

THE PLUMBING ADVOCATE

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Thermostats: Assistance Required

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A. O. Smith Priming Contractors For Industry Changes

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**TPS Supply /
The Plumbing Store**

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MEMBER PROFILE >

T.P.S. SUPPLY / THE PLUMBING STORE, MORRISTOWN, NJ

"It is still easier for a small business to service their customers on a more personal basis"

The Plumbing Store (T.P.S) has been in business for 40 years and is now under the direction of second generation family member, President Anthony Milelli. T.P.S Supply recently relocated to a larger facility providing improved inventory levels and greater counter area to better service their customers. With our larger counter space we were able to add a self-serve area of coffees, water and snacks - this is greatly appreciated by plumbers and homeowners.

"Our new facility allowed us to add a showroom to help spark additional business. We now have the ability to show and sell lines such as Gerber and Danze which has all helped generate additional sales to homeowners," explains Milelli.

Serving primarily plumbing and heating contractors, T.P.S Supply is constantly seeking ways to better serve their customers. "Service first, is our mantra and it is still easier for a small business to service their customers on a more personal basis," explains Milelli. Beyond service, T.P.S Supply looks to enhance their customers experience every day. Breakfast, lunches and sometimes BBQ's are provided to contractor customers along with the teachings of a certain product. In addition, monthly training and sales events are offered to customers. Classes include product training and business skills such as selling, collecting and general business practices. On a larger scale to improve efficiency and customer service, T.P.S Supply will be implementing the xTuple software package.

A challenge that impacts virtually every wholesaler is profit margin compression. Milelli tells, "My biggest concern is operating a business today with ever rising cost. I don't believe it's hard to make a dollar, but I do believe to keep .43 cents (30% margin) of that dollar is becoming harder and harder." New opportunities for T.P.S Supply will evolve around investment into technology. Milelli indicates, "Technology is going to make us different and more unique. We have partnered with xTuple, Trade Service, web designers and an app designer in an effort to make our customers and workers experience easier and



Milwaukee Counter

more efficient. These partnerships will allow our customers to check our stock online, and even place an order online for delivery anywhere. I don't believe that the internet will take over our business, but I do believe in finding ways for customers to do business with us in easier and more cost effective ways."



TPS Supply BBQ Event

"Unique" is an appropriate word to describe T.P.S Supply; at 28 years old, Milelli has a different perspective on business in comparison to his competitors. "Being young and eager I try to let my customers teach me what they need so I can better my business. My competition is mature; they tend to be less flexible, which provides us with an opportunity. We're willing to open the store after hours if a customer needs material, deliver material to job site on demand and add particular items into inventory if requested. With this said, we know we need to maintain a balance and stay grounded to our core principals, otherwise we are a walking time bomb and our customer has the detonator," reports Milelli.

With the 2014 Equity Meeting approaching, Milelli says, "The Equity meeting is very valuable as I was able to speak to other wholesalers who have years of experience and insight. It was great to be able to spend days talking about business's and sharing best practices with fellow members. I am excited about this year's meeting. If I learn one thing during the meeting that I can apply to my business that will be invaluable to me."

Visit www.tpssupply.com for more information



TPS Training Class

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