

Chris's Corner: A Real World Story

I have mentioned stories time and time again about purchasing equipment through internet dealerships versus traditional, local, brick and mortar businesses like mine or someone else, local to you.

Let me relate an experience to you that just recently happened. We had the director of maintenance at a large nursing home, call us back in November, 2014 to get a quote on a replacement dishwasher for the main kitchen at their facility. We explained for this type of purchase he would need to go through a local Hobart authorized dealer and then we would install the machine for the dealer.

I spoke with the dealer and discussed the operation and the current specifications, etc of the customer's existing machine. The dealer knew what model they wanted to sell, but they sent us down to the location to do a site survey and tighten up the specs on the machine. The dealer wanted everything voltage, phase, water supply specs, direction of operation, so he would get the exact machine to fit the customer's needs.

We get the dealer all the information he needs and he works up a quotation for a replacement machine and sends it to the customer. I work up a complete installation quotation, which includes removal of old machine, setting in place the new machine and doing all the water supply, drain and electrical connections for a turnkey install that was based upon what I knew the dealer would do on their end and also sent this to the maintenance director.

We didn't hear anything back for a few weeks, which isn't unusual, it usually has to go through a budgetary process and issue the purchase

order et cetera. One day the maintenance man calls me and tells me he found the exact unit on line for \$500.00 or so less, so he is dealing with XYZ Company, instead of the local dealer, but would I still install the unit? Of course, I say yes, that is my job and who am I to argue with a customer.

A couple of days later, the customer calls he has a problem. He didn't realize that the unit was shipping direct to them and they don't have a loading dock or fork lift, would I receive it for him. I say yes, but you will have to pay additional freight to reconsign the delivery. He says he has no choice and that they will pay the extra freight and pay us additional to receive the unit, deliver it to their location, unload, unbox and set in place; which is what the original local dealer would have done for them.

We receive the delivery and call the customer to set up the appointment for the installation. We load up the unit, take a service truck and go to the customer's location to do the install. The first thing we do is remove the old machine and demo the existing utility connections so that when we install the unit we have fresh drain lines, water supply and wiring.

Meanwhile, after us removing the old machine, the maintenance department goes about scrapping the unit, doing a very good job of breaking it up and down in short order. We move the new unit into place and unbox it. We notice something is terribly wrong in a few minutes. Our original specification called for a right to left machine, somehow the customer ended up with a left to right which will not work.

Phone calls are made, emails are reviewed and it comes to light that the online dealer didn't specify the correct machine. A correct machine will not be available for about a month. In the meantime, the customer is out of business.

We reloaded the wrong machine onto our delivery trailer and tried to get as much plumbing and electrical work done while we were there, so that when the correct machine did show up we would be ahead of the game, since the customer is already behind.

I suppose, I don't know for sure, that the online dealer had to reimburse the customer for using disposables until they got back in business. The dealer had to pay us to haul the wrong machine back, repackage it to send back, receive the correct machine and redeliver it.

All this because the customer thought they were saving a little money.

If they had dealt locally, with a dealership that has been in business for years, none of this would have happened.

Even if they would've gotten the right machine, they ended paying for freight and paying me to receive and deliver the unit, which the original dealer had included in their price. They wouldn't have tied up labor in junking the old machine, as the original dealer had included this in his price as well.

There is a difference between a traditional brick and mortar dealership and a dealer who merely processes orders. Be advised.