

H-09 The Cleaning Presentation

Procedure: *The “Magic Squares” Cleaning Presentation*

Purpose: No matter how much customer relationship building you do (and nothing is more important than building a professional relationship) sooner or later you must actually do the work! This Procedure will not focus on HOW to do the job as much as how to DELIVER the great technical job we’re famous for.

Overview: We know you are a skilled, hardworking carpet cleaning or restoration technician. (After all, we only employ the best!) But as you already know, the customer EXPECTS hard work and clean carpets. To achieve our Desired End Product (which is a Customer Cheerleader!) we must deliver this great technical work in such a way that the customer realizes that we are a truly fantastic company. Here’s how you do it- step by step.

Steps:

1. Set up your tools and equipment- During this step it is especially important to have on your “*Customer Eyeglasses*” and view your actions through the eyes of the homeowner. There are many powerful Moments of Truth in this scene ... either good or bad, all depending on you.

A. Look- really look- at what you are bringing into your customer’s home- Our regular routine can “blind us” to what our tools and equipment really look like to the customer. Here’s a mental check list to run through BEFORE you bring in your equipment:

1. Check your cleaning wand for matted hair around the spray jets, dripping valves and dulled, dirty finish. Your scrub wand is one of your most visible pieces of equipment and it should always sparkle! If necessary, use some rubbing compound in the shop to make your wand gleam!
2. Examine your rotary extraction tool for sand and matted fibers underneath the housing. Also be very careful not to wheel it through dirt or mud as the tires will then transfer this gunk into the customer’s home.
3. Hoses should always be cleaned at the previous job BEFORE being loaded onto the truck for transport. Make sure they are clean before bringing into the customer’s home.
4. Pre-spray pump-up sprayers and spotting kits should be checked for chemical drips and residues.
5. Especially make sure your clear view vacuum filter is clean. (Over time these filters can become permanently clouded. If this is the case, please show it to your supervisor for possible replacement. Your clear view filter is one of your most valuable Cheerleader making tools.)

B. Bring in your cleaning equipment- Use extra care and work in an efficient, organized manner. Here’s some guidelines:

1. If at all possible mix your chemicals at the truck. (Or in the shop.) If you must mix chemicals in the customer’s home, use a drop cloth or a “Floor Guard” under them and NEVER leave bulk chemicals open and/or unattended.

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2. Attempt to keep all your tools and equipment in the same room and move them with you as you clean your way through the home. This keeps them away from young children and helps to prevent loss. (Not to mention making you more organized and efficient!)
3. If weather conditions are wet, muddy or snowy remember your customer will be on “extra alert” as far as you tracking in. We’re talking some potentially huge Negative Moments of Truth here.
 - a. So use extra door mats and runners.
 - b. Also follow the “inside man/ outside man” approach. One technician brings the equipment to the front door and the “inside person” (with clean feet) carries it on from there.

2. Start cleaning- (At last!) So far, you’ve given your customer literally dozens (maybe even hundreds!) of great Unspoken Answers to his or her Unspoken Questions. But now the homeowner still has one last great burning Unspoken Question, “*What are my carpets going to look like?*” You answer this concern with this “*Magic Squares*” Cleaning Presentation.

- A. Pick a suitable area for your “*Cleaning Presentation*”- Most carpet cleaning companies start cleaning at the farthest point from the truck and work their way out of the house.

NOTE: Many times “the furthest point” means in the bedrooms. But bedrooms are hard to get a good “contrast” in, as well as being difficult for the customer to see what is going on. So loop your hoses into the bedroom but perform your “*Magic Square*” Cleaning Presentation in the hallway or another area where the customer can see what you are doing.

1. Pre-spray and agitate a soiled area near where you want to start cleaning. To allow proper dwell time go ahead and pre-spray ahead and/or move furniture in your next area.

SPECIAL HINT: During your “walk through” in *The Customer Interview* be looking for this “special soiled area” to perform your *Magic Square*. It should be reasonably near your starting cleaning point, be a large enough area for both you and the customer to stand and have adequate lighting so the customer can see the results. Most importantly, it should be dirty enough that you will have a “striking contrast” between the clean and dirty carpet. Hallways, landings and entrance areas into rooms are always good possibilities. (Probably the most popular “*Magic Square*” area is coming out of the kitchen into the carpeted dining room.)

2. In the middle of this *Magic Square* area clean an exact square one or two feet in size. Make sure the edges are clearly and sharply defined between the soiled and clean area.
3. Be sure to double extract and groom if necessary. The goal here is for this area to “jump out” at the customer because of the bright contrast between the clean and dirty areas of the carpet.
4. Check the appearance of your *Magic Square* from where the customer will likely stand. HINT: If needed, groom the fibers to increase contrast with the available lighting.

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- B. Prepare the stage for your “Magic Square” Cleaning Presentation-** Make sure your hoses are out of the way and tools and sprayers aren't blocking your customer's view.
- C. Call the customer and point out how well their carpet is cleaning-** Now your client can heave a big mental sigh of relief. They will think (and possibly say) *“My carpets are going to be beautiful!”* And you will have made a Cheerleader!

3. Involve your customer with sensitivity- All customers want to be “involved” with what you are doing. After all, you're working on their HOME! But people have different degrees on their desire to be involved. So you must use “sensitivity” here. On one hand, you mustn't ignore a client. On the other hand, you don't want to be a pest and take them away from other things they want to do.

- A. Ask if they would like to “inspect” your work-** Periodically (especially when you're finished with a room or section of the house) ask the customer to inspect what you have done.

NOTE: Now is the time when you should “qualify” any work that you can't make perfect or if you've noted a “pre-existing” problem.

- B. Be sure to point out your clear view filter-** Remember, *“a picture is worth a thousand words”* and as the dirty rinse water rushes through our clear view filter you have a “moving picture.” Many times our customers will stand entranced for a long time- happily contemplating the dirty soil leaving their home! We're talking Cheerleaders without you having to say a word!

- C. Ask for guidance if needed-** If there is more than one way to accomplish the work explain their options and help them decide. Function as a consultant.

- D. Explain our procedures-** You have a wonderful opportunity to help your customer define just what makes up a “good job”! You're doing a great job so why not get the credit for it? Here's some procedures to mention to the customer during different parts of the job that we offer and many other companies don't:

1. *“Mrs. Jones, I'm placing these special blocks and carpet protectors to protect your carpet during the drying phase.”*
2. *“Now I'm going to use this special commercial vacuum before I start the deep cleaning to remove as much of the dry soil as possible.”*
3. *“I'm pre-treating your carpet to help loosen the oily, sticky soils that bind the dirt to your carpet fibers. This is much the same process as when you 'pre-soak' some especially dirty laundry.”*
4. *“Now that we've moved out your furniture from the walls is OK with you if I wipe down the baseboards at the same time? It's included in our service and is a lot easier for you than to have to do it later.”*

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Special Note: Do you see in the previous point #4 how you can call attention to a special “Value Added” Service we’re including free to the client by phrasing it in the form of a question asking permission? This technique can be used on many other things you’re doing anyway in the home to get maximum appreciation from the client and to make Cheerleaders!

5. *“I’m going to ‘set the pile’ of your carpet now with this special grooming tool. This speeds drying and removes any cleaning marks I’ve left, as well as giving your carpet a beautiful finished look.”*
6. *“Now that I’m leaving this room, if it’s OK with you, I’m going to set up this special air mover. I’ll keep it moving behind me as I work through the house and it will really speed up the drying of your carpets.”*

- 4. Finish your work-** But as you do so, remember to keep building your relationship with the customer. Never ignore your client! Enjoy your customers and have fun with them. (But do so with respect.) With the Value Added Service techniques you’ve learned, dealing with our customers should be the most enjoyable part of your day. (Except maybe getting your pay check!)
- Remember too that a large part of your evaluations (and your future raises and promotions) will depend upon your success in consistently making Cheerleaders. We can’t stress enough that while sparkling clean carpets are very important, your most important job here is to Make the Cheerleader! Thank you in advance for your help, for your support and for sharing our Cheerleader vision!

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Procedure: *Enhancing the Cleaning Presentation*

Purpose: Various ideas on how to take an already great “cleaning presentation” and make it even better.

Overview: Many companies (including some of our competitors!) can make the carpet at least look clean. But as a Value Added Service company our job is to “add value” by so impressing the customer that they become a Cheerleader for life! These ideas on their own won’t do much. But add them onto our cleaning “dog and pony show” detailed in the previous procedure, *The “Magic Squares” Cleaning Presentation*, and you will have a definite winner!

Steps:

1. **Enhancing the use of the bath towel entry mat.** Most importantly, don’t forget to use our entry mats. Not doing so is a big negative Moment of Truth. (And especially so if our customer has used us in the past and previous technicians always followed procedure and placed the entry mat.)
 - A. **Proper placement.** Be sure to place the towel with company name and logo placed up and readable to someone entering the house.
 - B. **A sense of humor along with pride.** Our towels may include an embroidered slogan such as “*Because we care*”, “*Dirt Defender*”, “*We take dirt out, not bring it in!*” and “*The dirt stops here!*” You will find customers really enjoy these sayings and comment on the pride we show in the small details. It is up to you to follow through with your work and attitude.
2. **Using the yellow “caution towel”.** Each service vehicle should carry at least six of our bright yellow towels embroidered with the big red “Caution” sign.
 - A. **When to use yellow “caution” towels.** Place these on any hard surface floor coming from a damp clean area. (Remember that when talking to the customer carpets are always “*damp*” after cleaning, never “*wet*”!)
 - B. **Communicating a warning verbally.** Any time you place a “caution” towel down also verbally caution the homeowner. Our ultimate goal is not to just guard against lawsuits. We also sincerely care about our clients and want to prevent dangerous accidents.
3. **Enhancing the use of our “clear view” filter.** Once again, just like with our door mats, one of the most important things you can do is to use the clear view filter on EVERY job. Remember that a “picture is worth a thousand words” and a clear view filter gives you a continuous “moving picture” that will impress the homeowner enormously.

NOTE: In addition, regular use of the filter also means your vacuum tank filter will stay much cleaner, meaning better vacuum power and faster cleaning. Also your tank will require fewer cleanings to get the “stinky sludge” out of the bottom.

 - A. **Correct placement of the filter is very important.** It normally should be placed just inside front door where the customer can easily see it but out of the main work traffic route back to the truck. There should be enough adequate light (either from natural or artificial sources) so that the customer can see the dirty cleaning solution rushing by.

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- B. Cleaning of the filter.** Due to the enormous amounts of dirt flowing through the filter it is easy for the Plexiglass to get clouded up. If you wipe it out after each job this problem is greatly minimized. For serious clouding try using a white (least abrasive) rubbing compound which should polish up the Plexiglass very nicely.
- C. Have fun.** As always, we've tried to have some 'tongue in cheek' humor with our clear view filters. Therefore, you will find some with slogans such as, "*There goes the dirt!*" or "*Just imagine how clean your carpet will be!*"
- D. Leaving a "cleaning sample".** Most house wives won't want you to follow through on your question, "*Mrs. Jones, would you like me to leave a dirty square right here in the dining room so your husband can see the contrast when he gets home?*" ☺ So you may want to try an alternative approach.

NOTE: Actually this fun question above to the homeowner does get a lot of grins and even better, it cements the contrast in the mind of the wife and gives her some "ammunition" if her spouse complains about the cost of the cleaning!

1. As you clean the filter you can scrape some of the hair/ gunk/ dirt/ toothpicks, etc. off the screen and put it into a small zip-loc bag from your pocket.
2. Then say with a grin, "*Mrs. Jones, would you like this as a sample of what we took out of your carpet?*" You'll be amazed at how many people will say "*Yes!*"

- 4. Enhancing the use of our "Corner Guards".** These high visibility, bright yellow guards protect the wall from the dragging hose and even better, create a positive Moment of Truth for the homeowner when they see the degree of care we use in their home. Corner guards are to be used at all corners when the hose is passing near them, especially in hallways. (Each service vehicle should have eight stocked at all times.)

- A. Proper hose usage.** Our corner guards feature the slogan, "*Your wall's best friend.*" And properly used they will prevent us from having to repaint a lot of chipped paint. BUT, even so, this does not mean you should be a 'bull in a china shop' when dragging hose. When working in a two person crew try to have both of you coordinate moving large amounts of vacuum hose. Instead of just pulling harder when it seems hung up GO FIND OUT what the problem is. This will save you having money deducted from your pay check to repair/replace antique end tables, salt water aquariums and porcelain Hummel figurines!

HINT: Apply Scotchgard logo decals to each Corner Guard. (Available from Jon-Don.) These logos will increase your customer's awareness re: reapplying the protector finish.

- B. "Outside" corner guards.** Each service vehicle also carries three corner guards that have had two long tent stakes epoxied on to the back. These guards should be placed so that when the hose starts writhing around under vacuum pressure they will keep it out of the customer's gardens and off her lawn. (Be especially careful with hot solution lines and nice green lawns!)

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Procedure: *Pre-Vacuuming*

Purpose: To remove more dry soil from our customer's carpets *before* we wet it with pre-spray or the cleaning solution.

Overview: Between lack of time and poor vacuum maintenance (read here "never changing the totally dirt-packed bag") our typical customer does a terrible job of dry soil removal. Most residential vacuuming is done purely for cosmetic reasons and no attention is given to the dirt building up deep in the carpet fibers.

If the majority of this soil is not removed before we hot water extract it then becomes "mud" and be much harder to remove in the future. In addition, the remaining water left in the fibers may very likely wick this soil onto the carpet fiber ends during the drying process. This sad state of affairs brings on the dreaded customer complaint, "The carpets look worse now than before they were cleaned."

Of course, Value Added Service focuses on more than just the technical cleaning process. So in this Pre-vacuuming procedure we will also examine how to create more Positive Moments of truth by explaining the reasons why we are pre-vac-ing and showing them the dramatic results.

NOTE: In both our in-house technical seminars and in industry IICRC approved schools the time honored TACT method of cleaning is taught. And who can argue with the four important components of **T**ime, **A**gitation, **C**hemical and **T**emperature? However, for the purposes of this procedure we could add one more factor to make it VTACT with the "V" obviously standing for pre-**V**acuuming! These five components working together will make an incredible combination to support the great Value Added Service you have always provided!

Steps:

- 1. Make sure you have the right equipment and that it is properly maintained.** Carry a HEPA upright vacuum on the truck. Make sure that the beater bar has aggressive (not worn out) bristles and that the bar is not slipping against the rubber belt drive.
- 2. Carry your vacuum up on your first trip.** Explain to the customer that you would like to start "*dry soil removal*" while your co-worker on the truck continues to set up equipment, etc. First, go on your "walk through inspection" of the house with the homeowner.
- 3. Remove the old vacuum bag and install a new one in front of the customer.** You don't need to say much here. But the care you are showing will pay off big time. At this time you can explain about the benefits of HEPA dry soil removal with less particulates and dust in the atmosphere which means a cleaner and possibly healthier home. (Be careful about making unsubstantiated health claims such as "*an allergy free home*".)
- 4. Use the "Four Corners technique".** Divide the room up into comfortable quadrants and vacuum each square from all four directions. As you work explain to the homeowner what you are doing and why. (The need to vacuum from all four sides for maximum soil removal.) If you keep working efficiently as you talk this step does not need to take that long plus remember that your assistant is setting up the extraction equipment as you work.

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- A. **Use the detachable wand to detail vacuum all edges and corner.** Very likely the customer never does this and as she sees the “care and concern” you are using at the very start of the job this process becomes a huge positive Moment of Truth!
- B. **You may also use the wand to vacuum the dust off of her HVAC heating and A/C outlets.** Another good MOT is to vacuum the grille work under her refrigerator.

NOTE: As per our *The “Magic Squares” Cleaning Presentation*: Always call attention to a special “Value Added” Service we’re including free to the client by phrasing it in the form of a question asking permission. This technique can be used on many other things you’re doing anyway in the home to get maximum appreciation from the client and to make Cheerleaders!

- 5. **This Four Corners vacuuming process should be completed in the first room and then start our normal cleaning process.** The second employee can then continue the pre-vacuuming ahead of the extraction cleaning.
- 6. **Remember that we never stop creating positive MOT’s.** So after pre-vacuuming the final room call the customer over and remove the new vacuum bag you inserted at the start of the job. Explain that *“Everything you see in this bag was brought up by proper vacuuming techniques.”* Open up a trash bag and then slit the HEPA bag open and dump all the debris in the trash bag. Then explain that by us using this extra step her carpets will be much cleaner at the end of the job.
 - A. **Offer to inspect her home vacuum for proper running and maintenance, if she wishes.**
“All part of our Value Added Service!”