



Show Number: 754

Barry Costa
The Life and Times of an
Industry Icon and Educator Extraordinaire

Good day and welcome to the IAQradio+ blog. This week we welcomed Barry Costa to discuss his Life and Times. Barry Costa's distinguished career in carpet installation, cleaning, and restoration spans over 50 years, including 38 years as an instructor, he has served on and chaired numerous national committees, contributed to national water damage standards, been a keynote speaker at conventions and special events, and authored many articles in industry publications. Since becoming an IICRC-approved instructor in 1986, Barry has taught thousands of cleaning and restoration contractors worldwide, helping them earn certifications in carpet repair and installation, water damage restoration, and other areas. After many years of in-person WRT training, Barry transitioned to exclusively live stream/online training in 2020. Now a legend in the cleaning and restoration industry,

Nuggets mined from today's episode:

Barry Costa's Carpet Industry Journey

In the late 1960s, Barry Costa began working in the family business, Costa Carpet Company, Inc., in Taunton, MA. He began installing carpet at age 12. The business diversified into carpet cleaning and water damage dry outs after purchasing a hot water extraction machine from SteamWay International. Later, Barry attained Master Installer and instructor status.

Career change and then back again

Barry taught public school for 10 years before transitioning back into the carpet industry full-time in 1986, where he blended his teaching skills with his industry knowledge. Inspired by industry icons Ralph Bloss, Doug Bowles, Marty King, Murray Cremer, Joey Pickett, Tom Hill, Ron Toney, and Wally Weber, he became an IICRC instructor. Barry's early courses were taught for SteamWay distributors.

A believer in the power of association

Barry was a joiner with memberships in NEIRC (New England Institute of Restoration and Cleaning), SCRT (Society of Cleaning and Restoration Technicians), and ASCR (Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration, now known as RIA Restoration Industry Association). Barry emphasized the importance of industry

organizations like RIA and IICRC and encourages membership, involvement, and support within the restoration community.

Evolution of Water Damage Restoration

Barry discussed the evolution of water damage restoration, reminiscing about the early days when wet carpet was removed for drying, cleaning and subsequent reinstallation OR “suck, spray and hope” when water was extracted from carpet, cherry scented deodorizer applied and allowed to dry naturally. (Wool carpet and jute/horsehair carpet cushion smell like “wet dog” when wetted.)

Barry noted that the water damage restoration has come a long way with technological advancements and a greater understanding of drying dynamics. The host materials for renegade water have changed.

What you can't see can kill you

Pathogenic microorganisms and hazardous chemicals are often invisible to the naked eye; what you can't see may kill you. Barry emphasized the need for “forensic-level cleaning,” greater understanding of the science of cleaning, and verification of cleanliness to ensure safe environments. ATP is a tool that can be used to demonstrate cleanliness.

Life is cyclical; what's old is new again

Three different training modes: See it, Hear it, and Do it! When Barry began teaching carpet installation, he shipped a demonstration platform to each course. The platform weighed 3K pounds and fit in 2 large crates. It took Barry 1 day to set up the platform at each location. To reduce lost time between courses, Barry needed a second platform. Training courses need to adapt to changes in building methodologies and materials

Online Training Challenges and Solutions

Barry highlighted the importance of “hands-on” training in some IICRC course categories and emphasized the need for a combination of cognitive and performance-based evaluations in training. Cliff expressed concern over dilution in the IICRC. Dilution occurs when qualified instructors who meet the IICRC's criteria in teaching one category can add other categories in which they are less knowledgeable and experienced, resulting in a dilution of knowledge.

Barry shared his experiences as an IICRC volunteer and instructor and his efforts to improve the industry by adding performance assessments.

Microbial Warrior

Barry is excited about Microbial Warrior training and the opportunity afforded him to work with Jeff Jones, scientists, and academics. The Microbial Warrior program uses ATP to validate cleaning.

Connections/Experience

To reduce the number of regional trade shows attended by vendors, a group of regional trade associations partnered with Larry Cooper to hold an annual large event in Las Vegas. The event featured hands-on demonstrations. Barry was deeply involved with 40 of these Connections and Experience events. The event was sold to BNP Media. After the sale, he volunteered to continue as a volunteer during the transition period. Experience is morphing into a new type of show. The leadership baton of the hands-on area was handed to Lisa Lavender (rtilearning.com), who is doing a great job.

Barriers to entry

The IICRC has been criticized for barriers to entry encountered by wannabe instructors. For example, Dr. Eugene Cole, PhD, an eminently qualified authority on microbial contamination, couldn't be approved to teach an IICRC course because he hasn't taken the prerequisite IICRC courses required to be an instructor. Greg Anderson, who worked at Woodard Cleaning & Restoration, managed a JonDon location and was an insurance adjuster, was initially denied instructor status.

Training course options

- Face-to-face
- Face-to-face with hands-on
- Synchronous- also known as "Live Stream" with an active instructor
- Asynchronous- also known as "At Your Own Pace," without an active instructor present.

COVID forced the IICRC into online training.

Lee and Jim Pemberton pitched the IICRC on online training well over 20 years ago.

Not all IICRC courses are conducive to online training alone.

WRT is livestream viable. It would be the cognitive learning platform followed by a mental, multiple-choice exam.

Applied Structural Drying (ASD) is the hands-on component of water restoration training. It would continue cognitive training but focus on hands-on elements and decision-making, followed by a performance/skill exam.

The IICRC strives to be the premier certification and standards writing organization. Barry advocates for the IICRC to measure student performance by multiple parameters, noting the Microbial Warrior uses 3 types of testing: cognitive, skill-based, and behavioral

Advice to would-be instructors

- Be yourself
- Know your craft
- Different training styles
- Different learning methods: Visual, auditory, kinesthetic
- Remember, you are conveying the craft to the students

Career highlights

- 2003 Cleanfax person of the year
- 2005- Instructor of the year, peer-voted (IICRC instructors voted)
- 2021- People's choice (IICRC student voted)
- 2003-2008 As Standards chair, Barry brought ANSI into the fold of IICRC
- Exams and Certification Chair; Executive Committee; Board of Directors; Barry brought in Scantron
- ICRA was created when the IICRC was in a downward spiral. We created two performance-based exams, proving it was a viable addition to evaluating.
- Fundraising for Leukemia Lymphoma. Barry spoke at six events with running icon John “the penguin” Bingham and raised over \$250K in 19 events.

RoundUp

PETE CONSIGLI, Disaster Restoration Global Watchdog, and Industry Historian Pete quizzes Barry on historical events, and Barry gets 100%:

Who taught the first WRT course you attended? (Pete Consigli)

Which training course did you attend that served the best lunch? (Spencer Hess, Toms River, NJ) (Pete was the Chef)

Unfinished biz

Leslie Anderson was awarded Restoration Woman of the Year at The Experience.

- Concerned about the loss of institutional memory. IICRC’s institutional memory lies within the shareholders. The IICRC board and shareholders should work on preserving and sharing industry history with newer members.

- IICRC to explore establishing a library in the Global Resource Center with books and materials donated by Barry Costa, with a call out to other industry veterans.
- Pete Consigli suggested the possibility of a room being dedicated to Barry Costa in a future hands-on training facility that the IICRC is exploring purchasing.
- Pete related a congenial conversation with Ralph Bloss (SteamWay founder) in Denver during an IICRC WRT course in the 1990's that Pete taught when he was with Dri-Eaz. Ralph got a kick out of hearing a comparison of Ralph to Ed York (IICRC founder, SCRT founder) as Ralph being "a bible-thumping Ed York." Ralph and Pete (who knew Ed well) had a good laugh. Ralph and Ed were both industry pioneers and innovators, and great salesman. Ralph was a Christian man whose faith formed his core principles behind his success.
- The Australian government has Registered Training Organizations (RTO) that oversees accreditation for vocational trades. There is a 3-step validation process for successful completion of classroom training, hands-on skills assessment, and employer verification. It is a good model for North America!
- <https://www.asqa.gov.au/rtos/what-is-an-rto>
- America will get there one day, as Winston Churchill once said, "America will do the right thing after exhausting all the other possibilities."

BARRY COSTA

- Barry expressed gratitude for the contributions of industry pioneers
- Abraham Lincoln used the biblical saying "a house divided against itself cannot stand" in his "House Divided" speech. Barry is pleased that the industry unification efforts begun by John Mosher (RIA) and Dan Bernazzani (IICRC) finally came to fruition.
- As a trade association, RIA can advocate for its members, while as a certification and standards organization, IICRC cannot do advocacy.
- Barry expressed gratitude to industry pioneers who helped advance the industry and hopes that the next generation will have the same passion.
- Barry has a photo of Claude Blackburn (founder of DriEaz) extracting sewage from a building without PPE.
- He hopes the next generation of volunteers and instructors will have the same passion as those who came before them.
- Barry has donated many items to the IICRC, such as antiques and his library.
- Even though you might be able to clean, restore, and remediate, it doesn't necessarily mean you know how to teach this to others.

- After donating many of his used carpet repair and reinstallation tools to Shaw Industry's training center, Barry mentioned that he plans to sell his remaining new tools as he enters retirement.
- Bill Yeadon's advice on retirement: Don't look back and memorize the word NO!
- Barry plans to continue his Advisory work with the Microbial Warrior program to develop advanced training and assessment methods, Best Practices, and state-of-the-art methods based on science and proven in the field.
- RIA will continue to encourage firms of all sizes to become members and advocate for the industry. Great job, Ed Cross!
- IICRC to focus on encouraging and mentoring the next generation of instructors.
- Unfinished business: Frustrated by standards that only evaluate cleaning by visual acuity.
- Leslie Anderson is carrying on efforts to implement performance-based assessments for IICRC certification
- Barry concluded by sharing ten life lessons from his late daughter, emphasizing the importance of making every day count and touching as many lives as possible. (See Below To See All 10)
- Barry's wife, Carol Costa, had the last words, "It's been quite a ride!"

Z-Man signing off

Trivia

Name the term used for a surname derived from a place name, which included names of specific locations, such as the individual's place of origin, residence, or lands that they held, or more generically, names that were derived from regional topographic features.

Answer: toponymic or habitational surname or byname

Answered by: John Lapotaire

10 Life Lessons

- #10: "Deal with life one day at a time"**
- # 9: "Turn every life experience into a learning experience"**
- # 8: "Always look for the positive"**
- # 7: "Try to do at least one new thing every day"**
- # 6: "Be true to yourself"**
- # 5: "Touch as many lives as you can"**
- # 4: "Enjoy the little things"**
- # 3: "Don't seat the small stuff"**
- # 2: "Hold on to your friends"**
- # 1: "Make everyday count"**