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Forget Your Resolutions



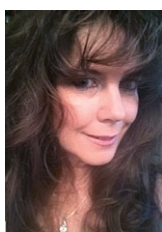
For years, I was one of those people who started my new year with new business goals. And like “those” people, I found myself in April back to the drawing board to layout new plans that were more realistic and attainable. However, deep inside, I knew that the goals I originally set out for myself could have been reached if I just stuck to my original plan. That’s when I began to reflect on why so many “other” people seem to soar on the wings of their aspirations while others stay grounded frantically flapping and getting seemingly nowhere.

According to David Allen, author of *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*, most of us have anywhere from 30 – 100 projects on our to-do list at any one given time. YIKES! Makes sense why so many of us struggle with prioritizing our lists. But he argues that even if we were given more time, most of us wouldn’t accomplish more than we are right now and would only fill the extra time with feeling more overwhelmed and anxious.

Let’s get real, when it comes down to it, we all have the same amount of time each day. To be exact, 24 hours, 1,440 minutes and 86,440 seconds. All the great minds in history had the same amount of time too – from Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein to Leonardo da Vinci – and they were able to accomplish wondrous achievements with limited technology and some with the added responsibility of raising 10 or more children. So, time is clearly not the issue!

We can only reach a level Allen calls “sophisticated spontaneity” when we stop keeping things in our heads and begin systematically choosing what to focus on and how to spend our time. I found that getting everything out of my head and into a workable system so that my mind and time are free to focus on the task at hand has taken me a lot farther than previously misguided New Year’s resolution lists.

Whatever way you choose to free your mind to make the most of your time this year, I recommend that you forget your resolutions, if you truly want to go from proficient to productive!



Happy New Year,

Eliana Barriga
letters@retailobserver.com

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CES, Winter Market and Design & Construction Week. OH MY!!!

Wow, here we go again. Shows, shows and more shows. The next three shows are a great way to start off the New Year. CES, Las Vegas Winter Market and Design & Construction Week. The introduction of new products and the networking available over the next 5 weeks will be amazing and I for one can't wait.

CES takes place January 7-10 with a multitude of events both before and during that are going to keep us in a whirlwind. With press events starting on the 5th and going through the 7th and then 3 full days of trying to take in the entire show, it will be a challenge to catch it all. I personally am looking forward to all of the new connectivity products that are hitting the market and seeing how manufacturers have progressed with glasses-less 3D TV. I know my feet will be tired.

January 26-30 will be another exciting Las Vegas Winter Market. This year nearly 1.1 million square feet of new and expanded showrooms spanning furniture, home decor and gifts has been added. Over 1,200 new and expanded exhibitors and thousands of new product introductions. For this show, I will definitely need walking shoes.

The Design & Construction Week with the International Builders' Show (IBS) and the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) co-locating will also take place in Las Vegas February 4-6, along with the International Window Coverings Expo. I thought I'd share with you a list of the manufacturers in the appliance category that are showing:

Air King, Brew Express, Broan-Nutone, Electrolux, BSH Home Appliances, Dacor, Falmec, Fhiaba, Fulgor Milano, Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet, Liebherr, Napoleon Fireplaces & Grills, RANGECRAFT Manufacturing Co., Scotsman Ice Systems, Summit/Danver, True Professional, Vent-A-Hood, Viking Range, and Vinotemp.

Just to name a few! Of course, this list will be old by the time the show rolls around. Expect to find even more manufacturers; some you may know as well as a few you don't, will be onsite or at offsite locations which seem to be happening more at many shows. With these three events merged here in Las Vegas, we can now see and talk with exhibitors from every part of the industry during the same week. Thank goodness I've decided to buy new shoes!

I look forward to reporting on these events in the upcoming months and showing you all of the new products and innovations that The Retail Observer is on the lookout for! Just remember that the best way to see what's being offered is to be there yourself and if you're at a show and see me, please stop to chat and tell me what you think.



Happy Travels,

Moe Lastfogel
moe@retailobserver.com

The RetailObserver

We proudly support the following trade associations and buying groups throughout North America whose news and information greatly contribute to the quality of *The Retail Observer* and the education of our readers.



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LE PRODUCTS

Designed for a Global Market

Three years have passed since our last visit to Bassano del Grappa which is found in the Veneto region of Northern Italy. Our last trip to this region brought us to the Meneghetti S.p.A. production facility to preview the newly acquired and re-branded Fulgor Milano line of cooking appliances. Many things have changed for the brand since our first introduction in 2010, but a passion for design and quality has remained evident in their commitment to creating an impressive array of lifestyle products.

In 2012, Meneghetti S.p.A., the parent company for Fulgor Milano, re-launched the product line after injecting a fresh European look into existing models. This change in aesthetics modernized the product and provided an opportunity for the Fulgor Milano team to simplify and create cohesion in the product mix for the North American market. The team has also been focusing on customer service by centralizing all processes, from manufacturing to administration, to their facility in Bassano del Grappa. | *continued on page 10* |



Additionally, after-sales service support and parts distribution for the North American market was secured within the USA and is being handled deftly by ADCO Service out of Arizona. Since 1986 ADCO Service has provided their services to premium appliance manufacturers and is well situated to deliver the highest level of customer care for the Fulgor Milano line of products should it be required.

Fulgor Milano offers many built-in cooking options to suit the needs and the cooking styles of even the most discerning food enthusiasts. They offer natural gas / propane, radiant and induction cooktops which come in standard 24", 30" and 36" widths and even non-standard sizes such as 42" (gas only) with options for standard knob controls or the latest in modern touch controls. In-wall convection oven options abound in several widths and heights to suit nearly any kitchen design. Manual clean and self-clean versions with several feature / control options create many attractive purchase options to fit a variety of budgets. Rumour has it that attendees to KBIS 2014 will be treated to the first exposure in North America to Fulgor Milano's Creative and Special Compact Line of products including in-wall steam oven, convection microwave speed oven, wine cooler and coffee maker.

With a rejuvenated product line and customer service secured in North America, Fulgor Milano turns its focus towards distribution in the US market. The brand has seen much success in the Canadian market, being used in major developments in two of Canada's largest metropolitan regions: Toronto and Vancouver. For the United States, Fulgor Milano finds itself in an interesting position as it enters a market that has many recognized brands. The Fulgor Milano team brings a flexible and dynamic determination in addition to many years of experience in all aspects of appliance design, production, marketing and distribution and is committed to nurturing the relationships and the time needed to carve a solid path for their products. This premium Italian made product line offers refreshing opportunities in a market where margins are continuously tightening for distributors and dealers. The Fulgor Milano team is determined to ensure that distributors and dealers have the opportunity to maximize their profitability and sales.

One cannot expect a market to adapt to a product.





Rather, the product must adapt to the market and ultimately also to the people which will use and live with that product for a significant portion of their lives.

When asked about the brand and the future vision for Fulgor Milano, President Gianni Meneghetti says: "We have already made investments in logistics and implemented lean production methods. These significant investments allowed us to take a big step forward towards completing our internationalization and to further development projects. We updated the brand to Fulgor Milano so as to underline the Italian origin of the brand. Now with more than 140 new premium products available on the global market, Fulgor Milano is synonymous with durability, innovation and modern design. Currently, we are working on functional innovation which we think will really distinguish our brand in the global market. A product must characterize a lifestyle so that consumers can either recognize themselves in it or it must represent a lifestyle they aspire to. This is the only way to attract the interest of a modern and mindful consumer. To achieve this goal we drew upon our most valuable resource which is our employees. We find ourselves able to involve all of them in the development process. Training and meetings are organized every week with employees where ideas and feedback are heard. We call them all "engineers" as we are certain that everyone can bring the experiences and ideas necessary for innovation. We also learn from our partners who effectively become our technical field consultants, integrating themselves in the business process and providing feedback. Our relationship with our partners is also fundamental to achieving our goal of being successful in the wide array of markets we find ourselves in."

"Everyone approaches their perfect design from a different angle. Having the perspective of owners, salespeople, assemblers, quality and testing specialists and service personnel funnelled through the design and engineering team allows Fulgor Milano to develop cutting edge designs which are reliable, aesthetically pleasing, efficient to build, functional, easy to use and easy to service."

For U.S. Retailers who are interested in the brand, Fulgor Milano is already in negotiations with several key distributors to support the brand in various markets. Authorized distributor announcements will be forthcoming by Q1 2014. **RO**

CALL TO ACTION



SEND US YOUR SHOTS

We are looking for retailers, distributors and manufacturers engaged in their element while at tradeshow, special events, showroom openings or just plain group get-togethers.

The Retail Observer is interested in featuring you in our snap-shot page, "Retailers Observed," where you can see what your industry buddies are up to. Please e-mail us your hi-res photos in .jpg format. Include the captions with the photos you send for consideration and be sure to put "Retailers Observed" in the subject line.

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Book Review

The Risk Advantage

As an entrepreneur and racecar driver, Tom Panaggio has learned that you cannot avoid risk if you want to be a winner.

In *The Risk Advantage*, Panaggio tells the story of how he and his business partners built two thriving companies: Direct Mail Express (which now employs over 400 people and is a leading direct marketing company) and Response Mail Express (which was eventually sold to an equity fund, Huron Capital Partners).

The book is designed as a guide for those who are contemplating an entrepreneurial pursuit, are already engaged in building a business, or who are currently working for someone else and want to inject an entrepreneurial attitude. With *The Risk Advantage*, Tom aims to help business owners face the many situations, predicaments, and crises they'll encounter during their lives and to help formulate their leadership style and business strategy.

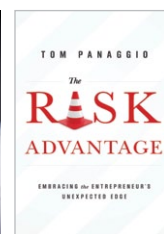
The Risk Advantage is a story about an entrepreneurial journey that explores the relationship between opportunity and risk, two important forces that are necessary for success. Panaggio teaches that the unexpected edge for success starts with identifying a worthy risk and then having the courage to take it. In his book, he identifies those risks based on the experiences of his own journey.

"In today's competitive global economy, you absolutely must provide enough value to keep customers loyal over the long term," Panaggio comments. "The days of being the only [insert your type of business here] in town are over. Customers have many choices, and if they aren't more than satisfied, they'll take their business to the competition."

He adds: "All that you have to do is exceed your customers' expectations, not by a huge margin, but just enough so that they're pleasantly surprised. That's where word-of-mouth advertising begins. When you hit that point, there's a multiplier effect to the investment you make to secure the customer. Remember, a client's real value is not the revenue made from their first order, but the total long-term value. The cost of acquiring a customer can be significant, but the cost of losing one—as well as all of the business that person might have brought to you—is greater."

Opportunities are always there for you to grab. If you want to realize a dream, accomplish a daunting goal, or simply start your own business, you must be willing to embrace risk. Learning the lessons of *The Risk Advantage* is an important first step on that journey. **RO**

Author: Tom Panaggio has enjoyed a 30-year entrepreneurial career as cofounder of two successful direct marketing companies, Direct Mail Express (DME) in Daytona Beach, Florida, and CEO of spin-off RME in Tampa, Florida. Visit www.TheRiskAdvantage.com
Publisher: River Grove Books, 2013





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BSH HOME APPLIANCES OPENS EXPERIENCE & DESIGN CENTER IN NEW YORK CITY

THE NEW SPACE WILL SHOWCASE INSPIRING INNOVATIONS FOR THE KITCHEN, LOCATED IN THE ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS BUILDING

B/S/H/ BSH Home Appliances is expanding its position at the forefront

of kitchen innovation and design with the grand opening of the BSH Experience & Design Center in New York's Architects and Designers Building. Located in the design hub and international gateway of New York City, the new Experience & Design Center is the ultimate showcase of the entire BSH portfolio – Bosch, Thermador and Gaggenau – for the mass premium, luxury and elite luxury markets. The space was designed by award-winning global architectural firm VOA Associates Incorporated.

“The Experience & Design Center in New York is a new way of thinking BSH. The opening of this new facility affords us the opportunity to work closer with our trade partners in the New York and tri-state area, and also opens up a gateway to collaborate with our global BSH network to work on developments throughout the world,” said Michael Traub, CEO of BSH Home Appliances. “With the industry rebounding, now is the right time for us to expand our presence in one of the most influential design capitals, the culmination of strategic steps we have taken in the continued success and growth of BSH and its Bosch, Thermador and Gaggenau brands.”

With stunning kitchen vignettes and lifestyle settings featuring the latest products from Bosch, Thermador and Gaggenau, the space is designed to ignite the passion of architects, designers, builders and homeowners by challenging the conventional view of home appliances. Visitors will be able to view the entire BSH portfolio, addressing the needs of nearly every kitchen – from the ground floor to the penthouse, to single family homes and multi-family developments.

- Bosch offers precision and efficiency combined with sleek, modern style, which makes it a natural fit for many urban dwellings.
- Thermador is a leader in luxury kitchens designed for culinary enthusiasts, offering products that provide true performance and real innovations for real cooks.
- Gaggenau, a leader in design and technology innovation, creates luxury home appliances exacted to the highest standards using signature German engineering.

The BSH Experience & Design Center, located in New York City's Architects and Designers Building at 150 East 58th Street, Suite 700, will be a sister design space to the BSH Experience & Design Center in Irvine, Calif. The New York Experience & Design Center will be open to the public during business hours from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For more information about the design center, or to book an appointment, please call 888-455-8892.



BOSCH HOME APPLIANCES

Bosch home appliances is part of BSH, Bosch and Siemens Home Appliance Group, based in Munich, Germany. As part of the third largest appliance manufacturer in the world, Bosch has been selling high performance German-engineered appliances in the United States since 1991. Known nationwide for raising the standards in quietness, efficiency and integrated design for appliances, Bosch frequently receives top ratings in leading consumer publications and is the winner the ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year-Sustained Excellence Award two years in a row. With U.S. headquarters in Irvine, Calif., the company also operates an appliance park in New Bern, N.C. which houses state-of-the-art factories for dishwashers, ranges, ovens and cooktops. For more information about Bosch, visit www.bosch-home.com/us, like Bosch at [Facebook.com/BoschAppliances](https://www.facebook.com/BoschAppliances) or connect on Twitter @BoschAppliances.





THERMADOR

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For more information, visit www.thermador.com or follow us on Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/thermador and @Thermador, respectively.



GAGGENAU

Gaggenau is a manufacturer of high-quality home appliances “Made in Germany” and an innovation leader in design and technology. With 330 years of history, Gaggenau has revolutionized the kitchen again and again with its internationally acclaimed products. Gaggenau’s success is based on technological innovation and a clear design language combined with perfect functionality. The difference is Gaggenau. www.gaggenau-usa.com.



VIKING RANGE TO EXHIBIT AT KBIS 2014 VIKING WILL FEATURE NEW PRODUCTS AND COOKING TECHNOLOGIES IN LAS VEGAS



Viking Range, LLC, the originator of “Professional Performance for the Home,” will be an exhibitor at the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS) 2014 during Design & Construction Week™, to be held February 4-6 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Viking will be located in Booth N1215.

“Viking will be showcasing dozens of new products and advanced technologies at KBIS. Those attending will get a firsthand look at these exciting innovations,” said Tim Tyler, director of marketing at Viking. “We are eager to show the industry all of the new projects that we have been working on at Viking over the past year and to share our vision for the future of the Viking brand.”

Viking is looking forward to KBIS as an opportunity to reinforce the strength of the Viking brand to its core influencers – designers, builders, architects and remodelers. Brent Bailey, director of brand management at Viking, stated, “Not only will Viking domestic product lines be on display, but we will also be showcasing our extensive and growing line-up of Viking products available globally. We look forward to meeting many international attendees at the show and introducing them to the Viking brand for use with their clients.” *| continued on page 18 |*

With so many new products launched between August 2013 and January 2014, Viking management is pleased with the collaboration of KBIS with the International Builders' Show (IBS) to create Design & Construction Week™. "The design and builder communities are critically important to Viking and we are excited to be a part of this mega-event to showcase so many innovative new Viking products," said Tyler. Viking Range was acquired by The Middleby Corporation, a global leader in the commercial kitchen industry, on December 31, 2012.

As of October 15, 2013, the KBIS 2014 show floor was officially sold out and Design and Construction Week™ is expected to draw over 60,000 residential design and construction professionals. "We anticipate huge benefits to exhibitors in both shows – as well as to attendees – because there will be so much more to see in one location," added Tyler.

Designers and homeowners consistently turn to Liebherr refrigerators for many key reasons. They know that Liebherr models are a perfect fit for a custom kitchen, accommodating unique and creative approaches to design, as well as the individual needs of the consumer.

"As appliance manufacturers, it is important to provide customers with compact, yet efficient, appliances that will flawlessly fit within their kitchen's design," says Josef Steigmiller, vice president, Liebherr Refrigeration, The Americas. "In the past home design was driven by practicality but now homeowners want function and design to align—and it starts in the kitchen," he adds.

Liebherr has a full line of premium refrigerators to fit any design customers have envisioned for their kitchen. The freestanding stainless models are sleek center pieces that make a definite statement. The built-in models are perfect for designs that call for units that slide into cabinet surrounds and the fully integrated models become one with their kitchen design, hidden seamlessly behind custom cabinetry.

Each Liebherr refrigerator offers unlimited style and envelops cutting-edge food preservation technology within its clean lines. Refrigerators offering maximized food preservation are in high demand and Liebherr leads the way with smart features such as BioFresh drawers designed to store food at an ideal temperature and humidity to help retain freshness and quality for up to three times longer than traditional refrigeration. Liebherr's Super Frost and Super Cool features offer automatic quick chill and freeze functions to seal in food's important nutrients, flavors and textures.

All of this technology comes wrapped in the innovative engineering of a Liebherr refrigerator. GlassLine storage shelves and the elimination of thick interior padding and insulation mean maximum usable interior storage space. Plus, energy-saving interior LED light columns illuminate the appliance's interior so they can admire the ongoing beauty of fresh and healthy food.

Liebherr, a worldwide company specializing in refrigeration and freezer technology, is an industry leader in green manufacturing, consistently introducing innovative solutions for freshness. Liebherr's product line includes freestanding models from 24-inches up to 60- inches wide, built-in and fully integrated refrigeration up to 48-inches-wide, plus a selection of wine storage units, under-counter beverage centers and outdoor refrigerators. To learn more, visit www.liebherr-appliances.com.

| continued on page 20 |



SLEEK DESIGN MEETS FUNCTION WITH LIEBHERR

LIEBHERR Your customers may not think about their refrigerator much. To them, it's just a big box that keeps food fresh, drinks cold and provides a place to show off their kids' artwork, right? Not anymore. Today's refrigeration offerings are equipped with fabulous conveniences to make life easier and save energy—and exterior enhancements that create a major design element in the kitchen.



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KBIS ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL INNOVATION BOOTH AWARDS

PUTTING THE DESIGN IN DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION WEEK™

Las Vegas February 4-6 **KBIS** 2014

For the first time ever, the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS), will recognize exhibitors for innovative booth designs and displays with the KBIS Innovation Booth Awards. Known for its abundance of new products and cutting-edge designs, KBIS is also a destination for some of the most innovative booth and product display presentations in the residential design industry. Booths will be judged on: WOW Factor, Messaging, Education, Engagement and "The Unexpected & Unprecedented."

"KBIS is putting the 'design' in Design & Construction Week™," said Brian Pagel, VP Kitchen & Bath Group, Emerald Expositions. "The Innovation Booth Awards was borne of the premise that, 'Creativity is contagious. Pass it on,' said Albert Einstein. We want to not only recognize the exhibitors who always create provocative displays, but also encourage all exhibitors to prove their status as innovators in the kitchen and bath industry with new and exciting display concepts."

Exhibitors may enter the competition at www.kbisinnovation.com. There is no cost to enter. Entries will have their entire booth judged on Tuesday, February 4, 2014 from 9AM-12PM, by a juried panel of representatives from the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), KBIS and elite professionals in the kitchen, bath and display design industry segments, including Modenus BlogTour Las Vegas participants and 30 Under 30 Alumni.

Awards will be given for First, Second and Third Place. Winners will receive a special award, presented at the announcement on Center Stage in the NKBA Booth on Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 11:30AM in conjunction with the Best of KBIS Award announcements. All winners will also receive special post-show promotional benefits on KBIS.com and other KBIS digital media platforms.

For more information and to enter, please visit: www.kbisinnovation.com

"The biggest risk is not taking any risk...In a world that's changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks." Mark Zuckerberg

For the latest news and announcements visit www.KBIS.com, follow KBIS on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KitchenBathIndustryShow and on Twitter at @KBIS2014.



VINOTEMP LAUNCHES THE NEW DESIGNER SERIES 50-BOTTLE SEAMLESS WINE COOLER



Vinotemp, a recognized leader in the wine storage and refrigeration industry for nearly 30 years, today launched the new Designer Series 50-Bottle Seamless Wine Cooler. Part of Vinotemp's new independent dealer exclusive Designer Series product line, the cooler was recently recognized with a Silver Award for Design Excellence (ADEX), features a reasonable price point, and includes industry exclusive, patent pending gliding metal shelves with black wood trim.

"Vinotemp's new Designer Series includes products that provide excellence through performance while maintaining a high standard of visual aesthetics," states President of Vinotemp, India Hynes. "In addition to the ability to properly store a small to medium sized wine collection, the new Designer Series 50-Bottle Seamless Wine Cooler includes features like patent pending, gliding metal shelves with black wood trim and a seamless stainless steel trimmed dual-pane glass door for effortless integration into any kitchen design." | continued on page 22 |



KBIS 2014

Las Vegas | February 4-6

More New Products
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Registration Code: ADRET

For the first time ever, KBIS 2014 will co-locate with the NAHB International Builders' Show. This new mega event, called Design & Construction Week™, will be one of the world's largest gatherings in residential design and construction focused on new ideas, products, and technologies coming to market. It will be the can't miss event of the year.

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Features of Vinotemp's Designer Series 50-Bottle Seamless Wine Cooler (VT-DS24SB50):

- Patent pending, gliding metal shelves with black wood trim
- Dual-pane glass door with seamless stainless steel trim
- Charcoal filtration for humidity and odor control
- Blue LED (light-emitting diode) interior lighting
- Front-vented for undercounter or free-standing installation
- Option of right or left hinged door
- Temperature range: 45 – 65 F
- Approximate bottle capacity: 50
- Dimensions: 23.8" W x 22.7" D x 34.3" H
- A one year warranty covering parts and labor and a five year warranty on the compressor
- MSRP: \$1695

The new Designer Series complements Vinotemp's growth by providing quality refrigeration options through independent dealers. For more information about the new Designer Series 50-Bottle Wine Cooler, and to find a dealer, please visit www.vinotemp.com. To become a dealer please contact Robert Magro of The Product Solution Group at 888-522-9947.

For nearly 30 years Vinotemp International has manufactured custom wood wine cabinets, wine racks, wine cellars, and cooling systems and has been the leading distributor of wine coolers, beverage coolers, wine dispensers, wine accessories, and more. Close attention to market demand and non-standard ideas have resulted in Vinotemp's ability to offer diversified wine storage solutions utilized by renowned resorts, restaurants, hotels, and the yachting industry. For more information about Vinotemp contact 800-777-VINO (8466) or visit www.Vinotemp.com.

Find Vinotemp on Facebook.com/Vinotemp and Twitter @vinotemp.

BOSCH, CAESARSTONE AND THERMADOR: THREE LEADING BRANDS UNITE FOR DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION WEEK

THREE BRANDS OF CHOICE, THREE INNOVATIVE DAYS, ONE STAGE – FEBRUARY 4-6, 2014



Bosch, Caesarstone and Thermador are uniting to showcase inspiring design, a range of kitchen solutions and new products during Design & Construction Week, February 4-6, 2014 in Las Vegas. Over three days, the brands will share their vision of today's kitchens and aspirational design in one masterfully designed booth conceived by award-winning kitchen designer Mick De Giulio.

"Bringing together these three iconic brands under the direction of Mick De Giulio is an unprecedented achievement, which Caesarstone is proud to be a part of," said Sagi Cohen, Caesarstone US CEO. "As an industry leader, Caesarstone sees the builder community as an important partner, which is why it was imperative for us to have a strong presence at this year's Design & Construction Week. Our product's ability to compliment any design, but also add value to a project will be highlighted during the show."

Bosch, Caesarstone and Thermador see their partnership as a natural one for the inaugural Design & Construction Week, as it allows the three brands to present attractive home and kitchen solutions to both the builder and designer communities.

"The uniting of these brands will demonstrate to builders, architects and designers alike that together, BSH Home Appliances and Caesarstone offer quality solutions to suit every kitchen design," said Michael Traub, president and CEO of BSH Home Appliances. "Bosch provides European precision engineering in a sleek, modern package, while Thermador offers innovation for the culinary enthusiast."

- Bosch, the definitive European kitchen brand for the Mass Premium market, will unveil a completely redesigned cooking line, which will set a new benchmark in kitchen design – available to consumers in April 2014.
- Caesarstone, the industry trendsetter in combining artful home design with durability and quality, will offer an exclusive preview of their newest color innovations at the show. In addition, they will present innovative programs and offerings, which meet the unique demands of the builder community.
- Thermador, a leader in luxury kitchens designed for the culinary enthusiast, has reimagined the possibilities in surface cooking and indoor grilling - unveiling the next generation of cooktops, ranges and rangetops featuring industry leading design and unrivaled performance to create the ultimate cooking experience.

"Creating the Design & Construction Week booth for these three brands allows me an opportunity to demonstrate how warm and inviting today's stylish kitchens can be," said De Giulio. "I hope the space I am creating will inspire builder and design professionals to bring attainable luxury into more homes, because quality products never go out of style."

Design & Construction Week 2014 takes place from February 4-6, 2014 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The Bosch, Caesarstone and Thermador booth will be located in the International Builders' Show (IBS) area in the Central Hall at booth number C3837, though attendees at any of the Design & Construction Week shows are encouraged to visit. More information about the schedule of booth activities will be available in the coming months. Additional details will also be shared on each brand's social media channels: Bosch: *Facebook, Twitter*; Thermador: *Facebook, Twitter*; Caesarstone: *Facebook, Twitter, Interior Collective*.

| continued on page 26 |

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Powerful Promotional Products from Lake Industries



Shaville Kellner, CEO of Lake Industries, has a simple request for the retail appliance industry. "We want you to buy our products and give them away...for free!." And, more and more, dealers around the country are listening, all the while creating in-store promotions that drive revenue, encourage up-selling and minimize discounting.

Lake, founded in 1979 and based in the Las Vegas suburb of Henderson, Nevada, is fast developing a reputation as a solid provider of top quality stainless steel cookware and kitchen knives to the retail appliance industry. For decades, Lake has been one of the largest suppliers of these products to the direct, in-home sales industry and distributors for their Platinum Cookware and Messerstahl Cutlery brands number in the thousands, reaching across the globe from Detroit to Dubai and from New York to New Zealand. "Our direct sales distribution model gives us a fantastic edge when discussing programs with appliance stores", says Kellner. "Our goods are never sold in traditional cooking stores or on the internet. They have an extraordinarily high value with a comparatively low cost. You can't find them discounted anywhere, so the integrity of the value the stores assign to the product for promotional purposes is always maintained."

Lake first became acquainted with the retail appliance industry in 2005 as an OEM, private label supplier of cookware sets to Dacor. Kellner recalls, "It was just one of those crazy timing and dumb luck things. We were looking for a location to film a product video and they were incredibly gracious in allowing us to use their facility. The next thing you know, we were making their cookware for them."

More recently over the past few years, Lake has assisted dozens of independent appliance retailers nationally by creating

value added promotional offerings using their proprietary Platinum Cookware and Messerstahl Cutlery brands. A notable example of one of these promotional programs is with Pacific Sales who uses Lake's Platinum Gourmet Skillets and Messerstahl Knife Sets to incentivize their customers to reach certain purchase levels, at which point they get the skillets and knives for free. Says Kellner, "We've found that as these products are not tied to any specific appliance vendor, the stores find that using our induction ready, lifetime guaranteed cookware gives them the flexibility to promote with all appliance brands, all the while minimizing discounts and maximizing profits."

Does the program work? Dave Souter, owner of Baron's Major Brands in New Hampshire thinks so. "We have been using Lake Industries products to give our customers a great value added product when they make a purchase on select brands we want to promote. We know this has been working well, sales are flying! I highly recommend using these products as sales closers."

Kellner indicated that this unique approach has not always been easy. "At first it was terribly frustrating. We would emphasize to the stores that our goal was not to supply cookware or cutlery for resale...quite the opposite...but to provide high quality, high value promotional products which would allow them some wonderful opportunities to drive traffic and move profitably through inventory, be it seasonal overstocks of first line goods, closeouts, whatever...the possibilities are endless. Now, after making a ton of impressions, it seems that our message is really getting through and, more importantly, really getting support."

Lake Industries is thrilled to be exhibiting at this year's Design and Construction Week. For more insight into products and programs from Lake Industries, visit them in the South Hall at Booth S 1623 or give them a call at (800) 261-4501. **RO**

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SPEED QUEEN® ANNOUNCES BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN RESULTS

HOME LAUNDRY BRAND RAISED FUNDS THROUGH SALES OF LIMITED-EDITION WASHER/DRYER PAIR



Speed Queen® has spent the past 100 years manufacturing best-in-class laundry equipment to make families' lives easier. This year, the brand reinforced its commitment to families by partnering with The Breast Cancer Research Foundation® (BCRF) to raise more than \$16,500 for breast cancer research and awareness.

The campaign launched in mid-September with the release of a limited-edition washer/dryer pair to Speed Queen dealers around the country. To raise the funds for BCRF, Speed Queen donated \$20 from every pair purchased. In addition to the product sales, Speed Queen and its parent company, Alliance Laundry Systems, raised money through fundraising efforts by employees at company headquarters.

To kick off the campaign internally, Speed Queen donated a pink-accented washer and dryer pair to an employee, Peter Rens, whose sister recently lost her battle with breast cancer. Rens chose to donate his new machines to the nurse who cared for his sister.

"We started this campaign to show our support for customers, friends and family members whose lives this disease has affected. We are so grateful that the campaign was well received and we look forward to continuing to raise funds and awareness for the cause in the future," said Reid Meisner, National Sales Manager for Speed Queen Home.

The Breast Cancer Research Foundation's mission is to achieve prevention and a cure for breast cancer by providing critical funding for innovative clinical and translational research at leading medical centers worldwide and increasing awareness about good breast health.

For more information about Speed Queen's machines or about the

company's philanthropic initiative, please visit SpeedQueen.com/home or call 800.552.5475.

For more information regarding The Breast Cancer Research Foundation or how to join the fight against breast cancer, please visit bcrcure.org.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES 2014 EXECUTIVE BOARD AND BOARD OF INDUSTRY LEADERS



The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA)® has announced the election of its 2014 Executive Board and Board of Industry Leaders. CEA is the nation's preeminent technology trade association representing more than 2,000 consumer electronics and technology companies.

"CEA is proud to represent the entire spectrum of consumer technologies, from automotive to wireless and some that haven't existed before, like sensory technologies and 3D printing," said Gary Shapiro, president and CEO, CEA. "The industry executives serving on our Board represent the most successful and innovative consumer electronics and technology businesses in the country. Their guidance brings broad experience and strategic direction to the table and represents the true, innovative spirit of our dynamic industry."

The members of CEA's Executive Board were confirmed by a vote of CEA members at the CEA Industry Forum held in Los Angeles this week. Newly elected CEA Executive Board Members include: Jim Bazet, chairman and CEO, Cobra Electronics; John Bosch, president and CEO, NXE; Joellyn Gray, director, marketing and imaging division, Fujifilm; and Robert Struble, president and CEO, iBiquity Digital Corporation.

Jay McLellan, president, Leviton Security and Automation, and Daniel Pidgeon, chairman, Starpower, continue to serve on the Executive Board as chair and vice chair respectively. Randy Fry, president, Fry's Electronics, remains on the Executive Board as past chair.

Previously elected CEA Executive Board members who will continue service include:

- David Hagan, president and CEO, Boingo Wireless
- Ron Freeman, CEO, AAMP of America
- Gary Yacoubian, president and managing partner, Specialty Technologies/SVS
- Steve Tiffen, president and CEO, The Tiffen Company
- Robert Fields, vice president, teaming and strategic alliances, MiTek

CEA's Shapiro continues to serve on the Executive Board along with Glenda MacMullin, COO and CFO, CEA, serving as treasurer and Karen Chupka, senior vice president, International CES and corporate business strategy, CEA, serving as secretary. Pat Lavelle, president and CEO, VOXX International, was elected to fill the previously vacant industry executive advisor position.

| continued on page 28 |

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Live Better With Life's Simple 7™

CEA also announced the election of its 2014 Board of Industry Leaders (BIL). The BIL serves CEA and its Executive Board in an advisory role, helping to set public policy positions and priorities for association activities.

New members of CEA's BIL include:

- Eric Bodley, vice president and general manager, PPC
- Jay Buchanan, electronics division director/GMM, Nebraska Furniture Mart Inc.
- Lee Cheng, chief legal officer; senior vice president, Corporate Development; head of the office of the chairman; and corporate secretary, Newegg Inc.
- Joe Clayton, president and CEO, DISH Network
- Kristin Cook, managing director, BDS Marketing
- David Hanchette, vice president, business development, Legrand
- Craig Kornblau, president, Universal Studios Home Entertainment
- Phil Molyneux, president and COO, Sony
- Enrique Muyschondt, president, DesktopFab Inc.
- Mike O'Neal, president, Linear LLC
- Luis Pineda, senior vice president, Qualcomm Inc.
- Jack Sheng, co-founder & CEO, eForCity Corporation
- Eric Smith, CTO and co-founder, Control4
- Skip West, president, MAXSA Innovations

CEA MEMBERS WHO ARE CONTINUING THEIR SERVICE ON THE BIL IN 2014 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Terms through December 31, 2014

- Tim Baxter, president, consumer business division, Samsung Electronics America
- Scott Burnett, managing director, consumer electronics, IBM
- Mike Dunn, president, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment Worldwide
- Ron Freeman, president and CEO, AAMP of America
- Ian Geller, vice president, business development, Pandora Media
- Bill Holmes, vice president, business development, Netflix
- David Inns, CEO, GreatCall
- Henry Juskiewicz, CEO, Gibson Guitar
- Kenneth Lowe, co-founder and vice president, VIZIO
- Mark Luden, president and CEO, The Guitammer Company
- David McCalpin, general manager, home energy management, GE Appliances
- Dean Miller, president, Lenbrook America Corporation
- Elliott Peck, senior vice president and general manager, sales, imaging technologies and communications group, Canon, USA Inc.

- Scott Ramirez, vice president, marketing, Toshiba America Consumer Products
- Jake Sigal, founder and CEO, Livio Radio

Terms through December 31, 2015

- Jim Braun, president and CEO, Dual Electronics Corporation
- Eric Davidson, president, American Automation and Communications
- Peter Fannon, vice president, corporate and government affairs, Panasonic
- Jim Hamilton, CEO, Identity Ventures LLC
- Benjamin Hartman, vice president, consumer electronics, Amazon.com
- Noel Lee, head Monster, Monster Inc.
- Mike Mohan, president, home business group, Best Buy
- Denise Morales, executive vice president, global sales and channel strategy, Beats Electronics
- Dan Novak, vice president, global marketing, PR and communication, Qualcomm
- Daniel Pidgeon, chairman, Starpower
- Eric Reed, vice president, entertainment and tech policy, Verizon Communications
- David Rodarte, president and CEO, NuVo Technologies LLC
- Sally Washlow, president, Cobra Electronics Corporation
- Doug Webster, vice president, global marketing and corporate communications, Cisco Systems

Ex-Officio Members (2014 Division Chairs & Foundation Board Chair)

- Marc Beckwitt, vice president, MediaNavi Strategic Partnerships, Technicolor
- John Bosch, president and CEO, NXE
- Eric Davidson, president, American Automation and Communications
- Ron Freeman, president and CEO, AAMP of America
- Joellyn Gray, director, marketing and imaging division, Fujifilm North America Corporation
- David Inns, CEO, GreatCall
- Joe Lautner, director, business segment - control, CORE Brands
- Michael Pope, president and owner, Audio Video Interiors
- John Shalam, chairman and founder, VOXX International
- Walt Zerbe, product manager, Legrand

The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) is the technology trade association representing the \$203 billion U.S. consumer electronics industry. More than 2,000 companies enjoy the benefits of CEA membership, including legislative advocacy, market research, technical training and education, industry promotion, standards development and the fostering of business and strategic relationships. CEA also owns and produces the International CES – The Global Stage for Innovation. All profits from CES are reinvested into CEA's industry services. Find CEA online at www.CE.org, www.DeclareInnovation.com and through social media. **RO**

In Memory of Larry Feldman

*Industry Icon, Brand Champion, Dedicated Employee,
Loving Husband and Dear Friend.*

*You will be dearly missed by your friends and family
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LARRY

1959 —

A Visionary and Pione



How do you take a premium appliance brand that no one has ever heard of, sell it into the North American marketplace and make it a resounding success? Moreover, how do you do that over and over and over again throughout the course of your career? It may sound like the premise for a case study for business school. In fact, it's the model of best-in-class brand distribution that is the legacy of the late Larry Feldman.

Feldman passed away suddenly on November 3, 2013 at the age of 54. He began his career with his family's business, Empire State Wholesale, and shepherded the company through dramatic growth. Nearly 20 years ago Feldman began working for Almo when the company acquired Empire State. It was with Almo that Feldman realized his unique vision: to become the first national distributor of high-end home appliances. Over the years he built up Almo's Specialty Division, successfully launching several previously unknown brands. Thanks in huge part to Feldman, Almo's current roster of best-in-class major appliances includes premium brands like Liebherr, Faber, Asko, and Capital.

While Feldman's success story reads like fodder for business school textbooks, in reality, it's not an ideal model for duplication. His accomplishments did not come solely as the result of siffs, rebates or marketing formulas. There is no matrix or chart that can demonstrate the 'Feldman Method' for selling appliances. Feedback from his peers is consistent: Larry Feldman's career was built upon the intangible and unique qualities that he possessed as an individual. He had a nose for seeking out excellent brands, a dedication to his dealers and their

customers, genuine warmth in his personal dealings with others, and a relentless commitment to excellence.

"His passion, his love, his enthusiasm was beyond belief," said Tony Aitoro, COO of Aitoro Appliance Co. Inc. Aitoro had known and worked with Feldman for over 20 years, and describes Larry as "a big hugger like me." He explained how Feldman could come in to visit a retailer to discuss a new brand they had never heard of, and successfully sell it into the store. "He sold it through his sheer passion and love of the products," he said, adding, "I think Liebherr was his biggest love. It was clear that Larry was so much a part of the Liebherr family," he recalled. "He'd walk into Liebherr's offices and it was like he was walking into his own company. He was the driving force with the North American market and the Liebherers listened to him."

Marc Perez, former vice president of Liebherr North America's refrigeration division worked shoulder to shoulder with Feldman when Liebherr first brought its premium refrigeration line to the United States. "I was not sure what I would find when Liebherr appointed me to launch appliance operations back in 2004," said Perez from his home country of Spain, where he now resides. "What I found was Larry Feldman — a person with a true passion for this industry and a tremendous drive to build things from scratch. Larry always said, 'if we can't have fun while we're doing this, we should quit'—and right away he'd add with a smile, 'unless you still have a mortgage to pay.'" Perez described Feldman as someone who would rather 'do' rather than talk about doing. "He was always leading by example. He'd be putting together

FELDMAN

— 2014 er in Premium Appliances



cabinets for the next tradeshow or tearing them down and making sure everything was packed properly, no matter how late it was. Larry was always willing to give before receiving. He was a good friend."

Mitchell Weissberg, owner of Krup's Appliances in New York City had done business with Feldman for about a quarter of a century. "I believe the Dynasty range was one of the first lines we worked with Larry on," he recalled. "We went to California together to see the factory. He was great. He had such excitement for the products. The best thing about him was that he understood how to truly partner up," Weissberg continued. "He had lines that were excellent products, but not brands that were naturally recognized or known by consumers, but when you dealt with Larry there was no risk. The support was incredible. If there was ever an issue, he made it go away. He showed that no matter what, he's going to be there. He knew it was about building longterm relationships. Larry was the brand pioneer. This business can be tough. There's a lot of pressure, but Larry knew that relationships mattered. He proved it over and over whatever way he could. He would support you any way he could. Yes, we did business together, but he was truly a friend."

Ray Doyon of Modern Home Doyon's TV & Appliances described Larry Feldman as a maverick. He met Feldman about 30 years ago when he was still with Empire State Wholesale. "He was always getting out there and making things happen. He would have an excitement when he talked about new products." The two shared a love of boating, and would talk about their mutual hobby at length. "This being a people

business, Larry is one of the reasons we'd try something new. Larry made it easy to put a new brand on the floor. If Larry said to give it a try, he'd support it. You never got stuck with anything."

Like her industry peers, Marci Dew, President of Faber North America, echoed the fact that – while he was an important business partner – Larry Feldman was first and foremost a dear friend. "He was a true friend; a best friend; and a really good business associate. Those are the things about him that were most endearing," she said. "When I think about Larry, I think about a guy who was really caring; really honest. He had a tremendous spirit of hard work that was unparalleled." Dew added that she, like so many others, is still in a state of shock and disbelief over Larry's untimely passing. "I see shadows everywhere I go... at training, at tradeshows... It's a loss to me and my family."

Larry is survived by his wife, Christina Cognetta Feldman, his mother, Shirley Levine Feldman, his siblings and several nieces and nephews. Anyone wishing to make a memorial contribution in Larry's memory may donate to the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association or the charity of their choice.

When asked how frequently you might come across someone of Larry's sheer drive for excellence in professional and personal relationships, Weissberg paused for a moment, and said it was "extremely rare." "Larry was always on, always up, always positive... All the dealers I know had a tremendous amount of respect for Larry. Whether they went into business with him or not, they all respected him and they all liked him. He will be truly missed."

Training Re

A Powerful New Way to Make Sales Associates More

WHAT OMNICHANNEL CUSTOMERS WANT FROM SALES ASSOCIATES

According to the 2013 Shopper Experience Study by Cognizant, customers want store associates to¹:

- Have better in-person customer service skills
- Acknowledge them as a high-value customer in the store and give them special treatment based on their loyalty
- Be able to price match
- Be equipped to address seamless cross-channel fulfillment

TRAINING REIMAGINED

Contrary to industry predictions, technology is not making retail sales associates obsolete. In fact, the human factor is as important as ever. But the role of sales associates is changing.

In today's omnichannel retail environment, sales associates are no longer expected to be product information libraries, but are viewed as facilitators that help customers get what they want—whether it's information, products or services.

By the time most customers walk into the store, they already know the showerhead has a 2.0 gpm flow rate, the wine cooler chills to 40°F or the hardware comes in 11 finishes.

To be successful today, sales associates need to have access to as much or more product information than their seamlessly connected customers. More importantly, this information needs to be relevant, targeted and timely, so they can truly influence customer behaviour and connect customers with desired products—no matter where the products are in the supply chain.

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- Be equipped to address seamless cross-channel fulfillment

To enable these highly connected, highly successful sales associates, leading retailers are reimagining training by:

- Transforming their Training departments from cost centers into profit centers by tying their ROI to key business metrics like revenue or customer satisfaction
- Leveraging the latest technologies like gamification to engage sales associates and increase retention
- And, most importantly, they're breaking down internal silos and integrating the powerful product-rich resources of the Marketing department

LEVERAGE MARKETING ASSETS

Progressive Marketing departments are already providing omnichannel product information for customers. Those same technology investments—in web, digital signs, kiosks and tablets—can be leveraged to train sales associates.

imagined

Effective in an Omnichannel World



Chrysler Academy's iShowroom sales support system leverages both Marketing assets and Training modules to deliver the right Contextual Content to in-dealership sales associates and customers—across numerous media.

Likewise, much of the content Marketing is using with customers across various channels can be leveraged to provide sales associates with real-time sales support tools, such as:

- Product demos and simulations
- Customer reviews
- Competitive comparisons
- Promotions
- Inventory access and ordering
- Loyalty program information

By giving sales associates access to sales support tools that blend marketing information with sales process information, retailers can realize the three holy grails of omnichannel shopping:

- **Make Personalized Service Real** — A personalized experience is the No. 1-rated service or feature customers want while shopping in a store, according to the 2013 Shopper Experience Study.¹
- **Make it Easy for Sales Associates to Access Complex Product Information**— Deloitte learned in its work with a national department store chain that when store associates had a high degree of product knowledge and provided the right amount of assistance, a 9 percent increase in conversion rate resulted.²
- **Connect Customers with the Products They Want** —

Inventory visibility across all stores and channels is the key enabler to omnichannel success, said Macy's CEO Terry Lundgren at the 2013 Global Retailing Conference. By the end of 2013, Macy's associates will be able to see 90 percent of the company's inventory via hand held devices.³

DEVELOP CONTENT JOINTLY

The secret to delivering retail performance improvement tools that seamlessly integrate the best marketing and training techniques is joint content development that accommodates:

- Learning Management System standards
- Delivery across multiple devices
- Contextual Content — content relevant to a time, customer, store and device type
- A collaborative portal for associates to share best practices, ideas, tips, video role-playing, etc.
- Analytics so you can continually refine content based on what's working and what's not

Today's omnichannel shoppers want in-store sales associates who can provide personalized service, answer any remaining questions and get them the products they want, even if those products aren't in the store. Equipping sales associates to meet those expectations requires a new kind of

training and sales support. It requires a profit-focused Training department that can integrate its strengths in skills-based training with real-time Marketing information about products while integrating loyalty programs and inventory. **RO**

¹"2013 Shopper Experience Study." Cognizant. June 2013. <http://risnews.edgl.com/retail-research/4th-Annual-Shopper-Experience-Study--Rise-of-the-Individual-Shopper86760>

²"Driving Profitability Through Your Store Associates." Deloitte, 2010. http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-UnitedStates/Localpercent20Assets/Documents/Consumerpercent20Business/us_retail_Storepercent20Associate_060410.pdf

³Tenser, James. "Omni-Channel at Macy's: It's About Inventory Too." RetailWire. April 16, 2013. <http://www.retailwire.com/discussion/16710/omni-channel-at-macys-its-about-inventory-too>

Alan Buterbaugh, Senior VP of Content Engineering at Wireless Ronin Technologies will be presenting the Industry Roundtable Discussion entitled, "Maximize Your Digital Assets for Both Customer Education & Employee Training," at Digital Signage Expo 2014 at the Sands Expo & Convention Center in Las Vegas, which will run February 12-13.

For more information go to: www.dse2014.com.





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The road to becoming a certified kitchen designer (CKD) or a certified bath designer (CBD) is as challenging as it is fulfilling. In fact, the challenges — and the fulfillment — never really end.

If you doubt the difficulty, have a look at the following rundown of what the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) requires of anyone pursuing certification through the association:

- Seven years of full-time residential kitchen/bath design experience, including proven knowledge of kitchen and bath design, as well as construction, mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems.
- A minimum of four years of formal design education, or 60 hours of NKBA professional development programming.
- Successful completion of a rigorous, two-part examination of both academic knowledge and practical skills.
- Expertise in the NKBA Kitchen & Bath Planning Guidelines & Access Standards (31 kitchen and 27 bathroom planning guidelines), which recognize the importance of consumer health, safety and welfare in kitchen and bath design.

As for the “never really ends” part, a certified designer must meet a mandated minimum of 10 hours of continuing education every two years. This is typically done through the various programs offered by the NKBA,

both ongoing and at the annual conference, held in conjunction with the annual Kitchen & Bath Industry Show. The rationale for this ongoing training is to stay atop all the important developments in product and design, the better to serve the client. The goal is not merely to be “trendy,” but to make certain that nothing critical is ever skipped or missed on a project, leaving the client feeling dissatisfied and shortchanged.

Faced with such a formidable set of job requirements, why do so many design professionals devote years — essentially, their entire professional lives — to pursue and maintain certification? The answers are many and varied, involving motivations and aspirations both professional and personal. But they all boil down to a single, compelling idea:

Certified designers deliver superior value to everyone in the kitchen and bath field — not least to themselves and their own careers.

- **Greater value to the marketplace:** Certification is a major selling point these days. Whether you are employed by a showroom or work independently, meeting clients in their homes, you enter every conversation with credibility and a prestige that compares favorably with any other profession. Those letters after your surname, in effect, raise the bar of professionalism in every encounter — an advantage that is more important than ever. *| continued on page 36 |*

Because of the recent downturn and its lingering impact on the current “snail” economy, many designers have had no choice but to go independent, making the current kitchen and bath scene more competitive than ever. Designers all compete for the same work, the same projects. Those with certification are more marketable and, frankly, more competitive.

- **Greater value to the client:** Throughout the hundreds of hours of education, certified designers learn there’s no substitute for getting close and personal with the client. Before any design work begins, the designer will use a discovery process that entails numerous questions, to learn as much as possible about how the client uses these spaces: Are you right-handed vs. left-handed? Are there any disabilities in the family? How often do you shop? How do you cook? What hobbies does your family pursue?

By probing in great depth how the family functions in a given room, a designer is better able to create a new and reinvigorated space that will meet the client’s needs for years to come. This thoroughness also helps avoid the unhappy situation in which a homeowner returns months later, wondering why her new space lacks some new design element she later came across at a home show or in a magazine. During the planning stages, a conscientious designer tries never to overwhelm, while still presenting all the options, so the client never has reason to complain: “Why didn’t you tell me I could’ve had a steam shower?”

- **Greater value to the project:** Certified kitchen and bath designers understand more than just how to plan beautiful spaces and match exotic colors. During the long pursuit of certification, they are educated on everything in the home, from the foundation to the roof. In the process, they develop an “engineer”-type mentality that complements their design skills and aesthetic judgment.

Yes, certified designers understand cabinetry and countertops, appliances and furnishings, as well as the functionality and operation of all the various fixtures and fittings that outfit a bathroom or kitchen. But they also understand the piping, valves, ductwork, and other components *behind the wall* that enable the space to function properly for the occupants.

Certified professionals also know how to deal with all the various mechanical specifications — electrical, plumbing and HVAC — and they can read, interpret and make critical decisions based on technical drawings and cabinet plans. Certified designers cannot claim to be experts on, say, how to build a foundation or where to relocate a support wall. But they are trained to know, for example, where piping sits behind the wall, so there’s no thought of hanging a medicine cabinet on the other side.

A designer with a grasp of mechanical systems in a home has professional credibility not only with the client, but also the various trades. They quickly come to see this designer as a true, fellow

professional and readily defer to his or her knowledge — especially when the designer appreciates the limits of that knowledge and understands when it’s time to defer to another professional.

What’s the payoff on all this expertise beyond design? Quick resolution — if not outright elimination — of problems that can delay the job for days and even weeks, with all the attendant costs. A certified designer learns the principles of construction well enough to do the job more cost-effectively, which helps with sizing and calculating, ordering and lead times, installation time and cost control. In the end, a certified designer helps clients avoid serious issues they may not even know exist.

- **Greater value to an employer or partner:** All of the values described above can also raise the credibility and the marketability of any enterprise that works with a certified designer, whether as an employer or a partner. In fact, certified designers are skilled at making the job of the retailer or showroom much simpler and easier.
 - Instead of just sending a consumer into the showroom to pick out any product that catches her fancy, the certified designer will coach the client in the pros and cons of various options under consideration. The seasoned designer will also set the stage for the selection process by alerting the showroom to style and budget considerations, as well as the specific makes and models that should be highlighted. This consultative approach makes the selection process go more smoothly, while helping to avoid problems on the job site.
 - Another big hassle-saver on the job site is the certified designer’s ability to execute detailed working drawings for use by installers, as well as to inform and educate the client. The key word here is “working,” because these drawings will have all the necessary specifications, dimensions and other markups — without which, the installer would likely have to improvise, risking mistakes that will cost precious time and money.
- **Greater value to oneself:** Achieving and maintaining certification is not easy. Anyone willing to devote the time and energy required is, by definition, a dedicated and fully invested professional.

As a certified designer, you have demonstrated your willingness to go above and beyond. That is huge for the industry and for anyone who works with you or is served by you. But it’s also huge for you and your career aspirations. Such a high level of commitment — as well as the self-esteem it engenders — is, in many ways, its own reward.

Congratulations and welcome to our club of dedicated professionals. **RO**

Source: The 2013 NKBA Certification Task Force



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2014—A Look Ahead

I usually begin each year with a column listing some suggested retail resolutions—like improve your inventory turns, raise your margins, do more sales training and so on.

I'll take a bit of chance this year and do something different by trying to dust off my crystal ball and see what I think 2014 will bring.

Depending on who you listen to, the economy is either really starting to turn around, or only temporarily easing on the way to another deep recession. What do you make of record high stock market indexes while unemployment still hovers at 7 percent? What affect will the Affordable Care Act have? Do we face more government shut-downs from our stymied Congress?

From where I sit, things look pretty good for retailers in our industry—particularly for independents. Here are some factors that I think will impact business in the coming months.

• **Improved home building—**

Although we won't see the 1 million new home starts that will really heat up the industry, NAHB is predicting 844,000 single family home starts this year—a 30 percent gain from 2013. A smaller 6 percent gain will bring an additional 317,000 multi-family units online.

• **Strong home sales—**

National Association of Realtors predicts flat 2014 sales of 5.1 million homes despite projected 6 percent price increases.

• **Interest rates, although rising, continue to be at record lows—**

Even if rates rise to what could be as high

as 5.4 percent, according to economist Lawrence Yun, more buyers will be coming into the market because of strengthening job growth and potentially more lenient mortgage qualifications.

• **Webrooming is replacing Showrooming—**

According to Accenture, 65 percent of shoppers this past holiday season planned to research online but make their purchases in stores to avoid shipping costs and be able to see and touch the items they'd decided to buy. 36 percent said they planned to buy online and pick up the merchandise in-store.

• **More states are collecting tax on internet sales—**

Nine States now require out-of-state retailers including eBay and Amazon to collect their local sales taxes. In May, the Senate passed the Marketplace Fairness Act, which gives states the ability to require large out-of-state Internet retailers to collect sales tax, just as local brick-and-mortar stores must. Hopefully, the House will soon realize that these are not new taxes but just an attempt to level the playing field for the small dealers who employ 2.7 million people and pay \$57 million to those team members each year.

• **Independent market share is growing—**

Once the biggest player in appliance retailing, Sears continues to lose market share. In cities like Lexington, KY, where the last Sears store closed at the end of December, local dealers are promoting their own resiliency.

• **Renewed interest in buy local—**

Fueled primarily by social media,

and boosted by its primary sponsor, American Express, Small Business Saturday has now been declared a national holiday by the U. S. Congress. The campaign boosted sales for independents by 23 percent. Consumers are getting the message—for every \$100 spent at a local store, \$68 stays in your community (according to research firm Civic Economics). Shop at a chain store? Only \$43.

• **Pent up demand—**

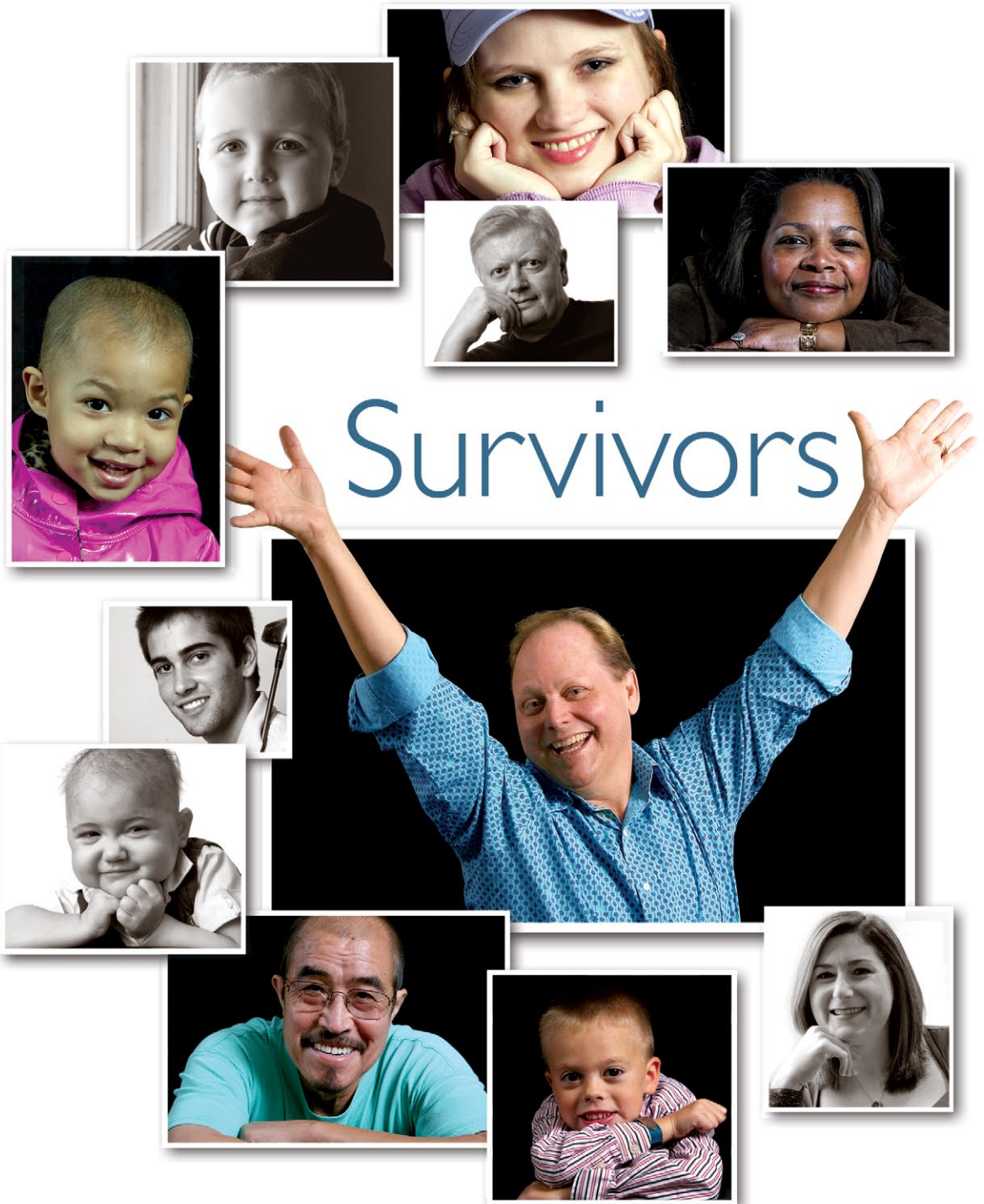
Americans worked hard to reduce debt during the past five years. To do that, many put off buying anything but necessities. Now, though, they're feeling better about their prospects and are more willing to consider making major purchases.

But beware. None of this means it's going to be easy. This only suggests that there will be more opportunities for those who are willing to hustle for the business. Don't expect to pull into the parking lot tomorrow morning and find a big line of customers waiting to get in. You'll still have to promote—both traditionally and digitally; the customer experience will be increasingly more important.

Best wishes for a happy New Year. I hope 2014 is prosperous and profitable. **RO**

Elly Valas is the Marketing Services Director for Nationwide Marketing Group. She can be reached at elly@ellyvalas.com or at 303-316-7569. Visit her website at www.ellyvalas.com.





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Empowered Employees Power Profits

Employee empowerment is defined as allowing employees to make fast decisions, on the spot, in favor of the customer. Empowerment is the single most difficult skill to get employees to utilize. That's a problem for businesses and government because if you don't have empowered employees, you will never be a service leader.

It is critically important for businesses to give employees the power to make decisions on the spot because one policy can't cover everything. There are too many weird things that happen every day. The best news is that most decisions will cost the company less than \$50 which is a pittance when you consider the lifetime value of the customer and the good will that empowered decisions can make.

If you have over happy customers you make a lot of money. And since 99 percent of all customer contact is with an employee either by phone, in person or over the Internet, it is vitally important that employees know they can make bring resolution to a problem by being empowered

But employees are afraid to make empowered decisions on their own—regardless if the company actively supports empowerment. There are three key reasons employees don't take initiative to solve problems.

1. The primary reason employees will not make an empowered decision is they think they will lose their jobs. In their minds, they absolutely know they will lose their jobs. Most people don't want to go home and tell their family they are fired. They think it is less risky to lose a customer than your job. After all, they think, "No one ever got fired for enforcing a policy, rule or procedure."
2. They are afraid they will be penalized and have to pay for what they did. For example, if they

upgraded a person from a room to a suite, they will have to pay the difference.

3. They don't want to get chewed out. There is very little upside for an employee who makes decisions. They don't get any pats on the back and there aren't any celebrations when they make a decision.

Companies need to adopt an employee empowerment plan.

- To implement an employee empowerment plan, every top manager and department head needs to be on board. They must enforce a culture of empowerment culture and they must celebrate when employees make empowered decisions. It just takes one negative management feedback for the employee grapevine to get the message that the policy is just lip service or the policy du jour.
- Train employees on empowerment. You have to teach them what is it, how to do it and how we make a big deal about it.
- Reinforce and celebrate empowerment. Most empowered decisions have no significant cost. For example, they might open the doors early to let in a customer. They can bend policies and procedures to fit a situation. In a restaurant, they can let customer mix and match menu items.

There are so many things you can do to make customers over happy.

In fact, I wanted to buy my wife an iPad from the AT&T store so I could get a \$100 voucher. However the store was out of stock. But instead of sending me to the Apple store across the mall, the employee walked me to the Apple store, we bought the iPad and he gave us the \$100 voucher

even though I didn't buy the computer at his store. That's empowerment.

Unfortunately, most companies don't have empowerment programs. I can think of only a handful that fit the bill – Ritz Carlton, Marriott and Amazon. Very few organizations understand employee empowerment or are good at it. Ritz Carlton empowers any employee to spend up to \$2,000 on the spot. However, no one has ever given away \$2,000! The irony is that other companies think employees will give away the store. They won't.

Some decisions don't take any money at all, but they improve the customer experience.

Another irony is that companies spend massive amounts of money on marketing to attract customers. If companies spent part of their marketing budgets to retain customers by training employees to make empowered decisions they would see an immediate, measurable return on their investment.

You want to empower employees to make decisions on the spot. When he does, the impact on customers is immediate.

If employees know their jobs are to make over happy customers, the company will grow faster. By empowering employees, you can build market share and market dominance. You will have happy customers and you will make more money. **RO**

John Tschohl is described by Time and Entrepreneur magazines as a customer service guru and presents strategic keynote speeches to companies worldwide. John@servicequality.com or www.customer-service.com



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Ch-Ch-Change

In all our day-to-day business experiences, there is nothing that rivals that of change. We attempt to navigate its tumultuous waters, we try to manage its fickle nature, and we sometimes even conquer its battle strategy. But most often we avoid it like the plague.

Our challenge is that some changes require strategy and contingency planning. But mostly, if we think the change is going to be for the better, we'll move forward with it. In fact, it's only when we're the passive receptors or victims of change, which makes us unhappy. Here are some suggestions for why we resist it:

- 1. Fear.** Primarily, fear of the unknown and fear of loss are some of the first indications of resistance. Even if the change is for the better, it's going to be different, and we don't know how to deal with different yet, so we'd rather have what we know. Or, we fear losing status, routines, co-workers, responsibilities, etc. We lose those familiar things and now what do we do?
- 2. Resentment.** This could be a close cousin to fear, but it begins to manifest itself in behaviors or attitudes toward the change. It can specifically be directed at the person(s) instituting the change, like a new boss or supervisor, or it can be more globally directed, as in "the government" or "headquarters" or "Administration." So, instead of responding to whether the change itself is for the better, the resentment is focused specifically on the change agent, i.e. kill the messenger.
- 3. Disagreement.** Sometimes we're not afraid and we're not resentful, we just

believe the change is wrong! We think whoever made this the decision hasn't thought it through, or has become disconnected from the real work. What's almost worse is when this disagreement response is perpetuated by a lack of information; it can lead to apathy and malicious compliance.

Well, none of that sounds good! What if you're the change agent? How can you help impact the quality of the change process?

This is so simple; you're not going to believe it!

- 1. Information.** In my experience, this is the number one issue- the perception of a lack of information as it relates to the daily workings of an organization. So here's my suggestion: share all the information you can. Give everyone an opportunity to know the specifics of the change, anticipated timelines, and expectations. Err on the side of more information rather than less, and if some information is confidential, tell them you can't tell them all the information right now. Be honest.
- 2. Inclusion.** I'll start right up front with a caveat: don't do it unless you mean it. When you can include employees in the decision-making process about the changes to occur, it creates a smoother path for buy-in to the change and therefore less resistance. Sometimes, because of timeliness, nature of the proposed change, etc. inclusion is not practical. However, if you examine the big picture of the situation and you decide that participation in the

discussion, or a survey, or another query of some kind would benefit the change process, do it. However, don't institute inclusion and then ignore the feedback. This doesn't mean that you have to include every crazy idea, but you can create a way to value input and respond with logic and effectiveness aligned with your mission.

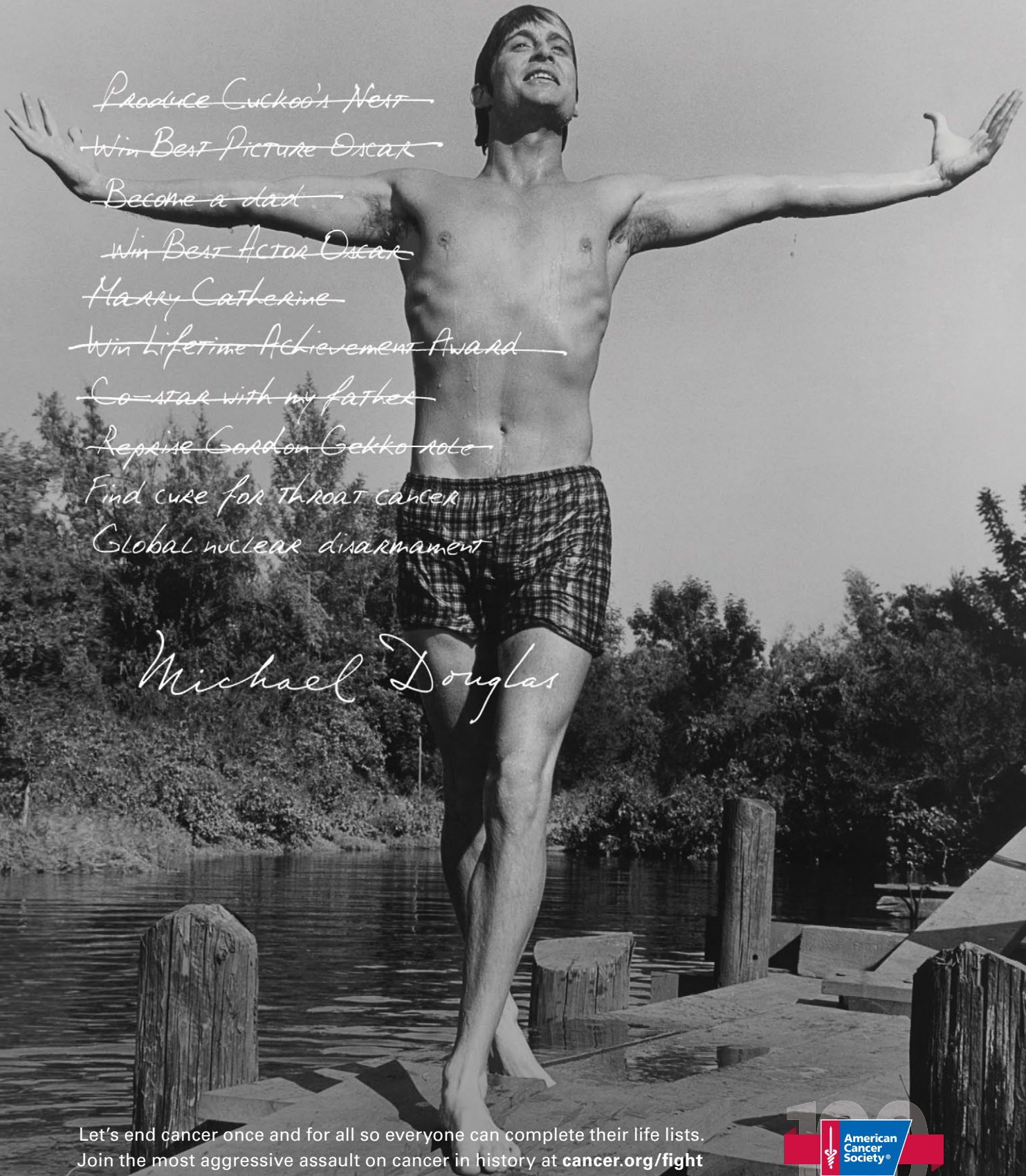
- 3. Follow up.** This is the ongoing practice of sharing and receiving information. Create a way to gather feedback during the change process. Create a way to respond to feedback. Communicate in person, in writing, in groups- any way to assist people to adapt while minimizing fear, resentment and disagreement. If you don't follow up, you're simply setting yourself up for resistance again.

Told you it was simple—not easy, but simple!

Most often, it is the way we perceive change that steers us in our responses. If we see change as a learning opportunity, a challenge or a way to know something different about ourselves, we can feel confident that we can deal with it, even if it wasn't our idea. We're not slaves to change. We can partner with change to create work and lives that we have not even imagined! **RO**

Libby Wagner, author of The Influencing Option: The Art of Building a Profit Culture in Business, works with clients to help them create and sustain Profit Cultures. www.libbywagner.com





~~Produce Cuckoo's Nest~~
~~Win Best Picture Oscar~~
~~Become a dad~~
~~Win Best Actor Oscar~~
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How the Stages of Team Development Build Strength

The gathering of individual team members and the formation and designation of a team does not automatically make a group of individuals a team. It typically takes groups of individuals time to coalesce and form into working groups and then teams. This is a step-by-step evolutionary process that all teams go through as individual team members become familiar with each other, learn to respect one another, develop boundaries and norms and ultimately learn to work together as a team.

This is important for leaders to consider because team strength evolves from the maturity and evolution of the team. The longer teams work together, the more effective and productive they typically become. This is due to the fact that roles and responsibilities are clarified, individual team members learn the capacity and capability of each member of the team, and all learn to respect each other and work together toward its common goals and objectives.

Teams evolve, develop and build their strengths by typically going through five individual stages. These include:

- **Examination**—The initial gathering of individuals into a team is normally characterized by confusion over specific roles, tasks, assignments and leadership. Due to this confusion, individual team members become anxious, hostile and often dependent upon the leader of the team. The interactions within team members reflect relationships, alliances, biases, perceptions and antagonisms brought in from the outside. During this initial stage, individual team members struggle with the concept of developing a group identity.
- **Definition**—As a result of the multiple personal agendas brought into the team environment from the outside, certain predictable interactions

immerge within a new team. These include conflicts on various levels. Struggles immerge over influence and leadership, power, tasks, roles and assignments. Additionally, conflicts arise over the pace, approach and management of the team and the tasks assigned to it.

Individual team members identify roles that they wish to assume in achieving the objectives of the team. As these roles immerge, the assembly of individuals is not yet a group, but rather a collection of individuals with a common purpose.

- **Identification**—As the individuals begin to work together, personal fragmentation fades and individuals begin to identify with the group. The group as a team begins to take on a unique personality created by the synergy of the individual team members. Personal objectives and agendas become subjugated to the common goals of the team. Individual team members find that their roles are defined to serve the overall objectives of the team.
- **Process**—During the fourth stage, teams learn to work effectively together. They have defined the norms, goals, boundaries, roles and responsibilities that define them as a team. This is where team strength is built. In addition to learning to work effectively together as a team, they also learn to evaluate their effectiveness in achieving goals and objectives. Additionally, they learn to experiment with the leadership of the team and how to increase its overall effectiveness to achieve its goals. This stage is where teams have matured and developed into effective working units.
- **Evolution**—In specific circumstances, teams are created to achieve a specific goal and objective for an organization. Once completed, these teams are dissolved. Individual members of

these teams will experience a certain grieving process once the team structure has been eliminated.

In other situations, teams continue. However, individual team members both leave and join resulting in a change in the personal dynamics of the team. This can change the synergy of the team and its personality as both membership and tasks change and evolve.

- **Team Building Roles**—Team strength is both built and supported by the structure, roles and responsibilities that define a team. These provide the mechanisms to control and channel conflict, which keep individual team members focused on achieving their specific goals and objectives.

Specific team building roles contribute to the achievement of overall team goals as well as to an improvement in the overall teaming process. In some cases, specific team building roles are assigned to specific individual members, while others are assigned to all collective participants.

This is important for leaders to consider because as a team matures and develops, leaders are empowering individual members within it by fostering an environment that allows them to self-manage their particular team functions. While leadership involvement may be directly diminished, overall leadership effectiveness is actually enhanced by the development and facilitation of a strong team structure. **RO**

Contact Timothy Bednarz at timothy.bednarz@majorium.com, or 715.342.1018

Excerpt from: A Team's Purpose, Function & Use: Pinpoint Leadership Skill Development Training Series



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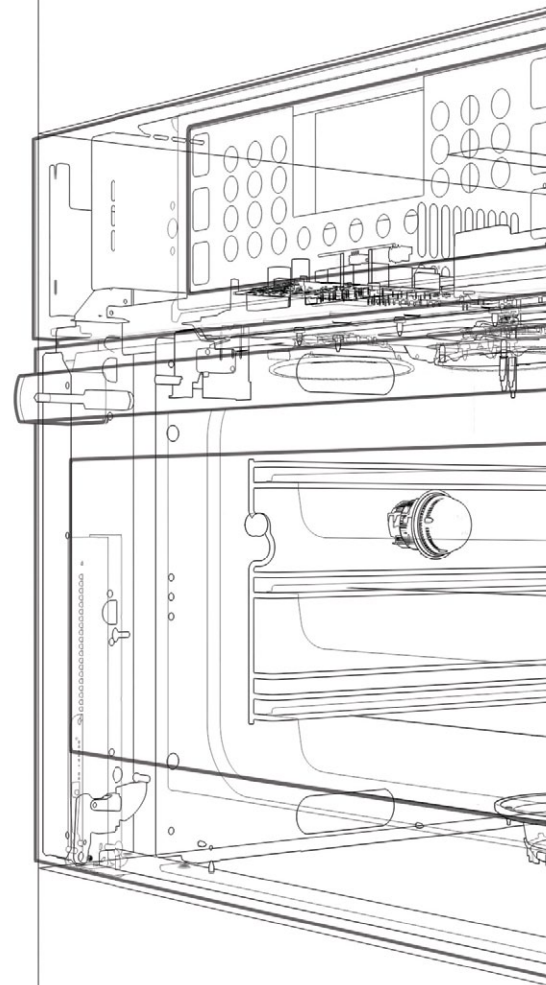


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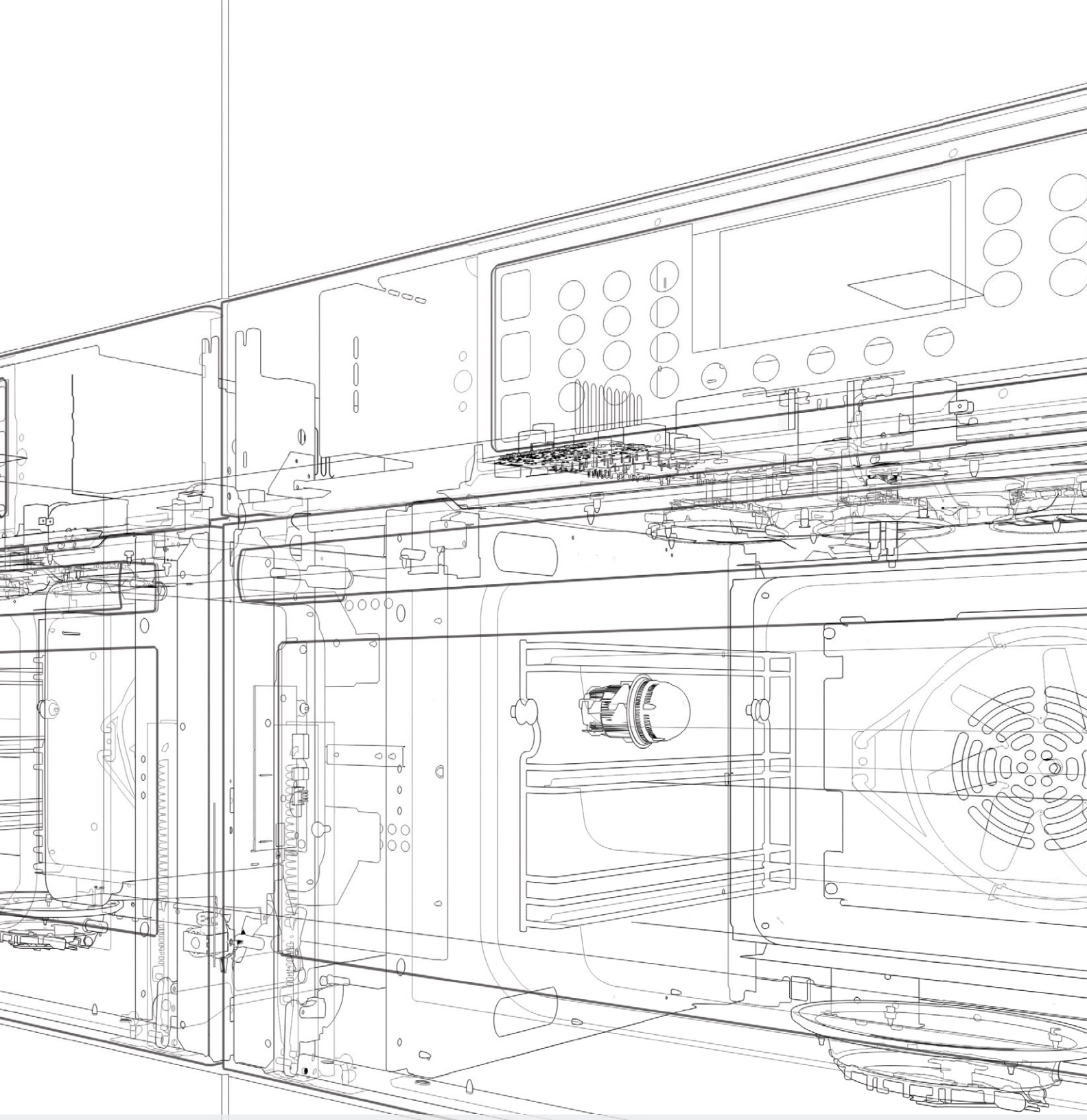
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POSTHAUER NAMED GE APPLIANCES' SALES GENERAL MANAGER



Rob Posthauer

GE Appliances recently named Rob Posthauer General Manager, Sales, where he will lead the sales teams with responsibility for all sales activities within the retail and contract channels, including parts.

Posthauer, who will report directly to GE Appliances President and CEO Chip Blankenship, comes to this leadership role following three years as GM, Home Depot Sales and Marketing. Under Posthauer's direction, the GE Appliances team earned The Home

Depot's 2012 Vendor of the Year award in the Décor category.

"Rob's deep industry knowledge and strong customer relationships will help us grow our business," said Blankenship. "He has a strong team and we have leadership products. We are well-positioned to win in this competitive marketplace."

Prior to leading The Home Depot team, Posthauer held sales and product management roles including Marketing Manager – Cooking Products, Senior Merchandising Specialist, National Account Manager and Area Sales Manager. Before he joined GE Appliances in 2004, Rob worked for Maytag Appliances, starting out as District Representative and working his way up as District Manager, National Account Manager, Key Account Manager and Market Manager. Posthauer received his bachelor's degree from Purdue University in business administration and finance.

Posthauer replaces Mike McDermott who is now a senior vice president and general merchandising manager for Lowes Companies, Inc. The new GE Appliances sales manager for The Home Depot will be announced in the near future.

VICTORIA + ALBERT APPOINTS ERIC PHELPS TO VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES FOR NORTH AMERICA



Eric Phelps

Victoria + Albert today announced the appointment of Eric Phelps to Vice President of Sales for North America. Phelps replaces Javier Korneluk as the day to day manager of USA and Canadian sales operations.

Phelps reports to Okke Roosjen, Group Sales Director, which is a newly formed global role. This strengthening of the sales team comes in response to year on year

growth in the company's network of dealers combined with increased activity in the contracts market.

Chris Davies, Chief Executive Officer for Victoria + Albert Baths says, "Anyone who has ever met Eric will know his fabulous ability to really connect with people. This coupled with his extensive knowledge of the bathroom industry makes him ideal for this demanding role."

For more information about Victoria + Albert's products, visit www.vandabaths.com or call 1-800-421-7189.

MIELE ANNOUNCES NEW VP OF MARKETING IN THE UNITED STATES DR. CHRISTIAN SCHWARZ TO LEAD MARKETING DEPARTMENT



Christian Schwarz

As Miele prepares for its largest U.S. product launch in company history, the global appliance manufacturer has appointed Dr. Christian Schwarz as its new Vice President of Marketing for the USA. Having spent nearly 20 years within the Miele organization, most recently leading marketing for Miele, Austria, Dr. Schwarz brings a strong brand connection, as well as a wealth of insight and knowledge. In his new role, Dr. Schwarz will lead all

domestic marketing initiatives for the world's oldest family-owned appliance manufacturer. He will report directly to Nick Ord, President of Miele, USA and is based out of the company's Princeton, NJ headquarters.

"Dr. Schwarz is a great asset to the entire Miele organization," said Ord. "His experience and proven successes with Miele in Austria make him an excellent choice for this critical position. He brings an exceptional understanding of what makes the Miele brand so uniquely different."

During his tenure in Austria, Dr. Schwarz was responsible for increasing the company's presence on social media, developing a consumer loyalty program and creating marketing campaigns which resulted in market shares above 20%. Building on these successes, Dr. Schwarz will lead the development and execution of all marketing initiatives in the United States for the brand's full line of award-winning culinary appliances, dishwashers, laundry and floor care product solutions. His expertise with the Miele brand will play a leading role in strengthening Miele's position as one of the most desirable brands in household appliances. **RO**

What's Hot, What's Not Trending Now at Appliance Retailers

In the retail landscape, things evolve. Whether it is slow change over time or rapid change in response to factors around us—like technology—it's important for the appliance retailer to be nimble enough to respond to consumer preferences. If you aren't, your competitors will be, which will cost you in the long run. Here's a list of What's Hot and What's Not in the world of appliance retail.

IN: In-store Displays

OUT: Rows of Appliances

There is nothing more intimidating—not to mention boring—than walking into an appliance store and being confronted by a sea of white or stainless-steel appliances. Star Power in Dallas, for example, recently added appliances to its business (which was previously focused on home electronics), by purchasing Ed Kellum & Son. CEO David Pidgeon noted that by adding appliance displays, the company has taken shopping to another level with a warm and inviting interior and a greater degree of interactivity. "We have chefs cooking in live indoor and outdoor kitchens, along with the experience of our media rooms," he says. "Customers like to try things before they buy; we call it 'experience shopping.' They hear, see, touch, and now, with live cooking demos, smell and taste. All their senses are activated and customers see us in a different way." Interactive displays engage, inspire, and motivate the customer to create a similar experience in their own home.

IN: POS System

OUT: Old-School Terminal

Mobile POS is an incredibly easy way of checking out a customer and has other benefits too, such as tracking orders and remote training. No longer are you tethered to a specific terminal to

take care of your customer; you can do it right across the kitchen counter where you've just treated the customer to a chef-prepared appetizer, for example. POS also means customers never have to wait for terminals to become available. Mobile POS creates a less formal, more interactive experience. Take a hotel that has employees checking guests in while they are enjoying champagne from the comfort of the lobby. You remove the "desk" from the scenario, creating a more intimate, less intimidating vibe. Sales people are more like friends sitting next to you, without the obvious constructs of commerce readily visible. This subtle change can have a drastic impact on the customer's psyche. Outside of convenience, if you are selling but don't utilize state-of-the-art technology, what message does that send to your customer?

IN: Uniforms

OUT: Business Casual

If you've ever been in a store and have had to ask the question, "Do you work here?" then you know how important a uniform can be. A simple button-down shirt with logo tells the customer that the employee does indeed work at your store and is available to answer questions. It also inspires confidence with the implication that uniformed employees have specific product knowledge. Finally, uniforms help with consumer branding (just look at Best Buy's Blue Shirts, for example) and makes a consumer feel safe when employees visit their homes for an in-home installation or delivery.

IN: Extended Store Hours

OUT: Closing at 5

If your store hours are the same as they were in 1950, then something's amiss. Maybe opening at



Star Power's live kitchens and true experience media rooms are inviting, and they engage and inspire customers.

9 and closing at 5 made sense back then, when single-income homes were the norm and many women stayed home during the work week. Now, with both sexes working, it makes greater sense to open and close later. For example, some appliance stores, like Star Power, open at 10 and close at 7 on most days. If the "big box" stores stay open until 9, and you close at 5:30, who is going to capture that after-work customer?

Whether it's extending store hours, instituting company-wide uniforms, installing new technology, or incorporating more in-store demos and displays, it has never been more important to cater to the changing needs of an increasingly savvy clientele. **RO**

John White is a 20-year veteran of the appliance industry and is currently serving as the Executive Vice President of Appliances for BrandSource.



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Maximize Your Bedding Sales with Top of Bed

In any furniture store, the bedding department can be the most profitable department, but there is consistent opportunity for it to be even more profitable. Are you maximizing its fullest potential? According to the Home Textiles Today 2012 annual report dated 01/28/2013, it showed "Top of Bed" retail sales at \$5.5 billion, \$1.5 billion in pillows, \$3.1 billion in sheets, and \$800 million in mattress protectors. When you combine furniture store and specialty store sales of these products, they are capturing a mere 24 percent of the sales. Do not allow the big box, department store and e-commerce retailers to dominate this category. Adding top of bed to your product mix opens the door for easy add on sales and enhances the consumers bedding purchase experience.

There are many great products that could be sold within your store to the customer who is looking to buy a new set of bedding. Bed protectors, pillows, sheets, and comforters are all great necessities for the consumer to purchase along with their new set. Shouldn't you be offering these products by incorporating them into your presentation? The selling of a mattress and top of bed products is both a necessity and imperative. Selling a pillow is one of the most important aspects of mattress sales. For example, the proper pillow is essential for a restful nights sleep. Many customers will go out and buy new pillows after purchasing a mattress, so the use of the pillow sell is a key component in the presentation for the purchase of a new mattress. Ask the consumer questions about

how they sleep, whether they sleep on their side, back, or stomach as pillows are now designed to fit their habits. Match the pillow and mattress to ones wants and needs. Learn to read a customers body language on if they are willing to purchase one. A quick and easy test is to have them lie down to experience the full effect of how much a new pillow can improve the overall experience with a new mattress. Make the pillow a part of their mattress buying experience and the add-on sale is natural and easy.

Selling mattress protectors is a natural progression and necessity. Nearly 90 percent of consumers buy a mattress protector within 10 days of purchasing a new mattress. There are many benefits to owning a mattress protector, as the item protects the consumers' brand new purchase from stains, allergens, and bed bugs. Make sure the customer is aware of the risks of not accompanying their purchase with a mattress cover by leading with open-ended questions that have them consider the importance of added protection. Let the customer know it is protecting their investment as well as taking care of their wants and needs. By guiding a customer into understanding the importance of a mattress protector, the sales of them within a furniture and mattress store will rise.

The selling of sheets is also imperative to the selling of a new mattress. Sheets represent 1.3 billion dollars in retail sales. How much are you getting? Sheets are another personal addition to mattress sales. Just like with pillows, every customer will want something different. Making sure there

is a display of sheets that is easily visible to the consumer with many different products of sheets with ranging thread counts will lure a consumer into purchasing new sheets for that new bed. Simply having the inventory and knowledge of bedding accessories can help to secure more add-on purchases.

If a mattress purchase is a significant factor in driving the demand for bedding accessories and, if mattress retailers could use the additional sales and gross profit that bedding accessories can provide, then why are most mattress retailers letting that business walk out of the door? Simply put, they shouldn't! Manufacturers are coming out with new innovative ways to merchandise this profitable category. Serta launched an accessory display stand with a triangular revolving stand that stands at 6'9 high and 42" around which is the perfect size to fit into ones bedding department. By offering these products and integrating them into you're bedding presentation, you are fulfilling your consumers wants and needs and seizing the opportunity to increase the average ticket. Manufacturers see the opportunity for plus sales by making these products available...are you taking advantage of the opportunity as well? **RO**

Bill Bazemore is the Vice President of Furniture for Nationwide Marketing Group. Call (770)442-9726 or email furniture@nationwidegroup.org.



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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, Associations, Distributors & Manufacturers—

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Embracing Tech-savvy Consumers and the Mobile In-store Sale

In 2014, if you were to walk in the front door of one of Cantrex Nationwide's cutting edge Consumer Electronics Retailers, here is what you would see:

- A media wall with selected movie trailers, product information and marketing materials from MemberNet TV (not a satellite or cable feed playing network shows with competitors' commercials)—a compelling and engaging display.
- An open WiFi network encouraging you to sign in, take pictures of products, share them with friends, and even comparison shop. Such a simple offering, which provides superb customer service in our connected world.
- Featured TVs with an accompanying QR code—a barcoded square that, when photographed with your smartphone, takes you to a specific website where you can watch videos of the TVs being demo'd on the floor and download a discount product coupon. In one QR video, an engineer explains a TV's "smart" features.
- Sales associates equipped with a tablet to show you additional product specs, competitors' prices—and competitors' negative reviews! No need for you to leave the store to shop around. Sales associates can complete your sales transaction on the floor—no waiting in line at the cash register—and email you a copy of the receipt: having an electronic copy comes in handy should you ever need to exercise your product warranty. If you are tech savvy, a sales associate might offer to send you an article on the new 4K TV

technology. Expect to get a follow up email from the sales associate that served you, thanking you for stopping by. Sales associates in this store are firmly in control of the in-store experience.

If you are not already embracing the mobile in-store sale, you should consider moving in that direction sooner rather than later. It not only streamlines the sales experience, it also lets you integrate your other in-store enhancements, such as loyalty programs, mailing lists, electronic receipts and, most importantly, the ability to continue the relationship with customers after they leave your store.

Tablets and smartphones also open the door to alternative promotional opportunities, like Foursquare, and new mobile payment options. Google Wallet and PayPal are already increasing their share of transactions with tech-savvy consumers, and more payment applications are on the way. Some of these payment options cost retailers less than a premium bank card.

Why get on board? It doesn't seem that long ago that retail sales professionals took the lead in educating customers toward a purchase. Those days are gone; the process to engage your customers has changed. Customers walking into your store—if they walk in, instead of shopping online!—likely come armed with prices from your competitors. They will have devoured every consumer report available online and will have participated in multiple social media platforms, where they have not only learned about the products that you sell, but what other customers think about doing business with you. To say you

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are exposed is an understatement!

However, I firmly believe that customers still want a physical shopping experience. They want to touch and see the products, especially big ticket items. By providing instant online content when they browse in your store, you successfully combine the best of the digital, connected world with the best of the physical. Your sales associates once again become educators driving the sale.

Great retailers will thrive in this world of transparency, and by embracing and encouraging the technology on your sales floor, you put yourself back in the driver's seat to control the sale. **RO**

Mike Bittman, Senior Vice-President, Consumer Electronics and Photography.

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NATIONWIDE ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH PROFIT SYSTEMS

Nationwide Marketing Group announced that they have partnered with PROFITsystems, one of the home goods industry's most popular software providers, to offer a group program for their 3,500+ independent retail members. The PROFITsystems program is designed to run every aspect of operation in the retailer's business, including point-of-sale, inventory management, customer relationship management, a full accounting suite, and more.

Nationwide's retailers will also be able to take advantage of real-time online dashboards, website eCommerce, and tablet integration. Nationwide has been arming their members with preloaded tablet devices, known as their Info-Pads, so the evolving initiative continues to enable retailers to combat the changing shopping trends of consumers.

"We are really looking forward to this collaborate effort with PROFITsystems," says Frank Sandtner, Vice President of Member Services for NMG. "As we increase our focus on the furniture and bedding categories, PROFITsystems stood out as a vendor with solutions that meet our retailers' needs."

"We are thrilled partner with NMG in this offering to their members. When you combine the forces of two companies whose sole purpose is to help retailers, great things will happen. I look forward to helping our mutual clients prosper in new ways." stated Shelley Parlin, Chief Operating Officer for PROFITsystems.

ABOUT PROFIT SYSTEMS

PROFITsystems is the leading total solutions provider to the home goods industry for retailers between \$1M-\$80M in annual revenue. Key components of their retail solutions include enterprise software, consulting, performance groups, advanced

education, group-buying freight programs, e-commerce and web dashboards. Their flagship product, RETAILvantage features include real-time inventory management, customer relations management, point-of-sale, and accounting systems.

For additional information on PROFITsystems please visit: www.profitsystems.com



NATIONWIDE GEARING UP FOR MARCH PRIMETIME! SHOW IN LAS VEGAS

Registration is now open for Nationwide Marketing Group's March PrimeTime! show. The event will be held March 9-13, 2014 at The Venetian Palazzo and Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas.

Dealers will meet with leading appliance, electronics, and furniture manufacturers and have access to unbeatable deals. The group's thousands of independent retailers will also gain exposure to product demonstrations and valuable educational opportunities only available at PrimeTime! The theme of the event is a continuation of the August branded show "We are Independents. Strong. Proud. United." Nationwide continues to showcase the growing success of the independent retail channel within the competitive industry.

Nationwide is excited to share some of their newest initiatives in March, including revamped educational sessions and member meetings. These resources are aimed to increase work culture, member services, management, marketing and web service initiatives for retailers.

Visit www.nationwideprimetime.com for registration information, and be sure to download the mobile app. Scan here or search "Nationwide PrimeTime 2014" in the app store. **RO**





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BrandSource Rings Up \$430M in 2013 New-Member Sales

Predicts Banner Year for 2014

BrandSource, one of the largest appliance, electronics, mattress, flooring and home furnishings merchandising group in the country with more than \$14 billion in purchasing power, has announced that it has added more than \$430 million in new-member sales since June 2013. BrandSource attributes this growth to its highly-regarded member programs including BrandSource Financial, the BrandSource Credit Card, BrandSource Digital Marketing, LeaseSource, and the merchandising group's stocking solution, Expert Warehouse.

"We're attracting more new members than ever, with this being one of the best member-retention years in our history," said Bob Lawrence, CEO of BrandSource. "Despite a very rough patch in the economy these past few years, things are looking up economically. We've been steadfast in continuing to create and implement the most strategic, bang-for-your-buck member programs out there in order to help our members succeed, and we're happy to report that it's working. We expect that 2014 will be a banner year for the BrandSource organization."

One of the most popular programs, BrandSource Financial, is an in-house wholesale financing solution wholly owned by BrandSource, so retailers can rely on it with confidence and long-term. Likewise, the BrandSource Credit Card has proven extremely beneficial for the BrandSource member, making consumer financing incredibly fast and easy so dealers can close high-ticket sales efficiently and seamlessly. BrandSource LeaseSource allows customers who don't have first-tier credit to get financial assistance and helps them rebuild their credit in the process.

Aside from its financial programs, BrandSource's digital marketing initiatives have helped boost membership, with retailers attracted to the plug-and-play services offered. The popular BrandSource app allows members to capture mobile shoppers and manage social-media engagement. Both members and shoppers alike have easy access to product and pricing information, manufacturers, colors, measurements and model numbers. Shoppers can search for the nearest BrandSource dealer from more than 40,000 zip codes from the palm of their hand.

BrandSource's robust POS System allows members to do everything from checking a customer out using an iPad to tracking inventory. BrandSource's Expert Warehouse makes accessing and shipping product easy, stocking inventory so the BrandSource members can delegate floor space for product showcasing vs. storage.

"The economy is getting better and BrandSource members are getting stronger," said Tom Bennett, EVP of BrandSource. "The programs that BrandSource put into play during the hard times are now reaping rewards for the entire organization. We couldn't be more thrilled by our membership, sales, and prospects for next year, and we're looking forward to seeing everyone at our March Summit in Florida."

The 2014 BrandSource Summit & Expo will be held March 16-19, 2014, at the Marriott World Center in Orlando. The 2nd annual Butch DuBose Charity Golf Tournament will be held at Hawk's Landing on March 16, 2014 and the popular Stampede will be held on Monday, March 17. Visit www.brandsourceconvention.com for updates and registration information. **RO**



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The United Servicers ASTI Annual Convention Provides Training for Technicians & Managers

The recession has affected your industry; no one will argue this point. Part of creating a turn-around strategy is recognizing how it has affected the industry, and just what to do about it. Prior to the downturn, budgetary cuts were already affecting OEM factory training on how to repair new and current appliances.

Many manufacturers continue to cut their training budgets to the point that there is simply not enough training to keep up with today's rapidly evolving technological advances in the appliance industry. How is a field technician expected to perform professional repairs when he has not been trained on new models and new technology? Will these new appliances be self-repairing? Don't laugh. I'll bet they're coming. It's important to have service and repair training in mind during these days because the consumer's brand loyalty rests heavily on their after sales service experience. It continues to puzzle me how manufacturers can overlook the need to train the repair workforce as they develop strategies to protect their brand and market share.

Trade Associations such as United Servicers Association were created to fill this training void. For years these associations have existed—picking up where the manufacturers leave off—to fulfill the training needs of their membership.

United Servicers National Training Event is the Appliance Service Training Institute or ASTI. The 2014 ASTI will be held in San Diego California on February 26th through March 1st. The Towne & Country Resort and Convention Center will be the host for the expected 600 independent service providers from around the country.

Attendees of the premier training event will have five days of intense, hands-on training

from many appliance manufacturers who will conduct factory training during the convention. Servicers will be trained on current and new models from most manufacturers; all gathered under one roof for five days. Training will cover the distance between basic refrigeration, entitled "From the Ground Up" to advanced solder-free brazing from American Beauty Supply—the latest technology in refrigeration repair. Fred's Academy will deliver a full day of basic electricity, entitled "Mastering wiring diagrams." Participants will be shown how to work with ladder diagrams and how to read wiring diagrams while diagnosing customer complaints. Technical hands-on training will be provided by Samsung, LG, Whirlpool, ASKO, Dacor, Fisher & Paykel, Bosch, GE, LG, Electrolux, Scotsman, Capital and Liebherr.

This very impressive line-up of OEM factory trainers is offering 48 unique 90-minute classes. How could any service provider seeking training miss this event? But it's not just technical training on the schedule at the ASTI. Attendees can also choose from a full complement of business management training. USA's business management topics on how to better run your business are sure to benefit even the most astute entrepreneur.

Management classes include *Calculating Cost of Doing Business*, *Service Management Productivity*, *Penalizing Efficiency & Experience: Charging Hourly Rates*, *Parts Inventory Management*, *Customer Engagement with Social Media* and *Maximizing Your Web Presence*. These classes—and more—are amongst a very impressive training curriculum for both service managers and technicians alike. But it doesn't stop there.



There will be a tradeshow with over 50 vendors that servicers do business with every day. Demonstrations on the latest software systems to run your business with and much more. Don't forget the networking opportunities that exist at ASTI events. You'll meet the service managers from all the manufacturers and make friends with successful servicers from all over the country.

The ASTI provides a solid line-up of training at a reasonable price of only \$499 for United Servicers Association members (includes breakfasts and lunches). It is a highly anticipated event and an unrivalled opportunity to improve your business. It's also expected to sell-out, so if you're considering attending the ASTI register now to avoid disappointment. Learn more about the ASTI and register online at www.ASTI.us. I'm looking forward to seeing you there. **RO**

Paul Mac Donald
Executive Director
United Servicers Association



For more information, call
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BAT's are Flying as PSA Rolls Out Training Program

The Professional Service Association (PSA) has spent the last few months rolling out its Basic Appliance Training (BAT) program nationally, and the initial returns are very promising for the appliance service industry.

The BAT program is designed to get back to the basics of appliance repair—offering technicians new to the industry foundational training, while providing more seasoned technicians an opportunity to keep their skills up to date. BAT offers basic electricity, gas theory and basic refrigeration from the ground up. The PSA training team, led by lead instructor Phil Whitehead, has conducted 7 sessions in 2013, and a full schedule of classes across the country is planned for 2014.

The program is three full days in length and lunch is provided each day. PSA works with local hotels to provide discounted arrangements for attendees, and the training sessions are generally supported locally by independent parts distributors. Class sizes are determined by the size of the local training facility, but general run in the area of 20 per class.

BAT training differs substantially from the usual field training supplied by manufacturers, in that the basics are the focus. Instead of focusing on specific product that might be or has been rolled out, BAT provides the background that service technicians need to make that training even more effective. In discussing field service options with both the PSA membership and others within the appliance service industry, PSA felt that there was a substantial gap in the understanding of the fundamentals of appliance service—understanding electrical concepts and the

basic structure of diagnostics. The BAT program helps fill that gap, making the service professional more effective in both the diagnostics and repair of the appliance. In turn, that tech becomes a more profitable member of the service team.

The initial response from participants has been very encouraging—the training and instructors both get high marks, and the participants have been more confident in their abilities after taking the course. Of particular interest have been the comments of the more veteran technicians— they have been among the biggest proponents of the training. Many feel that there are few opportunities for them to hone their skills, and with the ever changing technology that is driving the appliance business, it's critical that the successful technician keep up with the fundamentals to be able to troubleshoot and repair the product in a timely manner. The BAT program helps in addressing this need.

Successful completion of BAT is also the first step in becoming a Certified Master Technician. The most important thing that a professional service provider can do is to let your customers know at a glance that you are one of the best that the appliance service industry has to offer.

By becoming a Certified Appliance Professional with a Master Technician rating, a technician joins the ranks of the best-trained and most knowledgeable appliance service technicians in the country today. By passing the examination the technician is being tested and accredited as a Master Technician by a panel of their peers who are members of the Professional Service Association and are responsible for the validity of the testing procedures.

PSA plans on offering BAT programs in several locations throughout 2014, and will offer the training as part of NASC 2014 in Nashville, TN March 24-27. In addition, manufacturer's product training will be offered, as will service management, training in QuickBooks and Excel programs, and certification for technicians, managers and support personnel. In all, there will be well over 100 opportunities for training that attendees can choose from, along with the tradeshow, peer meeting and industry discussions key to the future of the appliance service industry.

As additional instructors are certified to supply the BAT training, it is expected that the offering will be expanded and additional classes set up. In addition, future plans call for providing classes to large service providers or more specialized service providers, dependent on their particular needs. PSA is also working to partner with leaders of the appliance parts distribution industry to support this training; the level of support that has been extended by the local parts suppliers has been key to the success of the program to date, so parties interested in the BAT opportunities in their areas should also stay in close contact with their local parts distributors in order to stay current with class offerings.

Check for BAT opportunities in your area at www.psa-world.com or contact PSA at 888-777-8851. We look forward to seeing you and your repair team at BAT programs in 2014! **RO**

Randy Carney
PSA Executive Director



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Creating the Perfect Kitchen Space

For many of your customers, a new or remodeled kitchen may be part of their wish list. KitchenAid gives them enticing reasons to bring those dreams to reality. As a company of cooks, KitchenAid understands that appliances not only play an important role in helping you prepare a meal for the ones you love, but are also an essential ingredient in your kitchen design. "What many people don't know about KitchenAid," says Gail Bruce, senior brand manager, "is that in one form or another we've been making appliances that inspire creativity for over 95 years."

To help your customers take the next step in their kitchen remodel, you can point out some key features that showcase the quality and craftsmanship that makes KitchenAid® appliances distinctly different.

BRINGING PROFESSIONAL TOOLS INTO THE KITCHEN



"Our company is immediately associated with our iconic stand mixer," says Bruce. "Our passion is helping push home cooks past the boundaries of what they think can be done. We have features like true

convection and steam-assist technology that were once only found in professional kitchens." With Even-Heat™ Technology, KitchenAid has taken this technology to a higher level which shows a commitment to innovating that gives consumers the results they crave. "Even-Heat™ Technology is a game-changer for consumers who previously would have to rotate pans to get consistent results," says Bruce. Even-Heat™ Technology is available for both built-in wall ovens and freestanding ranges. Consumers have options for remodeling on select wall ovens using the FIT System* that adjusts the height of the oven to fit an existing cutout.

DESIGNING REFRIGERATORS THAT PROVIDE FRESH IDEAS

When consumers plan their kitchen, the refrigerator is one of their first considerations. Built-in refrigerators include a 42-inch French door refrigerator that delivers one of the widest capacities available. Freestanding refrigerator options include both counter-depth and standard-depth configurations. Counter-depth refrigerators are welcome in some kitchens because they create a more streamlined look by having only the doors and handles extend beyond a traditional base cabinet.



To support the fresh design, the Preserva® Food Care System is available on select side-by-side and French door refrigerators. This innovative food preservation system helps extend the storage life of your favorite produce

by addressing three key issues that are essential for food preservation: humidity, ethylene, and odors.

ENTERTAIN INSIDE THE KITCHEN WITHOUT DISTRACTION



As more and more entertaining is being done inside the kitchen, your customers will welcome the opportunity to have a dishwasher that is quiet and energy efficient. In addition to being exceptionally quiet, the new line of 2014 KitchenAid® dishwashers will continue our reputation as the best performing dishwasher brand.** "Consumers look for several things from a premium dishwasher," says Bruce, "and at the top of their list is cleaning and drying performance." In addition to exceptional performance, KitchenAid® dishwashers provide several handle and console options that allow different looks for different design tastes.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

KitchenAid gives your customers the opportunity to enhance their remodel with precise, design language throughout a full suite of KitchenAid® appliances. Says Bruce, "We know how important it is to give consumers the option to get a unified look, and with the Architect® Series we've been able to accomplish that." **RO**

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*Available in 27" and 30" standard single and double wall ovens. See product specifications for minimum and maximum installation dimensions.

**Combined wash and dry results of leading premium brands; dry testing conducted with rinse aid.

CREATE YOUR MASTERPIECE

Share our passion for inspiration.

From our stand mixer to our dishwasher, we've been helping cooks fall in love with their kitchen for over 95 years. Today, our full line of appliances includes refrigerators that bring out the flavor of fresh ingredients, wall ovens and ranges that provide exceptionally even three rack baking, and dishwashers that get dishes clean and dry without pre-rinsing.

With that kind of performance, **there's so much more to make.**

Find more information and culinary inspiration at kitchenaid.com.

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To learn more about the entire KitchenAid Brand line, please visit kitchenaid.com.



LG STUDIO
 premium appliances,
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LG's core home appliance line has experienced significant growth since the brand's U.S. debut in 2004. Now, we're poised for the same success in the premium built-in appliance market, and you can be part of it.

LG Studio appliances deliver the very best of LG innovation and design. By becoming a selected LG Studio dealer, you'll be positioned to fulfill high customer demand—all while enjoying a successful partnership with one of the world's leading appliance companies.

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