

## Providing Superior Air Testing Methodologies for their Industrial and Homeowner Customers



Lester H. Keepper III  
CEO

### **About Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc.**

Since 1992, Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc. has focused on providing its clients superior air testing methodologies with extraordinary customer service. Many Fortune 100 and 500 companies as well as hundreds of industrial hygiene professionals rely on Prism's technology to solve their indoor air quality, environmental, process control, and industrial gas analysis challenges.

**Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine**

### **CEOCFO: Mr. Keepper, what is the concept at Prism Analytical Technologies?**

**Mr. Keepper:** We are a commercial air testing laboratory, our core work is testing for chemicals that are in the air, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and such. We have many facets to our business, but technically we are a commercial laboratory.

### **CEOCFO: What do you understand fundamentally about the whole testing process that perhaps others do not understand quite as well?**

**Mr. Keepper:** Our primary focus is to identify chemicals in the air. However, depending on who our audience is will determine how we report that information. Our audience is very diverse ranging from the industrial sector to the homeowner. If it is the homeowner that we are addressing through our latest product called Home Air Check, the test identifies chemical sources, typically household products that can be adding chemicals known as Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) to the air you breathe. We focus on identifying chemical sources from household products rather than frightening the homeowner with specific VOCs they have in the air. Therefore, we take those VOCs and translate them into products and say, "In your home you should be aware that you have higher levels of VOCs from gasoline or VOCs from air fresheners or VOCs from personal care products or cleaning products and such." Now the homeowner can take proactive action and remove sources that may be causing health issues. We are really assessing the indoor air quality of that particular space. We do indoor air quality audits in all types of manufacturing facilities; we even test chemicals coming out of industrial stacks.

### **CEOCFO: Is it always clear-cut where it is coming from?**

**Mr. Keepper:** Not always. That is a good question. That is because VOCs are either from nature or manmade. For instance, when we were studying molds we found many VOCs associated with manmade products also produced by mold. Molds produce many, many, many different VOCs. Therefore, what we are looking for, of course, are those VOCs that are not identified with manmade products, only naturally occurring to mold. There are many interesting crossovers between manmade products and products of mother nature. Sometimes it is like finding a needle in a haystack. Therefore, it takes a comprehensive database and a knowledge space to really look at this and interpret what we see.

### **CEOCFO: Are there particular areas where you have a greater presence than others as far as industries? Where do you see the most growth?**

**Mr. Keepper:** We have two really high growth areas within our core knowledge of air testing but are on opposite ends of the business spectrum. At one end, our consumer based side is our Home Air Check products, being what homeowners would use to test their homes for indoor air quality. This market area is truly growing because of the interest of green homes and green products. However, the other side of our business which is really on the technical side, specializes in FTIR applications. FTIR is the short version of Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy. We have a deep knowledge base in this niche area. We have some new technologies we will be introducing in the near future.

**CEOCFO: *When would someone come to you for that high level of expertise? Would you give us an example of a common engagement and something that might be a little bit more out of the box?***

**Mr. Keepper:** Commercial power plants for instance. The coal burning fired power plants today are under heavy scrutiny by the EPA and therefore are looking for ways to reduce the amount of pollutants to meet the new regulations.. Prism provides cost effective application methods and testing to help companies monitor in real time the effects of process changes. They will hire us to come out and do engineering studies to be able to assess in real time different operation conditions and what effects it has to the output of stack emissions. Other industrial segments we work in are semiconductor, cement kilns, ethanol plants, chemical processing, and manufacturing facilities. Our services extend across the USA and into Canada.

**CEOCFO: *How do companies find you?***

**Mr. Keepper:** In this particular industry, by attending market specific conferences. Basically a couple of our people are quite well known in this industry. Therefore, it is more being known, delivering technical papers and being present at those conferences..

**CEOCFO: *How do you keep abreast of where you might be called on, what types of businesses and what types of air quality people are going to be paying more attention to in the upcoming year or two?***

**Mr. Keepper:** It is interesting, because back in the very early 1990s, our company introduced the FTIR to the air emissions testing industry by showing how a bench top lab instrument can be taken out into the field. Our CTO, Dr. Martin Spartz, was very instrumental in doing that in the earlier days and of course over the years the EPA has adopted this technology. Now, how do you see what is going on in the future? First of all, these types of compounds, chemicals we test for are not going away. Our testing in this segment fits well with the testing and monitoring of the primary pollutants. However, as far as applications and things of that nature, as the industry moves so does the thought process. By being on top of or part of applications development, you look at the problems and you go back to the lab to come up with the fix. That fix then becomes your next product.

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**CEOCFO: *Would you tell us about the product for homeowners?***

**Mr. Keepper:** Our Home Air Check test grew out of the many years of development in the lab. It is a high end air test analysis brought to the homeowner at a very affordable price. We use the same instrumentation that is used for our high end tests. We have perfected the process so that we can keep costs down. A small test pump and sample tube is sent to the homeowner. Once the sample is collected from the homeowner the sample kit is returned to the lab for analysis. A report is sent typically by email to the homeowner. The focus of the report is not on what specific VOCs we found rather it focuses on the products found in a home that contributes to the VOCs found in the air. This way the homeowner can take proactive action on what was found in the report thus leading to a healthier breathing environment. One of the biggest hurdles in bringing this technology to market was simply finding a way to inexpensively take a sample. We were able to do that by basically developing our own air pump. We built a cost effective pump that allows us to deploy this technology to the masses. You can look order our test via our [homeaircheck.com](http://homeaircheck.com) website or on Amazon/ Amazon Prime.

**CEOCFO: *Do you do much advertising?***

**Mr. Keepper:** The advertising is really driven by social media. Therefore yes, it is not your typical magazines or newspapers or things of that nature. Today we have had to adapt to the social media push. Facebook and Google ads, Pinterest, Twitter and so on, are all being used to get our message out.

**CEOCFO: *What is next for the company?***

**Mr. Keepper:** We are growing in two different areas, both with the focus on our core knowledge, being able to analyze and test chemicals that are in the air. Our thermal desorption business, our air quality part of our company which includes Home Air Check, our goal is to continue to drive the product awareness and continue to develop further the databases that allow us to analyze the changing conditions in people's homes. This market is new and growing and Prism is poised perfectly for the tremendous growth opportunity. As far as our instrumentation side of the company that includes FTIR, we have several new introductions scheduled.

**CEOCFO: *Are you able to tell us about those or are they still under wraps?***

**Mr. Keepper:** Let us put it this way; we just applied for patents. Part of it is disruptive technology and it is something that we are excited about.

**CEOCFO: *Is it easy to find the right people. Do you find people are interested in the type of work or the type of projects and creativity, in fact, that you offer?***

**Mr. Keepper:** It is difficult to find a person with the knowledge skills as a walk in employee. Prism Analytical Technologies is a technology driven company that is looking for new and better ways of analyzing gases. Therefore, our technologies keep evolving. However, the people that we do find are proficient in the field of chemistry or physics and various other areas. When we bring them in, they will pick it up and carry on as far as our development. We are also part of a innovative technology center that is supported by Central Michigan University. Finding the right people is always a challenge but having CMU here has been a real plus.

**CEOCFO: *How do you spend your time as CEO?***

**Mr. Keepper:** Literally, creating the infrastructure for growth. Making sure that we are applying proper resources and really driving those product areas. Finding the right people to manage segments of our growth area. The other area is finding proper capital to be able to drive the technologies and to be able to drive the sales and marketing. Therefore, it is more of an oversight and making sure that we are running on all cylinders.

**CEOCFO: *Why should people pay attention to Prism Analytical Technologies?***

**Mr. Keepper:** We are really excited about a couple of new products. One in the very near term being eighteen months out and one to follow that up, both having tremendous sales potential for us. I am talking about an order of magnitude change for us. We have over the years built a strong technology base and now we are ready to capitalize.

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**BIO: *Lester H. Keepper III***

*President & CEO, Co-Founder*

Prior to starting Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc., Mr. Keepper was the President of CCA, a Hitachi Metals International Company. Over his career Mr. Keepper has been responsible for the development of new products, installation of production systems / facilities, and production of products for several Fortune 500 companies. Mr. Keepper has established laboratory and process technology systems for the advanced ceramic, electro-deposition coating, powder coating, and high energy magnet industries. He has also written and established quality control and MIS systems. Mr. Keepper has developed new market applications for air testing and monitoring. This includes applications of TDT Air Scan, FT-IR, and other air scanning technologies. Mr. Keepper received his BA in Chemistry from Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL and his MSBA in general management from Indiana University - Northwest.

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