

NEWS RELEASE

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Savvy Merchandising Helps Hardware Store Owner Boost Sales of Problem-Solving Plumbing System

ELKHART, INDIANA (MARCH 8, 2007) – A hardware store owner in this northern Indiana town is using a combination of merchandising savvy and Midwest-style straight talk to help his customers solve one of the most common household renovation problems – how to install a basement bathroom without breaking the bank – with above-floor plumbing technology.

His approach is clearly working. Sales of traditional bathroom plumbing installation products at his store have actually declined, but sales of Saniflo brand, above-floor plumbing systems have increased.

“When you offer people an alternative to getting the sledge hammer out and busting up the concrete floor, it’s no contest,” says John Haas of above-floor plumbing systems, which make it possible to install a complete bathroom right on top of a finished floor – with no need for digging to create drainage connections.



JOHN HAAS DEMONSTRATES A SANIFLO SYSTEM. “JOHN REALLY GETS BEHIND A PRODUCT,” SAYS SANIFLO REP MIKE MCNEELY. “AS A RESULT, HE’S DOING QUITE WELL WITH IT.”

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Savvy Merchandising, *continued*

“When we first began handling the line, I could see that there was a real opportunity to sell more units if we were marketing the product better,” recalls Haas, who has owned Central Hardware since 1988.

But because the technology is relatively new in the United States, his customers don’t always know that above-floor plumbing is a viable option. In response, he’s been rapidly increasing his customers’ exposure to the technology with tactics that can be applied anywhere.



JOHN HAAS IN FRONT OF HIS ELKHART, INDIANA, OPERATION. “WHEN YOU OFFER PEOPLE AN ALTERNATIVE TO GETTING THE SLEDGE HAMMER OUT AND BUSTING UP THE CONCRETE FLOOR, IT’S NO CONTEST.”

Ambitious advertising, clever promotion: Haas, who had a career in marketing before buying Central Hardware, has mounted an ambitious advertising campaign, using local radio and print media. Thinking out of the box is his specialty.

Last fall, Haas introduced Saniflo to hundreds of local football fans at a “Toilet Toss” fundraising event to support Elkhart high schools. Participants paid to toss a football into a Saniflo toilet bowl from 20 feet. Contestants who succeeded won a chance to win four Indianapolis Colts tickets. “It was fantastic!” Haas says of the exposure he got for Saniflo. “Plus, it raised several hundred dollars for the students.”

Promotional activities have proven a smart awareness tool, but Haas also puts an especially high value on in-store merchandising. After seeing a working Saniflo system on display at a trade show, he knew that’s what he needed inside his store and had one installed. “Now we can show people how quiet the grinder

Savvy Merchandising, *continued*

inside the unit is and how quick the on-off cycle is. Seeing the product in action has changed some people's minds – it's an attention-getter!"

Haas has enhanced the working model inside his store with a display that he keeps well stocked with information and brochures. "It's in a prominent position – right in the center as you come in, so you can hardly miss it," he says.

"John attends the PRO Hardware shows and always stops by the booth," says Mike McNeely, a Saniflo sales representative who works with Haas' distributor, The Bostwick-Braun Company. "John really gets behind the product. As a result, he's doing quite well with it."

McNeely points out that Haas goes a step beyond most storeowners, who usually deal solely with the distributor. "He picks up the phone and calls me personally, which is unusual. And I've given his number to other owners on occasion. When they hear a success story like his, they're ready to buy."

Problem solving with a personal touch: Haas prides himself on the personal service that sets apart family-owned businesses like his, which was established in 1945. "We do an excellent job of getting the customer where he or she needs to go," he says. "If we can talk to her, we can solve her problem. Having the product here in the store is a big plus."

Most of Central's Saniflo customers purchase it to solve a plumbing challenge, such as installing a beauty shop in the home. Another common application involves young couples that need help expanding their basements to accommodate their growing families. Besides home and small business owners, Central Hardware also works closely with plumbers and even factories.

Strictly by the numbers: When asked how other owners of small hardware stores, supply houses and retail plumbing shops can promote above-floor plumbing as successfully as he does, Haas says it takes some salesmanship. "Any

Savvy Merchandising, *continued*

time you've got a product that sells for \$500-plus, you'd better be able to talk intelligently about it. That's real money."

Helping his customer make a decision typically boils down to product cost and labor, he continues. "I get a piece of paper out and say, 'Here's what you start with - a jackhammer. You have to bust up concrete, and you don't always know what's under it. And you'll have to put in a pit as well...'"

Thus does Haas walk the customer through the entire, "conventional" plumbing installation process, adding up all the dollars on one side of his sheet of paper. He then does the same thing for Saniflo. When his customers finally understand the above-floor solution, they see the value.

"The Saniflo system is something unique, and it fills a niche," he says. "It has worked very well for us. In fact, it has been the most successful new product that we have taken on since I came here."

SEA SANIFLO INC. is the only manufacturer of its kind in North America, offering a complete line of macerating toilet systems for residential and commercial applications. Saniflo markets through independent sales agents throughout North America, and the product line is currently available at more than 500 distributor locations in the United States and Canada.

For more information about SANIFLO, call 1-800-571-8191. Or visit the Saniflo website at www.saniflo.com.

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