



# ADDRESSING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT USERS THINK THEY NEED AND WHAT THEY REALLY NEED

**M**y name is Rich Morse. Starting in 1989, I made my career in construction. I specialized in ground-up commercial carpentry. As the product marketing manager for Stabila, I work to bring simple and reliable innovation to trades that depend on quality leveling systems.

The rate of practical innovation in the premium laser category is accelerating. Self-positioning layout lasers that require a single person to set up and operate are now being demonstrated on site and sold for layout applications with a 30- to 300-foot range. The laser automatically positions two precision squares with a tolerance of +/- 3/32 inch at 100 feet. This is objective layout versus subjective layout — there is no guesswork. Labor rates are cut in half, accuracy is doubled and confidence and commissions soar.

Unfortunately, more contractors are using mid-price point pouch lasers for applications that are beyond what the tools were designed for. This drives customer



Stabila's IP65 Tech level is used daily by concrete contractors across the country. This is truly a remarkable level in high demand for its durability. It is available in four sizes — 14, 24, 48 and 72 inches. A 48-inch magnetic version is also offered.

satisfaction down, return rates up and distributor frustration through the roof. The contractor thinks his tool is defective, inaccurate or both. Assertive inside and outside salespeople need to question their prospective customers' typical working ranges and working environments (indoor or outdoor).

Traditional "tool pouch" line lasers receive high satisfaction ratings when operated in a range of roughly



Stabila's layout station LA180L is a radio frequency controlled laser that self positions at the push of a button to deliver perfect 180-degree control lines. The LA180L allows one worker to square up any job site layout quickly and precisely when compared to the conventional 3-4-5 method of two men and a 100-foot tape.

30 feet. Sales of green beam personal lasers will continue to develop. At this time, the majority of these sales are being captured by the premier laser houses in each market.

Many exterior contractors are replacing their rotating lasers with models that feature IP65 dust and water protection. Today's premium, serviceable rotating lasers have street prices in the \$1,000 to \$2,000 range. However, it is worth noting that a surprising number of opening price point (\$599-\$699), rotating lasers can now be seen on some major road and bridge sites. This will prove to be problematic for those contractors in the mid-term.

Many times, mid-range (50- to 200-foot-range) interior and light construction rotating laser users are buying products that are basically non-serviceable. Most of these tools are under-featured and under-accessorized at the time of purchase. Help these folks, show them their new alternatives.

The professional-quality level market has a five-year C.A.G.R. (compound annual growth rate) in the mid double digits. Distributors and contractors can expect new leveling systems for high risk applications in 2017 and 2018 that will bring more efficiency and gutsy street prices. Distributors will feel the strong margins.



The R-BEAM was engineered with a mission to be the most durable spirit level on the market. The unique profile makes the R-BEAM 120 percent stronger and lighter than other manufacturer's heavy-duty box frame levels. This reduces the chances of bent frames. The R-BEAM has great stability when installing cabinets or block.



The LAX 400 Pro Liner multi-line self-leveling laser from Stabila has a working range of 60 to 490 feet with receiver, and works with or without a receiver. It produces bright, crisp lines and dots including a 360-degree horizontal line, two vertical lines at 90 degrees to each other and plumb points.

The big three power tool companies will answer the invitation to upgrade the level sections in the tool corrals of the big boxes. This will be a win for everyone — better quality for the user, higher retail prices, more exposure for the category and more market expansion.

The sales trajectory for digital or "Tech" levels is confident. Contractors that need to be code compliant spend. Expect the range of products in this category to continue to expand through 2020.

Laser distance measuring tools are now basically fundamental for estimators and quality-seeking contractors that are replacing their long tapes. Respectable entry level models start at \$59. The \$600 units sell well when demonstrated properly and quickly. Bluetooth technology can be the scale tipper at well attended end-user shows.

As a contractor, I relied on my STAFDA houses for service, selection and availability. This is a fact: Professional contractors want a professional counter salesperson's advice on the best tools and accessories for the job. Speak up. **cs**



MORSE

For more information, visit Stabila at STAFDA in booths 1342-1344 and visit the website [www.stabila.com](http://www.stabila.com).

# **Self-Positioning Lasers Are Here**

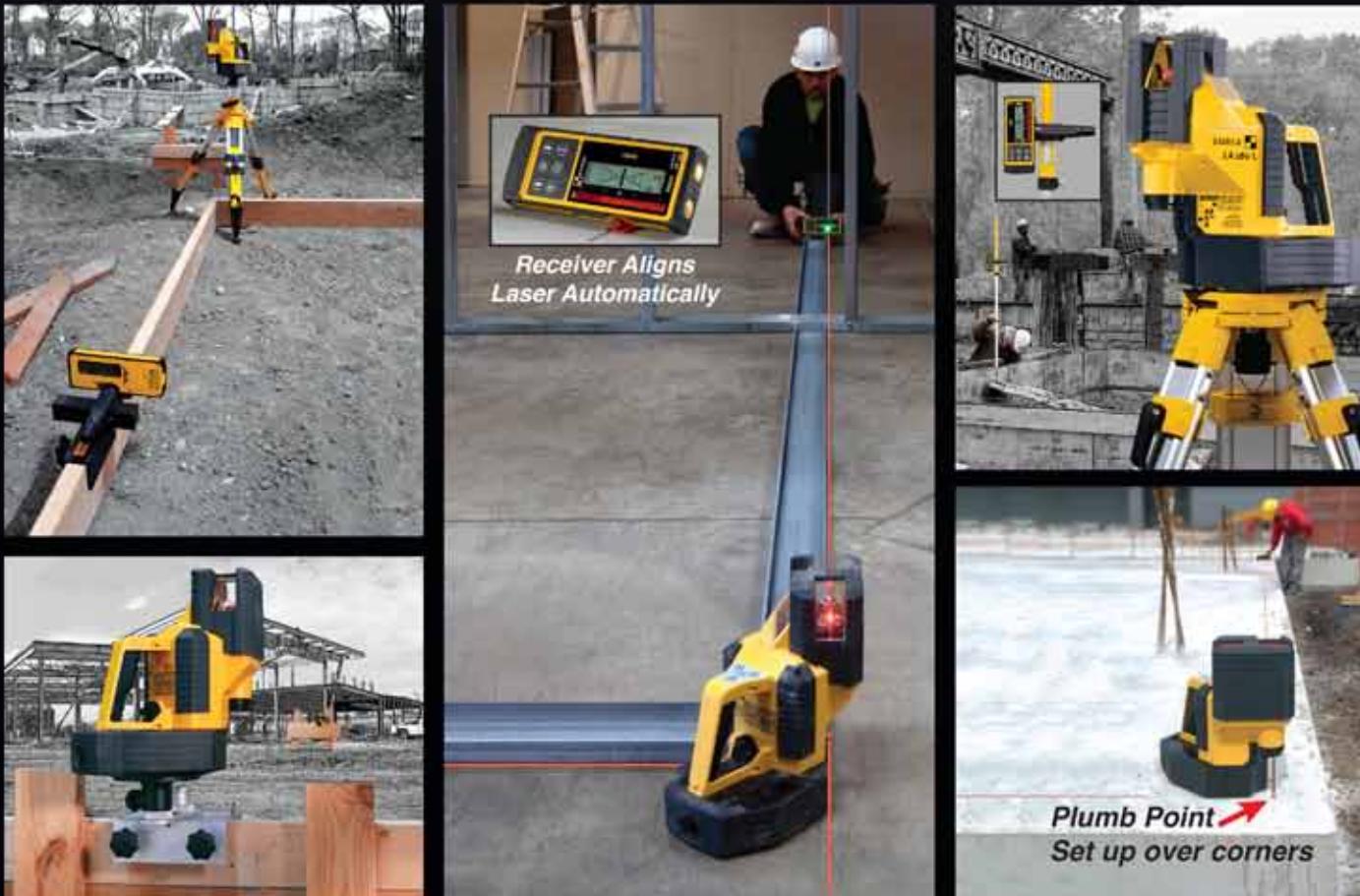


## **Layout Station**

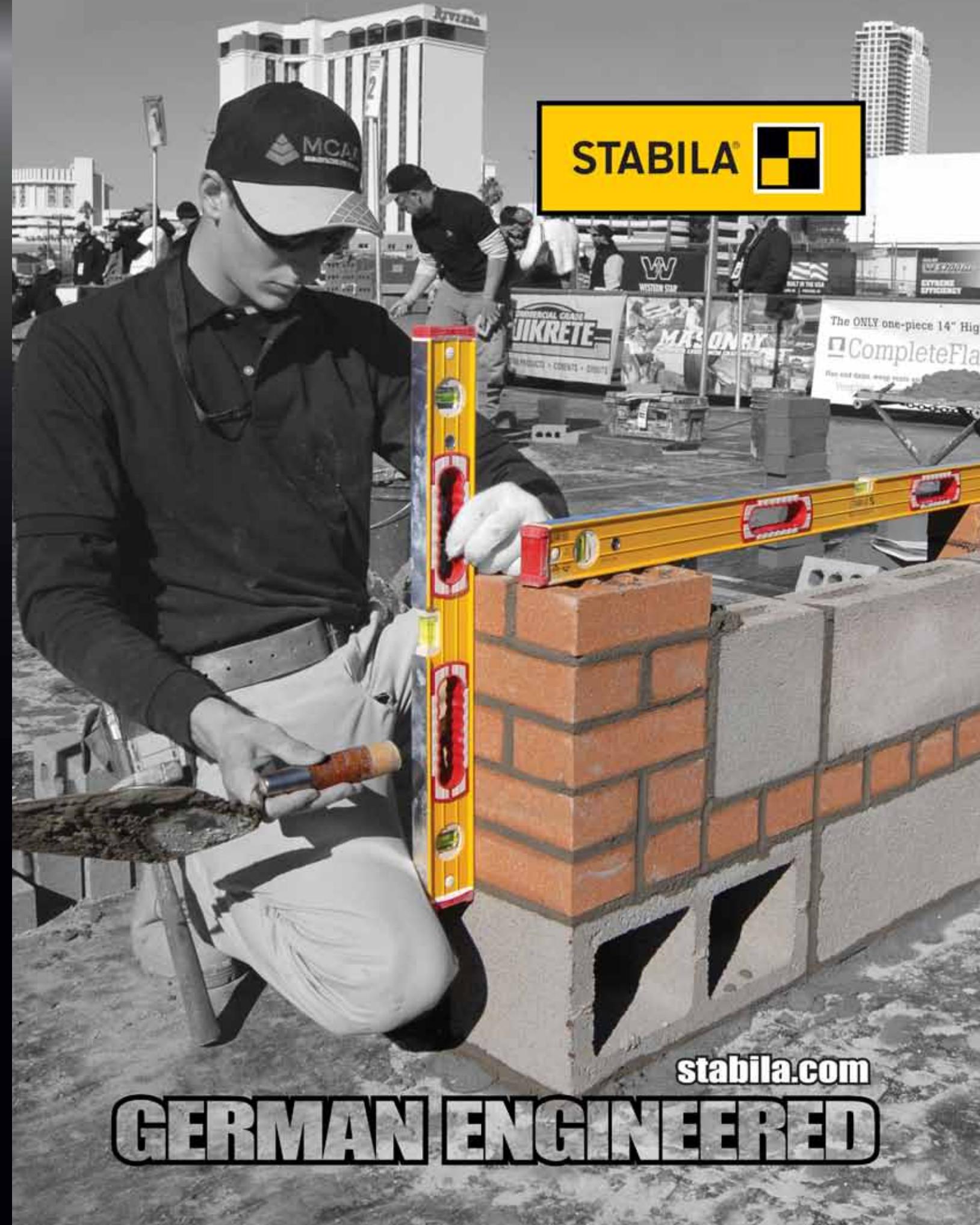
WITH



- **Fastest Way to Square**
- **50% Less Labor**
- **Accuracy:  $\pm 3/32'' @ 100'$**



- Multi-lines
- Self Leveling
- Indoor-Outdoor
- Horizontal Beam
- 150' Auto Alignment Range
- 300' Range with Receiver



[stabila.com](http://stabila.com)

## **GERMAN ENGINEERED**