

INSIDE SAN DIEGO'S TOP COMPANIES



Semper Solaris - Founded on Military Values



Co-Owner and former USMC Officer Kelly Shawhan and his family



Co-Owner John Almond and his family

What makes Semper Solaris so great and why should you trust them to install your solar panels?

From the start, Semper Solaris was built on the military values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. Co-founder Kelly Shawhan is a former US Marine Corps Officer who has taken the values and skills he learned from his service years and applied them to Semper Solaris.

In fact, the name of the business, Semper Solaris, reflects Kelly's determination to instill military values in his company. Semper Solaris is inspired by the Marine Corps motto, Semper Fidelis, which means always faithful. Kelly wants his entire solar company to reflect this excellence inside the company and in customer's homes.

Military roots run deep for both Semper Solaris co-founders, Kelly Shawhan and John Almond. Not only is Kelly a veteran Marine, but so is his brother and father. John Almond's father spent his whole career in the military. Even as a civilian, John gets it. He understands the value of former service

members' skills. Kelly and John try to hire as many veterans as possible. They strongly believe in the work ethic the military instills in service members and in helping out fellow service men and women.

When you talk to Kelly, he's passionate about helping former service members. He might even tell you the story of the jungle pact. In the Philippines in 1985, Kelly made a promise with 13 other Marines after a long mission. That night, they

"If we ever got to a spot where we could help a Marine out, or any service member, we would do so, and we'd pass that legacy on so that they would be able to help another member."

swore, "If we ever got to a spot where we could help a Marine out, or any service member, where we could get them a job, buy them a beer, whatever the situation might be, we would do so, and we'd pass that legacy on so that they would be able

to help another member." Kelly considers it a huge privilege to run a business built upon the promise he made all those years ago. Semper Solaris is founded upon loyalty, exceptional customer service and a commitment to their team. As Kelly says, "All of us need to pay it forward and look out for our guys."

Both Kelly and John want to bring the excellence of the military into their business, as well as helping service men, women and their families. Whether it's first responders or fellow Marines, Semper Solaris gives discounts to all service members. Semper Solaris has done a lot of volunteer work for the San Diego Police Department, and they are always excited for the chance to serve the people who put their lives on the line every day.

As you can see, Kelly and John's loyalty to service members built the foundation for Semper Solaris' success. They don't just believe military values and loyalty are a good lifestyle, Kelly and John believe it's good business. Semper Solaris' success is also due to the dedication of their team members, many of whom are also former service members.

NABCEP CERTIFICATION: Essential to Solar Success

Semper Solaris, one of the fastest-growing solar companies in California, stands out in the solar industry because of great customer service, skillful installations, and high quality materials. But they also stand out for another reason: the NABCEP certification.

NABCEP, or the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners, is a non-profit organization that began in 2002. Their mission is to support the energy industry while helping to develop industry professionals, and in that to promote customer confidence in the service that they receive. In NABCEP's own words, they are "the most recognized and esteemed certification the solar industry has to offer."

Robert Bessler, the Executive Director of Operations at Semper Solaris, is NABCEP certified, and he also takes the certification into consideration when interviewing and hiring new employees. "Those who pass the test are considered experts," he notes. "If you don't know what you're doing, you definitely won't pass. The certification tests aren't just multiple choice—you have to do your own calculations and have working industry knowledge."

When Bessler was originally NABCEP certified, he estimated that there were only about 200 other professionals in the nation with the certification. In order to take the NABCEP



Robert Bessler, Executive Director of Operations. NABCEP certified.

certification exam for Solar PV Installation Professionals, all candidates need a large amount of experience in the field, an OSHA 10 hour construction industry card, and at least 58 hours of advanced training in PV systems. They must also provide information for three or five installations they've supervised. For Bessler and others, this meant at least four years of experience in the solar industry.

Bessler had been working in the solar industry since 2000, and he heard about NABCEP when it was first beginning from the creators themselves, who shared about NABCEP at industry conferences and trade shows. Right away, Bessler was interested: "NABCEP appealed to me because I knew I was committed to the industry. I wasn't going to be industry-hopping." For those who want to be in the solar industry for the long haul, certifications like these can certainly add credibility. He added, "The closest analogy I can think of is the ASE certification for auto

mechanics. Some are certified and some aren't, but the certification means something. It's the same thing for solar."

Now, Bessler interviews potential employees for Semper Solaris. He shares, "When I'm interviewing, if applicants have their NABCEP certification, it shows that they really put in the effort. For lack of a better word, it shows that you're legit!" Now, Bessler is also certified by IREC, the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, to teach and train others in NABCEP courses. He's been teaching for two to three years now, and shares his NABCEP solar expertise with the new solar employees.

The NABCEP is an excellent indicator of solar expertise. It is because of values and strengths like these that Semper Solaris is having such successful growth.



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