

# CARSIDE MANNER

REAL-LIFE LESSONS IN CUSTOMER RELATIONS



## Selling the Job, The Whole Job, and Nothing but the Whole Job—So Help Me Profitability and Reputation

It's not always easy to convince some customers that a job done well the first time is worth the added costs involved in making things right—the first time. There always seems to be enough time and money to get things right the second time around. Unfortunately, it's usually *your* time and *your* money at risk when a patch job returns to haunt you. Many customers are more than willing to step over a dollar to pick up a dime.

More than one customer has asked you to slap a job together to save a few bucks with the promise that he wouldn't hold you responsible. Then he returned time and time again to voice his displeasure about the job. We all know that most promises like that are forgotten before the words hit the floor.

### Short Term—Or Whole Life?

In this month's article on air conditioning, we stress the important role played by the receiver drier in an air conditioning system. A new drier and proper evacuation of a system before charging are like an insurance policy against poor cooling and shortened system life.

But some customers will balk at the added expense, because like insurance, the added protection offered by this can-thing with the peep hole in it are somewhere down the road.

"Gee, I don't know. We really don't use the air conditioner except on really hot days. Just recharge it for the time being and we'll fix it right later."

See what I mean?

Or maybe you'll hear this one.

"Shucks, my brother had a blown hose, replaced it, threw some refrigerant in the darn thing, and now it blows cold as ever."

Everybody is an expert.

What this guy and his brother don't know is that when that hose blew a year ago on St. Swithen's Day, the receiver drier was ruined in short order. You can't soak up all the water in Lake Michigan in a sponge.

Darned thing won't hold it all.

## The Operation Was a Success—But The Patient Died

So now we're dealing with one of those intangibles. The customer can see the value of the new hose. The old one is in tatters. Looks a bit like a dog's breakfast. You can hold it up, point with emphasis at the gaping hole and sell a new one in short order.

But the drier is a different story. The customer can't see anything wrong with it. Ain't leaking is it? It blows cool air, right? So what's the problem?

Maybe the local life insurance salesman has the right idea. He knows how to sell the intangibles.

You've all heard the line.

"Mr. Jones, have you made adequate provision for the care of your loved ones in the event of your untimely death?"

Tasteless? Yeah. And we don't advocate scare tactics like those. But insurance is what you're selling when you convince the customer to replace that suspect drier. Long term insurance for the air conditioner. And just as important, you're selling insurance for your own mental health when the operation is a success and the patient lives a long and happy life.

### A Stitch In Time

You probably get sick of hearing people tell you how important it is to educate the customer and then make the sale. Educate—schmeducate. Who has time to babysit these people? You just don't have the time to explain everything to everybody. Right?

The question is, will you have more time on that hottest of hot days when you're swamped with air conditioning repair work and that guy comes back with sweat on his brow and screaming children in the back seat?

Now that's a tangible concept if I ever saw one!

Convincing the customer to let you do the job right the first time is insurance for you and your business as well. Look at the time spent as an investment with some very tangible returns.

- The added sale of needed parts will fatten the bottom line on those repair orders. (And let's face it, that's why you open the doors each day.)
- It will increase customer satisfaction and decrease customer complaints.
- In the long run, it will help you establish a reputation for quality, lasting repairs.

More profits.

Less hassles.

—By Ralph Birnbaum