

The Engaging Story Behind a Hotel Boiler Replacement That Saved \$700,000



This is the story of a request from a leading international hotel chain to install a new 750-horsepower replacement boiler specified by the hotel's engineering consulting firm. But it is also much more than that. It is about the importance of measuring twice, out-of-the-box thinking, and enduring relationships that go back nearly 60 years.

The Backstory



In 1964, Scott Bogot was enrolled at the Illinois Institute of Technology when he invited Joan, his girlfriend of several years, and his parents to dinner at a restaurant in the basement of an iconic hotel in downtown Chicago. When the drinks arrived, Scott cautioned Joan to be careful when sipping her gardenia-adorned cocktail. Moments later, Joan discovered the diamond engagement ring Scott had instructed the waiter to place on the gardenia. The table erupted with joy as Joan accepted Scott's marriage proposal.

In 1970, Scott joined his father's commercial HVAC business, Bogot Service, first as a service manager and later as a sales engineer. In 1975, he received a call from the hotel chain that owned the location where he had proposed to his wife. This resulted in installing two 600-horsepower boilers weighing 56,000 pounds each, which had to be lowered by crane 53 feet below street level to the hotel boiler room. Scott's successful planning and oversight of this challenging project led to a long and rewarding career managing complex installation and retrofit engagements. In 2014, Bogot Service became part of Reedy Industries, which was rebranded as PremiStar in 2022.

The Opportunity



Fast forward to 2024. Scott, now one of PremiStar's leading senior sales engineers, received an inquiry from Stefan, the regional manager overseeing the same hotel where he and his wife became engaged. They met for lunch, and after hearing the gardenia story, Stefan explained that they were considering replacing one of the hotel's boilers and asked Scott whether he wanted to bid on it. Reflecting on his dinner at the hotel 60 years earlier, Scott replied, "Of course! When you're ready, we're ready. I'm not done yet." Six months later, when Stefan could not find Scott's business card, he reached out to him through PremiStar's website.

The Challenge



In reviewing specifications provided by the hotel's engineering consultants, Scott discovered that they specified a boiler that was 130" in diameter, 12" too large to fit into the hotel's boiler room. He sourced a custom U.S.-made boiler that would fit, but the price tag was \$1,300,000. Scott then requested a copy of the testing report on the boiler he had installed in 1975 and began developing an alternative solution.

The Solution



After reviewing the non-destructive testing report on the #3 600-horsepower boiler, Scott said, "You've got two 750-horsepower boilers, and two 600-horsepower boilers I installed in 1975. Rather than installing a new boiler, you only need to refurbish the existing one with a new set of tubes, tube sheets, and a modern linkage-less burner." This alternative solution, approved by the customer, resulted in a savings of \$700,000.

Key Takeaways



Consulting engineering firms play an important role in evaluating HVAC infrastructure and specifications for new equipment. However, as this case study demonstrates, they are not infallible and do not always have the mechanical expertise to recommend alternative, more cost-effective solutions. Working with a trusted partner to review the project and conducting independent due diligence before moving forward is essential.

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