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PORTABLE RESTROOM OPERATOR

288-KING (5464)

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November 2009
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CHAT 'EM UP

Constant networking pays off for Iowa PRO

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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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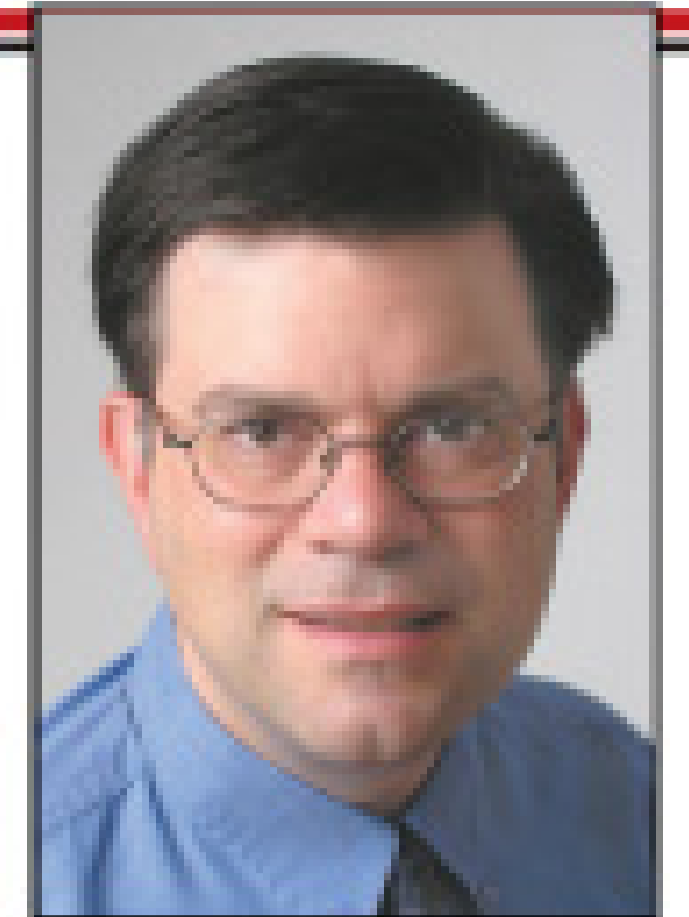
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Contact us: PRO strives to serve the portable restroom industry with interesting and helpful stories. We welcome your comments, questions and column suggestions and promise a prompt reply to all reader contacts. Call 800/257-7222; fax 715/546-3786; e-mail PRO editor Jim Kneiszel at editor@promonthly.com.



Your Best Vehicle for Advertising

WHEN IT COMES TO SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT YOUR PORTABLE SANITATION COMPANY, DON'T IGNORE THE BROAD SIDE OF YOUR VACUUM TRUCK

By Jim Kneiszel

What would you pay for access to both sides of an advertising billboard alongside the busiest highway in your service territory? How much thought and effort would you put into choosing the right message to promote your portable sanitation business on that valuable signage?

That's how you should treat the blank canvas on the sides and back of your service trucks' tanks. Vacuum tanks offer a unique opportunity to promote your business to thousands of people every day. If you're just slapping your name on the side, you aren't taking the best advantage of an asset.

And just like with your other advertising, you shouldn't be afraid to update your tank. To enhance your professional image, you might strip off the graphics — and maybe the paint — and start from scratch every several years as the tank starts to look dated or rough around the edges.

Here are a few ideas to jumpstart or refresh the advertising on your vacuum tanks:

Vacuum tanks offer a unique opportunity to promote your business to thousands of people every day. If you're just slapping your name on the side, you aren't taking the best advantage of an asset.

WHAT SHOULD BE ON YOUR TANK?

Distinctive colors

The color scheme of your truck and tank can be very important, and while basic white can be pleasing to the eye, you should think about the message you want to convey.

Recently, a restroom contractor told me that he switched from the



Barrett Hope's truck, published in the *PRO Rides* feature, has a distinctive color, easy-to-read lettering and a memorable flaming roll of toilet paper.

basic white he's used for years because that's the same look most of his competitors chose. He wanted to stand out from the rest, and he didn't want someone to see a badly maintained white truck and assume it was his.

Another pumper I talked to has been running all-pink trucks for quite a while. When I asked why, he explained that the bold color is so memorable that people started calling and asking if he was the guy

with the pink trucks, then hiring him for no other particular reason. Any way to get a leg up, I guess.

I'll also put in a pitch for a more classy looking paint scheme, like a crisp maroon over gold or metallic blue over silver. Some passersby might assume that because you went the extra mile to create an awesome look for your truck, that you will provide them the same care in service.

Basic contact information

Make sure your business name is in clear, bold lettering and easy to read from a passing vehicle. You might ditch plans for a cursive-style typeface that will be more difficult to read.

Your standard seven-digit phone number doesn't cut it today. Because route drivers frequently cross through different area codes on a daily basis, you now want to include your area code in a phone number listing. And you want to include all of your phone numbers, including 800 numbers and cell phone numbers so customers can reach you, even as they're passing you on the freeway.

And if you have a Web site, that address should be part of the standard information you include on your tank. This is a good argument for short Web site addresses.

Professional logo

Most small business owners gasp when they learn how much a professional logo from a graphic designer costs. But a simple, clever logo —

if well-used — is worth every dollar you pay, and more. Think of a logo as a long-term investment, something that will be a cornerstone of your marketing and advertising plan. How to come up with that winning logo is the topic for another column, but suffice it to say that a snappy logo on your tank will attract customers.

List of services

If you offer diverse services, you may benefit from listing those services somewhere on the sides or back of the tank. Now, there's no room for a huge laundry list, but narrow them down to the top three or four services. Let's say one of them is grease trap cleaning. Now that captures the attention of the restaurant owner in town who, when seeing your truck roll by, thought you only serviced portable restrooms.

Certifications, licensing and memberships

It's time for building instant credibility for your company. If your drivers are certified technicians, through to the Portable Sanitation Association International or a state agency, listing that builds your professional image. Are you a member of the local Chamber of Commerce or other professional trade or civic groups? These affiliations are also likely to sway potential customers your way. Even listing required wastewater licensing sends the message you're doing things the right way.



A-1 Septic of Topeka, Kan., had this nifty float gauge indicator fabricated into a vacuum tank both to remind people they may need service and tell the driver when it's time for disposal.

Something that's yours and yours alone

Unique approaches to tank advertising show you're creative, clever, and go the extra mile to win over customers. I once saw a septic pumping truck with a tank gauge that looked like a clock with a moving hand to show the level of contents. Inside the clock face read "It's Time!" I'm sure that truck draws many a double-take.

Your unique touch might be full tank and truck vinyl graphics of an American flag or of a beautiful landscape to convey an environmental theme. It might be as simple as a catchy tagline that describes your business, like "We're quick, clean and dependable." Some contractors hot rod it up with flames. You're only limited by your imagination.

WHAT SHOULDN'T BE ON YOUR TANK?

Rust and grime

Do you want people to think you're a budget-priced outfit before they dial your number? Then ride around with a tank that's rusting at the seams or has unsightly rust lines running down from the top man-



Barrett Hope of B's Portable Toilets, Rexburg, Idaho, produced this professional logo to promote his company.

way. And keep your tank washed. Even the most professional graphics and logo lose impact through a thick layer of dust and dirt.

Bathroom humor

Some of you will part ways with me on this one, but I argue you should ditch graphics of a skunk or an outhouse, and lose the "Number One in the Number Two Business" slogan. These images might bring a chuckle to some of the folks who drive by your truck, but they won't build your professional image or help you charge more for the environmental services you provide. Aren't there more critical messages you'd like to share on this valuable advertising space?

Political statements

While everyone's entitled to their opinions in politics — and religion for that matter — is it smart for a small business owner to plaster those opinions on a work truck? This is America, and you certainly have the right to put your opinions out there any way you want to. But do so knowing that you may be turning off as many potential customers as you're turning on. Appealing to the broadest audience possible means remaining neutral. You might vehemently disagree with someone politically, but you probably still want to provide for their portable sanitation needs.

Too much information

Just like advertising, you want to focus on the most important messages, and not turn your tank into a confusing jumble of words, numbers and graphics that passersby won't be able to digest. Remember, this isn't NASCAR, and the goal isn't to work as many images as possible onto your tank.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Do you have anything to add to the list? Do you disagree with any of my suggestions? Has your truck been designed with effective advertising in mind that you'd like to share with readers of *PRO*? Send me an e-mail with your responses, or send a digital photo of your truck and we might publish it in an upcoming issue.

The bottom line with tank advertising is this: You've already bought the truck. The exposure that rolling billboard can bring to your company is invaluable. Don't waste any more time turning your tank into your best vehicle for advertising. ■







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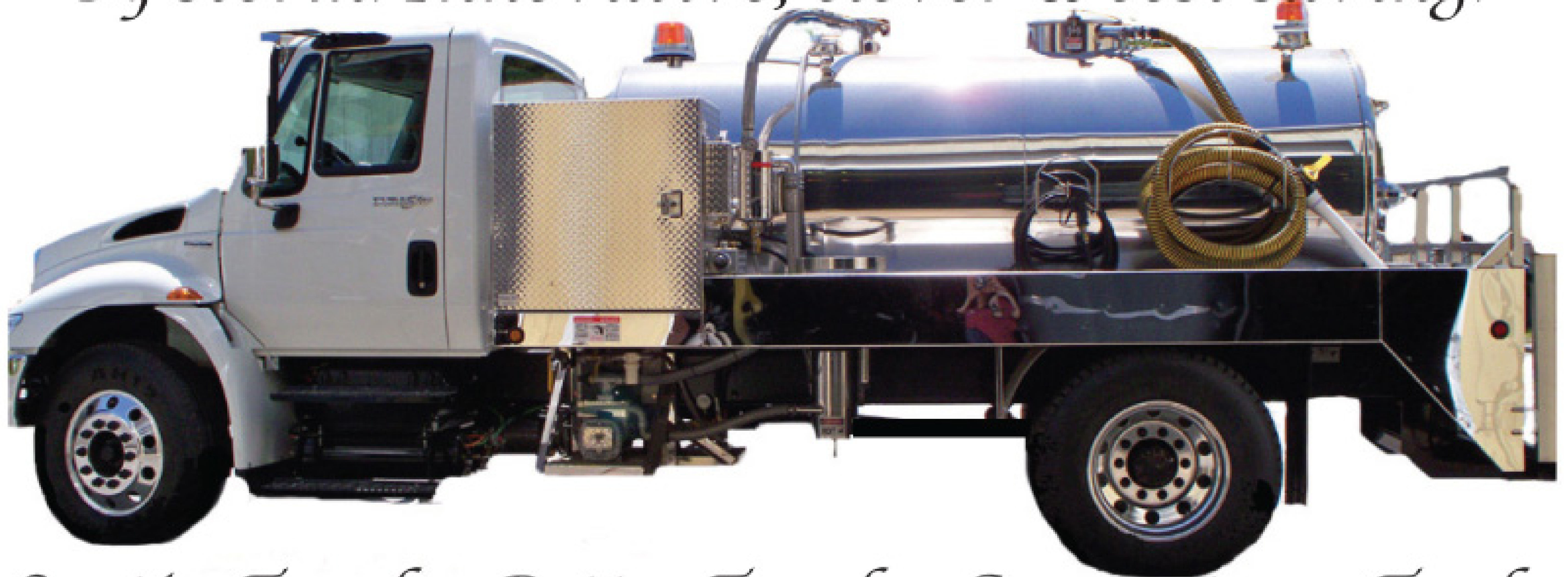
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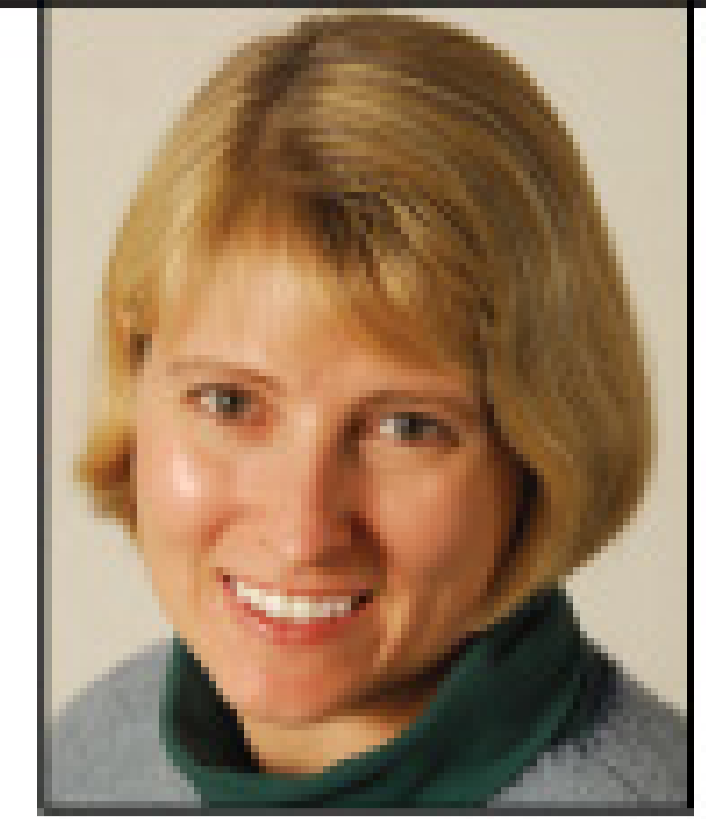
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But Wait, There's More

Tired of your company not working to its full potential? Give your business a boost by adopting some of the marketing techniques perfected by the late Billy Mays.

By Judy Kneiszel

Whether you enjoyed the attention-grabbing approach of the bearded pitchman with the extra loud voice or were irritated by it, when Billy Mays passed away last summer, you probably thought you'd never again feel pressured to buy what he was selling.

No, he won't be coming to your TV late at night promoting any new products, but as he often said toward the end of his pitches, he's "not done yet," when it comes to offering something of great value to you. Billy Mays' legacy for business people isn't "Mighty Putty," "The Awesome Auger" or any specific product; it's his overall marketing prowess.

While hollering about your portable restroom business on TV might not be an approach you are comfortable with, there are lessons to be learned from Mays, because it doesn't matter whether he amused or annoyed you, the guy could SELL. Here are some lessons he provided:

Lesson No. 1: Be enthusiastic.

Maybe Mays' enthusiasm was over the top, but he certainly communicated excitement for whatever he was selling. So should you. Enthusiasm is contagious. If you don't believe in your company, who will? Start by inserting a little, "Hello, Billy Mays here," volume and inflection into your phone-answering voice.

Lesson No. 2: Solve problems.

Imagine Mays selling the services of a portable restroom company. He'd say, "Are you tired of people complaining that the restrooms at your event are smelly?" And go on to explain how the frequency and quality of cleaning provided by the company he was promoting would eliminate this problem. Or he might say, "Want to throw an outdoor party but dread all those people tracking dirt and mud into your house when nature calls? Keep the party and the dirt outside by renting portable restrooms."

Enthusiasm is contagious. If you don't believe in your company, who will? Start by inserting a little "Hello, Billy Mays here," volume and inflection into your phone-answering voice.

Mays sold products by asking a question he knew people would answer with a "yes." That question was: Do you want this or that particular problem solved? All products and all services exist to solve a real or

perceived human problem. In every sales pitch, focus on how your company will solve a customer's problem.

Lesson No. 3: Don't just tell ... SHOW and tell.

It wasn't just Mays' booming voice that sold products; it was his demonstrating that the product worked. If you want to up-sell a customer to your nicest units, show them how spacious they are. Pound on the walls to show how sturdy they are. Hang your coat on the hook and comb your hair in the mirror. Give the customer a sniff of the deodorizer scents. Flush a flushing unit and activate the motion-sensitive light. Seeing is believing.

Lesson No. 4: Use testimonials.

Mays' commercials often featured "real" people touting the benefits of the product. This is effective since potential customers can relate to existing customers and trust people like themselves more than salespeople or celebrities. Ask your best customers if you can print a testimonial from them in your marketing materials or include it on your Web site.

Lesson No. 5: Listen to customers.

Before taking a product pitch national, Mays would test it "on the street" and in limited TV markets to get people's feedback and make changes based on what they had to say. Take both positive and negative comments into account and use them to improve what you're selling.

Lesson No. 6: Know what you are selling and believe in it.

Mays tested products extensively before selling them. He knew every feature and benefit of a product; he knew how it worked and he knew what people liked about it. If you haven't been sniffing deodorizers or slamming restroom doors, you don't know what you're selling.

Lesson No. 7: Be unique.

No matter how good someone is at selling, providing inferior service and cheap products won't sustain the growth of a business. However, Mays showed us that people often choose a decent product that's marketed differently over a superior product. Were the products marketed by Mays really better than products sold in stores, or was it the unique marketing that sold them? You won't build a business by providing inferior service, but let's say Company A and Company B provide the exact same restrooms and the exact same quality of service, but Company A drivers wear tuxedos. Who are potential customers going to remember and call? Why does everyone in America know "Auto Glass

Specialists?" Because they're the guys in the little red trucks. They accentuate their uniqueness.

Lesson No. 8: Call people to action.

"Order now!" Mays would shout. Don't just put information out there; tell people exactly what you want them to do, and when. What do you want people to do after visiting your Web site? How about, "Reserve a restroom for your event today," or simply "Call now for an estimate."

Lesson No. 9: Know your price point and make customers believe they are getting a real value.

Mays once said the best things in life are free and \$19.99. That was the sweet spot where he determined he could really sell things. What he did was determine the price where customers felt like they were getting a value, but there was still a profit to be made. This doesn't mean drastically undercutting the competition. It might mean pricing your services higher than the competition but throwing in something extra or accentuating something you do to make customers perceive you are giving them a better value. Mays knew customers would perceive two items for \$19.99 as a better value than one for \$9.99 and would be more likely to buy even if they only wanted one because they felt like they were getting something for nothing. I looked at several portable restroom company Web sites and here are a few statements they used to try to build the value of their service:

- "Renting restrooms through our auto-generated database takes only a few mouse clicks." Added value: time and effort saved.
- "Free delivery and pickup." Added value: something for free.
- "Provider of portable toilets, temporary fence, temporary storage

and other services." Added value: one-stop shopping saves time, plus the real or perceived savings when services are "bundled."

Remember: Uniqueness + problem-solving = higher value.

"BUT IT GETS EVEN BETTER."

Maybe the best lesson Mays taught us was the value of personal branding. You are your company. And if you listen to your customers, believe in what you do and offer a quality product or service at a price that is perceived as a value, customers will reward you. We don't all have a bucket of OxiClean in our laundry rooms because we need it to survive, do we? ■



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288-KING (5464)



**A King's Throne
Des Moines, Iowa**

Owners: Mark Manning and Tim Smith

Founded: 2007

Employees: 3

Service area: 30-mile radius of Des Moines

Services: Portable sanitation

Affiliations: Portable Sanitation Association International, Des Moines Homebuilders Association, Urbandale (Iowa) Chamber of Commerce; Better Business Bureau



A King's Throne co-owners Tim Smith (left) and former police captain Mark Manning. (Photography by J. Addison Barbour)

CHAT 'EM UP

Local networking and marketing efforts are a top priority for an Iowa police captain turned portable restroom operator

By Sharon Verbeten

Mark Manning has never had much trouble talking with people. As a former police captain, communication was an essential part of his job.

When fate intervened tragically a few years ago, however, Manning was faced with a life-changing decision — and it was ultimately one that would allow him to use his well-honed communication skills to launch a new career and a new life.

Today, as co-owner of A King's Throne in Des Moines, Iowa, Manning takes talk to a new level as he uses networking to market his fledgling portable sanitation business.

BEST OF A BAD SITUATION

It would be too easy to describe Manning's life as a cliché — one of those "lemonade from lemons" or "when one door closes, another one opens" stories. But that's exactly how his career in portable sanitation began.

In 2004, Manning — a 12-year veteran of law enforcement — was assisting at an accident scene when his squad car was struck by a drunk driver at 65 mph. Manning was serious-

ly injured, and after spending long hours in a spinal rehabilitation clinic, he still remains in constant pain, confiding that the accident "effectively ended my law enforcement career."

Considering himself lucky to be alive, Manning turned his sobering situation into an opportunity after talking with his friend Tim Smith, who had worked in the portable sanitation industry for more than 11 years.

tion industry for more than 11 years.

"I was looking into what I was going to do with my life," Manning says. "I heard Tim tell me for years about how he wanted to open his own portable restroom company."

Both were looking to build the level of customer service in portable sanitation in their region, so they decided the time was right — taking on the busy Des Moines metro-



Driver Mark Halda loads a restroom on one of the company's two service vehicles.

“We have the knowledge and experience even though our company only has a few years under its belt. (Customers) don’t want a one-year hero without a proven track record.”

Mark Manning



Driver Mark Halda and owners Mark Manning and Tim Smith in front of a Ford F-350 from Best Enterprises Inc. and Ford F-550 from Satellite Industries Inc.

politan area, which boasts a population of about 1.5 million.

“It seemed a very viable possibility for the metropolitan area to have a new company with that type of quality,” Manning says.

So after about six to nine months’ preparation, writing a business plan (with help from the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Iowa Social Economic Development Program) and acquiring outside financing, A King’s Throne launched in 2007.

“It was definitely more difficult than I thought ... just the unforeseen planning and unforeseen expenses,” Manning says. “You can’t just open your door and have a truck and 10 restrooms.

“I give credit to my business partner,” says Manning, adding that Smith’s background in the industry has helped A King’s Throne emerge as not just the “new kid on the block.”

“We have the knowledge and experience even though our company only has a few years under its belt,” Manning says. “(Customers) don’t want a one-year hero without a proven track record.”

In short order, A King’s Throne has amassed an inventory of about 500 restrooms — about 200 from Armal Inc., 150 from Hampel Corp., 40 from PolyJohn Enterprises Corp., and eight to 10 ADA units from Armal

and PolyJohn. They also purchased an enclosed cargo trailer that had been renovated into a restroom trailer.

Two vacuum service trucks head their fleet — a 2001 Ford F-550 with 950-gallon (600 waste/350 freshwater) steel tank from Satellite Industries Inc.; and a 2006 Ford F-350 with a 550-gallon (400 waste/150 freshwater) stainless steel tank from Best Enterprises Inc. Both feature Conde pumps. A 2004 Ford F-350 flatbed truck is used to haul up to six regular units.

MARKETING MOJO

Amid all the unknowns in starting a business, there was one very clear direction that both Manning and Smith were certain about. Since Manning was unable to do field work due to his injuries, he would focus on marketing A King’s Throne. And that’s been a fortuitous choice for the young company.

With several competitors in the metropolitan area, A King’s Throne needed some marketing mojo to drive its business, build its reputation and make a name for itself. And from the company’s inception, Manning was focused on just that — even as early as brainstorming the company’s name. Manning wanted a catchy handle with a positive connotation.

Manning and Smith agreed on the name, with one small exception — Manning liked “The” King’s Throne; Smith wanted to change the initial article to “A”. And with Smith’s seniority in the industry, Manning concurred — realizing that alphabetically, the name would come first in the phone book. It’s a small point, to be sure, but has proven a shrewd move.

Manning says the company also has gained business because the name alone has prompted inquiries. He says the organizer of the Des Moines River Run Garbage Grab called A King’s Throne initially simply because she liked the name.

That foot in the door gave Manning the opportunity to tout his products and services to the annual event, which hosts several thousand attendees each summer. Being willing to work out demanding customer service requirements, Manning says, ultimately sealed the deal.

“Our company was willing to deliver (units) that day at 6 a.m. and pick them up that night at no additional fee,” he says. “We saved them money, and it was a higher level of service. They found value in a company that would go the extra mile.”

Dedicated customer service, Manning feels, is appreciated, especially in a troubled economy.

“Some people are only interested in the bottom-level price,” Manning says, noting that A King’s Throne has lost business when compared only on



A cargo trailer converted for portable sanitation use serves special events.

"We put hand sanitizer in our construction units. I felt the construction workers deserved the right to kill germs on their hands before they eat their peanut butter and jelly at lunch."

Mark Manning



a price basis.

"We're not the highest, but we're about \$15 higher than our competitors, per unit per month. It's difficult to actually show (clients) value," Manning laments.

Manning realizes the gap between price and perceived value is sometimes tough to straddle because the end user of the restroom is often not the company decision-maker. How do you bridge that gap?

"I'm still not sure," Manning laughs, noting that he makes concerted efforts to meet and talk with purchasers directly. That can be tough, however, especially on construction sites when subcontractors are involved.

"I try to explain that it's cheaper to rent a portable restroom ... than taking unscheduled breaks to drive to a convenience store and drive back to the site," he says.

Manning also has added another marketing tool on construction sites that he believes adds value to their line. "We put hand sanitiz-

ers in our construction units," he says. "I felt the construction workers deserved the right to kill germs on their hands before they eat their peanut butter and jelly at lunch."

STAYING VISIBLE, STAYING VIABLE

As companies of all kinds struggle to remain viable in a recession, many business owners are discovering — or perhaps reassessing — the value of networking. It's certainly something Manning has never taken for granted. In fact, it just may be the best tool in his marketing arsenal.

"I do enjoy the networking," he says. "That was my real intention; I like getting out with people." That's why he especially endorses joining local organizations — like chambers of commerce or homebuilders' associations — and attending their functions frequently.

"It's my opportunity to meet them," he says, noting that the most effective networking usually doesn't involve a hard sell. "(Potential customers) don't want to be pressured. They get turned off if you're trying to

pressure them."

Still, his visibility at these events, he feels, is key because his company needs to reach a diverse clientele, including both special events and agriculture venues (about 30 percent of their business) and construction sites (about 70 percent).

While the people he meets might not need his services directly in their businesses, they may sit on boards of festivals or be involved with sporting events that might eventually need portable sanitation. So keeping his face and his company's name and reputation in the forefront is essential.

Listening is a Powerful Tool

Mark Manning knows a thing or two about listening. Not only was it important in his previous law enforcement career, but his careful listening skills also have earned his Iowa company, A King's Throne, several lucrative and long-term special event accounts.

"(Business owners) need to be able to sit down and talk (with potential clients); that's one of the benefits (of my job). I'm able to sit down and spend time with event planners and try to inform them of what they need after they tell me what they think they need ... We try to make sure we're on the same page," Manning says.

Just this year, A King's Throne parlayed successful marketing skills into a three-year contract with the Des Moines Asian Festival. The annual one-day event in May brings about 5,000 visitors to the region.

While special events make up roughly 30 percent of A King's Throne's business, Manning hoped to build on that number. "I went on a discovery mission to find these different events," he says.

Although the festival had long been served by another provider, Manning approached the organizer to carefully assess their needs.

"When (the event organizer) told me what the numbers were (in terms of units), it seemed way upside down on what they should have," Manning says. "They had way too many wash stations for the number of units they had. I tried to come up with some reasoning as to why they needed 60 sinks ... I tried to show them that it didn't quite make sense."

By carefully listening to the festival's needs (the event required all units be serviced halfway through the event), Manning eventually convinced organizers he could save them a significant expense without compromising service.

Manning suggested fewer wash stations (reducing from 30 two-sink units to 10), which lowered both per-unit and cleaning costs. That decision saved the festival \$4,000 per year. "We also built into the contract that if they thought that after the first year they needed more sinks, we would accommodate that," Manning said. The contract also included provisions for cost of living and fuel increases.

Manning cites listening and taking the extra time with potential clients as vital keys to A King's Throne's fledgling success.



The company's inventory includes 200 restrooms from Armal Inc., 150 from Hampel Corp. and 40 from PolyJohn Enterprises Corp.





At left, Mark Halda repairs units damaged in a wind storm. Above, a restroom placed at a neighborhood park.

"We've had to make some adjustments due to the economy."

For example, A King's Throne had planned on snaring more construction accounts, which seemed a bit more realistic prior to the recession.

"There is some commercial building going on," Manning says, "but even that is pretty slow. And it's still pretty slow in the home building area."

Adding to the challenge is that Iowa's special events work goes into winter hibernation.

should be a given — but in telling potential clients about it.

His best marketing tool? "Our ability to show the quality and the value," he concludes. ■

"After September, there are not a lot of events," Manning says. And last June, major floods crippled the city. "Last year, we lost a lot of special events due to flooding. That doesn't just affect (the events') budget; it affects our budget."

But in troubled times or good, Manning believes the key to a successful business lies not only in exceptional customer service — that

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"It's difficult to actually show dollar for dollar what I do," he says. "I don't always know where my referrals are coming from."

FORGING AHEAD

After only two years in business, Manning says A King's Throne is well on its way to hitting the goals set forth in its business plan. "We're getting there," he admits, adding,

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ROOM C204-C205 - SSCSC

- 8:00 - 9:00 Manhole Inspections 'The Need'
- 9:30 - 10:30 Combination Truck Maintenance and Safety, Sewer Hose Maintenance and Nozzle Technology
- 11:00 - 12:00 Jetting Nozzles - Their Design, Technology and Effective Usage
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 - 2:00 Elevating the Quality of Your CCTV Inspection Program
- 2:30 - 3:30 Critical Steps in Prioritizing Sewer Rehabilitation
- 4:00 - 5:00 Traffic Control - The Critical Factor in Pipeline Inspection

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

ROOM C105-C108 - NEHA

- 8:00 - 9:00 Decentralized Systems - The Next Wave in Our Industry
- 9:30 - 10:30 Septic Tanks: A Gift That Keeps on Giving
- 11:00 - 12:00 Selling CIOWTS Certification to Installers and Regulators
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 - 2:00 Softeners and Onsite Systems
- 2:30 - 3:30 Advanced Wastewater Treatment Systems
- 4:00 - 5:00 Maximize Efficiency by Working Closely with Regulators and Within the Regulatory System

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WASTEWATER TRANSPORTERS

ROOM B101-B102 - NAWT

- 8:00 - 9:00 Sampling Protocols and Methods for Alternative Technologies
- 9:30 - 10:30 Dealing with Restaurant or High-Strength Waste
- 11:00 - 12:00 O & M for ATUs
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 - 2:00 O & M for Drip Irrigation
- 2:30 - 3:30 What to Expect When the EPA Comes A-Callin'
- 4:00 - 5:00 A Template for Keeping Your Employees Trained

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SEWER SERVICE COMPANIES

ROOM C101-C104 - NASSCO

- 8:00 - 9:00 Pipe Inspections without an Operator?
- 9:30 - 10:30 Ways to Increase Your Daily Sewer Cleaning Production Rates without Increasing Your Costs
- 11:00 - 12:00 Proper Preparation of the Substrate Results in Coating Longevity
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 - 2:00 Collection System Asset Management - Getting from Reactive to Proactive
- 2:30 - 3:30 Trenchless Lateral Renewal Technologies - Lessons to be Learned
- 4:00 - 5:00 Zoom Camera Technologies: The Next Level of Infrastructure Inspection

WATERJET TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

ROOM C203 - WJTA

- 8:00 - 9:00 The Impact of OSHA's Combustible Dust National Emphasis Program on Industrial Vacuuming
- 9:30 - 10:30 Waterblast Safety
- 11:00 - 12:00 Waterjet Applications and Business and Financial Considerations

PORTABLE SANITATION ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

ROOM C203 - PSAI

- 1:00 - 2:00 Understanding Your True Cost Analysis to Ensure Profitability - Part 1
- 2:30 - 3:30 Understanding Your True Cost Analysis to Ensure Profitability - Part 2

LEADERS RESOURCE NETWORK

ROOM C201-C202 - LRN

- 8:00 - 9:00 Creating Your Vision for Success
- 9:30 - 10:30 Getting Your Team On Board
- 11:00 - 12:00 Working Effectively in a Family Business Culture
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 - 2:00 Creating Your Own Competitive Edge
- 2:30 - 3:30 Winning More Sales
- 4:00 - 5:00 Women in Business: Panel Discussion

NATIONAL ONSITE WASTEWATER RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

ROOM B103-B104 - NOWRA

- 8:00 - 9:00 Wastewater Characteristics
- 9:30 - 10:30 Soils and Site Evaluation Overview
- 11:00 - 12:00 Septic Tank Overview: Function, Design, Construction, Inspection and Troubleshooting
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1:00 - 2:00 Seminar on Aerobic Treatment Units
- 2:30 - 3:30 Seminar on Media Filters
- 4:00 - 5:00 Seminar on Pumps and Controls

SCOTT HUNTER

ROOM C109-C112

- 9:30 - 10:30 Relationship is the Key!
- 11:00 - 12:00 The Art of Customer Service
- 12:00 - 1:00 **LUNCH BREAK/BOOK SALES**
- 2:30 - 3:30 Creating an Outrageously Successful Company - Part 1
- 4:00 - 5:00 Creating an Outrageously Successful Company - Part 2



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THURSDAY

February 25th, 2010

BUSINESS TRACK ROOM C101-C104

- 8:00 - 9:00 New 4 P's of Marketing
Jerard Nighorn/Lenzyme Trap-Clear Inc.
- 9:30 - 10:30 Quit Learning and Start Doing
Bill Raymond/Nexstar Network
- 11:00 - 12:00 5 Secrets of Winners
Kenny Chapman/Nexstar Network

INSTALLER TRACK ROOM B102

- 8:00 - 9:00 Risk Assessment for Determining SVC Frequency
Colin Bishop/Bord na Mona
- 9:30 - 10:30 From Theory to Reality
Roger Lacasse/Premier Tech
- 11:00 - 12:00 Timed Dosing and Controls
Mark Gross/Orenco

LIQUID WASTE TRACK ROOM B103

- 8:00 - 9:00 Understanding the Biology and Function of an ATU
Doug Dent
- 9:30 - 10:30 Permit Required Confined Space
Ed Fitzgerald/Jack Doherty Co.
- 11:00 - 12:00 T.B.D.

PORTABLE TOILET TRACK ROOM B104

- 8:00 - 9:00 Up-Selling: How to Thrive During a Recession
Ray Luden Jr./PolyJohn
- 9:30 - 10:30 Portable Sanitation Business Overview
Deric Boggs, Phil LaRoche/Satellite
- 11:00 - 12:00 T.B.D.

MUNICIPAL TRACK ROOM C105-C108

- 8:00 - 9:00 Pipe Cleaning Tools
Dana Hicks/ENZ USA Inc.
- 9:30 - 10:30 Increase Revenues through Pipeline Laser & Sonar
Doc Bennet/CUES
- 11:00 - 12:00 How to Prevent I/I in the Manhole Chimney Area
William Goff/Sealing Systems Inc.

SPANISH TRACK ROOM C109-C112

- 8:00 - 9:00 Limpieza de Drenajes y Tuberías y la Elección de Boquillas
Jim Aanderud/SSCSC
- 9:30 - 10:30 Formando un Programa Eficaz de Inspecciones CCTV
Jim Aanderud/SSCSC

WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY ROOM C203

- 9:00 - 12:00 The Regeneration Process: How to Re-energize, Re-purpose, Re-invent and Handle Everything!
Ann Fry

FRIDAY

February 26th, 2010

MUNICIPAL TRACK ROOM C105-C108

- 8:00 - 9:00 Identifying Manhole I/I Sources and Cost-Effective Repair Methods
Lee Haessig/Cretex Specialty Products
- 9:30 - 10:30 Jet Up! Taking Science to the Sewer
Scott Paquet/NozzTeq Inc.
- 11:00 - 12:00 Cured in Place Pipe vs. Digging and Replacing
Travis Bohm/Perma-Liner

BUSINESS TRACK ROOM C101-C104

- 8:00 - 9:00 Quality and the True Cost of Ownership
Matt Sutton/Rapid View
- 9:30 - 10:30 Vision and Direction: Leading your Service Company to Prosperity
Victoria Finley/One Biotechnology
- 11:00 - 12:00 How to Shop Your Insurance Effectively
Mark Herring/Heffernan Insurance

INSTALLER TRACK ROOM C109-C112

- 8:00 - 9:00 Safety in Excavation
Gary Hooks/Safety Corporation of America
- 9:30 - 10:30 Comprehensive Control Panel Training
Joe Zimmerman, Scott Rietsema/SJE Rhombus
- 11:00 - 12:00 Onsite Wastewater Effluent Disinfection
Jim Cruver/Salcor

LIQUID WASTE TRACK ROOM B103

- 8:00 - 9:00 Dewatering Alternatives
Kelly Brown/BDP Industries
- 9:30 - 10:30 Convert a Liability to an Asset
Emily Landsburg/Black Gold Biofuels
- 11:00 - 12:00 The Role of Bacteria and Bioaugmentation in Grease Traps and Septic Systems
Dr. Clarence Baugh/Custom Biologicals

SEWER & DRAIN TRACK ROOM B102

- 8:00 - 9:00 Drain Cable Technology and Their Real World Applications
Keith Nesky/Spartan Tool
- 9:30 - 10:30 OSHA Procedures Regarding Confined Space
Chris Cira/M Tech
- 11:00 - 12:00 Sonde and Utility Line Locating Techniques
Rob Trefz/RIDGID



ONSITE INSTALLER COURSE ROOM B101

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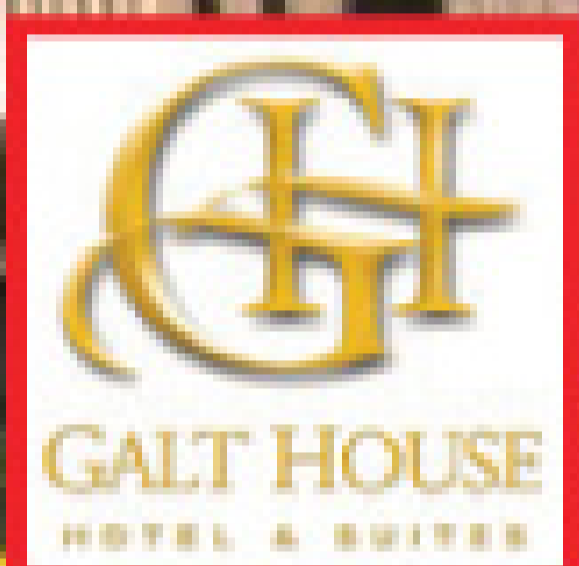
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The need for portable restrooms was so great once reconstruction began that several companies were needed to supply them. At right: A home was destroyed by the tornado that touched down in May 2008. (Photos courtesy of Rebecca Valentine)



ON LOCATION

THE JOB: Tornado recovery

LOCATION: Windsor, Colo.

THE PRO: Waste Chasers, Eaton, Colo.

Master of DISASTER

Colorado's Waste Chasers pitches in to help its hometown recover from a devastating storm

By Mary Shafer

THE TEAM

Tim Chutz owns and operates Waste Chasers, a jobsite services firm that offers portable restrooms and roll-off containers. This side of the business was aided during disaster relief efforts by two full-time staff members; portables driver Marcos Garza and customer service/dispatcher Tracy Wilson.

COMPANY HISTORY

In 2004, Chutz expanded a small jobsite cleanup and salvage company he'd bought into demolition and related services. He quickly came to specialize in hurricane and tornado recovery. "When I bought the company," Chutz recalls, "it had a truck in Florida cleaning up from Hurricane Charley. I took over, got into it and took good notes. Once I'd spent six months doing that, I got to know people." Chutz got three more post-hurricane Florida jobs that year. Waste Chasers also spent four months in New Orleans after Katrina, and four months in Galveston, Texas, after Hurricane Ike.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Waste Chasers became the go-to cleanup crew and provider of portable restrooms and roll-offs after a mile-wide, EF-3 tornado (estimated to produce winds of 136 to 165 mph) roared through the historic town center of nearby Windsor, Colo., May 22, 2008.

"I was watching the news in my Longmont home, when all the sudden there were weather alerts," Chutz says. "A tornado had been sighted south of Greeley, heading toward Wyoming. I followed the notices as the tornado grew and headed toward Windsor,

where my business is."

Chutz got a call from Wade Willis of the Windsor Park & Recreation Department asking for help. The town hall was disabled and torn up. Power and utilities were out. The call was a direct result of Chutz's face-to-face marketing with the town in the past.

THE JOB

Chutz had trouble getting into Windsor because roads were debris-covered. Once there, he met with officials to ascertain their needs. "Then I called four or five guys I've worked with in Denver to get more trucks and some extra help."

The beefed-up Waste Chasers crews started work that day. Before they could place portables, they had to help clear truck pathways. They moved in with grapple trucks, skid-steer loaders and chain saws to cut down trees and help power company crews move downed lines.

The government held impromptu meetings as one crisis after another arose in the



Waste Chasers owner Tim Chutz outside his office in Eaton, Colo. (Photo by Stephanie Burchett)

“We got together with all emergency services and city planners and created color-coded maps. We had to methodically go through and clean up section by section, so we could get everything moved off the streets ... Crews needed restrooms, so I called Wade and told him they really needed portables. He invited me to bring in mine.”

Tim Chutz

developing emergency. Chutz was called in for his disaster recovery expertise. During the initial hours, his crews were continuously called away from restroom placement. They helped remove trees on cars where emergency vehicles needed to get through, and stabilized buildings on the brink of collapse.

“We got together with all emergency services and city planners and created color-coded maps,” Chutz says. “We had to methodically go through and clean up section by section, so we could get everything moved off the streets.” Contractors’ trucks were flooding in to repair houses. Emergency vehicles and utility trucks were working. Sanitation was a problem. “Crews needed restrooms, so I called Wade and told him they really needed portables. He invited me to bring in mine.”

MANAGING THE WORKFORCE

Waste Chasers crews stayed on location every day for more than three weeks, 12-13 hours a day. The biggest challenge was responding to multiple requests simultaneously, Chutz recalls. He managed the hectic schedule for two-and-a-half months by assigning tasks in manageable chunks: one crew assigned to town parks, the baseball field and municipal pool; another on streets and sidewalks, and so on.

Communication technology was critical. “When someone from the town called me, I’d call one of my three managers on the Nextel,” Chutz says. “It’s all about organization of manpower and machinery. At any one time, I had 30-35 people on the payroll.” He often worked from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., then completed an activity log to stay on top of paperwork.

He arranged to be paid by the hour, billed daily. “I made sure that time sheets were turned in every day,” he says. “I wrote it up at



Waste Chasers initially placed about 40 standard restrooms in the storm-damaged area. Chutz has 300 restrooms in his inventory. (Photos by Stephanie Burchett)



midnight each night and turned them in the next day so the town knew what they were spending.”

As a hometown contractor, Chutz made some pricing concessions. “There were 3-4 times when insurance wasn’t going to pick up a cost, so we did some work pro bono. You’ve got to give back,” he says.

BY THE NUMBERS

After the public right-of-way work of the first few weeks, private right-of-entry work began. Residential home demolition didn’t begin until about two months after the storm. This allowed insurance companies to get adjusters into the area to approve and process claims. Portable restrooms and roll-off containers were moved in for house tear-down and selective demolition work.

Waste Chasers initially had about 40 standard restrooms placed in the affected areas, so workers wouldn’t have to walk 3-4 blocks. The company has a total inventory of 300 restroom units; 250 are Five Peaks Technology K2 units, 30 are PolyPortables Integra units and 20 are Poly-Portables ADA and Enhanced Access restrooms. The company lost about 25 of its fielded units to the storm’s violent winds.

Chutz also has about ten 8-yard roll-off trucks. These mostly stayed in place for private construction, not being big enough for heavy-duty municipal cleanup. His big grapple trucks have 60-yard containers that can be rolled and compacted to haul such heavy loads. His individual steel roll-off containers range from 10 to 30 yards and were also used for residential demolition and reconstruction.

KEEPIN’ IT CLEAN

“Normally we service typical jobsite portables weekly,” Chutz explains. “But in this situation, so many different crews were using them, the driver serviced everything at least every other day.” By the height of the cleanup, Waste Chasers had positioned 50 units in Windsor. These all ended up within about a six-block area, the most heavily damaged Cornerstone Neighborhood.

Portables for the immediate cleanup were removed by September. A few were left at the town’s baseball field, fire museum and a few other public areas. Private home construction throughout Windsor kept 15-20 units on site through the first quarter of this year.

ACT LOCALLY

Chutz knows the power of public relations. “I try to localize, because you get to know people and to understand their needs. Nobody’s big enough to take care of every place that’s affected by one of these storms, so I like to concentrate on an area where I can monitor the progress and see things coming back.”

He’s always willing to participate in activities like Habitat for Humanity, providing free trash containers and portables. Waste Chasers also participates in green recycling initiatives such as landfill diver-

sion and educational school programs. “It’s about giving back to the communities that support us.” ■

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INDUSTRY NEWS

Chemcorp Industries Names Bamberg Executive VP

Dave Bamberg has been named executive vice president, business development, for Chemcorp Industries Inc., maker and distributor for Johnny's Choice portable restroom deodorants and cleaners. He has 20 years of industry sales and marketing experience. ■

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DOLLARS AT DELIVERY

A Discussion Forum poster seeks advice on how to prompt event organizers to pay for units when they are set up

QUESTION:

We have been in business since 1961. We recently went into the portable restroom business. I see the most problems when I rent to organizations, usually large organizations with home offices. I have a problem getting paid by check at delivery. I have always been paid, but does anyone have suggestions on how to get them to pay upon delivery? The excuse I get is the check has to be written at the home office. I have gotten paid, but I usually have to make phone calls for a couple weeks after the event.

ANSWERS:

Tell them in advance that you won't set the restrooms unless you have a check in your hand at or before time of delivery.

We get that all the time. We rarely get paid on site, but I've only been stiffed a couple times. I'll get paid one way or another.

Get the credit information for security reasons. That way if they don't pay by the invoice, you can apply it to the credit card.

The best way I have found is to accept credit cards. Most organizations are willing to provide you with credit card information. If they don't want to be billed by using the credit card, tell them you will send them a monthly invoice, but get the credit information for security reasons. That way if they don't pay by the invoice, you can apply it to the credit card.

Come Join Us Online

The PRO Online Discussion Forum is found at www.promonthly.com. The forum is conveniently split into several topic areas: General Discussion, Business, Chemicals & Deodorizers, Parts & Accessories, Portable Restrooms, Portable Restroom Trailers, Portable Restroom Service and Trucks. Simply register with a user name and password and join the discussion! Information and advice in PRO Forum Chatter is offered in good faith by industry professionals. Readers should consult in depth with appropriate industry sources before applying the advice they read here to a specific business situation. ■

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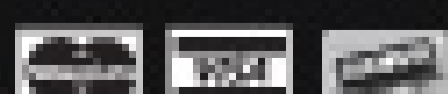


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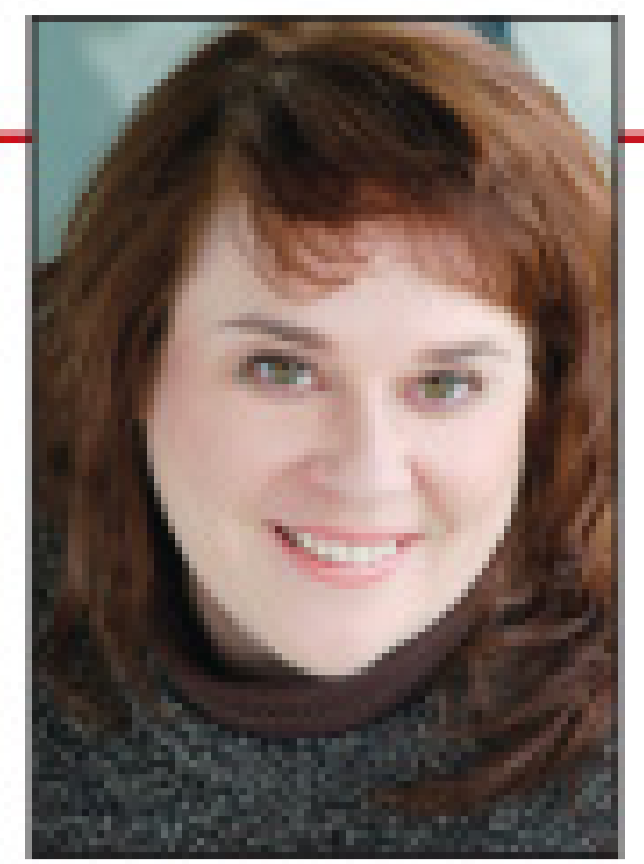
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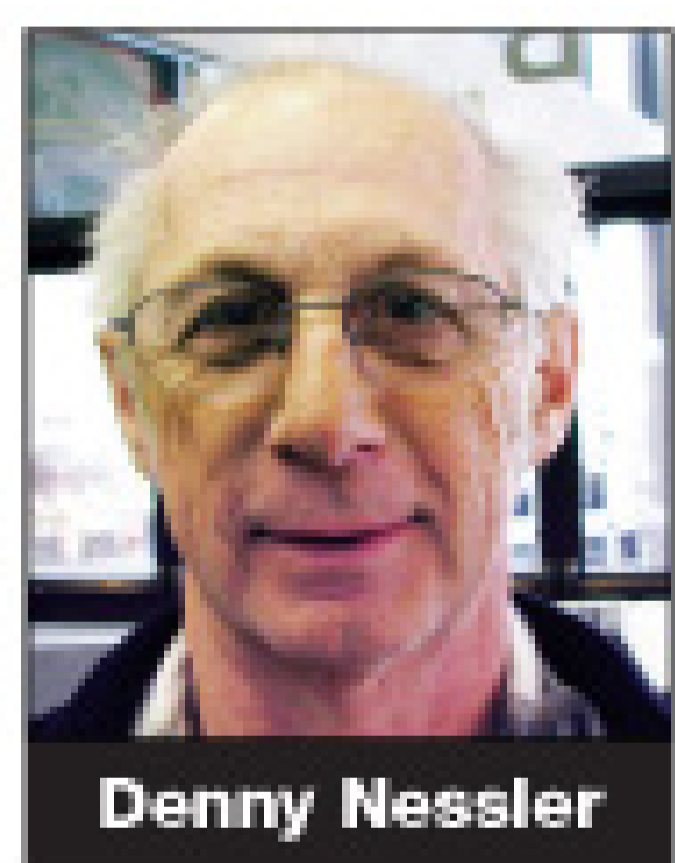
By Mary Shafer

Remember back in the mid-1980s, when fax machines became affordable, how everyone would ask, "Oh, do you have a fax?" Then, within just a few short years, the question simply became, "What's your fax number?" People just assumed that if you were a serious businessperson, you had a fax machine. Well, that's how it's getting to be now with Web sites.

Only a year or two ago, many folks I talked to on the floor of the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International weren't even thinking about getting on the Web. This year, I'd guess about half of them have either launched a Web site or are in some phase of making that happen. By the end of the decade (which is really only a year away), those who haven't migrated the majority of their company information onto the Internet will be in the minority.

A 2005 study estimated that 76 percent of American households had at least one Internet-connected computer. That was four years ago.

There has been an irreversible change in the way people seek information. As more young people from the "wireless generation" enter the workforce and use Web-enabled mobile devices, online search will only grow in popularity and importance. Service businesses ignoring this reality are in serious danger of being left in the dust of the last century. Here's a look at how two PROs are handling the issue for their companies.



Name: Sheila Nessler and Denny Nessler
Company: Columbia Sanitary Services Inc.
Location: Golden, Colo.
Employees: 6
Years in Business: 10

Columbia Sanitary Services serves Colorado's Front Range with portable restrooms and septic pumping. Sheila Nessler is the majority owner with her husband, Denny Nessler. They take advantage of the

edge gained in snagging government contracts with a woman-owned business designation. Both realized that to exploit that edge, they'd need to take their business where the majority of vendor-seeking eyes were looking.

"We wanted more exposure as a minority-owned business to federal projects and other contracts where that matters," says Denny Nessler. "We've seen in meetings and negotiations Sheila has had that we're taken more seriously since we have a Web site."

He says the Columbia staff did an in-house survey that tracked new business calls for a year, and were surprised by what was learned. "We tracked our leads and found we were getting more referrals by word-of-mouth than we were from the Yellow Pages. We knew the word-of-mouth from neighbors was a large part of (how we got) new business, but we had no idea how few people really look at our phone book ads. And the ads are not cheap."

Nessler says that based on these surprising results, Columbia immediately decided to reallocate its marketing dollars.

The Nessler's took a critical look at the large budget they had designated for print and decided to pull out of several of the phone directories they'd been in since buying the business a decade ago. They used that money to fund a Web site launch.

They approached COLE Publishing's Web site design division to help plan and implement their company's first Internet presence, www.copotties.com. The plan is to continue sending more marketing dollars to the Web site. Columbia will see about a 25 percent growth in that spending over the next 3-5 years.

"We wanted more exposure as a minority-owned business to federal projects and other contracts where that matters. We've seen in meetings and negotiations ... that we're taken more seriously since we have a Web site."

Denny Nessler



Name: Leslie Fisher
Company: Eagle Services
Location: Omaha, Neb.
Employees: 9
Years in Business: 7

"We started thinking about getting a Web site about seven years ago," recalls Leslie Fisher, who co-owns Eagle Services, a septic pumping and portable restroom company, with her husband, Jeff

Fisher. "I was a computer programmer in a previous life, so I thought I could do it myself. I probably could, but I just don't have the time."

The Fishers finally hired a company to produce a Web site. The site, www.eagle-services.net, had only been live for a short time, so the company hasn't seen any changes from it. But the site will change the way promotional budgets are divided between print and online marketing, with more dollars being allocated to keeping the Web site up to date.

Fisher says the impetus for launching the site was the realization that how people shop for services has changed drastically over the past several years. "People just go out and Google something when they want to find it. I do," she says. And now she's in the process of making sure that all the company's printed materials — letterhead, business cards, brochures — and all the fleet vehicles carry their Web address to drive traffic.

Fisher understands the need to keep the content fresh and current. "The way the world finds its information has changed," she says. She believes Eagle's Web site will ensure her company remains relevant to how people search for services. ■

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Back in Service

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



WHEN A VACUUM TRUCK HAS BEEN SITTING IDLE FOR A LONG TIME, IT'S CRITICAL TO CHECK THE PRE-FILTER AND ALL OPERATIONS BEFORE HEADING OUT OF THE YARD FOR A JOB

QUESTION:

My small company has three restroom service trucks. The recession has really brought a slowdown on business. It used to be that we could barely keep up with demand, but in recent months we've had trucks sitting, maybe running one truck, sometimes two. Then the other day we got some calls, and it was time to do some pumping. We were happy that all three trucks would be on the road making money.

The trucks headed in different directions. One truck got to the work site, which was 35 miles from the shop. The driver got everything set up, but there was no vacuum on the gauge. The pump was running, but there was no vacuum being measured at the gauge. He checked the hose and there was no vacuum there either. Still the pump was running. Anyway, our "great" day required another truck being sent out to do the job.

By the way, we have always been in the habit of cleaning the primary and the secondary as recommended. So what do you think the problem was?

Gary Gerard
St. Paul, Minn.

ANSWER:

This is a great question because we've seen cases like this in our shop. The recession has left many trucks sitting for long stretches of time. And most service technicians do check and clean their primaries and secondaries, thus avoiding any problems the following day when trucks rev up again.

When trucks have been sitting for any amount of extended time, beyond what is considered normal, check for proper operation at the shop before you head out to pump.

We've mentioned many times that if you don't clean your primary from time to time and your secondary every day, you'll have problems. One other element needs to be brought into the equation to solve your problem. Let's talk about the pre-filter; some people call it the final filter.

The pre-filter is the final safety accessory to prevent debris and materials from entering the pump. In the typical vacuum system, the primary is the first source of protection. As the system runs, some stuff makes it past the primary and is sucked into the secondary where

hopefully it drops and is trapped before moving onward toward the pump. But since we are not living in a perfect world, some debris continues toward the pump. This is where the pre-filter comes in.

Some manufacturers have the pre-filter already attached to the pump. It serves as the final obstacle keeping debris from entering the pump. Other pump manufacturers offer it as an optional accessory. It looks much like a mini-secondary.

A WHOLE LOT OF SHAKIN'

In your case, one of two things most likely occurred. As the truck sat for a few days or a week, the leftover waste materials dried and hardened and attached to the interior of the primary and/or secondary and possibly the pre-filter. Then, the vibration of bouncing for 35 miles to the job caused the dried debris to flake off and move along. When your employee turned on the pump, this material collected at the pre-filter and blocked your airflow.

When trucks are running every day, the system tends to take care of itself in this regard. But with more trucks sitting in this stressed economy, things like this will happen.

The lesson is clear: Check that pre-filter. It usually has a removable top attached by wing nuts and can be checked quickly and easily. The other half of the lesson is that when trucks have been sitting for any amount of extended time, beyond what is considered normal, check for proper operation at the shop before you head out to pump.

And don't stop at your vacuum system, also check the engine oil and other fluids. It might be a good idea to check your tire pressure and the condition of your hoses at the same time.

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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