



SATELLITE BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

Quality Control

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■ **How often do you inspect the work done by your employees or contractors? All good managers set expectations for the folks they are overseeing and then ensure that these folks are achieving them. Many employers will manage their sales force by monitoring their calls and providing coaching and make sure they are setting the proper expectations for the customer.**

It is also not uncommon for a retailer to call the customer to ask how they are enjoying their system. However, few take the extra step of making sure that the individual doing the installation is meeting the expectations that have been set forth.

If you are not conducting quality control inspections on your installers (employee and contractor) then you are not properly managing your business. A quality control inspection will provide a number of benefits such as fewer service calls, reduced charge backs, and more satisfied customers along with increased referrals. Unless you personally do all of your sales and installations you need to be conducting QC's. A quality control inspection takes very little time, however, if done thoroughly and on a consistent basis it will provide substantial dividends.

A study in 2004 indicated that 45% of all new customers are generated by referral, so it is even more important to verify that those working for you are doing the job that you have hired them to do. Given the cost of acquiring new customers it is imperative that you make every effort to ensure your customers are satisfied and see your organization in a positive light.

First and foremost conducting a quality control inspection will allow you to see the type of work being done by the technician. You should have a checklist that indicates what you are looking for (the tech should be given the same list indicating what you expect when they do an installation). When you go on the QC check to ensure that everything that you asked the tech to do was done properly, this includes use of approved materials, proper dish mounting, grounding etc. If this work is substandard or the proper materials have not been used, you can correct it or send the tech back out to make it right. A majority of service calls and disconnects are caused by inferior workmanship or materials so this simple task can save you a lot of money. Also these inspections can provide an opportunity to recognize a tech that did a great job and can be trusted to handle more complex installs.



The other benefit of the quality control inspection is that it allows you to show your customers that you care about them and their satisfaction. While many retailers call a customer after the sale, nothing beats speaking to a customer directly and telling them that you stopped by to ensure that their installation was done properly. This also presents a perfect opportunity to ask the customer for a referral or sell them additional products or services.

While it would be ideal that you would personally inspect every installation, it is not practical. You only need to QC a small percentage of your company's installs to get results. QC's do not take very long and you can conduct 10-15 per day depending on your market. Focus on new technicians and those who have previously failed inspections, inspecting 2 or 3 of their jobs will give you a good indication of the work they do. If they are not meeting your expectations then take corrective action and plan to QC them again in the future. If you have 10 or more techs you should spend one or 2 days a month checking their work, this is very little time when you consider how much you spend managing the rest of your business.

If you have a larger company with many field technicians then you may need to hire someone to conduct the QC's, perhaps this is the installation supervisors job. Many large installation firms have a group of field operations staff whose primary objective is ensuring quality installations. More and more companies are hiring personnel to QC installations; the platforms also have dedicated staff for this purpose. These organizations see the need to manage all aspects of their business.

There are also companies that out source this work for you. This may be an option if you are using a 3rd party installation network throughout the country. However, if you are going to outsource the QC be sure to manage this process also. Set the expectations, inspection criteria and reporting requirements to ensure you are getting the information you need ensure the work is being done correctly.

Lastly, remember if you are subcontracting work from someone then be sure that the work you do will meet their expectations. They may inspect your work and hold you accountable for an improper installation.

In closing remember matter what size your organization is, that it is not just your money that is at risk if there is shoddy workmanship or a bad customer experience. It is also the reputation of you and your company.

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