210: Understand how to communicate with others within building services engineering  
**Worksheet 6: Communication methods**

**Answer guide**

**Read the scenario below. Write a paragraph outlining how this problem could be avoided in the future.**

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| --- | --- |
| 02 electrician.jpg | Cyril runs a small electrical company. One evening he received a phone call from a very good customer whose heater had stopped working and was giving off a burning smell when switched on. He visited the site that same evening and isolated the heater but had no time to do a site inspection. He advised the customer that a replacement heater would cost in the region of £170 and also, given that the heater was a special size, he could not guarantee when a new one could be fitted, as he was unsure of availability.  The next day, a Friday, he contacted the customer to advise that he would be there on Saturday, as his friend who ran the local electrical wholesalers had managed to obtain a heater. The customer said that, owing to the fact that no heater was available, the family would be away for the weekend but a key would be available next door.  Cyril and his apprentice started the work on Saturday and within two hours found the reason for the heater failure and the burning smell. The latter was caused because when the heater went faulty, it resulted in the cable insulation feeding it melting, thus requiring the cable run to be replaced. |

Cyril went to the next-door neighbour’s house but no contact details had been left. Given that it was a very good customer, Cyril made a decision to get on with the work, including the rectification work required. This involved working late into Saturday evening and well into Sunday.

Cyril called round on Monday morning to make sure that the customer was satisfied with the job and to outline details of the additional work that had been carried out. The customer was extremely grateful – that is, until Cyril submitted his invoice for the work a week later. The invoice amounted to some £500.00. Cyril was faced with a situation where payment was refused and the customer accused him of ‘ripping people off’.

Cyril produced a number of written communications to the customer in order to obtain his money. Each time the customer became more aggressive. Finally, he chose to seek legal advice from his solicitor who advised him to drop the claim, as he was unlikely to win in any legal action.

**Answer the questions below.**

**These answers are only some of the possible correct answers.**

1. **Name some poor practices that can give you, your company or the industry a bad name or reputation.**

**Poor time keeping, bad attitude, swearing, behaving inappropriately, using the customers’ phone, dirty feet marks**

1. **‘If you are a good electrician, it does not matter what you look like or how you treat your customers.’ Is this true? Explain your answer.**

**No. How you treat your customers is of paramount importance – they are your best source of advertising.**

1. **Why is it important to present a good quality image?**

**A good quality image will help to put the customer’s mind at rest by portraying you as a professional who will endeavour to look after their property.**

1. **What good practices can you and your company undertake that will enhance your reputation?**

**Company branding on vans and clothing, shared work ethos/attitude, training, company policies**

1. **When would you use verbal communication with customers? What might you discuss?**

**Verbally communication with the client is used daily to confirm issues that have already been agreed or just in polite conversation**

1. **When should communication be in writing?**

**All official communication should be in writing to ensure clarity over what work is being carried out and at what cost (quotations, invoices, applications)**

1. **A customer is unhappy with your recommended position for the installation of a convector heater and would like it moved on to a different wall. What actions and communication methods may be required?**

**As an employee of a company, determine the customer’s new preferred position of the radiator and explain that you will have to speak to your supervisor. Explain to the supervisor any additional work and materials involved so that a variation order for the work can be raised. This should be communicated both verbally and in writing.**

1. **While working you need to take ‘responsibility’ for a job. What is meant by this?**

**Ensuring that the job runs smoothly and that you address any concerns that the client may have.**

1. **What are the dos and don’ts related to running a job?**

* **Do treat the client’s property with respect**
* **Don’t treat it like your home from home**
* **Do discuss all the areas where you will be working and over what timescales**
* **Don’t ignore the customer**

1. **Can you list five common customer complaints?**

* **Bad attitude**
* **Whenever I ring, I get fobbed off**
* **Your product didn’t do what you said it would**
* **You didn’t do what you said you were going to do in the estimated time**
* **They (the customer) have not been kept informed as the job progresses**