

DEALER OF THE MONTH

By Michael Meyer

Growing Smarter

North Carolina dealership provides a variety of services with expertise & respect

For more than 16 years, Signature Plumbing Inc. and Benjamin Franklin Plumbing have been providing an expanding number of services to the residents of Wilmington, N.C. Today, the company's range of offerings includes water treatment, and its business partners, employees and customers benefit from its service-oriented approach and commitment to quality.

Evolution of a Company

Randall Siegel founded Signature Plumbing Inc. in 1999. Originally, the company had a somewhat narrow purview, but it nonetheless aspired to be exceptional. "Randall's vision was to build a solid plumbing company where quality and professionalism [are] always standard," said Dwayne Kincaid, general manager for Signature Plumbing. "His focus was on residential and commercial new construction."

As time went by, however, the company began to expand its focus. In 2005, it established a service department, and in 2010, Signature Plumbing became a Benjamin Franklin Plumbing franchise. Benjamin Franklin Plumbing boasts franchises from coast to coast, and aligning with it has paid off for Signature Plumbing. "[It] opened many doors for us," Kincaid said. "We suddenly had access to buying power, great support, training and resources we could never imagine."

Although the company always had an interest in improving water quality for its clients and would provide water treatment upon request, it did not highlight that aspect of its service offerings until after joining forces with Benjamin Franklin.

"[Benjamin Franklin] opened our eyes to a lot of things," Kincaid said. "We started seeing that water treatment is important to the house, and they gave us some great training on it. So we started to get more serious about it at that point. We thought that we could start doing this. We're already in the house—why not offer these additional services to the client? We also felt that over the years, a lot of things had been taken from plumbers, like water treatment, so we said, 'You know what? We can take this back!' This is something that we do well, and we can make it better for our clients."

In 2012, the company became a Purotics dealer to further cement its status as a water treatment service provider. "It's been really good for us," Kincaid said. "It's opened our eyes, and I think, rather than just being plumbers, we're also known now as water treatment experts, and that [has] helped us out a ton."

This expansion of the company's offerings has coincided with the growth of public discourse regarding water quality issues. "Overall, we have seen a [more] educated consumer regarding water quality," Kincaid



Dwayne Kincaid (top) and the team at Benjamin Franklin Plumbing and Signature Plumbing provide Wilmington, N.C., with water treatment using Purotics products.

said. "Increased consumer demand for in-home treatment systems [is] a result. As a plumbing company, we have found consumers are very happy to discuss the causes and effects of poor water quality on their plumbing systems."

On the Shoreline

Wilmington is located on the southeastern coast of North Carolina, and its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean serves to not only attract those seeking fun in the sun, but also contributes to conditions that make water treatment a priority for the city's residents and visitors.

"Our chlorine here is really high," Kincaid said. "Because we are along the coastline, there are fears of bacteria in the water, so people come here and they complain about chlorine, [saying] 'this smells terrible.' It's very irritating for somebody who's not used to it to come here on vacation—they smell it and say, 'Oh my gracious, this is like pool water.' That's one of the things we've noticed here regionally that is a little bit different from inland and other places."

Treat Them Right

The company has 57 employees spread across two divisions: Signature Plumbing currently has 45 employees, while Benjamin Franklin Plumbing has 12 employees. "Our core foundation is our employees," Kincaid said. "We invest in our employees and maintain a culture that promotes customer service excellence. We firmly believe our employees come first, and in return, our clients always receive the best service available."

In order to provide that exceptional customer service, the company

has some guidelines that help its employees get to root of the problems they encounter. "Every customer gets [his or her] water tested, period," Kincaid said. "We want to find out what caused the plumbing problem in [the] house, so every customer gets a water test. Also, we

educate our clients and offer our customers options—give them the choice of either good, better or best when it comes to choosing water treatment items."

Ultimately, this respect has created a number of positive relationships between the company and its customers. "At the end of the day, clients like options," Kincaid said. "They like warranties. They like to feel like they're in control [of] making the deci-

sions ... Our No. 1 success has been listening to the clients and letting them choose—putting them in control at the end of the day." **WQP**

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