



A one-contractor source for all the homeowner's needs. That's how Painting Plus, Inc. differentiates itself in the competitive Atlanta residential market.

Take a tour of their job sites on any given day and chances are you'll see not only interior and exterior paint crews, but also one of the company's roofers, carpenters, siding installers or gutter cleaners at work. They even invested in a dumpster business to ensure customers get the cleanest possible worksites.

Owner Charlie Dallavalle Jr. instituted this vertical business integration strategy soon after starting Painting Plus, and it's been a key factor in the company's incremental growth. Five crews of painters along with the related businesses have propelled annual sales to \$3.9 million.

"Because of the way we run our business, we get jobs done faster with less hassle for our customers," Dallavalle says. "That in turn has resulted in more referrals for us."



spent summers on the boardwalks and beach towns popularized by the "Jersey Shore" TV show and the songs of Bruce Springsteen. His uncles were in various trades there and soon he started working for them. Back home, he also got a lot of hands-on experience at Walton High School, which he said had "the best building construction class and teacher in the state" at the time (since replaced by a computer lab).

"I've been around construction all my life," he says.

After graduation he went to the University of Georgia in Athens for a degree in business and marketing. The part-time painting and window washing business

Family ties are important to Charlie Dallavalle Jr. (front row, center). His brother Anthony (front row, left) is a project supervisor and estimator, as well as a certified lead renovator. His father Charles Dallavalle Sr. (back row, center) took over the company's gutter cleaning division after retiring from his corporate sales job. His right-hand man, Kent Pochmara (back row, right) has been with the company 12 years. Gary Williams (front row, right) specializes in insurance claims management for the company's roofing division. John Martin (back row, left) is a sales rep.

TOTAL COVERAGE

Construction's in his blood

Born in New Jersey, Dallavalle moved with his family at the age of six to Marietta, Ga. Many relatives were still in New Jersey and he

that he started in college was doing so well he turned down several corporate job offers and incorporated the company in 1998. He's never looked back and is continu-

ally coming up with new ways to build equity in Painting Plus and its related brands.

Honest business practices and top-quality service at an affordable price are the benchmarks of the company, Dallavalle says. Job-

tising in targeted neighborhood newsletters, local direct mailers and sponsoring school, YMCA and Little League teams and other community projects.

Dallavalle was also a paint industry trendsetter online, and the

siding, though, discoloration of the applied paint can occur fairly quickly in a climate like that in Georgia. Working with Sherwin-Williams, Dallavalle came up with a two-part system to prevent that from happening.

"I don't ever want to lose that mom-and-pop feel"
— Charlie Dallavalle Jr.

site and vehicle signage are heavily used, but he also spends about \$100,000 a year on marketing. To get the most for his investment — about 2.5 percent of the company's gross sales — he's a stickler on tracking results. Currently he says he's getting a good return from adver-

company site, paintingplus.com, also brings in leads.

"The Internet has changed the whole industry," he says. "Today you can't afford not to have a website. But it's only part of what we do." He still spends a lot of time out in the community knocking on doors, he says. "It's all about getting in front of the customer."

A shared philosophy

With one-stop convenience at the core of his business, Dallavalle says he's been fortunate to find a paint supplier like Sherwin-Williams that has the same philosophy.

"When it comes to painting, Mike Rosenthal, my local store manager, can get me everything we need," he says. "For instance, I asked Mike to bring bleach in to his store to save my crews time and it was on the shelves a few days later." Sherwin-Williams is also there to help him solve any coatings challenges.

For example, he says, many of his customers are looking for long-term solutions for their home maintenance needs. Quite a few choose to replace exterior wood siding with cement-fiber siding. Because of the porous nature of the

He starts with a prime coat of Loxon Masonry Primer, followed by a topcoat of either SuperPaint or Duration, depending on the needs of the project. By sealing the substrate with the Loxon product, he says, the cement-fiber siding does not soak up as much pigment. That extends the life of the paint job and prevents the kind of color fade you get when using only a traditional exterior paint product.

Like Sherwin-Williams, Dallavalle believes in being approachable no matter how big his company gets.

"I don't ever want to lose that mom-and-pop feel," he says. "We understand that when our customer signs our contract, they want to deal with the person who sold them their project." Estimators are responsible for their projects on a daily basis and are required to visit each project, receive an on-going status report from the project manager and job foreman to insure good communication with the customer on a pro-active basis.

"One of our core beliefs is to communicate to all of our customers that their schedule is our schedule," Dallavalle says. "If you need for us to meet you at your home on a Sunday, we will meet that expectation." **PPC**



Above, bottom: A Painting Plus crew pressure washes a home in Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood. Owner Charlie Dallavalle Jr. believes he gets better results if the crew members who paint the house also do the pressure washing.

Above, top: Offering additional services such as siding, roofing, carpentry and gutter cleaning helps Painting Plus serve customers better. Residential work makes up 90 percent of their business.