

Success Flows from the Hearts and Minds of Those You Lead

By Joel Smith, PMI Board of Directors President, Kohler Co.



Joel Smith

Here we are at the end of 2020 and the end of my term as PMI president. If I told you I liked being your president this past year, some might call that fake news and they'd be right.

The truth is that I loved it. I loved every bit of it. Our meetings as board members, wrestling with the big issues of the day, finding solutions for our members, were more exciting and

complex than I ever imagined they would be. I want you to know what an honor it has been to serve. Leading an association – especially one like PMI that's so healthy, dynamic and forward-looking – is an amazing experience.

These past 12 months have flown by extremely fast. Whether we were building our strategic plans for the association's future, or wrangling the hundreds of decisions – small and large – essential to our success, I've benefited from the support, guidance and great advice provided by our great team of volunteer leaders on our board, committees, task forces and Strategic Advisory Council. It's fair to say that you can never forget that your company's success flows from the hearts and minds of the women and men that you lead. And nowhere is that truer than among the leaders of your association.

I've truly appreciated the unique perspective that each member brings, and we've been made better by the diverse insights that have helped us arrive at the best decisions. It's a pleasure to work with a team that can wrestle with big and complex issues, and always arrive back in a place that is best for the membership.

I also thank my team and colleagues at Kohler for their unwavering support while I was otherwise engaged with PMI business. And I thank so many of you, who even with hectic

work-from-home schedules, and wrestling with pandemic-related challenges such as tutoring your kids at home, still found time to share your thinking, ideas and advice with me.

Finally, I want to thank the PMI staff. This is an amazing group of people. PMI20 was a great example of our staff's ability to tackle something completely new, like hosting a virtual conference, and pull it off in the most successful way. You will never hear, "We can't do that." They have a unique ability to make things happen through their creativity, dedication and determination. And they have made my job far easier and far more enjoyable than it ever would have been without them. So thanks to our entire staff and our team of extended staff members who make the association run the way that it does.

This year-end issue of Ripple Effect covers the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference and the 66th Annual Meeting of the Membership, including some of the outstanding individuals whom we recognized with our annual awards. I thank all of the PMI members who participated in these virtual events and in other PMI activities this year. As we turn the page to 2021, I look forward to seeing your continued dedication and commitment to PMI and our industry. Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a healthy and successful new year!

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PMI Works for You As Your Partner in Progress

By Kerry Stackpole, IOM, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

2020 has been a year of extraordinary highs and unprecedented lows. When we kicked off the year, the United States economy was humming and wearing a mask was something bad guys did to rob a bank.

When COVID-19 arrived, however, our world changed forever. The first thing to go was toilet paper – and scoring a pack of disinfectant wipes was like winning the lottery. Airports became ghost towns. Schools, offices, restaurants, and neighborhood shops all closed, then reopened with reduced hours.

Many of us began working at home, alongside our kids, cats, dogs and spouses. Friends and family stayed away. For some of us, it was extraordinarily sad when visiting our grandparents or parents at a hospital or assisted living facility became impossible. Even family funerals were off limits.

While gloves and masks quickly became essential, so did our industry. PMI acted quickly to secure the essential business designation for our members from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. We successfully worked with state governors, and we lobbied our neighbors in Canada and Mexico to achieve the same essential business designations for our member firms with operations there.

Some 35 years ago, **Alvin Toffler** wrote about the electronic cottage in a book called “The Third Wave.” He said we would all have access to the internet and the world-class communications tools we need. He suggested that everyone could work from home, which would improve our work-life balance and our relationships with family and neighbors.

The good news is PMI’s electronic cottages were established in 2018. Our entire staff is well-positioned and prepared to deliver member value every day. We kept your PMI network intact. Inside My PMI and Ripple Effect arrived on time. Our popular Tech Talk sessions led by **Matt Sigler** stayed the course. And our regular monthly committee gatherings and board of directors meetings supported by our PMI staffers, **Jodi Stuhrberg** and **Ann Geier**, all continued forward without missing a beat.

And just to make it interesting, we virtually onboarded our newest team member, **Stephanie Lass**, to lead our growing electronic classroom webinars and assist the team’s continued work on educational events, including the PMI Aspiring Leaders Program and the 2021 PMI CEO Thinking Forum. We made the PMI Washington DC Legislative Forum and the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference virtual to assure that each of you could remain safe and healthy while gathering the vital information you need to do your job successfully.

Our quarterly PMI Market Outlook and the accompanying webinars hosted by our partners at ITR Economics

brought you critical insights on the latest strategies for dealing with the pandemic’s impact on our economy and industry. PMI webinars will continue to be focused on delivering industry-specific content and actionable outcomes. You’ll also have access to the newly revised PMI online codes and standards classes, which many PMI member companies use to get new team members up to speed quickly.

If COVID-19 made one thing clear to the world, it’s that the faucet is in the fight. Having access to clean water and handwashing facilities is making a huge difference in the fight against this deadly virus, as is the personal protective equipment manufactured by many of your companies.

We all know that the work you do is not easy work and it’s definitely something none of us at PMI take for granted. Keeping one another safe from the impact of this pandemic is key to the successful re-ignition of our economy and the continued growth of all of our businesses. PMI is your partner in progress and always remember PMI works for you. Thank you for your continued support.

PMI20 Now Available On-Demand

The PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference was a digital experience filled with three days of member-focused, content-rich insight. And now, you can watch the conference sessions on-demand!

If you did not register for PMI20, you can purchase access to all sessions for \$399 or individual sessions for \$99 each. With the purchase of at least one session, you gain free access to the Lunar Loo Challenge session recording. Register here: tinyurl.com/y5fb5dng

Reach out to **Stephanie Lass**, PMI education coordinator, at lass@safeplumbing.org if you have any questions.

PMI members can access PMI20 video recordings and slide presentations at tinyurl.com/y5dmbc5k

PMI20 Keynote Speaker: Meet People Where They Are

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

PMI20 keynote speaker **Rachel Hanfling** related personal experiences from her past to explain how developing listening and observational skills can help leaders to become better communicators.

She said these experiences led her to a career in television, which served as the springboard to her current work as a communications and media coach.

As an eight-year-old child, Hanfling said she “always felt like I was on the outside looking in. . . I just couldn’t connect to the other kids – and it hurt a lot.” As she hoped and prayed to find a circle of friends, she stated that she “started observing the other kids; everything they did. I was listening. I was paying attention to the words they said and how they said them.”

She observed the newscasters she watched with her mother every night, too. “And I could see, even at a young age, that these newscasters were doing in front of millions what I wanted to do one-on-one in small groups, which was build a relationship.”

Increasing the human connection

A key moment in her presentation came when she said she often encourages clients to lessen or eliminate PowerPoint slides from their presentations as a way of increasing the human connection between them and their audiences. She then wrote on a piece of paper, calling it “the only slide that you are going to see today.” The words she wrote and placed in front of the camera were: “Meet people where they are to take them where you want them to go.”

She continued: “It’s human nature to walk through the world and think about our own agenda, our own thoughts, our own needs. But if we want to be effective communicators and get the results that we want, it is incumbent upon us to meet our audience, whether that is

one person or whether that is millions, where they are. And that means thinking about what they care about, what they want, and what they need.”

Hanfling said most people have an easier time with the second part of her slide – understanding where we want people to go, but the challenge is how to articulate it “in a way that your audience can hear it and understand it in the most simple and clear fashion.”

Helping PMI members with communication challenges

Hanfling welcomed three PMI members into the discussion: **Troy Benavidez** of LIXIL; **Bob Neff** of Delta Faucet Co., and **Ruben Hernandez** of CSA Group. Each of them presented Hanfling with a question about a communication challenge.

Benavidez asked for advice on how to onboard new employees in the virtual environment. Hanfling suggested that he think about the difficulty of starting a new job where you may not know anybody and don’t have the ability to go to lunch and get to know people. “Be a giver first,” she said. “Try and figure out what that person needs. Make that person feel like you’re in it with them.”

Neff asked for tips on how to collaborate and engage with team members without having live or video conferencing ability. In responding to his challenge, Hanfling talked about how she would develop relationships with individuals being considered for TV appearances by having long telephone conversations with them.

“There’s a tremendous amount of intimacy that one can develop over the phone when we’re stripped of thinking about how we look in front of somebody, and also how the other person looks,” she explained. “That comes from really listening to the words someone says.” She added that some individuals



Rachel Hanfling

feel uncomfortable on video and that can interfere with relationship building. “Perhaps only do video when there’s an actual need to see somebody, and then the rest of the time allow people to just be present (in audio).”

Hernandez asked for guidance on ways to communicate in ways that are grounded in reality but serve to maintain employee morale. Hanfling acknowledged the challenges of communicating during a time of uncertainty and advised Hernandez to listen to hear what employees are going through and to practice empathy and compassion.

“The more we try to wrap ourselves around each other at this point, I believe the better we’re all going to be, and it’s going to be better for business,” Hanfling stated. “We need more love right now, more caring, more giving, more decency. All of those things are going to move the ball forward.”

In closing Hanfling said, “I believe that every single human being has the capability to become a superior communicator. And I believe that the better we get at it, the more we’re going to see results that come from it.”

Todd Teter Elected PMI Board of Directors President

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Plumbing Manufacturers International announced the election of **Todd Teter** as president of the 2021 PMI Board of Directors during PMI's 66th Annual Meeting of



Todd Teter

the Membership on Nov. 19. The senior vice president and general manager of the House of Rohl North America, a division of Moen Inc., Teter succeeds **Joel Smith**, the director of faucets product engineering at Kohler Co. In addition, board members were approved, outstanding contributions recognized, and no dues increase will occur in 2021 in acknowledgment of the difficult business environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his acceptance remarks, Teter outlined three goals for the coming year: accelerating PMI member value, increasing engagement and leveraging diversity, and exploring the art of the possible. He encouraged PMI members to be bold and courageous during these difficult times and thanked Smith for his contribution

as the 2020 PMI board president. Relating the expectations of medical experts, Teter said a COVID-19 vaccine will make the 67th Annual Meeting of Membership an event members and guests will be able to attend in person, as part of the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference at Paradise Point in San Diego, Nov. 15-18, 2021.

Other members of the 2021 board will be Smith, immediate past president; **Martin Knieps**, Viega LLC, vice president; **Sal Gattone**, LIXIL, secretary/treasurer; and at-large directors **Daniel Gleiberman**, Sloan Valve Co.; **Fernando Fernandez**, TOTO USA; **Bob Neff**, Delta Faucet Co.; and **Chip Way**, Lavelle Industries.

PMI's membership meeting was held a week after the conclusion of the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference, held from Nov. 10-12. PMI20 was attended by 76 PMI member executives and 20 first-time attendees.

PMI Awards and Raffle Winners

Jerry Desmond, PMI's California government affairs consultant, was the recipient of the 2020 PMI President's Award. In conferring this honor, Smith lauded Desmond's "extraordinary skills,

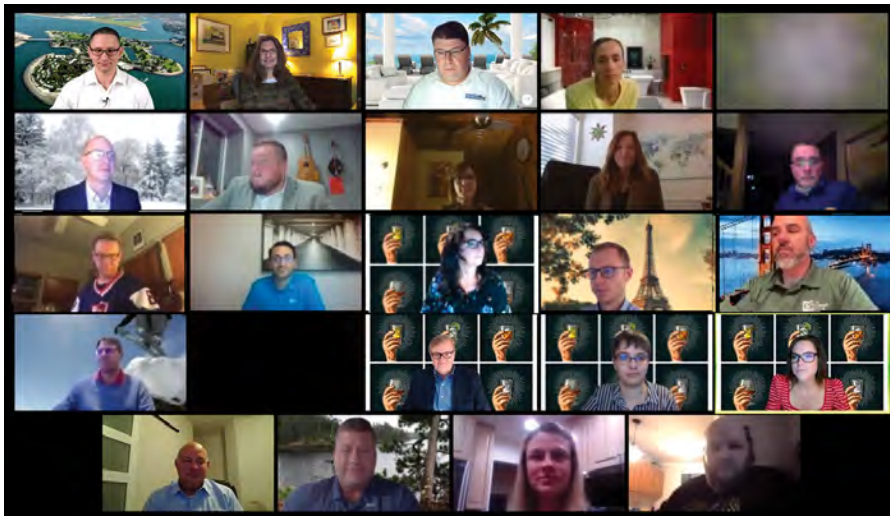
strategic insight, and outstanding contributions to the industry." Desmond said the recognition was a "complete surprise. I'm very honored."



Jerry Desmond received the 2020 President's Award



Cambria McLeod, Kohler Co., celebrated the PMI20 Happy Hour with her three daughters



PMI20's virtual Happy Hour featured a "Best Zoom Background" competition and raffle drawings



Belinda Wise, Kerox, enjoyed her PMI20 Happy Hour treats

Infectious Disease Awareness Changing Restroom Design

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

COVID-19 has shined a spotlight on the importance of managing the spread of infectious diseases to keep the public safe. How will this awareness shape future bathroom designs? How should cleaning protocols change? Which new plumbing technology can help most?



Steven Soifer

Steven Soifer, Ph.D., president of the American Restroom Association (ARA), answered these and other questions during his presentation to PMI members at the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference on Nov. 12.

European inspiration and new touchless tech

The ARA has turned to Europe for “the ideal future restroom design” for both cleanliness and best use of space, according to Soifer, who has a doctorate in social welfare policy.

He highlighted the ARA’s proposal that suggests the United States incorporate the European design of single-occupan-

cy toilet rooms. Soifer said the typical European public restroom, with six individual stalls and two ADA-compliant stalls, costs the same as the traditional gender-segregated restrooms in the U.S., but uses 25% less space. The ARA plans to include more details on its recommendations in a 2021 report titled “The Future of Public Restrooms.”

For organizations and businesses that want to invest in upgrading their current restrooms, Soifer suggested they consider installing new innovations in plumbing and bathroom technology. Innovations such as sensor-activated faucets, toilets and soap dispensers and automated touchless doors are already being installed in many U.S. facilities and buildings.

He also touched on antimicrobial fixtures and non-porous bathroom surfaces and mentioned certain metals, such as copper and silver, which help repel bacteria.

Another issue to be considered, which Soifer described as controversial, is to promote safe distancing by blocking off every other urinal and toilet in men’s public restrooms. He noted that this precaution is particularly important in restrooms with only partial-height partitions – common in U.S. construc-

tion design. “It should be noted that we’re not 100% sure whether or not this could violate some possible building codes,” he added. “We haven’t heard of any businesses being cited for enforcing social distancing in public restrooms.”

New cleaning protocols and potty parity issues

Soifer, an advocate for safer and more private bathrooms, also presented information on new and established restroom cleaning protocols and discussed potential legislative efforts focusing on potty parity challenges, which would involve adding more public restrooms for women.

The level of restroom cleaning can vary depending on a business’ budget and time constraints. Soifer said frequent restroom disinfection, monitoring and documentation are a must; however, businesses should anticipate higher costs to hire enough staff for the job. “If you want to take it up another level, we know that the hotel industry – especially four-star hotels and above – like to use UV lighting to essentially destroy microbes in the air,” he stated.

While Soifer said the ARA doesn’t anticipate future legislation addressing public restroom design, the organization will continue working with the International Code Council (ICC) on any code revisions in that area. One exception may be legislation on the need for additional women’s public restrooms nationwide, because women typically wait longer and have fewer facilities to use.

Soifer shared information on the ARA’s advocacy efforts for enforcing revisions to the International Plumbing Code – working with the ICC; presenting congressional testimony on gender equity/potty parity issues in U.S. federal buildings; and representing the U.S. at international conferences of the World Toilet Organization.

Benavidez, Bertrand Win PMI Awards

Receiving 2020 PMI Ambassador Awards were **Troy Benavidez**, LIXIL, co-chair of the PMI Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee, and **John Bertrand**, formerly of Moen, Inc. These awards recognize members who promote and encourage PMI participation within their companies.



Troy Benavidez and John Bertrand

Winners of a raffle drawing held among those attending the PMI20 Happy Hour were **Ruben Hernandez**, CSA Group, who won a PMI21 registration, and **Dominic Kung**, Viega, who won one night at Paradise Point.



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U.S. Trade Policies Unlikely to Change Quickly, Experts State

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Three attorneys from Crowell & Moring presented “Global Supply Chain Disruption: Key Considerations, Opportunities and Risks” at the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference.

Clif Burns, Evan Chuck and **David Stepp** provided an overview of the major laws that will likely impact global business and supply chains. They discussed how manufacturing companies are leveraging these laws to optimize their supply chain architectures, achieve cost savings, and hit business financial targets.

They said United States trade policy, particularly toward China, is unlikely to change quickly, despite **Joe Biden** having been elected president. “Generally, we’ve moved away from lowering trade barriers to putting new ones up,” Chuck said. “In 3 1/2 years, we have seen a combination of presidential and congressional action on China specifically, ranging from the aggressive imposition of tariffs on products coming from China, as well as other measures taken in the name of national security that can potentially impact the development and distribution of technology and information flow across borders.”

Chuck addressed tariffs impacting PMI members, including Section 232 tariffs on importation of aluminum

from Canada, as well as the Section 301 tariffs imposed on imports from China. The United States Trade Representative imposed more than \$500 billion of Section 301 tariffs after concluding that China’s trade practices were unreasonable and discriminatory and harming American intellectual property rights, innovation, and technology development, Chuck explained.

Lawsuits relating to Section 301 tariffs may result in refunds

In the latest development relating to Section 301 tariffs, more than 3,500 companies sued the Trump administration in September, alleging that it exceeded its authority in imposing some of those tariffs. “That matter is before the Court of International Trade, and it’s something that is being monitored closely because it could result in potentially some refunds that would be beneficial to businesses,” Chuck stated.

Burns explained how export controls affect “hybrid” outsourced/offshored activities in China. Having items custom-produced in China requires transfer of relevant technology to China. Export controls cover unpublished or proprietary technology, as well as goods, if the technology is on the Commerce Control List of the Bureau of Industry and Security. There also are controls

on certain pipes, valves and pumps, for example, depending upon their construction (linings) and capabilities (flow rate).

Burns also explained the role of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which administers a law that allows the U.S. president to set aside certain foreign acquisitions of U.S. companies that threaten national security.

COVID-19 accelerated reassessment of supply chains

Stepp talked about how the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated companies’ reassessments of their supply chains. “They’re realizing that price is not the only consideration for sourcing. They’re looking at suppliers in low-cost countries, to move the origin outside of China to other countries where Section 301 duties are not going to be applied,” he said.

When moving a supply chain into a new country, manufacturers must focus on issues such as forced labor and codes of conduct, he said. For example, in China, the Muslim population has been moved to re-education camps and there is evidence of forced labor in factories in the part of China where they are being moved.

“So any PMI members who are sourcing from China, they need to be thinking about their supply chain, and even for things being sourced outside of China. There needs to be some sort of mechanism in place with your suppliers and your vendors, to ensure that forced labor is not being used. Because, if there’s any obligation by non-governmental organizations or others that forced labor is being used for the production, that can really wreak havoc within the supply chain, and prevent goods from being entered into the U.S.,” Stepp stated.

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David Stepp, Evan Chuck and Clif Burns from Crowell & Moring

Ellis Labels 2020 U.S. Election as 'Political Overtime'

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Across the United States, we witnessed a lot of “political overtime” and a few surprises over the past few weeks.

That was part of **Jim Ellis'** analysis in



Jim Ellis

“Understanding the 2020 Election” during the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference on Nov. 10.

Ellis' presentation took place one week after Election Day. Since then, **Joe Biden** has been declared the winner as results were certified in states where the race was close.

Ellis, creator of The Ellis Insight and senior political analyst for the Business-Industry Political Action Committee

(BIPAC), discussed voting results in key states, inaccurate predictions made by some election polls, and the U.S. House and Senate races.

As was the case in the 2016 election, Trump would have needed to win five critical states in 2020, including Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Texas, Ellis noted. “In the past, Georgia, Texas and Arizona were slam dunks for Republicans, but not anymore,” he said. Biden won Pennsylvania as expected, and was victorious in Arizona and Georgia as well, surprising some political experts.

Election pollsters were off in their projections, too. Several incorrectly predicted some of the Senate races, including Maine – where polls projected Republican **Sen. Susan Collins** to lose.

Experts also had anticipated that Democrats would pick up seats in the House.

Instead, Republicans will end up netting nine to 11 additional seats, according to fivethirtyeight.com as of Dec. 1, diluting the Democratic majority. “The party winning the White House generally loses seats in the House during the first mid-term election, so the 2020 results actually place the GOP in a surprisingly strong position for 2022 despite their continued minority status,” Ellis said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate is still up for grabs. Ellis underscored the importance of two runoff elections to take place on Jan. 5, 2021, where Georgia voters will decide which party will control the Senate. Republican Sens. **Kelly Loeffler** and **David Perdue** face challenges from Democrats **Raphael Warnock** and **Jon Ossoff**, respectively. If Democrats win both elections, they will have 50 seats, with Vice President **Kamala Harris** serving as a tie-breaker. If the Republicans win both seats, they will hold a 52-48 majority.



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COVID-19 Places Focus on Home, For Both Work & Living

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

The home becoming a focal point of consumer spending, the emergence of permanent remote work arrangements, and rising employee workplace safety expectations were among the many interesting topics addressed during the “COVID-19 and the New Norm” panel discussion during the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference.

Ashlei Williams, chief marketing officer of PHCP Pros and editor of Plumbing Engineer, moderated the discussion among panelists **Brad Farnsworth**, consumer marketing expert and president of The Farnsworth Group, Inc.; **Laurel Farrer**, remote work strategist and founder of Distribute Consulting and the Remote Work Association; and **Brad Hammock**, co-chair of Littler Workplace Safety and Health Practice Group.

Farnsworth said COVID-19 has changed the role of the home, with



many individuals now working from home and spending more time there. Farrer said the pandemic resulted in about 86% of American employees working from home during the pandemic, with 40% to 50% of them expecting to continue this work arrangement post-COVID-19. “Those are incredible numbers that affect millions of people,” she stated. “We don’t have regulations or legislation to protect either the employers or the employees at this scale. So there’s a lot of catching up to do” in both the private and public sector.

Planning and budgeting amidst uncertainty a major challenge

Hammock said the pandemic has made organizations realize the importance of planning for worst-case scenarios. “Many employers didn’t have the infrastructure in place to deal with this (pandemic), and they’ve been scrambling and diverting resources to build that foundation. For the most part, employers found a way to adapt. But it was an eye-opening experience,” he explained.

As organizations look to 2021, they are wrestling with how to budget. “Uncertainty is as high as I’ve ever seen,” Farnsworth stated, with the many unknowns resulting in conservative budgets. Farrer said companies “have no market history to influence projections.” One of their greatest overhead costs – real estate – is a big question mark, due to remote working arrangements and

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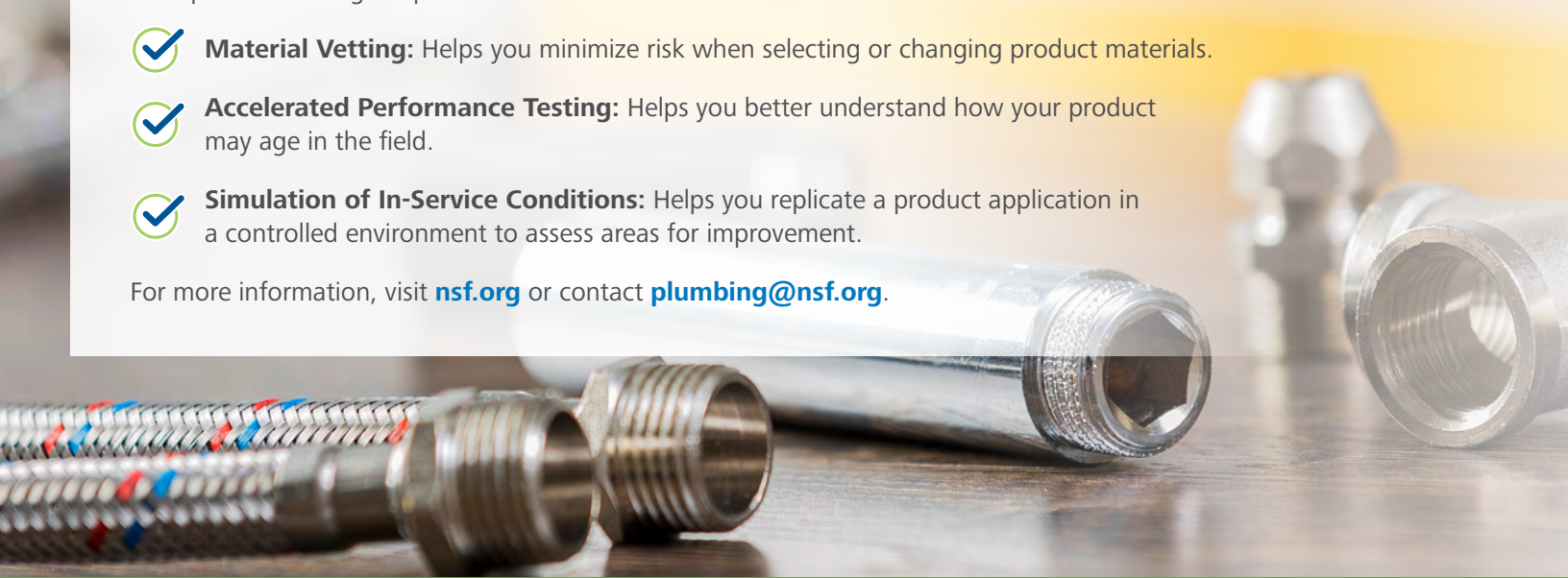
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COVID-19 Places Focus on the Home (Contd.)

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increased online versus in-store purchasing, she explained.

Hammock expects organizations to devote more resources to addressing health and safety issues in the workplace.

“What that looks like as a line item and a budget, I don’t know, but I think that conversation needs to be had at budget time,” he stated.

He said the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been prioritizing COVID-19 from an inspection standpoint and focusing primarily on high-risk industries, such as health care and long-term care. “On the non-COVID side, OSHA has started to conduct other types of non-COVID inspections in certain areas of the country,” Hammock explained. “And that’s why you shouldn’t forget about

the other hazards that are out there. I don’t know what the numbers are in manufacturing, but there is a little bit more inspection activity, and we should continue to see that go into 2021.”

Conversations about workplace safety now must include consideration of home working environments, Hammock and Farrer agreed. “We’re getting more laws and regulations about mobile workforces in general,” Farrer explained. She said OSHA and the Society of Human Resource Management haven’t yet addressed working from home in a substantial way. “And here we are with over 80% of our workforce working from their couches or in their bedrooms,” she stated.

She doesn’t expect federal legislation on this matter, due to other priorities, for at least 18 months. “What we need

to do in the meantime is make sure all of our workers are trained to implement safety on their own,” naming desk height, the distance between a computer screen to the user’s face, and other ergonomic issues as examples.

The panelists agreed that working from home versus a conventional workplace is not an “either or” conversation. “The office as an institution is not going anywhere anytime soon. It’s not a matter of if we have offices in the future, it’s a matter of how we are using them,” Farrer said. Offices will likely be reserved for collaborative tasks – group decision-making, strategic thinking, product innovation and research and development, the panelists agreed. “But we have now moved out of the historical era in which we need to drive an hour and a half to sit down at a computer. That’s what’s going to change,” she said.

PMI Member Joins NASA's Lunar Loo Challenge

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

When NASA needed a high-tech toilet designed for astronauts to use on missions, it turned to crowdsourcing for answers. PMI member Duravit answered the call to help solve the 2020 Lunar Loo Challenge – and won third prize.

Crowdsourcing – an online platform that matches problems with problem solvers – also can help plumbing manufacturing companies and others find answers to highly technical and difficult challenges.

In their Nov. 12 presentation at the PMI20 Manufacturing Success Conference, **Steve Rader**, deputy director, NASA's Center of Excellence for Collaborative Innovation, and **Christian**



Steve Rader

Cotichini, co-founder and CEO, HeroX, discussed "How Crowdsourcing Helped NASA Design A New Toilet."

The Lunar Loo Challenge, which ran from June 23 to August 17 and offered \$35,000 in prizes, received more than

2,500 design submissions and another almost 1,200 submissions in the "juniors" category. The challenge also attracted plenty of attention on social media and from the news media. Rader said public awareness and recognition is important as NASA tries to solve some of its most challenging situations.



Christian Cotichini

"This was a great example of what's possible with crowdsourcing. For some reason, our plumbing- and toilet-related challenges seem to have extra-high engagement," Cotichini said. "I guess it's because people can relate to it."

Complex specs inspire creativity

Designing a toilet to work in both lunar gravity and microgravity was just part of the creative hurdle entrants faced, Rader explained. Among many other things, the Lunar Lander toilet design specifications required the toilet to have a mass of less than 15 kg, consume less than 70 watts of power, stabilize urine to avoid

the generation of gas and particulates, and accommodate both female and male users.

Rader highlighted the top 17 design submissions, describing them as unique and interesting approaches. First prize of \$20,000 was awarded to a team led by Washington-based engineer **Boone Davidson**. Taking advice from former astronaut **Susan Helms**, the team designed its Translunar Hypercritical Repository 1 (THRONE). The THRONE was inspired by the retractable roof of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Ga., and features a retractable covering, bladeless fan, and memory-foam seat, according to a Business Insider article.

Thatcher Cardon, a U.S. Air Force colonel and flight surgeon, and software specialist **Dave Morse** won second prize of \$10,000 for their Individualized Collapsible Astronaut Toilet (ICAT). Their design featured a collapsible, blow-up toilet with a gel-based storage system that offers a custom seat for each astronaut.

Duravit AG, a German subsidiary of PMI member Duravit, won third place, and \$5,000, for its Centrifugal Lunar Toilet. The Duravit toilet was designed to suck in excrements from the user's body and then use a centrifuge to accelerate and deposit waste into a tank via a screw conveyor. **Franziska Wülker**, a development engineer, led the Duravit AG team, and was the only female engineer to participate in the top three winning design teams, according to a Duravit news release ([tinyurl.com/y2pdwebn](https://www.tinyurl.com/y2pdwebn)).

Cotichini also discussed HeroX's role as the crowdsourcing platform used for the Lunar Loo Challenge. He explained how crowdsourcing can help complement any company's or organization's in-house projects by assisting in finding expert freelancers and innovative talent to help solve specific problems.



U.S. Trade Policies (Contd.)

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Experts answer questions from PMI members

The three attorneys fielded questions from the PMI20 attendees. One question was whether or not the Biden administration would be more flexible in granting tariff exclusions for plumbing products. Chuck responded by suggesting companies develop coherent stories to explain that they took steps to bring parts of supply chains back into the U.S. and that balance with Biden's stated trade goals so far.

"My sense from our experience with similar industries is that we may have more traction (with the) Biden administration than the current one. The current one, I thought, took a very hard line," Chuck stated. Stepp added there will probably be some picking and choosing of the tariffs that will remain

in place. "We do think there'll be some relief, especially for manufacturers for included parts and components," as well as lessened restrictions and additional exclusions. "A lot of that will be subject to the political process."

Another questioner asked about the likelihood of reforms to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Chuck said the notion of giving the WTO more support and moving towards multilateralism has been expressed but there are "challenges now because of what's happened in the past 3 1/2 years with our trading partners in Europe."

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PMI STAFF

Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE
CEO/Executive Director
kstackpole@safep plumbing.org

Matt Sigler
Technical Director
msigler@safep plumbing.org

Jodi Stuhrberg
Association Manager
jstuhrberg@safep plumbing.org

Stephanie Lass
Education Coordinator
slass@safep plumbing.org

Ann Geier
Administrative Assistant
ageier@safep plumbing.org

PMI CONSULTANTS

Ray Valek
Public Relations
ray@valekco.com

Frederick Desborough
Technical Consultant
frd@flex-fluss.com

Pam Taylor
Legal Consultant, Jones Day
ptaylor@jonesday.com

Maureen Baird
Graphic Design
info@mbairdgraphics.com



1750 Tysons Blvd., Ste. 1500
McLean, VA 22102
Phone: 847 481-5500
Fax: 847 481-5501
SafePlumbing.org