

H-07 The Customer Interview

Procedure: *The Customer Interview*

Purpose: To display professionalism and “*move the job along*” while at the same time continuing to build a relationship.

Overview: All too often, technicians are so eager to start cleaning carpets they forget a basic Value Added principle. “*Always fix the customer first ... then fix the real problem.*” This system that allows you to ferret out what the problems of the client are. After all, our customer must have some “perceived problems “ or they wouldn’t have called you in the first place!

Steps:

1. **Your goal in The Customer Interview?** To display an “*attitude of care and concern.*” Your customer will forgive almost anything, if along with the “screw-up” you deliver a healthy dose of care and concern. This Customer Interview allows you to do this in an organized manner, along with discovering the Baseline Expectations of the homeowner. How do you do this? With these two Magic Questions.
2. **Magic Question #1:** “*Would you give me a tour of what we’ll be working on, and as we go please show me any areas of special concern.*”
 - A. **Never use the “p-word”-** The word “problem” is negative in nature. Strange as it might seem customers always assume if they admit they have a “problem” we will charge them more!
 - B. **Listen carefully-** It’s very insulting for customers to give deep thought to your first Magic Question and then realize you aren’t really paying attention. So how to “listen carefully”?
 - C. **Take Immediate Action-** The best way to show your “care and concern” is to take Immediate Action when the customer shows you a concern. Here’s some suggested ways to do this:
 1. Write it down- any time the customer points out a spot, stain or “problem” area, make a note of it on your work order under Special Instructions. When you take notes, it is VERY reassuring (and flaterring) to your customer.
 2. Keep your bottle of Spot Out and a clean white towel with you during the Customer Interview. When the customer shows you a spot they’re concerned about, IMMEDIATELY drop to your knees, examine it and ask if you can “test” it. Then remove half of the spot with the Spot Out and the towel. Hold up the towel to show the soil transfer and explain to the homeowner that “*the soil appears to be releasing real well.*”
 - a. After you’ve tested all the “customer concern areas” give the homeowner the same Lifetime Free Spot Out bottle you’ve been using and explain it is a free gift from us to them. Stress this bottle represents a free lifetime supply of a great carpet spotter for them. Any time the need more just stop by our office or give us a call.
 - b. Do NOT tie the giving of this gift to the customer having their carpets cleaned by us. It is a free, unconditional gift we want to give for both sound emotional and business reasons.

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3. If the customer displays concern about a piece of furniture, etc. explain to your co-workers, in front of the customer, the special attention it should be given. This is what we call Indirect Reassurance and this is much more believable to the homeowner than you speaking directly to them.

3. **Ask your Supplemental Questions-** Remember, your goal in the Customer Interview is to not only display an attitude of ‘care and concern,’ you also need to discover the Expectations of the customer. So ask additional questions at this time to find out what your client really expects from your work. Here’s the four major Supplemental Questions that must be asked before you start cleaning the carpets of a new client:

Note:(The words in parentheses are the abbreviations that are shown on your work order and need to be checked as you ask them of the homeowner.)

- A. **“Are there any spots or stains I need to be aware of?”** (Spots, stains?) If there are make a note of them and test as explained above.
- B. **“Do you have any idea how old the carpe/upholstery is?”** (Age?) Try to never ask a question your customer can’t answer. Everyone can at least guess how old their carpet is!
- C. **“Do any pets live inside? Are you aware of any pet stains on the carpet?”** (Pets?) This is one we really need to know up front so that:
 1. Proper inspecting and pre-treating, plus optional odor control procedures can be followed. See technical section in Operations Manual or our Jon-Don video for more information.
 2. The customer can be “pre-treated” by lowering her expectations of what can reasonably be done with pet odor problems!
- D. **“Have you noticed any seams coming apart, ripples in the carpet, frayed edges, etc?”** (Seams, ripples?) Its not enough to ask your customer *“Do you have any installation concerns?”* The average homeowner doesn’t know anything about carpet installation and will automatically reply, *“No, everything is fine as far as I know.”* Instead, you must “spoon feed” your customer by giving her mental pictures of what constitutes an “installation concern” by using the phrases noted above.
 1. If your customer does show you potential problem areas, be absolutely sure to **WRITE THEM DOWN** on the work order, before you start the work.

NOTE: Remember that if you show the customer a problem before you start the work, it is **THEIR** problem. If they discover it after you’re done, it is now **YOUR** problem!

2. Also analyze different ways to either stabilize the installation problem adequately to permit cleaning and/or to restore the carpet. Give the customer these options, along with the prices and your recommendations. For pricing guidelines check your Operations Manual under Pricing. For repair guidelines go to the Technical Section of the Operations Manual.

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Procedure: *Using “Spot Out”*

Purpose: We give away a Free “Lifetime Replacement” bottle of Jon-Don’s *Spot Out* carpet spotter at each residential job. Therefore we want to get the maximum “bang for the buck” out of this free gift to our customer.

Overview: One of our most popular and effective marketing programs has been giving away free bottles of “*Spot Out*” to every residential client. This is a great deal for your client as “*Spot Out*” is a highly effective spotter and it is FREE for the customer. However, the “*Spot out*” program is a great deal for us too. It is a highly appreciated gift that stays in the home for years reminding the customer who it is that cares for their carpets. It also is a good deal for you since hopefully our clients will be using the free “*Spot Out*” we provide instead of dumping who knows what junk on their carpets and then you having to deal with it later!

Steps:

1. Testing the carpet. As you walk through on your “inspection tour” look for spots that the customer is concerned about.

Note: Materials needed: Clean white towel, new if possible.
New 8 ounce bottle of Jon-Don’s Lifetime Replacement “*Spot Out*”

A. Find an appropriate area for your testing. What do you look for?

1. Try to find an area with good lighting.
2. The area needs to be large enough that both you and the customer “fit” without you invading their “personal space”.
3. Above all else, the spot needs to be removable with the “*Spot Out*”. (Imagine the black eye if you can’t get the spot out!)
 - a. Generally, if the spot is darker and not “glossy” it very likely is a protein stain which the “*Spot Out*” should easily remove.
 - b. If the spot is dark and shiny and feels oily that is very likely exactly what it is ... oil based. “*Spot Out*” will usually remove oily spots. But there may be better spotters to use. Try to stick with protein spots or really bad traffic areas.
 - c. Obviously avoid red spots, light colored stains and areas that have been bleached or the color changed. We have products that may help these areas but this work is labor intensive and problematic.

B. Ask permission: “*May I test this area (spot) to see if the carpet appearance is restorable.*”

NOTE: ALWAYS ask permission before doing *anything* in the customer’s home.

1. Drop to one knee and saturate one half of the spot or area with the “*Spot Out*”.
2. Then agitate the spotter with one corner of your clean white towel.

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3. Fold the towel until it has several layers and is about 4" or 5" square.
4. Place the towel on the spot and put all your pressure on it with the knee that is on the floor for about thirty seconds.
5. While you are waiting just talk with the customer about any other concerns they may have with the carpets. (Be sure to write down all of their responses on the work order.)

C. Show the customer the "results" of the "*Spot Out*" testing.

1. Bring the towel off of the spot brushing the fibers up as you do. There should be a huge and dramatic difference if you have chosen your "testing spot" well.
2. Now open up the towel and show the client the incredible contrast between the blackened soil transfer area and the whiter clean area.

D. Sum up the results. If appropriate, you can say, "*Well, it appears like the soil is going to remove quite well on your carpets.*"

2. Present the "*Spot Out*" to your customer. After having seen the results of your testing your client now quite correctly views this cleaning agent as a "miracle". You are now going to make a Cheerleader with the next step.

A. Hand the customer the bottle of "*Spot Out*"- Simply say, "*We'd like you to have this bottle with our compliments. Any time you run out just bring it by the office or call us for a free replacement bottle. This is a lifetime supply of spotter for your carpets. After all, if we're going to be taking care of your home we want you to have the best tools to help us in between cleanings!*"

B. Use your own "comfortable wording" on the above statement. But be sure to convey that it is a free, no-strings-attached gift from us to them.

Note: NEVER condition us getting the job on the giving of the lifetime free spotter gift. Even if your prospect winds up using a different company the Spot Out is theirs to keep.

3. Reap the rewards. This Procedure may seem to be overly complicated and lengthy just to give the customer some free spotter. But remember your goals:

A. To create a Cheerleader- We do this by "throwing our bread on the waters" by giving the customer a valuable free gift right at the start of the job. By demonstrating the spotter you show them just how valuable it will be.

B. Give an "Unspoken Answer"- By removing the spot the customer is concerned about right away you are immediately sending an "unspoken answer" to their "unspoken question": "*Does this technician know what they are doing?*"