Prove your value

to future *and* current commercial customers

Fending off competitors shouldn't stop once you have the account

The world's changed since around 2007—have you noticed? When the economy started slipping, so did revenue for companies of all kinds. Firms responded by looking for ways to reduce, or eliminate expenses, especially the ongoing kind. Lately, the nation's overall economic situation finally seems to be improving a bit, and that's good news. The bad news is, we've all become accustomed to keeping a tight grip on our money. So what's that mean for cleaning contractors, who represent one of those ongoing expenses? It means that things could seem to be going fine with our business customer, until one day we get the word that we've been replaced by a cheaper contractor. Or maybe they've hired the manager's nephew to pressure clean the fleet. Or regular cleanings of their building no longer seem necessary.

It happens all the time. So what can you do to help ensure an ongoing, profitable relationship? Remind the customer why quality cleaning is in the long-term best interest of their company.

Don't assume that customers know what you know

If companies don't understand the difference between top-notch work and the slap-dash efforts of a low-baller, then why exactly would they spend the extra money? But what if you explained that the caustic chemical the other guy is using actually removes paint from their trucks along with the dirt? In a few years, their fleet starts looking shabby, damaging their brand's image, but then it's too late. Replacing vehicles is going to cost them a lot more in the long run than simply using a contractor like you who can keep even older trucks looking new.

Maybe at one time you successfully convinced them why you can do a better job, and that's how you got the account in the first place. But it's been a while. Their financial pressures have increased. Maybe the person who hired you isn't even there any more. Remember, it's someone's job there to do a cost/benefit analysis on each line-item expenditure, looking