

The Retail Observer

May, 2013

AN EYE ON THE INDUSTRY SINCE 1970

Vol. 24, Issue 5

DIGITAL SIGNAGE EXPO 2013

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NATIONWIDE PRIMETIME!

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The Black Dot

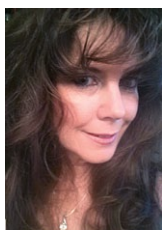
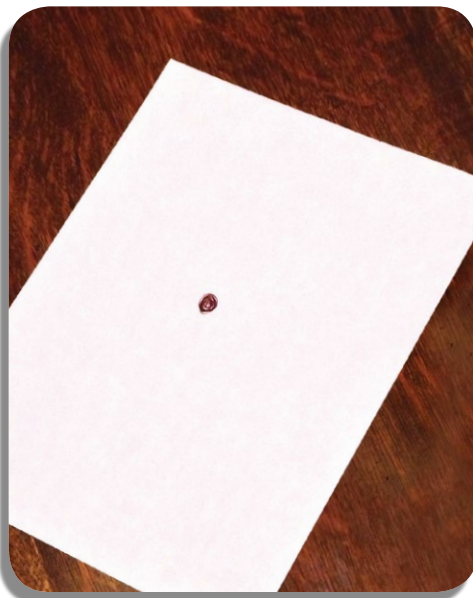
During a business meeting, the president stood up in front of a group of employees and held up a large glossy piece of paper. He took out a black marker and made a black dot in the center of the paper and asked the team what they saw. Everyone replied, "A black dot." "Don't you see anything besides the black dot?" "No," the audience replied. "What about the beautiful sheet of paper? I'm sure you can all see it, but you've chosen to overlook it."

It's easy for us to overlook the potential of everyday things in life like a large open canvas that could have many opportunities for greatness, but instead, we choose to focus our attention on small issues, the little things in life like the black dot.

I heard this story the other day and it got me thinking "outside of the box." I began to ask myself a lot of questions about my own black dot and how it is preventing me from growing and expanding both my consciousness and my business. So, what's your black dot? What are you staring straight at that is keeping you from seeing the bigger picture?

When we get stuck focusing on one issue, we miss the giant snowball effect rolling down the hill straight at us! It's time we put on our 3D glasses and begin to notice what's in the space between the lines, all the other stuff that surrounds our black dot that stimulates our creative thinking process. So, the next time you find yourself focusing on the black dot, step back and take a look around at what you could be missing.

For more inspiring ideas on "thinking outside of the box" check out the articles from our contributing writers including: *Take It From IKEA: Create Your Own Maze and Make Shopping an Exciting Experience!* by Elly Valas (our Retail Guru) and *Why Poetry Might Save Your Business* by Libby Wagner, Culture Coach.



Here's to creativity and reaching your full potential!

Eliana Barriga
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The Retail Observer

MAY 2013

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CELEBRATING OUR 24TH YEAR
AS *THE RETAIL OBSERVER*

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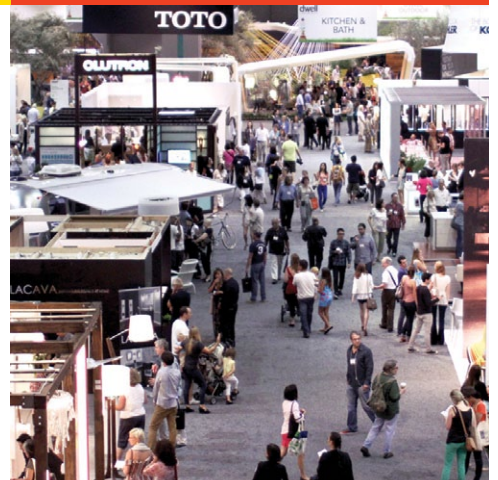
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Reflections at Age 50 of Time Gone By

Last month I celebrated my 50th birthday. As I reflected over the last half century, I remembered my achievements and failures, the good and the bad, my highs and my lows and all of the friends and family that have come and gone through the years. I found myself in a nostalgic mood so researched the events that took place in 1963, the year I was born.

Here are a few highlights from that year that many of you will remember:

- President John F. Kennedy broadcasts a historic Civil Rights Address, in which he promises a Civil Rights Bill, and asks for "the kind of equality of treatment that we would want for ourselves"
- Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his "I Have A Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to an audience of at least 250,000 during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom
- JFK is assassinated
- The Beatles release their first album "Please Please Me" in the United Kingdom
- General Hospital and Doctor Who air their first episodes
- The American Institute of Kitchen Dealers was founded (today the NKBA)

Here are a few you might not remember, but I thought were very cool:

- The first push-button telephone was made available to AT&T customers
- ZIP codes are introduced by the United States Postal Service
- The Pro Football Hall of Fame was opened
- Los Angeles Dodgers left-handed pitcher Sandy Koufax sets a World Series record by striking out 15 New York Yankees
- Lawrence of Arabia wins Best Picture
- The Coca-Cola Company introduces its first diet drink, TaB cola
- The Great Train Robbery takes place in Buckinghamshire, England
- Iron Man debuts in Marvel Comics
- Marvel Comics releases the first-ever X-Men comic book
- Car manufacturing firm Lamborghini is founded in Italy

And most importantly:

- Harvey Ball invents the ubiquitous smiley face symbol

As I look over this list, I realized that many of these events had a profound influence over my life. Okay, maybe not General Hospital, but undeniably the works of JFK and Dr. King, zip codes and push button phones. I am looking forward to finishing my list for the other 49 years and I am also looking forward to the next 50.



Happy Retailing,

Moe Lastfogel

moe@retailobserver.com

The Retail Observer MAY 2013

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 5

CELEBRATING OUR 24TH YEAR
AS THE RETAIL OBSERVER

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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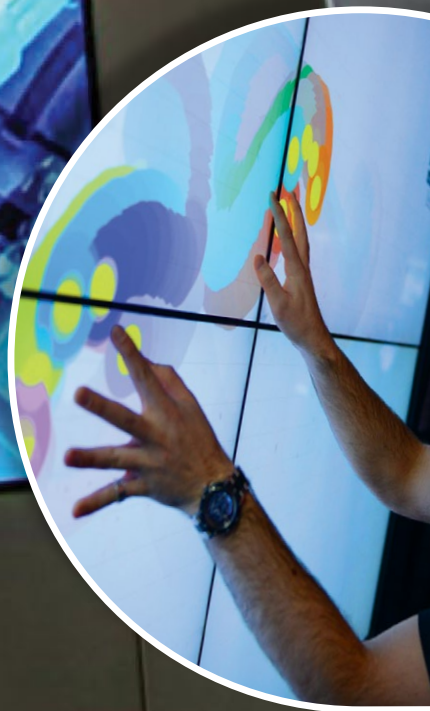


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DIGITAL SIGNAGE EXPO 2013

SHATTERS ALL
RECORDS &
SETS NEW
ATTENDANCE
MILESTONE—
ANNOUNCES
MOVE IN 2014

Digital Signage Expo® (DSE), the world's largest and longest running International Conference and Tradeshow dedicated exclusively to digital signage, interactive technology and digital out-of-home networks (DOOH), today announced that its tenth anniversary show held last week at the Las Vegas Convention Center has officially shattered previous records, set a new attendance milestone and reinforced DSE's position as the digital signage industry's preeminent show.

Show management has just confirmed that new all-time benchmarks established at DSE 2013 last week include:

- 4,080 qualified attendees (excluding exhibitors)— a 1.4% increase over 2012
- Attendance increased in spite of the snowstorm that closed airports
- Record conference attendance – a 9% increase over 2012
- Record international attendance from a total of 77 countries – an increase of 11.6% over 2012, representing 8 more countries than a year ago
- Record 211 exhibitors – an increase of 22% over 2012
- 68,895 net square feet – a 10.3% increase over 2012

| continued on page 10 |

| continued from page 9 |

Chris Gibbs, president of Exponation, LLC, which produces Digital Signage Expo said, "Not only was the show a success by all quantitative measures, but the quality and number of end-users who attended helped create wonderful energy and generated very positive comments from the majority of exhibitors." He added, "Exhibitor satisfaction was so high that we are pleased to report that the show floor is close to 80% sold out for 2014."

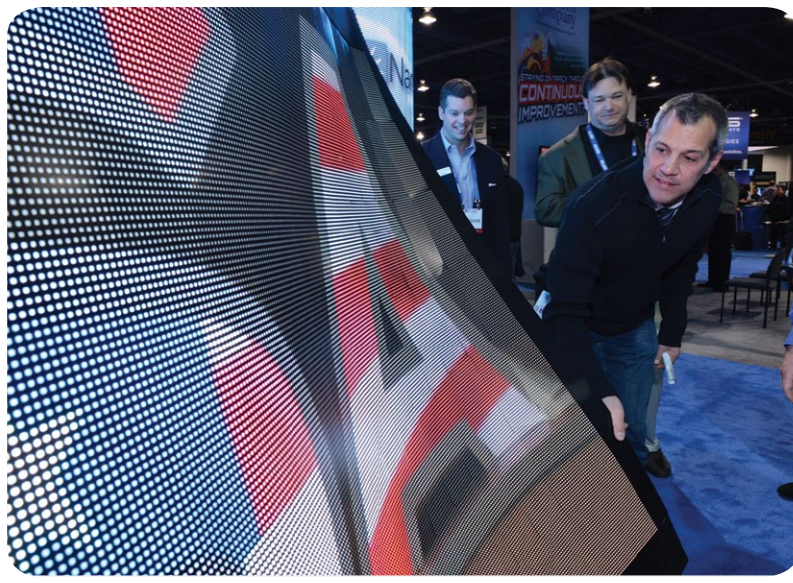
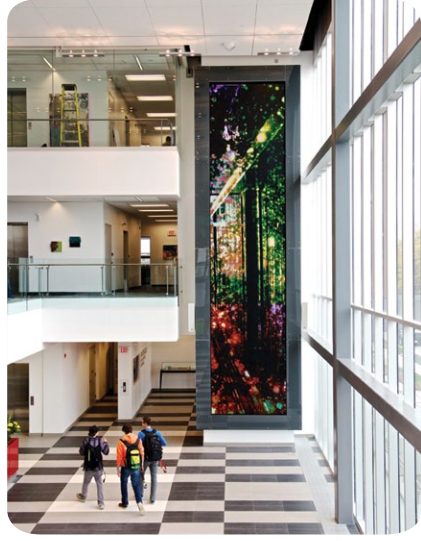
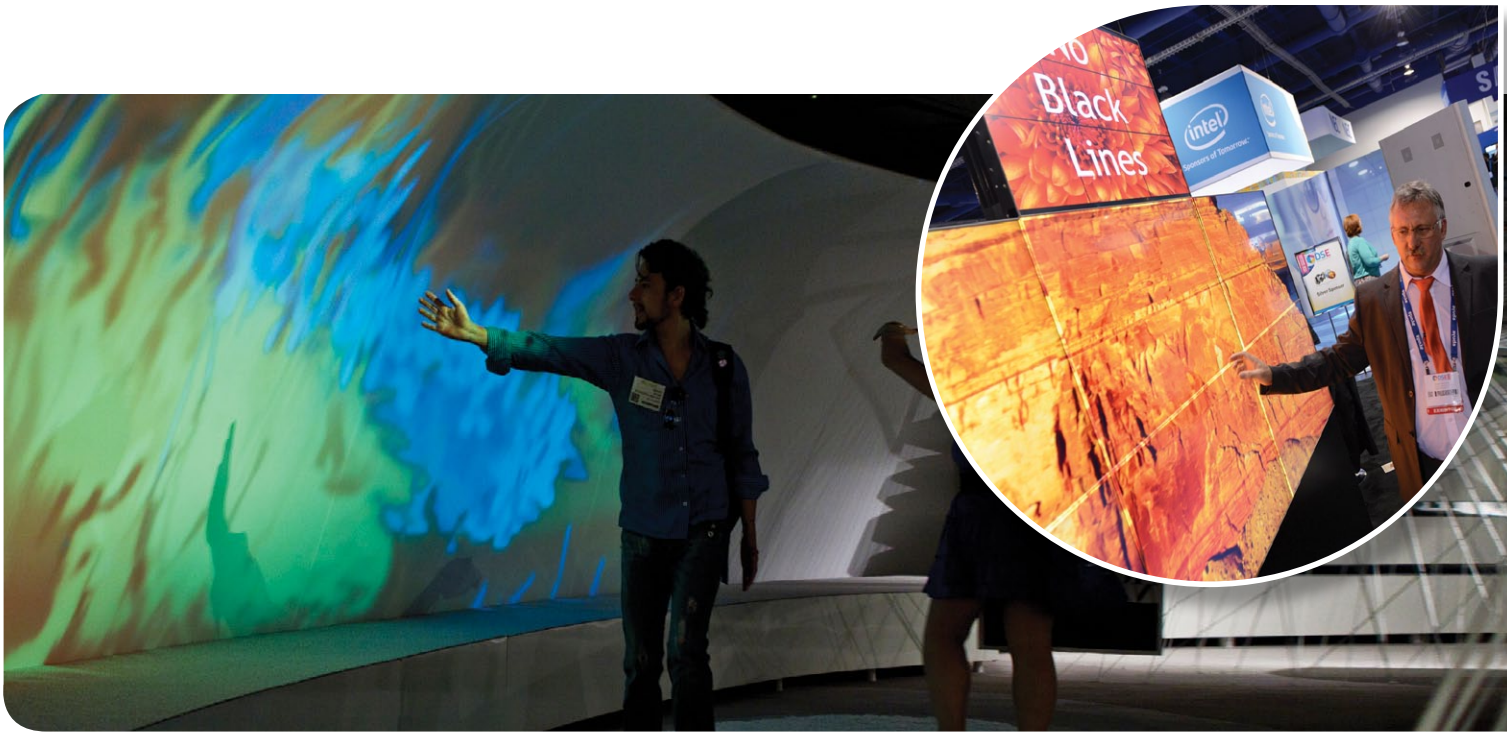
More than 200 exhibitors feature technology and services including hardware, software, network, delivery and content from around the globe. DSE also offers the largest and most diversified digital signage and digital out-of-home educational program anywhere in the world, with more than 150 educators and the largest variety of educational opportunities, including a live installation tour and structured curriculum leading to professional re-certification in eight educational tracks. The 2014 program will continue to provide a comprehensive educational program comprised of pre- and post-show educational events, general conference seminars, targeted Industry Vertical Discussion Groups and free workshops, all designed to enhance professional development.

Digital Signage Expo is the world's largest and longest running conference and trade show exclusively dedicated to the digital signage, interactive technology and digital-out-of-home (DOOH) industries. Launched in 2004, DSE was the first event dedicated to the digital signage market and has been a significant contributor to the growth of this fast-paced industry. Professional end user attendance represents decision-makers from key industry categories such as retail, restaurant, healthcare, education, hospitality and transportation, as well as other key stakeholders, including advertising executives, brand marketers and systems.

Mark your calendar now: Digital Signage Expo 2014, co-located with the Digital Content Show, is scheduled for February 11-13, 2014, with access to the Exhibit Hall February 12 & 13 at the Sands Expo & Convention Center in Las Vegas. For more info, visit www.digitalsignageexpo.net. You can follow DSE on Twitter at DSEexpo, or for all DSE 2014 updates, use #dse2014.

For year-round news and information on digital signage, visit DSE's new Digital Signage Connection web portal at www.digitalsignageconnection.com. | continued on page 12 |





DSE 2013:

ONE RETAILER'S EXPERIENCE

As a retailer who is always trying to improve our customer experience, I find that Digital Signage Expo is a great place to spark ideas, compare thoughts with your peers and learn from the experts. DSE has become the one event that everyone in the industry attends to network and see all the newest technologies. The tradeshow floor is packed with vendors who specialize in digital signage solutions, some of which have been designed not only to solve problems at retail, but also to help increase sales.

The conference program offers multiple seminar tracks including one designed to help those just starting out. The other tracks focus on content, development and management; network design, management and operation; hardware, software and connectivity; and interactivity. In short, there is something for everyone on your digital signage network team.

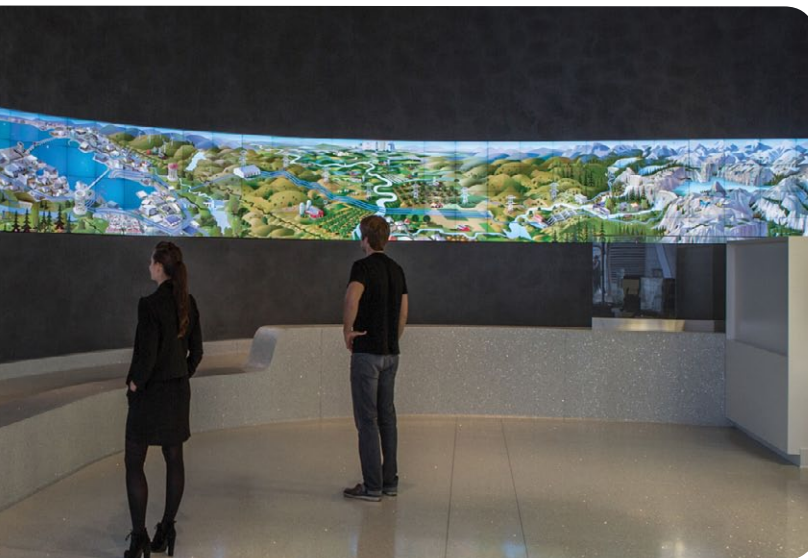
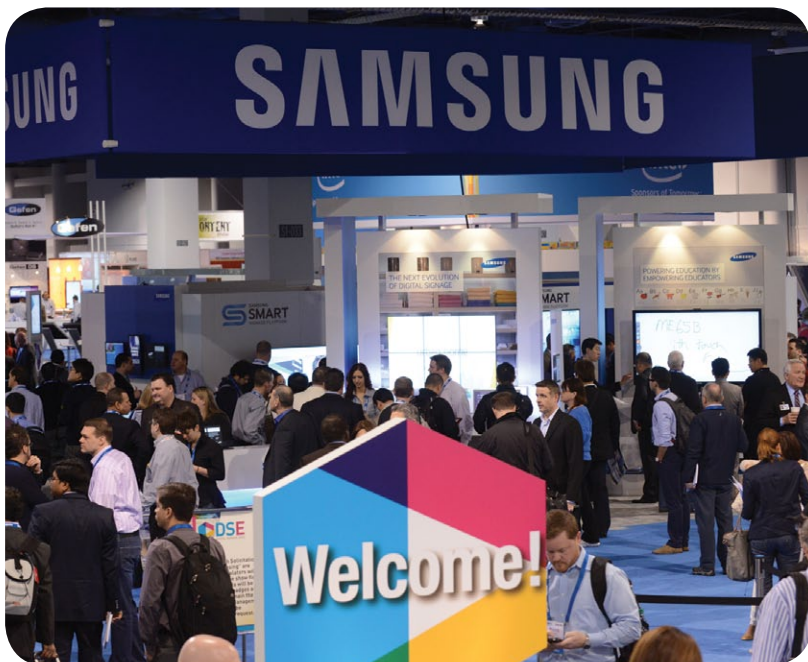
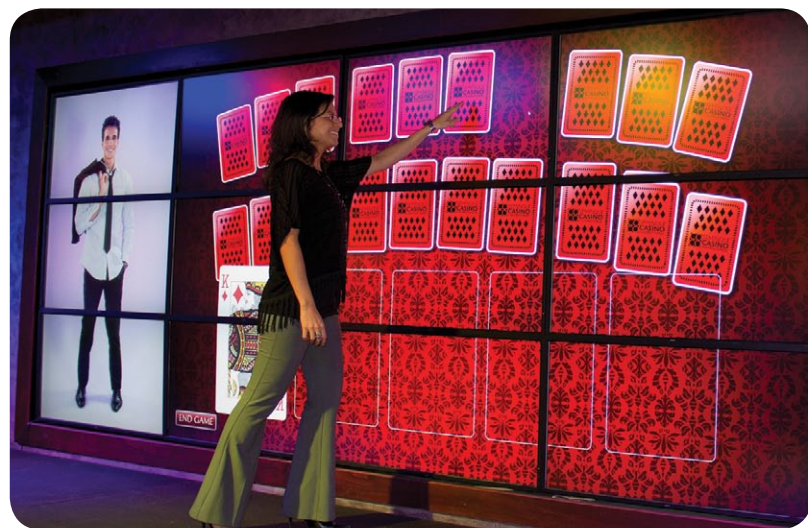
As Manager of In-Store Digital Media, I make a point of staying up-to-date on industry trends, particularly on how each multiple touch-point, might impact our business. That's why I chose to attend a variety of seminars which had application in our field. This year my focus was on how we might incorporate interactive technology in our stores. My goal was to get ideas on both adding as well as complementing our existing digital signal program. My selections included:

- Interactive Technology Integration Considerations
- The Business Side of Dynamic Digital Signage
- New and Future Advances in Interactive Technology
- Embracing 'Showrooming' through Interactive Retail

Because I represent MetroPCS on DSE's Advisory Board, I was invited to moderate the session on "Embracing Showrooming," a trend that has concerned many in the retail sector. I was very impressed with Scott McGillivray, chief strategy officer from IQmetrix. When DSE makes the audio recordings of these sessions available on their website, this is one I recommend listening to.

I am very interested in the concept of how we might be able to leverage interactivity. I like that DSE offers a whole section of classes on Interactive topics. The sessions were always





informative and generally entertaining. Even though I was familiar with some of the information the speakers were covering, I always patiently waited for the best part—the Q&A's.

Don't get me wrong, I pick up a lot of helpful information and new ideas from the presenters, but it is the discussion that occurs after the presentation in the "Q&A" where you can see that others are dealing with similar challenges. All the people in the class might not have the same objective, but the questions asked will usually have you jotting down new ideas and questions for your finance or IT teams.

I found that the single course offered at DSE which prepared me best for the challenges I'm faced with in my job was the Digital Signage Certified Expert (DSCE) certification course. After that class I felt more comfortable talking with vendors, presenting my plan to superiors as well as working with IT regarding in-store traffic. Because of the success I have had with DSCE, I stayed an extra day to take advantage of another all-day seminar, Digital Signage Content and Media Expert (DCME). This was the first year the Digital Signage Experts Group presented this program, focused entirely on Digital Signage content. Make a special note of it for next year.

In addition to the general conference seminars, DSE offered Industry Vertical Discussion Groups, which were roundtable discussions on topics relevant to specific industry sectors. This year retail operators could choose from:

- How Build-A-Bear Combined Digital Interactive with Traditional in its Store Designs
- The Cost Ramifications of Player Placement in Retail Networks
- Digital Signage at Retail: A Trip to the Mall
- Digital Signage Sells in Seasonal Pop-Up Stores
- Best Practices for Digital Signage in Retail

Regrettably, I did not have time for these, the free on-floor workshops or the presentations in the Content Theater. With well over 100 choices, Digital Signage Expo offers the largest, most comprehensive educational program designed specifically for all of us whose organizations have invested or plan to invest in the technology. Honestly, to see everything I really wanted to see, I would have had to be in 2 places at once!

It's not just the educational opportunities that make Digital Signage Expo the best show in the industry; it's also the tradeshow floor! For retailers, it's a can't miss if you are thinking of adding digital signage into your stores or offices.

As I approached the top of the steps, from the elevated showroom entry, I got a birds-eye-view of the entire floor—and it was a wonderland. I felt like a child loose in a toy store. It didn't take but a few steps for my mind to start planning a slew of "what-if" scenarios. Regardless of your goals, whether to | *continued on page 64* |

CALL TO ACTION



SEND US YOUR SHOTS

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

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

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Book Review

I Love You More Than My Dog

Five Decisions That Drive Extreme Customer Loyalty in Good Times and Bad

Consumers now more than ever are carefully considering how they spend every dollar. At the same time, social media that gives buyers a public forum for their thoughts and experiences is enjoying a meteoric rise. Together, they've created a completely new business culture, one where businesses need not just loyal buyers, but passionate fans. These fans talk to their friends, urge their neighbors to become customers, post on Twitter and fawn on Facebook. They can fuel explosive growth.

Only an elite few businesses have these true advocates and no one knows how to create them better than Jeanne Bliss, who has served as the senior customer executive at five major US corporations - Lands' End, Allstate, Microsoft, Coldwell Banker and Mazda Corporations. Her book, "I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY DOG: Five Decisions That Drive Extreme Customer Loyalty in Good Times and Bad" is a primer for companies ready to truly transform themselves to serve their customers.

According to Bliss, beloved companies share a set of five active and purposeful decisions which inform and motive their conduct. When followed, these decisions take companies on a journey that creates a seismic shift from mere business to beloved company. They are:

- **Decide to Believe.** Beloved companies suspend cynicism by choosing to believe their employees and believe their customers. They are freed from extra rules, polices and layers of bureaucracy that create a barrier between them and their customers.
- **Decide with Clarity of Purpose.** Beloved companies take the time to be clear about their unique promise for their customer's lives. They make decisions to align to this purpose and this promise.
- **Decide to be Real.** Beloved companies break down barriers between customer and company, creating a relationship between people and revel in one another's foibles, quirks and spirit.
- **Decide to Be There.** Beloved companies devote more resources and more plain old work to be there for their customers.
- **Decide to Say Sorry.** How a company reacts to mistakes reflects the humanity of the organization and show its true colors more than almost any situation that might arrive. **RO**

Author: Jeanne Bliss, Founder of Customer BLISS, She has served as the senior customer executive at five major corporations, and today is a consultant, speaker and author on the customer experience and creating brand loyalty. www.customerbliss.com
Publisher: The Penguin Group



THERE'S NOTHING FISHY HERE.



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BROWN JORDAN®
OUTDOOR KITCHENS

The Brown Jordan® Outdoor Kitchen Collection includes a breadth of exclusive cabinetry designs and styles to meet the needs of today's consumers, architects, designers, and builders who seek outdoor kitchens that can uniquely fit the décor, style and personal tastes for an outdoor living environment.

"Developed by CT Acquisitions, this is Brown Jordan's first-ever designer line of custom outdoor kitchens. By offering the most extensive selection of outdoor kitchen cabinetry and related equipment in the industry, the Brown Jordan collection reflects the outdoor leisure and entertaining heritage of our brand," said Chris Carmicle, president of Brown Jordan Company.

Outdoor kitchen owners are looking for more than quality appliances that fit into standard designs. They are seeking elegant outdoor kitchen solutions with adaptable cabinetry layouts that represent high-quality and premium design without the high price tag for maintenance and repair. The Brown Jordan collection offers the durability of stainless steel combined



with the style of various customized wood grain patterns, designer paint colors and subtle textures that are virtually maintenance free.

The Brown Jordan name is synonymous with outdoor entertainment and leisure. The collection is available to the trade at select dealers and Brown Jordan Showrooms and via consumer retail at specialty outdoor and other dealers.

Headquartered in Wallingford, Conn., CT Acquisitions is the leading provider of stainless steel outdoor kitchens, cabinetry and amenities for outdoor living including ventilation hoods, kitchen carts, American made stainless steel gas grills, refrigerators, ice makers, pizza ovens, ceramic

smoker/grills, and outdoor bartending centers—all designed to maximize enjoyable outdoor entertainment. www.danver.com.

For more than sixty years, California-based Brown Jordan has been the industry leader in innovative and iconic leisure furnishings that continue to define and transform outdoor living. The Brown Jordan portfolio features more than 30 collections in a range of design styles and material. In 2012, it entered into a licensing agreement with CT Industries to develop the Brown Jordan Outdoor Kitchen Collection.

For more information, visit www.brownjordanoutdoorkitchens.com or call 855-839-5063.

| continued on page 18 |





No kitchen is too small for a Galley, since the cutting boards actually add counter space. Even the most ambitious cooking project can be performed right at the Galley, without having to walk all around the kitchen. And cleanup is a breeze because everything is already at the sink!

You can see it at www.TheGalleySink.com. Watch the short videos online at www.thegalleySink.com under "The Galley in Action" to see the product for yourself or call 918.794.2700 for more information.



A BRAND NEW PRODUCT AS REVOLUTIONARY TO THE KITCHEN INDUSTRY TODAY AS THE MICROWAVE AND THE DISHWASHER WERE WHEN THEY WERE INTRODUCED!



Roger Shollmier, the owner of Kitchen Ideas in Tulsa, and whose own kitchen was voted the #1 Most Bodacious Kitchen in America by HGTV's Fine Living Network, has developed a revolutionary new product called the Galley. The Galley is much more than a sink: it's a super functional work station! Cutting boards, colanders, a drain rack, and stainless bowls slide above and below each other on two tiers inside the sink to accommodate food preparation, clean up, and serving in one convenient place.

The Galley is revolutionary in function and design. Equipped with the Signature Galley Accessories, it is by far the most useful space in the kitchen. Available in three lengths: 7', 5½' and 4', the Galley can be installed indoors or out. Add an induction or gas cook top and you'll be able to cook right at the Galley. Installation is simple enough to be performed by a local plumber.

The Galley is available two ways:

1. As an under mount: the stainless interior is attached below a solid surface or natural stone counter top; or,
2. As an apron front sink: the stainless interior is in a surround of your choice of granite, marble or wood.

THE BRAND PREFERRED BY TOP CHEFS NOW INCLUDES A NEW FULL LINE OF PROFESSIONAL-STYLE COOKING & REFRIGERATION APPLIANCES



AGA MARVEL expands the company's product portfolio with its new AGA MARVEL Professional Series, a full line of sleek professional-style cooking and refrigeration appliances inspired by AGA's European cooking technology and professional and catering heritage. Long favored by top chefs, AGA brings cooking precision, control and versatility to kitchens. Available models in the series include a 36" range, complementing vent hood, integrated dishwasher, and full-size refrigerators like the counter-depth French door model, built-in units, columns and undercounter options.

STAINLESS STEEL PROFESSIONAL STYLING, EUROPEAN COOKING PERFORMANCE

The new 36" AGA Professional Range features stainless steel fit and finish with heavy-duty die cast control knobs, true European dual convention, dual-pan | continued on page 20 |





AGA

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The longest history of premium full size and undercounter refrigeration in North America

The legacy behind the name

Our roots run deep, merging legendary European cooking heritage with progressive American styling. For well over 100 years, our products have been kitchen essentials, and continue to enrich the culinary experience for discriminating homeowners worldwide. Exceptional craftsmanship, lasting quality and design innovation are realized throughout our family of brands. From the iconic AGA Cooker, to Heartland's nostalgic beauty, and now to the new AGA MARVEL Professional kitchen suite, our products are distinguished as truly aspirational.

To capture the opportunities available to AGA MARVEL dealers, call 800-223-3900.

AGA MARVEL

www.agamarvel.com



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broiler system, three heavy-duty telescoping glide-out racks, powerful gas cooktop with five sealed brass burners, extra-large oven window and storage drawer. Designed with the true home chef in mind, the AGA Professional Range provides seven oven functions for cooking versatility: convection, browning, convection broiling, fan-assisted, thaw and serve, and warming.

INDUSTRY-LEADING REFRIGERATION DESIGN AND CAPACITY

The new AGA MARVEL Professional Series also includes MARVEL Professional models, the brand renowned for leading the undercounter refrigeration market. AGA MARVEL is now expanding the design to full-size units, featuring striking glass-door built-in models with blue interior display lighting, available in 48-inch, 60-inch and 72-inch sizes in addition to full-size column units, dual zone wine cellars and other refrigerator/freezer configurations. More information about all AGA Marvel products can be found at www.agamarvel.com.



ZEPHYR LAUNCHES NEW AIRFLOW CONTROL TECHNOLOGY (ACT) IN ITS DCBL SUPPRESSION SYSTEM-ENABLED HOODS; KEEPS THE FOCUS ON POWER AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY WITHOUT SACRIFICING DESIGN AND FUNCTIONALITY

INDUSTRY FIRST TECHNOLOGY GIVES BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS AN ALTERNATIVE TO MAKE-UP AIR KITS

ZEPHYR Zephyr, the leader in ventilation hood design, innovation and technology, launched the industry's first Airflow Control Technology (ACT™); an exclusive technology that gives builders and developers the ability to set the maximum motor CFM level, without compromising design. ACT is a part of the DCBL Suppression System™ technology that offers the quietest,

most energy efficient and performance-driven hoods on the market.

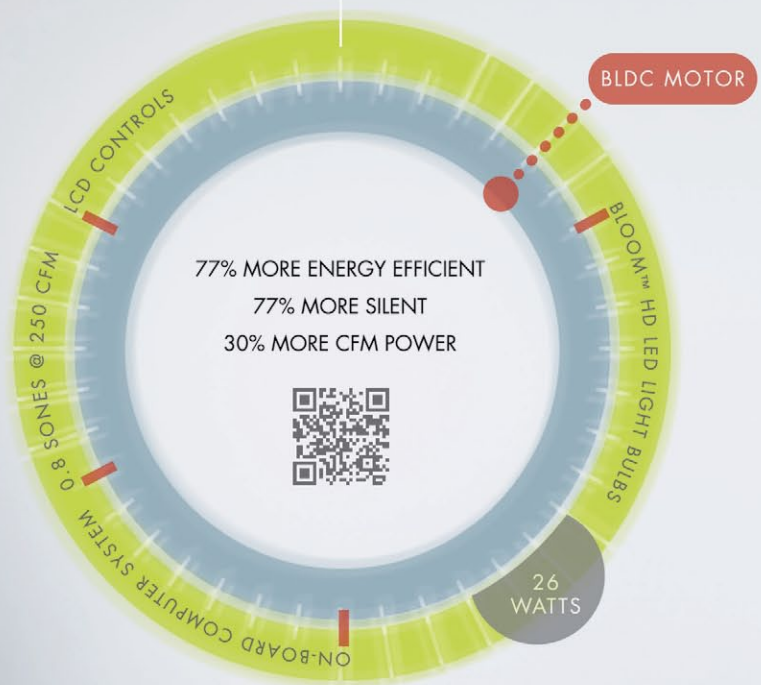
There are some national building codes that limit the maximum amount of CFM a ventilation hood can output, due to "make-up air" regulations that are required for all homes. This forces builders and developers to either purchase expensive make-up air kits, which includes additional labor and installation costs, or specify ventilation hoods with lower CFM.

Zephyr has found a solution to the "make-up air" kits with its groundbreaking new technology that allows the installer to easily set the maximum blower speed to one of four most commonly specified CFM levels: 290, 440, 590 or 715.

"At Zephyr, we are constantly trying to bring innovation and technology to the forefront of our ventilation hood design and we believe that with ACT, builders and developers will definitely benefit from this new technology," says Luke Siow, president of Zephyr. "This technology will ultimately cut costs for the homeowner and builder without sacrificing the design. In addition, it increases the amount of hood designs available in markets that may have otherwise been restricted by make-up air regulation."

ACT is available and pre-installed into all Zephyr products with DCBL Suppression System. This groundbreaking technology features an on-board computer and Direct Current (DC) motor that increases overall torque at lower speeds and provides increased CFM levels and lowers noise simultaneously. Using a DC motor also allows Zephyr to reduce energy consumption by 80 percent, which is unheard of in the ventilation hood industry. There are no additional costs to the builder that wishes to specify an ACT-enabled ventilation hood with DCBL technology.

Since 1997, San Francisco-based Zephyr has continued to bring design, innovation and technology to the forefront of the kitchen ventilation hood industry. The company has challenged the perception of what ventilation means in kitchen design and created a new awareness of the importance of a high performing ventilation system. With acclaimed talent such as artistic visionary, Fu-Tung Cheng, and industrial designer, Robert Brunner, Zephyr is able to create cutting-edge residential range hoods unlike any other company. In addition, Zephyr has pioneered ventilation hood technology with the industry's first DCBL Suppression System; an exclusive innovation that delivers the most silent, energy efficient and performance-driven range hoods available today. As a direct result of its commitment to elevating range hood design and technology, Zephyr is the recipient of several prestigious awards including Consumer Report Buy Rating, Consumer Digest Best Buy Rating, Chicago Athenaeum Good Design, ADEX (Awards for Design Excellence), Appliance Design 'Excellence In Design' and the Architectural Products 'Product Innovation Award.' To learn more, visit www.zephyronline.com. | continued on page 22 |



The Future is Wow

Zephyr's Next Generation Europa Collection features the industry-first DCBL Suppression System,™ which results in the most silent, energy efficient and performance-driven range hoods today. Cutting edge green technology makes this collection a modern kitchen must—today, tomorrow, and forever.

Learn more about all our Zephyr products at www.zephyronline.com/RO





BERTAZZONI INTRODUCES NEW RANGE LINEUP FOR THE NORTH AMERICAN MARKET

FAMILY-OWNED ITALIAN COOKING COMPANY REVEALS NEW COLOR, INNOVATIVE FEATURES, INDUSTRY'S FIRST DUAL-FUEL PRICE AND FIRST MOBILE APP



Bertazzoni, one of the oldest family-owned manufacturers of cooking appliances in the world, has announced its new range lineup for the North American market. This lineup includes a new vibrant color, innovative new features and competitive price points for its Professional Series, Master Series and Heritage Series. Unveiled for the first time, the new "Arancio" Professional Series range is a stunning orange color, inspired by the foods of the Emilia-Romagna region where Bertazzoni manufactures all of its products. For 2013, the Built-In product program has been enhanced with new Built-In

specialty ovens as well as even more accessible price points. In addition, Bertazzoni created its first, free iPad app, currently in beta, containing interactive product information and images, designed for distributors, dealers, architects and interior designers.

"Today marks a major milestone for the Bertazzoni brand," said Paolo Bertazzoni, president and fifth-generation owner of Bertazzoni. "This is the single largest new product introduction for the Bertazzoni line in the North American market and I'm proud to put our family name on it. We're continuing to embrace new product innovation with our next generation of ranges, building on our rich Italian heritage of high-quality engineering and culinary culture that's made our brand a success for 131 years."

THE COLORS OF ITALY

Color is an essential expression of Italian exuberance and artistic elegance. Bertazzoni's color inspiration stems from the natural foods of the Emilia-Romagna region, home to the Bertazzoni family and its 131 year old company. To select the exact hue, Bertazzoni looked outside to the local farmer's markets, mixing rich pumpkin with exotic saffron and juicy persimmon. The result is "Arancio," a uniquely beautiful deep orange, inspired by Italy's fruits, vegetables and spices. It's a color that becomes a true focal point for any kitchen while also harmonizing with the overall kitchen décor.

In the Professional Series, the stunning new "Arancio" color is available in all gas and dual-fuel models, in three sizes—30", 36" and 48". In addition to new "Arancio" (orange), the Bertazzoni Professional Series is available in six rich colors including "Rosso" (red), "Vino" (burgundy), "Nero" (black), "Bianco" (pure white) and "Giallo" (yellow).

"The Bertazzoni family dinner table has always been laden with heirloom recipes that encompass the natural foods of the surrounding region," said Valentina Bertazzoni, brand manager and sixth-generation family executive for Bertazzoni. "The new Arancio range creates a connection between Italian design and our regional cuisine. Arancio's rich new color, combined with our innovative technology, perfectly encapsulates the essence of the Bertazzoni brand."

Bertazzoni's new range lineup for the North American market was made available in stores in April 2013. All Bertazzoni products are sold through its large network of distributors in the U.S. and Canada. For more information, visit www.bertazzoni.com.

Based in Italy, Bertazzoni is a 131 year old family-owned company that manufactures ranges, ovens, cooktops and ventilation systems. Designs range from contemporary and traditional to classic. Embracing a strong heritage of fine engineering and the culinary culture of the Emilia Romagna region, Bertazzoni products are built with passion and precision by people who know about cooking, for people around the world who love to cook. For more information, visit www.bertazzoni.com. | continued on page 24 |

FROM ITALY, NOT FLORIDA.
- WITH THE NEW ORANGE -



TO COOK BEAUTIFULLY

Shown: The 2013 Bertazzoni Professional Series all-gas 36-inch range, with high-efficiency worktop, different sized brass burners including 18K Btu dual-ring power burner, ergonomic controls, convection oven, extra large cavity, full-width broiler, heavy duty telescopic glide shelves, soft motion door hinges, stainless-steel construction. And Arancio (Orange) hand-finished paintwork.

BERTAZZONI.COM



FINALLY, A BEER TAP THAT'S HOME IN ANY DESIGNER KITCHEN

NEW OVERLAY PANEL SYSTEM FOR TRUE PROFESSIONAL SERIES® BEVERAGE DISPENSERS PROVIDES HOMEOWNERS UNLIMITED CUSTOMIZATION



The trend in home design today is customization. Consumers have become more educated about everything related to their homes, and their kitchen cabinetry is at the top of the list. To further increase design options, True Professional Series® announces its new overlay panel door system for its Single and Dual Tap Beverage Dispensers. This new feature provides homeowners the ability to create a seamless look of custom cabinetry throughout a room.

"It's really the best of both worlds. Beer connoisseurs can have their beer taps in the kitchen while maintaining the look of their cabinetry," notes True Director of Sales and Marketing, Steve Proctor. "When designing a living space, our new overlay panel door system will give homeowners endless design options for their kitchens, dens, game rooms, home theaters and outdoor kitchens."

The customized overlay panels may be built and easily applied using the overlay panel door system to match custom cabinetry and maintain the visual flow throughout a room or can be customized to create a one-of-a-kind focal point in the space.

True Professional Series® Beverage Dispensers are handcrafted in the USA and deliver the perfect serve by utilizing the company's exclusive airflow technology that pulls the beer temperature down to a frosty 33 degrees.

The Beverage Dispensers can accommodate one quarter-barrel or two one-sixth barrels of beer and are uniquely rated by Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) for both indoor and outdoor use, making them ideal for bars, kitchens or any other location inside or out.

True Professional Series® is a division of True Manufacturing Company. For more than 65 years True® has been an industry leader in commercial refrigeration. Now homeowners can experience that same quality with True Professional Series®, an authentic commercial refrigeration line refined for the home. Handcrafted in the USA with the same meticulous attention to quality and detail industry professionals demand, the residential series includes award-winning wine cabinets, refrigerators, beverage centers, refrigerator drawers and beer dispensers. For more information about True Professional Series®, please call 888-616-8783 or visit www.true-residential.com.



CHRISTIE BRINGS ELEMENT OF INNOVATION TO DSE 2013 WITH CUSTOM DIGITAL SIGNAGE SOLUTIONS, INTERACTIVITY KIT AND DEBUT OF AN ALL-WEATHER OUTDOOR PANEL

CHRISTIE® Whatever the weather, Christie®, a global visual technology company, produces innovative products and services designed to meet the digital signage needs of today's customers. As a complete digital signage solutions company, Christie debuted its new Christie® Weather-All Series of outdoor flat panels and showcased Christie® MicroTiles®, with Christie Interactivity Kit, and new bundling options for professional services and customized digital signage solutions through Christie's Managed Services team at the Digital Signage Expo 2013.

| continued on page 26 |

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Among the products at Christie Booth:

• **Christie WeatherAll FHD551-W LCD Outdoor Flat Panel**

The new Christie WeatherAll Series of LCD outdoor flat panels made its world debut at the Integrated Systems Europe (ISE) show on January 29, setting the standard for outdoor LED edge-lit LCD technology. They are now ready to conquer the elements at DSE 2013 with the introduction of the first product in the WeatherAll series - the 55-inch Christie FHD551-W LCD display, engineered to withstand the harsh elements that normal flat panels cannot. Rugged and versatile, the IP56/NEMA 4-rated Christie FHD551-W LCD display is a professional grade full HD (1920 x 1080 resolution) solution designed to perform in a wide range of applications, including outdoor sporting venues, outdoor live events, architectural applications, entertainment parks, public displays, the hospitality and resort industry, transportation services, as well numerous other outdoor environments not typically applicable with standard LCD panels. The new Christie WeatherAll FHD551-W LCD outdoor panel will also be on display at DSE's New Product Pavilion.



• **Christie MicroTiles Wall with Christie Interactivity Kit**

Booth visitors can paint on a graffiti wall or play a carnival game on a Christie MicroTiles wall, equipped with a Christie Interactivity Kit. Powered by Baanto™ ShadowSense™, the Christie Interactivity Kit is a complete solution for adding multi-touch interactivity to any rectangular digital display. Modular and scalable for the utmost in flexibility, the Christie Interactivity Kit can be configured into 84 different sizes. It can accommodate practically any large format display up to 21.4 feet wide and 6 feet high, and is also the perfect interactive solution for Christie® MicroTiles®, for arrays measuring up to 16-units wide by 6-units tall. The easy-to-use, field-installable kits are designed in pieces that simply attach around the display wall perimeter and plug into a computer USB port without the need for drivers. It offers excellent performance with high touch accuracy and fast response times that support up to 18 touches on a large-format display.

For more information visit www.christiedigital.com



RANGE HOOD COVER THAT MATCHES KITCHEN CABINETS OR APPLIANCES NOW OFFERED BY STREAMLINE HOODS

streamlineHOODS
Setting a New Standard in Designer Range Hoods

Streamline Hoods Model P755 allows you to match and

integrate the hood with the same finishes you have on your cabinetry or other appliances. The range hood is delivered with a framed open front ready for your contractor or dealer to install a matching finish to the cabinets. Cabinet door hinges are supplied. The opening comes in different sizes and is 22 mm thick for MDF insertion.

Model P755 is offered in AISI 430 stainless steel with 3 speed electronic controls, industrial filters, 20W halogen lighting and a 400 CFM fan. All Streamline Hoods offer an Easy Cleaning System with a lower tray made of AISI 304 stainless steel lower tray to facilitate cleaning and a double function internal protective grille. The motor housing box is insulated to provide soundproofing, fireproofing and grease resistance for the quietest ventilation available.

Streamline Hoods offer ultra modern and contemporary design range hoods in a variety of shapes and sizes with many choices of stainless steel finishes. In addition to a full line of modern range hoods, Streamline also offers a line of decorative hoods available customized with silkscreened photos on glass designs. Streamline's colored glass hoods are available in standard colors of red, orange, green white and black—8 stainless steel finishes available. Glass color matching is available per the RAL color chart. Hoods can be silkscreened on 1, 2, or 4 sides depending on the selected hood. This unique feature is unlike anything currently offered in the United States.

"Streamline Hoods is committed to providing design and innovation along with the highest quality products for the kitchen, builder, remodeling, architectural and designer markets," states Ramona Panus, president of Streamline Hoods, "a Streamline luxury range hood creates the perfect finishing touch to the elegance of a modern kitchen."

| continued on page 30 |

streamlineHOODS

Setting a New Standard in Designer Range Hoods



Streamline Hoods offer modern and contemporary range hoods. Whether your kitchen design calls for an ultra-slim contemporary stainless-steel hood, a more traditional design or a glass accent color, Streamline Hoods can complement your style.



Glass front panels can be made in any RAL color or can be made in the same finish as your appliances or cabinetry. Streamline Hoods can customize your colored glass front with your choice of silkscreened art in your design or stock designs from Streamline.

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QUALITY CRAFTED IN THE USA

Vinotemp Launches New Independent Dealer Exclusive Designer Series

Vinotemp, a recognized leader in the wine storage and refrigeration industry for over 25 years, has launched a new design driven product line for independent dealers.

For decades, Vinotemp has specialized in custom wine cellars and wine cabinets for the home as well as luxury commercial establishments. Recently, the company expanded into other aspects of the market making them the largest provider of quality wine storage, refrigeration, and accessories in the world. The new Designer Series complements Vinotemp's growth by providing quality wine storage and refrigeration options through independent dealers.

"The Designer Series is the result of decades of experience and it was meticulously created with a certain audience in mind," states President of Vinotemp, India Hynes. "Our new Designer Series provides dealers with an exclusive Vinotemp product line that features everything from patent-pending wine racking to completely seamless stainless steel doors."

Within the Vinotemp Designer Series, there is an effective collaboration between form and function that provides excellence through performance while maintaining a high standard of visual aesthetics. The contemporary and sleek styling of the new Vinotemp units, combined with the use of innovative seamless glass technology, adds an element of sophistication to any room.

Vinotemp's new Designer Series includes; a 50-Bottle Seamless Wine Cooler, a 149-Bottle Seamless Dual-Zone Wine Cooler, a Stainless Indoor/Outdoor Refrigerator, and a Stainless Indoor/Outdoor Automatic Ice Maker.

To learn about pricing and the benefits of being a Vinotemp dealer, please call 800-777-8466. **RO**



Introducing Vinotemp's New Designer Series

An Independent Dealer Exclusive



149 Bottle Seamless Dual-Zone Wine Cooler

Exclusive, patent-pending, distinctive **BLACK** wine racking
Display wine behind dual pane glass
Seamless stainless steel doors
User friendly control panel
Built-in or freestanding installation



50 Bottle Seamless Wine Cooler

Stainless Indoor/
Outdoor Refrigerator



Stainless Indoor/
Outdoor Automatic Ice Maker

Great taste extends beyond the bottle.

A Proud Heritage of Experience and Quality

For over 25 years, Vinotemp has been providing wine storage solutions, making us a leader in the wine storage industry. Our wine cabinets, racks, cellars, metal wine coolers and cooling systems can be found in luxury commercial establishments, gourmet food and wine purveyors, as well as trusted national retailers. Now we have extended this experience and quality to our distinctive, new line of Designer Series products.

Learn more about the benefits of being a Vinotemp dealer by calling 1-800-777-8466

In February 2013, Streamline Hoods announced the introduction of a new innovative line of designer range hoods to satisfy the industry designers, architects, showrooms, remodelers and their clientele. Design excellence, customization, superior ventilation and craftsmanship separate Streamline Hoods from the competition.

Streamline Hoods is the national distributor of this new line of range hoods manufactured in and imported from Europe. An inventory of the range hoods is maintained and special orders are also available for designers, architects dealers and remodelers planning their client's homes and kitchens. To view the complete product line, visit www.streamlinehoods.com.



DURAVIT INTRODUCES STARCK 2 COLLECTION REDESIGN

UPDATED LINE OFFERS PHILIPPE STARCK DESIGN AND DURAVIT QUALITY FOR EVERY LIFESTYLE AND BUDGET



First launched in the US in 1998, Duravit's Starck 2 line became an

instant classic with its organic, water-inspired forms and elegant approach to the bath. For 2013, designer Philippe Starck has updated the collection with a refined washbasin, an innovative tub, and clean shower trays to further enhance the contemporary aesthetic. While maintaining the fundamental design DNA of the original series, Starck's latest additions add a modern look at an accessible price point.

Duravit USA President Tim Schroeder commented, "The new Starck 2 collection takes cues from the original and presents an expanded view on modern chic. With updated interpretations and recent design

innovations, Duravit has been able to further enhance the many options within this popular series."

The Starck 2 ceramic washbasin receives a subtle yet stunning nuance in this redesign. Its former circular shape has been slightly altered to that of a delicate oval, a tiny deviation from perfect symmetry that highlights the organic nature of the series and adds modern flair. In the new model, the base of the bowl is flat and sweeps vertically upwards through gently rounded corners. The washbasin has a comfortably large and convenient depth, a feature that helped spark its original popularity.

The updated Starck 2 line now also includes a sophisticated rectangular tub with a standout feature: a prominent, integrated neck rest. The tub itself is an engineering feat; its rectangular form features clean, strong angles nearly impossible to achieve in acrylic. The luxurious addition of a seamless neck rest blends into the new bathtub, which makes it comfortable as well as stylish.

New Starck Slimline shower trays round out this reinvigorated collection. A characteristic design feature is the flat installation height, reducing the rim to a mere 4/5 of an inch and making it ideal for all standard shower enclosures. In addition to a rectangular variant, the Starck Slimline shower trays are also available in a quadrant-shape to comply with both national and international building standards.

For more information on Duravit or to find a local distributor, visit www.duravit.us or call 888-DURAVIT. **RO**



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Use Water Filters to Drive Additional Sales

Four Tips and Talking Points to Put Clean, Delicious Water on the Radar of Consumers and Sales Associates



A built-in water dispenser is part of the allure of today's refrigerator. It provides consumers with clean, fresh-tasting water – as long as they regularly replace the water filter.

As more focus on water quality enters mainstream media, this unsung appliance part is making headway into the limelight as consumers move toward a healthier lifestyle.

But not all water filters are created equal. GE just launched

its most advanced filtration, the RPWF, which is the only refrigerator filter on the market that is tested and verified to remove 98 percent of five trace pharmaceuticals* from tap water, including ibuprofen and progesterone, which is found in birth control pills.

In addition, all GE filters pass rigorous structural and filtration tests, making them NSF certified; NSF is one of the most respected independent certification companies in existence today. Consumers can have confidence that buying a genuine GE filter replacement gives them the best quality and cleanest water from their refrigerator.

As soon as the customer installs a new refrigerator, he or she will be back in the market for a new water filter within six months from the date of installation.

FOUR TIPS TO KEEP YOUR WATER FILTER BUSINESS FLOWING

1. **Integrate water filters into the refrigerator selling story.** GE research shows educating customers about the benefits of filtration and reminding them they have to change the filter are the top drivers of filter sales. The best time for this teaching moment is during the sales process.
2. **Display water filters with refrigerators.** "Place displays in the refrigerator area, inside or next to refrigerators, to make the selling

process easy on the salesperson and the customer," says GE's Lauren Whitsell, product manager for renewables.

3. **Take advantage of GE's rebate.** To support salespeople in making filters part of the refrigerator sales process, GE provides consumer rebates throughout the year. If consumers buy the replacement filters when they purchase the refrigerator, they can save up to \$30.
4. **Develop a plan to drive water filter replacement with your customer base.** Think of ways to educate customers through advertising efforts and in-store signage. "Salespeople calling customers who have purchased a refrigerator within the last six months to ask if they need to get a replacement filter is a great way to drive additional sales and keep in contact with your customers," added Whitsell.

THE FLOW OF INFO: TALKING POINTS FOR EVERY SALES PERSON

- **Protect your family from harmful contaminants,** including five trace pharmaceuticals* (RPWF only) as well as insecticides, herbicides and chemicals that may be found in tap water.
- **Certification assurance** from third-party validation gives consumers confidence that GE filters, required to pass rigorous NSF tests, deliver what other filters can't—peace of mind.
- **Drink better tasting water** by removing contaminants, minerals and hard deposits helps deliver fresher, clearer water to your glass.
- **Say bye-bye to bottles.** All GE refrigerator filters can deliver more than a thousand 20-oz. bottles, enabling consumers to save significant money and keep plastic out of landfills.
- **Save money** since fresh, filtered water costs only a few cents per gallon, while premium bottled water can cost up to \$5.
- **Prevent expensive leaks** with GE filters. Quality design and materials make a difference.
- **The Plan: Encourage consumers to replace their water filters** every six months to ensure clear, fresh-tasting water and an instant and fast flow from the dispenser. **RO**

*Removes Ibuprofen, Atenolol, Fluoxetine, Progesterone, and Trimethoprim. Not all pharmaceuticals may be present in your water.

A white GE SmartWater filtration cartridge is shown in a dynamic, low-angle shot. Water is splashing over the top of the cartridge, creating a sense of movement and freshness. The cartridge has a circular top with a grid pattern. The GE logo and the text "SmartWater filtration" are visible on the side of the cartridge. The background is a soft, light gray.

Filters Get The Sales Flowing

Offer genuine GE Water Filters to generate more sales

Stocking and selling reliable GE water filters are an excellent way to generate additional revenue for your retail location. When you sell a GE refrigerator, encourage customers to buy an extra filter so they're ready for replacement in six months. Customers can maintain a steady stream of clean, delicious water and ice, while you encourage a steady flow of repeat filter purchases!

Contact your GE Area Sales Manager for more information.

NATIONWIDE

NATIONWIDE PRIMETIME! SHOW DRAW

PRIMETIME! SHOW





AS 5,000+ ATTENDEES

SOLUTIONS: BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

Nationwide Marketing Group held their PrimeTime! spring conference at the Venetian in Las Vegas March 3-5, 2013. Unveiled were some of their newest initiatives and held record attendance numbers. This PrimeTime! was the first in which the NECO and Cantrex Nationwide divisions attended with their retailers, and the convention occupied over 325,000 square feet of exhibition space and some 5,000 attendees, including 1,200+ dealer members. The theme "Solutions: Blueprint for Success" was targeted to arm independent retailers with all the tools they need to succeed in the constantly changing industry.

The Nationwide leadership team was pleased to share their membership growth in 2012. Robert Weisner, CEO of Nationwide confirmed the group signed over 300 members last year, bumping their roster to exceed 3,500 retailers. With a volume of \$14 billion in buying power and 10,000+ storefronts, they are forecasting continued growth in 2013. "This enhanced growth can be attributed to the many strides we are making to ensure our members have everything they need to succeed in a challenging marketplace," said Weisner.

"We feel it's a great time for independents," said Dave Bilas, executive vice president. He said big box retailers have been stumbling, paving the way for market share growth by smaller players. "Nationwide just wrapped up the

biggest year with the most growth in our company's history. Our role at Nationwide is and will continue to be providing our members with all the tools and strategic direction needed to excel and be as profitable as ever," added Bilas.

Senior Vice President of Appliances, Jeff Knock, said appliance sales were robust for the group in 2012, with a 13% increase in ASPs over the previous year. "This year, we have the momentum. Our programs are well in place. We continue with "Draw-Escape-Sell" as our core strategy and have big plans to unleash it in new ways and bring you more. I am very proud of the success of our D-E-S model. I am proud that our membership has embraced it and I am grateful that our vendor partner's have supported it with strategic funding and focus to help us drive the mix in a "reality" based marketplace," said Knock.

Tom Hickman, senior vice president of Electronics, reported that Nationwide's CE business grew about \$500 million in 2012, due in part to the addition of significant CE dealers to their membership. "This may seem like 'more of the same' for many of us, but the fact is that although 2013 will be a challenging year, it will also be the year of great innovation in the television business with the rollout of Ultra HD and OLED. Potential customers will be coming into retailers' stores looking for this new technology. NMG will be heavily promoting these advancements in conjunction with our video partners. We are extremely eager to see the influx of excitement (and sales) that Ultra HD and OLED will bring to retailers," added Hickman.

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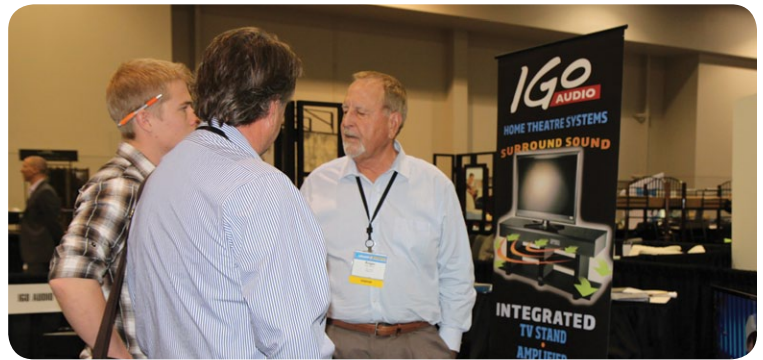
With continually increasing attendance numbers from the Furniture category, the group devoted the a full day just before the show floor opened to their Furniture Summit, which held presentations from industry leaders such as Jerry Epperson and David Perry. Bill Bazemore, vice president of Nationwide Furniture, reported membership growths in 2012 to be 1,600 of the group's 3,500+ members who are now carrying furniture in more than 3,000 stores. "Bedding sales account for the highest profit center in most stores today. For the appliance and/or electronic dealer, it is the most natural progression of product mix and has proven to be a home run," said Bazemore.

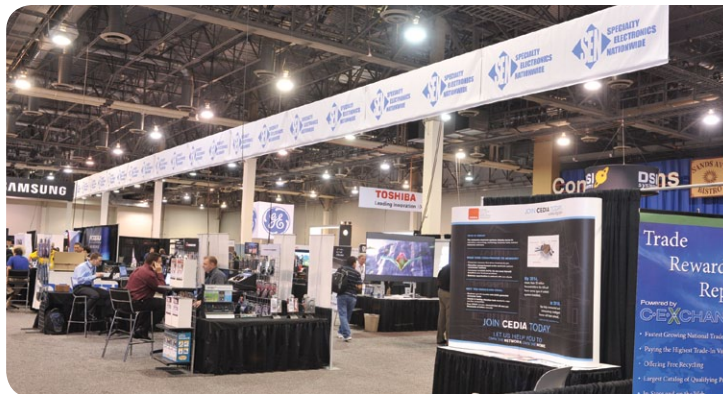
The Rent to Own (RTO) category had 100+ individual RTO companies in attendance. James MacAlpine, vice president of the Rental Division and Business Development, said the group unveiled the first ever RTO marketing calendar at the show, which will provide retailers with specific RTO materials, such as website banners and email marketing elements. MacAlpine also added, "We've seen an increase in RTO attendees at PrimeTime!, as existing members invite their franchisees to take advantage of special buys and learn more about the member services offered by Nationwide".

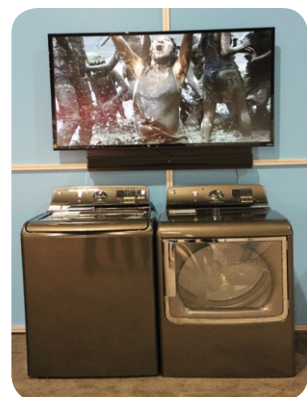
Some of the newest initiatives included the announcement of the revamped MemberNet site, the group's primary intranet communication tool for members. The goal is for the system to be more robust and user-friendly, with updates on everything from volume rebates to sales training to marketing materials. This central vehicle of digital signage allows retailers to feed vendor videos, custom clips, movie trailers, PSA materials and more to their individual stores. Les Kirk, COO of Nationwide shared that the new MemberNet, dubbed MemberNet 4.0, is set to launch in the second quarter of 2013 and is also being built as a bilingual tool to accommodate French-speaking retailers. Additionally, the system will be designed to be more accessible from mobile devices.

In alignment with the goal to gear independents to more technologically advanced tools, Nationwide rolled out a new Info-Pad tablet with the goal of arming everyone at the sales level with a tool they can use to help close sales by keeping consumers in the store. As the initial roll-out began at the show, over 1,500 were ordered, while numbers have continued to increase in the weeks following. Jeff Knock explains that Toshiba supplies the 10-inch tablets, partly funded by vendors, preloaded with Nationwide's software, and will be made available to dealers at well under \$200. The group's PrimeMedia facility, based out of Atlanta, will load the tablets with the group's web data suppliers CMIC Data and RetailDeck, a variety of

| continued on page 39 |









data including infomercials, marketing assets, HD commercials, and product demos that will provide retail floor sales personnel with everything needed to keep the customer from walking out. The software will also run on Apple's iPad. The Info-Pads are not transactional, but the group is looking to add POS functionality in the future. "This is a great example of how Nationwide is preparing our members to collect market share as it becomes available. It is also another big step in exploiting our vendor's key innovation and product messages," added Knock.

The group also announced during PrimeTime! that they received the Partner of the Year Award from ENERGY STAR. Nationwide Marketing Group is honored for its leadership in educating consumers about energy-efficient products that earn the ENERGY STAR, the government-backed symbol of energy efficiency. By increasing ENERGY STAR brand awareness and training programs within Nationwide's traditional and digital communication initiatives, the independent retailers of NMG have increased leverage to drive the sales of ENERGY STAR qualified models and move towards the retirement of older less efficient major appliances and consumer electronics. "Nationwide has once again demonstrated its heritage of ENERGY STAR marketing leadership by creating sales and marketing programs designed to transform the mix of ENERGY STAR qualified products sold to consumers", says Richard Weinberg, senior VP of marketing for NMG. "Our partnership with ENERGY STAR helps us meet our customers' needs while also offering them the benefits of saving money on energy bills and protecting the environment." Over the last 20 years, with help from ENERGY STAR, American families and businesses have saved more than \$230 billion on utility bills and prevented more than 1.8 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

Nationwide also kicked off their NeXt Gen initiative, designed to encourage and support the next generation of entrepreneurs and leaders that will take the appliance, electronics and furniture industries into the future. The program is designed to bring these future leaders together to facilitate discussion, learning, and networking with industry executives. "By bringing in the next generation of leaders in the industry and establishing this network, we have the opportunity to provide them with the key resources needed to grow and evolve within their business" said Alex Knock, director of PR & communications. The kickoff reception was held at Rattlecan Restaurant and Bar in the Venetian, drawing 140+ young industry leaders. The group will continue to host NeXt Gen events in the future.

The next PrimeTime! show will be held August 11-14, 2013 at the Gaylord Texan in Dallas, Texas. For additional information, visit www.nationwideprimetime.com. **RO**

Take It From IKEA:

Create Your Own Maze and Make Shopping an Exciting Experience!

IKEA recently opened a new store in Denver. I waited as long as I could for the masses to thin out before I ventured out this week. I have to admit, in all of my travels, I've only been to an IKEA once several years ago and I was eager to see what all of the hullabaloo was about.

I'd often heard about the IKEA maze—no matter what you're looking for, you have to wend your way through the entire store. I was prepared to find that annoying, but instead I found it entertaining. I'm not really interested in redecorating right now—I was on a mission to study their retailing. Still, I found myself engaged in numerous displays and picking up a wide variety of products.

I was struck by the use of color throughout the store. It was clear that if I wanted to, I could match green throw pillows to sheets, chairs, lights and even kitchen gadgets. The use of color pulled me from one display area to the next.

Associates—dressed alike in yellow and blue striped shirts and sweaters—were visible but not intrusive. It's clearly a self-service store, but if I had wanted help, I could easily identify who to ask. They appeared to be strategically placed throughout every department. None, however, looked up from their tasks to greet or acknowledge me.

Their whole-home displays definitely peaked my interest. Four models—from a tiny dorm-room sized one-room efficiency at 200 square feet to a complete two bedroom 600 square foot apartment—were totally outfitted with furniture, cookware, clothing hanging in the wardrobes, pictures on the walls, accessories, storage units, bathroom fixtures and even a nursery. I could actually picture myself living in even the smallest model home. My sister is

building a small rental studio apartment and I can't wait to show her what she can do with her 19 x 24 space.

OK. So you're not the biggest furniture retailer in the world. Maybe you don't carry furniture at all. Although my store was once yellow with red and blue trim, maybe yours isn't. Here are the catchwords describing my IKEA adventure that you can apply to your own business.

- **Color**—Schaefer's TV and Appliance used 25 different shades of paint when they built their new store in Lincoln, NE. Western Appliance in San Jose just built a new Thermador display into bright red cabinets. Who says that TVs, appliances, bedding and furniture need to be displayed in a boring, monotone environment? Sub-Zero uses bold shades of purple, yellow and green in their Living Kitchen displays. I love my own bold red laundry pair.
- **Create Your Own Maze**—Grocers keep milk and eggs in the back. Why? Because they're high demand items and they want their prospects to walk the aisles. Encourage your associates to walk customers around. Maybe it's time to turn the age-old design of putting laundry at the front on its head. "Have you seen our new Sleep Center?" or "I know you're looking for a range, but do you have a minute to see some of the great new colors available in appliances?" Or move your cashier somewhere so that customers will have to see the whole store.
- **Entertain**—We live in an experience economy. Bring in guest chefs. Hold cooking classes for kids. Grill on weekends. Bake bread and cookies. Follow the Huffington Post's Arianna Huffington and hold seminars

about the health benefits of napping and of getting a great night's sleep. Think about Boston-area Jordan's Furniture sporting one of the country's 200 iMAX theaters.

- **Engage**—Associates must get their customers involved in the selling process. They need to actively listen as they ask customers questions about their needs and wants; their lifestyles, hobbies and habits. Give interesting and exciting presentations to your customers. Demonstrate your products; don't just spout off a laundry list of features. Big washer? Sure, here's the 20 pairs of jeans you can wash in one load. How will the product make your customer the envy of their friends? Will it help them save time, money and energy?

Shopping shouldn't be work. It should be fun for buyer and seller. I remember when my friends and I—just looking for something to do—would go shopping. We weren't looking for anything special, just a place to hang out. But now, I'd just as soon go to Walgreens or the grocery store as into any other store.

Here's the PS—I spent Easter with my family on the west coast. I couldn't wait to drag my sister into IKEA. And it didn't feel like a chore at all. With all the sights in the Bay Area, where did I want to go? Shopping! **RO**

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



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Who Are Your Customers?

If You Don't Know, How Can You Serve Them?

Who are your customers? Do you know what they want? Do you know what they think about you and your products and services? If you don't, you have some work to do.

It's critical that you know your customers, so that you can give them what they want. You must be proactive. Instead of waiting for your customers to start leaving you and wondering why they are heading to your competitors, you must research their needs and determine their opinions of your business.

As soon as I mentioned the word research, most of you are probably thinking, "Oh, great. Now he wants me to spend a lot of money, money I can't spare."

The type of research I am talking about doesn't have to cost you anything. And it basically involves two steps:

- **Ask.** If you really want to know how you can improve your business, ask your customers. Each time you have contact with a customer, engage her in a conversation. Did she find everything she needed? If she needed help or advice, did she get it? Did she encounter any problems while doing business with your organization? Does she have any complaints or suggestions she would like to share with you?

You might also ask if the customer was served in a timely and knowledgeable fashion. If the response is positive, great; if it is not, it probably indicates

the need for additional training for your employees.

Also do a little probing. For example, you might ask a customer if there is anything he might have purchased if you had it in stock. Maybe he came in for bathroom tiles, but also would have purchased some decorative bathroom items if you carried them. In his response you could identify additional, and complementary, products that could increase your business.

Make it easy for your customers to share their opinions with you. Include an 800 phone number on sales receipts and invoices, and have that number answered by employees, not machines. Provide customers with an email address they can use to contact you and share their thoughts.

- **Listen.** If you don't listen to what your customers are telling you, you might as well not ask for their opinions. Acknowledge what they are telling you and thank them for taking the time to do so. Also, assure them that you will act on what they have said. Most customers don't offer suggestions or make complaints, because they don't think anything will be done with that information. They simply take their business elsewhere.

I'll give you a personal example: While staying at a \$450-a-night hotel in California recently, I informed the staff that there were ants in the bathroom. Nothing was done to correct the

situation. Needless to say, I will not be returning to that hotel.

It's critical that you acknowledge what customers tell you and that you implement those suggestions you determine will improve your business and your service. If many of your customers are telling you the same thing—that your hours are inconvenient, that the quality of a specific product is poor, or that your employees are rude—you know you've got a problem and should act quickly to make changes.

You also must thank customers for taking the time to share their opinions. You can do so verbally or in writing, and you can give a gift card or discount to customers to thank them for their feedback. When customers feel that you value what they have to say, they will be more loyal to you.

Your customers are the experts when it comes to improving your business. Look at them as consultants who will help you make the changes that will keep them coming back to you and that will draw new customers to you. Let them help you drive your business to new heights. **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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Why Poetry Might Save Your Business

Recently, I found myself on a blind date. After the awkward settling in at the table, perfunctory introductions and basics, my date began talking about his business, his travels to Japan, his grown children, his previous jobs, his hobbies. I really was trying to focus, but his voice had this lulling effect. Finally, he seemed to remember that he didn't actually know me and asked where I went to college. I answered. He followed up in quick succession about where I went to graduate school. I answered. Then he wanted to know what I had studied, "what did you get your degree in?" he asked.

"Actually, I have a Master's in Fine Arts and Poetry," I replied.

"WHY?!" he yelled, with something that can only be described as incredulity.

At this point, the date wasn't really going anywhere, and I so wished that I could've come up with some pithy, smart aleck response to such an unfiltered reply, but the truth is, I wanted to give him the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps, to the ordinary blind date guy, having a degree in poetry, being a poet, is a sort of weird thing to bring to the table when you're a successful businesswoman and entrepreneur?

It is a little weird, to be honest, and as I mention in the introduction to my book, *The Influencing Option: The Art of Building a Profit Culture in Business*, "poets... have taken some martyrish approach to standing righteously outside the business arena, acting like we don't care and refusing to see the connections between you and us. In truth, we need each other." I know that in my journey to success as a world-class consultant helping organizations create those Profit Cultures, I have not trod a straight path—it has not been linear.

How might poetry, or what poets do, help save your business?

- **Language.** It's all about the language, always. One of my favorite mentors says, "language controls the conversation, which controls the relationship, which controls the sale." In other words, the better access we have to exact language, the greater probability we have for success. This is why I specifically teach ethical influencing. The way we ask for what we want matters.
- **Courage.** The act of writing a poem, in itself, is an act of courage. Donald Hall said it was the effort to "say the unsayable," which takes courage, no matter what. I am often, in my coaching and in my consulting, helping leaders and business people to be more courageous. Sometimes, the most courageous conversation they need to have first, is with themselves. Sometimes, the exact obstacle they face in moving forward, urging on a creative or innovative team or company is the courageous conversation they are not having right now.
- **Specificity.** When I was in school, I had written a piece about a walk outside on a spring day: "The white flowers fluttered in the wind," or something-such I wrote. "What white flowers?" my teacher asked. "A writer knows the name." Which means: a writer will research, notice, find out, and report. Most of the problems in business are due to a lack of specificity. Hard to imagine it's not something more awesome or complicated, but it's not. I help them get really specific, and often articulate that specificity in their visions or strategies, their communication and messaging, and in their managing of performance and results.
- **Humanity.** No matter what your writer friends may tell you (or your business

friends) we are not from two different sub-species. At the core, every person wants to be noticed, to be heard, to make a difference. Everyone. Poets are taking time to notice this more frequently, and to articulate it, and to develop sensitivity and awareness around when it happens, or conversely, when it doesn't. I bring this awareness to, and cultivate it in, my relationships with my clients.

For a long time, I never wanted to talk about, or even admit, that my background and educational credentials did not include an MBA from a prestigious university. I thought that my potential clients might believe that that was the indicator for "smart" and the criteria by which they might decide to work with me or not. It's irrelevant: my clients want results. They want to know that the money, time and effort they are going to invest will give them what they want: higher profits, more engaged workplaces, less stress, success in their endeavors. I can do this, exactly as I am, and now I know why, of many of my favorite Shakespeare quotes, one I really love is, "This above all else: to thine own self be true... for thou canst not be false to any man." When I show up as poet, entrepreneur and ordinary smart person, I can then help others be who they need to be, too.

What about you? Are you the poet of your own business? **RO**

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



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Overcoming Common Communication Problems

As teams are composed of different personalities with different communication styles, problems can occur even when team structures aren't properly constructed and implemented. Leaders should understand the common problems experienced by groups that can hinder the effectiveness and productivity of the team.

Floundering—Teams commonly have trouble initiating and ending discussions. Members flounder, wondering what actions to take next. Resistance is experienced as the team moves from one phase of the discussion to the next. Floundering during discussions suggests that the team has not arrived at a consensus. Leaders must make sure each team member understands their assignment so that they don't feel overwhelmed and are comfortable enough to engage in meaningful discussions, open review and criticism of their work.

Overbearing Participants—Overbearing participants wield a disproportionate amount of influence over the team. They often have a senior rank within the company or possess in-depth technical knowledge. While most teams benefit from their participation, they can cause problems when they forbid any discussion that encroaches on their area of expertise or authority. Leaders can minimize these problems by reinforcing to the team that, as long as it pertains to the current subject, no area is off-limits. Privately, leaders can talk with overbearing individuals to let them know that it is important for the group to explore the particular subject and for individuals to understand the process.

Dominating Participants—Some team members can consume a disproportionate amount of time by talking too much. Their excessive input inhibits other members of the team from participating. Leaders should structure discussions to encourage equal participation, and openly solicit input and contributions from all team members.

Reluctant Participants—Reluctant participants may feel shy or unsure of themselves in the team, and must be encouraged to contribute their ideas and perspectives. Problems can develop when there are no activities built-in to persuade these individuals to participate. Leaders must act as gatekeepers to the discussion by openly and actively soliciting input and contributions from these individuals. These measures ensure balanced participation from the entire team.

Self-Assured Statements—Some individuals express personal beliefs and assumptions in a self-assured manner. These statements are so forceful that other team members assume they are hearing a presentation of facts. Consequently, members are reluctant to question these statements without facts and data to defend their position. Leaders cannot allow unquestioned acceptance of opinions as facts. They must use techniques and questions that compel members to support their statement with facts and to hold it up to the scrutiny of the entire team.

Attribution—As a way of bringing meaning to apparent disorder and confusion, people tend to attribute motives to individuals they disagree

with or don't understand. This behavior can lead to hostility in the team environment. Leaders must reaffirm the purpose, boundaries and framework of the training exercise and intervene when such behaviors are exhibited by team members.

Discounting—Discounting occurs when team members fail to assign other members' ideas and options any validity, credence or credit. If discounting happens frequently, teams can experience hostility. Every team member deserves respect and attention from the entire team. Leaders must ensure that the team is trained from the onset in active listening and other constructive behaviors. When possible, the leader should provide support to the discounted individual. Leaders will also need to privately discuss the matter with the team member who is responsible for discounting.

DIGRESSION AND TANGENTS

Wide-ranging and unfocused team discussions are a natural tendency as teams stray from the topic. While some digressions may be entertaining, they divert the team from the purpose of the activity. Team facilitators are responsible for bringing these discussions back to the team's agenda. **RO**

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

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Can Your Sales People Close the Deal?

Proper Training in Furniture Sales is Essential to Success

Associates who sell refrigerators, TVs, speakers, toasters, and even clothing are offered training to help them understand the products they are touting and effectively close the sale, while leaving the door open for repeat business. Sadly, training in the furniture business is lacking. Usually, it entails a factory rep coming out to the store and spending a half hour or so on the product line. While helpful, this is certainly not enough for sales people to be truly effective. I know that when I was coming up through the furniture business, I was handed a dust rag and told to dust every piece in the store to get to know the product.

However, whether you are selling high-end furniture or inexpensive promotional product, giving salespeople proper training on everything from greeting the customer to color selection, to style, as well as closing the deal is vital to the success of your company. "Untrained sales people waste customers' time," says Mike Petersen, vice president of the Furniture Training Company, a company that offers full-service training to furniture retailers. "These associates also breed disloyal customers, because customers who receive unsatisfactory assistance while in the store leave feeling frustrated and dissatisfied. They are likely to never return to the store again." This problem then becomes compounded because customers spread the word far and wide via social networking. Shoppers who do end up buying something become disappointed over time as they realize that the furniture they purchased does not actually satisfy their needs. They begin to feel that the sales associate "talked

them into" buying the wrong furniture.

To address these issues, the Furniture Training Company takes a virtual, soup-to-nuts approach on furniture training, including online program modules, testing, games, measurable results that go back to the sales manager, and even certification. They pore over every detail of the exchange, such as the importance of the greeting. "All greetings should mirror the greeting offered when you enter a friend's home. Phrases like, 'Its nice to see you' and 'I am glad you are here' make customers feel welcome," says Petersen. "Whether or not the customer indicates a purpose, or is just there to look around, it is critical that the sales associate offers help."

Another area where most furniture retailers fall short is a strong foundation in room design. Customers don't trust a sales person who doesn't know the basics of color and style. "The sales associate must understand that customers don't want to buy furniture, they want to create beautiful and functional living spaces," says Petersen. Associates with design knowledge sell more furniture to more customers because they are able to help the customer know how to improve those living spaces. An understanding of color palettes, furniture styles and periods, as well as scale and room layout are all required to answer customer questions with confidence.

Mattress sales are slightly different, because unlike furniture shoppers, all mattress shoppers are ready to buy; they simply are looking for the best mattress for their needs. The salesperson must therefore have the product knowledge needed to



inform clients and the salesmanship qualities that give customers confidence.

Of course, if the salesperson can't close the sale, then no amount of product training, design background, and finesse is going to make a difference to your bottom line. Closing the sale should be easy if the customer has been shown the right solution. This only happens when the sales associate becomes a true product knowledge expert and when he learns the right things about his customer. "When you know your product and your customer, you feel confident in closing the sale," says Petersen. "Closing becomes a simple matter of helping the customer realize that her needs will be met by the furniture you present, and this doesn't happen by guesswork." **RO**

E. Michael Allen, Brand-Source VP of home furnishings, has been with the organization for 15 years and overseen the growth of the category to one of the largest in the country.



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What's Controlling Your World?

Years ago, a mission of the electronics industry was to integrate all of your home entertainment components into a single remote control for ease of operation. During this time, the Custom Integrator was born. You know, the guy you called to hang a TV on the wall or come over to get your DVD player to work. These initial control systems were very complex to design, difficult to program and users weren't always keen on the way that they would operate. Some of these complex systems still exist, but thankfully are much easier to navigate now.

Control systems today cannot only do more, but they are also more intuitive to program and can interface with more stuff. Integration is becoming limitless as to what can be controlled in and out of your home. You now have the ability to control the lock on your front door, the temperature of your house, your window shades, the lights and even remotely start your car. These new systems are robust and efficient. Not to mention that you can monitor a gaggle of products and devices. Metadata is available so that you can find out the name of a song you are listening to or the temperature of the steaks on your grill. New smart appliances allow you to monitor every-thing from the groceries in your refrigerator to the energy consumption of your laundry pair. There are even cool new features that allow you to decide on dinner menu options based on what you still have in the refrigerator.

Whether it be at work, at home, or even at a friend's house, control systems

are a part of all of our lives in some capacity. This trend is not going away anytime soon and it's a revenue stream that you should be seriously considering for your business. Integration and control is not just for the A/V Industry anymore either. Specifically, if you sell appliances, this is a category that you should be embracing. The kitchen is a focal point of the home; a properly integrated kitchen is the nexus of the home.

So where do you start? LED lighting is a great area; a properly lit kitchen is amazing. It dramatically changes the way that the kitchen looks and feels. Make sure that the kitchen has Wi-Fi access also. With an iPhone, Android, iPad or tablet, it's now possible to control your lighting in the kitchen and monitor your appliances from that device. Plus you have access to cook-books, videos, weather, Facebook and the ability to control other integrated items in your home. Our phones aren't just phones anymore. We rely on them for everything, why not use them to control and get information from the stuff in our lives that we use the most?

Some integration control manufacturers, like Key Digital, base their entire product line on the fact that you will be controlling the items in your home from your phone or tablet. Their operation is ergonomic and intelligent. Traditional control systems still exist, too, if you are not interested in using your phone. Control 4 is one manufacturer who seems to be leading the pack. They have a cutting edge product and have been intimate with control and integration since its inception. The

unique thing about C4 is that they focus not just on controlling products, but also making the world a better place. When proper integration occurs, energy efficiency is achieved as well. C4 has successfully married integration with energy efficiency.

Although some control systems are intuitive, more elaborate control systems require training in order to become a certified programmer. There is a great deal of work involved, but it is an achievable goal for a dedicated individual. Recently, myself and two of my colleagues attended the Control 4 Training in Salt Lake City. None of us will be doing everyday programming anytime soon, but we wanted to prove a point. This is a necessary category to embrace. If we can do the programming, surely someone in your company can do it too.

Are you intrigued about control yet? **RO**

Barrie McCorkle is the Director of Membership for Specialty Electronics Nationwide (SEN) and is an A/V industry veteran with 20+ years experience in the Audio, Video and Custom Installation community. Throughout his career, he has worn literally every hat that you can in a family owned audio/video business. He started selling electronics at the age of 12 and was managing his first store at 17. Most recently, he was VP/Co-owner/GM of Design Audio/Video, a Colorado based company with 2 stores. Barrie is an active CEDIA volunteer and co-authored the Registered Outreach Instructor (ROI) Train The Trainer class. He is also a certified ROI.





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SEN ADDS 20 NEW MEMBERS IN 2013



Specialty Electronics Nationwide (SEN), a division of Nationwide Marketing Group, has added 20 new members since January of 2013, increasing their membership roster to 470+ member companies.

Some of the new additions include Paul's TV, based in Irvine, CA and LinkUS Systems, based in Fresno, CA. "Our membership continues to grow at a rapid pace. When you combine the strength of our vendor programs and our unparalleled member services with the team here at Nationwide, you end up with a winning combination for our members," says Jeannette Howe, SEN's executive director. "I don't see that trend stopping anytime soon. We plan on a dramatic increase in membership in 2013 and have exciting new programs with companies such as Control4, Key Digital, ButtKicker, American Express and Office Depot to bring our members continued growth".

Nationwide has been increasing their memberships at a healthy pace both in new memberships numbers and in total buying power. In June 2012, the group added Micro Center to their roster, followed by their international expansion into Canada with the adoption of Cantrex, now known as Cantrex Nationwide. Nationwide's buying power is now 14 billion, deeming them the leading buying group in the nation.

EPA NAMES NATIONWIDE MARKETING GROUP 2013 ENERGY STAR® PARTNER OF THE YEAR

NATIONWIDE MARKETING GROUP EARNS AWARD FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH MARKETING & PROMOTING SUPERIOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT PRODUCTS



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has named Nationwide Marketing Group (NMG) as a 2013 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year for its outstanding contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by educating consumers about energy-efficient products. Nationwide's accomplishments were recognized at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. on March 26, 2013.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has named Nationwide Marketing Group (NMG) as a 2013

Throughout ENERGY STAR's many years of existence, Nationwide Marketing Group will be honored for its leadership in educating consumers about energy-efficient products that earn the ENERGY STAR, the government-backed symbol of energy efficiency. By increasing ENERGY STAR brand awareness and training programs within Nationwide's traditional and digital communication initiatives, the independent retailers of NMG have increased leverage to drive the sales of ENERGY STAR qualified models and move towards the retirement of older less efficient major appliances and consumer electronics.

"Nationwide has once again demonstrated its heritage of ENERGY STAR Marketing leadership by creating sales and marketing programs designed to transform the mix of ENERGY STAR qualified products sold to consumers," says Richard Weinberg, Senior VP of Marketing for NMG. "Our partnership with ENERGY STAR helps us meet our customers' needs while also offering them the benefits of saving money on energy bills and protecting the environment."

Over the last 20 years, with help from ENERGY STAR, American families and businesses have saved more than \$230 billion on utility bills and prevented more than 1.8 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

"EPA is recognizing Nationwide Marketing Group for their commitment to sales and marketing of ENERGY STAR products," said Bob Perciasepe, acting administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Nationwide provides leadership in the marketplace by helping customers reduce their energy bills and carbon pollution at the same time."

The 2013 Partner of the Year Awards are given to manufacturers and retailers that successfully promote and deliver ENERGY STAR certified products, saving consumers money and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Award winners are selected from the nearly 20,000 organizations that participate in the ENERGY STAR program.

ENERGY STAR was introduced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1992 as a voluntary market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through increased energy efficiency. Today, ENERGY STAR offers businesses and consumers energy-efficient solutions to save energy, money, and help protect the environment for future generations. Nearly 20,000 organizations are ENERGY STAR partners, committed to improving the energy efficiency of products, homes, and buildings.

For more information about ENERGY STAR, visit www.energystar.gov or call toll-free 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937). **RO**

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MAY

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18-21

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show.restaurant.org

6-8

HOME FURNISHINGS INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

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PALM SPRINGS, CA
www.homefurnishingsconference.com

7-9

2013 NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW

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

14-18

PSOC CONVENTION
(Professional Servicers Organization of California)

Knotts Berry Farm Hotel
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www.psoca.org

15-17

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www.hdexpo.com

18 – 21

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www.icff.com

21-23

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10-12

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5-6

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JULY

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BrandSource Launches New OutdoorSource Division Focused on Outdoor Products

New and Existing Members Can Leverage Extensive Marketing and Fulfillment Support Program to Drive Store Traffic

Millions are celebrating the arrival of spring and sprucing up their outdoor living spaces with new furniture and outdoor appliances. BrandSource recently launched OutdoorSource, a new division for current members and independent retailers focused on outdoor products.

"The OutdoorSource division was created to help members compete with big box stores by offering a compelling and affordable assortment of outdoor products," said Bob Lawrence, BrandSource CEO. "More importantly, this new division increases our overall volume, making us more attractive to manufacturers and translating into more supplier support and better programs for our members."

The OutdoorSource marketing and fulfillment support program is designed to drive store traffic with TV, print and web-based advertising as well as turnkey digital marketing promotions. It also includes TV commercials with brand ambassador Kathy Ireland, CEO and Chief Designer for Kathy Ireland Worldwide® (kiWW®).

OutdoorSource products will also be featured on the popular BrandSource mobile app, which brings the entire line directly into the hands of shoppers and members. Free and available through the iTunes app store, this robust, feature-packed sales tool currently boasts the #1 spot on iTunes when searching for appliances.

To minimize OutdoorSource product inventory and maximize turns, members can also take full advantage of BrandSource's Expert Warehouse initiative, a complete fulfillment solution with no minimal order quantities. Consumer electronics and major appliances may be combined with orders to meet freight requirements for up to two deliveries per week.

New and existing members interested in offering OutdoorSource products will be rewarded with a variety of services and solutions reflecting the BrandSource commitment to helping members be more successful.



OutdoorSource support services include a field-based district manager who serves as a point of contact to help members profitably grow their businesses; an inside sales and customer service team ready to answer questions regarding products, programs, promotions and services; and a full sales training program tailored to each member's needs. Members can also get assistance with retail and in-house inventory financing, human resource issues, health care, service plans, business insurance and more.

OutdoorSource will also offer a password-protected, members-only intranet with a complete library of product resources that lets them securely place orders and manage all back office functions.

"The OutdoorSource division, like the entire BrandSource organization, is designed to put more consumers through the doors of our member stores and is dedicated to their day to day success," said Lawrence. **RO**

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Warranty Service Labor Rates and CODB

Recently a USA member sent me the following question:

"I have a question regarding CODB (cost of doing business) and warranty labor rates. I had my parts manager ask this question in the CODB class at the ASTI. She said that there was a separate P&L that should be used for it, but I am confused. Can you help me better understand how to properly use the CODB calculator to determine warranty rates?"

I understand that we are not paying advertising costs for that work, so I know it shouldn't be considered in the calculations for CODB. However, I am not 100% sure of how to best address this. I know some people take a percentage of their overall CODB based on their percentage of warranty business. I know people guess at it. I know people subtract their marketing expenses out and then conduct their CODB calculations. So, I am looking for the BEST PRACTICES approach to the CODB and using it to determine warranty rates.

Your perspective on this would be highly appreciated!"

For many years I have delivered a breakout at the USA convention on how to calculate your Cost of Doing Business (CODB). USA offers a FREE CODB calculator downloadable from its website home page. This year at the USA's Appliance Service Training Institute, Doug Rogers my good friend and President of Mr. Appliance, conducted the CODB class. Doug and I have discussed this topic at great length and have a slightly different approach on the calculation but arrive at the same result. There is nothing in my presentation that suggests there is a different P&L used or the carving out of advertising to determine warranty labor rates and I am certain that Doug would agree.

The CODB calculator cannot be used to determine warranty rates. Warranty labor rates are set by a manufacturer and offered to the servicer as payment for services rendered. We need to remember that when we do warranty work it can be at the expense of COD work. In other words, the more time we allot to fill our day with lower paying warranty service calls, the less time we have to do higher paying COD work.

That being said, I recommend that companies use the CODB calculator for two reasons. First, to set COD (cash calls) labor rates based on costs and current company efficiency (first call completes or FCC) to deliver desired profits from business activities. The CODB calculator tells you what the average completed ticket needs to be to achieve profit goals based on wages, overhead and efficiency or FCC. If the results of the calculator are non-competitive (too high priced) then action is required. Either technician wages, overhead, desired profit need to be lowered or increase company efficiency and FCCs. It's often easier to increase efficiency than cut wages or overhead and as business owners that's our primary responsibility.

Second, the CODB calculator reveals what it costs per hour to run a business so we can make informed decisions. One of many decisions is what labor rate and from which supplier we might be willing to accept. Not all warranty rates are the same dollar amount and if they are the same amount they may not be created equal. If two companies offer \$100 per completed call one may be more attractive than the other. Ease of working a manufacturer's warranty process or potential future business opportunities must be considered; example: high-end line warranty call vs. a

low-end line warranty call. I'd much rather take the \$100 call for a high end customer who has more disposable income than your average low-end purchaser for obvious reasons, providing, that is, I am aggressively marketing these customers for future additional products and/or services. Additionally one manufacturer's warranty policies might require more hoops to jump through in order to get paid than the other.

It is important to highlight that the CODB calculator will reveal what your average ticket must be to achieve desired profit goals. The key word in that sentence is "average" ticket. Our average completed ticket is the average of warranty, COD, walks (diagnostic only) and n/c tickets. The trick is to have the right % of warranty tickets to COD tickets. For me that average mix was 30% warranty and 70% COD. In the early years of my business I was upside down at 70% warranty. Profits flowed when I corrected this mix.

Warranty service presents many great opportunities and adds much value to any service business through access to technical information and training. Warranty service calls provide access to new customers if expectations are exceeded and can become a long term source of repeat and referral business. Warranty service calls must be managed and as with all aspects of any business, "You can't manage what you don't measure"! **RO**

*Paul Mac Donald
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Why Would Anyone

This is a question that is often asked about any trade association and is difficult to answer if you don't understand the dynamics of a trade association. Trade associations are exactly what the name says it is. It is a group of similar businesses that come together for the purpose of working together to improve industry conditions for all involved in that group. They exchange information, they work together on committees for the common good, they develop programs to benefit their members and ideally, they each contribute something to the organization to make it better each time a new member joins.

Now let's see what PSA members have accomplished to make their organization the best it can be to meet their needs in managing their business.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **PSA Update**—A monthly update and published in Appliance Service News to bring news and interesting industry articles to readers on a monthly basis. It is also posted on the PSA web site www.psaworld.com.
- **PSANet**—Our email network that allows PSA members to communicate directly with other members, provides instant industry news as it happens, provides instant technical assistance, provides management assistance when requested and might even contain a good joke once in while. Many manufacturers also monitor the network and technical assistance is provided.
- **PSA-edu**—Our email network for educators, industry leaders and manufacturers to communicate on a national basis to

share information to improve and support the training of new technicians.

EDUCATION

- **Certified Appliance Professional (CAP) program**—Allows technicians to certify their skills as either a Master Technician or as a Certified Technician. The program measures the technician's skill level against industry set benchmarks and skill standards set and maintained by the National Coalition of Electronics Education (NCEE) Graduate Technician program that measure the skills of graduating technicians from technical schools attesting to the fact that these graduate technicians have the skill level to enter the appliance service field as entry level technicians without field experience. After two years of actual field experience, graduate technicians can convert their certification to a Master technician with the recommendation of the employer.
- **Certified Service Manager (CSM) program**—Allows owners and service managers to certify their skills as a professional service manager according to national standards created and maintained by the National Coalition of Electronics Education (NCEE).
- **Certified Consumer Specialist (CCS) program**—Designed to test the skills of the non-technical service center support personnel who are in everyday contact with consumers.
- **Certified Service Center (CSC) program**—Designed to identify those service centers who have taken the time to train and certify

their operations as a facility capable of providing World-Class service to consumers by certifying their technicians and support personnel to national industry standards.

- **Curriculum**—The PSA education committee is working with both post secondary schools and vocational High Schools to improve and update curriculum to keep it current with the needs of the industry. They are also working to create a model for Vocational High Schools nationally to attract more technicians into the field as a career choice and to act as a feeder to post secondary schools that offer appliance service training and can meet the standards for developing quality technicians.
- **SkillsUSA**—PSA is involved on a national level with the SkillsUSA competition held annually in June where students from vocational schools from all over the country come together and compete for awards and prizes for their diagnostic skills. PSA provides our Graduate certification exam free of charge during this event.
- **Technical Training**—PSA provides technical training at the annual convention and free certification for those attending the convention.
- **Management Training**—PSA provides management training to servicers on how to better manage their business. Service managers can become certified as Certified Service Manager (CSM) attesting to the fact that they have had the training and have met the requirements of service business management in consumer relations, employee relations, accounting,



Want to Join PSA?

marketing, productivity and general management techniques.

- **Annual Convention**—The National All Service Convention (NASC) has become the premier educational event of the industry with top-notch training in technical skills, management techniques and free certification for those who attend. It also provides members with the opportunity to participate in industry roundtable discussions with manufacturer and third party warranty representatives to resolve issues that face us all. It also gives the vocational instructors an opportunity to interface with the industry and to update their skills with up-to-date technical training as well as meeting with other instructors and industry leaders to provide better support to the educational effort. The ability to network with servicers from all parts of the country, exchange best practice ideas, discuss industry problems, get certified and have a great time in the process is something every servicer should be involved in.

MEMBER TOOLS

- **PSA Service Library**—Provides the latest service manuals and bulletins in one location to secure needed technical data for multiple brands, not limited to, Whirlpool, Frigidaire, GE, Samsung, LG, Subzero/Wolf, Viking, Fisher Paykel, and much more. Available on CD or flashdrive. We've also added HVAC products and the library is updated throughout the year to keep you up to date on the latest technical data.

- **Low cost long distance telephone program**—Allows you to take advantage of low cost long distance service with no hidden charges or gimmicks to run your cost up. All you pay is the current low rate plus the mandated taxes.
- **Low rate Bank Card program**—Allows members to accept credit cards in payment for the service that they provide to their customers. All you do is charge it today and it is in your checking account within 48 hours.
- **Cost of Doing Business Software**—PSA has partnered with a CPA firm to develop a Cost of Doing Business software program that allows members to accurately find their cost of doing business and to manage your business by controlling costs and lets you make knowledgeable business decisions based on facts and not on guesswork.
- **CAP Practice Exam**—Allows technicians to see if they have the skills and are ready to take the certification exam.
- **Employee Evaluation program**—Allows you to test the skills of a potential new technician candidate before hiring. The program will show you where they are strong technically and the areas where they will require some help to bring their skills up to an industry standard. You know how everybody can talk a good game but can they deliver? This program takes the guesswork out of the evaluation process.
- **The Flat Rate program**—PSA has available a Major Appliance Service Pricing Guide (MASPG) to provide an industry accepted flat rate pricing guide to its members, our program

is an outright purchase. This can be accommodated for your market conditions, and allows to you make changes and print out for your staff, at anytime.

The PSA Industry Relations Committee meets regularly and continues a running dialogue on all industry issues all year long. The certification committee edits and reviews the certification question pool to make sure all questions are pertinent and correct according to the latest skill standards. The communications committee is responsible for the direction and content of our publications and we really need people who are willing to write articles for these publications. These are just a few of the ongoing committees that are staffed by volunteer members.

The PSA Board of Directors volunteer their time, energies and resources and work very hard to oversee the work of the volunteer committees and to promote and work for the good of the association and the service industry as a whole. Each member of the board serves on one or more industry committees meeting with other associations and manufacturers in an effort to resolve industry problems. Each member serves a two-year term and board seats are available to any member who wants to throw his hat into the ring and run in the annual election. All members of PSA are given the right to vote for officers by mail in ballot. Our board members are just like our members, comprised of service company owners, technicians, and highly experienced in the appliance industry. **RO**

The Storehouse of World Vision Helps



GLORIA AND JOE ROBERT



FREDA AND SHAWN DAVIS WITH DAUGHTER



GINA AND TONY BONO

The Storehouse of World Vision was honored to once again participate in the National Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS) in New Orleans, Louisiana, held on April 19-21 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The Storehouse of World Vision, is a network of six storehouses which supply donated goods such as building materials, school supplies, personal care items, and clothing from corporate partners to more than 2.2 million people annually in low-income communities.

As a lead-in to the 2013 KBIS, and as part of its mission of helping rebuild communities, The Storehouse of World Vision is partnering with New Orleans' St. Paul's Homecoming Center (SPHC), to help three local families rebuild their homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Skilled volunteers, along with designers and contractors, are currently working to create beautiful new kitchens and baths in the three family homes, located in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans.

"While we look forward to the partnership KBIS brings, World Vision and its Storehouse program are extremely proud to be able to bring together our generous national and local corporate sponsors to donate critically needed supplies to help these local families restore not only their homes, but their hope, in a better community and a better world," said Efrain Perez, corporate relations director for World Vision.

The rehabilitated kitchens and baths were available for display for manufacturers,

vendors, architects, architecture students and faculty from Virginia Tech, along with local and national media at the start of the conference. One vendor, who has gone above and beyond their support to help the many deserving people residing in low-income communities, was awarded the Crystal Vision Award at a luncheon. The event was open to conference attendees, as well as local home builders, manufacturers, vendors, designers and architects.

"One of the best things a group can do is come together for the good of others," said John Morgan, 2013 National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) executive board president." The NKBA is proud to have joined forces with The Storehouse and St. Paul's Homecoming Center to help these three families renovate their kitchens and baths. I am so proud of our industry and their willingness to help by supplying product, design and other needed resources to make this a reality. We look forward to the success of this project and to knowing that the Kitchen & Bath Industry will leave New Orleans a little better because we came!"

THE STOREHOUSE OF WORLD VISION NEW ORLEANS FAMILIES

Gloria and Joe Robert. Gloria and Joe own a home in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans that backs up to the London Avenue Canal where one of the major levee breaches occurred during Hurricane Katrina. Their home was totally destroyed and they lost everything. Joe is a builder and was in the

New Orleans Families Rebuild Homes

process of rebuilding their home when all of his tools and floors were stolen out of the house. The economy tanked, work became slow and they fell on even harder times.

They are currently living in two rooms at the home of their daughter, Crystal, in New Orleans. Crystal's house, which was also severely damaged in the storm, left them living in a house with exposed studs and no kitchen. The Storehouse of World Vision has recently begun helping them finish their daughter's house. Joe and Gloria would like to finish their own home on the canal one day, so they can move out and give Crystal back her home. Gloria and Joe are thrilled to have been chosen to receive World Vision's help and look forward to seeing their daughter's finished home—and one day, their own home.

Freda and Shawn Davis and their teenaged daughter. The Davises also live in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans. Freda and Shawn did not have flood insurance and the little money they got for their contents was stolen by a fraudulent contractor who ran off with \$32,000. He did such shoddy work on their home's stucco that water constantly leaked into the house, warping all of the cabinets, mildewing the sheetrock, and doing untold damage. Shawn lost his job after the storm, found another job and then was laid off again this summer, due to the economy. Shawn recently found work with an offshore environmental company, but they are still in need of a kitchen and major repairs on a half bath.

They have been living on the second floor

of their home for six years, cooking in microwaves and toaster ovens and going to Freda's mom's house for meals. We look forward to making this family whole again.

Gina and Tony Bono. The Bonos had to demolish their home in the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina due to the extensive damage of over 13 feet of water. They received a small amount of insurance money, but not enough to cover the demolition and rebuilding of their home. Gina lost her job after the storm and Tony, who is also a builder, has to work on other houses to keep income coming in. Gina now works at a local supermarket. The couple is renting and paying a note on their new home. They became very discouraged as the funds ran out and were on the verge of walking away from their house when The Storehouse of World Vision came along. The kitchen and bath that is being donated to the Bonos has renewed their hope and given them the strength they need to persevere.

"The stories of these local families receiving help from The Storehouse of World Vision are tales of strength, compassion, determination and love," said Connie Uddo, director of St. Paul's Homecoming Center in New Orleans. With the generous support of the Storehouse and the donation of time from numerous skilled volunteers, we are able and proud to help these families rebuild their homes and their lives."

For more information on The Storehouse of World Vision's participation in the 2013 National Kitchen & Bath Industry Show, visit

www.worldvision.org/storehouse. For more information or to volunteer to help rehab the three New Orleans homes, contact Connie Uddo, director of the St. Paul's Homecoming Center at: 504.644.4125.

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. For more information, please visit www.worldvision.org/press or follow them on Twitter at @WorldVisionNews.

World Vision's Storehouse network is comprised of six warehouses across the U.S. that receive corporate donations of new, top-quality goods made available to local community partners for distribution. Goods that are distributed include building materials, school supplies, personal care items, and clothing to over 2.2 million people in low-income communities annually.

*In September 2006, the St. Paul's Homecoming Center, under the guidance of Director, Connie Uddo, was opened to provide the post-Katrina community with volunteer help, housing, tools, computer access, a wash-a-teria, Road Home assistance, case managers, mental health counselors, welcome baskets, community barbecues, bottomless cups of coffee and a shoulder of support. For more information on the St. Paul's Homecoming Center, please visit www.stpaulshomecomingcenter.org. **RO***

| continued from page 13 |

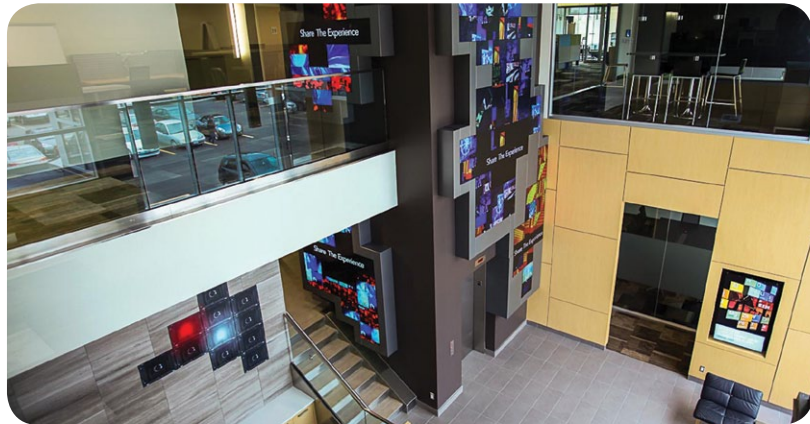
entertain, engage or inform your patrons, there are vendors that can help. What I really like about the industry as a whole is that most companies know they can't do it all and they partner with other companies to bring clients a solid solution. Those are the type of vendors DSE showroom floor is packed with. When you are at the show you can actually meet with three vendors at a time and walk away knowing you have the opportunity to succeed in launching a Digital Signage program. The prospects are endless with over 200 vendors on the floor to start, then even more attending for educational purposes and to experience the floor with their peers and potential customers. It also helped me last year, as a first time attendee, identify the vendors that really "did" Digital Signage versus the ones that only say they "can do" Digital Signage.

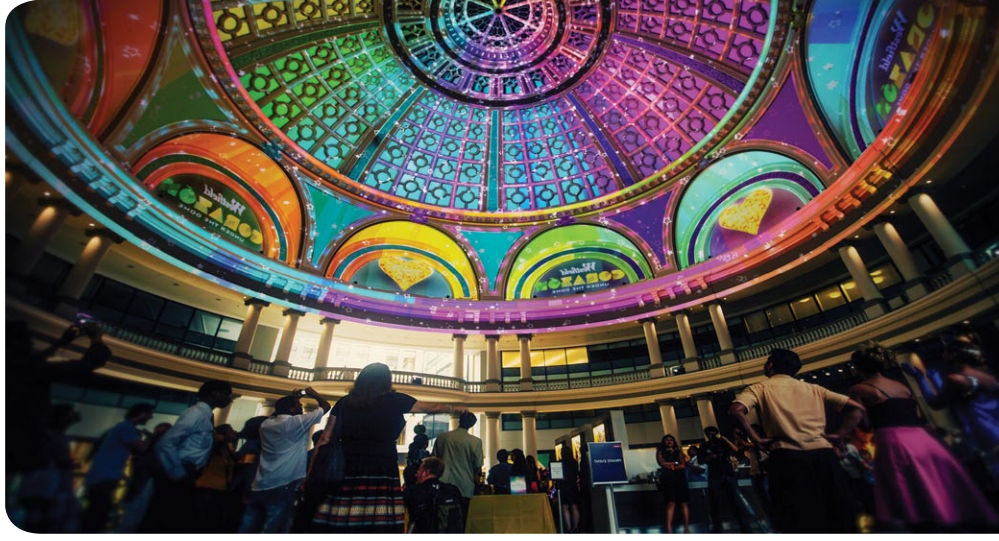
Of course everyone wanted to know "what's new?" Exciting new innovation is the key that drives our industry. That's why I like that DSE features a New Product Pavilion where exhibitors who are introducing new technologies at DSE have a visible showcase. There were over 50 new products in the Pavilion alone, a number of them designed or suitable for retail application (small screens and tablets, freestanding touchscreens, and interesting exterior solutions). This was a great resource for ideas; they also gave you the booth numbers so you could get additional information and see a demo first-hand.

As a retailer, I see the value in continually exploring ways to improve the customer experience and meet future challenges with creative, effective and cost efficient solutions. As a professional I see value in continually investing in my ability to be better at what I do.

Even if you aren't in the market to buy, but you want to get some ideas on how Digital Signage can improve your sales and customer experience in the future – DSE is the place to be. **RO**

Stacy Milligan is manager, In-Store Digital Media for MetroPCS, responsible for the company's strategy on digital signage in all corporate and dealer locations, including managing content on MetroVISION, an in-store digital network, strategy, planning on content and programming. Milligan also represents MetroPCS on the Digital Signage Expo Advisory Board and is a regular contributor to DSE's Question of the Month. www.digitalsignageconnection.com/blog/question-of-the-month.







Building the American Dream One Man Embraces the Entrepreneurial Spirit & Builds a Legacy

Long before Frederick Louis (F.L.) Maytag built his first washing machine, he was a field hand, cutting the bands off bundles of grain and feeding the meal into threshing machines. As he watched man after man injured while performing this dangerous job, he dreamed of inventing something safer.

F.L. Maytag didn't set out to build an international brand; his only goal was to improve life for farmers across America. With the belief that quality is the most important element in building a dependable product, he was soon producing the best farm equipment in America.

By 1907, he had ventured into home appliances with his first wooden washer. Made of the finest cypress and with a hand crank advertised as "so simple, a child could do it," the Pastime washer revolutionized how America washed clothes.

It was this philosophy that fueled him to create an electrically-operated washer and then later, the first gasoline powered washer, for homes where electricity was not yet available.

This revolutionary washer, known as the Multi-Motor, was so successful that it doubled sales and production within the first six months. The only one of its kind for many years, it eventually made Maytag Company the world's largest manufacturer of this type of engine.

While the Maytag name was already synonymous with innovation, it was one invention in 1922 that firmly established Maytag as the world leader in the industry.

Until that time, clothes were cleaned in washers that "dragged" them through water. Maytag Company envisioned a better way to clean, and soon the aluminum gyrafoam agitator was born. Word of the incredible efficiency of this new type of washer spread, and by 1924, Maytag was making one out of every five American washers.

Despite establishing itself as an industry leader, F.L. Maytag never let his company forget its responsibility: "Along with leadership comes the confidence of the public. We must maintain the quality of our product in every respect."

"When there is real need, there can be found a means of supplying it."

— F.L. MAYTAG



By 1940, F.L. Maytag's grandson, Fred L. Maytag II, had taken over the company and devoted its resources to the American effort during World War II. During the War, Maytag temporarily halted washer production and devoted itself to creating airplane hydraulic systems for B-26 bombers.

After the War, washer production resumed, as did the innovations Maytag was known for. By 1949, the company introduced its first automatic washer, and in 1953, an electric dryer that forever changed the laundry process.

Maytag Company spent the next several decades concentrating on further improving upon the design of its washers, increasing capacity, efficiency and durability.

In 2006, Whirlpool Corporation acquired Maytag, and continues to uphold its dedication to innovative products and customer satisfaction to this day.

Continuing one of its long-held traditions, Maytag kicks off its annual May Is Maytag Month soon with special deals on Maytag® appliances. **RO**

Mark Your Calendars!

The month you're waiting for is almost here!
Look for more details coming soon.



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*Largest in total capacity based on manufacturers' published specifications as of May 2013. Model LSSB2791ST.

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