

# **HIGH-PERFORMANCE HVAC TODAY™**

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

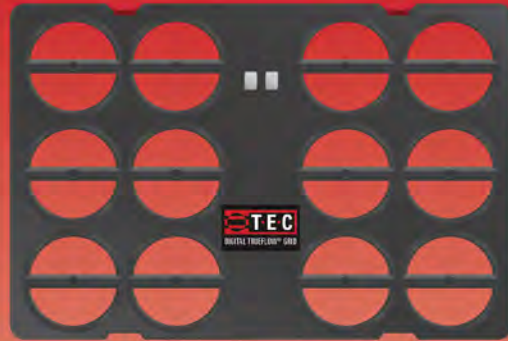
## **ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Branding that Makes Your Company Unforgettable
- How Trade Organizations Strengthen Your Brand
- Four Draft Pressure Tests to Help ID CO Issues



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6

**TECHNICAL:**

## Four Draft Pressure Tests to Help Identify CO Issues

NCI's David Richardson discusses tests to use to keep your customers safe as part of an ongoing combustion safety effort.



## 10 Commandments of a Worley's Team Member

1. Wants to work in a safe and drug-free environment.
2. Always does the right thing with character and integrity.
3. Strives to provide 100% customer service satisfaction.
4. Motivated to accomplish goals both personally and professionally.
5. Is a team player.
6. Values professional image and appearance.
7. Takes pride in their work.
8. Is humble, coachable, and a good listener.
9. Takes responsibility for their job.
10. Believes in communication, policies, and procedures.



11

**MARKETING:**

## Branding that Sticks: Make Your Company Unforgettable

High-Performance HVAC Contractor Chuck Worley shares how branding works, when it has an impact, and how it enables your business to stand out. Learn how he creates impactful impressions that drive his business.



17

**PARTNERSHIPS:**

## How Trade Organizations Help Strengthen Your Company Brand

Laura DiFilippo shares how her family's contracting firm benefits from trade organization membership.

### DEPARTMENTS

Today's Word .....4  
 High-Performance Product Review .....5  
 Podcast of the Month .....9  
 NCI Update ..... 23

HVAC Smart Mart..... 24  
 Ad Index..... 25  
 One More Thing ..... 26

# Always Remember: You are THE Brand



**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).

In the High-Performance HVAC™ world, we spend a lot of time talking about brand. Often, those discussions revolve around logos, websites, marketing campaigns, taglines, and more. Though all of that matters, here's the truth we sometimes forget: the most powerful, influential, unforgettable brand your company has is the technician who shows up at the customer's door.

In our industry, brand isn't an image. Brand is an experience. And nobody shapes that experience more directly, more authentically, or more permanently than the person in the crawlspace, the attic, or at the kitchen table explaining what's really going on inside a home's HVAC system.

## BRAND IS BUILT ON PERFORMANCE, NOT PROMOTIONS

We live in a time when homeowners are more educated than ever. They're looking for answers, not assumptions. They want proof, not promises. That's why High-Performance contractors have a tremendous advantage: your "brand" is based on measurement, diagnostics, testing, and results.

When a tech takes time to measure static pressure, run a load calculation, or show the homeowner exactly how airflow is impacting comfort, the brand strengthens in real time.

## THE CONTRACTOR IS THE VOICE OF TRUST

Good branding is really just good communication. And in this business, the contractor is the **communicator-in-chief**.

Every question answered clearly, every finding explained honestly, every step walked through with confidence builds trust — maybe the most valuable brand asset you have. Customers don't remember the tagline on your truck nearly as well as they remember how they felt during the conversation with the person diagnosing their

comfort problems.

If the contractor communicates with clarity, empathy, and expertise, the brand soars. If they rush, mumble, assume, or cut corners, the brand takes a hit. It's that simple.

In fact, Chuck Worley of **Worley's Home Services** explains that your brand is your promise, and for his company, that promise includes **character, integrity, and doing the right thing**. He shares more in the article "[Branding that Sticks: How to Make Your Company Unforgettable](#)" on **page 11**.

Worley adds that the work itself is proof of the brand.

A beautifully installed system that performs exactly as promised is a form of craftsmanship creating a brand that's more powerful than any billboard. It has staying power and lasts long after the tech leaves.


## TRAINING AND CULTURE HOLD THE BRAND TOGETHER

Great brands don't happen by accident — they are built intentionally. That means continuous training, aligned processes, and a company culture that values performance above convenience.

**Consistency is branding. Training is branding. Culture is branding.**

In the article, "[How Trade Organizations Strengthen Your Brand](#)," on **page 17**, Contractor Laura DiFilippo focuses on the training aspect of her family's business and how third-party credentials go a long way toward building trust, which in turn builds relationships.

So here's the challenge: Measure. Test. Communicate. Deliver comfort, not guesses. Build a brand rooted in high-performance and show homeowners what true professionalism looks like.

Remember: **YOU** are the brand. 



Written by HVAC Professionals for HVAC Professionals

**TEC 3/8-in. HEX Shank Drill Bit**

There's nothing exciting about drill bits. I'd rather watch mastic dry instead of talking about a drill bit. Until now. Why? The folks at [The Energy Conservatory \(TEC\)](#) have created a drill bit worth talking about.

If you're a High-performance HVAC professional, this drill bit is for you. Meet the **TEC 3/8-in. hex drill bit**, a little guy built for HVAC professionals who test, measure, and don't have time to baby their tools. This isn't your average grab-it-out-of-the-bin drill bit.

It's designed specifically for installing a nice, clean test port for testing HVAC system static pressures to take temperature measurements. The magic is in the

details. The milled drill stop leaves only 5/16-in. depth — just enough to punch through the metal skin without hearing that surprising hissing noise issuing from



the coil, or getting the shock of your life because you drilled through something electrical.

If you've ever let the genie out of *that* bottle you'll appreciate this test port installation tool. The TEC 3/8-in. hex shank drill bit is laid out with a 1/4-in. quick-change hex shank so you can pop it onto your drill or driver faster than a tech can grab a free doughnut at a training class. No slipping, no wobbling — just clean, confident, test port installations every time.

If precision, protection, and performance are your thing, grab one or even get 10 TEC 3/8-in. hex drill bits. In HVAC testing, accuracy matters and this little guy makes sure your drill doesn't go rogue.

Just go to the [TruTech Tools website](#) and order yours today. It even comes with 25-hole plugs! **NCI**

— By Casey Contreras, NCI Instructor

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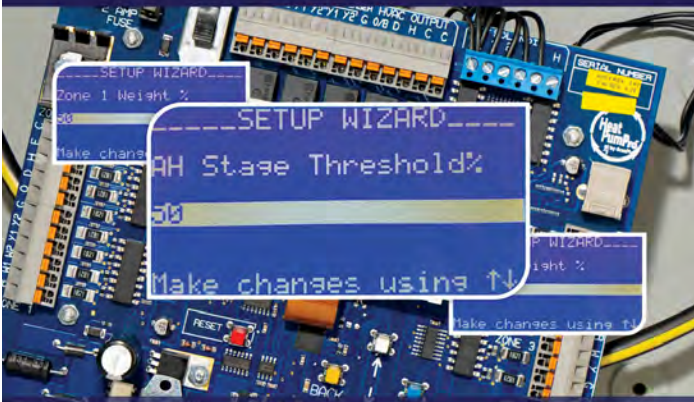
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TECHNOLOGY

# Identify Potential CO Issues with These Four Draft Pressure Tests

**D**raft pressure testing is one of the underrated measurements used to identify potential CO issues. Contractors who attend NCI's [Combustion Performance and CO Safety](#) class learn about four draft pressure tests they can use right after class to help identify safety issues in their customers' homes.

Let's look at these test measurements and how you can use them to better diagnose potential carbon monoxide (CO) problems.

## BEFORE YOU START: SAFETY FIRST

Before you perform any draft test, measure CO from the equipment's flue gas to verify safe operation. If CO on your combustion analyzer display is over 400 ppm or rising during operation, don't perform the following draft tests – you may put yourself in a dangerous situation.

If your combustion analyzer CO readings are less than 100 ppm and stable, you can proceed with the draft test. It's best practice to measure equipment CO when you perform any draft test. If CO readings rise during the draft test, turn the equipment off and stop testing.

Be sure to also monitor ambient CO while testing with a low-level personal CO monitor. The NCI Instructors personally carry the [Seitron PM1](#) and [Sensorcon Inspector Pro](#). You should also look for potential flue gas spillage because building pressures may change as you test. If ambient CO rises above 35 ppm, discontinue the test, and ventilate the building.

## FUNCTIONAL FLUE TEST

The first draft test to perform is the functional flue test. This test enables you to determine if the flue can work. It also simplifies inspections since you don't have to dismantle the flue and perform an inspection with a mirror and flashlight.

When you perform this test, mechanical room doors should be in their normal position. Testing in a false environment will lead to inconclusive results. **Remember:** continuously monitor ambient CO with a low-level personal CO monitor while you test.

Test the smallest Btu input vented appliance first. This is typically the water heater.

Insert the draft gauge probe into the flue test port and measure CO in the proper location to assure the appliance is safe. Continuously measure equipment CO to assure readings are less than 100 ppm and stable.

Next, turn on the water heater and observe the draft for five minutes with no fans running. Ideally, draft should be  $-.02$ -in. w.c. (inches of water column). If there is no draft reading, there is an issue, and you should investigate and correct the following



probable causes:

- Damaged vent cap
- Blocked flue pipe
- Wind blowing
- Stack effect – internal building pressure
- Combustion air grilles and/or ducts exhausting air
- Summertime operation
- If using an older Dwyer 460, the ball could be



stuck or damp.

If your draft reading is  $-.02$ -in. w.c. or more, the flue is working. You can go to the next test – draft interference.

### DRAFT INTERFERENCE TEST

Using this test helps you determine if duct leakage, exhaust fans, or door closure impacts draft pressure. The draft interference test is a continuation of the functional flue test, so the draft gauge and probe remain in their original position for this test.

First, turn on the furnace blower to its highest speed. If draft pressure falls to zero, turn the power off. Return duct leakage or an airflow imbalance is causing draft to drop and can cause flue gas spillage or backdrafting.

Find and correct the airflow problem before proceeding.

Next, turn on exhaust fans, such as kitchen exhaust and clothes dryers, one at a time to see how they affect draft pressure. Any decrease in draft pressure can signal potential flue gas spillage or backdrafting.

If draft pressure decreases, identify which fan or fans are the culprit and consider providing makeup air or

pressure relief to account for them.

If draft is consistent, start closing interior doors to rooms with supply registers and no return grilles in them.

If the draft pressure decreases, you'll need to relieve pressure from these rooms. Jumper ducts and transfer grilles are great solutions for this problem.

### FLUE RESTRICTION TEST

**“You can only determine if air ends up at the burner when you measure multiple CO readings from the equipment’s flue gas.”**

The third application of draft pressure testing is to identify potential flue restrictions with natural draft or fan-assisted appliances.

This test will help you evaluate the

flue’s performance and identify any obstructions or design flaws that may affect system efficiency. Begin by considering common issues such as deteriorating chimneys, improperly installed liners, or undersized flues.

Also consider whether the flue is correctly sized for proper operation.

Perform this test as you would any other draft test. Leave the draft gauge and probe in the same position as you did for the functional flue and draft interference test.

Let the appliance run for five minutes and record the draft reading. Next, manually turn off the gas line shutoff valve to the appliance and watch the draft reading.

If there is a restriction in the flue, the draft pressure reading will increase for at least 10 to 15 seconds. The draft reading should remain the same and then decrease on a properly sized flue.

### COMBUSTION AIR SUPPLY TEST

And finally, let’s look at the combustion air supply test. You can quickly perform this during a regular combustion test.

A single draft pressure reading can



tell you whether there is enough combustion air in a room. If you measure draft pressure of  $-.02$ -in. w.c. or greater, there is plenty of available combus-

tion air. It's that simple. No measuring room volume, duct sizes, or grille dimensions. The measurements let you know if there's enough combustion air in the room.

It's important to remember an adequately sized opening and enough room volume doesn't ensure combustion air makes it to the burner. Don't make this dangerous assumption.

You can only determine if air ends up at the burner when you measure multiple CO readings from the equipment's flue gas. If those readings are stable, you have a consistent air supply to the burner.

If your draft pressure stays in range through all these tests, consider yourself fortunate. Typically, you'll uncover at least one issue.

These tests enable you to isolate various building conditions that may be the difference between missing or diagnosing a potentially dangerous condition. **NCI**



**David Richardson** joined National Comfort Institute full time in 2010 as a curriculum developer and trainer. In this role, he develops and teaches practical, real-world training focused on the HVAC and Home Performance industries. He is currently NCI's vice president of curriculum development. He has been involved in the High-Performance HVAC industry since 2001. David writes monthly columns for various industry publications and is a regular presenter at many industry conferences. He can be reached at the following URL: [ncilink.com/ContactMe](http://ncilink.com/ContactMe).

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# DOMINATING Your Market

At the 2026 National Comfort Institute Summit, held in Austin, TX this past September, we had the opportunity to sit down with Brian Wright and Axel Romero of Crossway Mechanical, Tumball, TX to learn how they've used advanced diagnostics to set their company apart.

From solving tough comfort problems to tackling serious health concerns, these two High-Performance HVAC™ contractors share their journey in becoming the go-to choice in their market.

This conversation is packed with real-world lessons for contractors who want to grow their reputation, deliver measurable results, and raise the bar for High-Performance HVAC™.

Adam Mufich and Eric Palmer of National Comfort Institute conducted the interviews and in this podcast we share what they learned about building an HVAC company up to dominate a marketplace and provide the highest quality services to residential HVAC customers.

**Catch These Informative Episodes at [hvactoday.com/podcast](https://hvactoday.com/podcast)**



### ***One Year in the Life of a High-Performance HVAC Contractor***

Contractor **Anthony Woo** shares with our podcasting audience how he first connected with NCI, the impact it's had on his professional journey, and the lessons he's learned over the past year. From new skills to real-world successes, this conversation highlights how training and education can transform not just a career, but an entire approach to residential HVAC.

### ***Static-Pressure Sales Versus High-Pressure Sales***

In this episode, we unpack the difference between pushy, outdated sales tactics and data-driven conversations that build trust. **Al D'Ambola** shares highlights from his Summit presentation, including how to make measurements relatable for homeowners and a creative approach to following up with customers.

### ***Furnace Safety: Correcting Hazardous Operation with Vince Lopez***

In this episode, **Vince Lopez** shares a real-world situation where another contractor claimed a furnace was safe, but testing revealed a dangerous situation. Vince walks us through how he identified the issue and provided a solution, and why education and proper testing are critical to protecting our customers.

### ***Service That Stands Out***

In this episode, **Jim Ball** shares practical strategies for making your service department not only stand out but thrive as a profitable part of your business. From setting your team apart in a crowded market to implementing systems that boost efficiency and customer satisfaction. Whether you're an owner, manager, or technician looking for fresh ideas, you'll leave with actionable insights you can start using right away.

### ***Defining Clean Air with John Ellis***

NCI's **Adam Mufich**, **Casey Contreras**, and **John Puryear** break down the often-overlooked side of indoor air quality—how some IAQ devices can actually create harmful byproducts in your home. They explore the pros and cons of different filtration types, when to use each, and why not all "clean air" products are created equal. If you care about what your customers are breathing, this episode will help you make more thoughtful recommendations.

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# Branding that Sticks: How to Make Your Company Unforgettable

Let me start by saying that in our industry, the **contractor is the brand**. Not the equipment, not the logo, not the fancy slogan. You. People buy from people they trust. They want to do business with someone they like, someone they've met, someone who feels real — not “Good Luck Google” search result guy.

I learned this the hard way. When I started **Worley's Home Services**, our identity focused on outworking everyone around us. I'm talking about grinding through every minute of the day. That means diving under five houses a day, banging on doors, and selling more jobs while my son, Chase, was in his college dorm room doing payroll. We were hustling like crazy. That was our brand — work until you dropped.

But here's the truth: hustle alone doesn't scale. At some point, you hit a wall. For me, my personal annual sales hit a wall at \$2.5 million out of \$3.5 million in total sales. I couldn't sell more because I couldn't physically get into more houses. That's when I realized: branding is leverage. It's what keeps your phone ringing when you're not knocking on doors.

## THE MOMENT IT CLICKED

Right about this time, a friend of mine — a consultant named Arnel Tanyag — said something that changed my life. He said, “*Chuck, you're a unicorn. Most marketing people can't sell, and most salespeople can't*

*market. You can do both.*”

That stuck. It made me start thinking differently. Instead of just selling, I started building a brand. And it happened by accident. A close friend hated the color green (my favorite color) and, as a joke, bought me an obnoxiously bright orange jacket. I walked into a networking event wearing that jacket over a green shirt, and the whole room turned to look at me: a hundred people — all eyes on Chuck.

That's when it hit me: **marketing works when you make an impact**. People remembered me. They talked about me. And that's the job of branding — make people think of you first when they need help.



Be different or be forgotten — Chuck Worley not only stands out for competitors because of his branding colors, but also because his company delivers comfort like no one else.

## BE DIFFERENT OR BE FORGOTTEN

So, the biggest lesson for me personally is this: you have to stand out. You must be different. And most interestingly, most of your competitors won't do it. They'll keep painting gauges on their logos and call it a day. My advice: don't be that guy.

For us, orange and green became our signature. It's on our trucks, our jackets, our shoes. It pops. It's memorable. And it works. I had someone tell me recently, “Chuck, when I see orange — anywhere — I think of Worley's.”

That's powerful. So much so that in our area, there's a 50-year-old heating and air company with totally orange trucks. We're nine years old, and people think of us first.



Why? Because we didn't just slap on orange paint and call it good. We wrapped 90 trucks in bold colors. We show up at events dressed in orange and green. We host annual customer appreciation branding parties where 350 people show up in our colors and post pictures on social media. For weeks after the event, Facebook became flooded with orange and green. You think that moves the needle? You bet it does.

### YOUR BRAND IS MORE THAN COLORS

Now, don't get me wrong — branding isn't just about colors and logos. That's the easy part. The hard part is **delivering on the promise your brand makes**.

At Worley's, our promise is simple: **character, integrity, and doing the right thing**. Those aren't just words on a wall. They're part of our 10 Commandments for employees. We frame them and hang them in our office. We tell every technician *they have permission to do the right thing*. Take care of the customer. Don't install a

totally free furnace, but if something's wrong, fix it. No excuses.

Why? Because I can make the phone ring all day long, but if we suck when we show up, that customer is gone — and they're telling 10 friends how bad we are. Do a great job, and maybe they'll tell their mom. Do a bad job, and they tell the world.

### CULTURE DRIVES CONSISTENCY

I am always asked how we keep our team aligned with our brand. The answers are Culture, Vision, and Mission. We tell our people: "Always do the right thing. Always deliver work

you'd be proud to show your grandma. That's the Worley Service standard.

**And here's the kicker:** when you build that culture, your brand becomes real. It's not just a logo.

It's a "Worley's" experience. Customers feel it. They trust it. And they come back.

That's why we do tens of thousands of dollars per week cross selling our various service. A customer has a great experience with our electrical team, so they call us for HVAC. Then plumbing. Then crawl space encapsulation. Why? Because they want that great experience again.



**MARKETING STRATEGIES THAT WORK**

So how do you build and manage a brand? Here are a few strategies that have worked for us:

**1. Show Up Everywhere.** I go to networking events, Chamber of Commerce meetings, lunch-and-learns. I shake hands. I kiss babies. I hand out business cards like candy. And when someone says, “I already have your card,” I say, “Do you have one at home and one at the office? No? Here you go.” You’ve got to be in front of people.

**2. Leverage Social Media.** Social media is huge. We post pictures of jobs, share customer testimonials, and highlight community involvement. Our customer appreciation branding party is a social media goldmine. We have 350 people posting our colors in their posts, which provides thousands of impressions, and yes, revenue goes up.

**3. Use Technology.** QR codes on business cards, trucks, ads make it easy for customers to leave reviews or book service. We track everything through our [ServiceTitan](#) customer management system by using over a hundred unique phone numbers. That way, we know what’s working and what’s not.

**4. Build Relationships.** This is the big one. People want to do business with people they like. If you’re

not out there meeting folks, you’re missing the boat. When the president of the chamber gets asked, “Who should I call?” he’s not pulling up Google for the answer. He’s referring the guy he knows, the guy who shows up.

house. I talk about this on my radio show every week: I explain how the entire house is the system. Sweating ductwork? That’s not the problem. That’s a symptom.

The problem is hot, humid air hitting cold metal. Fix the building science. Encapsulate the crawl space. Diagnose before you prescribe. That’s how you protect your brand — and your reputation.

**CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Branding isn’t easy. The biggest challenge is consistency. Why? Because everybody’s watching you. Do good things, they’re watching. Do bad things, they’re watching.

So, align yourself with good organizations. Join groups like ACCA, NCI, and PHCC. Be part of your local chamber of commerce. Support ministries and charities. Give back to your community. Because your brand isn’t just what you say — it’s what you do.

And here’s another challenge: consider acquisitions. We’ve bought 20 companies over eight years. Bringing new employees into the Worley culture takes work. They loved their old company.

Great. But that company’s gone. Now they’re part of Worley’s. Here’s our mission. Here’s our brand. Let us teach you how to live it.

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**10 Commandments of a Worley's Team Member**

1. Wants to work in a safe and drug-free environment.
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5. Is a team player.
6. Values professional image and appearance.
7. Takes pride in their work.
8. Is humble, coachable, and a good listener.
9. Takes responsibility for their job.
10. Believes in communication, policies, and procedures.

**HIGH-PERFORMANCE MEANS HIGH STANDARDS**

Now, let’s talk about testing and measuring. If you’re in the [High-Performance HVAC™](#) space, you already know this: you can’t fake quality. Testing is required. Measuring matters. And training is vital.

We’ve come a long way from the days of filling out Excel spreadsheets to do airflow calculations like I did in the early 2000s. Today, we’ve got tools that make it easy — TEC Digital True-Flow® grids, mobile apps, and digital gauges. Use them. Train your techs in how to use them and talk about them. Why? Because nothing will kill your brand faster than installing a system that doesn’t work.

And don’t just look at the symptoms of problems. Consider the whole

**HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?**

“How do we measure our success?” is another question I get asked a lot. Let me summarize my answer like this: When I walk into a room and ask, “Who’s *never* seen one of my trucks?” and less than 20% raise their hands, I know we’re winning.


When crossover sales keep climbing, I know we’re winning. When customers call and say, “We appreciate what you’re doing for the community,” I know we’re winning.

Metrics matter. So be sure to track your calls, leads, and conversions. But don’t forget the human side. Branding is about relationships. It’s about trust. It’s about being the guy people think of first when they need help.

**FINAL THOUGHTS AND A CHALLENGE**

Here’s my advice: stop selling someone else’s brand. Stop hiding behind the equipment. **You are the brand.** Be different. Be bold. Build relationships. Deliver on your promises. And never forget that people buy from people they like.

If you’re ready to take your brand to the next level, start today. Pick one thing — maybe it’s a new logo, perhaps it’s a networking event, maybe it’s a social media push — and do it. Then do another. And another. Because branding isn’t a one-time project, it’s a lifestyle. Also, if you want to make your company unforgettable, start by making yourself memorable. Show up. Stand out.

If you want to talk more about branding or want ideas that work in the real world, reach out to me. Let’s connect. Because if a dyslexic knucklehead like me, who barely made it through school, can build a brand that dominates our market area, so can you. 



**Chuck Worley** is the owner of [Worley Home Services](http://WorleyHomeServices.com), Yorktown, VA. This full-service home services provider was established in 2016 and has grown from an original team of three to 85. Chuck is an active marketer and radio show host who focuses on creating raving customer fans. His moniker is “*Always Be Branding*,” and you can learn what that means by checking out his website at [chuckworley.com](http://chuckworley.com). Or you can reach him directly at 752/955-9415, or by email at [chuck@callworleys.com](mailto:chuck@callworleys.com).

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# How Trade Organizations Help Strengthen Your Brand

In today's HVAC market, a strong brand isn't built by advertising alone — it's built on trust, credibility, and consistent proof that you do what you say you'll do. For [DiFilippo's Service Company](#), that foundation has come from more than just our work ethic.

It comes from the third-party validation we've earned through our involvement with professional trade organizations like [Air Conditioning Contractors of America \(ACCA\)](#) and [National Comfort Institute \(NCI\)](#).

These affiliations have become part of our brand identity. They communicate who we are before we

ever set foot in a customer's home. They show that we care about professionalism, continuous learning, and doing the job right. And in a marketplace filled with mixed messages and variable quality, that credibility makes all the difference.

## A LEGACY BUILT ON QUALITY AND REINFORCED BY REPUTATION

[DiFilippo's Service Company](#) has deep roots in our community. My husband Vince purchased the company in 1989, continuing a family tradition that began in 1971.

I joined the business a few years later, and from the start, we shared a simple goal: provide the highest quality service possible and always do right by our customers.

We built our brand around four core values: honesty, integrity, professionalism, and quality workmanship. Those principles have shaped every decision we've made, from how we answer the phone to how we test and install systems.

However, as the HVAC industry evolved and competition intensified, particularly with private equity-owned companies entering our market, we recognized that values alone were insufficient. We needed to prove our professionalism through recognized standards.

That's where our trade associations came in. Joining ACCA and NCI gave us access to education, peer collaboration, and **High-Performance HVAC™ certification programs** that

allowed us to demonstrate our expertise. Those credentials became part of our story and part of our brand promise to customers.



## HOW ASSOCIATIONS BECAME PART OF OUR BRAND STRATEGY

We joined our local ACCA chapter in 1996, at a time when deregulation in Pennsylvania was creating major industry shifts. Smaller independent contractors were banding together to share knowledge and navigate uncertainty.

For us, at first, it was about survival. But it quickly became clear that being part of ACCA was also a powerful way to distinguish our company.

Through ACCA, we connected with other high-performing contractors who inspired us to raise our own bar. The late [Skip Snyder](#), one of my earliest mentors, encouraged me to get involved nationally. That advice not only expanded my perspective — it connected me to a network of industry leaders who shaped how I think about business, leadership, and branding.

Around the same time, Vince discovered NCI and was immediately drawn to its focus on [system performance testing and verification](#).



Their training emphasized measurable results — something we could proudly show our customers. NCI's High-Performance HVAC certifications became a visible way to back up our brand's promise of quality.

Today, our involvement in both organizations is part of our identity. We feature our affiliations on our website, in proposals, and across marketing materials. When homeowners see the ACCA and NCI logos, they understand we're not just another contractor — we're a company that adheres to proven industry standards and invests in continuous improvement.

### THE POWER OF THIRD-PARTY VALIDATION

In Pennsylvania, HVAC licensing isn't required, which means anyone can start a company and call themselves a professional. That lack of oversight makes third-party validation even more essential. Without it, customers have no easy way to distinguish quality workmanship from shortcuts.

That's why our association memberships matter so much to our brand. NCI certification and ACCA affiliation tell customers we hold ourselves

accountable to something higher than local norms. We're not just saying we're qualified — we've proven it through rigorous training and testing.

We still meet homeowners who've never had their ductwork balanced or CO levels tested. When we show them real performance data and identify issues others missed, they see the tangible benefits of working with a certified, standards-based contractor. Those moments reinforce our reputation as professionals who don't guess — we measure.



Every service call becomes an opportunity to reinforce that brand message: We test, verify, and deliver comfort and safety through measurable results. That's what builds trust. And trust, once earned, becomes the most valuable part of any brand.

### BRANDING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

While associations strengthen our

reputation externally, they also shape how we operate internally. A company's brand isn't just what customers see — it's how your team behaves when no one's looking. Our trade organization affiliations have helped us build a culture that reflects professionalism from the inside out.

Through ACCA, our entire team gains access to business insights, training, and leadership development that helps them understand what professionalism truly means.

For our technicians, NCI's training builds technical confidence and pride in their craft. When employees feel competent and respected, they naturally become brand ambassadors. They don't just wear the company logo, they live it.

Every technician who walks into a customer's home carries our reputation on their shoulders. Because they're trained and certified, they can speak with authority, explain the science behind their recommendations, and back up their work with data. That level of professionalism sets us apart and customers notice.

We even reinforce our branding visually and behaviorally. Vince includes copies of his NCI certifications with every sales proposal.

It's a simple gesture that communicates volumes: we're trained, verified, and serious about performance. It shows we're part of something larger than ourselves — a community of professionals committed to excellence.

### PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION AS A BRAND DIFFERENTIATOR

In today's crowded HVAC market, many companies look and sound



alike. They make similar claims about comfort, efficiency, and customer satisfaction. The real differentiator isn't what you say — it's what you can prove.

That's why third-party affiliations are so powerful. When you align your business with respected trade organizations, you're signaling to the world that you don't just meet the minimum — you exceed it. You hold yourself accountable to independent standards that validate your professionalism.

Customers may not always understand the full meaning of a certification or association logo, but they sense the professionalism behind it.

They see the structured processes, the detailed testing, the clear communication. And they associate that with quality and reliability: the hallmarks of a strong brand.

Our marketing reflects that message consistently. We don't just talk about comfort or service — we emphasize our commitment to verified performance. We tell customers, "We don't guess. We test."

It's simple, authentic, and backed by the third-party organizations that make it possible.

### LEADING WITH CREDIBILITY

Serving in leadership roles within ACCA has been transformative for me personally and professionally.

It's helped me develop the confidence to advocate for higher industry standards and has positioned DeFilippo's Service Company as a respected voice in our market.

Leadership visibility also enhances brand credibility. When customers and peers see that you're active in shaping the HVAC industry by participating in committees, sharing best practices, or mentoring others, it sends a message that your company is not just a follower, but a leader. It's another layer of trust that reinforces brand strength.

I've been fortunate to meet incredible professionals through ACCA — people who inspire me to keep learning and who challenge me to keep improving. Those relationships have expanded our network, increased our visibility, and built long-term credibility for our business.

### USING ASSOCIATIONS AS A STRATEGIC BRANDING TOOL

For contractors who haven't yet

joined a trade organization, I can't stress enough how valuable it is — not only for education and networking, but as a strategic branding tool. Being part of a respected association says something powerful about your company before you ever open your mouth.

It tells customers you're part of a professional community that values ethics, skill, and accountability. It tells potential employees you're serious about training and career development. It tells your peers that you're engaged in moving the industry forward.

In other words, it brands you as a professional, not just a business owner. And because membership involves continuous learning, your brand doesn't stagnate — it evolves.

Every class, certification, and conversation adds depth to your company's story. That's the kind of authenticity that can't be manufactured by marketing alone.

### BUILDING BRAND TRUST IN A DIGITAL WORLD

In today's information-saturated environment, customers have endless choices and can research every decision online. But information alone

doesn't build trust — people do. That's why our industry still needs the human connections and credibility that associations foster.

You can't download mentorship or measure ethics through an algorithm. Trade organizations bring people together in ways that strengthen not only individual companies but the entire HVAC profession. They provide the structure, support, and shared knowledge that keep our industry credible.

As the HVAC landscape changes — with electrification, decarbonization, and workforce development reshaping how we operate — our brands must reflect adaptability, authenticity, and integrity.


The relationships and credibility we build through associations will

continue to be our most valuable brand assets.

**THE BRAND BEYOND THE LOGO**

For DeFilippo's Service Company, our brand isn't just our logo or tagline — it's our reputation, built day by day, customer by customer, through measurable quality and trusted partnerships. Our involvement in ACCA and NCI has elevated that reputation by linking it to nationally recognized standards.

When homeowners see those affiliations, they don't just see membership. They see a commitment to excellence. They see a company that values professionalism, performance, and people. And that's a brand message that no marketing campaign can match.

Because in the end, a strong HVAC brand isn't what you say — it's what others believe about you. Trade organizations help make that belief stronger, clearer, and lasting. 



**Laura DiFilippo** is vice president and co-owner of Paoli, PA-based **DiFilippo's Service Company**. For more than two decades, she's been instrumental in running all the company's operations, including HR, financials, marketing, and supervising the management team. She also served as **national chairman of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America in 2012**, was named **Contracting Business** magazine's **Woman of the Year in 2013**, served as **president of NATE in 2018 through 2020**, and was named to the **Class of 2022 NCI HVAC Industry Influencers**. To learn more about how she and husband Vince build their brand, reach out at [ncilink.com/ContactMe](https://ncilink.com/ContactMe).

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### UPCOMING NCI TRAINING: DECEMBER 2025 - FEBRUARY 2026

#### PUBLIC LIVE TRAINING

##### Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety

December 2-4: Centennial, CO  
 December 2-4: Somerville, MA  
 January 20-22: Foxborough, MA  
 January 27-29: Albuquerque, NM  
 January 27-29: Morristown, TN

##### Residential HVAC System Performance and Air Balancing

December 2-4: San Antonio, TX  
 December 2-4: Philadelphia, PA  
 December 9-11: Richmond, VA  
 January 6-8: Austin, TX  
 January 13-15: Carrollton, TX  
 February 10-12: Phoenix, AZ  
 February 24-26: Milwaukee, WI

##### Duct System Optimization and Residential Air Balancing

December 9-11: Glen Burnie, MD  
 December 9-11: Tampa, FL  
 December 9-11: Mentor, OH  
 December 16-18: Lawnside, NJ  
 January 20-22: Lewisville, TX

##### Airflow Testing & Diagnostics

January 20: Sacramento, CA

#### PUBLIC LIVE TRAINING (cont.)

##### Refrigerant-Side Performance

January 21-22: Sacramento, CA

##### Commercial Air Balancing

February 10-12: Monroeville, PA

#### PUBLIC ONLINE LIVE TRAINING

##### Commercial Air-Side Recertification ONLINE LIVE

December 16-17

##### High-Performance Heat Pump Retrofits - ONLINE LIVE

January 6-7

##### Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety Recertification - ONLINE LIVE

January 13-14

##### Commercial System Performance ONLINE LIVE

Part 1: January 13-14 • Part 2: January 20-21

##### Airflow Testing & Diagnostics ONLINE LIVE

January 27-28

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[ncilink.com/SCESchedule](http://ncilink.com/SCESchedule)

##### Commercial Air Balancing

December 2-4: Anaheim, CA **SOLD OUT**

##### Residential HVAC System Performance Certification

December 9-10: Anaheim, CA  
 December 9-10: Tulare, CA

##### High-Performance Heat Pump Retrofits

December 11: Anaheim, CA  
 December 11: Tulare, CA

##### Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety

December 16-18: Anaheim, CA

##### Duct System Optimization and Residential Air Balancing

January 13-15: Anaheim, CA

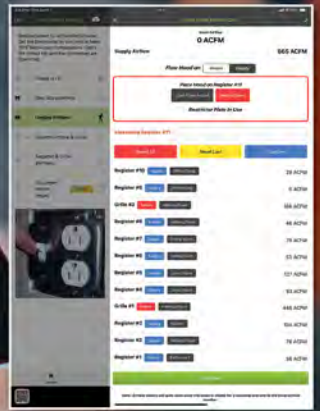
##### Commercial System Performance

January 27-28: Anaheim, CA



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

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**NCI SUMMIT 2026  
SAVE-THE-DATE**

Great news: the team at National Comfort Institute (NCI) has secured the dates and location for their annual **High-Performance HVAC Summit 2026**. Be sure to mark your calendars for September 1-3, 2026, in Pigeon Forge, TN.

The Summit will be headquartered in the **Dollywood Heartsong Lodge and Resort** – a stunning facility inspired by the beauty of the Smoky Mountains.

Yes, Summit will be focused on high performance, but you can also plan a family vacation that features complimentary trolley service to Dollywood Parks, numerous dining options, as well as indoor and outdoor pools, and more.

To secure your rooms at NCI's preferred rate of \$185 per night **WITH NO RESORT FEES**.

By the way, if you attended Summit 2025, consider joining NCI's exclusive **PATH to High-Performance Coaching program** (a 10-part online coaching series) to keep that momentum going. Though the first session has already occurred you can still join for future sessions.

Yes, there is a cost associated with it, and seating is limited. However, **if you register for Summit 2026, the coaching**

**program is FREE.** Just go to [gotosummit.com/path-to-performance](https://gotosummit.com/path-to-performance) to learn more about this program, how you can sign up, and how you can save money by registering for Summit 2026.

If you have any questions, call NCI's **Customer Care line at 800/633-7058**.

**HVACR SYMPOSIUM TO FEATURE  
NCI TRAINERS**

The Seventh Annual HVACR Symposium is scheduled for January 22-23, 2026 in Ocoee Lakeshore Center and Bill Breeze Park in Ocoee, FL.

This year, National Comfort Institute (NCI) is a Silver Sponsor and exhibitor at the event and two of NCI's instructors will be presenting.

For more details on the Symposium — costs, hotels, how to register, and so on, go to [ncilink.com/Symposium2026](https://ncilink.com/Symposium2026).



We look forward to seeing you there. Be sure to stop by the NCI booth and say hello.

**NCI REVEALS IT'S  
ALL-NEW WEBSITE**

In late November 2025, National Comfort Institute (NCI) launched its new website design. The site, [nationalcomfortinstitute.com](https://nationalcomfortinstitute.com) was redesigned from the ground up to be more mobile friendly, easier to navigate, and provide users a much better experience.



Based on a modern design framework, the site now provides easier access to the **NCI Homeowners** site, all **HVAC Training and Certification** information, **Membership**, and more, directly from the homepage.

If you haven't registered for the website, it is free to do so. Just go to [www.nciinstitute.com/registration](https://www.nciinstitute.com/registration) and fill out the required information.

If you were registered in the old site, use the lost password function under sign-in and reset your password to access your account. Questions? Call our Customer Care Line at **800/633-7058**.



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Advertiser Index

Arzel Zoning Technology, Inc. | [www.ArzelZoning.com](http://www.ArzelZoning.com) ..... 5

Baker Distributing Company | [www.BakerDist.com](http://www.BakerDist.com) ..... 24

Daikin Comfort | [www.daikincomfort.com](http://www.daikincomfort.com) ..... 8

Evergreen Telemetry | [www.EvergreenTelemetry.com](http://www.EvergreenTelemetry.com) ..... 10

Lazco Corporation | [www.Lazcocorp.com](http://www.Lazcocorp.com) ..... 14

R.E. Michel Company | [www.REMichel.com](http://www.REMichel.com) ..... 25

Sauermann | [www.sauermanngroup.com](http://www.sauermanngroup.com) ..... 16

Seitron Americas | [www.seitronamericas.com](http://www.seitronamericas.com) ..... 20

TEC (The Energy Conservatory) | [www.energyconservatory.com](http://www.energyconservatory.com) ..... 2

To Your Success | [www.ToYourSuccess.com](http://www.ToYourSuccess.com) ..... 24

Tru Tech Tools | [www.TruTechTools.com](http://www.TruTechTools.com) ..... 24



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# Looking Forward and Looking Back: Are You in the GAP or the GAIN?



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

**B**efore you look forward toward your goals for 2026, and what you want to achieve, it may be a good idea to take stock of what you have accomplished this past year.

In his book, [The Gap and the Gain](#), Dan Sullivan explains how most people, especially highly ambitious people, are unhappy because of how they measure their progress. We all have an “ideal,” a moving target that is always out of reach.

Most people live in what Sullivan calls “the Gap.” They aren’t able to appreciate their progress because no matter how much they get done, they measure themselves against their ideals or goals.

However, when we measure ourselves against our **previous** selves, we’re in what Sullivan calls “the Gain.”

He describes how when his coaching clients periodically look at the “Gain” by taking stock of all that they’ve accomplished — both personally and professionally, they are often shocked at how much they actually achieved.

Does this sound familiar? Do you frequently beat yourself up because you missed a goal? How often do you celebrate the things you and your team have accomplished?

## HOW TO GET IN THE GAIN

A great way to get on the path to being in the “Gain” is to look back at 2025 and write down all the things you accomplished. Maybe you moved further on your path to High-Performance HVAC™ by equipping your team with the tools and training to measure static pressure on every service call and installation.

Perhaps you provided your field people with personal safety monitors and combustion analyzers, and instituted a protocol for Carbon Monoxide testing in every home they enter.

Think about your actions over the past 12

months to move your company in the right direction in spite of all the challenges 2025 presented. Be sure to put them in the Gain column.

## A CHALLENGING YEAR

There is no doubt that 2025 was wrought with challenges, including changes in regulations and codes, new refrigerants that require different handling and training — not to mention keeping so many different blends on your trucks!

The past several years were a roller-coaster ride with an uncertain economy that made consumers skittish about making big purchases like equipment replacement. Many are trying to squeeze one more year from their old, inefficient systems — some barely on life support.

Add in uncertainty about whether the government will reverse refrigerant phaseout regulations or cut the energy programs in the Inflation Reduction Act, and 2025 has been a doozy of a year.

Now think about all the things you have done to overcome these huge challenges and add these actions to the “Gain” column. You will quickly see your “Gap” column shrinking in comparison.

## CELEBRATE YOUR WINS!

I’m not saying you should diminish the importance of your ideals and goals. Those should always be in front of you, driving you to greater success every day. But don’t forget to celebrate and recognize your achievements and those of your people on a consistent basis.

You could put a list of those gains on a poster board or a monitor that is displayed prominently for your employees to see. Maybe share the good news at a holiday party with your team, where you not only celebrate the start of a new year, but recognize your company’s Gains! NCI



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Great news: the team at National Comfort Institute (NCI) has secured the dates and location for their annual **High-Performance HVAC Summit 2026**.

Be sure to mark your calendars for September 1-3, 2026, in Pigeon Forge, TN.

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also plan a family vacation that features complimentary trolley service to Dollywood Parks, numerous dining options, as well as indoor and outdoor pools, and more.



**High-Performance HVAC SUMMIT 2026**  
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