



Q&A WITH TOM CUCINOTTA OF CUCINOTTA'S POOL SERVICE

The simple choice for energy efficiency.



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EPA recently sat down with Tom Cucinotta of Cucinotta's Pool Service. He is one of the leading pool service contractors in Florida. We asked him how he markets ENERGY STAR® certified variable speed pool pumps to his customers and how the pumps helped him build his business.

How long have you been installing ENERGY STAR certified variable speed pool pumps?

I was one of the first contractors to sell variable speed pool pumps in the state of Florida. We have now installed over 2,000 variable speed pumps.

What are the signs that you need to replace your pool pump?

There are a number of signs, some pretty simple but some are a little more subtle. In general, if your pump is seven to 10 years old it probably needs to be replaced. More specific ways to tell are when the pump loses power, is much louder than before, gets hot and shuts down, or will not start.

What is the best way to explain what a variable speed pool pump is to your customers?

First thing to explain is that *pool maintenance can use different pool pump speeds*. Pool cleaning with a pressure side cleaner requires high pump speed, but filtering, which is the task performed 80 to 90 percent of the time, only requires low speed.

Second, *regular single speed pool pumps run at high speed all the time – like a car always going 100 mph – and waste energy*.

Third, *variable speed pumps can be programmed to run most of the time at lower speeds for filtering and ramp up occasionally for cleaning*. You save enormous amounts of energy by running the pool pump at lower speeds.

What is the best way to explain to my customers how much energy the variable speed pool pump saves?

Many of your customers probably don't know the enormous energy costs of pool pumps. If you have an in-ground pool, pool pumps are the second largest energy use in the home next to HVAC. In FL, I see variable speed pumps saving customers at least \$350 per year and as high as \$1,000 per year in some cases. Pool pumps running at lower speed use much, much less energy because pump energy use varies with the cube of the pump speed. In English that means that:

- A pump running at 1/2 speed uses 1/8 the energy!
- A pump running at 1/3 speed uses 1/27 the energy!!

So even if you run it longer at lower speeds (to achieve the same pool turnover as before) it will still use a lot less energy. The energy savings easily pay for the extra cost of a variable speed pump in less than two years. And over their lifetime, you'll save thousands of dollars.

In addition to these savings, are there utility rebates available?

Yes, to sweeten the deal even further, rebates for variable speed pool pumps are available all over the country. You should check with your local utility's website to see if they offer rebates. I have seen the rebates as high as \$400 per pump. Some of these rebates go directly to the contractor.

What are the other benefits of ENERGY STAR certified variable speed pool pumps to your customers?

In addition to impressive savings, there are other great features to variable speed pumps. Usually the biggest selling point comes when you just turn on the pumps and hear how much quieter they are. You can barely hear them because they

use permanent magnet motors not induction motors and, of course, run at much lower speeds. Another great benefit is safety. Some variable speed pumps come with built-in Safety Vacuum Release Systems that shut down the pump to prevent suction entrapment. They also clean better as filters work better and last longer when water runs through them at lower speeds. Finally, variable speed pumps last a lot longer. I have seen them last 10 years, where it seems I was replacing single speed pumps every three to four years in the past.

What are common myths around ENERGY STAR variable speed pool pumps?

I hear all sorts of excuses for not using variable speed pumps and none of them are true. Some think installation will be a hassle because they are configured differently than single speed pumps. That is not true, they have the same shape and footprint. Some folks don't want to use a new technology because it will break and lead to call backs from customers. I tell them I have been using them for 10 years. Others say the programming to set pump speeds and times is too complicated. I tell them it is easy and now can be done through user friendly smart phone apps.

Can you tell me how selling ENERGY STAR variable speed pool pumps helped your business?

These variable speed pumps have been great for business. Every time I install one I ask if I can put up a sign in the property for about a week to advertise your savings. I get a lot of calls due to that advertising.

Also, Cucinotta's Pool service now has a more high-tech, high-end contractor reputation. Not to disrespect my fellow pool guys and gals, but it has a reputation as a low tech service!

Probably the best thing that comes out of variable speed pumps is it ends the need for multiple pumps and can lead to customers investing in other high end pool products like hot tubs, salt water systems or fountains. Next thing you know you

are also working on bringing LED lights, automation systems, and other high end accessories!

You will never regret installing one of these ENERGY STAR certified variable speed pool pumps.



To learn more about ENERGY STAR certified pool pumps, please go to: www.energystar.gov/poolservicecontractors.

ENERGY STAR® is the simple choice for energy efficiency. For more than 20 years, EPA's ENERGY STAR program has been America's resource for saving energy and protecting the environment. Join the millions making a difference at energystar.gov.