



A ServiceTitan Magazine

# TOOLBOX

ISSUE 5

INSIDE

Highlighting tech  
side of jobs can  
attract top talent



SALARIES  
ON THE RISE

## A different kind of Service

How Troy Daland and Zac Harris  
use military skills as veterans in the trades



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Toolbox Magazine  
Issue No. 5 • 2025

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## Editor's Note

Welcome to the latest issue of Toolbox, ServiceTitan's magazine for the trades. For those of you new to Toolbox, this magazine is the print counterpart to our digital home at [ServiceTitan.com/Toolbox](https://ServiceTitan.com/Toolbox), which includes articles, webinars, podcasts, tools, licensing guides and so much more.

Our team truly loves to highlight the amazing work done by contractors like you — and that continues in this issue, including our cover story on another kind of service, as we highlight veterans who bring military skills to the trades.

Also featured in this issue:

- Some of the most popular research articles we've ever published are, naturally, about salaries in the trades. Don't miss our updated report, which includes state-by-state insights for plumbing, HVAC, electrical and office workers.
- High-Tech HVAC is all about the critical nature of embracing technological advancements and AI in order to truly make the most of the ever-changing landscape in the trades.

What do you want to see in future issues? Do you have a story worth sharing? Got an idea for a new digital tool? Let us know!

Email us at [ToolboxMagazine@ServiceTitan.com](mailto:ToolboxMagazine@ServiceTitan.com).

We hope you enjoy this issue of Toolbox. And from the entire team at ServiceTitan, thank you for all you do, each and every day!

Scott Goldman, Toolbox Editor



## Events

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

REGISTRATION  
**NOW  
OPEN**



## Pantheon 2025

Clear your calendar and start planning your travel. The leading conference in the trades—Pantheon—is coming to Anaheim, CA.

Join dozens of thought leaders, hundreds of ServiceTitan team members, and thousands of contractors like you for a two-day celebration of the trades grounded in learning, networking, inspiration, and motivation.

Scan this code and check back often for more information on the agenda, keynote speakers, entertainment, and more.



## Come See Us at These Upcoming Events

2025 Dates	Event	Location
7.23	Texas Water Quality Association Convention & Tradeshow	San Antonio, TX
9.3	Home Service Freedom Event	Las Vegas, NV
9.12	NECA 2025 Convention and Tradeshow	Chicago, IL
9.17	Texas Roofing Conference	Round Rock, TX
9.25	Famous Enterprises Cleveland Expo	Cleveland, OH
9.28	Western Roofing Expo	Las Vegas, NV
10.7	1-Tom-Plumber Convention	Clearwater, FL
10.11	Neighborly Reunion	Nashville, TN
10.26	SMACNA	Maui, HI
10.27	Service World Expo	Las Vegas, NV





# From job pipeline to **GOLD MINE**

Security and success  
await Black plumbers

By Eddie Wooten

**C**ameron Head remains a few months away from enrolling at Alabama A&M University to study business management. • But the 18-year-old already has a few things figured out as the fourth generation of his family to work at Head's Plumbing Sales and Service in Atlanta. • "I really like money," he says with a smile. • So does Benjamin Harden. The 21-year-old has worked with Georgia's oldest Black-owned plumbing company for two years, following in his father Byron Harden's footsteps. But he knows what is available for him in this industry, too, particularly given a shortage of workers nationwide and in Georgia. • "A potential gold mine," Benjamin Harden says.



Granted, family connections have revealed opportunities for these two young adults to build a career and establish financial security.

But why aren't more people of color seeing what they're seeing?

Only 10.1% of the nation's plumbers are Black or African American, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics finds. Others are missing out.

"I can make over a hundred thousand dollars a year just by working with my hands and using my brain," Byron Harden says. "I can take care of my family doing it. Any other African American can do the same thing."

True enough, although it also hasn't been easy for Black plumbers or Head's Plumbing.

Opening doors

Updates to the company's logo, designed when Sheila and Phenus Head Jr. and his parents, Phenus Head and Lucy F. Beckum, opened the door in 1981, offer today's prospective customers a more realistic stylized depiction of Head's Plumbing. Submerged to his neck in water, twisting a pipe wrench, he's now a plumber of color instead of being the white portion of a black-and-white stencil.

The original logo served as a mask for Head's Plumbing in years not far removed from the Civil Rights Era in the South. But the result could still be crushing.

"You don't know the heartbreak of someone having a plumbing problem and they have unequivocal trust in you," says Khadija Head, the chief executive officer, "until you ring the doorbell and they see you."

"I have a plumbing problem, and it needs to be fixed," the Head's plumber would be told. "It's not going to be fixed by you."

Black residents made up nearly 47% of Atlanta's population of 510,000 and about 33% of the Atlanta metropolitan area's 6.3 million residents in 2023, according to CensusReporter.org.

The revised version of the logo should open doors—and perhaps minds.

"We're going to appeal to someone who's very intentional that they want to have someone that looks like them in their home," says Khadija Head, a Murray State University graduate and former college basketball player and coach who co-owns the business with her brother, company president Odari Head.

"We want to have individuals that seek us out because they're looking for a licensed professional plumber, and we just happen to be Black."

The Head's technician team is predominantly Black, including six of seven technicians and one of the two apprentices. Having more people of color in the industry could provide not only greater balance but solve labor issues, too.

"We have this gap of skilled workers, and we need a way to fill the gap," Khadija Head says during a break in overseeing



her team at a ServiceTitan Power the Nation project for Nicholas House in Atlanta. "We have to do something different. If we continue on the same trajectory and just expose individuals that aren't from the Black and brown community to the home service industry, it's going to be very hard to run this race."

Since service industries continue to face challenges in finding employees, it's a race worth running.

Earning power

Entry-level plumbers, those with two years of experience or less, earn median salaries of \$51,000, according to research by Payscale.com for ServiceTitan. Plumbers with two to four years' experience will find the median salary at \$66,200. For four to seven years of experience, the median in Georgia is \$71,800.

Cameron Head, a senior at McEachern High School in Powder Springs and one of Odari's two sons, participates in a work-study program and goes to the Head's Plumbing office each afternoon. On top of having watched his family thrive—parents and grandparents have saved enough to fully fund Cameron's college education—he's learning the industry and formulating ideas on how adding HVAC service could help Head's Plumbing grow.

"Just looking at yearly salaries of plumbers and HVAC technicians," he says. "You can really be a millionaire off it."

Benjamin Harden is keeping score, too.

"With the shortage of workers, becoming a master, you can basically charge whatever you like for certain work, what you feel it's worth," he says.

These young adults see dollar signs, but their parents see security in this trade.

"Everyone's not going to be a basketball player, football player," Odari Head says. "But this is something that you could go in, earn a good living and be able to provide for your family and be able to build something in it."

Like fathers, like sons. Now they welcome others to come along for the ride.

Making it sexy

Getting prospective plumbers into the truck is a challenge. Ron Anderson, president of the Georgia Plumbers' Trade Association, says his state could use another 2,000 to 3,000 plumbers to fill needs.

Yet hiring often consists of "one company stealing from another one," he says.

The United States is projected to have 43,300 annual job openings and 6% growth in the number of jobs from 2023 to 2033, according to CareerOneStop, a U.S. Department of Labor site. Georgia is projected to see 820 annual openings, or 12% growth, from 2023 to 2033.





ing career and technical education courses toward high school graduation or adopted career-readiness objectives into state requirements.

"You've got to go to where the people are at," says Odari Head, who holds both a degree from Tuskegee University and his master plumber license. "That means going into the school, starting at the grade level."

The number of students enrolled in vocational-focused community colleges rose 16% in 2023 to its highest level since the National Student Clearinghouse began tracking such data in 2018, the Wall Street Journal reported in April 2024.

**Show the fun:** Benjamin Harden's love for gaming has led him to find ... more plumbers?

"I didn't think I would run into any other younger people my age who are also doing plumbing," he says.

And the kind of technology that appeals to Harden and his friends also can be used to appeal to potential employees.

"Most folks think of plumbers, and they think of the plumber's crack," Odari Head says. "We've got cameras we send down the sewer line. You control them like you're playing a video game. There is so much more to plumbing than stopped-up toilets and leaky faucets."

His sister mentions the software partner of Head's Plumbing and how it can be another recruitment tool.

"They're making the trades sexy again," Khadija Head says of ServiceTitan. "This generation, they were born with technology at the palm of their hand. So it's attractive to them."

**Develop your own training center:** The Head's Plumbing office is actually a house sitting along Campbellton Road, southwest of downtown Atlanta. Behind the house and storage facility sits about 2 acres of potential.

"We want to build a training facility to elevate our current technicians, but technicians that don't even work for us because the goal is to have more experienced people in the field and it's a great recruiting tool," Khadija Head says. "Have them on our site, see the advanced level of equipment we offer, the different services we offer."

### 'The trade is for us'

For now, Khadija Head shows off the Head's team and their work via video on TikTok and Instagram. She supports other business owners in learning about entrepreneurship and speaks at conferences, willing for anyone to hear her message.

"I want to make sure that individuals that look like myself and my brother understand that the trade is for us as well," she says. "My goal is not to have a company where we employ the largest number of Black and brown people. My goal is to inspire the largest amount of Black and brown people to one, join the industry, and two, start their own businesses because that means that they can employ other individuals."

"I'm in a unique position, and shame on me if I'm not pushing a needle to make sure individuals know what we're doing and know what's possible for themselves." ■



"We have individuals who are quickly aging out of the industry, but the number of individuals who have homes is steadily rising," Khadija Head says. "It's so important to be proactive in filling that gap and really passing on the skill set because it's unique in our industry with service and repair."

So how can the plumbing industry attract more prospects, including more Black or African American prospects?

**Career education:** Vocational skills classes once were a staple in U.S. high schools. And then preparing students to attend college became a focus, although earnings potential from a degree comes with a cost.

U.S. college graduates' federal loan debt totals \$1.693 trillion, and the average student leaves campus owing Uncle Sam \$38,375, according to Education Data Initiative.

"And the jobs they're getting, the starting salaries are so low they're lucky to move out of Mom and Dad's house after they get through with the college debt," Anderson says.

Trades-focused education and programs might be on the way back. In 2023, according to the Freedomia Group, 18 states (Georgia wasn't one of them) enacted policies count-



# High-Tech HVAC

For the trades, emphasizing technology in job descriptions key to attracting talent

By Patrick Sutherland

**D**uring his 35 years working in various roles for Johnson Controls, Chip Dudley has watched technological advancements completely reshape his industry. He's seen Building Automation Systems revolutionized by software, and racks of giant manuals in three-ring binders made obsolete by mobile phones.

- Now he's watching commercial trades companies deal with a challenge produced by that ever-improving technology: attracting the right talent to drive it.

By Patrick Sutherland

**D**uring his 35 years working in various roles for Johnson Controls, Chip Dudley has watched technological advancements completely reshape his industry. He's seen Building Automation Systems revolutionized by software, and racks of giant manuals in three-ring binders made obsolete by mobile phones. • Now he's watching commercial trades companies deal with a challenge produced by that ever-improving technology: attracting the right talent to drive it.





"At any given time, Johnson Controls has 800 requisitions to hire in these technical fields, whether it's a chiller mechanic, or a controls technician, or a fire alarm technician—just a huge gap in what we need versus what we have," said Dudley, speaking as part of a three-person panel during a seminar at the 2025 AHR Expo in Orlando.

A new generation of workers who grew up using laptops, tablets and mobile phones is hitting the workforce with skills these companies covet, but not necessarily the desire to work in the trades.

That perception frustrates panelist David Sciarrino, the Director of Healthcare Solutions at InSite, a software and professional services company.

"I know people right now that are very well-qualified developers—full stack (skills to work the front end and back end of a website or app)—they can't find work. The market's flooded," he said. "And if you look at (the companies represented) in this room with us, they all need an HVAC tech right now."

#### It's not a sexy business, so messaging matters

Dudley says commercial trades companies in particular must adapt the way they promote themselves and their jobs to attract top talent.

"Many people know Johnson Controls for manufacturing chillers. We call it 'heavy iron' in the industry," he said. "We manufacture a lot of big products, but we're no longer marketing ourselves as an HVAC company. We are a technical solution company for more sustainable, comfortable, and safe environments for your clients."

He admits "it's not a sexy business," but he believes if applicants know they are going to be using computers and updated technology, the opportunities are more appealing. And when job-seekers are on a company's website, Dudley says they should see workers using a device.

Sciarrino agreed that potential new hires have expectations regarding technology.

"They grew up with screens in their face all day long," he said. "They're going to expect to have an iPad or some sort of device that helps them interact with their environment and do their job."

#### AI is opportunity knocking

All three panelists agreed that, with companies such as ServiceTitan incorporating AI to provide software solutions for the trades, leveraging the chance to work with it will be appealing to candidates.

Lenny Joseph, who has a background in mechanical engineering, began his career in the mid-1990s—about the time computers became fixtures in homes and businesses. He is confident the arrival of AI will have the same kind of seismic impact on the culture.

"Now you're seeing another shift that's happening where AI is coming in," he said. "And every single time a shift happens, opportunities arise from it."

He added that businesses built on older tools and systems need to have a plan for AI.

"I'm pretty sure there are people below the age of 30 who have never seen a typewriter before. So you've got to think about it from that perspective," he said. "You've got to have a pathway to get toward AI, and you've got to take the tools you have and make it better and attractive for these people who are coming in."

Sciarrino believes young talent entering the workforce will understand the impact of AI, calling it "a blank whiteboard" that will appeal to candidates.

Said Dudley: "They'll be on the forefront of it if they want to enhance the AI, if they want to have their opinion on how the AI is developed or used within their company."

#### Skilled trades have always offered bright future

The way Sciarrino sees it, a job in the skilled trades sells itself.

"Electricians or any of the skilled trades, it's one of the very few careers you can have where you're going to be working with the latest technology that is foreign to most of the general public," he said.

"You can do it with a year or two years of training, and you can take it anywhere you want—you can work for a company and work your way up into management, or you can take what you've learned and ...

"Start your own business," said Dudley.

"... start your own business. Yep," said Sciarrino.

The thought made Dudley reflect on another selling point of the skilled trades.

"You know, you tell people stories about somebody they didn't go to college, they worked with an electrician, they started up a business, they grew it," he said. "They sold it for \$30 million when they were 42 years old, and now they're retired ...

"You don't need a college degree." ■



**"You've got to have a pathway to get toward AI, and you've got to take the tools you have and make it better and attractive for these people who are coming in."**

**David Sciarrino**

Director of Healthcare Solutions at InSite



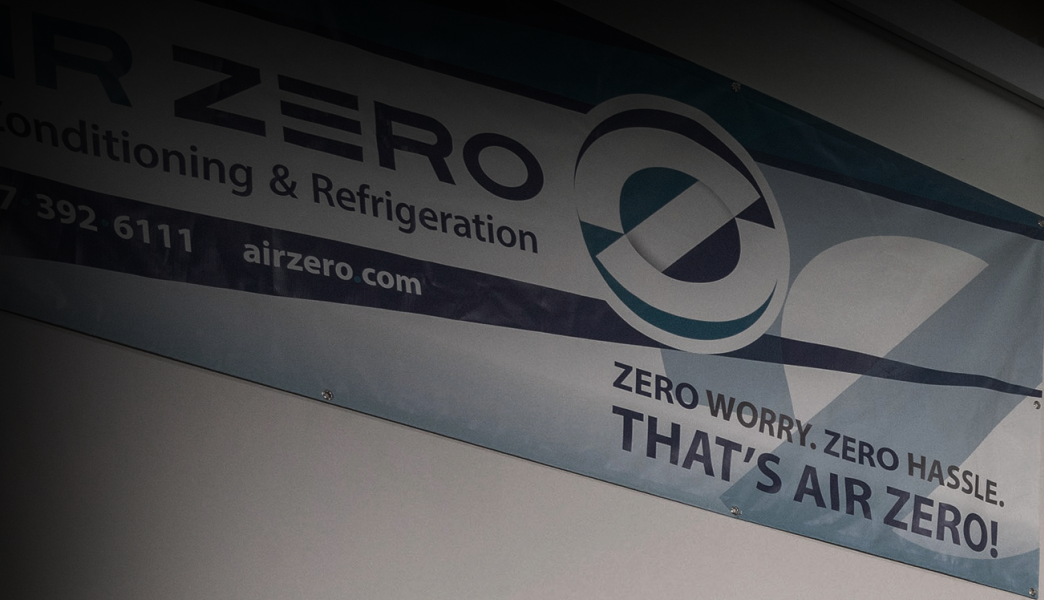
**"We manufacture a lot of big products, but we're no longer marketing ourselves as an HVAC company."**

**Chip Dudley**

Johnson Controls







# SERVING A NEW PURPOSE

## Veterans bring military skills to the trades

By Brendan Meyer

**T**hirty years ago, Zac Harris would get annoyed whenever his then father-in-law would point at a home or structure in their neighborhood and proudly say, "I put the A/C in that building." • At the time, Harris had just finished 18 years in the Army and Navy. And while his father-in-law was a proud HVAC technician with a set career path, Harris was in his mid-30s, unsure of what to do next. • The military was a big part of his identity. His grandparents, parents and sisters all served. Most of his time was spent as a Navy combat engineer, where Harris worked with his hands and helped people every day. He loved the brotherhood of the military and was proud of his work. • Now, he was searching for a job to fill those voids.





Veterans, Daland said, are trained to show up early. They're trained to learn fast, to deal with stress, to lead, be vocal, solve problems, and work well with others.

At first, Harris wanted to be a diesel mechanic. But he was told he was overqualified. Then he went to school to be a surgical assistant, but realized the pay wasn't enough. Then he tried to be a cop, but was told that with tattoos, it'd be difficult to find a job.

His father-in-law encouraged Harris to try HVAC. The trade was a fruitful career path, he said, and he could teach him how to do it. But Harris felt unqualified. Everything he'd learned in the military did not feel transferrable to an industry he knew nothing about.

"I didn't think that a lot of the skills I had were something I could use in the civilian world," Harris said.

"I was lost."

**Disciplined, fast-learners**

Troy Daland has seen that story play out again and again.

The owner of Air Zero Air Conditioning in Tampa, Florida, served 24 years in the Air Force, and he's seen many veterans struggle to understand how their military traits apply to the civilian workforce.

What they don't realize, Daland explained, is that many of those traits, like simply showing up on time, are universal—and needed.

"In the first (civilian) job I had out of the military in 2019, it was eye-opening that people got away with not showing up and doing the work," Daland said. "Of course that exists in the military. But (I quickly learned that) people showing up





late doesn't seem to bother anyone—and they're not held accountable for it.”

Veterans, Daland said, are trained to show up early. They're trained to learn fast, to deal with stress, to lead, be vocal, solve problems, and work well with others.

“There's a certain skill set and a certain level of discipline that comes with folks who came out of that (military) environment,” Daland said.

That's why, when he bought Air Zero in 2021, he knew he wanted to hire some veterans to fill out his staff.

And he had a few ideas as to where he'd find them.

### 'Different kind of service'

When co-founders Rob Holmes and Marvin Key created the trainee program for ForgeNow's seven-week technician course, they knew some students would recognize the format.

“I think anybody who has gone through the military and sees what we're doing, they laugh and say, ‘All you guys did was copy basic (military) training,’” said Holmes, the co-founder and president of ForgeNow. “Maybe we're not that creative, but we know when something works.”

Just like the military, ForgeNow trains their students “full-time, intensely and hands-on,” Holmes said. Their HVAC, plumbing, electrical and facilities maintenance programs in Dallas, Texas, equip and credential students to become apprentices in seven weeks, followed by help with job placement.

Holmes is a veteran himself, and many of ForgeNow's students are veterans, too.

“Of our over 1,200 graduates that we've put into the trades the last three years, over 500 of them have been veterans,” Holmes said. “We've created a launching pad for everybody. But for veterans in particular, it's been a real launching pad that's helped them transition from service into a different kind of service.”

Daland has hired technicians via ForgeNow. And he's not the only shop owner who asks the training center for veterans.

“Employers are looking for the military talent because of their previous experiences, rather than the training they're receiving here at ForgeNow,” said John Voit, an employer engagement manager and veteran at ForgeNow.

“We give (our students) the basics and foundation of their trade...but (the veterans) already have that life experience and that skill set from the military. It's so easily transferable.”

### A new path

Nowadays, Harris drives around the Tampa area in a truck that has an Air Zero logo, en route to his next appointment as the shop's newest service and production manager.

“I'm 15 minutes early to everything,” he said. “I'm never late.”

Harris indeed took his father-in-law's advice 30 years ago, learning HVAC on-the-fly in the field. And the more he started digging into his new career, the more he realized just how much his military experiences applied.



“Whether it's leadership, how to plan something, how to organize,” Harris said. “I may not be going to the warehouse to pick up bullets and hand grenades, but I'm picking up this, this, and this, and I have to make sure I have this quantity, that quantity and this quantity. The same thing I did in the military, it's just a different item.”

Daland, who utilizes multiple programs to find and connect with veterans, found Harris the old-fashioned way: word of mouth. He's the sixth veteran Daland has hired since 2021.

“It's showing up on time. It's the discipline,” Daland said. “If (Harris) doesn't understand something, he's going to figure it out. Those are traits that we're looking for. And that's what Zac brings to bear.”

Harris said the past 30 years in the trades have provided him his “house, cars and all my toys.” But it has also filled some of those military voids. He's developed close bonds with co-workers over the years.

He still gets to work with his hands. He loves helping people. And he's starting a family tradition.

“When my son got out of the military last August, he went into the trades,” Harris said. “He's following in my footsteps.”

He even sometimes finds himself driving around the neighborhood, pointing at buildings and homes, doing the same thing that once annoyed him years ago.

“Now that I've been in this trade for 30 years, I realize I say the same thing (with pride): ‘Yeah, I put the A/C in that building.’” ■

### INTERESTED IN HIRING VETERANS?

Daland suggests programs such as ForgeNow, Transition to Trades and Trane's Trade Warriors. He'd also love to answer any questions you have. Email him at [troy@airzero.com](mailto:troy@airzero.com).



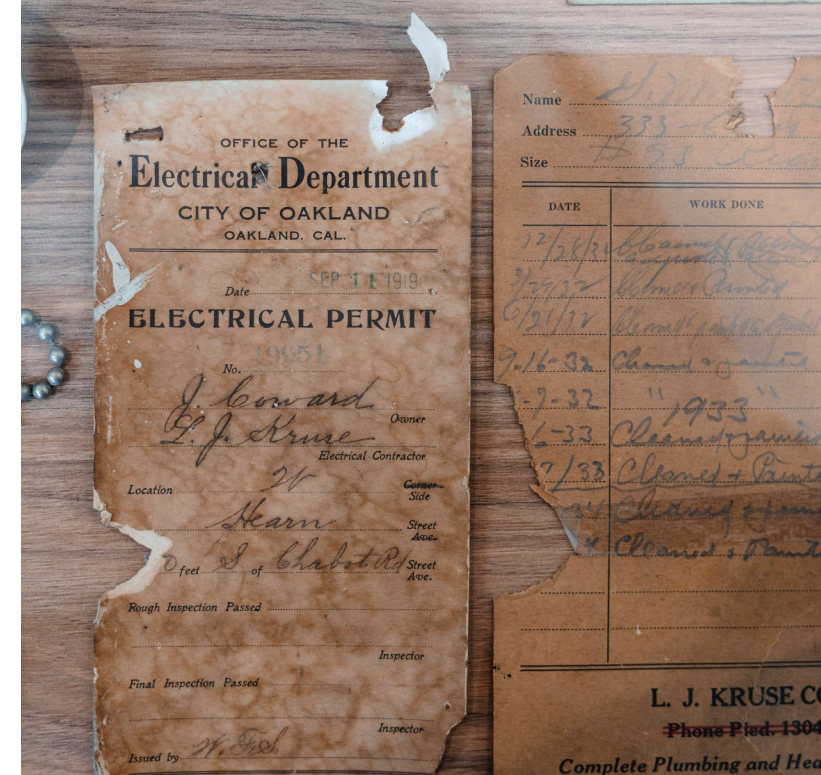


## The Kruse brothers' path to the family shop

By Brendan Meyer

**L**egacy is front and center at L.J. Kruse Co. The story of Louis J. Kruse opening his plumbing shop in Oakland, California, in 1916 is featured prominently on its website. “Extended family” is one of the company’s core values. Even its logo, in big green letters, touts the shop’s longevity: A Century of Service. • Despite all of that, the Kruse brothers—Nate, Ben and Will—never felt an obligation from their father to become the fourth generation to run L.J. Kruse and continue the family legacy. • “There was never a pressure of, ‘You have to join, or the company’s not going to be here,’” Nate said. “There was never any of that talk.” • Instead, their father David Kruse, urged his kids to pursue other paths. So that’s what they did.





Will studied sports journalism and later became a veterinary assistant. Ben traveled the world and worked in the restaurant industry. Nate worked in plumbing—for a competing shop.

But over time, on their own accord, the brothers' paths all wound up at L.J. Kruse.

And that, Ben said, is one of the secrets to their success.

### A special set of tools

From an early age, the brothers learned that previous generations of L.J. Kruse took rushed paths to the family's commercial and residential business.

The second generation started when the founder (their great-grandfather) unexpectedly died, which thrust his son, Edward Kruse (their grandfather), into the business.

"(According to family lore), he was studying to be an engineer at Cal University...and someone walked into that classroom at Cal and said, 'Your father just passed and we need you at the business,'" Ben said.

The third generation started shortly after their father, David, had his first kid (Nate) at age 19.

"I think that was part of his deciding factor—to get a good-paying job," Nate said. "Luckily for all of us, that morphed into an amazing third generation of the company...Our father and our uncle ran the business together for 30-plus years."

There was no obligation to follow suit. And by encouraging his sons to pursue other career paths, each brought a different skill set when they eventually wound up at L.J. Kruse and completed the apprenticeship program.

As vice president and service manager, Will's journalism background has helped him deal with all different types of customers. As president and CEO, Nate's 10 years at a larger competing plumbing business gave him a different perspective on how to run a shop. As vice president and project manager, Ben's experience in the fast-paced, high-stress restaurant

industry taught him how to achieve results in a short time.

"I think we are successful because we weren't ushered in as the next in line," Ben said. "We all entered the business on our own timetables, on our own pathways. And we're bringing the experiences and tools that we had in our previous (careers)."

### Embracing technology

One of those tools is technology.

Years ago, the brothers understood that, to take the family business into the future, they needed to automate more tasks with software.

But it wasn't the first time L.J. Kruse embraced technology.

"Back in the mid-'90s, (our father and uncle) developed their own proprietary estimating system on Excel spreadsheets. It is an incredible program that we still use to this day," Nate said.

"They even bought (one of the first-ever) computers," Ben added. "They had a room for it called 'The computer room' where they would go and do their accounting. It allowed them to be cutting-edge and (have) a leg up against their competition. They understood that in order to win in this business, you've got to be out in front of (technology)."

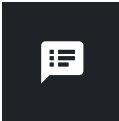
That's why the brothers chose ServiceTitan a few years ago.

The decision has brought plenty of positive changes. For example, L.J. Kruse went from processing piles of paper invoices (that would sometimes get lost and take months to bill), to invoicing their customers within 24 hours.

"ServiceTitan has given us a way to say, 'Hey, we've been around for 100 years, but we're also cutting-edge and we're also here to give you the best possible customer experience we can,'" Ben said.

### 'No-brainer of an honor'

Legacy is front and center at L.J. Kruse—and it's also in a



**"I think part of our secret sauce and what's made us successful is the family-business approach."**

**Ben Kruse**

L.J. Kruse Co.

glass display case in a conference room.

That's where the brothers have collected artifacts from generations past. Included is the green and gold painted L.J. Kruse sign, likely from a 1960s worksite, with the company's "28332" phone number on it—well before area codes and present-day, seven-digit phone numbers.

There are old-school time cards, their grandfather's Rolo-dex, a plumbing code book from the early 20th century and countless black-and-white photos. There's even an electrical permit with a 1919 stamp and Louis J. Kruse's signature.

These artifacts give the brothers pride.

"So many things had to go right in the last 100-plus years for us to get here and work out in the way that it did," Will said.

"We are the fourth generation. That's huge. That was never a weight—but something I thought was super special about the company, the multi-generational aspect. While we weren't forced into it, when the opportunity arose, it was a no-brainer of an honor to carry on that next generation."

"I think part of our secret sauce and what's made us successful is the family-business approach," Ben added. "People are used to our competitors where they're essentially a number. We're successful because we're able to deliver a level of service and customized approach that our larger competitors can't."

"We are incredibly lucky that the three of us not only get along as well as we do," Nate said, "but have very similar visions on where we want to go and how we want to get there."

As for the fifth generation? It's already in flight.

After graduating from college, Nate's daughter decided to work in L.J. Kruse's office—on her own accord—and is now pursuing the apprenticeship program.

There's no pressure, though. ■



# Leveling UP

Salary trend  
in the trades?  
They are rising  
faster than  
inflation.



**D**ata from Payscale.com shows that, across the trades, salaries for technicians and office workers across HVAC, electrical and plumbing businesses rose nationally by about 3.5 percent, regardless of experience level or trade.

That outpaced the 2024 rise in the Consumer Price Index of 2.9%, indicating that wages generally grew faster than nationwide prices across the industry.

The question for contractors: Did salaries at your business keep pace? There are a number of benchmarks to consider.

While the median entry-level base salary for HVAC technicians (\$54,100) is slightly more than that for an entry-level plumber (\$53,900), both significantly trail the median entry-level salary for electricians (\$60,600). Still, salaries for electricians rose more slowly than for either HVAC techs or plumbers.

But the salaries vary significantly by state.

Here, we've shared Payscale.com data and highlighted the average salaries for intermediate-level technicians across HVAC, plumbing and electrical, plus those for CSRs and dispatchers on the office side.

The database of salaries comes from Payscale.com, which works with human resources and compensation specialists to modernize compensation and salary benchmarking through technology.

Payscale's 2024-2025 Salary Budget Survey (SBS) is based on salary budget submissions from 1,550 organizations.

In the following pages you can check out what Payfactors.com data showed.







## HVAC technician salaries

Nationally, entry-level base salaries for HVAC technicians rose by 3.44% in the past year, 3.62% for senior techs, and 3.53% for HVAC supervisors. That puts pay for the average entry-level HVAC tech – with half making more and half making less – at \$54,100 nationally. And while salaries are rising fastest in New Jersey (4.04%), California (3.97%), and Illinois (3.92%), there are no projected salary decreases in the data.

For intermediate HVAC technicians, those with 2-4 years of experience, the median is \$65,700, and for experienced HVAC technicians (4-7 years), it's \$77,200. HVAC supervisors (7+ years of experience), at the median, make \$90,800.

\$64,200

Entry-level HVAC technician median pay in San Francisco (\$30.87 per hour). New York City (\$60,600, \$29.13 per hour) is second in entry-level salary, demonstrating the premium in the nation's biggest cities.

\$49,200

Median salary for entry-level HVAC technicians in West Virginia, lowest in the country. California (\$59,200), New Jersey (\$58,300) and Washington (\$58,000) are the highest paying states for those workers.

### NATIONAL HVAC TECH SALARY RANGES BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Entry level	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$41,800	\$20.10
50th percentile	\$54,100	\$26.01
90th percentile	\$68,600	\$32.98

Intermediate	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$49,800	\$23.94
50th percentile	\$65,700	\$31.59
90th percentile	\$80,600	\$38.75

Senior	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$61,600	\$29.62
50th percentile	\$77,200	\$37.12
90th percentile	\$92,600	\$44.52

Supervisor	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$68,900	\$33.13
50th percentile	\$90,800	\$43.65
90th percentile	\$129,000	\$62.02

SOURCE: Payscale.com



## MEDIAN SALARY FOR INTERMEDIATE (2-4 YEARS) HVAC TECHNICIANS BY STATE

State	Salary in \$	State	Salary in \$	State	Salary in \$
Alabama	61,900	Louisiana	63,400	North Dakota	62,400
Alaska	67,700	Maine	63,800	Ohio	63,400
Arizona	64,300	Maryland	67,500	Oklahoma	62,200
Arkansas	60,800	Massachusetts	69,800	Oregon	66,800
California	72,000	Michigan	64,600	Pennsylvania	65,500
Colorado	66,500	Minnesota	66,100	Rhode Island	66,100
Connecticut	68,600	Mississippi	60,200	South Carolina	62,200
Delaware	66,500	Missouri	63,600	South Dakota	60,800
Florida	63,300	Montana	61,700	Tennessee	62,800
Georgia	64,400	Nation	65,700	Texas	65,500
Hawaii	68,200	Nebraska	62,600	Utah	64,000
Idaho	62,300	Nevada	64,400	Vermont	62,200
Illinois	67,100	New Hampshire	66,800	Virginia	66,500
Indiana	63,100	New Jersey	70,800	Washington	70,500
Iowa	62,100	New Mexico	63,700	West Virginia	59,800
Kansas	63,100	New York	69,200	Wisconsin	64,100
Kentucky	62,000	North Carolina	64,300	Wyoming	60,200

SOURCE: Payscale.com

## INSIGHTS FROM THE NUMBERS

3.44% increase Entry-level	3.46% increase Intermediate	3.62% increase Senior	3.53% increase Supervisor
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Entry-level salaries are projected to rise fastest in New Jersey (4.04%), California (3.97%), and Illinois (3.92%) since June 2024, the last time Payscale.com provided ServiceTitan with data. There are no projected salary decreases.

The 50th percentile salary for an entry-level HVAC technician (0-2 years experience) nationwide is \$54,100. For intermediate experience (2-4 years), it's \$65,700, and for experienced HVAC technicians (4-7 years), it's \$77,200.

Entry-level HVAC technicians have the highest projected median pay in two of the nation's biggest cities, with San Francisco (\$64,200, \$30.87 per hour) and New York City (\$60,600, \$29.13) topping the list.

Wyoming (\$49,600), Mississippi (\$49,500), and West Virginia (\$49,200) have the lowest projected median salary for entry-level HVAC technicians; California (\$59,200), New Jersey (\$58,300) and Washington (\$58,000) are the highest paying states for those workers.

HVAC supervisors (7+ years of experience), at the median, make \$90,800.





## Electrician salaries

Highlighting the need for new technician talent in the trades, entry-level base median salaries for electricians rose 3.59% over 2024, faster than either intermediate electrician salaries (3.59%) and senior plumbers (3.15%).

For entry-level electricians, the median annual base salary for 2025 as of June 1 was projected to be \$60,600, or \$29.13 per hour.

That's higher than the entry-level figure for either plumbers or HVAC technicians, according to Payfactors.com. And for intermediate level electricians, those with 2-4 years of experience, the number rises to \$71,100, or \$34.18 per hour.

At the senior level, defined as 4-7 years of experience, the median is \$76,600, or \$36.83 per hour.



### NATIONAL ELECTRICIAN SALARY RANGES BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Entry level	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$44,700	\$21.49
50th percentile	\$60,600	\$29.13
90th percentile	\$83,900	\$40.34

Intermediate	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$54,100	\$26.01
50th percentile	\$71,100	\$34.18
90th percentile	\$91,100	\$43.80

Senior	Annual	Hourly
10th percentile	\$57,000	\$27.40
50th percentile	\$76,600	\$36.83
90th percentile	\$100,000	\$48.08

SOURCE: Payscale.com

## MEDIAN SALARY FOR INTERMEDIATE (2-4 YEARS) ELECTRICIANS BY STATE

State	Salary in \$	State	Salary in \$	State	Salary in \$
Alabama	66,900	Louisiana	68,600	North Dakota	67,400
Alaska	73,100	Maine	69,000	Ohio	68,500
Arizona	69,500	Maryland	72,900	Oklahoma	67,200
Arkansas	65,700	Massachusetts	75,500	Oregon	72,200
California	77,800	Michigan	69,900	Pennsylvania	70,800
Colorado	71,900	Minnesota	71,500	Rhode Island	71,500
Connecticut	74,200	Mississippi	65,100	South Carolina	67,200
Delaware	71,900	Missouri	68,700	South Dakota	65,800
Florida	68,400	Montana	66,700	Tennessee	67,900
Georgia	69,700	Nation	71,100	Texas	70,800
Hawaii	73,700	Nebraska	67,600	Utah	69,200
Idaho	67,400	Nevada	69,600	Vermont	67,300
Illinois	72,500	New Hampshire	72,300	Virginia	71,900
Indiana	68,200	New Jersey	76,500	Washington	76,200
Iowa	67,100	New Mexico	68,900	West Virginia	64,600
Kansas	68,200	New York	74,800	Wisconsin	69,200
Kentucky	67,100	North Carolina	69,500	Wyoming	65,100

SOURCE: Payscale.com

## INSIGHTS FROM THE NUMBERS

3.99%

Rise in entry-level electrician salaries in New Jersey, fastest in the nation. That's followed by California (3.92%).

\$55,000

Media entry-level electrician salary in Wyoming, lowest in the nation. California, at \$66,300, is the highest, followed by New Jersey (\$65,200), and Washington (\$64,900).

3.14%

The average salary increase for senior electricians nationally, according to the data, a smaller increase than those in HVAC and plumbing.

\$100,000

Equivalent to \$48.08 per hour in base salary, the median salary of senior electricians (4-7 years of experience) at the 90th percentile.





## Plumbing salaries

For entry-level plumbers, the projected median annual base salary is \$53,900, or \$25.91 per hour. For intermediate plumbers with 2-4 years of experience, the national median rises to \$70,000, or \$33.65 per hour. At the senior level, defined as 4-6 years of experience, the median salary is \$75,800, or \$36.44 per hour.

Plumbing salaries nationally, according to Payfactors.com, rose at a rate similar to other jobs in the trades, with entry-level plumbers making 3.65% more at the median than a year ago.

Plumbers with 2-4 years of experience saw their base pay increase by 3.55% over a year ago, the same rate at which senior plumbers rose.

## MEDIAN SALARY FOR INTERMEDIATE (2-4 YEARS) PLUMBERS BY STATE

State	Salary in \$	State	Salary in \$	State	Salary in \$
Alabama	65,900	Louisiana	67,500	North Dakota	66,400
Alaska	72,000	Maine	67,900	Ohio	67,500
Arizona	68,400	Maryland	71,800	Oklahoma	66,200
Arkansas	64,700	Massachusetts	74,300	Oregon	71,100
California	76,600	Michigan	68,800	Pennsylvania	69,700
Colorado	70,800	Minnesota	70,400	Rhode Island	70,400
Connecticut	73,100	Mississippi	64,100	South Carolina	66,200
Delaware	70,800	Missouri	67,700	South Dakota	64,700
Florida	67,400	Montana	65,700	Tennessee	66,800
Georgia	68,600	Nation	70,000	Texas	69,700
Hawaii	72,600	Nebraska	66,600	Utah	68,100
Idaho	66,400	Nevada	68,500	Vermont	66,200
Illinois	71,400	New Hampshire	71,200	Virginia	70,800
Indiana	67,200	New Jersey	75,400	Washington	75,000
Iowa	66,100	New Mexico	67,800	West Virginia	63,600
Kansas	67,100	New York	73,600	Wisconsin	68,200
Kentucky	66,100	North Carolina	68,500	Wyoming	64,100

SOURCE: Payscale.com

## INSIGHTS FROM THE NUMBERS

**4.13%**

Increase in entry-level plumber base salary in New Jersey, the fastest increase in the nation. Plumbing salaries rose slowest in Wyoming (2.07%).

**\$49,000**

Median base salary for entry-level plumbers in West Virginia, lowest in the nation. California (\$59,000) and New Jersey (\$58,000) have the highest.

**\$114,000**

Base salary for senior plumbers in the 90th percentile, where 90 percent of plumbers make less. That's \$54.81 per hour.







### Office worker salaries

While Payscale’s survey covers CSRs and dispatchers in all industries, not just in the trades, the numbers illustrate what competitive salaries for those jobs look like vs. the competition for those workers.

Nationally, office worker salaries are up about 3.5% across the board, regardless of position or experience level. That includes the median base salary nationally for entry level CSRs (\$45,500, or \$21.88 per hour, up 3.64% over a year ago) and entry level dispatchers (\$49,000, \$23.56 per hour, up 3.38%).

The median salary nationally for office administrators (\$55,100), office supervisors (\$71,000), and office managers (\$101,000) rose at a similar rate. ■



Scan the QR code for more industry insights

### INSIGHTS FROM THE NUMBERS

**\$53,700**

Median salary for entry-level dispatchers in California, highest in the nation. West Virginia (\$43,600) is the lowest.

**7.7%**

The gap for entry-level pay between dispatchers and CSRs.



**\$63,400**

National median salary for CSR managers with six or more years of experience. California, at \$69,400, is again highest in the nation.



### HOW MUCH DO CSRs AND DISPATCHERS MAKE BY STATE?

	CSR 2-4 years	CSR Manager 6+ years	Dispatcher 2-4 years
Alabama	46,700	59,700	52,000
Alaska	51,100	65,300	56,800
Arizona	48,500	62,000	54,000
Arkansas	45,900	58,600	51,100
California	54,300	69,400	60,500
Colorado	50,200	64,200	55,900
Connecticut	51,800	66,200	57,700
Delaware	50,200	64,200	55,900
Florida	47,800	61,100	53,200
Georgia	48,600	62,200	54,100
Hawaii	51,500	65,800	57,300
Idaho	47,100	60,200	52,400
Illinois	50,700	64,700	56,400
Indiana	47,700	60,900	53,000
Iowa	46,900	59,900	52,200
Kansas	47,600	60,800	53,000
Kentucky	46,800	59,900	52,100
Louisiana	47,900	61,200	53,300
Maine	48,200	61,600	53,600
Maryland	50,900	65,100	56,700
Massachusetts	52,700	67,400	58,700
Michigan	48,800	62,400	54,300
Minnesota	49,900	63,800	55,600
Mississippi	45,400	58,100	50,600
Missouri	48,000	61,300	53,400
Montana	46,600	59,600	51,900

	CSR 2-4 years	CSR Manager 6+ years	Dispatcher 2-4 years
Nation	49,600	63,400	55,200
Nebraska	47,200	60,400	52,600
Nevada	48,600	62,100	54,100
New Hampshire	50,500	64,500	56,200
New Jersey	53,400	68,300	59,500
New Mexico	48,100	61,500	53,500
New York	52,200	66,800	58,100
North Carolina	48,500	62,000	54,000
North Dakota	47,100	60,200	52,400
Ohio	47,800	61,100	53,200
Oklahoma	46,900	60,000	52,200
Oregon	50,400	64,400	56,100
Pennsylvania	49,400	63,200	55,000
Rhode Island	49,900	63,800	55,600
South Carolina	47,000	60,000	52,300
South Dakota	45,900	58,700	51,100
Tennessee	47,400	60,600	52,800
Texas	49,400	63,200	55,000
Utah	48,300	61,800	53,800
Vermont	47,000	60,000	52,300
Virginia	50,200	64,200	55,900
Washington	53,200	68,000	59,200
West Virginia	45,100	57,700	50,200
Wisconsin	48,400	61,800	53,800
Wyoming	45,400	58,100	50,600

SOURCE: Payscale.com





# ‘Using the Tool’

How 2024’s TitanAdvisor Score Challenge winners benefit from ServiceTitan

By Brendan Meyer

When Cesar Diaz heard his shop’s name called at the TitanAdvisor (TAD) Score Challenge ceremony at Pantheon 2024, he was confused for two reasons.

One, he wasn’t sure why he’d won. Two, he wasn’t fully certain what TAD was.

His shop, Made Simple Heating and Air in Santa Clara, California, had just gone live with ServiceTitan eight weeks prior. And in the frenzy of starting a new software and trying to utilize as many features as possible, Made Simple’s TAD score spiked from zero to 121, a surge that garnered his shop a TAD award in the “Rookies of the Year — Less than 1 year tenure” category—as well as some understandable bewilderment.

“I was like, ‘What is this? What’s going on?’ Diaz said. “‘What did I do?’”

The answer to that question is easy: Diaz was simply utilizing ServiceTitan.

The Titan Score, featured in TitanAdvisor, is a tool for all

ServiceTitan customers. It quantifies how effectively you are utilizing ServiceTitan. A higher score means better utilization, which translates to greater value for your business. In fact, contractors who maximize their use of ServiceTitan have been shown to grow more than twice as fast as those who don’t.

“I think it’s a really good indicator (of how our shop is doing),” Diaz said. “Because even though I’m not out there in the field anymore and I’m not part of those results, I’m still part of the end result because I’m here, on the front end, utilizing (ServiceTitan).”

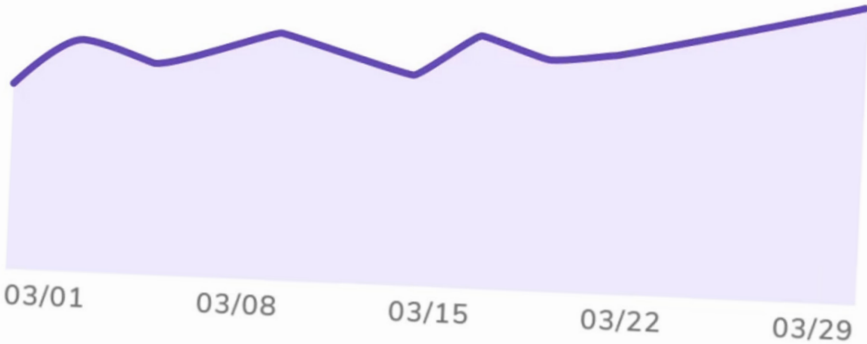
Diaz said the biggest game-changing feature the residential shop has used since going live is dispatching.

“There were a lot of hiccups before (we switched to ServiceTitan). A lot of our calls were, ‘Where is the technician? Why hasn’t he showed up? What’s his ETA?’ It added a lot of stress because I had to hang up the call, call the technician to see where he was at, and then call the client back.

“Now, using the (dispatching feature), I know where my guys are.” ■

167 Your TitanScore

Higher score means better product integration



## 2024 TitanAdvisor (TAD) Score Challenge Winners

### Rookies of the Year — Less than 1 year tenure

- » Aim High HVAC Inc
- » Made Simple Heating and Air Inc Rising Stars — 1-2 years tenure
- » Arrow Energy Solutions
- » Paradise Heating and Air LLC

### Breakthrough Performers — 2+ years tenure

- » AJD Plumbing LLC
- » Accent Comfort 1 Services LLC

### Also honored were customers with the highest Titan Scores, the 2024 TitanAdvisor Masters

- » Above and Beyond Heating and Cooling LLC
- » Beyer Plumbing Company



Scan the code to find out how Titan Advisor can help propel your business forward and get the most out of ServiceTitan, no matter where you are in your business.





# Contact Center Pro

## Streamlining efficiency, well-being and success

By Pat McManamon

Innovations that streamline workflows and improve operations are welcome in any office. • That is exactly what happened when Bonney Plumbing, Heating & Air in Sacramento, California added Contact Center Pro, a call center platform available for ServiceTitan users. The team at Bonney found that Contact Center Pro brought a consolidated, streamlined flow of leads to one inbox, which led to increased efficiencies - and bookings.

The benefits Bonney reports in just the first month since it started with Contact Center Pro include:

- Booking rate went from 35% to 41%, a rate Bonney says it had never achieved (Bonney judges based on percentage of total calls compared to bookings, but when the ratio is leads vs booking, Bonney is at a whopping 97%).
- Bookings increased 11%.
- Missed calls reduced by 60%. Now at 4% (which Bonney says is below the Nexstar best practice of 5% by consolidating call centers).
- The abandon rate dropped from 12% to 4%.

"This product has made my life so much better," said Kallie Carmical, Call Center Manager for all brands at Bonney. "It has saved me. I don't know how to say it, but it's made my life beyond better."

Contact Center Pro essentially acts as a fully integrated call center solution. It helps businesses manage calls seamlessly, especially when they have several entities under one umbrella, which Bonney does.

Contact Center Pro features include call routing, AI Virtual Agents, agent monitoring, real-time analysis and the ability to book directly from calls, all in the ServiceTitan platform, which maintains data consistency within the ServiceTitan account.

It eliminates the need to find incoming leads from different places and for different businesses. All leads are funneled into a single place that allows a business to capitalize on booking jobs in a more efficient manner.

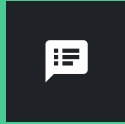
Imagine if you will several creeks flowing into one river of opportunity that flows to a streamlined customer service operation, improved job booking efficiency, and a better work life for the CSRs.

"It takes things off their plate," Carmical said. "Before, they had to go through their dashboards and make sure everything was accurate, and they did a lot of tedious work. They don't really have to do that anymore. They can focus on just booking the call, which is what a CSR should be doing."

"Their whole mindset is to book a call and move on to book another one."

Bonney was founded in 1978 by Mark and Candace Bonney with a vision to be so customer oriented that people would never leave. Its jingle is well known in the Sacramento area, and in 2021 the business was honored as the best employer in Sacramento for a business its size.

It now has five brands under the Bonney umbrella: Bonney, Big Air Heating & Air Conditioning; Boyd Plumbing; Peter Levi Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and Drains; and Gallagher's Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning.



**"It takes things off their plate ... They can focus on just booking the call, which is what a CSR should be doing."**

**Kallie Carmical,**  
Call Center Manager for all  
brands at Bonney

Taken together, its services include plumbing, HVAC, drain and sewer, air quality, and electrical, all for residential and commercial services.

The centralization offered by Contact Center Pro means addressing leads in a multi-tenant business becomes more streamlined and efficient. By centralizing all locations, Bonney is able to staff more effectively, which means fewer calls are missed. It makes the team in the call center more efficient, reduces abandon rate, and provides more time for outbound calls. It also more than makes up for if an employee is ill or on a well-earned vacation.

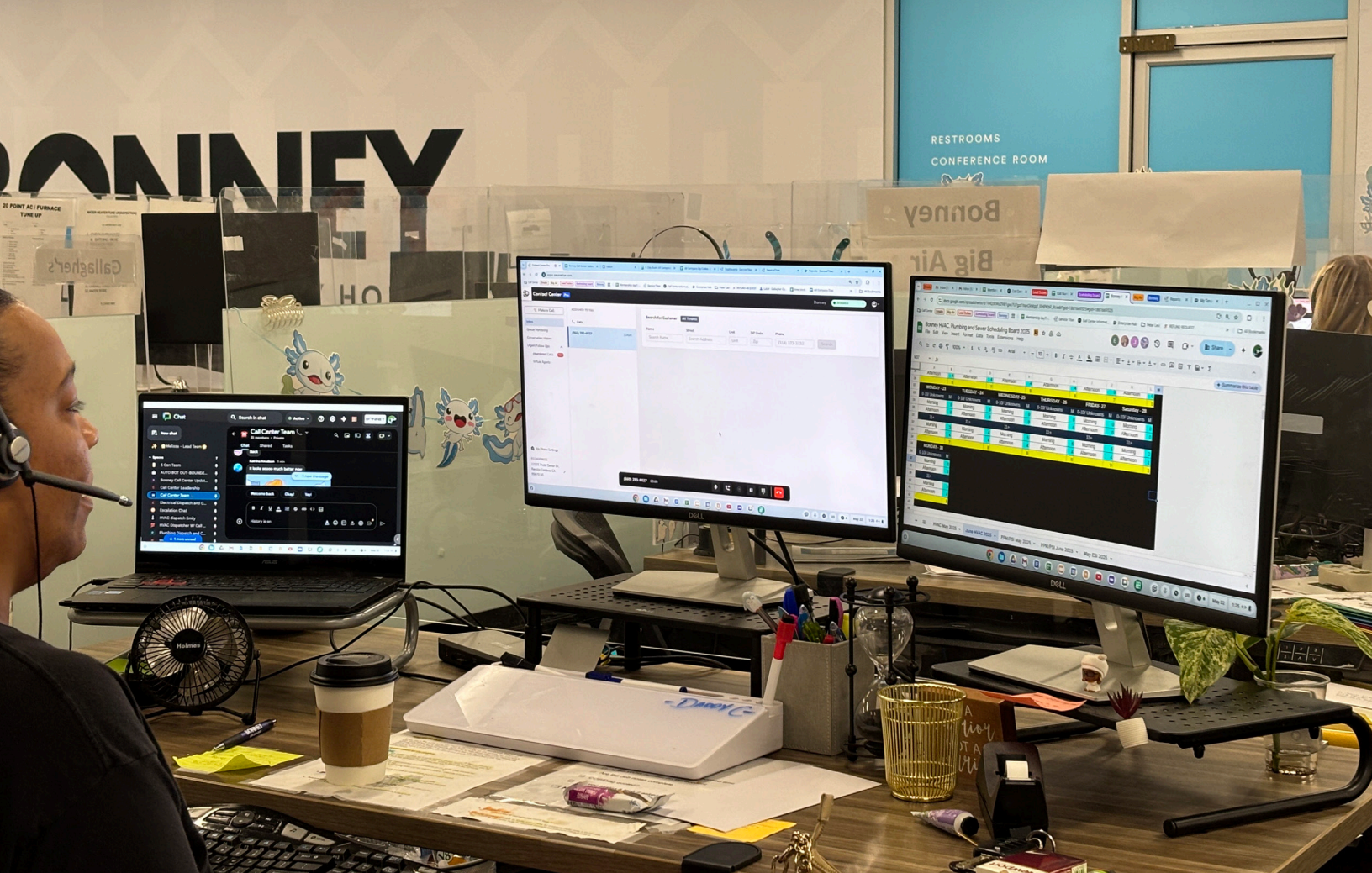
"I have 17 CSRs," Carmical said. "I'm getting ready to go into summer, but in real life I won't need that many people. Especially with AI [Virtual] Agents. I don't have to worry about them getting sick. It's unbelievable."

### Built for exactly what contractors do

Bonney even played an active role in the rollout, implementation and refinement of Contact Center Pro. Because Bonney was one of the first to use it, ServiceTitan developers were in the building watching how the process worked. In real time, they would monitor and then meet to talk about ways to make the system better.

"It's invaluable," said Angela Kump, a Junior System Administrator in IT and a ServiceTitan Certified Administrator. "To help build this from the ground up and to have a team that cares behind it, that still works on coming out with incredible features, it's





just a game changer.”

Prior to Contact Center Pro, Bonney designated one CSR to handle calls for its smallest entity. With Contact Center Pro, it has many people available for that entity.

“As that call comes in, they’ll get it, but they also are able to answer calls for our busier companies so they stay busy,” Kump said.

**AI Virtual Agents change the game**

The addition of AI Virtual Agents allows 24-7 attention to callers, and is just the most recent of beneficial features. More exciting advancements will soon follow.

“We just rolled out AI [Virtual] Agents,” Kump said. “It was really easy to add into our workflows that we already had established. We were going to originally roll it out just to handle our during-the-day overflow calls, but we actually rolled it out to take those as well as our after-hour calls, because the experience has been much more uniform than our answering service ever has been.

“We already are incredibly happy with the results we’re seeing.”

ServiceTitan’s AI, known as Titan Intelligence, records calls and provides a summary and sentiment analysis about the CSR’s approach. That then can be used as a coaching tool. Through Second Chance Leads, it even can ping a manager and suggest a callback to turn an unbooked call into a booking.

“If we capture the call, it’s a brand new customer,” Kump said. “If we are able to take that call, we can help the customer right away. We can book the soonest appointment, provide the information they’re looking for and, hopefully, if it’s an upset customer, we’re saving that customer.

“We’re making money, we’re booking that customer, we’ve sold them a membership, so now they joined one of our families.

“If we missed that call, they called our competitor. This product is amazing. I promise.”

To get started with Contact Center Pro, book a demo today. ■



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Center Pro, the only  
contact center system  
built for the trades.

**Book a demo to find  
out more.**

# Pricing is hot topic in Australia

One of the best parts of my job at ServiceTitan is sharing the wonder of discovery with customers on the Toolbox for the Trades podcast. I was reminded again of that joy, and of what it felt like in ServiceTitan’s early days, on my recent trip to Australia for a ServiceTitan event.

Australia is a new market for ServiceTitan. Former Zoom Drain CFO and current ServiceTitan employee Ellen Rohr entertained a group of almost 200 that somehow still felt intimate, in Sydney.

As part of that event, Rohr and Tom Howard, founder of Lee’s Air and also a ServiceTitan employee, hosted a session on budgeting, and insisted to the audience that charging the right amount for their services via flat-rate pricing was essential.

Immediately, there was pushback. Tradies – the term for contractor preferred in Australia – in the crowd expressed concern there would be negative sentiment from customers and the media if they raised prices.

Indeed, 76 percent of Australia’s tradies in a recent ServiceTitan survey of more than 1,000 respondents in the country said they use time and materials to price their work.

That, and not flat-rate pricing, is the standard. And it might be holding companies in Australia back from recognizing the full value of their services.

Rohr and Howard pushed back against that thought, insisting instead that being priced correctly and adequately means being able to provide excellent customer service, being around for the long run, and being able to motivate your team.

It was all reminiscent of 2017, when I joined ServiceTitan and the same conversation was being had – in the U.S. market.

ServiceTitan’s thought leaders were pushing the kind of flat-rate pricing that is the basis of the software’s strategy, and facing pushback from contractors.

Now, flat-rate pricing is the standard, and a pillar of success for so many ServiceTitan customers. American contractors have set a new standard for excellence, using what’s now a tried and true tactic in flat-rate pricing.

That moment might have been a tectonic shift in the trajectory of tradies in Australia. It felt like ServiceTitan was shaking up the trades culture in Australia, just as it has in America.

Sometimes, history repeats. ■



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