehab hospital Wednesday afternoon April 25. The staff said although I was scheduled to stay until at last May 3, I was progressing so well that there was nothing else they would do for me that could not be done as an out patient two to three days a week with them — so that set up the transition to out patient care.

“I went from the hospital Wednesday afternoon directly to my personal private care doctor to bring him up to speed and to check in with his feelings to be sure they were in tune with all the other doctors and if not why not! All was okay to get started with the setting up of therapy sessions, exams, new doctor meetings (broken neck bone C-7), routine sessions, etc., etc.

“So, I currently have therapy/treatment sessions on Monday/Wednesday/Friday each week of various kinds and levels for two hours per day.

“NEWS FLASH — This huge neck brace (a real pain in the neck) was scheduled to be worn by me (constantly) for 10 to 12 weeks for the healing and protection of the C-7 vertebra (carotid artery passes through this bone area, so

it's a pretty critical area, huh?). Well, while seeing my surgeon recently, he informed me and showed me complete new x-rays that now confirm the need for surgery on the neck as C-6 & C-7 are cracked and truly must be repaired and fused like now! Wow, a surprise for sure, but in reality if all goes well, I will be back to semi-normal faster than just waiting to see what happens, know what I mean?

“The other major piece of injury is the six cracked ribs that are trying to heal. My goodness they really hurt like crazy, but at times seems to be a little less each day. I will keep you all posted as to conditions, and I assure you as someone famous or infamous said one day, “I’LL BE BACK!” There is yet lots to do for you from me! And sincerely, thank you all so much for your concern, care, cards, letters, flowers and candies!”

See ya back in the Corner real soon,
Love and Blessings to you all,
John (\$6 Million and One Dollar Man) ■

Maryland geothermal heat pump RPS bill passes

WASHINGTON — The “Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard - Renewable Energy Credits - Geothermal Heating and Cooling” bill (SB 652 and HB 1186) has passed in Maryland. The legislation effectively makes geothermal heat pumps (GHPs) an accepted technology available for renewable energy credits (RECs) under the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard mandate.

The Maryland standard stipulates that electricity suppliers (all utilities and competitive retail suppliers) use renewable energy sources to generate a minimum portion of their retail sales, to a level of 20% by 2022. Electricity suppliers demonstrate compliance with the standard by accumulating RECs.

The legislation is the first of its kind in the U.S. Among many industry and agency stakeholders, the Geothermal Exchange Organization (GEO) lent support and written testimony that were crucial to the success of the measure. In late-2011, GEO started work with the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to change the state's policy and legislation regarding GHPs. Following a

stakeholders meeting in early December, MEA increased existing incentive caps for GHP installations from \$1,000 to \$3,000 for residential units and \$10,000 for commercial units.

MEA Geothermal program manager Doug Hinrichs noted several reasons for including GHPs in the Maryland RPS:

- More technology options to meet renewable energy procurement mandates;
- Reducing “first cost” of GHPs for home and business owners;
- Increasing local economic development (well drillers, heat pump installers, HVAC industry) and
- Reducing the use of conventional energy, including coal, nuclear and fuel oil.

“Utilities that harness this distributed, thermal renewable energy resource at a scale large enough to earn RECs will also improve their annual load factors. Higher annual load factors provide a downward pressure on electricity prices,” said GEO president Doug Dougherty.

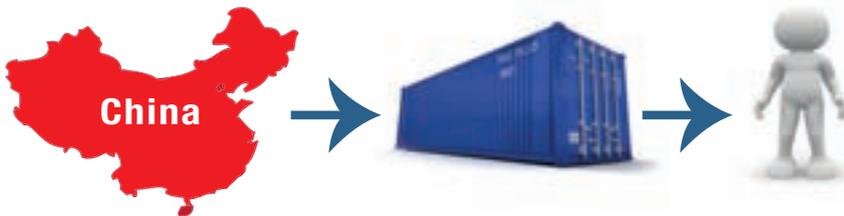
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Turn time: 1 week to 40 days, air or sea freight option.



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General celebrates 90 years of innovation; marks role in founding NHS

NEW YORK — General Tools & Instruments is celebrating a remarkable milestone: the 90th anniversary of product innovation from its headquarters in New York City. General is also proud to call attention to its role in launching the first-ever National Hardware Show.

At the end of World War II, as the last American troops returned home from “over there,” the nation’s hard-

The first NHS was held at New York City’s Grand Central Palace in March 1946 and attracted about 300 manufacturers.

ware industry was poised to fulfill the dreams of young families eager to build their first homes. At that time, the “Hardware District” of lower Manhattan burst with small businesses producing hand tools and home furnishings. Today, only General remains.

The NYC hardware industry of the

mid-1940s, while comprised largely of family-run businesses whose owners were friendly competitors was, in reality, rather fragmented. Then, one pioneering member of this circle brainstormed what would become a monumental idea: Bring together hardware makers and sellers not only in the city, but throughout the nation, to showcase their products and the entire industry. That pioneer was Abe Rosenberg, founder of General Hardware Manufacturing Company (now General Tools & Instruments), and that showcase event was the first National Hardware Show.

The first NHS was held at New York City’s Grand Central Palace in March 1946 and attracted about 300 manufacturers. Today, the show is held at the Las Vegas Convention Center and boasts more than 2,000 exhibitors and 20,000 attendees.

General Tools & Instruments began as General Hardware in 1922 as the



brainchild of Abe and Lillian Rosenberg. In its inaugural year, General introduced what was then a revolutionary specialty item, the egg slicer. In its early days, the company developed numerous other “hard goods,” offering a full-range of domestic and professional items from clothesline pulleys and screen-door hardware to specialty hand tools. With Lillian running the store, Abe took to the roads of New York and New England, searching for machine shops to manufacture his tools. By 1930, he had outsourced a small line of specialty items, including circle cutters, metal punches and pocket screwdrivers.

For the next 40 years, Abe continually generated new product ideas for commercial and consumer use. Upon his death in 1977, his daughter

Dorothy (Weinstein) took the reins and continued to augment the scope of General’s product offerings. Today, General Tools & Instruments remains very much a family business, owned and operated by Dorothy’s sons Gerald and Martin. General has expanded its product line to include more than 1,500 specialty tools and instruments designed to meet the most demanding needs of professionals, technicians, craftsmen and DIY-ers in a wide variety of trades.

Visit www.generaltools.com.

OBITUARY

Michael Burr, national sales manager, Holyoke Fittings

It is with deep regret that Holyoke Fittings Inc. announces that Michael W. Burr, the company’s national sales manager, died after a brief battle with cancer on May 17 at JFK Haven Hospice. He was surrounded by his loving family. Born in Panama in 1946, Burr grew up in Alabama, and he and his wife raised their family in New Jersey.

For the past three decades, Burr was a committed friend, colleague and mentor to all in the plumbing and HVAC/R industries. He will be greatly missed by all he touched.

Burr proudly served an enlistment in the United States Navy. He was a lifetime member of the Read Valley Fish & Game Club in NY; a Piscataway Little League and Babe Ruth coach; an avid hunter and golfer; an international traveler and a Mason.

Most importantly he was a loving husband, father, brother and grandfather. Burr is survived by his wife of 46 years, Kirsten, sons Michael and Matthew, sister Gene and six grandchildren.

Visitation was at the Piscataway Funeral Home, 18 Stelton Road, Piscataway, N.J. 08854, phone number 732-968-2828. To send your online condolences to the Burr family, please visit: www.piscatawayfuneral-home.com.

Interment took place on Tuesday May 22 at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Cemetery in Wrightstown, N.J.

At the request of the family, donations in Mike’s name may be made to JFK Haven Hospice, 65 James Street, Edison, NJ 08818, phone number 732-321-7769.

For further information, call 718-649-0710.



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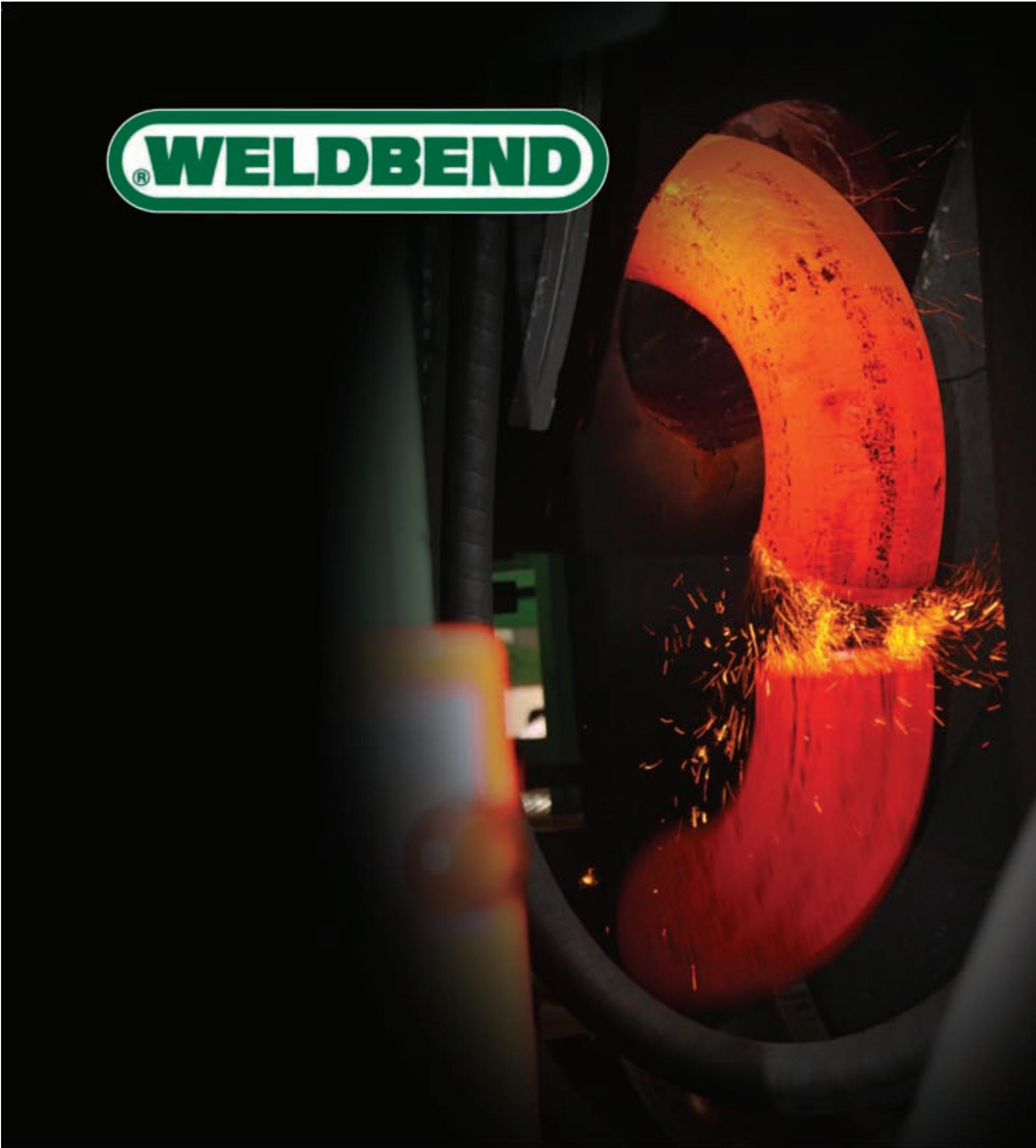
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Standard Plumbing Supply evolves through innovation

Six decades in business



BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

Now celebrating 60 years in business, Standard Plumbing Supply has continued to grow and evolve thanks to innovative distribution concepts, including a master distribution segment that now accounts for 20% of total sales.

Founder Dale Reese is considered by many to be the originator of self-service wholesaling in this industry

—he later referred to the concept as “an open store.”

Reese was a World War II veteran who served under Gen. Patton. When he returned from service, he attended NYU under the GI Bill and earned a masters degree in retail merchandising. Reese interned at Macy’s and Gimbel’s in the millinery and fine china departments before returning home to Utah. After serving in sales for another whole-



saler, he decided to start his own business. Much was changing in the retail store landscape — Sam Walton had recently converted his first Ben Franklin franchise to self service — and Reese believed that self-service was the way to go.

“It changed the way people looked at wholesaling, and it was an adjustment for our customers,” said Richard Reese, the founder’s son



Richard Reese, president

who is now president of the company. “Now our customers are very used to it, and it’s proven successful for everyone concerned.”

A unique footprint

The unique geography of Standard’s territory also required them to organize their operations a little differently than many — setting up a series of satellite stores in the late 1990s. In total, Standard operates 64 (Turn to *The original... page 34.*)

“A lot of the smaller towns were used to only getting wholesale deliveries a couple of times a week. We thought there was a good market for a physical store where they could buy, anytime they needed, material.”



Management team members are (from left): Joey Gray, head of purchasing; Diane Magario, showroom director; Richard Reese, president; Dave Freeman, vice president; Matt Freeman, showroom services and procurement; and Matt Larsen, sales manager.

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34. *Master Distribution*

The original 'open store': Standard Plumbing Supply

(Continued from page 32.)

locations with 310 employees in eight states: Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona and California.

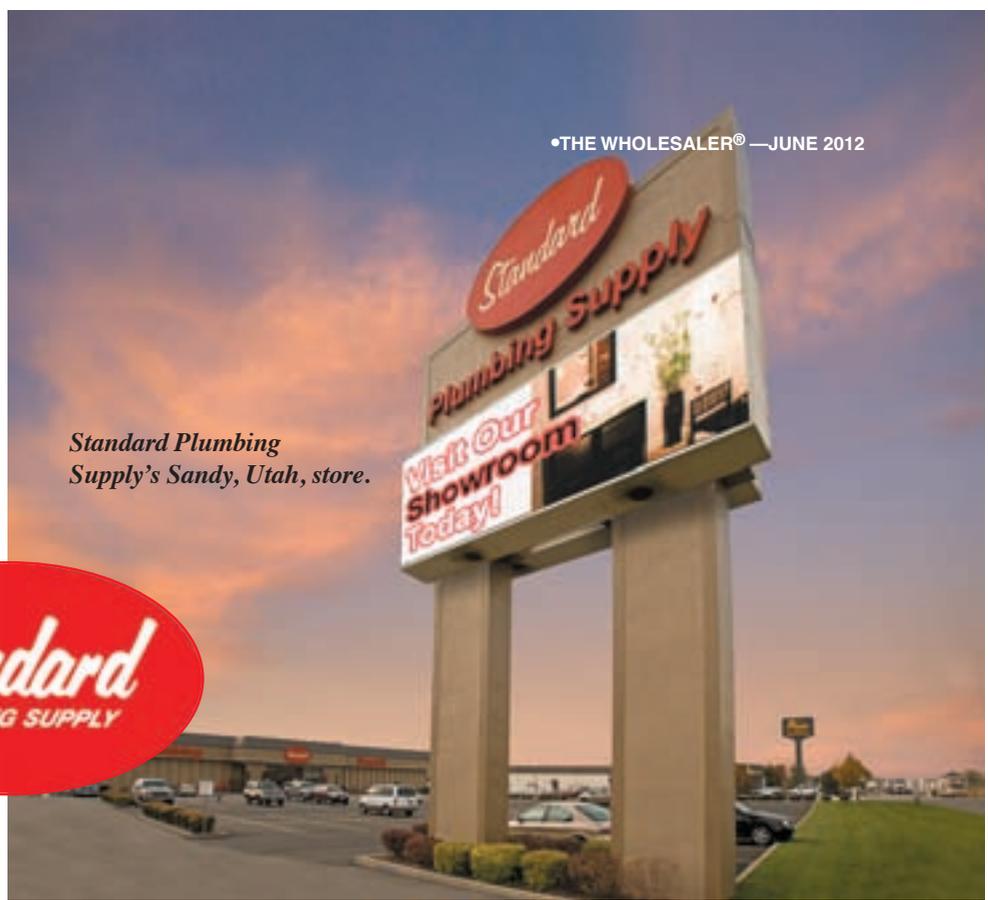
"We're here in the Mountain States and there is a lot of windshield

"We sort product the minute it comes in and send it right back out. We don't keep a lot on our shelves here. Company wide, we typically have about \$24 million in inventory at any given time."

time between small cities," Reese explained. "A lot of the smaller towns were used to only getting wholesale deliveries a couple of times a week. We thought there was a good market for a physical store where they could buy, anytime they needed, material. Many of our locations are in small towns. Each store has a budget and some autonomy on what they carry because we don't know or understand their markets as well as they do. They are serviced regularly by our Stock Support warehouse in Sandy as we get product in from vendors. We have 19 tractors and 50 trailers that are hauling material to our locations constantly."



Standard Plumbing Supply's Sandy, Utah, store.



In addition, Standard relies on auto replenishment that is based on the past 90 days' history. If the branches can't sell product, they ship it back to the headquarters, which then re-sorts it and sends it to another location that

has a bigger market for it. "We rarely have to do vendor returns because we can typically find a way to sell those products through another branch. We have a DC that follows the WalMart (Turn to Standard... page 36.)

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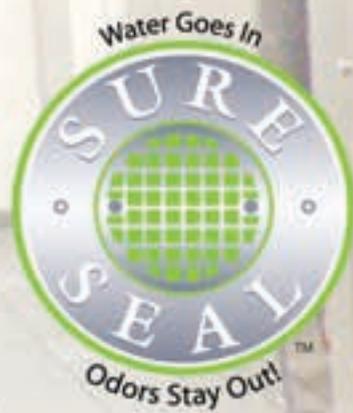
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Standard Plumbing Supply a 60-year hit with customers

(Continued from page 34.)

platform on inventory. We don't put it on the shelf and pull it again, which I believe allows us to offer a broader depth of inventory than many. We sort product the minute it comes in and send it right back out. We don't keep a lot on our shelves here. Company wide, we typically have about \$24 million in inventory at any given time."

And when it comes to vendors, Standard has built long-term relationships with many of its channel partners. They will add new vendors as needed based on customer demand. Reese emphasized that, "We're really

responding to the demand that has been created in the marketplace by the manufacturer, rather than trying to convince the customer to switch. We want to fulfill our customers' needs rather than dictate to them."

Last fall, Standard acquired MWI, a Southern California-based plumbing wholesaler with two locations, which gained the company entry into the WIT buying group. According to Reese, "We've actually been able to double our remittances through WIT compared to our prior buying group in just a few months."

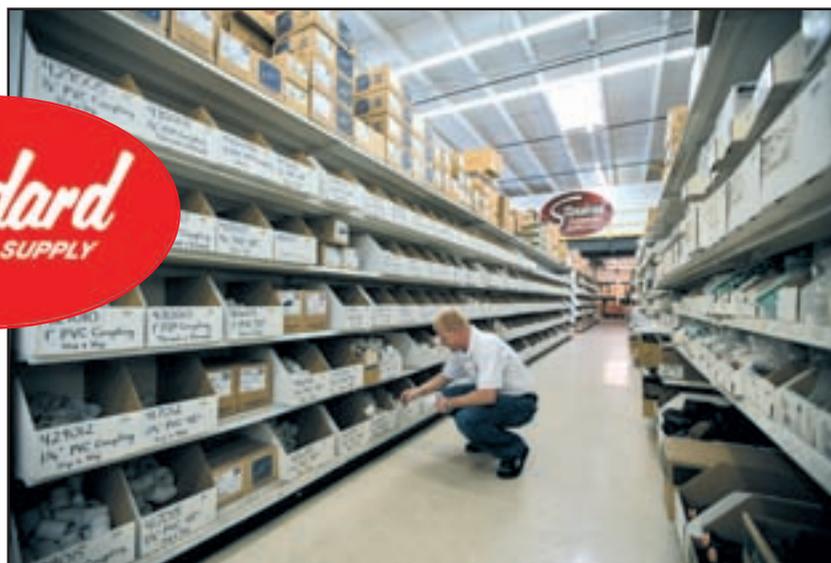
Showrooms have also played a key role in Standard's growth over the



All of Standard's stores are serviced regularly by its Stock Support warehouse as product comes in from vendors. Standard has 19 tractors and 50 trailers that are hauling material its locations constantly.



Showrooms have also played a key role in Standard's growth over the years. Under vice president Dave Freeman's direction, the company has increased its showroom footprint and now has 48 showrooms that range in size from 1,000 to 14,000 square feet.



The Sandy, Utah, store's neat aisles. Standard's founder Dale Reese is often credited as the innovator of the 'self-service wholesaling' concept. 'It changed the way people looked at wholesaling,' said his son Richard, now president of the company, 'and it's proven successful for everyone concerned.'

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years. Led by vice president Dave Freeman, Standard has put a greater emphasis on showrooms — a decision that has proven instrumental to their business.

"We've always had a small space for showrooms in our locations, but

"Obviously, brick and mortar are not necessarily important in terms of location. We're able to leverage all the inventory into one facility and it makes it easier for us to support our customers."

under Dave's direction that has grown tremendously. The fixture business has become a significant part in our growth. Our 48 showrooms range from 1,000 to 14,000 square feet. Most are located on well-traveled (Turn to Providing... page 38.)

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Providing a much-needed service

(Continued from page 36.)

streets. At our Sandy location, we have an electronic sign on I-15 that 193,000 people pass by every day. Manufacturers can promote their products on the sign. Our contractors and consumer customers are very loyal.”

Moving into master distribution

As Reese described, Standard’s master distribution business, Showroom Services, was created in part to supply its own showrooms with just-in-time product.

Most of Standard’s customers — including their own stores — place orders electronically. This allows them to pull and ship inventory seamlessly. In fact, according to Reese, very few of their orders are entered by hand anymore.

He noted that while the master distribution segment of their business is similar in that it is two-step distribution to the customer, there are some unique differences. “Obviously, brick and mortar are not necessarily important in terms of location,” Reese commented.

According to Reese, one of the factors that has helped their master distribution business expand is the fact that manufacturers have created too many SKUs — making it difficult for many wholesalers to carry everything. So they turn to master distributors like Standard to shore up those offerings.

“We’re able to leverage all the inventory into one facility and it makes it easier for us to support our customers. We have a different sales force — eight inside salespeople — for our master distribution business and a different approach to sales. Actually that team of salespeople handles very few orders. Instead, they provide technical expertise, follow up with orders and handle returns. The pricing is extremely slim, but unlike what we often encounter in our traditional wholesale business, it’s typically not up for negotiation. Our master distribution business is primarily high dollar-per-pound items, rather than the commodity side of the business.”

According to Reese, one of the factors that has helped their master distribution business expand is the fact that manufacturers have created too many SKUs — making it difficult for many wholesalers to carry everything. So they turn to master distributors like Standard to shore up those offerings. In addition to selling to other wholesalers, Standard’s master distribution arm also serves national and local retailers.

“I think there will always be a place for local and master distributors,” Reese said. “The challenges with freight and other factors make wholesalers a necessary business to get products to customers. And master distributors provide a much-needed service by rapidly getting the right product in the right hands.” ■

For additional information, visit www.standardplumbing.com.

(See Master Distributor Directory on page 40.)

Standard Plumbing Supply holds 12th Annual Product Show

Standard Plumbing Supply held its 12th annual product show on March 22 at its headquarters in Sandy, Utah. Founded in 1952 by Dale Reese, this was a very special year as Standard Plumbing Supply is celebrating their 60th anniversary. “60 Years in Business” was the theme for the product show. More than 2,700 guests attended from eight western states. Customers had their photos taken in front of a 1948 Chevy delivery truck, a replica of Standard Plumbing Supply’s first delivery truck in 1952.

This was the company’s largest product show

to date with 137 booths and over 200 manufacturers and vendors. 2600 meals were served during the show and while guests dined, a collage of the most memorable highlights and factoids from 1952 played on a huge screen. Customers really took advantage of product specials that day. They played bingo to earn chances to spin Standard’s wheel of fortune for cash and prizes. Hundreds of door prizes were given away and one lucky customer won the grand prize — a 47" flat screen HD TV.

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CIPH gala supports Habitat for Humanity Canada

TORONTO — More than 320 industry members, spouses and guests attended a spectacular gala evening in support of Habitat for Humanity Canada at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto. The evening included a silent auction featuring many wonderful wine collections, followed by an outstanding performance by internationally renowned impressionist Martin Dubé.

“Since our partnership with Habitat for Humanity began in 1994, members have donated over \$8.1 million to Habitat for Humanity. CIPH members continue to take pride and a leadership role in addressing the need of affordable and decent housing by providing energy efficient modern hot water heating systems and water efficient plumbing products,” stated CIPH chairman of the board Kevin



Fullan (Flacor).

The 2012/2013 Fundraising Committee announced an aggressive goal to raise \$2.75 million in product and cash for Habitat for Humanity Canada by the end of 2013. To date, including proceeds from the gala's silent auction, members have generously donated more than \$533,000.

Thank you to the following major donors who have already pledged both product and cash to the 2012/2013 fundraising campaign. A major donor is a company donating more than \$25,000 (\$5,000 must be in the form of a cash donation):

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- Aqua Tech Sales & Marketing/Weil McLain Canada Sales Inc.
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- Usines Giant Factories
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The CIPH board announced that the ninth CIPH-sponsored home

build will take place in Ottawa in 2012. A celebration event is being planned for June 27 in conjunction with CIPH's annual business conference, June 24 – 26, 2012, in Montebello, Quebec.

Visit www.ciph.com.

NKBA launches career center

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J. —The NKBA's Kitchen & Bath Career Center, found at KitchenAndBathCareerCenter.com, serves as one of the premier electronic recruitment resources for the



industry. Employers and recruiters can access the most qualified talent pool with relevant work experience to fulfill staffing needs.

Job seekers can post their resumes, where they can be discovered by industry firms looking for new employees and can easily search for the ideal position, narrowing the search by

state or province, category, level, type, country and education. Openings can be filtered by salary, allowing for even greater definition in matching expectations between employer and employee.

The NKBA, in continuing to find ways to meet the needs of the membership and the industry, launched this targeted career site so that companies of all sizes in all areas of the kitchen and bath industry can connect with their ideal pool of candidates. In turn, qualified professionals can maximize their time in taking the next career step by streamlining the search process.

Visit www.nkba.org.

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**Creating
a buzz**

Werner speech at KBIS focuses on future opportunities

BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

The buzz at this year's Kitchen & Bath Industry Show wasn't just about the exhibits on the show floor, although they were fabulous as always. It was bigger than that. In fact, the buzz this year came from a place more powerful and inspiring than what we've seen at KBIS for years — maybe decades.

Michael Werner, the CEO and president of Globe Union and Danze,



Michael Werner, CEO/president of Globe Union and Danze

gave an extremely informative and forward-thinking State of the Industry address to hundreds of showgoers. The interactive, multi-media presentation was entertaining, but more than anything, it challenged the industry to think and work differently in months and years to come.

While I wish I could share the entire presentation with you (it's worth watching it at www.danze.com/SeeChangeConnect) here are some of the highlights I think could motivate you to act on Werner's vision and position your business for growth and success.

See.Change.Connect

Werner structured his presentation around three main points:

- **See** — A look at the industry as we know it. Where we were, where we are today and where we're heading near-term.

- **Change** — An exploration of new



technologies that are creating opportunities for the industry.

- **Connect** — An insight into how we can all benefit by leveraging the Internet to connect and create a new business model.

His bottom line? "I believe our industry is on the cusp of an exciting transformation," he said. "And if we combine the potential of technology and the internet, with our professional expertise, our best days lie ahead."

See: A state of the industry

Werner's presentation started out painting an unfortunate, but realistic picture of where we've stood in recent years.

"We went from over two million housing starts and record remodeling expenditures, to the mortgage crisis and a kitchen and bath industry that contracted by nearly 40%," he said.

As an example of how one company paralleled the industry's roller coaster ride over the last decade, Werner shared his professional experience as CEO of Danze.

According to Werner, 10 years ago the market was hungry for a company that combined fresh styles, finely crafted products and affordable price points. He helped build that company and called it Danze. From the beginning the company was very different — playful and progressive. For years they saw great growth — until the housing crash hit.

"Instead of panicking, we did what any strong organization should do," Werner said. "We analyzed our business from top to bottom, identified weaknesses and opportunities, and made significant changes."

It was during this time that Werner and his team were inspired by Simon Sinek's book, *Start with Why*. They turned inward and began an extraordinary journey that revolved around this idea: It's not *what* you do; it's *why* you do it.

"This is a really powerful concept," stated Werner. "It got us thinking about three critical questions that we encourage each of you to ask about your own business:

- Why do we exist?
- What do we believe?
- How do we bring our beliefs to life?

"We reflected on how, day-in and day-out, Danze products impact the



Michael Werner, CEO and president of Globe Union and Danze, delivered an informative and forward-thinking State of the Industry address at K/BIS 2012. The entertaining, interactive, multi-media presentation challenged the industry to think and work differently in months and years to come.

lives of families and individuals on an emotional level," he continued. "This ended up reaffirming that our three questions were exactly the right ones we should be asking."

Hope in the industry

"The recent state of our industry has been terrible — no amount of sugar coating will make it better," said Werner. "And it's been incredibly painful for us and our whole country. But there is hope."

Werner went on to cite these promising statistics:

- According to Hanley Wood, 2012 housing starts should grow by double digits, albeit from historically low levels.

- The NAHB estimates that there are more than two million homes' worth of pent-up demand.

- The prestigious Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, projects new household formations will average more than 1.2 million annually over the next decade.

- An increase in home resales — especially those abused foreclosures — will also contribute to a recovery in remodeling, as many homeowners undertake projects within just two years of buying an existing home.

- Although the \$300-billion remodeling market fell 25% during the housing crash, it's rebounding. It's projected to grow at a 3% to 5% compounded rate for several years.

- As consumers stay in their residences longer — especially the 60% of Baby Boomers who plan to age in place — they're eager to improve their homes.

- Kitchen and bath remodels consistently top the list of most desired projects with nearly \$40 billion spent annually.

- Remodeling activity will also be driven by the increasing age of U.S. housing stock, which at a median of 37 years, is now the oldest in history.

- Nearly 80% of homes are at peak remodeling age!

Although the statistics are finally

starting to change in our favor, Werner stated that to capitalize on it, we must be responsive to the changing needs of our trade customers and ultimately the homeowner.

"People now want products that are not only cool and beautiful; they want them to be ecologically friendly as well," said Werner. "And people are busier than ever so they're looking for smart solutions that save time and effort."

Werner also pointed out that new ethnic and demographic groups continue to enter the market. Their tastes are likely to be different than those of

"Instead of panicking, we did what any strong organization should do. We analyzed our business from top to bottom, identified weaknesses and opportunities, and made significant changes."

— Michael Werner

the traditional baby boomer families that led the market for decades.

"As kitchen and bath experts, we must be responsive to the changing needs of these customers," he said. "As form follows function, lifestyle follows technology. If a new technology makes life easier, more productive and fun, people will embrace and eventually depend on it."

The impact of technology

Technology is surrounding us each day. But many in our industry are intimidated by it, confused by it, or down right scared of it.

According to Werner, "One day soon, technology will radically change how your business, showroom and design studio looks and operates. The 'winners' of the future will be those who learn how to successfully integrate technology into their daily businesses."

(Turn to K/B... page 50.)

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See contact information on page 90

K/B industry looking forward

(Continued from page 48.)

He continued, “One thing’s for sure. Future showrooms will be infinitely larger. That’s because the showroom experience will start with customers visiting your virtual showroom, on-line. So in addition to your professional expertise, shoppers will have a heightened sensory experience. They won’t just be looking around your showroom; they’ll be living it — with enhanced technologies such as holographic displays and virtual reality.”

Werner shared several examples of

“We believe there are real opportunities for showrooms, designers and wholesalers to form mutually advantageous commercial relationships with e-commerce retailers.”

software tools that can help bring spaces to life in today’s business (ATS from Toronto, YF CAD from China, 20-20 Technologies from Montreal and others).

“A technology-infused lifestyle is no longer aspirational, it’s life,” he said. “Think of yourself as a consumer. You’re accustomed to instant gratification. You want what you want how, where and when you want it. In fact, we are all typical consumers. And like us, our customers utilize technology to learn about home products, just as we all do about music, books and travel.”

Traditionally, retailers have seen online and physical stores as competing businesses. But according to Werner, customers aren’t thinking that hard about which channel is serving them — they just care about convenience and perceived value.

“A key question for our industry

going forward has to be ‘How do you communicate your perceived value while seamlessly blending the physical and digital worlds?’” he said.

High tech, high touch

In recent years, the primary positive effect of the Internet on the kitchen and bath industry has been ever-present information. Unfortunately, the principal negative affect has been pricing pressure on showrooms. However, Werner went on to explain how these two worlds can, should and must live together in our industry.

Werner shared a key principal from quantum physicist Michio Kaku’s book, *Physics of the Future*, which he calls the ‘caveman principal.’ According to Kaku, we are biologically wired

our ability to adapt and change will be the key to our growth and vitality.

“It begs the question: How can we ride the Internet to grow our business?” Werner continued.

This is where the vision of See.Change.Connect comes in. “It’s ultimately a vision of connectivity, which will mean more sales and profits for everyone. The bottom line objective is to create win-win relationships between all the industry players, including e-commerce sites,” said Werner.

“We believe there are real opportunities for showrooms, designers and wholesalers to form mutually advantageous commercial relationships with e-commerce retailers. And based on our conversations with several of



Werner challenged his audience to ask themselves questions for which there are no solid, hard-and-fast answers.

to prefer face-to-face communications. Kaku believes there’s an ongoing competition between High Tech and High Touch. For example, sitting watching TV versus getting up and interacting with the world around us and why in a wired world we still go to live concerts and travel for pleasure.

“In this competition, we want both,” says Werner. “It’s why consumers do research online and then walk into the showroom to touch products in person. Now if all this is true, then it’s safe to say that no matter how advanced our technology gets, one-on-one communication will never become extinct. In fact, rather than technology separating us from our humanity, it will most likely help us rediscover it.”

The beginning of a new world

There is no doubt the Internet is changing the way we do things. And, with new technologies emerging every day, our industry must stay open to utilizing and extending these technologies to our trade partners and homeowners. According to Werner,

the leading etailers, we’re confident that they agree.”

Werner explained that his Vision of Connectivity is based on three basic truths about today’s market:

- The Internet is phenomenal at generating traffic, but lousy at closing sales. Many K & B Internet sites have millions of visitors each month because consumers love how easy it is to find information. But for those sites that sell products, the average closure rate on-line is less than 2%.

- Showrooms and designers are great at closing sales, but lousy at generating traffic. Many showrooms close 50% to 70% of their opportunities because consumers love designers’ great ideas and confidence. But traffic is light and only 22 people visit the average showroom per month.

- Combine these two truths with the ‘high touch’ caveman principle, and it’s easy to understand why most home improvement shoppers research on-line, but end up making their purchases locally. If only we could make meaningful connections

(Turn to Adapt... page 52.)

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52. *State of the Industry*

Adapt, change, prosper

(Continued from page 50.)

between the Internet and showrooms. We could turn these weaknesses into strengths, and drive more traffic to showrooms, generating more sales overall.

Although many of Werner's examples that day were specific to designers and showrooms, he believes there will be new opportunities to link plumbers, builders, remodelers and wholesalers into the equation as well. The more complex a project, the more value showrooms, designers and these other professionals add to the process.

"Homeowners are more likely to turn to a trusted professional when selecting several items or designing an entire kitchen or bathroom," he said. "The more difficult the project, the lower their confidence and the greater their need for guidance from K&B professionals. And while con-

sumers may research online, they're less likely to purchase through an e-commerce site if their project is complicated," Werner continued. "So now the challenge is: What's the best way to get the online eyeballs the help they need?" he said.

Werner went on to explain an actionable strategy that benefits trade partners, homeowners and etailers: the Portal-2-Prosperityism.

This collection of specific technology and marketing based initiatives will bring the See.Change.Connect vision to life. Every initiative is designed to enable participants to link with other players in the channel as a way to grow sales and profits.

To help jumpstart the efforts, Danze (of which Werner is CEO and president) will be spending much of this year introducing several initiatives to its partners. Here are just a few:

- Like the "Fan Cam" at a sporting



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There are more than two million homes' worth of pent-up demand, and 2012 housing starts should grow by double digits. As consumers stay in their residences longer, they want to improve their homes; with nearly 80% of homes now at peak remodeling age, that's a lot of potential business.

event, the first concept is a designer showcase that displays great work while generating meaningful leads. This also builds traffic for showrooms, and links them to designers, manufacturers and other internet sites. Danze will be launching a new website this summer that will connect registered designers and showrooms

to consumers in their area.

- Danze will also offer tools that will help their registered showrooms showcase designers on their websites.
 - For even greater exposure, Danze will offer designers and showrooms outbound marketing opportunities and link them to third
- (Turn to Thriving... page 54.)

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Advertorial

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Thriving in a new world

(Continued from page 52.)

party sites such Houzz.com (which features the Internet's largest database of design and decorating ideas, including 400,000 high-quality photos, thousands of articles by design experts, product recommendations, and social media tools).

"Think about showrooms helping designers reach more consumers, and

"We believe there are real opportunities for showrooms, designers and wholesalers to form mutually advantageous commercial relationships with e-commerce retailers. And based on our conversations with several of the leading retailers, we're confident that they agree."

brands bringing you leads. Now that's the Vision of Connectivity in action," stated Werner.

Poised for success

Utilizing these concepts and engaging in more partner discussions are just a couple ways showrooms, designers, wholesalers and others can begin to see success.

According to Werner, one way to begin and maintain these conversations is using co-branded tools that are being developed for more targeted consumer engagement programs.

"Wilkinson Supply, a high-end showroom operator and wholesaler in North Carolina, is on the right track for customer engagement by the way they train employees with nine pages of customer commitment guidelines," said Werner. "This includes every showroom visitor receiving a hand written thank you note."

"Just think how their team will get even closer to customers as they leverage the Internet and thoughtfully engage consumers. By using videos, blogs, surveys and other marketing communications, many in conjunction with their suppliers and designers, new business potential for Wilkinson is unlimited. Can you imagine the possibilities for them? Or you?"

Werner also suggested that showrooms and plumbing wholesalers begin to engage in e-commerce by partnering with others, as he believes the physical and virtual worlds are blending together. But he was quick to point out the realities of the situation: "We're not suggesting you hire 20 programmers and start a new Internet business. We're just recommending that showrooms and stocking wholesalers partner with industry players, including e-tailers and other third party service providers, to offer state-of-the-art e-commerce capable websites."

He admitted that some businesses will choose to only offer informa-

tion, while others may want full e-commerce capable sites. "It's all good," he said. "As is a designer's version that will enable product selection, 3-D room design, and ordering through showrooms and plumbing wholesalers."

Werner's closing once again challenged everyone's opinions on whether the Internet is a positive or negative force in our industry. "I hope you're now thinking that there are a lot more exciting opportunities out there than you ever realized. And you can't wait to get started," he said.

"If we leverage the power of technology and the Internet, the future of the kitchen and bath industry will be very, very bright. It's in our hands to connect with more people and build more business. And all we have to do is link up and work together." ■

For more information about Werner's *See.Change.Connect.* vision, visit www.SeeChangeConnect.com.

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Pipeline construction adds thrust to U.S. oil infrastructure development

Although the eventual fate of the Trans-Canada XL oil pipeline construction, directing Canada's explosively fast-growing oil sands conversion toward major U.S. refineries, is in jeopardy, long overdue redistribution of the growing oil glut in Cushing, Oklahoma's huge inventory centralization is on the verge of being rectified. The first step, already underway by Enbridge Pipelines Inc., is reversing the flow of its existing pipeline from the Gulf of Mexico toward Cushing's Oklahoma inventory to the Gulf Coast refinery complexes around Houston and southern Louisiana.

Enbridge is also planning to connect non-oil sands Canadian energy resources with the U.S. Midwest, as well as Canada's own eastern Canadian supply needs, including a number of refineries in that area. Enbridge is further asking approval to transport oil production from North Dakota's Bakken Belt and the Three Forks shale formation in Montana to refineries in the U.S., as well as eastern Canada.

With the expansion of hydraulic fracturing and horizontal extraction

providing sizable new oil production in the continental U.S., the lack of a balanced system of pipeline networks to regional refineries in all parts of the nation is becoming a matter of extreme urgency. Even without the previously hoped-for 100% potential emanating from Alberta Province's oil sands conversion, the glut produced by internal U.S. crude oil increase makes it imperative that a national infrastructural system facilitating crude oil distribution to regionally situated refineries be instituted. This makes the additional crude oil available quickly, efficiently and at minimum cost.

The missing link in this increasingly optimistic energy scenario leading to eventual energy independence is how the top-level U.S. leadership will react to the golden opportunity that technological breakthroughs and millions of potential new barrels of crude oil have presented to the American nation. Not the least of the advantages that this pipeline resurgence is offering is the need for, eventually, several hundred thousand construction workers that this cumulative buildup will require

in the months and years ahead.

With the general election only little more than five months from now, the final choices made by the American people will have a huge bearing on the success or failure of such ambitious, but potentially rewarding, results.

Oil/natural gas divergence reaches all-time record

The unprecedented price gap between the price of oil and its natural gas equivalent has reached a point of puzzlement, provoking a need for logical explanation. What is particularly confusing is the fact that oil prices have skyrocketed, while U.S. natural gas prices are at a near-generational low.

To set the stage, oil prices as a multiple of natural gas costs have reached a level of 8.35 times, after decades where this disparity hardly ever digressed from a two-to-one ratio. Although the gap started widening during the 2008–10 Great Recession, it shot up like a rocket in the past year, with regular gasoline climbing 30%, and the equivalent natural gas amount dropping 71% during that same time period.



BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS
PVF and economic analyst emeritus

The answers to this riddle are intertwined in a combination of extraction, marketing issues and geopolitical interference. The following points should lend clarification to my most frequently asked questions:

Natural gas... does not lend itself to global pricing, since it's heavily dependent on pipelines and the cumbersome conversion to liquid natural gas, which adds substantially to transportation costs. Although becoming a dominant factor in power generation and heating elements, its use in transportation is limited...

- Crude oil prices are driven by a globally-efficient market dominated by the primarily Islamic OPEC nations, which control almost one-third of the proven global reserves. Barring unforeseen military activity, a universal availability of tankers can move oil from one destination to another almost instantaneously. Although oil and oil derivatives are becoming infrequently used for power generation, they are still widely used for automotive and air transportation as well as for heating and a wide variety of end uses, such as plastics and chemicals. In the past 50 years, new oil reserves have been more difficult to reach, making extraction increasingly more costly as deep sea drilling has become the source of a higher percentage of new discoveries.

- Natural gas, on the other hand, does not lend itself to global pricing, since it's heavily dependent on pipelines and the cumbersome conversion to liquid natural gas, which adds substantially to transportation costs. Although becoming a dominant factor in power generation and heating elements, its use in transportation is limited to vehicles that are dependent on headquarters refilling, such as buses and fleets of

Hall of Fame presentation saved by industry leaders

BY MORRIS R. BESCHLOSS

The 11th anniversary of the highly-respected PVF Hall of Fame induction ceremony — the centerpiece of the PVF Roundtable's second quarter-annual meeting — held in May in Houston, was flawlessly orchestrated by *The Wholesaler's* editorial director Mary Jo Martin. The event of the evening was to be the presentation of the 43rd entrant, to JABO's Jack Bazemore, as the recipient of the coveted immortalization of industry manufacturers, distributors, and related associations, in which 42 others had previously been celebrated.

But the real drama before an enthusiastic 300 PVF industry movers and shakers occurred under the radar screen, orchestrated by the exceptionally popular, but self-effacing CEO of Weldbend Jimmy Coulas, whose many good works in the past have been done without fanfare. Thanks to Jimmy, what could have been an inability for the honoree,

Jack Bazemore, CEO of JABO, and key members of his team, to be present, turned out to be what the JABO founder himself described as his

Jimmy Coulas dispatches the Weldbend private jet to retrieve 2012's honoree Jack Bazemore.

most profound industry moment.

When Weldbend's Steve Letko heard about this unfortunate turn of events, it was already after lunch in Chicago. He immediately got in touch with Coulas, who was tied up with out-of-town business guests, but who positively acquiesced in Letko's request to attempt the pickup of Bazemore, Curtis Drown and Patrick Hughes. (Jay Bazemore had flown into Houston the previous day to attend the IPD board meeting.)

Coulas never hesitated and followed that old British adage: "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer."

With little time to spare, Weld-

bend's jet not only made the trip from Chicago to Huntington in record time, but got the plane to Houston's Hobby Airport by 5:30 p.m. When a snag developed regarding clearance at the airport and getting Bazemore, Drown and Hughes to the meeting site on time, Houston-based Welding Outlet Inc.'s owner, Sheryl Michalak called Houston's outstanding professional chauffeur and security officer, Mike Tucker, to resolve this situation. By 6:30, the JABO Group was delivered safe and sound, in time to take part in the Hall of Fame activities, which Jack and son Jay, incoming IPD Chairman, did magnificently.

If there was a trophy for a "good deed" done on short notice, it would have to go to Jimmy, already noted as the ongoing benefactor of the highly acclaimed Weldbend/IPD Breakfast at the ASA Convention.

Jim, the Bazemores thank you, the Hall of Fame thanks you, and so does every member of our great PVF industry family.

pickup trucks.

The collapse of natural gas prices in the U.S. is primarily attributed to the hydraulic fracturing (fracking) revolution, in which natural gas that traditionally has been a flare-off of oil shale recovery also is recovered. Although it's expected that current Mideast political upheaval driving oil prices and the surplus of natural gas may both be tempered by eventual normalization, it's not expected, even in the long run, that the ratio will devolve into less than five to one from its current record peak. Both oil and natural gas may eventually see their prices mitigated to this level in the long term. It's doubtful, though, that we'll again see world prices of oil much below \$100 a barrel or natural gas over \$5 per one million Btu, even though the current energy equivalent between the two would then still price equivalent oil at below the \$50 per barrel level.

Long-term employment outlook due for slight improvement

An exhaustive study of various reports issued by the U.S. Labor Department and the Federal Reserve Board's 12 regional districts indicate a grudging but upward tilt in employment in the months leading up to the November 6 general election. With independent businesses providing the thrust, a slow but tentative overall employment growth is in the cards for the months ahead. While the vast majority of embattled, privately-owned employers, who do most U.S. hiring, are distrustful of the spate of intrusive government policies coming down the pike, most have taken steps to reduce their cost of doing business, especially in the area of reduced job costs.

I have yet to meet one owner or general manager among my hundreds of contacts that will hire anyone in anticipation of potential business increase. On the other hand, layoffs have slowed materially, since few indicate reduced activity, whether manufacturers, distributors or contractors, especially in the areas of energy, commercial and industrial construction or rehabbing existing facilities to make them more energy-efficient. Also getting more active is work on maintenance and repair to solidify existing edifices, while new residential home construction is practically non-existent.

Unquestionably, the overall employment picture is slowly improving, if at a snail's pace. To make the case, in February 2012 there were 3.66 unemployed people for each job

opening, the lowest level since 2008. This was a significant improvement over close to five prospective hires per position at the height of the recession in March 2009. But it's still a far cry from the 1.8 workers per vacancy in late 2007, at the peak of the pre-recession boom.

Much of any possibility for improvement in the current employment status will necessitate a reversal of the White House's incessant demand for legislative tightening of small business's flexibility in utilizing their accumulated cash for expansion, maintenance or supplementing of internal activities, such as additional product lines.

As long as these independent businesses are hemmed in by increasing federal government restrictions there are no available incentives for such organizations, other than to survive the current trough, hope for relief at the general elections or toughen up for hard times yet to come.

Renewable energy hoax exposed by recent bankruptcies

The most recent exposé indicating the U.S. Treasury Department's connivance with the governmental energy agency to rush through the ill-fated loan to Solyndra is only the tip of the iceberg of the administration's obsessive embracing of solar, geothermal, bio-fuels, ethanol and wind as America's energy wave of the future.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I'm just as vehement an exponent of the "87% solution," which posits that oil, natural gas and coal are now, and will be for the foreseeable future, the energy resources to satisfy America's transportation, power generation and energy derivative development such as chemicals and plastics.

Whether by coincidence or upon development of the respective political party platforms, this coming confrontation will feature the two diametrically-opposed positions of putative Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney and the incumbent President Obama. Obviously, Romney backs oil, natural gas and coal.

The scandalous solar panel bankruptcies, supported by the misuse of U.S. taxpayers' contributions, are only one symptom of the length to which the current administration has gone to force through a preponderant use of renewables, while practically snuffing out the use of America's most abundant natural resource — coal — from all power generation usage.

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Pricing to hold mostly steady; markets see growing shift to U.S.-manufactured product

Demand for carbon steel welding fittings and forged steel flanges continues to be strong and steady as we move into

Commercial construction remains sluggish due to uncertainty in the economy, difficulty in obtaining financing and the reduction in govern-

ment construction projects in the federal, state and local markets. Pricing for domestically produced commodity carbon steel welding fittings and flanges are expected to remain stable through the second quarter as costs and availability of raw materials have reminded relatively stable. Pricing for certain size ranges of offshore commodity fittings have experienced price increases up to 25% in the distribution sector of our industry.



BY STEPHEN G. LETKO
PVF market insider

Regular monitoring of the market is suggested as global uncertainty and volatility could shock the markets for raw materials and energy. This volatility has, in part, impacted an Asian offshore manufacturer of welded fittings and pipe to declare bankruptcy.

the second quarter. This demand is being bolstered by the robust activity in the petro-chemical, power, refinery, shale play and industrial sectors of our industry.

ment construction projects in the federal, state and local markets.

Pricing for domestically produced commodity carbon steel welding fittings and flanges are expected to re-

main stable through the second quarter as costs and availability of raw materials have reminded relatively stable. Pricing for certain size ranges of offshore commodity fittings have experienced price increases up to 25% in the distribution sector of our industry.

Shortages of intermediate size commodity carbon steel welding fittings have been experienced in some sectors of the industry in recent weeks, adding additional pressure on the domestic manufactures. Domestic production adjustments have been implemented to correct the issue within a few weeks.

The industry is experiencing an increase in demand for domestically produced products predicated on concerns for consistent quality, increases in transportation costs for offshore product, extended lead time and liability issues.

Related to the above concerns, it is alleged that a groove product manufacturer has been shipping material into the Mexican market without verifying that the material was of USA origin upon request of the Mexican authorities. The material had in fact been marked properly, was made domestically and was in compliance with NAFTA. This remains an ongoing issue in Mexico and should be noted that care should be taken when shipping under NATA regulations to ensure compliance with the rules including the ability to verify validity of country of origin.

Cautious optimism for the third and four quarter that the demand will continue to be experienced at the current pace is being expressed by key players in the distribution industry. Continued sluggishness in the commercial construction industry, political uncertainty, restrictive and punitive regulations on coal, fracking, pipeline and nuclear industries, along with tax policy concerns, are factors influencing the future health of our industry. ■

Stephen Letko launched his own firm, SPL Enterprises LLC, in 2000 after a distinguished career in executive positions with companies including Dodson Steel Products, Mills Iron Works and Crane Company. His expertise includes implementation of new markets, restructuring companies to improve their financial position, and developing marketing, quality and employee incentive programs. Contact him at 770-972-8282 or sletko@splenterprises.com.

Burgeoning U.S. energy production sets stage for growth in PVF markets

(Continued from page 57.)

Only extensive shipments from productive American coal mines to willingly receptive emerging nations such as China, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, who have no compunction about using this prolific powering resource in the conversion of iron ore and steel, among other benefits, keeps U.S. coal producers alive.

As if the misplaced preference for “renewables,” which leading energy experts view as supplemental (no more than 5% of all global energy used in this century), were not enough, the administration ridicules fossil fuels (oil and gas) as “yesterday’s powering resource.” Energy agency head Steven Chu even hints that excessively high gasoline prices may be beneficial, making the use of electric cars and “compacts” more prevalent by touting their lower generating costs, despite the obvious inconvenience of the electric/gasoline hybrids, and their greater safety concerns, proven by recent recalls of the Chevy Volt.

Future natural gas outlook brightens immeasurably

Just when it looked like the price of natural gas couldn’t go lower, it recently dipped to \$1.90 per one million Btu. If anywhere near this level holds, the U.S. will be offering the cheapest gas prices available anywhere in the world.

In the throes of the growing natural gas glut, incapable of being absorbed by the demand level of climate control during a mild winter and slow conversion by electric util-

ities from coal, nuclear power and even a few still oil-powered, the “fracking” revolution continues in full swing. While this “overproduction” is currently a liability, there are straws in the wind that allude to another breakout opportunity that could make America the world’s leading provider of natural gas.

Unlike in the U.S., natural gas is in short supply in the European community of nations, which rely almost totally on pipelines emanating from Russia. This not only carries a high cost but imposes Russia’s oil and resource power over the once-dominant Europeans, who now depend on Moscow, the way the Western World and others pander to the Mideast OPEC nations.

There are three major factors that will create profitable markets for the growing oversupply of natural gas extraction in the U.S.:

- Liquid natural gas (LNG), of which America was the recipient a few short years ago, will be available to U.S. suppliers within the next two years, or possibly earlier. This will not only take advantage of the new massive finds of natural gas as a byproduct of oil shale, but will add a new dimension to the already torrid export expansion that the U.S. is currently enjoying. Such normal business expansion will also likely double today’s pricing, making it profitable for suppliers stung by minimal resource returns.

- The chemical industry is in the process of taking advantage of natural gas conversion into building blocks for plastics. Dow Chemicals recently announced a multi-billion

dollar plan in Freeport, Texas, for such implementation, scheduled to be the first of several others. Coincidentally, Freeport, located on the Gulf of Mexico, will also become a major hub of LNG shipments worldwide in the foreseeable future.

- Mass transportation can become the beneficiary of this evolution, and there seems to be both private sector,

Liquid natural gas [LNG], of which America was the recipient a few short years ago, will be available to U.S. suppliers within the next two years, or possibly earlier. This will add a new dimension to the already torrid export expansion that the U.S. is currently enjoying.

as well as U.S. government activity to move this concept forward. Up to now, this has been limited to trucks and buses that return to home station/refueling locations overnight.

If this evolution develops satisfactorily, it’s possible to envision both natural gas and crude oil as major export opportunities by 2025. All this, of course, depends on a business-friendly leadership taking the helm to fulfill America’s maximum potential. ■

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

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The five biggest estate planning mistakes that enrich the IRS instead of your family

Readers of this column often ask me to give a second opinion (really a review of an existing estate plan). Typically, the plan has one to three mistakes. Sadly, each mistake causes estate tax dollars to be lost to the IRS, automatically reducing your children's inheritance.

Recently, I reviewed the estate plan of a well-to-do reader (Joe, age 65) with a net worth of \$20.8 million. Even I was shocked: Joe's plan had all of the five biggest mistakes. Who's at fault? Joe's lawyer, Lenny.

Most interesting is that Lenny is an experienced estate planning lawyer with a good reputation. The real problem is the way the law schools teach estate planning (how to and to whom to distribute your wealth when you die). That's the way Lenny — and almost every lawyer I know — was taught. Mistake No. 5 (following) tells you how to solve this national estate planning problem.

Joe's mistake-ridden plan motivated me to write this article, which pinpoints the five most common estate planning errors and shows you how to correct each one.

Mistake No. 1 – Not creating the right succession plan

Joe owns 100% of Success Co. (an S corporation), which is run by his son Sam. The company is worth \$9.7

million (Joe had a professional valuation done) and grows 5% to 10% in revenue almost every year; profits increase accordingly. Joe's original plan left Success Co. to his wife (Mary, age 64) and after her death to Sam ... a mistake. Why? Because the potential estate tax liability grows along with the ever increasing value of Success Co.

The time to transfer Success Co. to Sam is now. Here's what we did for Joe and what you should be thinking of doing if you own all or part of a closely held business. First, recapital-

ize Success Co. This means that you create voting stock (say 100 shares) and nonvoting stock (say 10,000 shares), a tax-free transaction. Joe keeps the voting shares and absolute control for as long as he lives. Under the tax law, the nonvoting shares are entitled to a deep discount of 40%, so for tax purposes these shares are only worth \$5.82 million.

Next, Joe, transfers (actually sells) the nonvoting shares to an intention-

ally defective trust (IDT) for \$5.82 million, taking an interest bearing note as payment. According to our crazy tax law, the entire IDT transaction is tax-free to Joe: There is no capital gains tax and no income tax on the interest to be received while the note is being paid. How can this be? The answer is that the trust is intentionally defective for income tax purposes under the Internal Revenue Code.

Even better, Sam does not pay even one penny for the stock. Instead, the cash flow of Success Co. (via S corporation dividends to the IDT) is used

to pay the note, plus interest. When the note is paid in full, Sam — as the beneficiary of the trust — receives the nonvoting stock tax-free.

Mistake No. 2 – Not avoiding the double tax on qualified plans and IRAs

Between Joe and Mary, they have \$1.9 million in the Success Co. 401(k) plan and various IRAs. Left alone, these funds will be clobbered with a double tax (income tax and es-



BY IRVING BLACKMAN
Tax and estate specialist

tate tax). Using 2013 tax rates, the IRS winds up with 70% of these plan funds and the family a paltry 30%. A tax tragedy!

We used a strategy called "retirement plan rescue" (RPR) to purchase \$5 million of second-to-die life insurance on Joe and Mary. Actually, the policy was purchased by and is owned by an irrevocable life insurance trust (ILIT). The beneficiaries of the ILIT are the three nonbusiness children (Sue, Sy and Sid) of Joe and Mary. This will help treat these three children equal to Sam. Because of the ILIT, Sue, Sy and Sid will receive every penny of the \$5 million tax-free.

Cool! Just how cool? Well without the new plan, the kids would get only \$570,000 (30% of \$1.9 million). This way they get all of the \$5 million (tax-free), about nine times more.

Mistake No. 3 – Not putting investments into a family limited partnership (FLIP)

Joe and Mary have \$8.1 million in cash, CDs, stocks, bonds and income producing real estate. They created two FLIPs, one for the real estate and one for the other investments \$2 million was held back to be used in Mistake No. 4, so the amount put into the FLIPs was \$6.1 million. A FLIP, when properly structured in accordance with the tax law, is allowed a 35% discount, reducing the \$6.1 million to \$4 million (rounded) for tax purposes, thus saving estate taxes on \$2 million.

Joe and Mary immediately gave separate gifts of \$1,026,000 each to Sue, Sy and Sid. \$13,000 from Joe and \$13,000 from Mary was the annual gift exclusion allowed without any gift tax consequences; the additional \$1 million each used a portion of the \$5.12 million one-time gift maximum allowed per person (a total of \$10.24 million for a married couple) for 2012. (Starting January 1, 2013, this amount goes down to \$1 million per person.)

A warning: If you are in the financial position to make large gifts to your kids and grandkids, you have until December 31, 2012, to use your \$5.12 million (\$10.24 million (Turn to Don't screw up... page 62.)

If you are doing your estate plan, you ain't dead yet. A comprehensive plan dictates that you have two plans: a lifetime plan (the real tax-saver and wealth builder) and a death plan (the typical type of plan that Lenny did for Joe). Of course, the lifetime plan must dovetail with the death plan.



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full-line distributor. Controls, announced that Refricenter, one of South Florida's leading

stocking distributors of air conditioning, refrigeration and ventilation equipment, parts and supplies, has become the brand's newest full-line distributor. Founded in 1971, Refricenter

serves all of South Florida, with branches from West Palm Beach to South Miami-Dade County. The addition of the Luxaire line of products allows Refricenter to once again sell light commercial equipment — up to 25 tons.

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products on board allows us to expand our product offering and sell commercial equipment,” said Pedro Bazo, vice president-sales at Refricenter. “We join our dealers in welcoming the opportunity to once again provide these additional products to their customers.”

Visit www.joinluxaire.com.

Don't screw up your estate plan!

(Continued from page 60.)

if married). This window of opportunity is closing. Call me if you have a question.

Mistake No. 4 – Not taking advantage of life insurance as a tax-advantaged investment

Actually, I could write a book about the many opportunities life insurance gives you to beat Wall Street investments and the tax collector at the same time. There are actually dozens of core life insurance strategies and hundreds of variations. Joe used three of the core strategies as follows:

Strategy No. 1: Refer to Mistake No. 1: A portion of the funds received each year by the IDT for its share of Success Co.'s S corporation profits is being used to purchase a \$3 million second-to-die life insurance policy on Joe and Mary. The \$3 million death benefit, along with the other second-to-die policies described in the following two strategies, will be used toward giving Joe's three nonbusiness children their fair share of the estate.

Strategy No. 2: Refer to Mistake No. 2, which describes a strategy that acquires \$5 million of second-to-die

insurance on Joe and Mary.

Strategy No. 3: Refer to Mistake No. 3. \$2 million was held back to be used in this “single premium immediate annuity strategy” (SPIAS). In a nutshell, here's how the SPIAS works:

First, Joe and Mary purchase a joint and survivor single premium annuity for \$2 million. As long as one of them is alive, they will receive an annuity payment of \$109,304 every year. The IRS regulations make a portion of the annuity received tax-free, so, after income taxes they will have a net amount of \$96,362 every year. This amount is used to pay the annual premium on another second-

to-die policy for \$7,268,294. Actually, the policy was purchased by and is owned by an irrevocable life insurance trust (so Sue, Sy and Sid will receive the death benefit tax-free).

To summarize: You can see that life insurance, when you know how to structure its ownership and the right strategies, is a true tax-advantaged investment, turning taxable dollars into tax-free dollars and multiplying those dollars in the process.

Mistake No. 5 – Not having a comprehensive estate plan

Let's start by pointing out the obvious: If you are doing your estate plan, you ain't dead yet. A comprehensive plan dictates that you have two plans: a lifetime plan (the real tax-saver and wealth builder) and a death plan (the typical type of plan that Lenny did for Joe). Of course, the lifetime plan must dovetail with the death plan.

As you can see, the first four mistakes are all part of your lifetime plan. Your comprehensive plan deals separately with each significant asset that you own, getting those assets out of your estate for estate tax purposes, yet allowing you to control each asset for as long as you live. Properly done, your plan (like Joe's new plan) should completely eliminate the impact of the estate tax.

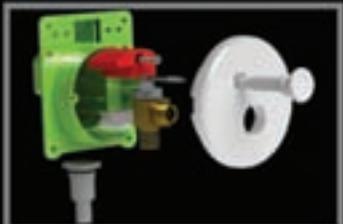
If your estate plan does not, at a minimum, accomplish all that is discussed in this article, you owe it to yourself, your business and your family to get a second opinion.

And finally, a warning: This article does not attempt to cover every possibility, exception and potential tax trap. Only work with advisors who can explain in plain English exactly how your plan accomplishes each of your goals and eliminates your estate tax liability. ■

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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Mr. Steam.

www.mrsteam.com



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RangeCraft.

www.rangecraft.com



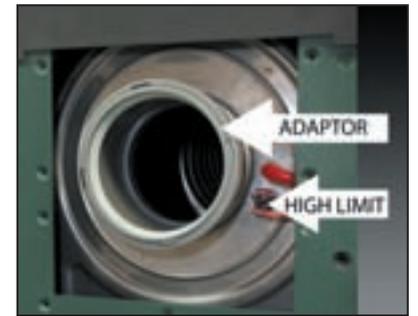
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Acorn Engineering Company.

www.acorndrinkingfountains.com



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See contact information on page 90

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www.amerrec.com

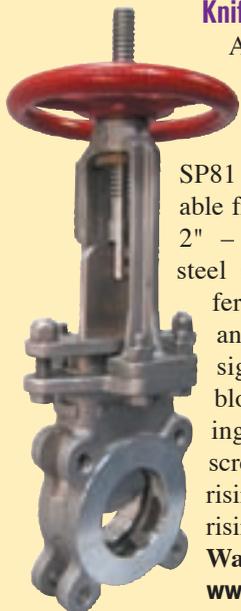


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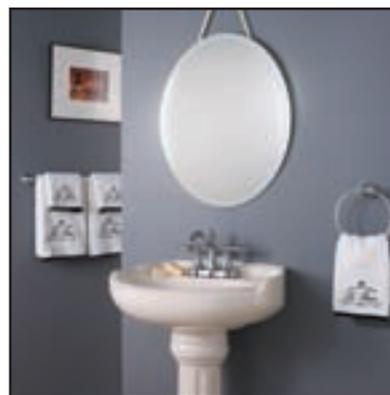
www.drainbrain.com



Bath collection

The Alexandria™ collection presents an eclectic twist to elegant style in the bathroom and pairs with Alexandria showerheads, faucets, valve trims and other bathroom accessories. The inspiration behind the Alexandria Collection comes from its showerhead design, which was launched in early 2011. **Speakman Company.**

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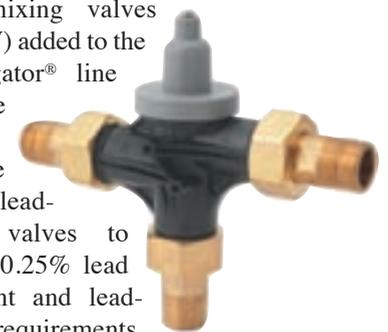
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Vanity for small spaces

Ideal for smaller baths or powder rooms, a downsized, 24" vanity option is available for the MANHATTAN collection. Features chrome accents along vanity drawers, a coordinating mirror frame and double horizontal chrome drawer handles. Solid poplar construction beneath a cherry veneer; also available in 30" and 36" widths. All models offer matching mirrors and are available in black or white finishes. **Xylem Group LLC.**

www.xylem.biz

Upflush grinder system

Redesigned SANIBEST PRO, a 1-hp power upflush grinder system, has 25% more power than the previous generation. Operates at 3,600 rpm for rapid elimination of heavy waste in



homes and public restrooms where flushing sanitary items might be a concern. Hardened steel grinder components; requires a 3/4" discharge line. Easy access to the internal workings for simpler service work.

Saniflo.

www.saniflo.com

Pre-rinse spray swivel

Pre-rinse swivel option (Part No. 018200-40) offers improved ergonomics for users and will allow a greater range of rotation and motion.



Swivel can be easily installed on any T&S spray valve by simply unscrewing the handle from the hose, installing two washers and screwing the swivel between the spray valve and hose. The only tools needed are a hex L-key and a wrench. **T&S Brass.**

www.tsbrass.com



High-efficiency showerheads

WaterSense® certified, high efficiency showerheads feature air injection technology and deliver a reduced amount of water with more strength and additional power. Depending on the product line and finish, the showerheads can deliver water at 2.0, 1.75 or 1.5 gpm at 80 psi. With exclusive advanced Pressure Manifold™ technology and brass ball joints, the showerheads come in a wide variety of styles, including traditional, contemporary and transitional.

Gerber Plumbing Fixtures.

www.gerberonline.com



Bathroom collections

Living Square and Palace collections offer customizable and cuttable contemporary ceramic vanities and shelving solutions. Vanities can be cut to fit, even if it means cutting on the diagonal. Each collection has a full complement of furniture and accessories. Vanity sizes for Living Square run from as small as 25.6" up to 70", and Palace's countertops run from 35.4" up to a double vanity at 70". Shelving is also cuttable to fit with the vanities, and Palace has integrated towel rails. **LAUFEN.**

www.laufen.com

Tankless water heaters, scale control

Featuring higher flow rates, the expanded Value Series of tankless water heaters includes two new units, the V75i and V75e, 180,000 Btu units that provide up to 7.5 gallons of hot water per minute. Feature a minimum input of 10,300 Btu, one of the lowest in the industry, resulting in an activation rate of 0.4 gpm. To safeguard a tankless water heater from limescale build-up and corrosion, the Scale Control System may be installed on a home's cold water line in front of or upstream of the unit. A special blend of compounds is dissolved into the water stream, delivering consistent scale control without the use of electricity. **Rinnai.**

www.rinnai.us



Freestanding tubs

The Addison and the new Addison 2 freestanding tubs have backrests that are gently contoured to be supportive, comfortable and relaxing. Tubs are made of engineered solid-surface material, a mixture of ground natural minerals and binding agents that has been liquefied, poured and hardened. The nonporous, stain-resistant surface looks and feels like natural stone. Addison measures 66 1/8" x 36 1/8" x 23 1/4"; Addison 2 measures 65 1/5" x 32" x 22 1/4". Both can be ordered as soaking tubs or custom fitted with a pedestal base and therapeutic air bath. **MTI Baths.**

MTIBaths.com



Heating controls

Replacement furnace controls are fully manufactured in the U.S. and designed with microprocessor-based precision and a 100% lockout feature to ensure safety. New models have been added to the existing wide array of replacement heating controls, including the popular line of fan blower controls and oil primaries.

ICM Controls.

www.icmcontrols.com

Versatile bathroom series

The Onto collection features bonded, anti-warp and zero-emission plywood paired with ceramic and offers 16 different types of furniture solutions appropriate for both residential and commercial applications. In-



cludes consoles with built-in washbasins, tall and low cabinets, an upholstered drawer unit with sitting area, a floor standing, pillar-shaped vanity unit with built-in round sink, bathtubs and illuminated mirrors. Produced by a special oil and wax treatment, which saturates the fibers of the wood to prevent the absorption of water; the wood's highly-compressed and bonded layers prevent warping. **Duravit.**

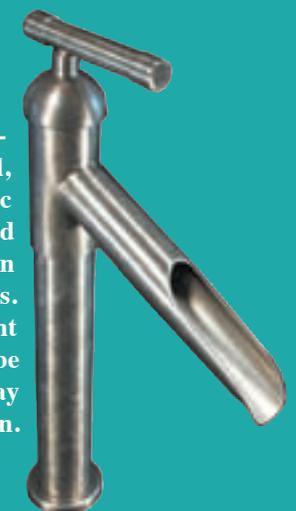
www.duravit.us

Rustic style faucet

The Brut faucet is available in Rustic Nickel, Pizzazz Nickel, Rustic Copper or Oil-Rubbed Bronze, as well as in many optional finishes. Brut comes in different heights and can be paired with a side spray for use in the kitchen.

Sonoma Forge.

www.sonomaforge.com



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See contact information on page 90

Mitsubishi distributors gather in Hawaii

SUWANEE, GA. — Mitsubishi Electric Cooling & Heating held its annual distributor conference at the Fairmont Orchid in Kohala Coast, Hawaii in late March. The conference strengthens and celebrates the important relationship between Mitsubishi Electric and its distributors, who play an integral role in promoting split-ductless and VRF zoning systems to U.S. customers.

An important tradition of the Distributor Conference is to honor the distributors and manufacturers' representatives whose performance surpassed expectations in 2011. The Distributor of the Year Award recognizes the organization that has performed above and beyond all others in sales, market development and service levels with Mitsubishi Electric's products. The award went to Homans Associates, Wilmington,

H.M. Sweeny trade show a success



LANDOVER, MD. — Each year during the third week of April, the H. M. Sweeny Company and its divisions of ABC Electric Motors, Larson Supply and the Turn Key, host a trade show/picnic in appreciation of its loyal and dedicated customers. This event is a reminder of the company's longevity of over a century. This year's Trade show was again a huge success. The weather was perfect, the crowd was overwhelming, and the food was great. Over \$5,000 worth of gifts and door prizes were given out. Visit www.hmsweeny.com.

Mass. The 2011 International Distributor of the Year award went to Inproambient S.A de C.V., Benito Juarez, Mexico City, Mexico.

Quota Buster and Superior Sales awards were given to distributors who exceeded their established quo-

tas for the past year. The 2011 Manufacturers' Representative of the Year award went to Roy C. Martin & Company Inc., Hoover, Ala., acknowledging the company's overall growth in its sales territory.

Visit www.mehvac.com.

ASA accepting nominations for safety awards

ITASCA, ILL. — The American Supply Association is accepting nominations for its 2011 Member Safety Recognition Awards to be presented during NetworkASA 2012 in Orlando on Oct. 18–20.



A total of six awards will be presented — three in the manufacturer category and three in the wholesaler category — based on the number of safe hours worked during 2011.

The purpose of these awards is to elevate the awareness of the importance of safety in all aspects of the PHCP and PVF industry and also to award the ASA members that have had the lowest incident rate of non-fatal injuries and illnesses throughout the previous year. All current ASA member companies are eligible.

Most companies have already filled out a Bureau of Labor Statistics report from 2011 called OSHA Form 300A, Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses. Submit a copy of Form 300A with the details on an application form. Please use 2011 data only. The award is based on cumulative data from all company locations. All information provided will be kept confidential. The intent is to request only data that is already provided to others, such as OSHA, so as not to create any additional work. A sample of the OSHA forms can be accessed at www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/new-osha300form1-1-04.pdf.

The application deadline is August 17, 2012.

Visit www.asa.net to read more and to download an application.

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Distributor achieves 30% growth after DDI install

SANDY HOOK, CONN. — Hayward Pipe & Supply Company used the same software through two acquisitions. With no feature enhancements in sight, they went looking for a more advanced solution to meet their growing needs.

A magazine ad caught the attention of Greg Peddie, president of Hayward Pipe & Supply, leading him to contact DDI System. Through demonstrations and discussions, Peddie realized that DDI was different than many other leading software providers.

DDI had the industry-specific features they needed plus experience with growing businesses in many other related industries. DDI System



**Greg Peddie, president,
Hayward Pipe & Supply**

encourages networking between their inform software users through an online community and conference. “I instantly loved the ‘cross-enhancements’ that DDI’s inform software provides,” Peddie said. “I wanted access to learn how other distributors do business, the tools and techniques they use, then incorporate the best of those ideas into my own operations. Plus, access to DDI’s large user community would provide ongoing ideas for business operations, input for software developments and ‘tips & tricks’ that would help my business in

“With our previous software we needed to hire a ‘licensed outsider’ to perform accounting tasks. With inform, end of month and year are done with a mouse click. Upgrades are now done in house...inform software pays for itself in two years and the fully upgraded hardware in 3 years.”

the long run. “I also needed better service. Passport Business Solutions (Hayward Pipe & Supply’s old software) was expensive and unreliable.” DDI System was the answer with leading technology, forward thinking and personal service.

Getting started

Right off the bat, Peddie raves about DDI’s proven transition methods. “DDI’s plan worked really well! The switch was definitely a lot easier than anticipated for our entire team.”

DDI’s project manager was onsite for their “pre-implementation,” setting up a practice system and training schedule. “For the following weeks while we practiced on the system, our DDI project manager was just a phone call away,” he said. “DDI was back onsite with us for one week at ‘go-live.’ They transferred our data, trained our entire staff, and answered all of our questions. In the end, the software was really easy to learn and we felt comfortable with our new solution in only 3 days.”

Attaining instant advantages

DDI System guarantees a return on investment within one year. This statement is backed up by almost instant savings obtained through DDI’s streamlined processes, overall cost reductions and increased customer service. Hayward Pipe realized these savings and how true DDI System’s statement is.

- **Unlimited Product Count:** With their previous solution, there was a maximum count of 15,000 products supported. This limitation hindered growth and created additional work. Hayward Pipe was forced to “combine product numbers” or use manual catalogs to place orders. “With inform, we currently have 45,000 products and easily create new product codes as needed,” Peddie said. This singular benefit has created a ripple effect on productivity and accuracy. “We now have a better understanding of customer purchasing habits with increased sales reporting,” he added. “We’ve been able to leverage that information into tighter procurement habits and customer specific pricing.”

- **Advanced Accounting:** Inform’s accounting features have also made a tremendous impact — saving thousands of dollars annually. “With our previous software we needed to hire a ‘licensed outsider’ to perform accounting tasks,” noted Peddie. “They closed each month, closed each year, and installed upgrades. With inform,



“With inform, we currently have 45,000 products and easily create new product codes as needed, and have a better understanding of customer purchasing habits with increased sales reporting,” says Greg Peddie.

end of month and year are done with a mouse click. Upgrades are now done in house. By eliminating this person, inform software pays for itself in two years and the fully upgraded hardware in three years.”

Customer service providing a competitive edge

User-driven reporting, opportunity pipeline and, soon, integrated e-commerce are supporting Hayward Pipe’s long-standing mission — provide unprecedented service and value to customers. “We have manufacturers that offer rebates directly to our customers, which we handle for them,” Peddie



noted. “Previously this manual process required time to search paper files, make a list of customer contact information, items purchased and price paid, then submit the report to each customer. Now, I’ve created an electronic report that I run each month. This process has been reduced to a mere two minutes. My customers even commented that our report is better than any of our competitor’s.”

Increasing sales

Customers are also seeing a difference in follow up. Utilizing the opportunity pipeline allows sales reps to easily follow up on every quote provided to customers. This, combined with a customer order history, em-

powers salespeople to quickly and efficiently convert quotes into sales orders. Hayward Pipe is increasing sales and customer relationships.

Finally, Peddie is excited to be introducing inform e-commerce to his customers. This single-system solution will allow his customers to order online, automatically receive their unique pricing, and view reports of past purchases, open and paid invoices, and much more. It’s an online experience Peddie is confident his customers will love.

Personal service making a difference

DDI’s customer care team has also impacted operations. “Good luck getting answers with our old system,” recalled Peddie. “When we did hear back, it would cost me \$800 each time they assisted us.” DDI System prides itself on personal, same day service. “With DDI we receive great service. Whenever we call in with a question we get a response the same day — within two hours! If our question is critical, the response is immediate.”

Supporting record breaking growth

“We had a solid 30% growth in 2011 in spite of a down economy and difficulties in California,” Peddie said. “While I know DDI is not the only reason, their software definitely helped!” With inform supporting his team, Peddie has not been required to hire additional staff to support this unbelievable growth — or to support their upcoming online shopping endeavor.

Contributing to their bottom line increase, inform has become a valuable “employee” — one Hayward Pipe & Supply looks forward to retaining for years to come. ■

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BY JEFF BALDWIN
Special to THE WHOLESALER

T&S Brass takes pride in being an industry leader when it comes to developing and providing innovative products for food-service and plumbing applications. The company's emphasis on providing new levels of productivity and innovation — as seen with its water conservation products, hands-free technology and concealed plumbing capabilities — is designed to help exceed the environmental, health and performance expectations of customers.

NSF/ANSI 372 Background

A current pressing issue throughout the plumbing products industry is lead-free or low-lead products for potable water applications. As a re-



sult of growing concern over the health risks associated with lead contamination, social and political strides have been made to establish tighter low-lead regulations.

Regulatory changes have emerged in various states since the 1990s, with California leading the charge, but lead-free legislation has now taken the national stage. On January 4, 2011, President Obama signed into federal law the "Reduction of Lead in

What you need to know about lead-free laws

Drinking Water Act," also known as Senate Bill 3874. A 0.25% maximum lead content — which is measured through a weighted average calculation — is mandated of all pipes, fixtures and fittings that are sold in the U.S. for installations delivering water for human consumption. Full compliance is required by January 4, 2014.

Time of transition

Very early on, T&S foresaw the regulatory changes that were emerging in the states and decided to take action, moving ahead with an aggressive schedule for converting the top 95% of its products based on sales volume to the 0.25% standard by January 2010 (the implementation deadline set by the state of California). T&S began working on an innovative strategy to prepare for the changeover.

This action required drastic changes to the manufacturing process for potable water-related products. Rather than creating two domestic product lines — one lead-free for states who were early adopters of the new regulations and one for the remaining states — T&S was 98% successful in meeting its original goal with only a marginal price increase. The company quickly converted the remaining products, and by mid-2010 its entire line of affected T&S and equip products were in full compliance.

Making the bold call to transition all of the potable water products not meeting this standard well ahead of the national implementation deadline has given T&S some significant advantages, and it can help you, too.

Considerations for wholesalers, dealers and distributors

Wholesalers and distributors need to educate themselves on this important legislation to stay ahead of the curve.

The first step in the process is to know the correct terminology when it comes to legislation:

- "U.S. Safe Water Drinking Act" — The original legislation from 1986 allowed a maximum of 8% lead content in plumbing products.
- AB 1953 — The original California Assembly bill which mandated the 0.25% maximum lead content standard in the state of California and started the lead-free content movement.

- Senate Bill 3874 — The national bill which passed as "The Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act."

- "Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act" — Signed in 2011, this amended the Safe Drinking Water Act to allow a maximum of 0.25% lead content.

Standards

- NSF/ANSI 61 — The long-standing water testing standard developed by NSF International and a diverse group of interested stakeholders.

- NSF/ANSI 372 — The material testing standard developed by NSF



International and a diverse group of interested stakeholders.

The second step is to know the deadlines:

- California and Vermont — January 1, 2010
- Maryland — January 1, 2012
- Louisiana — January 1, 2013
- National — January 4, 2014

Wholesalers and distributors should give serious consideration to converting their operations to only stock products that meet this new requirement. Those who wait to make the change run the risk of being stuck with non-compliant inventory when the change takes full effect in 2014. Switching to carrying only lead-free products rather than having to stock two different versions of each product will also help with SKU reduction, saving time, money and critical inventory space. T&S makes this task easy, with one set of SKUs that meet all current standards, as well as the upcoming new national legislation requirements.

Specifying engineers can also play an important role. By writing tighter specs that require any product designed for dispensing potable water to be third-party certified to both the long-standing NSF/ANSI 61 standard and also the new NSF/ANSI 372 standard, they can help eliminate the use of improper material or substitution in the market.



T&S believes that by being brave enough to make the tough call and nimble enough to implement these changes quickly, its customers are now reaping the rewards. The company welcomes any lead-free questions or concerns you may have regarding this important issue. ■

Jeff Baldwin is Design Engineering Manager at T&S Brass and Bronze Works. Visit www.tsbrass.com or follow them on twitter (@tsbrass). Plumbing industry professionals will also find useful content and guidance on their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/tsbrass) or YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/TS-BrassVideos).

As a result of growing concern over the health risks associated with lead contamination, social and political strides have been made to establish tighter low-lead regulations.



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*Offer good from April 16, 2012 until July 31, 2012. Free product will be one 3502-4E2805ABCP. To qualify for free faucet, you must order at least twelve 3500 Series faucets at one time. No limit on number of orders placed during promotional period, standard shipping and freight. Quoted projects are not eligible for promotional pricing.

K/BIS 2012 –Innovative new and hot kitchen and bath happenings

The Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, held from April 24 – 26 at McCormick Place in Chicago, was an “excellent” show, with more than 500 exhibitors. There was a heavy turnout of manufacturers from China and Taiwan, some of whom meet American and European ISO quality standards.

The best K/BIS keynote speech in the last 25 years

This was one of the best keynote speeches that I have ever attended. The subject was the connection between the Internet, technology and our industry. Michael E. Werner, president and CEO of Globe Union Group Inc., provided an overview of how we should envision the future in business and how technology advances will alter the industry. Werner addressed the ways that technology impacts our current landscape, how it has evolved and how we can best prepare for upcoming shifts. Through ongoing advancements in technology, everything has become possible, accessible and more affordable.

Navigating and embracing the re-defined course of business as industry professionals will ensure the success

One of the best keynote speeches that I have ever attended. The subject was the connection between the Internet, technology and our industry. Michael E. Werner, president and CEO of Globe Union Group Inc., provided an overview of how we should envision the future in business and how technology advances will alter the industry.

of the industry. With proven facts and evidence, Werner showed the capacity-filled audience that the Internet is a friend to all and that it is not the case of “the showroom versus the Internet.” If you think that having a website is enough, you will be surprised to learn what has happened and what will take place in the next couple of years. (Mary Jo Martin, editorial director of *The Wholesaler*, did an exclusive article on Michael Werner’s presentation on page 48 in this issue. Don’t miss it!)

The Best of K/BIS 2012 awards

The winners of the Best of KBIS were announced on Wednesday, April

25. The eight winning products were selected for their functionality, quality/durability, flexibility, aesthetics/style and innovation. The winners were:

Best Universal Design Product:

The Elevance Rising Wall bath by Kohler (www.kohler.com)

A stylish alternative to traditional walk-in baths, the Elevance Rising Wall provides a traditional bathing experience, while offering increased



accessibility. The extra-wide opening, integrated grab bar and chair-height seat make entering and leaving easier than a traditional walk-in bath. Elevance provides comfortable soaking depth with an integral relaxing waterfall fill and an ergonomic back and neck rest. It is designed to fit into a standard 60” bath footprint for remodels and new builds.

Best Green Product:

MotionSense™ faucets by Moen (www.moen.com)

MotionSense provides an intuitive, hands-free kitchen faucet experience that responds to users’ simple hand movements to activate water flow. There are three ways to turn on faucets with MotionSense: the wave sensor at the top of the faucet, the ready sensor near the base of the faucet that identifies when an object is placed beneath the spout and the handle on the side of the faucet, which offers traditional manual operation.



Best of Bath – Gold Award:

Redi Trench by Tile Redi USA LLC (www.tileredi.com)

The most exciting marriage of design and function in the bath industry, Redi Trench meets the needs of building pros with an innovative, exclusive design added to the established utility you expect from their Tile Ready shower pans. Features give

endless design flexibility: any size Redi Base (52” – 72”); Plank pitch™; Molded-in trench; any trench location; any drain location(s) in trench and Your Choice tileable or grate top.

Best of Bath – Silver Award:

Alessa shower base by Fleurco Products Inc. (www.fleurco.com)

This bench will appeal to people looking for a seat, a stool or a footrest while showering. Parents will find that washing their kids is easier with the bench. Storage space beneath the seat is perfect for keeping shampoos and soaps at hand. This IAPMO-approved base comes with a selection of decorative linear drain finishes.

Best of Kitchen – Gold Award:

Stainless steel kitchen sink by ROHL LLC (www.rohlhome.com)

Handcrafted in Italy, ROHL’s line of commercial grade stainless steel and stainless copper plated sinks are designed for the high-end residential market. Unlike traditional stainless sinks, ROHL’s sinks are constructed of 16-gauge commercial stainless steel for extreme durability. Crafted with a unique “tangent edge,” a rounded, a bottom edge radius and zero-edge side wall, each carries an insulating undercoat, a “quiet coat,” reducing splash-back sound.

Best of Kitchen – Silver Award:

Liebherr HC 1540 by Almo Specialty Products (www.almospecialty.com)

Liebherr’s fully integrated HC 1540 refrigeration unit offers the convenience of 30” sizing with Liebherr’s signature sleek, European styling and state-of-the-art performance features. The HC 1540 can be concealed behind cabinetry or stainless steel, giving designers flexibility and the homeowner ideal food storage conditions. This 30” model also offers the possibility of a custom design feel with flush 24” deep cabinet installation, a feature not available in competing units.

Best of Show:

Segmented cooktop: gas/griddle/induction by Bertazzoni (www.bertazzoni.com)

Bertazzoni sets the new standard in surface cooking flexibility with its new Design Series segmented cooktops. Housed in a sleek and sophisticated low-profile, stainless steel frame, this new 36” cooktop is available in six combinations of gas, electric griddle and induction to perfectly match any style of cooking.



BY PETER SCHOR
Showroom specialist

People’s Choice Award:

U-socket wall outlet with built-in USB ports by U-Socket (www.weir-comfees.com)

U-Socket is an AC receptacle with built-in USB ports that can power any device capable of being charged via USB, including iPods, iPhones and iPads. Designed to replace a traditional wall outlet, U-Socket eliminates the clutter of AC adapters that stick out and take up space. Enjoy the convenience of a charger built right into the wall. U-Socket is also eco-friendly, thanks to its 5-star energy efficient design that auto-senses wattage and only outputs full power if something is connected to it.

Bathroom trends and new products – Electronics

For the past five years, I have written about “electronics” becoming more important in bathrooms each year. These include electronic faucets, floor warming, chromatherapy showers and baths, LCD-mir-



rored TVs, magnification mirrors and back-lit lighting systems, washlet seats and bidets, heated toilet seats, steam baths with sound systems, saunas, towel warmers, nightlights with wall switches and more. Digital and LED lighting was everywhere at K/BIS 2012, including digital electronic showerheads that operate from the bather’s wall mount remote control. Merging sound and vibrations, the new KOHLER Underscore VibrAcoustic baths are engineered to
(Turn to An abundance... page 78.)

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See contact information on page 90

An abundance of riches at KBIS 2012

(Continued from page 76.)

ease tension and stress. Vibroacoustic is a technology-based sound therapy defined as hearing and feeling sound vibrations through the body. Additionally, the quality of the sound system on the bath is so good that it can be used as a stand-alone audio solution for the entire bathroom. The bather can stream music and podcasts through the bath from a mobile device wirelessly or via hardwire connection. The VibrAcoustic technology is controlled by an intuitive full-color touch screen user interface. Do you have all these types of products in your showroom?

Shower and bathing products

- Pulse Shower Spas (www.pulse-showerspas.com) offers one of the hottest new bath product categories in years. These pre-plumbed shower columns (panels) are code approved, some even use the existing shower valve, making them ideal for retrofit. You remove the shower arm, quick connect to the 1/2" I.P.S connection and fasten to the wall, all in about 15 minutes.



- Tyrell and Laing International Bathtubs (www.TandLInternational.com) offer an exclusive range of cast stone Luxury Lifestyle bathtubs, lavatories and shower bases. These bathtubs have been designed for ultimate relaxation and comfort, along with elegance and beauty. T&L bathtubs are made in the USA, have a 10-year warranty and are offered in an infinite number of colors and numerous textures. Grab this one for your showroom before it is gone.

- ThermaSure (www.temperatesystems.com) not only keeps your bath water warm but also gives the bather a warning sign, both audibly and visually, when the water is too hot. It purifies the water, killing off any viruses or bacteria and making it really safe.

Best bath products

- Miracle Seat (www.miracleseat.com) is the industry's first germ- and odor-controlled toilet seat. Great looking, it comes in round and elongated styles and in white or colors. The vented seat contains a manifold



that is connected to an unobtrusive flexible duct leading to a PVC pipe that receives its vacuuming power from its own whisper-quiet 90 CFM exhaust fan. Odors and germs are vented out of the building through existing bathroom fan ducting or through a separate outside vent. The Miracle Seat can be wired to the bathroom light switch and run whenever the light is on, or it can be wired to a separate switch.

- Electric Mirror (www.electricmirror.com). Electric Mirror has been selling their exclusive, innovative, and extraordinary backlit lighting systems, LCD-mirrored TVs and magnification mirrors with LED lighting in the five-star hotel bath industry for 15 years. Their new Visionary Series medicine cabinets and lights are hot!

- Penguin Toilets LLC (www.penguintoilets.com), last year's Best of K/BIS award winner, has designed a patented secondary drain system built within the bowl that adds protection

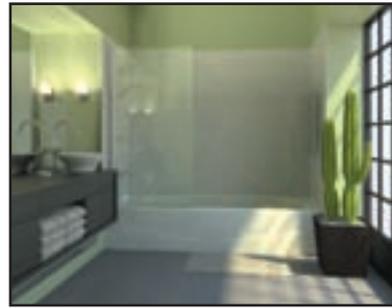


against overflow and has been IAPMO approved. Got a non-overflow toilet in your showroom?

- Great Grabz (www.greatgrabz.com) has award-winning designs of signature "Wave" decorative, ADA-compliant safety grab bars with exceptional mounting kits.

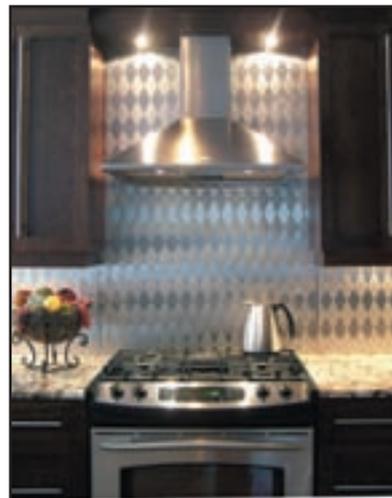
- Ark Showers (www.arkshowers.com) specializes in European-inspired bathtub shower screens, a sleek and practical alternative to shower curtains and sliding tub

doors. Their single panel, pivoting designs provides the clean, open look of frameless shower doors with the versatility of a bath shower combination. Available in a wide selection of sizes, styles and finishes, with the option of ClearShield® glass coating for ease of cleaning.



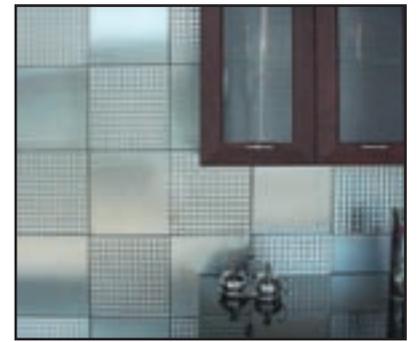
Best kitchen products

- Stainless Living backsplash systems (www.stainlessliving.com), available in three sizes and 14 different designs, were a huge hit. You can choose from the three stock sizes, or



the systems can be customized to fit perfectly, to your exact specifications. Installation is accomplished in minutes, using a combination of two-sided tape and construction adhesive. Plumbing and appliance showroom displays and stocking distributor programs are offered strictly through "channel distribution" and are very profitable. Late 2012 they will be offering S.S. dishwasher panels and refrigerator fronts in 14 different patterns. They are a \$25-million, 70-year-old company.

- Rigidized stainless steel countertops (www.rigidized.com) are custom metal countertops made from textured and plain stainless steel and copper. There is a wide offering of edge-profile backsplash styles and corner options such as integral sinks. For showrooms, one unit can be put on display for qualification purposes.



It is as easy as mailing or faxing CAD or shop drawings to Rigidized from your client. They will give you a consumer price, a trade price and your price. These products are highly profitable and competitive, and they ship to all parts of the U.S.

Other niceties

I am sure that I missed many new products in this article. Please let me know what I missed or if there are any new and hot products that you think should be included in future articles. I can be reached via e-mail at pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. I hope it was of great benefit, especially for those who did not come to KBIS.

Note: The 50th annual Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS) will be held in New Orleans, April 19 – 21, 2013.

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, email pschor@dynamicresultsinc.com or visit www.dynamicresultsonline.com.

With proven facts and evidence, Michael Werner showed the capacity-filled audience that the Internet is a friend to all and that it is not the case of 'the showroom versus the Internet.' If you think that having a website is enough, you will be surprised to learn what has happened and what will take place in the next couple of years.



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See contact information on page 90

Streamline® copper tube and fittings receive UL rating

MEMPHIS, TENN. — The refrigerants used in modern HVAC and refrigeration systems have evolved significantly since Mueller Brass Co. first developed and pioneered the Streamline® braze/solder-type copper fitting back in 1930. In order to further educate the industry on its products' superior capabilities with today's modern refrigerants, Mueller Streamline Co. worked with UL (Underwriters Laboratories) to conduct a series of demanding performance tests. As a result, Mueller's Streamline copper tube and fittings are the first such products to be UL Recognized to 700 PSI operating pressures. In 2010, the company's Streamline line sets were the first copper line sets to be UL Recognized to 700 PSI.

Modern refrigerants, such as R410A and subcritical CO₂, can operate at more than 60%

higher pressures than the prior generation of refrigerants. Mueller Streamline Co. wanted to provide its customers with unbiased informa-



tion about the capabilities of Streamline copper tube and fittings when used with these modern refrigerants and turned to UL, one of the world's most trusted third-party certification organizations and the foremost authority on safety in refrigeration systems.

"The industry standards have simply not kept pace with the evolution in refrigerants toward higher efficiency ratings and higher pressures," stated Chris Mueller, director of marketing for Mueller Industries' Copper Systems business. "The UL Recognized to 700 PSI rating comes after four years of extensive testing that included hoop strain, cyclic fatigue, hydrostatic burst, thermal cycling and more."

Visit www.streamlinecopperquality.com.

MTI Baths wins ADEX awards

ATLANTA — MTI Baths took home six 2012 *Design Journal* ADEX awards for design excellence in freestanding tubs, sinks, hardware and teak accessories. The winners are as follows:

- Platinum Award — MTI teak shower seat, Versailles tub and Olivia tub
 - Gold Award — High-flow tub filler and Andrea® tub with sculpted finish®
 - Silver Award — Adrian SR lavatory sinks.
- Visit www.mtibaths.com.

OEM Shurjoint now in Tyco fold

(Continue from Tyco, page 1.)

Founded in 1974, Shurjoint introduced the SHURJOINT brand in the mid-1990s. Based in Taiwan and the U.S., Shurjoint currently offers over 3,000 piping components with a full line of grooved fittings, couplings, valves, ductile iron threaded pipe fittings and welding outlets in 1/2" to 96" sizes. SHURJOINT products are used with a variety of piping materials including carbon steel, stainless steel, ductile iron,

PVC, HDPE, CPVC and copper.

"This acquisition demonstrates Tyco's ongoing commitment to the Mechanical market. As a result, Tyco will broaden its grooved product portfolio and expertise in innovative mechanical solutions," said Colleen Repplier, president of Tyco Fire Protection Products. "Shurjoint is an excellent strategic fit to our business, and allows us to improve service to the fire, HVAC, mining and industrial markets."

Sales alliance marries TOTO, V&B

(Continued from TOTO, page 1.)

For TOTO USA's distributors and high-end kitchen and bath showrooms, the new alliance will deliver exceptional value by providing them the opportunity to add the highly desirable Villeroy & Boch USA products to their businesses. As is the case with TOTO USA products, Villeroy & Boch USA products are available only to the trade. The two brands will be positioned to complement each other in showrooms. Distributors and showrooms selling both brands will enjoy economies of scale on freight, service and support by combining Villeroy & Boch USA orders with their TOTO USA orders.

Villeroy & Boch USA customers can continue to order products through its New Jersey facilities until August 31. Starting July 1, however, its products will also be available through TOTO

USA. As of September 1, 2012, all Villeroy & Boch USA products will be sold through TOTO USA only, and TOTO USA will handle all sales, logistics and customer support matters.

Visit www.totousa.com or www.villeroy-boch.com.

Inland

(Continued from Irr, page 1.)

"The acquisition of Inland Supply affords us the opportunity to expand our presence in the Syracuse market," said Michael Duffy, Irr Supply Centers' president.

The Inland Supply location will remain open and operate under the Irr Supply Centers Inc. name.

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See contact information on page 90



More than 700 gathered at the Anatole in Dallas for the WIT & Co. Spring Meeting. During the general session, keynote speaker Todd Buchholz gave a great perspective on economic conditions in the U.S. and globally. According to executive VP Charlie Morehead, WIT now has 91 distributor members and purchases were up 8.7% last year over 2010.





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Is VMI right for you?

The thought of someone else managing the replenishment of inventory, at no cost to you, sounds like a pretty good plan. Those inventory planners and buyers are pretty expensive folks; not as expensive as sales reps, but they do add a nickel or two to the payroll. Beyond the payroll expense, figuring out what to buy can be three parts art and one part science. A friend of mine once suggested that purchasing inventory in a distribution company is “a thousand little decisions done right each day.” No disrespect, but it sounds like someone was trying to justify his existence. All kidding aside, replenishment is a challenge we would all rather do without.

In order to prepare for this article, I solicited the opinions of several dis-

Make sure that you have a good relationship with a supplier before you even consider entering into a VMI program. Several participants agreed that you should only attempt this type of program with someone you have been involved with for a long time.

tribution experts. In addition, I surveyed and interviewed many distributors who currently participate in VMI relationships. This is a culmination of what they told me.

Vendor managed inventory, or VMI, comes in many different forms and relationships. Essentially, inventory levels are managed by the preceding link in the supply chain. Some VMI relationships constitute the manufacturer managing inventory levels of their distributor customers. Some distributors manage the inventory levels of their customers. For the purposes of this article, I have focused my attention on the manufacturer–distributor relationship from the perspective of the distributor.

There are a couple of different ways to develop a VMI relationship. A manufacturer can use a proprietary system that analyzes your transactional data in order to recommend orders. The challenge with this type of systems is getting the data into a common format; many participants said this was the greatest challenge in the whole process. Another option is to go through a VMI service provider. Several participants indicated that this was a much easier way to go, because the data translation, between manufacturer and distributor, was handled by the provider. In this relationship, the service provider fee is typically

covered by the manufacturer, so there is very little downside to a distributor. It was also noted, by those who had used both a service provider and a proprietary system, that the service provider was more adept at understanding inventory replenishment in a distributorship. As we all know, manufacturing and distribution are two very different animals.

The benefits

The most commonly suggested benefit derived from VMI was the ability to return product without the usual hassle. One person I spoke with described a complete change of demeanor by their rep with regard to returns. Prior to entering into the relationship, the rep would be very reluctant to accept returns even though the distributor was well within the stated policies. It was always a hassle to get a return authorization signed. After they entered into a VMI relationship, the rep almost welcomed the return transaction. According to this distributor, that made the program worth its weight in gold. (My suspicion is that it had something to do with how it affected that rep’s sales commission, but you didn’t hear it from me.)

Usually, the most commonly touted benefit is better inventory turns. A liberal return policy will help this a great deal. The fact that you don’t have to make freight minimums anymore is another huge factor. Most manufacturers dispense with the normal freight minimums for VMI customers. This really helps when you need to do non-stock specials or when you have high volatility. Can you achieve solid inventory turns without VMI? Sure, but it is a lot easier when the supplier is a partner in achieving mutually agreed upon goals.

From a customer service standpoint, many participants suggested that they experienced fewer stock outs and better overall flow of material. One participant shared that he had always been the victim of shortages due to product allocation. After VMI, those shortages disappeared. Although the manufacturer never publically stated it, he believed that his company was now given priority status on products subject to allocation. Some people believe that this is a reward for helping a manufacturer plan well. Although there is a possibility that a manufacturer will use your data to improve their production, it is fairly unlikely. Your business would have to be a significant portion of their overall volume in order to move production planning.

Cash flow improvements are a distinct possibility. Some manufacturers offer incentives for VMI customers. These could come in the form of rebates or special payment terms. They should; much of the benefit occurs at the manufacturer level. Let’s face it; once you go on VMI with a supplier, it is very difficult for competitive products to earn a seat at your table.

Many people believe that there is a potential for labor reduction when entering into a VMI relationship. Unfortunately, this is not often the case. VMI is not a “set it and forget it” type of program. You still have to watch and approve the orders as they are generated. Many participants suggested that they still have to tweak orders on a regular basis. I guess this is a good segue into the challenges of this type of program.

The potential challenges

Data translation is one of the biggest challenges to any VMI relationship. The two partner systems have to be able to communicate. I can walk around the country and find many different item codes for the exact same product. Many people overcome this challenge by using the UPC code as a common denominator. This requires the distributor to enter this field in their master item records. This is not a very difficult task, but there is a significant time consideration. VMI service providers can really help smooth out this translation.

Reporting can also be a real challenge. The distributor has to be able to create a transactional report that accumulates usage. The manufacturer must be able to assimilate this report into their system and populate the proper fields. Any time two databases try to communicate, bits can get lost in translation.

One participant suggested that they had difficulty with rapid changes in sales usage. As sales picked up, the system always seemed to be in catch-up mode. Highly volatile item turnover can be difficult to predict. When the replenishment recommendation is one step removed from the distributor, the challenge is magnified.

Overstocking of material has always been one of the biggest fears about VMI. Once you hand the reins over to the manufacturer, look out! Here come the 40-foot trailers. While some participants experienced overstocking in the beginning of the relationship, simple adjustments leveled off the optimistic flow of inventory. Holding partners to some specific performance metrics will help offset this challenge.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, some distributors experienced problems with programs that tried to



BY JASON BADER
Inventory management specialist

manage the inventory too tightly. Setting up unrealistic parameters, such as eight or more annual turns, caused inventory shortages in many key products. This is why inventory turn goals must always be balanced with customer fulfillment goals.

The advice

The best recommendation I heard was: Make sure that you have a good relationship with a supplier before you even consider entering into a VMI program. Several participants agreed that you should only attempt this type of program with someone you have been involved with for a long time. It should be a trusted partner with a track record of successful VMI implementations. If they are not doing a great job for you now, VMI will not necessarily make them better.

Before you sign on the dotted line, make sure to establish clear performance metrics. Set realistic goals for inventory turns. Make sure to balance this with a clear expectation of customer service fill rates. Define what you consider dead stock. Believe me, there are many different answers to the date of death. Make sure you agree on what constitutes surplus stock. If you don’t, you might be shopping for a new warehouse.

Take time to plan out a VMI implementation. It takes a while to get things right. Start with a small sample size and work up to more complicated lines. You need to build confidence within your purchasing team. This may be seen as a threat to their jobs. Be sensitive to this and manage the fear of change. It should be noted that a vast majority of the distributors I spoke to had fewer than five VMI relationships. Nobody is losing their job over this one.

Before you head down the trail, get advice from your industry peers. Most of you work with the same vendors. Ask for recommendations and references. Make sure that you check out service providers before agreeing to sign on with a manufacturer. Many of them have exclusive relationships with a particular provider. According to the participants I spoke with, there
(Turn to *To VMI or...* page 86.)

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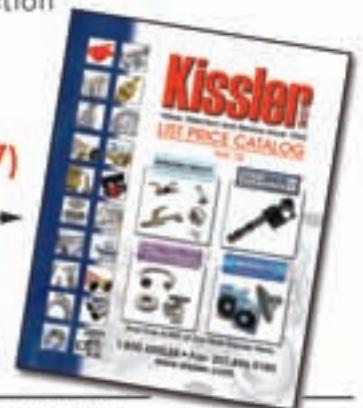
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776-0030 Heavy Duty Showerhead, 2.5 GPM, Solid Brass with Chrome Finish, 2-1/8" Face Diameter
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Amazon is here. How will you deal with it?

(Continued from page 8.)

There are already a lot of products (they say 500,000) and a lot of information on their site only one month after its announcement.

- *They tout low price but, on the surface, the jury is out* — I checked a couple plumbing products on their store and found, for example, a pretty generic round white toilet (2-day delivery) priced a little higher than a couple other webstores with similar delivery and significantly above a trade plumber's price for the product at a local wholesaler. (If their published pricing drives the market price, traditional wholesalers will be able to compete and make more money. Don't hold your breath.)

- *Don't forget, EASY is often the trump card* — For many people who must order, receive and pay for product, EASY is very important and sometimes the overriding issue in deciding who to buy from. In some cases, they will essentially ignore the product cost if one vendor is the "problem free" supplier. I think Grainger once had a marketing piece that explained that the total cost of acquiring a product is more important than the cost of the item. As I remember it, they discussed a reliable, error-free single-source actually saved money compared to checking many alternatives and buying from many sources. Thus the buyer could feel better about paying a higher unit price since reliable, problem-free transactions were so much more efficient for the buyer's company. This provided justification to buyers who felt obligated to find the best value. Frankly, there are a lot of buyers (of course not in our industry) who think that "job 1" is making their daily work as easy as possible.

- *"The young folks today just aren't wired the way they were in the good old days"* — Ignore this at your own peril. Many of the up-and-coming generation find texting and e-mailing better than a phone conversation. As one young guy told me, "If I text you, it takes 15 seconds. If I call you, we just waste a lot of time talking about the weather, how things are going for me and how you and mom are doing." As you can tell, the young guy was my son. This same group would rather find the product online, read reviews from allegedly "real" customers, place an order, pay by credit card and handle any customer service issues via e-mail. Some of these people are starting or inheriting businesses in our industry.

- *Seriously consider whether you*

want to partner with Internet companies — One of my clients built a pretty good business selling products online. He used a "free webstore" provider. He spent a couple years tuning the product mix and pricing, and just when it was starting to run well, the "free webstore" provider shut them down. The provider had been able to scrutinize their transactional data, got excited about the opportunity then, without loyalty or remorse, moved forward with their own offering. I don't know about Amazon Supply, but some Internet stores act as order takers and then forward the orders to partners who fulfill the order. If you partner with these companies, just remember their version of loyalty might be, "What have you done for me in the last hour?"

- *Keep tabs on the industry's direction* — There is an old saying, "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." Good fundamental marketing involves keeping your competition "close" by understanding their game, their strengths, their weaknesses and their value proposition.

With traditional competitors, understanding what makes them tick can involve significant time and energy. You might even need to get out of the office to observe and understand what they are doing, first hand. On the other hand, the effort can provide insights into who buys from the competitor, how much inventory they carry, how many people they employ, etc.

On the surface, Internet companies seem much easier to understand since their presentation, their offering and their value proposition are available to customers and competitors alike simply by navigating through their site. Understanding who buys from them and how they manage their inventory, who really fulfills the order might be more difficult since their distribution center might be located thousands of miles away or be as close as your competitor down the street who is their "fulfillment partner." Thus far, Amazon has released very little information regarding their operation but here are the highlights from their website:

- Net sales: \$48.077B; (Product sales: \$42.000B; Services sales: \$6.077B)
- Cost of sales: \$37.288B
- Gross margin: \$10.789B; 22.4%
- They list just under \$5B in inventories for 2011
- They spend \$2.9B on technology and content, which I assume is the product information and their site
- Since Amazon Supply is so

new, probably very little of the sales are related to that business. Hopefully they will break out that segment going forward.

- *Don't pretend that the Internet is just a passing fad for our industry* — You need a webstore, if only to retain your existing customers who want to order online and will switch over to competitors who have a webstore. If your competitors are sleeping or bucking the trend, you might even take some of their tech-savvy customers in the process.

- *Tell your state legislators to stop allowing e-tailers and e-wholesalers to sell merchandise into your area without paying any sales taxes* — If your state doesn't have sales taxes, this will be tough but many states have sales taxes yet allow out-of-state competitors this huge cost advantage. Additionally, you want them to endure the administrative costs associated with all the goofy tax calculation and reporting laws of your state.

I just heard on the radio that, the great state of Missouri, my home state, missed out on more than an estimated \$400M in tax revenues. They had more important issues to occupy their time. Like: Whether or not to honor Rush Limbaugh as a Famous Missourian. Some say, legislators are avoiding the issue because closing a

tax loop hole is bad politics in an election year. Whatever their reason, local retailers and wholesalers cannot continue to cede this 6% to 7% (in Missouri) price advantage to out-of-state competitors.

As I said earlier, Amazon and others are prosecuting a strategy of Disruptive Innovation. They have proven that their approach works selling books as they "innovated" the way the world buys books and "disrupted" the traditional bookstores out of most cities. The jury is still out for our industry regarding Amazon Supply but they think that disrupting the status quo could be their ticket to a nice chunk of our industry and they are willing to spend a lot of money testing their theory. ■

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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To VMI or not to VMI (Continued from page 84.)

can be a vast difference between companies. If they think "fill rate" refers to the speed at which beer flows from a tap, you might want to look elsewhere.

Is VMI right for you? I hope that I have given you plenty of information to chew on. Only you know the right answer for your situation. I can only answer this question as any good consultant would: It depends. Good luck. ■

Jason Bader is the managing partner of The Distribution Team, a firm that specializes in providing inventory management training, business operations consulting and technology utilization to the wholesale distribution industry. Bader brings more than 20 years of experience working in the distribution field. He can be reached at 503/282-2333, Jason@Distributionteam.com or at wwwthedistributionteam.com.

Correction

In the May issue of *The Wholesaler*, we ran a column on page 76 called "If Selling Your Business is in Your Future — Move Quickly" by George Spilka. We inadvertently used his former contact information at the end of the article. Following is his updated bio for those wishing to contact him:

George Spilka is president of George Spilka and Associates, a national investment banking firm, which he founded in 1978. They specialize in middle market, closely-held corpo-

rations. This Pittsburgh-based firm advises clients through the entire acquisition process, and also in preparing a company for sale. Their client base has included a diverse group of distributors, including many plumbing, waterworks, PVF and HVAC distributors, and manufacturers. You can learn more about the firm at their website www.georgespilka.com. He can be reached by e-mail at spilka@georgespilka.com, by telephone at 412-486-8189, or by writing him at Suite 301, 4284 Route 8, Allison Park, PA 15101.



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See contact information on page 90

INDUSTRY NEWS

Speakman showcases new collections at KBIS

NEW CASTLE, DEL. — During the 2012 Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, Speakman Company displayed their latest products from their debuted shower and bath collections of plumbing fixtures.

The introduction of the new products brings a number of new designs to Speakman's existing product line.

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Each ensemble of products includes a high performing Speakman showerhead, shower valve/trim and tub spout to complete the showering experience. The offering also features coordinated designer faucets and accessories, including a towel bar, a towel ring, two robe hooks and a toilet paper holder.

Each collection ranges in style from modern to contemporary design. In early 2011, Speakman launched 30-plus new showerheads, four of which are the inspiration behind each collection.

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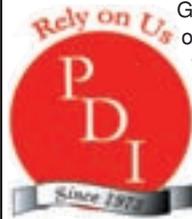
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What's *your* definition of success?



BY MARY JO MARTIN
Editorial director

Ask 10 people their definition of “success,” and you’re likely to get 10 different answers. To many, it’s climbing the corporate ladder. To others, it’s wealth, or admiration, or even followers on Twitter. But to some, it’s about finding that delicate balance in life between family, friends, faith and career.

At the recent Pacific Southwest Distributors Association Annual Convention in Indian Wells, Calif., it was a pleasure to listen to keynote speaker David Kim. Many of you will recognize him as the former CEO of Baja Fresh who had an emotional journey on an episode of the hit TV show *Undercover Boss*. Kim was born in Korea and came to the U.S. with his family as a child. His father was a Korean diplomat who was forced into exile when the government was overthrown. They went from a very comfortable existence to a penniless one almost overnight. Kim learned the art of business by frequenting swap meets with his parents, buying and selling items to make money and help support the family.

He recently authored a book called *Ignite: The 12 Values that Fuel Billionaire Success*. Following are some excerpts from his presentation:

- “It is the failures, not successes, that made who I am and who I will be.”
- “Many people have asked me what has made me successful. So I wrote this book on the values that billionaires share. I started studying what makes them so successful. It’s really not what you would expect. The things that we take for granted, they actually execute every day.”
- “One of the main things people ask me is ‘What is one silver bullet you can share that has been most important to your business?’ It’s human capital. That’s probably the most important basic element of running a business. At the end of the day, it’s human capital that is going to make your businesses successful.”
- “How many in this room actually know the names of everyone who works

for you? It has gotten discouraging to me when I don’t. Sometimes the company grows so fast and so big that I neglected the human connection. I would take things for granted and always assume there was more time. I’ve learned that’s not the case, so I made adjustments to live the way I truly believe is important.”

- “This country is so blessed because we have a spirit of giving. We give twice what the rest of the world does — combined — every year.”

- “There are certain things that truly matter in life. My core values when I was younger had to do with succeeding and what I want to accomplish. For me it was all about building a foundation that eventually started falling apart. As I started to age and see what really was more important, I started focusing more on family, faith, freedom and America. I love this country; it allows people the opportunity to pursue their dreams. And as I’ve changed my focus, I’ve realized how important it is to spend more time with my family and those I care about.”

- “Your core values have to somehow be aligned with truth — in business and in your personal life.”

- “In today’s age, we have so much technology available to help us communicate more often and with more people. But the ironic thing is that there are studies showing that people are actually lonelier today than ever before. We’re all so tied with communicating electronically that we’re losing our emotional and personal connections.”

I couldn’t agree more. We are all doing more with less, squeezing more and more into our waking hours, and feeling the pressure to be connected with through our smart phones and laptops nearly every waking hour of the day. We often put those closest to us on hold. We tell ourselves there will be “tomorrow” to do those things we *really* want but that we keep putting off. But life doesn’t always work that way. Each day is a gift and we need to grab it with both hands, treasuring the moments and the people while we have them.

A friend recently e-mailed me this thought-provoking challenge: “Enjoy the little things in life, because some day you’ll look back and realize they were the big things.”

My wish for you, my friends, is a life full of “little things.” ■

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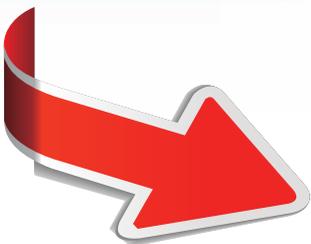
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