



# Winning the Plumbing Battle

*Brought to you by the  
Institute of Plumbing SA*

*'The fight is won or lost far away from  
witnesses - behind the lines, in the gym and  
out there on the road, long before I dance  
under those lights.' - Muhammad Ali*

08610 PLUMBER | [www.iopsa.org](http://www.iopsa.org)



# Let your rewards work for you



Become a Heat Tech Rewards member today and you can start **earning points on every Heat Tech product\*** that you purchase.

Your points are just like cash and you can spend them however you want.

To register simply visit our rewards website [www.heattechrewards.co.za](http://www.heattechrewards.co.za) or SMS your name and surname to 45085.

As soon as you've registered you automatically earn 100 points and you can then start logging your purchases to collect more points.

**THE MORE YOU PURCHASE, THE MORE POINTS YOU EARN!**



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- 1 To register visit [www.heattechrewards.co.za](http://www.heattechrewards.co.za) or SMS your **name and surname** to 45085.
- 2 Purchase a Heat Tech product\*, find the Heat Tech Rewards sticker on the product, and scratch to **reveal the unique product code**.
- 3 Visit [www.heattechrewards.co.za](http://www.heattechrewards.co.za) to **log your purchase** by entering this unique product code.
- 4 Points are accumulated and on **reaching 1 000 points, you receive a rewards card loaded with R500**.
- 5 For every additional **1 000 points** accumulated, a further **R500** is automatically added to the rewards card.
- 6 **Points balance** can be checked **online or by dialling \*120\*884# from your cellphone**.
- 7 Once the money is loaded on the rewards card **it does not expire** and can be spent at any MasterCard or Visa merchant.

[www.heattechrewards.co.za](http://www.heattechrewards.co.za)

\* Excluding spare parts and accessories | Ts&Cs apply

# Are you making choices to keep your business fit for the future?



## INTRODUCTION

Your feedback has rallied the IOPSA team to launch a series of communication opportunities amongst members as well as facilitate the opportunity for personal reflection.

We live in challenging times and ensuring your **business** is sustainable in the long-term can leave you feeling like you are preparing for a 'world boxing championship every month end'. However, building your **fitness for the future** is all about what you do consistently behind the scenes - **way** before month end and **way** before you find yourself in the spot light servicing a customer.

So sit back and reflect on some of the key points that repeatedly come up with members in various discussions about building **business acumen**.

This booklet is break down of the collective insights of specific areas that plumbing businesses should reflect on to ensure your business is built on a solid foundation '*Making choices **that** keep your plumbing business fit for the future.*

*'...building your fitness for the future is all about what you do consistently behind the scenes...'*



37 Linksfield Road, Dowerflen 1609 | PO Box 4419, Edenvale, 1609 | Tel: +27(0)11 454 0025

Email: [info@iopsa.org](mailto:info@iopsa.org) | Member: [www.iopsa.org](http://www.iopsa.org) | Consumer: [www.iopsa.org.za](http://www.iopsa.org.za)

Gauteng Committee: Ryder Rollinson (Chairman), Dean Cane (Vice chairman), Colin Oates, Sello Mokawane, Adrian Beeslaar, Dale Simon, Malcolm Harris, Craig Preston.

Contributors: Gary Macnamara (Executive director IOPSA), Debbie Donaldson (You're Worth it!), Steve Brown (Operations Manager IOPSA).

# A KEY ISSUE IN KEEPING YOU FIT FOR THE FUTURE IS KNOWING YOUR OWN BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

- The quality of products sold by manufacturers, importers and merchants.
- Relevant salaries and wages.
- The use of qualified plumbers and assistant plumbing installers.
- Good business practice.
- Lack of skills and access to skilled resources.
- Culture that expects the best but are unwilling to pay for it. First world service at third world prices.
- Greed above need, profit above people.
- Highly competitive industry.
- Corruption and dishonesty.
- Culture of no maintenance and waste.
- Clients not paying.



## *It all starts with you!*

We often complain about how difficult the plumbing industry is and how much better it would be doing something else. The saying that the 'grass is greener on the other side' is not unfortunately our exclusive 'right'. The fact is, all industries and countries have their own difficulties and challenges, especially in the current political, economic and social turmoil we find ourselves in.

IOPSA often get calls from lawyers and other professionals wanting to be plumbers. Their perception is that that plumbers make lots of easy money. How many times have you thought that lawyers make easy money?

## **SO HOW DO YOU DECIDE ON WHICH BATTLES TO FIGHT IN YOUR BUSINESS – HOW ARE YOU GETTING YOURSELF FIT FOR THE FUTURE?**

How much of your personal mind set creates stumbling blocks in solving challenges? Are you supporting and stimulating yourself with options? Exploring all possible opportunities to implement

solutions to your business challenges or are you stuck and a little overwhelmed at this point?

When last did you step back, reflect and brain storm your options alone, with other entrepreneurs or with a mentor? How hungry are you to surround yourself with solution seekers rather than people who will agree with how hard business is?

Take the plunge; treat yourself to the gift of stepping back and looking at where you are and where you want to go.

There is a simple concept referred to as *learned helplessness* – where we are prevented from avoiding some repeatedly negative stimuli – we eventually reach a state in which it we become passive and depressed because we believe there is no action we can take to avoid the aversive stimulus. Essentially, we give up trying.

Whilst this sounds extreme, even a little of this at a personal level can play with our motivation... So how about building on the gift to yourself? Shift from 'give up' exercises to 'I'm building solutions that make sense' especially if you choose to give yourself a fighting opportunity to be fit for the future.

If you can shift your thinking even a little bit, you can shift from blaming yourself and others to learning from your past decisions. That old saying "we can't change our outcome if we keep doing the same thing" may start to make sense?

How about lawlessness? We get upset with others because they drive through a stop street or when taxis go through robots, but yet we ourselves drive through stop streets and robots.

Sometimes we prefer to pull the wool over our own eyes. We make ourselves believe we are making the right choice for short-term gain when we know this is a temporary fix and won't last long.

*What is the secret of success?*

*'RIGHT DECISIONS'*

*How do you make the right decisions? 'EXPERIENCE'*

*How do you get experience?*

*'WRONG DECISIONS'*



Take a look at this 7 step guide to preparing for a win and build a successful plumbing business.

<b>Round 1</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>SIMPLE</b> Keep your business simple focus on what you do best.
<b>Round 2</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>UNIQUE</b> Don't try be everything to everyone. Find your niche and put your energy into your unique offering.
<b>Round 3</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>COMPETITIVE</b> Create opportunities to be different. Know your competitors and ensure your pricing is relative to the market.
<b>Round 4</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>CONSISTENT</b> Have faith that your business will succeed and persevere as there will be many obstacles and frustrations, which can always be overcome.
<b>Round 5</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>EVOLVE</b> Know your client's needs, understand your industry and continually adapt your business. No short cuts, learn from your mistakes.
<b>Round 6</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>SERVICE</b> Give clients what they want and the best service you can achieve. Deliver what you promise, don't over promise and under deliver.
<b>Round 7</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>SUPPORT</b> Employ the right staff and support them. Create financial support and find a business mentor.
<b>Winner by knockout!</b>		



**Round  
1**

LET'S GO INTO A LITTLE MORE DETAIL AND BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, SHOWING THAT EVERYONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE SUCCESSFUL:

*'Focus on what you do best, think simple.'*

## SIMPLE

### FOCUS

Focus on what you do best, think simple. It's that SIMPLE, don't complicate your business for the sake of things. Controls, processes, products and services must make a difference to your vision for the business and client experience otherwise why have them? You're looking for excellence without unnecessary stress, effective use of your resources, management of your overheads and delivering a quality service.

### STRENGTHS

Fighters keep their plans simple, so they can deliver - trying to implement many different techniques and moves can be tiring and often ineffective. A fighter knows his/her strengths and focusses on those to deliver the knockout blows.

### TEAM

Your team is part of your business, they need to understand what you expect and how you measure service and client satisfaction.

### BASICS

Get the basics right and build from there. Your unique offering must be a living experience for clients. Don't focus on what people don't use or want.

*'It's not that complicated.'*



*'Each fighter plays to his/her unique strengths to deliver the unexpected and to gain victory when their opponent least expects it.'*



## UNIQUE

### FIND YOUR NICHE

Find your niche and put your energy into your unique offering. This will help with competitiveness as well as focus. The more you as a business can focus, the more practise you get, the better you get, the quicker you deliver quality.

### GREAT DELIVERY

We often fall into the trap of offering more services believing it will generate more revenue not understanding the challenges, resources required and costs associated. Just take a look at a "bakkie plumber" who tries to be all things to all people and is consistently struggling to make ends meet. The implications of poor installations and non-delivery directly impact your client experience and bottom line.

### BE DIFFERENT

No-one wins a world title fight by throwing the same punches, moving in the same circles or defending with the same hand as their competitor. Each fighter plays to his/her unique strengths to deliver the unexpected and to gain victory when their opponent least expects it.

*'No-one wins a world title fight by throwing the same punches...'*



# COMPETITIVE

## THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

For successful business owners, not everything is tied up in a neat little box. They channel their creativity to make themselves more valuable! Think outside of the box to find new ways to make your product or service more desirable than the competitor.

## WORK SMARTER

World champions know their competitors, train harder, develop their strength, move quicker, fight smarter and are more resilient. They get the basics right and then add their unique quality move into the mix!

## COMPETITION IS FIERCE

Most plumbing service providers offer drain cleaning and pipe repair, is there spot in the market where competition isn't so fierce? Review niche services, such as specialty plumbing where customers are prepared and willing to pay more for your work.

## KEEP YOUR OVERHEADS TO A MINIMUM

Husband and wife plumbing firms are popular because there is no extra salary for a girl – Friday. Working from a home office costs less than leasing office space. Check with your accountant on what can and can't be claimed from the receiver of revenue.

*World champions know their competitors.*



## CONSISTENT

Customers relate to a consistent professional operation, measure the consistency of your client interactions. Reputations are built on consistency, clients need to know what to expect from you and your team.

### LOVE WHAT YOU DO

Your motivation is infectious, clients enjoy people who enjoy their jobs, people feed off of your passion. Part of success is focusing yourself and your team on what they do best. Build insight and knowledge about your own industry; staying abreast of your changing landscape helps you know where plumbing is going and what clients will need in the future. Repeat business and word of mouth are powerful confirmation of consistent value. Existing clients are a source of new clients.

*Jumping back and forth between business plans, strategies, or even products and services, is hard to keep up with the demands incredible energy from you and your employees and your clients. 'Rhythm is everything in boxing. Every move you make starts with your heart, and that's in rhythm or you're in trouble.' – Sugar Ray Robinson*

*'A world champion can't cut corners, he trains properly, eats properly and most importantly uses the right equipment in his/her training to achieve success.'*

### DO THINGS RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

We don't get endless world title opportunities and clients want something done right the first time. You should know which products create complaints and when an installer is capable of maintaining a quality installation. A world champion can't cut corners, he trains properly,



eats properly and most importantly uses the right equipment in his/her training to achieve success.

Investing your profit in yourself is a short-term gain, but investing in your business wisely translates into long-term sustainability. You know how important cash flow is to your business – it's not an urban legend. You need to understand your income, expenses and keep control of your cash flow. Cash in your bank account is significant to your business, managing payments by clients can make or break your business.

## KEEP RELEVANT RECORDS

You need to know what is going on in your business. Client experience, financials and big decisions must be recorded for easy reference. Tracking and understanding your past performance informs your future decisions.

Experienced operations are clear: qualify EVERYTHING in writing when doing quotes including allowance for overtime, access to property and P&G's. Don't leave communication open to interpretation and misunderstanding, it just creates unnecessary friction and distraction from a good client experience.

*Decision making must include consideration all of the risks and rewards. Motivating yourself around the rewards alone leaves you vulnerable to unmanaged risks. Take the time to consider the risk could even turn into a reward in the future. 'The hero and the coward both feel the same thing, but the hero uses his fear, projects it onto his opponent, while the coward runs. It's the same thing, fear, but it's what you do with it that matters.' – Legendary trainer, Cus D'Amato*

**Don't give  
up the fight!**



## EVOLVE

### KNOW YOUR CLIENT'S NEEDS

We know clients can be difficult, although at the end of the day they want what's best for them. So get to know your clients, make them feel comfortable with the decisions being made and look for the opportunities where you can benefit them, and add value. Clients want to be heard - be prepared and clear on what is included and excluded. If clients trust you, they will always come back.

Understand your industry and continually adapt your business. Know and understand the changes happening in your industry. Legislative requirements, building standards, training, and importantly new products and technologies

### NO SHORT CUTS - LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES

If something doesn't work, however frustrating it is review how to do something about it. Understand where you went wrong and try a different approach.

Most importantly make decisions based on quality first then pricing which is a great formula for getting it right the first time, however we live in an ever changing environment so always make it your business to know what's new on the market and ensure its tried and tested.

*If something doesn't work, do something about it!*

### REPLACE YOURSELF

You need help to grow your company-you cannot do twice as much as you are currently doing and do it well. You must hire someone to either do your current job or the new job created. One way to start a new business within your own business is to hire someone who has specific experience to grow a profitable company or division.

### DON'T PUT ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET

Meaning don't just work for one builder and expect to get all their work. It doesn't happen. Sadly there is very little loyalty in the construction industry at the moment because everything is based on price and the plumber that wins the job is usually the cheapest one despite their history of bad workmanship.

# SERVICE

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

Providing great products is one thing, but providing great customer service is another. Even when your product is thriving in your industry and region, if you fail to offer outstanding customer service, your success rate will decline and limit your growth or possibly result in failure of the business. As a business owner, be sure to emphasise good customer service at all times.

Give the best service you can achieve and keep striving to up your game. Build relationships, customer service is key.

## DELIVER WHAT YOU PROMISE

Don't over promise and under deliver. No matter the obstacles, frustrations and interferences your clients will support you if you deliver what you promise. Communicate effectively. If you're late, let your client know.

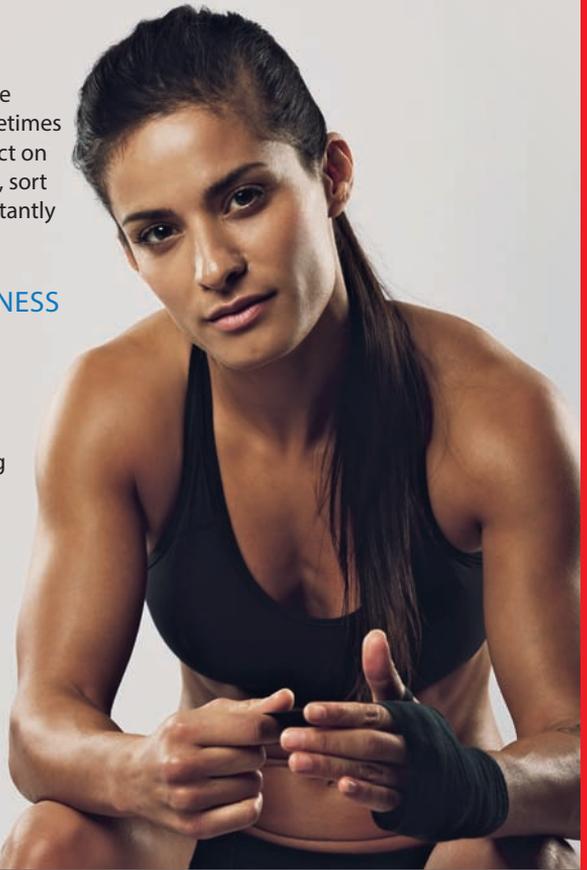
## MAKING MISTAKES

We all make mistakes, it's not the fact that we make mistakes it's how we deal with it. Sometimes we are embarrassed or those mistakes impact on our bottom line. Acknowledge your mistake, sort out the client straight away and most importantly learn from the experience.

## A WEBSITE OR BLOG IS YOUR BUSINESS REFERENCE

So many plumbing firms still don't have a website or blog. Potential clients want to see what jobs have been done by your company and who your clients are. Sending a brochure or profile about your business when you start quoting a new client is also beneficial. If creating a website is a cost that you can't afford, set up a Facebook and Twitter account. They are both free.

*Customer service is key.*



# SUPPORT

## BUSINESS MENTORS

Business owners who use mentors are 20% more likely to experience growth in their business than those who don't have a mentor. Mentors are the people who have got the wisdom and experience to give you the right advice at the right moment, make introductions, and expand your network and open doors of opportunity. During the most difficult times in business a mentor can give you the support and direction you need to stay positive, see the wood from the trees and find solutions.

Know the skills of the trade inside and out. Although you may not be performing plumbing duties directly, it is incumbent on you to know every aspect of each process and service. That means, don't give up your day job as a plumber until you have enough hands-on experience to be able to run your own business. You must provide guidance and training to your employees, be current on building codes, and learn from your fellow tradesmen before you open your own shop.

## SUPPORT YOUR EMPLOYEES

Taking from people and not giving back to them is never sustainable. Yes your staff earn a wage or salary, but if you want to grow your business invest in your staff. Employ the right staff and support them. Your staff are your company, they are human, make mistakes, have their own challenges and they think differently to you, so the best thing you can do for your business, is listen to your staff, give them direction, upskill them and most importantly work with them.

The more you give your staff, the more they will give you back. Spend your time growing people rather than breaking them down. A person cannot do what you expect them to do unless you show them what to do.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Your business is more likely to fail without a financial plan or support. A lack of financial planning is one of the main reasons why small businesses fail, whether it's being caught out with cash flow or overestimating your revenue.

Even the most cash-generative companies need funding to either start or grow. Regardless of how much money you're able to put in yourself, it's important to step back and consider the business finance options open to you.

Typical small business funding comes from either friends and family or banks, but there are actually a range of business finance solutions available.

*Your business is the people you employ.*



# BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE!

Today's **PLUMBERS** can reduce the effect of poor health and climate change more than any other trade or industry in the world!

Plumbers positively contribute to the only natural, sustainable resource that sustains life. We are part of nature, don't turn your back on water. Make a better choice. Your choices effect all of us!

We can learn from our past mistakes, look at the cause and find solutions, it's up to us to take care of our water

Useable, safe and clean water is something to think about now, in the present.

*Join us to ensure quality plumbing for all!*



[www.IOPSA.org](http://www.IOPSA.org)



# Membership costs as little as R11 per day!



Become a IOPSA Plumbing Member.  
Align yourself with the leading Plumbing Industry Body.

## Protect.



### Protect your Business.

Advice and resources on  
technical installations &  
standards

Information and assistance to  
workplace health and safety

Industry representation and  
compliance

## Develop.



### Develop your skills.

Discount on relevant industry  
training for you and your staff

Events and networking  
opportunities

Newsletters, magazines,  
Facebook and online info.

## Grow.



### Save time and money.

Member Promotion

Use the IOPSA member logo  
and branding to market  
your business

Sustainable business practise  
guidance

**Call our membership team to find out more! 08610 Plumber (75862)**

**Be a part of this industry leading organisation.**

## Join today.

Call **08610 plumber(75862)** | Visit **www.iopsa.org** | Email **info@iopsa.org**



# IOPSA INTEREST FORM

**Please tick the relevant box**

<input type="checkbox"/>	I am interested in being a member of IOPSA
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am interested to serve on an IOPSA committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a membership query
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a technical query

**Please complete the form below**

NAME & SURNAME	
COMPANY	
EMAIL	
TELEPHONE	
MOBILE	

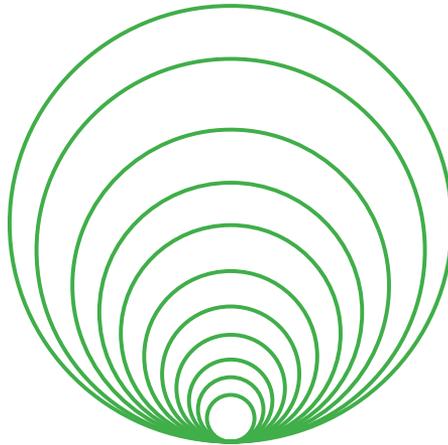
**EMAIL THIS FORM BACK TO [info@iosa.org](mailto:info@iosa.org)**



**viega**

[www.harscan.co.za](http://www.harscan.co.za)  
011 787 2993

**Hep<sub>2</sub>O**



125mm  
110mm  
90mm  
75mm  
63mm  
50mm  
40mm  
32mm  
25mm  
20mm  
16mm

## LOCALLY MANUFACTURED SABS APPROVED SANS 15874 POLYPROPYLENE PIPES & FITTINGS FOR ALL YOUR PLUMBING NEEDS



Atlas Plastics Piping Systems are known for their quality and durability and carry a 30 year guarantee\* making them the ideal solution for any plumbing project.

- Pipes and fittings range from 16mm - 125mm
- Pipe fittings are joined using a fusion welding process to create the most reliable joint available. (Training available)



The full range is available on order from Plumblink nationally.

Huts • Piping Systems



Sanitary Ware • Tanks

National Enquiries: Tel: +27 (0)18 469 1201 • Gauteng Enquiries: +27 (0) 11 493 2457  
KwaZulu-Natal / Eastern Cape : Tel: +27 (0)73 714 1987 • Western Cape: +27 (0)83 257 0515  
Email: info@atlasplastics.co.za

www.atlasplastics.co.za | www.atlasplasticsafrica.com

\* Terms and conditions apply

# DON'T BE SORRY

We are destroying South Africa's water, sanitation & health for future generations

## STOP the Excuses

PROFIT above PEOPLE  
GREED above NEED

## WE CAN CHANGE THE FUTURE

Choose to correct this. We are the foundation of this generation. It is up to us to take care of our nation's resources



- Access to clean water  
- Poor installations  
- Water Loss  
- Falling poor quality products  
- Poor sanitation  
- Failing infrastructure

**WATER  
SANITATION  
HEALTH**



**Institute of Plumbing  
South Africa**



**Become a member, get involved**

Call - 08610 PLUMBER (75862)

Email: [info@iopsa.org](mailto:info@iopsa.org)

[www.iopsa.org](http://www.iopsa.org)