

# PIPELINE

piping systems inc.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

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## Direct Threats And The iGens by Pauline L. Lally

**O**ur senior staff recently participated in a workshop to help identify how we can better serve our clients. As part of the exercise, we participated in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis of our company. One of the threats that we identified (and probably the most important for the future), was "Lack of qualified techs entering the trades."

Media, and specifically trade magazines, have been sounding alarm bells about the lack of technicians entering the trades over the last 10-15 years. Recently, I heard a "Ted Talk" about our growing population and how a large majority will be entering retirement age in the next 20 years. In Italy, it has been determined that there will not be enough people to work to support the retirement obligations of the future retirees. To avoid this problem, Germany has taken steps to build an education system that will enhance and attract teenagers to pursue a trade. The U.S. is a little behind on this issue. As part of the boomer generation we must ensure that the educational system promotes trade skills.



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Babies born during the 1990s have been referred to as Generation Z, The Homeland Generation and the iGens. So, how do we attract the iGens? Studies have found that the iGens

are more entrepreneurial than their predecessors, they are less motivated by money than Generation Y and they are more loyal. So that means, as business owners, we need to give them guidelines and then let them work with an entrepreneurial mindset within that space, while fostering a work environment that allows them to "be their own boss." If they are less motivated by money, we need to compensate them in other ways, such as flexible work schedules and a system that provides meaningful recognition. If in fact they are more loyal than their predecessors, we must let them know that we appreciate their loyalty and

never, ever take advantage of that.

When you come down to it, this generation is really not all that different that the generations before. What I described earlier are really good business practices. What are you going to do to attract them?

## Testing With Kidde Fire Systems

Kidde Fire Systems is a global leader in fire protection—protecting people, property and processes from fire hazards. Their fire protection solutions include intelligent smoke and heat detectors, conventional and networked system controls, and the largest portfolio of fire suppression agents in the industry. And, it is all designed, installed and maintained by Kidde Fire Systems' highly skilled

Authorized Distributor network.

We've done business with Kidde for nearly 15 years. Recently our technicians impressed them by their performance. Here is a note I received from Stephen Bobby in their Ashland, Massachusetts, plant:

*"Again, Piping Systems came through huge for Kidde Fire Systems. On our recent tests in May and June, Mike Ramsey and Bruce Bouchard came up BIG again for us. As*

*always, they worked straight out to get the job done, and more importantly got the results we needed to have a successful outcome. These guys follow direction, come up with better ways of laying out pipe systems and, on down-time, found things to do to keep busy. You have two hard-working employees. We would have them again in a heartbeat, and probably will in the future. Thanks again for another successful round of testing!"*



**piping systems inc.**

32 Mill Street (Rt. 79) • P.O. Box 409  
Assonet, MA 02702 • [psi@PipingSystemsInc.com](mailto:psi@PipingSystemsInc.com)  
TEL: 508/644-2221 • FAX: 508/644-2447

Scan this QR Code with your smartphone to easily find us online

[www.PipingSystemsInc.com](http://www.PipingSystemsInc.com)





# Build Your Leadership Image With Style

Style can be as important as substance to effective management. You need to project the right image to your employees, and that depends on more than selecting the right power suit. Here's how to manage how people see you:

- **Examine your current image.** Ask a trusted colleague to tell you how you're viewed in your workplace and industry. What strengths do people associate with you? Where do you need to improve?
- **Craft your image selectively.** Don't try to showcase everything at once. Pick your most important skills and traits to emphasize. Identify those you want to downplay. Then ask yourself, "How do I want other people to talk about me when I'm not present?"
- **Analyze the field.** Look at other leaders in your organization and profession to determine what makes them stand out so you can emulate their approach. How do they dress? What skills do they demonstrate? How do they treat people?

## Little-Known Facts About Books and Language

The world of books, reading and words is full of surprises. Take a look at some of these stories about writers and other creative people from the website, *Buzzfeed.com*:

- *Green Eggs & Ham.* This Dr. Seuss classic was written on a bet. Publisher Bennett Cerf wagered \$50 that Ted Geisel couldn't write a children's book using fewer than 50 different words. Geisel won.
- Thomas Jefferson, the third U.S. president (and writer of the Declaration of Independence) invented more than 100 "American" words to distinguish U.S. writing from British usage—including the word "anglophobia."
- *Gone with the Wind.* Margaret Mitchell began work on her first (and only) novel after recovering from an auto accident. During her convalescence, she read so many books from the local library that her husband got tired of going back and forth—so he suggested she try writing a book of her own.
- *Amazon.com.* The first book sold on the now-dominant website was *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies*, by Douglas Hofstadter. Its subject: whether machines could be taught to think like people.

## Go Fly A Kite!

The mayor of a small town was walking through the park one day when she spotted a little boy flying an enormous and beautiful kite high in the sky. Intrigued, she walked up and asked who was responsible for the keeping the kite in the air.

"I am," the boy said. "I made this kite all by myself, and I got it up into the air on my own."

Then they both heard a whisper in the air. "I am the wind," the voice said. "I keep the kite in the air by holding it aloft with my breath."

A third voice, high-pitched and vibrant, joined in. "I am the kite's tail," said this voice. "I keep the kite stable as it flies through the air. Without me it would crash to the Earth!"

Moral: Cooperation and teamwork are essential to every endeavor.

Journalist George Plimpton wrote about his undercover experience playing what professional sport as a rank amateur in the 1966 book *Paper Lion*?

See the answer below

## Trivia On Paper

1) The TV series, *The Paper Chase*, followed the lives of students at a prestigious university majoring in what discipline?

- a) Accounting
- b) Marketing
- c) Law
- d) Economics

2) Besides paper strips and water, what other ingredient is typically used to make papier mâché?

- a) Oatmeal
- b) Flour
- c) Sugar
- d) Baking soda

3) Journalist George Plimpton wrote about his "undercover" experience playing what professional sport as a rank amateur in the 1966 book *Paper Lion*?

- a) Football
- b) Hockey
- c) Basketball
- d) Baseball

4) According to TV's *The Big Bang Theory*, Sam Kass expanded upon the traditional "Rock, Paper, Scissors" game by adding the choices of a lizard and what *Star Trek* character?

- a) Kirk
- b) Bones
- c) Sulu
- d) Spock

5) What was the name of the character played by actress Madeline Kahn in the 1973 film *Paper Moon*?

- a) Pussy Galore
- b) Lili Von Shtupp
- c) Trixie Delight
- d) Velvet Allure

—from *mental\_oss*

Answers: 1) c; 2) b; 3) a; 4) d; 5) c

# Growing Together With Benjamin Moore Paints

We recently received a note from one of our long-time clients, Benjamin Moore. We would like to share it with you:

*"PSI has the most respectful, courteous staff and technicians I have ever had the pleasure of working with. I can't say enough about PSI. They are always there for me. They are truly knowledgeable professionals in almost every area, and they can be trusted to support my needs. When you want the best, you get PSI."*

We have had the pleasure of serving the Benjamin Moore Paints facility in Milford, Massachusetts, for the last 20 years. As they've grown, changed manufacturing processes and added on to their original building, we have been there to service all of their piping needs. I guess you could say that we have grown together.

Looking back at how we were doing things 20 years ago, I marvel at how far we've come as a piping solutions provider. We have kept up with new regulations that seem to crop up continuously—new licensing requirements, building codes, OSHA regulations, computer software applications—they seem endless. While preparing for this article, I looked at my computer files that were dated back to 1995. I can't even open some of them, because the file types aren't supported anymore!

PSI has proudly served our clients since 1971. Experienced, responsible, trustworthy and rock solid. These are terms our clients have used to describe us. Isn't that what you look for in a contractor? Our proven track record demonstrates that we are the best choice for you when you need to select a piping solutions provider. Let us start building a long-term relationship with you and your company today.

## A Better Way To Look At It

**A** water bearer in China had two large pots. Each hung on the ends of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of

myself because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The bearer replied to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each possess that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. A wise leader takes each person for what they are, and looks for the good in them.

