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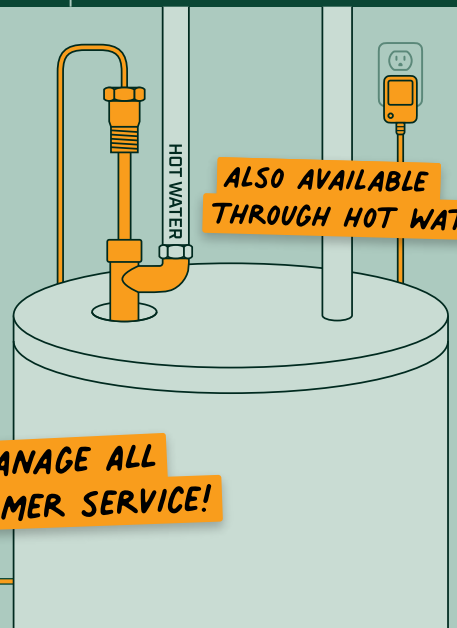
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Plumber  
**Profile**

## Learning from History

Third-generation owner uses data-driven strategies to help shape a family business evolution.

- By Ken Wysocky



## On the Cover

Plumber Dan Thomas, with Agentis Plumbing, turns valves off at a residential site in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in preparation of replacing thermal expansion tanks. Agentis Plumbing, owned by Nate Agentis, was founded in 1954 by Nate's grandfather. The company now has 60 employees and works a 40-mile radius around Bethlehem.

(Photography by Hannah Beier)

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# Plumber

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Cory Dellenbach

## Navigating the Data Pipeline

Tracking all sorts of information from calls to time on a job can help your plumbing company in many different ways

**I** have a bad habit and that habit is keeping data on everything that I am involved in. As an example, my entire family is involved in bowling with the kids on the middle and high school team here in our community and my wife and I both in adult leagues.

I track all of our data. I keep track of our scores, what spares we leave, how we do on spare pickups and fill-percentages (getting strikes and spares and leaving open frames). I love tracking that data and seeing — hopefully — improvement as the season goes along.

I do that with other activities too. Tracking website data for the local water ski team's website that I help with, and church attendance numbers, and so on. Let's just say ... I like data collection.

It's really not a bad thing. It does help. For example, I look at the bowling data and I can see what my kids are missing out there with spares and help them adjust to start picking those up.

Nick Agentis, owner of Agentis Plumbing in Pennsylvania, is kind of the same way with data collection. As you'll read in this issue's profile on the company, that data collection helps him determine what to do with his company.

### USING THE DATA

In today's digital age, data has become the cornerstone of innovation, driving decision-making processes across industries, including plumbing. As plumbers, you might wonder how data fits into your world of pipes and wrenches. Data is not just for tech companies or marketers — it's a powerful tool that can revolutionize the way you work and serve your customers.

Tracking data in the plumbing industry is not about monitoring website clicks or social media engagement. Instead, it's about using information to optimize operations, enhance customer service and stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Agentis Plumbing, as you'll read, uses a management software that provides a dashboard for every position on the team. That dashboard tells them their leading and lagging metrics and tells when they've beaten or missed goals.

By analyzing historical data on job durations, customer demand and technician availability, you can optimize your workflow to minimize downtime and maximize productivity. This not only boosts your bottom line, but also enhances customer satisfaction by ensuring timely service delivery.

### FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS TOO

One of the most immediate benefits of tracking data is in preventive maintenance. By collecting and analyzing data from your clients' plumbing systems, you can identify patterns and trends that indicate potential issues before they escalate into costly emergencies. Imagine being able to predict a pipe leak or a clogged drain before it happens, saving your clients time, money and headaches.


By leveraging technologies like Internet of Things sensors and smart meters, you can collect real-time data on water usage, pressure levels and temperature variations. This wealth of information opens up new opportunities for proactive maintenance, water conservation initiatives and even predictive analytics to anticipate future plumbing needs.

### GET BEHIND DATA

I urge you to embrace the power of data in your plumbing business. Whether you're a solo practitioner or a large-scale operation, tracking data can unlock a world of possibilities for efficiency, innovation and customer satisfaction.

Dive into the data pipeline and let it flow towards a brighter, more prosperous future for your business and the plumbing industry as a whole.

Let me know what data you collect and how you use it. You can email me at [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com).

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## CUSTOMER EDUCATION

### Tankless Water Heater Lessons

In the effort to recommend products to customers that can provide the best value and performance, one such product that has gained popularity over the years is the tankless water heater. In this online exclusive, regular contributor Anthony Pacilla provides some tips on upselling tankless water heaters to a customer who may be on the fence about switching over from a tank unit.

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## OVERHEARD ONLINE

*"Most companies have a ton of data but don't do anything useful with it. They, or the marketing company they work with, do a lot of analysis, yet they have no real understanding of what the data means."*

— *Learn How to Understand What Your Business' Data Metrics Are Telling You*

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## STAY SAFE

### Confined Space Ventilation Requirements

Forced air ventilation may be needed when occupying hazardous confined spaces on the job. As this online exclusive explains, you can calculate the required amount based on square footage and air exchanges per hour standards.

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## LEADERSHIP

### Be a Better Boss

This online exclusive cites the results of a study performed by Perceptyx, a company that specializes in employee surveys and people analytics: 24% of 1,500 employees polled said they currently work for the worst boss they've ever had. The key behavior that garnered either a worst- or best-boss ranking? Responsiveness. ▲ [plumbermag.com/featured](http://plumbermag.com/featured)



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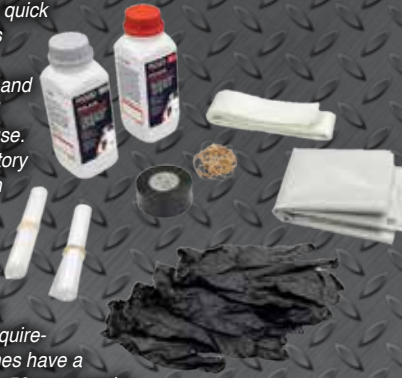


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◀ Nate Agentis, owner of Agentis Plumbing, at his company's shop in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Agentis is a third-generation owner of the company that his grandfather founded in 1954.

# Learning from **HISTORY**

Third-generation owner uses data-driven strategies to help shape a family business evolution

By Ken Wysocky | Photography by Hannah Beier



**Agentis Plumbing Inc., Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**

<b>OWNER</b>	Nate Agentis
<b>FOUNDED</b>	1954
<b>EMPLOYEES</b>	60
<b>SERVICES</b>	Residential and commercial service/repair plumbing, drain cleaning
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	40-mile radius around Bethlehem
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="http://agentisplumbing.com">agentisplumbing.com</a>

**I**

t's said that those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

As the owner of Agentis Plumbing, Nate Agentis took that old adage to heart, which has helped him avoid the financial issues his father and grandfather faced and turn the third-generation family company in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, into a growing and data-driven business.

"We swung the pendulum hard the other way," says Agentis, 43, who bought the business from his father in 2022. "I'm very serious about organizational structure and finances. We get financial updates every other day and I meet once a month with a financial consultant and an accountant.

"We also have proprietary customer-relations management software that provides a dashboard for every position, from dispatching to our warehouse to the technicians, who have iPads," he continues. "The dashboards tell us our leading and lagging metric and tell us when we beat or miss our goals.

"The bottom line is that numbers tell you the truth," Agentis adds. "Sometimes contractors feel like they're busy and making money, but they're not. Bringing in actual numbers and data shows us what's real and helps us fine-tune our decision-making process so we make

good decisions for the health of the company."

The company, which employs 60 people and runs about 50 service vehicles, was founded in 1954. Residential service and repair plumbing and drain cleaning generates about half of the company's income while commercial work contributes the balance, Agentis says.

## HUMBLE ORIGINS

Agentis' grandfather, George, started the business in 1954, after learning the plumbing trade during a stint in the United States Army. But like many tradesmen, he was good at his craft, but not a good businessman.

"My grandfather was soft-hearted and often worked for no fee," Agentis says. "He literally brought a horse home one day that he'd accepted as payment."

Agentis' father, Steve, took over the business in late 1977 when George Agentis ran into deep financial problems. Steve added drain cleaning to the company's services, which helped the company hit a financial milestone by 1994: \$1 million in revenue, Agentis says.

"My dad ran the business out of our home with help from my mom, Debbie," he recalls. "I grew up in the world of plumbing. I remember technicians playing Nintendo video games with me while they waited for service calls."



▶ Team leader Matthew Braciliano turns a valve on to restore water at a residential site after completing work.



▲ Plumber Dan Thomas removes a thermal expansion tank as the team works on replacing them with newer tanks.

Agentis worked for his grandfather and father at an early age, accompanying them on service calls and helping out in the shop.

“I was my dad’s little right-hand man, which was really fun,” Agentis says. “He was smart — he started me out at the bottom.”

## BUSINESS-LIKE APPROACH

After issues with delinquent taxes nearly forced the company to close its doors in 1977, Agentis’ father got serious about the business side of plumbing.

“He realized that in order to build a business, you have to run it smart, not just do the work,” Agentis says. “My mom got more involved, too.”

Along the way, his parents exposed Agentis more and more to things like bookkeeping and other business-related aspects of running a company. Agentis also went to college and earned a degree in management marketing. He graduated in 2002 — the same year he became a master plumber.

“My dad never forced me into plumbing — it just made sense,” Agentis says. “My grandpa did it and my dad did it and they made good money. So I wanted to be a part of it, too.”

In his mid-20s, Agentis transitioned from a service truck to a full-time office position, where he continued to learn about finances and dealt with customer complaints and so forth.

“I learned a lot about the business,” he says. “I got into strategic planning and business development as my dad scaled back and delegated more and more work to me.”

## Company Reaches Out to Help Those in Need

At Agentis Plumbing, a third-generation, family-owned company based in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, “giving back” is a central tenet of the company’s culture.

Of course, a lot of companies say that. But owner Nate Agentis does more than pay lip service to the concept, as evidenced by a trip he took in May 2023 with eight technicians to build houses in Nicaragua. The mission was organized by a local church and the company donated \$10,000 to fund the construction of two houses.

“Giving back is part of my faith and who I am,” Agentis says. “It’s one of our core values, along with compassion, excellence, purpose and integrity.

“God has given us talents and the ability to make money and we want to use those for a bigger purpose than ourselves,” he adds. “There’s more purpose to life than getting a paycheck on Fridays.”

The trip also left a lasting impression on the technicians.

Agentis says some of his technicians have endured hard times during their lives, but standing on a smoldering landfill and watching people who live under tarps and pick through garbage to find scrap metal and food provided a valuable perspective.

“The people who live there do this every day,” he says. “I saw grown men crying while we stood on that landfill.

“Some of them told me it was one of the most life-changing things they’ve ever experienced,” Agentis continues. “That’s worth more than any money we can make back in the Lehigh Valley where we live.”

The company also partners with Samaritan’s Purse, an evangelical Christian organization that provides humanitarian aid both locally, nationally and abroad.

Agentis estimates the company spent about \$21,000 on the Nicaragua trip, including food, airline flights and lodging. And that doesn’t include the revenue lost by having eight technicians gone for a week, which equates to about a 10%



In 2011, Debbie was diagnosed with cancer and died about nine months later. After that, Agentis' father stopped doing plumbing work and opened a kitchen and bathroom store, leaving Agentis to run the company, which he eventually bought in 2022.

## BALANCED CUSTOMER BASE

Aside from the emphasis on collecting data and closely monitoring finances, Agentis cites several reasons for the company's growth, starting with developing a roughly 50/50 split between residential and commercial work.

"Doing both gives us a healthy business balance," he explains. "As long as your residential business is big enough, that's what supplies your cash flow. But given that an average homeowner calls a plumber only every five to seven years, you also need commercial work.

"You might get five calls a month from a commercial customer, plus you make more money on commercial jobs," Agentis adds. "But you also wait longer to get paid."

Agentis, who nurtures a faith-based company culture, says he loves doing residential work because it helps people in the surrounding communities.

"You feel like you're a part of people's lives and helping out families," he says.

Eliminating trip charges and emergency-service fees also plays a role in the company's success. While Agentis concedes it reduces revenue, he says it pays off by enhancing the company's reputation for honesty, plus it strongly differentiates the business from competitors.

"This past week, three customers said they called us


staffing decrease.

"It's a sacrifice as well as a commitment," he explains. "To handle the staffing shortage, we shift people around, don't schedule longer jobs and schedule as much emergency work as possible for the following week. We also left enough key people behind."

In 2024, Agentis plans to take another group of employees to Honduras. And once again, he expects the results will far outweigh any lost revenue.

"When you go to foreign country like Nicaragua, you see how few opportunities there are for people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and better themselves," he says. "There basically aren't any jobs.




"So when we go into a community and build someone a home and give them the deed, it creates a new life for them — gives them a chance to break the cycle of poverty," Agentis adds. "It's truly amazing to see."



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<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>NEW</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>4008H POWER UNIT</b></p> <p>»8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi    »400' x 3/8" Jet Hose              »800 cc EFI            on DC Powered Reel              Honda Engine  <b>Just Add A Tank!</b>    <b>\$12,719 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>3012H POWER UNIT</b></p> <p>»12 gpm @ 3000 psi    »400' x 1/2" Jet Hose              »800 cc EFI            on DC Powered Reel              Honda Engine  <b>Just Add A Tank!</b>    <b>\$13,159 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>3012H COMPACT SKID</b></p> <p>»12 gpm @ 3000 psi    »400' x 1/2" Jet Hose              »800 cc EFI            on DC Powered Reel              Honda Engine  <b>(100 GALLON TANK)</b>    <b>\$14,579 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>NEW</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>4008H COMPACT SKID</b></p> <p>»8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi    »400' x 3/8" Jet Hose              »800 cc EFI            on DC Powered Reel              Honda Engine  <b>(100 GALLON TANK)</b>    <b>\$14,129 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>	
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>VM4008H</b></p> <p>»8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi              »690 cc              Honda Engine              »50' x 3/8" Washdown Hose on DC Reel  <b>\$13,399 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>STB3012H</b></p> <p>»12 gpm @ 3000 psi              »800 cc EFI              Honda Engine              »400' x 1/2" Jet Hose on DC Reel  <b>\$22,899 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>STB4008H</b></p> <p>»8.2 gpm @ 4000 psi              »690 cc Honda Engine              »50' x 3/8" Washdown Hose on DC Reel  <b>\$22,299 Plus Freight</b></p> </div>

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◀ Agentis Plumbing team leader Matthew Braciliano works at a residential site in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as he and his team work on replacing tanks on a water system at a property. Agentis Plumbing, owned by Nate Agentis, was founded in 1954 by Agentis' grandfather. The company now has 60 employees and works a 40-mile radius around Bethlehem.

for service because there was no trip fee," Agentis points out. "Other companies make people pay \$80 even though the customers probably don't know anything about the company.

"To me, it feels like entrapment because once you've paid that charge, you feel like you should use that company whether you want to or not," he continues. "By not charging those fees, we build trust with our customers. About 50% of our business is repeat customers."

## KEY INVESTMENTS

Investing in reliable and productivity-enhancing equipment also spurred growth. Today the company owns about 50 service vehicles, most of them either Ford Transits or GMC trucks equipped with box bodies made by Reading Truck.

For drain work, the company owns dozens of Electric Eel Model drain machines; a few Mini and Maxi Miller drain machines from Picote Solutions; and three trailer-mounted water jettors from Harben (a subsidiary of

Flowplant Group Ltd.), one Mongoose trailer jetter (a brand owned by Sewer Equipment) and two truck-mounted jettors, one equipped with a Harben unit and one with a Mongoose unit. The Mongoose machines feature UDOR water pumps.

The business also relies on RIDGID NaviTrak Scout pipe locators and dozens of pipeline-inspection cameras, mostly RIDGID SeeSnakes and units from Vivax-Metrotech.

In 2022, the company invested in a Bluelight pipelining system from HammerHead Trenchless.

## TRAINING AND POSITIVE CULTURE

Comprehensive technician training via an in-house program developed by Agentis also has been critical to success.

"This kind of training basically doesn't exist in the plumbing industry," Agentis says. "The training program includes detailed procedures for service tasks, including step-by-step procedures, material needed and so forth.

"We created our own videos for the program and technicians take a test after reading and watching the videos," he explains. "It helps us determine where technicians' strengths and weaknesses lie, which also helps us get the right technicians for the right jobs."

Aren't apprentice programs adequate? Not really, Agentis says, noting that apprenticeship training is largely building code-based and focuses primarily on new construction plumbing.

Continued ▶

“Sometimes contractors feel like they're busy and making money, but they're not. Bringing in actual numbers and data shows us what's real and helps us fine-tune our decision-making process so we make good decisions for the health of the company.”

Nick Agentis

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## Plumber Profile

- ▶ Team leader Matthew Braciliano, left, and plumber Dan Thomas, clean up at a job site after completing the work.
- ▼ The leadership team at Agentis Plumbing includes, from left, Paul Ward, project manager; Sam Housam, warehouse manager; Martin Gross, project manager; Conner Trinkle, project manager; and Nate Agentis, owner. The team poses for a photo near one of the company's box trucks.



“Apprenticeship programs are great, but if an apprentice rides with six different guys, he might learn how to set a toilet six different ways and possibly start taking shortcuts that create liability risks,” Agentis says.

Another key factor in the company's growth is its focus on building a faith-based, team-oriented culture. Agentis says that the company doesn't pay the highest wages in the area, but makes up for it with an emphasis on things such as retirement plans, career paths/promotions, teamwork, company-sponsored activities and regular encouragement and recognition, he says.

“Sometimes we lose people because they can get higher pay elsewhere, but we've also had five people come back,” he notes. “When it comes down to it, money is not the No. 1 priority for employees. I even have a handful of guys who took pay cuts to work here.”

### MORE GROWTH EXPECTED

Agentis says he has hired about 40 employees since he started running the company about 12 years ago, which reflects its steady growth. And he expects to keep growing, either through geographic market expansion or by acquiring other companies.

“But my ultimate objective is caring for my community and our employees and making enough money in the process to keep growing,” he says. “I want to make sure our people love to work here.”

Looking back, Agentis says he's “surprised, humbled and blessed” by the company's rapid growth. But he says it hasn't stemmed from his efforts alone.



“But my ultimate objective is caring for my community and our employees and making enough money in the process to keep growing,” he says. “I want to make sure our people love to work here.”

*Nick Agentis*

“God gave me a great team and everyone does their part to drive things forward,” he says. “It's all been a great gift.”

“This business was built on my dad's back,” he continues. “I walked into something that was well-established, which was another huge blessing for which I'm very grateful. Now it's my responsibility to keep building and growing it.”

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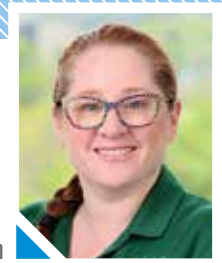
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Katie Donovan

# Unlocking the Power of AI

A guide for home service businesses to navigate the emerging artificial intelligence age *By Katie Donovan*

**A**rtificial intelligence has emerged as the cornerstone of innovation within the home services industry, captivating professionals and consumers alike. Yet, amid the buzzwords and hype, the true essence of AI remains diverse and multifaceted, evoking varied interpretations and expectations.

According to *Bloomberg*, AI's impact is poised to affect nearly 40% of global job roles, underscoring its profound implications. Therefore, it's crucial to delve deeper into how AI will have consequential ripple effects through paid and organic search.

At a recent Google event, AI was heralded as “the third big shift,” following the advent of the internet a quarter-century ago and the subsequent mobile revolution. Each epoch has fundamentally altered our societal fabric and unprecedentedly disrupted industries. As AI looms on the horizon, it promises yet another paradigm shift in how we live and work.

Businesses and consumers alike are eager to harness the transformative potential of this technology. From its inception, the internet facilitated global connectivity and access to information, while mobile technology further personalized experiences, catering to immediate needs and desires in real time. Today, billions of searches are conducted daily on search engines, underscoring the pivotal role of AI in shaping our digital interactions.

As we navigate this new era of technological advancement, it's imperative to discern AI's true impact on home services and beyond. From enhancing efficiency to revolutionizing customer experiences, AI is the key to unlocking a future defined by seamless integration and unparalleled convenience.

## Unleashing AI's Potential in Marketing Strategy

As we delve deeper into the evolution of AI, its transformative potential within marketing becomes increasingly apparent. At the forefront of this revolution is “predictive AI,” which promises to revolutionize every facet of marketing strategy. Serving as the bedrock of data-driven decision-making, predictive AI discerns the who, where, when and how of marketing campaigns, leveraging insights from customer behaviors to achieve business objectives.

“Content Creation AI” epitomizes the widespread conception of AI, encompassing a myriad of creative endeavors from copywriting to image and video production. This versatile tool empowers marketers to craft personalized campaigns with unparalleled efficiency, seamlessly integrating customer names and preferences for a bespoke experience.

Machine learning, a cornerstone of AI technology, augments marketing efforts by identifying target demographics and optimizing ad placement in real-time. This AI-driven campaign optimization ensures maximum impact and conversion rates, propelling marketing strategies to new heights of effectiveness. It's important to note that machine learning AI has been around for quite some time and continues to improve.

In customer engagement, “Engagement AI” emerges as a game-changer, facilitating seamless interactions across various channels, from chatbots to voice assistants. This AI-driven interactivity extends beyond mere communication, offering invaluable insights into customer preferences and behavior to streamline operations and enhance service delivery.

The pervasiveness of AI extends far beyond marketing, permeating industries from navigation to social media management. From real-time updates on map applications to AI-powered social content generation, integrating AI technology enriches our daily experiences and empowers businesses to stay ahead of the curve.

As we embrace this new era of AI-driven innovation, combining human marketing expertise with cutting-edge

Embracing AI requires a willingness to test and scale new initiatives.

AI technology promises to revolutionize the industry landscape. By harnessing the power of AI, businesses can navigate the complexities of today's dynamic market with unparalleled agility and efficiency, ushering in a new era of transformative growth and innovation.

## Jump In! We're at an Inflection Point for Next-Level Growth

AI stands at a pivotal moment, akin to the transformative shifts experienced by television, which revolutionized planning, creativity and the production of iconic commercials. Subsequently, the internet ushered in an era of personalization and measurable advertising, driving monumental impacts for businesses of all scales. Mobile technology further elevated brand utility, assisting in every facet of our lives.

Many forward-thinking marketers, such as CAMP Digital, are already harnessing AI to unlock new opportunities. We've enthusiastically embraced this paradigm shift, recognizing that there's no better time to do so than now, given AI's proven efficacy. Recent tests at Google yielded staggering results for CAMP Digital, with a 70% increase in revenue and significant cost reductions for nearly one-third of the tests conducted.

Consequently, we've wholeheartedly integrated AI across our operations, leveraging its capabilities in search and combining it with Generative AI — empowering us to generate text, images, sounds, animations, 3D models and other data types. This holistic approach propels CAMP's customers toward next-level growth and profitability with a focus on enhancing customer connections, fostering creativity and bolstering our confidence in go-to-market strategies.

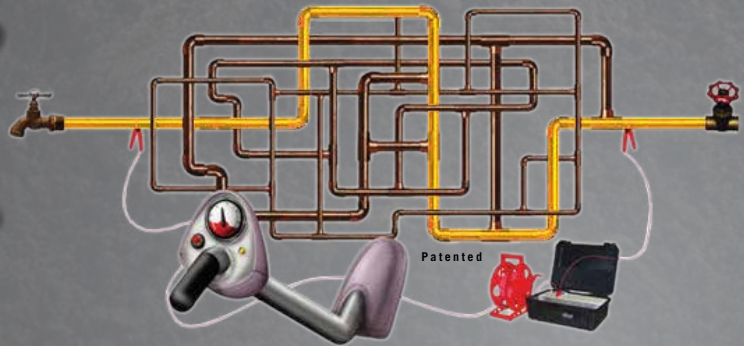
In today's dynamic marketplace, where customer journeys are increasingly intricate, and demand is swift, personalized responses, the fusion of AI-driven insights and innovative marketing solutions has become indispensable for businesses seeking to stay ahead of the curve. Some examples include:

### Customer Connections:

- AI enables marketers to uncover new pockets of demand in the rapidly evolving landscape of customer journeys, particularly in the home service trades.
- Today's purchase decisions are increasingly complex, dynamic and nuanced, with customers exhibiting behavior akin to "product detectives."
- For planned services, 61% of consumers utilize five or more online services before purchasing, engaging

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in extensive research on reviews, financing, warranty, performance and cost.

- Demand services, such as emergency repairs, witness swift decision-making. Customers spend less than 20 minutes before taking action, highlighting the urgency and spontaneity of such transactions.
- Despite representing significant investments, HVAC system searches are often made hastily, emphasizing the need for marketers to deliver timely and relevant messages.

### AI-Powered Marketing Solutions:

- Implementing AI-powered campaigns like Google's Performance Max enhances search optimization across multiple channels, maximizing conversion opportunities and customer engagement.
- Enhanced conversion for web, an AI-powered solution, ensures accurate and privacy-safe measurement of marketing effectiveness, which is crucial in the era of impending cookie depreciation.

- Marketers leveraging enhanced conversions for the web witness significant improvements in conversion rates on search and YouTube, underscoring the efficacy of AI-driven strategies.
- AI-powered creative solutions offer endless possibilities for delivering tailored messages to customers, spanning various formats from short videos to display ads, ultimately driving higher return on investment.

### Experiment with 5-10% of Your Marketing Budget: Navigating the AI Frontier

In our forward-looking approach at CAMP Digital, we encourage businesses to allocate 5-10% of their marketing budget for experimentation and innovation in the coming year. While it may seem daunting, especially given rising costs and increasing competition for customer attention, reserving a dedicated portion for experimentation is the key to unlocking AI's potential.

Embracing AI requires a willingness to test and scale new initiatives. Despite the uncertainties, this investment in experimentation is the path to uncovering incremental conversion lifts. As we venture into uncharted territory, some experiments may lead to failures, but others can yield glorious successes, offering valuable insights and identifying opportunities for significant return on investment.

Staying agile is paramount. Ensure data, budgets and channels align seamlessly with marketing objectives and business goals. This agility, coupled with a keen focus on financial metrics, is crucial for adapting to the evolving landscape and harnessing the power of AI in marketing.

Remember, AI's true potential lies in its diverse applications across various industries. As the third shift in AI unfolds, businesses like ours in the trades can leverage its analytics, predictive, generative and creative capabilities. The horizon is wide open with possibilities, and in the upcoming months, we anticipate witnessing inspiring examples of brands utilizing AI in innovative ways. Let's stay abreast of these developments, adopting smart and forward-thinking strategies to propel our businesses into the future. 📱

*Katie Donovan is the co-founder and CEO of CAMP Digital, a leading digital marketing agency exclusively for companies in the home services industry. The award-winning agency leverages strategies in website design, SEO, paid ads and more for impactful campaigns to attract and convert quality leads while using its proprietary Capacity Pro dashboard that allows real-time adjustments to marketing strategy based on client capacity.*



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Kate Zabriskie

# Unraveling Complexity

Simpler approaches to serving customers will improve their experience, encourage them to call again and again

By Kate Zabriskie

*“Who designed this convoluted process? A monkey could have done a better job.”*

*“Why do I have to come in and talk to someone? This whole transaction could be handled online. Frustrating!”*

*“I dread going there. The parking lot is impossible to navigate, you fill out what seems like 8,000 forms before you see anyone, and often the staff is confused by the complexity of the processes they follow. I’m glad I only have to go there once or twice a year.”*

Every day, countless service providers make choices that unnecessarily complicate service interactions. At best, those decisions make the customer experience less enjoyable. At worst, unneeded complexity opens the door to complaints, bad reviews and competitors.

## GOOD & SIMPLE

Organizations that know the value of simplicity strive to streamline processes and eliminate rocks on the service-experience road. Furthermore, those who understand the importance of effortless service know achieving it is an ongoing group effort. From the boardroom to the service window, everyone from top to bottom diligently works to eradicate needless steps, complexities or jargon that may confuse customers and obstruct them from reaching their goals.

### Examples of the Payoffs

**Streamlined processes:** Simplifying processes, procedures and workflows eliminates unnecessary complexities, making customer interactions more efficient and effortless.

**Clear communication:** Using straightforward language ensures product information, instructions and policies are easily understandable, creating a faster customer experience.

**Intuitive navigation:** Creating intuitive interfaces helps customers quickly find what they need without clicking on the wrong link, going to the incorrect location or calling the wrong number.

**Reduced cognitive load:** Organizing information and choices in a clear and logical manner helps customers make

confident decisions, reducing the likelihood of buyer’s remorse, returns or calls to the help desk.

**Efficient problem resolution:** Providing simple and accessible channels for customer support enables quicker problem resolution.

**User engagement:** Presenting information or products in a simplified way makes customers want to use a service provider.

## WE’RE DIFFERENT

My business is complicated! We’re not running a hamburger stand or a retail store. Our product is highly technical. While not every interaction is basic, all service providers can make interactions easier. No matter who you are, there are opportunities to streamline design, usability, communication, accessibility and problem resolution.

**Obvious opportunities:** If you open your eyes, many problems are obvious. Here are a few of the usual suspects: complex payment process, inefficient customer relationship management systems, excessive use of industry jargon, multiple contact attempts.

**Other places to explore:** In addition to the easy-to-find improvement opportunities, most teams can find more if they start asking questions:

1. Is our product or service easy to understand?
2. Is our website or physical location easy to navigate?
3. Can customers easily find the information they need?
4. Are our pricing and billing practices transparent and easy to understand?
5. Can customers quickly contact us when they need to?
6. Is our customer service process straightforward and efficient?
7. Are we using plain language in our communications or relying too much on jargon?
8. Are our processes designed with the customer’s convenience in mind?
9. Are we offering simple, efficient solutions to customer problems?

10. Can customers easily purchase our products or services?

11. Do customers have to go through unnecessary steps or complexities to achieve their objectives?

12. What feedback are we getting from customers about the ease of their experience?

The front line is a gold mine: Organizations that take simplicity seriously know the goldmine of information frontline service representatives can provide if they are encouraged to bring issues to management.

Routine complaints: For every customer who voices dissatisfaction, three or four others will say nothing. Organizations that treat service seriously see complaints as canaries in the coal mine, and they encourage service representatives to track concerns and bring them forward.

Multiple contact attempts: If customers need to contact your company multiple times for the same issue or related issues, there's a problem and an opportunity to simplify the resolution process. Frontline representatives are almost always the first to recognize boomerang interactions.

Poorly defined policies: Confused and confounded customers are the result of poorly defined policies. Representatives who must manage them know when guidelines or rules are ill-defined.


Lack of training and tools: Frontline service providers

Organizations that know the value of simplicity strive to streamline processes and eliminate rocks on the service-experience road.

are also acutely aware when they don't know the answer, can't get a system to cooperate or must implement a workaround.

### KEEP IT SIMPLE

Once you start looking, it's easy to become overwhelmed by the amount of work involved to make things easy. Take a breath, and then take another. Just as most processes don't become convoluted overnight, it takes time to go in the other direction.

Start with straightforward fixes to build momentum. Next, prioritize what is easier to implement and what will have the most impact on the customer experience. Then get to work. 

-----  
*Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. Reach her at [www.businesstrainingworks.com](http://www.businesstrainingworks.com).*



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Ken Dickerson

# What It Takes to be a Plumber

As workforce gets older, there needs to be a call for proper training and mentorship in the trade

By Ken Dickerson

If you have a passion for plumbing like I do, you most likely read as much as you can about the subject. The variety of what I read can range from new products to plumbers' opinions on certain topics. I enjoy it all.

As I was reading an article from a colleague who teaches plumbing apprenticeship at a different college, he wrote about his favorite code citation, which really put me back in my seat to think. What is my favorite code citation? For each person, this can be on the total opposite sides of our code book, and whatever your favorite code citation is, that is the right one for you.

Personally, mine is SPS 382.015. That code citation reads "the purpose of this chapter is to provide that all plumbing in connections with buildings and facilities in the state, including buildings owned by the state or any political subdivision thereof, shall be safe, sanitary and such as to safeguard the public health and the waters of the state."

What a bold statement to put on us plumbers. Essentially, we have to make sure that no person gets sick from our installs and that we don't contaminate any water throughout our state. A mentor of mine once said that plumbing was the most noble profession in the world, and after reading that, I think he may be right!

This goes for all plumbers regardless of what you may actually do in your everyday job. From preventing cross connections, to requiring an indirect waste connection, to water distribution materials, to discharging wastewater effluent back into the earth via a private onsite wastewater treatment system, I could go on and on.

## PROPER TRAINING NEEDED

In order for us to even attempt to follow any of our code citations we need the proper training. Most states either require an apprenticeship or work experience under the direct supervision of a licensed plumber.

The training both inside the classroom and out in their daily duties are so valuable to the plumbing profession.

The training, both inside the classroom and out in their daily duties, is so valuable to the plumbing profession. This is no simple task and will take years for the very beginner to become even a novice in the plumbing world.

I found this in an article published in an issue of *Domestic Engineering* from 1919. It's about an apprenticeship plan, arguing that the necessity for more care in the selection of plumbing apprentices is plain to every tradesperson in the craft. If a low grade of apprenticeship has been the rule in the past, it has been due to improper selection of apprentices and lack of sympathetic direction and cooperation on the part of the master and journeyman. An untrained or half-trained apprentice, or one whose inclinations are in other directions, lowers the standard of plumbers and plumbing.

Reading the paragraph from 1919 makes me wonder about a couple of things. Do most plumbing shops have an apprenticeship plan? What do they expect from an apprentice and what can an apprentice expect from them? Both the apprentice and the journeyman should help one another. For example, here in Wisconsin we just passed a code update, our first since 2008, and the very first people to see and understand the updates are the apprentices. Their job is to inform the entire shop and keep them up to date with these code updates. This can be difficult if there is not a plan or proper expectations of one another.

Why aren't we selecting our future plumbers with more care? Why are we not giving them the proper training that they need and deserve? Is it all about the numbers? According

to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, plumbing will grow about 2% by 2032 and with approximately half our workforce being 50-plus years old. That means we have to train more people in the next 10 years than we have had to over the last several decades combined! Now I certainly don't advocate for less training in the plumbing trade, but I think that it would be nearly impossible to still protect the public health and the waters of the state. How are we expecting the very best from our apprentices if we don't give them the ample direct supervision they need and deserve?

### A CHANGE NEEDED?

We know finding good quality help that you can train and mold into the plumber that works best for your company was just as hard to find 100 years ago as it is now! How can this still be happening 100 years later? Maybe we need to make a change on how we look at training?

I know that we may have run into the journeyman in our career that belittles every aspect of our professional life and makes plumbing very difficult. This may be from the old adage of the younger plumber making less money and having more energy to complete more tasks during the workday, so let's make their life harder to build up my own worth. I think that mentality is just nonsense. I have always

had the mindset to train as many people as I can to make my job that much easier. Now I know that as I grow older in years my ability to do certain installs may diminish, my knowledge and ability to train grows exponentially, making my worth to the company even more valuable, not less.

I see way too many beginner plumbers sent out on their own doing the oddest of stuff because of lack of training. As an apprenticeship teacher, I have approximately 90 different students over a two-week period describe what they are seeing and doing in the field. This ranges from service, to remodels, to new construction, to POWTS. Now sometimes I do think they have some great ideas that I would have never thought about doing. However, most of the time the install is either not code-compliant, not fixed efficiently, or both. I don't want to say that I've heard it all, but hearing the perspective from 90 different apprentices a year allows me to hear a plethora of unique installs.

The future comes at you fast. It starts today, and it starts with you. **P**

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*Ken Dickerson teaches plumbing apprenticeship at Waukesha County Technical College. He is the 2022 Associated Builders and Contractors of Wisconsin Instructor of the Year, a U.S. Air Force veteran and proud husband and father of two. To reach Ken, email [editor@plumbermag.com](mailto:editor@plumbermag.com).*

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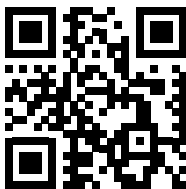
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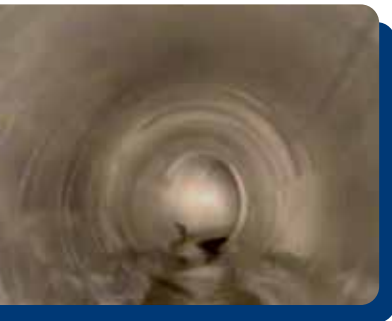
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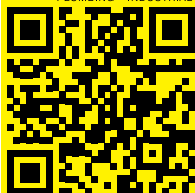
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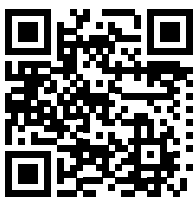


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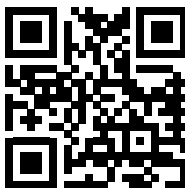
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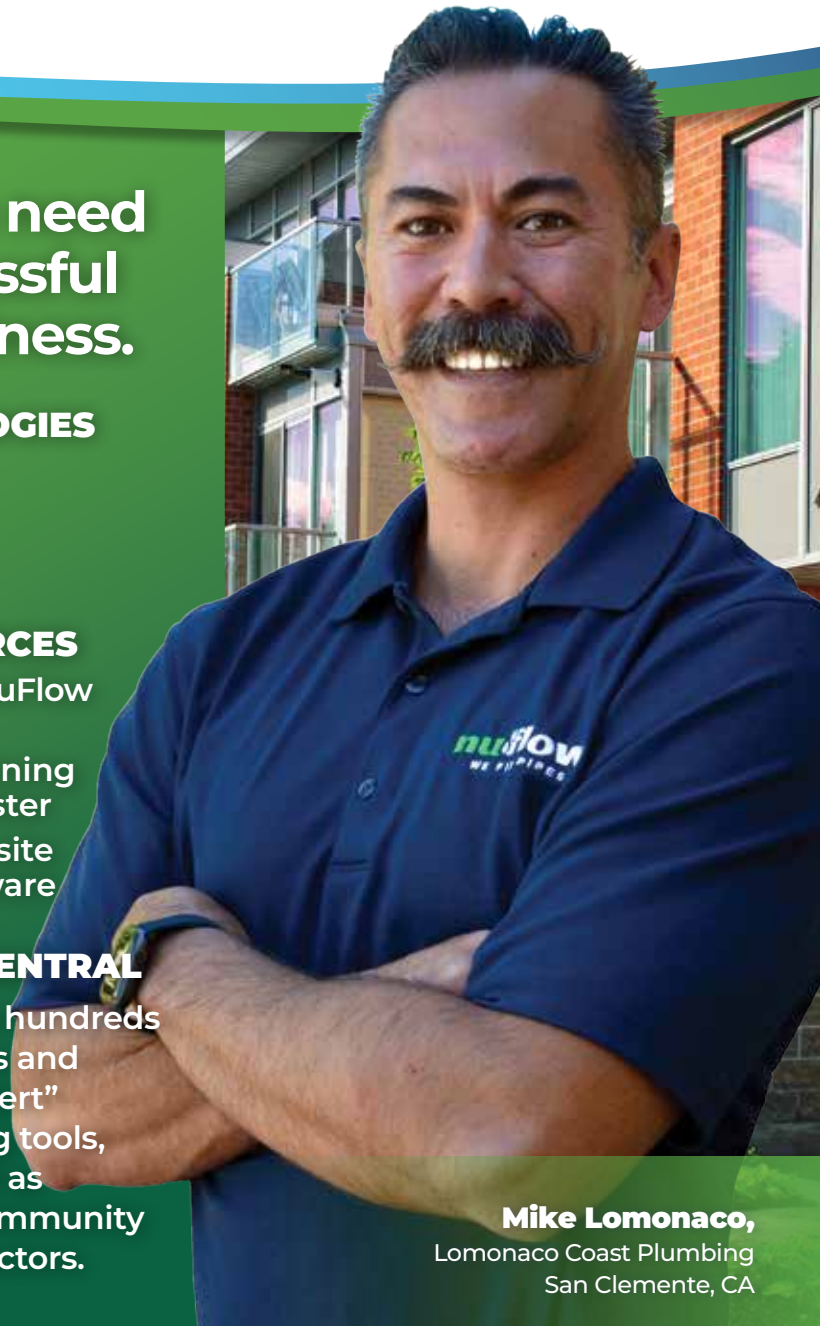
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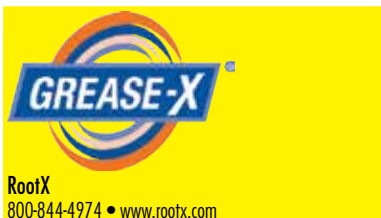
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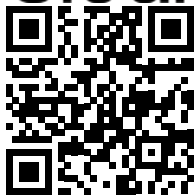
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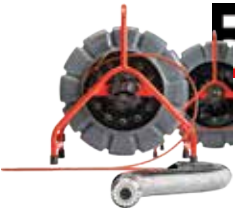
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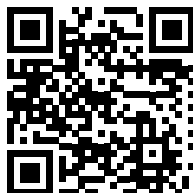
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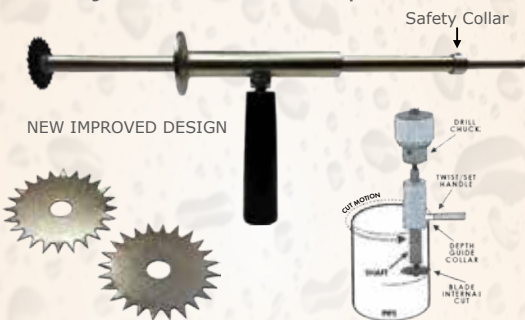
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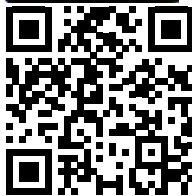
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# Mastering the Craft

Tips to taking care of your daily-used tools so they last a long time for you and your team

By Cory Dellenbach

**A**s a plumber, your tools are not just instruments of your trade; they are the extensions of your expertise, your companions in the field and your lifeline when tackling challenging jobs.

From wrenches to pipe cutters, each tool plays a vital role in ensuring the success and efficiency of your work. However, just like any other equipment, your plumbing tools require proper care and maintenance to perform at their best and stand the test of time.

It's important to care for your plumbing tools just as you would any of your vehicles, power tools and the high-end equipment you might have.

Caring for your plumbing tools is not just a chore; it's a responsibility and a testament to your dedication to your craft.

## WHY TOOL CARE MATTERS

Caring for your tools isn't merely about extending their life span; it directly impacts the quality of your work and your reputation as a plumber. Here are some reasons why tool care should be a top priority.

**Performance:** Well-maintained tools operate more smoothly and efficiently, allowing you to work faster and with greater precision. A rusty wrench or a dull cutter can significantly impede your progress and compromise the quality of your workmanship.

**Safety:** Neglected tools are not only less effective but also pose safety hazards. A loose grip on a slippery wrench or a cracked pipe cutter can lead to accidents and injuries, jeopardizing both your well-being and that of your clients.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** Regular maintenance and care can prevent minor issues from escalating into major repairs or replacements, saving you valuable time and money in the long run. Investing in the upkeep of your tools is an investment in your business's sustainability and profitability.

## TIPS FOR TOOL CARE

Now that we understand the importance of tool care, let's explore some practical tips to keep your plumbing tools in optimal condition.

**Cleanliness is Key:** After each use, thoroughly clean your tools to remove any debris, grime or residue that may have accumulated. Use a rag or brush to wipe off dirt, and consider using specialized cleaning solutions for stubborn stains. For metallic tools, applying a light coat of oil can help prevent rust and corrosion.

**Proper Storage:** Store your tools in a dry, well-ventilated area to prevent moisture buildup and rust formation. Organize them in a toolbox or a designated storage rack on your truck or van to minimize clutter and facilitate easy access. Avoid exposing your tools to extreme temperatures or direct sunlight as these can degrade their materials over time.

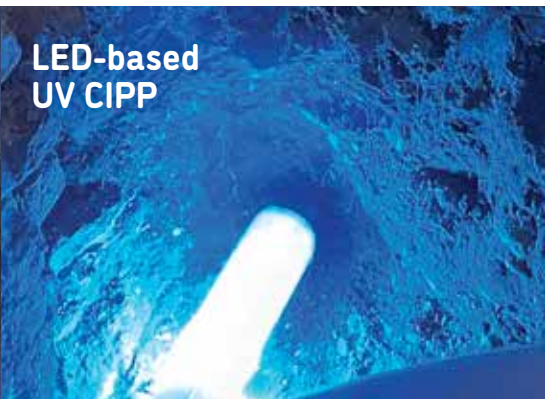
**Regular Inspection:** Just like your more expensive power tools and work vehicles, you should periodically inspect your tools for signs of wear and damage such as loose handles, dull blades or bent shafts. Replace any worn-out parts or components promptly to maintain optimal performance and safety. Investing in high-quality tools with durable materials can also minimize the need for frequent replacements.

**Sharpening and Lubrication:** Keep cutting tools, such as pipe cutters and blades, sharp and properly lubricated to ensure smooth operation. Use sharpening stones or files to maintain sharp edges and apply lubricating oil or grease to moving parts to reduce friction and wear.

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Be sure to follow manufacturer guidelines and recommendations for sharpening and lubrication procedures.

**Handle With Care:** Treat your tools with respect and avoid using excessive force or rough handling, which can lead to premature wear and damage. Use the right tool for the job and avoid using tools for unintended purposes, as this can cause unnecessary strain and stress on the equipment.

**Educate Yourself:** Stay informed about the proper usage and maintenance of your tools by reading manufacturer manuals, attending training workshops or seeking guidance from experienced professionals. Understanding the intricacies of your tools will enable you to care for them more effectively and prolong their lifespan.

### DEDICATION IS SHOWN

Caring for your plumbing tools is not just a chore; it's a responsibility and a testament to your dedication to your craft. By following these tips and incorporating proper tool care practices into your routine, you can ensure that your tools remain reliable companions throughout your plumbing career.

Remember, a well-maintained tool is not just a tool; it's a reflection of your professionalism and commitment to excellence in every job you undertake.

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## Product Spotlight

Hydronic radiant heating system is clean, efficient and green

By Cody Wiesner

**R**adiant heating is popular among homeowners who value quiet, dependable systems that lower their monthly energy bills and provide cleaner air. It's also a good option for busy HVAC installers and plumbers looking to improve productivity on the job. Crete-Heat, a hydronic floor panel system, installs up to two-thirds faster than other radiant systems, according to company owner Don Regan.

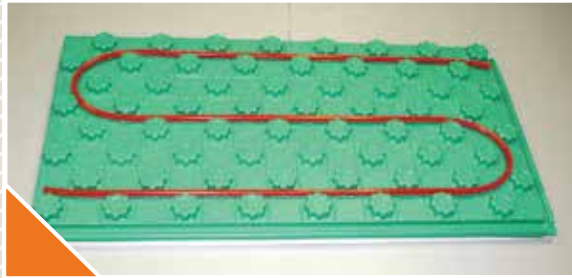
"For contractors, No. 1, it's a huge time-saver," Regan says. "No. 2, for homeowners or the end-user of the building that pays the utilities, 35% of your heat loss is downward loss from the building. That's huge. Crete-Heat is made out of EPS foam, so it maintains twice the rated R-value for life."

Other radiant panel systems traditionally use foam insulation, a vapor barrier and staples or zip ties, all installed in separate steps, but Crete-Heat panels combine all three components into one simplified design.

"And you don't have to staple the tubing down or you don't have to zip-tie it to anything. Basically, put the three panels in and you just lock the tubing, and it's that simple."

This, paired with lightweight, easy transportation across a job site and the ability to be installed by one person, translates to substantial time savings.

Crete-Heat is ideal for indoor, outdoor and winter applications, and suitable for basements, garages, driveways and main floor slab. Each interlocking panel contains EPS



foam with 94% R-value retention and contains several rows of knobs across its surface, which securely holds PEX tubing in between. Concrete is then placed over top to create the thermal flywheel effect radiant heating is known for.

With 25 psi panels on the inside and concrete on the outside, Regan says Crete-Heat is a durable and repair-minimal product.

"Generally speaking, once a concrete is set up and pressure's being maintained, there's never really a need for repair after that."

The company's use of CFC-free, HCFC-free, recyclable EPS makes it an environmentally friendly choice compared to all other forms of styrene. It does not affect air quality and is mold-resistant following ASTM C1338 guidelines. Additionally, Crete-Heat's manufacturing center in Massachusetts offsets almost 500,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> per year thanks to investment in solar power.

Fans of the TV show *This Old House* may have already seen Crete-Heat products in action. While the business began with a homeowner demographic in mind, Regan says Crete-Heat has become especially popular for commercial applications.

"Houses is how we started out, but it just expanded from there."

Crete-Heat products are sold by several dealers across the U.S., including Roth North America. 315-475-0100, [www.roth-america.com](http://www.roth-america.com)

Continued ▶

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### Successware field management software update

Successware released its newest quarterly update to the platform aimed at enhancing overall workflow.

Updates in the new release include key improvements in dispatching, such as advanced usability so relevant job and technician information is available in a single location. It also offers power sorting to quickly sort through unscheduled or unassigned jobs to get them on the board immediately. Jobs can be filtered by location so to see where technicians are available, making rescheduling a breeze. Dispatch notices can be tailored to send each technician a list of their jobs for the day, or send a communication by job to the assigned technician, all directly from the dispatch board. The new update also makes it easier to bulk renew customer agreements, helping businesses maintain their consistent revenue by ensuring no agreement gets left behind. **443-873-0499**; [www.successware.com](http://www.successware.com)

### CSI Controls WellZone pressure controllers for well applications

CSI Controls' WellZone pressure controller series for submersible well applications are available in two-wire and three-wire models, which work with any single phase 115/230-volt well pump. They are longer lasting than a standard pressure switch, easy to set up and have a wide range of pressures and pumping differentials. The WellZone controllers eliminate the traditional pressure switch, which is a common system failure point. They provide pump protection against rapid cycling, low pressure, run dry, overpressure, overcurrent and undercurrent. Plus, they are housed in NEMA 4X enclosures, so they can be installed indoors or outdoors. The LCD allows for quick view of the system pressure, run status, hours run and pump cycles. The rotary button provides the user with a simple navigation method through the menu and program settings. **218-847-1317**; [www.csicontrols.com](http://www.csicontrols.com)



### FieldEdge by Xplor MarketingEdge marketing automation tool

FieldEdge by Xplor, an all-in-one software platform for home contracting businesses, has announced a new digital marketing automation tool, MarketingEdge. With audience targeting, lead management, email marketing and personalized advertising, MarketingEdge is designed to help HVAC, plumbing, electrical, locksmith and appliance repair businesses present a professional brand image, upsell their services to existing customers, and attract new prospects more easily. The digital marketing tool enables automated marketing campaigns with prebuilt email, text and landing pages, to speed campaign creation, and offers unlimited texts and emails. It also can do smart audience segmentation, for sending more authentic messages based on customer behaviors and preferences, and real-time tracking and analytics, for viewing email open, engagement and conversion rates and easily assessing how a campaign is performing. **800-226-7529**; [www.fieldedge.com/marketingedge](http://www.fieldedge.com/marketingedge)

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 Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PRIMARY JOB FUNCTION?

- President/CEO/Owner  Management/Supervisor  
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#### HOW MANY EMPLOYEES DO YOU SUPERVISE OR WORK WITH AT YOUR FACILITY?

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

#### HOW MANY VEHICLES DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE IN SERVICE?

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 100,001-200,000  200,001-500,000  500,001+

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 Septic Tank Pumping  Other \_\_\_\_\_



**June 10-12**

**Women in the Mechanical Industry 2024 Conference**, Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. Visit [mcaa.org/events](https://mcaa.org/events)

**June 10-13**

**AWWA Annual Conference & Exposition**, Anaheim Convention Center, California. Visit <https://events.awwa.org>

**June 16-18**

**Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating Annual Business Conference**, Delta Grand Okanagan Resort, Kelowna, British Columbia. Visit [www.ciph.com](http://www.ciph.com)

**June 26-27**

**Houston Build Expo**, NRG Park Center (Hall E1/E3). Houston. Visit [buildexpousa.com/houston-build-expo/](https://buildexpousa.com/houston-build-expo/)

**July 31 - Aug. 1**

**Atlanta Build Expo**, Cobb Galleria Centre (Halls C & D). Visit [buildexpousa.com/atlanta-build-expo/](https://buildexpousa.com/atlanta-build-expo/)

**Aug. 7-9**

**Safety 2024 Professional Development Conference & Exposition**, Colorado Convention Center, Denver. Visit [safety.assp.org](https://safety.assp.org)

**Aug. 28-29**

**Los Angeles Build Expo**, Los Angeles Convention Center (West Hall A). Visit [buildexpousa.com/los-angeles-build-expo/](https://buildexpousa.com/los-angeles-build-expo/)

**Sept. 22-26**

**95th Annual International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials Conference**, Planet Hollywood, Las Vegas. Visit [iapmo.org](https://iapmo.org)

**Sept. 24-26**

**WaterSmart Innovations**, South Point Hotel and Conference Center, Las Vegas. Visit [awwa.org/events-education/watersmart-innovations](https://awwa.org/events-education/watersmart-innovations)

**Sept. 25-26**

**South Florida Build Expo**, Broward County Convention Center (Hall C), Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Visit [buildexpousa.com/south-florida/](https://buildexpousa.com/south-florida/)

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## General Pipe Cleaners promotes Angela Grieb to national sales manager

General Pipe Cleaners has promoted Angela Grieb to national sales manager. In her new role, Grieb will manage, train and support General Pipe Cleaners' network of independent sales reps, provide customer support and interface with wholesalers, distributors, end users and influencers. She joined the company in 2005 as the executive assistant. During her 19-year career at General Pipe Cleaners, she has performed many roles, including sales support, marketing support, human relations and assistant national sales manager.



## Zoeller names Bill Zoeller as chief executive officer

Zoeller Co. announced that Bill Zoeller became CEO May 1. Zoeller's board of directors, with the support of executive search firm Kensington International, selected Zoeller, previously chief operating officer, to lead the company as CEO upon the retirement of John Zoeller, who has served for 22 years.



"As the chief operating officer at Zoeller Company, Bill Zoeller has shepherded the company through several acquisitions, significant growth and the COVID-19 pandemic, cementing the company's position as a leader in the water solutions industry," says Christopher Carmicle, chair of the board at Zoeller Co. Prior to this role, Bill Zoeller served as the president of Louisville Operations and director of risk management of Zoeller Co. Before joining Zoeller Company in 2011, Zoeller spent more than a decade at LG&E and KU Energy and KPMG.

## Taco begins expansion project on Massachusetts plant

Taco expansion of its Fall River, Massachusetts, plant is underway. The over \$20 million project greatly enhances and expands the manufacturer's ability to build larger tanks, heat exchangers and a wide range of other products, while also enabling them to add capacity and reduce lead times. Taco Comfort Solutions, based in Cranston, Rhode Island, began making plans for the plant expansion more than a decade ago. Groundbreaking began in early September 2023 and the project is expected to take about 18 months to complete.

## RIDGID celebrates 25 years in press technology

RIDGID, a part of Emerson's professional tools portfolio, is celebrating 25 years in press technology. The brand first introduced press technology to North America in 1999 and has continued to help professional tradespeople utilize the platform to drive job site efficiencies. RIDGID offers a product portfolio of innovative solutions that help tradesmen and women achieve fast, secure and flame-free connections.

## Plastics Pipe Institute publishes new technical document

A new technical document that addresses the critical differences between cross linked PEX tubing systems with polybutylene systems has been published by the Plastics Pipe Institute. The initiative was deemed necessary to eliminate any confusion between the two products because of problems associated with polybutylene, which was discontinued. Prepared by PPI's Building and Construction Division, "PPI TN-31 Differences Between Crosslinked Polyethylene and Polybutylene Piping Systems for Potable Water Plumbing Applications" discusses the advantages of modern PEX tubing and fittings as compared with PB tubing and fittings, which were last sold in the U.S. during the late 1990s.

## CUES software recognized as Esri Cornerstone Partner

CUES' GraniteNet Asset Inspection/Decision Support Software was recognized as an Esri Cornerstone Partner at the 2024 ESRI Partner Conference on March 10-11 in Palm Springs, California, for 20 years of commitment to Esri and ArcGIS technology. Developed by CUES in 2004, the inclusion of GIS spatial mapping to asset infrastructure data is now used by over 1,000 municipal utilities and contractors.

## A. O. Smith appoints Stephen Shafer to president and COO

A. O. Smith has appointed Stephen Shafer as president and chief operating officer. In this role, Shafer will lead the company's global business units, including operations, engineering and IT. Most recently, he served as president of the Automotive and Aerospace Solutions Division for 3M Company. Prior to 3M, Steve worked for McKinsey & Company and Ford Motor Company holding various roles focusing on manufacturing, supply chain and operational improvement.



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## Viega announces Andreas Reger as new CEO

Viega has appointed Andreas Reger as its new president and chief executive officer. Reger will replace Markus Brettschneider, who was recently appointed as the new global CEO for Viega Group. This strategic move follows the decision of current Global CEO Claus Holst-Gydesen to move to Viega's supervisory board, after 14 years of leadership, with the last 10 years as global CEO.

## IAPMO publishes manual of recommended construction practices for potable water

The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials and the Construction Practices for Potable Water Task Group have released the publication titled the *Manual of Recommended Construction Practices for Potable Water*. This manual provides education and guidance to help plumbing professionals responsible for the design, construction and commissioning of water systems to reduce the potential of contaminating plumbing systems during construction. On Sept. 15, 2021, IAPMO initiated the task group to create a manual to provide code enhanced and adoptable language for construction use, related to potable water piping systems and water safety management during the construction phase. The task group consisted of more than 30 industry experts from across the nation, focused on actionable guidance and construction best practices surrounding potable water.

## NIBCO promotes Joe Choflet to VP, sales and marketing

NIBCO has promoted Joe Choflet to vice president, sales and marketing. In his new role, Choflet will continue to lead wholesale, retail, specialty and international sales. He will now oversee product marketing for plastic and metal fittings and valves. Choflet will continue to report to Ashley Martin, president and COO of NIBCO.



## Oatey acquires Sweden-based Aktibolaget Durgo

Oatey has acquired Aktibolaget Durgo, a specialty developer and manufacturer of air admittance valves and other pressure regulating valves based in Stockholm, Sweden. For more than 100 years, the company has also embraced state-of-the-art technology to continue to achieve high standards of quality and safety.

## Bradford White donates heat pump water heaters

Bradford White continues its commitment to support training the workforce of the future by providing strategic in-kind grant funding to the Center for Employment Training, a national nonprofit technical training school. The grant, which stems from Bradford White's charitable giving initiative, Industry Forward, includes the purchase of nine 50-gallon AeroTherm heat pump water heaters, which will be used at nine CET training centers across northern and Southern California for their training programs.



## Legend Valve opens Texas distribution center

Michigan-based Legend Valve opened its new distribution center in Stafford, Texas. The new warehouse substantially increases its distribution footprint for customers in the growing Southern U.S. The new facility will allow two-day-or-less delivery for 96% of customers in the continental United States. The facility will also offer local wholesalers easy access to a will-call service desk, further allowing customers to reduce their inventory-carrying costs. [P](#)



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