



Best Servicers of America

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PARTNER

SERVICE MANUAL

VERSION 1.0

Welcome

Service Policy and Procedure

You are now part of the Best Servicers of America Network. Organizations which demonstrate a commitment to customer satisfaction and professionalism will serve as the foundation from which we hope to build the finest service support network in the industry.

Best Servicers of America is committed to flexibility and responsiveness with the concept of “Quick Service” being paramount. You will find that we backup this goal with action. When one of our service partners has a problem we want it to be our problem - it is our problem! **You need only inform us by using the System or a call to us to set the wheels in motion.** The entire service resource base of Best Servicers of America is at your disposal, a phone call away.

First and foremost in this regard is the Quality of Service (QOS) which you provide to our customers. We consider QOS a primary service aspect because poor QOS renders all other customer satisfaction issues irrelevant. This is why we must first do one thing - repair every unit with the highest QOS.

QOS is the single most important individual performance measurement. QOS is derived from a survey conducted among customers who have recently received service.

At Best Servicers of America, we consider our service network a key factor in the development of an enhanced customer satisfaction paradigm. Together, it is essential that we forge a standard for service delivery through the mutual and reciprocal application of sincere, speedy, and above all, smart service.

Please convey, to all the personnel in your organization that Best Servicers of America considers you to be a vital part of the service support team. The goal of this team is ambitious. To go beyond customer satisfaction by delivering service better than the customer expected and to establish a new benchmark for measuring service quality which sets customer satisfaction as the minimum passing grade. This can only be considered if the infrastructure which delivers customer satisfaction is in place, stable and strong.

Customer Service & Service Process

SCHEDULING A SERVICE CALL

The first contact is the most important contact you will have with the customer. It will help set the tone for the entire service experience. If the customer walks away from that first contact with a positive impression of you, they will tend to be more easily satisfied during the rest of the process. If they are "turned off" during this first contact, everything else down the line will be made more difficult.

The value of a human contact during that first call is critical. Routinely having an answering service or voice mail accept these calls is a mistake (your best choice would be to provide your cellular phone number). Keep in mind, the customer comfort zone is being able to talk to a human about their problem; it makes their comfort zone bigger. Leaving a message on an answering machine just might make it smaller! If you must use an answering machine, return these phone calls as quickly as possible. Don't wait until the end of the day to pick up the 47 messages you have! Pick up messages several times during the day and return them promptly.

When you talk to the customer, always use a friendly tone of voice. Being friendly and upbeat allows you to reduce the frustration level that may already exist. If you use a monotone or annoyed voice, you may tend to get the customer more frustrated and annoyed. The more positive you can make this conversation, the more accurate information you will be able to get out of it! If you are not sure how to pronounce the customer's name, ask them. Saying something like;

"I'm not quite sure how to pronounce your name, sir. Could you pronounce it for me?" or make an effort to pronounce it and then say, "I hope I pronounced that correctly, sir."

Always use last names and Mr. or Miss, or Mrs. Do not refer to a customer as Mike or Bill or John unless you know them or they tell you to. Keep the conversation professional at all times.

When First Talking to the Customer

When you talk to the customer, listen to what he or she has to say. Make sure that you understand what it is that the customer wants and what it is that the customer expects from you. The customer will readily share some information with you. Other information will be your responsibility to get from them.

For example, the customer may say that their unit doesn't work. You would then ask what exactly is the problem, what may have caused the problem, when did it stop working, and other questions to accurately determine what the problem is.

Ask the questions and then listen to the answers. Don't cut off the customer when he or she is talking about their problem. Letting the customer talk accomplishes two very important things.

1. First of all, talking about the problem allows the customer a chance to vent their frustrations and feelings. Being able to vent their frustrations allows them to reduce their anger and anxiety. This in turn lets them become less frustrated, more relaxed, and more receptive to your questions and suggestions.
2. The second thing that is accomplished by letting the customer talk is that you can gain valuable insights as to what the problem really is. Little bits of information may actually help you in diagnosing the problem more accurately. The more accurate your diagnosis, the greater chance you have in having the correct parts when you visit the customers home. Since your efforts should be focused on resolving the problem in one site visit, having the correct parts is critical.

Asking questions also allows you to "head off" some service visits entirely. There will be instances where a customer may not be using the device properly, or the problem is a common one that can easily be fixed by the customers themselves. In cases like these, you can simply instruct the customer on what to do and they can fix it themselves! They don't have to wait for a service tech and you save the cost of going to the customer's home. You now have more time to schedule other, more important, jobs and satisfy more customers! That is what I call a win-win situation!

Confirm the Information

When you do need to schedule a service call, it is very important that all the information you receive from the customer is accurate. Nothing wastes more time than searching for a wrong address, calling a wrong phone number, or ordering parts for the wrong model of equipment.

Since you are at the customer mercy in obtaining this information, be sure to validate every piece of information. Repeat everything back to the customer. Say something like:

"I would like to confirm the information you just gave me, Mr. Jones. Your address is 123 First Street East Meadow and your phone is 345-4565. You have an XYZ 1000 washer and the drum is not spinning. Is that correct?"

By doing this, you are able to catch any mistakes before hanging up with the customer. If you have the phone number wrong and your hang up, how will you call him back? What if the phone number is unlisted? Always confirm information. If you have a piece of information that is alphanumeric, use the A as in apple, B as in boy, method to insure that everything is accurate.

The key is to take whatever measures are required to provide an ultimate service. With all the information required on hand when you arrive at the customer's home or place of business you have more chance to have the right parts to resolve the problem in one visit.

At minimum this requires accurate addresses, phone numbers, and problem descriptions. Any information that is false will only prolong the time required to resolve the problem and reduce customer satisfaction.

Being able to schedule the actual service call during the first contact shortens the total time it takes to resolve the issue. It also addresses the customer concerns at that point and helps increase his confidence in you.

When a customer has a specific day and time assigned to them, they are more apt to be reassured that their problem is going to be addressed. If they are told that someone will call them back later, they will remain cautious until the call is returned. Therefore, make every effort to schedule the service call during the initial contact. If this is not possible, then return the customer phone calls as fast as is humanly possible. The faster you return the phone call the more faith and confidence the customer is going to have in you.

Determine When You Can Do the Service Call

In order for you to schedule the service call, you need to know two things:

1. First, you have to know when you will have the parts you will need to complete the repair.
2. Second, you will need to know your current schedule and availability. Without these two pieces of information you will reschedule a lot of service calls!

Resist the temptation to schedule an appointment quickly even though you don't have the part in stock. This wastes you time and will disappoint the customer. **Always know parts availability before scheduling the service call.**

(Note: **This only applies when you KNOW that a specific part will be definitely needed.** For example, if someone calls up and says the top cover of his machine shattered in 10 pieces, you would not respond to that call until you had the cover in stock. You would give the customer an approximate delivery date and then call to schedule the service. There will be times when you THINK you know what you need but are not 100% sure. In these cases, you will probably have to respond and confirm which part is actually needed. You do not want to make the customer wait for several weeks for a part that you will not need to complete the repair. That will infuriate the customer and deservedly so!)

Schedule the Service Call

When scheduling a service call, it is important that you be aware of any special needs or requirements that the customer may have. This may include work schedules, children, and other responsibilities. In work environments, it may be a particular time of day when it is the least busy. Whatever these situations are, you need to be aware of them to provide proper customer service.

The ideal situation is when you are available the same time that the customer is available. That is a win-win situation. If it works out that way, Great! If not, then we start negotiating. Ask the customer when someone is usually available or what time of the day is best. Try to accommodate a rough time frame. For example:

If the customer says first thing in the morning is best, and those times is not available, try and offer the second call of the day.

If late in the day is better, try and offer your customer appointments later in the afternoon. Do not offer a 1 o'clock appointment to these customers. Some servicers will service a specific territory on a certain day of the week. For example, a company serving five counties may schedule all their calls in one county on Monday, another county for Tuesday, etc. In cases like this, you would say to your customer;

"We are in your area on Mondays, what part of the day would be more convenient?"

This lets the customer know that Monday is the only day service can be scheduled in their area. Failure to state this up front could backfire on you. Let's say you start by saying;

"When would be convenient for you?"

The customer replies;

"Wednesday morning is good."

You say;

"I'm sorry Wednesdays are not good for us."

The customer then says;

"How about Thursdays?"

You say;

"Thursdays are not good either."

The customer starts to get annoyed and asks;

"Are Fridays OK?"

You finally state;

"I'm sorry but Monday is the only day we are in your area."

Don't you think the customer would be really angry at this point? You bet he is! If there are any restrictions on scheduling appointments, be up front with them when dealing with the customers. They will appreciate it in the long run. Believe me, they will.

Try and save early morning and late afternoon appointments for two wage earner families or families with school age children. It may be far easier for a person to arrange to come in an hour later, or leave an hour early, to be present for a service tech than it would be to take an entire day off. Most people have a limited amount of personal or vacation time and it does not make them happy when they must use that time to stay home and wait for a service tech.

Please don't misunderstand this. We are not saying that your time is not as valuable as your customer's time. What we are saying is that you want to keep the customers coming back to your company time and time again. If scheduling service in a way that makes it easier and less painful for them, don't you think that will leave a favorable impression on them? We are talking comfort zones here. Responding to your customer's specific needs enlarges their comfort zone and helps create an overall positive impression.

When scheduling appointments, use a sliding scale of appointment times. A sliding scale uses a specific window of time that overlaps during the day. For example, if you find that your average service call takes an hour of site time plus 30 minutes of travel, you could schedule your service calls in two or three-hour blocks of time. The day would look something like this:

Appointment # 1 8 AM.

Appointment # 2 9 AM - 11 AM

Appointment # 3 10 AM - 1 PM.

Appointment # 4 12 Noon - 2PM

Appointment # 5 2 PM - 4 PM.

With a schedule like this, shorter service calls enable you to get to the next call at the earlier part of the time frame. Normal length calls will allow you to get to the next call about in the middle of the time range. Calls that run longer than anticipated will have an hour or so "grace period" built in to the next call.

A schedule like this should be modified according to your individual needs and established industry service practice. The basic advantage of a system like this is that it enables you to go through your day in an efficient manner while adhering to a promised time frame.

When you schedule the service call, ask your customer if there are any important things you should know. Is the house easy to find? Are there house numbers that are easily visible? What color house is it? Are there any special instructions you should follow? Anything you may need to know should be indicated on the service record at this time.

Confirm the Appointment Time

What do we do before ending every conversation? Confirm the information. Make sure the customer understands what is going to happen next. Don't leave any doubt in your mind, or the customer's mind about what will transpire in the future. End each conversation like this; "All right, Mr. Smith, I will be at your home on Tuesday the 23 between the hours of 10 AM and Noon. The address is 123 first Street, East Meadow and your phone is 555-1345. Do you have any questions?"

This kind of closing allows you to confirm the appointment time, check the address and phone number again, and give the customer one final opportunity to ask any questions they may have. This part of the call produces closure. Closure is the process where the customer's mind accepts the fact that the situation has been closed in a specific way. In this case, an appointment has been scheduled.

Determine Follow up

If you schedule an appointment more than a few days ahead of time, give the customer a follow-up phone call on the day before the scheduled appointment. It is not uncommon for people to completely forget about an appointment that was scheduled the week before.

The follow-up phone call accomplishes several things. First, it reminds the customer of the appointment. This increases the chance that the customer will be home for the scheduled service call. This reduces wasted time and gas. Second, it gives the customer a chance to reschedule the call in case something else had come up since your last conversation.

The customer may appreciate the ability to reschedule. Last, but certainly not least, it shows your customers that you run an efficient operation that cares about the customers. Their confidence in your company grows. As their confidence grows, so does their comfort zone. As their comfort zone grows..... Well, you know what happens!

Ending the Conversation

Always thank the customer for calling. Tell them you appreciate their business and will respond to their problem the best way possible. Pump them up a little. Make them feel good. Make them feel important. Give them your name and phone number in case they have to call back to cancel or reschedule. Make sure there are no unanswered questions. Ask yourself how you would feel at this point. If you would feel anything less than satisfied, look for ways to make things better NOW!

THE SERVICE CALL

It is at this point when we move from a telephone presence to a personal, face to face, force! At this point, the whole game changes. Instead of a voice on the phone, you are now a physical presence that can be seen, touched, smelled, and thoroughly evaluated!

Because of this, there are several things we need to address:

Appearance

Like it or not, we are all initially judged on the first impression we have with a customer. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the first impression will be made on appearance. Why? Think about what happens when the customer first opens their door or greets you in their office. What's the first thing they do? They look at you. You don't speak to each other before you make eye contact. You look first and then speak. Because of this, your physical appearance carries a tremendous amount of weight! Appearance carries with it a judgment of your competence. If a customer does not like your appearance, he or she will also question your competence. It is not fair but it is true and you must deal with it. We are not saying that you must repair equipment in a three-piece suit. What we are saying is that your appearance must be considered acceptable for your industry and geographic area. If the accepted dress for your particular industry is dark trousers, white shirt and dark tie, then that is what you should be wearing. If your industry standard were shorts and a T-shirt, then shorts and a T-shirt would be acceptable. What you are trying to do is instill a certain level of confidence in the mind of the customer. Your appearance is a major building block on which to build your confidence. It can either help you or hurt you.

Let me give you an example. If you hire someone to clean and vacuum your swimming pool, you would expect the person to come in shorts and a T-shirt. Maybe even a bathing suit would be appropriate. After that you go to a new financial planner to reinvest your entire retirement portfolio. When the financial planner greets you in his office he is wearing shorts and a T-shirt. How confident would you be investing large sums of money with this individual. Same dress, different industries, and different accepted ways of dress. Regardless of industry or geographical area one thing is constant. Whatever you wear, and whatever work you do, you need to be clean and well groomed. Your personal hygiene and appearance speak volumes about you as a person. If you show that you do not care about yourself as an individual, why would the customer think you would care about his or her problem? It is important that we realize that we are dealing with perception here. While perception is not necessarily fact, we must realize that, to that fact, the customer's perception, are their reality.

What they think, therefore, you are! Because of this, and the impact it has on your customers, service techs should always follow the following guidelines:

- 1) Always be neat and clean. If shorts and a T-shirt are acceptable in your line of work, make it a clean pair of shorts and a clean T-shirt. Also keep in mind that a plain T-shirt may be acceptable but a T-shirt with an offensive or inappropriate design or logo is not!
- 2) Make sure your personal hygiene is what it should be. You may do dirty work but that does not excuse you from keeping yourself clean. One of the most offensive problems is body odor.
- 3) Customers hate dealing with people with body odor. This may sound funny or rude to some people but it is a fact that we must deal with.
- 4) Keep yourself well groomed. Shave every day and keep your hair well trimmed.

To some of you reading this, this will seem amusing or of little consequence. I assure you that it is not. Your first impression counts a great deal. There have been some instances where a customer will even refuse someone access to their home because of inappropriate appearance. While this will not occur often, it may occur on occasion. Always keep in mind that you need your customers, they do not need you. They can go somewhere else for their service. You can't!

Greeting the Customer

Once you get past the initial "look over" from the customer, you will then turn to communication skills. It is important that you look confident when you talk to the customer. Look the customer in the eyes when you talk to them. Do not look down at the floor or off into space somewhere. Making eye contact exhibits confidence and authority. Always look into your customer's eyes when you talk to them.

Always use your customer's name when greeting them. "Good morning, Mrs. Rivera, I'm Jim from Best Servicers of America. How are you today?" sounds a lot better than "Hello Ma'am, I'm here to fix your washing machine." Try to make your greeting personable and individualized. Always include the customer's name, your name, and your company name in your greeting. The last thing you want to do is greet your customer with a greeting that appears to be recited from memory or sound impersonal. Your greeting helps establish your personality. You would like your customers to feel you are friendly, personable, and confident. After your appearance, your greeting is next in importance.

Respecting the Customer's Property

The customer office or home is his or her own "space". It is important that you show respect for this area. If it is rainy or snowy outside, ask the customer if you should

remove your shoes before entering their home. Most customers will say no but all of them will appreciate your thoughtfulness. This will also get the customer in the frame of mind to believe that you really care about your customer and their needs.

Think about the opposite. If you were a customer and a repairman came into your home and tracked dirt and grease over your carpets, how would you feel? Not very appreciative or positive towards that person. Your goal is to get that customer to think as positively about you as possible. Showing respect for your customer's property is just another way of helping to achieve that goal. Another way of showing respect is to put down a drop cloth before starting to work. Whether you are going to make a mess or not, placing a drop cloth down prior to service helps place the customer more at ease and creates a positive impression about you.

Another benefit is that the drop cloth allows you to keep track of small parts that may fall on the floor during the repair. Have you ever tried to find a very small screw in a deep shag rug?

All these things need to take place prior to beginning the actual service procedure. Notice the skills involved. No special technical or repair knowledge is required to do the things we talked about so far. We have just used some common sense and basic communications skills. No rocket science here, just common sense. We treated people like we wanted to be treated ourselves.

Skills Customers want from a Service Technician!

As a service technician you have probably attended several training classes, maybe obtained a college degree, or have a wealth of practical experience that you use every day. You probably know your equipment inside out. What do probably did not know is that the customer focuses on something else! Here is what you customers expect from you:

- 1) Honesty
- 2) Politeness
- 3) Punctuality
- 4) Fairness
- 5) Compassion
- 6) Courtesy
- 7) Competence
- 8) Friendly

The above eight skills are what your customers are looking for. Out of the eight listed above, only one, Competence, has anything to do with technical training or equipment knowledge! Don't get me wrong. Technical knowledge is a necessity for repairing equipment. It is a must have requirement for a service technician.

The point that we are trying to make is that technical competence is just a small part of the picture. In order to be effective in your job as a technician, you need to integrate the other skills as well. A technician without all the other skills will not be successful. These technicians are better suited to a role as a bench technician where they just fix equipment without much human intervention. The job of a field service technician is a combination technician/human relations kind of person. They not only repair equipment but also repair the relationship between the customer and the company as well. Two different jobs, two different skill sets.

We have talked about perception. Your customer service and technical skills together help form that perception. We also talked about the value of instilling confidence in the minds of the customers. To instill confidence, you use your customer service skills to present a positive impression about you and your company. Technical skills also play an important role in instilling confidence. If you have visited the customer 10 times before for the same problem and cannot make a lasting repair, all the customer service skills in the world are not going to help you!

The successful technician is a technician that continually develops both, his or her skill sets. We all know technicians that customers just seem to love! They ask for them by name, write letters of appreciation, and go out of their way to express their satisfaction.

They may not be the best trained or have the best skills, yet the customer love them! Why? Because these technicians have learned how to make people feel good. They take the time to talk to their customers. They find out what their customers need and they find ways of giving it to them. Maybe it requires a little handholding. Maybe it's a follow-up phone call. It may be something as small as a warm smile. Whatever it is, they have identified it and mastered it.

Every technician starts his or her job by riding with someone to learn the little points of the job. Most new technicians concentrate on learning the little tricks and problems with each machine they will work on. Very few steps back and see how the older technician treats his customers. This is a very big mistake. Every technician should spend time with another technician to see how he or she handles their customers and service calls. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience out there and it's there for the asking. Ask for it! Learn from it! Develop communication skills as well as technical skills. You'll be more successful and have higher customer satisfaction for your efforts!

Never underestimate the power of customer service skills and your appearance. Always make eye contact with the customer. Stand tall, don't walk or stand hunched over. Make sure your body language says **CONFIDANT**. We want to do everything we can to exhibit a powerful personality. We want to instill confidence. We want to make our customers glad that we are the ones they called to service their equipment. Not the competition. Competition! Let's talk about competition! Three different businesses can

send three technicians to the same seminar and take the same courses. They can purchase the same tools and diagnostic equipment. What will separate one business from another? Customer Service Skills!

Think about that for a moment. Customer Service will often set one business ahead of the rest. Why do people buy a certain brand car from a dealer that is miles away? It's because of that dealer's reputation for customer service. People have also been known to pay more for the same service based on excellent customer service. People travel large distances to purchase from businesses that have excellent customer service reputations.

The vast majority of repairs can be done by the average well-trained technician. Some tough problem may require above average skills and experience but by and large, a well-trained technician can handle most everyday repairs. Why then do some business have good reputations and others poor reputations? The difference is that some businesses stress technical skills and training but ignore the human side of the job. They are either ignorant, or chose to ignore that aspect of the job. In order for you, and your company, to be effective and generate a good reputation in the community, every technician must integrate customer service skills into their approach to service.

DOING THE REPAIR

Do you want to virtually assure yourself of success in most of your service calls? If so, make sure you do this one thing: Get the customer involved in the service call! Getting the customer involved means make him a part of the process. You are probably doing this to a certain extent already; you just need to expand on it.

When a technician goes on a service call, he or she should always ask the customer what the problem is. Even though it should be listed on the service ticket, the problem should always be confirmed with the customer. Ask the customer to confirm what you have been told already. Ask the customer questions about when the problem occurs. Get as much information as possible. Make the customer involved. Consider having the customer demonstrate the problem.

While the customer is operating the unit, you can observe to see if he or she is doing anything wrong that may have caused the problem. Making the customer involved accomplishes two things.

1. First, it allows the customer a chance to explain his or her problem and vent their frustrations if they have any. This reduces their anxiety and eases their fear of the unknown.
2. Second, by making the customer part of the process, you will stand a much better chance of having your customer accept whatever solution you decide on.

For example, if the customer feels confident in your judgment, and you have explained things to him every step of the way, your customer will tend to accept your decision to adjust a part rather than demand a replacement. The idea is to get the customer involved so that they can "buy in" to your solution. You want to work together to get a problem resolved. You want to create a win-win situation between you, your company, and the customer. If you can achieve this, you have done an excellent job! Use your listening skills to gather information about the problem.

While some problems will be easy to spot, others may be impossible to solve without specific information. Always listen to the customer. It will save you time and money and make the customer feel better at the same time!

Many technicians know what a problem is before they walk in the door. It could be a very common problem that occurs in every unit they service. In cases like these, a technician may dismiss the customer's comments and tell them they know what the problem is.

This is a very dangerous thing to do for the following reasons:

1. Dismissing a customer's comments can be interpreted as a very rude gesture. It tells the customer that you do not think what he or she has to say is worthwhile listening to. It also gives the customer the impression that you feel yourself to be superior to the customer. All these feelings will tend to have a negative effect on the customers' feelings towards you. What do you think that will do to your customers comfort zone? It will probably reduce it. That is not the result we are looking for.
2. Another important reason for listening to the customer is that we may pick up one little piece of information that could be critical to diagnosing a problem. Let's say we stop the customer in the middle of his comments. We stop him before he can say that the problem only shows up after the unit has been on for an hour or so. Maybe the problem only occurs when it is very humid or some other special time. If we don't know this, we could spend wasted time and money trying to repair the unit. Some people are funny. If you cut them off when they are trying to tell you something, they very often will not offer any more information until they are specifically asked for it. They will sit there and watch you sweat, knowing that the unit will work fine for another hour, without telling you that. Call it spite, call it thick-headed. They just will not help you. I'm not sure that I blame them, either.

It is important that you realize that a technician's job is a partnership between you and the customer. You need the customer to tell you what is wrong and the customer needs you to repair the piece of equipment. When any part of this relationship becomes strained or non-productive, the entire relationship goes down the drain. Now we are at the point where you have gathered all the information that you will need. Now we let the technical skills come out and take care of the actual repair. While we are doing that, however, let's use our head just a little bit customer service wise.

Things You Should Never Do While Repairing the Unit:

1) Never insult or put down the customer's equipment.

Remember that the customer made the decision to purchase that particular make and model of equipment. Something made the customer purchase it. It may have been the looks, features, manufacturer, advertisement, etc. Something struck a cord with the customer to make him purchase it. If you insult the equipment, you run the risk of insulting the customer right along with it. Keep your opinions to yourself. Be careful even when you are asked about your opinions. Try and remain neutral and non-committal.

2) Don't make comments or talk to yourself while working.

How would you feel if you went to the dentist and he said "Oh, damn!" while he was working on your mouth? Not very good! Customers pay attention to you when you are working on their equipment. When they hear negative comments they tend to react with negativity. They may start to worry that things are really worse than they are. They might blow things way out of proportion. Keep audible comments to yourself at all times.

3) If the customer ask what you are doing tell them!

Unless you work for the government, your actions and techniques do not represent classified information. When a customer asks what you are doing, usually they are just curious. Explain things to them and they will be happy. Again, this is making them part of the process. If you ignore them or talk down to them, your customers will pick up on that.

4) If the problem is a common one reassure the customer.

Reassuring the customer reduces anxiety, increases confidence, and increases your customers comfort zone. Let them know you have seen this problem before and the repair will take care of it with no problem. If the replacement part was changed because of the problem, make sure the customer knows you are installing a heavier duty replacement so that the problem will not come back. The more you can reassure your customer, the more likely he or she will be satisfied at the end of your visit!

5) When you have tested you repair, let the customer pull the knobs and turn the dials!

Here again, customer intervention should be encouraged. When you are done, and before you start packing up, invite your customer to try out the unit. Let them see that it works. Answer any questions. Ask the customer if the unit seems to be working properly. If everything appears to be working perfectly, you can pack up your tools and equipment.

6) Explain what you did and why.

When you are done with the repair, explain what you did to the equipment. Let the customer know what parts you replaced and why. Explain the charges, if any, and the warranty period on the repair. If there are any specific things the customer must know, let them know now. Maybe they can't use the equipment until adhesives dry. Explain that to them now.

7) Ask the customer if there's anything else you can do for them.

You are already at the customer's home or office. Take advantage of that and ask if there is something else you can do for them. This is a perfect opportunity to generate additional income for you or your company. Everyone wins! The customer does not have to stay home for another appointment and your company makes a few extra dollars. Everybody is happy!

8) Close out the call

Let the customer know that you are finished and the repair is complete. You want to eliminate any thought in the customer's mind that you are going to come back and do something in the future. Let your customer know that the repair is finished and thank him for the opportunity to be of service. Be friendly and personable. Make sure that they know you appreciate their business.

9) Thank the customer again and wish them well.

Take a few minutes and thank the customer again. Tell them to have a nice day and offer them a business card with your phone number on it. Inform them that they should call if they have any other problems or questions. Shake hands with them and leave. These steps will help you complete the service call in an extremely productive manner. Go through each of these steps and every service call you make. These steps should take no more than 5 minutes to do yet will save you

hours of time and a good amount of money over the years. They are not technical skills; they are customer service skills. Learn them. Use them. Update them.

WHEN YOU CAN'T COMPLETE THE SERVICE CALL

Up until now we have dealt with the easiest of situations. Someone has a problem; we schedule the repair, arrive at the home, and repair the unit. Everybody's happy and we move on to the next call. Unfortunately, that is not the way it happens all of the time. Rescheduled service calls happen for a variety of reasons. Most of the time it's parts. Nobody makes a van or stockroom large enough to carry every part for every model that you will be called upon to service. There will be instances where you will not have the right part to complete a repair. When this happens, you should add the following steps to your service call skills:

Inform the Customer What Is Going to Happen Next

One of the most important things to do when you have to return to complete a repair is to let the customer know exactly what is going to happen next. If a part has to be ordered, don't just tell them the part will be ordered and then you will call to reschedule. That may sound a little abrupt to the customers. Instead, try something like this:

"Mr. Smith, I need to replace the feed motor in your unit. They don't fail that often so I don't stock that part. I will contact my office today and they will order the part on their next order, which gets submitted on Thursday. Usually it takes about two weeks to get the part if the manufacturer has it in stock. If there is any delay we will notify you. If you have any questions about your part, you can call into our parts department and speak to Nelson at ext. 701 to verify the status."

That gives the customer all they need to know and then some. It gives the customer a contact name and phone number in the parts department to call if they have any questions. It also gives the customer an idea of the time frames involved. What you are doing is setting a certain level of expectation in the mind of the customer.

Suppose you just told the customer that you need to order a part and will return to complete the repair. The customer has no idea how long they should be waiting. Maybe the customer will wait the two weeks. Maybe they will expect you back in two days! Without setting the level of expectation yourself, you have no idea what the customer expects. This places customer satisfaction in doubt. Always take the time to explain what is going to happen with the customer. It takes less than two minutes and can save a lot of problems later.

Never Promise What You Can't Deliver

One very common problem is that the customer is not very happy that you cannot complete the repair during the first visit. Maybe they need the equipment for their business or maybe it's just something they enjoy using very often.

Either way, they are not satisfied when told that there will be a two-week wait for the part to arrive. Very often we are tempted to promise something to the customer just to be able to get out of the house or office. Like:

"OK, Mr. Smith, I'll put a rush on it and we can get the part in two days. We'll call to reschedule."

If you can get the part in two days, that statement is just fine. It addresses a customer concern and provides a solution to the problem.

If you can't get the part in within that two-day time frame then you have taken a bad problem and made it much worse. The customers are not stupid. When that part doesn't come in, they know you just told them something to shut them up. They will become angry with you and your company for doing that. Their anger will make it that much harder for you when you return to complete the repair. If that is not bad enough, something far more important has occurred. The customer now realizes that you lied to them. Your credibility and relationship with that customer has been damaged. Depending on the type of person the customer is, the relationship may be damaged beyond repair. At best, your company is going to have to work very hard to regain the trust of that customer.

Every technician should have a basic knowledge of how long it takes to receive a part after it has been ordered. If orders are sent to the manufacturer only during certain times of the week or month, the technician should be aware of that also. This information will make it easier for you to determine an approximate wait time for the part you need. Make sure your customers know that your time frames are estimates. Explain that you and your company have no control over what the manufacturer or distributor carries in their inventories. Let them know that you will do your best to get the part in as quickly as you can. Do everything to reassure the customer but do not over promise. It will come back to bite you. One more thing, when your customer loses confidence in you and your company, what does that do to their comfort zone? It not only reduces it, it can wipe it right out!

Follow-up with the Customer

More companies, large and small, fall far short in this area.

When you have a customer waiting for a part and it doesn't come in on schedule, do you call them? Unless it is a "hot" customer, probably not.

This is a mistake. Someone has given the customer a time frame for getting parts and service on their equipment. That time line sets the expectation level of the customer. If he is told two weeks to get the part, he will expect to be notified within a day or two of that two-week time frame. If he is not notified, then they start to get frustrated:

What's going on?

Why haven't they called?

Maybe they can't get the part!

If they can't get the part, they can't fix the machine.

I can't afford a new machine!

What will I do without this machine?

The customer's mind starts to create all these different reasons why you have not called them to schedule the return visit. From the smallest problem to utter catastrophe, every scenario starts to go through the customer mind. One simple phone call can eliminate this problem. Keep the customers in the loop regarding their parts. Let them know the unit is backordered from the distributor but they expect it in within a few days. Let them know you can't get the part from the manufacturer because they don't have it in stock. Whatever the reason, share it with them.

Even if you forgot to order it, be up front about it. It is better to find out from you than it is for your customer to discover that later! Sharing information accomplishes several things. It keeps the customer informed about the status of his or her part. This reduces frustration levels. It also lets the customer know that you are doing everything you can do and the problem rests with another company. Let your customer get angry with the manufacturer when you can't get a part. Your relationship with the customer is what you need to protect every day. Don't let anything come between you and that relationship.

Reschedule with priority

When the part comes in, make every effort to quickly reschedule the service call. It's not right that this customer be put on the end of the list for service. They have waited patiently and deserve fast response. Depending on company policy you may want to schedule the call when you have confirmation that the part has been shipped. That can save a few days. Sometimes companies leave a few slots open for reschedules and emergencies. This allows you to get the call completed quickly. The faster you respond, the happier your customer will be.

WHEN THE SERVICE IS COMPLETE

When the service call is complete, the job is not. Paperwork regarding the job should be completed and turned in as quickly as possible (SIGNED WORK ORDERS SHOULD BE FAXED OVER TO 561- 886-6690). not doing so would delay the payment process for you. The job isn't over until the paperwork is done! In addition to the paperwork, the following steps should be taken whenever a service has been completed:

What Parts Were Used?

If any of the parts that were sent for the repair had not been used you will have to contact the main office in order to obtain a free return label. If there are any core parts, the same procedure should be followed.

Is All the Paperwork There?

Are all the required paperwork forms available? If this is a warranty job was the paperwork submitted for payment? If the customer is to be billed, has a bill been generated? If the customer has a service contract, has this information been entered in against that contract? Service businesses are in the business of making money. If all repairs are not billed out to the proper people, the business will lose money. If that should continue, people will lose their jobs. Pay attention to paperwork.

Is the Customer Satisfied?

Do you want to blow the doors off your competition? Call your customer a few days after they received service and ask them if everything is still all right. They won't expect it and will be very appreciative. You may get a few extra service calls because of these follow-up calls but it is better to satisfy a customer than to lose him to your competition. Another important piece of the follow-up procedure is the Customer Satisfaction survey. This survey asks your customer to give you their opinions and comments on what you did well and what you can do better. This information can go a long way in improving your service efforts. The follow-up survey is not to be used as a substitute for the follow-up phone call. Each serves a different purpose. Use both to find out how you are really doing!

Servicing Warranty Calls

Warranty business may be business that you get because you are the only business in your area that is authorized to do the repairs and be compensated by the Best Servicers of America.

For warranty service calls you should follow these important steps below:

1. Try to schedule appt for Diagnosis within 24 hours of having received the service call
2. Update Best Servicers of America private website with the actions you have been taken to schedule the call (in case you are on the road, calls us and we will update the system for you).
3. Once onsite, call us so we can document in real time your arrival to the service location.
 - a. Verify if the Serial and Model number match the unit to be serviced indicated in the service work order. In case it does not, please contact main office for instructions.
 - b. If the customer is not home, tech needs to follow the steps below:
 - i. Call main office to report you are onsite and to let us know customer is not home for service.
 - ii. Agent from Best Services of America will enter all the necessary notes in the system and try to contact the customer by calling all the available contact phone numbers and leave message.
 - iii. Agent will advise tech to wait for 30 minutes to give the customer the opportunity to arrive onsite.
 - iv. In case customer not home after the 30 minutes wait, tech to call main office and close service work order.
 - v. Tech will be paid for the service visit.
4. Once unit has been diagnosed, call us to provide diagnose information and part numbers needed (if any) to repair the unit and close the service work order (a new work order will be created for you to go back onsite once parts arrive).
5. Best Servicers of America will be ordering the parts from the manufacturer and shipping the parts to the technician (technician must have a valid shipping address in the system that can receive packages from multiple carriers – like UPS, FEDEX, etc).
6. Technician should proactively try to schedule the appt for second visit by verifying on Best Services of America website when the part should be arriving and schedule appt (if possible) for next day.
7. Once appt scheduled, please follow procedure from number 2 through 4.
8. If there is any core part or unused part to be returned, please call into the main office in case there is no return shipping label already inside of the shipment received.

THINGS TO AVOID

We have spent a great deal of time talking about what we should do when we talk and deal with customers. Equally important are the things we should NOT do! While it is impossible to cover everything, the following is a brief list of some of the more important things to avoid:

Talk concerning politics or religion.

These topics are quite personal and many people have strong feelings about them. It is unwise to enter discussions or make comments on these subjects. We do not want to risk having a personal opinion come between a business and a customer.

Jokes

Much like religion and politics, an individual sense of humor will vary greatly. What one person finds funny another may feel offended. Keep jokes or funny stories to a minimum. That does not mean you should be serious and rigid in your dealing with the customer. Be friendly and cheerful but watch out for jokes and other similar stories.

Knocking your competition

Never put down someone else who has worked on the unit or anyone that is your competition. It is not very professional and can come back to haunt you. I know of one technician who looked at a repair and said "Wow! Who worked on this last? He sure didn't know what he was doing!" It turned out that he was the one that worked on the unit last! Try and recover from that blunder! If asked specifically about another serviceperson or competition, just say you really don't have any first hand information about them. Then, turn the conversation around to what your company does better. Your customers will appreciate that and will also tend to discount anything you say about your competition anyway.

Dishonesty

Some people will attempt to get you to do something dishonest in order for them to save a few dollars. Sometimes people will ask you if you would like to do the job yourself at night or on weekends at a lower price than if your company would do it. **ALWAYS REFUSE THESE OFFERS!** These offers are made by people who will have no problem turning you in to your company if things don't go right. They may even hold it over your head to get other work done. It is just not worth it. Besides, the very best reason for not doing it is: It's just not right! If offers like these are made, it is a good idea to report them to your company after the work is completed. This way, if the customer does call and complain and make up some story about you, your comments will already be on file. Be careful, there are a lot of funny people out there!

Avoid the liquid lunch!

Resist the temptation to have that beer with lunch. Even on those 95-degree summer days! The smell of alcohol, even just one beer or drink, can stay on your breath for quite a while. Even if it doesn't affect your performance, the customer may feel otherwise. Another important reason, never drink and drive!

Poor Driving!

When you are driving a vehicle with your company's logo or name on it, you are representing the company. You may not be at the customer's home, or even on company business. Since people can see whom the vehicle represents, your actions behind the wheel are a reflection on your company. If people see you driving erratically or dangerously, that will send a negative message to their brains about the company. Don't risk that to save a few minutes!

Thinking you know it all!

Most of us feel that we know ourselves better than anyone else. We think we have a good grasp of what we are doing and how we are doing it. The reality is, we see things from one vantage point; our eyes and ears. Other people, such as co-workers, friends, and family, see us from a totally different perspective and may be able to provide valuable insight on how we act and appear in front of others. It is very difficult to know how we sound or look to other people without this feedback. Ask other people for their feedback on how we deal with other people. Don't take negative comments as criticism but rather as constructive comments that will enable you to improve your customer service skills.

On The Business Side...

Avoid using substandard parts!

The quality of your work speaks volumes about your company and how it regards its customers. By using substandard parts, you place that quality in a dangerous position. Use the best parts you can find in all your work.

Avoid ambiguous wording in your warranty.

If you offer a warranty on your work, make the wording of the warranty easy to follow and understand. Make sure a fifth grade student can read and understand it. Unclear warranties can add to frustration levels and conflicts. Keep wording simple!

Don't promise what you can't deliver!

You are much better off turning down business that you can't handle than taking it on and disappointing a customer. Customers appreciate honesty. Though you risk losing a customer to your competition, you will stand a much better chance of getting that customer in the future if you do right by them today! Only promise what you know you can deliver!

Old or dirty vehicles

Your vehicles are a reflection of your company. Keep vehicles properly maintained and clean. If your customers see old and filthy vehicles pull up to their homes, what impression do you think they will have. Just as your employee's appearance reflects on their competence, your vehicles appearance also reflects on your company.

Don't rely on voicemail!

Try and keep the human element in as much of your dealings with customers as possible. Customers hate voice mail! If you find a significant number of calls going to voice mail every day, it may be time to think about adding another person to handle these calls.

ABSOLUTE MUST DO's

Exceed Customer's Expectations

Always try to go one step further. Give the customer something in addition to what they expect. Always be on the lookout for new things to offer your customers.

Be Innovative

There are very rare instances when only one solution will work. Don't be afraid to come up with new ways to deal with the same old problems.

Learn From Your Mistake

If you do or say something wrong to a customer, don't beat yourself up over it. We all make mistakes. It's what we do with these mistakes what's important. Learn from your mistakes. Think about what happened and why. Try and determine what should have been done or said at that time. This way, the next time you are in that situation you will know what to say or do. If you don't do this, you will keep making the same mistakes over and over again!

Avoid Using Technical Language

When talking to your customers, avoid using technical terms that the customer may not understand. This goes not only for service techs but also parts people, dispatchers, and other people the customer may deal with. Try to explain everything in an easy to understand manner. This will reduce the frustration level of the customer and make them more receptive to what you have to say.

Payment Schedule

Invoicing and Payment Procedure

You are to submit a signed work order at the end of each completed visit; work orders will be available for printing on the www.BestServicers.com portal. A summary of the completed calls will be performed at the end of each month which will include the total amount of calls serviced by you for that pay period. When running the payment cycle system will leave behind any ticket that does not have the paperwork returned. The system sees it as IMCOMPLETE, leaving the ticket for the next pay period.

A check will be issued under your company name and mailed to you by the 20th of each month. The amount per call is the agreed with your recruiter while in the process of becoming a Best Servicers of America service provider.

Conclusion!

Customer Service skills should be a very big part of every technicians training. These skills will enable you to do your work better, faster, and more easily.

In closing, I would like to applaud you for just spending the time to read this manual. Just by reading it you have identified yourself as someone who realizes the importance of customer service skills. That alone places you above the average technician.

Once again, welcome to our team of professionals!

Sincerely,

Management