

PIPELINE

piping systems inc.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS

WINTER 2011

Thermos Bottle Building

(The following article, by Ronny J. Coleman, is reprinted with permission from the September 2010 issue of Sprinkler Age.)

Do kids still take lunch boxes to school? I'm a great-grandparent now, so I am a little remote from the routine of the school-day drill. I do recall a point in my life when your metal lunch pail was a status symbol, and your thermos of hot soup was really neat on a cold winter day. Do

kids still know what a thermos bottle is, or has that gone the way of playing marbles or jumping rope?

Well, be prepared for the return of the thermos concept in a big way. Have you ever heard of a thermos house? Of course it's not a real thermos bottle; it's not metal on the outside and a fragile glass bottle on the inside. Instead, it is a structure that is so tightly sealed up that it does not allow heat to escape in the winter, or heat to penetrate in the summer. A thermos building is one that maintains a specific environment with a minimum amount of exchange between the building and the atmosphere.

The world today is experiencing an energy revolution. Environmental issues are catching up with consumer demand. With the

increased emphasis placed on preserving the environment consumers are being recruited to play new roles in saving energy. By saving that energy, advocates believe they can definitely take a positive step in fighting the climate change and in preserving non-renewable sources of energy. While this issue is being debated in a public forum, homeowners and building managers are acting to seal up their buildings better than ever before.

Of course, we all know that buildings have to breathe; at least conceptually they have to be able to have adequate circulation to reduce other adverse effects like fungus.

What I am referring to is the increased desire in our world to reduce the impact on the environment by making buildings "greener" and, subsequently, they do not lose as much energy to the atmosphere. This phenomenon should be closely

examined by fire agencies, for it is my belief that it may well impact the tactics and strategy we employ to combat interior structure fires.

An increase in insulation and a careful energy audit may make any building a nice cozy place to be, but it sure won't react to fire conditions the same. Fire protection engineers have often noted that fire behavior has two different scenarios: fuel-fed fires and ventilation-driven fires. In a fuel-fed fire, the oxygen to support the combustion is readily present and allows a specific burn rate. In ventilation-driven fire, the fuel is accelerated by the movement of air and, subsequently, you have faster burning fires.

The fact is that firefighters must make a decision fairly early on in a fire about whether to ventilate a fuel-driven fire or whether to enter and operate from a ventilation-driven fire. Now, we have to be able to ascertain whether the fire has been artificially influenced by the thermos effect and make sure that our chosen tactics and strategies do not allow aggressive firefighting to become more dangerous.

Fire officers should become more familiar with the use of energy codes in two different areas. The first is in the construction of new buildings. This is where the codes are impacting the fire problem in a profound way. Whole new tracts, entire new neighborhoods may be setting up a new environment for you to fight fire within. There may be creativity with products where assumption can get you into trouble fast. For example, the insulation in attics, the caulking around doors and windows, even the type of glass in the windows may be more difficult to force entry.

As I wrote this, I was reminded of a joke about thermos bottles. Apparently, a young man was told that if he put hot stuff in a thermos, it would stay hot all day. Likewise, he was told that if he added cold stuff, it would keep it cold. His question was, "How does it know the difference?"

Well, the laws of heat exchange and the effect of insulation are well known to us as features of fire behavior. Our task is to

continued on page 4



piping systems inc.

32 Mill Street (Rt. 79)

P.O. Box 409

Assonet, MA 02702

TEL: 508/644-2221 • FAX: 508/644-2447

E-MAIL: psi@PipingSystemsInc.com

WEBSITE: www.PipingSystemsInc.com

12 Traits To Cultivate For Achievement

Success depends on a certain amount of luck, but smart people don't leave it entirely up to chance. In the book *Work Your Strengths* (AMACOM), authors Chuck Martin, Richard Guare and Peg Dawson identify 12 strengths essential to success. These skills are:

- **Response inhibition**—the ability to think before you act
 - **Working memory**—remembering information while you are performing complex tasks
 - **Emotional control**—not giving in to anger, anxiety or other counterproductive feelings
 - **Sustained attention**—the ability to focus on the immediate job
 - **Task initiation**—getting started
 - **Planning and prioritizing**—knowing what's important and what to do first
 - **Organization**—having all the tools and resources available whenever you need them
 - **Time management**—using your time as efficiently as possible
 - **Goal-directed persistence**—setting goals and moving steadily toward them
 - **Flexibility**—the ability to adapt to changing circumstances
 - **Perspective**—seeing the big picture and your role in it
 - **Stress tolerance**—ability to deal with stress
-

Appointment Time-Savers

You've got places to go and people to see. And you can't afford to hang around waiting for an appointment to show up. Here are some tips for saving time:

- **Confirm your appointments the day before.** Let people know you're conscientious; they'll likely follow suit.
 - **Don't arrive too early.** More than 10 minutes early is wasting time.
 - **Bring some work with you.** If you must wait, it cuts down the wasted time if you bring something else you can work on in the meantime.
 - **Set the appointment for an odd time.** Instead of 8 or 8:30, try 8:15 or 8:45. People will most likely do their best to make it on the dot.
-

Want Creativity? Leave 'Em Alone

Managers who want their employees to be more creative and innovative may be interested in the results of a study on new product development. The Nielsen Co. looked at product development practices in 30 packaged-goods marketers and found that those where senior management was least involved in creating new products generated 80% more revenue from those products than companies where top-level managers were more hands-on.

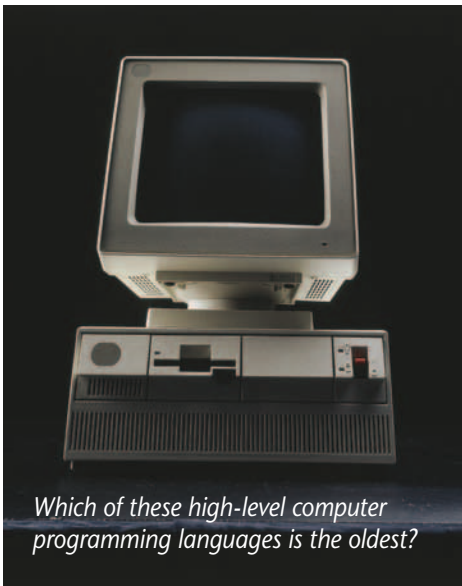
When employees worked off site as part of a so-called "skunk works" project, companies realized 5.7% of their revenue from new products. Innovation teams working exclusively at company headquarters saw their products generate only 2.7% of revenue for their companies.

Moral: When you want creativity and innovation, stay out of your employees' way.

Great Advice For Managers

It's said that when former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Gordon Dean died in a plane crash in 1958, an envelope was found among his personal effects. On the back of the envelope, Dean had scribbled nine lessons that he had learned in life. Every manager would be wise to take note of each one:

- 1) Never lose your capacity for enthusiasm.
- 2) Never lose your capacity for indignation.
- 3) Never judge people—don't type them too quickly. But in a pinch, never first assume that a man is bad; first assume that he is good and that, at worst, he is in the gray area between bad and good.
- 4) Never be impressed by wealth alone or thrown by poverty.
- 5) If you can't be generous when it's hard to be, you won't be when it's easy.
- 6) The greatest builder of confidence is the ability to do something—almost anything—well.
- 7) When confidence comes, then strive for humility; you aren't as good as all that.
- 8) The way to become truly useful is to seek the best that other brains have to offer. Use them to supplement your own, and be prepared to give credit to them when they have helped.
- 9) The greatest tragedies in world and personal events stem from misunderstandings. So communicate!



Which of these high-level computer programming languages is the oldest?

I Didn't Know That!

- 1) How many 180° bends are in a common paper clip?
 - a) two
 - b) three
 - c) four
 - d) five
- 2) Hershey's Mr. Goodbar candy bars come in what color wrapper?
 - a) red
 - b) brown
 - c) orange
 - d) yellow
- 3) Which of these high-level computer programming languages is the oldest?
 - a) FORTRAN
 - b) BASIC
 - c) COBOL
 - d) LISP
- 4) Which of these common battery types is the tallest?
 - a) AAA
 - b) AA
 - c) C
 - d) D
- 5) Sales of what fruit plummeted in 1989 amid false rumors about a cancer-causing chemical known as Alar?
 - a) grapes
 - b) apples
 - c) pears
 - d) bananas

Answers: 1) b 2) d 3) a (FORTRAN was developed by IBM in 1954.) 4) d (D batteries are the tallest of the four, followed by A, C and AAA.) 5) b

You're The Expert

People respond to authority. You'll be able to persuade them more easily if you can position yourself as an expert in your field or industry. Here are some tips for establishing your credentials:

- **Cite the experts yourself.** Show people you've done your homework. Quote authoritative sources of information that they already trust, and you'll build your reputation as a reliable resource.
- **Highlight your qualifications.** Don't beat people over the head with your degrees and accomplishments, but do look for ways to remind them of your expertise and knowledge. "When I was managing a marketing department at XYZ Company," is one way to establish your experience, for example.
- **Get testimonials.** Nothing enhances your credibility like recognition from other experts. Ask others to share their experience working with you. Their words will support your image.
- **Dress appropriately.** You don't have to wear a three-piece suit for every meeting, but pay attention to your appearance. Does it send the right message—that you're someone people can depend on?

Things Your Hotel Desk Clerk Won't Tell You...

- The 1-800 reservations number will probably send you to a central office with set rates. If you call the hotel directly instead, you can negotiate.
- Hotels can pay a commission of up to 30% to online booking sites. So offer me 20% less than the online price, and we both come out ahead.
- Independently owned hotels are more likely to give you a discount. Some chains balk at dropping the rate.
- If you show up at 11 a.m. and check-in time is 2 p.m., please don't be upset if your room isn't ready. I can't make the housekeepers go any faster. And you don't want them to rush.
- Don't ask me for an upgrade when other guests are within earshot. Want a more spacious room without paying more? Request a corner room or a handicapped one.
- Some concierges get kickbacks for sending you to pricey tourist traps. If you want an unbiased recommendation, ask me.
- Sometimes my boss makes me lie, like when I tell you the elevator's not working and I tell you someone is coming to fix it soon. I know it won't be fixed until Monday, because the manager doesn't want to pay the repairman's weekend rate.
- Don't call between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. with a special request. Chances are I'll have a long line of guests waiting to check out or in and will just want to get you off the phone.
- My official job description: errand runner, toilet plunger, bow-tie tier, towel deliverer and chef (that free continental breakfast doesn't appear from above). I've also sprinkled rooms with rose petals and dealt with dead bodies. All for about \$10 an hour.
- We love it when you steal the soap, shampoo and lotion. That's why we put our logo on them. But pillows, bedspreads and irons? We're billing your credit card.
- Keep it down. Even the best hotels aren't totally soundproof, and I'm the one who has to send the security guard up to knock on your door when someone complains.
- It's a lot easier for me to remove Wi-Fi charges from your bill at checkout than to agree to waive them in advance.
- No, we don't have an hourly rate. You don't want to be at a hotel like that anyway.



We love it when you steal the soap, shampoo and lotion. That's why we put our logo on them. But pillows, bedspreads and irons? We're billing your credit card.

—from *Reader's Digest*

Thermos... *continued from page 1*

know the difference when we are about to assault a structure fire attack or ventilation. In this case, knowing the difference keeps you out of harm's way.

Contact Piping Systems, Inc. for all of your fire protection system needs, from quarterly inspections in conformance with NFPA guidelines, to renovations, new system design and installation. Call us at 508.644.2221 and ask for either Tom, Mike or Greg. And visit our website, www.PipingSystemsInc.com, to learn more about how we keep our customers happy.

John Taylor Hangs Up His Tool Belt

John Taylor, Piping Systems' first full-time employee, recently was honored at a retirement party held in his honor. John began his career at PSI in 1971. Upon hearing of his retirement, one of our customers said, "Steamfitting is a trade that either kills you or makes you stronger." Luckily for John, he survived.

We are reminded of something Alexander Graham Bell once said: "When one door closes, another one opens, but we often look so long and regretfully at the closed door that we fail to see the one that has opened for us." Best wishes to John on a long and enjoyable retirement, and to the open doors.

Our New Year's Message

The past year has been another challenging one for many of us. The hoped-for economic recovery has been slow to develop, causing continued strain on individuals, families and businesses. Nevertheless, we all have much to be thankful for and should take time to appreciate our individual blessings. As a business, we are grateful for our dedicated, hardworking employees, outstanding building team partners, supportive corporate friends and, of course, our loyal clients, who are the reason our company exists.

Our nation has experienced tough times before, and we've always risen to the occasion, battled our way through our problems, and emerged better and stronger. This time will be no different.

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



We're doing our part. This newsletter is printed on environmentally-friendly paper—50% recycled, using 25% post-consumer waste, and is composed of a mixture of fibers from certified forests, post-consumer recycling processes and fibers from other controlled sources.

Check Out Our Website

We recently remodeled our website and changed our address to www.PipingSystemsInc.com. Please make note of the new Web address and the accompanying change to our e-mail addresses. For now, visitors are automatically redirected from the old addresses to the new.

We've added a feature that allows our customers to fill out a Job Completion Survey online. Soon our job contacts will receive a communication directing them to the website to complete a questionnaire about a recently completed project. Your feedback is vital to us and helps us align our business focus with your needs.

Do You Have A Comment Or A Suggestion?

Visit our website at www.PipingSystemsInc.com and click the "Customer Survey" option on the left side and write your comments. We look forward to hearing from you.

Visit us online today at www.PipingSystemsInc.com



piping systems inc.

32 Mill Street (Rt. 79)
P.O. Box 409
Assonet, MA 02702

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

