

Add more Flav-IRs...

Expand your Business and Expand your Opportunities!

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Abstract

The opportunities in infrared are endless! Do you really want to limit yourself to just one or two applications? By diversifying your business, you are not hindered by the same economic cutbacks as specialized companies. It is a good idea to specialize, but to expand your business at the same time. This presentation is dedicated to helping you achieve an understanding of the opportunities that await you.

By incorporating new ideas like infrared into your existing business, you can make up for lost revenue. "Diversify or Die" appears to be holding true. Rather than take on a completely new field of work, why not expand on what you do? If you are a home inspector, you are a natural candidate for the opportunities in building inspection that infrared presents. If you are already an infrared contractor, by learning about different applications of infrared, you can maximize your market and increase your sales.

This presentation is ideal for the new thermographer all the way to the experienced and successful thermography business owner. Topics discussed:

- How getting into the business is not as hard as you may think
- How to select a camera
- How do you diversify your business
- How long does it take to be successful as an IR thermographer
- How does one get trained on so many applications of infrared

Introduction

It is wise to diversify your investments such as your financial portfolio, but what about the suggestion to diversify your business? How long will a bicycle shop stay in business if they sell only one type of bike? That's like an IR business that offers only electrical scans. Why would a thermographer choose only one specialty to build his/her

business? That business is susceptible to failure not only from competition cutting prices, but also from budget cuts by corporate managers, who in hard times typically cut maintenance costs from the budget. So, diversification is something you should seriously consider for your business. Take your greatest tool – your brain, and use it in conjunction with your greatest technological tool – your infrared camera, and come up with a plan to make your business more profitable and recession-proof.



Figure 1. Add some Flav-IRs to your business

Start with What You Know

Infrared is a proven beneficial technology for the identification of common electrical and mechanical problems (see figures 2 & 3), so if you already do electrical or mechanical predictive maintenance, start by improving your service. Realize that if you provide an average service, by definition, you need to fix it. Make it a great service. Sales of electrical infrared services are the easiest of any of the applications. If you have an electrical client, get them to buy your other services. In fact, try selling your new services to every existing client. They already believe in your service and this will be the easiest sale you ever make.



Figure 2. Electrical P/PM

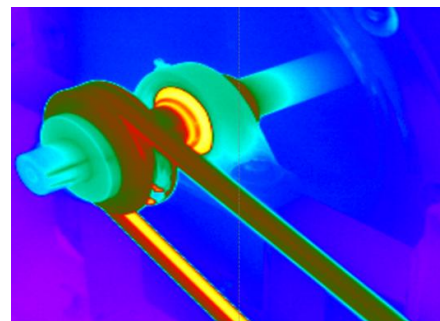


Figure 3. Mechanical P/PM

Use the IR “Wow Factor”

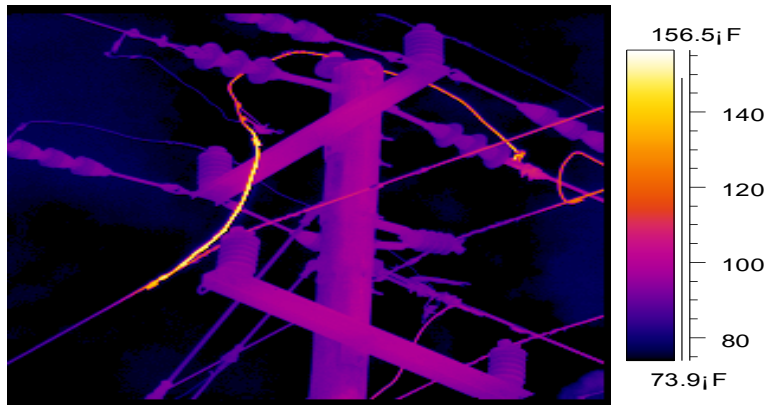
Since “a picture is worth a 1000 words”...use that! Get an IR camera if you don't have one and take it with you everywhere you go. You never know when you will get a very cool shot. Use those images to build your web site and update it frequently with new content. Display the images with pride. It won't be long before you have a bunch of images. Talk up infrared whenever you go...think it, breathe it, sleep it, and eat it. Infrared is a brilliant technology and one that even the technically-challenged can understand. Take advantage of the “WOW FACTOR” and use it in your marketing and advertising.

The Infrared Camera

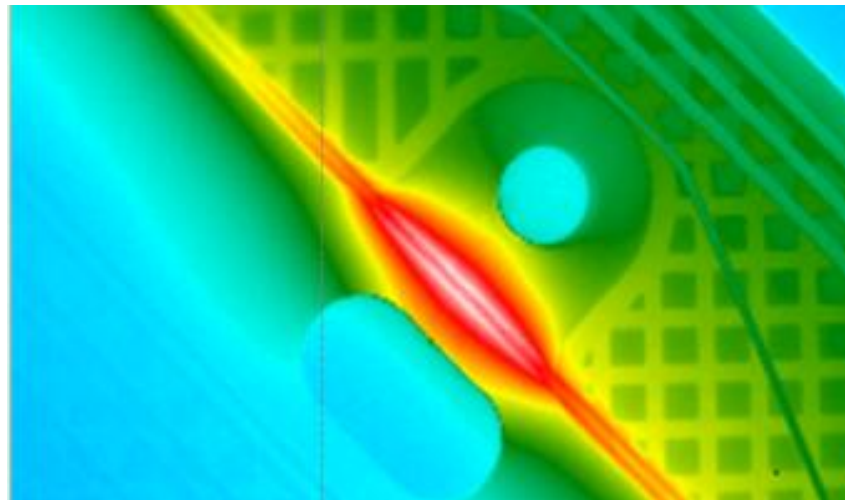
Diversify your infrared business, dream of what you want your business to be, and choose an infrared camera that will not put limitations on what you can do. An entry level camera (typically priced under \$5K) might be sufficient for simple moisture or energy surveys in residential structures; however, this would not be the proper choice if you want to perform large commercial building surveys or look at micro-circuitry. Realize that your infrared camera is an investment in your future and needs to be carefully considered as a business investment. Our advice is to buy the best camera that you can and make sure it hurts to pay for it. You will likely be more motivated, work harder and get more work when it hurts...especially when your significant other reminds you just how much you spent and figures out the equivalent thing that could have been purchased with that money.

The Applications

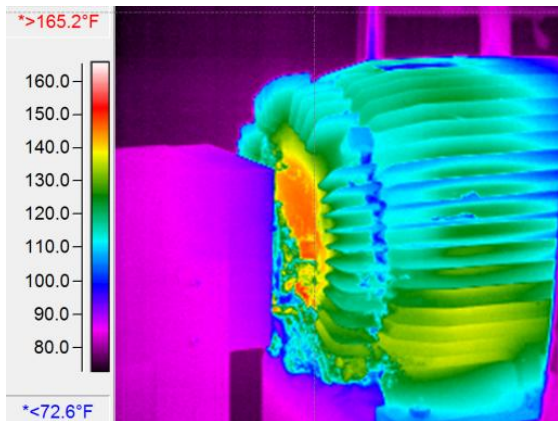
OK, what other applications should you sell? Below, find one more than 31 Flav-IRs (images) and the potential customers for each of the many applications that you should consider adding to your IR business. Each one of these examples represents whole markets that you can tap into.



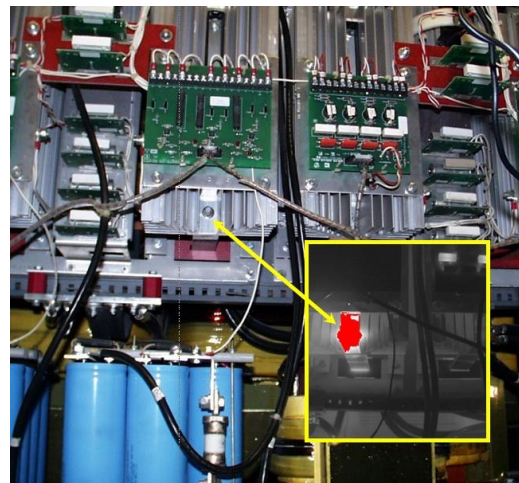
Electric Distribution Lines – Electric Utilities



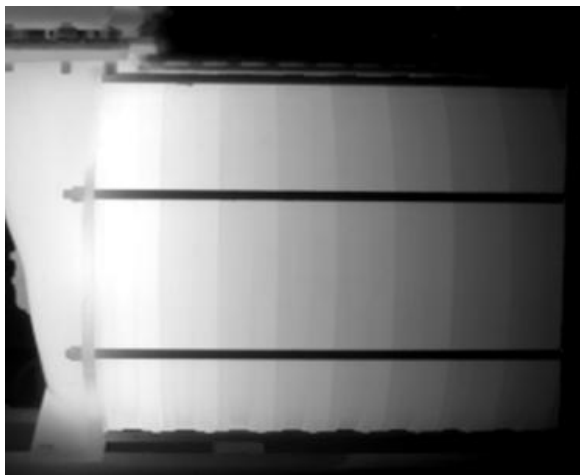
Micro-Circuitry – Microprocessor Manufacturers



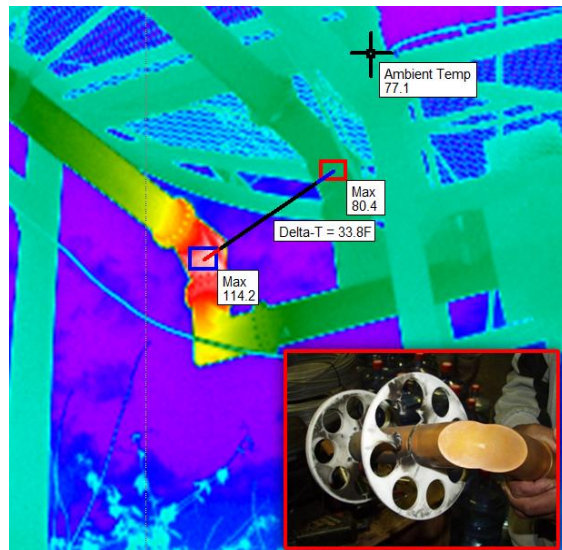
**Electric Motors –
Factories/Rewind Shops**



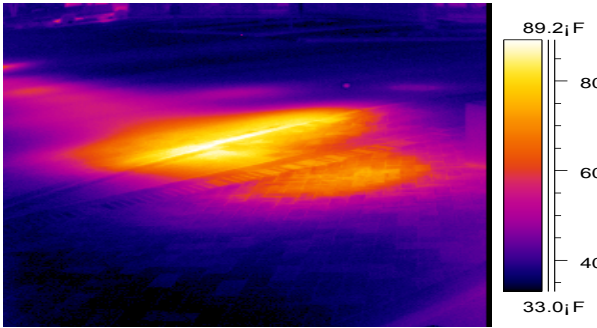
**Computer Room Switchgear –
Data Center Operators**



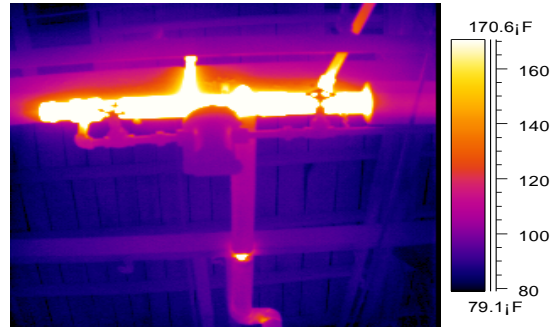
**Aerator Blowers – Water Treatment
Plant Operators**



**TV Tower Wave Guides – TV and
FM Stations**



**Steam Distribution Line Leaks –
Steam System Operators**



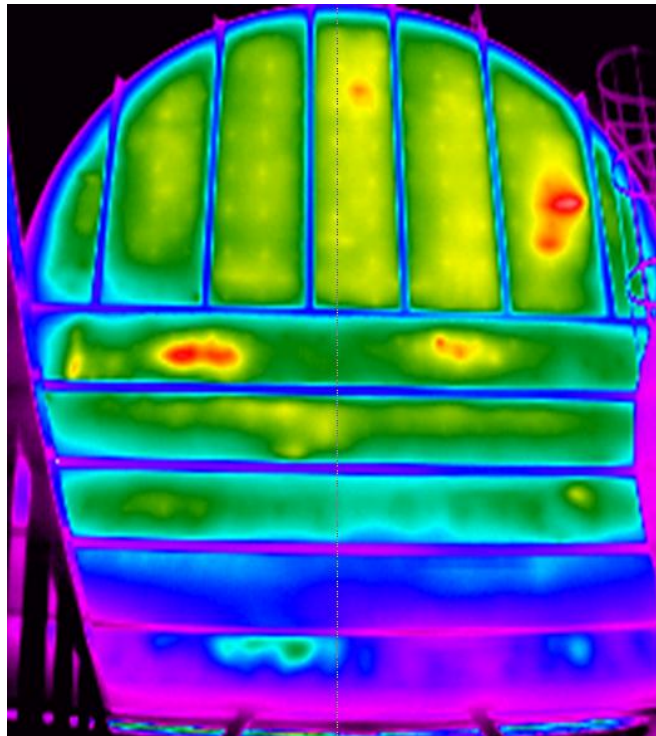
**Steam Pipes and Steam Traps –
Power Plant Operators**



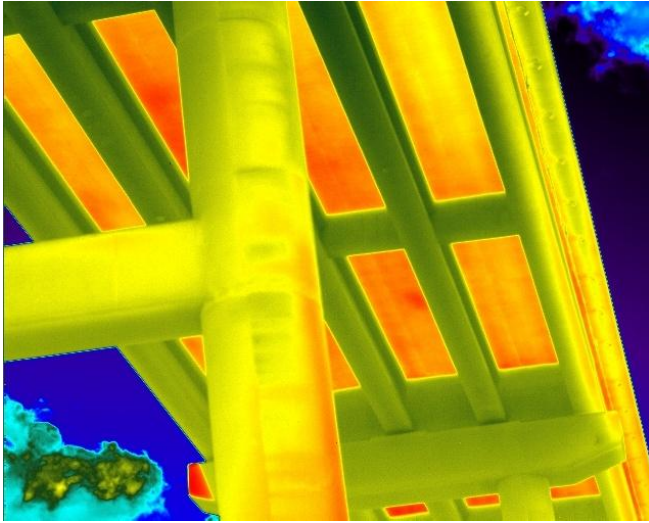
Scrubber Stacks – Factories



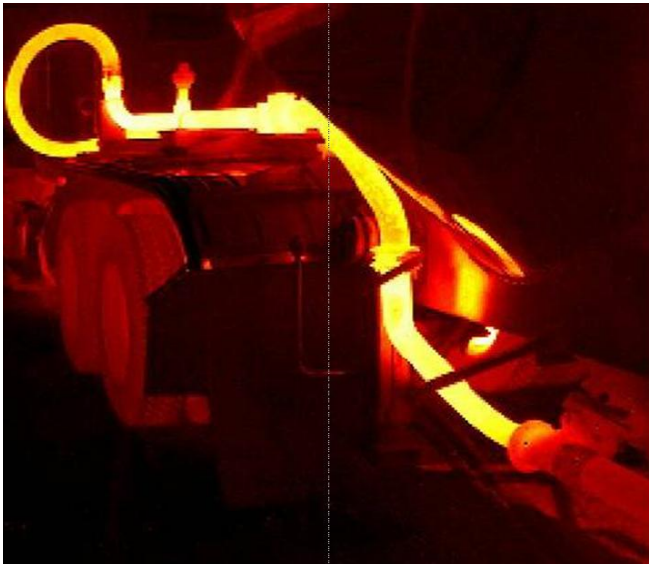
**Brick Kilns – Brick/Refractory
Manufacturers**



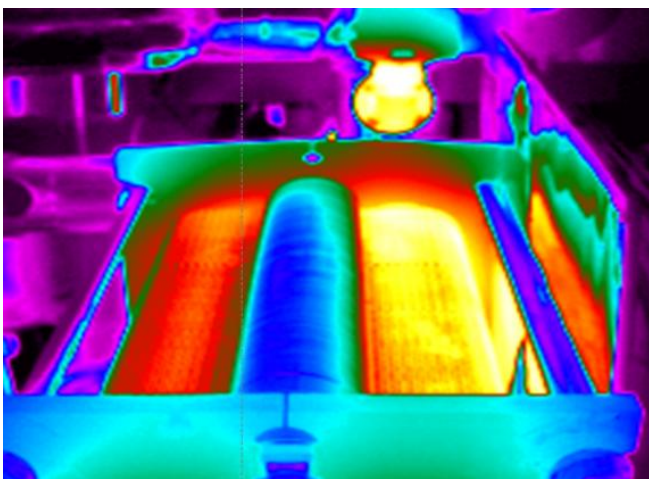
**Recuperative Thermal Oxidizers –
Manufacturers**



**Bridges – States and
Federal Government**

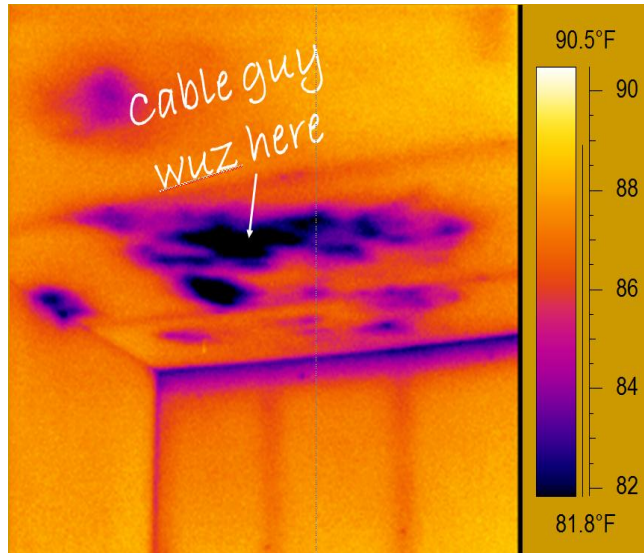


**Dry Chemical Pumping Systems –
Factories/Bakeries**

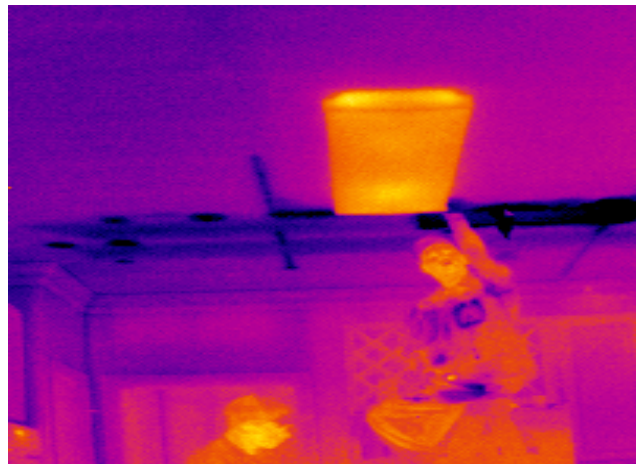


**Heat Exchangers –
Factories/Manufacturers**

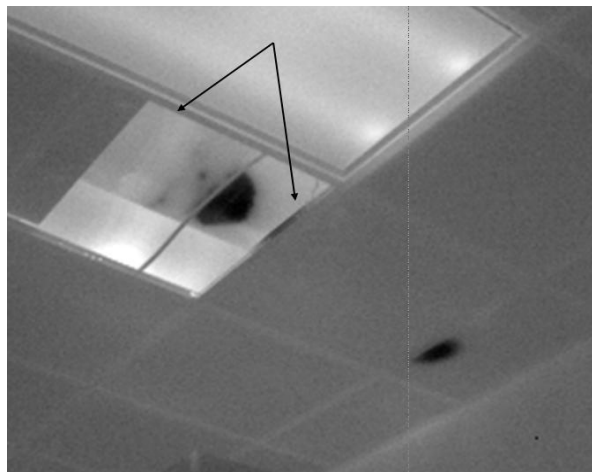
**Residential Heat Loss
Surveys – Homeowners**

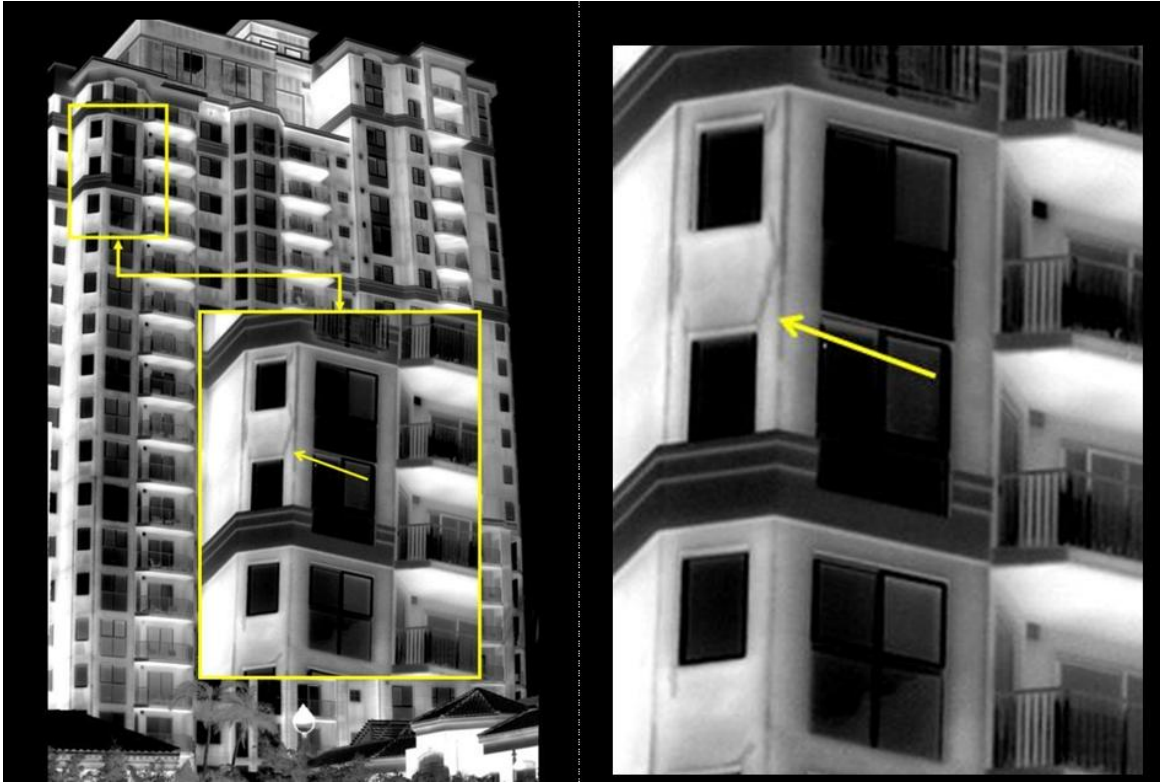


**Moisture/Leak Detection –
Mold Remediators/Contractors**

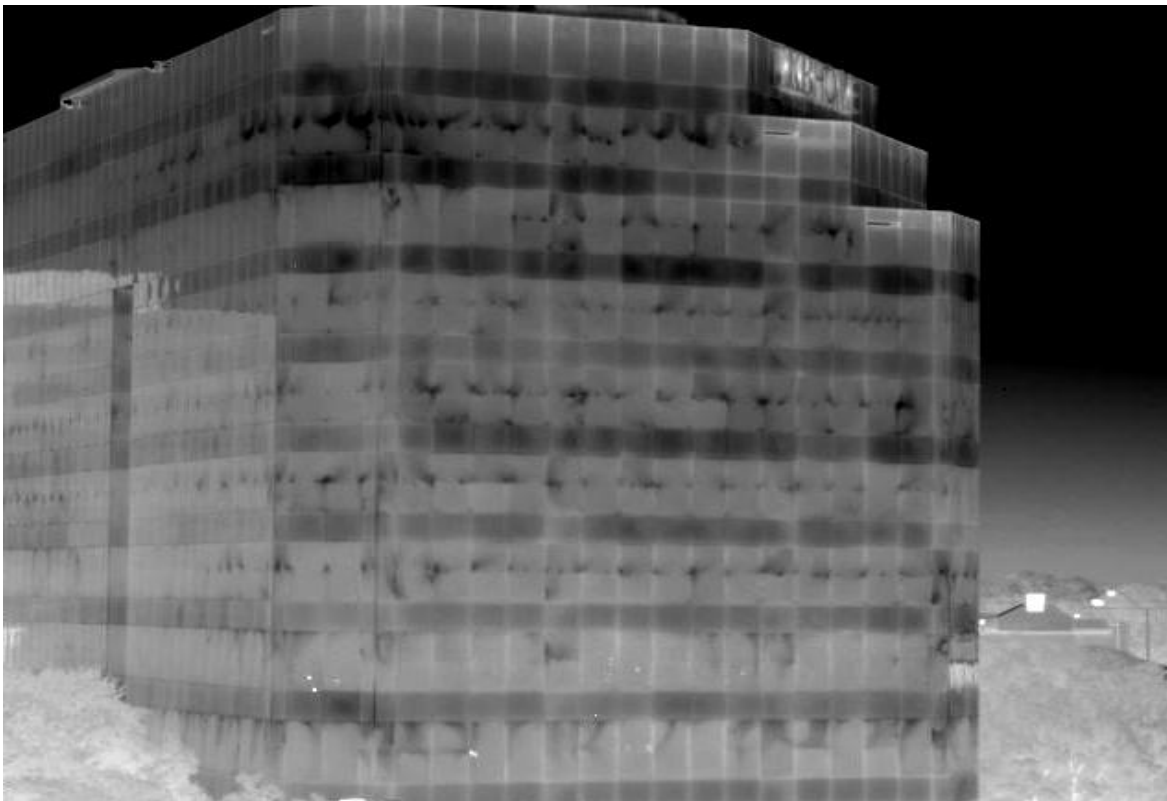


**Pipe Leak Detection –
Building Owners**





Stucco Delamination – General Contractors/Attorneys



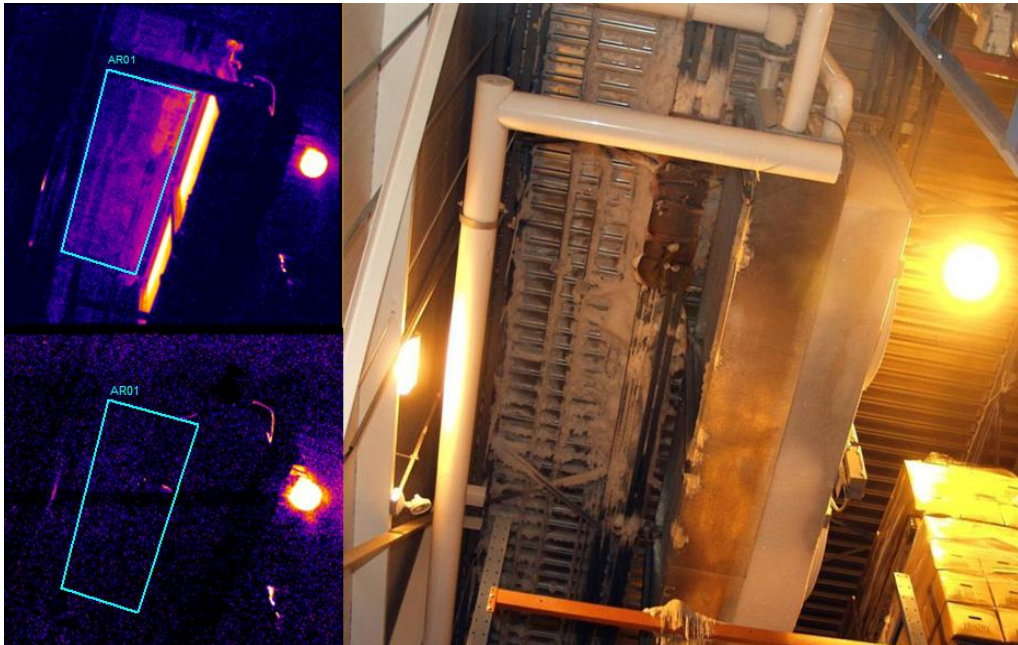
Large Building Air Leak Surveys – Building Owners/Property Managers



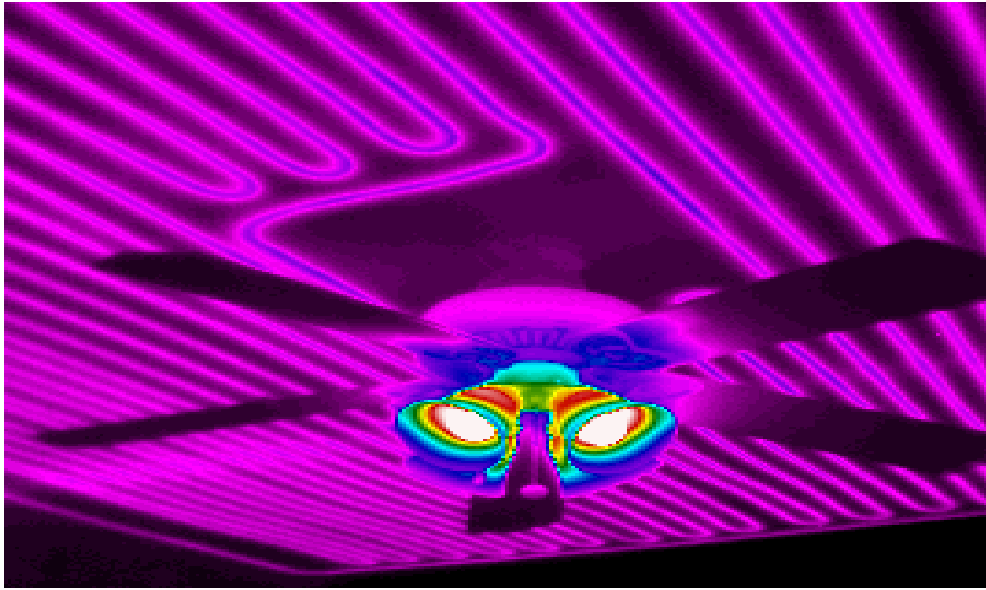
Large Building Insulation Surveys – Hotels/Libraries



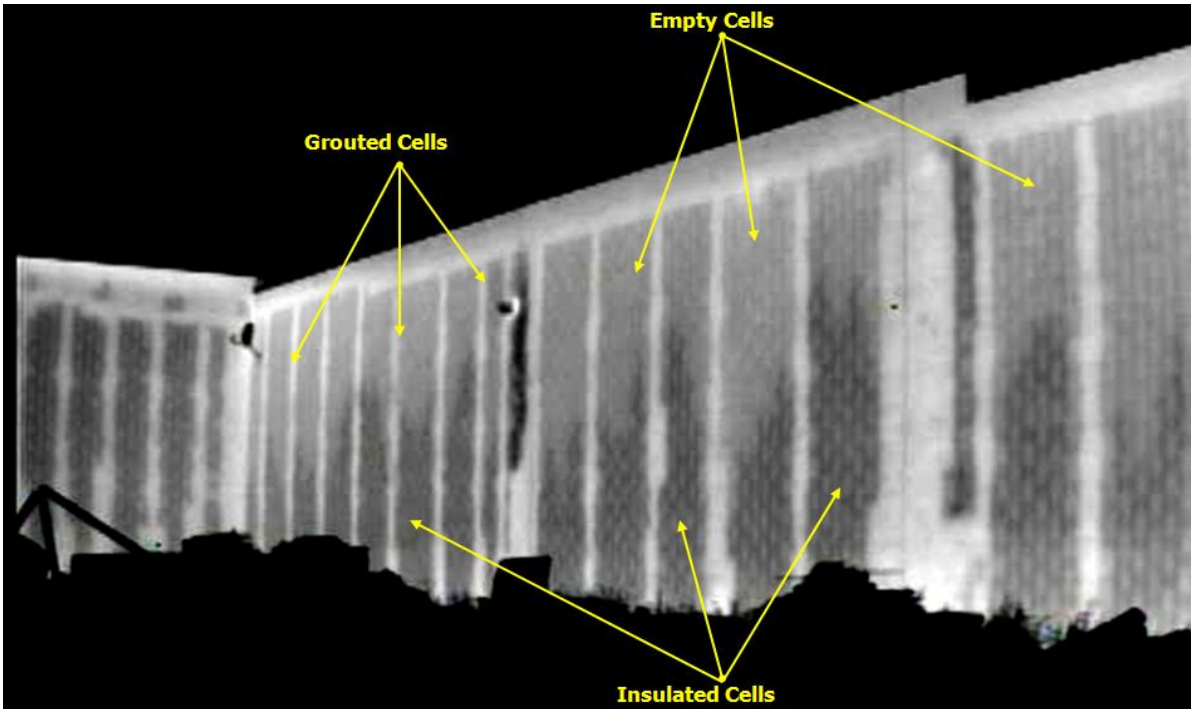
Termite Detection – Churches/Engineering Companies



**IR Surveying of Freezers, Coolers, and Blast Chillers –
Dairies/Cold Storage Operators**



Radiant Heating in Ceiling – Contractors/Building Owners



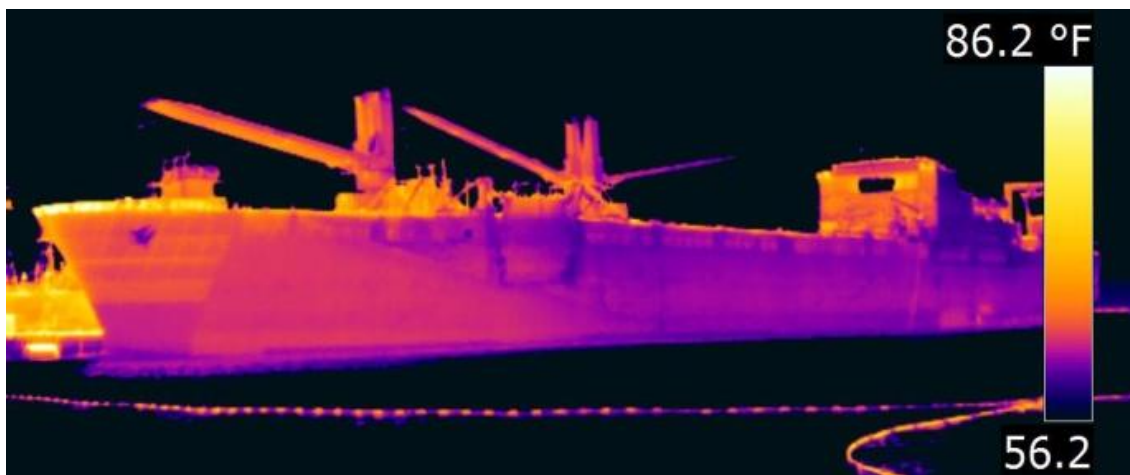
CMU Wall Surveys (Structural Defects, Heat Loss, and Insulation Q/A) – Contractors/Retail



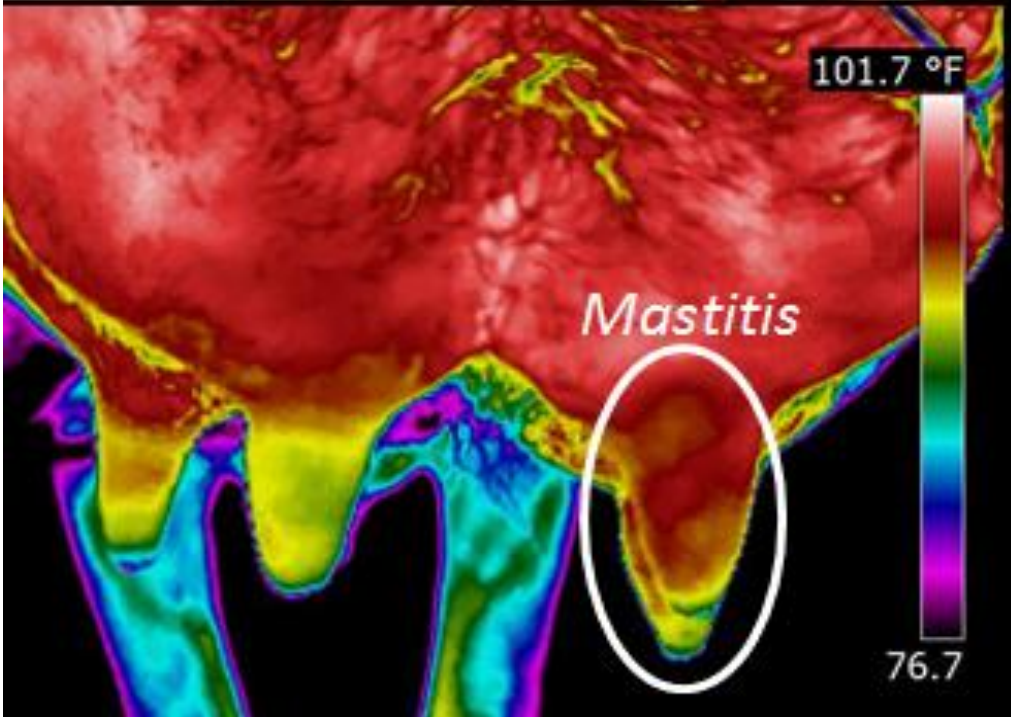
Moisture Surveys – Large and Small Building Owners/Managers



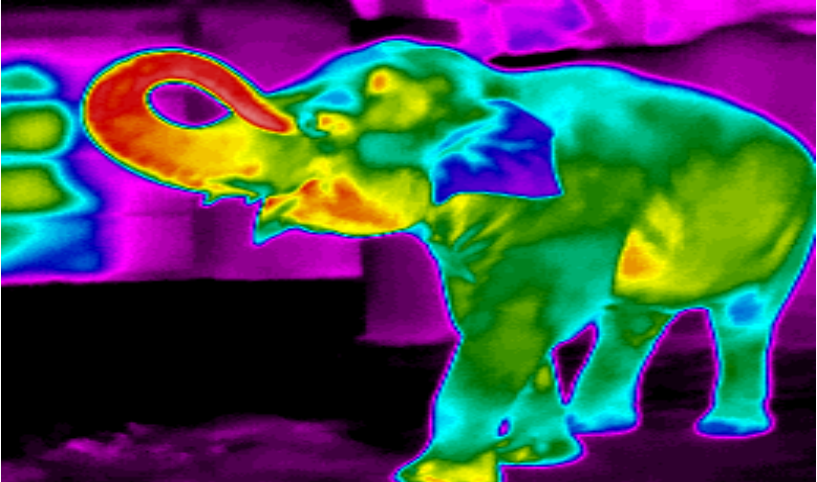
Paranormal Investigations – Paranormal Groups



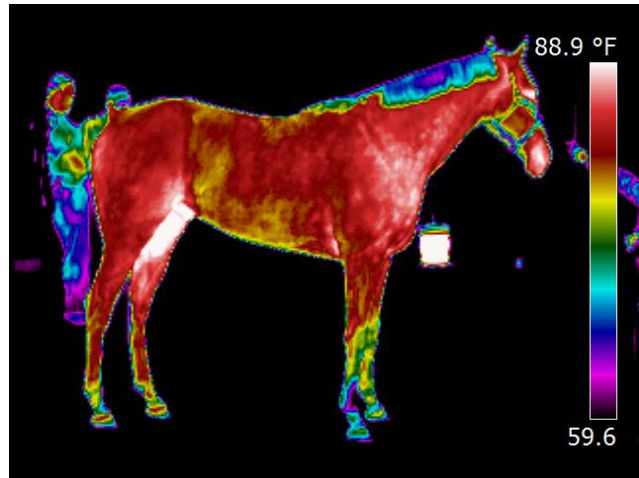
Large Ships – US Navy, Cruise Ship Lines



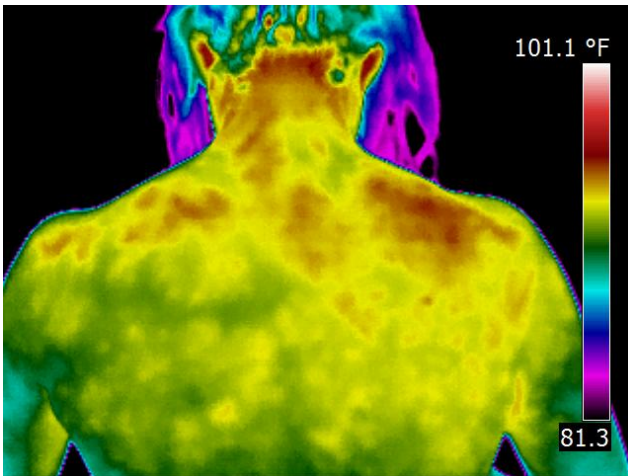
Dairy Cow Analysis – Dairy Farms



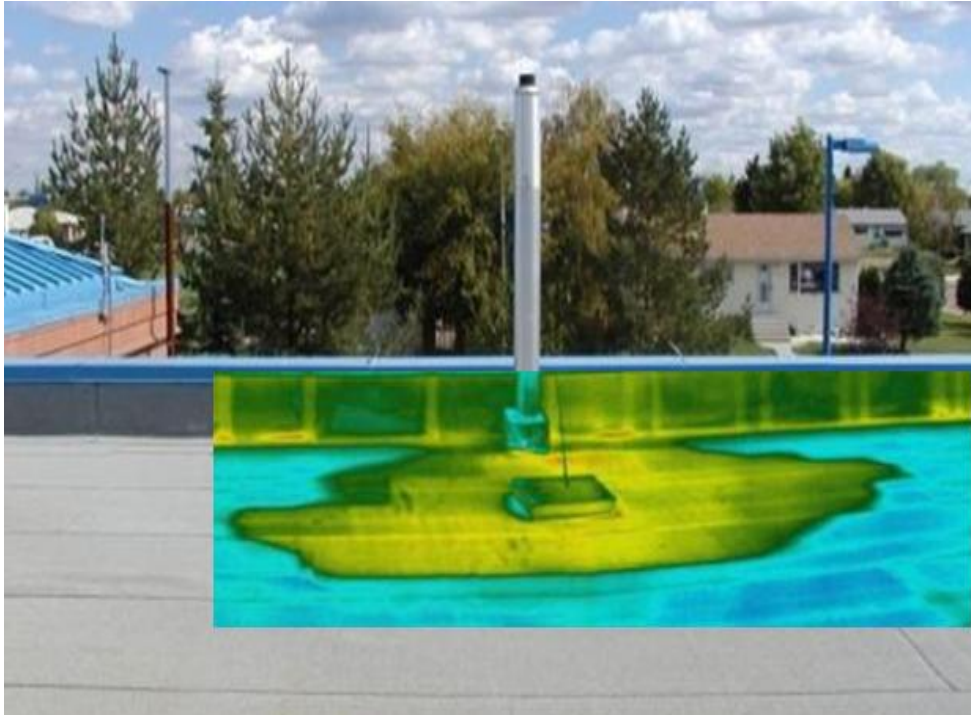
Large Animals – Zoos/Veterinarians



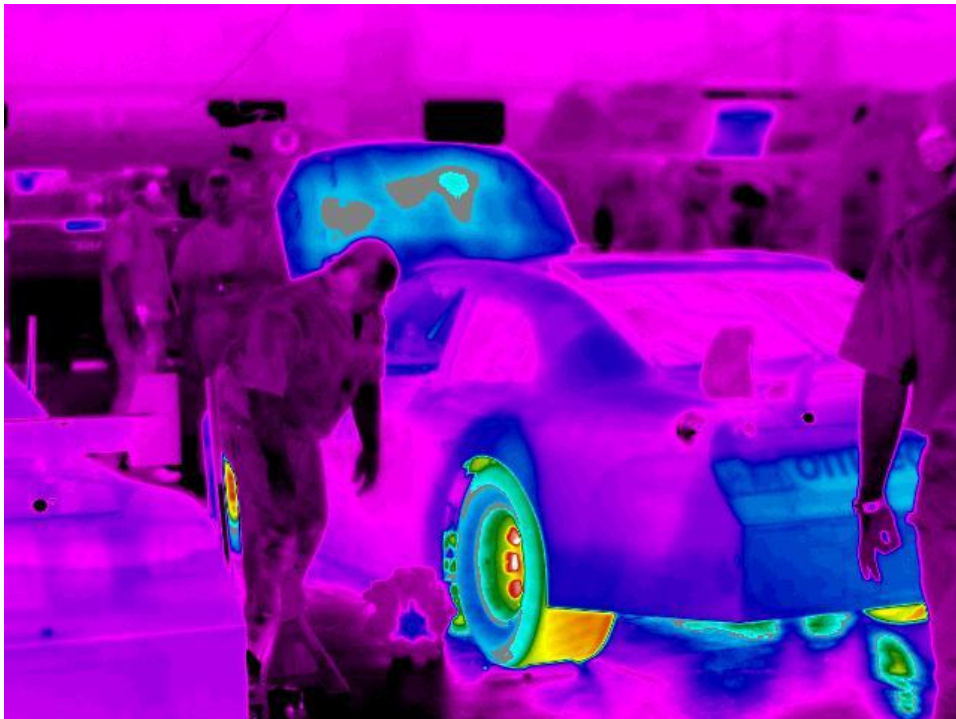
**Equine Infrared –
Horse Owners/Veterinarians**



Acupuncture – Chiropractors, Physicians



Flat Roof Moisture Surveys – Building Owners/Roofers/Consultants



Race Cars – Racing Teams

Will your Business Diversify or Will It Die?

We have presented some of the possibilities out there, but certainly not all of them. Now ask yourself how you can diversify your infrared business. Attending a national conference such as IR/INFO is an excellent way to start this endeavor. But you need to do more research. A review of the internet will reveal some of these opportunities and you will find that there are organizations that can assist in your diversification and marketing efforts.

By not offering lots of IR services, you are leaving money on the table. Whether your specialty is breakers or bearings, or houses or horses, explore the other applications. There are customers out there who are waiting for your infrared services. Our hope is that you will take the next step and pursue additional markets for infrared thermography with a passion!

About the Authors

Peter Hopkins has operated a successful home inspection company since 1996 (www.inspecdoc.com) and has personally performed over 6,000 property inspections. His company expanded into infrared in 2005, with the opening of SoCal Infrared (www.socalinfrared.com) and has found success in many applications for infrared thermography. Peter is the co-founder of a national network of contract thermographers, United Infrared (www.UnitedInfrared.com), which includes application-specific training and business coaching in a multitude of infrared applications, which allows thermographers opportunities to further develop their businesses. Peter is an ICC Code Certified Building Inspector and Certified HERS Energy Rater. Peter has been trained in Equine Thermography and is licensed with the California Horse Racing Board as an Assistant to Veterinarians. He lives in southern California with his wife Anna and their two children.



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Gregory R. Stockton is president of three separate infrared service companies; RecoverIR, Inc. (www.recoverir.com), United Infrared, Inc. (www.unitedinfrared.com), and Stockton Infrared Thermographic Services, Inc. (www.stocktoninfrared.com), based in Randleman, NC. Greg has been a practicing infrared thermographer since 1989. He is a Certified Infrared Thermographer with twenty years experience in infrared and twenty-seven years experience in the construction industry, specializing in maintenance and energy-related technologies. Mr. Stockton has published sixteen technical papers on the subject of infrared thermography and has written numerous articles about applications for infrared thermography in trade publications. He is a member of the Program Committee of the Society of Photo-Optical Instrumentation Engineers (SPIE) Thermosense and Chairman of the Buildings & Infrastructures Session at the Defense and Security Symposium.



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