

Creating a Customer Loyalty Program that Really Works

- 1. Train employees, and empower them to do it right the first time. Training and retraining your employees is the best way to retain happy customers.**

At McAfee, we empower our employees and coworkers to use their creativity and innovation through many different avenues such as meetings, sharing ideas and trying new methods. This accomplishes two important things: It makes people feel good about themselves and makes them feel good about what they're accomplishing. In return, the training and time you spend with them setting company expectations translates to excellent customer service because everyone is on the same page.

- 2. Set performance standards and inspect what you expect. What gets measured gets done. Let all employees know exactly what they must do to provide superior customer service.**

Your team will only do what they see you do. If you expect them to be on time, be concerned with safety, show respect to customers and have integrity, then you should do all of these. Like it or not, you are the leader and the example you set is being watched and copied by everyone in your company. When we do what we say we will do, we build trust and confidence. Managers will make mistakes just as leaders do, but they will also learn from them and become better managers. Know what your team expects, let them know what you expect and your company will experience much success.

- 3. Understand your competition, and know the cost of losing a customer. Beyond products and services, understand what kind of customer service your competition provides. In addition, ensure that all employees know the lifetime value of a customer; the cost of losing even ONE and the effects that loss can have on your business.**

Knowing the competition and treating them fairly is good business. Wanting to win and get ahead of the competition is good too; it energizes our inner drive toward constant improvement and success. We tend to dislike losing. At McAfee, we make customer satisfaction our number one priority. That is why our customers keep coming back. We understand the value of EVERY customer and that positive feedback generally translates to referrals to friends and family members. Integrity, trust and following through on what we say we are going to do go a long way to keeping our customers satisfied and keeping our competition at bay.

- 4. Market your service program and don't make customers pay for service. Use your marketing strategy to communicate that you provide superior customer service. Whenever possible, pay for everything related to customer service (e.g., warranty returns, added gas charges, etc.) Chances are that if you don't, your competition will.**

In the HVAC business, reacting quickly and responding to a customer's needs are imperative for success. At McAfee, the phone must never ring more than twice before it's answered. Our first call has a guaranteed arrival time of 8 a.m., and every customer receives a courtesy call letting him or her know we are on the way. A "no heat" or "no cool" call is put at the top of the list and takes priority over all others. We gain nothing by overcharging a customer,

gouging our prices or taking advantage of someone. We exist for the customer and not because of the customer. Most of our company decisions - like launching the “8 to 8 at the same great rate” program - have paid off because we added a convenience for the customer, not the other way around.

5. Go the extra mile. When customers want something from you, give it to them. Then, do something extra!

Through the years, the home improvement and HVAC industries have not had the best reputation. There are many business owners that cannot understand how you “get ahead” by being on the up and up with customers. I feel the opposite. Several years ago, we formed the “McAfee Way.” Our “way” is very simple and how we prefer to do business. It sets us apart from our competition and gives our customers the service they deserve. For example, we wear shoe protectors into every home, maintain constant communication regarding appointment times, park our vehicles on the street instead of the driveway and leave the job cleaner than we found it. But I always like to continually look for new and improved ways to go the extra mile – and base many of my decisions on customer feedback. If you are not constantly looking for ways to improve your business, then you are not doing your job.