

Health Solutions

Halo To Expand On Vacuum Success

CHARLOTTE, NC— Having completed its first year in the floor care business, Halo Technologies, Inc., is looking to expand its product assortment and distribution with the eventual goal of being a health solutions company.

“We’re not a vacuum cleaner company,” Ken Garcia, president and founder of Halo Technologies, told **HOMEWORLD BUSINESS**®. “Our mission statement is to create innovative products that make families healthier. We are taking technologies that have been developed in other industrial segments and translating them for the home.”

It was that philosophy that underpinned the company’s first product, the Halo UVX upright vacuum cleaner as well as its full-size counterpart, the UV-ST, a more fully featured model that has been picked up by several major retail accounts. The UV-ST is a full-size upright that includes on-board tools and has a 14-inch cleaning path, compared to the UVX, which has a 12-inch cleaning path and no on-board tools.

The more widely distributed UV-ST has a \$399 suggested retail. In developing the unit, Halo bucked some of the industry’s most current design trends. Unlike the majority of uprights currently on retail shelves, which are bagless, the UV-ST and UVX use HEPA-medium filter bags. According to Garcia this was a strategic decision based on a common complaint regarding bagless vacs, the plume of dust that escapes when the dirt cup springs open and empties into the trash can. “Even the best bagless units out there when you

finish using them, there’s all this stuff clumped up inside the dirt cup,” Garcia said. “When we were testing units in development and my wife saw the cloud of dust that was raised when you empty the dirt cup she said, ‘There’s no way you’re emptying that in the house.’”

UVC Leads To Retail Placement

While many consumers solve this problem by emptying their vacuums outside the home, Garcia felt using removable bags with a strong filter medium would make it easier and safer for consumers to empty their uprights.

Halo’s UV-ST also is a soft-sided design, unlike most uprights sold at retail today which have hard plastic outer cases. By eliminating the plastic and substituting a cloth-like exterior, Halo was able to reduce the weight that was added by the inclusion of a UV light system on the underside of the units’ cleaning head.

Despite the differences from the bulk of uprights currently available on retail shelves, the core differentiator—UVC technology— has helped Halo get placement at several major retail accounts. These include Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond and Sears, a development that is both pleasing and somewhat surprising to Garcia, given the company’s newcomer status and lack of history in the floor care business.

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“I didn’t believe the product would be as widely accepted as it has been so quickly,” said Garcia. “Typically new technology moves in slowly, particularly something that, despite being so widely used over the last 50 years, has been virtually invisible to the consumer.”

He noted that even today most people have little idea what UVC is or what it does, and educating consumers



about the technology remains one of the company's core challenges as it looks to expand its business. One of the ways **Halo** is currently looking to do that is with video loops distributed to key retailers with the machine and used to educate consumers at the point of sale.

Having gained placement at some of the country's top floor care retailers, with several others slated for rollout at in the first quarter of this year, Halo is now looking to expand its distribution into the commercial segment, including hotels and day care centers.

The company is also working to expand its product line, which though initially focused on floor care products, could and likely will expand to encompass other product categories as well. The next product introduction is slated for back-half-2008 rollout, though specific details were not available at presstime. 

Halo's UVX upright features UVC technology in the base that is said to kill bacteria and other allergens, which are then sucked up during the normal course of vacuuming.

