

Seizing Opportunities to Learn Makes Our Industry Successful

By Martin Knieps, PMI Board of Directors President, Viega LLC



Martin Knieps

Having been part of the plumbing manufacturing industry for more than 15 years now, I have come to appreciate and enjoy the new challenges, developments and innovations that seem to occur every single day. From the start of my career in supply chain – a hot spot in today’s environment if there ever was one – there have been abundant opportunities for me to learn and grow in every

position I’ve held. One of the best parts of working in our industry for me is that you never stop learning.

Honored by the confidence you have placed in me to be the next president of Plumbing Manufacturers International, I expect this continual learning to continue as I work with the PMI Board of Directors and committee leaders to deliver the greatest possible experience and value to members. In a very real sense, we work for you, and I can confidently say that outstanding work will continue in 2022.

PMI’s newest strategy work is focused on helping our industry do its part to address climate change. That includes addressing a wide of swath of emerging STEEP (social, technologic, economic, environmental and political) issues, such as those created by the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence (AI).

Using the STEEP foresight model, the PMI board has identified Zero Waste as a goal for our industry and the community we serve. How do we go about addressing the need to reduce or even eliminate waste across the frontier of our product design, development and manufacture? What are our responsibilities and how do we address those obligations in a safe and responsible manner? We’ll be seeking your ideas, input and support for these new efforts. We’ll use all of the resources of PMI to advance our industry’s agenda while making certain we elevate the dialogue in regard to the environment in which we all operate.

To be clear, this strategy will be on top of, not in lieu of, our ongoing initiatives and efforts. PMI will certainly continue its aggressive lobbying posture, technical advocacy, and deepening educational platforms. We’ll do so, however, with an eye to the evolving challenges presented by climate change and to the ways PMI can optimize member value and the strength of our collective efforts on behalf of our industry.

I’m looking forward to working on your behalf with a great team of leaders heading up our committees and on our board. That said, please reach out to me to share your thoughts and comments about the work we’re doing and the work ahead. Nobody does this work alone and your participation makes all the difference.

As we begin our efforts in this new year, it’s fair to say that being PMI president isn’t all work and no play. Make plans now to enjoy and participate in the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference and 68th Annual Meeting of the Membership to be held along the renowned Bourbon Trail in the historic city of Louisville, Kentucky, from Oct. 24-27, 2022. Scored as one of the 10 best new food cities, Louisville is home of the Kentucky Derby at legendary Churchill Downs, the iconic Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory, and the Muhammad Ali Center in the Greatest’s hometown.

In closing, thanks for your support and for all I know you will do for PMI in the years ahead. Thanks also to Immediate Past PMI President **Todd Teter** for his many contributions to PMI and the success we’ve enjoyed as a team. Todd’s insight, generosity of spirit, and willingness to take good risks is both respected and deeply appreciated. Let 2022’s learning begin, with more success soon to follow!

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The Best Thing to Do is the Right Thing; the Worst Thing, Nothing

By Kerry Stackpole, FASAE, CAE, PMI CEO/Executive Director



Kerry Stackpole

In 2021, more than 5 million people over the age of 55 exited the labor force. About 1.5 million of those folks retired early, pushed in part by the ongoing CO-

VID-19 pandemic. At the same time, 5.4 million new business applications were recorded by the U.S. Department of Commerce. There's a significant reshuffling of the workforce taking place, and employers are on the front lines.

No, I'm not encouraging you to join the "Great Resignation", as it is being called. Rather, I'm encouraging you to reconsider how you motivate, encourage and empower your teams to be certain they are willing participants in today's labor force. It's about helping them keep their hearts and minds in the game.

According to the AlixPartners 2021 Disruption Index, 85% of CEOs agree that disruption is the primary strategic challenge confronting business and society. Interestingly, only 25% of those same CEOs say COVID-19 is having an extreme or very significant impact on their businesses. Yes, COVID-19 is affecting the way business gets done. A growing focus on employee health and safety is now at hand, alongside newly essential remote working policies and practices. Yet, the bigger challenge may well be possessing the confidence to address the disruptive forces facing industry, whether these forces are social, technological, economical, environmental or political in nature. 83% of CEOs say their organizations can effectively predict disruptive forces facing their industry. However, 50% of senior executives and 59% of C-suite leaders believe the talent gaps in their organiza-

tions make them vulnerable to navigating disruption ineffectively.

Finding workers is now at the top of the list for 88% of manufacturing CEOs, according to the 2021 Connecticut Manufacturing Report, one that's indicative of what's happening across the nation. That means industry's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are more important than ever. Recruiting talent essential to the future of your company and leveraging the unique knowledge and experience of your workers with digital tools is more vital than ever. Capturing the hearts and minds of new potential employees requires your company to have clarity of purpose and to make meaningful contributions for the good of society. Do we make sinks, faucets and toilets, or do we assure the health and safety of global citizens by assuring effective sanitation and access to clean water? The answer to both is yes. Yes, we do. Engineering the fixture and fittings marvels with the added social responsibility for improving the health, safety and sanitary situation for our fellow citizens is heady stuff.

If you need another reason 2022 will not be boring, consider the U.S. economy. It's on fire. Consumer demand for all varieties of products and services has grown at an astounding rate over the past year. Multi-unit housing and commercial construction starts are set to climb. Single-family housing median prices will jump double digits with record regional price gains, especially in suburban neighborhoods. The inflationary surge in prices, unlike anything we've seen since 1982, is expected to decline. Average pay increases will rise 3.9% in 2022, the highest rate since 2008. Here's the best 2022 estimates from our U.S. economic prognosticators: projected GDP, 4.0%; projected inflation, 2.3%; home value increase, 2.9%; commercial construc-

tion increase, 6.0%; U.S. gov't pandemic spend, \$4 trillion; and U.S. gov't infrastructure spend, \$1.2 trillion.

With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act signed into law by President **Joe Biden** in November 2021, record amounts of money will be spent on plumbing products and services, including over \$55 billion to expand access to clean drinking water through new infrastructure and to remove lead service lines. The opportunities for plumbing fixture and fittings manufacturers will be abundant for years to come.

As part of this year's strategy engagement, PMI will support our industry's efforts to become more resilient in the face of the impacts of climate change. It's no secret that Americans feel the effects of climate change when extreme weather washes out roads, floods communities, or cuts power to entire regions. We all must be responsible consumers of the world's resources and eliminate unnecessary waste within the manufacturing process and in the packaging and plastics essential to the distribution, wholesaling or retailing of plumbing products. With the benefit of our members' support and leadership, PMI will be a source of clarity and science-based insight in support of the work that needs to be accomplished.

As President **Theodore Roosevelt** once noted, "In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is nothing."

As we start the New Year, let me wish you and your team all the greatest joys in doing the "best thing" to assure the success of your company. Along with Team PMI—our Board of Directors, committees, and staff—we'll be doing exactly the same.

PMI Leaders Gain Team-Building Insights Aboard USS Midway

Photographs by Angelica Vasquez, Text by Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team

Through discussions held both within the bowels and on the deck of a famous aircraft carrier, PMI members gained insights about leadership from each other and two retired military officers.

Held on the first day of the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference, the third annual PMI Aspiring Leaders Program at the USS Midway Museum gave participants the opportunity to hone team management skills while

learning important tactics to solve leadership challenges, such as managing team members who need to learn new skills and avoiding the pitfalls of becoming a new leader.

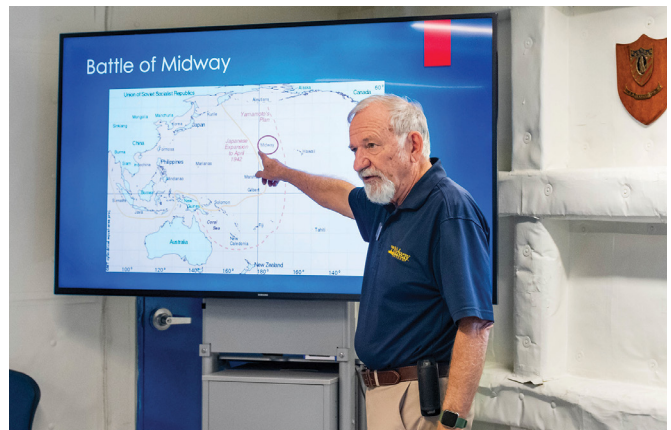
Who exactly is an aspiring leader? You are – as is any high-potential professional seeking opportunities to learn and develop leadership skills. PMI developed its Aspiring Leaders Program with both budding and experienced plumbing

manufacturing professionals in mind. The program helps PMI members gain a greater awareness of how their leadership skills can impact their organization and their professional advancement.

Make plans to participate in 2022's in-person event on Oct. 24 in Louisville, Kentucky, as part of the PMI22 Manufacturing Success Conference! Watch also for chances to participate in virtual PMI Aspiring Leaders webinars throughout the year.



Former naval officer Dave Rosenberg provided his secret to creating thriving, self-directed teams. His strategy calls upon the work of Abraham Maslow and his hierarchy of needs – physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. His presentation covered steps managers can take, starting with the hiring process and continuing through retention and team development, to help employees fulfill their needs while contributing to the goals of the company.



Museum docent and retired Air Force captain Brian Schimpf kicked off the program by outlining the USS Midway's history to participants. Named to commemorate the 1942 naval battle and commissioned eight days after the end of World War II, the ship was the largest ship in the world until 1955. She operated until 1992, seeing action during the Vietnam War and serving as the Persian Gulf flagship during Operation Desert Storm in 1991.



Participants were given a tour of the ship's deck and hangar, where various aircraft were on display for the museum's visitors.

New Tools, Studies Boost Premise Plumbing Safety

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

The educational and scientific community continues to develop new tools, research and modeling techniques that will help make premise plumbing systems safer. Four experts from that community shared their findings – from better ways to assess Legionella risk in building water systems to boosted efforts to educate the public on water quality issues – at the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference.

Latest resources to better assess Legionella risk

Temporary building shutdowns caused by COVID-19 likely increased incidences of Legionella bacteria in building water pipes, said **Janet E. Stout**, Ph.D., president and director of Special Pathogens Laboratory. The pandemic added to an already long list of reasons why better risk assessment and water management for Legionella needs to be implemented quickly.

Dr. Stout discussed new tools and guidance from ASHRAE, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Joint Commission that can help building owners and operators prevent Legionella in building water systems while reducing their liabilities.

“Many building operators don’t have water management plans for dealing with the effects of low flow and shutdowns,” stated Dr. Stout, a research associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh Swanson School of Engineering.

During her PMI21 presentation, “Assessing Risk from Legionella and Waterborne Pathogens in Building Water Systems: What’s New?,” she discussed how the 2015 version of the ASHRAE 188 Legionella Standard tells building owners what to do for Legionella control, but not how to do it. “This creates gaps that could cause illness and make building owners vulnerable to liability claims for failing to prevent disease,” she said. The latest ASHRAE Standard 188-2021

titled, “Legionellosis: Risk Management for Building Water Systems,” fills those gaps, Dr. Stout added.

Another helpful resource being developed is the proposed ASHRAE Standard 514. NSF International has transferred facilitation of NSF Standard 444, “Minimizing Risk of Disease and Injury Associated with Building Water Systems,” to ASHRAE to be used as the base document for developing the new ASHRAE Standard 514. The new standard will build on the foundations that ASHRAE Standard 188 and NSF Standard 444 have provided.

Dr. Stout discussed a new CDC resource launched in 2021, “Toolkit for Controlling Legionella in Common Sources of Exposure.” (tinyurl.com/5hd53tew). Designed for public health experts and building owners and operators, the toolkit provides evaluation methods for hazardous conditions in systems prone to Legionella and supports Legionella control measures per the ASHRAE Guideline 12-2020.

She also shared updates on a new standard by the Joint Commission on water management programs to address Legionella and other waterborne pathogens; this standard took effect in January 2022.

Dr. Stout encouraged PMI members who’d like to learn more about Legionella to sign up for the free webinar series, “Puzzled by Legionella?” (tinyurl.com/yft9yr4s), hosted by Special Pathogens Laboratory.

New study helps better connect good public health with plumbing industry

A new study on “Right Sizing Tomorrow’s Water Systems for Efficiency, Sustainability & Public Health” helped better connect good public health with the plumbing industry, reported **Andrew Whelton**, Ph.D., associate professor of

civil, environmental and ecological engineering at Purdue University.

During his presentation on “New Developments in Building Water Safety,” Dr. Whelton shared details and outcomes of the study, which was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and conducted from 2017 to 2021. The study provided crucial public education on how decreased water flow in water systems can affect drinking water quality; the study also helped to shape industry best practices and assisted in creating a first-of-its-kind plumbing decision support tool (tinyurl.com/4kvj95uy), he said.

The tool guides decision makers, such as building owners, designers and manufacturers, in identifying plumbing characteristics, operations and maintenance practices that minimize health risks to building occupants.

Universities and colleges involved in the study included Purdue University, Michigan State University, San Jose State University, Manhattan College, Tulane University, and the University of Memphis.

Dr. Whelton said the study helped discover chemical and microbiological water safety issues in buildings, explored fundamental processes that control building water safety, and identified and tested building water system mitigation methods. The ReNEWW House (tinyurl.com/2p86h36u), which Dr. Whelton described as “the most monitored home in America,” was used by a team of 45 people to develop integrated water quality models and identify piping network design and operational conditions that can decrease health risks.

The ReNEWW House was an existing home near the Purdue campus that the university and Whirlpool Corporation transformed into a world-class research laboratory and sustainable living show-

New Tools, Studies Boost Premise Plumbing Safety (Contd.)

case, he explained. The 3-bedroom, 1.5-bath home was renovated with water-saving fixtures, trunk-and-branch design and PEX piping. To illustrate the volume of testing done there, Dr. Whelton said that between October 2017 and October 2018, the team completed more than 30,000 individual water quality measurements and 2.64 billion online plumbing-related measurements.

Addressing codes for pipe sizing, water temperatures to better control Legionella impact

Addressing plumbing code pipe sizing issues and water temperatures can make a huge impact on reducing Legionnaires' disease while cutting water and energy use, said **Tim Keane**, owner of Legionella Risk Management, Inc.

Keane discussed the cascading impact of oversized water system building pipes resulting from outdated plumbing codes during his PMI21 presentation on "Key Interdependent Building Water System Drivers - Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation & Control of Opportunistic Premise Plumbing Pathogens." He also shared information on technologies to counteract the impact of oversized piping and case studies showing the result of this cascading impact on Legionella and equipment.

He explained how time to tap, water age and temperature are the main interdependent building water system drivers that should be monitored and changed, when necessary.

Keane also discussed the best water temperature range for growing Legionella, which is 85 to 110 degrees Fahrenheit – and is considered tepid. He recommends this specific temperature range be removed from plumbing codes wherever possible to prevent Legionella growth.

Instead, Keane advises using a "tepid cold" range of between 70 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit, which promotes little to no

Legionella risk. This temperature range is well suited for handwashing, particularly for offices and schools, as well as for eye washing. Keeping temperatures in this range also offers significant energy savings over higher temperature ranges and substantially impacts water system design requiring energy-efficient, point-of-use heaters with lower British Thermal Units. PMI members can view Keane's presentation slides for additional recommended water temperature ranges that offer low Legionella growth and scald potential.

Keane said that the high water temperatures maintained in many buildings waste energy and destroy disinfectant in a water system. For example, he described an investigation he took part in at a veterans home where the entire water supply and return system was being kept at 150 degrees Fahrenheit. "We found that high temperature was destroying 100% of the disinfectant," he said. As a result, the home experienced outbreaks of Legionnaires' disease for several years.

Hydraulic modeling helps examine water quality in premise plumbing systems

Juneseok Lee, Ph.D., associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at Manhattan College, addressed the need for more advanced water system modeling to better understand and improve water quality in premise plumbing systems.

During his presentation, "Premise Plumbing Modeling: State-of-the-Art Reviews, Challenges and Outlooks," Dr. Lee explained his team's goal to develop a set of calibrated hydraulic-water quality models. The models help predict the disinfectant residual concentration, heavy metal concentration, and microbial characteristics at fixtures within a single-family residential plumbing system.

Typically, off-the-shelf software packages, such as EPANET, have been used to

model premise plumbing systems, Dr. Lee noted. While experimental studies have been conducted over the past 15 years to examine water quality within premise plumbing systems, he said they haven't been used in applied engineering designs or to develop a dedicated product for simulating premise plumbing.

Dr. Lee has been working with Dr. Whelton and others to develop the integrative hydraulic water quality models. His team's research involved examining the impact of different plumbing scenarios, such as changes in plumbing use, volume, operational characteristics, and layout of the chemical and microbial quality of the water delivered.

He suggested the need for advanced modeling to further understand premise plumbing systems. Dr. Lee made recommendations, including integrating premise plumbing with computer-aided design and building information modeling systems to enable network construction and 3D displays of model results. He also suggested developing uniform, consistent industry standards for data management and real-time monitoring in premise plumbing systems. Improved guidance also is needed to help building owners navigate difficult building water quality problems, Dr. Lee added.

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Experts Review PMI Legislative Priorities, Trade Issues

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Plumbing Manufacturers International's government affairs consultants shared highlights of the many legislative activities PMI tracks while two experts discussed United States trade issues, including new laws in China, at the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference.

AB 100, plastic packaging and reduced water use top California legislative activities

Jerry Desmond, PMI's California government affairs consultant, provided details on bills that may impact PMI members. Topping his long list were Assembly Bill (AB) 100 addressing maximum lead leach rates in faucets, along with bills covering single-use plastics and just-announced recommendations for reduced residential water use. He shared key effective dates of AB 100, a law that adopts industry standard NSF/ANSI/CAN 61 2020 as the lead-testing requirement for certified endpoint drinking water devices sold in California.

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, the law requires the mark of "NSF/ANSI/CAN 61: Q ≤ 1" to be printed on the consumer product packaging of endpoint drinking water devices that are certified to meet this standard. By Jan. 1, 2023, all manufacturers must comply with the standard, and by July 1, 2023, wholesalers and retailers may no longer sell non-compliant endpoint devices.

Proposed and already-enacted bills on single-use plastic packaging are getting the plumbing manufacturing industry's attention. One new proposal, the California Recycling and Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, which has qualified to be placed on the Nov. 8, 2022, statewide ballot, would give "extreme authority" to California's Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery over single-use plastic packaging, Desmond said. The act will require producers to ensure that single-use plastic packaging is recyclable, reusable or refillable, or compostable by 2030.

With drought conditions a continued concern, legislation will likely be proposed in 2022 for the state to lower per-capita daily residential water usage below the current allowed water use maximum of 55 gallons per day, Desmond added.

Federal action focuses on Lead and Copper Rule, counterfeit and stolen products, WaterSense funding

Stephanie Salmon, PMI's federal government affairs consultant, delved into issues involving plumbing manufacturers' interests – from deterring online sales of stolen products to revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule to WaterSense funding.

Salmon discussed the Integrity, Notification, and Fairness in Online Retail Marketplaces for Consumers Act (INFORM Consumers Act). This bipartisan legislation would restrict the online sale of stolen, counterfeit and dangerous consumer products. The law would ensure that consumers can see basic identification and contact information for high-volume third-party sellers.

The Environmental Protection Agency's Lead and Copper Rule is getting its first major overhaul since 1991. The Office of Management and Budget is performing a final review of the rule's revisions while EPA proposed delaying the compliance date to Sept. 16, 2024, Salmon reported. She also shared that proposed funding for EPA's WaterSense program has been maintained for FY2022.

U.S. to strengthen supply chains, China may cause more hiccups

As supply chain issues remain top of mind, the Biden administration has established a U.S. Supply Chain Disruption Task Force, said **Gary Stanley**, director of the Office of Materials Industry in the Industry and Analysis Unit of the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration.

The task force will focus on areas where a mismatch between supply and demand has been evident – such as in homebuilding and construction – and help alleviate bottlenecks and supply constraints, Stanley reported. Stanley also provided updated data on plumbing exports, naming Canada, Mexico, China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom as the five leading export markets.

However, China continues to raise roadblocks for U.S. plumbing manufacturers and other businesses as trade relationships become more complicated, said **Evan Chuck**, partner at Crowell & Moring, LLP. He suggested companies look for alternative supply chain structures in Vietnam, Malaysia and Mexico.

Chuck discussed new laws in China that could create snags for plumbing manufacturers. For example, he said China's new Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law prohibits companies operating in China from complying with U.S. or other national sanctions. Sanction compliance would expose those companies to lawsuits in which the Chinese authority could blacklist a company, seize its assets and even deny the company's representatives access to China, he said.

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Participate in 2022 PMI Advocacy/Government Affairs Committee calls for updates.

Slower Pace of Growth Expected for Plumbing Manufacturers

By Judy Wohlt, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

After explosive growth in housing sales and remodeling activity spurred a healthy year for plumbing manufacturers in 2021, the economy is set for a rebalancing. **Connor Lokar**, senior forecaster with ITR Economics, delivered this forecast and others along with the data to support them during his presentation at the PMI21 Manufacturing Success Conference.

“Next year is going to look and feel different because demand is going to slow,” especially in the single-unit residential building space, Lokar said. However, he predicted that growth would occur due to increased commercial building – which stalled in 2021.

Timing is everything

Timing will be everything for plumbing manufacturers to remain successful during the coming year. Detailed planning using the right data will be crucial, Lokar said.

He reviewed 12 leading economic indicators, such as single-family housing starts, the U.S. Confidence Business Index, and total industry capacity utilization, and all but one shows deceleration in 2022. The ITR Retail Sales Leading Indicator is the only indicator showing growth for the next four quarters.

Lokar described rate-of-change in quarterly or 12-month results from the previous year as a powerful tool to plan business strategy. Rate-of-change can help companies to anticipate shifts in business cycle trends, such as home remodeling and consumer spending, and their impact on a business. “To derive our rates of change, we generally look at top line sales,” he added.

The United States’ gross domestic product growth rate will drop from 4% in 2021 to 2.1% in 2022, which remains somewhat positive news, Lokar explained. “These are yellow lights at the intersection, not red lights. We’re not

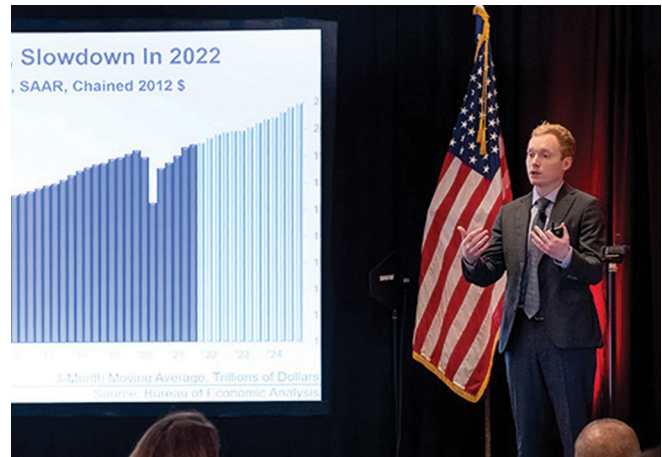
going to see recessionary conditions from a broad-based aggregate market standpoint,” he said.

The rush of consumer stimulus spending that took place during the pandemic has faded. The three federal stimulus packages that boosted disposable income helped drive many to spend on projects they were putting off, such as remodeling their homes. Disposable income skyrocketed from around \$15 trillion pre-COVID-19 to more than \$17 trillion after stimulus funding was distributed, Lokar stated. Many also beefed up their savings with those funds. However, as prices on almost everything began to rise, people withdrew from their savings – and will continue to do so into 2022.

People who lost jobs during the pandemic are now rejoining the workforce, which will benefit the plumbing industry. “We do see record employment in plumbing and HVAC contractors, so we are seeing things getting better,” Lokar said. Economic uncertainty and falling growth rates have motivated more people to stay at their jobs, which means job retention should get better. However, hiring challenges will remain for the next three to five years, according to Lokar.

Pricing, supply pressures to ease

High materials prices from 2021 will ease as demand for products slows in the second half of 2022. Plumbing manufacturers and others will be happy to see prices drop for copper, steel, aluminum, other industrial metals, and plastics, Lokar pointed out.



Connor Lokar, ITR Economics

“It’s going to get a bit worse before it gets better,” he said. To prepare for the slowdown, businesses will try to protect their margins by bumping up their prices into the first quarter of 2022, Lokar added. The slowdown also will improve product and supply availability, as well as lead times, in 2022.

Lokar finished his presentation by offering 10 points of advice for companies facing the kind of decelerating growth expected in 2022. These points include having cash on hand, rethinking capital expenditures plans, eliminating unprofitable business segments, and more.

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PMI members can view the most recent PMI Market Outlook at tinyurl.com/4rytdjha

Uponor Joins PMI As Manufacturing Member

By Ray Valek, PMI Communications Team, Valek and Co.

Joining Plumbing Manufacturers International at the start of 2022, Uponor North America is set to work alongside other PMI members to meet challenges relating to labor, supply chain, sustainability and more.

“We are constantly looking for new employees in our offices and factories, as well as providing our customers with solutions and support as they compete for labor in these challenging times,” said **Kate Olinger**, director of industry and regulatory affairs at Uponor. “Supply chain issues are also a concern, from sourcing raw materials, trucking and freight issues, as well as upholding our part in the supply chain of supporting our customers.”

Olinger spoke about the intersection of workforce and sustainability, which is a key strategic initiative for Uponor. “When we’re interviewing candidates, they want to understand our commitment to sustainability – our commitment to people, planet and profit and having all of those in balance. We are actively working to improve our planet and reduce our footprint while planning for the long-term future of our company for our customers, employees and partners.”

“Uponor is an outstanding addition to PMI’s roster of members, which produce 90% of the nation’s plumbing products,” said PMI CEO/Executive Director **Kerry Stackpole**. “PMI priorities, particularly those relating to workforce development and climate change, support the strategic focus of Uponor on these and other issues.”

The primary product offering of Uponor is cross-linked polyethylene – or PEX-a – plumbing and heating systems with residential and commercial applications, Olinger explained. Recently, Uponor has started offering PP-RCT, a large-diameter mechanical piping solution that works seamlessly with PEX systems. “We offer the pipe, fittings,



valves and accessories for these systems, creating a complete polymer solution. Our products are often ‘behind the wall’, supplying the water to fixtures and equipment in a project,” she added. With its global headquarters in Vantaa, Finland, Uponor has its North American headquarters in Apple Valley, Minnesota.

As a new PMI member, Uponor is looking to augment its memberships in the Plastics Pipe Institute, Plastic Pipe and Fittings Association, and other organizations, Olinger stated. “PMI’s commitment to monitoring and influencing codes on a local, state and national level is of interest. Also, the work that PMI is doing from a government affairs standpoint is also going to be important; there will be more and more opportunities on a national and local government stage to help drive sustainability forward and have a seat at the table,” she explained.

Uponor staff who will be actively participating in PMI in addition to Olinger are **Doug Fulton**, vice president, new venture development; **Kevin Wong**, Canadian codes manager; and staff working in codes management, she said.

Olinger mentioned research and development being done by the National Institute of Standards and Testing and IAPMO’s WE•Stand group, as well as potential updates to Hunter’s Curve to make water supply lines more water efficient, as technical work requiring input from companies and associations throughout the plumbing industry. “Not only can we spread around some of the work that needs to be done,” she explained, “we can make sure it’s done in a cohesive way.”

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