

Enzo Milano expands beyond original clipless curling iron

At any salon show, it's easy to know that **Enzo Milano** is in the house, thanks to the models on stilts moving across the floor above the attendees. A number of years ago, company founder, **Renzo Composto**, hit the salon market with his line of "clipless" curling irons. As with most new product concepts, stylist adaptation didn't happen overnight. However, with its aggressive trade show marketing strategy, Enzo Milano not only has expanded its business, but kicked off a category in which many companies are now offering their versions of this versatile styling tool. **Beauty Industry Report (BIR)** recently caught up with Enzo between shows, and we are delighted to share his story.

BIR: When you introduced your line of clipless curling irons, these tools were truly new and innovative. Please share your story about bringing this new category to market.

Renzo Composto (RC): From day one, Enzo Milano has been a family business. As far back as I can remember, I used to help my second cousin, **Antonio lo Presti**, bring his ideas and concepts to the United States from Italy. As a young entrepreneur, I realized the potential in the salon business and in our product, which people loved and believed in. So with a bigger plan in mind, Enzo Milano was born to bring in the most innovative products from Italy to market on a bigger platform.

BIR: What did you see in the professional beauty marketplace that indicated there was an opportunity for your tool line?

RC: I observed a lack of creativity and education to support a professional appliance line. Plus, all the focus was on traditional flat and curling irons. One marketer after another was bringing out its version of the same tools.

BIR: Why have Enzo Milano clipless curling irons become so popular with stylists?

RC: These irons inspire creativity, because they allow stylists to create looks that cannot

be created with any other spring or Marcel curling iron. That is the driving force behind our brand's popularity.

BIR: Renzo, how do your clipless irons allow stylists to achieve unique looks that cannot be created with traditional curling irons?

RC: First, wrapping the hair from root to tip allows the heat to be on the root longer, with less on the tips, giving the ideal balance of heat to create an Enzo curl. The second is our Tribostatic heating technology, which makes sure that our Clipless Iron does not need to reach extreme temperatures to create amazing looks that last. When an iron is too hot or the temperature is uneven, it will damage and dry out the hair. Our heating technology enables the use of lower temperatures at extremely even heat. In comparison to similar products, both beauty professionals and consumers can see the difference in their hair quality and longevity immediately.

RC: As we grow the company, we continue to provide tools designed to revolutionize the way stylists do hair. We will continue to improve our line, as well as add to it. The **Conico Series** is Enzo Milano's most versatile set of irons. They feature a tapered shape that allows stylists to create many combinations of curls and waves by simply adjusting the sectioning and hair placements. They look so natural, because no two are identical. The **Reverso Series** is our most innovative collection. The irons' unique shape allows stylists to create amazing volume with maximum hold. They're great for busy stylists, because they allow them to work quickly.

BIR: Tell me about your background.

RC: I started working in the beauty business at 18 with my family in Italy and began importing my own line into the United States a few years later. Soon after, I founded my own company, Enzo Milano.



Enzo Milano introduced the first clipless curling iron, which launched a new category of styling tools.

BIR: How has the popularity of curly and wavy hair impacted your business?

RC: Considering that our line was born during the flat hair phenomenon, we have been on a steady incline from the start. Plus, many celebrity stylists—**Riawna Capri** and **Nikki Lee**, stylists for **Selena Gomez**; **Neal Farinah**, who does **Beyonce's** hair, **Peter DeRosa**, stylist to **Paula Abdul**, and **Rocco Donna**, who styles **Jennifer Lopez** and **Katy Perry**, have used our irons to style their clients for appearances on some of the most popular television shows and in the celebrity magazines.

BIR: Enzo Milano recently expanded to offer other tools. Please tell us more.

BIR: At shows, Enzo Milano's stilt walkers definitely stand out in the crowd. Tell me about your strategy.

RC: Our marketing strategy is simple—focus on the customer and make every interaction with our brand an experience. Stylists seek us out at the shows to see what we are doing and what we have that's new. They also want to share the styles they have created using our tools. We look at every trade show individually, based on the projected number of attendees, the demographics of the attendees and projected return on investment and develop individual marketing plans based on each.

BIR: Tell me about your team.

RC: Enzo Milano employs more than 50 people, with our key team members working out of Los Angeles. Our team includes **Brett Cayton**, vice president of sales; **Natalie Composto**, national sales director; and **Leena Luangrath**, show and education coordinator.

BIR: What is your operating philosophy and how do you approach each day?

RC: Our customers always come first!

BIR: What is your vision for your company?

RC: Our vision is to create a brand that is incomparable to any other and to develop a culture that combines amazing experiences with great products.

BIR: In a crowded marketplace, what is your brand's point of difference?

RC: Beyond having a high quality product line, we believe that our relationships with individual stylists, salon owners and distributors help set us apart. We create experiences, we create friends and we create smiles—those add up to creating sales and fans, whom we love just as much as they love us!

BIR: What is your flagship product?

RC: Our signature item is the Enzo Milano Classico line—the original clipless curling iron. We offer a lifetime warranty, because our irons are made with the highest-grade materials. It is the must-have iron for any professional stylist.

BIR: How can retailers maximize sales of your tools?

RC: Sales are the result of a combination of in-store product placement, continuous retail education, training and support. We provide in-store signage and point-of-purchase materials to help distributors and salons sell through.

BIR: Tell me about your online marketing, sales and education initiatives, including but not limited to your social media outreach.

RC: All of our marketing is streamlined across all media, including print campaigns, trade show experiences, online and hands-on training. All work together to create our unique brand experience at the point of customer contact. You will continue to see an aggressive campaign moving into 2012 with a new focus to the retail markets, an emphasis on education and a few fun Enzo antics. Keep an eye out!

BIR: Initially, Enzo Milano was marketed directly to salons; however, recently you have started selling through distributors. How is that strategy working, and who are

“Our Clipless Iron does not need to reach extreme temperatures to create amazing looks that last.”

some of the distributors in your network?

RC: Over the years, we have cultivated great partnerships with our distributors across North America. We are proud to work with our partners and will continue to provide them with responsive customer support, as well as continuous education and training.

Our distributors include **Salon Services & Supplies, Maka Beauty Systems, Paramount Beauty, Infinity Beauty Concepts, Creative Beauty Concepts, National Salon Resources, Aloha Beauty Supply, Island Beauty Supply, Canada-Venus Beauty Supplies Ltd, Chauet** and **West Coast Beauty.**

BIR: What are the key success factors you look for in selecting a distributor partner?

RC: We consider our distributors as partners and as extensions of our family. We select distributors who respect our brand concept, image and have similar family values with their teams. We are blessed to have great partners.

BIR: What's new and/or hot in your line?

RC: The hottest iron is the Enzo Reverso Line. It's a versatile iron that gives stylists the speed and creative flexibility they need. The Reverso creates amazing root volume without the use of excessive products.

BIR: What do you have planned for 2012?

RC: We have many new surprises planned and will be unveiling them starting at the **International Salon and Spa Expo** in Long Beach, CA.

BIR: Tell me about your education program.

RC: Natalie Composto leads the Enzo Milano sales education programs. She is the heart of our company and makes it possible to expand our culture to our distributors and salons.

BIR: What is your long-term vision for education?

RC: In 2012, we will continue to expand our education and will launch our Enzo certification, which will train stylists how to use the tools both to design looks, as well as to maximize their styling time.

BIR: Who have been your mentors?

RC: I have many mentors from manufacturers reps, distributors, manufacturers, bankers, marketing directors, many salon owners, many stylists, and, of course, my family members! I appreciate them all! Without their advice, we would not be here today.

BIR: What is the best business advice you ever received, and who was it from?

RC: My father told me, "If you have everything under control, you're not moving fast enough. Go after it."

BIR: What inspires you?

RC: Seeing the love that our customers have for us and seeing styles created with the Enzo Milano irons all over the red carpets and magazine covers.

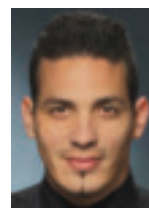
BIR: What would BIR's readers be surprised to learn about your company?

RC: As I noted earlier, Enzo Milano is a family business, and I think that makes the big difference; we approach all issues and resolve them as a family.

BIR: If you weren't working in the beauty business, what would be your dream job?

RC: I'm lucky to have my dream job, but I could see myself owning an ad agency or fashion line.

Reach Renzo Composto at 949-242-2881 or renzo@enzomilano.com. Visit enzomilano.com.



Renzo Composto, company founder