



## KRISAY'S APPLIANCE & BEDDING

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# Surviving Powerful Forces and Thriving Since 1889

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LOCATION:  
Johnstown, Pennsylvania

FOUNDED:  
1979

OWNER:  
Guy Krisay

WEBSITE:  
[shopkrisays.com](http://shopkrisays.com)

Guy Krisay can't help but get nostalgic when he talks about his business. The building that houses Krisay's Appliance & Bedding in Johnstown, Penn., has survived three major floods in U.S. history. The first natural disaster dates back to the 19th century: Johnstown's "Great Flood" of 1889 occurred after a dam collapsed due to heavy rains. When rubble accumulated at the Stone Bridge (a historic landmark today), it caught fire and caused the water to back up. The building that would eventually become Krisay's floated upstream to its present location. The building's story of survival is in the annals of "Ripley's Believe it or Not!"

It wasn't until 1979 (and two floods later), Krisay and his dad, Steve, started the appliance business in the steel, iron and coal mining town. Maytag was the first brand they sold with household names to follow that included Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Frigidaire, Speed Queen and GE. Within five years, the Krisays opened a warehouse one block away from the flagship store's downtown location. A second location soon followed in upper Johnstown.

"Time marched on," said Krisay, "and we had our best year in business last year."

He continued, "But with success comes other issues that make my head spin—that's where RWS comes in."

Here, Krisay, an Appliance Dealers Cooperative member, shares the history of working with RWS—from RetailDeck® to "Socrates"—the evolving competitive landscape and the latest way RWS has made a difference in the profitability of the business.



“RetailDeck is important in terms of inventory, our warehouse, delivery, timing...it’s been indispensable to our business over the years.”

GUY KRISAY

**Q: How long have you worked with RWS?**

**Guy Krisay (GK):** A long time, 10 or 12 years. I remember meeting Jennie’s family (RWS COO Jennie Gilbert) at a buying fair. That’s where I initially got the interest in their services and became a RetailDeck customer. RetailDeck has always given us an idea of where our competitors are in terms of pricing. RetailDeck is important in terms of inventory, our warehouse, delivery, timing...it’s been indispensable to our business over the years. Without RetailDeck, it would be like trying to run our business without a computer!

**Q: What has the digital journey been like?**

**GK:** I’ve gone from wringer washers to computerizing our business. Back when we got our computer system in 2000, I remember my dad not wanting anything to do with it. I had taken a computer science class in high school, but that was in the punched card era.

Soon after we signed on for RetailDeck, we got an RWS website. Then our site needed to be cellphone friendly. Today, we’re on “Socrates” (WebFronts’ 5th generation design platform). It’s easy for our customers to navigate and allows them to see everything from pricing to rebates and warranties.

Going online is what people do, not just Millennials. They want to be educated about the purchases they make. “Socrates” is the difference between being in business and not.

**Q: How has RWS helped you on pricing strategy?**

**GK:** Through the years, Jennie has always been there for me. As our business has grown and with last year being our most successful, it’s come with both rewards and challenges. This business has become a commodity with prices changing daily. Jennie understood what type of pricing structure we needed to make a profit and stay in business while remaining competitive.

The pricing formulas RWS has established have allowed us to maintain a level of profitability without a customer coming to a manager and questioning our pricing. We aim to give consumers the best price every day. We pride ourselves on servicing everything we sell. It’s one way we build loyalty as an independent retailer and keep people coming back.

**Q: How has the competitive landscape changed?**

**GK:** Back when Lowes and Home Depot came to our small town, we did see a lull in business because it was new and exciting. But it’s “self-service” model with very little guidance. An independent retailer advantage: People don’t have to walk 100 yards to find someone to help them.

Today, Amazon is a force that’s only getting stronger. Right now, Amazon’s strength is in the smaller items like parts. It does put pressure on the independents. When we get calls for part pricing, we hear a lot, “I can get that cheaper on Amazon.”

**Q: In the wake of Amazon, how can an independent retailer win?**

**GK:** There’s a lot we can do. We do our due diligence to confirm a part number coincides with a model number (a common mistake consumers make when ordering parts online) and that they’re ordering the right part to begin with—and if they need it. I’ve seen non-genuine OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) parts on Amazon. When a customer buys a part from us, we can test the old part and help with simple installation instruction. We see do-it-yourselfers come into our store two, three and four times for help. Customers have the option of our service department that can fix it for them. Our building is a reminder of survival when powerful forces come along.



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