



Guest Speakers and Co-owners Kevin Horne and Richard Dunn

On October 7, 2020 junior and senior level students in HVAC and Senior Practicum class got to listen and ask questions to a couple businessmen that started from ground level and now co-own a very successful local Heating and Air company called Action Air.

Mr. Horne and Mr. Dunn started out by telling how they met as employees at a large heating and air company and after a few years realized they wanted to work for themselves, co-founding Action Air.

Students submitted questions to the co-owners for them to review. The first question they responded to was one submitted by Riley Martin. He asked our guest speakers, *"What is your biggest challenge was in running your own business."* They shared the following with our students:



The biggest challenge years ago had been advertisement and building a client base. Now it was finding quality employees with valid driver licenses. They advised students that they were a successful company to stay open 31 years and possible employees should be concerned with how they do in school, attendance, their driving record, even what they were posting on social media. Mr. Horne said, "We stalk possible employees and their social media besides looking at school records and background checks." They went on to say that the soft skills an employee has is a direct reflection of their company. The three most important ones they looked for were communication skills, likeable personality, and did they dress appropriately to represent their company.

Another question submitted by Riley was, *"What factor has helped your business grow the most?"*

Both Mr. Horne and Mr. Dunn agreed that it was hiring the right type of employees. They looked for employees that brought value to their company. Customer referrals is one of their largest ways they generate business so they want someone that is going to be personable. Also, they said their 100% satisfaction guaranteed policy and meaning it was important.

Jarvus Petty submitted the question, *"Any Tips for someone that wants to start their own Business?"*

Mr. Horne said not to try to open your own business right out of school. Gain experience and see how things are done. Learn the ins and outs of the business first, and then be ready to put in “Sweat Equity” when you start one. Mr. Dunn added that when you own the business you will work longer hours than any of your employees if you are doing it right, at least early in the business.

Kaleb Tran submitted the question, *“What do you do when you have a disgruntled employee?”*

Mr. Horne said that they were proud to have long standing relationships with all their employees. Most had been with them 5 or more years and the reason for that was unlike some of their competitors, they offered sick time, vacation time, health insurance, and even matched funds in employees 401K.

Jailon Jackson asked the speakers, *“What are some of the difficulties of installing HVAC units and what do you have to know?”*

Mr. Dunn and Mr. Horne gave five important things one needed to learn in the HVAC industry:

1. Understanding compressors, coils, and motors, especially variable speed units.
2. Understand electricity and how it works. (80% of all their calls dealt with this.)
3. Understand about humidity, temperature control, and air flow.
4. Understand electrical vs gas powered units.
5. Understand the use of the different specialized tools made especially for this work.



They closed the presentation by reminding students, regardless of what business you were interviewing for...

You need to know how to work with other people (teamwork).

You need to know how to treat people you are working for (customers).

You need to be professional even in a service job, how you look and how your vehicle looks is a reflection of yourself and the company you work for.

