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Doing Things **DIFFERENT**

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Keeping it Clean

Shelving units and other options help keep your plumbing vehicle looking nice and makes your job easier.

- By Tim Dobbins



On the Cover

Kegonsa Plumbing apprentice Beau Drenkhahn installs a Kohler Simplice faucet at a new residential construction site in Stoughton, Wisconsin. Madison-based Kegonsa Plumbing was started in 2018 by Lucas Elsing and offers services in remodeling and new construction plumbing throughout the Madison area. (Photography by John Maniaci)

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Cory Dellenbach

Time to Be a Coach

Taking on the ownership of a company — either starting it yourself or assuming control — can be a scary and overwhelming experience, but there is help out there

A couple months ago the Green Bay Packers, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Buffalo Bills and Kansas City Chiefs were battling it out for a spot in the Super Bowl. The people teaching those players and drawing up the plays were Andy Reid, Matt LaFleur, Bruce Arians and Sean McDermott — the head coaches.

Coaches are an important piece of the puzzle for any team, whether it is a professional sports team or, let's say, a team of technicians for a plumbing company.

Without the coach there is no direction for the players, or technicians, and no work would ever get done. Coaching isn't an easy job, and you can't become one overnight. It takes years of practice with a lot of ups and downs. A good example is Andy Reid starting in Green Bay as a low-level position coach, eventually working his way up to head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles, and then getting fired from that job and landing in Kansas City.

Ups and downs are part of the job if you want to be a head coach, even if it's for a plumbing company.

IT TAKES TIME

Don't expect to become a head coach — the owner of a plumbing company — overnight. It likely won't happen. You'll need to put in years of work for other plumbing firms first before you might even be ready to take the helm of a company.

During that learning period, do everything you can to get experience. Watch what the other owners do and how they conduct themselves and interact with staff. Do you want to be just like them, or do you want to be different? Why?

Learn as much as you can in your jobs, both with working in the field and office. That way when you do take on your own company, you can help your employees with the questions they will have.

ASK FOR HELP

When you do become the head coach of your own company, don't stop learning and don't be afraid to seek help from others.

Lucas Elsing, owner of Kegonsa Plumbing, based in Madison, Wisconsin, learned that right from the start. Elsing knew his strength was in plumbing and didn't know very much about running a business.

Instead of winging it on his own, Elsing reached out to a consulting firm. That firm helped him develop business skills that he would need — and he still uses them.

Kegonsa Plumbing, featured in this issue, has grown significantly since it started operation in 2018 and a big part of that is the help Elsing got from the firm. That helped him become a better leader for his company.

There are many other avenues too for you if you're looking to start up your own company or take the reins of an existing one. Join one of the many plumbing associations out there, like PHCC in your state, and connect with others in the industry.

If that isn't an option, look at local community colleges where you can take business management classes when you aren't busy with the company.

DON'T GIVE UP

Finally, you're going to learn a lot when you break out on your own and it might seem easy to just throw up your arms and quit. Don't do that. There is help out there for you to better yourself and your company. It might take some additional work, but it's worth it.

For those of you already owning your company, what helped you along the way? Reach out to me at editor@plumbermag.com or call 715-350-8436.

Enjoy this issue! 📧

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PLUMBING CRISIS

Texas Contractors Get a Taste of Frozen Pipe Problems

The unusual winter weather that hit Texas hard in February, cutting off power and heat to millions of people, took the form of an influx of plumbing problems in the aftermath. A shortage of plumbers and materials made recovery that much more difficult.

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CUSTOMER CARE

Charging Call-Out Fees for Estimates

Some customers won't budge from their expectation that estimates should be provided for free, but you should never be afraid about properly valuing your time. This online exclusive discusses the issue more.

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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Reshaping Your Workplace Culture

There's a lot of emphasis these days on building a great workplace culture. But actually accomplishing that is easier said than done. The keys to success are fairly

simple, but improvement requires real and concerted action, as this online exclusive explains in further detail.

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Doing Things DIFFERENT

Working on a business
— not in it — makes
all the difference for
Wisconsin plumber

By Ken Wysocky |
Photography by John Maniaci



Kegonsa Plumbing, Madison, Wisconsin

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| OWNER | Lucas Elsing |
| FOUNDED | 2018 |
| EMPLOYEES | Seven |
| SERVICES | Remodeling and new construction plumbing |
| SERVICE AREA | About a 40-mile radius around Madison |
| WEBSITE | www.kegonsaplumbing.com |

◀ Kegonsa Plumbing owner Lucas Elsing stands in front of one of his service vehicles at his company's shop in Madison, Wisconsin.

When master plumber Lucas Elsing formed Kegonsa Plumbing in 2018, he was certain he had the technical skills to succeed.

"I was pretty confident in my abilities," the 32-year-old entrepreneur says. "I always trusted that if you do quality work, you'll always have work."

But as for business moxie? Not so much.

"I have a plumbing background, but not a business background," he explains. "I knew the industry and the trade, but I didn't know about the day-to-day inner workings of running a business."

But like the old adage points out, recognizing there's a problem is the first step toward solving it. And for Elsing, the solution was hiring a business coach several months after he founded his company, based in Madison, Wisconsin.

"I didn't know what I didn't know, so I had to find out," he says, adding that it was difficult to admit he needed help. "You can't let pride stand in the way of success."

Elsing worked with ActionCOACH, a consulting firm in Madison. The cost was \$800 a month. "I was super nervous writing out that first check, wondering how I could afford to pay it every month," he recalls. "Now it's the easiest check I write."

▶ Kegonsa Plumbing laborer Hailey Hanson moves a Bradford White water heater inside the company headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. The water heater is being moved to a new home construction site for installation.

“I knew the industry and the trade, but I didn't know about the day-to-day inner workings of running a business.”

Lucas Elsing

WORKING ON THE BUSINESS

One of the most important things Elsing learned, he says, was to work on the business, compared to constantly immersing himself in it. Essentially, he stopped behaving like an employee of the company and became a business owner, focused on things like bigger-picture items such as marketing, how to hire employees, setting goals, budgeting and strategically thinking about the company's direction.

"Some days I still miss working in the field," he admits. "But I also understand I have different responsibilities."





- ▲ Kegonsa Plumbing owner Lucas Elsing installs a Bradford White Defender water heater at a new construction residential site in Stoughton, Wisconsin. Elsing started Kegonsa Plumbing in 2018 and offers services in remodeling and new construction plumbing. The company has seven employees.
- ▼ Apprentice Beau Drenkhahn installs a Kohler Forte tub/shower trim at a residential construction site.



I now have employees with families that depend on the business succeeding.”

Was investing in a business coach a good move? The numbers say yes. When he started out in March 2018, Elsing was working out of his garage as the company’s sole employee. Today the company has hired seven employees, runs four service vehicles and operates out of a leased, roughly 6,000-square-foot shop in a downtown Madison garage.

Furthermore, revenue in 2020 has increased roughly 77% compared to his first year in business two years ago. Kegonsa Plumbing — named after a lake in Stoughton, a town about 20 miles south of Madison where Elsing grew up — focuses primarily on plumbing installations for new construction and remodeling projects.

“When I started out, I was thinking small and envisioning small,” he says. “The coaching helped me realize I was doing that out of fear. But when you run a business the right way, you can start to think bigger. And that’s what I did.”

TRADES FOOTBALLS FOR FAUCETS

Elsing planned on attending college and playing football after he graduated from high school in 2007. But he instead followed his father's advice.

"He talked me into becoming a plumber," Elsing says. "He said it was a great opportunity — a job where you could provide for a family and never be replaced by a robot. Giving up football was hard, but now I don't regret it at all."

Elsing started out as an apprentice at a large commercial plumbing company in Madison. After eight years, he decided to go to the other end of the spectrum and work for a small, mom-and-pop shop and do more residential work.

"I wanted to learn as much as I could about the service and remodeling aspects of residential plumbing," he says. "I worked there for four years and then decided I knew enough that I could start my own company."

To find customers, Elsing signed up with Angie's List/

“When I started out, I was thinking small and envisioning small. The coaching helped me realize I was doing that out of fear. But when you run a business the right way, you can start to think bigger. And that's what I did.”

Lucas Elsing

Home Advisor. He also reached out to builders he knew and also relied on word-of-mouth references. Later on, he hired a marketing company that designed a company logo.

As a marketing “leave-behind,” Elsing gives customers a general checklist that indicates the state of their plumbing systems, including items that could eventually need attention.

“It's part of educating customers so there aren't any hidden surprises coming down the road,” he says. “We want to be top-of-mind if customers ever need something, but the checklist also reduces the chances of someone taking advantage of them because they have this reference in hand.”

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Plumber literally started his business off on the right foot

When Lucas Elsing first started Kegonsa Plumbing in Madison, Wisconsin, he figured he'd have to do something unusual to carve out a toehold from which to attack his target market: home-remodeling contractors.

So to do something that would truly differentiate his company from competitors, he opted for what he calls "lumpy mail." It involves sending contractors a large envelope containing an introductory letter and something that's shaped irregularly enough to attract attention.

In this case, it was the right foot from — wait for it — a mannequin.

"Some people send emails, drop off business cards or make phone calls," Elsing explains. "But I really wanted to do something memorable and set myself apart. So I found some mannequin feet on Amazon for less than \$10 a piece. The wife of one of my guys painted the toenails. And I became known as 'the foot guy.'"

"When people open up the envelope, they're curious about why there's a foot inside," he continues. "So then they read the letter, in which I introduce myself and say I'd like to get off on the right foot and do things right the first time if they give me a chance to work for them."

How well did the marketing effort work? Well, Elsing says he sent feet to eight contractors — and five hired him. That's an excellent hit rate for direct-mail marketing.

"I targeted well-established remodeling companies and I've been getting repeat work from those five general contractors ever since then," he reports. "So those \$10 mannequin feet probably turned into \$100,000 worth of business or more over the years."

One key to success: Use a large envelope with protective packaging material inside, not a box. That way the recipients can feel that there's something "lumpy" inside.

"It's all about jacking up their curiosity," he says.

The marketing technique also served another purpose: It indicated which contractors had a good sense of humor and, as such, would more likely be easier to work with and build relationships with, he says.

"One guy thought it was a little weird," Elsing recalls. "He was very old-school and not very pleasant. So I knew to not bother him anymore."

"Something like this gives you a glimpse of people's personality and character," he adds. "In a sense, you're interviewing them and at the same time they're interviewing you to see if it's a good fit." And like the old adage says, if the shoe fits, wear it.

CHANGE OF HEART

At first, Elsing decided to work solo because he figured hiring and managing employees would be difficult. But that mindset changed after he joined Business Network International (BNI), a global business-networking organization.

At his first meeting of the Madison BNI chapter, Elsing met Mike McKay, a coach at ActionCOACH. "I told him I'd never have employees, and he never lets me forget that now that we have seven employees and still are growing," Elsing says.

McKay convinced Elsing that managing employees wouldn't be a hassle if he created the right business culture and hired the right employees. While that may sound easier said than done, Elsing says he maximizes the odds of finding employees that are a good fit by using a customized set of interview questions.

"You have to ask job candidates questions that give you a chance to see what they're all about — what gets them up in the morning to go to work," he says. "After we narrow down a list of job candidates, we send them a DISC profile that they fill out online."

DISC is a behavior-assessment tool; the acronym stands for four different traits — dominance, influence, steadiness and conscientiousness. The DISC profile can help determine if employees are driven and detail-oriented — two important considerations for plumbing. "There are a lot of details that go into plumbing work for a remodeling job, for instance," he says.

PROBING QUESTIONS

"If you can hire people who take accountability for their own actions, that's huge, too," Elsing adds. "You don't necessarily find that out through a DISC profile, but you can ask people about how they've handled mistakes. If they say someone else caused it, that's a red flag."

"Job references will only tell you good things, so you have to find your own ways of getting information — put a little pressure on them during interviews."

▶ Lucas Elsing installs a Kohler Simplice faucet at the residential site. After the success of his plumbing company, Elsing has also started a home remodeling company as well.

Elsing also likes to give prospective employees skills tests, such as asking a prospective estimator to build an estimate for a new-construction plumbing project, then compare the results to Elsing's own estimate for the same project. Or give a house plan to a prospective plumber and ask how they'd pipe it out, he says.

"We also might ask them to solder a joint or ask technical questions about how things go together or what they would do under certain circumstance — basically situational plumbing," he says.

CREATING A QUALITY CULTURE

Of course, having a great corporate culture goes hand in hand with finding good employees. Elsing says that



when he finally got serious about hiring employees, he also had to get serious about creating a caring and supportive culture. And it's not rocket science, either; just create a place where people like to work.

"I knew what I wanted to create — an enjoyable place where you're appreciated for what you do," he explains.



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▲ The staff at Kegonsa Plumbing includes, from left, Chris Michaels, plumber; Hailey Hanson, laborer; Beau Drenkhahn, plumbing apprentice; Lucas Elsing, owner; Jeff Misfeldt, plumber; Erin Lynett, project manager; and Mike Hilgers, plumbing dispatch/estimator.

“Employees usually don’t quit over money. They quit because of their bosses. That’s where company culture comes into play. Everyone wants to be treated well and respected.”

Lucas Elsing

“At larger companies, you often hear that you’re just a number and can be replaced. But you have to give employees the respect they deserve.

“Employees usually don’t quit over money,” he continues. “They quit because of their bosses. That’s where company culture comes into play. Everyone wants to be treated well and respected.”

One of the best side effects of creating a supportive culture is it makes recruiting employees much easier. Word gets around when a company is a good place to work. As such, Elsing says you know when you’ve successfully created a desirable culture.

“When you don’t need to run ads to find employees because people come to you unsolicited — that’s when you know you’ve done it,” he notes.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Another key to the company’s success is recognizing business opportunities. For example, about a year ago, Elsing created a separate company called Kegonsa Remodeling and Design.

Why? Too often he’d provide quotes for the plumbing portion of remodeling projects, but clients later would tell him they didn’t hire him because they can’t find an available general contractor to manage the project.

“We were leaving money on the table — losing jobs for things we had no control over,” he explains. “So I saw an easy in to do the whole job and got a general contractor’s license. That way I can connect the dots for customers.”

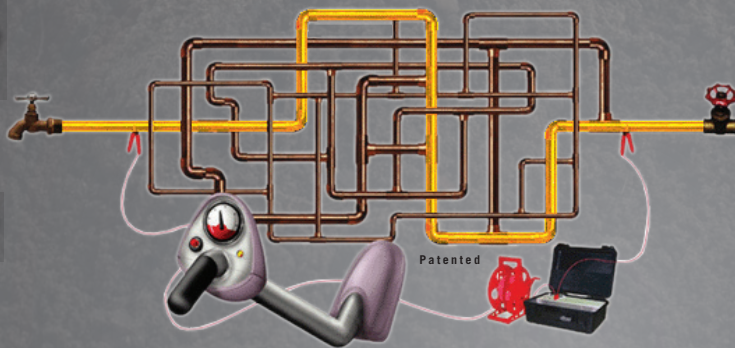
Now Elsing can provide a quote for an entire remodeling job and hire subcontractors — drywallers, electricians, painters and so forth — to do the nonplumbing work.

“It’s been great,” he says of the venture. “It’s growing just as fast as the plumbing is. People usually call a plumber first because if they’re remodeling a bathroom, they think of plumbing. And a lot of general contractors are too busy to take on more work. So if we can take on that role and simplify it for them, the likelihood of us getting the job is pretty high.”

To better serve its growing customer base, the company’s fleet of equipment also has grown accordingly. Kegonsa Plumbing runs four service vehicles: two 2017 Chevrolet 2500 cut-away box vans with 12-foot-long box bodies made by Unicell Body Company; a 2014 Dodge RAM 2500 that pulls an enclosed 16-foot job site trailer made by Bravo Trailers; and a 2014 Ford Transit Connect that carries a Spartan Service storage system made by Supreme Corp. (a brand owned by Wabash National).

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The company also owns a Bobcat E-10 mini-backhoe and a 10,000-pound-capacity dump trailer made by Champion Trailers.

In addition, technicians rely on two Milwaukee Tool M-Spector pipeline-inspection cameras; an electric concrete saw made by Husqvarna; a Bosch jackhammer; a RIDGID pipe-threader; and a Cold-Shot pipe-freezing kit made by General Pipe Cleaners, a division of General Wire Spring Co. Technicians primarily use Milwaukee Tool power tools, he says.


Staying ahead of the curve in terms of technology also is essential for success. New products keep emerging and customers expect contractors to be knowledgeable about them, Elsing says. As examples, he cites toilets with concealed trapways and touchless faucets.

A PLAN FOR GROWTH

Elsing has ambitious plans for further growth. Within the next three to four years, he'd like to hit \$10 million in sales and hire upwards of 20 more employees. Part of that revenue increase could come through an acquisition of a trades-oriented company to provide more capability and quality controls and reduce reliance on subcontractors.

"I think it's important to set goals," he notes. "It's good to have something to measure yourself against, as opposed to running around aimlessly.

"I definitely want to grow," he continues. "And I feel

that if I put the right pieces of the puzzle in as we go, that goal is manageable — and very doable." 

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Building a Name Brand

Company's intentional error spells out the importance of a catchy business name

By Ken Wysocky

If you think the word “Korreckt” in Korreckt Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning is misspelled, you are, well, correct. It sticks out like a 60-inch pipe wrench in a pile of hand tools.

And that's what company founder Ivan Patterson undoubtedly had in mind when he established the business — and came up with the name — back in 1950 in Dayton, Ohio, says his grandson, Nate Patterson.

“It definitely gets noticed,” says Patterson, now a co-owner of the company. “People see the name on our trucks and it's like they do a double take because it's spelled wrong. It really catches your eye.”

Patterson says he doesn't know how his grandfather

came up with the name. “But it's what we ended up with and it's been very effective in branding our company,” he says.

This underscores an important point for plumbers — and it's one that Ivan Patterson recognized 70 years ago, even though he didn't have a marketing degree: When it comes to branding and name recognition, what you name your company matters. A lot.

“I think the name of your company is probably the most important advertising feature you have,” says Nancy O'Hare-Zika, the owner of Yellow Dog Creative. Based in Marquette in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the marketing firm caters exclusively to companies in the trades.

“Building trust within a community starts with people being able to easily learn and remember your name, which helps your company become a fixture in your community,” she explains. “And having a strong, recognizable name will help you tell your story better and create name recognition within your community.”

“I think the name of your company is probably the most important advertising feature you have.”

Nancy O'Hare-Zika

◀ Nate Patterson's plumbing company has a unique way to catch the attention of potential customers — the misspelling of correct to “Korreckt.” The company was named that by his grandfather in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of Korreckt Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning)





COMPANY Korrekt Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning Inc., Dayton, Ohio

CO-OWNER Nate Patterson

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MAKE IT MEMORABLE

When asked for a good example of a plumbing-company name, O’Hare-Zika cites Rapid Plumbing. It not only creates an opportunity to tell a story about what differentiates the business, but it also hits on something customers desperately want during a plumbing emergency — quick service.

“It also creates name recognition, which is super important in the trades because plumbing, heating and cooling are not call-to-action industries,” she explains. “People don’t just wake up one morning and decide they want to make plumbing improvements. They only call because they wake up and there’s no hot water.

“So our job here at Yellow Dog is to make sure our partners (clients) are so well known in their communities that their company names are always on the tip of consumers’ tongues.”

If you Google “best names for plumbing companies,” 20,300,000 results pop up. The clever ones clearly stand out and evoke a sense of trustworthiness and quality. Others? Not so much.

Take Drain Surgeon, for example — a nice play on “brain surgeon” that alludes to high-precision capabilities. Or The Pipe Doctor, which connotes quality, top-level service. Or All Clear Plumbing or Down the Drain Plumbing, both of which speak to great results for customers. And the list goes on and on and on.

A good name also should easily segue into a catchy tag line. Consider SameDay Heating & Air, Plumbing and Electrical in Utah, for instance, which is a Yellow

Dog client. O’Hare-Zika says the tagline naturally comes to mind: “When someday isn’t soon enough, call SameDay.” Ditto for another client, Four Seasons Plumbing — “The right call any time of year.”

“You have to look at a name as part of an entire branding package, not just a name on a truck,” she recommends.

O’Hare-Zika also notes that another client, First Call Heating and Plumbing, offers another advantage going in the name game: The name lends itself to an easy-to-say, shorthand nickname, as in First Call. The same goes for SameDay, for that matter.

NAMING NO-NO'S

One thing O’Hare-Zika doesn’t recommend is using a family name for a company — think John Smith & Sons or Mark’s Plumbing, for fictitious examples. While it’s quite common to do this, she advises against it because it’s harder to sell companies if new owners will probably need to rebrand them.

Furthermore, if someone within the family or someone with the same last name ever gets into some sort of trouble, your company is forever linked to that, she adds.

“The only way I would use a family name is if it’s already been around for decades,” she says. “Otherwise I would never, ever start a new business with a family name. One of the top things we hear from clients in terms of regrets is that they put their family name on a building or trucks.”

“You need to choose a name that allows you to be creative with it and make the company’s marketing easier for years and years down the road. A name is so much more than just a name.”

Nancy O’Hare-Zika

Plumbers also should resist naming their companies after the city or area in which they’re based. If a company is named Downtown Plumbing, for instance, and wants to expand into the suburbs, customers there may think Downtown Plumbing doesn’t serve the suburbs. The same

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▲ Along with eye-catching vehicles, Four Seasons Plumbing plays off its name in its advertising slogan of "the right call any time of the year." Contractors should come up names that are catchy and you can play off of them in advertising. (Photo courtesy Yellow Dog Creative)

thing holds true for Smallville Plumbing if the fictitious company decides to expand outside of Smallville.

Another no-no: Naming companies after local or regional geographic features. For instance, O'Hare-Zika notes that in Marquette, which is nestled up against Lake Superior, many business latch onto that Great Lake element. As a result, there are many business with "Superior" in their names, which makes differentiation difficult, she says.

SKIP THE POTTY HUMOR

As for potty humor and butt-crack references, O'Hare-Zika says they should be avoided at all costs. While it's okay to use humor in branding your company, doing it via potty humor just isn't a good idea. (So don't even think about Butt-Crack Bros. Plumbing or taglines like, "We Pity the Stool," "A Flush Beats a Full House" or "No. 1 in the No. 2 Business.")

"Yellow Dog Creative was created to counter potty humor," she says. "It's the whole basis for our business. Companies definitely do it and companies will continue to do it. But I tell people on a weekly basis that we won't do those kinds of commercials or marketing campaigns.

"We're trying to change the game and increase respect for the trades and part of that is changing the image," she continues. "I'd much rather focus on a company's reputation for cleanliness, the essential nature of its services or how it's always ready when customers need help. There are so many positives to talk about as opposed to bringing in all that other stuff."

O'Hare-Zika suggests that tradesmen work with a knowledgeable marketing firm to avoid making common name mistakes. There's too much at stake to just wing it, she says.

"You need to choose a name that allows you to be creative with it and make the company's marketing easier for years and years down the road," she says. "A name is so much more than just a name." ■

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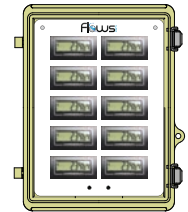


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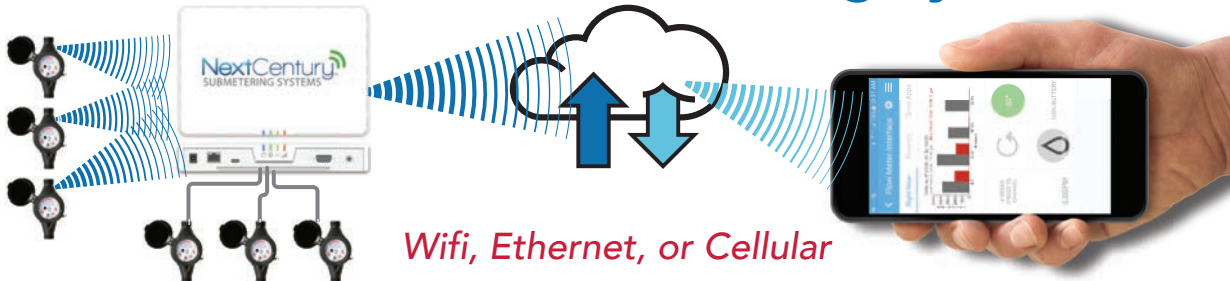


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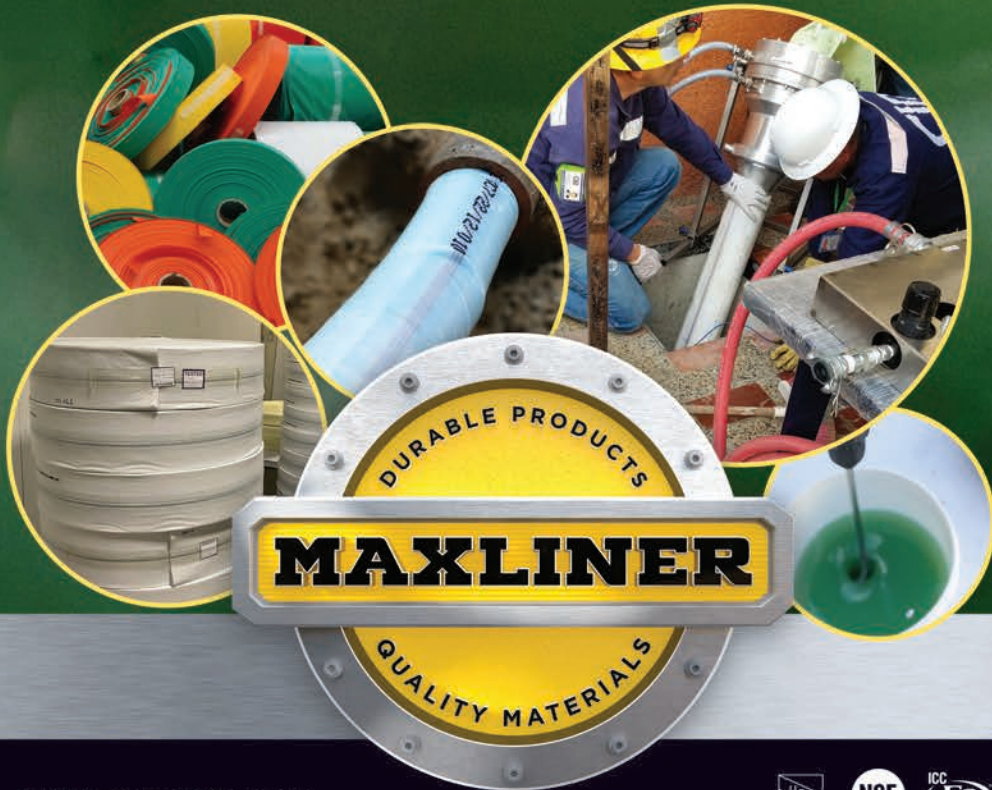
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Randy Lorge

The New Normal?

Take a hard look at your training method and how that might change during this pandemic

By Randy Lorge

WAIT! Before you start grumbling and flip to the next article, give me a chance to elaborate on the title. I know a large percentage of you are sick of hearing about the “new normal” and several of you believe that we will eventually get back to business as usual in the coming months.

I hope you are right, but I have a feeling we are too far into this to completely go back to what we perceived as normal prior to the pandemic.

Think about it like this for a moment. Until the mid to late 1990s, copper was the most widely used material for water piping systems. Today PEX is, for the most part, the material of choice due to a wide range of reasons. You could almost say it’s the new normal.

Flashback to the past 12 months: COVID-19, wildfires, hate crimes, riots, protesting, and of course we cannot close it out without mentioning politics. All things that would force anyone to ask what normal is anymore.

Now here is where this article begins to tie together all of the things mentioned above and get us back on track to how this is plumbing related. Last March, our country recognized that plumbers were essential to protecting public health.

Plumbers deal with ensuring safe water and sanitation systems are installed to protect the health of the nation. We do so by installing water treatment equipment, safe potable water supply systems, and drain, waste and vent systems.

To do this, we need to become educated in understanding the codes, theory and science that accompanies the trade. As part of our training, we learn the hands-on skills needed to install plumbing for our customers. This typically begins with serving an apprenticeship and learning in the classroom while also working full time in the field as an apprentice under a journeyman or master plumber.

Once an apprenticeship is completed, many individuals write a state exam and become licensed. This license usually comes with the requirement of maintaining your knowledge of the plumbing trade by acquiring continuing

Since the outbreak of the pandemic however, the way we acquire these credits (CEUs) has changed. We find ourselves hard pressed to take classes face to face due to gathering restrictions.

education units between renewal periods. As an example, here in Wisconsin, I need 24 hours of credits every four years. To attain these credits, we typically attend in-person classes where the provider does a presentation based on something code related or the latest and greatest products in the plumbing market. Since the outbreak of the pandemic however, the way we acquire these credits has changed. We find ourselves hard pressed to take classes face to face due to gathering restrictions.

Some states have suspended the requirement for CEUs during the pandemic while others have moved to the virtual method and require either online or webinar-based training as a substitution. This is very similar to what is happening in our K-12 and higher education environments. It has changed the way we are being forced to learn due to the circumstances.

I truly think the success for this type of learning is twofold. First the provider needs to “think outside of the box” and come to grips with the idea of changing the way they have forever offered training. Secondly, I think the

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learner needs to remain open-minded and remember the purpose for the training — to maintain our level of knowledge as it relates to plumbing.

Over the past 12 months I have seen some of the worst and some of the best classes related to the trade. Some were just “talking heads” and it was easy to lose focus on the topic because of the monotone vibe of the class.

The classes I liked most were the ones where I was able to do something. I think it would be safe to say that for most of us the reason we got into this trade was because we enjoy working with our hands and problem solving to “fix it.” So why should our continuing education be different, right?

Imagine a class where you had to do water pipe sizing and were going to add a softener or tankless water heater. Would there be a need for pipe size changes? If so, how would you go about determining it? Or what if you were given a DWV drawing and asked to size it during the presentation while reviewing code requirements? What about selecting the proper backflow preventer for the job to protect the water supply and the instructor put it on you, the plumber, to make the call and then have the ability to discuss the decision with your peers.

I’m going to do something different and ask you to assist me with your training needs. Would you consider taking a poll for me on the types of virtual training that you would like to see online? What can I do to help you get engaged? Below is the link for the poll, which you can find in the electronic version of this article at www.plumbermag.com.

The way we do things has changed because of the pandemic. Like PEX versus copper, we have accepted it as the new normal and in most cases, thrived and became better at what we do because of it. Why should our education be any different? **PI**

Randy Lorge is a third-generation plumber and the director of workforce training and development for the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO). Lorge is also a member of the planning team for the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH). This 501(c)(3) foundation has completed water and sanitation projects for those less fortunate in India, South Africa, Indonesia and, more recent, the United States. He enjoys time with his family and spending as much time as possible in his deer stand. To contact Lorge, email editor@plumbermag.com.

To take the poll for Randy, go to: https://doodle.com/poll/Simvbyxhuh4c3qat?utm_source=poll&utm_medium=link

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| <p>Amazing Machinery, LLC 3811 Old Tasso Rd., NE, Cleveland, OH 7312 800-504-7435 ■ 423-790-1600 (f) 800-504-7436 info@amazingmachinery.com www.amazingmachinery.com ad on page 45</p> | Viztrac, RIDGID, General Pipe Cleaners, Electric Eel, Forbest, Wholer, Goldak, Vivax | 1.5" to 24" | 10' to 400' | DVR, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, SD Card, Wi-Fi | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | Water | |
| <p>Central Oklahoma Winnelson 5037 NW 10th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73127 888-947-8761 ■ 405-947-8761 (f) 405-947-1934 krjones@winnelson.com www.centralwinnelson.com ad on page 29</p> | RIDGID | 3/4" to 12" | 65' to 325' | Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, DVD | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| <p> CUES, Inc 3600 Rio Vista Ave., Orlando, FL 32805 800-327-7791 ■ (f) 407-425-1569 salesinfo@cuesinc.com www.cuesinc.com</p> | CUES | 2" to 200" | 100' to 4000' | CD, Compact Flash, DVD, DVR, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, HDD, SD Card, VHS, Wi-Fi | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | Sewer, Pipe |
| <p>Duracable Manufacturing Co. 300 Ashworth Rd., West Des Moines, IA 50265 800-247-4081 sales@duracable.com ■ www.duracable.com ad on page 21</p> | RIDGID, Picote, APS, Drain Gear, General Pipe Cleaners, Fisher | 1" to 12" | 30' to 325' | Compact Flash, DVD, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, SD Card, Wi-Fi | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | Water | Sewer, Pipe, Leak |
| <p> Electric Eel Mfg. 501 W Leffel Ln., Springfield, OH 45501 800-833-1212 ■ 937-323-4644 (f) 937-323-3767 info@electriceel.com ■ www.electriceel.com ad on page 34</p> | Electric Eel Mfg. | 3" to 10" | 200' to 300' | HDD, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive | | | | ✓ | | | |
| <p> Thinking Ahead EPL Solutions, Inc. 1330 W Collins, Orange, CA 92867 714-453-9760 sales@epls-usa.com ■ www.epls-usa.com ad on page 57</p> | Gvision Camera System, Gvision Mini Camera System, SXR Precision Locator, Camtronics Miniflex Mini Sewer Camera | 3" to 12" | 200' to 400' | HDD, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, IOS Direct Connect, SD Card, SSD | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |

| | DEALER/DISTRIBUTOR OF | PIPE DIAMETERS - INCHES | REEL SIZES - FEET | RECORDING METHODS | ACCESSORIES | REPAIR PARTS | INSPECTION VEHICLES | REPAIR FACILITY | SOFTWARE AVAILABLE | DETECTION EQUIPMENT | LOCATION EQUIPMENT |
|---|---|-------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
|  <p>General Pipe Cleaners 1101 Thompson Ave., McKees Rocks, PA 15136 800-245-6200 ■ 412-771-6300 info@drainbrain.com ■ www.drainbrain.com ad on page 60</p> | Gen-Eye, Gen-Ear | 1.25" to 10" | 100' to 400' | Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, Wi-Fi, SD Card | | | | ✓ | | Water | Electric, Sewer, Pipe, Leak |
| <p>Hermann Sewerin GmbH 100 Home Road, Hatboro, PA 19040 888-592-9916 sewerin-usa@sewerin.net www.sewerin.com/us/ ad on page 34</p> | | | | | | | | | | Water, Gas | Pipe, Leak |
|  <p>MyTana LLC 746 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104 800-328-8170 ■ (f) 651-222-1739 mytana@mytana.com ■ www.mytana.com ad on page 51</p> | MyTana | 1.5" to 12" | 50' to 400' | Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, Wi-Fi, SD Card, DVR | | ✓ | ✓ | | | Water, Gas | Sewer, Pipe, Leak |
|  <p>Pearpoint, Inc. 39-740 Garand Lane, Unit B., Palm Desert, CA 92211 800-688-8094 ■ 760-343-7350 (f) 760-343-7351 pearpoint.sales.us@spx.com www.pearpoint.com/en-us</p> | Pearpoint (USA) | 2" to 60" | 100' to 1000' | Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, HDD, Wi-Fi | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Water | Sewer, Pipe |
|  <p>Spartan Tool LLC 1618 Terminal Rd., Niles, MI 49120 800-435-3866 customerservice@spartantool.com www.SpartanTool.com ad on page 5</p> | Traveler, Explorer, Sentinel | 1.5" to 8" | 100' to 400' | HDD, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, SD Card, Wi-Fi | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | Sewer, Pipe |
| <p>Superior Signal Company LLC 178 West Greystone Rd., Old Bridge, NJ 08857 732-251-0800 ■ (f) 732-251-9442 info@superiorsignal.com www.superiorsignal.com/plumber ad on page 57</p> | Superior Smoke, Superior SealPac | | | | | | | | | | Smoke, Sewer, Pipe, Leak |
|  <p>Vivax-Metrotech Corp 3251 Olcott St., Santa Clara, CA 95054 800-638-7682 ■ 201-562-7056 salesUSA@vxmt.com ■ www.vivax-metrotech.com ad on page 17</p> | Vivax-Metrotech, vCam Cameras, vLoc3 Locators | 2" to 14" | 100' to 400' | Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, HDD, SD Card, Wi-Fi | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | Electric, Sewer, Pipe |

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Keeping it Clean

Shelving units and other options help keep your plumbing vehicle looking nice and makes your job easier

By *Tim Dobbins*

How your service vehicles are organized is a big deal. Not only does a tidy work truck or van mean more efficient and safer workflow, it is a representation for your service workers and business to every customer that sees it.

No matter the job, plumbing requires an abundance of tools, fitting, valves and other equipment to be transported daily, and there seems to be an endless amount of options for storage and organization inside cargo vans and box trucks. Every mechanic sets up their shop a little different

Every mechanic sets up their shop a little different and it's the same with plumbers and their vehicles.

and it's the same with plumbers and their vehicles. The great thing about the multitude of vehicles and vehicle storage options is that they allow complete customization.

“The box truck we have now has Hackney shelves in it, we had a lot of fun building it our way,” says Josh Shelton, owner of Shelton Plumbing in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. “We made one side with skinnier shelves and one side with deeper shelves with space in the back for drain cleaning equipment.”

SETTING UP

Designing each vehicle's storage arrangement specific to a branch of your business is a great way to tackle the setup. For the truck Shelton mentions above, it was designed exclusively to do things related to drain cleaning. Truck storage designed to house equipment and tools needed for drain cleaning and similar services will be set up quite differently from a vehicle used mostly for installs. Take a close look at the service the truck will be used for and choose the shelving accordingly.

Let your employees help too. If you have a team member that will be the primary driver of the truck, letting them have a say is a wise choice. If they are experienced working on the road, chances are they will have a good idea of how they would like the flow of the vehicle and have good insight on where things should go for how they work. Just like a mechanic organizing their tools, every plumber will have an arrangement that feels comfortable to them.

With the last truck Shelton and his crew designed, they did just that. They worked together

Continued ▶

- ◀ Organizing a truck or van with shelves can help a plumbing company become more productive by ensuring the plumber knows where the tools and supplies are each time he goes to the truck. Shelves can be aluminum or made of wood, depending on the company's preferences.



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◀ Having storage bins like the ones pictured here can help a plumber set up for any job easily. They can even be set up for specific jobs ahead of time.

up front and not on the rear end of the trucks because if you do, they'll be dragging.”

There are numerous options for premade shelving and bins available that offer plumbers different options, so it pays to do some research and find one that best fits the vehicle you are outfitting. Milwaukee Tools PACKOUT systems are made to provide versatile options for plumbers. PACKOUT systems use a mounting plate that can be installed anywhere on a vehicles wall or floor and allows users to lock in the matching PACKOUT racking kits. This provides flexibility, allowing users to switch out the complete bins for different tools or equipment depending on the specific job.

The CRAFTSMAN VersaStack line of storage solutions offers a variety of modules for inside a work truck with certain storage units manufactured with wheels for maneuverability when at the job. The toolboxes come in multiple sizes for customized storage within a vehicle.

Other options are companies like American Van Equipment, which is what Botto and his team use. They offer everything from ladder racks and shelving, to partitions and bin storage systems specific to the make and models of your particular vehicle.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

No matter what you choose, keeping the option open for quick bin exchange can be quite handy. Pre-set bins can be stored in the shop and interchanged quickly for various jobs. “We'll buy a set of premade bins and we'll go ahead and customize some stuff as far as tools and parts go. Being plumbers, we're jacks of all trades, so we will make up some bins for different jobs,” Botto says.

Always keep in mind the space left after installing shelves and bins. The more room left on the floor, the better. Open floor space comes in handy for hauling large items to jobs like water heaters or large supplies of full-length PVC pipe. More important, it keeps you and your workers safe because a clean, open area to walk through means less trips and falls. And don't forget to save room for a garbage can. A small trash receptacle keeps the vehicle tidy as it's being used and saves time at the end of the day in cleanup.

Vehicle setup boils down to you and your unique situation. But keep in mind what a well-organized vehicle can mean for your company and always remember that your service trucks are a direct representation of your company. When customers see an organized space that is clean and tidy, their impressions of you, your employees and your business go up. 📌

to customize the shelving as a team. “It was a great. It was kind of a morale boost because the guy that it was going to be his truck was part of the planning and part of the build. He had a vision of what he wanted, and we said alright, let's put it together,” Shelton says.

SHELVING OPTIONS

No matter what route you choose, there are a few things to remember as a template for proper storage. Start with good shelving, distribute the weight properly and leave plenty of space on the floor.

If you choose to go the homemade route for shelving, choose materials wisely. Take weight capacity, longevity and added weight of material into consideration. Aluminum is a popular choice to reduce weight while providing great strength and it will last. However, wooden shelving can be a great option as well if built correctly and will save money compared to metal.

When building shelves, think ahead to when the shelves are full and keep in mind weight distribution throughout the vehicle. “We try to spread the weight out evenly,” says Roger Botto, owner of Botto Bros. Plumbing and Heating in Hicksville, New York. “We try to keep the heavy stuff



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Profile

NuFlow Certified Contractor

In his first year as a NuFlow Certified Contractor, Jeff Lane generated nearly \$1 million dollars in lining revenue.

Jeff became a NuFlow Certified Contractor in 2019 after a big company called because of sewer backups. Machinery throughout the warehouse made busting out the concrete floor impossible.

“NuFlow gave me the words of wisdom I needed. I made my money back on the first job, and then some. That’s no joke.”

Jeff continues to invest in new equipment and grow his team.

“Lining is a huge part of my business. It has carried me during this pandemic. I just invested in NuCure CCUV and plan to have three lining crews by this time next year.”

NuFlow’s training and support has been the most valuable part of Jeff’s success in building his lining business.

**Jeff’s advice to his fellow plumbers?
“Get your guys out of the trenches and make yourself more profitable.”**



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Jeremy Eskenazi

Attracting the Top Talent

Cash is king. But there are more ways to sweeten the pot to land your next star technician.

By Jeremy Eskenazi

Hiring in the plumbing industry has been challenging for a long time. Even through the pandemic, many plumbing companies were looking to add employees and having a hard time finding qualified candidates that would make for a good fit.

As you start looking for the next great worker to further your company's goals, deciding how hard you can compete for talent is important. While there are trends making candidate relationship-building easier — such as offering a more flexible work schedule for some roles — money is still a primary driver for candidates.

Salary has traditionally been king. And this king is powerful because it compounds year over year on your list of expenses. Not every company can spend more now, but every company wants to attract and retain the best talent for their team. This is where the candidate experience and your employer brand can be a strategic differentiator from other companies looking to hire.

It's important to remember that people don't come to work just for money. Everyone wants to feel valued and find the work interesting and challenging.

There are a few ways to minimize the amount of extra cash you need to help candidates consider your company over others.

THE COST OF HIRING

Understanding one-time costs versus compounding costs is a good starting point. If you can give someone an upfront, one-time cash bonus, it will save your company money year-over-year compared to a larger starting salary. When you get into their second year of employment, having to raise salary by a percentage compounds the cost and can add much more to your operating costs than a one-time payment. Even hourly employees in lower-earning roles that are in high demand may be swayed by a cash bonus upfront.

As you approach your budget and talent needs for the coming year, you may find you have less flexibility to offer

Another great noncompounding benefit is education subsidies ... For instance, offer to pay the costs of a technician seeking more training on tools from a manufacturer or industry certifications that improve a worker's career path.

bigger salaries to help you win the talent war. While everything has some cost, there are alternative areas you can invest in that cost much less and will not steadily rise like a salary does. Here are eight of them:

1. Offering flexibility — Whether it is the start and end time of the workday or a compressed work week — think four days at 10 hours per day, giving long weekends — these are coveted offerings. If the job allows for flexibility, it's worth considering.

2. Covering perks — There are tons of creative offerings that matter to employees and are often available at a small cost. A few examples are: subsidies for public transit or commuting, extra uniforms paid for by the company, meal services at work, free or discounted laundry service, gym or lifestyle club memberships or discounts.

3. Job sharing or part-time work — Many people have their own reasons for wanting to work less than full time. Offering part-time or job-sharing options where two people perform what was once a full-time job can give you more coverage in talent and attract some amazing candidates who wouldn't otherwise be interested.

4. Having good managers — A positive workplace culture is a competitive advantage. If you invest in managers who care about their teams and prioritize teaching and coaching employees, you will be able to attract,

develop and importantly, retain top talent. It's been proven many times that people work for people, not companies, so make sure your managers are good listeners, care about their people and can show empathy.

5. Offering hiring bonus/signing bonus — A bonus can help you counter another offer and be equally attractive upfront as many bonuses can be paid within the first three months and can have a condition of repayment if the employee leaves before a set amount of time. For hourly workers, a few hundred dollars upfront can make a big difference in whether they decide if they want to join your organization. Because these are one-time costs, they don't compound like salary does.

6. Starting benefits coverage earlier — The traditional model for health care coverage has been to delay offering benefits for 90 days to get through a probation period. Offering insurance coverage immediately becomes a great employee incentive. A company could also offer to reimburse existing health costs or pay for the previous employer's benefits until the transition occurs.

7. Reimbursing education costs — Another great noncompounding benefit is education subsidies. Skills change quickly and the investment in learning benefits both the employee and the company in the long term. For instance, offer to pay the costs of a technician seeking more training on tools from a manufacturer or industry certifications that improve a worker's career path.

8. Having modern work tools — Sure, you want to have the best technology for your office workers; newer computers, GPS tracking, etc., but what about offering to pay for your employees' mobile phones? Offering a broad range to choose from or solid reimbursement plans for employees to have the latest and greatest is a draw.

CREATIVITY COUNTS

Remember, money does reign as king. If you offer 30% less salary than your competitor, even this list will not help you win the talent war. However, if you offer 30% more salary, your balance sheet might start to look a little funny and it will be difficult to sustain making above-market salary offers for many roles. The market is competitive and being creative with the advantages you can afford will help show candidates you care about their experience and that you understand what matters to them in a comprehensive employment package. 📱

Jeremy Eskenazi is a human resources trainer, author of RecruitConsult! Leadership, and founder of the consulting firm Riviera Advisors. Contact him at www.rivieraadvisors.com.

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Inspection, Location and Leak Detection

By Craig Mandli

Drainline TV Inspection Cameras

CPI Products PoleCat

Sometimes push inspection cameras are hard to control when not in a pipe and trying to look into a ground-level space. It can be dangerous to kneel down and stick your head in these places, and in some areas violates safety rules. When you need to look into a septic tank or other opening inspectors often resort to improvising ways to control their inspection camera. The **PoleCat** from **CPI Products** is designed and made for this application. Simply strap an inspection camera to it with the preinstalled Velcro, loosen the lock nut, turn to the angle desired, attach any standard broomstick-threaded extension pole and it's ready. It fits any push inspection camera and installs in minutes. 413-443-0925; www.cplproducts.com



CUES Micro Pan and Tilt Camera

The **CUES Micro Pan and Tilt Camera** is designed to work with the LAMP II lateral launcher as an optional pan-and-tilt push camera. The camera is steerable to navigate through multiple wyes when traversing 45- or 90-degree bends or sweeps. It can be easily deployed with or against the flow. The camera includes a detachable steering wand; an automatic, powered, self-leveling camera head; built-in lens wiper; and two banks of LEDs with variable light intensity. Additional features include 360-degree pan and tilt, and built-in sonde with switchable frequencies. 800-327-7791; www.cuesinc.com



self-leveling color camera, one-touch USB recording, on-screen footage counter, and wheels for easy transport and maneuverability. The system also includes a rugged stainless steel housed 1.68-inch-diameter self-leveling color camera for inspecting 3- to 10-inch lines. A flexible camera spring is designed to navigate 3-inch P-traps. An LCD monitor with AR film for optimal viewing in sunlight is encased in an anodized aluminum housing mounted to the reel. 800-833-1212; www.electriceel.com



Envirosight Verisight Pro+

Envirosight's Verisight Pro+ push camera can be used to complete critical drainpipe and lateral inspections quickly and accurately. Its stainless self-leveling camera captures up to 90 hours of color footage from pipes 2 inches in diameter and larger, regardless of material. With supplied centering devices, it snakes through multiple bends for maximum range. An integral triband sonde (33 kHz, 512 Hz, 640 Hz) works with most any locator. The welded-steel coiler comes with 130, 200 or 330 feet of pushrod. The entire system runs for six hours off internal rechargeable lithium-ion batteries, or off main or vehicle power. Its controller displays real-time footage on an 8-inch LCD, and can operate all camera functions, generate custom text overlays with a full QWERTY keyboard, and easily off-load inspection footage by SD card or USB drive. 866-838-3763; www.envirosight.com



EPL Solutions Gvision

The **Gvision** camera system from **EPL Solutions** offers a rugged, compact solution for inspecting pipelines 3 to 12 inches in diameter. Available with 200 to 400 feet of pushrod, the reel has a stiff, yet flexible fiberglass cable that is optimized for farther pushes through turns and bends. The color camera is self-leveling and includes a powerful, convenient, always-on 512 Hz transmitter for quick and precise area determination. The antiglare LCD monitor delivers a clear, crisp picture even in direct sunlight. To record video



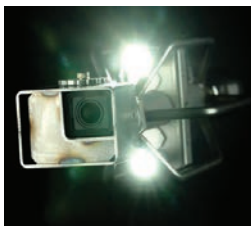
Electric Eel eCAM Ace 2 SL

Electric Eel's eCAM Ace 2 SL pipeline inspection camera system has a new battery cradle that accepts a Milwaukee M18 or equivalent battery. Battery life is six to seven hours. Other features include a

inspections, connect a USB storage device or Apple mobile device directly into the USB port. The DVR outputs HD-quality videos, which can be stored and shared from a mobile device. **714-453-9760; www.epls-usa.com**

GP Sewer Cam

The **GP Sewer Cam** is made to be dropped. The heart of the jet-powered system is its durable and simple-to-use GoPro Hero 7 Black camera. Not only is GoPro camera technology affordable, but its durability guarantee has made it the go-to camera to document extreme sports, where it takes a physical beating. The skid unit is compatible with 6- to 18-inch pipe and is constructed from Type 304 stainless steel. Custom skids are available for larger pipe. GP Sewer Cam has teamed up with Arthur Products so every GP Sewer Cam comes with a custom-drilled (to buyer's jetting specs) nozzle. The unit is 4 1/2 pounds, has three screws, one moving part, and is completely made in the USA. **310-774-9468; www.gpsewercam.com**



A self-leveling camera head with adjustable LED illumination delivers crisp video footage and includes a built-in 512 Hz sonde. The control box mounts securely on a full swivel bracket to position the 12-inch daylight-readable monitor for best viewing. All-digital recording lets the user save footage to internal storage or USB flash drive. Operators can also stream video wirelessly to multiple devices. The rugged frame has balanced weight and antiskid feet for easy maneuvering. A skid and camera guides for the camera head help jump offsets and navigate bends. **800-328-8170; www.mytana.com**

Pearpoint P540c

The **Pearpoint P540c** offers an intuitive graphical user interface with built-in user manual, a full-size QWERTY keyboard and a choice of six different languages at launch. Context-sensitive, ATM-style buttons on both sides of the display provide access to the easy-to-use menus while an additional seven buttons offer direct control of the most-used functions. It has the capability to use the newly designed command module with any reel system. This will provide contractors the flexibility of having multiple rods for different uses while only needing one command module. **800-688-8094; www.pearpoint.com**



Hathorn Wi-Fi DuraSCOPE

Hathorn's Wi-Fi DuraSCOPE inspection cameras offer the convenience of streaming video inspections to an Apple or Android mobile device using the free PipeSTREAM app. It can be used to take screen shots, overlay voice commentary and share videos with up to four devices. It has the choice of DuraCAM self-leveling or straight-view camera heads in multiples sizes and an on-screen footage counter. Municipal-grade camera reels are built tough, with butt-welded steel frame construction, stainless steel camera heads, and a choice of HDPE premium pushrod size allows the user to push far and remain in the field longer. It has 512 Hz sonde control and external 18-volt Milwaukee battery compatibility for quick swap outs and longer time in the field. **866-428-4676; www.hathorncorp.com**



Ratech Electronics Plumber's Helper Jr.

The **Plumber's Helper Jr.** pipe inspection system from Ratech Electronics is based on a small-scale reel and comes with 100 feet of mini Gel Rod cable, a removable compact command module with 7.1-inch LCD, a built-in battery and an SD recorder for recording digital images and video. This mini pipe inspection system is available with a full-spectrum, 1.375-inch, self-leveling color camera; a standard color camera; or any of the company's three micro camera heads — 5/8-, 3/4- or 1-inch diameter. **905-660-7072; www.ratech-electronics.com**



MyTana PGR400

MyTana's PGR400 push camera has the range and rigidity to inspect long laterals and small mains, with the choice of 325 or 400 feet of pushrod for use in lines 4 to 12 inches in diameter. The reel has a brake with adjustable drag to help manage the pushrod as the technician works.



RIDGID SeeSnake Compact C40 with CS6x Versa Camera System

The RIDGID SeeSnake Compact C40 with CS6x Versa Camera System features a 25 mm self-leveling camera head and 131 feet of flexible push cable that is suitable for small/restricted branch lines with tight turns and shorter runs in main laterals. It includes a high dynamic range image sensor, TiltSense inclinometer and integrated TruSense technology. Its quick-release docking system makes it suitable for pairing with the CS6x Versa digital reporting monitor. An ergonomic, all-in-one solution for capturing media, the monitor has a 5.7-inch daylight-viewable display that provides a crisp, clear in-pipe image. It offers multiple mounting positions with an adjustable kickstand to suit job site conditions and can be tilted to the desired viewing angle while docked or removed for convenient placement. **800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com**



The system includes a daylight-viewable control module with a 9.7-inch HD LCD monitor, distance counter and internal rechargeable batteries with five-plus hours of battery life. Video recording and JPG-format pictures can be saved to the internal 1 TB hard drive. The control module has built-in Wi-Fi to stream live video and snapshots to the vCam Live View Mobile app. **800-446-3392; www.vivax-metrotech.com**

Dye

Oatey Hercules Megabubble Leak Detector

Hercules Megabubble Leak Detector from Oatey uses a high-viscosity formula that produces large, long-lasting blue bubbles for easier detection of leaks on pipes, fittings, tanks, coils, cylinders, pressure vessels and valves. The formula is nontoxic, noncorrosive and will not freeze. The product is available with a dauber or spray bottle. **800-203-1155; www.oatey.com**



Spartan Tool Explorer

The Explorer modular camera system from Spartan Tool has a control box that is compatible with five different pushrods up to 400 feet in length, letting the user quickly adapt to any environment. Included WinCan software allows the user to map full plumbing systems for future reference, and files can be saved to a WinCan account, the cloud, external USB drives and the system's internal storage. The stainless steel camera head provides a crisp, color picture to the superbright, sun-light-readable LCD. Change out reels create a system that provides the ability to tackle any size job. **800-435-3866; www.spartantool.com**

The Explorer modular camera system from Spartan Tool has a control box that is compatible with five different pushrods up to 400 feet

Electronic Leak Detection

FloLogic System

The FloLogic System is a commercial-grade plumbing leak detection, automatic shut-off device that protects homes and businesses from plumbing supply leak damage. IT works in virtually all homes and businesses with 3/4- to 2-inch water service. All systems offer real-time leak detection and flow notification abilities beginning at 1/2 ounces of water flow per minute thanks to EverWatch leak-sensing technology. When a leak is detected, the water is shut off automatically and the users receive an alert through the smartphone app. The FloLogic CONNECT module also has a thermometer, allowing low room temperature alerts and automatic water shutoffs. **877-356-5644; www.flologic.com**



Vivax-Metrotech vCam-6 HD

The vCam-6 HD inspection system from Vivax-Metrotech includes features such as text writer, voice-over, locatable sonde and traceable pushrod as standard equipment. The standard reel is available with 200, 300 or 400 feet of pushrod and the choice of a 1.3- or 1.8-inch self-leveling HD camera.





Hermann Sewerin GmbH AQUAPHON A 150

The AQUAPHON A 150 from Hermann Sewerin GmbH allows professional pre-location and the precise pinpointing of leaks. The receiver has a compact design and maximum carrying comfort. Connected to high-end microphones and wireless headphones, it can help produce brilliant reproduction

quality. In addition, noises are visualized on the display so they can be reliably and uniquely evaluated. Thanks to adjustable filters and automatic frequency scanning, frequency ranges can be individually adapted to the user's hearing. Influences from sound interference are minimized, and the sound quality is optimized for reliable evaluation of the leak situation. 888-592-9916; www.sewerin.com



LeakTronics Plumbers Kit

The Plumbers Kit from LeakTronics includes highly sensitive and powerful listening equipment that users can detect leaks with, even when

those leaks are in pipes buried more than 6 feet underground. It includes a pipe probe that identifies leaks by touching on valve handles, pipes, spigots and when used in soil, by listening through dirt and landscaping to hear where water is escaping a pipe. The deck plate included in the kit creates a direct surface contact that listens for water leaks through concrete and floors, hard soil and solid surfaces. The soft-sided listening disc has the ability to hear leaks in walls and floors, behind tile and cabinetry and all without making a scratch or mark on delicate surfaces. Hand Held Video Pro and Deluxe cameras take users inside the pipes with clear visual acuity and FLASH sonde technology to locate the camera head underground so technicians know where to dig to make repairs. 818-436-2953; www.leaktronics.com

Electronic Pipe Location



General Pipe Cleaners Gen-Eye Hot Spot

The Gen-Eye Hot Spot pipe locator and transmitter from General Pipe Cleaners includes a total field antenna and on-screen icons



to help lead users to their targets without a long learning curve. It can be used to quickly and accurately locate inspection cameras, sondes, active power lines and utility lines. Rated at IP65, it is water resistant, dustproof and dirtproof. The 5-watt transmitter, in tandem with the locator, makes finding buried utilities quick and easy. More power means more signal to locate. Choose one of four frequencies to best suit the application. 800-245-6200; www.drainbrain.com

RapidView IBAK North America 3D GeoSense

The 3D GeoSense system from RapidView IBAK North America provides the power to map lateral pipelines with accuracy and speed. The 3D sensor is available in almost all IBAK cameras, and can be deployed on a pushrod, via lateral launch, or on a mainline crawler. The sensor tracks the movement of the camera as it travels through the pipeline, capturing distance, position and depth in 3D space, and is displayed by datalogging software. It means technicians no longer have to track the system above ground with a locator, as they can simply conduct the inspection and collect the positional data. The system is ideal for cross-bore analysis, or any situation where pipeline positional data is necessary. 800-656-4225; www.rapidview.com



Subsite Electronics UtiliGuard 2

The Subsite Electronics UtiliGuard 2 is a multifrequency utility locator that takes the features of the original UtiliGuard and adds a user interface, integrated data capture and GPS positioning. The user interface has simplified graphics that are easier and faster to interpret. Operators will notice a change in screen layout when directly over a utility locate, providing positive confirmation. Screen graphics deliver increased operator confidence, locate consistency and operational performance. It automatically captures data without altering the operator's normal workflow. This data can be used to verify performance and demonstrate quality and process compliance in the field. Supervisors can also track performance, compare it with benchmarks and enable actionable outcomes to be implemented. This reporting and auditing capability helps increase quality, reduce cable strikes and increase productivity across multiple crews. 800-846-2713; www.subsite.com



Smoke Locators

Cherne Residential Plumbing Smoke Blower

The **Cherne Residential Plumbing Smoke Blower** is a fast and easy leak-detection system. The blower uses long-lasting dense smoke that is pumped into a plumbing system to identify leaks quickly and efficiently. It comes with a 5-foot, heavy-duty hose that fits a 4-inch clean out tee and is lightweight and corrosion-resistant. With exhaust pumped through the plumbing, the blower can be used indoors and easily transported with its top-mounted carrying handle. Its efficient 122 cc, 3.5 hp, four-stroke Honda engine provides more than 700 cfm, making it fast, easy and safe to determine



plumbing-problem areas. Through vibration damping, excess movement and noise are also minimized, creating a smoother and more efficient experience. 800-321-9532; www.oatey.com.brands/cherne

Hurco Technologies Power Smoker 2

The **Power Smoker 2** from **Hurco Technologies** quickly locates leaks in new and existing plumbing systems. The machine is connected to a clean-out and smoke is sent through the system to reveal any problem areas. The system uses **LiquiSmoke**, a laboratory-tested safe smoke that costs cents per minute to use and has an indefinite shelf life. When the test is complete, the smoke dissipates without leaving any odor or residue. 800-888-1436; www.hurcotech.com



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Superior Signal 5E Electric Smoker



The **5E Electric Smoker** from **Superior Signal** offers a cost-effective 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 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 harmful exhaust gases and handles all residential and commercial smoke-testing applications. Smoke tests take minutes to perform and see immediate results. The unit comes with an 8-foot, industrial-grade flex hose, weighs 8 pounds and requires no maintenance. 800-945-8378; www.superiorsignal.com



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Product Spotlight

Adjustable floor drains and clean-outs easy to install and level

By Craig Mandli

As a plumber, you know that when you install floor drains and clean-outs, if they aren't level, they won't work correctly. Thankfully, the Watts Pronto! line of adjustable drains and clean-outs are not only durable, aesthetically appealing fixtures, they offer easier installation and simple leveling for all floor finishes. Available in PVC and cast iron, the Pronto! line enables post-pour adjustment and quick installation.

The drains and clean-outs feature an integrated bubble level concrete cover for a level installation and to protect the fixture while pouring concrete. The product is pre-packaged with shims for tilt correction to create a professional finish.

"They can save 15 minutes per drain or clean-out install," says James Koepsell, drains director at Watts. "They let you get a level drain or clean-out the first time, and every time with the built-in bubble level, designed for pre-pour and post-pour adjustment. You get maximum flexibility in light to medium commercial and residential applications with the complete solution that ships as a fully assembled system."

Pronto! drains and clean-outs are designed for light-to medium-duty commercial and residential use. They are available in two durable nickel-bronze cover sizes with 5- and 6-inch diameters and a 5-inch stainless option. They include pipe connections of 2, 3 and 4 inches, and come complete with an anchor flange, with up to 1 1/2-inch pre-pour and 1-inch post-pour adjustability.



"The real benefit is that the drain can be adjusted twice," says Koepsell. "The basin can be raised or lowered to match the initial concrete pour, and then the strainer can be adjusted to match the finished floor. We also offer matching clean-outs for each."

PVC models come with a solvent weld or no-hub outlet connection, and cast iron models feature a no-hub or push-on outlet connection. A stainless steel clamping collar ring is available as an optional accessory. Both models come out of the box completely assembled.

These are appreciated because they are dual adjustable, with the built-in bubble level, and are designed for pre- and post-pour adjustment," says Koepsell. "We have conducted many field tests on these drains and clean-outs, and the feedback is all positive." 978-689-6066; www.watts.com

Milwaukee Tool PACKOUT racking solutions

Milwaukee Tool expanded its PACKOUT Modular Storage System with two new racking solutions: a PACKOUT 2-shelf Racking Kit and a PACKOUT Racking Shelf. For more versatile mounting options, the PACKOUT Racking Shelf attaches to E-track, allowing users to place the shelf in any location or onto any surface E-track can be mounted. To keep contents secure during transport, the shelf features integrated tie down points and an anti-rattle screw. A 50-pound weight capacity, metal-reinforced frame and impact-resistant body provides maximum durability. The shelf will be available on its own or in a kit with two racking shelves and two 20-inch lengths of vertical E-track. 800-729-3878; www.milwaukeetool.com





Webstone T-Valve and transition fittings

Webstone, a brand of NIBCO, new Press × FIP transition tee products, including the all-new Pro-Pal T-Valve, are ideal for isolating a line or device for service. The valve features a full-port ball valve with an integrated tee fitting. Sizes range from 1/2- to 1-inch, including reducing branch options. In addition, Press × PEX transition elbows and couplings are now available in 5/8- and 1-inch reducing sizes. All products are made from lead-free DZR brass and are compatible with popular press tools. **800-336-5133; www.nibco.com**

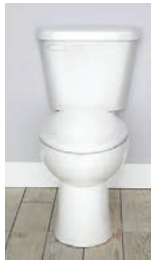
Oatey full-clamp pipe clamps

Oatey's improved full-clamp pipe clamps feature updated installation and removal features for fast and easy use. The clamps are built with convenient push-on installation technology, including a lead-in edge that automatically opens the clamp. With a patented removal wedge and notch, clamp removal is also quick and simple. The full clamps provide pipes complete standoff from the surface, and 360-degree pipe protection allows tubes to expand and contract. Notched nail slots also allow for strain relief and better nail alignment. **800-203-1155; www.oatey.com**



Gerber Plumbing Fixtures 0.8 gpf toilet

Gerber Plumbing Fixtures added the efficient 0.8 gpf toilet to its Viper lineup. Available in white with a chrome-plated, top-mount flush actuator, the toilet utilizes the Viper trapway design and Fluid-master 400A fill valve to provide set-it-and-forget-it reliability. It is available in both 12- and 10-inch rough-in configurations, an ADA-compliant ErgoHeight elongated bowl, and as a standard-height round-front bowl, ideal for confined spaces. Additionally, the large 20 1/2-inch by 9 3/4-inch footprint is ideal for replacements and the tall bolt caps cut down time needed during installation, eliminating the need to trim floor bolts. **866-538-5536; www.gerber-us.com**



J.C. Whitlam plastic pipe cutter

The newly-designed Sabertooth one-handed operation plastic pipe cutter from J.C. Whitlam Mfg. has a retractable

razor-sharp blade that cuts all types of plastic pipe and conduit through 1 5/8-inch outside diameter. The V-Blade design pierces the surface, which makes it ideal for thin wall pipe. The Sabertooth cuts PVC, CPVC, ABS, PE, polypropylene and PEX, and conduit pipe and tubing. It has a lightweight diecast aluminum body, a cam ratchet that prevents slipping, ergonomic rubber grips and easy locking blade. No tools are required to change the blade. **800-321-8358; www.jcwhitlam.com**

Viega Pressgun 6 and Pressgun 6 Picco

The Viega Pressgun 6 and Pressgun 6 Picco are now available at distributors and through Viega. The Pressgun 6 is a cost-efficient workhorse that can press up to 4-inch ProPress copper and stainless and 2-inch MegaPress with the V2 actuator and rings, as well as 2-inch PureFlow PEX. Its features include an eight-second press cycle, LED display indicating number of presses left on a charge, steel cylinder head and jaw intake, 270-degree rotating cylinder head, and forward and backward compatibility with RIDGID batteries. The Pressgun 6 Picco can press up to 1 1/4-inch ProPress with the C1 actuator and rings, 1 1/2-inch PureFlow and 3/4-inch MegaPress. Both tools come with an 18-volt lithium-ion battery and charger. **800-976-9819; www.viega.us**



Franklin Electric VR SpecPAK Pressure Boosting System

Franklin Electric's VR SpecPAK Pressure Boosting System is a pump and drive package that combines the benefits of its high-performance VR Series vertical multistage pump with an efficient TEFC motor and variable-frequency drive specifically designed for pump applications. It is ASHRAE 90.1-2010 compliant and is designed with NSF/ANSI 61 and 273 certified isolation valves. Users can easily configure it to comply with pressure-boosting needs in most commercial, industrial, or multiresidential applications for constant-pressure operation with several available options according to flow needs, control enclosures, interfaces (touch screen human-machine interface/PLC) and additional communication ports. **260-824-2900; www.franklinengineered.com**



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Restoration 1 and bluefrog Plumbing + Drain recap 2020

Waco, Texas-based brands Restoration 1 and bluefrog Plumbing + Drain capped off 2020 filled with expansion, new programs, awards and more. Restoration 1 awarded 40 new locations, expanded into West Virginia, Utah, South Dakota and the District of Columbia, and ended the year awarding 350 locations to date across 43 states. bluefrog Plumbing + Drain awarded six new locations, entered Virginia, and is now servicing eight states. Additional 2020 highlights included Restoration 1's naming Sherry Rose as COO and bluefrog Plumbing + Drain naming Mike Mushinski as president.

Draincables Direct is now DCD

Starting in January 2021, Draincables Direct underwent a name change and is now known as DCD. The company has expanded its product line to include larger drain cleaning machines known as the Valor Series, as well as offering drain cleaning replacement parts, blades, cutters, video inspection equipment and jetter hoses and nozzles. DCD will continue to provide the same product and services, direct from the manufacturer.

Asahi/America welcomes new business development manager

Asahi/America welcomed Shane McDaniel to its business development team, as business development manager for actuation products. McDaniel brings a diverse set of skills and experience with him to Asahi/America, ranging from instrument and controls technician to outside sales, and aftermarket sales and service. He will work closely with the company's sales and engineering teams to further promote Asahi/America's actuation product line across a variety of industries in the U.S.



REHAU appoints Thomas Troeger CEO of Americas

REHAU announced the promotion of Thomas Troeger, D.B.A., from CMO to CEO of the Americas region. During 14 years with REHAU, Troeger became director of the furniture solutions business division in North America in 2013 and then vice president of the division for the entire Americas region in 2015. Troeger joined the regional executive board in January 2019 as chief sales and marketing officer.



Mr. Plumber acquires Heffner Plumbing

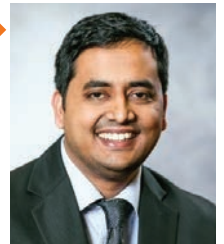
Mr. Plumber, a provider of plumbing services serving central Indiana, announced the acquisition of Heffner Plumbing, a plumbing service provider that has operated in Avon, Plainfield, Zionsville and Brownsburg, Indiana, for more than 20 years. The acquisition comes as Mr. Plumber continues to work toward growing its customer base in central Indiana.

Vernon Bitzer Associates now offers RectorSeal products

RectorSeal, based in Houston, Texas, announced that Vernon Bitzer Associates will represent RectorSeal's plumbing products in Eastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey and Delaware. Vernon Bitzer is headquartered in Warminster, Pennsylvania.

Watts introduces new senior product manager

Shashwat Nath joined Watts as senior product manager, shut-off valves. He has overall responsibility for the strategy, new product development and product management of Watts solutions for ball valves and butterfly valves, as well as its range of AquaLock, ANKA and APEX plumbing system fittings. He brings extensive experience in product management for large product portfolios across several industry verticals. He also has extensive experience related to IoT systems, both hardware and software.



Armstrong names Simon Allan global director

Armstrong Fluid Technology announced that Simon Allan has been named global director, standard building products, and a member of the company's leadership board. Allan joined Armstrong in 2018 with responsibility for Armstrong's UK and European wholesale strategy and the development of the circulator market in those markets. In mid-2019, he assumed the interim role of sales director, UK, and led the team through a period of transformation and change including the 2020 coronavirus business interruption. 



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Seventh Emerging Water Technology Symposium,
Westin Riverwalk, San Antonio. Visit iapmo.org/ibu/events

May 11-13

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

June 13-16

AWWA Annual Conference & Exposition (ACE),
San Diego Convention Center, San Diego.
Visit www.events.awwa.org

June 22-23

Wastewater Equipment (WEQ) Fair,
York Fairgrounds, York, Pennsylvania.
Visit www.weqfair.com

June 29-July 2

**Water & Wastewater Equipment
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Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis.
Visit www.wwettshow.com 

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