

Don't Forget to Check The Web for Routine Information and Online Literature

**www.
abifoundry
.com**

ITEMS readers and customers are reminded to check out our website for the latest news about AB&I, as well as for up-to-date product and pricing information.

"We've put the bulk of our product and pricing literature on our website, in convenient .pdf format for cross-platform viewing and printing," said AB&I sales manager, Greg Seiler. In plain English, what that means is that anybody with a computer can download the full range of product sheets, submittals and price data, anytime 24/7.

The AB&I website is constantly updated to ensure that the most accurate and timely information is available online.

While customers are always welcome to contact their AB&I field sales representative or the customer service department at the Oakland headquarters, sometimes it's faster and easier to just go to the Web and download the information or forms as needed.

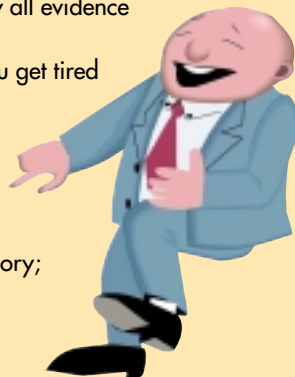
"We want to make it as easy as possible to do business with AB&I," said Seiler, "and our website is an important tool."

Just for Fun...

More of Steven Wright...

If your brain doesn't work the same as Steven Wright's, consider yourself fortunate. His mind sees things differently, much to our amazement and amusement. Here are a few more of his gems...

1. Half the people you know are below average.
2. 99% of lawyers give the rest a bad name.
3. 42.7% of statistics cited by people in arguments are made up on the spot.
4. A conscience is what feels bad when everything else feels so good.
5. A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
6. The early bird may get the worm, but it's the second mouse who gets the cheese.
7. What's the speed of dark?
8. How do you tell when you're out of invisible ink?
9. Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.
10. Hard work pays off in the future; laziness pays off now.
11. Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.
12. My mechanic told me, "I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder."
13. If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.
14. A conclusion is the place where you get tired of thinking.
15. The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.
16. The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.
17. Everyone has a photographic memory; some just don't have any film.



Jim Harrick Jr.'s Final Exam

The following are excerpts from the 20 question final exam given by Georgia's ex-assistant coach Jim Harrick Jr. to his Coaching Principles and Strategies class:

1. How many goals are on a basketball court?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
2. How many players are allowed to play on any one team during a regulation game?
a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) 5
3. What is the name of the coliseum where the Georgia Bulldogs play?
a) Camaroon Indoor Arena b) Stegeman Coliseum
c) Carrier Dome d) Pauley Pavilion
4. How many halves are in a college basketball game?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
5. How many quarters are in a high school basketball game?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
6. How many points does a basket count for in a basketball game?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
7. How many points does a 3-point field goal count for in a basketball game?
a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4
8. What basic color are the uniforms the Georgia Bulldogs wear in home games?
a) White b) Red c) Black d) Silver
9. In your opinion, who is the best Division I assistant coach in the country?
a) Ron Jursa b) John Pelphrey
c) Jim Harrick Jr. d) Steve Wojciechowski



ITEMS

NEWSLETTER

April 2004

Importers Vote to Block New Standard Requiring Radioactivity Testing for Iron



A proposed new standard requiring manufacturers of cast iron soil pipe and fittings to test their raw scrap for the presence of radioactivity has been delayed as a result of importers voting against adoption of this important new safety measure.

The new provisions would appear in two new standards revisions proposed by ASTM, a leading standards body in the U.S. The new standards would become part of ASTM-88-04 and ASTM-A74-04, two major standards affecting cast iron DWV material.

"Five years ago, we wouldn't have seen the need for this change," says AB&I plumbing manager, Gary Wickham, "but it's a different

world now."

The change to the standards was proposed as a precautionary measure based on world events, but was bolstered recently by an Associated Press report citing the presence of radioactive "yellow cake" in a shipment of scrap exported to Holland from Iraq. The

radioactive scrap was reportedly shipped by a Jordanian exporter who said he did not know of the contamination (see page 3 for reprint of news article). Though discovered before any real damage could be done, the potential for contamination in future shipments is very real.

"The time has come for this change to the standard to be adopted," said AB&I vice president, Kip Wixson. "All responsible parties that we know of, including all domestic manufacturers, are strongly in favor of this new standard, and support its immediate adoption."

The Cast Iron Soil Pipe Institute (CISPI), the American trade association serving domestic pipe manufacturers, is strongly in favor of the new safety provisions, and is actively involved in the standards adoption process with ASTM.

"It seems that the whole [adoption] process is being held up by a few importers objecting to the cost of testing their scrap," said Kip Wixson. "While we're all concerned about costs, there are just some things that have to be done anyway," he continued, "and assuring the safety of our products is one of those things."

If this new standard is not adopted, it is clear that the potential for future contamination is very real. As nuclear technology proliferates into countries not culturally suited for dealing with its complexities, the risk of dumping or intentional contamination grows by the day. This standard is a small step toward fixing this urgent problem.

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Kip Wixson



Perspective

How a Touchdown is Like a Sales Call

Focusing on the positive and being our best makes everybody better

The NFL just passed a rule against end-zone celebrations – no more sharpie pens, no cell phones, and no choreographed boogie-woogie. Some say it's the old school vs. the new school, but as you look at team sports the overriding impression you get from watching some players is "me-me-me," – not the team. The in-your-face attitudes displayed by some players seem to focus on making the other players look bad, rather than making their team more successful. Some players who make a good single play, like a tackle or a block or whatever, act as if they won the game singlehandedly, talking smack and getting in an opposing player's face.

I've wondered how these antics translate into business competition. Do we talk smack to our competitors? Do we badmouth each other in the marketplace?

During a recent sales call, I had the opportunity to listen to a manufacturer's rep talk about his competitor to a contractor. This rep was not even wise enough to find out who his competitor was before putting him down to the customer. The bottom line to this conversation was that his competition was so bad he had to be better than them. He did not talk up the positive points of his product, or the benefits of dealing with his factory; he merely alluded to them as "big." Instead, he laboriously detailed the shortcomings of his competitor.

The result? When the rep left, the contractor turned to me and said, "You know, I hate to see that guy; he never has anything positive to say."

I immediately thought of the smack-talking athlete who is pounding his chest and pointing at the sky. If I could have, I would have given that sales guy a 15 yard penalty.

However, he actually punished himself because he didn't get the order, nor did he get the respect of his customer.

The AB&I sales team is imbued with the value that we always tell our customers why we're a good choice. We also promise to be 100% honest; if that means we can't match a competitor's claimed delivery date, so be it. If we respect our competitors and speak positively of our own capabilities, we're the better for it. On the other hand, if we have good competitors, they keep us sharper, drive us, and force us to be better. Just give me a good competitor and see how much better I can get.

The great athletes of the past not only played well, but acted as though they respected the other team. This respect made their accomplishments that much greater. When I speak about our dedicated production team, our talented engineering and maintenance teams, and our no-nonsense customer service team, I am not pounding my chest, but simply saying that our distributors and their contractor customers can put their faith in AB&I, because we do what we do very well. They can always expect our very best efforts.

Always beware of people who talk down their competitors instead of talking up their own abilities. My guess is they might have something to hide.

For most people, April is taxtime, which gets my mind thinking about our current system of taxation and how it's losing its claim to fairness and equity. In 1990, the top 25% of taxpayers earned 62% of the nation's income, and paid 77% of all federal taxes collected by the government. In 2000, the top 25% still earned 62% of the money, but paid 84% of all federal taxes. So, you

say, the top 25% of taxpayers are rich, and can afford the added tax burden, right? Well, a yearly family income of just \$55,000 would put you into this "rich" category. Are you rich by this standard? Do you object to more and more of your money going to the taxman?

If you're rich by this definition, then you paid 16% of your income on federal taxes in 1990, but nearly 20% in 2000. That's a 25% tax increase. For the life of me, I cannot figure how news reports cite that higher-income taxpayers are getting away with murder by not paying their fair share. The fact is, those earning \$55,000 or more per year are paying MORE, not less, than before.

I know that people differ on their concept of tax fairness, but it might be a good idea to keep in mind that the affluent really are paying their share, if not more. It's no wonder that these taxpayers see a bigger refund when taxes are cut; they're paying more to begin with.

Is anybody else out there getting disenchanted with professional and big-time college sports? I remember when a touchdown or homerun would bring a big smile or a hearty hug from a teammate. Nowadays, it brings a scowl and defiant gestures. "It's all about me," seems to be the prevailing attitude, and it has become uncool to display a demeanor other than tough and menacing. Too bad. Kids still look up to athletes, and it's great to see the best of the best play their game. I only wish the players would get a little more perspective, and become the heroes they truly could be.

Nuclear Bomb Making Material Found in Scrap

The following is a reprint from the January 20, 2004 issue of American Metal Market magazine (www.amm.com). Why hasn't this story been reported in the major press?

PHILADELPHIA – Workers at a Dutch scrap metals company discovered a key ingredient for manufacturing nuclear bombs within a cargo of scrap steel bought from the Middle East.

Dock sensors at the Jewometaal Stainless Processing BV facility in Rotterdam, Netherlands, helped workers locate a small canister containing uranium oxide, also known as "yellowcake," an essential ingredient for manufacturing

nuclear warheads, according to the Associated Press.

Scientists later confirmed that the material was indeed uranium oxide, which has no other use outside of bomb making.

According to published reports, the discovery was made December 16, but the announcement was delayed by international authorities attempting to trace the sale.

A Jewometaal spokesman told reporters that the Jordanian scrap broker who

handled the transaction disavowed knowledge of the material, but confirmed that the scrap steel originated in Iraq.

President Bush said in his 2003 State of the Union address that Iraq attempted to purchase yellowcake from suppliers in Niger, a claim that later came under fire when documents used by U.S. intelligence agencies as the basis for the statement turned out to be forged.

Personality Assessments Now Used to Pick Athletes in the Draft

Psychological testing has long been used in the business world as one criterion for selection of senior managers and other executives. Such tests have been refined over the years to the point that many large companies won't hire or promote key people without first checking for emotional issues or personality quirks.

This trend toward checking people's psyches in addition to their skillsets is beginning to be seen in the field of professional sports, too. Take the case of Tony Parker, starting point guard for the San Antonio Spurs. Three years ago, the Spurs were considering taking a pass on Parker, the 28th pick in that year's draft. Parker had taken a special personality assessment administered by a company called Caliper, specialists in psychological testing for businesses. One call from Caliper CEO Herb Greenberg turned the corner for both the Spurs and young Tony Parker.

"His test jumped out at me," Greenberg says. "He was just the classic point guard.

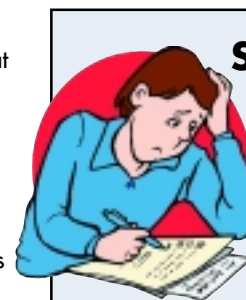
Caliper has administered his tests to over 10,000 athletes over the past decade. "Our batting average," says Greenberg, "is so good it's spooky."

With salaries for pro athletes in the stratosphere, teams need good predictors of future success before they take the plunge with a new player. Greenberg's tests help make those predictions.

"There are 337 kids here [in the draft], and every one is a super talent. But the vast majority won't make it," Greenberg says. "The difference has to be motivation. Managers and coaches can certainly assess talent. The questions that keep them up at night

have to do with the players' heads and hearts. That's where we come in."

According to Greenberg, the three core traits in any sport are competitiveness, self-discipline, and self-esteem. These traits make up the psychology of a winner.



Sample Question

Here's a sample question from Herb Greenberg's "Forced Choice" test he administers to potential pro athletes:

- I am a good leader.
- I am a responsible person.
- I am emotionally stable.
- I get along well with people.

Choose the statement that best describes you. Now, from the other three choices, choose the one that is least like you.

The two choices show a strength and possibly a weakness in an applicant.

We told [the Spurs] to look at this kid. I prayed he'd be available at 28. He was, and they drafted him." The rest, as they say, is history. Parker became a starter after just five games, and helped them get to the 2003 NBA title.