

Confidence is Key Toward Making Good Decisions

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



Kerry Stackpole

How many decisions have you made in your life when you didn't have all the information you might have needed? If you're like the rest of us, the answer is plenty. The current uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic, continuing debates on Capitol Hill about infrastructure spending, and questions about the future of work have sparked a series of conversations about the array of business decisions still to come. There are mixed signals everywhere and few that explain our current circumstances.

This situation leads me to the question of how do leaders make good decisions? What intrinsic and extrinsic conditions create an optimum framework for making a choice? A quick Internet search will offer you suggestions for how to use a four-step all the way to a 10-step method for making choices. You will find thoughtful advice such as "you can always change your mind," which is often true. Another gem inserts urgency into the decision equation, asserting "you may never get another chance" and reminding you that some opportunities are fleeting.

Is there a better way to make better decisions? The literature suggests there might be. Starting with the first things first question, "is this a decision you need to make now?" Undoubtedly, there's a lot on your plate and more arrives every day. Having certainty about which decisions are essential and which can wait gives you important space for contemplation. At NASA, the launch director makes the "go/no go" decision for the launch. During the Space Shuttle era, the number of people expressing concerns about things both minor and major prior to a shuttle launch was often overwhelming. Much of it was due to the anxiety and stress of the work and the deep sense of responsibility held by the launch team. The

question often asked was, "do I have the right people with the right expertise in the room?"

An important point made by all the decision-making frameworks can best be summarized by a simple sounding question – "what is your ultimate goal and will this decision get you closer to achieving it?" Sounds simple enough, yet more struggle with this question than you might imagine. There's a reason the proverb, "when you're up to your neck in alligators, it's hard to remember that your initial objective was to drain the swamp" lives on. Have you accurately framed the issue before moving to a choice?

One important decision-making tool that never goes out of favor is the pros and cons list or, if you prefer, the risks and opportunities matrix. Making decisions is never easy. Making time to weigh the likely impact of your choices by considering the plus and minus options will help immensely. Some years ago, I met a young purchasing manager who oversaw million-dollar raw material purchases. When I asked about the biggest challenges she faced in her position, she said it came when she first started out in purchasing. She was often unsure about her buying decisions. She adopted a process of tallying the cost of a purchase order and then making a calculation of how many weeks salary she would have to reimburse the company if she made a buying mistake. While the company was never going to require a reimbursement, spending the company's money like it was her own, she said, helped her build confidence in her decision-making.

If you are going to be decisive, having the confidence to explain how you made your choice, and why your decision is the optimal one, will go a long way toward building the confidence of your team and improving the quality of your decision-making in these uncertain times. As former Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General **Colin Powell** wrote, "People want to share your confidence, however thin, not your turmoil, however real." Now is surely that time.

PMI Board Renews Strategic Foresight Planning

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

About 20 years ago, Blockbuster – a huge video rental chain with 7,700 stores – passed up a chance to buy a fledgling company called Netflix for \$50 million. Netflix is worth \$1 billion today. Blockbuster, now a defunct company, made this mortal error because it wasn't in touch with trends occurring in technology, markets and society. Operating from a position of strength at the time, Blockbuster failed to imagine what the future would be like.

To help organizations plan for successful futures by minding these trends, the idea of strategic foresight has taken hold around the globe. In 2018, Plumbing Manufacturers International incorporated strategic foresight into its planning discipline, and the PMI Board of Directors completed its third annual review of progress made toward strategic goals at a Sept. 29 meeting at the Rose Hotel near Chicago.

During this year's meeting, the board took the additional step of taking strategic foresight beyond PMI and learning how to adopt the process for the entire plumbing manufacturing industry.

Jared Nichols, founder and creator of the NU Futurist and the Foresight Academy, was invited by the board to facilitate a session titled "Using Foresight to Build the Future." The session focused on teaching board members to turn disruption into opportunity. His colleague, Green Beret and Special Forces veteran **Paul Toolan**, assisted in facilitating the program.

"Strategic foresight has emerged from the volatile, uncertain and chaotic environment we have all experienced," said PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**. "We have learned that the traditional strategic planning that focused only on what's good for the company lacked sufficient outward focus and did not reflect enough on significant social change. . . Strategic

foresight opens the blinds wider to see a broader sphere of issues and trends that you may not have noticed in your day-to-day work."

PMI Board of Directors President **Todd Teter** introduced the day's agenda as an opportunity to have a thought-provoking discussion about how PMI can improve the value it provides to members and where PMI wants to go in the future.

Stackpole spoke about "where we've been and where go going," providing an update on PMI's strategic initiatives in member engagement; diversity, equity and inclusion; professional development and education; strategic partnerships and coalitions; and more.

PMI Technical Director **Kyle Thompson** presented on technical trends within the industry and how governmental entities are responding to projected water shortages and other environmental and climate issues, followed by a discussion of how PMI can take proactive technical positions to achieve positive change. **Ray Valek** explained how communication tactics contributed to successful PMI initiatives including the PMI Is For You campaign, outreach through traditional and social media, the response to California AB 100, and engagement with members via digital platforms.

Nichols led the group through a discussion of possible futures around the driver of climate change. As a group, the



Jared Nichols, founder of the NU Futurist and the Foresight Academy

PMI board members ranked implications most significant to the future of their companies, according to the level of impact and uncertainty.

Next, the meeting participants chose the implication of greatest concern to create or "will/or" question about the future. This question provided the foundation of two alternative future scenarios. Then, they worked through a five-step scenario for building two alternative scenarios around this implication.

The participants then answered questions about how their organizations and the people they serve might fare in both alternative futures. They also identified what they believe would be their primary obstacles and opportunities in each scenario.

The exercise resulted in the development of several strategic options for the board to consider that will help the plumbing manufacturing industry to be well positioned as society adapts to social and economic changes caused by climate change.

Updated Guidebook to Tackle Shifting Data Privacy Laws

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

Legislation protecting data privacy in several states and countries continues to be revised and passed at a rapid pace, making it difficult for many businesses to comply. To help prepare Plumbing Manufacturers International members for the changes and compliance challenges, PMI is updating its Domestic and International Privacy Regulations Guidebook.

PMI originally created the guidebook with Wiley Rein, LLP, in 2019 to address the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA). The guide also provides international guidance on the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as well as on Mexico's and Canada's data privacy laws.

A new amended version of the CCPA, called the California Privacy Rights and Enforcement Act (CPRA), and new comprehensive data privacy laws in Virginia and Colorado – all taking effect in 2023 – could cause issues for businesses that aren't prepared.

“With such a fractured approach among the states – and no federal legislation on the horizon – it becomes more challenging to come up with a comprehensive



Joan Stewart

privacy compliance plan,” said **Joan Stewart**, a Wiley Rein attorney who focuses on regulatory compliance, privacy issues and data governance counseling. Stewart will discuss this topic at the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference, where the updated guidebook will be initially shared.

What's coming

The CPRA will significantly expand California consumers' privacy rights and protections, Stewart noted. New data privacy laws in Virginia and Colorado

– along with the CPRA – will implement additional limits on targeted advertising, too.

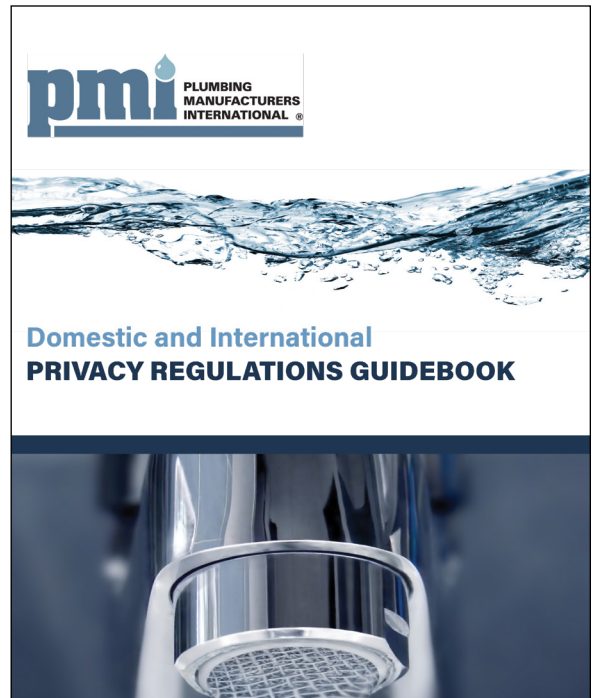
“If PMI members are using advertising campaigns that automatically collect information about consumers to drive customized targeted ads online, they will face additional restrictions on the use of this information,” Stewart said.

California currently allows 30 days for businesses found to be non-compliant with data privacy laws to reach compliance. That safety net does not currently exist as part of the Virginia and Colorado laws, she noted. The CPRA removes the automatic 30-day “cure” period, but “we're hopeful that California will reconsider and continue to use a moderated approach as more of a teaching tool, so businesses understand these obligations and have a chance to meet them,” Stewart said.

Companies should prepare for complications as various states are anticipated to adopt comprehensive privacy regulations during the next legislative cycle, according to Stewart.

The most important step businesses can take to comply with these laws? “Understand what data you're collecting and where it's coming from. Look at your data collection practices and cast a wide net,” Stewart explained.

Another regulation of potential concern to PMI members involves China's new Personal Information Protection Law. Stewart said many U.S. businesses – and the law firms helping those businesses – were surprised by the short timeframe



allowed to become compliant. China adopted the law in August 2021 and set a compliance date of Nov. 1, 2021.

She noted that the most challenging part of the new law will be the complicated cross-border data transfer provisions. “There are many pieces that haven't been finalized on these provisions and we're still waiting for guidance,” she said.

Stewart suggested PMI members that believe they may be impacted by any of these laws contact their legal counsel for help and guidance.

To attend Stewart's presentation and learn more about these laws, register for the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference (safeplumbing.org/pmi21).

PMI members can view the current PMI Domestic and International Privacy Regulations Guidebook on the members-only section of the PMI website (tinyurl.com/ejx7j6ju).

PMI21 Agenda Finalized As Countdown to Nov. 15-18 Begins

With more industry experts added to the agenda and COVID-19 case counts in San Diego on the decline due to relatively high vaccination rates, excitement is building for the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference, Nov. 15-18, at the Paradise Point Resort.

Among those joining the program is **Janet Stout**, Ph.D., president and director of Special Pathogens Laboratory and research associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh Swanson School of Engineering. Dr. Stout will discuss “Assessing Risk from Legionella and Waterborne Pathogens in Building Water Systems: What’s New?” Her presentation will center on updates to ASHRAE Standard 188, newly strengthened Joint Commission environment of care policies addressing Legionella and other waterborne pathogens, and why the epidemiology of many waterborne pathogens makes water management challenging.



Janet Stout

Gary Stanley, director, Office of Materials Industries, Department of Commerce, and **Evan Chuck**, partner, Crowell & Moring, will present on “U.S. Trade Policy in the Biden Administration Era.” They will provide an update on tariffs, exports and changes to Buy American federal procurement requirements. Having presented to PMI members before, Stanley and Chuck will translate the latest trade-related developments into useful information for conference attendees.



Gary Stanley



Evan Chuck

Adam Bartman will be joining his Reed Controls Inc. colleague **Avishai Moscovich** in presenting about



Adam Bartman

plumbing Internet of Things. Bartman is the co-founder of Reed, a software solution that integrates leading brands of plumbing valves, meters and sensors to help commercial and multi-family buildings operate efficiently.

Elizabeth Lovsted will be joining **Jacob Atalla** and **Heather Cooley** on a panel about “How Water Efficiency/Conservation is Changing in an Era of Growth and Drought.” A water resources manager at the San Diego County Water Authority, Lovsted will contribute her knowledge of California’s new water use efficiency standards and how those may affect future potable reuse and recycling projects.



Elizabeth Lovsted

See the entire PMI21 agenda at tinyurl.com/ukdnm8kw.



SAN DIEGO



Save \$900 with PMI21/Aspiring Leaders Program Bundle

Save \$900 by adding your participation in the Nov. 15 PMI Aspiring Leaders Program to your PMI21 registration. To be led by formal naval officer **Dave Rosenberg**, “Locked on Leadership: The Secret to Self-Directed Teams” is designed for PMI’s aspiring leaders.

Who exactly is an aspiring leader? You are – as is any high-potential professional seeking opportunities to learn and develop leadership skills. PMI developed its Aspiring Leaders Program with both budding and experienced plumbing manufacturing professionals in mind. Our program will help you gain a greater awareness of how your leadership skills can impact your organization and your professional advancement potential.

The program will take place on Nov. 15, the first day of PMI21, aboard the USS Midway Museum in San Diego. Calling upon his military leadership training and experience running four successful companies, Rosenberg will walk participants through a disciplined approach to attract the best job candidates, retain

top talent, and create successful, self-directed teams.

Rosenberg will discuss tactics and solutions to some of the many leadership challenges that crop up: dealing with co-workers who just go through the motions; handling unmotivated team members who need to learn new skills; and avoiding some of the pitfalls of becoming a new leader, such as micro-managing team members. In addition, USS Midway Museum docent and retired Navy captain **Steve Andres** will provide a presentation about the history of the battleship geared toward the program participants.

The third annual PMI Aspiring Leaders Program also will provide you with the opportunity to network with other plumbing manufacturing industry leaders, particularly if you decide to register for PMI21 as well. Share this information with colleagues who may be interested. Learn more at safeplumbing.org/events/aspiring-leaders-program.



Dave Rosenberg

Know About COVID-19 in San Diego Before You Go

With a one-dose vaccination rate of 87.7% of those 12 and older, San Diego County reports a relatively high vaccination rate in comparison to other U.S. counties. This rate has resulted in a relatively low daily case rate average of 14 cases per 100,000 in the county for the two weeks leading up to Sept. 27, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data.

For comparison’s sake, the average rate per 100,000 was at 16/100,000 for the entire state of California and 36/100,000 for the entire U.S. and ranged from a high of 143/100,000 in Alaska and a low of 14/100,000 in Connecticut on Sept. 27, CDC data shows.

Despite the relatively low case rate, the CDC rates the county at a **very high risk** level for **unvaccinated persons**. The risk in the county will decrease to **high risk** if the daily case rate drops to less than 11.4 cases per 100,000.

The risk for **vaccinated individuals** is much lower; a CDC study showed that only about one of every 12 reported COVID-19 cases occur among vaccinated persons. At this rate, the daily case rate in San Diego County for vaccinated persons would be roughly 1.2 per 100,000 – a **moderate risk**.

Strict precautions have contributed to California’s lower-than-average case counts. For this reason, California continues to require **unvaccinated persons** to wear masks in all indoor settings, and the Paradise Point Resort will of course be complying with this requirement. For **vaccinated individuals** in indoor settings, mask wearing is recommended. Unless an outbreak occurs, mask wearing is not required outdoors, regardless of vaccination status.

PMI will update this information leading up to the conference.

Register Now!

Register for PMI21, or bundle with the Nov. 15 Aspiring Leaders Program: safeplumbing.org/pmi21



Plumbing Manufacturers Supply Sanitation to Underserved

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

As water scarcity and quality have become growing issues in many underserved communities – especially in drought-ridden states and countries – some plumbing manufacturers are harnessing their expertise to help.

Worldwide in 2017, more than 2 billion people didn't have access to basic sanitation and 3 billion people lived without acceptable sources to wash their hands at home, according to the latest data from the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

Several Plumbing Manufacturers International members, including Kohler Co., LIXIL and IAPMO, have been stepping up to deliver sanitation and handwashing solutions to those who need it most.

Inspired by a trip to Indonesia and seeing firsthand the lack of suitable handwashing facilities



James Bourne, Kohler Co.

in Ende on Flores Island, Kohler Mira project engineer **James Bourne** wanted to help. Bourne noticed that village water supplies dried up in the summer, forcing families to walk many miles to collect water from remote wells and streams. He also realized those families needed the ability to wash their hands more frequently to reduce the spread of waterborne illnesses, according to a Kohler blog article.

Upon his return, Bourne pitched his idea for a low-tech, water-conserving handwashing station in Kohler's I-Prize competition. I-Prize is part of the company's Innovation for Good incubator, which encourages employees to present innovations with a social purpose, the article said. Bourne's team won incubation funding to further develop his idea with field work in Nepal to study the

culture, behaviors, patterns and barriers to handwashing in developing regions.

PMI member LIXIL also recently created a simple handwashing station for low-income households that don't have access to running water, according to LIXIL's SATO website. The SATO Tap is designed to hold a bottle of water and includes a plastic base that stores a bar of soap. Individuals operate the nozzle with a nudge of their hand to reduce contact among multiple users.

Daigo Ishiyama, SATO chief design engineer, found inspiration for the SATO Tap in an unexpected place. After watching his six-year-old son play with toys in the bath – letting water dribble from one to another – Ishiyama started forming his idea. Within weeks, he had created a simple and inexpensive way for people in lower-income parts of the world to wash their hands regularly, stated the SATO website.

The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH), the non-profit arm of PMI member IAPMO, launched its Wash Station Challenge 2021 in June to build mobile wash station facilities for the Navajo Nation in the southwestern United States. Projects



LIXIL's SATO Tap



to assemble the wash stations were hosted at 10 chapters of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing, Pipefitting and Sprinkler Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (UA) nationwide. The wash stations will be delivered to community health service facilities, chapter houses and farms on the Navajo Nation.

“These new hand-washing stations are going to provide further hygiene capacity for Navajo people and community sites that are currently without, and help further protect general public health and safety in the face of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic,” said IWSH Managing Director **Seán Kearney** in a recent IWSH news release.



IWSH Wash Station Challenge

Aspiring Leaders Sharpen Critical Thinking Skills

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

Employees who use reason, fact-finding and analysis – essential critical thinking skills – can better identify problems and possible solutions that can lead their companies to simpler, less costly results.

The good news for businesses, including plumbing manufacturers? Employees can learn and improve their critical thinking skills.

A group of Plumbing Manufacturers International members recognized the importance of learning more about this key leadership skill by taking part in PMI's Aug. 25 Aspiring Leaders workshop, "Applying Critical Thinking to Communicate and Inspire Action."

"I'm here to get you to a point that you can apply the steps of critical thinking to any situation and create a communication plan for that situation," **Carolyn B. Thompson**, an experience training designer, facilitator, event planner and human resources consultant for Training Systems, Inc., told the group.

Focus on facts, but read between the lines

Thompson defined critical thinking, which she said is "the process by which people qualitatively and quantitatively assess the information they have accumulated, and how they, in turn, use that information to solve problems and forge new patterns of understanding."

She guided the group through a series of steps to properly use critical thinking skills to identify and solve a problem. An important first step is to gather all relevant information, focusing on the facts. Non-relevant information, such as angry or emotional statements, should be left out of the equation. Thompson said it's important to note people's body language and tone of voice. "Part of being able to gather relevant information includes reading between the lines and being able to see things that other people don't," Thompson said.

She highlighted using "repetitive why analysis" as a valuable method to ensure focusing on the real problem or underlying cause that needs to be solved. "You keep asking why until there are no more answers," Thompson said.

For example, she told a story of how repetitive why analysis helped save a monument in Washington, D.C., from further deterioration. The experts first assumed harsh chemicals used to clean bird droppings were the only viable solution. But when they continued drilling down with "why" questions, such as "why are there so many bird droppings on the monument?" they quickly discovered more relevant details. They found that a large population of spiders were a food source for the birds and that swarms of gnats were attracting the spiders. Ultimately, they discovered that the monument's lighting was attracting the gnats, so they changed the lighting.

In the end, this type of analysis can lead companies to more straightforward solutions that work better and cost less.

Critical thinking errors and tips to avoid them

Thompson described several "critical thinking errors" that can trip up anyone: egocentric or arrogant thinking; groupthink, where you go along with everyone else; drone mentality, where you go through the motions and pay little attention to what's happening around you; social conditioning and bias, which can cause either positive or negative subconscious attitudes about



the people you're dealing with; and schedule pressures that leave you with too little time for gathering all the facts.

She offered tips on avoiding these errors and suggested engaging other people who don't think like you to gather different opinions and viewpoints. "It's easier to communicate when you are prepared with facts, arguments, perspectives, and possible solutions," she said.

PMI members interested in learning more can access the workshop slides and worksheets under Workforce/Professional Development on the Webinars/Videos members-only page (tinyurl.com/mh4vwpyu). Learn more about and register for PMI's Nov. 15 Aspiring Leaders Program held during the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference at safeplumbing.org/events/aspiring-leaders-program.

Applying Critical Thinking to Communicate and Inspire Action
with Carolyn B. Thompson
August 25, 1-2:30 p.m. CT

ASPIRING LEADERS WORKSHOP

pmi PLUMBING MANUFACTURERS INTERNATIONAL

CDA Shares Study to Aid Meeting NSF 61 Q Limits

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

The Copper Development Association (CDA) recently shared its study results on several brass rod alloys to help PMI members meet the updated NSF/ANSI/CAN 61: Q ≤ 1 standard.

With an effective date of Jan. 1, 2024, the standard requires faucets and other endpoint devices used for drinking water to leach 1 microgram (mcg) or less of lead during testing and requires device components to leach 0.5 mcg or less.

“Representing raw material suppliers, we wanted to do our part to help manufacturers make this transition and give them confidence that there are multiple brass rod solutions available that can help them meet the more rigorous public health standard,” said Adam Estelle, director of CDA’s Rod and Bar Council, during his PMI Sept. 16 webinar presentation on “Lead-Free Brass Rod Solutions for Lower NSF 61 Q Limits.”

The CDA study was designed to exceed the testing requirements outlined in “NSF/ANSI/CAN 61 Normative Annex 2 Acceptable Materials,” which describes an evaluation process to determine if a material does not contribute any contaminant above its acceptable level defined in the standard, Estelle explained. The CDA submitted an NSF Joint Committee Issue Paper in September requesting that six brass rod alloys evaluated in the study be added to Annex 2.

Estelle said the team developed a testing plan that involved: 1) including multiple alloys developed specifically for drinking water applications; 2) assessing the performance of those alloys against the new lower Q limits within practical product design parameters; and 3) examining the potential influence of processing variability across a wide range of machined surface conditions.

“We needed to wrap our arms around what influence, if any, different combinations of machining parameters like cutting speeds, tool wear, and surface finish may or may not have on lead leaching,” Estelle said. “The data clearly show that regardless of how the brass parts were machined, all the candidate alloys still passed the lower Q requirements by a wide margin at meaningful wetted surface area to volume ratios.”

He encouraged PMI members to review and provide feedback on the CDA study before the NSF Joint Committee’s December meeting. PMI members can email Estelle for a copy of the companion technical report submitted to the committee at Adam.Estelle@copperalliance.us.

Watch it on demand

PMI members can watch the webinar on demand and download Estelle’s presentation at safeplumbing.org/members/webinars-videos under “Technical/Regulatory.”

2021 PMI LEADERSHIP

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Lead-Free Brass Rod Solutions for Lower NSF 61 Q Limits

Webinar by the Copper Development Association Inc.

Thursday, September 16, 1 pm - 2 pm CT

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Adam Estelle