

Is Sales a dirty word in the Service Industry?

There is a debate heating up in a plumbing site. There are three plumbers that believe sales are a dirty word and one person claims that sales are not necessary in today's business model. The claim being made is if you cannot use your plumbing skills to sell the product and service then you should not push your ideas with sales. One made the statement that a sales person's job is to influence. The sales person is there to influence however he or she is also there to help, guide, and serve the customer. Remember the sales person should be the expert and the home owner requires and demands that the sales person give them the proper information to base a good decision.

Every person involved in the debate has stated that it is good practice to give options to the customer. Some have a skewed sense of right and wrong and what is an appropriate way to give the option or options. The plumber that is having a great difficulty with a sales structure and concept made a wild claim that he can give an option in 15 seconds to the customer.

Here is the problem a customer of his is experiencing. A slab leak .A slab leak is a water line that has a pin-hole or broken pipe underground and under the concrete slab of a home allowing water to leak. More history is necessary to form an accurate description and solution. That history informs the sales person that this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leak this customer has experienced. Missing information is the time frame of these 3 leaks.

A father son outfit, and while the son is busting up the floor to uncover the leak the father is giving the home owner a price to re-pipe. This is how the option was given to the home owner. I contend the home owner had no option in this situation. Why is the re-pipe quote not an option? The floor is being broken up and now the home owner might as well make the repair as opposed to re-piping the home. The option should have been given prior to breaking up the floor. The customer is forced to go with the repair in their mind. I am pretty confident that the customer has over 25% of the cost in repairs to date plus this new cost and will not be guaranteed that another pin-hole leak will rear its ugly head in the near future. I can guarantee you that a pin-hole leak will reappear. We already know and understand the water piping is compromised. By breaking up the floor and starting the repair before submitting a proposal for the re-pipe this plumber conceded to the customer that this was his best answer to the slab leak and that he was making the decision and not the home owner.

In the mind of this plumber the way I would have handled this situation is unethical and has low integrity. I would price the leak location, and penetration of the floor, and then estimate the cost of a

repair of a ½ inch or ¾ inch water line repair. I then would have priced up a total re-pipe of the home and explained the exact details of the re-pipe. We would have discussed any penetrations in the wall and cabinet. The home owner would know and understand exactly where the new installation of water piping is located and the size of the water piping and I would correct any issues the home owner had experienced with the existing water pipe.

Both the home owner and I would sit down and discuss a budget to pay for the repair or re-pipe. We would have considered money already wasted on the 2 prior repairs and the time frame between the other water leaks. Is it really wise to spend good money on a bad situation? The only reason to repair the slab leak is if the home owner cannot get the money to do the re-pipe however that is not the plumber's decision to make. The decision belongs to the home owner when they are given all the information prior to the plumber committing to do work. This is a true and honest option given to the homeowner.

It is time to put the customer's needs before the plumbing contractor wants. It is time to communicate to the customer the benefits to every option and allow the customer to make the decision that best fits their interest and budget .It is time to throw the contractors feelings out the car window and allow the customers feelings to take precedence. The time is now to put away bogus attitudes that prevent the best opportunity for the customer. Their best chance is you yet the best in you went on vacation. The time is now to do the right thing for your customer.

Sales efforts are not a dirty word when it is done for the customer and in the customer's best interest. The decision the customers make is in their best interest and will fit their budget. Once all the information is presented it is our duty to respect the customer's decision and complete their request. Start adding structure to your daily business and watch your customer's satisfaction level increase dramatically.