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Think outside the bucket

William Lingerfelt (right)
and Ben Langford,
Operators
Atlanta Hydrovac

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DEAL WITH THE
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Atlanta Hydrovac operator William Lingerfelt (right) uses the digging wand from the hydroexcavator while fellow operator Ben Langford holds the dig tube as he uses the remote to pothole for utilities at a job site in Marietta, Georgia. Atlanta Hydrovac, founded seven years ago, has grown to 13 trucks servicing all of Georgia. The company has 30 employees and offers services such as potholing and daylighting, slot trenching, debris removal, detention pond cleaning and sewer jetting. (Photography by Matt Odom)

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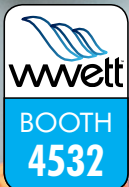
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A Tale of Two Sides

WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS GO RIGHT, OR WRONG ON THAT JOB SITE YOU AND YOUR TEAM ARE ON

BY CORY DELLENBACH, EDITOR

Dig Different magazine kicks off its ninth year of publication with this issue. I'm proud of what we've been able to do with this magazine and take pride in how it looks with every issue that we produce.

I imagine you are the same with your company. You take pride in the way your crews do the work. When something doesn't go right, you aren't very happy about it and you want to try and figure out what went wrong and fix it.

WHEN THINGS GO RIGHT

What do you do when things go right? First of all, figure out what made it go right; it could be the crew that was working the job, the equipment used, or many other factors.

If it was the equipment that was used that helped the job go smoothly, then ensure that all of your crews have the same equipment and that it's in good working order. Nothing makes a job go bad faster than a vacuum excavator, drill or other equipment breaking down. By making all of the equipment the same, it ensures that crews can operate any equipment in the fleet.

When things are going right, be sure to acknowledge that with the crew working that job. They need to hear when they do something good for the company, not only when something goes wrong. By praising them for the good work they do, you're boosting their morale and that could trickle down to the rest of the team.

If a certain employee or team continues to do great work, maybe it's time to say thank you in other ways. Like the form of a bonus or an extra day off. Let the employees know of these possible rewards for doing a good job, getting jobs done on time and without error. You might

see production increase and more if they know a reward could be won.

WHEN THINGS DON'T GO RIGHT

We've all at those jobs too where something doesn't go right. Equipment breakdowns, crew members calling in, delayed materials for the work — it could be any of those.

The important thing here is not to lose it yourself. Some of this stuff might be unpreventable. Hopefully you've built some extra time into the job schedule to account for some of this. If not, you'll learn real fast.

Make sure you have extra equipment or parts ready just in case of an equipment breakdown, if you have a crew member who consistently calls in, have a chat with him or her and find out what is going on, maybe it can be prevented, or maybe some other course of action needs to happen. There isn't a lot you can do about delayed materials. It seems like it's happening more and more these days, but maybe just trying to plan ahead and order extra material if you know you will need it for future jobs?

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Whether the job goes right or wrong, it's always a learning opportunity for you, your team and your company. Take the time after each job to review what went good and what didn't and how to either replicate or fix what happened.

What do you do for your team when something goes right on the job? Let me know your experiences by emailing me at editor@digdifferent.com.

Enjoy this issue! ▼

WHEN THINGS ARE GOING RIGHT, BE SURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WITH THE CREW WORKING THAT JOB. **THEY NEED TO HEAR WHEN THEY DO SOMETHING GOOD FOR THE COMPANY, NOT ONLY WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG.**



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SUPPLY CHAIN

Tips to Overcome Challenges

Supply chain issues continue to plague the construction equipment industry, and unfortunately for contractors and other equipment-intensive businesses, there is little relief in sight. This online article offers some advice for dealing with the ongoing challenges.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

"WITH THE UNPREDICTABLE COST OF FUEL, IT HAS BECOME MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER FOR CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES TO **DECREASE THEIR FUEL COSTS AND INCREASE THEIR FUEL SECURITY.**"

5 Ways On-Site Fuel Storage Can Improve Job Site Efficiency
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CONFINED-SPACE EMERGENCIES

Review Your Rescue Plan

Even the most experienced technicians need continual training in confined-space entry procedures. As a part of that training, every crew should have a confined-space rescue plan in case of an emergency so workers can test the space before entering and quickly leave if it becomes unsafe.

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BUSINESS EXPANSION

Excavating Company Breaks Into Paving

Not every underground company also is a paving company like Complete Underground LLC. The Virginia-based company introduced itself to the new market after contracting to do some work in a busy section of downtown Richmond — a job that required the crew to finish each day by temporarily resurfacing any open-trench areas.

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Atlanta Hydrovac

Atlanta, Georgia



OWNER: Five members of an owner group

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 7

SERVICES: Potholing and daylighting, slot trenching, debris removal, detention pond cleaning, and sewer jetting

SERVICE AREA: Georgia (and surrounding states when warranted)

EMPLOYEES: 30

WEBSITE: www.atlantahydrovac.com

One of the Atlanta Hydrovac teams on a job site in Atlanta, includes, from left, William Lingerfelt, Ben Langford, Black Daniels, Brandon Jones and general manager Greg Dubin.

PRIME OPPORTUNITY

COMPANY FORMED AFTER SEEING A NEED FOR HYDROEXCAVATION EXPERIENCES CONTINUED GROWTH AFTER SIX YEARS THROUGH DEDICATED CREWS AND LEADERSHIP

STORY: GILES LAMBERTSON PHOTOS: MATT ODOM

In 2015, five people in the Atlanta, Georgia, area looked around and saw an area underserved by hydrovac companies. The group was involved in several facets of the construction industry — from erosion control to site development to demolition — and encountered few vacuuming trucks in their workdays. Just two firms in the metro area had trucks slicing through Mother Earth, sucking up material and carting it away.

Seeing opportunity, the group bought a second-hand Vactor HXX (TRUVAC), a venerable model on a Kenworth four-axle chassis with a 1,200-gallon water tank and 12-cubic yard debris body, and launched Atlanta Hydrovac. They hired someone to manage the new business. However, after only one year, the arrangement wasn't working out to the point that owners considered axing the enterprise.

Then Greg Dubin (pronounced doobin) entered the picture. "I heard through a friend that the group was looking for someone to run the company and I looked into it," Dubin says. He had worked in the industry for a dozen years at that point, most recently in the natural gas pipeline industry. Six years later, the 40-year-old is still general manager of fast-growing Atlanta Hydrovac — and a very busy man.

At the start of the workday, he typically is at the company shop in the Atlanta suburb of Powder Springs

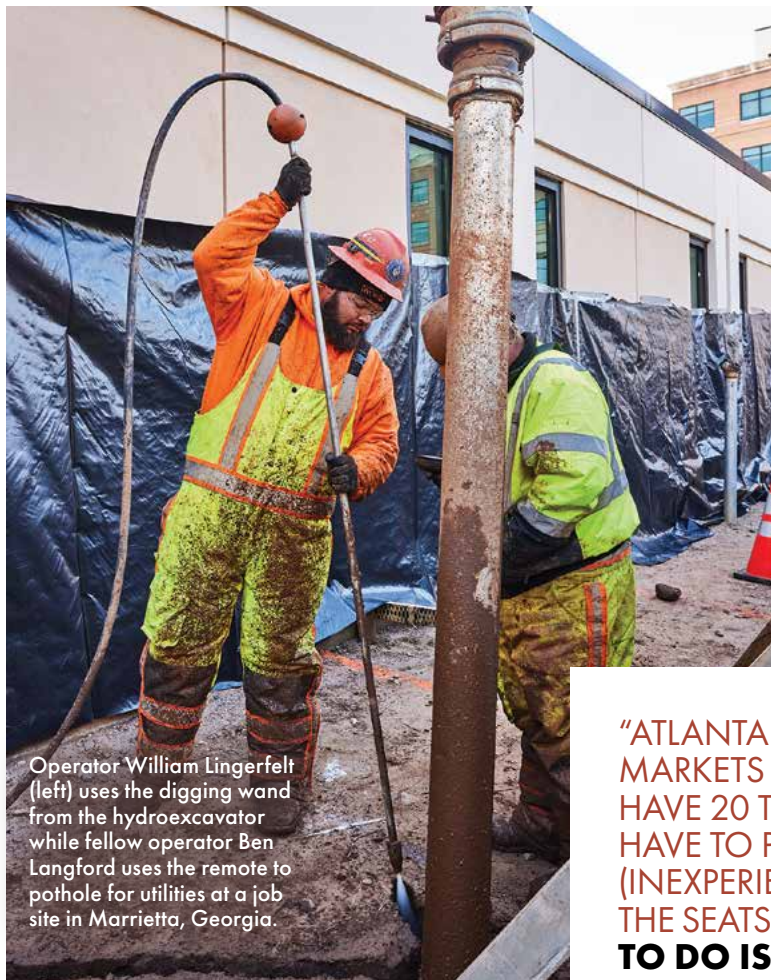
to see crews roll out on their assignments before rolling out on his own. On the day he was interviewed, Dubin met a client for breakfast, then sat for the interview before working up two bids, calling some other clients, checking in with a crew, and driving five miles to a work site and another 40 miles to meet with a vendor.

Asked if such a schedule doesn't make him sometimes wish he were relaxing at the working end of a vacuuming hose somewhere, Dubin responded that he gets in his hose time, too. "I've been on the hose multiple times," he says. "I'll show up with a pizza sometimes and do some digging while the crew takes a pizza break."

The general manager knows his limits. One of his first hires when he started managing the company was Brandon Jones, an experienced hydrovac operator who oversees scheduling and field operations. Another key assistant is Blake Daniel, who came aboard as a crew foreman but has been promoted to safety officer and operations coordinator.

BUILDING A FLEET

The fleet of trucks at Atlanta Hydrovac now numbers 13, with the company adding one or two trucks a year. The workload justifies even more rolling stock, Dubin says, but he doesn't have qualified operators to run them. "Atlanta is one of the hottest markets right



Operator William Lingerfelt (left) uses the digging wand from the hydroexcavator while fellow operator Ben Langford uses the remote to pothole for utilities at a job site in Marietta, Georgia.



A remote operates the GapVax HX56 hydroexcavator boom.

"ATLANTA IS ONE OF THE HOTTEST MARKETS RIGHT NOW. WE COULD HAVE 20 TRUCKS, BUT I WOULD HAVE TO PUT WARM BODIES (INEXPERIENCED OPERATORS) IN THE SEATS. THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO IS PROVIDE CLIENTS WITH A BAD EXPERIENCE AND BAD VALUE."

Greg Dubin

now. We could have 20 trucks, but I would have to put warm bodies (inexperienced operators) in the seats. The last thing I want to do is provide clients with a bad experience and bad value."

Eight of the company's owned vac trucks are the Vactor HXX, the model with which the company began. Yet another HXX is a long-term rental. The company also owns two combo vac trucks — a Vactor 2100 and a 2100i. Why did the company go with Vactor instead of another brand?

"At the time, they were the closest supplier with a shop, about 60 miles away in Greenville," Dubin says. The company didn't have a mechanic or maintenance facility or an equipment yard then. It was parking its trucks overnight at a dump. Consequently, the proximity of Vactor's shop was a calling card. "We needed someone nearby."

That's not to say the trucks themselves weren't otherwise appealing to Atlanta Hydrovac. "Every brand has its strengths and flaws," the general manager says. "Overall, we are happy with Vactor products."

The situation changed four years ago when the company built a 100-foot-by-60-foot facility, large enough to handle simultaneous maintenance on five trucks. Mechanics and a full-time shop manager staff it. With the exceptions of major engine overhauls and transmission work, the company's vac trucks and field support vehicles no longer have to make the run to Greenville.

The company has also added two GapVax hydroexcavators to its fleet. In the equipment yard are two GapVax HX56 multipurpose wet/dry vacuum rigs with 15-cubic-yard debris bodies. A 2022 version of the unit is on order.

AN ARRAY OF WORK

Dubin has a flexible description of his customer base. "Anyone who puts a bucket in the ground is on my possible client list," he says.

A majority of customers are utility, site and general contractors. A few are residential developers. Natural gas utility companies have long-term arrangements with Atlanta Hydrovac for periodic work. Even one-off contracts sometimes lead to

company trucks working at a job site for six or seven months.

Company crews are busy, daylighting and potholing and trenching. They also regularly are found at water detention ponds, which they clean according to federal mandates for such bodies of water. In addition, a dozen times a year, when the size of a contract warrants it, the company will send a crew out of state.

Is there a bread-and-butter call from a customer, a frequent task that is the backbone of business? "Our bread and butter is any excavation, from potholing to water lines to whatever" says the ever-practical general manager. "Anything you need, we can handle it."

A Family Bond

How many companies talk about employees and management working together like family? It might be easier to list the companies that don't make such a claim. Atlanta Hydrovac's assertion of family unity seems especially strong, however, as a couple of examples show.

"I heavily promote a family atmosphere here," says Greg Dubin, general manager of the company based in Atlanta. "As stressed as I am sometimes, I wouldn't trade it for the world. I consider this to be my family."

He says he has been told more than once that "my brother or my friend or my cousin would like working here." Sometimes they indeed end up going to work at the company. "We have a fantastic group. They didn't know each other before they came to work here and now they're hanging out on weekends."

The closeness benefits the company in ways more important than weekend camaraderie. For example, Dubin says it is easy to get his veteran equipment operators to train new hires because the old hands have bought into the notion that they will be more secure in their jobs and have it easier at work if they increase the skill level of everyone. That's a very family-centric sentiment.

In July, this family bond was tested and found secure when an employee, Adam Cleveland, was killed away from work in a motorcycle accident. Dubin says the incident "was one of the hardest things I have ever gone through and had to deal with."

His hope was that Cleveland's co-workers would reach out to the stricken family. They did. "It was important for us to be there for the family through all of it and most of my staff did what they could. It made me proud."

The trucks also clean up construction sites. Rather than dig into undisturbed soil, cleanup crews vacuum existing material into debris tanks and haul it away. Example: A concrete pour for one contractor didn't work out — the pavement cracked and needed repouring. So, the concrete was broken up and Atlanta Hydrovac was called to remove underlying soil to create a firmer base for a new slab.

The GapVax trucks have a different calling: sewer cleaning. "The two trucks are running nonstop doing sewers every day. We do the camera work and the cleaning and the testing. We offer pretty much a turnkey package for sewer customers," says Dubin. Yet the service is barely mentioned on the company website, on purpose. "We try not to put out too much that we do that kind of work. Customers already have a two-week wait for us to get there."

Crew members are each assigned to a truck, with one floater to cover absences. About half of the men work exclusively with hydrovac rigs performing traditional excavations. Six are authorized to operate the GapVax jetter units. "We have some phenomenal operators," says the general manager.

When COVID bore down a year ago, the owners group huddled and put policies in place that were workable and reasonable. Everyone in the company experienced a learning curve as they dealt with the virus in a safe way. "We had a couple of spikes during the period," Dubin says. "About this time last year, we had eight guys go down at the same time. Our operations manager and shop manager each spent a week on trucks."

Workplace safety of a more ordinary kind is on Dubin's mind these days. Company crews recently received a new safety handbook. A client-friend of Dubin's is safety director for a large contractor in the Southeast and helped the company put together the manual.

"Safety training has been our push this year," Dubin says. "How to train people to be safe, what programs you need to have in place and so on. We have been very fortunate to have people willing to help us with our program."

While the company hasn't experienced any major injuries, there have been minor scrapes. For instance, an operator on a hydrovac truck grazed the grille of his truck and a sharp edge gouged his arm.

"So, now we have a plastic sheet on each grille so that doesn't happen again," Dubin says. "We have a safety meeting each week, analyze jobs each morning for safety concerns, and have monthly meetings. Going forward, we're going to continue to promote being safe."

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Good working relationships rather than lowest bids are what keep Atlanta Hydrovac working, according to Dubin. He says he sometimes gets calls along the lines of, 'Hey, we're told we ought to use you and we need you for this job.' Such word-of-mouth payoffs are a product of the general manager investing time each day with clients. He calls them to be assured that everything is going well or, if a job is complete, just to say hello.



Atlanta Hydrovac general manager Greg Dubin (right) stands nearby a crew potholing for utilities using one of the company's GapVax HX56 units. Dubin joined the company a year after it was started.

"I HEAVILY PROMOTE A FAMILY ATMOSPHERE HERE. AS STRESSED AS I AM SOMETIMES, I WOULDN'T TRADE IT FOR THE WORLD. I CONSIDER THIS TO BE MY FAMILY."

Greg Dubin

"I am big on face-to-face communication, and I spend a lot of time on the phone. I call 50% of my clients every day," he says. Think about that: Half of his clients hear from him every day! That kind of regular dialogue spills over to create goodwill toward Atlanta Hydrovac crews. "So many clients are on a first-name basis with my guys. The best kind of call I get is when a client phones to say he wants this particular operator or that operator back on his job site the next day."

Cultivating and maintaining personal connections dovetails with Dubin's desire for the company to have "organic" growth — that is, to respond to customer demand so competently and agreeably that customers keep calling back for more. He believes confidence in his crews and in the company's product ultimately is what separates Atlanta Hydrovac from its rivals.

He quotes a mentor who taught him the core value of working relationships. "He would tell me, if you keep doing what you're doing, you're going to be fine. What you tell the client is the truth. You show up on time. And you communicate on a daily basis. That's how you build relationships in this industry." ▼

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PHOTO BY SCOTTEISEN

Costs of operating equipment such as this John Deere excavator have increased this year due to the rise in fuel prices. There are things you can do to help with costs, such as tracking software, regular maintenance, switching to a hybrid or even just shopping around for a better price.

6 Tips for Dealing With Rising Prices at the Pump

FROM SHOPPING AROUND TO CONVERTING TO CNG, THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS A COMPANY CAN MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF FUEL PRICES

BY CONEXPO-CON/AGG

No one in the construction industry needs to be made aware of rising diesel prices over the past year. They've felt the pain. Through the first week in July, the average price of diesel fuel was nearly 70% higher than the year prior.

There's no single magic bullet to reduce fuel costs, improve fuel efficiency or help you navigate through these unprecedented times; however, a group of strategies can certainly help.

1. SHOP AROUND

Roberta Wright, CEM and fleet coordinator for the city of Lynchburg, Virginia, has learned to shop around when it comes to fuel prices. In 2018, when she discovered she could get a better price from other vendors than the vendor on contract, she broke the contract and started to get quotes for every load of fuel. The net savings added up to more than \$103,000 over five years.

With an increasing number of supply chain issues, this year Wright has returned to contract purchasing, but with a twist. She asked participating vendors to show documentation of what they paid for the fuel, plus their constant delivery fees and the total price per gallon of fuel for each load. "It's not that I am trying to undercut everyone. It's my job to get the lowest price."

While your business may not have the buying power of a municipality, the point is to keep vendors honest by keeping the fuel pricing transparent. "Anyone can do it," says Wright.

"IF A MACHINE ISN'T BEING OPERATED IN THE OPTIMAL MODE (ECO, PRODUCTION, ETC.) OR IN THE OPTIMAL GEAR, IT WON'T ACHIEVE MAXIMUM FUEL EFFICIENCY."

Larry Herman

If you're fueling at retail, several apps can help you identify the lowest price for gas and diesel near you such as Gas Buddy and Drivvo.

2. TRACK FUEL COSTS

Wright highly recommends fuel management software to help managers keep an eye on costs.

Reports from FuelMaster software show the vehicle number, who fueled the vehicle, the number of gallons, date, time, pump and product. She adds in the fuel costs which change every time they load their two on-site tanks.

"Having some type of monitoring system reduces theft," says Wright. When she sees fuel efficiency decreasing, she can have the maintenance team identify any issues.

3. DIG INTO TELEMATICS

Telematic data offers valuable insight into fuel efficiency and machine utilization. "Across the industry, telematics data is often underutilized," says

Larry Herman Jr., telematic support supervisor at RDO Equipment Co., which represents CONEXPO-CON/AGG exhibitors John Deere and Vermeer.

According to Herman, many factors can contribute to fuel burn rate and excessive fuel consumption. "Telematics systems, like John Deere's JDLink, can track utilization data including idle time, fuel consumed while in idle, and compare that data across the fleet to identify opportunities for improvement," says Herman. JDLink's Machine Analyzer tool allows managers to compare data for the entire fleet, specific groups of equipment or machine types.

Another area to focus on are the gears or modes the machine is being operated in. "If a machine isn't being operated in the optimal mode (eco, production, etc.) or in the optimal gear, it won't achieve maximum fuel efficiency," Herman says.

According to Herman, John Deere's JDLink system allows managers to see where their machines are hitting key utilization on job sites. This is based on machine load factors, engine loads and gearing. "Too much hard utilization and you are wearing the machine and burning more fuel," says Herman. "Too low utilization and you are burning excessive fuel where a smaller machine could better perform that work."

With telematics data in hand, managers and fore-people have the information they can use to coach their operators to maximize productivity with utilization.

Herman encourages managers to sit down with a specialist at the dealer who can offer in-person or remote support to help customers delve into their data and capabilities. The answers aren't always clear-cut.

"Auto-idle/shutdown can be beneficial in some situations, but not every situation as each business and use-case is different," says Jacob Koon, an RDO telematics consultant based in Texas. "For example, an excavator on a pipeline job may be continually digging and have relatively low idle. That machine may be a good candidate for auto-shutdown because its job is to be constantly "working." However, another excavator on that same job may have very high idle because it's being used to hold the pipe in place while it's being attached."

4. BE TRANSPARENT WITH CUSTOMERS

California-based Graniterock burns through approximately 3 million gallons of diesel fuel each year, producing and delivering concrete and other materials to customers in the San Francisco Bay area.

"We pride ourselves on setting a price and sticking to it," says Rich Sacher, executive vice president of the Materials division. "However, this year, we could never keep up with the velocity of change."

As a result, the company did something it has never done before: It instituted a fuel surcharge. The fuel surcharge is based on a publicly available data source and adjusted monthly.

According to Sacher, Graniterock chose a fuel charge because they believe it is the fairest option that offers full transparency to their customers. To ease the burden, they stood behind customers with long-term commitments.

"Anytime you have a challenge in a supply relationship or a contractual relationship, it forces you to reach out and challenge each other," says Sacher. "Customers appreciate that the fuel surcharge is something they can clearly show to their own customers." The company announced the surcharge in a letter to customers and explained the decision in both a video and podcast.

Across the industry, fuel surcharges have become more common. In some cases, contractors and government agencies are delaying projects and/or spreading out work over a longer time period in the hopes that fuel prices drop and work can be completed more efficiently.

5. CONVERT TO HYBRIDS

With compressed natural gas priced at \$2.52 per gallon, converting your trucks to run on CNG and gas, or CNG and diesel can bring significant savings, all while reducing emissions. Conversion kits from Green Energy Solutions effectively convert your trucks to dual-fuel hybrids, running approximately 20-30% CNG.

According to Business Development Manager Kyle Flint, one of their clients, Oklahoma-based B&H Construction, has seen fuel costs go from \$11,600 per employee to \$4,800 per employee after converting most of their truck fleet. "Everything more than a half-ton has been converted," says Flint.

"WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON SETTING A PRICE AND STICKING TO IT. HOWEVER, THIS YEAR, WE COULD NEVER KEEP UP WITH THE VELOCITY OF CHANGE."

Rich Sacher

Conversion kits are easily installed and include a tank package suited to the vehicle, plus hoses, tubes, fittings, pressure regulator fuel delivery system, sensors and processors. The cost for a diesel assist kit is approximately \$15,000-\$20,000, while the cost for a gas kit is \$13,500-\$15,500. There are a number of government incentives for organizations that convert their vehicles to CNG because it is a more renewable, clean-burning biofuel.

6. DON'T OVERLOOK MAINTENANCE

It's never a good idea to skip on machine maintenance, especially those tasks with a direct impact on fuel efficiency. According to RDO's Herman, air filters should be cleaned daily and changed regularly. Fuel filters should be monitored for water or sediment that could lead to poor fuel economy. Lastly, be sure to track tension and tire pressures are set to the proper points to avoid overworking your machines and burning more fuel than is necessary. ▼

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Tips for Successful On-the-Job Training

ESTABLISHING A CLEARLY DEFINED TRAINING ROUTINE WILL GET NEW HIRES UP TO SPEED FASTER

BY KATE ZABRISKIE

I'm overwhelmed. I learned a new piece of equipment today. The person showing me what to do knew everything. The problem I had was the deep dives. He spent so much time on troubleshooting techniques. It was just too much for my first day."

"I can follow the steps, but I have no idea why I'm doing what I'm doing. I sort of feel like a trained monkey. I hope nothing goes wrong because I will have no clue how to fix it if something does."

Despite our best efforts, it's not as easy as it looks to get the training equation right. We train too early, we train too much or we make a host of other errors. While some of us learn from our mistakes, many of us practice a cycle of rinse and repeat as we make the same blunders year after year.

The good news is it doesn't have to be this way. With some careful planning and follow-through, you can avoid problems many people will encounter again and again.

STRATEGY ONE: KEEP TRAINING RELEVANT AND IMMEDIATELY APPLICABLE

Countless onboarding programs attempt to teach everything a person would ever want to know or need to know about a job in the first few hours, days or weeks. The information is important, but it has no immediate value. Subsequently, learners become overwhelmed, and then they don't have opportunities to apply or reinforce what they've learned for weeks or even months.

Good training coordinators know the value of careful pacing, and they practice just-in-time training when they can. Ask yourself, what does my new hire need to be successful in the first day, the first week and the first month? Teach to those needs as much as possible, and save the more in-depth information for a more appropriate time. What do you need to prioritize?

STRATEGY TWO: CONNECT TO WHY AGAIN AND AGAIN

When people don't know why they are doing something, they don't understand the big picture. While they get the process at a surface level, their limited understanding potentially keeps them from following procedures later.

As a basic example, say someone is learning how to use a printer/copier/scanner/fax machine and part of the process is putting the guard up on the paper tray with jobs over 100 sheets. Without an explanation of why that's important to do, that person might take it upon themselves to skip that step back on the job. Only when papers are scattered all over the floor and have to be recollected do they realize the importance of raising the guard. And when you're training people to use equipment much more dangerous than a copier, it's important to explain the "why" for processes, especially safety procedures.

Great trainers make connections. They repeatedly explain why they're doing what they're doing, why procedures are written as they are, and so forth. Are you connecting the dots as well as you should, or could you do a better job?

STRATEGY THREE: USE MULTIPLE CHANNELS TO CEMENT LEARNING

I showed her how to do it, she did it, and now she's trained. Maybe that's true for the simple stuff, but for the complex processes and procedures, multichannel encoding reigns supreme.

For example, show trainees in real time how to complete a process. Then do it again, at the same time providing a narration track while the learner takes notes. Next, have her read aloud the notes she's taken. Finally, have the trainee demonstrate the procedure.

The multichannel approach allows learners to see, to hear, to write, to speak and to do whatever process they are learning. Depending on the learner, some senses may be more powerful than others. And in rare cases where there is no preference, repetition wins the day. What can you do differently to engage more senses?

STRATEGY FOUR: TEACH WITH REFERENCE TOOLS

It's one thing to conquer a task during a class setting or one-on-one coaching, but it's entirely another to reproduce those results on the job.

People who have mastered the training function know to develop and teach reference tools in addition to processes themselves.



Kate Zabriskie

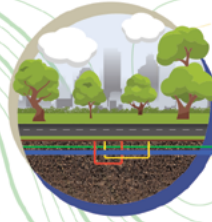
GREAT TRAINERS MAKE CONNECTIONS. ... ARE YOU CONNECTING THE DOTS AS WELL AS YOU SHOULD, OR COULD YOU DO A BETTER JOB?

Ask yourself what kinds of support you need to develop. Decide where you need to incorporate them in your training plans. Those who learn how to solve problems themselves are worth their weight in gold. In addition to strong productivity, these people are also usually happier and more motivated than those who don't have the tools to stand on their own feet.

Four strategies and none hard: Make training relevant, connecting to why, repeating information using different channels and incorporating the tools learners should use to solve problems on the job. If done deliberately and with routine, you will almost certainly get a good result.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate Zabriskie is the president of Business Training Works Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. She and her team provide onsite, virtual and online soft-skills training courses and workshops to clients in the United States and internationally. For more information, visit www.businesstrainingworks.com. ▼



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BY CRAIG MANDLI

Equipment Attachments

Ditch Witch MT164

Built to help power and fiber optic contractors easily create a clean, narrow trench in one pass, the Ditch Witch MT164 microtrencher attachment offers maximum compact cable installation performance. Equipped with a standard hydraulic plunge and option to offset the frame, the MT164 provides variable depth control and gives contractors the ability to cut right up next to a curb. It can trench up to 2 inches wide by 16 inches deep, allowing crews to cut deep enough to get through a standard-sized curb. It can also be set up for a push or pull application depending on the job site. The microtrencher's compact footprint provides operators increased flexibility with minimal disruption to surrounding infrastructure in urban areas.

580-336-4402; www.ditchwitch.com



MB Crusher BF90.3

The BF90.3 crusher from MB Crusher is a popular midsize 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



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ASV Holdings offers smooth CTL Turf Tracks for minimized damage to soft, delicate surfaces. With a combination of greater ground surface area and the benefits of ASV's Posi-Track undercarriage, the tracks can minimize damage to topsoil and root systems. They have a smooth design and are manufactured from a special blend that resists cracking, provides traction and maximizes overall life. The rubber tracks eliminate corrosion because they contain no steel cords. Durability is maximized through seven layers of embedded puncture, cut and stretch-resistant material. These turf tracks are available for the RT-25, RT-40, RT-50, RT-65 and VT-70 high-output models.

800-205-9913; www.asvllc.com



Easy-Kleen Pressure Systems Wildcat Heaters

Wildcat Heaters high-pressure, oil-fired hot-water/steam heaters and hydraulic pump systems from Easy-Kleen Pressure Systems are designed for reliability and efficiency, and are installation-ready for vacuum trucks and hydroexcavators. A full range of heater options includes dry steam, redundancy packages, schedule 80 and 160 stainless steel or A53 boiler pipe, and fine-tuned temperature and flow-control systems. All coils are manufactured in-house, with CRN boiler-approved coils now available. Heaters can be designed for mounting



in a cabinet or supplied as a completed cabinet unit. They are CSA and ETL approved. Hydraulic pumping systems are available.

800-315-5533; www.easykleen.com

Excavators

John Deere 350 and 380 P-Tier

The 350 P-Tier and 380 P-Tier midsize excavators from John Deere offer SmartGrade technology as a factory option and field upgrade kits, and the user can choose from 2D or 3D guidance, or 2D or 3D SmartGrade Ready Control. Overdig protection limits the bucket's cutting edge from going below the target design surface. Visibility around the machines has been improved with the option of a right, rear and left camera system with LED surround lighting that provides 270-degree visibility and is integrated into the cab's primary display. In an effort to lower daily operating costs, the machines' fuel economy is up 7% compared to previous models via electric on-demand cooling fans that reduce engine load, in-line after treatment for less restriction and system complexity, and increased front piping diameter to cut down hydraulic restriction.

800-503-3373; www.johndeere.com



Volvo Construction Equipment EWR130E

The Volvo Construction Equipment EWR130E midsize wheeled excavator provides a short front and rear swing radius without compromising on lifting performance or digging force, according to Volvo. The rear swing is 5 feet 1 inch and a front swing of 5 feet 11 inches. Coupled with new four-wheel steering and in-line outrigger options, the machine is easy to control and stable, Volvo reports. Its uses include urban jobs where frequent roading is required, and confined job sites or roads where traffic safety is paramount. The inline outriggers help position and stabilize the machine in tight spaces. A divided blade option provides additional leveling 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 Minotaur DL550

CASE Construction Equipment's Minotaur DL550 compact dozer loader weighs in at more than 18,000 pounds and works with 114 hp, delivering dozing and grading performance and powerful site loading capabilities. It has a chassis-integrated C-frame with a six-way dozer blade. The C-frame hydraulically couples into both the chassis of the machine as well as the attachment coupler. This design provides the stability and smooth operating plane of a small dozer while ensuring that all operating power is channeled through the whole body of the machine, providing greater performance and long-term reliability. It's also available with an optional, fully integrated ripper for tearing up tough terrain to simplify dozing and earthmoving operations.

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Yanmar Compact Equipment wheel loaders

Yanmar Compact Equipment's compact wheel loaders include comfort features across the line, including a spacious cab and dual doors for easy entry from each side. The machines provide a combination of power, comfort and compactness for applications that require fast travel speeds, high lift capacity and a small turning radius. The lineup includes the V4-7, V8, V10 and V12. Operating weights for the line range from 8,422 to 15,432 pounds. The loaders feature bucket capacities of 0.65 cubic yards to 2.35 cubic yards and lift capacities of 7,451 to 15,962 pound-force. Fast travel speeds improve job site productivity, ranging from 11.8 to 22 mph. Hydraulic quick couplers allow for fast and easy changing of attachments.

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2. CASE Construction Equipment E Series excavators

The new E Series of excavators from CASE Construction Equipment features seven new models. A 10-inch LCD display serves as the control center for the machine, providing greater visibility to cameras, machine data and controls. Views can be customized, including rear sideview and Max View perspectives. Hydraulic Flow Control Balance allows operators to set arm in and boom up, and arm in and swing flow and priority to their preference. New engines from FPT Industrial offer increased horsepower, torque, transient response and emissions simplification as well as extended service intervals. **866-542-2736; www.casece.com**

3. Komatsu Machine Control 2.0 for PC490LCi-11 excavator

Designed to offer contractors productivity-enhancing automation on a larger excavator, Komatsu has introduced its Machine Control 2.0 on the PC490LCi-11 excavator. An excellent match for excavation, trenching, slope work or fine grading, the excavator helps minimize over-excavation to allow operators to dig straight to grade quickly and accurately. New features on the iMC 2.0 include an upgraded 10.4-inch monitor with increased memory capacity, processing speed and pinch to zoom functionality in a smaller lightweight package. And the new bucket angle hold control automatically holds the bucket angle to the design surface during arm operation, enabling operators to perform finish grading using only arm input. **847-437-5800; www.komatsuamerica.com**

4. Brokk launches My Brokk online support platform

Brokk launched My Brokk, a comprehensive online support platform that offers multiple services in a single resource. The My Brokk portal offers two new online services: a library of manuals and other technical

documents, a web shop for ordering parts and attachments and access to Brokk Connect, Brokk's robot and fleet management system. The web shop also offers online purchasing for the first time, providing faster order processing and shortened delivery times. The new portal makes it easy for customers to access essential services any time of day from any device or location. **360-794-1277; www.brokk.com**

5. All new Brandt HX120 hydroexcavator

The all-new Brandt HX120 hydroexcavator is a high-output unit with a 1,150-gallon water tank and 11.6-cubic-yard debris tank. Nimble enough for urban settings, the HX120 helps contractors work more efficiently with maximized legal load weights, quicker debris loading and unloading time, and the capacity to take on larger jobs without load weight concerns. Real-time measurement of water and overall truck weight enables operators to make quick, informed decisions, which reduces the risk of damage or overweight penalties. The new unit features a 28-foot boom reach with 340-degree rotation. **866-427-2638; www.brandt.ca**

6. Cat Pumps hydroexcavating pumps

Over 50 years of high-pressure pump manufacturing experience has earned Cat Pumps a reputation of producing the highest quality, longest lasting pumps for every market 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 8.0 gpm at 3,000 psi; Model 660 with 10.0 gpm at 3,000 psi; and Model 3560 with 20.0 gpm at 4,000 psi, or 25.0 gpm at 3,000 psi. **763-780-5440; www.catpumps.com**

7. EasyDig 4-foot trench cage for hydrovacs

Designed to be used with a hydrovac, EasyDig's 4-foot-diameter circular trench cage is new to the excavation industry. A hand-movable aluminum trench cage breaks down into half-circle pieces that can be moved in the back of a pickup. Each half circle is less than 50 pounds. The latest design is engineered to 28-foot depth, depending on soil conditions. With a built-in access/egress ladder, EasyDig was created specifically for sewer and water utility repairs. This latest version comes with a lid that locks onto the trench cage to keep the excavation safe from passerby. **855-485-3279; www.easydig.ca** ▼

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This Issue's Feature:

Rig drill provides more power with less noise

BY CRAIG MANDLI

As horizontal directional drilling increases in popularity, drills that can handle a larger workload are populating the market. **Vermeer** recently unveiled its latest generation of **maxi HDD rig drills** with the introduction of the 550,000-pound **D550**.

According to Clint Recker, trenchless product manager at Vermeer, this powerful large drill leads its class with 100,000 ft-lbs of torque, advanced telematics and smart onboard technology and diagnostic information. Loaded with performance features and technology, the D550 crawler-mounted drill can help crews work efficiently installing large-diameter products, including oil and gas pipelines, waterlines and high-voltage electrical transmission lines at long distances.

"This latest generation maxi rig drill delivers more compared to our older Vermeer models," says Recker. "In addition to the D550 drill's class-leading torque, it can deliver a steady, ultra-slow speed control for working in challenging hard rock as well as rotation speed for boring in challenging clay conditions."

Recker says that Vermeer developed and integrated new HDD technology into the Vermeer D550 to deliver an optimal operational and service experience for contractors. The drill's onboard telematics gives drill operators and service technicians access to important diagnostics information. "It includes smart onboard technology that gives the operator and service technicians greater access to the information they need," says Recker. Operationally, the




D550 from Vermeer

D550 controls feature three different auto-drilling modes — rotation, thrust and speed. Ultra-slow speed technology delivers precise thrust control to allow drill operators to regulate weight-on-bit pressure for optimal cutting action and maximum tooling life.

In addition to new technology, the D550 also features several mechanical improvements, including a full travel vise that can be positioned up and down the rack as needed for making/breaking tooling and optimizing efficiency during casing installation. The operator can position it close to the carriage for optimal casing handling on direct installation projects. The unit's hydraulic circuit delivers the peak amount of torque at high rotational speeds while system pressures remain low to help maximize component life. Also, the drill runs substantially quieter than previous models — 111 dBA — which helps keep job site sound levels down and reduces the need for sound barriers when working in urban areas.

The D550 gets its name from its robust 550,000-pound operational thrust/pullback ability.
641-628-3141; www.vermeer.com

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THE LATEST:

News

NUCA announces winners of new STAR safety program

The National Utility Contractors Association announced the first two members who have completed the association's new safety program. BRS Richfield, North Carolina, and Concrete Cutting Systems of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are the first two construction companies to achieve the STAR program's top platinum status. The new Safety, Training, Awareness and Recognition program, or STAR, provides a venue for every company in the utility construction industry to measure the effectiveness of its safety programs and recognize how these important company programs can be improved.

Diamant Boart changing name to Husqvarna

Diamant Boart will become Husqvarna. For 85 years, Diamant Boart has served the global stone industry with high-quality diamond tools. In 2002, the company became part of Husqvarna Group's Construction Division. The Husqvarna brand will be implemented over the coming months but the Diamant Boart trademark will be kept and used for a selected range of products. The Husqvarna Stone Diamond Tools business will continue to build on the heritage and proud tradition of Diamant Boart in the global stone industry, while leveraging Husqvarna's innovation. ▼

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Happenings

CALENDAR

Jan. 22-27

Underground Contractors Association of Illinois Annual Convention, Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, Aruba. Visit www.uca.org

Feb. 7-9

Underground Construction Technology International Conference & Exhibition, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida. Visit www.uctonline.com

Feb. 14-16

Global Excavation Safety Conference, The Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Florida. Visit www.globalexavationsafetyconference.com

Feb. 16-17

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

Feb. 20-23

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

March 14-18

CONEXPO-CON/AGG, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. Visit www.conexpoconagg.com

March 15-23

Ohio Contractors Association Annual Convention, The Hotel ARTS, Barcelona, Spain. Visit www.ohiocontractors.org

March 30 – April 1

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

April 17-21

Common Ground Alliance Conference & Expo, Caribe Royale, Orlando, Florida. Visit www.cgaconference.com

April 30 – May 4

NASTT's No-Dig Show, Oregon Convention Center, Portland, Oregon. Visit www.nodigshow.com

Dig Different welcomes your contributions to our Happenings column. To recognize members of your team, please send notices of new hires, promotions, service milestones, certifications or achievements. We also invite your national, state or local associations and organizations to post notices, news items and learning opportunities. Send contributions to editor@digdifferent.com. ▼

DOWN & DIRTY

What's Your Story?

Dig Different welcomes news about your tough excavation, pipe bursting, trenching, boring or tunneling job for the Down & Dirty column.

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