

BEING DIFFERENT, GETTING MORE BUSINESS

If I were to ask what differentiates you from your competitors, what would your answer be?

You might answer: guaranteed quality workmanship, dependability, or lowest price. These qualities are what most tradespeople sell about themselves. So they are not unique. I am sure you think you are better than your competition and that may be the case, but if you are using the same tired old lines people will be reluctant to believe you.

While accountants often give technical advice, in this issue I'd like to address more practical matters. Having spoken to many property investors and business owners, I can tell you that when it comes to the trade industry many clients are often disappointed and will



use multiple builders, plumbers, sparkies etc until they find one that they can trust and rely on. Your client wants more than just a generic promise. They want a difference and one that exceeds their expectations all the time. For instance, they want a tradesman who will be on time every time; i.e. when you say 8am you are there at 8am, not 7:30am or 10am or next week. There is nothing more frustrating for a client than having a tradesman turn up early or late if they are trying to organise a family or business.

The second concern that has been voiced to me is: clients feel that quality workmanship includes that the place will be clean when you leave. This may sound petty to you but trust me, you will have clients for life if you promise to clean up and actually deliver. Not only will you get repeat business but word of mouth will spread and soon you will have several new clients. Doing a Yellow Pages search in Palmerston North city, I found 263 Builders, 63 Plumbers, 69 Electricians and 48 handy men. They all make the same promise and yet seem to think that makes them unique.

My informal survey of clients came up with some practical suggestions on how to improve your business:

- Do not over book yourself – be realistic about how long a job will take. While it may be that the more jobs you do the more you get paid, you should consider what the cost is of losing clients.
- Allow for sufficient travel time. Travelling across town will usually not take just 15 minutes. Being late leaves a bad impression.

MONEY MATTERS

by Shane Storey



- If you know you can't make it, ring in advance, i.e. the night before not 10 minutes before.
- Include cleaning as part of the job and be prepared for it. Have a cheap vacuum cleaner and some cleaning cloths. This simple task will provide clients for life, as they will remember your service.

Remember that quality is still important and you should not let your standards slip. To be competitive in a crowded market and during tough economic times you need to stand out from the rest and really be the best.

GOT A MONEY QUESTION?

Email it to:
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