



Brush Strokes



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Say 'No' With Finesse!

Everyone in the industry faces the same dilemma on a daily basis whether customers contact them via telephone, walk in to their store, or correspond in writing. It is not driven by malice or deceit. Most often it is simply the natural progression of the sales and service process. The transaction is moving ahead smoothly, and then the customer stops to ask a question about a product, service or company policy. Then anxiety builds up inside. You would prefer to say "Yes.", or "Certainly, this product can do that.", or "I can start next week." But you will not utter any of those phrases today because you must speak the truth. And the truthful answers are "No.", or "I am sorry, but this product does not do that.", or "I can not start until next month."

The quandary of which I write is about how to say "No." Saying "No" might make you feel unpopular or appear like a killjoy. Conveying seemingly bad news to someone else might bring to an end all of the goodwill that you have been creating while attempting to negotiate a sale or provide a service. Regardless of how a person might feel personally about having to say "No" to a customer, sometimes the answer must be "No." What separates the seasoned professionals from amateurs in business are three distinct behaviors: (1) knowing when to say "No", (2) knowing why to say "No" and, (3) knowing how to say "No."

The first key behavior involves a sense of timing and good listening skills. Many people have an instinctual sense when dealing with a customer that they must respond in the negative. This "sixth sense" triggers our response to provide an immediate answer. Our reply is communicated without any pause whatsoever on the heels of the customer inquiry. This is not an acceptable reaction since timing is a vital communication skill.

Instead, you should allow yourself a moment or two to formulate a qualifying question in order to ascertain the importance of the criteria. As an

example, if a customer were to ask "Can you start my project next week?" you might qualify your answer by saying "If we started next month, would that be OK?" Your question qualifies the criteria required to achieve customer satisfaction. Should the customer answer "Yes", then you have the flexibility to start next month. In this illustration, the technical answer to the question was "No". However, with a pause, and some time to formulate a rational response – and a bit of finesse - a much more creative answer surfaced.

There will be instances when the consequences of doing what a customer requests will outweigh any benefits. One such case might arise when you risk the stability of your staff or fulfillment system in order to satisfy the request of a specific customer. In said circumstance, it is important that the customer understands why you can not carry out their request.

The concept of knowing how to say "No" begins with an adherence to the fundamental principle of saying what you CAN do rather than what you CAN NOT do. When you convey what you can do, it keeps the proverbial door open so that the dialogue with the customer so that they may continue with their business relationship. However, when you resort to what you can not do, it threatens to limit future dialogue as well a business relationship.

When it comes to keeping customers satisfied and the door of business opportunities open, a pause and a creative response may make all the difference.

*About the author: Steve Coscia, President of Coscia Communications, assists HVACR companies in achieving world-class service status. He is the author of the **HVAC Customer Service Handbook**. A best selling author, columnist, 20-year customer service practitioner and telephone skills specialist, Steve presents keynote speeches and facilitates HVACR customer service workshops. To learn more about Coscia Communications go to www.telestress.com or contact Steve Coscia at 610-853-9836 or steve@coscia.com.*

You are invited to the monthly meeting of the

PDCA Lincoln State Council

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, 6:30 p.m. (Networking @ 6:00 p.m.)

Meeting Location: Crave Restaurant ~ 1204 W. Rand Road ~ Arlington Heights



Monthly Meetings Typically Feature:

- Informative Programs
- Beneficial Networking
- "Joker Jackpot" Raffle
- Associate Discounts/Specials
- Dinner Give-Aways

The Investment of Employee Training

In most companies, training of employees is seen as an "expense" when really, if done correctly, it is an investment in your company's future success. Training arms your employees with needed professional and technical skills and also shows that you are invested in them. This helps keep workers motivated and involved.

Join Paul Cook from Painters USA who is Certified as a Core Curriculum & Painting Instructor with the National Center for Construction Education & Research. Paul offers 3-4 year training programs for his painters. The painters receive a certificate each year and it is recorded in a national database.

Paul will guide you through setting up training systems tailored for your company, regardless of size.

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Endorsed ConsensusDOCS Soon to be Released

On Friday, September 28, 2007 a diverse group of 20 construction associations representing designers, owners, contractors, subcontractors and sureties launched **ConsensusDOCS**, more than 70 collaboratively drafted construction contracts.

"PDCA was among the subcontractor groups that collaborated in the production of the **ConsensusDOCS**. The most important aspect of the **ConsensusDOCS** is that they serve no master, they are designed to be fair and equitable and also serve best industry practices," said Dr. Ian R. Horen, CAE, PDCA CEO. On August 17, 2007, the PDCA Board of Directors fully endorsed the **ConsensusDOCS**, and decided not to endorse any further the AIA model Construction Contract.

The release of **ConsensusDOCS** represents the first time that broad industry representation has had an equal voice in collaboratively drafting construction contracts. The unprecedented buy-in for these contracts reflects a genuine effort to identify and utilize best practices to better the

industry.

ConsensusDOCS is unique because each document was drafted to reflect the project's best interest, rather than a single party interest. These cutting-edge contracts and forms address all project delivery methods from design-bid-build through a new innovative collaborative agreement, as well as emerging issues such as electronic communications and building information modeling.

For a complete list of the member organizations participating in **ConsensusDOCS**, more information or to purchase and download the documents, visit www.ConsensusDOCS.org or click on the **ConsensusDOCS** logo on the PDCA homepage (www.pdca.org).

We are proud to announce that we are able to offer PDCA members a discount on the **ConsensusDOCS**. Please reference the code "PDCA 200" to receive your discount.

PPG Pledges \$15,000 to PDCA Education

The **PPG Industries** has committed \$15,000 to the PDCA Education Program over the next three years. The announcement was made by Ron Raley, Marketing Director PPG Industries/Stores.

Ron Raley said, "PPG Architectural Coatings (Pittsburgh Paints, Porter Paints, PPG Amerson Protective & Marine Coatings brands) supports the importance of contractor education and its value and contributions to meeting the highest professional and industry standards. We look forward to working together on delivering this educational opportunity to enhance your business success."

PDCA CEO President David E. Siegner stated, "PDCA's education and accreditation initiative continues to gain momentum and it is now truly an industry program. Having **PPG Industries** add their support is a significant advancement to contractor education and ultimately consumer awareness of the accredited contractor."

PPG Industries is a leader in its markets; is a streamlined, efficient manufacturer; and operates on the leading edge of new technologies and solutions. It is our vision to become the world's leading coatings and specialty products and services company, serving customers in construction,

consumer products, industrial and transportation markets and aftermarkets. PPG has 125 manufacturing facilities and equity affiliates in more than 20 countries around the globe.

Accepting the pledge; Dr. Ian R. Horen, PDCA CEO, said, "PPG is one of the oldest and among the most respected paint manufacturers in the U.S. We are very pleased that PPG has determined that an investment in PDCA member education is worthwhile. We extend a grateful thanks to PPG for its trust and confidence in PDCA."



Are You Using the (Correct) PDCA Logo?

Is the PDCA logo on everything you use for your business—trucks, letterhead, brochures, promotional items? If you are using a "old" PDCA logo, the new one must be in place by May, 2007.

Using the PDCA logo not only identifies you as a member of our association, but it heightens consumer awareness and encourages them to hire a PDCA member, thus bringing you more business.

Make sure to go to the members only section of www.pdca.org and download the new PDCA logo today!

Save the Date! PACE 2008

PACE 2008

THE POWER OF PAINT + COATINGS
January 27 – January 30
 LA CONVENTION CENTER | LOS ANGELES, CA

WWW.PACE2008.COM

Watch *Brush Strokes* for schedule and PACE 2008 features as they become available!

ACCREDITED
PDCA
 CONTRACTOR

A key to growing your business is growing your business' credibility. Don't forget to include "Earn PDCA Accreditation" in your goal setting for 2007! Call the PDCA office today for more info! 847-298-9796.



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Your "Partner in Profit"

We're on the Web!
www.lincolnpdca.com
www.pdca.org

Lincoln State Council PDCA—2007 Board of Directors

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CHECK OUT PDCA'S WEEKLY
POLL AND OTHER MEMBER
RESOURCES AT

WWW.PDCA.ORG.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday, October 10, 2007
NO MEETING due to other industry events.

Wednesday, November 14, 2007
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Setting up Training Systems

Wednesday, December 12, 2007
HOLIDAY PARTY
Free food!

Wednesday, January 9, 2008
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
"Don't Hold Your Company Back"

Wednesday, February 13, 2008
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
How do You Successfully Diversify Your Business?

Wednesday, March 12, 2008
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
COPs

Wednesday, April 9, 2008
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
"The Secret to Success in the Painting Industry"

Wednesday, May 14, 2008
MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Establishing Recurring Sources of Revenue

All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held at Crave Restaurant, 1204 W. Rand Road, Arlington Heights (north of Palatine Road, South of Rte. 53). Networking begins at 6:00 p.m. and dinner/program at 6:30 p.m. Order off the menu and you pay only for what you eat and/or drink!

