

Four Ways to Grow Your Commercial HVAC System Cleaning & Restoration Business

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For DUCTALES magazine



Introduction

You've started your commercial HVAC system cleaning and restoration business and you work hard to establish it and make it grow. After your initial success and growth your sales level out or plateau. You just can't seem to get more sales out of your current business plan and practices. Now is a good time to step back and evaluate your business plan and practices to see:

- What you can do better?
- How can you better serve your customers?
- How can your customers better serve your goals?
- What new or different growth options are available for you?

Of course you don't have to wait until your sales plateau to go through this process. You can do it annually or every other year whatever fits your needs best. This article

will examine four ways you can grow your commercial HVAC system cleaning business.

1. Develop stronger relationships with your existing customers.
2. Expand your marketing to reach a larger audience and make a stronger impression on existing customers.
3. Network with other trades that can give you more business.
4. Expand your service offering to better serve your existing customers and help bring in new customers.



1. Develop a stronger relationship with your existing customers

Your existing customers are your biggest asset. How can you maximize the benefits of this relationship?

The most important thing you can do to develop a strong relationship with your customers is to do a great job every time.

Many people do good work and there is nothing wrong with good work. You need to aim higher so your customers think the world of you and the service you provided.

- Do the obvious like:
- Be on time
- Be courteous
- Be neat
- Treat your customers' building like it was your grandmothers home.
- Clean up after yourself.

Take that extra step and:

- Do a great cleaning job
- Take before and after photos to prove your quality
- Do something extra
- Leave them with the impression that you are the best HVAC system cleaning contractor in town

After doing a great job another way to help develop that strong relationship with your customer is to conduct a Customer Satisfaction Survey after every job. A survey can provide valuable information, completes the sales cycle and is part of good customer service.

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This survey should be short and to the point. It could be mailed, faxed or even completed over the phone. It gives your customer the opportunity to give you feedback on your completed project plus it can measure their willingness to refer you and/or give you a testimonial..

Sample Survey:

1. How did you hear about (Company Name) and our services?

- Environmental Consultant:
- Mechanical Contractor:
- Mechanical Engineer:
- Past Customer.
- Web Site.
- Yellow Pages.
- Other: _____

2. How did you know this type of service was needed?

- Occupant complaint.
- Visually apparent
- Smoke/fire damage.
- Recommended by Environmental Consultant
- Recommended by Mechanical Contractor
- Recommended by Mechanical Engineer
- Recommended by Facility Manager
- Other _____

3. What criteria were used to have this type of service done?

- Employee comfort.
- Part of maintenance schedule.
- Improve HVAC system performance
- Improve IAQ/safety of building
- Smoke/fire damage.
- Other: _____

4. When was the last time you had this type of service done at this facility?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years.
- More than 5 years
- Never

5. How do you view the quality of our service?

- Exceeds expectations
- Meets expectations
- Does not meet expectations

6. What condition was the work area left in compared to before the project was started?

- Better condition
- No noticeable difference
- Items out of place.
- Additional clean up needed.

7. Have you ever had this type of service done by another contractor?

- yes
- no

8. How does our service compare?

- Better
- No difference
- Not as good

9. Would you recommend our company's service?

- yes
- no

10. Would you be willing to give a short testimonial?

- yes (we'll contact you later)
- no

If you keep track of the survey results over time you can identify trends like:

- How are customers finding out about you?
- What causes the service to be needed in the first place?
- How is the quality of your work?
- How do you compare against your competitors?
- Would they refer you to someone else?

You can use the answers to questions 1 - 4 to help guide your marketing efforts. You can share the answers to questions 5 - 9 with your field technicians so they can see how important their work is to your companies' success. If there was a problem on the job that you never heard about it may come out during the survey. You can then try to solve the problem before it gets any bigger. How you handle problems have a great impact on your customer satisfaction level.



2. Expand and strengthen your marketing to reach a larger audience and make a stronger impression.

Step back and examine your marketing efforts. Look at everything you currently do and see if you can improve it in some way.

- Are you contacting all the trades and professions that can impact your business on a regular basis?
- Are you getting the most out of your marketing efforts?
- Are there new things you can do that you have never done before?

Listed below are some of the ways you can get your marketing message out to your audience:

- Company uniforms
- Company capabilities information
- Customer satisfaction survey
- Testimonials
- Newsletters
- Business forms (estimates, invoices, etc)
- Direct mail flyers
- Yellow pages
- Web site
- Articles (before and after cleaning, benefits of cleaning, solving a problem, etc)
- Participate in local organizations (ASHREA, BOMA, Hospital Engineers, etc)

- Local trade shows sponsored by the local associations



3. Network with other trades that can give you more business.

You can increase your business by networking with other trades that can hire you directly or as a subcontractor to provide their HVAC system cleaning services. Listed below are different audiences that can affect your business and that you should be marketing too:

- Environmental Consultants (can determine cleaning specifications and can hire you as a sub contractor)
- Mechanical Engineers (can determine cleaning specifications)
- Mechanical Contractors (can hire you as a subcontractor)
- Fire/Water Restoration Contractors (can hire you as a subcontractor)
- Mold Remediation Contractors (can hire you as a subcontractor)
- General or Asbestos Contractor (can hire you as a subcontractor)
- Air Balancing Contractor (can refer you)
- Hospital/Medical Facilities (can hire you)
- Schools/Universities (can hire you)
- Past Customers (they already trust you and should be more than willing to hire you again)

A periodic newsletter is an easy way to keep your name in front of these different groups. Not all of these audiences will be of equal value to you so you will need to prioritize your marketing efforts to get the best value for your marketing dollar.



4. Expand your service offering to better serve your existing customers and help bring in new customers.

Look at your current service offering. Are there things you can add to your HVAC system cleaning service that can make you more valuable to your customers? Are there services you could add that would set you apart from your competition? Listed below is a list of some things you may want to consider if you are not already offering them:

- Coating mechanical insulation after you have cleaned it.
- Replacing damaged insulation in air handlers, rooftops and plenums with closed cell insulation.
- Inspection and documentation services.
- UV lighting solutions.
- Duct leakage testing and then duct sealing solutions.
- Mold remediation services.
- Kitchen hood/exhaust system cleaning.

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- HVAC system preventative maintenance programs.
 - Surface cleaning (non HVAC)
 - Building commissioning
 - Others

Expanding your service offering will enable you to better serve your existing customers, attract new customers, increase your revenues and help set you apart from your competition.

Summary

The goal of this article is to help you move past that sales plateau or avoid it all together. It's a challenging goal that most business face at one time or another. Hopefully you can apply some of these suggestions.

If you have any questions please contact Peter Haugen at 952-808-1616 or phaugen@vacsysint.com.

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