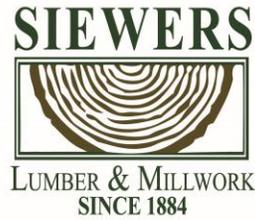


April 17, 2015



“Preserving the Past while Building the Future.”



Celebrating 131 Years of Service

A note from the Siewers Family...

Happy 131st Birthday....to all of us!!!

Siewers Lumber will be celebrating its 131st Birthday this year. We will be celebrating our Founders Day on May 7th from 11:00 am to 1 pm. Culpepper Wood Preservers and Simpson Strong Tie will be hosting the event with us by providing a BBQ Lunch! They will have a mock deck and representatives from both companies on hand to answer any questions about deck building. We feel that this celebration is not just for the company but for all of us, because without YOU we would not have made it to 131 years. We have come a long way since they were delivering lumber by horse and buggy and we thank you for all the wonderful years!

Please RSVP for Founders Day to Lauren Fields at 358-2103 or laurenf@siewers.com. Plan on bringing the whole gang! She just needs a headcount when you call so we can be sure to have enough food and “Birthday Cake”. We are looking forward to celebrating with you.

Thank you for reading our newsletter and for your feedback on ways of making it better. Please continue to let us know your needs and that your needs are being met.

-The Siewers Family

April 17, 2015

Contractor News

6 Steps to Better Selling By Victoria Downing

How well are you doing at sales? Are you closing 50% of your leads? It's useless to be a good craftsman unless you also can sell what you create. Your customers cannot be expected to recognize a good idea unless it is presented to them by a good salesperson.

1. *Make a great first impression.* You only have 3 seconds to make your first impression and 30 more seconds to revise it. Studies show that appearance, including clothing, body language, facial expressions and eye contact creates more than half the first impression you make.
2. *Ask open-ended questions.* Questions that start with who, what, where, how, why and "tell me about". By asking open questions, your customer will tell you what is important to them.
3. *Determine the budget early in the process.* Ask if they have an investment amount in mind. Otherwise, you can't give them the right solution.
4. *Bracket a ballpark budget.* And remember: In remodeling, the prospects' budget is almost always initially unrealistic. That means it may take a couple of discussions before you nail down what they are able and willing invest.
5. *Know the best ways to handle objections.* Studies show that there are only six main objections in any one industry. Write them down and then develop responses to each one.
6. *Always ask the prospect to make a decision.* 65% of all sales calls do not include a direct request for business. One of my favorite quotes is "Salespeople don't close because they don't know what to ask the prospect to do." Just think of how many more sales you'll close if you ask directly.

Changing Values Impact the Luxury Market By Leslie Hart

In the luxury market, the key to driving sales is understanding consumers' values and how this impacts their purchasing decisions.

Many people with means are rejecting a lifestyle of material wealth and luxury. That doesn't mean they want to do without. But they now recognize that personal happiness and status are not connected to things. This is called "responsible consumerism". The new post-material mindset is more about caring, sharing and enhancing the quality of life. People's spending follows their values. Values are the foundation for lifestyle branding and marketing. Studies show 50% of affluent believe it is important to buy from companies whose values align with their own.

The mature (55+) segment of the high-income market is generally jaded about luxury and has a lifestyle that revolves more around downsizing. Yet they will trade up to luxury occasionally, rather than regularly, such as on a major home remodeling project. And young affluent want bigger, better houses than the ones they grew up in. They are more concerned with adopting a casual and green lifestyle. Concerned with health and fitness, they are careful shoppers.

Green is not a fad. In a survey of 1,200 consumers, more than 2/3 said a company's green practices influence where they shop and what they buy.

April 17, 2015

Ten Ways to Keep Making Your Clients Happier and Happier By Roco Baldassarre

According to Forest Research, it costs five times more to find a new customer than to retain a current customer. Sometimes, small changes have a big impact on how customers perceive the quality of your service and make the difference between loyalty and high churn rates.

Here are ten ways to increase customer retention for service businesses.

1. *Call your clients regularly.*

Communication makes everything easier. Schedule periodical calls with your customers to share updates about how things are going and to ask how happy they are with your services on a scale from 1-10, 10 being best. If they do not give you a 10, do not ask why but ask what it would take to make it a 10. If they give you a 10, ask what they particularly appreciate.

Related: Tips to Go Above and Beyond with Customer Service

2. *Create valuable content.*

Share new market insights, your opinion on the matter, and opportunities that your clients might not be aware of yet. Generating valuable content shows that you are on top of your game and improves brand awareness. Clients will also be likely to share your content or recommend your services to their connections based on publicly available content.

3. *Become an authority in your field.*

You should always strive to be the best company in your market. If people see your business as a leading brand in the market, they are much more likely to stick to you. They have confidence in you because the consensus confirms that they already have one of the best providers.

4. *Reply to your emails promptly.*

You should always reply to your emails within 24 hours. If possible, within one hour. It is much more effective to reply saying that you received an email and that you will reply as soon as possible instead of waiting several hours and responding with a long detailed email. Quick response times show that if something important comes up you are always on top of your inbox.

5. *Be decisive.*

Clients hire you because you are the expert. You cannot afford to be uncertain what's best for your clients. Your confidence has to come across in your discussions. Avoid "if" in your emails or calls. Anticipate questions that require research, do the research ahead of time and have all the right answers at your fingertips.

6. *Value your client's point-of-view.*

Clients are experts in their field as you are in yours. You need to listen to ideas and inputs from your clients because they have worked with their own customers longer than you

April 17, 2015

and can make your efforts more efficient. If you are providing a service to an end-customer, listen to their needs and personalize your service to their liking.

7. Add a personal touch.

Adding a personal touch to the relationship, such as a hand written Christmas card or an email about your work anniversary. It shows that you care and enforces your position as the top of mind choice for your customers.

8. Be realistic and do not over promise.

It is better to under promise and over deliver. On average, unhappy customers share their experience with 20 people or more while satisfied customers share their experience with three or four people. One way to avoid the nay-sayers is to set realistic expectations from the get go and take on only clients that are happy with that.

9. Identifying opportunities proactively.

Don't wait for customers to ask you what else can be done to improve performance. Come up with ideas and new strategies to proactively tell your clients how they can get more out of their budgets. This will show your customers that you care about making sure their investment in your company is helping them grow continuously over time.

10. Be clear and transparent

State clearly what you do, how you deliver your services, and what customers can expect from you. Customer loyalty increases also based on how mistakes are being handled. Studies show that up to 70 percent of unhappy customers transform into loyal customers if the mistake has been fixed exceeding their expectations.

Customer retention is an essential part of a service business model because existing customers are easier to up sell and more profitable than constantly acquiring new customers while having a high turnover.

Related Story: 5 Tried and True Ways to Calm Down a Difficult Client

RRI Points to Speed up in Remodeling Activity in 2015 Article found in Remodeling Magazine March 2015

Economic conditions point to average 4% gain.

Every metropolitan statistical area in the United States can look forward to increasing remodeling activity this year, with growth averaging 4% and the nation as a whole set to reach an unprecedented level of activity by the third quarter. Those are the economic signals emanating today from the latest edition of the Residential Remodeling Index (RRI), a product of Hanley Wood's Metrostudy unit.

The RRI--a formula based on several economic indicators known to influence remodeling--stood at 97.2 as of 2014's fourth quarter. That means remodeling conditions nationwide then were 97.2% of what they were in early 2007, when the remodeling market last peaked. The latest RRI is 3.1% better than the index stood a year earlier. It

April 17, 2015

also is 1.1% better than the revised third-quarter RRI of 96.1 and marks the 11th consecutive quarter of year-over-year gains.

"With demand fundamentals also firming across the country at the close of the year, particularly in employment growth, projected growth rates in the RRI for the next few quarters have strengthened. As a result, the previous forecast for the remodeling market to reach full recovery (a reading of 100.0 or more) by third quarter 2015 remains intact," Metrostudy said in a news release.

Metrostudy chief economist Brad Hunter took heart in an improving job market and recent increases in consumer confidence. "Wage growth rebounded in January, and if increases can stay consistent for a while, it would bode well for the younger generation of potential homebuyers to enter the market," Hunter said. "Additionally, current and future remodeling opportunities are ripe among baby-boomers."

The index is produced through a statistical model that leverages detailed data on remodeling activity, including household level remodeling permits, and consumer-reported remodeling and replacement projects. "Activity" includes home improvement and replacement projects worth at least \$1,000.

Aside from the national report, Metrostudy also produces RRI's for each of the nation's 381 metropolitan statistical areas. Every one of those markets can expect to see year-over-year growth in remodeling and replacement project activity in 2015, "with average growth of 4%," Metrostudy said.

Budget-Friendly Tech Tools By Craig Webb

REMODELING's resident technology expert, Joe Stoddard, regularly produces lists of free or low-cost software for remodelers. In a presentation at the Remodeling Deck JLC Show in Baltimore last October, Stoddard gave the scoop on several tools geared toward sales and marketing.

According to Stoddard, if you're a startup or extremely small, these might do the trick. Likewise, if you're starting a project and want low-cost software to minimize expenses, these might also work. But ultimately, as your business grows, odds are that you'll want to move to the older, more robust, more expensive systems.

It's important to note that anytime you're using a free service, there's some sort of cost extracted, Stoddard says. In the case of Google and other companies, it's that they're aggregating and selling your data to marketing services and manufacturers.

Additionally, these services are here today, but could be gone tomorrow. Get what value out of them that you can, because there's a chance that a larger company will buy them and either shelve them or incorporate them into their own product. The good news is that it doesn't take long to implement these services. Don't take these as recommendations as much as suggestions. Evaluate them in your own business and see how they'll work.

April 17, 2015

Just a few free sites that might help:

Customer Relationship Mgmt

Insight.ly Zoho
All Clients Microsoft Dynamics CRM

Organizing Personal Information

Protopage Asama
Evernote ToodleDo

If you don't have these systems, you might want to add them. Adobe Acrobat or a similar software system, PDF Expert, Excel or another spreadsheet program, drop box or similar storage filing system and Builder Trend or other project scheduling system.

Some Customer Service Reminders for Remodelers By Tim Faller

I'd like to offer remodelers these reminders:

- When a client calls about a problem, take it seriously and investigate it carefully.
- Communicate internally so the client doesn't have to repeatedly explain the problem afresh each time someone comes to the site.

When a client calls your organization, the person fielding the call should take careful notes and relay all the information to the person responding to the call so that the problem and how to fix it are clear *before* that person arrives at the site. It's *your* job to troubleshoot your work.

- Return phone calls that day if possible, at most within 24 hours — even if the conversation will be uncomfortable.

Click to open the 5 Steps to a Safer and Stronger Deck

<http://www.strongtie.com/ftp/fliers/F-5STEPDECK12.pdf>

What You Need to Know Now About the Lead-Paint Rule

The EPA's Renovation, Repair, and Painting rule has been in force for five years now.

Is it working? Read More

Quick Contractor Tip

Long, thin drill bit: by Sam Yoder, Portland, ORE.

To make a drill bit that's long enough and thin enough for discreet probes, take a stiff wire (insulation props are perfect), cut one end on a bias, chuck it in your drill and go. Yoder has gotten through walls and even floors with this; he has even gone around corners.

How would you like to be published in a future issue of Siewers Newsletter?

Be sure it is a quick tip that can help another contractor and one that is simple to understand ("Even I need to understand it!") It also must be economical to create. Submit your tips to us at laurenf@siewers.com.

April 17, 2015



Excerpts from Johnny Siewers II

For the next 5 months, we will be sharing excerpts from Johnny Siewers II's memories of the old mill on Belvidere. Join us as we travel back in time through thoughts and impressions that a young man had over 60 years ago. I hope you enjoy them as well as we have.

1959: Annual Sales in 1959 were less than \$200,000 and minimum wage was \$1.00 an hour. We had less than 25 employees. The highest paid employee was paid less than \$2.00 hour. My beginning salary was \$60 a week and my brother Freddie Siewers made \$80 a week.

We had a Yates-American Moulder and Rip Saw on the first floor in the rear of the mill.

All the remaining machinery was on the second floor: two planers, 2 jointers, 2 rip saws, 2 shapers, 1 belt sander, chain mortiser and tenden machine. Upstairs we also had 4 bench areas for making cabinets, assembling doors, windows and all other millwork items.

We had no elevator so all materials were lifted up and down the stairs by hand.

Feel Lucky!

Be sure and bring your business card next time you visit Siewers. Just drop it into the glass fish bowl on the counter to enter a monthly drawing.

Good Luck!!!

**Congratulations to O. B. Yancey our
April winner!**

April 17, 2015



Economy Snap Shot.....

	<u>Unemployment Rate – Entire U.S.</u>	<u>Consumer Confidence (Indexed to value of 100 in 1985)</u>	<u>Total Housing Starts/Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate</u>
March 2015	5.5%	101.3	926,000
Prior Month – February 2015	5.5%	98.8	908,000
Prior Year – March 2014	6.7%	83.9	950,000

	<u>Gallon (\$) Of Gas</u>	<u>Existing Home Sales</u>	<u>National Avg. Mortgage Rate</u>
March 31, 2015	\$2.40	N/A	3.77
Prior Month – Feb. 2015	\$2.37	4,880,000	3.71
Prior Year – March 2014	\$3.54	4,600,000	4.34

Market Summary

	<u>April 16, 2015</u>	<u>1/01/15</u>	<u>3/31/14</u>
DOW	18,112	17,823	16,457
NASDAQ	5,011	4,736	4,199
S&P 500	2,106	2,058	1,872

Long & Foster Market Minute / March 2015

New Listings	Current Contracts	Sold Vs. List Price	Months of Supply
2,655	1,934	98.3%	4.7
	Median Sales Price	Days on Market	
	\$206,000	72	

April 17, 2015

Company Mission

To serve the needs of contractors and do-it-yourselfers.



“Passion is a huge prerequisite to winning. It makes you willing to jump through hoops, go through all the ups and downs and everything in between to reach your goal.” Kerri Welsh, Olympic Gold Medalist

**Siewers Lumber & Millwork
1901 Ellen Road
Richmond, VA 23230**

**Visit our website for product and general information.
www.siewers.com**

Phone: (804) 358-2103 Fax: (804) 359-6986

**Hours:
Monday – Friday
7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Share with others.

***If you know someone that would like to receive our
“Siewers Newsletter”, have them email us at
laurenf@siewers.com and we will add them to our
distribution list.***

....Next issue May 20th