

The Retail Observer

March, 2010

YOUR RESOURCE GUIDE TO THE INDUSTRY

Vol. 21, Issue 3

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How's Business? Great!

It's that time of year when rain and snow keep showing up on the weekly weather forecast, and you're just ready to enjoy some Spring sunshine. But be careful... Don't let the blahs get you and everyone around you down. It's bad for business! What's your response when someone asks you "How's business?" I bet the tendency is to start to tell them how you really feel... especially if you're struggling some. But did you ever notice that what you say enough times, over and over again, you start to believe?

A friend sent me a short fable about a jolly old farmer who was well-loved in his village, with loyal farm hands to work for him. The folks in the village thought he was so jolly because his business was so successful, but no, to the contrary; he was raised with a family tradition of wearing a button on his lapel that said, "Business is Great!" They went through tough times like any other business, but he continued to proudly wear his button. Many people asked him what was so great about his business, which led to conversations about the pleasure of meeting new people, the joy of working in an upbeat environment, the reward of learning new things every day, and the fascination of the work itself. No matter how miserable a person was, they always felt better after listening to the farmer's infectious enthusiasm and positive outlook on life.

The way I see it, whether you're out on the showroom floor or in upper level management, the belief in the button needs to come first, and the great business will follow. Imagine what inner peace and prosperity you could bring about just by keeping a joyful attitude on a regular basis, following the button mantra. Take the button challenge today where *you* work.

NEW WRITERS

In the February issue we added Rick Segel to our line-up of great writers. Rick is the author of *The Retail Kit for Dummies*. He will be focusing on issues such as helping retailers and vendors partner, so everyone sells more. Kevin M. Henry debuts his new column, "Trends", on pg. 38 of this issue. He will be taking us to new levels of thought and possibility to expand the way we do and think about business. Next month we will be adding Robert Spector to the mix, author of *The Mom & Pop Store*. He has tapped into the buy local campaign, as independent shops are reinventing themselves and their connection to the community. We look forward to having him aboard. We are pleased with our new additions and the growth and enthusiasm we are receiving from our readers and industry partners.



Here's to great business!

Eliana Barriga
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The Retail Observer

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CELEBRATING OUR 21ST YEAR

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A woman in a white dress and veil stands next to a Miele washing machine. The dress is flowing and she is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The washing machine is white and has its door open, showing the drum. The background is a bright, airy room with a window and a table.

For centuries people beat clothes against a hard surface to clean them. Most washing machines still do.

Other washing machines batter the life out of clothes. Not Miele. A unique patented Honeycomb Care™ drum cradles clothing on a cushion of water so they're guaranteed to wash cleaner and proven to last longer.¹ In addition, machine intelligence saves water and energy with smart cycle programs that conserve as they protect. It's time to provide your clients with a 21st century solution to cleaning clothes better. It's time for Miele. miele.com



A Salute To The Servicer

Last month I had the pleasure of watching more than 1,000 servicers receive training in various educational venues on the East and West coasts. These servicers were there to learn, gain new tips, find new solutions and meet with their peers. Many of them came out of their classes with smiles on their faces, excited to have learned how to properly fix yet another gizmo or had found a new and easier way to remove and replace a widget, as well as having learned many valuable ways to run their business and increase their margins.

The first venue was the MSA convention at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. The host—Marcone, the largest supplier of parts and tools to the appliance trade—received a positive response from an estimated 450+ servicers, vendors and service managers, making this a successful event for all. This was quite a feat considering they had just acquired AP Wagner the week before. Hal and Rick, your team was incredible!

The second event was ASTI in Orlando, sponsored by jointly by PSA and USA. The program was held at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort in the heart of the Disney World property. This was a first-of-its-kind event with these two service powerhouse associations pulling together to give this valuable commodity of over 500 servicers a chance to grow their skill levels and increase their business education. With vendors and techs from all facets of the Industry and a very strong roundtable discussion with over 300 in attendance, this group walked away with new skills to help consumers in need of their abilities.

Over the years in the arena of the appliance world, there have been murmurings that this industry has a not-so-bright light on the service side. I would like to illuminate and dispel any negative notions of these incredibly educated servicers, who are highly motivated, and yes, are able to fix almost anything (without duct tape). Upon walking into many of the classes, I felt at a loss. There were diagrams, schematics and parts of things that I had no idea of what they did, let alone why. The conversations about belts, compressors and integrated circuitry were everywhere around me. The knowledge that was being transferred between these warriors of the fix was amazing.

As a salesman and a manager in this industry, I was blown away by these guys and gals who truly have their stuff together. Not only do they have full knowledge of the product, they are geniuses at fixing them when they malfunction and are an extremely valuable asset that many have taken for granted. Don't forget that these servicers can make or break a deal, and many are—or can be—your best salesperson. I, for one, stand and salute you—The Servicer—for your skills, knowledge and saving my butt on more than one occasion.



Happy Retailing,

Moe Lastfogel
moe@retailobserver.com

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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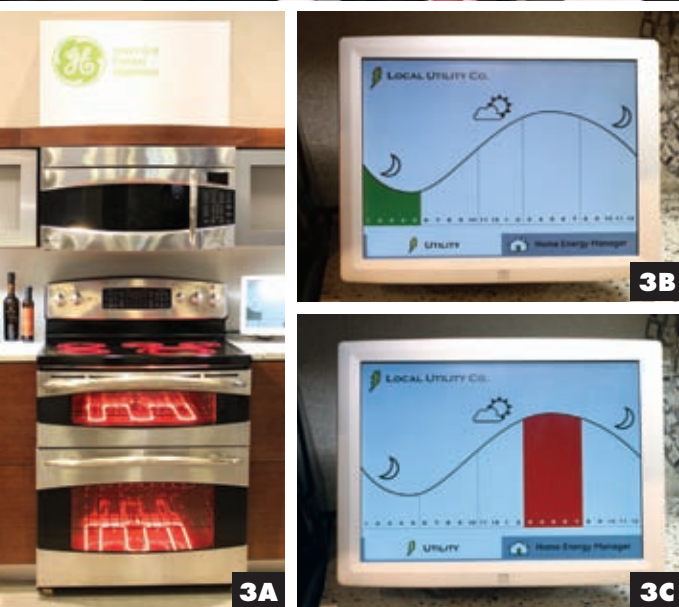
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3A

3B

3C



4

OPTIMISTIC CROWD AT INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS SHOW

Approximately 55,000 builders, remodelers and other members of the home building industry crowded the aisles of the National Association of Home Builders' International Builders' Show at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The mood? "I'd call it cautious optimism," said Ron Cook of Tamko Building Products in Joplin, MO, one of more than 1,100 exhibitors at this year's event. "It's certainly different than it was last year because we didn't quite know what we were in for."

Members lined up at the Partnership Pavilion, a new NAHB initiative on the show floor designed to match builders with financing sources. The successful program was launched to help serve an industry still stymied by a lack of available credit for new housing developments—as well as tighter restrictions on home buyer mortgages.

Builders and remodelers also attended educational presentations on design trends, energy retrofitting, marketing, low-income housing tax credits and more than 175 other topics.

"We came here to network," said Clint Wilson of Hybrid Core Homes in Santa Rosa, CA. The show seemed livelier than last year's event, he said. A company manufacturing geothermal heating systems saw steady traffic at its booth, according to Steve Smith, managing partner at Enertech Manufacturing, LLC of Greenville, IL, who said builders are particularly interested in learning more about the tax credits available for installing geothermal and other renewable energy heating and cooling systems.

"It's been a good, upbeat crowd," Smith said. "I think we all have a more positive attitude for 2010. I've already talked to our marketing folks about getting a bigger booth at next year's show."

1. Everpure Water Filtration booth featuring: Shelly Johnson, Julie Fraga and Neal White
2. Stephen Ross and Alan Cohen in the SUMMIT Specialty Appliances booth 3.(A-C) G.E.'s Smart Grid enabled Range and the local utility software grid readout showing peak and optimal usage charts



WDS AT THE 2010 INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW

INDUSTRY'S LARGEST PRODUCT DISPLAY SHOWCASED

The National Association of Home Builders event featured the most cutting-edge designs, technologies, and products for all segments of the industry. Here are just some of the many exciting innovations that builders saw at the event of the year for the home building and remodeling industry:

- Whirlpool Corporation brought truly next-gen products to the 2010 International Builders' Show. The company showcased the latest from its family of brands including a look at smart grid technology.
- Aquatic, the newly introduced company merging the brawn of Lasco Bathware and the beauty of Aquatic Whirlpools into one company, showcased the broadest and most inspirational offerings—from luxury hydrotherapy to everyday bathing and accessible products including the new, elegantly-designed Freestyle Bath with ground-breaking features for people with limited mobility.
- Panasonic debuted its newest ventilation fan, WhisperGreen FV-13VKM2. Featuring a motion sensor, dual-speed controls, and a revolutionary, energy-efficient DC motor, it improves indoor air quality and complies with residential ventilation standards and is available in an 80 CFM model as well.
- H-P Products exhibited its complete line of central vacuum systems and unique hose management products, including Hide-A-Hose for whole-house cleaning, Vroom for high-traffic area quick cleaning, and Spot for specific cleaning jobs in the house.
- Wine Master Cellars LLP, creators of the | *continued on page 10* |

4. Maytag display 5. G.E.'s Hybrid Smart Grid Water Heater 6. Ashley Kasdorf demonstrating the new Whirlpool side by side refrigerator 7. Delta's plumbing fixtures booth 8.(A&B) Samsung's LED prototype display refrigerator with rotating streaming video images 9. Jenn Air's new kitchen vignette





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5



patented VintageView® revolutionary label-forward wine-racking display system, unveiled six new custom ordered colors of wine storage systems. The new selection of colors will meet the demands of its customers who have requested additional finishes to compliment their hospitality, retail and residential environments.

- Nordstar Kitchens Limited exhibited state-of-the-art modern progressive cabinetry manufactured from green certified nauf board, featuring integrated pulls and glass uppers for the ultimate in urban fashion.
- Sea Gull Lighting Products, LLC offered its new Wheaton and Albany collections, as well as ENERGY STAR® and LED fixtures for the home.
- Bluegate Inc. debut its new line of floating glass shelves for home and/or office décor. These shelves, which require no hardware, are a great accent to any design and are available in several shapes and sizes.

The next International Builders' Show takes place Jan. 12-15 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL. Visit www.nahb.com or www.buildersshow.com.

THE NAHB NATIONALS GOLD AWARD WINNERS— AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE IN NEW HOME SALES, MARKETING AND DESIGN

The year's most outstanding work in residential real estate sales, marketing and design was honored at The National Sales and Marketing Awards gala (known as The NationalsSM), one of the building industry's most prestigious events. Hosted by the National Association of Home Builders' National Sales and Marketing Council (NSMC), the awards ceremony, held during the 2010 International Builders' Show, attracted more than 500 building industry professionals to Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas for an up-close look at the year's most innovative and successful ideas.

"The focus of this year's Nationals awards is to celebrate the innovation, creativity and endurance of our profession," said Sheri Jackson, chair of The Nationals. "Despite the negative effects of the economic downturn, our industry continues to produce good work, and we are proud to recognize the sales and marketing professionals who have made that happen."

A diverse panel of industry professionals from across the country selected Gold award winners from more than 700 entries. Several top award winners are highlighted below. For a complete list of Gold and Silver winners, along with additional details and history of The Nationals, please visit www.thenationals.com. **RO**

1. G.E. booth with Energy Star
2. Amana laundry room
3. Air King shows their products in style
4. G.E.'s blueprints to innovation concierge counter
5. Whirlpool's Working Better Together to Build your Business booth

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The Retail Observer is interested in featuring you in our new 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. Send to: production@retailobserver.com

FEATURED THIS MONTH:

The ASTI Convention



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Mailbag

The feature article on CES is finally sinking into my head that technology is in every aspect of our lives and integrating into the stuff we use every day. My grandkids are making it obvious that I had better keep up with the times or fall behind in life and in business. I am starting to get the diversification model, not having all the eggs in one basket, by adding items that interface with what I already am selling to improve the bottom line.

If we already are selling TV's along with our appliance line up, let's sell the games and accessories, as well as the speakers and home theater installation. For that matter, how about the theater chairs, the popcorn and the machine to make it too? I am starting to get this. Thanks for opening up new horizons for those of us stuck in our ways with our "old school" thinking. It's been a tough year—I'm a little slow, but catching on... Keep up the good work!

Randy Maier,
Florida



I just wanted to tell you how impressed I am with the growth and evolution of the publication and how every issue has been better than the last. I mentioned it on my blog, posted on the Elle Décor website as well as Multi-Housing News. (www.theessentialkitchen.blogspot.com.) I am excited to begin writing for you with this current issue.

Kevin M. Henry,
Los Angeles, CA

I just finished with the January edition of your publication and I have to disagree with Vent-A-Hood's statement on page 20, that they would have the longest warranty program of any

domestic range hood manufacture for 5 years. Since the 90's, Imperial Range Hoods has had a 5 year parts and labor warranty on their entire line except for their very affordable Economy range hood, with a 1 year warranty. Looks like others are now attempting to match Imperial's warranty policy.

Ed Sladek,
Retired

(Editors Note: Indeed the Five (5) year warranty is currently the best in the industry, in which Vent-A-Hood is not alone in providing, as noted. It is always a compliment when the standard has been raised and is met, as it is encouraging to see that more manufacturers supply this level of quality and support to the consumer.)

(Missed the original article to which these letters refer? They are available online at www.retailobserver.com)

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Book Review

Big Box Swindle

AUTHOR: STACY MITCHELL

In less than two decades, large retail chains have become the most powerful corporations in America. In this revealing book, Stacy Mitchell illustrates how mega-retailers are fueling many of our most pressing problems, from the shrinking middle class to rising pollution and diminished civic engagement—and she shows how a growing number of communities and independent businesses are effectively fighting back.

Mitchell traces the dramatic growth of mega-retailers—from big boxes like Wal-Mart and Home Depot to chains like Starbucks and Old Navy—and the precipitous decline of independent businesses. Drawing on examples from virtually every state in the country, she unearths the extraordinary impact of these stores and the big-box mentality on everything from soaring gasoline consumption to rising poverty rates, failing family farms, and declining voting levels. Along the way, Mitchell exposes the shocking role government policy has played in the expansion of mega-retailers and builds a compelling case that communities composed of many small, locally owned businesses are healthier and more prosperous than those dominated by a few large chains.

More than a critique, *Big-Box Swindle* provides an invigorating account of how some communities have successfully countered the spread of big boxes and rebuilt their local economies. Since 2000, over 200 big-box development projects have been halted by groups of ordinary citizens, and scores of towns and cities have adopted laws that favor small-scale, local business development which limit the proliferation of chains. From cutting-edge land-use policies to innovative cooperative small-business initiatives, Mitchell offers communities concrete strategies that can stave off mega-retailers and create a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Stacy is a senior researcher with the New Rules Project, a program of the nonprofit Institute for Local Self-Reliance. A frequent speaker at conferences and public forums, she has advised communities on strategies and policies to limit chain store proliferation and strengthen locally owned businesses. Mitchell regularly contributes articles and commentaries to magazines and newspapers, and produces an acclaimed monthly email newsletter, *The Hometown Advantage Bulletin*. 



“Big-Box Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-Retailers and the Fight for America’s Independent Businesses”
Author: Stacy Mitchell
Beacon Press, 2006
Email: smitchell@ilsr.org



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VENT-A-HOOD DEBUTS PROPRIETARY DUCT-FREE RANGE HOOD

COMPANY INTRODUCES THE AIR RECOVERY SYSTEM SERIES FOR DUCT-FREE VENTILATION

Vent-A-Hood Vent-A-Hood, the company that created the modern residential range hood, has unveiled a truly effective duct-free range hood with the introduction of the Vent-A-Hood Air Recovery System series.

“We’ve launched a whole new category of range hood,” said Skip Woodall, president and CEO of Vent-A-Hood, about the ARS series. “Thanks to superior engineering and design, we offer the one real solution for residents in lofts, condos or highrises who have suffered with recirculating hoods that do nothing to clean the cooking air.”

Unlike conventional low-quality ductless ventilation products on the market, Vent-A-Hood’s new Air Recovery System includes a unique four-phase technology with four times the cleaning power to effectively collect the rising gases,

separate the grease, contain the odor and trap the smoke for complete cooking air recovery.

The ARS series features an active canopy to capture cooking contaminants. A centrifugal blower then extracts the grease. The air is pushed through an activated carbon bed with 50 times more exposure to cooking air than flat carbon mats in traditional ductless hoods to reduce odor. And lastly, a large accordion microfiber filter makes Vent-A-Hood’s design the only hood to address smoke when not venting to the outdoors.

“The Air Recovery System is a green technology to take pollutants out and put clean air back,” Woodall said. “It is the only range hood worthy of the Vent-A-Hood name that will clean and recover good air when ducting to the outside of a home is not an option.”

The Vent-A-Hood ARS series, offered in two stainless steel designs, is now available across the U.S. and Canada. For more information visit www.ventahood.com or call 1-800-331-2492.

FURNITURE SMART



Furniture Smart, the furniture division of Nationwide Marketing Group, exhibited for the first time at the Las Vegas Market.

“Up until now, Furniture Smart has only exhibited at our buying show and conference which is attended exclusively by our member dealers,” said Bill Bazemore, executive director of Furniture Smart. “Now that our division is in such a growth mode we felt that the Las Vegas Market was a perfect time and place to connect with more dealers from across the country.”

According to Bazemore, Furniture Smart had 5,600 square feet of show space at the Las Vegas Market showcasing their new private label bedding line and market specials from a select number of top furniture manufacturers.

“We encourage any independent dealer who is interested in the benefits of a buying group to contact us.

Furniture Smart offers its member dealers programs with industry leading manufacturers including exclusive pricing and promotions, rebates, guaranteed freight rates, quick ship programs and innovative marketing solutions.

To see Furniture Smart’s private label bedding line and learn more about the programs and services they provide the

independent dealer, contact Bill Bazemore at furniture@nationwidegroup.org or 770.442.9726.

VIKING INTRODUCES PROFESSIONAL SERIES CUSTOM ELECTRONIC CONTROL RANGES



Viking Range Corporation announces the introduction of 30", 36" and 48" W. sealed burner dual fuel electronic

control ranges to the Professional Series Custom product line. The electronic control panel combines the traditional feel of a knob with the additional features of an electronic display for the oven settings, including temperature probe, timer, and timed bake functions.

These electronic control ranges combine professional power with a new user-friendly oven control system. The push-button interface provides easy, precision control of oven settings as well as a sleek look. The mirrored display disappears when not in use.

In addition to the large oven capacity, the electronic control ranges offer a variety of baking and broiling modes—up to 14 cooking modes in all. The auto-roast feature automatically sears the outside of meats and then returns to the pre-set temperature in the standard convection roast mode, allowing the meat to retain its juices and flavor. A timed bake function allows the oven to begin cooking up to 24 hours in advance, and then drops into a 150° F "Hold" mode when cooking time is complete. An oven control lock prevents the oven controls from being activated when the oven is not in use. Other notable features include a Sabbath mode setting and custom display settings.

The sealed gas burners on the ranges' surface feature the Viking exclusive VariSimmer™ setting that allows for precision control of ultra-low cooking temperatures. Select model ranges are equipped with a TruPowerPlus™ burner, which offers 18,500 BTUs of power. The 36" and 48"W. models also feature a thermostat-controlled griddle and an easy-clean grill option.

The Viking Professional Series Custom electronic control ranges are offered in stainless steel and 23 exclusive colors finishes.

To request product information, please contact Viking toll-free at 888.845.4641, or visit the web site at vikingrange.com.



Photography courtesy of Viking Range Corp.

NKBA REVEALS 2010 KITCHEN & BATH DESIGN TRENDS

THE NATIONAL KITCHEN & BATH ASSOCIATION REPORTS THE STYLES FOR 2010

NKBA™ The results are in from a recent survey of designers conducted by the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) to reveal the key design trends for 2010. The results of the NKBA 2010 Kitchen & Bath Design Trends Survey confirmed the continuation of a number of existing trends in the marketplace, but also uncovered others that indicate shifts in the direction that kitchen and bath style will take this year. Below are 2010's seven kitchen trends and four bath trends.

KITCHENS

1. Traditional is the New Contemporary—Traditional will continue as the most popular kitchen design style in 2010, with contemporary following closely behind, while the Shaker style is seeing a surprisingly strong resurgence. | *continued on page 18* |

Liebherr Appliances Becomes Star-K Certified

REFRIGERATION MEETS NEEDS OF KOSHER CUSTOMERS



Liebherr's freestanding refrigeration products, as well as select built-in and fully integrated units are now certified as Sabbath compliant by the Star-K organization. After extensive research and development, and testing by the Star-K group, Liebherr's units meet the strict religious requirements of kosher customers.

"We worked with representatives from Star-K on the programming and electronics to obtain the desired functionality," explains Andrew Sullivan, Liebherr's technical advisor. "Once we were comfortable with the results, samples were evaluated by the organization and they passed with flying colors. We're glad that our products can be used by our large kosher customer base without worry," adds Sullivan.

As explained at star-k.org, here are some Liebherr holiday mode features designed to observe kosher laws and traditions:

- The door can be opened/closed at any time without concern of directly turning on or off any lights, digital readouts, solenoids, fans, valves, compressor, icons, tones or alarms.
- Any defrost cycle that becomes active will not be a function of the number of times or the length of time that the door is opened.
- The ice maker is disabled automatically.

For further information visit www.liebherr-appliances.com and to obtain a complete list of compliant Liebherr models, go to:

www.star-k.org/cons-appl-liebherr-refrigerators.htm. **RO**



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Five Ways to Fresh

Liebherr's new side-by-side SBS 246 refrigerator has five different climate zones to best preserve what you eat AND drink. The gorgeous stainless steel and glass exterior with cabinet-depth dimensions houses perfect storage options for groceries and Gewürztraminer. Open the doors and discover patented BioFresh technology, creating ideal conditions for fruit, vegetables, meat and fish to last up to three times longer. Vitamins are preserved and you don't need to shop as often.

Convenient compartments in the freezer, energy efficient LED lighting, unique soft-close door system and advanced airflow patterns highlight Liebherr's design ingenuity. And because you don't store your fine wine the same as your lettuce, enjoy two separate temperature zones in the wine cabinet for your reds and whites.



www.liebherr-appliances.com

LIEBHERR
Design, Quality and Innovation



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK WITH YOUR DISTRIBUTOR LISTED BELOW

- Shades of whites and off-whites will be the most common kitchen colors in 2010, while brown, beige, and bone hues will also be popular.
- Cherry on Top**—Cherry will remain the most popular wood for kitchen cabinetry, followed closely by maple, while alder increases in use. As for the finishes placed on those cabinets, medium natural, dark natural, glazed, and white painted will all be common. Other colors of painted cabinetry and light natural finishes are in decline, however, as are distressed finishes.
 - Floored by Tile**—Ceramic and porcelain tile, as well as natural stone tile, remain popular kitchen flooring options, but hardwood will dominate the kitchen landscape more than ever in 2010. For countertops, granite continues to be the most popular option, but quartz will nearly catch up in popularity. For backsplashes, ceramic or porcelain tile and glass will serve as the primary materials.
 - Flexible Faucets**—Standard kitchen faucets will become less standard in 2010 in favor of more convenient models. Pull-out faucets continue to increase their market dominance, while pot filler faucets will also become more prevalent. Kitchen faucets will most often be finished in brushed nickel, followed by stainless steel, satin nickel, and—surprisingly—polished chrome.
 - Undercounter Refrigeration**—French door and freezer-bottom are the two most popular styles of refrigerators, and side-by-side refrigerators remain a popular option. A surprising trend is the extent to which undercounter refrigerator drawers are being used in the latest kitchen designs. Perhaps even more surprising is that undercounter wine refrigerators have been recently specified by half of kitchen designers.
 - A Range of Cooking Options**—The tried-and-true range continues to serve as the workhorse for cooking, although the combination of a cooktop and wall oven is beginning to overtake it. Gas will maintain its position as the most popular type of cooktop over electric, although induction cooking continues to gain in popularity due to its energy efficiency.
 - Dishwasher-in-a-Drawer**—Standard dishwashers, with the traditional door that pulls from the top down, will once again be easily the most common type in 2010. However, an increasing number of dishwasher drawers will be installed in kitchens this year for their convenience and their ability to wash small loads of dishes in each drawer, thereby saving water and electricity.

BATHROOMS

- In With the Old, Out with the New**—Traditional will be the most popular design style in bathrooms in 2010, as contemporary designs will be a distant second, followed by the Shaker style as an even more distant third. Beiges and bones will be the most common colors used in bathrooms, followed by whites and off-whites, and then by browns, indicating a somewhat subdued color palette this year.
- Ceramic and Granite**—Ceramic and porcelain tile will be the dominant flooring materials in bathrooms this year, while natural stone will continue to prove popular as well. Though increasingly popular in kitchens, hardwood flooring won't become common in bathrooms in 2010. For vanity tops, granite will remain king, with quartz and marble also proving popular options.
- Simple Fixtures**—Perhaps more than ever, the most

| *continued on page 20* |

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common color for fixtures will be white. Bisque and off-white will be the only other fixture colors at all common in new or remodeled bathroom. For sinks, simple undermount models will be most popular, followed by integrated sink tops, drop-in sinks, vessel sinks, and pedestal sinks.

4. A Nickel for Every Finish—Faucet finishes in the bathroom are similar to those used in current kitchen designs, with brushed nickel continuing to lead the way in 2010. Polished chrome and satin nickel will also be incorporated into many bathrooms, just as they had been throughout 2009. These faucet finishes will be followed by bronze and stainless steel.

WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION FEATURES DEDICATED 'NEW WAYS OF INVESTING IN BUILDERS' EXHIBIT AT 2010 IBS



In addition to the latest appliances from Jenn-Air, KitchenAid, Maytag, Whirlpool, Amana and Gladiator brands during the 2010 International Builders' Show® (IBS), Whirlpool Corporation is offering builders an overview on how the company is working better together with builders to help them build their businesses. Attendees of the show can tour The Inside Advantage™ section of the booth, an exhibit dedicated to new ways Whirlpool Corporation is investing in the building community.

“The past couple of years in the building industry have been challenging, to say the least,” said Tracy Frye, senior contract marketing manager at Whirlpool Corporation. “We’ve positioned ourselves to meet the challenges of today’s marketplace, refocusing our people and processes around our trade customers. We’ve also invested in a complete continuum of support, resources and services to make it easier and more beneficial to do business with us.”

The exhibit begins with a hands-on demonstration of The Inside Advantage™, which is designed to meet the needs of Whirlpool Corporation’s trade customers and other building and design professionals. More than a program, The Inside Advantage™ is defined by four pillars, which are demonstrated throughout the exhibit:

- **Powerful Brands**—learn more about items of interest within each specific established brand;
- **Innovative Products**—view unique products that entice homeowners and make it easy to specify, use and install Whirlpool Corporation appliances;
- **Market Insight**—examples of how Whirlpool Corporation keeps its eye on housing trends and develops innovations and products to anticipate market demand, including products that meet universal design, open floor plan, sustainable, multi-cultural and generational customers and other needs;
- **Targeted Services**—special services that enable building professionals to best serve their customers, including the Quality Express Delivery Service and Finishing Touches™ Program, to name a few.

“Our Green Touch™ Program is a perfect example of how we’re helping builders meet today’s new challenges,” said Frye. “We consult with | *continued on page 24* |

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The large 2.5 cu.ft. upper oven offers fantastic wood fired smoke infused cooking. The stainless steel lined and insulated oven features direct venting from the fire box that directs smoke and heat into the oven cavity to circulate authentic wood fired taste while roasting to perfection.

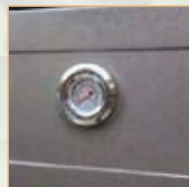


UPPER OVEN

The large 2.5 cu.ft. fully insulated lower oven with fire brick base and stone floor is sealed from smoke and ash. Featuring 2 rack positions, temperature gauge and window for viewing in the door, perfect for pizza, breads, and all forms of roasting and baking.



COOL TOUCH HANDLE



TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Oven temperatures range from 300 degrees to over 700 degrees and will hold temperatures for hours, thus providing flexible temperatures for many foods.

The oven comes complete with fire brick base, ceramic pizza stone, sliding rack and baking dish providing a wide range of

DIMENSIONS

Height:.....81 5/16"2066mm
 Width:.....24 13/16"630mm
 Depth:.....27"685mm
 Chimney:.....22 11/16"576mm
 Net Weight:317 1/2 lb 144kgs



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(PRODUCT AVAILABLE MARCH 2010)

MODEL NUMBER: SOWFDO



LOWER OVEN

cooking choices. From delicious wood fired flavored pizzas to home cooked meals of poultry, lamb, roast beef or complete dinners.

The lower fire box features a heavy steel wood rack and full ash tray below. The cavity contains all fire and ash, easy to load and add wood while cooking as well as cleaning.

Front adjustable door vent and cool touch ventilation control handle and damper on the smoke stack allow for fast or slow burning of the wood in the

fire box and heat control of the ovens.

Storage cart features 4 cubic feet storage area for woods and charcoal, weather proof and ready at your feet, built in handles and rear wheels allow for easy moving and transport.



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our builder customers to provide them with appliance packages that meet the requirements of today's sustainable homes, while also fitting homebuyers' lifestyle needs, including kitchens, laundry rooms, HVAC products and beyond. Additionally, we provide our builder customers with access to an exclusive portal, which is a ready resource for the latest information pertaining to sustainability."

GE MONEY NAMES HOME IMPROVEMENT INDUSTRY LEADER TO ADVISORY BOARD

INCOMING NARI PRESIDENT PAUL J. ZUCH JOINS INDUSTRY BOARD IN PROVIDING GUIDANCE, EXPERTISE



GE Money's Sales Finance business today announced that home improvement industry leader Paul J. Zuch has been appointed to its Home Improvement advisory board. Currently in its fourth year and

comprised of leading executives in the home improvement industry, the 11 member board helps Sales Finance better develop and deliver innovative financing programs that help contractors grow their businesses.

Mr. Zuch is the owner and president of Dallas-based Capital Improvements, a full-service residential design and remodeling firm. He is responsible for developing and executing all of the company's long-term growth strategies, launching new products and services and defining the company as the premier choice for home design and remodeling. Mr. Zuch has been involved with the building and remodeling industry for the past 26 years and is the president-elect of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI).

"The advisory board brings us closer to our customers, ensuring through listening and collaboration that we're doing all we can to help our customers succeed. We welcome Paul to the board and look forward to his lending his voice and sharing his vision for the betterment of the industry," said Bruce Christensen, vice president and general manager of GE Money's Home Improvement division.

"GE Money is clearly a leader in the home improvement financing industry," said Zuch. "I feel privileged to join this dynamic team and look forward to working closely with them in shaping the vision of growing the home improvement industry, and how financing continues to play an important role in that growth."

One of the board's goals is to help GE Money develop

appropriate best practices and programs that enhance the home improvement financing experience for consumers. "The board members represent some of the most respected companies and leaders in our industry," Christensen added. "We are fortunate Paul has committed to being on the board and will contribute his expertise to helping the home improvement industry and our respective businesses grow."

GE Money provides billions of dollars of consumer financing through more than 145,000 small and medium businesses on Main Streets across the United States. Over the past 16 years, GE Money's Home Improvement division has been an industry leader, providing homeowners and home improvement contractors attractive, easy financing options that simplify payment options for home improvement projects.

LG ELECTRONICS AND VIKING FORM STRATEGIC ALLIANCE



Viking Range Corporation and LG Electronics, Inc. announced that they have entered into a strategic alliance. Areas for

collaboration include product cross-sourcing and joint procurement opportunities, and shared R&D and service resources, as well as expanded distribution.

Under the agreement announced during the International Builders Show, LG plans to reach more U.S. consumers as Viking U.S. distributors will have the opportunity to carry premium LG appliances. This specialized distribution channel will complement LG's existing U.S. network of national and regional appliance dealers. Viking plans to increase its international distribution, particularly in the rapidly expanding Asia/Pacific markets through its alliance with LG.

Fred Carl, Jr., CEO of Viking Range Corporation, said, "Teaming with LG will give our loyal distributors new growth opportunities while allowing Viking to work with one of the strongest global brands and technology leaders in home appliances. We look forward to this mutually beneficial relationship, including future opportunities for product development collaboration."

"This alliance will leverage the respective brand, technology, marketing and distribution strengths of LG and Viking, enabling us both to satisfy a broader range of consumer needs," said James Shad, president, LG Electronics USA. "Viking has built an exceptional brand, and LG is proud to be associated with this American icon's heritage of quality and customer service."

It is anticipated that Viking distributors will begin offering LG appliances beginning in the second quarter of 2010. **RO**

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With exclusive EcoSmart™ technology, Bosch Vision delivers efficient performance without compromising any cleaning results.

Vision washers and dryers use advanced EcoSmart™ technology, a network of sensors and intelligent controls, to deliver the most efficient performance without compromising cleaning results. “With Vision, we challenged Bosch engineers to re-imagine the substance of laundry performance. The result is a washer and dryer pair that makes the most out of every drop of water and power while delivering superior cleaning results, quietness and safety,” said Gotthard von Hundt, senior vice president of Laundry at Bosch home appliances. EcoSmart’s water savings are amplified with ActiveWater™, a system that uses 70% less water per load than the industry average. In Vision dryers, EcoSmart senses remaining moisture throughout the cycle to lower the energy usage.

EFFICIENCY

- The ActiveWater system multiplies the cleaning power of each gallon of water. Combined with advanced EcoSmart technology, Vision uses just 13 gallons of water per load while delivering the cleaning power of 400 gallons.
 - Curved Vision paddles effectively saturate clothing by lifting and “raining” water as clothes gently tumble inside the drum.
 - The Jet Dispenser injects just the right amount of detergent based on load size directly into the water, while the 3-D Water Flow design allows water to circulate through the outer drum, door nozzle and back panel. As a result, clothes are saturated quickly and evenly, without using a lot of water.
- The dryer’s EcoSensor® measures the moisture level of the clothes and adjusts cycle length and heat level automatically for efficient and gentle drying.
- The Bosch exclusive EcoAction® feature is available on all Vision washers and dryers. With just the simple push of a button, consumers can reduce energy use by up to 20% per wash load and 10% per dry cycle.

CLEANING PERFORMANCE

- The washer’s ActiveClean™ system adjusts the number of rinse cycles for custom cleaning results.
- The exclusive Stain Removal option tackles all stain types in one

convenient wash cycle.

- New specialized wash cycles such as Baby Care and Allergy Rinse are ideal for family members with sensitive skin or detergent allergies.
- The Vision Steam Dryer offers three steam cycles (Steam Touch-up, Steam Refresh and Steam Wrinkle Relax) to efficiently and quickly reduce wrinkles and remove odors from clothes – without a wash cycle.
- The Bosch Vision ActiveDry™ system utilizes the moisture sensor and intelligent controls to deliver the exact level of dryness selected by the user.
- The DynamicAir™ dryer technology provides the gentlest environment for drying your clothes by delivering a high volume of air at a moderate temperature.
- Vision features the industry’s only one-piece stainless steel drum—a breakthrough that prevents corrosion, lowers friction, and in turn, reduces wear on clothes and fabrics.

THOUGHTFUL ENGINEERING

- A new Anti-Vibration System (AVS™) makes Vision one of the lowest vibration washers on the market.
 - AVS was designed and tested with second story installations in mind, making it a low vibration quiet solution for house and condo owners looking to move their laundry room upstairs or closer to the living area.
 - AVS utilizes stiff springs, shock absorbers and intelligent controls to eliminate noise and vibration.
- Bosch’s exclusive AquaStop® Leak Protection System is the only laundry system on the market that prevents major water damage to the home from an unlikely leak in the machine or hoses.

Bosch Vision is now available in white, silver and anthracite in 300, 500 and 800 Series side-by-side or stacked installation models. Vision washers and dryers have a MSRP range of \$999 to \$1,549. New sky and sepia color laundry pairs will be available April 2010. For more information, visit, connect on Twitter at @BoschAppliances, www.bosch-home.com/us or become a fan at Facebook.com/BoschAppliances. **RO**

We turn water from a resource into an asset.



The Bosch Vision® uses 64% less water* (and 61% less energy**) than other washers.



- ActiveWater™ turns 13 gallons of water into the cleaning power of 400.
- EcoAction® settings on the washer and dryer reduce energy usage up to 20% per load.
- DynamicAir™ dries clothes gently, quickly and thoroughly at a lower, more efficient temperature.
- The Stain Removal Option provides peace of mind with the right temperature range to clean multiple stain types in a single cycle.
- Steam Touch-up settings refresh clothes by relaxing wrinkles and removing odors.
- AquaStop®, a Bosch exclusive, eliminates the risk of major water damage. Available in the 500 and 800 series.



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© 2010 Bosch Home Appliances. *Industry average based on non-ENERGY STAR® qualified clothes washer per-cycle water consumption. **Savings based on annual kilowatt-hour consumption of Bosch Vision® washers compared to the average non-ENERGY STAR® qualified washer per cycle. Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 80404-14-92219-1.

Successful 2010 CES Sets Optimistic Tone for Industry

MAJOR CES INNOVATIONS INCLUDE TABLETS, APPS, NETBOOKS, 3DTV AND SMARTPHONES

The 2010 International CES®, featured the world's most innovative new technologies, from android products and apps to tablets, eReaders, netbooks and smartphones. As a result of the resounding success from the 2010 CES, exhibit space sales for the 2011 CES are already tracking ahead of 2010, with the 2011 International CES scheduled January 6-9 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"The 2010 International CES featured a record number of innovative products and raised the bar for the next generation of consumer technology," said Gary Shapiro, president and CEO, CEA. "Due to the phenomenal success of the 2010 CES, we are seeing more companies sign up for the 2011 CES each day. We're already exploring new TechZones and special exhibit areas for 2011, so that we can showcase the entire technology ecosystem. With more than 120,000 attendees, including 5,000 media, analysts and bloggers, CES is simply the largest global platform for consumer technology product launches."

"The quality of attendees at the 2010 CES was excellent; Sharp, like most exhibitors, is far more interested in seeing the "right" people during the show, not in how many people come to see us," said Judah Zeigler, associate vice president, retail and consumer marketing group, Sharp Electronics Corporation. "Not only was our display extremely busy, but the people who came were genuinely interested in purchasing our products; in other words, they were true members of the

trade. CES was truly the perfect springboard to what we are hopeful will be a strong 2010."

"There is no doubt, this year's CES was one of the best ever for D-Link," said Daniel Kelley, senior director of marketing for the computer networking leader. "Our wide array of new solutions for the digital home – media players, home monitoring, energy efficiency products and Wi-Fi connectivity – not only drew huge crowds to our booth, but earned enormous media coverage and a ton of awards."

More than 20,000 new products were announced at the 2010 CES, including the products listed below, which generated tremendous buzz throughout the industry. Several companies listed had such success at the 2010 CES, they have already made plans to expand their exhibit space for the 2011 International CES.

Tablets were among the major trends on the 2010 CES show floor with noteworthy tablet product announcements from Asus, Dell, enTourage, Freescale Semiconductor, HP, ICD, Lenovo, Notion Ink and Sony.

News on product launches from the 2010 International CES can be found in the Exhibitor News section of www.CESweb.org. The 2011 International CES will be held in Las Vegas Jan. 6-9, 2011 and registration will begin this summer. Find CEA online at www.CE.org. **RO**

NEW PRODUCTS ANNOUNCED AT THE 2010 CES INCLUDE:

- Asus Eee PC Touch Series tablet
- Intel Reader
- Kodak Pulse Digital Frame
- Samsung world's first transparent touch active matrix (AM) OLED display MP3 player
- Sony's partnership with Discovery and IMAX for 3D network
- Boxee Box by D-link
- Lenovo Hybrid IdeaPad U1
- LG 15" OLED TV
- Motorola Backflip Android-powered smartphone
- Sprint's 4G Network
- Dell's Streak tablet
- LG 15" OLED TV
- Notion Ink's Adam with NVIDIA's Tegra 2 and Pixel Qi
- Syabas Popbox
- enTourage eDGe
- Motorola Backflip Android-powered smartphone
- Notion Ink's Adam with NVIDIA's Tegra 2 and Pixel Qi
- Tivit Mobile ATSC DTV adapter
- Ford myFord Touch interface
- Panasonic 15.2" 3D TV
- Toshiba CELL TV with gesture technology
- Freescale Semiconductor Smartbook tablet
- Parrot AR.Drone
- ZOMM mobile phone lease
- Innovative Converged Device (ICD) Vega and Ultra Android Tablets
- Pocket Radar
- Saygus VPhone
- Sharp's QuadPixel technology
- Skype on Panasonic and LG flat panel TVs
- Sony's Dash

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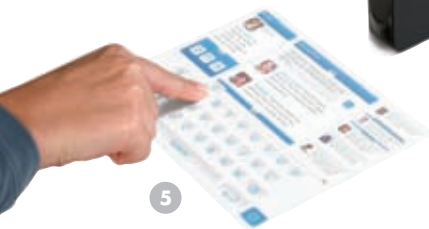
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- 1 Woot! Screaming Monkey with Black Cape — www.wootwholesale.com 2 Liquid Image Co. LLC Underwater Camera Mask — www.liquidimageco.com 3 Arabesque by Crystal Cable Speakers in Natural Glass — www.crystalcable.com/splash.php 4 SANYO's first hybrid pedal assist eBike offers regenerative braking and coasting to efficiently manage energy and allow a smooth, comfortable ride, up to 40 miles per charge! — www.us.sanyo.com 5 Light Blue Optics Unveils Light Touch™ - An Interactive Projector That Turns Any Flat Surface into a Touch Screen — www.lightblueoptics.com 6 Ford Work Solutions In-dash Computer — www.fordworksolutions.com 7 Klipsch LightSpeaker System Architectural Speaker —

PRODUCT HIGHLIGHT



www.klipsch.com/na-en **8** Monster MCC AV55 Home Theater Controller—www.monstercable.com **9** Viper Smart Start from Directed Electronics to start, lock or unlock your car—www.viper.com **10** Sherwood iNet-2.0 Internet Radio, iPod Dock and 8inch Photo display—www.sherwoodusa.com **11** Symwave and XONA Media MK3 kiosk—www.xonamedia.com **12** VIZIO - 72 TruLED Full HD3D HDTV—www.vizio.com **13** Novel E1510 Work Station—www.novelquest.com **14** New 3M Pocket Projector—www.3m.com/mpro **15** Pocket_Radar_Display—www.pocketradar.com | continued on page 32 |



- 1 Turbine Pro Copper Headphones by Monster — www.monstercable.com
- 2 DreamGEAR is producing NASCAR-branded gaming accessories for racing video game titles on the market — www.dreamgear.net
- 3 LG 47-inch LCD HDTV with Slim Full LED Backlight technology and NetCast Entertainment Access — www.lge.com/us
- 4 Parrot AR Drone 22 iPod controlled Copter — www.parrot.com/usa
- 5 Blusens H110_40P - 40" lcd-rtv tv with blu-ray, integrated digital tv — www.blusens.com
- 6 Skype and Panasonic Announce Collaboration to Add Skype Software to VIERA HDTVs — www.panasonic.com
- 7 Optoma PK201 Handheld Projector — www.optomusa.com/index.asp
- 8 Corsair Flash Padlock 2 is perfect for transporting and protecting your sensitive business or personal information — www.corsair.com



10



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15



16

- 9 Microvision SHOWWX Laser Pico Projector — www.microvision.com/showwx 10 Pioneer In-Vehicle Multi-Media Receivers — www.pioneerelectronics.com 11 iA5 is iHome's first ever App-Enhanced alarm clock speaker solution — www.ihomeaudio.com/iA5 12 Touch Revolution reference design for the Nimble Desktop Smartphone — www.touchrev.com 13 Definitive Technology Ultra-thin on-wall speaker Mythos XTR-50 — www.definitivetech.com 14 Skiff Reader, the first e-reader optimized for newspaper and magazine content — www.skiff.com 15 Video Name Tag by Recom Group — www.videonametag.com 16 Nvidia Ultra Android Based tablet — www.nvidia.com/object/tegra_mids.html **RO**



Showroom Spotlight

Allen & Petersen

COOKING & APPLIANCE CENTER

Allen & Petersen Cooking and Appliance Center is a premier cooking solutions provider; in business since the 60's—pleasing customers all over the globe—providing them with both mainstream and upper end appliances, products and services to enhance their cooking experience.



provide the firepower needed to bring dinner to the table quicker and with better results!

Allen & Petersen originally opened a cooking school in 2002 with a desire to help families stay together. To accomplish that, they decided to teach folks how to cook good food - encouraging families to have dinner together once again, have the quality time together they need and develop a love of food. In 2008 they became one of the first Viking Cooking School franchises in the country.

KITCHEN STORE

The idea to provide an experience in cooking as well as creating a shopping environment unlike any in the area was created at the same time as the school. The kitchen store stocks and sells all of the tools that customers need to make great meals easier. Their goal is to become the hardware store for cooks. Leon likes to say that Allen & Petersen is the place where people can come and buy the range to cook on, the pot to cook in, and the hands on “how to” instruction to make it taste great!

KID'S PINT SIZE WORKSHOPS

Allen & Petersen holds Kid's Pint Size Workshops every Saturday morning at both of their stores. Admittance is 2 cans of food or 2 dollars that goes to the Food Bank of Alaska. Parents are required to stay in the store (which many take the opportunity to shop) while their children learn and make a quick recipe (about 45 minutes). The kids have fun (with the hope that this will help to develop a desire to cook—so they will come back and be future Allen & Petersen customers).

ALASKA'S BEST KITCHENS CONTEST SPONSOR

Allen & Petersen's *Alaska's Best Kitchens* magazine, twice a year, sponsors a kitchen design contest focusing on the best kitchens in Alaska. The caveat is that the entrants must have purchased their appliances from Allen & Petersen, which enables them to show off their new kitchen (hopefully encouraging their friends to upgrade their kitchens to “keep up with the Jones”), the designer who designed the kitchen gets to showcase their work where potential clients can learn about them, and customers can see that others are purchasing the same appliances that they are | *continued on page 36* |

Ray Allen and Jack Petersen started Commercial Contractors, Inc. in 1967. During the 1970's the two men purchased Noblecraft Kitchens adding cabinets and major appliances to their product line, officially known as Allen and Petersen Home Decorating Center. In the boom of the early 80's they had six stores in Alaska and Washington. During the “crash” of the Alaska economy in the mid 80's, Allen & Petersen closed all but their Anchorage location—but made it through these very tough times. Jack Petersen, after working closely with Ray Allen for twenty years, bought the operation from his partner in 1985. In 2007, Leon Barbachano, a long time employee who was serving as general manager and CEO, became an owner with Kenny Petersen of the new Allen & Petersen Cooking & Appliance Center.

VIKING COOKING SCHOOL

Through a partnership with Viking, they offer cooking classes that inspire the chef in their customers. Their quality cooking tools help prepare the finest meals easily (it's amazing how the right tool can make all the difference!) as well as the excellent appliances that



considering, which in turn gives them confidence to buy. Appliance Shoppers get a chance to see how an appliance that they are considering purchasing will look installed in a real kitchen (not just a vignette at the store). This has been very successful marketing tool.

Allen & Petersen Cooking and Appliance Centers are located in Anchorage and Wasilla, AK. The retail store has changed from a complete “Home Decorating Center” to a high-end cooking center, no longer selling paint, flooring, and cabinets. Allen & Petersen Cooking and Appliance Center is now Alaska’s premier destination for major appliances, small kitchen appliances, cooking utensils, and cooking classes. **RO**



Tax Preparation Tools for Small Business From The IRS

APRIL 15TH IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER – ARE YOU PREPARED?

The IRS has many different online tools to assist your business, all which can be found at www.irs.gov.

SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP

There is a great Virtual Small Business Workshop, www.tax.gov/virtualworkshop, which walks you through setting up taxes for your business, what you need to know about a home-based business, retirement planning and payroll taxes.

E-NEWS

You can sign up for the e-newsletter that comes out with important upcoming tax dates for Small Business/Self Employed customers, website updates, and tips for businesses. The link to subscribe is: www.irs.gov/taxpros/providers/article/0,,id=208260,00.html

CALENDAR

A great tool is a calendar that shows the dates various forms and taxes need to be filed. It also has tips on business expenses you can deduct, retirement ideas, and your rights as a taxpayer. You can view the calendar or download it at www.tax.gov/calendar.

TAX CENTERS

You can also find information related specifically to your business on the Industries/Professions page. The link for the Tax Centers is: www.irs.gov/businesses/small/industries/index.html

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

The Small Business Resources page links to over a dozen sites that focus on small businesses.

Check out the small business television site that is devoted exclusively to providing engaging streaming video content to small businesses at www.sbtv.com.

STARTING, OPERATING AND CLOSING A BUSINESS

This website has just about everything you need to know to start, operate and close a business: www.irs.gov/smallbiz.



Tao of the N

THE SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS CONSUMER MATRIX



The
•
Way
•
Path
•
Route
•
Principle
•
Doctrine
•
True Nature
of the World

The collapse of the global economic system has led to a major impact on the life style of the American consumer on the whole. A word that was once associated with an older generation has become the watch word of the new economy, “Frugality”. Everyone is looking over their collective shoulder, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Will I have my job next year or even next month...my 401k is useless, my savings account is near empty and I have no way to cover tuition for the kids next semester. In other words...every penny counts.

A new, socially aware consumer matrix has formed from the ashes of the current economic collapse, the Socially Conscience Consumer or [SoCon]. SoCons know what it means to be self-sufficient, a consumer who understands that the purchases they make and the products that they choose have a profound impact on the world around them, both economically as well as environmentally.

They feel that they have too much “stuff” and that they are prisoners of their possessions and that they had fallen victim to easy credit and the siren song of mass-consumption. Today they will no longer cave-in to their old buying habits. The SoCon wants to experience life and not just fill space around them with things. Now every purchase must be weighed and evaluated.

The SoCon has risen from this economic disaster and is emerging as a survivor, not as a victim. They feel good about themselves and most of all they feel good about the future. Like the economic collapse of the 1970’s and 1990’s, the SoCon will enter into an age of great opportunity and great possibilities. This new consumer feels empowered and they have the confidence to take on the future. They believe that tomorrow will be better than today, as they focus on what’s good about life, rather than what’s not.

MARKETING TO THE SO-CON

So what drives the Social-Conscious Consumer? To the SoCon it’s all about lifestyle, it’s not about owning—it’s about living. If stress and anxiety were the bi-products of the post-economic collapse, then nothing will be more coveted by the SoCon than a safe haven where they can gather and commune with family and friends.

ew Economy

FORMED FROM THE CURRENT ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

To market and outreach to this new consumer, we must first understand who this New Consumer is and what motivates them to buy. The Socially Conscience Consumer will no longer be goaded and coerced by peer pressure or ego-based advertising in order to “keep up with the Joneses”, but have moved to a position of self-reflection and social responsibility with a simple and direct battle cry of “Do I really need this?”

At the core of marketing to the SoCon is “justification”. Justification such as value, craftsmanship and sustainability are the underlying motivation of SoCon purchasing. These justifiers are used as rational excuses to give oneself permission to buy. The overriding justifier behind all-discretionary spending is to improve the quality of life of the individual, of the family and ultimately of the species and planet. So instead of a discount or promotion, these companies should focus on “justification” and align themselves with the needs of their end consumer. The SoCon wants a better, more satisfying, fulfilling life and they will search out and attain those items, services and companies to fulfill that need.

The SoCon offers no apology for their beliefs. They want to make a difference. They want to know that what they purchase is eco-sensitive and that the companies they purchase from have a community as well as a global agenda. They are making a stand...not in the streets with pitch-fork and torch, but with their hard earned and harder kept dollars. They are no longer brand loyal, but seek brands that exemplify the new social contract and will hold them accountable. They believe that traditional indicators of value are important. To the SoCon, products must be sold through a trusted name, be of superior workmanship and must commit to a

higher standard that contributes to the global good. They look at labels and check out web-sites and align themselves with those companies that embody their beliefs and values.

THE NEW ECONOMY

Darwin is often mis-quoted; it is not the survival of the fittest, but rather the survival through adaptation. How do we adapt to the new economy, how must we change to survive the current market conditions?

First we need to re-think our products and services in this new economy, our clients are looking for value, not just a deal or cheaper materials—they are looking for real value from their ever shrinking dollar. The SoCon will invest a few dollars more for something that was built to last and not have to be repaired or replaced in a year or two. This will be the undoing of the “iconic” brands as they lower the bar to compete on the open market. If it is about price, they will lose, especially if they lose their perceived value. But to the affluent consumer, the brand must embody the new social contract. Wealth is no longer about things or logos or a brand name...true wealth is about giving back to the community, to the country...to the planet. The things they will purchase today must reflect the greater social good—from the clothes they wear, to the coffee they drink, to the car they drive, to the kitchen that defines their home—each purchase must reflect a social return on investment by the company or manufacturer.

Retailers need a direction as many are following the same path as if there was no change in the market. Like the U.S. Auto Industry, the American Appliance Industry is like an elephant on roller-skates and has failed to make the turn and is still marketing to

| *continued on page 40* |

the old matrix, while smaller, socially and globally conscious companies are nibbling at the edges of the empire.

THE SO-CON MARKETING MANIFESTO

To balance desire through social responsibility

To consume knowingly as well as selectively

To create a point of purchase based upon meaning

That innovation leads to responsible consumption

That the process is as important as the product

To embrace the limited use of natural resources through responsible means

To commit to a policy of “continuous improvement”

To partner with like-minded companies, organizations and individuals

To understand that the individual and the choices they make lead to change

To commit to protect the endangered, to make others aware, to cause change through action

TAO— While the character itself translates as ‘way’, ‘path’, or ‘route’, or sometimes more loosely as ‘doctrine’ or ‘principle’. It is often used philosophically to signify the fundamental or true nature of the world.

Be the company that cares, who understands and feels the pain the consumer is feeling. These are emotional times. Consumers are leery and more than a little shell-shocked from what they have been through. The SoCon will use their limited resources as a “currency of consciousness” to leverage a greener and more sustainable tomorrow. What can you do to meet the client half way? How can you be the company that “gets it”? **RO**

Designer, writer and speaker, Kevin M. Henry has been a “thought-leader” to the kitchen industry for over 30 years and is sought out for his views and observations regarding market trends and industry direction. His blog, The Essential Kitchen, is followed world-wide by both consumers as well as industry and media leaders. Kevin is invited to speak internationally on a wide range of topics, including luxury branding, sustainable kitchen design and market trends. Mr. Henry has been behind the success of such iconic brands as Snaidero, Poliform/Varenna, Kippfersbusch and ALNO in North America. He is the Executive VP at Bazzeo, an eco-centric kitchen collection. kevin@bazzeo.com, www.bazzeo.com, www.theessentialkitchen.blogspot.com.



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Take the Bull by the Horns

Although we're beginning to see signs of improvement, there is no imminent return to business as it once was. Consumer confidence hasn't rebounded, unemployment remains high and there's general fear and malaise out there. Margins and prices continue to erode as your big box competitors fight for increased market share.

In order to win in this climate, your response must be new, fresh and different.

Re-merchandise your product assortment. The shift to thrift is real and will probably last a few years. You'll never be able to move a customer up to a profit piece if all they see are high priced models. Look at your merchandise mix and make sure you have low-priced leaders, some mid-priced step-up products as well as fully featured items. In every category, be sure you have at least one product that is priced as low as your competitors.

Target your marketing. The old adage about half your advertising being wasted is truer now than ever. But today, it's easier to promote to those consumers most likely to be your buyers. Instead of running ROP ads, you can select zip codes that mirror customers who buy from you. You can use cable to advertise on programs watched by younger customers. Direct mail can be dropped to homes most likely to need the kinds of products you sell.

Harness the web. Although the number of customers actually buying on the Internet is not growing rapidly,

the majority of shoppers are turning to the web for information before going to the store. On a robust website the smallest dealer can appear as large and professional as his biggest competitor.

Use the web to drive traffic into your store. Email campaigns to customers who have opted in to your list are inexpensive and effective. Offer specials to those on your list that aren't promoted anywhere else. Use discount coupons. Create newsletters to announce new products and to give helpful information about use and care of products, recipes and even upcoming community events.

Create online communities. Independents are starting to see real results from their Facebook and Twitter pages. Others have started blogs to keep connected with their customers.

Create exciting events. Customers are driven by well-staged, well promoted retail events. Every holiday is a reason to party; anniversary, truckload and tent sales still create traffic. Ask your vendors for special items to promote and extra advertising funds. Don't forget private VIP customer sales to give special buying opportunities to customers who have stuck with you through the years.

Energize your sales team. With fewer customers to talk to, it's easy for sales associates to become complacent and frustrated. They may approach customers with the old, tired "can I help you?" and fail to really engage the prospect as a potential buyer. Hold more sales contests—for the most items on a ticket on a given day, for the first sale of the morning, for the most

extended warranties sold in a week, for the highest gross margin. Change it up and make it fun. Got attitude? Get it off your floor. Poor attitudes are contagious and you can't afford to have anything but smiling, cheerful people in front of your customers.

Make training a new priority. Go back to the basics and ask your associates to go through your selling skills program again. Ask each one to conduct a portion of it as a refresher at your weekly meetings. Ask your vendors to come in to help refresh your product skills. Insist that their presentations be based on benefits, not on features.

As a way of announcing his retirement to my brother and me, my Dad said, "this is my seventh—and last—business downturn." His point was that business cycles. The good times are frequently followed by tougher ones. But eventually, our consumers want and need the things we offer them. You can't just wait out the economy; you must be proactive to ensure that you get a bigger piece of the smaller pie.

Perhaps you'll look back and see how much you learned and changed; how you took the bull by the horns; how your skills grew and how you were able to succeed where others failed. **RO**

*Elly Valas is an author, retail consultant and speaker. She is the co-author of *Guerrilla Retailing*. She can be contacted at elhy@ellyvalas.com or visit her website: www.ellyvalas.com.*





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Bad Bosses: Don't Be One

It's no surprise that "The Devil Wears Prada," was a hit, both in book and film format. Anyone who has ever held a job has a story to tell about a boss who could probably rival Prada's Miranda Priestly, aptly described as "the boss from hell."

The toll those bosses take on the people they manage and the organizations they represent, is impossible to measure, both in terms of dollars and morale. I would guess that bad bosses are the major cause of employee turnover. The number one reason employees leave their jobs is not because of money, it's because they work for bad bosses and don't feel valued and appreciated.

Often, people are promoted to leadership positions, not because of their skill in managing people but because they are technically proficient at their current jobs. In many cases, they were never trained on how to be a boss, how to coach employees, and how to encourage superior performance. They don't understand the importance of morale in improving performance and increasing productivity.

Too often people are promoted for all the wrong reasons. They are technically skilled, they have been with the organization for many years, or they are friends with the boss. None of these is a valid reason for promoting someone. Why? None of them has anything to do with leadership skills.

Instead, organizations should promote those people who are skilled, self-motivated, and are willing to learn, then train them. Good people skills are a critical trait for a good boss. No one is

born with the skills necessary to lead people. They must be trained in how to motivate, recognize—and, yes, even reprimand—employees, all in an effort to form a cohesive and effective team. These are skills that must be taught and reinforced.

HERE ARE MY SIX SUGGESTIONS FOR BEING THE BEST BOSS POSSIBLE:

- **Train yourself—and your employees**
Read books on management, buy training programs or enroll in workshops and seminars that will help you become the type of leader you would like to work for. Train your employees—when you invest the time and money to do so, you are letting them know that you value them.
- **Communicate clearly and regularly**
Employees perform best when they know exactly what is expected of them and are given feedback that is specific, sincere, and timely. Two-way communication is important. When you let employees know that you are willing to listen to what they have to say, they will open up to you—and who knows what wonderful ideas they might have to share.
- **Treat your employees with respect**
Employees, no matter how menial the job or low the pay, deserve to be treated with respect.
- **Recognize employees' contributions**
People need to be caught doing great things. Too often, the only time

employees are recognized are when they make a mistake. But, if you make it a point to praise them—and do so in public—they will continue to work hard for you. People are hungry for recognition and will accomplish significantly more if they receive it on a regular basis.

- **Motivate your employees**

Too many managers think money is the ultimate motivator; it isn't. Nothing is more effective in motivating an employee than a pat on the back, a simple 'thank you,' or a public word of praise.

- **Coach your employees**

If you want to have a winning team, you must coach each member. You must nurture them. Recognize their strengths and help them to improve on their weaknesses.

When you treat employees with respect, communicate openly and honestly, and coach them to do the best job possible, you not only will be a good boss, but you will increase your chances of being promoted to even higher positions within the organization. It's a win/win situation. **RO**

John Tschohl - described by Time and Entrepreneur magazines as a customer service guru, is also an International strategist and speaker. He can be contacted at John@servicequality.com



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Asymmetric Advertising

In this day and age of social media this and customer engagement that, plain old advertising has taken a hit, and for good reason. It's expensive. It's a wasteful shotgun approach that reaches a lot of non-customers. There are countless other ads in the same medium, competing for consumers' attention. People are getting better and better at tuning it out.

But there is one form of advertising that overcomes many of the barriers above, and might just be a creative, innovative way you can build your brand recognition. I call it "Asymmetric Advertising." The idea is to advertise in ways and/or places that deliver maximum impact with a minimum of competition. In other words, instead of advertising in newspapers or on the radio, where everyone else is, advertise in places where no one else is.

I saw an example of this recently while going through security at the Nashville airport. At the bottom of the bins where you place your shoes and belt and laptop and one-quart plastic bags with toothpaste and shaving cream, was an ad for online shoe retailer Zappos.com. Brilliant! At a time when people are thinking about their shoes, they see an ad for a place to buy new ones.

Another example I read about comes from Miller Brewing. When the company launched its MGD 64 low-calorie beer, one of the places they advertised was on the paper

covers of coat hangers from dry cleaners. Genius! A product targeted at women—who, let's face it, handle the majority of dry cleaner interactions—advertised in a place to uniquely fitted to capture their attention.

In both of these examples, the advertisers were able to reach a somewhat targeted audience, likely at a lower cost than conventional advertising, in a medium with no competition for other advertisers. In other words, they were able to get an asymmetric share of consumers' attention.

You can use this strategy on a local level, and you don't need the budget of Zappos or Miller. The possibilities are almost endless. It just requires a little creativity and a willingness to partner with other companies in your area. Below are a few ideas that I hope inspire you to think creatively, in order to come up with some ideas of your own.

- **Pizza Boxes.** Try partnering with a local pizza joint to sponsor their pizza delivery boxes. You could have your logo and Web site printed on the boxes, or even attach flyers with special offers or invitations to join a Facebook group. This could be ideal for a kitchen appliance retailer or designer.
- **Yard Waste Bags.** In the spring and summer, people in many parts of the nation will put their yard waste in large paper bags and leave

them on the curb. These bags are often emblazoned with the logo of a Big Box retailer. Why not print some of these bags yourself and distribute them in certain neighborhoods?

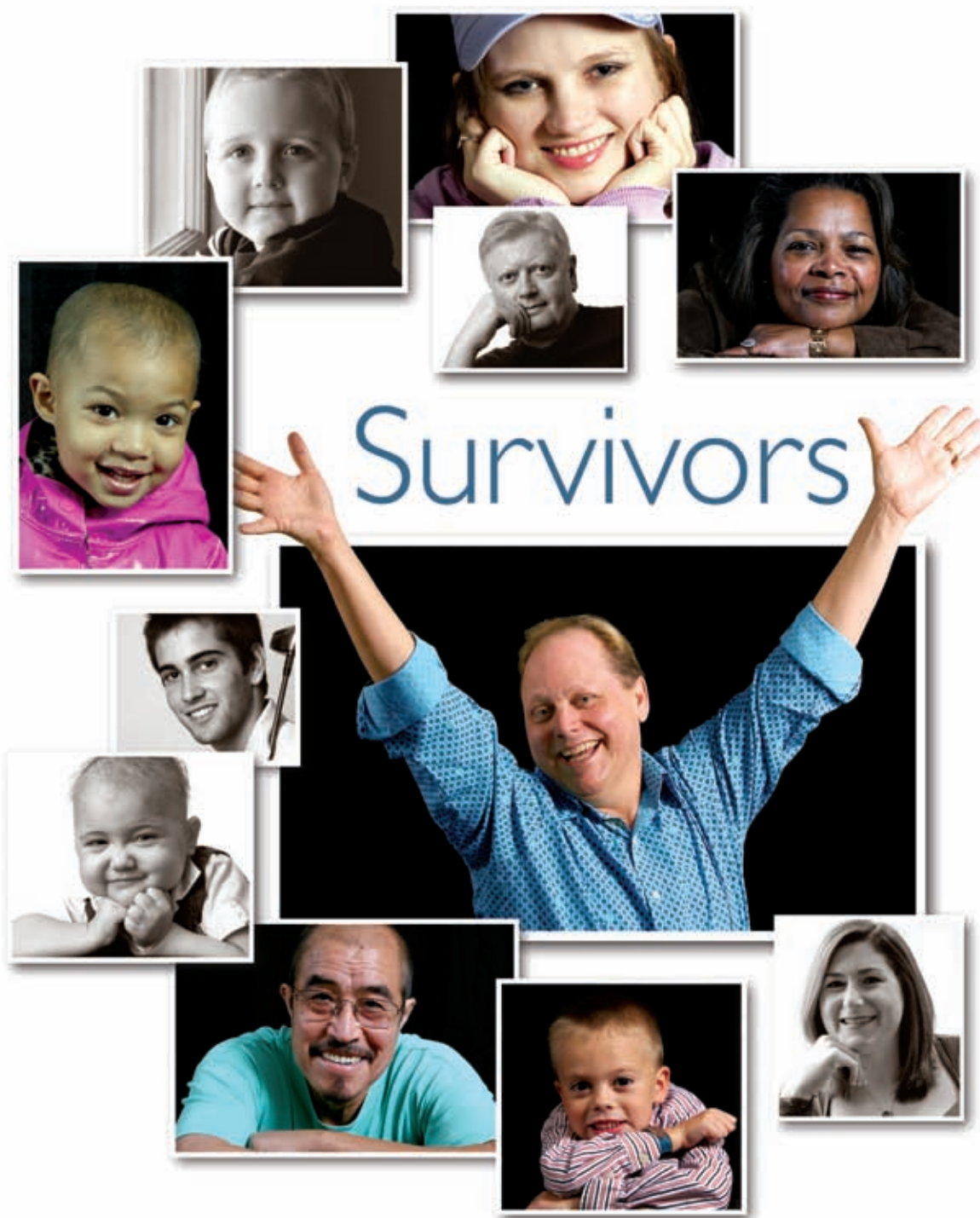
- **Reusable Grocery Bags.** As people become more environmentally conscious, they are using reusable bags for their grocery shopping. Problem is, people don't want to pay for the bags. So why not approach a local gourmet grocery store with an offer to supply them with bags featuring your brand messaging to give to their customers?
- **Car Floor Mats.** Many auto repair shops will place paper floor mats in cars they repair as a courtesy to customers. Maybe you can offer to offset their costs by printing these mats for them.

If you have used asymmetric advertising, or just have an idea, I invite you to share it on my blog, or on *The Retail Observer* group on LinkedIn. You don't have to give away any secrets, but by sharing your ideas, you might inspire others and you might get some inspiration yourself. **RO**

BUILD

Christopher Thiede owns BUILD Communications, a branding and PR firm. Read Chris' blog at www.buildcommunications.com.





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undo...Undo!...UNDO!!! Ctrl/Alt/Delete?

Many people have a recurring nightmare when it comes to computers. Those seemingly harmless series of keystrokes that unleashes the hidden command to undo countless hours of hard work, and initiates the proverbial “blue screen of death” upon which our systems and our psyche may never recover (insert sinister laugh here). I hit save didn't I? It seems amazing that a device which has permeated every facet of our lives continues to reign as a symbol of fear, frustration and confusion for so many. Maybe these irrational fears stem from the days of DOS commands like *.delete? You remember, this was like the Houdini of DOS command lines—here you have stuff on your hard drive... presto! Now you don't. Maybe it simply lies with our own personal computing experiences where we have failed to hit save before shutting down and the critical file we need for the meeting is now lost forever. Lesson learned. I know you're now religiously backing up your hard drive every week... aren't you?

IN THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF HOMER SIMPSON: “D’OH!”

Certainly losing the presentation file for tomorrow's meeting raises the stress level. Now, think of yourself as a business owner who has the fate of their company, and the job security of every employee influenced by the decision to purchase and implement a system that can cost anywhere from several thousand dollars to several hundred thousand dollars or

more. You can skip the cardio today, your heart rate is already elevated (besides, it's March and the gym membership was a distant memory in February).

NOTHING TO SEE HERE FOLKS...
KEEP IT MOVING

The inherent stress of making a decision involving large sums of money, coupled with a device that has been historically unreliable, unpredictable, and downright mysterious will lead many to the ledge hoping someone will ultimately talk them down. Let's face it, the real stress in pulling the trigger on a few hundred thousand dollars has less to do with the amount of money invested in your business, and more to do with the thought of spending a ton of dough on... dare I say it... a computer system. Really? Can't we just tweak a few more years out of the box we already have? You know the answer to that question. Minor enhancements and tweaks aren't going to solve your problem. So now what?

TIME FOR THE NIKE PLAN: JUST DO IT!

“Just do it” sounds good when you're trying to decide on signing up for a half marathon or grappling with the guilt of ordering cheese fries, but not when you are making a decision that will either drive process efficiency across every function of your business, or potentially suck the life right out of you, your employees, and your bottom line. We have spent the last several months writing articles detailing the need

for due diligence, business process analysis, and ROI rationalization. These are the tools of the trade used to analyze the software options that are available... and there are a lot of options. The landscape is confusing, and you must use a methodical approach to insure the best possible fit for your business need.

DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME FOLKS, WE ARE PROFESSIONALS...

I am certainly not advocating the gratuitous plug for business here... oh, what the heck. Hiring a consultant that understands the complex landscape (and believe me, we live it here at R2), is a practical approach to not only streamlining the process to finding the right solution for your business, but can insure that you employ a project methodology to insure success with a very complex and risky investment. Business software solutions don't come with an undo button. Failure to effectively analyze and implement the best solution can cost you a lot more than living with a bad system... it can literally kill your business. Undo doesn't work in the real world. Hire the professionals, and rest easy. **RO**

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It's Time to Maximize the Customer

If you listen to the evening news, you'll hear that we're in a recovery. There's been help for the big boys on Wall Street, but down here on Main Street where our customers are, I think you'll agree, the situation is a little different. The signs are there that the crisis is improving, but we're not out of the woods yet.

Let me share an interesting statistic from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, a non-profit research organization. They confirmed something that I have been preaching for quite some time; that the average independent store is outperforming the chain stores by a significant amount. I believe the reason for that is the independent knows their customer and market much better than the chain store ever could.

An article in *USA Today* quoted Janet Hoffman, Accenture's global retail managing partner, saying, "Retailing must go back to its roots. Know the customer, and offer unique products or services."

THE NEED TO SELL MORE - EVERY TIME, TO EVERY CUSTOMER

At the same time that retail is searching out its roots, customer confidence is eroding. Fearing layoffs, inflation and general economic upheaval, new customers are going to be harder to attract than ever before. Retailers need to increase the emphasis on cost consciousness; having that perfectly priced item that will lure the wary customer into the store. They need to

MAXIMIZE EVERY CUSTOMER, and by that I mean, getting the most out of every customer by selling promotional goods and multiple items, as well as suggesting more ideas and products they would be interested in—than we have ever done in the past.

Maximizing the customer also means selling them our better merchandise, as well as realizing that the focus on value shopping doesn't mean spending fewer dollars -- it means spending each dollar wisely, realizing maximum value from each. You can sell the better dishwasher for example, because the customer believes they'll get longer use of it, and that it's of a higher quality than the less expensive alternative and therefore a better investment of their hard earned dollars.

PINPOINT MARKETING EFFORTS

Collect as much data about the customer as possible and add them to your data base with more than just an email address. Collect information on them including prior purchases, what they have the ability to buy from you, when they are most likely to buy, and how to best reach them. Social networking has also become more and more prominent, presenting a prime opportunity for retailers to transform customers into fans. Participating in online communities such as Facebook and Twitter allows your customers to connect, share information, learn about new products, and really become part of

a larger community centered around your industry in general and your store specifically; this is the beginning of maximizing the customer. When those customers recommend their friends to your store, acting as advocates for your merchandise and service, they've truly been maximized!

Our customers are engaging with our front line employees—so we have to make sure our cashiers, clerks, and everyone else in the store understands the value of connections. This is critical for pinpoint marketing efforts; customers are expecting offers to be personally relevant. You can't be personally relevant if you're sending emails to someone you know nothing about! When you hire, it means employing the right people who know how to *maximize not minimize* the customer service experience.

The consumer is in the hunt for the best buy of the day—and we, as business people, are in the hunt to attract new customers and keep them buying, time and time again. It all starts with the attitude of *maximizing every customer*.

So tell me, how many customers have you *maximized* today? **RO**

Rick Segel, author of *The Retail Kit for Dummies*, helps retailers and vendors partner so everyone sells more! Visit Rick's website at www.ricksegel.com



be inspired

Show: April 16-18, 2010

Conference: April 14-18, 2010

McCormick Place - Chicago, IL



KBIS.com

New product debuts offer a key reason why kitchen and bath professionals make the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show the event to attend year after year. If you're serious about the kitchen and bath industry, there's no better investment you can make in your business than KBIS 2010.

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Be Ins

K/BIS OFFERS ESSENTIAL MARKETING FEATURING INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS, EDUCATION

Now in its 47th year as the world's largest international trade show event dedicated to its industry, the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (K/BIS) will be held at McCormick Place in Chicago on April 16-18, 2010. The must-attend event brings together the industry's top dealers, designers, builders, remodelers, retailers, and other professionals directly involved in the design and remodel of residential kitchens and bathrooms. The nearly 350,000-square-foot expo space at K/BIS is complemented by a full conference program, which is led by top industry leaders and offers vital networking opportunities.

"With consumers growing savvier than ever when it comes to home improvement, K/BIS offers its attendees and exhibitors an unparalleled opportunity to get a leg-up on the competition by showcasing the latest products and trends in the marketplace," said Mark Karas, 2010 president of the NKBA.

SHOW HIGHLIGHT

The theme for this year's show, "be inspired," aims to stimulate kitchen and bath industry professionals as the nation slowly works out of an almost two-year long economic recession. "We want to inspire people who may have been sitting on the sidelines waiting for things to get better to really look at the possibilities for growth in this industry, and get them back on their feet," said Brian Pagel, vice president of the Kitchen and Bath Group at Nielsen Business Media. "We're trying to stress that the fundamentals of the kitchen and bath industry are still very strong and there's a bright future ahead, while at the same time, we seek to arm our audience with the skills and knowledge they need for added growth."

Show highlights this year include the Design Idea Center and Center Stage, housed within the NKBA's 13,000-square-foot booth in the center of the trade show floor. At the Design Idea Center, attendees can peruse some of the latest and most innovative products in the marketplace to boost their own

creative and business ideas.

Next door, Center Stage houses some of the conference's smaller educational sessions and networking opportunities that are all free of charge. Attendees can earn continuing education units (CEUs) by attending the sessions, which feature topics and speakers including "Designing Kitchens for Gourmet Chefs" by Anne Burrell, host of Food Network's *Secrets of a Restaurant Chef*, as well as "Right-Sizing Your Home & Your Business" by former Home magazine Editor-in-Chief Gale Stevens and "What Drives Building Innovation" by Broan-Nutone Director Thomas Schuler, in addition to many more.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

The keynote speaker for K/BIS 2010 will be Sergio Zyman, the world's first-ever chief marketing officer, a position which he formerly held with The Coca-Cola Company. Complimentary to attend with show floor admission, the opening ceremony will feature Zyman kick off K/BIS with opening remarks from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on Friday, April 16, 2010.

This year marks a special year for both Zyman and K/BIS, as the 30-year marketing guru plans to direct his focus toward the importance of self-marketing and improved sales strategies. In the past, keynote speakers have traditionally focused on leadership issues, but this year, sales and marketing topics are more important than ever for kitchen and bath businesses and professionals as the nation comes off a dampening economic recession. "Zyman's speech will be targeted to a specific audience this year," said Bill Darcy, senior manager of marketing for the NKBA. "His focus on rebuilding business goes along with the entire theme of the 2010 show."



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AND SALES SOLUTIONS IN CHICAGO ANNUAL SESSIONS & NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM

With panels, sessions, interactive seminars and courses, the programming at this year's K/BIS spans the kitchen and bath industry with exclusive presentations by some of the nation's top designers, builders, retailers, and other executives and professionals.

This year's conference program is broken down into four "Knowledge Paths" that include: Business and Leadership, Trends and Insight, Design and Inspiration, and Sales and Marketing. The four paths each contain a variety of panels, presentations, courses and other educational sessions related to their particular fields, which present opportunities for attendees to receive credited CEUs.

Among the nearly 30 educational programs, some key topics and presenters include: "The Green Competitive Edge" led by Jack Thomasson, host of HGTV's Dream Home and Green Home, who demystifies the green trend and shares tips for incorporating eco-friendly components into great home designs; the Builders/

Remodelers Seminar led by Bill Rancic, the first winner of NBC's *The Apprentice*, who will use his entrepreneurial insight to discuss how builders and remodelers can succeed in business and life; and David Kohler, president and chief operating officer of Kohler Co., who will provide the State of the Industry Address and an overview of product design, technology, and sustainable design in his presentation titled, "The Road Ahead for the Industry."

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

K/BIS offers a variety of exciting networking opportunities for attendees to both forge new relationships

and strengthen existing ones. Other than interactions taking place on the show floor and in conference rooms, structured opportunities include an International Reception, which is a complimentary networking event for all foreign attendees and exhibitors, NKBA Town Hall meeting, and other special events. "You can talk on the phone all year long, but only once a year can business colleagues meet face-to-face and develop new connections with dealers, specifiers, buyers, and other professionals all in one spot," Pagel said.

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) is a non-profit trade association and owner of K/BIS, sponsored by Kitchen and Bath Business (K+BB) magazine, and produced by Nielsen Business Media, the show is expected to draw more than 30,000 attendees, along with nearly 700 exhibitors made up of the largest kitchen and bath manufacturers in the world. With nearly 40,000 members, the NKBA has educated and led the kitchen and bath industry for more than 45 years. The mission of the NKBA is to enhance member success and excellence, promote professionalism and ethical business practices, and provide leadership and direction for the kitchen and bath industry worldwide. NKBA members span 11 kitchen and bath industry segments, including builder/remodeler, cabinet shop, dealer, distributor, decorative plumbing and hardware, designer, fabricator, multi-branch retailer, installer, manufacturer and manufacturer's representative, many of whom attend or exhibit at KBIS each year. For more information, visit www.NKBA.org or call 1-800-THE-NKBA (843-6522).

ABOUT NIELSEN BUSINESS MEDIA

Nielsen Business Media produces more than 50 conferences and trade shows annually for professionals in fields ranging from construction and design to jewelry and retail merchandising, reaching thousands of industry leaders each year in collaborative environments | *continued on page 62* |



2010 •

UPCOMING EVENTS

• 2010

MARCH

11-13

HPB EXPO

(Hearth, Patio & Barbecue)
Orange County Convention Center
ORLANDO, FL
www.hpbexpo.com

11-14

MEGA GROUP USA SPRING NATIONAL CONVENTION

Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel
ORLANDO, FL
www.megagroupusa.com

14-16

INTERNATIONAL HOME & HOUSEWARES SHOW 2010

McCormick Place
CHICAGO, IL
www.housewares.org

15-16

2010 HIGH POINT PRE-MARKET

High Point Furniture Market
HIGH POINT, NC
www.highpointmarket.org

24-27

EHX ELECTRONIC HOUSE EXPO

Orange County Convention Center
ORLANDO, FL
www.ehxweb.com

27-31

BRANDSOURCE SUMMIT CONVENTION

Hilton Anatole
DALLAS, TX
www.brandsourceconvention.com

APRIL

7-10

NARI NATIONAL SPRING BUSINESS MEETING

Wyndham Phoenix Hotel
PHOENIX, AZ
www.nari.org

10

NARI - EVENING OF EXCELLENCE

Wyndham Phoenix Hotel
PHOENIX, AZ
www.nari.org

14-18

K/BIS 2010

McCormick Place
CHICAGO, IL
www.kbis.com

17-20

2010 NARMS SPRING CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

Saddlebrook Resort
WESLEY CHAPEL, NC
www.narms.com

17-22

SPRING MARKET

High Point Furniture Market
HIGH POINT, NC
www.highpointmarket.org

25-26

2010 AHAM ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

Wigwam Hotel
LITCHFIELD PARK, AZ
www.aham.org

MAY

4-6

NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW

Las Vegas Convention Center
LAS VEGAS, NV
www.nationalhardwareshow.com

18-20

TOP TO TOP EXECUTIVE BUSINESS CONFERENCE

Renaissance Chicago Hotel
CHICAGO, IL
www.narms.com

JUNE

9-11

PCBC 2010 CONFERENCE

Moscone Center,
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
www.pcbc.com

15-17

E3 EXPO 2010

Los Angeles Convention Center
LOS ANGELES, CA
www.e3expo.com

JULY

22-24

SEBC GREEN BUILDING SHOW

Orange County Convention
Center
ORLANDO, FL
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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, Associations, Distributors and Manufacturers - Please submit your event schedules to production@retailobserver.com at least two months prior to the date so it may be included in our Upcoming Events Calendar. To receive *The Retail Observer* in print version, please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.





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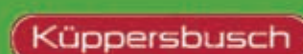


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The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

An old adage says that the only things we can be certain will stay the same, are that things will continue to change. That's true in many aspects of life and it is certainly true in the appliance service industry. In the December issue Service News of *The Retail Observer*, I wrote about the importance of the various players inside the independent service industry, learning to work together to accomplish common objectives. The argument was that if this doesn't happen, national retail and service organizations would continue to exploit the weaknesses of independents, and possibly make them a thing of the past.

On the battlefield of big box retail, power players the likes of Lowes, Home Depot, Best Buy and a bevy of regional power retailers, have long aimed their big guns of deep pockets at each other and pulled the trigger—seemingly casting the notion of profit margin aside for the privilege of writing the sales invoice. While each of these companies certainly has their own unique go-to-market strategy, the bottom line is that their offerings are all price point driven. Well, at least they were...

This past fall, Lowes announced they are launching a new initiative called Lowes Service Advantage, (LSA). LSA is a multi-phase appliance service initiative that will give them a significant edge on the retail floor - and will at least initially, create new service opportunities

for select independent servicers.

Phase 1, beginning soon, will focus solely on store displays and customer returns and will give independent servicers the option of servicing the products in their shop or on-site at Lowes locations. Phase 2, scheduled for the 4th quarter of this year, will expand the LSA offering to consumers in the home. While there is no confirmation of such, it's not too much of a stretch to imagine that there is a Phase 3 on a drawing board somewhere inside Lowes headquarters in Mooresville, NC, that will bring Lowes operated service to metropolitan markets sometime in the future.

When independents are asked what this means for them, many will flippantly cast this information aside with a statement that a big box retailer will never be able to effectively, let alone profitably, execute something as complex as appliance service. This could very well be a fatal mistake. Lowes has repeatedly demonstrated that they do a very good job of outsourcing services. If any big box can administer appliance service and do it well, Lowes can.

Servicers presented with the opportunity to contract with LSA must truly analyze the opportunity from a business perspective to determine if it is a good move for their business. Emotional responses, while understandable, may prevent a company from taking advantage of a good business proposition.

It would appear that service only companies have little to lose through a relationship with Lowes as long as agreeable rates can be agreed upon and everyone keeps their end of the deal. The only watch-out may be that if Phase 3 above comes to fruition, and Lowes knows who all the good techs are, independents could find themselves fighting to keep employees.

In most examples servicing dealers will not be giving the opportunity to contract with LSA due to the competition factor. However, many servicing dealers have been approached. Many have flatly refused with no interest to help a competitor, while others have signed. For those that have signed the rationale has often been; 1) The work pays well, especially for shop work. 2) The work can be used to train novice techs on current products, and. 3) If they don't do it, someone else will.

The coming months and years will show what Lowes' contributions to the industry mean to the rest of us. As independents we must assess our threats and opportunities, and the companies do the best job of telling the difference will win. **RO**

*J.R. Zirkebach, Director of BrandSource Service.
BSS: Bringing profitability to the independent services.
For more information, call 714.502.9620 or e-mail services@brandservice.com*





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1.



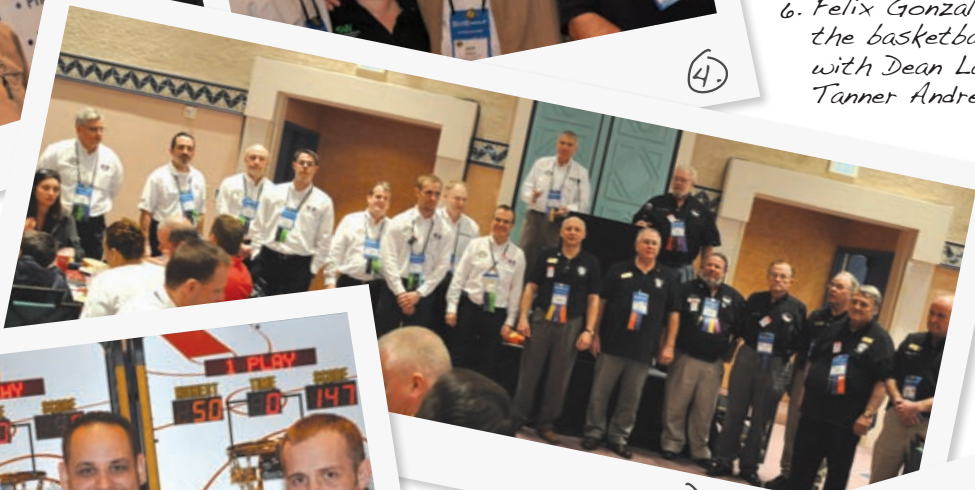
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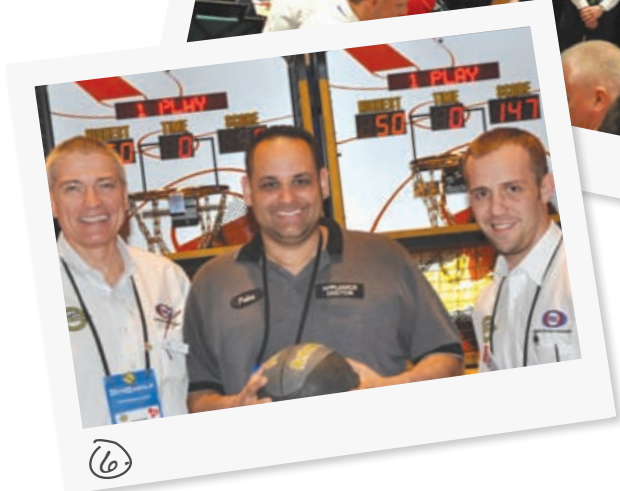
3.



4.



5.



6.

ASTI 2010 THE APPLIANCE SERVICE TRAINING INSTITUTE

1. Don Holman and Dean Landers addressing the crowd
2. Will the real Mr. Appliance please stand up?
3. Chuck Webb and Shawn Connely of APD
4. Seamus Wardkowski and Amanda Root of Drive My Profits with Jeff Morgan of A & E Factory Service and Michael Willsher of Page Hardware & Appliance Co
5. USA vs SPA in a game of "Capture the Flag"
6. Felix Gonzalas, winner of the basketball shootout, with Dean Landers and Tanner Andrews



BrandSource Summit! Excitement Grows

EDUCATIONAL FOCUS ON DIGITAL MARKETING,
CUSTOMER SERVICE AND CUSTOM INSTALLATIONS

BrandSource, Home Entertainment Source, the consumer electronics specialty division of BrandSource and TRIB, The Rental Industry Buying Group; join forces once again in Dallas, Texas at the end of March to welcome 2,000 members in three days of educational seminars, how-to workshops, along with two days of outstanding deals during the buying fair. It's time for the Summit!

Digital marketing is a series of evolving marketing tools that are in constant flux, yet these are areas of marketing that cannot be ignored. The tools include social media marketing, online video marketing, Email Marketing, Keyword search marketing and more. "Our members are interested in some or all of these new marketing tools," said Bob Donaldson, general manager Digital Marketing for BrandSource. "Most independent retailers are too busy running their business to focus on new areas of marketing. The presenters for Digital Marketing will bring the level of understanding and need to a level all members will be able to understand and implement. "BrandSource members are excited to learn more about these new avenues of marketing and are looking forward to learning how to quickly implement them.

BRANDSOURCE & JOHN FORCE TO GIVE AWAY A FORD FIESTA

BrandSource members will once again feature a John Force and Ford Motor Company sweepstakes awarding a Ford Fiesta. Registration forms are available at every BrandSource store and available on line at www.brandsource.com.

BRANDSOURCE CONTINUES TO GO GREEN

BrandSource and its members are continuing a tradition of being environmentally friendly again in 2010, following a year where nearly every major appliance consumer rebate was focused on ENERGY STAR® appliances. "In 2009 BrandSource focused its

efforts on ENERGY STAR major appliances by providing consumer rebates only on ENERGY STAR products each month," said Vice President of Appliances, John White. "In addition, BrandSource provided free delivery of ENERGY STAR major appliances. BrandSource and Home Entertainment Source (HES) provided consumers with 0% financing offers for 12 to 15 months with the purchase of any ENERGY STAR major appliance and any ENERGY STAR flat panel TV. "According to White, BrandSource major appliance suppliers have been helpful and enthusiastic about the BrandSource ENERGY STAR support.

"In 2008, BrandSource developed its own push into focusing on being environmentally friendly," said General Manager of Digital Marketing, Bob Donaldson. BrandSource cut back on paper distributed at the two major buying fairs it holds annually. In doing so the marketing group saves over 250,000 pages per year in program information during these events.

Members receive the majority of all show programs electronically weeks before the buying fair begins. These special buys and offers can be updated quickly with little waste and a reduction in the carbon footprint these events generated.

BrandSource has developed a digital educational solution to encourage all members who accept major appliances as trade ins to take the old energy guzzling appliances or water wasting appliances to recycle these trade ins and take them off the electrical grids.

During the Energy Trade-In Rebates provided by the Department of Energy in conjunction with ENERGY STAR appliances, some states do not require the trade in appliance to be recycled. "We would like to see all of these trade-ins properly recycled," said Donaldson. "It doesn't make sense to offer a used refrigerator to a consumer for a low price when the energy use is costing the customer more than if they had purchased one of today's energy efficient models." **RO**





Research shows children heal better and faster with their family nearby. So, while Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®) can't make medicine taste better or take away painful treatments, we can help ensure children have the most important weapon close by during their fight—their family. Without steadfast supporters, like BrandSource® who donate thousands of home appliances to our U.S. Ronald McDonald House® programs every year, and people like you, RMHC and our network of local Chapters couldn't serve over four million families and children a year.

This holiday season consider giving the gift of RMHC. **Go to rmhc.org to donate.**

Who is SEN?

SPECIALTY ELECTRONICS NATIONWIDE

Specialty Electronics Nationwide (SEN) is the specialty consumer electronics buying group under the Nationwide Marketing Group umbrella. A buying group uses the strength-in-numbers philosophy to band together dealer members to negotiate vendor programs as a group. The buying group represents itself as a single national account to the manufacturers so that each dealer member can reap the many financial benefits of purchasing at much higher volume levels.

It is Specialty Electronics Nationwide's mandate to develop vendor programs that provide enhanced margin opportunities, and therefore ensure the increased profitability of our specialty CE dealer members. In addition, Specialty Electronics Nationwide supports members with inventory fulfillment solutions, training programs, marketing initiatives, consumer financing, competitive credit card processing rates, health insurance, and even extended warranty programs designed to support your custom installation services. It is no mistake that this specialty electronics buying group evolved out of the Nationwide Marketing Group family. Nearly every dealer in the appliance business is a member of a buying group.

SEN caters to custom installation dealers that sell specialty consumer electronics to end users/clients. All of our members have a commercially zoned presence in their marketplaces; at this time we do not support dealers that work out of a residential location. Our dealers include the hybrid business model (dealers that offers both retail and custom installation services), appointment only showroom dealers, and the custom installation integrator in an office park. Since all of our dealers have overhead expenses, we have developed aggressive solutions that allow our dealers to buy specialty consumer electronics at discounted prices.

WAREHOUSE DIRECT

At Specialty Electronics Nationwide we believe that our brick and mortar based dealers need reliable sources for allocation, should be able to buy at factory competitive prices, and deserve the support of the manufacturing community. Many manufacturers

have raised the annual volume levels that dealers are required to reach in order to be a factory direct dealer. Their new policies have forced dealers to buy through traditional distribution at significantly higher prices. So that Specialty Electronics Nationwide members may continue to buy products at competitive prices, we have launched our revolutionary Warehouse Direct program.

Specialty Electronics Nationwide partners with various distribution companies across the country so our members can purchase goods through our Warehouse Direct program at factory competitive prices. There are 47 Warehouse Direct warehouses across the nation and members generally receive inventory within 48 hours of placing an order. By ordering product as a group, we are able to forecast our needs and place sizable purchase orders with our manufacturers. Additionally, the state-of-the-art online ordering system allows dealer members to increase turns, buy at the right price, and maximize their return on investment.

For the first time in the history of CE, the independent specialty dealer has the power of the purchase order!



CUSTOM WAREHOUSE DIRECT

We know how important it is to have a one-stop shop where you can fulfill all of your custom installation needs. Our Custom Warehouse Direct program provides the cutting edge "Just In Time" custom inventory solution for all Specialty Electronics Nationwide members. The price of copper has been extremely volatile so we now buy bulk cabling, accessories and custom installation products from manufacturers such as Eagle Aspen and Monster Cable in truck load quantities. In addition you will find Niles JobSite architectural speaker products and volume controls, Vantage Point Mounts, Channel Plus distributor systems and new product categories from Monster Cable including universal remotes and lighting systems. This exciting new Custom Warehouse Direct initiative will continue to grow and meet your demands for multiple brands in just one shipment at the right price.

The Warehouse Direct Fulfillment Solution – You Purchase at Buying Group Prices. The Warehouse Direct program is a win/win for all partners involved. **RO**

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Advanced Appliance Workshop

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Wednesday, April 14 • 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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ABOUT KITCHEN AND BATH BUSINESS (K+BB)

K+BB magazine, published by the Nielsen Company, reaches 34,000 interior designers, architects, kitchen design specialists, custom builders and remodelers each month. This magazine blends exclusive features on cutting-edge business developments, installations and industry personalities with solid market research. K+BB was the first magazine to recognize and serve this industry, and continues to provide progressive and insightful coverage of the industry's products, trends, and services, with a sophisticated visual style befitting a design-oriented readership. For more information, please visit www.kbbonline.com

NKBA PRESIDENT KARAS ANNOUNCES GOALS FOR 2010



The newly-elected president of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), Mark L. Karas, CMKBD has stated four areas for the NKBA to focus its efforts in 2010 to empower the association's members to make the most of a recovering kitchen and bath market.

- **Education and Certification** – Karas' first goal for the association is to expand the NKBA's renowned educational offerings to provide opportunities for professionals involved in all aspects of the kitchen and bath industry, such as design, sales, installation, and remodeling, among many others. The NKBA will also work toward adding certifications and/or certificate programs, which currently include design and installation, to reach the entire industry. "I'm so proud to be an NKBA-certified designer, and I'd like for professionals in all segments of the industry to

have the opportunity to distinguish themselves by earning NKBA certifications or certificates," said Karas.

- **Consumer Awareness** – "The NKBA is well known among professionals involved in the kitchen and bath industry," Karas explained. "Now we'd like for consumers to become more familiar with what the National Kitchen & Bath Association is, the valuable resources we provide to them, and why hiring or purchasing from NKBA members is so important." The NKBA plans to achieve greater awareness among homeowners across the United States and Canada through advertising, public relations initiatives, and the grass-roots efforts of members.
- **Member Communication** – Job postings, interns, publications, events, discounts, consumer leads, and marketing opportunities are just a few of the many benefits of NKBA membership. In 2010, the association will increase its efforts to communicate those benefits to members. "The NKBA offers so many outstanding programs and services that sometimes even the most active members don't know about all of them," Karas reported. The NKBA will launch more efficient communication, such as the upcoming MyNKBA, a customizable web portal that's personalized according to each member's local area and industry segment. MyNKBA will update members on the latest offerings without the need for frequent e-mail and newsletter updates.
- **Volunteer Leadership** – "Chapter officers, industry segment advisory council members, and other volunteer leaders are the engine that drives the NKBA," Karas said. In 2010, the association will strengthen its message to encourage members to become leaders on the local and national levels, and then work with those leaders to make full use of their skills and expertise to serve the NKBA membership.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL KITCHEN & BATH ASSOCIATION

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) is a non-profit trade association that owns the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS®). With nearly 40,000 members, the NKBA has educated and led the kitchen and bath industry for more than 45 years. The mission of the NKBA is to enhance member success and excellence, promote professionalism and ethical business practices, and provide leadership and direction for the kitchen and bath industry worldwide. For more information, visit NKBA.org or call 1-800-843-6522 **RO**

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Kitchen & Bath Industry Loses a Legend

THE PASSING OF KASNEA MARTIN,
PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER OF KASMAR PUBLICATIONS, INC.

On Christmas Eve, the Kitchen and Bath Industry lost a legend when Kasnea Martin passed away at the age of 82. Elected to the NKBA Hall of Fame in 2006, along with her lifelong partner Don, she was the inspiration of design excellence in the dedication and promotion of kitchen and bath designers as true professionals within the kitchen & bath industry.

When she entered the industry, working with a western trade journal called Kitchen & Bath Specialist, designers were at the bottom of the heap as far as recognition in their field, so she asked the question in one of her first editorials *"Ain't there any Designers in the West?"* This, referring to the National Kitchen Association's (now the NKBA) national design program, which never featured any design contest winners west of St. Louis, MO.

In the mid-1980's, Kasnea had the innovative idea to create a quality magazine featuring the work of talented kitchen and bath designers, along with articles focused on specific kitchen and bath planning 'topics of interest' to the consumer. To insure the quality of all projects presented, Kasnea created a selection committee/advisory board of

noted professionals within the industry.

The result of this was a project by Kasmar Publications to publish the first national consumer magazine strictly devoted to kitchens, a publication that would only feature western designers, proving a point to the national association as well as to promote the word *'professional'*. The title of this new publication was *Kitchens By Professional Designers*, which took two years to publish the first edition. Many feel this was the beginning of the use of the word 'professional' as an industry standard in the design field of kitchen & bath.

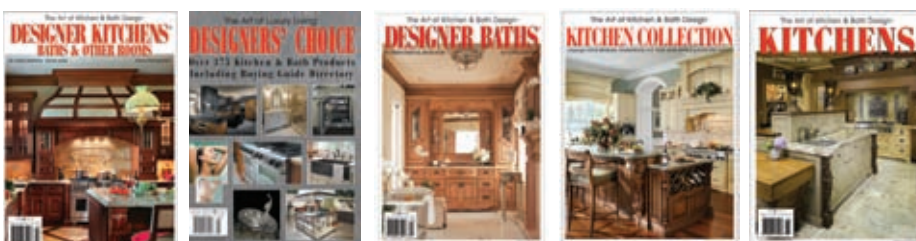
The main business after that of Kasmar Publications, were its trade journals. Coming up later this year in October, Kasmar will publish the 23rd edition as a tribute to Kasnea's determination, her belief in the Kitchen & Bath Industry and the talented and creative designers she was so dedicated to.


"Ours was a true love affair" said her husband Don. "We had a wonderful life trip together; 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with never a harsh word or a real disagreement - just a trust and belief in each other always. No one ever spoke of one name without the other. It was Kasnea and Don - it always has been and

always will be that way."

"The out pouring of sympathy and heartfelt sadness has been remarkable," he continued, "I have received well over 200 cards, e-mails and letters and am extremely grateful to all of you. I have tried to answer each one but misplaced the first batch, and for that I apologize. Neither of us wanted any sad songs after we left this world, so as members of the Neptune Society, there were no services, just fond memories for each and every one of us and my loving wife and partner, Kasnea."

*In Loving Memory,
Don Martin*





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Whirlpool Brand Creates Wide Open Spaces in the Kitchen

LATEST FRENCH DOOR MODEL OFFERS MOST SPACE AVAILABLE FOR FRESH FOOD* WITHOUT TAKING UP ADDED SPACE IN THE KITCHEN

Ever wonder why a family of four needs seven kinds of juice? Whirlpool brand knows different lifestyles call for different tastes. Now, playing the balancing act with groceries, leftovers and gallons of milk are a thing of the past with the Whirlpool® Latitude™ French door refrigerator.

Perfect for entertaining as well as busy families, the Latitude refrigerator was developed with consumers' needs in mind, offering 10 percent more space in the refrigeration compartment compared to similar size side-by-side models while maintaining the same external dimensions. With 27 cu. ft. of capacity, the Latitude refrigerator is expansive, boasting the industry's most usable interior refrigeration space based on fresh food volume, including deeper door bins, extra shelf space and an easy-to-access in-door ice maker with removable bucket. The spacious Latitude refrigerator also includes an option to drop the refrigerator and/or freezer temperature to accommodate new food additions, all while garnering an ENERGY STAR® qualification.

A recent survey commissioned by Whirlpool Corporation found that 53 percent of adults believe the refrigerator is the appliance that uses the most energy in their home on a day-to-day basis. However, according to ENERGY STAR, a new ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerator saves enough energy to light the average household for more than 4.5 months (when replacing a refrigerator bought before 1990).

"We know that consumers want more room in their refrigerators to help manage the varying tastes of their families. With that in mind, we have designed the Latitude refrigerator to not only hold several jugs of juice and milk in door bins, but to help make consumers' daily lives just a little bit easier with smart solutions like an exterior dual pad dispenser with measured fill. It gives consumers the ability to dispense the exact amount of water needed for a recipe or morning coffee," said Carolyn Torres, Whirlpool refrigeration brand manager. "Even with the added interior space and intuitive features, such as a power outage

alert, the Latitude refrigerator helps conserve energy and saves money on utility bills, without sacrificing performance."

The Latitude refrigerator brings consumers' kitchens several innovative features, including dispensing an exact amount of water, measured in cups, liters or ounces with a rotating faucet that allows consumers the ability to fill tall and odd-shaped containers with ease; a power outage alert that notifies consumers that there has been a power outage and the duration so they know whether or not food is safe to eat; and, the Fast Cool option, which immediately drops refrigerator and/or freezer temperatures to accommodate new food.

The Latitude refrigerator (GI7FVCXW) is available white, black, stainless steel and Satina® finish with an MSRP starting at \$2,599. For more information, visit—www.whirlpool.com.

METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service on behalf of Whirlpool Corporation between December 29 and 31, 2008, among 2,042 U.S. adults aged 18 years and older. Results were weighted as needed for region, age within gender, education, household income and race/ethnicity. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

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**Based on fresh food volume in French door refrigerators.*

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