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Built on Service, STRENGTHENED BY FAMILY

Real-world strategies for scaling smart, training better and keeping teams engaged drawn from one family's remarkable business evolution Page 12

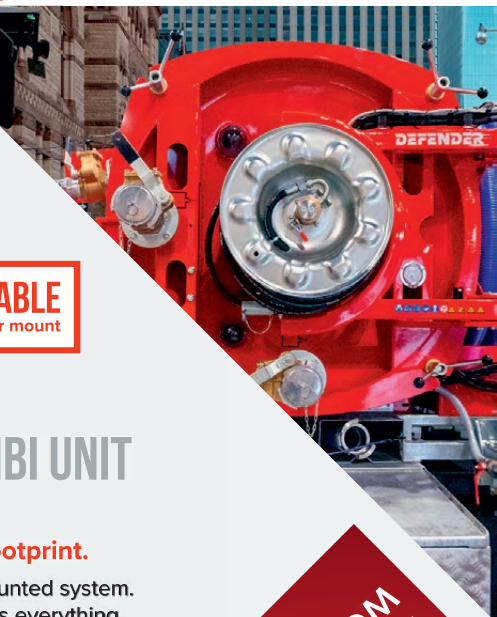
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Plumber Profile

Built on Service, Strengthened by Family

Real-world strategies for scaling smart, training better, and keeping teams engaged drawn from one family's remarkable business evolution.

- By Suzan Chin-Taylor



On the Cover

Shelton Plumbing technician Frank Roberts works on prepping a sewer line for trenchless lining installation at a job site in Murrysville, Pennsylvania. The company offers residential and commercial plumbing, sewer inspections, sewer, water and gas line repairs, and many other services within a 15-mile radius of Alle-Kiski Valley, Pennsylvania.
(Photography by Nate Smallwood)

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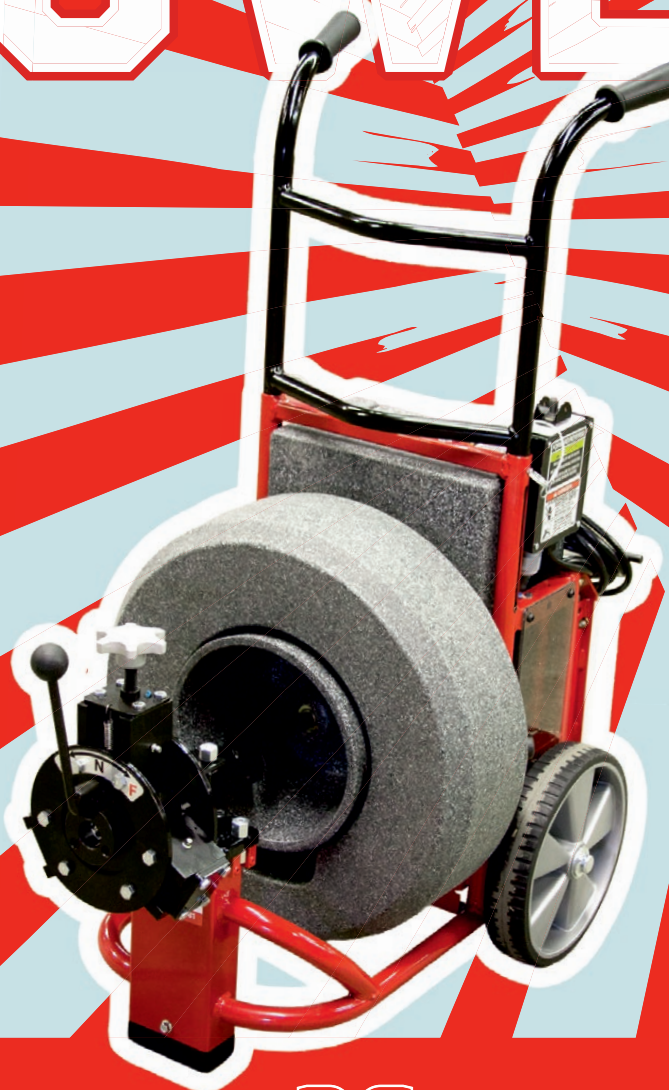
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Cory Dellenbach

Finding the Right Fit

What promotion works best for your plumbing business

I've seen this question asked a few times on the plumbing social media groups I follow on social media: "What method of advertising do you use for your company?" There's never just one clear-cut answer; there's always a slew of different responses.

Marketing isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, especially in the plumbing industry. From social media and digital ads to newspapers, radio, TV and old-fashioned word of mouth, every method has strengths, drawbacks and a place depending on the company using it. Let's take a look at some of them.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL MARKETING

Social media has become a powerful tool for plumbing companies, particularly those looking to build name recognition and stay top-of-mind. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and Google allow contractors to showcase projects, highlight team members, share customer reviews and even respond to service calls in real time. The cost of doing these is relatively low, sometimes free and results can be measured quickly.

The downside? It takes time and consistency. Posting once a month won't move the needle, and online visibility can be fleeting if you stop engaging. Digital marketing also tends to work best for companies willing to track metrics and adjust strategies regularly.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

Print advertising still holds value, especially in smaller or rural communities where local papers remain a trusted source of information. Newspapers can reach an older demographic that may not be active online and often bring a sense of credibility to a company's name.

> Marketing isn't about chasing trends. It's about finding what works for you — and sticking with it long enough to see results.

However, print ads can be expensive and difficult to measure. Once the paper is printed, the message is locked in — and if readers skip the page, the opportunity is gone.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Radio and TV advertising offer broad exposure and strong brand recognition. A catchy jingle or familiar voice can make a plumbing company instantly recognizable, even years later. These mediums work well for established companies looking to dominate a market or reinforce an existing reputation.

The challenge is cost. Production and airtime aren't cheap, and smaller companies may struggle to justify the investment unless they're seeing consistent returns. Like print, results can also be harder to track.

WORD OF MOUTH

Still one of the most powerful forms of promotion, word of mouth is built on trust. A recommendation from a neighbor or family member carries more weight than almost any ad. It costs nothing — but it must be earned through quality work and customer service.

The limitation is control. Word of mouth grows organically and can't be scaled quickly. It's a long-term strategy, not an instant fix.

SO WHAT'S BEST?

The key is knowing your business, your market and your goals. A one-truck operation may thrive on social media and referrals, while a multicrew company might benefit from radio or TV exposure. Most successful contractors don't rely on just one approach — they blend several methods and adjust over time.

Marketing isn't about chasing trends. It's about finding what works for you — and sticking with it long enough to see results.

Have you found one that works best for your company? Let me know by emailing me at editor@plumbermag.com.

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CHASING GOLD

New Champion Crowned at WWETT Show Lining Olympics

For the second year in a row, Waterline Renewal Technologies hosted the Lining Olympics at February's WWETT Show in Indianapolis. Teams competed to see who could complete the repair of two "leaks" on a pipe using UV CIPP technology. They were assessed on speed, accuracy and teamwork. In the end, a team from Hiller Plumbing's Nashville branch defeated defending champion Mr. Rooter Plumbing of Abilene, Texas. Keep an eye out. You might see Hiller Plumbing featured in a future issue.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

"The bigger mistake is not hiring the wrong person. It is never showing the right person what success looks like. ... When the picture is unclear, people just make up their own version of 'good.' Some assume they are doing fine until they are surprised by criticism. Others burn out trying to guess what you want."

— Hiring Habits That Will Hold Your Crew Together

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SERVICE EXPANSION

Branching Out into Drain Cleaning



In a highly competitive market, it is crucial to continuously seek growth strategies to stay ahead. One highly effective strategy for plumbers — if you're not doing it already — is expanding services to include drain cleaning. You not only tap into new revenue streams but also better cater to customer needs. Regular contributor Anthony Pacilla offers some tips about expanding services in this online exclusive. plumbermag.com/featured

THE WRITTEN WORD

Master Your Craft With These Business Books

In many trades, when someone with years of experience buys a business of their own, you often hear them say that while they're definitely an expert in the field, their business acumen could use a little work. Luckily there are many resources out there that can help. Here is a core list of books that will benefit contractors who want to be better at business management and improve their leadership skills. plumbermag.com/featured

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Josh Shelton, owner of Shelton Plumbing & In-Line Renewal Solutions, stands in front of one of his work trucks near their company headquarters in Alle-Kiski Valley, Pennsylvania.

Built on Service, STRENGTHENED BY FAMILY

Real-world strategies for scaling smart, training better and keeping teams engaged drawn from one family's remarkable business evolution

By Suzan Marie Chin-Taylor | Photography by Nate Smallwood



Shelton Plumbing & In-Line Renewal Solutions, Alle-Kiski Valley, Pennsylvania

OWNER	Josh Shelton
EMPLOYEES	20
SERVICES	Residential and commercial plumbing; sewer, water and gas line repairs; sewer inspections and compliance repairs; trenchless rehabilitation (CIPP, epoxy, vertical stacks); trenchless equipment and materials; hands-on and field training; tech support and diagnostics; equipment repairs & rentals (expanding)
SERVICE AREA	~15-mile radius
WEBSITES	johnsheltonplumbing.com in-linetrenchlessshop.com

When Josh Shelton talks about plumbing, leadership or the future of the trades, he's not speaking from theory. He's speaking from a lifetime spent absorbing the values, work ethic and resourcefulness that shaped Shelton Plumbing, long before he ever considered taking over the business his father founded the same year Josh was born.

"My dad started Shelton Plumbing in 1983," Shelton recalls. "He grew the company to around 20 employees at one point, but he found out that he didn't really enjoy the management side. It got out of his control, and he decided to downsize."

For more than a decade, his father, John Shelton, operated as a one-man shop, just him, a truck, deep roots in the Alle-Kiski Valley and a loyal customer base built on trust, craftsmanship and doing right by people. Those years became, in John's words, "the best times of his career" because he regained control of his schedule and re-centered the business around service.

But eventually, a decision had to be made about the future. One day John approached Josh with a direct question: either take over the business or he would sell it. It wasn't a path Josh had expected.

TURNING A RELUCTANT BEGINNING INTO A CALLING

Despite spending his childhood summers digging, repairing and tagging along on plumbing jobs, Josh never planned to become a plumber. "I didn't choose the plumbing path because I spent my childhood helping my dad to make money and I just didn't really like plumbing when I was a kid," he admits.

He also didn't choose college; instead, he chased work, any work, traveling the country doing labor-intensive jobs at fossil fuel and nuclear power plants. He describes himself then as someone who "loved to work," but not yet someone who had found his purpose.

The turning point came quickly after his father's ultimatum. "Two weeks later, I was enrolled in plumbing school and never looked back," Josh says.

From the first day in the field as an apprentice, everything changed. Working beside his father not only taught him the trade; it reshaped their relationship. "Those first two years were such an eye-opener. I got to go into his world and see what he did to provide for the family, the sacrifices he made. It built a bond we never had before."

One moment in particular stays with him. Struggling to solder a joint and bristling at his father's offer to help, Josh found himself suddenly alone on the job site. His father had walked out without a word. Three hours later, John returned, not with anger, but with a lesson. "He just looked at me and said, 'Okay, are you ready to learn?' That moment was life-altering. I knew I had to swallow my pride."

The lesson stuck. From then on, Josh committed to mastery, not just of plumbing, but of humility, patience and teamwork. He became the apprentice who anticipated needs, studied processes and refined every movement. It's still how he trains his team today.



Frank Roberts keeps an eye on the video screen as he inspects the sewer line with a Hathorn camera reel.

A FAMILY COMPANY IN THE TRUEST SENSE

By the time Josh earned his journeyman's license and eventually his master's, Shelton Plumbing was growing again slowly, intentionally, and with family at the center. His sister Sarah joined to run the office. His brother-in-law Denny came on board. Later, his uncle joined the related trenchless operation.

People often ask him how he manages working so closely with family. His answer is unwavering: "I think it's the greatest thing ever. Family are people you can always trust. You can rely on them."

Trust is a theme that recurs throughout Josh's leadership philosophy, trust in the people you hire, trust built through accountability and trust earned through service. It's also a value he learned from watching his father, whose reputation in the community was not just as a plumber, but as a man who gave endlessly of his time to churches, missions and disaster relief efforts. "He could have retired a millionaire," Josh says. "But he gave it all away, time, money, dedication to people. The business itself became an extension of that service mindset. I get to honor my father by doing everything I can to continue his legacy."

FINDING HIS FOOTING AS A BUSINESS OWNER

After nearly a decade focused solely on technical excellence, Josh reached a new realization: to grow, he had to understand business.

In 2018, he began working with business coach John Laslavik of ThistleSea Business Development. "For the first three years, I thought he was talking another language, P&Ls, balance sheets, personalities, DiSC profiles," Josh says with a laugh. "But you can't advance yourself or grow a company if you don't have people guiding you."

This period marked the transition from skilled technician to strategic leader. Understanding people, not pipes, became the real growth curve. The shift to developing his team, building processes and learning to delegate would ultimately lay the foundation for the innovations that came next.

INNOVATION BENEATH THE SURFACE

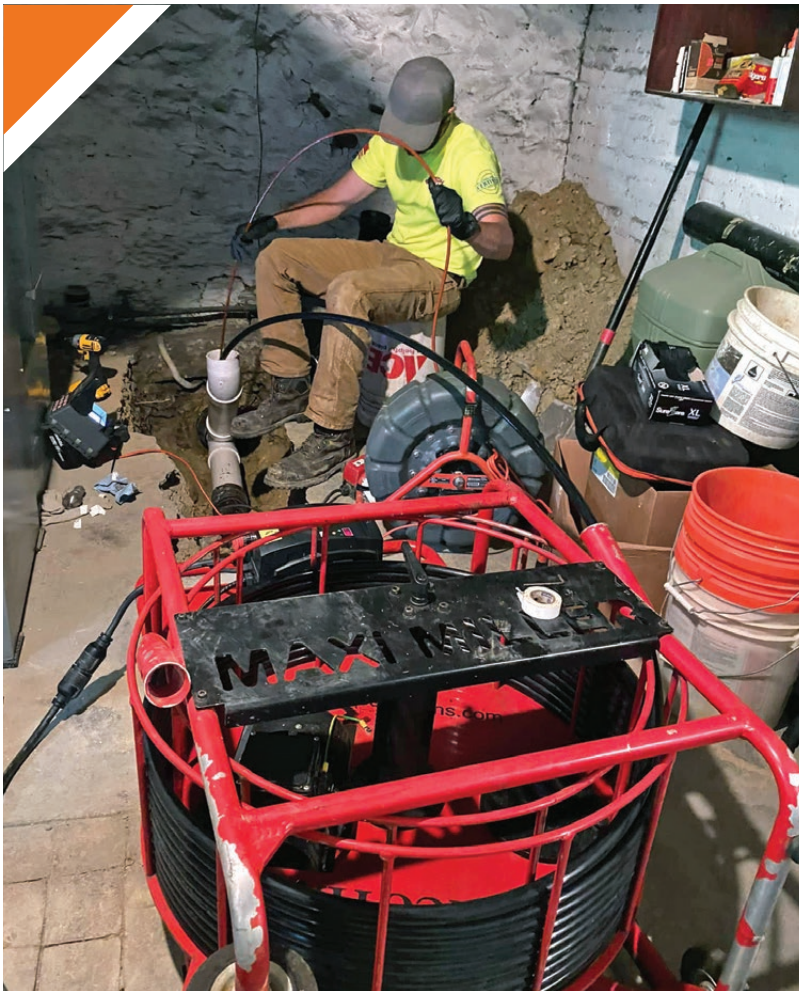
As Shelton Plumbing grew, Josh gradually shifted from traditional plumbing work into areas requiring higher skill, more technology and stronger problem-solving. It wasn't a strategic plan at first; it was a response to the needs of the community.

"We started purely based on service and repairs," Josh says. "My dad was huge into remodeling but over the years, I saw that wasn't the most profitable area. I want the most for my team, better trucks, good equipment, bonuses. That meant shifting our services."

The shift accelerated as local regulations changed. Western Pennsylvania's sewer inspection requirements for home sales created a surge in demand for repair, rehabilitation and replacement of failing sewer lines. That opened an opportunity and a challenge.

WHY TRENCHLESS BECAME THE GAME-CHANGER

Before trenchless methods were widely available, repairing underground sewers meant major disruption:



An employee with Shelton Plumbing uses a Picote Maxi Miller drain cleaning machine on a job site. (Photo courtesy Shelton Plumbing)

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Shelton Plumbing technician Frank Roberts, left, uses a Hathorn camera reel while company owner Josh Shelton uses a Picote Maxi Miller drain cleaning machine as they prep a sewer line for trenchless lining installation.

saw-cutting concrete, jackhammering basements, gutting finished spaces, and performing labor that was not only grueling but dangerous.

"Years ago, projects took six, seven, eight days with saw-cutting, jackhammering, hauling everything in and out," Josh explains. "It was hard, backbreaking labor. We called it the bucket brigade."

The human cost was real. As an owner-operator, Josh took it upon himself to handle the highest-risk tasks. "I was the guy in the trench box, the guy climbing the roofs, doing things that were the most unsafe because I felt like I owed it to my people. I can fix plumbing; I can't fix them."

Shelton started with trenchless technologies like Perma-Liner CIPP lining, Picote epoxy brush coating, and later, light-based lining systems and LightRay UV Technology. UV changed everything for the business. "With trenchless, we do bigger jobs faster. Some projects that used to take eight days, we now do in three or four," Josh says. "Efficiency is up, profitability is up and my guys couldn't be happier."

Efficiency wasn't the only motivator. Safety, customer experience and preserving property all played equally important roles. In the hilly, dense, older neighborhoods surrounding Pittsburgh, traditional excavation is often impractical or impossible.

"You have sewer lines under driveways, under retaining walls, under hundred-year-old trees, even under a neighbor's driveway," Josh says. "You can't just excavate that. Trenchless provides a better product and a better experience."

THE CASE THAT PUT SHELTON ON THE MAP

One project in particular reinforced the power of this new approach. A Realtor contacted Josh with a desperate problem: a fully finished basement, tile floors, game room, bath, laundry, all areas underneath had failed the sewer inspection. Two contractors had already told the homeowner the basement would need to be torn apart. What happened next became part of Shelton Plumbing's company lore. "We completely renovated everything under that floor through a 2-by-2-foot opening in a utility space," Josh recalls. "We lined everything under that floor in a day and a half."

The homeowners were stunned. The Realtors were stunned. Even the city inspectors were stunned until Shelton Plumbing submitted a detailed CCTV report documenting each lined section as required for compliance. "That was a major turning point. People realized this was possible," Josh says. "It changed how we do business."

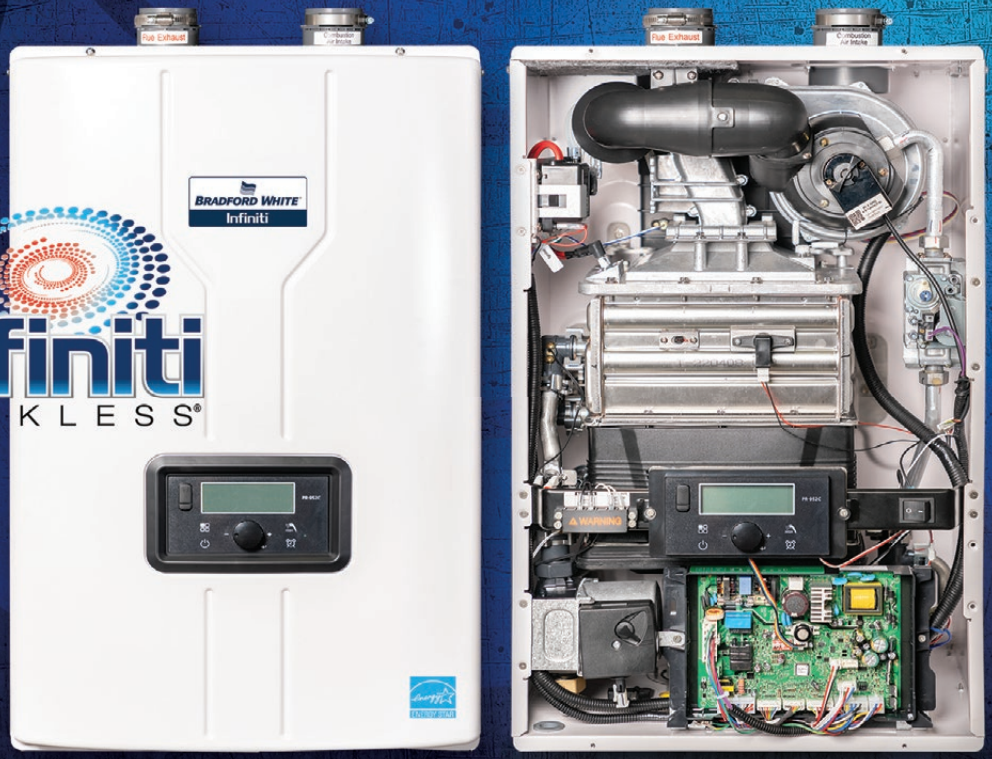
WHEN THERE'S NO PLAYBOOK, YOU BUILD ONE

When Josh first embraced trenchless, the industry wasn't structured the way it is today. There were no Facebook groups, no massive online communities and few resources for troubleshooting. "We didn't have anybody to call," he says. "Everything we developed for ourselves is now part of our training curriculum, how we plan jobs, how we use equipment, why we choose one method over another."

That hands-on experience of solving problems in the field with limited support gave Shelton Plumbing a deep understanding of the tools they used. It also opened the door to a new business opportunity.

> "With trenchless, we do bigger jobs faster. Some projects that used to take eight days we now do in three or four. Efficiency is up, profitability is up and my guys couldn't be happier."
> *Josh Shelton*

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Frank Roberts sets up the Hathorn camera reel for job site usage.

natural," Josh says. "The retail part is just the byproduct of the service."

The model is simple: Help plumbers choose the right equipment, train them using real-world scenarios, provide phone support when they're stuck, repair equipment fast and keep people working.

Behind this is a lesson born from Josh's early days in trenchless — he doesn't want others to struggle for five years learning what he had to learn alone. "There were so many pieces I didn't have access to like materials, repairs or rentals. Now we fix everything we sell. We diagnose over the phone. Sometimes we get parts out the same day." In short, he built the resources he wished existed when he started.

FROM USER TO TRAINER TO SUPPLIER

Rob Larsen from Waterline Renewal Technologies began to notice the Shelton team's growth and the increasing demand created by Pennsylvania's regulations. As the local need outpaced the capacity of national suppliers, Josh found himself serving as a bridge between technology makers and the plumbers who needed these solutions.

That evolved into In-Line Renewal Solutions, a full-service equipment, training and support resource for trenchless contractors. "I've lived a life of service in plumbing. Moving into the service side of supplying equipment felt

GROWING BEYOND THE REGION

Although In-Line Renewal Solutions is strongest in the Northeast, the company supports contractors from Florida to Michigan to New England. "We don't put restrictions on ourselves. We find a way," Josh says. One contractor recently drove four and a half hours to have a piece of equipment repaired. "We had it done in 30 minutes and he was back on the road. That's what service looks like."

The momentum continues to build. Josh hints that 2026 will bring "some pretty cool plans" for expansion and enhanced service capabilities.

Everything DiSC to Build a Stronger, More Communicative Team

As Shelton Plumbing grew, owner Josh Shelton discovered that technical skill alone couldn't create the culture, efficiency and teamwork he envisioned. What made the biggest difference was a tool many contractors have never considered: Everything DiSC, a behavioral assessment that helps teams understand how people naturally communicate, respond to stress and make decisions.

What DiSC Stands For

DiSC categorizes communication and behavioral tendencies into four primary styles:

- D – Dominance: Direct, decisive, action-oriented. Motivated by results; stressed by slow processes, inefficiency and overexplaining.
- I – Influence: Social, expressive, collaborative. Motivated by relationships and enthusiasm; stressed by isolation or overly rigid structure.
- S – Steadiness: Patient, supportive, consistent. Motivated by stability and teamwork; stressed by rapid change, pressure or abrupt communication.
- C – Conscientiousness: Analytical, precise, methodical. Motivated by accuracy and clear expectations; stressed by ambiguity, rushed timelines or emotional decision-making.

Josh learned through coaching that every person on his team leans toward one or more of these styles, and understanding those tendencies is essential for effective leadership.

Using DiSC to Improve Communication and Avoid Unnecessary Conflict

One reason Shelton Plumbing adopted DiSC was to reduce internal friction, especially during handoffs between office staff, field technicians and management. Team members now recognize that misunderstandings often stem not from disagreement but from differing communication needs:

- Some team members want the what and move forward.
- Others need the why or the step-by-step how before they feel confident taking action.
- Some prefer quick decisions; others need time to process information.



LEADING PEOPLE AND BUILDING CULTURE

For Shelton, running a successful plumbing and trenchless company has never been solely about technical skill or equipment. It's about people, understanding them, developing them and trusting them.

After years of working closely with a business coach and implementing tools like Everything DiSC to improve communication and team dynamics, Josh now views leadership as a practice rooted in adaptability.

DiSC stands for Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness. People have one dominant communication style or a combination. "As a leader, you almost naturally become a chameleon," he says. "One day I have to be a D, the next day I have to be an I. When you understand your people and how they communicate, you know how to energize them."

Running two companies and nearly 20 employees meant he had to evolve into someone who could connect with every personality. "When you know yourself and your team members, things really start to excel," he says. "We now manage things and we lead people."

A CULTURE OF SUPPORT, NOT BURNOUT

One of Josh's core philosophies is protecting his people from the burnout he experienced earlier in his career. The company no longer markets itself as a 24/7 emergency service provider. They have on-call staff, but they prioritize sustainable workloads. The result? Higher morale, better performance and a culture built on mutual support.

Recognizing these differences helps prevent shutdowns, frustration or misinterpretation.

DiSC also provides a shared language for addressing conflict in a productive, nonpersonal way. When disagreements arise, the team can pinpoint whether the issue stems from style differences such as pace, detail level and decision-making preferences rather than viewing it as a personal clash.

Understanding motivators and stressors allows supervisors and peers to communicate in ways that bring out each person's strengths. This has strengthened trust across departments and helped Shelton Plumbing maintain high performance without burnout.

By integrating DiSC into onboarding, training and daily leadership, Shelton Plumbing has built a culture where people feel seen, respected and supported. The result is better teamwork, smoother communication and a workplace where employees stay engaged because their needs and strengths are understood.

"My team does an insane amount of work each day, but they're not burned out," he says. "When we add team members, the whole company feels like it just got a major break even though we're actually doing more." Maximizing time and efficiency, rather than maximizing hours, has become a defining metric of success.

WHAT SUCCESS REALLY MEANS

While revenue and profit matter, Josh is clear that profitability is essential to providing good wages, tools and equipment and he doesn't measure success by dollars alone. "I think too much weight gets put on money. Society says success is based on how much money someone made," he says. "But I look at success as, 'Have I outdone myself? What areas can I be better in this year, next year?' "



One of Shelton Plumbing's service vans the company uses. The company has 20 employees.

For Josh, it always comes back to people. "I'm nothing without my people. I've got a bunch of trucks and equipment, and I can't do anything with it if I don't have them." Whether it's technicians in the field, family members in the office, or contractors calling In-Line Renewal Solutions for guidance, relationships are the common thread that sustains both sides of the business.

DELEGATION, TRUST AND LETTING GO

If there's one lesson Josh wishes he'd learned earlier, it's that delegating isn't losing control. It's gaining more of the time and freedom needed to lead effectively. "Learn to delegate and learn that it's okay to let things go," he says. "If other people don't do it your way, it's okay. If they make mistakes, that's OK too."

He knows firsthand how hard this is for plumbing business owners, especially those who started as technicians. "Once you're an owner-operator, it's hard to trust people and let go because this is something you built with your own two hands," he admits. But the reward is immense. Delegating builds people. And as they grow, the company grows.

INVEST IN PEOPLE, INVEST IN YOURSELF

The most meaningful successes Josh points to aren't financial milestones but human ones, watching employees advance their skills, seeing them gain confidence and helping them achieve goals in their own lives. "If I can help a person, it might take two years to develop them. But the time and energy you put in will help you, and it will help them," he says. "It's a reciprocal relationship."

At the end of the day, he believes no contractor will look back on their life wishing they had spent more time at the office. "We're going to be asking for our families, the people we care about," he reflects. "Our people, our family, that's the most important part of it."

A BUSINESS BUILT ON SERVICE, CARRIED FORWARD BY PURPOSE

From John Shelton's humble one-man operation to Josh's multifaceted plumbing and trenchless enterprise, the throughline has always been service, to customers, to employees, to other contractors and to the community. "We're forced to understand people if we want to be efficient and productive," Josh says. "Once you do that, everything starts to fall into place."

The future looks bright for Shelton Plumbing and In-Line Renewal Solutions. Demand for trenchless technology continues to rise, and Josh is already planning the next phase of expansion. But even with major growth ahead, one thing remains unchanged: the company's commitment to serving others with integrity, innovation and heart. As Josh puts it: "The more you invest in others, the more you give back to yourself."

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Anthony Pacilla

Not Your Average Waterline

High-purity water systems push plumbing beyond the basics, requiring specialized materials, techniques and know-how to deliver ultra-clean water for labs, health care and high-tech manufacturing

By Anthony Pacilla

Let's face it, when you picture plumbing, you probably think of robust copper pipes, PEX, maybe some cast iron, and the satisfying gurgle of a well-draining sink. That's the familiar world of potable water.

But step into the world of a university research lab, a cutting-edge medical facility or a high-tech manufacturing plant, and you'll quickly realize that "water" isn't always just water. Here, "pure" means something entirely different, and the systems that deliver it are a fascinating, often confusing, blend of science and specialized plumbing.

This world of high-purity water systems, particularly those relying on reverse osmosis and deionization, can feel like a jump into a different dimension. You might think, "I'm a plumber, not a chemist!" While you don't need a Ph.D. to work on these systems, having a basic understanding of the science is critical. Furthermore, HPW plumbing demands specialized skills, materials and protocols that go far beyond standard code. It's an area that's only growing, and it positions you as an indispensable expert in a highly lucrative niche.

The Problem: When "Clean" Isn't Clean Enough

So, why can't a university lab or a semiconductor plant just hook up to the regular tap water?

Well, imagine trying to isolate a single molecule for study, or cultivate super-sensitive cells, when your water supply has tiny bits of calcium, chlorine, organic compounds or even microscopic bacteria floating around. It's like trying to find a needle in a haystack — or worse, accidentally adding a new needle that ruins the whole experiment. That's why labs, medical facilities and places like microchip manufacturers need water that's been stripped bare of impurities.

Regular tap water, while perfectly safe for drinking, is a cocktail of dissolved minerals, organic compounds and living organisms that can:

- **Mess Up Experiments:** Imagine a lab tech trying to analyze a blood sample, only for the minerals in the water to react with the chemicals and give a false reading. That's wasted time, money and potentially critical data.
- **Destroy Expensive Equipment:** Autoclaves (sterilizers) and delicate analytical instruments can get clogged with mineral scale or corrode, leading to breakdowns that cost a fortune and bring crucial operations to a halt.
- **Contaminate Everything:** In a sterile environment, even the tiniest speck of bacteria or a dead cell can cause an entire batch of cell cultures or a full manufacturing run to fail.

This is why we move beyond the familiar pipes and into the realm of RO and DI.

RO: The First Big Step – Squeezing Water Pure

Think of reverse osmosis as your purification heavy-hitter. It's usually the first major line of defense, tackling the bulk of contaminants.

The How-To (Simplified):

You know how osmosis works, right? Water usually flows from an area of low salt concentration to an area of high salt concentration through a special membrane. RO, as the name suggests, reverses that.

> As the installer, your job is not just to connect the purification boxes; it is to ensure the integrity of the water after it leaves the equipment and before it gets to the point of use.

1. **Pressure is Applied:** We apply a lot of pressure to the "dirty" (high salt/contaminant) side of a semi-permeable membrane.
2. **Water Passes, Contaminants Are Blocked:** This pressure forces the tiny water molecules through the microscopic pores of the membrane, leaving most of the larger stuff — like dissolved salts, heavy metals, pesticides and even bacteria — trapped on the other side. It's like squeezing the pure juice out of a fruit and leaving the pulp behind.

What RO gets rid of: Up to 99% of those annoying dissolved solids, along with most heavy metals and tiny microbes. It's like taking a sledgehammer to the problem, getting rid of the vast majority of impurities that could cause trouble.

For a lab, a "larger" RO system isn't just a dinky filter under a sink. It's a serious piece of machinery, probably freestanding, with prefilters to protect its sensitive membranes, powerful pumps, a reject line (for the concentrated wastewater) and a large storage tank for all that newly purified water.

DI: The "Polisher" – Getting Down to the Atoms

Even after RO, a tiny fraction of electrically charged particles, or ions, might sneak through. That's where deionization tanks come in. They're the ultimate polishers, ensuring the water is virtually ion-free.

The How-To (Simplified):

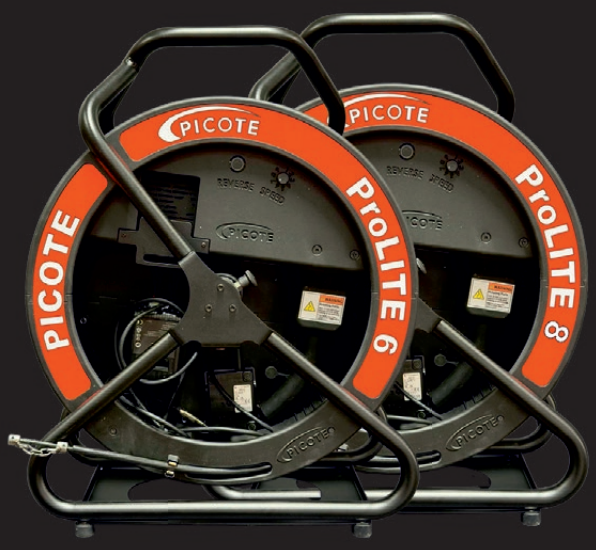
DI tanks are filled with special resin beads — think of them like tiny, molecular magnets. Some beads are positively charged and grab the negatively charged ions (called anions, like chloride and sulfate). Other beads are negatively charged and grab the positively charged ions (called cations, like calcium and sodium).

When you combine RO and DI, it's a dream team. RO does the heavy lifting, saving the more expensive DI resins for the final, superfine polishing. This is crucial for labs that need "ultrapure" water, measured not just by how few particles it has, but by its electrical resistivity — the higher the resistance, the fewer free ions present.

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The Plumber's Critical Role: Beyond the Box

As the installer, your job is not just to connect the purification boxes; it is to ensure the integrity of the water after it leaves the equipment and before it gets to the point of use. This is where HPW plumbing truly departs from the residential world.

1. Material Strictness

Forget copper and PVC. In HPW, you primarily deal with specialized plastics and stainless steel.

- **Polyvinylidene Fluoride and Polypropylene:** These plastics are chosen for their low leachables (they won't contaminate the water) and their smooth inner surface.
- **Electropolished 316L Stainless Steel:** Used in the most critical applications, like water for injection for pharmaceuticals. The electropolishing process creates an incredibly smooth, nonporous surface that resists microbial biofilm formation and corrosion.



2. The Art of the Perfect Joint

Traditional jointing methods are strictly forbidden because they create crevices or introduce contaminants.

- **Thermal Welding (Plastics):** Instead of gluing, plastic pipe is joined using butt fusion or socket fusion. This involves heating the material to a precise temperature and joining it under pressure, creating a seamless, homogeneous joint with no internal ridge for particles or bacteria to collect.
- **Orbital Welding (Stainless Steel):** This is the gold standard. It's an automated, computer-controlled welding process that uses an inert gas purge inside the pipe to prevent oxidation (known as "sugaring"). The result is a perfect, consistent and smooth internal weld bead every single time — a critical barrier against contamination.

3. Design and Contamination Control

HPW loops are designed to prevent water from ever going stagnant, which is a breeding ground for bacteria (known as biofilm).

- **Recirculation:** Most HPW systems operate on a closed-loop recirculation model, constantly moving and retreating the water.
- **Eliminating Dead Legs:** Any pipe branch off the mainline that is rarely flushed is called a "dead leg" and must be minimized. Strict engineering specifications define the maximum length of these branches to ensure proper flushing.
- **Valves and Fittings:** Only specialized valves, primarily diaphragm valves, are used. They eliminate internal crevices that can harbor bacteria.

Becoming an HPW specialist is challenging, requiring investment in training and specialized tools, but it is one of the most rewarding and high-value specializations a plumber can pursue, offering a career at the intersection of industry, science and public health.

Anthony Pacilla is a registered master plumber for McVehil Plumbing in Washington, Pennsylvania. He has over two decades of experience in the plumbing and HVAC trades and has a bachelor's in business and economics from Thiel College.

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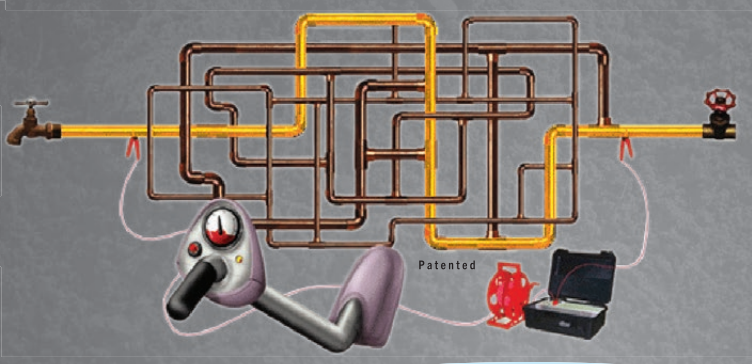
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Kate Zabriskie

Do You Really Need Training?

What to do before you invest in education and training for yourself and crew

By Kate Zabriskie

Something goes sideways at work — missed deadlines, bad customer feedback, you name it — and the first suggestion is, "We need training!" Sound familiar? It's like reaching for a Band-Aid when what you really need is a lifestyle change. Training can be powerful, but it shouldn't be your knee-jerk solution to every workplace hiccup.

Here's the hard truth: Training is the last stop, not the first. If you're jumping to training without laying the groundwork for great performance, you're wasting time, money and effort. Let's break down what you need to be doing instead — and why it matters.

STEP 1: HIRE FOR SUCCESS

Think of hiring as the foundation of your performance "house." If you're building on shaky ground, even the best training program won't save you. You need the right people in the right roles from the get-go.

Here's how to hire smarter:

- **Be Crystal Clear About What You Need:** Don't settle for generic job descriptions like "good communication skills." Define what success looks like in the role.
- **Ask About Real Situations:** Look beyond polished résumés and ask candidates how they've handled challenges in the past.
- **Prioritize Cultural Fit:** Skills can be taught, but a mismatch with your team's vibe or values is much harder to fix.

Smart hiring sets the stage for performance, minimizing the need for "fix-it" training later.

STEP 2: SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

You know what drives me up the wall? Leaders who say, "They should just know what to do." Really? Since when are we hiring mind readers? If you want great performance, you need to spell it out — clearly and consistently.

Here's how to set expectations that stick:

- **Be Specific:** Don't say, "Do better." Say exactly what "better" means: "Respond to all customer inquiries within 24 hours."
- **Write It Down:** Memory is unreliable, and verbal instructions are easy to forget (or misinterpret). Document everything.
- **Keep the Conversation Going:** Expectations aren't one-and-done. Reinforce them regularly in meetings and one-on-ones.

Clarity eliminates confusion, giving your team a clear path to success — and fewer excuses for poor performance.

STEP 3: MODEL THE BEHAVIOR YOU WANT TO SEE

Here's a truth bomb: Your team is watching you. If you preach punctuality but show up late to meetings, you've already lost the plot. Leadership isn't just about what you say — it's about what you do.

To walk the talk:

- **Practice What You Preach:** Whether it's meeting deadlines, showing respect or staying organized, lead by example.
- **Own Your Mistakes:** Perfection isn't the goal. When you mess up, acknowledge it and show how you'll fix it.
- **Live Your Values:** If collaboration is a core value, show it by inviting diverse input and recognizing contributions.

When you model the standards you expect, you set the tone for everyone else to follow.

STEP 4: PROVIDE THE RIGHT TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Expecting great performance without giving people the tools to succeed is like asking someone to build a house with a toy hammer. Before blaming performance, ask yourself: "Do they have what they need?"

Here's what to check:

- **Technology:** Is their software up to date? Slow tech kills productivity and morale.

- **Time:** Are workloads reasonable, or are you stretching people too thin?
- **Knowledge:** Do they know where to find information and resources? If not, create guides, FAQs or training documents.

When people have what they need, they're empowered to succeed — and training becomes less of a crutch.

STEP 5: HOLD PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

Here's the thing about accountability: Without it, even the best plans turn into wishful thinking. It's like signing up for a gym membership and never going — you have the potential, but nothing's happening.

How to make accountability work:

- **Address Issues Quickly:** Problems don't get better with time. If something's off, call it out immediately.
- **Give Actionable Feedback:** Be specific about what went wrong and what needs to change. "The report was late" isn't as helpful as, "The late report delayed our project timeline and caused extra work for others."
- **Follow Through:** Empty threats are worse than no accountability at all. If you set consequences, enforce them consistently.

Accountability bridges the gap between expectations and results, ensuring everyone stays on track.

STEP 6: PROVIDE COACHING AND MENTORSHIP

Not every performance issue requires formal training. Sometimes people just need guidance from someone who's been there, done that. It's like using GPS instead of fumbling with an old-school map.

Ways to provide coaching:

- **Regular Check-Ins:** Use these to offer targeted advice and discuss progress.
- **Peer Mentoring:** Pair experienced team members with newer ones to share knowledge and skills.
- **Shadowing Opportunities:** Let employees observe high performers in action.

Coaching creates a supportive environment for learning and growth without the need for a formal training program.

STEP 7: MAKE TRAINING TARGETED AND PURPOSEFUL

If you've done everything above and still see performance gaps, then — and only then — should you consider training. But make it count.

If you're relying on training to solve performance issues without addressing the bigger picture, you're doing it wrong.

Here's how:

- **Identify the Root Cause:** Don't train for the symptoms; train for the actual problem.
- **Keep It Relevant:** Skip generic courses and focus on the specific skills or knowledge your team needs.
- **Follow Up:** Training doesn't end when the session does. Monitor progress and ensure the learning is being applied.

Training is most effective when it's part of a broader performance strategy — not a standalone fix.

TOP TAKEAWAY IDEAS

Training isn't a magic wand. It's more like the cherry on top of a well-built sundae. If you're relying on training to solve performance issues without addressing the bigger picture, you're doing it wrong.

To build a high-performing team, focus on the fundamentals: hire well, set clear expectations, model excellence, provide the right tools, hold people accountable and offer coaching. Then, if gaps still exist, use training strategically.

Remember: Great performance isn't trained — it's built. Step by step, with the right pieces in place, you'll create an environment where people can thrive without leaning on training as a crutch.

Kate Zabriskie is the president of Business Training Works Inc., a Virginia-based talent development firm. She and her team provide onsite, virtual and online soft-skills training courses and workshops to clients in the United States and internationally. For more information, visit businesstrainingworks.com.

Advancing Trenchless Innovation

NASTT looks ahead to 2027 and beyond

Submitted by NASTT

The trenchless technology industry continues to evolve at a rapid pace, driven by innovation, collaboration and a growing need for sustainable underground infrastructure solutions.

At the center of this progress is the North American Society for Trenchless Technology, which remains committed to advancing education, research and knowledge sharing across the sector.

As the industry looks ahead, NASTT is pleased to announce that the call for abstracts is now open for the 2027 NASTT No-Dig Show, scheduled for March 21-25, 2027, in Raleigh, North Carolina. This premier technical and networking conference and exhibition will once again bring together owners, engineers, contractors, manufacturers and academics from across North America and beyond.

The call for abstracts invites professionals to share case histories, research findings, lessons learned and emerging practices across all trenchless methods and applications. The deadline for abstracts is June 30, and selected submissions will form the foundation of the technical program including paper presentations, panel discussions and technical sessions that highlight both innovation and real-world experience. NASTT strongly encourages participation from seasoned professionals and emerging voices alike, recognizing that the strength of the No-Dig Show lies in the diversity of perspectives and projects represented.

NO-DIG NORTH SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER

While planning is underway for 2027, the coming year also offers significant opportunities for education and engagement. NASTT will host the 2026 No-Dig North conference Nov. 2-4 in Calgary, Alberta.

No-Dig North has established itself as a key regional event for trenchless professionals working in Canada and the United States, offering a focused technical program, exhibit hall and valuable networking opportunities. The Calgary conference will spotlight regional challenges, climate considerations and innovative solutions being deployed across municipal and utility projects.



NASTT No-Dig technical sessions are designed to provide practical, experience-based guidance on the planning, design and construction of trenchless projects. Topics have spanned a wide range of methods, including horizontal directional drilling, cured-in-place pipe, pipe bursting, sewer laterals and more. (Photo Courtesy NASTT)

OTHER EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Beyond its flagship conferences, NASTT continues to deliver year-round education through its robust Good Practices suite of courses. These

courses are designed to provide practical, experience-based guidance on the planning, design and construction of trenchless projects. Topics span a wide range of methods, including horizontal directional drilling, cured-in-place pipe, pipe bursting, sewer laterals and more. Developed and taught by industry experts, Good Practices courses emphasize what works in the field, helping project teams reduce risk, improve outcomes and apply trenchless technologies more effectively.

In addition to in-person offerings, NASTT hosts numerous virtual courses and webinars throughout the year. These online programs make education accessible to professionals regardless of location, allowing participants to stay current on best practices, new technologies and evolving standards without leaving the office or job site. Virtual courses also provide an entry point for professionals new to trenchless technology, supporting workforce development and long-term industry growth.

DRIVING THE INDUSTRY FORWARD

Together, these conferences, courses, and educational initiatives reflect NASTT's ongoing mission to advance trenchless technology through knowledge sharing and professional development. Whether contributing an abstract for the 2027 No-Dig Show, attending the 2026 No-Dig North in Calgary, or participating in a Good Practices course, industry professionals have numerous opportunities to engage, learn and help shape the future of trenchless construction.

For those looking to make an impact, the message is clear: Get involved, share your experience and be part of the conversation driving trenchless innovation forward.

Visit nastt.org for more information on upcoming events and ways to get involved.



The Back-of-the-Shop Advantage

How shop layout, prep work and prefabrication improve field productivity

By Brian Hieval

In plumbing, the job site tends to get all the attention. It's where systems are installed, inspections happen and customers see the finished product. But for many successful plumbing operations, the real gains in quality, efficiency and profitability start long before a truck rolls — back in the shop.

A well-organized shop is more than a storage space for tools and materials. It is a production environment where layout, preparation and prefabrication decisions directly influence how smoothly work unfolds in the field. As labor shortages persist and margins tighten, shops that treat their back-of-house operations as strategic assets gain a measurable advantage.

> The back-of-the-shop advantage is not limited to large commercial contractors. Service shops, residential operations and small commercial firms all benefit from improved layout, preparation and selective prefabrication.

SHOP LAYOUT SETS THE PACE

Shop layout affects productivity in subtle but powerful ways. Poorly arranged spaces create wasted motion, misplaced materials and bottlenecks that ripple through the workday. Efficient layouts, on the other hand, support logical workflows that mirror field operations.

High-performing shops typically organize space around function. Dedicated zones for cutting, threading, grooving, soldering, welding and assembly reduce setup time and improve consistency. Clear labeling and standardized storage locations allow technicians to find what they need quickly, even when staffing changes or crews rotate.

Vertical storage and modular racking systems help maximize square footage while keeping frequently used fittings, valves and components within easy reach. Heavy materials are positioned to minimize manual handling, improving both safety and efficiency. Lighting, ventilation and power access are often overlooked, yet they play a key role in precision work and tool performance.

When layout supports the work instead of working against it, technicians spend less time searching, adjusting or improvising — and more time producing.

PREP WORK REDUCES FIELD FRICTION

Preparation done in the shop eliminates uncertainty in the field. Measuring, staging and verifying components before they leave the building reduces on-site decision-making and limits opportunities for error.

Cut lists prepared from drawings or takeoffs allow pipe sections to be fabricated to precise lengths under controlled conditions. Threads, grooves and joints completed at the bench are typically more consistent than those done in cramped mechanical rooms or adverse weather. Assemblies can be pressure-tested or dry-fit before transport, identifying issues when they are easiest to correct.

Material staging is another critical prep function. Kitting materials by job, floor or system ensures crews arrive with what they need rather than making repeated trips back to the truck or supplier. This approach also simplifies inventory tracking and reduces material waste.

Prep work also supports better communication. When shop staff and field crews collaborate during preparation, potential conflicts — such as access constraints, sequencing issues or coordination with other trades — can be identified early. That foresight helps crews maintain momentum once installation begins.

PREFABRICATION MOVES LABOR TO A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT

Prefabrication has become one of the most effective tools for improving field productivity. By shifting labor-intensive tasks from the job site to the shop, plumbing contractors gain greater control over quality, scheduling and labor utilization.

In the shop, technicians work at comfortable heights with proper tools, stable power and predictable conditions. This leads to faster assembly times and more consistent results. Repetitive assemblies such as valve stations, carrier groups, equipment skids and multi-trade racks benefit especially from prefabrication.

Prefabricated components reduce congestion on busy job sites and limit interference with other trades. Installations become more about placement and connection than fabrication, allowing less experienced workers to contribute effectively under supervision.

From a scheduling perspective, prefabrication decouples some labor from job site readiness. Assemblies can be built while foundations cure, walls are framed or permits are finalized. This flexibility helps smooth workloads and improves labor forecasting.

QUALITY CONTROL HAPPENS BEFORE INSTALLATION

The shop is the ideal environment for quality control. Components can be inspected, measured and tested without time pressure or site constraints. Standards can be enforced consistently, regardless of who built the assembly.

Documented procedures for fabrication and prep help ensure repeatability. Jigs, fixtures and templates further reduce variability, particularly for complex or high-volume assemblies. When quality checks are completed before delivery, field crews spend less time correcting defects and more time installing.

This upstream approach also reduces callbacks and warranty work. Problems addressed in the shop rarely become problems for customers.

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT MATTER

The benefits of shop work depend on effective logistics. Prefabricated assemblies must be protected during transport and arrive on site in the correct sequence. Clear labeling, coordinated delivery schedules and proper handling equipment are essential.

Shops that integrate logistics planning into their workflow avoid common pitfalls such as damaged assemblies, missing components or site congestion. Thoughtful coordination ensures that shop gains are not lost during the transition to the field.

A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THAT SCALES

The back-of-the-shop advantage is not limited to large commercial contractors. Service shops, residential operations and small commercial firms all benefit from improved layout, preparation and selective prefabrication. Even modest changes — such as standardized staging areas or preassembled repair kits — can yield noticeable improvements.

As the industry faces ongoing labor and productivity challenges, the shop represents an opportunity to work smarter. By treating the shop as a production hub rather than a storage room, plumbing contractors can improve field productivity, elevate quality and gain a competitive edge — before the job ever begins.

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Inspection, Location and Leak Detection

By Craig Mandli

Drainline TV Inspection Cameras



American Pipelining Solutions Quick Sight

Quick Sight inspection cameras from **American Pipelining Solutions** deliver dependable performance in a cost-effective, easy-to-maintain package. Each unit includes a 130-foot pushrod, a 10-inch HD screen and onboard recording via SD card. Camera head options include an 18 mm fixed head (QS20), a 23 mm fixed head (QS40R) and a 23 mm self-leveling head (QS40RSL), providing options for various pipe sizes and job requirements. All models come standard with a 512 Hz sonde and an integrated footage counter for accurate distance tracking and locating. Systems are field-serviceable — many common repairs can be made onsite without specialized tools. When needed, full support and repairs are available through the APS Repair Center. This modularity helps reduce long-term service costs and keeps your equipment working longer. **888-258-9359; www.americanpipeliningsolutions.com**



Aries LETS 6.0 Lateral Inspection System

The **LETS 6.0 Lateral Inspection System** from **Aries** is designed to simultaneously acquire mainline and lateral assessment video from 6-inch and larger mainline pipes, with lateral inspections up to 150 feet. A slim, unibody tractor profile allows the system to navigate pipes as small as 6 inches while multiple wheel configurations support varying pipe conditions and sizes. The lateral camera deploys with or against the flow at a 135-degree launch angle using a contoured, telescoping chute with multiple positions for improved access in larger pipes. A forward-facing mainline camera monitors pipe conditions and observes the lateral launch while a rear-view camera provides visibility during reverse operation and retrieval. Operators control the tractor and cameras through a single interface including a dual-joystick controller. Camera options include self-leveling or pan-and-tilt with in-pipe lens cleaning, and an integrated 512 Hz beacon supports locating. The system is built to support efficient, consistent inspections in demanding sewer environments. **800-234-7205; www.ariesindustries.com**



DRAIN INVADER Drain Inspector

The **Drain Inspector** from **DRAIN INVADER** is suitable for tight access, fast diagnosis and crystal-clear inspections in 1.25- to 4-inch sewer lines. Built for real-world fieldwork, this rugged, lightweight unit pairs portability with prograde performance. At less than 1 inch, this self-leveling camera head with adjustable LED lights delivers sharp visuals on the 10-inch HD screen — so you see every offset, clog or root intrusion in real time. A 100-foot glass fiber pushrod navigates through bends while onboard video recording to SD lets you capture and review footage for customers or documentation. With up to six hours of battery runtime and a 512 Hz sonde for easy locating, you're set for long days on tough jobs. It includes skids and a carrying case. **866-631-3569; www.draininvader.com**

Fiberscope.net by MEDIT MiniFlex



The **MiniFlex** from **Fiberscope.net by MEDIT** is a plumbing inspection camera designed for ultimate portability and maneuverability in small-diameter pipe inspections. Its Flexi-Tube neck allows the camera to navigate multiple 90-degree bends and P-traps in 1.25-inch pipes with ease. Ideal for inspecting kitchen and bathroom drains, pools, spas, hot tubs, showers, sprinkler lines and

narrow industrial machinery, it handles jobs other cameras can't. The system boasts a flexible yet rigid push cable that is up to 130 feet in length. Its stainless steel, waterproof camera head features LED illumination and a built-in 512 Hz sonde for precise locating. A vibrant 8-inch touchscreen displays live video, which can be recorded to an SD card. Additional features include an on-screen text generator, footage counter, slope meter and a rechargeable battery, providing up to seven hours of portable use. **877-613-2210; www.fiberscope.net**

General Pipe Cleaners Gen-Eye Fusion



The **General Pipe Cleaners Gen-Eye Fusion** video pipe inspection system combines a high-quality, high-definition camera with three ways to record, a touchscreen keyboard for titling, Gen-Pack battery adapter for remote operation and a durable Gel-Rod push rod. Crisp, clear images and recordings are viewed on a large 10.1-inch LCD touchscreen built into a durable, compact case. The command module features a video recorder with full high definition 1080p recording capability. It supports USB to flash drive recording and has an internal 64 GB memory, which provides recording of approximately 32 hours of inspections. It includes Wi-Fi live video streaming with easy point-to-point connections. It offers video recording and snapshot features using a cell phone or tablet via General's free app. It is compatible with General's new high-definition cameras and reels as well as General's full-size reel, mini-reel and Micro-Scope3 camera systems. **800-245-6200; www.drainbrain.com**

Hathorn H7



The **Hathorn H7** system comes standard with a 7-inch daylight-readable, shatter-resistant LCD monitor with 1,000 cd/m^2 of brightness. It also has an onboard hard drive with 64 GB (upgradable to 128 GB) capacity and USB recording allowing the user to record MP4 video and JPEG screenshots. These systems are compatible with 18-volt Milwaukee (or equivalent) batteries for ultimate portability and over five hours of runtime on a single charge. All units come equipped with 200 feet of premium cable and a choice of self-leveling camera heads. Optional Wi-Fi video streaming technology is available. **866-428-4676; www.hathorncorp.com**



Milwaukee Tool M12 75-foot Drain Camera

The **M12 75-foot Drain Camera** with PACKOUT Compatibility from **Milwaukee Tool** delivers fast, confident facility maintenance with reduced downtime for maximum productivity. Designed for facilities plumbing needs, this diagnostic solution is built to inspect 1.5- to 4-inch pipe up to 75 feet out, improving the drain cleaning process, eliminating the hassle of blind troubleshooting, avoiding costly subcontracting and reducing prolonged downtime. The 75-foot flexible cable with 18 mm HD camera head allows this solution to navigate tight bends with ease, delivering thorough inspections in all challenging jobs. PACKOUT top-stack compatibility provides seamless transportation across the facility, along with other everyday tools. The camera provides instant setup with an integrated and adjustable display for multiple viewing angles in all environments. Clearly assess with the daylight-readable, 7-inch touchscreen display with zoom and pan functions. The impact, debris and water-resistant display protects against job site conditions. **800-729-3878; www.milwaukeetool.com**

MyTana MS11-NG2



MyTana's MS11-NG2 inspection system inspects 3- to 6-inch lines delivering clear imagery and footage. Add the optional MS11+ Combo Kit with an interchangeable, fixed position mini camera head to inspect 1.5- to 3-inch lines. Each size head has a 512 Hz transmitter built in. A high-clarity, 6.4-inch daylight-readable monitor and all the controls are integrated on the rugged pushrod frame for grab-and-go convenience; helpful when access points are scattered or hard to reach. You can save footage to internal or removable drives, or stream video wirelessly to a mobile device and add voice over using the built-in microphone. The 200-foot durable pushrod resists kinking but can be replaced in house if needed. It is powered by a long-lasting, rechargeable Li-ion battery. **866-948-7576; www.mytana.com**



RapidView IBAK North America MiniLite 3 HD Push System

The **MiniLite 3 HD Push System** from **RapidView IBAK North America** is a compact, powerful solution built for high-definition inspection of small-diameter sewer lines and laterals. Designed around the intuitive BP 3 touchscreen controller with a bright 12-inch display and integrated Windows-based PC, it delivers crisp Full HD video and reliable data recording right out of the box. Engineered for versatility, the system supports all RapidView IBAK push cameras with precise joystick control and continuous rotation for smooth navigation in tight laterals. Whether inspecting plumbing drains, property laterals or small sewer mains, the system offers clarity, accurate length measurement and seamless data management to enhance reporting and decision-making. **800-656-4225; www.rapidview.com**

RIDGID SeeSnake Digital Self-Leveling Cameras



RIDGID SeeSnake Digital Self-Leveling Cameras deliver clearest, smart in-pipe images while keeping the onscreen image upright at all times. This technology eliminates the mechanical components traditionally used for self-leveling, which is one of the most common failure points in camera heads. The result is one less costly repair to worry about without sacrificing any features. Powered by TruSense technology, these cameras deliver high dynamic range imaging, TiltSense inclinometer data and digital pan/zoom for accurate inspections. With FleXmitter sonde, navigating turns is simple and efficient. All models are built for efficiency and longevity in residential and commercial applications. The Mini Pro DSL is perfect for home inspections. The Compact M40 DSL is ideal for tight spaces with a mid-range push cable, while the Compact C40 DSL provides a lightweight design for easy transport and quick setups. For longer runs and larger pipe diameters, the Standard DSL reel delivers heavy-duty durability. **800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com**

Vivax-Metrotech vCamDrain



The **vCamDrain** from **Vivax-Metrotech** features a Wi-Fi reel controlled by the free vCam Mobile Controller app. When connected to the reel by Wi-Fi, the app controls the camera lights, distance counter, sonde, text writer and microphone. The app shows the reel's battery and charging status. Recording can be done directly to the app and instantly shared or copied to the reel's USB port. The stainless steel 18 mm HD camera with sapphire lens and ultrabright LEDs produces a crisp, clear image of the pipe's interior. The custom push-rod provides a delicate balance of flexibility and pushing strength usable in lines from 1.5 to 3 inches. The drag-resistant pushrod allows it to navigate multiple bends, tight turns, P-traps and most toilet traps. The camera head and spring assembly with a built-in 512 Hz frequency sonde are field-serviceable. The Li-ion battery-powered reel provides eight hours of power after a six-hour charge. **800-446-3392; www.vivax-metrotech.com**

Electronic Leak Detection

Hermann Sewerin GmbH SeCorrPhon AC 200



The **SeCorrPhon AC 200** from **Hermann Sewerin GmbH** combines the characteristics of a correlator with acoustic water-leak detection, meaning prelocation, pinpointing and correlation in a single system. It includes an easy-to-read measurement value display and automated filter selection. It is based on the tried-and-tested housing and hardware concept of the AQUAPHON A 200. Each is ideal for use for leak detection across all sections, materials, diameters and lengths of pipe. Numerous additional functions are also available for complex location scenarios. **888-592-9916; www.sewerin.com**

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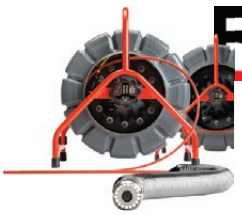






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Electronic Pipe Location



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Locating and tracing CCTV inspection systems can present major difficulties. This can be made even worse in cases where a pipe has rubber seals, insulators or gaps between sections. These problems, if not overcome, can result in costly repairs, delays and in some instances, personal injury. The **CUES Accupoint** precision locator and transmitter was designed to address these issues. The Accupoint series features depth measurement, guidance mode and compass orientation to make sonde and pipeline locates easier and safer. Ease of use is at the heart of the products, coupled with the accuracy, repeatability and reliability. **800-327-7791; www.cuesinc.com**

Radiodetection RD8200SG Survey-Grade Precision Locator



The **Radiodetection RD8200SG Survey-Grade Precision Locator** enables users to locate and map buried utilities in a single operation. An integrated GNSS antenna allows high-accuracy location data to be viewed and recorded on a mobile device while locating. For inspection and plumbing applications, it also supports sonde locating, allowing operators to trace the position and depth of sondes used in pipe inspection cameras, drain rods and duct-tracing tools. This capability helps identify blockages, pipe routes and inspection points without unnecessary excavation. Additional features include interference rejection to improve signal clarity, Current Direction to distinguish between parallel utilities and StrikeAlert to warn of shallow services. The lightweight, ergonomic design supports extended use, while automatic usage logging and swing warnings promote proper operation. When used with Locate Performance Management, Radiodetection's digital platform, utility owners can track locate activity and validate mapping data. **877-247-3797; www.radiodetection.com**

Schonstedt u-LOCATE+ Pipe & Cable Locator



Schonstedt's u-LOCATE+ Pipe & Cable Locator is designed for contractors who need an easy-to-use, reliable, economical solution for locating utilities. It is an ideal tool for plumbers, electricians, landscapers, site managers and facilities maintenance techs who occasionally need to detect and trace a buried utility on a job site. It features a high-contrast display and a shock-resistant housing for use in demanding job site conditions. Dual locating frequencies of 33 and 82 kHz support active line tracing, while passive power mode allows detection of energized utilities. A 1-watt transmitter, depth estimation and left/right guidance arrows help users identify utility position and alignment. For plumbing and inspection applications, it includes 512 Hz sonde locating capability for tracing inspection cameras, drain rods and sondes inside nonmetallic pipes. The system also supports accessories such as signal clamps and sonde tracers to extend locating functionality. **888-367-7014; www.schonstedt.com**

Smoke Locators

Cherne Residential Plumbing Smoke Blower



The **Cherne Residential Plumbing Smoke Blower** is a fast and easy leak-detection system. The blower uses long-lasting dense smoke that is pumped into a plumbing system to identify leaks quickly and efficiently. Featuring a 5-foot, heavy-duty hose that fits a 4-inch clean-out tee, it is lightweight and corrosion-resistant. With exhaust pumped through the plumbing, the blower can be used indoors and easily transported with its top-mounted carrying handle. Its efficient 122 cc, 3.5 hp, four-stroke Honda engine provides more than 700 cfm, making it fast, easy and safe to determine plumbing-problem areas. Through vibration damping, excess movement and noise are also minimized, creating a smoother and more efficient experience. **800-843-7584; www.cherneind.com**

AquaMotion names new sales rep for New England

John Stack Sales has added AquaMotion to its family of products that they represent to its wholesale and trade partners throughout the northeast including upstate New York, Virginia, Delaware and Washington, D.C. This fills a void in the company's line card for recirculation pumps, as well as a line of energy-efficient hydronic circulators for all their boiler appliance applications.

ThermOmegaTech's plumbing division announces new roles

Warminster, Pennsylvania-based ThermOmegaTech announced a promotion and a new role alignment within its commercial plumbing team. Josue Vazquez was named commercial plumbing national sales manager, overseeing sales in the United States and Canada. And Daniel Kovac is stepping into the role of commercial plumbing business unit manager. Kovac will be responsible for sales performance, profitability and the strategic direction of the division.

Rinnai partners with Habitat for Humanity Canada

Rinnai America Corporation announced a new partnership with Habitat for Humanity Canada to help address the growing need for affordable, sustainable housing. As part of the collaboration, Rinnai will donate 48 Rinnai electric heat pump water heaters to support nine Habitat projects throughout 2025 and 2026. The donated REHP units will be shipped from Rinnai's new Ontario distribution center and installed in duplexes, townhomes and multifamily projects across Canada, providing homeowners with reliable, high-efficiency hot water while supporting Canada's broader electrification and carbon-reduction goals.

Bessemer Investors announces sale of Leonard Valve to A.O. Smith

Leonard Valve and Bessemer Investors, a New York-based investment firm, announced that Bessemer has completed the sale of Leonard Valve to A.O. Smith. A.O. Smith previously announced the signing of a definitive agreement to acquire Leonard Valve on Nov. 12. Bessemer invested in Leonard Valve in 2019 alongside third-generation owner Niles Wilcox. Since then, Bessemer has partnered with Wilcox and the Leonard Valve team to execute a succession plan, enhance the management team and support organic growth, operational initiatives and strategic mergers and acquisitions. During Bessemer's ownership, Leonard Valve expanded its digital and thermostatic mixing portfolio and acquired Heat-Timer, a supplier of commercial heating controls and energy management systems.

Send us your plumbing industry news: Email personnel, business acquisitions and related plumbing news, photos and videos to editor@plumbermag.com.

Product FOCUS

Superior Signal 5E Electric and 5E FLEX smoke blowers



When testing laterals, building plumbing in both residential and commercial facilities or pumping or inspecting a septic tank, smoke testing is a quick and effective way to find plumbing faults and odor sources. The **5E Electric blower** and the **5E FLEX** battery-powered smoke blower compatible with leading 18-20-volt tool batteries from **Superior Signal**, easily connect to any cleanout or inspection port to smoke test the entire system in only a few minutes. They gently push smoke throughout the system to find cracks, leaks and quickly identify problems, taking only minutes to set up and seconds to see results. Used with Superior Smoke Pellets, they are ideal for hard-to-find odors, leaks and other faults in residential and commercial facilities. They come complete with an 8-foot industrial-grade hose. **800-945-8378; www.superiorsignal.com**

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Product Spotlight

Water heater shut-off valve now available with installation kit

By Craig Mandli

Water damage is one of the biggest property risks every homeowner faces. That's why the WAGS valve from AquaGuard is a smart investment. The company's valve is designed to prevent disastrous floods, expensive damage and the hassles of filing an insurance claim by shutting off the water supply if a water heater were to leak.

The valve can be installed on all styles of water heaters, is fully mechanical and requires no external power supply. It sits in a drip pan under the water heater, and when approximately 1 inch of water accumulates, an internal water-soluble fiber element triggers an industrial-duty, spring-loaded piston in the valve that shuts off the water flow. Once activated, the valve can also shut off the gas supply if so equipped. A red tab pops out to indicate valve activation.

"The WAGS Valve is the only 100% mechanical automatic water heater safety shut-off valve on the market," says AquaGuard President Steven Fielding. "Now it is available with a custom-size sealed drip pan and prepiped press fittings to help installations in tight spaces and save time not having to assemble fittings to the valve."

Automatic safety shut-off means no electricity, batteries, wireless signals or maintenance is required. According to Fielding, many plumbers are installing the units in multi-level homeowner association and apartment buildings where tank water heaters are often installed on finished levels and very small utility cabinet spaces. The kit includes a custom 24-by-26-inch galvanized steel sealed drip pan (meaning no more bending and jamming around drip pans in tight spaces) and prepiped press fittings to install in tight spaces and reduce plumber installation time.



"The kit can be a high-value upsell to add to tank water heater installations to protect property owners from disastrous water damage should their water heater fail," says Fielding. "Many property owners are discovering extended tank life without fear and are getting insurance rider discounts on their property insurance with WAGS Valves installed. It provides peace of mind for the property owner, and they can safely get more useful life out of their investment."

According to Fielding, homeowners are appreciative, especially when their tank fails when they are away on vacation.

"This saves them on insurance claims and the damage disruption," he says. "When you take possible insurance discounts and peace of mind, the WAGS Valve can pay for itself many times over." **844-438-9247; www.wagsvalve.com**

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U.S. Boiler Citadel condensing boilers

U.S. Boiler has expanded and improved its line of Citadel condensing boilers and volume water heaters. The Citadel is now available in seven capacities from 399 to 1,500 mBh, all with 10:1 turndown. AHRI certified and rated up to 97% thermal efficiency (98% for the water heater), the Citadel is available in natural gas and propane configurations. Citadel boilers conserve mechanical room space and simplify installation. They can be stacked two-high without the need for accessory racking systems. Zero side and top clearance optimizes heating capacity per square foot of mechanical room space. Also new is the Citadel boiler's compatibility with U.S. Boiler's USB-Connect mobile app. The app expedites and streamlines installation, service and troubleshooting of all the company's condensing boiler models. A standard, reinforced 3-in-1 vent connector facilitates the use of polypropylene, CPVC or stainless steel venting. **888-432-8887; www.usboiler.net**

NIBCO Webstone E-X-P tankless water heater service valve kit



NIBCO announced new Webstone E-X-P tankless water heater service valve kit enhancements. The line now features lead-free hot-water and boiler-service pressure relief valves, with redesigned forged brass construction that provides a more compact, space-saving body. The E-X-P Ultra-Compact press kits now include single O-ring press fittings, shortening installation lay length by over half an inch, and feature the new snug-fit gasket design. Enhanced products are suitable for plumbing and heating applications. **574-295-3000; www.nibco.com**

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CALENDAR

April 22-23
Dallas Build Expo, Dallas Market Hall.
Visit buildexpousa.com/dallas-build-expo/

April 22-24
North American Steel Construction Conference,
Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta.
Visit nascc.aisc.org

April 28-30
Water Quality Association Convention & Expo,
Miami Beach Convention Center, Florida.
Visit convention.wqa.org

May 27-28
Austin Build Expo, Palmer Events Center, Texas.
Visit buildexpousa.com/austin-build-expo/

June 14-17
Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating Annual Business Conference, The Algonquin Resort, St. Andrews, New Brunswick. Visit ciph.com

June 15-17
Safety 2026 Professional Development Conference & Exposition, Anaheim Convention Center California.
Visit safety.assp.org

June 21-24
AWWA Annual Conference & Exposition,
Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.
Visit events.awwa.org

June 22-24
National Fire Protection Association Conference & Expo,
Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas. Visit nfpa.org

June 23-25
World Plumbing Council, NEC Birmingham, England.
Visit worldplumbing.org

June 23-25
Installer Show, National Exhibition Centre,
Birmingham, England. Visit installershow.com

Aug. 12-13
Houston Build Expo, NRG Park Center, Hall D.
Visit buildexpousa.com/houston-build-expo/

Sept. 13-17
2026 IAPMO's Annual Education and Business Conference,
Sheraton Universal, Universal City, California.
Visit iapmo.org/events/iapmo-events

Plumber invites organizations and associations to submit details about upcoming industry trade shows and conferences for our calendar of events. editor@plumbermag.com.

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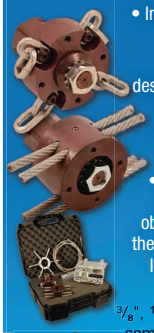
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