

This American Standard® showroom group was reinvented to generate business, new and old



Reinvention. It is the secret of the art of longevity. It has become a buzzword to describe what has become a pivot point, whether voluntary or forced, along the career path of many baby boomers in today's workforce. It is an opportunity to start anew with an attitude of youth and vigor. And it is a strategy that owner Tracy Bond of Bond Plumbing Supply, Inc. and his son Wade Bond, corporate vice president, have successfully employed in their showrooms in and around Miami, Florida.

The third-generation plumbing supply wholesaler, which took root in 1946, sold primarily to wholesale trade customers, including plumbers and architects, as well as schools, the federal government, and exporters. But when the deepening recession brought with it a sharp decline in business, circumstances necessitated new methods of attracting business that would breathe new life into its retail traffic, while bolstering its staple wholesale customer base. To achieve this, the Bonds used a tool already in their possession, one they had not placed great emphasis on in the past – their showrooms.

Find out how Bond Supply leveraged its showrooms, including a complete remodel in its Miami location, and emphasized the American Standard® product line in all three of its Florida showroom locations, to capitalize on business that would otherwise have gone unrealized.

American Standard
Style That Works Better.

Case study:

Bond Plumbing Supply — The American Standard® Showrooms That Have Taken On A Second Life

Bond Plumbing Supply, Inc., wholesale distributor of plumbing fixtures and supplies headquartered in Miami, Florida, has felt the pinch of the widespread economic slump during the last three years as much as any business connected to the building industry. This past October, however, Bond saw business once again begin to move in the right direction after the grand reopening of its 5,000 square foot Miami showroom. The upward momentum that took hold is a direct result of owner Tracy Bond and his son Wade, corporate vice president and third generation family owner, having recognized the untapped marketing potential that lay dormant in its three Miami-area showrooms, which to date had been grossly underutilized.

Since its inception, the company, which Tracy Bond's father launched in 1946, had focused mainly on the wholesale side of its business, catering their four distribution locations in and around Miami to plumbers, engineers, and architects, while also supplying government contracts and exporters who work with buyers of new tract homes and condominiums.

But the grand reopening of the Miami showroom, together with rotating fresh lines of American Standard® product through all three showrooms – the others in Port St. Lucie and West Palm Beach – has allowed Bond to achieve its objective of also reaching out to more customers, trade and consumer, involved in higher-end remodeling and custom home projects.

The company's showrooms have become increasingly important and an integral part of maintaining existing business — and generating new clientele — in a competitive marketplace. In an effort to continually satisfy



its wholesale customer base, while appealing to the area's growing remodeling and custom home marketplace, Bond Supply knew they had to offer more compelling lifestyle presentations that highlighted upscale and stylish product. They accomplished this with the help of American Standard, which had similarly grown to meet a more demanding market with design-forward and technologically advanced products.

The ties that bond

Bond Supply has been an American Standard distributor – the oldest in Florida – since its beginnings. But it was not until its recent focus on its showrooms that Bond's partnership with American Standard reached a new level. The company now counts itself among American Standard's *Platinum Distributors*, with ninety percent of its inventory falling under the American Standard, Jado®, and Porcher® brands.



The Bonds cite mutual loyalty as the main component in the company's long-standing relationship with American Standard. "The reason that we carry so much American Standard product is loyalty," says Wade Bond. "American Standard has been good to us," he explains, "and we have been good to them."

The product sells easily, because it's well received by consumers, in part, due to the word *American* in the name, which we believe goes a long way in defining the quality of the brand."

Participation in joint promotions and events helps further strengthen the relationship between Bond Supply and American Standard. For instance, in October the company participated in *The Responsible Bathroom Water Conservation Tour*, sponsored by American Standard, promoting water savings via a mobile marketing tour.

Invitations went out from Bond Supply to all local members of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) in an effort to develop relationships with designers. The event was promoted and marketed by the company, together with American Standard.

Reintroduce yourself

Bond Supply's new found strength in the remodel and custom home industry, as well as its growing wholesale business stature, is due in large part to the October 2010 grand reopening of its main showroom in Miami, according to Wade Bond. "The showroom is gorgeous," says Bond, explaining that showcased new product from the American Standard, Jado and Porcher brands have played a major role in drawing in new business, as well as providing a better platform to impress current wholesale customers, while also attracting new ones. "We have new vignettes and an entire wall of American Standard brass faucets," he states, adding, "Customers expect more these



days. And when you can attractively display products in lifestyle vignettes, and offer working models, it make all the difference to both retail and trade customers who are comparison shopping."

Enhancing Bond's "show and tell" abilities are TV monitors in the showrooms that display continuous streams of informational segments on American Standard product, which enable visitors to better understand product features and design nuances. In addition, the showroom floor plan is very open by design to allow ample space for visitors to step back and visualize the newest products. For instance, patrons will find bathtubs with working jet streams displayed in fully accessorized vignettes with paintings and other coordinating décor.

The Miami showroom's new accolades also include a green product wall area that displays WaterSense®-certified showerheads, faucets, toilets, and urinals from American Standard. Moreover, since Miami city regulations dictate a 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf) requirement for flushing, Bond has capitalized on American Standard's broad range of toilets that meet the criteria, with upwards of two dozen on display, including the best selling Town Square®, Champion® 4, Cadet® 3, as well as the new Porcher LXP collection.

Not having lost sight of the steadfast commercial business on which Bond Supply built its foundation, the showroom features a unique new segregated commercial section. It is a separate area designated to offer the plumbing, healthcare, and hospitality industries, and other trade professionals, hands-on application of product in a “mini-showroom-like setting” within the main showroom. The feel created is one that lends itself to a perception of stepping into an entirely different showroom — a commercial division. There, showroom visitors can find a commercial brass section and working vignettes for the professional product designs that they would typically only see in a catalog or on a website. Included are such products as metering faucets, mop sink faucets, bedpan cleaners, and commercial sensor faucets.

Every vignette tells a story

While all three showrooms have been updated with American Standard’s newest and most design-forward products, the remodeled Miami showroom underwent a complete transformation that involved gutting, rebuilding and designing brand new vignettes, all with the goal of winning over remodeling projects and building commercial traffic. Among the new vignettes, which run the gamut from contemporary to traditional to Asian — each with a unique theme — are those with working high-end bathrooms for residential and commercial applications. “Our residential display showcases a luxurious Porcher bath with the elegant Tetsu® 42” Wall System and Porcher Solutions™ wall-mounted dual flush toilet,” Wade Bond points out. “On the commercial side,” he continues, “we display the American Standard Lucia™ wall-hung lavatory with Selectronic® technology, the Moments™ faucet and Glenwall® pressure assisted, wall-mounted toilet, the newest American Standard has to offer.”



The Bond Supply showrooms have successfully balanced the growing retail side of their business with the increased offering of high-end commercial product to further solidify their wholesale business. “Commercial customers are looking for product with style to set them apart, while also providing all the qualities of ADA and commercial

function at an affordable price point,” explains Wade Bond. To this end, Bond Supply uses American Standard’s breadth of product line to satisfy its dual customer demand.

Changing landscape

If necessity is the mother of invention, reinvention is the mother of prosperity. And Bond Plumbing Supply surely is testament to this fact, having improved its showrooms’ stage presence to better accommodate the area’s proliferating remodeling and custom home market. As it now rolls out the red carpet for its designers, custom homebuilders, and homeowners, along with its loyal and growing wholesale customer base, the Bonds are relying on their



showrooms to carry them — and prosper — in a market that is being shaped by a changing economic landscape. American scholar Warren G. Bennis said, “People who cannot invent and reinvent themselves must be content with borrowed postures, secondhand ideas, fitting in instead of standing out.” The focus on showcasing American Standard products and the reinvention of the Bond Miami showroom is proof positive that Bond Plumbing Supply surely plans to stand out.

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