

EMPHASIS ON SALES, MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

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Like most companies in today's economy, looking for new ways to be more profitable is more important than ever. With fewer dollars to go around, it is critical to be as efficient and cost conscious as possible. This is also the message you want to reflect to your employees. Right now service companies are the strength in the pool industry. Isn't it time to check to make sure your company is lean and in a position to succeed and grow? From the retail clerks behind the counter to the service techs in the field, it is our responsibility to look for new ways to increase our sales. Field techs should be looking around at every stop to find things the client may need or could benefit from. Developing an entrepreneurial attitude in your staff will be rewarding, not only for them, but also for your bottom line.

Subtle reminders to all your employees that they are partially responsible for the success (or the failure) of your business could be helpful in getting your point across. Ask your field employees daily, prior to the start of their route, to be sure to examine the pool and equipment thoroughly at each stop. Simple things like having adequate supply of repair parts in their vehicles, being conscious of their fuel consumption, and minimizing unnecessary stops will help improve the efficiency of the business. After a period of time, this will become second nature to them and become part of their daily routine and ultimately will produce more sales. Draft up a few questions that your retail clerks could be asking your retail customers and have it in sight of the cash register or counter; this too, will increase your sales.

Effective listening is something we all need to practice and apply in our daily routines. Instruct your employees to listen to what customers have to say. They will give you vital information if you let them, and as a result, you can help them buy what they need. Sometimes a smile and a nod is all it takes to get them to part with the valuable information you need such as: their son or daughter is having a swimming party, or their grandchildren will be visiting, or the softball team is coming over. Obtaining this information will tell you that the swimming pool may need additional treatment due to a higher bather load, therefore, sales of additional chemicals such as shock, acid or clarifiers may be needed. Pool toys, floats and patio supplies could also be items you may suggest to increase your sales. Making customers comfortable, whether it is in the field or in the retail store, will help make their decision to buy a much easier one.

It is more important than ever to sharpen the skills of all your employees. They are the backbone of your business, and you can't do it all yourself. Emphasize to them that without sales and without the customer base, the company may not be efficient enough to withstand our struggling economy. Sell, sell and sell some more!