

Another example again:

This entry is going to be short and sweet, illustrating once again why you can't ignore small problems.

I had a national account recently place an overtime call at 11 pm at night. Their dishwasher wouldn't run at all. Upon investigation my technician discovered the machine had shorted out, blowing two fuses, three boards and an electrical contactor or contact switch. He didn't have the parts necessary to repair the machine that evening.

The following morning, I saw the call on the call board and began looking up the parts on our system for availability. We had all the parts in stock locally except one part. I logged into our national parts locator to search for the missing part and, fortunately, found one relatively close by; two hours away.

When my tech arrived I discussed the situation and the absolute necessity of the board we didn't have. It was a deal breaker. The machine wouldn't run without it.

I called the office who had the part and asked if I could have it. They had two in stock and said I could have it. This isn't rare, even if they only had one they would have given it to me, unless it was marked already for a customer. Most, if not all, independents would do the same.

I jumped in my car. Drove and got the part and returned to meet my technician at the customer site, so he could install the parts and get them running. It was pretty urgent in the customer's eyes, and ours too, as they had been inoperable and hadn't done the previous evening's dishes nor the breakfast dishes and were washing by hand.

Upon installing the parts and being able to run the machine, my technician discovered the root of the problem. The steel braided hose between the booster heater and rinse pump was leaking badly. More accurately, it was leaking to such a degree that it was spraying water all over the machine and dish room, sort of like a loose garden hose at full pressure spraying wildly across your driveway.

The water hit the control panel directly and while the cover to the panel is water resistant, it is not water proof. You can't spray water directly on it and hope the fuses, boards and electrical materials inside it will not get wet.

We couldn't let the machine run like this as it would be down again in a matter of minutes, if not hours, and we would be back at square one. This time we wouldn't have the parts at all and would have to order them and they would be down for another day.

We told the customer not to use the machine. We had found the hose, once again, at a nearby office and I would be going to get it and would be back in four hours. Another four hours lost to me and more importantly to the customer.

In summation, after getting the hose the customer was fully back in business. They were down for almost 24 hours.

My technician questioned both the manager and the dish room employees about the leak. Didn't they notice water was spraying all over the place? Didn't they realize that spraying on the control panel wasn't good for the machine? The answer was they thought it was normal, even though it never had done it before.

Lesson, if they would have called when the hose first leaked, we could have taken care of it in about one hour sum total with no down time at all. None.

The irony of it, too, is that the machine is under a service contract. All parts, labor and travel charges are covered by the contract. It would have cost the store and the company nothing to take care of the problem. Instead they were out of business for practically a day by choosing to ignore an obvious problem.

TAKE CARE OF SMALL PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY BECOME BIG ONES! FOR THE MILLIONTH TIME.