

Set-up and the Salesman

By George Porter

A person I know works for a sewer cleaning company. He says that when people call for his services it is his job to send a crew out to fix the problem. None of his customers want any details about what was stopping up their sewer line, they just want it fixed. All he does is sell the jobs, he is not really interested in how they do it or any of the other gory details about the job. His customers are looking for results, not details.

Have you ever seen salesmen (or saleswomen) who have the same attitude about set-up? It is done by people with dirty hands and clothes who probably ride around in old trucks and that is just not part of their world. Have you been to a good car dealer lately? Every salesman knows all the parts of the vehicle, basically how they work, and what is the benefit to the customer. What it takes to make the car function is part of their training.

There are sales people and managers who's only knowledge of set-up is what it cost and cheaper is definitely better. Cheaper and faster both would be like a dream come true. It is as though this was some sort of necessary evil, a mandatory overhead that the customers demand. Then on top of that there is the state or federal government trying to make it more complicated all the time. If they could just sell the homes and let the customers deal with this mess themselves they couldn't be happier.

I could be wrong but I believe that set-up is a product just like the house. In fact the home is sort of a useless product if it doesn't get set-up. You can sell set-up, you can make a profit on set-up, you can generate more sales with set-up, you can literally destroy the completion with set-up, and it can put you out of business if you don't get it right. The days of the travel trailer type sales organization in the manufactured housing business are over. There are dealerships now that require all salesmen to work in the service department for at least 2 months before they will allow them to take customers. They find that this experience enables their sales staff to better help their customers make decisions about lot preparation, location, and pricing of the total package.

Customers are more knowledgeable these days and they want good answers to hard questions. The sales people of today had better be able to give in-depth answers to these questions. They had better be right or the entire organization suffers when they are not. At the least you wont get referrals and more sales, at the worst, the dealership gets sued. Teach your sales people about set-up before it is too late!