

Help technicians sell

By AUSTIN FRISHMAN, PH.D.

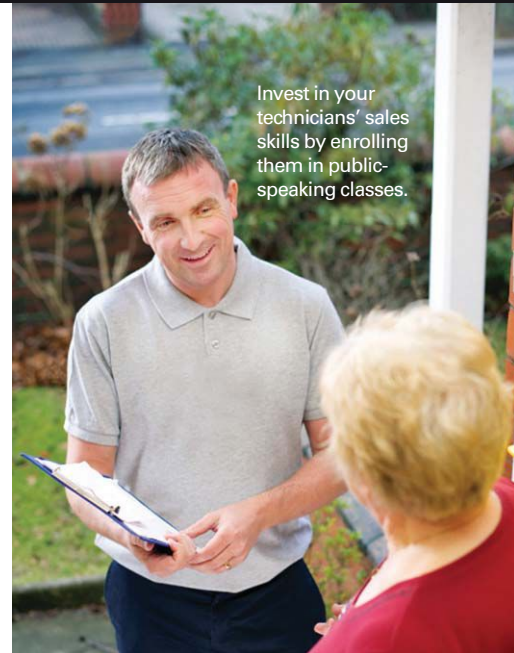
Make sure your employees understand the importance of the service your company provides.

They must feel comfortable and good about the items you sell, or else the initial motivation is lost. Ideas to ensure you're keeping that comfort level high are:

- › **Have a plan and goals.** Decide how and where you want to expand. Share this information with your technicians.
- › **Issue business cards for each technician.** They should carry at least five cards with them at all times.
- › **Role play in training sessions.** Select different types of services you're trying to sell and have them walk through their pitch with a manager or colleague.
- › **Bring in manufacturers for training meetings.** Reps can provide insights about how to sell, install and maintain add-on services like fire ant control, surface insect control or mosquito control.
- › **Sharpen technicians' communication skills.** Offer to enroll and pay for public-speaking classes.
- › **Hone technicians' time management**

skills. Training in this area can open their schedules so they can fit sales time into their routes.

- › **Recognize successful sales.** Dinner for two at a nice restaurant is a satisfactory reward, but this doesn't have to be only about cash. Post positive results on a visible bulletin board. Send letters to technicians' families explaining how important their dad or mom is at work.
- › **Give them a head start.** Help the technicians compose a list of potential prospects, so they know where to prospect.
- › **Give them support materials.** There are effective sales training videos, as well as leave-behind materials, online for technicians to use with their clients.
- › **Make sure they know it's OK to ask for help.** When it comes to a large national account, for example, you don't want a technician to inadvertently destroy a lead because of his sales inexperience. If a technician is reluctant to sell, encourage him to turn in leads at least.
- › **Hire the right person.** Screen for individuals who are likely to succeed at sales and service.



Invest in your technicians' sales skills by enrolling them in public-speaking classes.

- › **Set goals that are realistic, and reevaluate them over time.** LM

Frishman is technical consultant to LM's sister magazine Pest Management Professional, where this article was first published. He's president of AMF Pest Management Services.

The Ticker:

LAWN CARE

Valent U.S.A. Corp. and **Nufarm Americas** entered a distribution agreement that appoints Nufarm the exclusive distributor of Valent-branded products for professional turf, ornamental and aquatic uses in the U.S. The two companies will combine product portfolios into one broad portfolio that will be sold by Nufarm in the U.S.

FMC Corp. produced a video about liquid pesticide applications and added it to its YouTube page, [youtube.com/user/FMCTurf](https://www.youtube.com/user/FMCTurf). The video demonstrates how to prepare for an outdoor application, proper personal protective equipment, proper storage of pesticides and how to prepare for an accidental spill.

MY DOG ATE MY SALES LEAD

Most service technicians aren't comfortable selling. Some even believe selling is a step back and borders on being dishonest. They're locked into their own comfort zone. Here are 10 of the most common thoughts about why selling is so difficult for them:

1. I know my customers. I like them. I don't want to push something on them they may not need.
2. My day is too short as it is to get the work done. How can I possibly have time to sell?
3. Salespeople are sharpies who have no idea how to do the work. It's not what I want to be.
4. I once turned in a lead and never received the commission. Who needs that?
5. It takes 60 days or longer to get paid for what you sell.
6. Uncle Sam takes too much out of my commission.
7. What's the sales force for? Isn't it their job to sell?
8. If I wanted to sell, I would have interviewed to be a salesperson.
9. People don't like to be hounded to purchase things.
10. I'm afraid of rejection. (Few people admit this.)

Now, tackle each of the above challenges and turn your technicians into happy, successful, well-balanced service/sales professionals.