

FAQ

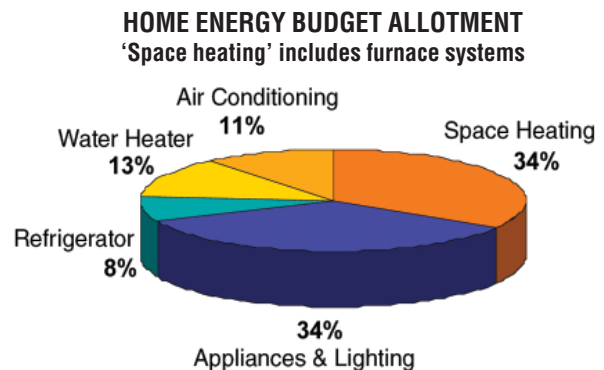
BY GARRY UPTON

Over the course of 2008, 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.

It's February: cold, wet, and time for emergency calls in the Northern U.S. Many furnaces will need immediate replacement, and won't have been budgeted by homeowners.

Our research shows many contractors often suggest the standard efficiency product (to keep the first cost down), which often cuts into their profit margins, to help with the emergency installation. That's commendable, and makes a strong statement about their compassion and sense of community, and makes everyone proud to be associated with the HVAC industry. However, consider the following facts:

Furnaces last an average of 20 years; energy costs are high, and going higher, with no end in sight; the cost to heat and cool the average home is about half the energy used in the home,



Resources: 2006 American Home Comfort Study; Building Energy Data Book 2005 (U.S. DOE); Energy Prices, 1980-2030 (2006 dollars per million Btu) 2008 DOE Annual Energy Outlook.

thus half the energy bill; the number one request homeowners have for their HVAC system is that it be more energy efficient; and, those with the lowest income have the greatest need for low energy bills. Options to help emergency customers with more efficient comfort systems include: energy utility rebates; government programs; family assistance; second mortgage/lien. With rising energy costs, your near heroic action and first cost price may not only hurt your customer's ability to keep up with monthly bills, but also result in an uninformed customer who is less than pleased with you. Today, with the exception of coal, all energy costs are escalating at concerning levels. The cost of heating and cooling the house remains the single most costly part of any utility budget. Therefore, finding a way to help emergency-replacement customers buy high efficiency has never been more important. **CB**

Garry Upton of Decision Analyst, Inc., shares his interpretations of its American Home Comfort Study of homeowners, and probes into what customers look for in HVAC contractors. To learn more about this study, or to purchase it, contact Garry Upton at gupton@decisionanalyst.com

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