

# Rain Soft

of Northern

Michigan

Taking the worry out of water... Since 1953



*Rain Soft*<sup>®</sup>  
PURELY BETTER BUSINESS ... SINCE 1953

**DEALER  
PROFILE**

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# DEALER PROFILE:

## RAINSOFT'S YOUNGEST DEALER TALKS ABOUT HIS FIRST 18 MONTHS IN BUSINESS.



*Dan Phalen, CEO of RainSoft of Northern Michigan, started his dealership when he was only 28-years old.*

### **Recruitment, training and business support get Dan Phalen's dealership off to a running start.**

*Dan Phalen is CEO of RainSoft of Northern Michigan. He's RainSoft's youngest dealer. He's also one very smart businessman. What follows is an interview with Phalen in which he describes the research he did on RainSoft prior to starting his dealership; the support he got from RainSoft during his startup; and some of the unique marketing techniques his company is now employing.*

### **INTERVIEWER: What peaked your interest about RainSoft in the first place?**

**PHALEN:** I was in direct sales selling air purification systems. One day during a meeting with a financing company that I was using, they told me about RainSoft and the partnership they had with Home Depot. It really struck my interest so I started looking into them. I did research on their products and I hardly found any issues. And if there was an issue there was always someone from RainSoft took care of it, with no cost to the customer. Their lifetime warranty makes a strong statement. In fact, once I started my dealership they even paid us to do some warranty work on 30-year old equipment for homeowners that weren't even our customers.



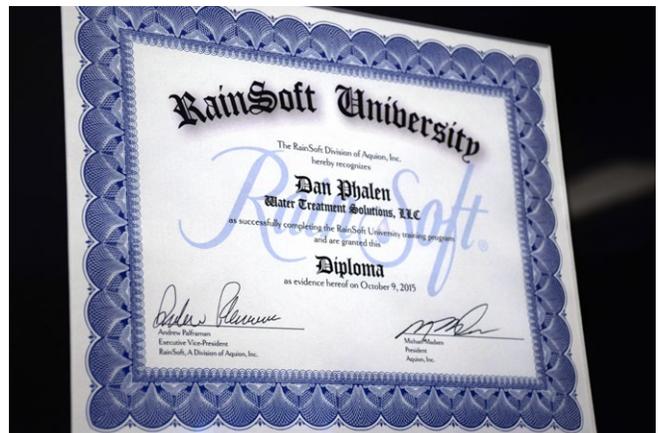
*Phalen's exclusive RainSoft dealership territory extends from Flint in the middle of Michigan, west to Lunington, northwest up to Traverse City and to the far northeast to Alpena.*

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you describe what the startup process was like?

**PHALEN:** We started our dealership in November 2014 and I was actually very excited because of the way RainSoft set everything up. Ryan Kraft, their regional trainer came in that first day that I was in business and helped us with recruitment. He was with us for two weeks. He then came back another couple of times for two-week stints, all to help us build a solid and trained crew. Regional Director Alan Kniffen also came in to help with training and teach us the RainSoft system of marketing. It really put us at ease right from the start, and there was no cost for all that training.

**INTERVIEWER:** Any help with business systems?

**PHALEN:** For new dealers they got what they call RainSoft University. It's a full week of intensive training held at their headquarters outside of Chicago. They drill you on putting together a business plan. They teach you a very effective system for logging leads, appointments, demos, sales and installs. They explain all the nuances of using the Home Depot. They even ask you when and how much you want to sell your dealership for down the road, then show you how to reach that goal through the right number of initial sales combined with re-occurring revenue



*Phalen's RainSoft University certificate hangs proudly in his office.*

though service sales. In essence, it's a thorough business guide on how to succeed in the water treatment business.

**INTERVIEWER:** You mentioned that The Home Depot relationship first got you interested in RainSoft. Why is that?

**PHALEN:** If you're in direct sales you have to know how tough it is to get leads and how much those leads can cost. But with The Home Depot relationship, leads don't cost us anything unless they result in a sale. Then, there's all the ways we get leads through the Home Depot. We get leads through their Appli-



*The in-home water test gives consumers a side-by-side comparison of their home water to RainSoft treated water. The vial on the left demonstrates superior detergent performance.*

ance Longevity Program because our products can help water-using appliances last a lot longer. We get leads through in-store end cap displays featuring our products. We also staff stores with our own people to do water surveys with shoppers. And one of the most productive sources is the water test kit display. It invites people to find out what's in their water. They take home the kit, fill up the small bottle with a sample of their household water, then return it to us in the postage-paid envelope. We then test that water, log it into our computer, and give the customer a call with our initial findings. It's during that call that we offer to do a free in-depth water test at their house that also includes a \$20 Home Depot gift card.

**INTERVIEWER:** Can you explain how that in-home water test works?

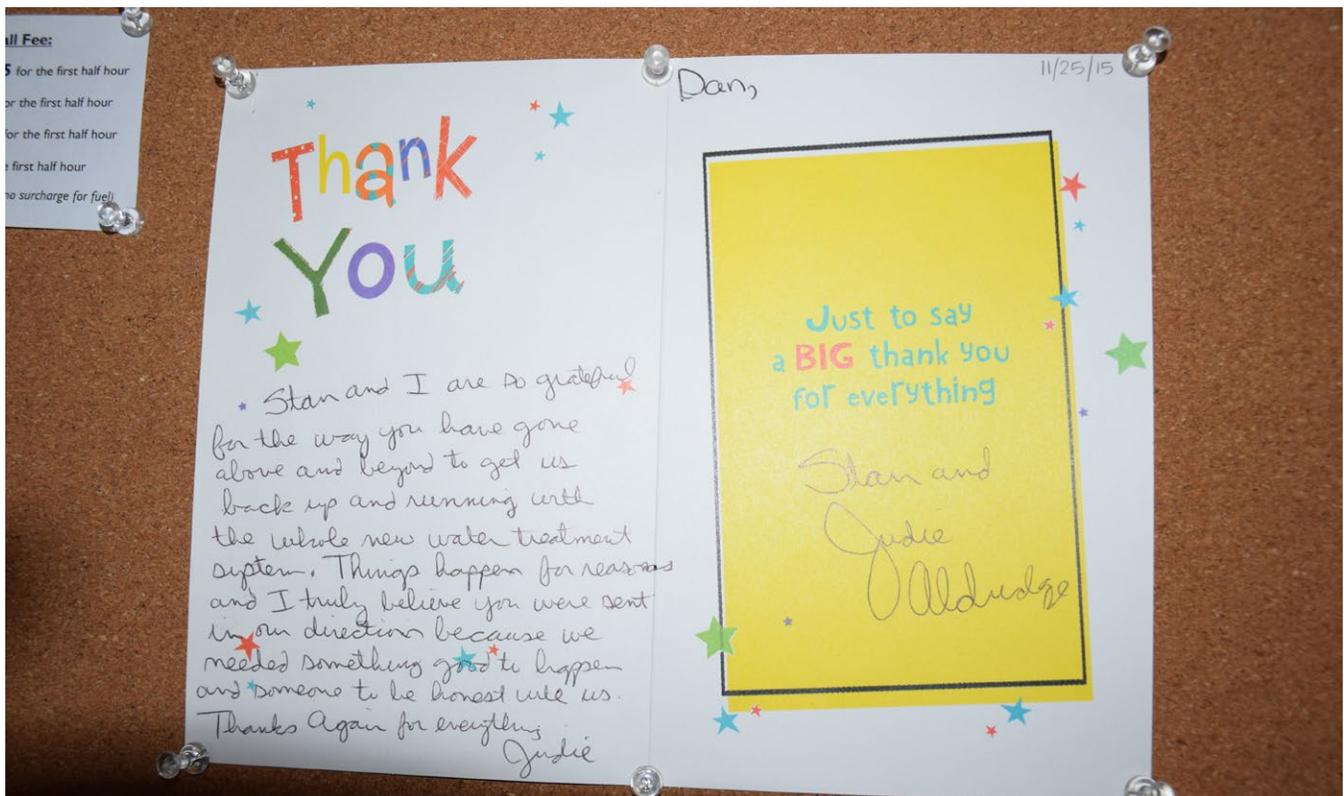
**PHALEN:** We put their home water through a mini-water conditioner and do a side-by-side comparison with their untreated water. It's a real eye-opener as they taste feel and smell the difference in the waters. What really helps is the iPad app presentation. It takes you and the customers through the entire presentation. In fact, you don't have to be a salesperson, because the app does all the selling for you. It's huge.



*Very effective at generating consumer interest about what's in their water are these free take home kits found in all Home Depot stores.,*

**INTERVIEWER:** Are you doing anything unique in the way of lead generation?

**PHALEN:** I don't know if it's unique, but we've taken the Home Depot water test kit displays and expanded to all kinds of locations. So now we have over 100 of these displays getting leads for us in independent hardware stores, gas stations and insurance agencies. The displays only take up a one-foot square area of floor space, and we pay those stores a commission for every sale that's generated from their display.



*For an elderly couple whose water was so bad with iron, Phalen made a special trip on Thanksgiving eve to install a new water conditioner for them. They were so thankful, Phalen received a \$50 gift card to Applebees.*

I also buy cases of RainSoft bottled water treated with the Ultrefiner II and I give the water away to convenient stores. I don't care if they sell the water for 75 cents a bottle or give them away for free, because each bottle connects the quality of the water they're drinking to RainSoft and The Home Depot. It also gives them contact information. It's cheap, yet effective advertising. We're also going to be giving free bottles away at kids' soccer tournaments.

**INTERVIEWER: You're based out of Flint, Michigan. So we'd be remiss if we didn't ask you about the city's water crisis and the effect it has on your business.**

**PHALEN:** It's a terrible situation. And it certainly has raised people's curiosity about what's in their water. It's also made people more protective. Just like they lock their doors at night to protect their family,

people are now beginning to realize that they need to also protect their family by knowing what exactly is in the water in their house.

**INTERVIEWER: So, how's business?**

**PHALEN:** It's been good. We've actually seen a steady increase in sales and installs for every month we've been in business so far. We even just landed a really large commercial job for a sugar company, and they called us. We're not sure, but we think they initially called us because of our Google reviews. Look up water treatment in our area and you might see one company with one three star review, and maybe another company with four so-so reviews. Then you'll come to RainSoft of Northern Michigan and see 55 Five Star reviews. So, if you need water treatment, who are you going to call? Like I said, business is good.

"We have testimonials saying how their family's skin has cleared up, or how healthier they feel. It's really gratifying when a customer actually calls you to tell you how much you've helped them."

*Dan Phalen, CEO of RainSoft of Northern Michigan*



RainSoft



## **About RainSoft**

Headquartered in Roselle, Illinois, RainSoft, a division of Aquion, Inc., is an international company with over 150 authorized and independently owned dealerships in the U.S. and 20 other countries. The company is dedicated to producing the world's finest water treatment systems, all of them manufactured in the U.S.A. and backed with the industry's strongest lifetime warranties. For more information, visit [RainSoftDealer.com](http://RainSoftDealer.com) or call 1-866-4RAINSOFT (866) 472-4676.