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On the ROAD

### Moving Made Easy

KeiKart attachment saves time by making pipe lining equipment easier to maneuver over rough terrain.

- By Ken Wysocky



### On the Cover

S&J Plumbing's Kyle Stong installs a new pipe in the bathtub fixture while at a home in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Stong uses a Milwaukee Tool flashlight to diagnose the problem. S&J Plumbing, based in Arlington Heights, is owned by Joe Fuentes and operates in a 20-mile radius of the shop. The team offers complete residential plumbing services, including bathroom remodeling, natural gas line repair, and drain and sewer cleaning. (Photography by Rob Hart)

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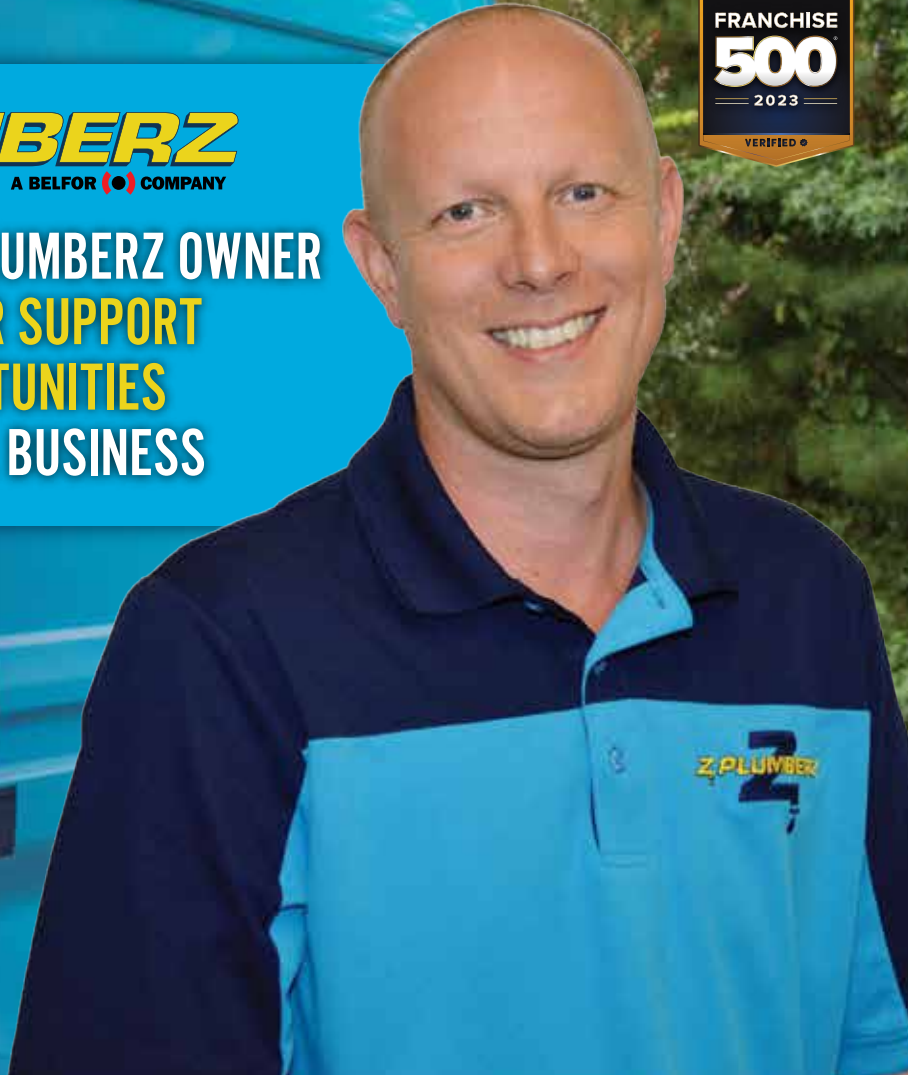
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Cory Dellenbach

## Tracking Your Business

Doing basic statistical keeping and number crunching will help you determine a plan for your company and how it should operate

**A**

s a bowling coach I find myself looking at statistics all the time. Looking over what my team just did over the weekend compared to our opponent and the other teams in our district.

Number crunching, figuring out what's working and what isn't, what I can change.

While some days seem to be never ending with stats, it's a good thing to have handy and review. It does help in making game-time decisions, knowing who is best on different oil patterns or who is having an off week.

It can be the same for a plumbing company too. You could determine what your crews could use training on. Are you getting more calls for water heater repairs than fixture replacements, maybe spend more time on water heater training. Do you get customers calling more from one area of town than the other, perhaps spending more advertising dollars in that area that isn't getting as much.

Number crunching can be a headache, but you'll see it in almost anything you do these days. If you aren't already keeping track of some of this stuff for your business, it's a good time to open that laptop and start figuring out some stats that can help you.

### WHAT TO TRACK

Business stats can be determined based on your specific market, company size, location and so on. By having baseline stats to track performance, companies have a better understanding of what is going in their area and in the larger industry opposed to just their company.

The stats can help determine the effectiveness of a certain advertising campaign, service offering or even service area. It's important to know early on what you should be tracking and how.

Here are three simple things that you can track as far as your plumbing company:

1. **Inventory:** It should be a given that many of you are already doing this. If you aren't, you should be. It's the easiest way to know what your team is using and

if you should keep more of that product on hand or not. It would also be good to know why it's being used. Do you see more of a certain item used in one time of the year than the others? This is how you can figure that out.

2. **Advertising:** Keep track of where you spend your advertising dollars — social media, television, radio, newspaper, yellow pages, etc. Knowing this and asking customers where they found you is extremely valuable to your company in knowing where to spend money and where not to.
3. **Customer Calls:** It sounds weird, but you can track customer calls. More specifically, what type of services are being requested. This way you can see if you should be devoting more time to certain staff training or the possibility of adding services if you continually get requested to do something you don't offer (like HVAC work).

### NUMBER CRUNCHING

You don't need fancy software to track this stuff. If you or someone at the office is tech savvy, all you need is a spreadsheet software, like Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets. Create categories and fill them in whenever you get a call or go out on a job. Make it a regular thing to do after customer interactions or job service calls and it'll become a habit.

There are plenty of resources online and throughout some past business features in *Plumber* magazine to help determine what you could be keeping track of with your company. Just start with one and see how it helps and ease into the others.

### YOUR TRACKING

What do you track with your plumbing company already that you would recommend to others in the industry? Email me with your ideas at [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com)

Enjoy this issue! 📧



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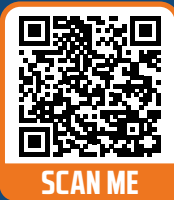
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## COST SAVER

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## TROUBLESHOOTING

### Examining Drain Clog Culprits

In this online exclusive, regular contributor Anthony Pacilla takes a look at the common ways different types of sewer pipes clog, from terracotta to cast iron.

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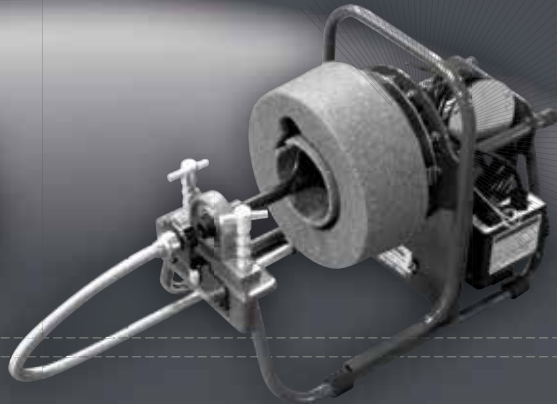
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# Persistence PAYS OFF

Chicago-area plumber fights to get into the industry and uses that drive to build up and grow his company

By Giles Lambertson | Photography by Rob Hart



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**W**hat sparks a person to start a business? The notion is triggered in many ways — admiring a self-employed person and wanting to emulate it, perhaps, or finding yourself with a truckload of widgets and realizing there’s a market for them.

For Joe Fuentes, the desire to have his own plumbing company arose during a class several years into his plumbing apprenticeship. A business agent addressed a roomful of apprentice plumbers that evening and in the course of remarks said, “Some of you guys in this room will become contractors.”

Bingo! “Becoming a plumbing contractor had never crossed my mind,” Fuentes says. “When he said that, it sort of awakened something inside me. He planted a seed in me personally and it took root and stayed in my mind that I should become a contractor.”

The seed didn’t bear fruit for eight years. In 2016, Fuentes finally walked away from a \$120,000-a-year job as a union plumber, spent \$10,000 on a used service truck, and set up shop in his garage as owner-operator of S&J Plumbing.

◀ Joe Fuentes, owner of S&J Plumbing, stands in front of one of his company’s service vans at their shop in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Fuentes founded the company in 2016 and services a 20-mile radius from Arlington Heights. He named the company after his daughter Sarah and son Joseph.

▼ Plumber Kyle Stong unpacks the new fixture (Kohler) and inspects it prior to installation.



“I worked with some great journeyman plumbers. I was very fortunate to be paired up with those guys. I learned so many facets of plumbing as an apprentice.”

*Joe Fuentes*

## A YOUNG START

Owning a business is not a new thing for the extended family of Joe Fuentes, who are immigrants from Argentina. They arrived in the U.S. when the now-40-year-old S&J Plumbing owner was an infant. His grandfather owned a dry-cleaning establishment in the Chicago area and his father had his own shoe repair shop. How Fuentes ended up plumbing is a story all by itself.

As a 20-year-old, Fuentes was looking for a career path in the trades and noticed that plumbers seemed to earn good wages. So he thumbed through the Yellow Pages and saw dozens of listings for plumbers in the Chicago area. He started calling and asking to become an apprentice.

► Dylan Szpinalski prepares a copper pipe, while Kyle Stong diagnoses the problem and the steps to make the fix.



He was not immediately successful, so he called some more, and then some more. He made a list of the ones he called, to make sure he didn't call any of them twice. In all, Fuentes reached out to 60 plumbing houses and only one offered him an opportunity. His plumbing career as a union apprentice began.

His first employer was the oldest plumbing house in the state but went out of business after two years of the five-year apprenticeship. He got on with another plumber and continued to learn the trade. He says the ensuing years were a wonderful learning experience.

"I worked with some great journeyman plumbers," Fuentes says. "I was very fortunate to be paired up with those guys. I learned so many facets of plumbing as an apprentice."

Fuentes is persistent — as demonstrated by his dogged calling of plumbers as a 20-year-old — as well as entrepreneurial. The attributes serve him well as a business owner. "I like working for myself because I like the freedom of making my own decisions and controlling my future,"

he says. "I don't like things coming to me. Instead, I like to go out and get them."

He named the business S&J Plumbing to acknowledge his daughter Sarah and son Joseph. Besides being represented in the company name, they were part of the reason Fuentes was driven to establish himself as a young man in the plumbing trade: He was a single parent, raising two children in his home and needed a steady income.

"I don't want to get mushy here, but everything I did I did for them," Fuentes says. "That's why when I named the company, I decided to honor them."

Continued ►

## Leading in the Office

If you call up the website of Chicago-area S&J Plumbing, after a few moments a message comes onto the screen appealing for a donation to The Kids Pantry of Christian Life Church. What???

"That was Christa's idea," says S&J owner Joe Fuentes. Christa is Christa Limperis. Her title is office manager. As Fuentes puts it, "She handles all the office stuff." Turns out that's a lot of stuff.

Her responsibilities include customer service, dispatching, human resources, booking appointments for Fuentes and software applications. Oh, and volunteering company employees for community projects and supporting community programs like The Kids Pantry's appeal for Christmas-season donations.

Limperis ended up at S&J Plumbing because she worked with Fuentes at another plumbing house. They kept in touch after leaving that firm. When Fuentes started his plumbing company in Arlington Heights in 2016, she was his second hire.

"She added a tremendous amount of value to our company," Fuentes says. "When I was a one-man operation, hiring her allowed me to focus more on customers. It allowed me to focus on growing the business and implementing processes for growth."

► S&J Plumbing office manager Christa Limperis talks with owner Joe Fuentes at the start of a workday. Limperis has been with the company since Fuentes founded it. She handles customer service, dispatching, human resources, booking appointments for Fuentes and software applications.



The seven-year-old company has grown into a 15-employee plumbing house with plans underway to more than double that in the next few years. While the fast growth taxes the plumbing crews that serve residential customers in suburban Chicago, it also ratchets up the pressure on back-office staff.

Fuentes recognizes the connection. "It was a challenge for me to run a one-man shop," he says. "Having someone in the office was so important. Without Christa, it would be impossible for the company to grow now. Without someone like her in the office, it would be impossible to get to the next level."

In other words, behind every good plumber better be a good office manager.

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▲ The team at S&J Plumbing includes, from left, Colin Kurpieski, plumber's helper; Kyle Stong, Dave Denning and Tim Golter, journeyman plumbers; Toby Fisher, plumber's helper; Dylan Turner, journeyman plumber; Jay Parker, CSR/dispatcher; Joe Fuentes, president/owner; Christa Limperis, Mike Taylor, plumber's helper; office manager; Ryan Faulhaber, apprentice plumber; Chris Loveless and Luke Roos, apprentice plumbers; Tom Iversen, journeyman plumber; and Dylan Szpinalski, apprentice plumber.

▼ Plumber Dylan Szpinalski grabs equipment from a S&J Plumbing van while at a residential job. Crews like the vans because of the external storage doors, allowing for many tools to be carried.



## SMALL, BUT BUSY SHOP

His 3,000-square-foot shop is in Arlington Heights, a suburb of Chicago. Yet company crews serve customers across a 20-mile radius of the shop, covering the whole region north and west of the Windy City that includes 75-80 suburban communities. That's a large residential customer base for a plumbing business — and S&J does,

in fact, exclusively serve homeowners and renters. It has no commercial or industrial customers.

“When I started the business after working in commercial and in new construction settings, I knew I wanted just to offer service to residential customers,” Fuentes says. “I love this so much more. It's something new every day, rather than traveling to the same old job site. I get to meet new people, which is always enjoyable for me. I never get bored.”

His crews head out from the shop each morning in seven service trucks. The chassis of the trucks are from various manufacturers, but each carries a full-fledged enclosed utility body with side compartments, rear access to interior space and rooftop carrying framework.

In the trucks are Milwaukee power tools and RIDGID drain cleaning equipment. Video inspection of pipe interiors is accomplished with RIDGID SeeSnake cameras. Though Fuentes swears by Kohler fixtures because of their reliability, he carries a variety of fixture options for customers. “I'm proud of our trucks and they are fully stocked with quality products, 99% of them American made,” Fuentes says.

The company more recently got into drain-cleaning and it is a growing part of the business. Fuentes recently purchased a trailered jetter — a Spartan 758 unit — that can infuse a line with water at 3,000 psi and a flow of 12 gpm. “I don't need the jetter often for our residential customers, but I've had some requests,” he says.

On the occasions when clearing a residential drain leads to bigger problems — that is, to broken or clogged lines outside the house — Fuentes has the equipment to





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“I’ve learned that getting one on one with employees is how to keep them. They are looking for someone they can trust to lead them.”

*Joe Fuentes*

do the work, including a dump truck and Bobcat mini-excavator. The equipment is needed several times a month.

Chicago’s suburban service area contains some pretty old neighborhoods. Consequently, the company replaces quite a lot of pipe, such as waterlines that have aged out and drains constructed in an era of thin-copper material and worn through. Once a week at least, S&J also is called to fix old leaking natural gas. S&J crews stay busy.

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Early in his career, Fuentes chased the money, he says, bouncing among plumbing houses, growing both his skills and his income as a union apprentice. As an employer, he says he realizes now that companies retain good employees mostly through building relationships. “I’ve learned that getting one on one with employees is how to keep them,” he says. “They are looking for someone they can trust to lead them. My philosophy is, I’m here to serve my employees, not them serve me.”

It seems to be a winning philosophy. His longest-tenured employee was his helper when he started the business. “He was my first hire and, seven years later, he is about to become a journeyman plumber,” Fuentes says. “He’s one of my top guys.”

All members of the crew are licensed journeymen or apprentices, except for a few plumber helpers on the path to an apprenticeship. One apprentice or helper goes out with all journeymen. “It always is nice to have a second pair of hands on a job and it also is a great recruiting tool when I’m hiring other journeymen,” Fuentes says.

S&J’s skilled and contented plumbers are producing desired results — satisfied customers. The company does some marketing, but the biggest source of new jobs is the good reviews they’ve received.

“We’re among the highest-rated companies in the area, both in the number of reviews and the scores we’re



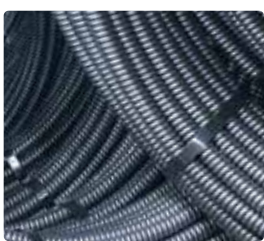
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# Plumber Profile

- ▶ Owner Joe Fuentes meets with some of his crew in the shop prior to the start of the workday. Fuentes finds it important to connect with his team, which can help them stay with the company longer.

given,” Fuentes says. “It’s a testament to my employees, from the ones answering the phone in the office to the guys out in the field.”

Having quality employees is not by happenstance, “When I hire, I am looking for good people, not just good plumbers,” the owner says. “After all, customers don’t know plumbers, but they know people. They’ve been interacting with them all their lives. Our customers sense right off the bat that our employees are good people.”

## THE NEXT STEP

Good people. American-made products. Two decades of plumbing experience to lean on. These are the foundations



of S&J Plumbing. What’s the next step for the company? The goal, in a word, is growth, Fuentes says.

Growing the fleet of service trucks to 20 from seven. Increasing the number of employees to a level that complements a fleet of that size and then reassessing from there, he adds. Other goals include tripling the size of the office, equipment yard and warehouse — and owning the property instead of leasing it. Perhaps the most aggressive plan is to begin to offer HVAC and electrical services alongside plumbing and drain-cleaning, thereby becoming a full-service shop for residential customers.

This is ambitious, but Fuentes seems ready to undertake it. The journeyman plumber has freed himself from service work to oversee the growth.

“For the last year, I have not touched a tool,” he says. “Managing full time is something new for me and I’m trying to get better at it. Sometimes I almost obsess over it. It’s such a challenge to balance making employees happy with getting the work done efficiently.” **PI**

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# Moving Made Easy

Kei Carts attachment saves time by making pipe lining equipment easier to maneuver over rough terrain

By Ken Wysocky

Lugging a MaxLiner HotKick unit (MaxLiner USA) to remote locations for pipe lining jobs used to give Keith Witt a bit of a workout. But thanks to an all-terrain attachment distributed by Key Equipment & Supply Co., called Keikart (formerly Kei Carts), the owner of Witt's Water Works plumbing service in Willard, Utah, must now get his exercise elsewhere.

Equipped with large rubber tires, the aluminum attachment adds new dimensions to Witt's business, namely improved productivity and portability. "It's made getting the unit in and out of my truck much easier, as well as easier to transport on longer distances," says Witt,

a sole proprietor who established his business in 2004. "When I work at remote locations, it cuts transport time significantly. And we all know your time is worth something."

Powered by a diesel engine, the HotKick is used to heat and cure the felt liners used in MaxLiner pipe lining systems. It weighs around 177 pounds and measures 36 by 24 by 49 inches. The cart that comes with it is great for paved surfaces, but it's not as adept at traversing rougher terrain, notes Witt, who does service and repair plumbing, drain cleaning and pipeline rehab work throughout northern Utah.

A recent job required Witt to move the HotKick several hundred feet on an uneven lawn, including an 8- to 10-foot drop down a hill. Observing how difficult it was to move the machine, a MaxLiner representative who was showing

Continued ▶



**OWNER** Witt's Water Works, Willard, Utah

**PRODUCT** All-terrain attachment for MaxLiner HotKick unit

**FUNCTION** Easier transport of heavy machines

**FEATURES** Aluminum construction, 10-inch pneumatic tires, one-minute installation

**WEBSITE** [www.keyequipment.com](http://www.keyequipment.com)

◀ Keith Witt of Witt's Water Works in Willard, Utah, makes easy work of hauling his MaxLiner HotKick with an all-terrain Keikart attachment made by Key Equipment.

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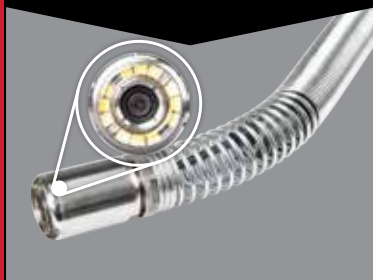
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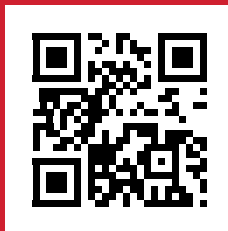
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Witt the ropes suggested that he buy the Keikart all-terrain attachment, made specifically to handle HotKicks.

“We did two shots on the job — one section of 4-inch-diameter pipe about 35 feet long and another section of 3-inch-diameter pipe about 40 feet long — and then another two-shot job,” Witt recalls. “And that all-terrain attachment would’ve come in real handy on both jobs. It took two people about 15 minutes to get the HotKick to the job site, and with the all-terrain cart, I could’ve done it by myself in about five minutes,” he explains.

So Witt invested around \$500 in the attachment, which weighs about 27 pounds and measures about 22 inches long by 10 1/2 inches wide. It features four 10-inch-diameter pneumatic tires, two on each end.

“I wasn’t concerned about the cost,” he says. “I just knew it was a tool that could really help me be more productive.” Witt says he was also influenced by John

“I wasn't concerned about the cost. I just knew it was a tool that could really help me be more productive.”

*Keith Witt*

Larsen, the owner of Rhino Rooter in Brigham City. Witt and Larsen often combine forces on drain cleaning and pipe lining projects.


Larsen was already familiar with Keikart because he owns one of its Stealth carry-reel carts. A Stealth cart with a 12-inch reel can carry 300 feet of 3/8-inch-diameter hose or 200 feet of 1/2-inch diameter hose. The Stealth enables Larsen to work in remote, hard-to-access locations where he can’t take his large 4018 trailer-mounted jetter, made by US Jetting (4,000 psi at up to 18 gpm). The Stealth can also be built with 8- or 22-inch carry reels and features two 10-inch-diameter pneumatic tires. It weighs about 65 pounds and measures 46 by 22 by 24 inches (with a 12-inch reel).

It takes less than a minute to affix the attachment to or detach it from a HotKick cart. To attach it, just position it under the rear of the HotKick cart, raise it into place, slide a connecting rod through the assembly, and push a large hairpin clip pin through one end of the rod. The connecting rod self-stores on the attachment when not in use.

Keikart all-terrain attachment is distributed by Key Equipment & Supply Co., headquartered in Bridgeton, Missouri. For more information, visit [www.keyequipment.com](http://www.keyequipment.com) or call Key Equipment at 800-325-4323.

Witt says the attachment also provides a big assist in weather-related problems, such as snow, along with terrain issues like hills, mud and sand.

The company also owns a Dodge 3/4-ton pickup truck, a 14-foot cargo trailer made by Wells Cargo, drain cleaning machines made by Spartan Tool (100 and 300 models), a Clog Dog from Clog Squad, and a TCM-2000 from GI Industries. Witt relies on the PipePatch system from Source One Environmental to perform point repairs in pipes.

Could Witt work without the attachment? Sure, he agrees. “We’re persistent — we’d make it work. But now transporting equipment doesn’t press on my mind any more. I know I can get the HotKick where I need it, quickly and efficiently.” 



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**“The best training was on the job site. Real world situations mean so much more. We call the team to go over projects. Their experience is so valuable, the team really knows the product and how to use it.”**

Today, Aaron has grown the lining side of his business.

**“About 50% of our work is now pipe lining, maybe more. We subcontract lining work for other plumbers in the area, some call me for help every week. Now, we’ve started booking larger, more technical projects.”**

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<b>Allan J. Coleman Co.</b> 5725 N Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60660 773-728-2400 ■ (f) 773-728-2499 shane@allanjcoleman.com www.allanjcoleman.com <b>ad on page 9</b>	RIDGID, Insight Vision, VuTek, General Wire, Electric Eel, UEMSI, Spartan	1" to 12"	30' to 325'	Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, DVR, SD Card	✓	✓		✓			
<b>Central Oklahoma Winnelson</b> 5037 NW 10th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73127 888-947-8761 ■ 405-947-8761 (f) 405-947-1934 krjones@winnelson.com www.centralwinnelson.com <b>ad on page 43</b>	RIDGID	.75" to 12"	65' to 325'	Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, DVD, Wi-Fi	✓	✓		✓			
 <b>CUES</b> 3600 Rio Vista Ave., Orlando, FL 32805 800-327-7791 ■ (f) 407-425-1569 salesinfo@cuesinc.com ■ www.cuesinc.com	CUES	2" to 200"	100' to 4000'	CD, Compact Flash, DVD, DVR, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, HDD, SD Card, VHS, Wi-Fi		✓	✓	✓	✓	Water, Gas	Sewer, Pipe
<b>Duracable Manufacturing Co.</b> 300 Ashworth Rd., West Des Moines, IA 50265 800-247-4081 sales@duracable.com ■ www.duracable.com <b>ad on page 11</b>	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
 <b>General Pipe Cleaners</b> 1101 Thompson Ave., McKees Rocks, PA 15136 800-245-6200 ■ 412-771-6300 info@drainbrain.com ■ www.drainbrain.com <b>ad on page 52</b>	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
 <b>Hermann Sewerin GmbH</b> Robert-Bosch-Strasse. 3 D-33334 GUTERSLOH GERMANY sewerin-usa@sewerin.net ■ www.sewerin.net <b>ad on page 41</b>		3" to 8"	200' to 330'	DVR, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive SD Card, WiFi						Water, Gas	Pipe, Leak
<b>Hurco Technologies, Inc.</b> 409 Enterprise St., Harrisburg, SD 57032 800-888-1436 ■ 605-743-2466 info@hurcotech.com ■ www.hurcotech.com <b>ad on page 20</b>	LiquiSmoke										Smoke

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<b>Milwaukee Tool</b> 13135 W Lisbon Rd., Brookfield, WI 53005 800-SAWDUST www.milwaukeekeetool.com <b>ad on page 23</b>		100"	325'	Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, SD Card, Wi-Fi			✓			Water	Pipe
 <b>MyTana</b> 746 Selby Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104 800-328-8170 ■ 651-222-1738 (f) 651-222-1739 mytana@mytana.com ■ www.mytana.com <b>ad on page 19</b>	My Tana DrainTracker, NG2, PGR Systems	1.5" to 12"	50' to 400'	DVR, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, Wi-Fi, SD Card	✓	✓	✓			Water	Sewer, Pipe, Leak
<b>PEARPOINT</b>  <b>Pearpoint, Inc.</b> 39-740 Garand Ln., Unit B. Palm Desert, CA 92211 800-688-8094 ■ 760-343-7350 (f) 760-343-7351 pearpoint.sales.us@spx.com www.pearpoint.com	Pearpoint (USA)	2" to 60"	100' to 1000'	Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, HDD, Wi-Fi			✓	✓	✓	Water	Sewer, Pipe
 <b>SPARTAN</b> <small>EST. 1984</small> <b>Spartan Tool LLC</b> 1618 Terminal Rd., Niles, MI 49120 800-435-3866 customerservice@spartantool.com www.SpartanTool.com <b>ad on page 2</b>	Traveler, Explorer, Sentinel	1.5" to 8"	100' to 400'	HDD, Flash Drive/USB Thumb Drive, SD Card, Wi-Fi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sewer, Pipe
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Jeff Haden

# Upscaling Your Plumbing Business

To chart a successful course, service procedures must change dramatically when taking a mom-and-pop business to the next level

By Jeff Haden

**Y**ears before I got there, when the book production plant was relatively small, a line employee made a mistake that cost the company tens of thousands of dollars. In response, the owner decided a supervisor would have to sign off on product quality before every job.

This reaction was understandable, and it worked when the facility had one production line that ran a job or two a day. But it didn't work when there were five production lines that ran dozens of jobs per shift — and often sat idle waiting for supervisory approval. It was a process that wasn't scalable.

Unscalable workflows and processes are a common challenge, especially with startups and small companies like yours that provide plumbing services. What works today — when you have fewer employees, fewer levels, fewer customers, fewer everything — no longer works when your business has grown.

So how can you create a process that will be effective now and still be efficient when your business has grown? Here are five tips.

## 1. Eliminate multiple “touches”

Capacity challenges often create workflow delays. Say you run an e-commerce business and a heavy influx of orders means you need to expedite shipping to meet delivery dates. You could require employees to get approval before shipping via overnight instead of ground. This way you can decide if other means make sense, like re-prioritizing order of the day's fulfillment list.

But that also means the problem requires multiple touches: the initial employee you, and maybe another employee — all of which likely costs more than upgrading the shipping method.

Whenever possible, create processes with one touch point. In this case, giving employees the authority to expedite shipping up to a certain cost amount, or to upgrade the shipping method on a certain number of

packages per day. Establish parameters and trust employees to work within those parameters.

When you trust employees to do their job well, engagement tends to improve — which means you'll have more time to figure out additional ways to improve overall productivity and better handle increased demand. Because too heavy a workload is a great problem to have.

## 2. Determine who is the best person to make decisions

In my case, that meant deciding line operators had the responsibility — and authority — for making quality decisions. They knew the customer's job specifications. They knew our product standards. They didn't need me (or anyone else) to decide whether a job was OK to run.

Line operators were in the best position to make those decisions. Moreover, they appreciated being trusted, since needing someone to approve your work feels like being back in kindergarten.

Scalable processes place broad responsibility where it belongs: with the people who actually do the work.

If you're worried about your employees exceeding their responsibility, or making mistakes, no problem: Check in, monitor and provide feedback when necessary.

You may decide to create an FAQ section on your website to help address common questions and concerns. ... That should free up time for your customer service reps to deal with more complicated or unique customer needs.

Helping employees improve and develop (and as a result, enjoy greater freedom and autonomy) is a much better use of your leadership time.

### 3. Don't let technology drive best practices

It's tempting to streamline or automate a process by adding software or other technology. But that only makes sense if the tools you add support, rather than drive, the process.

Here's a recent real-life example: I toured a manufacturing plant where the introduction of data collection changed how employees physically reconfigured machinery to run different products. While certain aspects of data collection were more efficient, overall productivity dropped since the job changeover process was no longer as efficient as possible. And overall productivity mattered a lot more than how quickly certain data was collected.

Adding a tool should never slow employees down. At a minimum, that tool should make no difference on overall productivity, cost or quality. Instead, determine the best way to do what needs to be done — and then look for ways to automate or improve ancillary functions.

### 4. Decide what doesn't need to be done

Eliminating signoffs is one example. Determining who will make decisions and trusting that person to in fact (rather than theory) act on those decisions is another.

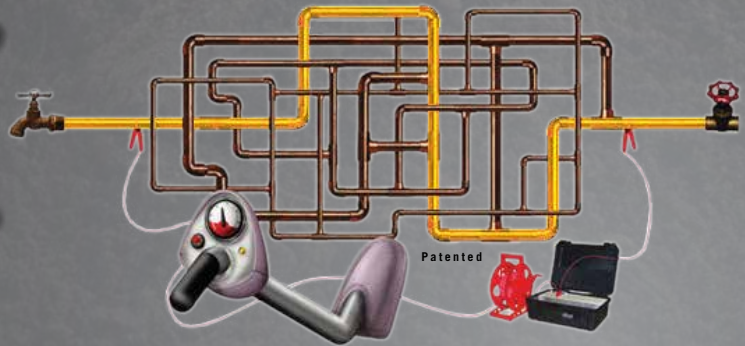
But don't stop there. Complexity is the enemy of scalability: the more steps, tasks and touch points involved in a process, the more difficult that process is to scale. Before you create new processes, evaluate your current workflow and determine what you can eliminate.

Let's say you run an HVAC service company. When a customer calls, someone creates a work ticket. After performing the work, a service tech completes the ticket and they make note of the time, materials, parts, etc. Then someone (an administrator) uses the ticket to generate an invoice.

That system may work just fine up to a point. But if your business grows and you need to add 10 service techs, how much will your administrative time increase? A lot. But not if you streamline the process by creating a workflow where, say, service techs complete work tickets that automatically generate and send invoices. Sure, they will need hourly rate costs, as well as parts costs, but someone

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already has that information. And someone is in charge of keeping that information up to date.

Instead of having the administrator fill in costs and generate invoices, have that person populate and maintain a database — one that could be as simple as a spreadsheet — to help techs complete the cost portion of the work ticket that generates an invoice. Techs are already “touching” the work ticket; adding a few more entries is incremental.

This also eliminates the need for an administrator to ask a service tech questions about missing or unclear information. The service tech is best placed to know what was done, when and with what materials.


This is a process that is scalable: one database, one workflow, accessed and used by as many service techs as you may eventually employ.

### 5. Always start with the bottom line

Scalable workflows cut costs and don’t create unintended consequences downstream. Before you change a process or introduce a new workflow, ask yourself at least three “What if?” questions:

1. What if we add employees?
2. What if our workload doubles?
3. What if our customer needs change?

In the early days of a startup, you may have the time and desire to field every customer complaint because you can ensure that their concerns are addressed and you can discover how to improve your business based on their experiences. But answering every customer call won’t be feasible when your business grows.

You may need to add customer service reps. And you can certainly “scale” reps, but at considerable cost. Therefore, you may also decide to create an FAQ section on your website to help address common questions and concerns, or videos detailing the services you provide. That should free up time for your customer service reps to deal with more complicated or unique customer needs. 

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



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Anthony Pacilla

## To the Skilled Go the Spoils

Putting in the time to get trained and learn about the job you are doing will advance you faster than anything

By Anthony Pacilla

**P**lumbing and drain cleaning are very similar to professional sports in one aspect — your skills are what really counts. Skills and specialization can make you go from an average guy to a rockstar regardless of age.

There are plumbers who have become complacent, refused to go to new training events, no longer read trade magazines and haven't bought a book or read an installation manual in a decade. These plumbers gave up once they passed their code exam; show up at 7, then the coffee break, followed by a long day complaining, lunch break, followed by more complaining, and at last the closing bell at 3 — time to go home, wake up and start over again!

On the other hand, there are plumbers who are crushing their careers. Going to get their license and certifications, spending time after work learning, going to extra training seminars and volunteering to head up units. The formerly mentioned will continue for most of their career wondering why a company will sometimes promote a person with less years of experience into higher ranks.

### A STORY EXPLAINS IT ALL

Here's a real-world example that I ran into the other day (which prompted me to write this). At a supply house I start a conversation with a guy. He explained that he started his career working for a utility company. Being a young man, he wasn't happy with the pay and promotional opportunity structure that seemed to be primarily focused on seniority.

He left the utility company and went to work for a commercial plumbing company instead. After a few years the company asked him to get his plumbing license (which locally requires a 4-year program). He declined because he didn't want to spend two nights a week in school. He quit because he got passed up for a foreman position and said he'd rather just do a lot of utility and site work such as water and gas line installations.

Take your career seriously, and don't allow yourself to "let yourself go" to the point where you're just happy to have made it to another year in the trade.

He said he found a company that did a lot of gas and water installations and repairs, but that they couldn't keep him busy every day of the week. When this company asked him to install sewer lines as well, he protested and quit. He then bounced to another couple companies with the same type of complaint. They always wanted him to go get trained on drain cleaning, pipe lining, pipe bursting, water heater stuff, sewer lines, plumbing licensing, service training and so on.

He said he didn't get into the trade to keep going to school and didn't understand why he couldn't just install water and gas lines all day. I explained that his best bet would be to go with a company who does municipal style pipe lining. He said he would if it didn't require training. To top this off, he said he was upset at his last job because there was a 30-year-old who got paid more than he did right off the bat and got promoted within five years of being there. I asked him about the new kid. He said "all this young kid had was his plumbing license."

The man continued: "He could fix anything. He spent 10 years as a service plumber and another six in new construction builds. They had him ride with me for a few months, he showed me things I've never seen before. He could run circles around people. He could do it all and did so without making one phone call for help. Totally independent. He was also asking to work overtime and emergency dig-ups and even went out of his way to put a

Continued ▶



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crew together of a few current employees and started a quick reaction callout crew for emergencies. He spent every night reading about the trade, went into online groups and tried to pick up tricks, talked to other plumbers, called manufacturers, went to all the training stuff, he was great! It's just crap that he got paid more since he was newer and that he was promoted when I have been putting in years here for over a decade!"

### SKILLS, NOT YEARS LIVED, SETS YOU APART

Having a two-way relationship with a company is an amazing thing for both parties. Loyalty matters, and so do the years of work someone puts in. A company with "lifers" is a great thing. There's something to be said for longevity, loyalty and experience; but just because you lived another year at your current skill level doesn't mean you're better than everyone else or deserve more money or a promotion.

What matters is how skilled you are at what you do. How do you become the best? Don't settle and don't ever

stop. Not licensed? Get one. Training comes available for commercial valve repair? Make sure you're there. Most trade magazines are free — get all of them in your mailbox. This new gas tubing requires a certification? Add it to your arsenal. Foreman position becomes available? Throw your name in the ring and let it be known you want the job.

Become highly skilled, highly motivated and highly specialized. Take your career seriously, and don't allow yourself to "let yourself go" to the point where you're just happy to have made it to another year in the trade. 

-----  
*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.*

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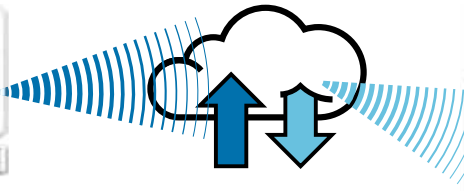


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## Stellar Plumbing

Elk Grove Village, Illinois

**W**hen Steve Prodanov decided it was time to rebrand his plumbing company, he knew he wanted to do something to get attention and to show that the team provided stellar customer service. That's when he came up with Stellar Plumbing and created the design for the company based in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. The logo was designed as a shooting star with bold colors to stand out in the saturated market. Designing the logo was Prolific Prints, while Signarama of Buffalo Grove, Illinois, installed the wrap on the vans. The vans are high-roof Ford Transits, which allow for ample storage and help the technicians keep organized and fully stocked. The vans have aluminum shelving manufactured by J&M Truck Bodies with compartmentalized storage bins. Stellar Plumbing offers residential and commercial plumbing services and drain cleaning in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. "We provide same day service and pride ourselves on transparency and up front flat-rate pricing," says Prodanov, the president and CEO of the company. For more information on Stellar Plumbing, go to [www.stellarplumbingil.com](http://www.stellarplumbingil.com) 



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# Inspection, Location and Leak Detection

By Craig Mandli

## Camera Tractor Wheels

### Cua Claws crawler wheels

Crawler wheels from **Cua Claws** can help improve footage in wet, slippery PVC or other plastic pipe. The wheels have a tungsten carbide furnace brazed to the wheel. An extended range of modes is available that can be retrofitted to the customer's crawler. The company also offers a service to apply its carbide to crawler wheels. Some wheels are stainless and cannot be processed so Cua Claws has a line of replacement wheels of exact fit in mild steel so the grit can be applied. This way the customer can harvest the savings to re-grit instead of replacing the wheels when necessary. 714-697-8697; [www.cuaclaws.com](http://www.cuaclaws.com)



### RapidView IBAK North America tractor wheels

Traction plays a key role in every successful sewer inspection. If your inspection system's wheels are slipping along the pipe, you are losing traction, and therefore are not getting the maximum potential out of your equipment. **RapidView IBAK North America** offers four different types of wheels, other than their standard rubber wheels, to be used in specific pipe conditions. High-traction tungsten carbide wheels are heavy by design and provide great traction in nearly any pipe. Treaded wheels come in two different composites (hard/soft) and provide extra grip on offset joints and hard debris. Granulated rubber wheels are designed specifically for PVC pipes and work well in slippery conditions. Pneumatic wheels are ideal for larger diameter inspections and help climb over obstacles and debris. 800-656-4225; [www.rapidview.com](http://www.rapidview.com)



## Drainline TV Inspection Cameras

### CUES flexiprobe C540c

The **CUES flexiprobe C540c** system integrates survey reporting, video titling, digital recording and portability into an easy-to-use and intuitive package. It is managed by a powerful and intuitive controller and includes a quick boot-up, an intuitive user interface, and a high definition 10.1-inch TFT display. The controller features a high-capacity internal lithium-ion battery, providing power for up to a full day's typical usage. Also on board is 128 GB of no-moving-parts memory, sufficient for over 90 hours of video recording. A report is ready to share as soon as a survey is completed using unique condition codes. Integration with GraniteNet software includes additional reports for a chosen standard and asset system, including ratings and scores. Onboard Wi-Fi connectivity allows the user to use a communications device or dongle as a hotspot, letting then share a survey with a customer, manager or accounts department. 800-327-7791; [www.cuesinc.com](http://www.cuesinc.com)



### Electric Eel eCAM Ace 2 SL

The display screen on **Electric Eel's eCAM Ace 2 SL** is twice as bright as previous models, which is an important factor in the clarity and definition of viewing inspection camera images and data. A brighter screen provides better contrast and visibility of inspection, making it ideal in brightly lit environments like full and direct sunlight. The unit also features a new location on the rear of the monitor for the battery cradle and AC/DC power input. The unit can handle both 18-volt battery (Milwaukee M18 or compatible) and 12-volt AC/DC adapter inputs (not at the same time). It has an entirely new operating system and menu navigation, a screen shot function in JPEG format, on/off function instead of powering up



when plugged in, menus in three languages including English, French and Spanish, and a keypad to reflect new functionality including sonde function. **800-833-1212; [www.electriceel.com](http://www.electriceel.com)**



### Envirosight Verisight Pro+

**Envirosight's Verisight Pro+** push camera is designed to complete drain-pipe and lateral inspections efficiently and accurately.

Its self-leveling camera captures up to 90 hours of color footage from pipes 2 inches in diameter and larger, regardless of material. It snakes through multiple bends for maximum range, and an integral tri-band sonde (33 kHz, 512 Hz, 640 Hz) works with most locators. The rugged, 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 mains or vehicle power. Its controller displays real-time footage on an 8-inch LCD screen and can operate all camera functions, generate custom text overlays with a full QWERTY keyboard, and easily offload inspection footage by SD card or USB drive. **866-838-3763; [www.envirosight.com](http://www.envirosight.com)**

### EPL Solutions Gvision V7

The **Gvision V7** from **EPL Solutions** is a ruggedized, elite camera system that can be purchased as a mainline with 200, 300 or 400 feet of stiff yet flexible pushrod or a 150-foot mini-camera. Instantly capture video recordings and snapshots with the press of a button and access them any-

time within the internal storage. The tech will never have to wonder where a video was taken as geolocation information is automatically attached and displayed on recordings. Add text overlay using the camera reel or a USB keyboard. Copy recordings and snapshots on two USB flash drives at once, or share them using the Gvision app. The app allows the user to remotely control, preview and download video inspections for easy sharing. Users can capture every detail with the color camera head clearly displayed on a 10.4-inch Tru-View LCD screen. Add an internal battery for up to six hours of runtime. **714-453-9760; [www.epls-usa.com](http://www.epls-usa.com)**

### Fiberscope.net by MEDIT TROGLOTREK

This zero-emission, battery-operated **TROGLOTREK** steerable pipe crawler from **Fiberscope.net by MEDIT** can inspect pipes as small as 4 inches in diameter and compact enough for a single operator to pick it up, transfer it to a job site, run the inspection on battery power with no additional generators or inverters, and carry it back. This crawler can be efficiently used in pipes up to 40 inches in diameter. The whole system, including its monitor and control unit, is waterproof and can be used under harsh and rainy weather conditions. Upgrades include a wheel extension kit that allows the inspection of pipes of larger diameters, and a fully motorized cable reel, making the whole set a portable robotic inspection system. It can be supplied with either straight-view or pan-and-tilt cameras, an optional extra lighting kit, and a higher-capacity battery. **877-613-2210; [www.fiberscope.net](http://www.fiberscope.net)**



### Hathorn Inspection Cameras H12

The **H12** control module from **Hathorn Inspection Cameras** is equipped with a bright 12.1-inch VividHD LCD screen. It is powered by 18-volt Milwaukee (or equivalent) batteries, and is available with PipeStream Wi-Fi technology, which allows the user to directly stream the video inspection to up to four devices at the same time (Apple or Android). This system also comes with a full keyboard, eight pages of text overlay, dimmable light control, record/pause to USB and sonde control. It is usable in any light condition (including direct sunshine), providing HD picture quality, high contrast and 8X digital pan and zoom technology. Command modules are paired with Hathorn Standard reels, which offer nine camera heads (straight view and self-leveling), five different reel sizes, five different rod sizes and lengths from 100 to 500 feet. **866-428-4676; [www.hathorncorp.com](http://www.hathorncorp.com)**





### INSPECTORCAMERAS.COM Scout 3-Pro PLUS

The **Scout 3-Pro PLUS** from INSPECTORCAMERAS.COM is a lightweight, easy-to-carry, rugged and waterproof inspection camera. Use the 10-inch screen for better viewing and the 130-foot heavy-duty cable for longer pushes. Included is a 23mm stainless steel camera head that self-levels with a sonde for locating. It can capture high-quality images while recording videos with sound from the built-in microphone. It has a Bluetooth keyboard for typing on the screen, secure internal storage for accessories, and a completely removable control box for limited space areas and easy cleaning. It comes with a set of skids, accessories and two chargers. **603-267-0400; www.inspectorcameras.com**



### Milwaukee Tool M18 Modular Pipeline Inspection System

Milwaukee Tool's **M18 Modular Pipeline Inspection System** is built around their M18 500GB

Control Hub, which powers the reels and easily swaps between the reels for added versatility. Available in 100-foot flexible, 120- and 200-foot mid-stiff, and 200- and 325-foot stiff reels, technicians can inspect 1.5- to 10-inch sewer and drainlines on one system. Each reel features a high-resolution camera, and the 1080p HD self-leveling camera head features high-intensity LEDs to optimize the light output for better visibility down the line. The push cable is built to withstand harsh conditions when navigating through cast iron, clay and PVC pipes. Technicians can digitally pan and zoom up to 4X, making it easier to narrow in on the point of interest. View, record, edit, and share HD images and video recordings from the M18 wireless monitor or the free Milwaukee Pipeline Inspection app on a mobile device. **800-729-3878; www.milwaukeetool.com**



### MyTana DrainTracker

MyTana's **DrainTracker** mini camera moves through tough traps and smaller lines to verify grease and scale removal. Suitable for sinks and bathrooms, this camera includes a super-flexible 50-foot pushrod and a

0.75-inch diameter camera head with a built-in 512 Hz sonde. The 5-inch daylight-readable monitor is integrated just above the controls, and the whole one-piece unit weighs just 15 pounds for easy transport. It also offers adjustable LED lighting for best illumination as it captures high-definition photos and videos. Footage may be recorded to a removable SD card. **800-328-8170; www.mytana.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 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**



### RIDGID SeeSnake microReel APX

The **RIDGID SeeSnake microReel APX** is designed to optimize inspections and engineered with a lightweight, compact profile for easy portability. It features bright LED lights with high color accuracy and auto-flip imagery delivering crisp, detailed images and ensuring upright viewing angles in a variety of pipe conditions. Paired with TruSense technology, this tool delivers an in-pipe image with superior clarity, detail and fewer blown-out areas and sections of the pipe that are too dark to see. TiltSense measures the camera's angle and, when connected to a SeeSnake series monitor, the camera can convey the camera's degree of tilt on the monitor — giving professionals a useful indicator of the pitch of the camera in-pipe. It also comes with a built-in kickstand for in-field versatility with multiple configurations for optimal operation. **800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com**





## Subsite Electronics Push Camera System

When a transporter isn't an option because of pipe size or limited access, the **Subsite Electronics Push Camera** allows operators to complete inspections in the most challenging conditions. Ideal for pipes from 1.5 to 12 inches, it features single conductor technology with a rigid 1/4-inch fiber pushrod covered with a durable Hytrel jacketing that allows operators to inspect up to 500 feet down the line. Additionally, the 1/4-inch-diameter single conductor cable provides added strength without weight concerns, allowing operators to complete significantly longer inspections without the cable getting twisted or warped. The 1545 camera with an in-line 512 Hz beacon allows the operator to easily locate damage and blockage in the pipe. The camera is controlled by a 1575 controller, which features a rugged, durable and reliable enclosure. **800-846-2713; www.subsite.com**



## Trojan Worldwide VISIONHD

The **VISIONHD 1080P** color camera system from **Trojan Worldwide** is a reliable easy-to-operate inspection camera system designed for 1.5- to 4-inch lines. The all-in-one enclosed case features a 1-inch high-definition 1080p self-leveling waterproof color camera head with adjustable LED lights and a built-in 512 HZ sonde transmitter for locating. The system has 100 feet of durable pushrod, and a built-in foot counter. The display module has a 10-inch full HD LCD with DVR and is capable of recording to an SD card or USB flash drive up to 6 hours on a full charge. Other features include a keyboard for text writing and an attachable microphone for voice recording. This system also includes built-in ports to attach larger camera reels to the display module for viewing and recording. Accessories include headphones with a microphone, two skids, charging cord and USB adapter to help center the camera head in the line. **800-392-4902; www.trojanworldwide.com**



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## Vivax-Metrotech vCam-Drain

The **vCam-Drain** from **Vivax-Metrotech** can inspect drainlines from 1 1/2 to 3 inches up to a length of 70 feet. It includes a Wi-Fi reel that works with a smartphone or tablet, eliminating the need for a viewer. The vCam Mobile Controller app receives the video from the reel and controls all functions of the reel, including adjusting the camera lights, sonde functions, distance counter and recording to the tablet/smartphone. It gives the user a choice of the standard 0.70-inch nonleveling HD camera head or a 0.78-inch self-leveling HD camera head. Both cameras are field changeable by the user. **800-446-3392; www.vxmt.com**



detected, the water is shut off automatically and the users receive an alert through the smartphone app. The FloLogic CONNECT module also features a thermometer, allowing low room temperature alerts and automatic water shutoffs. All systems are equipped with battery backup for continued protection during outages. Plumbers who sell and install the system can help their clients secure their home against plumbing supply leak damage, and can help them save hundreds annually on property insurance. **877-356-5644; www.flologic.com**

## Hermann Sewerin GmbH SeCorrPhon AC 200

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



## Electronic Leak Detection

### ELTEK E-WATERBLOCK Long Range

**ELTEK'S E-WATERBLOCK Long Range** is a smart device that can detect water supply anomalies and block water flow with its built-in shutoff automatic valve, preventing flood damages and excessive consumption. Easy to install and set up at end point level, its LoRaWAN protocol guarantees a connection not hampered by walls and other infrastructure. No power connection is needed. Through the ELTEK Portal, a web-based dashboard, all consumption data are shown for each georeferenced device both in an aggregate and detailed way. For every device or group of devices the user can check its status, water consumption and any problem that might occur. The portal will send an alert for any anomaly detected, and the portal administrator will be able to check what's going on, and send a maintenance team to solve it. **www.eltekgroup.it**



## Electronic Pipe Location

### General Pipe Cleaners Gen-Eye Hot Spot

The **Gen-Eye Hot Spot** pipe locator and Hot Spot® transmitter from **General Pipe Cleaners** makes locating pipes and utilities easy. The locator's total field antenna and on-screen icons lead the user right to the target, without a long learning curve. Whether an experienced pro or a first time user, the user can quickly locate inspection cameras, sondes, active power lines and utility lines with pinpoint accuracy. Rated at IP65, the locator can withstand a 3-foot drop, is dust and dirt proof, and water resistant. The powerful 5-watt Hot Spot 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**



### FloLogic

**FloLogic** offers a smart leak detection and automatic shutoff system with industrial-grade U.S.-made cast bronze valves in sizes up to 2 inches. It detects leaks as small as a half-ounce per minute from the moment they start. When a leak is



## Schonstedt Instrument u-LOCATE+

Schonstedt Instrument's u-LOCATE+ is a dual frequency system designed to detect and trace buried utilities. It offers 33 or 82 kHz active frequencies, plus a 512 Hz sonde mode, and is well suited to locate specific underground assets or inspection cameras. The 82 kHz is particularly suited for locating jointed water pipes, which pose a particular challenge due to isolating seals between sections. The signal can be applied to the pipe by direct connection, a clamp or induction. Sonde mode enables tracing inspection cameras or sondes inserted in nonmetallic pipes, ducts or concrete conduits. Left/right arrows and audio signals guide the user towards the target utility. A single button press provides depth estimates. Designed for everyday use, in almost all types of weather and environments, it is a lightweight locator with an ergonomic design, and a rugged and shock-resistant construction. 512 Hz sondes are available. 800-999-8280; [www.schonstedt.com](http://www.schonstedt.com)



## Smoke Locators

### Cherne Residential Plumbing Smoke Blower

The **Cherne Residential Plumbing Smoke Blower** is a fast and easy leak-detection system. The blower uses long-lasting dense smoke that is pumped into a plumbing system to identify leaks quickly and efficiently. Featuring a 5-foot heavy-duty hose that fits a 4-inch cleanout tee, the blower 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, 4-stroke Honda engine provides more than 700 cfm, making it fast, easy and safe to determine plumbing-problem areas. Through vibration damping, excess movement and noise are also minimized, creating a smoother and more efficient experience. 800-843-7584; [www.cherneind.com](http://www.cherneind.com)



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## PHCC announces staff leadership change

Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association announced Mark Ingrao is no longer the chief executive officer of the organization. Former PHCC Educational Foundation Chief Operating Officer Cindy Sheridan has been named PHCC's interim chief executive officer. Sheridan joined PHCC as the membership director in 2000 and became the foundation chief operating officer in 2010. Formed in 1883, the PHCC provides legislative advocacy, education and training to approximately 3,500 plumbing and HVACR businesses and 65,000 technicians.



## RectorSeal names Repco Sales of Georgia as new rep

RectorSeal announced Repco Sales of Georgia is now a RectorSeal representative for plumbing products and solutions. Founded in 1989, Woodstock-based Repco Sales serves architects, engineers, wholesalers and contractors in the fire protection, waterworks and plumbing/mechanical fields.

## Matco-Norca expands its website portal to customers

The new Matco-Norca web portal allows users to check pricing and inventory, review and create quotes, access orders and bids, track shipments and more. In the past, only rep agencies and internal staff had access to the portal, but due to customer demand, the company added more access. The company is also in the process of a front-end redesign of their main website that will include custom product information management.



▲ Paul McKay



▲ Christen Allen



▲ Blake Oatey




▲ Jamie Clapper

## Oatey announces personnel promotions

Oatey announced the promotion of Paul McKay to vice president, Canada. In his new role, McKay will now lead the daily operations of Belanger (Tubular Industries of Canada), in addition to his existing responsibility for G.F. Thompson and Oatey Canada SCS. The company also announced that National Showroom Sales Manager Christen Allen will now lead tile showroom sales in addition to the kitchen and bath market, serving as sales manager, showroom and tile sales.

In addition, Oatey named Jamie Clapper to the newly created post of vice president, eCommerce. In this position, Clapper will lead and grow eCommerce strategy in collaboration with various departments across the Oatey organization. The company has also promoted Director, International Blake Oatey to vice president, international development. This move is reflective of the company's focus on growth in strategic international markets.

## Caleffi promotes Roger Corrente to VP of sales

Caleffi North America promoted Roger Corrente to vice president of sales. In 2007, Corrente began his career at Caleffi as a regional sales manager, focusing on the development and support of manufacturers' representatives and distribution networks in the Northeast United States and eastern Canada. Since then, he has taken on increasingly greater responsibilities, most recently serving as national sales director. 



# Inspection, Location and Leak Detection


By Craig Mandli

## Large service company streamlines with inspection software



**Problem:** AIMS South began as CleanServe — an operation with one jet/vac truck and a few employees in 2000 that grew to over 60 employees, numerous jet/vac trucks, mainline and lateral CCTV inspection vans and related equipment by the time they became part of the AIMS Companies in 2014. “In analyzing our workflow, we determined that the biggest barrier to moving operators to where they were needed was different software,” says Shane Mounger, branch manager.

**Solution:** When it came time to standardize and select a single pipe inspection software for the CCTV trucks in the South Region, AIMS partnered with **ITpipes**. With their mix of CCTV equipment, they knew the software had to be hardware-agnostic. Their pipe inspection software would need to not only operate with their existing array of CCTV equipment but also be able to work with any other equipment they chose to invest in. “Having one standard, easy-to-use software that works on all our CCTV equipment, no matter the manufacturer or age, removed the barrier of different software, allowing us to be more efficient and keep our inspection projects on track,” says Mounger.

**Result:** “We’ve found that ITpipes is easy to operate, and intuitive to learn. With the weekly online training, there’s never a shortage of learning opportunities for new employees,” says Kent Ford, AIMS South Region vice president. “Until ITpipes, I never realized how much the right software could help production.” 877-487-4737; [www.itpipes.com](http://www.itpipes.com) 



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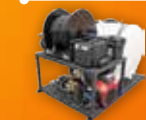
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## Product Spotlight

Alarm designed to catch stubborn leaks early

By Craig Mandli

**M**ost every water leak leads to some amount of damage and extra costs. The key to mitigating the damage is catching them early. The Flood Buzz Water Leak Alarm can help.

Flood Buzz alarms are small but powerful devices that emit loud alarms as soon as water touches the bottom of the device. There are no moving parts, no extra components to break, nothing to install, and they are fully reusable with pre-installed batteries that last up to 3 years. The alarms have been successfully utilized in thousands of homes and facilities, saving owners and managers from the high costs of remediation and repair. According to Flood Buzz Marketing Director Kylie Scharf, necessity was the mother of this particular invention.

“Our founder was heading out of town on an international trip for two weeks and noticed a leak under the kitchen sink about an hour before leaving for the airport. Had he not noticed it, the leak could have done thousands of dollars in damage before his return,” she says. “He attempted to purchase a water leak alarm to prevent future issues, but found they were quite expensive, too large and clunky, and would require future battery changes that we were likely to forget. Our company was already working



with contractor/builder professionals on a different product at the time. We were able to share initial ideas about Flood Buzz and work with them to gather inputs into our earliest designs.”

Flood Buzz units are available in four distinct models, each specifically designed to detect different types of leaks. Whether for use in a small space, such as under an apartment kitchen sink, or in commercial properties under HVAC units or water heaters,

there is a Flood Buzz reusable water leak detector for any situation. Flood Buzz Pro models feature a space for a sticker so customers can easily call right after the water leak alarm sounds.

“Since the Flood Buzz Pro has an indent where plumbers can affix a sticker with their contact information, it serves as a marketing tool so the customers know who to call at the first sign of a water leak,” says Scharf. “We have received feedback from many of the large accounts we work with that this is such a simple but brilliant added value component of how they work with customers to ensure they are alerted the moment there is a leak — and most importantly, that the customer knows exactly who to contact.” 914-552-6692; [www.floodbuzz.com](http://www.floodbuzz.com)

### Watts under-sink Guardian mixing valve

The new LFUSG-HWP from Watts is an under-sink Guardian point-of-use mixing valve with hot water purge. The four-port valve features a hot water purge lever that allows facilities to perform a sanitization at the



faucet with a flip of a switch. Benefits include increased safety with quick sanitization at the point of use. The rest of the facility can continue to function without a full system shutdown, allowing uninterrupted water distribution. No tools are required to initiate sanitization. The valve comes standard with a cover to ensure only authorized users can initiate sanitization. 978-688-1811; [www.watts.com](http://www.watts.com)



### RectorSeal Outset Seal adjustable lineset protection system

RectorSeal released the Outset Seal, an adjustable lineset protection system for ducted and ductless HVAC installations. The Outset Seal is designed to protect indoor areas by blocking air leakage, moisture penetration and rodent intrusion and hiding unsightly wall penetrations where HVAC linesets enter or exit structures. The seal works on new and existing installations, and a single size can cover ducted and ductless applications. The Outset Seal kit includes a 12-inch by 12-inch panel that will accommodate HVAC linesets up to measurements of 7/8-inch outside diameter with 3/4-inch of insulation. **713-263-8001**; [www.rectorseal.com](http://www.rectorseal.com) 



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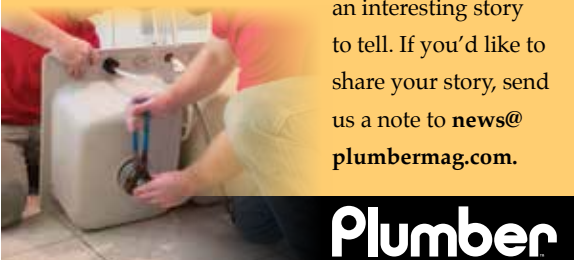
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