

## HVACR insights



## Five Ways to Create Trust

Communication and marketing tips to help build long-term relationships with your customers.

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Homeowners typically don't think about their HVAC system until there's a weird noise or a breakdown on a hot day. They know heating and cooling are important to their family's comfort, but they just expect it to work. When it doesn't, most people don't know where to start.

HVAC is fairly complex, so you shouldn't assume customers know what a SEER rating means or even how often they should change a filter. By explaining their system breakdown and solution in simple, non-technical language, you'll help them feel informed and in good hands.

Below are five additional tips, based on dealer best practices that will also build trust and lay the foundation for long-term relationships with your customers.

**Be a great listener**—The most important factor for building trust is being a great listener. Avoid starting with a sales pitch about your products and services. Instead, make sure you understand the problem from the homeowner's perspective. Take on the role of a trusted adviser by raising the questions homeowners don't bring up themselves, probably because they don't know to ask. You can prepare a checklist to guide the conversation. Questions you might ask are: What are your family's temperature preferences throughout the home? What are your utility bill concerns? Would you like remote access to control your system? What other concerns do you have?

As the HVAC expert, this is your time to shine. Discuss the options and help the customer make a choice that fits their family's home and lifestyle. When the job is done, the homeowner will live with their HVAC system for a decade or more. If you build trust from the start, the relationship will last.

**Be the go-to expert**—When homeowners have a question about their HVAC, they often start with the Internet. The information they find online may or may not be accurate. During your consultation, you can help provide a better understanding of what they've read or heard.

You can also build your own online presence and become a go-to source for reliable HVAC information. Create an online social networking channel and post short videos focusing on topics like preparing your HVAC for summer, fall or winter; the importance of filter changes; the role of HVAC in improving

air quality; and other topics you know about. This makes your expertise easily accessible and digestible for homeowners.

Make sure your website is up-to-date. Create a social media page if you don't have one. Respond right away to all feedback, positive and negative, to demonstrate that you're committed to customer satisfaction.

Consider sending out periodic emails to customers with tips and tricks for maintaining their systems. Also, take advantage of OEM cooperative marketing programs to elevate awareness of your company.

**Create a brag book**—Develop a "brag book" to set yourself apart from competitors. This is a concise handout that highlights examples of your work and your array of product offerings and services. Don't be afraid to include references from your loyal customers. It should also include your certifications and licensing qualifications. Leave it behind for your customers to reference as they make HVAC decisions.

**Offer discount incentives**—A discount on the first-year maintenance agreement is a perk for the homeowner and ensures you will be in touch with them at least once per year. The discount will pay for itself as it creates satisfying, long-term relationships with your customers and encourages referrals.

**Stay in touch**—Take advantage of the one-year milestone as an opportunity to re-engage with the homeowner. Send them a quick card or email to remind them regular maintenance will keep their unit operating properly and update them on your new products and services. They'll appreciate this non-evasive way of staying in contact. While your business depends on selling HVAC systems, the ultimate goal is to create lasting relationships built on trust and sustained through regular communication. 📧

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