From the President

“It All Started When…”

I was always doing some kind of pick up work - pulling weeds, mowing lawns, raking leaves. In high school, one of my teachers referred me to their elderly neighbors to shovel snow. That turned into mowing the lawn in spring. Then the maid quit and they asked if I would clean their house once a week. This was the cutest couple you could imagine. Already in their 70’s, I think she mostly liked someone to talk to. Her husband was an attorney and although he had turned the practice over to his daughter, he still went to the office every day. She would find different projects for me and I would also vacuum, dust, clean the bathrooms, and do all of the ironing. I know - every woman’s dream husband! (My wife would concur! LOL) There came a day when they asked if I could paint their house and the rest is history.

I worked my way through college doing painting and odd jobs. I actually think I spent more time working than going to school. I did get a wonderful wife for my efforts there and in

From the President

1988, we married and I concentrated on being a Painting Contractor. It was never easy as I did some things well and some things not so well. Wearing all the hats was not my favorite part of the job. It was not uncommon to have other contractors ask me to join their firms. Most of these offers were actually “I think you could help me fix my screwed up company and I don’t have much money but if you work really hard, there might be a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.” It did not keep me from working with a couple of different contractors over the next 20 years. But neither were the perfect fit.

Finally, in January 2012 I joined Precision Painting and Decorating as General Manager. I knew the owner Aaron Moore through PDCA and he needed help with is rapidly growing company. It has been a great fit. I have been afforded the opportunity to do the things I excel at and delegate the other tasks to others. We doubled our revenue in my first year and are on track to double again this year. I have never been happier and am enjoying my job more now than ever before.

Scott Lollar
Precision Painting and Decorating Corp.
Editor’s NOTE: Advanced Shop Talk
By Mike Kelly, mike@crestwoodpainting.com

This year’s Advanced Shop Talk in Baltimore was the most well-attended AST in quite some years. The tone of the event and the level of energy were both upbeat – business is generally improving (and in quite a few cases, booming) and both business owners and suppliers are excited by that.

In this issue of the Painters Rag we’re sprinkling in several “It All Started When…”s. Unlike doctors and firemen, almost nobody dreams of being a residential painter when they grow up. While most people simply react to the turns in the Road of Life they encounter, a few move forward with deliberate purpose and vision. These are the people that buy the plane ticket, invest a weekend and participate in AST.

Finally, In recognition of our suppliers, the Residential Forum would like to encourage supplier submissions to the Painters Rag. More education than straight advertising, these pieces will ideally focus on in-the-field experiences that residential painting contractors have faced using a particular product or process. Suppliers are a key part of the success that is Advanced Shop Talk; we’d like to see everyone share in that success.

(Past) PRESIDENT’S LETTER

Now that I have officially passed the torch, I can openly admit that when stepped into the role of President of the Residential Forum, I wasn’t sure that I was fully qualified for the position. Based on my own notion of what a leader “looked like”, I didn’t think that I fit the bill. Thankfully, I was blessed with an amazing board and the best executive director a girl could ask for, and quickly became comfortable in my new role.

Ironically, it was on my final day as President that I was presented with a new definition of what a leader truly is. Michael McFadden, our guest speaker at AST 14 started off his leadership talk with a few questions for the audience, one of which was “What is the definition of a leader?” After a few members shared their thoughts, Michael gave us his definition of a leader – someone who helps someone else through a problem. That was a light bulb moment for me. A year or so ago I read a book called Cure For The Common Life, through which I discovered that my passion lies in helping others. So it looks like I’ve been a leader all along.

These past two years as your leader have been an incredible journey. I have grown immensely, overcome my fear of public speaking, put my event planning skills to good use, made lots of new friends, and the best part of all is that it never really felt like work (ok – that last week before AST was a little stressful).

I also get to go out on the best high note possible. We had record numbers at AST 14, and aside from the incredible array of education and sharing of knowledge that took place, we had an absolute blast in Baltimore. If you were unable to attend, PDCA National will be posting the presentations in the Contractor College section of their website shortly, and a few of the presentations will be tweaked and presented again at the PDCA Expo in Reno in March.

Thank you again for putting your trust in me and I look forward to continuing my journey with all of you over the years to come. And if there’s any way I may be of assistance, please don’t hesitate to ask, I’d love to help.
Supplier Interview

Tim O'Reilly, Pro Marketing, Masterchem Brands, Inc., St. Louis, MO

Biggest take-away from Advanced Shop Talk in Baltimore:
I can't isolate one, so here are a few: Business is on the upswing; Business issues are relatively universal among participants; PDCA is righting itself and moving in the right direction.

Recent book that struck a chord:
Simplexity, by Jeffrey Kluger. It's an easy read that uses real-world scenarios to draw distinctions between the simple and complex and how, from first glance, complete mis-perception is common.

"It All Started When..."

How did you get in the painting business?

I married my High School Sweetheart after my first year in college. We had to figure out how to make ends meet while continuing our education. I worked nights at UPS for a while (11 pm - 3 am) and used caffeine to stay vertical (but it was making my mind mush), so I found this little Kelly-Moore Paint Store that just opened in Norman, OK that was willing to work around my class schedule. I opened and closed the store and left in the middle of the day for classes. I'm the son of a Boat Mechanic, so spending time with the Painters as they were waiting for their crews or I was mixing paint was a lot like home. After about 3 years, there was a flier posted on the back room bulletin board for a Purchasing job at the Corporate Offices in San Carlos, CA. I'd learned a lot about the business and was fortunate they chose me. Based on the experiences, learnings and reputation I'd built for myself in the Purchasing position, I've been afforded many opportunities in paint store operations and to manage visible brands in this industry, including: Zinsser primers & shellacs, Varathane, Parks, Wolman, Watco, and now KILZ Primers & Paints. It was absolutely the paint store's flexibility with my class schedule that pulled me into the Paint Industry. I've left twice for a couple of years each but always come back because the folks are the magic. Painters are real people - small businesses working hard to employ others and put food on the table for their families. The true backbone of this great country.

NAME: Don Fahrbach
COMPANY NAME: PNP Craftsmen
LOCATION: New York City
YEARS IN BUSINESS: 11

When I was offered a corporate transfer and the family did not want to move. I bought a small painting company with a twenty year old 212 phone number and a three month backlog...
“Fun” with Colors - An Action Plan Implemented

Yesterday

our Ops Manager stopped by a job and saw the color that was being applied was not the same as the existing. It was not covering properly and it looked like the one coat system was going to turn into the unplanned, money-losing 2 coat system (it was a designed low-cost job). The owner was sure the existing color was Swiss Coffee, the Project Manager assumed it would cover the off-white color in the estimator’s photo, and the Foreman didn’t know any better. The Estimator didn’t note the color, and the Salesman only established that the colors were to be the same. Who was at fault? How to correct so it doesn’t happen again?

If you attended my Company Structure presentation at AST 14, you may recall that many times all the above players would be the same person within our company, but in this case each position was a different person, including the salesman who took the original call (me). That’s 4 different people for one simple job, but sometimes that’s how things roll with company with 13 employees and counting.

What to do? Being the leader, I posed a few questions and let the staff think through where the failure(s) happened and what was controllable or not. It was fun watching it unfold. Now, were not talking a big meeting, tons of research, or long debate session; just a simple standup meeting with the job paperwork.

One of my goals from AST 14 was to better lead our company through Action Plans. With purposeful leadership, I managed gathering all the facts and possible solutions. We opted to not develop an intricate “system” full of double checks because this was a rare occurrence. So we decided to train to it, document the training, and monitor the results. Here’s what our Action Plan (my email) looked like:

**Estimator:** match colors fairly close while onsite and record in estimate notes. Add primer Option if not sure if 1 coat system.

**Scheduler:** at acceptance, initiate color process and how the color decisions will be made. Note on job paperwork.

**Project Manager:** discuss/warn buyer not sure if color will cover in one coat, and ask what to do if it won’t. Decide if pre-job visit (crew in
“Fun” with Colors - An Action Plan Implemented

Area?) is needed to establish existing and compare to new color choice, or to install color samples. Perform or delegate this task to crew that may be in the area.

Foreman: to establish color at 1st arrival & then order paint if possible (large jobs), or report to PM color issues.

The whole plan would make the weekly Crew Meeting agenda with a focus on the foreman’s part. During the meeting other ideas would be considered, the plan will be implemented with the Foremen and they would be reminded for the next couple of months. The Ops and Sales personnel would have already noted the changes and created their own system to implement those changes. If any usable feedback came from the field it would be brought up at the next Ops/Sales meeting. The Business Manager (me) will add to the Job Descriptions which will educate new positions and establish a performance evaluation item. I also added the Action Plan to my Ops and Sales Outlook Tasks that reminds me every 2 weeks or so to check on the status of my key people’s tasks.

But is it SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based)? I think it still needs work, but I also believe in “paperwork reduction” so I’m not going to spin my wheels too much on this until it needs it - if it needs it. There are too many other battles that are more important at this time!

Randy Fornoff
MTS Painting

NAME: Tony Vlachos
COMPANY NAME: Color Your World Custom Painting & Decorating
LOCATION: Long Island, NY
YEARS IN BUSINESS: 29

My father had decided that it was time for me to help support the family. So at 16 I quit school and went to work full time painting apartments in Brooklyn. A year later I was doing scaffolding and bosun chair work when my father lost the rope to his bosun chair, fell and became paralyzed. Since then I have been painting and learning new systems and look forward to learning how to work more as a businessman.
The presentations made over the two-days were all extremely well done. The interesting part, from a vendor’s point of view, was that all of the presenters had content that was completely applicable to Kovrd’s business. While some content that was painter-specific, the vast majority of it was about the industry itself. Topics ranged from marketing to web-based customer interaction, self-improvement, company structure and long-term strategic planning—all highly relevant to our own business. Each presentation was followed by a round table discussion where participants can hear what painters are thinking, feeling and looking for in their business life.

For anyone wondering if they should attend, I would strongly encourage them. You couldn’t make stronger relationships or gather better information. I’m really looking forward to next year… and the year after that.

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**Great Industry Insights at AST 14 in Baltimore**

Ben Leonard
Kovrd Products Inc.

My recent trip to Baltimore proved to be much more than a gathering of painters and vendors. It was a learning experience that offered an extremely valuable inside perspective to the industry.

This format of open conversation and round table discussion was yet another great opportunity to hear firsthand what is important to painters. I have certainly had some incredible talks in the past but this was different. It was an opportunity to see firsthand the relationships that have been forged amongst attendees and the high-quality brainstorming that can take place simply because they are comfortable in those relationships. It was a chance for anyone and everyone, vendors included, to share whatever was on their mind knowing that it would be heard with respect and support and with the probability that someone there had insight and knowledge to offer.

For anyone wondering if they should attend, I would strongly encourage them. You couldn’t make stronger relationships or gather better information. I’m really looking forward to next year… and the year after that.

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**IT ALL STARTED WHEN...**

NAME: Kevine Weinmann
COMPANY NAME: Weinmann Painting
LOCATION: Portland, OR
YEARS IN BUSINESS: 17

I quit my job at Intel because I could not stand sitting at a desk inside for nine hours. I realized that my desk space was the same size a prisoner gets per the Geneva Convention.
Reviews - Advanced Shop Talk in Baltimore

“AST is a great way to bounce ideas off like-minded individuals who have great ideas and expertise in every area.”

Josh Dryfhout
H.D. Painting Contractor
Ontario, Canada

“This is a tremendous meeting. Presentations and discussions are at “expert” level. Inspiring and informative.”

Jeff Van Dehy
Karen’s Company
Lafayette, CO

“Dollar for dollar the best bang for the buck in the painting industry.”

Kevin Weinmann
Weinmann Painting Inc.
Portland, OR

“Excellent return of my investment! See you next year!”

Kent Spencer
Spencer Painting and Deck Care
Hanover, PA

“It is the best two days any company owner can spend with like-minded businessmen to exchange information.”

Ray Rahni
Paint Track LLC
Briarcliff Manor, NY

NAME: Cara Parsons
COMPANY NAME: Lamb Painting
LOCATION: Spearfish, SD
YEARS IN BUSINESS: 1 yr. 3 mn.

I graduated from Black Hills University in Spearfish with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a specialization in marketing. Lamb Painting was hiring an Administrative/Marketing Assistant. I applied, got the job – it has developed into a Project Coordinator/Operations Manager position.
DON’T MISS THESE OPPORTUNITIES

Present at the 2014 Expo
The 2014 Painting and Decorating Expo is looking for the latest information from the coatings application industry. If you or your company has information to share with contractors, submit an abstract for consideration. Abstracts are due by September 30, 2013.

Awards Deadlines
Get the recognition you deserve! Don’t miss these opportunities to nominate your work for an industry award:
• The KILZ® Picture it Painted Professionally (PIPP) Awards, the first national awards to honor the very best of the painting industry, is PDCA’s way of paying tribute to the work of professional painting and decorating contractors. Award submissions are due Jan. 15, 2014.
• Creativity can help grow your business. The PDCA Painter’s Choice Awards recognizes outstanding marketing initiatives by PDCA members. Also, don’t miss the newest addition to the Painter’s Choice Awards: the Paint Your Website Award. Does your website standout from the competition? Visit www.paintyourwagon.org for more information.

Register in October and Save!
Take advantage of the October monthly special and register early!

Visit www.paintinganddecoratingexpo.com for more information.
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