

Marketing 101: It's all about the customer.

From our point of view, we're focused on the services we offer in order to make a living. Is that what's important to customers? Not really. What they care about are the ultimate benefits *they* derive from those services: having a building, or fleet, or whatever it is, that looks great to them and to others, and that will also last a long time.

So *start there* in formulating your marketing message, whether it's delivered in print, online or in person. Put yourself in their shoes, and think about what *you* expect from any contractor.

When you're trying to make a sale, what objections, concerns or questions do you most often hear? Customers want to achieve their desired result without a lot of cost, time, risk and hassle. So address those issues up front, before the prospect even brings them up. If you can get the job done

quicker, or if doing a better job means less-frequent cleanings—thereby saving them money—then that's your competitive advantage, and it's surely worth mentioning up front.

The best selling techniques involve less talking and more listening. For instance, listen for clues about problems they may have had with previous vendors. Then mention why your techniques, supplies or work ethics make those issues go away.

If you've been selling your services for a while, you know that buying decisions aren't made purely on a basis of logic. Emotional aspects do come in to play. For example, the best contractor in town can still fail if he hasn't learned to build up a sense a trust among his business prospects.

If you can give them references or testimonials from other people like

them, they're more likely to trust you. If you seem to genuinely understand the issues and pressures they're dealing with, they'll be much more inclined to do business with you.

Ask the right questions.

If they say they already have a mobile wash contractor, don't just toot your own horn. Ask them, for example, if that contractor uses bleach or chemicals that you know to be corrosive. Then explain the damaging nature of those substances. In other words, plant a seed of doubt about their current or previous purchase habits.

The thing is, you can't force anyone to buy. But if you say the right things in your marketing, people will come to their *own* conclusion that you're the smartest choice.

So just stay focused on *their* needs, and *your* needs will be met by default.