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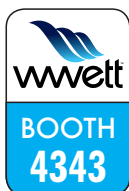
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Custom-built storage system transforms box truck into a sparkling-clean mobile warehouse.

- By Ken Wysocky



On the Cover

Russell Joe Jr. is the owner of Quality Sewer & Drain in Danvers, Massachusetts. Joe founded the company in 2016 and offers sewer and drain cleaning and inspections throughout the north Boston metro area.

(Photo by Scott Eisen)

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Fuel: Gas / Propane

Pump / Pressure: 11 GPM Pump @ 3,500 PSI

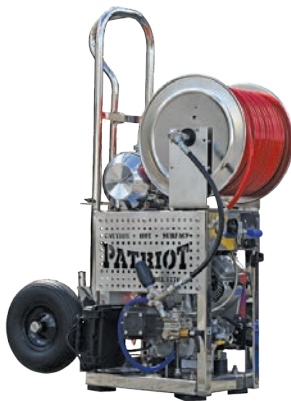
Frame & Reel: 100% Stainless Steel

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Fuel: Gas / Propane

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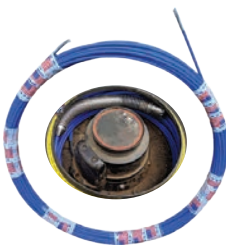
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Conductor Wires: 6

Conductor Wire Size: 28 AWG

Length: 100'

Made in USA. Call to see if compatible with your sewer camera



Patriot - Mini Rod

Push Rod Exterior Jacket:

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Push Rod Interior: Fiberglass

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Conductor Wires: 6

Conductor Wire Size: 20 AWG

Lengths: 100', 200'

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Push Rod Interior: Fiberglass

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The Waiting Game

Having to wait can be a good thing when it comes to running a business, but make sure it's not bogging you down too much

W

aiting isn't very fun, but you're often doing it: waiting on customers to decide if they want to proceed with the repair, waiting on supplies or waiting on your next job assignment.

Waiting is a part of everyday life, and it's something you have to get used to. But is there a way you can make it easier? Yes.

For example, why are you waiting for the supplies? Over this past year, we've had a few stories on inventory systems and hopefully you've taken some of those

wrong person for the job. Hiring an employee can be one of the most important tasks you do for your growing company, but you want someone who is a good fit with your other employees and customers.

When starting a new business, you want to make sure you've evaluated all of your options and are not rushing into a decision just to do it. Take your time, take a deep breath and wait awhile as you really consider if starting your own company is something for you. If your whole heart isn't into running a company, managing employees and getting business, then it's best to wait until it is.


READY FOR 2020

No more waiting here though; 2019 is about to come to a close as we've hit December. It's a busy month for many. Don't let it get too busy. You still need time for yourself, and your employees need time with their families.

This past year we ran the series *Getting Down to Business* that focused on tips one might need when starting a plumbing company. We're going to continue to offer those tips into 2020. Do you have a tip or suggestion for those looking to start a business? It can be an overwhelming process to go through, and any help you offer could be a blessing for them.

I would also like to get more project stories in the pages of *Plumber* magazine in 2020. Do you have a project that your company undertook — whether it be a tough job or a unique one? Take some pictures of your projects and let me know about them.

I look forward to hearing from even more plumbing contractors in 2020. I can be reached at editor@plumbermag.com or at 715-350-8436.

Enjoy this issue, and have a safe holiday season! 

When starting a new business, you want to make sure you've evaluated all of your options and are not rushing into a decision just to do it. Take your time, take a deep breath and wait awhile as you really consider if starting your own company is something for you.

suggestions to heart and improved your inventory system. You should never have to wait for supplies. Keep your shop stocked correctly and you will have everything you need — even in emergencies.

Have a big project coming up? Order the supplies early to ensure they arrive by the time the project begins. That way you aren't wasting your time, your employee's time or your client's time by waiting.

There are times, though, when waiting is a good thing: waiting to start a business, buy a new truck or equipment, and even hiring the next employee.

Why would it be good to wait on hiring the next employee? You don't want to move too fast and hire the

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BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

The Ways You Can Benefit From Fleet Management Software

Managing a fleet of trucks and staying on top of maintenance, scheduling, personnel and billing can be stressful. That's why implementing a fleet management software solution can be a good idea for larger companies looking to improve operations, grow profit margins and increase efficiency. This online exclusive covers the benefits you can realize from making this type of investment.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

"Even if you don't respect someone, you must treat them with respect. When we're treated in a disrespectful manner, it shuts down our willingness to communicate."

— *How to Manage Employee Conflicts More Effectively*

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DISPEL ANGER

Navigating Customer Service in the Internet Age

Even if a customer's complaint is largely unfounded, you have to tread carefully because of the power and visibility of an angry online review. Regular contributor Anja Smith recounts an experience she had in her family's business that provides good lessons on how to approach dealing with a complaint.

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FAMILY MATTERS

How to Handle Personal Relationships in the Workplace

In this industry there are countless family-run operations, so it's easy for home life to bleed into the workplace and vice versa. That can have its challenges. This online exclusive looks at a couple examples of how contractors handle working alongside family members.

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QUALITY CONTROL

By emphasizing workmanship, good equipment and professionalism, contractor gains a foothold in competitive market north of Boston

By Ken Wysocky | Photography by Scott Eisen



Quality Sewer & Drain Cleaning, Danvers, Massachusetts

OWNER	Russell Joe Jr.
FOUNDED	2016
EMPLOYEES	1
SERVICES	Sewer and drain cleaning, inspections
SERVICE AREA	North Boston metro area
WEBSITE	www.qualitysewercleaning.com



R

ussell Joe Jr. knows the value of quality work. He's built his business around it.

"Like it says on my website, customers deserve quality work done right," says Joe, 34, who took a rather circuitous career route before following in the footsteps of his father, Russell Joe Sr., and establishing Quality Sewer & Drain Cleaning, based in Danvers, Massachusetts, in 2016.

Whether it's the equipment he invests in, the work he performs or the way he presents himself to customers, Joe is all-in on the Q-word. It's a trait he learned from his father, who still operates Quality Plumbing and Sewer Cleaning in Niagara Falls, New York, a business that's now 29 years old.

So far, the younger Joe's approach is working: In 2018, he expects to double his gross revenue compared to 2017. Residential work generates about 60% of the company's revenue and commercial jobs produce the balance. "I'm blessed that after two years, I'm self-sustaining," he says.

"I'm at a point where I can pay my bills, put some money away and still grow the company slowly. I think I'm winning."

Along with the quality ethic, Joe credits much of his success to his father, who passed down endless amounts of knowledge — and continues to do so today. "If not for him, I couldn't do what I do," he says. "And if I have a question, he's always just a phone call away."

ROUNABOUT ROUTE

Joe's path to becoming a drain cleaner was anything but straight. Though he grew up in the trade and started working part time for his father at 16, he actually attended a trade school to become an electrician.

After graduating from trade school in 2002, Joe worked for two years as a commercial/industrial electrician. Then he literally switched tracks and became a railroad conductor for seven years. "I figured that it was better to experiment a little while I was young," he says. After that, he changed direction again and became the general sales



▲ Russell Joe Jr. uses a camera to check a drainpipe that is blocked by tree roots.

▶ Joe grabs supplies from the back of his service van. The truck is organized with shelving units to make it easier to find items.

manager of a luxury-car dealership in Massachusetts for about three years.

"But as a single dad, I wanted more schedule flexibility and the ability to control my own destiny," he says. "I'd watched my father do it and saw an opportunity in drain cleaning, so I opened up my shop. It's been way more rewarding because you know you're the boss and you know it's your own company. You complete tasks for homeowners who are in dire need or get a restaurant with a clogged drain up and running again. It makes you feel good.

"Every day it's something different — definitely a challenge," he adds. "Plus, I get to spend more time with my daughter, too."

Joe's aha! moment came when a friend had to call a drain cleaner in to fix a sewer problem. Joe watched and was astonished at not only the lack of professionalism, but also the mess the contractor left behind. "And the company didn't even investigate to see what the cause of the problem was," he says. "I thought to myself, 'Wow, you can throw a snake down a drain and not do an inspection and walk away with that kind of money?' I figured I could do the job 10 times better, so I dove in."

STARTUP STRUGGLES

Any drain cleaning entrepreneur who started out from scratch and endured growing pains can relate to Joe's early struggles. There was plenty of competition in Danvers, located in what's known as the North Shore area, north of Boston. But he saw a chance to differentiate his business, based on quality.

After draining most of his savings account with about \$20,000 in startup costs, mostly for essential equipment and a service van, Joe set about on the difficult business of getting the word out and developing a customer base. "There were many sleepless nights," he recalls. "I was completely new to the area and opening up a company without any contacts. I didn't know anyone in the industry who could throw me a lead or referral. It was scary."

But he marketed his company with direct-mail flyers and social media like Facebook and Instagram. He also took the shoe-leather route, knocking on doors as he traveled from business to business, trying to gain a foothold with commercial customers, too. "Before I knew it, the phone started ringing and ringing and word-of-mouth referrals started coming in from customers," he says. "I also got positive Facebook and Google reviews."



“There were many sleepless nights. I was completely new to the area and opening up a company without any contacts. I didn't know anyone in the industry who could throw me a lead or referral. It was scary.”

Russell Joe Jr.

▶ Using a RIDGID K-50 sectional machine, Russell Joe Jr. cleans out a sink drain at a job site.

Scheduled maintenance is good for business

If given the choice, Russell Joe Jr. — the owner of Quality Sewer & Drain Cleaning in Danvers, Massachusetts — would rather clean a restaurant's sewer line on a scheduled visit during normal business hours than during an emergency call at 8:30 p.m. on a Saturday, when the business is packed with customers.

That explains in part why he encourages his commercial clients to buy into the concept of regularly scheduled maintenance. In fact, he's also starting to see more interest from residential customers.

"I have about 30 scheduled-maintenance contracts with restaurants and apartment-complex owners in town," he says. "It's better because once you get into a place, you learn where the problem areas are and can address problems faster. It's not like you're walking into a hidden surprise.

"Sometimes it's fun to go in and play detective and figure out a problem, especially if other companies couldn't," he adds. "But it's also nice to know what to expect."

In addition, scheduled cleanings provide steadier cash flow as opposed to relying on random emergency service calls. Most of the contracts call for quarterly cleanings. Others are just every six months or once a year, while

some restaurants require cleaning every other month.

A soft-sell approach works better than a hard-sell strategy, he notes. He always emphasizes to clients that his recommendation is just that — a recommendation. But it helps to have a video inspection that can bolster his recommendation, and presenting himself professionally helps close a deal.

Joe says there's another selling point aside from the reduced risk of emergency calls at the worst possible time: Customers always know about the condition of their sewer lines, which enables them to plan for fixing problems before they become bigger and more expensive to resolve.

Joe doesn't use formal contracts. Instead, he verbally explains to customers how scheduled maintenance works, then writes up the basic terms on a receipt. He doesn't lock customers in to, say, annual contracts; they're free to stop the scheduled cleanings anytime they want. "But I've never had anyone back out of one yet," he says. "I think formal contracts can turn off customers. I'd rather build a better bond with them, based on trust and quality workmanship, than lock them down and tie them into a specific term. My reputation is everything, and that's what I'm building."



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Like a good marketer, Joe always makes a point of asking customers where they heard about him, so he can tell which promotional platforms are most effective. “If they say they found me through Google, I ask them to give me a good review if they think I did a good job,” he explains. “Google reviews are huge. They even helped me get calls from plumbers, and I now do drain cleaning for three companies on a weekly basis and get referral calls from time to time from about a half-dozen other plumbers.”

To Joe, quality takes many forms. But none of it is all that complicated: Answer the phone. If you can’t, call back promptly. Show up neatly dressed, wearing company-logoed apparel. And clean up after yourself.

“Drain cleaning is messy work — no way around it,” he notes. “But you don’t want to show up in jeans, sneakers and a Bud Light T-shirt. And even if you do great work, if you don’t clean up, the last thing a customer will remember is the mess you left.”

RELIABLE EQUIPMENT COUNTS

Operating on a tight budget made buying reliable, profit-enhancing equipment a must. In addition, Joe had to buy functional machines that could handle a wide variety of applications. As such, he invested in two RIDGID drain cleaning machines: a K-1500 sectional drain machine with 100 feet of 1 1/4-inch-diameter cable and a K-50 machine that offers either 25 feet of 5/16-inch-diameter cable as a sectional machine or 60 feet of 5/8-inch-diameter cable as a drum machine.

Joe also relies on a Milwaukee Tool trap snake for unclogging toilets and urinals; a RIDGID NaviTrack Scout locator; and a Wopson pipeline inspection camera made by ShenZhen Wopson Electrical. His service vehicle is a 2012 Chevrolet 2500 Express van.

Continued ►

▲ Russell Joe Jr., owner of Quality Sewer & Drain, carries cables from his truck to the basement of a home in Peabody, Massachusetts, before checking and cleaning out its sewer line.

“Even if you do great work, if you don’t clean up, the last thing a customer will remember is the mess you left.”

Russell Joe Jr.

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you are only sorry once!**



▶ Russell Joe Jr. feeds cable into a RIDGID K-1500 sectional machine in the basement of a home.

“I’m not the cheapest but not the most expensive, either. My goal is to provide quality work at reasonable rates. That’s my father’s slogan, so I borrowed that from him.”

Russell Joe Jr.

“The camera has been a huge investment,” he says. “It’s not the fanciest one on the market, but it was the best I could afford and it’s done wonders for me. So has the NaviTrack Scout locator.”

To determine how much to charge customers, Joe says he shopped around and also consulted with a friend who does sewer cleaning. One thing he knew from the start: He would not lowball his rates because it might hamper his ability to pay for the equipment.

“I’m definitely not that kind of guy,” he points out. “I’m very competitively priced. I charge a flat rate, not an hourly rate, except for commercial jobs, where I usually charge a flat rate plus an hourly rate, depending on the job. I’m not the cheapest but not the most expensive, either. My goal is to provide quality work at reasonable rates. That’s my father’s slogan, so I borrowed that from him.”

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social media such as Facebook and Instagram has been instrumental to growing the business. Joe uses Instagram, for instance, to help him build relationships with other contractors that can lead to referrals.

“We all post pictures of what we do or maybe what we’ve pulled out of a sewer line,” he says. “I even run small contests where I ask people to make a comment and tag and follow my page, then randomly select a winner from everyone who responds and give them a prize, like a Knipex Tools pliers. Some of it is just fun and silly.”

Instagram also serves as a great digital clearinghouse for contractors to share tips and advice. Joe says he has connections with contractors from Australia to California who share likes and dislikes about camera heads, jetters and the like. “I’ve made amazing friends all over the place,” he says. “It’s not so much marketing, but networking that provides more exposure for possible subcontracting work, not to mention advice. There’s a wealth of knowledge out there.”

As an example, Joe points to a recent job where he arrived to find a clogged 250-foot-long sewer line — much longer than his equipment could handle. But through an Instagram connection, he knew a colleague with a water-jetting machine whom he could call for help. “He came out and helped me after-hours,” he notes. “I never would’ve known him without Instagram. I didn’t make a ton of money on the job because I subcontracted him to do the work, but I got a customer for life.”

Facebook also helps Joe cost-effectively acquire new customers. A look at his company’s Facebook page shows plenty of five-star ratings and likes. “Russ is the best!” reads one review. “We have had problems with our kitchen drain for years. After using various vendors, I found Quality Sewer & Drain of Danvers. Russ responded quickly to my call. He showed up with his handy camera and was able to view all the trouble spots. He cleaned out the drainpipe properly and even took the time to put the camera back in to be sure he got everything out. It was a success.



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Another customer notes, "After trying to unclog my downstairs toilet for four hours and going through two rolls of paper towels, I gave them a call. (Russ) showed up in under an hour and fixed the problem in about 10 minutes. Really nice guy and (he) even cleaned up all the paper towels that I had left all over the bathroom floor. Highly recommend."

BIG AMBITIONS


Looking ahead, Joe definitely sees further growth on his radar, but not so fast that it jeopardizes his ability to provide quality customer service. The company has already grown enough that he's moving from a home-based operation to a 700-square-foot shop with an office in Danvers that offers enough space to store equipment.

In order to become more of a full-service outfit, Joe is also considering buying his own jetter, which would reduce his reliance on subcontractors when larger jobs pop up. "It would be nice to be able to handle everything on my own," he says.

Furthermore, Joe is even considering the purchase of a vacuum truck to offer septic tank pumping service. "I get call after call asking if I pump septic tanks," he says. "There are a lot of little towns north of me where homes still are on septic systems. But we'll see. I want to grow a

little at a time — not too fast. If you grow too quickly and invest too much, there's a much bigger chance of failing."

Joe also would eventually like to hire an employee, although he says it may take awhile to find someone who's dedicated enough and shares his goals and business philosophies. In the short term, he's thinking about working with a local technical school to find a good candidate for seasonal summer work that could lead to full-time employment.

In the long run, though, Joe doesn't plan to play small-ball forever. "I'd like to eventually be the biggest and most reputable drain cleaner on the North Shore," he says. "I didn't get into this business to stay in the middle of the road. If I'm going to do it, I want to be the biggest and the best." 

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Kate Zabriskie

Breaking Up Isn't Hard to Do

Here are the four reasons why you lose customers and what you can do about it

By Kate Zabriskie

Although Neil Sedaka and Howard Greenfield may have been right about love relationships when they penned their hit, “Breaking Up Is Hard to Do,” when it comes to business, that notion rings less true. Customers frequently break up with their suppliers, vendors and partners. And guess what? Most of them don’t find it hard.

Are breakups inevitable? Not always, but businesses need to understand the four reasons customers leave and how they can use relationship extenders to avoid these situations.

BETTER PRODUCT

Sometimes customers decide to break up because they find a better product. They discover something that addresses their needs that’s faster, easier, healthier, more effective, more enjoyable or improved in other ways that are important to them.

Are you buying the exact same things you were buying 20 or 40 years ago? Have you any use for a Walkman? Probably not. Smart companies listen to what their customers want, think beyond those demands and push themselves to innovate and improve.

Relationship Extenders

1. Pay attention. Know what your products and services are, what others are selling and how your customers are using what they buy from you. What problems are you solving? What would customers buy if you weren’t around? Who were they hiring for plumbing services before you?

2. Challenge the status quo. It’s easier to innovate when you’re not being reactive. Don’t wait for a customer exodus to motivate you. Challenge yourself to innovate before you’re faced with no choice. What could you do better?

BETTER PROCESS

Leaving for a different product isn’t the only reason

customers tell companies goodbye. Good processes count too. Without them, the customer experience suffers. For instance, imagine a movie theater with great films, state-of-the-art sound, pleasant employees and clean facilities. So far, so good. Now pair that vision with long lines, staff members who can’t figure out how to work the cash registers despite their good manners, double-booked theaters and so forth. Would you risk taking someone you cared about to such a place or would you choose to avoid the headache and go somewhere else? Most people would prefer to opt for a breakup and avoid potential pain and problems.

The lesson? At a minimum, doing business should not be hard. If you’ve got processes in place that inflict pain on your customers, don’t be surprised when they bolt the minute they find an acceptable alternative.

Relationship Extenders

1. Make doing business easy. Walk in your customers’ shoes, and experience your business the way they do. What are you making difficult? What could you make easier? Where are you wasting their time? What used to make sense but doesn’t anymore?

2. Borrow from others. Process improvement ideas are everywhere you look if you know how to find them. When you are interacting with other businesses, ask yourself what they are doing well and what you can adopt or adapt.

BETTER SERVICE

All else being equal (or even in the ballpark), customers will often break up with service providers because someone else is paying them more attention or better attention. Consistent caring doesn’t happen by accident. It requires companies to define great service, hire people who are capable of delivering on those promises, train them how to do it and put a management team in place to oversee the process.

You must earn and reearn your customers' business. Look for signs you've gotten sloppy or lazy, and take immediate steps to get back to your best behavior.

Relationship Extenders

1. Define what you expect. If you don't identify what quality service looks like, don't be surprised when your employees don't deliver.

2. Train people and hold them accountable. Plenty of companies offer training, but they treat it like a one-and-done activity. After you've defined what you want to see and hear, put a plan in place to teach people how. Once they know what they are supposed to do and how to do it, reward good performance and coach deficiencies.

3. Don't get too comfortable. If you think your customers will just be there because they're there, you're mistaken. You must earn and reearn your customers' business. Look for signs you've gotten sloppy or lazy, and take immediate steps to get back to your best behavior and woo your customers again.

BETTER PRICE


The final reason customers will leave a business is price. If customers can get the same product and service you provide from someone who charges less, often they will leave. In other words, when the value-to-price equation gets out of whack, people look elsewhere. That doesn't mean companies should race to the bottom and strive to be the low-cost provider. What it does mean is businesses need to ensure they have a value proposition that matters to customers and aligns with the price being charged.

Relationship Extenders

1. Shop around. Know what your competitors charge and what they deliver for that money.

2. Find out what matters to your customers other than price. What do they care about? What are they happy to pay more for? What are you offering that they don't seem to value? What should you add? What should you subtract?

TRY AND TRY AGAIN

Staying in any relationship requires work, and when it comes to customers, many a suitor will try to take them away from you. With some diligence, you can avoid the breakup blues and spend many happy years together. 

Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works, a Maryland-based talent development firm. Reach her at www.businesstrainingworks.com.


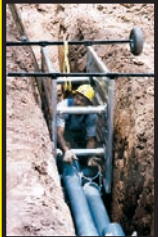

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Organized for Profitability

Custom-built storage system transforms box truck into a sparkling-clean mobile warehouse

By Ken Wysocky

When it comes to organizing plumbing trucks, Anthony Ficara — the owner of Quick Relief Plumbing in Kansas City, Kansas — literally builds on a simple philosophy: A place for everything, and everything in its place.

That mindset is vividly evident inside his sparkling-clean 2005 GMC Savana box truck, which features a 12-foot box body from Supreme. It's outfitted with a custom-built storage system that impresses both customers and fellow plumbers alike.

"Customers usually say they've never seen such a clean plumbing truck," he says. "I think it helps my business because when people see such a clean and organized truck, they correlate it with how clean I'm going to leave their house as well."

Ficara's emphasis on clean and well-organized service trucks stems from a fundamental equation: Quick and easy access to parts and tools amps up productivity. Better productivity means more jobs per day. More job per day results in more revenue.



Kansas City, KS

COMPANY	Quick Relief Plumbing, Kansas City, Kansas
OWNER	Anthony Ficara
TOOL	2005 GMC Savana with 12-foot box body from Supreme
FUNCTION	Warehouse on wheels, courtesy of a largely custom-built storage system
FEATURES	Numerous storage areas for PVC pipes, repair parts, tools, fixtures, etc.; interlocking PVC vinyl floor tiles; aluminum diamond-plate trim work
COST	Around \$4,500
WEBSITE	www.quickreliefplumbing.com

Anthony Ficara, Quick Relief Plumbing owner, and one of his three service vans with custom-made storage in the back. (Photo courtesy of Quick Relief Plumbing)



The inside of Anthony Ficara's service van contains storage bins and shelving units he built out himself.



Moreover, the ability to carry as many parts and materials as possible eliminates time-consuming and profit-killing trips to supply houses. Because there's virtually no wasted space, the truck is able to carry approximately \$12,000 to \$14,000 worth of parts and materials, he says.

"A simple round trip to a supply depot might take an hour," he says. "We don't make money driving — we make money working. The ability to carry so much inventory is the difference between doing, say, three versus six jobs a day."

A DIY SPECIAL

Tricked out with gleaming diamond-plate aluminum and a floor fashioned from Lock-Tile interlocking blue and gray PVC vinyl tiles, the truck's interior is as eye-catching as it is functional. Ficara covered the 3/4-inch-thick plywood walls of his mostly self-fabricated system with diamond plating to create a ding- and dent-resistant surface, while the floor tiles — which are made from recycled materials and are oil and chemical resistant — provide an easy-to-clean surface.

"I've had wooden floors before, and if you spill something like cutting oil, the wood soaks it up," he notes. "Then you walk on it and risk tracking it into a customer's house. These tiles interlock so tight that I had to use a hammer to connect them."

On the driver's side of the cargo area, Ficara built a length-of-the-truck storage area at floor level to hold 10-foot sections of PVC pipes. Above that stand four open storage bays custom-built to hold large plastic bins, where he puts PVC fittings.

Above those, Ficara designed open spaces to store things like garbage disposals, sump pumps and large tools. And further toward the cab is another shelf unit designed to hold 10 Milwaukee Tool stackable parts organizers.

All shelves feature an aluminum lip to keep items from sliding off. Between the last storage section and the cab are open bays that hold tarps, flue-pipe fittings and coils of PEX tubing.

"I think it helps my business because when people see such a clean and organized truck, they correlate it with how clean I'm going to leave their house as well."

Anthony Ficara

Established in 2011, the company employs three people and runs three service vehicles in the metro Kansas City area. The company focuses on the residential market, centered on service and repair work, drain cleaning and plumbing for remodeling projects.

MORE SPACE, MORE INVENTORY

After 20 years in the industry and having worked for several companies, Ficara grew tired of working with trucks that weren't designed for maximum productivity. He's seen it all: 5-gallon buckets for storage, tools and materials "bungeed" in place, and items sliding off poorly designed metal shelving units.

"It could easily take five minutes to find what you need — if you could find it at all," he says. "And time is money. Along with that, a lot of parts are expensive. So when they're not in trays or bins, they can get trampled on or broken. You can accidentally destroy a \$60 faucet cartridge before you ever get to use it."

"When trucks are organized, you know exactly what you have out there," he adds. "You can pretty much step in the truck, grab what you need in 20 seconds and get back to working on a repair."

CLEVER USE OF SPACE

The passenger side of the cargo area features the only part of the storage system that Ficara didn't build: four sections of shelving manufactured by American Van Equipment. Each section holds seven plastic bins, for a total of 28 bins. They hold a wide variety of repair parts and plumbing fixtures.

In the middle of the four sections, Ficara left an open area that houses a Masterforce toolbox with self-locking trays. One last section in front of the cab wall provides space to hold a 5-foot ladder and a dolly, he says.

By the rear door, on the back end of the shelving units on each side of the truck, Ficara bolted on aluminum tool holders made by J&M Commercial Van Outfitting. They hold everything from pipe wrenches and trash bags to a broom and plunger. "They help me fulfill my goal of getting as much on the truck as possible," he says.

Ficara even made use of a small loft area above the cab by building a small cabinet that contains four drawers to hold more parts. The truck also offers enough floor space

to easily accommodate a RIDGID K-400 drain machine.

Ficara says he primarily uses Milwaukee Tool and RIDGID cordless power tools and hand tools made by Channellock, Crescent Tools (a brand owned by Apex Tool Group), Klein Tools and RIDGID. He also owns a RIDGID SeeSnake Mini pipeline inspection camera.

WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Ficara estimates he spent between 40 and 60 hours over the course of around two months to outfit the truck. The total cost was about \$4,500, he says.

"But you get all of that back — it pays for itself pretty quickly through increased productivity," he points out. Moreover, he says a commercial storage system could easily cost that much or more.

In the end, Ficara concedes that even with a custom-made storage system like his, it still takes effort and commitment to keep things neat and organized. "But the efficiency you gain is well worth the time and money spent to get there," he says. **P**

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Anthony Pacilla

Professional Bearing

Modern world has taken away some of the best leadership qualities, and it's time to find those again and get them back

By Anthony Pacilla

While modern leadership standards include open-door policies, coaching through issues and creating positive company cultures, there is one thing missing from many modern leaders and establishments: bearing.

This word is as old fashioned and hard boiled as it sounds — and it is a missing quality in most modern leaders. Society has turned its head against strict leadership and instead forcefully embraces and promotes free-spirited work environments where bosses are supposed to socialize and develop personal relationships to a certain degree with co-workers and employees.

I argue that this “coexist, can’t we all get along” way of management was an attempt at owners to be charismatic, loved by all — a way to get away from the “I’m your boss, do what your told” way of thinking.

Being you and socializing turns a workday into a soap opera. One day you’re happy and talk to Melissa about how she looks great today; tomorrow you’re upset and yell at Steve. Steve saw you be nice to Melissa yesterday and now resents you for it. You tell Steve something personal about what you did this weekend with your wife, and all he hears is how you have enough money to take weekend vacations

and he doesn’t. Jokes get taken the wrong way, people get offended, they dislike your political opinions, they notice you watch Fox instead of CNN, or vice versa. You tried to be down-to-earth, but now everyone hates you for it.

Let’s go back in time a few decades. I’m sure you can think of an old boss or office clerk who had complete control over their professional image and put forth a commanding presence. Not the kind of strength that a screaming drill instructor would impose on you, but a calm, totally in control, very serious personality for whom you had tremendous respect for.

We used to have an office manager/part owner named Ruth. She kept the books by hand and was always very serious. When you walked into her office, she would stare at you in anger, it seemed, eyeballing you through the top of her specs as if to say, “What do you want?”

If horseplay or fraternization were taking place near her she would say, “Stop it! This is a business! A very serious business! Serious people have to do serious things to make sure we can all feed our families and keep the doors open!”

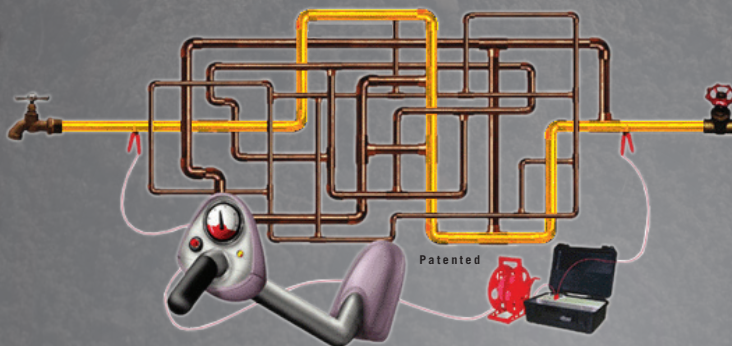
She showed up to work, did her job and went back home. Personal life was omitted from the workplace. I can’t even think of what would happen if a co-worker walked in and started talking about their family problems and what they did this weekend. She never screamed, she never gossiped, she never told you anything about her personal life and she didn’t want to hear about yours; it was an environment of professional courtesy, respect and professional bearing in its finest form.

Working men don’t mind following the strong, silent type of boss who seems to have mastered himself, his life, and his direction and purpose. One who has an open-door policy — but who is totally put off by small office quarrels and politics in the workplace. A guy who you could confide in if you have a serious personal issue, yet respects your privacy and doesn’t get involved with your personal business.

It has been difficult for bosses to walk the line of that old-school strength with the new, softer approach; but this new work environment is longing for the heavy weight and seriousness that only an effective leader can strike into them.

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Bosses trying to adapt to the new generation of employees have replaced these bosses. It has been difficult for bosses to walk the line of that old-school strength with the new, softer approach; but this new work environment is longing for the heavy weight and seriousness that only an effective leader can strike into them.

One of the many things I have come to respect about my father's leadership ability is his bearing along with his ability to say no. He is famous for his quote "Give me a one-word answer" that can be heard on a daily basis. Lack of emotion, very matter of fact, and direct. If he isn't comfortable telling someone yes, he simply says no. There is no long explanation or excuse, he isn't rude, and if you ask a question, he gives you an answer. If you follow up with "why?" then he will either give you a short, concise and reasonable answer or he will tell you that he doesn't need to explain why.

He will then follow up with you at a later time that makes sense to go over why. You know where he stands, and more important, you know you overstepped a boundary; but there is never a question that "the line" exists.

Your consistent attitude of a very clean, confident and calm leader will become contagious and set a standard in your workplace. Your job at the end of today is to provide your employees with confidence and a winning spirit while

giving them the tools and resources to make the company a profit.

Written procedures, along with measurable goals within a strict and rigid system that is closely watched, is the straight line to results. Keep your workplace a calm, focused, clean and routine workplace; drive the actions of your employees through your own personal actions. And don't forget to keep your professional bearing — it will become the breath of fresh air and leadership that this crazy world needs today more than ever. 

Anthony Pacilla has been in the trades since he was 9 years old (family business). He started cleaning toilets, mopping floors and putting fittings away in the warehouse. As he picked up skills, he would add becoming a ground man and laborer. When he was ready, Pacilla became an apprentice and then a journeyman plumber. He graduated college with a business and economics degree and immediately wanted to come back to work in the family business. A few years ago, Pacilla became a licensed master plumber. To contact Pacilla, email editor@plumbermag.com



Jeff Haden

Being Trustworthy

Want to make a great first impression with potential customers? Listen, deflect praise on others and treat every stranger with respect!

By Jeff Haden

Want to make the people you meet instantly feel more comfortable? Want to make the people you meet instantly feel valued and respected? In short, want to make a great first impression? The key, according to Amy Cuddy, is to realize people subconsciously ask themselves one question when you first meet: “Can I trust you?”

“From an evolutionary perspective,” she writes in her book *Presence*, “it is more crucial to our survival to know whether a person deserves our trust.” That’s why — especially if you’re meeting someone in a business setting — showing that you are skilled, experienced or capable isn’t nearly as important as showing that you are trustworthy and likable.

To make a great first impression, first show that you’re someone who can build and maintain great relationships — and make people feel better about themselves. How do you make a great first impression in a genuine and authentic way?

1. Listen 10 times more than you speak.

Ask questions. Maintain eye contact. Smile. Frown. Nod. Respond — not so much verbally, but nonverbally. That’s all it takes to show the other person that he or she is important. Then when you do speak, don’t offer advice unless you’re asked. Listening shows you care a lot more than offering advice does, because when you offer advice, in most cases, you make the conversation about you. Only speak when you have something important to say — and always define “important” as what matters to the other person, not to you.

2. Shift the spotlight.

No one receives enough praise. No one. Whenever possible, start the conversation by telling the other person what they did well. Not only will people appreciate your praise, they’ll appreciate the fact you care enough to pay

attention to what they do. And then they’ll feel a little more accomplished and a lot more important ... and they’ll love you for making them feel that way.

3. Give before you receive (and assume you may never receive).

Never think about what you can get. Focus on what you can provide. Giving is the only way to establish a real connection and a real relationship. If you focus, even in part and even for a moment, on what you can get out of the other person, you show that the only person who really matters is you.

4. Put everything else away.

Don’t check your phone. Don’t glance at your monitor. Don’t focus on anything else, even for a moment. You can never connect with others if you’re busy connecting with your stuff, too. Give the gift of your full attention. That’s a gift few people give. That gift alone will make others want to be around you and remember you.

5. Don’t be self-important.

The only people who are impressed by your stuffy, pretentious, self-important self are other stuffy, pretentious, self-important people. The rest of us aren’t impressed. We’re irritated, put off and uncomfortable. And we hate when you walk in the room.

6. Show that other people are more important.

You already know what you know. You know your opinions. You know your perspectives and points of view. All that isn’t important because it’s already yours. You can’t learn anything from yourself. But you don’t know what other people know, and everyone, no matter who he or she is, knows things you don’t know. That makes other people a lot more important than you — because you can learn from them.

7. Choose your words.


The words you use impact the attitude of others. For example, you don't *have* to go to a meeting; you *get* to go meet with other people. You don't *have* to create a presentation for a new client; you *get* to share cool stuff with other people. You don't *have* to go to the gym; you *get* to work out and improve your health and fitness. You don't *have* to interview job candidates; you *get* to select a great person to join your team. We all want to associate with happy, enthusiastic, fulfilled people. The words you choose can help other people feel better about themselves.

8. Don't discuss the failings of others.

Granted, we all like hearing a little gossip. We all like hearing a little dirt. The problem is, we don't necessarily like — and we definitely don't respect — the people who dish that dirt. Don't laugh at other people. When you do, the people around you wonder if you sometimes laugh at them.

You can never connect with others if you're busy connecting with your stuff, too. Give the gift of your full attention. That's a gift few people give.

9. And readily admit your own failings.

Incredibly successful people are often assumed to have charisma simply because they're successful. Their success seems to create a halo effect, almost like a glow. The key word is "seem." You don't have to be incredibly successful to make a great first impression. Scratch the shiny surface, and many successful people have all the charisma of a rock. But you do have to be incredibly genuine to be remarkably charismatic. Be humble. Share your screw-ups. Admit your mistakes. Be the cautionary tale. And laugh at yourself. People won't laugh at you. People will laugh with you. They'll like you better for it — and they'll want to be around you a lot more. 

Jeff Haden is a contributing editor for Inc.com and a LinkedIn Influencer.

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Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

Aqua-Rex WK1

The WK1 from Aqua-Rex is designed to keep scale out of water heaters. When it is retrofitted to an older property, it also effectively clears out the old scale from the heater and general plumbing system. It is designed to take care of the whole house, including showerheads, faucets and work surfaces. It also delivers partially softened hot water, equivalent to a water softener, so washing hair and doing the laundry becomes easier. It only takes about 10 minutes to install, and it never needs any maintenance or servicing. 877-640-2170; www.aqua-rex.com.



AquaMotion Aqua-Shield

The Aqua-Shield from AquaMotion is a water-saving hot-water recirculation pump/system for outdoor installed tankless heaters without a built-in pump. Its built-in timer and sensor are fully automatic and work with one pipe and dedicated return line systems, On Call (OnDemand) and undersink Aqua-Flash bypass valves. It includes a tamper-proof protective, lockable housing against rain, sprinkler spray, humidity and freeze. It provides hot-water comfort when needed while saving 7,500 to 15,000 gallons of water annually. 401-785-3000; www.aquamotionhvac.com.



Aquaworx by Infiltrator IPC Panel with Tapper

The Intelligent Pump Control (IPC) Panel from Aquaworx by Infiltrator is available with the Tapper Wi-Fi connection for programming and monitoring. It innovates pump system performance by leveraging simple pressure transducer technology. The Tapper enables the user to program and monitor multiple IPC pump-driven systems remotely via a standard wireless connection



to an enabled mobile phone, tablet or computer. The Tapper also includes a USB slot for capturing and downloading system events and settings onto a removable USB memory device providing the operator with a history of system function critical to troubleshooting and maintaining a pump-driven system. The easy-to-install panel monitors liquid levels, controls pumping time intervals, logs events in real-time and calculates daily system flow via an embedded microprocessor in the pump controller and a floatless pressure transducer in the pump chamber. 800-221-4436; www.infiltratorwater.com.

Bradford White Water Heaters AeroTherm

AeroTherm heat-pump water heaters Bradford White Water Heaters are Energy Star certified for year-round savings and provides four operating modes (Heat Pump, Hybrid, Electric and Vacation) so customers have more control than ever. They offer Vitraglas corrosion protection and qualify for many state and local utility rebates and tax credits. They are designed with top connections for easy installation. They can also be fully repaired in the field (both sealed system and electrical). 215-641-9400; www.bradfordwhite.com.



Dallas Specialty Green Hi-Temperature and Chemical Couplings

Dallas Specialty Green Hi-Temperature and Chemical Couplings provide a solution for laboratory, food and drug, medical, testing, research and pharmaceutical facilities, where temperatures up to 212 degrees F exist or chemicals are present. They are flexible enough to provide connections for various types of piping systems such as stainless pipe, copper, Duriron, IPEX, Kimax glass piping systems, and many other chemical piping systems. They are easy to install with high-torque clamps and banding, providing a strong, tight connection. They are available in numerous sizes from 1 1/4 to 12 inches IPS, accommodating



most standard piping connections. They will handle acids and many harsh chemicals and are resistant to hydrochloric, acetic, nitric and sulfuric acids. It is advised to reference the chemical resistance chart for compatibility prior to installation. **800-222-5644; www.dallasspecialty.com.**



Den Hartog Industries AST-0300-1R, AST-0500-1R and AST-0750-1R

The AST-0300-1R, AST-0500-1R and AST-0750-1R pump tanks from **Den Hartog Industries** are cost-effective, economical and environmentally friendly alternatives to the company's original septic tank line. They are the same strength and quality and are built from the same mold — but they are manufactured using reclaimed polyethylene. They offer up to a 30% cost savings on traditional tanks and can serve as a direct replacement for expanding existing or for future septic product installations. **712-752-8432; www.denhartogindustries.com.**



Easy Kleen Pressure Systems Hydrostatic Tester

The **Hydrostatic Tester** from **Easy Kleen Pressure Systems** allows the user to test for leaks and verify performance. They can choose between a 6.5 hp Kohler or Honda gasoline engine with low oil alert and recoil start. This unit has an adjustable heavy-duty aluminum pressure regulator with water dump feature, liquid-filled pressure gauge with 10 feet of suction/bypass and discharge hose. These units are suitable for contractors and rental shops for test pumps due to a rugged and dependable design. Custom units are available. The unit has a simple design for ease of use and maintenance. The hydrostatic pump in the tester has a 550 rpm diaphragm pump and gearbox drive delivering 10 gpm at 600 psi. **800-315-5533; www.easykleen.com.**

Electric Eel eCAM Ace 2 SL

The **eCAM Ace 2 SL** from **Electric Eel** has a self-leveling color camera, one-touch USB recording, on-screen footage counter, wheel kit for easy transport and maneuverability, rugged stainless steel-housed 1.68-inch color camera with sapphire lens, 20 LED light ring and high-resolution charge-coupled



device element (optional self-leveling color camera available), 200 feet of braided fiberglass premium 1/2-inch-diameter pushrod, and an industry-standard 512 Hz sonde. Additional features include a 5.4-inch LCD monitor with AR film for optimal viewing in sunlight that's encased in an anodized aluminum housing mounted to the reel, a protective acrylic anti-glare monitor shield, a heavy-duty screen cover that closes to protect the monitor when in transit or storage and that flips up to act as a sun shield for viewing in bright sunlight, a video output jack for recording option, flexible camera spring to navigate 3-inch P-traps, a rugged and portable powder-coated steel frame, secure-locking reel brake and centering skid. **800-833-1212; www.electriceel.com.**



Enz USA Golden Jet 10.060A/B/CTR turbine nozzle

With operating flows as low as 8 gpm at 2,000 psi, the **Golden Jet 10.060A/B/CTR** turbine nozzle from **Enz USA** is a powerful cleaning tool. The turbine design allows for lower flow and less water usage while maintaining high torque for effective pipe cleaning in lines ranging from 2.5 to 8 inches. Because of its sealed bearings, this nozzle can be operated with both clean and recycled water while being relatively maintenance-free. This compact, efficient nozzle is a powerful root remover and is suitable for use on grease, solids, mineral deposits, concrete and grout. Its complete kit provides a selection of pre-cut chains, skids and two head styles. **877-362-8721; www.enz.com.**

FloLogic System

FloLogic Systems offer real-time leak detecting abilities beginning at .5 ounces of water flow per minute. When a leak is detected, the water is shut off automatically and the users receive an alert through a smartphone app. The FloLogic CONNECT module also features a thermometer, allowing low room-temperature alerts and automatic water shut-offs. **877-356-5644; www.flologic.com.**





Fluidmaster PRO45H Pro Fill Valve

The PRO45H Pro Fill Valve from Fluidmaster controls both tank and bowl water levels with a dial for maximum water control, offering the ability to fine-tune water levels to perfection. It is suitable for high water-pressure homes and properties. It can withstand up to 120 psi and adjusts from 9- to 14-inches for increased customization. It is also extremely quiet and reduces water hammer, so much so that customers will not even know their toilet bowl is filling up. It services all toilet types, is easy to install and is self-cleaning. 949-728-2207; www.fluidmaster.com.

General Pipe Cleaners Kinetic Water Ram

The Kinetic Water Ram from General Pipe Cleaners/General Wire Spring quickly and cleanly clears clogged drains with green power. Just pump it up, insert in the drain and snap the trigger. It's that quick. The environmentally safe tool uses compressed air to generate a shock wave that pulverizes the stoppage instantly. The shock wave bypasses vents and goes around bends to reach the stoppage with only 2% loss of power. The built-in pump and pressure gauge let the operator select the right amount of force for each job. The lightweight, compact tool is cleaner than snakes, safer than chemicals and uses no electrical power or carbon dioxide. An optional toilet attachment screws onto the front to turn it into a powerful plunger. 800-245-6200; www.drainbrain.com.



HoldRite (RWC) TestRite DWV Testing System

The HoldRite (RWC) TestRite DWV Testing System only requires one tool and tests in minutes, with no hoses, compressors, gauges or wrenches necessary. The system can be filled conventionally from above or a hose can be attached to the optional 3/4-inch valve at the point of the test stem. Triple-seal protection provides for a dry, safe environment, allowing plumbers to work more efficiently and stay dry themselves. Designed with versatility in mind, it can be installed in no-hub cast iron, ABS and PVC pipe systems in 2-, 3-, 4- and 6-inch sizes. 800-321-0316; www.holdrite.com.



LeakTronics Leak Detection Equipment Plumbers Leak Detection Kit

The Plumbers Leak Detection Kit from LeakTronics Leak Detection Equipment helps find all leaks and reduce water waste by stopping the leaks. It includes modern listening devices built to accurately identify exactly where leaks occur, in a noninvasive fashion, so repair can be effective and repair costs can be minimized. Whether under concrete and soil, in walls, behind cabinetry, or under floors and foundations, pipes and plumbing make an audible sound when they leak. The kit includes equipment designed to hear that leak in every situation. 818-436-2953; www.leaktronics.com.



Mansfield Plumbing Products QuantumOne

The QuantumOne pressure-assist toilet from Mansfield Plumbing Products provides commercial-grade power for bathrooms with heavy traffic. The Flushmate pressure-assist flushing system uses compressed air to blast water through the bowl, delivering a quicker, more effective flush. It only uses 1.0 gallon of water with every flush, saving water and money without sacrificing performance. Its PuraClean easy-to-clean glaze creates an ultraslick surface inside the toilet bowl so debris won't collect. 877-850-3060; www.mansfieldplumbing.com.



Niagara Conservation Nano

The Nano 0.5/0.8 gallons per flush dual-flush elongated toilet from Niagara Conservation is WaterSense certified. Utilizing vacuum-assist stealth technology, it averages only 0.6 gpf. Its dual-flush technology allows users to select either 0.5 or 0.8 gpf with the same power as the industry standard 1.6 gpf. In addition to saving water, its flapperless Stealth Technology delivers a powerful flush, preventing clogging and leaking and eliminating the need to flush more than once. A 400A fill valve is fully submerged, canceling out the noise typically produced by a standard toilet. Its compact, elongated bowl provides maximum comfort, while it's designed to fit in small spaces. 800-831-8383; www.niagaracorp.com.

Norweco Singulair R3

The **Singulair R3** water reuse system from **Norweco** is designed to reduce water consumption, reuse treated effluent and recycle water to conserve and recharge water resources. It provides a solution to chronic water shortages and reduces energy costs associated with water and wastewater treatment. According to the manufacturer, the system quietly, efficiently and automatically treats all incoming wastewater to a high level for restricted indoor and unrestricted outdoor use. The system exceeds effluent requirements of NSF/ANSI Standards 40, 245 and 350 and qualifies for Green Building credits under both the LEED rating system and the National Association of Home Builders ICC 700 National Green Building Standard. **800-667-9326; www.norweco.com.**



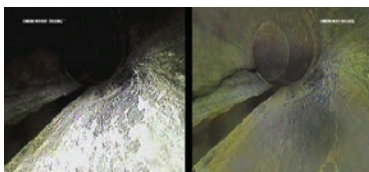
Pipe Lining Supply eco-friendly resins

Eco-friendly resins used in both cured-in-place pipe lining and AIPPR coating processes from **Pipe Lining Supply** offer an environmentally friendly system to rehabilitate sewer drain, waste and vent piping. The resins include the PLSQP-100 epoxy resins and the PLSQC-100 polyurea resin system. **800-354-6464; www.pipeliningupply.com.**



RIDGID SeeSnake cameras with TruSense

Connecting to **RIDGID SeeSnake** CSx series Wi-Fi-enabled monitors, **TruSense** conveys valuable information about the in-pipe environment, eliminating common challenges faced by diagnostic professionals. For example, the high dynamic range image sensor expands the camera's dynamic range, allowing a greater ratio of bright and dark areas to be displayed in the same image at the same time. This means fewer blown-out areas and sections of pipe that are too dark to see. In addition, the cameras let you choose between fixed or self-leveling camera options. **TruSense** also includes an integrated TiltSense feature that reports back the pitch of the camera in-pipe. This on-camera inclinometer helps contractors accurately identify and diagnose problems underground. **800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com.**



Rinnai America SE+ Series

If a home does not have a dedicated return line, **Rinnai America's SE+ Series** featuring **ThermaCirc360** technology can offer faster hot water without the expense of adding an additional line. This technology allows for the simple installation of a thermal bypass valve at the fixture farthest away from the water heater. Once installed properly, the unit temporarily uses the cold-water line for recirculation. Now you can have hot water faster when you need it. **800-621-9419; www.rinnai.us.**



SharkBite (RWC) EvoPEX system

The **SharkBite (RWC) EvoPEX** system is a push-to-connect plumbing solution for new or retrofit residential construction. It allows installers to plumb an entire structure without the need for special tools, crimping, glue or solder, improving job site efficiency and reducing the risk of installation errors. Designed as a PEX pipe system, it extends beyond traditional pipe-and-fitting solutions to include fittings, PEX pipe, outlet boxes, valves and other accessories needed to install a complete potable water plumbing system from meter to fixture. **877-700-4242; www.sharkbite.com.**



StreamLabs Control

The **StreamLabs Control** stays one step ahead of leaks, providing homeowners with constant leak protection and automatic valve shut-off functionality. The device can turn off the user's water remotely via an app and offers automatic emergency shut-off in the event of a leak. It uses ultrasonic technology and advanced sensors to measure water flow rate, pressure and temperature. Along with providing real-time notifications, status alerts and freeze warnings, it also analyzes water usage data to show homeowners where they are using the most water over time. With an Alexa integration option, the unit offers home and away modes, as well as Smart Alerts that detect water usage patterns and introduce leak notifications based on the homeowner's usage. The unit protects the entire home from costly water damage, giving homeowners complete control of their water from anywhere. **770-863-4083; www.streamlabswater.com.**



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The 5E Electric Smoker from Superior Signal offers a cost-effective and green solution to find difficult leaks and odors in residential and commercial plumbing systems. Connect the blower to any plumbing clean-out or vent, with the appropriate size smoke candle to force smoke through faults and cracks, easily identifying sources of odor and hard-to-find leaks. Smoke candles produce a highly visible, nontoxic smoke and are completely biodegradable. They are manufactured with zero-waste stream and include labels printed with vegetable-based ink on recycled paper as well as biodegradable, recycled paperboard tubes. The unit does not generate any harmful exhaust gases and handles all residential and commercial smoke testing applications. Smoke tests take just minutes to perform and see immediate results. The unit comes with an 8-foot industrial-grade flex hose, weighs just 8 pounds and requires no maintenance. **800-945-8378; www.superiorsignal.com.**



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Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

Microbiological product reduces pumping costs and frequency

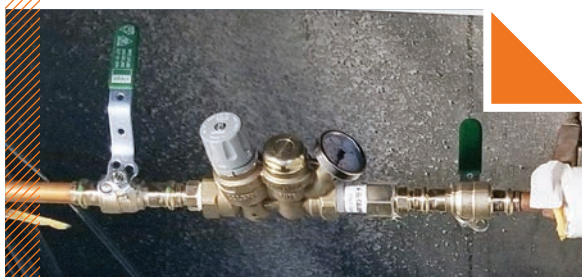


Problem: Five years ago, an Ohio resident spent \$430 to have his 1,500-gallon septic tank completely pumped out. This routine maintenance activity had to be performed every two years. Following this schedule, the customer would have run up a bill of \$1,290 in pumping costs for three pumping procedures over the five-year period of 2014-19. By the time he paid for next year's routine pumping, he would be spending an estimated \$1,720.

Solution: Rather than staying locked into the traditional procedure, the homeowner decided to try the biological route of enhancing his system with supplementary microbes, enzymes, nutrients and stimulants to speed up the biodegradation process in the septic tank. He began rigorously applying ECO-SEPT, a 1-ounce water-soluble pouch from **Bionetix International**, by flushing it down the toilet once a month. It is designed to reduce pumping frequency by unleashing a diverse microbiology for faster degradation of paper, grease, vegetable waste and other organic wastes. It also extends the life of leachfield lines and reduces bad odors, blockage and backups.


Result: As of April 2019, five years after starting the biological treatment, the septic tank had passed all inspections, with no need for pumping. This was done at a fraction of the expected pumping price, allowing the septic tank owner to save several hundreds of dollars on routine maintenance costs. 514-457-2914; www.bionetix-international.com.

Thermal hot-water balancing stops complaints



Problem: The domestic hot-water system installed in the early 1970s at the Courthouse Square Apartments in Denver had been suffering from a shortage of instantaneous availability of hot water since startup. Over the years, the installing contractor tried to balance the system by adding pipes and circulation return branches — to no avail. The pyramidal parallel direct return type of design was a problem since the initial installation. Residents began complaining to the local health department which, upon investigation, determined the system was noncompliant with the local health standard, which requires hot water to be delivered at 120 degrees F within 30 seconds. The property also experienced severe hydraulic erosion corrosion due to imbalances in water flow. This caused leaks on the circulation return system, resulting in interruptions to the hot-water system for repairs and hidden water damage due to pinhole leaks.

Solution: Advanced Hydronics reviewed the installation's hot-water supply and circulation system drawings. When performing system inspections, they determined that continued traditional balancing with the installed quarter-turn balancing valves was an impossible task due to their throttling limitations. **Caleffi North America ThermoSetter** thermal balancing valves were installed throughout the building, bringing the system immediately into compliance with mandated temperature standards.

Result: Installing ThermoSetter valves not only reduced the water velocity to fix the hydraulic erosion and prevent further erosion damage, the property also realized a 15% reduction in energy and water consumption due to residents not wasting water while waiting for the hot water to be delivered to their apartments. 414-238-2360; www.caleffi.com. 

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Product Spotlight

A camera for a connected world

By Craig Mandli

As a plumber, time is your most valuable commodity. While camera inspections typically are not a major time consumer, reviewing and putting together reports based on your inspection results can be. The Pearpoint (USA) flexiprobe P540c portable push system from CUES aims to take many of those responsibilities out of the plumber's hands.

The P540c system simplifies your operations by automatically creating a survey report, allowing the user to concentrate on other inspection tasks. It also allows the user to share reports quickly and easily via email or the Dropbox file-sharing service. Onboard Wi-Fi connectivity allows the user to use a smartphone or dongle as a hot spot, letting him or her immediately share a survey with a customer, manager or accounts department. Video footage can also be shared directly to a compatible device such as a customer's phone or colleague's tablet. This, along with the overall versatility of the camera, make it a suitable fit for plumbers.

"The P540c can be used not only by small plumbers who offer home-based inspections, but also by contractors who inspect mains that can be 12 inches in diameter," says Adam Rosenquist, national sales manager for the CUES/Pearpoint Portable Products Division. "It was



designed to meet the needs of the plumbing market who require versatility, ease of use and a competitive price."

Engineered to provide all-day use in rugged conditions, the flexiprobe P540c offers a variety of rods for different applications. Not only can its upgraded command module produce automatic survey reports, but it can also be used on any of the six available push systems and be used continuously for up to five hours on a single charge. A choice of a 1- or 2-inch camera is available and can be used interchangeably between most systems. In addition, a built-in

512 Hz sonde is provided for locating purposes.

"The P540c system offers the flexibility of inspecting a wide range of line sizes, from 100- to 500-foot sanitary lines," Rosenquist says. "It also has interchangeable sondes, and cameras, and a command module that can be used with any of the other reels. This flexibility allows plumbers to purchase one complete system, but use another reel without the need of buying an entire system."

According to Rosenquist, feedback on the system has been encouraging. "Customers appreciate the excellent image quality, ease of use and state-of-the-art technology," he says. **800-327-7791; www.pearpoint.com.**

MyTana Mfg. LD40 auditory pipeline leak detector

MyTana Mfg.'s new LD40 leak detector uses a unidirectional sensor to filter out environmental noise, making it easier to detect hissing, trickling or seeping noises from leaking pipelines. Four interchangeable sensor tips simplify detecting for different surface textures including through carpet. The digital display features an instantaneous, easy-to-understand visual response meter to listen and watch for leaks. **800-328-8170; www.mytana.com.**



RIDGID CS6x Versa digital reporting monitor

The RIDGID CS6x Versa digital reporting monitor features a unique pivoting frame for high and low monitoring positions to allow flexible placement and optimal viewing. A 5.7-inch, daylight-viewable screen provides a crisp, clear in-pipe image, while the water-resistant keypad gives direct control of camera and monitor functions. Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity allow for remote viewing and recording of inspections on an iOS or Android phone or tablet using the free HQx Live



companion app. Inspections can be shared immediately or, if needed, footage can be saved to a USB drive for future review. **800-769-7743; www.ridgid.com.**

General Pipe Cleaners stainless steel braid hose

The new high-performance stainless steel braid jet hose from General Pipe Cleaners/General Wire Spring enhances the performance and cleaning power of the portable JM-1000 Mini-Jet and JM-1450 water jet drain cleaners. The durable stainless steel braid makes it easier to slide the jet hose down 1.5- to 3-inch drain lines and more easily navigate tight bends. The 3/16-inch Teflon core reduces flow resistance and improves small line cleaning power. It is available in 30-, 50- and 75-foot lengths. **800-245-6200; www.drainbrain.com.**



Insight Vision Cameras IV2 inspection camera system

The IV2 Inspection Camera System tablet from Insight Vision Cameras has a 10.1-inch tablet screen that is daylight readable and lighter to use. Powering the unit can be done with either AC, DC or a Milwaukee Tool M18 battery. The system performs on-demand recording and snapshots and has an on-screen distance counter. It has a self-leveling color camera head with modular design and an always-on, built-in 512 Hz sonde. The tablet rotates to any angle and offers one-touch recording to USB. **800-488-8177; www.insightvisioncameras.com.**



DEWALT FLEXVOLT cordless pipe threader

The FLEXVOLT cordless pipe threader from DEWALT has a high-performance brushless motor that delivers long runtime in demanding applications without the hassle of power cords. It threads up to 2-inch black iron pipe, rigid conduit and more. At 9.4 inches tall, 26.38 inches long and 19.98 pounds, it accepts a pipe capacity of 1/2 to 2 inches. It has a right-handed thread direction, and its die and die head materials are made of high-speed steel and cast iron respectively. The pipe threader is also compatible with RIDGID 12-R style die heads. It is equipped with the DeWALT E-Clutch System that senses the motion of the tool and shuts the tool down if necessary. **800-433-9258; www.dewalt.com.**



Custom Auger Systems horizontal boring auger kit

The hand-held horizontal boring kit from Custom Auger Systems combines horizontal auger boring with the power of heavy-duty electric drills to bore distances of 5 to 30 feet or more underground. It's designed in sections so it can be used in tight spaces. An insulating drill chuck adapter helps protect the user from electric shock. The kit can be used for installation of PVC pipe under existing foundations or driveways, running gutter systems or irrigation lines under sidewalks, or shooting pipe under landscaping or other permanent installations. It requires only one person for operation and is less damaging to landscaping than sawing and trenching. **865-585-7861; www.customaugers.com.**



Bradley WashBar with undermount basins

Bradley's WashBar with undermount basins pairs Bradley's original clean-rinse-dry technology with a selection of cast-formed undermount basins made of either Evero natural quartz or Terreon solid surface. These durable basin materials allow for creation of customized restroom decks in varying lengths, L-shapes, cutouts or even different countertop materials. An alternative for applications featuring a complex or restrictive restroom deck design, this flexible fixture makes most designs possible. **800-272-3539; www.bradleycorp.com.**



Brasscraft PEX water stops

Brasscraft PEX water stops from the G2 Series are available for crimp barb, cold expansion and push-connect installations. The stops are a machined one-piece body for durability and long-lasting performance. The positive quarter-turn one-piece shut-off mechanism provides smooth on-off operation without freeze-ups, and the push-connect stops are installation-ready. Available in a wide variety of configurations for faucet, toilet and icemaker installations, all stops are 100% leak tested. **877-272-7755; www.brasscraft.com.**



Weil-McLain SVF large commercial boilers

Weil-McLain added four larger sizes to its energy-efficient Stainless Vertical Firetube boiler portfolio to accommodate large commercial applications. The SVF boiler line now includes Btu sizes of 1,500,



2,000, 2,500 and 3,000 mBh that join the existing 750, 1,000 and 1,100 Btu configurations. The 1,500 to 3,000 mBh SVF line features thermal efficiency up to 96.8%, ease of installation and maintenance, and the user-friendly Unity control system. Time-saving installation features include an integrated shipping ramp, heavy-duty roller casters for improved maneuverability in confined spaces, industrial-grade leveling legs mitigating the need for a concrete pad, integrated burner in cover plate for minimized 18-inch overhead space requirement, adjustable control panel height adjustment, and the advanced Unity control setup wizard. **855-248-1777; www.weil-mclain.com.**

American Standard Greenbrook high-efficiency urinal

Streamlined for a clean, modern look with an inverted back wall, American Standard's Greenbrook high-efficiency urinal is the latest addition to the 1-pint flush urinal collection. With an inverted back wall that provides superior splash protection, the vitreous china wall-mounted urinal features optimized surface contours and a water-flushing spreader to ensure a thorough rinse. The urinal's smooth EverClean surface contains antimicrobial properties that inhibit the growth of stain- and odor-causing bacteria, mold and mildew. The double-coat glaze also helps with maintenance, continuously repelling dirt and grime. **800-442-1902; www.americanstandard.com.**



LeakSmart (Waxman Products) integrates with Control4

LeakSmart (Waxman Products) added updates to its native integrations with Control4 Smart Home systems to create a fully integrated leak detection and protection solution for home, multifamily, hospitality and commercial applications. Native integration with Control4 includes LeakSmart's Cut-In and Snap valves as well as LeakSmart's reusable water sensors that are placed throughout the home to detect leaks. With Smart Home OS 3, homeowners can add favorite LeakSmart devices for a quick, at-a-glance status, providing peace of mind that no unusual moisture levels have been detected. **855-532-5457; www.leaksmart.com.**



RectorSeal Plumber's Mate utility pads

Plumber's Mate ultra-absorbent utility pads from RectorSeal are designed for plumbers and HVAC hydronic technicians to protect property from damaging job-site water drips, spills and accidents during installation and repairs. Each Plumber's Mate packaging includes six absorbent pads that each unfold to 24 by 24 inches. Each pad is constructed of three pieces: a dry touch top layer, a dynamic liquid containment layer that uses SuperCore technology to hold up to 1 quart of water, and a leakproof and waterproof protective plastic layer back sheet that prevents moisture contact with floors and molding. **800-231-3345; www.rectorseal.com.**



A. O. Smith Water Heaters ProLine electric tankless series

The ProLine electric tankless series from A. O. Smith Water Heaters is designed for commercial, residential and point-of-use applications. The water heater is available in three sizes, with 45 different models ranging from 2.4 to 32 kW and UEF up to 0.93. The units are available in a variety of voltage options: 120, 208, 240 and 277 volt. All models have true dry fire protection, where the element will only turn on when the chamber is full of water. All models also have scale reduction technology. This feature reduces scale formation on the elements and on the chamber walls, which reduces failures and service requirements. **800-527-1953; www.hotwater.com.**



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Brasscraft names new vice president, sales

Brasscraft announced the promotion of George Werner to the position of vice president, sales. In his expanded role, Werner will develop and implement strategies that position the company for profitable growth in all its sales channels. He has 15 years' experience with Brasscraft. Since 2011, he has held the position of vice president, retail sales, and in 2019, he assumed additional leadership responsibility for the wholesale sales channel. Prior to these roles, he was the national accounts manager and senior director of retail sales. Before joining Brasscraft, he held various wholesale and retail sales positions at Alsons Corp.



Vorsteveld joins LAARS Heating Systems


LAARS Heating Systems, a subsidiary of Bradford White Corp., appointed Lou Vorsteveld, Ph.D., to the position of director of engineering. Vorsteveld will oversee LAARS' engineering functions, including project execution, design quality, strategic technology direction and development, and optimal design for manufacturing, and he'll work closely with engineering resources across Bradford White Corp. Before joining LAARS, he was vice president, engineering, and a member of the management team at AERCO International. He also previously served as president and CEO of Bosch Thermotechnology/Buderus Hydronics.



TGI-Connect and PressurePro unveil integration plans

TGI-Connect and PressurePro unveiled their intent to integrate technology. Announced in conjunction with the opening of Trimble's in.sight user conference, the completion of this integration would feature wireless connectivity between the solutions, allowing fleets immediate access to real-time tire condition reports for each of their trailers, powered or not.

Uponor signs exclusive agreement with Pestan

Uponor North America and San Diego-based Pestan North America, a supplier of PP-RCT pipe and fittings, announced the signing of an agreement naming Uponor the exclusive distributor of PNA's proprietary polypropylene, random copolymer, with modified crystallinity and temperature-resistance products throughout the U.S. and Canada. 

CAST YOUR VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE EQUIPMENT!



Plumber magazine is announcing the Contractors' Choice Awards **where you, our readers,** can cast votes for your favorite equipment in a variety of categories.

Head to www.plumbermag.com/contractors-choice/vote to cast your vote.

Winners will be announced at the AHR Expo, which will be held Feb. 3 - 5 at the Orlando Convention Center in Orlando, Florida



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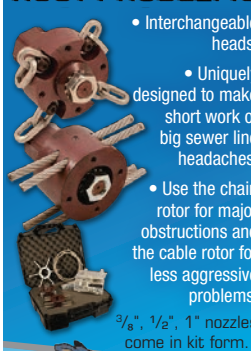
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National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) International Builders' Show,

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas.

Visit www.buildersshow.com

Feb. 3-5

AHR Expo,

Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida.

Visit www.ahrexpo.com

Feb. 17-20

Water & Wastewater Equipment Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show,

Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis.

Visit www.wwettshow.com

Feb. 21-23

Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS),

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas.

Visit www.kbis.com

March 15-19

Mechanical Contractors Association of American (MCAA) Annual Convention Wailea,

Maui, Hawaii. Visit www.mcaa.org

March 16-18

ACCA 2020 Annual Conference,

St. Louis Union Station Hotel Curio Collection by Hilton,

St. Louis. Visit www.accaconference.com

March 20

Illinois Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors (PHCC) Expo North,

Drury Lane Conference Center,

Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois.

Visit www.ilphcc.com

March 21

Flow Expo 2019, Fairplex, Pomona, California.

Visit www.flowexpousa.com

May 5-7

National Hardware Show,

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas.

Visit www.nationalhardwareshow.com **PI**

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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