



## Showroom Style

### A deeper look at getting better show results

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There is no doubt that 2010 is a challenging year for all of us in the showroom industry. It will continue to require more focus, creativity and going back to the basics of what works in our showrooms.

Slim pickin's require smart choices

The Kitchen and Bath Industry Show ([www.kbis.com](http://www.kbis.com)) April 16-18 in Chicago is expected to draw about 30,000 people. Show hours are Friday and Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; and Sunday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. About 500 exhibitors will be housed in 300,000 square feet of exhibit space in two halls.

#### **Educational Venue at K/BIS 2010**

The Opening Ceremony will be held April 16 from 8:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. and is called “Disregard All Previous Instructions.” Author/consultant Sergio Zyman will discuss “How today requires a completely new set of rules, competitive factors and unique propositions. Previous practices or instructions are obsolete in today’s marketplace and economy.” I read the first 30 pages on my Kindle and it will be a good event!

The educational venue operated by the NKBA at K/BIS has always been held for the K & B dealers excluding the bath/plumbing and decorative hardware dealers and distributors. Due to losing DPH manufacturers and decreased attendee market share, the exceptional efforts of Ken Rohl, Hall of Famer, from Rohl LLC, has sponsored two great programs for product-selling showrooms this years. On April 15 from 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., a pre-show seminar called “Decorative Plumbing: A Systems Approach” will be hosted by Paul Greenspan, who comes from 25 years of decorative plumbing showroom experience. On April 16 from 12:00 p.m.–1:45 p.m., there will be a “Trends and Insights” program hosted by Robert Tietze from The Portland Group, who owns SPLASH and four SPRITZO showroom locations in New England. Their showroom mantra is: “Use our showrooms like they were your own! Let our partnership save you money and make you money!”

David Kohler, president and COO of Kohler Company, will give a “State of the Industry” address on April 17 from 12:15p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Called “The Road Ahead for the Industry,” it surely will have some steak n’sizzle!

Other NKBA programs, paid by manufacturer sponsors, will have subjects that should hold your interest such as green, lighting, air quality, design trends, and others that you should check out.

The NKBA Book Store is a great place to find visual books that are exceptional for your showroom. These books help visitors determine the look and products that they desire. The “Best of K/BIS 2010” Product Showcases is always a fun place to see new products. Who will replace the crown of “The Best of Baths” award for 2009, which was Quick Drain USA ([www.quickdrainusa.com](http://www.quickdrainusa.com)). The New ZOW Pavilion will showcase European products and design trends.

#### **LUXE Home at The Merchandise Mart**

On the first floor of The Merchandise Mart is 110,000 square feet of kitchen, bath and building products. Magazines and associations have booths at K/BIS 2010 and are of great value! This Mart is a visual extravaganza of 40 showrooms including Kohler, Urban Archaeology, Hastings, TOTO USA, and a myriad of decorative showrooms for both bath, plumbing, kitchen and much more! On April 16th is one of the best kept secrets, with a giant celebration of Open House showrooms. If you want to get great showroom merchandising ideas and see many of your lines displayed elegantly, take a quick cab ride to The Merchandise Mart.

## **Trade and consumer magazines**

One of the greatest perks of K/BIS are that the magazines and free subscriptions are included in the “business to business category.” Most of the magazines are not assigned a booth until the middle of April or at show time. I would suggest going on [www.kbis.com](http://www.kbis.com) and clicking on “Exhibitor List” and then “Publications–Business to Business” and “Publications–Consumer.” Last year I counted more than 21 magazine booths. If you come to their booth with a typed list of your other showrooms, you can subscribe as a group. The “business to business” magazines are free to anyone attending K/BIS who has been pre-qualified. Make sure that you stop by the TMB Publications Booth; where The Wholesaler, PHC News and Plumbing Engineer magazines are located! Also, make sure that you register your staff to get The Wholesaler magazine with my monthly showroom column. Did you know there are kiosks of free industry magazines outside the show floor?

## **International Reception**

Attention Manufacturers: There are many industry people from all over the world at K/BIS 2010 looking for new lines. A few years ago when the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was involved in K/BIS, there were bulletin boards from every continent with “Looking For Lines” and “Lines Available.” I told my manufacturer clients to have pre-printed 3” x 5” index cards with all of your information, if you are looking for global representation. Then you can post them on each continent that you have interest in. If you are really serious about this subject, I’ve been involved “globally” for many years, quietly, and have detailed information on exceptional bath/ plumbing and kitchen representation (reps, buy/sell stocking, and distribution channels), around the world!

## **China Manufacturers – Update for 2010**

There are much larger number of manufacturers coming from China this year along with newer American companies importing products from China under American names. The Chinese manufacturers are now interspersed throughout the show. Look for manufacturers from China that have the “ISO Quality Certification.” There are exceptional finds at K/BIS 2010.

## **What’s new and hot**

Due to the date of the K/BIS 2010 Show and a slower pace in new bath and plumbing products, I will be writing about this subject in the May, June and July monthly columns of The Wholesaler. Don’t forget to review the New Product Showcase in this month’s magazine to see some very interesting and innovative products. I am sure you remember the “Fish N’ Flush” Fish Tank Toilet Tank showcased some years ago. This year, we got The “WOW Toilet” (Booth S-4464), a clear universal reusable poster design toilet tank that fits most two-piece toilets. There are a wide variety of posters that can be ordered and it is ideal for commercial, restaurants and other applications. This product comes complete with a certified dual flush system for water savings as well. You will have to read the June 2010 edition of The Wholesaler to find out what was “really hot” at K/BIS 2010 and “what was not”!

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