



Excellence the Luter Way

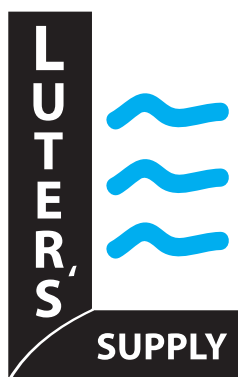
Service. Consistency. Quality. A long-haul mindset. The family values that have made Luter's Supply a mainstay in Tylertown, Mississippi for three generations are the same hallmarks that make it Bestbath's[®] Dealer of the Year for 2017.

Managed by CEO Max Luter and his brother, Chief Operating Officer Chad Luter, Luter's Supply features a beautiful 10,000-square-foot showroom filled with bath and shower displays. Bestbath models — including two designed with input from Max and Chad's father, Emmette — are top sellers for the store, and by far and away the Luter's top brand for serving the growing aging-in-place customer demographic.

Bestbath's relationship with Luter's Supply runs deep. Max said he will display the Bestbath dealer award in the lobby as a salute to his father, who passed away this year.

"He believed in the Bestbath brand," Max said. "He could call them at any time to discuss how to improve a product. He had that easy connection. I feel this award is definitely a tribute to him and his vision and his legacy in the bath industry."

The story of Luter's Supply dates all the way back to 1944, when Hosea (pronounced Jose) Luter started working in Walthall County as an electrician and plumber. Hosea had no formal training or even a high school diploma. But he was sharp and intuitive about his crafts, becoming a resource that even the trained pros turned to when a beguiling problem needed solving.



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In the 1960s, Hosea bought an auto service station where he sold pipe fittings, electrical wires and other supplies displayed in small bins. His wife, Ruth, helped with the books. Over time, the shop became more of a plumbing supply and fixtures store, especially when Hosea's son, Emmette, joined the business in 1972 after serving as an officer in the Air Force. Emmette had mostly taken over operations by 1986 when his father passed away. That year, he made manifest a longtime dream held by he and his wife, Marie, by moving into the space formerly housing a car dealership to open a proper bath and shower fixture showroom.

Max went to work for his dad in 2001 after wrapping up his own seven years of service as a Naval officer. His brother, Chad, joined the company a few years later after graduating from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he studied business.

Every retail store walks a financially risky line between carrying too much inventory and not enough. Emmette was a firm believer in keeping a large amount of extra product on-hand so that Luter's could accommodate large orders or a surge in demand.

That strategy, adopted by his sons, allowed them to quickly help residents get their lives back together during the last two years when record flooding damaged thousands of homes in nearby Louisiana, including bathrooms. Many of those residents were older folks who either needed to replace aging-in-place showers or who took the flood damage as an opportunity

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to install more comfortable and accessible units. Customers poured into Luter's to buy Bestbath products in part because other dealers quickly ran out of inventory.

"Our dad's mindset was to always have it in stock," Max said. "It's risky to do that, but the beauty of Bestbath is that, because there is always high demand, it's always a high-turnover item for us."

Emmette started researching aging-in-place bath and shower products more than a decade ago and reached out to several manufacturers to learn more. After feeling unconvinced by the quality or capacity of several companies, he liked the combination of products and responsiveness from the people returning his calls at Bestbath. He started carrying Bestbath products in 2006 and watched products tailored to the needs of the aging-in-place customer base become a larger and larger part of the family business.

Emmette noticed no manufacturer made showers big enough to accommodate customers weighing more than 500 pounds. The Bestbath team designed a larger model based on his recommendations — called the Escape 6035, named after Emmette — and later a slightly smaller unit. Those units remain among Luter's best-selling aging-in-place products, Max said.

"Bestbath has been a wonderful partner, always listening and willing to make changes, improving things based on what we see in the field," Max said.

Bestbath products are made in the USA and come with a 30-year limited warranty so you can relax knowing you're covered now and in the future.



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