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Technology, Marketing and Mother Nature Drive Business

SERVICE: Co. Finds Air Conditioning Is In Demand on the Coast

■ By EMMET PIERCE

Carini Heating and Air Conditioning, a family owned and operated business, has found success in its short history by learning digital marketing, providing good service and offering innovative products that provide high energy efficiency.

Most notably, people in San Diego, especially along the coast, have become more willing to use air conditioning during summer months.

"The attitude definitely has changed, especially in the last couple of years," CEO **Gabriel Carini** said. "We are seeing summer heat waves starting earlier in the season."

The changing weather has had a big influence over people who live in coastal areas. In the past, they were able to cool their homes simply opening their windows on warm summer days. More and more, they are turning to air-conditioning systems to keep homes cool and comfortable.

Carini was working for other people in the industry in 2006 when he realized he could achieve more by starting a company of his own.

"My thought was I could provide a better product than my competitors," he recalled.

Cool With the Internet

In addition to providing superior products and services, success requires finding a way to reach your customers, he said. The company has used Internet marketing to gain a competitive edge.

"When we first started, not a lot of our competitors were Internet marketing," Carini said. "They still were using the Yellow Pages."



Melissa Jacobs

Gabriel Carini, a longtime resident of La Mesa, enjoys a moment atop Mount Helix.

Carini said search engine optimization techniques have gotten his company's name in front of customers who shop online. The company also has strived to be a top-rated contractor on social media review websites, such as **Angie's List**.

New Product Appeal

Another thing that has generated new business is the introduction of advanced air-conditioning technology, Carini said.

The company is involved in all aspects of heating and air conditioning. Services range from installation, maintenance, and repair to retrofitting traditional and ductless mini split systems. Mini split systems enable

homeowners to cool only the rooms they plan to occupy, reducing energy costs.

"There is a big increase in efficiency with these systems," Carini said. "If you are occupying only a bedroom in the evening, you don't have to air condition the entire house to be comfortable."

Although they are new to the U.S., such systems are common in Europe, Carini said.

His company recently installed a multizone cooling system in the home of **Brent Van Dussen**, who works at home, building computer networks. Van Dussen said he wanted to be able to cool his home office without having to pay for cooling the entire home.

"I needed to look into having a more comfortable working environment to be able to be productive," Van Dussen said.



Brent Van Dussen

Bill Me Later

Carini said his industry has been helped by the availability of financing that encourages people to install such energy-efficient systems. It's now possible to obtain long-term financing through an additional property tax assessment.

Payments can be made through property tax bills for up to 20 years and the interest is tax deductible, according to **Renovate America**, a provider of financing for clean energy products. Renovate America works with local municipalities to provide the Home Energy Renovation Opportunity (HERO) program to property owners. It is used to finance a wide range of products that save water and energy.

CARINI HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

CEO: Gabriel Carini

Financial information: The privately owned company has doubled its sales in each of the last three years. It is projecting sales to grow by another 100 percent in 2015.

No. of local employees: 17

Investors: None

A Smaller Carbon Footprint

Ian Frisch, president of **Solar Universe** in San Marcos, often works with the Carini company.

"We've had the chance to partner with a lot of different companies, but it has worked really well with them because they have really happy customers," Frisch said. "Solar and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) go hand-in-hand. They are making homes more energy efficient. We both are fond of HERO financing and what it has done for our customers."

Carini has experienced growth each year since he started his company in 2006. The firm has doubled its sales in each of the past three years. Carini expects sales to grow by 100 percent in 2015. He plans to expand his services into new areas.

"The home is a system, not just heating and air conditioning," he said. "Anything you can do to minimize the amount of heat loss or gain in the home will improve your carbon footprint and lower the amount (of money) it takes to run the household."



Melissa Jacobs

Ian Frisch, president of Solar Universe in San Marcos, says that his company works well with Carini. Both companies have benefited from the HERO financing program.