

Ethics & Customer Service

Over the past few years, it seems as though the water industry has gained tremendous momentum—and it does not show any signs of stopping anytime soon. Consumers are becoming more aware of water quality and contamination issues than ever, and international markets are growing by leaps and bounds each year. Technologies are developing rapidly as well—rarely does a day go by that my email inbox does not receive a press release describing a new treatment method or application of technology.

It is an exciting time to be involved in the water treatment industry. And while it is important to keep up with the latest innovations and trends, it is just as crucial not to get so caught up in them that we forget one aspect of the industry that should never change: serving customers with honesty and integrity.

WQP 2014 Dealer of the Year Scott Hillman, CWS, owner of Integrity Plumbing and Water Treatment in Franklinville, N.Y., reflects on this topic in WQP's 2016 Industry Forecast (page 11). In his more than 20 years in the industry, he writes, he has trained many water professionals, "and no matter what the company or type of system, ethics were the recurring theme."

Despite increased public knowledge of water quality and contamination, water professionals have their work cut out for them when it comes to selling treatment systems and equipment. The stereotype of the unscrupulous used car salesman looms large anytime a consumer is making a large purchase. Kelly Thompson, MWS, of



Moti-Vitality LLC touches on this in his column (page 28) about how to handle potential customers who do not return your phone calls even after a seemingly successful sales presentation: "They may not be returning your phone calls because they see you the same way they see every other salesperson they have met ... But if you surprise them by reaching out every few months with a personalized offer to help (not sell), they may come to see that you are different."

Showing customers that you are not like every other salesperson—that you are there to serve them and improve their lives—is a hurdle that, perhaps, water treatment professionals should see as a challenge to provide top-notch customer service. "People can tell when they are being bullied," Hillman writes, "and they appreciate honesty, integrity and ethics."

As you set your goals for the year, keep customer service and the Golden Rule in mind—it is what can set your company and our industry apart from the rest.

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