



A SEAMLESS PROCESS

from Inception to Final Inspection



 Mike McGuire
Managing Partner of Zink Corporation



 Wilson Villarrubia
ZVS Director of Ventilation Services

Written by Margaret Patricia Eaton

Few pause to admire the well-functioning ventilation system of a commercial kitchen. It's the original unsung hero. But we will notice when the atmosphere is redolent of deep-fat frying, or when the kitchen staff is oxygen-deprived and exhausted—and it will be too late.

Because not only is it noticed, but a poorly ventilated kitchen also threatens the integrity of the entire foodservice delivery model, affecting the quality of the food, the health of the staff, and the enjoyment and environment of the diners.

Happily, ventilation systems designed and installed in commercial kitchens by ZVS (Z-Ventilation Solutions) don't get noticed—a good sign that they're working well.

Based in Columbus, Ohio, ZVS, provides complete turnkey, customized solutions for commercial kitchen ventilation systems in restaurants, hospitals, and institutional cafeterias, reaching the national marketplace through Paradigm, a unique network of foodservice agencies.



To learn more about the turnkey solutions ZVS offers to food-service consultants, architects, and design dealers specializing in the planning of commercial kitchens, we join Mike McGuire, Managing Partner of Zink Corporation, the holding company for ZVS, and Wilson Villarrubia, ZVS Director of Ventilation Services.

Although ZVS only began life as a stand-alone brand six years ago, as McGuire explains, it's a subsidiary of Zink Corporation, a 45-year-old company from Columbus, Ohio, with eight offices across the mid-west. Zink Foodservice, the original

rep group, began as a family-owned rep business in 1976, marketing and selling commercial foodservice equipment, and over the years expanded to Zink Corporation, which includes equipment, smallwares, tabletop, furniture, distribution, service and ventilation.

In 2017 there were some major changes, with Jim Zink and McGuire, who had been with Zink Corporation for 33 years, becoming Managing Partners, after the company was sold to its employees via an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) Trust. ►►

▶“This means that everyone now has a stake in the business,” McGuire says, “and it has been very successful. Since the employees, who number 80 in total, are all stakeholders, the profitability and growth of the business is important to them.”

Another major change was to set up ZVS as a stand-alone subsidiary, dedicated to designing, engineering, and installing ventilation solutions, with Wilson Villarrubia as Director of Ventilation Services.

What started in the Midwest, has now expanded to North America. ZVS is licensed to design and engineer systems that meet building codes in 49 states and markets its customized solutions through Paradigm, a national organization of 200+ foodservice representatives. Paradigm, of which Zink Corporation is a founding member, maintains 18 offices and 28 culinary centers through the U.S. It is, as McGuire says, “leading the reinvention of foodservice representation.”

What differentiates ZVS from other companies which may stock and sell hoods, or fans, or various ventilation system components, is the combination of ZVS’s design, engineering, and sales teams which bring together a unique level of knowledge that allows them to provide comprehensive customized solutions for commercial kitchens.

The team focuses on all aspects of a project, “above and below the hood,” says McGuire, explaining how the team can consult and add value to any aspect of the project, “from rooftop to tabletop.”

McGuire describes Villarrubia as having extensive engineering and ventilation experience. “He brought the expertise to get us started, and spearheaded ZVS, which has grown to include 16 employees. Now we have engineers, CAD drawing experts, a support process engineer, and a client services team.”

“We have an extensive team that can work on complicated designs. I am either directly involved in each project or overseeing the coordination details with my team and our installation team run by Steve Bosworth,” Villarrubia states.

The entire process of creating a complex ventilation solution takes about a year, according to McGuire. “We are involved in the early stages of design for the restaurant, hospital, school, or other institution and the system has to be engineered to work in that specific building, so we work on the engineering at the front end. Everything is built specifically for that job, and referenced for that job, so nothing is built ahead of time—it’s design, build, install, test and balance.”

What ZVS offers is a seamless process from the project’s start to its completion. According to the company, “project managers coordinate all aspects of the project beginning with site survey, design, costing, engineering, CAD/Revit drawings, permitting, BIM, and construction meetings, and installation through final testing and balancing.”

As it’s a turnkey approach, all risk transfers from the customer to the experts from ZVS who are accountable for all aspects of the project. This includes, in addition to the design, the domestic manufacturing of all the system components. These parts include the specific combination of hoods, canopies, ducts, fans, controls, pressure controls, fire suppression, and filters to the specifications set by ZVS, with ZVS retaining all rights to their brand.

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When it comes to installation in a new building, McGuire says that ZVS becomes part of the construction schedule. “There is a lot of coordination with other trades to accomplish a project this complex. We essentially become part of the construction team to provide a seamless process from inception through final inspection.”

Villarrubia describes the process as “a balancing act between design, product, and installation, which is completely managed by the ZVS team, all of which are dependent on one another. If not done right, one small component can affect the overall



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performance of the solution. As an example, if the system is drawing out too much air, it will affect something as simple as opening the door into the facility. If not pulling enough air, it becomes immediately evident due to odors, smoke, or a space that feels too warm."

To maintain a proper hood system's efficiency, it must be kept clean. One of ZVS's 'secret weapons' used to accomplish this is Woolguard Hood Filters, which capture 98 percent of grease before it even enters the exhaust system. Their use also increases the overall safety and efficiency of the establishment, because, with a cleaner hood system, the entire exhaust system, the hood, the rooftop fans, HVAC, and other equipment will run more efficiently.

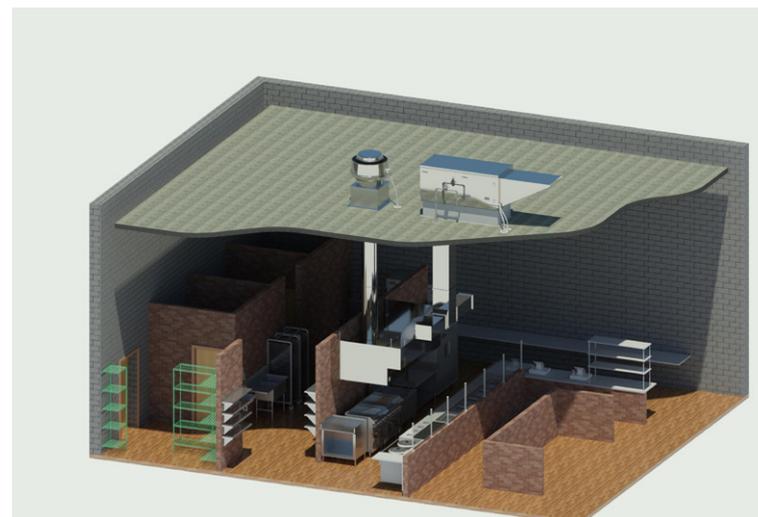
The welcome result is significant savings. Kitchens that once had to clean quarterly find they only have to do so yearly, saving on water, chemicals, labor, and downtime.

As Villarrubia explains, the big difference between a ventilation system like the one ZVS provides and an air conditioning system, is that traditional AC systems recycle and cool, "but we actually exchange the air. We also offer products that help in the overall facility through dedicated outside air systems on the rooftop that bring in 100 percent air from the outside. We are bringing in fresh air continuously and taking air out continuously."

ZVS offers "a portfolio of products and services that allow us to design products based on performance and not product restrictions." This includes associated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing services, and project management that "ensures ZVS can provide the right solution for every job."

McGuire calls ventilation "the most complex piece of a project when building a kitchen. It's very technical and very few people across the country are proficient at it. To have the expertise to do it is a unique skill set. It's not a commodity business; it's a design-engineer product and that's what we do at ZVS." ■

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