

The RetailObserver

June, 2009

The Monthly News Magazine with Personality

Vol. 20, Issue 6

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THE PINNACLE OF DESIGN – JENNIFER L. GILMER, CKD
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Celebrating Our 20th Year!

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Goodbye Atlanta-Hello Chicago

Well, K/BIS 2009 is over and planning has already started for next year in Chicago. Chicago is a glorious town full of fun, food and frolicking. Everyone seems to like Chicago. But what about Atlanta? Did you go to KBIS this year, did you see what a fabulous city it is, how clean, how convenient, how friendly? If you didn't go, then buddy, you missed it.

What a great city Atlanta is for a show. Hotels were within easy access to the Georgia Congress Center. The average taxi in town rates were around \$10. Shuttle buses ran every ½ hour and no ride seemed longer than 10 minutes. We rode in on the MARTA (their rapid transit system) and found it clean, fast and for \$4 round trip to the airport a great way to go. The streets were clean and free of litter and the people of this city were some of the most hospitable that we have met yet. Atlanta has had a reputation and stigma that may have kept a lot of you away, but ever since the Olympics this town has grown into a diverse and rich cultural center. From the Coca-Cola Center and the Georgia Aquarium to some of the most eclectic neighborhoods in the country, it is a wonderful town to explore. I only wish we would have had more time there to do just that.

What about the show, you ask? Well, let me give you a little insight. If you didn't go, let me repeat... then buddy, you missed it. We spoke with many people from all walks of the industry and this is a very brief summation of what they said:

Manufacturers and Reps - "This was one of the best shows we have ever had for a K/BIS. The people that showed up were ready to discuss business and we were able to give them more time and because of it we have gotten some outstanding leads from Atlanta. Many of these exhibitors have already re-upped for Chicago 2010."

Attendees - "The smaller more intimate show made it easier to get around and we were given more attention by the exhibitors than ever. We were able to see the show in a day and a half which gave us more opportunities to look at some of the other product lines that we don't normally get to see and learn about."

All in all, this was a great event for those who attended and Atlanta is a city well on its way to becoming one of the best show venues in the country. See you next year at K/BIS 2010 - in Chicago, April 15-18; you won't want to miss it.



Happy Retailing,

Moe Lastfogel

Summer Fun—Make Your Customers Smile

Summer is here, school is almost over and it's time to nail down those last minute summer plans: Travel, concerts, swim lessons, and summer camp. With budgets in mind, many of us are picking and choosing carefully our entertainment options. So maybe it's not the year for you to take that vacation of a lifetime you have been dreaming about, but you want to relax, unwind and have a little fun! What are you going to do to spoil yourself? Ask yourself the question, "Am I living my life to the fullest? Am I nurturing my soul with peace of mind and spending time with the ones that mean the most to me?" I invite you to stop and think about your personal priorities. With our economic correction in full swing, you have done what you needed to do to re-direct your business position, and are continuing to make adjustments along the way. What have you done on a personal level? Are you still in freak-out mode or have you learned to live with change, taken care of business in order to protect your future, so you can relax a little bit again?

Remember, it's more about the journey than the destination as they say. Are you on your journey or standing on the sidelines watching the game of life? What about you guys out there? Father's Day is coming up on the 21st of this month, so I gotta ask you, what have you done for yourself lately?

What do you give yourself permission to do for fun? What's on your secret wish list? Do you fall into the work-a-holic category? Does your family complain about not seeing you enough? (And this goes for you ladies out there too!) Girls have their secret bag of tricks: personal time in the nail & hair salon, spa time, clothes shopping. Spoiling comes naturally to most of us. We all have to care of ourselves before we can really spoil the ones we love.

What about our clients and customers? They are just as stressed as we are! We all want to feel good and have fun along the way. What are you doing to make them feel better? What kind of "experience" are they having when they come to your store? Do they go home feeling good about the time they spent there? What if you could make it feel like a mini vacation when they come to your store? What kinds of things can you do to spoil your customers?

I can tell you one word that is universal and puts a smile on

most people's faces...FUN! Summer is for fun! Swimming, carnivals, sun, sports & games, food, you get the picture! Bring it to your store. Theme your weekends and play some carnival games with little give-a-ways, bean bag toss, rubber ducky pond, ring toss etc. Make it like a spin the wheel—people like to win something. Tickets can be given for playing to be entered into a monthly drawing for a really cool prize like dinner for two at a local restaurant (donated by the restaurant), a weekend getaway at a bed & breakfast (also donated), tickets to a sporting event (yep, you guessed it... donated too). Involve the community and support each other's businesses and play. You can sell hot dogs and soda too out

front to bring in the crowd. Going to the local store has just become a fun weekend outing and you bet they'll tell the neighbors what a good time they had and how lucky they were!

How else can you spoil your customers? How about giving them something they want when they buy something they need? A couple of tickets to a theme park with a refrigerator purchase or a movie theatre popcorn bucket with two local theatre tickets, popcorn and candy with a home theatre purchase? Better yet, what if you created your own DVD library and they get a membership card for a year to check out free movies with their home

theater purchase. You would get them constantly returning to your store and viewing your merchandise on a regular basis for one year. Advertising doesn't get much better than that!

In your community, who can you partner with to encourage business for both of you and spoil your customers at the same time? This is a definite win/win situation that will keep your customers coming back to you and referring their family and friends. What is the personal flair you have in order to create your company's signature touch?



Eliana Barriga
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“ How can you spoil your customers? How about giving them something they want when they buy something they need? ”

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K/BIS IN NK 2009 Kitchen

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The National Kitchen and Bath Association's 2009 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show (K/BIS) in Atlanta was buzzing with excitement as exhibitors both large and small debuted and previewed a bumper crop of new and enhanced product introductions. Attendance for the event went over 29,000.

"Across the board, exhibitors told us that the quality of the attendees at K/BIS was superior, with fewer 'tire-kickers' and more decision makers," said Suzie Williford, 2009 President of the NKBA. "The exhibitors and attendees who came were there to do business."

Jenn-Air exhibited at K/BIS for the first time in two years. "This show drew the right type of attendee for our brand, and our booth was unbelievably crowded the entire weekend," said Deb O'Connor, senior brand experience manager, Jenn-Air.

"We were excited and very glad that we came," said Angela O'Neill, director of marketing for Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. "K/BIS stimulates ideas, education and the industry."

Diamond Innovative Garage, which manufactures garage organizing and storage solutions, was one of the non-traditional exhibitors at the show. "We found good leads and we're in the right place," said Rob Marker, a distributor for the company. "We thought that kitchen people looking for secondary lines would be a good target and those people paid attention to us here."

1. NKBA silent auction to benefit the Boys & Girls Club, headquartered in Atlanta. 2. Attendees crowd the show floor of the Georgia World Congress Center on Friday, May 1, 2009. 3. Opening day ribbon-cutting: 2009 NKBA Vice President, David Alderman, CKD, CBD; Immediate Past President, Sara Ann Busby, CKD; 2009 NKBA President-Elect, Mark L. Karas, CMKBD; Vice President - Nielsen Kitchen/Bath Group, Brian Pagel; 2009 NKBA President, Suzie Williford; NKBA CEO, Don Sciolaro; 2009 NKBA Secretary, Maria Martina, CKD, CBD;

REVIEW

BA /Bath Review

MOE LASTFOGEL

BEST OF K/BIS AND NKBA DESIGN COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

In addition to the show floor, the 4-day event included the Best of K/BIS, whose winners were announced May 2. Winners included:

Best of Competition Awards

- Bath Category, Quick Drain USA for Quick Drain Channel Drain System
- Kitchen Category, Affluence Seamless Since for Affluence Seamless Sink

Bath Category Awards

- Gold Award, Seura for ONE Television Mirror
- Gold Award, Quick Drain USA for Quick Drain Channel Drain System
- Silver Award, Emtek Products for the Stainless Steel Collections Bright Handle Product
- Silver Award, El Dorado Stone for Gemstone Walls

Kitchen Category Awards

- Gold Award, Affluence Seamless Since for Affluence Seamless Sink
- Gold Award, Element Designs for High-Gloss Solid Surface PARAPAN Doors
- Silver Award, Atlantis Outdoor Kitchens for Atlantis Cabinetry

and 2009 NKBA Treasurer, Alan W. Zielinski, CKD. **4.** Sun set on the NKBA 2009 Board of Directors' Gala in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park. **5.** Terry Savage, financial columnist, best-selling author and television commentator spoke on the economy and its impact at the NKBA annual business luncheon. **6.** Mary Jo Peterson, CKD, CBD, CAPS, CAASH, was inducted into the Kitchen & Bath Hall of Fame. **7.** Attendees of K/BIS 2009 preview the most current trends and product introductions from hundreds of exhibitors.





Dan Sullivan, President of Affluence Seamless Sinks offers, “We were exposed to people at K/BIS that we never would have otherwise had a chance to meet including top designers from around the world and the most influential people in the industry.”

Over 530 media were registered at the show, representing over 250 different media outlets. “From a media standpoint the show was a huge success. There was a steady flow of high-profile media that were interested in learning about our various product lines,” added Allison Gatta, GE Consumer & Industrial Public Relations Product Manager.

National design television shows and design personalities could be found throughout the show floor, filming the best the industry has to offer for upcoming segments and specials. These include an exclusive television special on HGTV, the DIY Network, and nationally-syndicated *Today’s Homeowner with Danny Lipford*[®], who also did a live broadcast of his radio show *Homefront with Danny Lipford* on May 2.

Some of the celebrity personalities at the show included Paul DiMeo, Didiayer Snyder, and Ed Sanders of “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,” Food Network’s Aida Mollenkamp, Karl Champley of DIY Network’s “Wasted Spaces” and “DIY to the Rescue,” HGTV’s Pat Simpson, and John Gidding of HGTV’s “Designed to Sell.”

KBIS ESTIMATED TO INFUSE OVER \$52 MILLION INTO LOCAL ATLANTA ECONOMY

The 2009 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference was estimated to infuse over \$52 million into the local economy. K/BIS hosts the largest collection of kitchen and bath products, courses and conference sessions in North America.

“The money K/BIS will bring into the city will help stimulate our restaurants, hotels, taxi cabs and conference center,” said Mark Vaughan, Executive Vice President & Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Hosting K/BIS is also a great opportunity to show attendees all Atlanta has to offer including the CNN Center and World of Coca Cola, located right in the conference center corridor.”

Over 40,000 industry professionals including exhibitors, attendees and major media outlets from across the country were expected to come to Atlanta to attend the show.

1. Mike Huckabee, former Arkansas Governor, and past Presidential Candidate, presented an entertaining and inspiring Keynote Speech on leadership at K/BIS **2.** 2009 NKBA President, Suze Williford, offers the introduction for Keynote Speaker, former Arkansas Governor, Mike Huckabee. **3.** Studio NKBA, a television talent show parody featuring, 2009 NKBA President, Suze Williford; President-Elect, Mark L. Karas, CMKBD; Vice-President, David Alderman, CKD; Secretary, Maria Martina, CKD, CBD; Treasurer, Alan W. Zielinski, CKD; and Immediate Past President, Sara Ann Busby, CKD. **4.** Kenneth Anderson, CKD,

THE NKBA AND SCRIPPS NETWORKS PARTNER ON KITCHEN/BATH INDUSTRY SHOW COVERAGE ON HGTV

NKBA partnered with Scripps Networks, LLC to produce an exclusive television special for HGTV featuring the 2009 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference (K/BIS). Additional content from K/BIS will be featured online at HGTVPro.com, Scripps Networks' site for homebuilding professionals. The special aired on May 24 and May 31.

"We're delighted to work with HGTV to bring consumers the excitement of K/BIS by showcasing the products, trends and design elements that will be on display," said the NKBA President, Suzie Williford. "By working with Scripps Networks, the NKBA is able to bring consumers rare and valuable access to the experts and innovators at our industry's most important annual event."

K/BIS 2009 – THE NKBA'S FIRST SILENT AUCTION

As part of the 2009 NKBA Board of Directors' Gala, held Thursday, April 30, 2009 as the kick-off event to the Kitchen/Bath Industry Show, the NKBA hosted a silent auction. All proceeds were assigned to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

This charitable organization, headquartered in Atlanta, benefitted from the generosity of donors and attendees alike. Evan McElroy, Senior VP Marketing & Communications for the Boys & Girls Clubs, was presented with a check by 2009 NKBA President Suzie Williford at Friday's K/BIS opening ceremony. Due to additional donated amounts from bidders, the originally estimated \$16,200, resulting from bids on 73 donated items or services, grew to \$19,605 in donations to the well-respected charity.

SILENT AUCTION DONORS:

- Agave Restaurant
- Allan Zielinski, CKD
- Atlanta Botanical Garden
- Atlanta Braves
- Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- The Busby Family
- Chicago Hilton
- Convention Data Services Covered Bridge Kitchen & Bath Group

Founder and President of Task Lighting, was one of three inductees to the Kitchen & Bath Hall of Fame. **5.** Pinnacle of Design \$25,000 Award was presented to Jennifer L. Gilmer, CKD. Paul Leuthe - Sub-Zero/Wolfe, Jennifer L. Gilmer, CKD, and 2009 NKBA President, Suzie Williford. **6.** Registration for the 2009 K/BIS, Heart of the Home began on Friday, May 1st featuring more than 600 exhibitors and co-exhibitors. **7.** James Bakke, CEO of refrigeration innovator, Sub-Zero/Wolfe was inducted into the Kitchen and Bath Hall of Fame.



- Cuerno Restaurant
- Danze
- DeRose Designs
- Extreme Makeover: Home Edition
- Freeman Exhibits
- GE Money
- GE Monogram
- Georgia Aquarium
- Georgia World Congress Authority
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- Houston Texans
- Hyatt Regency Chicago
- Il Mulino Restaurant
- Jangle Advertising
- Jenn-Air
- Kitchen & Bath Design News
- Klise Manufacturing
- Kohler
- Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority
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- Lladro
- Lynda Wilhelmus, CMKBD
- Marriott Marquis
- Max Lager's
- Medieval Times
- Metallo Arts
- Mouser Custom Cabinetry
- Nielsen Business Media/KBB
- NKBA Arizona South Chapter
- NKBA Big Sky Chapter
- NKBA Columbia River Chapter
- NKBA Louisiana/Mississippi/Arkansas Chapter
- NKBA Maine Chapter
- NKBA Ohio Valley Chapter
- NKBA San Diego Chapter
- NKBA Southern New England Chapter
- Nuheat
- NY Jets
- Omni Hotel
- Orlando Omni Champions Gate
- Peabody Orlando
- Phil Rothschild, CKD,

- Vision Design Center
- Rigidized Metal Corporation
- Road Atlanta
- Rohl
- Royal Doulton
- Rutgers University
- Schmidt Cabinetry Company
- Scotsman
- Scripps Networks
- Sidelines
- Steel Restaurant
- Sub-Zero/Wolf
- This Old House
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| *continued on page 10* |

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K/BIS in Review—NKBA

| continued from page 8 |

HISTORY OF THE SHOW

In January 1964, the first Kitchen/Bath Industry Show (K/BIS) was held by the Association of Kitchen and Bath Dealers (AIKD). The first show appeared in a corner of the exhibit space of the Middle-Atlantic Lumbermen's show at the Sheraton-Park Hotel in Philadelphia from January 28-30, 1964. There were approximately 24 exhibitors, mainly custom cabinet manufacturers, and registration was nearly 250 attendees.

In 1965, and for the next 11 shows, the show itself ran for three days for trade members and two more days for consumers. Beginning in 1975, the show became trade only and shows were scheduled for only three days. Growth of the Association and its committees and councils allowed for the convention/conference to move to four days in 1980.

In the early years, shows were separate from the annual conventions/conference. The convention would include a board meeting and election, and a general membership meeting was held in conjunction with the show. In order to better suit the membership and governance structure, it became more feasible to combine the annual convention with the show.

In 1973, show management was turned over to the trade show division of Gralla Publications. It then joined with Gralla's Apartment Builder/Developer Conference and Exposition and became the Kitchen/Bath Industry Show and National Kitchen and Bath Conference.

Due to most of the membership being east of the Mississippi, most shows were held in the east. In 1985, in order to meet the needs of west coast membership, the NKBA and Gralla launched KBIS-West, which was held in Long Beach, California, with exhibits and seminars mirroring K/BIS.

Next year, K/BIS will return to McCormick Place in Chicago from April 15-18. Updates can be found at www.kbis.com.

EXHIBITORS SHOWCASE THE BEST THE INDUSTRY HAS TO OFFER

Kohler, Whirlpool/Jenn-Air, Delta, GE, Sears, and TOTO USA were among hundreds | continued on page 12 |



1. Attendees of K/BIS fill the elevators at the Georgia World Congress Center. **2.** 2009 NKBA President Suzie Williford welcomes guests to the Gala Event. **3.** 2009 NKBA President, Suzie Williford presented Evan McElroy, Senior VP Marketing and Communications for the Boy's & Girl's Club, with a check from the proceeds from the Silent Auction in the amount of \$16,200. **4.** Randall Whitehead spoke on the practical application of energy-efficient lighting design, that contributes and enhances the overall visual appeal.

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of exhibitors that made K/BIS a must-attend event. The 2009 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference (K/BIS) once again offered industry professionals the best opportunity to see firsthand the most innovative kitchen and bath products the industry has to offer.

“The Kitchen and Bath Show is very important to Kohler in launching new products and gaining direct feedback from customers,” said Jim Lewis, Vice President of Kohler brand marketing. “Our booth becomes a lively product gallery where attendees come see what’s next. This year we have no shortage of ‘new’ with everything from stylish plumbing products designed to save water to functional kitchen products.”

Here is just a sampling of new products and lines attendees found at this year’s show:

ROHL showed authentically crafted faucets, fixtures and sinks in Traditional, Trans-Modern and Modern styles. | *continued on page 14* |



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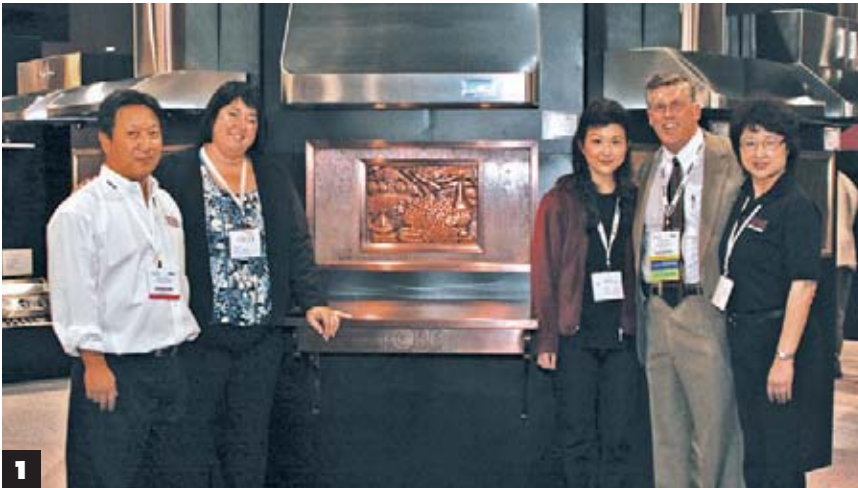
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Of particular note is the “shower experience” vignette, where they will demonstrate a full range of showerheads, hand showers, and accessories designed to create spa-like settings in a master bath, guest suite or secondary bath.

LG Electronics showcased its 2009 portfolio encompassing innovations in the built-in cooking category, new approaches in French-Door refrigeration as well as advances in front-load steam laundry, including new vibrant colors and designer finishes.

Jenn-Air announced a new collection with models that raise the standards of high performance in the premium appliance market. The new line includes high performance wall ovens with advanced LCD touchpad controls and the most powerful convection elements on the market, and new downdraft cooktops available in a unique ductless configuration. *Atlantis Outdoor Kitchens* introduced bamboo outdoor cabinetry. An industry first, these are waterproof outdoor kitchens that provide the beauty and functional storage of indoor kitchens. | *continued on page 16* |



1. Jennair Bronze Fu Tung Cheng kitchen 2. Scavolini booth



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SHOWROOM

Everpure showed its full-line of products including the new ViruPure™ and Protega, industry-firsts as they not only safeguard water from contaminants and bacteria, but also from viruses such as E.coli.

Gerber Plumbing Fixtures LLC is exhibiting two new exciting products, the HET Avalanche 1.28 and the new environmentally friendly Wicker Park Suite, complete with HETs and WaterSense certified faucets.

Lasertron is viewing their new Designer LED Stainless Steel Cabinets. Customizable to any size, with customized designer cut-outs, the recessed stainless steel cabinet emits a rainbow of light, illuminating the contents and adding drama to interior or exterior space.

Moen is offering the latest in green products for the bath—the Envi™ Eco-Performance showerhead. This new, three-function, water-efficient showerhead reduces water usage by 30 percent, while still treating users to a full, satisfying spray that feels similar to the flow of a standard showerhead. | *continued on page 18* |



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1. Everpure recycle display 2. Turbo Chefs - Don Pikula and Carol McMullin

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Rheem is proud to announce a partnership with ENERGY STAR® to provide products that meet stringent new ENERGY STAR criteria, and the introduction of two new solar water heating systems that qualify for ENERGY STAR.

Stone Care International, Inc. is introducing the Stone Care For Dummies™ product line, which provides a simple and straightforward do-it-yourself (DIY) application process to help consumers care for granite and marble countertops; stone floors such as marble, limestone, granite, and slate; and all ceramic and porcelain tile surfaces.

TADGreen, Inc., maker of E-cloth®, will introduce two new task specific kitchen cleaning products to its cleaning collection. The new E-cloth Stainless Steel Pack and the new Range & Stovetop Pack both feature E-cloth's specialized fiber technology in place of harmful chemicals for safer household cleaning.

TONUSA has partnered with Fu-Tung Cheng, world-renowned designer, to create elements, a modern line of kitchen cabinetry that offers elevated design at a moderated price. | *continued on page 20* |



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1. Bosch corner display 2. Five Star Appliance booth

Make a quiet sales pitch.

A top priority for consumers in a dishwasher is “quietness.”¹ At 40 dBA, the 800 Plus is the quietest dishwasher in the U.S.²



- It's the quietest² and most efficient³ dishwasher in the U.S.
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J.D. Power and Associates ranked Bosch “Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Dishwashers Three Years in a Row.”⁴



PARTNER OF THE YEAR

¹ Based on the J.D. Power and Associates 2008 Kitchen Appliance study.SM ² Based on available sound information on competitors' websites, March 2009. ³ Based on standard-size dishwashers, according to ENERGY STAR® ⁴ Bosch received the highest numerical score for dishwashers in the proprietary J.D. Power and Associates 2006–2007 Major Home Appliance StudiesSM and 2008 Kitchen Appliances Study.SM The 2008 study was based on 14,782 total responses measuring 16 brands, and measured opinions of consumers during the previous 36 months. Proprietary study results are based on experiences and perceptions of consumers surveyed in June–July 2008. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com.

Fu-Tung Cheng has created a look and feel that *is decidedly modern, yet surprisingly timeless.*

Symmons is launching The Symmons Winslet Bathroom Suite embodies nostalgic elements of colonial décor and The Symmons Ballina Bathroom Suite which seamlessly blends classical styling with modern splendor.

“In one location, industry professionals can find out everything they’ll need to stay a step ahead of the competition,” said Suzie Williford, President, National Kitchen and Bath Association. “Extraordinary new lines, sustainable products, comprehensive education and incredible networking opportunities, make K/BIS the most comprehensive show for the kitchen and bath industry in North America. K/BIS is an event no industry professional can afford to miss.”

K/BIS was also happy to welcome all of the new exhibitors to the show including Aran World, SRL, Milano Electronics, LLC and Pro Kitchen Software. **RO**



1. Samsung display 2. Electrolux display



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1. Salih Bugay and Randi Chandler of Blomberg 2. Blomberg booth 3. Toto booth 4. Pinnacle Sales Group gets trained by Bill Spencer of Brew Express 5. Elica Crystal Fan won NKBA People's Choice Award 6. Suzie Williford - NKBA 2009 President, Holger Fietz 7. Shane Demirjian and Chris Thompson of American Range 8. GE cooking demonstrations 9. Sara De la Hera and Patricio Barriga of Fagor America 10. Fabrizio Bigatti, James Adams, Matt Holmes, Joe Otis, Amy McCormack at Elica 11. Dick Bergstrom of VAH Marketing and Don Sciolaro of the NKBA at the International Meet and Greet 12. Lynx Pro Grills Mike Edwards, Bret Hadley and Brian Eskew with Eastern Marketing's



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Marty Friedman **13.** Jay Kim and Ed Ryan of Daewoo Electronics America Inc. **14.** Dennis Benboom and Jim Brennan of Air King **15.** GE's new hybrid water heater **16.** Matthew Avery of Faber, Mike Kipp of Pacific Specialty Brands, Marci Dew of Faber, Stephan Byns of Trail Appliance Ltd.-Richmond, Canada **17.** Mercedes Aza welcoming the Latin American visitors to KBIS at the International Meet and Greet **18.** GlemGas - 50 years **19.** Mark Lubell-Terim SPA, Cheryl Michaels-EuroChef USA, Tom Jefferies-Jeffries Dist., Harvey Lubell, Steve Weldon and Peter Calcandy-EuroChef USA **20.** Steve Joseph, Elaine Cheney, Ric Brutocao, Karol Becker and Duncan Black of Dacor

Miele

New Ultra Maneuverable S7 Upright Goes Where No Upright Has Gone Before...

MIELE INTRODUCES INNOVATIVE S7 UPRIGHT SERIES WITH PATENTED SWIVELNECK™ TECHNOLOGY

It took 80 years of Miele vacuum innovation and six years of engineering perseverance to forever change the way an upright vacuum cleaner is perceived. S7 by Miele breaks the boundaries between upright and canister—combining the very best of both worlds into one ultra maneuverable design. Its patented new SwivelNeck™ technology, with power-steering capability, allows the user to effortlessly move the vacuum in any direction—even laying flat to the floor—with an extremely low profile that glides under beds, tables and more.

An integrated telescopic wand and specialized cleaning tools—such as one would find on a Miele canister vacuum—allow the user to easily shift from floors to crevices, stairs, furnishings and drapes. An energy-saving Automatic Setting, on select models, intelligently selects the correct suction level for optimal cleaning results and power usage.

“Our objective was to create the world’s first steerable, yet powerful upright vacuum,” states Nadine Gast, Product Manager, Miele floor care products. “Following six years of market research, modeling, testing and customer interviews, we’ve invented a breakthrough product that truly redefines the upright. We took every known weakness of existing upright concepts on the market and turned them around as a benefit for Miele’s new S7.”

“Moving a typical upright takes physical exertion—compared to S7’s effortless fluid motion. Most uprights are good for wall-to-wall carpeting, but poor performers on floors and rugs—compared to S7’s superior cleaning for all surfaces and ability to shift from drapes to floors or from carpets to cushions. Compare S7’s stunning design that’s sleek, quiet and agile to the typical upright’s noisy, bulky frame. S7 also provides advanced Sealed System™ HEPA filtration with a new 9-layer HyClean™ filtering dustbag that holds 25% more [than previous bags] and automatically closes with a unique spring-loaded lid when it is removed so that all the dirt, dust and allergens stay inside vs. escaping back into the home’s air,” Gast explains.

“Excellent user convenience is a fundamental property of our vacuum cleaners and is a weakness of other uprights on the market,” states Dr. Markus Miele, Co-proprietor and Managing Director of Miele & Cie. [Miele is the largest family owned and operated manufacturer of floor care products in the world.] “To set the S7 apart, we created a completely new concept... a steerable upright that assists the user in the same way that power steering assists a car driver,” stated Dr. Miele. “We strive to continuously make consumers’ lives easier with unique innovations.” In addition, Miele’s “one person, one machine” manufacturing philosophy ensures a quality product that—like all Miele appliances—is endurance tested to last 20 years. Each product’s assembly is controlled by one individual, in one plant... with only the highest quality raw materials and technology.

For product specifications visit http://www.miele.com/pdf/brochures/2008_12_S7.pdf or www.miele.com for the product video.

RELIABLY GREEN – A BRAND TO TRUST FOR THE LONG-TERM

For more than 80 years, Miele has produced floor care products known for their quality, German engineering and durability.

- Every S7 is endurance tested before it leaves the factory for a 20-year life span—unmatched in the industry.
- All parts produced and supervised by Miele. Every detail crafted, controlled for quality.
- Miele’s modern plants produce almost no waste and all waste is recycled.
- Virgin polymers are easy to recycle when the product’s life span is complete.
- Miele uses no cadmium or lead in their coatings and only water-based paints.
- Low energy consumption and automatic controls optimize performance and energy use.
- Less fine dust and allergens in the home’s air due to advanced filtration. **RO**



Luxury penthouse suite.

Stunning views of Miele dishwasher.

One dishwasher has the stature to raise property values. Its name forever synonymous with luxury, performance and innovation. A jewel nestled in the heart of the kitchen, whether hidden behind custom cabinetry or standing proud in stainless steel. Miele dishwashers, a must-have appliance for every must-see listing. mieleusa.com



Little Treasure for Big Pleasure

NEW MINI WINE STORAGE CABINET FROM LIEBHERR

Proving a big idea can be small, Liebherr introduces its mini wine cabinet with all the big performance features of its award-winning wine storage product line on less than a 17" x 19" footprint. The new WS 1200 is so compact, it can be plugged in anywhere or even wall mounted to optimize space, all while providing the perfect storage conditions for fine wine and accessories.

"Our wine storage product line has expanded to meet the needs of the ever-growing number of wine enthusiasts in this market," states Thorsten Platt, Vice President of Liebherr North America. "The range goes from a large three zone freestanding unit that holds 143 bottles down to our new mini that holds 12 bottles. There's a product to suit every space requirement and lifestyle need," adds Platt.

On its own in a bar or recreation area, in the master bedroom, well placed in a great room, or sitting side-by-side with the new Liebherr humidior, the attractive WS 1200 with stainless steel surround and an integrated recessed handle offers the following features:

- Three solid beech wood shelves and a convenient drawer that maintains a warmer temperature than the wine compartment to house wine accessories, chocolates or candies
- Energy efficient LED ceiling lighting controlled with a dimming function and a permanent "on mode" to create atmosphere without affecting the temperature of the wine
- Activated charcoal filter for pure interior air quality
- Door lock and door and temperature alarms to alert the homeowner to any changes in conditions
- Insulated glass door with UV coating to protect fine wines from light damage
- Innovative MagicEye touch control system to ensure a precise temperature range from 41° F to 68° F (5° C to 20° C).
- The WS 1200 is currently in production and will be available to the North American consumer in late summer, 2009. **RO**



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The 36" CS 2062 has unique LED light columns and LED drawer lights illuminate almost 20 cubic feet of storage capacity. The dual refrigeration system, with two separate variable speed compressors, provides superior and consistent cooling in the most energy efficient manner possible. And the elegant French doors coupled with double freezer drawers make it a kitchen showpiece.



CS 2062 freestanding model shown.

Two-in-Five Retail Workers Aren't Planning to a Take Vacation This Year, Survey Reveals

NEARLY HALF OF RETAIL EMPLOYERS EXPECT WORKERS TO STAY IN TOUCH WHILE AWAY

With only a few days until the official start of vacation season, money, anxiety and guilt are causing some workers to scrap their vacation plans. Two-in-five (41 percent) retail workers say they haven't gone on or aren't planning on taking a vacation in 2009; 28 percent indicate it is because they just can't afford it, according to CareerBuilder's annual vacation survey. Additionally, retail workers indicate that they are either afraid of losing their jobs (5 percent) if they go on vacation or feel guilty (19 percent) being away from work.

Taking a vacation doesn't necessarily mean a clean break from work. Nearly half (45 percent) of retail employers say they expect employees to check in while they are away, with more than one-third (39 percent) indicating it'll be necessary only if they are working on a big project or there is a major issue going on with the company. One-in-five (19 percent) retail workers say they plan to contact work once or more, regardless of what their responsibilities, while they are on vacation.

"While the current economy may be causing workers anxiety about taking a vacation this year, a break from work is essential for maintaining healthy productivity levels," said Ben Jablow, Managing Director of WorkInRetail.com, CareerBuilder's retail employment site. "Workers should plan ahead and make it a goal to use their vacation benefits this year; nearly one-in-ten retail workers reported that they didn't use all of their allotted time last year. Utilizing your time off is even more important now due to the added responsibilities and pressure that some workers may be faced with due to the current economic situation."

When planning a vacation, Jablow recommends the following tips to ensure your time off is a true break from work:

- 1. Start Preparing Today** - The minute you start thinking about booking a vacation, talk to your supervisor and see if the dates you want to be away are a good time for both of you.
- 2. Leave a Plan Behind** - A few weeks before you leave, start recording important information, key contacts and any deadlines that will come up while you are gone and give it to a co-worker who can fill-in for you while you are gone.
- 3. Stick to a Schedule** - While it's best to leave work behind, if you must do work, set limits and boundaries for yourself and employees. Don't let activities on vacation be interrupted by work.
- 4. Set a Good Example** - If you're the boss, take a vacation and limit your contact with work. Your employees will feel much better getting away and enjoying themselves if they see the boss doing the same. **RO**

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 2,543 hiring managers and human resource professionals (employed full-time; not self-employed; with at least significant involvement in hiring decisions; non government); and 4,435 U.S. employees (employed full-time; not self-employed; non government ages 18 and over between February 20 and March 11, 2009 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of 110 retail employees and 82 retail employers, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,543 and 4,435 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.94 +/- percentage points and 1.47 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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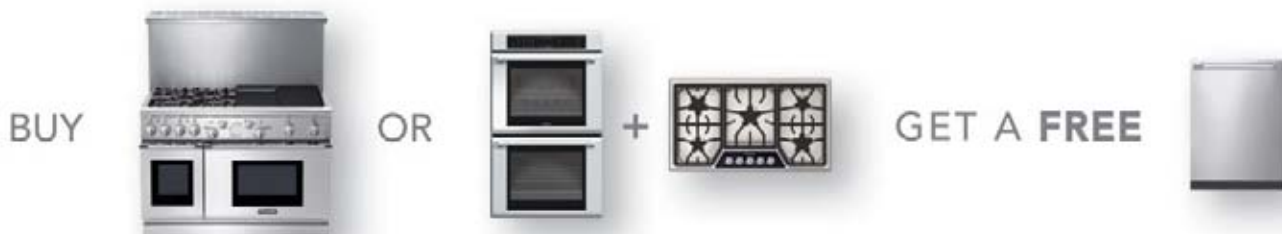
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PCBC Exhibitors to Display Latest and Greatest Products and Services for Homebuilders

The quality of the exhibiting companies and their relevance to homebuilding at PCBC year after year sets the standard for industry trade shows, and this year is no exception.

"PCBC has always believed that homebuilders come to industry trade shows to learn about homebuilding," said Ann Bivens, Exhibits Director for the Show. "Even during this severe recession, we are continuing to set high standards for our exhibitors and have in fact rejected quite a few prospective exhibitors because our attendees have come to expect that if a company is exhibiting at PCBC, it's a company that deserves their attention."

PCBC® 2009 will be held June 17-19 at San Francisco's Moscone Center. For more information about exhibiting companies, educational programming and other events associated with the Show, visit www.pcbc.com or call (800) 956-SHOW.

Bivens noted that PCBC's commitment to quality has led to dozens of new companies becoming exhibitors this year as they seize the opportunity to put their products before builders and developers planning future projects.

This year, all exhibits are being consolidated into the Moscone Center's South Hall, which will make it much easier for attendees to see everything that's on display. And to make it even easier, PCBC is unveiling Smart Solutions, a new exhibit showcase featuring products that provide smart, creative solutions to specific building challenges.

"We've created a separate area for the Smart Solutions exhibitors to make it really easy for builders to see which of these innovative products makes sense for them," Bivens noted. "For example, we have one company, Rewater Systems, that has developed a wastewater management system that filters water from the laundry, kitchen and shower and then reuses it for drip irrigation. During a drought like we're going through today in California and with regulators continuing to pressure builders to use less water, this is the kind of innovative product that we want to make sure builders are aware of."

Bivens said another Smart Solutions exhibitor is FASCO America, which distributes Scrail collated fasteners, which can be driven with a pneumatic nailer at a rate twice as fast as collated screws and eight times faster than bulk screws.

Another way for builders to keep on top of innovative products is the annual Cool Products competition. Now in its eighth year, the unique competition features products selected by exhibitors that are then judged by a panel of industry experts.

"What's cool? Products with the greatest promise for creating healthier homes and better communities," Bivens said. "On our 50th anniversary, PCBC is launching the New Age of Invention and we want to make sure builders and developers are aware of these products that are making our communities better places to live."

Of course, faster nail guns, the latest in sleek kitchen and bathroom products, windows and doors, and all the other products and services that will be on display may make communities better, but for a homebuilder, it's kind of like being a kid in a candy store as well.

To plan which exhibitors to visit, the new PCBC Web site has a great search function to identify exhibitors by product type. Visit www.pcbc.com/go/search to get the latest information about the companies and their products and services. **RO**



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THE “VIKING EXPERIENCE”

THE GSC DISTRIBUTOR SHOWROOM



THE GSC (also known as The Gene Schick Company) opened the “Viking Experience”, their new state-of-the-art distributor showroom which showcases products manufactured by Viking Range Corporation.

The opening night party was a who’s-who of dealers and celebrities. Sam Choy, Tyler Florence and Guy Fieri headlined the event as the stars of cooking while the true star was the showroom itself.

The “Viking Experience” provides over 7,500 square feet of display space including a multi-media live demonstration theater, and twenty (20) lifestyle kitchen and outdoor kitchen vignettes showcasing Viking appliances. Designed by Valerie Teele of Atelier Design (Burlingame, CA), the vignettes feature a variety of themes including Classical French, Tuscan, English Countryside, Traditional American and Contemporary.

Among the most unique displays was a “Green Kitchen” which demonstrates design possibilities using sustainable,

1. Theater 2. Avignon outdoor 3. Around the world 4. Bobby Bermudo

THE "VIKING EXPERIENCE"

HOWROOM OPENING



reclaimed and recycled materials, paired with ENERGYSTAR® rated appliances.

“The ‘Viking Experience’ offers consumers and design professionals a wonderful opportunity, not only to see the latest ultra-premium Viking appliances, but to see some of the newest and most exciting cabinetry and surface materials,” according to Mike Beranis, VP Sales. “Our new venue is all about design ideas and possibilities that delight the senses and stimulate the imagination.”

The “Viking Experience” is open to the public and design professionals by appointment only Monday through Friday. For appointment information, contact Kathryn Regalia at 510-429-8200 ext. 217 or at kregalia@thegsc.com.

THE GSC is the exclusive wholesale only distributor of Viking Range Corporation major appliances for Northern California, W. Nevada and Hawaii. *| continued on page 34 |*



5. Patisserie kitchen 6. Piece of the Pie 7. Andalusia 8. Lulu's diner



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1. Tahoe 2. Suffolk Kitchen 3. Highway 1 Recycled Kitchen 4. Some guy with Guy Fieri of the Food Networks Diners, Drive-ins and Dives 5. Tyler Florence of Food Networks Food 911 and Tyler's Ultimate cooking with GSC showroom designer Valerie Teele of ATELIER Design Studio 6. Tyler Florence, Sam Choy, Sandy Studer GSC, Guy Fieri, and Mike Beranis of GSC



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La Cornue

Celebrating



The La Cornue Centenary Party held at Purcell Murray on April 22 party, debuting the new residentially-approved Rotisserie was a tremendous success, thanks in large part to our guest chef, as well as our sponsors, *Architectural Digest*, Valrhona Chocolate, The Pasta Shop, and Martine's Wines. Ron Siegel is the Executive Chef at the Dining Room at the Ritz Carlton in San Francisco and has worked with Thomas Keller and Daniel Boulud. He is also the first American to win Iron Chef!

We had over 150 people attend, a wonderful group consisting of current La Cornue owners, designers, architects, La Cornue dealers, and friends of Purcell Murray. I would like to thank all who attended and sharing in this special anniversary celebration of La Cornue. We are proud to be the North American distributor of La Cornue, and hope everyone enjoyed their time at the Purcell Murray showroom.

Launched in honor of the 100th anniversary of La Cornue, the Broche Flamberge® Rotisserie has been a signature La Cornue product since 1974, but it was not until 2009 that the product carried a UL-Approval for installation in a residential home.

Handmade just outside Paris in La Cornue's Saint Ouen l'Aumône atelier, the Flamberge is part of the Château series of products and is the masterpiece of Xavier Dupuy, President of La Cornue and grandson of its 1908 founder, Albert Dupuy. Completely redesigned this year, the new UL-Approved Flamberge features a rear wall of solid cast iron which is heated by a 27,000 BTU gas burner. Synthetic wicks pull the heat up through the vaulted back of the rotisserie, allowing the radiant heat to gently cook meat, poultry or fish as it rotates slowly over the flame.



1. Ron Siegel in front of the live Château range 2. The very first La Cornue gas oven for the home 3. Alexis Gion, eastern territory manager for La Cornue with Purcell Murray, demonstrating the new rotisserie 4. Anne Puricelli, Director

La Cornue

100 Years

The Flamberge is available in 26 enamel or metal finishes and can be accented in a choice of five solid metal trim combinations. The signature La Cornue ID plate can be engraved with a family name or an estate name, signifying that the unit was custom made for a particular owner. The residentially approved model requires no built-in ventilation and calls for only 120 volt power supply. The unit measures 32" square and only 18" deep, typically built into a cabinet or wall inside the kitchen. With a starting price of \$10,000 US, the rotisserie is for a very specific client – the most discerning with exquisite taste.

When Xavier Dupuy took over La Cornue in 1985, production was limited to just a few hundred Château ranges a year, very few of which were shipped to North America. Today the US & Canada represent 40% of La Cornue's global business, a figure which has been growing since it was first distributed in North America by Purcell Murray in 1986.

The introduction of the new Broche Flamberge reinforces La Cornue's reputation as a prestigious family company which specializes in producing generation after generation of handmade masterpieces which combine technological innovations with one-of-a-kind design. Even in 100 years, La Cornue has never compromised on their manufacturing technique—today every Château range and rotisserie is handmade to order just outside Paris, by two craftsmen with patience and pride. No two creations are like! Long-awaited by culinary and design enthusiasts alike, the residentially approved rotisserie is now easily designed into any American kitchen, certain to be the heart of the home.

Visit www.la-cornue.com or www.lacornueusa.com

of La Cornue North America **5.** Tim Murray, President Purcell Murray and Matthew Murray, Managing Director Purcell Murray **6.** The new La Cornue rotisserie

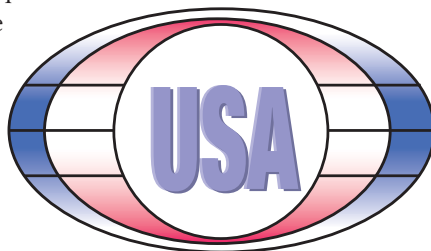


SRC Review

The SRC 09 in Dallas Texas was an overwhelming success, over 350 service professionals came together to build their confidence through knowledge for success. The subjects featured in this column were covered in depth at the recent convention (SRC09, www.SRC09.org). Experts in their fields held classes providing detailed information on subjects to help you in running your business. We want to come along side you and help you operate a professional, successful and profitable business. Earmark your calendar now for next February and join us for the most intense business and technical training available anywhere.

PARTS PRICING

Stop giving away your parts! You can and should be making a profit on the parts you install for customers as part of your service. I've talked before in this column that there are substantial costs involved in all parts acquisitions. These costs need to be covered in the retail price you charge for your parts. If you are not sure of how much to charge, take a lesson from the major retailers throughout the world. Some items have to stay competitively priced such as refrigerator water filters, fill hoses, dryer venting, and other accessory type items since they are advertised many places. But the vast majority of parts, especially the top 200 fast moving parts, should be sold at a premium. These are the items which you are normally able to buy at volume discounts or on monthly specials through your parts distributor. The list price of these parts reveals the ability to make a decent margin, including items such as belts, igniters, fill valves, etc. If you are marking up your retail prices based on your cost, you need to make sure you are using the standard dealer cost and not the discounted cost. For instance you may be able to buy a dryer belt for \$4 but the actual published dealer price is \$9 and the manufacturer's list price is \$18. If you used a 100% markup and based it on your actual cost, the retail price would only be \$8. If you mark up on the published dealer price the retail part price would be \$18. I am suggesting you price these high volume items using a higher mark up based on market value. Belts, for instance could be priced at \$24.95 or \$29.95. Oven glow igniters should also carry a premium retail price. The bottom line I want everyone to take away



from this article is to apply the appropriate value to the parts you are installing as part of your repair service.

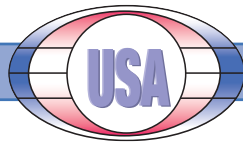
FROM THE FIELD!

The following story was submitted by USA Service member Brian Osgoodby via e-mail. Enjoy!

"Many years ago I had a call on an old Maytag dryer with a complaint that it wouldn't start. The eldest of the old couple of the house directed me down into their basement where the laundry pair was and they left me to take care of the problem. Sure enough when I was trying to start it, the motor just made a loud hum. I pulled it out a little so I could access the rear and I removed the back panel. Squatting down in the tight quarters, I realized the blower wheel had seized up. From my restricted position, I removed the screws holding on the blower shroud on and as I got the last one loose the shroud tumbled toward me, dropping onto my lap! BUT that wasn't all that plopped on me. There was an unexpected extra 'piece' included with the shroud, one very dead, wet animal which turned out to be a half-grown possum! Needless to say it scared me half to death and I reared backwards hitting my head on the concrete wall before I recovered my senses. I then verified all was well with the dryer, put it back together, operated it and performed final evaluation tests. Then I picked up the tail of the possum with my pliers and showed the customers the root of their machine failure. They were very surprised but glad I was able to ferret out the problem and get their machine back into operation. So this is just another animal adventure in the life of a service tech."

Thanks for sending along your animal tale (tail?) Brian. You never mentioned what I assume had to be a very unpleasant odor that accompanied the possum. I would have loved to see the old couple's faces when you presented them with their prize! I guess it would have been really a sad moment if you would have discovered upon the presentation of the dead animal that the possum was the family pet that had come up missing in the last few days. (I'm sorry for all you pet lovers. I know I have an active imagination, I can't help it!). **RO**

Dean Landers is the President of Service USA



PSA & USA JOIN FORCES TO CREATE A

PSA/USA National Joint Convention: The Appliance Service Training Institute (ASTI)

An agreement was reached today by the board of directors of the Professional Service Association and United Servicers Association to hold a PSA/USA National Joint Convention the Appliance Service Training Institute (ASTI). This premiere training and technical convention will be held in Orlando in February 2010.

“During this economic crisis the appliance service industry is aiming to lower costs for servicers and manufacturers by holding one super convention”, explains USA’s President Dean Landers. “By focusing on only one event to attend next year both manufacturers and service providers will benefit from significant savings in 2010,” says Landers. “PSA and USA will combine programming to carefully plan informative sessions and a trade show presented by industry leaders. Sessions will showcase new products and provide technical training, professional development, certification and service business management. This PSA/USA National Joint Convention will serve the needs of industry professionals and educators alike,” stated PSA President Don Holman.

Technical training will be provided at the PSA/USA National Joint Convention by Whirlpool, Electrolux, General Electric, Bosch, Sub Zero, LG Electronics, Fisher & Paykel, Viking, Samsung, Speed Queen, U-Line, Dacor, Scotsman and Lokring Corporation. With over 50 exhibitors for the trade show portion of the convention, ASTI will offer specialized training and unique networking opportunities for everyone in the service industry. More details will be made available at <http://www.asti.us> as planning for the convention continues.



ABOUT PSA

PSA (Professional Service Association) is an independent trade association incorporated in 1989 is dedicated to the highest standards of quality service. The purpose of PSA is to be the voice of the independent service provider and to assess and identify industry related problems and provide solutions.

PSA is dedicated to providing educational training, certification, business management training, support and fairness to the independent service industry. PSA encourages professionalism and honesty and publicly identifies those technicians who provide a level of service professionalism that meets the criteria established by the service industry, with industry approved certification credentials. Visit PSA’s website at <http://www.psaworld.com>.

For more information contact Ron Sawyer at psaworld@aol.com

ABOUT USA

USA (United Servicers Association) is a North American service trade association formed by servicers for servicers in 1992. Its mission and purpose is to develop and provide services and programs intended to assist members in building strong businesses for the purpose of competing successfully in the currently competitive environment. To achieve these goals, USA provides educational programs, financial services, government relations, and management and marketing programs. Visit USA’s Web site at <http://www.unitedservicers.com>.

For more information contact Paul MacDonald at paul.m.macdonald@unitedservicers.com **RO**

Water, Inc., Launches the Body Glove Portable Water Filter Bottle

THE ULTIMATE GREEN DRINKING WATER OPTION WHILE ON THE GO!

The international water appliance distributor, Water, Inc., has developed an advanced portable filter bottle that individually replaces over 375 plastic bottles from landfills and waterways!

A partnership between Water Inc., and water sports giant Body Glove International has resulted in the release of the environmentally-friendly Body Glove Water Filters and a concerted effort to encourage consumers to use filtered instead of bottled water. Following the wake of a completely redesigned under-counter water filter line, the international distributor has delivered another exciting filter product. In an ongoing effort to replace the aging Everpure water filter line, of which Water, Inc was a Master Distributor for over thirty years, the portable filter bottle represents one more option to consumers who are looking for technologically advanced and green water filters.

Following many years of limited green technology, the environmentally-friendly water filter products are a welcome alternative for like-minded consumers who value green-focused businesses. "Consumers expect more from companies today than just a working product," commented Major Avignon, President and Founder of Water, Inc. "The portable filter bottle eliminates the need to purchase bottled water when away from the home or office, we're very excited about this green addition to the Body Glove filter line." With each filter bottle sold, Water, Inc., contributes financial support to The Surfrider Foundation in an effort to keep both surf and waterways clean.

Green tech has always been a cornerstone of the circa-1977 Carson-based business. Water conservation and recycling programs are a core factor of product development and distribution. The Body Glove under-counter filter systems, manufactured by 3M, have been engineered from the ground floor as a recyclable filter

product. Each year, when a Body Glove filter is replaced, Water, Inc., upon request, provides a filter recycling kit that allows the filter to be responsibly recycled rather than polluting our crowded landfills. The very nature of the 3M manufactured product line allows for green recycling, whereas older filter technologies, such as those with fused aluminum and plastic compositions cannot be feasibly recycled.

The new 18 oz. water filter bottles are made from a reusable and recyclable BPA-free #4 plastic sports bottle. Of special note however, is the filter technology. A step above typical water filters, the Body Glove filter removes up to 99.99% of water-borne contaminants. "You can drink water from a variety of sources with complete confidence—the tap, rivers, streams, ponds or creeks; anything but salt," commented Richard Tarantino, Executive Vice President for Water, Inc. "The proprietary Ionic Adsorption Micron Filter, the key to the filtration system, has been tested extensively by Independent Government laboratories in the US and throughout the world to strict EPA/ANSI protocols and NSF Standards 42 and 53." Whether traveling, vacationing or camping, the portable filter bottle is a great way to eliminate the need of costly plastic water bottles.



ABOUT WATER, INC

Water, Inc., is a premier worldwide distributor of high-end water filtration systems and luxury water products for the home and office, including the 3M manufactured, eco-friendly Body Glove brand distributed through a network of over 2,500 dealers and distributors worldwide. Since 1977, Water, Inc., has delivered premium service and products to the Kitchen and Bath, Plumbing Wholesale and appliance markets. For more information and updates, please visit www.waterinc.com or call 1-800-322-WATER (9283). **RO**

Do You Know What You Don't Know?

In an effort to explain how certain product sales reflected the economy, Mike Duke, Wal-Mart's new CEO, recently took the *Today Show's* Matt Lauer on a tour of one of their stores. His overall message was that customers continued to be stressed and that their discomfort is manifested in the way they are buying. In one scene Duke explained that at the beginning of the month—close to payday—customers bought large boxes of diapers. Toward the end of the month, though, they bought smaller packages—just enough to get them through for a couple of days.

Sales of sirloin steaks have declined in favor of ground beef and other less expensive cuts of meat. While sales of men's and women's apparel have stalled some, people are still buying infant and children's clothing. Mr. Duke explained that people will delay purchases for themselves, but still take care of their kids. My point in citing Mike Duke's interview with Mr. Lauer is not to renew a "sky is falling" mentality. Instead, I wanted to illustrate the depth of the information Wal-Mart garners about its customers. Much of Wal-Mart's success has been fueled by its ability to gather information and to share that information with their suppliers. In some ways, they're more of an information technology company than a retailer.

This story raises two questions. How much information do you have about your customers? And how much information do you share with your suppliers?

In previous generations, America was fairly homogenous. What appealed to one customer probably appealed to most other buyers. But now, Claritas, for instance, has divided today's customer into 64 market segments based on things like age, education, income, hobbies, affiliations, and neighborhoods. Each group has different needs and responds to different messages in different media.

If you ask them, your customers will share powerful demographics that can help you better merchandise and create more effective marketing programs. If your customers are primarily aging baby boomers, your business future is at risk as most of them down-size their homes, travel more and purchase their last appliances and home theaters.

A grey-haired consumer base may also show that either your marketing doesn't hit up-and-coming Gen X and Gen Y-ers, or that your product assortment doesn't meet their needs. It may also mean that multi-cultural younger prospects can't relate to your mostly white male sales force or that your store doesn't have enough "cool" factor to

attract the younger consumers.

Perhaps you'll discover that although you market to the entire area covered by your local paper or TV channels, your customers only come from the zip codes immediately surrounding your stores. In that case, you might manage your advertising budget better with more targeted direct mail or better selecting the zip codes into which you insert your circulars. By tracking where your customers live, you can also find areas of new opportunity rich with prospects who might not know what you offer them.

Similarly, if your customers are mostly first-time buyers, your advertising may be working, but perhaps your customer service isn't good enough to make people come back to buy again. Conversely, if most of your customers are old loyal fans, you may not be reaching new prospects with your marketing. Unlike the box stores, independents are almost paranoid about sharing their sales data with their suppliers. They often tell me about their fears of vendors marketing directly to their customers if they know which products were sold where.

Wal-Mart, on the other hand, continually shares sales information with its suppliers. Vendors know instantly how well their products move through distribution centers and stores. Suppliers are penalized when their products are out-of-stock; and contracts with Wal-Mart often include minimum inventory turns as part of the purchase terms. In return, suppliers get the data they need so that they can reach those targets.

Companies like Kimberly-Clarke, for example, rely on queries it gets from Wal-Mart customers to develop new products. Virtually every new diaper and thousands of other consumer products came from a need expressed by people telling Wal-Mart what they'd buy if it were available.

We truly do live in an information age. Knowledge is power. Like other tools, those who have the most and use it the most wisely will evolve and grow. The others? I wish them luck. **RO**

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





Letter to the President

May 13, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave,
N.W. Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

You said recently that, "Small businesses are the heart of the American economy" and that "Our recovery in the present and our prosperity in the future depend upon the success of America's small businesses and entrepreneurs." We know you value American innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity as characteristics that not only make our country special but also will be important contributions to pulling us out of the current financial crisis.

As small business leaders, we stand ready to work with your Administration to restore growth and to work toward a sustainable global recovery. We commit to this out of experience—small businesses, in the past decade, created approximately 70 percent of all new private sector jobs—and responsibility to future generations. At the same time, we are concerned that the current path of excessive government spending will choke future opportunities for the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Our budget deficit this year is already expected to reach \$1.84 billion, or 12.9 percent of the U.S. GDP. By 2017, economists predict our national debt will surpass the size of the economy itself. This debt will make it difficult for entrepreneurs to access small business loans to fund their next venture. If the new class of inventors cannot secure financing, will America continue to be known as the place of ideas and opportunities where dreams are realized?

We have excelled in America because of a system of free markets that allows for us to compete and reach consumers across the globe. At the recent G-20 Summit, you affirmed this view and advocated trade as an important tool for reviving the global markets. The pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama and South Korea, would allow small businesses to reach a new class of consumers, help correct an existing trade imbalance, and save us millions of dollars by eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

We are also concerned with the Employee Free Choice Act. If passed, this bill would greatly impact our ability to compete in this global marketplace. Small businesses must be nimble and flexible, ready to adapt to unexpected market changes. A law that would allow for the massive coercion of workers to join unions, and require government arbitration in the event negotiations over work conditions and wages stalled, would be the end of small business in America. If such a policy

becomes law in the United States, we would have to consider shutting our doors or moving our business, and American jobs, overseas.

It is critically important that we commit to policies that will help America remain competitive, creative and innovative in its endeavors. We ask you to consider an Innovation Checklist put forth by the Consumer Electronics Association as a guide in signing legislation into law.

This checklist asks if a bill: creates American jobs, spurs new technology, encourages the best and brightest to come to the United States, rewards innovation and investment, promotes exports, and fosters productivity and energy efficiency. If the answer is no to any one criterion, is it a law that would benefit America and its citizens?

Thank you, Mr. President, for supporting small businesses. We encourage you to support initiatives that will position our country and its entrepreneurs to succeed in today's global climate.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Luden, President
The Guitammer Company
Westerville, OH

Christopher Fabian, President/CEO
Professional Service Solutions, LLC
Gainesville, GA

Robert A. Fields III, Vice President,
Mobile Electronics InstallerNet
North Andover, MA

Jim Hamilton, CEO
PowerMat
Colleyville, TX

Duane Paulson, President
Sequel Technologies, Inc.
Roseville, MN

Rip Hanks, President & CEO
Centerpin Technology Inc.
Gulf Breeze, FL

Kathy Gornik, President
THIEL Audio Products
Lexington, KY

R L Johnson, President & CEO
Elite Systems Solutions
Waynesfield, OH

Bernie Appel, President
Appel Associates
Fort Worth, TX

Ishak Kang, President
dot UI
San Francisco, CA

Thomas L. Ardolf, President
Cybermation Inc.
Waite Park, MN

David Lorsch, CEO
DC-Genius
Scottsdale, AZ

Ray Di Filippo, Vice President,
Sales & Channel Development
Sima Products
Manassas, VA

Skip West, President
MAXSA Innovations, LLC
Fairfax Station, VA

Create a Great Customer Experience

THE FIRST STEP: CHANGE EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

For decades I have watched as hotels, retailers, and other businesses spend millions of dollars renovating their buildings while investing literally nothing on customer service. A Holiday Inn a block from my office recently spent an estimated \$2 million on renovations but I still would never put up any of my out-of-town clients there. Why? Because the service is terrible.

You'll get a much higher return on your investment if you focus on improving customer service. Sure, customers enjoy patronizing businesses that are located in nice facilities, but they do not make their business decisions based on aesthetics. They spend their money with those businesses that provide excellent products and services at competitive prices—and that offer superior customer service.

That service, however, doesn't just happen. It requires training, commitment, and focus. It also requires changing employee attitudes and behaviors. You must train every employee, including managers and supervisors, in the art of customer service. You must get the commitment of every employee, from the CEO down to the front line, to making customer service a priority.

When it comes to providing customer service that will wow your customers and keep them coming back to you, the most important person in the organization is the frontline employee who has constant contact with your customers. Unfortunately, many employees feel they're underpaid and not appreciated. As a result, they have poor attitudes—and those attitudes show.

When you train employees, you accomplish two major goals: You provide the skills they need to take care of your customers, and you send a message that you care enough about your employees to invest the time and money to give them the skills they need to be successful. When your employees feel valued, they will be motivated and will perform to higher levels.

Let's dispel one myth right away: Money is not a motivator. While everyone deserves to be paid well, if you want to improve employee attitudes take these four steps:

1. Train every employee in the art of customer service. A key element of that training should be how to handle difficult situations and irate customers. When you do that you will develop a cohesive team that is enthusiastic and productive and that will drive your business. After you have completed that training, reinforce it with public praise and positive reinforcement. Also, train every supervisor on how to coach, nurture, and reinforce superior performance. When everyone

works together to accomplish a valued objective, it builds team spirit and a customer-oriented culture.

2. Build your employees' self worth and self esteem. The better employees feel about themselves the better they will perform and the better they will treat your customers. Self-imposed limitations are a major stumbling block for many employees. You must help them to see themselves as they can be, not as they are. Maybe Anne missed the bus this morning, or Mike broke up with his girlfriend last night, or Sam is living from paycheck to paycheck. All those situations affect their attitudes. Give them the skills and the confidence to handle any situation that arises—both on and off the job.

3. Teach your employees how to communicate positively. When was the last time an employee smiled and called you by name? Remember, it's not what you say but how you say it that's important. Train your employees to smile and make eye contact. Communication includes listening. Employees can't help customers unless they hear and understand what those customers have to say and respond appropriately.

4. When training employees, mix up the groups. Often there is friction between departments and employees. If you can improve communication between them, you will improve morale and attitudes. Consider customer service training programs part of your maintenance package. Just as you must change the oil and tune up your car to keep it running well, training your employees at least twice a year will improve their performance. In today's economy, it is critical that you invest in your employees. Train them well and reward them often. **RO**

John Tschohl is an international service strategist and speaker. Described by Time and Entrepreneur magazines as a customer service guru, he has written several books on customer service, including Loyal for Life, e-Service, The Customer is Boss, Achieving Excellence Through Customer Service, and Ca\$hing In: Make More Money, Get a Promotion, Love Your Job. His bimonthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge, www.customer-service.com. You can also contact him via email, John@servicequality.com or call 800-548-0538.





Almo Extends Digital Camera Offering with Fuji

Almo announces addition of FUJIFILM USA's line of cameras and accessories to its digital camera product offering.

Almo Corporation today announced that FUJIFILM's line of digital cameras and accessories is now available to their customers. As the nation's largest consumer electronics and appliance distributor, Almo offers an extensive lineup of consumer friendly digital imaging products from the industry's top brands, which now encompasses Fujifilm.

Almo dealers can now offer Fuji's FinePix point and shoot and SLR-style cameras to their customers. These 'intelligent', easy-to-use digital cameras feature some of the industry's leading technologies including Face Detection, Automatic Scene Recognition and Image Stabilization to ensure the best quality picture is captured with ease.

"Fuji has an impressive history of innovation and excellence in the imaging industry," commented Warren Chaiken, Almo President and COO. "Did you know that Fujifilm is responsible for many world firsts in imaging technology? Fujifilm developed the world's first digital camera, a device that has become an essential part of our lives. And they were the first company to succeed in digitalizing X-ray images. When consumers purchase a Fuji camera, they can rest assured that they are purchasing from a technology leader."

Almo dealers may now offer a selection of Fujifilm's 2009 digital camera lineup from the Fujifilm A Series basic digital camera, the FinePix super-slim J Series, the fun and colorful FinePix Z Series, the highly intelligent F Series camera with EXR and the S Series advanced cameras. Coordinated digital accessories are also available.

Fuji's hottest technology for 2009 is their Extreme Super CCD EXR Sensor and it is featured in their new F200EXR camera. It introduces a totally new concept in capturing image quality, just as your eye seamlessly adapts to every situation, the new Super CCD EXR instantly becomes the ideal sensor for every shot in every scene—

more beautiful than you imagined. And it's fully automated. The EXR Auto automatically recognizes and selects the ideal shooting mode. What could be easier?

Fuji joins other imaging industry leaders such as Olympus, Canon and Panasonic in Almo's Photo-Video product category. For details on available Fuji models, please visit www.almo.com or contact your sales representative.

ABOUT FUJIFILM

FUJIFILM Corporation (NASDAQ:FUJI) brings continuous innovation and leading-edge products to a broad spectrum of industries, including electronic imaging, photofinishing equipment, medical systems, life sciences, graphic arts, flat panel display materials, and office products, based on a vast portfolio of digital, optical, fine chemical and thin film coating technologies. The company was among the top 15 companies around the world granted U.S. patents in 2008, employs more than 70,000 people worldwide and in the year ended March 31, 2008, had global revenues of \$24.7 billion. Fujifilm is committed to environmental stewardship and good corporate citizenship.

For more information, please visit www.fujifilmholdings.com.

ABOUT ALMO CORPORATION

Almo Corporation is the nation's leading independent distributor of Consumer Electronics and Major Appliances. Known for its Rapid Ship services and exceptional customer service, Almo distributes over 40 of the industry's top brand names. Dealers and Retailers have instant access to a wide variety of Major Appliances, Consumer Electronics, Mobile Electronics and Professional Residential Kitchen and Outdoor Appliances. Founded in 1946, Almo is headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and operates 12 regional distribution facilities with over 1 million square feet of warehousing throughout the United States. More information on Almo is available by visiting Almo's website at www.almo.com. **RO**



BUILD

Are You a Branding Do-It-Yourselfer? Part 2

Last month, I discussed how not to be a branding do-it-yourselfer – things you should hire a professional for, unless you have the know-how. As promised, this month addresses what you can, and even should be doing on your own.

In these modern times, with sophisticated, inexpensive software and countless Web-based services, it's easier than ever to conduct many marketing functions without outside help. In fact, many of these DIY marketing techniques can be more effective than conventional marketing at a fraction of the cost.

However, these efforts can take up your most precious resource—your time. So be sure to factor that into your decision to tackle your marketing DIY project.

With that in mind, here are some things you can easily do on your own:

BLOGGING

I know what you're thinking. Aren't blogs for people to complain about politics? How can a blog help me market my company?

The truth is, a blog can be a great way to market your company. It can enhance your Web presence tremendously, allowing your company to show up on Google searches. It also lets you demonstrate your knowledge and expertise. And it's cheap. You can set a blog up for free.

There are just two rules to blogging:

- First, don't be too self-promotional. If you just make your blog a big commercial for yourself, no one will read it. Instead, use it to give advice and share knowledge with your readers. Write about current trends or events in your area that relate back to your industry.
- Second, keep it up. One blog post every few weeks is not enough. You should post at least once a week or more—just enough to keep your readers from forgetting about you. They don't have to be lengthy. In fact, short blog posts are usually the best ones.

E-MAIL

E-mail marketing campaigns can be a good alternative to a blog, or a great way to enhance your blog. Most importantly, e-mail campaigns are easy to do and very affordable.

Before you start any e-mail campaign, you need a list of e-mails of people who want to hear from you. Remember: you must have permission to contact them. Don't be tempted

to buy a list or obtain people's e-mails in otherwise sneaky ways. You'll be more likely to get people mad than interest them in your services.

Use transparent ways to obtain e-mails. Add a sign-up page on your Web site or your blog. You can even be clever and get them through a contest or sweepstakes, but make sure you are clear and honest with people about your intentions.

Once you have an e-mail list, look in to services like Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com), Vertical Response (www.verticalresponse.com) and others. For as little as \$15 per month, you can create postcards, coupons, e-newsletters and more using online templates or your own designs. Most importantly, these services track your results, so you can see what works, what doesn't, and make changes accordingly.

VIDEO

You would think video is the last thing you would want to tackle on your own. It requires professional camera operators, microphones, sound technicians, editing suites and graphics generators. Yes and no. If you want to make a high-quality, dramatic video that captures the imagination of your customers, you should hire a professional video production company. But thanks to the Web and sites like You Tube, consumers are growing accustomed to—and may even prefer—amateur-quality videos. Why? I think it has a lot to do with authenticity. When consumers see a poorly lit, grainy video, it feels real. Not slick or corporate.

So how should you use video in this way? The possibilities are endless. The place to start is your Web site or blog. By creating regular, short videos that are funny, informative or educational, you will get people coming back to your site. You might even start the next viral video.

This is by no means an all-inclusive list. What you can accomplish on your own is limited only by your creativity and time. **RO**

Christopher Thiede owns BUILD Communications, a branding and PR firm. Read Christopher's blog at www.ideas2chew.com.



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The 10 C's—A Winning Combination

(Part 1)

Over the past several months I have been writing about the many elements that help make the retail environment a pleasant and engaging place for your customer. As an independent retailer you need to be asking yourself the following questions:

Looking at the business today, what type of customers does our company serve? What types of products does the company currently offer to our customers listed in order of importance? What type of technology does our company use to serve the customer?

The answers to these questions will help keep the foundation of your company strong and enduring. There are numerous factors that will help contribute to the success of the company. Many can be found in the 10 C's. Here are the first five, with 6-10 to follow next month in Part 2.

1. Corporate Identity: In today's competitive business climate it is more important than ever to have a strong corporate identity. Every business needs to be well identified. This identity is usually expressed through strong graphic identity. In order to stand out, every business needs to be identified.

It is very important to make sure that your current identity reflects your company, its products and lifestyles of the customer it seeks.

2. Continuity: This is probably one of the most important areas that a store needs to address. Over the years, many retailers have a tendency to make spotty changes to their store. For the most part, many changes are spontaneous in nature. In addition to those reactive changes, retailers also tend to collect a wide range of P.O.P material and related signage, as well as displays from suppliers. Combined, these items typically add visual confusion to the sales floor. It is very important that all elements in the store are working in harmony with one another.

3. Cleanliness: If you do not have a housekeeping program in place you should take the time to develop one. All

product that is on the sales floor that is advertised as new should look its best. Appliances should be wiped and cleaned regularly. If a new product becomes scratched or damaged, remove it from the floor and repair or replace it. The store front should be cleaned daily inside and out. Remember this is the first impression that you make on the customer. Public restrooms should be spotless.

4. Customer Service: Customer service involves much more than a friendly hello. It extends over most of the 10 C's. If your store is lacking in good design, you are lacking an element of customer service. If your store is unkempt, you are lacking an element of customer service. If the product you carry is unreliable, you are lacking an element of customer service. If your customers cannot locate and find the features and price, you are lacking an element of customer service. If your colors are harsh and out of balance you are lacking an element of customer service. If you do not keep pace with your customers needs through change, you are lacking an element of customer service.

5. Confidence: The product that you carry instills confidence in your customers. Make sure the product that is on your sales floor is supported by the company that supplies it. If a customer cannot get reasonable support from the manufacturer of a product or supply them with the necessary resources to service it, do not carry it. **RO**



With over fifteen years of experience in store planning and design. Mark Schaffeld has been providing quality design to the appliance, electronics and furniture industry. Mark has not only helped dealers within the fifty contiguous states but has also worked with retailers in Honduras and Guatemala. Mark and his company the retail strata G group can be reached at: 812-537-9091, Mark@retail-strata-g.com or visit his web site at www.retail-strata-g.com.



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North Central: Steve Stremke at 630.771.0341

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Northwest: John Boyd at 425.226.7194

Southwest: Jim Skaggs at 480.367.2913

Mid-East: Jeff Cooksey at 513-530-7020

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free-standing
electric range



An Interview with Jim Hentz, Executive Vice-President, TCF Inventory Finance, Inc.

RO: Who is TCF Inventory Finance, and how have you chosen your team?

JH: Although a new entrant in the inventory finance business, the TCF Inventory Finance team is among the industry's most experienced. Our senior management group averages more than 26 years in the inventory finance (or floorplan) industry and is backed by a highly-skilled and well-tenured group of inventory finance veterans. While the name of our business may be new, many will remember our names and our commitment to customer service excellence from our days at Transamerica Commercial Finance (Transamerica).

TCF Inventory Finance is a subsidiary of TCF National Bank, which, in turn, is a subsidiary of TCF Financial Corporation (NYSE: TCB) (www.tcfbank.com) a regional bank headquartered in Minnesota with \$18.1 billion in assets.

TCF Inventory Finance is headquartered in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, with the Canadian operation headquartered in Oakville, Ontario. All TCF Inventory Finance business activities are conducted by staff located within North America.

RO: What is the mission of TCF Inventory Finance?

JH: First, in this time of tight and uncertain credit, we feel strongly that an alternative financing source is needed in a floorplan financing market that has witnessed significant consolidation. More importantly, we believe that by restoring the level of service that our customers came to expect of us, we will quickly become the floorplan finance source of choice for the industries we choose to serve. We have maintained excellent relationships within the Consumer Electronics & Appliances (E&A) industries, and we know that customizing the business and service models around the individual needs of our customers will serve us well as we grow our share of that market.

RO: What is the biggest challenge facing TCF Inventory Finance in 2009 or in the future?

JH: As a recent start-up, we face all sorts of challenges on a daily basis. It's impossible to call out one as the biggest, but I would suggest that resisting the pressure to rush headlong into the market to help

calm the turmoil that exists from the other floorplan lenders has been a big struggle. We hear every day from suppliers and dealers alike that our services are necessary immediately, but we have had to maintain a steady, well-considered and orderly entry into the market in order to demonstrate that our people, processes and systems are sufficiently ready and robust enough to deliver the first-rate level of customer service that the market expects of us.

RO: What does TCF Inventory Finance offer over its competitors?

JH: At TCF Inventory Finance, the customer really does come first in everything we do. Every employee is dedicated to providing the very best service to support the businesses of our customers.

Our parent company, TCF Financial Corporation, is committed to our success. This enthusiastic support has allowed us to enter the floorplan finance market now, when the uncertainty of the credit markets is at an all-time high and when all E&A retailers, buying groups and suppliers, most need an alternative to an overly-consolidated inventory finance market. Our access to a consistent, reliable and predictable source of capital, courtesy of our parent company, presents a stark contrast to the well-publicized struggle within the capital markets faced by our competitors.

RO: Any last comments?

JH: The entire TCF Inventory Finance team is thrilled to be able to re-enter the floorplan finance business in support of the many, many good businesses that operate within the E&A industries. Floorplan finance is an industry that we love, and the opportunity to do it "right" again and restore the level of customer service to where it was several years ago is exciting to all of us. The reception that we have enjoyed from all parts of the North American E&A industries has been truly gratifying: it not only justifies all the hard work that we have put into this, but motivates us to move forward with a passion and commitment that has been long missing from our industry.

RO: Thanks, Jim.

JH: You're welcome. Thanks for the interest in our business. **RO**

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Contacts:

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Charlie Love – 812.471.3261 or clove@tcfif.com or
Ray Ouellette – 603.293.8226 or rouellette@tcfif.com

Canada

Bob Eddy – 877.800.4430 or beddy@tcfif.com or
Tracy Williams – 877.800.4430 or twilliams@tcfif.com

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COMING EVENTS

CALENDAR 2009

JUNE-2009

- 2-4**CONNECTIONS™: The Digital Living Conference and Showcase**—
Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, CA
- 10-12**Digital Downtown**—World Financial Center, New York, NY
- 11**NKBA Advanced Appliance Course**—Miele Design Center, Princeton, NJ
- 17-19**PCBC**—Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA
-

JULY-2009

- 16**NKBA Advanced Appliance Course**—
Dacor Corporate Design & Culinary Center, Los Angeles, CA
-

AUGUST-2009

- 10-11**Almo Expo**—Verona, New York
- 13**Almo Expo**—St. Paul, MN
- 16-19**Nationwide Primetime**—Walt Disney World Dolphin, Orlando, FL
- 19-20**Almo Expo**—Cincinnati, OH
- 30-Sept.3.....**Brand Source Convention**—Paris Hotel, Las Vegas, NV
-

SEPTEMBER-2009

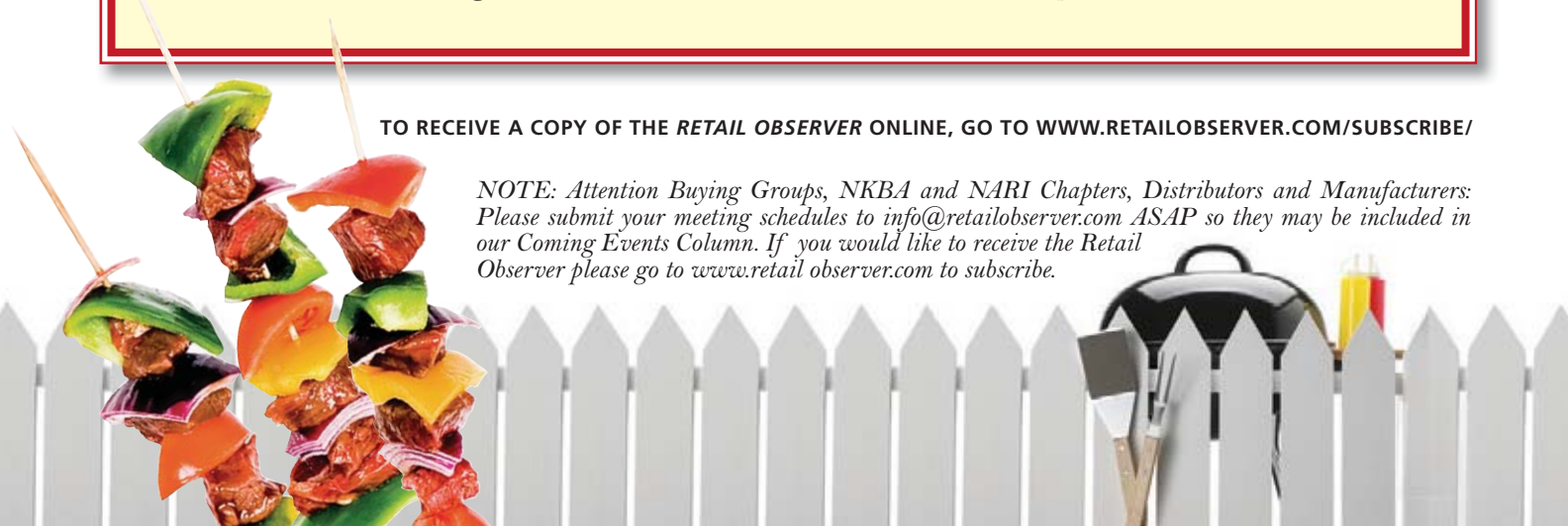
- 1-4**Mega Group USA/Best Brands Plus Convention**— San Antonio, TX
- 10**NKBA Advanced Appliance Course**—Dacor Design & Culinary Center, Chicago, IL
- 14-15**Almo Expo**—St. Charles, MO
- 14-17**Las Vegas World Market Fall**—Las Vegas NV
-

OCTOBER-2009

- 1**NKBA Advanced Appliance Course**—Miele Design Center at LUWA Distributing, Seattle, WA
- 17-20**High Point Furniture Market**—High Point, NC
- 18-21**2009 CEA Industry Forum**—Phoenix, AZ
- 28-30**Remodeling Show 2009**—Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN

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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, NKBA and NARI Chapters, Distributors and Manufacturers: Please submit your meeting schedules to info@retailobserver.com ASAP so they may be included in our Coming Events Column. If you would like to receive the Retail Observer please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.



"My NKBA certification gives me the edge to design kitchens that 'wow' my clients."

X *Cait Lauza, AKBD*

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- CBD®** – Certified Bath Designer
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NKBA 2009 Competition



PHOTO: BOB NAROD PHOTOGRAPHY, LLC.

THE PINNACLE OF DESIGN

(Sponsored by Sub-Zero/Wolf)

Jennifer L. Gilmer, CKD

Jennifer Gilmer Kitchen & Bath,
Chevy Chase, MD
\$25,000 Award



PHOTO: MANIER CREATIVE

BEST OVERALL KITCHEN

(Sponsored by Miele)

Siri Evju, CKD, CBD

Siri Designs,
Portland, OR
\$15,000 Award



PHOTO: WILLIAM LESCH PHOTOGRAPHY

BEST OVERALL BATHROOM/POWDER ROOM

(Sponsored by Dal-Tile)

Lori Carroll Co-Designer: Mary Roles

Lori Carroll & Associates,
Tucson, AZ
\$15,000 Award

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) announced the winners of the 2009 NKBA Design Competition, which awards over \$100,000 in cash prizes. The winners were recognized in Atlanta at the NKBA Design Competition Awards Ceremony, held at Center Stage in the NKBA's Design Idea Center at the 2009 Kitchen/Bath Industry Show & Conference (K/BIS®).

Open only to NKBA members, the NKBA Design Competition recognizes the talent of kitchen and bath designers to plan safe, functional, and beautiful spaces. In 2009, the NKBA received a record 679 entries. A panel of NKBA-certified designers from all of the NKBA's eight geographic regions judged the projects based on visual

CATEGORY 1 - SMALL KITCHENS

First Place:

Jennifer L. Gilmer, CKD
Chevy Chase, MD

Second Place:

Beverley Leigh Binns
Pickering, ON

Third Place:

Roger W. Zierman
Minneapolis, MN

Honorable Mention:

Friedemann Weinhardt
Ottawa, ON

Rockland, MA

Second Place:

Bryan Reiss, CKD, CBD
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Third Place:

Lori Carroll
Tucson, AZ

Honorable Mention:

Kristin Ann Okeley, CKD
Indianapolis, IN

CATEGORY 2 - MEDIUM KITCHENS

First Place:

Jennifer L. Gilmer, CKD
Chevy Chase, MD

Second Place:

Friedemann Weinhardt
Ottawa, ON

Third Place:

Diane Foreman, CKD, CBD
Lake Oswego, OR

Honorable Mention:

Richard J. Farrell
Pickering, ON

CATEGORY 4 - OPEN PLAN KITCHENS

First Place:

Siri Evju, CKD, CBD
Portland, OR

Second Place:

Erica S. Westeroth, CKD
Toronto, ON

Third Place:

Kenneth Fromme
Louisville, KY

Honorable Mention:

Laurie Belinda Haefele
Newport Beach, CA

CATEGORY 3 - LARGE KITCHENS

First Place:

Cameron M. Snyder, CKD

CATEGORY 5 - POWDER ROOMS

First Place:

Lori Carroll
Tucson, AZ

Second Place:

Lori Carroll
Tucson, AZ

09 Design n Winners

appeal and creativity, as well as principles of design, presentation, and safety and ergonomics, using the NKBA Kitchen and Bath Planning Guidelines.

The competition spans ten categories, and offers a first, second and third place winner, as well as an honorable mention, in each category. The ten first place winners in each category receive \$2,000, while second place finalists receive \$1,000 and third-place finishers \$500. In addition, \$25,000 is awarded to the Pinnacle of Design winner, \$15,000 each to the winners of the Best Overall Kitchen and Best Overall Bathroom/Powder Room, and \$5,000 each to the winners of the Best Before & After, Best Sustainable Kitchen, and Best Sustainable Bath.

Third Place:

Tess E. Giuliani, CKD
Ridgewood, NJ

Honorable Mention:

Dawn M. Whyte
Petoskey, MI

CATEGORY 6 - SMALL BATHROOMS

First Place:

Cheryl Kees Clendenon
Pensacola, FL

Second Place:

Linda McKenna, CKD, CBD
Benicia, CA

Third Place:

Cheryl Kees Clendenon
Pensacola, FL

Honorable Mention:

Cheryl Kees Clendenon
Pensacola, FL

CATEGORY 7 - LARGE BATHROOMS

First Place:

Jan E. Regis, CMKBD
Pickering, ON

Second Place:

Cheryl Hamilton-Gray, CKD
Carlsbad, CA

Third Place:

Peter Ross Salerno, CMKBD
Wyckoff, NJ

Honorable Mention:

Lori Carroll
Tucson, AZ

CATEGORY 8 - MASTER SUITE BATHROOMS

First Place:

Scott and Sandra Gjesdahl
Kirkland, WA

Second Place:

Chris Berry
St. Louis, MO

Third Place:

Beverley Leigh Binns
Toronto, ON

Honorable Mention:

Cheryl Hamilton-Gray, CKD
Carlsbad, CA

CATEGORY 9 - SHOWROOMS

First Place:

Elina Katsioula-Beall, CKD
Studio City, CA

CATEGORY 10 - OTHER ROOMS

First Place:

Sandra L. Steiner-Houck, CKD
Columbia, PA



PHOTO: BRINKMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

BEST BEFORE & AFTER

(Sponsored by *This Old House*)

Diane Foreman, CKD, CBD

Co-Designer: Jamie Rupprecht, AKBD

Neil Kelly Design Build/Remodeling,
Lake Oswego, OR

\$5,000 Award



PHOTO: ERHARD PFEIFFER

BEST SUSTAINABLE KITCHEN

(Sponsored by *Monogram*)

Laurie Belinda Haefele Co-Designer: Colin Dusenbery

Haefele Design,
Newport Beach, CA

\$5,000 Award



PHOTO: PHIL BELL

BEST SUSTAINABLE BATH

(Sponsored by *Rheem*)

Brian M. Johnson, AIA

Collaborative Design Architects/HSD Studio
Billings, MT

\$5,000 Award



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BrandSource Expert Warehouse Continues To Grow

A few years ago the BrandSource management team, headed by CEO Bob Lawrence and Vice President of Electronics, Jim Ristow, took note of the changes taking place within the consumer electronics industry. Major manufacturers were beginning to require higher volume levels for retailers to purchase products on a factory direct basis. The shift included more and more dealers buying from distributors at higher than direct prices, making the retailers either less profitable or moving to other brand names to remain competitive.

BrandSource formed the Expert Warehouse and initiated an online order system available to members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Starting with a handful of brand names, today's Expert Warehouse program includes major brand names like Sony, Samsung, LG, Panasonic, Hitachi, Pioneer and Pioneer Elite, and several lines of major appliances.

Today, the CE industry trend has continued to increase the minimum amount of annual purchases dealers are required to buy each year to be able to purchase products directly from the manufacturers. More and more retailers are finding themselves working with distributors.

The BrandSource Expert Warehouse has been a tremendous benefit for BrandSource and Home Entertainment Source members, by providing their products through Expert Warehouse at factory direct pricing. Expert Warehouse has developed a program that allows members to reduce their need for expensive outside warehousing, by providing just-in-time inventory deliveries from any of the three national Expert Warehouse locations.

The Expert Warehouse program has become so popular most deliveries can be made within one to three days anywhere in the country. And members have the ability to mix and match brands to suit their needs which allows members to buy only what they need.

Jim Ristow, Vice President of Consumer Electronics for BrandSource, recently reported that the Expert Warehouse has become a huge hit among the marketing group's members, and the 20 percent increase in volume in 2008 over 2007, is proof of the continued success Expert Warehouse delivers to BrandSource and Home

Entertainment Source members. "In a down economy when consumers are cutting back on major purchases, and when retail pricing has been dropping each year, to show a twenty percent increase year over year shows us how successful the warehouse program has become," said Ristow.

The Expert Warehouse program saw additional changes last year with the addition of major appliances, and this year a new line of freezers has been added, and the Haire line of major appliances was recently added, giving BrandSource members a highly promotional, full featured line of major appliances available in the past only through truckload purchases.

40 YEARS AND STILL GROWING

As the annual convention and buying fair draws near, BrandSource members will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year, with a renewed focus on the latest marketing tools that are quickly replacing what has been the industry norm for the past fifty years. Social media will be a major focus point, as will Email marketing and improved internet presence.

The BrandSource Marketing Group began in 1969, when a handful of appliance dealers discussed the best way to combat the box stores of that era. Those box stores are gone, replaced by new competitors, but the independent retailers are still here, thanks in part to the competitive retail and wholesale programs developed by BrandSource.

"Consumers today still need a refrigerator, a washer, dryer, stove and the consumer electronics they have always wanted in the past. The way we market to them has changed dramatically over the past five years, and it will continue to change even more quickly in the next five years. We want to be sure our members are on the leading edge of the latest technology," said BrandSource General Manager of Marketing, Bob Donaldson. Our 40th Anniversary Convention will focus on new technologies and their integration in to our business. This year's Convention will be held August 31 – September 3, at the Paris Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. **RO**



**Michelle needed
CPR in September.**



**Luckily, Alberto took
a CPR course in June.**

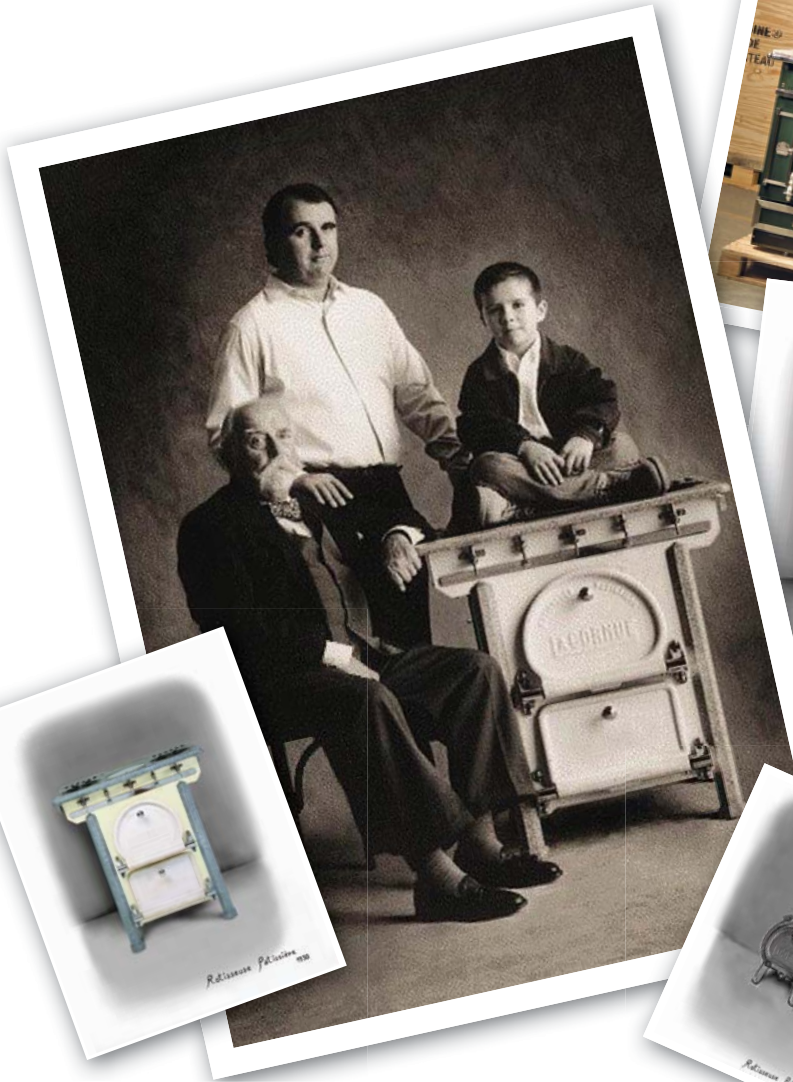
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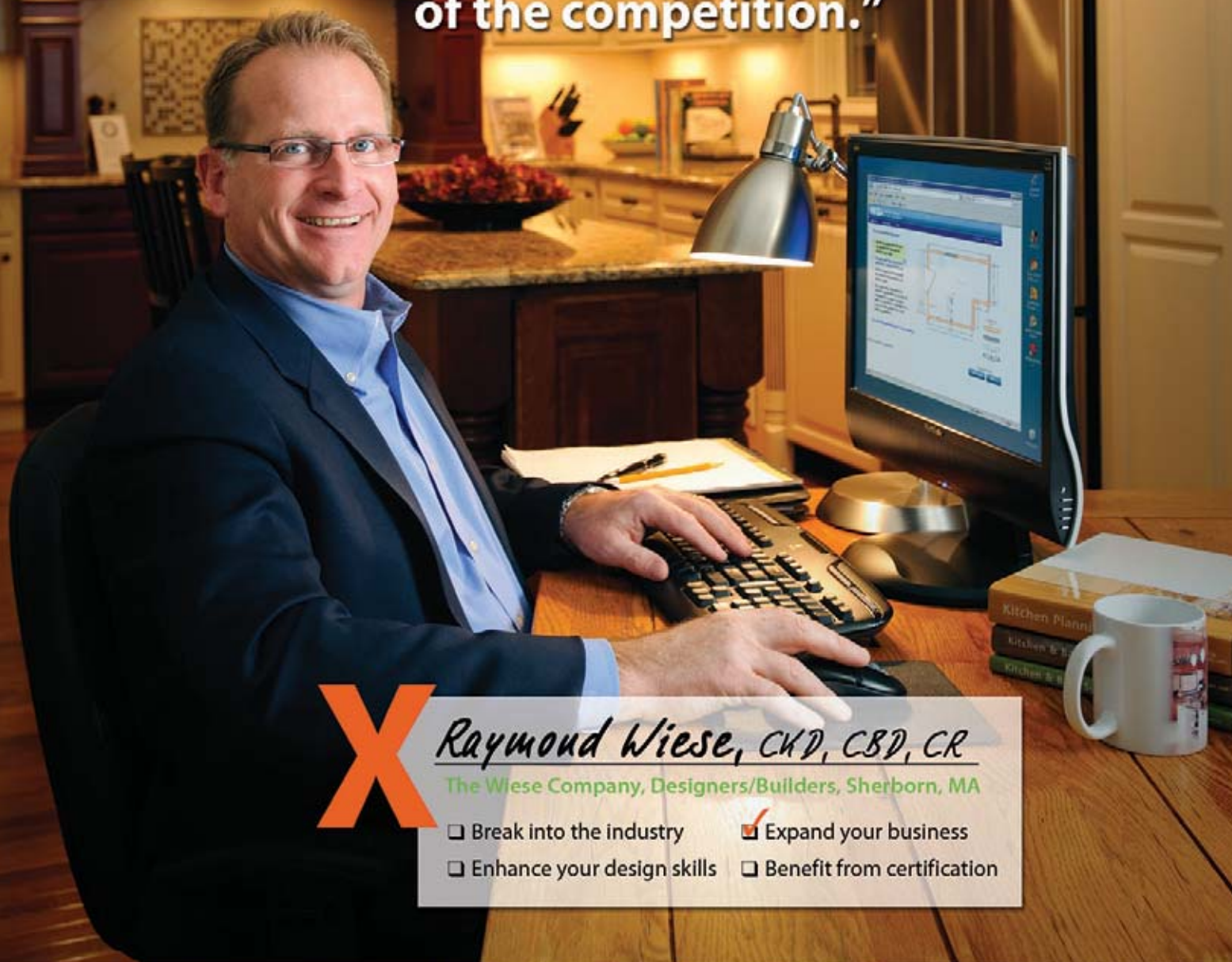
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