

Procedure: *The “Ice-breaker”*

Purpose: This procedure will get your relationship with the customer off to a good start.

Overview: Right after you’ve introduced yourself to the homeowner an awkward pause can develop if you’re not careful. You wait for the homeowner to do something, who of course doesn’t know what to do and waits on you! Value Added Service teaches us to always make things s-m-o-o-t-h for the customer and awkward pauses aren’t smooth!

Now of course our technicians could say, “*Get out of the way, Mrs. Jones. I’ve got work to do!*” and shoulder her out of the way. There has to be a better way ...

### Steps:

**1. Have some fun-** Think for a moment about the emotions your customer experiences as she meets you for the first time. Not a pretty picture, is it? Suspicion, distrust, hostility ... and of course, FEAR! How do you deal with it? Break the ice, in a light hearted manner!

(Remember, your customer doesn’t have these negative feelings toward you personally. How can she? She doesn’t even know you yet! But instead the homeowner is reacting with society’s generally negative attitude toward home services in general and carpet cleaners and restoration technicians in specific!)

Spend a few minutes with the customer now to break down their emotional barriers and you’ll reap some big rewards down the road. This scripted out “*getting to know you*” sequence is a perfect Value Added example of the old saying, “*pay me now ... or pay me later.*”

**A. Introduce yourself again-** That’s right, if appropriate, introduce yourself to the kids, the dog, the cat, etc. People love their children and their pets (we’re not sure which group is more highly valued!) more than anything else. So go ahead, admire them and make friends with the kids and the dog! Trust us. You’ll have fun!

1. A SPECIAL CAUTION HERE: Do NOT touch your customer’s children, unless you shake their hand with their parents present. We live in a sick society and sadly some children have been influenced by the constant barrage of warnings about child molesters. All it takes is one false accusation to ruin your life forever.

NOTE: Try to avoid being alone in the same room for any length of time with the customer’s minor child. And in the unlikely event of a customer’s minor child inviting you to start working in the home without the homeowner present call the office for instructions before starting work.

2. Really want to have some fun? Get a dog biscuit out of the box that is in each truck’s glove compartment and after asking permission from the owner, give it to the pooch. (But remember, always ask permission to do anything with customer’s pets.)

**B. Make a “Sincere Comment”-** Next to their kids and pets, customers are proudest of their home. So as you arrive at the home, be looking for something that you can honestly praise or mention. Here’s some ideas:

1. The yard or garden.
2. The house itself.
3. The neighborhood.

4. Customer's cars and their condition.
5. Other possessions you see that can betray an interest of the client.
6. Neighbors you've worked for in the past.

CAUTION: Be careful about slipping into gossip. The private matters of our customers should stay private.

**2. Refer to clipboard-** Of course, you can't stand and chat with the customer all day long. It's time to get some work done! It may be tempting once again to mutter under your breath and shoulder your customer out of the way, but there is a better way...

**A. Look down at your clipboard and say, "I see we're supposed to ..."** It's incredible, but when you say this it puts your customer "on track" in a tactful manner and almost like magic the door will swing open!

**3. Lay down your door mat-** So far in this script you've given a lot of "Unspoken Answers" to your customer's "Unspoken Questions". But the client still has other question shouting away in her mind huge question is ...

**A. "Are they going to track in dirt?"-** Now you can answer this Unspoken Question by verbally stating, "We're going to be real careful not to track in dirt." Or you can SHOW the customer how careful you're going to be by unrolling your Customer Door Mat.

**B. The Customer Door Mat is non-negotiable-** We feel so strongly that the consistent use of Customer Door Mats is essential non use at any residence is subject to discipline. Please check your Company Employee Manual for details.

**C. After all this work, don't forget to USE the door mat-** The Customer Door Mat is for more than just "show." Use it carefully. If your shoes are seriously caked with mud use the pressure gun from the truck mount to spray clean them before entering the house. Or if possible, take your shoes off or use shoe covers.

NOTE: When you unroll your doormat you'll find a bottle of our Free Lifetime Replacement Carpet Spotter. Just keep it with you because in a minute you'll use it in your Customer Interview segment

CAUTION: We talk a lot in this step about showing care and concern. These feelings are tough to fake. If you really and truly don't like our customers, please talk to your supervisor and we'll try and find you a non-customer contact position. Nothing is more important as a Carpet Cleaning/Restoration Technician than your ability to make friends out of our clients, or in other words- Cheerleaders!