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Plumber Profile

Shattering Stereotypes

Colorado plumbing firm zig where others zag and builds a 'high-five' culture.

- By Ken Wysocky



On the Cover

High 5 Plumbing co-owners Levi and Cassi Torres, pose outside of their new Golden, Colorado, office building with some of their service vehicles. High 5 Plumbing was founded in 2012 and has 42 employees serving the metro Denver area with residential service and repair plumbing work.

(Photography by Carl Scofield)

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Cory Dellenbach

Breaking Through the Wall

Recharge, reinvent and reignite your passion of why you do this job day in and day out

If you want inspiration of why you are in this industry and who you do it for, this issue is just for you. Between the profile in this issue to the Industry Insider column there are many highlights in both pieces that should drive your enthusiasm for the plumbing industry.

We all get into lulls at times where you just feel like you've hit a rock wall and you're tired of what you're doing and contemplate quitting. Sometimes all you need is a cold splash of water hitting your face to wake you up and realize what you have and how good it is.

What can you do if you do hit that rock wall, though? There are plenty of options from taking a break, changing up something with the company or finding something to drive you. Let's take a look at each of these options.

TIME FOR A BREATHER

You're frustrated, just don't want to do any work, you're stressed. Guess what? It might be time for a break — a vacation. We all get to that point and plumbing can be a grueling job often and you need to give yourself that time off to refresh your body and mind.

It doesn't even need to be a true vacation. Find a way to get to an industry trade show or training session outside of the normal work day. That alone might be enough to break up the day-to-day work that you need to do with the company.

Many state associations — like PHCC — have annual conventions. Find out when and where your state's convention is and hit it up. You'll get time away from work, but you will be around others just like you. You'll have some downtime for fun and you'll also be learning how to improve your business at the same time.

CHANGING THINGS UP

High 5 Plumbing, featured in this issue, came up with a fun idea to change things up for its plumbing crews. Owner Levi Torres was tired of the normal plumbing uniforms — button-down shirt with logo. So, the company team created

an attention-grabbing logo and developed new uniforms to get the team excited, and it worked!

It worked so well, in fact, that members of the community are buying clothing with the plumbing company's logo on it. Look at that, something the team can be proud of and the company is making extra bucks at the same time. Not bad.

Torres has done other things too — like virtual training — to break up the work days and to help his team get through those tough jobs.

Take a glance at the profile and see how you can adapt what Torres and High 5 Plumbing are doing with your own company.

GET DRIVEN


Is there something near and dear to your heart that could push you past that brick wall? In the Industry Insider column in this issue Randy Lorge talks about the IWSH program he is heavily involved in where they find ways to get water services and septic systems to areas — even in the U.S. — that don't have them.

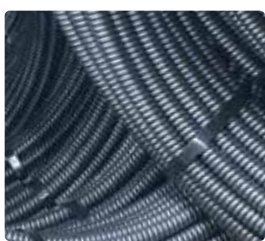
Your eyes will be opened when you read about what Randy has experienced and be motivated to do something like this yourself. Maybe reach out to him and see if there is a way you or your team can help.

This is Randy's last column with *Plumber* as he's focusing more on IWSH and his duties with IAPMO. I would like to thank him for his time over these last several years sharing his expertise, wisdom and stories with us. I'll miss seeing his stories come across every few months, but I have to applaud what he is doing and what he has done. Good luck in the future, Randy!

PUSH YOURSELF

What do you do to keep yourself going and making sure you aren't getting stopped by that wall? Let me know by emailing me at editor@plumbermag.com.

Enjoy this issue! 



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Over the years, NASSCO has amassed and developed a lot of educational materials to support the safe and proper installation of CIPP. If that's a service you offer or are interested in learning more about, NASSCO Executive Director Sheila Joy goes through everything the organization has to offer in this online exclusive. [▲ plumbermag.com/featured](http://plumbermag.com/featured)

OVERHEARD ONLINE

"Don't overdo it. Too many follow-ups can come off as pushy. At the same time, don't wait too long between communications or you risk becoming forgotten."

— Customer Follow-Up Crucial to Avoid Wasted Business Opportunities

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JOB READY

Tools for Success in Commercial Plumbing

Grease-clogged restaurant pipes, hospital plumbing systems that can't be shut down for

patient safety, and apartment complex main-line water repairs. These are only a few of the plumbing issues you'll find yourself resolving if you specialize in commercial plumbing. Zach Mospens, a product manager with RIDGID, reviews the tools that are important to have in order to navigate through the longer, more complex pipe systems generally found in commercial settings.

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BACK SAVER

Hydroexcavation Aids Plumber's Shift to More Sewer Work

When Cary Hansen decided to steer his company — Hansen's Plumbing in Ventura, California — into

more lucrative sewer and drain work and depend less on service and repair plumbing, he invested in a trailer-mounted vacuum excavator. It has become a key piece of equipment for the company. Read more in this online exclusive.

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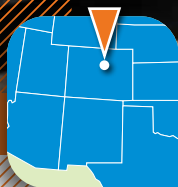
*Results may vary, as cure time is dependent on equipment used and existing pipe conditions.

High 5 Plumbing co-owners Levi and Cassi Torres, pose outside of their new Golden, Colorado, office building with some of their service vehicles.

Shattering STEREOTYPES

Colorado plumbing firm zigs where others zag and builds a 'high-five' culture

By Ken Wysocky | Photography by Carl Scofield



High 5 Plumbing Inc., Golden, Colorado

OWNER	Levi Torres
FOUNDED	2012
EMPLOYEES	42
SERVICES	Residential service/repair plumbing
SERVICE AREA	Metro Denver area
WEBSITE	www.high5plumbing.com

Whether it's technicians giving customers "high-fives" after service calls, hiring a business coach, offering technicians online and virtual reality training or technician uniforms that look like baseball jerseys, High 5 Plumbing is not your run-of-the-mill plumbing company.

"We're not your traditional plumbing company," says Levi Torres, who established the company in 2012 in Golden, Colorado, a far western suburb of Denver. "If everyone does things one way, we tend to do it another way."

"The bottom line is that there are more than 1,800 registered plumbers in the Denver area," he continues. "I need to make sure people notice us and choose High 5 Plumbing."

If the numbers are any indication, plenty of customers are doing just that. By 2016, the company generated around \$1.1 million in gross revenue. By 2022, revenue jumped to around \$7.1 million. And in 2023, the company is on pace to reach nearly \$10 million in sales, Torres says.

Furthermore, the company started out with five full-

time employees and now employs 42 people. And the growth is even more impressive when one considers that company's innovative marketing and branding tactics, a big factor in its success, were developed by Torres and his wife, Cassi — even though neither has any formal marketing training.

"We definitely feel like it's something we're pretty good at," Torres says. "We have a pretty good eye for branding."

That creative spark is reflected in the company's name. During a brainstorming session, Cassi came up with a name that Torres liked.

"I told her, 'That's a good one — give me a high-five,'" he recalls. "Then we both thought, 'Wait a minute — how about High 5 Plumbing?'"

That also led to the company's slogan: "Every call ends with a high-five."

Technicians also ask customers for permission to take selfie photos of them getting high-fives from customers; the company posts the photos on social media platforms.



▲ Levi Torres, right, checks in with plumbers John Peloquin, left, and Dominick Calvo as they work on a job site replacing a water heater. At its job sites, High 5 Plumbing places signs in the street near their vans indicating they are working there and offering anyone in the neighborhood free service call fees if they are called while in the area.

▶ Dominick Calvo, a plumber with High 5 Plumbing in Golden, Colorado, solders copper fittings to the flexible intake and outflow waterlines for a new hot-water heater installation at a residential property in Golden. High 5 Plumbing, owned by Levi Torres, was founded in 2012 and has 42 employees serving the metro Denver area with residential service and repair plumbing work.



“We’re not your traditional plumbing company. If everyone does things one way, we tend to do it another way.”

Levi Torres

“We have thousands of photos of our technicians giving customers high-fives,” Torres says.

A SUCCESSFUL SHIFT

Torres has deep roots in plumbing. As a teenager, he worked for his father, Leonard Torres, who owns Torres Plumbing & Heating in Alamosa, Colorado. After attending college for one semester, he decided to work for his father instead.

“I saw how much money I was paying to go to college compared to how much I could make as a plumber and realized that it would be much more beneficial to become a plumber,” he explains.

At around age 27, Torres went to work for another plumbing company. And after a couple years there, he left to establish High 5 Plumbing after he wasn’t allowed to take a day off.

“They wouldn’t let me take a day off because I didn’t have any personal days left, so I quit,” he says. “After that, it seemed like starting my own business was the next natural step in my career.”

The company initially focused on plumbing for new construction and remodeling projects, working primarily for general contractors. But in late 2015, Torres decided to head in a different direction because the company had accumulated more than \$300,000 in past-due invoices for work already completed.

“We spent the last three months or so of 2015 essentially being bill collectors,” he says. “Then in 2016, we switched to doing only service and repair plumbing. We essentially started a new company.”

Torres says he “fired” all of the general contractors the company worked with except for five businesses that paid on time. Those five companies helped High 5 maintain some cash flow until the company was more firmly established in its new market, he notes.

Continued ▶

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◆ Plumbers John Peloquin, left, and Dominick Calvo, fitting a new 40-gallon hot-water (Rheem) into a tight space at a residential property in Golden, Colorado.

“It was nerve-wracking because we gave up a lot of revenue,” he says. “But it didn’t take us long to see great results. I wasn’t that worried because I was very confident in my abilities.”

MAN WITH A PLAN

Along with the new business focus, Torres decided to invest in some business coaching from the Blue Collar Success Group, a training and business development organization.

“I wanted to restructure the ‘new’ business the right way, from the very beginning,” he explains. “That way, we’d have systems and processes in place so we wouldn’t be overwhelmed by rapid growth.

“A lot of times when companies grow, headaches come along with it,” Torres continues. “But when you have processes and procedures in place, you can avoid those headaches.”

The BCSG provided guidance for things such as office and field operations, inventory management and employee training. For example, it provided an operations manual that spells out exactly what technicians need to do in order to be successful.

“The result is there are no gray areas — no one wonders what they need to do to succeed,” Torres says. “It’s the same for our staff that takes phone calls and dispatchers. Pretty much everyone has an operations manual for their position.”

ONLINE TRAINING

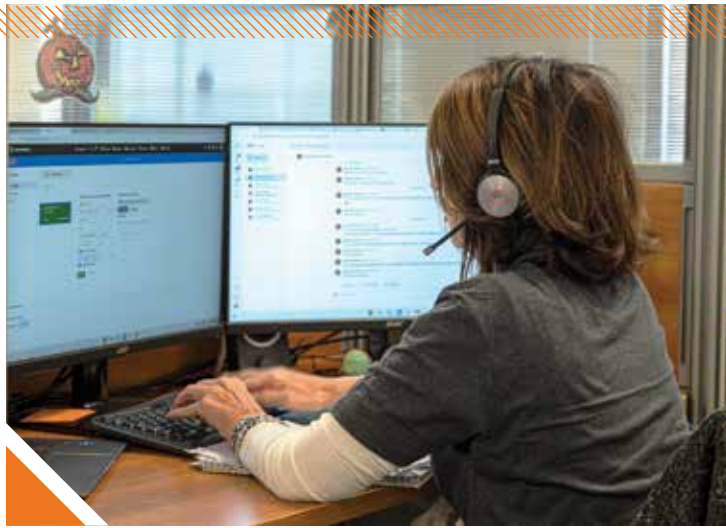
Through the BCSG, Torres also learned about Trainual, an online tutorial program. Technicians can watch repair videos, take quizzes and find answers to plumbing questions. It also contains tutorials for office staff.

“It’s basically an online depository that offers a way to rapidly train employees,” he says. “If technicians run into

“A lot of times when companies grow, headaches come along with it. But when you have processes and procedures in place, you can avoid those headaches.”

Levi Torres

- ▶ Office employee Brenda Hoffman uses ServiceTitan to enter information on a customer during a scheduling call in the company's headquarters in Golden, Colorado.



problems, they can search Trainual and find answers.

“As a result, our managers aren’t putting out brush fires all day because techs can lean on the software for answers,” Torres adds. “This gives our managers more time to pay attention to more important things, like profitability and employee retention.”

Blue Collar worked with Torres to develop the customized training manuals. Employees can either learn by watching, listening or reading.

“It’s a really cool system,” Torres says. “Not everyone learns the same way, so we’ve found that if we can hit all three ways that people learn, then we can ensure everyone gets trained.”

The company pays about \$4,500 a year for the program, which is a subscription service with fees based on the number of employees that use the system. But Torres says it’s worth the expense because employees get trained much quicker.

“It gets them doing things the High 5 way much faster, so it’s money well spent,” he says. “If an experienced plumber

comes in, it takes only about five days before they’re out in the field generating revenue. Before we had Trainual for techs, it was a 10- to 14-day training period,” he notes.

NO ‘I’ IN TEAM

To create a team-centric culture, Torres posts copies of the company’s mission statement and “vital values” all over the company’s office so everyone is on the same page.

“If everyone is sold on your company’s mission, they’ll tend to do the right things for the business because they



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believe the business will take care of them in the long run.

“If you invest time and energy into your people to train them and make them better employees, you’ll always get a better outcome,” Torres says. “If they keep getting better, they’ll stick with you.”

Good equipment also helps support employee-retention efforts. The company runs mostly Ford Transit service vans outfitted by Mastercraft Truck Equipment (a company owned by the Reading Truck Group) with Adrian Steel trade shelving systems.

Trucks carry SeeSnake Mini, MicroReel and standard pipeline-inspection cameras from RIDGID; Spartan Tool 100 and 300 cable drum drain machines; Spartan 717 cart-mounted jetters; and Spartan Cadet portable “suitcase” jetters.

UNIFORM APPROACH TO BRANDING

The uniforms that High 5 technicians wear help brand the company and differentiate it from competitors. Each technician gets to design a baseball jersey in three colors: gray for “home” jerseys, black for “away” jerseys and white with pinstripes for an “alternate” jersey.

The company name is embroidered on the front of the jersey and the company logo appears on the back.

“It allows them to show their personalities a little bit, plus they don’t have to wear the same thing every day,” Torres says. “They’ve been an absolute hit.

“And whenever we bring in new technicians and they see the jerseys, they absolutely love it, too.”

To extend the theme, technicians’ business cards look like baseball cards; each technician gets to design their own card.

“One of our guys held a plunger like a baseball bat for his photo,” Torres says. “Those baseball cards are the talk of the town.”

Technicians used to wear typical uniforms: gray button-down shirts with a technician’s name embroidered on the left chest, the company logo on the right chest, and an American flag on the shoulder.

But in 2019, Torres and his wife were

Continued ▶

Reality Check: Turning Gaming Into Training

Virtual-reality training for plumbing technicians sounds about as plausible as clogproof toilets.

But at High 5 Plumbing, it’s a reality as apprentices don headsets every week and learn how to make plumbing repairs — even though they’re nowhere near a kitchen or a bathroom.

About two years ago, the company — based in Golden, Colorado, a far western suburb of Denver — invested roughly \$2,000 in a virtual-reality software program called Interplay Learning. Coupled with headsets from Meta, it makes training more like gaming — something fun that technicians actually look forward to, says Levi Torres, who founded the company in 2012.

The bottom-line benefits: Significantly shortened training time. Plumbers make more money earlier in their careers, which boosts overall company revenue — and employee retention. And better technician engagement during training.

“We can get someone with zero plumbing experience and give them a headset that takes them into a fake bathroom, where they can figure out why a toilet is making an odd noise, for example,” Torres explains. “The nice thing is they can get trained without breaking a toilet or flooding someone’s bathroom.

“Furthermore, they can log into the cloud-based app at home and do training there instead of on business hours,” he continues. “It has drastically changed how we train our technicians. ... It’s like a video game to them.”

Torres says that the program helps him produce licensed residential plumbers in about 18 months, which is about six months faster than usual.

“If I have, say, three people in the program now, I know I’ll have three licensed plumbers producing revenue by the end of a year,” he says. “They’ll start making good money significantly faster if they’re truly committed to the program.

“If I have a technician making \$100,000 a year, that means he’s generating \$500,000 for the company,” Torres adds.

While virtual training doesn’t replace in-the-field training, it speeds up the learning process because when apprentices ride with technicians, they run into problems they’ve probably already handled during the virtual training, he says.

However, it takes a while for the training to yield financial benefits, Torres warns, noting it took about a year before he saw results.

“You have to realize it’s an investment,” he says.

The company gives apprentices six to 10 hours of paid virtual training per week, which motivates them to get trained faster. And they only get access to virtual training after they complete a stint as a warehouse apprentice, which involves pulling and delivering repair parts, and then graduate to being a field apprentice.

“After that, the only thing that slows them down from advancing is lack of knowledge,” Torres says. “The ultimate goal is to graduate to an installer, because then they can earn performance bonuses. And the more Interplay Learning you do, the better your chance is of advancing faster. “Some guys go from being a field apprentice to an installer in as little as 60 days,” he continues. “If you give people the right tools, they’ll use them to succeed.”

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“If everyone is sold on your company’s mission, they’ll tend to do the right things for the business because they believe the business will take care of them in the long run.”

Levi Torres

▲ High 5 Plumbing owners Levi and Cassi Torres (front row left), with some of their employees and service vans, across the street from the new High 5 Plumbing headquarters in Golden, Colorado. The company started with five full-time employees in 2012 and now is up to 42.

watching a Colorado Rockies baseball game and noted how when players lined up on the field during the singing of the national anthem, they looked so professional — like a team.

“So I bought her a couple of Rockies jerseys,” Torres says. “And they looked so good that we thought we might as well use them for our company uniforms.

The popularity of the jerseys led the company to create High 5 clothing for technicians, from T-shirts to hoodies. The only words on the clothing are “High 5” — no reference to plumbing.

When customers started asking where they could buy High 5 merchandise, the company created a small line of merchandise that it sells on a website separate from the company website. All proceeds go to various nonprofit organizations affiliated with the company’s High 5 Cares charitable-giving program.

“We’ve sold more than 2300 articles of clothing in 22 states and Canada,” he says.

What’s the appeal? “It’s just a cool, uplifting brand,” Torres says.

BRIGHT BUSINESS PROSPECTS

Looking ahead, Torres envisions more growth for the company, both financially and geographically.

“We’re on pace for almost a 30% increase in revenue for 2023,” he notes. “And within the next 18 months, we plan to open another facility in Colorado and open new facilities in multiple states within the next five years.”

While the plan may sound ambitious, Torres believes it’s totally doable.

“I don’t want to sound cocky, but we have a great track record of setting goals and then hitting them,” he explains.

“We’re big on vision,” Torres continues. “Even if we don’t hit our goals within the desired timeline, it’s just a matter of time before we’ll actually achieve them.”



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“We send all our technicians to on-site training. They gain an in-depth understanding and they always come back with new tips and tricks to share with the rest of the team.”

NuFlow’s ongoing support has also been a valuable resource for their company.

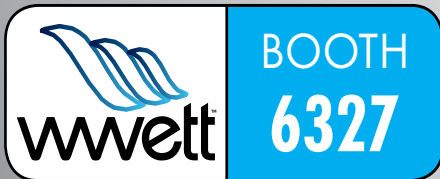
“Honestly, their support is the most valuable resource for us... I’m not just saying that. NuFlow is always there to help us.”

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Christian and Lindsey Rushing,
Peerless Plumbing, Phoenix, AZ

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Embracing the AI Revolution

From autoreply to dispatch, how artificial intelligence is transforming the trade industry *By Joan Koehne*

Do you remember the days when plumbing companies had three or four office workers typing quotes, managing inventory and keeping the books by hand? With the advent of technology, those three jobs were rolled into one. It's amazing what computers have done for business operations.

Anmol Bhasin, ServiceTitan's chief technology officer, is seeing another seismic shift happening in the business sector — the arrival of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence is the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to mimic human intelligence to reason, learn, self-correct and perform complex tasks. Bhasin says that AI has the potential to revolutionize the trades industry to an even greater extent than computers did in the 1980s.

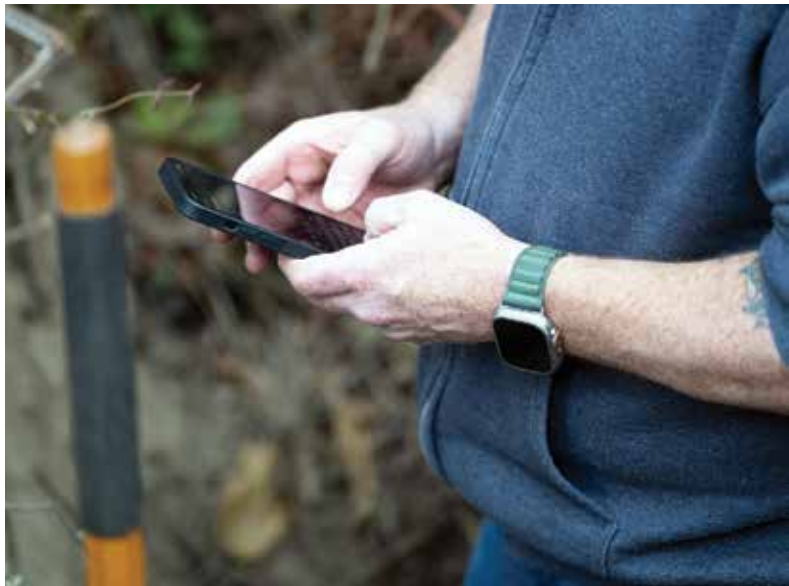
"I've been around AI and machine learning for a majority of my career, and I've seen many different variations," he says, "but I have never seen what has happened in the last 12 months. Never."

BECOMING MORE AVAILABLE

The major change Bhasin noticed is the widespread availability of AI tools. "Smaller companies now have the access to what large companies had," he says.

“The learning curve has changed so dramatically that it's become commonplace. Everyone can use it.”

Anmol Bhasin



▲ Using artificial intelligence is getting easier with smartphones, tablets and computers and the ways to use it is also quickly expanding. Plumbers can use it in many ways including marketing, billing, and answering phone calls and text messages.

Historically, AI was difficult to harness because its systems were based on sophisticated algorithms and complicated mathematics. The complexity of machine learning prevented AI from being available at large. That's no longer the case.

"That's the biggest change that has happened," Bhasin says. "The learning curve has changed so dramatically that it's become commonplace. Everyone can use it."

HOW IT WORKS

ChatGPT, one of several AI resources in use today, comes in both a free version and a paid version and operates as a chatbot. To obtain information from the chatbot, a user participates in a dialogue. By typing what's called a prompt, a user directs the chatbot to do any number of

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tasks. The chatbot has been trained on a large amount of data from books, websites, articles and other sources, and its capabilities are enormous.

AI is capable of writing website code, emails, articles, songs and marketing content; explaining complex subjects; analyzing massive amounts of data; creating images, and so much more. Because of AI's diverse capabilities, Bhasin says now's the time for plumbers to integrate AI into their daily operations.

"It's here. It's an unstoppable force. It's an opportunity for this community to take advantage by being open-minded about it," he says. By adopting the latest technology, plumbing businesses have the opportunity to gain efficiencies and increase their top line revenue. ServiceTitan has already integrated AI into its mobile, cloud-based software platform to help service companies streamline operations, increase sales, and improve customer service.

"In the next two to three years, with such a surge of capabilities available in software for plumbers to leverage to run their business, not adopting them, in my opinion, is a sure-shot way of being left behind," Bhasin says. He recommends taking small steps to start, observe the return on investment, and take the next step.

"Nothing speaks like success. Take a leap of faith, and give it a go," he says.

WHEN AND WHERE TO USE AI

Bhasin suggests autoreply software for customer reviews is a good place to start using AI. When reviews come in, AI has the ability to automatically respond with the right tone, intent and information. Additionally, AI can map the customer review to a specific job and technician.

"A human being can review the response before it's published, but you don't have to write it," Bhasin says. The time savings adds up quickly. "You can do 100 responses in a matter of two hours versus a week," Bhasin says.

AI also streamlines the marketing process.

"Where you could create two marketing campaigns a day, now you can create 20 because you're not creating them, you're curating them," Bhasin says.

By entering a prompt into an AI platform, plumbing companies can produce video scripts, news releases, blog articles, Facebook posts and other marketing collateral. Users begin by telling the chatbot to act in a certain way, for example, as a marketing manager, a journalist or notable marketing professional. They instruct the chatbot to create

"It's here. It's an unstoppable force. It's an opportunity for this community to take advantage by being open-minded about it."

Anmol Bhasin

a specific type of content, adding details like length and keywords to use. They click Enter, and within moments, AI generates a brand-specific marketing piece.

Bhasin recommends carefully reading and editing AI-generated content before it's published, assuring that the document represents the company's specific brand message and personality. Plus, fact-checking is essential. AI is known for so-called "hallucination," when generated text seems plausible but is actually incorrect or nonsensical. So, be wary. You can't always trust what AI generates.


Pricing and forecasting are two other strategies where AI shines. AI can set prices based on multiple elements, like raw material costs, labor shortages, and customer demand. To forecast a seasonal workforce, AI can combine real-time signals like the weather with a company's historical data to predict the number of technicians needed at any given time.

Dispatch is another operation that's well-suited for AI. "The majority of the heavy lift is automated. It's a great example of AI hitting the core efficiency elements of a trades business," Bhasin says.

Another AI product automatically analyzes calls between a customer service representative and a potential customer. The so-called "second-chance" AI product automatically accesses the call to determine if it's a missed lead and worthy of a return call.

AI also powers live chat features on websites. Live chat has grown in popularity in recent years, as customers look for quick and easy ways to schedule services and ask questions. Chatbots are available 24/7 to answer questions, book appointments, generate emergency plumbing leads and converse with customers. AI-powered chatbots provide quick and efficient customer support while freeing time for their human counterparts.

By taking small steps to start, plumbing organizations can tap into an array of services that AI offers. They can choose to dabble in AI on their own or partner with a business operating software company like ServiceTitan.

"Pick your tool and get going," Bhasin says. "Start believing." 

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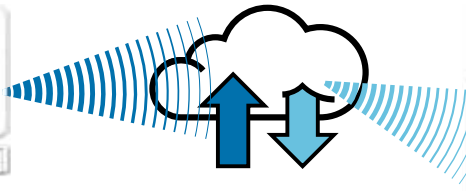


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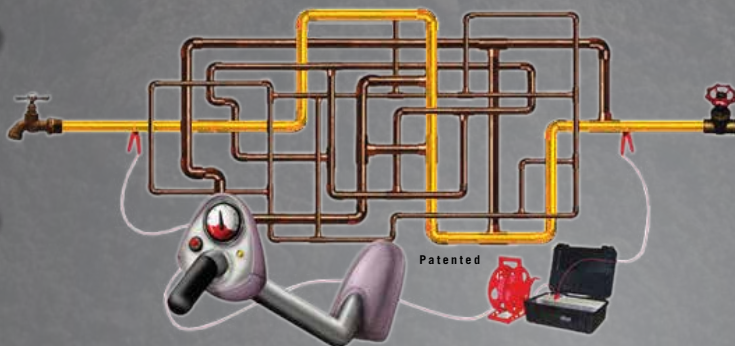
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Kate Zabriskie

Reviving Team Enthusiasm

Follow this solid human resources advice and your team will quickly be firing on all cylinders

By Kate Zabriskie

“They’re here, but they’re not here. My staff isn’t committed, and it’s obvious to me and our customers. We’re in trouble.”

“To say that initiative is lacking is an understatement. My staff doesn’t think beyond the basics. If they hit a wall, they stop. The idea of looking for a window never crosses their minds. Frustrating!”

“Maybe it’s them. Maybe it’s me. Our team just goes through the motions. I wish there were a magic formula to get people focused and motivated.”

While there isn’t an instant solution for increasing enthusiasm, focus and initiative, there are steps any owner or manager of a small business can take to orchestrate success.

Step One: Communicate the direction.

It’s hard for people to reach a destination if they don’t know what it is. Whether you call it mission, purpose or something else, employees need to have a solid understanding of the organization’s why, the team’s why, and their why. Leaders who promote engagement regularly connect day-to-day tasks and expectations with the bigger picture.

Work on creating clear lines of sight. For instance, “Debbie, we’re here to service members. Everything we do should help our members get the most from our conferences. As the registration clerk, it’s important for you to accurately register members and send their confirmation documents within two days of receiving a request. Our goal is timeliness and accuracy.”

Step Two: Delegate responsibility and authority.

Once people know the direction, good leaders give them responsibility and the tools they need to execute the plan. Will everything be done exactly as the leader would do it if he or she were to take on the task? Doubtful. However, great leaders know when to step in and when to stand back and let others own their work.

“John, your job is to manage customer returns. While

I have guidelines for you to follow, you can decide and then let me know how you will organize your work.”

Step Three: Recognize good work and the importance of others.

No matter their role or level in an organization, people like to be appreciated and recognized. Whether someone is a vice president or a temporary worker, leaders who engage their teams communicate the idea that everyone has an important role. Take the time to articulate how others contribute. “Eric, you are the face of the office. When people visit us, you are the person who sets the tone. Thank

Will everything be done exactly as the leader would do it if he or she were to take on the task? Doubtful. However, great leaders know when to step in and when to stand back and let others own their work.

you for taking pride in the appearance of the reception area and screening visitors in a friendly way that doesn’t feel like an interrogation. You’re nailing it.”

Step Four: Support stumbles.

Slips, trips and falls will happen when people solved problems, and leaders who engage their teams to the full capacity have the good sense to support the stumbles employees will inevitably encounter. In other words, it’s about having the maturity to get beyond blame and focus on what to do differently in the future. Do you assume the best? Do you steer clear of throwing others under the bus?



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Do you treat errors as learning opportunities? If not, you've got some room to improve. "Eric, the event did not go as you had hoped, and now is the time to learn from the experience. In hindsight, what could have been done differently?"

Step Five: Instill a sense of calm and certainty.

Without a clear course, employees spend a lot of time worrying and focusing on what-ifs that may never happen. But with a sense of certainty, people's shock absorbers function at maximum capacity. A leader with a plan reduces fear, uncertainty and stress. The plan can be short-term and it can change, as long as it's there and communicated. Do you do all you should do to keep people in the loop? "Folks, we're in a period of transition. We have several companies interested in acquiring us. Nothing has been decided and for the next two months, we're going to operate as usual. When I get information to share, I will share what I know. Until then, if you have questions, ask."

Step Six: Promote a level playing field.

Fairness trumps favoritism every time, and people will stick with a leader through some horrible circumstances when that person is a straight shooter and doesn't favor some over others. Stay mindful of what's fair, and think about how your team will perceive your actions.

Step Seven: Address problems.

Engaged teams don't like mediocrity, and the people at the top have high standards for everyone. When problems occur, leaders who engage confront them head on. If you have conversations you've put off, now is the time to reset and communicate what's expected.

RESULTS WILL COME

Leaders who engage don't do so by accident or without work. If you want to jump-start or refocus your team, start with these seven steps. With some deliberate effort on your part, you should start seeing results. 📌

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



Randy Lorge

It's Not What We Do, It's Why We Do It

Finding time to remember why you got into this industry and who you do it for is important for every professional to recall

By Randy Lorge

Plumbing is not just about the pipes and fixtures; it's about the underlying purpose. It's not what we do, it's why we do it. Plumbing ensures the flow of clean water, the removal of waste, and the well-being of our communities. It's a vital service that goes beyond the physical connections; it's about safeguarding health, comfort and convenience.

It's amazing to me to believe that I have been writing for *Plumber* Editor Cory Dellenbach and his team at the magazine for seven years!

Cory contacted me shortly after I returned from a Community Plumbing Challenge back in 2015, which was held in Nashik, India. It was a life changing event for me where I served as a coach for a young group of plumbing apprentices and engineers. Since then, plumbing has taken me to various parts of the world which I probably would have never traveled to. Places like South Africa and Indonesia.

These were places where this third-generation plumber truly learned the importance and value of his skills.

GETTING CLOSER TO 'HOME'

Over the past years I've written about the "value" of those skills, which each and every one of you reading this possesses and which are most likely taken for granted every day by those whom we serve.

To be honest though, it wasn't until 2018 when I realized that I didn't need to travel to other countries to find the immense need for plumbing and skilled plumbers. It was then that I learned that over 2 million plus people in the United States alone, live without access to safe water and sanitation. Since then, I have dedicated much of the last six years doing plumbing projects domestically, with the largest percentage of that work occurring on the Navajo Nation. The population of the Navajo reservation is approximately 173,637 and it is about the same size as West Virginia which, believe it or not, is larger than 10 other states!

After that eye-opening experience on the Navajo Nation, I left a very rewarding 19-year teaching career as the instructor of plumbing apprenticeship in northeastern Wisconsin, and in 2019, went to work for the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials.



◀ Completed mound systems that IWSH volunteers install as part of the project in the Baca area of New Mexico.

There's a lot of work to do yet and far too many people still living without safe water and sanitation.

It was IAPMO who formed the International Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Foundation — a 501(c)(3) organization that afforded me the opportunity to perform plumbing abroad. Between these two incredible organizations, I now wear my two “professional hats” as the IAPMO director of Workforce Training and Development and as the program director of North American IWSH projects.

GOING FORWARD

While I'm sure that many of you have read much of what I've laid out above in past articles I've written for *Plumber*, I feel it's important for you to see where plumbing has taken me and where I continue to see myself and this trade going forward.

I mentioned my background was in providing education to plumbing apprentices. Each of us knows that knowledge



▲ Photo of the new Navajo Technical University plumbing lab located in Crownpoint, New Mexico.

is power. I strongly believe that statement and always emphasized it to my apprentices throughout their training. In early August of this year, and through the continued work and support of IAPMO and IWSH, I recently completed

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SINCE 2002

what I'll call possibly the pinnacle of my career, in developing and implementing a plumbing certificate program for the Navajo Technical University located in Crownpoint, New Mexico.

This program is the first of its kind in the four corners region of the Navajo Nation. This three-semester program includes six plumbing specific courses (15 credits) ranging from Plumbing 101 to the installation and understanding of drains, venting, water piping, gas piping and hands-on training in a state-of-the-art plumbing lab. This December, six students are on track to graduate from the program. With this training the students will have an enhanced opportunity to not only find plumbing related jobs throughout the reservation but also advanced placement into plumbing apprenticeships throughout New Mexico!

As part of our ongoing efforts to provide safe water

team also provided a walk through and presentation for these systems to various Navajo agencies and community leaders. These systems are currently being monitored and will serve as training opportunities should the Navajo Nation decide to move forward with utilizing this type of septic system.

Both systems were installed in a week's time, and it was largely due to the incredible IWSH volunteers and sponsors which supported us. I can't express enough about how amazing a week it was and what it meant to have a former student working side by side with me and in many ways, teaching me the art of plumbing!


MORE WORK TO BE DONE

So, as you can see, plumbing is so much more than most people can imagine. It is a trade that I've learned, taught, and continue to learn more about. It continues to evolve. Technology changes, products improve and our skills become more enhanced.

But that's what we do and it's who we are. There's a lot of work to do yet and far too many people still living without safe water and sanitation. It's also the reason I need to step away from the keyboard for a while. My workload continues to evolve, and more projects seem to be

pulling me in multiple directions.

It has been an amazing seven years of writing for *Plumber*, and I want to thank them for allowing me the opportunity to write both educational and personal experience articles for you. I've also enjoyed the feedback which many of you have shared with Cory about my articles, and he has shared with me. Thank you.

"Until next time, may our plumbing endeavors always be guided by a deeper understanding of 'why,' as it's in our 'why' that we find meaning and purpose in our work." 

Randy Lorge is a third-generation plumber and the director of workforce training and development for the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials. Lorge is also a member of the planning team for the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation. This 501(c)(3) foundation has completed water and sanitation projects for those less fortunate in India, South Africa, Indonesia and, more recently, 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.



▲ Photo of the new Navajo Technical University plumbing lab located in Crownpoint, New Mexico.

and sanitation to those in need, our IWSH team then took on another project located in the Baca area of New Mexico which is approximately 45-minutes east of Gallup.

In my 3-part series "America's Dirty Secret" I shared a report that indicated over 15,000 homes in the Navajo Nation need sanitation facility improvements. In 2022 I performed 16 site surveys where I witnessed firsthand failing septic systems. Part of the cause for these failures is due to the soil conditions and a high limiting factor (bedrock). Many of these systems failed to the point of producing surface ponding of sewage.

To address these failing systems, our team collaborated with a soil tester (and former student of mine) to perform soil tests on multiple sites earlier this year. We determined that due to the depth of usable soil we had to work with, a pressurized sand mound system would work best.

With this information in hand, we designed two mounds which were then installed as pilot projects for two preselected homeowners on the reservation. As part of the project our

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Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

Aquor Water Systems V1+ Hydrant

The **V1+ Hydrant** from **Aquor Water Systems** is leakproof, frost-free, and lays flush against siding. The connection system is quick and easy — simply push and twist to engage the hose connector. To disconnect, untwist and water stops instantly. It uses water pressure to keep the valve closed, rather than a screw-tightened assembly. It also eliminates concerns about freezing pipes. As soon as the hydrant disconnects, it seals, drains and winterizes. The faucet stops water inside the home's wall for maximum insulation. Stainless steel has better thermal insulation than brass, so the hydrant doesn't need to be covered, even when temperatures reach -30 degrees F. Stainless steel is a recyclable building material, lasts decades and does not produce toxic byproducts during manufacturing. **800-458-1749; www.aquorwatersystems.com**



BK Resources Evolution

BK Resources Evolution faucets are manufactured with lead-free 304 stainless steel, and offer green features that conserve natural resources and reduce environmental impact. They are made from eco-friendly 304 stainless steel, free from brass and other toxic elements. Designed with user health and environmental care in mind, these faucets redefine sustainable plumbing. They boast a 304 stainless stem with an integral check valve, 1/4-turn ceramic, double seat O-ring seal, and mounting nut for robust and enduring performance. Choose from a variety of 4- and 8-inch splash or deck mountings and spout options. The line also includes pre-rinse units for complete project integration. **888-310-4393; www.bk-resources.com**



Bosch Greentherm 9000 Series

The **Bosch Greentherm 9000 Series** gas tankless water heater offers an efficiency rating of UEF up to 0.96 and features for easy installation, operation and simple maintenance. This gas tankless water heater can be



configured for small homes, condos or large commercial applications, depending on the model. Indoor models can be converted from natural gas to liquid propane, with flexible venting options. They are designed with top connections for water, integrated drain ports, and a unique integrated sensor technology that auto-calibrates. The premium Greentherm 9900i SE model comes standard with a glass front and integrated Wi-Fi control (available as an option on other models). The mobile app allows the user to remotely control the water temp, activate the recirculation pump and monitor usage and sensor values from a cellphone or tablet. **603-552-1100; www.bosch-homecomfort.us**

Bradford White Water Heaters AeroTherm Series

With 50-, 65- and 80-gallon capacity units available, the **Bradford White Water Heaters Energy Star-certified AeroTherm Series** offers value, efficiency and versatility. The water heaters are easy to install and maintain and feature the AeroTherm integrated smart control panel plus five operating modes (heat pump, hybrid, hybrid plus, electric and vacation). Units are fully compliant with California's Title 24 energy efficiency standards and are eligible for many local and state utility rebates throughout North America. The series includes Bradford Vitraglas lining, an engineered enamel formula that provides superior tank protection from the corrosive effects of hot water. **800-523-2931; www.bradfordwhite.com**



Century Chemical Bio-Tab

Bio-Tab from **Century Chemical** is a tablet that sinks to the bottom of septic tanks where buildup problems begin. There, self-reproducing bacteria and enzymes gradually dissolve to create a growing area of activity, digesting and liquefying organic waste — treating the entire system, including the drainfield. Common household chemicals such as





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anti-bacterial products, bleaches, detergents or a heavy presence of antibiotics can kill already low levels of bacteria in the septic system. When this happens, waste is no longer being digested, resulting in buildups of solids that plug the system and give off offensive odors. Bio-Tab is able to establish itself by working from the inside out, and regular usage — combined with routine pumping — can aid and support the natural digestion of waste, helping septic systems to maintain good working condition. **800-348-3505; www.bio-tab.com**

CORRO-PROTEC Powered Anode Rod

CORRO-PROTEC Powered Anode Rods made of titanium stop corrosion, rotten egg smell and limescale buildup inside hot water tanks. Designed to last over 20 years, they are a long-term solution that don't require any maintenance. The power supply, plugged on top of the titanium anode rod, provides small electrical current that completely stops corrosion. With that unlimited source of protection, it can double the life of the tank and prevent unwanted reactions like the sulfur smell in hot water, limescale buildup inside the water heater and air in water pipes. Since the anodes won't deteriorate over time, they are 12 inches long and easy to install in a wide range of water heaters starting from 10 gallons to 120 gallons, including a specific model for Bradford White tanks. They fit on electric, gas, solar, hybrid, indirect and geothermal water heaters. **877-466-6660; www.corroprotec.com**



in2aqua STYLE Kitchen Faucets

STYLE Kitchen Faucets from **in2aqua** incorporate Neoperl aerators, ensuring optimal water delivery. Available in side-lever or top-lever, all units utilize ceramic disc technology. They incorporate an optimized user experience and

have received a high-efficiency and high-performance rating, resulting in a designer product that is highly functional yet promotes sustainable usage. Made of quality materials for all components, faucet bodies are constructed of solid brass. A full line of faucets is available in either chrome or stainless steel finishes. **800-257-6051; www.in2aqua.com**

Navien NPE-2

Navien NPE-2 series high-efficiency condensing tankless water heaters can be used for either residential or commercial applications and offer durable dual stainless steel heat exchangers, high-efficiency up to 0.96 UEF, and field gas convertibility for natural gas or liquid propane operation. They feature ComfortFlow technology which includes a built-in recirculation pump and buffer tank that resolves issues of minimal flow rates. They offer a turndown ratio up to 15-1, an increased 2-inch PVC venting length up to 75 feet, built-in HotButton on-demand recirculation system controls, an expanded cascade capability up to 32 units, an expanded common venting capability up to 12 units, and EZNav advanced multiline control with built-in intuitive software and easy-to-use setup wizard. **833-812-0908; www.navieninc.com**



Niagara Phantom One Piece

The **Phantom One Piece** toilet from **Niagara** includes Stealth Technology that re-engineers the flush into a high-power, low-maintenance, virtually clog-free, water-efficient solution that saves water. This technology has a vacuum-assist pull and a noise-canceling tank for a whisper-quiet flush. At an efficient 0.8 gpf, it is powerful enough to flush 1,000 g of miso, is MaP Premium rated, WaterSense certified and surpasses all industry drainline carry standards. It has a modern, sleek design that is ideal for residential, multifamily and hospitality properties. It also offers a comfortable elongated bowl and ADA height. Its design offers a concealed trapway that's aesthetically pleasing and makes it easy to clean. It includes upgraded components like zinc powder-coated handles available in left or right options and a Fluidmaster fill valve that reduces noise. **833-812-0908; pro.niagaracorp.com**

Noritz America Hybrid Hot Series

Noritz America has merged the benefits of storage in a standard tank water heater with the efficiency of tankless into one powerful unit, the **Hybrid Hot Series**. The combination of the storage tank and tankless water heater offers flexibility for indoor commercial applications, such as restaurants and hotels, that require a large dump load of hot water over a short period of time



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¹Consult with a tax advisor for complete program details and eligibility requirements.



without the use of multiple tankless water heaters. It includes faster hot water recovery, continuous hot water supply, a cement-lined storage tank, and common venting for up to six units. **714-433-2905; www.noritz.com**

Oatey FlowGuard High Contrast 1-Step CPVC Cement

FlowGuard High Contrast 1-Step CPVC Cement from Oatey is recommended for cold and hot water systems up to 200 degrees F. Its prevention formula is designed to help protect pipes from corrosion. Its green color provides high contrast to CPVC pipe, making it easy to identify proper installation. This low-VOC, fast-set cement can be used to solvent weld copper tube sizes CPVC hot and cold potable water pipes and fittings up to 2 inches in diameter with interference fit. Using low- and no-VOC products helps improve and maintain indoor air quality. It comes with a dauber, and no primer is needed where local codes permit. It is available in five variations of sizes, ranging from 16 ounces to 1 gallon. **800-321-9532; www.oatey.com**



PRIER Product P-360 Sanitary Bury Hydrant

As Municipal codes move to protect people from ecological harms, **PRIER Products** has created the **P-360 Sanitary Bury Hydrant** to meet these changing codes. It stores water in a concealed canister, eliminating the need for an exposed weep hole underground. There is no chance of water contamination. It uses a piston system, rather than venturi, so it doesn't require winterization. It is serviceable from above surface. There is a catch for easy hands-free bucket fills and a high flow rate of 10 gpm at 25 psi differential. It is tested and approved to the ASSE 1057 Standard. The hose outlet is where all the safety features are housed, including a vacuum breaker and backflow preventer. This sanitary hydrant is also tested and approved to NSF-372, certifying it as lead-free. **800-362-9055; www.prier.com**



Rheem ProTerra Heat Pump Water Heaters

Rheem ProTerra Heat Pump Water Heaters include the EcoNet app that allows users to adjust the tank temperature and operating

modes remotely, set custom schedules to match needs throughout the day and view energy usage tracking. Users can also access Rheem's Hot Water Availability feature that indicates how much hot water is available in the tank, preventing any cold shower surprises. They are Energy Star 5.0 certified and reduce energy usage and carbon footprint by up to 75%. The ProTerra Hybrid Electric model features a UEF of up to 4.07. **866-339-2388; www.rheem.com**

Uponor AquaPort

The **Uponor AquaPort** is a self-contained unit that converts a building's hydronic heating supply to on-demand domestic hot water. This solution eliminates centralized domestic hot water and recirculation piping to provide numerous benefits, including energy and water savings, improved water quality, installation efficiencies and reduced maintenance. **800-321-4739; www.uponor-usa.com**



Viega MegaPressGXL Ball Valve

Viega MegaPressG Ball Valves are first press valves available in sizes up to 4 inches and are a safe and fast way to connect gas pipe. The valves have an HNBR sealing element at the press-ends which is compatible with fuel and gas applications, including natural gas and propane. They reduce installation time up to 90% when compared to traditional methods and require no open flames or hot work permits. The HNBR sealing element operates in temperatures from -40 to 180 degrees F and is compatible with a variety of applications. All fittings and valves come with Smart Connect technology that detects unpressed connections. **800-976-9819; www.viega.us**



Vista Water Group VersaCheck Dual Check Backflow Preventer

The **VersaCheck Dual Check Backflow Preventer** from **Vista Water Group** is a QAI-certified plumbing solution that seamlessly marries environmental responsibility with uncompromised performance. Crafted from premium, eco-friendly materials, this line of check valves sets a standard for sustainability in the plumbing industry, all while meeting or exceeding strict national plumbing standards. It is



truly 100% free of lead and other harmful chemicals, is NSF-compliant and completely nonreactive to chlorine and hard water. It is designed to serve a wide range of applications, is available in hard-anodized aluminum and PVC, sized from 1/4 to 1 1/2 inches, and uses female NPT ports or quick-connect fittings. 419-565-5702; www.vistawatergroup.com

W4 Smith-Blair Plumbing Couplings

Smith-Blair steel plumbing couplings from W4 (Westcoast Water Works Warehouse) are high quality and eco-friendly. They are manufactured with VOC-free powder coatings. In addition, the stainless passivation process helps them to stand up and last by reducing the effects of corrosion. 866-234-9494; www.w4-w4.com



Waterless Co. Urinals

Waterless urinals from Waterless Co. are a go-to fixture for sustainable restrooms and facilities. Offering the most simple and cost-effective system on the world market, the many size models reduce water use up to 40,000 gallons per year, improve restroom hygiene due to their dryness, reduce vandalism and install easily to standard 2-inch drainlines. 800-244-6364; www.waterless.com



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Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

School restrooms go high-tech with touch-free washbasin



Problem: The Agnews Campus in the Santa Clara Unified School District serves 3,000 students in San Jose, California. The district worked with LPA Design Studios to design the schools with a high-tech aesthetic — even in the restrooms. “Our main goals for the restrooms were to maximize ease of use, clean and modern aesthetics, and maintenance,” says Alice Kim, project interior designer, LPA.

Solution: The design team chose the all-in-one **WashBar with Verge** washbasins from **Bradley Corp.** as the standard for all 136 campus restrooms. With touch-free soap, water and hand dryer in one chrome-plated component, the WashBar makes handwashing easier, more accessible and hygienic. A total of 147 WashBars were specified.

Result: “With combined and integrated functions, the WashBar met the needs of easy access and usage, as well as clean aesthetics,” says Kim. The basin and the WashBar hand dryer are designed to work together to eliminate water dripping onto the user, walls or floor. “The units eliminated facility personnel’s concern of dripping water from sink basin to hand dryer, which could result in slip/fall hazard,” Kim says. 800-272-3539; www.bradleycorp.com

Pressurization unit keeps boiler running efficiently



Problem: During a recent routine boiler check, the maintenance team at Marian Village, an assisted- and independent-living community in southwest-suburban Chicago, discovered water pouring from the top of the pump and flooding the room.

Solution: The **Mikrofill 3** is engineered to help facility managers avoid that type of problem. It is a direct-type pressurization unit intended specifically for sealed, low-pressure hot-water and chilled-water applications. Able to fill any heating or chilled water system from empty without using a pump, the product also delivers commercial backflow protection with no RPZ valves. The leak and flood protection derives from the unit continuously monitoring system inlet and operating pressures through pre-commissioned sensors that automatically maintain system presets. By recognizing a change in cold-fill water pressure, these sensors open the valves to top off the system, stopping the fill once the required pressure has been reached.

Result: Installer Rich Friedman’s smooth installation at Marian Village validated the unit’s effectiveness and efficiency. This has led to further plans for additional installs in the community’s boiler system. www.mikrofill.com

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Hotel stages efficient conversion of 900 bathtubs to step-in showers



Problem: Located in downtown Houston, Hilton Americas-Houston aimed to convert 900 bathtubs into step-in showers for their elite guests, including star athletes and celebrities. Mechanical contractor Way Engineering faced challenges coordinating the plumbing rough-ins with the drain openings in the preformed shower pans and accommodating the hotel's post-tension cables without compromising its structural integrity.

Solution: Way Engineering discovered **QuickDrain**, a versatile system, at a local Houston ASPE event. The **ShowerLine** linear shower drain system proved ideal. Its modular design and flexibility allowed for easy adaptation to existing conditions, eliminating the need for material handling and additional expenses. Its integrated PVC drain body, combined with a pre-sloped PET shower panel and waterproofing sheet membrane, represents a total shower solution for effective and efficient drainage. The drain system features a fully sloped trough where water exits through either a vertical or a side waste outlet, making it easy to accommodate existing plumbing.


Result: With QuickDrain's system, Way Engineering successfully converted 900 bathtubs into elegant, modern showers at the Hilton Americas Houston Hotel. The system's ease of installation and compatibility with various job site conditions maximized productivity and minimized disruption to hotel operations. The project was completed efficiently, allowing the hotel to maintain high occupancy rates and generate revenue, without inconveniencing guests. **866-998-6685; www.lrbrands.com/quickdrain**

Contractor saves costs and hassle with above-floor plumbing solution

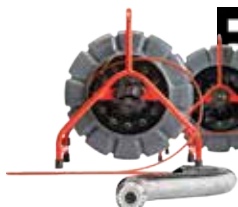


Problem: Robert Hightower and his wife planned to renovate their master bathroom in their luxury high-rise condo in Marietta, Georgia. However, they faced a significant challenge due to building association rules that required anything embedded in the concrete floor to remain intact. This meant that conventional below-floor plumbing was not an option, jeopardizing the structural integrity of the building. Raising the floor was also not feasible as it would have been costly and inconvenient.

Solution: Hightower sought advice from his neighbor, Lester Crowell, who had successfully used **Saniflo's** above-floor plumbing in his own condo renovation. Danny Glass of Cool Air Mechanical recommended the installation of the one-piece, dual-flush **Sanicompact Comfort** toilet. This compact, self-contained toilet system could be installed without the need for traditional below-floor drainage, saving cost and space. Its dual-flush system (1.28 gpf for solid waste; or 1 gpf for liquid only) conserves water and lowers utility bills. In addition, the system does not require external venting to function properly. The one-piece unit is powered by a 0.5 hp motor, which allows it to discharge effluent up to 9 feet vertically and/or 120 feet horizontally. The discharge line extends 8 feet vertically from the Sanicompact and 2 feet diagonally into the ceiling where it is connected to the drainline. The toilet is mounted on the wall, which saves space and makes cleaning easy.

Result: Installing the unit took a few hours, but the entire project was successfully completed in just under three days. "We were able to swiftly and effectively install the Sanicompact Comfort, and Robert and his wife were thrilled with the outcome of their bathroom renovation project," says Glass. "There are numerous advantages to using this product. I can't think of many reasons why you wouldn't want to go with it. It's a no-brainer compared to breaking up a slab or dealing with the unknowns of a multistory unit." **800-571-8191; www.saniflo.com** 

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Product Spotlight

Heat pump water heater pushes sustainability

By Craig Mandli

With constantly more stringent regulations and decarbonization goals on every priority list, the bar is continually rising on products that raise efficiency and maximize energy savings. The Veritus Heat Pump Water Heater from Lochinvar serves as a sustainable option, providing energy savings and reliable domestic hot water for a wide variety of commercial applications.

The product fits an ever-growing industry need, according to Jennifer Russell, segment development manager, decarbonization at Lochinvar. “With the recent introduction of new regulations and increasing customer demand, heat pump water heaters have already begun to play a major role in the decarbonization of the industry,” she says.

ECM pumps, fans and a scroll compressor work together to enable Veritus to operate with a high coefficient of performance, optimize heat transfer and minimize emissions. To provide improved installation flexibility, the heat pumps are modular, meaning units can be manifolded together — ensuring ample hot water supply, built-in redundancy and capacity matching for larger commercial water heater demands. According to Russell, the unit’s competitive footprint and modular design allow for versatile application in health care, fitness clubs, multifamily and other commercial buildings, aligning with recent regulations



promoting high efficiency heat pumps. Its modular design enables contractors to transport individual models to a rooftop in a freight elevator, rather than having to move larger models as one piece via crane, improving installation flexibility for the contractor.

The Veritus employs a low Global Warming Potential Refrigerant. When paired with Lochinvar’s Thermal-Stor storage tank, the tank’s baffle ensures

the system performs optimally by controlling the stratification of hot water as it’s stored, enhancing overall system performance. To make installation even easier for contractors, the control box can be installed separately from the tanks and heat pump units, providing further flexibility. A user-friendly SMART TOUCH control panel makes it easy for users to adjust settings and monitor performance. An ECM variable speed pump ensures precise control, higher efficiency and reduced noise levels. The unit operates efficiently in below-freezing temperatures due to its reversing defrost cycle that minimizes defrost time.

“We know that customers are hungry to see highly efficient commercial heat pump technology, so we’re thrilled to officially introduce Veritus to the market,” says Russell. “This product is one of many that demonstrates Lochinvar’s commitment to sustainability.” 615-889-8900; www.lochinvar.com.

Continued ▶

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Superior Signal 5E FLEX battery-powered smoke blower

Superior Signal's new 5E FLEX battery-powered smoke blower is specifically designed for smoke testing building plumbing and sewer laterals. The 5E FLEX is compatible with leading 18- to 20-volt tool batteries and, utilizing a high-quality power adapter, the blower integrates seamlessly with an existing electric tool set. Additionally, it can also run off any 12-24-volt power source — such as a car or truck battery — using the DC clips power adapter. The 5E FLEX gently pushes smoke through the system in just a few minutes and takes only seconds to see results. Smoke testing is a cost-effective solution ideal for hard-to-find odors, leaks and other faults in commercial, residential and municipal facilities. While the 5E Blower is popular for a variety of plumbing applications, it is also particularly useful in testing sewer laterals, and can clearly illustrate where a fault or leak may occur on private property. USA-made, the 5E FLEX comes with an 8-foot industrial grade hose. Used with Superior's 1A or 2B smoke candles, it creates 4,000 or 8,000 cubic feet of smoke, respectively. Superior's smoke candles are also sold in convenient SealPac cans which extend shelf life. 732-251-0800; www.superiorsignal.com/prflex



A. O. Smith water heaters with X3 scale prevention technology

A. O. Smith launched its concentric vent non-condensing tankless water heater line with X3 scale prevention technology. The technology ensures uninterrupted functionality, eliminates the need for scale-related maintenance and extends the life span of tankless units three times longer than unprotected units. Designed to meet the needs of industry professionals, the X3 simplifies installations thanks to contractor-preferred concentric venting. The unit accommodates long venting runs and features quick natural-gas-to-propane field convertibility for added flexibility. 800-527-1953; www.hotwater.com



J.C. Whitlam Talon HDPE drainpipe adhesive

J.C. Whitlam Company's Talon HDPE drainpipe adhesive is now available for purchase through wholesale plumbing, irrigation and underground utility supply houses. The adhesive is excellent for bonding high-density polyethylene drainage pipe,



perforated sewer drainpipe, smoothwall HDPE sewer and drainpipe, and many other types. Once fully cured, the adhesive creates a permanent watertight seal, effectively preventing costly root intrusion at the joint. The product is ideal for various jobs, including new home construction, repair plumbing and basement waterproofing. It is especially useful for bonding foundation drains, French drains, perimeter drains or footer drains to prevent separation when backfilling. 330-334-2524; www.jcwhitlam.com



MAC Faucets washroom accessories collection

MAC Faucets' washroom accessories collection provides a large selection of accessories for the commercial bathroom focusing on creating a unified and visually appealing bathroom environment. It includes grab bars, soap, aroma/air freshener, toilet paper and toilet seat cover dispensers and touch-free hand dryers. Each collection of accessories is available in an array of over 22 finishes to complement the MAC automated faucet offering. The collection is offered in stainless steel for maximum durability. 866-558-3200; www.macfaucets.com



Assured Automation SV Series 2-way solenoid valves

The Assured Automation SV Series is a general purpose, stainless steel, two-way solenoid valve with NPT end connections that can be used in a wide variety of applications. ¼- to 2-inch NPT ends are stock and G-threads are available via special order. The corrosion-resistant stainless body is ideal for OEMs looking for a durable two-way solenoid for their equipment. Typical applications include pumps and compressors, pollution control equipment and heating with low or high pressure steam. 800-899-0553; www.assuredautomation.com

Leak Defense BuildAlert system for job site protection

Leak Defense, a Watts brand, has released BuildAlert, a new system that allows users to gain 24/7 visibility into their construction job site. It can automatically turn off water in the event of a leak both during and after working hours. With automatic controls, displays, and alarms, users have easy access to essential functions whether on or off the job site. The system utilizes remote on/off capabilities accessible via a free PC or mobile app, making it convenient to control operations as long as there's an internet connection. 866-410-1134; www.leakdefense.com



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WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY SERVICE?

- Plumbing/Heating/Cooling
- Rehabilitation/Relining/Bursting
- Sewer/Drain Cleaning
- Dealer/Distributor/Manufacturer
- Septic System Installation/Repair
- Consulting/Engineering
- Other _____

WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PRIMARY JOB FUNCTION?

- President/CEO/Owner
- Management/Supervisor
- Operator/Technician
- Other _____

HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DO YOU SUPERVISE OR WORK WITH AT YOUR FACILITY?

- 1-3
- 4-9
- 10-19
- 20+

HOW MANY VEHICLES DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE IN SERVICE?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21+

WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE POPULATION OF THE AREA IN WHICH YOU PROVIDE SERVICE?

- 1-10,000
- 10,001-50,000
- 50,001-100,000
- 100,001-200,000
- 200,001-500,000
- 500,001+

WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL EQUIPMENT BUDGET?

- \$1-\$50K
- \$51K-\$75K
- \$76K-\$150K
- \$151K-\$250K
- \$251K-\$350K
- \$350K +

WHAT SERVICES DO YOU PERFORM ON A REGULAR BASIS?

- Plumbing Maintenance/Repair
- Sewer/Drain Cleaning
- New Construction - Commercial
- Pipe Bursting
- New Construction - Residential
- HVAC
- TV Inspection
- Location/Leak Detection
- Septic System Installation
- Septic Tank Pumping
- Other _____

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WQA launches Mark of Excellence recognition program

The Water Quality Association unveiled a new member recognition program called the Mark of Excellence to honor water treatment professionals demonstrating a commitment to quality at the highest level. The program distinguishes WQA member companies that sell certified products and employ certified professionals. The Mark of Excellence replaces the six-year-old Business Excellence designation, which required companies to pay a program fee and apply for the recognition. Instead, the Mark is awarded automatically at no extra charge to companies that meet its three criteria: are a WQA member in good standing; sell or manufacture certified water treatment products; have certified professionals on staff in the individual location.

Caleffi welcomes Kayla Redding as sales manager

Caleffi North America announced Kayla Redding as the new regional sales manager for the Western U.S. Redding holds a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from York College of Pennsylvania and an MBA from Ashford University. She has over 17 years' experience in the manufacturing and construction industries.

Joseph Sullivan joins the PHCC Educational Foundation Board of Governors

The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors — National Association's Educational Foundation has named Joseph Sullivan to the organization's board of governors. Sullivan's company, J.J. Sullivan Plumbing and Heating, works on commercial and institutional jobs in the Cambridge, Massachusetts area. He served as the PHCC of Massachusetts state treasurer for 20 years.




Oatey promotes Patrick Aquino to SVP, Wholesale

Oatey has promoted Patrick Aquino to senior vice president, wholesale. With almost 20 years' experience in sales and business development, Aquino joined Oatey nearly eight years ago as northeast regional sales manager. He has since gained progressive responsibility as national sales manager; director of rough plumbing and commercial sales; and most recently, vice president, wholesale.



Heat-flo celebrating 25 years in business

Heat-flo, headquartered in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Serving a range of industries from plumbing to hydronic heating to renewable energy, the company designs and manufactures stainless steel water heaters and storage tanks. Heat-flo's dedication to quality assurance, sustainable practices and customer satisfaction has earned it a reputation for reliability and excellence. 

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Dennis Dallos
Plumb Twisted
Cushing, Oklahoma



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Jan. 16-18, 2024

2024 Mechanical Contractors Association of America Safety & Health Conference, Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, Tucson, Arizona. Visit www.mcaa.org/events/calendar/2024-safety-health-conference/

Jan. 22 - 24, 2024

AHR Expo, McCormick Place, Chicago. Visit <https://ahrexpo.com>

Jan. 24-27, 2024

Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis. Visit www.wwetshow.com

Jan. 29-31, 2024

Manufacturing Extension Partnership Innovative Conference, Signia by Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek, Florida. Visit www.mcaa.org/events/calendar/2024-mep-innovation-conference/



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Tampa Build Expo, Tampa Convention Center (East Hall), Tampa. Visit buildexpousa.com/tampa-build-expo/

Feb. 27-29

National Association of Home Builders International Builder's Show, Las Vegas Convention Center. Visit www.buildersshow.com

Feb. 27-29

Kitchen & Bath Industry Show, Las Vegas Convention Center. Visit www.buildersshow.com

March 10-13

WaterReuse Symposium, Hilton Denver City Center, Colorado. Visit watereuse.org/news-events/conferences/2024-watereuse-symposium/

March 11-14

Air Conditioning Contractors of America 2023 Conference & Expo, Universal Orlando's Sapphire Falls Resort, Florida. Visit accaconference.com

March 17-21

Mechanical Contractors Association of America (MCCA) Annual Convention, JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes, Florida. Visit mcaa.org/events/calendar/mcaa-annual-convention-2024/

March 22

Illinois PHCC EXPO North, Drury Lane Conference Center, Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois. Visit ilphcc.com/expo

March 26 - 28

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

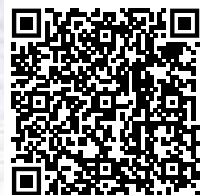


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