

Keeping Up With the Trends



Trends are always changing, but are you keeping up with them? While technological advancements inevitably improve our way of life—just as microwaves allow us to cook up meals in only a few minutes and cell phones enable us to communicate with one another from any location at any time—the initial acceptance of technology is often met with some resistance.

I, for example, was never one to pay my bills online. But ever since the time I forgot to mail in a check for my credit card bill, and realized that I could pay online and still be on time, I have been hooked.

What was once a tedious monthly task has become something so simple—it requires almost no effort on my part other than my supervision to see that the task gets done and that it gets done correctly.

With the ever-changing technologies we face today, you should be adjusting the way in which you run your business in order to keep up with and stay ahead of the trends. There is no doubt that a challenge will be thrown at you that could potentially have detrimental effects on your business if you are not prepared to handle it. If you are aware of the direction in which the industry seems to be heading, and you are willing to make the necessary adjustments in order to keep up, you will most likely pull ahead of competitors who are hesitant to change the way they do things.

One of the greatest recent technological advancements that too many water dealers are not using enough is the Internet. This single tool—which is available to you at work, at home, even on your cell phone—can allow you to manage your entire business with just a few clicks of a mouse. You can effectively communicate with customers and suppliers via e-mail; you can keep up on new product information by browsing websites; and you can attract business by creating your own company website.

Another valuable tool that water dealers should be constantly utilizing is the customer. You come in contact with customers on a daily basis, so who better to ask about what they want in terms of water treatment than the end users themselves. If customers tell you they would like to see an under-sink RO system that doesn't use so much water, you should investigate future trends of water-saving systems. Or if customers tell you they would like to be reminded when they are due for a filter change, perhaps you should look into a customer database with a calendar system that will notify you when it is time to contact your customers about such issues.

The water treatment industry is changing in many ways and it is important that you keep up with it. For instance, if you fear how the ongoing debates regarding the effects of water softener discharges into septic systems and the looming threat of softener bans will affect your business, you better be keeping up on the research that is being conducted regarding the issue so you can adjust your business accordingly.

I recently spoke with a dealer who is affected by the softener issue, but has come across a possible solution to the problem regardless of what the WQA and NOWRA's research ends up concluding: a no-salt solution. If this is what it comes down to, you better be ready for it.

What ever happened to word processors, slide rules and rotary-dial phones? They've been replaced by computers, calculators and cell phones...and we have all adjusted. But technology alone is not the key to a successful business; it is the way in which you can combine these technologies with new ways of doing business that will lead to success.

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coming up next month

The June issue of *Water Quality Products* will feature dealer networking, funding and financing, product liability and certification, bacteria removal, IOA column, WQA forum and sales techniques. Be sure to visit our website at www.wqpmag.com for daily industry news updates.

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