



**Narciso Alarcon wins the prestigious Best of the Best Award**

by Krista Berns



**W**hen you walk into Antis Roofing & Waterproofing's office in Irvine, Calif., it soon becomes apparent it is not a typical roofing company. An open space features bright couches and a pingpong table. Comic book-style art spans the walls, which feature large white spaces covered with handwritten quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. and Aesop, as well as a Sanskrit poem.

It then becomes apparent this out-of-the-ordinary office produces extraordinary employees, such as this year's Best of the Best Award winner.

The Roofing Industry Alliance for Progress' MVP Task Force presented Narciso Alarcon, field operations manager/superintendent for Antis Roofing & Waterproofing, with the award, which is an extension of the Alliance's Most Valuable Player (MVP) Awards. OMG Roofing Products Inc., Agawam, Mass., and *Professional Roofing* co-sponsor the honor.

"Narciso Alarcon's work history clearly demonstrates he's an MVP in the roofing community," says Reed Gooding, president of GSM Roofing, Ephrata, Pa., and MVP Task Force chairman. "In addition to working on the roof, his passion for his fellow employees and commitment to honoring their history and culture are one of the main reasons Antis Roofing & Waterproofing has been recognized by the *Orange County Register* with its Top Workplace 2016 Award. Top off his impressive resume with an unwavering commitment to community service and volunteerism, and it was an honor celebrating Narciso as the Best of the Best."

### Starting out

Alarcon was born in Guerrero, Mexico, and grew up with two sisters and three brothers. As a child, his favorite hobby was swimming, and he often swam in a large river near his village.

His family moved to Santa Ana, Calif., when Alarcon was 14. Although he initially attended school, he left when he began his roofing career at 16.

"My brother-in-law worked for Mayer Roofing," Alarcon says. "I started helping him and liked it and decided to work on roofs."

Although in the beginning Alarcon's favorite part of his job was receiving a paycheck, he soon began to love roofing for another reason.

"I realized all the work we've done has built communities," he says. "I like to be part of building the community, and even after 20 years, I can go back to a community and see my work. I drive there with my son and tell him I installed roofs on those houses, which is a cool thing about this job."

After working at Mayer Roofing for a few years, Alarcon worked at PetersonDean Roofing for six years as a field supervisor before starting his job at Antis Roofing & Waterproofing.

"I started looking at Antis and liked it," Alarcon says. "I liked that Charles is the boss but he doesn't treat you that way. He treats you as part of the company."

Alarcon started at Antis Roofing & Waterproofing as a field technician and was promoted to supervisor and then to field operations manager/superintendent.

"It took two years to move up each step, and I like having the opportunity to go up in steps," Alarcon says. "When you learn step by step, you understand the work the most."



Alarcon receives the Best of the Best Award at NRCA's 130th Annual Convention





Alarcon outside Antis Roofing & Waterproofing's office



Alarcon with Charles Antis after winning the Best of the Best Award

### A natural leader

Alarcon's promotions have led him to become a leader who oversees the entire field.

"I think what ultimately led us to promote Narciso to his current role is he had an unusual demeanor with his crew and with staff where he was always fully present, curious and authentic," says Charles Antis, founder and CEO of Antis Roofing & Waterproofing. "He also put the workers first. He saw the needs of the company and wanted the company to be profitable but not at the expense of his crew. That resonated with me."

Aaron Antis, director of sales for Antis Roofing & Waterproofing, says Alarcon's transition to leader was seamless.

"He took a lead role quickly and has been a natural, consistent leader," Aaron Antis says. "He exemplifies the 'first one in, last one out' mentality. He leads by example; he won't just tell his team what to do—he'll show them. If there's ever an issue of a crazy leak our technicians can't solve, he'll take the 2 a.m. call and go out there with them and take care of it."

According to Aaron Antis, Alarcon hasn't just risen to the occasion but has gone further and incorporated a leadership style that can be uncommon in the roofing industry.

"Often, there is an old-school roofing worker mentality where the boss tells you what to do, and if you don't do it, he'll yell at you," Aaron Antis says. "He's flipped that to a culture of inclusiveness, giving back to the community and technicians. Everyone has a voice, and even if someone is wrong or doesn't have full perspective, his or her voice will be heard, understood and received well. He helps people develop."

"The team we have now is here because they want to be and respect him as a leader—not just because they need a job or to pay the bills," he continues. "They want to work with him and genuinely want to be here for a long time."

### In their shoes

Alarcon especially shines when it comes to his relationship with his team.

"The guys in the field like him—how he talks and puts himself in their shoes," says Fernando Torres, estimator/sales support for Antis Roofing & Waterproofing. "He hasn't forgotten where he started. He's always protecting the guys and speaking out for them, and that's what they respect. The guys have a voice because of Narciso. He knows how to gain trust. You can tell him personal things, and he'll try to help you in your personal life, too. He's a supervisor, but he's also a friend."

Field workers Ever Hernandez and Jesus Zermeno agree, saying Alarcon's experience in the field makes him an understanding leader.

"He knows about the things we do in the field because he has done them," Zermeno says. "We know we can ask him anything. He understands the work we do. He likes to do it right and always thinks about safety. He explains why we need to be careful."

"He's respectful with everyone," Hernandez says. "He doesn't discriminate whether someone works fast or slow. He makes sure everyone is on the same level. Everyone respects him because he worked hard to get the position he has. He has done it all."

Charles Antis says Alarcon has an unusually good relationship with the crews.

"For the roofing industry, it stands out," he says. "Past leaders have been either afraid of losing popularity with the workers or have established a military-like hierarchy, which is common in the industry. But Narciso motivates through pep talks and by asking questions about how the men feel and what they want. As a company, we're not afraid to hear about what's not working because we believe by listening to that, we're going to get where we need to go. And Narciso embodies that in all he does."

Karen Inman, president and chief operating officer of Antis Roofing & Waterproofing, says she immediately was impressed by Alarcon's approach in the field.

"He is a good mentor," Inman says. "He is a leader who, if he knows his workers could do better or do something more efficiently, will stop in the moment, teach them, allow them to practice and move on. They know he will make them better roofing workers in the process, and with his leadership team, he does a lot of the same coaching. He tells them they need to respect the field workers. He's grooming his leaders to do that, which will be phenomenal for the company."

Alarcon also is thoughtful in the way he recruits workers. “Before hiring anyone, he considers whether we will be able to keep them employed,” Charles Antis says. “He realizes hiring someone for a two-week stint is not doing anyone any good; therefore, we would come up with another solution rather than hiring workers in a way that would injure their careers.”

Alarcon says he always looks for workers who truly would benefit the company.

“I always look for the best so we can continue to improve the company,” Alarcon says. “I want to bring on good people who have an open mind and will learn more about the company.”

And when it comes to his relationship with his workers, Alarcon values honesty and communication.

“I always tell the truth,” he says. “I communicate, and I never lie to the guys. And the guys respect me because they know I’m fair.”



Alarcon and Charles Antis present Lobo Awards to Antis Roofing & Waterproofing employees

## Incorporating culture

Alarcon likely also garners respect from his crews because of his ability to help incorporate Mexican culture into the Antis Roofing & Waterproofing environment. Alarcon says all the company’s roof technicians are Latino, and about 90 percent of that group are from Mexico.

Inman says Alarcon has been crucial when making decisions regarding Antis Roofing & Waterproofing employees.

“He’s our voice within the leadership team, asking what will resonate with Latino culture in our technicians,” she says. “As we look at sharing our success and what that means—for example, additional time off or bonuses—he’s the one who helps guide us so our decisions resonate with the team.”

Charles Antis says Alarcon helps the company see what truly is valued by its workers.

“As an employer, I take authenticity and a real relationship in business as a serious matter, but I have a hard time understanding what it was like for most of my employees to be born in another country and raised here,” he says. “Narciso has helped me understand what matters to our employees. He’s helped me understand the sensitivity of the workers by their upbringing, the peaks and valleys of their lives and why they are the way they are. He’s taught us how to better reach them so they feel heard and want to communicate.”

“He’s helped us understand what’s important to the crews because sometimes it wasn’t what we thought,” Charles Antis continues. “It helped me put the emphasis where it needs to be. He showed me what matters to employees and what they value.”

One example is the company’s implementation of the Aguinaldo, a tradition from Mexico that shares profits as an annual Christmas bonus for employees to show appreciation for their hard work.

Alarcon also has helped the company implement the Lobo Awards (“lobo” is a Mexican gray wolf), which annually recognizes exemplary employee characteristics, comparing the employees with the “pack” teamwork model of wolves.



This card was given to children of Antis Roofing & Waterproofing employees to honor their parents.

“We want to be like a pack, thinking like lobos, who mark their territories and work together,” Alarcon says. “Our shirts have the eyes and face of the lobo, and we look out for each other with those eyes, take care of each other and make sure everyone is safe.”

Alarcon’s mother and extended family live in Mexico. Although Alarcon’s family visits when they can, he says it’s never enough, and he misses his family being together. So, he especially enjoys sharing Mexican traditions—his favorite is Mexican music and dances—at Antis Roofing & Waterproofing parties.

“I like to continue with the traditions we have in Mexico, and I love the guys getting together and sharing,” he says. “We’re from different states in Mexico, and we share our culture, share the country of Mexico. We bring our families to parties and hang out like a family. We can continue the support of other families.”



## ON the WEB

For more information about the Best of the Best Award and a list of previous winners, go to [www.professionalroofing.net](http://www.professionalroofing.net).

Alarcon also has been an important part of Antis Roofing & Waterproofing's safety culture.

The company has a safety meeting every week, as well as a one-hour safety meeting every month; the meetings primarily are held in Spanish. Additionally, Alarcon heads the company's safety committee, which meets twice per month to discuss the most important issues, address any problems that arise and find the best ways to respond.

"It's one of the biggest challenges I have," Alarcon says. "I want to enforce safety 100 percent. It's tough because I'm not able to see everyone in the field. I want the guys to understand safety is a benefit for them—not just for the company. I try to make sure they know it is most important they are safe for their families so they go home at the end of the day."

Charles Antis says Alarcon succeeds with teaching employees safety, which is important no matter how experienced they are.

"Safety to a lot of experienced people doesn't seem necessary anymore," he says. "They believe it's there for newbies. Narciso has done a great job of teaching them, by example, about how many families have been affected in the roofing industry by death or injury of those who were experienced but weren't tied off. He's done a great job in building safety, which affects all parts of being a good contractor."



Above and right: Alarcon volunteers for Habitat for Humanity Orange County



### Customer care

The care Alarcon takes with his crews transfers to his relationships with customers.

The company's core business is condominiums, and Alarcon interacts with

homeowners associations, property managers, boards of directors and homeowners.

"Narciso is viewed as an expert by property managers and boards of directors," Inman says. "He participates in sales calls because he comes across as knowledgeable and communicates well. When he interacts with homeowners, they always walk away feeling taken care of. He's going to do the right thing, and everyone knows it."

Charles Antis says Alarcon's goodness comes through when he meets with customers.

"When any customer meets him, they are taken aback by his presence and smile," he says. "His face lights up when he smiles, and it disarms customers and builds immediate trust where, in our industry, trust is not easy to build. When he helps sell our services to a homeowners association, I've heard people comment about his presence and the trust he inspires. He exudes genuineness, and his positive presence wins people over immediately."

Alarcon says he just tries to be honest with customers.

"I set out expectations for when we will be done, and I don't lie to them," he says. "I've had to work with difficult customers, which is always a challenge, but I handle it based on the information I have. I try to find all the information for the customer and address it the best way possible. I always respect our customers."

### Time well spent

Alarcon's dedication to his customers, his employees and the company shows in the long days he works—sometimes reaching 16 hours. So when he has free time, he makes sure it counts.

"I like to go to the beach, and when I have time, I drive along the coast," Alarcon says. "I like to spend time with my family—my wife, Belén; my son, who is 16; and my daughters, who are 7 and 2."

Alarcon also spends his free time participating in charity work through Antis Roofing & Waterproofing, including overseeing the 50 to 100 annual maintenance and repair projects the company donates to local non-profits and those in need.

The company also is involved with Alzheimer's Orange County, Ronald McDonald House, the Boys & Girls Club and Habitat for Humanity Orange County, which has been the company's primary beneficiary. Alarcon and other Antis Roofing & Waterproofing employees were recognized at a Boston Red Sox/Anaheim Angels game for their work with Habitat for Humanity Orange County.

"I have worked with Habitat from 2010 to the present," Alarcon says. "I have been part of every build they have done in Orange County. I like to spend time with that because it's my way to give back to the community and the less fortunate. I feel good when I help install their roofs. I really enjoy it."

"He has a willingness to do everything," says Teri Jo



Cherry, business operations manager for Antis Roofing & Waterproofing. “He works hard at his full-time job, and then Habitat needs someone, so he donates his time and skills there. He wants to do everything possible and never say ‘no.’ He always shows up.”

Alarcon likely will continue to show up at Antis Roofing & Waterproofing as his momentum propels him toward a promising future with the company.

“I’ve watched him mature into a confident man,” Charles Antis says. “He’s always been warm and amicable, but now I watch him walk with confidence and smile a little broader.”

Charles Antis sees Alarcon taking that confidence with him as the company expands and Alarcon’s role continues to grow.

“He still will oversee all the workers—he is at the highest level of production now, so I don’t see that ever changing,” he says. “But I see his role changing to oversee multiple territories as Antis Roofing & Waterproofing is looking to expand in other markets. He will be overseeing production in those markets and likely communicating and lecturing for different groups about how to build a great culture, gain the trust of your workers and build an authentic production arm of the company.”

Inman agrees, saying Alarcon is vital to the company’s expansion.

“He absolutely has the skills and drive to be the leader that takes us there,” she says. “He’ll grow in his leadership, and he’ll grow in his ability to groom the additional leaders he’ll need as part of his team to make that happen. He is crucial to that plan.”

When Alarcon thinks about the future, he sees himself at Antis Roofing & Waterproofing.

“I appreciate everything they have done for me, and I will have more responsibilities within the company and take on more challenges,” he says. “I really love this company.”

## A generous leader

There are many reasons Alarcon’s co-workers at Antis Roofing & Waterproofing love working with him and believe he deserved to win the Best of the Best Award.

“He’s a great guy,” Aaron Antis says. “He wants people to succeed and be happy. He enjoys his work, which everyone can see, and it makes everyone enjoy their work more. You never need to worry about going to him with a complaint or problem; he’ll work through it with you and set his needs aside to help you.

“Narciso has a good team that loves and supports him and would do anything for him,” he continues. “They do the right thing because he is their leader and has shown them doing the right thing is important.”

Torres agrees: “His attitude, honesty and loyalty make him a good leader. If he sees you going off course, he’ll put you back on the road and tell you what you need to do to be a better worker and better person.”

Jose Vazquez, customer service manager for Antis Roofing & Waterproofing, praises Alarcon’s can-do attitude.

“One of the great things about working with him is he’s always willing to find a solution,” Vazquez says. “That’s such a great attribute to have. He always wants to see what we can do and find ways to fix a problem. And he’s willing to support any team as a whole.”

Inman says Alarcon is a leader who understands balance.

“He is kind, full of integrity and knows how to balance company needs against employee needs, which is key for a leader,” Inman says. “Part of the culture at Antis is always looking for the win-win, and one of our core values is always to err on the side of generosity with all stakeholders. Narciso does that—it’s core to who he is.”

Despite the praise, Alarcon still was surprised to win the award.

“I know I’m working hard for the company and myself,” Alarcon says. “I’m a dedicated person, and I’m always trying to do my best for the company, but I know many other people deserve it, too.”

Charles Antis says Alarcon’s ability to motivate people to work hard while remaining sweet and kind is a unique characteristic that makes Alarcon the Best of the Best.

“He somehow motivates, inspires and effortlessly guides people in a sweet, gentle way,” he says. “He’s showing the world how to be a great leader, love your people and show them that every day, which is awesome.” 🌟🌟🌟



From left to right: Alarcon with daughter Camila, wife Belén, daughter Alexa and son Bryan



Alarcon with his wife, Belén, at NRCA’s 130th Annual Convention

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