

A Reputation for Quality From Day One

Some companies build their reputations as they grow. Others determine the reputation they want to have from their inception and then work hard to achieve it.

U.S. Products is one of the latter companies. From the start, the firm set out to produce carpet cleaning and restoration equipment that offered the latest technology, highest quality, was cost-effective, and provided innovative cleaning solutions.

To these ends, most observers agree that U.S. Products has succeeded. Today, the company is recognized as one of the world's leading, most respected, and pioneering manufacturers of professional carpet and upholstery cleaning equipment, as well as flood and fire restoration products.

It's the heat

In 1983, U.S. Products invented and sold through distributors a revolutionary new upholstery and drapery cleaning machine capable of both wet and dry cleaning.

Named The Ultimate and still produced today, it has set the standard for innovation and quality. The machine has an internal heat exchanger that delivers up to 200 degrees Fahrenheit of heat.

Customers reported that The Ultimate's heat improved cleaning effectiveness and productivity considerably.



Because of this, U.S. Products decided to make heat a primary component in virtually all of their extractors.

In fact, they soon introduced the first portable carpet extractor with a state-of-the-art in-line heater, complete with solid state circuitry control, which could deliver a constant 212 degrees Fahrenheit at the wand tip.

New owners, expanding markets

Impressed with the company's products and potential, Doug Hauff and his business partner Chuck Wilke purchased U.S. Products in 1998.

"The company had already lived up to its reputation as a manufacturer of high-quality, innovative, and cost-effective products," said Hauff. "Now it needed to expand its national sales network."

To do this, Hauff and Wilke developed new marketing programs, upgraded distribution systems, and introduced a stream of new tools and equipment.

In 1999, Stephen Hanig was hired as Vice President of Sales to build a national sales force and distribution network, and to help manage corporate account development.

Recently the company hired a marketing manager to improve communication among the company, its distributors, and sales force, and to increase brand awareness to the customers.

To maintain quality control, all manufacturing operations are handled at the firm's Coeur d'Alene, ID plant.

"We build and assemble the equipment here," said Hauff. "This allows us to stay close to our products, analyzing them over and over again, making improvements as necessary, and ensuring adequate response time for our distributors."

Machines for the 21st century

Always one step ahead of the industry, U.S. Products realized that as important



The factory's rotational molding division.

as heat was to their earlier machines, 21st-century trends in carpet care would require the development of more environmentally preferable machines — machines that incorporate heat, but use far less water. And to improve productivity, have no tanks but instead have direct water hook up capability.

For instance, in 2004, they introduced the Agitator 20, a low-moisture extractor that uses just one gallon of water per minute — as compared to four or more used by some machines.

The Agitator 20 helps green carpet cleaning, according to Hauff, because less water also means less chemical solution — an important component in green cleaning.

He added that carpets dry in as little as 30 minutes with the Agitator 20, so there is little chance for mold or mildew to develop and the customer is back in business quickly.

The auto fill/dump system eliminates the time-consuming filling and emptying of the machine.

"Our Agitator 20 is just the beginning," said Hauff. "We will soon be introducing more innovative products that help make the cleaning professional's job easier and more efficient, protect the environment, and raise the standards of our entire industry." □

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