



Blowing the Roof off the Roofing Industry

NAIM Prepares to Launch Innovative Product

Installing a house roof on a hot North Carolina day in 2007, entrepreneur Daron Akins' brother, Faron, got increasingly frustrated as he pounded nails and watched shingles tear. He thought, "There's got to be a better way." That's when a thought occurred to him that could change the direction of the roofing industry.

Instead of using nails, what if shingles could be laid with a hook-and-loop type of material, much like the fastener on his tool belt?

"We realized not only would that remove the leak potential that you get with nails, but also add a stronger hold to the shingles with a full-surface attachment," says Daron Akins.

Roofing Revolution

Realizing they'd hit on a winning idea, the Akins brothers patented it, founded a company to manufacture the product and named it North American Innovation & Manufacturing Corporation (NAIM). The low-cost, single-point solution they envisioned—to be called OmniMax Roofing System—had the potential to revolutionize roofing technology.

"Asphalt is antiquated," explains Akins. Unlike traditional asphalt shingles, OmniMax shingles would be more resistant to high winds, completely resistant to hail and algae, would retain its look, and wouldn't tear or curl. They would also be lighter weight and could come in any color or design.

NAIM's OmniMax Roofing System would also be easier on the environment. Since it would be made from recycled materials and would be recyclable, the company determined their shingles would eliminate seven to 10 million tons of scrap waste generated from re-roofing with asphalt shingles.

North American Innovation & Manufacturing Corporation

Challenge

NAIM required help with implementation of its patented roofing system

IES Solution

Product Development

Benefits

Refinement of NAIM's materials set and manufacturing process should permit them to achieve greater market share, enjoy better margins and accelerate their commercialization process

With that vision in mind, the Akins brothers approached the NC State Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) for help with implementation.

“We talked with [Regional Manager] Barrett Walker about what type of assistance IES could provide, especially within our budget,” Akins says. Walker—and later, IES Business Growth and Innovation Advisor Al Mastrangelo—worked with NAIM to bring the right level of added focus to the project.

“It was a big help, especially figuring out which materials to use. Their expertise when it came to polymers was invaluable. It helped us dramatically streamline what we’re going to do and how we’re going to do it,” says Akins.

“OmniMax roofing is a meaningfully unique breakthrough that will revolutionize the roofing industry,” says Mastrangelo. “IES’s help in refining NAIM’s materials set and manufacturing process should permit them to achieve greater market share, enjoy better margins and accelerate their commercialization process. We look forward to the opportunity of providing additional technical and marketing assistance when NAIM is ready to commercialize the venture.”

“ We have a much clearer direction of where we’re heading and how to get there. Having that pinpoint focus is crucial and now we’re on our way. ”

—Daron Akins,
NAIM

The key, Akins says, is to keep costs low while still creating a knockout product. “We want a premium product at a low price,” he says. “We want this affordable for consumers.”

Having finalized their product design, NAIM now moves forward to seek the required funding to test and certify, manufacture and launch their idea.



Industry Expansion Solutions

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