

HYDRONICS

| CONTRACTOR/WHOLESALER RELATIONSHIP |

Vincent R. Boltz, Inc. succeeds with strong relationship with APR Supply Co.

BY JOHN MESENBRINK

Dateline Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Around here you pronounce it Lepnin, just ask the locals. Located in central Pa., Lebanon boasts rolling hills and plush landscapes.

Enter Vincent R. Boltz Inc., a locally owned and operated contractor who has been serving the Lebanon area's energy needs since 1925. Specializing in every aspect of HVAC and plumbing, Bob Boltz, president and owner, is a third-generation contractor. Serving both

the residential and commercial markets, Boltz puts more emphasis on the residential side.

With the reliability of oil systems hard to beat, oil systems are still predominant in the area. Boltz offers the latest and most efficient technology, ensuring the highest degree of home comfort and reliability.

And just because they have been around for a while doesn't mean they don't keep up with the times. In fact, Boltz offers an advanced bio-

blend (Bx) heating oil, which helps support the local farmers and reduces dependence on foreign oil. The Bx burns cleaner and reduces greenhouse gases.

Boltz also specializes in sustainable technology such as solar thermal and geothermal, with an eye on new controls technology. "I think the real energy savings lies in the new electronics," says Bob Boltz, president and owner, Vincent R. Boltz Inc.

As a matter of fact, Boltz technicians were recently on a jobsite that required two Bradford White water heaters. A home had two older water heaters and one of them began to leak. The owner wanted to replace them both, even though the other appeared to be fine. "The homeowner simply didn't want to take a chance after seeing the potential for damage once the first one began to spill rusty sludge into the basement. When he learned about Bradford White's protective ICON gas valve system, he was sold. It's much more than a gas valve. A microprocessor constantly monitors and controls the burner to provide consistent water temperatures, but also works as a diagnostics center for troubleshooting. One of the options is an alarm that activates if a leak occurs, and will deactivate automatically if the leak is corrected," said Gary White, sales manager and heating services manager for Boltz.

So when it comes to picking a supplier, the quality of equipment is most important, followed by the quality of service. Price is also considered, but not as much as the other two factors. And there needs to be trust factor involved, as well.

Contractor/wholesaler bond

Enter APR Supply Co., a third-generation wholesaler, serving the Lebanon area as a plumbing, heating



Gary White (l), sales manager and heating services manager for Vincent R. Boltz, Inc., and Bob Boltz, president and owner, review plans for an HVAC installation.



Boltz Technician Scott Anspach prepares to install a Taco circulator at a customer's home in Lickdale, Pa.



From l to r: Gary Brouse, APR Supply driver, Sam Rueppel, outside sales rep for APR, deliver Bradford White water heaters to Gary White at Boltz headquarters.

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and cooling supplier, which can trace its roots back to 1922. In 1934, Mark Tice began working for Lebanon Plumbing Supply Co., which was founded in 1922. Mark Tice purchased a controlling interest in 1947. In 1971, Mark's son Randy Tice joined the industry, launching his own controls business in 1975, Environmental Equipment Engineering Co. The two companies merged in 1982 to form APR Supply Co. Now the company is owned by Scott Weaver and John Tice, Randy's son, when they took over the firm in 1991.

With 25 locations in Pennsylvania, APR offers 24-hour delivery, with same day or next day deliveries. "We have a lot to offer dealers when it comes to building a business relationship," says Randy Tice, chairman of the board, APR.

Today, APR is one of the most reliable suppliers in the country. In fact, Scott Weaver, president of APR, serves as the American Supply Association's president (2011-2102).

Connect the two businesses and you have a strong bond

based on trust, loyalty and familiarity. Boltz and APR have worked together for more than 40 years.

"APR provides excellent inside support, prices are in line and parts availability is phenomenal," says White.

APR recognizes that in order to be successful change is necessary. Management works hard to foster a corporate culture that embraces change as a competitive advantage by pioneering technological advancements.

APR's success comes from not just relationships with customers, but relationships with vendors as well. APR was invited to join the Affiliated-Distributors buying group in 2008, which with \$28 billion of collective purchasing power and 450 members is significantly larger than APR's previous buying group. The change equates to better pricing, larger rebates, increased supplier support and additional value added programs.

APR is part of AD — Affiliated Distributors, a Philadelphia-based buying group. "Distributors need to



From l to r: Randy Tice, chairman of the board, APR Supply, and John Tice, executive vice president, APR Supply, take a break from their busy schedule.

work together to remain competitive with the big box stores," says Tice.

Boltz on technology and education

"We service a lot of hydronically heated homes in this area. Components of choice, after years of experience in the market, include Taco circulators, zone controls, hydro separators, zone valves, and Watts expansion tanks, boiler fills and backflow assemblies. And, for the many older homes in our area that don't have central air conditioning, we install a lot of Fujitsu mini-split heat pumps that provide super-efficient cooling and heating. All of this technology is readily available through APR. Their prices are competitive and their service for contractors is so well honed that we have no reason to look elsewhere," says White.

And with the advancements in technology, Boltz's technicians need to stay ahead of the game by Boltz's philosophy of training and education. "If you think it costs a lot to train technicians and have them leave, try not training them and have them stay. You have to train guys, especially with the electronics on the



APR's Sam Rueppel shows Craig Gibble, V.R. Boltz service technician, a Watts 3/4" 25AUB-Z3 water pressure reducing valve.

equipment. If you don't, you'll be out of business," says Boltz.

"The success of a company comes directly from its employees. Bob invests a lot in educating his crew. He gives them the proper tools they need to succeed and he expects them to do the best they can," says White.

In addition, Boltz finds trade associations like the National Association of Oil and Energy Service Professionals (OESP) important because of the education provided. "Networking, gaining a national perspective and keeping pace with technology are all great reasons for joining trade associations," says White. ●



APR's Michelle Young pulls pipe for a contractor's order.



Orlando Suarez moves Fujitsu units out for transportation to contractor customers.