

# B2B

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## Marketing Turns Sexy

### BIG BIRGE PLUMBING

**P**LUMBING HAS NEVER LOOKED like this.

An Omaha couple is turning heads with online teasers for their Big Birge Plumbing Company and gaining new customers in the process. Brad and Lallenia Birge lend their killer smiles and buff, model good looks to Pop Art-style ads that emphasize primary colors, tongue-in-cheek graphics and sex appeal dynamics.

The company logo features an illustration of Brad's flexed arm, adorned in a rolled-up red and black flannel shirt to expose a bulging bicep. His burly hand grips a red wrench. In a profile pose they stand back to back. He's dressed in the iconic working man's garb of a flannel shirt, blue jeans and work boots, an oversized wrench dangling from one hand. Lallenia's attired in a blouse, shorts and heels as she holds a plunger. In some shots she wears a retro, red and white polka dot dress. In others she dons a white sweater with a blue or red skirt to evoke a cheeky vibe. In still more poses she clutches a giant wrench or a frying pan in an oven-gloved hand. Her expressions range from mock distress to amour.

In these fanciful turns he's the strong, dependable man and she's the woman in need of rescue. The campaign echoes vintage television situation comedies, Technicolor romance movies, comic strips, pulp novels and pinup glossies. It's Betty Page exotica meets Doris Day-Rock Hudson fantasy meets Li'l Abner-Daisy Mae shtick.

Completing this throwback homage is the tagline: "Honesty, quality, American craftsmanship. Old-fashioned values reborn." The alter-ego personas are exaggerations of the couple's real selves, but the expressed values are how they live and do business.

"We take it very seriously," says Brad. "We stay true to what we say we are. I can't stand bad service. The way you treat somebody is everything. It's totally how you present yourself. On any job I do I try to make it a positive experience for clients."

"We do have a lot of repeat customers and there's a reason why. We treat people right. We give people a good price and good service. Our clients become our friends." ➤





◀ He's a master licensed plumber with years in the trade. She's a personal fitness trainer who's opted to devote more time to their son, Wyatt, and to the business. Her entrepreneurial skills have proven invaluable. She conceives the marketing strategy and executes it with help from his mother and photographer Justin Barnes.

"She's turned out to be a really big part of the company," Brad says of Lallenia. "Without her backing me, and giving me feedback, and throwing ideas out and putting it into play, the business wouldn't be where it is today. As far as our image, it's all her."

Lallenia, who enjoys finding frilly props and playing adult dress-up, says it's all about finding creative ways to make the Big Birge brand stand out among all the clutter.

"When you see other plumbing ads it's all guys," she says. "I was like, 'We need a woman's touch here.' It's just fun for us to do our own thing right now and to be ourselves. People think we shell out big bucks for our marketing, but we don't. As long as we can do it ourselves, we're going to continue doing it."

The couple says their business website garners high traffic and positive feedback. The same is true for their Facebook page and for the YouTube videos they've made. Their eye-catching promos extend to T-shirts, yard signs, and company vehicles.

Coming soon is Lallenia's own website, The Plumber's Wife.

"It's about wives helping their husbands as entrepreneurs," she says.

"I am a plumber's wife and I'm darn proud of it." **B2B**

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