

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PRODUCT REPRESENTATIVE?

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- **BE PRESENT.** It sounds simple enough, but it is worth saying. The old out of sight, out of mind saying applies. Make an effort to SEE your customers. It reminds them that you care.
- **TIMELY RESPONSES.** We live in a Pizza Hut and Amazon world where everyone wants it now. That means that patience is shorter than ever. If a jobsite visit is needed, a technical letter is required, or perhaps a solution to an issue, respond within an acceptable timeframe...which normally means "immediately".
- **FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW THROUGH.** If some additional time and information is required of you, make sure that you get what is needed to the person that needs it, without being reminded. Do what you say you are going to do, and do it when you say you are going to do it by.
- **KNOW YOUR PRODUCTS.** It is imperative that you know your product lines and systems like the back of your hand. Lack of knowledge will kill your credibility. And while we are ok with hearing "let me check and get back to you", don't make that a normal response.
- **KNOW YOUR COMPETITION.** You need to know your represented products and systems, and as importantly you also need to have strong knowledge of your competitor's products and systems. Often times we need to know what differentiates you, or what makes you the better choice. And avoid bashing your competition...it lacks professionalism when you do.
- **KNOW THE CODE!** Especially in today's world. Code interpretation and compliance with testing standards are critical components in determining what products and systems are selected. When you know the codes and standards, it can be a great help in guiding us to make those decisions. This demonstrates your expertise.
- **GET ALONG WITH OUR CUSTOMERS.** It is very important to us that there is a harmonious balance on the jobsite. We need to protect ourselves and ensure jobsite conditions match up to manufacturer requirements and recommendations. But please don't go to the site with a guns-a-blazing, perfect-world mindset. This puts our general contractors on the defensive and strains our relationship. Remember, we have to be on that jobsite every day, and hope to do more business with our customer.
- **BE DISCREET.** We are all human beings, which means we are going to make mistakes. We wish for all of our installations to be perfect. But when they are not, pull us to the side to discuss the issues and corrective measures. Your discretion will be rewarded. If you publicly call me out in front of my customer, architect, or consultant, I can assure you that your products and services won't be needed on future projects.
- **DETAILED AND PRECISE REPORTS.** Jobsite observation reports or meeting follow up reports are common place these days. Make sure these reports have the correct information, and that they say what is needed. I realize in the litigious world we live in that we can be somewhat restricted in what legal teams will allow, but figure it out. Wishy-washy wording such as "appears" and "should" are despised by subcontractors and general contractors alike. We want direct answers...is it installed per manufacturer's guidelines, will it perform as intended, and is it warrantable? Yes or No!
- **EASY TO DO BUSINESS WITH.** Make it easy to do business with. If there is an aspect at your company that makes it difficult, find a way to overcome it. If your warranty application is arduous, make it a point to assist your customers in filling them out. If you, or your company, forces your customer to do extra work to do business together, know that you may lose a job and worse, a customer.
- **EXPERIENCE HELPS.** It is helpful, but not required, if you have experience. Most manufacturers do a great job training their new personnel. But if you have installed these systems in your previous career, that goes a long way. We have a connection, and you can relate to what we are going through on a jobsite. It matters.