

# INCLEAN

MAGAZINE

## CARPET & RESTORATION

Pathway to L-earning ...

### NETWORK SIGNALS VIGOROUS EXPANSION OF SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

Engendered by the presentation of a raft of initiatives designed to significantly boost supplier members' turnovers, an upbeat mood pervaded the 2009 Network Group conference. Those initiatives include commercial water damage; fire restoration; NetworkAssist (IT) enhancements including a public web site; and more human resources.



Above: From left, Network's Aaron Nicol, Barry Fraser (Sunshine Coast Flood & Fire Restoration), Network's Mark Brittain and Network's Kat Nicol

Below: Barb Jackson and Libby Longstreth (right)... these two US speakers made significant contributions to the conference's success



Held at Sofitel Gold Coast, late May, the three-day Network Group Conference was attended by technician supplier members, international industry experts and local guest speakers. The Network Glaziers' group also held a co-located conference.

From the US were School of Surface Technology's Libby Longstreth and Ron Toney; and Total Contentz's Barb Jackson and Tim Jackson. From Australia were Suncorp's Angus Cruikshank and Michael Stubbs; and CPK Training's Simon Phipps.

The conference, themed Pathway to L-earning, was run by a 'brains trust' of Ashley Easterby, Duncan Bennett, Mark Brittain and Aaron Nicol.

After a welcoming party at PHJ Services' impressive Gold Coast premises, the work sessions were fast-paced to ensure constant delegate attention. It was an excellent formula for a learning environment.

"This program delivers real value to you, our suppliers, in terms of professional education and lifestyle enhancement," stated Duncan Bennett in his welcoming address as MC.

The content was a mix of education to help Network suppliers improve their business practices and information about the Group's expansionary plans and how best members could capitalise on them.

Network operations manager Mark Brittain set the scene with his presentation 'What's next!' He covered the Group's expanded human resources with the recruitment of Carly Watts as administration officer; aggressive moves into commercial water damage and fire restoration services; the re-introduction of professional development days; changes to NetworkAssist; and supplier audits.

"One of our most significant initiatives is the development of a Network Restorers' website. We believe that now is the time to further expand our communication avenues and the new website will complement our phone and email contact systems," explained Brittain. The website will include supplier profile pages as well as public news feeds.

Carrying on the IT tack, Novoss Software's Aaron Nicol related how the Group's initial - and ahead of its

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time - Carpetrak software has evolved into the proprietary NetworkAssist. It gives the Group its backroom strength on which to build various service delivery offerings.

"We are including a job management suite and a digital content inventory system; and new modules are being developed ongoing," Nicol stated. "We are leveraging this very powerful technology for the good of all supplier members," he added.

Importantly, NetworkAssist will allow suppliers to self-manage their work through the Group, including their compliance requirements.

### Global best practice

In his Pathway to the Future address, Ashley Easterby noted that, "we've grown, and as we have grown we have had to re-organise. And at all times Network has striven to implement global best practice.

"Network Restorers has added value to your business. At this conference we have presented options but it's up to you how you want to use them in your businesses.

"Our model - the 'e-supply of services - works, it delivers efficiencies and best practice," he stated.

But, surmised Easterby, "we need to raise the bar." This is being supported and will be achieved through the introduction of new products and software.

### Australia the new restoration frontier

According to leading international restoration consultant and speaker Barb Jackson, Australia is poised on the edge of restoration's new frontier.

"The opportunity exists, Network Restorers has discovered it and Network Restorers has the map," she said in her 'Pathway to Success' presentation. She questioned supplier delegates with, 'are you prepared for growth? Is your company prepared? And, 'what will you do this year?'

In her second presentation, Jackson discussed 'Developing your market niche'. Her meaty content covered niches as a profit centre; considerations when choosing a niche; and identifying a niche. "Observe market trends," she intoned.

'Marketing your restoration business' was Jackson's final segment and was particularly informative in terms of bringing delegates up-to-date with the latest e-marketing trends.

Bringing a wealth of hands-on practical knowledge, School of Surface Technology's (www.carpetschool.com) Libby Longstreth presented 'How to be a carpet inspector'. It covered the common post-carpet installation problems; the peacemaker's (read carpet inspector's) role; the inspection and reporting process; the course's rigorous content; and the commercial opportunities for inspectors.

"There is a huge need for carpet inspectors and awareness of their valuable role is only just starting," Longstreth enthused.

Adding some lightness to the conference program, School of Surface Technology's Ron Toney pointed out that 'Cleaning is fun'. An IICRC instructor, he observed that "we can have a good time when we know what we are doing."

Of paramount importance is ensuring that clients perceive the value technicians deliver.

Toney gave many insights to customers' minds and then explained how best to maximise each and every site visit. As well as entertaining it was full of practical tips for on-site selling.

Other speakers included IICRC Oceania's Monica Morse;



Above: Some of the Munters' team, from left Neville White, Adrian Morton, Steve Cranston and Anthony Saleno, with speaker Ron Toney (centre front)



Above: From left, Network's Ashley Easterby with PHJ Services' Julianne Brown and Hannah Bourke



Above: Suncorp's Angus Cruikshank (left) with Ashley Easterby

Suncorp Group Insurance's Angus Cruikshank; Suncorp Banking's Michael Stubbs; and CPK Training's Simon Phipps.

Industry executives commented that this conference was one of the very best they had attended in terms of content and staging.

Check out pictures at:



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