

Chris's Corner: What we believe

After being in business for over 25 years, there are certain things that I, and my employees, have come to believe. I guess more accurately, things we have come to know.

Business in general, regardless of what business you're in, has to be about a value proposition. What is it that you are willing to give your customers in exchange for them providing you with an income?

I believe in win/win. You can't deal dishonestly with people or take advantage of people's lack of knowledge or experience and pull one over on them.

You have to take all of your knowledge and experience of what works and what doesn't work and what you would do, knowing what you know, and put yourself in their shoes. You can't sell someone something, which you wouldn't spend your own money on.

This means not overselling a customer a machine that is too big or too sophisticated for their needs. This means not selling a customer a repair if replacement is available for a better investment. You have to weigh every one's unique needs and requirements, including ours, and come up a proposition that benefits everyone. So that in getting \$100.00 in revenue we give more than \$100.00 in benefit, satisfaction and experience.

Sometimes the best solution is not to do anything at all. If a customer has a budget and has needs and we can't come up with a great solution, we will tell them, "I don't think we can help you." Maybe we will point them in a different direction, give them places to find used or rebuilt equipment or maybe a totally different way of achieving whatever it was they were trying to do. We have even sent customers to our competitors if it was in the customer's best interest.

Beyond win/win, I think we simply believe in helping people in whatever form that may take. You help someone out with no agenda in mind other than simply helping them. You might help yourself in the form of an equipment or parts sales or maybe a service call; you might not. Because you genuinely cared and genuinely tried, the person remembers you and your motivation and down the road they come back for more help or recommend you to someone else. And so it goes.

If you help enough people get what they need, help them solve their problems; it all comes back to you over time. That is the secret of any business.

Sometimes customers don't even know they have problems and you have to point them out. Then you have to provide a solution that solves that problem and gives them a solid return on

their investment. There always has to be a payback. People might spend money, just to spend money, but good businesses treat every expenditure as an investment.

Another belief we have is that we aren't ever afraid to say, "I don't know." If someone asks us a question and we aren't sure of the right answer, we don't hesitate to say, "we don't know, but we will research it and find out."

We are experts in our field, there is no question about that, but there isn't an expert that knows everything there is to know within their given field. The best in the world don't know it all and we aren't afraid to say, we don't know, we will find out.

Consider the alternative; blowing smoke, making it up and putting someone and their money at risk because we are too arrogant to say we don't know. At that point, you're not a business person, you're a phony, a huckster.

We also make mistakes. We do the wrong thing with the best intentions. We order the wrong part, we misdiagnose a problem or whatever. We break things when trying to fix other things. When we do, we say up front, we messed up, and we make it right.

Why do people refuse to admit mistakes? We are good, but we aren't perfect; we are human. We fix the problem and move on. No finger pointing, no blame, no excuses. It's easy.

So what we believe is to treat people honestly. Don't sell something or do something to a customer that knowing what you know you wouldn't do yourself. Be accountable. Be accessible. Admit mistakes and fix them. Have fun doing what we do.

I know this seems trite and cliché, but business is not a giant competition or battle of the wits. It sure doesn't have to be. Help people with the best of intentions and execution and they gladly will do business with you now and for years to come.