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PROFESSIONAL DISTRIBUTOR

APRIL 2013 VOL. 21, NO. 3

The Distribution Network Connection

2013 DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR: WAYNE KOLVOORD

MAC TOOLS

Fort Wayne, Ind. Mac
Tools franchisee gives
100 percent to the job,
his family, the community
and his industry

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Mobile tool sales was the right opportunity for Wayne Kolvoord.

2013 Distributor of the Year

Fort Wayne, Ind. Mac Tools franchisee gives 100 percent to the job, his family, the community and his industry.

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Published by
Cygnus Business Media
 P.O. Box 803, 1233 Janesville Ave.
 Fort Atkinson, WI 53538-0803
 920-563-6388 • 800-547-7377
 Fax: 920-563-1699

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Professional Distributor (ISSN 1553-6211) (online 2150-2080) is published nine times a year in Feb., March, April, May, June, Aug., Sept., Oct. and Dec. by Cygnus Business Media, 1233 Janesville Avenue, Fort Atkinson, WI 53538. Postage paid at Fort Atkinson, WI and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates, in U.S. currency only, are: one year \$35; two years \$65; Can/Mex \$50 one year; \$95 two years; international, \$75 one year; \$145 two years. Back issues are \$10 per copy. Send check to: Cygnus Business Media, P.O. Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257. POSTMASTER: Please send change of address to Professional Distributor, P.O. Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257. Canada Post PM40063731. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: Professional Distributor, Station A, P.O. Box 54, Windsor, ON, N9A 6J5. For change of address or subscription information: Toll-free (877) 382-9187 or (847) 559-7598 Email: circ.profdistmag@omeda.com

Printed in the U.S. Volume 21, Number 3; April 2013



Professional Distributor® magazine is a Registered Trademark of Cygnus Business Media Inc.

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February distributor shows really hit the mark; new tools boost shop efficiency



BY ELLIOT MARAS
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With technology changing so many aspects of the tool distribution business at such a rapid pace, distributor tool shows are more important than ever for tool truck owners. And based on the energy I saw at the Matco Tools and Mac Tools events last month, the flags are doing their best to make these events useful for their distributors.

Hundreds of distributors took advantage of the shows and saw a lot of exciting new tools. They met company product managers and manufacturer representatives during the trade shows. They attended educational sessions on how new tools work and how to market them. They heard from fellow distributors on what tools are hot. They shared notes on the best ways to sell tools and interact with customers.

These were energizing events. And while I haven't taken a formal survey, I'll bet that everyone who attended the shows

John Marsh of Launch Tech USA explains a new diagnostic tool to a group of Ohio Mac Tools distributors.



felt the time and resources invested was well worth it.

One thing that struck me was the positive attitude shown by just about every distributor I spoke with. Many were quick to point out that despite a difficult economy, their businesses are growing, thanks to the many great new tools that manufacturers are introducing.

There were four major tool trends evident at both flag events. All of which have to do with improving repair shop efficiency.

Cordless power tools are hot and expanding. Customers love the ease of use of cordless tools. They want a cordless option for just about every job.

Diagnostic tools continue to evolve. The capabilities keep improving and shops are finding that more of these systems are giving them diagnostic capability in easier-to-use formats, such as wireless tablets.

Storage systems (toolboxes and carts) are becoming more versatile, allowing techs to store more tools. The growth of cordless and diagnostic tools has driven box and cart manufacturers to find ways to store these and other tools more economically. Manufacturers are listening to distributors and techs alike in designing storage concepts that allow techs to get more done while moving around less.

Trucks are being designed with more display space and greater ease of use. The price points, always high in comparison to other types of offerings, did not dampen traffic at vehicles designed with the distributor's needs in mind.

But product and education weren't the only draws at these events. Camaraderie has always



Brooke Colley of Matco Tools shows a green trim toolbox at the tool storage area.

been a big part of the mobile tool business, and the shows have always provided owners a great venue to network and share best practices.

Some district managers organized their distributors' activities, allowing attendees to make better use of their time. Jason Gardner, Mac Tools DM for Dayton, Ohio and Indianapolis, Ind., organized group booth visits for his distributors. Learning as a group on the show floor provided more value to these distributors, and the exhibitors made better use of their time as well by having a group to meet with in one setting.

Repair shops and techs understand that efficient tools make them more productive and more profitable. Distributors who understand how new tools boost shop efficiency have the greatest opportunity to strengthen their sales and their customer relationships.

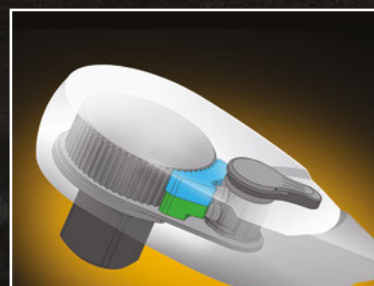
The distributor tool show remains the most efficient way for distributors to learn more about new products. This is why flag organizations and tool manufacturers invest as much as they do in making these shows such great events for their distributor customers. ■

Elliot Maras

For more coverage of the tool shows, visit www.vehicle-service-pros.com/distributors.

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2013 Distributor of the Year: Wayne Kolvoord Fort Wayne, Ind.

BY ELLIOT MARAS, EDITOR

For Wayne Kolvoord, the professional is personal. Kolvoord, the 2013 Distributor of the Year for *Professional Distributor* magazine, devotes himself wholeheartedly to serving his customers as if they were his family.

His family, for that matter, is quite extended. In addition to three children of his own, Kolvoord and his wife, Elaine, have six foster children.

In the four years Kolvoord has owned a Mac Tools franchise, he has established one of the most successful tool trucks in Fort Wayne, Ind.

He proves that an individual with the right skills can succeed in mobile distribution. He was nominated for Distributor of the Year by Kevin Stewart, his district manager. Kolvoord was chosen from a competitive pool of nominees by the *Professional Distributor* staff.

The Distributor of the Year award honors business owners not only for

Fort Wayne, Ind. Mac Tools franchisee gives 100 percent to the job, his family, the community and his industry.



Wayne Kolvoord shows a customer a set of screwdrivers.

business success, but for being active in their community. Kolvoord, in addition to being a foster parent, has been active in his community's little league and Girl

Scouts organizations. He has also taken a leadership role in helping other Mac Tools distributors in the Fort Wayne area.

A solid foundation

Kolvoord, 58, was an accomplished salesman before he came across the opportunity to own a tool truck. He had never owned his own business, but when he came across the chance to own a tool truck franchise, it seemed like the opportunity he had been looking for. One advantage he saw was not having to relocate every few years.

In the decades Kolvoord spent honing his sales and service skills, he relocated several times. He eventually wanted to stay in Fort Wayne so his kids could grow up in one place.

(Continued Page 10)



*Kolvoord reviews
a balance due
with a customer.*

Mobile tool sales was the right opportunity for Wayne Kolvoord to own a business.

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COVER STORY/DISTRIBUTOR PROFILE

"I've worked for a lot of companies, but none have wanted me to succeed as much as Mac Tools," he says. "It's on your shoulders whether you make it or not. You're not out here alone."

He had enough money in savings to buy a truck and his starting inventory. He was able to buy a 17-foot, 1999 Grumman Olson from an out-of-state distributor who was retiring.

who hadn't seen a Mac Tools truck for many months. Kolvoord looked at this as a chance to build new relationships. "That really put a lot of guys in good favor," he says. "It's all about sales, service and collections."

Not knowing the tools did not intimidate him. Kolvoord simply asked his customers what they needed, and he learned about the tools from them. In

District manager Kevin Stewart congratulates Kolvoord on winning the Distributor of the Year Award.



Top 5 Tools

- 1) DeWalt 12V MAX li-ion 1.5 Ah combo pack (impact, driver drill and flashlight combo).
- 2) Mac Tools AWP050 1/2" drive impact wrench
- 3) Mac Tools 21-piece cobalt drill bit set
- 4) Mac Tools Task Connect OBD II CAN, ABS and airbag scan tool
- 5) Mac Tools tire inflator gauge with dual foot chuck

Mac Tools gave him a list of customers. Most of the territory had gone unserved for nine months. Some customers told him they would not buy anything from him for two years. To the skeptics among his customers, Kolvoord offered a bet. He bet them \$10,000 he would still be business in five years. No one took him up on the bet.

There were a lot of warranties to honor when he began visiting customers

four years, he has become recognized as a tool expert.

A key to his success is his insistence on talking to every customer, one on one. He makes it a point to ask each customer how they are doing, if they have any warranty needs or any "issues"

Since starting the business four years ago, his sales have increased every month. When he started, he was

(Continued Page 12)

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COVER STORY/DISTRIBUTOR PROFILE

Kolvoord, right, answers a customer's question about a Mac Tools toolbox.



told he should do 20 sales and 40 transactions per day. He surpassed these averages from day one, and he currently averages 28 sales and 50 transactions per day. This translates into \$1,400 to \$1,500 in sales per day.

Kolvoord takes full advantage of the special deals that Mac Tools offers. He delivers the Mac Tools monthly flyers by

hand every month to all of his customers.

He sometimes allows a customer to borrow a tool before deciding if they want to buy it.

Kolvoord doesn't negotiate on price for anything except toolboxes. The only other exception is when a group of customers get together to buy high-ticket items, such as scan tools, as a group.

The red Columbia River Knife & Tool knife kit makes a strong visual statement on one wall in the truck.



Kolvoord takes his tool bag into 80 percent of his locations to show new tools. The only stops he doesn't go into are those where he knows the majority of technicians are waiting to walk his truck as soon as he arrives.

"They can see the flyer, but when you put the tool in their hand, then they say it's pretty nice," he says.

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COVER STORY/DISTRIBUTOR PROFILE



Girl Scouts cookies are popular sellers on the truck.



Kolvoord adjusts a ratchet on his truck.

Operating software helps

The Mac Tools mobile operating system software makes it easy for Kolvoord to keep track of his collections and receivables. His wife, Elaine, updates his collections and receivables daily, allowing him to know what is outstanding. "If you don't stay on top of (receivables), it'll kill you," he says.

The Mac Tools software includes schematics of tools that he can print out and show customers. This way, if a tool needs a certain component, the customer can order that component instead of sending the tool for repair or buying a new tool.

The software also makes it easy for Kolvoord to know who bought what item in the past. When tool manufacturers introduce add-ons such as a hook for a flashlight, he knows who to approach.

He frequently breaks sets of tools to accommodate requests. "I have extras of a lot of stuff," he says. "I keep extras of every tool bit. Rarely do I not have a tool for these guys."

He invested in a credit card reader app for his smart phone, and it has paid off since about half of his sales are paid by credit card.

Kolvoord keeps a close watch on credit processors, since the transaction fees can vary considerably. He says he

recently switched processors and has more than cut his monthly fees in half to about \$400. He also saved money recently by switching to a new mobile phone carrier.

(Continued Page 14)

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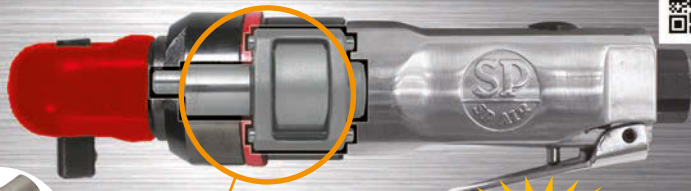


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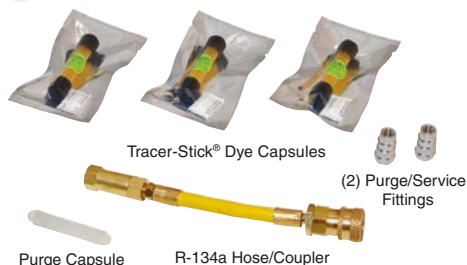
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Field service group helps

Kolvoord has found great benefit in the Mac Tools field service group, a group of regional distributors who meet periodically to share experiences. "It's always nice to hear what's selling good in somebody else's area," he says

Last summer, Kolvoord spearheaded a group of five distributors to meet and spend time on a Saturday walking each others' trucks. The distributors spent five



Kolvoord shows a pair of wire cutters to his customers.

Kolvoord shows a flashlight with a hook after passing out flyers.



up together in a public location. They will serve food and advertise the event.

Kolvoord views the group activity as way to make the Mac Tools name stronger, which in turn will make his business stronger.

He has found it helpful to attend the Mac Tools Tool Fair, where he can buy tools that offer one-year, same-as-cash terms. This financing is a great customer incentive, according to Kolvoord.

In the future, Kolvoord hopes to operate multiple trucks.

The most important skill to succeed in any type of sales, Kolvoord says, is people skills. "To have that rapport with customers requires some effort and time," he says. "It's a pretty big trust factor." ■

For an extended version of this article, go to www.VehicleServicePros.com/10891069.

For a video tour of Kolvoord's truck, Visit www.vehicleservicepros.com/video/10893257

hours together, walking each others' trucks and sharing ideas. Next summer,

the group will expand on this and invite the public to visit their trucks, all lined

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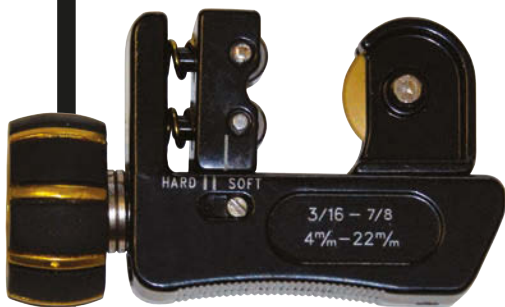


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Do YOU stock it?

The following products are among the most requested tools and equipment from recent issues of *PD's* sister publication, *Professional Tool & Equipment News*.

Perhaps you've already received requests about some of these items. They are definitely products you should take a closer look at stocking for your customers. ■



Consistent tube cutting

Cal-Van's Constant Pressure Tube Cutter, No. 157, utilizes a spring to keep consistent compression on the cutting blade to the tube. This allows the user to cut through thin-walled steel tubing without having to continually tighten or re-adjust the cutter. Simply turn the adjustment handle until the alignment marks line up, then turn the cutter until the tubing is cut. It makes the task of cutting through steel walled tubing faster and easier. The tool can cut a range of tubing sizes from 3/16" to 7/8" and features a replaceable blade.

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The **E-Z Red 158-pc Heat Shrink Set, No. HS34**, offers eight different sized tubes that shrink to fit over cable splices and can be used for wire harnessing, covering, marking and bundling wires. This set can be used for automotive, marine, home, industrial, computer and many more applications. This set offers a 2:1 shrink ratio. The case also features a molded-in ruler for accurate measurement.

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Run multiple applications simultaneously

Launch Tech USA's Launch Pad offers the benefits of a tablet with the strength of the Launch diagnostic platform. With a Windows 7 operating system, multiple applications can be utilized simultaneously. The user can perform wireless-to-the-vehicle diagnostics, graph and record PID data, and use online repair databases all at the same time. Add-on modules allow for future adaptability, such as J2534 reprogramming and lab scope. Also included is a free 30-day trial of Identifix's Direct-Hit, which notifies the technician of vehicle-specific repair information and known fixes automatically, right on the screen.

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Reach into tighter spots

Koken universal double joint impact swivel sockets, Nos. 13772-P and 14772-P, allow the user to reach into even tighter spots than one regularly can with an impact swivel. This can be accomplished by having the tool "swivel" at two different points. Simply attach any impact socket to the tool and it becomes an impact swivel. Inside the tool a mechanism allows the female drive part and body part to quickly return to a straight position. No. 13772-P works with 3/8" applications and No. 14772-P with 1/2" applications.

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Tighten with 30 ft/lbs of torque

ACDelco's 12V 1/4" power ratchet wrench, No. ARW1202, includes two 12V li-ion batteries, one quick charger and a carrying case. The tool features a 1/4" square drive, 30 ft/lbs of tightening torque, spindle lock, aluminum gearbox housing, variable-speed switch, anti-switch grip, 0 rpm to 160 rpm and a weight of 2.35 lbs. **Enter 29 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com**



With 96 leads and connectors

Strategic Tools & Equipment Co. offers the **ATLK96 Test Lead Kit** that enables technicians to turn their testing/measurement tools into more powerful and time-saving diagnostic tools. The set contains 96 commonly used leads and connectors in a convenient carrying and storage case. This complete kit turns testing and measuring devices into diagnostic tools for fault finding on the increasing number of sensors, actuators and electronic circuits found on today's vehicles. The aids are for tracing, checking, capturing or fixing complex vehicle circuitry. **Enter 31 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com**



Remove broken studs, bolts and screws

Knipex's double-edged bolt and screw extractors, No. 9R 471 901 3, can remove damaged screws, studs and bolts and is servicable for years of use. It removes damaged screws and bolts without damaging the threads on both right- and left-handed thread applications. Non-slip and double-edged engagement removes even the toughest frozen bolts. The tool has four double-edged cutting/gripping edges. Simply drill the right sized hole into the frozen bolt, hammer in the extractor, and turn it out with a wrench or ratchet. Made in Germany. **Enter 32 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com**



Ratcheting terminal crimping kit

S & G ToolAid's Quick Change Ratcheting Terminal Crimping Kit, No. 18980, includes the most popular nine die sets for automotive terminal crimping applications. Die sets can be changed quickly and easily with the press of a lever, according to the manufacturer. The crimping tool has a steel frame with comfortable cushion grips. A ratcheting action ensures a perfect crimp every time. The kit is supplied in a durable, plastic molded storage case with carrying handle. A call-out label on the inside has application information and instructions. **Enter 30 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com**



Remove stretch belts

Lisle's stretch belt installer/remover, No. 59370, allows the technician to easily slip off the old stretch belt and slip on the new one without having the tool fall to the shop floor when turning the pulley. This is done by having a powerful internal magnet inside the tool that keeps it securely on the pulley, even when upside down. The tool can be used on both the front and back side of the pulley. It helps prevent damage to the belt and/or pulley during removal and installation. **Enter 33 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com**

Capital Equipment Sales: Are You Getting Your Fair Share?

Don't forget about your biggest ticket opportunities of all.

BY PHIL SASSO, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR



Phil Sasso is president of Sasso Marketing Inc. (www.sassomarketing.com), a technical marketing agency specializing in tools and equipment. Subscribe to his free marketing tips at philsasso.com/blog.

Q Are any tool dealers making money selling shop owners big ticket items like tire service equipment, compressors or lifts? Is it not worth the time, effort, or headaches? Or am I missing an opportunity? If there's money in it, where do I start?

A "Are you stepping over dollars to pick up nickels?" asks Steve Perlstein, sales and marketing manager at Mohawk Lifts. He feels many dealers can get too focused on tool sales to take advantage of capital equipment sales opportunities.

If you aren't selling capital equipment, you're missing out on profitable business. Capital equipment sales won't just put more dollars in your pocket, they will put it there faster - without fussing on weekly collections or risking slow pays or skips, since you don't need to carry it.

'ARE YOU STEPPING OVER DOLLARS TO PICK UP NICKELS?'

If you're like most dealers, you visit close to a hundred shops a week. That puts you in the perfect position to sell shop owners and/or managers who make hundreds of thousands of dollars

in capital equipment decisions a year. Because you see these decision makers every week, you can know their capital equipment needs first. But to benefit from that advantage, you need to build a relationship with them and be proactive.

"Every January you should ask the shop owner what's on his 'wish list' for the year," says Mohawk's Perlstein. Be sure to keep an up-to-date list and follow up on it. "And you don't need to just ask at the beginning of the year. Every so often you should be asking about items on your list and adding new items to it."

Once an owner starts shopping for capital equipment, you should be asking questions about what they want, what brands they're considering and when they plan to make their decision.

You could then contact a local equipment dealer and hand off the sale for a percentage.

"But why would you want to do that?" asks Perlstein. You're in the best position to close the sale: your customer already knows and trusts you. And you'll earn much more closing the deal yourself. Handing off a sale will likely also cut you out of the loop for future capital equipment sales.

If you're with a flag, you likely have access to several capital equipment programs. It's good to be familiar with those programs since they'll likely provide you with sales tools and financing to help you close your deal. Many equipment programs give you a toll-free hotline you can call with pre-sale technical questions - so you're not alone.

"If you're competing against other dealers, they're all likely selling the same products from the same manufacturers," says Perlstein. This can move things from salesmanship into a bidding war. If you

want to be more competitive and profitable, consider selling something different by working directly with some manufacturers, he suggests. (The manufacturer will likely offer financing. If not, I offer some options in the next question.)

And no matter what route you choose, you don't need to worry about equipment setup or installation. If you or your customer aren't comfortable or qualified to do an installation, most manufacturers have a nationwide network of experts who can do it for you for a fee.

Once you sell your first piece of capital equipment, the rest will become a piece of cake - and you'll be taking home a bigger piece of the pie.

Q I'm an independent. The biggest hurdle to selling more expensive items like compressors to shop owners or toolboxes to techs is putting together the financing. I'm not going to carry them on a price tag that big. And the finance companies I've contacted either charge customers a fortune, extend credit only to business owners or require an in-person loan application. Any advice?

A There are several options for financing capital purchases (aside from joining a flag).

A business owner may prefer a bank loan to get better terms. However, many business loans today take a long time to clear, carry exorbitant fees and require personal guarantees. This may make a bank loan less than desirable.

Credit card financing is another option for shop owners or technicians. Although interest rates can be steep, your customer may have an offer for very low



traditional financing, leasing with a buy-out and lease-to-own options without a buyout. Everyone's situation is different, so there isn't a best option that fits everyone. But leasing can often offer lower terms and tax benefits. (It's best for them to ask their

accountant about tax benefits).

Don't let all the options overwhelm you. Your job isn't to be a financial expert; it's to give your customers options so they can choose what's best for their situation. ■

or zero percentage teaser rates for a short period of time. The downside? It will cost you a couple points to process his credit card on your merchant account and your customer could be socked with huge interest rates if he can't pay off his purchase before the promotional period ends.

A better option may be for you to establish a relationship with a financing company. Your customer benefits from the ease of financing and you can be involved in the process, so you don't have to send a customer away and wait for him to get approved.

Companies like Everlasting Capital (everlastingcapital.com) offer for financing what Expedia.com offers for travel. It gives your customers options.

A dealer can establish a no-cost account with a company like Everlasting Capital and process a customer's application over the Internet. Customers can choose from a menu of financing options based on their preferences and credit rating.

It takes from a couple minutes to approve the average purchase under \$10,000 to a couple hours to approve most purchases over that amount. Everlasting Capital offers financing options for anything from capital equipment for shop owners to personal equipment for a technician, according to company president Josh Feinberg. The minimum financed amount is as low as \$500.

There are many options available through financing companies, including

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Air Conditioning Service Tools

'Tis the season for A/C service and repair. This seasonal service can be a boon for your customer's business, if his shop is stocking the right tools and equipment. With the advent of the newer HFO-1234yf refrigerant being used in newer vehicles, shops may also be stocking up for future aftermarket repairs.



Multi-refrigerant RRR machine

The **CPS Products** fully-automatic, multi-refrigerant **FA1234 Recover/Recycle/Recharge Machine** can be converted for use with any of the following refrigerants, in five minutes or less: R-134a, HFO-1234yf, R22 and R407C. The FA1234 includes a high-capacity, 50 micron, 6 cfm vacuum pump and comes equipped with a 50-lb recovery tank as standard equipment. It can be easily programmed for 90-lb recovery tanks, or any standard international tank on the market. Standard equipment includes 8' hoses, R-134a couplers, HFO-1234yf couplers, R-134a tank refill adapters and HFO-1234yf tank refill adapter. It has a powdercoated steel cabinet built on top of a 1" steel tubular frame for durability in the shop, with spare filter storage drawer.

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Repair damaged rubber and aluminum lines

S.U.R. & R.'s A/C Line Repair 5/16" repair fittings can be used to make on-the-car repairs to damaged rubber and aluminum lines including pinholes, cracks and kinks. It includes a compression block off fitting for use on SUVs and vans with leaking lines or failed rear A/C components. Featuring advanced compression union and hose adapter technology, all connections are made by hand and tightened with the use of a standard wrench. Other benefits include all-aluminum construction to avoid corrosion and double seal compression union technology. Enter 44 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com



"I always found the best way to find A/C leaks was with dye."



Refrigeration system analyzer

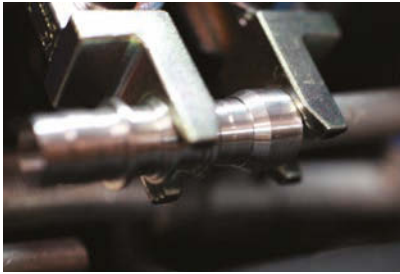
The **Ritchie Engineering YELLOW JACKET Refrigeration System Analyzer** display reads in analog, digital or a combination of both, and monitors two pressures, two live temperatures, subcooling and superheat, and saturation temperatures (liquid and vapor) for 84 refrigerants. This refrigeration system analyzer comes standard with the TITAN four-valve manifold, an external, replaceable vacuum sensor; battery holder; and boot, bumper, plug and sensor/probe boots, all in a blow-molded instrument case. Enter 46 at "e-inquiry" on vehicleservicepros.com



Service a hybrid vehicle's air conditioning

Mastercool's 69789-H A/C machine meets SAE J2788 for Standard 134A and hybrid 134A vehicles. An automatic and programmable design allows the technician to perform a continuous recover/recycle, vacuum, vacuum leak test and recharge. It includes an installed data base of thousands of vehicle refrigerant capacities for domestic and imports from 1998 to 2012. Automatic operation includes auto oil discharge, auto oil injection, auto air purge, auto vacuum leak test and auto filter alarm. This machine also incorporates an integrated system flush, printer and 6 cfm vacuum pump for quick efficient air and moisture removal.

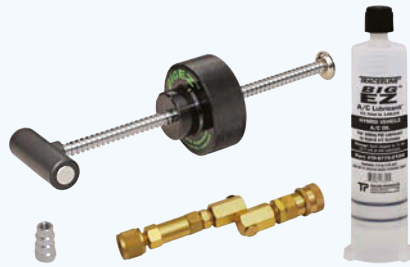
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Fix air conditioning leaks

The AGS Co. **Swedge-Lok Repair System** makes air conditioning leak repair easy by eliminating the need to wait for expensive OE replacement parts. It requires no welding or soldering and saves time by allowing most repairs right on the vehicle. These tools provide universal repair of air-conditioning tubes and hose connections in all makes and models of vehicles. All Swedge-Lok unions use aluminum alloy, making them corrosion-proof for a true permanent repair. The unique design and strict tolerances of each union assures that each repair is pressure-rated and tested to 1000 psi, exceeding all requirements for air conditioning systems.

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Hybrid A/C lubrication tool

Tracer Products' BigEZ Hybrid/Ester Oil Injection Kit, No. TP-9772, makes adding lubricating oil to a hybrid A/C system a time-saving, uncomplicated process. At the heart of the kit is the BigEZ injector assembly, an easy and accurate way to add oil to hybrid A/C systems. Also included is a solid-brass R-134a hybrid coupler with a check valve and purge fitting. Unlike a hose, the all-metal coupler is non-permeable and allows easy connection to the low-side service port. It includes a 4 oz (118 ml) hybrid/ester oil cartridge filled with a unique lubricating oil that is specially formulated for use in all hybrid vehicles.

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A/C security system

The **Airsept Click Lock A/C Security System** is a unique new tool that alerts service providers if an air conditioning system has been opened since the repair shop last serviced the system. The Click Lock tamper-proof cap features a one-piece heat-resistant plastic housing that snaps closed around an A/C service fitting. Once closed, Click Lock cannot be opened without visibly damaging the cap. It fits over standard High or Low Side service fittings. The locking mechanism snaps together by hand. Each Click Lock tool is labeled with a unique serial number. This allows easy repair order tracking.

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DRIVING SALES



Spot A/C leaks with UV flashlight

UView's UV Phazer Black, Nos. 413065 and 414075, features a "True UV" LED blacklight that is 11 times more powerful at illuminating UV dyes than previous offerings, according to the company. Available in rechargeable lithium-ion (No. 413065) and AAA battery (No. 414075), the flashlights benefit from the features of the Phazer Neo, but at an even better price. It includes adjustable lens focus, anodized aluminum housing and a 400 nm wavelength.

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"A built-in oil injector is a must for a new A/C machine."

Handles R-1234yf refrigerant

The RTI Technologies ACS 9000 A/C service machine handles R-1234yf refrigerant. The A/C service machine is designed and approved to meet the stringent VDA General Specifications for R-1234yf automotive A/C



service equipment in Europe. It includes separate oil lines to handle standard and hybrid vehicles. The precise automation on the machine enables it to handle exact refrigerant filling, guaranteed purity levels, integrated flushing, self-diagnostics and an advance warning system on filter replacement. Technicians can interface with the unit in 33 languages and collect reports through the onboard printer or through digital export with a memory stick for PC use.

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DRIVING SALES

Dual mode refrigerant leak detector

The **Techno Tools Dual Mode Refrigerant Leak Detector, No. D440A-UV**, features two refrigerant leak detection modes, a solid electrolyte gas sensor and a patented UV dye detection system. The instrument is certified by a qualified independent laboratory to comply with SAE Standard J2791 and J2913. It has a unique digital leak size indicator that takes the guesswork out of whether or not to repair a small leak. The D440A-UV does not require rechargeable batteries.

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“ I'd like an A/C machine that measures to the hundredth of a pound of refrigerant, instead of a tenth. Some cars, like Mini Coopers, only take about 0.83 lbs (of refrigerant), which makes measuring to the hundredth very important. ”

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IN FOCUS

Mastercool 69788-A Automatic RRR Machine

Unit provides automatic and continuous recover/recycle, vacuum, vacuum leak test and recharge for A/C service.

The Mastercool 69788-A Automatic RRR Machine, certified for compliance with SAE J2788, can perform automatic and continuous recover/recycle, vacuum, vacuum leak test and recharge for A/C service. This unit includes an installed database of thousands of vehicle refrigerant capacities for domestic and imports from 1998 to 2012. Automatic operation includes auto oil discharge, auto air purge, auto vacuum leak test and auto filter alarm. The unit also incorporates a 6 cfm vacuum pump for efficient air and moisture removal. Thirty pound internal DOT tank, heavy duty load cell scale and compact footprint will provide for years of reliable performance.

Selling points

- SAE 2788 certified RRR machine with two-year warranty.
- Includes refrigerant database of over 1,000 vehicles.
- Automatic and manual featured modes.
- Comes with a 6 cfm vacuum pump.
- Compact design, easy to maneuver, requires minimal shop space.

Features and benefits

- Automatic/manual modes with two-year warranty.
- Refrigerant database.
- Auto vacuum leak test.
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- Auto filter alarm.
- 6 cfm pump.
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Application

- Complete AC service.
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The Mastercool 69788-A RRR Machine comes SAE 2788 certified with two-year warranty.

Specs

- Made in Italy/U.S.A.
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SNEAK PEEK

Welcome to Sneak Peek! This product section features exclusive, recently introduced automotive tool and equipment products. In Sneak Peek, we'll show you new tools even before automotive technicians get to read about them in *Professional Tool & Equipment News* magazine. Sneak Peek products will help you stock your truck with the latest and greatest tools on the market.

BETTER ACCESS TO TIGHT SPOTS

JS Products introduces its line of professional tools, including the **SteelmanPro Extendable Flexhead Ratchet Set**, No. 96753. This set comes with 1/4", 3/8", 1/2" drive ratchets that feature quick release and a 72-tooth ratcheting mechanism. Tools include a 180-degree flex head to help users work in tight spots and a dual durometer handle that enhances grip.

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a troubleshooting camera with an infrared heat map, bridges the gap between low-cost IR thermometers and higher priced thermal imagers. Use the VT02 to detect blockages in heater cores and cooling systems, diagnose automotive electrical issues and determine failed bearing components quickly without the use of other less-efficient tools. It can display and save images as full visual, full infrared or in three blended modes (25, 50, and 75 percent), and comes with free Smartview software.

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ACDelco's 6V Multi-Media Inspection Cameras,

allow the user to identify and document issues, download the information to a computer and allow supervisors or customers to view the findings. It includes a 4GB SD memory card, USB port for images and video output, 3" (320 x 240 pixels) LCD screen, four-setting LED for illumination, 2.5X image zoom and 180-degree flip view. Available with a 48" long, 4.5mm camera cable (No. ARZ6055) or 72" long and 8mm camera cable (No. ARZ6058).

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The last man standing in a changing L.A. neighborhood

ZVI ROTHENBURG, INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTOR

L.A.'s economic challenges culls competition for holdout distributor.



BY ZVI ROTHENBERG

Zvi Rothenberg is an independent tool distributor based in L.A.. He is a 22-year veteran of the mobile distribution business. Send any comments or feedback to editor@vehicleservicepros.com.

Los Angeles is not the way it always was. I've lived here for over 42 years and it has changed a lot. Once thriving main streets are now subject to blight, sometimes separated merely by a single city block from an upscale neighborhood or movie studio. Now, my business struggles to come to grips with changed economic realities.

I began my career as a successful manufacturing engineer, but I was forced to look for different work when manufacturing went overseas. I decided to start my own distributorship and I had the advantage of starting out with capital on-hand. Most guys can't make it because they're mortgaging their house to buy inventory and they cannot collect on it all, but I never had that issue.

My business grew to over 1,000 customers with a seven-day work week. I am aware this is triple what most people have, but there are a lot of shops here and not a lot of tool distributors. I owned a house in the neighborhood since my engineering days and my competition generally could not afford to

live in the immediate area. They don't live that far away, but in L.A. traffic, their commute during business hours can be about two hours each way, so, I never had a lot of competition. I have the homefield advantage.

But, it all started to change in the last 10 years. Why? I don't know, but I have my theories. The rents are so high and the parts stores are selling tools. Sometimes the shops just find ways around not using necessary tools by modifying what they have or borrowing the tool from someone. This all means less money for guys like me.

The city streets are mean, with homeless people at the street corners and stiff competition between repair shops. To the casual observer, Los Angeles either has big-box stores or specialty shops. The general automotive repair shop that needs tools for all makes and models simply appears not to exist.

Competition between the remaining shops is fierce, and because of local zoning laws, they are often situated in plazas where three, four, five or even more shops are literally pitted across and adjacent to one another. This sort of competition

steadily decreases shop profit margins. Another challenge it poses for me is that it makes it easy for techs to share tools.

So, I can drive the streets all day without seeing any competition, but still not make the sales I used to. When I was driving with an editor from *Professional Distributor* magazine earlier this year, he pointed out an old a Snap-on truck. I said, laughing, "They sell fruit out of it, no tools. It's just parked there."

I still have my dependable core of customers, but many of the techs I used to work with have grown increasingly undependable. Due to America's porous border with Mexico, some simply just disappear with all their tools, never paying what was owed. Because some of these men have assumed identities and no legal status, they are essentially invisible.

I refuse to concede defeat. I'm not fed up or jaded and I still work six days a week. I still have customers from when I began 22 years ago. Just, these days, there are a lot less of them.

Nonetheless, I hope for better times ahead. In the meantime, in my territory, I'm the last man left standing. ■



My solid core of customers are the most rewarding part of my job.



Being a tool dealer requires clerical work on the fly.



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