

# PIPELINE

piping systems inc.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

WINTER 2013



## Our New Year's Message

The new year is traditionally a time of reflection, when we look back at the past and with promise to the future. The last several years have presented enormous challenges to us—personally, as families, as businesses and as a nation. It hasn't always been easy, but because of our unwavering spirit and determination, we've come through it, and we'd like to think the toughest times are behind us. With the recent election now over, let's hope our leaders can finally come together to find long-term solutions to critical issues.

As we look ahead, it's also a good time to appreciate our blessings. At Piping Systems, Inc., we are thankful for our dedicated, hardworking staff, outstanding building team partners, supportive corporate friends and, of course, our loyal clients, who are the heart and soul of our company and the very reason we exist.

On behalf of the entire Piping Systems team, we hope you had a safe and healthy holiday and wish you a new year filled with happiness, hope and great opportunity.

## Focus Four

**D**id you know that OSHA has developed a Construction Outreach Program called the "Focus Four"? The Construction Focus Four Module was developed in support of OSHA's effort to help workers in the construction industry understand the hazards they face and know what their employer's responsibilities are regarding protecting workers from workplace hazards.

Construction safety is one of OSHA's top concerns. Construction is among the most dangerous industries in the country and construction inspections comprise 60% of OSHA's total inspections. In 2009, preliminary data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that there were 816 fatal on-the-job injuries to construction workers—more than in any other single industry sector and nearly one out of every five work-related deaths in the U.S. that year.

Also in 2009, private industry construction workers had a fatal occupational injury rate nearly three times that of all workers in the United States: 9.7 per 100,000 full-time equivalent construction workers vs. 3.3 for all workers. (Source: *OSHA.gov* website)

The goal of Piping Systems' safety program is to help ensure that team members return home safely every day. One of the ways we accomplish this is to have a robust safety program. It begins with the attitude of upper management and their resolve to make safety a priority. There is no end—that is to say, we can never have the attitude that whatever we're doing is enough. The safety philosophy has to be ingrained in all our work practices.

We have a formal safety committee that meets on a regular basis. The safety committee sets out annual goals, monitors progress on achieving those goals, establishes an annual budget, schedules training, reviews accidents and "near misses," and discusses any ongoing safety issues.

The annual safety budget includes funds to provide proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), appropriate safety training, safety incentives, random drug testing program, and drug screening and physicals for new hires.

Recently, we implemented a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) program. The intent of the program is to help supervisors/foremen to use the findings of the JHA to eliminate and prevent hazards in their daily workplaces. This is likely to result in fewer worker injuries and illnesses, safer, more effective work methods, reduced workers' compensation costs and increased worker productivity.

The analysis also can be a valuable tool for training new employees in the steps required to perform their jobs safely. A daily checklist has been designed to review many of the potential hazards that are present in the workplace. Being aware of the hazard contributes significantly to accident prevention.

Working safe enhances our working relationship with you, our customer. We work together with you to make sure everyone returns home safely at the end of the day.



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# Ancient Popcorn



Ancient peoples weren't watching movies, but archeologists have determined that folks were munching popcorn in Peru some 6,700 years ago. Researchers from Vanderbilt University and Peru's Academia Nacional de la Historia discovered the remains of ancient corncobs, husks, stalks and tassels at two mound sites on Peru's northern coast, providing important insight into understanding how corn developed into the crop we're familiar with today.

Corn was first cultivated as a crop in Mexico about 9,000 years ago, and it spread to South America within a few thousand years, where it evolved into different varieties over time. Ancient Peruvians apparently ate their corn in several ways, and although it wasn't a big component of their everyday diet, the researchers say they did eat corn flour and popcorn, even before the development of ceramic pottery (and the microwave oven).

# Handwriting On The Wall

Email, texting and tweeting all make communication quicker and easier. But some worry that electronic communication tools are eroding our ability to write the old-fashioned way: by hand.

A study conducted by Docmail, an online stationer, found that the average adult (out of 2,000 participants) goes about 40 days without writing anything by hand, and one in three haven't written a note on paper for more than six months. In addition, 50% feel that their handwriting has significantly declined, with one in seven being "ashamed" of their writing.

Spelling may be another casualty, with four in 10 of the participants reporting that they depend on autocorrect for the right words. Many writers may find themselves helpless without a keyboard in the near future.

# The Rise Of The eBook

Books may not be on the way out, but eBooks are gaining a foothold in readers' lives. Nearly three in 10 adult Americans own at least one device for reading electronic books, and more than one in five have read an eBook within the last 12 months. And they appear to be reading more, with regular eBook readers perusing an average of 24 books over the past year, compared with the 15 books read by the average reader of "dead tree" volumes.

# Successful Team Collaboration

Being creative in a team environment can be difficult. The pressure to conform, and the challenge of making your voice heard, can dampen anyone's impulses.

The key is having the right people around you. From Jonah Lehrer's book *Imagine: How Creativity Works* (Houghton Mifflin) come these two insights into unleashing the power of creative collaboration:

1. **Mix strangers with acquaintances.** Teaming up with a bunch of creative people you don't know can be intimidating. But a team of close friends may not provide enough creative friction. Lehrer cites research around Broadway musicals and observes that the most successful theatrical teams are composed of a combination of familiar faces and new blood. Create a mix of intimacy and freshness with the people you bring on board.
2. **Get an outsider's view.** After a while, any project gets too familiar to the people working on it. Both the flaws and the unnoticed opportunities become less obvious as time goes on. Bring in some fresh eyes to critique your work without preconceptions. You don't want tunnel vision to blind your team to the possibilities.

# Environmental Awareness And Green Buying Habits

The environment is everyone's concern these days, but that worry doesn't always affect our buying decisions. That's the upshot of a survey by coupon site *RetailMeNot.com*: Although 46% of respondents said they're more likely to buy a product that's eco-friendly over one that's not, 59% indicated that they're unwilling to pay extra for it.

Other results from the survey:

- **71% of respondents said they think about the environmental impact** (positive and negative) of the products they regularly shop for. However, 43% said they don't consider the impact of their purchases when they actually buy.
- **60% said that they at least sometimes take steps** to lead a "greener" lifestyle by recycling, driving energy-efficient vehicles, and using environmentally friendly products. Twenty-five percent reported that they always take such steps, and only 15% said that they never do.
- **40% of survey participants said they purchase "green" products** when they're easily available and the price difference isn't big. But 51% admitted that they tend to buy whatever they need when shopping, regardless of its environmental impact.

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly





# Take Charge Of Your Own Professional Development

Your employer may offer some job-specific training, but in the long run you're responsible for your own professional development. To keep your career skills sharp, follow this advice:

- **Read widely.** Look for books and articles (online and in print) with fresh points of view that will open your mind to new professional techniques and innovative ways of looking at the world.
- **Join up.** Look for professional organizations that relate to your job, your industry, and where you want to go in the future. Attend their meetings, volunteer to help with their events, and participate actively.
- **Network.** Joining professional organizations is one way to expand your network. Look for other ways to make meaningful contacts inside your industry and beyond. Listen to their ideas and advice.
- **Embrace technology.** Invest in a smartphone and other tools that the rest of the workforce is already using. Getting comfortable with high tech will help your mind grow more adaptable and increase your efficiency.
- **Challenge yourself.** Look for opportunities to get out of your comfort zone. Take on a stretch assignment, or speak at a conference. You'll learn and grow by doing something different.

## Dads Invade The Supermarket

The long-held stereotype of the grocery store as women's territory may be losing its grip. A study from Cone Communications reports that **52% of fathers are now the primary grocery shoppers in their family.** And they're not just popping out for a snack, either.

The study's findings include:

- **Shopping lists.** A majority of dads—63%—take a detailed shopping list to the store with them.
- **Coupons.** Another majority—56%—collect coupons and read advertising circulars when planning their shopping trips.
- **Meals.** Fifty-two percent of shopping dads plan meals for the week.
- **Research.** Twenty-four percent of fathers who shop check the background of the products they buy.

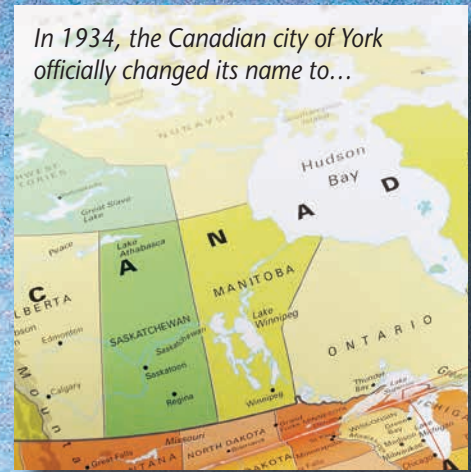


## Information Overload?

The Internet is a busy "place," what with all that data running across the virtual landscape. Here's a quick snapshot at what kind of traffic it handles on a daily basis:

- **Data.** Enough information flows through the Internet in a 24-hour period to fill 168 million DVDs.
- **Email.** The U.S. Postal Service would need two years to process the 294 billion emails sent daily.
- **Blogs.** They're everywhere! Two million blog entries are posted on a typical day.
- **Facebook.** Approximately 172 million people visit Facebook in a day, spending a total of 4.7 billion minutes, updating 532 million statuses, and uploading 250 million photos.
- **Video.** Web surfers watch 22 million hours of video on Netflix every day; 864,000 hours worth of video are uploaded to YouTube.
- **Music.** People listen to 187.6 million hours of music streamed from Pandora in a day; if a time-traveling computer went back to the year 1 A.D. to stream that much, the music would still be coming today.

In 1934, the Canadian city of York officially changed its name to...



## Five Questions

- 1) Which sporting items have been filled with everything from goose feathers to tree sap and polybutadiene?  
a) surfboards  
b) boxing gloves  
c) hockey pucks  
d) golf balls
- 2) In 1934, the Canadian city of York officially changed its name to:  
a) Montreal  
b) Edmonton  
c) Toronto  
d) Ottawa
- 3) Which country issued the first adhesive postage stamp?  
a) United States  
b) Spain  
c) Nepal  
d) United Kingdom
- 4) In 1905, what became the first human body part to be successfully transplanted?  
a) cornea  
b) liver  
c) kidney  
d) lung
- 5) Which presidential daughter wrote the novel *Murder in the White House*?  
a) Margaret Truman  
b) Susan Ford  
c) Caroline Kennedy  
d) Luci Baines Johnson

—from *mental\_floss*

Answers: 1) d 2) c 3) d (The U.K. offered the stamps in 1840. The U.S. followed suit seven years later.) 4) a 5) a

## Words To Live By

**H**ere are some of our favorite sayings. These are posted in numerous locations around our office building in strategic places such as near the fax machine (no sense wasting time while waiting the fax to go through). We thought you might like to read some of them.

- "Let all things be done decently and in order."  
—Corinthians
- Murphy's Law: Whatever can go wrong usually does (or something like that). How about Dyson's Law: Whatever can go well can go even better through planning, passion and persistence.
- "Customers who feel they are served, instead of sold, are likely to do repeat business."  
—T. Scott Gross
- Doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way.  
—Unknown
- Failure to plan is a plan to fail. - Unknown
- Good planning costs less than good reacting.  
—Unknown
- She didn't know it couldn't be done so she went ahead and did it anyway.  
—Unknown (PSI's owner is a she!)
- "The worst thing a company can do to working people is to not operate at a profit."  
—Samuel Gompers
- "Next week there can't be any crises. My schedule is already full." —Henry Kissinger
- Three of the most negative words in the English language:  
Can't  
Always  
Never  
Keep the first letter in each word, then use them to spell CAN. —Unknown

## Here's What We Think Of YOU!

- **YOU are the customer.** If we satisfy your wants with personal attention and a friendly touch, you will become a walking advertisement for our products and services. If we ignore your wants, show carelessness, inattention and poor manners, Piping Systems, Inc. will simply cease to exist.
- **YOU are sophisticated.** You have grown accustomed to better things. You have money to spend.
- **YOU are an egotist, sensitive and proud.** Your ego needs the nourishment of a friendly, personal greeting from us. It is important to Piping Systems, Inc. that you appreciate our services. After all, when you buy our products and services, your money is feeding us.
- **YOU are a perfectionist.** You want the best you can get for the money you spend. If you criticize our products or services, we will take heed. The source of your discontent lies in something we or the products we sell have failed to do. We will find that source and eliminate it to retain your business.
- **YOU are fickle.** Other mechanical contractors will continue to beckon you with offers of more for your money. Piping Systems, Inc. must offer something better than its competition offers.
- **YOU are our customer,** and Piping Systems, Inc. must prove that you have made a wise choice in selecting our firm, our products and our services above all others. Piping Systems, Inc. pledges to give our customers the attention they deserve—to stay in regular contact, even when the potential for new business isn't there. We will always do our best work. There will be no need for you to look elsewhere. Piping Systems, Inc. is here to serve you.

## Proper Insurance Is Critical

So, you plan on hiring a contractor to work on your building. Here are a few points to consider in order to limit your exposure to risk:

- Find out what insurance coverage your contractor has. You'll want general liability, workers' compensation and automobile liability at a minimum.
- Ask to be listed as an additional insured on your contractor's insurance binder.
- During the construction process you'll need a builders risk policy to protect against wind, fire, etc.
- Discuss who will pay the deductible in the event of a loss.
- When your project is completed, you'll need permanent insurance as the builders risk expires.

Building and expansion projects should be a positive experience. Take time to discuss insurance with both your contractor and his agent.



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