

the forte

# FORTUNE

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May 2017



Zucchetti p. 20

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## CONTENTS

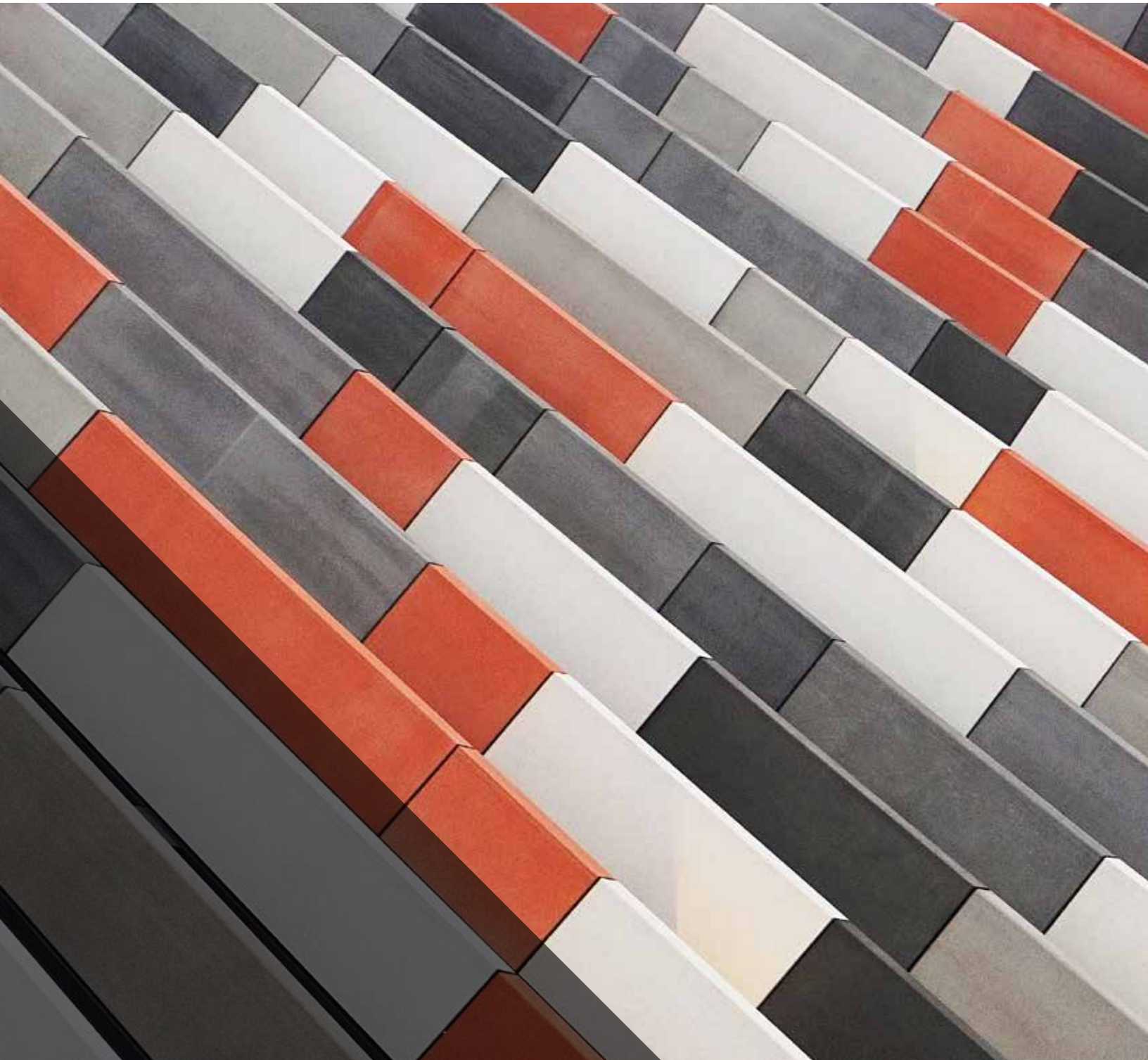
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<b>PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE</b> <i>A Marvelous May</i>	<b>4</b>
<hr/>	
<b>2017 Summer Meeting</b>	<b>6</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Ten Good Minutes with Jeff Valles</b>	<b>12</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Forte Welcomes :</b> <i>Bathworks InStyle</i>	<b>16</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Forte Welcomes</b> <i>Sidler International</i>	<b>18</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Zucchetti</b> <i>Italian Flair, Ground Breaking Design, Award-Winning Products</i>	<b>20</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Simple Acts of Kindness Make a Huge Difference</b>	<b>24</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Forte Preferred Vendor News</b>	<b>26</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Forte Resources</b>	<b>31</b>





*A Marvelous May*



May was a busy month for Forte. At the beginning of the month, the Vendor Committee spent three solid days together reviewing six applications from potential new partners. Only one of those companies was selected as a Preferred Partner – welcome Sidler International. The Committee also met with 13 of our existing Preferred Partners to develop business plans to help those partners become more important to Forte and strategies to make Forte members more important to our Preferred Partners.

The Forte face-to-face meetings with Preferred Partners are invaluable. To prepare, Forte asks members who are responsible for 80% or more of the volume with a particular Preferred Partner to provide a candid assessment of the partner's performance. We ask our members to:

- Describe their relationship with the Preferred Partner.
- Identify their top-selling items from the company.
- Relate their top concerns about the company.
- Describe Preferred Partner's performance.
- Describe actions the company could take to secure more of the showroom's business.
- Evaluate the quality of the Preferred Partner's sales representation.

To help assure confidentiality, Forte provides Preferred Partners with members' candid assessments prior to meetings but does not identify the author of any comment. Much of the input provided by our members was

predictable, but other content was eye opening and formed the basis for productive conversations.

At the face-to-face meetings, Forte learned of new products that our Preferred Partners have in the development pipeline. Many Preferred Partners shared that they are tapping new markets, such as the hospitality industry.

Partners also confirmed their commitments to enforce MAP policies where none existed in the past and announced new programs that will make rebate levels more achievable and provide additional incentives for members to partner with Forte Vendors. All of this news represents a win-win situation for the entire group. We want to thank all of the Preferred Partners that participated and all of the members that provided candid and constructive evaluations to help make our Preferred Partners and our organization better. The Vendor Committee is committed to conducting face-to-face meetings more frequently to provide additional Preferred Partners the opportunity to further grow and prosper with Forte members.

The International Contemporary Furniture Fair was another significant event for Forte members and Preferred Partners. Held at the Javitz Center in New York May 21-24, ICFF has become an important and significant show for the decorative plumbing and hardware industry. ICFF reminded me of what KBIS was 20 years ago – an event that attracted best-in-class suppliers with best-in-class distributors. Because ICFF is held in my backyard,

we have been fortunate to attend every year. The 2017 version was almost overwhelming. We worked an entire day nonstop to meet with all of the Forte Preferred Partners exhibiting, seeing new products and absorbing design trends not only in decorative plumbing and hardware but also in furniture, lighting, fabrics, wallcoverings, flooring and storage. We were impressed by the quality and breadth of the new products that we saw. We saw many trends that Forte members can capitalize on to keep our showrooms on the cutting edge. Customization of finishes and products was one of the trends that will benefit all of our showrooms, because our clients will need our expertise to specify custom sizes, custom products and custom finishes. Customization is not something that is easily ordered online or through a distributor that is not intimately familiar with a line and its capabilities.

In some areas of the country selling bath furniture is a difficult proposition. Based on the products and trends we saw at ICFF, selling bath furniture should become a lot easier. Vanities on display had unlimited storage opportunities and featured head turning colors such as green and blue to accompany the more popular shades of gray, white and black. Many of our Preferred Partners introduced new sinks and faucetry with creative designs and unmatched functionality that again will help our showrooms to stand apart from competitors.

An added bonus of attending ICFF was the opportunity to network with so many fellow Forte members to discuss the products and trends that were featured and catch up on local market conditions. Overall the outlook was positive with many members noting that business conditions are robust. If the first quarter volume in the Forte channel is any indication, we are off to a good start. Our volume grew. Same store sales were up. The numbers were impressive given the fact that the national economy grew at 0.07 percent.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Summer Meeting August 1-2 in Chicago and continuing May's momentum.

Howard Frankel  
President

# *2017 Forte Summer Meeting*

The 2017 Forte Summer Meeting  
August 1-2  
Fairmont Chicago at  
Millennium Park, Chicago, IL

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## **Capitalizing on Opportunities**

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**Ten Outstanding Reasons to Attend the Shareholder-Only Forté Summer Meeting**

- Share experiences and learn from fellow Shareholders how they are capitalizing on Crosswater and Ammara opportunities.
- Discuss pressing business challenges and opportunities among fellow Shareholders with similar business models at the Peer-to-Peer Network Meetings.
- Participate in an innovative workshop that puts your sales professionals in the best position to close more sales
- Learn how to develop a viable exit strategy for selling your business.
- Learn how to put your displays and bignettes in the best light.
- Exchange experiences with key Forté Preferred Vendors.
- Take advantage of the industry's best networking.
- Learn how to you can leverage your Forté membership to improve your bottom line.
- Be the first to see potential new additions to the Crosswater offering.
- Take advantage of limited time Summer Meeting specials.



## **What You Never Learned About Closing Sales**

**Presented by Frederic Lucas**

**Tuesday, August 1**

**Gold Room, 3 - 4:30 p.m.**

Closing a sale is not an event, but an outcome. Books have been written about closing, but they don't address the real reasons why salespeople don't close as much as they could. Sales statistics reveal that your salespeople will close between 10 and 20 percent of sales opportunities despite their best efforts. Attend this seminar to learn how to get them to close the other 80 percent.

In this fast-paced session you will learn how to:

- Reduce vulnerability of clients that want to think it over or comparison shop.
- Shorten your sales cycle and get consumers to decide faster.
- Close without pressuring prospects.
- Posture to differentiate, close more effectively and increase recurring sales.
- Create a strong customer experience.
- Eliminate objections at the time of closing.



## **The Right Light**

**Presented by Andrew Shebath, Victoria Supply**

**Tuesday, August 1**

**State Room, 4:30 - 6 p.m.**

Have you ever ordered a product for display that you saw at a trade fair and then discovered that it did not look the same by the time it arrived in your showroom? Have you had clients return products because they claim the finish was not what they ordered or that it looked different from what they saw in your showroom? Which displays and vignettes in your showroom attract the most attention and which ones seem to be ignored? Most often the aforementioned issues have something to do with the way that products, displays and vignettes are lit.





In today's world, lighting can be cleverly used to enhance the beauty of your showroom displays and vignettes, attract customer attention and put your brand in the best possible light. At this program, you will receive the tools and guidance you need to better understand display lighting and how you use effective lighting to make your displays pop.



## **Do You Have An Exit Strategy: Guidance for Effectively Transferring Ownership of Your Business**

**Presented by Lee and Terry Resnick, Resnick Associates  
Tuesday, August 1  
Cuvee Room, 4:30 - 6 p.m.**



This seminar focuses on the areas of estate planning, business succession, and liquidity issues and offers options to Forte Members on how to pass their businesses to the next generation or other successors. Attention is given to nonfamily, closely held businesses. Techniques are explained that will assist Forte Members to preserve their estates. Several key topics covered are: buy-sell agreements, valuation, trusts, due diligence of life insurance and addressing family issues within a family business, among others.

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## Peer-to-Peer Network Meetings Tuesday, August 2 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

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The Peer-to-Peer Network discussions continue in Chicago at the Summer Meeting. The meetings provide a unique opportunity for Members with similar business models in noncompeting markets to share successful practices, vet business challenges and discuss different issues related to running a decorative plumbing and hardware showroom. Potential topics that might be addressed at the Peer-to-Peer Network meetings include:

- How can Forté become more important to your business?
- What can and should Forté do to connect with your sales staff so that they understand which manufacturers are Forté Partners?
- What is your Crosswater and Ammara strategy moving forward? What is likely to change?
- What have you done to help your staff close more sales?
- What are the best things you have done for your business in the last 12 months?
- What actions have you taken in the last 12 months that you regret?
- Who is your most important vendor and why?
- What's hot in your showroom and what's not?
- What are your best sources to find new staff?
- How do you determine the effectiveness of your website?





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## **Preferred Partner Review Wednesday, August 3 Gold Room, 2:15 - 3:30 p.m.**

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Help identify new opportunities within the Forté channel. The Partner Performance Review will concentrate on other Forté lines and manufacturers. We will examine the following criteria:

- Quantitative performance
- Sales
- Fulfillment
- Customer support
- Local representation
- Market position
- Product style leadership

## **Forté Hospitality July 31 Embassy Room 8 - 10 p.m.**

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If you are arriving in Chicago early, please join members of the Forté Board, Product Only Committee and Vendor Committee for a drink and a snack at the Forté Hospitality Room. This is another opportunity to network with Forté volunteers and your peers from across the continent in a relaxed, fun-filled atmosphere. even better.

## **Summer Meeting Fee**

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The cost to attend the Summer Meeting is \$495 per person. The fee includes the reception and dinner Tuesday, breakfast and lunch Wednesday and session breaks Tuesday and Wednesday.

## **Hotel Accommodations**

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Forté has negotiated discounted room rates of \$229 per room plus tax. Reserve online at <https://aws.passkey.com/go/Fortésummer> or call 1-800-526-2008 and tell the reservation agent you are attending the Forté Summer Meeting. Reservations must be made by **July 10** to obtain the Forté group rate.

## **Summer Specials**

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Preferred Partners interested in providing a special for the Summer Meeting should forward the details to Rebekah Covay at [rcovay@buyforte.com](mailto:rcovay@buyforte.com)

# Ten Good Minutes

with Jeff Valles



## **What Were Your Expectations When You Moved to Chown?**

Frankly, I was scared to death. I spent most of my career in manufacturing before spending eight years with Forte. I was entering an established business with seasoned managers and members of the Chown family that I did not know that well. I understood manufacturing, and I knew that I do not have the patience to deal with retail clients on a showroom floor. My initial approach was to help guide the business to become more successful without having to work the floor. To my good fortune, I am the beneficiary of two outstanding managers and an excellent crew of sales professionals. My role is to leverage the assets that exist and take the business to the next level.

## **What does the next level look like?**

The next level is both exciting and frightening. The U.S. in general and, decorative plumbing and hardware specifically, has too much retail space and both are being attacked on multiple fronts. First there are online retailers nipping at our customer base. I am not sure if many in our industry will be able to weather the storm of increased online purchases combined with the threat of the big manufacturers becoming plumbing's equivalent of Google and Facebook. I fear that Kohler, Delta and Moen will control the market even more than they do today. Most consumers don't want to look at 20 different websites to find what they need. They want to look at only one or two. Which sites will attract the most eyes, Kohler.com or Chown.com? This

is where Forte can help. Independent manufacturers need to work with independent showrooms, because if they don't everyone will continue to be at a competitive disadvantage and the gap between the 800 pound gorillas and independents will continue to expand.

Smaller manufacturers and Forte showrooms don't have the resources, people or time to attract the attention of the premium and luxury consumer through traditional advertising media. However, if we work together, we can expose the weaknesses of the slow moving gorillas. We have to look at advertising, marketing and merchandising differently. Programs like co-op print advertising does not make a lot of sense. Instead, those funds should be used for supporting websites, social

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media campaigns and Google Ad Words among other newer technologies that help level the competitive playing field. Showrooms and almost every independent manufacturer can't outspend Kohler, Moen and Delta on advertising. It's not a good use of resources when better options are available. Let's not forget our customers Google first!

***What has changed at Chown since your arrival?***

Chown did not get into the plumbing business until about 20 years ago. At that time, few of the key industry manufacturers would sell direct. When lines did agree to partner with Chown, display requirements were disproportionate to available showroom space. With plumbing sales, we have been able to show fewer lines more effectively. Less has been more. We have fewer products on display but we are selling more per square foot.

***What should manufacturers be doing more of to support your showroom?***

The most important thing that manufacturers can do to support our efforts is to stop forcing their representatives to provide training. There is no way the best rep in the world can train effectively even if their line is the top seller in our showroom. The reason is simple. Most reps can't answer all of the questions that need to be answered and do not have that addictive passion. Showrooms go to market by enlightening customers on the reasons why we believe that the products we have specified for their projects will make their lives better and more rewarding. Our salespeople need to know lines inside and out and believe in the brand. If they don't, they won't be confident selling a line and eventually, the line will fall off their radar screen.



***What do your best manufacturing partners do that others don't?***

They listen and they don't tell me that their lines grow at double digits every year, because we know that real businesses don't grow at that rate.

***What do your best representatives do that others don't?***

The best reps are out in the field and successfully specifying products for projects. They keep our displays up-to-date and don't worry about receiving a purchase order before acting. They also treat our sales staff with respect by not bothering them when they are busy. A good rep has a thankless job serving as the liaison between the vendor and distributor.

***Where do you see opportunities for Chown and the industry?***

There is no one who buys from a decorative plumbing and hardware showroom that wants to go to a cocktail party and brag that they purchased a cheap faucet. People who buy from showrooms appreciate premium and luxury products. Our opportunity is to capitalize on the premium and luxury shopper and position our showrooms as the go-to destination for products that offer a distinctive story that differentiates our showroom brands from supply houses and home centers. Our showroom professionals need to know how to tell stories, because our customers want to tell their friends, family and peers the story behind products and why those products make them feel special.

***What role does Forte play at Chown?***

Forte is the second most important criterion to evaluate lines at Chown behind a company's infrastructure. It is paramount for Chown to partner with

manufacturers that have the capacity to expand their offerings, understand and provide outstanding customer service, produce well-made and well-designed products and take ownership of problems and fulfillment commitments. A beautiful product that does not work or cannot be delivered in a timely fashion is useless. At the end of the day, showrooms have to own manufacturing problems, because the customer bought the product from Chown and not ABC Faucet Manufacturer. I also recognize that Chown has to be an early adopter. We have to pioneer lines, but we need to partner with lines that can grow.

Forte is second because I trust my peers and fellow members with fully vetting our manufacturing partners to help ensure these partners have the ability to grow, their products will work in the field, they won't run and hide from problems and that they will treat our showroom and our staff with respect.

***How could Forte better serve your business?***

Forte volunteers and leaders have often said that there are many different businesses within Forte, but I don't agree with that. We all have similar businesses. The difference is how we operate day-to-day. The organization's leadership needs to take a more global perspective and focus decision-making on what is in the best interest of the group as opposed to how a decision may affect individual businesses. Sometimes, this global perspective does not seem to be readily apparent.

***What has surprised you the most about the showroom business?***

The most obvious surprise is that decorative plumbing and hardware are the first items to value engineered out of a project.

Second, almost every builder – even luxury builders – does not care about plumbing or hardware they install in a project. If a client requests or demands higher-end plumbing and door hardware, builders will acquiesce, but they don't readily look to purchase products we sell in our showroom.

Third, designers struggle with plumbing. They are more comfortable specifying a \$750 pillow for a couch than fighting for a \$750 faucet. We as an industry need to improve the image of the bathroom. Designers have no qualms specifying a \$25,000 couch that takes 12 to 16 weeks to arrive. However they balk at specifying a \$25,000 powder room. Our main deliverables are secondary concerns, and we need to work to change that.

***What role will Crosswater, Ammara Designs and other Forte-exclusive and limited distribution lines play at Chown?***

They are the future and keys to our future success – period end of sentence. When we put a Forte exclusive line or limited distribution line on a bid, we know that spec can't be shopped. It's ours to win.

***What changes do you plan to implement in the next year?***

We realized that we don't know how to effectively merchandise or market our business to respond to the changing dynamic in the ways our clients buy. That's why we have partnered with a local architecture firm to reconfigure our showroom layout and displays



Jeff Valles



# *Forte is Pleased to Announce its newest Member: Bathworks InStyle*

## ***Bathworks InStyle***

8780 Central Avenue, Suite A  
Montclair, CA 91763

The main Forte contact is Ron Kadouri  
[ron@bathworksinstyle.com](mailto:ron@bathworksinstyle.com)  
[www.bathworksinstyle.com](http://www.bathworksinstyle.com)

Bathworks InStyle features a 10,000 square foot showroom offering cutting edge bath and kitchen products serving the Island Empire region of Southern California. The vast showroom offers well-trained and knowledgeable sales professionals that have been serving homeowners, builders and the design community for more than 20 years. The company's sister showroom Lightbulbs Etc. is a full service lighting showroom.







# *Forte Welcomes*

*Sidler International*



Forte is pleased to announce a new partnership with SIDLER International. The company combines Swiss craftsmanship and quality with state-of-the-art technology to provide another best-in-class medicine and mirrored cabinet option to your merchandise mix. Otto Sidler founded the company in 1964 and produced his first mirror cabinet four years later in 1968.

SIDLER established a North American presence in 2009. Headquartered in Vancouver, British Columbia SIDLER distributes its products from multiple warehouse locations, one on each coast. This guarantees a streamlined order fulfillment process for Forte members across the United States and Canada.

SIDLER produces seven unique collections that embody Swiss quality and detail in each product. SIDLER's elegant, customized designs combine simplicity and authenticity to create a unique yet familiar feeling. This extravagant outlook from SIDLER's Swiss craftsman is not by chance but rather by design.

Employing more than 60 people in a 100,000 square foot facility and manufacturing 35,000 cabinets annually, SIDLER's experience and know-how is the foundation of its innovation and designs. A lean company structure and flexible operation allow SIDLER to meet specific customer demands and provide custom solutions in a timely manner.

**KEY CONTACTS:**  
SIDLER International  
7626 Winston Street  
Burnaby, BC V5A 2H4  
Toll free: 888-415-2422  
Phone: 604-415-2422  
Fax: 604-415-2433  
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kane@sidler-international.com



# *Zucchetti*

*Italian Flair, Ground Breaking Design, Award-Winning Products*



*Agora Collection*



*What would you say if you had access to award-winning and Italian-designed and manufactured bath products from a company committed to limited distribution and with a worldwide reputation for quality, ingenuity and forward-thinking design?*

We are not pulling your leg. That opportunity exists for every Forte member that wants to take advantage of the only true Italian plumbing fixture manufacturer in the group – Zucchetti.

Zucchetti's roots are in the Lake Orta region of Italy, about 80 kilometers northwest of Milan. In the 16th century, the region was known for making world-class church bells. The processes used 500 years ago to develop church bells — pouring liquid metal into a mold, and then once cooled, cleaning, polishing and decorating the finished product — are not dissimilar to the processes used today to make faucets. In 1929, Alfredo Zucchetti tapped into that history and tradition when he started making faucets in the Lake Orta region. Prior to World War II, Zucchetti mainly produced industrial valves and fittings. Starting in 1950, the factory was re-engineered to produce chrome taps under the direction of Mario Zucchetti who led the company for a half century.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Zucchetti became the largest tap manufacturer in Italy, and the company developed a rich tradition of forward-thinking in everything from marketing to innovative product development. Did you know that in the 1980s, Zucchetti was the first faucet manufacturer to advertise on television? Zucchetti was also the first brand, back in the 1970's, to partner with professional designers in product development.

Today, the third generation of the Zucchetti family leads the company. And Zucchetti now employs more than 400 people in four factories that produce products sold on five continents. Toward the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st, Zucchetti faced a dilemma. It could join many other manufacturers that were outsourcing manufacturing to the Orient and other cheap labor markets or it could stay true to its roots and produce products for discriminating consumers that demand superior design and quality. Zucchetti chose the later and that is one of the reasons why Franco Platini - Export Manager -believes Zucchetti presents a tremendous opportunity for Forte members.

Platini explained that his company believes in limited distribution, because it is advantageous to partner with best-in-class showrooms that don't want to compromise margins or engage in bidding wars. He understands that every time a showroom brings a new product into their merchandise mix there is a cost for displays, training and showroom space and showroom owners expect a return on those investments.

Director of Sales USA Michael Mozzicato emphasizes Zucchetti's rich tradition of design innovation exemplified by the Bellagio collection. If imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, Zucchetti's Bellagio collection would be hard pressed to maintain its humility. In almost every showroom, you'll find several Bellagio knockoffs. Bellagio is the best selling Zucchetti faucet in North America because of its transitional style. Its roots are classic traditional with a hint of modern flair, and it is an original.

Zucchetti's success in Europe and throughout the globe is due in large measure to its ability to meet any stylistic preference. Zucchetti's breadth of product ranges from traditional to European

modern. Product diversity is not the only reason that Zucchetti has earned a reputation as a design and innovation leader. With the Savoie, Zucchetti differentiated the tap using a special lacquer for the handle that pays homage to the fashion world. It is the same material that Prada uses for the exterior logo plaque attached to its luxury bags.

Zucchetti's reputation for design and quality has led some showroom consultants to believe that its product line is priced at the upper end of the spectrum. That's a misnomer that Mozzicato often corrects when he visits showrooms. He offers as evidence the extensive Pan collection. Pan comprises 17 different deck, wall and floor mounted lavatory faucets. Pan may look like many faucets in the marketplace, but when you examine the fixtures closely, you realize Pan is wonderfully proportioned and incredibly balanced.

Hiring Michael Mozzicato and moving the distribution facility from Los Angeles to Houston have been win-wins for Zucchetti and its customers. Fulfillment, communication, customer service and access have all dramatically improved. Complementing those changes is a new website that provides the information that sales consultants need to make specifying Zucchetti products easier and more rewarding.

Platini and Mozzicato emphasized that Zucchetti is doubling down on its commitment to the North American market. In addition to a more effective and efficient distribution facility, enhanced communications and the new website, Zucchetti has hired a full-time specification representative in New York and will channel projects through Forte members that commit to Zucchetti. The company is also making waves with the recent and forthcoming releases of innovative and head-turning products.



*Bellagio Collection*



*Closer Collection*



*Nude Collection*



*Pan Collection*

The Nude Collection was unveiled at the 2017 ISH Fair. The faucet's distinctive hand-blow, hand-polished crystal handles were inspired by the glass stoppers designer Cybille De Margerie found on old wine barrels. The Nude Collection exudes Zucchetti's personality. Platini notes that there are a number of faucets with crystal handles but almost all of them are attached to traditional taps. That's not the case with the Nude Collection. Pairing hand-blown crystal handles with a variety of finishes,

Zucchetti wowed ISH attendees and will do the same for Forte showroom customers. Look for Nude to make its way to Forte showrooms sometime next year.

Zucchetti's personality is also clearly evident in Closer. There simply is no other showerhead that is comparable. It looks, feels and acts differently and easily evokes an emotional response from customers. Winner of multiple awards that include the Good Design, FX Design and ADEX, the one honor that may stand out the most is that Closer won the ICFF Best in Class Award in a year where Zucchetti did not even exhibit. Closer tells a great and compelling story.

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It looks like a lamp, and it makes water shine brightly by reinventing the shower experience. Closer embraces all the poetics inherent to the idea of balance, capable of renewing itself and changing appearance without warning. The design ensures that bathers can direct water to any part of their bodies and the showerhead will stay in place, at all times. At ISH 2017 collection of Closer faucets was introduced as well.

Agora is a traditional faucet but is groundbreaking in that it was designed as one component of a complete bathroom suite. Zucchetti made Agora to accompany its sister company Kos' tubs, basins, water closets and

accessories. Agora and Zucchetti were one of the first plumbing manufacturers to provide a complete bathroom solution and it still does.

Zucchetti offers lots of compelling reasons and stories that make it a logical partner for Forte members. It is an internationally respected powerhouse whose products are specified by the leading designers on five continents. Zucchetti offers Forte members a window of opportunity to provide customers with Italian-designed and manufactured products that are not found at national wholesale showrooms or heavily discounted online. It's time to take a closer look at Zucchetti.



*Pan Collection*



*Closer Collection*



*Simple Acts of Kindness Make a Huge Difference*

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As someone who has to fly frequently, there's nothing about getting on an airplane these days that one would consider enjoyable. By charging to check bags, the airlines are forced to board planes 30 to 40 minutes before take off to enable passengers to cram their bags in the overhead bins. Imagine how much more efficient loading and unloading would be on an airplane if the airlines charged to carry on and provided checked baggage at no cost?

Baggage policies are not the only reason that flying is not pleasurable. Many flight attendants do not appear to enjoy their jobs (Southwest attendants are excluded). More often than not, they are surly, unfriendly and even combative. To those who fly regularly, were you at all surprised that United Airlines dragged a passenger off a plane?

A third annoyance is the intellectual dishonesty of the airlines. They purposely inflate estimated arrival times so they can increase the percentage of flights that arrive "on time." An hour flight is advertised as taking 90 minutes. Do the airlines truly believe that their most valued customers – frequent flyers – don't realize that flight time inflation is regular practice?

The list of annoyances and unpleasanties is almost endless. That's why when an airline actually does something nice, it makes a huge impression. On a recent JetBlue flight, I was seated next to a woman who had a framed picture that she was bringing as a housewarming gift for her son. The framed painting would not fit in the overhead. It did fit underneath the seat but projected into the aisle, clearly in violation of TSA's requirements to leave all aisle space unencumbered in the rare case that the plane would need to be evacuated. I did not foresee a pleasant outcome for the painting or the person sitting next to me. If the painting had to be checked, chances are that it would be damaged or destroyed, because it was not wrapped properly to be put on a conveyor belt or handled as a piece of luggage. To my utter shock, the flight attendant said no problem. The plane was half full (a rarity) and he indicated that he would strap the painting on the seats in front of us. Even if the plane was full, I was confident that this flight attendant would have found a workable solution.

This JetBlue experience was so refreshing because it belied expectations. And therein lies the opportunity for showrooms. Brainstorm with your team to identify opportunities to pleasantly surprise and delight your customers. When you do, your random acts of kindness will make a huge difference and likely generate higher retention rates and more positive online reviews.

# Forte Preferred Vendor News



## Crosswater Announces Additional Training Sessions

Crosswater London has added June 13 and 14 (June 12 is sold out) as new training days at the company's Millford, MA showroom and training facility. Company founder and brand ambassador David Hance leads each session. Highlights include:

- A limit of 15 participants per session assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Crosswater London picks up the cost of airfare by crediting the cost to a member's account, pays for hotel stays, provides meals while in Millford and arranges for return transportation to the airport after the training.
- Crosswater also reimburses participants for UberX transportation from the airport to Millford.
- Following training Crosswater applies a \$1,000 credit to each member's account for Crosswater London stock. The stock order must be received within one week of training completion and be on one order to be eligible for this credit. The credit is limited to one per branch.

To reserve a date, email your preference to [info@crosswater-bathrooms.com](mailto:info@crosswater-bathrooms.com)



## Steamist's 550 Digital Control

Steamist's new 550 Digital Control is equipped with a myriad of in-demand functions and features that enhance shower design and elevate the user experience. These include patent-pending dual-temperature technology that allows for superior temperature accuracy and is preprogrammed for connectivity with iHeartRadio, Spotify and Pandora. The user can now easily stream music while they steam or shower bringing a fresh start to their day.

The new 550 Digital Control features a large, high-definition touchscreen display with multiple-language capabilities and easily adjustable font sizes. Depending on the homeowner's preference, the control can be installed in Portrait or Landscape orientation.

The company also announced new pricing effective July 24. Contact Steamist for a copy.

[www.steamist.com](http://www.steamist.com)



## New Alton Vanity from Furniture Guild

Inspired by a 1960 Cadillac, Furniture Guild introduced a new Alton Vanity at the 2017 ICFF. The wineberry and copper finish makes an elegant statement rarely seen in any showroom. This piece will wow your customers.

[www.thefurnitureguild.com](http://www.thefurnitureguild.com)



## Congratulations to Stone Forest

Stone Forest was honored at the 2017 International Contemporary Furniture Fair with a Metropolis Likes Award for its Calma Bathtub. Shown in Marquina Taupe, the tub ready to ship now.

[www.stoneforest.com](http://www.stoneforest.com)



### Duravit's Luv

Duravit showcased its new Luv Collection at ICFF in New York City, May 21-24. Luv is defined by soft, muted colors and curved shapes. The series encourages designers and consumers to create an individualized look, with consoles and washbasins available in a variety of finishes and storage options. Equally modern and timeless, the Luv series is a fresh aesthetic for Duravit that matches the trends of today and the classics of tomorrow.

Luv's signature oval shape was inspired by a straightforward vision from designer Cecilie Manz, who is the first female to design a Duravit collection. This vision produced the sophisticated purism of the Luv series.

The Luv collection is accomplished and original, combining Nordic style with traditional, classic features. Luv's curated selection of available materials and colors brings warmth and durability to the bathroom. The color palette of matte lacquers and soft glazes was developed exclusively for Duravit and emphasizes the refined aesthetic of Luv.

[www.duravit.us](http://www.duravit.us)



### Duravit's New Darling

Duravit's Darling presents an innovative technology that bonds the washbasin to the vanity. Manufactured with millimeter precision, the ceramic of the washbasin fits accurately in the furniture. The materials bond seamlessly and appear to be a single unit. Darling New c-bonded washbasins together with the furniture series L-Cube by Christian Werner, allow Forte members to create new, puristic washbasin solutions - and gives you much more freedom of design in the bathroom.

[www.duravit.us](http://www.duravit.us)



### Duravit Announces its 2017 Designer Dream Bath Competition

Duravit has opened its Designer Dream Bath Competition for submissions. This annual program asks designers to showcase their dream bathrooms with Duravit fixtures - built or unbuilt.

This year, for the brand's 200th anniversary, Duravit is asking designers to incorporate the latest 2017 collections (Luv & DuraSquare) into unbuilt submissions.

The Built category will continue, with completed designer projects featuring Duravit fixtures from the last five years.

Submissions close on September 8, with winners and honorable mentions to be announced during Duravit Design Week in early October.

[www.duravit.us](http://www.duravit.us)

Continued on next page



### **Atlas Homewares Introduces the Conga Collection**

As one of Atlas Homewares' newest lines, the Conga collection is notable for its drum-inspired knobs and smooth, ergonomic design with a subtle groove for added interest. Options include two knobs sizes and four pulls ranging from 3 3/4 to 7 1/2. Conga adds a tropical feel that is understated yet versatile and perfectly at home in South Beach, the Cape or in an upscale penthouse in the heart of the city.

Available in a selection of five beautiful finishes, including polished chrome, polished nickel, brushed nickel, matte black, and new warm brass.

[www.atlashomewares.com](http://www.atlashomewares.com)



### **BLANCO Introduces the ATURA Faucet With Pull-Down Spray.**

Featuring an attractive high arc and solid brass body, the ATURA offers a high-performance dual spray and is available in a standard 2.2 GPM and well as a 1.5 CALGREEN water-saving model.

BLANCO ATURA is available as a kitchen and bar faucet and comes in both polished chrome and stainless finishes.

BLANCO ATURA details:

- 16 3/8" high with a 9" reach
- Limited lifetime warranty
- Ceramic disk cartridge
- MSRP:
  - Chrome: \$275
  - Stainless steel: \$325

Additionally, BLANCO's ARTONA faucet is a winner of the prestigious Red Dot Award in the Product Design category. The BLANCO ARTONA® faucet with pull-down spray is offered in a variety of dual finishes to coordinate with BLANCO's SILGRANIT® colors as well as chrome and stainless models. The ARTONA offers both kitchen and bar/prep models and also has different spray models for water conservation.

[www.blancoamerica.com](http://www.blancoamerica.com)



### **Mountain Adds Handshowers to Revive Collection**

Mountain Plumbing Products has introduced a matching handshower to complement its wildly popular Re-Vive ultra slim showerheads. The handshowers are constructed in stainless steel and mimic the sleek, thin profile of the Re-Vive showerhead with a 30° ergonomic bend. The handle is double walled to prevent scalding. The handshowers are available in round and square shapes. Also offered in the Re-Vive collection are the waterway, slide rail and handshower hose to complete product suite.

Mountain Plumbing offers same-day shipping and has no minimum order requirements.

[www.mountainplumbing.com](http://www.mountainplumbing.com)



### **Panasonic Honored by Builder Magazine, EPA and NAHB**

Congratulations Panasonic. For the ninth straight year, *Builder* magazine and its readers rated Panasonic first in quality in the bathroom/ventilation fan category.

Panasonic also recently was recognized as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2017 ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year winner for Sustained Excellence. This is the Panasonic's eighth straight ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year award.

Panasonic also received the first-ever SPARK Award given by the NAHB Leading Suppliers Council, which recognizes the most innovative council member of the year that demonstrates commitment to developing products and services that enhance building quality and livability.

[www.panasonic.com](http://www.panasonic.com)



### **Barclay Introduces the Marshall Double Slipper Tub**

Indulge yourself with a soothing soak in an elegant soaker tub from Barclay. Its Marshall Double Slipper is 71 inches of comfort in smooth, lasting cast iron displayed on majestic lion paw feet. Marshall is also available on a cast iron base.

[www.barclayproduct.com](http://www.barclayproduct.com)



### **Victoria + Albert's New Rossendale Trough Sinks**

The new Rossendale trough sinks from Victoria + Albert allow more versatility in bathrooms. The added combination of style, space and simplicity make these new sinks a great addition to any job. The sink comes in two sizes Rossendale 122 measuring 47-7/8" wide and 15" front to back and the Rossendale 91 is on the smaller side at 36-1/8" wide.

[www.vandabaths.com/us/americas](http://www.vandabaths.com/us/americas)



#### **KWC Honored With Adex Awards**

KWC was honored with an ADEX Gold Award for its Piana and a Platinum Award for its Intro faucets.

[www.kwcamerica.com](http://www.kwcamerica.com)



#### **Cal Faucets New Corsano Pull Out Faucet**

Corsano delivers space saving flexibility, which works in even the most cramped kitchens. The sleek Italian style faucet is 100 percent solid brass and comes in more than 30 artisan finishes and 15 PVD finishes-including two cool new finishes: carbon (PVD) and ultra stainless steel™ (PVD).

[www.calfaucets.com](http://www.calfaucets.com)

# Forte Resources



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