

Plumber™

Never Looking **BACK**

Leadership lays foundation
for Louisiana contractor's
growth and expansion
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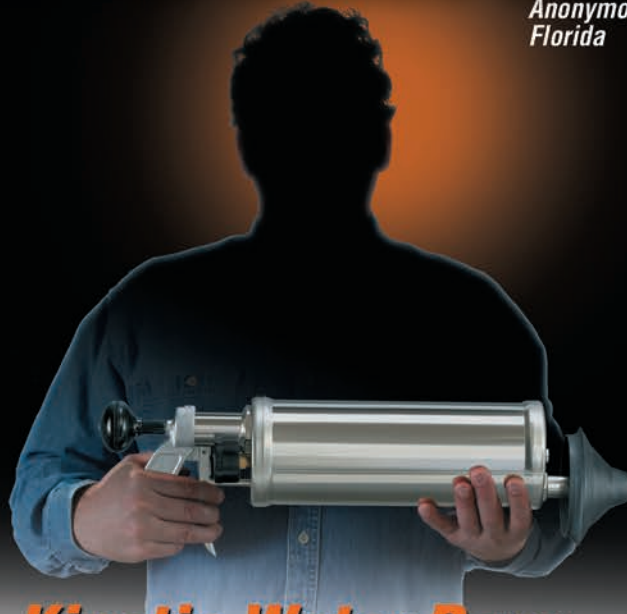


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*Anonymous Plumber,
Florida*



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on the ROAD

Safety First

Combustion analyzer helps plumber ensure customer safety while bolstering efficiency and profitability.

- By Ken Wysocky



On the Cover

Bryar Johnson, a plumber with Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling in Ball, Louisiana, works on PVC pipe under a house where there was a water leak reported. The company owned by Doyle Parsons offers services in drain cleaning, inspection, CIPP, pipe bursting, hydroexcavation, plumbing and installation.

Photography by John Ballance

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Cory Dellenbach

Learning to Be a Leader

It can take time and practice to be an effective leader. Start practicing early if you want your business to thrive.

M

y oldest daughter came home from school a few weeks ago with an assignment: Write down, in one sentence, what it takes to be a good leader.

If asked that question, what would your answer be?

A 2016 article in *Forbes* magazine listed some qualities that make a good leader: have faith in your own beliefs, be able to make the hard choices, earn the respect of the team, know the team, know that the people are the key to success, articulate a clear vision and push people to be their best.

Becoming a good leader can take work. Consider Doyle Parsons, owner of Louisiana-based Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling.

MAKING CHANGES

Parsons knew he had to make a change: He discovered he didn't have the capacity to effectively lead more than three employees.

The first thing Parsons changed was his attitude. He hung up a board in the office and assigned one person to rank his attitude every day based on what everyone else said. "The first day they gauged my attitude at a six, and one of the guys said, 'If you'd have done this last year, you'd have been at a zero every day.'" It took him just two days to change his attitude and how he treated his team.

His business, which is profiled in this issue, has been doubling in size every year since then. Parsons believes that if a business isn't growing or is losing employees, lack of good leadership ability is probably the reason.

Parsons did have some of the leadership qualities mentioned in *Forbes* even before making a change. He started his company with — no tools, no service truck and not a lot of money. He had faith in his beliefs, though, and

he made hard choices early on to get started in the right direction. He knew what he wanted to accomplish with it. Now he knows his team, he's constantly pushing them to do their best, and he knows they are the key to success.

TIPS TO GET BETTER

If you are looking to become a better leader, here are some time-tested pieces of advice:

Earn their respect — Start with leading by example. Go through the same training you expect of your team. If you work with your team and understand what they do every day, they will respect you for it.

Learn from your team — You don't have all the answers, and you don't know everything. The minute you think you do, you've failed as a leader. There will be times when you learn from team members. Consider holding weekly knowledge-sharing sessions. Get conversation going on safer or more efficient ways to work jobs.

Share your lessons — On the flip side, part of a leader's responsibility is to give back. You got where you are by doing some things right. Be sure to pass along the lessons you've learned so your team can avoid mistakes.

THE FINAL ANSWER

My daughter's answer to the question was: "Someone who will listen and make things better." That is probably the simplest way to describe what a true leader should be.

What are your thoughts on what makes a leader? I'd like to hear what you've learned along the way. You can email me at editor@plumbermag.com or call 800-257-7222.

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GIVING BACK

\$65,000 of Work Goes Into Plumbing Firm's Charity Project

We've written before about T 'N G Plumbing in Dexter, Minnesota, and its annual Pay It Forward project, in which the company partners with other organizations and businesses to provide much-needed plumbing and home renovations for someone. In this online exclusive, read about the project the company decided to take on for 2018. plumbermag.com/featured

TRAINING TIPS

Company Takes In-House Training Seriously

The Sunny Plumber in Las Vegas, Nevada, was featured in the March issue. In this online exclusive, learn more about the company's training philosophy and the approaches it takes to ensure its employees are prepared for whatever they find out in the field. plumbermag.com/featured



WEBSITE TUNE-UP

Make Sure Your Web Presence is Producing Results

When was the last time you worked on your website? If the answer is anything longer than "weeks ago," you need to check out this online exclusive. Like any good marketing tool, your website should provide a strong return on your investment and work as a 24/7 salesperson for your company. It can't do that if it isn't getting any love. This article covers some questions to ask yourself to determine if your website is getting the job done.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

"No matter how good the service you deliver, you'll still have problems caused by bad weather, equipment failure and human error. We can't control those things, but we can control what we say to customers when they happen."

— 10 Phrases to Avoid When Dealing With Customers

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◀ Doyle Parsons, owner of Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling, stands in front of his fleet of vehicles at his company shop in Ball, Louisiana.

Never Looking BACK

Leadership lays foundation for Louisiana contractor's growth and expansion

By Luke Laggis |
Photography by John Ballance



Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling, Ball, Louisiana

OWNER	Doyle Parsons
FOUNDED	2006
EMPLOYEES	14
SERVICES	Drain cleaning, inspection, CIPP, pipe bursting, hydroexcavation, plumbing and installation
CUSTOMERS	Residential and commercial
WEBSITE	www.parsonsplumbingla.com

D

oyle Parsons woke up one morning and knew it was time to make a change.

That was 10 years ago. Parsons, a licensed plumber in Louisiana, had spent two years doing hurricane relief work in New Orleans after getting fired from his plumbing job back home. He was living in his truck, going home to see his family for 12 hours a week.

“I had just obtained my master plumber license while I was in New Orleans and then decided to come home to provide for my family,” Parsons says. “I had no clear ambition except just to provide for my family. And then after five years, we had a consistent 30 percent growth rate; at six years, we were at a 40 percent growth rate; and at seven years, we were at 47 percent. I wasn’t sure where to go and just started reading a bunch of books, and then I just felt like the sky was the limit.”

Today, Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling has nine service trucks on the road with 11 crew members in the field and three in the office. The company generated \$1.8 million in revenue in 2016.

STARTING OUT

Parsons spent his first day back in Ball, Louisiana, making phone calls. On the second day, he had 10 hours of work, and he never looked back.

“I never turned a job down,” he says. “Even if I didn’t have the equipment, I would go rent it. For my very first drain job, I had to go rent the equipment from The Home Depot. So I rented it for a week and just prayed for work.

“I didn’t have any tools. I had no service truck — no work body — so I had to find a way to pick up a 500-pound machine and put it in the back of a pickup truck. I used a four-wheeler ramp and had to just take off running to get it up the ramp and into the back of the truck.”

▶ Plumbers Dustin Ashworth, left, and Kaleb Bolton install a waterline at a school.

“If your business isn’t growing or you’re losing employees, your leadership ability is not there. ... It applies to every business, every organization. Your business will not outgrow your leadership capabilities.”
Doyle Parsons





▲ Plumber Jessie Wigley uses a wrench to replace a valve under a house where crews are replacing waterlines.

◀ Bryar Johnson, a plumber with Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling, gets a Milwaukee Tool saw and flashlight out of his truck for a job at a house in Ball, Louisiana.

“I was always expanding services. I didn't know about having a niche. I just wanted to take care of the customer if they called. I didn't want them calling anybody else. My theory was if they call someone else then I've lost them.”

Doyle Parsons

Through the rental process, he was eventually able to secure a line of credit and buy the Electric Eel cable machine he had been renting. He used that same machine for several more years without any problems.

The business started growing when Parsons began getting calls for water leaks, drains and broken lines underneath the slab. He would sometimes dig 10 to 15 feet under houses by himself to replace lines and says he developed a reputation for getting the job done, no matter how big or small, or what it entailed.

“My biggest deal was that if a customer called, I always took the job no matter if I knew how to do it or not,” he says. “I just had the confidence. You always show the confidence in front of the customer that you know what you're doing, and you do the best professional job.”

“I was always expanding services. I didn't know about having a niche. I just wanted to take care of the customer if they called. I didn't want them calling anybody else. My theory was if they call someone else, then I've lost them. I just built on that, taking every job, no matter how big, how small, how nasty — just do it.”

- ▶ Plumber Andrew Horton checks to make sure a bathtub is level during an installation.



SOCIALLY TRENCHLESS

Parsons says Louisiana is 20 years behind the curve on trenchless work, and his primary service area is even further behind. Nonetheless, he was aware of the opportunities it presented.

He's the only one in his area providing pipe bursting and hydroexcavation, which are recent additions to his plumbing and drain cleaning services.

"A year and a half ago through Instagram, I started seeing other plumbers from around the country pipe bursting, relining and hydroexcavating. I didn't know anything about those three processes, and being that my driving ambition was always to be on the cutting edge and offer services that no one else offered, just on a leap of faith, I went and purchased a hydroexcavating trailer (Vac-Tron Equipment) and pipe bursting equipment from Spartan Tool. I had no jobs, no use for it, never seen it. I just knew that if we were on the cutting edge, somehow, somewhere the word was going to get out.

"We hired a social media team through Facebook, and they started posting for us on hydroexcavating and pipe bursting. We've had the pipe bursting equipment for three months, and we have not done one job. The hydroexcavating though, we landed a \$32,000 job just on a Facebook ad."

Parsons did close to \$58,000 in hydroexcavation business in the first three months he had the equipment, primarily through the company's social media presence and word-of-mouth referrals.

"Everyone we come across now, they know we have the equipment," Parsons says. "We do a lot of work for the local colleges, a lot of municipal people, so now we're just promoting it verbally to everyone we know."

The company recently tackled a hydroexcavation project at a local military base, with very exact requirements. They had to dig a 4-foot-deep 4-foot-wide trench 40 feet under two separate sections of a building to replace a sewer line. It was unlike anything they'd done to date, but they were successful.

They also get called onto construction sites to locate utilities before any traditional digging begins and have been using the equipment on their own jobs in lieu of traditional excavation equipment to prevent any utility damage. Parsons says it will dovetail nicely with pipe bursting when that picks up.




"I wanted to catch up with what the rest of the nation is doing. I wanted to get up to speed because that is the future," he says. "That's why I bought it."

Parsons' leap of faith didn't end with hydroexcavating and pipe bursting equipment. The company also moved into lining, purchasing MaxLiner USA equipment, based solely on the potential it represents.

Continued ▶

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Plumber James Dockery uses a Gen-Eye Micro-Scope (General Pipe Cleaners) to check out a sewage line for breaks or blockage.

book I've read, everything rises and falls on leadership."

The business was in a cycle — up to five employees, down to two, up to five and down to three, and up to six and back down to three. Parsons says he didn't have the capacity to effectively lead more than three employees at that time.

"I decided it was my attitude. So I actually hung a board up in our office, and I assigned one person to rank my attitude every day based on what everyone else said. The first day they gauged my attitude at a six, and one of the guys said, 'If you'd have done this last year, you'd have been at a zero every day.' So it took me a matter of two days

STRONG LEADERSHIP

Parsons gives credit for the company's growth not to the equipment upgrades or the expanded service menu, but to something decidedly less technical in nature.

"My biggest growth period came through leadership training," he says. "I went to a John Maxwell course to become a certified speaker and business coach. In every

to change my attitude and how I treat my people. I treat them with the utmost respect. My attitude, they say it hovers around a nine every day. And since then, my business has been growing double every year. It's been two years and I've gone from three to six to now 14 employees. If your business isn't growing or you're losing employees, your leadership ability is not there. ... It applies to every

Continued ▶

Changing people's lives ▼

Doyle Parsons formed Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling in Ball, Louisiana, with a focus on providing for his family. Over the course of the past 10 years, the mission has evolved.

"My biggest deal is that I want to change my team members' lives," says Parsons, a soft-spoken but enthusiastic entrepreneur. "I'm building my business around the concept of helping others achieve their dreams."

Parsons has several stories of redemption among his staff. One of his plumbers was told he'd never amount to anything by another employer. Under Parsons' wing, he obtained his plumbing license and shortly thereafter ran the biggest job the company had ever taken on.

Another was a drug addict who'd been in the business for five years but had nothing to show for it. He didn't even have a driver's license. Now the man is in good health, licensed both on the road and as a plumber, and recently bought his first house.

"As a business owner, you have to allow your team to fail. If you cannot trust your employees to fail, you're never going to grow. It's called failing forward," Parsons says. "There is no straight line to success, so you have to be willing to let your guys fail. Treat them with utmost respect. Ultimately they're human beings. They have feelings and emotions. Each person responds differently. Make sure you're aware of what's going on in their home, their lives. ... It affects their jobs. And make sure you treat them with respect."

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business, every organization. Your business will not outgrow your leadership capabilities.”

Parsons also hired a business coach last year to help restructure and come up with better systems and processes. As a result, the company is on pace for 100 percent growth in 2017.

One of the notable changes is a shift to free inspections, which started at the beginning of this year. The driving force, Parsons says, was to help upsell jobs, and his General Pipe Cleaners Gen-Eye cameras have done just that.

“We put a camera in every truck that has drain equipment. In most of the area, they charge you a camera fee,” he says. “We do not. After we run the drain and clear it, we actually run the camera to inspect it and see if there are any issues. Then we explain to the customer what’s going on, and they choose an option, whether they want to fix it, repair it, or let it be. Since we’ve implemented that process, we’ve taken \$140 drain jobs and turned them into \$2,000 jobs.


“We’re now finding that if we camera the line for free after we do the job, then it actually ensures that we have no callbacks,” he adds. “So it’s actually cut our costs.”

Right now, all the inspection work is residential, but Parsons recently obtained his Louisiana municipal mechanical license, so municipal work could factor into future plans.

One thing is certain: With municipal clients or without, Parsons has ambitious expansion plans.

“Ultimately, we’re trying to get to 200 locations in the next 40 years, so I’m not sure if the municipal work will fit into that scope,” he says. “I want four locations in every state in America. I have one right now, and we’re looking to send a man into New Orleans soon.”

The 40-year plan, he says, is part of something bigger than himself.

“Scripture says without a vision a man perishes. So this vision will help drive and motivate me every day.” 

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▲ The Parsons Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling staff from left: Brad Keen, Kaleb Bolton, Lee Wiley, Angee Free, Andrew Horton, Rebecca Parsons, Thomas Paulk, Jody Lemoine, Doyle Parsons, Chris Moreau, Dustin Ashworth, James Dockery, Jessie Wigley and Bryar Johnson.

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- Designed in conjunction with the ProPress XL-C fittings, ensuring total system compatibility
- Compatible only with RIDGID® Standard Series pressing tools
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- More than 400 presses per charge using Advanced Lithium 4 Battery
- LED-light for continued operations in no or low-light environments
- Capacity - ½" to 4" for Copper and Stainless Steel, ½" to 2" for PEX

*Versus RP 330-B

RP 241 Press Tool



- Multiple Size & System - RIDGID has the only compact press tool that can go up to 1 ¼" on Copper & Stainless Steel; up to 1 ½" on PEX tubing; and up to ¾" Iron Pipe
- Bluetooth Connectivity - Connect to your tool through your phone and manage important information like cycle count and battery life
- New 12V Lithium-Ion Battery - Over 140 crimps per charge
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Safety First

Combustion analyzer helps plumber ensure customer safety while bolstering efficiency and profitability

By Ken Wysocky

When master plumber Anthony Tosco installs equipment such as boilers and water heaters, safety — for him, his technicians and his customers — is always top of mind. As such, the owner of Avanti Plumbing, Heating and Cooling swears by the BTU 900 combustion tester made by E Instruments International.

“There’s no way to just look at an open flame and make adjustments for efficiency and safety,” says Tosco, who opened shop in 2006 in Audubon, Pennsylvania. “You can’t smell carbon monoxide, so you need this tool to execute jobs and make sure equipment is performing up to manufacturers’ specifications. During storage, shipping, and setting things up, you never know if something is going to get out of whack, so you have to be able to follow through and do your due diligence.

“In the end, it’s a safety issue for both me and my customers,” he adds. “It also eliminates liability (if something goes wrong later).”

At a cost of more than \$1,000, the combustion tester represents a significant investment, notes Tosco, who owns three BTU 900s. But for plumbers who care about their customers and ensuring optimal performance of the equipment they’re installing, it’s a small price to pay, he says.

Besides, the testing unit eventually pays for itself by increasing productivity. Before Tosco bought his first BTU 900 six or seven years ago, he used a more cumbersome mechanical oil-and-gas testing kit that included six or seven different items to perform various tests. But the digital, hand-held BTU 900 can perform and display the results of five different tests; it has enough memory to store up to 600 test results, he says.

The unit tests for things such as combustion efficiency; levels of flue gases, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide; and all required draft, pressure, and temperature readings.




▲ Anthony Tosco, owner of Avanti Plumbing, Heating and Cooling in Audubon, Pennsylvania, uses a combustion tester to measure the combustion efficiency and carbon monoxide levels on a Laars Mascot mod-con boiler.

“You can’t smell carbon monoxide, so you need this tool to execute jobs and make sure equipment is performing up to manufacturers’ specifications.”

Anthony Tosco

Moreover, the unit performs those tests faster and more accurately, Tosco says. “An average combustion test used to take 25 to 30 minutes,” Tosco says. “With the BTU 900, I can do it in five or 10 minutes once the system is up and running.”



Audubon, PA

COMPANY Avanti Plumbing, Heating and Cooling

LOCATION Audubon, Pennsylvania

TOOL BTU 900 combustion tester/analyzer

FUNCTION Measures combustion efficiency, carbon monoxide levels, draft readings and other functions

FEATURES Compact, hand-held unit with ability to perform multiple tests; wireless Bluetooth capability; rechargeable lithium-ion battery; large, backlit LCD display panel; metal connections; wireless-printer compatibility; protective rubber cover with magnetic back panel; enough memory to store 600 tests; 12-inch probe with 10-inch dual hose for gas and draft measurements

WEBSITE www.avantiplumbingandheating.com

COST More than \$1,000

Another handy feature is a heat-exchanger tester, which indicates if a heat exchanger is cracked. “If you don’t perform the test, you would never know,” he explains. “And a defective heat exchanger could be dumping carbon monoxide into the air.”

The unit also is compatible with wireless printers. That enables Tosco to leave behind with customers a printout of all the test results. This provides verifiable proof that whatever appliance was installed or repaired was in good working order when he left the job. “If you leave a job and everything was kosher when you left but you can’t prove it, that can be very problematic,” he points out.

Tosco also notes the unit’s durability, which is enhanced with metal connections and comes with a thick rubber housing that protects it from drops. “It’s like an OtterBox cover for a cellphone,” he notes. In addition, the rear of the cover is magnetic, so he can work hands-free by attaching it to a gas line or appliance while doing combustion tests.

The BTU 900s must be sent back to the manufacturer annually to be recalibrated; that’s why Tosco owns more than one unit. A calibration-certification sticker is affixed to each recalibrated unit for verification, Tosco says.


Overall, the unit is very user-friendly, he reports. All operators have to do is turn it on outside the building where they’re working and wait for 30 seconds to a minute; this allows the unit to sample fresh air, which provides a baseline safety level. “Then you go to the fixture and perform the test,” he explains. “If the appliance uses oil, you have to first do a smoke test. But if it’s powered by natural gas, you just drill a hole in the vent connector (if there’s not one already provided by the manufacturer), then insert the probe, and let it do the test.”

“If you leave a job and everything was kosher when you left but you can’t prove it, that can be very problematic.”

Anthony Tosco

The tool also helps Tosco differentiate his full-service company — which does everything from service-and-repair plumbing to kitchen and bath remodeling to bringing in underground utility lines — from competitors. (The company runs three Ford service trucks: a 2010 Ford Transit, a 2014 Ford F-350 with a 9-foot aluminum box body made by Reading Truck Group, and a 2015 Ford Transit van.) Tosco also relies on drain cleaning tools from RIDGID and General Pipe Cleaners.

Furthermore, the unit also helps Tosco justify the cost of his services. For example, if a customer complains that Avanti Plumbing, Heating and Cooling’s service is more expensive than a competitor’s rates, Tosco says he asks them if the competitors perform combustion tests, as well as other safety checks and measures. “They usually say, ‘No, the other guys are usually in and out of here in 15 minutes,’” Tosco notes. “Using the BTU 900 shows customers that I provide a different and better level of service.”

And does so with customer safety first and foremost in mind. 

Where Are You in Your Entrepreneurial Life Cycle?

Knowing the stage of your career as a business risk-taker will help you invest logically in your plumbing business

By Ami Kassar

Just as we experience spring, summer, fall, and winter, there are similar seasons for entrepreneurs. Understanding where you fit into these cycles determines how you approach growth, helps pinpoint your most comfortable financial options and makes evident your tolerance for risk.

So, what are those four cycles? Here are some easy-to-remember names: Growers, Gliders, Speed-bumpers and Exiters.

Consider the case of John, in his early 60s, whose company has coasted along for years. The business is growing steadily, although at a much slower pace than 20 years ago.

John is financially set for life and wants to enjoy retirement by traveling with his wife and spending time with his grandchildren. Although there's no immediate hurry, he's looking to cash out from his company, which is now largely in the hands of his capable daughter. As you might guess, John is an Exiter.

At a social function, John strikes up a conversation with a husband-and-wife team named Jason and Tara who run a fledgling company of their own. Jason and Tara have just won a significant contract and their products are receiving good reviews, but they need capital to meet their demands.

These classic Growers ask John for advice, figuring (correctly) that he's seen it all. So what does John tell them? An aggressive businessman all his life, John tells Jason and Tara to be bold — which is the only way to successfully get through each individual entrepreneurial cycle.

GROWERS

A Grower is the type of entrepreneur typically depicted in film, on TV, in books and all other forms of media. These are the businesspeople looking to expand their

operations, often rapidly. They generally have a healthy appetite for assuming risk and are loaded with self-confidence.

John tests Jason and Tara by asking them what they'd do if they received a \$1 million gift. Would they invest all (or most) of that money directly into their business, or would they hold on to it, essentially saving it for a rainy day?

John is happy to hear his newfound friends didn't hesitate before saying they were confident in their business and figured that investing the money would go a long way toward solving their growth issues.

John tells them that since their business prospects are solid, there would be numerous financing options available for them, ranging from the tried-and-true U.S. Small Business Administration, or SBA, loan to the ancient practice of factoring to everything in between.

While John is speaking, his audience grows, enthralled by the wisdom he's imparting. One of the listeners is a longtime friend named Mary whose small chain of stores is stable and profitable. She is a Glider.

GLIDERS

Mary tells the group that she's reached a happy point where she's making a solid amount of money, expects her business to remain sound and is loath to wreck a good thing. John's been somewhat of a mentor to Mary over the years, so he poses the same hypothetical \$1 million gift question he just asked Jason and Tara.

Mary waffled a bit. She first said she would place a significant chunk of that gift into mutual funds, happy with a smaller return but still available to be used if need be. After more thought, she decided to place about 75 percent in her business because she realized she was already generating a higher return than what a mutual fund offered.

John approved, noting that keeping a business on an

Continued ►

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Entrepreneurs don't know everything and tend to look at the big picture and forgo some of the fine details. ... The key is recognizing that no two businesses — and their financial situations — are alike and they can't be addressed with a rote game plan.

even keel is never a bad thing, especially for someone like Mary, who is beginning to consider retirement options. He also pointed out that since her business was doing well, there'd be no shortage of palatable financial options available if the need arose.

The conversation lurches in a different direction, however, when a frazzled-looking entrepreneur joins the discussion. That would be Derek, the founder of an online store. Derek's business was growing at a double-digit rate, but he overestimated his market and is now stuck with a warehouse full of unsold goods — not to mention his bank wants to pull its line of credit and is demanding repayment.

Derek, a textbook Speed-bumper, asks John what he should do.

SPEED-BUMPERS

John points out that a little rain falls on most people's lives at some point, and entrepreneurs aren't immune. Again, he brings up the hypothetical \$1 million gift.

It doesn't take long for Derek to gain clarity when he says that he would plunk most or the entire hypothetical \$1 million gift into his business. While some nonentrepreneurs might consider that foolish, Derek realizes that for any business to succeed, it requires the stomach for at least some risk along with overriding confidence. By stepping back, he realizes that — missteps aside — his company and business model are viable and will need some fine-tuning.

John cautions that challenges might lie ahead because some financial options will be closed to him. And the

options that will be open may carry a greater risk (or interest rate) or even the possibility of surrendering some equity.

Having provided his sage advice to the others, the group of entrepreneurs questions John about his plans.

EXITERS

John replies that even the most fervent entrepreneur will walk away at some point. The reason why doesn't really matter. The group then turns the table on John and asks him what he'd do with the hypothetical \$1 million gift.

Not surprisingly, he says he'd invest half of it in mutual funds and put the rest back into the business, noting that it would help his successor daughter. John points out that succession planning is important, but too many businesses either overlook it or give it short shrift. After all, who wants to be thinking about the distant future when the thrill of running a business still looms?

He notes that eventually that day comes, however, and transitioning power is a delicate process, especially when you consider your legacy, not to mention tax concerns, heirs (whether or not they're taking over the business), and dozens of other things that often aren't considered.

John does say that the exiting process, which should be a joyful time, can become burdensome and require professional financial assistance. With that, the group begins to break up, each having gained a bit of clarity in regards to their particular situation.

ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

As entrepreneurs yourselves, what have you learned from this hypothetical situation?

No matter what cycle they're in, entrepreneurs are a fascinating breed; they represent much of what makes the American business world so great. That said, entrepreneurs don't know everything and tend to look at the big picture and forgo some of the fine details. That's why they sometimes need outside help. The key is recognizing that no two businesses — and their financial situations — are alike and they can't be addressed with a rote game plan. **R**

Ami Kassar is the founder and chief executive officer of MultiFunding, a speaker, and the author of the book, The Growth Dilemma. For more information, visit www.multifunding.com.



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Going Mobile

Field service management software allows for faster response time and better customer relations *By Jared Raney*

If there's one requirement for a plumber, it might be summarized with one word: mobile.

Mobility is key for service technicians, and any tool that increases mobility is a treasure in this business. Fortunately, gains in technology have given way to a number of systems designed for that very purpose.

Commonly referred to as service management software, they are electronic dispatching and billing systems that bring numerous efficiencies to plumbers.

WHAT IS IT?

Software in this vein comes under a variety of names and forms, but generally it is a shared digital system that remotely connects technicians in the field to their home office. It typically includes job assigning, invoicing and GPS services, but perhaps the most helpful aspect of this type of software is file sharing.

"They can pull up history from other technicians that were at the home and can look at pictures that other technicians may have taken, pictures that the customer may have sent in and we attach to the job," says Kyle Leighton, operations and service manager for Frasier's Plumbing,

“It gives the technicians tools that are right in front of them that they did not have before. They're not having to rely on calling the office 50 times a day to either find out this bit of information or that bit of information.”

Kyle Leighton

Heating and Cooling, which uses a system called ServiceTitan.

Customer relationships are in many ways a plumber's currency, especially for bigger operations, where some technician crossover or change is inevitable. Finding a way to retain knowledge about customers among various technicians can be a boon to customer service.

"I can just pull up the database on my cellphone, on an app, and I can pull up all of our customers' information, their address, their telephone number — it saves a step, and they feel more comfortable knowing that we're familiar with them, what we've done at their house, and how we can further help them," says Lisa Mertz, vice president of Matt Mertz Plumbing. They use a system from Kickserv.

THE BENEFITS

At its simplest, these systems are environmentally friendly, limiting a company's paper trail, and provide significant organizational benefit, but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Another valuable feature is the GPS. In today's world, most operators have Google Maps on their phone, but what these systems do with GPS is much more than that. The software links with the office so staff can see where technicians are in the field and destinations can be sent directly to them.

"Our plumbers can use it as a tool if there is an emergency," Mertz says. "I can pull up their trucks to see which plumber has a job already in or around the area, so our plumber can get to the emergency quicker. When you start entering an area, it picks up the zip code, the area, and what the township or borough is for you."

Service management systems simplify operations, whether it's sending job assignments out to plumbers already in the field or trading work orders and invoices back and forth between the customer, office, and technician.

Even automatic timecards are an option with some systems.

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“It gives the technicians tools that are right in front of them that they did not have before,” Leighton says. “They’re not having to rely on calling the office 50 times a day to either find out this bit of information or that bit of information.”

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

“Do your research; don’t just jump into the first one you find or the first thing that someone would recommend to you,” Mertz says. “Absolutely do research on what you need for your company. Customize it to what works best for you and for your company.”

Finding a company that will work with you and that is readily available for questions is key.


“Trying something new is always a little bit challenging, if you’re not familiar with it,” Mertz says.

The Kickserv system has a messenger feature with a direct connection to Kickserv support staff.

If you live in an area with questionable cellular data service, make sure your system has provisions to store data when outside of coverage. Frasier’s Plumbing, Heating and Cooling, which operates in northern Wisconsin, runs into this problem on occasion, but after giving feedback to ServiceTitan, their program now addresses those situations.

DON'T STOP EVOLVING

Technology is constantly changing; be on the lookout for new features and systems.

“Each company needs to find out what works for them, explore options, and not be afraid to try something new,” Leighton says. 

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Anja Smith

An Exit Strategy

Whether you're retiring or just wanting to step away, having a plan for the business is a must for any owner *By Anja Smith*

When you started your plumbing business, you likely had a lot on your plate. What equipment to buy, how to find work, what to call the company, and a laundry list of other tasks and decisions. One thing that may not have been on your mind at that time is how you would eventually leave your business.

The lucky ones have some sort of vision for retirement or ideas for the next stage of life. If so, the real question is whether the business operations and decisions are getting you closer to that vision or further from it.

For some of you hardworking folks, the idea of retirement is ludicrous. The fact remains: One day you will exit your business. That may be with one or both feet in a grave, but hopefully your legacy matters enough to do some planning. Where is all this hard work headed and how long will it last are two important questions for any business owner — this isn't just a concept for fancy or big companies.

Where is all this hard work headed and how long will it last are two important questions for any business owner — this isn't just a concept for fancy or big companies.

An exit strategy is best defined as understanding where you want to go and what will happen to your business when you get there. A defined exit strategy will make an impact on the day-to-day running of your company, meaning the sooner you decide, the better.

There are a lot of options for how to exit a company. Some are more common for a plumbing company than others. For instance, an initial public offering or becoming a publicly traded company is incredibly uncommon for any business. It is even more rare for plumbing companies.

But plumbing companies do trade hands often, remaining privately held and providing good jobs and good livings for those involved. Here are a few options to consider:

Employee buyout

This option wins the feel-good category. It is the equivalent of handing your business off to the next generation. A buyout can be an easy transition for employees and the owner, especially if you have someone you have been grooming for a long time.

For a plumbing company, this option has a lot of upside because qualified outside buyers can be difficult to find. It is a technical field with licensing requirements and regulatory concerns.

Sell to a competitor or outside individual

Finding a buyer to acquire you can be tricky and take time. The pool of qualified buyers for a plumbing company is small. On top of that, your numbers have to be impeccable, and you have to be willing to find a valuation both sides can agree on.

This type of sale usually involves a business broker, who can help you figure out the value of your business, find a buyer, and take care of the paperwork. Just like in real estate, that person expects a cut of the proceeds. For the owner, this usually means a clean exit and a large cash payout.

Ride the cash cow

If you have great systems and people in place, you might consider turning over operations but not ownership.

Continued ▶

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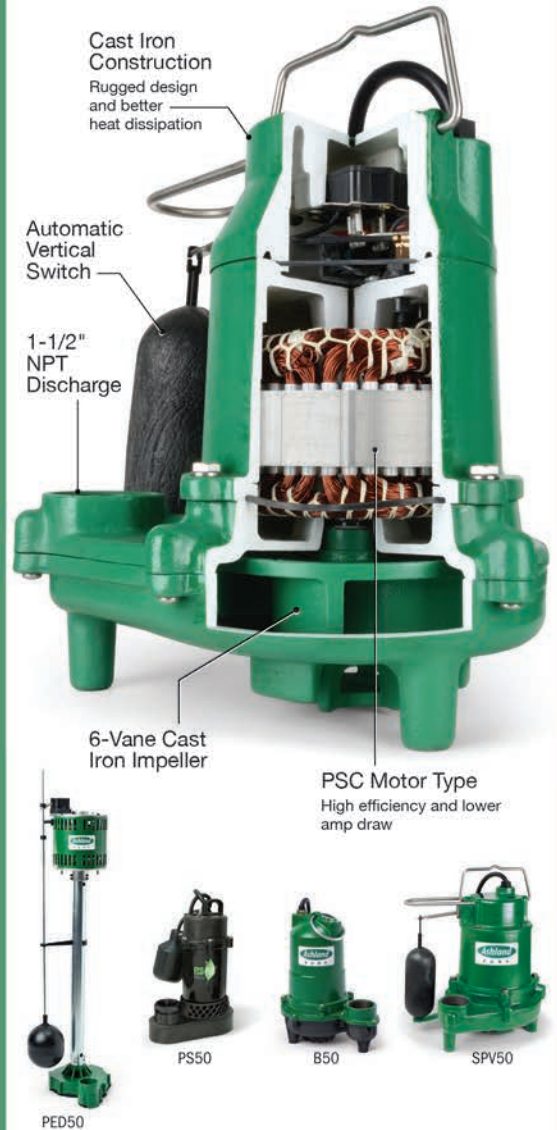
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A lifestyle business is one where the owner continues to draw profits from the company without working in it day to day.

This might sound like the ultimate dream, but remember, this isn't a true exit. You aren't walking away from this company and saying "good luck" — you have to be available for at least occasional decision-making. Consider that you may also have to step in if you lose key players.

Liquidate

Simple, and often heart-wrenching. If the value of your business, from an accounting perspective, isn't more than the sum of it's parts, you might consider liquidating. If you are a sole operator or feel like you "are" your business, this might be the right path. This means selling off your assets, paying off your liabilities, and moving on with your life.

HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

The crucial point is that you don't have to be ready or thinking about retirement before you start planning your exit. In fact, it is crucial that you begin planning well ahead of the exit strategy execution. The ends dictate the means, so once you have decided on an exit, you can work toward that future. This is why it is not just possible, but imperative that you consider your exit long before you are ready to make it a reality.

For instance, if you want to sell to an employee or group of employees or have a relative succeed you, that person or those people will need to be well-groomed for the responsibility. They will need to understand not just their job, but how to run the business. Don't wait until your retirement year to start teaching them how the accounting, marketing and operations work. Typically, this person will be included in the upper management circle long before the transition takes place.

An outside sale, on the other hand, requires squeaky-clean accounting and operational excellence to maximize value. People want to buy opportunity but not a mess. You will have to demonstrate, on paper, that the company has value without you.

Agreeing on exactly how much your company is worth can be a touchy subject for many business owners. You see the best in your creation, not the flaws. Fortunately, there isn't much emotion in it. In a service industry like plumbing, it is common for the value to be placed at a multiple


of cash flow. An accountant can calculate this for you if you don't know how.

Knowing the potential value of your company is a great litmus test to determine if you are on the right path. If you want to consider selling your company, you will want to prioritize strategies that increase the cash flow, decrease liabilities, and otherwise sweeten the pot for a potential buyer.

WHAT WILL LEAVING LOOK LIKE?

Life doesn't always go according to plan. You may get to your planned exit date and not be ready to leave. Conversely, life events may require that you exit sooner than you planned.

This might sound like a scary prospect or an exciting one, but the good news is you are in control of how prepared you are for that day. Be willing to change your plan if circumstances change and play to your strengths.

It's OK to have torn feelings. Exit strategies can seem stressful or bittersweet when thinking about how you are going to "quit" your business one day. Think of your exit strategy as insurance, giving you the ability to hit the curveballs that life throws your way. Along the journey, you might find yourself running a better company for it. 

Anja Smith is managing partner for All Clear Plumbing in Greenville, South Carolina. She can be reached at anja.nicole.smith@gmail.com.

Knowing the potential value of your company is a great litmus test to determine if you are on the right path.

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Advanced Treatment Units

Anua PuraSys SBR

The **PuraSys SBR** from **Anua** batches treatment in cycles, including aerobic and anaerobic steps, to clean water and reduce total nitrogen. It allows nitrification and denitrification to occur in the same chamber, saving space. The smart controls adjust aeration for varying flows, eliminating excessive air that can lead to system failure through sludge bulking. Flexible tank configurations include the retrofit of existing tanks. The system can reduce BOD₅ and TSS to less than 10 mg/L and provide greater than 50 percent total nitrogen reduction, according to the manufacturer. It can be scaled up for commercial applications. 336-547-9338; www.anuainternational.com.



Bio-Microbics MicroFAST

MicroFAST wastewater treatment systems or **MicroFITT-ee** (energy-efficient version) systems from **Bio-Microbics** are integrated into a standard septic tank. With the SFR feature, alternate modes of operation include intermittent operation of the blower to reduce electricity usage up to 45 percent and recirculation of nitrified wastewater to the primary settling chamber for extra denitrification. Its biosolids treatment and sludge digestion enable cost-effective treatment with less maintenance. Available from 500 to more than 9,000 gpd applications, technology easily scales up for larger residential and commercial flows. The stability of the treatment process with fully submerged, fixed-film media and the effectiveness of activated sludge treatment helps in certain difficult applications and where there may or may not be infrastructure available. The effluent meets secondary quality requirements and can be distributed to a soil treatment system or water reuse applications (with drip-tubing irrigation or other non-potable use). 913-422-0707; www.biomicrobics.com.



Knight Treatment Systems White Knight Microbial Inoculator Generator

The **White Knight Microbial Inoculator Generator** from **Knight Treatment Systems** offers an enhanced form of aerobic treatment technology that introduces, cultivates and releases selected microorganisms. It is designed to be simple to install in most septic tanks. It can be used to retrofit outdated ATUs and package treatment plants and enhance the performance of community and high-strength wastewater treatment systems in addition to septage processing facilities. 800-560-2454; www.knighttreatment.com.



Norweco Singular Green

The **Singular Green** advanced treatment unit from **Norweco** is designed to quietly, efficiently and automatically treat all domestic wastewater in just 24 hours. The durable, watertight HDPE tank is ideal for new or replacement applications. It is easily installed and offers single-tank convenience. The all-in-one system contains pretreatment, aeration, clarification, filtration, flow equalization, and optional disinfection and dechlorination. Incorporating support ribs and an inherently strong arch shape, the durable tank is designed for a long life span. Designed for domestic wastewater flows up to 600 gpd, with treatment performance meeting or exceeding the strictest state and county requirements, it is certified by NSF to Standards 40 and 245 for nitrogen reduction. 800-667-9326; www.norweco.com.



Orengo Systems AdvanTex AX-RT Series

The **AdvanTex AX-RT Series** of advanced wastewater treatment systems from **Orengo Systems** is designed for system repair and rehabilitation. All interior components



are installed, plumbed and adjusted at the factory. Units can be shallowly buried for use between a functional, watertight septic tank and a functioning drainfield. The three-in-one design includes recirculation, treatment and discharge in a single unit to simplify installation and eliminate the need for additional tanks, basins, risers and lids. The system can be maintained with an annual service call. Filters and textile media are accessible and cleanable, and control panels are touch-safe. No blower is needed for the passively vented system. An optional UV disinfection unit is available. **800-348-9843; www.orenco.com.**



Premier Tech Aqua Ecoflo PACK

Featuring a single monobloc unit integrating a primary tank and a biofilter, the all-in-one **Ecoflo PACK** treatment system from **Premier Tech Aqua** is now offered in 500- and 600-gpd capacity. It is suitable for both primary and secondary homes, and it's fast and easy to install with smaller equipment. It can integrate the DiUV Classic kit when disinfection is needed. It is a permanent septic solution based on a compact filter technology that treats wastewater without energy. The system retains pollutants thanks to its 100 percent organic coco husk fragment-based filtering media. It offers the ease of maintenance and all the benefits of a recyclable filtering media that can be accessed via the lid at the end of its useful life. **800-632-6356; www.ecoflobiofilter.com.**

Presby Environmental EnviroFin

EnviroFin from **Presby Environmental** is a passive onsite wastewater treatment and dispersal system designed with a small footprint, to ship easily, and to exceed NSF/ANSI Standard 40 treatment. The effluent enters a fin distribution unit, or FDU, where it settles and breaks down suspended solids. Skimmer tabs located at the FDU's perforations prevent grease and suspended solids from leaving the FDU. The FDU distributes the effluent into the treatment fins, which are filled with coarse green plastic fibers, creating a massive bacteria treatment area. Perforated air duct pipes run across the top of each treatment fin, providing oxygen to promote bacterial growth. **800-473-5298; www.presbyeco.com.**



SeptiTech STAAR

SeptiTech STAAR (Smart Trickling Anaerobic/Aerobic Recirculation) filter systems are designed for both multifamily domestic and high-strength commercial wastewater from 100 to more than 150,000 gpd. Systems use partially submerged media to treat high organic loads that integrate with other technologies and accessories. The biological trickling filter also maintains low levels of Nitrate-N with all below-grade components that fit in available concrete, plastic or fiberglass tanks. Smart technology allows the system to go into a sleep mode that will dial down activity and eventually shut all power off until normal flow conditions are detected. This allows the system to achieve lower operating costs and power requirements. **207-333-6940; www.septitech.com.**



Drainfield Restoration

Arcan Enterprises Septic-Scrub

Septic-Scrub chemical additive from **Arcan Enterprises** is designed to help remove sludge that builds up and sticks to the stone in a drainfield, pit or sand mound to rejuvenate the drainfield. According to the maker, it works in the first 24 hours after application. It can serve as part of a maintenance program. It works with all types of systems, is safe to handle and is environmentally friendly. **888-352-7226; www.arcan.com.**



Ecological Laboratories PRO-PUMP/TST PLUS

PRO-PUMP/TST PLUS (Total System Treatment) from **Ecological Laboratories** is designed to provide inside and outside benefits in a bioformulation that cleans and deodorizes drainlines in a single monthly application. When used as directed, it can help improve line flow, eliminate drain odor and protect onsite wastewater systems by restoring the necessary biological action in septic tanks and absorption fields. It is a highly active, safe microbial formulation designed specifically to maintain drainlines throughout the home. **800-326-7867; www.propump.com.**



Lenzyme Trap-Clear Rejuvenation Septic Kit

The **Rejuvenation Septic Kit** from **Lenzyme Trap-Clear** includes Field & Line Cleaner, Oxidizing Agent, High Count (Drainfield Biological Activator) and Lenzyme packets. This kit is designed to clean a conventional septic system with normal soil structure and up to 150 feet of lateral line. The kit is ideal for clay fields. Field & Line Cleaner cleans the pipeline and conditions the soil bed while the Septic Oxidizer's ingredients attack the biomat buildup and have a reaction with the sulfides. The High Count (Drainfield Biological Activator) is specially blended to restore the biological activity, which is depleted during the oxidizing process. It also attacks leftover organics in the field. **800-223-3083; www.lenzyme.com.**



Septic Maxx Solu-Pacs

Septic Maxx Solu-Pacs are commercial-grade and chemical-free. They contain both aerobic and anaerobic ingredients and activate in low-oxygen environments like septic tanks and higher-oxygen environments like drainfields or holding tanks. Like a probiotic, they can replenish the body of the septic system with the healthy bacteria it needs to function at its best and help liquefy solids, toilet paper, greases, oils and starches. They can also help replace the good bacteria that get killed off by the bleaches, detergents and other chemicals used to kill the bad bacteria. Use them once a month to protect between pumpouts and reduce the chance of drainfield failure. Simply toss the pre-measured packet into the commode, wait 5 minutes, and flush. They are available to contractors looking to resell to their customers and for private purchase. **800-397-2384; www.septicmaxx.com.**



UTILITY Super Cessolve

Super Cessolve from **UTILITY** contains four natural bacterial enzymes: protease, which digests proteins such as hair; amylase, which digests starches and sugars such as vegetable matter; lipase to digest fats such as greases and oils; and cellulase to digest cellulose such as toilet paper. It actively continues to make more digesting bacterial enzymes if there is waste in the system. It is suitable for use in drainlines,

down pipes and stacks, sinks, grease traps, septic tanks and cesspools, cement vault toilets, recreational vehicles, manure pits and slurry stores, lagoons and ponds, and waste treatment plants. It contains no harmful caustics, acids or solvents, and is nonflammable. It is noncontaminating and harmless to all types of drainpipes. **516-997-6300; www.utilitychemicals.com.**

Excavation Equipment



Bobcat R-Series

R-Series excavators from **Bobcat** offer a 15 percent increase in over-the-side stability with the dual-flange track roller system, allowing placement of larger pipes. Strengthened hinges and latches and more ridged, aligned panels reduce vibration in the cab. Along with having large cab openings, the cab has been redesigned with 29 percent more floor space and 15 percent more glass surface area, which includes an improved top window and narrower side pillars for visibility. They have blades with increased downward angles for greater stability when digging on an uneven surface or trenching at an angle, and a boom swing greaseless pin joint for enhanced uptime protection. **800-743-4340; www.bobcat.com.**

Pipe/Pipe Tool

RIDGID 286 Soil Pipe Cutter

The **RIDGID 286 Soil Pipe Cutter**



is designed for accurate, single-stroke cutting of soil pipes up to 6 inches. Its articulating outward-facing hooks simplify connecting cast-iron and clay pipe, while the handles can easily be adjusted and set for repeated cuts. Long handles and a built-in cutting mechanism also provide the mechanical advantage to minimize cutting effort and enhance ergonomics. Chain extenders can be added to cut up to an 8-inch soil pipe (up to 15-inch if cutting clay pipe only). **800-769-7743; www.ridgid.com.**

Pumps



Ashland Pump AGP-HC200

The AGP-HC200 grinder pump from **Ashland Pump** has a radial portion that grinds waste into fine slurry, as well as a cutting-edge axial portion that cuts and chops stringy solids and other forms of nonhuman waste into pieces that will pass through the small-diameter discharge pipe. Fibrous materials get chopped and cut,

while the soft solids become slurry, minimizing downstream solids and preventing clogging. The engineered design prevents wrapping at the inlet. The cutters are made of case-hardened 440 stainless steel and are easy to sharpen and adjust clearances, according to the maker. 855-281-6830; www.ashlandpump.com.

Franklin Electric Little Giant Pit+Plus basin

The **Little Giant Pit+Plus** basin from **Franklin Electric** is an advanced installation and service-friendly sewage basin option for plumbing contractors. It has a monolithic top to separate and promote the three key areas of a sewage package: the pump, switch, and plumbing connections, which can be accessed independently. Still offered with the common float switch, the system incorporates the reliable ECM, or External Control Module, switch option. It contains a bell inside the basin to monitor liquid level for switch operation outside the basin, isolated from the liquid. This package also incorporates molded-in discharge and vent ports, allowing contractors access to the pump or switch independently without disrupting the plumbing connections. It is offered in both Senior (20-by-30-inch) and Junior (24-by-24-inch) sizes with a 44-gallon total capacity, equipped with a Little Giant 9SN or 10SN Series ejector pump. 260-824-2900; www.franklinwater.com.



Polylok Inc. / Zabel PL-PS40

The PL-PS40 prepackaged basin assembly from **Polylok Inc. / Zabel** comes ready to assemble. It is made of high-density polyethylene and is lightweight and compact. To install, glue three pieces of PVC and connect the inlet and outlet pipes, and then

provide power. The design allows for an adapter ring to add up to 24 inches of risers. The prepackaged basin assembly is easy to access and disconnect for future servicing. It includes a 24-by-40-inch basin, 24-inch heavy-duty cover, 0.4 hp effluent pump with a piggyback float for automatic on/off operation, indoor/outdoor audible and visual alarm with float, internal piping system (2-inch PVC piping and a gate, check and union all in one valve assembly), three grommets, a 4-inch inlet, 2-inch discharge, a 1 1/2-inch inlet for electrical, and a junction box with three watertight connectors. 888-765-9565; www.polylok.com.

Webtrol Pumps MVPS-RE1

The MVPS-RE1 drop-in package for existing progressive cavity systems from **Webtrol Pumps** has a progressive cavity pump at its center, which provides reliable operation and nearly constant flow, and is easily able to adjust for pressure variations in any system setting, according to the maker. The package is powered by a 1 1/2 hp motor, spinning at 1,750 rpm to provide grinding torque. With all package parts readily available and easily replaceable, it can quickly and easily be serviced in the field. 800-769-7867; www.webtrol.com.



Weil Pump Vortex Mover Pump

Vortex Mover Pumps from **Weil Pump** are designed to effectively pump “no-flush” polyester wipes, such as baby wipes, handy wipes, shopping cart wipes, barrier cloths and washcloths. Thanks to the design of the clog-free zone, they solve the ever-common problem created by these troublesome towels flushed into the wastewater system, which often ball up and clog many grinder and solids handling pumps. The rugged cast-iron submersible mover pumps offer 1,750 and 3,450 rpm double-seal submersible motors and are available in 2-, 3- and 4-inch discharge. They are delivered as either floor-mounted or quick-removal configurations. 262-377-1399; www.weilpump.com.



Septic Tanks

Jet Inc. BAT Media Plants

Jet Inc. BAT Media Plants offer variable capacity in a NSF 40 and 245 listed treatment system. The precast concrete J-1500 Series provides complete effluent treatment from 500 to 1,500 gpd with the option of a fully integrated pump tank. The 500- and 800-gpd PLT Series tanks are the lightweight, rotationally molded alternative to the concrete J-1500 Series. The seamless polyethylene tanks are easy to transport and install in the most difficult site conditions. **800-321-6960; www.jetincorp.com.**



Snyder Industries NexGen D2

NexGen D2 septic tanks from Snyder Industries are durable, rotationally molded, rugged one-piece tanks with no seams to leak. Installation of these tanks is convenient in that no special backfill or water filling is required during installation. The units may be pumped dry during pumpouts. They are suitable for use as a septic tank or pump tank, and they may also be used for nonpotable water. They are available in 750-, 1,000-, 1,250- and 1,500-gallon sizes. There is no need for installation crews to sit idle waiting for tank delivery, as they can be moved into position without the use of heavy equipment. **402-467-5221; www.waterandseptictanks.com.**



Septic Tank Components

Simple Solutions Distributing Super Wolverine

The solar-powered Super Wolverine vent filter from Simple Solutions Distributing is designed to eliminate odorous airflows up to 10 cfm, and the solar fan vents the tank, reducing accumulation of sewer gas. It holds between 8 and 10 pounds of activated carbon and is available with inlet sizes between 3 and 6 inches. It can be used for larger aerobic systems found at restaurants or on small commercial buildings. It has an optional saturation indicator for monitoring the life of the carbon bed and uses a 2-inch drain plug for media replacement. **866-667-8465; www.industrialodorcontrol.com.**



TUF-TITE tank risers

Tank risers from TUF-TITE have internal supports or ledges to reinforce internal plastic safety lids. The ledges will strengthen the company's plastic internal safety lids or a variety of internal safety devices made by others, such as concrete, fiberglass or rope netting. The riser lids come with all necessary mounting hardware, including safety screws. **800-382-7009; www.tuf-tite.com. P1**



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Septic and Sewer Systems

By Craig Mandli

Remediators help recover failing systems



Problem: Woodland Park, a trailer park in Charlemont, Massachusetts, consisted of 25 lots and a single-family residence. Replacement of the 24-year-old septic systems was cost-prohibitive.

Solution: To solve the issue, several **Aero-Stream Remediators** were installed in the failing systems. A Remediator was installed in one system in 2011, with two more systems in 2014. The remediation systems are designed to resolve septic system issues and eliminate concrete tank degradation caused by hydrogen sulfide gas.

Result: Installation of the Remediators brought the failing systems into compliance and saved the park owner over \$100,000. The soil absorption systems were determined recovered, with a Certificate of Compliance issued in 2016. 877-254-7093; www.aero-stream.com.

Treatment system helps facility come into compliance



Problem: Twenty miles northwest of Boston, the rural town of Stow, Massachusetts, is home to the Meeting House at Stow elderly care community. When the facilities' previous wastewater treatment plant failed to meet permit for a prolonged period, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection issued an administrative consent order requiring the facility to correct its noncompliant discharge to the groundwater.

Solution: The solution was to replace the failed activated sludge-based process with a more robust and reliable fixed-film process. The new system was permitted under Massachusetts Groundwater Discharge pollution control regulations requiring the system to meet a standard of less than 10 mg/L total nitrogen. The project engineer Martinage Engineering Associates selected an **Aquapoint Bioclere** treatment system for its proven nitrification and denitrification performance capability, energy efficiency and low life cycle costs. In order to retain heat in the process and enhance removal efficiencies, the trickling filters are ventilated with warm air from the process control building. Effluent from the biological process is polished through a sand filter and UV disinfection prior to groundwater discharge.

Result: The system reduced BOD from a high of 21.6 mg/L in October 2011 to an average of 10.5 mg/L. Also, TSS was reduced from 11 mg/L to an average of 5.2 mg/L. Total nitrogen was also significantly reduced from 65 mg/L to an average of 3.7 mg/L. 508-985-9050; www.aquapoint.com.

Lake home uses bed system for treatment



Problem: A three-bedroom home on Tuttle Creek Lake in Riley County, Kansas, needed to be replaced. The original system, a sand bed installed in the 1970s, had been damaged beyond repair by overgrown trees and brushes; and root intrusion had damaged the pipes. The homeowner didn't know where the original system was located and wanted a replacement system that wouldn't require costly maintenance but would provide treatment to protect the nearby lake.

Solution: Tim Schlatter of Alternative Systems of Kansas was able to find the location of the original system and designed a bed system using **Eljen GSF, Geotextile Sand Filter**, modules in its place. The system consists of 27 **A42** modules installed on top of ASTM C33 sand and is gravity-fed.


Result: The system is able to protect the nearby lake by pretreating the effluent to NSF Standard 40, and was quickly installed. The homeowner is happy with the result. **800-444-1359; www.eljen.com.**

Mounded sand filter system replaces failing Colorado septic system



Problem: Following their purchase of a five-bedroom home in Centennial, Colorado, the homeowners were notified by the Tri-County Health Department that the septic system was red-tagged due to effluent surfacing from the drainfield. Scott Kellogg of Douglas County Septic and Kate Carney, P.E., of CHURCH Onsite Wastewater Consultants recognized that groundwater and runoff from the property were collecting in the drainfield area and that the constricted site and low-permeability, sandy clay loam soils posed a significant challenge to a solution.

Solution: With no area on the site to accommodate a new drainfield, Carney designed a mounded pressurized sand filter system that could be installed in the footprint of the existing drainfield. Wastewater flows from the house to a 2,000-gallon septic tank. The on-demand pump in the tank's third compartment discharges 84 gallons per dose to the automatic distribution valve, or ADV, installed inside an insulated riser to prevent freezing. The ADV alternates dosing to six zones in the 3,672-square-foot mounded **Quick4 Plus Low Profile Chamber** drainfield from **Infiltrator Water Technologies**. Each zone includes two 102-foot-long rows of 25 chambers and 1.25-inch PVC laterals with 1/8-inch orifices drilled on 36-inch centers suspended in the chambers at the 12-o'clock position. Site backfilling, grading and a swale divert runoff away from the drainfield. Underground drainpipes collect and divert roof runoff.

Result: Installation took 12 days, and the homeowner remained connected to the old system until the new tank was connected. Douglas County Septic will monitor the system biannually and maintain as needed. **800-221-4436; www.infiltratorwater.com.** 

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Product Spotlight

Saving water and money with the AquaMotion Aqua-Flash

By Cory Dellenbach

With the growing need to conserve water, more plumbers are finding ways to help customers from running water needlessly. That's where the Aqua-Flash instant hot-water recirculation system from AquaMotion comes into play.

"It's a system for instant hot water for tank or tankless systems," says Michael Ferruccio, director of operations.

The unit allows the homeowner to instantly have hot water when turning on a faucet, without having to run the water until it is warm. The Aqua-Flash system can save up to 12,000-15,000 gallons of water per year for the average family 4-5 people. It saves on utility and sewage bills and helps reduce the water shortage.

Plumbers install the pump with a timer on top of the water heater on the 3/4-inch hot outlet. The timer on the pump has three settings (on, off, and on timer) and can be set with 15-minute increment tabs. The Flash valve installs under the farthest fixture away from the water heater. The valve is an all-metal design using lead-free bronze and stainless steel. It installs with a compression fitting onto



the angled hot shut-off valve. A braided hose connects to a tee installed onto the cold-water angled shut-off valve. This model is the AMH1K-3UV. The valve installation can be done in 10 minutes with only a wrench and without cutting pipe.

"When the timer calls for activation, the Aqua-Flash bypasses cooled water through the tee into the cold return line back to the heater without wasting water," Ferruccio says. "It is maintaining a constant 90 degrees F at every fixture in the home."

Homeowners can set the pump to operate only when they are home and when they want hot water.

This Aqua-Flash can also be used with tankless heaters. The valve installs under the sink as with tank systems. On tankless units, the pump installs below the tankless fixture in the hot line. A 3/8-inch bypass connection in the pump housing is provided to connect to the cold-line tee to keep the tankless in a ready state to fire when temperature settings are met. This model is the AMH1K-6UVZT1. 800-785-3000; www.aquamotionhvac.com.

RIDGID Press Booster pipe press tool

The Press Booster from RIDGID is used with the Viega MegaPress XL jaws and rings and allows for pressing of black steel pipe between 2 1/2 and 4 inches. The tool can press connections in under 25 seconds, weighs less than 22 pounds and comes with a built-in carrying handle and strap. The actuator rotates 180 degrees on the press rings for hard-to-reach angles. The primary kit includes the XL Booster; 2.5-, 3- and 4-inch rings; and a carrying case. 800-769-7743; www.ridgid.com.



J.C. Whitlam Gator-Bite PVC pipe cutter

J.C. Whitlam's Gator-Bite plastic pipe cutter cuts all types of plastic pipe and conduit through 2 1/2 inches. The two-handed cutter cuts PVC, including thin wall, CPVC, ABS, polyethylene, polypropylene, and PEX conduit pipe and tubing. It is made with a lightweight, yet heavy-duty die-cast aluminum body and high carbon steel blade. Replacement blades and springs are available. 800-321-8358; www.jcwhitlam.com.



Franklin Electric FPS PowerSewer System

The FPS PowerSewer System from Franklin Electric is a low-pressure system available in 60-, 72-, 84-, and 96-inch basin sizes, and it pumps wastewater to a collection or treatment area, as an alternative to gravity sewer systems and septic tanks. The basin's internal C-channel assembly releases from the top of the unit, making accessibility and maintenance simpler. The float tree is spring-loaded and easily removable, with a lift handle to simplify pump removal. The system features an isolated pump support that can accommodate heavier pumps for expanded applications. Inclusion of the FPS high-head grinder allows the system to produce a maximum shut-off head of 200 feet, with a maximum flow of 35 gpm. **260-824-2900; www.franklinwater.com.**



Bradley Heat Trace Emergency Shower

Bradley Heat Trace Emergency Showers with Halo Technology provide safe and fast eye-wash and emergency shower relief in the most extreme, frigid environments. The S19-304 Series Heat Trace combination unit has an integrated Halo eye or eye/face wash. The units are available with an optional signaling system, indicator light, extension cable, drench hose, stainless steel material and anti-scald valve to enhance performance. The showers are equipped with a freeze-protection valve to ensure continual flow of water in case of power failure in cold temperatures, and the fixture is insulated and covered by a high-visibility yellow ABS plastic shell. **800-272-3539; www.bradleycorp.com.**



HammerHead Trenchless XPR pneumatic hammers

HammerHead Trenchless' XPR series of high-performance pneumatic hammers for pipe ramming and pipe bursting applications features a high-flow valve system that produces a more powerful impact. The XPR technology allows for the reverse function to be controlled above ground, simplifying tool removal from pushing collets and burst heads. The 26XPR is capable of installing casing 24 to 84 inches in diameter and is suitable for use in drainage culverts, pipeline work, and horizontal directional drilling assist methods, such as washover casing installations, pipe assist or pipe extraction, and guided pilot bore ramming. It is also effective in pneumatic pipe bursting applications of pipes ranging from 15 to 36 inches in diameter. **800-331-6653; www.hammerheadtrenchless.com.**



Water Cannon Inc. - MWBE pressure washers

Pressure washers from Water Cannon Inc. - MWBE feature a recirculation module that cools the water while the trigger gun is closed. The triplex ceramic plunger pump is designed for both commercial and professional daily use. To protect wear parts, it includes an overheat safety valve that will open and close automatically to allow the recalculating higher-temperature water to be released, allowing cool water to replace it. **800-333-9274; www.watercannon.com.**



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Uponor hires senior manager

Uponor named Paul Jossart senior manager, operations, for the company's Hutchinson, Minnesota, expansion. He previously held operations roles at Hutchinson Technology, Nova-Tech Engineering, and most recently with Arconnic/Remmele Engineering. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.



Habeck named national account manager for Chicago Faucets

Chicago Faucets has appointed John Habeck to the position of national accounts manager. He will be responsible for developing e-commerce and supporting relationships with major national accounts. Habeck previously served as national



account manager for the Mallard Group and the Beckett Corp.

Taco Comfort Solutions presents Dan Holohan comfort award

Taco Comfort Solutions presented the Dan Holohan Lifetime Contribution to Comfort Award to Bruce Marshall at the AHR Expo in January. He is the third recipient of the award and was recognized for his commitment to education and training. The award is given annually to an HVAC professional or company that has made a substantial contribution to comfort technology, advancement or training. 



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May 8-10

National Hardware Show, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Visit www.nationalhardwareshow.com.

May 15-16

Sixth Biennial Emerging Water Technology Symposium, DoubleTree Hotel, Ontario, California. Visit www.aspe.org/2018ewts.

June 7-9

Illinois Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors Association Convention, French Lick Resort, French Lick, Indiana. Visit www.ilphcc.com.

June 11-14

American Water Works Association (AWWA) 2018 Annual Conference & Exposition (ACE), Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Resort and Casino, Las Vegas. Visit www.awwa.org.

Sept. 28-Oct. 3

American Society of Plumbing Engineers Convention & Expo 2018, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta. Visit www.aspe.org.

Oct. 8-12

PHCC CONNECT 2018, Hyatt Regency Albuquerque Hotel, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Visit www.phccweb.org. 

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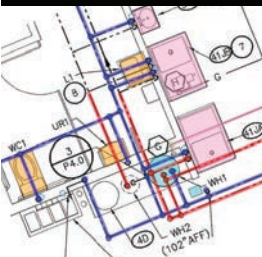


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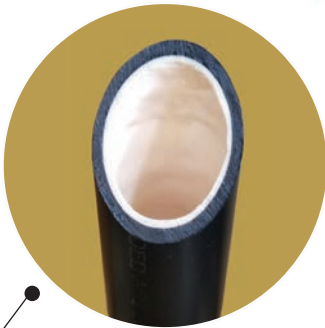
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