

Celebrating David Fleming's Years of Service

Twenty years ago, my three partners and I started Thermal Remediation Services (TRS) to commercialize the six-phase heating technology developed by Battelle's Pacific Northwest Laboratories. At the time, my partners had been working together since the early 1990s, and I was representing their firm as an independent salesperson in the Pacific Northwest. It was my dream to be an owner of a company that would allow me to combine my love of the environment, my interest in learning about the many disciplines involved in remediation, my desire to build trusting relationships and a commitment to provide value. My goal was to create a company that provided secure jobs, excellent wages and benefits, and a place where people were inspired to work. We were fortunate to have Battelle Memorial Institute, the U.S. Small Business Administration and AMT Capital help us start TRS by providing licensing rights, advice, and financing.

Today, our company name is TRS Group and the industry refers to the technology as electrical resistance heating (ERH). We use three-phase power instead of six-phase. We also provide thermal conduction heating and steam-enhanced extraction with the capacity to perform 20 thermal projects simultaneously. TRS became a 100% employee-owned company (ESOP) in 2016, rewarding our employee-owners for the success we have created together. TRS employs more than 70 people and has joint ventures in Brazil, Europe, and China.

It is the strength of our staff, the respect we have for each other, and our customer relationships that have helped us succeed. Our culture encourages us to focus our strengths for the benefit of the company, our clients, and communities.

The lessons I have learned from my years at TRS have made a profound impact on my life. The most important is knowing that how I treat people is the ultimate measure of who I am. My role as a salesperson has given me the opportunity to show our clients that the best salespeople are honest and ethical and strive to develop healthy relationships based on trust.

TRS values the growth of our technologies and people. Two years ago, the leadership team gave me the opportunity to manage the business development of technologies to treat per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), sometimes called "forever chemicals." Cornelsen GmbH, a TRS alliance partner in Europe, developed the patented PerfluorAd system, which can drop PFAS out of solution for subsequent treatment. In June 2020, the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office awarded TRS the only thermal patent for the treatment of PFAS in soil. It is truly exciting to be part of a company developing new technologies and markets.

This would not have happened had it not been for the people in our company pulling together for a common purpose, to deliver outstanding technologies and services through the good and challenging times, without waiver, remaining courageous, persistent, and dedicated to our cause. Please raise your glass and join me in a toast – to the TRS family, for their unwavering commitment and perseverance to build a company we are all proud of. I am thankful and grateful to be part of TRS.