



New Jersey
Irrigation

NEWS

The Newsletter of the Irrigation Association of New Jersey

Vol. 12 No. 13 April 2010

President's Message

To My Fellow IANJ Members-

As far as any of us can remember, 2009 has been one of the toughest, if not THE toughest year yet for our industry. It was one of the worst years for the US economy since the Great Depression. The stock market crashed. The housing market crashed. Then on top of the slow economy was ALL THAT RAIN!!! Central Park in NYC had the second most amount of rainfall since they started keeping records in 1837. We

also had the Bernard Madoff Ponzi scandal. How ironic is it that Mr. Madoff started his business career as an irrigation contractor on Long Island? One of the trunk slammers that moved on to a "reputable" business I guess. Apparent-

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ly a trunk slammer in one industry can be a trunk slammer in another.

But that was last year. Please don't tell me about the "perfect storm" again. OK, I get it. It sucked. It sucked for a lot of us. It's now 2010. Do I know if it's going to be a better year or not? No I don't. But that doesn't mean that a successful contractor shouldn't ACT like it's going to be. I'm a big believer in perception. It's not whether something is real or not. It's what people's perception of what real is that's reality. If they THINK it's going to be a bad year, chances are it will be FOR THEM. If they think it's going to be a good year, chances are it will be FOR THEM.

So how does one change the way people perceive things? How can someone get the people around them to view things in a more positive light? You need to be positive. You need to be upbeat. It's easy to be a naysayer. Don't give into it.

There are many avenues out there to help an irrigation contractor be successful. First there are the manufacturers. Rain Bird, Toro, Hunter, Irritrol and the others all want to help. Use them as resources. They want to help you win. If you win, they win. They have training. They have services that they are more than willing to offer to help you prosper. But you need to ask. Secondly there are the distributors. Ask them what's new in the marketplace. Ask them for

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IANJ Newsletter is published four times a year by the
Irrigation Association of New Jersey.

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Art and Typography by

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President's message

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business advice. Chances are they have seen people in your scenario (whatever scenario it is). Some have succeeded and some have failed. Ask them why some are still around and why the others aren't. They'll probably have some insightful answers, some things maybe you haven't thought of, but you need to ask.

Another even better resource are your fellow contractors. Believe it or not, they have more answers than one would expect. You may not want to believe it but they do. I remember a contractor who was successful in the 1990's (the good 'ol days) telling me back then, "I don't talk to my competitors. It's a war out there and I don't want to know my competition." I thought he was missing the boat but hey, he was successful, right? Well, not so much today. He has no compatriots that he can bounce things off of. Meanwhile I see that those contractors that do have good relationships with their competitors seem to be doing better. Coincidence or consequence? I'm not sure but I can take a guess.

That's where the IANJ fits in. Come to the meetings. Get involved. Heck, just come to the meetings. The IANJ hosted a Business Development class a few weeks ago and had a poor turnout. Why? Can we not all run our businesses better? I don't get it. None of my competitors were there. Is that a good thing for me? I don't think so. If they don't get better, neither can I.

There's money to be made in 2010. Some of us will do well while others may still struggle. Try to notice who's being successful and who's not. Ask them what works. I'm sure they'll be willing to share their best practices.

So good luck to all, have a great Spring, and don't forget to ask.

