

August 2009

Southern **PHC**

plumbing • heating • cooling



The Soldier's Soldier Salutes
Bradford White Accomplishments
Product Focus: Water Heaters

Southern Trade Publications
P.O. Box 7344
Greensboro, NC 27417
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Cover Story

The Soldier's Soldier Salutes Bradford White Accomplishments

Solid Commitment to Customer Needs & Innovation



The soldier's soldier, Colin Powell, addresses a rapt audience at Bradford White's sales meeting.

A special guest addressed a large crowd at Bradford White's most recent sales meeting. The group didn't know who the keynote speaker would be, and when he walked to the podium, you could hear a pin drop.

Retired Secretary of State and four-star general Colin Powell said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this, for me is an honor." After a long, standing ovation, he continued by saying, "Bradford White has achieved market leadership very deliberately, and with great effort. You've set and know your goal, and you have clearly demonstrated an ability to move toward it in unison, to achieve success at a level so few companies have experienced.

"These are key steps in accomplishing lofty objectives, striving to be the best at what you do, and in tackling the challenge with vigor, ethically, and with a sense of responsibility and stewardship that now importantly includes the need to develop energy efficient technology to assure a better world for future gen-

erations," added Powell. "This is what makes a great company. That's why I'm proud to be here with you."

An hour later – after Powell had won the hearts and interests of every attendee, having skillfully woven war stories with anecdotes of Bradford White successes – Nicholas J. Giuffre, Bradford White President and COO, and A. Robert Carnevale, Chairman

and CEO (who served under Powell in Korea), joined Powell at the podium.

"This is a crucial moment in time for Bradford White, a time to share greatness with a true American hero," said Carnevale. "It's a time of gladness and accomplishment, and also a time to fortify our position, to be smarter and more competitive, to stay alert and to be vigilant."

Today, those words define Ambler, PA-based Bradford White. Ask Nick Giuffre who the "heroes" are at Bradford White and he may tell you there are two easy winners of that title: the company's employees, and the fruit of their labor, the water heating products they develop and manufacture. "Our products have placed us in the nation's leading

position as the manufacturer of choice for reliable, efficient water heating technology," he adds. "We've achieved that position through hard work and dedication to task."

Since '92, Bradford White has seen significantly increased product sales, far surpassing the growth rate of the water heating industry. "But our highest reward has been development of a highly loyal customer base," said Giuffre.

According to Giuffre, his vision is to be the supplier of choice to all levels of customers in the wholesale channel. "We build a premium product and provide it at the best possible price. We offer solutions for every water heating application our customers might encounter, and believe that loyalty is a two way street regardless of the economic conditions.

"We Want to be the Easiest to do Business With"

"For us, loyalty means that we must never separate from our path," contin-



Nicholas Giuffre, A. Robert Carnevale and Colin Powell with a sales meeting memento.

Cover Story



Water heaters roll off the line at Bradford White's state-of-the-art manufacturing plant in Middleville, Michigan.

ued Giuffre. "To accomplish that, we listen. When customers offer recommendations, challenges or complaints, we also listen, we owe that to them. And then we respond through product innovation and excellence. It may sound old fashioned – but all of this must happen before our name goes on the product."

The manufacturer's key initiatives in '08 and '09 have involved product quality, breadth of product line and the development of a concept that's become just as important as any manufacturing process. At the core of it, Bradford White has refined and carefully machined a commitment to customers that is far-reaching and comprehensive.

"We want not only to be the best manufacturer of water heaters, but also the easiest firm in the market to do business with," affirmed Fred Vattimo, director of corporate advertising. "We also believe in a consistent re-investment of earnings in R&D, manufacturing technology and processes, and personnel development and as well as in strategic acquisitions."

What defines Bradford White most uniquely is the firm's wholesale-only philosophy and steadfast commitment to professional partners in the industry.

"I believe we've earned the reputation of having the highest quality products in the industry," continued Giuffre. "It's so gratifying to hear anecdotal stories about our quality from customers. With what we hear clearly from our wholesaler and installer customers, we know our quality initiatives are working."

A Greener Company

It's apparent that Bradford White has forged into the "green-build" industry, a movement in large part driven by energy costs, the desire for energy independence and environmental stewardship.

Bradford White's efforts on this front are all-encompassing. From leadership roles in AHRI, the firm helps to ensure sensible government partnership in supporting energy efficiency in our industry. Involvement in various "green" associations and inclusion of

their customers' needs in the product development process ensure that the products they offer meet or exceed market requirements.

"These initiatives are important for us because they represent an opportunity for growth in new products segments, and for us to differentiate ourselves from the competition," said Vattimo. "And at the customer level, our green initiatives have produced many new products and technologies to meet those needs."

According to Vattimo, one of the key developments to surface after years of engineering and laboratory work was introduction of the firm's ultra high efficiency eF commercial water heater, considered by some to be the crown jewel of the manufacturer's product offering. "But we also have the Ultra low nox Eco-Defender residential gas series, a new lineup of solar water heaters, and our TTW (through-the-wall) models, tankless systems and high efficiency electrics, and the indirect models, too. Many of these water heaters were developed largely through customer feedback and have become some of our greenest offerings."

Giuffre attributes Bradford White's continued success, innovation and growth chiefly to sights set squarely on



An eF water heater installation in a New Jersey hotel.

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Another eF water heater installation at a school near Pittsburgh.

market expansion and new business opportunities. In the summer of 2002, Bradford White completed the acquisitions of Niles Steel Tank in Niles, Mich., a producer of specialty large and custom storage vessels, and Aero Environmental of Mississauga, Ont. (now known as Bradford White Canada) which manufactured oil-fired heating products for domestic and commercial applications.

In 2005, the firm acquired Laars Heating Systems. That acquisition created a strong entry into the hydronics market. The high-efficiency, high-performance and condensing boiler lines and commercial water heater systems are recognized industry-wide as leading technology.

Today, Bradford White has four subsidiary companies under its corporate umbrella: Bradford White Water Heaters, Bradford White Canada, Niles Steel Tank and Laars Heating Systems. "Bradford White was built and positioned to thrive in challenging markets through the breath of our product lines, the various markets we serve, and the diversity provided by our subsidiaries,"

Said Giuffre.

"Combine this with our outstanding R&D team and you begin to get a picture of the company we've become," said Vattimo.

Wholesaler-only Philosophy

If one thing defines Bradford White, it's that the firm is staunchly devoted to sales through professional wholesalers.

"Ultimately, they're our first-line customer. We've grown through years of loyalty to them, and those relationships have nurtured our growth here with revenue that fuels both product and employee development," says Carnevale.

The firm is also involved with wholesaler buying groups. "The biggest benefits are the efficiency of communication with our customers and prospective customers, the networking opportunities, and the marketing vehicles the buying groups offer," offered Giuffre.

"We also believe water heaters should be installed by qualified professionals because it is the safest way," he added. "This is more true today than ever before because the standard product is

more complicated and there is a much more complex product offering that requires the knowledge and talent of the professional installer."

Asked where Bradford White will be in a decade, Giuffre scans the horizon momentarily for an answer. A spontaneous and decisive guy who's been in the industry for 32 years, he's rarely contemplative. But the question has an answer, and he wants it to be the right one.

"In 10 years, we'll grow to about twice our current size," said Giuffre. "This will be accomplished through continued growth in the wholesale channel, the addition of new products and technologies, and strategic acquisitions which compliment our wholesale-only philosophy. That's where we'll be, but the roots of our growth sink deep into the company of today and loyalties that haven't failed us, ever. It's the focus of our work all day long, and it's also why we sleep so well at night."

Powell closed the sales meeting with these words, still ringing true today: "Bradford White is strong through innovation, loyalty and perseverance. Change is inevitable as you grow, but those core values – unchanged after so many years – will guarantee an exciting future."



Water heaters are rigorously tested.