

PIPELINE

PIPING SYSTEMS INC.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

SPRING 2017

Diman Vocational Student and Piping Systems, Inc. Make History

"Just want to let you know that I am very pleased and also impressed with the work that your team is doing here. They have been very polite and accommodating with the "disruption" of our employees. They have kept all there areas safe, clean and free of obstructions. If they thought that there may be any type of obstacle that would cause some concerns they would let me know in advance so I could inform my team, and that is very much appreciated.

You couldn't ask for a better intern. Emma was a great asset in getting the job done. She cleaned and put things away as she went. Paul and Emma work very well together. Great job in helping her with a career. She really likes working with PSI. She told me that it's a great place to work and the people are fantastic.

I agree. Please pass this along to Pauline and let them know that they are a value to your staff."

—Paul Murphy
PepsiCo
Stacy's Pita chips
Maintenance/Facility

Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School, Fall River, Massachusetts has instituted a cooperative employment program whereby students in Grade 12 spend two weeks in class and two weeks in the industry working in the occupation or trade they have been studying in school. Students are eligible to apply for the cooperative program in their last trimester of junior year and into senior year.

The Cooperative Education Program is designed to provide an opportunity to further a student's education through an actual work experience, while gaining valuable employability skills on the job. Typically, most job sites will have two students for each full-time job, thus job sharing. Students attend school for two weeks for academics and then return to their respective employers for two weeks for co-op.



Pictured left to right: Pauline L Lally, Owner, Piping Systems, Inc.; Mr. St. Michel, Proud Dad; Emma St. Michel, Student and John Pimental, HVAC Department Head, Diman High School.

During the last year, Piping Systems, Inc. has formed an agreement with Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School to hire seniors who are participating in Diman's co-op program. The program has been successful beyond our expectations.

We currently have two students from the business technology department and six students from either the plumbing, HVAC or welding departments. Piping Systems, Inc. recently made history by hiring the first female student from Diman's HVAC Department: Emma St. Michel.

At first, there were concerns about how the female would fare in a male-dominated work-force. Although we can control how the PSI team relates to each other as co-workers, that control is gone when working on a jobsite with multiple trades. Sadly, even in today's world, there is still a bias against people choosing 'non-traditional' careers. With her smile and conscientious work ethic, Emma has managed to create a positive atmosphere wherever she works. Recently, one of our clients had positive things to say about her (see sidebar at left).

Additionally, the two students from the business technology department have even taught us some shortcuts in the MS Office Products. We call that reverse mentoring! We couldn't be more proud of the students and our team!



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Set Goals Together To Maximize Performance

When employees share in setting their own goals, they're more committed and involved in achieving them. Follow this four-step process for participative goal setting:

- **Take the lead.** Yes, you're working together, but as a manager you still have the main responsibility for identifying performance targets. Start by suggesting a goal.

Ask your employee to evaluate it for anything that's unclear or inaccurate. Revise the goal if necessary.

- **Use the SMART goal approach.**

SMART goals are: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

- **Formalize the plan.**

Once you've agreed on a goal, write it down so neither of you misunderstands what's supposed to happen.

Make sure you both

know how you'll measure the employee's efforts.

- **Follow up.** Ask the employee to check in with you regularly. Agree on follow-up intervals at the outset; plan on at least four if the employee is entering new territory where his or her skills may not yet be up to par. Put a reminder on your calendar to check in if the employee doesn't come to you with a progress report on the specified date.
- **Evaluate the process.** Once the goal has been completed, meet with the employee to discuss what worked well and what didn't. Ask for suggestions about how to improve things the next time.



The 5-Second Rule May Not Be So Safe After All

We've all heard of the five-second rule: If a piece of food drops on the floor, it's safe to eat if you grab it in five seconds or less. That may not be true, though, according to an article on the *Medical News Today* website.

Researchers at Rutgers University decided to test the rule. They used four types of surfaces: stainless steel, ceramic tile, wood, and carpet. They also choose four kinds of food: watermelon, bread, bread with butter, and gummy candy. Finally, they tested four different contact times: less than a second, five seconds, 30 seconds, and 300 seconds.

They cultivated bacteria similar to salmonella and spread it on the different surfaces, allowed it to dry, then dropped each food on each surface for each designated time period. The results: The bacteria was able to contaminate the food almost instantly in every case, although with different degrees of contamination. Watermelon soaked up the most bacteria because of its moisture; the gummy treats were affected the least due to their hard surface. Nonetheless, the scientists are confident that their findings disprove the five-second rule. So you're probably safer throwing out any food on the floor.

A Cure For The Hiccups

A man walked into a drugstore and asked the pharmacist if he could give him something for the hiccups. The pharmacist promptly reached out and slapped the man's face.

"What did you do that for?" the man asked.

"You don't have the hiccups anymore, do you?" the pharmacist asked.

"No," the man said, "but my wife out in the car still does!"

Making The Bed

South African leader Nelson Mandela was known for many things, not the least of which was his humility even after he became famous around the world. Mandela always made his own bed, no matter where he traveled. One time he was visiting Shanghai, where he stayed in a very fancy hotel. Chinese hospitality requires that you allow the maid to clean your room. Doing it yourself can be regarded as an insult.

An aide tried to explain this to Mandela. In response, the leader asked for his maids to be sent up to his room. The aide talked to the hotel manager, and soon Mandela was speaking to the staff. He explained that he always made his own bed wherever he was, and the maids agreed.

"He never really cared about what great big people think of him," the aide wrote later, "but he did care about what small people thought of him."

SPEED BUMP

Dave Coverly



Safety Meeting Pointers

Regular safety meetings demonstrate the importance you and your organization place on safety. But to work, safety meetings have to address real issues and tackle them seriously. Here are some pointers:

- **Be short and specific.** Employees will have an easier time remembering two or three specific ideas rather than a dozen or more. Pick a theme for the meeting—lifting, for instance, or computer ergonomics—and cover that.
- **Ask questions.** This is your best opportunity to find out what works and what doesn't from the people who deal with safety issues every day. Ask for their input and feedback on how their jobs can be made safer.
- **Answer questions.** Always allocate time on your agenda for discussion and Q&A. If you don't have an answer, say so—but then find out and communicate your commitment to safety.
- **Provide a handout.** Always give team members something to take away with them. Even a one-page list of reminders they can post and refer to will help anchor your safety message in employees' minds.



Test Your Ethics

Decisions about ethics (what's the right thing to do when the situation isn't clear) are the toughest ones you'll face on the job. Ask these questions to find the right path:

- **What are the facts?** Make sure you know what's going on, who will be affected by the decision, and what you don't or can't know.
- **What are your options?** Consider several different solutions, weighing the consequences of each before choosing one.
- **Is it legal?** If the answer is no, find a different solution. Even if the answer is yes, continue investigating. Just because you can do X doesn't mean you should.
- **Can you justify it?** Imagine explaining your decision and the reasons behind it to a stranger. Would you be proud of what you did, or ashamed?

Punctuation Is Powerful

Maria Feodorovna, the wife of Tsar Alexander III of Russia, was known for her charitable works. According to one story, she once saved a condemned man from exile in Siberia by moving a single comma in the warrant signed by her husband.

The original document read: "Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia." The Empress moved the comma so the warrant read: "Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia." The man was saved and released.



What was the original purpose of the Leaning Tower of Pisa?

Structured Trivia

- 1) Sydney harbor bridge is an example of which kind of bridge construction?
 - a) cantilever
 - b) arch
 - c) box girder
 - d) suspension
- 2) What did the Romans build at Ostia, Boulogne, Ravenna and Dover?
 - a) temples
 - b) markets
 - c) lighthouses
 - d) walls
- 3) Which famous French engineer provided the iron skeleton for the Statue of Liberty which stands in New York harbor?
 - a) Gustave Eiffel
 - b) André Citroën
 - c) Pierre Henri Hugoniot
 - d) Henri de Dion
- 4) What was the original purpose of the Leaning Tower of Pisa?
 - a) a prison
 - b) a bell tower
 - c) a military lookout
 - d) a church

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

Core Values and Mission Statement

Have you ever taken the time to think about and write down your personal core values? Do you ever review them? If not, I would highly suggest that you make this part of your annual or quarterly goals.

This year, instead of writing down my New Years' Resolutions, I reviewed my core values to see if they still resonate with me. From there, I looked at my written personal mission statement to make sure it aligned with my core values. It takes a couple of hours to do this, but it is well worth it.

There are many publications and online resources that are available to guide you through the process. Having your core values drive your mission statement makes it so much easier to make decisions throughout the year.



Why am I telling you this? Because one of my personal core values is to make a positive impact on those people that surround me: family, friends, team members, clients and associates. The most important core value of my business is "As a team, here at Piping Systems, Inc., we work together to create meaningful relationships with our clients. We bring light and ease to our clients' lives by being reliable, high-performing, professional, knowledgeable and efficient problem-solvers."

I challenge you to let us know if you believe that our team embodies this core value. If you ever encounter a situation where working with us does not conform to our core value, please let me know about it personally by dropping an e-mail to: plally@PipingSystemsInc.com.

Safety: What's Hot?

In June 2016, the Boston City Council passed an ordinance amending the Boston Fire Prevention Code requiring that, effective January 1, 2017, all persons



engaged in hot work operations must obtain a Hot Work Safety Certificate.

If you are a facilities manager, be aware that simply thawing pipes is considered "hot work." The definition of "hot work" per the amended Boston Fire Prevention Code includes:

- welding and allied processes
- heat treating
- grinding
- thawing pipes
- powder-driven fasteners
- hot riveting
- torch-applied roofing

- any similar applications producing or using sparks, flame or heat

Rest assured that we strive to comply with all ordinances and codes and, in order to comply, we recently sent more than 20 technicians to obtain the necessary training. The training was held by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in cooperation with the City of Boston in an effort to assist in advancing safety.

Here's where to go to learn more about the ordinance and how to comply: <http://www.nfpa.org/training-and-events/by-topic/hot-work?icid=D696>



We're doing our part! 



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