

Chapter Twenty Seven

Options

James William Fulbright:

“...We must learn to explore all the options and possibilities that confront us in a complex and rapidly changing world...because when things become unthinkable, thinking stops and action becomes mindless.”

This could be one of the shortest and yet one of the most important chapters in this guide.

Always give your customers or potential customers options.

If you have the tendency to be a “take it or leave it” individual you are going to experience many problems with pool owners during your career in the pool service industry. Can you still be successful? Yes. However, if you are a “take it or leave it” person you will gain and lose many more customers than a person who has a little more finesse in their business presentation.

If you are bidding a customer for service I cannot imagine you would want a service rate at the bottom of the pool professional’s pay scale. However, I hear from pool men almost on a weekly basis who purchased a small number of accounts and then built their business by bidding at the low end of the scale just to acquire more customers. This is a ridiculous and unnecessary scenario. It is the same as saying I took a job at a fast food place for \$8.00 an hour just to have a job. I can’t make

a living, but at least I am working. You can see how ridiculous a statement like this becomes when you understand what you can really accomplish in your business.

All you have to do is understand a little customer psychology. You must understand the reasons behind a customer's request and you can be more successful than the fast food working pool man.

If you take the time necessary to study the assignments in this guide you should be far ahead of and more successful than the individual who has not taken the time to study this information.

When you arrive at the pool location look around and get an idea what type of person you will be speaking with and how well they take care of their property. Take a few minutes to inspect the equipment, the plumbing, the skimmer, anything to show the customer you are more interested in the pool than the other pool men who came to bid the job. Find little things wrong with the pool that could cost the pool owner a great deal of money if left in disrepair.

Once you have made your inspection give the customer the bid for service. I cannot tell you what to bid, but bit high. In most cases the customer will balk at this higher service fee. If he does balk, instead of saying this is my rate, take it or leave it, give him the option we discussed earlier and the option that can also be found in *The Millionaire Pool Man Video Series Video 1 – Prospect Bidding*.

The option scenario gives the customer an out without having to say your service is inadequate and he no longer wants your company servicing his pool. Many people are non-confrontational. Keep this in mind when you approach a pool owner for a service or repair estimate.

Many customers are shy and hesitant and must have a way out of your service that makes them feel comfortable and non-confrontational. If you cannot approach your customers from this option perspective you will experience a lower percentage of success.

Now that you have covered several chapters and you have an idea how this works, take a few minutes and complete the next assignment. Come up with an option for a customer on the following three services:

1. A pool draining:

2. An acid wash:

3. A salt system:

The following are a few options you could have written for your assignment:

1. Pool Draining; once you explain to the customer the pool needs to be drained, if the customer balks, you can say there is an option. Instead of completely draining the pool you can partially drain the pool and replace as much as half of the water. This will save the pool owner some money and it will still somewhat accomplish the goal.

The pool owner may or may not take the less expensive option. The pool owner will not always take the less expensive option, but it gives him something else to consider. If you came up with something similar in the previous assignment, congratulations, you are thinking.

If the only option you give the customer is to say yes or no, most of the time the answer will be no.

2. Acid Wash; once you explain the need for the repair as outlined in Chapter 9 on Services, and as you have learned by completing the assignments, you can give the customer the option of a light, medium or heavy acid wash. Since most people consider themselves average people, most people will choose the medium acid wash.

There really is no medium acid wash. An acid wash is an acid wash. These are the options you can give the pool owner so he can feel more comfortable and more in control of the situation. This is not deceit. You are not cheating your customer if they really need an acid wash. Also, so there is no chance of deceit, regardless of what option the customer chooses, give him the same rate.

Never try to sell your customer a repair or a service they do not need!

3. Salt Generator; after extolling the virtues of a salt system, if the pool owner is still not going in the right direction, you can offer the pool owner an automatic chlorinator instead. Never run down your alternative part or service. Let the pool owner decide. However, there is nothing wrong with letting them know a chlorinator will not make the water feel or smell like a salt generator, but it will serve a valuable purpose.

Always remember:

The option sale is better than no sale at all.

Never back your customers into a corner. Remember, if you only give them a choice between yes and no, the answer will usually be no. It is easier to do nothing than to do something. Always give them options.