

Professionalism And The Pool Service Technician

by Charles Baird

Have you ever asked yourself how another pool tech can demand rates so much higher than your own? Have you ever asked yourself how another pool tech can charge so much for repairs or parts? If you have, I can assure you it all begins with professionalism.

Professionalism is the one attribute, regardless of industry, that every customer is seeking. If you made the choice to be a professional, you are more than likely already on the road to success. If you haven't given professionalism much thought, you may still earn a living, but you will always be chasing the next dollar just to cover your overhead; and you will never garner the respect or success available to the true professional.

Everything you do in life sets you on a collision course with either professionalism or amateurism. To be successful, you must develop a mind-set where everything you do is performed with the utmost knowledge and commitment. This is the true path to unlimited success. This is the true path for the professional.

No Excuses

There is no excuse for being ill-informed or sloppy in your work, and there is also no excuse not paying careful attention to customer's needs and expectations. I can't say learning is always enjoyable for everyone, but it's a necessary part of paying your dues. Of course, you have the freedom to choose whether you want to pay those dues, but your choice will determine whether you're successful.

You have the freedom to attend or not attend every relevant seminar. You have the freedom to read or not read every relevant book on our industry. You have opportunities, taken or not taken, to be trained in the field by others more experienced. Choosing to take advantage of available opportunities and continued training is how we grow in our knowledge and excel as professionals.

Looks Matter

Dressing as a professional and knowing your business are so impressive to a customer that you can just about demand whatever price you want for service. Again, the choices are yours to make. You have the freedom to choose if you shave in the morning. You have the freedom to decide if you wear clean, respectable clothing. You have the freedom to decide if you drive a clean and well-signed vehicle.

I can't fault you if you choose to be less than professional. Certainly a lot of people in the pool business operate that way. If you choose to "just make a living" and have more free time to enjoy the things in life that are more important to you, I am truly happy for you. But a professional will always have a better success rate than an amateur.

The Difference Is In The Details

Other hallmarks of professionalism in the pool service trade include returning customers' call quickly, patiently explaining services and repairs, and providing customers with detailed invoicing.

I have sold and consulted for more than 16,000 pool service and repair technicians over the past 38 years, and I can easily see the difference between the professional and amateur serviceman.

But what are the rewards of professionalism? Better service rates, better prices for equipment and

repairs, fewer complaints, fewer questions from customers concerning repair charges, better employees, more free time to enjoy the fruits of your labor, better profit centers and, perhaps, most importantly, less stress in your day-to-day business operation.

You have the opportunity to be different and better.

If you want to look for a mentor, look to the professional pool serviceman and work diligently to mimic his or her business ethics. It is the true entrepreneurial spirit that must permeate your being to choose the right path. The right path for every true businessman is unlimited opportunity offered to the professional. The other path is most often failure.

Charles Baird is the owner of One Stop Pool Pros, Lake Forest, Calif., and president of National Pool Route Sales.