

DEALER SPOTLIGHT

Air Perfect, Inc.

For Ted and Laura Chittem, owners of Air Perfect, Inc. in Milford, Conn., their business is about much more than supplying customers with their HVAC needs. It is about education and creating a business that is responsible on many levels.

“Our company mission is to recognize that the opportunity we have, relative to what we do for a living, is to make the world a better place and our country more secure,” said Ted Chittem, who has been involved in the HVAC industry for more than 30 years. “Because Laura and I are involved in HVAC, we have a disproportionate opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that customers are completely informed about the energy efficiency of the equipment they’re about to buy.”

Ted said that going into a sale, most customers already have a preconceived idea of what they want in an HVAC system. “Most people know they don’t want the cheapest system out there, but at the same time they don’t want to spend a tremendous amount of money. So most customers have decided on a middle-of-the-road system.” In an effort to counter this, Ted has created a matrix to help customers see the benefit of a more advanced, energy efficient system.

“I’ve developed a very simple matrix that compares three different systems. It includes their initial costs, their operating costs, and returns on investment, so the customer sees that they’re making an informed choice.”

By doing this, a whole new level of consumer awareness is created. “When we’re answering the questions that aren’t asked, we’re educating the consumer in a way that they entirely didn’t anticipate, and when we can do so in a quantified way, we can help the consumer feel confident in the decision that they’re making.”

Air Perfect, Inc., which employs between 10 and 15 employees and has a fleet of seven trucks, serves customers in the counties of New Haven, Fairfield and Litchfield, Conn., as well as Westchester County, N.Y. The company specializes in the higher-end residential market, and provides both replacement systems and custom designed systems for new construction. The Chittems have also focused their business on energy efficient systems that utilize green technologies as much as possible, specializing in such products as Carrier® geothermal heat pumps and Carrier HYBRID HEAT™ dual fuel system technology.

What sets Ted apart from his competitors is his knowledge of building science and engineering. In addition to specializing in HVAC, Ted has also taken several classes in building science. “I took classes under Joe Lstiburek, an engineer and principal of Building Science Corp. in Massachusetts,” Ted said. “This knowledge has allowed me to apply an integrated approach to my business. Energy and comfort are a function of the symbiotic relationship that the shell and its heating and cooling system have. They need to work together, and the customer needs to understand what their choices are vis-à-vis both.”

As such, Ted is able to make recommendations to customers not only about their HVAC systems, but also about other factors that may be affecting their home’s energy consumption, such as windows, insulation and solar.

The Chittems also believe another secret to their success is, quite simply, integrity. Ted personally oversees every installation, and has put in place a verification system that ensures all systems are being installed properly. “It’s important that all systems are installed 100 percent per manufacturer’s instructions,” Ted said. “The system I have in place makes sure customers are getting that level of quality.”

Per Ted’s system, installers record all data at start-up to ensure that all equipment is properly installed from the beginning. Ted also makes it a point to stay in the customer’s lives after HVAC projects, often making short phone calls or sending e-mails. “By staying in customer’s lives, we’re able to work primarily by referral. Every customer has a circle of friends. By showing them that we care about the business we do with them, they’re more likely to tell their friends about us.”

The Chittems also have first-hand experience in creating an energy efficient home – recently, they built their own. The 5000 square foot, near net-zero energy home is built from wood, and includes a Carrier natural gas fired vari-

able speed furnace, a seven-zone Carrier Infinity™ control system coupled with a hybrid air source, and Carrier energy recovery ventilation.

In addition, the home features foam insulation, passive and active solar, and water conservation. The home was also awarded a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) score of 22, which means it only consumes 22 percent of the energy of the average home.

“When you go through this process, you become much better at helping other people go through it,” said Laura. “Our client base is often building new houses and having to make decisions with builders. Going through this process personally has helped us explain things much more clearly to our clients.”

For the Chittems, educating their customer base – and themselves - is the catalyst that drives their business every day. “We really have a passion to educate people,” Laura said. “Ted goes out of his way to explain to homeowners their options for cost, efficiency and comfort. No one sees the HVAC system in their home – they feel the HVAC system.”

Project Pictures:



Framing a House



Solar Panels

To learn more about Air Perfect, Inc., please visit www.airperfectinc.com.