

Best Small Business

Owners Dick Ortega and Kevin Fahl worked together for several years in the mechanical contracting business when they decided to start their own business in 2004. Their experience told them the mechanical contracting market had high cost and low cost options. Dick and Kevin wanted to be the alternative that offered more value at a lesser cost. The new company was named Alternative Mechanical and offered plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning services to construction trade.



Owners, Kevin Fahl and Dick Ortega

Dick and Kevin not only wanted to offer more to their customers, they wanted to offer employees fair wages, benefits and growth opportunities. They saw a need to embrace minority skilled-trades people, providing training and a career for them. Today, their workforce is very diverse.

With over 55 years experience between them they had the skills necessary to succeed, but needed guidance on starting a business. Dick and Kevin enlisted the services of Region 7 to assist them in starting Alternative Mechanical. Regional Director Dante Villarrel assisted them with the development of a business plan, cash flow projections and obtaining a small loan to start the business. Once started, SBTDC guided Alternative Mechanical through the growth of the business, and now continually offers the additional assistance and resources when needed.

Alternative Mechanical started in an old warehouse with just the two employees. Within one year they outgrew their space and moved into their current location which gives them three times the operating space. They now employ 35 employees.