

The Official Publication of the Society of Cleaning and Restoration Technicians

Society of Cleaning and Restoration Technicians

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From the President's Pen

You may remember from my last article that I had just returned from South Texas after Hurricane Dolly and I was excited about going to Connections in Las Vegas. Well, unfortunately, I didn't make it. However, I understand that it was a very good convention and everybody had a great time.

Right after Dolly hit South Texas, it wasn't long until Gustav ravaged portions of Louisiana and Mississippi. We stayed put, as it wasn't bad enough for us to leave our location. So we continued to supply equipment to those in need and to work with one of the fine commercial contractors that we are closely affiliated. So we sat it out.

On September 12th we were put on alert by Gerloff Companies out of San Antonio, Texas and also by Watermark Restoration out of Birmingham, Alabama. Both of these companies are SCRT Members. Both of these companies had clients in and around the Houston area. Then on September 14th we were called in by both Gerloff and Watermark for additional equipment. One of the greatest things that can come out of being a member of an organization like SCRT is you have likeminded professional people that you can count on when you need help.

Gerloff Companies had wet and damaged commercial structures from Beaumont to Bay City and back to Houston. Watermark Restoration had a large hospital and a seven story building adjacent to the hospital in West Houston. My team had the opportunity to work closely with Mike Donahoo and Shane McMillan the owners of Watermark in drying the seven story building.

Both Gerloff Companies and Watermark Restoration are the epitome of professionals in the restoration field. The number one item on their agenda is satisfied customers. They both realize that there are any number of people in the industry that may have the same



knowledge and the same equipment, but it is how you address your customers' needs that make the difference. It is not that they never make mistakes, but it is what they do to remedy the problem.

These companies are the kind of people that make up SCRT around the world.

I heard good reports about the entire Connections week from the meetings, seminars, trade show, and IICRC certification classes at the end of the week. One of those meetings was with the Connections Board of Directors which spent considerable time meeting with a meeting facilitator Chuck Rumbarger dealing with the possibility of a national trade association. This is a real topic of discussion in the industry and especially the leaders and boards of the 13 trade associations.

Probably the most amazing aspect of all of this is that the Connections Board of Directors is really trying to work as a team in all aspects of what they oversee. There are differences of opinions, but there is beginning to be a real unity in doing what is best for the entire industry. Obviously, my first allegiance is to SCRT and then to the rest of the

How to Find a Clean and Healthy Hotel

By *International Executive Housekeepers Association*

Occasional news stories on hotel cleanliness — or lack thereof — reveal that top dollar doesn't always buy a clean and healthy home away from home.

To avoid the gross-out factor — and perhaps to skip contracting an illness — on your vacation or business trip, you might consider calling ahead for more than the nightly rates. Here are a few probing questions to ask:

Does the establishment's housekeeping director/manager know what he or she is doing?

You can be more polite than that, but consider this: While cleaning is generally considered a low-education job, it involves microbiology and judicious use of pesticides and cleaning chemicals. It's not enough for a manager merely to understand these subjects; she must have the leadership skills to train and motivate a team of people to clean your potential room properly. So how does he get the expertise required?

Good old-fashioned education. Associations, such as the International Executive Housekeepers Association (IEHA), provide access to education and resources in the art of clean.

Answers to look for here: The housekeeping director/manager is a registered executive housekeeper or R.E.H. for which a bachelor degree is necessary. Or, she is a certified executive housekeeper or C.E.H. or is pursuing less formal programs, which also mandate hitting the books — such as IEHA's curriculum involving 330 hours of intense study on subjects such as pest control, laundry and linen, housekeeping techniques and continuous improvement. Is the hotel certified?

CIMS (Cleaning Industry Management Standard) certification is the brainchild of the ISSA (International Sanitary Supply Association) and several cleaning-related associations, including IEHA, and ensures a baseline of standards. Your candidate hotel has probably built on elements of that foundation to form its own benchmarks, but it's nice to know you can count on a minimum

criteria. In the case of CIMS, this means the establishment has numerous checks and balances in place, like written room cleaning instructions and documented employee training.

Getting specific, how does the housekeeping department ensure germ-free glassware and coffee mugs?

A recent news exposé videotaped hotel housekeepers violating health codes. They were cleaning the drinking glasses with toxic window cleaner right in the room — or not really cleaning them at all.

Answers to look for: While individually wrapped, disposable cups lack romance, they're a pretty good bet for clean and healthy. Alternatively, the housekeeping staff should be able to name the employees who daily gather dirty goblets, glasses and mugs, cart them to the dishwasher and furnish the rooms with a fresh, sanitary supply. Bonus question: Do they use triple sheeting?

Not extremely widely employed, triple sheeting uses one bottom sheet, one top sheet under the blanket and one top sheet over the blanket. Sandwiching the blanket or comforter gives it extra protection from human contact and allows for more frequent laundering of bedding than use of a large, bulky bedspread. ■

President's Pen (from page 1) industry, but there are 12 other minds with the same attitude. During that meeting I was elected Connection's Vice-president. Just goes to show you that if you are on a volunteer board you shouldn't miss any meetings because you will get elected to some position! Just kidding of course. I am very much honored to be elected to that position. Anytime I can represent SCRT at a higher level, I'm honored to do so.

SCRT has its next board of directors meeting in Atlanta on November 15th. Some of the topics of this meeting will include election of Officers, discussion of the National Trade Association and how we can grow SCRT.

Don't forget about the drawing for the Caribbean cruise. Just sign up a new member or two and you could be taking a great vacation this Winter.

Until next time
Gary ■

Good Customer Service Alone Doesn't Win Referrals

By Ivan Misner

Don't wait around for your excellent service to pay off. Instead, build a network for word-of-mouth marketing.

Many entrepreneurs are under the impression that if they provide good customer service, people will refer business to them. Just like that. However, that's only part of the picture. Sure, customer service is important. But good customer service is just a prerequisite--a minimum expectation. Think about it. Would you refer somebody to me if I provided lousy customer service? Of course not. Your own credibility would suffer.

Good customer service is part of what the prospect expects when you refer him to me. If you're recommending me to him, I must be something pretty special, right? And if I want to keep that customer coming back, I'll need to give him more than the minimum expectation of simply good customer service. I'll need to provide great, outstanding, memorable customer service to really stand out.

People don't refer business to you because you meet their minimum expectations. They refer you because they expect you to do a good job which, in turn, enhances their relationship with the person they are referring. They may not even be doing business with you, so customer service may not be an issue with them personally--but of course they expect you to provide outstanding value to the prospect. They want the prospect to come back to them and say, "Thanks for sending me to Joe Trueblue. He had just what I needed, and the service was great. You sure know some outstanding people!"

Your referral source has a strong interest in making sure everyone comes out a winner. She knows that when the happy customer comes back to you again and again, you're more likely to send business her way when the need arises. The great service you provide to the customer comes back to you

in the form of a stronger relationship with your referral partner.

One of my colleagues is Bob Burg, author of *Endless Referrals*, and here is his take on what it takes to receive referrals consistently:

We all know of companies and salespeople that couldn't stay in business, despite having superior products. We're also familiar with companies and salespeople that were remarkably successful with just an average product.

Of course, having an excellent product is important. However, technology today has made that commonplace and expected. In order to have qualified prospects "beating a path to your door," you must be able to network and to market yourself and your product or service in such a way that it makes people want to do business with you and refer you to others. You need to provide them with such a great buying experience that they know they made the right decision. However, to get them there in the first place, it's the networking and marketing that's most important.

Being in a referral group is one of several important parts of an effective word-of-mouth marketing plan. One of the things these groups emphasize is that you need to be very specific in what you do and in how your product or service is uniquely valuable. If you use general terms, you're at the lowest level of competitive effectiveness. And if you say, "customer service," that's not what people are buying.

As I have pointed out many times, unhappy customers are 11 times more likely to talk about your business than happy customers. Good customer service only reduces negative word-of-mouth; it doesn't necessarily increase your business through positive word-of-mouth.

If you provide outstanding customer service, and your referral partner has experienced that as a customer, it can definitely increase the number of referrals you receive. As already mentioned, good customer service is a prerequisite for cultivating your referral network . . . but great customer service to a referral partner can be a jump start.

Referral networks and other referral settings often feature third-party testimonials, in which someone who has used your prod-



uct or service (in this case, your referral partner) tells the group, "I've used Moe's products, and I'm here to tell you, they're the best I've ever found." Hearing it directly from someone they know is often enough to get people to believe it and act on that belief.

Testimonials are crucial to the referral process, especially within referral groups. Never underestimate the power of the third-party testimonial. When you stand up and say, "I've used this person, and you should use this person too, because . . ." and then go on to explain why, it changes how people view that service provider. Your experiences become my experiences. This makes it much easier for people to refer that provider—even if they haven't personally used his services yet.

Called the "Father of Modern Networking" by CNN, Dr. Ivan Misner is a New York Times bestselling author. He is the founder and chairman of BNI, the world's largest business networking organization. ■

Flu Shot: Influenza Vaccine and Side Effects

Who should get the flu shot?

An annual flu shot is recommended for anyone who wants to reduce his or her chances of getting the flu. The flu shot is highly recommended for certain high-risk individuals who are more prone to flu complications, such as pneumonia. The CDC defines higher-risk people as the following:

- all children 6 to 18 years of age
- people 50 years or older
- women who will be pregnant during the flu season
- people who live in nursing homes
- adults with chronic heart or lung conditions, including asthma, or with any condition that weakens the immune system
 - household contacts and caregivers of any children younger than 6 months of age (these children are too young to receive the flu vaccine)
- any person in close contact with someone in a high-risk group, such as health care workers and household contacts

Exciting New Start for WOOLSAFE in North America

WOOLSAFE and Wools of New Zealand, USA have merged their approved Wool Carpet Cleaner's networks. The two networks of carpet and rug cleaning companies in North America have combined to form an invaluable new resource of wool and fine fabric cleaning expertise for both consumers and professionals. Companies will now be listed on both the www.woolsafeusa.org and www.fernmark.com/en_us websites.

They are called the **WOOLSAFE Approved and Wools of New Zealand Accredited Wool Care Specialists**. They are arranged by state and city and cover the whole of the USA and important parts of Canada.

Also, the WOOLSAFE Organization is very pleased to announce that Ruth Travis, President of R L Seminars Inc., has agreed to become WOOLSAFE's Director in North America. She succeeds Guy de Lacrose, who resigned from the post in January 2008.

Ruth is immediate past President of the IICRC and former Society of Cleaning and Restoration Technicians President.

Ruth is an expert in area rug cleaning and regularly teaches the IICRC-Approved Rug Cleaning Technician Course. She is an IICRC-Approved CRT Instructor. And at the last IICRC Board of Director's meeting she and Jeff Bishop were approved to teach the IICRC-approved Senior Carpet Inspector course.

She is also an IICRC-Certified Carpet Inspector specializing in color correction. Ruth is a consultant to individual cleaning companies and carpet mills, and works closely with the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) in Dalton, as well as ISSA, Housekeeping Channel and Association of Residential Cleaning Services International.

Ruth, who is based in Franklin, Tennessee, operated a fabric care service for 13 years where she performed fabric cleaning, protection, and inspection and color correction services for her clients, interior designers and carpet mills. After selling her share of the business to her business partner in 2001, Ruth shifted her focus to training and instructing others in the fabric care industry.

For more information about WoolSafe go to: www.woolsafeusa.com. ■

The Paradox of Our Time

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers; wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families; more conveniences, but less time; we have more degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment; more experts, but more problems; more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get angry too quickly, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life; we've added years to life, not life to years.

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor. We've conquered outer space, but not inner space; we've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul; we've split the atom, but not our prejudice.

We write more, but learn less; we plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait; we have higher incomes, but lower morals; we have more food, but less appeasement; we build more computers to hold more information to produce more copies than ever, but have less communication; we've become long on quantity, but short on quality.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion; tall men, and short character; steep profits, and shallow relationships. These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare; more leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw away morality, one-night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the show window and nothing in the stockroom; a time when technology has brought this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to make a difference, or to just hit "Skip Ahead"...

By Dr. Bob Moorehead, former pastor of Seattle's Overlake Christian Church. (He retired in 1998 after 29 years in that post). The essay appeared under the title "The Paradox of Our Age" in Words Aptly Spoken, Dr. Moorehead's 1995 collection of prayers, homilies, and monologues used in his sermons and radio broadcasts. ■

Want to take a Cruise Vacation in February?

Here's how! Help grow the SCRT by signing up new SCRT members and earn the chance to win a grand vacation for your effort.

All SCRT members who sign up new members between October 1, 2008 and January 1, 2009 will be eligible for the drawing for the Water Strategies cruise for two on the Carnival "Glory." The more new members you sign up, the better your chances of winning as each time you sign up a new member your name will be submitted. So if you sign up one member, your name goes into the drawing one time . . . ten new members . . . ten chances of winning.

The cruise is scheduled for February 21 - February 28, 2009 and will sail from Port Canaveral (Cocoa Beach, FL) and cruise to Cozumel, Mexico, Belize City, Belize, Costa Maya, Mexico and Nassau, Bahamas ports of call. The value of the cruise is \$1800.00 for an inside cabin for two. Travel to and from the port of embarkation isn't included.

When you sign up a new member be sure to fill in your name as the Sponsor on the application which you can get from SCRT Headquarters by calling 800-949-4728. Then just send the application to SCRT Headquarters @ 234 Cedric Street, Leesburg, GA 31763 or fax it to 229-438-7512. ■



Easy Tips for Holiday Air Travel

by *Christine Sarkis, SmarterTravel.com Staff*

With the Holidays just around the corner, here are some tips to help your flight go a little smoother.

Airport security often channels passengers into lanes that separate expert and casual travelers. Wondering how to adopt the experts' time-saving measures and put yourself in the fast lane? Here are tips for speeding through airport security:

Wear Slip-On Shoes

Life is easier when you don't have to wrestle with laces while balancing on one foot in a moving line. Wear slip-on or otherwise easy-to-remove (and replace) shoes and you'll speed things up on both ends of the checkpoint.

Follow the Carry-On Rules

Keep your liquid toiletries under the three-ounce maximum, storing them in a single plastic quart bag that you remove from your carry-on so it can be X-rayed separately. Remember to take your laptop out of its bag. And check online before leaving home to verify you haven't packed items that screeners will confiscate.

Remove Your Metal

If you wear items likely to set off the metal detector, bring your own clear plastic bag and unload your booty (jewelry, belts, etc.) while you're waiting in line, then just drop it all into the dish provided by security. This goes for asthma inhalers and similar medical devices, too. You can also put pocket items such as cell phones and coins into your carry-on for safe-keeping.

Hang on to Your Boarding Pass

Your boarding pass and identification should be in your hand as you walk through the detector, so don't lose track of it in the bustle of preparations.

So, once on-board do you dread flying? Is it the inevitable delays, the cramped seats, or the expensive snacks? Or maybe it has more to do with the dehydration, recycled air, and chilly cabins? In the spirit of happy and healthy holidays, here are 10 ways to make your next flight more comfortable.

Snag a Good Seat

If you're taller than 5'9", you know that whatever the airlines may claim, those seats were not built for you. If you're tall and even a little bit claustrophobic, sitting in an airline

seat for any length of time can feel like a punishment. This is why it's not a bad idea to strive (and maybe even pay a bit extra for) a seat with more legroom. In coach, that means seeking out the exit row or bulkhead seats. You'll get more legroom and a little breathing space as well, which can make all the difference in a space as cramped as an airplane cabin. SmarterTravel.com sister site Seat Guru can help you find a roomier seat.

Wear Noise-Canceling Headphones

The overpowering drone of airplane engines can interfere with sleep and make for a more stressful flight. Noise-canceling headphones replace the cabin and engine sounds with white noise or music. You can also plug them into seat jacks and make in-flight movie or television watching more pleasant. On the downside, they're pricier than most headphones (\$100 and up), but they last for years and are a great way to drown out sounds—babies crying or people having loud political arguments, for example—in other situations as well.

Carry a Water Bottle

Don't want to be at the mercy of flight attendants who you suspect don't really care if you're thirsty? Achieve hydration independence: Bring an empty bottle through security and fill it up on the other side. If space is at a premium, look into water bottles that can be collapsed when not in use. If you're concerned about plastic, there are options such as Klean Kanteen steel or Sigg aluminum bottles.

Fight Dehydration

Dehydration is a real issue in the air: It can increase the effects of jetlag upon arrival or just leave you feeling icky. The first rule of hydration is, of course, to drink enough water, which you can do whenever you want if you bring your own water bottle. But you can fend off stinging, dry eyes by also packing some moisturizing eye drops, and keep your skin supple with a little bottle of lotion. Both are allowed through security as long as the containers aren't larger than three ounces.

Pack Your Own Food

Which would you rather eat: a soggy, \$10 day-old turkey sandwich or a \$5 packet of broken crackers? Trick question! Plan ahead and you won't have to settle for either. Pack your own lunch (just beware the TSA restrictions and leave the soup at home) or pick up something in the terminal before you board. If it's a long flight, also pack low-salt snacks such as

fruit, so that when boredom and hunger set in, you'll be prepared.

Bring Warm Things

More airlines are charging for blankets and pillows these days, and even when they don't, it's never totally clear how often those things get washed. And if you've ever seen a seatmate sound asleep and drooling ever-so-slightly onto that airplane pillow, you quickly recognize the downside of shared pillows. Bring your own without sacrificing too much space by packing a large scarf, pashmina, or wrap. That way, you can use your source of in-flight warmth as an accessory (or picnic blanket) once you land.

Don't Forget About Entertainment

Let's face it: Unless you're really good at sleeping on airplanes, boredom is likely to be a recurring problem on long flights. Nothing makes three hours feel like six more than staring at the seat in front of you while shifting uncomfortably and checking your watch every 15 minutes. Stave off boredom and turn flights into leisure time with books, magazines, or Sudoku. Bring a portable DVD player or laptop and watch movies. Or load up your mp3 player with podcasts or videocasts of your favorite radio and TV shows.

Exercise

Uncomfortable seats feel even worse when you sit still in them for hours on end. Give your muscles a break every hour or so with some basic stretches. Moving around also helps some people stay more relaxed on flights.

Stay Organized

Does this sound familiar? You settle in, grab a book and some gum from your bag and stow it under the seat. Twenty minutes later you think of something else you want (your mp3 player or some tissue), but now the seat in front of you is reclined. A back-of-seat organizer, such as the Seat Pak from Flight 001, hangs from your tray table latch and keeps items you might want in flight within arms' reach.

Be Prepared for a Layover

Plan for any layovers by researching the airport ahead of time. Most U.S. airports have websites where you can find information about restaurants, lounges, and extra amenities such as showers, nail salons, or Wi-Fi hotspots. If there's a chance that bad weather may delay your connection, write down the phone numbers of airport hotels when you're researching—they could save you from sleeping on the airport floor. ■

IICRC ANSI- Approved S520 Standard Now Available

The Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification ANSI-approved S520 Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Mold Remediation is now available. The new reference guide, which provides updates to the standard originally released in 2003, will help cleaning professionals continue to provide high-quality service utilizing the latest techniques and technology.

“There has been a recent push for legislatures to develop laws and guidelines that protect consumers who use mold remediation services,” said Dan Bernazzani, Chair of the IICRC’s Government Affairs Committee. “The S520 standard provides professionals with a guide for meeting certification standards while advancing the IICRC’s mission to enhance the quality, value and service offered to consumers.” As mold has become a growing issue for consumers, especially those living in damp climates and in hurricane-prone areas, a number of states have either passed laws or are considering actions (such as Maryland) aimed at protecting consumer interests. During Florida’s 2008 legislative session, legislators passed a law that regulates and licenses providers of home inspection services, mold remediation services and mold assessment services. The law is the first time that Florida mold remediation and inspection companies face state-level regulation, and will require all mold assessors and remediators to meet certain requirements starting in July 2010.

Kentucky’s Senate is considering a bill to regulate mold remediation using the general principles outlined in the S520 standard. And, New York’s legislature is working on a bill for the next legislative session that will set statewide standards for mold remediation.

For information on certification programs and standards offered by the IICRC please visit www.iicrc.org. To purchase a copy of the S520 standard please call 360-693-5675. ■





New Members

Enviroclean

Ole Anderson
Hermitage, TN
shawmaintenance@aol.com

Hi-Tech National Flood Relief, Inc.

Al Diallo
Doraville, GA
info@hi-techcarpet.com

Power Dry, Inc.

Greg Petropoulos
Lenexa, KS
tracy@powerdrykc.com

The Bower Group, Inc.

Andrew Bower
Paxinos, PA
cleanrug@ptd.net

To Our Valued Members: *WE WANT TO RECOGNIZE YOU AND YOUR COMPANY.*

Once a month, we would like to spotlight one of our members on our web site and in our newsletter but in order to do this, we need you to boast a little!

1 - If you or your business have received any industry or community recognition in 2008, e-mail the announcement to us.

2 - If you have come up with a unique solution to a problem in your business that would benefit our members, describe the problem and solution in detail and send it to us.

Don't worry about editing, we'll do that for you! The member chosen for the spotlight each month will receive a \$50.00 credit on their next membership renewal. We are waiting to hear from you.

Please send your announcement or article to Patti Savelle @ accounting@scrt.org.

We appreciate your continued support of SCRT.

Join A SCRT Chapter!

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Interested in starting a SCRT chapter in your state or region?

Contact Tom Sherman,

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or e-mail him at: tomemtb@aol.com