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Control Point Mechanical, Inc.
Shrewsbury, MA

GV's Heating & Cooling, Inc.
Glenview, IL

Punbar, LLC
Houston, TX

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Goodman's Satoru Akama: Contractors Are Key to Our Success

ABCs of High-Performance Contracting: Part 11

Are You A Fast Food or Gourmet HVAC Contractor?



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LEADERSHIP:

Contractors of the Year: Changing the World One Job at a Time

Want to know the benefits of being successful at High-Performance contracting? These three winners explain.



SALES:

ABCs of High-Performance HVAC Contracting, Part 11

In this concluding article, Dominick Guarino discusses the implementation process and how it brings everything together.

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LEADERSHIP:

Goodman's Satoru Akama: Contractors are Key to Our Success

Read our exclusive interview with the Goodman/Amana president who shares his views on the U.S. HVAC Industry.



MANAGEMENT:

Are You a Fast Food or Gourmet HVAC Contractor?

Jim Davis discusses how training is the difference between being price driven and quality driven.

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LOOKING FOR
MORE TIME, MONEY OR FREEDOM?

**WE HAVE
THE TRAINING TOOLS
FOR THAT.**



The business toolbox programs are presented by Goodman® and administered by third-party training organizations. All training programs are designed to support independent HVAC contractors who sell Goodman brand products. Any costs for the training programs are determined and charged directly by the third-party training organizations.

What Are Your Summertime Priorities?

As I write this, HVAC contractors across the country are either gearing up for the traditional summer busy season, or are already into it. Depending on where your business is located, things have already heated up.

According to *Weather Channel* predictions, summer temperatures are expected to be hotter than average in the East, milder in the Plains and Midwest, and a mixed bag in the South. These same predictions say that June will burn hot from the Southeast into the Mid-Atlantic. Even parts of the Pacific Northwest will be much warmer than normal.

So why am I going on about the weather? First, for most contractors, this is the time of the year where they make the bulk of their annual revenues. It is also when chances are very high that their field service and installation crews can suffer “technician burnout” from working too many hours going out on too many jobs.

So who is to blame? Burnout is really caused by just two people: a company manager and the technician himself or herself.

From the management standpoint, it is really a matter of short-term and long-term priorities. Short term, it's all about quantity — getting the most jobs in as quickly as possible and grabbing the biggest chunk of the pie as possible.

But long-term, what if the techs burn out? How will they continue to perform at their best and what does that do to your company's reputation, its bottom line? This is particularly problematic if your techs are expected to take system measurements, test, and make diagnoses based on the data they uncover.

Furthermore, burnout has ramifications for the techs' health, their families, and their careers. Ultimately, they may decide to leave the HVAC in-

dustry and that really hurts longterm because it already is so hard to find good technicians.

From the technician standpoint, here are some thoughts on how they hurt themselves as well. How many techs set out to prove how good they are by volunteering for too many hours? Or want the overtime pay? Some want to impress the boss by getting as many jobs in per day as they can, as fast as they can. Others are just competitive and want to out-do their fellow techs.

The passion is great, but it can be misplaced and cause the tech to become disillusioned, tired, and lead to burnout.

So what's the answer? In a word: Balance. There is a great value to making a healthy work-



Mike Weil is editor-in-chief and director of communications and publications at National Comfort Institute, Inc. He can be reached at MikeW@ncihvac.com

**TECHNICIAN BURNOUT IS CAUSED
BY ONLY TWO PEOPLE: THE MANAGER
AND THE TECH HIMSELF OR HERSELF.**

life balance a priority in your company, especially during the busy summer season.

According to an article on the [Service Excellence Training website \(ncilink.com/Burnout\)](http://Service Excellence Training website (ncilink.com/Burnout)), techs with a healthy work/life balance are happier, have less stress, less sick time, less medical bills, and are more astute at doing their jobs better and more accurately. And that makes happy customers, which creates longterm relationships, referrals, and higher profits.

Have you considered implementing things like limits for on-call rotations, or mandatory time off? Maybe offer breaks from always being available for emergencies.

So what is YOUR priority this summer? What things do you do to keep your techs healthy? Please drop me a note and let me know how you handle technician burnout in your company. NCI

EVAPCO Air-Cooled Condenser

Designed specifically for use in large commercial applications (primarily for the power generation industry) EVAPCO's **Advanced Technology™ ACC** (Air Cooled Condenser) combines a new



modular construction scheme with the enhanced thermal performance of EVAPCO's patented nuCore™ Heat Exchanger. It uses an induced-draft design –

where the fan is located above the heat exchanger. This provides several advantages: lower overall unit height, reduced potential for recirculation, and less risk of fan vibration caused by high winds.

For more information on the Advanced Technology ACC, please visit www.evapco-blct.com.

Fujitsu Medium Static Pressure Duct Units

Fujitsu General America recently introduced new medium static pressure duct indoor units for their single-zone Halcyon mini-split product line.

This new **RGLX line** features sufficient static pressure to heat or cool a whole house. Units are available in seven sizes ranging from 12,000 to 48,000 BTUH, with efficiency ratings up



to 21.3 SEER.

Compact size and broad capacity range make the medium static mini-splits applicable to a wide range of applications. The evaporators are slim enough to fit most ceiling spaces, making them ideal for hidden installations, while the condensing units can be installed below a window or in a narrow space.

Through the wired or wireless controller, automatic airflow adjustment function can be selected, in which the unit detects required airflow and automatically adjusts it. Installers can se-

lect from two- or three-wire control via a dipswitch on the indoor unit.

The V-shaped heat exchanger, air stabilizer and DC fan motor assure quiet, efficient operation. The 12, 18, and 24,000 BTUH RGLX models are also Energy Star™ qualified.

For more information, contact a local Fujitsu representative, or visit www.FujitsuGeneral.com.

Danfoss Self-Regulating Heating Cables

Danfoss recently introduced **Connecto NA** — its new and improved line of connection kits for Danfoss self-regulating heating cables.

Compared to traditional connections, these Connecto kits can be installed 75% faster—in as little as three minutes.

The Connecto kits are available in eight variations that include the proper splice or power connection assembly, as well as a threaded cap, sleeve, clamping sleeve and clamping sheet.

The PX Pipe Freeze Protection Cables can be used to prevent water and sanitary pipes from freezing and becoming ice-damaged. They can also ensure hot water or fluid pipes maintain required temperatures and consistent flow.

For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/DanfossConnecto>

Watts QuadRail™ Fastener System

Watts recently announced the launch of its new **QuadRail™ Fastener** system. The QuadRail™ Fastener is designed to hold a wide variety of Watts tubing and



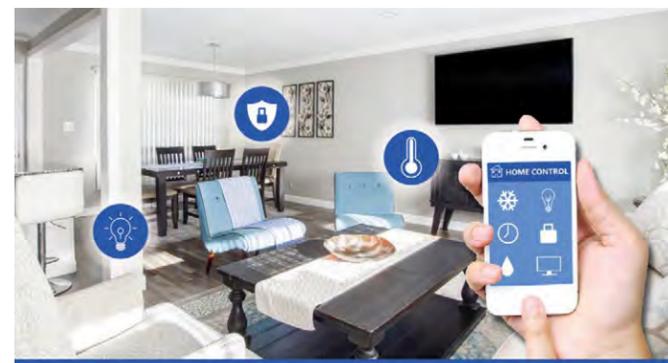
pipe in a substrate such as concrete, thin slab, and sand.

Ideal for radiant heating/cooling or snow melt applications, these rails can be secured to foam board insulation, wood sub-flooring, or turf using staples, screws, or nails.

QuadRail™ Fastener specifications:

- Injection molded of durable nylon
- Flexible to easily follow the contour of the surface it's being attached to
- Each rail: 4-feet long
- Unlimited length of installed railing (due to interlocking ends)
- Tube spacing in 4-inch increments
- Available in bundles of 10.

For more information, go to the website at Watts.com.



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New Carrier 800 Ton Water Cooled Chiller \$88,000 Loaded on Truck

New Arrivals 50 ton Trane Roof Top 460 volt with Gas Heat \$18,000 fob Las Vegas used 1 year

2 New Daiken 50 ton roof tops VAV with Gas Heat \$28,000 each

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HARDI
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NCI Contractors of the Year: *Changing the World One Job at a Time*

Contractor of the Year — what does that even mean?

For the National Comfort Institute (NCI), it means recognizing the very best contracting firms dedicated to the Performance-Based Contracting™ method.

These companies are part of an elite group: dynamic and professional with owners who seek new ways to improve their business by delivering real, provable comfort to customers.

They represent a growing breed dedicated to learning and acquiring the skills needed to run their businesses and truly deliver on the promises they make to employees and customers. These are the leaders of our industry.

There are three winners because there are three categories: **Small** Contractor of the Year (achieve under \$2 million in annual sales), the **Medium** Contractor of the Year (achieve between \$2 and \$6 million annually), and the **Large** Contractor of the Year (more than \$6 million in annual sales).



THE CRITERIA

All NCI Contractors of the Year must meet the following criteria:

- Implementation of Performance-Based Testing into their daily routine
- Have or are in the process of implementing a Performance-Based Business Culture
- Maintain a Strong Service Department that is Service Agreement-Based
- Conduct System Renovation Sales as a regular part of their selling process
- Training is an important part of the company culture.

SMALL CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

This year's winner is Punbar LLC, a fairly new company that began life as a fully functioning High-Performance HVAC company. Based in Houston, Texas, Punbar was born in 2015 out of



the need to provide real system performance in an area where humidity is overwhelming.

Ronald Amaya and business partner Diego Guerrero are both engineers who originally came to the U.S. from Venezuela. They found they couldn't make their own homes comfortable and couldn't find an HVAC contracting firm to help them. So, they decided to start their own company that could.

They did their homework and discovered NCI, which taught contractors how to measure, test, and measure again.

Amaya says, "NCI classes showed us that system designs were usually right. The problems often involved how they were installed. We dis-

The Punbar team pictured here, from left to right: Victor Amaya, Diego Guerrero, Ronald Amaya, Hector Martinez, and Leo Roa.

covered it's not only about proper airflow, but it is also about how you deliver that airflow."

They also learned in their training that managing the business to support the High-Performance approach to HVAC is equally important. They developed processes and use tools that make it easier for the field technicians to do their jobs. That same data is used during the selling process as well.

"We are one of the only HVAC companies that look at the entire picture of a customer's home," Amaya says. "When you do that and explain airflow in the same context as human blood flow, and then give them choices, customers are sold before you even bring up the price."

MEDIUM CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

GV's Heating and Cooling LLC, of Glenview, IL, founded in 1990, is located on Chicago's North Shore and serves residential and light commercial customers throughout the area.

Owner Greg Vickers says his journey to high performance began in 2009 when he learned about NCI. He took his first class (taught by Rob Falke) in 2010.

In the beginning, only Vickers attended classes because he wanted to understand Performance-Based Contracting™ before introducing such a big change to the company.

Eventually his daughter, Dawn Vickers-Mroczek, also started taking classes and together they began their implementation process on the sales side of the business.

"Dawn and I were the only two salespeople at the time, so we began doing static pressure testing on most of our



GV's Heating and Cooling team (left to right) includes James Hamelberg, John Mroczek, Dawn Vickers-Mroczek, Nathaniel Brand, Pam Vickers, Scott Vickers, and Greg Vickers.

calls," he says.

Once they "got the hang of it," both Greg and Dawn began holding regular training sessions for the technicians on how to do static pressure testing, how to interpret the results, and how to offer customers options when it comes to addressing issues they find.

Today GV's Heating and Air Conditioning is 100% focused on High-Performance contracting and, according to Vickers, everyone is on board.

"As we began diagnosing problems and solving them, we started getting calls from people having issues other contracting companies couldn't fix," he says. "They'd ask us to help and we would. When that started happening, our techs saw how we really provide a different service, and THAT got them fired up."

Winning the NCI Contractor of the Year Award is, in Vickers' opinion, a tremendous honor and proof that what they are trying to do is the right thing to do.

"Our employees can really see the importance and value of what we've been pushing and there is virtually

no resistance to it anymore. Now that they've seen that effort recognized by NCI, it means the world to them."

LARGE CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR

When it comes to diving deep into Performance-Based Contracting™, Control Point Mechanical, Shrewsbury, MA, is truly at the controls. After all, company founder and owner Nick Lupo's career began in the U.S. Navy working on nuclear reactors on board submarines and, he once would tell you, if he can fix those, he can certainly do the same with HVAC systems.

Control Point is located in Shrewsbury, MA — a suburb of Worcester, located about 45 minutes from Boston. Lupo founded the company in 2007 to focus mostly on the commercial and industrial marketplace. He added residential to the mix in 2017 and this year achieved combined gross revenues in excess of \$6 million.

He says that from the very start of his HVAC career, he measured and tested every system on every job.

"It's just always been how I operat-



Pictured here is the Control Point Mechanical team. From left to right: John Fullen, Erin Morrissey, Zander Freeman, Dave Jalbert, Jake Lupo, Bob Comer, Ken Brooks, Nick Lupo, Mark Wasiuk, Chris Cote, Ben Martel, Dan Olen, Jake Woskie, Tom Provost. Not Pictured: Brett Russell.

ed. When I started Control Point Mechanical, it became part of our culture. NCI helped me formalize what I was already doing and continues helping me take it to the next level.”

He adds that NCI membership does another important thing for his com-

pany – it shows him how to set up the systems necessary to support a performance-based contracting culture. Lupo says they get a lot of help from NCI trainers to develop the necessary back office processes which makes everything work.



Winning the Contractor of the Year award, he says, is “the icing on the cake.” “It is a team effort. Even though it requires training, and a lot of it, we are committed to staying on the cutting edge. We absolutely invest heavily in it.

“And it is the people of Control Point – the field team, the office staff, everyone, who truly make it work for us. But more importantly, they make it work for our customers,” Lupo says.

So what is a Contractor of the Year? It is a Performance-Based Contracting™ firm dedicated to changing the world one job at a time. These three companies epitomize this by putting into practice the tenets of High-Performance HVAC Contracting. Congratulations to this year’s winners. 

Goodman’s Satoru Akama: “Contractors Are Key to Our Success”

“OUR HVAC CONTRACTORS ARE OUR GREATEST PARTNERS AND THAT IS WHY WE WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THEM.”



Satoru Akama

During April’s High-Performance HVAC Summit, I had the opportunity to sit down with Satoru Akama, president of the Goodman/Amana business unit of Daikin Industries, and talk about the industry, Goodman’s role in it, and the company’s strong focus on well-trained contractors.

Akama, who was born and raised in Japan, spent 31 of his 33 years in the HVAC Industry there. Much of that was with Daikin in sales and marketing. Among his most recent assignments – before transferring to Goodman – was being president and director of Tokyo Daikin Air Conditioning Co., one of Daikin’s largest sales companies.

“In that role,” Akama says through his interpreter, Tomoko Cable, “I was in very close contact with the contractors and would visit installation sites with them. So I have a fairly good idea on how installers work and what they face on the front lines.”

Which is what made him the perfect choice for a new role after Daikin acquired Goodman in 2012.

“In this role, I am focused on Goodman and Amana’s North American market,” he says. “Our priority is to bring a better value proposition to the HVAC industry and serve our customers on a different level. We want them

to come to know us, recognize us, and understand our intentions. We want to become instrumental in the growth and success of our partners and customers.”

When asked about the key challenge facing Goodman today, Akama didn’t even hesitate. “Manpower,” he exclaimed.

“Even though we are investing heavily in tech-

nology and production, we are putting forth our utmost efforts to expand the channel partners and help them grow.

“The people in the field, the technicians and installers, that is where the action is. They are the ones who make things happen. The number of people doing those jobs is not keeping up with the growth of the HVAC Industry.



Air Conditioning & Heating

“Let’s face it,” Akama continues, “when our product leaves the factory, it is just an assembly of aluminum, steel, and copper. It doesn’t become a product until somebody in the field designs its interface with the building, installs it, maintains it, and repairs it. Then it becomes a product.

“That is why we consider dealers, our HVAC contractors, as our greatest partners. We will continue investing in them so we can grow together.”

He adds that it is for this reason that Goodman seeks out partnerships with groups like National Comfort Institute (NCI). He believes NCI’s focus on technical training is key to contractor success in the field and wants Goodman to be tied into that.

“I see this partnership as very strong,” he adds. “The curriculum and programs created by NCI seem to be eagerly wanted and needed by contractors, even those who aren’t members. And we like that.

“The bottom line,” Akama concludes, “is that we have to be prepared for even more challenges in this industry. Not only with a product that meets demand, but also with the skills to get it installed and serviced properly.

“We have to provide our contractors with the skill-set and tools required. That is why we intend to intensify our training and we believe the partnership with NCI hereafter, will only further grow stronger to tackle the changes that are coming to the North American marketplace.” 

“We have to provide our contractors with the skill-set and tools required. That is why we intend to intensify our training and we believe the partnership with NCI hereafter, will only further grow stronger to tackle the changes that are coming to the North American marketplace.” 

UPCOMING 2019 NCI TRAINING SCHEDULE

Airflow Testing & Diagnostics and Refrigerant-Side Performance Bundle
Aug 20-22: Los Alamitos, CA

Airflow Testing & Diagnostics
Aug 20: Los Alamitos, CA*

Refrigerant-Side Performance Certification Program
Aug 21-22: Los Alamitos, CA*

Duct System Optimization & Residential Air Balancing Certification Program
Aug 27-29: St. Louis, MO
Oct 1-3: Los Alamitos, CA*
Oct 8-10: Sheffield Lake, OH

Commercial Air Balancing Certification Program
Aug 20-22: South Plainfield, NJ
Sept 17-19: Los Alamitos, CA*

Residential HVAC System Performance & Air Balancing Certification Program
Sept 17-19: San Antonio, TX
Sept 24-26: Los Alamitos, CA*
Oct 22-24: Union City, GA
Oct 29-31: South Plainfield, NJ

Commercial System Performance Certification Program
Sept 10-11: Los Alamitos, CA*
Oct 8-9: Carrollton, TX

Combustion Performance & Carbon Monoxide Safety Certification Program
Aug 20-22: Centennial, CO
Sept 4-6: Los Alamitos, CA*
Sept 17-19: Somerville, MA
Sept 17-19: Sheffield Lake, OH
Oct 8-10: King of Prussia, PA
Oct 22-24: Austin, TX

* Subsidized NCI training offered by Southern California Edison

Performance-Based Selling Bootcamp
Oct 8-10: Los Alamitos, CA*

Introduction to Hydronic Testing, Adjusting, & Balancing
Aug 27-29: Sheffield Lake, OH
Oct 29-31: Los Alamitos, CA*

National Balancing Council Commercial Balancing with Certification
Sept 23-27: Sheffield Lake, OH

Optimize Economizer Performance with Certification
Sept 12: Los Alamitos, CA*



Visit NCIlink.com/ClassSchedule to view the latest schedule of NCI Training events

Implementation: Bringing It All Together

Any journey begins with the first step. By reading this series, you've taken your first step towards becoming a High-Performance HVAC Contractor. You may want to read through each article again as you'll likely gain a different perspective when you see the full picture in front of you all at once.

In the final installment of this 11-part series, we will focus on steps you can take to put the previous 10 articles into action.

High-Performance Contracting is still very much a **Blue Ocean** in the HVAC industry. If you haven't read "[Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irrelevant](#)," by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne, you should definitely consider it.

The approach fits well with High-Performance Contracting. Here's a link to a website that focuses on Blue Oceans: NCILink.com/Blue-OceanStrategy. You'll find a number of great implementation tools there as well.

Catch up on all the installments of this series:

Part 1: What is High-Performance HVAC and Why Do It? ncilink.com/ABCs-1

Part 2: Is It the Right Fit for Your Company? ncilink.com/ABCs-2

Part 3: Five Steps for Becoming A Performance-Based Contractor. ncilink.com/ABCs-3

Part 4: Five More Steps to Becoming a Performance-Based Contractor. ncilink.com/ABCs-4

Part 5: Your Investment in Performance. ncilink.com/ABCs-5

Part 6: The Five Keys to Quality Training. ncilink.com/ABCs-6

Part 7: The Right Tools for the Job. ncilink.com/ABCs-7

Part 8: High-Performance Selling: Prepare for the Call. ncilink.com/ABCs-8

Part 9: The ABCs of High-Performance Selling. ncilink.com/ABCs-9

Part 10: How to Generate Leads with Little or No Competition. ncilink.com/ABCs-10

Be sure to read my *One More Thing* column in this issue to learn more about why High-Performance HVAC is a perfect Blue Ocean Strategy. (NCILink.com/0619OMT). If you haven't already taken it, your next step is to invest in educating yourself in this little-known area of the industry.

You can begin by taking a class on Residential System Performance (ncilink.com/sp) or Duct System Optimization (ncilink.com/DSO) – it will open up your mind to all the possibilities.

There's no substitute for live training where you can interact and explore ideas with an instructor and your fellow HVAC professionals.

TALK TO OTHER HIGH-PERFORMANCE CONTRACTORS

Seek out High-Performance contractors in your marketplace or perhaps in neighboring towns. There are thousands of companies that are at different stages in the learning curve. Some are further down the path and some are just starting like you.

There are also hundreds of NCI members who are on the path to High Performance. These members are identified in NCI's online contractor lookup.

To look for a company near you who have begun the process, click on the Find A Certified Professional on MyHomeComfort.org and enter your zip code and the mile radius you want to search for peers in your area.

THE ROAD TO IMPLEMENTATION

Steady progression is the key to implementation. Commit to doing something every

week that moves you further along the path. Baby steps are better than procrastination. The worst thing you can do is lie to yourself by saying when you have time you'll get started. If you're a typical HVAC contractor, I can almost guarantee you that you'll never have that "spare" time.

Implementation is the biggest challenge to making your company performance-based. Over the years we've refined 20 key steps to implementing High-Performance.

Each step will help you move along the path towards integrating measuring and testing into your company's processes and culture.

Here's a brief overview of the 20-step process:

Step 1. Determine your High-Performance products and services. Define the products and services you will offer to improve the safety, health, comfort, and efficiency of your customer's HVAC systems.

Step 2. Choose a champion. Determine who will lead and keep everyone focused on achieving your High-Performance HVAC goals.

Step 3. Establish processes and roles. Adjust your existing processes and procedures to include High-Performance principles.

Step 4. Measure and reward team performance. This will help support a consistent testing culture leading to high-performance solutions. Recognize and reward your performers.

Step 5. Get your entire team on board. Explain "why" a High-Performance culture is much better than the "status quo."

Step 6. Define mandatory measurements. Clearly define which measurements are not optional on every service call, maintenance call, sales call, and installation.

Step 7. Purchase proper test instruments. Identify the best test instruments for getting the job done that fit your budget.

Step 8. Select collateral materials. Review NCI's document library and select the pieces that support your high-performance initiative.

Step 9. Update your information systems. Modify existing paperwork or software to record HVAC system vital signs and High-Performance recommendations.

Step 10. Develop a High-Performance skillset. Build your team's confidence in their high-performance testing and communication skills with consistent training.



Step 11. Practice, practice, practice. Practice testing and simplified communication skills in non-threatening real-life situations.

Step 12. Price your products & services. Develop an upfront pricing model to support the High-Performance products and services your team will offer.

Step 13. Collect performance measurements. Implement a process to measure and record HVAC system vital signs at every opportunity.

Step 14. Communicate performance evaluation. Establish a method to connect potential safety, health, comfort, and efficiency concerns to poor system performance measurements, and communicate the information to the customer.

Step 15. Offer high-performance products and services. Provide appropriate recommendations based on performance measurements and customer priorities.

Step 16. Create a scope of work for each project. Design solutions that fit the customer's needs and priorities.

Step 17. Hand-off project to installation. Communicate all aspects of the project to the installation team.

Step 18. Perform high-performance services. Complete work to correct safety, health, comfort, and energy efficiency problems.

Step 19. Test-out to verify results. Implement a Quality Assurance system to ensure that the promises made were delivered.

Step 20. Maintain system performance. Continue collecting system performance measurements

during your maintenance agreement visits.

These 20 steps will put you on a fast track to High-Performance Contracting. The steps are in the roadmap NCI uses in its Trailblazer Coaching program - which is available to both NCI members and non-members. Here's a link to more info on that program: Ncilink.com/Trailblazer.

Even though the 2019 program has already started, since the online sessions are recorded, you can jump in at any point in time.

TURN YOUR PEOPLE INTO AIRHEADS

Many Performance-Based Contractors jokingly refer to themselves as airheads as they treat the air side of

HVAC systems very differently than most companies.

Part of changing the culture in a company is mixing things up a little. Try to create a sense of teamwork and friendly competition as you introduce these changes.

Maybe start a "Highest Static Pressure" contest where the tech who tests a system with the highest Total External Static Pressure each month wins a dinner for two, or a gift certificate.

Reward the people that take the lead toward changing the way they perform installation and maintenance. Sometimes trying to effect change is like pushing on a rope. Look for "champions" within your organization who will help "pull" the others along with them.

Get your field and office employees

excited about HVAC Performance by involving them in testing and fixing the systems in their own homes.

When they experience the benefits first hand, you can bet they'll get excited about what you're doing when they interact with your customers.

MAKE IT FUN!

As you roll out each new phase of your culture change, be sure to create an air of excitement and fanfare.

Warning: Unless you're prepared to deal with some major resistance, do not make a big announcement about how "everything is going to change around here starting immediately."

You're much better off introducing the High-Performance concepts one at a time. Then when everyone is on the

same page, they will feel like they're part of creating the "new approach," and you'll encounter much less resistance along the way.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

NCI is committed to working with contractors willing to invest in implementing High-Performance in their companies. We do this through ongoing training with nearly 150 training events each year across North America, and with our contractor membership organization.

One of the most valuable benefits of NCI membership is unlimited phone support. Members can call our toll-free number and talk to our knowledgeable staff any time, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM East-

ern Time. Support calls range from answering technical questions to helping with sales and marketing issues, to implementation.

Should you decide to join the growing ranks of Performance-Based Contractors, NCI is here to support you. Together we can build a new and better HVAC industry. We're ready for you if you're up to the challenge.

Every day NCI works hard to improve and simplify the methods, forms, procedures, and training curriculum to help contractors become more successful, and distinguish themselves from their competition.

You have my pledge as NCI chairman and CEO that our primary focus will always be on helping contractors and improving our industry. It's why

our organization was created.

We will always strive to maintain the highest standards, morals, and ethics among our employees, customers, and members.

I hope you've enjoyed reading this guide to High-Performance Contracting, and we look forward to working with your organization should you decide to join us in Leading the Comfort Revolution. And remember, "If You Don't Measure, You're Just Guessing!"! 



Dominick Guarino is publisher of High-Performance HVAC Today magazine and CEO of National Comfort Institute, Inc. He can be reached at domg@ncihvac.com



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Are You A Fast Food or Gourmet HVAC Contractor?



If everything your HVAC company promises is fast and cheap, you might be considered a fast food type of HVAC contractor. I eat my share of fast food. In fact, I recently picked up a fish sandwich from a fast food place. The fish was half on the bun, cheese was half on the fish, and there was more tartar sauce outside the bun than inside. But it was fast and cheap!

I'm not sure how much training went into the "chef" who made that sandwich. On the other hand, a gourmet restaurant requires years of training and testing before a real chef can plate a meal.

Thousands of dollars are spent training new employees, plus providing continuing education for existing ones. No one seems to care that the food is expensive and takes longer to serve.

Furthermore, believe it or not, this is life and death training because of food allergies and

Is everything about your HVAC company fast and cheap? If it is, no matter what the reason, your business could be considered a "fast-food" HVAC firm.

poisoning possibilities.

When an HVAC technician enters a customer's home, there is also a potential life or death situation if the building has any type of fuel burning equipment or devices. Carbon monoxide (CO) poisonings occur more often than most imagine, but they often go undiagnosed or unreported.

Some insinuate it's up to the homeowner to protect themselves. However, I'm sure the homeowner is not aware of this.

Do contractors need to be trained on how to test for all the possible CO dangers? Or is it okay to just wing it? You might hear some contractors say, "We don't charge enough to do all that CO testing or buy our technicians the expensive test instruments and tools. We certainly can't afford the training."

Fast and cheap!!!

Some contractors watch a YouTube video and believe they know everything there is to know

IN A GOURMET RESTAURANT, NOBODY SEEMS TO CARE THAT THE FOOD IS MORE EXPENSIVE AND TAKES LONGER TO SERVE. SHOULDN'T THE SAME THING BE TRUE ABOUT YOUR "GOURMET" HVAC BUSINESS?



In a "gourmet" HVAC company, just like in a gourmet restaurant, years of training and re-training are required to guarantee customers get what they desire and deserve.

about carbon monoxide. Really? Maybe they went to a free CO seminar. Both are fast and cheap, and in both cases, unfortunately, were probably not worth the time.

Protecting customers from carbon monoxide poisoning should not be optional. But, you also need to know that carbon monoxide safety testing is more than just walking into a building with a personal CO detector. It's more than conducting a token CO test on a piece of equipment with an analyzer.

It is more than uncovering a CO problem that is occurring immediately. It is identifying conditions that may contribute to a CO poisoning intermittently or later on.

As you would expect a complete meal from a fine restaurant, your customers expect you to know your job.

Do your CO diagnostic skills encompass the whole combustion process, verifying combustion air, and proper ventilation? What is a valid test for confirming venting? Do you know all the possible mechanical defects and how to detect them?

Unless you know what can cause CO problems, you'll be unable to correct them. Your customers expect you to advise them, especially with regard to safety and health issues stemming from all the sources of carbon monoxide.

This goes well beyond heating equipment and water heaters. For example, what are external sources of CO that can infiltrate the building? Can CO infiltrate back into the building after it has vented outside, even by sealed combustion equipment?

PROTECTING CUSTOMERS FROM CO POISONING SHOULDN'T BE OPTIONAL. IT SHOULD BE GOURMET. IT ALSO MEANS YOU HAVE TO BE WELL TRAINED.

Sometime ago, NCI Trainer David Richardson wrote a blog (ncilink.com/EGIACO3) that talked about Four Obstacles to CO testing. He says these are Unwillingness, Lack of Confidence, Fear, and Pride. I believe there is a fifth obstacle which is Competitiveness. "If we do CO testing, we will have to charge more money and we will be less competitive."

So having said that, ask yourself this: are you a fast food or gourmet HVAC contractor. There are times when fast and cheap have their place, but not when life and safety are at risk. They should not be the normal mode of performance. 



Jim Davis, Senior Trainer, National Comfort Institute, is focused on combustion safety. He has a long and storied career in the HVAC Industry -- a career that began back in 1971. He worked for HVAC contractors and distributors, the latter of which is where he became involved with selling the first digital combustion analyzers. That is where his combustion crusade really began. Today he is one of the foremost authorities on combustion and CO safety. He can be reached at jimd@ncihvac.com.

Save 20% With Summer Onsite Training!

You can book onsite training today for any time between June 1st and July 31st and save 20% off your already discounted member rates.

Here are just a few reasons onsite training is an incredible value for your company:

- The schedule and content can be customized to meet your specific training needs
- One affordable price to train, certify, and/or recertify your entire team
- Your team gets more one-on-one time with the instructor
- Bonus evening sessions with our instructors at no additional cost!
- We can train all areas of your company so everyone is on the same page
- You have NO TRAVEL EXPENSES because we come to you. We train in your facility. This means so much less downtime for your team
- You can earn NATE, BPI, and even State CEUs (where applicable)
- You can recover your investment in weeks by implementing what you learn right away.



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Registration is Now Open for Summit 2020

National Comfort Institute (NCI) is pleased to announce we have opened registration for the 2020 High-Performance Summit online. Now is your opportunity to reserve your seat, take advantage of the early bird rates, and – for a short period – receive a FREE six-month print subscription to *High-Performance HVAC Today* magazine!

Summit returns to the We-Ko-Pa Resort and Conference Center in Scottsdale, AZ. We-Ko-Pa is a very short drive from the Phoenix airport and is nestled in the heart of the 40-square-mile Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. It is also a mere golf cart ride away from championship golf, casino excitement, and great outdoor recreation, and shopping.

This year's Summit in Orlando was a record breaker and already Summit 2020 is shaping up to be even better. Right off the bat, NCI is bringing back the popular golf outing (more information on that will be coming soon), plus we are planning additional training/education opportunities from our partners.

As is our custom, the core NCI conference will have two-days of breakout sessions, a trade show with part-

ners, topped off with the annual NCI Awards Ceremony.

And the best part – you can register right now for the conference! Simply click on this link – ncilink.com/Summit2020Reg – to get your team registered and set for April 2020. Doing so will save you \$100 on the regular rate which, by the way, has not increased from last year.

Once pre- and post-con options are available, we will share the details. Remember: you can always visit the NCI Summit website at www.goto-summit.com for the latest information and details on the meeting, its speakers, and special events.

Oh, and don't forget: NCI Members can earn and apply NCI Bucks for all Summit Week events.

So, don't wait. You can even book your rooms NOW and take advantage of NCI's special rates. Go to ncilink.com/Summit2020Hotel and lock in your rooms today. If you have any questions, please call our Customer Care Helpline at 800-633-7058.

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“No Curb Necessary”

— Kevin Walsh, Schaafsma Heating and Cooling Co., Grand Rapids, MI

“The inspector told the building owner he needed to add economizers to his equipment. This is what we found. I like how the disconnect is wired to another disconnect on the far side of the unit. Talk about meeting code!!”

Kevin Walsh from Schaafsma Heating is the June 2019 winner of our Photo-of-the-Month contest, as voted on by the subscribers to the *High-Performance HVAC Today* magazine and visitors to the website. His submission was under the “Bad” category. He will receive a \$50 gift card.

You can too – submissions are always welcome. If you'd like to submit a photo for consideration in our Photo-of-the-Month contest, [click here](http://ncilink.com/POMSubmit) and fill out the information as requested.

THE JULY CONTEST OPENS ON JUNE 10, 2019.

That gives you plenty of time to submit something in any of our three categories: **The Good**, **The Bad**, **WTH (What the heck)**.

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HIGH-PERFORMANCE HVAC TODAY

Publisher
Dominick Guarino

Editor-in-Chief
Mike Weil

Art Director
Connie Conklin

Online Development Director
Brian Roseman

Circulation Manager
Andrea Begany-Garsed

Editorial Assistant
Marge Smith

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High-Performance Contracting is a Great Blue Ocean Strategy



Dominick Guarino is publisher of HVAC Today magazine and CEO of National Comfort Institute, Inc. He can be reached at domg@ncihvac.com

About 14 years ago, a book titled, “[Blue Ocean Strategy](#)” was published by the Harvard Business Review Press. I recently re-read the book with new eyes, thinking about service and installation companies in our industry.

With a “blue ocean” strategy, contractors can differentiate themselves in their marketplace and provide products and services with little or no competition. They would also be able to charge enough to be very profitable, grow their businesses, and take good care of their employees.

Sound like a tall order? Let’s start by defining a blue ocean strategy. The book’s authors define a blue ocean as an “untapped market space,” awaiting “demand creation, with the opportunity for highly profitable growth.” In blue oceans, competition is irrelevant because the rules of the game are waiting to be set.

A “Red Ocean,” on the other hand exists where “industry boundaries are defined and accepted, and the competitive rules of the game are known.

“Here, companies try to outperform their rivals to grab a greater share of existing demand. As the market space gets crowded, prospects for profits and growth are reduced. Products become commodities, and cutthroat competition turns the ocean bloody.”

Sound familiar? For decades, our industry’s red ocean has been the *Low Price Swamp* where *dealers* are competing mostly on price, with virtually the same exact equipment.

Unfortunately, without education, to typical customers a furnace, is a furnace, is a furnace. Improving soft skills and nice touches like wearing booties will only get you so far.

THE HVAC INDUSTRY’S BLUE OCEAN

So where is your blue ocean? You actually don’t need to look any farther than the HVAC systems you’re already servicing. The market for selling High-Performance services is virtually untapped.

Why have so few HVAC contractors figured out

how to tap into this very profitable blue ocean of business? I believe there are several key reasons:

1. Box swapping continues to be the KPI (Key Performance Indicator) for HVAC contractors — this is still encouraged by manufacturers, distributors, and most “consultants.”

2. Lack of strategy — few leaders have taken the time to study and develop the right performance-based business model for their company and market area.

3. Fear of the unknown — most people within organizations feel out of their comfort zone in the blue ocean of High-Performance contracting.

4. Trouble marketing their newfound skills to homeowners — the strategy involves marketing a different level of service and maintenance. You generate leads and sales of system improvements through testing and diagnosing system performance issues.

5. Lack of good systems and internal training to build High-Performance services into the company culture — success is dependent on everyone in your company being on the same page, including dispatch, field personnel, sales, operations — all starting with your leadership.

6. Absence of a profound belief that once you understand and have learned the right way to install and service your customers’ systems using measured performance, you could never go back to box swapping and parts changing again.

Now you could look at these six challenges as negatives and problematic, or you can look at overcoming them as your keys to starting your blue ocean strategy. Maybe you’ve already dipped your toes in these new waters. Perhaps you’ve even paddled just past the shore, trying to get through the bloodied waters of typical HVAC contracting. Once you do, you’ll be able to reach the clear blue ocean, just on the horizon.

Wherever you are, the good news is, there are plenty of blue seas waiting to be explored and charted. NCI

High-Performance Trailblazer Coaching

Keep the momentum going all year long!

NCI’s 2019/2020 High-Performance Trailblazer Coaching Program

NCI is offering a valuable implementation coaching program to keep your company on the path to success. For as little as \$35 a month, you can participate in 12 monthly High-Performance Trailblazer Coaching sessions with fellow HVAC contractors from across the country.

This program was designed and tested by contractors who participated in the inaugural program launched at Summit 2018. Each session is a highly interactive 45-minute web meeting, led by NCI coaches. Your first session includes a 40,000 foot overview of the entire coaching plan where you can ask questions and provide input on the areas you might need the most help with.

In each of the next 10 sessions your coaches will lead the group in a discussion on two of the steps on the Trailblazer Roadmap below.

During the final session, just before Summit 2020, you will review where you’ve been, discuss successes and failures along the way, and map out your game plan for the next 12 months.

Here’s what the original Trailblazers say about the program:



Additional Bonuses:

- Pricing Calculators
- Lead Generation Tools
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- Software Input Forms
- Educational Resource Library
- Coaching Session Recordings
- And much more...



Download your Trailblazer Roadmap

This map illustrates the 20 areas that will be covered in the online coaching sessions. Breaking the process down into these bite-size steps will help insure your success without overwhelming you and your team. <http://ncilink.com/roadmap>

To register for Trailblazer online coaching, go to: ncilink.com/Trailblazer





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