

# HIGH-PERFORMANCE HVAC TODAY™

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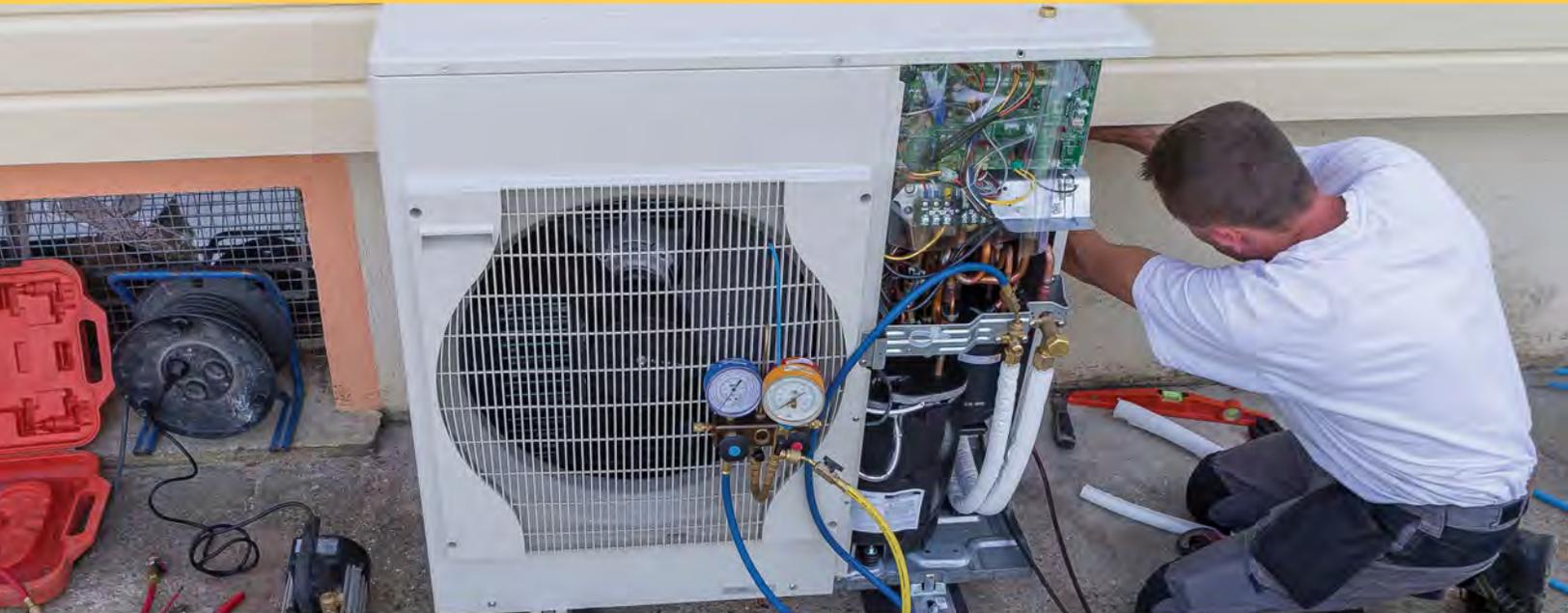
## Get Ready For FALL

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Fall Marketing Ideas That Work
- Training Investments Shape Your Company's Future
- Get Your Customers' Ducts in a Row

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# HIGH-PERFORMANCE HVAC TODAY™



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# The Art of Forecasting: What Would Nostradamus Say?



**Mike Weil** is editor-in-chief and director of communications and publications at National Comfort Institute, Inc. Contact him at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](mailto:ncilink.com/ContactMe).

I've always had an appreciation for those stewards of the crystal ball — whether they're the palm readers you see on the boardwalks of amusement parks, the mysterious gypsy women with the heavy Eastern European accents at county fairs, or even the television weather forecasters who get paid big bucks to be wrong 90% of the time.

One forecaster by the name of Nostradamus has always intrigued me. Born in 1503 in the south of France, Nostradamus grew up and became famous as a physician and astrologer, who wrote a book called, *The Prophecies* (published in 1555). The book was a collection of long-term predictions that some claim accurately predicted everything from the French Revolution to the rise of Adolf Hitler, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S., and even the end of the world.

How can this be? Though I find it fascinating, Nostradamus seems to be THE conspiracy theorist of the 15th century. I am not a believer.

However, we live in a world where it's vital to think about the future — from planning to get things done by certain deadlines (the plague of journalists everywhere) to keeping tabs on how national, state, and local events impact your high-performance business. You even need to think about [training the next generation of leadership](#) in your company.

Sometimes forecasting can help derail bumps in the road before you hit them.

From a more historical perspective, Nostradamus couldn't have predicted how Willis Carrier would see a need to control humidity which eventually led him to develop the [Psychometric Chart](#). From that and other events, the modern air conditioning industry was born.

Carrier obviously went on to think creatively about several other things, as did many other

people in the industry, and they created a new future with inventions resulting from that thinking.

We often take this and other history lessons for granted, but to me, it's simply amazing how such creativity, and the forecasting behind it, built and still sustains one of the most important industries in the world today.

It's also important to remember that the ability to forecast and think creatively impacts you and your business every day. From forecasting how the [marketplace situation](#) impacts your customers and your business, to creating the plans and strategies necessary to grow a high-performance culture in your company, and everything else in between. This not only benefits your team, but also the entire HVAC value chain.

Sound a bit idealistic? What would Nostradamus say? Does he have a 468-year-old quatrain about how high performance will change the entire comfort industry?

I doubt it. But every day smart contractors address industry-wide issues like using [A2L refrigerants](#), improving HVAC system energy efficiency, and [solving manpower shortages](#). They move their teams to become certified professionals, and [find unique custom solutions for customer comfort issues](#) to position themselves for continued growth and success.

When I think about that, it thrills me as much as do the strange and mysterious interpretive predictions of a man from the 1500s who many still see as an accurate predictor today.

We have a lot to be proud of as an industry. We are problem solvers, we are creative, and we work hard to build a better future every day.

Sure, I am still fascinated with all the stewards of the crystal ball. But Nostradamus aside, can we do something about the really poor predictions highly-paid weather forecasters make? 

Written by HVAC Professionals for HVAC Professionals

**Dwyer 490W Differential Pressure Manometer**

Many technicians today are faced with an increasing selection of instruments, often leading to choosing one that may not be the best. When it comes to Hydronic Testing and Balancing instruments, I use an incredible range of meters and instruments. One that has been a standout for me is the **Dwyer 490W Differential Pressure Manometer**.

In October of 2021, I traveled to Hawaii to instruct a Hydronics class at the **AURA D-KIST Solar Telescope** on the Island of Maui. This telescope is located 10,080 feet above sea level in Haleakalā National Park, which is very protected.

Due to the altitude and **Dynalene 50**

fluid chemicals, which is a corrosive and toxic additive in the hydronic loop, the park administrators were very concerned about leaks. The good news is that the Dwyer 490W operates with less leakage potential and is easier to zero out than



other instruments at that altitude. Its components are resistive to the corrosive nature of that fluid.

The Dwyer 490W uses two pressure instruments that connect directly to the

**Pete's Plug** needle. The probes communicate with a smartphone app that uses an intensive library of valves and circuit setters that allows the app to display direct flow information — not just the pressure drop. This saves a considerable amount of time in determining and plotting flow rates.

The 490W's compact construction and integration with technology sets it apart in the industry for service and TAB technicians. The Dwyer company continues to lead the industry in pressure and flow measurement and has had the industry's confidence for over 100 years.

Learn more about this differential pressure manometer here: [ncilink.com/Dwyer490W](http://ncilink.com/Dwyer490W).

— by Jeff Sturgeon, NCI California Training Center Manager and Instructor

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# Get Your Customers' Ducts in a Row

**M**ost things at which you succeed in life require lots of practice. This was true for me when it came to identifying problems with a duct system, attempting to convey the issues I found to the homeowner, then selling a solution that would benefit both my company and that customer.

I have gone through several iterations of this process, always trying to tweak it to produce the best results possible.

Since I consider myself a technician and not a salesman, my first instinct is to grab my tools and figure out the issue. The problem is that this will likely waste time and not solve any issues.

## START WITH DISCOVERY

I always start with discovery. The discovery might happen when a customer calls in to complain about uncomfortable rooms in their home, or when you are on a service call unrelated to the

duct system, and you find a glaring issue.

I've learned over the years that a problem is not a problem unless the homeowner recognizes it. Ask many questions and have the customer elaborate on the issues experienced. Keep the spotlight on them.

When they say the system is loud, my follow-up question might be, "Loud enough that you have to turn up your TV volume when it is running?" If they say a specific room is uncomfortable in the summer, I might respond, "How uncomfortable is uncomfortable? Are you saying it's off by a degree or two, or is it worse than that?"

I might also ask, "On a scale from one to 10, how uncomfortable are we talking?" If it is a problem worth solving, getting them to share their tale of woes won't take much effort. This is when I recognize I have a potential job.

The next question is simple but essential: "If I can identify any items contributing to your issues, would you like me to provide you with repair options?" When they answer yes, I walk outside and grab my most powerful tools, a tape measure, a [Ductulator](#), and my [Trueflow Grid](#). I need to get an idea of the system's operating condition.

## MY TRUSTY TRUEFLOW® GRID

My first step is to run the full workflow of the TrueFlow Grid.

The TrueFlow generates a customer-facing report showing the total external static pressure, system pressure drops, and airflow through the furnace or air handler. It will also identify weak links in the duct system.

Before showing the report to the homeowner, you must analyze the data and consider potential solutions. Let's identify how much airflow this par-

### True Flow System Air Flow and Static Pressure Analysis

#### Air measurements

Total air flow = 1236 CFM  
Return duct = -0.295 inH<sub>2</sub>O  
After filter = -0.758 inH<sub>2</sub>O  
Before evap. coil = 0.329 inH<sub>2</sub>O  
Supply duct = 0.102 inH<sub>2</sub>O

#### System & conditions

System Type: Fuel  
Orientation: Upflow  
Cooling Capacity: 4  
Filter Location: InDuct  
Cooling Climate Type: Moist  
Elevation: 495 ft

#### Summary calculations

Flow		309 CFM/ton
TESP		1.087 inH <sub>2</sub> O
Return Plenum		0.295 inH <sub>2</sub> O
Filter Drop		0.463 inH <sub>2</sub> O
Evap. Coil Drop		0.227 inH <sub>2</sub> O
Supply Plenum		0.102 inH <sub>2</sub> O

#### Summary of Warnings

-  Very Low Flow; High Return Pressure.
-  Low Flow; High Filter Drop.





tical system needs. That is easy for air conditioning because the TrueFlow report gives us an idea of that, but what about the heating side?

If we are working on a system with a gas furnace, we can figure this out with a bit of math. I look at the system's data plate and find the temperature rise range. Whatever its range, you want to find the midpoint.

### FIND THE MIDPOINT TEMPERATURE

The midpoint will be the target. Running a furnace at the midpoint of the range will give you a buffer against issues like when the furnace filter loads up with dirt.

You find the midpoint in the range by simply averaging the larger and smaller numbers.

So let's say your range is 20°F to 50°F. Take the larger number and add the smaller number together, then divide by 2.

In this case:  $50^{\circ}\text{F} + 20^{\circ}\text{F} = 70^{\circ} \div 2 = 35^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

That 35°F is your target heating

temperature rise.

Finally, we can solve for our target airflow by slightly rearranging the sensible heat formula:

$$\text{Btu Output} \div (\text{temp rise} \times 1.08) = \text{Required heating airflow}$$

Now that I have my required airflow for the customer's system, I start looking at the ductwork near equipment components.

Two numbers that I want you to remember are 700 feet per minute (FPM) and 900 FPM. These numbers are the maximum velocity limits that ACCA recommends on a residential duct system. The first number, 700 FPM, is for the return, and 900 FPM is for the supply.

We can analyze the return and supply trunks with these numbers in mind. If you have a Ductulator, then it is easy. Plug in the duct size you are referencing and look at the CFM you are moving and the corresponding velocity. If it is above the maximum velocity limits, the system is oversized, the ductwork is undersized, or, worst case, all of the above.

### SIZING AND OTHER POTENTIAL ISSUES

Remember that just because the velocity in the duct is less than ACCA's limits does not necessarily mean the duct is sized correctly. It means no glaring red flag is waving in front of your face.

Another obvious issue might be a small evaporator coil on a large system. This would cause a high-pressure drop across the evaporator coil.

I always look at the filter size as well. The magic velocity I use for 1-in. filters is 300 FPM. If your velocity is higher than 300 FPM, it is likely causing a high-pressure drop, increasing the static pressure.

$$\text{Converting filter CFM to velocity: CFM} \div \text{Area (sq. ft.)} = \text{velocity}$$

Let's say our hypothetical system moves 1,000 CFM through a 16-in. x 20-in. filter.

$$1000 \text{ CFM} \div \frac{16" \times 20"}{144" (\text{Area of } 1 \text{ Sq.ft.})} = 450 \text{ FPM}$$

In this example, you can see that a 16-in. x 20-in. filter is inadequate for the system.

Taking National Comfort Institute's "[Duct System Optimization](#)" class was also crucial to my process. It taught me how to identify duct system deficiencies and make surgical changes to the ductwork that positively impact the overall system performance.

### CONNECTING THE DOTS

Start connecting the dots between the customer's complaint and what the report tells you. If the homeowner

complains about the house being humid, consider offering a solution that involves verifying that the equipment is sized correctly by performing a Manual J calculation.

Then you can set the airflow of the equipment by matching the home's sensible and latent requirements to the equipment's performance data.

Finally you can set the system's correct refrigerant charge.

As you complete the steps needed to correct comfort complaints, ask yourself what happens if the system is oversized for the home.

You need to stop the process and have that conversation with the owner. Let them know that the oversized equipment is likely the cause of their home being so humid.

In this scenario, I usually find low airflow and high duct pressure. The nice thing about installing the correct size equipment is that it usually reduces airflow requirements and lowers the static pressure, ensuring the system operates as designed. In this scenario, you might sell the customer a new, properly sized system.

Another thing I try to remember is to slow down and collect as much data as possible. It is essential to understand what the home needs versus what it currently has installed. There is likely more than one issue contributing to the customer's complaints.

**AND FINALLY...**

Take a step back and look at the "Big Picture." Identifying comfort prob-

lems becomes an art form. When you can solve these problems, you will develop a positive reputation, and customers will start spreading referrals like wildfire.

Being able to solve issues that other companies can't puts you ahead of the game and eliminates your competition. This allows you to take the time necessary to do the right thing while charging what your company is worth. **NCI**



**Adam Mufich** is the president of **A-Team Heating and Air** in Glen Ellyn, IL. He has been an HVAC tech for 20 years. This 75-year-old HVAC firm is family owned and employs NCI and NATE-certified technicians. To reach Adam, go to [ncilink.com/ContactMe](http://ncilink.com/ContactMe).

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# How Training Investments Shape Your Company's Future

**T**oday's HVAC industry is constantly evolving. Driven by government regulation, climate activists, technological advancements, misinformation, social media, low-bid competitors, and changing customer expectations, this isn't your granddaddy's heating and air business!

To thrive in this crazy environment, you must innovate to gain a competitive edge and drive future success.

While technology and market strategy play vital roles, one investment that significantly shapes your future is often overlooked. That important investment is continuing education for yourself and your employees.

- Improved Company Culture
- Enhanced Employee Performance
- Increased Employee Engagement & Retention
- Top Talent Attraction
- Next Generation Leadership Development
- Compliance & Risk Management
- Significant Competitive Advantage.

Let's dive in!

## IMPROVED COMPANY CULTURE

Emphasizing continuing education creates a culture of lifelong learning where continuous improvement and growth are encouraged and celebrated. This positive culture fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and a sense of community among employees.

In her blog post, [\*20 Tips for Creating a Learning Culture in the Workplace\*](#), author Emma O'Neill cites an IBM study that focused on the value of employee training. That study showed that "84% of employees within the best-performing organizations are receiving the training they need compared with 16% in the worst-performing companies. And in another recent eLearning report, 94% of employees said investment in training and development is one of the major reasons they would decide to stay in a role longer."

When learning becomes integral to your company's DNA, employees become more proactive in seeking knowledge, exploring innovative ideas, and embracing change.

This adaptability is crucial in today's dynamic



Ongoing educational investments equip employees with the mindset and skillset to embrace change and drive innovation. In this article, you'll learn how a commitment to continuing education leads to future success through:

# THE FUTURE

business environment, where the ability to learn and evolve is often the differentiating factor between success and stagnation.

A lifelong learning culture attracts top talent and inspires existing employees to stay with the company and strive for excellence. It promotes what the *Harvard Business Review* calls a **growth mindset** and continually encourages employees to seek knowledge and self-improvement.

This growth mindset extends well beyond professional life too. A growth mindset leads to personal growth, better relationships, and improved intellectual curiosity.

Training investments should include programs that promote problem-solving, design thinking, and collaboration. This enables your employees to develop innovative solutions to problems they encounter in the field. Training investments unlock innovation and creativity within your business.

## EDUCATION IS THE FUEL FOR CREATIVE CRITICAL THINKING

Enhancing your employees' skills encourages creativity while improving **critical thinking** and problem-solving abilities. When employees have the opportunity to develop their capabilities, they become more confident in exploring new ideas and different approaches.

Educational investment fuels innovation within the business. A well-trained workforce is more likely to identify opportunities for improvement, suggest creative solutions, and adapt to changing circumstances. A culture of innovation positions the company for long-term success and sets it apart from competitors.

Training programs also foster a culture of **continuous improvement**, where employees actively seek ways to enhance their skills and contribute to the company's overall success.

This collective drive for improvement and excellence permeates the

business, resulting in increased operational efficiency, customer delight, and fantastic business performance.

When your company operates with a culture powered by a growth mindset, innovation, and continuous improvement, you are well on your way to enjoying the High-Performance HVAC success of your dreams.

## ENHANCED EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employees learn about the latest advancements, emerging technologies, industry trends, and best practices through great training programs. Ongoing education ensures employees remain competent and relevant, making them a valuable asset to customers and your business.

Continuing education often involves interacting with peers, experts, and industry professionals in classrooms and industry conferences. This interaction provides opportunities to expand your professional network,



collaborate on projects, and exchange ideas. **Building a robust professional network** can be instrumental in career growth and professional support.

Your well-trained workforce leads to improved job performance, increased productivity, higher quality work, fewer callbacks, more five-star reviews, and unlimited referrals from delighted customers.

**INCREASED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION**

Furthermore, training programs provide opportunities for employees

to acquire new skills and take on more significant assignments, fostering a sense of **engagement** and career progression. Continually updating their knowledge and skills increases their chances for growth and advancement.

Being adaptable and versatile in the face of change also increases employability and long-term professional success. If your education stops at learning how to charge an R-22 system, your value to the HVAC industry is greatly diminished!

By offering continuing education, you, as a leader, demonstrate commitment to employee development and

growth. When employees feel valued and supported, they become more engaged and motivated, boosting morale and overall job satisfaction.

Employees who see a clear path for growth within a company are more likely to remain loyal and contribute their best efforts to its success. This leads to higher **employee retention rates**, which reduces expensive recruitment and training costs associated with high staff turnover rates.

**TOP TALENT ATTRACTION**

Your training investment also creates a positive perception that can

significantly impact recruitment efforts and your ability to attract high-quality candidates. Investing in employee training benefits the individual employee and contributes to your company's overall reputation and brand image.

A strong brand helps to attract top talent and positions you as an employer of choice in the market. When you prioritize training and development, people see your company as forward-thinking, employee-centric, and invested in the future success of your workforce.

Businesses that provide opportunities for continuing education have an advantage when attracting top talent. The best prospective employees with the right mindset seek companies that

**“Employees who see a clear path for growth within a company are more likely to remain loyal and contribute their best efforts to its success.”**

value their growth and offer opportunities to expand their skills.

The modern workforce has indi-

viduals from diverse backgrounds, generations, and skill sets. Training investments can bridge the gap between different generations, foster collaboration, and promote a culture of inclusivity.

In today's tight labor market, you need every recruiting advantage you can muster. A life-long learning commitment creates a competitive advantage in the talent market, ensuring a steady influx of skilled individuals into your business.

**NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Effective **leadership** drives growth and guides your company's future direction. Training investments play a pivotal role in nurturing leadership



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talent within your business.

You can identify and nurture high-potential employees for future leadership roles by providing training opportunities. [Leadership development programs](#) equip employees with the skills and knowledge needed to take on management roles in the future.

Several providers of HVAC leadership development programs include:

- [BDR Leadership Excellence Academy](#)
- [Blue Collar Success Group](#)
- [Grandy & Associates](#).

Plus, many trade associations and local colleges offer management training courses. I mention this because to develop a pipeline of emerging leaders who are prepared to assume critical positions, you need to groom and train them. Doing this ensures a smooth transition when vacancies arise and reduces the risk of leadership gaps.

Suppose your retirement plan is based on the future financial success of your business when you are no longer in the office every day. In that case, you owe it to yourself to invest heavily in the success of your next-generation leadership team.

**COMPLIANCE & RISK MANAGEMENT**

In the HVAC industry, compliance with product specifications, government regulations, and adherence to best practices are critical to your customer’s safety, health, comfort, and energy efficiency.

When installing high-performance equipment on a low-performing air duct system, are you delivering what your customer deserves? Failure to comply with product specifications

and installation standards creates bad reviews and terrible profits.

Providing continuing education helps employees stay up to date on these critically essential requirements. Failure to comply can lead to severe consequences, including the death of employees or customers.

Managing risk is a crucial business responsibility. Continuing education reduces the risk of non-compliance, mitigates legal issues, and reduces potentially devastating reputational damage and financial loss.

**“Continuing education is an investment in the company’s most valuable asset: its people.”**

**SIGNIFICANT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Staying ahead of the competition is crucial in today’s fast-paced and rapidly evolving business landscape. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce gives the business a competitive edge regarding efficiency, innovation, and customer delight.

Well-trained employees deliver better customer experiences. Companies enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty by investing in training programs focused on customer service, communication skills, and product knowledge.

Employees with the necessary skills to understand and address customer needs can build solid relationships and drive customer retention.

Delighted customers become brand advocates, contributing to the company’s growth and success.

**STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE**

Training investments are a strategic imperative for companies shaping their future success.

By empowering your employees, keeping up with industry changes, enhancing retention, nurturing leadership, fostering innovation, improving customer satisfaction, and adapting to changing workforce dynamics, you position your company for growth and resilience in a rapidly evolving HVAC business landscape.

Continuing education is an investment in the company’s most valuable asset: its people. Companies prioritizing training and development will unlock success and create a brighter future. If you agree, invest heavily in your people’s continuing education.

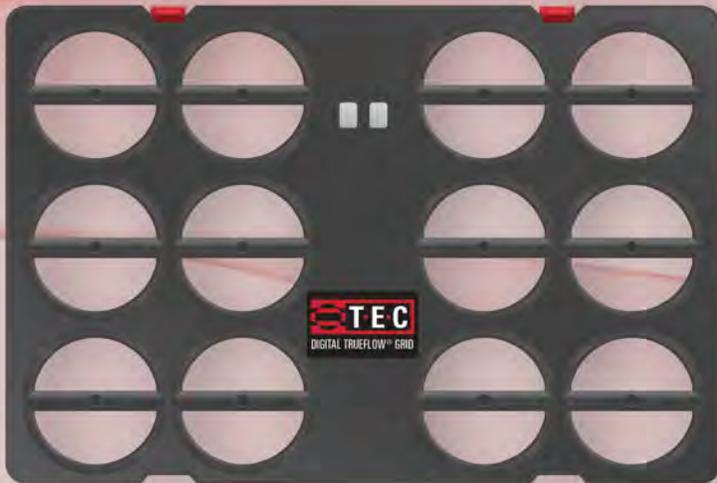
If not, chances are good your high-performance HVAC dreams will turn into a low-performance HVAC nightmare. 



**David Holt** is NCI’s director of National Accounts. He is also a business coach who shares his expertise and knowledge with HVAC contractors who are looking for guidance on how to implement High-Performance into their business. He is responsible for developing content for both classes as well as in-person training events. You can reach him at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe).



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# Fall Marketing Ideas That Work!

It's August, and there is a good chance that your team is still running full bore to take care of customers during the year's busiest season. But Fall is just around the corner, and the time is now to start developing a marketing plan for the next season.

Many marketing gurus talk about assets and content you must plan for and implement to achieve your goals. These often include items like:

- Writing blog articles
- Creating email marketing and promotional campaigns
- Creating social media marketing campaigns
- Putting together case studies for your sales team to use
- Shooting video promotions
- Creating or buying commercials on radio and television stations
- Putting together specials & other promotions
- Developing contests.

There are several articles that *High-Performance HVAC Today* has published on these matters. Here are a few of them:

- ◆ [Five Key Considerations for Building Your Annual Marketing Plan](#)
- ◆ [It's Time to Get Real with Social Media Marketing](#)
- ◆ [A Content Marketing Primer for High-Performance HVAC Contractors](#)
- ◆ [Uncover New Opportunities This Fall](#)
- ◆ [Don't Miss Fall Indoor Air Quality Opportunities](#)
- ◆ [Selling to New Prospects Versus Existing Customers](#)
- ◆ [Consciously Promote Your Own Brand](#)
- ◆ [Marketing Performance is About Relationship Building.](#)

Over the years, during National Comfort

Institute's High-Performance HVAC Summits, contractors have shared exciting and innovative ideas on some unique marketing practices they do that help bring in business during Fall.

With their permission, we share some of these with you here and invite you to share any unique marketing programs that you successfully use with us.

## HOME SHOWS

This live-action approach to marketing is often considered one of the best ways to generate leads, land new customers, and reinforce your brand image with existing customers, especially if the local home show is popular with your community. Typically, contractors will have their sales team or the owner in the booth during the show.

**Will Horner of Canco ClimateCare** in Newmarket, Ontario, Canada, has a slightly different approach. He says, "We have all our employees take part in our home show exhibit, not just salespeople. This way, potential customers can meet our team; just as important, our team gets face time with customers and potential customers. We not only generate leads doing this, but we also build morale and pride among the employees."



## TALK RADIO

Before customers let you into their homes, they must know they can trust you completely. So how do you build

and grow customer trust? They need to know who you are, what your company excels at, and how they can depend on you to take care of them.



What better way to help potential customers get to know you than by giving them advice and expert tips via a radio talk show?

**Tom Johnson of TM Johnson Brothers** in Grandy, MN, shared the following advice: His HVAC company teamed up with a local remodeling contractor to do a weekly home improvement radio show.

“We hosted this show and invited guests from related trades to join us on air for conversations covering everything from how to select a contractor, what efficiency means to monthly utility bills, and so much more.”

In his case, Tom says the guests paid the radio station for the airtime. Meanwhile, he and the remodeling contractor were on air for free, and the station advertised TM Johnson Brothers’ services for free.

He adds that every station has its unique approach to how their talk shows work, so it’s up to each contractor to negotiate the deal that works best for them in their marketing area.

### COMMUNITY ACTION

Another excellent way for potential customers to get to know and trust

your company is through community service. **Mike Greany of Aire Rite Air Conditioning & Refrigeration**, Huntington Beach, CA, says his team has worked with groups like **Toys for Tots**.

“Our team offers service and installation discounts to customers who donate toys.”

In his case, his company partnered with a local TV station (early morning time slot), where the station provided airtime and news coverage of the Toys for Tots event.

“They even provided some social media promotions,” Greany adds.

Over the years, other contractors got involved with community action groups like **Habitat for Humanity**, local weatherization programs, and home HVAC safety inspection programs for the elderly in conjunction with local distributors.

Another idea that fits under a “community” header is proactively introducing your field service and installation team members to customers before they arrive at the home.

According to **Jake Bassett of Bassett Plumbing and Heating**, Middleton, MA, his company sends

out emails introducing their techs. The email contains embedded videos of the technician introducing themselves, plus a little about who they are, their outside interests, and so on.

“It’s all about making our customers feel comfortable,” he says. “Our technicians even go so far as to pick up donuts for customers!”

### INVOLVE YOUR CUSTOMERS

**Darrel Sterling of John Betlam Heating & Cooling**, Rochester, NY, says his company uses an installation checklist they review with the homeowner. “This includes showing them how the thermostat works,” he says. “The checklist has a second page referral sheet. We ask for permission to take a photo standing next to their new furnace or outside their home and then have them email it to their neighbors.

“We do this because it’s one thing to get an email from a contractor, which most homeowners will toss. It’s another thing to get an email from the neighbor,” he says.

Sterling adds that the homeowner needs to sign off on the referral program to get discounts, and you need

to obtain permission to use the photo on your website for other marketing and promotions.

National Comfort Institute (NCI) also discusses involving customers on service, installation, or sales calls, especially when performing performance testing. **NCI's David Richardson** wrote the following in the article, *[Balancing Hoods: The Go-To Instrument for Air Upgrades](#)*:

*"Once you have confidence in your ability to use an air balancing hood, it's time to use it to create a customer experience like no other. As you use the hood to teach your customers about their HVAC system, it becomes a differentiator. It helps you stand out.*

*"Let customers use airflow hoods. This activity puts them in control. It changes the conversation and allows them to make smart decisions," he writes.*

### SHAMELESS PROMOTION

Of course, other ways exist to grab attention and build brand awareness. For example, **Dawn Mroczek** of



**GV's Heating** in Glenview, IL, has **QR codes** on their installation truck.

"We started using QR codes on this truck in March or April this year. We use an online outfit called **QRCodeChimp.com**, where we design the codes. When people see the truck in traffic or someone's driveway, they can scan it with their mobile devices, and it takes them to our 'About' page on our website," Mroczek says.

She adds that the code is part of their truck wraps, and they can change where the code takes a customer without changing the code itself.

"So, we can change it during fall to point customers to any Fall Maintenance specials we have or just to our service agreement page."

The other great thing about using

QR codes is that they can also help in other marketing. Mroczek says they use different QR codes for Google Reviews, Q&A, Referrals, and more. The codes go on handouts that their techs give to customers and email blasts that go out after the tech's visit. Plus, Mroczek says everything is highly track-able using Google Analytics, and the cost is very reasonable.

### GET CREATIVE AND GET STARTED

These are just a few unique ideas that some High-Performance HVAC contractors use to fire up their Fall promotions and generate more leads and sales. That's not to say you should ignore the traditional marketing strategies mentioned earlier. This article is a reminder that you can be creative, have some fun, and build brand recognition, reputation, and leads during those shoulder seasons when business slows down.

The thing is, though, that you need to get started now. Brainstorm some ideas, put a plan together, and then execute them. You will be glad you did.

If you have some exciting marketing ideas that work for you, drop me a line at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](http://ncilink.com/ContactMe). **NCI**



At GV's Heating, a QR code is displayed on their installation truck to serve as a marketing and promotional tool to pique customer curiosity and drive leads.



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## Did You Miss Summit 2023? We have Great News!



The NCI High-Performance Summit took place in April 2023. If you've never attended before, Summit is unlike any other industry event. It focuses entirely on High-Performance HVAC Contracting!



As we gathered in Branson, MO, we knew we needed a way to allow our contractors to revisit all the wealth of information that Summit provides. This year, instead of the usual educational breakouts, we discussed best practices with contractors. An NCI trainer facilitated each session which ran four times with four different groups of contractors.

These recordings present all the breakouts – with all the ideas they generated.

Do you want to hear all these great ideas for yourself and your team?

Well, you can because, for the first time, you can buy this Virtual Summit review package. It even includes **one full registration for Summit 2024**, to be held in Asheville, NC.

Get tons of content from Summit 2023, and lock in your registration for what will surely be the biggest and best Summit

ever in the Fall of 2024. [Click here to see a review of everything your purchase provides.](#)

NCI Members can save \$100 immediately! You'll see your discount reflected in the cart.

So what are you waiting for? Contact us to give members of your team access at no additional cost. Go to [ncilink.com/Summit23Rec](https://ncilink.com/Summit23Rec) to get started.

Call our customer care line at **800/633-7058** if you have any questions.

## High-Performance HVAC Contractor Authors Needed

This magazine seeks High-Performance HVAC Contractors like you, to write and contribute articles and article ideas.

Sure, you already have a full-time job, right? But think about this: As an author, you have a tremendous opportunity to stand out in your marketplace. Think of your articles as content you can market to customers.

So what do we need? Some typical ideas can cover:

**Tools:** This can be a 250-word review

of something you use to test static pressures, measure airflow, temperature, and heat in residential and commercial HVAC systems.

**Processes:** What strategies do you have in place for your techs in the field and/or your office personnel to manage everything from recording field measurements to tracking high-performance training, objectives, and so on?

**Sales:** How is High-Performance HVAC Contracting impacting your sales?

**Business/Marketing:** How do you incorporate testing, measuring, and diagnostics into your service agreements? How do you use social media for marketing your High-Performance Contracting services? How do you explain test results to customers?



**Technical:** How do you train/certify your field service and installation team?

We understand you are busy. That is OK. We can help make it as easy and painless as possible.

If you're interested in helping by writing an article, simply go to the following URL: [hvactoday.com/contribute](https://hvactoday.com/contribute). Fill out the very brief form there, and we will contact you to get the ball rolling.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Editor-in-Chief Mike Weil at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe). 

# Customers Want HVAC Contractors They Can Trust

**T**he thought of HVAC contractors as “marketers” is still a foreign concept for many today. This belief is true, especially among smaller businesses with an owner mindset that price drives sales and volume drives profits.

So much information is available from the HVAC trade press, marketing gurus, and consultants that soundly put those ideas to shame, but for whatever reason, many contractors remain dogged in their desire NOT to market.

But the fact is, EVERY business needs marketing. Before Owens entered the residential business in 2000, we did some marketing for our commercial business. I’ve always thought our strengths in commercial HVAC were due to the “feet on the street.” On the other hand, residential is all about making the phone ring. Marketing is vital for a residential HVAC business.

## STEPPING UP OUR MARKETING

Back in the 1990s, our company stepped out. I attribute this to two factors; my late brother Jim earned his MBA from [Kellogg School of Management](#), and my younger sister Catherine worked for Time Warner.

With Catherine’s help, we developed a campaign where we could insert our ad into major publications like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Sports*

*Illustrated*. These publications were able to place regional advertising in issues delivered to our area.

People were surprised to see Owens ads alongside major national brands. Whether this did any good in terms of lead generation is hard to tell.

My brother Jim created a campaign around the [CFC issue](#) in the mid-1990s. The campaign included different print ads, seminars, and even a radio spot. Again, we could gather empirical evidence that these efforts generated increased leads and sales.

Today, any smart marketer will tell you that it’s hard to correlate ads and business increases directly.

When our company entered the residential business, Jim knew we had to do something. So, we tried almost everything from mailings, to inserts in local newspapers, to a full-page ad in the yellow pages, to the tune of about \$70,000!

## TELEVISION ADVERTISING TURNS THE TIDE

Fast forward to 2015, when I met John Lonsbury ([Lonsburyconsulting.com](#)), an Emmy-nominated creative director and marketing strategist who talked us into doing TV ads. He had a lot of experience in writing and producing ads. So off we went. This time we had an easy way to track where leads came from. When





people called in, we'd ask them how they came to call us. We then coded the work order as a TV-generated lead, giving us some empirical data to measure.

But anecdotally, we had another tracking system. My face! Everywhere I went, someone commented about seeing me on TV! It was crazy, and it happened every day!

Several of our first ads stood out.

In the Minneapolis market area, we have several less-than-honest HVAC contractors!

They don't send a technician to customers' homes; instead, they send salespeople! The salespeople are equipped with a picture of a cracked heat exchanger and are turned loose on unsuspecting homeowners.

These salespeople just have to get into the furnace room for five minutes and come back and show customers the photo their managers gave them. Based on the fake picture, they tell the customers that their furnace is dangerous and must be replaced.

To add insult to injury, these contractors tell potential customers they can replace the furnace that day so

customers don't get a second opinion or price. These contractors then charge two to four times what the cost should be. Such practices are happening as you read this.

By the way, other contracting outfits charge only \$49 or even \$19 for a tune-up! They want to get into a home to charge exorbitant fees for repairs and replacements.

#### CASE STUDY

Two customers called us for a second opinion after encountering one of the two contractor types highlighted here. Our team went to their homes and found the furnaces were operating fine, each only needing a minor repair.

These two homeowners told their story for our TV commercial, and then I came on at the end and said, "*Don't let another company red tag your furnaces without getting a free second opinion from Owens Companies.*"

This commercial has been a hit!

Our customers tell us they want a contractor they can trust!

Not only will we not "sell" them something they don't need, but by

following the [National Comfort Institute](#) protocols and looking at the whole system (not just individual components), we are providing added value and the right solutions for their home. Truly a win-win.

My message is first to train your people to know how to do the work right, then build your reputation for honest and good work. Don't be afraid to talk about all of that, plus the services your company provides through good marketing.

Customers will grow to trust you, and your business will grow as a direct result. 



**John Owens** is president and CEO of Owens Companies, Bloomington, MN. He has 45 years of experience helping building owners. The company pioneered preventive and predictive maintenance, which is

the first step in controlling energy costs. The Owens Companies recently announced their partnership with [Orion Group](#) – a national platform built by partnering with exceptional family-owned facility services businesses and providing resources to help fuel their next chapter of growth. To learn more, go to [ncilink.com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe).

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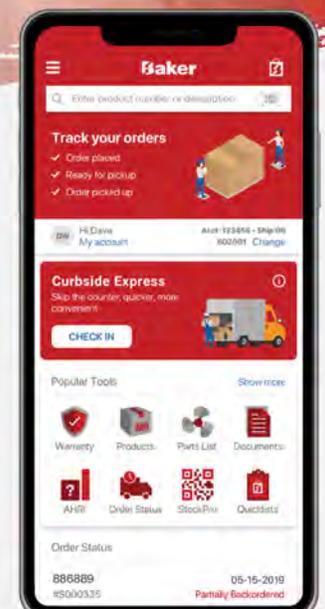


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# National Comfort Institute Moves to Tennessee!

## Welcomes You.



**Dominick Guarino**  
is publisher of  
*High-Performance  
HVAC Today* magazine  
and President & CEO  
of National Comfort  
Institute, Inc. He can  
be reached at [ncilink.  
com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe).

It's been nearly a year since National Comfort Institute (NCI) started planning to move our headquarters from northeast Ohio to eastern Tennessee. Finally, just last week we physically moved the contents of our offices and training center buildings to our new HQ Building/Training Center in Morristown, TN.

Moving a company 500 miles has been an interesting experience complete with hundreds of details and logistical challenges.

### LESSONS LEARNED

As with any major change, many lessons were learned. One benefit was we purged 30 years of accumulated "stuff," ranging from files, books, old tools, unnecessary furniture, old computers, and so forth. In all we purged almost 50% of the clutter within our buildings!

**Big lesson:** Don't wait for a major event to clean up your shop. When shoulder season hits, take advantage of that time to clear out that back room, or that dead corner of your warehouse. We all pretty much have that area in our shops.

We shredded over 100 boxes of old files and paper. Some were scanned and saved digitally, but many were so old they were shredded outright. It felt good to just get rid of stuff. We still have tons to go through but we will never have to deal with a significant amount of it again.

### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Once our decision to move was set in stone, we started the process of looking for a new home for NCI in a small town called Morristown, which is roughly an hour from Gatlinburg and Knoxville, TN, and an hour and a half from Asheville, NC.

One of the many reasons we chose Morristown is because it is nestled between two awesome TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) lakes, with

Cherokee Lake to the North and Douglas Lake to the south.

Another great advantage is that it is within 4 hours or so driving distance to many great cities and towns, including Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, Birmingham, Atlanta, Charlotte, Greensboro, and many others, and just a few hours more to most of the southeastern and central U.S.

### NEW BEGINNINGS

By spring of this year we secured an amazing 11,000 sq. ft. building to house our offices on the main level and a 5,500 sq. ft. training center on the lower level.

The facility has everything we'd hoped for including what will be an incredible 1,400 sq. ft. "live fire" hands-on lab. This lab will house six-plus permanent HVAC systems of different types including a boiler and hydronic system. Since the building was originally all-electric, we just ran a natural gas line to make sure we can provide hands-on combustion and CO safety training.

The training space includes two other key areas: A 1,600 sq. ft. classroom that can easily accommodate 25-plus students complete with 65-in. digital screens. It has a 1,400 sq. ft. video studio complete with a separate AV control room where we will broadcast most of our online live training.

We're very excited about this soon-to-be state-of-the-art High-Performance HVAC training facility. In addition to our regular classes, we plan to hold special in-person bootcamps here for contractors from across North America.

By the way, all of NCI's phone numbers and email addresses remain the same, so it is still easy to get in touch if you have questions or issues.

We hope you will come visit us for the training and stay for all the awesome amenities this area has to offer. See y'all soon! 



# Cutting-Edge Training

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Think you know airflow? Think you know carbon monoxide safety? Think you know how to solve your customer's comfort issues? Be sure. Don't guess. Find the training and expertise you need from the National Comfort Institute (NCI). Only at NCI will you find certification courses like Duct System Optimization and Combustion and Carbon Monoxide Safety, taught by leaders and innovators in the HVAC industry. Find out why NCI says, "If You Don't Measure, You're Just Guessing!"™ Visit the link below or call **800-633-7058** to find classes near you.

### UPCOMING NCI TRAINING SCHEDULE

#### PUBLIC LIVE TRAINING

##### **Airflow Testing and Diagnostics**

August 29: West Allis, WI  
August 30: Kimberly, WI

##### **Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety Certification Program**

August 29-31: Glen Burnie, MD  
September 6-8: Lansing, MI  
September 6-8: Centennial, CO  
September 12-14: Kimberly, WI

##### **Residential HVAC System Performance and Air Balancing Certification Bundle**

September 6-8: Fenton, MO

##### **Commercial Air Balancing Certification Program**

September 12-14: Sacramento, CA

##### **Duct System Optimization and Air Balancing Certification Program**

September 12-14: Portland, OR

\* NCI training sponsored/subsidized by Southern California Edison (SCE) for qualified local contractors.

\*\* NCI training sponsored by TECH Clean California for qualified local contractors.

#### PUBLIC ONLINE LIVE TRAINING

##### **Residential Air-Side Recertification - ONLINE LIVE**

July 11-12

##### **Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety Recertification Program**

August 15-16

##### **Test and Certify Ventilation Systems and Economizers Certification Program - ONLINE LIVE**

August 23-24: *Part 1*  
August 30-31: *Part 2*

##### **Airflow Testing and Diagnostics - ONLINE LIVE**

September 6-7

#### \*SCE SPONSORED LIVE TRAINING

##### **Commercial System Performance Certification Program**

July 11- 12: Anaheim, CA

##### **Residential HVAC System Performance and Air Balancing Certification Bundle**

August 15-17: Anaheim, CA

#### \*SCE SPONSORED LIVE TRAINING (cont.)

##### **High-Performance HVAC Design and Redesign**

August 22-24: Anaheim, CA

##### **Hydronic Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing**

September 6-7: Anaheim, CA **SOLD OUT**

##### **Airflow Testing and Diagnostics**

September 12: Anaheim, CA

##### **Airflow Testing and Diagnostics Implementation Workshop**

September 13-14: Anaheim, CA

#### \*\*TECH CLEAN

##### **CALIFORNIA TRAINING** [ncilink.com/TECHCleanCA](http://ncilink.com/TECHCleanCA)

##### **Airflow Testing and Diagnostics**

August 29: Fresno, CA

August 31: Sacramento, CA



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# Performance-Based HVAC™ Training



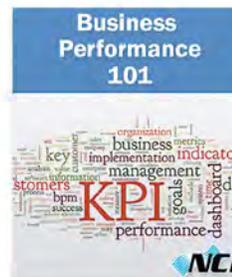
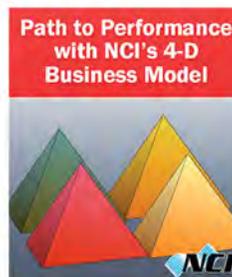
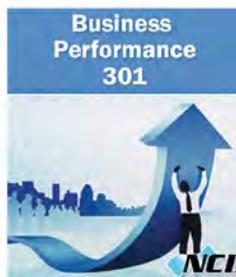
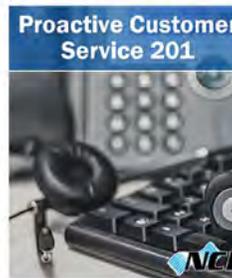
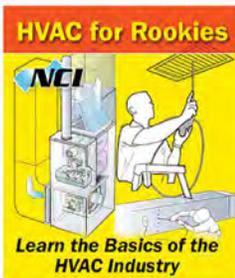
These courses are focused on helping your organization succeed and grow, at your pace. If you're just starting out, or have been in business for decades, there's training that you will find helpful on your path to performance.

Some Benefits of NCI's Online University Training:

- Training is available any day, any time, 24/7
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- Supports a High-Performance HVAC Contracting™ culture
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