

Frequently Asked Questions

BY GARRY UPTON

Over the course of 2006, this space will identify opportunities within customers' homes that you may not have observed in the past. The opportunities are based on a recent homeowner survey conducted by Decision Analyst, Inc.

This Month's FAQ (part 1): *My boss told me to listen more and be more observant in the home. What am I supposed to look for? What am I listening for? Why is this important?*

Large numbers of homeowners rely on their HVAC contractor's home comfort advice. While one-half say they're pleased with their heating and cooling system, 8 in 10 would like something added, or changed. Often they're unaware that their central system, when properly built and accessorized, adds to their comfort and the value of their home.

When on a call, here are some things to look for:

■ **Check the air delivery system.**


More than on-half of all homes have air distribution problems. Look for signs

that the homeowner is compensating for a poor central delivery system.

- 3 homeowners in 50 add a window unit or two.
- 1 in 5 homes with a central furnace will include at least one working portable space heater.
- 1 in 5 homes have portable humidifiers; almost as many have portable dehumidifiers.
- Air purifiers are becoming the rage. Today, 4 in every 25 homes includes one.
- **Observe living styles** related to the system in the house.
- Look for too much dust in a well-maintained home.
- Identify the ages of the residents. Are there elderly in the home?
- Check the home for signs of respirator use or oxygen tanks.

- Note the presence of pets.

- **Look for DIY repairs.** Three-fourths of your customers have completed a do-it-yourself project, many of which dealt with improving their home's energy efficiency.
- 3 in 10 added weather stripping/caulking.
- 4 in 25 installed energy efficient windows.
- 6% added storm windows.
- As many added/replaced insulation.
- 1 in 10 had their ducts sealed.

Next month we'll continue answering this question by addressing testing, identifying opportunities, and more. 

Garry Upton of Decision Analyst, Inc. shares his insights and interpretations of a study of 19,000 homeowners and probes what they look for in HVAC contractors. To learn more about this study, or purchase it, you can contact Garry at gupton@decisionanalyst.com.