



THE PLUMBING **ADVOCATE**

A PUBLICATION OF EQUITY PLUMBING

FALL 2014

Legend Valve & Fitting Training Program

Thermostats: Assistance Required

More Gridlock in Store, What Will Washington Do Now?

A. O. Smith Priming Contractors For Industry Changes

Marketing Is More Than Hats, Hot Dogs And Hawaii

Merit Brass

**TPS Supply /
The Plumbing Store**

Ludwig, Smith, & Walker, Inc.

MERIT
BRASS



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



MEMBER SERVICE PROVIDERS



On Line Training Courses

Website: www.opensesame.com

Contact: Tom Turnbull
Phone: 503-729-3042
Email: tom.turnbull@opensesame.com

OpenSesame is the world's largest marketplace for online training courses, with 22,000+ courses from more than 380 sellers. Buyers can research, select and purchase elearning courses on topics from healthcare to customer service, all in one place. Preview courses, read reviews and buy courses with no expensive subscriptions or long-term commitments and use them instantly online, by email or in any learning management system. OpenSesame makes online training flexible, affordable and simple. Reference Coupon Code: EQUITY to receive special discount!



Website Design & Consulting

Website: www.go-spi.com

Contact: Rich Schmitt
Phone: 314-872-9199
Email: rich@go-spi.com

Schmitt Profit Tools is a provider of catalog software and services for paper, handheld and web storefronts as well as industry focused website design and price management and analysis software. All of the tools can be linked to most of the ERP systems common to the industry.



Office Supplies

Website: www.staplesadvantage.com

Contact: Kimberly Matta-Jackson
Phone: 888-224-3784 x4519
Email: kimberly.matta-jackson@staples.com

Staples through Staples Business Advantage Program you can take advantage of the special pricing programs set up for you by Equity. For all your Paper, Toner and Cartridges, Office Supplies, Office Furniture and business equipment, see Staples and make it EASY! Join the growing list of satisfied Equity members who use Staples for their office supplies and more.



Inventory & Distribution Management

Website: www.distributionteam.com

Contact: Jason Bader
Phone: 503-282-2333
Email: jason@distributionteam.com

The Distribution Team provides a myriad of products and service to help today's independent distributor cope with this rapidly changing industry. Focused on inventory management, The Distribution team can also help you with all facets of your distributorship.



Distributor Pricing Service

Website: www.tradeservice.com/tours

Contact: Robert Stone
Phone: 317-733-8939
Email: Robert_stone@tradeservice.com

Trade Service offers three essential products for the plumbing distributor: 1) eDataFlex which updates your ERP system with accurate data; 2) the TRA-SER program which allows staff quick access to pricing so they can sell more; and 3) Submittal Manager for those of you who build submittals for your customers it can shave 50-75% off the time it takes to build them. Take a tour of any of these at: www.tradeservice.com/tours



Computer Software

Website: www.xtuple.com

Contact: Stacey Pandeloglou
Phone: 757-435-1733
Email: stacey@xtuple.com

xTuple – affordable software designed for independent wholesale plumbing distributors. Priced for distributors of all sizes, xTuple runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, mobile devices, or in the cloud. Features include robust accounting with fully integrated CRM, Sales Order/Quote Entry interface to Vendor Catalogs or Trade Service, automatic price updating, auto-email of documents, full EDI capability, xTupleCommerce (everywhere Commerce for your website), Private forum for Equity Plumbing members. Options: Perpetual or Annual License, Cloud.