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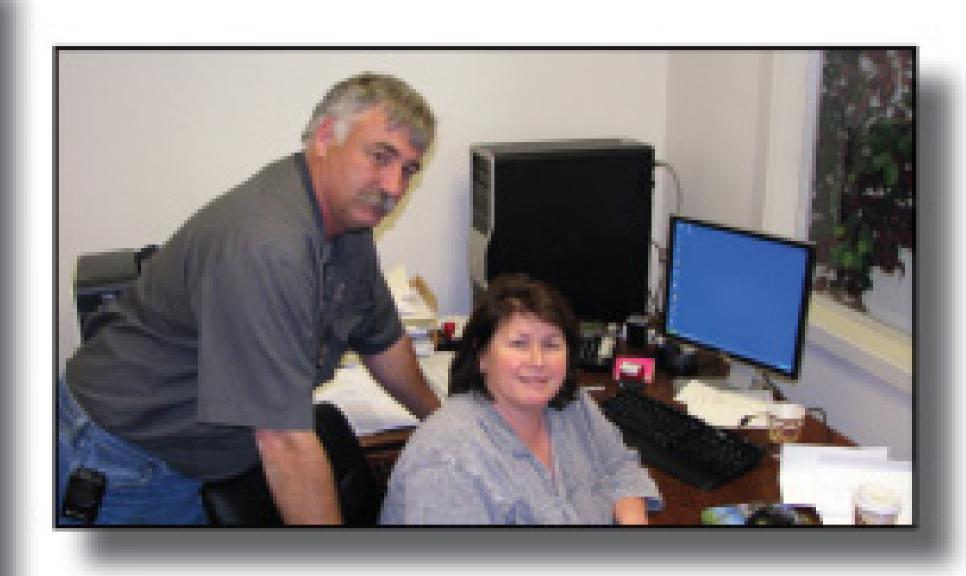
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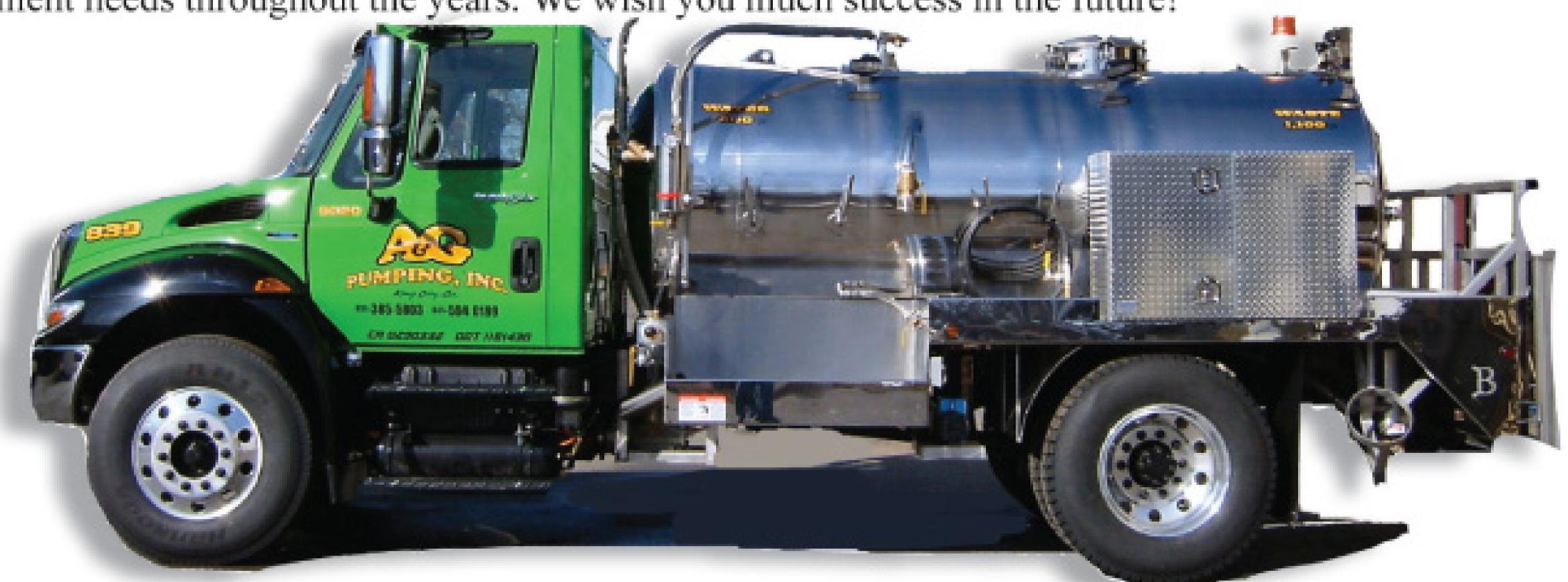
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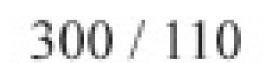




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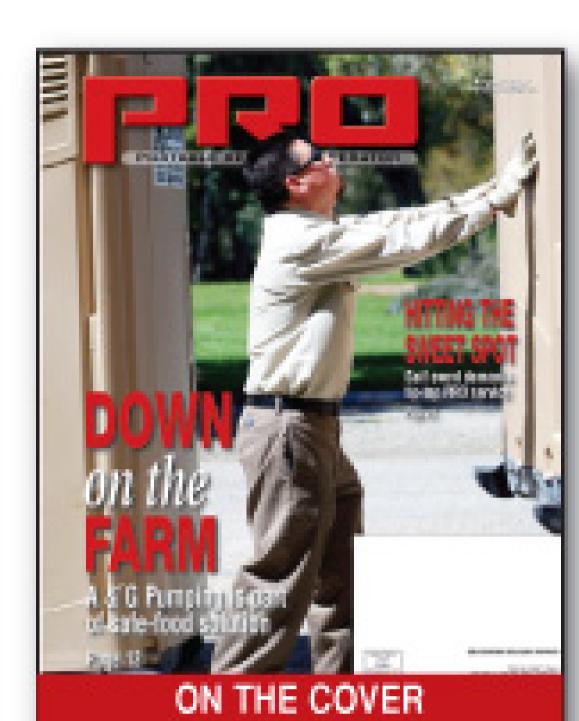
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Office hours 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. CT M-F

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CIRCULATION: Circulation averages 8,475 copies per month. This figure includes both U.S. and International distribution.

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Spit & Shine

Look good and get personal with clients. These are customer service tips for PROs who want to clean up in a challenging economy.

By Jim Kneiszel

t's more important now than ever to provide sparkling customer service. With a decline in construction and more and more portable sanitation providers fighting over fewer and fewer jobs, premium customer service is the best way to win over and retain customers.

For the first time, we added a customer service theme to the *PRO* editorial calendar for 2009. Of course, we often deal with quality service issues throughout the year, but we made the decision to give the topic a bigger emphasis this month. Looking at where the economy has taken us the past 10 months, our timing — totally coincidental — couldn't have been better.

Since I was a teenager, I've worked in jobs that demand good people skills and quality customer service. From my days of slinging hot dogs and peanuts at baseball games to serving readers of *PRO* today, being cordial, responsive and putting a professional foot forward have always been an important part of the job description.

Along the way, I've seen a lot of masterful customer service efforts and witnessed a good deal of scary-bad service. With that experience as a backdrop, here are my favorite tips for PROs who want to improve their company's customer service:

BE RESPONSIVE

More than ever, customers are impatient for answers. Use of the Internet, cell phones and text messaging has ramped up the demand for instant response to all inquiries. Pick up the phone on the first ring. Check your voicemail and answer calls and texts as soon as it's practical. You may not like the many interruptions, but leave your e-mail open all day and respond to messages promptly. The only time you should delay electronic or phone communications is when you're already focused on a customer or a critical task. Remember the last time you Googled to find a service provider? When the list popped up, you likely called one name, then quickly went on to the next company on the list if you didn't get an answer. Rapid response will boost the bottom line for your business.

On a service route, never leave a restroom in "just good enough" condition. Make sure it's in "I'd send my grandmother in there" condition. Set a cleanliness standard for yourself, and never move onto the next restroom until you've met the standard.

REMEMBER NAMES

I'm not great at remembering names, so I marvel at people who have a talent for it. If you want to learn from the best, watch a politician. Years ago, I interviewed then Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson. A few years later, I ran into him at an event and was shocked when he walked right up to me, shook my hand and made a point of calling me by name. I don't know how he remembered, but his name recall is a talent that helped him get elected four times. If you don't have a knack for matching names and faces, you can still make a favorable impression by repeating a customer's name during conversation or recalling details from past conversations. This personalizes relationships and shows you're engaged in service decisions.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Long ago, when I was a size 40 and my waist and inseam were both 32 inches, I got a job selling men's suits in a department store. One day, my supervisor pulled me aside and gently told me I needed to iron my clothes if I wanted to keep my job. I learned to put a sharp crease in my dress shirt sleeves and had no more problems. If you want to command respect in the field and promote professionalism, you need to tuck in that clean uniform shirt, wear slacks that are clean and not threadbare, and walk with a posture that shows you mean business.

CLEAN AND CONSISTENT WINS THE DAY

On a service route, never leave a restroom in "just good enough" condition. Make sure it's in "I'd send my grandmother in there" condition. Set a cleanliness standard for yourself, and never move onto the next restroom until you've met the standard ... even if it means falling a little behind schedule making a filthy unit right. You never know when a client decision maker is going to use your unit, and you never know when a prospective new client is going to use your unit. If every unit is cleaned to your satisfaction, you will retain existing customers and attract new ones.

ADD "YES" AND "I'M SORRY" TO YOUR VOCABULARY

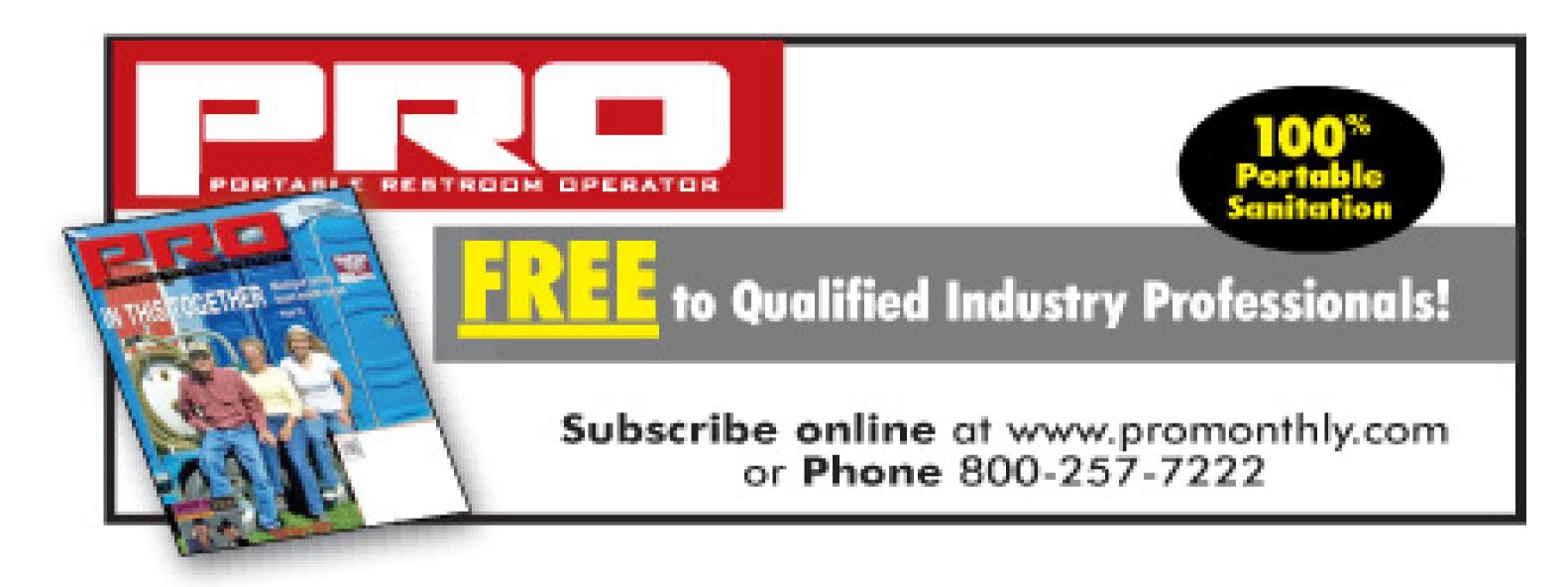
Sometimes we resist saying "yes" to a request, or to acknowledge a mistake. Why is that? As a writer for so many years, I've been called on mistakes made in print a few times and have had to apologize. Nobody likes to make mistakes, but everybody makes them. We need to understand when we've failed, quickly accept responsibility, say we're sorry and move on. Say "Yes" to requests whenever you can, take responsibility for mistakes and you're likelier to build loyalty with customers.

DEVELOP A SIGNATURE SERVICE

You know how the maid leaves a mint on your pillow at a five-star hotel? While I'm not suggesting you leave a piece of candy after servicing a restroom, you can add a classy little touch or small gesture to your service routine to help your business stand out from the competition. It might come in the form of a convenience accessory built into a special event unit, like a corner shelf with a few toiletries, a unique air freshener or a solar light to brighten the unit. Or perhaps a floral arrangement or privacy skirting set up outside the restroom. Check out what your competitors are doing and come up with a creative solution.

ALWAYS FOLLOW UP

How do you know if your customer service efforts are working if you don't ask your customers? Contact your clients after every job to ask if they were happy with the service and if they have any suggestions for you to improve customer service. Call them, send out an evaluation postcard or shoot them an e-mail the day after you pick up their units. Customers can teach you valuable lessons and the follow-up might be the first step to securing your next job.











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Writer Judy Kneiszel has operated her own small business for a decade and is familiar with the many rewards and challenges of business ownership. Write to her with questions, comments or topic suggestions at thewordhouse@ameritech.net.



How Are We Doing?

If you want to learn what your company is doing right (and wrong), ask your customers by conducting a satisfaction survey

By Judy Kneiszel

In today's sluggish business climate, customer satisfaction is critical for any company's success. Even if employees are tripping over themselves to try and please customers, there's no way to know for sure if the extra efforts are effective unless you do one more thing: Ask! Yes, the best way to find out if customers are satisfied is to ask them.

But wouldn't you already know if customers were unhappy? Wouldn't someone have told you? Not necessarily. Some customers don't like confrontation and will just stop doing business with a company that has not met their expectations rather than complain. Employees might not be passing along the complaints they receive because they think it would make them look bad. Also, they are viewing every job and customer interaction from their side — the provider side.

You want to get the customers' view because one of the biggest advantages you can have over your competition is strong customer relationships. Strong relationships are built through dialogue, and surveys can get that ball rolling.

SURVEY METHODS

How you gather information from customers is up to you, but make the most of whichever method you choose:

Phone: When a customer is signing a contract for your services, ask

Asking customers for feedback through a survey says you appreciate them. It acknowledges their importance to your company. In return, they will provide you with valuable information you can use to improve your service and bottom line.

permission to give them a call at a later date to ask how satisfied they were with the service.

Mail: Send a printed questionnaire and a postage-paid return envelope to customers.

E-mail: To avoid breaking spam laws by randomly blasting out surveys via e-mail, ask customers if you can send them a customer satisfaction survey to complete and e-mail back to you.

SURVEYS THAT WORK

For a customer satisfaction survey to be of use to your company, it has to be conducted in a way that persuades customers to take the time and thoughtfully complete it. It has to be well thought out and clearly written so it will uncover the type of information that will really be of help to your company performance. Follow these suggestions to make a survey work for your company:

A good survey has a goal. Companies use surveys for different purposes. Some want to evaluate the perceptions and performance of a specific product or service, while others want to gather general information about the overall customer experience.

You may want to get a feel for customer satisfaction with regard to

the cleanliness of your portable restrooms before deciding to change cleaning products, deodorizer fragrance, cleaning frequency or methods used for cleaning. In that case you'd stick to questions relevant to cleaning but you wouldn't ask if customers like your billing policies or delivery practices.

Having a goal in mind before implementing a survey will help you write good questions, and allow you to set expectations within the company around the results of the survey. If you can explain to staff exactly what you are trying to find out through the surveys, they are more likely to support the idea of surveying.

Don't waste time asking about things you are unwilling to change. Choose question topics based on what you could really change based on the answers. If you are unwilling or unable to purchase softer toilet tissue, what's the point of asking customers if they are satisfied with the softness of the tissue currently placed in your units?

Word questions well. You want to draw out how customers think your company has met their specific needs through your product or service. You don't want their opinion on portable restrooms in general; but your restrooms and service specifically.

Make sure the survey is easy to respond to. Customers will not respond to a survey that requires too much effort. Filling out the survey is a courtesy to your company, so keep the convenience of your customer in mind. E-mailing a survey or sending a link to a Web form reduces the time it takes to answer your request. However, if your customer base is less technology-oriented, you may get better results surveying by telephone or mail. The key to success is to keep the time spent on the survey brief, but meaningful.

Ask good question(s). Ask basic customer satisfaction questions like: How satisfied are you with your decision to hire Oscar's Portable Restrooms? How satisfied are you with the service you received?

Also ask customer loyalty questions: How likely are you to buy from us again?

How likely are you to recommend our company to others?

Ask what the customer liked and didn't like about the products, the service and the company.

Vary your questions. Consider how long the questions will take to answer. It is best to mix the types of questions you ask. If every question is open-ended, customers might decide it will take too much time to compose responses and quit the survey before they complete it. If every question is a multiple choice, yes/no or a rating, the survey may not take long to fill out, but the quality of information you receive may not be helpful.

Make it timely. A monthly satisfaction survey sent to a small group of your regular customers allows you to chart your progress over shorter periods of time and shows any impact your changes have made. A sharp decline in satisfaction serves as a red flag. A steady increase is something you can tout in your marketing efforts.

Sending a brief survey following a sales transaction, event or interaction gets immediate feedback while the experience is still fresh in customers' minds. This type of survey gets the customer's gut reaction.

Don't over-survey. Don't survey every customer every time. But if there have been changes in your company that may affect responses since the last time you surveyed a particular client — or responses may for some reason change seasonally — ask again.

Act on the results. Once you have completed and evaluated the surveys, use the results to improve your business. If you ask people for their time and opinions and do nothing with responses, the customers will get annoyed and won't bother to help you out again. Accept criticisms with an open mind and try to solve the problems or change customers' perceptions. One benefit to being a small business is the ability to turn feedback into immediate changes. The big guys can't move as fast.

BE POLITE AND SHARE

Share survey results with staff so they can contribute ideas for improvement and share in the credit for successes. And, finally, you may want to send a thank-you gift to customers who complete a survey and share how their feedback has impacted, or will impact, the company.

Customers expect a lot from the companies they do business with these days and retaining your customer base is critical to your success. By conducting a short, effective survey, you can learn what your customers view as your strengths and weaknesses and what makes them stay loyal to your company.

Asking customers for feedback through a survey says you appreciate them. It acknowledges their importance to your company. In return, they will provide you with valuable information you can use to improve your service and bottom line.







A & G Pumping Inc.

King City, Calif.

Owners: Angie and George Young

Years in business: 16

Employees: 14

Specialties: Farm sanitation

Service area: Agricultural fields surround-

ing King City, Calif., and Yuma, Ariz.

Web site: www.pumperman.com

ing City, Calif., lies in the heart of the lush Salinas Valley, a rich agricultural region where crops such as lettuce, tomatoes, broccoli, and artichokes give it the nickname "America's Salad Bowl." George Young spent 20 years working as a ranch foreman in the Valley, but in 1993 saw an opportunity to head in a different direction.

"One day I'm out in the field with my bosses," he recalls. "And they go, 'Man, somebody needs to start another (portable restroom) business down here."

Thus began A & G Pumping Inc., whose

Utilizing clean-service techniques and custom field-ready restroom trailers, A & G Pumping Inc. is part of the safe-food solution in California's produce-growing region

business today is 90 percent agriculture-related sanitation in a territory extending 100 miles north to San Jose and 100 miles south to Santa Maria. By law, farm workers can't be more than five minutes from a restroom, so the

company provides two- and three-unit trailers that move around with the crews.

CONTAMINATION CONCERNS

The most critical requirement for this niche market is to keep on top of the ever-changing food safety laws, which have greatly increased in light of recent salmonella and E. coli scares. This has affected every part of the company's operation. "We have to have our standard operating procedures on how we clean the units, how we fill the waters, where we dump, and our training schedules," Young says.

George and Angie Young started out by borrowing \$5,000 for a down payment on a '93 Chevy 1-ton pickup, which Southern California Tank & Fabricating outfitted with a 600-gallon waste/250-gallon freshwater steel tank. Angie Young took over from there, servicing privately owned units on nearby farms.

George Young kept his job, but at night started building two-unit trailers in his garage after purchasing 20 restrooms from PolyPortables Inc. As fast as he could build them he'd rent them out, and two years later he was able to quit his job and work full time for the business. They purchased another truck, a '95 International and added septic service. In 1997, they hired their first employee, enabling Angie Young to run the office.

In addition to the trailered units, A & G provides freestanding units in fixed locations around the ranches for other types of workers.

The company's current inventory includes

CALIFORNIA



Members of the A & G team (front row, from left) are Ramon Rimirez, Martin Matias, Juan Camacho

and Pedro Camacho. Pictured in the back row (from left) are Frances Nichols, Angie Young, George

Young, Cody Young, Ramon Martinez, Rafael Camacho, Sal Robles, Crecencio Rico and Everado

500 trailer mounts and 1,500 unmounted units, almost all tan Satellite Industries Tufways. They also have 20 ADA units from Satellite Industries and 150 PolyPortables Inc. hand-wash stations. The company does not work many special events but did purchase one Presidential trailer from Advanced Containment Systems Inc. a couple years ago for weddings.

Rivera. At right are owners Angle and George Young.

MANAGING THE TEAM

Today their foreman, Ramon Martinez, oversees 10 drivers. Israel Ornelas is their mechanic, son Cody Young runs the shop, and Frances Nichols handles office duties with Angie.

All drivers have certifications documenting that they've attended food safety seminars. "I make my drivers go so they are up to date on everything that goes on," Young says. Prospective employees are thoroughly screened and then put on a two-month probationary period. "We are unique in what we do, and we are perfectionists," Young says.

Drivers work alone and cover an average of 150 miles a day. They stay in touch via GPS units, cell phones and Nextel two-way radios.

The company holds safety meetings every two months to review procedures, go over new regulations, and find out how everybody's doing. "We ask them what we can do to make things better, or if they see anything that needs attention. They are your outside eyes," Young says of his technicians. Sometimes Young will jump in a truck and ride along with

"Washing the hands is a major, major issue here ... We're building units right now with 15 spigots on them."

George Young



one of the drivers, or spot-check units after they've been cleaned. Once a year, the company hires a person to evaluate the drivers' performance — everything from how they operate the truck, clean the units and communicate with clients.

"If you don't have the key employees, you're not going to have a successful business," Young says. "And you have to treat them right." Workers are paid well and given two weeks vacation and health insurance. Consequently, A & G has had little turnover.





DESIGN EVOLUTION

Young still builds his own trailers but has had to modify the design to conform to evolving food safety standards. Most of the trailers are outfitted with two portable restrooms, one for men, one for women. Between the units is a 30-gallon water tank for hand-washing, and soap and paper towel dispensers. In the past, graywater would go on the ground. Now the trailers are required to have a catch basin plumbed into a holding tank.

Shop welder Cody Young (left) builds a double trailer mount. A & G builds all of its own trailer mounts. At right, Young loads a restroom for delivery.



Camacho Munoz (left) and George Young transport restrooms to a jobsite. Young has 12 service vehicles, two of which are 2008 Peterbilts outfitted by West Mark Inc. The other trucks are 2001 to 2009 Internationals built by Southern California Tank & Fabricating and Best Enterprises Inc.

The company also has about 50 one-unit trailers with 15-gallon water tanks, and 50 three-unit trailers with 45-gallon water tanks.

Another new requirement is that the company name appears on the trailers, and the units must be inspected annually by the county. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration laws are often posted, along with signs reminding workers that "All employees must wash their hands."

"Washing the hands is a major, major issue here," Young says. In fact, auditors train farm workers how to wash their hands and how to use the portable restrooms. Farm workers — who can't eat, smoke or chew gum while on duty — must wash their hands

before they start work and after every

break. "We're building units right now with 15 spigots on them," Young says. Some ranches also require units to be furnished with hand sanitizers.

Water quality is also critical. Even though the company uses municipal water for the hand-wash tanks, a tester comes out once a year to take a sample at the faucet in their shop.

CLEANING STANDARDS

Servicing procedures have also changed with the new regulations. "We used to be able to go into the field and clean right next to

SOUTH FOR THE WINTER

Farming in the Salinas Valley is seasonal, April through October. Fortunately, the growing season is skewed to the winter months in the desert regions of southern Arizona. So in October each year George and Angie Young of A & G Pumping Inc. move a good chunk of their operation to Yuma, Ariz.

They take two employees with them ("the ones who aren't married") and make the 20-hour roundtrip drive 11 or 12 times to move 50 trailer mounts, 40 single units, and two service vehicles (which are hauled not driven). The final trip includes all the supplies they'll need. "We load all our paper and chemicals inside a 53-foot dry van trailer," George Young says, using it as a mini supply warehouse. "That's what the guys work out of instead of having to rent some place."

Workers left behind take their two-week vacations, and are kept busy in the off-season doing repairs, maintenance and cleaning. Units and trailers that have been out in the fields are brought back to the shop. "We go through them and fix the vents, the screens, the door latches, add new rivets if there's any missing," Young says. "All the trailer mounts, we go through and pack the bearings, check the springs and hangers, and repaint them. Every year they look like a brand new trailer when they leave here."

crops," Young says. "Now the trailers must be a minimum of 20 feet from a field." Some counties require 200 feet. Trailers are either pulled out of the field by the foreman or taken to a yard at night. Drivers contact the foreman before their arrival to coordinate.

Trucks are washed every day, and freshwater tanks cleaned weekly with bleach to prevent bacteria growth. The waste and freshwater systems on the trucks are kept separate.

"All my trucks have two water pumps.

That way we're not using the same hose to clean that we use to fill the freshwater tanks,

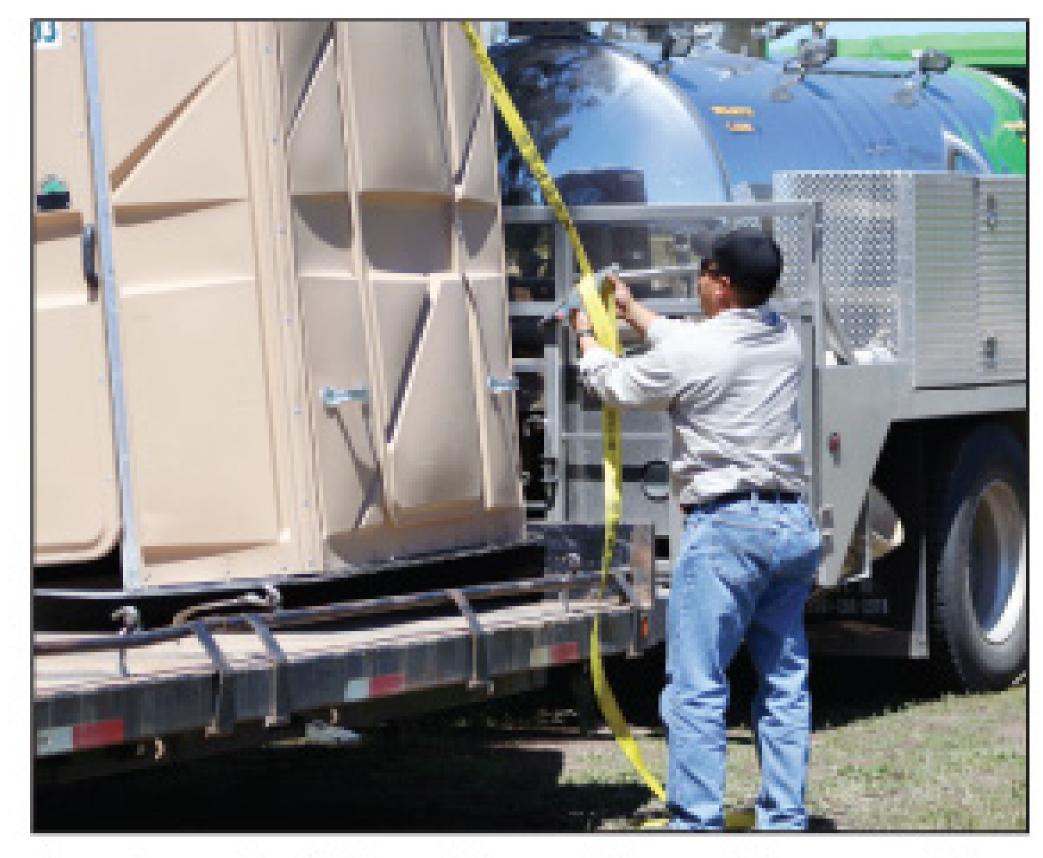


"If you don't have the key employees, you're not going to have a successful business ... We ask them what we can do to make things better,

or if they see anything that needs attention. They are your outside eyes."

George Young





Juan Camacho (left) and George Young deliver one of the company's 150 PolyPortables hand-wash stations to a California military base. Above, Camacho secures a load of restrooms.

so there's no contamination," Young says. The driver's side services the restrooms; the passenger side the sinks.

The company has 12 vacuum trucks, two of which are 2008 Peterbilts outfitted by West-Mark Inc., with polished stainless steel tanks. The others are 2001 to 2009 Internationals with steel tanks built by Southern California Tank & Fabricating and Best Enterprises Inc. The tanks are all 1,500 gallons (1,100 gallons waste/400 gallons freshwater) and have Conde pumps. A & G also has a 2008 Peterbilt septic truck with a 3,600-gallon aluminum tank. A 2009 Peterbilt flatbed, a '97 3-axle lowbed and a '91 water truck round out the inventory.

GOOD VISIBILITY

Competition in the Valley has gotten much tougher over the years. "When we started our business there were only four of us, now there's 30," Young says. Without lowering rates, the company has remained competitive based on quality service, industry expertise and a willingness to keep up with and conform to changing legal requirements, Young says.

They've also developed ways to keep their name in front of customers. Young calls all his clients monthly or bimonthly to make sure they're happy with the service, and to see what else they might need. He's also not shy about calling on ranchers who haven't been using his service. He's very active in community activities such as the King City Young Farmers, Little League, 4-H, Pop Warner, and serves as assistant fire chief. "The more you do for your community, the more you get back," he says.

Drivers wear company-supplied uniforms — jackets, shirts, and hats, all with company logo.

And over the last couple years the company has been painting its trucks — green cabs and black fenders — for a unique look. "This also gets back to food safety," Young

says, "because we would be getting complaints saying, 'Hey, your truck's out cleaning in the field' (which is illegal). And I'd say, 'No, it's not my truck.' All the trucks you see are white, so that's why we decided to change our colors. So now I look different than everybody."

SAFEGUARDING PUBLIC HEALTH

Everyone who works in the agriculture industry is being asked to do their part to ensure food safety. Segments of the industry have been devastated in recent years as food poisoning outbreaks and deaths were traced to unsafe food handling practices. Laws understandably have

MORE INFO:

Advanced Containment Systems Inc.

800/927-2271 www.acsi-us.com

Best Enterprises Inc. 800/288-2378

www.bestenterprises.net

PolyPortables Inc. 800/241-7951 www.polyportables.com

Satellite Industries Inc. 800/883-1123 www.satelliteindustries.com

Southern California Tank & Fabricating 909/627-1313

000/02/ 1010

Westmoor Ltd. 315/363-1500 www.westmoorltd.com

West-Mark Inc. 209/537-4747 www.west-mark.com

been tightened.

A & G takes this mandate seriously but Young does not see it as a burden. Rather, it's an opportunity. "It's good for our industry because now that's just more services you have to supply. It's better for the industry, and it's better for us."









PSAI Web Advances Raise Industry Awareness

By Heather Pauling Rouleau

The Image & Education Committee is dedicated to helping the Portable Sanitation Association International in its mission to be recognized as the authority within our industry. Our mission is to raise the professionalism, expertise, image and, ultimately, the value of the portable sanitation industry through education to our members.

The Image & Education Committee's most recent efforts focused on enhancing the PSAI image through updates of the PSAI tag line, logo, and Web site, www.psai.org. The modified PSAI Web site was launched in March 2008 and has become a valuable resource to member companies.

Banner advertising slots are currently at full utilization. The Web site has 52 portable restroom operator and associate member links with new links added monthly. Additional exposure to the site has been fueled by an e-mail marketing program, with monthly updates on PSAI news and events.

The PSAI Web site also provides general information for all visitors.

This offers an informational source concerning upcoming events, certi-

Among the new Web site additions is a list of PSAI Service Technician Award winners. Each year, the PSAI honors "the individuals that actively embody the highest standards of our industry" with this prestigious award. fication program, membership, links to member Web sites and includes downloads, such as the Special Events/Extended Crowd chart and Cost Per Service Breakdown form.

The success and positive feedback from the new Web site makes its

continued development a priority of the committee. We are dedicated to supporting the most successful features of the Web site and evaluating areas for improvement. It is our goal to take this information and outline a plan for a second phase of development, which will provide additional features with greater benefits for PSAI members.

Among the new Web site additions is a list of PSAI Service Technician Award winners. Each year, the PSAI honors "the individuals that actively embody the highest standards of our industry" with this prestigious award. The Image & Education Committee is dedicated to increasing the number of qualified candidates by creating a clearly outlined application.

A review of the current application has led to changes that will simplify the nomination process, while accurately quantifying the selection criteria. Expectations are that the new application will lead to greater participation by PSAI member companies.

Joining me on the Image & Education Committee are Ryan Anthony of Satellite Industries Inc., Kathy Crafton of PolyPortables Inc., Jeremy Hawkins of ADCO Holdings Inc., Christopher McCarthy of Mr. John of Pittsburgh, and Andrew Nelson of TankTec.

Heather Pauling Rouleau of Shakopee, Minn.-based Biff's Inc. is chairperson of the PSAI Image & Education Committee. ■

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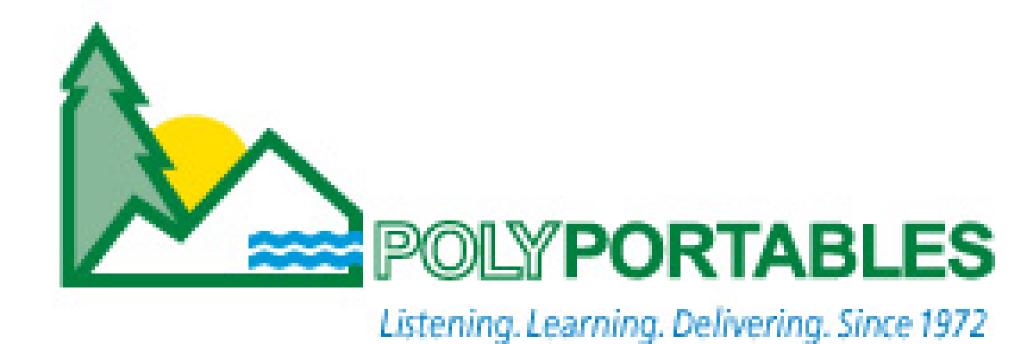




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OUR PROBLEM, TOO

ONE TRUCK SHORT OF GOOD SERVICE

July 2005. Hurricane Dennis had just struck the Florida panhandle, and one of Jim's customers was moving his operation to the Pensacola area to set up for the Forest Service and FEMA. The customer's entire crew was on the panhandle, yet he was short one pump truck. The truck was in Atlanta.

Jim packed a bag, and took off with the truck toward the disaster area. He got as far as Montgomery,
Alabama the first night. Due to the crush of evacuees, there were no hotels available so he slept in the truck cab. He arrived at the staging area the next day, and then spent a couple more nights in the truck, coordinating deliveries for his customer, and generally helping out any way he could.



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THE JOB: Zurich Classic of New Orleans Golf Tournament

LOCATION: New Orleans, La.

THE PRO: Event Restroom

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Hitting the SWEET SPOT

Event Restroom uses every club in the bag to provide scratch portable restroom service for the PGA Zurich Classic golf tourney

By Betty Dageforde

THE TEAM

Steve Young is the owner of Event Restroom in Gretna, La., a suburb of New Orleans. He specializes in restroom trailers. His core team for the Zurich Classic of New Orleans included supervisor Steve Randall, drivers Carlos Tavarez and Billie Scott, and Jamie Verdin in the office handling phones, routing and invoicing. He borrowed four workers from his brother's rental business to help with servicing, hired five trailer attendants, and brought in Scott Graham, a friend in the shower trailer business, to work as day supervisor.



COMPANY HISTORY

Not many people who got caught in Hurricane Katrina would say they were in the right place at the right time. But that turned out to be the event that kick-started Young's business. In 2005, he had just gotten his graduate degree in entrepreneurship and was contemplating his next move. After consulting with his brother — who then owned the tent and party rental business Young had had for 10 years — he decided to get into the restroom trailer business with visions of serving the film industry and special events.

Scott uses a 2008 Isuzu W4 flatbed with 600-gallon waste/250-gallon freshwater tank built by Crescent Tank Mfg. to service some of the 125 tan Integra units from PolyPortables scattered throughout the course.







His first two trailers arrived one month before Katrina hit and he quickly changed direction. Two days after the storm, he bought another trailer and started renting out subleased equipment as fast as he could get his hands on it.

When things settled down, he went back to focusing on special events. He soon expanded into portable restrooms, as trailer customers often wanted both. Plus, that allowed him to get into the construction market, which exploded after Katrina.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Four years ago, using his new trailers as bait, Young convinced the director of operations for the Zurich Classic to take a look at his inventory. The director was impressed and Young landed a contract for five trailers. With his foot in the door, he emphasized providing superior service at reasonable rates, and this year earned the contract to supply all the equipment for the event. But he's not taking the high-profile job for granted. "It's a fight every year because there are always people who want it, so we always have to one-up them, and set the bar higher," he says.

THE MAIN EVENT

New Orleans has been an annual stop on the PGA Tour since 1938. The 2009 Zurich Classic was held the last weekend of April at TPC of Louisiana, 12 miles from the French Quarter, and had a purse of \$6.2 million. The tournament was the backdrop for a week-long series of concerts, parties, business promotions, and charitable events. "It's not just golf, it's New Orleans. So it's got to be done big and it's all about food," Young says.

BY THE NUMBERS

The company provided 125 tan PolyPortables Inc. Integra units, 20 of which were upgraded models with flushing toilets and hand-wash stations, and eight of which were Enhanced Access Units. These units were scattered throughout the course underneath tents in groups of eight to 10, with a Tag Along hand-wash station. To minimize noise,

Among the nine restroom trailers brought in for the golf tournament were three 18-foot OPTimum trailers (above left and below) from Black Tie Manufacturing and a 53-foot, 20-station (10 men, 10 women) restroom trailer (above) from JAG Mobile Solutions.

units were placed as far from the lines of play as possible, while still being accessible. They were turned away from tee boxes and in some cases covered in foam material.

The company also provided 10 300-gallon holding tanks for office and media trailers.

And nine restroom trailers were brought in — three OPTimum units from Black Tie Manufacturing Inc., one 24-foot Advantage Plus from Advanced Containment Systems Inc., one Comfort Elite III from Wells Cargo COG, one trailer from Comforts of Home Services Inc., one JAG Mobile Solutions Porta-Lisa, one JAG 24-foot Fantastic, and their latest, an 18-foot trailer from JAG they call "Custom Boutique." Young and his wife, Robin Young, designed every aspect of this trailer. "We always want to be very involved. We know what our customers want, we know what breaks, we know what's easy to fix, what parts are easy to get." Interesting design features in the new trailer include cork flooring, bamboo walls, vessel sinks, and hands-free fixtures.

LET'S ROLL

The Custom Boutique trailer was showcased at the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International in February, then headed directly to TPC's 18th hole so the grandstand and sky boxes could be built over it. The same for the Wells Cargo trailer positioned next to the 9th hole. The remainder of the trailers were delivered 10 days before the event.

Seven portable restrooms were brought in two months early for construction workers. The remaining equipment was delivered over the first two weeks of April using 10-unit trailers attached to their service trucks. Removal started the Monday after the tournament, other than a handful of units left for a few weeks for the construction crew.

KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

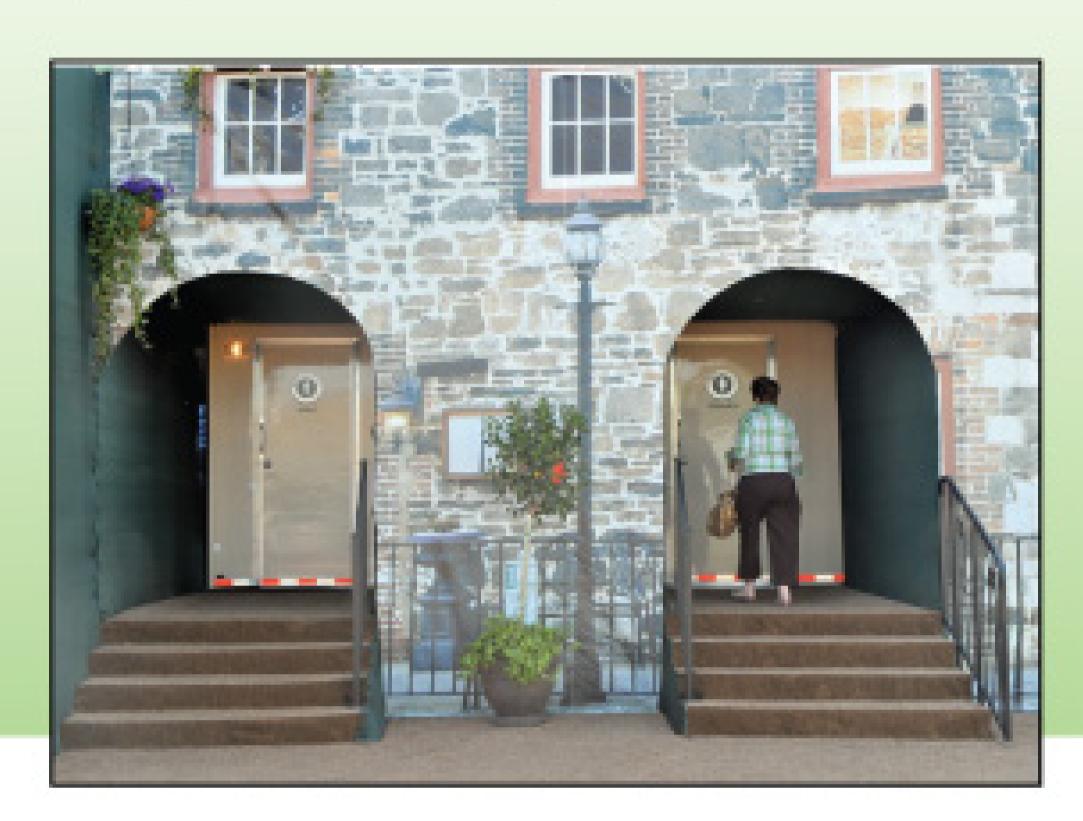
Units, trailers and holding tanks were serviced immediately after each day's play. "We tried to get as much done before dark as we could,

"Whether it's the PGA or a backyard party of one restroom, I don't treat them any different. We really try to give the same service to everyone, and I think that's made a difference."

Steve Young

but could go as late as midnight or 2 in the morning depending on usage," Young says.

The company used three service vehicles with two uniformed technicians in each. The 2003 Ford F-550 from Best Enterprises Inc. has a 1,000-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater stainless steel tank with a



Conde pump.
Both the 2008
Isuzu W4 flatbed
with a 600-gallon
waste/250-gallon
freshwater tank

An 18-foot Custom
Boutique trailer built
by JAG Mobile
Solutions was covered by a decorative
facade at the VIP
grandstand.

and the 2007 Chevy 2500 with a 300-gallon waste/150-gallon fresh-

water tank were built by Crescent Tank Mfg. and feature Masport Inc. pumps.

On-site attendants maintained the trailers during the day.

SERVICE IS AN ATTITUDE

put out during the event, and the company successfully tackled them all. Young believes service is what sets his company apart. "The reason I got in this business was to offer something no one else offers. Anyone can buy a trailer but not everyone can keep it serviced properly and cleaned all the time."

Young extends that professional attitude to all customers. "Whether it's the PGA or a backyard party of one restroom, I don't treat them any different. We really try to give the same service to everyone, and I think that's made a difference," he says.

MORE INFO:

Advanced Containment Systems Inc.

800/927-2271 www.acsi-us.com

Best Enterprises

800/288-2378 www.bestenterprises.net

Black Tie Manufacturing Inc. 877/253-3533

www.blacktiemanufacturing.com

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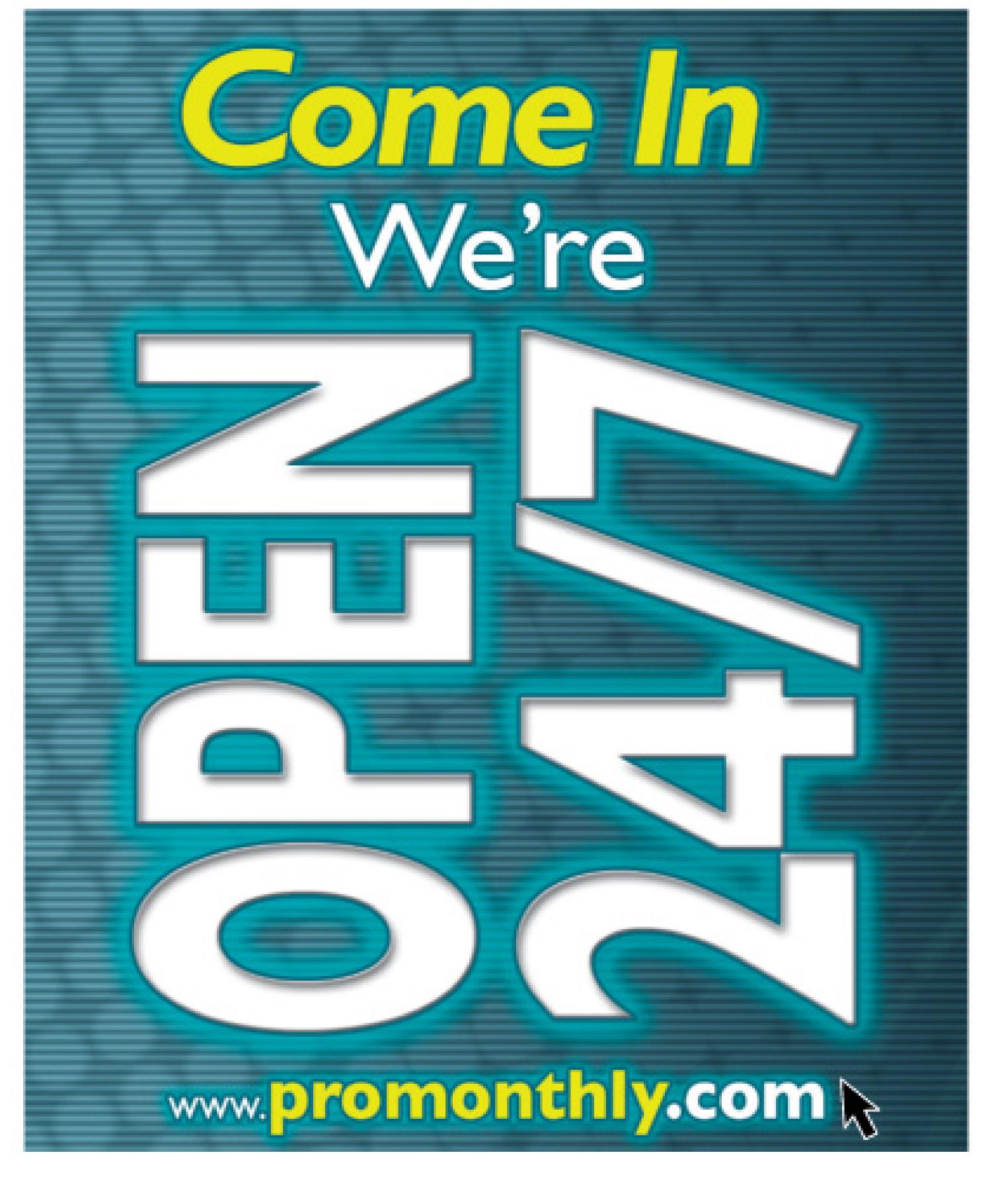
315/363-1500 www.westmoorltd.com













Faye Kelley is vice president of business development for PolyJohn Enterprises Corp. Contact her at Faye.Kelley@polyjohn.com.



Treat Customers Like Family

Thinking about your customers a new way can greatly increase your sales

By Faye Kelley

o you think of your customers as just a paycheck? Or, do you think of customers as family, partners or friends ... people you can help, and who in turn can help you? In my job, I get to see a lot of different small businesses in action. I see which are growing and which are struggling. One thing the top performers have in common is the way they treat their customers like family.

Here are six ways customers resemble family, along with suggestions to help you reinforce that "family feeling":

FAMILIES NURTURE

When you have a new customer in your area, find some things you can do to help them succeed. It could be as simple as a welcome gift, friendly payment terms or an invitation to join a local business group like the Chamber of Commerce. Anything you can do to make a new business owner feel welcome in your community will go a long way toward winning a customer for the long term.



FAMILIES SHARE INFORMATION

Sharing your knowledge can help your customers be more successful. Most don't come to you just to rent a restroom — they need your expertise. Counsel them on placement, service times and service frequency. Don't just ask them "where do you want it?" When you think about it, there are many ways your service can add value to your customers' businesses. And don't forget to tell customers what their upgrade options are. Not only will you sell more, but the customer will be happier with their selection.

FAMILIES KEEP PROMISES AND COMMITMENTS

In order to be consistent at delivering on promises, you need a contingency plan for everything that can go wrong. Ask yourself, what will I do if my truck breaks down? What if my driver doesn't show up? What if a rainstorm floods the placement area? To be a truly dependable partner, plan for worst-case scenarios.

FAMILIES LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN

You can't stop customers from shopping around. However, if you lose a customer, don't burn bridges. Keep former customers on your call list and contact them at least quarterly. It pays to be persistent.

FAMILIES CELEBRATE TOGETHER

Don't hesitate to send a "congratulations" card when you hear about a customer who has just won a big contract or received a community honor. Why not celebrate your own business anniversary each year by inviting customers to an open house? Just like your family may get together every year to stay in touch, you can do the same with your customers, making the "family" that much stronger

FAMILIES HELP IN A PINCH

Urgent requests are an opportunity to show how much you are willing to do for customers. The most common "urgent" call is a spill or tipover on a customer's property. While this may be a routine occurrence for you or your crew, it's not for your customer. How fast you respond, and how well the scene is cleaned, will show off your commitment to service.



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QUESTIONS? Get Answers...

New PRO Discussion forum brings portable sanitation professionals together over the back fence, 21st Century style

By Jim Kneiszel

inally ... A place you can go to talk shop with portable restroom operators from across the country ... and around the world. Welcome to the PRO e-mail discussion forum, your cyber home for communicating with other portable sanitation professionals about issues affecting the individual contractor or the entire industry.

PRO Discussion is based on the successful Pumper Discussion that has been a fixture on the COLE Publishing *Pumper* magazine Web site (www.pumper.com) for nearly five years.

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Once you've registered and confirmed your forum membership, post an e-mail introduction for fellow PROs.

Sit back and wait for e-mail topics to roll in. You and other PROs will meet on the forum and exchange information whenever you like.

When one PRO sends out a question or comment, everyone on the discussion list will receive the e-mail and may respond. The forum is open for a wide range of topics, but there are a few simple ground rules to keep in mind when starting or responding to an e-mail post.

Discussion rules

- No soliciting or commercial product endorsements.
- No derogatory remarks about products, services or people.
- · No discussing prices or pricing of goods or services.
- No forwarding junk mail, chain mail, jokes, or any other e-mails not specific to this industry.

As easy as it is to join the discussion, it's just as simple to leave — or unsubscribe — and stop receiving e-mails. Instructions to remove your e-mail address from the forum are found on the promonthly.com Web site.

Remember, there's strength in numbers. When we all get together and share ideas at promonthly.com, we strengthen our service businesses and the portable sanitation industry.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Satellite Industries Enhances Web Site

Satellite Industries has enhanced its Web site, www.satelliteindustries.com, to include the Global restroom model, which was acquired from Hampel Corp. The site also includes product promotions, expanded industry news and a program that tracks customer satisfaction with order entry, order fulfillment, delivery and overall product quality.

PRODUCT NEWS

Ameri-Can Expands ADA, Value-Priced Shower Line

ADA shower trailers from Ameri-Can Engineering are avail-

able in 22 models in a variety of floor plans, sizes and luxury grades. The trailers feature a rear-mounted pod that lowers to the ground for handicapped accessibility. Ameri-Can also has developed a line of valuepriced trailers, including the 810 that provides four private showers in a compact unit. Features





include onboard freshwater, graywater tank and on-demand hot water. 574/892-5151; www.ameri-can.com.



PumpBiz Introduces PortaPump

PortaPump from PumpBiz International is designed to remove standing water from golf course bunkers and fairways, flooded parking lots and sidewalks or drain water from pits that need to be excavated due to pipe breakage or root damage. Able to pump up to 2,000 gallons per hour, the oneperson unit is powered by a Honda 4-stroke 35cc engine. A larger unit, able to pump up to 16,800 gallons per hour, is available. 800/786-7249; www.pumpbiz.com.



We're Here for the PROs!

Have you ever wondered how we generate story ideas for the pages of *PRO™*? Portable sanitation contractors are our most important sources for the news and feature stories you see here every month. If you have an issue-oriented story idea or know of a fellow contractor whose success story should be told, please call or write and tell us about it. Editor Jim Kneiszel may be reached through COLE Publishing by phone at 800/257-7222, by mail at P.O. Box 220, Three Lakes, Wis. 54562, or by

Here's a sampling of features that appear in the pages of PRO:

e-mail at editor@promonthly.com.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

What's the strangest thing that happened to you and your business this year? You know, that funny or unbelievable portable sanitation story you find yourself repeating over and over to friends and family? Whether it's a tale of misfortune or good fortune, we want to hear about it and share it with readers in *All In a Day's Work*.

WORKING VACATION

Do you have trouble leaving your work behind when you visit faraway places? If your camera holds images of portable restrooms and associated rental products along with the usual vacation shots of tourist attractions or the family frolicking on the beach, we want to hear from you. We'll share your snapshots and portable restroom travel tales in Working Vacation.

PRO SNAPSHOT

Many of today's leading portable restroom companies started out with humble beginnings, the company owner building wooden units in the back yard and going on service routes with an old pickup truck in the 1950s and '60s. Scan your favorite old photos and send them, along with a brief history of your company, and we'll share your business story in *PRO Snapshot*.

TAKE 5

Some days you only have a few minutes over a cup of coffee to take a breather in your hectic workday. We want to help you make the most of those few moments by introducing you to a PRO or industry leader who addresses the five issues that have the greatest impact on their job or business. If you know someone in the industry who could offer valuable insights to others, we'll feature them in *Take 5*.

PRO FORUM CHATTER

An interesting portable sanitation roundtable discussion awaits you anytime at the *PRO E-mail Discussion* at www.promonthly.com. If you haven't already subscribed to this free e-mail idea exchange, check it out on our Web site (click on the *PRO E-Mail Discussion* icon to sign up) and start talking about industry issues with counterparts across the country. We print some of those discussions in the magazine under the headline *PRO Forum Chatter*.



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The Bucket Brigade

PROS SHARE THEIR TRADE SECRETS FOR A SPOTLESS RESTROOM SERVICE ROUTINE

By Mary Shafer

as there are as many different techniques for keeping restrooms clean as there are PROs, and most operators take this part of their job seriously. After all, how each unit looks will determine the way a potential customer perceives its owner, and as cliché as it may be, there's not much truer an adage than, "You never get a second chance to make a good first impression." And in these days of belt-tightening, when everyone needs to drive a harder bargain, less-than-spotless restrooms can be a deal breaker.

But there are some PROs who have elevated achieving the ultraclean unit nearly to an art. Though the exact formula seems to be a very personal alchemy of cleaning products, tools and good, old-fashioned elbow grease, most operators take great pride in what they do to present a sparkling restroom. Here, a few share their approach.

"Hard work," says Marc Lamoureaux, owner of A-1 Portable Toilets, who still considers himself a beginner in the business. "I use a brush, a



Name: Marc Lamoureaux Company: A-1 Portable Toilets Location: West Suffield, Conn. Employees: 1 Years in Business: 3 rag and a squeegee." He goes in with the brush to work off any surface grunge and large bits of debris. If he encounters a deep stain, he works on it with a rag doused in cleanser. What that cleanser is may vary.

"We've tried a lot of things," he says, but right now prefers what's offered by J & J Chemical Co. and Satellite Industries. "They both have good stuff." Then he rinses everything down and squeegees it dry.

He says he's experimented with disinfectant sprays but generally doesn't use them, or any deodorizers other than what's in the tank chemicals. His average time for cleaning a unit is 15-20 minutes.

Route driver Daveane Downing of T.R.B. Portable Restrooms and Septic Service feels pretty strongly about her surface treatments. "I pre-



Name: Daveane Downing Company: T.R.B. Portable Restrooms and Septic Service Location: South Salem, Ohio Employees: 4 Years in Business: 10 fer Mean Green Cleaner and a mold and mildew remover," she says. Downing appreciates Mean Green's non-toxic and biodegradable qualities, and buys it at a local retail store.

After pumping

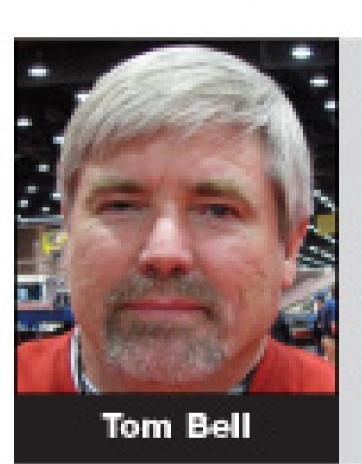
each unit, she scrubs it down inside and out with these cleaners, then hoses it off with freshwater. After drying all surfaces with a towel, she

fills the tank with chemicals and again wipes everything down to clean up any splashes. She mixes tank deodorizer with the chemicals, and sprays a cherry-scented air deodorizer to finish the job, leaving it sweet-smelling for the next user.

"I went to a car show one day and bought this rubber squeegee. It's phenomenal on the plastic floors of the restrooms, which is important, especially for women, who don't like a dirty floor."

Tom Bell

Tom Bell, co-owner of Bell Boyz Portable Restrooms, went outside the industry to find his favorite cleaning tool. "I went to a car show one



Name: Tom Bell Company: Bell Boyz Portable Restrooms Location: Mercer, Pa. Employees: 2 Years in Business: 5 day and bought this rubber squeegee. It's phenomenal on the plastic floors of the restrooms, which is important, especially for women, who don't like a dirty floor." He feels the floor's appearance is a major factor in

user perception about the cleanliness of the rest of the unit.

"This particular squeegee is a real nice size, with coarse bristles on one side and the other side a sharp rubber blade like you'd use on a window. So I can scrub real hard on a bad stain, then go over and dry the floors. It just dries the floor so well that a person could go right in there and use it as soon as we're done."

He doesn't have a preference for cleaning liquid. "I've tried them all, but with this squeegee, I can scrub with one side, flip it over, and the floor comes out sparkling. We also do a hose-down and wipe everything off with a towel." He recommends this hose-squeegee-wipe technique for most surfaces, including sinks and urinals.

"The urinal's another area you've got to hit real good, because it can develop a white scale if you don't keep it clean. So you've got to have a good brush to get in there, too." Following the scrubbing, he goes in around the stool seat and urinal with a shot of spray disinfectant.

After he's done with all the surface cleaning, he checks the urinal drain for foreign matter. "People put all kinds of stuff down there that they shouldn't, like gum or seeds or whatever. We've got to suck it out sometimes. We also have a little (mechanical) grabber that we bought at a local hardware store to fish that stuff out."

He puts this removed trash into a bucket on the truck, along with other items he might find, such as T-shirts and beverage cans, in the rest of the unit. This he takes back to the truck for disposal at his yard.



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TRUCK CORNER August 2009

Bob Carlson (left) and Jerry Kirkpatrick answer your questions in Truck Corner.

Mythbusters

JUST LIKE THE POPULAR TV PROGRAM EXPLAINS AWAY COMMONLY HELD BELIEFS, BOB AND JERRY DEBUNK TALL VACUUM TRUCK TALES



Tho can forget the story of the tiny lizard that was flushed down the toilet, only to turn up years later as a 16-foot alligator in the sewer of a major metropolis? Nothing more fun than a good old fashion urban legend. It turns out the portable sanitation industry also has its myths.

Well, not as bone chilling as a monster alligator roaming beneath the streets, but just as important to pumping professionals is that some persistent "legends" circulating through the industry are untrue and might be costing contractors through unnecessary spending on equipment.

Over the past few years we've collected some of these pumping myths. A few of them cropped up recently, so we decided it's a good time to debunk them again. Just like urban legends, enlightened portable sanitation contractors are going to think we made these up, but this is the kind of stuff that couldn't be made up. For everyone's benefit, let's review a few favorite vacuum-pumping myths:

Aluminum is a better insulator than steel

When asked why he bought an aluminum tank for his new vacuum truck, one contractor replied, "It keeps the load warmer in winter."

What erroneous pumping stories have been traveling in your circle of industry friends? What statements have you heard — presented as fact by other contractors or customers — that have left you shaking your head in disbelief? Send your vacuum truck myths or tall tales to us in care of editor@promonthly.com.

What? We've heard a lot of reasons why aluminum tanks are a smart buy; lighter weight, brighter shine, etc. Until recently, we hadn't heard of its insulation benefits.

Actually, that load in 25-degree weather in a steel tank or stainless steel tank will be just as cold. Aluminum does not have any special thermal qualities. Of course, if you pick up a "hot" load, the contents will be warm for a while, but in time all loads are going to be as cold as the outside temperature.

The bigger the pump, the better

A few weeks ago, a local pumper

said he was going to put a 2,500-gallon tank with a 450-500 cfm pump on his next truck. To some guys, pumps are like engines in a car; the bigger the engine the more power. In cars, this is true. With vacuum pumps, there's a slight catch. The bigger the pump, the greater the cost. So why spend more money on a monster pump when it isn't necessary?

To give you an idea of what we mean, suppose we pull up to our jobsite, flip on the monster pump, and in two minutes, the tank is ready to pump. Only problem is, we haven't got the hose where it goes and we're not ready to do the job. A monster pump is not going to really make you go faster or pump much quicker. Common sense says to get the pump that best fits the size of your tank.

Here are some guidelines for good pump/tank combinations:

CFM (pump size)	Gallons (tank size)
20-40	80-200
50-90	150-500
100-120	400-800
130-150	700-1,200
160-200	1,000-1,800
210-240	1,700-2,500
250-280	2,400-3,000
290-340	3,100-3,600
350-400	3,500-4,200

The difference in prices of these various-sized pumps is dramatic. Be realistic in understanding how the vacuum pump works, and buy accordingly.

Vacuum relief valves are unnecessary

In a recent letter, a reader argued that a vacuum relief valve wasn't necessary to prevent a tank collapse. This comment blew us away. If this were the case, why are there thousands of vacuum tanks with vacuum relief valves installed on them? If they didn't serve a purpose, the person who invented and first sold vacuum relief valves sure scammed everybody!

Here's the deal: The force of vacuum is incredible. When vacuum is allowed to rise out of control, it can make pretty much anything collapse, even a reinforced steel or aluminum cylinder. The vacuum relief valve came along because there was a need for it. By setting the valve to "relieve" the tank at a certain level of vacuum, the tank will not collapse or be at risk of collapsing. It's common sense.

SHARE YOUR MYTHS

What erroneous pumping stories have been traveling in your circle of industry friends? What statements have you heard — presented as fact by other contractors or customers — that have left you shaking your head in disbelief? Send your vacuum truck myths or tall tales to us in care of editor@promonthly.com.

We'll take a look at more of these "myths" in the months ahead. As we have said many times in the past, the more you know about your truck, pump and parts, the more money you'll have to keep in your pocket. The information to fully understand your truck is readily available, so be careful what you believe. You may be the guy who sucks up the monstrous alligator into your vacuum tank!

Bob Carlson and Jerry Kirkpatrick of Arizona-based Glendale Welding have over 50 years combined experience dealing with portable sanitation truck issues. Fax questions to them, addressed to Truck Corner, at 623/937-3688, or send Bob and Jerry an e-mail at truckcorner@promonthly.com. ■



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