

# satisfying CUSTOMERS for PROFIT

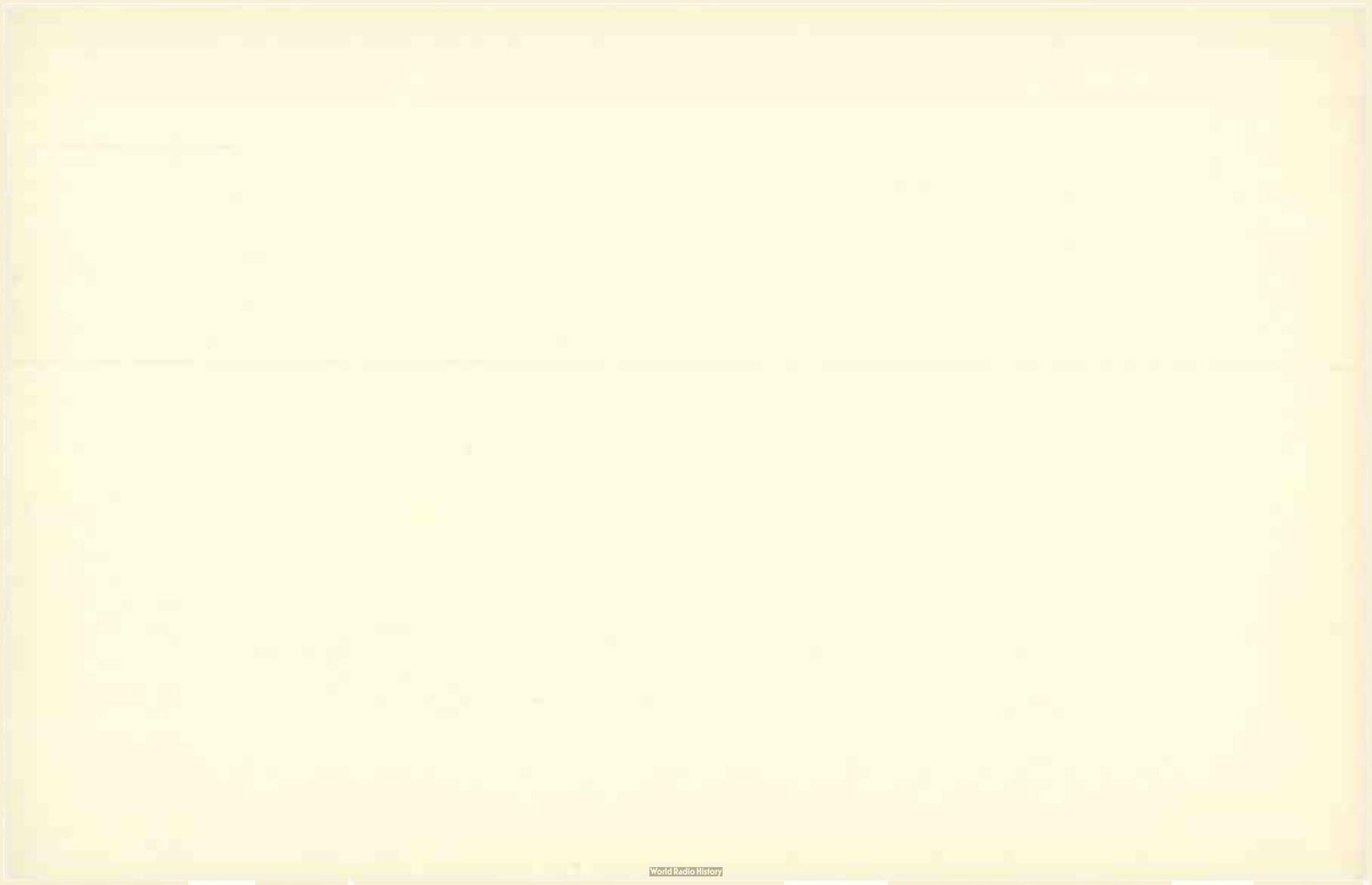
Tested Principles of Customer Relations  
for the Service-Type Business

*An Electronic Industries Association Project*

A



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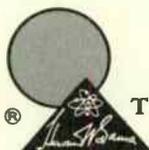


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# satisfying CUSTOMERS for PROFIT

*An Electronic Industries Association Project*



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SATISFYING CUSTOMERS FOR PROFIT

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## FOREWORD

It is an established fact that servicing represents one of the most important segments of the electronics industry. It is also a fact that servicing is an extremely complex business.

Recognizing this, the Electronic Industries Association has sponsored a series of publications designed to provide a thorough study of service work in all its various phases. Previous publications dealt with technical skills, and future ones will cover business management.

This book is the latest in the series, and deals with that all-important element of any successful service business—Customer Relations. In these pages you will learn the practices—combinations of technical and business management techniques—which will enable you to deal effectively, and successfully, with your customers.

We wish to express our appreciation to the independent electronic service technicians who participated in the field test of the course, the EIA Service Committee, and the Subcommittee on Customer Relations.

October, 1960

JAMES D. SECREST  
Executive Vice President  
Electronic Industries Association

**ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION—  
NEW YORK TRADE SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS**

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**Basic Electricity — 2nd Edition**

**Basic Electronics — 2nd Edition**

**Basic Radio and Radio-Receiver Servicing — 2nd Edition**

**Basic Television and Television Receiver Servicing**

**Advanced Television Servicing Techniques**

**Industrial Electronics**

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## CROSTOWN ELECTRONIC SERVICE

A series of situations involving the day-to-day experiences of the Crosstown Electronic Service business with their shop and home customers.

The personnel of the Crosstown Electronic Service consists of the following principal characters:



**BOB TRONIC**, the 30-year-old owner-operator who makes many of the house calls.



**POP TRONIC**, Bob's father, an electronic service "old timer" who is full of practical ideas as a result of a lifetime in the professional service business.



**MARYBETH**, Bob's wife who helps the father-son team at the shop, answering the telephone and waiting on the shop customers.



**RED TOWERS**, who does much of the bench service work, but often calls upon Pop's wisdom and experience; makes many service calls with Bob or alone.

Each narrative deals with a special aspect of customer relations. A summary of the important points follows the presentations. Thought-provoking, practical questions are used to apply the knowledge in a useful manner.



## 1 BOB ANSWERS THE \$7,500 QUESTION

With the New Year's resolutions still unbroken, Bob Tronic did his best to ignore the bright mid-January sunshine coming through the spotless front windows of the Crosstown Electronic Service building. He had just finished reading the report from his bookkeeping service, and there was no doubt about it: it had been the best year yet. More than 20% better than the previous year, in fact.



**BUILD YOUR PROFITS**

Bob pushed back his chair and walked over to Marybeth's desk. After twelve years of marriage she knew that Bob had just run out of cigarettes and was coming over to search hopefully in her purse. Without even looking up from the envelopes she was addressing for the special February mailing, she took a new pack from a hidden carton and offered it to Bob.

Bob looked startled. "How'd you guess, Sweetheart?"

"You picked yourself a mind reader," said Marybeth.

"Well, Mrs. Mindreader, if you're as sharp as all that, maybe you'd care to guess what kind of a year we've had?"

Marybeth frowned seriously, then looked up brightly. "I'd say about 20% better."

"What makes you think it's 20%," Bob went on, "unless you've been peeking at the mail from the bookkeeping service?"

"I haven't been peeking at anything," protested Marybeth, "and what's more I don't have to. A week seldom passes without a pleasant telephone call from a satisfied customer. We're busier than ever before. The telephone is my yardstick of our activity—the best yardstick in the world." She paused as Red Towers, Bob's helper, came from the shop.

"Where there's smoke there's cigarettes," said Red suggestively.

"What a bunch of freeloaders," complained Marybeth, as Bob offered a cigarette to Red.

"Like many of our customers," agreed Red.

Bob frowned. "You're dead wrong on that one, Red. There's nothing free about any of our customers. They're the folks who pay our salaries, my friend. You know how much I figure each one of them is worth to us? Just about \$7,500, at least. And that's just the hardware: trucks, office equipment, test equipment, replacement parts and tubes, inventory, and tools. If you added on the cost of your training and

mine plus the good will we've been building up since we opened for business eight years ago, the actual worth might be twice that."

"I don't get it," pleaded Red. "Let's say we have 1,500 customers in a certain year. If the business investment is \$7,500, then each customer is only worth five bucks. Doesn't that figure?"

Bob nodded. "That's one way of looking at it, but without the \$7,500 invested we couldn't have any customers. A good customer is hard to find and harder to keep. I like to think each one cost \$7,500; then I'm not so likely to forget what's at stake. \$7,500 may not be all the cash in the world, but it took us eight years to get this far. Any time I fail to satisfy a customer, I figure I've said goodbye to 7½ G's. You'd be surprised how much harder I work on the next call we get."

Red thought this over, then winked at Marybeth. "Next, you'll say the customer is King."



"He is," said Marybeth, ignoring the wink. "It took me five years to make a believer of Bob. And no one can sniff out the trouble in a sick TV faster than our boy. In fact, that was the problem when Bob was getting started. He was so busy trouble-shooting thingamajigs that he never took the time to treat the patient as well as the disease. I was worrying about the slow growth of Crosstown Electronic Service when I saw an article

in one of the service magazines about customer relations. It was then we began to realize there's more to the service business than fixing sets. We started thinking in terms of people, too."

"Marybeth put her finger on it," agreed Bob. "It finally dawned on me that it wasn't enough to be a good technician—there are plenty of fellows in this town who are. It's things like courtesy, tact, enthusiasm, sympathy, and friendliness that make the big difference. In this business you're rewarded to the extent that you give Service with a capital S. I've got increased business and profits to prove it." Bob waved at the papers on his desk.

"You don't need complicated records to know how you're doing," Marybeth interrupted. "I can tell just by talking to our customers on the telephone. But don't tell Bob; he thinks I gaze into a crystal ball."

## In Brief . . .

**A good customer is costly to find. . . . and keep.**

**A growing business is the result of *really* selling service. And there's more to selling service than applying technical know-how.**

**Enthusiasm is the most contagious disease you can catch. It builds business good will when left uncured.**

**The investment in training never ceases to pay dividends, and don't forget—this training includes customer relations. In-service training offers the only opportunity to compete in a rapidly changing technology.**

**Probably fairly close to where you are now, there are several hundred—or thousand—men and women who hold the key to your future success. They are customers or prospects, or both.**

**The serviceman who believes he is merely servicing, but not selling, will soon cease servicing.**

**It isn't enough to be a good technician—a service technician is rewarded to the extent that he gives Service with a capital S.**

**Completely satisfied customers are the yardstick of a serviceman's success.**

**Business growth is a result of combining the ability to perform satisfactorily and the ability to impress favorably.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Did you ever try to estimate the cost of your training? Some of the costs were obvious, such as the tuition and the books purchased, but can you name some of the hidden expenses of your training?
2. Can you itemize the investments in your customers that *don't* cost money?
3. How many sources can you list that can help you keep up to date on customer relations?
4. Who benefits from a service call?
5. When does your investment in training, experience, shop equipment, etc., pay off?

## 2 AN OLDTIMER SOUNDS OFF

### CUSTOMERS



1950-150  
MILLION



1960-180  
MILLION

### THE SERVICE PIE IS GROWING

Perhaps one very good reason for the success of the Crosstown Electronic Service was a friendly, family atmosphere so strong that customers seemed to sense they were in good hands.

This cordial, how-can-we-help-you spirit was nothing you could touch or define. It was expressed in Marybeth's voice when she answered the phone, in Bob's friendly smile as he walked into a

customer's house, in the way a person was greeted when he entered the shop. Nothing pushy or flip, mind you—just a genuine interest in people and their problems, plus the obvious competence of men who know their work and take pride in their skills.

Red Towers noticed this special personality his first day at work. Bob and Marybeth made him feel at home right from the start. They introduced him to Pop Tronic, Bob's father, who was officially retired but still came in almost every day. Then Johnny and Linda, Bob and Marybeth's children, stopped by after school. Johnny said he was going to be an astronaut and wanted Red to tell him all about the Air Force. Linda caught him off balance by asking if he was married. (Red coughed and said that he wasn't, at least not yet.) By closing time, Red felt he'd known the Tronics for years. He soon found out that most of the customers, even new ones, felt the same way.

One Thursday afternoon a few weeks later, Pop was helping Red check out a mobile transmitter from the Plainview Taxi Company. Red, who had learned a lot about communications equipment during his four years with Uncle Sam, was amazed when Pop beat him to a diagnosis. Marybeth's arrival with two cups of coffee encouraged him to find out how come.

"Pop, transmitter work is pretty offbeat for most shops—how did you spot that short so fast?"

"Young man," said Pop with a twinkle, "I've been fixing radios since before you or Bob were born. In fact, next month it'll be just 35 years ago I sold my first set. I had a furniture store on Grand Avenue then, and half the people in town hadn't even seen a radio when I first put one in the window. Collected a big crowd, which was what I had in mind, of course, but then someone wanted to *listen* to it as well as look at it. Next thing you know I had to buy a dozen headsets and hire

a bright high school boy to explain how it worked. Wasn't long afterward that I got interested myself and took a set home to tinker around with."

Red chuckled, "Got hooked by your own gimmick?"

"That was only the beginning," confessed Pop. "After a while people actually began buying sets, and since no one had ever heard of a service shop in those days, I had to keep them running myself. When Central City started broadcasting, and when we could count on picking up Chicago now and then, things really began to boom. I've been in up to my ears ever since. I'm a ham, too. I had the first amateur license west of Rockville and now hold a first-class ticket. Right now I've got a 1,000-watt single sideband job at home that you might like to try out sometime. There's a bunch of us enthusiasts who get together on Friday nights; we'd be pleased to have you drop by."

Red glanced at the taxi transmitter on the bench. "I should have guessed I was up against an old pro. You've seen a lot happen in thirty-five years."

"That's right, Red. In the old days, radio was mostly a curiosity. Today, with TV, FM, hi-fi, and all the rest, electronics is a part of people's lives. We're sitting in the middle of a \$14,000,000,000 industry. Behind us are some of the finest engineering talents in the world and some mighty capable production men, too. Together they turn out more sets, components, and parts in a day than you'd have seen in a whole year back in 1920. A few bucks today will buy you quality and reliability people didn't even dream of then. The finest lab in the country didn't have the test instruments we've got sitting on our bench right now. In another ten years, the industry will be two, three times as big. And that's only half the story."

"Half?" puzzled Red.

"Yes," Pop went on. "Something like 180,000,000 Americans use, enjoy and depend on the equipment we service. They're a savvy bunch, too, with an investment in sets that grows bigger every year."

"Sounds like we'll make a mint."

"Not if you think in those terms, Red. But If you think about people and how you can serve them better and more efficiently, you can count on a comfortable living or even better. More important, you can count on a world of satisfaction. After thirty-five years in this game I've learned that success is built on doing something people need and



**YOUR SHARE**

doing it right. Stick that idea in your hat and you'll never worry about a buck again."

"I'll try it on for size," Red promised as he headed back for the bench. "Meanwhile, what do you say we put this transmitter back together before it gets obsolete."

## **In Brief . . .**

**Each customer should be made to feel that he has come to the right place.**

**Speak in a friendly, pleasant tone—each customer needs to know you want to help him.**

**The industry and the service dealer benefit from attitudes that speak well of the firm.**

**Facts about products can be converted into selling points.**

**A friendly manner breeds new friends—if in doubt, try it.**

**A friendly atmosphere spreads as it sells your business, your products, and your industry.**

**Service fosters the sale of products of the electronics industry by creating good will through customer satisfaction.**

**Pride in the vast industry, of which you are a part, pays off in respect and understanding from your customers.**

**The shortest success rule: "Please others."**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. What can you do to show a how-can-I-help-you spirit to each customer?

2. How can you explain the value of efforts made by your industry for the customer's benefit?

3. How can personal ties with customers be built and strengthened?

4. What evidence can be displayed to make customers feel they are dealing with competent, skilled people?

5. Why are you proud to be a part of the great electronics industry?

### 3 BOB'S RECIPE FOR 'TURTLE SOUP

Whether it was sunspots or flying saucers, Bob had had to pull so many TV sets into the shop the first week in May that both he and Red were hard pressed to get them out by the weekend.

This Friday afternoon, it seemed to Red that the clock must have stopped running. He had a tough alignment job on his hands, and the longer he worked on it the hungrier he got. When he heard Mrs. Smith walk in with a portable record player and a tale of woe at two minutes of five he gave up. Grabbing his hat, he stormed past Bob and Mrs. Smith, marched out the door, and was soon installed at Harry's with a tall glass of beer.

A good 20 minutes later, Bob settled himself in the booth across the table from Red and gestured toward the beer, "Where's mine?"

"I thought maybe you'd decided to stay behind and make an evening of it," Red retorted morosely.

"Mrs. Smith," said Bob, "has a problem. Tomorrow her oldest boy, Tommy, is six and he's having a party. She needs the record player for some of the games she's planned. This morning her three-year-old knocked it off a table. She couldn't come down to the shop until her husband got home because the baby's sick. I replaced a cracked tube and put in a new stylus. You know what she said when I carried the phono out to her car?"

"She said, 'Elvis really sends me,'" suggested Red.

"She said, 'Bless you, Bob. You always help us when it counts most.'"

Red hid his embarrassment behind the menu, and then ordered the usual with French fries.

Bob buttered a piece of rye. "I know how you feel, Red. This has been a busy week and it's aggravating when someone comes in with a rush job just as you're getting ready to close. But you know, most of the time it really *is* an emergency of some kind, and if you look at it from the customer's angle, an extra 15 minutes doesn't matter that much. This steak will taste a lot better when I think about Tommy and his gang having a ball tomorrow."

"And you made at least three bucks," said Red defensively.

"More or less," Bob replied. "The point is, however, that Mrs.



Smith has been a customer for five or six years. I happen to know she's steered at least three neighbors to us during that time. I hope she'll still be coming to us 20 years from now, along with her friends and *their* friends. Anyone ever tell you how to make turtle soup?"

Red shook his head.

"First you catch a turtle. The same recipe applies to the service business. First you get a customer, and when you've got him, you do everything possible to hang onto him so he can buy you that steak you're cutting up. Customers pay your salary and mine, and you'd better learn to love them if you like to eat regularly."

Red threw up his hand. "Okay, okay.

I goofed and I'm sorry. From here on in I'll be kind to turtles. Are you through?"

"Not quite, Red. Things are booming these days, what with the population going up, and more and better products coming out all the time. Makes it mighty nice for a business like ours. On the other hand, competition's keener, too. There are at least six other good service outfits right here in Plainview. If we slack off, some of their new customers are going to be our old customers, and we'll stop growing. If we get inconsiderate and impersonal, we'll eventually go bust, like that guy who came down from Central City last year thinking he could make a fast buck.

"Twenty years ago this was a quiet, friendly, easygoing town. Now, with the new plants down on the south side and developments over at Eastville, things aren't the same. This means that the personal touch is more important than ever before; it isn't like the old days when everyone knew everyone else in town.

"Another thing. With all the appliances people have nowadays, the service industry has become a vital part of life. We in the electronics field have to train longer, learn more, develop more skills and repair more complex equipment than any other service group that goes into a family's home. We have greater prestige and command greater respect. In short, we have a bigger stake in good customer relations."

Red scratched his head. "I never thought of it quite that way before, but what you say figures. I guess what you're telling me is that I'd better be more professional."

"You're on the beam, Red," said Bob, reaching for the check. "What do you say we head on back for some of Marybeth's cake and ice cream?"



## In Brief . . .

Customers bring in problems and expect solutions.

A growing business has recognized the need for good customer relations.

Efforts on behalf of a customer representing above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty concern for a situation are long remembered.

The mechanics of efficient servicing should not allow the need for customer relations of the highest order to be overlooked.

Acquiring and retaining customers is the fundamental element of a successful service business.

The first service call is especially important because on it rests the possibility of repeat business and referral business. However, *every* service call is equally important, for each time a call is made, a customer can be retained or can be lost.

## Facing The Problems . . .

1. A poet once said, "No man is one man." What meaning does this hold for the service technician?
2. Name at least three customer relations policies which Bob Tronic (and you) could agree upon *now* to keep ahead of the competition.
3. How can your service center benefit from increases in the growth of population in its service area?
4. Why is the "personal touch" so important in a service business?

## 4 RED TRIES ON KID GLOVES

It was a perfect summer morning. As Bob and Red sped along the highway to Eastville, a few wispy clouds drifted along on a cool breeze. In the back of the Crosstown Electronic Service truck were three brand new console TV sets and as many antennas. Bob had an arrangement with two Plainview dealers to do all their installation work, and Red was along to lend a hand.

"A day like this actually makes it a pleasure to get out and climb around some Joe's roof," commented Bob as he overtook a station wagon full of kids headed for the lake.

"Me, I'd rather go fishing," retorted Red cheerfully. "Did you remember the bait?"

"Nope," Bob admitted, "but at least that head of yours'll be just dandy for a sinker, and you'd probably scare enough fish to death on your way to the bottom so I wouldn't need a rod and reel either."

"Aw, Bob, come off it. Children are nuts about me, and my grandma thinks I'm swell."

"Okay, let's suppose you've got a five-year-old named Charlie who's so nuts about you he wants to electrocute himself while you're checking out his daddy's TV. Now what?"

Red drew himself up in mock dignity. "That's an easy one, Professor. I tell his mother she's sure got a bright lad there who'll probably run me out of business by the time he's eight. Then I point out that there's more than 20,000 volts running around the chassis and suggest he'd be a lot safer out on his tricycle."



"Perfect customer relations," applauded Bob. "Now your next customer is Norma Lamour. She meets you at the door in a filmy negligee and tells you she's so glad you came. You've hardly got your dropcloth spread out before she tells you to forget the TV and come be comfy with her on the sofa."

Red straightened his necktie. "Tell me more, boss."

"I can see I've already told you too much," Bob rejoined. "Just pick up your gear and get. The name's Towers, not Casanova."

"But you're always telling me that a customer is a person with a problem, and I'm supposed to do everything. . . ."

"Start to make a pass at Norma," interrupted Bob, "and you'll be

the one with the problem. You just struck out, Red; that makes your average 50%."

"Okay," grumbled Red, "who else do you know?"

"Call number three is at the home of Joe Booze. There's an empty pint on the front lawn, a half-empty fifth on the telephone table, and an atmosphere that's about 90 proof. Joe offers you a little snort and. . ."

"I thank him kindly, tell him that I don't drink, and fix his set while he's out in the kitchen getting more ice."

"That's better," said Bob. "Now here's one that really calls for kid gloves."

Red looked blank. "Kid gloves?"

"Most people respond to courtesy and common sense. Others require kid-glove treatment or you're in trouble. Right now you're trying on a pair for size." Bob explained. "The McQuarrels live at the end of Thorny Lane. You manage to get inside without being chewed by their bulldog, and Joe McQuarrel tells you his wife left the set on all night and now it won't work. The little woman gives Joe a piece of her mind, he calls her a no-good you-know-what, and she asks you to tell Joe what a bum he is. What now?"

Red drummed his fingers on the dashboard. "I guess I duck out again."

Bob nodded. "You may have to, but first give Joe and the missus a chance to snap out of it. You can ask if it's an inconvenient time for you to look at their set and offer to make a new appointment. Nine cases out of ten they'll pull themselves together and you won't have wasted a trip. The tenth time they'll be so busy exchanging compliments they won't even know you've left."

"Sure is a rough neighborhood," grinned Red.

Bob waved to a state trooper out on patrol. "Here's another curve ball. Willy Miser out in Westwood complains that he can't pick up more than one channel. You discover he has the lowest-price portable on the market and is running it without even a rabbit-ear antenna."

"First I tell him he has a swell set," said Red confidently. "Next I point out that it's doing the best it can but that he's in a fringe area on the wrong side of West Mountain. Then I suggest that the right kind of antenna on his roof will help pull in the more powerful stations, though he'll need a set specially engineered for good reception in problem areas if he wants Central City."



“Right in the bull’s eye, Red. Your last call is on that grandma of yours. She says her picture is so light she can’t see anything, and no wonder. She has the contrast turned all the way down, and the other controls are off, too.”

Red faked a yawn. “I tell her that her set is working well but that it’s a complex instrument which gives maximum performance when properly adjusted.”

“That’s my boy,” cheered Bob. “It looks like you’ll have to install these sets yourself.”

“And what will you be doing, chief?” asked Red.

“Me? I’ve gotta go dig some bait.”

### **In Brief . . .**

**Each customer is an individual and as such deserves individual understanding.**

**The lifeblood of the service business consists of the customer and his problems. Each situation involves a different set of elements and represents a challenging opportunity because of the human element.**

**Oftentimes only a simple, friendly remark is needed to relieve the tension of a bad situation, but the nature of the *right* remark must be based on one’s ability to understand human nature.**

**The service technician is expected to be friendly, but some of the customers can be too friendly. Don’t mix business with pleasure.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Here are some not-so-unusual home service call situations. What should be done?

- (a) Met at the door by a scantily clad female, obviously alone.  
Next step?
- (b) Invited to join a hilarious party. Your reaction?
- (c) Blundered into the midst of a loud “discussion” about the family finances. Which way to turn?

2. How should a grouch—the guy who’s got a mad on all the time—be handled?

3. What do you do with the guy who knows all the answers?

4. How do you get around the customer who can’t make up his mind?

## 5 OPPORTUNITY NEVER RINGS TWICE

Red Towers hadn't been with Crosstown Electronic Service long before he realized that people—the right kind of people—are the most important asset of any service business. He appreciated the ease with which Bob and Pop Tronic took care of customers. The skill with which Marybeth dealt with the customers was not so obvious.

One reason Red was slow to recognize Marybeth's business talents, of course, was that she spent most of her time in the front of the shop while he was either back at the bench or out on service calls. She was able to satisfy many customer needs herself. For example, there were many sales of replacement batteries for portables, which Marybeth handled quickly and capably. She was also quick to interpret customers' descriptions of malfunctions, questioning them further about significant symptoms so that Bob and Red could get on with a diagnosis.

Important as these skills were, however, Marybeth's greatest talent lay in effective customer relations. In a very real sense, she *was* the Crosstown Electronic Service. Her smile and her friendly, warm personality were usually the first contact new customers had with the firm; in fact, people who dropped by the shop seldom even saw Bob or Red. Marybeth gave them such a good impression that they came back when they needed help again.



This particular afternoon Red was restocking and tidying up the shelves behind the counter just as Marybeth was putting down the phone.

"Who paid for that call?" quipped Red. "You've been talking long enough to bake a cake."

"That," said Marybeth wearily, "was Mrs. Collins. She's about 110, watches TV all day, and is so deaf I have to repeat everything three times. Sometimes I wish I were deaf, too."

"What's that you say?" Red teased.

"I said sometimes I . . . now wait a minute. There's nothing wrong with your ears that a little soap wouldn't fix. Besides, I'm serious. I've heard enough about Mrs. Collins' Siamese cat to last me the rest of my life."

"Why didn't you cut her off, then? You were talking like her cat was the apple of your eye."

Marybeth made a gesture of despair. "The point is, Red, that the cat is the apple of *her* eye, and until she's through telling me all the cute things it's done, I can't find out what she wants us for. If I interrupted her, she'd be so offended she'd hang up."

Red grinned slyly. "If you need any help answering the phone, just let me know."

"The way I answer that phone," Marybeth grinned back, "is more important than the way you change a tube. If a customer gets aggravated at me, you'll never even have a *chance* to change the tube. What's more, a mad customer doesn't ring twice. He calls someone else, and we start hurting."

"That's true," Red admitted, "but does it mean you've got to chin away the afternoon with every animal-lover in town?"

"Of course not. Just stop and think a minute." Marybeth sat back and sighed. "The phone rings. What do I do first?"

"You pick it up and say 'Hello,' natch."



"No, first I stop whatever I'm doing so I can give my full attention to the person calling. *Then* I pick up the phone and say, 'Crosstown Electronic Service, may I help you?' That way the caller knows he's reached the right number. And I keep my tone of voice pleasant and friendly so he knows I really *do* want to help."

"So far, so good," said Red getting interested. "What next?"

"Next I find out the customer's name and write it down on a note pad at once so I can remember it and call him by name while we're talking. People appreciate that; it's another sign of our interest in them. If the person gives me the address I write it down, too. In any case, I check this file of service calls here on my desk to see if we've done anything for him before. More than half the time we have, and with the service card in front of me, I can refer to the make and model of his set and mention the date we last worked on it. This shows that we cared enough about him to make—and keep—a record of what we did for him before. It confirms his good judgment in calling us again instead of trying someone else."

Red came over and sat down. "Go on, I'm fascinated."

"If it's a new customer, I start making out a new card with name, address, telephone number, the number of the apartment if it's not a private house, the make and model of the set—if the customer knows—its age, and the symptoms. I'm careful, though, not to cross-examine

the person. I let *him* tell *me* in his own way. When he's finished, I ask about anything he may have forgotten. Then I tell him I'm sure we can fix his set good as new and arrange a time for a home call."

"And, as the sun sets," Red kidded, "you hang up."

"Not before I've thanked him for calling us and told him once more that we'll soon have his set working again. Also, I let him hang up first."

Just then the phone rang again. Marybeth started to reach for it, then paused and looked inquiringly at Red.

"Not me, ma'am," said Red, dodging back behind the counter. "I don't want to lose my amateur standing."

### **In Brief . . .**

**Watch the way you bark when you use the telephone.**

**The person receiving a telephone call should be prepared to make written notes.**

**When you talk over the telephone, your voice, and your voice alone, is you.**

**A frown with your voice can lose a customer. A smile or a laugh with your voice can keep a customer.**

**When answering the telephone, first tell the caller who you are. Allow the caller to hang up first.**

**The telephone is usually the customer's first contact with your service. Therefore, it is most important to make a good impression.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. How can each telephone conversation with a customer reflect a friendly attitude?
2. The remembrance of five simple rules will ensure a pleasant telephone voice impression. Can you name three of the five now?
3. Can you outline a plan to improve your "unseen salesman," your telephone voice?
4. Name five important values of a card file of your customers' service histories, available close to your telephone.
5. Do you know the ABC of customer handling?

## 6 MRS. T.V. BUSTED NEEDS BOB'S SYMPATHY

Bob was whistling as he walked into the shop and hung up his jacket. "Home again so soon?" said Red. "What's up, doc?"

Bob pretended to pull off a pair of surgical gloves. "I've just returned from a very difficult operation."

"It must be rough," Red quipped. "That makes three cases of splinters in one week. Patient survive?"

"The patient not only survived," said Bob in mock dignity, "but when I left, the owner and her young ones were happily sitting in front of a set that was so sick when I arrived it couldn't even talk."

"You've lost me, Bob," complained Red. "Just who or what were you carving up?"

Bob tried to look serious. "Now, Red, you know as well as I do that a good doctor, like a good serviceman, never gossips about his patients."

"Aw, come on, Bob," said Red hungrily, "give me a clue."

"You won't breathe a word?"

"Not a peep."

Pulling up a stool, Bob sat down. "Okay then. Let's call it the Case of Mrs. T. V. Busted. Lives on West Main—you know the area—nice, but nothing fancy either. She and her husband made a down payment on a big console job six months ago, and they have to scrimp a little to meet the installments. That part's fine because they'd rather have a deluxe TV than eat steak every night. Still, they've got a big investment in the set, and when it went dead during the late show last night it was just like a tree fell on the house. This morning Mrs. B. calls in about five minutes after we open. By 9:15 I'm on her doorstep."

"Couldn't have been anything serious," commented Red, glancing at his watch. "It's only 10:15 now."

"It wasn't. Just a two-fifty tube. But as far as Mrs. B. was concerned, the end of the world was just around the corner. Here they'd sunk every spare cent they had into a real fine set and suddenly it went sour on them. Mrs. B. was so worried when she let me in I was afraid she'd burst out crying."

"So you reached for your scalpel, cut out the infected tube, and before you could say 'Now that didn't hurt a bit,' she was all smiles."

Bob shook his head. "I didn't even touch her set for 15 minutes. It took me a good ten just to get her calmed down enough to tell me how it was behaving."

"I get you," Red winked. "She was good looking."

"It's no joke when something you don't understand goes wrong,"

Bob went on. "Put yourself in her place. Something expensive and important in her life has stopped working, and she was afraid it would cost her a fortune to fix—if it *could* be fixed. Like having your car conk out on a cross-country trip. Mrs. B. needed first aid, quick."

"What, for instance?"

"Sympathy, for instance. Plenty of it. Remember, a person doesn't usually call us unless she has a problem. Sympathy eases that problem. The more the person shows concern about the trouble—the more sympathy she needs."

Red looked puzzled. "So you gave her a pat on the shoulder and said everything was going to be okay. That doesn't take ten minutes."

"You're still off the beam, Red," Bob said. "It doesn't do any good to *act* sad, you've got to show you *really* care. That means letting Mrs. B. unload her problem on you. Let her tell you the whole story, talk it out. Hear it through and don't fidget. Show by the expression on your face and the tone of your voice that you're genuinely sorry it happened. When you get a chance, reassure her."

"Reassure her?"

"Yes, make it plain you're going to get rid of that worry for her. You can say, for example, she has a mighty nice set and the manufacturer has a reputation for turning out a fine product. You can say that what she's told you about the trouble sounds like a repair that won't take long or cost much to fix. This helps relieve her fear about having made a bad investment and also lets her relax as far as your bill is concerned."

"I get you, Bob," chimed in Red. "And besides sympathy and reassurance, you're also building up Mrs. B.'s confidence in you as the right guy to touch her little jewel."

"Exactly. If you think you've got appendicitis, you don't want just anyone slicing you up. We surgeons have known that for years. Pull out your screwdriver before you've paved the way and you'll give Mrs. B. a fit. If she doesn't shudder when you disconnect the power cord, she'll probably pass out when you start yanking the tubes. But if you build her up right first, she won't so much as bat an eye even if you have to take the chassis out. It's less *what* you do than *how* you do it."



A smile flickered across Red's face. He walked back to the workbench and pointed to an ailing tuner assembly. "Gee, doc, I got a terrible problem, and it hurts right here."

### **In Brief . . .**

**Bad news selling requires some good news sweetening.**

**Genuine sympathy eases the hurt of a problem. Don't just pretend to be sorry, *be* sorry.**

**Calm a worried set owner before, not during, work on an ailing set.**

**Most service calls are the result of a customer's problem with a product. Go prepared mentally and physically.**

**Sympathy in the service business is concerned with one's responsibilities to his customers.**

**Act as though what you want most in life is to service the customer's set.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. There is only one way to sell sympathy. Do you know what to do?
2. The serviceman soothes a worried customer by showing his confidence rather than his cockiness. How can you do this?
3. Since confidence cannot be inspired without having self-confidence, how does a person gain self-confidence?
4. Sympathy is associated with graciousness. Name at least two other qualities that are associated with and support a sympathetic attitude.
5. Ever find it difficult to keep a business conversation going with a worried customer? Then you should be able to state the three ground rules for such a conversation.

## 7 BOB TAMES BULLDOG GROWLER

A week or so after the Mrs. Busted episode, Red was relaxing with a cigarette at his favorite end of the workbench after a long hassle with a color job. He'd had no trouble with a similar model of the same brand a few days before and so didn't bother to check the schematic. Only after wasting an hour trying to puzzle out something odd about the amplifier section did it cross his mind that the circuit might have been modified. A glance at the reference literature confirmed his oversight. The manufacturer had found a way to improve performance and, sure enough, there was a big letter "B" in front of the serial number on the chassis to flag his attention that the "A" series had been changed.

When Red heard Bob's footsteps coming through the front of the shop, his gloom lifted sufficiently to notice Bob was smoking a cigar.

"How come the Corona Corona, chief? Don't tell me you've been *winning* at poker."

"No such luck," admitted Bob with a cheerful grin. "I took it off a guy who was about to brain me with a beer bottle."

"Rough stuff at this hour of the morning? You mean they have TV in that kind of a bar?"

"There you are, Red, jumping to conclusions again. Some of our best customers are barkeeps. With the wear and tear their sets get, they really appreciate good service. No, I was over at Bulldog Growler's."

"So now you're a veterinarian," quipped Red. "One of these days someone's going to ask to see your medical degree, Bob, and the next thing you know you'll be run out of town on a lumpy stretcher."

Bob grinned. "Bulldog Growler is a man, about the orneriest one east of the Rockies. Not a bad sort when you learn to know him, but once he gets an idea fixed in his head, it takes an H-bomb to shake it loose."

"What did he have against you?"

Bob flicked the ash off the end of his cigar. "It wasn't me he was mad at. He bought a bargain-priced set from a discount house up in Central City a few months ago and took it out to his farm on the other side of Jackson County. His set was designed for local reception, so naturally its performance didn't set any records out there. This griped him so much he threw it in a pickup truck and jolted it all the way back



to his house in town. He must have shaken something loose on the trip, because it didn't do much better here. When the audio went dead last night he all but put a bullet through the picture tube."

Red nodded attentively. "What did he want you to do, dig a grave?"

"Almost. He wanted me to tell him what was wrong with his blankety-blank set so he could write the manufacturer and demand his money back. He figured he'd been swindled and was even raving about getting a lawyer. I did what I could to calm him down, checked the set out, and found that I could easily fix it within half an hour."

"How did Bulldog react to the good news?"

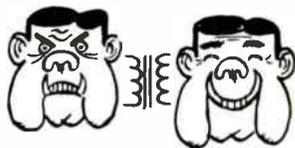
Bob shuddered. "It set him off on another rage, only this time *I* was at fault. First he figured I was an idiot because he *knew* the set was a lemon and wouldn't work. Then he figured I'd find more things wrong if he let me start work—I was out to cheat him by inches. Finally he made up his mind I was trying to cover up for the factory."

"If a guy talked to me like that," said Red, "I'd tell him off and duck out."

"You'd be making a mistake. Bulldog's as tough as he is stubborn. Sass him and you'd be carried out. Apart from that, if you argue with a customer, you get his back up to the point you can't possibly reason with him. To top it off, you've wasted your time on a service call you can't hope to collect on."

Red scratched his head. "So how'd you handle it?"

"The basic problem was Bulldog's conviction he'd been swindled. He was pretty unhappy thinking someone had pulled the wool over his eyes. I told him I'd seen quite a few sets just like his and that all of them were giving satisfactory service. I said the manufacturer carefully inspected each receiver before it left his plant. Then I pointed out that this particular model was intended for strong signal areas and was not designed for peak performance at locations more than 20 miles from a transmitter. Under proper conditions, however, his set could be expected to do almost as well as more expensive models. All this made him feel a lot better.



**THE TRANSFORMER IS  
CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

"The next step was to describe the failure and tell him the set could be repaired and adjusted on the spot in about half an hour, after which it would be as good as new. I suggested that if he'd authorize me to go ahead, he could be looking at his favorite program this evening. Well, he sputtered for a while longer before telling me to see what I

could do. By the time I had everything shipshape, he'd run out of steam. When I reconnected the set and turned it on, he grinned from ear to ear. 'Bob,' he said, 'that's real nice. I'm sorry I got a little riled. Tell you what, have a cigar.' So here I am, enjoying a good Havana."

Red chuckled admiringly. "Bob, you're a whiz. I think I'll run out and buy up a few myself."

Bob looked surprised. "Didn't know you smoked 'em."

"I don't," Red confessed. "They're for you—the next time I blow my stack."

## **In Brief . . .**

**A difficult-to-please customer can be a real challenge to customer relations skills.**

**Lost confidence can be restored, but it isn't easily accomplished.**

**Be patient and listen to the customer's point of view, avoiding a contradiction—even if he is wrong.**

**Recognize and emphasize the *positive* features of customer's equipment. Try to ignore the negative—even if he insists.**

**Evaluate each problem carefully. Then recommend a solution that offers the most benefit to the customer.**

**Your customer is seeking confirmation of his good judgement in selecting his receiver, is wondering whether his judgment is good, and wants to know that it was good. Seek every possible means of honestly praising your customer's choice of equipment.**

**Your customer also exercised judgment in selecting you as his serviceman, and he wants to know that his choice was good. Selling yourself and your ability confirms his judgment.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. What must you do as a service dealer to inspire confidence in your technical ability?

2. If a customer is convinced that he has been cheated as a result of his equipment purchase, where do you begin in an attempt to change his opinion to one that's more favorable?

3. What steps would be taken to rebuild a customer's lost confidence in his equipment?

4. Why is it so important to restore the customer's confidence in his equipment?

## 8 BOB'S LATE FOR A DATE

This particular Tuesday, Bob and Red had been working on a tricky alignment job ever since opening up Crosstown Electronic Service an hour earlier. It was about time for the morning coffee break, and they were glad to hear Marybeth come in.

"Hi, sweetheart," he called out. "Make mine extra black; we're up against a tough one."

Marybeth walked back to the bench and looked blankly at Bob. "What are you doing here?"

"Giving Red a hand. Why?"

"You were supposed to be out at the Browns' at 9:30. I marked the appointment on your work schedule. She has to leave at 10:30 to be gone all day, and she's busy tomorrow, too, so I promised you'd be there first thing. Didn't you check the sheet this morning?"

Bob hung his head. "Gosh, I meant to, and then I got started on this job. It just slipped my mind. I know the Saunders are expecting me at 10:45. Maybe I could run out right now?"

"It's 10:15 already," said Marybeth with a glance at her watch. "You'd need almost 15 minutes to get over there. I'll call Mrs. Brown and see if she can wait."

Marybeth looked up Mrs. Brown's number in the service card file and rang up at once.

"Hello, Mrs. Brown. This is Marybeth Tronic at Crosstown Electronic Service. You called yesterday afternoon about your TV set, and I promised Bob would be out this morning at 9:30 sharp to fix it for you. I'm terribly sorry, but there was a mixup on our part. Bob didn't see the note I left for him, and it was only this minute we discovered the mistake. It's our fault, and there's no excuse for being so careless. Bob is right here now and can be out at your house in less than 15 minutes, if it wouldn't inconvenience you too much more."



Mrs. Brown said no, she had to be in town for another appointment, and she'd be out Wednesday as well.

Marybeth checked the worksheet. "Mrs. Brown, Bob should be through with his last call this afternoon about four. Would it be possible for him to call on you when you get back from town? Or would a later time be better?"

Mrs. Brown thought it over. She decided 4:30 would be best.

"Fine, Mrs. Brown. Bob will be there, and I'm sure he'll have your set as good as new by the time you're ready to start dinner. He's so sorry he slipped up this once. We want to give you the best service we can, and we take pride in being prompt. It was our mistake, but we do assure you that we won't let it happen again. We have a new stereo tape I think you would like. Bob will bring it this afternoon. Please keep it for a week so your family can enjoy it."

Mrs. Brown said that was a very nice thought and thanked Marybeth for letting her know about the mixup.

"Thank you, Mrs. Brown. We appreciate your giving us a chance to make good. We hope you'll always think of us when we can be of service. Bob will see you at 4:30, then. Goodbye."

Marybeth waited for Mrs. Brown to hang up, then put down the receiver, and turned to Bob. "She was very nice about it, and I don't think it'll make any difference as long as we don't let her down again. Thank heavens she hadn't already left when I called."

"Sorry to put you through that, honey," said Bob regretfully. "At least it doesn't happen very often."

"So you slipped up," Red chimed in. "Why make a federal case out of it? Mrs. Brown was probably going to do the ironing tonight anyhow."

"What if she was?" retorted Bob. "When people call in, they expect you to make a definite appointment and to keep it. If a woman has to be out a lot during the day, it's annoying to make a point of staying home and then have a no-show. Especially if no one takes the trouble to let her know there's been a delay. Even when she's been a customer for years, she won't take that kind of treatment very long before trying some other outfit."

"Well," asked Red, "suppose I don't forget an appointment but simply get hung up on an earlier job?"

"That's a tough one," Bob admitted. "If it looks as though you're just going to be, say, half an hour late, call in advance, explain you've been held up, and ask if it's still convenient for you to come. Nine times out of ten, it doesn't make any difference, but the customer appreciates your desire to be prompt."

"However, if you get so far behind it looks as though you'll be late for, say, three appointments in a row, it's best to reschedule your next call—in advance, of course—and get to the remaining ones on time."



That way you disturb only one customer instead of three. Best of all is to be on time.”

“Let’s see,” said Red checking the clock over the bench, “you’re supposed to be at the Saunders’ at 10:45?”

Bob started, grabbed his truck keys, and raced out the door.

Red watched him go, then called to Marybeth. “Better make mine extra black instead.”

### **In Brief . . .**

**Promptness is a virtue—a very important virtue. Attention to it is an evidence of reliability and dependability.**

**Appointments are made to be kept. An appointment with a customer or a prospect is an obligation of honor.**

**A service business has availability to sell. If a customer is never forgotten, the odds are ten to one the customer will not forget you.**

**Customers deserve notice of any unavoidable delay. Notification of a change in plans will ease the inconvenience.**

**The quick admission of responsibility for failure to keep an appointment minimizes the damage to customer confidence.**

**Promises are to be made—and kept. Unkept promises destroy good will more quickly than poor service.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. The morning home call schedule requires three stops: at 9:30, at 10:15, and at 11:00. What action would you suggest for the following situations:

- (a) It’s exactly 10:15 when you start the truck toward House #2 which is two miles away. Expect heavy traffic all the way.
- (b) At 11:10 the work at House #2 is incomplete. Will take at least 20 more minutes. House #3 is seven blocks away.

2. An irate customer is on the phone with a complaint that a service call was due an hour ago. What do you suggest if:

- (a) No record can be found in the shop of the promise to call.
- (b) Call was overlooked because of failure to check work schedule.

3. What do you suggest in the event of a delay such as this: Arrived on schedule at 1142 No. Shadeland Avenue, as work order directed, but a phone check showed the correct address was 1142 So. Shadeland Avenue.

## 9 WHY OLD MACSTUBBLE'S BACK ON THE FARM

It was quiet in the Crosstown Electronic Service building when Marybeth came in after getting Johnny and Linda off to school. Bob was just putting the knobs back on Mrs. Martin's portable he'd been working on since 7:30 a.m. Red and Pop were busy taking inventory.

"Hi, Beautiful," Bob called out, "did you remember the doughnuts?"

"Better than that, Bluebeard, I also picked up some rolls at Jimmy's. But you don't get a bite until you shave." Marybeth wrinkled her nose disapprovingly as she headed off to fill the coffeepot.

"There's a woman for you," muttered Red. "A fella gets up early to finish a job for a lady going on vacation, and right away his wife jumps on him because his whiskers are showing."

"Marybeth's right," Pop rejoined. "You ever meet Joe MacStubble?"

"The guy who works at Modern Electric on South Main?"

"None other," said Pop, pulling up a chair, "except that if you'd take the trouble to follow the fortunes of your neighbors, you'd know that he was fired again last week."

Red looked sympathetic. "No kidding? Must be the fifth or sixth time Joe has caught the axe. What's he gonna do with himself?"

Pop lit his pipe with slow, deliberate puffs. "His brother owns a pig farm in the corn belt. I hear Joe's going to give him a hand. Maybe the pigs won't like that, though."

Red was really shocked. "Gosh, when it comes to electronics, Joe's no fool."

Marybeth brought in the cups, spoons, sugar, and cream.

"Never said he was," Pop went on calmly. "You remember his nickname?"

"Sloppy Joe?" suggested Red.

"Check! Joe went around looking like a walrus with a hangover. You'd think one of those professional wrestler fellows was on the loose. No wonder he got fired."

Marybeth returned with a pot of steaming coffee.

"It doesn't seem right," Red reflected, "that a good technician should stand or fall on whether he's got B.O."



“Joe MacStubble,” said Marybeth with obvious disgust, “practically invented B.O. He didn’t believe in shaving every day, he didn’t believe in changing clothes more than once a week, and he went around with a half-eaten cigar stub in his mouth that smelled even worse than he did.”

“Remember,” Pop went on, “Mrs. Average Customer doesn’t know an oscillator from an elephant. More than likely, she’s going to form her opinion of you from the way you look and your attitude. There’s more to it than a shave, a shower, and a clean shirt.”

“I know,” interrupted Red. “I always comb my hair after every meal and see my barber twice a year.”

Pop frowned and took a sip of coffee. “Sure, MacStubble was an extreme case, but you wouldn’t be so flip if you had a good wife to set you straight. For instance, how many service shops in this town keep their trucks clean? When you pull up in front of a customer’s house in a sparkling truck, you’ve got the battle half won.”

“Hardly seems necessary to worry about scrubbing behind the ears with all this rain,” suggested Red mischievously.



**WOULD YOUR CUSTOMER  
VOTE FOR YOU?**

“Then you put out your cigarette,” Pop went on, “pick up your cap and your tool kit, and march purposely up the walk. (Our friend MacStubble, of course, liked to take short cuts across flower beds and newly seeded lawns.) You give the bell a tap, and when the lady comes to the door, you take off your cap, greet her cheerfully by name (it’s on the work order), and tell her confidently that you’ve come from Cross-

town Electronic Service to make her TV set as good as new. Now if you can only remember to keep that big mouth of yours shut, Red, you might even get out the door again without her ever realizing what an idiot you are.”

As Red tried to duck the wadded paper napkin Pop tossed at him, Bob appeared (clean shaven) with Mrs. Martin’s portable under his arm.

“Coffee’s ready, Handsome,” smiled Marybeth.

“Keep it hot, Sweetie,” said Bob putting on his jacket. “I promised this for nine o’clock, and I’ve got exactly twelve minutes to run it over to Omaha and Grand.”

“That,” said Pop approvingly as Bob went out the door, “is what I call Service.”

## In Brief . . .

An impression of neatness is easy to make. Personal appearance and the appearance of the truck and the equipment are customer measuring sticks for neatness and efficiency.

Each customer expects to be treated as if he is a voter and you are a candidate for mayor. Don't lose a vote.

Use the walks and the drives; short cuts across the lawn or through the shrubs might arouse tempers.

It's always polite to remove your cap when entering another's home. No cash is spent for politeness, but dollars may be earned as a result.

Personal appearance can give impressions for or against. Try for the plus.

Look successful!

Speech habits are important, too. Careless grammar and slang may give an impression of carelessness in everything you do. Watch your language.

## Facing The Problems . . .

1. Why do you believe in the importance of presenting a neat personal appearance?
2. What does a neat, clean service truck have to do with customer relations?
3. Neatness and efficiency give good impressions to customers and prospects. Observe the three A's of impression-making. The first A stands for Appearance. What are the other impression-making A's?
4. You're ready for the day's work when the morning chores are complete. Start by putting on a SMILE. Name the four other morning chore S's.
5. How do you make your speaking voice work for improved customer relations?
6. Many people have annoying mannerisms which detract from their conversation and speech. What speech mannerisms of others annoy you?

## 10 RED LEARNS ABOUT SETSIDE MANNERS

It had been just six months since Red Towers, Air Force separation papers clutched firmly in hand, started to work for Bob Tronic at Crosstown Electronic Service.

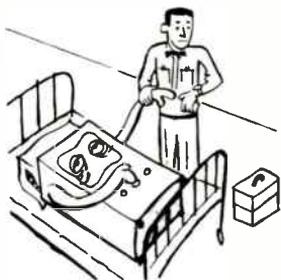
Thanks to the military technical schools, Red knew a good bit about electronic equipment. And thanks to the practical experience of servicing aircraft radar systems in Alaska and North Africa, Red had learned early in his career that there's more to being a good technician than knowing how to read the schematics in the service literature.

During the past six months, Red had spent most of his time in the shop, gradually trying his hand on more complex jobs while Bob concentrated on the four sets out of five that could be serviced in the customers' homes. The time had come, however, to round out Red's skills, and the way business was mushrooming, it obviously wouldn't be long before Red would be needed to operate another service truck to keep up with the service calls.

On this particular morning, Bob had taken Red along to help install a new set under a contract Bob had with the Midland Appliance Mart. Some unforeseen delay in obtaining a particular new antenna mast had left them too short on time to run Red back downtown, so Bob figured Red might as well cut his teeth on a home service call Marybeth had relayed. Red had kept his eyes open and his mouth reasonably well closed, just as he'd been told. Still, there were one or two points Bob wanted to drive home.

"Red," said Bob as Marybeth started the coffee, "you know I have a real respect for your technical skill. In fact, there are darn few TV ailments that you can't cure now without help from me or anyone else. However, you still have a thing or two to learn about customer relations, and I hope you'll listen seriously to what I have to say."

"Okay," admitted Red remorsefully, "so I stomped on the Grahams' petunias while we were getting that antenna positioned."



"Well, that was plain carelessness," sympathized Bob. "Besides, we were able to straighten everything out by replacing the damaged plants. I'm talking about our second call, at Mrs. Rogers'."

"Kindly Dr. Tronic," confided Marybeth as she passed out cups, "is referring to Setside Manners."

"Marybeth has a point," agreed Bob. "Many's the time when a doctor can't cure a disease until he's gained the patient's confidence. The same principle holds true in the service business."

"You mean I'm supposed to pat the safety glass sweetly and say everything's going to be okay?" cracked Red.

Bob sighed wearily. "For example, when Mrs. Rogers invited us in, you saw how unhappy she was. Their television set is less than a year old, and it was a real disappointment to her when it blacked out again last night. It wasn't the first time that had happened, and she was worried and thought that she'd bought a lemon, although we know that chassis is very good. You were in such a rush to get the tools out that I was thinking about sending you out to the truck to cool off."

"Why stand around and gab when it was nothing but a short and a blown fuse?" pleaded Red.

"That's not the point," Bob went on. "How could Mrs. Rogers know what was wrong? Remember to listen attentively and sympathetically. There's a fair chance you may get a clue as to the trouble. But even if you don't, you at least give the customer a chance to unload some worries. Apart from showing that you really are sorry for the disappointment, you probably have the added advantage that no one will watch over your shoulder and bother you with questions while you're trying to troubleshoot."

"Hadn't thought of that," admitted Red.

"It doesn't make sense to pull out the pills until the patient is calm enough to swallow them. Another thing: those five extra minutes spent listening to Mrs. Rogers did something for us, too. When she finished telling us the symptoms, you remember I smiled, thanked her for *her* patience, told her she had a fine set, and said I was sure we'd soon have it just as good as new?"

Red nodded thoughtfully.

"Well, that built up her confidence in us. She could see we were thoughtful, courteous, and businesslike, and so she didn't worry whether we might bungle the job and make things worse. Head-scratching could have been interpreted as bewilderment. You may recall that she was genuinely relieved and pleased when we had her set working again in less than 15 minutes. In fact, she paid the bill cheerfully and said how nice it was to be able to get such quick and expert service."

"Doc," smiled Red, "you win. I promise I'll never operate without



taking pulse, temperature, and respiration. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got to go fix a hi-fi amplifier with a bad case of whooping cough."

### **In Brief . . .**

**It is best to demonstrate sincere interest and courtesy to the customer *before* demonstrating technical skill.**

**Customers look upon servicemen as sympathetic experts who will listen to the opinions of amateurs. A valuable, time-saving clue to the difficulty may be included in the expression of opinion.**

**Setside manners should generate confidence in the service dealer's ability. Successful service dealers avoid mannerisms that might cast doubts on their ability, especially a puzzled expression or action.**

**The analysis of a problem includes consideration of the remarks a customer can offer about set performance.**

**Opinions need not be ventured until all the facts are known.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. What are the four basic elements of good setside manners?
2. How should the bad news of a service problem be relayed to the customer?
3. A card file describing the equipment and previous service work on it helps customer relations in the home in many ways. Can you name three advantages to you?

## 11 RED'S MOTTO: DON'T CHIP THE CHIPPENDALE

Bob never was much of a football fan, perhaps because he'd always been too busy taking things apart to spend an entire afternoon watching 22 strong men rip up the sod and dislocate each other's shoulders. But since he opened the Crosstown Electronic Service, his lack of interest in the gridiron had turned into actual dislike. For the first half of the season, he could count on spending every Saturday afternoon emergency-patching TV sets that weren't ready for the big game.

Now that Red was showing some promise in applying customer psychology, Bob figured it was necessary for Red to give him a hand with the week-end rush.

Happily there was a lull Friday morning, so Bob gestured Red into the front office and waved him to a chair.

"Good news for the troops, Red. I need you to help me with the house calls."

Red thought it over. "My sergeant always used to say, 'Every rose has its thorn.' What's the catch?"

"Don't be so suspicious, Red," grinned Bob. "For the next few Saturdays, I'm going to pay you to drive your coupe around the countryside admiring the autumn leaves between stops to fix ailing TV's."

"Do I gotta, boss?" complained Red. "Suzie isn't going to like sitting home on Saturdays."

"Tell her to get a job babysitting," suggested Bob. "You can use your extra pay to start buying furniture on the layaway plan."

Red blushed. "Aw, come on, give it to me straight."

"Fact of the matter is," Bob went on, "the football season is here, we're swamped, and you should get some valuable experience answering calls all by your lonesome. I'll take care of our steady customers, 'cause I know their sets and they know me. You'll take the new calls I can't handle myself."

"So now you're going to give me a pep talk?"

Bob nodded. "That's right. You've shown a lot of talent in learning to handle people, and I'm even hoping that between Suzie and me we'll have a finished product one of these days. Those four years in the barracks, however, didn't do you any good."



"What do you mean? I had the neatest bunk in the whole squadron," Red complained.

"Sure you did, and you probably waxed the floor, too. The point is that you can't know how people feel about their homes until you've got one of your own. Now let's assume you arrive at the Johnsons' in a thunderstorm. What do you do first?"

"I go to the door, wipe my feet, and take care I don't drip a lot of water around the place," said Red proudly.

"Good man," approved Bob. "Now we'll assume you've listened to Mr. Johnson tell you all the symptoms, built up his confidence in you and his set, and at last you're left alone with the beast, which happens to be supporting about two dozen china cats. What next?"

"Well, I drop my tool kit, sweep off the junk, and get to work."

"That's what I was afraid of," moaned Bob. "Don't ever drop your tool kit anywhere, except maybe on your own foot, if it'll help you to remember to spread a dropcloth first. And don't think of china cats as junk: the Johnsons are crazy about them. Look around for a safe place to put them (up high if there're children in the family), and carefully move them out of harm's way. If you have to shift a floor lamp or other furniture, ask permission first and handle it like your own money paid for it. Be sure you don't scratch the floor or leave fingerprints on the wall."

"My motto," said Red gravely, "is don't chip the Chippendale."

"Very clever. 'Don't chip the Chippendale,'" mused Bob.

"I don't scratch cabinets," said Red.

"Don't. We want repeat business," agreed Bob. "Now, suppose you open the set and find quite a bit of dust on the chassis. Be very careful to keep the dust from falling on the rug. Any parts you take out of the set—along with any tools you're using—go on the dropcloth *only*. If your hands get dirty, take time to clean them. We'll assume all you have to do is replace a couple of tubes. What next?"

"Let's see," mused Red. "I check the set out, tape one of our business cards on the back, put all the cats on top again—carefully, of course—get the floor lamp in place, clean the front face of the safety glass, write up a bill with details of the work done and the parts used, touch up the controls to obtain the best possible picture, tell old man Johnson what the trouble was, briefly and simply, and that his set's better than ever, collect, and get out. Anything else?"



“Not bad, Red,” said Bob approvingly. “But you forgot to wipe your fingerprints off the set before moving the cats, and you didn’t mention checking to see if you’d picked up the boxes the new tubes were packed in. It’d be a good idea, too, to remind Mr. Johnson that we fix all kinds of home entertainment gear, including radios, record players, and hi-fi sets. Be sure to thank him for calling us and tell him it was a pleasure serving him. Got it straight?”

Red thought it over. Finally his face broke into a broad grin. “With a teacher like you, Bob, how can I go wrong?”

### **In Brief . . .**

**Building a service business depends on the service dealer’s successful efforts to make his customers want to continue doing business with him.**

**Remember, your customer’s personal property is as precious to him as yours is to you. Treat it with care.**

**Floors and floor coverings should be given special attention, particularly in foul weather.**

**After accomplishing a repair, emphasize the benefits the customer can now enjoy, and help rebuild his confidence in his initial judgment. This tends to soften the inevitable jolt of the repair bill.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Suppose that, in spite of all possible precautions, you accidentally topple last year’s Christmas gift from Aunt Martha off the top of the set. If it is broken, what should you do?

2. Have you ever forgotten to bring a dropcloth to protect the rug? What can be done, short of a trip back to the shop?

3. Special precautions should be taken to protect property in the customer’s home. What suggestions can you offer in the following instances?

(a) Special built-in equipment is encountered and must be disassembled.

(b) Obviously expensive carpeting is on the floor in front of the equipment.

(c) Equipment is in an area which proves difficult to work in.

4. Some “soft sell” suggestions can be made before leaving a home after a service call. What suggestions are appropriate?

## 12 RED LEARNS TO WATCH HIS TONGUE

There was something about the way Mike Johnson walked through the Crosstown Electronic Service doorway that told Red to watch his step. He was carrying a well-worn portable TV, which he pushed carelessly onto the counter. Marybeth had run out to the bank, and Bob was back at the bench, so Red took over.

"Good afternoon, sir. Can I help you?"

Johnson ignored Red's friendly greeting. "This here set is a lemon. I've had it in two other shops in town, and each time they've fixed it, it's busted down again a few weeks later. Now it won't work at all. I want to know if you guys can do anything."

Red tried hard to recall all the coaching he'd received. "I'm sorry you've had so much trouble, sir. I know that make well, and it's built to give good service. The maker won't send a set out until he's satisfied it will perform properly. However, we'll be glad to check it over for you right now and see what's wrong. I'm sure we can make it good as new so you'll get a lot more enjoyment out of it. What seems to be the matter?"



Mike gave a quick rundown of symptoms, which Red noted on a workslip. Mike also pulled out the receipts from the other two shops and added, "When you open it up, I want you to look at what those clowns did and let me know your opinion. I think they played me for a sucker."

Red excused himself after waving Mr. J. to a chair and took the portable back to the bench.

"What's up?" asked Bob.

"A Mr. Johnson's out front," Red replied, "and he wants to know whether the fellas who serviced this set before gave him the bum's rush. Sounds to me like tube trouble and maybe a bad resistor that's burning them out."

Red's guess proved accurate. About \$4 worth of parts would do the trick. He also noticed some sloppy soldering that had apparently been done at the second service shop. "Look at that, Bob. The character who did this burned off enough insulation with his iron to cause a short when those two wires came in contact. I'll run out and get Johnson's okay to fix her up. He'll be interested to know he was at least half right about those other outfits."

“Just a minute,” cautioned Bob. “We can’t be sure that the short was anyone’s fault. Even if it was, it’d be a mistake to knock another guy’s work. Come along and let me do the talking.”

Bob walked over to where Mike was sitting. “Mr. Johnson, I’m Bob Tronic. Red and I have checked your set, and I’m happy to say nothing serious is wrong. A resistor failed and caused two tubes to burn out. It will cost less than ten dollars to put everything back in order. The parts we put in carry a 90-day guarantee. May we go ahead and finish it up while you wait? It’ll take us less than 15 minutes.”



Mike thought it over for a moment. “Sure, go ahead. Those other boys really loused me up, huh?”

“No, sir,” said Bob in his most diplomatic tone, “I wouldn’t say that. A TV is pretty complex, and when there’s trouble, the cause can be one of any number of things. Both the servicemen you went to do good work, and it wouldn’t be fair of me to pass judgment on them without having seen your set when it was acting up. A television set is similar in complexity to the human body, and it is impossible to diagnose a problem faced by another person unless the conditions are exactly the same—and they never are. That’s why physicians don’t comment on the work of other physicians—conditions vary. Anyhow, I’m sure you’ll get a lot more use out of it when we’re finished.”

Johnson nodded his head without further comment and was out of the shop 15 minutes later as promised.

Bob watched him leave, then turned to Red. “When a customer asks your opinion about something, it pays to be extra cautious. Johnson had some bad luck with his set, and it’s not surprising he started getting suspicious of the men who worked on it even though he had no cause to blame them. If we’d taken advantage of his fears to get in a dig at our competition, he’d have wondered if we were any better.”

“I get you,” agreed Red. “He would have told people we were all a bunch of thieves.”

“Very possible.” Bob paused to light a cigarette. “The same principle applies to questions about different brands. Some people will try to talk you into telling them which manufacturer is best. Don’t let them. If you recommend brand X, the customer buys it and isn’t satisfied, or if somebody else is hot for brand Y, the customer will wind up thinking you’re taking push money from the dealer. If he really gets you into a corner, say you’re most familiar with brands X, Y, and Z and

like them, but that every well-known manufacturer stands behind his products. Suggest that he shop around for the particular features he wants in the price range he's decided on."

"How do I stand on sex, religion, and politics?"

"Part of the same package, Red. You don't want to involve yourself in controversy with a customer on any subject. And that goes for neighborhood gossip also. It's foolish to start an argument that leaves the customer and you mad. Stick to fixing his set. Keep your opinions about it to yourself, too. If he hears you complain about hard-to-reach components, he'll figure you don't know your business."

"Just one more question," said Red with a wink. "Who do you pick to win the World Series?"

### **In Brief . . .**

**The wise serviceman plays it down the middle by avoiding discussions of controversial subjects and ignoring juicy neighborhood gossip.**

**Give the customer renewed faith by an assurance that his equipment will work as it should when you have completed the necessary repairs.**

**Nothing is gained and nobody wins by knocking the competition.**

**Always obtain permission *before* starting repairs. A preliminary diagnosis and cost estimate will be appreciated by the anxious customer.**

**Complaints and gripes about the repair problem fail to impress a customer—except to suggest to him that you don't know your business. It's best to just work cheerfully and well.**

**Don't put yourself in the position of making a definite recommendation to a customer. Give him a choice, and let him decide.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Your customer owns a television set that is quite old. He asks you whether to repair it or trade it off. How should you reply?
2. Your customer owns a relatively new television set. He asks you whether it is as good as brand X. How should you reply?
3. While working on a set, with your customer looking over your shoulder, you find it difficult to reach a certain tube. The customer asks, "What's the difficulty?" How should you reply?
4. Most people hesitate to discuss controversial topics with comparative strangers. Name four or five controversial subjects you should avoid in conversation with customers.

## 13 BOB MAKES A FRIEND OUT OF SUSPICIOUS SAM

The hands on the clock above the bench were pointing to five of five when Bob returned from some afternoon calls.

"Another day, another dollar," commented Red cheerily. "Say, you look beat."

"I am," Bob sighed, sinking onto a stool. "Sometimes I feel like giving up this game and having a go at raising goldfish. It's bad enough to sweat over a cranky set for an hour and a half, but when the guy who owns it calls you a crook to your face, I begin to wonder what's the use."

"There's bound to be a few bad apples in every barrel," sympathized Red. "Who was serving tea?"

"An old man named Snyder, Sam Snyder, who lives all by himself in that plush district in the north end of town. He's said to be worth at least a million, though you'd never know it to look at him. Parting with a dime gives him so much pain he has to take aspirin afterward. I sure feel sorry for a guy like that."

Red nodded his agreement. "What was his gripe against you?"

"Well," said Bob, taking off his shoes and cooling his feet on the floor, "when I started working on the set, he pulled up a chair and watched me like he was afraid I'd sabotage something on purpose. There was about five years' worth of dust on the chassis, which I cleaned off as carefully as I could. This seemed to irritate him. 'Young man' said he accusingly, 'I'm paying you to make a repair, not to house-clean. Get on with your work.'"

"Imagine that," whistled Red. "I wonder what charm school he flunked out of."

"So I explained to him very politely it was necessary to tidy things up so I could make some tests. That satisfied him for a while. Then when I pulled out the schematic for his model to take voltage readings he got incensed again and asked why I didn't do my homework *before* trying to troubleshoot."

"That's a new one," commented Red. "What'd you say?"

"I simply pointed out that no one could remember all the values for all the circuits on all the sets ever manufactured. I let him look at the schematic so he could see for himself his TV wasn't like a clock. Every-



**SELF-CONTROL IS REQUIRED  
WHEN UNFOUNDED  
ACCUSATIONS ARE MADE**

thing was fine for another 15 minutes or so. Finally I could sense he was beginning to fidget. That was where the payoff came.”

Red leaned forward raptly. “He had a tantrum and accused you of stealing the silverplate?”

“Just about. ‘Young man,’ he said, ‘you’re taking so long I don’t think you know what you’re doing. Either that or you’re just stalling so you can run up my bill.’ It was pretty strong talk.”

“Boy, that’s the truth,” Red agreed. “I would have packed up and walked out.”

Bob shook his head. “Not when a guy questions your skill or honesty. It was a temptation to sound off on what I thought of *him*, but that wouldn’t have accomplished anything either.”

Red puzzled for a moment. “How did you straighten him out?”

“I said, ‘Mr. Snyder, I’m sorry to hear you talk that way, because it means you must have had an unfortunate experience with someone else. I want you to know that our company depends on doing good work at a fair price. We’d be foolish if we didn’t look out for our customers’ interests. Our business depends on satisfying you in every



way; otherwise we’d go broke. We pride ourselves on ability and integrity, and I want you to be convinced that your set is in good hands before going on with this job. I’d be happy to give you the names of several people I’ve been able to help recently. You can telephone them for a frank opinion of our reputation. If they have any complaint to make about what I’ve done for them, I’ll put your set back together, and there won’t be any

charge for this service call.”

“You really put it to him straight, Bob. How’d he take it?”

“Well, he sat there for a while without saying anything. Then he pulled himself together and apologized. He said, ‘Young man, I’m not so old I can’t admit a mistake. I’ve been unfair in criticizing your work, and you kept your head. I don’t think I’d have been as patient if I were in your shoes. You just take your time and let me know when you’re through. I’ll be out on the back porch.’ With that he walked out of the room. He kept his promise, too. He didn’t so much as stick his head in the door until I was finished.”

Red stood up, and paced over to the window, and turned around. “I take my hat off to you, Bob. To make a friend out of a crusty old codger like that was some doing. I imagine you felt a lot better about it, too.”

“Yes, I did,” said Bob, stretching. “Even so, it left a bad taste in my mouth. I’m glad we don’t run across his kind every day.”

“Well, as the man said, ‘It takes all kinds to make a world,’” shrugged Red.

## **In Brief . . .**

**No battles are won when tempers are lost. Extraordinary self-control is often required when an unfounded accusation is made.**

**A contradicted customer is a lost customer. Truth and reason are the only weapons for upsetting unfounded accusations.**

**References may be volunteered or supplied upon demand. Past satisfactions assure new customers of competence and reliability.**

**Electronics is a mystery to the ordinary person. Simple explanations and a lack of secrecy help decrease feelings of anxiety about the unknown.**

**Activities which may be misunderstood or mystifying should be carefully explained if misunderstanding is to be avoided.**

**Watch your expression and your tone of voice. Don’t let either sneer!**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Since service labor charges are usually associated with *elapsed* time, what procedure should be followed when the customer insists on gabbing?

2. How do you explain the reason for referring to service literature while busy with a set repair in a customer’s home?

3. What action is indicated when the customer insists on watching you work?

4. Many suspicious thoughts can be traced to a fear of paying for some work or a part that is unnecessary. If such a problem is anticipated, how could you remove such a fear?

## 14 MRS. WHITE WONDER'S WHY BOB'S MISSING A PART

It was so sultry outside that Red and Pop had passed up the usual afternoon coffee. Instead, Marybeth had prepared a pitcher of iced tea, which was now about half full. Pop was just finishing up a story about his early days as a ham when they heard the telephone ring in the front office.

"Red, it's Bob," Marybeth called. "He wants to talk to you."

Red picked up the phone and winked at Pop. "Crosstown Electronic Service, may I help you, sir?"

"I hope so, Red," said Bob at the other end of the line. "I'm out at Mrs. White's and short a part. Write down the number and see if we have one in stock."

Red did so and reported back. "Sure enough, we have three."

"Thanks a lot. I'll drive down and pick it up," Bob replied, ringing off.

A few minutes later, Bob ran in and was gone again in a flash. When he returned after completing his other calls, the tea pitcher was empty. "Just as I thought," he grinned wryly. "You two have been living it up when I was out getting cooked in all this heat. Next thing you'll be wanting an air conditioner."

"Say, that's an idea," Red agreed. "What was Mrs. White's problem?"

Bob pulled up a stool and sat down. "Nothing unusual except she wanted to know why I couldn't fix her set without coming back for the part. Said she thought only plumbers were absent-minded."



### A NOTE ABOUT THESE CARDS

It takes constant practice to make habitual the use of the ideas in "Satisfying Customers for Profit." But they can become habits—by developing just one technique at a time.

This section of cards is to help you do just that. Put card 1 on your clipboard or visor of your car—the place you will see it most often, and especially where you will be reminded of this technique just before you enter the customer's home. For the next week, concentrate on this technique—use it on every call!

A week later, replace it with card 2, to remind you of that technique. You will still be using number 1—you have the habit—but concentrate on number 2 for the next week. Reread the card on each and every call. Think about it while in the customer's home.

Keep this up until you have all twelve techniques firmly in mind. Save the cards. At the end of twelve weeks, start all over from the beginning and go through the same procedure again. Six months from now, they will ALL be habits—the best habits that you can acquire!



**1** The lifeblood of the service business is the customer and his problems. Each situation involves a different set of elements and represents a challenging opportunity because of the human element.

Efforts on behalf of a customer "above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty" are long remembered.

(over)



**2** In the service business, sympathy and reassurance are responsibilities you have to your customer.

Reassurance builds confidence—in the customer's choice of a receiver and of a serviceman (you!).

Genuine sympathy eases the hurt of a problem. Don't just pretend to be sorry—be sorry!

(over)



**3** Promises are to be made—and kept. Unkept promises destroy good will more quickly than poor service.

Promptness is a virtue—a very important virtue—an evidence of reliability and dependability.

An appointment with a customer is an obligation of honor. Don't miss appointments!

(over)

What "above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty" efforts did you expend today to insure completely satisfied customers? (Hope there isn't room enough to write them all on this card!):

---

Recall one of today's customers who needed sympathy and reassurance:

She (or he) said: "

You said: "

What *should* you have said, to sincerely express sympathy with graciousness, kindness, patience, and understanding?

---

This past week, were you unavoidably delayed and therefore late for a promised call? If so, did you phone the customer to say you would be late? Yes  No

If no: (1) Was the customer inconvenienced?

Yes  (You've lost goodwill.)

No  (Are you sure?)

(2) Was the customer annoyed or angry?

Yes  (Can you blame her?)

No  (Maybe you didn't notice.)

(3) Arriving late, did you chalk up a not-home?

Yes  (Wasted your time!)

No  (Lucky you.)

(4) Did you skip the call—become a no-show?

Yes  (Probably lost a customer.)

No  (Good, but better to phone.)



**WOULD YOUR CUSTOMER  
VOTE FOR YOU?**

**4** Personal appearance can give impressions for or against. Try for the plus.

Your appearance, and the condition of your truck and equipment are customer measuring sticks of neatness and efficiency.

Carelessness with your grammar, and use of slang, also gives an impression of carelessness. Watch your language!

Look, talk, act—and *be*—successful!

(over)



**5** Setside manners should generate confidence in your ability. Avoid mannerisms that might cast doubts, especially a puzzled expression or action.

Opinions need not be ventured until all the facts are known. Evaluate each problem carefully and completely—*then* recommend a solution that offers the most benefits to your customer.

(over)



**6** Remember. . . .  
Your customer's property is as precious to him as yours is to you. Treat it with loving care. Floors and floor coverings should be given special attention, particularly in foul weather. Leave the place shining!

And . . . "Don't chip the Chippendale!"

(over)

Check list:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoes clean and shined? | <input type="checkbox"/> Hat off in house?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trousers pressed?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cigarette tossed?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shirt clean and neat?   | <input type="checkbox"/> Polite? Smile?          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tie?                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Use good grammar?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaved today?           | <input type="checkbox"/> Use slang or swear?     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands and nails clean?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Truck washed?           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hair cut and combed?    | <input type="checkbox"/> Dents, rust, repairs?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shower this morning?    | <input type="checkbox"/> Test equipment clean?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant this morning? | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool kit well arranged? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breath offensive?       | <input type="checkbox"/> Tube caddy neat?        |

YOU add others:

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

---

Before starting on your calls this morning, did you:

- (1) Check the customer card file to:
  - (a) Verify customer name and address?
  - (b) Check makes and models?
  - (c) Review previous work for clues to the seat of present trouble?
- (2) Check the applicable service literature to review peculiar disassembly procedures, unusual control placement, component and tube placements and relationships, circuit peculiarities, etc.?
- (3) Check replacement components and tubes in your kit, caddy, and truck to be sure you had those which might be needed?

If not, were you caught short in any of the above (or other) respects?

---

Think back . . .

Were you extremely careful with your customers' possessions and home on *every* service call this week? Was there *anything* you could have done better, or *more* that you could have done, to protect them?

Did you leave the receiver, floor, walls, furniture, lamps, knick-knacks, etc., free of finger-prints, dust, smudges, scratches, mud, old parts, boxes, etc?

Did you put *everything* back exactly where you found it?

If not, . . . why not?



**7** Nothing is gained and nobody wins by knocking competition.

Complaints and gripes about the set or the repair problems fail to impress a customer—except to suggest to him that you don't know your business.

It's best to work cheerfully and well.

(over)



**SELF-CONTROL IS REQUIRED  
WHEN UNFOUNDED  
ACCUSATIONS ARE MADE**

**8** No customers are won when tempers are lost. Truth, reason, and calmness are the only weapons for upsetting unfounded accusations.

Watch your expression and tone of voice. Don't let either sneer or anger show. And don't use sarcasm to counter sarcasm, for it never works.

Remember: a contradicted customer is probably a lost customer.

(over)



**UNDERSTANDABLE  
ANALOGIES HELP  
EXPLAIN TROUBLE**

**9** Suspicious customers often become ex-customers. A sincere attempt should be made to eliminate suspicion of faulty workmanship and business practices.

Develop a set of analogies which the customer can understand, comparing the radio or TV functions to things with which the customer is familiar.

Call-backs require real skill in customer relations.

(over)

You find that the technician who previously serviced the set pulled a boner. What do you tell the customer? (Be careful! A dig at your competition raises doubts about all servicemen—including yourself!):  
“

Or, you have trouble getting at a difficult-to-reach tube or part. The customer, looking over your shoulder, says:

“What’s the difficulty?” Your reply? (Watch out! Blaming the manufacturer backfires by reflecting on your ability and the customer’s judgment in his choice of sets):  
“

---

Who has the last word in an argument with a customer?  
You? . . . or your customer?

Have you ever lost a customer through your “winning” an argument? Sure, he was wrong. But supposing his business would have amounted to about \$50 a year; and he had five friends or relatives that might have been your customers at \$50 per year; and each of them had five friends or relatives who were looking for a reliable, competent, customer-relations-minded service technician. In just one year, how much business did winning the argument cost you? \$\_\_\_\_\_ Nice bit of business you *lost*, by winning!!

- (1) Was winning the argument worth the cost?
- (2) Did you ever analyze who *really* pays your salary?

---

Review your handling of recent call-backs (of course you have them—everyone does). In each case, what customer doubts, suspicions, and worries did you note and how did you reassure your customer?

- (1) Doubted your competency?
  - (2) Suspected intentional poor workmanship, carelessness?
  - (3) Worried about added, unexpected expense?
  - (4) Couldn’t understand why service is needed again (in less than five years!)?
  - (5) Suspected set design faults?
  - (6) Suggested that he had a “lemon”?
- (You can add others.)

Could you have handled these call-backs better than you did?



**AVOID MEANINGLESS  
CONTRADICTIONS**

**10** Anger and resentment are the natural reactions when someone tells us we are wrong. Happiness is the natural reaction when someone tells us we are right.

Abuse and argument have no place in the kit of useful customer relations techniques. Suggestion, rather than argument, and a good deal of flattery, will handle any "tough" customer.

(over)



**BUILD YOUR REPEAT  
BUSINESS**

**11** The customer's first service call is especially important because on it rests the possibility of repeat and referral business. But *every* service call is really just as important, for each time you make a call, a customer can be retained . . . or lost.

Business growth is formed from the combination of ability to do well and the ability to impress favorably.

(over)



**SATISFIED CUSTOMERS  
PASS THE WORD AROUND**

**12** A personal referral from a satisfied customer is a priceless bit of advertising—but it costs nothing except the ability to please your customers so they will recommend you to others.

Completely satisfied customers are the yardstick of your success.

(over)

Remember that customer with a chip on his shoulder? He was wrong (of course), but he *thought* he was right—and he probably wasn't *entirely* wrong. Did you:

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Listen courteously and attentively, without argument or anger? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (2) Examine and verify the trouble?                                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (3) Determine who was at fault?                                    | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (4) Explain the facts, without saying that the customer was wrong? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (5) Take action promptly?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (6) Resell the customer?   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you scored 100% in the above test, you win a prize—a satisfied customer!

---

To be a successful serviceman, building repeat business, you must be a combination of a salesman, a diplomat, a public relations man, and a capable craftsman. It isn't enough to be only a good technician.

Today, in addition to being a technician, were you a:

- (1) Salesman?
- (2) Diplomat?
- (3) Public relations man?

How could you have improved your techniques in each case?

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To retain customers and obtain word of mouth recommendations, pay close attention to customers' evaluation of your service, stressing practices that create goodwill.

Consider every complaint a personal challenge—a test of your sales and technical ability. You'll meet that test if you determine the pattern of the complaints you get—and prepare to take the offensive to stop them before they gain momentum.

Think about the things you do that are most appreciated by your customers: How can you stress these practices?

Think about your recent call-backs: Was there a common reason for them? What are you doing about it?

"If I had a dollar for every time I've been asked that question," Pop chimed in, "we'd all be down in Florida fishing."

"At this season?" Red complained. "Me, I'm for Colorado."

"If you don't like Plainview," said Bob, pretending to be angry, "nobody's keeping you. Getting back to Mrs. White, she asked if it wouldn't be a good idea to carry extra parts in the truck so I wouldn't have to sizzle in traffic so much."

Pop and Red burst out laughing. "What did you tell her?"

"The obvious," Bob replied. "I thanked her for the suggestion and told her we stocked more than two thousand different kinds of replacement parts and that the truck was already packed with the items we needed most often. If we tried to carry them all around with us, we'd need a semitrailer 40 feet long. She said, oh, she hadn't thought of that. Then she asked if we ever needed a part we didn't have at the shop either and what did we do then."

"Sounds like Mrs. White's planning to go into business herself," quipped Red.

Bob shook his head. "She was just interested in how we work. When a customer asks you questions like this, she appreciates your taking the time to give a straight answer. Much of what we do is a mystery to the average person, and people feel happier when they know the reason for some of our operations. It's good customer relations to play ball. Just as long as you explain in terms they can understand."

"Mrs. White's second question, Red," said Pop, "was another common one. First you point out how many parts there are in just one TV set. Then you remind her that there are many set manufacturers, each of whom has a whole line of models which change from year to year. You'd need to keep something like 100,000 parts to have a complete stock. This would mean tying up so much money in inventory that you'd have to charge much more for the common replacements to cover your investment in the items you'd seldom use."

"That's right," continued Bob. "No customer wants to shell out more for a repair than the minimum necessary. He can see it wouldn't be fair to make most people pay extra just so you could take care of the oddball jobs a little faster. Especially when you tell him our supplier can give us 99% of the seldom-needed items right off his own shelves. It means a little inconvenience for us now and then, but if anyone objects, just reassure him he's only paying for one service call. The return visit doesn't cost him anything extra."

### BEFORE MAKING A SERVICE CALL



"I've noticed," Red observed, "you check the schematics of the sets you'll be fixing before you go out in the truck. That's so you won't be caught short on a tube complement or something obvious, isn't it?"

"Dead right," emphasized Bob. "A little checking beforehand can save you an hour a day. You see why it's important to try hard to get the make and model number of a set when a customer phones in. It helps eliminate a lot of unnecessary running back and forth."

"On those few occasions when you do need something unusual," Pop reminded Red, "don't leave the customer's house until you've checked on its availability. If we don't have it here, call the supplier and make sure he'll put one aside for you. Then you can tell the customer exactly when you'll be back to complete the repair. No one likes to be left in the dark."

Red's face wrinkled up into a grin. "Just one more thing, Bob."

"Shoot."

"Anybody around here seen my long-nosed pliers?"

## **In Brief . . .**

**Use the telephone to save time in locating needed parts. The shop and the distributor are as near as the telephone. Arrange appointments to return with the part.**

**If the nature of the trouble and the set model is known before a service call is made, it isn't a bad idea to check the history of previous service, if any, and the service literature for clues to the remedy. The customer will be impressed with your efficiency!**

**Anticipation of probable parts needs can often save extra steps and lost time.**

**There are practical limits to the replacement parts stock in the shop and the service truck. The nature of these limits may require explanation to a disappointed customer. Be prepared to explain.**

**Explanations must always be given in terms the customer can understand.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. What steps should be taken when the serviceman finds himself in the midst of a home service call without a needed replacement tube?
2. How should the serviceman proceed when there is no available part at the shop or at the supplier's place of business?
3. How should you explain the fact that it is not to the average customer's advantage for a service shop to stock uncommon or seldom used replacement parts?
4. What action do you advise if a repair in the home is beyond your ability?

## 15 BOB PULLS HANK SMITH'S SET INTO THE SHOP

When Red heard Bob toot his horn out behind the shop, it was the second half of the ninth with a man on third and two outs in a 3-3 tie.

"Wouldn't you know," he grumbled as the umpire called strike one. He glanced out the window and saw Bob getting out of the truck. The ump called strike two; Red held his breath. The batter swung and knocked a long high one into the left-field bleachers.

Bob stuck his head through the door.

"When you get through playing ball, champ, how's for giving me a hand with this console?"

"Okay, okay," said Red with an air of relief. "We got the game wrapped up."

The two of them carefully lifted a nice 24-incher onto a dolly and wheeled it in.

"Boy, that's a honey," commented Red. "How'd you win it?"

"Belongs to Hank Smith out on North Ridge Road," Bob explained. "It's an intermittent. I couldn't spot the trouble for sure, though I have a hunch or two."

"I'll bet he was sorry to see it go," said Red, still admiring the set. "It must have left a hole in his living room big enough to park a car in."

"Well, he didn't exactly cheer," Bob agreed. "In fact, it's a touchy problem that has to be handled right. With set serviceability the way it is these days, better than 80% of the repairs can be handled in the home. As a result, some people get upset when you must haul away their pride and joy."

"What's the best way to coat the pill?" inquired Red.

"First, you have to convince the customer it's necessary," Bob replied, perching on the corner of the bench. "Remind him that his TV is a complex instrument with certain adjustments requiring costly, delicate test equipment you can't bounce around in the back of a truck. Tell him you'd be a lot better off, too, if you could wrap up every set on the spot since you'd be able to make more service calls that way. On an intermittent like this one, point out it's surer and less expensive to watch the set in the shop instead of



**EXPLAIN BEFORE DELAYS  
ARE QUESTIONED**

cluttering up the customer's parlor all afternoon. Also assure the customer that our objective is a lasting repair in the most efficient and least expensive way."

"I get you," Red broke in. "You persuade him you can do a better job at less cost."

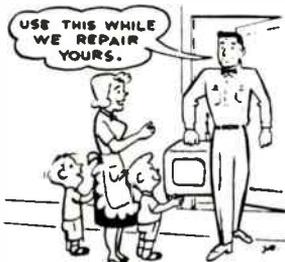
"Check," said Bob approvingly. "Another tip: be sure to explain what's wrong with the set, what you're going to do, about how much it'll cost, and when you'll return it. He'll be happier about watching his set go out the door if he knows when he'll have it back."

"Suppose you aren't sure of the trouble?" Red asked.

"Tell him that while you haven't yet used test equipment on the set, you think the trouble is so-and-so and give him a tentative cost estimate," Bob explained. "Promise you'll call back within 24 hours to get his okay on a definite cost of repair and let him know when you'll complete the job."

"Is that why you've phoned in now and then and asked how much work we had here?" Red inquired.

Bob nodded. "I wanted to make sure we could work a set into the schedule before making any commitments on delivery. It's poor business to call a guy up and tell him he's going to have to wait longer than he expected. He figures you're letting his job wait while you're catching up with rush work. That kind of treatment isn't fair, and he's bound to question the delay."



**A GOOD WILL BUILDER**

"How do you decide whether or not to leave him one of our loaner sets?" Red went on.

"That depends a little," Bob replied.

"If it's a household full of kids and I can see the missus will have a problem while her set's in the shop, I almost always leave one. Or if the customer makes a fuss over how awful it's going to be with no TV. On the other hand, sometimes you can tell the set won't really be missed or the customer may have a second set, in which case there's no reason to tie up one of our receivers. The time we need for a repair is a factor, too. I always provide a loaner when I know we'll be several days on the job; for example, if we have to wait for a part to be shipped in."

"I suppose we use portables for loaners because they're easier to carry around," observed Red.

"Yes, and a lightweight takes up less room on the truck," Bob noted. "Another reason is their lower cost; we don't have so much capital tied

up in loaners as we otherwise would. Also, if a set gets damaged in the customer's home, we don't stand to lose so much. I buy new ones every year to minimize the depreciation and obtain a maximum resale price."

"What happens to the old ones?" Red wanted to know.

"Every once in a while a customer likes the loaner so much," Bob explained, "that when I return his set he asks if he can buy the portable for his sun porch or basement. I can offer the customer a pretty good price and still give him a standard 90-day warranty. Otherwise we'll sell them from the shop after twelve months."

"Say, Bob," said Red with a twinkle, "I have a dandy idea."

"You and your bright ideas," moaned Bob. "What is it?"

"Let's put a loaner right over the bench here so I can *see* the ball game instead of only listening."

### **In Brief . . .**

**Most service problems can be solved in the home, but there are times when the customer's best interests are served by a shop repair.**

**A loaner set is a good will builder. The loaned set can be disposed of as a piece of used equipment. This makes these good will builders quite inexpensive.**

**If repair delays are inevitable, it is best to explain before the delay is questioned.**

**Careful and complete explanations should precede the removal of a set from the home to the shop. Stress the advantages to the customer. Promise a return date which can be met.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Do you happen to know what the most frequent complaint from service business customers is?
2. When and why does your firm leave loaner sets when a customer's set must be taken to the shop?
3. What shop situations must be carefully considered before a promise for a repair completion date can be made?
4. What should be done when a promised return date cannot be kept?

## 16 PEGGY COLLINS CALLS BOB AGAIN

"Say, Bob," Red teased, as the two of them sugared the morning coffee. "What's this I hear about you having a late date with Peggy Collins last night?"

"Who's been gossiping?" protested Bob with an air of injured innocence.

"Word gets around fast in this town," Red chuckled. "Not only that, I hear you were out there last week, too. Imagine a married man like you running around with a bachelor girl five years younger. Aren't you carrying customer relations a little too far?"

"Peggy's a good-looker all right," Bob admitted, "but my interest in her is purely professional."

"Not very convincing, chief," Red went on. "If your intentions were all that pure you'd go see her during the daytime, like everybody else."

Bob began to blush. "Come off it, Red. Can I help it if the girl works 'til six? What do you want me to do, miss dinner?" He chuckled.

"What's so funny?" Red challenged.

"I was thinking I should have sent *you* last night," Bob confessed. "The mood she was in, she'd have lowered the boom on you if you stepped out of line. Would have served you right, too."

"Tough day at the office?" suggested Red.

"Hardly," Bob replied. "She was sore because her set broke down again after I'd repaired it only last week. She asked if we usually gave that kind of service, or had I forgotten to put back a tube on the first call."



Red grinned. "I think dames are cute when they're mad."

Bob shook his head sadly. "Red, one of these days you're going to walk into an open manhole. And when you do, I'll put the cover on."

Bob paused before continuing. "Getting back to Miss Collins—she didn't realize there was no connection between her picture tube conking out last time and the condenser failing this time. As

far as she was concerned, her set had broken down twice in less than ten days, and it was my fault."

"So you pulled out the schematic and gave her a five-minute course in electronics?" Red guessed.

"So you think Miss Collins is the type to clutter up her blonde head with amps times volts equals watts?" asked Bob.

"No, I don't imagine she *would*," Red admitted. "What was the angle?"

"I told her her set was even more complicated than a car," Bob explained, "and just because you have a flat fixed one day is no guarantee the battery won't quit the next. I pointed out that when I came the first time the condenser was working perfectly. I said it was unusual for another part to fail so soon, but now and then it happened."

"Did you convince her?" queried Red.

"Not entirely," Bob conceded. "I guess Miss Collins is no whiz on mechanics, either. So I tried another example. I compared her TV with an electric typewriter. You put in a new ribbon one week, and the next week a key gets stuck. She saw the light then, and her frown turned into a smile. 'Oh, I understand,' she said. 'I didn't know so many things could go wrong with a set.'"

"I didn't want to leave her with the idea her set was nothing but a pack of troubles, so I explained that it was amazing how *few* things actually did go wrong. I told her she had a good set that was going to give her many more years of good service."

Red whistled, "Bob, it's a good thing you *are* married. If you'd given Peggy much more smooth talk she might have followed you home . . ."

"Forget it, Red," Bob interrupted. Besides, the 'your set will behave now' approach isn't foolproof."

"Oh?" said Red.

"A few people just can't seem to understand why their set won't run for five years after it's been fixed. They're so mad about having to call you again they won't even listen to reason."

"Not much you can do with people like that," Red observed.

"Well," said Bob calmly, "it's worth something to keep a customer from telling everyone you're a bum. In an extreme case I'll make a concession if I think there's a chance of winning back the guy's good will."

"Like what, for example?"

"I tell him I'm sorry I can't convince him there was no connection between the two breakdowns. Next I say I've built my business on satisfying customers, and I want him to feel he can always count on getting the finest service possible from me. Then I say I'm willing to



put his set in shape for the cost of parts and labor (for installing the parts) without any charge for the call itself. I consider this as an investment in this customer's future business. I leave it up to him to tell me what's fair. And you know what?"

"He throws you out on your ear?" suggested Red.

Bob shook his head. "Not at all. More often than not he figures I must be on the level or I wouldn't try so hard to meet him halfway. He tells me to go ahead with the work and forget about giving him a break."

## **In Brief . . .**

**Suspicious customers often become ex-customers. A sincere attempt should be made to eliminate suspicion of faulty workmanship.**

**An early call-back requires real skill in customer relations.**

**Explain the difference between the two troubles in easy-to-understand terms. Discuss the rarity with which an early call-back is encountered.**

**Soften early call-back disappointments with extra service. An understanding of the customer's feelings will suggest special handling.**

**Explain that there are many parts and tubes in a circuit and that a newly defective part did check out as satisfactory on the previous call and has been operating until now. However, be sure to reassure the customer regarding the improbability of further failures soon.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. What type of doubts may a customer have when he has to make a call for service shortly after a prior call?
2. What steps can be taken to regain customer confidence when an early call-back trouble is unrelated to the previous call?
3. An early home call-back requires special effort to resell the advantages of doing business with your firm. At least three pluses should be emphasized. Do know them by heart?
4. How can a description of the satisfactory service experiences of other customers be used to advantage in handling the disappointment caused by an early call-back?

## 17 BOB REVISITS A SICK FRIEND

Every few months Bob spent a couple of days at Central City attending service clinics sponsored by one manufacturer or another. Thanks to these, he was the first technician in Plainview to master the special skills required for work on color sets. He was so good, in fact, that two of the other shops in town passed along all their tough color jobs. When there was a lull at Crosstown Electronic Service, he checked Red out on the latest circuit designs.

This particular morning they were deep in a discussion on color alignment when Marybeth walked in with a long face.

Bob looked up from the service manual. "What's wrong, honey? You look like the bank foreclosed our mortgage."

"Mrs. Williams just called up," Marybeth replied, "and said the set you fixed last Tuesday is acting up again the same way. She was pretty upset. I promised you'd be out right away. Here's the worksheet showing what you did."

"That's odd," puzzled Bob, reaching for his kit. "It was doing fine when I finished. Red, hold the lesson until I get back."

He returned an hour later.

Red grinned his usual cheery greeting. "Use that TV-is-like-a-car approach again?"

"No such luck," Bob replied. "This time it was the same disease as before. One of the tubes I replaced Tuesday was shot and had to be tossed."

"They don't make 'em the way they used to," sympathized Red.

"You're right," Bob agreed, "now they're even better. I was the one who goofed. I overlooked an overload in the circuit. I'm surprised it didn't burn out sooner."

"Boy, you were really on the spot," Red observed. "What did you tell Mrs. Williams?"

Bob shrugged. "The truth, what else? I told her I'd checked her set carefully—which I had—and it worked perfectly. I said the new trouble started from the same cause, a current leak I hadn't noticed the first time because it didn't show up on the tests I ran to isolate the original failure. I explained that the condition was an unusual one, but since I didn't catch it, the second breakdown was my fault."



"She ask if you were going to charge her?" Red queried.

"I didn't wait for her to," responded Bob. "I assured her that we guaranteed our work, and if a repair we made proved to be unsatisfactory, the customer paid nothing. In her case the service call, the new tube, and the labor were on the house."

Red nodded attentively. "Was she pleased?"

"Yes, she thought that was a fair policy and thanked me for coming right out. I said I was sorry she'd been inconvenienced by an oversight on our part and added that I'd double-checked everything on this visit to make absolutely sure she wouldn't have any further difficulty."

Red had a new question. "Suppose you suspected a repeat failure but couldn't track it down?"

"I'd pull the set into the shop, explaining I was afraid the original repair hadn't reached the root of the trouble. And leave a loaner with the promise there'd be no charge for the new work if it turned out we'd slipped up on the first call. It's bad enough to miss something now and then—you want to do everything possible to prevent another call-back. On those occasions when one does get away from you, you want to be dead sure you catch it on the second try."

"A customer's patience could wear thin pretty fast," Red agreed. "Now, how about this situation? You have a call-back and it's a repeat failure, except this time you're positive the replacement part was at fault."

"That's a little different," was Bob's reply. "If the part is still in warranty we put a new one in and return the old one

to our supplier. There's a labor charge, but the customer isn't charged for the part."

"Suppose the customer asks how come the manufacturer doesn't check his product so it won't conk out after ten days? Or suppose he gripes about paying a labor charge on a failure that's no fault of his own?"

"That can be sticky," Bob conceded. "As far as the manufacturer is concerned, you can truthfully say every replacement part is checked carefully at the factory before it's shipped. On the other hand, there's no way to catch defects that didn't exist at the time of inspection—a part can be damaged between factory and final installation without anyone being the wiser. To protect the customer against the small percentage of failures which can't be prevented, the manufacturer gives a warranty long enough to insure that any hidden defects will show up.



“As for the labor charge, it would be quite expensive for service organizations like ours to fill out forms and reports so the manufacturer could pay us for labor on in-warranty replacements. The cost of parts would soar as a result, and every customer would have to pay more, even for ordinary jobs. In the long run, the present system is more efficient and therefore less expensive.

Red sighed. “Let’s get back to the bench, Bob. I’ve got a real dilly I don’t *ever* want to see again.”

### **In Brief . . .**

**When a call-back is a result of an unintentional oversight, be honest and frank; admit the oversight and explain how it happened—and tell the customer that there will be no charge for this sort of repeat failure.**

**Offer to properly correct the problem and show sympathy for the inconvenience to the customer.**

**Explain the nature and purpose of a parts warranty whenever a warranted part has failed in service.**

**Make absolutely certain that the second repair will positively do the job; then tell the customer this. Pull the set to the shop if there is any doubt about a lasting repair.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. What action can be taken to retain customer confidence when a call-back is due to previous incomplete or incorrect servicing?

2. List the key points to be emphasized during an explanation of a parts warranty and what it means to the customer.

3. How can a 30-day service guarantee, issued by the service dealer, generate good will?

4. “Guaranteed” work means many things to many people. What is the *basic* element of a *real* guarantee that will satisfy customers and insure repeat business?

## 18 POP'S SECRET FORMULA FOR LEMON-AID

Thanks to a cranky starter, Red was half an hour late when he swung his convertible into its usual spot behind the Crosstown Electronic Service building. He walked in the back door and found Bob, Pop, and Marybeth gathered around a new receiver that looked as though it had just come out of the factory carton. The image on the picture tube, however, was jumping around so much his eyes began to ache.

"What are you guys doing," Red greeted them, "washing laundry in that thing?"

Bob winked at Pop and Marybeth. "I don't get you, Red. This little honey is in for a checkup, and we're just admiring how sweetly she's working."

Red did a double take. "That set has the itch so bad it's liable to blow up if we don't spray it quick. Where's the DDT?"

"Now that you mention it," Bob admitted, "the picture is a bit unsteady. I wonder if the line cord is plugged all the way in."

"Plugged in?" howled Red. "It's probably halfway through the wall already."

Bob switched the receiver off and sat down. "Now, Red, I hate to hear you talk that way. This sweetheart belongs to Larry Wells, and he was raving about it only this morning."



"I bet he was raving," Red rejoined. "He probably didn't know whether to call us or an undertaker. How long's he had it?"

"About two weeks. When Larry brought it in, he told me it worked like a charm until last night. Suddenly he smelled something burning. A moment later it started acting up like this. Said he was afraid it was going to go into orbit."

Red chuckled. "He must've been plenty sore."

"That's hardly the word," Bob replied. "He said the manufacturer must have baboons working on final assembly. Asked me if we could do something or if he should keep it for a book end. The way he talked you'd think the whole industry had ganged up on him."

"The first thing to do," stated Red solemnly, "is to 'restore customer confidence. Compliment him on his choice of a set and advise him

he'll have many more hours of pleasure from it.' Boy, if anyone tried to tell him *that* he'd have gone into a coma. What did you say?"

"As a matter of fact," Pop cut in, "Bob told him exactly what you said. It's true. Larry's set is the first one like it that's been in the shop in the last six months. We've had calls after making an installation, of course, but 99% of the time the customer has goofed, not the manufacturer. That's why we take so much trouble to demonstrate and adjust all the controls when we make a delivery. Even so, a few owners forget and do something wrong. The first thought jumping into their minds is, they've got a lemon."

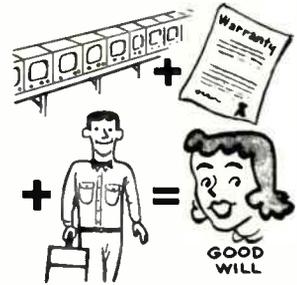
Bob nodded his agreement. "Pop, tell Red your formula for lemon-aid."

"A guy whose new set really *does* have a problem is a mighty unhappy fella. He doesn't think of the 999 other receivers that came off the production line the same time as his and are giving perfect service. All he sees is the 1,000th one sitting half dead in his living room. He's positive someone unloaded a lemon on him."

"You've got to get that thought out of his mind," Bob commented.

"Which is why you call your approach lemon-aid?" added Red.

"Exactly," Pop continued. "Take Larry, for instance. I told him I'd been in the business 35 years and knew for a fact that no set left any reputable manufacturer's factory unless it scored 100% on every inspection. Then I said once in a while there was a hidden defect that didn't show up until the set had been in use for a while. Next I pointed out how manufacturers recognized there was an outside chance something could go wrong between their plant and the consumer's home. That's why they protect the buyer with a 90-day warranty. His set was guaranteed, too, and there'd be no charge for any part we had to replace. I promised we'd get busy on it right away and fix it to perform the way the factory intended."



"Did he ask about labor costs?" Red inquired.

"No," Pop replied, "I brought it up myself. It's important for a customer to understand in advance exactly what to expect. I told him there'd be a small charge for our work."

"How'd he react?" Red wanted to know.

"He asked why the manufacturer didn't take care of that, too," Pop went on. "I said so few sets developed trouble during the warranty period nowadays, it wouldn't be practical or fair to make every buyer

pay something extra for repair services only a few would use. The present system guarantees that prices will be as low as possible."

Bob nodded in agreement. "Larry didn't rush out of here and write the factory a fan letter, but at least the sting was gone from his disappointment. He was confident his set was in good hands, he knew it would soon be working properly, and he was satisfied he was being treated fairly."

Red's eyes began to twinkle. "Now it's all settled," he quipped, "what do you say we send out for some sugar and ice?"

Marybeth and Bob looked at him blankly.

Red grinned slyly. "All this talk about lemon-aid has made me thirsty."

## **In Brief . . .**

**Special sympathy is in order for the customer whose very recent purchase has just presented him with trouble.**

**Factory warranties are merely one expression the service dealer has of the manufacturer's interest in local customer relations.**

**Tactful handling of an irate customer in search of "lemon-aid" is the route to obtain good will for the manufacturer and the service dealer. There is no short cut.**

**The customer who comes to your shop has a personal reason for considering your shop as a place to obtain service. It's your responsibility to justify that confidence.**

**Quality control receives more attention from the manufacturer than any other phase of production. But even with the best quality control at the factory, defects are bound to show up in a small percentage of sets received by a dealer. Good will for the entire industry is the product of manufacturer-dealer attention in making sure the set is in good operating condition before it is delivered to the customer.**

**Express confidence in the set and the repair. Compliment the customer on his choice of a set.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. How does a new set warranty aid the customer?
2. How does a new set warranty give customer relations aid to the service dealer?
3. How does a new set warranty give customer relations aid to the set manufacturer?
4. If an in-warranty failure seems to have resulted from a customer's carelessness or misuse, what responsibilities does the service dealer have to (a) the customer and (b) the manufacturer?

## 19 BOB GIVES A LESSON IN DIPLOMACY

Directly opposite the Crosstown Electronic Service stood a dry-cleaning shop that was said to be having financial trouble. Its owner was a heavy-set, dark-haired man who usually needed a shave. The week he opened, Marybeth had dropped over to congratulate him and welcome him to the block, but his attitude was so suspicious and negative, she had not gone back since.

The morning coffee was hardly poured this particular Tuesday when they heard the sound of someone shouting. Bob and Red walked to the front window while Pop and Marybeth watched from their seats. At that moment a man holding a suit on a hanger emerged from the cleaner's. He was white with rage. The proprietor pursued him to the door and hurled a few uncomplimentary remarks after him.

"Our happy neighbor," Red observed, "ranks so low on customer relations he'd have to look up to see the bottom."

"You can say that again," Bob agreed. "He won't be around much longer with that attitude."

They went back to the table and sat down. Pop was the first to break the silence.

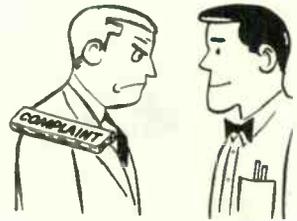
"A man with a service complaint is a man with a chip on his shoulder. Treat him wrong and you lose a customer. Abuse him the way that guy did just now and you make an enemy who'll cheer at your funeral. In this day and age how can anyone be so stupid?"

"A fella out my way," Red joined in, "opened a filling station about a year ago. His motto was 'The customer is a jerk.' I guess he went bust, 'cuz yesterday I saw him pumping gas for someone else."

"It points up," Bob added, "the importance of being fair and then some. We're particularly on the spot. The work we do is a mystery to most people—they can't see and touch it like a stain on a suit or a cracked cylinder head. Pop, maybe this would be a good time to brief Red on handling complaints?"

Pop nodded and put down his cup deliberately.

"Red, underlying most differences of opinion is a dispute as to facts. The more facts two parties can agree on the easier it is to find a middle ground on the debatable items. For us, this means keeping a record of every service call we make—you've seen them in that file beside the phone on Marybeth's desk."



"It's amazing," Bob noted, "how few customers can remember when they last called you or what you did for them. They throw out or lose the receipts we give them listing the cause of the failure and the parts replaced. With all the sincerity in the world someone will say a repair we made back in August was done last month. Unless we can produce a copy of that statement, he'll be genuinely convinced we're trying to weasel."

"If a customer's called you several times," observed Pop, "the worksheet helps convince him the different breakdowns were not related. He's less likely to think your repair was at fault."

"It cuts both ways," Bob emphasized. "If a call-back actually is due to our oversight, the worksheet helps prevent us from being unfair."

Red nodded with interest. "You've sold me on the importance of getting facts straight. What next?"

"No matter how cockeyed a complaint may sound," Bob responded, "make sure you do and say nothing to suggest you think it's unjustified. Remember, the customer is riled enough to pick up the phone or come into the shop. He won't appreciate your acting like it's a huge joke. Listen to him carefully, hear him out, and indicate you intend and *want* to satisfy him. If you keep your own temper under control and show a sincere interest in his problem, you can prevent the fuss from degenerating into a free-for-all. The quickest way to calm a guy down is not to argue with him."



"Suppose he's way off base," Red suggested. "You show him the worksheet and he's still not satisfied."

"Then you want to start thinking about making a concession to keep his good will," Bob explained. "Of course, you run across a few customers who are so ornery and stubborn they aren't worth

having. The great majority, however, will respond to a willingness on your part, and meet you halfway."

"A concession can fall flat," cut in Pop, "if given grudgingly."

"Yes, I forgot to stress that," Bob rejoined. "You want to be cheerful and good-natured. If you're at fault, admit it promptly and without reservation. Tell the customer you're sorry it happened. Thank him for calling it to your attention. If you're not to blame, explain you value his good will and want to do everything possible to give him the best service you know how. It's important to stress you're making an adjustment in order to satisfy him. You don't want him to regard the concession as an admission of guilt."

Marybeth cleared her throat. "It's bad enough when a customer walks in mad. Whether he's still angry when he walks out is up to you."

Red glanced across the street nervously. "Don't worry about me, folks. I don't want anyone taking this cookie to the cleaners."

### **In Brief . . .**

**Abuse and argument have no place in a kit of useful customer relations techniques.**

**A customer with a complaint has a chip on his shoulder. All of us want to be right.**

**Anger and resentment are the natural reactions when someone tells us we are wrong.**

**Listen carefully to the customer with a complaint. Let your listening attitude indicate a desire to give satisfaction.**

**Happiness is a natural reaction when someone tells us we are right. This human trait can be used to great advantage.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Why is it poor customer relations ever to tell a customer he is wrong?
2. How can the satisfactory adjustment of one customer's complaint become a source of additional business?
3. What should be the serviceman's attitude in handling a customer's complaint and its adjustment?
4. Do you know the six principles of complaint handling?

## 20 IT'S NOT THE LABOR, IT'S THE OVERHEAD

Red was in the front office with Marybeth when a husky guy dressed in dungarees and a T-shirt walked up to the counter. Bob greeted him, said his set was ready, and fetched it from the workshop.

Bob gave the safety glass a final polish. "We checked her out again this morning and she scored 100%. You can count on a lot more service from this little honey. She's a real sweetheart."

"What's the bad news?" the visitor asked.

"Good news," replied Bob cheerfully. "We gave you an estimate of \$17.50, and it turned out that one of the parts we thought we'd have to replace was okay. So the bill is \$15.30 instead."

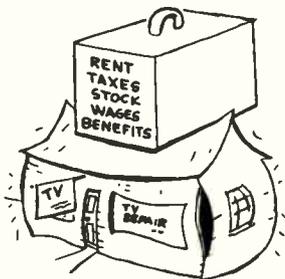
The man smiled appreciatively; then, as he studied the bill his expression turned into a frown. "You've got \$8.00 down here for labor at about twice what I make per hour."

"Yes," agreed Bob, "that's our standard rate."

"Gee, that's pretty steep. I pull down top scale, \$3.17 an hour. How come you guys charge so much? You must be making a mint around here."

"I wish we were," said Bob jovially. "I've been wanting to take the family out to the coast for three years now. Just as with your own employer, our labor rate figure covers a lot more than wages. We have the rent on the shop here, plus heat, light, and telephone. There's the truck we use on service calls and for picking up parts we need when our supplier can't give fast enough delivery."

Bob waved at the well-stocked shelves behind the counter. "We have a pile of cash tied up in these replacement parts and even more tied up in the test equipment back in the workroom which wears out or becomes obsolete. With three full-time people on the staff we have a bunch of taxes and benefits to pay for. Those shelves and file drawers of technical books and service notes are another necessary expense that has to go into our rate per hour. Then there's the cost of office work, such as call-taking, dispatching, and bookkeeping. We also have to pay for insurance to protect our shop and customers. Last time I broke it down, overhead ate up nearly half of our gross. And another item: new models are coming



out so fast these days we have a lot of homework to do just to keep up. That's time nobody pays us for."

Bob gestured at the bill again. "You see, the labor rate has to cover all these other expenses."

"Hadn't thought of that," the visitor conceded. "I'm glad you set me straight so I can tell the missus. Got change for a 20?"

Red waited until the door closed, then walked over to Bob.

"Boss, next time there's an election for the man-you'd-most-like-to-hear-bad-news-from, you can count on my vote. You really have a knack for batting curve balls over the fence."

"Nothing more than putting yourself in the other guy's shoes," said Bob modestly. "Anyone who makes less than our rate per hour—and that includes most of our customers—is liable to wonder why we think our services are worth so much more than his. It's natural." He reached under the counter and pulled out a chart.

"Here's a bar graph I had made up showing the various items that determine our rate. I use it on the stubborn cases. Notice how it's broken down into nine categories: rent (including utilities), truck, taxes, employee benefits, stock, cost of training, test equipment and tools, wages, and nonproductive time."

"What's that last heading?" Red wanted to know.

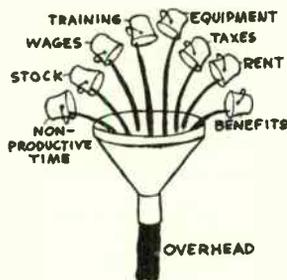
"Nonproductive time?" queried Bob.

"That's the 20 minutes or half hour we spend driving to and from a customer's house on a service call, including a factor for the occasions when a customer forgets we're coming and isn't at home."

"Which saves him the trouble of bringing his set to us?"

"Exactly." Bob paused to light a cigarette. "Our going to the customer is a convenience someone has to pay for. We could turn out more work if everything were brought to the shop. We wouldn't need a truck, we wouldn't get caught in traffic, we'd have all the test equipment we needed, and we'd be a lot more comfortable than squatting on Joe Blow's carpet.

"Also, nonproductive time includes time spent on a difficult problem, such as Mr. Smith's intermittent job yesterday, for which we couldn't possibly charge for all the hours spent on it. And then there's the time spent on the once-in-a-while call-backs. Don't forget the time necessary to chase down a necessary part. Also, remember Marybeth's salary for call-taking, dispatching, bookkeeping, and other paper work. I could go on and on."



"Ever find someone you couldn't convince?" Red asked.

"Very few," replied Bob. "As soon as a customer sees his charge includes a lot more than the salary of the technician with the tube tester, he realizes he's not so bad off after all."

"You know," Red confided, "you've taught me something, too. When I started coming in here I sorta wondered where all the money was going. And I see now what you mean when you stress good customer relations. With all that overhead, you've got to turn over every job you can lay your hands on to keep from being bled white."

"Right on the beam, Red," approved Bob. "Some of the outfits in this game forget they have bills to pay at the end of the month. I keep a close eye on the business just to make sure we haven't overlooked some way to reduce costs without sacrificing quality. We nearly starved the first six months after I opened this shop because I was charging too little. Then Charlie Smith came in to check my accounts and showed me what our real costs were. Overhead almost did me in."

Red chuckled. "That makes three things to watch out for."

"What are the other two?" puzzled Bob.

Red's face wrinkled up into a grin. "Death and taxes."

## **In Brief . . .**

**Only straightforward answers should be used in reply to questions about service charges and rates.**

**It is extremely important to know the exact costs of doing business. This knowledge will focus attention upon the value and importance of each customer.**

**The right of a customer to query a service charge cannot be questioned. Explanations must be given when requested.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. How would you explain a labor charge to a customer who had just questioned the charges for a condenser replacement?
2. The average customer appreciates some of the service business overhead expenses, but not others. Which overhead elements are most difficult for the average customer to appreciate?
3. Which overhead elements are most understandable to the average customer?
4. Prepare a list of your current overhead costs. Your labor rate should reflect the true worth of your labor, but any defense of the rate requires careful thought. A recognition of the many elements makes a defense possible.

## 21 BOB PUTS HIS BEST FOOT FORWARD

Marybeth was studying a book of paint color samples when Red walked over to her desk. Several scraps of wallpaper were gathered in a neat pile under her purse, and something that looked like a fixture supply catalog rested on the counter behind her.

Red called over to Bob. "Bad news, chief. Marybeth's getting set to pretty us up. What shade are the window boxes going to be?"

"Didn't I mention it?" responded Bob. "We're going to have our face lifted next week, and she's in charge of the redecorating."

Red surveyed the front office critically. "Looks fine to me. Linoleum's a bit worn over by the door but not enough to bother anyone."

"It was the best we could do three years ago," observed Marybeth getting up from her chair, "but it's beginning to look a little shabby. Also, we're running short on space for replacement stocks, which means building a new counter with more shelving."

Red whistled. "Sounds like a pile of money to me. What's the point?"

"Got to put our best foot forward," explained Bob. "Some of the other outfits here in Plainview are sprucing up; we don't want to be left behind. We've got a good location that draws lots of traffic. A little investment in paint and new fixtures will give us a leg up."

"Ever notice the bad impression you get when you walk into certain shops?" Marybeth asked. "Maybe the door sticks or is hard to push open. Perhaps the display windows are cluttered up with junk nobody's bothered to dust in five years. By the time you're inside you've begun to wonder what kind of people run the place. It's the little things that attract customers—or keep them away."

"Take the floor plan, for instance," chimed in Bob. "We gave a lot of thought to how we could make the best use of this space. We wanted to have enough room for customers to move around in without banging into each other. They need a place to sit down while waiting for an estimate, ashtrays if they feel like a smoke, something to look at besides blank walls."

"The counter is another example of a need for careful layout. If there's wrapping or packing to be done, the paper and string are far enough away from the cash register so one of us can make change while the other is putting a parcel together. Down at the far end are batteries

**KEEP YOUR BUSINESS  
SPARKLING**



and other items customers need most frequently. We can take care of three or even four people at one time."

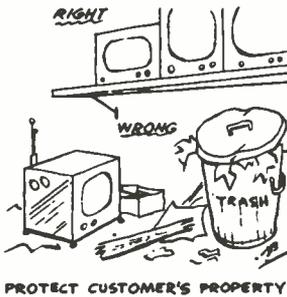
Marybeth waited for Bob to finish. "Even the stock shelves can be made into an asset if you arrange them attractively."

"Now I understand the reason for the pink curtains in the wash-room," quipped Red. "You want everyone to feel at home."

Bob tried to suppress a smile. "There's more to good customer relations in the shop than sound plumbing and well-oiled door hinges. Like adequate lighting, so the place looks cheerful even when it's dark and gloomy outside. Or placing the telephone close enough to the counter so a customer can make a call. And safeguarding customer property."

"I don't follow you on that last one," Red puzzled.

"Some outfits are careless about sets brought in for repair. They stack them any place on the floor and then wonder why the cabinet work gets scuffed up. You wouldn't do that in a customer's home, and there's no excuse for being sloppy in the shop. We put in the shelving opposite the workbench to be sure nothing would be damaged."



Marybeth raised a hand. "Speaking of being sloppy, most women dislike a place that's dusty and dirty. A tidy, well-kept establishment has an instinctive appeal to the housekeeper side of their nature."

"The next thing you know we'll be serving hot lunches," grumbled Red. "What else should I remember besides taking my shoes off before I come in?"

"Don't start giving Marybeth ideas," laughed Bob. "No, the only other point I'd make is courtesy. The good impression a customer gets from the appearance of a shop is ruined if he's treated thoughtlessly by the people behind the counter. A friendly greeting goes a long way and so does promptness in attending to his needs and a sincere interest in his problems. If you're busy with someone else, see if Pop or I am around to take care of him. If you're all alone, ask him to take a seat and make himself comfortable. Call him by name if you possibly can. People like to be shown you know who they are and welcome their trade. Oh yes, if the phone rings when you're helping someone and you realize the conversation will be a long one, jot down the number and promise to call back as soon as you're free."

Red thought it over, then broke out in his customary grin. "Only one thing's bothering me."

Bob braced himself. "Shoot."

"What do I do with my spare time?"

### **In Brief . . .**

**The face of a business is its store front and window areas. This face is a constant reflection of the personality of the firm.**

**Arrange the stock to facilitate inventory-taking—it will automatically look neat and orderly.**

**Old, shabby display materials have much less customer appeal than newer materials have.**

**Color deserves important thought when planning a redecoration job; the most important consideration is a choice of a color scheme in keeping with good taste and neatness.**

**A customer's property should receive the same careful handling in his absence that it would receive in his presence.**

**Acknowledge the presence of a waiting customer by some use of his name, if possible.**

**Customers do not like dark or poorly lighted places of business, or evidence of careless housekeeping.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. The shop front is the face of your business. Name five elements of an effective store front.
2. During the coming week try to make a list of as many ideas as you see for store fronts that capture your imagination. Then select at least one of these ideas to help your store front smile to each passer-by.
3. A good window display requires the effective use of color. Can you list the important considerations to keep in mind when choosing colors for a display?
4. Suppose that you plan to rearrange the shop service area for greater efficiency in serving your customers. List three planning considerations which should be given careful thought.
5. Displays are silent salesmen. Do you know the four basic requirements of a good display?

## 22 BOB COLLECTS INTEREST

It was nearly two when Bob got back from his morning calls. Red and Pop had long since finished lunch and were busy at the bench. Bob was whistling merrily.

"Late yesterday and late again today," commented Red. "What's wrong, boss, given up eating?"

"Hardly," replied Bob. "Had a little trouble at the first two stops, and the third was a real corker."

"Don't sound right to me," Red quipped. "If things were rough as all that, how come you're so chipper? That corker must have been a cute trick."

Bob grinned. "She was a mother of ten, if you insist on being personal. I guess her set just couldn't take it any longer. No, the reason I'm happy is because all three calls were referrals, people I'd never heard of before. Best sign I know of that we're on the beam."

It was Red's turn to whistle. "Boy, if that happened every day, *none* of us'd have time to eat. I mean, like a chain letter. You mail a buck to the guy at the top of the list, add your name to the bottom, and send it to two friends. Each of them does the same with two of their friends, which makes four. When your name hits the top of the list you're on Easy Street."

"Not a bad comparison," approved Bob, "except I never yet heard of a chain letter that got anywhere. These word-of-mouth recommendations are more like interest on an investment, an investment in good work and good customer relations."

Pop nodded his agreement. "When I was in the furniture game, I told my salesmen a satisfied customer was the most important person in their lives because not only would he come back again, but he'd bring his friends and relations with him. Then, when I got into radio service work, I found out satisfied customers were even more important. A guy buying a chair can pretty well see what he's getting. The same guy trying to find someone to fix his TV has no idea what will be handed him."

"So he picks up the phone," Red cut in, "and calls his Aunt Minnie to ask who took care of her last time. Aunt Minnie says she thinks Bob Tronic of Crosstown Electronic Service is cute. The next thing you know we got another customer."



Bob laughed. "You have the right idea, Red, though I wouldn't describe it quite the same way. Pop is saying that our product is an intangible. Apart from hoping his set will work when we're through poking around its insides, Joe Blow can't very well judge the technical features of the service he receives. However, he has no trouble at all judging us as people. If we succeed in selling *ourselves* to him, he'll sell us to others."

"That's true," Red reflected. "My next door neighbors moved in from Central City a while back. Last week, their washing machine had the jitters, and they asked me who was good. Said they'd checked the telephone book and found five names in the classified section. They couldn't tell who was best, so they came to me for advice. They picked one of the two I recommended, and it turned out they liked the outfit just fine."

"For the same reasons you liked it, I imagine," added Bob. "The others may be just as good technically, but the difference is an extra effort to satisfy customers. It happens every day. Today it happened three times to us, and you can bet your bottom dollar I stood on my head to make sure I justified the recommendation we were given."

"The serviceman making a home call has to carry the ball by himself," Pop went on. "In a store, a customer has already half formed an opinion by the time he walks in the door. The sign over the front, the merchandise in the windows, the way it's displayed give him a kind of mental picture of what to expect. Now he's inside, he can touch and poke the item he came for. If he decides he wants it, he has his pick of clerks. If he's got a complaint, there's a manager somewhere to listen to him and straighten him out. Now, when you ring the doorbell, *you* are Crosstown Electronic Service. In fact, you are the *entire* service industry in the customer's eyes, but all the customer sees is you and your truck. Everything else, and I mean *everything*, depends on you.

"A technician who rushes in, changes a tube, and rushes out again is like a guy who keeps his cash in a sock under his mattress. The most he can hope for is that no one will take it away from him. On the other hand, the smart cookie who takes the time and trouble to make each customer happy is putting his money in a bank where it will grow and be worth more tomorrow. I don't need to tell you which one is going to get ahead."

"Dead right," chorused Bob. "It calls for real skill. People are different; they



don't all react the same way. This means *you* have to adjust and use the tactics best suited not only to a particular situation but to a particular individual as well. The prize for success is his future business, plus the business he sends you by selling you to others. It's worth being late for lunch occasionally."

"Sounds good to me," admitted Red as a sly grin crept across his face, "except it looks like I'll have to start getting up half an hour earlier from now on."

"How come?" puzzled Bob.

"So I can eat an extra big breakfast."

## In Brief . . .

**It's quite proper to ask a new customer why he came to you. If the call was the result of a recommendation from a satisfied customer, it is also in order to thank the referring customer. Encourage such referrals.**

**Word-of-mouth recommendations are the best and most inexpensive advertising obtainable.**

**If personal integrity and ability are sold, the service sale will automatically follow.**

**When a request comes for a recommendation involving services your firm does not handle, it usually isn't wise to confine the recommendation to a single source. Try to suggest several equally reliable sources.**

**A serviceman making a home call holds the reputation of his own firm and the entire service industry in the palm of his hand. It's his responsibility to be honest and competent.**

**A bit of time, trouble, and extra effort help the service dealer collect dividends on his investment.**

## Facing The Problems . . .

1. Name at least two precautions to be taken when making a recommendation to a customer for service your firm cannot perform.
2. What professional counterparts must the serviceman represent if he wishes to be a successful businessman?
3. If your firm sells retail equipment, some of the interest on your investment must depend upon your knowledge of basic selling facts. Do you know the four basic selling facts?

## 23 FOOLISH FRANK NEGLECTS KNOW-HOW

"Phone for you, Bob," said Marybeth, coming back to the workshop. Bob clicked off his soldering gun and walked into the front office.

A moment or two later he returned, snatched a service manual off the shelf above the bench, and disappeared again. Red was beginning another job by the time Bob rang off.

"Must be a mighty savvy customer," observed Red, "who can ask a question you can't answer out of your head.

"That was no customer," Bob replied, "that was Frank over at Acme Radio and TV. Wanted advice on a color set he was having trouble with."

"And you straightened him out?" protested Red. "I thought he was a competitor of ours."

"He is," Bob agreed. "But we all gotta eat, and it pays to play ball. Another guy's headaches can make things easier for you when you run into a similar situation. Also, maybe you need a replacement part you don't have and your distributor happens to be out of stock, too. You'll get the job finished a lot faster if you can call some other shop in town and get it from him."

"Sure," conceded Red, "but Frank's always pestering you."

Bob sat down on a stool. "Frank's a special case. He sends me the ones he can't handle, so I help him on the others."

"What's the trouble?" demanded Red. "Is he still learning?"

"The trouble is Frank's *stopped* learning," Bob explained. "He's been in business as long as I have. In fact, we were in the same class at technical school. Frank figured he knew the game from A to Z and hasn't done much since to improve his skills."

"Well, surely he buys the same service literature you do?" Red asked.

Bob shook his head. "Frank doesn't even do that, at least not systematically. Claims it saves him money. He's dead wrong. The money he wastes in a month trying to find the information he needs would pay for all the material we buy in a whole year. Some jobs take him twice as long as they do us, for example, simply because he can't lay his hands on the right schematic."

"What does he care?" Red observed. "He charges it off as labor cost, and the customers foot the bill."



"There's a limit to that racket, too," noted Bob. "It doesn't take long for word to get around that so-and-so is out of line on his rates. Frank has to charge *less* per hour for his work just to stay competitive with us. His overhead is about the same, which means he nets less for himself. Besides, when he makes a service call in someone's home and runs into a bind for lack of specs, it doesn't look good."



"You're telling me Frank isn't very smart," said Red.

"He's not," Bob confirmed. "I've never seen him at any of the service clinics the manufacturers sponsor when they introduce a new line. You know, the ones I go to up in Central City. Frank has to feel his way with anything he hasn't handled before. The result is more wasted time. He doesn't realize that investing a few days in specialized training

every few months will pay off in improved efficiency."

"How so?" Red wanted to hear.

"Well," Bob retorted, "first you learn of the changes in basic circuitry or layout. Instead of scratching your head when you run across something that looks oddball, you know what to expect and can get on with the main business, which is making a repair. Because you do more in any given hour than the next guy, you're entitled to get paid more, since you saved the customer money by reducing the time necessary to fix his set. Equally important is the fact you turn out more jobs with the same overhead as the short-sighted technician. This is another way of saying a higher percentage of the labor rate goes to *you* instead of into rent.

"There's another way Frank loses out. Mechanical features of set design change along with the electronic improvements. Understanding the best way to take a set apart gives you more time to troubleshoot. Again, when you're in a customer's home, a quick, sure disassembly inspires confidence that you're an accomplished pro."

"The way you're talking," Red reflected, "Frank should have gone bust five years ago."

Bob chuckled. "Frank's foolish, but he's not a complete idiot. He has the good sense to hang onto the literature manufacturers send him, though he could organize it more efficiently than pitching it into a drawer. You've seen how quickly we can get hold of something we need out of our files thanks to the way it's indexed.

"Frank is also shrewd enough to get help from the distributor of a particular make he's having trouble with. It's a sound idea, but not as

efficient as having the dope right on the bench beside you. Also, Frank tends to specialize in certain makes he's gotten familiar with. There's nothing wrong with that idea either, except Frank does it out of necessity instead of by choice. A technician in this game who doesn't prepare for the future by keeping up his skill in every way he can is neglecting his most important asset."

"Which is?" invited Red.

"His know-how."

## **In Brief . . .**

**Survival in the keen competition of modern business practice demands the utmost in professional skill and knowledge. Customers prefer competent firms.**

**A helping hand for a fellow service dealer is likely to earn dividends when you need assistance.**

**While service literature represents an expense, it is an expenditure which is repaid by more efficient servicing, which results in improved customer relations—efficient work inspires customer confidence.**

**Service clinics offer valuable technical aid that can be turned into profits from improved customer relations.**

**Improved efficiency means time savings that increase the profit potential.**

**Quick, efficient work inspires customer confidence.**

## **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. Constructive imagination is a powerful selling tool. How do you use it to improve customer relations?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the specialization of a serviceman on one or two brands of receivers?
3. How can product facts be turned into selling points?
4. Name at least two ways to keep your technical know-how up to date.

## 24 BOB SURVEYS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

There was a stack of post cards on Marybeth's desk, and she'd spent the better part of an hour checking them against the customer file. Presently Red's curiosity got the better of him. He left the receiver he was working on and sauntered into the front room.



"Playing post office?" he suggested with a friendly wink.

Marybeth pretended to be shocked. "One more crack out of you, Red Towers, and I'll mail you to Siberia," she warned.

"What's the mystery?" Red insisted. "Got a 1¢ sale cooked up?"

"Not a bad idea," approved Marybeth. "We could give it a try. There's no secret about these cards. Once a month I send them out to all the people we've done work for during the last 30 days. They're perforated so the return part with the Cross-town Electronic Service address can be torn off and sent back. Want to see what they say?"

Red picked one up and began to read. "Dear Customer: Recently we had the privilege of helping you. It is our desire that you be completely satisfied with our work. If for any reason we failed to meet your expectations, we would appreciate your letting us know by commenting on the attached self-addressed post card and dropping it in the nearest mailbox. No stamp is required. We would also welcome any suggestions you may care to make as to how we could improve our service. We hope you will call on us again whenever we can assist you. Sincerely yours, Crosstown Electronic Service."

"What do you think of it?" Marybeth invited.

"I'm impressed," confessed Red. "You get any of these back?"

"More than you'd expect."

Red frowned. "You mean that many people are unhappy?"

"Just the opposite," Marybeth explained. "Quite a few customers take the trouble to sit down and write us how pleased they are with the way we took care of them. Now and then we do receive a criticism. I show it to Bob at once and he does something about it."

"What, for example?" queried Red.

Marybeth reached in her top drawer. "Here's one from a man who said he'd okay a repair for \$14.50, but when he came to the shop to

pick it up the charge was \$18. He felt we should have let him know it was going to cost more."

"Seems like a small point," Red observed.

"Yes, it was," Marybeth conceded. "Still, small matters can be significant. Bob checked the worksheet and the duplicate bill and found the man was right. So he called him up, thanked him for letting us know, and agreed we were in the wrong. Bob said he was sending a check for the difference. Care to guess what happened next?"

Red thought it over, then shrugged.

"We got a letter back a few days later returning the check. The man wrote we'd done a good job and charged a fair price, so he didn't see why we should penalize ourselves for an honest mistake. About a week afterwards a lady rang us for a service call and mentioned this fellow had given her our name. Said he told her we were tops."

"Boy, I wish there were more of his kind around," whistled Red.

"Most people *are* his kind," Marybeth insisted. "You do everything you can to treat them fairly and they won't forget you. We have quite a few customers who won't let anyone else touch their sets. If they bring one to the shop they tell Bob not to bother with an estimate but just go ahead and fix it."

"So the number of complaints you get back on these cards is a good indication of what people think?" Red concluded.

"Not entirely," replied Marybeth. "A company is judged less by the complaints it receives than by how well it handles them. That's why Bob goes to a lot of trouble to look into each one promptly. If it's a matter of personal dissatisfaction, he works it out with the customer. If the criticism is more general, he takes steps to make sure it won't happen again."

"How about the fan letter?" Red wanted to know.

"Those are important, too. They tell us what services or courtesies customers appreciate. This helps us stress the practices that create the most goodwill. Also, if the fan mail starts to drop off, we know we're not doing as much as we should. It keeps us on our toes."

"Like an automatic feedback," Red suggested.

Mary nodded. "Exactly. It's the best way to find out how people see us. We're on the inside looking out, and naturally our view is different. By telling us how we're doing, customers enable us to evaluate our progress realistically."



Marybeth paused for a moment. "One last thought. The finest advertising we can get is the word-of-mouth recommendation of satisfied customers. It's a priceless asset, and yet you can't measure it in terms of dollars and cents. You know why?"

Red shook his head.  
"Because it's free."

### **In Brief . . .**

**Customer evaluation of your service is more important to the future of a growing business than your own evaluation of the service.**

**A regular, systematic evaluation of customer satisfactions (or dissatisfactions!) should be planned and carried out.**

**It is useless to learn of customer dissatisfactions unless an honest attempt will be made to eliminate the source of the dissatisfaction.**

**A service firm is often judged by how well it handles its complaints.**

**If a complaint concerns an error you made, you should apologize to the customer for your error. Make amends at once.**

**He who serves best profits most.**

### **Facing The Problems . . .**

1. How can a regular survey of your customers help you improve your service?
2. Customers' complaints come in just two sizes—justified and unjustified. The treatment for both is practically the same, beginning with a very simple statement you know by heart. What is the statement?
3. Justified complaints should be restated before they are answered, for several reasons. Can you name two of these reasons?
4. You may feel you cannot afford to take the time to send out cards to all customers you have worked for in the past month. Should you skip it this month?

## 25 BOB BUILDS FOR THE FUTURE

It was the early part of July, and Bob's accountant had spent several afternoons working up a semiannual report. Among the papers he'd prepared was one comparing the current six-month totals against those for each of the preceding five years and indicating the rate of growth. The summary was encouraging. Even allowing for price increases, Crosstown Electronic Service was showing excellent progress.

As Bob reviewed this particular statement, his mind turned to the next half decade. It wasn't hard to project what his gross and net might be if the present pattern continued. At the same time, Plainview lay in the heart of an area that was outpacing the rest of the state, and he wondered if he shouldn't be doing even better.

Another thought concerned him. Although there'd been the usual ups and downs during the past twelve months, the current volume of business was approaching the point where he and Red couldn't keep on top even with generous assistance from Pop. If he brought in a new man full time, the overhead would take another jump, and it would be a while before enough new work came in to keep a fourth technician fully occupied. If he waited too long, on the other hand, there was the danger he'd run into trouble handling peak loads, with the probable result that the standard of service would suffer.

Bob tossed aside his pencil. "Red, Pop," he called, "I need help on a problem. Let's have a powwow."

Marybeth got out the coffee cups while the others settled themselves in chairs.

"What's the trouble, chief?" grinned Red encouragingly. "The finance company going to repossess our new multimeter?"

"Hardly," Bob smiled. "No, this is the kind of problem I don't mind. In a nutshell, our business is growing too fast for us. We've more jobs than we can handle right now, yet if the present trend continues, August will be tighter and September impossible."

"Sounds like we need a new man around here," observed Pop.

"We do," Bob agreed, "and that means building up enough extra volume to insure he'll pull his own weight. We must make a special push for even more trade. The problem is how to do it."

Marybeth coughed discreetly. "Why not start by looking at what we've done in the past?"



"Good idea," approved Bob. "Let's see. When we service a set, we tape a business card on the back so the customer will think of us if he needs help at some future date. If we've worked on a TV, we remind the customer we're equipped to repair radios, hi-fi components, transmitters, intercoms, garage door openers, and all kinds of electronic equipment. Every spring we have a special promotion on portables offering a free checkup with the purchase of batteries. Every summer we have a preventative checkup special. We've got a display ad in the yellow pages of the telephone book."

"Say, Bob," Red interrupted, "why don't we send a letter to everyone who buys a house in that development over in Eastville? We could tell 'em who we are, what we do, and enclose a coupon good for \$3.00 toward their first service call."

"Excellent," cheered Bob. "Maybe we should do that for anyone who buys a house, new or otherwise; there's an outfit in town that prepares lists like that. We could suggest a new antenna installation at older houses. Chances are the one the seller left behind is getting tired."

Pop leaned forward. "There must be near a hundred private planes based at Westwood Airport. We ought to get our share of communications and navigational work. Red could handle that."

"Another corker," Bob applauded. "Which reminds me, we could pick up more mobile transmitter-receiver jobs from the taxi fleets and maybe the state police as well. That's right down your alley, Pop."

"How about going after more installation business?" Marybeth suggested. "We have contracts with just two firms, and they've brought us quite a bit of repeat trade."



Red broke in. "With all the hi-fi do-it-yourself buffs in town, what'd you say to promoting a clinic two evenings a month? We could check out their work on our instruments for, say, \$1 per project, regardless of the number of times they came. We'd sell a lot of tools, soldering irons, tubes, and so on, and maybe pick up their TV and car radio work."

"Speaking of cars," Pop proposed, "why don't we tie in with some of the

big auto dealers in town? Offer them same-day service for radios on cars brought in for bench work."

Marybeth had another idea. "Besides our follow-up post card, we should send a mailing to old customers every six months. It could give them hints on recognizing the symptoms of deteriorating radio and

TV reception and suggest they call us *before* the breakdown if they detect any danger signs. It would make them more critical of set performance."

Bob threw up his hands. "Take it easy gang. Take it easy. You're making things worse."

"I don't get it," puzzled Red earnestly. "You wanted ideas."

"Exactly," chuckled Bob. "But the way you brain stormers are going to town I'll have to hire *two* new men."

## In Brief . . .

**The employees of a service organization have contributions to make for the future of the business. Encourage the contribution of ideas from others.**

**There are many tested methods for keeping present customers and attracting new ones, but methods which have proved to be useful to your business should be used over and over again.**

**Utilize as many useful ways as possible to keep the firm name and phone number before your customer—constantly.**

**A personal referral from a satisfied customer is a priceless bit of advertising, and advertising does not cost—it pays.**

**Try not to scare the do-it-yourself crowd away from the shop. They spend money for service, too.**

**Don't limit yourself to radio-TV-phono-hi-fi. Get the reputation for competent repair of *anything* electronic.**

**About the most valuable asset any business or profession can have is good will.**

## Facing The Problems . . .

1. There are at least four types of worth-while community activities in which active participation can help a service dealer acquire the confidence of new acquaintances who may become customers. Can you name three of these activity groups?

2. Present service customers need an occasional "retreading" to make them worth more as they think more of your firm. What are the aims of your customer retread program?

3. The finest asset a service business can own is good will. Just what is good will?

4. How should your employees—or fellow employees—show loyalty to your service shop?



## ANSWERS TO FACING THE PROBLEMS . . .

### “BOB ANSWERS THE \$7,500 QUESTION,” Page 9

1. Training time is seldom an earning time; room and board expenses are usually quickly forgotten; the time it took (and takes) to accumulate valuable product information; the spare time now spent in “keeping up” with new developments by reading, seeing, going, doing; the “learning” time on difficult or new jobs that cannot be charged to a particular customer; the time spent at clinics, meetings, night school, etc.
2. Courtesy, tact, friendliness, enthusiasm, confidence, sympathy, and honesty are the personal attitudes that mean so much.
3. Business, trade, and professional associations, literature from the manufacturers, service clinics, Small Business Administration publications, libraries, business consultants, Better Business Bureaus, and service clubs.
4. The service technician, not the customer, is the prime benefiter of a service call. The customer has had to pay out money just to restore his equipment to the condition it was in before it failed. The serviceman, however, has gained in income, the satisfaction of a job well done, and has gained a satisfied customer and friend.
5. Short range: the actual service call. Long range: repeat business and referral. The latter is most important.

### “AN OLDTIMER SOUNDS OFF,” Page 12

1. Be friendly, thank each customer for his business, listen when the customer is talking, avoid any argument, obtain the customer's point of view, and talk in terms of the customer's interests.
2. Mention such items as: the steady improvement in the quality and reliability of equipment and components; industry's research concerns the search for better performance of equipment; circuits are made more reliable to overcome problems experienced with earlier equipment; industry only grows as the customer's satisfaction with its products increases.
3. Discuss common hobby interests; talk about hobby equipment; encourage customers to talk about themselves, try to discover common community interests; offer easy, friendly conversation.
4. Display evidence of membership in associations respected for the support of competence and good business practice; refer to satisfied

customers; educate your customers to recognize the training and ability of yourself and your associates; develop and maintain a cooperative spirit among associates; invite attention to skill and knowledge upgrading practices of the company.

5. Because you uphold the reputation of the entire industry by insuring the satisfaction of customers with the products of the industry—the fifth largest and the fastest growing industry of our nation.

#### “BOB’S RECIPE FOR TURTLE SOUP,” Page 15

1. A service dealer’s obligations don’t end with the satisfactory repair of equipment. First and foremost, he must deal with people if he is to deal with sets. No one makes a living by doing just one thing well. The most successful service dealer is one who does many things other than use the basic technical talents for which he was called to the customer’s home.
2. (a) Never pass up an opportunity to “do something extra” for a customer. (b) Keep the charges in line with the competition’s prices. (c) Guarantee customer satisfaction by guaranteeing your work. (d) Be more professional than the competition. (e) Give undivided attention to customer grievances.
3. Take full advantage of the good will created by satisfied customers. Purposely make occasions to perform extra services for present customers. Publicize the service pluses your shop offers—particularly efforts of the servicemen to stay up to date with the latest technical developments.
4. Your old customers may soon become new customers of your competitors if you become inconsiderate and impersonal.

#### “RED TRIES ON KID GLOVES,” Page 18.

1. (a) Any direction except forward. Out. Retreat!  
(b) Make hasty arrangements to call back later and leave.  
(c) Toward the nearest exit. This isn’t your day.
2. First, try *not* to match his grouchiness—that’s what he wants, but it will only make him more irritated. Stand flat on your own feet and show that you will not be his doormat. Keep calm and ignore the fact that he is out of sorts. Complete your business with him as quickly as possible. If you can handle him, you can win an exclusive customer.
3. Realize that he is ignorant. He shows lack of thought and really has an inferiority complex. Feel sorry for him, but play his big weakness by complimenting him on his knowledge—really flatter him.

Ask for his opinion. He convinces himself that you're the best man in town for him to do business with.

4. Make up his mind for him. Force him into a decision. Force little agreements from him as you go along. Flattery often brings forth decisions.

“OPPORTUNITY NEVER RINGS TWICE,” Page 21

1. Be pleasant, be patient, be helpful, be courteous.
2. (a) Speak directly into the mouthpiece.  
(b) Hold the mouthpiece about a half inch from your lips.  
(c) Speak slowly.  
(d) Speak with just enough volume—not too loud, not too soft.  
(e) Speak each word distinctly.
3. (a) Listen to your own voice.  
(b) Get the opinion of others.  
(c) Learn to relax.  
(d) Read aloud as much as possible.  
(e) Try some self-improvement study with your grammar.
4. (a) It proves to your customers that you care enough about them to make—and keep—a record of what you have done for them.  
(b) You can check the spelling of names and the correctness and completeness of addresses quite readily.  
(c) You can refer to set makes and model numbers.  
(d) You can refer to the date of the last service call.  
(e) If the customer has other electronic home entertainment equipment, you can ask about it and possibly increase the business to be done on the service call.
5. ABC: Always Be Courteous.

“MRS. T.V. BUSTED NEEDS BOB'S SYMPATHY,” Page 24

1. Confidence must be inspired in your ability to solve the problem at hand. Express confidence in the set and the repair.
2. Avoid flippant remarks, quick retorts, and a swaggering air. Enthusiasm coupled with sincerity commands attention and inspires confidence.
3. The key to acquiring self-confidence lies in becoming thoroughly proficient in the performance of skills, both in technical ability and in customer relations.
4. Kindness and patience.
5. (a) Exhibit a pleasant and courteous manner.

- (b) Express a sincere interest in the customer.
- (c) Use tact.

“BOB TAMES BULLDOG GROWLER,” Page 27

1. Be technically proficient enough to accomplish any service recommendation made. Listen thoughtfully and carefully. Show a sincere and understanding interest in determining the best solution to a customer's problem.
2. First, try to determine the real problem. Perhaps dissatisfaction is due to demands made on the equipment which it cannot fulfill; or, the equipment was incorrectly used. Compliment the set. Resell the customer.
3. Emphasize the advantages of his equipment without dwelling on its limitations. Find honest reasons to support the original choice of equipment, helping to reestablish faith in his own judgment. Offer ideas which help the customer understand some important performance features and limitations of the equipment.
4. Customer must have confidence in his equipment before he can be expected to have confidence in his serviceman.

“BOB'S LATE FOR A DATE,” Page 30

1. (a) Will be at least 20 minutes late. Should stop at the first available telephone and tell expectant customer a delay is unavoidable.
- (b) Call House #3 at once. Try to reschedule call for early afternoon after explaining the problem carefully. Avoid a call that could extend through a family meal period.
2. (a) Apologize for customer's inconvenience. Explain inability to find “misplaced” work order. Offer to halt everything and come at once; try to reschedule, if inconvenient.
- (b) Apologize for oversight and inconvenience caused. Reschedule call with promise that such a thing will not happen again .
3. Call correct party at once. Apologize for delay. Ask permission to make call as quickly as you can drive 22 blocks.

“WHY OLD MACSTUBBLE'S BACK ON THE FARM,” Page 33

1. To wordlessly say that you care about the impressions created; to show evidence of a sense of responsibility; to earn confidence; to offer the best possible personal advertisement for your firm. A neat

- personal appearance assures each customer that you are also neat and exacting as a craftsman.
2. Provides the often-seen, traveling face of the business. Attracts favorable attention by giving the impression of neatness, orderliness, and regard for opinion.
  3. Actions. Attitudes. Appearance.
  4. Shave. Shine. Shower. Shirt (clean). Smile.
  5. (a) Use a warm, friendly, interested tone of voice.  
(b) Avoid speaking in a high-pitched or low-pitched voice.  
(c) Let your voice emphasize the important topics of the conversation.  
(d) Avoid raising the voice above normal conversation level.
  6. Failure to look directly at the person talked with; use of extremely poor slang; wearing an uninterested expression; toying with something in the hands; tapping a pencil; jiggling coins in a pocket; slouching posture.

“RED LEARNS ABOUT SETSIDE MANNERS,” Page 36

1. Be courteous, be friendly, be sympathetic, be competent.
2. Preface bad-news remarks with good-news remarks.
3. (a) The service literature can be checked before the call to make sure replacement tubes are in the caddy, to review peculiar disassembly procedures, and to note component placements and relations.  
(b) The previous failures may give clues to the seat of the present trouble.  
(c) Replacement components which may be needed can be placed in the truck *before* making the call.

“RED’S MOTTO: DON’T CHIP THE CHIPPENDALE,” Page 39

1. First, apologize. Then state that you will furnish a replacement—and, if necessary, spend hours finding one just like it.
2. Ask for some newspapers or a cloth; then spread the paper or cloth carefully before starting to work.
3. (a) If chassis removal is necessary, ask the customer for disassembly information if the procedure is not apparent.  
(b) Spread a dropcloth before starting to work.  
(c) Ask permission before carefully moving the unit to a more convenient location.
4. Leave business card and invite future service business. Also inform customer of other service work your firm can handle. Indicate the

type of accessory and equipment items on display at the shop which are of possible interest to the customer. Invite the customer to tell his friends about your firm. Make suggestions for obvious tie-in sales (i.e., record player needles, portable radio batteries).

“RED LEARNS TO WATCH HIS TONGUE,” Page 42

1. Give an honest opinion regarding set condition due to age, give estimated repair cost, explain that after repair set will operate well but other tubes and parts are old and could fail, and then let the customer decide. You might also suggest that, if he decides to buy a new set, he have the old one repaired for a second set for the den, recreation room, bedroom, etc.
2. Compliment the present set (the customer chose it, and he dislikes to have his judgment questioned). If you are acquainted with brand X, compliment it, too, limiting your remarks to the technical aspects. Features, prices, appearance, etc. are a matter of personal taste. Don't knock either set. Derogatory or belittling remarks will only reflect back on you.
3. Don't blame the manufacturer if you are having trouble, even though you might be right. Blaming others backfires by reflecting on your ability in the customer's mind. Explain to the customer, in non-technical language, what you are doing, making your explanations brief and uncomplicated.
4. Politics, the competition, sex, religion, gossip, and—with some people—even the weather!

“BOB MAKES A FRIEND OUT OF SUSPICIOUS SAM,” Page 45

1. Work and listen. The customer who likes to talk also likes a serviceman who can *listen* and *work*. After the first few minutes of sympathetic reassurance and listening to symptoms, learn to change the subject by summarizing what the customer has said in such a way that there is nothing more to be said.
2. Explain only if questioned. Discuss the multitude of models and model variations. Call attention to time saved because of available schematic. Use non-technical terms to describe the relation between the damaged component and other circuit elements as you describe the need to check associated units to prevent recurrence of trouble.
3. Make no attempt to hide or cover up your actions. Make the observation interesting by making non-technical explanations of your activity, emphasizing the complexities involved. Try not to block

- the view of the kibitzer. When the trouble is located, it doesn't hurt to make quite a show of locating the guilty part.
4. Demonstrate by your friendly attitude that you are there to help. No direct mention of this fear should be made.

“MRS. WHITE WONDERS WHY BOB'S MISSING A PART,”

Page 48

1. First check the truck tube stock carefully—it may be there even if it isn't in the tube caddy. If not, use the telephone to check the tube stock at the shop. Then make a last-ditch call to the parts distributor. Excuse the delay, and obtain the needed tube. Explain that no extra charge is made as a result of the delay.
2. Let the customer know the exact nature of the situation. If he knows he has to wait, he will plan to wait. Exhaust all alternate local sources of supply—including fellow servicemen—before asking the supplier to place a rush order for the part. This is an occasion where a loaner set could be left to add that extra touch which makes the difference between ordinary service and very good service.
3. Explain that slow-moving parts tie up business capital and thus increase overhead costs. About 5% of the items stocked account for 95% of the stock movement. Any overhead cost increase is passed on to all customers as an indirect cost. Savings are effected if slight, occasional delays are tolerated to avoid inflated charges.
4. If set is in a home and more competent fellow workers are at your shop, take the set in. If you can't handle the work within your own organization, tell the customer why not. Describe the services your organization can perform so he may use those services in the future. If possible, advise the customer where to obtain the service he needs giving him several choices, if you can.

“BOB PULLS HANK SMITH'S SET INTO THE SHOP,” Page 51

1. “It's never ready when they said it would be.”
2. Should do so if customer's set will be in the shop several days or if members of the household are known to make extensive use of the equipment, and if the service dealer can expect the loaner set to receive considerate treatment. Loaners generate good will and foster repeat business from both old and referral customers and remove the inconvenience factor from the cost-plus-inconvenience irritation the customer naturally experiences.
3. (a) Weigh likely complications and difficulties.  
(b) Consider availability of needed parts.

- (c) Necessary tools and test equipment available.
  - (d) Other work on hand.
  - (e) Promise not in conflict with holiday, week-ends, employee illness, etc.
  - (f) Immediate nature of customer's need.
4. Explain the probable delay as soon as it becomes evident. Explain action being taken to reduce extra delay time to a minimum.

"PEGGY COLLINS CALLS BOB AGAIN," Page 54

1. (a) Suspects serviceman's competency.
- (b) Suspects set design faults.
- (c) Suspects intentional poor workmanship.
- (d) Has worries about added, unexpected expense. (Add other doubts to this list. The more doubts you can anticipate, the more you are prepared to meet and overcome.)
2. (a) Replace in-warranty parts without parts charge.
- (b) Explain cause of failure as unrelated to previous trouble.
- (c) Consider replacing a low-cost, out-of-warranty part without parts charge if such action is indicated to hold customer's good will.
3. Reliability, promptness, courtesy.
4. Eliminates a possible chip-on-the-shoulder attitude. Indicate sincere desire to deal with such situations to obtain complete customer satisfactions. Reassures customer of your sincere interest in giving satisfactory service.

"BOB REVISITS A SICK FRIEND," Page 57

1. Apologize. Honestly explain cause of recurrence. If service was at fault, do not charge for reservicing. If an in-warranty part failed, make only a minimum service charge.
2. (a) Manufacturers also want customer satisfaction.
- (b) Warranty supports customer confidence even when plant inspection has overlooked a faulty part or a part becomes defective after plant inspection.
- (c) Customer is protected against loss from defects that result from premature failure in use.
- (d) The cost of parts would soar if labor were included in the factory warranty.
3. (a) Unexpected call-backs made with full customer confidence of receiving just and courteous consideration.
- (b) Repeat failure does not cause customer anxiety about a repeat service charge.

- (c) Amplifies customer confidence in serviceman's ability and reliability.
- 4. No doubt by the customer about the exact nature of your guarantee —parts only? labor and parts? time limit? Make sure the customer understands what a guarantee from your shop means.

“POP'S SECRET FORMULA FOR LEMON-AID,” Page 60

- 1. Gives confidence in both manufacturer and dealer at time of purchase. Softens financial blow in event of set failure while in warranty.
- 2. Allows service dealer to correct failures at minimum cost to customer, thus creating favorable opinion and developing confidence in dealer.
- 3. Manufacturer's back up of the retailer is recognized by the retailer as a good will builder. Increases in good will the retailer builds for a particular manufacturer are reflected in larger sales volume for the manufacturer.
- 4. (a) Explain cause of failure tactfully and make certain customer understands correct operating procedures to prevent recurrence. Unless deliberate damage is involved, repair under terms of warranty.  
(b) Advise manufacturer's representative that reported failure was due to customer error; with this kind of knowledge, the manufacturer may be able to design the product for simpler operation. However, it's the responsibility of the dealer to make certain the customer understands how to use equipment effectively.

“BOB GIVES A LESSON IN DIPLOMACY,” Page 63

- 1. He may be wrong, but he probably *thinks* he is right—and he may not be *entirely* wrong.
- 2. First, the satisfied customer will probably call again. A customer who receives satisfactory adjustment of a claim also becomes a valuable word-of-mouth advertiser for the shop.
- 3. Customers should be made to feel that the serviceman is sincerely interested in the claim. Don't hesitate to handle a claim since it offers an opportunity to strengthen the relations between the customer and the firm.
- 4. (a) Listen courteously and attentively.  
(b) Examine and verify the trouble.  
(c) Determine who is at fault and explain the facts.  
(d) Never tell a complainant that he is wrong.

- (e) Take action promptly, and,
- (f) Resell.

“IT’S NOT THE LABOR, IT’S THE OVERHEAD,” Page 66

1. Mention the elements of your service labor rate. Mention the non-productive time which made it possible to be of service in this instance. Stress the fact that the cost of service is much more than straight time.
2. Equipment depreciation and replacement, investments in training, stock inventories, necessary idle time, expenditures for service literature, convenience of home service calls, employee benefits.
3. Shop rent, utility bills, insurance, service truck expenses, employee direct labor costs.
4. (problem related to individual)

“BOB PUTS HIS BEST FOOT FORWARD,” Page 69

1. Neatness, cleanliness, visibility, eye-catching color, balance, good proportion, and visible results of your own ingenuity and imagination.
2. (project)
3. Colors should be cheerful, but not gaudy; they should have excellent contrast; they must have eye appeal.
4. Obtain an arrangement of materials and equipment that always keeps things within easy reach. Rearrange to obtain more usable area from less space. Plan full use of all space handy to the bench. Plan to use the service area for service work only—it is not a file room, stockroom, or warehouse for homeless materials. Arrange for easy housekeeping.
5. Advertising message, color, motion, and size.

“BOB COLLECTS INTEREST ON HIS INVESTMENT,” Page 72

1. (a) Offer a multiple choice.
  - (b) Confine the listing to firms you *know* are reliable, competent, and honest.
  - (c) Offer to assist with the contact thus saving the customer unnecessary and annoying efforts.
2. A diplomat, a public relations man, and a capable craftsman.
3. (a) Selling is persuasion, not compulsion.
  - (b) Selling is educating.
  - (c) Selling must benefit both the buyer and the seller.

- (d) Selling involves helping the customer to make a satisfactory purchase.

“FOOLISH FRANK NEGLECTS KNOW-HOW,” Page 75

1. Analyze each situation of past experience in order that new problems can be anticipated. The answers or solutions can be ready when such a problem occurs again. Capitalize on your past experience by organizing the meanings of it for future application.

2. *Advantages*

- (a) Greater efficiency and proficiency through specialized and increased experience with fewer models. You learn their peculiarities, common failures, chassis location of parts and tubes, etc.
- (b) Smaller investment in parts, tubes, and service literature.
- (c) Fewer lack-of-parts calls because your inventory can be more complete for the smaller number of models serviced.
- (d) A closer relationship with dealer, distributor, and manufacturer provides more help and information.
- (e) Dealer, distributor, and manufacturer probably will refer customers to you. A warranty station agreement may be advantageous.

*Disadvantages*

- (a) A greater area must be covered for the same volume of business, with resultant increased truck mileage and travel time cost.
  - (b) The value of customer referrals may be lost, since the prospective customer may have another make of set.
  - (c) You have your eggs all in one basket, which may or may not be good.
3. Translate the meaning of your knowledge of the product into customer benefits.
  4. Study professional servicing publications. Attend service clinics. Subscribe to and use a service literature service. Enroll in appropriate self-study, self-improvement courses.

“BOB SURVEYS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION,” Page 78

1. (a) Learn what *your* customers think of your service:
  - (1) Attitude of serviceman,
  - (2) Quality of work done,
  - (3) Appearance of serviceman,
  - (4) Promptness,
  - (5) Cost of work done.

- (b) Learn whether the customer impression applies to your whole organization or to one individual in it.
  - (c) Then decide why the results of the survey are as they are.
  - (d) Then go to work to correct the reason for any weakness shown by the survey.
2. "I am very sorry this has occurred."
  3. First, a customer is favorably impressed by the fact that a serviceman who repeats a criticism is not attempting to dodge the issue. Another advantage is that the customer's complaint is often minimized by repetition. Finally, if the real nature of a complaint is obscure, it may be clarified by repetition so that both customer and serviceman definitely understand the nature of it.
  4. By no means. This may be the very month something has slipped in your customer relations or technical efficiency. Take the time to mail a post card or questionnaire to at least a random sample of all your customers of the past month. It's important that your surveys be conducted regularly.

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1. Include: local Chamber of Commerce, service clubs, church of his choice, youth clubs and activities, P.T.A. groups, civil defense programs, Better Business Bureaus.
2. Include:
  - (a) Change "seldom" customers into regular customers.
  - (b) Change regular customers into exclusive customers.
  - (c) Develop all customers into more profitable customers; and,
  - (d) Convert all customers into lifetime customers.
3. Webster tells us that good will is "the favor or advantage in the way of custom which a business has acquired beyond the mere value of what it sells." The practices of good business behavior develop good will.
4. Being enthusiastic about the people they work for; speaking well of the firm to its customers, showing pride in their service by speech and action; following the rules and regulations of the firm.



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

What is it that makes one service shop prosper more than others of equal technical ability and facilities? Most surveys indicate that the reason is the difference in handling customer problems. In other words, it's how people are treated that influences them and their friends to become customers, or causes them to trade elsewhere. It's this relationship between the service shop and its customers—a thing called customer relations—that makes the all-important difference.

The secret to successful customer relations lies in knowing how people think and react, and applying this knowledge to inspire customer confidence and trust.

How can this be accomplished? It isn't easy, particularly because no two people think exactly alike. However, to a large degree, most people follow definite thinking patterns, and react to specific situations in much the same way. 25 such field-tested situations, typical of those which most often occur in service-type businesses, actually take place in this book. You'll learn how even the stickiest situations turn out for the best by proper application of customer relations techniques. You'll learn how to apply these techniques in your daily contacts with customers, with 12 handy reminder cards to keep you on the right track. If you work for, manage, or own a service-type business—or if you are studying to become a service man—"Satisfying Customers for Profit" can be an important key to your success.



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