

## Why we don't wait on repair estimates

One thing we do that, at times, can upset a customer or make them feel pressured is to follow up promptly on service calls where we have given the customer a repair estimate and are waiting for the go ahead to proceed.

A customer will place a call for a piece of equipment and we go out and troubleshoot the problem and will give the customer the price of parts. Most of the time, the customer will say go ahead or tell us they don't want to spend the money right now.

If they don't want to move forward with the repair we will close the call out of our system, invoice and collect for the work performed.

If the customer wants to think it over, that is fine. We will give it a few days and follow up with a phone call. We aren't trying to push people into spending money. We are trying to move things along while the situation is current.

We want the situation to be fresh in our technician's mind so they don't reinvent the wheel and have to remember the circumstances or symptoms that lead them to the original diagnosis and repair.

Most importantly, when we give the estimate that is our estimate to repair the machine, as it is, at that moment. If a customer continues to operate a machine that is broken and needs repair parts for an extended amount of time, chances are that in a matter of time more is going to go wrong with the machine. You run a machine with bad parts interacting with good parts; eventually the good parts will go bad as well. The machine is just like a human body; it is interrelated system.

It all goes back to my example I give all the time. You have a leak. We tell you what we need to fix the leak. You wait too long and then the leak has caused a motor or electrical parts to go bad which is four or five times more expensive. You end up getting mad at us.

Our estimates are for right now. We can't guess what will go wrong if you keep on running a machine for another month. It doesn't even take a month, it can happen in days.

So if we give you a repair estimate, we will follow up and if you still need time to decide, we will give it a few more days and follow up again. If at that time, you are undecided, we have to tell you that we are closing out the original call and billing you for it.

If you decide later to move forward, we probably are going to charge you for a second trip, which we wouldn't have if you would have decided to move forward in a couple of days. Just as likely, depending on what the original problem was, we may tell you we need to come back and reevaluate the problem. This is for your protection and ours. Circumstances may have changed.

There is nothing worse than being told or anticipating a repair cost and moving forward and finding there is more wrong. This happens pretty regularly, when we know something is bad upstream and until we replace the part we don't know that something else is wrong downstream. We have enough experience to anticipate where this can happen and will often forewarn a customer as to the possibility, but when the reason this happens is due to delay, there isn't anyone happy.

We don't like unhappy surprises, they lead to unhappy customers. We like happy customers.

This is just another reality of the business life; decision making is the life blood of business ownership and management. Every so often you have to pull the trigger or nothing gets done. Sometimes we have to do some prodding for everyone's ultimate benefit.