One activity you need to do this winter is train your employees to better communicate with customers.

All too often, companies in the green industry focus their winter training on technical knowledge, vehicle safety and building maintenance or clean-up. None of these help deal with the source of revenue: customers. Not all are good communicators. Have a professional trainer polish your personnel. The profits from investing in effective customer communication will be seen this spring as your employees go back to working with that most important person in your business, the customer.

—The author is a principle at Wandtke & Associates Management Consultants, 2586 Oakstone Dr., Columbus, OH 43231.

For more information, phone (614) 891-3111.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

Training to communicate

by Ed Wandtke

1. Asking customers for a referral;
2. Getting neighbors of customers to become customers themselves;
3. Reinforcing the quality of service when talking to customers;
4. Handling difficult questions;
5. Ending conversations without offending customers; and/or
6. Explaining the differences in service programs.

Training your employees to communicate is necessary, but many owners assume their employees are already effective. Try getting your more experienced employees to stand up in front of other employees, and train the latter to answer the above questions. Don’t be surprised to see some reluctance among employees. Not all are good communicators.

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Association of America.

"I’m proud to have been a director of PLCAA because I think it does a great job of representing the best interests of all lawn care companies, both large and small," says Norton.

On a personal level, business associates, including competitors, appreciate his wit, which can be warm or sharp—but always insightful. They value his observations and thoughts on the industry which he shares particularly through his involvement with PLCAA.

"It’s been an awful lot of fun and an experience I wouldn’t trade for anything," says Norton of his involvement with lawn care.

Both he and the company he helps direct—Barefoot—do the marketplace, the industry, and themselves proud by delivering quality, customer-appreciated lawn services at a price that’s fair to everybody.


—Ron Hall