

LISTEN!

Thoughts for the practicing service engineer

By Robert Nelson CMS

In striving to achieve the level of professionalism we as a group deserve, it seems helpful to examine how other professionals attain and retain their levels of performance.

I believe one of the most important elements they employ effectively is the ability to listen carefully and ask planned, logical questions to elicit from their clients the information needed to effectively serve them. Can you imagine going to a doctor, saying you aren't feeling well and giving no other information? Certainly the doctor would in time arrive at a proper diagnosis, but can you imagine how much time, effort, and expense would be wasted in pinpointing the area which needed attention? Or consider going to an architect and saying you want plans for a new home and providing no other information. What chance do you think you would have of ever getting a design

that would even remotely resemble what you had envisioned?

One of our serious mistakes is in not taking the time to listen to what the customer is trying to tell us. Far too often we arrive at the job site, ask to be shown to the equipment, make our diagnosis and repairs and leave. We then are called back again because the problem still exists.

We have a tendency to feel because of our training and experience that only we could possibly know what is wrong with the customer's equipment. We lose sight of the key element other professionals use extensively. They permit their clients to tell them what they believe is wrong, what they want done, and what they expect.

I feel that a few moments spent with the customer asking the following questions would yield significant results:

- What seems to be wrong with the system?
- When was the equipment last serviced?
- When did you first notice a problem with the equipment?
- What have you done to attempt to correct the problem?

The above is not intended to be all inclusive or applicable to every job. The important thing is to communicate with your customers, to let them help you serve them better. To function as professionals in our field, we need not only the technical ability to solve the problem, but also the ability to listen to our customers.

I submit for your consideration that the ability to listen is the mark of professionals in every field. We indeed should be striving to be professionals in our field.



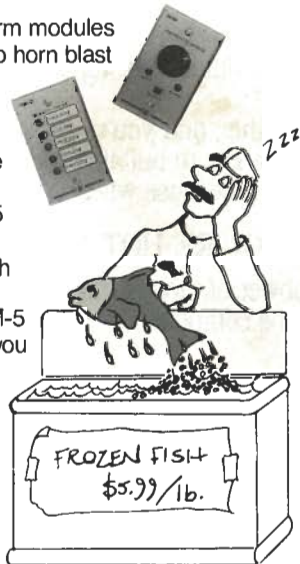
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