

## Obstacles of the service technician

Today's service sales technician confronts a different challenge than most sales professionals. Every person in sales has competition however in the service industry especially during economic downturns many people who have lost their jobs turn to the construction trade to get by and earn a living. Many of these unemployed personnel are unqualified to do both; sales and installation.

Countless more unqualified people have installed faucets in their home, repaired their personal equipment and believe this qualifies him or her to work on products and provide service to the public. The person rarely will have the insurance, proper education, and in most cases a license to perform the work for the public. Frequently this work is completed at wages far less than acceptable rates in the particular industry. This behavior destroys the livelihood of those that are true professionals in their respective fields.

Commonly the workmanship is less than satisfactory and this gives the trades people a bad reputation due to this unqualified person claiming they are a plumber, heating repair technician or electrician. More often than not there is not enough money involved to warranty or replace a defective product or bad installation. The consumer loses when a non professional sells, installs, and performs construction trade duties.

The difference between a professional and a non professional in the service industry is knowledge on the product that includes information why certain materials work best in certain situation. The professional understands national and local laws that govern the installation of the plumbing system ensuring a safe working system that will last for many years. A product may work however that product may not be legal in your area and can cause a cross connection contaminating the domestic water system. Another area of grave concern is the use of inferior products that will not hold up to the water pressure and can cause a flood while having the potential to cause property damage.

Understanding that every person faces risks and potential loss on a daily basis it is the duty of the professional trade's person to eliminate or help eliminate a higher risk associated with a higher loss. To assist the consumer against unqualified personnel installing products and services requires that communication must improve between the consumer and the service trade technician.

The perspective trades must learn how to use words that compels and engages while convincing and guiding a client to use them and their service. Times are a changing and it is necessary to give information to the consumer that will allow him or her to make a smart decision. This information no longer consists of use me because I have a license and have done this for 20 years. It no longer is wise to inform the customer that you have insurance in case something goes wrong and the other guy does not. It no longer means you are good and the best thing since sliced bread.

Today the successful sales service technician discovers the customer's perceived value. It is done with open ended questions that ask who, what, when, where, and how. Allow the customer to tell you what is important to him or her then meet or exceed those requirements.

There is a need to have a conversation explaining the solution and the cause of the problem. The conversation must be a two way street including the customer. The customer must feel part of the process so include them. When the customer makes a statement that attacks the profession or you the service technician must remain calm and understand that it is not a personal attack.

In today's buyer's market there is a need to talk with the customer and answer their questions in clear concise language that is understood. It is essential the service technician have viable vital differences than the handyman or unemployed worker that thinks they are as valuable as a licensed knowledgeable technician. These differences must be communicated to the consumer.

The time is now to build separation between the handyman and unemployed unskilled worker and answer the questions posed to you by the home owner. Discover answers to my neighbor had Joe install this for 50 dollars or I cannot afford, and this is more than I thought. It is the sales technician's duty to discover a way to answer my old plumber or HVACs did not charge this in the past. The sales service technician is required to give a reply to these questions, statements, and more. To ignore the customer and not respond is not an option.

Spending time in a different state in the north something hit me like a ton of rocks. The licensed professionals and the unlicensed unskilled workers are priced similar and dress comparable. In some cases the difference at the upper end was 100 dollars and at the bottom of the scale was 25 dollars. With so little difference with price the home owner is led to believe there is very little difference between skilled and unskilled work. You are the professional; you have a license and overhead to pay. Your experience and knowledge came at a cost and must be reflected in the price to your customer and in your appearance.

With such a low price you are telling the customer nothing else matters and go ahead and use the fly by night shade tree mechanic to do the necessary repairs. One HVAC company posted an advertisement in the paper advertising such a low price. His statement; everything was at a price to cover overhead only so that he could keep his doors open for the rest of the year. He promised his employees that he would not close his doors. Trading dollars is not the way to stay afloat. You are one accident away from ending your career and those that are surrounding you.

The way to stay afloat during this economic downturn is to learn to communicate effectively your value proposition to your customers. What is it that separates you from your competition and the fly by night operators? What is it that your customer gets and will want to receive from you? Why should your customer buy from you and use your products and services over the fly by night companies?

Stop losing customers to the unskilled and unlicensed people. It cannot be that the unskilled and unlicensed people have more product knowledge or better service. The area where they are stronger is with communicating in a conversation style that builds trust and rapport.

Start today and remove those chains that bind you allowing obstacles to overcome your ability. It is never too late to learn new techniques that will generate the revenue that you need to run a business successfully. It is now time to stop losing paying jobs to the unskilled, unqualified, and unlicensed people that have entered your profession.