

# Plumber

## OFFENSIVE FORMATION

Plumber gave himself a sporting chance by developing a playbook for success  
Page 12

▲ On The Road  
RADIO, TV SPOTS DO MORE THAN  
JUST BRING IN CUSTOMERS  
Page 24

▲ In The Shop  
BASIC TROUBLESHOOTING  
CAN HELP REDUCE DOWNTIME  
ON THE JOB  
Page 36

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**8 From the Editor: Planning Ahead**

Now that 2020 is nearly over, it's time to plan what's ahead next year for your company.  
- By Cory Dellenbach

**10 @plumbermag.com**

Check out our exclusive online content.

**12 Profile: Offensive Formation**

Plumber gave himself a sporting chance by developing a playbook for success.  
- By Ken Wysocky

**22 Smart Business: Are You Struggling to Meet Sales Goals?**

A strategic market analysis may uncover competitive disadvantages or push you in new directions to find greater profitability.  
- By Jill Johnson

**30 Industry Insider: Going Green With Older Homes**

Instead of big ticket items, try thinking in smaller terms when you are talking to a customer about converting to more green technologies.  
- By Anthony Pacilla

**36 In the Shop: Making a Clear Picture**

Learning basic troubleshooting for common inspection system problems reduces downtime on the job.  
- By Ken Wysocky

**42 Product Focus: Green Plumbing Products**

- By Craig Mandli

**48 Case Studies: Green Plumbing Products**

- By Craig Mandli

**50 Product News: Product Spotlight: Electric diaphragm valve offers fast cycling**

- By Craig Mandli

**52 Industry News**

**53 Calendar**

**Getting the Word Out**

Idaho contractor's growth spurt illustrates the power of radio and TV advertising.

- By Ken Wysocky



**On the Cover**

Curoso Plumbing plumber Isaac Byrd readies a Milwaukee Tool press tool to press copper pipe pieces together as he installs a tankless water heater (Navien) on the outside of a residential property in Santa Rosa, California. Curoso Plumbing, owned by Jim Curoso, offers residential and commercial plumbing services (specializing in water heater repair, service and installation), drain cleaning and remodeling.  
**(Photography by Collin Chappelle)**

**Coming Next Month - Hydronic Heating Systems, HVAC**

- ▲ Plumber Profile: Carrboro Plumbing (Carrboro, North Carolina)
- ▲ Industry Insider: Randy Lorge
- ▲ On the Road: Schedule Engine software



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# ADVERTISER INDEX

ALLAN J. COLEMAN  
SINCE 1905

Allan J. Coleman Co. ....11



Amazing Machinery, LLC .....31

American Jetter ..... 54

Anchor Graphics ..... 28, 54

Arctic Blaster, Inc. .... 54



Bradford White Water Heaters... 41



Cam Spray ..... 20



Central Oklahoma Winnelson ....15

Cua Claws ..... 54



Duracable Manufacturing Co. ....27

Electric Eel Mfg. .... 20

ENPRESS LLC ..... 26

FastEST, Inc. .... 54

Flows.com .....21

Freud America, Inc. ....35



General Pipe Cleaners,  
div. of General Wire Spring..... 56

HoldRite (RWC) ..... 29



HotJet USA .....3



IPP Solutions, LLC .....23



MaxLiner USA ..... 55

McCormick Systems, Inc. .... 54



MyTana LLC ..... 49



Nexstar Network, Inc. ....7



NuFlow Technologies .....39



OceanQuip Connectors, LLC ..... 54



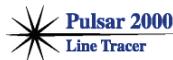
Picote Solutions .....17



Pipe Lining Supply .....2



Pipe Tools, Inc. ....38



Pulsar 2000, Inc. .... 34

Root Rat ..... 54



SPARTAN

Spartan Tool LLC .....5

Superior Signal Company LLC ... 54



SuppliesDepot.com .....9

The Home Depot .....33



Trojan Worldwide, Inc. ....19

Classifieds ..... 53

# Plumber

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Cory Dellenbach

## Planning Ahead

Now that 2020 is nearly over, it's time to plan what's ahead next year for your company

**I**

t's finally here: The last month of 2020. We've all been waiting for this, haven't we?

This past year has been a tough one for many. We've had to deal with a global pandemic, stay-at-home orders, business shutdowns for weeks or months, and a struggling economy.

The plumbing industry wasn't exempt. Companies had to adjust to office employees working from home, laying off staff because of slow business, and finding new ways to work (wearing masks and other personal protective equipment).

Both small and large business owners had to adjust, learn and adapt as the year went on because of the ever-changing pandemic and various state guidelines and mandates.

This year brought extraordinary changes that you might not have dealt with before, but you should still learn from them. If a company owner and its staff can't adapt to change, they won't make it very long in this industry.

What are some things you can take with you into 2021?

### Stay Calm, Don't Stress

Changes happen all the time, whether it be additions and losses to your staff, or new competitors moving in or out of your area, and you have to be ready to roll with the punches. It won't do anyone any good if you get stressed out and fall apart. The owner and staff need to pull together and help each other.

### Be Ready for Anything

What happens if one or more of your plumbers leave the company? You should have a plan for such events. Having a list of possible candidates to fill positions — gathered from previous openings — is a solid way to plan for staff leaving. If you can't do that, at least have a job ad ready to go out at a moment's notice.

### Have a Plan

If there is one thing this year has taught us, it is to have a plan. You never know when business will slow down or pick up. It can happen without much notice. Having a plan in place will give you direction on what to do in different situations such as having people work from home, adjusting schedules, adding staff. Winging it all can be scary and can lead to confusion for you and your staff.

### Be Flexible

Another thing to take from this year: the ability to be flexible. Things will change at a moment's notice sometimes and having the ability to adjust on the fly is valuable for everyone at the company. Learn to take those changes in stride and grow from them.

### HEADING INTO 2021

There are a few things you should definitely take from 2020 with you into 2021. The first is many companies changed the way they worked, ensuring face coverings were worn, gloves, different uniforms, etc. This should be something that is carried on.

You don't know what type of working atmosphere you or your plumbers will be heading into from job to job. Even when this pandemic is over, you might want to consider requiring at least the gloves and full overall uniforms to be worn on all job sites to keep them safe. I know it might not be the most popular opinion, but just think of everything your crews work around.

### WHAT'S AHEAD FOR YOU?

As we prepare to exit 2020, I'd like to hear what your company's plans are for 2021. Email me at [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com) or call 715-350-8436.

Enjoy this issue! 📧

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— *How to Halt the Turnover of Your Top Talent*

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## CHECKING IN

### Ohio Plumber Finds Continued Success as One-Person Shop

Linda Hudek was last featured in *Plumber* magazine two years ago. In the time since, she has made some improvements to her business while still staying true to what has consistently brought her success the past decade. Get an update about the former featured contractor in this online exclusive. ▶ [plumbermag.com/featured](http://plumbermag.com/featured)

## STAYING WARM

### Giving Customers Boiler and Water Heater Peace of Mind

As the cold of winter sets in, your customers are going to want to make sure their boilers and water heaters won't fail them soon. This online exclusive covers some maintenance tips to keep in mind for your service calls.

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## VIP TREATMENT

### Delivering Top-Notch Customer Service Without Raising Prices

Strategies targeted at improving the customer experience don't have to equate to higher expenses. In this online exclusive, regular contributors Carter Harkins and Taylor Hill take a look at the various ways you can provide better service without it costing anything extra.

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# OFFENSIVE FORMATION

Plumber gave himself a sporting chance by developing a playbook for success

By Ken Wysocky | Photography by Collin Chappelle



**Curoso Plumbing Inc., Santa Rosa, California**

**OWNER** Jim Curoso  
**FOUNDED** 1982  
**EMPLOYEES** 4

**SERVICES** Residential and commercial plumbing services (specializing in water heater repair, service and installation), drain cleaning and remodeling

**SERVICE AREA** 40-mile radius around Santa Rosa  
**WEBSITE** [www.curosoplumbing.com](http://www.curosoplumbing.com)

- ◀ Curoso Plumbing owner Jim Curoso stands at the rear of one of his Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans. Curoso founded the company in 1982 in Santa Rosa.
- ▶ Isaac Byrd uses a Milwaukee Tool press tool to put together galvanized pipe sections for a gas line for a water heater installation project. Plumbing assistant Jeremiah Anthony looks on.



**A**s a former collegiate and professional football player as well as a high school football coach, it seems only natural that Jim Curoso brings a sports-minded mentality to running his business, Curoso Plumbing in Santa Rosa, California.

From the way he manages employees to his focus on customer service and professionalism, the 44-year-old entrepreneur employs lessons learned from years and years of playing football: teamwork, pride, hard work, self-discipline and goal-setting.

And just like a linebacker focuses on tackling instead of trying to hone quarterbacking skills, Curoso focuses sharply on what he does well: installing and repairing water heaters, a business niche that generates about half of his company's revenue.

"There are a lot of things I learned in sports that I apply to plumbing," says Curoso, who played linebacker at both Santa Rosa Junior College, Humboldt State University and San Jose State University. He then played for the two teams in the now-defunct National Indoor Football League for several years and in a

*"There are a lot of parallels between business and sports, like working hard, taking pride in what you do and setting a goal and going for it."*

*Jim Curoso*

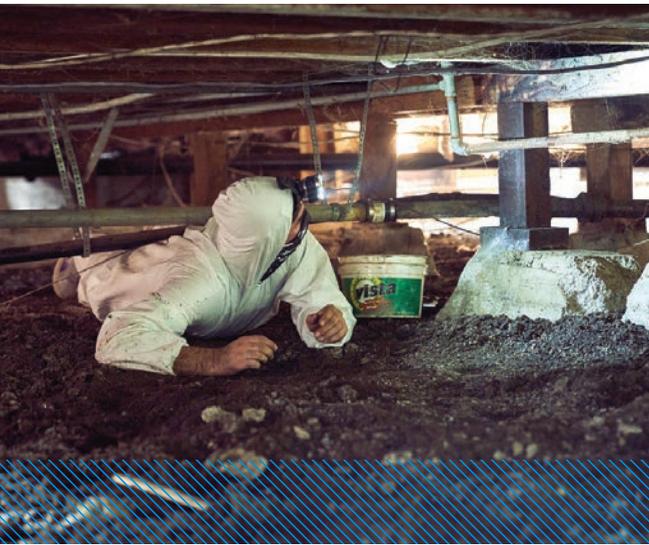
European football league. Curoso also was a teacher at and coached football for a high school in Eureka, a small town in northern California.

"There are a lot of parallels between business and sports, like working hard, taking pride in what you do and setting a goal and going for it," he continues. "In business, you also have to choose a good team and motivate people, just like in coaching.

"One guy may be really good at remodeling jobs and another guy may be really good at installing water heaters. Everyone can't be a quarterback or a running back — each person has their own skill set and putting them in a place where they can do well is a big part of business success."



◀ Plumber Isaac Byrd presses together copper pipe pieces during a water heater installation job.



▲ Plumbing assistant Jeremiah Anthony crawls under a residence as he prepares to connect a new tankless water heater to existing water and gas lines.

## Building a team

In addition, if technicians are unhappy with work conditions, they aren't as productive. So it's important to listen to what they have to say and build a culture where everyone works together, just like a coach must do with a team, he notes.

So far, the sports mindset has worked well for Curoso, the second-generation owner of the company, which he bought from his father, Jim Curoso Sr., in 2013. He says the company's revenue now is 10 times more than his first year in business.

"It used to be just me and an old Dodge truck and now we have three guys and I'm going full blast," he says. "We're absolutely swamped with work."

Of course, it helps immensely that two of the company's technicians — Clint "Bubba" Merz and Isaac Byrd — are lifelong friends of Curoso. And the third technician, Dan Bellucci, was hired based on a referral from a friend. Bellucci started out as apprentices at the company.

"I went my first four and one-half years in business without any employees. I really didn't want to have employees," Curoso says. "I wanted to do everything myself. It seemed kind of scary to have someone else turning a wrench on jobs when your name is on the truck.

"But things got so busy that it had to happen," he says. "And they've been invaluable. I trust them completely. Now we're blessed with plenty of work."

## Runs in the family

Curoso's father parlayed a stint as a pipefitter in the U.S. Navy into a plumbing career when he bought a company called Davey Drain in Santa Rosa, which is about 55 miles north of San Francisco.

## Business networking organization helped spur company's growth

Jim Curoso may be the sole owner of Curoso Plumbing in Santa Rosa, California. But for several years after he took ownership of the company founded by his father, Jim Curoso Sr., he nonetheless relied on a host of business "partners" for advice, courtesy of the Business Network Institute.

With more than 270,000 members worldwide and 9,500 chapters, the BNI ([www.bni.com](http://www.bni.com)) is an invaluable source of not only business referrals, but advice on topics ranging from legal matters and accounting to marketing and branding. Membership in the group contributed significantly to his company's rapid growth, Curoso says.

"I wanted to grow, but I didn't know how to drum up more business," he says. "I was used to putting an ad in the phone book and waiting to see who called me.

"But the BNI opened so many doors in terms of learning how to market my company, especially with developing a presentable website," he adds. "The input I received is a large reason why we're now so busy.

"I learned how to run a business from a whole lot of like-minded people," he says. "I didn't have to learn as many things the hard way because I learned it from other companies in our group."

Speaking of busy, there are times when Curoso – who

has only three employees and finds it difficult to hire more – can't handle all the customer calls coming in. But through the BNI, he developed contacts with other local plumbers to whom he can comfortably and confidently refer work.

"It's so great to have a good group of friendly competitors that I can refer work to," he says. "And it's also not uncommon for them to call me with questions and vice versa.

"I thought the value of this would be a way to get more business referrals," he continues. "But what I really learned was the value of having people to bounce questions off of about things like insurance, customer service or legal issues.

"It's invaluable to have a network of people on whom you can rely."

The annual cost of membership was \$2,000 during the three years and Curoso says it was worthwhile investment. Membership included weekly meetings where members of the local chapter were required to provide updates about their businesses.

"Stepping out of my comfort zone and talking about my business in front of people I didn't know was one of the hardest things I've ever done," he relates. "But it was great learning experience."

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▲ Plumber Isaac Byrd measures to find the length of pipe he needs for installation of a new tankless water heater, plumbing assistant Jeremiah Anthony looks on.

“When I was a kid, I went with him on jobs as often as I could,” Curoso recalls. “I was his human backhoe, helping to dig up busted water and sewer lines. He’d pay me \$20 and I thought I was getting rich.

“Sometimes he’d pull me out of school for big jobs, which I thought was great,” he continues. “It was a lot of fun for me, making money and hanging out with my dad, then going out for Chinese food after work. It was the greatest time ever.”

He also learned a lot from his father about running a business — things like building relationships with clients, being presentable and professional and following through on promises made to customers.

Later, Curoso graduated from Humboldt State with a degree in sociology. “I majored in football and minored in sociology,” he quips. He then went on to earn a master’s degree in education at the University of Phoenix before embarking on his professional football career, then trading in cleats for classrooms as a high school teacher.

But his love for plumbing never waned. “I still did plumbing work on the side,” he says. “I always missed the simplicity of plumbing.”

So in 2008, he went back to Santa Rosa to work for his

“I think all people really want is for you to be humble and truthful, and if something goes wrong, you have to ask what you can do to make things right.”

*Jim Curoso*

father. Curoso was his father’s only employee and a large part of the small company’s business revolved around working as a subcontractor for Sears, installing water heaters.

### Emphasis on water heaters

Curoso estimates he installed more than 3,000 water heaters while Davey Drain was a Sears subcontractor, which explains his continued focus on water heaters after he bought the company from his father and changed its name to Curoso Plumbing.

“I got tired of constantly explaining to people why the company is named Davey Drain and Plumbing,” he says. “Plus I just wanted to put our family name on the truck. We kept the same phone number and license, so it worked out well.”

On average, the company installs seven to 10 water heaters a week. The company’s marketing efforts, including search engine optimization on its website, are also geared toward generating water-heater business.

Why the sharp focus on this market segment? First of all, it was a niche business sector at which he excelled. “I can pretty much install them with my eyes closed,” he notes.

Second, the profit margins on water heater repairs and installations are good. And last but certainly not least, Curoso says it’s very gratifying work.

“When someone’s hot water goes out and you restore it, they have a smile on their face,” he says. “And you can usually install them in a day, so there’s almost instant gratification.”

### Diverse services

But the company focuses on more than just water heaters. It also installs boilers and does commercial and

residential service and repair, kitchen and bathroom remodeling, pipeline video inspections, drain cleaning and water, gas and sewer line repairs, to name a few.

To perform all those services, the company relies on a variety of equipment, including power tools made by Milwaukee Tool, Channellock pliers, six drain machines made by Gorlitz Sewer & Drain (a model 380 and 68 HD on each of the three service trucks), a RIDGID SeeSnake Compact C6 inspection camera and a RIDGID NaviTrak Scout pipeline locator.

For service vehicles, Curoso invested in three 2016 Sprinter vans built by Mercedes-Benz.

“I think they’re one of most presentable vehicles out there,” Curoso says. “I bought one and saw an instant improvement in credibility. When you show up in an old Dodge truck, customers look at you a little differently. It’s like when you dress up in a suit. It makes a difference when you look like a professional outfit. Our trucks are a big part of conveying a professional image and branding.”

Another benefit: the Sprinters’ diesel engines get more than 20 mpg, almost twice as much as Curoso’s original truck. The annual savings in fuel consumption has more

than made up for the higher initial purchase price, compared to other service vans, he says.

### Putting customers first

Whether it’s answering his cellphone 24/7, avoiding hard sells on products and services or leaving job sites as clean as they were before, Curoso strives to provide top-notch customer service.

“We always try our best to be there for customers,” he notes. “Unless I happen to sleep through it, I always answer my phone at night. And I try to be personable and honest — no pricing schemes, like a get-in-the-door service price.”

One of the first things Curoso did after buying the company was develop his own flat-rate pricing structure, which he believes offers a more honest and truthful pricing framework.

“It has positives and negatives,” he says. “But I think flat-rate pricing removes some of the negative connotations that come with a high hourly rate,” he continues. “Sometimes flat-rate pricing comes out in your favor and sometimes it doesn’t. But in the end, it all comes out in the wash.”



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- ▶ Isaac Byrd shows assistant Jeremiah Anthony the plan for connecting a new Navien tankless water heater to the existing water and gas lines under the house.
- ▼ Curoso Plumbing owner and operator Jim Curoso, center, is flanked by his two main plumbers Bubba Merz, left, and Isaac Byrd, right, along with one of the company's work vans outside of a job site near Santa Rosa.



In addition, Curoso believes in doing the right thing when customers feel wronged. “I think all people really want is for you to be humble and truthful, and if something goes wrong, you have to ask what you can do to make things right,” he says. “Over the years, I’ve done a couple jobs for free. You can’t go wrong if you do the right thing, even if you lose money every so often.”

The customer-centric approach works well, judging from the company’s average rating of five stars, based upon online reviews from more than 100 customers on popular platforms such as Google and Yelp. The latter platform generates about 75% of the company’s service calls, Curoso estimates.

Many of the reviews mention factors such as honesty, courtesy, fast response, efficiency, punctuality, knowledgeability and professionalism.

The fact that Curoso doesn’t ask customers to post online reviews makes the five-star average rating across all platforms even more impressive. “It just feels different when you ask people to do something,” he explains. “If they’re going to do it, they’ll do it on their own and it’ll be more heartfelt.”

## More growth expected

Curoso anticipates continued growth for his company, primarily through doing the same things the company currently does, just on a larger scale. The company also plans to open another branch nearly 2,000 miles away in Katy, Texas.

“Everyone can’t be a quarterback or a running back — each person has their own skill set and putting them in a place where they can do well is a big part of business success.”

*Jim Curoso*

Why so far away? His younger brother, Greg, 39, lives there and is interested in duplicating his older brother’s success, Curoso says.

But of course, any additional growth in Santa Rosa also depends on being able to hire quality employees to handle the additional work, he says.

“My name is on the truck, so I’m never going to sacrifice quantity (of employees) for quality,” he says. “Any new employees have to be presentable and value the company’s principles. Like I said before, it’s like a sports team: You have to have the right players in the right positions.”

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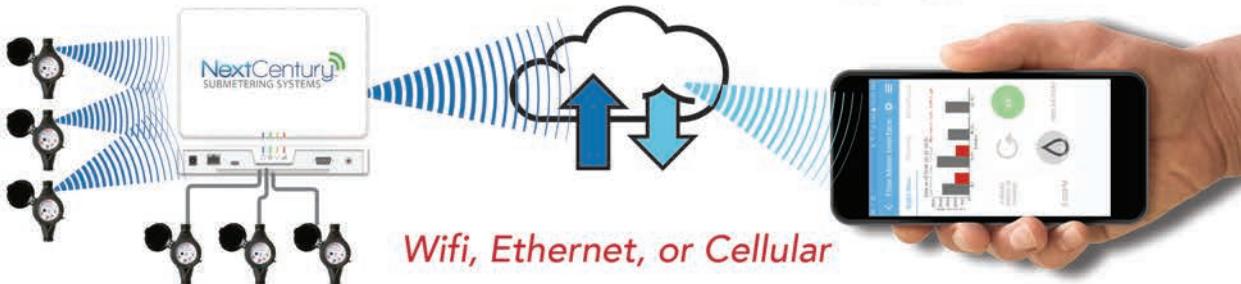


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Jill Johnson

# Are You Struggling to Meet Sales Goals?

A strategic market analysis may uncover competitive disadvantages or push you in new directions to find greater profitability

*By Jill Johnson*

**I**f you're struggling with sluggish sales, review two critical areas to address the situation. The first is determining if the slowdown is due to changes in your target market. The second is determining if your sales and promotional approaches are ineffective.

While there may be complicating factors beyond your control, most of the time a sales slowdown can be attributed to one or both of these issues. This type of analysis reviews your demographics, competitors and the effectiveness of your marketing messages to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the demand potential for your business. When combined with a marketing audit, you have a powerful opportunity to turn things around.

## Conduct a demographic analysis

A demographic assessment is the foundation of determining if your products or services remain feasible. Understanding your target market demographics provides insight regarding the impact of any changes in market volume. A demographic review helps determine if you are in a short-term sales slump or if a more significant market decline is expected over a longer time horizon. All too often, the cause for a revenue decline is evident in the demographic data. The key is to allow the data to show you, objectively, what is going on in your market.

A well-executed demographic analysis evaluates shifts in the variables of your consumer's age, gender, income and other economic variables impacting the market you sell to, and it identifies potential market risks impacting your business survival. Business client demographics include company age, revenue, number of employees or number of locations.

Be careful in defining your market area boundaries. Too many businesses use wider geographic areas for their market than they realistically serve. Overly optimistic boundaries will overstate your market potential. Think of your customer demographics in the same way that a doctor thinks about vital signs. Demographics will help identify

new opportunities. Or they will confirm your market has shrunk to a level where you should reconsider your offerings.

## Conduct market interviews

Some companies conduct probing interviews of customers, employees, key community leaders, industry associations and vendors to gain insight on what is changing within their marketplace. Interviews provide you with insights into what makes your competitors tick, or they help you understand what your key target audiences really think. Interviews can help you understand what is going on and provide you with insight to refine your marketing messages to improve sales.

## Study your competitors

While the internet has made it easier to gather basic information on competitors, competitive intelligence involves deeper methods. Look at what products and services they promote. Evaluate how they position those products and services to meet customer needs. You can network with industry experts, customers, suppliers, key referral sources and even competitors to better understand your market environment. Combine this information with research sources such as news media or subscription databases to help gain additional insight. Researching your competitors will provide you with a deeper awareness of opportunities or the need to revamp your offerings.

## Secret shop your team, the competition

Secret shopping allows you to better understand how effective your salespeople are at sharing your brand message with your target audience. You can assess their conversation approaches, closing techniques and positioning efforts when responding to contacts from a prospective customer. You can combine this approach with secret shopping your key competitors. Secret shopping your team and competitors will give you greater insight into identifying opportunities for improvement and enhancing sales effectiveness.

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Too many businesses use wider geographic areas for their market than they realistically serve. Overly optimistic boundaries will overstate your market potential.

sales approaches to improve overall performance. It is not uncommon for novice salespeople to be given little training with the expectation that they will intuitively figure out how to sell. Closing deals, whether to a consumer or a commercial client, can be a much more complicated effort. Sales may not resolve in a single interaction; they often involve multiple discussions before the final decision to buy. Developing better skills and questions for probing prospects can help move the sale forward.

## GET TO WORK

Engaging in a strategic market analysis may uncover the reasons for your revenue slowdown. The goal is to determine if your marketing approaches or your lack of a viable market is the cause of your situation. If it is your marketing, you can adjust your sales and marketing messages to better align with your customers. If it is the market, you can review pricing strategy and geographic service boundaries.

Sifting through the data will help you reassess your market trends, growth factors and competitive dynamics. You gain an understanding of the implications of this information relative to your business and can assess how well you are positioned for long-term success.

Jill Johnson is a speaker, author and president and founder of Johnson Consulting Services. Reach her at [www.jcs-usa.com](http://www.jcs-usa.com).

## Complete a marketing audit

Effective marketing strategies balance the elements of the marketing mix with your strategic plan to reach identified target markets and generate desired sales results. A marketing audit evaluates the effectiveness of your marketing and promotional tactics to identify what you should maintain or improve to support your strategic vision and plan. This would include a review of your website and sales approaches (phone, drop-in, internet, etc.). Review all of your marketing collateral materials to assess improvements to enhance consumer decision-making. Carefully evaluate how you use your social media channels to identify more effective tactics for sharing your marketing message and engaging with your prospects.

## Provide sales coaching to your team

Sometimes your team needs outside support to review

# Getting the Word Out

Idaho contractor's growth spurt illustrates the power of radio and TV advertising

By Ken Wysocky

**S**ome plumbers think that radio and television advertising is something expensive that only big companies can afford. But there's another viewpoint to consider: Some of those big companies used to be small companies — until they embraced radio and TV advertising.

Take MAGIC Electric, Plumbing, Heating + Air, based in Jerome, Idaho. Radio and television ads played a central role in the company's rapid expansion to 109 employees today from just three in 2013, when owner Billy Salts established the business.

"Our rapid growth has a lot to do with frequency of marketing," Salts explains, noting the company also uses everything from direct-mail campaigns and door-hangers

to the internet and social media platforms to saturate the market and reach potential customers.

"Good marketing is all about frequency, which we achieve by using so many platforms," he says. "They give us a strong presence in our markets."



<b>COMPANY</b>	MAGIC Electric, Plumbing, Heating + Air
<b>OWNER</b>	Billy Salts
<b>STRATEGY</b>	Radio and television advertising
<b>FUNCTION</b>	Attracting customers, branding awareness and recruiting employees
<b>INVESTMENT</b>	About \$200,000 in 2020, plus another \$20,000 in production costs; goal is 70% to 90% return on investment
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.themagicteam.com">www.themagicteam.com</a>
<b>YELLOW DOG CREATIVE WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://www.yellowdogcreative.com">www.yellowdogcreative.com</a>



▶ Plumbing technician Josh Knowlton with MAGIC Electric, Plumbing, Heating + Air in Jerome, Idaho, carries tools to a job site. The company uses radio and TV ads not only to prospect for customers and promote seasonal services, but also to build its brand and attract technicians like Knowlton.

“Our rapid growth has a lot to do with frequency of marketing. Good marketing is all about frequency, which we achieve by using so many platforms.”

**Billy Salts**

Furthermore, Salts relies on radio and TV ads for more than just branding his company and prospecting for customers. They also play a valuable role in recruiting new employees, one of the toughest challenges facing the industry.

So far, the approach is a winner for the company, which employs 18 plumbing technicians and runs eight trucks: six in Jerome, located in far south-central Idaho, and two in a satellite office in Boise, about 120 miles northwest. The company made *Inc. Magazine's* 2020 list of the top 5,000 fastest-growing, privately owned companies in the country (it ranked 3,763rd and 27th in Idaho) and was named one of the top 10 medium-size companies to work for by Best Places to Work Idaho for 2020.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

An old business adage says companies must spend money to make money, a philosophy that Salts adheres to when it comes to marketing. The company invests anywhere from 7% to 10% of its annual revenue on marketing; Salts says he invested about \$200,000 on running radio and television ads alone in 2020, plus another \$20,000 in production costs.

The company strives for a 70% to 90% return on investment (ROI), depending on the type of advertising used. Salts has established different ROI goals for different advertising platforms. Some programs return 100% of an investment, while others don't.

“But even platforms with lower ROI's still provide another way to get our message out there,” he says.

The key to calculating ROI is tracking the revenue generated by each kind of advertising. To that end, call-center employees always ask customers where they heard about the company. In addition, Salts uses ServiceTitan field-service/business-management software to track revenue produced by each advertising campaign.

“We also have different phone numbers, divvied up by ZIP code, on all of our ads for tracking purposes,” he says.



▲ Josh Knowlton works on a water heater installation at a customer's house who called the company after hearing their radio commercials.

## EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

Salts started running radio and television ads within the first six months after he established the company. “If you're growing a business, you have to get out in front of potential customers,” he explains. “Plus, people tend to forget about contractors, so it helps if we're constantly in front of them.”

MAGIC works with Michigan-based Yellow Dog Creative to produce its radio and television ads.

Generally speaking, the company runs 30-second radio and television ads from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Two to three different ads usually run concurrently on each venue, typically focusing on particular products or seasonal service promotions, he explains.

“But we also periodically run branding ads that just explain what our company is about, not focused on one division or one service,” he notes.

MAGIC also relies on radio and television ads to recruit new employees. To do this, Yellow Dog crafts ads that focus on the company's culture.

“We try to get the message across that this is a great place to work, as well as a great company to hire,” Salts says. “A lot of times, customers end up being our biggest (recruiting) advocates because they may know a technician or electrician that's trying to find a job or someone who's trying to get into the trades.”

The messaging apparently is working. Salts says the company hired 28 new employees from March through August and plans to hire another 25 or so within the ensuing six months to a year.



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“If you’re growing a business, you have to get out in front of potential customers. Plus, people tend to forget about contractors, so it helps if we’re constantly in front of them.”

*Billy Salts*

**HIRE AN EXPERT**

The bottom line in advertising is that great ads are necessary to produce maximum impact. That’s where Yellow Dog steps in. “When we first started working with them, TV stations would call us and ask who produced the commercials,” Salts says. “The quality was that good.”

Salts advises working with an advertising agency that thoroughly understands the market and also takes time to understand clients’ goals.

As for the ever-popular radio and TV jingles, Salts used them when he first established the company, but not anymore. Jingles were effective early on for branding, but marketing has changed since then, he notes.

“I just don’t see a lot of companies on the forefront of marketing using jingles anymore,” he says. “They seem to be more of a thing of the past.”

Regarding the argument that radio and television ads are just too expensive for plumbing companies, Salts has some advice: Plumbers should first consult with an advertising firm to see what kinds of advertising venues work best in their markets and go from there.

“We no longer go all in on just radio and television, but they’re still platforms that we feel offer great potential for getting our message out there,” he says. “You have to be willing to spend the money and do it the right way so you get a return on your investment.” **■**



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Anthony Pacilla

## Going Green With Older Homes

Instead of big-ticket items, try thinking in smaller terms when you are talking to a customer about converting to more green technologies

By Anthony Pacilla

In “newer” parts of the country, tankless water heaters, ultra-high-efficiency toilets, waterless urinals, rain collections systems, recycled graywater systems, state tax incentives for graywater programs and on-demand everything are the norm.

Sure, a small percentage of these newer areas are older homes, but for the most part, newer parts of the country were built with these systems installed from day one and are part of the culture. For the rest of the country, which deals with houses built during the time of George Washington, it can be the opposite.

Swapping a tankless water heater out in a newer Arizona home is different than totally re-roughing an entire basement to accept new style units, pipe sizing and flue routes. Drilling a hole through a wood frame house on stilts on the Outer Banks of North Carolina is different than drilling through an 8-foot-thick solid stone foundation wall in Boston.

Places like California need to conserve water while the northeastern United States has so many rivers, aquifers and watersheds that they don't even know how much water is available. All they know is that it seems endless.

### SELLING GREEN

Going “green” is in some parts of the country, a no-brainer. Older parts it can be a fistfight because of higher installation costs and lack of perceived value due to those associated costs.

Plumbers could argue both sides of this issue all day long. It does make you realize that payoff and today's installation costs many times outweigh any long-term investment benefit depending on how old a structure is and how it was built. Many people, no matter how well you inform them, don't look at their appliances or water waste as a worthwhile investment because much of our country is spoiled with plentiful water supplies and relatively inexpensive utility costs.

They will invest in a new porch, car, vacation house, the stock market or a mutual fund, but not in the water, fuel and electric waste in their homes — even though you could make the argument that we could save them more monthly than they will make in the market nowadays.

So how then can we “sell” customers on greener products? Let us start with some realities in older areas of America.

Stop thinking sweeping big-ticket, state-of-the-art items and think instead of case-by-case opportunities where you can match a green solution so they have an immediate result.

Water is many times plentiful and relatively cheap. There is very little sense of urgency to lower a water-heater gas bill because it costs a couple of hundred dollars a year to operate a tank unit. Many people have “free” water from auxiliary sources, such as a private well. Customers are used to how things have been and see no need to change. Because of the internet, customers are more aware that parts for newer greener equipment are not as readily available and more expensive to repair than older models.

Many older customers grew up and still have old heavy Speakman showerheads with no flow restrictors, which gives them a power-wash shower that they love. These customers wouldn't trade that power shower for anything in the world. Finally, the thought of having an annual maintenance cost for something as simple as a water heater angers them tremendously.

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Lots of people in the northeast will have a septic tank, leachfield, private gas well and private water well with the only utility bill they pay being electric. So how then, in this market, do we go green?

### THINKING SMALL

Stop thinking sweeping big-ticket, state-of-the-art items and think instead of case-by-case opportunities where you can match a green solution so they have an immediate result. Tie the green idea into premature failures of equipment and unnecessary downtime and costs.

Let's use water waste as our first example. Limiting waste is green. Think of how many simple ways a customer wastes water. Leaking toilets, faucets, taps and spigots alone account for tons of wasted water. Did you ever actually read the back of those toilet dye tablets about how much water is wasted by a leaking flapper? That will resonate with a customer.

What about turning the water heater temperature down to a lower setting? Not only does hotter water cost more to make, but it also wears down the water heater quicker. Do you live in a warmer climate with a customer who has an electric water heater? What about giving them the option of a heat pump water heater that steals humid air and uses it to heat the water? Many times, these people run a dehumidifier regularly anyway — why not turn two into one?

How about a tub-shower spout diverter that doesn't seal all the way? You're taking a shower while half the water is just going through the spout and right down the drain.

Could you install a graywater discharge to the garden on a call to install a new laundry setup? Two birds with one stone — switch left to discharge to garden, right to discharge to sewer. Everyone in cold areas has had a catastrophic frozen pipe event that ruined the living room

while they were on vacation. These people would consider those new devices that shut the water off during a line break. What's more expensive, a new living room or a water device installation?

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Sometimes it's the simple things and figuring out how to tie them into real-world applications that can make the customer feel they are making a difference with their bills, going green and preventing a costly breakdown. Easing older homes into being green is a better approach than forcing big-ticket items down their throats when the payoff may never actually pay itself off.

Going green in old American cities has to be an evolution and not an overnight change.

The type of house decides the installation cost of many items like a tankless water heater. Some homes are an easy day; others can be a three-day event. The payoff schedule is different for those different customers.

I say instead of making the jump from old school to state-of-the-art green, maybe our best bet is to be more thoughtful and practical with our recommendations to go green. Find ways that are simple and which a homeowner can see a more immediate payoff and value. 

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

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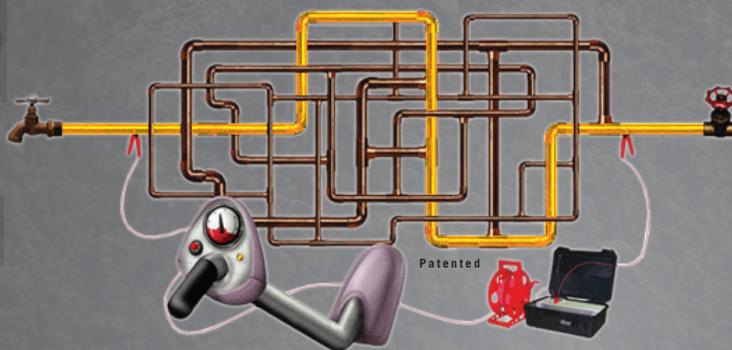


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# Making a Clear Picture

Learning basic troubleshooting for common inspection system problems reduces downtime on the job *By Ken Wysocky*

**I**nspection cameras are a critical tool on sewer cleaning and pipe rehab projects. So when a camera breaks down on a job, productivity, profitability and customer relations suffer.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Equipped with some basic know-how, savvy contractors can save the day by troubleshooting camera issues.

Of course, inspection cameras are complex machines and many repairs must be performed at service centers. But industry experts say there are certain problems contractors can troubleshoot themselves — to keep jobs moving ahead on schedule.

To learn more, *Plumber* spoke with Julie James, customer service manager in the Western office of CUES, and Adam White, a technical specialist at RIDGID.

James and White point out that most manufacturers' camera systems are different, which makes troubleshooting generalizations difficult. Nonetheless, the key to resolving many camera problems lies in determining which of the system's basic components are malfunctioning: the monitor, reel, camera head or cable.

Doing so requires isolating and testing each of these components. And isolating the problem component provides a side benefit — operators only need to send in the broken component, as opposed to sending in the entire system, leaving them without a camera, they say.

On CUES camera trucks (most of the company's camera systems are truck-mounted), contractors can use a test cable to evaluate the state of various components; a test cable is included with cameras. For example, an operator can bypass the cable reel by plugging one end of the test cable into a test port on the truck and the other end into a camera head; if the camera works, it's not the source of the problem, James explains.

"If you use the test cable and the camera comes up and running, then you know the issue is in the cable," she says. "If the camera doesn't work, then the cable isn't the problem."

Here are some other common problems and how to troubleshoot them:

## No image on the monitor

With RIDGID cameras, this could indicate a problem with the monitor, reel, camera head or interconnect cable, which is a short cable that connects the reel and the monitor. To make a determination, White says operators should disconnect the reel from the monitor, then use the monitor to watch a prerecorded videotape (if it's an older camera) or a video that's been downloaded onto a thumb drive.

◀ Inspection cameras are complex machines and many repairs must be performed at service centers, but there are certain problems contractors can troubleshoot themselves to avoid downtime.



“It’s always a good idea to have a spare of anything that can be easily changed out. Some guys don’t like to spend the money upfront on spare components, but that can be the difference between uptime and downtime.”

**Adam White**

“If you can watch a video, you know the monitor is working properly,” he says.

To eliminate the camera head as a problem, operators using RIDGID equipment can use a spanner wrench (it comes with the camera) to remove the head from the cable. Then plug the camera head directly into the interconnect-cable port on the monitor.

“If you get an image on the monitor, then you know the camera is good, too,” he explains. “So now you know the problem is not in the monitor or the camera head so it must be in either the reel, the push cable or the interconnect cable.”

To test the interconnect cable, attach the camera head to one end and plug the other end into the interconnect port on the monitor. If an image appears, then the interconnect cord also works, he says.

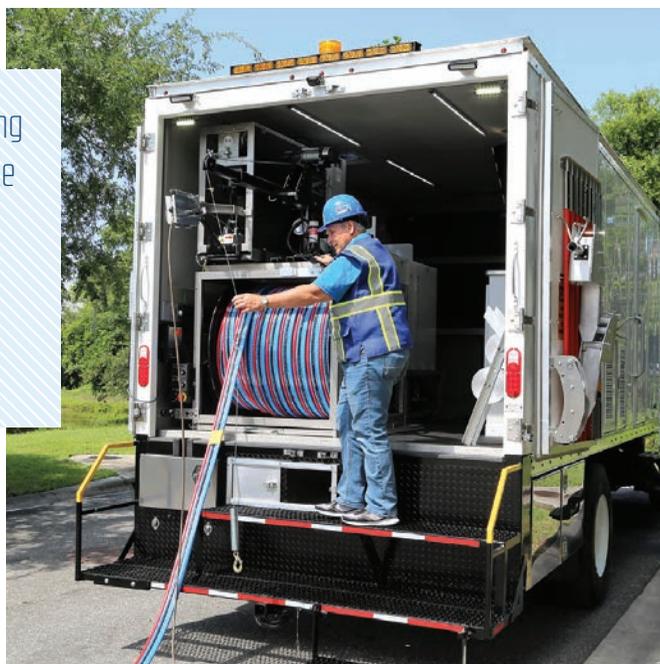
“The good news is you can replace the interconnect cord in the field,” White says. “It’s always a good idea to have a spare of anything that can be easily changed out. Some guys don’t like to spend the money upfront on spare components, but that can be the difference between uptime and downtime.”

If you still don’t get an image on the monitor, the problem most likely is in the push cable or the reel. “At that point, there’s not much you can do in the field,” he says. “Further diagnosis would require more in-depth disassembly that isn’t feasible to do in the field.”

### Water or sewage in the light heads

This problem typically is caused by failed O-rings. To fix this problem, remove the light heads, let them dry off for a few hours (or use a hair dryer to save time) and then replace the O-rings, James advises.

“We encourage people to maintain their light heads, too,” she adds. “Just remove a few screws and the heads come out. You can replace lenses, reflectors, O-rings and bulbs. It’s simple to do, and parts are readily available. And it doesn’t hurt to carry extra parts out in the field.”



▲ Operators also need to remember that camera systems are electronic devices that need to be treated with care.

### Broken cable

If a cable breaks, operators sometimes can “reterminate” it in the field. To do this on a CUES camera, cut off the bad part of the cable, then use the metal splice chamber to reconnect to the cable. The splice chamber protects the connection between the cable and the “pigtail,” which has pins on the end that plug into the mainline equipment, James explains.

“We recommend that if operators are going to go through all that work, they might as well replace the pigtail, too, because they get pretty beat up,” she says. “It’s a judgement call.”

Proper operation can help minimize the chances for broken cables. For instance, it’s recommended that operators keep their hands as close as possible to the drain they’re cleaning, which reduces pressure on the cable, says Adam Teets, a service manager at RIDGID.

“I’d say that 80% to 90% of camera failures stem from push-cable breakage,” he says. “So the best preventive measure is to push the cable down the line without too much pressure.”

### Prepare with spares

Carrying spare parts is critical to minimizing downtime. Even something as seemingly simple as a lifting strap for a transporter can cause profit-killing job stoppages because without it, the camera can’t be lowered into or removed from the pipeline, James notes.

“Little things failing will shut you down just as quickly as big things,” she says. “If you’re ordering a motor cable (which connects a camera transporter and the cable), order two. Sometimes you just don’t want to incur the expense, but don’t be penny-wise and pound-foolish. ... It’s not a lot of money compared to the cost of shutting down a truck.”

Proper maintenance is also crucial. Because of the environments in which they work, cameras are constantly confronting water and debris. That means it’s important to disconnect electrical connections to let them dry out to avoid corrosion, and remove debris that can slowly degrade seals and other parts, James says.

On pan-and-tilt cameras, for example, minute bits of grit can compromise the pivot mechanism. “And when you’re going up a sewer pipe, the wheels will pick up everything from hair to dental floss,” she adds. “Hair actually acts like wire and digs into the seals until they fail.”

As such, it’s important to do things like remove wheels and clean the axles. If a camera lens cracks, replace it right away so moisture doesn’t enter, she says.

Operators also need to remember that as electronic devices, camera systems need to be treated with care. “Our field reps often see users treating monitor-control units like anything but a complex electronic device,” White says. “They need to be properly stored: Don’t let them rattle around your truck every time you make a turn or a hard stop.”

Operators in cold climates also need to remember that electronic devices have a harder time working in bitter cold weather and battery life diminishes rapidly. So if temperatures are below zero, it’s a good idea to move the monitor into a garage or a utility room overnight, he suggests.

Taking care of your inspection camera will help prevent downtime when problems pop up on a job. **PI**

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By Craig Mandli

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### CPI Products URS1

The URS1 roller skid from CPI Products moves the camera off the bottom of the pipe and centers it in 6- to 14-inch pipes. Instead of impacting the walls and pushing into debris, the camera stays centered for an improved image and unobstructed lens. The wheels reduce friction and enable the camera to go further down the pipe with less effort. The legs automatically extend to help it stay centered when pipe diameters change. The legs also retract when the retrieval rope is pulled, which reduces the size of the unit, making it easier to retrieve and reducing stress on the camera cable. LED scuba lights are also available to increase visibility. This can also enable push cameras to inspect larger pipes. 413-443-0925; [www.cplproducts.com](http://www.cplproducts.com).



### CUES MPlus+ XL

The CUES MPlus+ XL push system is designed for easy operation and flexibility with an all-in-one setup and quick removal of the control unit, which can be used separately. It includes a coiler configuration and pan-and-tilt camera for mainline and larger pipeline applications up to 500 feet.



It integrates video observation coding, observation coding interface and digital recording. The lightweight system includes large, durable wheels for portability and a balanced footprint for stability. It is manufactured to handle rigorous field use. **800-327-7791; www.cuesinc.com.**

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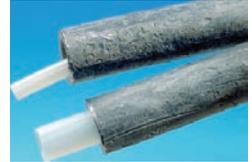
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of the existing service pipe. Designed for 1/2- to 2-inch diameters and up to 300-foot sections, it is made from a strong and durable virgin polyethylene terephthalate. The NSF 61-approved liner has two main uses: to keep drinking water pure and out of contact with the host pipe, such as lead or copper, and to rehabilitate pipes by sealing pinholes, cracks and small defects. It is a trenchless technology, thus its installation procedure avoids the risk of damage to other services since there is no disturbance of the ground around the pipe, also eliminating both the possibility of ground contamination and harm to existing plant and animal life. This no-dig, noninvasive system also preserves the property owner's aboveground structures, and can be installed in just a couple of hours. 800-348-0020; [www.flow-liner.com](http://www.flow-liner.com).



### Fluidmaster PRO45H Pro Series fill valve

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



### General Pipe Cleaners' Kinetic Water Ram

**General Pipe Cleaners' Kinetic Water Ram** quickly and cleanly clears clogged drains with green power. Just pump it up, insert in the drain, and snap the trigger. The environmentally safe tool uses compressed air to generate a shock wave that pulverizes the stoppage instantly. The shock wave bypasses vents and goes around bends to reach the stoppage with only 2% loss of power. The built-in pump and pressure gauge let the operator select the

right amount of force for each job. An optional toilet attachment screws onto the front to turn it into a plunger, enabling the operator to position the cone in the bowl to get a tighter seal. This allows the blockage to be struck with greater impact and no splash back. The tool has a sleek, plated body and comes in a sturdy carrying case with molded compartments for the Ram and accessories needed to handle 1 1/4- to 4-inch lines. **800-245-6200; [www.drainbrain.com](http://www.drainbrain.com).**



### Helix Laboratories BioFresh

**BioFresh** from **Helix Laboratories** is an eco-friendly and effective way to eliminate odors coming from drains. Based on microbes, it attacks the source of the odor by consuming the gunk in drains. This gunk, typically made up of soap scum, food, fats, oil and grease, is a breeding ground for drain flies. The beneficial bacteria and enzymes consume the gunk, eliminating flies and odors. This green product is septic safe, will not harm pipes, and is recommended for use in garbage disposals, washing machines and dishwashers. **877-444-3549; [www.drainscrub.com](http://www.drainscrub.com).**

### Infiltrator Water Technologies IM-Series Tanks

Injection-molded **IM-Series Tanks** from **Infiltrator Water Technologies** are available in multiple sizes including the IM-540 pump tank, IM-1060 and large-capacity IM-1530 septic tank. Lightweight, strong and watertight, the tanks enable shallow, multiple and serial tank installation options in septic and pump applications. All have integral heavy-duty lids that interconnect with the watertight click-and-lock EZsnap riser. The tanks also have structurally reinforced access ports, reinforced structural ribbing and fiberglass support posts to provide additional strength. The two-piece tank design nests for efficient shipping, and inboard lifting lugs make delivery and handling easier. The tanks frequently house advanced wastewater treatment systems such as the ECOPOD fixed-film bioreactor system or the ECOFILTER pump vault tank filtration system. **800-221-4436; [www.infiltratorwater.com](http://www.infiltratorwater.com).**



### LeakTronics Plumbers Kit

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



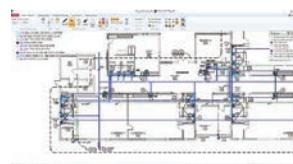
### Mansfield Plumbing Products QuantumOne

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



### McCormick Systems plumbing and mechanical estimating software

**McCormick Systems** plumbing and mechanical estimating software with Design Estimating Pro provides contractors with the tools needed for a fast estimate, PDF takeoff and design-build in one estimating program. It includes a database complete with



items, assemblies, labor units and material pricing, with estimators that can create an instant material list and professional final bid by simply clicking. Contractors measure pipe, count fixtures, create custom symbols and design-build directly onto the PDF drawing in a fraction of the time and training it takes on a CAD program. The software additionally incorporates the must-have feature of a work breakdown structure so the contractor can easily manage the project to completion after being awarded the contract. Contractors can estimate and design-build at the same time, all within one program. **800-444-4890; www.mccormicksys.com.**

### Milwaukee Tool PEX crimp jaw

Milwaukee Tool's PEX crimp jaw for the M18 FORCE LOGIC press tool comes in 1/2-, 3/4-, 1-, 1



1/4-, 1 1/2- and 2-inch sizes. It provides an easy solution for PEX crimp installations, eliminating the repetitive strain required with hand tools. These press tool jaws are compatible with F1807 and F2159 connections and have been optimized with an easy-open, in-line design for one-handed pressing when used with the M18 FORCE LOGIC press tool. These PEX crimp jaws offer high confidence for quality connections, as the spring-loaded opening grips the ring for precise alignment to the fitting, and a green light on the press tool indicates a completed crimp. **800-729-3878; www.milwauketo.com.**

### Navien NPE-S Series

Navien NPE-S Series tankless water heaters offer the industry's highest efficiency rating of .97 UEF. They are available in four different sizes (NPE-150S, NPE-180S, NPE-210S and NPE-240S) that offer a max input range from 120,000 to 199,900 Btu/h. Each unit includes dual stainless steel heat exchangers, 2-inch PVC venting capability up to 60 feet, 1/2-inch gas line capability, and field gas convertibility. For larger projects, up to eight tankless water heaters can be common vented and up to 16 units can be cascaded together. **800-519-8794; www.navieninc.com.**



### Norweco Singlair Green R3

Norweco's Singlair Green R3 water reuse system reduces water consumption, reuses treated effluent and recycles water to conserve and recharge water resources. It provides a solution to chronic water shortages and reduces energy costs associated with water and wastewater treatment. The system quietly, efficiently and automatically treats all incoming wastewater to the highest level for restricted indoor and unrestricted outdoor use. The system exceeds the effluent requirements of NSF/ANSI Standards 40, 245 and 350. It qualifies for Green Building credits under both the LEED rating system and the NAHB ICC 700 National Green Building Standard. By using the system and following local building code, a homeowner can expect to dramatically reduce water usage. **800-667-9326; www.norweco.com.**



### Pipe Lining Supply compact camera

Pipe Lining Supply offers a small, compact camera designed for use with high-speed drain machines for cleaning and/or coating sewer drains. The unit has a small external monitor that can be held in the palm of your hand, cable lengths of either 50 or 150 feet, and a wireless video headset, giving the operator a hands-free video display of the work they are doing. It has LED lights, an SD card slot for recording work, and rechargeable batteries for both the headset and the monitor for truly cord-free portability. It is a suitable camera for small-diameter pipe. **888-354-6464; www.pipeliningupply.com.**



### Real-Tite Plugs

All 60 variations of Real-Tite Plugs are designed to be green by being reusable. Using the same plug over and over reduces using natural resources, energy and materials. The company uses recycled and biodegradable materials in packing shipments, along with high-volume packing methods to reduce environmental impact. The plugs use three different methods to stop leaks – behind and over damaged threads, and a shoulder seal, ensuring constant, stable flow control, saving water. **800-877-0610; www.real-titeplugs.com.**

## RIDGID PowerClear

The compact and versatile RIDGID PowerClear drain cleaning machine eliminates tub, shower and sink blockages from 3/4- to 1 1/2-inch lines without the mess. It offers Autofeed technology to keep users' hands clean and free from touching the cable while advancing and retrieving it in the line. A guide hose also helps to keep the work area clean, making it suitable for residential or commercial use. Weighing only 12 pounds, the lightweight design makes it easy to handle while still being powerful enough to clear the toughest blockages. Its 120-volt motor feeds cable at a rate of 18 fpm to a maximum of 25 feet, and its clear cover allows users to view how much cable is remaining. The heavy-duty inner core cable is also purpose-built for long life, increased strength and kink resistance. **800-474-3443; www.ridgid.com.**



candle to force smoke through faults and cracks, easily identifying sources of odor and hard to find leaks. Superior Smoke Candles produce a highly visible, non-toxic smoke and are completely biodegradable. They are manufactured with zero waste stream and include labels printed with vegetable-based ink on recycled paper, as well as biodegradable, recycled paperboard tubes. The smoker does not generate any harmful exhaust gases and handles all residential and commercial smoke testing applications. Smoke tests take just minutes to perform to see immediate results. Smokers come with 8 feet of industrial-grade flex hose, weigh just 8 pounds, and require no maintenance. **800-945-8378; www.superiorsignal.com** 



## Saniflo Sanicompact

Saniflo's eco-friendly Sanicompact is a self-contained macerating-toilet system used to install water-efficient half bathrooms. It consumes as little as 1 gpf with its dual-flush system, while a typical toilet uses 1.6 gpf. This

not only saves money on a water bill, but also saves space, given the lack of a tank and it being self-vented. Aided by its above-the-floor technology, it can be installed anywhere as long as there is an electricity and water supply. It incorporates a macerating system that can handle and shred human waste and toilet paper in residential applications. The blade is a hardened stainless steel material, eliminating possible clogging and the need for any service/replacement. **732-225-6070; www.saniflo.com.**

## Superior Signal 5E Electric Smoker

The 5E Electric Smoker from Superior Signal offers a cost-effective and green solution to find difficult leaks and odors in residential and commercial plumbing systems. Connect the blower to any plumbing clean-out or vent, with the appropriate size smoke



**"We work off of the three-win rule,**

where the company, the employee and the customer all have to win. If just one loses, everyone loses.

We live off this. If a customer is upset, for example, then the employee didn't make sure the customer won.

Or if we don't provide a great customer experience, our profitability isn't as good, so the company doesn't win.

**Sometimes we even give customers their money back."**

**Richard Hart**

Harts Services  
Tacoma, Washington

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# Green Plumbing Products

By Craig Mandli

## Bathtub shut-off valve saves water damage and energy



**Problem:** Forgetful guests in a high-end casino resort hotel allowed bathtubs to overflow and cause damage in suites below. The Bellagio in Las Vegas was suffering substantial damage to suite decor, as well as inconvenience and damage to guest's property as a result of bathtubs being neglected and overflowing. The incoming flow rate was too great for the normal overflow outlet to deal with, and floods were very common at certain times of the year. Even when the overflow could deal with the incoming water, the water and the energy used to heat it were being wasted.

**Solution:** Flowban from Aqua-Rex is an entirely mechanical shut-off valve that closes off the supply to the faucets and won't reset itself until the faucet has been closed. It uses magnetically activated flap valves linked to a float set in a chamber below the overflow outlet. The movement of the float forces the flap valves into the water flow, closing off the supply. Water pressure keeps the valve closed until the faucet is manually turned off. A small dribble of water out of the faucet prompts an intuitive reaction to close it down, thus resetting the valve. It requires zero maintenance, servicing or electrical supply.

**Result:** Bathtub overflows are a thing of the past in the Bellagio suites where Flowban is installed. Flood damage no longer occurs. The value of the product is not limited to high-end casinos. At the other end of the social scale, Flowban is now standard equipment in Mercy Housing accommodations for the disadvantaged. 877-640-2170; [www.flowban.com](http://www.flowban.com).

## Apartment complex decreases property water usage by 51%

**Problem:** Vesta Capital, a real estate investment firm, set a goal to improve property return on investment and increase cash flow in Waterford Apartments, one of their multifamily properties in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After partnering with a local water conservation service provider, an initial property assessment was performed on the property that identified old and outdated plumbing fixtures as a major source of utility expense.

**Solution:** To combat those excessive costs, Vesta Capital removed the inefficient plumbing fixtures and installed new, ultra-high-efficiency products in all 416 units of the property. Niagara's Original Toilet with Stealth Technology replaced existing 3.0 gpf toilets on the property. Vacuum-assist Stealth Technology flushes using 0.8 gallons of water without being prone to leaks. Unlike the typical flapper-style toilet, Niagara toilets require less maintenance and have a powerful, silent flush that cleans the bowl every time and delivers savings. Niagara's 1.25 gpm Earth Showerhead replaced the existing 2.4 gpm showerheads in each unit, and 0.5 gpm Niagara aerators replaced 1.5 gpm aerators in bathrooms. Niagara's 1.5 gpm Kitchen Pulse Valve aerators replaced outdated 1.85 gpm aerators in kitchens.

**Result:** Within a month after the install, the readings on Waterford's five meters indicated a 51% water reduction, putting the property on track to save nearly 6.8 million gallons of water and over \$79,000 in utility spend annually. 800-831-8383; [www.niagaracorp.com](http://www.niagaracorp.com). 

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Pictured is the Compact Pro

- water flow up to 18 gpm or cleaning pressure up to 4,400 psi
- hydraulic hp reel holds 270 ft of ½" hose

## Compact and affordable truck-mounted jetters

New from MyTana, high-pressure ROM jetter and jet/vac systems come in six models for work in 12" to 24" lines. Their compact design deploys easily in light- to medium-duty commercial vehicles. Rugged and field-proven, these units deliver ease-of-use under harsh conditions, ensuring faster turnaround on jobs, higher revenues and increased customer satisfaction.

Learn more and see the lineup at [mytana.com/rom](http://mytana.com/rom)

While there, use the handy budgeting tool.



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# Product Spotlight

## Electric diaphragm valve offers fast cycling

By Craig Mandli

The growing demand for automation in industrial plumbing settings means that even valves which are isolated or not accessible for a compressed air system have to be automated. The eDIASTAR 5-Series Diaphragm Valve from GF Piping Systems is automated, reducing time-consuming manual operations within the facility.

Easy and fast retrofitting of hand-operated valves is possible without disassembly. Thanks to its all-plastic design, it is durable and needs little maintenance, it ensures short downtimes and lower maintenance costs during installation and reduces maintenance costs, even with aggressive and abrasive media. It includes the dEA Smart Actuator, a new electric valve that allows easy and fast retrofitting of GF manual diaphragm valves without disassembly. The eDIASTAR is designed to regulate, close and control volume flows automatically.

“Diaphragm valves are known for providing very linear flow control, as well as handling media that contains solids,” says Jeffrey Sixsmith, GF Piping’s valve and actuation product manager. “The eDIASTAR Diaphragm Valve is more than twice as fast at cycling than other valves on the market. Additionally, the uniquely designed high-flow valve body does not have the restricted flow associated with most diaphragm valves.”



With the eDIASTAR, hand operated valves that are isolated or not accessible to a compressed air system, thereby preventing actuation, can now be automated for greater efficiency. The valve can be controlled as open/closed, 4-20mA positioning, Profibus or Modbus.

It is available in various materials, including PVC, CPVC, polypropylene, ABS and PVDF, in 1- and 2-inch sizes. It is pressure rated at 150 psi, and its end connections can be ordered in socket, threaded, flanged, fusion socket or fusion spigot. It offers durable,

all-plastic construction without metal screws to prevent corrosion, ensuring minimal maintenance and short downtimes, even in use with contaminated, aggressive or abrasive media. This makes it well suited for applications in chemical processing, food processing, microelectronics, water and wastewater treatment, power generation, and cooling and control.

Other key features include position feedback, solid-state position sensing, automated learning mode, lightweight linkage, integrated emergency manual override, and maximum flow and linear characteristic curves for easier control. Facility operators can connect to the electric actuator via direct Wi-Fi through a smartphone or tablet to simplify planning, installation, commissioning, local control and troubleshooting. 800-854-4090; [www.gfps.com](http://www.gfps.com).

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## CUES Micro Pan and Tilt camera

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



## Bosch Tools GTC400C 12V thermal camera

Bosch Tools' GTC400C 12V max connected thermal camera makes it easy to check the routing of heating pipes and cables, floor heating distribution and piping, radiator ventilation, identify the source of drafts, evaluate the condition of insulation, avoid drilling errors and detect sources of water intrusion or leaks. The lightweight and convenient camera includes a 3.5-inch, 19,200-pixel color display with a trigger to quickly snap workplace images, and back buttons to provide one-touch operation. The GTC400C can capture thermal images at 160x120 resolution and it also features an integrated visual camera to compare side by side, picture in picture, or overlaid for a greater understanding of the work area. With a built-in memory for 600 images and the MicroUSB port, users can upload images to their computer using Bosch's free GTC transfer software. **800-301-8255; [www.boschtools.com](http://www.boschtools.com).**



## Makita LXT brushless 9-inch power cutter

The 18V X2 (36V) LXT brushless 9-inch power cutter from Makita has the power to cut through concrete, masonry and metal materials with all the benefits and convenience of cordless operation. The power cutter is available as both a bare tool and a kit. The bare tool has a maximum cutting depth of 3 1/2 inches, which allows for single-pass cuts in many common materials, including standard residential 4-inch concrete slabs, common 3 1/2-inch paver/blocks, 3-inch Schedule 40 pipe and 3-inch conduit. Active Feedback-sensing Technology turns the motor off if rotation of the wheel is suddenly forced to stop. An electric brake stops the wheel in 4 seconds or less allowing for faster repositioning. **800-462-5482; [www.makitausa.com](http://www.makitausa.com).**



## Asahi/America CPVC ball and check valves

Asahi/America announces the NSF 61 certification of its CPVC Type-21 ball valves and CPVC ball check valves in sizes 1/2- through 4-inch. Type-21 ball valves with CPVC bodies and EPDM or FKM seats and seals, as well as ball check valves with CPVC bodies and EPDM or FKM seats and seals meet the requirements of NSF/ANSI/CAN Standard 61 – Drinking Water Components. Available with socket, threaded or flanged end connections, the Type-21 ball valves are pressure rated up to 230 psi and are full vacuum-rated in all sizes. The ball check valves may be used vertically or horizontally, have a minimum shut-off of 5 psi and all sizes are rated for full vacuum service. **800-343-3618; [www.asahi-america.com](http://www.asahi-america.com).**

## Bonomi North America skid series industrial wafer ball valves

Bonomi's new 723/724 skid series' low-torque design allows for the use of smaller, more compact actuators, saving space within the system while reducing materials, such as pipe supports and labor costs. They are available in stainless or carbon steel. The standard full-port ball provides the most efficient media flow and there is almost no pressure loss since the interior dimensions of the valve are equal to the interior dimensions of the pipe with no obstructions. The skid series is also available in 30- to 60-, 60- and 90-degree V-port configurations. The valves come in pneumatic- and electric-actuated packages and in deadman spring return handle assemblies. **704-412-9031; [www.bonominorthamerica.com](http://www.bonominorthamerica.com).**

## Milwaukee Tool M18 FUEL sectional machine

Milwaukee Tool's M18 FUEL portable and powerful sectional machine for 5/8- and 7/8-inch cable delivers the power to clear heavy roots up to 150 feet, providing over 50% more power than corded even at its maximum capacity. With its light weight and compact size, the sectional machine can seamlessly transition between outdoor use and the tightest indoor applications. It also includes a carry strap for hands-free transportation onto rooftop jobs. The sectional machine combines three Milwaukee innovations: the POWERSTATE brushless motor, REDLINK PLUS intelligence and REDLITHIUM battery pack. **800-729-3878; [www.milwaukeetool.com](http://www.milwaukeetool.com).**



Send us your plumbing product news. Email new plumbing product news, photos, and videos to [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com).

## RIDGID and Greenlee bring experts in JobSite Live series

Emerson's RIDGID and Greenlee brands are putting its experts in front of people everywhere with JobSite Live, a new virtual event series that gives professionals the chance to interact with their peers and ask questions about everything related to the skilled trades. The series kicked-off with a RIDGID Instagram Live event dedicated to the latest trends in diagnostic and monitoring technologies, including RIDGID Cameras with TruSense technology. The interactive question and answer format allowed viewers to learn how certain tools can help them work more efficiently on the job site.

## ServiceTitan and Kinetico announce partnership

ServiceTitan announced a partnership with Kinetico, a global manufacturer of residential and commercial water softeners, drinking water systems and specialty filters. Kinetico's systems are distributed through independent water treatment dealers in more than 100 countries.

## Robert Goldschmidt named president of Roto-Rooter

Robert Goldschmidt was named president of Roto-Rooter Services Co. He succeeds Rick Arquilla, who is retiring at the end of the year. Goldschmidt currently serves as executive vice president, a role he has held since 2015. As president, he will oversee operations, national sales, call centers and corporate merger and acquisition activities. He will also provide guidance to the company's manufacturing division and franchising network.



## Grundfos breaks ground on new center

Grundfos announced the groundbreaking of its Americas Regional Center, located in Brookshire, Texas.

The 45,000-square-foot facility is expected to be completed during the Spring of 2021. Grundfos is currently seeking to achieve LEED Platinum certification. The new offices will house company sales, operations, engineering, HR, finance and other support functions.

## Caleffi announces R & G Sales as Arizona rep

Caleffi North America announced R & G Sales as its representative throughout Arizona for sales support and training for the heating, cooling and plumbing related markets.

## PPG names Logemann as chairman and CEO

Professional Plumbing Group's board of directors and Dunes Point Capital named Robert Logemann as Chairman and CEO of PPG. Logemann joined PPG, owned by DPC, earlier this year as executive chairman and will also assume the CEO role.



## Viega names Brettschneider new CEO and president

Viega named Markus Brettschneider as its new CEO and president. He replaces Dave Garlow, who resigned effective Sept. 1. In his new position, Brettschneider is responsible for the overall operations of Viega. He most recently was with ABB, where he was group senior vice president and global head of marketing and sales for industrial automation and global head of group solutions and channels.



## Uponor Canada names Hartwick as general manager

Uponor announced the appointment of Chris Hartwick as general manager, Uponor Canada, with a strategic focus on Canadian sales, marketing, customer service and customer engagement. He most recently served as director of sales for commercial building services, in the U.S and Canada, at Xylem.



## Dave Viola named new CEO of IAPMO

The IAPMO board of directors announced that IAPMO COO/ Executive Vice President Dave Viola has been appointed to CEO, effective Jan. 1. He will succeed Russ Chaney, who is retiring after a quarter-century at the helm of the 95-year-old association. Chaney will remain as an executive adviser to the CEO. Viola has more than 25 years' senior management experience within the plumbing and mechanical industry. He joined IAPMO in 2007 and has served as IAPMO's COO for the past seven years, with strategic and operational responsibility for the comprehensive array of IAPMO Group programs and services. 



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**Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS),**  
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 Visit [www.kbis.com](http://www.kbis.com)

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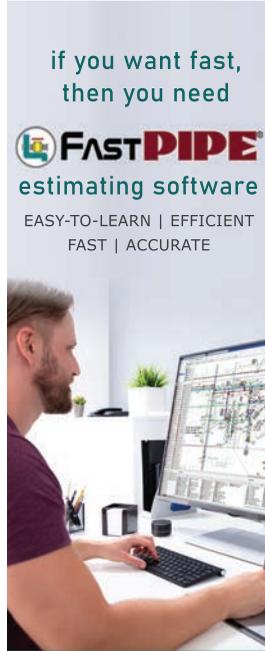
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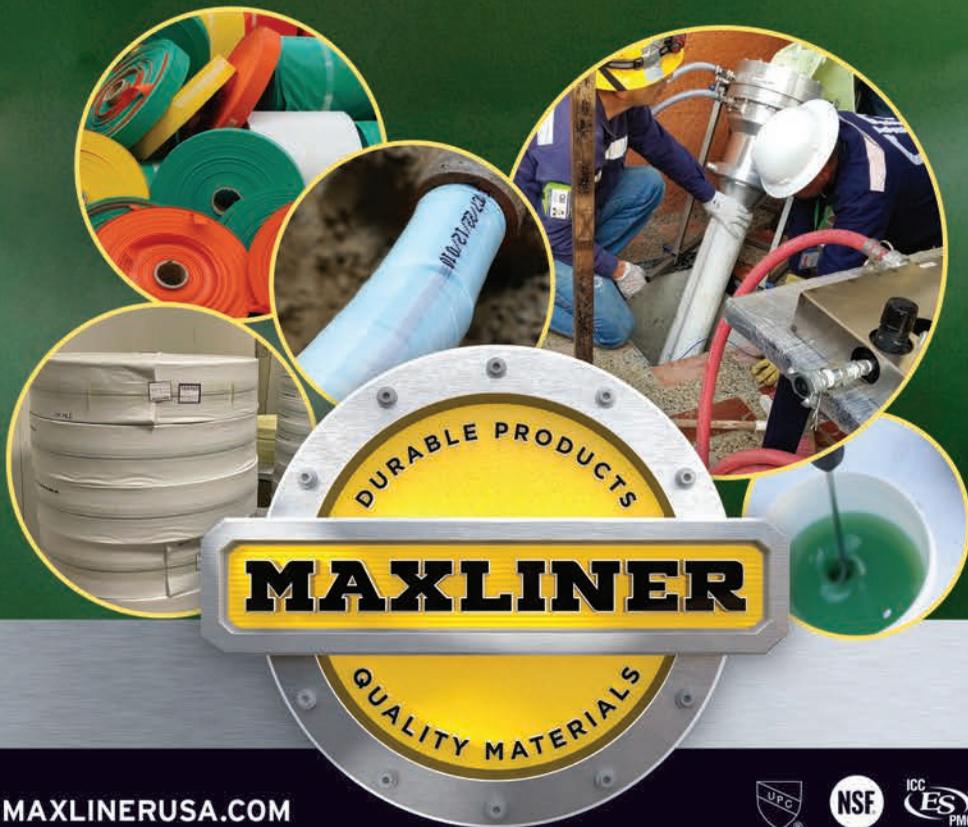
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