

>A SUPERIOR LEVEL OF SERVICE

BY CHARLIE GREER

The Residential Replacement Sales Call: Part 5

Charlie is taking this entire year to cover his over-the-top procedure he follows when running residential replacement sales calls. This is his fifth installment.

The Warm-up

You're supposed to try to transition to the kitchen table where you and the prospect can get to know each other a little better, but don't stand in the doorway and try to "warm them up." People don't like that. Here's a much more subtle transition.

Where to go and how to get there:

After you get the initial introductions out of the way, your options are to go to the equipment, the thermostat, or the kitchen table.

Whichever you choose, it's important that you be decisive. It must be apparent right off the bat that:

- You've done this before
- You have a system and a procedure to follow
- Things can be handed over to you and that you can take care of the without the homeowner having to stand over you and "supervise."

Say: "I usually start at the thermostat." They then usually lead you to it.

Questions:

People can get a little antsy when you start asking questions. Having a pre-printed questionnaire lets them know you only have a few questions to ask. The questions I ask are in this article.

Eyeball the temperature setting on the thermostat, then ask: "Is this where you normally keep your thermostat set this time of year?"



A pre-printed questionnaire lets them know you only have a few to questions to ask.

Since people have a terrible time making commitments, they usually get all nervous and say, "I don't know. What's it set at?"

I'll tell them the temperature setting. They'll try to read my face to determine what the correct answer is, and eventually answer.

I'll then ask what setting they keep it on during the opposite time of year. Once again, they'll be indecisive.

None of this surprises me. Not many people have ever taken a course on effective decision-making, yet effective decision-

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making is one of the most important skills we can possess. Most people can barely make up their minds where they want to go for lunch, and when they get there, what they want to eat. In an hour, I'm going to be asking them to decide on a home comfort system costing \$8,000 or more. If they can't even commit to telling me on what temperature setting they keep their thermostat, they're going to need to practice making decisions. I'm going to have to ask them a bunch of very easy questions that lead up to a sale.

Additional questions:

- "Is it okay if I turn the fan on?" (I then stand there and listen to how it sounds.)
- "Do you mind if I ask how long you've lived here?"
- "Are there any serious, concrete, already scheduled plans on moving soon?"
- "Are there any serious, concrete plans for a large room addition that have already been drawn, a contractor been hired, and scheduled, that I should know about? (If you don't ask it in that manner, they'll decide right on the spot that they want a room addition just because you brought it up and planted the seed.)
- "Is it alright if I keep a record of this conversation so if you call me three or four years from now, I'll have a record of everything that was said and know all about you? (This question lets them know that I'm not pushy or in any big hurry to get a decision out of them; that I still plan on being available to replace their equipment years from now, whenever they are ready.)

The transition:

After trying to write down their answers while balancing my clipboard on my arm and hang onto my tape measure and flashlight, I ask, "Can we sit down for a moment and I'll just get a little more preliminary information from you, then I'll take a look at your equipment and the installation?"

After you sit down at the kitchen table and go through the rest of your questions, there's a good chance you and the prospect will find some area of common interest and you can get to know each other a little.

The rest of the questions:

- Which is the hardest room to cool in the summer? The winter?
- Does anyone in the home suffer from allergies? If so, what are you doing to remove as much airborne allergens and contaminants as possible?
- Do you have high utility bills?
- Is noise an issue for you?
- Were there any improvements you want to attain with your new home comfort system?

Don't belabor any one question, and don't do any little mini-sales pitches as you go along. Just ask questions and record their answers.