



Volume 18, Issue 1 January 1, 2021

The Tool Box

Serving the Electrical, HVAC & Plumbing Industries Since 1912

The Law of Quality Service *Are Your Customers Bitter ?*

"Good customer service costs less than bad customer service."

Sally Gronow

What's inside...

- Are Your Customers Bitter ? 1-2
- Mechanical Member 3
- Associate Member 3
- Tool Box Talks 4
- Welcome New Member 5
- Happy Birthday Members 5
- Anniversaries 5
- Thinking of You 5
- Condolences 6
- Answers for Crossword 6
- Save the Dates 7
- Mark Your Calendars 8
- Recruitment Challenge 9
- Vision/Mission Statement 10

We inherited an automobile last year and took it to several mechanics for repairs. In one particular shop, there was a sign on the service counter that caught my attention

"The bitterness of poor quality is long remembered after the sweetness of low price is forgotten."

I took a photo of it and posted a photo of the sign on social media. It received more positive comments than any of my posts that month.

People will remember more how well you treated them than how much they paid. Everybody is looking for a "discount" today while income is down during the virus pandemic. Everyone likes to save money. However, smart buyers realize that if they pay more today for the best service, they will pay less later to make up for the low price paid to save a few dollars.

Rick is a landscaper in our area who has an impeccable reputation but isn't necessarily the least expensive. He offers prompt service, is courteous and fixes everything the first time. He is very personable. He seems to know every good company to do business with locally in every other industry. People ask him where to get their car repaired, who can paint their house, what pet veterinarian is the best.

Rick knows everybody and has become the "GOAT" (Greatest Of All Time) resource for our neighborhood. He remembers birthdays, names, and pertinent information as he chats with everyone he meets. Is it any wonder Rick stays very busy?

"Happy customers are your biggest advocates and can become your most successful sales team."

-Lisa Masiello

Look at successful companies who have excellent service and charge accordingly. Their great reputations surpass their advertising. They keep people coming back for more when the "bottom-dollar" discount businesses struggle to stay afloat.

How does Lexus stay in business? Take your car in for service and when it is returned, it is sparkling clean, delivered by a well-dressed individual very respectfully. Their customer waiting lounge is well-furnished, has nice refreshments and a quiet atmosphere. The price is much more than some run-of-the-mill service center, but the quality of treatment is superior.

How does Apple Care stay in business? Practically everything they sell is expensive, but they treat you like a valued customer. Call their help line and see. You will find that the major difference in their service is customer service training. I have never been able to get anyone at Microsoft on the phone to help me as fast as an Apple Care support service representative.



How does Chick-Fil-A stay in business? They charge more for a chicken sandwich than most restaurants, but they have become one of the largest fast food stores in the country. They train their people to treat customers with the most respect. Chick-Fil-A outsells the closest chicken food competitor by practically a 5 to 1 advantage, even though they charge more, are only open six days a week and are not a worldwide business. Audiences tell me that their customer service is some of the best in the business.

John Maxwell recounts the story of Chick-Fil-A founder, Truett Cathy, meeting with his senior managers. They each wanted to find ways the company could become bigger. Cathy answered, "If we get better at what we do, our customers will make us bigger."

And they did.

I worked with an energy company at a managers and service reps conference. Their service technicians are already some of the best in the business in their region, but they want to be better. I told them about a friend last winter who posted how they helped him get his home heated one morning in an ice storm. Most other companies were home riding out the inclement weather, but their customers are making them bigger.

Low Maintenance?

When the pandemic began and businesses were only open by phone, you could tell who was going to keep their job and who wasn't by their responses. Some people you spoke to "vented" their frustrations to each customer.

"Customer service shouldn't just be a department, it should be the entire company."
-Tony Hsieh

Many businesses are using online ordering to eliminate paying someone to answer the phone. The ones who have a live person to help customers need to bear in mind that the only touchpoint their customers have is that receptionist. That individual should be the best trained employee in dealing with both friendly and frustrated people. Sadly, that isn't always true. I try to be low maintenance with people. I don't want the person who hired me wondering if I have shown up at the hotel, if I am doing what I said I would or if there are any "surprises" in service they won't like.

How low maintenance is your organization for your clients or customers to work with you? During the pandemic's partial close down of business, more people wanted goods and services delivered more easily. Retail sales skyrocketed the first month of full shut down due to people buying from home and having services delivered.

My mother resides in an assisted living facility. She was not allowed to go out shopping for grocery or pharmacy items. We couldn't deliver everything she needed either. Then we discovered Instacart, a delivery service for our local grocery store and pharmacy chains. We now place orders online and the items are delivered directly to her... usually within a couple of hours. The grocery items cost a little more when ordered online, but the quality and convenience are worth remembering... and worth repeating.

Does the quality of your service justify the prices you charge? Do people remember you for being inexpensive or great at what you do?

Bitter or Better?

During the business shutdown, many companies went out of business for good. At first everyone blamed the pandemic, but the reality was that some companies were failing long before the this then.

- Sweet Tomatoes, a soup and salad bar, announced their cessation of business three weeks into the shutdown. However, they had been struggling to stay afloat before 2020. Meanwhile, Panera Bread down the street from our local Sweet Tomatoes is always busy.
- Sears filed for bankruptcy this past spring, but they have been in a death spiral for over 10 years. They couldn't find their niche when Walmart and Target stole their customers, but the problems go back farther. Had they switched to online business in the early 90s, they might be thriving today... and you might never have even heard of Amazon.
- Pier One Imports retailers have struggled against Home Goods and many other retailers. During the 1990s many upstarts came along, but Pier One didn't change enough with the times. They declared bankruptcy in February 2020 and closed all stores in May.
- Modell's Sporting Goods stores filed bankruptcy in March, just prior to the pandemic shutdown. Soon after, they began liquidating their inventory and closed their doors permanently.

All of these companies were very good at what they did... but not good enough to excite customers to keep coming back. It wasn't a government shutdown that closed them; rather it was a customer retreat that put them out of business. You can probably name a store in each industry that remained open through the Great Recession starting in 2008 and the Pandemic of 2020. The difference was their unique service (or lack of it) and reputation among customers.

"The more advocates you have, the fewer ads you have to buy."
-Dharmesh Shah

Today, you can spend a fortune in marketing and advertising. Someone will always come around to take your money promising that they will make your name great. But if you dump money into advertising and can't back it up with great service, you may as well flush it down the drain.

However, you can invest in the best customer service, the best people training (yes, "soft skills") and your customers will make you great. Why not invest your marketing money in being better and making your customers less bitter?

How is becoming BETTER a goal you have set for your organization? Again, if I were to interview your customers today, how many would say you are the best quality service for their money?

Permission is granted to reprint this article provided the following paragraph is included in full: Jim Mathis, IPCS, CSP, CJMT is The Reinvention PRO™, an International Platform Certified Speaker, Certified Speaking Professional, Certified Speaker & Trainer with the John Maxwell Team and best-selling author of Reinvention Made Easy: Change Your Strategy, Change Your Results. To subscribe to his free professional development newsletter, please send an email to: subscribe@jimmathis.com with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject. An electronic copy will be sent out to you every month. For more information on how Jim and his programs can benefit your organization or group, please call 407-369-7842, or visit our updated web site at: www.jimmathis.com. © 2020 Reinvention Nation, LLC

Mechanical Member



Metro Electric Co., Inc. was incorporated in October 1976 and is currently celebrating its 45th Anniversary of service and success in the metropolitan Charleston Tri-County area. With unlimited mechanical licenses in South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia we continue to specialize in industrial, institutional and commercial electrical contracting. Through extraordinary personal service, attention to detail and commitment to our customers needs we have earned a reputation for excellence that keeps our clients coming back.

Randy and Terri Harley retired in 2016 after 40 years at which time Metro Electric Co., Inc. became a 100% employee-owned company. Metro Electric strives everyday to establish and maintain an atmosphere of making our employees feel they are a part of something as co-owner's of an employee-owned company.

Metro Electric Co., Inc.'s success is the quality of personnel. The ability of our personnel to get the job done on time with quality workmanship and materials has propelled Metro Electric into being a key player in the electrical contracting field. We are proud to maintain an average work force of 100 employees. Metro Electric's commitment to provide a safe work site for our employee's is our #1 priority.

We are pleased to be a member of the Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina and wish for their continued success in the future.

Associate Member



Since 1978, McCarthy, Cobb & Associates, Inc. has provided a unique brand of personalized service to small and medium sized contractors throughout the southeast. We provide contractors with the financial security and construction assurance that lets them get started on their next project as soon as possible.

It takes a solid foundation to build a business. No one knows this better than construction industry experts like each individual contractor. That's why in today's evolving and unpredictable market place, every contractor needs an experienced and resourceful bonding agent to help them succeed. With competitive rates, specialized solutions and solid partnerships, McCarthy, Cobb & Associates, Inc. gives this security in surety.

We are industry professionals who pride ourselves on matching contractors with the right surety company to best fit individual needs. We also help to create lasting relationships to ensure not only maintaining surety capacity but increases in the future as needs demand.

McCarthy, Cobb & Associates, Inc. provides specialized solutions and a personalized approach to every client. We work with each client as a team member to create real solutions in real time. In the past three decades, we have established professional relationships with over 20 national surety companies that are A.M. Best Rated and T-listed, distinctions that allow us to offer the best rates and most comprehensive bond programs available.

When it comes to contract bonds, McCarthy, Cobb & Associates has the experience and the reputation to offer security in surety. We would like the opportunity to offer tailored bond services that will build your business and increase your position in today's marketplace. Contact us today to discuss your individual situation so we can help build your business. WE ARE TEAM BUILDERS!

“Tool Box Talks” – Safety Tip

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Portable Step Ladders – Safety DO’s and DO NOT’s

[Reference 1910 Subpart D / 1926 Subpart X]

Many of the most common accidents that occur when we use a portable step ladder can be avoided by observing the following tips:

DO’s . . .

- Always inspect your portable step ladder before use, and take it out of service if there is any deficiency found that affects its safe use.
- Make sure all four feet of the portable step ladder are set on a level and stable surface, and that both ladder spreaders are fully extended and locked into place before use.
- Keep your ladder, your body, your tools and any materials at least 10 feet away from energized electrical conductors (or even further for higher voltages exceeding 50kv).
- Always make sure at least one of your hands is firmly grasping a rung or side rail when you are climbing up or down a ladder. And be aware that just sliding your hand along a side rail as you ascend or descend the ladder does NOT constitute “grasping” the ladder.
- Maintain your balance and center of gravity on your portable step ladder by keeping your belt-buckle between the two side rails. Reposition the ladder instead of over-reaching.

DO NOT’s . . .

- Never use a portable step ladder for purposes for which it was not designed. For example, do not lean a closed portable step ladder against a wall or other surface for the purpose of climbing, or stand on one that has been placed across objects in a horizontal position.
- Do not use a portable step ladder made of metal or any other conductive materials when performing any task or working in an area where you, your tools or materials, or the ladder could make contact with energized electrical conductors or equipment.
- Never climb up or down a portable step ladder while carrying any object that prevents you from firmly grasping the ladder with at least one hand - or that could cause you to lose your balance.
- Do not place any tools or materials on the top cap or any step of your ladder that might fall and strike someone if the ladder were to be bumped or inadvertently moved.
- Never stand on the top cap of a regular portable step ladder, or on the top step. Always follow the ladder manufacturer’s rules and warning stickers for proper standing surfaces.

While these are not the only precautions and prohibitions applicable to the use of a portable step ladder, heeding these simple tips can go a long ways towards protecting all of us who do use them from accidents, injuries, and even death.

Free toolbox talk provided courtesy of www.oshatraining.com. Copyright 2017. Not to be sold, nor displayed on any other commercial website.

Welcome New Member Pee Dee Area

Happy Birthday Members!

Alice Gatch	1/3	Gatch Electrical Contractors, Inc.	Wife of Jimmy
Rudy Cullum	1/5	Cullum Mechanical Construction, Inc	
Steve Brewer	1/7	Easley Mechanical Services, Inc.	
Susi McWilliams	1/12	Columbia Cooling & Heating Co.,Inc	Wife of Robert
Sharon Bailey	1/13	C. R. Hipp Construction, Inc.	Wife of Pete
Pam Elliott	1/13	Greenville Mechanical, Inc.	
Manuel Hendrix	1/13	Honorary Life Member	
Paul Prevatte	1/17	Honorary Life Member	
Bob Jacques	1/21	Hajoca Corp.	
Roger Griggs	1/21	Roger's Computers Service, Inc.	
Terri Harley	1/23	Honorary Life Member	Wife of Randy
Susie Heyward	1/25	W. B. Gurmarin & Company, Inc.	Wife of Carroll
Charlie Smith	1/25	Cregger Co., Inc.	
Scott Arledge	1/28	Smith & Stevenson, Inc.	
Dan Brailsford	1/30	Honorary Life Member	
Bill Self	1/30	Honorary Life Member	

We would like to announce your Birthday too! If you would like to be listed, please call 803-772-7834.

Anniversaries

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Hill	1/14	Hill Plumbing & Electric Co., Inc.	Debbie
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Poplin	1/25	B & L Electric Co.	Brenda
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Strickland	1/29	Adams Insurance	Crystal

Thinking of You

Mrs. Phyllis Epting	SAMCO
Mr. David Gregg	Honorary Life Member
Mr. Bo Shuler	Honorary Life Member
Mr. Tim Whitehurst	Husband of Leslie - JMP Co.

Condolences

Mr. & Mrs. John Williams
 Cashion Electricians
 Son in law James Kenyon Wells
 Dec.8, 2020

Family & Friends
 Daughter of Jerry & Pam Moore
 Carol Moore Abrams
 December 9, 2020

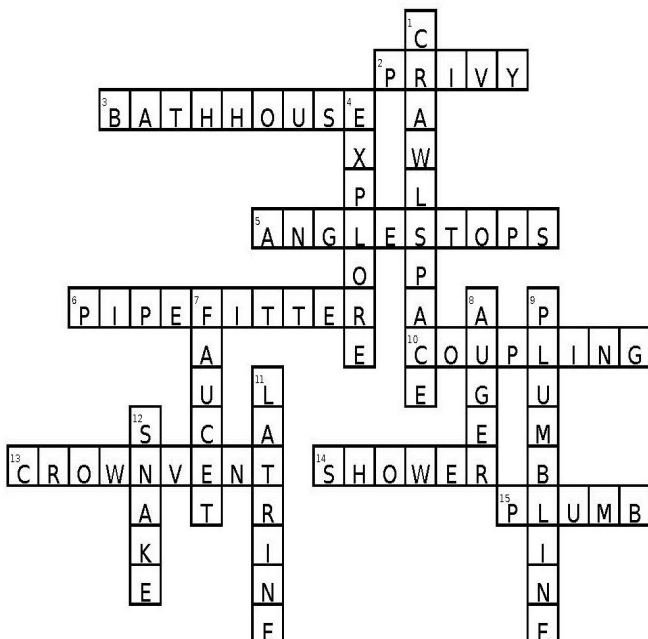
Mrs. Beth Wilson
 On The Loss of Her Husband
 Phillip Edward Wilson
 Control Management
 December 11, 2020

Mrs. Sally Paul
 On The Loss of Her Husband
 David Wilson Paul Sr.
 Sanitary Plumbing Contractors
 December 11, 2020

Mr. & Mrs. Lee Richardson
 Atlantic Electric Company
 Mother of Susan Richardson
 Joanne Gammache
 December 14, 2020

Mr. & Mrs. Gerard Edwards
 On the lose of his Mother
 Irma Eargle Edwards
 December 21,2020

Crossword Puzzle



SAVE THE DATES

Upcoming Events

Piedmont Area

14th Annual Piedmont Clays For Education Sporting Clays Event

Friday, April 30, 2021

The Clinton House Plantation

Clinton



Midlands Area

11th Annual Midlands Nine At Night Golf Tournament

Tentative: Thursday, April 1, 2021

Charwood Country Club

West Columbia



Pee Dee Area

14th Annual Pee Dee Blast Sporting Clays Event

Friday, September 17, 2021

Back Woods Quail Club

Georgetown



Coastal Area

12th Annual Charleston Slam Fishing Tournament

Friday, May 14, 2021 – Captains Meeting

Graybar Electric Co.

Saturday, May 15, 2021 – Fishing Tournament

WO Thomas, Jr. Boat Landing

North Charleston



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Area Meetings

In an effort to keep our members safe, the Areas will be hosting virtual meetings. It is our hope to begin having Face-To Face Meetings in 2021 depending on the Virus. We will keep you posted. Meantime, I hope you will join us virtually!

Take Care & Stay Safe!

Piedmont Area

Piedmont Area MCASC Membership Scheduled Zoom Meeting Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 1:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82579923562?pwd=bDIkOFF1WFIVNy9wanJ5YmRmYWw3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 825 7992 3562 Passcode: 171856

Midlands Area

Midlands Area MCASC Membership Zoom Meeting Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 1:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82687375933?pwd=SIR3eG1EQzRwREUwYUJ2K2xsbHh2QT09>

Meeting ID: 826 8737 5933 Passcode: 667637

Pee Dee Area

Pee Dee Area MCASC Membership Zoom Meeting Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 2:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85122445426?pwd=eUx2YUx2ZW96ZmhVanFpaW1ablZwQT09>

Meeting ID: 851 2244 5426 Passcode: 199409

Coastal Area

The Coastal Area Board Is Working Toward Having A Face to Face Meeting Tuesday, January 26, 2021 Beginning At 6:00 PM At

C.R. Hipp Construction (New Location), 121 Carolina Avenue, Goose Creek, SC 29445. STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS



2020-2021 RECRUITMENT CHALLENGE!!

Effective NOW through May 31st, 2021!

ALL MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO COMPETE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN:



TWO COMPLIMENTARY



Registrations to the 2021 Summer Convention!

We are counting on you to break out your networking boots and inform prospective members about the benefits of being part of the Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina!

We look forward to welcoming our new members and as a reminder; here are some of the benefits we continue to provide:

- an ongoing effort to offer free training opportunities for both professional & craft personnel
(Participation in our training program means "WE pay YOU to be a member!")
- a proactive political/legislative agenda
- current business/technical information & support
- a joint industry collaboration to improve relative business practices
- development of industry related career opportunities & work force development
- networking opportunities

Help us to continue to enhance the future of the construction industry in South Carolina!



P.O. Box 384, 29202
1504 Morninghill Drive
Columbia, SC 29210

Phone: (803) 772-7834

Fax: (803) 731-0390

E-mail: mflowers@mcasc.com
www.mcasc.com

Serving mechanical contractors in South Carolina since 1912.

Executive Board & Staff

Mike Richardson
President

Randall Owens
Vice-President

Jim Hearn
Treasurer

Edward Gibbs
Secretary

Mac Doyle
Associate President

Mona Flowers
Managing Director

Congratulations to our Associate & Mechanical Members who will be highlighted in the February issue of

"The Tool Box"

Associate Member

www.atlanticcoastelectricsupply.com



Mechanical Member

www.Triadmc.com



[Update Your Outlook](#)

Let us know if we need to update your Outlook or if you know someone who does!

MCASC Vision Statement

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina (MCASC) will be the leading construction association in South Carolina for specialty contractors and suppliers in the electrical, mechanical (HVAC), and plumbing fields by serving its membership, the industry, and the Community in a vibrant and harmonious fashion.

MCASC Mission Statement

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina (MCASC) will provide its membership with:

- current business/technical information and support
- a proactive political/legislative agenda
- a joint industry collaboration to improve relative business practices
- an ongoing effort to offer training opportunities for both professional and craft personnel
- educational scholarships for deserving students
- the development of industry related career opportunities

The Associations objective for this mission is to enhance the future of the Construction Industry in South Carolina.