

# CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

## Make time for service calls

by E.T. Wandtke

■ One of the most difficult tasks for a lawn service company is making time to follow up on customer service calls during the busiest times of the year. These scheduling conflicts will not disappear, but the following tips will help you to weather the customer service pressure easier:

1) Use the team approach. The team approach means that any employee is able to solve a customer service problem that's brought to their attention. Whenever a customer who needs help calls, the office can dispatch the nearest available service technician, even if the customer is not his.

2) Review the nature of service requests. When customer service requests and service delivery requirements are the highest, it is important to review and rank the type of customer service request being received.

Take the time monthly or biweekly to review and discuss the nature of service call requests and what can be done to reduce them. Use this review period as a time to reinforce your company's commitment to delivering the best service the first time you are on a customer's property.

3) Focus on quick attention to a service

call. Much of a lawn service company's customer service pressure comes from not attending to service calls on a timely basis, or from not communicating with the customer. Implement a "minimum response-time policy." Then put in place a system of written follow ups for the service calls to make certain the customer is satisfied with what you did to solve their service call request.

These customer service systems will help relieve customer anxiety over delayed follow-up. The team approach helps you provide the service you promise in the contract, and demonstrates your commitment to their satisfaction.

In addition, your employees will be more comfortable knowing that your commitment to customer service is based on the trust and confidence you have in their ability to solve a customer's problem.

## GREEN INDUSTRY EVENTS

### JUNE

**17:** Sports Turf Field Day, Talbot Theatre, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Sports Turf Association, 82 Rodney Blvd., Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2H3; (519) 763-9431.

**17-18:** Midwest Grounds Management Conference, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Contact: Professional Grounds Management Society, 10402 Ridgland Road, Suite 4, Cockeysville, MD 21030; (301) 667-1833; or K. Havens, Miami University (513) 529-6786.

**17-18:** "Systems Approach to Practical Tree Care," by Dr. Alex Shigo, Holiday Inn on the Lane, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: Lana J. Ahlum, Ohio Chapter/International Society of Arboriculture, P.O. Box 967, Hilliard, OH 43026; (614) 876-3694.

**18:** Tree Pruning Seminar, University of California, Riverside. Speakers include Donald F. Blair, Dan Condon, Ken Dyer, Alden Kelley, Ted Stamen, Seymour D. Van Gundy, Guy Witney. Contact: Hartley Bennett, U.C.C.E. Seminar Coordinator, P.O. Box 414, Wickenburg, AZ 85358; (602) 684-7308.

**22:** Fourth Annual Golf Tournament, to benefit scholarship and research, Normanside C.C., Delmar, N.Y. Contact: Northeastern Golf Course Superintendents Association, P.O. Box 391, Latham, NY 12110; (518) 783-1322.

**22-23:** Park & Recreation Design Symposium, Baltimore, Md. Contact: National Institute on Park and Grounds Management, P.O. Box 1936, Appleton, WI

54913; (414) 733-2301.

**24:** Turfgrass Research Field Day, Turfgrass Research Facility, South Deerfield, Mass. Contact: Dr. Rich Cooper, Stockbridge Hall, Univ. of Mass., Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2353.

### JULY

**1:** Cornell Turfgrass Field Day, Pine Island, Orange County, N.Y. Contact: Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center, Dillon Drive, Community Campus, Middletown, NY 10940; (914) 344-1234.

**8-9:** Pennsylvania Pesticide Institute meeting, The Embers, Carlisle, Pa. Contact: Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association, (717) 238-1673.

**12-14:** Summer Meeting, National Fertilizer Solutions Association, Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tenn. Contact: Kelly O'Brien-Wray, 339 Consort Dr., St. Louis, MO 63011; (314) 256-4900.

**15:** Nursery Field Day, Hampton Roads Agricultural Experiment Station, Virginia Beach, Va. Contact: Dr. Bonnie Appleton, 1444 Diamond Springs Rd., Virginia Beach, VA, 23455; (804) 363-3906.

**15:** Maryland Turfgrass Field Day, Cherry Hill Turfgrass Research Facility, Silver Spring, Md. Contact: Dr. Peter Dernoeden, Dept. of Agronomy, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; (301) 405-1337.

**16-19:** Florida Foliage Association Annual Convention, Jupiter Beach Hilton. Contact: Ann King, Florida Foliage Association, P.O. Box 2507, Apopka, FL, 32704-2507; (407) 886-1036.

## IN THE GREEN

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