



By Terry Begue,
Begue Painting, Inc.

“Painting contractors with good people skills have a huge advantage over those who prefer to ‘let their work speak for itself’.”

Terry Begue is the owner of Begue Painting Inc., and author of the popular e-book, “The Wealthy House Painter’s Guide to Having it All.” He’s been a successful painter for over thirty years and enjoys helping others start their own successful painting businesses too. Discover more at: <http://www.yourhousepaintingbusiness.com>.

Your People Skills Matter

I’ve always been an entrepreneur at heart. I love being on my own and providing a needed service. High school graduation was just behind me when I started my painting business. I knew the basics from helping my older brother repaint exteriors over the past few summers, but that was about it.

I couldn’t wait to get underway: big plans and even bigger dreams of being a successful painting contractor consumed me. No way would I lose valuable time working for someone else in order to understand the business.

After all, it’s just painting. How hard can it be? You run an ad, line up some sales calls, decide how much you want to make, slap on some paint, turn in a bill, and collect a check. Piece of cake, right? I had it all figured out... except one thing. My would-be customers rarely followed that script.

I thought all it took to be a successful painting contractor was knowing how to paint. The rest would effortlessly fall into place. I struggled for years thinking my business would get better when I became a more skilled painter by developing a system. Boy was I wrong! I spent years taking any painting jobs that came my way. Back in the day it felt like I was always one lost job away from being thrown out on the street.

Over time, I developed a killer system for turning over jobs fast. I trained a few guys and obtained all the necessary equipment. Thanks to some unique marketing strategies I was finally getting lots of calls. One critical piece was missing: I still didn’t know how to sell and get hired. Fresh, hot leads slipped through my fingers over and over. Without that skill set it was like being all dressed up with nowhere to go.

It was back to the drawing board. I started talking to any salesperson in any industry that would help me learn to sell. I spent the next three winters (off-season) selling cars, furniture and even vacuum cleaners.

I began picking my colleagues’ brains. I questioned my prospective customers about what they wanted in a painter and a painting company. I became the “Larry King” of house painting. Over time I discovered getting hired boils down to one important ingredient: people skills.

What are people skills? The gentle art of making people like you and feel comfortable around you. Painting contractors with good people skills have a huge advantage over those who prefer to “let their work speak for itself”.

Remember, consumers are tuned into station WH-FM (What’s in it for Me). Can you blame them? They pay good money for our services. It should be all about them. It’s vital you tailor your presentation to suit *their* needs, not yours.

Our customers are looking for real value, and this is the area where I see most painters miss the mark. Most have great values, but where they fall short is they don’t communicate how that value benefits their potential customers. Remember, the contractor that communicates the most value and delivers typically wins the job. As painters what we do is visual. Help your customers see the possibilities.

Ask yourself, “What am I doing that’s better or different from the competition?” Commit it to memory and start telling the world. Your potential customers want to know what you’re about, what you stand for, and mostly how it benefits them.

Remember, painting is a service business built on happy customers. When given a choice people logically want to be around, work with, and hire people they like. No one is naturally born with people skills, however, by being aware of your actions, your emotions and how you talk, you’ll be headed in the right direction! **TPC**