

# CONTRACTOR

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## Boomer's desire for comfort will help hydronics to grow

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WITH 93% OF the heating and cooling market being controlled by the forced-air hvac industry on this continent, it makes sense to look into the feasibility of combining efforts of both the so-called "Wet Heads" and "Air heads." The two are often portrayed as rivals but, in reality, they could work well together to meet the heating and cooling needs for a dwelling or workplace.

The fact is that heating and air conditioning systems are needed in most areas. Conditions and system requirements can, of course, vary from arctic to tropical. When we throw the wild card of El Niño into the picture, there is no telling what the heating requirements will be in the future for North America.

Seventy million Baby Boomers are not willing to take a back seat when it comes to comfort. They are willing to spend anything it takes to achieve comfort, with money not being an issue because they have the resources. So, we better give them the comfort they are demanding because they deserve it! Remember, when they retire they'll want to stick with radiant for their retirement dwellings. They will reach an age when human metabo-

lism and well-being become more sensitive to temperature.

What is the logical solution and approach? The development of hybrid systems. This can be accomplished by everybody working toward one common goal: comfort, thereby creating a better living environment without anyone losing business, market share or prestige. By combining hvac and hydronic sales through up-selling and giving the client the optimum system, increased sales can be achieved for both.

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We must stop looking at each other as competitors and establish a symbiotic working relationship. Smart players in the industry have been practicing this approach for years, especially hvac people, architects, engineers and builders. They understand the need for adaptation and change.

The hydronic industry has always looked at hvac as its archival, as a David versus Goliath relationship, an either/or situation, not under-

standing that radiant heating and cooling finally give us the ultimate opportunity to work together, benefiting both industries and the end user, and creating a perfect climate in every sense.

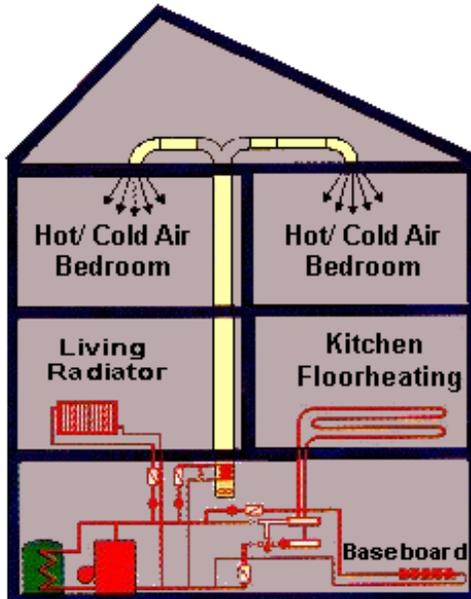
Once this happens, please fasten your seat belt. All it takes is a hydronic floor heating system to temper the climate in every bathroom and living area of North America and hydronic sales will grow tenfold.

Granted, some obstacles such as cost versus technology will have to be overcome. That will take some Yankee ingenuity and willingness to compromise by some hydronic and hvac component manufacturers. The fact is that off-the-shelf technologies exist and just have to be adapted and implemented by both.

Give the customer a heating and air conditioning system in the form of ducting or high-velocity systems in areas where heating requirements are marginal but integrate hydronic floor tempering as well, particularly in living areas where it makes sense, such as kitchens, bathrooms and other tiled areas. Radiant spot heating either in floors or walls in combination with hvac systems is an excellent marriage, giving the client everything he wants: comfort heating plus air conditioning.

In cold regions, where heating has priority but cooling is still needed two to three months a year, use hydronic radiant heating in living quarters

## Hybrid Heating/ Cooling System



only and go to ducted hvac in bedroom areas, providing cooling for the rest of the house as well. Where the hydronic portion of the system is the dominant part, a hydro-air system with a boiler as the heat source in combination with a duct coil makes sense.

The future of our combined industry efforts looks better than ever. Let's work together!

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