

the WHOLESALE

News of Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and Industrial PVF

85 YEARS STRONG

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Lather, rinse and repeat might sound more like a slogan for Pantene shampoo, but it's the creative — and pretty accurate — way that Marty Silverman, VP of Marketing, describes the way of life at General Pipe Cleaners.

It starts with knowing their customers. That relationship and ensuing conversation generates a good idea — which the team at General then goes about turning into a great product. Everything they do circles back



Abe Silverman,
company founder

to knowing their customers, and keeping them happy with leading-edge enhancements and service.

"Customer satisfaction, product reliability, creative solutions and continual product improvements have always propelled General," Silverman described. "Add solid, American-made equipment — and that's how we've stayed in business for 85 years! In fact, on our warranty cards, when we ask why did you buy our product, many people respond, 'Because it was made in the

USA.' We are proud that we can offer such a high-quality American-made product, and our customers appreciate that too."

**85 years of
entrepreneurial spirit**

The company's founder, Abe Silverman, got his start working



The Super-Vee hand-held drain cleaner is the workhorse of General's line. Many plumbers operate their Super-Vees for decades; one plumber had 30 years on his when it was stolen, and it was in perfect operating condition.

for his uncle. A prodigious inventor, Frank Magidson had patents on machines used to make wire hangers, automatic shoeshine

Pittsburgh building and landed his first job producing springs for our country's original voting machines. Always thinking about what would generate demand — and in the midst of the Great Depression — Abe strategically expanded his product offering to include drain cleaning cables. They were so popular with local

The Flexicore cable was a radical, heavy-duty innovation that has remained at the core — literally and figuratively — of General's business.

General Pipe Cleaners continues legacy of innovation



Second-generation brothers and partners Lee and Art Silverman mentor their sons and nephew, but leave the day-to-day operations to the third generation. Pictured from left are: Mike and Jeff Silverman, Steve Glick, and Steve, Art, Marty, Bob, Lee and David Silverman.



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plumbers that Abe and his small crew began designing and building machinery to make the “snakes” at their facility. They moved into a new, larger facility — narrowly missing being ruined by a flood at their original operation — and

model and hand-held drain cleaning machines, and integrated visual and audio inspection technologies.

As Marty described, the Flexicore cable was a radical, heavy-duty innovation that has remained at the core — literally and figu-

ness beyond the local Pittsburgh plumber base. Abe began traveling to neighboring states to build relationships and share the benefits of General’s products. With an increasing demand for — and lineup of — their products, General moved into their current facility in McKees Rocks, Pa., in 1968. They invested a great deal initially into renovating an old World War II chain works facility, and have since expanded several times.

In the mid-1960s, automatic cable feeds boosted the appeal of new General equipment. Among their innovations over the years:

- Feedomatic and Sewermatic — the industry’s first automatic feed drain cleaning machines.

- Power-Vee with power cable feed bolstered the company’s lead in hand-held drain cleaners.

- Jet-Set water jets — with Vibra-Pulse to assist the nozzle around tight bends and down long lines — have armed

plumbing and drain cleaning experts with vital new tools against grease, sediment, ice and other soft blockages.

- Gen-Eye video inspection systems that find and diagnose blockages. The line has grown to include the Gen-Eye POD and

Gen-Eye SD series — the latter line of which includes the Gen-Eye SDW with Wi-Fi capability and the Gen-Eye SDP with sunlight readable screen and 4 hour rechargeable battery.

- Hot Spot digital pipe locator that helps professionals find problems fast with durability, accuracy and reliability. That, in turn, simplifies customers’ work and makes them more productive and profitable.

- Gen-Ear acoustical leak detection devices quickly and accurately pinpoint problems.

- Among their classic drain cleaning equipment is the Mini-Rooter Pro with wheels and folding handle, Metro with stair climbers, and Speed-

rooter 92 with Flexitube distributor tube and molded inner drum.

- ClogChopper multi-function cutting tool, with six self-sharpening blades and an innovative spherical design. It is able to dig into encrusted debris and root masses, grinding up stoppages, scale and crystallized urine without pipe damage.

- Kinetic Water Ram drain cleaners — The hand-held drain cleaner uses kinetic energy rather than electricity and clears lines up to 4" in diameter. It directs 98% of the force down the line so it is safe for system piping. David Silverman, Vice President of Global Sales and a third-generation family member, added that “Innovative technologies help customers

“We are a family business, not a large faceless corporation. We focus on one product line — drain cleaning.... My cousins and I grew up next door to each other. We worked in the factory building machinery when we were in high school and college. How many other major players in the industry can say that?”

maintain their competitive edge. And they typically help customers handle more jobs in far less time. One customer using our Kinetic Water Ram reported servicing a 32-unit building in less than half the time it takes them to do the same work with conventional tools.”

As Marty proudly notes, “In addition to our tried and true offerings, our product line has expanded dramatically in the last decade.”

A legacy of trust and service

Now known as General Pipe Cleaners in the plumbing trade, the company has thrived over its 85 years thanks to hard work, market savvy, inventive approaches and, sometimes, just plain luck.

It’s obvious that simply settling for simple springs as drain cleaning snakes wasn’t appealing to Abe. And that quest for innovation has continued to drive the ensuing generations of Silvermans at General.



Jet-Set water jets, with Vibra-Pulse to assist the nozzle around tight bends and down long lines, make quick work of clearing grease, sediment, ice and other soft blockages.

began developing drain cleaning equipment.

Over the years, General spearheaded key plumbing & drain cleaning industry developments — including the Sewerooter power-driven drain cleaner, Flexicore wire rope inner core cable, floor

atively — of General’s business ever since. “The Flexicore design truly helped build our excellent name,” he said. “Even today, it’s widely considered the industry standard for drain cleaning snakes!”

Motivated to grow the busi-



General’s Metro with stair climbers is an indispensable piece of equipment in many plumbers’ trucks; as is the Mini-Rooter Pro and Speedroooter 92.

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They are proud to continue serving plumbing and drain cleaning professionals with what they like to call “the toughest drain

Lee Silverman, Abe’s son. “We’ve met the needs of two, three and – remarkably – even four family generations of customers. One

We are also very proud of the fact that more than 40% of our workforce is multigenerational. Those are achievements that would make my grandfather very proud.”

General’s products also have a long-lasting reputation. Marty likes to call that “optimal ROI” — optimal return on investment. “Our customers count on General equipment to enhance profitability,” he said. “Some individual machines have even served their owners for two or three decades!”

One of those is the hand-held Super-Vee, known for its knack of unclogging small-diameter lines in sinks, showers, toilets and laundry drains.

“The only reason one customer’s Super-Vee — originally purchased more than 30 years earlier — stopped working was when it was stolen!” Marty laughed. “The customer joked that some competitor must’ve valued it as much as they did!”

The past is a prologue

Today, General boasts a full line of advanced drain cleaning tools; its worldwide sales and marketing

They are committed to continuing its leadership role in innovative drain cleaning and inspection technologies.

“I’ve enjoyed working with my father,” described Marty. “He’s 82 now and semi-retired. No one re-

Each generation holds the steadfast belief that “good enough” is never good enough for General Pipe Cleaners.

ally retires in a family business. My grandfather came in once a week until he was 85 and unable to walk the steps anymore. Now we have an elevator. These days, when I go to trade shows, long-time customers stop by the booth and think they’re talking to my father. They’ll say, ‘You look great after all these years!’ Both my father and uncle, Art Silverman, still contribute to the business but most of the operation is run by the third generation these days. All together, there are nine family members here, including my brother, Steve, and five cousins, Jeff, David, Mike, Bob Silverman, and Steve Glick.



Gen-Eye video inspection systems find and diagnose blockages. The line has now included the Gen-Eye POD and Gen-Eye SD series, which includes the Gen-Eye SDW with Wi-Fi capability and the Gen-Eye SDP with sunlight readable screen for use outdoors on the brightest days.

cleaning tools down the line.”

They also take great satisfaction in the fact that General has surrounded itself with multi-generational employees, rep firms and customers.

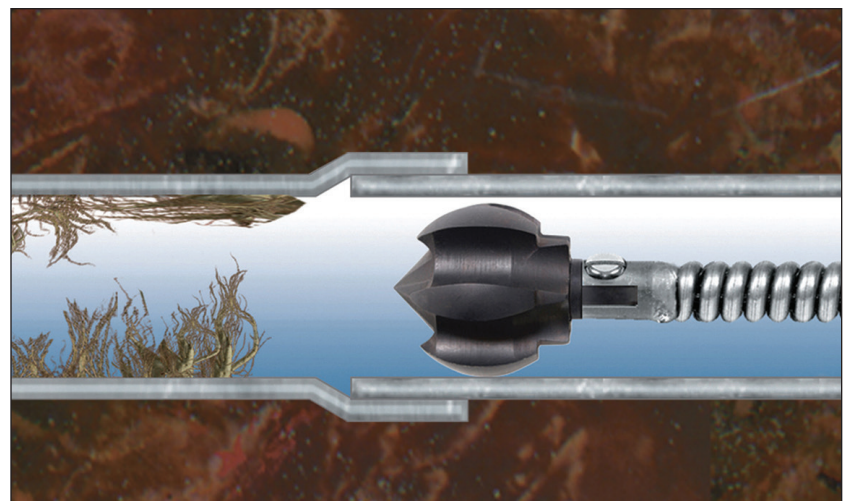
“Product reliability and innovation have forged our reputation,” commented General’s President,

of the reasons we believe we’ve achieved that is the longevity and reliability of our tools, which in turn helps plumbing and drain cleaning professionals boost their bottom line.”

Marty added, “Several of our reps are on their second and third generation representing our line.



The Hot Spot digital pipe locator pinpoints problems quickly without digging.



The ClogChopper multi-function cutting tool’s six self-sharpening blades and an innovative spherical design can dig into encrusted debris and root masses, grind up stoppages, scale and crystallized urine without pipe damage.

efforts include French and Spanish websites, expanded social media channels and YouTube videos. They remain loyal to the trade, however, with Marty proudly noting, “We sell only through wholesalers supporting our distribution channels.”

Abe Silverman’s lasting legacy of customer service, product reliability and innovative solutions continues today. With members of two generations working at the company, Abe’s great-grandchildren are now working summers the business. Each generation holds the steadfast belief that “good enough” is never good enough for General Pipe Cleaners.

“We are a family business, not a large faceless corporation. We focus on one product line - drain cleaning. We know our business, and we know each other. My cousins and I grew up next door to each other. We worked in the factory building machinery when we were in high school and college. How many other major players in the industry can say that? Wholesalers prefer doing business with us because we offer a good product at a good price, and we are easier to work with. In survey after survey, General is the preferred brand of drain cleaning machinery by wholesalers.”