



Mario A.

Position: Owner and Principal, Multi-Temp Systems Inc.

Background: Licensed Gas Technician, Licensed Refrigeration Mechanic

Have you always wanted to run your own company and be in the HVACR industry?

Mario reveals that, unsure of what he wanted to do late in high school, a guidance department aptitude test (taking into account interests and skills) indicated that the best fit was in the trades. Selecting from a list of trades, Refrigeration Mechanic sounded interesting and had the highest pay. Mario entered the AC and Refrigeration Program at a local community college earned his Gasfitter license (GI - in Ontario) and became an apprentice with a local commercial contractor. In his 3rd year of apprenticeship Mario and a partner started a company and within a short time Mario bought out the partner to become sole owner of what today is Multi-Temp Systems Inc.

What motivated the leap to business owner?

Mario says, "The driving force was that I saw ways to improve the business and working environment where I was apprenticing. I wanted a better work environment...what better work environment than one you can create yourself!" Mario continues to take business and management courses to improve his skills as a manager and owner.

What skills does it take to be the owner of an HVACR commercial contracting company?

- Resourcefulness; you often need to find solutions to problems quickly (there can be a lot at stake if it is a piece of equipment that is part of a manufacturing facility that is out of commission).
- Good communication skills; for suppliers, manufacturers, employees and relationship building with customers
- Time management skills to effectively manage all the demands of business
- Coaching skills to help employees to develop and grow
- Technical knowledge and skills so you can assist with finding solutions.

What does a typical day look like?

There is no typical day. "Ideally invoice review to start the day, followed by site visits to customers, upcoming job estimates, technical back-up for refrigeration mechanics as required, and then the paper work for running a business including keeping up with regulations, codes and new technology."

What are some of the challenges you face as an HVACR contractor and company owner?

Mario indicates that is difficult to maintain a good work force of trained and dedicated employees. The second challenge identified is 'time management' for balancing the many hats an owner wears as owner- business manager, human resources development, technician back-up and promotions with existing and new clients.

What do you find the most satisfying in your career right now?

Mario indicates that he "gets the most satisfaction from having a technical challenge and finding a solution to the challenge as well as meeting or exceeding the customer's expectation." He finds it satisfying that he is able to maintain interest and excitement in this industry. Specifically, it is the developments related to the 'control' side of the industry that keeps him interested. Mario sees great opportunities with these developments for processing and manufacturing clients focused on energy and money savings.

Would you recommend this industry and a career as a refrigeration mechanic?

Yes!

- It is a well-paying job in a stable industry - an essential service and it is not given to the seasonal nature of some trades
- It gives you satisfaction: being a Refrigeration Mechanic and able to help people who are relying on you to come up with solutions to problems with their HVACR system
- Variety in routine and activities: you may work alone or in a team; you may be on a rooftop unit of a movie theatre complex or working with a food processor on a manufacturing challenge; outside or inside.

