

# Fix the Customer, Not the Equipment

The average service call in Texas costs about \$175, give or tak. But the average consumer in Texas will spend about \$32,000 on HVAC equipment and related products over their lifetime. Do you as a dealer want \$175 or \$32,000? I know what my answer would be, but too many contractors are so concerned about collecting \$175 from a multitude of customers each day, they forget the true value of a customer.

Successful contractors understand that a customer is not only worth \$32,000, but will also increase their cash flow revenue by referring them to neighbors and friends. When you have been invited to a customer's house because of a comfort problem, you need to take every opportunity while inside their home to inform them of the many comfort products you have available. No competitor is present, you do not have to run to your next call, this is a perfect opportunity to spend some quality time with the homeowner. By doing so, you can get all their service, maintenance, accessory sales, and eventual replacement business. Quality time equals \$32,000. This is an easy formula to remember, but it does require a team effort from the company.

When the customer calls your business, be sure to ask specific questions about their problem, then schedule the call giving a two hour window.

"Mrs. Blount, Joe will be there between 9 AM and 11 AM." The day before their appointment, call them back to remind them of the appointment. At this time, ask if they have a safety and efficiency agreement with your company. This gives you the opportunity to talk about their eligibility for the discount, and sell an agreement. Your flat rate book, and you should all be on flat rate, will highlight the savings column and the homeowner can see what they are saving or could be saving, adding another opportunity to sell a safety and efficiency agreement.

Your dispatcher should dispatch all calls one at a time so the technician will not be rushed through his service calls at any house. Be sure the technician spends as much time as necessary with the customer, focusing on them and not just the equipment. The technician should approach the house without his tools and concentrate on what the customer is saying about their comfort problem. The technician is there to provide comfort, not to just fix the equipment.

Many technicians use the following survey, which can be printed on the back of the invoice, to uncover comfort needs:

What type of maintenance is done on the system?  
Are you pleased with your utility costs?

Does anyone in your home suffer from allergies?

Do you see excessive dust in the home?

How old is your equipment?

Are there any hot or cold spots in your home?

Once the survey is complete, the technician should ask the homeowner to take them to the equipment with the problem. The technician can then get the tools from the truck, diagnose the problem, discuss options with the customer, and review the customer's concerns about comfort.

Spend quality time with the customer and you will get close to that \$32,000. Train your office personnel and your technicians to give superior customer service and you will get all the business you can handle through referrals.

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