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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING CONTRACTORS—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION | VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3

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A black and white photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a striped shirt, working on a kitchen sink. He is holding a white pipe fitting and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background shows various plumbing tools and parts.

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# COMFORT ZONES

BY JONATHAN MOYER  
PHCC—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

**C**omfort zones. We all have them. (I certainly have mine!) Over the past several months, however, our personal safe places have been disrupted like never before. With the onset of COVID-19, we were thrust into survival mode ... both in our personal lives and in our businesses.

I was required to shut down my construction division by order of the Pennsylvania governor. I had to cancel in-person training sessions for my workers. And, sadly, PHCC had to cancel our May Legislative Conference on Capitol Hill.

What is revealed in a crisis like this, however, is our *strength* and our *resiliency*. Yes, I had to temporarily shut down one portion of my business, but our service work actually grew (mostly due to increased use of home plumbing and HVAC systems and to some DIY projects gone wrong!). And, as more customers inquired about air and water quality issues, we realized more opportunities to position ourselves as an expert in those areas. Yes, we couldn't meet in person as a company for our regular training sessions, but we were able to adapt and maximize some technology solutions to still hold virtual training via Zoom. And while PHCC couldn't meet face-to-face with our legislators this spring, our presence on Capitol Hill was stronger than ever as we fought for our "essential" member contractors and advocated for emergency loan programs for small businesses.

In every case, I was pushed out of my comfort zone, but I was also pushed *into* using new tools and platforms that I can now continue to leverage moving forward. Heck, I even participated in my first recorded video message to PHCC members *and* presided over our first full-scale virtual Board of Directors meeting in May! I was uncomfortable at first, but I got through it, and I'm better because of it.

## Positive Change

The silver lining during this crisis? In my company, I've actually seen a *boost* in morale. Employees have recognized that I've been completely open and honest with them about what was happening. Even though I had to lay off a few workers, my employees saw what measures I was taking to cut management pay and get a PPP loan so that we could bring those employees

back, which we did. We've had better teamwork. We've witnessed moments of true loyalty, seeing employees with more seniority with no families work hard to keep the guys with families working.

Speaking of family, I've loved watching our PHCC family help each other through this crisis. We've shared best practices with each other via the Contractors Talk portal on our PHCC COVID-19 Resource Center. We've relied on PHCC—National to dissect the millions of pieces of information out there – from safety measures to relief programs to budgeting strategies – and deliver the content that applies to our industry via easy-to-use platforms such as webinars, a dedicated microsite and video messages. And members have shared letters to their customers and templates for their employees without a second thought.

## Moving Forward

The immediate threat of COVID-19 will fade, but I am confident that the lessons we've learned in bringing new ideas to the table, solving new problems and creating new opportunities will remain. In fact, we're using those lessons to help our members recalibrate their companies for an even *brighter* future, which is the focus of this edition of *Solutions* magazine. And our comprehensive educational program for the virtual PHCCCONNECT2020 will take that to another level. Sept. 30-Oct. 1 will be a perfect time to get away from the daily grind, collaborate with each other, and focus on what the "new future" looks like for our businesses. I hope you'll join us!

In closing, I can't help but reflect on how much has changed in our industry – just in the last four months – and yet our number-one commitment is still the same as it was when a group of concerned contractors got together to form PHCC more than 135 years ago: *to maintain our profession's high standards to protect public health, safety and the environment*. What gave those original members faith in the past is what gives me faith moving forward ... believing that, together, we will take care of our workers, our families and our communities. ●

*PHCC—National Association President Jonathan Moyer also is president of Cocalico Plumbing & Heating in Denver, Pennsylvania.*

**The immediate threat of COVID-19 will fade, but I am confident that the lessons we've learned in bringing new ideas to the table, solving new problems and creating new opportunities will remain.**



# THANK YOU

The role you play as a Bradford White contractor has always been essential when it comes to protecting public health by installing and maintaining hot water systems. As we face the COVID-19 pandemic together and work to return to normal, the importance of what you do every day has never been greater.

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# CORONAVIRUS CREATES A NEW LEADERSHIP ROLE

BY MICHAEL COPP  
PHCC EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

**N**apoleon once described a leader as “a dealer in hope.” I think, however, that *people* are the true dealers in hope, and they often inspire leaders to steer the way toward a vision. During the difficult times we have faced over the past few months, leaders must now virtually synergize a group of people to create new and enriched processes for achieving excellence. At the same time, leaders must consider making their employee’s work-life more satisfying and meaningful despite being locked down and teleworking from home.

As Winnie Hart (2020) noted in a recent article by Entrepreneurs’ Organization, 10 Steps to Effective Coronavirus Crisis Leadership, “During a crisis, leaders lead. In every crisis, there is opportunity for leaders to make something good when it seems impossible. Like firefighters rushing into a burning building, we have to make quick decisions because lives – and businesses – depend on it.” (Retrieved from the World Wide Web on April 6, 2020, at <https://www.inc.com/entrepreneurs-organization/10-steps-to-effective-coronavirus-crisis-leadership.html>)

Hart lists 10 ways that leaders can lead during difficult times as presented by this pandemic:

1. **Align expectations.** Aligning expectations and realities takes skill, insight and patience, as well as the ability to admit you don’t have all the answers.
2. **All eyes are on you.** Self-awareness is a critical capability that leaders must develop.
3. **Stay positive.** Leaders radiate trust, hope and optimism that leads to positive energy, confidence and purpose.
4. **Tell the truth.** Communicate. Communicate. Communicate. If you are confusing, you are losing.
5. **Know what you stand for.** Leaders work from a place of purpose ... a higher mission that motivates and inspires teams for action.
6. **Demonstrate empathy.** Empathy isn’t about what you want; it’s about what the other person needs.
7. **See the big picture.** You don’t know what you don’t know. Leaders must be comfortable with what they can’t see.
8. **Slow down and stay calm.** Take care of yourself, mentally and physically, so that you can be fully present.
9. **Have a plan.** This is an extraordinary time, and we need leaders more than ever to communicate and gain consensus around a shared vision, which comes from the collective best thinking of the group.
10. **Simply lead.** Care and communicate in service of others (tenets of servant leadership).

This latest process of synergy using video conferencing, email and social media depends heavily on a corporate culture of

openness and trust, all of which start with the actions of the leader. John Maxwell once noted that “The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.”

If you have a moment, there is another article by Mark Nevins (2020) worth checking out titled Leadership In The Time of COVID-19; you may find his suggestions helpful. Of particular note, Nevins reminds any leader of a team or organization to not overlook the need to manage yourself. “You’re a human being, and you’re stressed like everyone else – and probably in ways you may not even realize,” he says. “Don’t let yourself get to the end of your rope. Take the time to make sure you yourself are as prepared and focused as you can be.” ●

*Michael R. Copp, MA, MIRM, is Executive Vice President of PHCC—National Association. A respected leader among construction industry trade association executives, Copp and his team work to ensure that PHCC contractors are the best choice for professionalism, reliable products and knowledgeable service.*

Sources:  
<https://www.inc.com/entrepreneurs-organization/10-steps-to-effective-coronavirus-crisis-leadership.html>  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hillennevins/2020/03/19/leadership-in-the-time-of-covid-19/#4bf540735e4e>

The pessimist complains about the wind.  
The optimist expects it to change.  
**The leader adjusts the sails.**

~ John Maxwell

*PHCC Executive Vice President Michael Copp sailing at Creve Coeur Lake Park, Missouri, ca. 1995.*



# LEARNING TO DANCE IN THE RAIN

BY CHARLOTTE R. PERHAM

PHCC EDITOR AND VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

**L**ike most of you, I never imagined the raging storm that just ravaged our world, tossing us into a “new normal” of sanitizing, social distancing and Zoom meetings. And while the clouds surrounding this threat won’t fully dissipate anytime soon, when I reflect on how we’ve *adapted* because of COVID-19, I see their silver lining.

It reminds me of the quotation from author Vivian Greene I’ve seen a lot lately. It says, “Life isn’t waiting for the storm to pass. It’s about learning to dance in the rain.”

And that’s exactly what we have been doing at PHCC ... striving to serve as a strong dance partner for our member businesses through the rain (and discovering along the way that we should actually *keep* some of these moves after the storm subsides!).

## Pivot

With that in mind, this issue of *Solutions* magazine is full of leveraging the lessons learned from COVID-19 to help you pivot your business in amazing new directions moving forward. Has this time in quarantine forced fresh ideas and feedback from some of your employees? Our QSC business coaches will advise you on how to channel that for long-term good.

Have you noticed a shift in your cost structures during this threat? Discover some free tools from the PHCC Educational Foundation that will, among other things, help you re-examine your costs and re-calculate your break-even and selling price. Speaking of budgets “Profitability Master” Ruth King gives you “7 Simple Actions” to help you get back on track financially and finish 2020 strong.

Realizing that your marketing efforts recently moved to the back burner? Unfortunately, that could create even *more* challenges for you down the road. That’s why we asked our PHCC marketing

partner, Market Hardware, to give you “5 Marketing Strategies to Help Your Business Bounce Back from the Coronavirus.”

## Moving Forward

They say that hindsight is 20/20. Wishing now that you had had a disaster recovery plan in place? PHCC—National recently completed one of our own, and we’re sharing it with the hope that you may use it as a model for your own organization. Plus, as we move into *recovery* mode from this year’s crisis, we’re giving you a few things to consider when rethinking your company culture – and workplace – moving forward.

Of course, one of the biggest lessons from COVID-19 is that training and preparation are key! That’s why we’re updating you on some of the latest opportunities coming out of PHCC’s Education & Training department. We encourage you and your staff to enroll in one of the new courses available through our partnership with DeVry University, make our webinar series part of your monthly routine, and access manufacturer-based educational offerings from several of our industry partners to build instant credibility and loyalty among your customers. There’s so much more ... check it out on page 29.

I hope you’re planning to participate in PHCCCONNECT2020 because we have an incredible line-up of educational sessions and high-caliber speakers planned for this virtual event.

In the meantime ... keep dancing! ●

*Charlotte R. Perham is Vice President of Communications & Marketing for PHCC—National Association. She specializes in strategic communications of news, trends and events in the construction industry.*



## Choose Your PHCC Communications Preferences

We understand the importance of timely and relevant communications. As a PHCC member, you have the ability to customize the type of communications you would like to receive from PHCC—National through a Communications Preferences Page. You can access this page via the footer of any email and through your My Profile section in your PHCC account, accessible through the Tools & Resources tab on the PHCC website.

From a drop-down menu, you will be able to select various topic categories that address your unique business needs or areas of interest.

For questions, contact [communications@naphcc.org](mailto:communications@naphcc.org).