

editorial

The good old days . . . if we're really honest with ourselves, couldn't match many of our modern advantages and improved standards of living. But the old days had many a custom we're beginning to miss very much indeed.

We remember fondly, for example, that competitive spirit in business which fostered a feeling of courtesy and service toward the customer. If you will, there was a courtship of the public. The drugstore delivered. Shopkeepers guaranteed satisfaction — and smiled about it as well.

It may not be gone forever — but the service attitude in business is certainly on an extended vacation. It's missing in many parts of the green industry as well.

We're disappointed and often downright irritated to find how carelessly the public is sometimes served in our industries. The trimmed branch that falls to wipe out rose bushes . . . the calls to answering services which are not returned . . . the spray drift . . . the missed appointments.

Most critically, we are disappointed to hear more often than ever: "we don't do that anymore," or . . . "I'm sorry but we

don't offer that service." Everywhere we go these days: "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

In our view there is just no place in a service-oriented industry for the phrase: "we can't do that." To us it means — "we don't provide service, we just sell a tangible product . . . take it or leave it."

To those parts of the green industry which are not related to a service industry . . . there's still a good bit of helpful philosophy contained in the service technique.

Briefly, the service approach is solving problems. Not the obvious, tangible problems, but the very real concerns which people have on their mind. A man with disease problems in his turfgrass may really be thinking: "I wish someone would come along and take care of this entire turf project of mine."

A lady who is asking for price estimates on a tree care job may really be looking for "men I can be sure won't drive their truck across the backyard."

To solve problems, we need to begin by understanding what they really are and approach them firmly and courteously.

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