

## New Year, Fresh Optimism

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



Kerry Stackpole

It is said that optimism is a force multiplier, so I'm going with that. It's 2021 and there's a great year ahead. With democracy prevailing and the presidential inauguration behind us, there are many positives to look forward to.

The ingenuity of the pharmaceutical industry will bring multiple varieties of COVID-19 vaccines to the public.

As the delivery of these vaccines ramps up, they will end up in the arms of everyone who wants one. The U.S. government is aiming for 1.5 million vaccinations a day. The vaccines will be administered by local hospitals and health departments, and eventually by pharmacies and your doctor's office. If all goes well, 75% to 80% of Americans will be vaccinated by the end of 2021, and we may reach a degree of normality, says **Dr. Anthony Fauci**, director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Plumbing product manufacturers and their employees are designated as frontline essential workers, who are part of group 1-B in the vaccine allocation plan. As more vaccines become available, manufacturers and their teams will be able to make on-site arrangements for COVID-19 vaccine administration with a local hospital, health department, pharmacy, or industrial health care service.

The Biden-Harris administration is introducing nominees and appointments of particular importance to our industry. At the EPA, President **Joe Biden** plans to nominate **Michael S. Regan** as administrator. Regan was appointed by North Carolina Governor **Roy Cooper** to head the state's Department of Environmental Quality in January 2017. Before that, Regan served at the EPA as a program manager responsible for designing programs to reduce pollution, as well as market-based solutions to improve energy efficiency, air quality, and climate-related challenges.

The Biden-Harris administration has appointed **Radhika Fox** as principal deputy assistant administrator in the EPA's Office of Water. Fox was previously the chief executive officer of the US Water Alliance, a national nonprofit organization advancing policies and programs toward building a sustainable water future for all. She brings more than 20 years of experience in developing policies, programs and issue-based advocacy campaigns on the most salient water issues facing the nation, including climate change, affordability and innovative finance, water infrastructure investment, equity, and the evolution of the One Water movement. Earlier in her career, Fox directed policy and government affairs for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

PMI looks forward to working with Fox on issues at the top of our agenda, such as supporting water security, rebuilding and modernizing our nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, maintaining and fully funding the WaterSense program, and increasing the water- and energy-efficiency of federal and commercial buildings by investment in retrofits.

Biden has announced that **Jennifer Granholm**, a former two-term governor of Michigan, will be his nominee for secretary of energy. Granholm was a Michigan attorney general (1999-2003) and its governor from 2003 to 2011. Granholm also served as a member of President **Barack Obama's** transition team and on his economic advisory team during the financial crisis impacting the auto industry.

The president also appointed a new leader for the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Office at the Department of Energy (DOE). **Kelly Speakes-Backman**,

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# New IAPMO CEO Shares Passion for Industry's Future

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

More than two decades of experience in the plumbing and mechanical industry – and robust transition plans – have primed **Dave Viola** for an exciting next chapter as the new CEO of IAPMO.

He's enthusiastic about the future of the plumbing manufacturing industry for many reasons. At the top of his list is IAPMO's strong relationship with PMI and other industry groups – giving them the collective ability to get things done quickly and properly. Viola expressed excitement over emerging technologies and innovations that will help solve crucial industry issues underscored by COVID-19, such as water efficiency, water stagnation, and the spread of infectious diseases. He also is looking forward to IAPMO boosting its social responsibility efforts.

Previously IAPMO's chief operating officer/executive vice president, Viola took the helm as CEO of IAPMO on Jan. 1, 2021. He stepped in for CEO **GP Russ Chaney**, who retired after 25 years as leader of the almost 100-year-old company.

"Russ Chaney built an amazing organization to set us up for success – with a diverse and talented team of well-intentioned people doing great things," Viola said.

## Clarity and perspective become the silver lining during pandemic

Starting a new position in the middle of a pandemic has presented some challenges; however, Viola said he prefers to focus on the silver lining. "It simplified things for us as it allowed us to gain perspective and clarity. So, it's boiled down to executing on two priorities for IAPMO – protecting our staff and maintaining and enhancing our services that turn into long-term benefit," he said.

One pandemic-related dynamic that could benefit from IAPMO's participa-

tion involves a "technology revolution," Viola said. He noted emerging technologies for designing more hygienic public restrooms, as well as innovations to address public health issues surrounding water aging and stagnation and opportunistic pathogens, such as Legionella.

"Embracing new technologies will be extremely important in 2021 and beyond to address critical societal needs," he said. "We need to keep bringing the industry together through our various forums, committees and partnerships with PMI and other industry organizations. It's IAPMO's duty to help manufacturers bring those technologies into the market quickly and correctly by facilitating the development of proper code language, appropriate product standards and performance metrics, and conformity assessment services."

The pandemic has drawn attention to underserved populations that don't have access to acceptable water and sanitation, such as the Southwest's Navajo Nation. Viola said he's pleased with IAPMO's efforts to help get running water and proper sanitation into homes and distribute hand-washing stations in that area through IAPMO's International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (IWSH) Foundation.

A bright spot in helping deliver water to those underserved communities – and protecting public health – will be the Biden administration's priority to improve our nation's water infrastructure, Viola noted.

## PMI and IAPMO make a dynamic duo

"PMI and IAPMO have this wealth of experience and history working together, and we understand what's important to manufacturers, both from a technical and regulatory perspective," Viola said.

Looking back fondly on his time spent as PMI's technical director in the

late 1990s and early 2000s, Viola said he's proud of PMI's major influence on protecting public health and welfare involving two key issues: lead in water and water efficiency. He



Dave Viola

also gave a shout out to **Matt Sigler**, PMI's current technical director and a former IAPMO team member. "Matt's done an amazing job bringing technical expertise and consistency within the tie that binds our two organizations together," he said.

As a PMI allied member, IAPMO gets great benefits from participating in PMI events and on committees, particularly the Technical and Advocacy/Government Relations Committees, Viola stated. IAPMO's also excited about getting involved in PMI's new Industry Marketing Committee. "Those interactions are invaluable as we're able to hear from our clients, the plumbing manufacturers, about what keeps them up at night. From that exchange, we're able to alter our business strategies to deliver the services they need," he said.

Viola anticipates 2021 will be challenging as the industry continues to face a steady stream of federal and state regulatory initiatives. "Because the pandemic is causing a dire need to get things done more quickly, we're entering a new era of legislative challenges," he said. "It will be more important for IAPMO and PMI to work together on any new legislation involving plumbing manufacturing to address public health, safety and welfare while ensuring high consumer satisfaction with any related plumbing products."

# PMI Is For You – And Everyone Else in Your Company

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

If you are reading this story, you are likely someone who is active and engaged as a PMI member. PMI needs your help to spread the message that your company's PMI membership extends to ALL employees of your company.

Yes, all employees of your company can contribute to a PMI committee or view any of our webinars or on-demand learning modules. They can attend the annual PMI Manufacturing Success Conference and PMI Legislative Forums. They can gain access to a comprehensive clearinghouse of industry reports and resources, including the quarterly PMI Market Outlook, and add themselves to and use the PMI Membership Directory for networking purposes.

All employees of your company can have Ripple Effect, Inside My PMI, and committee reports of their choice delivered regularly via email, providing them with timely information about PMI, PMI members, and industry events, issues and trends.

PMI also has created three new programs – the PMI Aspiring Leaders Program for ambitious professionals looking to gain leadership training; the PMI CEO Thinking Forum for senior professionals grappling with the pressing challenges of the day; and the PMI Industry Marketing Committee, which will develop ways to market the accomplishments and contributions of the plumbing manufacturing industry.

## Here's how you can help

1. Spread the word, by emailing this story with a personal note, to individuals in your company who would benefit from becoming an active and engaged PMI member. Ask them to peruse our safeplumbing.org website to gain a better

appreciation of PMI as a professional resource.

2. Encourage members of your company to gain access to members-only content by requesting log-in information. All they have to do is go to [safeplumbing.org/members](http://safeplumbing.org/members) and follow the instructions or contact PMI Association Manager Jodi Stuhrberg at [jstuhrberg@safeplumbing.org](mailto:jstuhrberg@safeplumbing.org). Providing your name, title and contact information to gain log-in information also will place you into the PMI Membership Directory.
3. Follow PMI on the social media platforms of your choice. PMI posts regularly on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Your industry colleagues and peers from entry-to senior-level are particularly engaged on LinkedIn, where PMI platforms are growing quickly. PMI's LinkedIn company page has about 2,200 followers, and PMI's LinkedIn group page, which allows group members to submit posts for PMI approval, has about 2,600 followers. PMI's posts on LinkedIn enable you to keep in touch with PMI's activities and offerings while restricting non-members from PMI members-only content.

4. Increase your participation in PMI, which is always looking for individuals who wish to become more involved.

## Here's your checklist

- \_\_\_ I will encourage my fellow employees to participate in PMI.
- \_\_\_ By submitting my name, title and contact information, I will gain log-in information to PMI members-only content, be included in the PMI Membership Directory, and indicate my choices for PMI committee participation.
- \_\_\_ I will start following PMI on the social media platforms of my choice.
- \_\_\_ I will sign up for an upcoming PMI webinar – see story on page 6.
- \_\_\_ I will mark my calendar for these upcoming events: PMI Aspiring Leaders Program, Nov. 15, USS Midway Museum, San Diego; PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference, Nov. 15-18, Paradise Point, San Diego.

Be a PMI ambassador by promoting the benefits of PMI within your company!



# PMI Optimistic About Biden Administration's Priorities

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

Optimistic about President **Joe Biden's** agenda, PMI moved quickly to work with the Biden administration and the 117th Congress as they began serving their terms in January.

The new administration's priorities closely align with many of PMI's goals, specifically supporting infrastructure to improve drinking and wastewater systems, a strengthened EPA program – which includes WaterSense, and international trade and commerce, said PMI Federal Government Affairs Consultant **Stephanie Salmon** during an interview with Ripple Effect.

Other key goals of the new administration that affect plumbing manufacturers focus on investing in career training at trade schools and community colleges; protecting consumers from purchasing counterfeit and stolen goods; and using retrofits to increase the energy efficiency of federal and commercial buildings, she added.

PMI distributed a letter in January to each member of Congress encouraging them to back these key industry priorities. Additional letters will be sent to new agency administrators once they have been confirmed. A PMI Government Affairs Alert to PMI members in January outlined how PMI will work with the new Congress and administration to keep the industry's interests front and center.

Going forward, what can the plumbing manufacturing industry expect from the new administration?

## A distinct shift in priorities from Trump to Biden

President Biden will ask Congress to approve many of his initiatives, including his economic recovery and tax plans, during his first 100 days. That could prove to be challenging, even with the slight majority held by Democrats.

With his “Build Back Better” economic recovery plan, Biden hopes to create millions of jobs through a series of large investments, Salmon explained. The plan, to be initiated in February, calls for spending trillions of dollars on American-made products, health services and infrastructure improvements. The proposed package includes \$400 billion to boost domestic manufacturing with procurement measures and another \$300 billion for research and development, she said. The plan also includes a comprehensive package to fix the nation's aging drinking water and wastewater systems – another PMI priority.

PMI's congressional letter highlighted the need for millions of Americans in underserved communities to have access to running water and basic indoor plumbing. New water infrastructure would help deliver that much-needed access, especially during a pandemic that has exposed how important adequate sanitation, good hygiene and safe water are to maintaining excellent public health, Salmon stated.

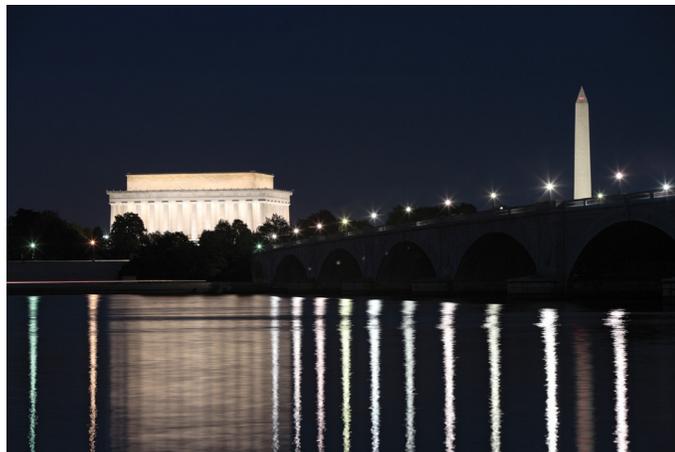
To pay for many of these wish-list items, Biden said he will propose a raise in corporate income taxes from 21%, a rate set under Trump's plan in 2017, to 28%, as well as a 12.4% Social Security payroll tax on those who earn

\$400,000 or more. Biden has promised that anyone making less than \$400,000 annually will not see their taxes increase.

Biden will likely overturn some of the Trump administration rules, such as the new showerhead rule published in December 2020, Salmon said. The new rule allows for multiple shower heads to be used together to expel 7.5 gallons of water per minute versus the old rule of 2.5 gallons per minute. In a Washington Post article about the rule, PMI CEO/ Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole** said, “It was a regulatory solution in search of a problem — a problem that doesn't really exist. The marketplace was not asking for this.”

## Uncertainty lingers over tariffs

Finally, trade is another important priority for PMI members. PMI's congressional letter noted how crucial it will be for our industry to work with the Biden administration to lift Section 301 tariffs, which serve as taxes on American consumers and businesses. Salmon noted that Biden may be planning to temporarily keep in place the 25% tariffs on Section 301 imports, which is a concern for PMI members because most use imported parts and materials from China. “It's something we'll be watching and weighing-in on closely,” she said.



# PMI Joins ‘Build by the Fourth of July’ Campaign

PMI joined The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Bipartisan Policy Center and more than 140 other national and local organizations to launch the “Build by the Fourth of July” campaign, which urges members of Congress to enact a fiscally and environmentally responsible infrastructure package by the Fourth of July 2021.

“PMI joined this coalition because it is exactly in line with our legislative and policy focus for 2021,” said **Stephanie Salmon**, PMI’s federal government affairs consultant. “All PMI members can participate in the campaign by using the social media toolkit developed by the Chamber.” The toolkit can be found at [uschamber.com/build-the-fourth-of-july-toolkit](https://uschamber.com/build-the-fourth-of-july-toolkit).

The coalition brings together a diverse group of organizations including

North America’s Building Trades Unions, the National Wildlife Federation, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the National Association of Home Builders, the National Association of Clean Water

Agencies, as well as other leading business, policy and labor organizations.

“Improving our national infrastructure is a perfect bipartisan issue for 2021 because it brings benefits to all Americans,” said **Kerry Stackpole**, PMI’s CEO/executive director. “Not only can



the package create sorely needed jobs and economic growth across diverse segments of our society, it also can provide incentives for green, energy- and water-efficient buildings that will positively impact our environment.”

## 2021 EWTS to be Convened as Virtual Event

PMI and the other co-conveners of the 2021 Emerging Water Technology Symposium (EWTS) have determined that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the event will go forward as a two-day virtual symposium on May 11-12. The EWTS was previously scheduled to be convened as a live, in-person event in San Antonio, on those same dates.

“It’s disappointing that a year after postponing the 2020 EWTS, the horrible COVID-19 pandemic prevents us yet again from safely convening the symposium as an in-person event,” said IAPMO Senior Vice President of Training and Credentialing Services **Tony Marcello**, the event’s lead organizer.

The two-day virtual symposium will provide a combination of timely speaker presentations and panel discussions.

“While it will be difficult to match the excitement of an in-person EWTS, we can promise the virtual symposium will deliver an engaging and timely, although abbreviated, program for attendees,” Marcello said. “We’ll be reaching out to our spon-

sors, supporting organizations, media partners, presenters and panelists and will announce the virtual program in the near future. The co-conveners remain committed to welcoming attendees to the EWTS in San Antonio in 2022.”

Program and registration details will be available on the EWTS website, [ewts.org](https://ewts.org), after March 11.

Co-convened biennially by PMI, IAPMO, the American Society of Plumbing Engineers, and the Alliance for Water Efficiency, in cooperation with the World Plumbing Council, the EWTS is designed to provide a portal for the host organizations’ partners in the manufacturing, engineering and trade industries to display and demonstrate their innovative solutions to legislative and regulatory developments that often alter industry landscapes.



# Aspiring Leaders Webinar Series A Prelude to Big Event

Professionals aspiring to leadership roles of greater responsibility are a hidden and untapped resource for PMI and the plumbing manufacturing industry. We know you're out there! For example, about 25% of the followers of PMI's LinkedIn company page identify as senior level. About one-third – nearly 700 professionals – identify as “entry level.” Another 40% – about 840 professionals – are positioned in the middle of the company organizational chart.

This year, PMI is starting the Aspiring Leaders Program Webinar Series to provide helpful content to those preparing themselves for additional responsibilities. The series serves as a prelude to the big event – the PMI Aspiring Leaders Program, to be held on Nov. 15 at the USS Midway Museum in San Diego on the first day of the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference. The program provides an innovative training experi-

ence that inspires the development of skills essential to successful leadership. Past programs have focused on creativity, listening, self-awareness, communication, and other aptitudes.

## First webinar in the series scheduled for March 18

The first webinar in the series will feature **Jeff Butler**, an author and workplace strategist. On March 18 from 2-3 p.m. CT, Butler will discuss how individuals can thrive within multigenerational workforces. He describes himself as a strategist who can help organizations improve their relationships with millennial employees.



*Jeff Butler*

Butler has authored books titled “The Authentic Workplace” and “The Key to the New You,” written more than 100 articles on workplace dynamics, and been featured in many media outlets, including Forbes and HR News. Butler has given TEDx talks about organizational psychology.

**Stephanie Lass**, PMI's education coordinator, said the webinar series – open to all employees of PMI member companies – will give PMI members a taste of what the November program will be like and encourage them to start thinking about which employees would benefit from participating in the program.

Registration for this webinar opens in February. To add the webinar to your calendar, go to [safep plumbing.org/events/calendar](https://safep plumbing.org/events/calendar) and click on the March 18 webinar link.

## Feb. 23 PMI Webinar to Explore Benefits of Copper

Employees of PMI member companies interested in hearing more about the public health benefits of copper can register for a PMI webinar with **Andrew G. Kireta, Jr.**, vice president, and **Adam Estelle**, director, rod & bar, of the Copper Development Association (CDA) on Feb. 23 from 2-3 p.m. CT.

They will discuss the extensive evidence and research associated with copper's antimicrobial ability to fight against infectious bacteria and viruses, such as coronavirus, in various settings. Kireta and Estelle will share how copper alloy materials have been incorporated into many product applications across various markets.

Their session on “Antimicrobial Copper Alloys: Self-Sanitizing Surfaces to Control the Spread of Human Pathogens”

will cover the role of the built environment and frequently touched surfaces in the transmission of human pathogens, and explore global cases where copper was used for its antibacterial properties on mass transit systems and in other areas.

Copper's inherent antimicrobial properties have long been known. Over the past two decades, extensive laboratory and clinical research have amply demonstrated the continuous self-sanitizing properties and associated public health benefits of uncoated copper and copper alloy surfaces. The supply chain has begun to incorporate the antimicrobial efficacy of copper alloy materials into a wide range of product applications suitable for diverse end-uses and markets.



*Andrew G. Kireta, Jr.*



*Adam Estelle*

CDA is a not-for-profit trade association that serves as the market development and engineering services arm of the North American copper, brass, and bronze industry.

All employees of PMI member companies can register for this webinar at [tinyurl.com/y5bfr5ra](https://tinyurl.com/y5bfr5ra).

# Get Great Exposure to Key Audiences with PMI Advertising

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

**Mark Twain**, an American literary icon, once said “Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.”

For PMI members only, the right kind of advertising might be an ad placed in Ripple Effect, Inside My PMI or on the safelumbing.org website.

The PMI Impact Advertising Program provides two levels of advertising – PMI Gold and Silver sponsorships – that fit a range of budgets and deliver many benefits. Both offer PMI members plenty of exposure to important audiences.

An ad on safelumbing.org, with 6,000 visits and 10,000 page views per month, will reach an audience of PMI members and the public. The Ripple Effect newsletter is delivered by direct email to more than 1,500 PMI members and subscribers, and it can be accessed via safelumbing.org, as well. Finally, advertising in Inside My PMI will help members reach more than 500 PMI members.

To view an example of a Gold-level sponsorship ad, PMI members can visit safelumbing.org where ICC Evaluation Service has sponsored a digital ad featuring its presence at KBIS 2021. The ad is running on the Members’ Dashboard, Events, and various other PMI website pages through mid-February.

“Our advertising program is a great way for PMI members to promote all the excellent things their organizations are doing,” said **Jodi Stuhberg**, PMI association manager. “We want to thank long-standing PMI member ICC Evaluation Service for investing in the Gold ad package in 2021, as well as for their continued interest and support of PMI. We appreciate their generous sponsorships of the PMI Manufacturing Success Conference, too.”

Gold sponsorship secures broad coverage with one of the following choices

(within one calendar year): a digital ad running on safelumbing.org for four months of your choosing; a full-page ad running in four consecutive issues of Ripple Effect; or digital ads in eight consecutive issues of Inside My PMI. This sponsorship level also includes registration fees for two attendees to participate in the PMI Manufacturing Success Conference.

For PMI members with shorter-term campaigns or smaller budgets, Silver sponsorship provides one of the following: a digital ad that runs for 30 days on safelumbing.org; a full-page ad that runs in one issue of Ripple Effect; or digital ads that run in two consecutive issues of Inside My PMI.

For more information about the program, visit [safelumbing.org/communications/advertise](https://safelumbing.org/communications/advertise), or contact

**Jodi Stuhberg**, PMI Association Manager, at [jstuhberg@safelumbing.org](mailto:jstuhberg@safelumbing.org)

**Advertise with PMI**

Gain Valuable Exposure Through PMI Website and Publications

PMI members have outstanding opportunities for exposure through PMI silver or gold sponsorship advertising. You may choose your sponsorship level and PMI communications vehicle – SafePlumbing.org website, Ripple Effect or Inside My PMI.

Gold Sponsor	Silver Sponsor
<b>Member Value Price:</b> \$10,000 Annual Fee	<b>Member Value Price:</b> \$2,500 Annual Fee
PMI Manufacturing Success Conference registration fees for two attendees. Four months of advertising within 12 months of sponsorship in one of these PMI communications options:	One month of advertising within 12 months of sponsorship in one of these PMI communication options:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SafePlumbing.org</b> (32,000 visits, 50,000 page views, over four months. Audience: PMI members and general public). Digital ad will run for 30 days during each of four months.</li><li>• <b>Ripple Effect</b> (Direct delivery to 1,500+ PMI members and subscribers, plus access via safelumbing.org). Full-page ads will run in four consecutive issues.</li><li>• <b>Inside My PMI</b> (Direct delivery to 500+ PMI members, plus access via safelumbing.org). Digital ads will run in eight consecutive issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>SafePlumbing.org</b> (8,000 visits, 12,500 page views per month. Audience: PMI members and general public). Digital ad will run for 30 days.</li><li>• <b>Ripple Effect</b> (Direct email delivery to 1,500+ PMI members and subscribers, plus access via safelumbing.org). Full-page ad will run in one issue.</li><li>• <b>Inside My PMI</b> (Direct delivery to 500+ PMI members, plus access via safelumbing.org). Digital ads will run in two consecutive issues.</li></ul>

SAFEPLUMBING.ORG	RIPPLE EFFECT	INSIDE MY PMI
<b>DIGITAL ADS</b> will run for 30 days. <b>AD size</b> is 250 px x 250 px. <b>FILE FORMATS</b> accepted are non-animated, 72 dpi, PNG, JPG or GIF. Be sure to include a URL for ad link.	<b>FULL PAGE AD</b> will run in the next available issue. <b>AD size</b> is 8.5" x 11" no bleed, 8.75 x 11.25 with bleed. Smaller sizes are acceptable. <b>FILE FORMATS</b> accepted are CMYK color, EPS, high resolution 300 dpi, JPG, or PDF with flattened transparency.	<b>DIGITAL ADS</b> will run in two consecutive issues. <b>AD size</b> is 250 px x 250 px. <b>FILE FORMATS</b> accepted are non-animated, 72 dpi, PNG, JPG or GIF. Be sure to include a URL for ad link. <b>CIRCULATION:</b> PMI members only

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who most recently served as CEO of the Energy Storage Association, will become the principal deputy assistant secretary for EERE. Speakes-Backman has spent more than 20 years working in energy and environmental issues in the public, non-governmental organization, and private sectors.

As we look ahead to working with the new leadership at the DOE, there are important issues requiring attention, including reversing the DOE show-erhead rule that became effective on Jan. 15, 2021. This rule undercuts the energy and water conservation standards

put in place by Congress and dilutes the compliance investments made by manufacturers.

There are real challenges ahead. Convincing folks to wear masks, socially distance themselves, and wash their hands regularly are still among them. Being an optimist doesn't mean being unrealistic. Having hope and confidence in the possibility of success even in the face of setbacks doesn't make you naïve. Believing that you can, should and will take actions to move important things forward is the essence of optimism. It really is a force multiplier.

## Planning, Leader Buy-in Integral to Solid Diversity Efforts

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



Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs have become more important to plumbing manufacturers and businesses – not just because they're the right thing to do, but because they produce better business results.

However, success doesn't happen overnight, and organizations need to consider several key elements to make their efforts count. Specifically, they need to tie DEI plans to existing company initiatives, such as recruiting and hiring; get commitment from senior management and throughout their organization; set realistic goals and achieve consistent progress; and build in accountability and incentives.

Creating a sense of belonging in the workplace with the right DEI action plan pays off in many ways – from retaining top talent, to boosting innovation, to realizing cost savings. Workers who feel like they belong experience a 56% increase in job performance and a 75% drop in sick days, while generating a 50% decline in turnover risk, according to a Harvard Business Review article. The result for a 10,000-person company would be an estimated annual savings of more than \$52 million, the article reported.

When putting together DEI action plans, organizations must look at every aspect of its employees and culture. That means considering gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability levels, race, and religion, according to a recent panel discussion about evaluating and promoting DEI, hosted by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

Many organizations have made progress in some of those areas, but still have work to do. For example, a Forbes diversity and inclusion survey showed that companies have made the most progress in the areas of gender, ethnicity and race. However, they would like to improve programs related to disability, age and sexual orientation.

### Link DEI to company goals, measure progress

To produce strong results, DEI action plans must be imbedded in a company's existing initiatives, culture and structure. Weaving DEI into the fabric of an organization starts with a detailed strategy that links to company goals and performance along with strong mechanisms for measuring progress, noted a recent Forbes article.

Companies should first work on educating leaders about the importance of a DEI plan and then invest in meaningful diversity training, according to the Society for Human Resource Management. It's also essential to create a shared vision by including employees, to establish a DEI council that meets regularly, and to report goals and measure progress.

Accountability should be considered, too. One of the best ways to encourage accountability is to link executive pay to a company's DEI goals. HR firm Mercer recently estimated that between 15% and 20% of S&P 500 companies include DEI metrics in executive incentive plans and said that more should follow this practice. (*Continue reading at [safep plumbing.org/communications/pmiblog](http://safep plumbing.org/communications/pmiblog).*)

### How to Submit Blog Content or Ideas

PMI@Work explores efforts to develop the manufacturing workforce for the future, particularly among PMI members. If you'd like to submit a post or content for consideration, contact PMI communications team member **Ray Valek** at [ray@valekco.com](mailto:ray@valekco.com).

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