

THE WHOLESALE

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution

Filling a niche

Eemax electric tankless units save energy, water and space

BY MARY JO MARTIN
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Whether it's a minor design change or complete overhaul, homeowners remodel their kitchens and baths frequently and businesses renovate restrooms and cafeterias to make them more efficient. Yet during these renovations, they sometimes forget to replace one of the single most important energy and water consuming item – the water heater. Eemax believes that they have an affordable solution that is easy to install and provides a better way to heat water.

Traditional tank style heaters store and heat hot water constantly – even when there is no demand

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for it. The Eemax inventors and engineers believe it's no longer acceptable to waste precious valuable resources that the earth provided us with. Eemax is in the market to save the earth, one drop of water at a time, and has developed a full line of “green” water heating products that save energy,

water, money and space. You can achieve ultimate “greenness” by using newer technology like electric tankless water heaters available from Eemax.



Since 1988, the Eemax product line has been engineered and assembled out of their headquarters in Oxford, Conn. Over the years, Eemax has developed “green” electric tankless water heaters that are 99% efficient, even more efficient than other technologies on the market such as gas tankless water heaters. Due to product awareness, some of these gas units on the market today have received Energy Star certification, yet they do not carry a 99% efficient rating like the Eemax electric tankless water heaters (ETWH). Their patented line of “green” ETWH were designed with highly flexible technology that allows them to work optimally with varying climates or temperatures of the ground-water or municipal water supplies.

In addition to residential homes, Eemax ETWH can be utilized in a wide range of commercial applications such as offices, stadiums, manufacturing facilities, laboratories, restaurants, hotels, schools, and shopping malls. To best meet the needs of this wide variety of applications, Eemax developed the products demanded by these segments. Among those products was a 9.5-kilowatt Flow Control heater for hand-washing applications. This simple on/off device paved the way for units with thermostats, adjustable flow and up to 480-volt capacities.

Eemax has seen tremendous growth since its founding, but it all can be traced back to a simple idea. “We started with a single engineer and a single idea about how to save energy, water and space,” said president and CEO Kevin Ruppelt. “By re-

Tankless Tech



Kevin Ruppelt Kevin Dokla Aaron Siegel

maining a U.S.-based company, being customer centric and exceeding expectations, we've been growing ever since.”

Ruppelt, along with vice president-sales and 20-year Eemax veteran Aaron Siegel and marketing manager Kevin Dokla, recently spoke with editorial director Mary Jo Martin about the direction Eemax is taking in product development, marketing and business strategies.

MJM: *The demand for tankless water heaters has steadily been climbing in the U.S. Why do you think tankless technology is finally catching on?*

Ruppelt: When people think about tankless water heaters, they are often referring to gas-fired models. It's interesting to note that according to numbers we have gathered, electric tankless water heaters have actually outpaced the growth of gas tankless units over the last few years. People are realizing the benefits of ETWH — they require no venting, no T&P valve, no drain, no mixing valves, and can be installed virtually anywhere due to their small stature. Our heaters are only about a cubic foot in size, weigh less than 20 pounds and only require cold water lines and electricity.

MJM: *I know you put tremendous effort into R&D to develop and launch new products. Could you give us a behind-the-scenes look at what goes into your product development?*

Siegel: Eemax is involved with all types of applications. If we discover an application we cannot meet, we immediately deploy our technical team to develop the needed products. That is how our HomeAdvantage line was developed. After completing extensive market research, we discovered a void within the residential market segment and set about developing this new line that includes stainless steel features and digital temperature controls.

HomeAdvantage products adjust the power ap-



Eemax water heaters are manufactured in Connecticut to meticulous standards using only top-quality components.

Tankless Tech

Electric tankless water heaters a growing market

plied to their heating modules to maximize energy savings by sensing inlet water temperature and flow rate. In addition, these units make it easy to adjust your exact comfort setting with a finger-tip control pad and temperature LED display. Selectable operating range can be set from 100°F to 140°F. The Home-Advantage product line features simple installation with “quick connect” water fittings without soldering. To match today’s appliance trend, the units come standard in a modern stainless steel enclosure.

MJM: *Has Eemax rolled out any other new products recently?*

Siegel: Eemax has begun producing heaters for safety shower applications used in production applications. With traditional water heaters, the water for safety showers is constantly heated, even though they’re only used in emergencies. You can take our product and place it next to the safety equipment, so when you need water at a precise temperature in an unlikely event of an emergency, it turns on and heats the water instantly, instead of heating the water all the time with a traditional tank style heater. The Eemax unit used in this application will create tremendous energy and cost savings.

MJM: *Could you please share what you think are the most significant benefits and capabilities of the Eemax ETWH?*

Ruppelt: We’re all familiar with the process.

“Our partners are motivated and dedicated to selling and marketing our products. Our products are available at plumbing wholesalers across the nation, so we have excellent distribution and customers who have experienced growth by selling our products.”

When in need of hot water, faucets usually have to be turned on and run for quite some time before warming up – with valuable water and energy going down the drain. Estimates show 20% of the country’s hot water goes down the drain unused.

Eemax wants to revolutionize the water heater industry with products that heat water instantly. Our ETWH save users more than just water and energy – they save our customers money. The unique thing about our product is that they are able to be located close to the point of use. So instead of having a tank-style water heater in the basement or utility room, customers can put ours close to where the hot water is used – showers, bathtubs, vanities, washing machines, dishwashers, and kitchen sinks. With our ETWH at the point of use, water can be heated at a designated location or they will boost hot water until it arrives from an existing traditional water tank heater.

MJM: *So how exactly do your ETWH work?*

Ruppelt: Water is heated directly without the use of a traditional storage tank that is commonly found in the basement or utility rooms. Traditional storage tank water heaters will run and reheat water even when not in use – costing users money and consuming energy. At the same time, water temperature is lost while sitting and traveling through the pipes.

With the Eemax line, when a hot water tap is

turned on, cold water travels through a pipe into the unit. An electric element heats the water immediately with minimal wait time to the desired temperature. As a result, the Eemax ETWH delivers a constant supply of hot water while being “green” at the same time. You never run out of hot water.

MJM: *How important are your relationships with wholesalers?*

Dokla: Eemax focuses on the wholesale channel and does not sell direct to consumers or to Big Box retailers. Rather, we prefer to partner with the local experts – wholesalers. We support our wholesalers by shipping order within two to three days of order receipt. We have just launched a new marketing campaign to assist our wholesalers get the word out on Eemax ETWH models. We’ve developed a turn-key program utilizing Personalized URLs where Eemax manages all of the creative and delivery; all the wholesaler has to do is say “yes” and the program is launched. It’s that simple.

MJM: *Do you use factory salespeople or have independent manufacturers’ reps?*

Siegel: Eemax utilizes both a direct sales team and manufacturers’ reps. The direct sales team focuses on the larger customers and provides support to the manufacturers’ reps. We use manufacturers’ reps because of their local knowledge of the industry and customers. They know where the jobs are! Also, we have a vibrant export business where we ship products to 30 counties outside the U.S., thus creating green collar jobs within the U.S.

MJM: *What steps are you taking to achieve Energy Star certification and educate the public on your high efficiency levels?*

Dokla: While Eemax heaters are one of the most efficient ways to heat water – 99% efficient – they’re not widely known yet. And while we’ve seen sales grow for a number of years, we must continue to keep working on getting the word out.

Our products are currently not Energy Star certified, primarily because the heaters are not well-known. Once people realize the advantages of such heaters they wonder why they are not Energy Star certified. But our team is dedicated to educating the public on the benefits of ETWH. Our partners are motivated and dedicated to selling and marketing our products. Our products are available at plumbing wholesalers across the nation, so we have excellent distribution and cus-

tomers who have experienced growth by selling our products.

We are also putting our competitive spirit aside to join forces with competitors to educate potential customers on the heaters’ value. The Coalition of Efficient Electric Tankless Water Heaters is working with the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Energy, non-government organizations, and the Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration Institute to spread the word. The goal of the Coalition is to convey the savings potential of ETWH. Eemax believes the Coalition will help the company’s products receive Energy Star certification.

The Coalition was formed by well-known industry-leading companies. Its leadership team consists of our very own Kevin Ruppelt, Coalition chairman and Salo Zelermyer, Coalition director and associate with Bracewell & Guiliani. The Coalition is represented by Bracewell & Guiliani, a highly successful Washington, D.C., firm with outstanding credentials and expertise in the energy industry.

MJM: *Can you share any information going forward on your strategic long-range planning? What are the key focus areas of the plan?*

Ruppelt: Despite the recession, Eemax has experienced growth in recent years, and has a strategic plan to keep growing the company. Our goal is to triple the company’s size.

In addition to developing new innovative products, Eemax’s growth was bolstered by an investment in September 2008 from Riverside Company, a private equity company. Riverside invests in strong companies primed to excel, with a plan that will leave them substantially larger and more profitable. With Eemax, Riverside saw an opportunity to invest in a company with great products and great people. From that investment, we are reinvesting in our company. We’re investing in new products, new leadership, assembly lines automation, and enhanced sales and marketing techniques. ■

For additional information, visit www.eemaxinc.com.



Eemax offers tankless water heaters for most applications, and designs new products to meet customers’ needs.