

# Frequently Asked Questions

BY GARRY UPTON

*Over the course of 2007, 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.*

Normally, I use the “American Home Comfort” report — based on the responses of more than 27,000 homeowners — as a basis for these monthly articles. This month’s article, however, deals with the revealing responses of just *one* homeowner. It’s typical of the “other side” of research — the qualitative side — and is what makes what we do “personal.”

This customer, a male/head of the household, is well-established and organized. He has a list of professionals that he relies on for his home needs. He has had an HVAC service contract for 23 years. However, because serious mistakes were made in the most recent installation, (that the business owner or technicians may not have been aware of), he may take his business elsewhere.

Read on to see how he responded to this question:

**Q:** *“Do you plan to keep this contractor as your primary ‘go to’ heating and air conditioning specialist?”*

**A:** *“I don’t know. Most of the mistakes were simply communications mistakes inside his company. They cost me two days of vacation, and made me feel my business was less appreciated than I’d like it to be, from those I’ve chosen to support my home, family, and me. There are two representatives who we really like, who seem to take turns coming out when we have problems. It would have gone a long way if the owner or one of those two would have just called.”*

If you look at it closely, the customer has begun to question his relationship with the company.

As your business grows, what personal touch points with your customers have you built into your business for you and your technicians?

This “slower” time of year will provide many of you with the time you didn’t have in the busy season to contact your past installation customers and let them know they’re special to you, and that you want them to be satisfied and comfortable.

Staying in touch, serving your existing customers, and expanding their home comfort with your products and services, can be a much less costly way to build your business than always going for the next “new” customer. **B**

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](mailto:gupton@decisionanalyst.com).

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