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stopping **CHIMNEY** LEAKS

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Heidi Ellsworth:

Hello, and welcome to this month's RLW, Read Listen Watch from RoofersCoffeeShop. My name is Heidi Ellsworth, and I am very excited to have you here today for I think an exceptional webinar, RLW, that's really going to go over something that every single roofing company out there can incorporate right now, right away. So before we get started, I want to remind everyone that this is being recorded and it will be on demand within the next 24 hours. So be sure to share it out with everyone in roofing or friends, family, everybody out there. Also, we will be having questions at the end, so please feel free to add any questions to the chat. We'll have that going throughout the whole webinar and/or to the Q&A and we will be sure to get to those as we go along. So let's get started. Today's RLW is about stopping chimney leaks, re-roofing and maintenance. I am very happy to welcome back to the show to the RLW, Wendy Marvin, the CEO of Matrix Roof and Home, and Nathan Ferraro, Senior Marketing with Sashco. Welcome both of you.

Wendy Marvin:

Thanks, Heidi.

Nathan Ferraro:

Thanks, Heidi, good to be back.

Heidi Ellsworth:

This is a great topic. I know it sounds crazy, but I'm really excited about this topic today. I just think it's something that we never talk about that much. So before we get started on that topic, let's start out with some introductions. So, Nathan, again, welcome back and could you please introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about Sashco?

Nathan Ferraro:

Yeah. So I'm Nathan Ferraro, and I've been with Sashco almost two years now working in product development. Sashco's slogan is products that work are owner-less. It's very annoyed by products that are supposed to do a function and they just don't work. Right? And a great example that of that-

Wendy Marvin:

That annoys us too.

Nathan Ferraro:

We just moved into a new building here and a great example of that was the paper towel dispenser, right? We had these new paper towel dispensers and boy, you had to really work at it and it never came out. And it's things like that, that inspire us to create a better product for our customers. So my job is basically to get out in the market, work with contractors, roofers, re-modelers, and figure out what opportunity there are for products that aren't working. And then to come back to the lab and tinker for a little while and then get solutions out there.

Heidi Ellsworth:

That sounds like a fun job.

Nathan Ferraro:

I love it.

Heidi Ellsworth:

I love it. Well, we're going to talk a little bit about that today, and I'm so happy to have Wendy, you are just a staple of RoofersCoffeeShop, such a gem for us. But if you could introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about Matrix Roof & Home, that would be great.

Wendy Marvin:

Thanks for having me, Heidi. I love being here with you guys. So I'm Wendy Marvin. I'm the CEO and founder of Matrix Roofing & Home Solutions, our Matrix Roof & Home. We're trying to shorten that up. I'm a roofing contractor. I own a company here in Vancouver, Washington. We service Portland, Oregon and Washington, primarily residential, small commercial, trying to find ways to differentiate ourselves in the market. It's a busy, busy state of Washington, has a lot of unlicensed contractors. We don't really have to pass a test to be here. So we're always looking for ways to advance and I'm really thankful to have the RoofersCoffeeShop group to just bounce ideas off of and pull new things from and excited to be here. I'm all the board stuff, whatever. I love our industry. I'm traveling constantly. I'm excited to be here, and excited to be a part of our industry.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Great. Well, thank you. Thank you both for sharing your wisdom and your knowledge. So let's get to it. Let's talk about chimneys. This is kind of fun. So you think about it and we always, were talking about roofing, we're always talking about all the different types of roofs, but how often do you really actually even hear anybody talk about the chimneys? And now obviously I'm from Oregon, maybe that's not obvious, but I'm from Oregon, we actually heat our home with a wood stove. It's our primary heat source. So we are very big about chimneys and wood stoves and fireplaces up in the Pacific Northwest. But overall, it is one of the most important parts. So maybe, Wendy, starting with you, how do you even train your crew, your folks in the office and really starting to make that chimney and the inspection of the chimney part of that homeowner building owner discussion?

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah, well, I'll back up even just a little bit further if it's okay. And just say that we got into it because we had the situations where we go through periods of years where we just get torrential rain and we get torrential rain for days on end. And when that happens we find that we started getting a lot of leak calls but there were leak calls we couldn't help with and what they were, were chimney leaks. And what we discovered after working with Masons and trying to help customers who now have interior damage, we want to try to figure out ways to get ahead of the game. And what we discovered is, of course, a lot of people have chimneys and brick especially, a lot of people don't use their fireplaces or don't maintain them if they do. And so if you think about it from a heat expansion contraction and then bricks being a porous substance, eventually what happens in our area when we get long periods of rain is the bricks just absorb so much water that it starts coming down through the flue into the house.

And so we were trying to solve the problem for our customers and how can we help? And so we started incorporating chimney inspections into our roof field inspection and just found nobody else was doing it. And I think that's the key is just like if I'm a customer and I'm talking to a roofer and one roofer gets up and just blah, blah, blah, this is what you need. And the other roofer gets up and gives a really thorough inspection but also says, hey, by the way, I think your chimney's past life. Is this something you use? Is

this something you don't? We do chimney maintenance, and obviously to the scope of a roofer exterior only, you got to be careful there. But we just started adding it to our conversation. So training was new and trying to get everybody compliant, but overall, it's been a great a and the customers really seem to like it.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And as you're looking at that in training your team to really look for what staining, wetness, crumbling, mortar, it's across the whole company. I mean, you need to, from the beginning to estimating through production, the whole nine yards.

Wendy Marvin:

You want to lay the foundation with your customer service people that are taking phone calls and emails and just say general questions like, well, do you have a fireplace in your home? And they're like, what does that have to do with my roof? And it's like, well, it sits on top of your roof. And then you ask do you use it? And then that gives us a heads up when the estimator goes out with their paperwork or their notes, it says, hey, customer has an unused chimney, they've lived there 10 years, they've never used it. Please inspect and include that in part of the field. And sometimes you take it off and it's fine. And other times, like my house, my house was built in the '80s, and when we started doing this we started sealing chimney bricks and stuff. And just having that conversation again from start to finish is a big deal.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And Nathan, I know you are talking to contractors every single day. You are across the country, but you have to be seeing mean with the Sashco products that can go clear across the entire house. Are you seeing some of these chimneys and other accessories, I wouldn't say accessories, but other penetrations on the roof that are capturing people's attention more so than ever?

Nathan Ferraro:

Yeah, I think chimneys are maybe a little bit more dangerous sometimes because a lot of the traditional penetrations through the roof are fairly small and they're round, right? They're a little bent of some sort, and the geometry there works well. And this picture that you have here is actually a pretty good geometry. But what if we take that and we rotate the chimney 90 degrees, right? Now you have a huge surface area that's going to catch leaves that might ridge over the flashing there, and it's basically a small dam on the roof that's catching water and we see that geometry frequently. And so chimneys are certainly a spot that you can catch more problem areas than a traditional small penetration where water's just going to shed around it and not get hung up as much.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah, yeah.

Wendy Marvin:

That's a good point.

Heidi Ellsworth:

A very good point. And you had said also earlier, Wendy, and it goes back to what you're saying Nathan, of really understanding what's on the roof, but then being able to really communicate that to the owner,

whether it's a building owner or a homeowner and that communication is so important. So let's start with you on that on just as you are starting to bring this discussion into it, what are some of the key messaging?

Wendy Marvin:

Well, again, hit them multiple times, you want to have this conversation when you do the intake, you want to mention that you look at chimneys, is that something they're interested in? And it almost always opens a conversation to be able to say, well, what do you mean, why would you care about my chimney? And then we have an opportunity to say, well, in our experience, chimneys that are not maintained are eventually leaks inside the home. And then you've got dry well damage and you've got potential flooring damage and different things. So you do that. And then you know, have to be sure that if you lay that foundation on the front end that your estimators also address that or they see your estimators working around the chimney and that you have maybe checklists for the chimney included in your estimating paperwork where when you get done with the estimate and the customer wants to ask you questions, that you're showing that's addressed.

And again, just being really careful. Again, our concern about getting involved with chimneys is probably what a lot of people out there are thinking is, holy heck, I'm not a mason, I'm not a chimney sweep, I don't want to deal with the fire stuff and just like a B-vent on a roof, we don't deal with that stuff. So you have to know your limits and you have to let the customer know that we deal with the exterior of the chimney, we deal with the waterproofing, as Nathan mentioned, this is a dead end basically where a pitched roof hits a flat surface and it's a real potential for issues.

So here are some of the things we can do. We can build crickets, we can provide maintenance, but it's just making it all part of the conversation. And then again, back to that liability, know when to say when. Know when to have a good chimney sweep as a partner that says, hey, I'm looking at your chimney and I know that you asked us to address it, but I'm just feeling like this is so far past life, we've got to get a mason involved or a chimney sweep involved and make sure that this is done. This is something we can't help you with.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And I would think homeowners would appreciate that so much, especially when you have those strong relationships where you can refer somebody whose high-quality.

Wendy Marvin:

Exactly, exactly. And then understanding the inside structure. I mean, I would advise anybody to just go on YouTube and look at how chimneys are built to understand that most of it is just a fire box and then the flues, the chimney flues, and then stuff built around it. So there's usually a lot of open cavity space that when this stuff starts going south and it starts leaking, it goes on for a long time before it's noticed.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah. Nathan, you're going mm-hmm, yeah.

Nathan Ferraro:

Well said. I have nothing to add there.

Heidi Ellsworth:

I'm always amazed too when you look at just thinking about it, it does take a long time to see where the leak is coming through because there's so much, but then all the other things that can be involved in there too. And once you start doing those repairs, what's that actually pushing down? What's happening? So I think knowing the inside without taking on the liability is really important for the overall health and safety of the roof and the chimney and the people.

Wendy Marvin:

And the company.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah, and the company overall. For sure. Well, then, okay, so let's talk about re-roofing around the chimneys. And maybe let's go ahead, Nathan, let's start with you just talking about from your experience with this out there with the contractors and with your products, what are some of the things that the contractors should have top of mind as they are starting to do after they've inspected it, they realize there're some problems and they're starting to work on it?

Nathan Ferraro:

Yeah. So coming from a sealant company, I think even we tried to stress that there's no fixing geometry. If you have anything improperly lapped, that's going to be a problem. And sealants aren't really designed to help with improperly lapped builds. So that's the first thing, it is to check all the flashing, make sure that everything's lapped properly and make sure that you have a geometry that makes sense. Again, this one is angled properly, but if we were to rotate at 90 degrees, maybe we put in a ridge and divert the water away from the chimney in a case like that. But then we do all know that water also goes uphill. So when you've got wind-driven rain, when you've got a horizontal edge like this, you can get ice damage, you're going to get water creeping up under the shingles. And so that's where sealants can be a belt and suspenders approach where you can keep the water out and have a low backup option there.

And so when you're selecting sealants, you certainly want to look for one that you're comfortable with that you know is going to stand up to the elements. You also want to think about your environment. So if they've got a leak, you may have moisture already in there. And so you need one where moisture vapor can still come out, otherwise you might be trapping water in and even though more water might not get in, you might actually be creating a mold problem because of trapping the moisture in. I think a lot of folks are maybe counterintuitively think about heat being a problem. And I've not seen a sealant that has a heat problem when it comes to a chimney. I think when you're talking about the outside of the bricks and that far up, it's really not getting that hot and pretty much every sealant can go up to 200 degrees. So that's one that, yeah, it's maybe worth understanding, but it's actually usually not a problem.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah. Both you and Wendy have been talking about this, the moisture getting trapped in, the bricks bringing in moisture. That brings me back to the whole freeze thaw, I guess I know Pacific Northwest, but just all those kind of things. But Wendy, take us through to what you do when you're looking I mean with all of these, like Nathan said, the flashings, but also thinking about freeze thaw, thinking about the look, the aesthetics, cleaning of the bricks. Take us through that.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah, well, so the look, I would say what's interesting to me is you start having conversations with contractors and there are people out there that don't replace the chimney pan when they re-roof. It's put in new flashing wherever you can put in new flashing and obviously the counter flashing where it's embedded in the bricks, you can't replace that, but you can check for the mortar that's around the counter flashing to see if it's intact and if it's crumbling. And that's a great place to apply something that Nathan's product. The beauty of Sashco for us has been the fact that they have a really good wet install. So we've got great products in our area and I hate to say it, but we roof in the rain all the time out here. And whether that's positive or negative, it's just a reality of what happens. And so if you're going to do a cleaning, if you're going to do where you're going to seal a chimney with a product, and we use GAF products for that, you got to be aware, has it been raining for the last four days straight, right?

Because you're going to seal in the moisture in the bricks and you've got to be able to make sure that the chimney cap is in place and that's the counter up on the top of this one is a great example of it's shedding water. It's not coming from the top down, it's coming sideways in the rain environment. Replace the flashing, make sure that you've got as much as you can, do most of your waterproofing in a warm environment where the bricks are dried out. So summertime is a great time to do that. You don't want to do that in fall and winter. And then if you do trap moisture in there, then yeah, you're going to end up with some potential issues for free thought. I love seeing that John Kenny's on because I'm thinking he would go crazy without part of this and I'm talking about just trapping moisture and having that freestyle issue and all those things.

The other part I would throw out there is just interesting about the lack of use thing. We've had people didn't even realize that we can take chimneys down, we can remove a chimney. If they're not using the fireplace, we work with the mason and we work with the chimney specialist and we get things capped off the right way, but chimneys can be removed and we can ply with the area and roof over it. And if somebody's not using and it's crumbling, it's going to be really expensive, it's just nice to be, again, a professional that thinks ahead. I will throw one thing out there is we've had a couple comments from customers in that Nathan talking about using the sealants and stuff and it's like, that's great. Sometimes you have to preemptively have a conversation with a customer that, hey, I'm going to be able to apply sealant around these areas.

Are you willing to pay for us to do the whole chimney? Because that's time-consuming. Look at all those joints in this, right? There's a lot of time of finger painting or whatever you need to do. And if they're not willing to do that, then what you need to point out is there's a potential color difference that it's not really going to be horrifically visible, but we've all had those customers that get stuck in the minutiae and really feel like you're not taking care of them. So, again, having that conversation ahead of time about what it could look like if we only do a portion of this and yes, we're going to do our best and Sashco has a lot of colors and allows us to do that. But again, there's the potential that it may not look exactly the same on all the joints if we don't do all of it.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And it all goes right back to that homeowner or building owner communications to really let them know what's up on the roof and what you can do to make it the best, to make it fit this brand new beautiful roof that's going on.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah. And lay the foundation and then try to think what we've done really well at is our team really thinks really well as a homeowner, what has made homeowners mad in the past? What have they said

about a patch job that we've done on a roof? They don't like that the color matches. If you're ahead of the game on most of those conversations, then for the most part people are reasonable. And when they do go, oh, I really don't like how that looks Mrs. So and so, remember back when we talked about this, here's your initial saying that we talked about the fact that the color's not going to match. Would you like to pay the extra to have us do the rest of the chimney? And it's just a protection really, and it feels like that's really needed more now than ever for good companies out there.

Heidi Ellsworth:

For sure. And I just think there's a lot of people who can't visualize, I'll just be honest about that. You may say that up front and they'll be like, oh no, it's not a big deal until they see it and then they're like, oh, I don't want it to look like that. Can you fix it? Can you finish it up? So if you have it in writing and have had that conversation, so much easier to move forward. And then this I mean goes right along with it. So what we were talking about obviously is re-roofing and taking care of that chimney during that re-roof process, but there's a whole nother world out there of service and maintenance for residential and when do you have really been forging the path? What I see from across the country of people who have really said, hey home, a lot of people are doing commercial service and maintenance, but residential service and maintenance, the whole thing. How can chimney maintenance fall into that?

Wendy Marvin:

Well, I mean go back to the basics of talking about how comfortable are you on a ladder? As a homeowner, how comfortable are you on a ladder? And they're not. Then you talk about how dangerous it is for someone who's not comfortable on a ladder going up and down, walking around, trying to be out there. And then what we have done, and this is maybe a tip and trick, is we've included a maintenance check in every new roof at one year. So when you sign on and you get a new tear off roof with us, in one year, you get a free inspection. And in one year we're not really going to have a lot of opportunity for maintenance in terms of mosque growth or anything like that. But we have found tree branches that fell or squirrels that have stuffed nuts up under the shingles or there's always something.

And so typically there's a small repair, we give a discounted repair fee for our customers if they're part of our maintenance membership. So that is the time that then we lay the foundation of, let us tell you about our matrix family membership program that we have where we're looking at your home and anywhere from one to three to four times a year depending on your tree cover and different things will come out to your home and do maintenance. And by the way, the maintenance includes an inspection of your chimney. Because did you know that in our area chimneys can get saturated and it's just, again, customers are just looking for someone to take care of them.

And I'm telling you, if you're not authentic about this, they can sniff a liar a mile away. So don't be salesy about this. You're being consulted. And that to me is the main key for this. And then let them know, we'll come back a couple times a year and obviously the field inspection is always important and we always try to give a couple pictures. May not mean anything like you mentioned they can't visualize, but it just shows transparency and honesty on our part.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah, and I love that about being authentic and really not being too salesy because really, do you need to be salesy? I'm just thinking about that is the best question ever. Do you really want to get up on your roof two or three times a year? I know we're talking about chimneys, but just to even think about gutters and everything else that goes along with that. What a great opportunity. So, Wendy, when you were really having your sales people talk about this, I mean going back to your comment, don't be too salesy,

but at the same time you want your sales people and your estimators to talk about this maintenance program. How do you incorporate that into that process?

Wendy Marvin:

Well, we talk about it in the beginning. Obviously, it's a little hard to talk about maintenance when you haven't even done their roof yet, right? Yeah. But you mention, hey, eventually we'd love you to be part of our maintenance program and here's what it looks like. So usually we'll have just a blurb about it, then you finish the roof and you say maintenance won't start immediately. We want you to know your brand new roof is beautiful and it's going to be intact. However, and this is the key, part of your warranty for your shingles includes maintenance. And if you're not providing maintenance on your roof and taking care of your roof, it can be reason that they deny should something go wrong with your shingles. And you have to be sure and separate out shingles versus workmanship of install because those are two different warranties. And then again, at that one year mark, I think that one year thing, I got so much pushback from my guys on that one, just like, why are we going back out there for a free estimate and whatever?

And I was like, because it's another face in front of the customer and it's an opportunity for you to be able to be out there and find something that might cause an issue a year from now and they're going to say it was workmanship and it's not. It's a situational thing that happened. So yeah, it takes a little bit to get the team on board and it takes a little bit of understanding. But again, from that customer standpoint, I know a lot of roofers that go, we don't want to deal with chimneys, it's just a liability. And it's like, do you think your customer wants to sign up for one more contractor to come out and talk to them? They want to deal with you and they want you to have that chimney guy and that stuff so you can help them out. They don't want to have to call somebody else.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And when I think about that too and that bigger picture of that maintenance going through and keeping one thing Nathan, it really goes to what really the deep philosophy of Sashco is of having the right products for every part of the building across the board. And so that just fits in perfect when you're looking at these maintenance programs.

Nathan Ferraro:

Totally. I love this picture here because it's part of our goal that when it comes to maintenance anyhow, no one ever has to do this as charity. And this might be a new build, but yeah, I think we have some really cool products that can save a lot of time, a lot of energy, and actually be more durable than a traditional repair using Masonry.

Wendy Marvin:

And a little bit more to that point. I think it's really important as a contractor to work with someone who's going to stand behind you. And I have full confidence in getting to know Nathan and getting to know Sashco and the things that they've done for us and how they've helped us and answering questions and all those things that if anything ever goes south with one of the product installations, they would have our back. And there's a lot of sealant companies out there, there's a lot of products out there, but a lot of them are small companies, small time, they don't really have that customer focus. And if that company doesn't have a customer focus, you could be left holding the bag. And when you work with a company like Sashco, you don't have to worry about that.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah, that is so true. Okay, so along on that point, I think we see the reasons. We see building the relationships, the partnerships, having the right products, the right everything. So Wendy, as your team brings us back and you finish the house and they're working on the maintenance, how do you include chimneys and even that maintenance too, but especially chimneys, how do you include that in your contracts?

Wendy Marvin:

Very carefully. Yeah. You want to be sure again and just say that as a roofing provider, these are the things that we believe we can deal with when it comes to your chimney. Obviously when we go beyond that, we are not a heat professional, we are not a chimney sweep, we are not a mason. And so to the best of our ability, John and Trent and the group, the legal guys out there will be more than happy to throw the verbiage at you. But the other part of that is talking about laying expectations. What are you going to do? If we're going to do a sealant on a chimney, it's like we are going to seal the exterior brick of the chimney in this manner using a roller, making sure that we tarp off your shingles so there isn't any fall off. And that we recommend this to be done every one to five years.

Whatever your contract you want to set out there and then show them that you did that. Here's a picture of the roller that we use and this is what we think. Because we've had people where you'll say we're going to do the chimney. And I think I feel really bad saying this, but I feel like this is sometimes a male-female thing too, is like, well I told them that, well, I understand, but did you make sure they understood what you said? You say you're going to seal the chimney and that means nothing to people. So you want to be sure that you're explaining how you're going to seal it. We've been up there with a nappy roller and people have gone, I thought you sprayed this stuff, what are you doing? I do. And it's like we explain it in the contract, have them initial, have them initial about the color.

If you're going to do some mortar sealant on there, have them initial and let them know if you can or cannot remove the pan for some reason. We've had situations where once in a while we can't replace the counter flashing obviously is in there, but the chimney pan flashing it, maybe we can't and why? And just laying it out. And again, if it's not in writing, it didn't happen. So this is the hardest part for us in the field, and I'm sure this is something that resonates with everybody out there that's a roofing contractor is you have to get change orders, you have to communicate in writing, and you have to get approval in writing.

Heidi Ellsworth:

So important. And as I look at this too, and I know we've had this on a couple slides, but I just don't think you can say this enough, is the quality of the people you work with. So if you do need to refer a chimney sweep or a mason or whatever it may be really having set those relationships ahead of time, Wendy, so you really can trust them.

Wendy Marvin:

Well, and we talked about, I had a guy in my own home to come out to do a chimney sweep for me and he came really highly recommended. And I don't tell people what I do for a living because I don't want them to act differently. And so he comes out and I'm thinking, wow, this is pretty good, this process is really great. The phones have been great. He answered the phone, there's the bar for most contracting and he shows up at my home and doesn't put down any tarping, proceeds to do some work up in there that knocks a bunch of stuff loose and ends up all over my wood floors in front of my fireplace. And then traces is in and out of my house five times without any boots on. It's like, hey, well, clearly this isn't somebody I want to align with.

And so contrast that to the guy that shows up the next time, and this is the guy we work with is he shows up, he puts booties on immediately when he walks into the home, he introduces himself, he's got a badge, he goes in and he spends the first 20 minutes laying out tarps and things to make sure that the dust goes in the right places. And then when he is going in and out, he's taking his booties off, it's great to wear booties, but you can't wear them to your truck guys. And just has turned out to be a great partner for us. And so if you don't care about those things and those are the customers that you want, that's great, align with who you need to align with, but just be sure that the contractors you're going to recommend or bring in on your customer's behalf are aligned with your values and how you handle them.

Heidi Ellsworth:

I also think too, you always got to think a little bit in the reverse. You don't know how often that chimney sweep may have to be referring a good roofing contractor.

Wendy Marvin:

Exactly. Yeah, exactly. We've gotten leads from them too. Yeah, for sure. And especially insurance work where we do have a storm in our area and we've got trees down and stuff. We've had calls from our chimney guys for sure.

Heidi Ellsworth:

It always works both ways. So as you're looking at that, and I'm going to start here. This is both windy and Nathan, but a checklist and so Wendy, let's start with you because you talked about this before. But what is that checklist that contractors should be top of mind? And there's probably a lot more than this, but this is just top of mind of when you go up and you look at either if it's a first time looking at the chimney or that yearly inspection.

Wendy Marvin:

Well, in a first time I would say your checklist includes moss removal, lichen removal. Does the chimney to the bricks need to be cleaned? Are the bricks and the mortar in good condition? And sometimes we even pull that from the GIS where we date the home to know when the chimney was installed. You're assuming it's when the house was built. Asking about do they use the chimney or not? Yes or no. Having those checklists go so that when your guys get out in the field, they've already got some information on there and then the field inspection is adding to that. So field inspection, the front end people say, yes, they use their chimney regularly or no, they don't use their chimney regularly or no, this isn't an of interest to them. And so then the guys in the field will say, okay, well, I inspected the chimney, the pan looks like it's falling out, so we're probably going to have to get some help with that. I mean, the counter flashing.

And then yes, I'm seeing additional moss. So we recommend a cleaning before we do that. And then your sales team comes back to the customer and says, well, okay, so included in the renewal of your roof, we want to include a cleaning of your bricks and your chimney and it's just a light wire brush cleaning. There's a lot of ways to do it, but we don't want you to have a brand new beautiful roof and this ugly moss covered chimney. And the customer goes, oh my goodness, that's great. And by the way, I think your gutters should be replaced because again, you don't want a brand new roof. John Kenny mentioned it in the comments is, value added services, things you can do that the customer won't think about until you're already gone. And they're like, God, my roof looks beautiful, but that gutters look like crap or the chimney, look at all that moss, it looks so ugly.

Now I got to call somebody else to deal with it. And if you're leaving them with the whole package intact, they're so much happier, so much happier. Maintenance wise, separate checklist again. And you have to be very clear with your guys on this, are you asking them to replace the mortar or seal the mortar? What product did you use? What color do you need? Usually that's a field decision at the time the estimator maybe can or cannot do that. So they have to have three or four tubes of stuff in their car with them or their truck. Did you clean it? Moss removal, did you seal it? What day was it sealed? And then ambient temperature of when the sealant was applied. Those are extreme, but they're really good references for later on if there's ever any issue.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Nathan, continuing on that too. That's really interesting. The temperature for when the products go on, the wetness, is it raining? What's going on? And really having that checklist to make sure that you have the right products.

Nathan Ferraro:

Yeah, I think this might be a good opportunity to talk about mor-flexx a little bit too. So the picture here is one where we've got some mortar crumbling out from between the bricks. A very, very common thing that you could spot when you're inspecting a chimney, right? There's some tuck pointing work that needs to be done. And we mentioned earlier that the whole mixing up a batch of mortar, it's not necessarily something that's a quick and easy fix, right? You've got to mix up a batch, you've got to have the buckets, you've got to have the mortar you, you're lugging it up onto the roof, all that sort of stuff. Whereas using mor-flexx to patch that spot is something that you can even do, go up to the inspection, come down, talk to the owner and say, hey, I can have this fixed for you in 20 minutes.

So just a couple tubes of mor-flexx gray will probably solve most of your applications, but you can also have a color card so that you can show them, hey, I've taken a picture and actually we're going to use the beige and here it is against your existing mortar up there and you can show a match right away. And then I think this is a cool product, so it's not a mortar, it's a sealant, but here you go, it's in between a couple pieces of brick here and I hope that that looks like mortar, but it's actually something that's pretty flexible. So I can push on this and I can move it.

And the reason that you got cracking there is because there's some stress going on. So if you crack that or if you patch that with a mortar that's super un-flexible, guess what? It's going to crack again. And so we don't often see people build chimneys with this. It has been done, but not what we'd recommend. It's really been done for fun. But for patching, I mean it's the perfect product, right? Because you're going to have stress there. The sealant is going to absorb it, you're not going to have cracking, and you can be done with your maintenance in five minutes.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Wow. Yeah.

Wendy Marvin:

And Heidi, I would add, we want to be sure that you're portraying to the customer that if we're going to put this over that this is a short-term fix for a longer term problem, that eventually they may have to deal with the bricks, they may have to deal with having a mason out and fix this or remove it all together if they're going to choose not to do it. But that this'll help get them through some more time.

Heidi Ellsworth:

It's like exactly the next thing is stopping the leaks. And so that's exactly what Nathan's saying is stopping the leaks and really figuring out what you need to do short-term and long-term. So Wendy maybe continue on that vein.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah, just again, the mortar flicks when you get to the place where things are cracking or crumbling, you're at an end of life of a product and you just have to make sure your customer is aware of that. And then here are the solutions we can offer. We can turn you over to mason to completely rebuild the chimney for 10 grand. Or we can try to help you get through another few years and these are the things that we recommend and this stuff is so cool. Do not give that to your guys when you're in the office because it's a toy. They will play with all that stuff and it bends and nobody can believe it, it's sticky, it's a little grainy when you do the install. So it's not really a finger thing, it's not a typical solvent base, it's more you want to use the right tools to install it. But it's amazing. It's amazing. And Nathan, I need a couple of those color cards please.

Nathan Ferraro:

No problem. We'll send them out to you or to anyone else on the call that needs one.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah, that's a great tool again is tell them what you're going to do and show them and let them see on the photo. And then next to the color card. See now here's the color difference. So if you're concerned about the way it looks and you want us to do all of it, that's great. That's going to be this time constraint and you're going to build that into your bid. Or if it's not, you'd like us to just do the partial, that's great. But I would recommend always build the line item into your bid that shows how much it would be to do the whole thing. Because to your point earlier, they get done and they look at it and they're like, oh honey, the woman especially, yeah honey, I wish we would've done the whole chimney. It looks like crap. Can we just have them do the whole chiming? You're like, okay, so they already know how much it's going to cost and you're not going back and having to do another bid.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And I know as we're talking about the mortar, but I want to make sure when it comes to stopping the leaks too, that we really make sure the flashings, like you said, the pan, just making sure that it's roofed correctly around the chimney.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah. Yeah. That's so hard. And again, to Nathan's point about the structure of a rectangle versus a square, even a square, a rectangle that's been problems and you tear the roof off and oftentimes we'll find just rotted, completely rotted plywood and don't even get me started on an OSB, but that'll be behind it because it's like we complain all the time about an architect who designs a home where a pitched roof dead ends into a wall. We have a dead valley, that's a chimney like it's called every roof. And Nathan mentioned it earlier and it's just so crazy that we continue to do that. So if you come across that when you're roofing, you start to talk to them about doing a cricket of some sort or something that you can divert the water away from it or a buildup of some sort or flashing that's getting, But then again, if it's just going to be flashing and they don't want to do the whole enchilada, then you have to lay the foundation of understand this is going to require regular maintenance.

I mean, I've actually done jobs where we go up to do a cleaning and the lady's complaining that are roofs leaking and someone who had been on a roof and it wasn't the little 85 year old woman we were helping someone who had been on her roof, left is garbage behind her chimney, can't see it from the ground and just standing there collecting water and pooling water and running sideways. And so when we did her tear off, she's a great example of it. All of the plywood underneath there was just rotted because the water was just like a little swimming pool.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Wow. Wow. It makes me nervous. Now I'm thinking about we got to go check now. I know. So Nathan, let's go back into, I mean, what we're just talking about and what you had talked about earlier, the sealants, the caulking, it's across the whole nine yards, whatever part it's on the masonry or with the shingles. But why don't you talk a little bit about the importance of the sealants and also the performance? How does that all play and how does that help the contractor even in their cell to the homeowner talking about that?

Nathan Ferraro:

Absolutely. So there's a few things that you want to watch for. Certainly when doing tech pointing on a chimney, about half the products out there that are for concrete or masonry or stucco are going to be self-leveling and those are not going to work. And so self-leveling is going to be a lot thinner. It's going to settle down and you've got a vertical application here, so you need one that's a little higher in viscosity. It's a little thicker so that it'll hang in the joint. You can tool it to match the previous mortar job and not just have it slunk down. And then you do want to understand the performance. So a lot of the sealants that match those mortars have some aggregate in there. There's some sand or some other particulate to make it look textured like mortar as you can see kind of here and straight up, that compromises the performance of the sealant to a degree.

You're taking that strong, flexible, elastic resin and you're throwing a bunch of sand in there that doesn't stick well, it doesn't stretch well. And so you just want to make sure that you're using something that you're comfortable with. If you're looking at a new product, certainly do some adhesion testing to make sure that it's going to stay in there. And then Wendy already talked about it a little bit, but another area that we try to really focus on is the moisture sensitivity. So it's ideal if we have dry, clean, and there's no dust on it and it's not going to rain for three weeks, but in the reality that happens once in a blue moon.

Heidi Ellsworth:

It only happens in factories, Nathan.

Nathan Ferraro:

In the RND lab, right?

Heidi Ellsworth:

Yeah, exactly.

Nathan Ferraro:

Where we're creating the products. So you want to make sure that your product can handle moisture, that you understand when it can get wet and that you're not going to have any problems there. And then I would be remiss if I didn't bring my strips out, houses move. And so the most important piece of a

sealant is that it can move, but then also that it relaxes when it moves. And so this is obviously the Sashco product, but this can stay there, it can stretch and flex with temperature day after day, after day. And you're not going to have a problem because of how relaxed that is. You want to look for a sealant that relaxes.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Along that line then, and we're just going to keep going with that thing. So talk to us about the products that are needed, but let's start with some of those Sashco products. And then we're going to also talk about some of the other products that Wendy has used in chimney maintenance. So let's start out with Through the Roof and the cobra nozzle.

Nathan Ferraro:

So Through the Roof is our all purpose roofing sealant comes in clear black and white, and it's designed to stick to basically everything that you're going to have on the roof, not textured. So in the area of tuck pointing, you go with mor-flex there again, but for just about everything else, this will be fine. It is designed mainly for residential. So it's actually a rubber based sealant. It's the one that I stretched before. So super elastic, but it's got some solvent in here that dissolves rubber and that's a good thing for the delivery of this. But what that means is it's not really going to be the ideal product for EPDM or TPO. So if you're getting into more of that commercial stuff, it actually sticks phenomenally, but it'll cause the TPO to wrinkle a little bit because it's actually fighting in a little bit.

And so typically we don't recommend it, certainly not for a really heavy application. But for aluminum, a lot of sealants out there struggle with aluminum flashings. It's going to be phenomenal and one of the best ones you can find. We typically tell folks to be a little cautious with [inaudible 00:48:28]. If you've got the coated metal roofing, it'll stick pretty well. But when it gets cold and has pressure applied to it, everything struggles on [inaudible 00:48:42]. And so I'm talking about the little ice guards or the snow guards. You tack the snow guard on, and then it's holding a bunch of snow up there. That's a tough application for any sealant without a little backup, something physical to hold it on. But it's a great product. People use it all over the country. You can put it on one wet, you can put it on when it's freezing, and it does really well for us.

It also comes in a brushable version. And I like to say this is typically the scalpel that's kind of the battle ax. So most folks are using our cartridge grade. We do see folks use the brush grade for a few applications. One of the main ones is traumatic damage. So going back to the example Wendy used earlier, you should probably have a new roof, but it's going to be a few weeks before we can get out here, we can fix everything. And so in the meantime, you don't want your stuff getting wet. So we're going to slather this on, it'll be okay for a few weeks. It is designed to last longer than that. I mean, got a lifetime guarantee along with all of our products, but that is one that we find frequently, folks doing traumatic patches before they can come out and put a new roof on.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Wow, at least there's something on there that can do that. Because right now there's a lot of people in Florida who probably are going, oh yeah, okay, we need that. And we talked about mor-flex for the brick and the mortar and really doing that. Then how does that all work into, I mean, Wendy we'll go to you. To waterproofing the brick or doing any coatings, how much of that do you do and what kind of products?

Wendy Marvin:

So the primary one we use for waterproofing brick is the GAF Masonex. Just a thicker roll on doesn't have a sheen to it. Doesn't really change the color of the brick a little bit, but not a lot. So that's the one we're using. The mor-flexx is definitely the repair for mason repairs and different things like that, helping that counter flashing seal back up again if it's a smaller issue. Through the roof I actually would say I love the battle ax because it's like tree penetrations and again, small holes that like, oh my God, we have to tarp this whole roof for this small hole that we have to get back out here and fix. And it's just slap it on and the beauty Through the Roof is, it's a wet application, so in rain it will stick. And when we have storms, obviously it's typically still stormy or wet or raining, and it just gives you an opportunity to have a stoppage of a leak without having to put more penetrations in the roof for a small issue.

So when you install a tarp, you're rolling up and the battens, you're securing it to the roof and you're creating more holes. And if you don't have to do that, it's better. So we haven't quite got the insurance industry on board with that yet, but when you explain it to them and if you have a reasonable adjuster, they've been pretty good about it because again, first step of all of it is to secure the interior contents and make sure it doesn't continue to leak.

Heidi Ellsworth:

And we get a lot of that.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Actually everywhere, it's everywhere right now. So obviously the flashings, the brick cleaners, the brushes, having all of this in your trucks, when you're finishing that up of being able to whether they're doing inspections, they're doing full reroutes or they're doing repairs or maintenance, all of this kind of stuff, to have those kits put together for your tree crews, I think it has to be really important.

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah, have a milk crate, have your chimney milk crate that has everything that you're going to need. And again, the thing that's nice is to empower your guys in the field to help bring something to your attention that you can bring to the attention that maybe we didn't see. Making sure that you get the paperwork signed and everything's done for a change order and that people aren't just going up and slapping things on without having a conversation. So our guys are pretty good about that, but everybody gets in the mode of, what I find the struggle with the most with roofers is they want to help, right? So they want to do, and they don't think about what's behind what they're doing and how it could go wrong. And that's our job as owners. And so just trying to give them all the tools that they need.

Again, the brushes is the nappy brush. That real thick, almost sheep skin looking brush tends to be the most, I think you can spray it on. I can't speak to that one because I don't know if we've done that or not, but we just use the nappy brush, protect the roof surface with tarping, and then the cleaners, just real basic janitorial supplies, have brick cleaners all the time. And then if you're going to use a wire brush, just make sure the guys understand light touch. And if they can't handle that, then don't give them a wire brush, give them a plastic bristle because you can damage bricks with that if you're over zealous. So yeah, just the generalities. And it's just a great way to have that valued added service in your maintenance program. And again, differentiate yourself from all the other contracts that gave them bids,

contractors that gave them bids that you're showing yourself as a consummate professional in our industry.

Heidi Ellsworth:

So cool. Thank you both. Wow, this has been a great presentation. I think there're huge amounts in here going to be very helpful for people to help expand, differentiate their business. So I want to say thank you so much. And I also want to say thank you to everybody who's on here. And also if you have any questions. So I have a couple comments in here. I've had a couple questions come in, but if you have any questions for Wendy or Nathan, please put them in now, we have just a few minutes and we'll hit a couple of those. Wendy said something earlier, but I think this was really great from John Kenny on the excellent point. So many residential contractors are missing the high profit, the repair and maintenance side of the business bring to the table. And so Wendy, I would love to just high level, but how do you start that, how do you start that residential service and maintenance program in your company?

Wendy Marvin:

Yeah, have your team watch this, right? Because I think more than anything, you've got to get your team to understand what's behind why we're doing this. Because a lot of times they just tell me what to do and what to talk about. But it's a consultive role. So you got to have them understand how you're helping the customer. You got to have them understand how to be careful for your company. And so have the team watch this, have them ask questions and then start when you're on the phone during your intake. That's where it starts is would you be interested? We offer chimney maintenance. Do you have a chimney on your home? And you should know that already. If you're getting an intake, your person's on the phone on GIS looking at Google Maps and I see you have a chimney, do you use your chimney?

And just get started. But be careful as an owner of just turning people loose in this and give them specific things to talk about, specific questions to ask and include your legal team on this. Again, because we don't do B-vents for a reason. We have to be careful around heat sources and flashings. And we didn't even talk about wood pipes, stove pipes, but making sure the sealants we're using are correct and all those things. So I think it's a great value added service. It's just getting your team on board and having it done right.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Perfect. I love it. We have a great question here, and this will be our last one. It's from Joe. Thank you, Joe. And he said, first of all, awesome presentation to both of you, and then he says, Nathan, where can I get the sample card for mor-flexx?

Nathan Ferraro:

Great question. So there's a few spots. You can go onto our website and all over the place, there's a request samples button that you can click and you can say in there, I want some color cards for mor-flexx. We are actually happy to send color cards or even the dangerous things that Wendy doesn't like doing.

Wendy Marvin:

It's like a fidget toy.

Nathan Ferraro:

That's right. Heidi, do you have Joe's contact information handy?

Heidi Ellsworth:

We do.

Nathan Ferraro:

Okay. So I'll make sure that that happens without you having to go to the website. We'll send you a few color cards, and Wendy, I've got you down for some as well.

Wendy Marvin:

Thanks, Nathan.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Perfect. And for all of you out there, Sashco has a full directory on RoofersCoffeeShop. If you are trying to find them, just go into that directory. It has great articles. We've done past podcasts and webinars with Nathan in the past that are just really good. So please check out their directory, check out what they have the information there. And that's where you can get some more sample cards too. They'll get you right to their website. So, both of you, thank you so much Nathan and Wendy. We so appreciate your time and your wisdom. I mean, everybody's staying here. It's just a great presentation. Thank you so much.

Wendy Marvin:

Thanks, Heidi for having us. Its been fun. Thanks, Nathan.

Nathan Ferraro:

Yeah, it's always fun. Wendy, Heidi, good talking to you.

Heidi Ellsworth:

Thank you. And I want to thank Sashco to bring this, this was their idea, great topic, great education, and a great way to differentiate and build your business. So keep watching, please visit their directory and we will see all of you on the next RLW, which will be November 30th. And it's going to be from our friends at DaVinci about keep cash flowing in cold weather. It's going to be really good, a very good time for it. And again, this is on-demand. It will be within the next 24 hours. So you'll be able to get it. Please share it and we will look forward to seeing you the next time on RoofersCoffeeShop, RLW. Have a great day. Thank you all.