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SUPPLY HOUSE TIMES PROFILE

THE WATERWORKS RESOURCE

The W4 management team includes, from left: Mike Castillo (inside sales), Brian Voss (president) and Jim Foley (outside sales manager). Photo courtesy of W4.

Westcoast Water Work Warehouse prides itself on its extensive product inventory.

Corona, California-based Westcoast Water Works Warehouse (W4) was founded in 2003 by three principal owners. After one principal retired and the other shifted focus to another entity he owns, **Brian Voss** took over as the waterworks master distributor's sole owner. W4, whose reach extends across the country, operates out of a 20,000-square-foot facility and inventories more than 5,000 parts, including couplings, clamps, tapping sleeves, brass and galvanized fittings, saddles, polyethylene pipe, tools and gauges. *Supply House Times* recently chatted with Voss about the company's continued evolution.

What separates W4 from the pack?

BV: In a few words it is our extensive product inventory that even manufacturers don't stock, very fast customer service and our knowledge in the five industries we represent. Most parts are shipped same-day and we offer 24-hour emergency service. In fact, when we hear about a pipe breaking on the TV news, we know it's likely we will get a phone call in the middle of the night from a distributor. And we're ready. Another differentiator is our in-house ability to customize parts, which is becoming more critical in our age of the "just-in-time" supply chain.

What new initiatives have taken W4 to the next level?

BV: Historically, we grew our business by word of mouth in primarily the waterworks sectors such as underground pipe construction and plumbing. Today, you can find W4 working in many industries including irrigation, industrial, and oil and gas. We are in the process of upgrading our software program and going to e-commerce by the end of this year to launch in 2020. We also continue to invest in marketing consultants, as well as sales and employee relationship training coaches to take us to the next level.

What trends are you seeing in the waterworks industry?

BV: Today, if you have the parts on hand or can customize it quickly, you can

get those parts in the hands of customers anywhere in the country literally overnight. You no longer have to be in the same city or town as your customer. We are constantly keeping an eye on customers' needs in products, sizes and any new service we can provide.

How does W4 define customer service?

BV: Customer service is top of the list. But customer service, to us, also means fast turnaround and delivery. We've even put a fitting in an Uber car to get it to our customer even faster than an overnight delivery service. But every business can get even better. At W4 we are installing state-of-the-art ordering systems to make the customer experience even better and more efficient.

How important is your relationship with the distribution channel?

BV: It is very important. We are a team. We work together to provide our customers the right quality product at the right price and to deliver it to the customer quickly.

How has the master distribution landscape changed recently?

BV: We have noticed our distributors, especially the corporate ones, keep their inventory levels really lean and rely on the close-in-geography master distributor to service their customers, and not rely on the long-distance manufacturers, which has increased our sales and inventory levels.

What does the future hold for W4?

BV: Besides continuing to expand nationally by e-commerce and our website, we are growing our business in newer market sectors where we can be of great value. I mentioned oil and gas earlier. This is an excellent example where W4 can be a significant player in gas pipeline repair. We also continue to pick up new product lines to offer our distributors to become a one-stop shop for all water, oil and gas product needs. As our slogan says, "We are your fitting solution." 