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December 2023  
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American Standard 'Building a Higher Standard' Winners, p. 18

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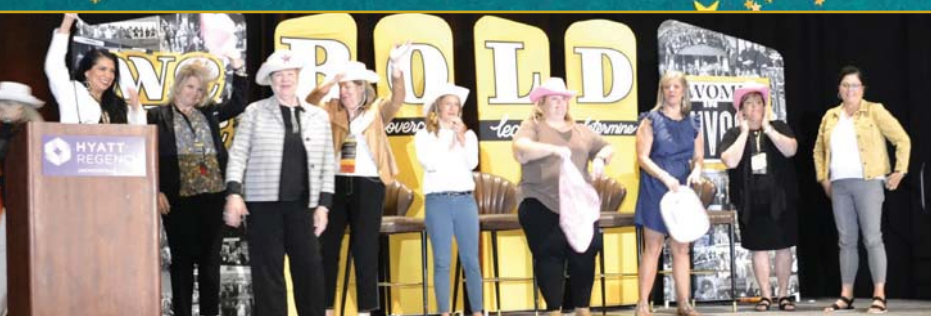
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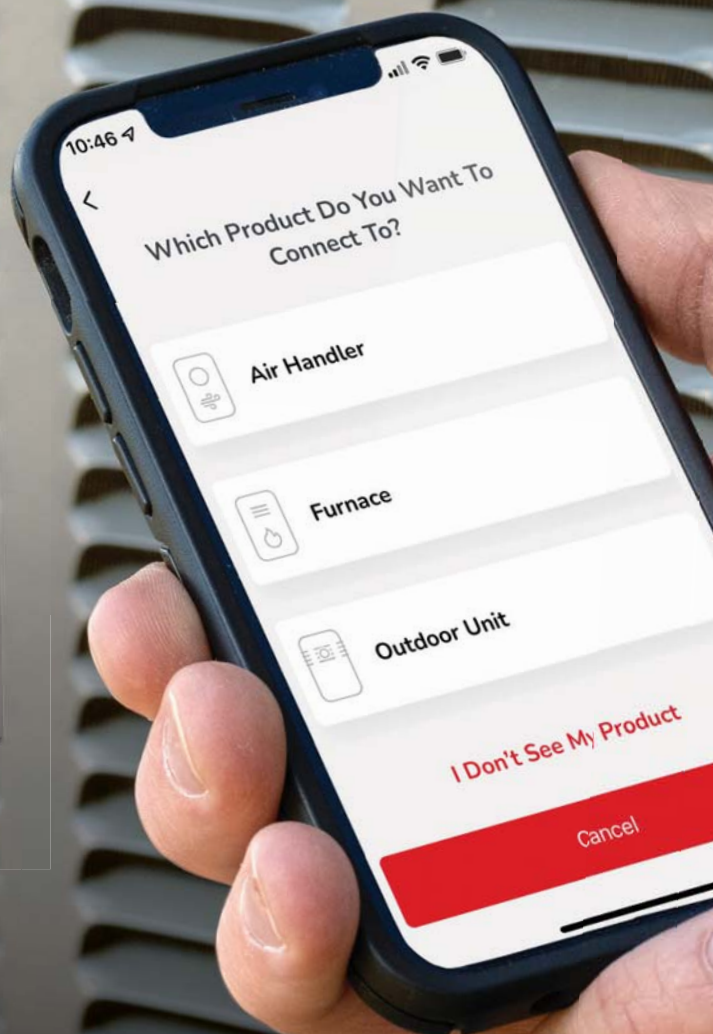
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## COVER STORY



# Great Events Ring Out 2023

With summer behind us, leading educational groups staged events that drew large crowds of interested members.

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**ON THE COVER:** Events by ACCA, PHCC and WHVACR provide guidance. Background: 176647790 | © Yuliia Chyzhevskia | Dreamstime.com

## RESIDENTIAL HVAC

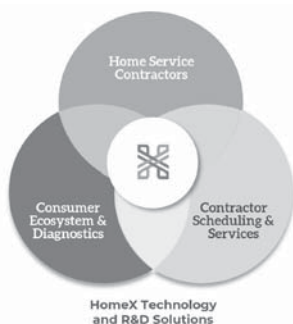
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Michael Werner has a heart for HVAC technicians. His HOMEX invention provides them with a better process of home diagnostics.

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A powerful marketing tool can be yours when you use video to showcase mechanical HVAC and construction projects.



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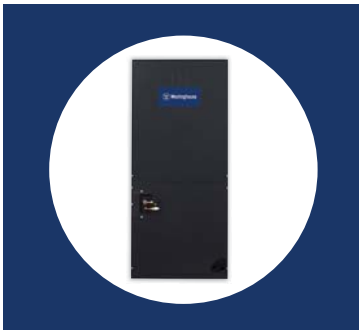
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## New DIGITAL CONTENT

Popular Stories in *Contracting Business*



### November Issue Highlights

#### Service World Expo Show Report

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276683>

#### Service and the Homeowner Experience

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276563>

#### A2L Refrigerants in Focus

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276181>

### Strikepoint Group Holdings Acquires Two

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21277857>

### MSCA, HVAC Excellence Partner for Careers

<https://contractingbusiness.com/212667581>

### Construction Employment Rises 2.8% in 2023

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276844>

## Contracting Business Success

### Sell the Biz Now, or Wait?

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276413>

### HVAC Sales Blockers

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21275733>

## eNewsletter Update

HVAC INTELLIGENCE

eNEWSLETTER

### Combustion Instruments

David Richardson identifies some instruments for combustion detection.

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276488>

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Searchable database can be found at  
[mycontractoruniversity.com](http://mycontractoruniversity.com).

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## Popular Online Galleries



### ▲ November 2023 Products

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21275728>



### ▲ 2023 Service World Expo

<https://contractingbusiness.com/21276683>

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**Charlie Greer was a faithful *CB* contributor. Our Team of Influencers will help us continue to serve you.**

## Thank you, Charlie Greer. Welcome, New Voices

**T**his is bitter-sweet. After a 30+-year association, we will be concluding Charlie Greer's tenure as a featured columnist in *Contracting Business*. A real pro, Charlie took the news well, and offered his stamp of approval on the new direction we're taking for his spot.

Charlie Greer became a mainstay at *Contracting Business* after he had become one of the HVAC industry's first million-dollar salesmen. (He was always quick to credit Ron Smith and Tom McCart and others for much of his success.) But if you know Charlie, you would agree that he has a personality and professional approach to sales that was guaranteed to bring success.

After Charlie became successful in HVAC he was an annual presenter at our Comfortech show (I know, I know, it should still be around.). He shined as the emcee of our "Comfortech Idol" contests, which ran for three years. Then editor-in-chief Mike Weil took advantage of the country's "American Idol" fever, and he and Charlie crafted a competition for best sales presentation and sales close role play, presented in front of a Comfortech audience and an esteemed panel judges.

Charlie's monthly offerings were filled with wisdom and the challenge to become better. Read Charlie's "farewell" on page 30. He remains active, and is welcome in this publication any time.

### Meet Our 2024 Influencers

We will convert Charlie's space to observations from our new team of *print* influencers. I've been behind the times in getting into this "influencer" phenomenon, because I'm an old guy, what can I say? You've probably seen some of them as guests of some of today's leading HVACR podcasters. They will also be guests on our "HVAC Chats" podcasts.

**Tersh Blisset**, owner of Service Emperor and Tri-Star in Savannah, GA. Blisset started the AHR Expo Podcast Pavilion, and is quite possibly the king of HVAC podcasters. He operates the Service Business Mastery podcast with Josh Crouch.

**Vince DiFilippo**, president of DiFilippo's Service, Paoli, PA. Vince has served on the *CB* editorial advisory board and has been a long-time supporter of this publication.

**Sarah Ghirardo**, senior marketing operations manager for ServiceTitan, and leader of LadyTitans, powered by ServiceTitan. LadyTitans is a network of individuals passionate about supporting and uplifting women in the trades.

**Ken Goodrich**, CEO of Goettl Heating, Air Conditioning and Plumbing. *CB* HVAC Hall of Fame

member Goodrich is one of the industry's most sought-after speakers, and he pulls no punches in his advice to business owners.

**Louis Hobaica**, president of the legendary Hobaica Services of Phoenix. Lou has been a leader in HVAC business excellence for more than 20 years. He and his brothers Paul and Mike have taken the successful company founded by Paul Hobaica, Sr. to greater heights of sales, marketing and customer service excellence.

**Andy Hobaica**, a sales leader at Hobaica Services, started as an installer, graduated to service technician, and is now a comfort specialist selling \$5 million annually. Watch for Andy's insights into better selling.

**Aaron Husak**, owner and CEO of Balanced Comfort in Fresno, Calif. Balanced Comfort specializes in HVAC, plumbing, weatherization, and restoration services. They have been on the Inc. 5000 list from 2021-2023.

**Colleen Keyworth** is director of sales and marketing for Online-Access, past president of Women in HVACR, and now president of the International Network for Women in Cooling. Growing up in an HVAC family, Colleen understands the realities contractors face when owning and operating a profitable business.

**Tommy Mello** is CEO of A1 Garage Door Service. A leading social media and event presenter, Tommy Mello founded A1 Garage Door Service in 2007. His success is astounding. Tommy's insights can be applied to any service business, including HVAC.

**Danielle Putnam** is president at The New Flat Rate, a flat rate menu pricing system for residential contractors. Danielle has served as a Women in HVACR board member and president, and is now one of the group's advisory board members.

**Joe & Tawnya Strittmatter**, with Strittmatter Plumbing, Heating, AC, now a business of Frymire Home Services. Strittmatter's has served Dallas-Fort Worth for more than 70 years.

**Lori Tschohl** is owner of Eagle Pipe & Mechanical, Poulsbo, WA, and 2024 president of Women in HVACR. She will share ideas about growing a business and how WHVACR will support women in the trades in 2024.

**Crystal Williams**, founder and creative strategist for Lemon Seed Marketing, is a dynamite presenter and thought leader. She will share insights into how to market your HVAC business more effectively.

Welcome to our *CB* Team of Influencers. **CB**

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## Three HVAC Events Ring Out 2023



ACCA's "Next Level" summit included a panel discussion on the importance of increasing and improving the training of HVACR technicians. Wyatt Smith, left, founder/CEO of UpSmith.com, presented questions to Stephanie Bothun, co-founder and vice president, Ascent Indiana; Tony Denhart, executive vice president of workforce and talent at the Indiana Economic Development Corp; Eddie McFarlane, vice president training, development and employee engagement, Sila Services; and Jeff McLanahan, vice president, learning and development, ARS.

Terry McIver

**F**all's 2023 HVACR conference activity was both an end to one year, and a fitting introduction to the next, as industry-leading associations and their memberships gathered after the conclusion to the summer of 2023 and a look towards 2024.

Following a successful Service World Expo in early October were three additional main events: ACCA's "Next Level" conference; PHCC's Connect2023; and Women in HVACR's "GO BOLD" conference.

### ACCA "Next Level"

The HVACR industry gathered in Indianapolis in October 16-17 for the Air Conditioning Contractors of America's "Next Level" event, a day-and-a-half of intensive learning tailored to empower both established and up-and-coming leaders in HVACR contracting companies. The event aimed at enhancing leadership skills, offering attendees valuable insights and practical knowledge to thrive in an ever-evolving industry.

The event featured three tracks focusing on vital aspects of managing a successful HVACR business or department: Recruitment and Skill Development, Effective Team Leadership, and Strategy and Communication. These tracks were designed to equip attendees with the expertise needed to run operations efficiently, ensuring they stay ahead of industry trends and challenges.

"Next Level" opened with a keynote presentation from Jeff Butler, author and workplace strategist with insight into how HVACR professionals can leverage technology and make simple changes to attract and keep top talent.



Wes Davis, technical services director for ACCA, provided a rundown of the advantages

of the MeasureQuick system of HVAC system performance verification, which is taking the industry by storm.

Terry McIver

There were three additional mainstage sessions, including a breakfast panel: The Power of Potential: Solving the Skilled Worker Crisis by Expanding the Talent Pool, sponsored by UpSmith; a lunch panel:

Preparing Your Team for the Refrigerant Transition featuring Don Gillis of Chemours, John Maiorana, ARKEMA and Kate Houghton, Hudson Technologies. There was also the return of "I've Got an Idea!" hosted by past ACCA board chair, Bobby Ring, president of Meyer & Depew Co.

Networking sessions and social events allowed industry professionals to connect, share experiences, and gain insights from their peers. A "Welcome to Indiana" Reception and the Party at the Punch Bowl Social, sponsored by Carrier, Federated Insurance, Indiana HVAC Association, Jackson Systems & Supply and Scorpion provided a vibrant atmosphere for networking and collaboration.

ACCA's 2024 annual conference will be held at the Universal Orlando Sapphire Falls Resort, March 11-14, and will have more than 20 training sessions. Keynote speaker will be Jake Havron, a leading business strategist and mentor. Visit [accaprof.org/accaprof2024](https://accaprof.org/accaprof2024) to learn more and to register.

### PHCCConnect2023

Cleveland, Ohio delivered a hometown welcome to an energetic group of plumbing, heating and cooling professionals as they gathered for PHCCCONNECT2023 in late October to make progress on their plumbing and HVACR businesses and help to secure a strong future for the industry.

The passion of PHCC's people was on full display throughout the three-day event, reinforcing this year's conference theme of "People. Passion. Purpose." PHCC honored several people during the conference's opening session. "As we recognize these individuals today—with the support of our industry partners—I am reminded of how valuable solid relationships are," said PHCC—National President Dave Frame. "These people share a passion for improving society, making a difference, contributing to their

communities, mentoring the next generation, and advancing the industry.”

PHCC members and other attendees took to their feet to acknowledge veteran PHCC Member Herman Bohinc of Ohio, who was presented with a resolution from the PHCC Board of Directors for his distinguished service to the Ohio state chapter and for lasting contributions to the association and its mission. As an instructor and mentor, Bohinc has inspired others in the profession to strive for excellence. (See cover photo, top left.)

The keynote session, “Growth Begins at the End of Your Comfort Zone,” featured Coach Kenny Ray Carter, a highly successful high school basketball coach, author, business owner, and educator. Many claimed that Carter—who mixed hard-hitting advice (“Discipline lasts you a lifetime.”) with a need for compassion (“Great people meet other people where they are.”)—was the best speaker they ever heard. Among his additional messages: be respectful; write down goals and carry them with you every day; and “reset your preset,” reinforcing the need to adjust quickly in certain situations.

### Against the Wind

“Look at 2024 as an opportunity,” said the event’s second keynote, Connor Lokar of ITR Economics. While inflation and rising prices are not going away anytime soon, Lokar advised that contractors “look at areas of your business that could be opportunities and things that you didn’t have time to do before, like training,



PHCC keynote, coach, author, presenter Kenny Ray Carter provided a thrilling account of his childhood and basketball coaching career and life lessons learned along the way.  
PHCC

technology, and software transitions. He warned of very tough economic times in 2030 and advised attendees on how to steer their businesses now in preparation.

Moderator Amy Hart of Continental Plumbing led an effective workforce panel on the tremendous opportunities for skilled trades. Together with Chris Boyd of A1 Sewer & Drain, Larry Betlejewski of Beetle’s Plumbing Solutions, and Jed Scheuermann from IAPMO, these panelists debunked some common misconceptions about the industry and offered ways to promote the truth about the profession.

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### Women in Industry Luncheon

Led by moderator Susan Few of Sunshine Home Services, a panel of seven involved in Women in Plumbing & Piping shared insights on how PHCC members can attract more women into the trades and the benefits not just to their companies but to the industry as a whole. They discussed recruiting tactics and timing (“plant the seeds as early as possible”), company culture, and the evaluation of all roles in a business.

### Women in HVACR “GO BOLD”



Outgoing WHVACR President Marcia Christiansen reviewed the organization's many activities and accomplishments in 2023.

Terry McIver



WHVACR 2024 President Lori Tschohl, founder of Eagle Pipe & Mechanical, promised new initiatives

for the organization in 2024, including four regional events.

Terry McIver

Women in HVACR held its 20th Annual Conference—“GO BOLD”—in Jacksonville, FL Nov. 6-8. WHVACR is a very active, non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging and supporting career growth in the HVACR industry, with more than 800 members.

The content for this year's event focused on various “bold” actions women working in the heating, air conditioning and refrigeration industries can take to step out and up in their careers.

Outgoing president Marcia Christiansen, business unit manager for PECO Control Systems, shared an update on the influence of WHVACR's 35 national “ambassadors” who are helping to grow the association and event participation through networking.

Christiansen reported that WHVACR participated in many of the industry's major events in 2023: AHR Expo, HVAC Excellence, EGIA, ACCA, Service World Expo and ServiceTitan's Pantheon.

She then thanked the management support and guidance by 2023 officers and board members:

Officers: Lori Tschohl, vice-president; Colleen Keyworth, immediate past president; Erica Leonor, secretary; Sarah Hammond, treasurer. Board members: Laurelyn Arriaga; Tanya Steindl; Kristin Gallup; Becky Hoelscher; Jane Sidebottom; Crystal Williams; Linda Rodriguez and Kerri Cupp.

### Presenter Highlights

Molly Allison, manager of talent acquisition at Rheem, spoke on how women can stand out and stand together. Allison addressed the unique challenges women encounter in a male-dominated industry, highlighted opportunities for professional growth,

and shared ways to achieve individual success and collective empowerment.

Christyn Mueller, commercial learning manager at Johnson Controls, spoke on how to radiate confidence and use the fundamentals to influence your career. Mueller helped the audience explore their confidence, quiet their inner critic and conquer self doubt.

Crystal Williams, founder of Lemon Seed Marketing, shared many ways create better instant relationships with customers and your company team, with a focus on the main personality

profiles: dominant, inspiring, supportive and cautious. She described the major traits of each personality type and advised on which company roles those types would be the most and the least suited to.

Industry technical issues were not ignored. Lori Byres, sales director at Hudson Controls, provided some analysis of the AIM Act, and its effect on the supply of HFC refrigerants, phasedown schedule, and the impact society will face from the phasedown now and in the future.

Brooke Greenwood, heating platform manager at Carrier shared how to improve one's understanding of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, and the impact local incentive programs can have on the ability to make discussions with homeowners easier to manage.

Keynote speakers for “GO BOLD” were: Cmdr. Mary Kelly, US Navy (ret.), author of 15 business and leadership books; Amberley Snyder, a rodeo competitor who was paralyzed in an equestrian accident, but has become an inspiration to thousands; and Lilah Jones, head of ISV's & Marketplace Sales for Northam at Google, a professor and lecturer. Jones delivered an inspiring message on embracing your “authentic” self.

Manufacturing panelists discussed brand priorities for 2024 amid many changes. They were Nick Arch, managing director, residential, Carrier Corp.; Cameron Prince, senior product manager, Allied Air; Connie Shroder, director of residential ductless mini-split products, Daikin; Kim Albrecht, director of marketing and training, Rheem.

Lori Tschohl accepted the role of president of WHVACR for 2024.

“This role is not just a title. It's a promise and a responsibility. It is an opportunity to make a difference in our organization and the lives of those we serve,” Tschohl said, in her acceptance speech. “I've made it my mission to bring about additional growth and transformation for Women in HVACR for 2024. Tschohl said WHVACR will hold four regional events in 2024, and announced that the 2024 WHVACR conference will be held in Dallas, Texas, Oct. 21-23.

Colleen Keyworth, director of marketing for Online-Access, was recognized for her nine years of participation in WHVACR, including as president and board member. Keyworth will continue to take women in HVACR to global heights, as she will begin to serve on the board of the International Network of Women in Cooling. Learn more at [inwic.org](http://inwic.org). **CB**



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**Navien**, the leader in condensing technology, has started shipping their latest innovation, the NPF Hydro-furnace. First announced during their virtual launch event on September 26th, the NPF forced air hydro-furnace is Navien's introduction into the HVAC market.

Available in upflow and horizontal configurations, the NPF comes in two sizes of 60,000 BTU/h and 100,000 BTU/h that both boast 97.0% AFUE, utilize high-efficiency ECM motor technology, and meet the stringent requirements of SCAQMD rule 1111 for Ultra-Low NOx performance.

The NPF uses Navien's industry-proven stainless steel heat exchangers to heat water in an isolated compartment out of the airstream which provides sound-reduction and energy efficiency. The heated water is circulated through a hydronic coil which transfers the heat into the airstream for the ultimate in quiet forced-air heating comfort. The sealed combustion design allows the NPF to deliver comfortable heat without significantly impacting humidity levels at one of the quietest sound levels of any furnace on the market. Water can be supplied to the NPF either through an auto-fill ¼" water connection or through an easily accessible manual fill water reservoir.



## Residential Heating

Engineered with forward-thinking technology and built to uncompromising standards, **Amana**® brand AVZC20 inverter-driven heat pumps provide up to 10 HSPF heating and 21 SEER cooling performance.

The AVZC20 features high-performing Comfort Speed inverter technology designed for consistent indoor comfort and quiet, variable-speed, energy-saving operation. With integrated ComfortBridge™ communicating technology, technicians can quickly commission, configure, diagnose using the CoolCloud™ mobile app. Exceptional heat transfer properties are delivered using a seven-millimeter, refrigeration-grade premium copper tubing and aluminum-fin condenser coil configuration. Contractor-friendly features include Amana brand control algorithmic logic; coil and ambient temperature sensors; sweat connection service valves with easy access to gauge ports;



top and side maintenance access; plus, single-panel access to controls.

Designed, engineered and assembled in the USA, the AVZC20 is available in 2- to 5-ton units with heating capacities of 22,800 - 52,500 BTU/h. Backed by Amana brand's Lifetime Unit Replacement Limited Warranty and 10-Year Parts Limited Warranty. [amana-hac.com](http://amana-hac.com)

Merging ductless-style performance with traditional ducted systems, transformative **Daikin** FIT inverter split systems are small, lightweight and quiet. With ducted gas furnace, heat pump or dual fuel capabilities, Daikin FIT outdoor units require just 4" of clearance—providing unparalleled flexibility for challenging projects.

An energy-efficient, cost-competitive system, Daikin FIT delivers impressive ratings up 8.6 HSPF2, 11.3 EER and 17.5 SEER2, with heating capacities from 17,400-54,500 BTU/h.

Inverter-driven outdoor compressors with side discharge run quietly, with sound levels down to 55 dB(A). [daikinfit.com](http://daikinfit.com)

**Goodman**® brand GVZC20 heat pumps leverage inverter technology for excellent efficiency ratings, up to 10 HSPF heating and 21 SEER cooling.

Goodman inverter-driven systems also can help reduce compressor wear and tear by running at more energy-conserving speeds, reaching indoor comfort settings more quickly, balancing heat load through continuous dehumidification, and operating at lower sound levels (avoiding the constant on/off cycling compared to single- and two-stage systems).

Compatible with ComfortBridge™ communicating technology for simpler commissioning, diagnostics and servicing using the CoolCloud™ phone/tablet application. Helpful contractor-focused features include Goodman control algorithmic logic; diagnostic indicator lights, seven-segment display with fault code storage; compressor crankcase heater; high-capacity muffler; coil/ambient temperature sensors; sweat connection service valves; easy gauge port access and more.

Available in 2- to 5-ton units, with 23,400-52,000 BTU/h heating capacities. Like all Goodman brand indoor comfort products, the GVZC20 heat pump is designed, engineered and assembled in the USA. [goodmanmfg.com](http://goodmanmfg.com)



**Fujitsu General America's** multi-position air handler units are now compatible with the company's XLTH (extra low

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temperature heating) outdoor units, which provide heating capacity at outdoor temperatures as low as -15°F.

Available in four sizes from 24,000 to 48,000 BTU/H, the multi-position air handlers feature all-aluminum indoor unit coils, high static pressure capability, indoor sound levels as low as 24 dBA and adaptive fan motor control for optimum comfort.

Minimal clearance is needed on three sides of the indoor unit, with only 21 inches clearance needed in the front for service. Down-flow and horizontal right kits come standard with each system. Field-installed electric heat kits up to 15.5kW are factory provided. External input/output interface for third-party systems is optional.

## Trane Price Hike

### Trane Technologies' Residential HVAC announced on

November 15, price adjustments on residential heating, ventilating and air-conditioning equipment that includes a price increase of up to 5 percent on select products and holds or decreases on others. The adjustments apply to select Trane®, American Standard® Heating & Air Conditioning, RunTru™ by Trane, and Ameristar™ by American Standard equipment, and related parts and supply brands. The price adjustments for residential equipment and select parts and supplies will take effect on Monday, Jan. 1, 2024.

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WiFi compatibility is also optional so that systems can be controlled remotely through Fujitsu's FGLair mobile app, and smart home services such as Amazon Echo or Google Home.

Optional accessories include wired remote controller, simple remote controller, wireless LAN interface, third-party thermostat converter, external input and output PCB, external connect kit, electric heater kit, combustible floor base, and an external filter box. [fujitsugeneral.com](http://fujitsugeneral.com)

The Platinum 18 heat pump is part of a new lineup of **American Standard** communicating equipment featuring American Standard Link, an innovative technology to simplify the installation, commissioning, and remote monitoring of variable-speed HVAC systems.

Created to provide technicians with a "plug and play" experience, it assists with installation accuracy through automated configuration, charging, and system testing; and it works with remote monitoring to provide quicker solutions and more efficient service calls.

Link provides the exact data technicians need for installation and troubleshooting on their own smart devices.

These models have the dual capability to operate with all existing AccuLink variable speed indoor equipment and controls, as well as the future American Standard Link air handlers and smart thermostats.

A full line of American Standard Link equipment has been available to American Standard's independent dealer nationwide since Fall 2022. [americanstandardair.com](http://americanstandardair.com)



The new **Trane** Platinum XV20i Heat pump is part of a new line of equipment featuring Trane Link, a revolutionary communication technology that simplifies installation, commissioning, and remote monitoring of Trane's variable speed systems.

Created to provide technicians with a plug-and-play experience, Trane



Link assists with the installation accuracy of the XV20i through automated configuration, charging, and system testing. Technicians can ensure a speedier setup as Trane Link self-identifies the equipment, provides an automatic connection through Bluetooth mesh, and utilizes standardized color-coated wiring. Using Trane Link, technicians can experience more efficient service calls and troubleshooting, as the technology provides the exact data they need on their own smart device, sources report. The full line of Trane Link equipment has been available to Trane's independent dealer nationwide since Fall 2022. [trane.com](http://trane.com)

The **Rheem® Endeavor™ Line Classic® Series R951V Ultra Low NOx Gas Furnace** offers a reliable way to keep homeowners comfortable. It is designed for lasting energy-efficient comfort that saves users money while delivering peace of mind. This 95% AFUE, ENERGY STAR® certified gas furnace is close to perfect when it comes to efficiently converting gas to heat. The Ultra Low NOx operation lowers the homeowner's carbon footprint by minimizing greenhouse gases while offering energy costs savings, up to \$85 annually, and potentially even more with available rebates.



The furnace's variable speed motor technology ensures a steady stream of just-right heated airflow to maintain comfort levels while providing superior humidity control. The insulated cabinet and truly variable speed airflow technology—guarantee quiet operation.

Features such as the PlusOne® Ignition System allow for reliability and longevity while the PlusOne Water Management System is a Rheem-exclusive patented sensor that shuts off the furnace if a blocked drain is detected.

Contractors can be assured of easy, hassle-free installation and serviceability, thanks to the Built-in Bluetooth® connectivity. Also, the user friendly EcoNet® Smart Thermostat helps homeowners lower their energy costs and keep their home comfortable.

With one of the best warranties in the market, Rheem offers 10 Year Conditional Parts (with registration) + Limited Lifetime Heat Exchanger. [rheem.com/endeavor](http://rheem.com/endeavor)

## CONTROLS

**Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US** has introduced the Simple Ductless Wired (SDW) remote controller.

The SDW remote controller is simple to use and is compatible with existing thermostat wire, allowing for easier installation, sources say.



Suitable for multifamily applications, the SDW controller features programmable presets with 7-day scheduling. The dual setpoint auto changeover and advanced installer setup options can be used to adjust settings to fit the needs of each user. Users can select their preferred humidity level with the new Auto-DRY function, which helps regulate the moisture level of the indoor air.

Formed in May 2018, Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US LLC (METUS) is the exclusive provider of Zoned Comfort Solutions® and leading supplier of Ductless and Ducted Mini-split and Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) heat pump and air-conditioning systems in the United States and Latin America. The company provides innovative products, systems and solutions capable of heating and cooling a broad range of applications from a home to a large commercial building. [metahvac.com](http://metahvac.com).

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## UPCLOSE: Trane® Autonomous Control Powered by BrainBox AI®

**Trane Technologies has introduced Trane Autonomous Control** powered by BrainBox AI®, to help building owners and operators increase energy efficiency. Trane® Autonomous Control reduces energy consumption and minimizes carbon emissions with the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

Trane Autonomous Control uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to automatically identify and perform system optimization actions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An enhancement to existing Trane Tracer® SC+ systems, it is self-motivated, constantly observing, correcting, and improving. Available as a secure, cloud-based service offering that requires no additional hardware, Trane Autonomous Control is a highly scalable artificial intelligence tool that can support multiple buildings with a single solution. It augments current control systems, enabling users to capture and synthesize a wealth of real-time and predictive data, including occupancy levels, weather patterns, and system performance information, to optimize efficiency and carbon reduction without sacrificing comfort. It also improves system performance and reduces operating and maintenance costs without investing in additional equipment or overburdening employees, and support sustainability goals by reducing energy use and minimizing carbon emissions.

In an interview with *Contracting Business*, Marcus Ellson, product engineering manager for Trane, revealed that Trane Autonomous Control Powered by BrainBox AI will help Trane meet the goal of its "Gigaton Challenge," which if successful will have reduced the carbon footprints of its customers' systems by a gigaton by 2030.

"We're constantly on the lookout for ways we can do that," Ellson said, "and one of the technologies that we've had our eye on for a long time is artificial intelligence. With our expertise in building control, we saw some good alignment there by bringing those two together. A few years ago, we started canvassing the landscape of that technology and Brain Box AI, where we had a good fit with their motivations, their expertise, their proven implementations in real sites."

A shared pilot project between Trane and BrainBox AI was started in 2021, using the building of a longtime Trane customer as the test location. Since that time, the customers' 120 locations have been added to the pilot program.

"Along the way, as we saw that performance was proven, and we entered a more formal relationship with BrainBox AI, a technology collaboration. And then, just a few months ago, we officially released the offering under the name Trane Autonomous Control," Ellson revealed.

While longtime building controls software performs admirably in monitoring and controlling building functions, Ellson said Trane Autonomous Control with BrainBox AI adds some new tools.

With AI, Ellson said, "We have the ability to better monitor the energy consumption of a piece of equipment, can better understand a forecasted situation, or if we [make a change] in the building, what will the impact be to other aspects of the building? With

that information at our fingertips, we can make different decisions, and some of those decisions are going to be better decisions than those a more prescriptive, situational-based sequence would be."

To capture and synthesize a wealth of real-time and predictive data and optimize energy efficiency and carbon reduction, Trane Autonomous Control with BrainBox AI takes its understanding of building use patterns and a building's behavioral history to modulate heating or cooling delivered to various spaces.

"If it's a retail location, we can look at its retail hours to understand how the building relates to that. We can look at Google Maps and popular use times, for better understanding of the nuances of something as simple as building occupancy," Ellson explained. "The end result of these decisions will be familiarity with building behaviors and equipment [performance]. Reducing the cycling of different stages of heating or cooling can be taken into account. The outcomes of these decisions will be familiar to people who have been optimizing buildings, reducing duct static pressure set points, or adjusting discharge air temperature setpoints."

Ellson stressed that Trane Autonomous Control is one of many ways Trane customers can spend their discretionary budget to achieve desired outcomes, including those related to sustainability and decarbonization.

"Autonomous Control is just one of several options, and it's important to know that there's going to be cases where Trane, as a trusted advisor of a customer, wouldn't necessarily recommend Autonomous Control," Ellson said. "For example, if they have an aging mechanical system that doesn't have a great interface or level of control, we're not going to maximize the benefit of Trane Autonomous Control until we do some underlying upgrades or offer better returns from another option."

"Trane looks at this as another great tool in our toolbox for the customer to consider, and not only on the merits of expected savings versus investment, but as something that has been resonating with customers, in how they view its financial model."

Ellson said Autonomous Control offers a more attractive budgetary scenario than a traditional building systems replacement exercise.

"A traditional building upgrade project will include energy conservation measures: add a VFD here, replace this piece of equipment and implement this sequence of operations. And that project is likely going to be funded as a capital expense by the customer. The payback is an estimate, and it's a few years of payback, in a sort of average sense. Now, with Autonomous Control on the table, this is typically something we would deliver through a service agreement, and the customer is able to fund it through their operational budget, a budget that a facilities team is going to have more discretionary, decision-making power to spend. And they're going to start seeing that payback on their very next utility bill. So now, just as a financial instrument to the company, this is more than paying for itself every month. It is a cash flow positive investment and can be a much lower barrier to entry for the customer to really start realizing these savings."

—Terry McIver



Ellson



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# American Standard Announces Winners of “Building a Higher Standard” Awards

DAVIDSON, N.C.—American Standard Heating and Air Conditioning has announced its sixth annual “Building a Higher Standard” award winners—three of the brand’s exceptional independent dealers from across the country. Selected from a group of high-achieving nominees, the 2023 winners were ultimately recognized by a blind panel of judges for being champions of American Standard’s core brand values of integrity, teamwork, commitment to excellence and community service.

The 2023 American Standard Building a Higher Standard award winners are: Gibson’s Heating & Plumbing, Waterloo, IN; Spencer Heating & Air LLC, Auburn, AL; and Hydes Air Conditioning, Indio, CA.

American Standard has always been committed to delivering the best-in-class experience in every aspect of its business, and the same goes for the brand’s nationwide network of independent dealers. The 2023 American Standard Building a Higher Standard Award winners exemplify integrity, teamwork, commitment to excellence, and community service by continuously going above and beyond to bring a higher standard of care to the communities they serve, from helping businesses in need and building cherished customer relationships to investing in their employees’ futures.

“The dedication and selflessness showcased by the 2023 American Standard Building a Higher Standard Award winners and nominees is truly inspiring. Their commitment to improving the lives of those

around them is a testament to the power of compassion and the impact it can have on a community,” said Kathryn Wildrick, Senior Brand Manager for American Standard. “At American Standard, our customer’s trust and satisfaction is the driving force behind everything we do and is a standard our dealers exhibit time and time again. We are grateful for their contributions and proud to recognize them for their unwavering commitment to building a better community for all.”

Gibson Heating & Plumbing is operated by Mark and Christie Gibson. Gibson Heating & Plumbing was founded in 1983 with the simple mission to provide every customer with unparalleled customer service. The secret to their success is their 6,000-square-foot, on-campus training center filled with seasoned experts where employees can sharpen not only their technical skills but also their interpersonal skills.

“By providing our employees with opportunities for growth and development, we not only increase their job satisfaction and retention but also enhance their skills and knowledge, which ultimately benefits our customers and business as a whole,” said Mark Gibson.

David Simpson’s unique perspective of being an HVAC technician in the field has tremendously enriched his experience of being a dealership owner. David’s hard work and ambition helped him move up the ranks from a service technician at

Spencer Heating & Air to eventually taking over the business as owner. Since then, he has shown dedication to ensuring his employees feel supported and cared for.

“I strongly believe that taking care of our employees means that we take care of our community, which translates to high-quality customer service. Being able to offer my employees benefits such as retirement is just one of the ways to have a positive impact their lives and grow our business,” David said.

The Hyde family opened its doors in 1972 and, since then, has followed two guiding principles to ensure their business success: sell reliable, quality products that customers can count on, and remember that their employees’ success is the company’s success. The Hydes make it a point to make every employee feel valued, whether that’s making sure each worker gets a card on their birthday or having teams switch roles for a day to learn and gain a new appreciation for each other’s jobs; they’re a business that makes sure everyone is on the same team.

“At our business, we believe everyone deserves a chance at success and can reach for it. That’s why we invest in our employees’ professional growth and always provide a supportive work environment,” said Michael Hyde.

The 2023 American Standard Building a Higher Standard award winners will be honored with custom trophies, challenge coins, a year of Customer Care Platinum



Mark and Christie Gibson, Gibsons; David Simpson, Spencer's; and Barry, Michael and Mark Hyde, Hydes.  
American Standard

Membership, and will have their names added to the Hall of Fame Trophy – which will be on display in the American Standard plant and offices in Tyler, Texas. They also will be the focus of a local media campaign with professional assets for their usage and have access to earned and paid public relations in trade and regional media.

American Standard also recognizes the Building a Higher Standard award's four semi-finalists and the remaining three dealers who round out the top ten with commemorative desk ornaments to recognize their dedication to the business.

2023 Semi-Finalists: are: BT Reynolds of Indianapolis, IN; Handyside Inc. of Harrisburg, PA; Samm's Heating and Air Conditioning of Dallas, TX; Christmas Air of Carrollton, TX.

Rounding out the 2023 Top 10: Hartley's Climate Control of St. Louis, MO; Cody & Sons Plumbing Heating and Air of Dallas, TX; Texoma Maintenance & Refrigeration of Oklahoma City, OK.

For more information about American Standard's Building a Higher Standard awards program, visit [www.amsd.us/bahs](http://www.amsd.us/bahs).

## Copeland Expands CO<sub>2</sub> Compressor Manufacturing

**ST. LOUIS, MO**—Copeland announced on November 8 a regional investment in manufacturing its compression products qualified for use with the natural refrigerant, CO<sub>2</sub> (R-744). Copeland CO<sub>2</sub> semi-hermetic and scroll compressors currently being manufactured in Mikulov, Czech Republic, and Cookstown, Ireland, will expand production to two of the company's North American locations.

Last week, manufacturing began on the Copeland 4MTLS transcritical and 4MSLS subcritical CO<sub>2</sub> semi-hermetic product lines in Rushville, Indiana; simultaneously, Copeland ZO(D) CO<sub>2</sub> scroll and digital scroll compressors commenced in Sidney, Ohio.

This change comes as the industry anticipates accelerated adoption of CO<sub>2</sub> refrigeration technology being driven by food retail businesses pledging sustainability targets and needing to comply with environmental

regulations. There has also been additional growth in cold storage infrastructure. Bringing CO<sub>2</sub> compressor manufacturing to North America will help Copeland's original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and end-user customers more quickly achieve their sustainability and regulatory compliance goals and build out their cold storage infrastructure as product lead times shorten and CO<sub>2</sub> compression is implemented within new store builds and remodels.

"The investments we are making in our facilities, supply chain and people in North America will allow Copeland to increase production capacity and flexibility," said Dave Bersaglini, vice president and general manager of refrigeration, at Copeland. "Positioning operations closer to customers and improving delivery times will allow us to be more responsive, providing customers with local support to help ensure their success."

## Dakota Supply Group Breaks New Ground in Three States

**Plymouth, MN**—Dakota Supply Group (DSG), a leading distributor of products and services for HVAC, plumbing, electrical, communication, automation, waterworks and on-site sewer, water and well, recently announced it had broken ground for two new distribution facilities, in Fargo, North Dakota, Butte, Montana and Ames, Iowa.

**The Fargo facility** groundbreaking occurred on October 17, 2023. The facility is scheduled to open in 2025.

Situated at 1387 55th Street NE, Fargo, North Dakota, the new 126,000-square-foot

facility boasts a strategic location with convenient access from 45th Street in Fargo and 9th Street in West Fargo and quick access from I-29. DSG has been serving customers in the Fargo market for the last 125 years.

"We are thrilled to break ground on our new facility in Fargo, North Dakota. DSG was founded in Fargo 125 years ago, and this expansion reinforces our dedication to providing exceptional service to our customers in this region for the next 125 years and beyond. Our strategic location and expanded services will enable us to meet the growing needs of the electrical, plumbing, HVAC, utility, and communications industries, ensuring we remain a trusted partner in their success," said Paul Kennedy, president and CEO of DSG.

**The Butte, MT facility** will be located on the 2900 block of Washoe Street. The new 60,000-square-foot facility is strategically located, with convenient access from Interstate 15/North & South and Interstate 90/East & West. It is slated to open in 2024.

"We are thrilled to break ground on our new facility in Butte, Montana. DSG has been serving customers in the Butte market for the last three decades, and establishing this new facility is a significant step in the continued commitment to a best-in-class customer experience in this vital market. The additional capacity of this new Butte facility will provide a central distribution point for all our Montana locations and provide the opportunity to expand our offering to include electrical products. The expanded range of services will cater to electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and telecommunications, ensuring we remain a trusted partner in our customer's success," Kennedy said.





# Greenheck's KSQ Mixed Flow Roof Supply Fan: The Ideal Choice for Clean, Outdoor Air

Greenheck's new KSQ mixed flow roof supply fan provides untempered make-up air for filtered supply air applications where heating and cooling are not required. Designed to deliver high performance with low operating costs and maintenance, model KSQ incorporates the following key features:

## High-Performance Mixed Flow Wheel

A high-efficiency mixed flow wheel allows the KSQ to deliver the specified airflow while operating at low sound levels, making it ideal for applications where high performance and quiet operation are essential. This technology also provides a reduced fan footprint and reduced operating costs.



## Installation Flexibility

Multiple intake and discharge configurations provide installation flexibility, allowing the KSQ to meet various application requirements. Panels on either side of the unit provide quick access to the motor and wheel for inspection or maintenance. The KSQ is selectable with a roof curb, duct adapter, and duct collars as well as backdraft and control dampers. Additional accessories include coatings, isolation options, disconnect switches, and a wide variety of controls.



## High-Efficiency Motor

Model KSQ is available with Vari-Green® direct drive technology up to and including 10 hp. Vari-Green® motor and control options enable easy setup and maintenance, help optimize system performance, and lower operating costs compared to traditional AC motors. Maintenance-free direct drive motors eliminate the need to replace or maintain belts.



## Filtration Options

To support improved indoor air quality and reduce the load on the HVAC system, model KSQ comes standard with 1-inch aluminum filters. The KSQ also offers optional MERV 13 filters, available in the bottom intake configuration. When MERV 13 filtration is selected, aluminum filters are included to pre-filter outdoor air.



## Certified Performance

AMCA licensed for FEI, Air and Sound Performance, and UL/cUL 705 Listed, model KSQ is available in direct drive sizes 7 through 33 with performance up to 16,750 cfm and 3.75 in. wg.

For more information, contact your local Greenheck representative today! [Greenheck.com/find-my-rep](http://Greenheck.com/find-my-rep)



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# Introducing: Clean, Outdoor Air



Greenheck's model KSQ roof supply fan is designed, engineered and tested to be the performance leader. Multiple intake and discharge configurations provide application flexibility with a mixed flow wheel that improves airflow and efficiency while reducing sound and footprint. Introduce more clean outdoor air into your application with the KSQ.



**LEARN MORE**

**Specify with Confidence. Specify Greenheck.**

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The groundbreaking for the Ames, Iowa facility was held on November 6. Located at 2155 Bailey Ave in Ames, IA, the new 30,000-square-foot facility offers a strategically positioned site, easily accessible from Dayton Avenue, providing quick connections to I-35 and Highway 30. DSG has served the Ames market for the past six decades.

"We are thrilled to announce this investment in Ames, Iowa. Our new warehouse facility will provide increased capacity to

serve not only our current waterworks business in the Ames market but also the ability to grow into the broader DSG offering across Iowa. We are furthering our commitment to bring a world-class customer experience to the customers, employee owners, and communities we serve," said Kennedy.

"We are celebrating our 125th year, and with years of success in Ames, we eagerly anticipate the opportunities this expansion will bring to Ames and the broader community," Kennedy added.

DSG is an independent, diverse and 100% employee-owned wholesale distributor of innovative products and solutions for the electrical; plumbing; HVACR; utility; communications; automation; waterworks; and on-site sewer, water, and well industries. DSG has more than 1,000 employee-owners in more than 54 locations across eight states; Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. **CB**

## Appointments

### NIBCO Executives Named

**ELKHART, IN, November 2023**—NIBCO INC., a leading provider of flow control solutions, today announced its Board of Directors has approved several executive leadership appointments. These new appointments are effective immediately and reflect the company's commitment to its long-term growth strategy.



Malm

**Steve Malm** has been appointed as the new chairman and chief executive officer. Malm has been with NIBCO since 1996 and has served as president and chief operating officer from 2006 to 2018 and president and chief executive officer since 2018. He has successfully led the company's growth, innovation, and profitability across various markets and industries. He will now oversee the overall vision, mission, strategy and performance of the company.



Martin

**Ashley Martin** has been promoted to the position of president and chief operating officer. Ms. Martin joined NIBCO in 2012 and has most recently served as executive vice president since 2021. She represents the fifth generation of family leadership since the company's inception in 1904. She has successfully overseen the company's operating performance and profitability. She will now be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the business.



Martin

**Rex Martin** will continue to assist the company with the title of chairman emeritus. Martin has been with the company for over 48 years and has most recently served as chairman since 1995. As a fourth-generation leader, he has been a visionary who has strengthened the company's commitment to its culture, values and mission for the future. He will continue to serve as an advisor and mentor to the executive leadership team.

"We are happy to announce that Ashley Martin has been appointed as the new president and COO of NIBCO," said Steve Malm. "Ashley is a fifth-generation member of our family business and has demonstrated exceptional leadership, vision, and passion for our company's mission, core values and growth. She will continue to lead our company with excellence and integrity, as well as uphold

our legacy of family ownership and stewardship. We are confident that Ashley will take our company to new heights of success and create value for our customers, associates, shareholders, and communities."

### New Presidents at Munch's Supply



Raimondi

**HILLSIDE, IL**—Midwest-based HVAC distributor Munch's Supply announced that Steve Raimondi and Adam Slusher will lead operations in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

Munch's Supply is part of Marcone Group, North America's leading distributor of appliance, HVAC, plumbing, commercial kitchen and pool and spa parts.



Slusher

As market president of Illinois/Indiana, Raimondi will oversee operations at nine locations throughout the two states, incorporating 400 employees.

Slusher is the new market president of Munch's Michigan, where he oversees operations at 11 locations throughout the state, which represents 94 employees. Munch's Michigan includes businesses operating under the names of Tommark and T.A. Gentry.

Raimondi and Slusher will report to Regional Business Unit President Mike Hendershott.

"Steve and Adam are individuals of high character who lead by example and are dedicated to both their teams and customers," Hendershott said. "Those are values that Munch's Supply was built on, making them ideal fits for continuing the company's success."

### Parts Town Plans Massive Arizona Facility

**Parts Town, a global leader in the high-tech distribution of OEM foodservice equipment parts, residential appliance parts, HVAC parts, consumer electronic parts, and related products, announced it plans to open a new, 420,000 square foot, high-tech distribution center in Glendale, AZ in late 2024. The new facility will feature the same high-tech automation and robotics solutions as its flagship Addison, Ill. distribution center, extending in-stock availability, and further enhancing speed of delivery of mission critical parts.**



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Unified VRF outdoor units allow for heat pump or heat recovery operation for the ultimate in application flexibility.



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# Better Tech for Techs

Michael Werner has a heart for technicians. His HOMEX invention provides them with a better process of home diagnostics.

**S**ome of the most unnecessary waste borne by heating and air conditioning businesses are the dispatching misadventures that might have been prevented by an advanced understanding of the HVAC customer's comfort problem.

Customer callbacks alone—those return visits to solve problems caused by technicians not having the right parts or tools, or by an occasional oversight—have been estimated by HVAC consultants to cost HVAC businesses between \$500 to \$700 per incident, so eliminating additional needless “truck rolls” makes lots of sense for both customers and contractors.

Technology has again come to the rescue, this time to provide more efficient dispatch operations, and tech expert/business dynamo Michael Werner is one of the heroes providing that solution.

That technology—HomeX Intelligent Diagnostics—powered by ChatGPT and artificial intelligence, is at this writing being used by several thousand technicians across the country. The artificial intelligence of HomeX diagnoses problems before service technicians are dispatched. This foreknowledge accelerates repairs and ensures contractors have the right parts and tools. The software can facilitate virtual or in-person services. Its tool—“Remote Assist”—allows technicians to diagnose problems via phone, video or chat. It may also eliminate the need for low-value truck rolls through a consumer self-help function, resulting in happy clients

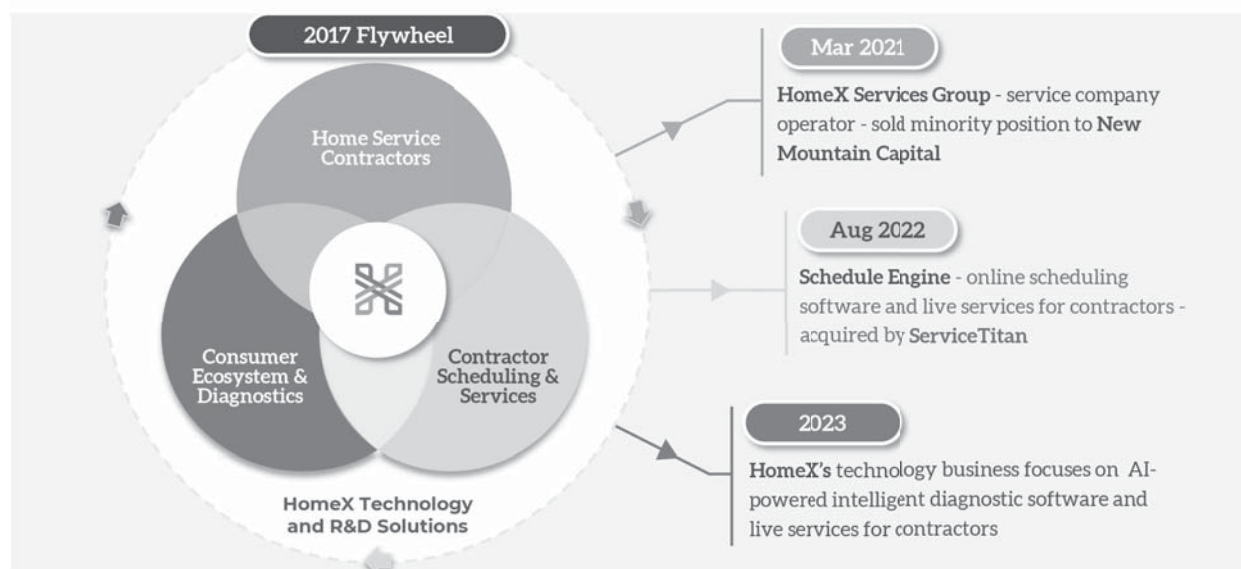
and more productive techs. There is also a version that customer service agents can use when working with residents.

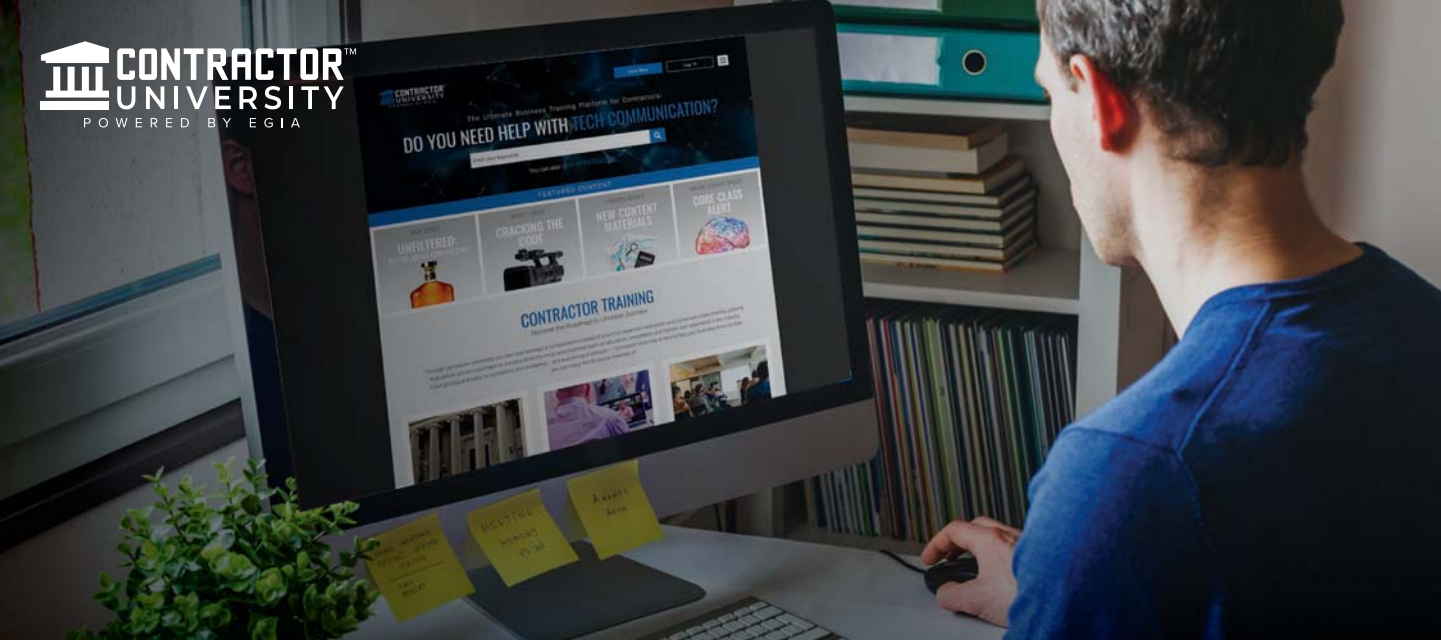
The HomeX Group is a home services platform that marries technology and field services operations. It provides home repair and maintenance services through its service network and a technology platform for providers. HomeX was founded by Werner and other service business experts in 2017, and is headquartered in Chicago.

Prior to starting HomeX, Michael Werner rose through the ranks over 14 years to become president of the very familiar Werner Ladder Co., a family operation that exists to this day. After helping to grow the business to over \$500 million, he led a sale to private equity and the family retained a minority ownership stake. Werner hoped to take the company public and exit his financial partners, but the economy and markets did not match up with his dream of international expansion and a public offering. He stepped down from the ladder business in 2001, after disagreeing with his financial partners who wanted to sell the business to a Fortune 1000 conglomerate.

In 2002 Werner was named president and CEO of Globe Union Group, which became the parent company of Danze, Inc. and Gerber Plumbing Fixtures. During Werner's involvement, Globe Union went from \$100 million to over \$700 million in revenue.

## The evolution of HomeX





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Michael Werner is applying life and business lessons to the development of HOMEX remote HVAC diagnostics. Most important of all is that it benefits the technicians.

Images courtesy of HOMEX

## Time for a Change

In 2012, after six miserable years of a literal depression in the housing market, Werner came to believe that technology could be an essential part of rebuilding the construction and service industries, an opinion he shared in the keynote speech at the 2012 International Kitchen and Bath Show.

His message at that show: build new technology for the industry and leverage relationships to fundamentally make it better for the contractor, designer, builder, distributor, manufacturer, and ultimately, the consumer. “I looked at the industry and said, ‘the industry is broken, and we need to do things differently,’” Werner shared, in an exclusive interview with *Contracting Business*. His goal was to build tech-enabled service businesses, with networks established between the different industry players, all of whom would be valued; there would be no pawns in this game. And to make it work he wanted to help both contractors and consumers.

“To illustrate this idea, I created a ‘flywheel’ that had three parts,” explained Werner (see graphic). “One part was to build technology for contractors. The second was to build technology for consumers, to help them run their homes better; and the third

**“This business has accelerated beautifully and will continue to grow organically and through new partnerships over the next couple of years.”**

— Michael Werner

was to be able to self-perform some of the work and have our own boots on the ground in certain markets. I wanted to do it all carefully because I didn’t want to compete with any other contractors. I wanted to sell the technology to any contractor, even in those regions where we had our own boots on the ground.”

We built each part of the flywheel to be stand-alone, with its own management team and structure. We also knew that at some point it might make sense to sell the technology companies to larger players, and in fact, in 2022 HomeX sold its Schedule Engine division to ServiceTitan.

In the HomeX Services division, the major ‘partnerships’ as Werner calls them, are with Gem Plumbing & Heating, Lincoln, RI; Haller Enterprises, Lititz, PA and Universe Home Services, Seaford, NY. Several add-on acquisitions have since followed, and the 14th partnership is expected to close in December 2023.

In March 2021, New Mountain Capital chipped in \$80 million for a minority stake in the HomeX Services business. New Mountain Capital’s entry

into the mix was a significant step in the development of HomeX Services.

“There were many things that we were doing really well, but many we could do a lot better with the right partner. And our entire approach has not changed. By bringing New Mountain in as a partner, they’ve helped us recruit at the senior level, and improve our operating systems, marketing and finance. It’s wonderful to have a great business partner to help you really grow a business. This business has accelerated beautifully and will continue to grow organically and through new partnerships over the next couple of years.”

Werner said the financial boost HomeX received from New Mountain’s involvement, combined with the advantages of HomeX technology were further enhanced by three differentiations in his business philosophy.

“One is that I come from a family business background and love what makes them different. Second, my core value is to be a positive force, so that as we build our business, we still care,” Werner explained. Third is my belief in “the rule of three.” Three points make a plane. Point and counterpoint cross each other out. But if you have three major points, that’s usually enough to win. Our three points are that we work in multiple segments (residential, commercial and mechanical), provide multiple services (HVAC, plumbing and electrical) and operate with an integrated light Center of Excellence structure. As a result, we’re different than most companies out there that acquire small, \$5 million to \$15 million service companies, and just apply a playbook, and expect the playbook to do everything. We are busy building a ‘great’ business.”

## Major Influences

Michael Werner was born in Canada and raised in Chicago. He earned a bachelor’s degree at Stanford University, and after college worked as an English teacher in Taiwan and then served with the US Embassy and the International Rescue Committee in Thailand, helping to resettle Cambodian refugees. It was an education in the good and the bad of human nature.

“I saw firsthand how pernicious communism and the Marxist ideology were, and how the Cambodians, who were just beautiful people, saw a quarter of their countrymen murdered in the name of ideology. It had a real impact on me and how I think about life and democracy, and how important democracy is, and the importance of being a ‘positive force.’”

Werner then returned to Stanford and earned a master’s degree in Engineering Management and then moved to New York as a mergers and acquisitions specialist for Goldman Sachs.

"The M&A world was just getting going again, after two back-to-back global recessions and it was fun to be a young person," Werner recalled. "And they were so busy. I was working a hundred hours a week, drinking from a fire hose and loving every minute of it."

His desire to raise a family in California with his wife Laura sparked their move back to the West Coast, where Werner worked for four years for one of his Goldman Sachs clients.

Werner's 14 years with the family's Werner Ladder business was a natural next step. There, an uncle shared the philosophy of turning negatives into positives, and weaknesses into strengths. Werner also learned the immense value of meeting with customers, during many miles of driving around Southern California to visit electricians, plumbers and HVAC technicians as a route salesperson. He progressed to be Western region manager, national accounts manager, vice president of sales and marketing and ultimately president.

"Working with contractors gave me a great appreciation for them. It ties into my appreciation and respect for people who work with their hands. And I coupled that with what I gained from my grandfather, who served in the First and Second World Wars. In WWII he was a 50-year-old Lt. Colonel who would climb up rope ladders on the sides of troop ships."

Well-equipped with myriad life lessons, vast business experience and his own brand of positivity, Werner proceeded to start

the company he believed would bring technology to the rescue of the champion of service industries: the technicians.

"One of the core things I said I want our company to do, is to absolutely put technicians on a pedestal. In the HomeX Services division, our objective is not to be the best place to work. I want us to be the only place where people want to work. To take such great care of our people that they wouldn't think of working anywhere else, and to inspire them to recruit other people to work for us. And it really has worked, because our retention rates are between 80 and 90+ percent, in an industry where retention is usually 50 percent. That's because we have done such good work to take care of our people and have come to be the only place where they want to work. To help do that, we're building out what we call a "center of excellence" approach, and by building on what each company had in place."

Werner said the "center of excellence" approach is built upon best practices so that company leaders can focus on what matters most in each company. And he loves that most of the centers are led by leaders that were already working in the partnership businesses.

"The key areas where we're doing that in each company are sales and marketing, supply chain, finance, human resources, M&A, and more," Werner said. "I've yet to find an HVAC company president who wants to spend his days doing accounting." **CB**

*In January: A look at the inner workings of the HomeX Service Division process.*

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A powerful marketing tool can be yours when you use video to showcase mechanical HVAC and construction projects.



# Video Presents the Reel You



Victor Blasco is a digital marketing expert and co-founder and CEO of the Explainer Video companies Yum Yum Videos and Yum Yum Digital.  
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In the competitive field of construction and contracting work, where your credibility is as vital as the concrete, steel, and tools you work with, the power of communication and brand perception cannot be overstated.

Clear and transparent exchanges with potential clients have always been the cornerstone of most construction companies' growth, ensuring client expectations are met and exceeded. But in today's digital marketing landscape, those exchanges start long before a client gets in touch with you—they start when people look your company up to learn more about what it can offer.

High-quality video content lets you tell your brand's story, engage your audience, and communicate your commitment to excellence. All

critical factors that can be the difference between a project landing on your desk or someone else's!

Read on to see how video can propel your company to new heights and help you carve your mark in the construction industry.

## Pitching Your Services With Video

As you aim to pitch your services to potential clients, it's essential to highlight the core qualities and value of your work, but you should also recognize the storytelling potential inherent in videos. After all, great visuals paired with a good story can significantly enhance your ability to engage curious people long enough to convey what you can do for them and ultimately persuade potential clients to reach out.



Project Showcase and Explainer Videos are two popular styles you can use to display your work and weave some narrative in the way you communicate with your audience.

## Showcase Videos

At their core, these videos work as robust visual portfolios for your services, giving you a platform where your work and skills are in the spotlight.

It's worth mentioning that you don't have to limit yourself to just exhibiting the result; you can (and arguably should) craft a compelling journey of the entire process that goes into a project. That way, you can create opportunities to highlight the challenges encountered throughout the construction process and your ability to navigate and overcome these obstacles with proficiency.

However you go about it, though, these videos are there to provide your potential customers a glimpse at the outcomes they can expect—allowing them to see not just what you've built but the dreams and possibilities you've helped realize along the way.

## Explainer Videos

These videos are great to give audiences a deeper dive into your projects and the services you provide.

The style follows a structure optimized to simplify intricate or complex aspects of what you do, using clear and concise language, a narrative three-act structure, and engaging animations to make information more approachable to potential clients.

For instance, if you're working on a project involving complex structural engineering or sustainable construction practices, explainers can help you break down this information into digestible stories to communicate to potential clients the info

**Explainer videos break down information into digestible stories, to communicate to potential clients the information they need.**

they need in an effective and engaging manner.

With various styles and approaches at your disposal, explainers can give your construction firm an edge, showing what you can do for your clients and doing so in a way that gets them to call.

## Time-Lapse Videos

You can use Time-lapse Videos to create a sense of excitement and anticipation around your projects by condensing weeks or even months of work into a few captivating minutes of footage showing your progress.

This allows viewers to witness the entire journey, from the project's inception to its completion, in a brief and mesmerizing piece of content.

## Project Walkthroughs

Project Walkthroughs provide a comprehensive view of the project at different stages, giving your clients a sense of involvement and providing a transparent glimpse at what you do.

**Time lapse videos create a sense of excitement and anticipation around your projects.**

By narrating these walkthroughs and explaining key milestones, you not only keep clients informed but also help them understand the project's progression and welcome its unique features.

## Project Updates

Regular Project Updates in video form are a proactive way to keep clients in the loop, fostering a sense of partnership and collaboration without requiring much in the way of resources to produce.

These types of updates go beyond the conventional email or document reports, offering a more engaging and informative medium to deliver information. They usually include brief interviews with project managers or site engineers, which can also help highlight their expertise and dedication.

By sharing these insights in video format, you build help trust and confidence with your existing clients, assuring them that their project is in capable hands and emphasizing to your potential clients your commitment to a successful project journey.

The mechanical HVAC and construction industries are more than bricks and mortar or rooftop units and chillers. Equally vital are the intangible elements of trust, credibility, and the immense value of your standing within the field.

Videos, in this context, are a powerful tool that can help you establish a reputation that endures the test of time and keeps bringing in new clients that spur growth. Just remember this type of content goes beyond just showcasing your work, as these videos can foster an emotional connection that lingers in the minds of your audience.

Start creating captivating videos today and watch your construction business flourish. Through the lens of video, you have the potential to reshape your industry presence, building not only structures but also a legacy of trust and excellence. **CB**

*Edited for space. See entire article online at <https://www.contractingbusiness.com/21277646>.*





**Thank you all for your support over the years, and the recognition you've given me for my efforts.**

## I'm Not Done Yet!

**A**ll good things must come to an end, and I'm afraid that's the case with my time with this publication. They're bringing in a rotating cast of current HVAC "influencers," and I must say that I'm all for it. I'm really looking forward to what these folks have to say.

It's been over 30 years since I wrote my first article for this fine publication. Since then, I've contributed over 260 of my articles, and loved every moment of it.

### An Attitude of Gratitude

I'm a big believer in feeling grateful for whatever you have. I make it a point to think about things for which I am grateful as I drift off to sleep and when I first wake up.

I'm eternally grateful for my time with this magazine, and all the folks who've read what I had written and provided feedback. I'm grateful that Terry McIver was my editor since 2016. He's a very easy guy to work with. A special thanks goes to Dominick Guarino, who published my first article in *Contracting Business*, and Jeff Forker, publisher at that time. They were always very helpful to the new guy who was just starting out on the speaking/consulting circuit.

Frequently, the first thing I think about is how grateful I am that I learned how to close sales. Right along with that, I'm grateful that I fell "bass-akwards" into HVAC residential service and replacement sales, and that I chose to stick with it, despite the struggles I had with it my first two years in the business.

Naturally, that leads me to my gratitude that I started my career at one of the greatest HVAC service and replacement companies in the business, Modern Air Conditioning in Fort Myers, Florida. Of course, I can't mention Modern Air without thinking about how fortunate I was that, at that time, Modern Air was still being run by Ron Smith, one of the best bosses a salesperson could ever have. I've often stated that, if he still owned Modern Air, and still ran it the way he did when I worked for him, I'd still be working there as a salesman, and loving every second of it.

Ron Smith's real genius is in recruiting. He hired a Sales Manager, Peter Higgins, who brought out the best in me and ultimately got me my start in consulting and training. I'm really grateful for that.

Ron Smith also brought Tom McCart into the business. He taught me a lot.

Naturally, I feel a deep sense of gratitude to all the contractors who supported me over these last 30+ years. I'm especially grateful for my first two

clients, Aaron York, Sr., of Aaron York's Quality Air Conditioning in Indianapolis, and Don Wright, of Air Conditioning Unlimited in Memphis.

### My Final Pieces of Advice:

- Learn about AI, accept it, and adapt to it.
- When you're making good money, don't spend it.
- Treat your employees as though they're your customers. Don't overwork them.
- There's some good in your employees knowing that you've been successful, but don't flaunt your wealth.
- You do not have to be an extrovert to make it in sales. Salesmanship is not "personality-driven". You don't make sales with your charming personality or fancy sales techniques. You make sales by delivering a superior level of service.
- Whenever you're proposing something, make sure you land them on the "sense of urgency", which is the reason to take action now.
- If I am sold on the recommendations I am about to make, I consider the job 80% sold: never recommend a customer buy anything that you wouldn't buy yourself if you were in their position.
- There is one person, and one person only, who is responsible for your success and your happiness—and that's YOU!
- Your life is nothing more than a result of the decisions you have made to-date. Make wise decisions.
- Success does not happen by accident. Success happens on purpose. Success is not a matter of luck or good timing. Success is a result of planning followed by deliberate right action.

This isn't the last you'll see of me. Who knows? It may not be that last you'll see of me in this publication. I just won't be doing a monthly column any more. I've got two books that are in the final editing stage, and I plan on releasing them next year.

**Thank you all for your support over the years and all the recognition you've given me for my efforts. I feel like I've made a difference. CB**

**Charlie Greer** was voted Favorite Industry Sales Trainer and HVAC Consultant-of-the-Year. He's also a member of the Contracting Business Hall of Fame and the creator of "Tec Daddy's Service Technician Survival School on DVD." For info on Charlie's services, go to [www.hvacprofitboosters.com](http://www.hvacprofitboosters.com). Email your comments on this column or your sales questions to [charlie@charliegreer.com](mailto:charlie@charliegreer.com)

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Choose your goals wisely, then take steady baby steps towards achieving them. Before you know it, change will start to take hold in leaps and bounds.

## Tips and Great Reads for a Successful New Year!

**W**hy wait till January to start making resolutions for the new year? By then your year is already under way and you will find yourself in the whirlwind of all the usual issues and decisions.

December is the perfect time to practice some introspection and plan for things you want to accomplish in 2024. Below is a list of four things to consider starting, and four things to think about stopping as the new year unfolds.

Be careful not to get overwhelmed by taking these actions all at once. Pick a few that are most important to you, then commit to a timeline for each of them. I've included the titles of some great books that can help you navigate many of these areas.

### Four Things to Start Doing

**1. Read at least one business-related book a month.** Just like we eat food to nourish our bodies, reading nourishes our minds. Whether you like to read physical books or listen to them on your smart phone, try to complete at least one book a month. I personally fit in a lot of "reading" time listening to audiobooks—both on long drives, and regular commutes.

**2. Practice personal accountability.** If you are an owner, you don't have a boss. So how do you keep yourself accountable? QBQ—The Question Behind the Question, by John G. Miller is a great book to help you ask yourself the right questions about your leadership style and personal accountability. Even if you're not the owner of your company you'll find QBQ very helpful in holding yourself accountable.

**3. Work more ON your business—less IN it.** As owners we tend to get immersed in the details of the day-to-day. While necessary when we're first starting out, it's important to pull ourselves out of doing the work. We need to spend more time building a sustainable business and an environment our people want to work in. I can't think of any better book than the timeless, The E-Myth, by Michael Gerber to put you on this path.

**4. Improve and document your processes and systems.** Sometimes this is easier said than done. Have you tried to document all the processes and systems in your company, only to find them scattered through different computers, paper files, and online storage? When was the last time you updated your documents to match how your business operates today?

A fantastic segue to The E-Myth is a book called Systemology by David Jenyns. The author provides a concrete, easy-to-follow roadmap to help you

document, organize, and improve the processes and systems in your company.

### Four Things to Stop Doing

**1. Selling products or services that aren't profitable or useful.** Sometimes we take on a new product or service and forget to evaluate its effectiveness on a regular basis. Make sure you aren't selling something that doesn't fit anymore with your company's vision and mission—or just doesn't have any hope of being profitable.

**2. Thinking you need to have all the answers.** As leaders of our companies, we tend to be the person everyone goes to solve problems or answer virtually any question about your products or services.

I highly recommend you explore "Change Your Questions, Change Your Life". This fable by Marilee Adams teaches you to get out of traditional judgmental thinking to adopt a more "Questions-Based Thinking" approach. Instead of being the answer person you become a questions person allowing your team to become part of the solution.

**3. Leaving Your Culture to Chance.** Is your culture intentional—or did it just develop on its own? With some introspection you and your leadership team can establish the exact culture you want for your company based on your values and vision. Traction by Gino Wickman can help your company build an operating system to keep you on a solid path of growth and success.

**4. Procrastinating.** We've all experienced procrastination at one point or another in our lives. The key is to shake it off by adopting new habits. One of those is a good prioritization and time management system.

Steven Covey's, First Things First is a great classic read to help you get back on track to work on things that may be less urgent but more important than a lot of the challenges you are faced with each day. While time management is important, prioritization is the real key to getting the right things done.

Feeling a little overwhelmed? Remember, the only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. Choose your goals wisely, then take steady baby steps towards achieving them. Before you know it change will start to take hold in leaps and bounds. **CB**

**Dominick Guarino** is President & CEO of National Comfort Institute (NCI), ([nationalcomfortinstitute.com](http://nationalcomfortinstitute.com)), the nation's premier High-Performance training, certification, and membership organization. NCI is focused on improving consumer safety, comfort, health, and saving energy, and helping contractors grow and become more profitable. His e-mail is [domg@ncihvac.com](mailto:domg@ncihvac.com).



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Ever since the Hyde family opened Hyde's Air Conditioning in Indio, California, they've believed that employee success is company success. Hyde's strategy of prioritizing their people has translated to employees in recovery getting a second chance, techs being promoted to managers, and a business that's flourishing to this day. And while maintaining a high level of excellence is a challenge, they'll be ready. Because a business that values its people is one that's **building a higher standard.**



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