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**TIPS FOR
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Alfredo Hernandez
Truck Operator
HydroEx Corp.

THE LITTLE COMPANY THAT COULD

Despite challenges, Puerto Rican
company finds path to growth
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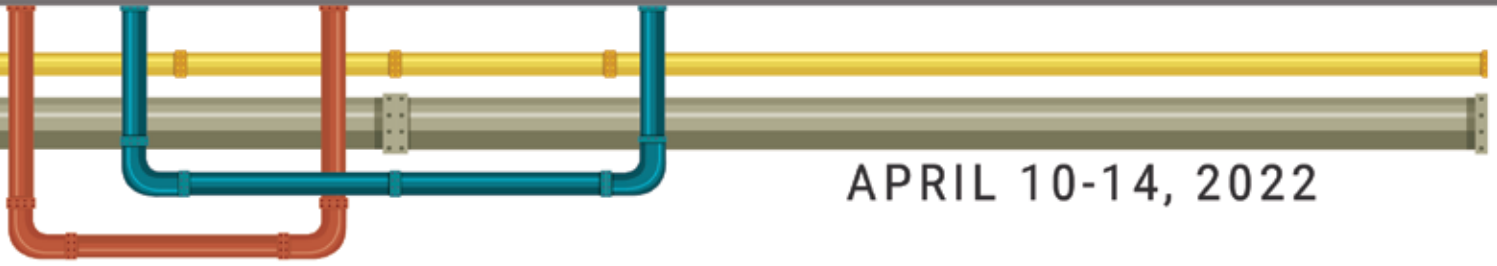
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**FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS TO YOUR OWN TEAM,
TEACHING THE BENEFITS AND TOOLS OF THE TRADE
IS A NONSTOP EFFORT THAT BENEFITS YOUR COMPANY**

BY CORY DELLENBACH, EDITOR

How much of your job is education? Whether it is teaching your staff new technology or methods; or teaching a current or potential customer what it is that you do, education is likely an important piece of what you do.

Cecilia Lloréns, vice president and chief financial officer of HydroEx Corp., knows all too well about education of customers. Cecilia says that her hydroexcavation company is the only one in Puerto Rico, and a big part of the company's growth has come just from teaching others the benefit of vacuum excavation.

She says it's not easy teaching customers and potential customers something new from the open cut trenching that they're accustomed to doing first. It's something I've heard other vacuum excavation and directional drill company owners and operators say before.

It's interesting hearing Cecilia's story of why they decided to offer hydroexcavation and what teaching others about the advantages of vacuum excavation has done for their company. You can read about that in this issue's profile on HydroEx Corp.

THE BENEFITS

If you're having to talk to a potential customer about why they should hire your company, you always want to start with the benefits. The first benefit for any vacuum excavation, directional drilling, or other trenchless method should be safety.

Remind those customers that by open cut trenching, they are putting their crew's lives on the line as well as anyone nearby. The hazard of piercing a gas line or slicing through an electrical line is there every day that open cut is taking place.

That customer may argue with you on the cost differences with open cut, but remind them on the cost if someone is injured or killed, on a job where a crew made mistakes. That should be enough to lock in a customer there.

DON'T FORGET THE EMPLOYEES

While it's important to teach the customers about the advantages of vacuum excavation, trenching or directional drilling, you also need to ensure your crews are on top of this as well.

The crews are the ones out there doing the work and they need to be made aware of any new tools or training that could help them improve upon what they are already doing.

We're coming on trade show season with some big shows coming up — WWETT Show in Indianapolis, the No-Dig Show in Minneapolis. Both of these shows are great for educational opportunities to help your team grow and, as a bonus, you get to check out some of the newest tools and products on the market.

Take some time for yourself and your team, and it'll pay off in the end with happy customers after a job is done right and done quickly.

YEAR EIGHT

This issue marks the eighth year that COLE Publishing has published *Dig Different*. We strive to educate you — the contractors — on the methods and tools available to help you on job sites of all conditions.

We do this by sharing profiles on companies just like yours that are willing to share their story, we occasionally bring you stories of unique or difficult jobs companies have taken on, and we've provided you with tons of equipment news throughout the pages.

We are going to continue that this year. If you are a company owner that is willing to share the story of your company, or if you have handled a tough or unique job that you wouldn't mind telling us about, we want to talk to you.

You can email me at editor@digdifferent.com, or call 715-350-8346.

Enjoy this issue, and Happy New Year! ▼

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IF YOU'RE HAVING TO TALK TO A POTENTIAL CUSTOMER ABOUT WHY THEY SHOULD HIRE YOUR COMPANY, YOU ALWAYS WANT TO START WITH THE BENEFITS. THE FIRST BENEFIT FOR ANY VACUUM EXCAVATION, DIRECTIONAL DRILLING OR OTHER TRENCHLESS METHOD SHOULD BE SAFETY.

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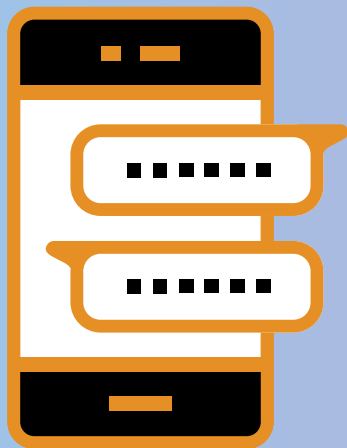


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Downsizing

Compact Hydrovacs Retain Power

The trend of manufacturers making smaller vacuum excavators well suited for urban settings continues. Of course the primary challenge is doing so while not diminishing the performance capabilities of larger units. Check out a couple of the newest compact hydrovacs to hit the market, unveiled last year at The Utility Expo in Louisville, Kentucky.

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Team Building

Maintain a Good Relationship Between Office and Field Staff

Do your office staff and field staff get along? If the answer is no, think about the daily stress that places on your employees and how it may affect your retention efforts. Nobody wants to go to work in a battlefield every day. Office employees and field employees play different roles within a company, but it's still vital that they have a healthy relationship. This online exclusive offers some advice on the topic.

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Overheard Online

"IF WE'RE GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL, SAFETY TRAINING CANNOT BE ABOUT COMPLIANCE. WE HAVE TO LET HUMAN BEINGS KNOW WE CARE ABOUT THEM AND WANT THEM TO STAY ALIVE."

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Selling Assets

What to Know Before Getting an Equipment Appraisal

Before selling an asset in your fleet, you might want to get an equipment appraisal to establish its value. Even if you've done this in the past, you may not know about some of the new technology and services that are transforming the traditional appraisal process in order to add transparency and consistency for both buyers and sellers. Learn more in this online exclusive.

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AMID ONGOING CHALLENGES, SMALL PUERTO RICAN COMPANY CHARTS A COURSE FOR GROWTH

STORY: KEN WYSOCKY PHOTOS: XAVIER GARCIA



Alfredo Hernandez (right) uses the lance to break up the ground at a job site, while HydroEx President and General Manager Miguel Rivera Villamil works the remote control for the hydroexcavator.

One of the company's first jobs was construction of a new taxiway at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in the city of Carolina, Puerto Rico. The company often still works at the airport to this day.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HYDROEX CORP.

In a way, HydroEx — a hydroexcavation company in Puerto Rico — is a lot like the island country it calls home: Despite challenges and setbacks, it just keeps rolling with the punches and striving for further growth.

Owners Miguel Rivera Villamil and Cecilia Lloréns established the company in 2003 in Guaynabo, near the capital of San Juan on the northern side of the island. Since that time, they've endured more than their fair share of turmoil and upheaval: A deep economic downturn that started in 2008. Devastating Hurricane Maria in September 2017. A 6.4-magnitude earthquake that rocked the country in January 2020. And the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, not to mention a labor shortage.

Yet through it all, the husband-and-wife team remains buoyed by the potential market for hydroexcavation services on this island country, with its population of 2.8 million people.

"Our belief in what we call our three P's — patience, perseverance and persistence — is what keeps us going," says Lloréns. "We're patient during downturns, we persevere in educating customers and developing business and persist in following up with customers."

"We also keep our overhead small," adds Rivera Villamil, noting that during the 2008 economic downturn, the company sold one of its two trucks and had to dismiss several of its full-time employees. Today the company operates with a lean mentality; its only employees are only Rivera Villamil, Lloréns and truck operator Alfredo Hernandez, who's been with the company since 2014.

The company operates one truck: A MAXVAX 700 designed by Amerivac Group and built by Sewer Equipment on a 2008 International 7400 chassis. It features a 6-cubic-yard debris tank, a 650-gallon water tank, a UDOR water pump (10 gpm at 2,500 psi) and a 3,000 cfm blower made by Roots (a brand owned by the Howden Group).

"This truck is a perfect size for us here on the island, where we have a lot of narrow streets," Rivera Villamil says, noting the truck is used primarily for exposing/locating utility lines, trenching and digging foundations. "It combines the benefits of a small and a large truck."

"IT'S VERY GRATIFYING WHEN I TELL PEOPLE WE OFFER HYDROEXCAVATING SERVICES AND THEY SAY, 'OH, YOU MUST BE FROM HYDROEX.' I KNOW WE MUST BE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT IN TERMS OF MARKETING."

Cecilia Lloréns



Educating customers on the benefits of vacuum excavation work is important to HydroEx as the only vacuum excavation company on the island.



Miguel Rivera Villamil, HydroEx president and general manager, and his wife Cecilia Lloréns, vice president and chief financial officer, with their hydroexcavator from Sewer Equipment. The two returned to Puerto Rico after years in the United States to launch a vacuum excavation company after seeing the need for one.

The couple faced a career cross-roads after Casco was sold in 2000.

“I really wanted to do something different — something that didn’t involve working for a large company with many employees,” Rivera Villamil says. “I wanted more of a niche market, where I could be an entrepreneur.”

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

The seeds for that business opportunity were planted earlier when Rivera Villamil saw a demonstration of a hydroexcavation truck. He was intrigued by how safely a hydrovac truck could do excavations.

“What I saw was a great business opportunity in a niche market,” he recalls. “Sure, there was some risk involved. But there were a lot of problems here in Puerto Rico with excavation accidents.”

“The drawings for utility lines usually aren’t that accurate,” adds Lloréns. “So even the best excavation contractors can have problems if they don’t know where utility lines are located.”

So in 2003, the couple took a leap of faith by establishing HydroEx and buying a hydrovac truck.

Getting potential customers to understand the advantages of hydroexcavation proved to be the company’s biggest challenge.

“The most difficult part was educating customers — showing them that we could minimize their excavation risks,” Rivera Villamil notes.

In addition, the company also had to fight an uphill battle in terms of pricing because hydroexcavation is more expensive than traditional excavation methods. Rivera Villamil countered that concern by explaining that the higher cost of hydroexcavating was small compared to the potential enormous costs and liabilities posed by, say, a backhoe rupturing a natural gas line.

HydroEx Corp. Inc.

Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

OWNERS:	Miguel Rivera Villamil and Cecilia Lloréns
FOUNDED:	2003
EMPLOYEES:	3
SERVICES:	Hydroexcavation services
SERVICE AREA:	Puerto Rico
WEBSITE:	www.hydroexcorp.com

BUSINESS, CONSTRUCTION BACKGROUNDS

Rivera Villamil and Lloréns were born in Puerto Rico. Rivera Villamil served in the United States Army and then earned a mechanical engineering and technology degree at Purdue University and a master’s degree in administrative science from Johns Hopkins University.

His first job was with Chrysler Corp. (now Stellantis) as a tool and process engineer at an assembly plant in Delaware. After five years there, he returned to Puerto Rico to work for a family-owned, heavy-equipment distributor, Casco Sales.

Lloréns earned a business and accounting degree at Notre Dame of Maryland University and a master’s degree in finance at the University of Loyola Maryland. She worked as a loan and credit administrator in the international division of a large Baltimore bank before returning to Puerto Rico to work for Casco, which was the exclusive distributor for John Deere agricultural and construction equipment and other heavy-equipment company products.

“EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT HYDROEXCAVATION HAS BEEN A VERY STEEP ROAD TO TRAVEL. BUT IT’S ALSO BEEN QUITE AN INTERESTING JOURNEY. WE JUST PERSEVERE AND KEEP ON GOING.” Cecilia Lloréns

A LUCKY BREAK

The fledgling company got a big break in 2006 while working on its first big project: the construction of a new taxiway at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in the city of Carolina. HydroEx was hired to expose a utility line, Lloréns says.

“After we finished locating the utility, they said they didn’t need us anymore,” she says. “But then a contractor broke an electrical line. So they called us back and we worked there on several additional projects.

“That was a big opportunity for us to show the benefits of hydroexcavation,” she continues. “Like they say, you can’t buy that kind of advertising.”

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The company's major clients are the numerous pharmaceutical manufacturers on the island. Here, truck operator Alfredo Hernandez (left) and Rivera Villamil work outside a manufacturing plant.

The company established itself even more firmly when a pharmaceutical company hired it to locate utility lines before starting an expansion project. HydroEx exposed several utility lines not shown on drawings, which impressed its risk-assessment team.

"We worked on that project for two years, from 2009 to 2011, and to this day, the company specifies hydroexcavation in its job bids," she says.

A TURNING POINT

That project proved to be another critical juncture for the company by giving it a foothold in the country's thriving pharmaceutical industry. Puerto Rico is a global hub for pharmaceutical and medical-device manufacturing.

In fact, the country is the largest exporter of biopharmaceuticals in the United States and the industry generates 30% of the country's gross domestic product and half of its manufacturing activity, not to mention employs more than 94,000 people, according to Invest Puerto Rico, a business development group.

"In one case, an insurance company told one of our pharmaceutical customers to call us," Rivera Villamil says. "Pharmaceutical companies now are our core customer base.

"We mostly do line locating and clearance work," he continues. "And if they're building an extension of a building, we will hydroexcavate the perimeter of the project to whatever depth is required to see if there are any utilities in the construction area."

On other jobs, HydroEx also excavates the foundations for plant expansions because the vibrations caused by conventional excavation machines could compromise the extremely sensitive calibration of equipment used in manufacturing. In other cases, the companies need hydroexcavation because

project areas aren't accessible for large pieces of conventional excavation equipment, he adds.

MORE GROWTH FACTORS

Another factor in the company's growth: certifications as a veteran-owned business, a disadvantaged business enterprise and a minority-business enterprise, which made it attractive to companies that are required to hire disadvantaged minority-owned companies to fulfill government quotas, she says.

In addition, HydroEx is the only company in Puerto Rico that focuses on hydroexcavating, which underscores the importance of being first to market and establishing a dominant position, Rivera Villamil notes.

To market the company's services, Rivera Villamil did hydroexcavation demonstrations for potential customers so they could see firsthand how the process works as well as the safety/risk-reduction benefits.

Furthermore, Lloréns joined numerous professional groups and organizations in order to network with potential customers. Such groups include the Puerto Rico Association of General Contractors, the Puerto Rico Manufacturers Association and its Industrial Women Committee and the Puerto Rico Minority Supplier Development Council, which certifies and supports minority-business enterprises, she says.

"I WANTED MORE OF A NICHE MARKET, WHERE I COULD BE AN ENTREPRENEUR."

Miguel Rivera

"You never know who you're going to run into at one of these meetings," she says. "Plus you have to keep reminding people that you're here and available."

Clear and effective branding also plays a key role in marketing, as reflected by the company's name.

"The company name makes it very clear what we do," Lloréns says. "It's very gratifying when I tell people we offer hydroexcavating services and they say, 'Oh, you must be from HydroEx.' I know we must be doing something right in terms of marketing."

GROWTH ON THE HORIZON

And after years of educating customers about the safety benefits of hydroexcavation, Rivera Villamil says the company has gained significant traction in that regard. With hydroexcavation now a more commonly accepted excavating technique and an expected flurry of infrastructure-improvement projects on the horizon, he believes the company is poised for growth in the coming years.

"We're now seeing a lot of bids going out for infrastructure projects, such as airport and water-utility improvements, funded by money from FEMA (the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency) for hurricane and earthquake assistance," Rivera Villamil says. "So hopefully by the end of this year or early in 2020, there'll be a lot more projects."

As Rivera Villamil looks back, he says making the challenging switch to an entirely different career has been well worth the risks involved with starting a business from scratch.

"When you find a utility line that customer didn't know was there and that would've caused a lot of headaches if someone hit it, it's very gratifying," he says.

"Educating people about hydroexcavation has been a very steep road to travel," Lloréns notes. "But it's also been quite an interesting journey. We just persevere and keep on going." ▼

The company's only hydroexcavator is a MAXVAX 700 built by Sewer Equipment.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HYDROEX CORP.

Well-Designed Hydrovac Truck Makes Repairs Less Challenging

As a hydroexcavating company that specializes in exposing underground utility lines and excavating foundation perimeters for building-expansion projects, HydroEx in Puerto Rico often is one of the first contractors on a job.

As such, there's extra pressure to avoid equipment breakdowns that can cause a debilitating domino effect on a project and upset construction timelines.

"We're usually doing exploratory work, so other contractors can't proceed until we're finished," says Miguel Rivera Villamil, who co-owns HydroEx with his wife, Cecilia Lloréns. That pressure is exacerbated by the fact that Puerto Rico is about 2,200 miles from Florida; for perspective, that's just 600 miles less than the approximate width of the United States. So getting parts quickly isn't easy.

"Servicing equipment is a challenge and so is getting repair parts. You usually can't get repair parts right away," he explains. "So when our truck breaks down in the middle of a job, we have to try to get it back to the shop and make repairs that day or the next day, using whatever parts we have in inventory."

"We can't afford to wait for two or three days for someone to come and repair it."

Furthermore, mechanics on the island typically aren't familiar with hydroexcavation-truck repairs. As such, Rivera Villamil has become a fairly proficient self-taught mechanic.

It helps that the company's only hydroexcavation truck — a MAXVAX 700 designed by Amerivac Group and built by Sewer Equipment — features a very user-friendly design.

The truck is built on a 2008 International 7400 chassis and features a 6-cubic-yard debris tank, a 650-gallon water tank, a UDOR water pump (10 gpm at 2,500 psi) and a 3,000 cfm blower made by Roots (a brand owned by the Howden Group).

"One of the reasons we purchased the MAXVAX is the way it's engineered," he says. "It's very simple mechanically so it's pretty easy to figure out repairs. The hardest part is getting parts, especially electric parts."

Rivera Villamil says the company carries a small inventory of basic parts, such as pumps, cylinders and hoses. He also performs most of the truck maintenance, which is critical, given that the company's biggest customer base is pharmaceutical companies with demanding environmental standards.

"Your truck cannot leak any oil when you're working at a pharmaceutical company," he says. "If they find a drop of oil while you're working, they'll take you off the project. So it's essential to keep trucks well-maintained."

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Vector Services

BATAVIA, ILLINOIS



There's no missing this eye-catching hydroexcavator from Vector Services as it rolls down the highway from job to job. The Illinois-based company has several of these units within its fleet with this unit coming from the Chicago area. Vector Services is a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business with its team tailored to providing underground construction and workforce services across the country. The company doesn't stop at hydroexcavation services, but also does traffic control, sewer camera inspections and offers workforce solutions as well. This truck, which sports a dark green and black camo look with a torpedo was built by **TRUVAC**. It has a 10-cubic-yard debris tank capacity and 1,100-gallon water tank capacity. The truck is fitted with a Hibon 8702 blower. The company currently operates in 20 U.S. states. More information on the company can be found at www.vectorservicesus.com.

Got a vacuum excavator or directional drill with real WOW appeal? Show it off to *Dig Different* readers! Send photos of your truck or drill after it has been lettered with your company name. Please limit your submission to one piece of equipment only. Your Dig My Rig submission must include your name, company name, mailing address, phone number and details about the truck, including debris tank size, cab/chassis information, pump/blower information, the company that built the truck and any other details you consider important. In particular, tell us what features of the truck help make your work life more efficient and more profitable. Email your materials to editor@digdifferent.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Tips for Setting Up Meetings with Employees

REGULAR ONE-ON-ONE TALKS WITH CREWMEMBERS CREATE A BETTER WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERYONE

BY KATE ZABRISKIE

There are only two of us in my department. Why should I bother with a formal meeting? We sit right across from each other.

I tried meeting individually with my direct reports, but they had nothing to talk about. Besides, we're all adults. We know what we're supposed to be doing at work.

Without trying too hard, it's easy for managers to compile a long list of reasons not to meet with the people they supervise. And guess what? The volume of reasons does not outweigh the value and importance of a regularly scheduled exchanges with a direct report.

If used correctly, over time managers and employees can enjoy many benefits by meeting one on one.

- 1. Visible appreciation:** Time is currency. If managers carve out time for their people and are prepared when they meet, they show they value employees.
- 2. Better thinking:** Regular one-on-one meetings give managers and employees space to step away from the urgent and immediate and to think more holistically and strategically about work, goals and development opportunities.
- 3. Stronger results:** Accountability tends to improve when people have an opportunity or a requirement to report on their progress.

TAILOR THE MEETING

Once a manager has bought into the value of one-on-one meetings, the next step is to execute them in a way that works for the manager and the employee. Good one-on-one meetings are not one-size-fits-all activities. That said, there are a few guidelines that can make a one-on-one meeting successful.

- 1. Pick a schedule and stick to it.** One-on-ones shouldn't regularly disappear from the calendar simply because something else suddenly comes up.
- 2. Choose a frequency that makes sense.** For some people, meeting once a month may be enough. For others, meeting weekly may be more appropriate. Every relationship is different. Furthermore, circumstances evolve. Depending on what's happening inside and outside of the business, an employee's needs could change drastically. Meeting frequency should be looked at from time to time. If the rate of meetings is correct, managers and employees should not routinely find themselves with no reason to meet.
- 3. Follow a written agenda.** Well-run one-on-one meetings are not free-for-all conversations. They follow an agenda just as any other good meeting does. A meeting agenda might include such topics as current projects, progress on yearly development goals, current challenges and so forth.
- 4. Put employees in the driver's seat by having them manage and document the agenda.** As a manager, you may create the initial agenda format. But once you do, your employees should take ownership of the documents associated with their one-on-one meetings.

OVERCOME OBSTACLES

One-on-one meetings rarely go from nonexistent or dysfunctional to perfect overnight. For that reason, managers should prepare to overcome a variety of obstacles.

Obstacle 1: Employees question the new meeting.

Solution: Reduce the surprise factor. If a manager has never held one-on-one meetings, they might come as a surprise to employees. To avoid feelings of uncertainty, confusion, or worse, mention the idea before loading the calendar with unexpected surprises. *"This year, I would like to focus more on individual development. Within the next week or two, please expect to see a meeting request from me. I believe we will all benefit if I spend time with each of you individually at regularly scheduled intervals. How often we will meet will depend on each of your needs and what we decide together."*



Kate Zabriskie

Obstacle 2: An employee doesn't take charge of the meeting.

Solution: Show them how. A good agenda can go a long way toward making the conversation flow. Although employees should have ultimate responsibility for keeping the agenda, this may take time. In the beginning, managers may have to explain what they want to see. *"For our first few meetings, I'll prepare the agenda. Once we've found our groove, my plan is to turn it over to you to own. This means you'll add to it between meetings and bring a copy for you and me when we meet."*

Obstacle 3: An employee gives short or general answers to questions.

Solution: Get specific. The more focused a manager's questions are, the better the conversation tends to be. For example, instead of asking, *"What are you working on?"* a manager might say, *"Tell me about the project that is going best right now and why that is."*

Obstacle 4: An employee seems unresponsive.

Solution: Leverage silence. When managers don't get immediate feedback, they sometimes mistake silence for non-responsiveness. It's important for managers to remember they already know the questions. The employee is hearing them for the first time and may need some time to digest and think about what's being asked. Instead of rephrasing questions that don't produce an immediate answer, managers need to get comfortable with letting silence sit in the room.

KEEP ON TRACK

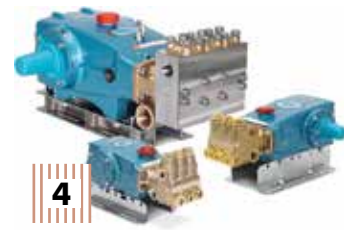
Like anything, one-on-one meetings can get stale. It's important to look at the format and frequency from time to time and to solicit feedback regarding what's working and what isn't.

If you've fallen out of the habit of holding regular one-on-one meetings or if you're not getting all you could from them, now is the time to take another look. After all, can you really afford not to?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works, a Maryland-based talent development firm. Reach her at www.businesstrainingworks.com. ▼

THE LATEST: Products



1. Cherne larger I-Series line of test plugs

Cherne Industries added larger test plug sizes within its I-Series line of Test-Ball, Muni-Ball and Air-Loc pipe plugs. I-Series plugs are built using a robotic manufacturing system that delivers quality, consistency and durability. The new plugs are available as large as 24 to 48 inches. Manufactured robotically, each plug's natural rubber core is mechanically bonded to its aluminum end plate, ensuring precision and consistency while eliminating failures that can result from chemical-bonding processes. In addition, I-Series plugs feature corrosion-resistant aluminum base plates with laser-etched identifiers, replacing the use of raised rubber markings that eventually wear away with usage. The plugs are lightweight, short and flexible, while offering back pressure to accommodate the range of plug sizes offered. Protective sleeves are also available for the full range of I-Series plugs, helping further preserve the plugs for extended use. **800-843-7584; www.cherneind.com**

2. Hibon VTB822 blower package

The Hibon VTB822 blower package provides sound reduction in a complete 2729 cfm, 28-inch hg plug-and-play system solution. The vacuum/pressure offloading package is ideally suited for hydroexcavating, daylighting, industrial vacuuming and grit recycling applications. This quiet system includes Hibon's tri-lobe vacuum blower, all silencers, inlet filter housing and element, the Hibon 8-inch four-way valve, properly sized Hibon pressure relief valve, all instrumentation, isolation mounts and stainless steel enclosure. The package is either hydraulically or V-belt driven and easy to install and maintain. **514-349-9730; www.hibon.com**

3. Navistar International A26 engine updates

With Navistar's updates to the International A26 engine, fleets can now achieve 10% improved fuel economy since the engine's initial launch. The latest engine enhancements are achieved through engine design and system updates, including: combustion enhancements, optimized engine temperature control, air management system updates, and reduced engine speed without compromising power. Built from the MAN D26 engine crankcase, the latest version of the International A26 produces up to 515 hp and 1,850 lb-ft of torque. The A26 is available for order in the International LT Series of long-haul vehicles, RH Series of regional haul vehicles, the HX Series for heavy-haul and various construction applications and the HV Series for select vocational applications. **331-332-3310; www.navistar.com**

4. Cat Pumps hydroexcavating pumps

Over 50 years of high-pressure pump manufacturing experience has earned Cat Pumps a reputation of producing the high-quality, long-lasting pumps in the markets it serves. With its dedication to zero-defect manufacturing, ease of service and availability from stock, Cat Pumps designs and builds high-pressure pumps and systems to suit the demanding environments of the hydroexcavation industry. Popular models include Model 56 with 5.5 gpm at 3,500 psi; Model 56HS with 8 gpm at 3,000 psi; Model 660 with 10 gpm at 3,000 psi; and Model 3560 with 20 gpm at 4,000 psi, or 25 gpm at 3,000 psi. **763-780-5440; www.catpumps.com ▼**

This Issue's Feature:

Rock reamer offers replaceable cutters BY CRAIG MANDLI

Horizontal directional drilling crews are charged with being able to bore through just about any ground condition. However, when they encounter rock, the job is a bit more difficult. That makes picking the proper tool critical for a successful project. The **Shark PDC Reamer** from **Infinity Tool** offers the durability to cut through that rock, with replaceable cutters available to keep the unit on the job.

The reamer was born out of a simple concept – to enable a rapid change of cutters onsite, minimizing downtime. Bottom line, there is no more sending reamers in for repair or buying a new unit. The tech simply needs to fit a new segment to be back up and running in minutes.

"This is the only PDC reamer design that allows a change of cutters onsite," says Keith Jackson, international sales director for Infinity Tool. "Each cutting segment can be changed with hand tools, minimizing downtime. Additionally, each cutter segment has the same design, no matter which position on the blade or what size of reamer."

Additionally, the Shark PDC Reamer also is designed to produce a symmetrical hole with reduced chatter. Every segment has the same design no matter which position on the reamer blade, and no matter what size of reamer. According to Jackson, it fills a large hole in the HDD industry.

"The Shark will mainly be used in HDD drilling applications in the utility

construction sector, where pilot holes have to be enlarged through ground conditions varying from sand to limestone," he says. "The reamer is also used in vertical construction applications."

Replaceable cutter segments are supplied in kit form with everything needed to replace a segment in the field with hand tools. Shark PDC Reamers are available in sizes from 14 to 48 inches. According to Jackson, they offer increased penetration rates for up to five times faster project completion than conventional methods, with reaming up to 12 inches of extra diameter in a single pass. They also cause less stress on the drill rig, as there is lower torque required and less vibration on the rods.

"The product is a good fit as it massively reduces downtime," says Jackson. "Our customers can fit a new cutting segment and be back up and running in minutes."
618-439-4042; www.infinitytoolmfg.com



Shark PDC Reamer from Infinity Tool

BY CRAIG MANDLI

Backhoes

John Deere BH10B

The BH10B backhoe from John Deere was designed for operators handling light construction, agricultural, landscaping or utility work. The attachment is ideal for those working in tight spaces by offering swing speed control and 180-degree capabilities to help maximize efficiency and improve machine stability. Workspace visibility is optimized with the attachments' sleek, low-profile design. Cushioned cylinders allow for smooth operations and limit shock loads during use. A two-lever control of boom or swing (left lever) and dipperstick or bucket (right lever) allow for precise control and movement. It has a maximum dig depth of 116 inches, with bucket widths from 18 to 36 inches. The heavy-duty buckets feature an easy clean-out design for the toughest jobs, with three linkage positions to maximize curl, reach or breakout force of up to 5,675 pounds. Standard-tilt seating capabilities offer easy moving between machine ingress and egress. It also has a convenient grab handle and open design for convenient maneuvering.

800-503-3373; www.johndeere.com



Bucket/Boom/Crane Trucks

Curry Supply Company Keystone and Keystone Pro

The Keystone and Keystone Pro service/mechanics truck line from Curry Supply Company include heavy-duty aluminum bodies with a 52-inch wide and 129-inch deep bed, tie-down rings, and a textured floor for added safety. Each side has four compartments — three vertical and one horizontal. Every compartment is designed with at least 20 inches of depth and adjustable shelving. Protected door seals and stainless-steel rotary latches keep all compartments secure and watertight. The Keystone Pro mechanics body includes a crane tower that will accept up to a 25,000 ft-lb crane attachment. Custom add-ons are available for both models, and both have mounting tracks on top of side pack for easy accessory attachment.

800-345-2829; www.currysupply.com



Zeus Electric Chassis

For vocational fleets looking to transition their class 4, 5 and 6 work trucks to battery-electric, Zeus Electric Chassis offers a severe-duty solution. The Zeus Power Platform is configurable to accommodate existing OEM bodies. Zeus offers multiple all-aluminum cab configurations, AWD, integrated mechanical, hydraulic, electrical and telematic vehicle functions, and battery with thermal management system scalable from 105 to 420 kWh.

844-938-7462; www.zeuselectricchassis.com



Compact Equipment

Toro Dingo TXL 2000

The Toro Dingo TXL 2000 compact utility loader offers telescoping arms to reach over obstacles, dig below grade and extend the operator's working range. Thanks to the telescoping loader arm technology, contractors can perform a number of tasks previously unachievable with this class of equipment.

In addition, the TXL 2000 offers a rated operating capacity of up to 2,000 pounds. It also offers many of the benefits of the compact utility loader class, including increased visibility and access, when compared to larger equipment classes with a sit-in cab. It provides operators 360-degree visibility by readjusting their body on the flexible, suspended operator platform. Equipped with a standard skid-steer loader attachment mount, the unit is compatible with most standard skid-steer attachments for versatility and productivity.

855-493-0088; www.toro.com



Equipment Attachments

Ditch Witch BH782

Whether contractors are loading, digging or moving material, the Ditch Witch BH782 backhoe attachment is designed to help contractors stay efficient on a variety of earthmoving tasks. It is available with a standard mini attachment plate and is compatible with Ditch Witch's fleet of mini stand-on skid-steers starting with the SK800 through the SK1550. The attachment offers a standard 12-inch bucket and can dig up to 78 inches. With a 180-degree swing radius, it can help improve operator agility and efficiency on the job site. To maximize productivity, it is equipped with a dual independent machine stabilizer. For increased multi-function performance, it offers intuitive operator controls to maximize job site uptime. It also comes with a single plug-and-play harness to integrate and install the harness to the machine more easily and seamlessly.

580-336-4402; www.ditchwitch.com



MB Crusher BF90.3

The BF90.3 crusher from MB Crusher is a popular mid-sized crusher bucket designed for excavators with an operating weight ranging between 46,300 to 70,500 pounds. The crusher is suitable for turning waste materials into aggregates ready to be repurposed on current or future job sites, saving money by eliminating transportation and material purchasing costs. The unit can reach a variety of job sites, regardless of the location and space available thanks to its compact size.

855-622-7874; www.mbamerica.com



Virnig Manufacturing Pick-Up Broom with Internal Water Tank

The Pick-Up Broom with Internal Water Tank from Virnig Manufacturing is designed to control dust. It has a 55-gallon tank with capacity indicators, direct drive guarded motor, HD bucket and an oversized 2-inch bearing and pin adjustment system to set bristle height. Widths of 72 and 84 inches are available, and the unit comes complete with hoses, couplers and a bolt-on edge.

800-648-2408; www.virnigmfg.com



Excavators

Doosan DX62R-3

Doosan's DX62R-3 mini excavator has a reduced-tail swing profile with 4.9 inches of side overhang, allowing for work in confined areas with more flexibility to maneuver. The design utilizes the basics of the existing Doosan mini excavator and builds on it by adjusting the positioning of the excavator upper structure to the undercarriage to reduce tail swing length. Moving the swing center forward extends the machine's digging reach by 11 inches while maintaining the desired machine balance.

770-831-2200; www.doosanequipment.com



Kobelco Construction Machinery USA SK75SR-7

The SK75SR-7 from Kobelco Construction Machinery USA has the power, fuel economy, and features needed to tackle jobs in tight spaces. With a dynamic digging force of 15,900 pounds and a 37% increase in digging speed, it delivers continuous operation and reduces cycle times. This unit maintains productivity and efficiency while working at high power levels, lifting heavy loads, and traveling on steep grades. It includes an optimized control layout with a jog dial and 10-inch color monitor, built-in rear, left and right-side cameras with a customizable split-screen display function to enhance operator awareness and jobsite safety, and a standard ergonomic lever and air ride suspension seat to reduce operating force and fatigue by 25%. Enhanced multi-function capabilities include an attachment selection system with adjustable flow-rate presets for the bucket, breaker, nibbler and thumb, allowing the operator to change between tools quickly and easily.

281-888-8430; www.kobelco-usa.com



Mecalac AS900tele

Mecalac's AS900tele telehandler combines the compactness and mobility of Mecalac's AS Swing Loader Series with telescopic technology to provide versatility on the job site. The 22.2 gpm auxiliary hydraulics increase flexibility, allowing use with a range of attachments, including mowers, road sweepers and earth augers. Functioning as a loader, telehandler or landscaping tool, the 8-ton machine has an innovative swing design, where operators can swivel the fully loaded bucket 90 degrees on either side. Additionally, the AS900tele features three steering options: two-wheel, four-wheel and crab.

508-921-3076; www.mecalac.com



Volvo Construction Equipment EWR130E

The Volvo Construction Equipment EWR130E midsized wheeled excavator provides the shortest front and rear swing radius in its size class without compromising on lifting performance or digging force. With a rear swing of 5 feet 1 inch and a front swing of 5 feet 11 inches, it has the shortest swing radius in the 12- to 13-ton range. When coupled with new four-wheel steering and in-line outrigger options, the result is a machine that is easy to control and stable. It is ideal for urban jobs where frequent roading is required, and in confined jobsites or on roads where traffic safety is paramount. It's also light enough to use on landscaping projects. The inline outriggers help position and stabilize the machine



in tight spaces. A divided blade option helps provide additional levelling on uneven ground or around curbs. The standard two-piece boom enables lifting up to 9,480 pounds at a 19.7-foot reach.

828-650-2000; www.volvo.com/constructionequipment

Loaders

CASE Construction Equipment TV620B

The TV620B compact track loader from CASE Construction Equipment offers a 114 hp, 6,200-pound-rated operating capacity, and more standardized features than previously available on any of the company's previous compact track loaders. This includes standard adjustable electro-hydraulic controls, high-flow hydraulics, auto ride control, one-way self-leveling, a hydraulic coupler, an auto-reversing fan, LED lights and a one-year subscription to CASE SiteWatch telematics. It has the CASE SiteConnect Module, remote connectivity and software updates through the SiteManager App (iOS and Android), as well as connectivity to the CASE Uptime Center for collaborative fleet management between CASE, the local CASE dealer, and the equipment owner. It includes a completely redesigned operator interface, 360-degree visibility and an 8-inch LCD multifunction display that serves as the command center for the machine.

866-542-2736; www.casece.com



New Holland Construction B75D

The new economy class B75D loader/backhoe from New Holland Construction has 74 gross hp, over 18 feet of maximum digging depth and standard 4WD. It offers fuel-efficient power with a simple, cost-effective Tier 4 Final solution, 3.4-liter FPT engine with a diesel oxidation catalyst for increased fuel efficiency and faster response times. With no fluids to add or diesel particulate filters to replace, maintenance is simplified. Standard 4WD and a power shuttle synchromesh transmission puts the operator in complete control. The operator environment keeps safety at the forefront with a ROPS/FOPS certified canopy. Four front and two rear halogen work lights allow operation into the night.

888-365-6423; www.newhollandconstruction.com ▼



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Building a Versatile Fleet

A WELL-DESIGNED BOX TRUCK CAN HAUL BIGGER EQUIPMENT AND MORE TOOLS

BY TIM DOBBINS

Sometimes thinking inside the box is exactly what you want to do when you spend the day on the road carrying a large number of tools, equipment, parts and supplies.

Box trucks are a popular choice among contractors. There are plenty of different styles and variances in each model, but box trucks as a whole provide a great solution for taking your equipment on the road.

"I would say that finding the perfect truck is an endless search," says Josh Shelton, owner of Shelton Plumbing in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. "There's a different truck that suits every job, so it can be a challenge to find that perfect vehicle."

When picking out a box truck, it's important to evaluate what aspect of the business you plan on using the truck for most, or as Shelton says, "You have to really think about what's your bread and butter and design the truck around that."

Shelton and his crew have multiple vehicles on the road, and they have found each one fits a different aspect of the business.

"If we are just using the truck for service and repairs, we really like the Ford Transit cutaway with an enclosed Reading service body," Shelton says. "We have bins on the outside, there's enough space on the inside and it's not too heavy." He adds that his other Transit with a Hackney unicell body attached offers more versatility for various storage options. "It's definitely one we are going to utilize more in the future because we can pick and choose how to build the truck in a way."

Roger Botto, a contractor in Hicksville, New York, also relies on box trucks as part of his service fleet. When Botto and his team are looking to haul some weight, they rely on a Ford E-350 cutaway box truck. For hauling a heavy load Botto, says they prefer the 350s or bigger. "We don't use anything small because when you load them up, you're going to go through brakes and tires all the time. I'll use my smaller cargo vans more for alteration work, like putting a boiler in or something."

Larger trucks not only have the capability to hold more weight, but they will also come with added towing capacity, making them a popular choice for contractors with large service trailers.

FORM AND FUNCTION

Selecting the proper fit for your business goes back to Shelton's advice of putting a lot of thought into what the vehicle is primarily going to be used for. Whatever the intended use, there is likely a make and model to perform the task.

Mercedes-Benz cab chassis are offered in a 144-inch or 170-inch wheelbase, and each comes standard with a 3.0L V6 turbo diesel engine. Mercedes

also offers factory upfits to customize the vehicle specific to plumbing with multiple options for service bins and storage shelves. Each vehicle comes with technology like Active Brake Assist, rearview camera and Traffic Sign Assist to help your crew stay safe on the road. Mercedes-Benz Sprinter cabs come with box bodies from Knapheide and IVS Hydro designed specifically for that chassis.

Ford's E-350 and E-450 cutaway series is powered by a 7.3L V8 engine with a six-speed automatic transmission. Like Mercedes-Benz, there is a list of options buyers can choose from like wheelbases ranging from 138 inches to 176 inches. Upgrades in towing packages and interior features are also an option to customize the vehicle specific to your needs.

Ford also sells its popular Transit model as a cutaway, offering another option for smaller box trucks. The Transit cutaway packs a 3.5L PFDi V6 engine

"THERE'S A DIFFERENT TRUCK THAT SUITS EVERY JOB, SO IT CAN BE A CHALLENGE TO FIND THAT PERFECT VEHICLE."

Josh Shelton

and 10-speed automatic transmission. They come in multiple models that vary in length and width and like the E-Series, several packages are available from Ford so users can customize the build to their unique specifications.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR FLEET

Aftermarket unicell boxes and service bodies like the Hackney and Reading options that Shelton uses are made to fit multiple chassis, so there is flexibility in choosing a chassis manufacturer and box to fit the needs of what you are hauling. Whatever box you chose, the possibilities for custom storage within are almost endless. And that is one the biggest benefits box trucks can offer.

Both Shelton and Botto offer an additional piece of advice to anyone looking into box trucks for a main or supplemental work vehicle and advocate looking into adding an extra leaf spring or helper springs for carrying heavier loads. "We've added helper springs to ours, and in our next truck, we are considering a system with air bags that will help even more to stabilize the truck," Shelton says.

Shop around and explore the benefits that investing in box trucks can bring your business and keep in mind your end goal throughout your search. With a lot of options to choose from, researching and talking to professionals with some miles already on the odometer can go a long way towards putting your investment in the right vehicle. ▼

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Not at all involved Somewhat involved Heavily involved

Final decision maker

How many pieces of excavation equipment do you have in service?

0 1-3 4-5 6-7 8-9 10+

What is your annual equipment budget?

0-50K 51K-75K 76K-150K 151K-250K 251K-350K 350K+

What services do you perform on a regular basis?

Excavating Vacuum Excavating Trenching

Horizontal Directional Drilling/Boring Vertical Drilling/Boring

Pipe Relining/Rehabilitation Utility Location/Leak Detection

Other _____

What is your company's primary service?

Excavation Contracting Utility Contracting Government/Municipal

Industrial/Commercial Vacuum/Cleaning Services

Dealer/Distributor/Manufacturer

Other _____

D0122

Don't Forget the Basic Reminders

TO KEEP CREWS AND THE COMMUNITY SAFE, EVEN CONTRACTORS NEED SIMPLE REMINDERS WHEN IT COMES TO DIGGING

BY MEGAN ESTES

Contractors play an extremely important role in protecting the utility infrastructure throughout the country. Every now and then those contractors need reminders of procedures to be safe and remain safe on job sites.

Georgia 811 offered several reminders of those safe digging procedures as well as some tips for digging.

CONTACT

Safe digging starts when you contact 811 at least three business days before beginning any mechanized work.

The service is free and helps prevent damage to utility facilities. In the state of Georgia, you are required to contact 811 before mechanized digging per the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act. Over 70% of Georgia's tickets are submitted online at www.georgia811.com, but excavators can also simply dial 811 on their phones to have a customer service representative process their ticket.

To find out what your state's laws and requirements are, dial 811 anywhere in the country and be directed to your state's one-call center.

WAIT

Wait the required time to begin digging. Facility owners and operators have until the response due date — listed on your ticket — to mark their lines and respond electronically to your ticket.

CHECK RESPONSES

Georgia 811 provides a service called the Positive Response Information System to help you track the status of your locate request. It can be accessed through the Georgia 811 website or by downloading the Georgia 811 Excavator App.

WAIT THE REQUIRED TIME TO BEGIN DIGGING. FACILITY OWNERS AND OPERATORS HAVE UNTIL THE RESPONSE DUE DATE — LISTED ON YOUR TICKET — TO MARK THEIR LINES AND RESPOND ELECTRONICALLY TO YOUR TICKET.

Many other states have a similar program. Be sure to find out what is available in your area.

Once all utilities have responded with a marked, clear, or no conflict code, excavators may begin digging.

RESPECT THE MARKS AND DIG WITH CARE

Every state is different, but in Georgia you may not use mechanized equipment within 18 inches of an underground facility. Be sure to find out what the laws are in the state that you are working in, most are within the 18-24 inches area.



Megan Estes

Once utility owners and operators have identified their facilities with flakes, stakes or spray paint; contractors should pothole to determine the exact location of underground facilities and then keep machinery the required distance away from the outer edges of the facility.

The area within each outer edge of a facility is called the tolerance zone. If digging within the tolerance zone, hand tools and vacuum methods should be used.

OTHER TIPS

811 recommends that all contractors take some type of damage prevention competent person training. Some of these training courses can be found on your state's 811 page.

In Georgia, the course is comprised of seven different training topics with the entire training lasting approximately one hour. The course is free, online and also available in Spanish. For more information, visit: www.georgia811.com/index.php/training-education/.

For more information on safe digging and 811, go to www.call811.com. ▼



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Underground Contractors Association of Illinois Annual Convention, Pueblo Bonito Pacifica Golf & Spa Resort, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Visit www.uca.org

Feb. 2-9

Ohio Contractors Association Annual Convention, Ritz-Carlton, Aruba. Visit www.ohiocontractors.org

Feb. 3-4

Horizontal Directional Drilling Academy: Underground Utility Infrastructure, Arizona State University SkySong Center, Scottsdale, Arizona. Visit www.hddacademy.com

Feb. 4

National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) of Iowa Annual Banquet and Leadership Seminar, Prairie Meadows Hotel and Casino, Altoona, Iowa. Visit www.nucaofiowa.com

Feb. 11

National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) of Nebraska Annual Conference, Cornhusker Marriott, Lincoln, Nebraska. Visit www.nucanebraska.com/annual-conference

Feb. 21-24

Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show, Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis. Visit www.wwettshow.com

March 1-3

Global Excavation Safety Conference, Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix. Visit globalexceptionsafetyconference.com

March 2-5

National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) Annual Convention & Exhibit, Naples Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort & Spa, San Antonio. Visit www.nuca.com/convention

March 24-26

Mid-America Trucking Show, Kentucky Expo Center, Louisville, Kentucky. Visit www.truckingshow.com

March 31- April 1

National Heavy Equipment Show, International Centre, Mississauga, Ontario. Visit www.nhes.ca

April 10-14

NASTT's No-Dig Show; Minneapolis Convention Center; Minneapolis. Visit www.nodigshow.com

April 12-13

Wastewater Equipment (WEQ) Fair, Tempe Diablo Stadium, Tempe, Arizona. Visit weqfair.com

April 22-28

World Tunnel Congress 2022, Bella Center, Copenhagen, Denmark. Visit wtc2022.dk

May 10-11

National Utility Contractors Association (NUCA) of Iowa Contractor Conference & Convention, Downtown Des Moines Marriott, Des Moines, Iowa. Visit www.nucaofiowa.com

THE LATEST: News

Felling Trailers names new sales manager

Felling Trailers appointed Joel Lindmeyer as their Great Lakes regional sales manager. In this role, he will be responsible for all sales development, activity and dealer support within Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. He will be taking over the Great Lakes region once served by Daniel "Boone" Larsen, who retired in May. Lindmeyer brings over 25 years' experience in the truck and trailer industry with a strong emphasis on sales and customer service.



Joel Lindmeyer

Zeus to collaborate with JB Poindexter's EAVX on electric work trucks

Zeus Electric Chassis and EAVX announced they will join forces to develop and commercialize innovative all-electric vocational work truck solutions. Joint development efforts will focus on integration of the JB Poindexter commercial truck bodies, utility truck bodies and vehicle cargo management systems with the Zeus Power Platform, an all-electric cab chassis. The non-exclusive collaboration agreement will initially focus on the Class 5 Zeus Z-19 and Class 6 Z-22, and then will expand to the Class 6 Z-26, all available with a variety of cab options.

VMAC celebrates 20 years of partnership with Lincoln Electric

Lincoln Electric and VMAC partnered 20 years ago on Lincoln's Air Vantage system that uses VMAC's air compressor technology. VMAC's relationship with Lincoln Electric began at a tradeshow in the summer of 1997, when one of Lincoln Electric's engineers, Nino Silvestro, discovered VMAC's UNDERHOOD air compressor. In the early 2000s, VMAC and Lincoln joined forces and began working together to develop an air compressor for Lincoln machines.

Yanmar fills president and director roles

Yanmar Compact Equipment North America announced Tate Johnson as president, Lee Thole as director of after-market and David Gannon as director of channel development. Johnson joined the organization as commercial director in September 2020, overseeing sales, national accounts, channel development and marketing. Thole brings more than 20 years' experience, with a background in parts, service and overall business operations. And Gannon joins the company with 30 years' multi-industry experience. ▼



Tate Johnson



Lee Thole



David Gannon

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