Serving the Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Industry Worldwide
The IKECA Journal is an industry publication for cleaners, fire marshals, insurance professionals, facility managers, vendors and other interested parties in the commercial kitchen exhaust cleaning and inspection industry.

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How great it was to be together in Scottsdale after three virtual conferences. That missing ingredient of what happens when you’re able to mingle together in between sessions, out for dinner, or just hanging around the pool or bar is proof that “in person” is uniquely different. The opportunity to seek out one of our colleagues for input, info, or opinion just seems to cultivate itself spontaneously when we spend time together. I’m looking forward to that same experience when we meet in Milwaukee for the Fall Technical Seminar in October.

While in-person events are great, there is also a high cost associated with attending these meetings. In light of this, the IKECA Board of Directors has voted to host our Fall 2023 Technical Seminar virtually to allow for owners and technicians to still gain important education at a fraction of the cost.

Pressing forward, as Past President Randy Conforti stated in the last issue of the IKECA Journal, we have been seeing the fruit of our 2020 Strategic Plan efforts in 2022. The IKECA Staff Team and Committee Volunteers have worked to expand the delivery of IKECA’s certifications via online format, giving the IKECA website a face-lift, launching proactive member recruitment programs, curating educational materials for IKECA members, and so much more.

Of all the good things that we see on the horizon for IKECA, along with the systemic improvements we can make, I truly believe that the growth of membership is most critical to our success. For years, I valued being the only IKECA member in my neighborhood as the differential advantage I had over my competitors. What I have learned is that the more we compete on a level field of quality and code compliance, the more enriched customer relations have become. Expanding the number of IKECA operators in your market will help fast-track a higher-quality arena to work in. I challenge every IKECA member to stretch the limits of their professional relationships, let your KEC colleagues know about the lower costs of the Introductory Membership, and take advantage of earning a $100.00 credit for your own membership.

IKECA has weathered the storm of the pandemic, and the ever-changing landscape of the KEC industry, and I am confident, as your new President, that we will end 2022 and start 2023 stronger than ever.
From the Desk of the Executive Director

Kathleen A. DeMarco, CAE / IKECA Executive Director

Much of the content of this issue focuses on the most widespread challenge for KECs right now: finding and keeping quality employees. The KEC industry definitely presents unique challenges: the work hours and environment are not for everyone. Combine that with “the Great Resignation” following the pandemic, which presented so many challenges for employees and their families, and the willing labor pool has shrunk significantly, making the hiring challenge even tougher.

In this Fall 2022 Journal, IKECA brings insights and new approaches to the hiring issue from several different perspectives. Interestingly we have articles that address the problem from within – taking a look at what you are doing (or not doing) to create and maintain a place of work where people want to be, to looking outside – at new and different potential sources for recruitment of employees.

The Journal is one example of thought leadership that IKECA is able to provide its Membership and the KEC industry. The articles, sourced from within and outside of the industry, provide different insights on tools, techniques, and resources. For example, a member shares how a simple and inexpensive device changed the way he conducts his inspections.

IKECA thought leadership also extends to its conferences. Like the 2022 Fall Technical Conference, which will feature industry leaders like Randy Conforti, Jim Roberts, Frank Mitarotonda, Kevin Pearson, Joel Berkowitz, and John Muller. The collective knowledge of these experienced and IKECA-certified professionals is offered to the industry in two full days of a schedule packed with information. In addition, the exhibit hall can be a wealth of education on new tools, products and services to support your business, and make your employees more efficient. Lots to learn in Milwaukee this October!

The real power of any association is the collective experience, shared. What is your contribution, and how will you share it with your IKECA peers? Join a Committee, attend and participate actively in Conferences, volunteer to serve on the Board, join an IKECA virtual round table session—no matter what you do, if you actively participate, you will give, and surely you will get as well. ♦
Obtaining an IKECA Certification: A Team Effort

April Elligson / IKECA Associate Director

IKECA Members understand the importance of getting and keeping an IKECA certification. It’s a requirement for certain member types, and a sign of responsibility and credibility. Carrying a CECT, CECS, CESI, BCCS, or BCSI behind your name sets you apart from others in the industry. When a code official, insurance professional, or facility owner or manager sees the IKECA credentials, they know that cleaning will be completed to the highest standard. Just as if any one of us needed medical attention or legal advice, we would not even consider a provider or lawyer without M.D., D.O., or Esq. at the end of their name.

Chair Charlie Cochrane states in this issue’s Certification Committee update that the Committee and IKECA staff and are working diligently to make IKECA certification exams more accessible, and to review the certification exam content for relevancy and alignment to the newest editions of standards, and with cleaning and inspection current best practices.

Over the years, IKECA has seen a high failure rate among certification exam candidates, yielding much discussion among IKECA Board members, staff, and Certification Committee members. Why is the failure rate so high? Are the certification exams too challenging? Are the questions unclear? Is proper time being allotted by individual candidates to study? Are candidates using appropriate study materials?

Since I began working with IKECA three years ago, it has become apparent through post-exam candidate surveys that exam failures are primarily due to the candidate not having allotted enough time to study the material, and/or the candidate assuming that because they are already doing the job, there is no need to study. Both of those scenarios are major factors in candidate success.

Unfortunately, IKECA staff all to often work with candidates who request study materials just a week before their exam, or who call to pay for an exam to be taken without seeking or using provided study materials. We always communicate to the candidate that these exams are rigorous, and it is important for them to take the time to learn the material. Our goal as the IKECA management team is to foster successful candidates, not to set them up for failure.

So what is the solution to all of this? The answer is simple. Major certification exams, such as the IKECA exams, should be a team effort. An employer should encourage study sessions with the candidate and should teach the candidate(s) the material, spending the time explaining industry standards and why they are important. They should encourage candidates to take the exam preparation session hosted by John Muller and Joel Berkowitz at every IKECA conference before they even register to take the exam.

All of us in IKECA have the same goal in mind—to protect life and promote fire safety. These things cannot be achieved alone. When the time came to take the SAT in high school, it was not administered on the first day of freshman year. Students were not expected to study alone and simply “figure it out.” The SAT is based on learned knowledge, from both education and experience. The IKECA exams are structured the same way. Employers should be setting the example for their employees and exam candidates, in order to set them up for success. IKECA provides the tools, but the IKECA member companies provide the know-how.

As the New York Times bestselling author John C. Maxwell says, “One is too small a number to achieve greatness. No accomplishment of real value has ever been achieved by a human being working alone.”

†
Join IKECA at the Hilton Charlotte University Place in Charlotte, NC this spring! The IKECA 2023 Annual Membership Meeting kicks off with educational sessions, vendor demos, networking events, and more! You won’t want to miss this exciting event in the bustling city known for great food, craft beer, sports, and scenery.

**Save the Date:**

**Wednesday, March 29 - Saturday, April 1, 2023**

- Hilton Charlotte University Place, Charlotte, NC

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This year as things around the world started to normalize, we had an opportunity to get back out in person in front of our fellow members at the IKECA Annual Membership Meeting in Arizona. The great weather of Arizona was a welcome relief to the end of our Canadian winter.

Our Canadian Chapter Committee met earlier this year and successfully gained funding from the Board of Directors, based on our plan to further our advocacy within Canada.

We have received the funding and put our efforts into action by attending the June 2022 Ontario Municipal Fire Prevention Associations Annual Symposium held in London, Ontario. Both myself and Bill Doherty represented IKECA in person at an exhibit booth, with a goal of offering AHJ memberships and promoting IKECA awareness. The event was a great success: we had the opportunity to meet with hundreds of AHJs from across Ontario, and were successful in adding to our membership. We were also able to visit with and strengthen our presence among a lot of our current AHJ members, which was great. This was our first in-person meeting in many years due to COVID restrictions in Canada, and the attendance was overwhelming.

It is very rewarding to see IKECA not only recognized in this association, but truly valued by the AHJ community. Our experience, as well as up-to-date, relevant education about our industry, are very appreciated. There were times during the Symposium when current AHJ members were literally selling our membership and the value they receive from IKECA to non-member AHJs. This is the ultimate reward for the time over the years we have spent promoting our association to this community. We have stoked the irons and are looking forward to the leads generated come to fruition amongst the local chapter meetings, which are anticipated to be held in the fall of this year. Our Committee has brought membership to the organization for this and next year and plan to attend 2023 Symposium.

Moving forward, our committee will build on this success and look to other similar events and associations reaching slowly but surely to promote our brand and association across Canada in an effort to drive IKECA’s mission to all KEC markets and potential members.

Thank you for the honor to represent IKECA as the Canadian Chapter president.

Update from the Certification Committee
Charlie Cochrane, CECS, BCCS

The Certification Committee has certainly had a busy year. We are moving forward and are on track with the main initiative of the year: moving all IKECA certification exams to an online format, and rewriting the CECT exam.

The Committee meets monthly, and has been working closely with Measure Learning (formerly Scantron) to learn how to write exam items (or the questions and possible responses to those questions), develop an exam item bank, and truly learn the science behind exam development.

Simultaneously, a new ad-hoc committee was formed, led by Dane Bundy, for the creation of a new IKECA Study Guide for the CECT exam. Those meetings take place approximately twice a month. This is a significant undertaking, since much of the study material has to be created from scratch and peer-reviewed. Topics such as site prep, duct cleaning, and fan cleaning do not exist in third-party material such as NFPA or ANSI/IKECA C-10, thus the committee is building this content, including photos, etc.

IKECA staff is also working with Measure Learning to move all other exams (CECS, CESI, BCCS, BCSI) to the online format. The Boston exams launched with an online testing option on July 1, and since then, many candidates have applied and taken the exam. This new format will be made available to test at a Measure Learning site as well for any candidates who prefer to test in-person.

We hope to have all of the pieces, including the new CECT exam and study materials, available by the end of Q1 of 2023. Once that is complete, the committee will then begin the process to develop a new CECS exam.

I want to recognize the time commitment these volunteers are making not only for the monthly meetings but the work that must be done between calls. We have teams of dedicated, competent, and hard-working people who we could not do this without. Thank you for all of your efforts.

Update from the Canadian Chapter
Alex Young, CECS

This year as things around the world started to normalize, we had an opportunity to get back out in person in front of our fellow members at the IKECA Annual Membership Meeting in Arizona. The great weather of Arizona was a welcome relief to the end of our Canadian winter.

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Thank you for the honor to represent IKECA as the Canadian Chapter president. ✪
2022 has shown great progress, many changes for IKECA and its members. I feel privileged to continue to be the Conference Committee Chair, to work with SMG staff, and to secure great locations for our Annual and Fall Technical Conferences. I want to thank everyone for their support in my role as Conference Chair, and I will continue to work hard to keep this Committee strong and move forward with the goal of successful conferences with the best results. I look forward to continuing working with everyone.

I stand by my 100% commitment to IKECA and the Board of Directors as Vice President to continue growing the association as a whole and launch forward for continued success. Our team, the best of the business community, will push together to achieve the same goals. The stability of the Conference Committee Team will continue to make improvements and grow our membership and the success of IKECA. I am confident that our growth with budgeting and planning will show how viable this Association truly is to the Fire Life Safety of all our customers.

The Education Committee is excited to announce that we have revamped the committee and have a team of volunteers working hard to provide educational content for the membership. We would like to thank all of our new volunteers for their participation and as always we encourage new volunteers to join our team.

With the revamp of the committee, the first order of business was to work on a fun and interactive trivia session for Fall Tech 2022. The committee met regularly to create questions and format for this session, and we are looking forward to executing it in Milwaukee. Following Fall Tech, the committee plans to revisit the IKECA Strategic Plan and develop set goals to accomplish for the end of 2022 and into 2023.

Additionally, I have taken on the role of committee chair for IKECA’s newly-formed ad hoc CECT Study Guide Committee. The purpose of this committee is to develop...
Update from the Education Committee, continued
Dane Bundy, CECS

op content and study material in anticipation of the new CECT exam. Since forming the committee, we have met several times and made great progress.

Update from the Insurance/AHJ Committee
Mike Rosenau, MBA, CSP, ARM, CPCU
& Frank Mitarotonda, CECS, CESI

Top of the day Iconic IKECA members:

As Co-Chair with Michael Rosenau and myself, Frank Mitarotonda, the guidance of April Elligson of Stringfellow Management, and the rest of the Insurance/AHJ team, we have been successful in forming the new Insurance/AHJ Committee and have made great progress.

The Insurance/AHJ committee’s objective is to educate AHJs, Insurance and Risk Management Professionals, and Facility Managers that IKECA is an international trade association representing kitchen exhaust cleaning specialists and inspectors of commercial kitchen exhaust systems, while stressing that the kitchen exhaust industry is growing at a rapid pace, and technology is changing all the time. We also want to educate on our certification programs to provide individuals with the means to keep on top of the changes in codes, standards, and technology.

The goal of coming up with questions for this past Spring 2022 Annual Meeting panel discussion, which included Jay Wingfield, Pete McDonnell, and Kathy Slomer and hosted by Randy “Brother Russo” was executed extremely well. Survey feedback from the Panel Discussion Session at the Scottsdale Conference was overall very positive.

As part of our outreach, the committee has created an Organizational Chart to serve as a checklist that helps define the responsibilities of the KEC, Facilities/Owne rs, the AHJ, and the Insurance Risk Management Professional. After countless hours of reviewing the project edits, we have finished a tri-fold brochure that provides further detail of the responsibilities of each party. The chart is to be used as a guideline across all jurisdictions for anyone to reference from an AHJ to a

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Leaving A Spot Resistant Rinse.

- 5-Gallon Pail Makes a 55 Gallon Drum of Concentrate $186.75 *
- 5-Gallon Pail “Drop Ship Special”: 16 Pails - $2,244.00 ($140.25 Per Pail!!!)
- 55-Gallon Drum Makes Eleven 55 Gallon
  Purchase One Drum @ $1,645.50
  Purchase Two Drums @ $1,452.00 each

*Quantity discounts allowed on 5-Gallon Pails:
  Two items less 5%
  Three items less 10%
  Four or more less 15%
Update from the Insurance/AHJ Committee, continued
Mike Rosenau, MBA, CSP, ARM, CPCU & Frank Mitarotonda, CECS, CESI

Facility Manager and so on.

As we progress, our next goals are to create an AHJ promo video as well as to host a “Loss Control 101” webinar after Thanksgiving.

As with any organization, member participation is key; our committee and all the other IKECA committees can use your help. It merely requires a few hours a year to make IKECA a credible viable organization.

Update from the Membership Committee
Kathy Slomer, CECS

I am excited to take over as Chair of the Membership Committee. A huge thank you to Dennis Poulin, previous Chair of the Committee, under his leadership there are some new and exciting initiatives in the works.

One of our top priorities as a committee is to grow membership, we all know how much we get out of our memberships and there are so many other companies that could also benefit. The group came up with a potential list of new members. April and her team designed an awesome marketing piece that includes a grease gauge along with a QR code that links that potential member straight to our site where they can find what they need to know about an IKECA membership. The Marketing piece has gone out and the Committee is in the process of doing follow-up calls and emails. If you know of any potential members, please reach out to April, pass along their information and she will mail the marketing piece to them.

Did you know we have a referral program? You can offset your membership dues by referring new members. The program is applicable for referrals of Active North American Members, Active International Members, Associate Members, and Introductory Members. For each paid membership you refer, you get a $100 credit!! We have eliminated the cap so you can refer as many as you want, you could potentially have enough credit to cover your whole membership dues.

I am looking forward to working with our group of hard-working committee members; Charles Cochrane, Dennis Poulin, Greg Fisher, Don Pfleiderer, and Mr. “Super fantastic” Frank Mitarotonda. If you would like to join our committee, we would love to have you. Send me an email to Kslomer@koolkleen.com.
Technical Standards Development Committee Update

James Shea & James Roberts, CECS, CESI

Reflection
1. serious thought or consideration

As we begin to write this update, we reflect on the last 5 years and wonder if we have done all that was intended when we began our journey as Chair and Vice Chair. This fall will mark a 5-year commitment from your Chair and Vice Chair to the IKECA organization and to our dear departed friend, Bernie Besal with hopes to continue the legacy.

The committee started with a few select members of IKECA. The ANSI / IKECA Standards were a vision of early members to improve the knowledge, professionalism, and training of members while also raising public awareness and expectation. To show how vitally important it is to the community not only do the job but do the job the right way. To bring a suite of minimum safety standards and requirements to the industry and support certifications and minimum levels of competency. To minimize liability of KEC companies while supplying an essential fire prevention service to the industry. To close the gap in the codes and standards requiring action, yet without the methodology or best practices to do so. To share with our tradesman the knowledge and expertise of so many that came before and learned through their experiences, successes, and tragedies. To enhance, promote, and in some cases legitimize our trade in support of life safety and fire prevention.

The premise to create minimum industry standards that would support the integrity and workmanship for those who followed these standards and to provide the Authority Having Jurisdiction, owner / operators, and service team members with the tools necessary to guide those in the industry to proper cleaning, inspection, and maintenance.

The standards along with the International Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Certification program allow organizations a path to validation that those who are certified and follow these standards have the tools necessary to deliver competent and reliable fire protection services.

In the past five years as your TSDC leadership team and Standards Committee, there is much to reflect on.

1. Continuing the momentum of those before, to offer a suite of ANSI-approved standards for the betterment of the industry and education of the community.
2. The completion, ANSI approvals, and introduction of the Maintenance Standard; M-10 now on its second revision cycle
3. The inclusion of the Cleaning Standard, C-10 into the body of the NFPA 96 Standard
4. Introduction of the first Technical White Paper, “Leak Testing of Type I Grease Ducts” in collaboration with the ASHRAE 154 technical committee
5. Creation of a Process for execution of our Standards Cycle process to accomplish true consensus among our many stakeholders who look to the ANSI / IKECA documents for guidance
6. Ongoing collaboration with our partners from the National Fire Protection Association including continued acceptance and update to our Memorandum of Understanding established during the infancy of our committee
7. Audit of our C-10 and I-10 standards with no findings but suggestions on how to make our process better aligned with the ANSI Essential Requirements
8. Asserting our influence to ensure the integrity and reputation of the ANSI / IKECA Standards while being utilized for industry training.
9. Sustainability of the TSDC during a pandemic
10. The introduction, addition, and reference of the inspection standard, I-10 into the NFPA 96 document
11. The combined effort to defend and retain the reference to C-10 in the Alaska State Fire Code
12. New revisions to C-10 and I-10
13. Training programs to enhance the awareness of technical committee members by subject matter experts to support code writing and grow the already expansive knowledge within the committee make-up
14. First Standards to identify and introduce new language addressing new innovations being integrated in kitchen ventilation equipment

The above only to mention a few. Upon the exit of the worst part of the pandemic, we begin to realize the impacts to our businesses, the economy, and the workforce, with so many working harder and longer than ever to sustain what they had before it all began. The
impact travels not only to our individual companies but also to the organizations which we have supported over the years.

Shifts in the support, volunteerism, and time available have changed for many. As an industry and organization, we must remind ourselves of the above paragraphs and the reasons why IKECA and the TSDC were established.

Once again, we speak to our membership in a call to action. We ask that you help strengthen the work accomplished through education and communication. Hand out the M-10 to managers, owners, and operators to help support their daily activities. Provide the C-10 and I-10 to your local AHJs and insurance underwriters. Take time if you are involved in local or national trade shows to include the publications in your itinerary during these shows and promote IKECA and the value of membership through ongoing training and certification programs. Get the word out that there is a suite of standards that support our industry and contribute to minimum competency requirements for successful execution of our work. If time is short for committee involvement, then we ask that you develop a process within your current systems during your normal workdays to deliver these important messages.

Get involved. Review the standards on a regular basis, offer them as the “how to” standards while supporting NFPA and the ICC Codes as the “need to,” “when to” and “where to” code requirements. I remind you that both NFPA and Underwriter Laboratories were and still are highly influenced by the work ANSI has done over the years.

Lastly, if you want change – make change. If the Standards we are writing need language to help you with compliance issues, then it is upon you to increase their strength by adding and enhancing them through your voice and public commentary.

Currently the TSDC is working on the first revision of the M-10 standard first completed in 2019. The maintenance standard is established to support the owners/operators in their daily work habits to supply safety to their workers, patrons, and places of business.

We have held two meetings on public comment and changes to the standard. One in Arizona this past spring and the other during a virtual meeting in August. If there is interest in following the proceedings of these
Technical Standards Development Committee Update, continued
James Shea & James Roberts, CECS, CESI

meetings, the minutes are posted on the IKECA website. The M-10 standard is still in cycle until the committee reviews all public comment and changes, and then votes to support sending the revision to ANSI for final approvals. We expect this vote to take place this fall during our fall meeting where the committee will meet for a final review of the revisions and a revised approved ANSI M-10 Standard revision in early 2023.

In addition to the M-10 Standard revision cycle, we continue to work on education and have completed our second session of discussions on Mitigating Risk and Liability as a “hot topic”. You might imagine, that this is a topic not without opinion, experience, and active participation.

Other happenings:

• Since the last report, we have a new Staff Liaison / Secretariat. Nikki Augsburger accepted the position and began her behind-the-scenes work for the committee in the first part of 2022. She has quickly become an asset to our organization and shows a passion for the committee, the world of ANSI, and compliance to the ANSI Essential Requirements as well as our Standard Operating Procedures. We welcome her on board as a member of Stringfellow Management in her complete role as Director of Standards & Certification.
• The committee has reviewed its Standards Cycle Process and with the help of our support staff made suggestions on changes that streamline the process and provide improvements to better align with ANSI’s Essential Requirements
• We have reviewed committee rosters and updated all affiliations/memberships – We are accepting new members for the following categories. Fire Prevention Authority, Insurance, & end-user
• We had positive communications with PWNA regarding industry commitment to the use of our standards for training and certification of industry outside the IKECA membership
• In January of this coming year, we begin the work on revisions to the next standard in line ANSI / IKECA Standard I-10 ♦
Hood Cleaning Service Vehicle

Features:

- Cab and body are separate. Benefits to this are no chemical/fuel odors in cab, a reduction of noise and safety in an accident.
- Motor and burner are installed on a slide so the unit is outside of the body while operating.
- Because of the slide, the motor and burner are more accessible, making them easier to service and re-fuel.
- No exhaust hole needed in the roof.
- Available with 3 bar ladder rack or two bar drop down ladder rack

Vehicle Specs:

- Transit T250 Single Rear Wheel Cab Chassis
- GVW 9,000 lbs

Kitchen System Install/Service Mid Roof

Features:

- Mid Roof Van has 69.5” of interior height
- 10’ conduit storage compartment
- (3) 7’ pipe storage compartments

Vehicle Specs:

- Transit T250 Mid Roof Cargo Van
- GVW 9,000 lbs

Options Available:

- T350 with 9,500 GVW
- High Roof Available with 79” interior height
- 40,000 BTU rear heater
- Shelving, storage bins and tool boxes (shown)
- Also available with dry chemical fill system and workbench
CONGRATULATIONS TO THOSE WHO RECENTLY ACHIEVED THEIR DESIGNATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS!

PECT Professional Exhaust Cleaning Technician
- Neil Reinikka / The Steam Guy
- Christopher Hilston / US Vents
- Jacqueline Abanto / Bare Metal Maintenance, Inc.
- Jemmy Almen / Oregon Hood Cleaning
- Norris Michael / Oregon Hood Cleaning
- Jerry Lauror / Oregon Hood Cleaning
- Tony Langimeo / Oregon Hood Cleaning
- Randy Botta / Oregon Hood Cleaning
- Juan Aldama / Oregon Hood Cleaning
- Aaron Gregory / Derby Pressure Wash
- Aaron Norfleet / Derby Pressure Wash
- Tyrann Ballard / Besal Services, Inc.
- Samuel Drinks / Besal Services, Inc.
- Benjamin Rogers / Performance Industrial
- Elijajuan Perkins / Performance Industrial

CECT Certified Exhaust Cleaning Technician
- Razwan Ahmed / RHM Hood Exhaust
- Chris Belmore / National Interior Solutions
- William Regan / Restaurant Exhaust Cleaning Specialists
- Walvis Marcos / Hood Cleaners of America
- Brandon Floyd / Apex Hood Cleaning
- Jordan Tremblay / Exo Nettoyage
- Michael Hernandez / Columbia Fire Protection

CECS Certified Exhaust Cleaning Specialist
- Jonathan Aristy Vidot / JJ Industrial Services
- Alberto Amezcua / Trebla Industrial Resources, Inc.
- Gabriel Chick / Service-Tech Corporation
- Dennis Creason / 360 Commercial Cleaning
- Jacqueline Ballot / Fire Protection Equipment Company

BCCS Boston Certified Cleaning Specialist
- Shary Martinez / Right Call Services LLC
- Sann Andrew / Cochrane Ventilation, LLC
- Drake Riot / CS Ventilation
- Javier Acevedo / Chief Fire Prevention
- Herbert Turner / Impact Fire Services
- Stephen Davis / Apex Ventilation Group, LLC
- Timmy Soung / Cochrane Ventilation, LLC
- Nicholas Leary / AirCare Environmental Services, Inc.

New Members

AHJ
- Nick Alonzo / Chandler Fire Department
- Christine Antaya / American Fire Equipment
- Tony Bennett / Scottsdale Fire Department
- Brian Bennink / City of Auburn Fire Department
- Annette Bisschops / Greater Sudbury Fire Services
- Ruben Briones / Chandler Fire Department
- Auburn Bureau / City of Auburn Fire Department
- Alan Campbell / Greensboro Fire Department
- Mario Cau Ottawa / Fire Services
- Steven Christen / Poudre Fire Authority
- George Cluff, Jr. / Rio Rico Medical & Fire District
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- Cody Moravec / Waukee Fire Department
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- Thomas Pond / Fairfield Fire Department
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Hear that? It is the sound of workers walking out the door or not showing up at all. The “Great Resignation” started early in the pandemic as companies across the board saw employees dropping out of the ranks, and the kitchen exhaust cleaning industry felt it, too. As 2021 progressed, the attrition momentum increased until it seemed like the flood gates had opened in many kitchen exhaust cleaning companies.

Here’s the bad news: new predictions indicate that high quit rates will continue to dominate the work world. Kitchen exhaust cleaning companies haven’t seen anything like it in their years of operation, and many state that they do not see any labor relief coming anytime soon.

While many attribute the turnover trend to issues related to COVID, enough research now exists to partially dispel that notion. The pandemic was indeed at the root of many resignations, but more specifically, the health crisis revealed and worsened existing issues causing people to dislike their jobs.

Consequently, kitchen exhaust cleaners shouldn’t make the mistake of believing attrition will settle down. Employees are migrating from their “crummy” jobs to “better” jobs, from companies that “don’t seem to care,” to companies “that do care.” To become the ideal employer, you should find ways to restore employee engagement and inspire valuable team members to stay put.

Be Transparent When Hiring

Kitchen exhaust cleaning is a tough job, so don’t oversell the job and conditions of the work involved. Recognize that it is not a clean, easy job and that it will not be a good fit for many people. Being transparent about the position means describing what being a long-term kitchen exhaust cleaning technician entails. If your company offers education or other benefits, be honest about the perks. But don’t gloss over the difficulties of the job. In the KEC world, employee education and training are essential for long-term success. Education will help develop a basic knowledge of a particular subject, while training is the “how to” of a particular process or procedure. Employees like to feel invested in their jobs.

Develop a New Employee Onboarding Process

Develop a structured onboarding process that includes a formal education program to integrate your new hires into the kitchen exhaust cleaning industry that will “break the ice” on what a kitchen exhaust cleaning technician does, and provide an overview of the core information necessary to become successful in the industry before they ever set foot on a job site. A good new employee onboarding program will include safety, culture, and workflow training.

Retain Employees with a Formal Career Program

Consider a few simple facts. Only 11% of companies offer formal career programs for employees, so in many cases, the only opportunity to grow is by leaving. When companies get involved in a formal education program, employee retention tends to improve, because employees feel a sense of pride and confidence that their employer is taking an interest in their personal development and knowledge level. By providing continued education for your technicians, the quality level of the services you offer will also increase with your technician’s expertise.

Online learning is one platform for ongoing training, because of the low cost and high impact usage, as well as ease of use for the employee. Others include in-person training hosted at your facility; training and education provided by your suppliers; and programs delivered by IKECA and other organizations during KEC industry events.

While there are many aspects that can set kitchen exhaust cleaning companies apart from their competition, employee education and training may be one of the most critical. A business owner adds value to the entire organization by providing continued education to increase the performance of all members of their team. These programs can help employees feel respected, empowered, and develop a career path in a place that can be worthwhile.

Andy Jacobs is the Founder and Partner at KEC Training by Etcetera (formerly KEC Concepts). KEC Training by Etcetera offers online learning courses to help new KEC technicians gain practical knowledge of the kitchen exhaust cleaning industry.
Having Trouble Finding Employees – You May Be Overlooking One in Three Candidates

John Collins / Omni Supply Corporation

Approximately one in three working-age adults have a criminal record, which is almost 74 million people. That record can be for anything from driving without a license, to possessing marijuana. Of course, there are those who have more serious criminal records.

A recent study from the RAND group says that “most who enter the criminal justice system ultimately desist from crime. The risk of recidivism declines the longer a person is in the community and does not commit a crime. Eventually, past criminal record is no longer predictive of future convictions.”

With unemployment low, job openings at an all-time high, and people leaving the workforce in unprecedented numbers, you cannot afford to overlook this population.

Organizations such as Starbucks and Home Depot have active programs for hiring people with criminal records. A recent survey of managers conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that employees who have a criminal record bring 82% more value to the organization than employees without records.

Why do they bring more value? Employees with criminal records tend to be more engaged and productive having a stronger work ethic. They also tend to be loyal to an organization that gives them a second chance. In fact, companies that hire people with records, on average, see an 11% reduction in turnover rates.

In addition to the cost savings associated with lower turnover, there are tax credits, training reimbursement, and other incentives offered. The WORK Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available for hiring ex-felons. (https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit).

In addition to the Federal government, many states offer tax credits, training cost reimbursement, or other incentives to employ ex-felons. Contact your state unemployment office or workforce development office to learn more about the advantages of hiring an ex-felon and the incentives offered.

If you are worried about bonding an ex-felon, the federal government offers a bonding program, which doesn’t cost the employer or employee anything. https://nicic.gov/federal-bonding-program-us-department-labor-initiative.

Another resource is DKB Foundation. Their website offers a series of videos for business leaders to help you understand and adapt to hiring ex-felons. https://dkbfoundation.org/playbook-3/

Hiring in today’s marketplace is fiercely competitive. Rethinking the hiring of ex-felons can put you at a competitive advantage, reduce costs, and in the end make a major difference in someone’s life. ♦
On behalf of our clients, we often discuss Digital Dialogue. It’s a hot topic. Here is how a typical discussion goes. First, I throw out the question. “What is Digital Dialogue, guys?”

The answers (and questions) come back. “We don’t know.” “Is it social media?” “Is it Chat?”

These responses always lead to interesting discussions, but this question from one of my young employees got my attention. “Isn’t everything digital dialogue?” The question made me think a lot.

Don’t let the word ‘digital’ become more important than the word ‘dialogue’. Successful Digital Dialogue starts a conversation that develops relationships and builds trust with your customers, because it helps you understand their needs, and they like the fact that you care enough to learn more about them.

Trusted businesses who are good communicators are far more likely to produce brand ambassadors who sing your praises and recommend you to their families and friends. Do you know what else successful Digital Dialogue does? It shortens the length of the sales cycle.

Don’t get frustrated if it doesn’t work immediately. Remember, it takes time to build customer relationships.

If you have Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software that allows it, noting your customers’ information delivery preferences would be a good start. With that information in hand, your sales team can target information to the customer in the way they are most likely to engage with you. Good and effective communication builds lasting relationships. Also, check the response rates for email blasts and refer to insights on Social Media for metrics. Reporting is very helpful.

Are You Good At Starting Conversations?
We all strive to be better at it. But, so much depends on “how” we communicate. Most people have a preferred channel of interaction. They respond when you communicate with them in the way they like. Have you spent time researching that? Take the time to find out by starting some Digital Dialogues on social media. Send an email blast or maybe even write a blog post. Ask a few questions on Facebook, and set up a “lunch & learn” Zoom call for your customers. Don’t get frustrated if it doesn’t work immediately. Remember, it takes time to build customer relationships.

Cindy Laidlaw / Laidlaw Marketing
In 2000, I found myself needing to change employment and a family member introduced me to Nelson Dilg. I found myself resolving the need for a job close-to-home but I really didn’t know what I was getting myself into – the world of grease exhaust system cleaning. My assigned task was to perform inspections on our own work and new clients, to confirm that all was safe and their grease exhaust system was indeed compliant with something called the NFPA 96 Standard. Initially, this seemed like a laborious task. Shortly, it all changed.

After being required to study the grave importance of my new industry employment, and reading of numerous grease exhaust system fires, a local Chili’s® restaurant burned to the ground in a raging five-alarm fire. The fire department found the source was tied to the grease exhaust system. I quickly found myself drinking the Kool-Aid that my new President was “preaching” to me week in and out, when he would speak of this organization, IKECA, and its focus on proper cleaning of the entire grease exhaust system. So, I began each in-
I was then introduced to Don Pfleiderer and quickly realized he was grounded in the same principles as Mr. Dilg with regards to compliance to standards. I performed my inspections responsibly, always sure to get all parts of the system inspected. I found that areas located behind the filter tracks were the non-compliant sections consistently skipped in cleaning operations. Still, I always found myself needing to borrow some customer’s ladder to get onto the hood in order to inspect the horizontal duct. This area was critically important and challenging to verify. It was here that again, many other cleaners were performing less than their owners were hoping for.

The Wakeup Call
While performing an inspection for Don Pfleiderer in Philadelphia, he asked me how things looked. I informed him of the conditions at the hood, and my dilemma of not having a ladder, and thus not being able to inspect the horizontal duct, which appeared to be compromised from the vertical, upwards view. He then asked “is your monopod too short? If so, get one with that extends to eight feet, or two that can be combined.” I said, “OK... but what is a monopod?”

That was the day my inspection life changed dramatically. This device has been well known to photographers for years (there were no photographers in my family and, GoPro® was 15 years away). Using the monopod eliminated 80% of the time I had been speding, climbing on top of hoods, carefully avoiding the suppression cables, and removing access doors (apparently some for the first time). It revolutionized my inspection workload.

So, for the 5% reading this story who don’t carry a monopod, but who perform any kind of work on grease exhaust systems, and certainly all the inspectors, this device is a must-have in your tool box. Oh, buy a few as you’ll leave them from time to time as gifts for kitchen staff!
Tips for Making the Right Equipment Purchase

Gary Weldon / Tegras North America

You hear about them all the time – these incredible restaurants that feature high-dollar tasting menus, crazy displays of molecular gastronomy, and insanely creative food that will leave you speechless. As restaurants advance to offer more to the customer experience, so do their kitchen exhaust systems and the grease they produce. If you have been a kitchen exhaust cleaner with years of field experience, you can attest to the fact that there are several different kinds of systems and configurations out there, each with its own unique grease output.

Kitchen exhaust cleaners can be tasked with cleaning a restaurant with multiple hood systems with a long maze of connecting ductwork and a solid fuel cooking system. For complex systems with hundreds of feet of lateral ductwork, would your kitchen exhaust cleaning company be up to the task? These types of jobs require a lot of technicians, multiple ladder setups, and chemical applications.

Upgrading or purchasing the right equipment can be influential in helping your KEC company tackle these tough jobs. It is common for businesses to get to a point where they have plateaued and need to invest in their business for it to grow and become more profitable. You may need to purchase new technology, machinery, and equipment. Taking that step to purchase new equipment can feel difficult, but sometimes it is necessary.

Your equipment purchase needs to fit in within your overall strategy. Here are some tips for making the right equipment purchase:

Face the Reality

The right equipment can improve your processes, productivity, capacity to innovate, and increase your revenue. Start by assessing your kitchen exhaust cleaning company’s reality and define your objectives. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Are you looking to increase productivity?
2. Will this new equipment make you more successful?
3. Will it help you stay ahead of your competitors?
4. Does the equipment provide a solution to a problem?

Get an External Point of View

Before you go out and just start buying the latest and greatest equipment, pause and get an external point of view. Depending on the scale of your investment, work with an external consultant who can ensure you are making the most of your purchase by accurately assessing your needs. They can also provide a cost-benefit analysis, which can help justify your purchase.

Create a Roadmap

It is important to see what’s working well in your kitchen exhaust cleaning company and what is not. What problems do you or your technicians face while on the job? This important step helps you understand your current equipment, set equipment development priorities, and provide a timeline for the implementation of new equipment. This will also give you a clear picture of what you are already doing and map out your processes. Whether it is buying new equipment, new technology, or optimizing certain processes, this mapping roadmap will help to identify investment opportunities to improve your clients’ results.

Find a Trusted Supplier

The internet gives you access to a wide range of kitchen exhaust cleaning equipment companies, so take the time to research. Sign up for newsletters targeting specific industries, and attend trades shows where you can get some hands-on time with equipment Above all, don’t let price alone guide your decision. Consider aspects such as post-sales service and the supplier’s reputation. You can, and should, request their references!

Keep Training in Mind

All too often, KECs don’t consider the time, money, and resources required to train employees on the new
equipment. Be sure to factor in training time to avoid productivity drops that can occur when employees take too much time to adapt to new equipment and technology. If the equipment is new or has new features, assume employees will face a learning curve. Block off time to train employees and ask the supplier if they provide new equipment training for your crew. You will find that many suppliers have already factored in this important element, so take advantage of it! Remember it is important to get ahead of problems by ensuring you have the right training in place to minimize downtime.

When you implement this process for your kitchen exhaust cleaning company, you can rest assured that as restaurants advance to offer more to the customer experience, you are also advancing with the right equipment! As a kitchen exhaust cleaner, you want to ensure that not only are your clients happy, but their spaces are free of all grease. The easier that job is on you and your employees, the better. When you obtain the right equipment, you will have the peace of mind knowing that it is going to save you time and money. That, in itself, is priceless.

Gary Weldon is the General Manager of Tegras North America and has served as an Engineer for Omni Containment Systems, LLC (OCS). OCS manufactures products that enable their clients to contain their fats, oils, and grease with cost effective, environmentally responsible solutions. OCS has been a member of IKECA since 2003.

Before you go out and just start buying the latest and greatest equipment, pause and get an external point of view.
Omni Containment Systems and Tegras North America continue to provide our clients with high quality kitchen exhaust cleaning solutions to support their business operations!

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Filter Efficiency: A Comparison of US and European Standards
Denis Schiavi / SiFiM Components & Solutions

When selecting replacement filters for restaurant hoods, selection criteria may include the size or sizes of the filters (usually standard), the material of construction, certifications of UL fire safety, NSF for sanitary safety and static pressure drop, among others.

Sometimes overlooked when comparing different market offerings is filter efficiency, designed to measure the rate of grease particle capture for filters installed into a commercial kitchen hood. Here, we compare the US and European standards.

The US Standard
In the US market, there are a range of standards including the ASTM F2519 standard, which defines the method to measure grease particle capture efficiency for a filter installed into a commercial kitchen hood. Variables in the standard include filter size, flow rate, and speed. However, the standard does not define a range of available speed, and speed indication is not incorporated into the below graph. Having speed as a variable could produce data more comparable among different filter products.

The European Union Standard
In comparison to the US market, the European market-required standard for air filtration in ventilation equipment for kitchens is German VDI 2052. The standard features particle filtration efficiency measured at different speeds for the same filter frontal size: from 0.5 m/s (around 98 fpm) to 2.5 m/s (around 492 fpm) in steps of 0.5 m/s for a total of 5 curves.

The test aerosols consist of paraffin droplets generated by an atomizer. They are detected by a particle detector upstream and downstream of the filter.

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Pressure Drop
Another important parameter for hood design is the pressure drop that is generated from filters and other details.

Filter pressure drop can be very different from one type of filter to another, and from one hood to another. This is characterized by filter frontal area and flow rate.

If there is a need to compare data from different filter sizes, it can be done by checking pressure drop at a specified speed. By doing so, you can have more data available and a wider choice to reach a better performance from your hood.
Post-Pandemic Hiring – Embrace What Has Worked for Decades
Brian Smith, Ph.D. / IA Business Advisors

There is a lot of chatter going on about hiring. We hear it everywhere in the news and our advising company is regularly approached by clients to help them navigate the “new norm.” We advise our clients to do exactly what worked pre-pandemic.

Our clients who followed a structured hiring process pre- and post-pandemic saw challenges, but these challenges are things that we can count on to never remain the same. The labor pool is shallower and the people in it were more discerning and difficult to communicate with. However, keeping a structured hiring process aids in finding the right employee regardless.

Our clients that followed this advice still hired good team members and have good retention of those team members. The clients that abandoned the structured hiring process and tried to shortcut it began to see the chaos of disorganized hiring practices and poor communication – higher turnover and difficulty in speaking to qualified candidates.

So, what is the secret to hiring post-Covid? It is the same process as hiring pre-Covid!

1. **Be Transparent About the Position.**

Companies feel like they need to sell a job, so they put the great aspects into the advertisement to sell candidates on the job, money, and culture. People today are still searching for work that not only pays the bills but supports the lifestyle they envision for themselves and their family. So, when you advertise the job, describe the job in detail. Help them understand what the hours are, what the environment is, what the team structure or lack of structure is, and be clear about what the role’s expectations are.

2. **Interview with Team Members Who Will Work with the New Hire.**

One of the biggest mistakes we believe happens is that no one from the team where the new hire will be working is generally included in the interview process. This perspective can help to prepare the team and the new hire for the potential first day.

Including the direct manager and one of the team members who will be responsible for onboarding or working with the new team member creates a few advantages for everyone. First, the prospective team member can engage with a person with whom they will actually work with. This interaction has proven to be valuable both in weeding out people who are not a fit and in solidifying the final choice for the one that does. Second, the first day for the new person is much less surprising and a more comfortable beginning. This has proven to help overcome a lot of first day to first week issues many companies face. Finally, we have seen a definitive de-

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Post-Pandemic Hiring – Embrace What Has Worked for Decades, continued

Dr. Brian Smith, Ph.D. / IA Business Advisors

There is an increase in turnover of new hires in industries that tend to have more attrition: the trades, food service, and hospitality.

3. Make the First Day a Big Deal.

Be prepared for your new team member. This is an important change for your company, your team, and the person joining you. Ensure that the person arrives to an environment that recognizes they are new and is prepared to help them acclimate and settle into their surroundings and areas of influence.

This does not mean throw a party. What this means is that your organization and everyone who will be involved in supporting the person’s first day will be ready and have a plan to accomplish what is needed to ensure your new team member feels like part of the team from moment one.

Have the legal issues ready to be completed and ensure that the process includes a review of your company culture, employee handbook, policies, and procedures. Ensure introductions are made to anyone the person may interact with; this will ensure that when they cross paths again in the near future, those interactions will be more comfortable, instead of that surprised, “Oh, are you new person everyone is talking about?”

Hiring post-Covid doesn’t have to be different than hiring pre-Covid. While the labor pool might be smaller, keeping positive and engaging hiring tactics is the way to ensure success. Be honest about what you’re looking for, include your team, and be prepared to onboard correctly.

Brian Smith is the Founder and Senior Managing Partner at IA Business Advisors. IA supports clients across the United States and in 32 other countries, and has been a member of IKECA since 2010.
Don’t Miss In This Issue

The Paradox of Fear

Bill Wooditch / Wooditch Enterprises

Growth will have more influence on your safety and security than those risks of inaction. Life expresses itself forward; you are either growing or declining. But you may not risk because you want to feel safe. Fear told Richard Branson not to start Virgin Airlines; he didn’t listen to the voice. Fear told George Washington he wouldn’t survive the winter; he got on that boat at Valley Forge, and we’re living today from the courage of that historical move forward.

Fear informs those who are willing to listen. Fear conforms to the limitations of the message; it does not expand beyond doubt, worry, loss, and uncertainty. It is the messenger that must believe the message. The messenger must convey the message with courage. You must be that messenger. Be bold. Have conviction. Exude confidence. Accept failure as a teacher and move “Always Forward!”.

The more you believe your fears, the stronger they become. The opposite is true. Fear prefers to isolate you in the dark or on your own with your thoughts. It doesn’t flourish from the encouragement of your allies. You need your allies; you need the strength of your self-talk and you need to be surrounded by those who live a life of increase; those who overcome fears daily and live a life of forward motion.

Entry on the road to abundance comes at a cost. What often stands between you and the life, you want to lead is fear. For some, their ego-identity is at stake with every decision they make, so they don’t take action or default to safe choices. The cost of success is perseverance, resilience, and conformity to habit. Each trait is subject to your awareness of the need to do that which you must to move forward. Once you are aware, you have an obligation to act upon that which you have found.

Successful engagement and expression reside on the other side of fear. Make the metaphorical journey to the edge and jump off, use a parachute, and make sure you pack it. Move forward and adapt, try, learn, and win! Remember, sustainable achievement is generated through directed activity, intelligent risk, and the willingness to engage life as a teacher in a classroom that is always in session.

Awareness Quotient:

- You are accountable to the process, but not the outcome. You influence the outcome by remaining accountable to the process.
- Be cautious not to assign self-worth to an opinion of another, or to external events that are outside of your span of influence. If your self-worth is attached to the opinion of others or to external events, your confidence and self-esteem will fluctuate and take the roller coaster ride on the tracks of that which you cannot control. Control your internal assessment of external events and realize that most of the outside world is beyond your control.
- Safe doesn’t wake up your survival instinct; it slumbers in the zone of comfort. Personal and professional growth first happens when you wake up, feel the twinge of fear, perhaps the scream of the lizard brain, and move forward in spite of it.
- The fear of personal responsibility creates helplessness. You must be the author of your story; personal accountability is the essential nutrition of personal growth. If it is to be, it will be up to you to make it happen. Find a way or make a way!
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