



ITEMS

November 2010

The Blue NSF Mark Shows Certifiable Compliance

Anaco's Legendary Quality is Verified



After many months of detailed product testing, meticulous plant inspections, copious paperwork, more testing, document filing, waiting, more paperwork, it's finally official: Anaco couplings, marketed by AB&I, have earned compliance certification by NSF International. Now, when you see the blue NSF mark on Anaco Couplings, you can have absolute confidence in Anaco's 40+ years record of quality.

"We needed some way to tell the market that our products were still the same quality, and that the "second-rate" couplings, made with cheap materials, only looked like ours," said Anaco's General Manager, Bill Kenney. The goal was to make a distinction between Anaco couplings and non-compliant couplings that may fail in the future.

A good DWV system must withstand a very harsh and corrosive environment over a long period of time. Non-compliant couplings that use inferior materials unnecessarily risk malfunction over time. Anaco wanted to find a way for the consumer to see the certifiable difference.

To be NSF Certified, Anaco's couplings have to continuously prove, through extensive testing, that they meet the requirements of the CISPI 310 standard. For instance, the steel used in the bands, shields and screws have to be proven to be made from genuine 300-series stainless steel for corrosion resistance (many substandard couplings are made from inferior metals that corrode). Additionally, gaskets have to be proven to be made with neoprene as the primary elastomer to resist chemical deterioration over time (many non-certified brands use



A Time To Give Thanks

Commentary by Michael Lowe

It's tempting to focus on how the Great Recession has wreaked havoc on our businesses. But, the elevating challenge is to see through our jumble of troubles and to recognize the many things for which we should be thankful. There is a silver lining in every difficulty.

For example, simply surviving the downturn is a blessing that will bring unforeseen opportunity in the future.

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More Trends in Customer Service for 2011 and Beyond

If you're like most business people, you're constantly thinking of new ways to attract and keep customers. Back in the old days (pre-2008), if you lost a customer to a competitor, you just went out and found another one. Or two. Your salespeople prospected like crazy when things got slow, and tended to coast a little when their customer list reached critical mass. All that has changed.

Today, everyone knows that the name of the game is service; the more service the better, as long as it's the right kind (please don't follow your customers around like little puppy dogs...). Today's manager keeps abreast of customer service trends to make sure that he or she is meeting the best practices standard for the industry. To get lax in the service department is to risk your business, plain and simple. Here are a few trends to consider when evaluating your own service policies:

1. Customer Service is the New Marketing

More dollars previously allocated to traditional marketing channels, like advertising and event sponsorships, are now being funneled into customer service. Instead of placing full page ads in the trades, many companies are investing in more personal contacts with their customers, more frequent visits, and a round-the-clock service presence through sophisticated websites and social networking.

2. Service, Not Just Price or Product Quality, Keeps Customers Coming Back for More

Back in those old days, lowering your price could increase cash flow and, sometimes, profitability. No more. Most small and medium-size businesses have already put the squeeze on



their pricing, so reducing it more just cuts deeply into the bottom line. Rather than competing on price alone, savvy businesses build loyalty through service, going the extra mile for their customers, and giving them what we used to call "value added." Today, added value is a given, largely expected in the marketplace. To stay ahead, companies must come up with new and creative ways to impress their customers.

3. Vendor/Customer Integration Takes Center Stage

It's been the dream of businesspeople for centuries to actually get inside the customer's business, see first-hand what he or she really needs, then suggest solutions that save them

money, make them more, or both. Today's smart manager knows that it's a good idea to share as much info with their vendors as is prudent, be open and honest, and in return, expect a high level of service from the vendor who, oftentimes, has now become a true strategic partner. Their success depends on your success.

4. Best Practices Must Be Adopted in All Aspects of Customer Service

Too many companies do one part of their customer service really well, but fall flat in another. Customers exposed to the good parts are impressed and remain loyal. Customers treated to the other go away. By establishing a best practices system, complete with methods for measuring how close you come to the mark, and enforcing that system across the enterprise, your company will be well positioned to take advantage of the growth that will come as the business climate improves in the coming months and years.

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Anaco Promotes NSF® Certification Through Trade Magazine Ads

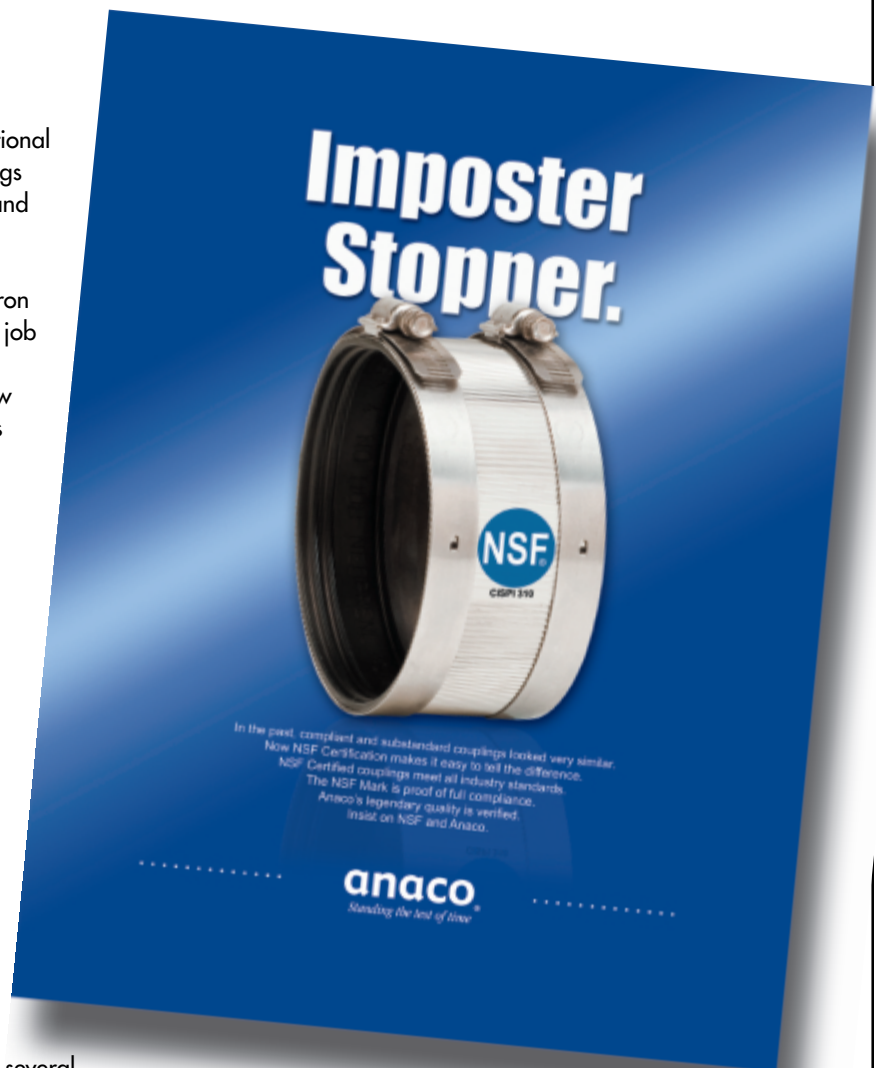
Anaco has embarked on a major promotional campaign to promote NSF-Certified couplings and their benefits to specifiers, contractors and owners.

With NSF Certification, all parties to a construction project will know that the cast iron pipe, fittings and couplings installed on that job meet all applicable industry standards. NSF Certification verifies that no substandard raw materials were used, or dangerous shortcuts taken, in the manufacturing process.

"We're very excited about this new certification," said Michael Lowe, Vice President of Marketing and Sales for AB&I. "We've needed a method for the market to distinguish between compliant no-hub couplings and substandard look-alike couplings that may not meet the standards and may fail after installation."

Certified couplings will be required to carry a non-removable label or mark that clearly identifies the coupling as NSF Certified. Customers are encouraged to require that the couplings they specify or install carry this mark, as it is the **ONLY** way to ensure that all standards have been met.

Other manufacturers, in addition to Anaco, will likely gain NSF Certification in the near future. Thus, customers will have several "NSF system" options.



Blue Mark Verifies NSF Certification of Anaco Couplings

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cheaper rubber and other compounds that decay when exposed to effluents in the pipe, air, or ground).

"The process of gaining NSF Certification was extremely rigorous, but was the best way we could prove to the consumer that Anaco couplings are compliant. Now, you can specify and install a 100% NSF Certified Cast Iron and Coupling system, guaranteeing that your system is unquestionably compliant," said Gary Wickham, AB&I's Senior Sales Manager.

Please note that we expect several other manufacturers' couplings to gain NSF Certification in the future, thus enabling consumers to have plenty of choice in specifying and in installing 100% NSF Certified cast iron systems.

Anaco: Standing the test of time

Anaco no-hub couplings have been preferred by contractors and plumbers since no-hub couplings were first introduced in the early 1960s. More Anaco couplings have been installed in the last 40+ years than any other brand. It matters what coupling you choose to install, stock, or specify. Only NSF-certified couplings from Anaco can ensure full compliance with all standards and can give you the value, quality protection, and peace of mind that comes from insisting on the best.

Anaco: Standing the test of time.

Commentary by Michael Lowe

Giving Thanks

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In fact, the seeds of future prosperity are germinating today. Our task is to cultivate them. Also, the experience gained by surviving the downturn should make us all stronger, wiser and better. Another good thing is that we still have time to leverage this new knowledge to improve our businesses and ourselves.

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Being optimistic about the future is justified. The glass really is half full. Maybe, if we're truly optimistic, more than half full. The current situation reminds me of the famous Winston Churchill quote: "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."

Moreover, in the spirit of Thanksgiving, it's time to take stock of all that is good in our own lives. Those fortunate to be in good health have a gift whose value cannot be measured. Those blessed with loving families have a treasure for which to be truly thankful. Those with stable careers enjoy benefits and a quality of life unattainable by most people around the world. Additionally, we still live in a country with unprecedented freedom and opportunity to make dreams reality.

I am sure we all can find many things for which we are thankful. The AB&I Team is abundantly thankful for your continued support and friendship. Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours.

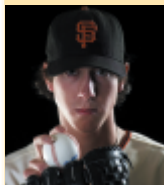


The Monthly Chuckle...

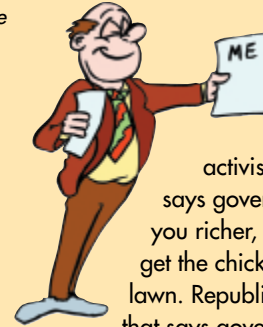
Giants Trivia Quiz

Did the Giants win the Series? Sorry, we weren't paying attention (yeah, right!!). Try your knowledge of Giants history.

1. Willie Mays hit more homeruns during his career than Babe Ruth.
a) T b) F
2. What Giants pitcher referred to himself as a "recovering Dodger?"
a) Jason Schmidt
b) Mike Krukow
c) Orel Hirshiser
d) Brett Tomko
- 3) Willie Stargell had more career at-bats than Stan Musial.
a) T b) F
4. How many Gold Gloves did Willie Mays win as a Giants outfielder?
a) 10 b) 9 c) 12
d) 11
5. What was the last year the Giants were in the World Series?
a) 2001 b) 2002 c) 1999 d) 2004
6. Which Giant became the first to win four consecutive MVP awards?
a) Mel Ott
b) Will Clark
c) Willie Mays
d) Barry Bonds



More Political Quotes



"The Democrats are the party of government activism, the party that says government can make you richer, smarter, taller, and get the chickweed out of your lawn. Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work, and then get elected and prove it." —P.J. O'Rourke

"Vote: the instrument and symbol of a freeman's power to make a fool of himself and a wreck of his country."
—Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

"For seven and a half years I've worked alongside President Reagan. We've had triumphs. Made some mistakes. We've had some sex...uh...setbacks."
—George Bush, Sr.

"I am not worried about the deficit. It is big enough to take care of itself."
—Ronald Reagan



1) F 2) c 3) F 4) d 5) b 6) d

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