



NKBA™

Susquehanna Valley Chapter



May 2009

PA Home Improvement Contract Act

WANT TO KNOW MORE? Well we will host an informative meeting on Thursday the 28th of May at the New Kingstown Fire Hall. Come and get all the information in the bill, directly from a representative of the PA Attorney General's Office. Immediately following the presentation, there will be a time of Q & A.

This will affect us all, so plan on attending. If you have not already received registration information please contact Dave Warfel at Dave@signaturecab.com with any and all questions. There is no cost to attend.

12th Annual NKBA Golf Outing & Dinner

**Royal Oaks Golf Club
Lebanon, Pa
Tuesday, June 9, 2009**

Mark your calendars and make plans for you and your colleagues, customers, etc. to attend! Last year's event was successful again. Thirty-eight golfers enjoyed a fun day of golf, good food and comrade. This year's format will be a modified shot gun start beginning at 12:30 pm. The day includes lunch and golf, followed by a steak dinner and an awards ceremony. Don't forget that we are still looking for some sponsorship. This would be a great way to promote your company and have some fun doing it!! Be on the look out for the sign up sheets you will be receiving shortly.



Board of Directors Officer Training

March 20-22, 2009
Orlando, Florida

From left, **Rod Haupt** VP Gov. Relations, **Liz Walters** Treasurer, **Denise Newcomer** AKBD VP Tech/Com., **Becky Ward** AKBD Secretary, **Dave Warfel** VP Programs, **Victoria Boehm** AKBD VP Membership, **John Petrie** CMKBD Chapter Rep., **Dustin Stehr** CKD CBD President, **Valerie S. B. Kissinger** CKD VP Acad. Relations.

K/BIS 2009 a Hit with Exhibitors

K/BIS 2009 in Atlanta was perhaps the most successful show where exhibitors have ever displayed their products. Despite a challenging economy and an international swine flu epidemic, attendance at K/BIS 2009 was much higher than expected. Better yet, exhibitors overwhelmingly reported that the quality of attendees visiting their booths was excellent, with few "tire kickers." Instead attendees were largely key decision makers serious about specifying, buying, selling, or distributing exhibiting companies' products.

In addition, there has been a great deal of press coverage for exhibitors at the show. As K/BIS has remained much stronger than nearly every other trade show in the housing industry, newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and TV networks--from both the consumer and trade media--were looking to capture the excitement of the show. You can already find many articles covering K/BIS 2009 and the exhibitors there online and in your local and national newspapers and magazines.

New Ventilation Legislation

This particular piece of legislation will require a make up air system. 505.2 Make up air required. Exhaust hood systems capable of exhausting in excess of 400 cfm shall be provided with make up air at a rate approximately equal to the exhaust air rate. Such make up air systems shall be equipped with a means of closure and shall be automatically controlled to start and operate simultaneously with the exhaust system.

The reason for doing this is because kitchens in homes are becoming larger and larger, resembling commercial kitchen environments with heavy duty ranges and so forth. Currently there are no specific requirements or guidelines for make up air in residences. With some hood systems exhaust 1800 cfm and more can adversely affect the operation of other appliances in the residence. It will be taking effect in 2010.

This will affect many of our high end kitchens so please become familiar with all new codes.

DID YOU KNOW?

An American family of four can use more than 400 gallons of water every day, and on average, approximately 70 percent of that water is used indoors.

But did you know that you and your family could save nearly 30,000 gallons per year simply by installing water-saving fixtures in your home?

If all inefficient toilets in US homes were converted to high-efficiency models, we could save more than 950 billion gallons of water per year – the equivalent of 15 days of flow over the Niagara Falls.

What do clients really want?

Home builders and Remodelers perceive that their client's most important values are budget and schedule; many designers feel that it is over all finished design and budget. But an article written in the Journal of Light Construction points out that many clients identified the following in the order of importance.

1. Personal Attention: Make them feel they are the most important customer in your business, even if they are not.
2. Dependability: Never promise more than you can deliver, but deliver more than you promise and hopefully you will always be in the good graces of your clients.
3. Return Phone calls promptly: This is one of the most courteous things you can do in your business.
4. Good Communications: Remember to put every detail in writing and clearly communicate to your clients how they are to communicate with you and your team. Remember most problems occur as a result of poor communications.
5. Schedule: Your clients deserve to have an accurate and complete schedule so they can plan their lives around your work.
6. No Surprises: Be thorough in all that you do for your clients, no one likes surprises especially if it cost them more money or inconvenience.
7. Budget: Everyone has a budget! It is important to establish your client's budget and work with your client to deliver their project within the budget.

Hopeful this will give us all an insight of what we can do to make every project go smoothly!

Overcome a Selling Slump

By Christine Corelli

Forget tough. Today's competition is fierce. Sales have been down for many businesses including manufacturers, business owners, reps, designers, and fabricators in the kitchen and bath industry. So, what should you do? Wait for the phone to ring? Wait for things to turn around? Cut prices? Cut prices so low that you can't make a decent profit? Worry to the point where your lack of confidence is written all over you when you're interacting with your customers, employees, and coworkers? Of course not. When it comes to worry, keep this in mind: Worry is like moving on a rocking chair; it keeps you going, but gets you nowhere.

Below are methods and mindsets to put you in the right frame of mind and get you back on track when sales are down. If you have been one of the fortunate designers or manufacturers who have been meeting or exceeding your sales goals, you may still wish to review these to be sure you stay on the right track. Remember: the number one rule for successful businesses and sales pros today is never get too comfortable where you are. Your competitors are vying for the business of your customers, and new competitors are emerging daily--many from non-traditional sources boasting new business models that challenge the status quo. The moment that you think that you're ahead of your competition, they will have the advantage.

Eliminate Negative Thinking

Fretting and worrying will not help you when your sales are down. They will hold you back. You cannot excel at anything unless you keep yourself in the right frame of mind. This requires balancing your ability to be realistic and objective, controlling your emotions, and working harder. Excessive worry will block you from functioning effectively and keep you from putting your best foot forward. It will also block your creativity--something you need more than ever when sales are down. If you begin thinking that you won't make a sale, then you probably won't. If customers sense your apprehension or pessimism, then they'll look toward another provider who thinks, acts, and talks like a winner. Get on the phones and start dialing. Spend more time face-to-face with customers. Call on past customers. Sound optimistic and convincing. Act like a winner, even if you haven't won the race for a while. Just like a thoroughbred that wears blinders to keep his eyes on the finish line without getting distracted, forge ahead on blind faith that you'll succeed in the long road ahead.

Go Back to Basics

Do the activities that produced results when you first got started. One of them was staying on the phones until you made a connection, booked an appointment, or made a sale. Great sales people instinctively know they must spend time "dialing for dollars" to existing and potential customers to get out of a negative sales period. If there aren't enough incoming calls, there must not be enough going out! The most successful people always have that habit—even when sales are down. Muster up the discipline to spend several hours on the phone each day to help generate business to get you out of the quicksand and onto solid selling ground.

Become a Chameleon

When its environment changes, the chameleon's biological process enables it to adapt readily to its new environment. Unfortunately, for human beings, it's not quite so easy. But the longer you resist the changes that are occurring in your business climate, and the fact that you need to sharpen your skills, take risks, and do things differently, the longer it will take for you to see sales results. Accept "what is," adapt like a chameleon, and forge ahead.

Tap Into Your Creativity

It's not uncommon to get stuck in a rut when sales are down. So, if you're hearing, "I'm not interested," get interesting! Think about changing your approach when interacting with customers. Stop trying to sell, and start "helping." Ask more questions to learn how you can help with their challenges. Tell them about similar businesses and kitchen and bath clients you are helping. Differentiate yourself from your competition and let customers know what's different and great about your company. Look at what successful businesses are doing in the industry. Find out what's working for them and determine how you can apply it to your own business in an even better way. Bring creative ideas and solutions to your existing customers too. They will thank you for it.

Sound Sharp

How do you sound when you're talking to customers? Do you sound confident in yourself and positive when offering your knowledge and conveying the value of doing business with your company? Do you sound empathetic to your customers' problems and that you genuinely want to help them? Do you sound like you have their best interest at heart? Your customer can tell if you do.

Hone Your Selling Skills

Master the art of influencing customers to buy from you. You can win over today's tough customers and get results faster by understanding and applying the concepts and theories in the "art" of influencing people. Recognize the importance of applying a consultative selling approach. Ask the right questions and use words and phrases that influence customers to buy from you. Memorize responses to objections, and learn how to eloquently articulate the benefits of your products or services.

Get Visible

Visibility is as important as ability. Physically calling on customers and attending business events critical to your success. Attend events where you can meet potential customers, learn more about what is occurring in your industry, and build strong relationships. Be selective where you spend your time and money, but remember that visibility is important.

Reconnect With Your Advocates and Spend Time Forming New Relationships

Visit customers, suppliers, and industry contacts who are your advocates. Don't be shy. Graciously and confidently ask for referrals and more business. Don't tell them how tough business is. It's tough for them too. Tell them about the customers who are delighted with the end-result of your kitchen and bath design, the quality of your product, and value-added service you provide. Tell them in detail how you exceeded expectations for a particular customer and that you can do the same for them. The efforts that you make to maintain strong business relationships can pay off for you when you need it the most. Calling on new customers (even those you believe are loyal to your competitor) will help you get out of a slump and move you toward long-term profitability. While results don't always happen overnight, if you keep calling on potential customers with persistence and professionalism and work hard at building relationships, you may be the one who will get their business down the road.

Organize or Agonize

Manage your time and maximize your activity. Have you been making the best use of your time? Have you prioritized your to do's each day and done them first? Are you spending the majority of your time on sales-related activities? Are you using the software to track and control your calls and record important details about clients so you can build relationships? Are you organized? If you don't have effective organizations skills, get organized. Your alternative is to agonize over why your sales are not where you want them to be.

Slow Down in Order to Speed Up

Have you lost sight of your goals, or worse, failed to set them? Big mistake! Even the most sophisticated professionals set goals. Setting goals is a way of making things concrete. It's a way to focus your energy if sales are not where you want them to be. Get into a non-business setting where you can think clearly and there will be no distractions. Sit down and write down your goals, as well as what action you'll take. Establish your priorities, and set goals so that you'll move forward. For example, "I will make ten phone calls per day to existing customers, and twenty to potential customers." "I will visit three customers a day." "I will study my industry and check out my competition on the web for half an hour each day." Write them down and look at them each day. Make sure your goals are specific in nature, as opposed to something as generic as "increase sales." Review your goals regularly, such as every 30 days, to analyze your progress. While you should strive to achieve all of your goals, it makes sense to revamp your goals if needed.

Invest in Yourself and Add Value

Spend more time and energy on learning new skills and self-improvement. Take a refresher course on presentation skills or take advantage of training offered by the NKBA. Bring in a sales expert to provide customized training for you and your sales team to provide critical skills on sales communication, time management, territory management, building relationships, responding to objections and advanced selling strategies. Don't wait for your annual sales meeting. Do it now if sales are down. If you are a designer, obtain training on how to sell to high-end customers. Make it priority to be dedicated to continuous self-improvement and focus on improving your skills. It will pay off more than you could ever imagine. Look at how you serve customers and determine how you can add value to what you sell or offer. This is a better way to go than defending price. Use the VMO (Value Management Objective Process), in which performance criteria are set and evaluated by your customers themselves. Ask them, "How can we provide more value?" "What features would you like?" Reach agreement on priorities, actions, and outcomes. Then, take action and continually seeks ways to increase it. Do what your competitors are not doing. What new features can you add? What additional service can you provide?

Create a Sales-Service Excellence Culture

Everyone who works in your company or showroom must recognize that that they, too, are "in sales," no matter what job role they may have. Each and every person in your company plays a strong role in developing your reputation, helping you obtain repeat business and establish high levels of customer loyalty. How's the culture in your company? If you haven't already done so, establish core values and involve your entire company in discussing ways each should demonstrate values that impress customers--honesty, integrity, respect, accountability, teamwork, health, safety, education, continuous improvement, environmental and social consciousness, and service excellence. Create "guiding principles" on how you will treat customers and each other, and make sure your entire team adheres to them.

Outshine Your Competition

Portray a higher level of service in every aspect of the business process. Listen more, talk less. Provide more knowledge, offer more ideas, and help them more than your competitors. Become the "go-to" person for help, and position yourself as an ongoing and valuable resource to customers. End each encounter with these words, "I really appreciate your business. Is there anything more I can do for you today?" Develop an obsession for turning out your best performance with every encounter, with every customer, every day!

There is no mystical, magical secret to sales success. It comes from hard work. But if there were a secret, it would be simple: Believe in your company, what you sell or offer, your people, and yourself. Then, make your customer feel that same belief.