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Producing Results

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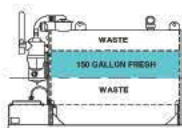
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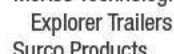






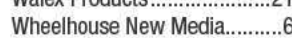

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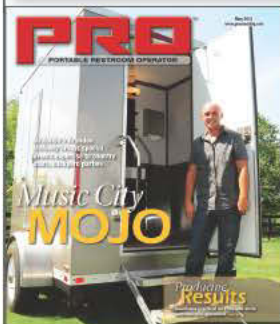
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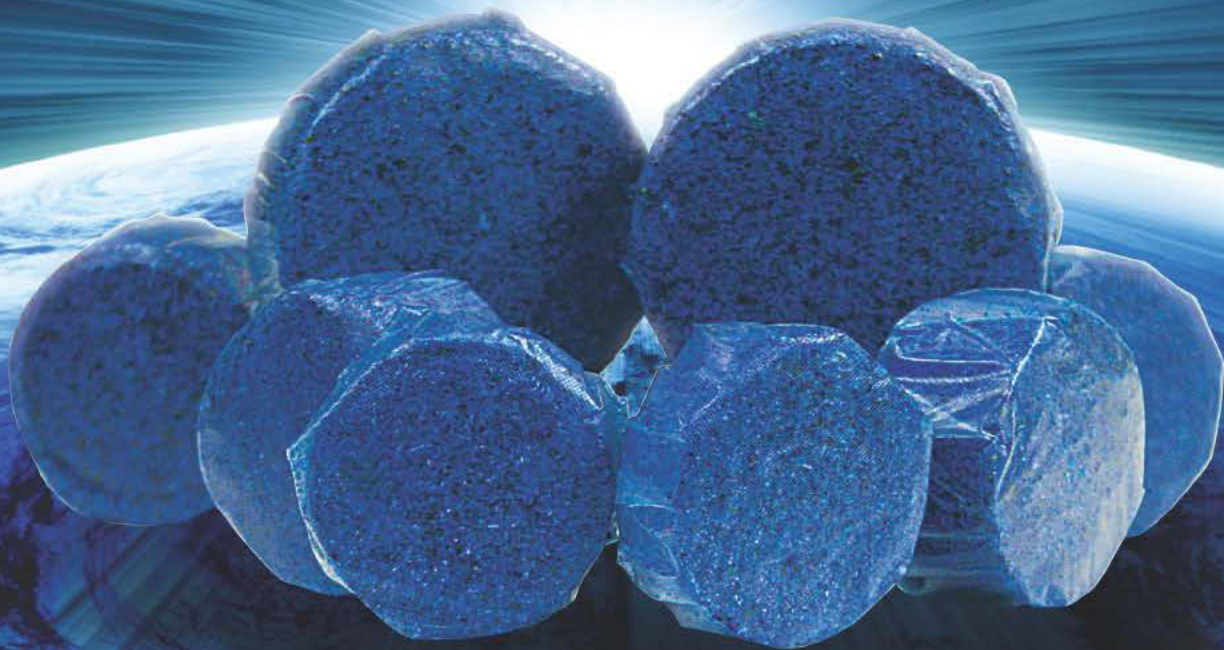
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Engage Brain, Then Talk

A FEW SIMPLE RULES ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS WILL GIVE YOU A BETTER SHOT AT BUILDING LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

By Jim Kneiszel

Recently I was negotiating the purchase of a used car. The dealership wasn't in my area, so I was working with a salesman over the phone and via email. As I was waiting for some paperwork I'd requested before sending him my check, the salesman became impatient and surprisingly argumentative. He wanted the check right away and hinted that I was being a difficult customer.

"Well, do you still want me to buy a car from your dealership?" I asked, incredulous about his pressuring tactics. Unfortunately, the discussion deteriorated further, and I ended up calling the dealership manager. As I suspected, this was the end of the month and the salesman was stretching to meet a quota of some kind.

"We put a lot of demands on the sales staff," the manager explained as he gave me an apology. "We teach them not to let that pressure transfer to the customer, but sometimes it happens. I assure you that's not the way we treat customers and we want you to be happy about your purchase."

The salesman was guilty of a lapse in good customer service, though this is certainly not the first or last time a used car salesman and a customer didn't get off on the right foot. After all, if there's one purchase consumers dread, it's walking into a dealership and buying a car.

The prickly back-and-forth with this salesman, however, made me think about the do's and don'ts of effective communication between your employees and customers. Here are a few rules for you to consider and talk over with your crew:

NEVER LET THEM SEE YOU SWEAT

My friend at the car dealership reflected his frustration at work back to me and risked a potential sale. I'm sure you and your drivers face similar pressures on a daily basis – an emergency call piles on top of several other appointments, a restroom servicing that appears easy at first turns into a terrible mess, a customer complaint early in the day is making you grouchy in the afternoon. You can't let those situations carry over to the next customer on your route.

If you run a portable sanitation route, you have to be even-keeled and diplomatic from sun-up to sundown. You're representing the company and professionalism is paramount to maintaining a good reputation. Keep in mind offering competent service isn't enough. To provide good customer care you always have to smile, be polite, and help educate your customers from pulling into the driveway to handing over the invoice.

THE CUSTOMER ALWAYS HAS TO THINK HE'S RIGHT

Do you want to develop a good relationship with a customer and get the call the next time they need a restroom? Then you can't argue with a customer. Period.

I recall working in a retail store many years ago. The department store's marketing line was, "It's not yours until you like it!" At first, that promise seemed like an open-ended invitation for customers to return goods, and a few customers took it quite literally, returning some pretty threadbare clothing. But after a time, I came to appreciate the sentiment that catchphrase represented.

Real customer loyalty only comes from continual satisfaction with the service provided. And sometimes to ensure that satisfaction, you might have to do things you think are above and beyond the scope of your work. This could mean cleaning up a portable restroom after a construction site tip-

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– Bill Reynolds Jr., RentAJohn, Columbus, OH

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over, for instance. Or making an extra service run at a special event because the customer – against your advice – didn't order enough restrooms in the first place. A customer may be wrong from time to time, but you can't tell them without risking losing them.

BE CLEAR AND DIRECT

There's a thin line between miscommunication and lack of communication. In all of your client dealings, convey important details clearly and reinforce the message. When you follow up on a complaint, for instance, tell the customer what you're going to do to remedy the situation, and then return and tell them what you did to make things right. Address questions and concerns head-on and don't make excuses. If you make a promise, do everything in your power to keep it. If you're going to miss a deadline, let the customer know ahead of time and explain why.

If you run a portable sanitation route, you have to be even-keeled and diplomatic from sun-up to sundown. You're representing the company and professionalism is paramount to maintaining a good reputation.

Many years ago, a boss told me he didn't mind if an employee made a mistake. What bothered him was being surprised by mistakes or workers who didn't own up to their errors. It's the same between you and your customers. If something goes wrong, don't let the problem fester and risk hurting your relationship. Own the mistake, apologize for any inconvenience it caused, and make it right. Clear and direct communication will help build loyalty even after a bad situation.

KNOW WHEN TO PICK UP THE PHONE

Sometimes communication by email, text or snail mail is appropriate, but there are situations where nothing replaces picking up the phone and calling or jumping in the truck and visiting a customer. You need to know which situations demand a more personal interaction.

Emails and texts are great time-saving tools for business communication. But they can cause relationship-killing misunderstandings. Sure, it's fine to tap out a text to remind a client what time you'll arrive at their shop or construction site. But a quick, condensed message is no way to answer a complaint or tell a customer that you're going to have to charge them to repair a vandalized restroom pulled from their work site.

People dash off written messages lightning fast. We all sometimes let our fingers get ahead of our brains. When you're in the middle of a flurry of messages on an extremely busy day, slow down and take a moment to consider if you're taking the right approach when communicating with customers. And when it doubt, don't push send. Pick up the phone.

TIME TO STEP IN?

Like the car dealership manager knew, probably from years of experience in sales, there's always a time to step in and make a customer service course correction. He knew the first order of business was to say he was sorry. Then he artfully handed me off to another salesman to complete the transaction in a less confrontational manner. The lesson in this situation is that even if a relationship goes awry, you may still have a shot at regaining the customer's confidence. ■

Thanks for Pleasing Picky Moms

I just finished reading your article on the cleanliness of portable restrooms (Making Mom Happy, February 2013), and you are spot on. I liked taking my son to Cub Scout events because it's required in the Scout rules that there be dedicated male- and female-use toilets; inevitably, the restroom would be shared between me and only one other mom. Heaven. It would be clean and smell nice and have lots of paper products.

My best portable restroom experience was the Avon 3-Day Walk for Breast Cancer. The people who supplied those restrooms – and showers – for over 6,000 walkers (and support staff) over the course of three days were fantastic. Every stop along a 20-mile walk (and the walk changed every day) had plenty of restrooms, and they were clean, they smelled nice and had lots of paper. And then the ones designated for us at night while we slept in tents – it was amazing to me how well it went.

Those are the best in my memory. And then you have the ones that are too full, no paper, no sanitizer, no hand wash facilities. Or they also have a urinal, and that's full too. There's nothing nastier than having to stare at a full urinal. I have hiked plenty of mountains and I'd rather squat in the forest than deal with a messy restroom.

I think the main issue is the same thought process that accompanies how one uses a rental car, or a hotel room: It's not mine, why should I take care of it?

How much better would our world be if we took care of everything as if it were our very own?

Thanks again for a great article.

Wendy Marshall, Los Angeles, Calif.

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Marketing in Your Backyard

ARE YOUR ONLINE PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS GOING BEYOND A SIMPLE COMPANY WEBSITE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO REACH LOCAL CUSTOMERS?

By Judy Kneiszel

If you ran a portable restroom rental business a decade or two ago, it's likely all of your customers were local and most of your business was done offline. Back then, a limited Internet presence for your company was probably adequate. But today the Internet is an essential tool for local marketing that some small businesses continue to overlook.

Even if you understand the importance of local Internet marketing, it can be daunting. But there are simple things you can do to give your local Web presence a boost that don't take a lot of time or money.

EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

Long-time local business owners assume everyone in their service area is familiar with their company. Your customers have known you for years. They drive by your business regularly. They honk and wave at your drivers, right? But what if they are on a job site and want to call you? Or at a networking event and want to refer your company to a friend? Can they find you? You may be "in the book," but what if that phone book is back at the office or, more likely these days, behind the office in a recycling bin?

Picture yourself running late for a dental appointment. You don't carry a traditional bound phone book in your car, you didn't bring your dentist's business card, and you don't have his number programmed into your cellphone. So you use your smartphone to search for him. His website is non-existent or doesn't work well on a mobile device. That's okay; his name comes up on a bunch of local business listing sites.

You begin clicking and find your dentist's phone number isn't included on any of them. You begin to wonder if you want a guy who is so far behind on technology working on your teeth. You hope he upgrades his dental equipment more frequently than his marketing. Likewise, your business may seem antiquated and out of touch to potential customers if you aren't easily accessible on the Internet.

YOU ARE ALREADY THERE

It's rare these days that a business doesn't have a website, but if you are that rare exception, get one. Even a quick build-it-yourself-for-free site is better than nothing, as long as your phone number and location are prominent. Just make sure it displays well on a mobile device.

Also realize that, website or no website, your business is most likely on the Internet already, so you'd better make sure the information is complete and correct. It's not uncommon for small local businesses to ignore online listing services.

Conduct an experiment and do Google and Bing searches for your business name. See if and where you come up. Also search your type of business by location, i.e. portable restroom rental, your city, state. Hopefully, if you have a website, it comes up near the top. If it doesn't, you may want to look into Search Engine Optimization, which means adding key words and phrases

on your website to boost your position in search results. Your business should also come up in Citysearch, YellowPages.com and other listing services.

Take the time to ensure that your business entry on these listing services is accurate, and that there are direct links to your website and the phone number and street address are in place and accurate.

CLAIM IT

Other online directory services where you might find your company listed include Bing Business Portal, MerchantCircle, Angie's List, Yahoo! Local, SearchLocal and SuperPages. If one of these sites lists your business, claim it by adding more details to the listing, such as your company website URL, a map, phone numbers or business hours.

Website or no website, your business is most likely on the Internet already, so you'd better make sure the information is complete and correct. It's not uncommon for small local businesses to ignore online listing services.

Be aware that the Internet is not stagnant. Even if your listings were up to date in the past, they may not be now. Google Places pages, for example, began disappearing about a year ago. Small business owners must now create a profile and join the Google Plus network in order to maintain a local business listing in the Google Plus Local results.

Many of these local directory sites allow customers to leave feedback and reviews. You may want to encourage some of your best customers to post reviews of your services. You could even provide incentives for them to do this. For example, offer a 10 percent discount on a future rental to a customer who writes a review. This encourages repeat business as well as reviews.

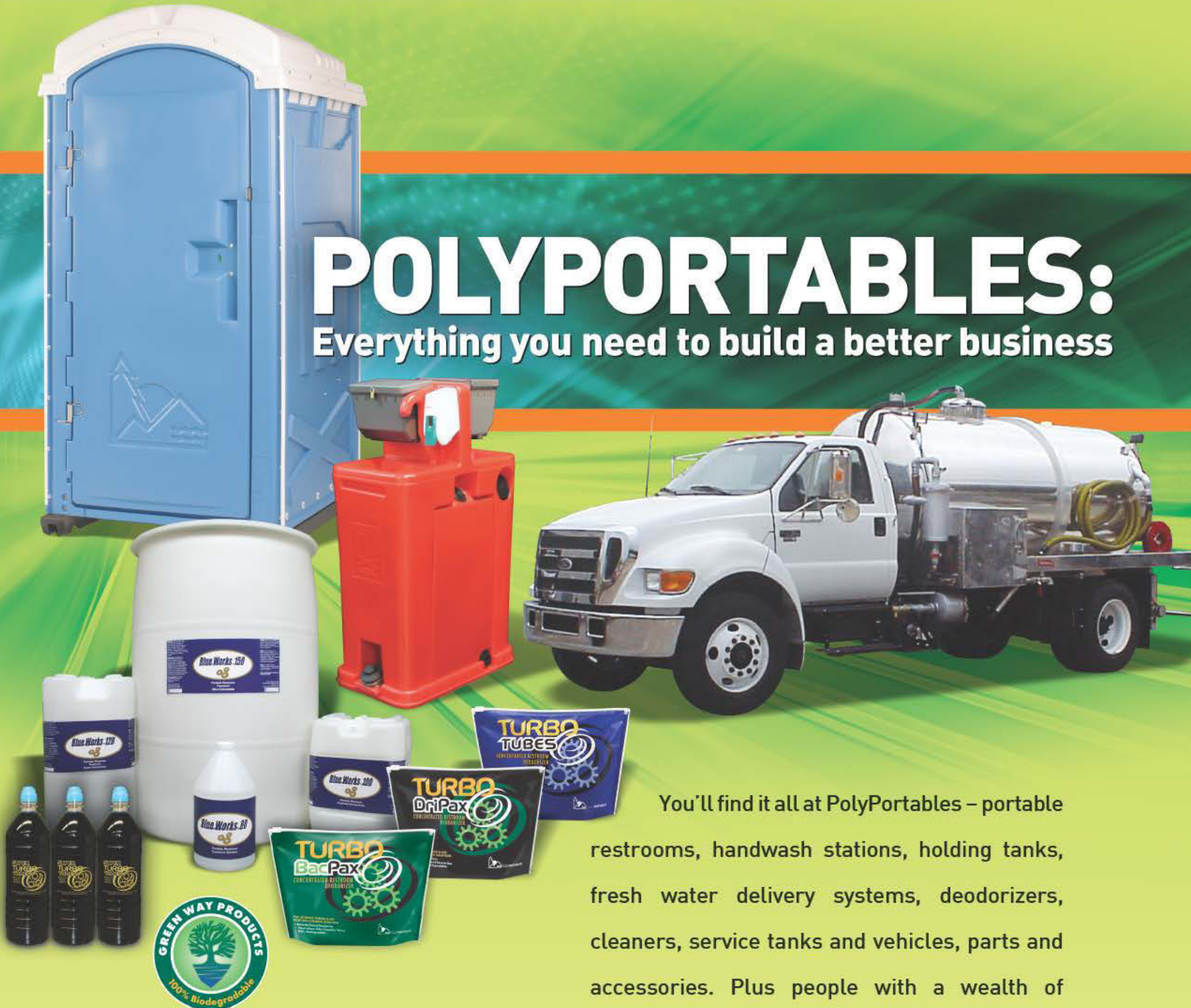
PAYING TO UPGRADE

After you've taken all the steps you can for free to boost your local online presence, monitor the response you are getting. Then, if you aren't pleased with the amount of business the Internet is bringing to your door, consider paying for more extensive online local listings. Just like upgrading the basic free listing in the old-fashioned print phone book to a bigger, more detailed paid ad, you can upgrade on most online business listings. If you decide it would be worth the expense to put some money into online local marketing, but need guidance, there are local online marketing service agencies that can assist you (also for a fee).

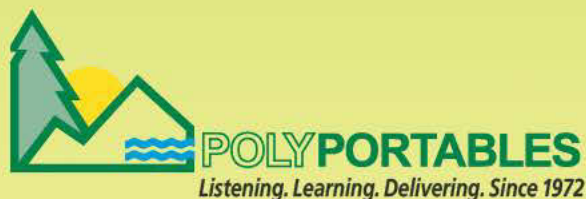
If online local marketing seems like a hassle, consider the hassle of ignoring it. If a potential customer is looking for a restroom rental company in your town and can't find you online, they'll probably find your competition there. ■

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Music City MOJO

An estate manager for a country star in Nashville saw the potential for restroom trailer service and dialed in to land exclusive outdoor events. **BY PATRICK DURKIN**

When Brandon McNeely graduated college about eight years ago, he couldn't see himself working in an office-cubicle environment, even though he had just earned a bachelor's degree in finance and economics.

Soon after, McNeely began working as an estate manager for country music star Ronnie Dunn, of Brooks & Dunn fame, a job that requires regular 10-hour days overseeing the performer's 17-acre residence and 250-acre farm. As his work duties bounced him back and forth between the properties, McNeely learned he enjoys the energy and excitement surrounding fundraisers and other big events that drew large, well-dressed crowds to Dunn's properties.

McNeely figured there must be a way for a businessman with entrepreneurial instincts to become a regular part of that excitement. He sifted through various ideas, but when nothing took root, he returned to college about three years ago to get a master's degree in finance and economics.

RESEARCHING THE MARKET

A few months after earning his master's degree in May 2011, McNeely stumbled onto his niche while reading

(continued)

Working for singer Ronnie Dunn, Brandon McNeely recognized a need for portable sanitation at upscale parties. So he started PoshPrivy, where this compact Comforts of Home restroom trailer is a popular offering. (Photos by Patrick Durkin)

PoshPrivy Nashville, Tenn.

Owners: Brandon and Kristeen McNeely

Employees: 2

Service area: 100-mile radius of Nashville, Tenn.

Specialty: Upscale portable sanitation for weddings and special events

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about a specialty restroom service company in an online news story. The concept of renting posh privies for business, family or formal affairs might offer everything he desired: independence, flexible hours, fun and exciting events, a service that won't fade away, and weekend work that allows him to keep the "day job" he loves.

Still, McNeely knew better than to jump into a business before studying and analyzing the idea further. His analysis of the Nashville area's ability to support a boutique, high-end portable restrooms company led him to Atlanta. He spent a day there with the owner of an

>>> *Brandon McNeely set up shop at home for his boutique restroom service, PoshPrivy. He operates the business with his wife, Kristeen, in Nashville.*



Tips for Bringing the "Wow" Factor

Brandon McNeely wants people to be talking about PoshPrivy's restroom trailers the minute they walk out the door, no matter who they are and what the event. After all, people wearing wedding gowns, tuxedos and fine footwear expect five-star restroom accommodations.

"Using a portable restroom doesn't have to be a cringe-worthy deal," McNeely says. "We're a boutique business. Our restroom trailers are unique and designed specifically for special events. We try to really 'wow' people. They can't believe how nice our trailers are. Most people have never seen anything like them."

Here are some of the ways McNeely markets to VIP customers:

Pricing options

In addition to the trailers, PoshPrivy offers two price packages. The basic package is just the trailer with toiletries. For an additional cost, McNeely provides a 'signature' package, which includes flowers, fresh mints, LED candles, indoor-outdoor rugs and a personalized chalkboard message. He also sets out amenity baskets. "When your niche is special events, you must cater to high expectations and meet them," he says.

Show it off

McNeely uses PoshPrivy's website to give customers a virtual tour of his restroom trailers. "Our website is clean and easy to navigate. We describe our features under 'Products and Pricing' and show them in our 'Gallery.' Our trailers offer so many advantages, and pictures tell that story. People look at photos of our trailers and say, 'I've got to have that.' Once we roll in and set them up, they walk into something special."

Plush interiors

If anyone still has doubts about portable restroom luxury after studying the online photos, McNeely offers guided tours of the trailers and their luxurious interiors at his storage site. "Some customers just need to see things in person to be convinced, and I have no problem with that," he says. "But that doesn't happen too often." When it does, though, it allows McNeely to discuss possible upgrades as clients inspect the trailers.



>>> *As part of PoshPrivy's Signature Service, Brandon McNeely places flowers and a personalized chalkboard message of congratulations in his Comforts of Home trailer.*

"I want to be part of my client's event ... I'm genuinely interested in being part of a great wedding, reunion or whatever. When you deal with brides and brides' mothers, they want the best. This is not just a business proposition for them."

BRANDON McNEELY

upscale portable sanitation company, and the trip reinforced that his business idea was solid.

In January 2012, McNeely and his wife, Kristeen, put his plan into action. He takes a conservative approach to building PoshPrivy. "This business is a baby right now, and we want to pay for everything as we go," he says. "I don't believe in assuming debt. I'll get where I want to go

by adding one or two trailers at a time as I can pay for them."

McNeely bought his first restroom trailer in early 2012 from a portable restroom company in Michigan that was shedding some inventory. This 6-by-8-foot restroom trailer – which he calls "The Petite" – includes a 300-gallon internal waste tank and a 125-gallon onboard freshwater tank. McNeely brought the two-stall 2010 Comforts of Home trailer back to Nashville, and then remodeled it. "It was our first unit, so I wanted to make sure it had a modern, upscale look and feel," McNeely says.

He started the makeover by removing the unit's free-standing pedestal sink, replacing vinyl for hardwood-style flooring, then installing designer lighting, floating vanities and automatic touchless faucets. To finish, he repainted the interior with an up-to-date color scheme.

Next he bought a new 2012 three-stall Porta Pal restroom trailer from Rich Specialty Trailers. The 13-foot restroom trailer – which he calls "The Polished" – has a 400-gallon internal waste tank and a 105-gallon freshwater tank.

In fall 2012, McNeely added "The Plush," an Alpha Mobile Solutions Signature Series 3 featuring two private women's rooms and one room for men. It comes with a 500-gallon internal waste tank and 125-gallon freshwater tank. Each restroom features amenities including vessel sinks,

(continued)

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AAA McNeely runs a power cord to his Porta Pal unit from Rich Restrooms. Music City customers organizing backyard weddings and special events want a lot of amenities when shopping for portable sanitation units.



AAA McNeely adjusts the wastewater outlet valve on one of his restroom trailers.

floating vanities, Corian countertops, stereo, ceramic floors and flatscreen TVs.

Rounding out his inventory is "The Premiere" trailer, another upscale unit made by Rich Specialty Trailers, which McNeely subleases through a partnership with Portable Restrooms LLC. in Charlotte, N.C. This large two-suite trailer – which has a 600-gallon internal waste tank and 200-gallon freshwater tank – includes a working fireplace, as well as hot water, solid marble and granite countertops, designer vanities, and heating and air conditioning for full climate control.

TARGETING CUSTOMERS

When McNeely was assembling his inventory, he contacted his target markets to alert them to his fledgling business. He services the Nashville area and roughly 100 miles in all directions in middle Tennessee, going after weddings, festivals, large reunions, corporate fundraisers and other events.

"If people can't find you quickly with Google, you don't exist. And once they find you, your website must instantly project your brand and what you're all about. You don't have to say much, but you have to say it right."

BRANDON MCNEELY

McNeely puts himself at the center of the business as the contact person and chief problem-solver. He handles all email communication, and every call placed to PoshPrivy routes to his personal phone.

"I want to be part of my client's event," he says. "I take time to make them feel comfortable with me, and assure them I'm genuinely interested in being part of a great wedding, reunion or whatever. When you deal with brides and brides' mothers, they want the best. This is not just a business proposition for them."

McNeely believes PoshPrivy's website and targeted email campaigns play key roles in establishing and building the company's unique brand. His maxim is "Redefining the portable restroom experience." That starts with a "clean," simple website that projects PoshPrivy's upscale niche. He also works hard to ensure the company pops up prominently when people search for upscale portable restrooms on Google or other Internet search engines.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

"If people can't find you quickly with Google, you don't exist," McNeely says. "And once they find you, your website must instantly project your brand and what you're all about. You don't have to say much, but you have to say it right."

That doesn't mean McNeely just flipped a switch and waited for business to build. He also networks with job-related companies to spread his message by word-of-mouth.

"I started going around to party-tent rental companies because our business is mostly geared toward outdoor events," McNeely says. "Probably 70 percent of our business (has been) from their referrals."

At the same time, he targeted event planners to raise awareness of PoshPrivy. For that, targeted emails generate results.

"I spent a couple of days compiling an email list of every event planner I could find around Nashville and middle Tennessee," McNeely says. "I use a service called MailChimp, which helps me design letters to target event planners who might need my restroom trailers. MailChimp works much better than traditional mail. Event planners need to think of you when giving portable restroom options to their clients."

Finally, McNeely – who doesn't own a vacuum truck – partners with a local company to pump out the trailers before hauling them home from the event site. "Most of the events we service last a half-day or so, which means we usually don't have to pump them until they're ready to be removed," he explains. "It's less trouble for everyone if we get them pumped on the job site right after the event."

SELL YOURSELF

All the while, McNeely builds business through face-to-face contact. "Once we're in touch with companies that can help us, I try to meet with the owners and essentially sell myself and our product to them," he said.

Part of "selling himself" means being an expert in the field. Before launching his venture, McNeely joined the Portable Sanitation Association International and attended its annual convention and trade show in 2011. While there, he attended seminars and talked with experts to broaden his knowledge.

More recently, he joined the National Association of Catering and Events to learn all he can about events and how best to service them. He also plans to join the Tennessee Wedding and Events Specialists Association this year. "The more I can network with experts in those areas – people who also need my trailers – the more I'll learn, and the more ideas and referrals I'll get."

Meanwhile, he provides personal touches to complement his restroom trailers. That includes mints, amenity baskets, flower bouquets in the women's side of the trailers, a personal message for the bride and groom on a chalkboard, and tiki lights that illuminate the path to the trailers after dark.

After all, the more McNeely does to make his portable restrooms pleasing, and perhaps even memorable, the greater the chance he'll never have to work from the confines of an office cubicle. ■

MORE INFO

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See ad page 36	Green Way Products by PolyPortables, Inc. 99 Crafton Dr., Dahlonega, GA 30533 800-241-7951 • 706-864-3776 • (f) 706-864-8111 info@greenwayproducts.net www.greenwayproducts.net	✓	✓	✓		✓			Cherry, Bubble Gum, Mulberry, Fresher n' Cleaner, Cinnamon Spice, Pine, Lemon, Artic Breeze	✓
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See ads page 34	Surco Products 292 Alpha Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15238 800-556-0111 • 412-252-7000 • (f) 412-252-1005 info@surcopt.com www.surcopt.com	✓	✓	✓				Scented Fiber Wafers	Bubble Gum, Cherry, Red Raspberry	✓
See ad page 21	Walex Products Co., Inc. PO Box 3785, Wilmington, NC 28406 800-338-3155 • 910-371-2242 • (f) 910-371-2094 info@walex.com www.walex.com	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		Tangerine, Cinnamon Spice, Mint, Cherry, Sunglow, Citronex, Very Berry, Fantasy, Mango, Wintergreen, Citifresh, Mulberry, Lemon, Tropical Breeze, Wildflower, Bubblegum, Beechwood	✓

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Producing Results

Cleanliness is critical for crews from Southwest Site Services as they work at California's bountiful fruit and vegetable growing operations

BY BETTY DAGEFORDE

Southwest Site Services owner Steve Morales Sr. poses in a farm field with one of the company's trailer units in the background. (Photos by Michael J. Elderman)

THE TEAM

Steve Morales Sr. and his wife Irene own Southwest Site Services in Corona, Calif. Irene handles accounts receivable, their daughter Stephanie works in the office, and son Steve Jr., assistant manager of operations, works as much as he can while studying to be an opera singer. One secretary and three drivers round out the staff, some of who work out of a small satellite office in Irvine, Calif.

THE JOB: Pumpkin Harvest

LOCATION: Southern California

THE PRO: Southwest Site Services

COMPANY HISTORY

After immigrating to the United States, Morales Sr. began a career with a national trash hauling and portable restroom company in 1988. Twelve years later, the company separated the portable restroom business from the trash side. In 2006, Morales left and started his own portable sanitation company.

Today, the company has 500 units and five service vehicles. They specialize in the agricultural industry and have created specially designed trailers with integrated units to help comply with the stringent

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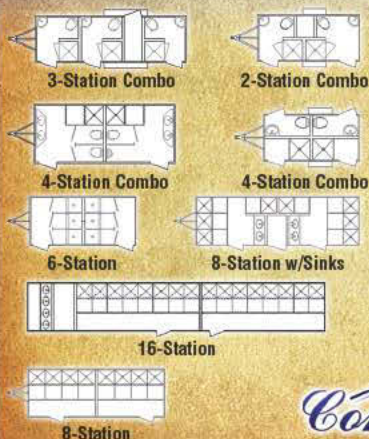


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<<< Technician Carlos Rubalcaba services trailer-mounted units that are placed in fields for farm workers to use while harvesting produce, including for the Harvest Festival.

v v v One of Southwest's new hand-wash trailer units, fabricated in-house, features a sink, paper towel dispenser for drying, and a larger freshwater container and cups to keep workers hydrated.

safety requirements of the industry. About 30 percent of their work is for construction sites and special events and a small portion of their income is derived from concrete washoffs and temporary fencing.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The Morales family got a big break in the beginning from one of their contacts, a large strawberry grower in the area. "That opened up a lot of doors for us, having him as a reference," Morales Jr. says "Ever since then, all the agriculture in Irvine has been ours at one point or another."

"As farmers' needs evolve, we're trying to keep up with them so they have the most sanitary restrooms."

STEVE MORALES Jr.

THE MAIN EVENT

Pumpkin harvesting begins as early as August in Southern California, peaking in October heading into Halloween, then tapering off the rest of the year. The company provides portable restrooms for field workers. And for the month of October, they provide units for the general public at Tanaka Farms, one of the largest growers in the area, which holds its annual

U-Pick Pumpkin Patch every day during October. Besides allowing visitors to wander the fields and pick their own pumpkins (and other veggies) off the vine, the event includes a petting zoo, wagon rides, a corn maze and Pumpkinmania, the Giant Pumpkin Weigh-off and Contest.

BY THE NUMBERS

The company works for the ten main farmers in the area. A few units are kept on the farms year-round, but the numbers increase substantially during the fall harvest season. One unit is needed for every 20 pickers. During the harvest, large farms might take as many as 50. Smaller ones may need only four. At the peak of the season, the company has about 300 units out on all the farms combined.

For field workers, the company uses green PolyJohn Enterprises PJ3 restrooms. Units have integrated hand-wash stations (including soap,

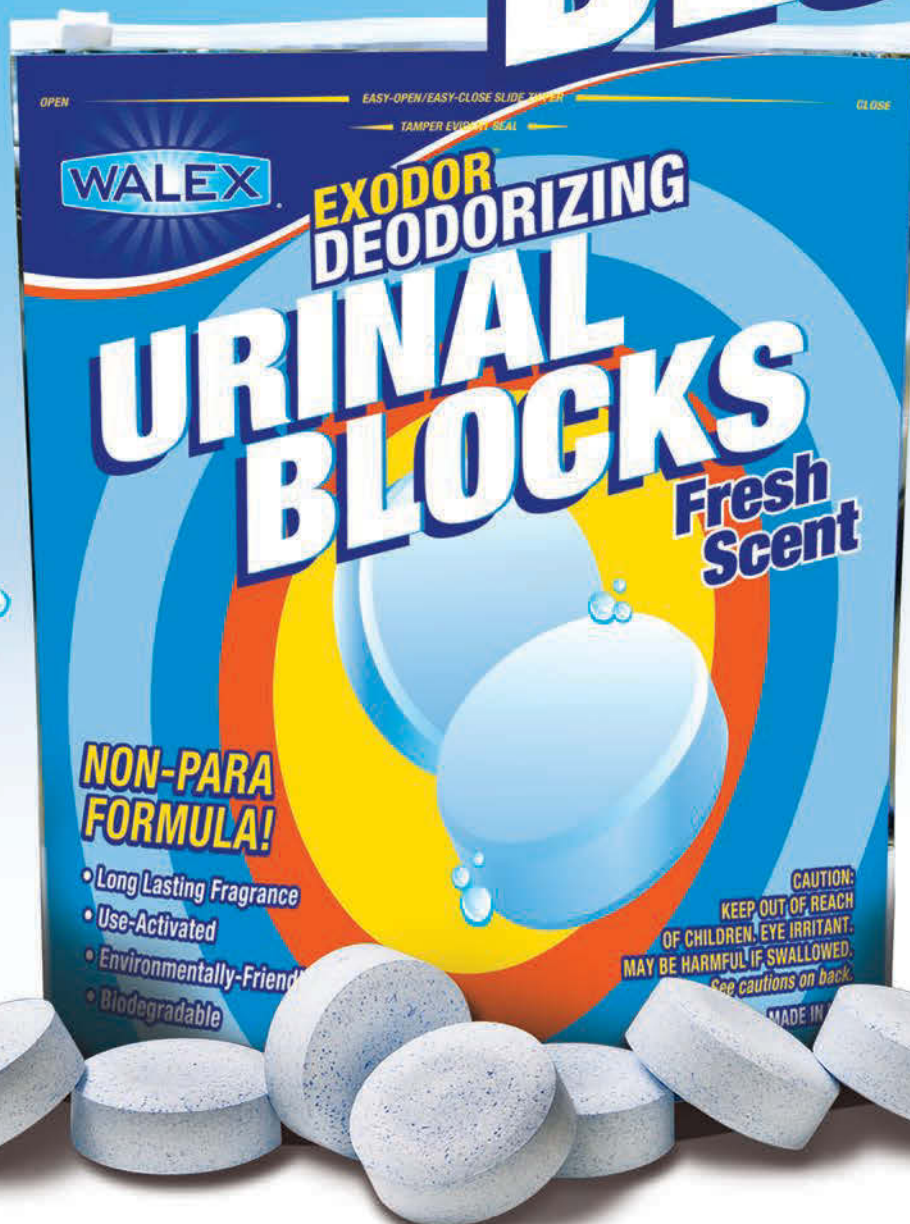
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▲▲▲ Steve Morales Sr. (second from left) with his wife, Irene Morales, son Steve Morales Jr. (left), younger son Anthony Morales and daughter Stacy Morales at the company office.

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>>> Technician Lucas Antunes washes his Ford F-650 vacuum truck service vehicle in the Southwest Site Services yard.

vvv The Southwest Site Services team includes (left to right) owner Steve Morales Sr., his son Steve Morales Jr., Alejandro Cacho, Carlos Rubalcaba, Jesus Lopez and Jose Gomez.



sanitizer and paper towel dispensers) built into the backs of them and are incorporated into the company-designed trailers. Per safety regulations, the trailers have catch basins to prevent dirty water from touching the ground. Trailers hold between one and four units. "Farmers like having a variety because sometimes they won't need as many pickers on a certain field," Morales Jr. says.

For the public event at Tanaka Farms, they brought in 20 tan free-standing Five Peaks Aspen units, five PolyJohn ADA-accessible units and 10 PolyJohn Bravo hand-wash stations. They were placed in five areas along the public routes.

LET'S ROLL

The company delivers their custom restroom trailers to farms using their fleet of Ford service vehicles. Although trailers can be train-linked when moving them around on a farm, highway regulations prevent them from pulling more than one trailer at a time on public roads. Trailers are taken to a central location and farm personnel haul them around the fields where needed.

KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

At the end of each day, units are rounded up by the farm workers and taken off field, back to a central location for cleaning. This not only facilitates the cleaning process but is a legal requirement to prevent contamination of the fields.

Wearing coveralls, gloves, rubber boots and company shirts, team members head out to the farms seven days a week, at 1 a.m. Servicing must be complete before the pickers arrive at 6 a.m. "It works out pretty good for us," Morales Sr. says, "because they want us to start early, and at construction sites you're not allowed to start before 7. So we take care of the farms first, then we're ready to start on the construction." Units for the public Pumpkin Patch event are cleaned daily before Tanaka Farms opens.

The company has five 2002-2007 Ford service vehicles. The F-750 was built out by Progress Tank with a 1,500-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater aluminum tank. The others are company-built — the F-650 has a 1,000-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater steel tank; the F-450, a 750-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater steel tank; the Super Duty, a 650-gallon waste/250-gallon freshwater steel tank; and the F-350, a 450-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater stainless tank. All have Masport, Inc. pumps.

Using products from ET Chem Lab, Inc., units are washed, pumped and refilled. Dirty water is vacuumed out of the catch basins and chlorine tablets are dropped into the tanks to prevent algae and bacteria buildup.

SAFETY FIRST

The pace picks up substantially during the harvest, but at no time does anyone let their guard down on public health regulations. Food safety is the number one concern and sanitation is a big part of that. To keep up with constantly changing federal and state laws the company is constantly experimenting with new trailer designs. Currently, they're working on a hands-free operation. "We have to keep on top of it," Morales Jr. says. "As farmers' needs evolve, we're trying to keep up with them so they have the most sanitary restrooms." ■

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By Jim Kneiszel

THE RIG: 2007 Ford F-750 with 1,100-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater tank used for running a daily portable sanitation service route

COMPANY: T & T Port-O-Let Service, in Clements, Md., was started in the late 1980s by Joseph "Buddy" Thompson and his wife, Louise, as a sweeping business cleaning up parking lots and construction sites. Their son, Joseph "Ricky" Thompson, started running a dump truck business later, and then father and son were joined by grandson Joseph "J.R." Thompson in the portable sanitation business starting in 2007. Louise works in the office on the sweeper side of the business and J.R.'s sister, Jennifer, takes care of the portable sanitation side. The company currently has an inventory of about 250 restrooms and four vacuum service trucks serving mostly construction accounts. It does work one big event, the Air Expo every other year at the Naval Air Station Patuxent River in California, Md., which requires 200 units.

BEHIND THE WHEEL: J.R. Thompson

SPECS: The F-750 is powered by a 5.9-liter Cummins in-line 6 cylinder, 24-valve engine putting out 325 hp and tied to an Allison auto transmission. Abernethy Welding added the split and baffled 1,500-gallon steel tank with dual topside manways and a Masport pump, as well as diamondplate equipment boxes on both sides and a folding restroom rack on the back. The truck runs on polished 22.5-inch Alcoa aluminum wheels and has HID headlights. It was also delivered with spray-on bed-liner on the hose trays and up the bottom half of the tank. J.R. Thompson added 240 running



The T & T truck has 240 running lights and 40 strobe lights, which make it easy to spot on a nighttime run.

(Photo courtesy of T & T Port-O-Let)

"I love lights. I want to be noticed when I go down the road early in the morning or at night. When people see me, they'll remember me."

J.R. THOMPSON



▲▲▲ The Ford F-750 built out by Abernethy Welding is detailed and ready for service at a local fair. (Photo courtesy of T & T Port-O-Let)

lights, 40 strobe lights and work lights out back for night jobs. A serious truck enthusiast, Thompson also added some bling in the form of 7-inch custom chrome stacks, a windshield visor and lighted aluminum bumper guide sticks. And he added chrome quarter fenders in the back to keep slop from splashing on the underside of the truck.

SHOWING MY COLORS: Every vehicle Buddy Thompson owned since he was a teenager has been white, so the family continued the trend with the F-750. "The orange graphics are something to stand out bright when you're going down the road," J.R. Thompson says. "If I had my way, all our restrooms would be white and orange, but they would get torn up quick on construction sites." The bold T & T logo and a phone number along the hose racks were produced by Double J Graphics. The truck doors are unadorned with advertising, but have accent pinstriping.

(continued)



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▲▲▲ J.R. Thompson and wife Coale with T & T's PRO Ride.

(Photo courtesy of T & T Port-O-Let)

WORKIN' FOR A LIVIN': In the busy summer season, J.R. services 45-50 restrooms daily on what averages a 100-mile route. His stops include the Naval Air Station, and commercial and residential construction sites. Routes are designed in a circle and all the trucks are outfitted with a GPS to make the job easier.

ROLLING THE ODOMETER: The F-750 has racked up 140,000 miles on the odometer since T & T bought it in 2009, but Thompson put on 52,000 in 2012 alone prompted by an increase in government contract work.

WHAT I LIKE MOST ABOUT MY TRUCK: Thompson is a nut for accent lights, and he's added all of the running and strobe lights that he says makes the truck stand out like a fire truck at night. He's working on ideas to light up the tank, which currently doesn't have any running lights. "I love lights. I want to be noticed when I go down the road early in the morning or at night. When people see me, they'll remember me." That's not always a good thing. Thompson recalls when a sheriff's deputy – who likely got up on the wrong side of the bed that day – stopped Thompson and complained that the truck had too many lights and could be a distraction for the motoring public. Thompson was given a citation, which a judge promptly threw out. Thompson also likes the maneuverability of the F-750 and the fuel economy, which he says is actually better than a smaller F-550 the company runs.

CREATURE COMFORTS: The cab is driver-friendly, with an aftermarket stereo and subwoofers behind the seat "for a bigger beat," Thompson says. The truck also sports air-ride seats, cruise control, power windows, tilt-wheel and entry grab handles. Thompson added a Galaxy CB so he can communicate old-school with area trucking buddies. He also added tinted windows all around, with triple tinting in the rear window to reduce glare.

WHY FORD? Thompson and his father wanted to buy a Peterbilt chassis for this truck, but couldn't find one at the time, and it turned out the Pete's would be \$12,000 more than Ford. They still dream of owning a Peterbilt,

"If I'm not cutting grass at my house, I'm bringing the truck home and I'm stuck on it all evening. I love a truck and like having my hands on them."

J.R. THOMPSON

maybe when this truck goes out of service. "The truck has been very good. It pulls its weight. When I get it full, it's got some torque behind it," he says. "It's been very reliable, and maintenance is the key."

PAMPERING MY RIG: Thompson is a stickler for keeping his rigs looking good. In winter and rainy weather, the truck is parked inside the shop. In the summer, he often brings it home where he can give it more attention with weekly washes, monthly waxing and extra detailing, like polishing the wheels. "If I'm not cutting grass at my house, I'm bringing the truck home and I'm stuck on it all evening. I love a truck and like having my hands on them," he says. In the cab, Thompson sweeps out the vinyl flooring nightly, and often hits it with a vacuum. He wipes down the dashboard with a wet chamois to keep the dust down, and doesn't use chemicals – like products designed to rejuvenate plastic or vinyl – as he believes they attract dust and lead to discoloration. He does all the typical maintenance, changing the oil every 5,000 miles.

MY BACKUP SERVICE VEHICLE: A 2001 Chevy dually with a 300-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater Marsh Industrial slide-in tank

WHEN I'M NOT IN THE CAB: Thompson is a "shade tree" mechanic who details trucks for others in his spare time. He's also into customizing his Chevy Duramax diesel pickup that he drags at a local racetrack. When he's not under the hood, he's spending time with his wife, Coale. The pair attends diesel truck events together on weekends. ■

Park it over here!

Do you have a truck that's a real head-turner on the highway? This feature is your opportunity to share it with readers of PRO. Take a digital photo of your PRO Ride, posing the owner(s) with the truck. Any portable sanitation industry truck is acceptable.

Your submission must include your name, company name, mailing address, phone number and details about the truck including tank size, cab/chassis information, pump information, the name of the company that built the truck, and any other details you consider important. In particular, tell us what truck features help make your work life more efficient and profitable.

Email your submission to editor@promonthly.com. We look forward to seeing your PRO Ride!

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Deodorants and Chemicals

By Craig Mandli

URINAL DEODORIZER

WAVE urinal deodorizer from **Chempace** offers ten times more fragrance than normal urinal blocks. It is ideal for continual coverage in extreme weather. It releases bacteria that cleans the urinal and eliminates odors at the source. The product is VOC compliant for use in all 50 states, and has no ozone-depleting ingredients. The design reduces splash back, cutting cleaning time by up to 50 percent. It is available in several fragrances, and lasts up to 60 days. **800/423-5350; www.chempace.com.**



PORTABLE RESTROOM DEODORIZER

Glacier Bay Dry Toss Paks from **Five Peaks** provide the same effective odor control, fragrance and deep blue color mask as the company's liquid deodorant in pre-measured pouches. They eliminate the guesswork of liquids and allow for better inventory control. The water-soluble pouch prevents waste and contact with product. Drop a single pak into the holding tank and add water. They are available in two strengths: normal to extreme conditions (heat and humidity) or special events/multiple services. They are formaldehyde-free, biodegradable and environmentally safe. **866/293-1502; www.fivepeaks.net.**



DEODORIZING LIQUID

The **Super Turbo Tube** from **Green Way Products** by **PolyPortables** provides easy portion control. It comes in a 1,000 mL bottle with a drip-proof cap that dispenses only when squeezed. Flip the cap up, point it into the holding tank and squeeze the bottle. A one-second squeeze delivers 10 mL, ideal for cooler temperatures and special events. One bottle should dispense 100 doses at this level. A two-second squeeze delivers 20 mL for high heat and heavy use. For the most severe temperatures and demand, a three-second squeeze is recommended. It is available in all standard fragrances as well as a Fragrance of the Month. **800/241-7951; www.greenwayproducts.net.**



DEODORIZING PACKETS

ProPaxx portion control non-formaldehyde deodorizing packets from **J & J Chemical Co.** offer fast-dissolving, non-staining deodorizing protection for portable restrooms. The packs break down solids and leave a pleasant fragrance. They are available in a variety of fragrances and three sizes – Silver for mild climates or events, Gold for extreme climates and week-long services, and Extreme for normal use and climates, or twice-a-week service in extreme conditions. **800/345-3303; www.jjchem.com.**

GRAFFITI REMOVER

Sans Graffiti is a gel-formulation cleaning agent from **Johnny's Choice** by **Chemcorp Industries**, designed specifically for removing stubborn ink stains and graffiti. It uses the natural, biodegradable cleaning agent d-limonene. The gel formulation adheres to vertical surfaces and can be applied by spraying or brushing. It can be used on a wide variety of surface textures and materials, and rinses away quickly with water. It is available in a variety of container sizes including 5- and 15-gallon pails and 55-gallon drums. **888/729-6478; www.johnnyschoice.com.**



TIME-RELEASED ODOR GUARD

Odor Guard SUPER Concentrated from **Liquid Waste Industries** is a time-released, biodegradable, environmentally friendly, non-formaldehyde agent that breaks down paper and waste to reduce mounding. It works in tough conditions, and contains a long-lasting, non-staining, built-in dye aid. It provides long-lasting and effective odor control throughout the service week and works well in extreme summer conditions. It is available in multiple fragrances. **877/445-5511; www.lwilnc.com.**



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Certified Graffiti Remover from Nilodor Deep Blue is a water-based paint and ink remover that safely breaks down the bond between paint and the surface. With a few steps, unwanted graffiti is removed from both hard and carpeted surfaces without harsh chemicals and toxins. It is non-flammable, biodegradable, and can be used on brick and tile, concrete, stucco, aluminum, fiberglass, plastic, Formica, plexiglas, stainless steel, metal, stone and rock. This formula will remove acrylic, primer, oil and water-based enamel, permanent markers, lacquers, aerosol spray paint and sealants. **800/443-4321; www.nilodor.com.**



MANGO DEODORIZING URINAL SCREENS

Mango deodorizing urinal screens from **Cooper's Own**, part of the **PolyJohn Enterprises** family of products, provides odor control and bacteria action that helps deodorize and clean both the urinal and drain. It releases a strong fragrance that lasts up to 30 days. There is never a need for special sprays or chemicals. It also comes in a service-friendly design. The patented shape fits all urinal styles, and the ribbed surface helps reduce messy splashing. Each screen is VOC-compliant and meets LEED-sustainable criteria. One case includes 72 6- by 12-inch screens. **800/292-1305; www.polyjohn.com.**



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Portable restroom deodorizer from **Porta Pro Chem. Co.** is non-toxic, non-allergenic and free from phosphates, formaldehyde, dichlorobenzene, enzymes and heavy metals. The chemistry bonds odors in solution rather than chemically modifying them. It is environmentally safe and biodegradable. It is offered in full strength and economy concentrate, as well as ready-to-use. Many fragrance choices are available in totes, drums or pails. **888/673-5846; www.ccountrysupply.com.**



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St. George's Foam Shield from **Servant Products** focuses on improving the condition of the portable restroom. The foaming product stops backsplash, suppresses odors, keeps bugs out, and improves a restroom's visual appeal. The product is biodegradable, safe and water-efficient. **877/644-3626; www.stgfoam.com.**



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Non-Para Exodor deodorizing urinal blocks by **Walex Products** feature effective long-lasting, controlled-release fragrance, along with additional odor control. The advanced non-para tablets are biodegradable and environmentally friendly. **800/338-3155; www.walex.com.**



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Bob Carlson is author of *Pumper 101: The Complete Guide to Owning and Operating a Vacuum Truck* and has spent many years building and repairing trucks for the portable sanitation industry. Send questions for Carlson to truckcorner@promonthly.com.



Looking Beyond the PTO Switch

UNDERSTANDING HOW POWER IS TRANSFERRED FROM YOUR TRUCK'S ENGINE TO THE VACUUM PUMP COULD SAVE YOU THE HEADACHE OF AN INCONVENIENT AND COSTLY BREAKDOWN IN THE FIELD

By Bob Carlson

QUESTION: I've been an owner/operator for almost three years and I'm not exactly sure how my vacuum system works. All I know is I pull out the PTO switch and my pump comes on, and in minutes, I'm ready to pump. Can you tell me what happens between the PTO switch and the vacuum pump? Someday my luck with this thing might run out, and I need to know what's going on underneath me.

Denny Macklin
St. Louis, Mo.

ANSWER: This is a good time to review the whole process of pumping. We'll start, like you say, turning on the power takeoff. This is done electronically with the truck in neutral. The PTO now does what it is supposed to do, take power from the truck transmission. It is connected to the truck transmission and it turns at the same speed as the truck transmission.

Just a side note, new trucks bought from a dealer may not have the PTO provision, which allows connection of the PTO. Without the PTO provision, there can be no way to operate the pump. In this case, an engine-driven setup would need to be used.

With the PTO running, another shaft extends to the right angle gearbox. The right angle gearbox (they also make them with no right angle) serves two purposes. First, it properly lines up the drive shaft from the gearbox outlet to the vacuum pump. Second, it converts the rpm from the PTO to match the rpm required for the vacuum pump to operate properly.

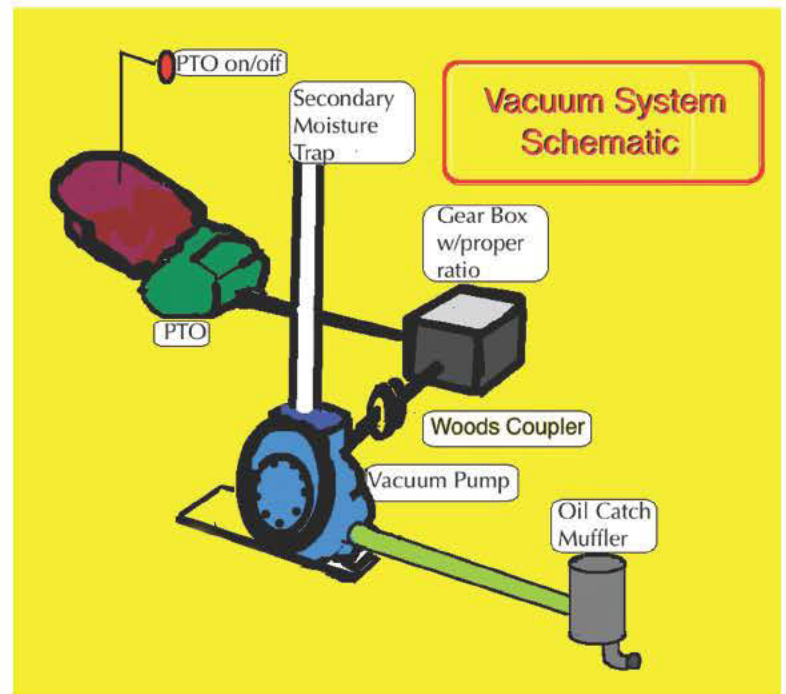
For example, let's say in our diagram the transmission is turning out 550 rpm. That speed goes to the PTO and then to the gearbox. The manufacturer of the pump recommends that their pump run at 1,100 rpm. Basic math tells us we need to double the speed of the shaft going to pump. Consequently, the assembler or the manufacturer of the system will install a gearbox with a 2:1 ratio.

With the driveshaft now turning at 1,100 rpm, there are two options to bring torque to the pump. The truck builder can run the shaft directly into the pump and be done with it.

Or, as I strongly recommend, the builder can install a Woods coupler between the gearbox and the pump. This is a small, flanged unit with hard rubber discs housed in a steel case that will save the pump in case the driver pulls the PTO switch when the truck is running and the driver is in a hurry.

PREVENT DAMAGE

The Woods coupler is designed to break away and prevent worse damage to the vacuum system in cases of a sudden, jerky start to the PTO drive. It is much easier to replace a Woods coupler and perform some shaft repairs than buy a new pump. The Woods coupler is made in two parts. One



half accepts the shaft from the gearbox, and the other half, running at the proper rpm, is connected to the pump. In cases of sudden, high rpm starts, the shaft from the gearbox to the Woods coupler breaks at the coupler. The vacuum pump itself now has its two inlets filled: The shaft from the Woods coupler, which is driving the pump, and the inlet coming from the secondary moisture trap that protects the pump from waste damage. The outlet connects to the oil catch muffler, which quiets the pump and retrieving excess oil given off by the pump.

Depending on the type of pump you are using, there may also be an oiler. Some pumps have an automatic oiler that feeds the rotor on the inside. Other pumps have a separate oil tank that feeds the rotor.

It is important for every driver to know and understand these basic parts and their purpose. Any one of these items can cause problems, but some can be avoided if you know how the system works and monitor it properly every day.

As you see in the graphic, your vacuum system utilizes a relatively small number of moving parts. Familiarize yourself and your drivers with each component. If you take the time to do that, a lot of repairs and routine maintenance can be performed at your shop and you will get the maximum life out of your pump. ■

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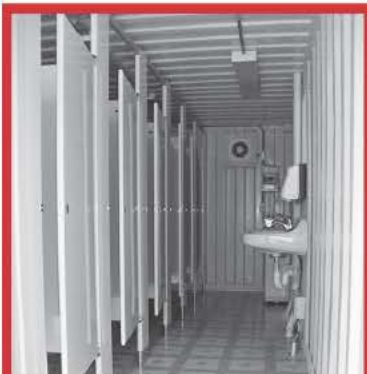
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