

## **Seven Steps to Set Your Pest Control Company Apart From Your Competitors**

By: [Scott J. Richardson](#), Esq.

Presentation matters. There is no doubt that how something or someone looks impacts customers and their experience with your company. Study after study shows that consumers purchase with their eyes. When dealing with homeowners, business owners and commercial accounts, the appearance of your pest control technician matters.

1. Many companies mandate uniforms, even if it is just a shirt. Beyond requiring the uniform, what are your company policies? Must the uniforms or shirts be kept clean, pressed and neat? Does facial hair need to be trimmed and neat? Are caps or hats part of the uniform? Consider how a technician in a soiled or torn shirt, bearing your company name or logo, looks when he enters a restaurant, an office or a home to treat. People are purchasing a total package and appearance is a critical piece of the package.

2. Having a clean uniform is not the end, it is just the beginning. There are small service improvements that will set you apart from your competitors. Recently, we had an HVAC problem and the service technician needed to come into the interior of our home to repair our air conditioner. Before he came into our home, he slipped disposable booties over his shoes. We were so impressed that not only do we remember his company, but we also will use his company again and have recommended them to others. Are the hands of your technicians clean? Frequently, someone will want to shake hands. Clean hands – devoid of dirt and most importantly chemicals-are imperative.

3. Are your service vehicles washed and clean? Are the equipment and chemicals neatly arranged, secured and stored in the bed of the truck? Trucks should be serviced frequently. Leaking oil or other fluids on the street or driveway will not only create a mess that you will be responsible for cleaning up, but you will also likely lose your customer's business. Also, leaks from a pest control vehicle that carries chemicals may be presumed by the customer to be toxic and possibly to be an environmental hazard as well as a violation of state pest control laws and regulations.

4. Professionally appearing paperwork and service tickets are another area where you can make a great impression. Presenting a customer with a soiled service ticket is disrespectful. An illegible handwritten ticket is worthless. At a minimum, train your technicians on how to complete service tickets and require that service tickets are neatly printed versus scrawled cursive writing on service tickets. If your budget allows, our recommendation is computer generated service tickets.

5. Talking to your customers on a regular basis is also very important. Some pest control companies have a supervisor run the route for each technician every few months. This gives the company direct access to the customer and the opportunity to ask how the company is performing. Are there any complaints or improvements in service needed or required? This methodology also counts as a form of supervision under the law and rules which helps to exonerate you and your company from joint responsibility under ARS 32-2308.

6. Clean up the work area. This is essential. If items were moved, make sure they are placed back where they originally were. Make sure that your technician has the necessary equipment to vacuum, sweep, wash or wipe areas, if needed. Ask the customer to inspect your work. It gives your company an opportunity to showcase the work they did and have the customer see the extra steps that your company takes.

7. Sending bills regularly and timely is important. When a bill is unpaid, ask the customer why. Was it service related? Is the customer in a cash crunch or is it some other reason? Many times a customer is upset with something about a service call and because they are non-confrontational they pay your invoice and then hire another company. Don't miss the opportunity to improve your company. Consider sending e-mails (or phone calls) with a short survey to ask your customers about their service experience with your company. The survey could be left by the technician with the service ticket or sent with invoices.

I will leave you with a true story from my home. Over many years, we have purchased several different appliances ranging from refrigerators to televisions. We go to one store and one store only. Why do we have loyalty to this store? It's simple. When the appliance is delivered the delivery people are dressed in clean khaki pants and a white shirt with the company logo. We are comfortable having them in our home as they are respectful, neat and make sure everything is installed properly, is working, and the area is cleaned up before they leave. The level of service we receive is worth the price of loyalty to this particular store. Image matters and a great image will create loyal customers.

Having had the distinct pleasure of representing over 180 pest control and landscape companies during my legal career, I am struck by the differences among them and the way they "present" to their customers. Taking care of your company's brand and image will result in more customer loyalty for your pest control company.

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