

The Retail Observer

April, 2013

AN EYE ON THE INDUSTRY SINCE 1970

Vol. 24, Issue 4

THE NEW AMERICAN HOME

A SYMBOL OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY & INNOVATION

NAHB'S OFFICIAL SHOW HOME OF THE
INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS SHOW

BRANDSOURCE WINTER SUMMIT

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FOR INDEPENDENTS



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Be Kind and Be Courageous

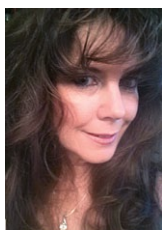
I really enjoy being the Publisher of *The Retail Observer*. As a business owner myself, I learn so much from the relationships I have built over the years. Especially from the contributions and suggestions for content we get each month from our partners, associations, writers and subscribers. Here are a few of the "ah ha" moments I had when preparing this issue.

John Tschohl's article *Moving Up: Take Control and Get Out of That Rut* included this quote, "Most people believe in having a backup plan, but I don't recommend it." To most of us that's just not practical business sense. But let's think about all of the people we look up to in the business world. The most successful stories include people who weren't afraid to fail because like John put it, "They fall forward, because they know there is nothing to catch them if they fall backward." We can all benefit from being courageous and taking risks from time to time. Not only is it exhilarating when we reap the rewards it's also a great way to continue learning what works and what doesn't and those lessons are priceless.

We also get stuck in our business mindset and forget to be human. We forget to say hello to our sales team and acknowledge their hard work. We forget to thank the delivery people who are the face of our business in the field. We forget to thank our office manager for keeping the books in order for us. We forget to take time out for ourselves during the day to enjoy the successes of our business.

That's why Libby Wagner's article *Reduce Complexity: Try a Little Kindness* really rang true for me. We can spend oodles on training our staff to work as a team but as the business owner we set the precedence for them to follow. Why should they "Just play nice," if we aren't even showing concern for the game they are playing? The good news is that it only takes a few seconds to lift morale. All you need to do is make a conscious effort every day to show up with a smile, hello, handshake or pat on the back. These small acts of kindness will resonate throughout your business and by the end of the day, you will notice happier, smiling faces and so will your customers.

On a final note, *The Retail Observer* is excitedly preparing for The Kitchen & Bath Industry Show in New Orleans and hope to see you there.



Safe travels!

Eliana Barriga
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The Retail Observer

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CELEBRATING OUR 24TH YEAR
AS *THE RETAIL OBSERVER*

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ADVANCED DEGREES

From the leader in appliance innovation comes the industry's first refrigerator with an integrated hot water dispenser. Thanks to GE, preparing hot food and drinks is easier than ever. Now that's just smart.

geappliances.com



imagination at work

Major Associations Working Together is a Sign of Things to Come

By now many of you are aware that the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS) and the International Builders Show (IBS) will co-locate in Las Vegas on February 4-6, 2014. The two events will remain separate and distinct shows held simultaneously at the Las Vegas Convention Center through 2016, creating Design and Construction Week, one of the world's largest gatherings focused on new ideas, products and technologies to design, build and remodel homes.

"Two shows, two associations and one place to see and connect with every aspect of residential construction and remodeling," said John Morgan, NKBA 2013 president. "We couldn't be more excited to deliver this special event for the industry."

"Co-locating IBS and KBIS will enable kitchen and bath professionals to benefit through a greater understanding and familiarity with related products, such as windows, doors, flooring, and mechanical systems, all of which are critical to overall consumer satisfaction with project outcomes," Morgan said. In 2015, Design and Construction Week will expand further with the addition of SURFACES and StonExpo/Marmomacc on January 21-23.

This year, The National Home Furnishings Association, Western Home Furnishings Association, Southeastern Home Furnishings Association and the Home Furnishings Independents Association have announced the schedule for the Home Furnishings Industry Conference (HFIC) to be held at the Sheraton in New Orleans on June 2-4, 2013.

The event theme is "Making it Big, Keeping it Easy" and will offer opportunities for retailers to continue developing the skills needed to evolve, compete and thrive. Including over 25 educational sessions, a best idea contest and a 60-booth product showcase, the HFIC continues to establish itself as the go-to event for all industry professionals.

"New this year is a simplified online registration process," said WHFA Director of Events, Cindi Williams. "It is amazing how quickly attendees can register for the event, take advantage of the Buy-One-Get-One offer and sign up for all the fun optional activities planned. And the confirmation comes right to your inbox, brilliant!" Retailers, vendors and manufacturers interested in attending the event can visit www.thehfic.com.

WOW! It has been exciting to watch associations with very similar goals in parallel industries work together for the benefit of the Retailer, Manufacturer, Designer, Contractor, Architect or anyone working in the Home Construction or Completion industries. This is one of the main reasons why we join associations, right? Like minds helping like minds to achieve the same goals. I believe this is just the beginning of what's to come and I'm looking forward to the changes.



Happy Retailing,

Moe Lastfogel

moe@retailobserver.com

The RetailObserver APRIL 2013

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 4

CELEBRATING OUR 24TH YEAR
AS THE RETAIL OBSERVER

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



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THERE'S NO CRYING WITH A
VENT-A-HOOD.
UNLESS YOU'RE THE
COMPETITION.



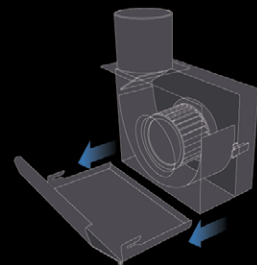
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NAHB'S OFFICIAL SHOW HOME OF THE
INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS SHOW

THE NEW AMERICAN HOME

A SYMBOL OF
ENERGY EFFICIENCY
AND INNOVATION



Each year at the National Association of Home Builders' big trade show, a group of home-product suppliers teams up with a builder to sponsor the construction of "The New American Home," showcasing the latest builders have to offer American consumers. The home exhibits cutting-edge products available in the U.S. from manufacturers all over the world. The show home is a collection of ideas for the industry to take away—in large pieces, or bit-by-bit—and put into millions of homes across the country each year...innovative products for the future of home building.

Blue Heron, a Las Vegas developer, has built a New American Home that hardly resembles the typical American home at all. Sprawling at nearly

7,000 sq. ft., the home features a subterranean courtyard, thousands of square feet of artificial water features, massive concrete-like overhangs, metal hand rails, faux-travertine floors and dozens of glass walls. The home is spacious with well defined spaces, multi-directional views, with seamless transitions bringing 17,000 sq. ft. of outdoor living indoors including several water features, lounging areas creating a "Resort Living" experience.

"The whole concept from the very beginning was this totally different style: the desert contemporary aesthetic," says Tyler Jones, Blue Heron's co-founder and chief executive. Since building the TNAH 2009 show home, Blue Heron has sold some 100 homes | *continued on page 10* |



in Las Vegas, often to design enthusiasts who care more about the home's horizontal aluminum louvers than about the fact that the home does not have a traditional, family-friendly set-up. Their target client is a professional who has a high powered, maybe stressful, all-day kind of job where they're going all day and coming home to a kind of calm, Zen-like, relaxing type environment. It's definitely not set up for families. It's for a professional single, or a married couple that's very social. Michael Gardner, Blue Heron's in-house architect, designed the space, and said he drew inspiration from Wright's work in Los Angeles and at Taliesin West, the late architect's winter home and school in the Arizona desert.

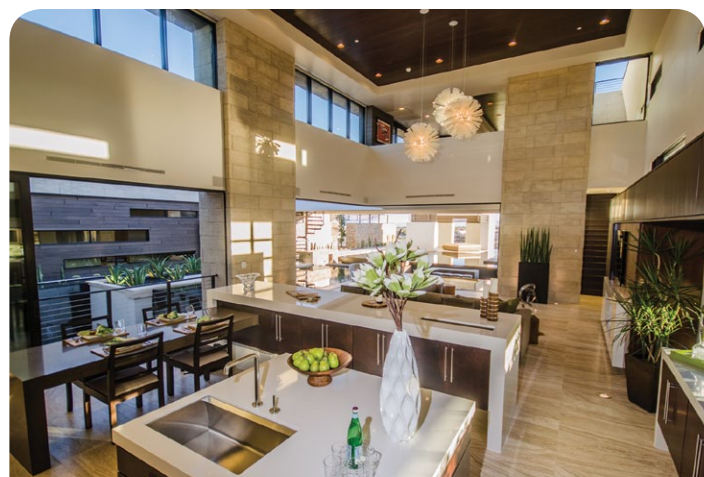
According to Enzo Peretto, president of Cleveland Homebuilders Association, who toured the home, exclaimed, "It was like being in America's New Construction Laboratory". Some of the cutting edge technology included solar hot water, photovoltaic roof panels, closed spray foam insulation, water sensitive irrigation, tankless hot water heaters, hydronic air handlers, intelligent fireplaces, sustainable building materials, ENERGY STAR appliances, and low E energy efficient windows were utilized in the design. The homeowner can monitor, manage and control security systems, climate, TV's, music, lighting, shades, and much more from their iPhones, iPads and laptops.

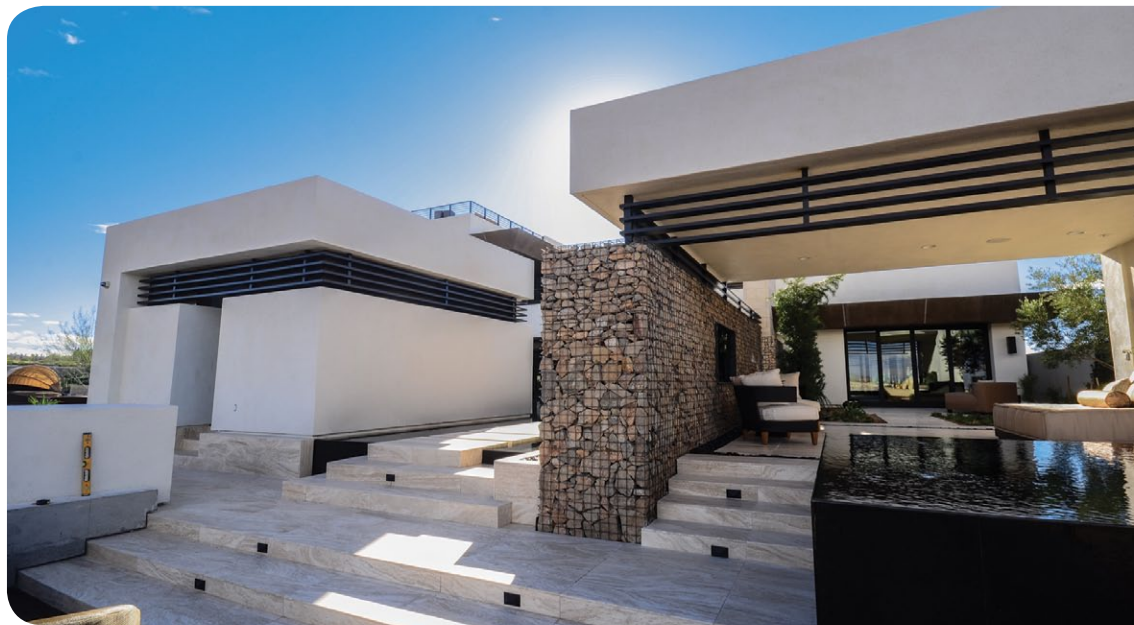
INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW DRAWS NEARLY 50,000 TO THE LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER

In a sign that recovery in the home building industry remains slow but steady, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) reported that just under 49,000 home builders, developers, remodelers, product manufacturers and other home building industry professionals packed the exhibit floor at the annual International Builders' Show (IBS) in Las Vegas. The tally was on par with the 2012 show, which attracted about 51,000.

Exhibitors reported that the mood was significantly brighter and the exhibit halls were crowded. "We've seen our traffic increase, and these are people who are ready to build, not just kick the tires," said Richard Palmersheim, vice president of marketing for Broan-Nutone LLC, manufacturers of exhaust fans and home technology equipment. "Driving business at the Broan booth are recent energy code changes that have home builders seeking more energy-efficient products and new tools for mechanical ventilation," he said.

Builders and remodelers participated in more than 100 educational sessions and seminars during the show on topics ranging from business management and sales training to technology and green building science. | continued on page 13 |









THE NEW AMERICAN HOME/IBS SHOW



| continued from page 10 |

A number of awards presentations celebrated outstanding achievement in the industry, home design and community service. Tours of The New American Home drew thousands of industry professionals to see the latest building products and techniques—and tips on how to merchandize them.

“This year, people are actually building model homes,” said Tim Miller, president and CEO of Velux, manufacturers of skylights and other daylighting products—an indication of growing confidence in the home buying market.

IBS AND KBIS TO CO-LOCATE BEGINNING IN 2014!

We are pleased to announce that IBS and the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) will co-locate beginning in 2014! That’s right, Design and Construction Week will take over Las Vegas! The two events will remain separate and distinct shows held simultaneously at the Las Vegas Convention Center through 2016.

“Plans to co-locate the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) with IBS can only be good news for attendees and for suppliers”, Tim Miller added. His comments were echoed by Jim Westdorp, group vice president of the kitchen and bath division at Kohler, who told attendees at a joint KBIS-IBS reception that co-locating will make it much easier for exhibitors to reach more clients and for builders and remodelers to see a wider variety of products. “This is very good news for all of us,” he said.

You will get more bang for the buck during Design and Construction Week. Make plans now to attend the event in Las Vegas on February 4-6, 2014. Registration opens September 3 and you can sign up to receive email updates throughout the year at www.buildersshow.com. **RO**



CALL TO ACTION



SEND US YOUR SHOTS

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

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

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Book Review

Competing in Tough Times

Retailer Survival Strategies for Today's Economic Environment

Today's economic environment is brutal, and retailers are feeling the full impact in decreased spending by consumers. How can retailers profit and survive in this unforgiving retail environment? Internationally respected retail management expert Barry Berman shows retailers how to not just survive, but thrive by building effective strategies based on cost and differentiation. Berman provides detailed coverage for implementing strategies based on becoming the low-cost provider and minimizing product proliferation, enhancing the service experience, developing and maintaining a strong private label program.

Following are five key insights:

- There has been an overall increase in competition from dissimilar retailer types, called "format blurring." Traditional retailers have seen significant competition as consumers increasingly shop at warehouse clubs, Wal-Mart, dollar stores, extreme value food formats like Aldi and Sav-A-Lot, office supply stores, factory outlets, and closeout-based web retailers.
- Retailers need to make it easier for consumers to get special values. Specials should be communicated on blackboards in front of each store and can be grouped together as solutions (such as pasta, pasta sauce, ground beef, and Italian bread for a supermarket or a HDTV, a speaker system, and HDMI cables for an electronics store). Coupon offerings can be posted on a store's website.
- One of the major long-term changes that has carried over from this recession is the increased concern for all consumers with "value." An effective value strategy can deter the migration of consumers to other outlets.
- Periods of low growth are also an ideal time to reevaluate whether additional services should be continued or separately charged. For example, a furniture retailer may want to consider unbundling charges for delivery, installation, and carting away of one's old furniture. In this way, consumers can select and pay for specific services that they value.
- Two major competitive strategies that retailers need to carefully consider are low cost and differentiation. Low-cost retailers base their overall strategy around reducing product choice, self-service shopping environments, and an absence of services that consumers view as secondary in importance, as well as lower rental costs. In contrast, differentiation strategies can be based on a "fun" atmosphere, the in-store service experience, unique products and customer trust.

Competing in Tough Times strategies apply to retailers in every market sector, ranging from consumer goods to apparel to technology. **RO**

Author: Barry Berman is Walter H. "Bud" Miller Distinguished Professor of Business at Hofstra University and Director of Hofstra's Executive MBA Program. He serves on the board of the American Collegiate Retailing Association (ACRA), and co-chairs the triennial Academy of Marketing Science (AMS)/ACRA Retailing Conference. Publisher: FT Press, an imprint of Pearson





AGA

European cooking technology
with a rich professional and
catering heritage



MARVEL

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



The legacy behind the name

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

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

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INTRODUCING PRIZER HOODS: AN ULTIMATE STATEMENT IN LUXURY KITCHEN HOODS

45 YEARS OF DESIGN EXPERTISE COMBINED WITH 133 YEARS OF CUSTOM MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE UNMATCHED LUXURY KITCHEN HOODS

 Prizer-Painter Stove Works, Inc., manufacturer of BlueStar™ professional cooking equipment for the home, introduces Prizer Hoods, a stunning line of professionally-inspired luxury kitchen hoods, crafted for kitchen designers, architects and homeowners who demand cutting-edge design and state-of-the-art performance.

The new Prizer Hoods merges the 45 years of leading design expertise of Independent Inc. with Prizer-Painter Stove Works' 133-year-heritage of quality custom manufacturing technology. With stunning and fully customizable designs, using a wide range of metal options, and offering a dazzling palette of colors, trims and finishes, Prizer Hoods makes the ultimate statement in any kitchen. From rich old-world, commanding styles to modern hood designs with smooth, sweeping contours, every hand-crafted Prizer Hood offers enduring elegance and engaging style customized to the buyer's individual taste.

"Since the kitchen is one of the more popular places to gather in the home, range hoods are evolving and becoming a focal point. From artistic to deep-rooted designs with flair, unique statement hoods are appearing in many settings, whether contemporary or traditional. And advanced manufacturing technology allows realization of unmatched performance," said Michael Trapp, president, Prizer Hoods.

INFINITE CUSTOM DESIGN AND STYLE

When a dream kitchen calls for fully customizable and distinctive silhouettes, Prizer Hoods delivers a uniquely styled product that can be tailor-made to fit any kitchen layout or design preference. Prizer Hoods has the capability to create a custom shape for each customer's taste, and each hood can be formed from virtually any metal and painted in any of hundreds of colors and finishes. This unique approach to kitchen hood design empowers designers and architects to reenergize the kitchen space with a personalized design statement.

Prizer Hoods' world-class design team has a combined 100 years of hood design experience. Custom hoods are created by the design and drafting department, whose main concern is attention to the detail and precise specifications of architects, designers, contractors, and homeowners. Restoration services are also available for customers' existing hoods to revitalize current hoods and breathe new life into a kitchen.

PROFESSIONAL POWER

"While design is critical, customers also desire a hood with professional performance," said Trapp. "With Prizer Hoods, there is no need to choose



between form and function. These are powerful hoods, with blowers moving air at rates from about 300 to 1400 cubic feet per minute or more, and with quiet operation providing true restaurant-quality performance at home.”

Each hood is handcrafted with precision and state-of-the-art equipment to ensure consistency and quality. Built to meet professional standards inside and out, Prizer Hoods combines high-gauge metals and commercial-style baffle filtration systems so anyone can cook like a pro. High heat sensors provide automatic heat moderation for seamless high heat cooking. Each hood accommodates top or rear discharge for convenience and accepts a variety of fans to meet the demands of any kitchen.

Prizer Hoods offers ventilation hoods for all applications, with quiet operation:

- Under cabinets: Ventilation options for under cabinet installation to fit style or space requirements.
- Wall mounts: A wall-mounted hood can be the clear choice for style and practicality.
- Island mounts: If a cooktop or range takes center stage in the kitchen, an island mount ventilation system can be the best choice.
- Recirculating: When exterior venting is not possible, recirculating ventilation systems are the solution.
- Outdoor BBQ cooking: The finishing touch for an outdoor kitchen, these hoods make fresh-air entertaining even fresher.
- Liners and Inserts: The latest hood technology is available for custom hood needs.

INDEPENDENT'S DESIGNS & PRIZER'S QUALITY CRAFTSMANSHIP

Prizer has built upon and expanded the hood designs manufactured by Independent Inc. following Prizer's 2012 acquisition of Independent's designs, technology and manufacturing assets. Independent had been a leader in designing and making luxury hoods since 1947. Since 1880, Prizer has built a heritage of craftsmanship – first with a full-line of residential and commercial coal ranges, hot water heaters, furnaces and heating stoves at the company's factory in Pennsylvania. In 2002, Prizer introduced handcrafted, restaurant-quality ranges for the residential market under the BlueStar brand name. Constructed of the highest-quality commercial grade stainless steel, and with specialized technologies such as the UltraNova® 22,000 BTU power burner and the 130°F gentle simmer burner, BlueStar delivers true restaurant performance to the home chef. The combination of 45 years of design leadership from Independent Inc. and 133 years of Prizer-Painter's manufacturing technology produces unique hoods with lasting value.

For more information, visit the new Prizer Hoods website at www.prizerhoods.com or call 610.376.7479

2013 ADDITIONS TO BUILT-IN SERIES BY SUPERIOR ITALIAN OVEN MANUFACTURER - BERTAZZONI



Bertazzoni is launching a new XV Professional line that marries the quality and traditions of Italian excellence in engineering with affordable pricing for the cost-conscious consumer. With this addition of the new XV line, Bertazzoni now offers the most comprehensive built-in cooking suite of any imported brand.

The new XV Professional line includes a 30 inch single-oven, double-oven and 24 inch model for small spaces. Available at a new and even more accessible price point than the XE and XT Design lines, the line is available at an opening price point of \$2,099 for 30 inch models and \$1,049 for the 24 inch model. Bertazzoni has also reduced its pricing on the majority of its built-in models, and announces a major package promotion which includes a free built in microwave that saves consumers up to 20%.

NEW XV BUILT-IN PRODUCTS

The following are new products in the Bertazzoni XV line, at a more affordable price point than any other Bertazzoni ovens, to date:



Professional Series 30 inch Single Stainless Steel Oven (MSRP \$2,099) – NEW!

- Dual diagonal convection system
- Flush stainless steel front
- 9 cooking modes and 4 heating elements | *continued on page 18* |



Professional Series 24 inch Single Stainless Steel Oven
(MSRP \$1,049) – NEW!

- European convection system
- New professional series metal knobs and handle
- New led interface



Professional Series 30 inch Double Stainless Steel Oven
(MSRP \$3,999) – NEW!

- Dual diagonal convection system in both cavities
- Flush stainless steel front
- 9 cooking modes and 4 heating elements in both cavities

PRICING UPDATES FOR 2013

The following are updates on pricing and promotions for Bertazzoni built-in ovens:

- XE Built-In Design Series was reduced by 11% (single oven) and 4% (double oven)
- XT Built-In Design Series was reduced by 7% (single oven) and 4% (double oven)
- Major promotion (January 1– June 30, 2013): Buy any

qualifying Bertazzoni built-in & cooktop pair and receive a free built-in microwave + frame

Based in Italy, Bertazzoni is a 130 year old family-owned company that manufactures ranges, ovens, cooktops and ventilation systems. Designs range from contemporary and traditional to classic. Embracing a strong heritage of fine engineering and the culinary culture of the Emilia Romagna region, Bertazzoni products are built with passion and precision by people who know about cooking, for people around the world who love to cook. For more information visit www.bertazzoni.com.

NEW CONVECTION TECHNOLOGY, CONNECTED FEATURES IN LATEST GE® WALL OVENS MEAN COMPLETE CONTROL OF MEALS

- NEW CONVECTION DESIGN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES AIR COVERAGE ON FOOD, RESULTS IN GREAT COOKING PERFORMANCE
- NEW WI-FI CONNECTIVITY GIVES YOU THE FREEDOM TO CONTROL YOUR MEAL WITHOUT REQUIRING YOU TO BE IN THE KITCHEN
- AVAILABLE IN A VARIETY OF CONFIGURATIONS, INCLUDING SINGLE AND DOUBLE OVENS



GE's new wall ovens feature the latest cooking technology—true European convection with Direct Air. New vents on the top of the oven cavity—the first ever in residential cooking by a major manufacturer—focus air directly on the food providing significantly increased air flow and great cooking performance. The new technology makes it easier than ever for aspiring home cooks to evenly bake food from perfectly browned pies to expertly crisped turkeys. And because great food shouldn't come with a sacrifice of time or convenience, an iPhone® and Android™ app lets consumers control the ovens with Wi-Fi access.

ELEVATED PERFORMANCE

In GE's newly designed wall ovens, the Direct Air convection system distributes heated air from two sources – both the top and back wall of the oven depending on the cooking mode. Unlike most convection systems, the oven's fans can reverse in direction and operate at seven different speeds. "We're elevating the cooking experience at home with technology that wraps around your food better than ever before and achieves outstanding results," says Jon Bostock, marketing manager for cooking appliances for GE Appliances.

In addition to even cooking, convection ovens cook many foods faster. "Shorter cooking times are a huge bonus for today's busy families and people who like to entertain," says Bostock. | continued on page 20 |

FROM ITALY, NOT FLORIDA.
THE NEW ORANGE.



TO COOK BEAUTIFULLY

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

BERTAZZONI.COM



REMOTE CONTROL OVEN

As consumers rely even more on their mobile devices, GE is leading the way to make interacting with their appliances and saving time as effortless as possible from wherever they happen to be. GE's newest mobile app gives consumers the freedom to control their oven using Wi-Fi technology. They can preheat; set the timer; change the temperature or cooking function; and check cooking status while managing activities, such as gardening or homework with the kids. "If you want to preheat your oven while doing laundry, our new GE wall ovens can help," says Bostock. "Don't worry about burning a casserole while you're doing the things that matter most, such as playing with your daughter in the yard. GE's app will notify you, so you can turn off the oven remotely."

The new GE wall ovens were designed for the ultimate in ease of use.

- Notification lighting makes it easy to multitask while cooking your favorite food to perfection. An industry-first LED lighting strip between the top of the oven door and the bottom of the control panel pulses during preheating and progressively illuminates bar lights during timed cooking. The light allows you to go about other activities and quickly look up to see the oven's status.
- The oven's multiple racks were designed to be left in the oven during the self-clean cycle for ease and convenience.
- Available in the GE brand, the new wall oven boasts five cubic feet of usable capacity, one of the largest in the industry.

"Wall ovens and other built-ins are the flagship products of GE's cooking business and where new technologies and innovations are introduced," says Bostock. "Cooking technologies and trends typically start in wall ovens and migrate to other platforms as time passes. It's very exciting to be working on the future of cooking in America."

GE's new wall ovens are assembled in Lafayette, Ga., and will be available in June of 2013. The wall ovens retail for a MSRP of \$999—\$3,499 however, retailers set their own prices. Models are available in black, white and stainless finishes. GE models are available in single- and double-oven configurations in both 30 and 27 inches.

For more information on GE Appliances, visit www.ge.com/appliances.

SAMSUNG AND SODASTREAM ANNOUNCE THE FIRST-EVER FOUR-DOOR REFRIGERATOR WITH SPARKLING WATER DISPENSER

SAMSUNG, AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING HOME APPLIANCE BRAND, TEAMS UP WITH SODASTREAM TO DELIVER SPARKLING WATER RIGHT FROM THE REFRIGERATOR



Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. is bringing the premium taste of fresh, crisp sparkling water right to the kitchen with the Samsung RF31FMESBSR 36" Four-Door Refrigerator featuring the industry's first-ever automatic sparkling water dispenser.

Powered by SodaStream, the recognized leader in personalized carbonation technology, the integrated system delivers cold, filtered sparkling water from the same mechanism on the refrigerator door that produces still water and ice.

With the new Samsung Four-Door Refrigerator with sparkling water dispenser, getting the crisp delicious taste of sparkling water is as easy as pushing a button. Using the same control panel they would use to select between water or ice, consumers can select up to three levels of carbonation for their sparkling water, giving them just what they are looking for to quench their thirst. The sparkling water dispenser uses a standard SodaStream 60L CO2 cylinder that rests in a small, concealed area inside the left refrigerator door, which is easily accessible to change when empty. With the addition of the sparkling water dispenser, consumers can save



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The #1 Refrigerator Brand in the U.S. Brought to you by Almo

SAMSUNG



#1 IN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.
#1 IN SALES.

Attractive Designs

Samsung's beautiful and sleek designs complement any kitchen decor

Bigger Capacity. Same Footprint.

More space inside with the same outside dimensions as a traditional model.

Smart Home Features

Available WiFi enabled LCD screen loaded with apps

Twin Cooling Plus

Innovative cooling system separates airflow from the refrigerator and the freezer to improve freshness.

Superior Ice Production & Storage

Samsung refrigerators produce large amounts of ice with extra ice storage capacity.

High Efficiency Operation

ENERGY STAR® Rated CEE Tier 1: Most Efficient

Samsung is the #1 Selling Refrigerator Brand in the U.S.
Is it on your display floor?

Samsung Appliances Available Nationally!



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space in the refrigerator that was previously allocated toward bottled carbonated beverages and reduce bottle waste in the home overall. In addition, consumers will ultimately save money that was used to purchase carbonated beverages, all while enjoying the convenience of getting sparkling water at the touch of a button.

“The new Samsung Four Door Refrigerator with a sparkling water dispenser reflects Samsung’s strong commitment to offering home appliances that not only meet consumers’ needs, but anticipate them in ways they never thought possible,” said Kevin Dexter, senior vice president of home appliances sales and marketing, Samsung Electronics America. “By joining forces with SodaStream, we are able to offer our consumers something never before seen on a refrigerator and bring a new experience to the kitchen.”

“This collaboration brings home carbonation to the next level, and we are excited to partner with Samsung to help bring our revolutionary technology to consumers,” said Daniel Birnbaum, CEO of SodaStream. “This product is a key milestone in a vision that represents the future for enjoying fresh carbonated beverages at home, easily made at the touch of a button, and without the clutter and waste that is produced by the old pre-packaged beverage industry.”

The 30.5 cu. ft. Samsung Four-Door Refrigerator with the sparkling water dispenser joins a long list of product innovations from Samsung that are revolutionizing the refrigeration category and offering best-in-class features for today’s dynamic homes. These include convenient storage features like the kid-friendly counter-height FlexZone drawer with four temperature settings, and the proprietary Twin Cooling Plus® technology that keeps food fresher longer. This model also includes high efficiency LED lighting to illuminate virtually every corner of the Ice Master ice maker which produces up to 10 lbs. of ice per day. These features are complemented by Samsung’s premium design and elegant finish, making it not only functional but beautiful as well.

The Samsung RF31FMESBSR Four-Door Refrigerator with a sparkling water dispenser will be available in the U.S. in April 2013 for an MSRP of \$3899.

For more information, please visit www.samsung.com

AIR KING INTRODUCES ESADA AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ENERGY STAR® QUALIFIED UNDER CABINET RANGE HOODS



Air King has recently added its ESADA Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ENERGY STAR qualified under cabinet range hoods to its extensive line of ventilation products. The ESADA range hoods [Models ES24

Series, ES30 Series and ES36 Series] provide an ENERGY STAR qualified solution for residential kitchen ventilation that needs to comply with the ADA standards. The ESADA series of range hoods is available in white, biscuit, almond, black or stainless steel finishes in widths of 24, 30 or 36 inches. All hoods feature a quiet operating two-speed blower with a high speed of 270 CFM and a low speed of 150 CFM. On low speed, the hood has a sound level just slightly more than a quiet operating refrigerator, yet still has enough ventilation power for typical cooking. The ESADA range hoods feature motor and lighting that are controlled by the included dual rocker control switch that can be installed in any convenient location providing maximum accessibility and ease of use. The remote-mounted rocker switch assembly comes in a white or stainless steel finish to match all decors and fits into a triple gang box. The included 26-watt, energy-efficient fluorescent lamp provides about as much light as a 100-watt incandescent bulb and is located at the front of the hood for total cook top illumination. “Air King is very excited to offer the ADA ENERGY STAR qualified range hoods,” said Jeff Kenkelen, president, Air King. “This series will be the first ENERGY STAR qualified ADA range hood on the market and will give home builders a new option.”

Air King is a U.S.-based manufacturer of exhaust fans and range hoods as well as commercial and industrial grade high velocity air circulators and other residential building products. Air King utilizes its domestic manufacturing facilities in West Chester, Pa., Franklin, Tenn. and Fort Worth, Texas along with global sourcing offices to provide high quality products to the residential and commercial markets. Dedication to customer service and producing high quality products is the goal at Air King’s North American engineering, design, and customer support centers located in West Chester, Pa. and Brampton, Ontario. www.airkinglimited.com.

ALMO RECEIVES “MOST MONSTEROUS®” DOMESTIC DISTRIBUTOR AWARD



ALMO Almo Corporation, the major national appliance and consumer and professional electronics distributor, is proud to announce that it received the prestigious “Most Monsterous®” Domestic Distributor Award at the Consumer Electronics Show.

“Head Monster” Noel Lee, Monster Cable Products Founder, presented Almo with the “Most Monsterous” Domestic | continued on page 24 |



Elegance, **meet Intelligence.**

It's a match made for a dream kitchen. A Liebherr integrated refrigerator fits elegantly and seamlessly with your cabinet design. And it more than satisfies your desire to spend intelligently. It also holds more food and keeps it fresher longer. It's everything you'd expect from a high-end refrigerator at a price you wouldn't. Meet your new Liebherr by following the QR code below.



www.liebherr.us/hg

LIEBHERR

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Distributor Award at Monster's spectacular Most Monsterous® Retailers of the Year Awards ceremony. Winning this prestigious award from Monster is a great reflection of Almo's commitment to Monster's suppliers and dealers. Being singled out by Monster, the world's leading manufacturer of consumer electronics accessories, advanced headphones and other innovative audio products, proves that the quality and value of Almo's efforts is recognized by the very best in the business.

"We are honored to receive this award from such a respected company as Monster," says Warren Chaiken, Almo's president and COO. "It is a testament to our business model and our dedicated employees, and will serve as an inspiration for our sales and product teams to continue their focus on providing exceptional service to our valued customers."

Almo was selected as a recipient of the "Most Monsterous®" Domestic Distributor Award due to its commitment to quality customer service, business acumen and reputation within in the industry. More information on Almo visit www.almo.com.

VINOTEMP LAUNCHES THE NEW STAINLESS STEEL 4-BOTTLE WINE DISPENSER

A STYLISH BY-THE-GLASS SOLUTION FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL WINE DISPENSING



Vinotemp, a recognized leader in the wine storage and refrigeration industry for 25 years, launched the new Stainless Steel 4-Bottle Wine Dispenser. For the past two years, Vinotemp has been dedicated to expanding its offering of practical, award-winning solutions for residential and commercial wine dispensing and storage. An increase in demand for additional in-home and restaurant wine dispensing solutions led to the availability of Vinotemp's new Stainless Steel 4-Bottle Wine Dispenser.

"Vinotemp is committed to providing wine dispensing and storage solutions that suit our customers every need," states India Hynes, president of Vinotemp International. "Vinotemp's Stainless Steel 4-Bottle Wine Dispenser is an attractive solution to wine dispensing that can help our customers get the most out of every bottle of wine by extending the shelf-life of open wine bottles and by pouring precise, customized amounts of wine with the push of a button."

The unit's ability to offer customized glass pours is a feature appreciated by industry experts like Tel'veh Café & Wine Bar's (Washington D.C.) General Manager and Wine Director, Alan Lamb. He recognizes the ability to pour wine at the push of a button in 2, 5, and 7 ounce servings as a perk for his customers, bartenders, and his bottom line, "...there is zero chance of over or under pouring, so every

guest gets the same portion. And, when all you have to do is press a button rather than go through the mechanics of pouring multiple glasses of wine, you remove spillage, breakage, etcetera."

Features of Vinotemp's Stainless Steel 4-Bottle Wine Dispenser (VT-WINEDISP4SS):

- A portion control feature provides the ability to customize the amount of wine dispensed into a glass (2, 5, and 7 oz.) – making it simple to pour the perfect glass, down to the ounce, every time
- Push button controls make it easy to pour the perfect glass of red or white wine
- Stores and preserves four open bottles of wine for weeks (with nitrogen or argon gas)
- Perfect for both residential and commercial use
- Blue LED interior lighting illuminates bottles
- Wine bottles are displayed through a double-paned glass door
- A shelf on top of the unit provides additional storage space
- Dimensions: 16.35" W x 17.45" D x 24.55" H
- Comes with two gas cartridges

For more information about Vinotemp contact 800.777.VINO (8466) or visit www.Vinotemp.com.



| continued on page 26 |

Introducing...

Fagor's Award Winning Integrated Refrigerator.



INTERIOR
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OF
YEAR 2012**

The New 24" Energy Star, Fully Integrated Refrigerator that incorporates efficiency and design continuity with simplistic installation - perfectly seamless.

fagoramerica.com





R&B WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTOR'S PHOENIX BRANCH MOVES TO NEW, LARGER WAREHOUSE AND SHOWROOM



R&B Wholesale Distributors, Inc. is pleased to announce the relocation of its Arizona Distribution Center to a new state of the art warehouse and showroom, centrally located at 353 N. 44th Avenue in Phoenix.

In addition to this move, R&B recently acquired the product lines from Noble Distributors. John Magnotto, longtime owner of Noble recently retired, and worked with his good friend, Bob Burggraf, owner of R&B, to combine forces. "It was a win-win for all," according to Mr. Magnotto. "Not only do our long time customers have a local supplier for our quality products, but I'm excited to say that all Noble employees were offered jobs at R&B. I couldn't be happier!"

The new warehouse is 40% larger than the previous, offering R&B's customers a wider assortment of products than ever. Also, the new facility is equipped with a modern showroom and training facility, which will highlight the latest products and technologies.

R&B Phoenix now offers appliances from Crosley, Frigidaire, GE, Speed Queen, Marvel, Aga, Northland, Heartland, Broan, Air King, Danby, Avanti, Brown, FiveStar, Daewoo, PureWash, and more.

R&B has two additional distribution centers in Hayward and Ontario, CA. Collectively R&B supplies appliances, electronics and foodservice equipment to retail and commercial accounts throughout the states of Arizona, New Mexico, California, and Nevada as well as El Paso, TX. R&B has 24 sales people out on the road visiting customers. R&B's fleet of 22 trucks delivers to most California and Arizona cities daily and New Mexico and Nevada on a monthly basis.

"This move couldn't have come at a better time. R&B is celebrating our 45th anniversary this year. With the larger location we can take advantage of more stock for the anniversary specials we will have throughout the year." says Michael Burggraf, general manager of R&B Phoenix.

If you are interested in becoming a dealer, please contact:
 AZ, NM, and El Paso—Mike Burggraf (602) 272-1200,
 S. CA & S. NV—Connie Espina (909) 230-5400,
 N. CA & N. NV—Chris Burggraf (510) 782-7200.

THE 2013 NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW® EXPANDS CATEGORY REACH, EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS, NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES



As the housing and home improvement industries continue to gain momentum, leaders from across the channel are looking for ways to grow their businesses, and the 2013 National Hardware Show® will offer the ideal setting for these individuals to come together and share ideas, find exciting new products, spot emerging trends and discover dynamic best practices.

Scheduled for May 7-9 at the Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC), the National Hardware Show promises to be bigger and better than ever this year with enhanced product categories, exciting educational offerings and limitless networking opportunities.

"Each year, we solicit feedback from attendees and exhibitors at the show, and we also travel throughout the industry to gather input about how to make the show better," says Sonya Ruff Jarvis, vice president of attendee programs for the National Hardware Show. "We have made a number of enhancements to the show this year as a direct result of the feedback we have received, and we are incredibly excited about how the industry is responding."

So far, the National Hardware Show has more than 98 percent of its available floor space sold out as exhibitors from across all categories are lining up to participate in the industry's biggest event, according to Ruff Jarvis.

Big-name companies that have signed on to exhibit at the 2013 National Hardware Show include notable brands such as 3M, Ames True Temper, Apex Tool Group, Char-Broil, Elmer's, Kohler, Weber and more.

| continued on page 28 |

MAKE KITCHEN VENTILATION EFFICIENT

The newly introduced Air King Essence™ Series ENERGY STAR® Qualified range hoods combine style and energy efficiency into the perfect kitchen ventilation solution. The Essence™ series provides effective ventilation while being one of the quietest range hoods on the market today. Essence range hoods are available in Stainless Steel, White or Black finishes and 30" or 36" widths.



2012 & 2013 ENERGY STAR® PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Air King offers a full line of ENERGY STAR qualified range hoods and exhaust fans to fit all budgets and ventilation needs. These products along with Air King's commitment to energy efficiency education have earned the honor of being named an ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year for the second straight year.



ENHANCED AREAS

In its efforts to make the event easier for attendees to navigate, the 2013 National Hardware Show will have exhibitors arranged into 11 separate categories, including: Farm and Ranch; Hardware and Tools; Homewares; International Sourcing; Inventor's Spotlight; Lawn, Garden and Outdoor Living; PDRA Paint and Accessories; Pet Products; Plumbing and Electrical; Storage and Organization; and Outdoors, Tailgate & Recreation.

While many of these areas have been staples of the show for years, others, such as Farm and Ranch; Pet Products; and Outdoors, Tailgate and Recreation, represent emerging categories within the home improvement landscape.

It's not just niche areas that represent exhibit growth at the show. Building Products will also make a return to 2013 National Hardware Show—a clear reflection of the growing strength of the nation's housing market. Other special areas have also been established at the show to highlight products that are Made in the USA or are energy-efficient, both of which stretch across the traditional categories.

"My favorite part of the show is the sheer volume of different products," says Megan Menzer, owner of Newton's True Value in Cherryvale, Kansas. "I look for new products to bring into my store and the new trends in product categories, styles and colors. I get to see vendors that might not be at our distributor show. I can network with people in the business, and we can share ideas."

AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The 2013 National Hardware Show will once again play host to the North American Retail Hardware Association (NRHA) All-Industry Conference, which will feature a dynamic slate of seminars to keep attendees informed about changing industry trends and consumer shopping habits.

The theme for this year's educational lineup revolves around today's changing consumer and the role that emerging technology plays in the future of the industry. The three-day educational program will include some of the leading authorities on multi-channel markets and will feature a special keynote address from Kathy Daly-Jennings, a retail executive from Google, who will discuss consumers' multi-screen lifestyles. Along with Daly-Jennings, other speakers will include noted consumer trend authority Brian Kilcourse, who will discuss how today's retail environment is evolving to meet the needs of a more tech-savvy consumer; and Timothy Dahl, a well-known home improvement industry blogger and former producer of *This Old House*, *Elle Decor*, *Metropolitan Home* and *Woman's Day* magazines, who will present on how to best find, engage and maintain customers online. For more information on the National Hardware Show® and to register visit www.nationalhardwareshow.com.

NAHB, NKBA SIGN AGREEMENT EXPANDING MEMBERS' EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) have forged an agreement that makes it easier for individuals who hold builder and remodeler professional designations to take advantage of continuing education opportunities from both groups.

Industry professionals who successfully complete courses required for either NAHB or NKBA designations can earn continuing education hours from either syllabus. The number of credit hours granted is equal to the length of the class.

Holders of the Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS), Certified Graduate Builder (CGB), Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR), Certified Green Professional™ (CGP) and other NAHB designations can take courses for NKBA's Certified Kitchen Designer (CKD), Certified Bath Designer (CBD) and other NKBA designations – and vice versa – to fulfill their respective continuing education requirements.

"Expanding these opportunities will encourage even more home builders, professional remodelers and kitchen designers to take advantage of the excellent training and education offered by both associations," said NAHB Education Committee Chairman Erik Anderson, CAPS, CGR, GMB, of Anderson-Moore Builders Inc. in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"The agreement provides building and design professionals a broader range of education options when trying to find courses to maintain their designations – and may spur NAHB and NKBA designees to earn designations from both associations," said NKBA director of learning Nancy Barnes.

NAHB courses cover diverse topics such as aging-in-place remodeling, business management, green building and project management, while NKBA offers a similarly wide range of classes for kitchen and bath professionals.

This news comes on the heels of January's announcement that the NAHB International Builders' Show (IBS) and the NKBA Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) will co-locate in February 2014 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

"With this agreement, NAHB and NKBA members attending these shows can take advantage of both associations' extensive education offerings – and now, they can do so at less-expensive member rates, no matter which association they belong to," Anderson said.

"This agreement is a win-win for NAHB and NKBA professional designation holders and, ultimately, for the consumers they serve because members of both associations will have access to even more high-quality education opportunities," he added. **RO**

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Capital Quality and Performance

More Accessible Than Ever Thanks to New Mark II Precision Series Ranges

Known as the product for those who love to cook and featured on The Food Network, Capital cooking appliances incorporate commercial performance and design into ranges, ovens and cooktops made for the home chef. With its new Mark II Precision Series, Capital Cooking Equipment makes owning a Capital range more accessible than ever before. At a price point close to \$3,000 USD, the 30" Mark II Precision Range offers an impressive 4.9 cu. ft. interior capacity, the largest interior oven capacity of any similarly sized convection range in its category and choice of sealed or open burners. What's more, it offers no compromises when it comes to quality.

"This Mark II Precision Series is a direct response to consumer demand," explains President Surjit Kalsi. "The feedback from our dealers was overwhelming: people love Capital's cooking products, and they asked us to make owning a Capital range a possibility for more of their customers. Not only have we fulfilled that demand, we've done so with a product that offers the best interior capacity in its class."

Even with the 30" Mark II Series' impressive price point, absolutely no compromises have been made. The Mark II Series ranges feature the exact same quality construction as other Capital ranges. The 30" model's cooktop features four sealed gas burners, rated at 19,000 BTU/hr each or 4 open burners, rated at 23,000 BTU/hr each. The large oven cavity can cook, bake and broil, and also offers a convection mode. The rear of the range has no protrusions, making it ideal for island installations and open concept kitchens. Like all Capital ranges, the Mark II series is available in any RAL color the customer desires, or traditional stainless steel.

"Research indicates that cooking and entertaining at home is a priority for Generation X and the Millennials," says Kalsi. "These young people are dining at home more than three times as often as they eat out. They see cooking among guests as part of how they entertain, and consider themselves to have good culinary skills. Having a Capital range helps support their lifestyle, and the new Mark II Precision series provides excellent value and the opportunity for open burner cooking, especially when compared to other options at this price point."

Here are some of the key features of the new Mark II Precision Series. Depending on the size of the unit, features may vary:

RANGE TOP

- Four Sealed Burners, rated at 19,000 BTU/hr each, or Four Open Burners, rated at 23,000 BTU/hr each
- Low, constant, even 140 degree simmer
- All burners are capable of turning down to a true simmer
- Porcelain coated cast iron grates with center bridge grate provides a continuous cooking surface
- Flush island trim for non-combustible or island trim installations



OVEN

- Large 4.9 cu. ft. oven cavity – 27"W x 15"H x 21"D
- Oven fits full size commercial cookie sheet (26"x18")
- Convection oven with separate Fan On/Fan Off switch
- 30,000 BTU Bake Burner for uniform cooking
- 18,000 BTU Infrared Broil Burner for perfect searing
- 5 Rack Positions (2 racks provided) for all cooking needs
- Dual 40W Oven Lights provide excellent interior illumination
- All stainless steel and glass door allow wall-to-wall visibility and easy cleaning
- Black porcelain with titanium spec oven interior
- Front and rear levelers allow 1½" height adjustment
- Broil pan provided
- Oven Modes: Bake, Broil, Convection Bake, Open Door Broil
- Standard Stainless Steel finish
- Also available in 10 standard colors (door and kick plate) + custom colors

The 30" model from the Precision Mark II Series is now being distributed throughout the United States and Canada and is available to view and order at specialty retailers. The 36" and 48" models will be available in Spring of 2013. **RO**



For a new generation of Capital cooks

With a price tag that makes the quality and engineering of Capital more accessible to all, the new Mark II Precision series offers the largest interior oven cavity in the 30" convection category and choice of sealed or open burners. With advanced features and exacting standards, absolutely no compromises have been made to Capital's performance. We can hear the applause of foodies everywhere.

Expect great things from Capital.



THE ART OF PRECISION™

Fire The Sommelier!

The WineStation® by Dacor

The DISCOVERY WineStation® by DACOR is the first automated, temperature controlled, four bottle wine dispensing and preservation system for the home. The WineStation allows the connoisseur to choose the right wine and just the right amount every time, be it a taste, half glass or a full glass, all with the simple touch of a finger.

The WineStation's proprietary argon gas preservation system allows you to open and enjoy a variety of wines and vintages for up to 60 days without the need to discard or consume unused portions. The environmentally-friendly and energy efficient Thermo-Electric Cooling System sets the ideal temperature for either red or white wine without the use or need of hazardous pollutants or refrigerants. The Dual-Zone Climate Control Divider, an optional feature, allows for the optimal storing and serving temperature for your collection.

The stainless steel finish is a designers dream, allowing the WineStation to blend seamlessly into any decor, from classic to contemporary.

The WineStation can sit on the counter as a free-standing element or can be built into cabinetry using the optional DACOR WineStation trim kit.

The LCD screens and touch control panel can display wine varieties, vintages, temperature settings and pouring volume, In addition, the interface allows you to enter in your unique finds and private collections. For peace of mind, each WineStation comes standard with a locking door and a personalized pass code to prevent children or strangers from accessing or operating the machine when left unsupervised.

The clear advantage of the WineStation is the patented CleanPour™ head, which allows for simplified bottle changing and ease of maintenance. With the WineStation, there are no fixed tubes or plumbing that needs to be flushed with chemicals or cleaning solutions every time you change a bottle. The pouring head is fitted with an easy to adjust gasket designed to seal the bottle when the cork has been removed. Once oxygen has been purged, its replaced by Argon Gas which is used to prevent oxidation and allows the wine to remain fresh for up to 60 days without the loss of flavor

or natural aroma.

The National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) approved CleanPour heads—just a quick rinse in hot water and you are ready to add a new bottle. With independent heads, bottles are never locked in and can be removed easily to make room for a new tasting.

The Discovery WineStation by DACOR will be the perfect addition to your kitchen, bar, den, game room or wine cellar. The WineStation is designed and manufactured in California. Pricing for The Discovery WineStation starts at \$5,299 SMRP and is available through authorized Dacor retailers nationwide.

FEATURES:

- 4 – Bottle Dispensing System for tasting and pairing
- Easy to read High Resolution LCD Display
- 3 – Button Portion Control, taste, half glass or full
- Dual Pane Insulated Safety Glass Door with Interior Lighting
- 60 Day Argon Gas Preservation System
- 6 – Patented, CleanPour™, Bacteria Free Dispensing Heads
- Thermo-Electric Cooling System with Variable Temperature Control
- Stainless Steel Housing for easy clean and care
- Optional Dual Zone Temperature Control

For additional information regarding the Discovery WineStation contact Dacor at 800.793.0093 or visit www.Dacor.com. **RO**





[Distinctive 30" Dual-Fuel Range]



[Distinctive 36" Gas Cooktop]



[Distinctive 30" Wall Oven]

Are your customers ready for Dacor?

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AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
LOOMING ON THE HORIZON—
BRANDSOURCE MEMBERS HAVE
TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES
FOR GROWTH OVER THE
NEXT DECADE.

WITH THE HOUSING
MARKET ON THE
REBOUND,
**THE FUTURE
LOOKS BRIGHT**
FOR INDEPENDENTS

BrandSource members attending the organization's Winter Summit in February were treated to four action-packed days of valuable workshops and seminars, new product introductions and a keynote address by CEO Bob Lawrence with strong indicators pointing toward solid growth opportunities for independents. Held in Orlando, the Summit was attended by thousands of BrandSource members and vendors.

Retired Whirlpool executive and keynote speaker Joe Higgins confirmed what the audience already | *continued on page 36* |

knew: the appliance, electronics and home furnishings industries were hit hard by the recession. But with strengthening home prices, increasing home sales and more remodeling and construction projects looming on the horizon, BrandSource members have tremendous opportunities for growth over the next decade, he said.

Lawrence emphasized the importance of mobile applications and social media and discussed new developments with the BrandSource mobile app, the first in the industry when it launched last summer. Available in two versions for both dealers and consumers, it currently reigns as the number-one appliance app in the App store. The BrandSource dealer app lets members instantly research more than 7,000 appliances and electronics from the palm of their hands. The consumer app features a dealer locator and lets shoppers to save favorites and share information via social media channels.

BrandSource also launched a new division, OutdoorSource, and debuted a vast assortment of outdoor furniture and equipment including patio furniture, lawn equipment, heaters, power tools, saunas, fire places and grilling products from a variety of suppliers including: B.E. Outdoor Living, EdenPURE, Fuego, Galaxy Outdoor, Husqvarna, Napoleon Gourmet Grills, Lynx, Pacific Living, Sunheat, Sunlighten and Twin-Star International

To support members selling appliances in the Eastern U.S., Lawrence offered updates regarding the expansion of Expert Warehouse, the BrandSource organization's regional fulfillment centers. He confirmed that plans are in place to open a fourth warehouse this year in Jonestown, PA to offer faster, more efficient service in that region.

BrandSource brand ambassador and designer Kathy Ireland, CEO and chief designer for kathy ireland Worldwide®(kiWW®), met with BrandSource staff to talk about ways in which they can help members be more successful with female shoppers, who make up or influence roughly 85% of retail purchasing decisions for the home.

Dennis Shields, executive director of The Rental Industry Buying Group (TRIB Group), strategic alliance partner with BrandSource, reported a very successful summit with nearly 500 RTO specialists in attendance.

"We had a very successful show and our attendance numbers outpaced last year," said Shields. "The mood was upbeat and positive with members anticipating a strong Spring RTO season."

BrandSource also unveiled its new Majestic Home Collection, a private label assortment of quality home furnishings available exclusively to BrandSource members.

With guaranteed three-week delivery, the line is outsourced by England Home Furnishings.

Summit attendees also took full advantage of the popular "Stampede" session, which allows BrandSource members to take advantage of a limited supply of amazing deals during a 90-minute time period.

"We are on a growth curve and the future is bright," said Lawrence. "It's a great time to be an independent." **RO**





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Manufacturer {NOTES}

Wind Crest™ Introduces New Culinary Series™ Hoods

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At the core of Wind Crest Ventilation products, our Culinary Series hoods are designed to provide the ultimate in ventilation performance, craftsmanship and materials. Our 12-step fabrication process mirrors that of a custom hood and ensures that each hood we build is to the highest quality standards. All of our Culinary Series hoods are manufactured in our factory in Southern California. Culinary Series hoods are made from 304 series 18-gauge stainless steel for unmatched durability and rigidity. Heli-arc, continuously-welded seams creates a hood canopy that is free of gaps where moisture and grease can accumulate. Our seamless construction not only improves the overall capturing area of the hood, it also creates a more efficient and easier to maintain ventilation system. In addition, all of our stainless finished hoods have been UL tested and listed for both indoor and outdoor applications.

The size of your vent hood and blower choice depend on many factors, including the size and power of your cooktop or grill, the type of cooking you do and the location of the product in your kitchen. Our Culinary Series hoods offer the homeowner a variety of standard ventilation options in widths from 30" up to 66" and depths from 24" up to 33". Couple this with one of our high performance internal, in-line, or remote blowers and you will have a ventilation system that will provide the power to draw and filter smoke, grease and odors away from your guests for a more enjoyable cooking experience.

Our Culinary Series hoods are designed to provide the ultimate in ventilation performance, craftsmanship and materials. From its beginning, Wind Crest has designed and manufactured high-performance ventilation products that rival those found in a commercial environment, but refined to complement the customer's discriminating taste.

Founded in 1995, Wind Crest designs and manufactures overhead ventilation systems and electric, gas and induction cooktops. The factory is located in Brea, Calif., Wind Crest is a division of award-winning CNP Industries, Inc. and is dedicated to the design and development of unique, professional-level cooking products of the highest quality and craftsmanship. For more information, please visit www.windcrestcnp.com. **RO**



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Almo Announces Expansion of 2013 Dealer Expo Schedule

Almo Corporation, a major national consumer electronics and appliance distributor, today announced their 2013 Almo Consumer Electronics and Appliance Expo schedule which will expand on last year's successful change to a 2-day format, bringing the event to new cities throughout the U.S. These regional tradeshow and training expositions feature hands-on access to the latest products, free skill & technology trainings, door buster show specials, one-on-one meetings as well as peer networking events.

"Last year we modified our schedule to meet customer demand by adding a second day focused entirely on appliance trainings. The response was phenomenal," said Warren Chaiken, President & COO of Almo. "So we're expanding the schedule again for 2013 to include additional appliance trainings during the CE technology and skills training day."

Registration for the West Coast Appliance Expo opened on March 25th. Agendas and event details were also posted on www.almo.com/events beginning March 25th. For those areas

not served by Almo's 2013 expo schedule, smaller training-only events will be available throughout the year. Interested dealers should contact their account team for more information www.almo.com or 800-345-2566.

Almo Corporation is the nation's leading independent distributor of Major Appliances, Consumer Electronics and Professional A/V equipment. Known for its Rapid Ship services and exceptional customer service, Almo distributes over 85 of the industry's top brand names. Dealers and Retailers have instant access to a wide variety of Major Appliances, Consumer Electronics, Mobile Electronics, Professional A/V Equipment and Professional Residential Kitchen and Outdoor Appliances.

Founded in 1946, Almo is headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and operates 8 regional distribution facilities with over 1.5 million square feet of warehousing throughout the United States. Dealers interested in joining the Almo family may contact our New Dealer Specialist via email or by calling 866-430-2566. Instant credit lines are available. **RO**

2013 ALMO EXPO SCHEDULE

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 Westin San Francisco Airport
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SOUTHWEST EXPO
 May 22nd & 23rd
 Hyatt Regency at Reunion Tower
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CENTRAL STATES EXPO
 July 16th & 17th
 St. Charles Conv. Center
 St. Louis, MO

Upper Mid-West Expo
 July 23rd & 24th
 Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport
 Milwaukee, WI

EASTERN MID-WEST EXPO
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NORTH CENTRAL EXPO
 August 7th & 8th
 The Depot Renaissance
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The New Power of Local

The lynchpin to a good marketing plan is the brand you create—your identity. In days long gone, retail branding was simple. Stores sold “everything” to “everyone.” Think general store here.

But today’s customer is highly segmented—by age, income, ethnicity and interests—and retailing is specialized. Sony, Dell and Apple, for instance, all have stores that don’t just sell computers, but only their computers. There is no “everything” and no “everyone.”

Who are your target customers? What do they value? How do you reach them? For example, if you want to attract new younger Gen X and Gen Y customers into your store you have to look like them—hip and high-tech. You’ll have to trade your oldies music for hip hop and local DJs playing their own electronic tunes. They’re hooked on Facebook and Twitter, but they’ll never see your ads on live TV or the local newspaper.

The St. Regis Bal Harbour clearly defines their brand as personalized luxury. Before checking in, guests can request to have a personal shopper deliver new clothes to their room styled exactly to the look they aspire to create. Some want to look like George Clooney and women often choose Mad Men’s Betty Draper’s styles. Walk into the hotel in your sweats and leave for dinner looking like you’re ready for the red carpet.

Your brand is an expression to your team and the outside world of your values, your products and the service you provide.

The Starbucks experience includes more than an expensive cup of coffee. The ever changing menu of specialized coffee drinks comes with the perfect venue for a blind date, job interview, team meeting or catching up with your best friend. Need to check your

email? All company owned stores offer free, one-click unlimited Wi-Fi. The Starbucks personality is a combination of product, place and service. Without all three, it might not be the same.

Warehouse stores like Costco brand themselves toward value. They have limited selection, but if your family goes through a lot of ketchup, you’ll be able to save money buying six super-sized bottles at a time.

When I ask independents about their brands, they often tell me that they give good service, have a great selection of products and competitive prices. But that’s no different than the message their competitors are screaming. Without differentiation, customers might as well go into the closest super store.

There’s one big differentiator that Main Street businesses have over their big box competitors and it’s starting to catch on with the public. The “buy local” movement is gaining traction quickly.

With all the talk about the real cost of not collecting tax on internet sales, consumers are starting to understand the effect that has on their communities. Taxes collected on retail sales support schools, ensure safety and maintain our roads and bridges.

I recently saw two back to back TV ads that caught my attention. The first was for Medved auto stores. In that spot, a customer talked about why she continued to buy from locally-owned Medved—instead of from national chains like CarMax, Go and Auto Nation. She liked that profits from her purchases stayed in Colorado and supported Colorado families.

In the second spot, the young owner of Aspen Mortuary told her viewers that “at this difficult time, let our family take care of

you.” Her message: when stricken with grief, do you want to talk to a family member or a corporate giant?

Younger customers are especially drawn to Main Street merchants. They have a certain disdain for corporate giants. The trick is getting your message out to them to get them into your store.

There was a time when customers automatically thought that “buy local” meant “and pay more.” Now, though, there’s a renewed interest in helping to support the local economy. Customers will still want value—and they should get it.

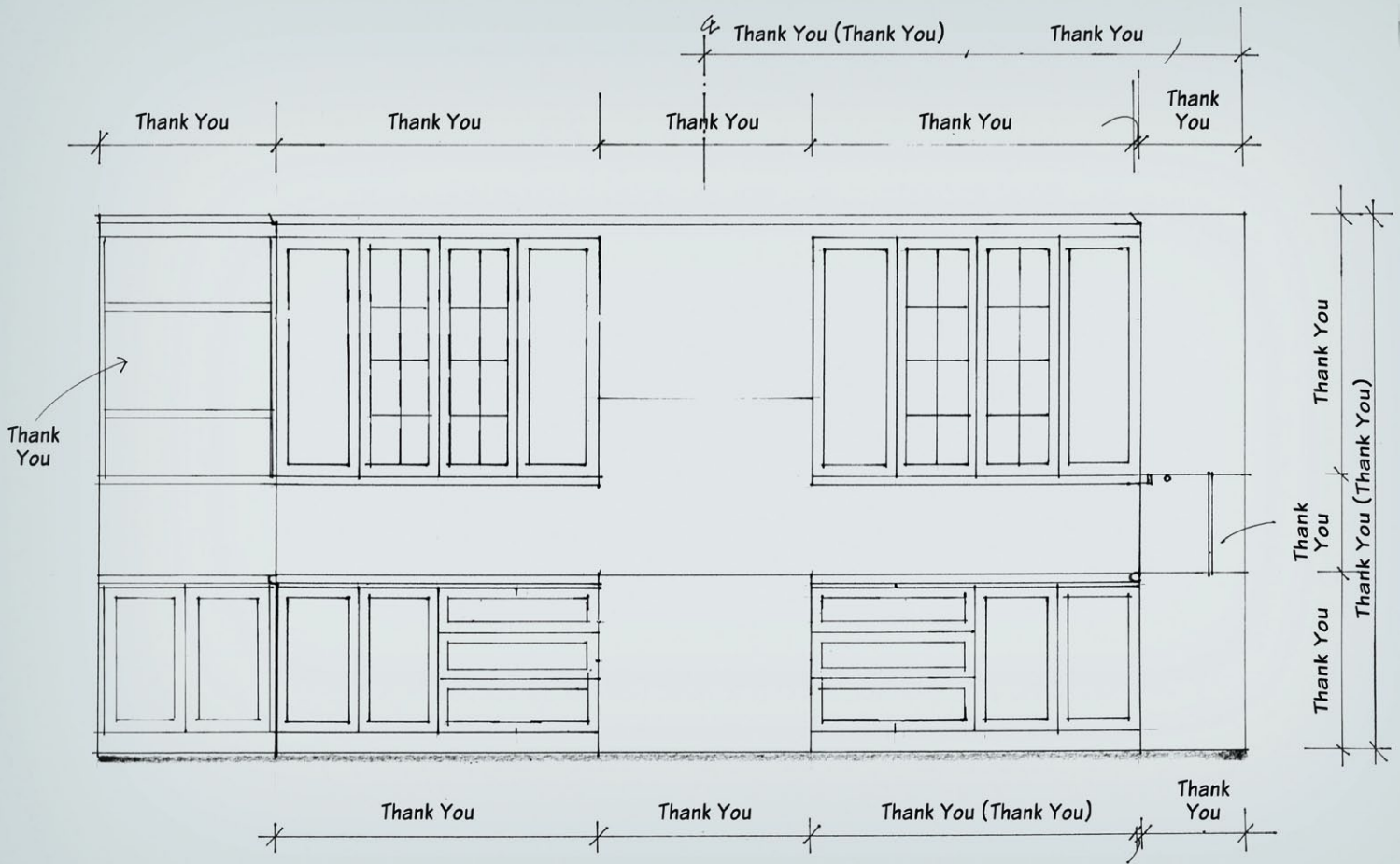
No, you don’t have the largest selection in town. Yours is “carefully curated” for your customers—chosen from the huge variety of products available to ensure that your customers get the best benefit for their money. And of course there are no additional charges for special orders.

Branding is telling your story. Your story is that you support local events, ball clubs and charities. You belong to national buying group giving you big box buying power. You don’t have orange-aproned or blue shirted associates but knowledgeable well-trained career sales professionals.

No, you can’t be everything to everybody. But you can be important to those buyers who want specialized service in a well-appointed, updated store. Buy local and you get me. **RO**

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





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Moving Up

Take Control and Get Out of That Rut!

Are you tired of your job? Are you stagnating? Are you sinking into mediocrity?

If you answered, “yes,” to even one of those questions, it’s time to take control, to swim in the sea of opportunity. It’s time to move up.

Nothing will change until you take action. But it’s important that you take well-planned action that will move you up the ladder of your career. The first step is to be honest with yourself. Do a self-assessment. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What are you passionate about? What are you committed to accomplishing? And what are you doing to leverage your full potential?

Using that information, create a written blueprint for your life, one that will guide your beliefs, determine your success, and help you overcome your failures. Include goals that will guide you in your pursuit of a better job, a more successful career. Vague goals will produce vague results; make sure that yours are clear—and measurable. And develop timelines for each goal so that you can track your progress.

Most people believe in having a backup plan, but I don’t recommend it. Doing so would be subconsciously telling yourself that it’s OK to fail, that you will have something to fall back on. Winners think differently. They fall forward, because they know there is nothing to catch them if they fall backward. They are willing to take risks.

Attack each goal with determination and dedication. Successful people understand that dedication is a non-negotiable. If you are not dedicated to what you are doing, you

will lose sight of your goal. As you reach one goal, move on to the next.

One of your goals should be this: Become indispensable. The brutal reality in our current economy is that organizations can’t afford to have mediocre employees. Indispensable employees don’t wait for instruction or direction; they figure out what needs to be done, and they take action. They generate ideas. They innovate on the fly. They create value. They are vital to an organization’s success. They are hard to

“FREE YOURSELF OF FEAR
AND LIMITATIONS, AND YOU
WILL UNLOCK THE HIDDEN
GENIUS INSIDE YOU.”

replace—and dangerous to lose. Become one of them.

As you are working toward your goals, build a network of people who are more successful than you are. No matter what you are doing in life, you should be reaching up. That network might include your managers, friends, family members—even your clients. Ask for their advice and implement their suggestions. Their success is proof of the legitimacy of their advice; you would do well to take it.

You also must believe in yourself. Many people give up on their dreams as soon as they encounter the first obstacle. They simply do not believe they have what it takes

to realize those dreams. They let the negativity of others drag them down. Don’t waste energy by focusing on what others think about you and your goals. Develop the self-confidence to do what needs to be done. Free yourself of fear and limitations, and you will unlock the hidden genius inside you.

While passion, clear goals, and dedication are critical to realizing your goals, you also must have the right combination of skills to be great at what you do. Planning, communication, creativity, and productivity are critical. So are time management, motivation, knowledge, and interpersonal skills. Make a commitment to investing whatever time and money is necessary to strengthen your skills. Enroll in classes and workshops. Read books on leadership, management, customer service, sales, and personal development. Become the expert on your organization’s—and your industry’s—products and services.

As you reach one goal, set a new one. Dream bigger. You can succeed; you can accomplish great things. The exceptional employee will be the driving force of the future. The extraordinary employee will challenge the status quo. The indispensable employee will move up. **RO**

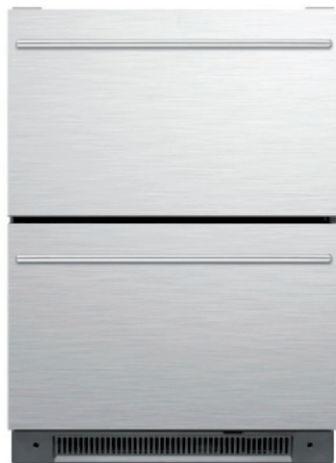
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Reduce Complexity: Try a Little Kindness

Recently, I was conducting a cultural assessment with a new team working on a Team Tune-Up. This part of a project may include one-on-one interviews, focus groups, or surveys to identify people's perceptions on what's currently going well and what's not working on the team, in the company itself, or with the leader. We also use this process to establish initial trust with our clients so that when we embark on the journey of a stronger, more resilient, more respectful team and workplace, we let every-one know all voices will be heard and valued.

I typically tell prospective clients that about 60% of these groups are suffering in some way from symptoms of organizational *drag*: turnover, loss of talent, interpersonal strife, lower or inconsistent performance, loss of market share or lowered sales, mediocre morale, etc. The other groups have some understanding that they are facing great change (or need to) and want to be ready for it in a different way.

So, sometimes, especially with the first kind of group, people don't always want to talk to us. Or, if they do, they are wary, suspicious and hesitant. Other times, they are so grateful and relieved at encountering a real listener, someone demonstrating care, concern and empathy, that all of the ideas, issues and concerns come rushing out. Often, there's venting, sometimes exhaustion and more often than you might think—tears.

Often I am struck by a simple idea, a crazy-simple solution. At times I've pushed it to the side of my mind, imagining that the answer to so many of these groups that want to get better, feel better, or even just feel less stressed, frustrated and tired, must be complicated--with the complexity of global, multi-dimensional

organizations facing unprecedented changes, there must be an answer that requires months and months of expensive big-name consultants arriving in jackboots, cluttering up the walls with sticky notes and printing out fancy Gantt charts?

What if these teams, these companies, could not only feel better, but could transcend whatever's come before and find happiness, satisfaction in their work, success in their endeavors, a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day?

After completing my interviews with this group, I wanted to bring them all together and say, "*Just play nice,*" but *nice* isn't selling these days, and nice has gotten a bad rap. *Nice*, they say, finishes last and has no place in business and market economies that have been slashed and burned these past, tough years. *Nice* might belong in the HR department (where they sometimes talk to people), but it definitely doesn't belong in sales or the CEO's office.

Here's the thing: *mean* doesn't particularly work. Even if it did for a short period of time, i.e. you're motivating them with the stick of fear or threat of losing their job. It's not sustainable. Wielding the heavy hand, or allowing a culture of he-said-she-said to perpetuate is distracting, demotivating, demoralizing and it loses you money.

WHAT ABOUT A LITTLE KINDNESS?

- **It's good to be kind to yourself.** This isn't about being selfish or self-centered, but rather to let go of our need, our drive for illusive perfectionism. It doesn't exist, frankly, and when we try to measure ourselves up to an impossible standard, we lose not only our humanity for our own self but also for others.

Also, it's nearly impossible for a self-imposed perfectionist to have a sense of humor, which involves wit, perspective and vulnerability. Be kind to you. Laugh at yourself.

- **Be kind to your co-workers.** They are perfectly imperfect, just like you. They are trying their best, even when you can't see it, and in our humanity, we often get off-track, distracted or lost. If you were thus, how would you like your co-workers to see you? Learn to forgive, and especially to balance accountability and respect. Being kind to others isn't about never getting results or asking for what you want. It means we let patience and perseverance be complementary.
- **Be kind to your customers, clients and community.** Think beyond the business and the immediate task at hand. Be a good neighbor, a thoughtful merchant or advisor. Practice the golden rule and select actions and words you can be proud of, that you'd want other people to know about you in the world. Know, when you see that face staring back in the morning that each day, each interaction, has the potential to be "for better or for worse." There are no neutral interactions.

It seems too simple? Not tough enough for good business practice? Give it a try and see what happens. You might be surprised. **RO**

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





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Are Your Teams Really Working Groups?

The formation of teams creates substantial and sustainable long-term benefits for the organization, including the fostering of a self-managing environment where employees are fully empowered to make decisions that increase their efficiency, effectiveness and overall productivity.

Teams are a critical component of every organization as the predominant vehicle for decision-making and accomplishing tasks. A team is defined as a group of people who need each other to accomplish specific results.

Teamwork represents a set of values that encourages listening, responds constructively to views expressed by others, gives others the benefit of the doubt, provides support and recognizes the interests and achievements of others. These values help teams, their individual members, and the entire organization perform.

In many organizational environments, working groups and teams are both essentially used in the same way despite there being a measurable difference between the two. Working groups are simply a loose combination of individuals working toward a common goal. These groups' structures will vary according to the makeup and personalities of the members. Teams, on the other hand, are governed by a specific structure that takes into account member roles, responsibilities, rules and boundaries.

It is important for leaders to understand the distinctions between groups and teams. Most individuals who work within groups perform as individuals. Teams require a common commitment to which members hold themselves mutually accountable. They are committed to a common purpose and a set of performance goals and approaches.

Teams differ fundamentally from working groups because they require both individual and mutual accountability. Teams go beyond group

discussion, debate and decision-making and do more than simply share information and best practice performance standards.

To understand how teams deliver extra performance, it is important for leaders to distinguish between teams and other forms of working groups.

- **RESULTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**—A key distinction between groups and teams is found in performance results. A group's performance is a function of what its individual members do as individuals: members don't take responsibility for results other than their own, nor do they attempt to develop incremental performance contributions requiring the combined work of two or more members.

A team's performance includes both individual results and the collective results of the team. The collective results reflect the joint and real contributions of team members.

- **LEADERSHIP**—A strong and clearly focused leader typically directs working groups. Due to the nature of the group's leadership, the individual leader has the ability to influence the work and results the group produces.

Teams, on the other hand, develop shared leadership roles that are established by team members. This reduces the influence of a single team member on the results of the team.

- **PURPOSE**—Working groups focus on a purpose that is the same as the broader organizational mission, whereas teams focus on a specific team purpose for which they are established to address.

- **OUTPUT**—Teams produce discrete work products through the joint contributions of their members. Possible performance levels are greater than the sum of the individual contributions of its members. Working group performance, however, is simply the product

of the results of individual members.

- **MEETINGS**—Working groups perform their work in efficiently run meetings. Teams encourage open-ended discussions and active problem solving throughout their meetings. The team meeting is specifically structured to encourage these activities. Within this structure, meetings are guided and directed by the roles and responsibilities of team members and are defined by the boundaries and framework established by the team to govern its activities.

- **MEASUREMENT**—Working groups measure their effectiveness indirectly by their influence on others. Teams measure performance by directly assessing the collective results of the team and its ability to fulfill its purpose and mission. The results of the team make something specific happen, and that adds real value to the results. By contrast, gathering as a working group from time to time does not sustain the group's performance.

- **METHODOLOGY**—Working groups discuss, decide and delegate the work of the group to individual members or committees. Teams discuss, decide and then complete the real work required together as a team. Within teams, performance goals are compelling; they challenge individuals to commit themselves as a team to make a difference within the organization. Since goals are challenging, the onus is on the team alone to make it happen. **RO**

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

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



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What Women Want

A Desirable Appliance is About More Than Just a Pretty Face

Women are hugely influential when it comes to appliance sales. They are not only buying products for themselves, but influencing the purchasing decisions for men in their lives. So the question is, what do women want?

Ask any woman what she looks for in a man, and she will most likely rattle off more traits than you can count on your hands: a sense of humor, reliability, brains, success, charisma, charm, oh yeah, and good looks. Women are complex, and that applies to their tastes as well. And just like a potential husband and future father-of-her-children, that new refrigerator or washer/dryer has to be much more than just a pretty face. Therefore, on the retail floor, it's important to appeal to all of a woman's desires, not just the superficial. Here are some tips for attracting and marketing to women on the sales floor that we've found to be invaluable.

- **Helping Stretch The Family Dollar**—Women are known to be more “keen on green.” However, the Federal Trade Commission tightened regulations to minimize overblown green marketing claims late last year, which has caused a precipitous dip in marketing products as such. However, helping her save money *and* energy is a win-win that should be extolled liberally—even shouted from the rooftops.

When the utility bill arrives, appliances that suck energy can stress the family budget. By pointing her in the direction of efficient appliances, you help the product sell itself. It's also important to show the value of features that contribute to energy, and therefore money savings. For example, washers with

faster spin cycles that remove more water from clothes mean a shorter dry cycle, which means less energy consumed. Auto dry cycles save energy by sensing when clothes are dry and are touted to prolong the longevity of fabric, to boot. Refrigerators with innovative door systems allow her family to access common items, such as drinks, without having to open the entire door, also reducing energy used. Long story short, don't just stress a good deal, spell out the value of energy-saving products in the long run.

- **Tout Features That Add Value**—Whatever happened to the refrigerator that was supposed to send you a text message when your milk expires? While it's a cool concept, many women see features like these as gimmicky, but appreciate those that actually make life easier.

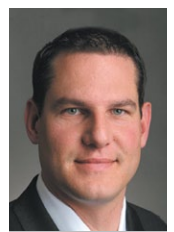
Today's woman is incredibly busy. Juggling a career, kids, significant others, and a social life keep her dance card full, leaving chores, well, a chore. Salespeople that show how to save time or make her life more convenient reap the rewards. For example, a larger capacity refrigerator will allow her to buy in bulk, meaning fewer trips to the supermarket and thusly added savings, while a larger capacity washer or dryer means fewer loads to do. Meanwhile, automatic detergent, bleach, and softener dispensers release detergent, bleach, and fabric softener at the right times in the cycle, meaning she can set it and forget it. Likewise, dishwashers with a Power Scrubbing mode mean less time spent pre-rinsing dishes. Save her time, and you'll get that sale.

- **High Women-Acceptance Factor**—In consumer electronics, one of the most

important considerations for men who want to buy speakers is the “wife” or “woman” acceptance factor. With interior design typically the realm of the fairer sex, monolithic black speakers around the living room are grounds for divorce. Most appliances these days are quite attractive, but what is lacking in some retail stores are engaging displays that will help women visualize how an appliance might look in their own home. For example, a refrigerator that is custom-matched with cabinets is best shown with (drum roll please) matching cabinets. Showing a suite of appliances in an attractive kitchen environment is much more inspiring than a sea of indistinguishable stainless steel products, which can be overwhelming. Make her feel at home by showing home vignettes.

- **Stay Current**—Finally, just as it is important for a clothing store to show trends in order to stay relevant to shoppers, it's not a bad idea to keep up with trends in your retail environment. Sure, she may end up buying a French Door fridge, but those separate column refrigerator, freezer, and wine cooler are exciting. And while she may opt for stainless steel models, those colorful, eye-catching washers and dryers will get the ‘aspirational’ juices flowing. **RO**

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



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2013 Kicking Off to be a Banner Year

It's time to give our businesses a jump-start and continue driving a banner year in 2013. Nationwide Furniture is committed to providing you with the solutions needed to take your business to a new level, as reflected in our biggest ever PrimeTime! show that just wrapped up.

After four years of saving and repaying debt, consumers are definitely ready to spend! Home-furnishing sales in 2012 grew faster than most other retail categories for the first time since 2006. Mattresses, recliners, motion upholstery and accessory sales are up double digits for many operations. Nationally, bedding sales were up 13.7% through October 2012. This is all great news for both our industry and you! Moving into 2013, it is now time to step back and take a hard look at your store.

To keep up the momentum and continued growth, we must attract today's young consumer, as they are the future. There is a heightened need for stores to be more hip and culturally relevant. Unfortunately, many furniture stores resemble museums: Unchanging, uniform and bland. By carrying the same merchandise and the same boring colors as your competitors just makes you a "me too" store. The furniture industry is a fashion industry and retail operations need to begin reflecting that.

How do we create excitement and energize not only our sales force, but also our customers?

SOLUTION: Acting as a fashion forward

retailer, being forward thinkers, thinking outside the box, and daring to be unique. By daring to be different from everyone else and not emulate your competitors, one is thinking towards the future. Mix up your floor, bring in new merchandise, and make it exciting.

Speaking of exciting...are you capitalizing on Nationwide's MemberNet TV in your store? Utilizing Nationwide MemberNet TV creates excitement, educates both your sales force and your consumer, and results in increased sales. In addition to driving a more updated look in-store, also consider marketing your brand and your business in the digital world, to further reach the young consumer target audience. Post on social media and incentivize with Twitter contests. This will drive the young consumers to your store by being visible and interactive in their world.

How can we increase our average ticket sales and profitability in 2013?

SOLUTION: The art of package selling. Package selling is more convenient, appealing and stress free for the consumer. Consumers today want to walk into your store and see the complete package. What is the complete package? Package selling results in the consumer visiting your store and seeing the room of their dreams. The sofa, the love seat, the correlating chair, the occasional tables, lamps, accessories, and the finishing touch... a beautiful rug pulling all the colors together. Many consumers lack the expertise to pull a

room together with just the right pieces nor do they have the time or energy to go from store to store to create that perfect environment in their home. By showcasing a complete room package, you are providing a one-stop solutions for your consumer. Room packaging generates the excitement to buy all of the pieces your consumer has fallen in love with because they want it right now. At PrimeTime!, Nationwide Furniture has all the vendors needed to complete this perfect package and selling environment in your store.

Are you an appliance and/or electronic store looking for a shot in the arm?

SOLUTION: Bedding. Bedding sales account for the highest profit center in most stores today. For the appliance and/or electronic dealer, it is the most natural progression of product mix and has proven to be a home run. At Nationwide Furniture, we offer programming with the leading manufacturers in the bedding industry today. A huge home run for all Nationwide Members has been the private label line Bellagio at Home Mattress Collection by Serta. These products allow you to differentiate yourself from the competition creating a unique selling and high margin opportunity. **RO**

Bill Bazemore is the Vice President of Furniture for Nationwide Marketing Group.

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Patrick Maloney

NATIONWIDE MARKETING HIRES PATRICK MALONEY AS VP OF APPLIANCE MERCHANDISING

Nationwide Marketing Group has hired Patrick Maloney to fill the vacant position of Vice President of Appliance Merchandising. He joins Jeff Knock, senior VP of appliances and Rick Weinberg, senior VP of marketing, as a great addition to an industry leading team. Maloney officially started on February 22, 2013.

"Patrick brings a fundamental understanding of short and long term merchandising goals for independent retailers," says Jeff Knock. "He will help drive continued focus on the Draw-Escape-Sell (D-E-S) model and we look forward to having him as an integral part of our appliance merchandising team."

Maloney was previously Director of Buying Groups at Electrolux, where he worked closely with the group's growing roster of independent retail members. Prior to his time there, Maloney worked in the retail industry for over ten years at Best Buy and Lechmere, where he developed relationships with some of the major vendors.

"I'm really looking forward to reviving my partnerships with the vendors and building more intimate relationships with the retailers by becoming more involved in their day-to-day operations," says Maloney.

"We are excited to bring on such a talented player that has a core understanding of the independent retail industry and the Nationwide business, and look forward to continued growth for our company," says Dave Bilas, executive vice president of NMG.



Jeff Knock



Rick Weinberg



Dave Bilas

NATIONWIDE ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH OFFICE DEPOT



Nationwide Marketing Group has partnered with Office Depot to provide a group program for their members that will save on purchases of office supplies and equipment.

The program is designed to reduce the cost of purchasing office supplies, paper, and other items, either in-store or online for the 3800+ Nationwide members across North America.

"The Executive Team at Office Depot has been great to work with as we've developed this program," says James MacAlpine, vice president of Business Development for NMG. "Due to the size and geography of our membership, it was important to us that we partner with a company that can provide exceptional service to our membership. Office Depot took the time to analyze our members' needs and developed a first class program that will benefit the membership, regardless of their size or product category."

Connie Roach, Territory Development Manager with Office Depot's Business Solutions Division, says "I am excited to be partnering with Nationwide Marketing Group to provide this cost savings program to their Members. Not only will they save on the supplies needed to run their businesses, but they will be able to take advantage of the deep discounts and vast knowledge within the print centers located in all of our retail stores. By signing up, members have the flexibility to get their discounts any way they shop, online, via fax, phone, or at 1,100 Office Depot locations by using their special store purchasing card."

Office Depot had a large booth at the group's PrimeTime! show, their twice-yearly member buying conference on March 3-6 in Las Vegas. Members had the opportunity to sign up for the program and learn more details.

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Brandsource Debuts Majestic Home Collection of Home Furnishings

Exclusive Only to Brandsource Members, Line Includes High Quality Sofas, Chairs, Sectionals, Ottomans & Customizable Fabrics with Fast Delivery

BrandSource has launched its new Majestic Home Collection, a private label assortment of quality home furnishings available exclusively to BrandSource members. Available now, the Majestic Home Collection was showcased at the recent BrandSource Convention in Orlando.

The Majestic Home Collection includes more than 30 SKUs, 70 fabric selections and guaranteed three-week delivery. All frames and fabrics are exclusive to BrandSource. The line is outsourced by England Home Furnishings, founded in 1964 and based in the foothills of East Tennessee. Long recognized for quality and a rapid delivery system, England attracted the attention of La-Z-Boy and was acquired by the company in 1995. It continues to operate as an independent division.

“We’re thrilled to offer our members exclusive access to an exceptional home furnishings collection that customers will love and competitors simply can’t match,” said Bob Lawrence, CEO of BrandSource. “England Home Furnishings has a solid reputation for high quality products, excellent pricing and a wide assortment of styles and options without a long build cycle.”

The BrandSource Majestic Home Collection offers 11 frames, each with a variety of options including coordinating chairs and ottomans. The line features self-sealing zippers, vented seat cushions and optional down inserts for the pillows. An assortment of Hammary occasional tables that complement the furniture can be selected and shipped with the order. Hammary offers a variety of occasional tables available in a variety of styles.

BRANDSOURCE FULL FURNITURE ASSORTMENT, INCLUDING NEW MAJESTIC HOME COLLECTION, IN ITS POPULAR APP

BrandSource has added furniture products to its popular BrandSource App, including the newly released Majestic Home Collection. This latest enhancement, an industry first, will allow BrandSource members to leverage changes in consumer shopping habits, which include the use of

BRANDSOURCE EXCLUSIVE



mobile devices, to compete better in their local markets.

The BrandSource App, which launched last year, now boasts more than 70,000 individual furniture skus from 172 unique suppliers. This is in addition to an extensive assortment of home appliances and consumer electronics already included in the database.

“I’m very proud to see BrandSource lead the industry once again by adding our extensive home furnishings catalog to the BrandSource App,” said Bob Lawrence, CEO. “This gives our members the competitive advantage they need to be successful in an ever changing marketplace.”

“Adding furniture is just the next step in helping our members achieve their goals. With the ever-changing marketplace, it is our responsibility to keep our members ahead of the technology curve. The BrandSource App is just one of our many programs that help achieve this,” added Jim White, VP of the BrandSource App. **RO**

• 2013 •

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 22 — EARTH DAY

APRIL

16-18
GLOBALSHOP
McCormick Place
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www.globalshop.org

19-21
**KBIS – KITCHEN & BATH
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20-25
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www.highpointmarket.org

23-25
LIGHTFAIR
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MAY

**NATIONAL HOME
IMPROVEMENT MONTH**

18-21
**NATIONAL RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION SHOW**
McCormick Place
CHICAGO, IL
show.restaurant.org

6-8
**HOME FURNISHINGS
INDUSTRY CONFERENCE**
Westin Mission Hills
PALM SPRINGS, CA
www.homefurnishingsconference.com

7-9
2013 NATIONAL HARDWARE SHOW®
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15-17
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NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, Associations, Distributors & Manufacturers — Please submit your event schedules to production@retailobserver.com at least two months prior to the date so that it may be included in our Upcoming Events Calendar. To receive *The Retail Observer* in print version, please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.



The 21st ASTI United Service A

Connect, Le





ssociation's Annual Convention

arn and Grow

The 21st ASTI United Service Association's annual convention was held March 6-9 at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL. at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. It was another home run for United Servicers Association [USA], making the ASTI a grand slam for the 4th consecutive year. The theme for this year's event was "Connect, Learn and Grow" and was echoed throughout the 4 day event with a record 540 participants. It was the perfect escape from the cold winter blues for USA members and their families—creating memories to share forever.

President Lance Kimball, Appliance Repair Specialists, commented:

"Attendance increased by 22% over last year. This growth is attributed to 750 companies that USA trained in the fall of 2012 at their Regional Service Meeting Program that traveled to 15 cities throughout both Canada and the United States. The appliance service business is changing every day and USA members are hungry to learn current marketing strategies to give them a competitive advantage and improved efficiencies in their businesses.

'A rising tide lifts all boats' and USA wants to lift the appliance service professional to heights beyond all others.

How does USA reach this goal? By educating our membership on how to run more professional, successful, and profitable businesses, we will raise the repair industry to new heights. With this goal in mind, USA provides its members with many benefits including ChatUSA, USA Service Library, educational monthly webinars and new low cost USA website builder services.

Why was it that 2013 ASTI saw the largest attendance ever? Was it the business classes, the OEM technical training or was it the magic of Disney? To tell the truth, we really don't know the answer, but we do know that USA could not offer this training without volunteers and OEMs willing to support USA and our industry.

Thank you to the parts distributors, sponsors, and manufacturers for supporting the 2012 Regional Service program. The parts distributors that hosted events included Appliance Parts Depot, Cashwell Appliance Parts, Fox Appliance Parts Atlanta, Reliable Parts, 1st Source Servall, Tribles Inc's, and WL May. National sponsors included NEW and Mr. Appliance. Manufacturers included Bosch, Dacor, Electrolux, General Electric, Scotsman, and Whirlpool. Without this

industry support, the Regional Service Meetings couldn't take place. Thank you for supporting our independent professionals and USA. Plans for the 2013 RSM program are underway and promises to be bigger and better still.

Many thanks to all that helped USA promote our RSM and the ASTI. Thanks to The Retail Observer for promoting our convention and RSM program to the self servicing dealers and the appliance retail industry. Thanks to Mark Maupin of Right Now Marketing for donating his YouTube creations and SEO efforts, they worked!

Parts Distributors need the repair industry to grow and prosper. USA will work closer with the APDA to educate our mutual customers in 2013. Thank you Bruce Swane, Phil Oraziotti, and Kirk Coburn and the entire APDA for understanding that when independents succeed, we will all win. I want to especially thank the parts distributors that sponsor USA and ASTI.

Thank you to manufacturers that donate the time and product to educate our industry. The manufacturers that train the independents understand that a satisfied consumer pays our bills and provides repeat and referral business. When consumers | *continued on page 62* |



are not satisfied with their appliance or repair experience, the industry suffers. USA wants to thank you for training its members.

To our sponsors, thank you for supporting USA and ASTI. A special thank you goes to Mr. Appliance, NEW, Sub Zero, Wolf, Rossware, Whirlpool, Bosch, Dacor, Wolf, NARDA, PlusOne Solutions, Lowe's, Service Company Solutions, Fred's Appliance Academy, Assurant Solutions, Virtual Fleet Supervisor, and Reckitt Benckiser. Without your support the ASTI is not possible at significantly reduced registration fees.

ASTIs and RSMs just don't happen, a lot of time and effort is behind these events. Many people help, but there is one person that puts it altogether, Executive Director Paul MacDonald. Paul is the driving force that has taken USA to new heights. It's a group effort, but I want to commend Paul for the great job he has done building USA. Thank you Paul! USA is your non-profit trade association and we're here to support you."

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Executive Director Paul Mac Donald showcased two new member benefits at this year's event. The USA website builder

service powered by Market Wrench, a low cost entry level website building service that is targeted to deliver optimized search results for appliance repair companies for USA members.

The second new member benefit launched is USA Insurance Services administered by Murphy and Associates. Members who buy their insurance services through this benefit are entitled to participate in annual premium rebates based on the group's claims performance.

At the annual ASTI Achievement Awards banquet, Paul presented the USA Lifetime Achievement Award to Captain Toolhead, aka Mike Staats, for his years of dedication and contributions to national trade publications including *Appliance Service News*, *Tech Talk*, *Marcone World* and USA Regional Service Meetings and ASTI conventions.

Corry & Jennifer Webert of Mid America Service presented the USA Partner Awards in the manufacturer category to Bosch, Dacor, Electrolux, Fisher & Paykel, General Electric, LG, Reckitt Benckiser, Samsung, Scotsman and Whirlpool for their dedication and support of USA and the Independent Service Professional.

USA Vice President James Dolbeare of

AAA Appliance Service Center presented the USA Partner Award in the category of Vendor Partners to 1st Source Servall, Appliance Parts Depot, Cashwell Appliance Parts, Fox Appliance Parts Atlanta, Lowe's, Mr. Appliance, NEW, Plus One Solutions, Reliable Parts, LTD., Right Now Marketing, Triple's Inc. and WL May Co. for their support and participation in USA's continuing education programs including the Regional Service Meetings and the ASTI .

Lastly, a BIG Thank You to ALL the ASTI attendees. Attending a convention takes time and money. Here's to the positive impact attending the ASTI convention will have in helping you to CONNECT, LEARN and GROW your business in 2013.

See you at the Towne and Country Resort in San Diego, California, February 26 through March 1 2014 for the 22nd Annual ASTI Convention! **RO**

*Paul Mac Donald
Executive Director
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Front line technicians are a very valuable asset to you the dealer. Properly trained, the front line technician is your very best sales person and a good will ambassador of your company.

We all know that our technicians should be properly trained and certified (MCAP) in the mechanics and technical end of the products that they work on and as dealers we all spend many dollars providing that training. Without continued technical education technicians quickly fall behind in their field and become inept when faced with repairing a product they are unfamiliar with.

Today's products are highly technical in nature and feature laden. The demands on the salesman to understand these features and communicate their use at the point of sale are exceptionally challenging. So what happens when our technicians are asked to explain a particular feature to a customer during a service call to their home? Well, more than likely they will get it wrong if they have not been trained in the art of sales. This misinformation causes customers to question the honesty of their salesperson or the credibility of the technician. In either case, the end result is that you are faced with an unhappy customer. A scenario none of us like to deal with.

So how does sales training for your technicians benefit your company? To give you an example, I have a small company with two showrooms and 10 service technicians. I was perplexed as to how we could make a

market with a particular manufacturer without a great deal of expensive advertising. After brainstorming with my tech team, I found that when faced with recommending a new product they would always defer to the manufacturer's machine they were most familiar with. Armed with that information, I called the sales representative from that manufacturer and asked for sales training for my tech team. The week after the training we sold four of the targeted products through our service teams recommendations.

Keep in mind that the average technician visits 8 customers every day. Multiply the number of technicians you have by 8 and that's the potential number of customers your tech team will have the opportunity to interact with in a single day. Your techs see more customers in a day than your salesmen, so why not make salesmen of your techs. And don't forget to have some fun in the process. Sales training for our techs takes place on Friday mornings with coffee and bagels supplied by the manufacturer's sales representatives. We choose a product that we would like to target and then let the sales rep. teach our techs about its features and some of the smooth ways to present them. Some manufacturers even offer programs that enable the technician to own the product at a reduced cost as an incentive to sell their product.

Truth be told, there is a huge difference between understanding the technical end of the appliance and understanding their features and their benefits. Technicians do not receive sales training at the manufacturer's technical seminars. Technical training is dedicated to teaching the technician to professionally troubleshoot and repair malfunctions. The manufacturer's technical training seminars avoid the hype that is commonly found at the sales training seminars.



Skillful training on how to compare the features and their benefits across brand lines enables the technician to confidently guide a prospective buyer to the product that will best fit their needs and then back to your store to make the purchase. This type of interaction between the technician and consumer solidifies the value of your company to your customer and breeds customer loyalty. Customer loyalty makes it difficult to shop anywhere but at your store.

Whether you have one or fifty, creating a partnership team with your technicians directly reflects on your cost of doing business and your bottom line. **RO**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— F.L. MAYTAG



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

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

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

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

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

Mark Your Calendars!

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



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Until then, keep up with the latest news, events, design trends and inspiration in the kitchen and bath industry all year long on kbis365.com. See you in Las Vegas.



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