Air duct cleaners must carefully handle customer requests for disinfecting and sanitizing services.
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The Value of 100

Mark Zarzeczny, ASCS, CVI
President & Chairman of the Board

100
It’s a nice number. Recognition of perfection when it comes to test results. A reward many students strive to achieve after spending countless hours studying and attending classes. It’s also a milestone reached by our friends at AIISA in Italy. They have welcomed their 100th member company and added a 250th ASCS to their membership. The growth of AIISA is particularly noteworthy as it comes at a time of crisis. These numbers reflect a near record growth in one year. The world is still rocked by the COVID pandemic. We have seen shut downs and re-openings and shut downs of re-openings. The focus of the members of AIISA is on providing a viable solution to a crisis of monumental proportions. Making sure the indoor air quality of their clients is as healthy as possible by working countless hours and in doing so, welcoming their 100th member. Congratulations on a job well done. This was not an easy test for which to study.

What does this have to do with us? We are half a world away running our businesses during not only a pandemic, but political and social unrest. Our Standards and Specifications are showing up in more hands of engineers, architects, building owners and decision makers like never before. Our ASCS and CVI certifications are recognized worldwide and we continue to add new members. You’ve all done something amazing. You are members of an association that has been built on your beliefs of what duct cleaning should be. The passion, hard work and dedication you all have for your craft has enabled duct cleaning to be a legitimate, sought after craft has enabled duct cleaning to be a legitimate, sought after service are needed more now than ever. People are looking to us for answers to their indoor air quality needs. Our members are part of medical facility cleanings, building re-openings and residential cleanings. More studies are looking at the viability of COVID-19 presence in duct work. Should they prove conclusive, our members will benefit from the results. The recommendation for increasing outside air supply into buildings only helps our members. Imagine all of the potential contaminants...
that are being introduced into HVAC systems as a result of this recommendation.

It’s easy to lose focus on so many things regarding our companies, families and social lives with so much going on in the world right now. I’ve had the pleasure of speaking with many of you over the past few months and have heard of the challenges members are having with lost business revenue, navigating the PPP loan process and equipment and supply shortages. I also have heard encouraging news from many of you that business has never been better and many of you are calling out many of the fraudulent companies on social media platforms for making sensational claims.

Thank you all for your inspirational stories and actions.

100 is an important number. I see 100% effort in our membership. As I mentioned last issue, we duct cleaners deal with adversity every day and we are better for it. I am glad to be a part of this industry. I am 100% sure of that.

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As an association executive, I’m constantly sharing and researching association best practices to ensure my client has every advantage and is driven toward success with decisions made in the board room – informed decisions. Part of that decision-making process is working to enhance my relationship with board members through self-management so that they feel confident and empowered, knowing they have all the information they need to fulfill their board duties.

Practicing self-management is a key part of the equation in all relationships, but especially those you cultivate in the workplace. It means practicing the behaviors that make oneself and others blossom, noticing those behaviors in others, admiring and enforcing them and really understanding what type of relationship you want to have with that particular person.

The first step in learning to practice self-management is recognizing and reflecting on your own list of personal pitfalls. How can you be better, do better and make those around you better? Think of a moment when you lost your cool, when you reacted with emotion and not with calm, logical thought. What were the triggers? How can you be aware of the triggers so that you don’t react the next time that person “pushes your buttons,” as we like to say? Understanding the trigger, the emotional reaction and then digging deeper to the reasons for the emotion can be helpful in recognizing and reducing negative interactions in the future. Maybe it wasn’t an emotional reaction. Perhaps you failed to really listen to someone and missed an opportunity, financial or otherwise.

You can use self-management to better communicate with your staff, but you can also improve your customer relationships, and building productive relationships with your team and your customers will absolutely lead to more successful outcomes.

Here are some basic yet meaningful tenets that will guide you toward enduring, productive relationships*:

1. Stay Organized – chaos leads to chaotic behavior
2. Ask Questions – your employees and customers have different life experiences and learning from those who will strengthen your relationships and give you a larger pool from which to source information
3. Listen – seize the moment and the value it offers
4. Concentrate – make discoveries that inspire meaningful progress
5. Be Flexible – don’t be a control freak
6. Seek Feedback – dissent = better outcomes
7. Build a Support Network – find a mentor or a group where you can seek advice
8. Be Your Own Devil’s Advocate – think about unintended consequences
9. Be Open and Approachable – others should know they are valued and this is how you show them
10. Diffuse Anger and Conflict – there’s no place for it if you’re solution-focused
11. Learn How to “Read” People – exercise empathy, in fact, become a skilled empathizer

Self-help, professional development, relationship building…call it whatever you want but apply it across all your interactions. Self-management helps you balance inherent human behaviors with what is needed from a leader at a specific moment in time.

“The control – what lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do.”
—ARISTOTLE

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**Executive Director’s Letter**

**NADCA Fall Tech is Going Virtual!**

By Kristy Cohen, NADCA Executive Director

COVID-19 sure has thrown things into a tailspin for 2020. But one thing that a pandemic can’t shut down is the NADCA 2020 Fall Technical Conference. If you couldn’t imagine an entire year without the Fall Tech that you know and love — now you won’t have to because the 2020 event is going virtual!

You will be able to take advantage of fantastic education delivered by some of the air duct cleaning industry’s most experienced instructors with just a click of a button. Topics will include:

- Microbial Threat Considerations in HVAC Systems
- Ventilation Inspections
- High Velocity Duct Systems
- Containment in Healthcare Facilities
- Project Management

Our Virtual Fall Tech event will also include networking to give you the opportunity to talk shop, ask questions and engage with your industry peers. Here are some of the benefits of participating in this year’s Virtual Fall Technical Conference:

**Acquire all 6 of the required CECs for ASCS renewal**

Why take a renewal quiz when instead, for the same price, you can get high quality industry training and the opportunity to network with other industry professionals?

**Take Advantage of No Travel Costs**

The beauty of a virtual event is that you don’t have to spend extra money for travel and hotel costs. If you aren’t usually able to send more than one tech because of travel costs, here’s an opportunity to provide the Fall Tech experience to more of your techs. In fact, if you register five or more attendees you will receive a $25 discount per registrant for the event. Please note that you must register all five attendees at the same time to receive the discount.

**Get Certified**

You also have the option to register for the ASCS & CVI Virtual Pre-Conference Training Courses (additional registration fee applies) so that you can prepare for certification. After the course, the NADCA team will help register you for the certification exam at a testing center or as an online proctored exam.

If you’re not growing, you’re falling behind— it’s as simple as that. You have to show customers that your air duct cleaning technicians are the most skilled and experienced out there or you risk losing potential business and even your loyal customer base. NADCA’s Fall Technical Conference is designed to help members stand out from the competition. NADCA’s trainers are highly experienced and know what it takes to be ultra-successful in the HVAC cleaning industry. To be the best, you have to learn from the best.

This year’s meeting will be sure to deliver all the fun, education, networking and camaraderie you can expect from any in-person NADCA event. The bonus is, you and your technicians can attend without the added travel and hotel expenses or missing time away from your family and the job site.

By Kristy Cohen, NADCA Executive Director

REGISTER TODAY AT nadca.com
IN BRIEF

VERMONT
Efficiency Vermont, an environmental agency focused on reducing carbon emissions and implementing sustainable energy practices across the state, is launching the School Indoor Air Quality Grant Program to help improve HVAC systems in Vermont’s schools. The program was created in collaboration with education leaders and government officials in the state and is intended to use federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to help improve school indoor air quality per national guidance around health and safety.

ISRAEL
The founder of Israel’s Environmental Protection Ministry, Carol Abraham, has turned attention to raising awareness of indoor air pollution. Abraham says that public attention in Israel is generally focused on conventional outdoor health hazards but warns that it’s time for attention to focus on indoor threats, especially in light of more people working from home due to COVID-19 closures. While Abraham is speaking out on the topic, no formal initiative has been developed.

FLORIDA
A study conducted by researchers at the University of Miami found that during the peak months for state-mandated quarantines due to COVID-19, levels of particulate matter and other indoor air pollution increased. While increased indoor air pollution is expected due to people spending more time at home and indoors during quarantine, what surprised researchers was the total increase in fine particulate pollution — sensors recorded an average 30% increase in PM2.5 particulate. In addition, increased use of harsh cleaning and disinfecting chemicals contributed to an increase in ammonia levels found inside homes.

WASHINGTON, DC
Public health agencies around the U.S. and world are calling for building and facility managers of large indoor spaces to upgrade the filtration used in their HVAC systems as a way to combat the spread of the coronavirus. However, HVAC industry leaders warn that supplies of the recommended MERV-13 filters are insufficient to meet mounting demand. Manufacturers agree, saying that there’s no way they can meet the global demand for the filters. MERV-13 filters typically make up just 5% of HVAC filter demand worldwide. That demand has increased 10-fold since the coronavirus pandemic started. Building and facility managers should expect to see significantly longer wait times for MERV-13 filter orders.
On Monday, July 20, 2020, AIISA reached the significant milestone of 100 members. In effect this is 25% more than we had at the beginning of 2020. Along with this there has been a significant increase in a number of ASCS certified technicians to 250 certified technicians — 25% more than we had at the beginning of the year. By any measure this is a considerable landmark. AIISA has been operating since 2004, and partner of NADCA since 2006. At this point in time, AIISA is now NADCA's biggest partner outside the USA.

How Did We Get Here?
Strategically speaking, AIISA has always believed that hygiene, maintenance and the right indoor quality of air is a fundamental part of our way of life. From the outset, company culture has underlined a standard procedure and a final validation of cleaning through accepted standards and global benchmarks, meaning the NADCA Vacuum Test. In order to correctly implement these measures, technicians must be trained to the required level through ASCS certification and, for those attaining an even higher level, CVI certification.

This solid foundation put us in a position, despite the obvious challenges encountered this year, to grow in the face of adversity. Following hospital sanitation procedures successfully carried out during the COVID-19 threat, other companies consequently came to understand that our demonstrated standards work, which helped them recognize the need to be on board with AIISA. This resulted in 170 requests for information in just one month and a total of 20 new members in the last three months. When we talk about cleanliness and hygiene we talk about health. If we also manage to raise awareness of our skills and competence in the market area of technical inspection and the cleaning of HVAC systems, thereby positioning the cost as indispensable in the long term, then all members will both profit and grow. Our aim is to safeguard the health of those operating within indoor environments in which there are HVAC systems. In this way working together ethically and sustainably we will endure now and into the future, cultivating and expanding our ever-growing network.

Special Thanks
All of this would never have been possible without the professional, tireless and patient contribution of Raffaele Caruso, AIISA Managing Director, and Stefania Silvaggi, AIISA Assistant Director. To them goes our deep felt appreciation and gratitude from the AIISA Board of Directors and all Members.

THANK YOU RAFFAELE, THANK YOU STEFANIA

The History of AIISA: Growing Together
AIISA has been operating since 2004 out of the founders desire to provide adequate rules to raise the quality standard in the market of assessment and restoration of HVAC systems. AIISA had already established an important relationship with NADCA. NADCA was a source of inspiration with a tried and tested technical culture.

2006
AIISA and NADCA signed an agreement that allowed AIISA to run ASCS courses and NADCA certification in Italy. AIISA is the first association to provide this service outside the United States.

2007
The first ASCS exam session took place in Rome on October 5, 2007.

Italian legislation promotes the “Technical protocol and Guidelines for the rules of maintenance regarding HVAC systems” and incorporates the NADCA Vacuum Test as a technical reference standard when defining cleanliness. All AIISA members refer to these procedural indicators.

2008
AIISA organized its first annual event, ANAM (AIISA NADCA Annual Meeting). ANAM is now a much anticipated event, which takes place once a year. It offers both training (course and ASCS exams) and technical culture input (keynote speakers). This runs alongside commercial opportunities for sponsors and exhibitors of equipment and services.

2013
The years from 2007 to 2013 were years of growth and consolidation for AIISA. In 2013 NADCA published ACR, the NADCA Standard, and presented the new CVI (Certified Ventilation Inspector) certification course. AIISA published the first version of the AIISA Operating Protocol for the inspection and sanitation of HVAC systems. The AIISA Operating Protocol became an immediate point of reference for operators in the sector. It represents the synthesis of knowledge in the field of hygienic maintenance of HVAC systems. It originates from ACR, the NADCA Standard, and implements Italian and European technical regulations. Another characteristic of the document is that of providing useful knowledge to customers in the drafting of technical specifications in relation to the tender.

Between 2013 and 2016
Many things continued to happen in partnership between NADCA and AIISA:
- Additional training for ASCS certifications.
- The Ventilation System Mold Remediator (VSMR) is introduced in Italy.
- AIISA initiates the professional qualification procedure for ordinary members through IQC certification, verifying the company’s professionalism.
- In view of the new CVI certification, AIISA has been promoting and organizing the new “HVAC engineering training for ASCS” since 2016 with the aim of improving the ASCS knowledge of plant engineering issues.

2017
In 2017, thanks to an agreement with INAIL (National Institute for Occupational Accident Insurance), the brochure “HVAC Systems: Health and Safety in Inspection And Remediation Activities” was published. The document examines the different construction phases, identifying specific risks in each of them. For each risk, the relevant PPE is identified and outlined.

2017 – 2018
AIISA launched the CVI certification in Italy, which ended in 2019 with the revision of course content and the inclusion of the topics related to Italy and Europe (laws, technical standards, etc.).

2019
The innovative project was launched: the Certificate of Hygienic Efficiency of the HVAC System. It is a method of evaluating the hygienic efficiency of HVAC systems and assessing how the HVAC system meets air quality requirements. This is based on the project and how it was made. It is a service that only a CVI certified technician can use.

AIISA also ended the revision of the contents of the ASCS VSMR certification course, with the introduction of specific Italian and European technical contents (laws, technical standards, etc.).
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FOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES, DEADLINES AND OTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT Sarah Black, DucTales Editor, at sblack@ahint.com.

DucTales is seeking submissions from members and industry experts for publication in future issues of the magazine.

ARTICLES MAY BE ABOUT:
- An experience in the field
- How you’ve grown your business
- Tips for other business owners
- Practical tips, tricks and guides for other indoor air quality professionals
- Technology reviews
- Training opportunities
- … and more!

BE FEATURED IN DucTales!

FOR SUBMISSION GUIDELINES, DEADLINES AND OTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT Sarah Black, DucTales Editor, at sblack@ahint.com.
The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors’ National Association (SMACNA), the leader in promoting quality and excellence in the sheet metal and air conditioning industry, announced its member foundation and premier research entity, the New Horizons Foundation, has issued a new project study addressing the productivity impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) across the sheet metal and HVAC industry.

Before the New Horizons Foundation issued its findings, no specific resource and data existed to aid contractors in quantifying the cost impacts of lost productivity working under pandemic-driven work protocols.

“The report highlights important data that can help our members better understand quantitative impacts of the pandemic, accurately advise their customers, and adjust their future project bids as needed, ensuring members have a best practices approach to working in the new normal,” said Guy Gast, Chair of the New Horizons Foundation and President – Iowa Division at The Waldinger Corporation.

Through data collection focused on two key areas: 1) mitigation tracking (the added time on site access, fit-for-duty, personal protective equipment, cleaning and protocols); and 2) productivity benchmarking (lost time in actual performance of the work) of industry professionals, New Horizons Foundation and its partners quantified the magnitude of time invested in pandemic-related productivity losses.

Key findings include:
- Based on information collected from sheet metal, HVAC and mechanical contractors, 8.7% of hours available on projects to do productive work are lost due to mitigation requirements such as personal protective equipment management, cleaning and disinfection, access rules and extra administration time.
- There is a 9.2% average productivity impact — time lost in installation labor — and an 8.7% mitigation impact on sheet metal, HVAC and mechanical contractor productivity as a result of the pandemic, resulting in 17.9% productivity impact.
- There are 85 minutes of lost productivity per day per employee’s eight-hour work period.
- The financial impact of productivity losses can take as long as three to six months to fully play out in a company’s finances.

In addition to highlighting the quantitative impact of the pandemic, the report also includes a roadmap to help members adapt to the new industry landscape — noting that companies with pandemic mitigation processes in place saw lower productivity losses.

The report is a joint effort between SMACNA’s New Horizons Foundation and ELECTRI International, the National Electrical Contractors Association’s (NECA) foundation.
When you think about adding a new employee to your payroll, determine what the actual financial cost of doing so means to your business.

This includes the dollars and cents over and above the basic wage or salary you agree to pay. There’s a rule of thumb that the cost is typically 1.25 to 1.4 times the salary, depending on certain variables. So, if you pay someone a salary of $35,000, your actual costs likely will range from $43,750 to $49,000. Some added employment costs are mandatory, while others are a little harder to pin down. Fortunately, there may be tax savings to offset some of the costs.
Mandatory Added Costs of An Employee

Hiring an employee means considerable payroll tax costs, including:

- Employer share of FICA (7.65% on compensation up to the annual wage base, plus 1.45% on compensation over the annual wage base).
- Federal unemployment tax (FUTA) of $42 per employee. The FUTA tax rate is 6%, but most employers can take a FUTA credit of 5.4%, resulting in a mere 0.6%.
- State unemployment tax, which varies with your state and your claims experience (the more claims made by former employees for unemployment benefits, the higher your state unemployment tax rate will be).

You can learn more about these costs from the IRS and your state revenue department.

You also need to address insurance coverage for your employees. This includes:

- Workers’ compensation. Costs vary from state to state.
- Other insurance that may be needed for the work performed. You may need to have a bond, a type of insurance, for an employee to protect a third party (your customer). For example, a bond may be needed for employees who work in customers’ homes so that homeowners’ valuables are protected from employees’ damage or theft.

Talk with your insurance agent to determine what coverage is needed. While these mandatory added costs can mount up, there’s good news. The costs of payroll taxes and insurance are fully tax deductible.

Other Costs of an Employee

Think about employee benefits you may want or need to offer an employee. Under federal law, only large employers (those with 50 or more full-time and full-time equivalent employees) must offer health insurance or pay a penalty. However, there is a federal tax credit for small employers that choose to provide at least 50% of the cost of health coverage.

Offering retirement savings plans, such as 401(k) plans, to employees isn’t mandatory under federal law, but employers may choose to do so. The cost of employer contributions needs to be factored into the total wage package.

Federal law requires employers with at least 50 employees to offer unpaid family and medical leave. But a number of states have paid leave laws. Some put the cost on employees (through wage withholding), while others require employers to share in the cost. And the District of Columbia puts the entire burden on employers.

These are only some of the employee benefits you can offer. Learn more about tax deductibility as well as exemption from payroll taxes for various fringe benefits in IRS Publication 15-B.

In addition to fringe benefits, there is a slew of other employment-related costs that may be difficult to quantify. These include:

- The cost of recruitment, including background checks and drug testing where applicable.
- The cost of initial and ongoing training.
- Miscellaneous items, such as uniforms and protective gear where needed.

Final Thought

Add up the costs to see whether your business can afford to add an employee to your staff. If your business is growing and you need more help, you can’t afford to NOT hire more workers. But knowing the cost will help you budget accordingly.

NADCA’S MULTIPLE EMPLOYER PLAN (MEP) FOR 401(k) SAVINGS

An MEP is a retirement plan for businesses with a common interest, but ones that are not commonly owned or affiliated. As the MEP sponsor, NADCA maintains the master contract for the retirement plan. Being part of an MEP allows you to offer retirement savings to your employees in a way that can also benefit your bottom line. An MEP can help business owners by giving their employees the opportunity to:

- Set aside tax-deferred income for retirement
- Reduce their immediate taxable income
- Qualify for any employer-matching contributions
- Make investing for their retirement automatic
- Learn about saving, investing and budgeting for their retirement

To learn more about this exclusive member benefit at nadca.com.
Every time a consumer makes a decision to buy (or not to buy) a product or engage a service, that decision is influenced by many different factors, all of which cumulatively make up the overall buying experience.

By Laura Petrolino
While product, service, messaging, visual brand and overall communications strategy are all crucial pieces on their own, even more important is how they work together to create an overall customer experience.

An effective buyer’s journey maximizes this experience. It integrates all the working pieces in a way that educates, builds confidence, provides motivation and proactively addresses customers’ needs.

Unfortunately, this is a difficult thing to see in context.

We’re often so close to our product or service we suffer from the curse of knowledge. We aren’t fully able to see how our customers experience the buying process. We don’t consider the buyer’s journey—nor the many different paths it can take.

In the ever-changing digital world it is important to constantly review your buyer’s journey. Review the details, as well as what it looks like in totality.

Unfortunately, because there are so many ways a buyer can journey from discovery to sell, this task can often seem overwhelming.

Break it down into the following stages to make sure you cover all aspects.

**Buyer’s Journey Stage 1: Create Awareness. Cultivate Research**

During the initial stages of your buyer’s journey, they become aware they have a need. This might be a pain that needs resolution, it might be a desire they want to fulfill, it might be a goal they need help reaching.

They might be aware of what the actual need is. Or often they will just be aware of the problem but not yet be able to connect the need. Additionally, they might isolate a problem, but it’s not actually the right one.

It’s important you understand the needs your buyer commonly comes to you with and the context in which those needs exist. That will affect how you approach your buyer in these early stages, including:

- The tone and voice you use
- The imagery you provide
- The educational content you lead with
- The level of engagement you request from them

While the buyer recognizes their need at this stage, they might not yet feel it requires a purchase or investment to resolve. This is why content that helps a buyer diagnose and solve a problem is crucial in the awareness stage. Your goals at this stage are awareness, education and developing credibility. All of which work together.

Ask yourself:
1. How will the people who need us find us?
2. Does our messaging and keyword strategy target the right prospects? Because it doesn’t matter how many people you bring into your marketing funnel, if they aren’t the right people you are just spinning your wheels.
3. What channels does our buyer use to find us? Google? (72% of buyers turn to Google first.) Social media? Word of mouth sites? Influencers?
4. What is their experience through each of those channels? Is it consistent and integrated throughout? Studies have shown about 57% of the purchase decision is complete before a customer ever interacts with you.
5. Does our content clearly define what problems we can solve for our prospects? Once they find you they need to know that the content you provide is relevant to their needs.

**Buyer’s Journey Stage 2: The Consideration Stage**

Once your prospect understands what they need, they will enter the consideration stage of the buyer’s
journey. They’ll start to wade through all the details and choices they’ve learned about in the awareness and research stage.

This is when you will clearly help them identify the details they need to consider to make the best decision — even if the results of that choice don’t lead to you.

Ask yourself:
6. Do we help our buyers prioritize criteria that’s important to them? Through content on-site or behind landing pages, such as lead magnets of checklists, quizzes, or frequently-asked questions.
7. Do we provide an easy way for them to have hands-on experience or live interaction? Sometimes a buyer just wants to go to you directly. Do you provide a demo or the ability to connect with a customer service rep quickly and easily?
8. Are there clear calls-to-action to help them take their preferred next step? Whether that be to request a demo, contact you in some way for more info, chat live, watch video testimonials or download a more detailed white paper or case study.
9. Is all information consistent? More than 70% of buyers return to Google multiple times during their research. You need to make sure every new piece of information they receive about you is consistent and supports what they learned previously.
10. Do we anticipate their questions and answer them through content? Content should help them understand what they need and how you might be able to serve those needs.

### Buyer’s Journey Stage 3: Confirm Return on Investment

Your buyer is almost there, but before they make a final decision, most buyers need reassurance they can trust you and that their purchase will be worth the investment (whether that be time or money, or both). The justification stage of the buyer’s journey supplies the reassurance they need.

Ask yourself:
11. Do we supply content that clearly shows return-on-investment? This might be case studies, clear data, testimonials or any other type of proof-of-concept content.

### Buyer’s Journey Stage 4: Decision Time!

Your buyer has finally made it and it’s time for them to make a decision. You can easily lose an engaged and interested prospect at the end of their buyer’s journey if you don’t continue to provide support at this stage. Remember: consistency is key throughout the journey.

The immediate pre/post conversion time is crucial for setting the stage for customer loyalty, satisfaction and creating potential long-term ambassadors for your business. Make sure you make it count.

Ask yourself:
12. Do we provide decision-stage prospects the same customer service we provide early-stage prospects? Don’t drop them off at the top of the mountain — help them to the other side.
13. Is the timeline for on-boarding, implementation, or start-up effective and efficient? Do you provide a clear timeline for them from the start so expectations are clear and they can plan accordingly?
14. Do we have a clear process to answer and resolve any start-up questions or concerns? Process is key at this point in time, both for the new customer and your team.
15. Do we provide transition support and guidance? Is there someone dedicated to this transition or implementation time to help guide new customers through and provide for their needs? Your job is to make this process as easy as possible. Provide support, resources, project management, and even help them with communications around the transition.

Analyze. Improve. Repeat.

The best strategy is to answer these questions yourself once and then go through the buyer’s journey in real-time and answer them again. You’ll most likely find discrepancies between what you thought the experience was and what it actually is.

Creating a buyer experience that generates, nurtures and converts prospects into happy customers is no easy or quick process, but a successful buyer’s journey will not only bring you new customers through the process itself, but also lay the foundation for loyal brand ambassadors and continue business growth.

Laura Petrolino is chief marketing officer for Spin Sucks, an integrated marketing communications firm that provides strategic counsel and professional development for in-house and agency communications teams. She is a weekly contributor for their award-winning blog of the same name.
Cash flow is an integral part of any small business, but factors outside an owner’s control — like the economy, COVID-19 or even the weather — can affect it.

Although business owners do their best to predict expenses and revenues, one in five small business owners find cash flow to be a common or continuing problem, according to the National Small Business Poll on Cash Flow, conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB).

“There are a lot of unforeseen events that are hard to plan for,” says Holly Wade, NFIB’s Director of Research and Policy Analysis. In addition to the obvious challenges caused by COVID-19 closures, business owners are often navigating a host of smaller events affecting their business. “It could be something like construction in the area that’s impacting traffic near a business in a certain way,” said Wade.

Here are some ways business owners struggle with cash flow and how they manage their challenges.

The Root of the Issue
On paper, businesses can be profitable but still have cash flow problems. According to NFIB’s cash flow poll, the three main causes of cash flow issues include a difference in timing between expenses and receivables (28%); unexpected variations in sales (21%); and seasonality (20%).

While cash flow issues are particularly common for seasonal businesses — especially if their busy times are not as strong as expected — seasonal changes such as weather or slowed business during offseason can affect any company.

To offset cash flow problems, business owners will need to bring in more cash, spend less money or a combination of both. The most common tactic used by business owners is stepping up collection efforts (55.3%) to encourage customers to pay. Depending on the circumstances, this might mean sending out invoice reminders or offering discounts for early payment.

Addressing Cash Flow Challenges
In addition to stepping up collection efforts, business owners said they’ve scaled back their purchases (30.2%), drawn on their personal financial resources (17.2%), adjusted scheduled payments (16.5%), and borrowed money (16.4%). Of those who borrowed money, 68% borrowed from a bank.

Business lines of credit can be particularly useful — 56% of owners responded that they have an open line of credit for business use — in that you only pay interest on what you draw from the line, as opposed to a term loan, which you must repay each month. Wade strongly recommends that business owners establish a relationship with a local bank or credit union in case they need financing at some point.

“Maintaining a good cash flow is about navigating the ups and downs and having relationships in place, whether it’s with a bank or a mentor, to work through the tougher times,” she says.

Cash flow struggles can be more common for newer businesses, Wade adds, because those owners haven’t gone through the trial and error it takes to establish a healthy balance. New businesses also have to spend a lot of money before they start making money.

No matter the age of the business, it’s always a good idea to plan by saving and making connections. Wade also recommends that business owners reach out to their local SCORE chapter, a nonprofit organization that offers mentorship and resources to small businesses, for advice.

“Maintaining a good cash flow is about navigating the ups and downs and having relationships in place, whether it’s with a bank or a mentor, to work through the tougher times,” she says.

Connect with experienced NADCA member business owners through NADCA’s Member Mentor Program. Visit nadca.com/member-mentor-program to learn more.
DISINFECTION
THE TRUTH ABOUT

By Kevin Howard
Air duct cleaners must carefully handle customer requests for disinfecting and sanitizing services.

As we continue living with COVID-19, more duct cleaners are fielding calls about sanitizing and disinfecting ductwork to help combat the virus in addition to regular cleaning requests. While sanitizing and disinfecting ductwork seems like a no brainer to the untrained consumer — especially in light of guidance from the World Health Organization about airborne transmission of the coronavirus — what, exactly, constitutes disinfecting and sanitizing ductwork? Touting disinfection and sanitizing services for air duct cleaning, or accepting a job to do just that, creates a problematic situation for air duct cleaners that must be navigated carefully.

The Industry’s Stance

Mark Zarzeczny, ASCS, CVI, NADCA President, has seen online advertising to sanitize and disinf ect ductwork — something that HVAC contractors legally cannot say in the United States. Other countries, like Italy, allow these terms when referring to certain types of duct cleaning techniques.

There are clear regulations regarding the use of chemicals — often used in a disinfection process — in duct cleaning. “I see a lot of people out there saying that they’re able to magically throw a chemical in the ductwork,” Zarzeczny said. The safety of these chemicals, and the proper application, is a critical component of effective and legal use.

If antimicrobials, including sanitizer, disinfectants, and fungicides are used in a manner inconsistent with their labeling, this is considered a violation of federal law in the United States under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

NADCA worked with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other parties to create the white paper, “Using Chemical Products in HVAC Systems: NADCA Provides Guidance,” which gives HVAC technicians guidance when it comes to sanitizing and disinfecting ductwork. It specifically addresses the use of chemicals during HVAC system cleaning and provides guidance for consumers, regulators and remediation professionals. It also gives readers an overview of products and cleaning techniques related to chemical product applications in HVAC system maintenance.

According to the white paper, a sanitizer is often misunderstood and misused. A sanitizer is a substance or mixture of substances that kills a high percentage of bacteria on a surface (99.9%), but not all of it. The EPA defines a sanitizer as a substance or mixture of substances that reduces the population of a bacterium in the inanimate environment, in “significant numbers, but does not destroy or eliminate all bacteria.”

Similarly, the legal definition of disinfectant states that the chemical “eliminates a specific species of infectious or other undesired microorganism, but not necessarily bacterial spores, in the inanimate environment only.” Disinfectants are useful to combat fungi, viruses and bacteria.
While ductwork may be sanitized and disinfected, within the United States duct cleaners can not say with 100% certainty that the work done is wholly clean. "That’s the difficulty,” Zarzeczny said. “It’s so simple and it’s so difficult, because you can be utilizing these things because they are registered as sanitizers and disinfectants. But, are we doing 100% of sanitizing or disinfecting? I’m not so certain about that."

As for those who are falsely advertising their work, Zarzeczny is quick to call out the problems with their claims. “I’ve seen people use foggers and just spray it in a return and they’re charging an awful lot of money," Zarzeczny said. “They’re saying that it’s addressing the whole system, which it’s not. I’m just passionate about these people. They’re acting fraudulently, and they’re giving our industry a bad name.”

Best Practices for the Use of Chemical Products

Both the white paper and Zarzeczny recognize that differences of opinion exist on how to manage the use of chemical products and the expert decisions made by industry professionals on whether a chemical application is advised based on the unique circumstances surrounding the system. "Our members should utilize the best possible methodology and technique in order to remove contamination and also to make sure that the end user is protected," Zarzeczny said.

While NADCA’s official stance is that source removal of contaminants is still the best method for cleaning and decontaminating HVAC systems, chemical application may be used for a wide variety of reasons. If a technician turns to a chemical product during cleaning, Zarzeczny advises that the use must comply with the product label. “It’s important that a user of any chemical being utilized out in the field is very aware that they comply with what that label states that chemical is to be used for, and not to use it for anything else but that,” said Zarzeczny. Chemical products are not necessary for source removal, but they may enhance the process.

“There are also some great machines out there that deliver chemicals that are registered with the EPA for HVAC use, so technicians may find that helpful during a job,” Zarzeczny said.

Educating Customers

Educating customers about source removal and the efficacy of the equipment and techniques is an important part of any job. “I always tell my customers what we’re going to do. The first thing we’re going to do is what we do best, source removal,” Zarzeczny said. “So, utilizing our equipment correctly, and just based on the cleaning alone, we’re going to remove a lot of the contamination.”

If using chemical application, and depending on the circumstances, occupants may need to leave the building to allow for adequate ventilation and time to allow any fumes to dissipate. It may take anywhere from two to eight hours for fumes or scents to fully clear out of the building.

Zarzeczny also advises explaining how chemicals and antimicrobials need time to settle to do their job. “For instance, when you spray something on the surface in your kitchen, if you read the directions on that particular chemical or cleaning product, it often says to let it sit a few minutes. The same is true for cleaning agents utilized in ductwork and on components.”

It is imperative that technicians not claim to be disinfecting or sanitizing ductwork; because the chemicals are not 100% effective, the end result will not be disinfected or sanitized ductwork.

In addition, technicians should advise customers that that once the system is turned back on that the ductwork may become contaminated once again due to a variety of reasons outside of the technician’s control. “Once you turn that system on, we cannot control it because you have a return, you have fresh air intakes that brings air into those systems and it can certainly recontaminate your ductwork,” Zarzeczny said.

As customers increasingly request sanitizing and disinfection services, air duct cleaners must be aware that their services, legally, may not be sold as such. In cases where chemicals are used to enhance source removal, the communications about what those chemicals can and cannot do and the responsible and appropriate use of those chemicals make all the difference in doing a job to the NADCA standard.
Have a Plan for Covid-19

✔ Protect your Employees

✔ Protect your Business
  • Insurance
  • Service Contract language
  • Government Resources

✔ Know which tools can help your Customers
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  • Disinfecting

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Former NADCA management partner of 23 years is remembered as a pioneer and most notably to NADCA members, as a man who took on this start-up association of vendors and guided the industry and the association through its early beginnings. He was instrumental in the early success of this budding association.

Kenneth John Sufka passed away on April 3, 2020 in Washington, DC where he resided for the past 45 years. He was born to Theodore F. and Geraldine (Coenen) Sufka on September 15, 1949 in St. Cloud, Minnesota. “Kenny,” he was known to all of us, will be remembered as a charismatic, caring and a loving person to his family and all of his friends. His engaging personality was truly one of a kind! His presence was felt, and the light was brighter the moment he entered the room. He was a very well-read man. Whether it was history, sports or politics, Kenny was able to articulate on any subject matter.

He was a sports enthusiast who very much enjoyed playing golf with family and friends, especially his friends at Lansdowne Golf and Country Club.

He attended St. Cloud Technical High School and attended college once he completed his military service. Kenny enlisted in the US Army immediately following high school and was a highly decorated soldier for his distinguishing service in the Vietnam War. Kenny’s favorite word that he lived by was “Freedom.”

He married his high school sweetheart Linda Tattle, and Kenny’s love for her never diminished.

He had an exceptional career beginning with his work as an account executive for Association Management Inc. in Washington, DC. Under the leadership of the President of AMI and his very good friend Chuck Perry, Kenny became one of the most talented in the association management industry. From there he utilized his entrepreneurial skills and founded Sufka & Associates in 1984. He was entirely responsible for the success of this company until his retirement in 2019.

He was preceded in death by his father, Theodore “Pitch”; mother, Geraldine “Dolly”; and brothers Theodore “Teddy,” Jerome “Omie,” Joseph “Joey” and Andrew “Andy.” He is survived by Peter (Terry) Sufka, Constance “Connie” (Dave) Then, Patrick “Pat” (Vickie) Sufka, Frank Sufka, Thomas “Tom” Sufka and Caroline Mathison, along with several nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews.

Due to the pandemic, there will be a service held in St. Cloud, Minnesota later this year. Details will be announced as soon as available. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Diabetes Association, 171 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311.
**NADCA Working for You**
NADCA committee members have been working hard to provide members with tools they can use to be successful and get the most out of their NADCA membership.

**FALL TECHNICAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**
Led by Mike Dexter and Kehau Mendes, the Fall Technical Conference Committee works diligently all year long to build a conference program of hands-on, technical sessions at every level. The 2020 event was set to be no different — until COVID-19 created obstacles that ultimately led to canceling the in-person conference.

Understanding that it would be hard to imagine going a full year without the Fall Tech we’ve all come to know and love, the committee has been working hard to transform the event into a virtual experience like no other. It’ll have all the education, fun and camaraderie like any in-person NADCA event, but without the hassle and added expenses of traveling and missing time away from the job site. And the cherry on top? The MC of the event will be our friend, Bob Krell!

**Sunbelt Rentals**
Sunbelt Rentals offers significantly discounted rates on equipment rental, emergency response for after-hours calls, online account management and much more for NADCA members. Log in to the “Members Only” section on nadca.com to access the Sunbelt Rentals Affinity Program and take advantage of the savings today!

**VISIT NADCA.COM TO REGISTER**
Maintain CERTIFICATIONS with NADCA Webinars

After studying, taking classes and passing a certification exam, the work of ASCS certificants isn’t done: You must work to maintain that certification by completing six continuing education credits (CECs) every year. This requirement serves an important purpose, ensuring that those who hold NADCA certifications are truly at the top of their game, investing the time and effort into learning the latest trends and best practices in their industry. NADCA offers several ways to complete the required CECs each year, one of them being recorded webinars available on the NADCA website.

CECs on Your Schedule
While NADCA also offers live webinars on a variety of topics, recorded webinars allow users to view the webinar on their own schedule, when it’s most convenient for them. Recorded webinars are available any time, anywhere, and all provide a minimum of two CECs.

How to Access the Webinars
All of NADCA’s webinars are housed under the Education tab on NADCA’s website. From the home page at nadca.com, select “Webinars” under the Education tab.

Scroll down to find Recorded Webinars. Click the title or the “+” sign next to each title to read more about each webinar. When you have decided which webinar you’d like to take, click “Add to Cart” and complete the online purchase. You may be prompted to log in to the NADCA website to complete the purchase.

You do not have to complete the webinar at the time of purchase, but instead can complete the webinar and quiz when it is most convenient for you.

MORE OPTIONS FOR EARNING CECs
Visit nadca.com/hvac-education-training to discover all the ways you can earn CECs and maintain your NADCA certifications.

Earn CECs
After each webinar, users are required to pass a quiz to earn their CECs. Upon passing the quiz, users get a certificate of completion that is submitted to NADCA to earn the CECs for that webinar.
The NADCA Board of Directors may choose to elect a person or persons for induction into the NADCA Hall of Fame each year at the Annual Conference. The Board is currently accepting nominations for individuals who meet the following criteria.

Nominees must have contributed to NADCA in an outstanding fashion.**

Examples include those who have been recognized for their talents or otherwise demonstrated a high degree of commitment to the industry and/or the association; those who have offered exceptional contributions that have furthered the growth, reputation and character of the air duct cleaning industry; nominees should possess an impeccable record of respect and integrity in the industry; could have made a historical contribution to the air duct cleaning industry, or developed a new product or cleaning process that significantly impacted the industry.

*Sitting Board members are precluded from nomination to NADCA's Hall of Fame. **Nominees are NOT required to be NADCA members.

Please note that nomination submissions are only valid for the current year. If you wish to re-nominate a candidate in future years, you will need to provide a new submission.

Nominee Contact Information

Name

Company Name (if appropriate)

Address

City State Zip Country

Phone Email Address

Reason(s) for Nomination (attach separate sheet if you require more space)

Your Name Company

Email Phone

Your relationship to the Nominee (if any)

Return this form to NADCA Headquarters by September 20, 2020

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Or complete your submission online at nadca.com/hall-fame-call-nominations
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