

Editor's Note



CUSTOMER SERVICE

I don't know how many people read the editor's words found at the front of magazines, but we editors often do. It's interesting to see what our counterparts are saying. In the November 2008 issue of *Rental Equipment Register* magazine, editor Michael Roth writes about a 77-year-old five-location rental outfit he visited.

Roth reports a conversation with the general manager, who says that when he "hears rental companies tout their customer service as delivering equipment on time and making sure breakdowns are handled in an expedient manner, his response is, 'Isn't that what we're supposed to do?' Isn't being on time the basic minimum that anybody in business should do?"

Roth continues that the man "compares it to a supermarket. When a customer goes shopping for food, he expects that the can of tuna he wants is going to be there, that's the essential minimum. The supermarket doesn't need to boast that it has the products its customers want—if it didn't, it wouldn't be in business. Likewise, does it have to boast that when the customer is ready to check out, the cashiers are on their jobs and ready to go?"

"Tain't necessarily so. In the past, I wrenched for a distributor who has a lot of industrial customers, and that company can boast of strong customer loyalty—in large part because they respond promptly to service calls and have knowledgeable mechanics and a good stock of parts.

On the other hand, Roth and his interviewee raise a point worth pondering. Is excelling at the basics enough? It seems to me that for some distributors that is indeed the best recipe for success. Forget the bells and whistles. However, other distributors may have to adapt in special ways to their local market situation.

If there's a lesson in all this, the best I can figure out is that each of us, whether we're in service, sales, or management, need to stop once in a while, take a deep breath and look around, and ponder whether we're delivering customer service (be it to a boss or to an outside customer) that makes us the obvious choice.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "GW".

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Industry Calendar 2009

Jan. 22 The WaterJet Technology Association (WJTA) day-long seminar, Safe Operation of Industrial Vacuum Equipment, Holiday Inn Orlando International Drive Resort, Orlando, FL. For more information, visit www.wjta.org.

Feb. 3–6 World of Concrete Annual Trade Show, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV. For more information, visit www.worldofconcrete.com.

Feb. 15–18 PACE Painting and Coating Expo, New Orleans Convention Center, New Orleans, LA. For more information, visit www.sspc.org.

Feb. 18–20 Environmental Technologies Panel, J W Marriot, New Orleans, LA. For more information, visit www.nsrp.org.

Feb. 18–21 IWCA Annual Convention and Trade Show, Atlanta, GA. For more information, visit www.iwca.org.

Feb. 24–26 HOUSTEX 2009, Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME), George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX. For more information, visit www.sme.org.

Feb. 25–28 Pumper and Cleaner International Environmental Expo, Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, KY. For more information, visit www.pumpershow.com.

Mar. 2–5 American Rental Association's The Rental Show, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA. For more information, visit www.therentalshow.com.

Mar. 30–Apr. 2 WESTEC 2009 Exposition, Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME), Los Angeles Convention Center, Los Angeles, CA. For more information, visit www.sme.org.

Aug. 18–20 2009 American WJTA Conference and Expo, Marriott Houston Westchase Hotel, Houston, TX. For more information, visit www.wjta.org.

Oct. 6–9 ISSA/INTERCLEAN North America 2009, Chicago, IL. For more information, visit www.issa.com.

Oct. 18–20 CETA PowerClean 2009 Trade Show and Convention, Silver Legacy Resort Casino, Reno, NV. For more information, visit www.ceta.org.

Oct. 27–30 DeckExpo 2009, side-by-side with the Remodeling Show, Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN. For more information, visit www.deckexpo.com.