

Frequently Asked Questions

BY GARRY UPTON

Over the course of 2008, this space will identify opportunities within customers' homes that you may not have observed in the past. The opportunities are based on a recent homeowner survey conducted by Decision Analyst, Inc.

Q: Are the so-called "hybrid" systems becoming popular with homeowners?

A: Selling is in full force across America and heat pump sales continue to come into their own. Just in their infancy in 1985 — the year in which I joined the HVAC industry — these units have come a long way.

In the past, markets with inequitable gas or oil versus electric energy costs were great candidates for hybrid systems. Today there has been such a surge in energy costs everywhere it makes sense to approach customers in most markets with the hybrid system alternative.

It works best when the local utility offers rebates, but whether they do


or not, offering homeowners a choice makes more sense to them now than ever before.

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Whether it's called dual-fuel (as we did in the late 1980s) or a hybrid system (heat pump and furnace), your offer and explanation of the possible benefits can help sell you and your expertise in a surprising number of homes.

By 2006 heat pumps were in over one fifth of all homeowner owned homes. In addition central sales for that period showed added heat pump growth, with one fourth of all central

sales for the period. Hybrid systems have made their mark, and today one in every 10 homes with a heat pump includes a furnace (an impressive part of the heat pump market). The market share is even more impressive based on the purchases made by hybrid homes for the period. One third of the new hybrid homeowners purchased both a furnace and heat pump to become a hybrid system home.

Now more than ever, homeowners are willing to hear about alternative system offerings designed to help them afford a comfortable home. The hybrid system can be an important part of your offering this year. 

Garry Upton, of Decision Analyst, Inc., shares his interpretations of its American Home Comfort Study of homeowners, and explores what customers look for in HVAC contractors. To learn more about this study, or to purchase it, contact Garry at gupton@decisionanalyst.com.