

Robert Bean Comments... in Heating Season Preview

While heating products and systems are changing, curriculum and publications intended to train professionals on these changes are stagnant, Bean stated. Specifically, he noted that the lack of general acceptance of integrated design approaches is keeping the industry from understanding its future and, thus, how to equip current and future professionals for the future.

“I continue to be concerned about the long-term competency of service providers, specifically as it relates to understanding the relationship between architecture, building performance, interior design, and energy systems and occupants,” Bean said. “Breaking out of a design silo culture continues to plague the industry, and it’s exacerbated by a broad illiteracy of integrated design principles across all design professions. For example, many (if not most) hydronic designers, contractors, distributors and manufacturers don’t understand that load calculations are not thermal-comfort calculations. Nor do they understand that heating design, in and of itself, is not comfort design.”

Bean pointed to a lack of understanding and adoption of ASHRAE Standard 55 as an example of the void in knowledge that he has witnessed. ASHRAE Standard 55, Thermal Environmental Conditions for Human Occupancy, specifies conditions for acceptable thermal environments and is intended for use in design, operation and commissioning of buildings and other occupied spaces.

“ASHRAE Standard 55 was first published in 1965,” Bean explained. “And yet, many (if not most) ‘comfort’ service providers have never read it, even though it’s the tool for integration. After 15 years of surveying audiences, I’m still finding that only 1.5 percent of practitioners understand how to apply ASHRAE Standard 55 to their work. We would not accept such illiteracy from other professionals, whether it’s a barber or a physician.”

Bean is passionate about equipping the industry with tools and resources to better understand and appreciate new products and technologies. It is the missing link to progress the industry has been looking to make in the built environment.

“There are no statistics that support the notion that repetitive introduction of new technology has changed market share for hydronics,” Bean said. “Yet, if one looks at training curriculums over the past 30 years, they have been primarily about new equipment and systems, rather than cross-training practitioners on integrated design and indoor environmental quality (IAQ) — the former necessary to achieve the latter, and the IAQ being what society ultimately wants from its architecture.”

See Robert Beans website. <http://www.healthyheating.com/>

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