

Nexstar Super Meeting breaks business barriers

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DETROIT — Last month approximately 400 Nexstar members attended Nexstar's 29th Super Meeting here, to discuss recent industry trends and the economic outlook for 2010, and to learn about optimizing team performance.

John Foley, a former lead solo pilot of the Blue Angels, the U.S. Navy's flight demonstration squadron, and advisor to Fortune 500 corporations, delivered a keynote address to Nexstar members about how the Blue Angels focus on optimizing team performance on a daily basis and how a business can use the same practices to increase overall productivity and success. Foley told Nexstar members that the culture of the Blue Angels is very similar to the culture of a small business. He spoke about what it means to perform at an optimum level, how limited beliefs can keep an individual and business from success, why it is necessary to have a point of focus, how trust is a main component of business success, why a leader must adjust their management style, and how a business must operate as one team — all necessary elements to increase business success and employee productivity.

“It was simply awesome to view business in the context of the Blue Angels,” said William B. Raymond, vice president of Frank & Lindy Plumbing & Heating Service Co., Peekskill, N.Y. “It certainly exposed tremendous opportunity for us all! It was a nice reminder of what is possible, particularly in the times we have been challenged with.”

During the Optimizing Team Performance breakout session, Foley delved deeper into team performance, discussing belief levels and performing beyond limiting perceptions, the necessity to have a unified staff, why staff members must buy into shared goals, and how to create a culture of gratitude and analyze performance efforts to ensure continuous improvement.

Members also participated in other breakout sessions, including Optimizing Opportunities for Business Acquisition, conducted by Tim Flynn, who spoke about his own experience when he

acquired a business; Optimizing Workflow with the Operations Playbook, conducted by Jim “Bone” Hamilton, business coach, and Jodi Peter, who has more than 25 years of experience in the HVAC industry; and Optimizing Internet Marketing: 17 Improvements You Can Implement Immediately, conducted by Jim Sterne, a consultant and speaker on electronic marketing and customer interaction.

Industry trends, 2010

At the event, Nexstar held a press conference to answer questions about how members overcame the recession, their business outlooks for 2010, and the recent consumer interest in energy-efficient products and tax credits. A panel of seven plumbing and HVAC business owners and Greg Niemi, president of Nexstar, talked to press members, including CONTRACTOR, about these issues.

John Conway, owner of Conway Services, Memphis, Tenn., and Nexstar peer group host, told the press that his company focuses on the positive.

“In 2009, we decided we weren't going to accept the economy as an excuse,” said Conway. “We celebrate success and stay focused to drive business on a daily basis.”

According to Niemi, 85% of Nexstar members are optimistic about 2010, based on a survey that 50% of Nexstar members took in July.

“Homeowners are investing in their homes, they are also investing in better products, making me optimistic about 2010,” said Conway. “People are also upgrading systems, instead of waiting until it doesn't work, they are replacing it.”

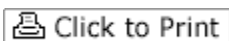
This year, consumers are showing interest in sustainable and energy-efficient products, and according to the panelists, consumers are becoming more educated about these products and inquiring about available tax credits.

Michael Salonen, owner of Rapid Response Plumbing, Heating and A/C, Glenwood, Minn., and Nexstar member trainer, said all his technicians are familiar with the tax credits since customers are well informed and knowledgeable about energy-efficient products.

Lewis Williams, owner of Mike Williams Plumbing, Heating and AC, Springfield, Ill., and Nexstar peer group host, said there has been a 3% increase of top-line product sales this year and that it's a buyers market.

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