

## Some Challenging Sales Areas in the Service Trade Industry

During discussions with owners of plumbing companies I am asked what I believe are problems within the plumbing industry and in general the service trade industry within the course of running service calls. There are several points I would like to cover where numerous service plumbing technicians and for that matter countless service trade technicians have overlooked important details that should be addressed and will affect the outcome of the service call.

One of the issues is the technician rushing into making the diagnoses and repairing the problem. Do not rush into a decision of a repair or solution until the client has informed you of all the issues and you know the solution is the appropriate solution. Start taking your time, follow up every question with additional questions confirming what you have heard and what the client wants to do about the problem.

Frequently the technician will suggest and compel the client to a repair on a product the client cannot stand or does not like. The quandary is the client did not understand or have knowledge there is another choice for them beyond a repair and that other choice is a replacement. Start giving your clients choices and watch your per invoice dollars jump through the roof. The client trusts you to give options with expert advice that allows the client to make an intelligent decision.

Try not to group or label your client. Stop thinking the client will only choose the option for repair. Give the client 3 options to choose from. A good, better, and best scenario is a best practice. When more than 3 options are given the client may need time to think it over. This will confuse the customer and place doubt in their mind of the urgency to get this completed today. More than 3 choices force a lot of decisions to make in order to proceed. Your questions asked will determine what 3 options are in the best interests of your client. Present the 3 best options and help guide the client to the best decision for him or her.

Take your time and allow your client to discover alternative wants and needs that will fit their busy lives better than their products presently serve them at this juncture. This permits your client to make the decision and will include them in the ownership exchange. It is not the technician's decision to make and never has been open your mind and allow the client to make the decision of what is in their best interest. Include the client in the decision making process and give them a different experience that will enhance the chances of you being memorable.

Another problematic area for service technicians is discovery of the client's motive to accomplishing whatever it is they wish to complete today. Why did the client decide to call today and set up an appointment? What will it take to encourage them to move forward, today? Is there a separate reason the client decided to give attention to the problem and what is that reason?

Frequently a technician will look at the problem and decide in their mind that the client will want to repair it because it is broke. How long has it been broken? Why did they wait so long to get it taken care of and what is their expectation. Ask questions that will discover predictable behaviors and results. These questions will produce the real reasons why the client wants to make the necessary repair or replacement today.

Pricing seems to be a major problem with many plumbing technicians. For some strange reason services technicians do not believe in the pricing structure. There seems to be a feeling that they are ripping off the client due to charging a higher rate for simple tasks that take years to perfect. A new attitude is required in order for a service technician to enjoy success. This new attitude must consist of a belief that they are worth the dollars they are receiving and charging the customers. Once a belief is discovered self confidence is realized and the success of the service technician becomes paramount. Tunnel vision is replaced with peripheral vision and it is significantly easier to help the client with better choices that discover more wants that turn into needs.

It is time for the service technician to believe and know they are worth every penny that is charged. Frequently the company has more faith in the ability of the technician than the tech does him or herself.

Something I feel very strongly about and very concerned due to the harm it is causing our Service Trade Industry and the image. It is over selling exaggerated claims of doom and gloom forcing the client to focus all of their attention on potential loss. Typically the speech places a high probability with massive property damage and disaster. Then will focus on how the client will feel when this occurs. The client will not understand there are minor risks due to the technicians focus with the over exaggerated loss. Characteristically with this method when asked how much time or when will it happen cannot be answered and there is no way to be 100% sure that it will re-occur in the future. Yet the emphasis will be on the damage and inconvenience that will be a direct result if it happens. The technician will not use the word if and will change it to when. It is crossing a line and approaches fear as a motivator. In general this method results in a successful sale with the elderly and the very young.

This is a problem for many service technicians and that is investing time with client's verses spending time with the clients. This will coincide with giving solutions and price too quickly. Take your time with the client and discover everything you can about the client. During this discovery time the technician will realize what real value to the client is. There is a high probability that the client will inform the technician exactly his or her intentions and how much influence a budget will be placed on the solution.