

Savings on tap

Devices squeeze savings from water bills

By Sherry Kahan
staff writer

Not everyone knows that people pay water bills for water entering the house and sewage bills for water leaving the house. However, most people are aware that heating water is costly. So it seems clear that any way an individual can reduce water use will save him money. Fortunately modern technology has come up with several inexpensive ways to do this.

Involved in the business of selling



Tom Hamilton of Aqua Miser Inc. shows devices which can help save on water. In the close-up are a flow restrictor (top) and a flow restrictor for a faucet.

these items is Tom Hamilton. He has several that cost less than \$5.

Sales manager of Aqua Miser Inc. in Farmington Hills, Hamilton is a wholesaler who sells flow-restricting showerheads. These easily connected devices not only reduce shower water usage, they cut down on the heating of hot water.

Hamilton also sells a toilet dam that can be placed in the toilet tank. It is made of two pieces of plastic over flexible steel. Bend it to form a protective ring around the drain, and it could save you half the water ordinarily used in a flush, noted Hamilton.

When the toilet flushes, down goes the water that is inside the dam. The water outside remains, and does not have to be added again and again when the tank fills up.

"The average tank holds six gallons," said Hamilton. "Using this device around the drain saves up to three gallons per flush. Most people don't realize that 43 percent of the water bill is from toilet use."

The two toilet dam panels cost \$6.95.

HAMILTON'S MAIN business dealings are with owners of rental property and motels, who, unlike the homeowner, have many, many toilets and showers in service.

"The restricting of water through the showerhead does not affect the pressure of the spray," he explained. "It cuts down the water used in a standard showerhead by about one-third. It puts out 2.45 gallons per minute compared to a standard showerhead which uses seven to eight gallons per minute."

"The reason the spray continues to be strong is because the aperture openings are smaller than average. The aerator plate on the underside has fewer holes and smaller holes. As the water rushes in, it has a smaller area to go through. This creates more pressure. The water is fighting to get through."

Hamilton estimates that showering is responsible for 25-30 percent of the water bill.

Various kinds of restrictors are available. One that is popular with rental property owners is vandalproof, according to Hamilton. It is put on with a tiny Allen head screw that requires a difficult-to-buy tool to remove. Therefore, it is difficult to carry it away.

ANOTHER SHOWERHEAD has a small button that can be pushed by water-saving bulbs during the lathering process. It reduces the water flow. Pushed again, it resumes the usual flow for rinsing.

What Hamilton calls a regular restrictor does its job without these two extras. The cost of these items ranges from \$6 to \$8.

"These products are installed easily," commented Hamilton, who believes that everyone living in areas where water is scarce should be required by law to install them.

He can be reached for further information on water saving at 722-7635.

Women need 2 communication styles

The real challenge for women who want to be successful whether it be in business or interpersonal relationships is to learn how to communicate in a male-dominated society, says a psychology professor at Michigan State University.

Elaune Donelson, author of the book, "Women: A Psychological Perspective," says that women are in double bind. If they follow the value system of a male-dominated society, they are warm, polite and secure and they're also ignored.

But if they are aggressive and opinionated they offend male colleagues and sometimes female colleagues who still hang on to the old value systems.

The challenge, said Donelson, is for women to recognize how both their verbal and nonverbal communication styles are interpreted.

"Women need to recognize the unfriendliness of the rules by which inferences are made about us," said Donelson. "The rules are not ones we have participated in making, yet they are the ones by which we are judged."

WHILE A WOMAN might think she is cautious, careful or even polite in her speech, saying, "That's probably the case," or asking a man, "What do you think?" men have a different interpretation, said Donelson. "They think that a woman is evasive, that

she doesn't have any ideas of her own and that she's never sure about herself."

The language of our culture tends to reinforce the problem, said Donelson. Women are said to chat, nag, gossip or even bitch while men doing the same thing are said to talk, discuss, remind or complain.

And women, she said, are often the worst offenders, using those words to describe other women.

Women, she said, have made some strides, and many women believe they have overcome some of the problems of womentalk, but the value system remains ingrained in many said Donelson.

"CHANGING THE HEAD is quite different from changing the gut," she said. "And many women whether consciously or unconsciously still operate from the gut. They speak out and then are made to feel guilty. And guilt is a very effective control."

Donelson said she doesn't want women to give up some of their characteristics of warmth, politeness and concern, but she wants women to recognize how some of these communication cues are interpreted.

"Part of the problem is that every interaction is a choice point," said Donelson. "Women have to think exactly what it is they want to say and recognize how they want it to be perceived."

A smile, a tilt of the head or an upright high pitch

of the voice can all undermine how a woman's words are perceived, said Donelson. A high-pitched voice, for instance, is often interpreted as immaturity, nervousness or emotionality.

The best choice for women is to try to blend the two communication styles: to remain polite and concerned and yet express opinions clearly and concisely.

It's not enough for women to know that they know," said Donelson. "They have to show that they know they know."

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