



## Podcast Transcript | *The Fix*

**Date:** September 18, 2023

**Guests:** Winsupply – Bruce Pilbeam & Tom Ponting

**Run Time:** 37:33

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00:00:06 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Welcome to The Fix, the podcast made for the trades, where we sit down with inspiring individuals across the trades to discuss their unique take on the industry, including career paths, job site stories, overcoming challenges, and everything in between. I'm your host, Katherine, a marketer here at Oatey with my co-host and friend, Doug, one of Oatey's resident experts in all things trades. The Fix is more than a podcast, it's a community, a community built to support tradespeople and inspire the next generation of essential pros. Let's start the conversation. All right, Doug, well, this is a first for us and talk about partnering with some of the best in the industry.

00:00:51 **Doug Buchan**

Absolutely, you know, I wanna label today the bridge, okay? When we think of bridges, what do we think of? We think of strength, integrity, trust, opportunity, right? Well, as a manufacturer, who are we trying to reach? We're trying to reach that contractor. You got it. Well, without a bridge, okay, we're not gonna see that opportunity. Love it. So our bridges are the wholesalers. Yeah. And we have a wholesaler in here today that we're gonna talk to and, you know, they have the word win in their name. They can't do anything but be successful. I love it. But we are very fortunate to have them in here and we're very fortunate to have them as one of our wholesalers who trust in our products and give that opportunity to our contractors out there.

00:01:32 Katherine Lehtenin

I mean, you couldn't have said it better. So welcome Bruce Pilbeam and Thomas Pontine from Winsupply.

00:01:38 Bruce Pilbeam

Thank you very much. Appreciate being here. Thank you for having us.

00:01:41 Katherine Lehtenin

Absolutely. Well, let's get started and talk a little bit about your backgrounds. I would love if you guys could both give us an overview for the listeners of who you are and your current role right now at Winsupply.

00:01:52 Bruce Pilbeam

Well, my name is Bruce Pilbeam. I am currently the Rough End Plumbing, PVF and Fire Protection Industry Manager for Winsupply. I have been with Winn for, well, 24 years. Started in 1999 as a truck driver at Dayton Winn Nelson. So after I got out of school, I worked for a little bit in a real job and then my brother called me and said, hey, we need a company president trainee for Winsupply. Would you like to come over? And I had worked there during high school so I knew the benefit and the great company that Winsupply was or is. So I quit my high paying \$12 an hour job and took a pay cut and started driving truck for \$9 an hour and worked through being a truck driver, worked in the warehouse, moved into inside sales, inside sales to office manager, office manager to vice president of Dayton Winn Nelson. And then about 2006, and six, I moved over to our support services, which is what we call, most people would call it corporate. We call it support services because we support the local

00:03:03 Bruce Pilbeam

companies. And I started in the purchasing department there and I was the buyer for Oatey. Awesome. At the distribution center. Mondays were my Oatey days. We had four distribution centers at the time

and I had to make sure I hit the category discount, the truckload discount and all the different things. So it took all day to buy Oatey on Monday. So four POs all day. And then maybe four or five years after that, you guys came to us with the Data Alliance Group. And we pioneered the VMI side with Oatey at our distribution center. And then last four or five years, I've been within our vendor relations department. So I've had a very long relationship with Oatey. And yeah, we're very thankful for the partnership and thanks for having us here today.

00:03:54 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Yeah, you got it. That's a great background. And what a great, I mean, getting into your role and your position today by having that experience in all those different things really give you probably a great perspective of how the business works and operates and how it used to operate and all the progress that has been made over the years too, I'm sure.

00:04:11 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Absolutely. I started there when everything was on three -part forms. Oh wow, yeah. And we've moved and progressed for the last 24 years into a lot of automation and getting leaner and meaner at the local company. So it's been a really exciting time at the company.

00:04:28 **Katherine Lehtenin**

That's fun. And sometimes you do have to take that look back to be like, man, we've made a lot of progress. Sometimes when you feel like, oh, we can't keep up, but a lot of progress has been made. It's pretty cool. Cool. All right.

00:04:38 **Tom Ponting**

Hi, I'm Tom Ponting. So I'm the British shouting person on this podcast today. I've been with Winn. Well, I could check LinkedIn, but I think it's nine months. So a lot newer. I used to work for a manufacturer in the plumbing world and got to know Bruce and the team up at Winn and just saw what an amazing company it is and ended up joining to work in the vendor relations team. So get to

meet great folks at Oatey. And prior to that, spent some time at General Electric and came over to the US about 12 years ago now.

00:05:12 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Yeah, that's awesome. That's really exciting. And to bring that background from the manufacturer side also gives another perspective into the industry and also into Winn. So that's pretty cool.

00:05:21 **Tom Ponting**

Yeah, I love what Doug said, the bridge. It's the ecosystem that is so important in this industry. The way that you started the manufacturing world. I love what you guys are doing with the amount of made in the USA, feeding out through to the distributor wholesale channel, the importance of the rep network and then how that reps connect everything back with the importance of the contractor. And I think that's one thing that we're so focused on at Winn is how do you get that local alignment with that contractor and that they know exactly what all the manufacturers are doing. And it's just a fantastic company that helps to drive that with great partners like Oatey.

00:05:58 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Yeah, that's excellent. So Bruce, you've spent many years working in the plumbing industry. What is one thing that you'd say is the largest item that's changed and maybe something that's really stayed constant?

00:06:12 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Oh, that's a good question. One of the largest things that I can see that is the evolution of how the contractor wants to buy.

00:06:21 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Sure.

00:06:22 **Bruce Pilbeam**

So it used to be the plumber, the HVAC technician would come into the supply house every morning at seven o'clock and usually order about the same kind of product. Sure. Fill their truck, go do their job. The next day, wash, rinse, repeat. E-commerce is making a huge impact on the business. And the contractors that are coming in now are younger and they're a little bit more tech savvy. Gone are the days of where a guy will come in on a two by four and he'll have a 9210 wax ring. Yes, yep. So that's the biggest, one of the biggest things is the technology has pushed the industry into a more efficient place. One of the things that has stayed the same is the contractors that we have. Sure. There's not as many people coming into the trades as I would like to see. We don't see as many young people coming in. So that contractor that you're doing business with is might be the same contractor you've been doing business with for 20 years and nothing's really changed on that side. So that's a constant

00:07:37 **Bruce Pilbeam**

that's concerning, but I think we're starting to turn the corner on that. Yeah. I just read a article in the Wall Street Journal yesterday where less people are going into the traditional four year college and more people are going into trade schools, which is great. It's awesome. Because we do have a dearth of qualified technicians in the field. Right. Which means they could get to command their wages at this point. Right. You know, and I think I have some ideas on that. I don't know how deep you would like me to get into that piece of why we got to that point, but it's nice that we're starting to see that, you know, more people are thinking of, you know, maybe college is not the right thing for me. Maybe an apprenticeship. Right. Maybe, you know, working with MCAA and learning the HVAC side of the trade or the PVF side of the trade is a way to go. Because a lot of people don't necessarily want to work in an office or code or whatever it is. Right. Absolutely. And we need those people

00:08:36 **Bruce Pilbeam**

because the trades is what makes the country run. Right. Absolutely. If, you know, when there's a hurricane or an earthquake or something that goes wrong in some part of the world, what's the first thing that people need? Clean drinking water. Yeah. And that's what we do for people all day, every day. And people take that for granted, I think. They don't understand. So, you know, it's, to me, it's

the most important industry that we have is access to clean water. And we do that for people. Yeah, absolutely.

00:09:11 **Katherine Lehtenin**

It's a great way to look at it and great perspective. So let's talk about that a little bit more and let's talk about it from a wind standpoint. You know, with that current environment and also the future, you know, possibility of the shortages, how, you know, how is wind supply looking to support those initiatives around the trades at the, you know, corporate level or the customer support level or even down to the local level?

00:09:36 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Well, we're involved with many industry groups. I mentioned MCAA just a second ago. We're also in PHCC. We're also in ASA and all the subgroups of ASA, so NCWA, SWA. And we do a lot of outreach with a few colleges, Texas A & M, Kearney, Nebraska, that has a fantastic supply distribution program. Personally, I've been, I've gone out to high schools. Sure. Within the Dayton, Ohio area. We're headquartered in Dayton, Ohio. And I've gone to quite a few high schools and talked to kids about the trade. Actually, I met a young lady a few years ago that was going to go into the accounting side. And I talked about wind supply and trades. And she ended up changing her major to a supply chain distribution major. Oh, cool. And then I got a call a couple years later and said, do you remember talking to this young lady? And he's like, yeah. Well, she mentioned you in an article about somebody who changed her mind about the trades. How cool. So I got a cool write-up about that. So there's a lot of things

00:10:46 **Bruce Pilbeam**

that we do. We could definitely do more. Sure. We would love to partner with Oatey in that aspect, for sure. Yeah. So.

00:10:52 **Tom Ponting**

It's an interesting outlet in the last week is I was talking to one of the DCs with an HVAC vendor. And they said, hey, what do you do with this equipment if you can't send it back? And I learned that we donate them to a lot of the trade schools. And that's something we work with quite a few vendors on to say, hey, do you want this back? No, just, is there a trade school near you that you can partner? And we already have those partnerships. I thought that was really interesting around it. But I think it's an aspect that, like Bruce's background is, there are so many great examples of people at Wind Supply that have started as a truck driver and now they're presidents and local owners making local decisions at these locations across the country and it's a fantastic story to kind of, some of the best career paths that the amount of people I've spoke to at Wind have done and it's amazing sort of American dream story to go from truck driver to president of a \$50 million location, supporting

00:11:52 **Tom Ponting**

the trades in that aspect. And it's amazing the culture that they drive with the hiring of this group of owners is unbelievable. They're always coaching, always seeing sort of younger groups. How do you bring them through? How do they tell that story? You could be the next truck driver to president aspect. And it's amazing to kind of see.

00:12:13 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Those success stories for sure. So let's talk about this a little bit, Tom. What does Wind Supply look for? And a vendor partner on this manner? Do you evaluate your partners? Do you look, as you said, partner with Oatey? Are there those that are out there that are doing a great job at it?

00:12:31 **Tom Ponting**

You guys are definitely doing a great job. So I'll start with that. All right, thanks.

00:12:34 **Doug Buchan**

So thank

00:12:34 Tom Ponting

you. Thanks for hosting us here. It goes across the different gamuts and I'll expand it more to maybe the vendor partner, the reps are such a big part of that ecosystem. But the way that Wind Supply works with its service entities that support those local companies, that's one thing. I think we call it support services. You might call it corporate. Sometimes in the field, they call it corporate because I'm like, oh, you know, and we call it support services and we're there to effectively support those local companies. So the engagement, the data sharing that Oatey does is fantastic. Like when I'm on the factory tour yesterday and I'm like, well, how do you tie this into our planning? Like, well, we get all your data and so that helps speed our planning. It's best in class. And then when you feed that down that level, it's then the engagement at the local level with every single local company and having that reps, having that touch point. I think the training is a huge part of that because

00:13:30 Tom Ponting

you have such a large breadth of product, making sure that every single local company knows that, knows what they're missing, that what they're stocking. And because what they're stocking is then helping that contractor have the right thing that they're buying. And I think that's just tying that entire, to use your term again, bridge is a fantastic way of looking at and helping us fill those voids in that bridge that we can help support. Yeah, for sure. Would you add anything to that?

00:13:57 Bruce Pilbeam

I think you hit on it very well. We like companies that treat us as a partner. Right. And Oatey definitely does that. And Tom used the term best in class. And I can't say that any better than what he said because you guys are best in class. You've always come to us with new products and you understand our model, which can be a little confusing. We're an ownership model. So when we say a local company president, that local company president has a significant ownership stake within his or her company. So they're a small business. Sure. And your rep network, you guys have top best in class rep networks who are also small business owners. So that relationship, that partnership at the local level is what really drives the economic engine of Wind Supply. And you guys understand that and work within our model very well.



00:14:55 Tom Ponting

And they effectively have, they're working with the contractor what the contractor wants. They have autonomy to buy that. But the aspect of the partnership that I get to see coming in here with Wind Supply and Oatey is that you're leveraging both that very local level, making sure you're getting those relationships working with contractors to know that they're buying the right stuff, but also then going, well, it's stocked at Wind Supply. You can use the support services, the distribution network that we have that enables then both of us to win in that marketplace. So I think that's very unique in the way that you guys drive that. So I appreciate it. Absolutely.

00:15:31 Doug Buchan

Yeah. And you know, as a contractor for decades, I can tell you that my greatest source of information was always the wholesaler. Okay. I could come in and I could get the blatant truth. All right. I could hear the good, the bad, the ugly. All right. And I would trust more in them sometimes than I would maybe an infomercial or maybe a rep because, you know, they're just giving me the everyday. They had skin in the game to give me the best products possible, but at the same time, they didn't want to let me down because I was a source that was continuous for them. So my question is, and this leads into off what you were saying, Thomas, is how do you keep that constant communication going with those contractors to know the needs of the industry and then all the changes that are happening continuously?

00:16:21 Tom Ponting

Yeah, I think it's a great question. It's not an easy question to answer. I mean, like it's looking at in so many different channels. I mean, from our view, the communication that we help get from great information that you have, getting it out to those local companies, know the important thing. New product launches are always a challenge no matter what manufacturer you're working it through, getting that down the field. Then it's the other side of stuff is that rep network is so important to know where to go, where to go target, which local companies is going to need that, and then flowing that through from the local company level so that they're educated. You know, this amazing facility that you've got here and making sure that our folks are trained so that they're then communicating that onto the contractor when they come in is vital. You know, there are small things, flyers, catalogs. Honestly, some of the old media things, like I'll joke about it, but in the industry that we're in,

00:17:15 **Tom Ponting**

in the wholesale world, the guys, often a contractor's coming in, you know, they should sit there, you need a big order, the wholesaler goes back, I'm gonna pull it, and they're sitting there talking to the other counter guy. And what are they talking about? Yeah, they might be talking about sports, but talk about their jobs, what they're doing that day, what other jobs they've got going. And there are counter mats and various other things that's out there to help educate. And I think that's that ecosystem that can really help between what you guys are producing, what you're getting out and training, and then how do you feed that through to that person that's gonna sit there for five to 10 minutes and gonna talk to that contractor about different things they've got going on that day and how they can help solve those problems. So yeah, does that help more?

00:17:53 **Doug Buchan**

Do you folks, do you have events just for your contractors? Oh, absolutely. Yeah? Yeah, absolutely.

00:17:59 **Bruce Pilbeam**

What type of events are those? The local companies do multiple different events. It could be as simple as a counter day where a rep comes in and they're featuring a new product and they're doing a cookout or whatever. It could be they're going to ballgames with the contractors. They do multiple things, but it's always built around a relationship piece first.

00:18:24 **Bruce Pilbeam**

And then the products, they come along with that. And partnering with good companies that have good products. So there's multiple outreaches that the local companies do. It's kind of hard to answer because it's 667 individual companies, and they all do things within their market a little different, and that's the beauty of the model. So they know what drives the needle in Tulsa a lot better than Bruce Pilbeam in Dayton, Ohio does. So Chuck says, this is my contractor, this is what I'm sponsoring his kids' ball team. We're doing a canned food drive here, and there's multiple things that we do.

00:19:02 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah, it's one of the things I love about your company is the fact that you're not a cookie cutter, okay? You guys are custom all the way, and you just mentioned that, okay? You adapt to the environment that you're in at that moment in time. You're not doing something that you have success in California on, and you're trying to adapt it into Alabama.

00:19:23 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Yeah, you go and visit all the local companies, you'll see 700 different ways to run a business. Sure.

00:19:29 **Tom Ponting**

But the network they create, I think they call it a brotherhood sometimes, and the aspect is they're constantly sharing ideas. So one of the local companies, I went to a customer appreciation day. So it's kind of like a calendar day, but it was just contractor appreciation. Come in, and they had a bunch of counters set up with different vendors. It was really cool. Walking around, and they were giving out some free things, stamps, and they'll share that with, oh, this worked well for me, and then someone else would do it, and different examples. And hey, how did you get all those vendors to stand that up in Dallas? And how did you even do that? I'd love to do that in Tulsa. I think that's what's really interesting is the ability for them to share those best practices and then build on it. But it's right, it doesn't work in every market, right? I think whether you're in Boston, you go into a ball game, that's what more contractors want to do versus the rodeo sponsoring. It's just different

00:20:28 **Tom Ponting**

in the market. I can't do a cookie cutter rodeo in different places in the country. I'd love to do that, but it just doesn't work.

00:20:35 **Bruce Pilbeam**

The Atlanta rodeo doesn't work. Doesn't work.

00:20:39 **Katherine Lehtenin**

So Bruce, with such a wide range of products offered by Wind Supply, how do you stay updated on the latest trends and innovations for each one of the categories and really provide that best solutions for your customer? Because I can understand there's that, I've grown up using it, I'm never going to switch, but also there's some really cool new things that are out there. So how do you balance between that?

00:21:03 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Well, new products are the lifeblood of our industry. We mentioned it earlier about there's less people coming into the trades. So the products that save time and effort for the contractors are the things that we want to help get out into the field. And we really lean upon the communication from the vendors. So we have a really close relationship. Brian Cerner is our national account manager for Oatey. I speak to Brian probably once a week. Sure. And it could be anything from a five minute checkup, what's going on, or 20 minute, 30 minute conversation of this is the thing that we're getting ready to do. And we're going to launch this product in six months. Voice of the customer, how do you see this? What kind of things do you get feedback from the field? And to Doug's point earlier, my source of unvarnished truth when I worked at the local company was the contractor. He came to the wholesaler to hear what was going on. Well, that's where I got my information from was when a contractor would

00:22:10 **Bruce Pilbeam**

come in and say, this drain doesn't do this and I wish it did that. Right, yeah. And then I would talk to my rep, say, hey, this is a concern, a pain point for my contractor. Have you guys ever thought of having a product that does this or do you have a product that does this to alleviate that pain point? That just goes up another level now at where I'm at in my current position is we hear those things and it's a constant information sharing with our top vendor partners, which Oatey is one of. And yeah, it's constant communication. What are you doing? Where's this going? How do you see the market in five

years from now? We're not looking six months from now, we're looking five years from now. And how do we get there and how do we get better? Yeah, absolutely.

00:22:59 **Tom Ponting**

And I think the build on that is the importance that I've seen with the reps, the rep agencies in this, is they're such an important part of the ecosystem that we're in is we heavily rely on them driving that contractor engagement, distributor engagement and having that connectivity without the reps. And I love the independence that they have because they can sometimes ask those difficult questions around those products and say, hey, why are you sending this back? What didn't work? What didn't work about it? And then we're having abilities to have that capture of that question to go back and then redesign something. And the innovation is so important here.

00:23:39 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Yeah, for sure. And it's important for us as a manufacturer, we need to understand because there's different codes, there's different ways to install. So all those things go into factors. And obviously as we develop and design, we try to capture everything and try to make sure we put the best product out there, but not until it really gets into the field. And we do that as part of our process. We go and we get lots of voice to customer, but you never know. And so it's always good to have that kind of communication back and forth.

00:24:04 **Tom Ponting**

And things on the side, you think about what's going on with California and the changes they've had in Colorado and it's just spreading throughout the country with the different codes that they're bringing in. And then the more you can capture that and say, wait a minute, now we need, for us, is then how do we change our distribution strategy? Because we can't just say, oh, we're going to go stock this product at every single local company that wins supply hat. That this is not how our model is, but our model allows that to be like, well, you can't stock that at the distribution center because you're not going to sell it in Colorado. So don't, and you get that feedback because we only stock what effectively supports them from a distribution perspective, feeds it down. So that's really important is

to make sure that that product mix that comes through from what the contractor actually needs is what we actually provide.

00:24:49 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Yeah, for sure. So one of the things that I like to always close out with is to talk about what do you see as your hopes and dreams for the trades in this industry as it progresses over the next 10, 15, 25 years? Could you leave us with any final thoughts of what you hope to see in the future?

00:25:10 **Tom Ponting**

Yeah, I think I echo what Bruce said earlier. I think we're seeing more and more of a younger generation and newer in career generation coming through and seeing just the huge opportunities that come through with the trades. Look, we've all had a plumber come out to our house. We know how much it is to fix up. I think it's a great financial opportunities. Also another area to be, you can in the future, be your own owner, be your own boss and drive your own schedule. And the potential is uncapped. So I'd just love to see more of that. I'd love to see more innovation from the industry, how they take sort of more labor -saving, time -saving for those contractors out so they can focus on more jobs and more. I think it's really important. So I'm really excited about where the industry's going. I think this year is gonna be like any last three years is interesting in a different way. But we're still seeing it be a strong year in different markets, especially due to how diversified wind supply

00:26:08 **Tom Ponting**

is. And we're just excited to continue to partner with Oatey in such a great way. Yeah, that's great. Bruce, any thoughts on that?

00:26:16 **Bruce Pilbeam**

I would agree 100%. More young people in the trades. I wouldn't say we're a recession -proof industry, but we're recession -resistant. And we have an aging infrastructure. We talked a lot about plumbing today, but we're not just in plumbing. We're in multiple verticals, PBF, fire protection, electrical, with

the grid needing to be changed, us moving away from fossil fuels and more to the electrical grid, even though there's different ways to do that. We're gonna need people to go through that and redo all our infrastructure. So we have a lot of work for 30, 40 years in front of us. And we need the people to do that. There can only be so much labor savings. You still need some labor. Right, absolutely. So more people, you guys, what you're doing, help getting that message out to multiple people so they can think about that. Because we need to, when you talk about a plumber, everybody thinks about the guy with his pants. Yeah, sure. Playing with poop, yep. But that's not that guy. I know

00:27:32 **Bruce Pilbeam**

multiple multi-millionaire plumbers. Yeah, absolutely. And so we need to change that perception out there with the kids that are coming up so they realize that it's an honorable. Yeah.

00:27:47 **Tom Ponting**

And so many family names, isn't it? It's always like, I was just, sorry, playing off, Bruce, what you said earlier about things that changed, haven't changed. There is gonna be a guy in a truck with a name on the back that related to it. That's never gonna change. I mean, you can talk about drones and all these other things with tech and AI, but at the end of the day, your water heater breaks, you need a new water heater. Right. And there's a guy that needs to know how to do that, and it's gonna happen every time. I mean, it's not gonna change, and I think there's some really exciting things out there, but I'm also just excited for that and just to see those family names continue and the legacies that a lot of these companies have. Like we have here, generations of people that work at Wind Supply, and there's those generations of people that are gonna continue that stuff with these and the trade. So that's something super exciting to continue.

00:28:38 **Katherine Lehtenin**

For sure. Well, Bruce, I wanna applaud you for taking time to going into high schools, and we are a firm believer that it happens, the conversation starts at the dining room table in your schools, in your community, and if you can start to build that network and starting to get that message out, then it'll just continue to grow from there. So the more that we can get parents more comfortable talking about the trades with their kids, get school counselors more comfortable talking about the trades and the

options there, the more that we can at least bring awareness and at least have an option, and that's a lot of what we're advocating for is providing that option to a lot of people that maybe didn't know about it, that it could be a good option for them.

00:29:20 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Yeah, absolutely. And I said earlier in the podcast that we need to be able to sell to contractors in the way they wanna buy. We also need to be able to deliver that message to people in the way they need to consumer. Absolutely. Be it social media, be it podcasting, YouTube videos, whatever it is that gets people's eyes to the trades is what we need to do, because just while going into a high school is great and talking to kids, we were all kids once, it was like, yeah, I don't have to go to history. So you might touch one or two of them, but the vast majority are playing on their phones. Well, maybe there's something we can do where they can - Gamification. Yeah, gamification. They can figure, it's like, oh, the trades. Pretty cool. Yeah. I like it.

00:30:08 **Tom Ponting**

You know, if you're on TikTok or whatever that stuff is. Hey, Oatey is on TikTok. Oh, wow. No TikTok. No TikTok. You can, at a slight point, you can follow Wind Supply on all social media platforms except TikTok. Oh, all right, all right. I do have one last question, if we've got time. Oh, yeah, you have a question for us? Yeah, flip it back. What do you think Wind Supply or the wholesale community out there, I'm sure all the local companies would love to know, what can they do more for the contractors, you think, out there to kind of partner better?

00:30:37 **Doug Buchan**

You know, being an ex-contractor, I can tell you that the message that you've given us today is what contractors are looking for. We're looking for support, okay? Unconditional support, all right? If we come in with a problem, don't push us off to the side, okay? If we come in and we want to share a good story with you, take that, consume it, and then build off of it, all right? So I think Wind Supply does a really good job at balancing, hey, we're here for you when you need us, and we're happy to listen to you when you have successes, and then you continue to share those successes and you build on it, and it just makes all of us better. I mean, think about safety, for example. I mean, back in my



day, safety is like all the hell with that. If you get bumped up a little bit, shake it off, you'll be fine. But the industry itself has become so much safer, okay, because of product development. So that contractor, he's gonna continue that generational thing, he's gonna continue success if we

00:31:35 **Doug Buchan**

give them the support that they need and we give them the ear to listen when they want to say something. And I think you guys do a really good job at that. So I appreciate you for it.

00:31:45 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Yeah, thank you very much, that's great feedback.

00:31:47 **Tom Ponting**

Yeah, I think, you know, Pam, we said that some of my favorite stories, and I'll end with this, from Winn is, one, you know, when I go to a location, talk to the counterperson, just the fantastic sort of engagement. You see a line of contractors and they're trying to help them solve problems. And then the other one, playing it to the social media side of things is, I love it, I love to see, because every one of our local companies has their own account. Whenever they post something or you hear the story of, hey, this homeowner had a problem, had a leak, called up a Winsupply local company, they were open at 2 a .m., came in, got me the product I needed. That's the sort of stuff I think helps the differentiator is to do that support of when that contractor needs it. We can pivot to do some of those things and I'm more excited about it.

00:32:31 **Doug Buchan**

You know, you'll also notice too -

00:32:33 **Tom Ponting**

I'm not saying all of them get up at 2 a .m. I'm just saying - Here's the expectation. Call Winsupply at 2 a .m. in the morning, cool? Because I might like, you know, get me, but I would say there is a lot of -

00:32:43 **Bruce Pilbeam**

It's fine, call us at 2 a .m. We'll take the order, right? We'll take the order.

00:32:50 **Doug Buchan**

You know, you talked about your counter people too. You'll notice, and I think you should give accolades to those counter people who contractors are requesting when they come in to wait on them. Oh, absolutely.

00:33:04 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Not to get too far and too deep into a quick story here, but I would say that what differentiates Winsupply is our ownership model, so our give a damn is more. And I'll try to be succinct about this, but when I was working at a local company 20 years ago, there was an excavator that was coming in when he was close to our building and he would always get the same thing. He'd get a roll of 3 .25K, a meter bar, a meter pit, a meter lid, depending on where he was, because there was different codes for different areas, but he would get about the same thing. And he would pay cash and he would come in, he'd order that thing. His name was Cecil, he was a great guy. And then he would leave. Well, I noticed that the only thing he was buying from us was this. So what do I do? As I said, I built a kit in the computer called Cecil. You type it in, boom, it's a copper meter bar. And I put it on the shelf. So when he called and said, hey, I need this, I was like, all right, Cecil, it's gonna be \$60,

00:34:02 **Bruce Pilbeam**

whatever it might be. He would come in and I just gave it to him. He's like, this is already ready? And I'm like, yeah, it's already ready. And then, so he started calling me every couple of days. And we went from a customer that was doing \$500 worth of business in a month to a \$3 ,000 customer pretty quick, because he's like, well, what else can you do for me? Because nobody's ever pulled an order to have

it ready for me, because I'm, he's - Paying attention. He was going, I was saving him time in his day. And those are just little things that happen every day, all the way through all of wind supply. Our counter guys do that all the time, because they're paying attention. They're give -a -dammons more, because they do care about their contractor and saving them time and helping them out, so.

00:34:43 **Tom Ponting**

Like how many times have those counter guys saved a day? Well, and they're not, you look at like time per transaction, if you really were to look at this from a corporate experience. Some of those transactions are not earning money on that. I mean, the person's come in and said, hey, I need this new trap, I need this drain cover, it kind of goes with this house. Do you know where I can have it? Well, they're there to help find that solution. But their value is by solving that solution and being a solution provider. What's the local company that just won, like local company year, what do they have on their building? It's like.

00:35:13 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Oh, the problem fixers or the solution, yeah. We solve problems. We solve problems.

00:35:18 **Tom Ponting**

It's on the entire side of their building. And we're like, wow, because that's what they do. But they know that by solving that, hey, I need this one small can of solvent, this thing, and the cost per transaction is not gonna, they know that's gonna turn into those 3 ,000, 50 ,000 jobs. Sure, sure.

00:35:34 **Bruce Pilbeam**

And the best part of that is, is then price becomes a secondary piece. Because the service that, so, you know, the contractors who are service -trained that just beating you up on price, those guys go to the wayside. And then the real partnerships, which is kind of what we're talking about today, the overarching theme, the real partnership gets built there. And then we don't mind when you call us at 2 a .m. for a water. Yeah. Because the Cheesecake Factory needs hot water tomorrow. We do care.

00:36:05 **Tom Ponting**

I like the way we're Cheesecake Factory. And it wasn't like the hospital, or like your grandmother's house.

00:36:12 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Everybody wants a turtle cheesecake. There you go.

00:36:14 **Tom Ponting**

It's Mother's Day in the Cheesecake Factory.

00:36:16 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Well, what you may not know is that Doug has worked on almost every cheesecake in America.

00:36:22 **Bruce Pilbeam**

Wow, yeah. I know that. That's why I threw that out there. Yeah.

00:36:26 **Doug Buchan**

I'm going to have to send him some cheesecake.

00:36:31 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Well, I want to thank you both for a great conversation today. I really appreciate your time and your insight. And we look forward to many, many more years with wind supply and look forward to a greater partnership with you. So thank you both.

00:36:44 **Tom Ponting**

Thank you.

00:36:45 **Katherine Lehtenin**

Thanks for

00:36:49 **Katherine Lehtenin**

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