



The Power of Pause

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



Kerry Stackpole

Whether you're facing economic headwinds or feeling legislation tailwinds, one thing hasn't changed. In this era of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), leaders must move quickly. Timely decisions and actions are essential to leadership. Yet, how do you know yours are the right decisions? It is often said that the companies that go faster than their competitors have

a first-mover advantage that makes the slower company's actions irrelevant. So how do those first-movers achieve strategic superiority?

The Corporate Finance Institute defines the first-mover advantage as a strategic tactic that enables a company to establish strong brand recognition and product or service loyalty before other entrants to the market. While being first has its benefits, it also clears a pathway for second movers who can avoid early mistakes, leverage the marketplace education expenses incurred by the first mover, and ultimately make product or service improvements to gain advantage in the marketplace.

Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple, liked to tell a story of how a first move of his set the standard for the entire computer industry. After dropping out of college, he discovered a newfound love of calligraphy. That discovery led to the integration of various typefaces and proportionally spaced fonts into Macintosh computers. Jobs later said, "If I had never dropped in on that single course...the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts... And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them."

Going fast sometimes means slowing down

Going fast creates leadership opportunities. Yet, a question remains. How can going too fast create risk and cause more harm than good? A noteworthy leadership concept posits

that you should "go slow to go fast." Sometimes called a "tactical pause," a deliberate break in an operation allows your team or organization to regroup. The pause creates an opportunity to smooth out the wrinkles and realign your processes, protocols, and procedures.

This past month, I had the good fortune to discuss leadership opportunities with a group of our industry's leaders at the PMI CEO Thinking Forum, held in the shadow of the United States Military Academy at West Point. While viewed as a college, West Point is unlike any college you might have in mind. Required athletics, formation training, battle tactics, academics, and leadership are drilled into the Plebes, Yuks, Cows, and Firsties. Thousands of business leaders who received second lieutenant bars at their USMA graduation went on to enormous success. They include **Bill Foley**, owner of the NHL Vegas Golden Knights; **Mike Krzyzewski**, "Coach K", the former coach of Duke University's men's basketball team; **Bob McDonald**, former chairman & CEO of Proctor and Gamble; **Alex Gorsky**, former chairman & CEO at Johnson & Johnson; and **Joe DePinto**, CEO of 7-Eleven.

The PMI CEO Thinking Forum prepares executives for VUCA

The PMI CEO Thinking Forum was born of the hard reality that VUCA is at the gates of every business. Plumbing fixture and fittings manufacturing is no different. PMI's desire to provide resources, tools, and experience as catalysts

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PMI Member Leaders Participate in CEO Thinking Forum

Executive leaders from Plumbing Manufacturers International companies met at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to participate in the 3rd annual PMI CEO Thinking Forum, Sept. 18-19, 2023.

The event was facilitated by Thayer Leadership, which has trained more than 117,000 executives and frontline leaders from 425-plus companies. With an elite faculty comprised of emeritus military officers, Thayer introduced the participants to the U.S. Army leadership philosophy of “Be, Know, Do” and the West Point values of “Duty, Honor, Country.”

Major Gen. **Douglas Crissman**, U.S. Army, Retired, led the executives through an interactive leadership development process that helped them translate their knowledge into an action plan. Discussions centered around leading with purpose and vision, strengthening teams with a shared understanding of values and mission, and empowering a workforce in new ways.

The forum included the West Point staff ride experience, led by Col. **Maria Del**



With the Hudson River in the background, the PMI CEO Thinking Forum participants were John Watson, IAPMO; Belinda Wise, Kerox, Ltd.; Jeff Baldwin, T&S Brass; Jodi Stubrberg, PMI; Chip Way, Lavelle Industries and vice president of the PMI Board of Directors; Sal Gattone, LIXIL and president of the PMI board; Kerry Stackpole, PMI CEO/Executive Director; Jay Burnett, Mercury Plastics; Paige Riddle, Viega; and Douglas Crissman, Thayer Leadership

Pilar McDermott, U.S. Army, Retired, Ph.D. She led the PMI group through a study of the decisions and actions of George Washington as they walked over the same terrain as he did while preventing the British from seizing the Hudson River. The participating executives shared this common leadership experience while gaining different frames of reference through the eyes of history.

The forum attendees enjoyed a private dinner, where they reflected on the day’s learning experience with their peers and celebrated the connections they made with each other.



The Power of Pause (Contd.)

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for industry leaders is at the root of the forum’s purpose. How do you maneuver through, around or over those unexpected circumstances and barriers that derail less-prepared companies?

Whether you are a CEO seeking fresh perspectives and time for introspection – or a leader seeking to learn how to think like a CEO – you will leave this experience changed for the better. Participants at the past three PMI CEO Thinking

Forums have benefited from the historical leadership experiences of Gettysburg, the American Revolution, America’s first president, and all the leadership struggles and victories since then.

Participating in the forum creates an understanding that great leadership is an imperfect balance between art and science. Being able to illuminate lessons from the past and apply them to your work is vital to your success. This year’s

PMI CEO Thinking Forum brought a series of thoughtful leadership presentations, deep analysis, peer conversations, and vivid technicolor stories of real-world experiences. This experience brought new wisdom, hard to find on our desktops amidst our hectic, busy schedules and day-to-day workload. Next year’s PMI CEO Thinking Forum might be the time to deploy that tactical pause you need.

PMI Prepares Water Efficiency Policy As It Rethinks Water

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

Plumbing Manufacturers International is creating a policy to establish a unified stance on water efficiency to help PMI staff and legislative consultants guide policymakers and water agencies that continue pushing for lower flow rates. Developed by PMI members through their committee work, the policy will become a valuable tool as PMI advances its Rethink Water initiative.

“PMI has a strong voice on water efficiency and should continue to exercise that voice when others want to create policies that will impact the industry. We as manufacturers design the plumbing products, so it makes sense that we would advise on how the policies are developed and implemented,” said **Troy Benavidez**, co-chair of the PMI Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee and leader of government relations and policy at LIXIL.

He highlighted the Environmental Protection Agency’s WaterSense program as a notable example of how plumbing manufacturers have worked together with government to ensure that plumbing fixtures are both efficient and perform well.

Benavidez wrote the initial draft of the policy, which was reviewed by an Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee working group before going to the entire committee for feedback and fine-tuning. The draft also was reviewed by the PMI Technical Committee co-chairs and PMI Board of Directors members who are committee members. The PMI board will review the draft policy soon and decide on next steps.

Considering the entire water value chain

Legislators and policymakers tend to focus on plumbing fixtures when looking for ways to become more water efficient. As a result, important considerations are left out that contribute to significant water inefficiencies, such as agriculture



and infrastructure, and unintended health consequences.

“If we want to meet nationwide water scarcity goals, we need to look up and down the water value chain,” Benavidez said.

The expertise of behind-the-wall plumbing product manufacturers needs to be considered, too, said **Paige Riddle**, co-chair of the PMI Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee and director of market management for Viega LLC. “It’s important that we all work together, along with code bodies, to shape and support water-efficiency initiatives and policies in a more effective manner,” she said.

Municipalities often want to incentivize residents to save more water in drought-ridden states, such as California, and look to water-efficient plumbing fixtures as an answer. For example, California Title 20 requires all toilets marketed within the state to flush 1.28 gallons or less – the requirement for WaterSense toilets and the standard PMI supports. However, some municipalities offer incentive programs to replace older toilets with 1.1 gpf or less, explained PMI Technical Director **Kyle Thompson**. “We’d like to see states like California first achieve a much higher market penetration with WaterSense toilets. Then we can see what’s happening with infrastructure,” he said.

PMI has emphasized the potential risks to infrastructure and public health associated with lowering toilet flush rates below WaterSense standards and specifications. Drainline carry performance requires adequate water to flush solids out of a toilet bowl, into a drainline,

and through to a sewer line, according to various studies measuring how various flow rates push solid waste through drainlines. Lower flush rates would likely cause more toilet clogs and double flushing, as well. Industry experts also have expressed the need for more research to determine the potential for pathogen growth when using newer water-efficient fixtures with older water infrastructure, Thompson noted.

How the policy will be used

The policy will serve as an internal document to guide PMI’s water-efficiency initiatives, such as Rethink Water, and support Thompson and PMI government relations consultants **Jerry Desmond** and **Stephanie Salmon** in their work with state and federal policymakers and water municipalities.

“This policy will establish what we want to drive towards and which tactical steps we’d like to take to get there,” Riddle said.

“The policy could also be used as a guideline to develop our own model legislation, allowing us to get ahead of future water-efficiency legislation proposed by policymakers,” Benavidez added.

Thompson noted that the policy will be valuable in PMI’s efforts to recognize that a skilled workforce is important to implementing water efficiency, including support of training programs for plumbers, designers and others in related fields.

PMI continues to recommend WaterSense flow rates when offering guidance to policymakers and water municipalities. The policy will include PMI’s advocacy for WaterSense flow rates, support for increasing market penetration of WaterSense plumbing fixtures and fittings, and the desire for a consistent water-efficiency regulation – instead of the current patchwork of water-efficiency requirements that vary from state to state, Thompson said.

Special Panel to Provide Global Perspective at PMI23

Special guests will provide a global perspective of the plumbing manufacturing industry during the PMI23 Manufacturing Success

Conference, Oct. 23-26, in Seattle. To be moderated by PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**, the “Global Plumbing Industry Roundtable Discussion” on Oct. 24 will include **Satinder Chera**, the incoming CEO of the Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating; **Tom Reynolds**, CEO of the United Kingdom’s Bathroom Manufacturers Association; **Billy Smith**, CEO/executive director, American Society of Plumbing Engineers; and **Ralph Suppa**, president and general manager, CIPH.

Assuming his duties with CIPH on Oct. 2, Chera will succeed Suppa, who established a strong partnership with PMI since joining CIPH in 1988. Chera has more than 20 years of senior management and leadership experience in the not-for-profit and association sectors, including serving as president of the Canadian Convenience Stores Association and vice president at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Prior to his work in the association sector, Chera served in director and senior policy advisor roles within both the Ontario and British Columbia governments. He brings a strong skill set in government relations, public affairs, communications, stakeholder relations, and partnership development.



During his tenure at CIPH, Suppa worked closely with industry members, allied North American associations and government to help establish uniformity and harmonization of codes and standards. In collaboration with PMI and other allied associations, Suppa established memoranda of understanding to enhance common North American goals such as training, regulations and codes-related support. Suppa has announced he will retire effective Dec. 31, 2023.

As BMA CEO, Reynolds oversees a trade body with more than 84 corporate members, which produce most of the branded bathroom fixtures and fittings supplied to the UK market. The association focuses heavily on product compliance and all aspects of sustainability. Reynolds also serves as chair of the UK Trade Association Forum’s Public Affairs Group, a board member of the Construction Products Association, and vice president of the European Taps and Valves Association (CEIR).

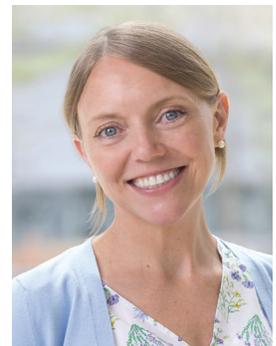
As the ASPE CEO since 2015, Smith is responsible for the administration, management and financial operations of the society, as well as implementing the policies and procedures established by the ASPE Board of Directors.

He provides professional administrative, management support and financial expertise to ASPE’s local chapters and for all society activities and programs. In addition, Smith represents the interests of ASPE and the plumbing engineering community in codes and standards activities and serves as a technical resource for the ASPE staff and membership. He builds and maintains relationships with other industry organizations to ensure that the public’s health and safety are kept at the forefront of legislation and regulations regarding plumbing system design, installation, inspection and maintenance.

New session on key water quality developments added

Erika Spanton, principal, Beveridge & Diamond PC, will present on “Key Water Quality Developments Coming Down The Pipe.”

Spanton maintains a robust mixed practice of litigation, regulatory and white-collar defense work focused on water quality matters.



Erika Spanton

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Satinder Chera



Tom Reynolds



Billy Smith



Kerry Stackpole



Ralph Suppa

Denise Dougherty of Sloan Earns PMI Paul Patton Award

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

Denise Dougherty, global regulatory manager at Sloan Valve Company, earned the inaugural Paul Patton PMI Manufacturing Success Conference Award because of her great attitude, passion for learning, and thoughtfulness toward her colleagues and community.

Dougherty will receive complimentary registration to the Oct. 23-26 PMI23 conference and the PMI Inspiring Leaders Program on the meeting's first day.



Denise Dougherty

The annual award was instituted to recognize an employee of a Plumbing Manufacturers International member company who shows outstanding potential for a career in plumbing manufacturing. Nominees must possess exceptional characteristics relating to leadership, community service, teamwork, or other personal qualities.

“This award reflects the deep interest and commitment of former PMI President Paul Patton to the professional development and growth of newcomers to our industry and to those seeking guidance on the challenges and opportunities of plumbing product manufacturing,” said PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**. “The award’s selection committee honored this commitment throughout the highly competitive selection process.”

A rising talent

Dougherty, who has been a Sloan employee for the past three years, has proven she’s more than worthy of the award, said **Ellen Sajdak**, senior director of the project management office

at Sloan, who nominated her colleague for the honor.

“Denise is a rising talent within our organization. She utilizes her experience to share knowledge with team members and has a passion for learning, isn’t afraid to dig in, and reaches out if she needs assistance. She continues to develop and does so with a smile on her face every day,” Sajdak stated.

Dougherty prides herself on bringing a high level of care to everything she does. That care extends to sharing industry information with her teammates via an internal regulatory newsletter she created, volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, and supporting the local PADS Shelter Program to help those who are homeless.

Forging her path to success

Dougherty, who is relatively new to the plumbing manufacturing industry, said she’s thrilled and honored to win the award and make the most of her third PMI annual conference.

“I’m excited to attend the conference to continue developing deeper industry relationships and be part of our first PMI Women’s Breakfast,” said Dougherty, who helped organize the Oct. 25 event. She also noted how important it is for women to step into leadership roles in the industry.

Dougherty credits Sloan’s supportive work environment for opening a path to leadership for her and others. “You can be who you want to be here. The company provides a level of comfort that allows me to talk about my life and my career goals,” she said. “I’m impressed with my colleagues, too. We have an incredible amount of talent here and I work with amazing engineers and project managers.” As part of the LGBTQ



PAUL PATTON AWARD

community, Dougherty appreciates the support PMI and Sloan provide to employee diversity, equity and inclusion.

She believes her extensive background in electrical codes helped prepare her for a successful career in plumbing manufacturing. “I’m most proud of bridging my electrical code experience with my plumbing code work. Plumbing technology is becoming so advanced with more electrical capabilities, so I’m ready for these changes,” Dougherty said.

She highlighted her work on Sloan’s new SC Argus Pro smart restroom system, which consists of smart products, data bridges, and cloud-based software that allows facility managers to perform preventative restroom maintenance, monitor water use, and even remotely flush water lines to avoid stagnation.

Finding the right resources through PMI

Noting how PMI is an “incredible resource” for regulatory and water-related information, Dougherty said she’s looking forward to becoming more involved in the organization and learning more about the industry. She currently participates in the PMI Tech Talks and Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee.

“PMI provides a lot of great information in one place, so we don’t have to look for it individually. We appreciate the coverage on regulatory issues, recycling, lead in water, appliance efficiencies, and other topics,” Dougherty said. “This is important information I share with our stakeholders here, which supports our work to protect people from failed products and property damage by focusing on good product performance.”

How to Help Disaster Victims with Product Donations

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

Weather- and climate-related disasters are on the rise. In the first eight months of 2023, the United States experienced 23 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters – the most since record-keeping began, reported the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

As a result, more people need help to rebuild their homes and get access to clean water. Plumbing Manufacturers International and many of its members have formed a strong partnership with the Storehouse of World Vision to help those in need, generously donating products, time and funds.

“Plumbing manufacturers have provided much-needed products, especially during the rebuilding phase of so many disasters over the years,” said **Jack Laverty**, corporate engagement director at World Vision.

The Storehouse’s mission is to help communities nationwide build foundations for a stronger future. Corporations donate supplies to help families in the U.S. refurbish and rebuild in the wake of natural disasters and financial crises.

Many PMI members are among the more than 400 U.S. corporations that

donate excess products and inventory, including Fisher Manufacturing, Fluidmaster, Gerber Plumbing Fixtures, Hansgrohe, Kohler Co., LIXIL, Moen, Reliance Worldwide Corporation, and Zurn Elkay Water Solutions.

In 2022, PMI members and others donated 7,176 pallets of building materials and products with a value of almost \$13 million, Laverty noted. The donations aided World Vision as it responded to 59 disasters in 52 countries, assisting 27.7 million people, the organization reported.

Every donation matters

PMI members have donated many products, such as toilets, faucets, shower heads, filters, tubing, connectors, and other plumbing fittings that are typically needed about nine months after a disaster – during the rebuilding phase.

Every donation makes a difference. “The smaller products, such as toilet parts, are as important to underserved residents as the larger, more expensive fixtures, such as bathtubs and sinks,” Laverty said.



“That’s especially true when many are facing financial challenges like choosing between buying a prescription for a sick child or buying groceries.”

Kohler has generously given its support for more than 20 years. The company introduces new product lines every quarter and donates inventory surplus. World Vision identifies where the products are most needed and coordinates delivery. Between 2003 and 2020, Kohler donated an estimated \$55 million in products, stated the World Vision website.

World Vision encourages companies to consider donating excess products and provides a donation calculator ([tinyurl.com/3xy8r6j7](https://www.worldvision.org/donate)) on its website to help determine if it would be better to donate, liquidate or destroy leftover inventory.

Lending a hand in other ways

PMI and PMI members also sponsor World Vision’s annual Crystal Vision Awards, help raise money through World Vision activities, or pack and donate medical kits and school supply backpacks.

This May, a group of Gerber employees participated in the World Vision Global 6K for Water, raising \$2,400 to provide clean water to children in communities around the world, noted the World Vision website. Gerber colleagues also filled backpacks with school supplies for underserved children, Laverty said.



Gerber employees in the U.S. and Canada participate in World Vision’s 6K Walk/Run for water to provide clean water to children in communities around the world

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Attend Feb. 28 Crystal Vision Awards Breakfast at KBIS



Leaders in the kitchen, bath and construction industries have joined with World Vision to make a difference for American children and families living in poverty. Many generous manufacturers, wholesale distributors, builders, manufacturing representatives, industry organizations, and more have donated excess inventory, sponsorships and time to the Storehouse of World Vision.

Each year during the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show (KBIS), World Vision holds the annual Crystal Vision Awards Breakfast to raise awareness for its efforts and to celebrate World Vision partners, including many PMI members, which help equip families to lift themselves out of poverty. PMI and various members are generous sponsors



Join us for the 2024 Crystal Vision Award Breakfast at KBIS
February 28, 2024 7-9am at the Westgate Resort & Casino in Las Vegas

[Register Here](#)



Supporting the Storehouse of World Vision



Panel discussion topic: "What is the outlook for repair and remodel projects in 2024, given the decline of homeowner mobility and existing home sales?"

of the breakfast, as well as contributors to the storehouse.

The 2024 breakfast will occur from 7-9 a.m., Feb. 28, 2024, at the Westgate Resort & Casino in Las Vegas. The

event will feature a panel discussion on the outlook for repair and remodel projects in 2024, given the decline of homeowner mobility and existing home sales. There is no cost to attend, only an RSVP. Register at tinyurl.com/42v27hp5.

How to Help (Contd.)

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Kohler has partnered with World Vision to provide safe water for thousands of people in Honduras, the Philippines and Vietnam by providing plumbing fixtures and filters, according to a World Vision blog article. In the U.S., thousands of homes in the Navajo Nation are being repaired, renovated and built using materials gifted by Kohler and other companies.

For many years, PMI has sponsored the World Vision Crystal Vision Awards held at the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS). The awards honor a manufacturing company that has supported the Storehouse of World Vision program with consistent and significant product donations.

Gerber, Kohler, LIXIL, RWC and Zurn Elkay also have sponsored the awards and have been recognized with an award for their generosity and commitment to helping families in need build better lives. PMI received the Crystal Vision Award in 2013.

"PMI has been wonderful for us and we're thankful for their partnership. We're also grateful to the many plumbing manufacturers who continue to help people when they need it most," Lavery said.

Imports Up As Strike's End Stabilizes Supply Chain

Cargo imported into the nation's major container ports hit the 2 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit mark in August and September and is expected to remain there in October, according to the Global Port Tracker report released by the National Retail Federation and Hackett Associates.

"Retailers are optimistic about the holiday season since they don't import merchandise unless they think they can sell it," NRF Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy **Jonathan Gold** said. "The holiday season is now the top priority for everyone in the retail supply chain as merchants prepare for the rush of shoppers who will soon be buying gifts for friends and family. As the holidays approach, the recent ratification of the West Coast port labor agreement between the ILWU and PMA provides supply chain stability and certainty for retailers utilizing the West Coast ports."

Members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) voted 75% in favor of approving the new six-year agreement with employers represented by the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA). "The negotiations for this contract were protracted and challenging," said ILWU International President **Willie Adams**. "I am grateful to our rank and file for their strength, to our Negotiating Committee for their vision and tenacity, and to those that supported giving the ILWU and PMA the space that we needed to get to this result." Representing about 20,000 longshore and clerk workers on the West Coast, the ILWU stated that the agreement will protect good-paying jobs in 29 West Coast port communities, maintain health benefits, and improve wages, pensions and safety protections.

PMA President and CEO **Jim McKenna** said the contract provides an important framework for the hard work ahead to overcome new competitive challenges and to continue to position the West Coast ports as destinations of choice for shippers worldwide. "From San Diego to Bellingham, these ports have long been the primary gateways for cargo coming into and leaving the United States, and our interests are aligned in ensuring they can effectively, and efficiently, handle the capacity growth that drives economies and jobs," he stated.

President **Joe Biden** congratulated all parties involved in the negotiations. "As I have always said, collective bargaining works, and I congratulate both parties at the ports for reaching an agreement. I want to thank Acting Labor Secretary **Julie Su** who used her deep experience and judgment to keep the parties talking, working with them to reach an agreement after a long and sometimes acrimonious negotiation. Above all, I congratulate the port workers, who have served heroically through the pandemic and the countless challenges it brought, and will finally get the pay, benefits and quality of life they deserve."

Global Perspective at PMI23 (Contd.)

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As the deputy leader of the firm's water practice, she has significant litigation and appellate experience in both federal and state courts. Her work includes a range of state and federal matters at each stage of litigation, including settlement negotiations, mediations, arbitration, discovery and trial. She has been first chair in numerous arbitrations and trials and has supported large, complex trial teams. Recent successes include

negotiating early, favorable resolutions of citizen suit actions alleging Clean Water Act violations in California and Washington.

See an overview of the entire schedule and register at safep plumbing.org/pmi23. Take advantage of our special bundle rate and participate in the PMI Inspiring Leaders Program for only \$99 more.

2023 PMI LEADERSHIP

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