

THE RETAIL observer

NOVEMBER 2020 Vol. 31, Issue 11

AN EYE ON THE INDUSTRY SINCE 1970

WELCOME

IFA Global Press Confer

IFA BERLIN, 3-5 SEP 2020 #coinnovation

IFA CONSUMER ELECTRONICS UNLIMITED BERLIN, 3-5 SEP SPECIAL EDITION 2020

IFA 2020 SPECIAL EDITION

A Hybrid Experience Puts the Tech Industry Back on Track



Printed on Recycled Paper
10% Post Consumer



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

Certified Chain of Custody
Promoting Sustainable Forestry
www.sfprogram.org
SFI-00555



Scan for Mobile

2764 N. Green Valley Pkwy, Suite 508
Henderson, NV 89014-2121





MONOGRAM™

The

STATEMENT
COLLECTION

*We are redefining the world of luxury
appliances, one detail at a time.*

Elevate Everything.

MONOGRAM.COM

GRATITUDE: THE ART OF GIVING THANKS YEAR-ROUND



With Thanksgiving soon to be on our doorstep, we pause to consider all we have to be grateful for – there is real power in a thankful heart. We really can't be thankful without feeling grateful. Genuine gratitude changes us; how we look at life. It changes our attitude.

We are often exposed to a barrage of negativity as we deal with resentments, ingratitude, entitlement, health issues, loss, etc. Gratitude is an awesome tool, an ally to battle these internal/external threats that rob us of our joy. People who live in a negative state rob themselves of a most powerful experience of *heartfelt praise and appreciation* in their life. Amazing how gratitude eliminates the negativity.

Giving value to others fosters appreciation, which in turn becomes the transformative energy of gratitude that changes us on a deep level. Practicing gratitude can be a positive way to find inner peace and contentment. By choosing to be thankful for the wonderful things and people in our daily lives we become healthier and happier. It is a mindful act so simple, yet it brings a lasting happiness and an inner joy to those committed to living the good life.

Think about the people in your life who are loving and kind to you. Who has your back by looking out for you? Who has sacrificed in order to make your life better? Do the people closest to you have your best interest at heart? At the end of the day, we all have those people in our lives who add to our happiness. We should never take for granted what another does, gives and sacrifices in order for us to flourish and to be the best version of ourselves. It takes a team in life to come out a winner in the end.

Living gratefully has its rewards! Give the gift of joy that comes from loving and helping others. That's the power of gratitude. So, take thanks beyond your Thanksgiving table this year and show your gratitude by doing something selfless today.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Eliana Barriga
eliana@retailobserver.com

THE RETAIL observer

NOV. 2020, VOLUME 31, ISSUE 11
CELEBRATING OUR 31ST YEAR
AS THE RETAIL OBSERVER

PUBLISHER/MANAGING EDITOR
ELIANA BARRIGA

DIRECTOR OF SALES AND MARKETING
MOE LASTFOGEL

ART DIRECTOR
TERRY PRICE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

HANK ALEXANDER
KEVIN DALKE
RENEE GALIOTO
MARIO JUAREZ
LEE McDONALD
STEVEN MORRIS
MIKE RYAN
JOHN TSCHOHL
LIBBY WAGNER
SETH WEISBLATT
ALAN WOLF
RALPH E. WOLFF

DEADLINE FOR JANUARY 2020 ISSUE:
DECEMBER 1, 2020

THE RETAIL OBSERVER
2764 N. Green Valley Pkwy, Suite 508
Henderson, NV 89014-2121
800.393.0509 • 702.208.9500
Fax 702.570.5664
production@retailobserver.com
info@retailobserver.com
www.retailobserver.com

To receive a copy of *The Retail Observer* online, or to unsubscribe, please go to www.retailobserver.com/subscribe



Printed on Recycled Paper



The Retail Observer website is hosted by Market Digitally



Long Live Freshness

Introducing the only built-in refrigerator with a 5-mode convertible drawer.

Precise temperatures, purposeful design and an ingenious convertible middle drawer make our stainless steel or panel-ready 36-inch Built-in French Door Refrigerator the perfect way to maintain the freshness of everything you put in it. Select from five temperature zones: chilled wine, fridge deli, kid's snacks, beverage, or drop the temperature all the way down to make it a freezer — whatever best fits your life. Signature Kitchen Suite is also equally dedicated to you; each refrigerator is backed with an industry-leading 3-year warranty featuring our 5-day Repair or Replace Promise.

SignatureKitchenSuite.com
@SKSappliances | 855-790-6655

Copyright ©2020 Signature Kitchen Suite, 111 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632. All rights reserved. "Signature Kitchen Suite" and the Signature Kitchen Suite logo are trademarks of Signature Kitchen Suite.



TO BE GRATEFUL OR THANKFUL, THAT IS THE QUESTION...



The holidays are upon us and I cannot decide if I'm more grateful or thankful for this past year.

By definition:

Grateful (adjective) - warmly or deeply appreciative of kindness or benefits received.

Thankful (adjective) - feeling or expressing gratitude; appreciative.

Ok, they are different words with very similar meanings, so I guess that I am feeling both (even in this Covid era). Let me tell you why I feel this way. The last 13 years in business and personal life have been a whirlwind of ups and downs. Dealing with loss as multiple family members moved on to the great beyond (four loved ones in three years), I experienced the warm support of friends and family during these times. Having children grow up and move out on their own (3) and now having five grandchildren with one more due this month. Thanks to social media, Facebook and LinkedIn has helped bring many old friends and family back into my life.

The Retail Observer has officially gone from "News Rag" to one of the most respected magazines in the industries we cover. It has achieved growth in our readership with over 26,000 subscribers and reaches over 38 countries. The website is now receiving over 30,000 hits a month on average. The magazine has also become the official sponsor or media partner of over 30 shows and events. Affiliations with trade associations, buying groups and our readership are in constant growth and are getting stronger every day. Consumer electronics, furnishings, plumbing and even cabinet manufacturers are calling to get involved with us to offer our readers new products to help grow their companies. The openness of the many manufacturers we deal with to invite us to take behind-the-scenes looks at what they are doing for the future has been amazing. We have grown to have many of our own writers and various Buying Groups and Associations that submit exclusive articles to us, making us one of the best resources in the industry to help our readers thrive in this economy – not just for today, but for tomorrow. I see the future offering even more to be thankful and grateful for. The sky's the limit. Let us know what you are thankful for. Send an email to letters@retailobserver.com. I look forward to reading your thoughts.

Happy Retailing,

Moe Lastfogel
moe@retailobserver.com

THE RETAIL **observer**

We proudly support the following trade associations and buying groups throughout North America whose news and information greatly contribute to the quality of *The Retail Observer* and the education of our readers.



www.aham.org



www.rtohq.org



www.asid.org



www.brandsource.com



www.cantrex.com



www.cta.tech



www.cedia.org



www.dpha.net



www.feigroup.net



www.htsa.com



www.nahb.org



www.nrha.org



www.NARI.org



www.nationwidegroup.org



www.necoalliance.com



www.NKBA.org



www.prosourceinfo.com



www.psaeworld.org



www.psoa.org



www.unitedservicers.com

Follow us on:

Become a Fan:

Join us at:



Inspired by the Mediterranean color palette, and an authentic Italian passion for fine cuisine, the new SMEG Portofino range series is a powerful choice in any size. Available in eight colors, various widths, and fuel sources, versatility is built-in. Discover more at smegusa.com or contact us 212-265-5378 / info@smegusa.com

SMEG - Smalterie **M**etallurgiche **E**miliane **G**uastalla

A family company since 1948 

Retail Dealer Partners Wanted - Designer Rewards Program Available

New York Showroom - A&D Building, 7th Floor | Chicago Showroom - Merchandise Mart, LuxeHome



M E S S

F A

Entrance
Eingang



IFA 2020 SPECIAL EDITION

A Hybrid Experience Puts the
Tech Industry Back on Track

- Underpinned by tight health and safety rules, IFA 2020 special edition connects brands with media, retailers and the public
- Huge interest by exhibitors in next year's IFA, with more than 60% of exhibition space already booked for IFA 2021
- IFA expands into photography in cooperation with Berlin photo week

IFA 2020 Special Edition has ended, sending the message that “tech is back” and that consumer electronics and home appliances industries and the tech media have a hunger for real-life experiences.

This year’s IFA Berlin was a hybrid event: three days of keynotes, presentations and product launches took place in real life under tight health and safety rules but were augmented by IFA’s new virtual platform, IFA Xtended Space. IFA 2020 Special Edition also hosted SHIFT Mobility meets IFA NEXT, an innovation platform that brought together start-ups, innovators and many companies shaping the future of mobility and everyday life. In addition, the IFA Business, Retail & Meeting Lounges provided an opportunity for brands and retailers to meet and do business in a safe, but face-to-face environment. Global brands seized the opportunity of IFA 2020 Special Edition to create wow-effects – for example LG with its impressive hologram presentation, as well as global brands like BSH, Haier, Honor, Huawei, Miele, Neato, Qualcomm, TCL and many more.

IFA 2021: ON TRACK FOR A FULL-SCALE EVENT

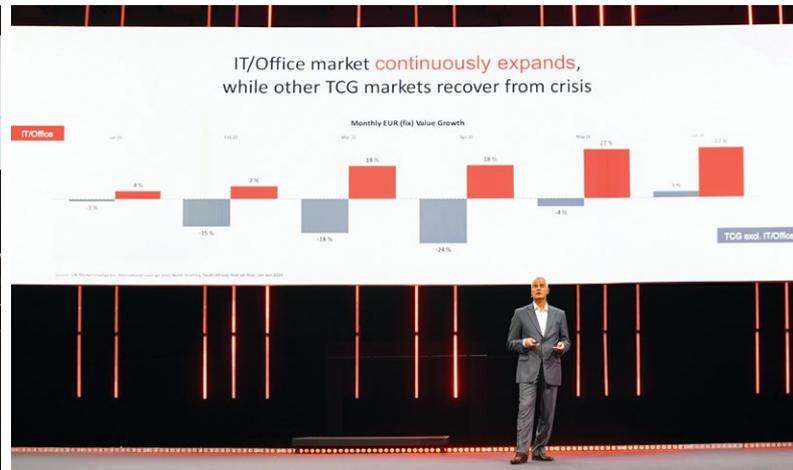
The IFA 2020 Special Edition also put IFA on track to run the show as a full-scale event. Set to take place from September 3-7, 2021, IFA Berlin 2021 already has strong industry backing. So far, more than

60 percent of the exhibition space has already been booked. “This is a new record. Never before have we had such strong interest so early, so far ahead of the start of IFA,” said IFA Executive Director Jens Heithecker.

IFA 2020 SPECIAL EDITION: A NEW TYPE OF HYBRID EVENT

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizers of the IFA 2020 Special Edition had imposed tight limits on the number of attendees, well below those set by Germany’s public health authorities. And yet, over its three days, the IFA 2020 Special Edition made it possible for 6,100 attendees to meet face to face, experience new devices and discuss the opportunities for the global technology industry.

On site, this year’s IFA had 150 companies presenting their ideas, and they were joined by an additional 1,350 exhibitors from 30 countries at IFA Xtended Space and the IFA Virtual Market Place. Even though IFA Xtended Space opened its virtual doors just a couple of days before the IFA 2020 Special Edition got underway, more than 78,000 people followed the IFA 2020 Special Edition online, and generated 262,000 views – watching the keynote and press conferences, following panel discussions and exploring the virtual product demonstrations. This year’s IFA Xtended Space will be



- GfK & IFA share the belief that this is an **inflection point** for the industry
- Our partnership is here to help **accelerate recovery** and **inject growth** into our markets
- We deliver trusted data, powered by AI to extract **signal from the noise**

3 major signals: **Disruption** ▶ **Acceleration** ▶ **Data Overload**



fully accessible until just before IFA 2021.

“The IFA 2020 Special Edition showed us the impressive power of innovation. On a deeper level, it also showed us that the world needs these face-to-face meetings between industry, retail, consumers and media, and it is IFA that facilitated these crucial connections, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic,” said Dr. Christian Göke, CEO of Messe Berlin.

Jens Heithecker, executive director of IFA Berlin, added: “The IFA 2020 Special Edition sent an important signal: ‘tech is back,’ and the recovery and rebuilding of the industry starts here and now. Of course, we had to keep the numbers at this year’s IFA low, but it demonstrated the keen interest of everybody to meet in real life, and it sets us on the right track for a strong, full-scale IFA 2021.”

Kai Hillebrandt, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of gfu Consumer & Home Electronics GmbH: “First and foremost I would like to thank our partner Messe Berlin for putting together the concept of an IFA 2020 Special Edition, and then making it happen. This was a bold move, but it has been rewarded with the event’s success. The IFA 2020 Special Edition was the first hybrid event in our industry and has set the standard. It brought people together, both in front of the screens and in person on the exhibition grounds in Berlin. IFA had a

very special role to play this year and fulfilled it perfectly. For the global markets, IFA provided important impulses at the right time in the run-up to the highest-turnover period as an innovation platform with numerous new product presentations. But as important as virtual components are in pandemic times, they never can replace human contact. Our goal for IFA 2021 will be to combine the traditional strengths of IFA – bringing together many innovations with even more people in one place – with the experiences of IFA 2020 Special Edition to create a robust future format.”

WINNERS OF IFA PRODUCT TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION AWARD DISCLOSED

19 cutting-edge products are awarded with the IFA Product Technology Innovation Award. CE China congratulates all gold award winners on their innovations.

Jens Heithecker, IFA executive director and chairman of CE China, announced at the IFA 2020 Special Edition in Berlin the prizewinners of this year’s IFA Product Technology Innovation Award hosted by IDG Asia. Nineteen innovative products from leading consumer electronic brands like HONOR, Midea, Panasonic, Samsung and Siemens stood out from international contestants.



LIST OF WINNERS

- **Multifunctional Fresh Keeping Refrigerator Gold Award**
Siemens KF96FPB50C
- **Health Technology Innovation Gold Award**
Electrolux Refrigerator EHE4809GDS
- **Washing & Drying Technology Innovation Gold Award**
Siemens XQG100-WN54B2X00W
- **Design Innovation TV Gold Award**
CHiQ 75Q7ART 8K
- **QLED Display Technology Gold Award**
SAMSUNG QLED 8K Q950TS
- **High-performance Innovative Laptop Gold Award**
HONOR MagicBook Pro
- **Fine Clothing Care Innovation Gold Award**
SAMSUNG AirDresser
- **Outdoor Innovation Wearable Gold Award**
HONOR Watch GS Pro
- **Smart Kitchen Solutions Gold Award**
Midea Ifamily
- **Image Processing Technology Innovation Gold Award**
Sony Alpha 7S III
- **User Experience Innovation Product Gold Award**
Midea Air Conditioning KFR-35GW/BP3DN8Y-XT100(1)
- **Nano-IPS Application Innovation Display Gold Award**
LG 27GN950
- **Sterilization Technology Innovation Gold Award**
Panasonic Washing Machine NGA5E
- **Water Purification Technology Gold Award**
PHILIPS AquaShield AWP1830/93
- **Air Purification Technology Innovation Gold Award**
Panasonic JX2 Series
- **Iced Coffee Technology Innovation Gold Award**
De'Longhi D3G SB
- **Innovative Display Technology Gold Award**
BOE Flexible OLED Full-screen Display
- **Smart Cleaning Technology Innovation Gold Award**
iRobot Roomba® s Series0.055 in
- **Camera Technology Innovation Smartphone Gold Award**
TECNO CAMON 16 Premier



NEW PRODUCT CATEGORY AT IFA 2021 AND COOPERATION WITH BERLIN PHOTO WEEK

From next year IFA Berlin will have a new product category and will add “imaging” to the show. “Imaging has become a major trend in our world that extends far beyond private life. It plays a central role in medical technology, autonomous driving, AI-technology and many other areas,” said Heithecker.

Also, Messe Berlin is partnering with Berlin Photo Week, a unique and innovative event format for everyone who loves images. “Combining photo sessions, community experiences, artistic and cultural inspiration, the creation of irreplaceable moments, partnerships that reach far beyond photography and media presence, the Berlin Photo Week is destined to become the novel imaging event format at the center of public attention,” said Wolfgang Heinen from Berlin Photo Week.

The Berlin Photo Week successfully debuted in 2019 when it attracted more than 30,000 primarily young photo enthusiasts, smartphone consumers and DSLR users as well as professionals. Berlin Photo Week’s objective is to create a unique way to inspire enthusiasm for making and enjoying photos and videos. It harnesses the diversity of Berlin’s landscape with the “Fun Place” as the event’s focal point and numerous “Satellite” locations dispersed around the

city. It also connects with Berlin’s globally renowned creative scene.

The dates of Berlin Photo Week 2021 will overlap with IFA 2021, enabling participants to profit from visiting both events.

ABOUT IFA 2020 SPECIAL EDITION

The IFA 2020 Special Edition – consisting of physical live events focusing on the B2B core functions of IFA – offers a meeting place for industry and trade in the IFA Business, Retail & Meeting Lounges and cross-industry innovations at SHIFT Mobility meets IFA NEXT. While these event elements are aimed at trade visitors, media representatives can exclusively experience the latest products and services, press briefings and the IFA keynote live at the IFA Global Press Conference.

DIGITAL IFA EXPERIENCE

With a virtual extension – the “IFA Xtended Space” – the physical event is complemented by live and on-demand streaming of presentations, matchmaking tools and digital product demonstrations. The IFA Xtended Space thereby is accessible for both on-site guests and all other interested participants around the globe.

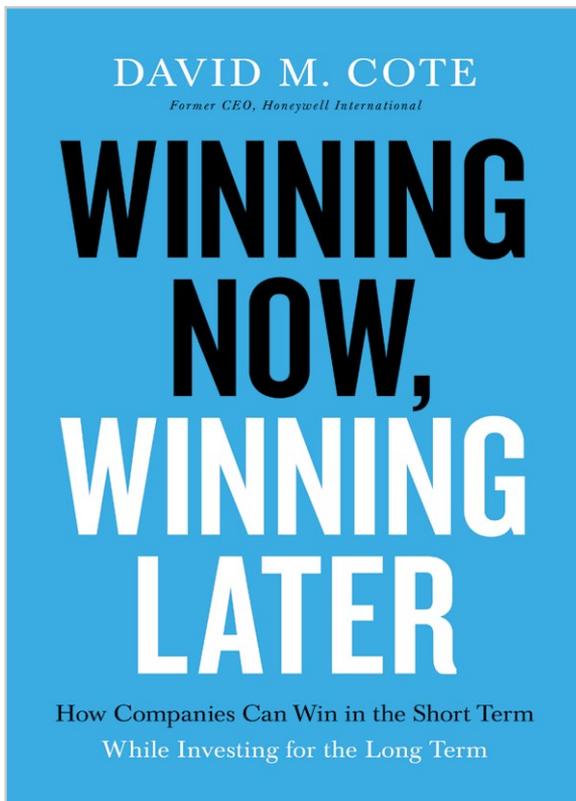
Mark your calendar for September 3-7, 2021, IFA Berlin 2021 www.b2b.ifa-berlin.com **RO**





WINNING NOW, WINNING LATER:

How Companies Can Succeed in the Short Term While Investing for the Long Term



Business leaders often take actions that prop up earnings in the short term, but compromise their companies' long-term health. David Cote, the much-respected former leader of Honeywell International and one of the most successful CEOs of his generation, shares a simple, paradigm-shifting method for achieving both short- and long-term goals.

Upon becoming Honeywell's CEO in 2002, Cote encountered an organization on the verge of failure, thanks to years of untrammled short-termism. To turn the company around, he and his team adopted a series of bold operational reforms and counterintuitive leadership practices that enabled them to "do two conflicting things at the same time" – pursue strong short- and long-term results. The outcome was phenomenal. Under Cote's leadership, Honeywell's market cap grew from \$20 billion to \$120 billion, delivering returns of about 800%, two and a half times greater than the S&P 500.

Offering ten essential principles for winning both today and tomorrow, this book will help readers:

- Spot practices that seem attractive in the short term but will cost the company in the future
- Determine where and how to invest in growth for maximum impact
- Sustain both short-term performance and long-term investments even in challenging times, such as during recessions and leadership transitions
- Feel inspired to stand up to investors and other managers who are solely focused on either short- or long-term objectives
- Step back, think independently, and foster independent thinking among others around them

Presenting a comprehensive solution to a perennial problem, *Winning Now, Winning Later* is a go-to guide for leaders everywhere who seek to transcend short-termism's daily grind and leave an enduring legacy of success. **RO**

Author: As Chairman and CEO of the industrial giant Honeywell for over 16 years, David Cote grew the company's market capitalization from around \$20 billion to nearly \$120 billion, delivering returns of 800 percent and beating the S&P by nearly two and a half times. David is currently Executive Chairman of Vertiv Holdings Co, a global data center products and services provider. He is a member of the Aspen Economic Strategy Group and on the Boards of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Conference of Montreal.

Publisher: HarperCollins Leadership





Tenaya 2 Series - TEN230SS



Alta 4 Series - ALT436SS

We're taking a fresh approach to your business:

Simplified Product Lineup

- Dealer Exclusive Under Cabinet Range Hoods
- Certified Packaging

Learn more by contacting your Broan representative

www.Broan-NuTone.com

best[®]

PERFORMANCE THAT INSPIRES

The BEST[®] iQ Blower System[™]

Up to 2X quieter and 22x more efficient than competitive blowers.

Up to 30% faster than the competition at removing smoke and odors because of BEST's advanced calibration technology that allows the blower to adjust to homes' unique duct runs.

Included CRT technology allows the installer to set the maximum blower speed to achieve the right level of performance offering another solution to address local codes or make-up air requirements.



Learn more at
BestRangehoods.com/iQ



CC34IQ63SB



INDUSTRY [NEWS]

NOVEMBER



LG 'ROLLS' OUT CRAFT ICE ON MORE REFRIGERATOR MODELS, ADDS NEW FEATURES FOR TODAY'S NEXT-LEVEL KITCHEN

Twice the output of slow-melting round ice, largest capacity in the industry, flexible storage options help consumers maximize kitchen capabilities

With more consumers experimenting in the kitchen as they spend more time at home, LG Electronics USA is expanding its industry-first slow-melting LG Craft Ice™ technology to 19 refrigerator models while adding convenient new features designed to inspire consumers to take their everyday kitchens to the next level.

The entire lineup of smart Wi-Fi-connected LG refrigerators with Craft Ice can produce double the amount of Craft Ice in the same amount of time for bespoke beverages at home.¹ Plus, consumers can choose from new featured-packed models with a versatile Full-Convert™ drawer that switches among five custom fridge-to-freezer temperatures,² LG InstaView® “knock on” glass technology, and the largest capacity French Door refrigerators on the market.³

“Today’s consumer is looking for a reliable refrigerator with more storage and organization, while also seeking new ways to get creative in their own kitchens as they stay close to home,” said Peggy Ang, head of marketing at LG Electronics USA. “Only LG offers the largest capacity in its category and innovative storage, along with features that inspire users to have fun mastering cocktail recipes or making the perfect iced coffee at home – all with the peace of mind only LG can deliver as the country’s most-awarded appliance brand in customer satisfaction.”⁴

DOUBLE THE FUN WITH CRAFT ICE+

The flexibility to choose cubed, crushed or exclusive slow-melting round Craft Ice on demand just got better. 2020 LG smart refrigerators with Craft Ice have been upgraded to include the



option to double the Craft Ice output – from three to six ice spheres – in the same amount of time.⁵ Owners of 2019 models can also enjoy the new Craft Ice+ feature via a software download when they connect their fridge to the LG ThinQ® app. With the ability to store up to 25 ice spheres in the freezer drawer bin and auto-replenishment, the new feature helps keep Craft Ice fully stocked for everyone.

LG refrigerators with Craft Ice are the industry's first to automatically make slow-melting round ice (measuring two inches in diameter) in the freezer drawer without the hassle and mess of filling and freezing molds. The innovation opens up a new frontier for home mixologists while also keeping sodas, iced coffee, and other drinks colder longer. LG Craft Ice refrigerators also feature ice in the door and a water dispenser that measures the exact amount (4, 8, 16 or 32 ounces) of fresh filtered water, automatically turning off when done.

CHILL TODAY, FREEZE TOMORROW FOR MORE CAPACITY WHEN YOU NEED IT

New to the Craft Ice lineup are the most versatile InstaView refrigerators yet, new 4-door French Door models featuring LG's first Full-Convert drawer (models LRMVS3006 and LRMVC230). The drawer's temperature can be changed with a simple touch of a button, enabling users to increase usable freezer space to 40 percent or refrigerator capacity by 10 percent. Five temperature profiles meet various needs: Chilled Wine (41°), Deli/Snacks (37°), Cold Drinks (33°), Meat/Seafood (29°), and Freeze (-7°). The Full-Convert Drawer satisfies any family's needs, with adjustable dividers to keep everything organized.

SEE AND REACH FAVORITES IN AN INSTANT

LG's popular InstaView® refrigerators enable users to knock twice to illuminate the interior and see inside so they can choose without opening the door. Offering quick and easy access to favorite foods, snacks for the kids, cocktail mixers and more, the popular Door-in-Door® design keeps it all organized. With options including Side-by-Side, and French Door (3- and 4-door) models, along with counter-depth and standard-depth options, consumers can find the InstaView Door-in-Door refrigerator that fits their kitchen and lifestyle perfectly.

COOL, SMART AND EFFICIENT WITH PEACE OF MIND BUILT IN

Owners of LG fridges with Craft Ice will also have greater peace of mind with LG Proactive Customer Care. The industry-first personalized customer support tool provides customized maintenance tips, monthly usage reports to keep appliances performing their best, and alerts that warn of potential issues before they arise – at no additional cost. These LG refrigerators are ENERGY STAR® certified, delivering energy efficiency without sacrificing performance.



For more information on LG refrigerators, please visit: www.lg.com/us/refrigerators.

- 1 An update for 2019 LG refrigerators with Craft Ice is available after Sept. 15, 2020 via download thru the LG ThinQ App.
- 2 Full-Convert Drawer is available on Models LRMVS3006,LRMVC230, LRMD2306 and LRMD3006.
- 3 Among Standard-Depth refrigerators based on Models LRFVS3006S and LRMV3006S
- 4 According to the 2019 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey of customers rating their household appliance manufacturers. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. Each year, the ACSI uses data from interviews with roughly 250,000 customers as inputs to an econometric model for analyzing customer satisfaction with more than 380 companies in 46 industries and 10 economic sectors. To learn more about the American Customer Satisfaction Index, visit www.theacsi.org. According to the 2019 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey of customers rating their household appliance manufacturers, LG is second to none in product quality and value, tying with another manufacturer in this year's report.
- 5 Shape and clarity of ice will be impacted when Craft Ice+ is activated; may vary with settings, water supply and home use conditions.



KEW LABS LAUNCHES UTS-1 – THE WORLD’S FIRST QI WIRELESS CHARGER WITH LONG DISTANCE COMMUNICATION

Kew Labs, a USA based design-led technology brand, has launched its Invisible Fast Wireless Charger, the UTS-1 following their initial showing at CES 2020. With its patented Intelligent Power Communication™ Technology, strong safety features and an in-house design and manufacturing setup, it aims to make wireless charging less intrusive with under-furniture designs while keeping high-tech performance. It is currently available at retail for \$104.99 and at wholesale prices for commercial partners and installers at www.kewlabstech.com.

The UTS-1 goes discreetly underneath a table or surface allowing users to charge all Qi compatible phones through the surface using Qi wireless technology. Designed and optimized in-house by Kew Labs' wireless charging design team, the charger supports the fast charge protocols of both Apple and Samsung phones and works through glass, wood, granite, quartz, plastic and other common materials, excluding metal. It is so powerful that it can charge through industry-standard 18mm-25mm (0.7"-1.0")-thick surfaces (there is also a thin model for 10mm-16mm) making it applicable for most furniture such as coffee and side tables, office desks and kitchen worktops.

Using the charger helps to reduce clutter, maximize space and provides a clean premium technology feel to a home or office while still providing powerful performance. Installation can be done in minutes and requires only the provided tape or screws, meaning there is no visible damage to the top surfaces. The UTS-1 is also the world's first wireless charger that can be daisy chain linked together. This allows users to connect two chargers in series using just one power adapter to create a double charging point for multiple devices, making it perfect for breakfast-bar countertops and meeting rooms.

Driving the performance of the charger is the Intelligent Power Communication™ (IPC) Technology – Kew Labs' patented thermal management system. IPC™ allows the charger to work through surfaces efficiently to deliver fast charging capability for Apple and Samsung models. The proprietary system (IPC™) works through a patented firmware that solves the distance locating and communication inefficiency problems experienced when a Qi charging signal is sent through material. Although other devices are currently available on the market, the Kew Labs charger is the world's first to have developed a reliable long-distance connection between the phone and the charger using this proprietary system. The technology has since been chosen and adapted for aerospace applications for private jet furniture and kitchen designs.



With Beko, you can Live Like a Pro



Full suite of appliances
From refrigerators with our EverFresh+ technology to our professional ranges and cooktops.



Range of cooking products to bring the heat
With 5.7 cu. ft. interior volume, SURF Convection and Professional Design.



Wide variety of styles and finishes
Full stainless steel interior and SilentTech as low as 39 dBA on select models and less energy used.

2 Year Full Parts & Labor Warranty
Peace of mind from quality build and reliable performance.

To learn more, call **888.352.BEKO (2356)** or visit beko.com/us-en

beko
Live like a Pro

INDUSTRY [NEWS]

It's important to note that without this two-way communication the phone is unable to send crucial charging commands that regulate phone temperature and fast-charging protocols necessary for safe and reliable charging. The technology also allows the charger to enter a standby mode and auto-shutoff when a phone is fully charged to prevent over-charge during the night, for example, making it the most user-friendly and high-performance invisible wireless charger on the market.

As well as high-tech performance, Kew Labs also made sure to provide strong safety features with the product to protect both the charger and smartphone during use. The charger comes with an in-built overcharge protection and "foreign object detection" system to prevent the charger from overheating or being falsely activated by any metal object other than the desired mobile phone, such as keys. The housing and internal construction also have a rugged build quality that makes it suitable for long-term commercial usage.

Kew Labs is reaching out to distributors, integrators and tradesmen to distribute this innovative plug and play charging station product. Please email info@kewlabstech.com for demos and more pricing information or visit our website at www.kewlabstech.com.

These products can be used in built-in and freestanding applications. All products are available in durable stainless steel, with select models available in black or white and customizable panel-ready options to match surrounding cabinetry allowing customers and their designers the freedom to create a truly unique space.

"We're excited to bring new features and design enhancements to our 1 Class Collection," said David Carr, director of product & marketing for U-Line Corporation. "With enhanced cooling performance, temperature consistency, and key design refinements, these products are the smart choice for consumers and designers looking for value in undercounter refrigeration."

Production is scheduled to begin in October 2020. 1 Class Collection product information will be available soon. Discover U-Line's complete product line at www.u-line.com.



U-LINE INTRODUCES 1 CLASS COLLECTION



U-Line, America's leader in undercounter refrigeration, produced in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, introduces the 1 Class Collection – their broadest lineup of Beverage Centers, Refrigerators, Ice Machines, Wine Refrigerators and Freezers.

With over 40 models available in 15" and 24" widths, the 1 Class Collection offers customers the widest variety of options in the industry when looking to complement their kitchen, bar or rec room.



FABER'S PRO MOTOR PRODUCTS



Faber has a variety of great accessories, but one accessory we would like to point out is our PRO Motor. Faber's Pro motor is designed with a stainless-steel housing and long-lasting metal impellers. Two models that include the PRO motor are the Camino Pro and the Maestrale.



KITCHEN, BAR, & REC ROOM READY THE 1 CLASS COLLECTION FROM U-LINE

Our broadest lineup of Beverage Centers, Refrigerators, Ice Machines, Wine Refrigerators, and Freezers.

Choose from 15" and 24" widths. All products offer a stainless steel finish. Select models are available in black, white, and customizable panel ready options to match surrounding cabinetry.

Manufactured in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA.



Learn more at [u-line.com](https://www.u-line.com)



The Camino Pro is the first professional canopy hood designed by Faber. Italian engineered and produced, the Camino Pro hood is available in 36" or 48" wide and 24" of professional depth. The Camino is made of polished stainless steel with solid wrapped edges. This hood is equipped with either a 600 or 1200 pro motor which offers the best in energy efficiency while extracting kitchen air impurities. Professional baffle filters located under the hood powerfully assist in catching any grease or unwanted odors. Once cooking is complete, cleanup is effortless with dishwasher-safe baffle filters. Faber has installed a rainbow electronic control to help indicate which of the four speeds you have chosen. This feature has not been installed in any other hoods, making this product unique to its class. Other features include self-starting technology with a heat sensor and LED lighting.

The Maestrale is a professional range hood with a sense of style. Available in 10" or 18", the Maestrale is also designed with polished stainless steel and welded edges. A three-speed slide control is located on the underside of the model making it easy for the consumer to pick a fan speed or turn on the LED task lighting. Pro baffle filters line the underside of the model helping to catch any unwanted impurities and grease. Installing the hood is made easy with its direct or rear venting capability. The Maestrale can either vent straight up or you may rotate the blower to the back to avoid extra duct work. Adjustable mounting hardware is included with this model helping to ensure a perfect level of installation.

For more information on our Pro motor hoods and the rest of our product line visit our website at www.faberonline.com.

Vinotemp

NEW BRAMA BY VINOTEMP MICROWAVE OVENS ADD VERSATILITY AND CONVENIENCE TO THE KITCHEN

Sleek design, navigable interfaces, and a variety of smart cooking options make the Brama Over the Range Microwave and the Brama Built-In Microwave ideal solutions for quick, convenient cooking.

Vinotemp®, the leading wine storage solutions and appliance provider, announced the addition of two microwave ovens to its appliance line, Brama by Vinotemp. Both the over-the-range option along with the built-in or counter-top option offer modern design aesthetic, navigable interfaces and a variety of cooking options including a smart Sensor Cook function.

"The ability to offer a full suite of kitchen appliances coupled with the continued growth of the microwave cookware segment drove



our decision to add microwave ovens to our line of Brama appliances," states India Hynes, CEO of Vinotemp. "And by offering both an over-the-range microwave and a built-in or counter-top microwave, we're providing options when it comes to adding versatility and convenience to the kitchen."

The Brama Over the Range Microwave (1.6 cubic feet, 1000 watt) features surface (task) lighting along with a two-speed exhaust fan, while the Brama Built-In Microwave (2.2 cubic feet, 1200 watt) includes a memory function that saves the desired power level and time for up to three items that are most often heated/cooked. Both options offer:

- **Sensor Cook Function**
When this smart function is selected, sensors inside the microwave work to detect humidity released by items being cooked, and the data is used to automatically adjust the optimal cooking time.
- **Multi-stage Cooking**
For the best results when using a microwave to cook, different power levels at different lengths of time may be necessary. The Multi-stage Cooking functionality allows the microwave to automatically change from one stage to another.
- **Ten Power Levels**
From softening butter and thawing meats to baking cakes, cooking pasta, scrambling eggs, sautéing onions, boiling water, making candy and cooking meats, a variety of power levels work to efficiently heat and/or cook almost anything.

Visit www.vinotemp.com to learn more about Vinotemp's newest Brama offerings, and other appliances and wine storage solutions.

A Stunning Option In Luxury Insert Ventilation!



Inca Lux

VAM Set your CFM to 295, 395 or 600
LED Efficient Lighting
STYLE Perimeter Aspiration
WIDTH 21", 28", 35"

 **FABER**
AIR MATTERS

www.faberonline.com

Italian craftsmanship you can trust!



FISHER & PAYKEL LAUNCHES INTEGRATED WINE COLUMN NEW WINE REFRIGERATION FEATURING OPTIMAL PRESERVATION TECHNOLOGY

Fisher & Paykel, a leader in premium appliances, is pleased to announce the launch of their Integrated Wine Column. This marks the brand's first foray into the wine refrigeration and preservation category in North America. Working alongside prominent master sommeliers, Fisher & Paykel has created a premium Wine Column that includes a generous 91-bottle capacity, a UV-filtering glass door, and customizable exterior panel. With dual variable temperature zones, anti-vibration technologies, oak shelving and customizable lighting, the 24" Wine Column is beautiful to use and engineered to deliver perfect results and exception care for wine storage.

"When developing a product, we focus on the user experience and how the product will fit and function within someone's home, spending countless hours researching, designing, engineering and testing. We are proud to bring to market a cooling and preservation solution for wine that is truly best in class," says Vice President of Product, Shane Rehm.

Fisher & Paykel's Integrated Wine Column is available in a stainless-steel finish or panel-ready to integrate seamlessly into the kitchen with customized panels. At 24" high and with a stainless steel interior and 13 beautifully crafted full extension racks featuring white oak shelving, the Wine Column accommodates 91 bottles across two independent temperature zones. Fisher & Paykel's Variable Temperature Zone technology offers four wine modes for Red, White, Sparkling and Cellar. All temperature settings are easily adjustable in 1°F increments between 43-64°F, providing optimal temperatures for cellaring and serving.

The Integrated Wine Column is engineered to maintain consistent temperature throughout both zones with Fisher & Paykel's ActiveSmart™ technology. It comes equipped with a quiet, low vibration compressor and absorptive materials to minimize unnecessary oscillation and movement that can dull flavor. UV light-blocking glass protects the wine from excessive light, allowing it to mature at a natural pace, while LED display lighting illuminates the cabinet to showcase your collection. Additionally, one can showcase their collection as they please with independent cradles, which can be adjusted to create an ideal display angle, while a chalk pencil and aluminum labels offer a stylish way to catalogue wine.

"From the moment wine is bottled, it is in a permanent state of degradation, and how that wine degrades – or ages – is what makes it an incredible and historical experience," says Mark Haydon, Fisher & Paykel's Chief Designer. "With exacting control for aging and fine-tuned modes for perfect serving temperatures, the Integrated Wine Column



FOR THE LOVE OF WINE - PRESERVE IT

Your wine delivered one perfect glass at a time



The first appliance to automatically preserve, chill, and serve any bottle, by the glass

Plum holds two standard bottles of wine, automatically identifies any varietal using artificial intelligence, chills each bottle to its ideal serving temperature, and preserves wine for 90 days - offering a new way for people to enjoy wine by the glass with a single touch of a button.

www.plum.wine

PLUM 

caters to both those who are deeply passionate about wine and its storage, and to those who love to entertain and beautifully showcase their collection." Visit www.fisherpaykel.com for more information.

GESSI

A WHOLE NEW WAY TO EXPERIENCE WATER

Innovative hi-fi system by Gessi pairs modern tech with retro stereo style

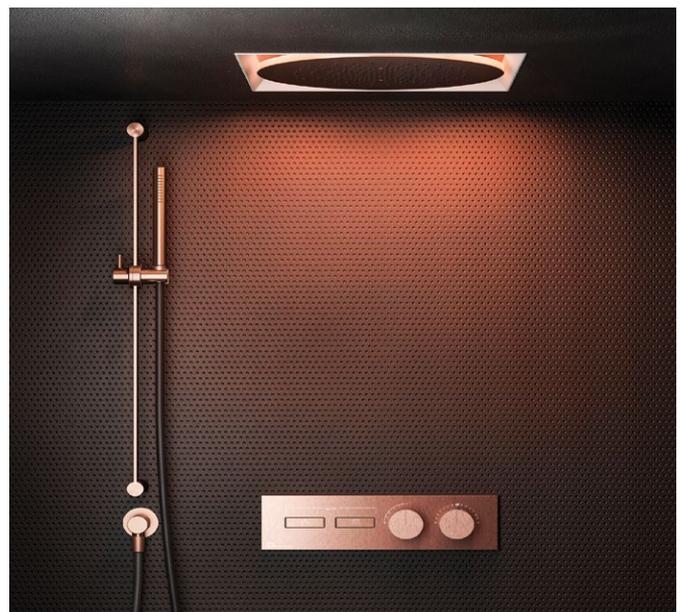
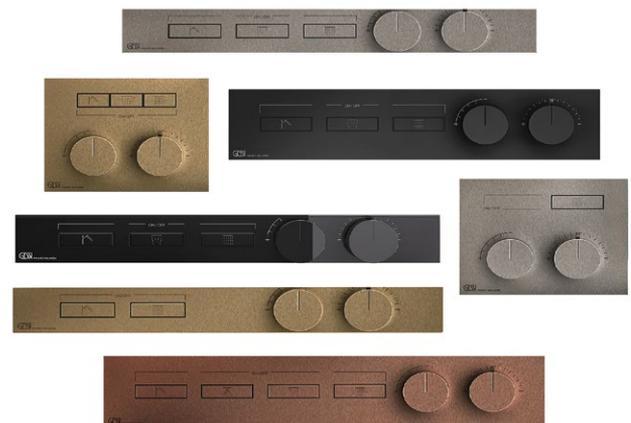
Gessi engages with water in a whole new way, injecting a sense of harmonious nostalgia with a thermostatic shower mixer that replicates the iconic look and feel of a stereo system from the 1980s and 1990s. Their new Hi-Fi Thermostatic Mixers go beyond retro-inspired aesthetics to offer high-fidelity technology for water delivery with accurate precision and perfect ergonomic design. Think of it as the control center for Gessi's signature Private Wellness® Program, a holistic design philosophy that imbues renewal and wellbeing into all aspects of daily life. Hi-Fi mixers are the pleasure of water amplified.

The Hi-Fi Collection is a unique addition to the bathroom furnishings market, providing an interactive interface to manipulate every aspect of the shower experience. The controls have been designed to mimic the tactile sensations of period stereo sets with clicking buttons and turning knobs, bringing the satisfaction of fine-tuning and the relaxation of music into a soothing wellness environment. Function buttons feature intuitive graphic icons for easy use, while the knobs have radial dials for precise control of water flow and temperature. Users may customize their preferred settings and enjoy an extraordinary shower with perfect control at all times.

Designed to fit neatly in any shower space, the Hi-Fi Collection is offered in three distinctive configurations. The square COMPACT design features one to three function buttons, while the rectangular LINEAR unit can accommodate up to four. The SHELF mixer houses its components inside a sleek box that attaches to the wall to form a convenient shelf for shampoo bottles and other necessities. This design is well suited for renovation projects or installation settings without sufficient space behind the shower wall.

Hi-Fi mixers control a wide range of luxurious options in Gessi's Private Wellness® Program, including hand sprayers and body jets, rainfall and waterfall shower heads, directional shower kits, atomizers and much more. The systems are available in the full spectrum of Gessi finishes such as copper, aged bronze, gold, matte black and polished nickel. Visit www.gessi.com for more information about Hi-Fi Thermostatic Mixers or any Gessi product.

RO



SMOKING HOT!

LATEST & GREATEST

IN NEW PRODUCTS



- 1 SKS 36-inch Counter-Depth French Door Refrigerator / www.signaturekitchensuite.com 2 Vinotemp Brama Microwaves / www.vinotemp.com 3 Vinotemp EL-168ZZ-S Single-Zone Wine 157 Bottle Cooler with BioBlu™ LED lighting / www.vinotemp.com 4 Dacor - 36" Dual-Fuel Range - Transitional / www.dacor.com 5 LG refrigerators with Craft Ice / www.lg.com/us/refrigerators 6 LG Single Unit Front Load LG WashTower™ with Center Control™ 4.5 cu. ft. Washer and 7.4 cu. ft. Gas Dryer / www.lgbuilder.com

GE APPLIANCES ANNOUNCES NEW SMALL APPLIANCES CATEGORY

Builds on long history of innovation, expands product portfolio with 24 new SKUs in 2020

GE Appliances (GEA), a Haier company, announced a new business launch into small appliances that will expand its product offerings beyond major household goods. The new microenterprise launches with 19 new products and 24 new SKUs, including coffee makers, toasters, toaster ovens, blenders and food processors, across its GE®, GE Profile™ and CAFÉ™ brands this month.

The new kitchen products build on more than a century of innovation and industry firsts for the company, starting with the first full line of countertop cooking appliances in 1904 and the first electric toaster in 1905.

“GE Appliances is built on a legacy of inventing the category of countertop appliances that added convenience and innovation into the home. It’s part of our DNA, and it’s time to bring it back to be part of our business,” said Andre Zdanow, executive director of small appliances for GE Appliances. “This new microenterprise expands on our heritage, and our deep-rooted expertise in engineering.”

General Electric stopped manufacturing and selling small appliances in 1984. Now, teams selected from the 900 engineers based at the GEA headquarters in Louisville, KY have designed the new collection of small appliances. They are building on the success of GE FirstBuild, GE’s global co-creation community that hatched best-selling products such as the Opal Nugget Ice Maker. Innovation

together with the attention to detail and commitment to superior quality found in the GEA major appliances is certain to set a new standard for small appliances.

“The habits of consumers have changed dramatically over the last several months of the pandemic,” said Zdanow. “As people are making most of their meals at home, they have experienced everything from recipe experimentation to cooking fatigue. Our new line-up offers performance and convenience to help consumers elevate their own abilities and change up their routines. From nugget ice to coffee brewed at the perfect temperature, our range of new appliances from our trusted brands is a new opportunity to deliver restaurant-quality food and drink, while adding an extra touch of enjoyment to the home.”

The launch of this new area of business for GEA demonstrates the commitment to growth for the appliance company. Since 2018, GE Appliances has invested more than \$660 million in its new products, U.S. manufacturing and its expanded smart distribution network, creating more than 1,500 new jobs.

The new small appliances will be available for purchase at geappliances.com and cafeappliances.com later this month. They are currently available for purchase at bestbuy.com and Best Buy locations across the U.S. and will continue to roll out to retailers nationwide.

For more information, visit www.geappliances.com.





BUILDING ON OUR HISTORY OF
Small Appliance Innovation

1899-2020

1899

GE tests electric coffee urns in its Schenectady Works restaurant.



1905

GE puts the first-ever electric toaster on the market. GE later develops the first U.S. patent for an electric toaster in 1909.



1911

GE develops a prototype for the first-ever electric waffle maker.



1930

GE introduces an electric tea kettle with automatic cut-off.



1937

GE introduces its portable hand mixer.



1956

The GE Housewares Division introduces the T-93 Toast-R-Oven, the first of a line which later will include broiling capabilities and a larger toaster and baking capacity in a compact, energy saving appliance.



1963

GE rolls out an electric carving knife and enters the blender market with an easy-to-store compact blender.



1984

GE divests its small appliances business.



1904

GE introduces the first heating kitchen appliances introduced as electricity is more widely available, including a pint water heater, coffee pot, disc stove, egg boiler, chafing dish, grill, frying pan, and electric heating table.



1907

GE rolls out a full line of electric heating devices, including a cereal cooker, tea kettle, broiler and popcorn popper.



1929

GE introduces its first stand mixer.



1935

GE offers multi-speed control offered on its stand mixer.



1950

During the 1950s and 1960s, GE wasn't only focused on kitchen appliances and introduced a variety of items like hair dryers, manicure kits, electric toothbrush, and even an electric mousetrap!



1958

The GE Housewares Division markets its automatic electric can opener, freeing consumers from the awkwardness of manual types.



1978

The GE Housewares Division completes development of the Versatron CTO-2000 countertop oven and introduces the FP-1 and FP-2 food processors, reducing the time for many food preparation chores to seconds.



2020

GE Appliances returns to the market with small appliances, launching with 24 SKUs, including our connected specialty coffee maker certified by the Specialty Coffee Association as a "Gold Cup" brewer.



FINDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SHOWROOM SALES TALENT IS VITAL TO A THRIVING INDUSTRY

As interest in home remodeling grows, especially with more time spent at home, the \$130.8 billion kitchen and bath industry continues to experience high employment vacancies.

That's why the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) launched NKBA NextUp, an initiative that aims to recruit and empower a well-prepared workforce for the kitchen and bath industry. NKBA also teamed with BridgeYear, a Houston-based organization, to allow students to "try on" various lucrative careers in kitchen and bath, from design to skilled remodeling trades and showroom sales, that they can pursue after graduation.

Earlier this year, as part of the BridgeYear/NKBA Career Tours, nearly 6,000 Houston-area students got the chance to "test drive" kitchen and bath careers. Half of the students expressed high interest in one or more of the professions, while more than 90% of the participants reported positive views about the occupations. These findings also echo new NKBA research among a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school students, showing that perceptions clouded by stigmas about the skilled trades are lessening.

NKBA's research also revealed that the top perceived benefits of kitchen and bath careers are: the opportunity to be the boss, to build a business, to help clients and to create plans and designs. Respondents also said that knowing someone in the skilled trades is one of the most common reasons they became interested in design and construction careers.

In general, a better understanding of career paths – whether by talking to kitchen and bath professionals or spending time in

the field – would help attract more students, as only about one-quarter said they feel "very informed" about these opportunities.

And that's where showroom professionals come in.

There's always an opportunity for professionals to engage with high school students to help them understand how fulfilling a showroom sales career helping customers make their home renovation decisions can be.

"It feels so good to see your client's face light up upon the reveal of their remodel because you know you've just made their wishes come true," said Jack Bernstein, founder and CEO, Kurrent Kitchen & Bath in Brooklyn, NY. Bernstein is also a member of the Class of 2019 in NKBA's prestigious Thirty Under 30 program which recognizes outstanding young professionals in K&B fields.

It will also be appealing to high school students (and no doubt their families) to learn that they can start making an income right after high school in kitchen and bath showrooms with little or no previous training.

"The design and construction industry is recession-proof because there is always work available. So there's always going to be a need for showroom sales," said Ravi Chatterjee, founder of ABC Design Showroom in Las Vegas. "When the economy isn't great, people may not buy new homes, but they'll remodel where they currently live. And when interest rates go down, people buy new homes."

Chatterjee noted his cousin opened a showroom in Los Angeles at the height of the 2008 recession and grew his business to three showrooms within two years.

Yet a successful showroom professional must have the skills

and knowledge to help customers choose products based on their style, design vision and budget. This knowledge isn't something learned overnight, but training opportunities are plentiful.

Bernstein has a deliberate approach to training, having new hires start out managing his social media platforms. He believes this approach is vital for a new employee to learn the business while making connections to build their customer base. His employees also receive product training, and Bernstein said it often takes approximately one year to become fully immersed in the business.

Brian Maffia, director of showrooms for General Plumbing Supply in Edison, N.J., said that his employees participate in an intense training process that includes product education through his manufacturer representatives. They also travel to manufacturers' headquarters for deep dives in product development.

NKBA research also noted that about 40% of the high school students surveyed said they need a lot more information, including how they would get training if they wanted to run their own business. Bernstein launched his retail showroom business

career immediately after high school and credits his father – who has more than 30 years of industry experience – as instrumental in mentoring him and helping him cultivate solid relationships.

“Being a business owner can be very lucrative, and it also gives me a flexible lifestyle,” added Bernstein. “But most important, when I retire and reflect on the business I built on my own – well, that's something that will stay with me forever.”

More than ever, there's a need in the industry to make better connections with the next generation of talent so they are aware of the rewarding, lucrative careers in showroom sales. Maffia noted that students often explore NKBA memberships or attend industry networking events, which is an ideal opportunity for business owners and decision makers to connect with potential talent.

“I mentor students and am constantly looking for ways to bring those who tell me they have an interest into the design and construction industry,” added Chatterjee. “The new energy they bring is much needed for a business owner like me, and it's a lucrative career for them.”

Now, that's a win-win situation.

RO

JACK BERNSTEIN

RAVI CHATTERJEE

BRIAN MAFFIA



2021 DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION WEEK TO BE AN ALL-VIRTUAL EVENT

Due to health and safety concerns and ongoing travel restrictions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) regretfully announce that the 8th annual Design & Construction Week® (DCW) featuring NAHB's International Builders' Show® (IBS) and NKBA's Kitchen & Bath Industry Show® (KBIS) will no longer be an on-site event. Instead, the two groups are planning a robust, all-virtual event.

Design & Construction Week was scheduled to take place on Feb. 9-11, 2021, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla. The new all-virtual DCW 2021 will still take place the week of Feb. 8 with extended programming.

"Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the safety of our exhibitors, attendees and the thousands of onsite workers who support the premier event of the residential construction industry, we feel the only prudent course is to make this year's show a virtual event," said NAHB Chairman Chuck Fowke, a custom home builder from Tampa, Fla. "We have plenty of great virtual educational programs, innovative products, services and workshops on tap, and we are very excited about the 2021 show. It's an opportunity to set a precedent for the industry by producing a dynamic virtual trade show, and we look forward to a very successful Design & Construction Week."

"This difficult decision comes following months of lengthy conversations with NAHB and Emerald," said Bill Darcy, CEO of the NKBA. "The safety and well-being of our attendees, partners, exhibitors, site workers and staff has always been our top priority. As we now cross the 16-weeks-out mark, it was time to transition to 100% focus on a virtual event. An all-virtual Design & Construction Week will be a different experience, but with it come new opportunities to reach an even larger audience that would not have been able to participate on-site, for any number of reasons, including ongoing travel restrictions. We pledge to transform KBIS into an exceptional show experience for everyone. And we will be

back live – bigger and stronger – for DCW 2022."

Registration for the virtual DCW event is free for all NKBA and NAHB members and, as with the in-person shows, attendees will have access to KBIS and IBS exhibitors and programming. The new virtual format will allow participants to see the latest product launches and cutting-edge housing and design innovations, hear from the top leaders in the industry, and take part in online education courses, from wherever they are in the world.

SUPPORT FROM THE EXHIBITOR COMMUNITY HAS BEEN SOLID

"With safety and well-being of attendees, exhibitors, vendors and trade-show staff as the priority, Kohler Co. applauds the difficult but appropriate decision made jointly by the NKBA and NAHB to convert KBIS and IBS, respectively, to being 100% virtual," said David Kohler, CEO of Kohler Co. "We look forward to the opportunity to connect with our trade customers and showcase our new products and innovations."

"We cherish our partnerships with NKBA and NAHB. In our shared commitment to the health and safety of industry colleagues, we fully support their decision to reimagine the 2021 KBIS and IBS events," said Thomas Yoon, president and CEO of LG Electronics North America. "As trusted partners, LG and Signature Kitchen Suite remain committed to working with these organizations to deliver engaging virtual experiences for the designer and builder communities, while continuing our major presence in The New American Home and The New American Remodel for 2021. We're optimistic about the recovery ahead, and we look forward to reconnecting in person with industry partners in Orlando in 2022."

Design & Construction Week will return to Orlando as an in-person event Feb. 8-10, 2022.

Further details on the virtual offerings will be forthcoming. For more information on the International Builders' Show, visit www.buildersshow.com, and visit www.kbis.com for information on the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show.

RO



THE BADGE ADVANTAGE

Turn knowledge into opportunity with NKBA's Specialty Badges, a valuable concept in professional development. This micro-credentialing program recognizes and spotlights acquired knowledge of our members across all K&B industry segments. It encourages members to stay current with the latest information in this ever-changing business, and serves as a visible and highly respected promotional tool.

“The Badge program gave me the opportunity to study the most relevant and critical aspects of the kitchen and bath industry. It has made me a lot more knowledgeable about my field, and set me on the best possible course for my career.”

— Allison Burt

Interior Modeler and Design Assistant at Nicholson Builders, Columbus, Ohio; holder of Sustainability, Lighting, Remodeling, Color, Cabinetry and Floor Plans & Specifications NKBA Specialty Badges

“I am a true believer in continuing education [and] NKBA is the first resource I turn to. Specialty Badges allowed me to check and expand my competency in three areas this year. It's a great way to add feathers to your cap... The AKBD certification I put off for years seemed easier after earning the Badges.”

— Johanne Poulin, AKBD *(project featured above)*
Owner and principal designer, Project Guru Design, Walnut Creek, Calif.; holder of Sustainability, Remodeling and Cabinetry NKBA Specialty Badges

Scan here for more information on NKBA Specialty Badges, or visit [NKBA.org/badges](https://www.nkba.org/badges)



NKBA NATIONAL KITCHEN+BATH ASSOCIATION

RTO WORLD 2020 DELIVERS AN UNCONVENTIONAL CONVENTION

The third annual RTO World, hosted by APRO and TRIB Group, recently ended. With many unsure what the virtual event would deliver, the convention and tradeshow left many participants with their expectations exceeded. RTO World surpassed or met its goals, with 788 participants and \$11.4 million in sales from the Hot Show. While 2020 has not been a kind year for many of our industry events, the rent-to-own industry can reflect on RTO World 2020 Virtual as an event that provided much-needed connection.

“While we would have preferred to be all together in Tampa as originally planned for RTO World 2020, we made the most of it through our virtual convention. The industry showed up for it and made the most of our reality,” said Chris Kale Sr., co-owner of CPL Group Inc., dba Rent King and APRO president. “After both attendees and vendors had orientation training and a few hours to acclimate to the virtual platform, our industry adapted well to the virtual environment. The overall feedback from dealers and vendors was decidedly positive!”

The RTO World 2020 Virtual Kick-off began from the comfort of participants' screens on Tuesday, September 8. In the opening, we heard from the Presidents of APRO and TRIB Group, Chris Kale Sr. and Chris Kale Jr., respectively, along with APRO Executive Director Jill McClure, TRIB Group Executive Director Dennis Shields, and Gary Jones from Ashley Furniture Industries, the event sponsor. Kick-off led into the TRIB Group Membership Meeting and then into the Peer Group Meetups.

“We are pleased with the outcome of our industry's first-ever virtual convention,” said McClure. “While meeting in person is always our preference, the virtual convention provided a way for vendors and dealers to come together for business and camaraderie.”

Peer Group Meetups have traditionally been a favorite way to connect attendees on the first day of the convention. For the meetups this year, participants connected on screens with their counterparts from other companies and engaged in insightful,



Chris Kale Jr. and Sr. (left-right), Presidents of TRIB Group and APRO respectively, kicked off the third annual RTO World in virtual form.

knowledgeable and relevant conversations to build their network and professional expertise about the current state of the rent-to-own industry as it approaches the 4th-quarter holiday season. Five peer groups had meetups, including Dealers/Owners, Store Managers, Buyers, District Managers and Marketing Professionals.

Attendees enjoyed a lighthearted social time at the Hot Show Cocktail Mixer before jumping into the Hot Show's presentation, sponsored by Whirlpool Corporation. During the Hot Show Mixer, RTO folks enjoyed friendly conversations in the meeting space and the chat while a slide show of pictures from previous RTO World events played. For this virtual version of the Hot Show, buyers and participants downloaded the TRIB Group app to submit orders. The app replaced paddles typically used in a crowded and bustling Hot Show. Simultaneously, as items transitioned on the app, RTO's tried-and-true auctioneer, Lyn Leach, presented products and deals live through the RTO World Platform for everyone to watch, ending with his signature, "Sold, sold, sold." Overall, the Hot Show exceeded expectations with an estimated \$11.4 million in sales, comparable to the RTO World 2019 results.

The second day of RTO World began with Mike Tissot, owner of Countryside Rentals Inc., dba Rent-2-Own. In his keynote, Navigating the Stormy C's, Tissot highlighted five elements that businesspeople can leverage to push their organizations into clear blue skies. Shortly

after the highly anticipated keynote, the RTO Education Sessions began. Attendees had the option to tailor their experience by choosing sessions from the following tracks: Dealers/Owners, Store Managers, and All Audiences. Wednesday's Education Session options included Operations Panel: Powering through the Pandemic featuring Trent Agin, SKC Enterprises Inc., dba Rent One; Michael Bennett, Buddy's Newco LLC, dba Buddy's Home Furnishings; Todd Wilkins, Fairway Leasing LLC, dba Aaron's Sales & Lease Ownership; and moderated by Jill McClure. Other Wednesday sessions included Train the Trainer: Deliveries, with Angie Brubaker, SKC Enterprises dba Rent One and Chip Guy, Buddy Mac Holdings LLC, dba Buddy's Home Furnishings; and Idea Lab: Driving Sales through Social Media, with Jessica Mahon, Countryside Rentals Inc., dba Rent-2-Own.

After a break, the highly anticipated virtual Tradeshow floor opened for the first time during the convention. All exhibitors had the opportunity to engage attendees by customizing their virtual booths. Through the 18,995 booth visits during the three days of tradeshow hours, exhibitors received 1,227 information requests and held hundreds of one-on-one meetings with attendees. While nothing can replace face-to-face interaction many exhibitors and attendees felt these interactions were the next-best thing. Some even found additional benefits to the virtual format.



Panelists Trent Agin (top left), Michael Bennett (top right) and Todd Wilkins (bottom left) discuss with moderator Jill McClure (bottom right) how their stores have adapted during the pandemic in the session, Operations Panel: Powering through the Pandemic.

“Since we operate on very remote islands, it is difficult and expensive for the staff to attend APRO events. With a virtual event, all of our managers could attend and see the business side of RTO. The cost of travel would have reached into the tens of thousands of dollars normally. This virtual event made learning affordable,” said Daniel Singh, Chief Executive Officer of Dial Rent To Own, whose stores are based in Aruba, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. “Our managers were able to gain valuable ideas and insight. The management team was motivated to put into practice the ideas they learned. And our managers were able to meet the vendors in person, which helped foster friendship and loyalty. They enjoyed the solidarity of the entire Dial Team being one in this event.”

“RTO World turned out to be a tremendous success for the O’Rourke Sales Company,” said Bill French, vice president of Rent-to-Own Sales from O’Rourke Sales Company. “The staffs at both APRO and TRIB did a great job of helping us prepare for the unknown.”

“As an exhibitor, we felt the conference was well organized and we still were able to participate in many of the events we would have wanted to attend in person,” said Kim Cardenas, CPA at Rivero,

Gordimer & Company P.A. “You could still feel that sense of collaboration throughout those in the industry even though everyone wasn’t able to be together in one room, which is one of the aspects we have enjoyed most about this conference over the years.”

The last event of day two for RTO World was the Emerging Professionals Networking Social, hosted by the APRO Emerging Leaders Council (ELC) and sponsored by Nationwide RentDirect. The up-and-comers to the rent-to-own industry who attended the event had the chance to connect with others, play some fun Zoom games and win prizes.

“The Emerging Professionals Networking Social was a good time. I enjoyed playing games, giving out prizes and getting to know everyone,” said Jessica Mahon, marketing director of Countryside Rentals Inc., dba Rent-2-Own, ELC member and event organizer. “We were all able to engage with everyone. No groups, no cliques, we were able to see and talk to everyone.”

With her excellent recall ability, Candace Hill beat everyone at a memory-related game, while Amberlee Maya hustled to locate obscure items to beat everyone in a group scavenger hunt. Hill and Maya each won a Visa Gift Card, along with drawing winners Casey Al-Sawalha, Danny Lastra and Michael Skehan.



Marketing Professionals Meetup, one of five Meetup peer groups participating in the virtual RTO World 2020



Daniel Singh, CEO of Dial Rent To Own



Emcee Jill McClure at The Annual APRO Awards Celebration and Business Meeting

“It was great to see some familiar faces, and meet some new ones, at the Emerging Professional Networking Social,” said Owner and Operator of Happy’s Home Center’s Inc., ELC member and event organizer, Adam Stark. “I’m excited about the involvement those that attended will have in our networking events going forward.”

Day three of the convention featured more RTO Education. Lyn Leach and Daniel Singh shared lessons they learned through personal experience for Leadership through Turbulent Times. In Recapture Lost Revenue, Joe Pici discussed how to find and build sales talent for stores. Shirin Kanji and Dan Fisher explored why a leader’s perception needs to remain adaptable in Change Your Altitude: A Leader’s Perspective. Angie Brubaker and Mike Simoncini discussed how to host a Delivery Rodeo in Idea Lab: Delivery Rodeo 101. For Going Live! Reach More Customers with Interactive Video, Brian Eckleberry gave a tour of his video equipment, software and studio setup for video making. In Idea Lab: Being a Community Pillar During COVID-19, Dale Anderson III and Casey Fowler facilitated a conversation with attendees on how RTO can impact the community. Rachel Casey explored the parallels between employee retainment and relationship management with attendees in Idea Lab: Employee Engagement and Retention Promotions. Throughout the day, there were Product Demonstration & Training sessions hosted by Corsicana Mattress Company, O’Rourke Sales Company, Whirlpool Corporation and Ashley Furniture Industries.

The education sessions were carefully curated to provide the most relevant topics and knowledgeable speakers for all attendees.

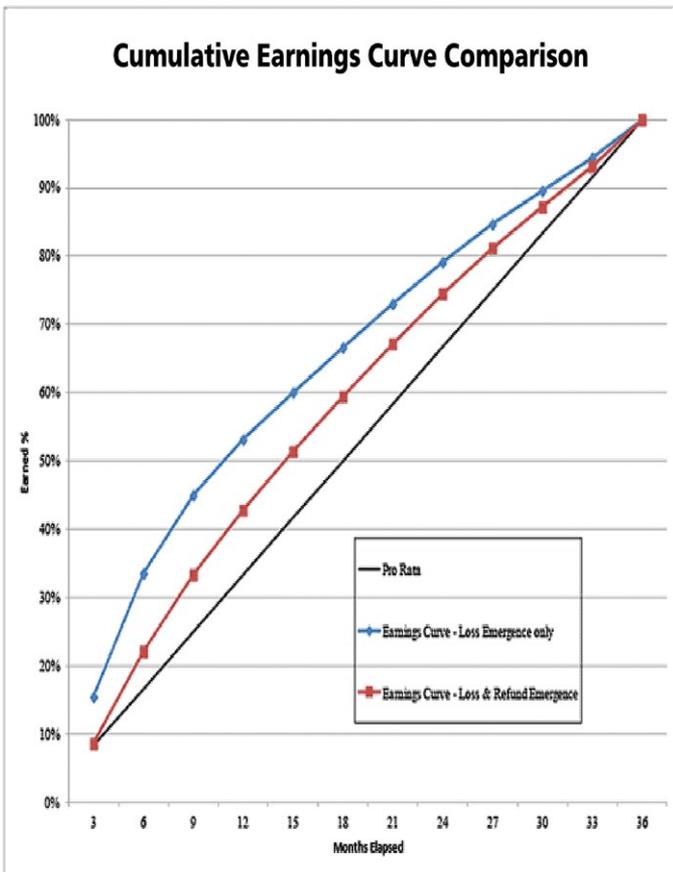
And attendees can even learn from the sessions they missed; all sessions were recorded and available on the RTO World platform for the next year. This gives participants the ability to revisit all the session materials to ensure they can put all they learned into practice.

After RTO Education Sessions, the tradeshow opened for the second time, which allowed attendees to reach out to exhibitors for information, conversation and sales. The APRO Awards Celebration and Business Meeting, sponsored by Benefit Marketing Solutions and O’Rourke Sales Company, followed the tradeshow.

The Annual APRO Awards Celebration and Business Meeting ended Thursday on a positive note. The annual celebration recognizing contribution and achievement in the rent-to-own industry was emceed by APRO Executive Director Jill McClure, APRO President Chris Kale Sr. and APRO board member Phillip Bumbry. Following the event, the celebration continued in the APRO Winners’ Reception, providing an opportunity for members to interact and congratulate the award winners in an informal environment. The celebration closed the last full day of the virtual convention and tradeshow, which left the following morning as the final opportunity for attendees to reach out to exhibitors and connect with others.

“RTO World proved to convert well to virtual. There was a steep learning curve for our staff teams, attendees and exhibitors, but it seems most people adapted well to it and were able to network, buy product and learn through the virtual event,” said McClure. “We know there are things we might do differently next time, but we’re pleased overall with our first virtual convention endeavor.” **RO**

ARE RETAILERS PAYING TOO MUCH FOR YOUR EXTENDED WARRANTY PROGRAM?



MAXIMIZING RETAIL MARGINS AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN A POST COVID-19 WORLD

As retailers emerge from COVID-19 isolation, many will find their business models turned upside down. Gone are the days (for now) of showrooms crowded with customers testing gadgets, impulse buyers, and long checkout lines. Instead, expect to see social distancing measures like scheduled appointments, contactless buying, and curbside pickups become the norm. The impact will be a reduction in overall transactions resulting in declining gross revenues. Now more than ever, maximizing retailer margins on each customer transaction is critical.

In order to maximize margins and ensure sustainability, retailers should be served well if they use this time to reset and reconsider every aspect of their operations. Everything from floor planning, staff training, vendor management, and customer engagement strategies must be re-evaluated. More than ever, retailers must find new ways to attract and convert every potential customer while continuing to service and retain them for years to come.

We all remember the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and marvel at the resiliency of our retail partners. Few retailers would dispute the impact that their extended warranty program had on their ability to recover from the brink of bankruptcy.

RISK MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES CAN IMPACT RETAILER PROFITS

Similar to the recovery from the 2008-2009 financial crisis, retailers today could and should use extended warranty sales as a tool for recovery. After all, social distancing measures will provide sales associates with the opportunity to employ the consultative sales approach that they have always longed for. At CPS, we believe that a consultative sales approach together with an increased focus on training will lead to increased extended warranty attachment rates. Attachment rates have long been an important KPI for every retailer and extended warranty provider, but how often do retailers consider if they are paying too much to their provider? And could they do better? The answers to these questions are found in the risk management structure of the retailer's extended warranty program. Let's examine these structures to see what we can find out.

Net Business Results for top US Personal Auto Insurers

Insurer	Loss Ratio	Loss Adjustment Expenses Ratio	Expense Ratio	Combined Ratio
State Farm	64.1%	16.8%	26.0%	106.9%
GEICO	67.8%	10.6%	15.3%	93.7%
Allstate	57.5%	13.3%	27.7%	98.4%
Progressive	62.9%	10.6%	21.0%	94.6%

When launching an extended warranty program, retailers often rely upon a risk management structure suggested by their chosen service contract provider. Naturally, these providers negotiate with insurance companies to obtain the best financial structure for their business before they even approach a prospective retailer. Have you ever wondered why the cost of a program can vary dramatically from provider to provider? Isn't the actual risk of failure on a dishwasher, for example, the same across all retailers? So why does the cost vary so much from provider to provider?

KNOW WHAT FACTORS DETERMINE INSURANCE RATES

Insurance companies set rates for programs based on historical loss data, if available, which is often not the case for new technologies, plus other factors, including their internal expense ratios and desired profit margins. The desired profit margins are generally the same, usually 10%-20% across all insurers, on a combined ratio (loss ratio + expense ratio) basis. Internal expenses however, are dramatically different. For example, if an insurer has a \$1B advertising budget or uses AI to predict weather patterns for CAT (catastrophic loss) exposures due to hurricanes and happens to have a warranty practice as well; guess what? Part of those expenses are allocated to the warranty practice even though they do not use or benefit from those expenses. Ask anyone who files or reviews rate filings at an insurance department and they will tell you that there is no such thing as a "me-too" rate filing because the expense portion of the rates cannot be the same across all insurers.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RATIO

So when a retailer asks a provider what loss ratio the program is priced at and they hear "85%," for example, does it mean the insurer is seeking a 15% profit? No, because an 85% loss ratio is only accounting for the risk portion of the rate; they haven't added the expense portion of the rate. The more important ratio to examine is the combined ratio. The Combined Ratio = Incurred Losses + Expenses / Earned premiums.

This means that an insurer with an expense ratio of 25% (most do) must have a loss ratio of 65% to achieve a desired profit of 10% on a combined ratio basis. If the loss ratio were truly 85% in this example that would mean the combined ratio for this program would be 110%. A program with a combined ratio of 110% will not last long at the current rates. The insurer will have to increase rates dramatically to overcome this deficit.

The chart on the previous page illustrates how the combined ratio impacts financial results and rates provided to retailers. In this example you can see that Geico has a loss ratio 10 points higher than State

Farm. However, Geico's combined ratio is 4.7 pts. lower than State Farm's 93.7% vs. 98.4% because their expense ratios are lower. If these companies were competing for the same warranty business, Geico would be in a better position to provide lower rates for the program despite having an overall higher loss ratio of this entire group.

EARNING PREMIUMS

Added to this complexity of underwriting 1st dollar policies are premium earnings. Notice the C/R equation includes "earned premiums" in the denominator. Warranty contracts are longer in length than traditional insurance policies, they have manufacturer warranty periods, and losses occur in a variety of patterns. Additionally, extended warranty contracts can be cancelled, often providing for a pro-rata refund of the unused portion of the contract, and they do not always have set exposure lengths. For example, when a product is repaired or replaced, the obligations under the contracts are often fulfilled; therefore the loss exposure is eliminated from that point forward.

Insurers insuring these contracts must have systems in place to delay or accelerate earnings of these contracts, according to the way losses actually occur, with methods other than pro-rata. The pro-rata earnings pattern earns an equal amount of premium each year or each month throughout the life of the contract. The rule of 78's method anticipates more losses occurring earlier in the contract life, while the reverse rule of 78's anticipates most losses occurring later in the contract life. This simple illustration demonstrates the problem with pro-rata earnings.

Remember that the loss ratio at a given time is determined by using the formula $LR = (\text{losses due to claims} + \text{loss adjustment expense}) / \text{total earned premium}$. So, the more earned premium you have at a given point the lower your loss ratio will be. In this example you can see that at month 24 the pro-rata method earns about 67% of the premium; whereas the other methods that use actual loss emergence and cancellations earn about 75% of the premium.

Insurers, unless they have proper systems in place and actuaries that understand the extended warranty business, may incorrectly continue to account for any remaining premium for these contracts as unearned premium reserves (UPR) according to the earnings patterns their systems are programmed to use, resulting in an inaccurate (higher) loss ratio at given points in time.

For more information on how UPR impacts loss ratios: www.casact.org/pubs/forum/14forum/Vaughan.pdf.

For more information about earnings curves please visit: www.providers-administrators.com/348218/earnings-curves-matching-premium-with-losses-and-refunds.

EXPENSE VS. RISK

Assuming they have considered these complexities and other factors an insurer will develop rates with a desired combined ratio in mind. The service contract provider adds their administrative fees to the insurance rates yielding what is known in the industry as a “dealer cost.” The retailer then adds a desired margin to these costs, or accepts a suggested margin, usually 50%, offered by the service contract provider. Together these costs and margin percentage make up the retail cost of the extended warranty contract. Under this model at least 50% of the contract price is related to costs, and even less related to the actual risk involved. Is there more profit available for retailers? Potentially, if they are large enough and informed enough about alternative structures.

The automotive sector of the service contract industry does a great job navigating risk management structures and advocating for themselves. Reinsurance, bonding, captives, excess of loss policies, and stop loss insurance structures are common in the automotive sector. For varying reasons, the “brown and white” goods segment has largely failed to embrace the additional revenue opportunities relating to service contract underwriting structures.

HISTORICAL PRACTICES IMPACT COSTS

Why does the first dollar insurance model that uses a Contractual Liability or Service Contract Reimbursement policies dominate risk management structures within the brown and white sector of the service contract industry? Other more cost-effective and proven compliance models exist that provide comparable protection to both customers and retailers. Moreover, these alternative models, which are approved by state regulators, provide greater program flexibility with the same underwriting diligence as their more expensive counterparts utilizing antiquated insurance policies as their means of compliance. The Service Contract Model Act, versions of which have been adopted by nearly every state, sets out the financial responsibility requirements for Service Contract Providers. It states in part:

Section 3. C. In order to assure the faithful performance of a provider's obligations to its contract holders, each provider who is contractually obligated to provide service under a service contract shall:

- (1) Insure all service contracts under a reimbursement insurance policy issued by an insurer authorized to transact insurance in this state or;
- (2) (a) Maintain a funded reserve account for its obligations under its contracts issued and outstanding in this state, and

- (b) Place in trust with the commissioner a financial security deposit, consisting of one of the following: (i) A surety bond issued by an authorized surety; (ii) Securities of the type eligible for deposit by authorized insurers in this state; (iii) Cash; (iv) A letter of credit issued by a qualified financial institution; or (v) Another form of security prescribed by regulations issued by the commissioner or;
- (3) (a) Maintain a net worth of \$100 million; and
 - (b) Upon request, provide the Commissioner with a copy of the provider's or, if the provider's financial statements are consolidated with those of its parent company, the provider's parent company's most recent Form 10-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) within the last calendar year.

For full text of the Act visit : www.naic.org/store/free/MDL-685.pdf

EMBRACING CHANGE

Clearly, based on the language of the statute, there are equally compliant structures available to retailers that can give them and their service contract providers more flexibility to develop distinct programs that will provide better pricing, faster speed to market, and therefore, higher profit margins. The notion that in order for a program to remain compliant it must be insured with 1st dollar coverage from an insurer that happens to insure a particular provider is a fallacy.

In a post COVID-19 world, retailers must embrace change to ensure their long-term success. While there are many areas that retailers must re-evaluate to deliver long-term profitability, the fastest to implement is a change to their service contract program. While CPS primarily offers 1st dollar coverage, we are not hamstrung by archaic methods of filing rates and forms like many of our competitors. Further, our ability to deploy flexible compliance models allows for less payments to middlemen and higher profits for retailers. By utilizing the far more cost-effective programs offered through CPS, retailers can maximize their service contract profitability without sacrificing customer experience or their financial security.

RO

Mike Ryan has over 25 years of experience in the Service Contract Industry, holding senior leadership positions in compliance, underwriting, sales and marketing, and product development at AIG, AmTrust, Starr Indemnity and Fortegra Financial. In his current role Mr. Ryan is SVP of marketing and business development at Consumer Priority Services.





CPS



The #1 Selling Accessory of All Time

CPS is the top rated warranty provider that delivers the most rapid response to claims and continues to deliver an incredible 5 star service experience years after the manufacturer's warranty expires.

Our **award winning program** adds **more value, more profit** and **more service** for customers and dealers alike.

- ✓ OEM & Extended Warranties
- ✓ Returns Management Solutions
- ✓ Call Center Services
- ✓ Expert Business Consulting

Sign Up Today!

CPS Sales Department

☎ 800-905-0445

✉ dealers@cpscentral.com

🌐 www.cpscentral.com



GETTING LOST CUSTOMERS BACK

Opportunities for service recovery are numerous. If you are close to a customer and discover a problem, it's your chance to go beyond the call of duty and win a customer for life.

Too many executives think employees are born with good customer service skills. It's important to develop a process that allows employees some latitude in serving the customer that will also include specifically defined steps that must be followed in providing service recovery. Doing so requires decision-making and rule breaking – exactly what the employee has been conditioned against! Workers have been taught that it's not their job to alter the routine. Even if they'd like to help the customer, they are frustrated by the fact that they are not able to do it. Worse yet, they don't know how.

Empowerment is the backbone of service recovery. I have stated in my books and seminars that it's impossible to be a service leader, to be customer centric and focus on a service strategy, without empowering employees. My definition of empowerment is giving employees the authority to do whatever it takes, on the spot, to take care of a customer to that customer's satisfaction – not to the organization's satisfaction.

Tips for Providing Awesome Service Recovery:

- **Act Quickly** – The employee at the point of contact can best implement service recovery. Avoid moving problems and complaints up the chain of command.
- **Take Responsibility** – Don't place blame, make excuses or lie to cover a mistake. Sincerely apologize and thank the customer for pointing out the problem.
- **Be Empowered** – Give those who work with customers the authority to do whatever it takes to ensure customer loyalty.
- **Compensate** – Give the customer something of value. Every organization has something of value it can give to a customer who has experienced a problem.

Service Recovery. The surest way to recover from service mishaps is for workers on the front line to identify and solve the customer's problem.

1. **Responding to their needs** calmly and emphatically can serve as the key to getting more cooperation from emotionally agitated people. How an issue is handled becomes the actual issue.
2. **Empathy is powerful.** If a customer expresses anger and you fail to react to it they feel like they aren't getting through, that you're not listening. Think about how you would feel in a similar situation.

3. **Ask Questions.** Once you have an understanding of the situation, try to avoid making excuses or defending your actions (or those of your team or organization). Ask what you can do to make things right. You need to show the customer that, as an employee and as the face of your organization, you are invested in solving the problem.

4. **Suggest Alternatives.** Solicit what the customer wants from you. You want to keep moving the situation along in a productive way. After the person expresses what he or she wants, decide what you're able to do and say so. Think outside the box. You can stay within your organization's guidelines and still come up with an alternative. They will view it as a sign of respect and an indication that you are listening to their specific concerns.

5. **Apologize.** Say "I'm sorry." Apologizing without laying blame will better position you to act in a manner that your customer perceives to be in their best interest.

6. **Solve the problem.** Take everything you've learned about the situation in preparation for this final step. At this time both you and your customer share a strong desire to find a solution. If you need help solving the problem, find it. Regardless of how a problem is solved, getting it done quickly is necessary in bringing this customer back. Then provide the customer your contact information in case they have questions or lingering issues.

In my book *Achieving Excellence Through Customer Service* I wrote: "Service is defined by listing its functions – maintaining old customers, attracting new customers, and leaving all customers with an impression of the company that induces them to do business with the company again."

Expressed in terms of attitude, service is:

- Thoughtfulness • Knowledge • Courtesy • Helpfulness • Integrity
- Friendliness • Efficiency • Availability • Professionalism

You are your brand...act like it. Every customer experience either weakens or strengthens that brand. **RO**

John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the president and founder of Service Quality Institute – the global leader in customer service – with operations in over 40 countries. John speaks more than 50 times each year and is considered one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. Contact John on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.





The Best Homes Deserve the Ultimate Laundry Room

Thanks to LG Styler for reduced wrinkles and daily refreshes, the innovative LG SideKick™ for small loads that can't wait, and advanced washers and dryers, the LG Ultimate Laundry Room keeps the whole family's clothes looking, smelling and feeling great — every day of the week. [Learn more at lgforbuilders.com](http://lgforbuilders.com)



CULTURE COACH CLASSIC

In the U.S. in November, it's easy to think about gratitude and gratefulness, since our big holiday of Thanksgiving permeates the month. And most people I know love the Thanksgiving holiday for its family traditions, which might include food, football, traveling to grandmother's house and other Rockwellian snapshots. Sometimes these family events can also be stressful – high expectations, months of not communicating as you'd like, bouts of bad behavior from certain relatives. Often, a company or store feels a bit like a family, too. You've got your favorite relationships and you've got that oddball cousin or uncle you might not have picked were you lining up candidates to actually be members of your family. Sometimes, it might feel tough mustering up something to be truly grateful about.

However, gratitude is much more powerful if we practice it all year long, and not only on special occasions. In fact, gratitude has a very important place in your business for several reasons. Consider this:

1. **It helps you focus on what's going well.** Sometimes when we are the person who's responsible for growing the business, envisioning the strategy or even getting things done, it's very easy to diagnose what's ailing the business by focusing on what's wrong. It's not that we don't need to fix those things that aren't working (a marketing strategy that's falling flat, a process that actually doesn't work), but beginning by noticing what you are grateful for, what's working, actually has a lot of science behind its usefulness. The practice of Appreciative Inquiry (www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm) has helped organizations and teams solve problems, come up with new solutions, and build upon their strengths.
2. **It helps you learn from your successes and/or reinforce the behaviors you want to repeat.** Often we are moving so quickly from one thing to the next, we don't take time to notice how we've been successful and what we've learned along the way. An After Action Review, commonly used by military organizations, asks questions about what happened, what went well, what was supposed to happen, etc.? That way, you can capture what went well and you can repeat it again, that way you can stop reinventing your successes each time around! Also, when communicating

one-on-one with employees or colleagues, when you take time to demonstrate gratitude, with specificity, the other person is more likely to repeat that behavior. For example, saying, "thanks so much for your support with that customer. I was worried the sale wasn't going to happen, but your research into the different product solutions allowed us to really provide great customer service and make the sale!"

3. **It promotes good will.** If you had a mother like my mother, we spent some time reviewing manners as I was growing up. Niceties like please and thank you are commonplace but people notice when they are absent. Demonstrating gratitude and gratefulness is the right thing to do. This is easy when you like the person, you like their performance or you are generally happy with them; however, those with whom you are frustrated need your gratitude, too. Rarely can we find someone who has no redeeming qualities and contributions. If you recognize them and do it sincerely (everyone can tell when you're not sincere or genuine, so don't bother), you actually strengthen trust and create a window for better communication, too.
4. **It strengthens your attitude and resilience when things are challenging.** The past several years have been challenging for many organizations. Higher costs, competing marketplace, layoffs or loss of business. It's tough to look squarely at some of those situations thinking, gee . . . this is great! But taking time to notice what's going well, what's working in the business, the people around you who are trying to do a good job and showing up every day . . . those are real things to be grateful for. Those are things that can help you maintain perspective and either come up with creative solutions or bounce back with resilience.

This November, make a promise to practice gratitude all year long, make it part of the normal way of doing business and relating to others inside and outside your organization, and see the rewarding benefits you harvest! **RO**

Libby Wagner, author of *The Influencing Option: The Art of Building a Profit Culture in Business*, works with clients to help them create and sustain profit cultures.
www.libbywagner.com



Make a Splash...

...At the industry's premier education, networking, and business marketplace.

The International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo, co-located with DeckExpo, is the industry's new number one destination.

This event partnership actively collaborates across the entire pool, spa, backyard and decking industries to bring you the most comprehensive array of face to face meetings, education, and technology all in one place.

Make a Splash, and take your company further, faster by participating with the PSP Expo, co-located with DeckExpo.

We strongly believe the International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo, co-located with DeckExpo, will go on as planned this November in Las Vegas. We are partnering with federal, state and local officials, along with listening to our customers to ensure we put on the safest show possible. While you're working to maintain your business, we'll be with you - every step of the way.

REGISTER TODAY:
www.poolspapatio.com

NEW! Dive In Together.

DeckExpo will permanently co-locate with the International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo beginning in 2020. This combined event will bring together pool builders and outdoor living professionals to provide an exceptional opportunity to discover new products, network with colleagues, and learn best practices.

INTERNATIONAL
POOL | SPA | PATIO
EXPO



CO-LOCATED WITH

deck EXPO



EXPO: November 11-13
CONFERENCE: November 8-13
Mandalay Bay Convention Center | Las Vegas

AMPLIFYING THE CULTURE-BRAND CONNECTION

How to tap into the soul of your brand

Have you ever noticed that you can't seem to trust a person who says one thing and does another? No matter how hard they try, or what they say to persuade you, the thoughts of some people can't be covered up. Someone might say, "I really care about you," while their actions are telling a very different story. Think used-car salesmen here.

Our intuition plays a large role in sensing the truth of these situations. When a brand communicates to customers, the same thing takes place. The way a company behaves when its audience is not there to see it should be no different than when they are there to witness.

Just like personalities famous or otherwise, the things that people think about and care about are directly connected to how they act, and therefore how people perceive them.

One way to build a stronger brand-culture connection is to take a deep assessment of how and where your brand and culture connect, and where they are disconnected. It's my belief that there can be no separation between corporate culture and brand. One comes from the other. They are directly linked. Together they define the character of your business, which is your brand. And when your brand and culture are intentionally, purposefully, and tightly tethered, they both become stronger. Here, your business works with operational integrity.

WHAT SAVVY LEADERS SEE

In her book, *FUSION: How Integrating Brand and Culture Powers the World's Greatest Companies*, Denise Lee Yohn states that "Culture is not incidental or incremental to business performance – it's instrumental." The brand-culture link is reinforced in leadership thinking, Denise continues, "As with culture, savvy business leaders have come to see their brands as value creation tools. Companies with strong brands operate more profitably and are valued at levels much higher than their estimated future cash flows and assets alone would suggest."

Consumers these days are so savvy that they see right through the companies who are pretending to act one way, but whose values are placed somewhere altogether different. This is called "value washing."

FROM EVOLUTION TO LAUNCH

A while ago, I led a large financial institution through a brand evolution program. The company was growing through a merger and there needed to be a reassessment of the brand due to broadening services and the melding of cultures.

As I led them through our research and fact-finding interview process,

it was discovered that many employees did not understand what the shift meant. They also had little understanding of who they were as an organization and what the company stood for.

As we moved forward in the brand evolution process, we took advantage of this lack of understanding as a blank-slate opportunity to define who they were and fold their teams into the process. I asked many members of the organization, to weigh in on the beliefs and values of the organization and I ensured that their voices were heard.

This process helped us learn about the beliefs and create cultural understanding and buy-in as the brand evolution was being shaped. Well before the new brand was launched to the public, I interviewed a wide range of employees, from tellers to executives, about the core elements of their work. I focused the line of inquiry on how they interacted with one another, how they interacted with customers and the public, and how they perceived the heart and soul of the company. From this, we gave the company a report on their corporate culture and turned it inside out to express what was most important and the relevant attributes of their corporate culture to their audience.

The result of fusing the culture and the brand created a brand evolution that the employees embraced and believed in, and that customers trusted. After the public brand launch, when someone came into one of their offices, the brand would continually be reinforced by the actions of the employees. The soul of any brand shines through the people who work there and serve the customers. This is integrity of brand character. After all, your brand is your character and your character is your brand.

RO

For the past 25 years, Steve has served as an advisor and consultant on brand strategy, organizational life, and humanized marketing strategy. He has worked with companies such as Samsung, Habitat for Humanity, New Balance, Sony, LG, Amazon, NFL and MLB franchises and is a regular speaker for TEDx, Creative Mornings, CES, HOW Conference, Social Venture Network, American Marketing Association, and AIGA conferences.

*Steve has published two books, *Brand Love and Loyalty* and *Humanizing the Customer Journey*, as well as a forthcoming book, *The Evolved Brand: How to Impact the World Through the Power of Your Brand*. He has been featured in *Business Week*, *Brand Week*, *Ad Age*, *Conscious Company Magazine*, *MarketingProfs*, and *HOW* magazine.*

*Steve leads his own brand and business strategic consultancy, *Mth Degree*. Contact: steven@theMthDegree.com, 619-234-1211 or www.theMthDegree.com*





INTRODUCING TRANSITIONAL STYLED
LUXURY KITCHEN APPLIANCES BY DACOR

Characterized by a sleek user interface and bold stainless steel touch points offering the perfect blend of Contemporary and Professional design elements which ensures the best of both worlds.

dacor

NEW YORK | CHICAGO | LOS ANGELES | SEOUL

DACOR.COM

HOW TO FIND YOUR BEST BUSINESS STORIES

Why does your business exist? Of course you're in it to make money. But I've never met a successful business leader who wasn't also driven by a purpose beyond the pursuit of wealth. There's almost certainly a deeper meaning at the core of your retail venture that pushes you to keep investing, taking risks, and getting out of bed every morning. This meaning is what powers your success. It's also the goldmine of your most effective stories.

Good stories, told well, can supercharge your business, build and bolster your brand, and enhance the perceptions and emotions your customers associate with you. This is no secret. The hard part is understanding how to find and deliver effective stories that you can use across all aspects of your business. Here's a simple approach.

GET TO THE HEART OF YOUR BUSINESS

Like the nose on your face, some of your best stories are sitting right in front of you, if only you can see them. In my storytelling workshops, I use provocative questions as a mirror to help people see the true nature of their work and what makes them tick.

Start at the beginning. Who founded the business? What specific problem did they aim to fix? What memorable moments of insight, struggle or triumph did they have? If your business is older, reflect on the difference it makes today: what kind of joy, dignity, ease, entertainment or pleasure do you make happen for your customers, employees and communities? Where do you see lives being changed in ways that make you proud?

The goal is to identify your defining experiences, those key moments that made you who you are or that say something important about what you're doing today. Bring them vividly to life with physical descriptions, identifiable characters, and some degree of struggle or risk.

For example, "On a visit to the Caribbean our founder had the crazy idea of using a South Seas motif to make buying food and wine more fun in the U.S.," the Trader Joe's story replaced a boring bog-standard message: "We have a passion for delivering international food and wine at excellent prices." No one cares about your "passion." Tell us what happened to you that made you so passionate.

GET TO THE HEART OF YOUR CUSTOMER

Recognizing powerful moments is just the start. To become an effective storyteller, you must also immerse yourself in what's meaningful to your customers at a deep, personal level. In other words, you must become a master of empathy.

Being empathetic requires that you feel someone's pain and not just sympathize with it. It's an experience of immersive identification in which you set your own ambitions aside and put the other person's agenda ahead of yours. You walk in his/her shoes without pre-judging or expectations.

I ask my workshop participants to name one specific customer – either a real person or a prototype – and answer questions about them. First the demographics: the who, what and where of their lives. Then the psychographics: the subterranean landscape of their dreams, fears, desires and dreads. Typically, my clients realize they don't have the answers to all of these questions. The good news is that there's a simple solution: just ask. People tend to love telling you all about themselves, as long as you're authentic.

With a deep immersion in this landscape of meaning, you then refer to the core stories you created earlier and pick the ones that speak to a point of joy, desire, hope or love in the life of your customer – anything that resonates with a value they hold dear. Start with a vivid detail that takes them to a different time and place. Then let them discover the lesson through the quality of the human drama.

Use your story to spark a conversation with your customer, one that you hope will last for a long and productive time. Invite people to respond or reply with stories of their own – which you may want to capture and share online or on social media. Remember, there's never really an ending to your best business stories. Just new chapters. **RO**

Mario Juarez is an organizational consultant, coach, and motivational speaker. He focuses on helping organizations and individuals achieve better business results through strategic storytelling. An award-winning former journalist, Mario led a series of innovative communications initiatives at Microsoft before founding his company, StoryCo, which serves clients across a range of industries.





UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV.

NOVEMBER 26 – THANKSGIVING

DUE TO CURRENT EVENTS, DATES
SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CHECK
EVENT TAB ON RETAILOBSERVER.COM
FOR MOST CURRENT CALENDAR.

NOVEMBER

11-13

**2020 INTERNATIONAL
POOL | SPA | PATIO EXPO**
VIRTUAL EVENT
www.PoolSpaPatio.com

2021

JANUARY

6-9

**2021 INTERNATIONAL CES
ALL-DIGITAL**
VIRTUAL EVENT
www.ces.tech

18-24

**IMM COLOGNE -
THE INTERNATIONAL
FURNISHINGS SHOW**
COLOGNE, GERMANY
www.imm-cologne.com

18-24

LIVING KITCHEN
COLOGNE, GERMANY
www.livingkitchen-cologne.com

24-28

**WINTER 2021
LAS VEGAS MARKET**
World Market Center
LAS VEGAS, NV
www.lasvegasmarket.com

FEBRUARY

4-6

**THE NAFEM SHOW 2021
(NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF FOOD EQUIPMENT
MANUFACTURERS)**
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
NEW ORLEANS, LA
www.thenafemshow.org

7-11

**2020 APPLIANCE SERVICE
TRAINING INSTITUTE "ASTI"**
Marriott Rivercenter
SAN ANTONIO, TX
www.asti.us

9-11

**DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION WEEK
KBIS 2021 / IBS 2021**
VIRTUAL EVENT
www.kbis.com
www.buildersshow.com

28-MARCH 3

ASD MARKET WEEK TRADE SHOW
Las Vegas Convention Center
LAS VEGAS, NV
www.asdonline.com

MARCH

3-6

**HEARTH, PATIO & BARBEQUE EXPO
(HPBE)**
Music City Center
NASHVILLE, TN
www.hpbexpo.com

8-11

**BRANDSOURCE 2020
SUMMIT & EXPO**
The Venetian
LAS VEGAS, NV
www.avbevents.com/summit

13-16

NATIONWIDE PRIMETIME
Gaylord Rockies Resort &
Convention Center
DENVER, COLORADO
www.nationwideprimetime.com

APRIL

13-18

EUROCUCINA
Salone del Mobile
MILANO, ITALY
www.salonemilano.it

TO VIEW THE RETAIL OBSERVER ONLINE, GO TO WWW.RETAILOBSERVER.COM/SUBSCRIBE

NOTE: Attention Buying Groups, Associations, Distributors & Manufacturers—

Please submit your event schedules to production@retailobserver.com at least two months prior to the date so that it may be included in our Upcoming Events Calendar. To receive *The Retail Observer* in print version, please go to www.retailobserver.com to subscribe.

RENT-TO-OWN IS GOING DIGITAL IN TODAY'S RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

It's no secret that retail and rent-to-own customers are shopping online more than ever. The pandemic continues to make social distancing and shopping from home the new norm throughout the country and has changed the way people are searching for and selecting home essential goods and services at your rent-to-own locations.

Chain Store Age, a retail news publication, reported that consumers shopped heavily online in the second quarter as the pandemic accelerated the already ongoing shift to the channel. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, second-quarter retail e-commerce sales in the U.S. grew by almost a third (31.8%) from the previous quarter and were up 44.5% year-over-year. Online sales totaled \$211.51 billion for the quarter, accounting for 16.1% of all retail sales, up from \$160.41 billion in the year-ago period.

Strong e-commerce growth, however, was not enough to offset losses from brick-and-mortar closures due to the pandemic, as total retail sales dropped 3.9% from the prior quarter, per a report by Emarketer. E-commerce is expected to account for 14.5% of U.S. retail sales this year, up from 11.0% in 2019, according to the research firm, which also expects that e-commerce will retain its increased share of the retail market going forward.

"Even as stores reopen and brick-and-mortar sales rebound, they forecast that e-commerce will lose just a 0.1% share of total retail sales in 2021, before gaining more than 1 percentage point each year through 2024," the report said. "By then, U.S. e-commerce sales will surpass \$1 trillion and represent 18.1% of total retail sales in the United States."

The statistics I am sharing are retail-driven, but I have confidence that the rent-to-own industry data show similar trends. With more and more retail consumers upgrading household essential goods during the pandemic, the rent-to-own community is reflecting similar tendencies. The increase in sales volume of furniture groups, larger televisions, new refrigerators or washers and dryers is driving the lineup of essential items that rent-to-own dealers must have in stock today to satisfy the needs of their consumers.

These shifts in how customers in the rent-to-own market currently shop and their experiences have also dramatically evolved over the past few months. Indeed, the current climate has made it apparent just how critical a robust website and online strategy is to the bottom line.

Having a strong online presence or (in other words) a website that represents your brick-and-mortar experience, is essential in these times. If you do not have a website, get one. If you have a website but have not reviewed or upgraded the functionality to include a few key elements, now is the time.

Here are a few things to think about when reviewing your current website's capabilities:

- Can your customers see available inventory and weekly, monthly and total pricing?
- Can your customers put items into a shopping cart and make a payment toward a rental transaction?
- Does your website have chat functionality? Live chat has become the leading digital contact method for online customers, as a staggering 46% of customers prefer live chat compared to just 29% for email and 16% for social media, according to www.superoffice.com.
- Does your website encourage shoppers to introduce themselves by creating a customer profile, and in turn, receive a tailored shopping experience?
- Does your website showcase up-to-date store hours and information on all the ways shoppers can engage with you?
- Have you defined all the measures you're taking to keep shoppers safe in store, in addition to the delivery and installation of their rental?

Don't wait any longer. With more customers than ever starting their shopping experience at home and online, an up-to-date website will attract and retain more customers and ensure they can communicate effectively with your business. **RO**



| Keven Dalke, Director, Nationwide RentDirect



RTO WORLD 21

THE NATIONAL RENT-TO-OWN
CONVENTION & TRADESHOW
HOSTED BY APRO AND TRIB GROUP

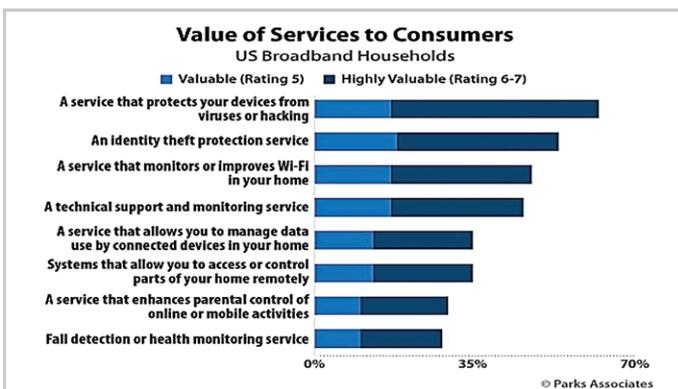


SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST 23-25, 2021 | TAMPA, FLORIDA

Experience the world of rent-to-own at the industry's biggest event of the year.

BRANDSOURCE IN GOOD HANDS WITH SMART-HOME SUPPORT FROM ALLSTATE



To help address the back end of a smart-product purchase, avoid middle-of-the-night calls, and attach a high-margin add-on sale in the process, BrandSource has developed a standalone tech support service with leading insurer Allstate and its SquareTrade subsidiary. The partners' Allstate-branded 24/7 Premium Tech Services program, introduced earlier this year, provides assistance with new product setup and home network connectivity, plus around-the-clock support and troubleshooting for all appliances and smart devices purchased from a BrandSource dealer, including integration with smart home hubs like Google Home, Amazon Alexa, Samsung SmartThings and Apple HomePod.

The retail price of the program is \$69 for a full year of coverage, and the service is being sold as a standalone product, meaning that neither the dealer nor the customer must carry or buy an Allstate or SquareTrade extended service plan to participate. (The service is already included for products protected under Allstate's extended service plans.) Registration for BrandSource members is free, fast and easy, the partners said, and dealers can begin offering the service in two weeks with no out-of-pocket costs, as all merchandising and sales collateral is paid for by BrandSource and SquareTrade.

SquareTrade said Allstate lends the service operation "incredible scale and stability," with both companies together covering over 100 million consumers in the U.S., and SquareTrade described its corporate parent as "one of the most trusted and recognized insurance brands in America." In addition, self-servicing dealers are welcome to participate in the program with the promise of competitive rates, a 15-day payment cycle and the ability to manage the customer experience end-to-end.

Thanks to the Premium Tech Service program BrandSource dealers can now sleep easy knowing their customers have 24/7 support because, as Allstate says, "We can all use a little help."

RO



Alan Wolf is Senior Communications Specialist for AVB/BrandSource, the nation's leading merchandising and marketing co-op for independent appliance, consumer tech and home furnishings dealers.

Any discussion of smart devices and the connected home usually revolves around hardware and supporting apps. This is certainly true for BrandSource, the nationwide merchandising and marketing organization for independent appliance, consumer tech and home furnishings dealers. As Chad Evans, the group's VP of Merchandising noted, BrandSource partners with vendors – particularly on the appliance side – to develop marketing campaigns and display programs that herald the advantages of having a smart refrigerator, range or dishwasher in your kitchen, and a connected washer and dryer in your laundry room.

But beyond explaining the merits of mobile-controlled devices, BrandSource also looks beyond the product sale to address one of the greatest stumbling blocks to smart-home adoption: support.

Indeed, according to recent research by consumer tech consultancy Parks Associates, 36 percent of U.S. broadband households that returned a smart-home or electronics device within the last 12 months cited difficulty in setup, installation and usage as the reason. What's more, although consumers are increasingly looking for connected products, "Our research shows [that] one in three CE (consumer electronics) device owners have experienced at least one technical issue with their devices," Parks senior analyst Kristen Hanich observed.

But rather than the problem residing with the device, connectivity issues can often involve the Wi-Fi network in the home – a sometimes sticky wicket for dealers that can lead to after-hours calls, service department truck rolls and frustration for customers.

ASHLEY SALES PREZ RICK COPPOLA TALKS SUPPLY CHAIN CHALLENGES WITH AVB

Getting back to “precedented” times was the hope and theme of an exclusive AVB interview with Rick Coppola, president of North American sales for Ashley Furniture Industries, streamed during the buying group’s recent 2020 Virtual Convention. While a welcome goal, this path may prove to be a long and winding road for Ashley and the greater home furnishings industry.

Indeed, Ashley is presently experiencing tremendous backlogs, and during my hour-long chat with Coppola he acknowledged the frustrations most furniture retailers were experiencing. The unprecedented surge in demand seems to be coming primarily from the independent retailer channel, he noted, and while that’s a testament to the talents of the AVB membership, it has also created a challenge for Ashley to deliver “at least their share of any product that is available,” he said.

Despite allotment issues, Ashley is importing a record number of products. “We currently have 18,000 containers on the water today, putting us in the top-five importers in the U.S.,” Coppola said. To help alleviate inventory constraints for dealers, the company is reviewing options to deliver container loads directly to retail customers that can accept shipments of that size. But the biggest challenge presently facing Ashley is simply receiving the container and cross-docking in order to distribute the desperately needed goods, he observed.

Coppola added that Ashley is also hiring hundreds of employees each week to increase capacity and ensure that its production lines are staffed-up and operational. But the retention bonuses and higher wages Ashley is paying to keep workers on the job, combined with higher transportation and raw materials costs, forced the company to impose an average 4 percent price hike on most of its products effective last month, as reported by Home News Now.

Coppola’s best advice to retailers to ensure a flow of goods: “Identify the highest-priority orders that go to the top of the list. If you are able to buy containers, we will be happy to work with you and sell you containers directly. And communicate with your customers so any expectations are clear. Also communicate with your marketing specialists.”

On the latter point, Coppola stressed the importance of a digital strategy that allows consumers to browse a product completely while providing as much purchase information as possible, including pricing, whether it’s displayed on the sales floor, and expected delivery dates.

Coppola also offered a list of retailer “musts” that dealers should be focusing on right now. His top six include:

- You must have a fantastic-looking website.
- You must advertise digitally; it’s where the customers are looking! Newspapers and TV spots during the late-night news are not working at all. It’s time to start advertising via social platforms. Just do it!
- Shoppers visiting your store must experience “customer centricity out the wazoo!” Make it fun for the customer to buy, he said. Hire people with the best attitude and provide product knowledge and sales skill through training.
- Partner with your marketing specialist, because the Ashley sales team is more than sales reps – they are constantly trained on marketing tools to help you and your business succeed.
- You must focus on your average ticket, he advised. You need to increase your ticket size without being pushy by understanding your customer; they are tired of shopping around and want to do business in-store with retailers that will best care for their needs.
- You must know who your competition is.

Coppola’s final words of advice: “Have a great merchandise lineup, have great salespeople, and just constantly focus on your customers’ needs,” he said.

Coppola’s insights clearly connected with AVB’s member dealers. As Brian Shealy of Economy Furniture commented, “I had a chance to listen and I was very impressed – he was insightful. I took comfort in the fact that he was very down-to-earth, very truthful and honest.”

“It was clear they are doing all they can at this time, doing the best they can, just like we are,” Shealy continued. “I was very impressed and appreciate the time he took to answer questions even though he was traveling. You don’t see that every day, and I thought it was refreshing.”

RO

Seth Weisblatt is Director of Merchandising / Home Furnishings for BrandSource, a unit of AVB Inc. He previously served as Executive Vice President at Sam’s Appliance & Furniture and Vice President of Digital Marketing at Ashley Furniture Industries.



FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE – RETAIL LIFE AFTER COVID-19

“Economy is the method by which we prepare today to afford the improvements of tomorrow.”

– Calvin Coolidge

On July 4, 1872, in a small hamlet in upstate Vermont, a boy named John was born into a middle-class family of independent retailers. His mother and father were farmers who also owned the local general store and post office in Vermont’s rolling Green Mountain range.

Going back generations, John’s family had been part of the local fabric of Plymouth Notch since before the town had a name.

As a boy, he had little ambition outside of being an honest and hardworking small-town business owner like his father before him. Although a quiet child, John was exposed to the principles of hard work and humility, earning a reputation as a dutiful overseer of his family’s businesses.

John would eventually leave the family business to practice law, but the lessons of his youth made a lasting impression and formed the foundation of his character for the remainder of his life.

On August 2, 1923 John was urgently awakened in the early hours of the morning – then-President Warren Harding had died of cardiac arrest the night before in San Francisco. John’s father, a justice of the peace and public notary, brought the family Bible and presented it to his son. A man of few words and fanfare, President John Calvin Coolidge was sworn in at 2:47 a.m. by candlelight and promptly returned to bed.

Coolidge would guide America into a period of economic boom, ushering in the Roaring Twenties while passing extensive tax reforms and helping rebuild a wounded American economy after the disaster of the Great War.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US TODAY

Fresh off several scandals, and faced with an administration that was rife with corruption, Coolidge saw the path forward through investing in the preservation and strength of the American economy. He was focused on the future of the American economy, just as we need to focus on the future of retail business in 2021 and beyond.

If you’re like me, you’re exhausted from reading every dissection and look-back in recent months. Undoubtedly COVID-19 has changed our

retail landscape, but I do not believe COVID-19 introduced new problems; it just served to shine a spotlight on pre-existing challenges.

Independent retailers didn’t suddenly start having issues with finding and retaining employees; it’s always been a challenge.

Independent retailers didn’t suddenly struggle to get their fair share of inventory compared to national retail; it’s always been difficult.

Independent retailers weren’t suddenly leagues behind their national competition with regard to digital marketing and e-commerce; it’s been a growing problem for years.

As Coolidge was focused on making investments in the economy of the 1920s to prepare for the needs of the future, today’s retailers must strive to make investments in their business now, so they’ll be prepared for whatever fresh challenges 2021 might bring.

For some of you, investing in your business means ensuring your digital marketing plan is sound and that it’s delivering the results you deserve. For others it will be to hire and build a bench of talented employees, deploy digital price tags, or perhaps even open new locations or add new categories to their existing business.

Whatever path presents itself as the best long-term opportunity for your business, I implore you to act now, if for no other reason than to be able to look back next year, or the year after, or sometime in the distant future and say your actions helped you weather new storms and face new challenges and allowed you to afford the improvements of tomorrow.

In closing, I’ll share a quote from President Coolidge. When pressed to explain how he planned to accomplish his agenda despite the headwinds of the Great War, corruption, the Spanish Flu and countless other challenges, he said:

“I have found it advisable not to give too much heed to what people say when I am trying to accomplish something of consequence. Invariably they proclaim it can’t be done – I deem that the very best time to make the effort.”

RO

Lee McDonald, Director of Consumer Electronics,
Nationwide Marketing Group





1 in 7 children faces hunger.

There's more than enough food in America for every child who struggles with hunger. Help get kids the food they need by supporting Feeding America, the nationwide network of food banks. Together, we can solve hunger™.

Join us at **[FeedingAmerica.org](https://www.FeedingAmerica.org)**



SMALL CHANGES CAN HAVE A BIG IMPACT ON YOUR 2021 CI BUSINESS

As we close in on the end of 2020 and look toward 2021, it's a good time to think about what lessons we might be able to apply to our futures in the custom installation (CI) business.

LET'S START WITH 2020.

Everything that was right is wrong. And everything that was wrong is right. What's next? Cats and dogs living together? Yeah, probably. But seriously, 2020 has taught us to be ready for anything and to always talk to customers about the options for WFH (work from home) and LFH (learn from home) so that they can make the right choices or upgrades to create a robust network.

Even if a client has a network that's only a few years old, the changes in technical specs (WiFi 6) or mesh make upgrading a good option. And all-in-all, the benefits outweigh the minimal costs. Your customers should upgrade now so that their networks are ready for whatever comes next and are prepared for any other system upgrades they might want to make down the road. Because, let's face it, EVERYTHING in the home is on the internet, from the obvious phone, computer and tablet to the refrigerator, the exercise equipment, the bed and even the mirror.

OLD CLIENTS BECOME NEW AGAIN.

Over the years, we've talked about marketing to previous customers. And if 2020 has taught us anything, it's to always stay in touch with past clients and don't ignore marketing to them. People are used to upgrading phones, tablets and computers every few years, and some of the same upgrade cycles can apply to your clients' entertainment systems.

This year, some big vendors – including Sony – have given marketing assets to their dealers that talk, not about products and specs, but about upgrading and enjoying your already installed system more. Other ways to market to your existing client base include focusing on new entertainment areas and options, like Samsung's new Terrace outdoor television line. Marketing to your existing client base will help you diversify your CI business from new construction and “word of mouth” referrals to continuing business clients. And let's face it, it costs a lot less to keep a client than to market and attract a new one.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE TRADITIONAL CI BOX

But growth doesn't just happen with customers. Don't forget to explore new markets. Right now, one of the hottest trends is healthy living. Since the beginning of COVID-19, health and wellness have been top-of-mind for clients. There are a lot of options in the wellness space, from lighting and human-centric lighting to shades and air cleaning. Wellness partnerships will make your business even more important to your existing clients and give you new opportunities to reach out and discuss options.

Plus, these upgrades don't have to cost a lot of money, and some have great retrofit options. Just adding shades can change the way a client lives, works and enjoys their home. In addition, adding powered shades is a fairly easy process, especially with some of the new battery- and even solar-powered shade options.

Recurring revenue models will grow and thrive in the new marketplace. In the past this has been focused primarily on security, but, moving forward, remote network monitoring and even remote service opportunities will attract not just new customers but new options from vendor partners.

Take, for example, clients who are concerned about having people coming in and out of their homes in the middle of a pandemic. If you can offer them the ability to remotely monitor both their networks and the devices on the networks, and proactively reach out if there's an issue, you're not just selling a service. You're providing convenience and peace of mind. And that makes this an upgrade that practically sells itself.

SO, WHAT'S 2021 HAVE IN STORE?

If this year has taught me anything, it's that nothing is predictable. However, a few things are obvious. Supply chain issues are likely to continue. Having a functioning website will be important. The upgrade cycle will be in hyperdrive. And marketing the RIGHT opportunities to your existing client base can and will help bridge the gap between new projects. Don't wait for January to get started. Now is the time! **RO**

Hank Alexander
Director HTSN - Home Technology Specialists Nationwide
Nationwide Marketing Group





A CUSTOM KIT *for the*
PERFECT FIT

The
**AFFORDABLE
SOLUTION**
when replacing Appliances

Our Custom Trim Kits provide a wider variety of appliance choices while alleviating the great expense of replacing your cabinets or countertops. In addition we can design and fabricate custom stainless steel parts for any situation. We welcome the opportunity to give a free quote on any project.

OVER 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE & INNOVATION!

Solving Customer Problems
Since 1983

MICRO-TRIM INC.

Phone (800) 338-8746 • Fax (800) 346-3890
www.microtrim.com

IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL FOR AVB/BRANDSOURCE

If knowledge is power, then AVB and its 5,000 member dealers are unstoppable.

That's because the buying group for independent appliance, home furnishings and tech retailers served up three separate educational initiatives last month that tackled a wide swath of critical industry topics.

Most recent was a complementary three-day series of 30-minute webinars co-hosted by Google and AVB Marketing – the advertising, digital marketing and e-commerce arm of AVB – in which the partners shared their pre-holiday insights on furniture shopping in the new normal. The program, which was open to all retailers, vendors and friends of the independent home furnishings channel, was designed to give furniture dealers a competitive edge in a vastly different fourth quarter.

Co-hosted by Kristen Fox, Strategic Partner Manager, Google Customer Solutions, and AVB Marketing VP Brian Wattier, the “2020 Fall Home Furnishings Insights” series kicked off Oct. 6 with an update on furniture industry trends and a look at the pandemic's impact on today's furniture shopper. The following day, Fox shared furniture retailers' most effective digital strategies, with a focus on video, Google Ad types and targeting the right online audience. The series concluded with a preview of Black Friday and a live Q&A session, giving attendees the chance to put their questions directly to Google.

“We are extremely excited about this opportunity to have Google share its insights,” Wattier said ahead of the event. “Together with AVB Marketing, the webinars will show how we can all work together to support the independent furniture retail channel.”

As an added incentive, one lucky retailer who attended all three sessions was randomly chosen to win a best-in-class, custom-designed e-commerce site from AVB Marketing valued at \$20,000, plus \$2,000 in Google Ad Spend.

The “2020 Fall Home Furnishings Insights” series was the latest collaboration between Google and AVB Marketing, one of a select group of Premier Google Partners worldwide. Together they help independent retailers take market share and grow their

businesses by sharing industry insights and best marketing practices, and by encouraging consumers to shop local.

Another major learning opportunity came in the guise of the *BrandSource Service Playbook*, which launched mid-month. Long in the making, this exclusive 32-page resource is a comprehensive tactical guide for servicing dealers that addresses everything from tech retention, training and compensation to inventory control and fleet management.

The Service Playbook is the brainchild of BrandSource's National Service Committee, which was formed last year to address the unique challenges facing the 75 percent of BrandSource members that perform their own appliance repairs. Among their challenges: billing rates that don't cover costs; finding and keeping qualified techs; and increasingly complex appliances with vendor-specific parts that require multiple – and costly – truck rolls.

A prime example of BrandSource's complementary value-adds, the Service Playbook addresses those issues with advice on improving first-call completes, turning house calls into high-margin sales opportunities, and other best practices from BrandSource's servicing members. It also includes a calculator for determining competitive but profitable billing rates, and concludes with a complete listing of key vendors, industry associations, parts distributors, warranty providers and educational outlets, making it an indispensable guide for both new and seasoned servicing dealers.

A digital version of the *Service Playbook*, which will be updated regularly with the latest industry listings and trusted expert guidance, was issued to all BrandSource members, and will be followed by a forthcoming print edition of this essential servicers' guide.

Meanwhile, it was back to school for BrandSource members when AVB University reconvened for a new *Fall Series* of vendor and business training classes this season.

The complimentary program, announced by AVB CEO Jim Ristow at the group's recent 2020 Virtual Convention, consisted of a weeks'-long curriculum of online courses by leading vendors

and business experts. The 45- to 60-minute classes were held twice a week, with manufacturer product trainings presented on Tuesdays and general business sessions held on Thursdays, through September and October.

The vendor lineup included Whirlpool, which presented kitchen, dishwasher and laundry innovations; GE Appliances, which shared “Six Keys to Moving Customer Experiences”; plus line reviews and product trainings by LG Electronics, Electrolux/Frigidaire, Beko, Serta and Tempur-Sealy.

Thursday’s business classes included a session on “Retail During COVID-19,” led by showroom designer and branding and display consultant Lyn Falk of Retailworks Inc., and “Customer Experiences,” taught by Dean Lindsay, the award-winning motivational speaker and business trainer.

Other business classes included:

- *Connect More, Convince Less*, with Ryan Avery, best-selling author and corporate consultant on winning principles and strategies
- *Proverbs for Selling: Mastering Sales Through Prospecting, Referrals and Discipline*, hosted by renowned speaker, trainer and sales coach Tamara Bunte
- *Next-Level Service: Transforming Transactions into Unforgettable Experiences*, with Scott Greenberg, the acclaimed business motivational speaker who helps entrepreneurs engage employees, serve customers and grow their businesses

The complimentary sessions were open to all BrandSource members, their employees, and AVB’s Canadian and Northeast buying group affiliates. The classes were recorded and added to AVB University’s expansive digital library for 24/7 access.

“Things are changing more rapidly than ever,” Ristow said at the Convention. “We want to make sure you get the right information, in the right way, right now.”

“It’s just an unbelievable thing that we’re proud of,” he added, “bringing you the AVB University and the Fall Training Series. Knowledge is power, and we’re going to give you knowledge.”

RO



Alan Wolf is Senior Communications Specialist for AVB/BrandSource, the nation’s leading merchandising and marketing co-op for independent appliance, consumer tech and home furnishings dealers.



Google and AVB Marketing co-hosted a three-day webinar series for the furniture industry.



BrandSource’s 32-page Service Playbook is a comprehensive tactical guide for servicing dealers.



AVB CEO Jim Ristow announces AVB University’s Fall Training Series.

NATIONWIDE MARKETING GROUP PARTNERS WITH PODIUM TO HELP INDEPENDENT RETAILERS WIN MORE E-COMMERCE SALES

Nationwide members will get immediate access to Podium's full suite of customer interaction management tools, including web and video chat, reviews, appointment scheduling and no-contact payment.

As more consumers turn to online shopping in the wake of the global coronavirus pandemic, Nationwide Marketing Group announced that it is partnering with Podium, a leading interaction management platform that works with more than 65,000 businesses worldwide, to help its members further capitalize on the continued growth in e-commerce.

According to the latest Adobe Digital Economy Index (DEI), U.S. consumers have spent 14 billion hours shopping online so far in 2020. And that number is expected to rise further, with 95% of all purchases estimated to be made online by 2040.

"Nationwide's independent retailers are already experts at building relationships with their customers," explains Tom Hickman, Nationwide's president and chief member advocate. "Our partnership with Podium will help them further refine their online communications, especially webchat and online reviews, to gather more leads, close more sales, share their brand message with more prospects and ultimately build more customer loyalty."

While Podium already works with more than 100 Nationwide retailers across the United States and Canada, the new partnership will allow seamless integration for members not yet signed onto the platform. So onboarding which used to take three to seven days can now be completed within 24 hours. The only requirement is that the retailer's website be managed by one of Nationwide's two website provider partners, Site on Time or Retailer Web Services.

In addition, all Nationwide members will receive a 20% discount on Podium tools, including members who were already Podium customers before the partnership was announced.

"We are excited to put pen to paper and go to market with one of the most turnkey integration and buying group strategies in the industry," says Jama Featherstone, director of retail sales for Podium. "By partnering with Nationwide Marketing Group and Podium, independent retailers across North America can now instantly adapt to the new customer

journey – from search to sold."

Katy Law, co-owner of Sweet Dreams Mattress & Furniture, a four-store retailer headquartered in Mooresville, N.C., has used several Podium features with her customers and could not be more pleased with the results.

"Podium has allowed us to quickly evolve the way we serve and communicate with our customers," Law says. "Many customers today want to do business via text, and Podium has a simple yet robust platform to be able to manage incoming website leads, reviews, customer follow-ups and relationship management – all through text! Podium Payments is hands-down the best feature of the platform. It's the most important closing tool, and every business should have it in their belt!"

The Podium platform has also been a gamechanger for Sherman's, a three-location appliance, mattress and furniture retailer based in Peoria, Illinois. When the company began working with Podium in 2015, their online reviews didn't accurately reflect the Sherman's shopping experience, says David Weiss, the group's marketing manager, largely because they never had time to solicit positive reviews. After signing on with Podium, though, all that changed.

"Within the first month of implementing Podium, our Google and Facebook ratings jumped to 4.7 out of 5 and have held steady ever since," Weiss says.

Sherman's also began using Podium's webchat service in 2019 after trialing a few other services and has seen similar success.

"Nothing we tried before compares to the engagement we see with Podium's webchat; it's extremely easy to use for both our teams and our customers," Weiss adds. "From their review invitation platform to webchat and now video calls, every service we've tried with Podium is solid and simple. We highly recommend them to anyone looking to improve their online presence."

Please visit www.try.podium.com/nmg to learn more or request a free demo.

RO



PriMetrix *powered by*



nationwide
marketing group

The Independent retail channel's first and only performance insights platform.

Through its suite of analytics tools, PriMetrix gives participating Nationwide Members business intelligence you can act on to propel your business forward.

Now you can easily answer key performance questions like:

- How am I performing compared to local competitors?
- How am I performing compared to fellow Members?
- How is my current product assortment performing against comparable SKUs?
- What SKUs will maximize my revenue and profit?

Learn more at NationwideGroup.org/PriMetrix

AND STILL WE WORK

Some changes are gradual and steady – we ease into the newness of doing things differently. We may grumble, but we make our peace and move on. COVID didn't give us time to carefully adjust or ease into things. Almost overnight we were placing new restrictions on our employees and asking them to change how they took service requests, contacted customers, entered homes and workplaces, etc. And don't get me started on the downtime. If the expression "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is even remotely accurate, then Jack has been losing his mind in 2020.

So here we are months beyond what we couldn't have remotely imagined would be a life-changing event. We were supposed to have a few weeks of family bonding and working from home, and then back to business as usual. But that didn't happen, and where does it leave us – or rather lead us?

We learned that we were "essential." So what now? All of the "essential" workers have been routinely showing up for work and going home every day for months with very few distractions to keep their sanity. Or worse, they show up at their kitchen table or home office and don't go anywhere. We made our adjustments. We grumbled and cursed the situation, and all the while we worked. We sent technicians into homes knowing we had no control over the environment beyond our own PPE and a bottle of hand sanitizer. And still...we worked.

As owners we worry. Worry about our people, our business, our survival, our customers, our health...and still we work.

As techs we worry. We worry about being exposed, about missing work, about income and providing for our families, about exposing our families to the virus...and still we work.

As call takers and schedulers we are yelled at and questioned, we are out of the loop, and yet there is no new information to share. We hear the urgency in the customer's voice but can do nothing to bridge the gaps...and still we work.

Our work and our world changed...and still we do what we do,

every day and with as much positivity as we can muster. We smile at the customer who smiles at us because we need it. We smile at the customer who doesn't because they need it even more. We encourage the staff and reward them as much as possible, while we cancel get-togethers and company outings and try to think of other ways to keep them engaged and happy. The test has been real and really challenging...and still we work.

When this all began, my biggest concern was whether our industry would be considered essential. Would our businesses stay open when so many were being forced to close? Would I be able to keep employees or would they be too afraid to work? Should I apply for PPP? And what about self-quarantine and unemployment. What do I do? "One day at a time," I told myself. Just keep getting up and going to work.

This entire year has been a test in patience and a test in many other ways it's impossible to name them all. If one thing can be lifted up as a highlight in a sea of low lights, for me it would be that we continued doing the work. We are strong blue collar members of society and we keep things running. These times will fade into memory and things will return to "normal" at some point. People will forget that it was the truck driver who got the food to the shelves. They will forget that the mechanic kept that truck running so the driver could do his job. They will forget that your tech and mine fixed the stove and the dishwasher and so many other things so that their lives continued with less concern, less stress. They will never know or appreciate the stress that was fluid in our companies and the hours of extra work that were logged. They will lose sight of the place that blue collar holds in keeping society together.

But we won't forget...and still we work. **RO**

Renee Galioto is co-owner of Island Appliance Repair in Wilmington, NC. Renee and her husband Patrick have ten technicians covering three counties and have served this coastal community for more than twenty-five years.



CROSLEY



Find Product Details and View Our Full Line At:
www.crosley.com
The Independent Dealer's Brand™

ARROW

INDUSTRIES Since 1931

A Division of *elbi* of America

ONE STOP RESOURCE
FOR ALL YOUR
APPLIANCE INSTALLATION NEEDS



Call 1-800-24ARROW
(242-7769)

465 N. Berry St. • Brea, CA 92821
www.arrowindustries.com



YOU WANTED TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR—SO NOW WHAT?

So you wanted to go into business for yourself. Become an entrepreneur. You believed that owning your own business would bring you independence and financial freedom. You thought that your technical success would translate to business success. How is that working out for you?

Many of us who have gone the route of entrepreneur soon find out that just because you are an expert in a particular field, it does not mean you can successfully run a business. Let's go through the typical myth that we all have justified to ourselves.

"I am a good technician and have lots of friends so I can easily open my own service business doing what I know best, fixing appliances. My friends all say that I should be in business for myself. If I were, I would not have anyone looking over my shoulder all day and I could keep all the monies I collect each day from the service work I do." So you say to yourself, "I'll open my own shop." First there is exhilaration, followed by terror, exhaustion and then despair. Does that sound familiar?

So why do so many professionals fall victim to the fatal assumption that since they are an expert in their respective field, they know how to run a business? Practically speaking, the most in-depth financial statement that many have probably seen prior to starting their business was a 1040.

Fast forward a couple of years as your business enters a more mature state, you wonder why you cannot keep your head above water. You bring in lots of money but you can't keep any of it and, as a matter of fact, you not only can't keep it but you owe more than you bring in. What happened?

The truth of the matter is that while you were so busy working in your business, you failed to work on your business. You failed to get the necessary education you needed to actually run your business.

It takes a lot of time and effort to successfully run your business. How many times have you heard the statement, "if you fail to plan you plan to fail"? How many of you have failed to create a plan for your business? What are your strategic objectives? What are your

organizational strategies? What is your management strategy? Yes- it takes some time to strategically plan for the next 3 to 5 years, but if you set your goals now you will have your road map for growth and success.

And what about those nasty, confusing financials? Why can't you just leave it to your accountant to figure it out? Accountants do not know your business. They know numbers and which side of the ledger to put them on. When your accountant gives you your Profit and Loss Statement and your Balance Sheet, everything you need is right there in front of you. But do you know what to look for? Do you know how to determine trends? Is your business in a positive growth period? Are you on a cash basis accounting system or an accrual basis? And which one gives a better picture of your business? Are you bankable? What metrics does your bank look at to determine if you are worth the risk when you want to establish a line of credit? What is a common size analysis? What is a burden ratio?

Okay, as I am writing this my own head is spinning with all those financial terms. Many businesses fail because, frankly, the business owner failed to educate themselves. The owner failed to acquire the skills necessary to successfully operate the business. The owner failed to work on the business, choosing instead to continue to do what was comfortable by continuing to be a technical expert and not a business expert.

There are many resources available to entrepreneurs to help you succeed. Your industry associations like PSA and USA are two very fine resources. Others include the SBA, your local Chamber and a new program offered by Goldman Sachs called 10,000 Small Businesses (www.10ksbapply.com). I encourage you to ask the serious questions and find the right answers.

RO



Ralph Wolff, Industry Relations, PSA
Certified Service Center
www.certifiedservicecenter.org

DO YOUR PART- GO GREEN!

Help lessen the global carbon footprint by choosing our digital edition format instead of paper.



SUBSCRIBE HERE FOR DIGITAL DELIVERY!
www.retailobserver.com/go-digital

While we hope you'll go digital, we will continue to produce the paper edition that you've grown to love over the last 50 years. This will ensure that no matter what is going on in the world today, you will be able to receive your monthly issue of *The Retail Observer*.

Going green begins with an attitude change and by taking concrete measures to ensure we protect our environment and preserve it for posterity by choosing a more sustainable, ethical, and healthier lifestyle!

IT TAKES POWER TO #COOKLIKEAGOD

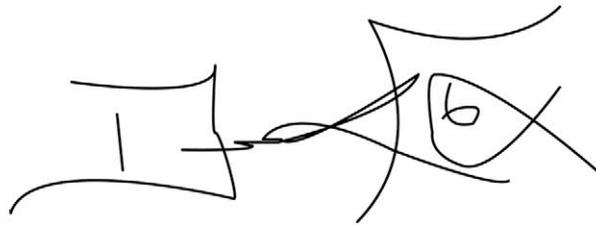
See for yourself    



Chef Derrick Fox doesn't have time for weak ass ranges. That's why he chose the THOR Kitchen 30" Pro-Style Range for his own home.

If you don't have power, you can't reach perfection.

Being a professional chef isn't just a job; it's a lifestyle. My THOR Kitchen keeps me on top of my game, even at home, because it has the power to handle everything I throw at it.



Chef Derrick Fox
Chef | MasterChef Season 6



MEET THE MOST IRRESISTIBLE NEW POWER COUPLE

EVERYBODY'S TALKING

Sharp's all-new, modern and elegant, built-in wall oven features an edge-to-edge black glass and stainless steel design. The SWA3052DS pairs beautifully with our new SMD2480CS Microwave Drawer™, the new power couple of style and performance.

This 5.0 cu. ft. 240V. built-in wall oven uses True European Convection to cook evenly and heat efficiently. The 8 pass upper-element provides edge-to-edge performance.

Sharp's top-of-the-line Microwave Drawer™ features Easy Wave Open for touchless operation. Hands full? Simply wave up-and-down near the motion sensor and the SMD2480CS glides open.

It's just the kind of elegant engineering, smart functionality and cutting-edge performance you'd expect from Sharp.

**NEW TOUCH GLASS CONTROL PANEL
EDGE-TO-EDGE, BLACK GLASS & STAINLESS STEEL
OPTIONAL 30" EXTENSION KIT SHOWN**

SHARP.

Be Original.

Simply Better Living

www.SharpUSA.com

© 2018 Sharp Electronics Corporation. All rights reserved. Sharp, Microwave Drawer™ Oven and all related trademarks are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sharp Corporation and/or its affiliated entities. Product specifications and design are subject to change without notice. Internal capacity calculated by measuring maximum width, depth and height. Actual capacity for holding food is less.