

# **HIGH-PERFORMANCE HVAC TODAY™**

*If You Don't Measure, You're Just Guessing!™*

## **2024 INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS**



**Vince DiFilippo**  
DiFilippo's Service Co.



**Eric Kjeshus**  
Energy Heating & Cooling



**Bill Spohn**  
TruTech Tools, LTD



**Greg Wallace**  
Progressive Heating,  
Air & Plumbing

### **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**

- **Recruiting HVAC Technicians: Strategies for Success**
- **2024 NCI Summit: Learn + Differentiate + Succeed**
- **Mastering Search Engine Optimization**

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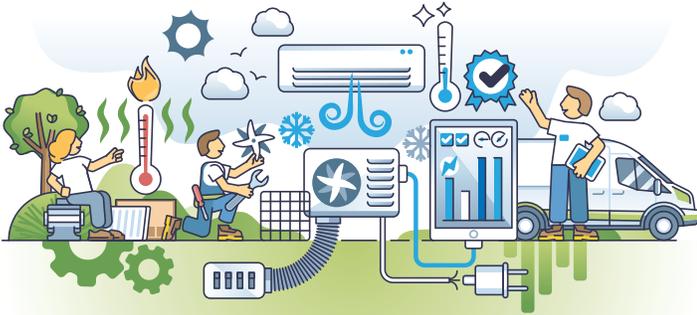
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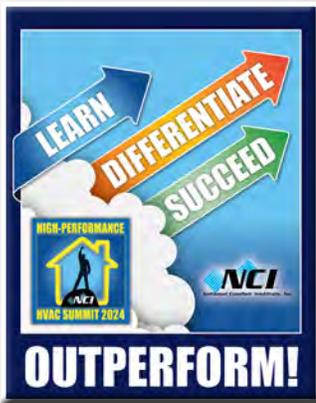
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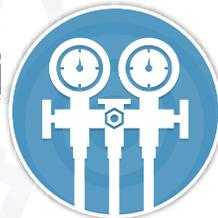
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# Celebrating the Unsung Heroes of the HVAC Industry



**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).

**D**id you know that since 2016, on June 22nd, the United States celebrates **National HVAC Technician Day**? This day is dedicated to recognizing the vital work of HVAC technicians. I didn't. But I recently learned about this day, and it makes all kinds of sense.

June 22nd was chosen to honor our field service and installation technicians because it marks the start of the summer cooling season and serves as a reminder of their importance.

Sadly, most people don't recognize this fact until their air conditioning systems fail. Our technicians are the unsung heroes whose work and dedication are felt by nearly every person living in the U.S. every day.

Not only do they work in some of the most ungodly conditions to ensure their customers' homes, offices, and public spaces remain comfortable throughout the year, regardless of the

front of these changes, continuously adapting to new tools and methods to improve service and sustainability.

## LET'S RECOGNIZE OUR TECHNICIANS

So, National HVAC Technician Day is an opportunity to recognize the dedication and skill of these HVAC professionals. From my perspective, it is also a time to recognize the importance of your investment in training your technician team and providing them with the tools and instruments they need to do their work.

For our High-Performance HVAC™ contractor readers, we want to recognize how you help your techs understand that their roles go beyond installing systems and fixing broken equipment. You teach and guide them through testing and measuring entire HVAC systems – not just equipment. Your influence as a company leader and manager helps drive technicians to excellence.

NATIONAL HVAC TECHNICIAN DAY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNIZE THE DEDICATION AND SKILLS OF THESE PROFESSIONALS.

## INFLUENCERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In this issue, we focus on people who influence not only their technicians and customers daily but also the direction of the entire HVAC Industry. Our **High-Performance HVAC Influencers** article is on **page 10** and online at [ncilink.com/2024Influencers](https://ncilink.com/2024Influencers).

In addition, Dominick Guarino's *One More Thing* column this month focuses on what it takes to create the ideal service technician. Read it on **page 30** or online at [ncilink.com/JuneOMT](https://ncilink.com/JuneOMT).

National HVAC Technician Day is a time to celebrate these hard-working professionals. It's important to remember and appreciate the skilled technicians behind all of our comforts. Their expertise, dedication, and resilience make them modern heroes. 

outdoor weather, but they also commit to professionalism by undergoing extensive training.

Furthermore, with growing concerns about climate change and energy consumption, the role of HVAC technicians is more critical than ever. Think about how they are key players in reducing carbon footprints and promoting green building practices.

As technology advances, the industry continues to evolve. Systems are becoming more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly, using smart technologies for better control and monitoring. Our HVAC technicians are at the fore-

Written for HVAC Professionals by HVAC Professionals

**TEC DG-8 HIGH-PRECISION MANOMETER**

Not all manometers are equal. Anyone who has questioned their pressure measurements knows what I'm talking about.

If you're looking for a different option, check out the DG-8 high-precision manometer from [The Energy Conservatory \(TEC\)](#). You can choose either inches of water column (in. w.c.) or pascals (Pa) as measurement units. Besides unbeatable accuracy, the DG-8 is simple, with only two buttons and a large backlit display.

The DG-8 kit includes two lengths of tubing, a static pressure tip, a USB-C charger, and a [Roomulator™ card](#) in a durable ballistic nylon case.

One of the DG-8's best features isn't inside the kit. It's the accompanying mobile apps. The first is **TEC Gauge**, which

uses the DG-8's Bluetooth feature to leave the manometer in one location and see measurements on your smartphone or tablet. TEC Gauge is available at the [Apple App](#) and [Google Play](#) stores.

Your pressure testing is more flexible with the DG-8 and TEC Gauge. You can see real-time static pressure changes at the equipment when adjusting to wall-mounted controllers.

Since the gauge measures in pascals, you can also test room pressure imbalances and use the included Roomulator to determine relief opening sizes. Finally, the DG-8 is one of the few manometers capable of draft pressure testing. You can see pressure changes in the palm of your hand when changing interior door positions or turning on various fans for draft interference and worst-case



depressurization testing.

The second DG-8 app is **TrueFlow** (also available in the [Apple App](#) and [Google Play](#) stores). It pairs with a Digital TrueFlow Grid (sold separately or as a kit) to measure fan airflow. This combination removes all doubt and confusion from airflow testing. It makes the process simple and quick, so it's ideal for selling technicians or salespeople educating homeowners about their duct systems.

If you want to learn more about the **TEC's DG-8**, go to [ncilink.com/DG8](http://ncilink.com/DG8).

— By David Richardson, VP of Training, National Comfort Institute

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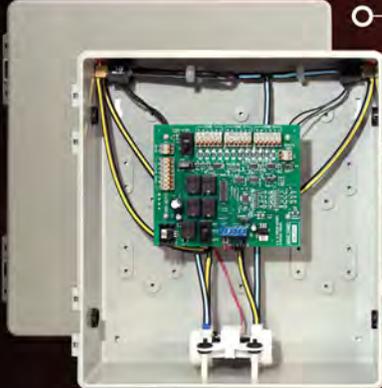
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# Recruiting HVAC Technicians: *Strategies for Success*

**T**he HVAC industry plays a vital role in ensuring comfortable indoor environments, making the recruitment of skilled service and installation technicians essential. Recruiting and retaining top-notch technicians is especially true for those firms that practice a system-performance approach to HVAC contracting.

However, recruiting top-tier talent and retaining them can be difficult. With that in mind, we spoke to several High-Performance HVAC™ contractors to determine how they address these challenges. Ultimately, they all agree that success requires HVAC contractors to develop and implement effective strategies to attract and retain skilled technicians.

They also say that recruiting is not a one-and-done project: it must be an active and ongoing process that starts with some basics, such as crafting clear job descriptions that outline the responsibilities, qualifications, and expectations for the role.



Jose Montes of **Kennihan Plumbing and Heating** in Valencia, PA, says they use a third-party recruiting firm to help.

“We use [Hire Dimensions](#) and have job postings running all year long. Even when we are not looking, we conduct interviews to establish rapport with potentially good candidates who we can go back to when the need arises,” he says.

Many such third-party firms can help you attract technician candidates and screen them.

Butch Mellot from, **ComfortMaster Inc.**, Nicholasville, KY, concurs. He says, “Employee recruitment and retention is a continual part



of business just as is pursuing customers. We must continually foster growth and direction to improve employee skills and maintain a sense of accomplishment and desire.”

With this in mind, here are some tips that Jose, Butch, and others say help them to win the recruitment game.

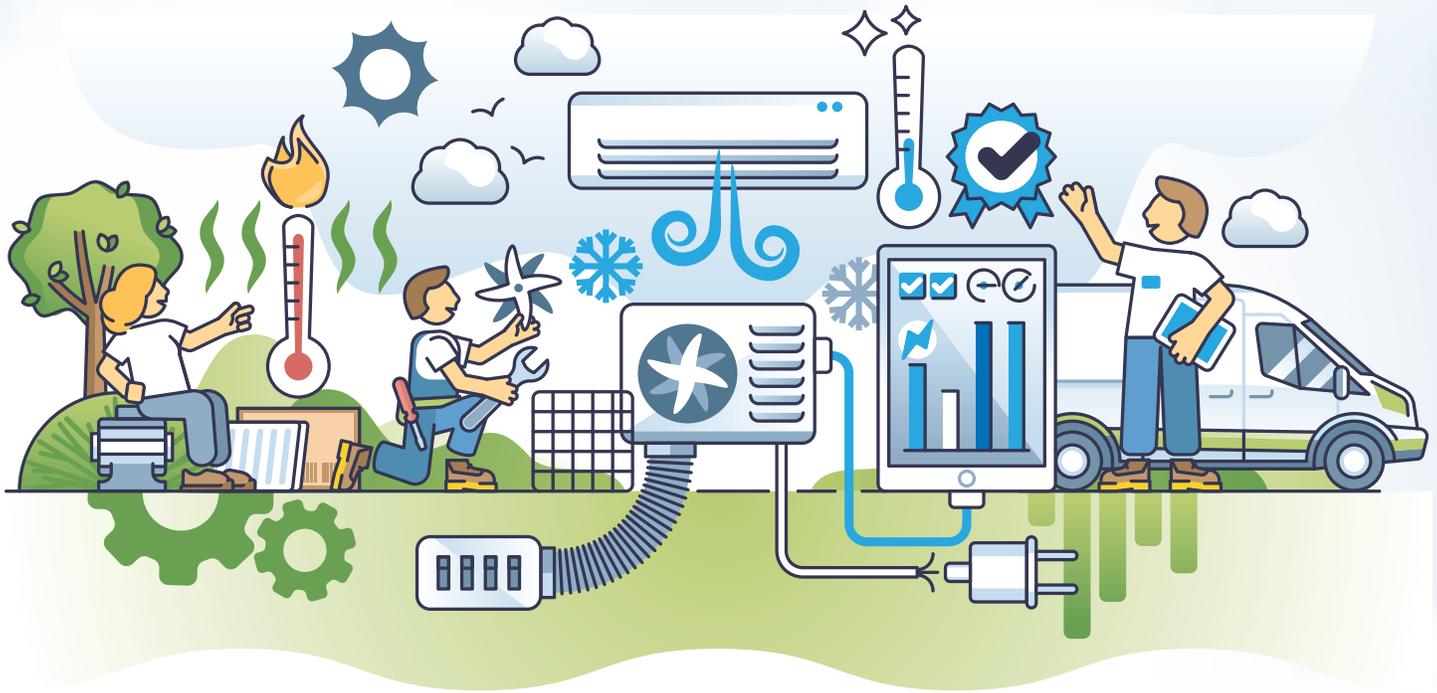
## DEVELOP A STRONG EMPLOYER BRAND

The contractors we spoke to say building a reputable employer brand is essential for attracting top talent in the HVAC industry. By showcasing your company’s commitment to employee development, safety standards, competitive compensation packages, and positive work culture, you may find top-level technicians approaching you.

“We ask all technician candidates what brought them to our company,” says Greg Wallace of **Progressive Heating, Air, and Plumbing**, Noonan, GA. “They almost always talk about how great our online reputation is. As a matter of fact, one of our technicians — who eventually became our service manager — came to us because of our online reviews. He was new to our area and thought it was best to research feedback on companies before choosing where to apply.”



[Online reputation](#) refers to customer reviews and stories about your company, people, and service. Wallace and Montes say they use social media, their company websites, and online job platforms to highlight customer AND employee testimonials, success stories, and career advancement opportunities.



This is all part of building a brand. However, brand building also requires competitive compensation and benefits.

Competitive compensation packages help attract skilled technicians. According to Butch Mellot, having good packages that offer not only salary but benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, and opportunities for overtime and bonuses will incentivize top performers.

### COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Most High-Performance HVAC contractors understand the importance of [investing in employee training and development](#) as part of their brand. Training not only enhances technician skills but also increases their loyalty.

At Kennihan Plumbing and Heating, training is a requirement for career advancement. “If a technician wants to head in a certain direction, we set out the training necessary to help them develop and grow along that path,” Montes says.

He adds that they offer HVAC system performance training through [National Comfort Institute \(NCI\)](#) and other training through local distributors on new products and emerging technologies.

Progressive’s Greg Wallace says, “We believe that training is one of the best ways to invest in our team. Training allows us to provide more value and expertise to our customers. Potential recruits are motivated by the training we discuss – from technical to soft skills, to business in some cases.”



**T.E. Spall and Son** in Carbondale, PA, owner Tom Spall says that they market training as part of their entire package, including benefits.

He says reputation plays a big part in why potential employees seek out his company.

“Training is so important to us,” he explains. “We have a collaborative relationship with our local high school and career technology center (to promote hands-on careers within the high

school environment) and several local trade colleges.

“We work with them to help enhance their programs by participating in their program advisory committee and assisting with training on specific topics such as air distribution and combustion testing. We also host classes for training sessions in our training center!”

Spall says this approach really hooks younger people.

“We interview candidates in our training center. It screams opportunity and pride in our craft.”

### FOSTER A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Creating a positive work environment is part of building a solid reputation among potential technicians and other job candidates.

Experts in business management say this is essential for employee satisfaction and retention.

For example, according to the [Indeed website](#), employers should encourage open communication, recognize and reward employee achieve-



ments, and provide opportunities for career advancement within the company. Additionally, they should prioritize work-life balance by offering flexible scheduling options and promoting a supportive team culture.

Jose Montes says the Kennihan Plumbing and Heating culture can be summed up by what they call “**The Kennihan Way.**”

The Kennihan Way is a value statement by which their team lives. It states:

- Be a **POSITIVE** influence with fellow employees and customers
- **SAFETY** is critical—both for you and your customers
- Take **PRIDE** in your work—maintain a “service” mentality
- **DO A COMPLETE JOB** — solve the customer’s problem, listen to their concerns, recognize opportunity, and complete all paperwork
- **RESPECT** the customer’s home and property
- Continuous **EDUCATION** is essential for professional growth
- Dress appropriately — **CLEAN UNIFORMS** — shirts, hats, and belts
- **MAINTAIN** trucks, materials, equipment, inventory, and the customer’s house as if they belong to you
- Always act as if you were in your **GRANDMOTHER’S** house. Customers don’t get professionals in their houses every day. Give them

the value of your experience, and let them know if you would recommend something.

### USE TARGETED RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

So, exactly how do these High-Performance HVAC contracts attract qualified candidates? They use what is known as “targeted recruitment strategies.”

At T.E. Spall & Son, these strategies include the following:

- [Job postings on online and of-line job boards](#)
- [Career spot on their company website](#)
- [Social media promotions and announcements](#)
- [Employee referrals](#)
- [Networking at industry events](#) (local, regional, and national)
- [Trade schools and/or apprenticeship programs](#)
- [Career/job fairs.](#)

“We sometimes use recruiting agencies as well,” Spall adds.

Greg Wallace at Progressive says they also use online job postings and a rotating spot on their “Now Hiring” website page.

“If we do not currently have a job open that they qualify for, we still welcome them to fill out an application, and we will interview them any-

way. We’ve created many jobs for the right people,” he adds.

For Butch Mellot and the team at ComfortMaster, they market jobs and careers using websites like [Indeed](#) but also seek candidates at their local school.

Mellot also uses social media channels (primarily Facebook), employee referrals, and alternate television marketing spots promoting career opportunities.

“We believe the holistic approach works best for us,” says Wallace. “Our team is a melting pot of people of all ages and skill levels. It takes a wide reach to meet people where they are. So whether they are directly looking for a job, or they see our advertisement by scrolling through their feed, we cast the widest net possible in our local area.”

### OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Some might say that in this day and age, career opportunities are a no-brainer. But it is amazing how



many contracting firms don't have growth paths for their technicians.

Wallace says that Progressive provides clear pathways for career advancement to motivate technicians to stay with their company long-term.

"Installation and service both have five levels in their career path," Wallace explains. "Each level describes the minimum skills required for that job and what they must master to reach the next level. Requirements include passing specific classes, training, and obtaining certifications that apply to their job."

"The entry-level for our office is the CSR position. Once they master that through phone training and actions, we promote internally before opening a more advanced job up for appli-

cations. Almost every person in our office has started in that entry-level position and moved up to fill positions such as sales and installation coordinator, service coordinator, etc."

Last month, in **High-Performance HVAC Today**, Lakeside Service General Manager John Boy-



lan wrote an article on the importance of setting and following **key performance indicators**. He explains the importance of establishing performance metrics and goals to track employee progress and identify opportunities for promotion or specialized training.

He also discussed the importance

of offering mentorship programs, leadership development courses, and cross-training opportunities to help technicians advance their careers within the organization.

By implementing these strategies, High-Performance HVAC contractors can effectively recruit and retain skilled service and installation technicians, ensuring their businesses' continued success and growth.

Investing in employee development, fostering a positive work environment, and building a solid employee brand are vital components of a successful recruitment strategy. By attracting and retaining top talent, you can deliver exceptional customer service and maintain a competitive edge in the market. **NCI**



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# Welcome 2024's High-Performance HVAC Industry Influencers

In the dynamic landscape of the High-Performance HVAC™ industry, influencers and mentors are paramount to shaping the trajectory of other HVAC professionals and businesses. These guiding figures serve as beacons of knowledge, experience, and innovation. They illuminate pathways toward excellence and advancement in an ever-evolving sector pivotal to comfort, sustainability, and energy efficiency.

The dictionary definition of 'influencer' is *"someone within a niche or industry who has some sway over a target audience. Influencers have specialized knowledge, authority, or insight into a specific subject."*

High-Performance HVAC influencers are leaders who make a difference. Most are servant leaders. In other words, they lead by serving others and their communities. By putting the needs of others first, they empower people to perform at their best.

They are not just members of the High-Performance HVAC community. They are active participants and mentors dedicated to helping others to be more successful. Through those actions, these people contribute to our community's growth and acceptance throughout the greater HVAC Industry AND among consumers.

Influencers believe in mentoring, education, training, and continuous improvement. They lead by example. They take what they learn and implement it successfully into their businesses, then take the time to share their experiences with others.

Selecting a class of influencers is not easy. It is based on the input of many contracting firms, manufacturers, distributors, utilities, and trade associations. The NCI team meets people who believe in testing duct systems, equipment, and

the building itself. These contractors measure airflow, temperature, static pressure, and more, then calculate how those things impact delivered comfort and energy efficiency.

The following individuals are the current generation of influencers. We don't consider the time or era these people served the industry. We look at what the candidates have done or are doing and the impact of those efforts.

To submit a nominee, let us know who they are and why you believe they are influencers. Send me your nomination via email at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](mailto:ncilink.com/ContactMe).

Here, then, is the Class of 2024 High-Performance HVAC Industry Influencers:

## VINCE DIFILIPPO



Service is a mindset. It requires a targeted focus on the customer and doing what is right. When Vince DiFilippo bought the HVAC service business from his brother's HVAC company in 1989, Vince's mission was to provide something that no one else in their marketplace was providing. He named his company **DiFilippo's Service** in Paoli, PA, and wanted to provide service through educated, certified technicians focused on customer comfort and safety.

This vision, which he shares with his wife and business partner, **Laura DiFilippo**, led him to seek the best training. He joined National Comfort Institute (NCI) in 2004, became an ardent supporter of the High-Performance HVAC™ approach, and eventually built a training lab in their headquarters building.

For Vince, it's always been about helping young people enter the HVAC trade and work smartly and safely. He and Laura joined organizations like Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA), NCI, and The Service Roundtable. They worked on getting many of their technical team certified by North American Technician Excellence (NATE).

Vince is a leader who sets the bar high for himself, which sets the example for his team. Just as importantly, his enthusiasm for learning and sharing his knowledge is infectious. At every meeting and industry event he attends, he helps others increase their enthusiasm and be excited about the business and the industry they serve.

His influence is subtle – not necessarily by being center stage in national organizations (though he served on ACCA's Disaster Relief, Government Relations, and other committees), but by being a servant leader, by setting the tone and example for excellence that influences not just the people in his company, but everyone he encounters across the country.

In addition, Vince serves the industry as a contributor and advisor to several HVAC Industry trade magazines and has been recognized with several awards and recognitions, including the following:

- ACCA's Residential Excellence Award
- Federated Insurance ACCA Super STAR Award
- Mainline Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year
- NCI Contractor of the Year Award

- NCI David Debien Technical Excellence Award.

His influence also impacts contractors nationwide through his teaching at seminars and major HVAC events.

"Vince is one of the biggest cheerleaders in the HVAC industry. When he speaks to audiences about being a next-level contractor or technician, his energy and enthusiasm are off the charts!," says NCI President and CEO Dominick Guarino. "I can't think of anyone more deserving of this recognition."

Vince also gives back to his community through his active participation in the local volunteer fire department.

"It's about doing things properly," he said in an interview several years ago. "It's about consistency and training and setting the example. That is how we can influence young people to work in the HVAC Industry and thrive in it."

For these and other reasons, **High-Performance HVAC Today** magazine is pleased to welcome Vince DiFilippo to the NCI Influencers class of 2024.

#### ERIC KJELSHUS

Regarding technical know-how and innovative customer comfort solutions, few people are better trained and prepared to provide them and help customers understand their systems. Eric Kjelskus is a rare individual focused on the technologies available to solve the unsolvable and help keep



customers safe, comfortable, and energy-efficient.

His company, [Eric Kjelskus Energy Heating and Cooling](#) of Greenwood, MO, has been at the cutting edge since opening for business in 1972 as a solar energy firm.

He is a master mechanical contractor and master pipe fitter, holding multiple certifications from North American Technician Excellence (NATE), Refrigeration Service Engineers Society (RSES), Building Performance Institute (BPI), and National Comfort Institute (NCI).

This is all fantastic as the owner of an HVAC contracting company. Still, Kjelskus shares his expertise by writing technical and how-to articles in several industry trade magazines. In addition, he takes his expertise on the road, speaking at various national HVAC conferences on topics related to building science and energy efficiency.

His focus is on fundamentals. And training.

As a result, he has been recognized by several organizations for teaching fellow contractors the importance of both the science and technology behind the systems they design, install, and service. These include:

- Building Performance Institute, Inc. (BPI)
- National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI)
- National Comfort Institute (NCI)
- North American Technician Excellence (NATE)
- Refrigeration Service Engineers Society (RSES).

His leadership on issues like

combustion and indoor air quality has led to HVAC system designs that have won four **Quality Home Comfort Awards** from *Contracting Business* magazine, several Contractor of the Year recognitions from the Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA), and NCI.

“I’ve known Eric for more than three decades,” says NCI’s Dominick Guarino. “His natural curiosity and willingness to learn, despite all of his industry experience, are two of his many strengths. He continues challenging those around him to learn and improve, regardless of their knowledge and skills.”

He has also changed the lives of customers whose comfort and IAQ problems he resolved professionally.

“Eric was the only contractor who asked me about my comfort and energy issues,” says one of his customers whose project won an award. “Eric explained how my energy problems were part of an overall house issue, including windows, doors, and lights. He was very knowledgeable and thorough. That was impressive. He was the only contractor who didn’t seem to be there to sell me something. So I chose his company for the job.”

With his thirst for knowledge, willingness to share what he knows, and focus on solving unsolvable customer problems, we chose Eric Kjelshus to join our *High-Performance HVAC Industry Influencers group*.

Congratulations and welcome to the **2024 Class of HVAC Industry Influencers**, Eric.

#### BILL SPOHN

Not all High-Performance HVAC Industry Influencers are contractors.



Sometimes, vendors and suppliers fit the bill, too.

Such is the case with Bill Spohn, the president and one of the owners of **TruTech**

**Tools, LTD**, an award-winning reseller of tools and test instruments.

In the high-performance arena, the lifeblood of testing and diagnosing HVAC system issues are the instruments that field service and installation technicians use to measure system performance. Spohn says, “Testing gives contractors confidence to recommend solutions that will lead to customer satisfaction and reduce callbacks.”

Over the last 30 years, Bill has built his career on creating, designing, and marketing a wide array of test and measurement products that work for technicians in the field.

But it’s not all about selling and marketing instruments. Bill is as much about understanding and teaching others in the industry about the science behind comfort, health, and energy efficiency to better the world in any small way he can.

He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in mechanical engineering and is a registered professional engineer (PE) in PA. In addition, Spohn holds four US patents in instrumentation design.

His influence spreads across the industry through his work on various technical committees for major industry organizations, including Building Performance Institute (BPI), RESNET (Residential Energy Services Network®), the Air-Conditioning, Heating,

and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI), Refrigeration Service Engineers Society (RSES), North American Technician Excellence (NATE), and Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA).

In 2022, Spohn and TruTech partnered with NCI to provide tools to the HVAC and building performance industries and give their customers access to NCI’s High-Performance HVAC training.

“Since I first met Dominick Guarino and Rob Falke in the mid-1990s, I’ve been impressed with their approach to training. NCI has a terrific mission to help HVAC contractors, as well as their technicians and installers, become professional craftsmen. TruTech has a parallel mission.

“We help provide the tools, access to education, and training to help contractors do better work. What a perfect harmonization for TruTech to focus on the tools while NCI focuses on education and training,” he said in an interview.

In a [podcast with Casey Grey](#), Spohn told listeners he is “a chronic volunteer who signs up to work on many technical committees that set the standards for proper testing in the HVAC Industry.

Spohn says, “A sign of a true technician is the quality of their tools and their ability to use them. Beyond owning the best test instruments, we want techs to know how, when, and where to use them.

“We believe a trained user makes a better customer, and a trained employee is more confident and valuable to the employer.”

For these and many more reasons, the **High-Performance HVAC To-**

**day** magazine team welcomes Bill Spohn to the **2024 Class of HVAC Industry Influencers**.

## GREG WALLACE



Sometimes, discovery and exposure to better ways of doing things lights a fire, builds excitement, and leads to evolutionary changes that propel a business to new levels of success. Such is the case for [Progressive Heating, Air, and Plumbing](#) of Newnan, GA. Owner Greg Wallace, who started the company in 1994, became exposed to the concepts of [High-Performance HVAC™ contracting](#) sometime before 2014, which sparked a 10-year mission that changed everything.

Today, the 30-year-old company operates on a philosophy that requires testing, measuring, and diagnosing every HVAC system they encounter. Wallace says the processes are in place, and system performance is second nature with his team.

“We are in the service business,” he says. “That’s what we do. And we are here to train our team to be the absolute best at what they do.”

He has always believed in training and staying on top of changes that benefit his customers, community, and employees. He says, “To serve your customers best, you must have training. High-Performance HVAC™ contracting is the key, as taught by National Comfort Institute (NCI). As the trainers at NCI always say, ‘If you don’t

*measure, you’re just guessing™.*”

“Greg and the Progressive team understand that consumers deserve to receive the comfort and efficiency they are promised and pay for,” says NCI’s Dominick Guarino. “They believe the way to guarantee those results is through measured and verifiable proof. That is what we teach.”

This training and approach is something that Wallace has said can change the entire industry. He does his part by sharing his experiences through writing for a national HVAC trade magazine, participating in panel discussions at national and local tradeshow events, and more.

He will tell you that he sees many of his competitors also attend events and thinks this is good.

“I’ve learned that competitors can teach you things. We can all help each other combat the fly-by-night companies that sell on price and do half-baked work,” he says.

It’s this kind of thinking and sharing that benefits the entire Progressive team as well as his local marketplace. But it doesn’t stop there.

Wallace is a huge supporter of his community. He will tell you that the community he serves signs everyone’s paychecks at Progressive. He sees the need to give back by only buying vehicles from local dealers and supporting the local Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta, Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, and many others. Wallace values sponsoring community events, supporting local schools and organizations, and more.

[Progressive Heating, Air, and Plumbing’s journey](#) from a small local business to a trusted industry leader is a testament to owner Greg

Wallace’s unwavering commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction. As the company continues to innovate and serve the Newnan community, it stands poised to shape the future of comfort and convenience in homes and businesses across the region.

We welcome Greg Wallace to the **NCI Influencer Class of 2024** for these and many more reasons.

## INSPIRING TOMORROW’S LEADERS

Congratulations to each of these individuals. They represent the type of people with the vision and desire to grow their companies and improve the industry they serve. As we said earlier, High-Performance HVAC Industry Influencers are today’s leaders who will inspire tomorrow’s leaders.

If there are members of the High-Performance HVAC community – both contractors and people who support them (vendors and partners) who go outside the box to set the tone and future of our industry, let us know who they are and why we should consider them for our Influencers list.

Please drop us a note at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe) and share your reasons for nominating them.

To see other members of the HVAC Influencers list, visit [HVACToday.com](https://HVACToday.com) and search “influencers.” 



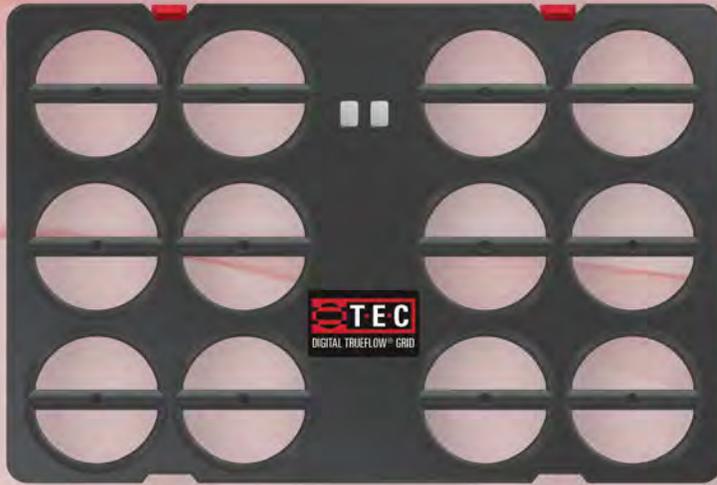
**Mike Weil** is Director, of Communications and Editor-in-Chief for [National Comfort Institute, Inc.](#)

He has 44 years of trade press experience, 40 of which focused on the HVAC industry. He is focused on a contractor-first approach to editorial, specifically targeted to the High-Performance HVAC™ Contracting community. He can be reached via NCI’s contact page at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe).



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## Make High-Performance HVAC™ Your Secret Weapon For 2025 and Beyond

Change in the HVAC industry is happening at a faster pace than ever. Electrification, heat pumps, inverter technology, new refrigerants and new efficiency standards are just a few of the challenges and opportunities in front of us. The key is to be prepared, proactive, and educate your team to meet the new opportunities head-on.

Join your fellow high-performance contractors at NCI's Summit in Asheville, NC to explore ways to outperform your competition, delight your customers, and lead your marketplace as you set your priorities for 2025 and beyond.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

**WELCOME RECEPTION & CELEBRATION:** Meet up with old friends and make new ones at this Welcome Extravaganza. Join your fellow contractors from across North America to celebrate our industry's resilience during the tough times of the past few years.

**NCI PARTNERS RECEPTION AND TRADESHOW:** Our partners help make this conference possible. Show your appreciation by attending the trade show events. Who knows? You might find that next great product or idea!

**IDEA MEETING:** All attendees are invited to this 2-part event where each participant can propose one or more ideas in the areas of lead generation and sales. Don't forget to bring your ideas and \$20 entrance fee. The best ideas split the pot for great cash prizes!

**NCI PARTNERS EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS:** Pick from several special sessions hosted by NCI Member Rewards Partners. Topics will range from new HVAC technologies, to software, to business improvement seminars.

**AWARDS BANQUET:** This long-standing tradition is one of the highlights of every Summit. Join us in honoring the best of the best high-performance HVAC contractors. You may be one of them!





## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

### **How to Build a High-Performance Culture in Your HVAC Business**

*John Boylan, General Manager, Lakeside Service, Brighton MI*

To successfully sell and deliver High-Performance HVAC Services and Installations everyone in your organization needs to understand, embrace and learn this next level of HVAC work. It starts at the top with your key managers and must also permeate the entire organization.

How do you get everyone singing from the same book, and more importantly what can you do to make it part of your values and company culture? John will share his journey, and how KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) have helped to keep Lakeside on track. He will also reveal the bumps and bruises along the way, as well as their breakthrough moments.

### **Anatomy of the High-Performance Sales Process**

*Dawn Mroczek, Sales Manager, GV's Heating & Air, Glenview, IL*

Do you sometimes wonder if there is a surefire approach to getting customers to buy your high-performance solutions? Dawn will share her journey, and how she integrated performance testing into her sales process.

She will also share how GV's Heating & Air embraced High-Performance HVAC™, and the process they developed to outline every step of the sales call from before the visit, all the way through to getting referrals by wowing her customers. She will also share GV's unique system renovation approach.

### **High-Performance HVAC Renovations from Start to Finish**

*Dustin Cole, Owner, Cole Air, Inc., Lake Charles, LA*

In the retrofit market, HVAC renovation is essential to achieve customer comfort and system performance. Simply swapping equipment without understanding the entire system can be a recipe for disaster.

Dustin will show you why and how High-Performance HVAC professionals blend Testing and Diagnostics with ACCA Manuals J, S, D, and T to deliver High-Performing HVAC systems for your clients and protect you from costly mistakes.



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### **How to Take Combustion Testing to the Next Level**

*Mark Hunt, NCI Instructor*

Consistency is essential with combustion testing. Without it, you may overlook potentially dangerous conditions and opportunities to improve your customer's safety and health.

In this session, Mark Hunt will discuss strategies for different situations, and what you can do to improve consistency among your team. You will leave this session with a solid understanding of how to handle ambient CO (carbon monoxide) testing and red tagging to present the right combustion solutions to your customers.

### **The Sweet Spot: Where Building Science and HVAC Intersect**

*Rob Minnick, NCI Instructor*

The crossover between Building Science and HVAC is one of the most misunderstood subjects in our industry. Many owners, technicians, and salespeople need a sweet spot so they can focus on what is important instead of wasting time with guesses and assumptions.

In this session, Rob Minnick discusses where Building Science & HVAC intersect in your business. He will walk you through a step-by-step process you can use to test, diagnose, identify, and explain the most common building and HVAC issues. Finally, you will learn when to progress to more advanced diagnostic testing and how to create a need for it.

### **Customer Communication: Drop the Technospeak**

*Simplify + Educate = Profit: The High-Performance HVAC Sales Formula*

Do you struggle to explain the value of High-Performance HVAC systems to homeowners? Ditch the technical jargon and discover the secrets to effective communication that builds trust and drives sales.

In this session, you'll learn how to craft powerful messages that showcase the benefits of your High-Performance HVAC™ solutions in simple, yet effective layman terms, and leave homeowners eager to invest.



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### **Climate Resilient Heat Pump Strategies**

*Ben Lipscomb, NCI Director of Engineering and Utility Programs*

A climate-resilient heat pump system supports the safety, health, and comfort of customers despite rising average temperatures and increasing extreme weather events. While meeting these primary goals, climate-resilient systems also perform efficiently to minimize environmental impacts and utility bills.

Learn about specific strategies to future-proof heat pump systems in a changing world including dual-fuel applications, cold-weather heat pumps, approaches to equipment sizing and selection, and different ways to provide backup power and heat.

### **How To Solve the Top 10 Inverter Installation Issues**

*Bryan Orr, President, Kalos Services and HVAC School*

While Inverter technology has been around since 1980, it has become mainstream in the US over the past several years. Nearly every residential equipment manufacturer today offers an inverter split system. However, new products entering the market are being met with some fear, as many technicians and installers are still learning this technology.

Bryan will share the top 10 inverter installation issues and how his HVAC company solves these problems to provide systems that operate at peak performance.

### **How to Properly Design with Today's Heat Pumps**

*Adam Mufich, President, A-Team Heating & Air*

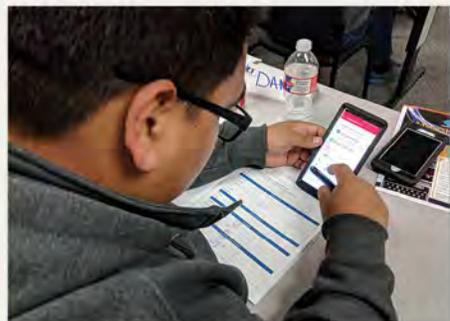
Today's heat pumps are nothing like their predecessors. And unless you account for the differences, you could end up lost and frustrated. With electrification looming, you need a plan to succeed.

In this session, Adam Mufich outlines a comprehensive design process that will give you confidence when installing heat pumps. He will share important tips specific to your local market and help you navigate the murky waters of electrification and what you need to know when it comes to heat pumps.



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### **The Air Upgrade Cure: A Simple Solution to HVAC Equipment Failures**

*David Richardson, NCI VP of Training*

HVAC system problems are at an all-time high and customer satisfaction at an all-time low. Two contributing factors are excessive external static pressure and improper airflow. Both are the result of poor installation practices and rule of thumb assumptions.

In this session, David Richardson shows you how to reduce the HVAC equipment failure epidemic with Air Upgrades. You'll see how testing, diagnostics, and a predetermined scope of work can help equipment operate as designed and improve customer comfort.

### **PerformanceTown – Take Your Testing Accuracy to the Next Level**

This year PerformanceTown will feature advanced hands-on diagnostics with the latest instruments and software. Try your hand at diagnosing and solving typical field performance issues and explore solutions to often long-standing problems.



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## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

#### Pre-Summit Events

- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Advanced Airflow Diagnostics with Hands-on Recertification Class
- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Advanced CO and Combustion Diagnostics – Recertification Class
- 5:15 - 5:45 p.m. Summit Orientation Meeting – All Welcome!
- 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Welcome Reception Sponsored by Daikin Comfort Technologies 

### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

- 7:00 - 9:00 a.m. Breakfast and Interactive Opening Session
- 9:10 - 10:20 a.m. Breakout Sessions 1 – Workshops
- 10:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions 2 – Workshops
- 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Luncheon and General Session
- 1:00 - 1:40 p.m. General Session - Keynote: Bryan Orr
- 1:50 - 3:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions 3 – Workshops
- 3:10 - 4:50 p.m. Idea Exchange Meeting – Optional - \$20 cash entry fee - contractors only
- 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. NCI Partner Trade Show Reception

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

- 8:00 - 8:50 a.m. Breakfast and General Session
- 8:50 - 9:30 a.m. State of High-Performance HVAC – NCI President and CEO, Dominick Guarino
- 9:40 - 10:40 a.m. Partner Sessions – Workshops
- 10:50 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions 4 – Workshops
- 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. NCI Partners Tradeshow and Luncheon
- 2:00 - 3:10 p.m. Breakout Sessions 5 – Workshops
- 3:20 - 4:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions 6 – Workshops
- 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Sponsor Appreciation Cocktail Reception
- 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Awards Banquet and Presentation Ceremony

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- 8:00 - 8:45 a.m. Breakfast, General Session and Prize Drawing
- 8:45 - 10:00 a.m. Panel Discussion
- 10:10 a.m. - 11:20 p.m. Breakout Sessions 7 – Workshops
- 11:30 - 12:30 p.m. Closing Luncheon – NCI President and CEO, Dominick Guarino

### EVENT AND LODGING



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The NCI Summit 2024 is September 10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>  
at the Crowne Plaza in Asheville, NC

Take advantage of *EARLY BIRD PRICING* opportunities.

Summit is open to the entire HVAC Industry. If you register **BEFORE June 28<sup>th</sup>**, you qualify for the Early Bird rate of **\$100 off** per registration! Plus save even more with our special 3-pack offer when you bring at least three people from your company!

*Are you an NCI member?* Check out the additional exclusive discounts you will receive by being a member. Learn more at [GoToSummit.com](http://GoToSummit.com) or call **800-633-7058**.



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# Mastering SEO For High-Performance HVAC Contractors

**A** strong digital footprint is the first step toward market leadership for HVAC contractors. Think of your website as a digital storefront, with each page representing a unique product or service you offer. To effectively connect with potential customers, it's critical to have a dedicated page for every service you provide, tailored to match the search queries of your target audience.

This approach makes it easier for consumers to find you and lays the groundwork for a successful SEO (Search Engine Optimization) strategy. SEO is the comprehensive strategy of optimizing your entire online presence to boost visibility in search engine results for searches related to your services.



This is vital for HVAC contractors because it ensures your business ranks highly when potential customers search for HVAC services, increasing the chances of attracting and converting them. High search rankings also build credibility with your audience, as higher-ranked sites are viewed as more trustworthy.

Here are some critical tips on how to strategize for your business:

## DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE SEO MASTER PLAN

Creating an effective SEO plan involves several essential steps. Here's a brief breakdown of the process:

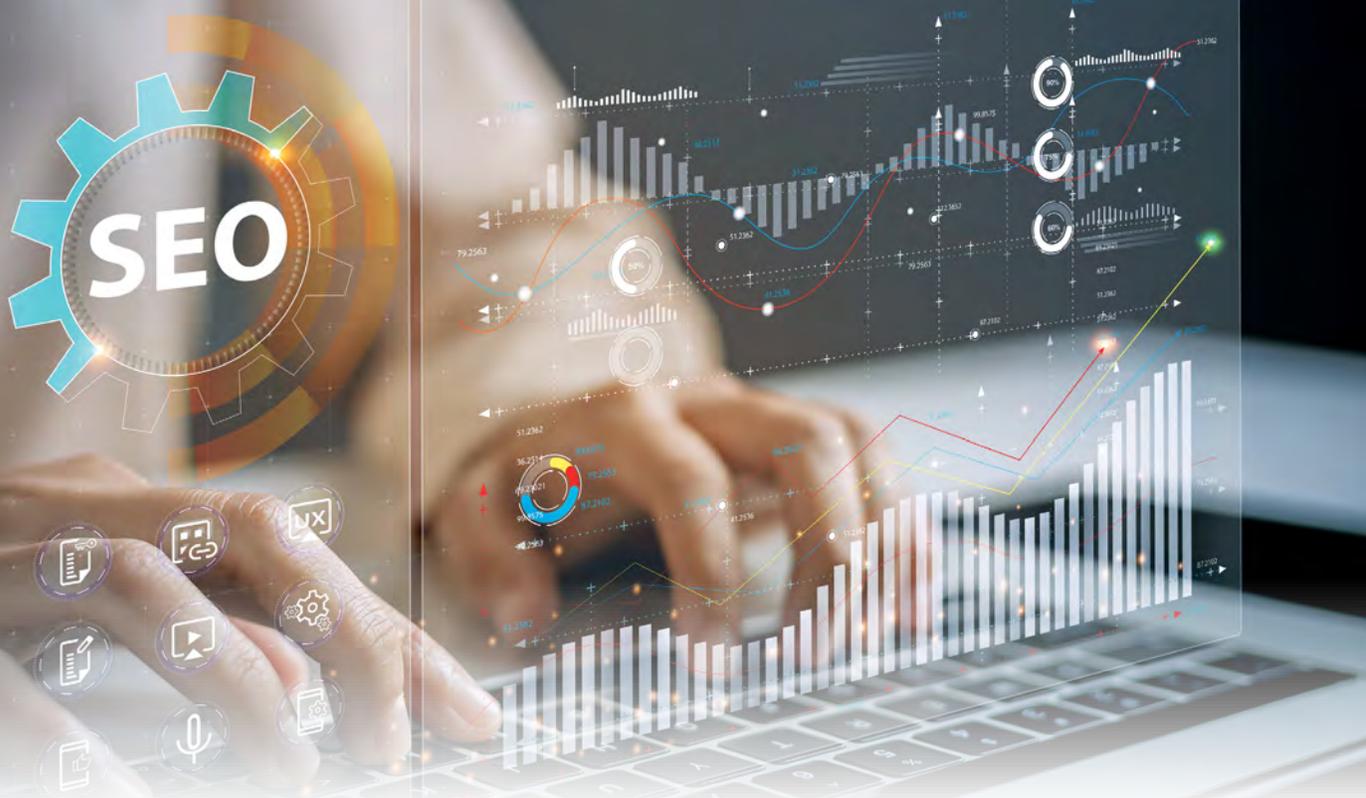
- 1. Compile a Comprehensive Services List:** List every service your business offers so you can clearly see what you can promote online. Include Indoor Air Quality (IAQ), high-performance testing and diagnosis, duct renovations, or any other services/specialties you provide.
- 2. Keyword Research and Demand Analysis:** Conduct thorough research to identify which keywords your potential customers use when searching for services like yours.

You'll want to consider a balance between highly competitive keywords and those that are more easy to rank for.

Tools like [SEMrush](#), [Ahrefs](#), and [Moz Keyword Explorer](#) are invaluable, offering insights into search volumes, competition levels, and related keyword suggestions. Search for each of your services (e.g., "AC repair in Phoenix, AZ" or "heater installation in Minneapolis, MN") to check the results.

- 3. Strategize Based on Location:** Your SEO strategy should not be one-size-fits-all. Instead, customize your approach for each city or region you serve based on the search volume and competition in those areas. This might mean prioritizing certain locations over others or using different keywords for different cities.

For example, as you do your keyword research, you may find "AC replacement in Miami, FL" too competitive, but "Ductless replacement in



Miami, FL” is easier to rank because the search volume is lower.

Similarly, you may prefer to focus your SEO efforts on a smaller city, such as Lynnwood, WA, instead of Seattle, WA.

### IMPLEMENTING LONG-TERM SEO STRATEGIES

SEO is not a one-off task but a continuous, long-term commitment. It also does not produce results overnight. You must regularly review and adapt your strategy to meet changing market demands and promote growth.

Additionally, you can gain significant advantages when you think ahead. Anticipate future consumer search trends and target relevant keywords early to get ahead of the competition. You can follow industry news and plan for what’s coming.

For example, with the introduction of the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), it would have been wise to start creating SEO based on phrases like “Heat pumps in (local city)” and “Heat pump installation in (local city)” to get ahead of the competition.

[CI Web Group](#) can help with this.

### ADAPTING TO MARKET CHANGES

Be aware that seasonal shifts, political climates, and unforeseen events like the COVID-19 pandemic can significantly impact market behavior. Plan your marketing strategies to adapt to these changes, ensuring the longevity and success of your business.

Make sure you’re planning for the summer season in the winter and vice versa. Have a plan for when an election year occurs; this way, you aren’t impacted when consumer behavior shifts.

In tough economic times, businesses that adapt and enhance their digital marketing efforts can maintain lead volume and market presence.

### STRATEGIES FOR COMPETING IN VARIOUS MARKETS

Integrating local SEO into your strategy is essential for HVAC companies looking to stay ahead of their competition. This includes optimizing your website with local keywords, setting up your [Google Business Profile](#) listing and updating it for accuracy, and then building local backlinks.

Backlinks are external links to your site that act as an endorsement. They

signal to search engines that your content is credible, improving your search ranking.

These efforts make your business more discoverable to potential customers searching for services in their area, providing a solid foundation for your broader SEO strategy. Keep the following in mind as you plan:

- **Strategic SEO Investment:** In highly competitive large markets, carefully plan your SEO investment and consider targeting smaller markets for quicker returns
- **Content Preparation:** If planning to expand your services or enter new markets, prepare SEO content (your service pages) well in advance
- **Gradual SEO Implementation:** Avoid launching too many pages simultaneously, which could raise flags with Google. Implement SEO efforts in stages for more effective results.

### CALCULATING AND MANAGING INVESTMENTS AND RETURNS

When planning marketing investments, understanding potential returns on investments (ROI) and return on ad spend is crucial. Look beyond traffic and review your business’s

leads, conversions, and revenue.

You'll also want to analyze lead handling, call response times, and CRM integration to ensure all your systems are in place to measure and manage various strategies' success effectively.

Advanced reporting tools like [Agency Analytics](#), [WhatConverts](#), and [SearchLight](#) are essential for evaluating your digital marketing success and shaping future strategies.

Analyzing this data will clarify your conversion rates — the number of website visitors who took a particular action, like booking an appointment online or submitting a contact form. A conversion with a phone call is when a call lasts for a certain length of time. Knowing this information is critical to understanding how well your website

and digital marketing efforts perform.

If you're seeing gaps between your leads and conversions, take a look at your team's efficiency, including how CSRs handle calls, response protocols for after-hours and weekends, and reactions to web form leads.

Plus, assess how well technicians or comfort advisors are selling and discussing financing options. These insights influence the cost per customer and overall campaign effectiveness.

#### READY TO STRATEGIZE?

HVAC service business owners must adopt a strategic approach to SEO to achieve a strong online presence and stay ahead of the competition. Businesses can ensure success by understanding digital marketing nuances,

targeting the right markets, and continuously optimizing SEO efforts.

Remember, persistence and adaptability are key in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

For more digital marketing insights like this, [register for an upcoming webinar](#) by CI Web Group. 



**Jennifer Bagley** is the CEO and founder of [CI Web Group, Inc.](#), a modern media and digital marketing agency. She is the creator of the [12-Step Roadmap to Achieve Accelerated Results](#).

Jennifer's agency serves thousands of home services companies across the U.S. and Canada as the preferred web design, digital marketing, and lead generation agency for the world's top manufacturers and distributors since 2008. You can reach her at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](mailto:ncilink.com/ContactMe).

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**SUMMIT 2024 EARLY BIRD PRICING**



Ladies and gentleman — Hopefully you have begun reading about **National Comfort Institute's 2024 High-Performance HVAC Summit** which is happening September 10-13 in Asheville, NC. It's time to move beyond saving the date on your calendar and register your team to take advantage of **Early Bird pricing opportunities**.

The Summit event is open to the entire HVAC Industry. If you register BEFORE June 28th, you qualify for the Early Bird rate of \$100 off per registrant.

If you plan to bring three or more to the conference, you can take advantage of NCI's Special Three-Pack registration rate of just \$895.

NCI members have even better Early Bird rates and can use NCI Bucks to help reduce costs even further.

Now is also the time to **secure your hotel room** for the special NCI rate. [Click here and book your rooms today.](#)

Learn more about this year's Summit [here](#). Or call the NCI Customer Care line at **800-633-7058**.

We look forward to seeing you in

Asheville in September.

**CONDUIT TECH JOINS NCI MEMBER REWARDS PROGRAM**

Last month, we introduced Shop-On-Fire to the NCI Member Rewards program. We're excited to introduce another new preferred partner: **Conduit Tech**.

This vendor focuses on helping High-Performance HVAC™ contractors to design, sell, and install high-quality HVAC solutions for their customers. The company's software uses cutting-edge **LiDAR technology** and data analytics to



quickly create ACCA-certified load calculations, 3D models, 2D floor plans, and more.

Conduit's tech helps you streamline your workflow and provides customers with easy-to-understand visuals of their homes to help you close more sales. You can transform home walkthroughs into active customer engagement sessions with your iPad.

As a partner, members can earn NCI Bucks by using their assets at their website [getconduit.com/](http://getconduit.com/). Members be sure to visit their page on the NCI site for your special benefits. You can also read [Adam Mufich's review of this tool here](#).

If you're not a NCI member, learn more about the NCI Membership [Training In-](#)

[centive Partnership Program \(TIPP\) here.](#)

If you have any questions, contact your NCI Customer Care Specialist at **800-633-7058**.

**NCI WELCOMES NEW TRAINER ADAM MUFICH**

National Comfort Institute (NCI) is pleased to announce the addition of a new instructor to its ranks — **Adam Mufich**. He officially became part of the NCI family in May.

You could say that HVAC has been in his blood for three generations — his Grandpa Joe, who was the chief engineer at several notable buildings in Chicago, including the historic Palmer House Hotel. Adam's father, Ralph Mufich, started working for Trane's Comfort Corps in the 1970's. Ralph opened a residential HVAC company in the early 1990s.

Adam worked for the family business until 2012, when the company was sold. This was when he started [A-Team Heating and Air](#).

Adam is a co-host for the **HVAC Over-time and Cooler Heads** podcast.

He works with the social media team at **HVAC School** and has written for NCI and other organizations.



He is certified in a number of disciplines including NATE, NCI, and others.

Please join us in welcoming Adam Mufich to the National Comfort Institute team. You can reach him at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](http://ncilink.com/ContactMe). 



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# The Ideal Service Technician



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**C**ontrary to some common beliefs, the best technicians are not necessarily the ones with the most knowledge or skills. Stand-out technicians have two distinguishing traits: A strong desire to serve people, and a natural curiosity and drive to constantly learn.

The best techs may also have great skills, which does help, but that isn't necessarily the secret sauce that makes someone a top technician. Oftentimes caring about their customers and their natural curiosity will trump knowledge and skills.

Knowing how to fix a system is only half the equation. The other half is fixing the customer. Now I don't mean that literally. It's not the tech's job to literally "fix" the customer, but it is their responsibility to help them feel well taken care of.

them to first ask questions. This is an opportunity to truly listen to the customer. Not only is it a good idea to ask the customer to walk through exactly what is going on, it's a great time to ask if they would like you to look into other potential issues related to their comfort system.

When trust is built up front, it's amazing how often a homeowner will talk about other, even long-standing problems. Who else would they tell about that bedroom that is too hot or too cold, or that they have to turn up the TV when the blower kicks on, or humidity issues, or dust problems?

While your techs don't need to be salespeople, they should listen intently and take notes to add to the customer record. You can always follow up later to offer further investigation. When

done right, this is an amazing lead source!

Once they have good information from the homeowner about the issue at hand, your tech can start the diagnostics. If the blower is functional, this is a perfect time to install four

WHO ELSE WOULD A CUSTOMER TELL ABOUT THAT BEDROOM THAT IS TOO HOT OR TOO COLD, OR HUMIDITY ISSUES, OR DUST PROBLEMS?

**A key trait is listening to the customer** and truly hearing what their issues are. Too many techs think the right approach is to walk in confidently and tell the customer they'll figure it all out and let them know when they're done, often without even listening to their needs or wants.

As both an HVAC industry veteran, and a homeowner, here's how I would like to be dealt with on a maintenance or service call:

First, I would expect the tech to show up on time and look professional. They don't have to be clean shaven with no visible tattoos (I think that is generally accepted today). They just need to be well groomed, friendly, and helpful. A nice touch would be a business card with their photo.

Before they start addressing the issue, I expect

test ports to measure the blood pressure of the system (static pressures).

This information will not only be useful as they troubleshoot the problem, it can be rechecked after the issue is solved. The data can then be shared with the customer, whether your readings are good or not so good. What a great way to score points going above and beyond!

**A word of caution:** Always explain to the customer why you need to install test ports, and ask for permission. 

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