

In building your business, the importance of how you handle telephone responses can't be overlooked. Getting a new customer to call and inquire about your services is an important first step in building a business. The ability to keep customers is equally important and will be determined by how well you relate to customers and how satisfied they are with your services.

The telephone response is the customer's first impression of you and the service you will provide. You can very often win confidence by the way you handle a new inquiry. After all, any person who calls has the potential to recommend other people to you, and therefore increase your business volume. In most cases, your first conversation and first meeting can result in a long-term business relationship.

Answering Telephone Responses

Upon receiving an inquiry for piano service, a prompt call back is the first order of business (assuming the inquiry is a message on your service, or a call taken by someone other than yourself.) If possible, return the call the same day or evening. The appointment can be scheduled even a few weeks away, but get to the customer immediately.

Being relaxed and pleasant is extremely important. Try to get a feel for the needs and requirements of the customer and the instrument. Give the basic information as to the standard tuning fee. Try to intro-

duce information in a clear and concise way.

A basic tuning fee is for a piano in good working order, that has been tuned on a regular basis (approximately two times a year). If the piano has not been serviced regularly, there is the possibility of additional tuning work and therefore, a higher fee. It should be made clear that this can only be evaluated at the piano and discussed at that time.

Most people understand that if they were negligent of proper service their instrument may need more than just a tuning.

If a new call comes in and you recognize it as a local artist, prominent teacher, owner of an exceptional piano, etc., let this person know you are sensitive to their needs. Make it known that as you acquaint yourself with their instrument you will keep them advised as to what the instrument needs to keep it in top condition.

Don't argue with the customer whose piano has never been tuned and is only willing to spend the standard tuning fee. If you feel you can have a professional relationship without compromising your ethics, fine. If not, politely express your opinions but don't argue and antagonize the person on the other end of the phone. This will not be beneficial to you in any way.

First Meeting With New Customer

Always think of the first impression you make as a mirror image of your professional relationship. If

you have a confident, positive approach, the customer will be made to feel comfortable right away. However, as we all know, nobody bats 1000.

Your general appearance will probably say more than anything else. Be well-groomed. Carry your tools in a professional-looking case. Remember, you don't want to turn somebody off by dropping down a tattered-looking case on their living room carpet.

Review in your own mind whatever phone conversation you had so you can concentrate on the piano without having to ask the same questions you already asked on the telephone.

Waste no time. Get to the piano and appraise the situation in your own mind. If repairs or additional tuning work is necessary, try to explain it at the piano. Illustrate whatever you can. For example, if the keys are sticking, explain how they can be eased. Give an approximate price. Show the customer how each key will be removed, eased, and then put back.

People are more likely to feel at ease if they can actually understand the problem and its solution by seeing it first-hand.

It is extremely important to listen to what the customer says. You can get a good feel for what their needs and requirements will be by just a little good communication. Don't be afraid to appraise situations honestly and openly, even if you feel uncomfortable with a piano on poor shape. Remember, some pianos will never deliver the quality the owner may require. They can be appraised of this in a diplomatic way. Make them aware of the limitations and that you will do your best under the circumstances. Remember, not everybody's budget can meet their needs.

As you finish up the piano, explain to the customer what was done. Give information as to proper follow up and maintenance. Explain how often the piano should be tuned and when the next appointment should be. Try to set up a regular schedule.

If the person who plays the piano is home, ask them to try it. Leave your customer with a business card.

Being able to communicate effectively in your telephone conversations and first meetings with new customers can be one of your best business expanding opportunities. People are always anxious to find out about efficient and reliable service contractors. The best advertising anyone can have is a happy customer.

The Piano Workshop

3166 West 33 St., Cleveland, Ohio 44109
Phone (216) 631-1777 or 631-1991

PIANO KEYS RECOVERED

Sets of 52 extra thick key tops replaced, .075" or .095"

Molded key tops, .075" . \$49.00
Molded key tops, .095" . \$54.00
Above with fronts, add. \$20.00

Plastic sharps, gloss... \$39.00
Plastic sharps, dull . . . \$54.00
Genuine Ebony sharps . \$69.00

Three working day turn-around time. Return shipping and insurance included. Remittance with order, please.
We replace pin blocks and install soundboards.

Service and installation center for Northeast Ohio for Marantz pianos and pianocorder units.
Complete library of tapes available.

Let our computer work up your plain wire string scale for you
Write for details.

You can't afford to have the job done wrong.