

The Truth Hurts?

By Bob Harris, Attrition Busters



Bob Harris

During my seminar session at the Grand Cayman meeting last October, I observed most of you in attendance shaking your heads in agreement when I suggested that we, as a group, tend to be reactive as opposed to proactive in terms of training for our employees.

I would like to share some very biting results of an experiment I did, which involved placing a total of twenty-five telephone calls to twenty-five different CSAA member companies.

I called a mix of large companies and smaller ones. I called East Coast, Mid-West, and West Coast companies and included some of the most respected among us. I had the same inquiry for everyone: "I would like to speak with someone about getting a quote for a home alarm system."

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Of the twenty-five companies I called, eleven of them told me they would have someone call me back. Of those eleven, six actually did. Two of the six called back on the same day. Three called the following day, and one called back after three days. Five of the companies I called never called me back at all. Sales people at five respected CSAA member companies failed to return a call from a prospect.

Out of the original twenty-five companies, I spoke with sales people at the time of my call in fourteen cases. Of these fourteen, nine of them qualified me over the phone and immediately proceeded directly to "price" as the significant advantage in doing business with their company as opposed to a competitor.

Having a local central station was the second most common reason but price was first... What? Have we forgotten how to convey value, quality, professionalism and effectiveness as a differentiator to turn this call into an appointment? Do you provide any sales and customer service training for your team?

There is certainly no shortage of "free" training on product and technology. Regrettably, this training does absolutely nothing when it comes to lighting any kind of fire under your team to empower them with creative tools to compete against price as a differentiator!

How much good business are you currently leaving on the table? Don't for a moment think that this lack of training isn't also affecting your front-office retention efforts, morale, and profitable growth!

Are you at all shocked by this? No matter how good you already are (or think you are), you must always provide tangible training to sales people, office staff, field techs, management, and every single employee to become even better.

"Have we forgotten how to convey value, quality, professionalism and effectiveness as a differentiator to turn this call into an appointment?"

Out of the fourteen I spoke with on my original call, three of them immediately made me feel as though I was causing an interruption. This was conveyed by their breathing and tone. They made me feel that they now had to stop what they were doing to answer my litany of preposterous questions. Questions such as, "How long have you been in business?" "What is your contract term?" "Are all of your installers licensed?" etc.

One of these fellows was particularly indignant and even chuckled when I didn't want to answer his question about what other companies I had already spoken with. This particular fellow works for very well-respected alarm company who is a long-time member of our association.

The other two perceptively arrogant sales people fired off questions at me


on everything from my personal credit situation to how soon I wanted an installation. None of these three ever suggested meeting with me until I thanked them for their time and was about to hang up. Only then were they interested in scheduling an appointment.

Of all twenty-five phone calls, only six sales people stood out as true professionals to me. They were not only well-skilled at creating a rapport over the phone, but also able to convey their sincere desire to address my needs in a manner I perceived as being in my best interest and not in just "making a sale".

None of these six even mentioned price. At the end of this experiment, six out of twenty stood out as professional. Five never even called me back at all. This issue of *Dispatch* is in all five of their offices right now!

What kind of training have you provided for your team? Have you hired an industry professional from the outside to come in and host a seminar and workshop with your team to address specific issues and challenges? Have you ever asked someone to call your own sales department so you could listen in on how they take care of your business? How many of you do not return phone calls or e-mails yourself?

How has reading this article made you think about your own company and ways you might make some positive changes to pick up more of what you are currently leaving on the table, and become as good as you tell everyone you already are?

Bob Harris is Founder and President of The Attrition Busters. He is a Consultant member of the CSAA. With over 30 years in the alarm industry; he provides seminars, business consulting, and workshops to help great companies become even better. Bob can be reached at (818) 730-4690 or by e-mail at bobh@attritionbusters.com. Learn more about The Attrition Busters at www.attritionbusters.com. 

SAVE THE DATE!

You and your sales manager and team are invited to a free CSAA webinar given by Bob Harris on how to overcome these habits! Thursday, October 8, 2009 at 1:30pm -3:00pm ET

Watch for more information in an upcoming CSAA Signals