

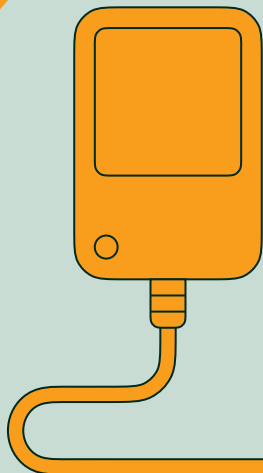
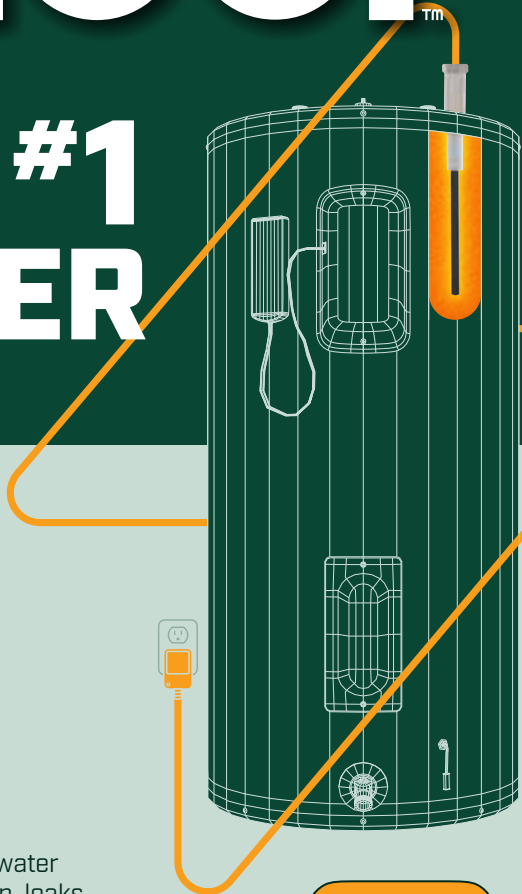
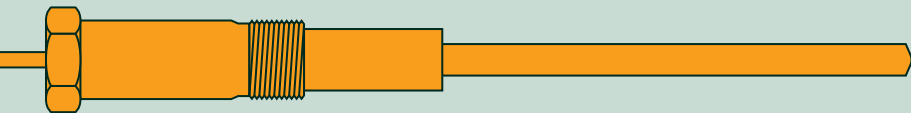
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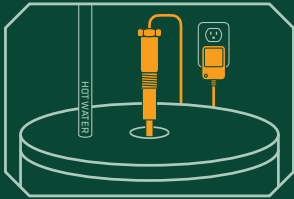
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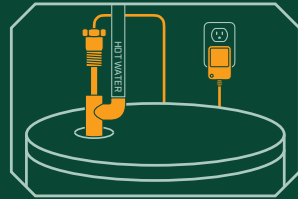


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Plumber Profile

Island Roots to Mainland Growth

Plumbing company goes from humble beginnings to a trans-Pacific success story thanks to perseverance and commitment.

- By Giles Lambertson



On the Cover

All Aloha Plumbing plumbers Kenny Agdinaoy, left, and apprentice Ben Garcia install a new propane water heater (Bradford White) at a residential home on the Hawaiian island of Maui. The company has locations in Maui; Oahu; San Diego, California; and Tempe, Arizona. **(Photography by Matthew Thayer)**

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Cory Dellenbach

Being Dependable

Make yourself available to customers, or even just answering the phone and getting back to them can be the difference in retaining them

Dependability matters. You've probably heard that a time or two. It is especially important in the plumbing industry where your customers depend on you and you depend on your crew and your supply houses to be there when you need them.

I learned a lot about dependability this past fall. I had a string of bad luck starting with two car accidents on the same day at almost the same time with different members of my family. It continued onto a wash machine that finally died on me and then a combi-boiler that failed.

Things that were supposed to be dependable were suddenly not dependable. It's frustrating to say the least.

Being dependable to your customers is one of the most important parts of your job.

We no longer had a dependable vehicle to get us around, we had to deal with undependable wash machines at a laundromat for a little bit, and we didn't have dependable heating in our house for a little while.

FINDING DEPENDABILITY

Throughout all of this, there is one thing that I could count on. When that boiler went down and when the pipe broke to connect the new washer to our plumbing system, I knew I had someone I could reach out to.

Our go-to plumber is one of the most dependable contractors in our area. I sent him a text and he responded almost immediately saying he would be over shortly. This was on a weekend, mind you.

Sure enough he was there within an hour diagnosing the problem. It wasn't going to be a fast fix as he had to wait for a supply shop to open the next day. Thankfully when that shop did open, the supply house proved to be dependable for him as they had the part in stock and our plumber could pick up the part.


The little inconvenience of not having hot water or heat for a day or two didn't matter as much knowing that we reached our plumber, he was responsive and was quick at finding what was wrong and getting it fixed.

BEING A GOOD EXAMPLE

I've heard friends and acquaintances talk about how they don't have a contractor they can depend on regularly. If something breaks they're looking online for someone to even answer a phone.

Being dependable to your customers is one of the most important parts of your job. That doesn't mean being there at your phone 24/7 to help a customer. If you have a longtime customer, make sure that they know what your hours are and even if you aren't able to help them, return a phone call and guide them in the right direction. That alone could help you secure them for other work that they might need because they'll remember you being helpful.

YOUR COMPANY

What are ways you and your team try to be dependable to customers? Let me know by emailing me at editor@plumbermag.com. I love to hear your ideas! 

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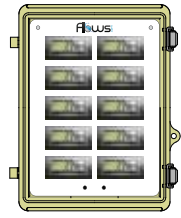


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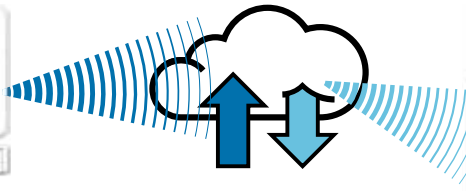


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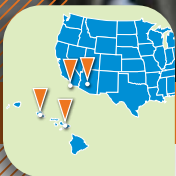

Infiniti
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◀ All Aloha Plumbing owner Deven Tells stands with some of his brightly colored vans at their shop in Maui, Hawaii. Tells also has company locations in Oahu, Hawaii; San Diego, California; and Tempe, Arizona.

Island Roots to MAINLAND GROWTH

Plumbing company goes from humble beginnings to a trans-Pacific success story thanks to perseverance and commitment

By Giles Lambertson | Photography by Matthew Thayer



All Aloha Plumbing, (Oahu-Maui, Hawaii; Tempe, Arizona; San Diego, California)

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The All Aloha Plumbing success story isn't about serendipity, where good things drop into your lap. Owner Deven Tells so rarely sits, he may not even have a lap. No, the company's growth is a product of risk-taking, perseverance and the good feeling that permeates its work.

One might guess that All Aloha is a Hawaiian company, "aloha" being a signature declaration of the Pacific Islands state, and that the company story reads like a paradisaical tale set to ukulele music and swaying dancers.

Think again. Tells and his rapidly growing company got to where they are today through personal integrity, hard work and an abiding interest in making life a little better for everyone.

MOVING AROUND

It all began when Tells' great-grandfather emigrated to Hawaii from Portugal in the 19th century. Tells himself came along in the late 20th century, born on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. It turned out not to be an idyllic setting

“A lot of entrepreneurs hold their companies back because they don't trust their management. I truly believe we have great managers and leaders and a lot of good systems and processes in place.”

Deven Tells

for the young man, who was raised by his grandparents and “bounced around” a lot as a youth.

His Hawaii-born grandfather was a fireman and, ultimately, manager of an American Fence Co. office. He earned his grandson's respect early on by patiently guiding him onto paths of responsibility. Tells looks back with gratitude for his grandfather's guidance. “He never gave up trying to start me down the right path. I wanted to make him proud.”

▼ Kenny Agdinaoay, a plumber with All Aloha Plumbing in Maui, Hawaii, connects waterlines to a propane water heater at a Kuia, Maui, home the company was doing service work at.





▲ Plumbers Jaron Sim, left, and Randen Ascuncion, load a Picote Maxi Miller drain cleaning machine into an All Aloha Plumbing van for the day's jobs.

Plumbing was the way to do it, he determined. He was living on the Big Island — Hawaii — with his grandparents when he visited a close friend by the name of Calvin Gulia, who was a plumber. While he was there for the weekend, Gulia invited Tells to accompany him on his service calls. Something clicked. “Since then, I have never stopped plumbing.”

As a novice plumber, he moved to another island in the Hawaiian chain, Maui, for a very good reason: The young woman he was dating said she would marry him only if he moved. “I said, OK.” She kept her word and the married couple have two daughters.

The move to Maui was unfortunate timing, however, occurring in 2009 when the recession-spawned housing industry collapse spread clear across the country to Hawaii. One year later, Tells still was plumbing for a minimum wage. While eating at a Taco Bell, he bumped into Steve Huffman, a budding plumbing

company owner who persuaded Tells to be his first employee.

It was a fortuitous meeting but did not turn out to be a lasting relationship. Tells worked at the company for seven years, reaching the position of vice president, but began to realize the job was not going to afford him additional opportunity, despite promises to the contrary.

“Steve taught me a lot about how to run a plumbing company,” Tells says. When assurances about advancement proved hollow, Tells was deeply disappointed and decided to leave before he became embittered and lost his aloha spirit. “I chose a different route. I always had an entrepreneurial mindset and wanted to start a company.”

Before he started All Aloha Plumbing in 2017, however, he returned a favor to his friend Calvin Gulia. Tells proposed that he work for his friend for a few months and invigorate the company by introducing some of the best practices he had learned.

The Spirit of Aloha

Deven Tells aptly named his company All Aloha Plumbing. The Hawaiian native firmly believes in the “aloha” ethos for self, individuals and his company.

“Aloha’ is a big word,” says the company owner. “People generally think it means hello, but aloha means so much more.” He recites some of the attributes of the Hawaiian term, including love, peace, compassion, mutual respect, mercy, kindness and being in harmony with people and the land.

“Aloha is the law. It involves everything that is positive. So, when we go to a customer’s home, we’re not just there to make money. We try to treat them with the aloha spirit, to treat them as our own grandmother or mother, to make sure they are taken care of.”

A cynical observer might roll his eyes at the statement. The cynic would be wrong. Tells clearly embraces the spirit of his native culture and has embedded it into his plumbing company’s way of doing business. By example and training, the culture of the company is, in a word, aloha.

“We really, really practice what we preach. Any team member who is not aligning with the aloha spirit, isn’t with us very long. We won’t let any employees hurt us by not upholding the spirit of what we are doing. We get a lot of good feedback from our customers.”

The 37-year-old company owner believes “the aloha spirit and training got me to where I am today.” He says his commitment has helped him move beyond bruising resentments in his business and personal life.

“My wife asks me if I can spread a little more aloha around the world because the world is in a bad place. It needs a little more aloha. So, I try to spread the spirit wherever I go. I try to be kind and look past stuff.”

Deven Tells is one busy businessman, always on the go, yet in his flying around, he seems grounded.

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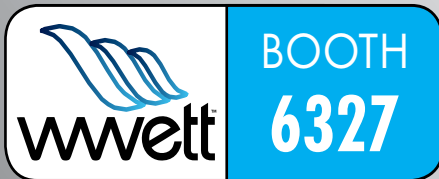
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Deven Tells

▲ All Aloha Plumbing apprentice Ben Garcia ensures a van is stocked for a day's work.

▼ Plumber Jaron Sim wheels a D225-QL Quicklock Invesion Drum (HammerHead) past Gerald Agdinaoay while loading the vans at the company's shop in Maui.

Gulia agreed and Tells moved to Honolulu for the task. He introduced a CRM system for managing business systems, analyzed the company's customer base, subbed flat-rate pricing for hourly pricing, and otherwise restructured his friend's company. Set on a surer foundation, the company — Emergency Plumbing, which was relocated to Oahu — has blossomed into one of the bigger plumbing houses on the island.

A debt of friendship repaid, Tells returned to Maui and opened the doors to his company in 2017.

QUICK EXPANSION

All Aloha Plumbing is a Hawaiian story, yes, but not all Hawaiian. In the six years since launching the company, Tells has dramatically expanded it, first in the islands and then across the ocean to mainland USA.

He operated on Maui for two and a half years before opening an All Aloha location in Oahu in 2020. A year ago, a company store was opened in Tempe, Arizona, followed last summer by the launch of a location in San Diego. Tells says the 2,500-mile jump to the mainland wasn't because business was faltering in Hawaii.

“We are still growing in our Hawaii locations by 20-25% a year,” he says, yet the itch to open the other two offices couldn't be ignored. “I don't see our growth in





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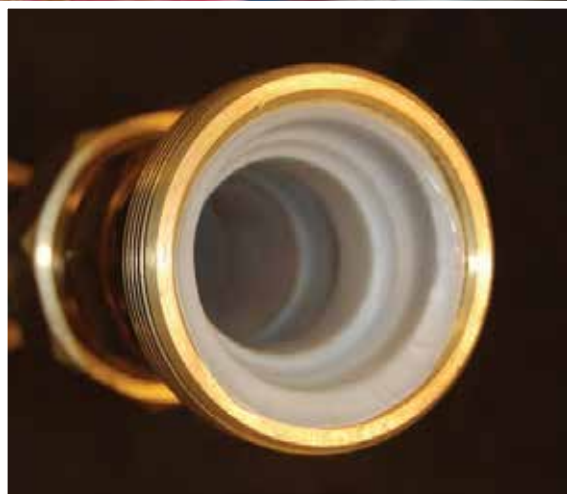
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Deven Tells

Hawaii slowing down any time soon, so if I can get four snowballs rolling at once, all the better.”

The 37-year-old company owner trusts his managers’ ability to make a success of it. “A lot of entrepreneurs hold their companies back because they don’t trust their management,” he says. “I truly believe we have great managers and leaders and a lot of good systems and processes in place. I let the managers run with decisions, unless they are insane. I try to let them do what they want to try to do.”

They are local managers, too, he notes. Tells is a fan of the coffee-company Starbucks, which he says learned in its expansion into China that hiring local people was a key to introducing a company to a new area. “That resonated with me, so I tried to hire locally.”

So far, the expansion across the ocean to California and Arizona has been a positive for the company owner, with the exception of Arizona weather. Phoenix this past summer experienced a record 31 straight days of temperatures of 110 degrees or above. “I thought I could handle heat, but boy, was I wrong. You have to be built better than I am.”

Heat aside, the Phoenix business experience has been good. In its first year in operation, the Arizona company store generated more than a million dollars in revenue. That didn’t come easy, though, and some of the profit is offset by the expense of an ambitious branding effort.

“It has been a challenge because it is a very competitive market,” Tells says. He has launched an 18-month branding effort to raise the company’s profile. “It is a heavy, heavy branding of the company to introduce us to the community. Radio, billboards, Facebook, TV, direct mailing. We’re starting now to see the fruit of it.”



▲ Kenny Agdinaooy, kneeling, and apprentice Ben Garcia install a new propane water heater (Bradford White).

READY FOR WORK

All Aloha Plumbing is principally just that — a plumbing company. At all of its locations, it does offer other services such as drain-cleaning, jetting, gas line repair and pipe lining, but the biggest revenue-producer “for sure” is residential plumbing work.

Bradford White water heaters and either Rinnai or Noritz tankless water heaters are the brands of choice, Moen fixtures are another company staple. Tells also is a Milwaukee Tool guy, though he credits Milwaukee marketing for that. “Tools are pretty much all the same, but I love Milwaukee because I think the company did such a good job promoting it as the choice of professionals. It’s in your head.”

The company has 22 vans spread among its four locations, all of them Ford Transit units brightly painted and carefully stocked. Both characteristics are important to Tells. “I really believe we have some of the most beautiful vans in the industry. But we also have a parts inventory so that the



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◀ Plumber Randen Asuncion loads a Spartan Tool Model 100 drain cleaning machine into a work van.

Pilot is the operative word: Tells is constantly flying from one location to another managing his businesses. “Typically, I’ll spend a few days on Maui,” he explains, “then a week in Oahu, a week in Phoenix, maybe a couple of weeks in San Diego — and then I’ll see my wife and kids in Oregon.”

Oregon? Tells explains that his wife Ashley is very close to her extended family, a characteristic of Hawaiian people. When many of her family members moved to Oregon, she and the children found the absence of siblings and cousins difficult. The couple talked about it and Tells moved them to the Pacific Northwest.

His far-flung company keeps him away from home anyway, so the move made some sense, “We talked about it and I am fine with that. Family is everything to her,” he says. So, a week or so out of each month, Tells flies into Oregon to spend downtime with Ashley and their two daughters.

He says he recently had a conversation with one of his employees, who told the boss, “Man, you seem spread really thin.” I told him I couldn’t be any thicker. I have great people in place who make my life easy. The only thing that makes it hard is being away so much from my wife and kids. My wife said to me once, ‘When is enough enough?’ I told her, I ain’t stopping. I know how hard life is.”

The constant travel isn’t a permanent gig, but it is a necessary one right now, the owner says. “The company is in a good place. People who worked hard are all being taken care of. We’ll see the result of the hard work when we’re done. When I’m taking my last breath, I’ll look at my daughters and know I was able to provide a good life for them.” **PI**

vans go out carrying just about anything a technician will need for a job. We want to be efficient and to maximize each house call.”

Ninety percent of its calls are to homes rather than to commercial properties. That’s by design, according to Tells. Commercial property managers tend to cut corners, which sometimes leaves plumbing houses liable for subsequent water system failures. Homeowners don’t do that. “We like to deal with people who own their homes because they want to do what’s best for their properties. We try to do what’s best for them.”

Finding and attracting tradespeople to work for the company is not a problem, Tells says, so much as it’s a process. He acknowledges the industry’s struggle to get another generation of workers, but he blames management for some of the dilemma.

“I am going to be honest. I hear it’s so hard to find people to work, but if you don’t put any effort into it, what do you expect?” he says. “A lot of owners spend one or two hours a week looking for people. My managers know that it is part of their job to spend three or four hours a week on recruiting, consistently recruiting. If you put energy into it, you get results.” Tells says All Aloha has an abundance of apprentices riding to calls in its Ford Transit vans.

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A Cure for the Bends

Tiny inspection camera easily navigates small-diameter pipe bends and traps

By Ken Wysocky

Trying to diagnose problems in small-diameter pipes with lots of bends used to be mission impossible for Robbie Roncelli, the owner of Roncelli & Sons Plumbing, based in the northern Detroit suburb of Romeo.

But courtesy of the MiniFlex inspection camera from Camtronics, working on small-diameter pipes now is easy — as well as more productive and profitable — for Roncelli, general manager of the company. Roncelli’s father, Ronald, owns the company and established it in 1920.

“Before we bought the MiniFlex, we never could get a camera down, say, a 1 1/2-inch-diameter pipe with bends,” Roncelli says. “We had one camera that we could finesse through a 2-inch straight line, but then it would get stuck in a bend and you’d have to dig it out.

“And that might be under somebody’s kitchen floor, for example.”

So instead, Roncelli had to resort to the old tried-and-true methods, like pulling toilets or using cleanouts to access drainlines. The latter isn’t always a great option in Detroit, where the housing stock is old and cleanouts often have brass caps that strip or break easily, he explains.

“Then you have to cut them off and rework a new one, which takes more time and adds to the cost for customers,” Roncelli says.

Or the veteran plumber would work blind without knowing what was causing clogs.

“It’s absolutely frustrating when you don’t know what the problem is because you don’t know what’s the right tool to use to get the line flowing again,” Roncelli says. “If I can’t get my eyeballs on your kitchen drainline or shower branch line, how do I know what’s going on?”

“It left us shooting in the dark and that also caused problems for customers because it costs a lot of money to replace a whole kitchen line that’s in a concrete slab floor, for instance, compared to just cleaning it.”



- COMPANY** Roncelli & Sons Plumbing LLC (Romeo, Michigan).
- OWNER** Ronald Roncelli
- MACHINE** MiniFlex pipeline-inspection camera system from Camtronics
- FUNCTION** Cleaning 1 1/2- to 4-inch-diameter pipes while navigating 90-degree bends and P-traps
- FEATURES** High-resolution, 5.6-inch color monitor; standard 50 or 131 feet of cable; built-in 512 Hz sonde; a sapphire-glass, spherical-shaped camera head with 105-degree diagonal viewing capability; a stainless steel camera head housing; 12 LED lights; on-screen footage counter; operates for seven hours on a full charge; flexi-tube camera neck; weighs less than 19 pounds; measures about 15 1/2 inches wide by around 18 1/2 inches tall and slightly more than 4 inches deep.

COST About \$5,000

WEBSITE www.roncelliplumbing.com

FIBERSCOPE.NET WEBSITE www.fiberscope.net

VISION QUEST

The MiniFlex, which Roncelli purchased through Fiberscope.net, a North American distributor and repair center for Netherlands-based Camtronics, eliminates those pain points.

“The beautiful thing is that it can go through kitchen and bathroom sink lines, shower lines — even a toilet

▶ Robbie Roncelli, general manager of Roncelli & Sons Plumbing, left, Mike Vultagio, sewer and drain technicians, center, and Skip Roncelli, sewer and drain technician pose near one of the company work vans with MiniFlex pipeline-inspection camera systems (Camtronics). (Photo courtesy Roncelli & Sons Plumbing)



P-trap,” Roncelli explains. “I don’t have to pull toilets anymore, which is incredible.

“We can put the MiniFlex down a sink and inspect the entire main right out to the mainline.”

Furthermore, the MiniFlex is light, compact and portable, which makes it easy to stow in a service vehicle and carry.

“A lot of our other cameras must weigh 60 to 70 pounds, which takes a toll on employees if you have to walk through a large parking lot at a shopping mall, for instance,” he says.

The unit weighs less than 19 pounds and measures about 15 1/2 inches wide by around 18 1/2 inches tall and slightly more than 4 inches deep.

“It’s absolutely frustrating when you don’t know what the problem is because you don’t know what’s the right tool to use to get the line flowing again.”
Robbie Roncelli

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The unit also provides a less tangible but equally important function by differentiating the company from competitors, Roncelli notes.

“I’ve never had a customer tell me another plumber had inspected their smaller lines with a camera,” he says. “So the MiniFlex brings us out on top because we can do things other plumbers can’t.

“The MiniFlex really shines in smaller lines, especially galvanized, copper or cast-iron pipes, which are notorious for getting heavier buildup than PVC pipes,” he adds.

VERSATILE TECHNOLOGY

Roncelli also likes how the small unit’s modular design is packed with features normally not available at a price point of around \$5,000.

“A lot of smaller cameras are like toys compared to this one,” he says.

The battery-powered unit, which can operate for seven hours on a full charge, features a high-resolution, 5.6-inch color monitor; 50 feet of push cable (65-, 98- and 131-foot cables also available); a built-in 512 Hz sonde;

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“These cameras not only help us make more money, but they help us make more money faster.”

Robbie Roncelli

12 LED lights; a sapphire-glass, color camera head with 105-degree, wide-angle view; a stainless steel camera head housing; and an on-screen footage counter.

Videos can be downloaded onto an SD storage card for customers, he adds.

The unit’s “secret sauce” is a flexible camera neck that allows it to negotiate tight bends, including multiple 90-degree bends in 1 1/2-inch-diameter pipes and P-traps in 1 1/4-inch-diameter pipes.

“We had one job where a plumber ran PVC pipes like spaghetti noodles,” Roncelli recalls. “I could not believe the amount of 90-degree fittings, including a ‘street 90’ plugged right into regular 90-degree fitting.

“I don’t know of another camera that would’ve gotten through all that. ... The camera head is incredibly flexible.”

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Roncelli first heard about the MiniFlex several years ago at the WWETT Show in Indianapolis. Was he skeptical?

“Absolutely,” he says. “We’d been down this path before with many other sewer cameras.”

But after buying one MiniFlex and using it for several months, Roncelli bought three more.

“There’s now a MiniFlex on each of our service trucks,” he says, noting his company, which employs five people, serves the northern metropolitan Detroit area and focuses primarily on trenchless sewer-line rehabilitation along with service and repair plumbing.

“These cameras not only help us make more money, but they help us make more money faster,” he explains. “If I can find a blockage faster and avoid cutting any sink fittings or pulling a toilet, for example, I can give customers a quote faster and get to work faster.

“And if they don’t want me to do the work, I haven’t wasted a lot of time and can get on to the next job and start making money.”

Knowing the condition of pipes before work begins makes for happy customers — and a successful business, Roncelli adds.

“It’s a game-changer, for sure,” he says. “It saves us a lot of time and saves customers a lot of money. It’s definitely a win-win.”

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===== RIGHT IN THERE WITH YOU. =====

The Hot Seat

From energy conservation to easy installation, there are many reasons to suggest condensing boilers to customers *By Christopher Kyes*

The temperatures are dropping and that means one thing: boiler season is around the corner. As consumers begin scheduling their heating consultations, it is worth the time to conduct a refresher on the types of boiler installations available and how to best guide customers on the ideal solutions for their specific needs and wants.

Historically, there have been two main installation categories of noncondensing and condensing boilers. For years, technicians and consumers alike were choosing to install — or inherit during the buying process — a noncondensing boiler. The anticipated colder temperatures on the horizon coupled with rising fuel costs, however, have homeowners seeking out more and more products that offer better efficiency to conserve money during uncertain economic times.

As the trusted experts expected to know all the ins and outs of the latest industry advancements that best serve to retrofit the dwellings and occupants' needs, technicians are finding themselves at the forefront of an industry shift. The innovations today, supported by research and development, are generating more interest in favor of condensing boilers. A leading alternative to traditional boilers, condensing boilers offer the ideal heating and hot water solutions to keep households at the ideal comfort levels all winter long.

Plus, the advantages of condensing boilers are second to none. So, let's dive deeper into those benefits and learn more about this win-win solution for installers and consumers.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY ENERGY CONSERVATION

The way a condensing boiler works is by converting water vapor condensation into heat. Through this process, condensing boilers leverage previously lost energy to recycle waste gas and deliver 95% high-energy efficiency. To put this into perspective, noncondensing boilers — which use the gases produced from burning fuel to release heat through a flue — typically range anywhere from 80-85% efficiency and use 13% more fuel due to their operational model.

This means opting for a condensing boiler will help families decrease their carbon footprints without the need to sacrifice their desired heating level.

COMBI CONDENSING BOILERS ELEVATE GREEN PRACTICES

Condensing boilers alone can solve one of the main household energy consumption areas, but those wanting to take their green efforts a step further should select a combi condensing boiler. This solution can provide hot water and central heating via one unit, which in addition to reducing overall energy consumption can also save valuable square footage in homes.



▲ The Greenstar Boiler from Bosch Home Comfort USA is a gas-condensing boiler available in both heating-only and combi versions.

▼ Singular combi boilers from Bosch Home Comfort provide heating and hot water for many residential applications.



Condensing boilers alone can solve one of the main household energy consumption areas, but those wanting to take their green efforts a step further should select a combi condensing boiler.

The combi condensing boiler product offers the same conveniences as a standalone condensing boiler with hot water on demand and improved water pressure due to its connectivity to the main water supply.

While those benefits alone may be convincing enough, the fact remains that selecting a condensing boiler or combi condensing boiler will still end up saving consumers money, particularly gas bills, while also making them eligible for further energy rebates and tax credits that can save up to \$2,400 depending on the selected model.

Currently, individuals can partake in several local and federal rebate programs for gas and hot water boilers, including Energy Star's 30% project-cost tax credit for

Energy Star-certified gas boilers with AFUE \geq 95% or certain oil boilers.

EFFORTLESS INSTALLATION

The benefits of condensing boilers, however, are not only felt on the consumer side. As installers, the top priority will always be providing a high-quality experience for customers. However, there is something to be said about the age-old phrase: "time is money."

Condensing boilers strip away the need for complex setups that often result in longer installation timeframes and unnecessary inconveniences for the homeowner. One such way these boilers allow for swifter installations is due to the type of venting used.

In noncondensing boilers, it is required to use a metal venting system often via a traditional chimney or flue. The venting requirements for noncondensing boiler solutions mean there are more constraints on the installation locations, which can require more in-depth venting formats or home improvements that cost time and money. Conversely, condensing boilers do not require a metal venting system. Instead, condensing boilers can be vented through small areas, such as a side wall, to provide more flexibility utilizing the more cost-effective plastic PVC pipes.



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The image shows four stainless steel water heaters of various sizes and configurations, including a tall tank, a smaller tank, and two electric water heaters.

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Heat-flo, Inc., a leading manufacturing company headquartered in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, is proud to announce its 25th anniversary. Since its inception in 1998, the company has been at the forefront of innovation, providing high-quality products and services to its customers while contributing significantly to the local economy.

Over the past quarter-century, Heat-flo has grown from a small startup into a strong player in the stainless-steel water heating business. The company's commitment to excellence, dedication to its employees, and its focus on customer needs have been the cornerstones of its success.

"We are thrilled to celebrate this remarkable milestone," said George Celorier, Founder of Heat-flo. "Our journey over the past 25 years has been characterized by growth, innovation, and a dedication to exceeding customer expectations. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our entire team."

Heat-flo specializes in design and manufacturing of stainless-steel water heaters and storage tanks, serving a diverse range of industries, including plumbing, hydronic heating, and renewable energy. Their dedication to quality assurance, sustainable practices, and customer satisfaction has earned them a reputation for reliability and excellence.

George Celorier added, "As we look forward to the next chapter, we are excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. We remain committed to innovation, sustainability, and exceeding customer expectations. We are grateful for the trust our customers have placed in us, and we look forward to many more years of success."

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RAISING THE STANDARD

Additionally, condensing boilers are also significantly lighter at an average of 80 pounds than their noncondensing counterparts, which can come in at more than 700 pounds with its cast iron boiler. The lightweight frame of condensing boilers allows for more placement options, such as being hung on a wall or sitting on the floor, that appear more attractive for homeowners due to their compact nature.

MORE THAN A SEASONAL TREND

While it is true that more innovations are underway as installers and manufacturers alike challenge themselves to continue positive momentum on reducing carbon emissions, it is fair to say the condensing boiler is more than a one-time trend.

In fact, Bosch Home Comfort's own market research shows that an average annual growth rate of 6.8% for condensing boiler installations was recorded over a five-year period from 2015-2020.

Its staying power, however, will need to be met with continued education. Technicians need to continue to

counsel consumers on this growing trend, keeping them apprised of their newest options for heating and hot water. A key part of ensuring customer satisfaction with the product will need to include proper and ongoing maintenance for condensing boilers.

Failure to undertake regular care and maintenance guidelines is a major cause of improper operation or complete breakdown of boilers. Be sure customers know how and when to seek service for their unit in an effort to minimize any loss of heat or hot water and keep homes running at the desired comfort levels. **P**

Christopher Kyes is a senior product manager for Bosch Home Comfort USA (formerly Bosch Thermotechnology), a leading source of high-quality, energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable heating, cooling and hot water systems.

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Jeff Haden

Following the Framework

Before you buy equipment and add staff to pursue a new specialty, evaluate your idea using the 3 P's

By Jeff Haden

I built a deck out on the dune. It turned out well. Not perfect — when you do the work, you always see the minor imperfections no one else notices — but overall, I was satisfied.

“That looks great,” a neighbor said. “You could start a business building decks.”

Hmm, I thought. I could. After all:

- Home improvement spending has spiked because of higher home prices; homeowners who might have moved up have chosen to improve what they own instead.
- Finding people to do that work is tough; 90% of homebuilders report a shortage of carpenters, according to a National Association of Home Builders survey.
- There's definitely a market; a deck is a relatively inexpensive way to meet the stereotypical “space for entertaining” desire of every homeowner on an HGTV show.
- No capital is required; I already own all the tools I need.

So, yes. I could start a deck-building business — but that doesn't mean I should.

When asked how he validates business ideas, here's what HubSpot co-founder Dharmesh Shah had to say:

The most dangerous ideas are not the bad ideas. Those you can discard easily. The dangerous ideas are the ones that are good — but not great. Yes, it could work, and yes, I could do it — but that doesn't mean I should.

The beauty of starting or expanding a business is that you are free to choose what kind of business. Not the business you could start, but the business you should start.

PROFIT POTENTIAL

It's not about the failure rate — I'm actually OK with that. It's that good ideas eat up a lot of time/calories, leaving little time for the great ideas.

Why would starting a deck-building business be such a dangerous idea? At face value, it wouldn't.

- Product/market fit? Check.
- Skills/market fit? Check. While I'm no genius, I would be smart enough to walk away from projects beyond my skill level.
- Reasonable profit potential? Check. Especially now; the supply and demand curves would definitely be my friend.

But that still doesn't mean I should. I enjoyed building my deck. But I don't want to build your deck. And I definitely don't want to spend all day, every day building decks.

That's the other half of Shah's could/should equation. Here's his simple framework for judging ideas:

Potential: If it worked, how big could it be?

Probability: What are the chances it will work?

Proximity: How close is this to things I care about, know about, or am passionate about?

How you weigh each category depends on your situation. Early on, Shah focused heavily on probability for success; risk is not your friend when your primary goal is putting food on the table.

EXAMINE POTENTIAL RETURNS

“Today,” Shah says, with a \$17 billion company under his belt, “I solve mostly for numbers 1 and 3: What has great potential that I'm passionate about? (Even if I fail, I'll have no regrets, because I cared enough about it.)”

And that's where the deck-building business falls apart for me. Probability of success is high. Growth potential? Sure — but scaling would require hiring and managing and infrastructure, and all the stuff I wanted to stop doing when I left a corporate job.

That only adds to the proximity problem; not only do

Continued ▶

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I not want to manage dozens of people, I don't really want to build decks every day. I like building decks for me and mine. I wouldn't like building decks for other people.

And I'm fortunate to have other work I enjoy more.

Trying to decide whether starting a particular business or adding a new service to your existing business makes sense for you? First, consider your situation. If you're just starting out, the probability of generating enough money to live on could be the most important factor; what you need to do matters more than what you like to do. What you could and should do is put food on the table.

If probability is less of a factor, then consider potential.

And how easily you can scale to meet that potential.

Unlike some ventures, a deck-building business isn't easily scalable. No matter how big the potential market, you need to be able to service that market — and want to build and run the type of business required to service that market.

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

Then consider whether you care about the business you will create. I could run a deck-building business. I could run a successful deck-building business.

But I don't want to.

The best way to define professional success? Whether you get to do work you enjoy. Work that leaves you feeling fulfilled, and satisfied, and happy. Work that allows you to control, as best possible, your own destiny.

The beauty of starting or expanding a business is that you are free to choose what kind of business. Not the business you could start, but the business you should start. Because we all have to make a living. But we also need to live. **P**

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

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Hydronic Heating Systems, HVAC

By Craig Mandli

Boilers

Bosch Thermotechnology Singular Combi Boilers

Singular Combi Boilers from **Bosch Thermotechnology** provide dependable home heating and up to 7.7 gpm of domestic hot water production. They have a turndown ratio up to 10-1, and a built-in boiler circulator pump. Singular combi wall boilers provide efficient heating and plenty of hot water for many residential applications. There are two different models to choose from: 155K Btu and 199K Btu. Both can make enough domestic hot water for most residential bathing needs. Depending on inlet water temperature, the smaller unit can run between two and three showers and the larger can run three showers plus a dishwasher. Both have a small footprint and are under 80 pounds, making installation easy. Features like an exhaust gas outlet sensor and a standard inlet filter screen to keep out debris provide extra protection for the boiler. **800-283-3787; www.bosch.us**



Bradford White Brute FT 301 & 399

The **Brute FT** series of high-efficiency condensing boilers from **Bradford White** includes the 301 mBh and 399 mBh models. They can be either wall mounted, or floor standing and feature a robust stainless steel fire tube heat exchanger. They include top and bottom connections for both system and gas piping, flue gas recirculation monitoring, multiple pump control, two independent heating curves, onboard 24-volt mixing control and conditional DHW priority technology. With integrated cascading logic, up to four units can be combined to provide even higher Btu outputs for larger system requirements. They are approved for venting in both 3- and 4-inch vent diameters with PVC, CPVC, PP and SS. **800-523-2931; www.bradfordwhite.com**



Heat-Flo Extra High Output

The **Heat-Flo Extra High Output** indirect series of tanks are available in 85- and 115-gallon capacities. The entire tank including the 100 feet of coil, body and dip tube are all made of 316L stainless steel. All the piping connections are easily accessible and make for an efficient, cost-effective installation. The finished tank is jacketed with a dent- and rust-resistant HDPE plastic and is highly insulated to minimize standby heat loss. Applications requiring high volumes of domestic hot water but are limited to a small tank footprint are ideal. These tanks excel when utilized in apartment buildings, dormitories and nursing homes. **508-278-2400; www.heat-flo.com**



Lochinvar FTXL 1.0

Lochinvar's FTXL 1.0 fits neatly into mechanical rooms with limited space while offering a higher input of 999,000 Btu/h. An integrated combustion filter collects debris from combustion make-up air, potentially extending the time between burner and heat exchanger cleanings, ultimately saving facility managers and homeowners money. The unit's 7-inch LCD touchscreen display makes it easier for contractors to adjust parameters with minimal effort and provides access to the remote connectivity capabilities for improved ease of installation. It features both CON-X-US Remote Connectivity and SMART TOUCH operating control capabilities, better connecting contractors with the unit. Improvements from previous models also include a 10-1 turndown ratio and a thermal efficiency rate of up to 98.3%. **615-889-8900; www.lochinvar.com**



Navien NPF Hydro-Furnace

The **Navien NPF Hydro-Furnace** is available in upflow and horizontal configurations, and comes in two sizes of 60,000 Btu/h and 100,000 Btu/h that both boast 97% AFUE and meet the stringent requirements of SCAQMD rule 1111 for Ultra-Low NOx performance. It uses dual stainless steel heat exchangers to heat water in an isolated compartment out of the airstream, which provides sound-reduction and energy efficiency. The heated water is circulated through a hydronic coil which transfers the heat into the airstream for the ultimate in quiet forced-air heating comfort. The sealed combustion design allows it to deliver comfortable heat without significantly impacting humidity levels at one of the quietest sound levels of any furnace on the market. It features variable capacity that can modulate down to 15% for an unparalleled level of comfort that allows the unit to meet year-round heating needs. **800-519-8794; www.navieninc.com**



mode, and have an adjustable overload that allows for easy adjustment of motor overload current. Common applications include pump chambers, sump pump basins, irrigation systems, lift stations and air compressor systems. They are UL/cUL Listed. **888-342-5753; www.sjrhombus.com**

Ductwork

Centrotherm Eco Systems InnoFlue UL1738 Polypropylene Vent Systems



Centrotherm Eco Systems produces **InnoFlue UL1738 Polypropylene Vent Systems**. Aside from achieving the relevant mechanical code listing, a critical difference between InnoFlue and alternative vent materials is the gasketed push-fit connection system, which removes the need for messy and toxic glues, primers, and solvents. A more environmentally friendly process, the EPDM gasket is the cornerstone of the injection molded socket, and creates an air- and watertight seal without any toxic chemicals or glues. **518-434-3400; www.centrotherm.us.com**

Fittings

NIBCO PressACR

NIBCO PressACR fittings are a joining method designed for use in copper tube systems for air conditioning and refrigeration applications. It is approved for use with a wide range of refrigerants and lubricants and creates a safer installation as there is no flame or fire hazard with press technology. The fittings are UL recognized to 700 psi and feature a gray hydrogenated nitrile butadiene rubber seal to help differentiate them from other NIBCO press products and to provide a permanent leakproof connection. They are approved for use with K, L and M hard copper tubing and soft copper tubing in 1/4- through 7/8-inch OD. In sizes 1 1/8-inch and above, PressACR is only approved for use with K, L and M hard copper tubing. Straight and reducing couplings, 45- and 90-degree elbows, caps, Y-joints, and tees are available. **800-234-0227; www.nibco.com**



Noritz Residential Combination Boiler

The **Noritz Residential Combination Boiler** allows for simultaneous residential, domestic hot water and space heating. The unit's simultaneous capabilities are easy to control and especially beneficial for applications that do not store or deliver heat energy efficiently. It offers 95% Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency, it is EPA Energy Star certified, has 316L copper primary and secondary heat exchangers with high corrosion resistance, can adjust to either PP or CPVC venting without programming changes, and venting can also easily be reconfigured to use room air. **714-433-2905; www.noritz.com**

Controls

SJE Rhombus Select Start Starter Boxes

Select Start Starter Boxes from **SJE Rhombus** provide a reliable means of controlling one 208 VAC three-phase motor, one 240-volt AC three-phase motor, one 480-volt AC three-phase motor, or one 575-volt AC three-phase motor in water, wastewater, and sewage installations. They utilize a wide-angle float switch to activate a combination motor controller to turn the motor on and off in auto



Supply Smart Brass PEX Fittings

Supply Smart offers a variety of **Brass PEX Fittings** in a choice of brands and sizes. Whether you're a Crimp PEX or Expansion PEX plumber, you're covered. The fittings provide strong connections that are anti-corrosive, resulting in long-lasting, quality work. With the ability to withstand extreme temperatures, they are a popular choice among plumbers. **860-631-7793; www.supplysmart.com**



Geothermal Heating

Total Green Waterless Multi-Functional Series

Total Green's Waterless Multi-Functional Series units are refrigerant-based direct exchange systems that marry the simplicity and efficiency of copper ground loops with modern innovations like a newly designed refrigerant circuit, ensuring high capacity, peak performance and reliability even in extreme cold climates. The AD unit features a two-stage forced air DX heating and cooling system, powered by eco-friendly R-410A refrigerant. It delivers efficiency, minimized environmental impact and can also provide 100% domestic hot water heating. The AH unit offers radiant floor heating throughout the entire house with a hydronic upgrade. **888-678-2032; www.waterlessgeothermal.com**



Hydronic Heating

Century Chemical Heat Transfer Fluid

Heat Transfer Fluid from **Century Chemical** is a propylene glycol based product that is ideal for use in RV floor heating systems as well as solar, hydronic and HVAC units. The ingredients in this product are "generally recognized as safe" by the United States government and offer a high boiling point, stability over a



wide temperature range, high specific heat and thermal conductivity, extremely low toxicity and a noncorrosive formulation. It is available in 1-gallon bottles, 5-gallon containers, 55-gallon drums or 275-gallon tote tanks. **800-348-3505; www.centurychemical.com**

Oatey Hercules Sludgehammer System Restorer & Noise Reducer

Hercules Sludgehammer System Restorer & Noise Reducer from **Oatey** provides system cleaning and reduced kettling while restoring heating system efficiency. It is suitable for all metals, including aluminum, cast iron and stainless steel. The restorer effectively removes sludge and corrosion while reducing boiler noise. It also pairs well with Hercules Sludgehammer Universal Corrosion Inhibitor as part of an annual heating system maintenance program. It helps restore efficiency to all hydronic systems. The system cleaner can be used in older boiler systems or when a new boiler is fitted into an existing system with sludge and scale buildup. The user must flush the product from the system after use. **800-321-9532; www.oatey.com**



Taco Comfort Solutions ECM High-Efficiency Circulators

Taco Comfort Solutions has expanded its family of easy-to-use, **ECM high-efficiency circulators** with the addition of the 0034e and 0034ePlus models. With a maximum of 34 feet of head and 50 gpm, the circulators offer up to 85% energy savings over a conventional circulator. They are available with cast iron or NSF/ANSI 61 and 372 certified stainless steel volutes, so they are ideal for closed-loop hydronic heating systems as well as domestic hot water recirculation systems. Both circulators also offer a convenient, rotatable control box cover for a professional look, no matter the orientation of the installed circulator. The 0034e features an easy-to-use dial with five operating modes, including constant pressure, fixed speed, TacoADAPT self-adjusting proportional pressure, and 0-10-volt capability. The 0034ePlus adds proportional pressure and more constant pressure settings as well as a digital display with real-time feedback, including watts, gpm, feet of head, and rpm. Both are dual-voltage 115 V/230 V. **401-942-8000; www.tacomfort.com**



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Pipe Patch Kits enable quick and efficient trenchless point repairs with all required consumables and components packaged together for one-time use. Patch Kits make inventory management easier on your business while ensuring you have all components needed when showing up to a job. Fiberglass patch meets ASTM F1216 requirements and cured patches have a life expectancy of up to 50 years under normal conditions. RIDGID Pipe Patch Kits are designed for 2", 3", 3-4", and 4-6" Packers and at lengths for 32", 3', and 6' repairs.



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Pumps

Saniflo Sanicondens Best Flat

Incorporating most of the same features as the Sanicondens Best, **Saniflo's** more powerful **Sanicondens Best Flat** condensate pump offers a more compact look, a larger volume and the ability to handle multiple mechanical systems. It boosts the pH of the acidic condensate before it can be discharged into a drain line — thus preventing corrosion. The built-in tank has a capacity of 0.9 gallons, or nearly a half-gallon more than the 0.55-gallon tank in the Sanicondens Best. This larger volume maintains longer contact between the condensate and the neutralizing pellets, allowing the unit to handle fixtures with higher Btu inputs. **800-571-8191; www.saniflo.com**



Stiebel Eltron WPL Series

Highly efficient cold climate air-source heat pumps, the **WPL 15 A2W Premium** (2-ton cooling, 25 kBtu/h heating) and **WPL 25 A2W Premium** (4-ton cooling, 50 kBtu/h heating) from Stiebel Eltron produce hot water for central heating, cooling, and domestic hot water production. The compact monobloc design doesn't need refrigerant lines run during installation. The inverter-driven compressor and fan increase part-load efficiency. Superb for new construction with lower flow temperatures, supply temperatures to 149 degrees F also provide suitability for modernization projects needing higher flow temperature. Heating capacity is available at low ambient temperatures down to -4 degrees F. The heat pump achieves top tier efficiency with IPLV ratings of 15.68 (WPL 15) and 16.83 (WPL 25), 2.77 COP Cold Climate Efficiency, and meets requirements for Energy Star Emerging Technology. It is third-party tested to meet AHRI 550/590. **800-582-8423; www.stiebel-eltron-usa.com**



Solar Thermal System

Uponor Xpress Trak

Designed for residential new construction and remodels, **Xpress Trak** from **Uponor** is a single-panel system with lightweight XPS foam at its core and laminated aluminum around the entire surface to provide exceptional heat-transfer capability. The XPS foam provides numerous benefits for both the installing contractor and the homeowner, including natural moisture resistance to eliminate caulking edges or panel grooves for increased installation efficiencies; no insulation needed in joist space below the subfloor, saving labor time and materials costs; compressive strength of 49 psi to eliminate floor deflection; lower mass for faster response times to improve system performance; and an R-value of 3.13 that allows energy use to heat the space rather than charging and storing energy into the panel. **800-321-4739; www.uponor-usa.com**



Valves

Aquaguard WAGS Valve

WAGS Valves from **Aquaguard** can stop a leaking water heater tank from continuously refilling and dripping, or until the tank fails catastrophically. The shut-off valve halts the incoming water supply, and on gas-fired units, shuts off the gas supply to ensure the home's safety from water heater failure. They are mechanically operated; meaning no maintenance, no electricity or no battery checks are required. They sit in a drip pan under the water heater and are activated when leaking water accumulates to a predetermined level in the pan. Once activated, the industrial-duty, one-shot safety valve shuts off the water and gas supply if so equipped. A red tab pops out to indicate valve activation. **844-438-9247; www.wagsvalve.com**



Little Firefighter Gas Shutoff Valves

In regions prone to seismic activity, seismic gas shut-off valves have assumed a pivotal role in disaster prevention. **Little Firefighter Gas Shutoff Valves** act swiftly during earthquakes, cutting off the flow of natural gas and proving their worth in several critical ways. When the structures shake, gas lines can rupture, leading to gas leaks that spark dangerous fires. Seismic shut-off valves intervene by halting gas flow, reducing the risk of fire and protecting lives. Earthquakes can disrupt evacuation paths, making timely escape difficult. By preventing gas-related explosions and fires, these valves save lives and limit property damage, offering peace of mind to homeowners and businesses. Many quake-prone regions and insurance providers mandate their installation, ensuring compliance with essential safety standards. 714-834-0410; www.littlefirefighter.com



Viega MegaPress G Ground Joint Ball Valve

The **MegaPress G Ground Joint Ball Valve** from Viega simplifies gas equipment installations and servicing by incorporating a press connection valve and ground joint disconnection method into one assembly. Featuring Smart Connect press technology to help identify unpressed connections, the valves reduce installation time by up to 90% and provide a strong, secure joining method that preserves the full wall thickness of the pipe, compared to traditional threaded joints. Made from carbon steel alloy, they have a corrosion-resistant zinc nickel coating, and feature a bottom-loaded blowout-proof stem assembly with locking handle. The valves come preassembled with our HNBR sealing element that is applicable for natural gas, propane, butane, diesel, heating fuel oil and other industrial gasses with an operating temperature range of -40 to 180 degrees F. They are available in 1/2 to 2-inch sizes with integrated ground joint union and suitable for use with Schedule 5 to Schedule 40 carbon steel pipe. 800-976-9819; www.viega.us



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Anthony Pacilla

The Power of the Prize

Using free incentives to drive sales and capture potential customers' attention is something you can easily implement at your company *By Anthony Pacilla*

Marketing plays a crucial role in the success of any business. However, with so many companies vying for attention, it's not always easy to stand out. That's where the "Free Prize Inside" marketing strategy comes in; it's a highly effective way to capture people's attention and generate interest in your products or services.

What is the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy?

Seth Godin popularized the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy in his book *Purple Cow*. It's a marketing tactic that involves giving away something for free to attract customers' attention and interest. If you've never read the book, you should buy it today.

The Free Prize Inside marketing strategy is about offering your customers value. Rather than just telling them what you do, you're showing them what you can do for them. By providing a free gift, you're proving you're the real deal and establishing trust with potential customers.

WHY USE THIS STRATEGY

The plumbing industry can be highly competitive, and it can be challenging to differentiate yourself from other plumbers in your area. Using the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy can help your plumbing business stand out from the competition and generate interest in your services, especially in the social media world.

Furthermore, the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy can help you build a loyal customer base. When you offer something of value to your customers, they're more likely to remember your business and keep you in mind for future plumbing needs. It can also help you build customer relationships, crucial to developing a loyal following.

Here are some ways you can use the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy to market your plumbing business:

1. Offer a free plumbing inspection

Offer your customers a free plumbing inspection while

By providing a free gift, you're proving you're the real deal and establishing trust with potential customers.

you are there for a nonrelated call. This is a great way to show that you care about their home's plumbing and want to help them avoid any potential plumbing problems. During the inspection, you can identify any issues with their plumbing system and offer solutions. This enables you to establish trust with potential customers and generates interest in your services.

2. Provide free educational resources

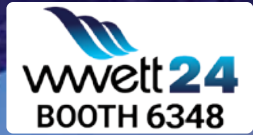
Another way to use the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy is to offer free educational resources, such as plumbing guides or how-to videos. These resources can help your customers better understand the plumbing in their homes and learn how to take care of their plumbing system. Think of a "click funnel" strategy, offering a free "Winterizing Guide" in exchange for a potential client's email address. By providing educational resources, you establish yourself as an authority in the plumbing industry, and customers will be more likely to trust you with their plumbing needs.

3. Promote free estimates

Offering free estimates or "free second opinions" can be an excellent way to attract customers who need plumbing services but are hesitant to commit to paying for them. By offering free estimates, you're providing value to your customers and demonstrating that you're willing to work with them to find a solution that fits their needs and budget.

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4. Give away branded items

Giving away branded items such as t-shirts or hats can be an excellent way to capture people's attention and generate buzz around your plumbing business. These items not only offer value to your customers, but they also help to promote your business and increase brand visibility. Always offer these "Free" items in exchange for information such as an e-mail address.

5. Host a contest

Hosting a contest is another way to use the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy to market your plumbing business. You could ask customers to submit photos of their plumbing system, with the winner receiving a free plumbing inspection or service. This helps to encourage customer engagement and generate interest in your business.


6. Partner with other businesses

Partnering with other businesses in your community can be a great way to expand your reach and offer value to your customers. For example, you could partner with a

local hardware store to offer a complimentary plumbing workshop or demonstration. This helps establish your business as an authority in the plumbing industry and promotes collaboration and community involvement.

OFFERING VALUE

Effective marketing is essential to the success of any business, and the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy is a powerful tool that can help you generate interest in your plumbing business and attract new customers. By offering value to your customers, you establish trust and build relationships that can lead to long-term loyalty.

In summary, there are many ways to use the Free Prize Inside marketing strategy to market your plumbing business, including offering free plumbing inspections or educational resources, promoting free estimates, giving away branded items, hosting contests, and partnering with other companies. By implementing these strategies, you can differentiate your plumbing business from others in your area and establish yourself as a trustworthy and reputable service provider. 

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Email us at editor@plumbermag.com

Hydronic Heating Systems, HVAC

By Craig Mandli

PEXa pipe meets needs for energy efficiency and fast installation at new schools



Problem: As more families moved to Victoria, British Columbia, the Sooke School District built two new schools for 1,200 elementary and middle schoolers. Remaining earth-friendly was important, leading the project planners to target LEED v4 Gold certification. To achieve this goal, the planners followed a district heating model, in which a central plant collects and distributes energy between the schools for flexible heating and cooling. According to project engineer Michael Hladky, the key to success in these applications is keeping the heating or cooling energy from escaping while it travels to the schools.

Solution: To meet the challenge, the team specified 2,800 feet of REHAU INSULPEX pre-insulated PEXa piping to deliver energy from the plant to the schools. INSULPEX is designed to efficiently transfer hot or chilled fluid through buried pipelines, minimizing energy loss while supporting labor and material savings.

Result: In the field, installers noticed the durability and user-friendliness of INSULPEX paired with the RAUTOOL hydraulic tool kit. “The system is just bulletproof,” says installer Joe Bell. “You can’t put the pipe and fittings together wrong; the tool won’t let you misposition anything.” INSULPEX further delivered favorable performance results, supporting the schools’ energy targets. 800-247-9445; na.rehau.com

PEX fittings used in cold-climate radiant heating system



Problem: Standard electric heating systems aren’t always enough to combat harsh Canadian winters, so some homeowners turn to hydronic heating for better results. Tibor Schuller, owner of Schuller Hydronics, wanted to model this comfort in his own home and sought a safe and efficient radiant heating system to accomplish the task.

Solution: Schuller Hydronics turned to **SharkBite’s** oxygen-barrier PEX and **EvoPEX** fittings for the job. Because PEX is flexible, the team could more easily handle it than rigid pipe, bending and securing it quickly along the floor. EvoPEX fittings, meanwhile, assured that connections were sound and permanent since they display a green indicator when pipe is properly inserted. The Schuller team also used the SharkBite manifold, which has push-to-connect branches that can be disconnected. That way the team could adjust if needed without losing valuable parts.

Result: Because of EvoPEX’s push-to-connect design, the hydronic heating system was quick to install, saving the company about 40% on labor costs. Schuller also considers it more eco-friendly, longer lasting and easier to work with than alternative hydronic heating fittings. This system efficiently warms his 3,200-square-foot home from the basement, throughout the house and out to the porch. 877-700-4242; www.sharkbite.com


Radiant heat answers call in cold environment



Problem: Wyatt Kincheloe, owner of Mountain Man Plumbing in Cody, Wyoming, was hired to provide a heating system for a 3,000-square-foot fabrication shop. With long, bitter Wyoming winters, the owner wanted an in-floor heating system. Kincheloe conducted a heat loss calculation based on the drawings, using a -20 degree F outdoor design temp. Not including DHW load, the building required 140 mBh. “Due to the size of the boiler room, I suggested the use of a combi boiler,” says Kincheloe. “We’re at 5,000 feet above sea level, so that was a consideration when selecting a model. I’d recently heard that U.S. Boiler’s Alta boiler is rated for high elevation, and I wanted to try the new gas-adaptive technology.”

Solution: The Alta combi unit Kincheloe selected provides 200 mBh of DHW capacity and 150 mBh heating capacity. This was Kincheloe’s first time installing an Alta, so he used the startup wizard within the USB-Connect mobile app. The new app, which interfaces with the boiler through a Bluetooth adapter, allows technicians to access the boiler control via smartphone or mobile device rather than the boiler display. “I downloaded the app, plugged in the adapter, and could immediately see and modify all boiler functions on my phone,” said Kincheloe. “I set the slab supply water temperature to 120° F, and set the DHW setpoint to 119° F.”

Result: Even though perimeter insulation wasn’t complete, the owner’s largest gas bill was \$300. This came mid-winter, when northwest Wyoming saw a weeklong stretch when daytime temperatures never rose above 0 degrees F. 888-432-8887; www.usboiler.net 📱




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NEW




4008H COMPACT SKID

- »8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi
- »800 cc EFI
- Honda Engine
- (100 GALLON TANK)

»400' x 3/8" Jet Hose on DC Powered Reel


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VM4008H

- »8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi
- »690 cc
- Honda Engine
- »50' x 3/8" Washdown Hose on DC Reel


\$13,399 Plus Freight



STB3012H

- »12 gpm @ 3000 psi
- »800 cc EFI
- Honda Engine
- »400' x 1/2" Jet Hose on DC Reel

\$22,899 Plus Freight



STB4008H

- »8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi
- »690 cc Honda Engine
- »50' x 3/8" Washdown Hose on DC Reel

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Product Spotlight

Efficient tankless heaters minimize environmental impact

By Craig Mandli

Plumbing contractors know the benefits of upgrading to a tankless water heater. From their energy efficiency to their longer life expectancy and their ability to rapidly heat water on demand, the systems are only increasing in popularity.

Rheem recently launched the next generation of its RTGH Series super high-efficiency condensing and RTG Series high-efficiency, noncondensing tankless gas water heaters. According to Patrick McLaughlin, product manager at Rheem, these smaller, lighter units were designed with contractors in mind to make one-person installation and servicing even easier, while saving the homeowner money and energy. Plus, enhanced features deliver the continuous hot water and energy efficiency homeowners want.

“Rheem’s new water heaters give plumbers and homeowners enhanced convenience and control, while providing a high level of flexibility for installation scenarios,” he says. “We designed the latest innovations to our tankless gas portfolio in direct response to the thoughtful feedback from our plumber partners.”

The RTGH Series condensing (0.93 UEF) and RTG Series noncondensing (0.82 UEF) offer performance while using up to 34% and 25% less energy, respectively, than a standard residential 50-gallon tank water heater, helping homeowners



minimize environmental impact. Convenience features include an integrated digital display for diagnostic information, built-in EcoNet Wi-Fi (on select models) for real-time service alerts and control with the mobile app and Rheem’s LeakGuard detection and prevention system with auto water shut-off (available on indoor Wi-Fi models). The new modern design is both smaller and lighter than previous models. With a 1/2-inch clearance, the units feature ideal side-to-side and front clearance and are designed for safe and flexible

installation in tight spaces, including closets.

The RTGH Series is designed for installation flexibility and includes a field convertible indoor/outdoor model, making it an ideal solution for tank retrofits as well as new construction installations. These super high efficiency units feature an ideal turndown ratio, allowing them to achieve tighter control over temperature output even during lower demand. The units also include a quick-hang bracket system, making one-person installs easier.

The RTG Series feature universal venting options and a 43-foot vent run, making them a flexible solution for tankless replacements and for new residential construction. The indoor and outdoor units are also compatible with 1/2-inch gas lines and the lighter design simplifies installation in a variety of locations. **800-621-5622; www.rheem.com**

NIBCO BenchPress product line expansion

NIBCO expanded its line of carbon steel fittings to bring more press options for plumbing and mechanical carbon steel pipe applications, as well as fuel and gas carbon steel pipe applications. The BenchPress and BenchPressG fittings are designed for efficiency, with easy, clean and fast installation, for a wider



range of applications. The line features a patented fitting design that creates consistent joints, is flame free and environmentally friendly. Available in 1/2- to 2-inch sizes, the BenchPress and BenchPressG fittings can be installed within seconds and require no threading equipment and lubricants, while maintaining joint integrity and professional appearance. **800-234-0227; www.nibco.com**

Taco 0034e and 0034ePlus ECM high-efficiency circulators

Taco Comfort Solutions has expanded its family of ECM high-efficiency circulators with the addition of the 0034e and 0034ePlus models. With a maximum of 34 feet of head and 50 gpm, the new circulators offer up to 85% energy savings over a conventional circulator. The 0034e and 0034ePlus circulators are available with cast iron or NSF/ANSI 61 and 372 certified stainless steel volutes, so they are ideal for closed-loop hydronic heating systems as well as domestic hot water recirculation systems. Both circulators also offer a convenient, rotatable control box cover for a professional look, no matter the orientation of the installed circulator. **401-942-8000; tacocomfort.com**



Navien NHW-A non-condensing tankless water heater with ComfortFlow

Navien's NHW-A non-condensing tankless water heater is available in two configurations: NHW-AI for interior installations and NHW-AE for exterior installations. Both the NHW-AI and NHW-AE are offered in 160,000 Btu/h, 180,000 Btu/h and 199,900 Btu/h sizes in either natural gas or liquid propane fuel operation. NHW-A is the only non-condensing tankless water heater to feature the ComfortFlow recirculation pump and buffer tank originally introduced in the NPE-A condensing tankless water heater in 2012. ComfortFlow helps eliminate the "cold water sandwich" effect and resolves the issue of low flow rates. ComfortFlow also reduces the wait time for hot water by allowing internal or external recirculation without the need for external parts or controls. **800-519-8794; www.navieninc.com**



Solid Surface material with smooth and seamless construction making the lavs easy to clean and repair. Solid surface is also a nonporous material, so it will not support mold, mildew or bacteria accumulation for a cleaner and more hygienic hand washing space. Only two rough-ins, integral mounting supports and a unique mounting plate help speed up the installation process. **800-272-3539; www.bradleycorp.com**

Goulds Water Technology LSP03 LSP07 submersible sump pumps

LSP03/LSP07 Sump Pumps from Goulds Water Technology are designed and built for extended service life and increased reliability. The corrosion-resistant, heavy-duty construction includes stainless steel motor casing, fasteners, and shaft, with a double labyrinth lip seal to further protect the motor. Available in manual or automatic versions with several float switch options to increase flexibility for a range of residential applications including basement draining, water transfer and dewatering. **866-325-4210; www.goulds.com**



Bradley Corp. Express TLX Series lavatory system

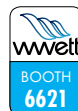
Bradley Corp. expanded its suite of lavatory systems with its Express TLX Series four-station lavatory system. Designed to provide value and hygiene while delivering long-lasting performance, Bradley's TLX four-station model creates a sleek and streamlined look that comfortably provides personal handwashing space for up to four users. Easy to specify and ADA compliant, its elongated, open-trough design is compact enough to save on wall space, expanding flexibility. Express ELX four-station lavatories are cast-formed in resilient Terreon



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Niagara earns second WaterSense Partner of the Year Award from EPA

Niagara has been recognized as the 2023 WaterSense Partner of the Year by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This is the second time the EPA has bestowed this recognition on the company in the last two years, and it's the third time Niagara has received the award in the past decade. WaterSense, an EPA-sponsored voluntary partnership program, promotes water-efficient products and practices.

Caleffi promotes Max Rohr to director, names new rep

Max Rohr has been appointed director of education and technical marketing, a newly created position within Caleffi North America. In this capacity, Rohr will lead the ideation, development and execution of Caleffi's training platforms including the Idronics design journal series, Coffee with Caleffi monthly webinars, Caleffi Academy field training and Ask Caleffi blog and podcasts. He will also ensure technical data, designer tools and installer information remains firmly integrated within the mainstream market communications of the company.



Caleffi also announced that Central Sales, an Iowa-based sales organization, now represents Caleffi in Kansas, Missouri and Southern Illinois. CSI will represent the entire line of Caleffi products, leveraging their expertise to provide service, support and collaboration with installers, distributors and engineers in their assigned territories.

Makita U.S.A. welcomes Sean Okada as new president and CEO

Makita has appointed Sean Okada as the company's president and CEO. He comes to the United States after seven years as president of Makita Australia. He also held leadership positions at Makita United Kingdom and Makita Gulf in Dubai. As the new president, Okada will drive the company's strategic initiatives, foster innovation and expand market presence while upholding Makita's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.



AquaMotion announces new representatives

AquaMotion has appointed two new manufacturer's representatives. A.H. Deveney and Co., Baton Rouge, Louisiana, will represent the company in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Central and Western Tennessee. Deveney has a staff of 17 to cover the large territory. Moore Sales Corp., previously AquaMotion's stocking representative for Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri, has now been appointed for the additional territories of Southern Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North and South Dakota. Moore has a staff of 11 and represents many HVAC product lines including Bosch.

PHCC Educational Foundation awards 57 students with scholarships

The Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors—National Association Educational Foundation awarded \$139,000 in scholarships to 57 students in 2023. Applicants must be plumbing or HVAC apprentices or trade school students, or college students pursuing studies directly related to the plumbing-heating-cooling industry. The 2024 PHCC Educational Foundation scholarship program will open for applications in January, with all submission materials due by May 1. Information on the scholarship program can be found at phccfoundation.org/scholarships.

Oatey hires Jon Boehlke as director of operations

Oatey has hired Jon Boehlke as director of operations at its William H. Harvey manufacturing facility in Omaha, Nebraska. Boehlke comes to Oatey from Hormel Foods, where he worked for more than two decades in various manufacturing leadership positions, most recently serving as senior operations manager. 





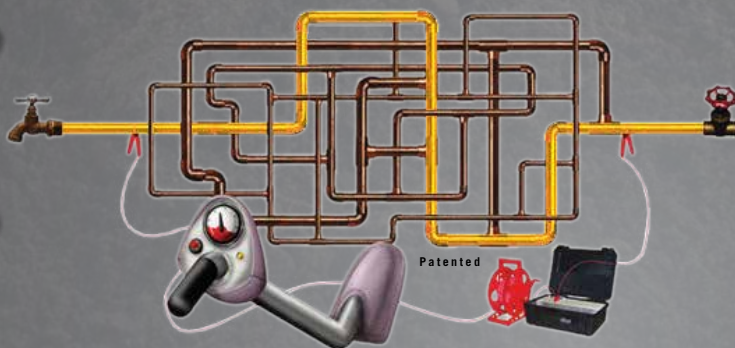
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2024 Mechanical Contractors Association of America Safety & Health Conference, Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, Tucson, Arizona. Visit www.mcaa.org/events/calendar/2024-safety-health-conference/

Jan. 22 - 24

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

Jan. 24-27

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

Jan. 29-31

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

Feb. 7-8

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

April 24-25

Dallas Build Expo, Dallas Market Hall. Visit buildexpousa.com

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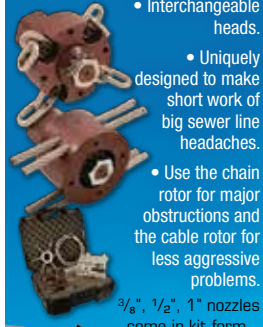
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