

Know your customers, keep your promises

Customer satisfaction begins long before any work is performed.

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There are many steps to ensuring customer satisfaction, and successfully completing these steps on a consistent basis will allow you and your customer to enjoy an outstanding relationship.

Offer only those services which you are prepared to perform properly. This may change from day to day, depending on the capacity and availability of your current resources, including management and crew time, materials, and equipment. You might have the best lawn mowing crews in town, but if your scheduled routes are already filled to capacity, and you sell a big job without the ability to expand your resources, you are guaranteeing customer dissatisfaction.

Know what your customers want

Ask your customers those questions that will help you understand what they like and don't like about similar products and services. Repeat back to them what you understand to be their desires. Listen for them to affirm or correct your perception.

Follow through on promises

Don't make promises you can't deliver. Even though most people want it done "yesterday," they are normally

more than willing to wait a little longer to get a high quality job that meets or exceeds their expectations. Be honest with your client. Make it a point to be clear and concise so they know exactly what to expect and when they should expect it.

Communicate quality to staff

Make sure your staff clearly understands what the customer's expectations are, and be sure they have all the resources at their disposal to meet or exceed these expectations. In most green industry companies this includes proper training so the staff has the necessary skills to do a superb job with the required efficiency to keep the job economically feasible.

Follow up on your work

It's a great way to help ensure customer satisfaction. Check in with your customers after a big job is completed. Touch base with your long term maintenance clients from time to time. People love to hear from you, and just asking how things are going and if they are happy with your work, encourages them to think highly of you and your organization. If they do mention a problem, or call you up with a

complaint, *immediately* is not too soon to solve it.

Now is not the time to be stingy with your solution. Consider the value of the client and do whatever it takes, within reason, to satisfy their complaint to their satisfaction. Once the problem is fixed, consider how the customer is feeling.

If your company has blundered, be sure to do a little something extra to make that customer feel good about your firm. It is amazing how much

Customers are impressed by prompt, aggressive, cheerful solutions to their problems.

good will you can achieve by giving a free rose bush to a recently troubled customer.

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