



Buffalo Grove Warehouse

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Distributors of America's Finest Plumbing & Heating Supplies

Plumbing supply company takes service to heart

BY TRACIE DARNELL
Medill News Service

Lee Greenspon says to have a successful business you need to treat the customer as you'd like to be treated and hire a quality staff that commits to that philosophy.

Owner of Buffalo Grove-based Banner Plumbing Supply Co. Inc., Greenspon has taken that philosophy and built a \$30 million a year plumbing wholesale firm now in its 60th year.

Diane Thomas of Lisle-based Barry Thomas Plumbing said she has been buying supplies from Banner for 16 years.

"I never have a problem finding a person to help me with any issue I am having," Thomas said. "They have the best customer service."

Past service is also part of the secret, Greenspon said.

"If a mistake is made," Greenspon said, "we think nothing of sending a truck and a driver to



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Gene Hara, vice president of Banner Plumbing Supply, a wholesale business, stands in the firm's Buffalo Grove warehouse.

come in at 4:30 a.m. so we could make the delivery by 5 a.m., so the plumber would have enough time to complete the job by the 8 a.m. deadline."

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years or more, with several members of the staff employed for more than 10 years.

"The people that work here come here because they enjoy what they do," Greenspon said.

Greenspon's father, Charles, founded the business.

"My father started the company with \$500 of borrowed money," Greenspon said.

Banner Plumbing opened its doors in 1947 in a small three-flat building on the South Side of Chicago.

With six employees, the company supplied plumbing materials directly to job sites.

Lee Greenspon took over the company in 1990 and began to expand operations beyond the South Side.

The operations in Buffalo Grove allow Greenspon to cater to his growing customers in the north and northwest suburbs, such as MG Mechanical in Woodstock and Heritage Plumbing in Hoffman Estates. The company is continuing to expand further into Buffalo Grove in December by moving to a 124,000-square-foot building that includes a 10,000 square foot showroom. The showroom will house the newest lines of decorative plumbing fixtures and hardware.

However, Greenspon remains modest.

"If I have any good quality at all, it has been the ability to pick the best people to work for me," he says. "I have been very blessed."