



PSA News

The Association for Service Professionals

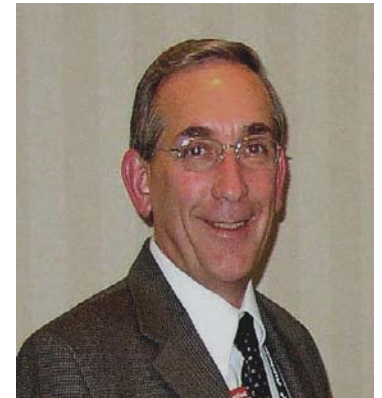
12 Tips for Making the Most of a Convention

By Ralph Wolff
Industry Relations, PSA

Editor's note- With NASC 2016 coming up, this article published in 2015 has a lot of relevance. Plus, we enjoy publishing Ralph's stuff, so enjoy it again!

Taking days out of your office to attend a convention is expensive. If you are going to spend money and sacrifice a valuable chunk of time that could be spent making money, then the conference better be worth your while. The usefulness of a work-related conference is determined by how you approach it. Approach it right and you can pick up new skills, learn about trends in your field and make valuable contacts. Approach it wrong and it can end up being long, boring and useless.

Here are some tips for getting the most out of your conference...



1. **Read the agenda before going to the conference and figure out what sessions will best fit your needs.** You probably won't be able to attend all the sessions so prioritize the ones you most want or need to attend. If you are attending with a co-worker, consider splitting up some of the sessions so that between the two of you, you can cover more sessions.
2. **Read the presenters list and do some research on the presenters for the sessions you are attending.** It is always better to know the credentials of the presenter, as it will give you more insight to the material and give you time to formulate questions. If the presenter's information is not available, reach out to them prior to the conference.
3. **Read the exhibitors list ahead of time and make a list of the people and companies you want to speak with.** Otherwise, in a large exhibition hall, you may get overwhelmed and miss getting to the people you wanted to talk to.
4. **Ask questions in the sessions you attend.** Don't be shy about questioning the presenters about points you would like clarified. You are actually doing the presenters a favor by asking questions, as most presenters dread having "disengaged" audiences. The more interaction in the session the more you and everyone will learn, including the presenter. So ask away!
5. **Be approachable.** Don't spend all your time outside of conference sessions using your phone or immersed in reading material. Be open and engaged and you will be more likely to meet like-minded people. Most people attending a conference are looking for others to interact with, so don't be afraid to approach people yourself. You don't even need an excuse; you can simply walk up and introduce yourself and ask about the other person. You can also ask whether they have been to any good sessions.
6. **Don't make non-work plans for the evenings.** You might be tempted to catch up with your friend who lives in that city, but lots of networking will happen in the evening, often spontaneously. You will want to be available for the last minute dinner or attend the hospitality room.

7. **Stay away from alcohol.** If you enjoy an alcoholic drink, at most, have only one or two. If you find yourself hanging out at the bar or in the hospitality room ask for a seltzer or soft drink.
8. **Bring snacks.** Conferences often offer only unhealthy, overpriced convenience foods. Find a local market and buy some healthy snacks to keep on hand in case you miss lunch or get hungry during the day.
9. **Wear comfortable shoes.** You're going to do a lot of standing around talking to people and you might even end up standing in some sessions. You will also be doing a lot of walking to get from your room to the conference halls, meals and so forth. There is nothing so distracting as when your feet hurt from uncomfortable shoes.
10. **Bring business cards.** The exchange of business cards is a time honored tradition at conferences. When exchanging cards be sure to make notes on the back of cards from the people you want to follow up with so you remember who each person is once you're back in the office.
11. **When you get back to your office after the conference, take some time to follow up with the people who you met.** Email them to let them know you enjoyed meeting them and perhaps reference something you talked about (those notes on the back of their cards will be helpful).
12. **Conferences are more than just sessions; they are an assembly of like-minded folks with great intention.** How often do you get uninterrupted time to discuss matters of interest with industry peers from around the country? Many great experiences happen during the downtime so don't leave these experiences to chance. Reach out to your contacts beforehand and set up an early breakfast or lunch.

When developing NASC 2016, PSA has sought to create an experience for you with great intention and resource. If you put some time into research prior to the conference and follow the tips listed here, you will most certainly come home with a trunk full of ideas and knowledge that will help you succeed.

It's not too late to sign up: NASC 2016, Dallas, TX- September 26-29, 2016. Go to www.psaworld.com to register, or call us at 888-777-8851.

PSA's Training All Over the Country!

PSA Training is continuing to sweep the country in 2016!

The BAT program focuses on basic principles and repair functions related to electricity, gas and refrigeration, the core basis of a successful appliance service technician. The BAT training provides a solid foundation for new technicians, along with a strong refresher course for more experienced techs that will make the product specific training offered by manufacturers more understandable and also help to make your technicians more efficient and effective.

In addition, new training classes for more seasoned technicians will be available this fall- look to this space for sessions that will, be held in your area!

There are more training classes confirmed in throughout the remainder of 2016 that will be announced soon, so please keep your eye on PSA News and our web site www.psaworld.com, for the complete 2016 PSA training schedule

September- NASC 2016 in Dallas, TX- September, 26-29

October- Nashville, TN- Tribles Appliance Parts October 24, 25, 26

**November- New Orleans, LA dates TBD (Advanced)
Chicago, IL dates TBD (Advanced)**

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Use of Test Instruments
Recognizing electrical symbols
Reading electrical schematics and diagrams
Diagnostic routines and troubleshooting

Day 2- Basic: Gas

Gas Basics, Safety, Characteristics
Fuel Gas Code requirements for Gas appliances Gas testing devices
Gas Ranges, operate and test components
Gas Dryers, operate and test components
Gas Water Heaters, operation and testing components

Day 3-Basic: Refrigeration

The Refrigeration system
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Refrigerants
Troubleshooting refrigeration systems
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Thoughts from the Executive Director

By Randy Carney, PSA Executive Director

It's essentially August, which means vacation time has hit (or will be). For whatever reason, August seems to be the month most people take their annual family trips. Now that my kids are out on their own, I am not so bound by the school timeframe, but I can recall the long, hot, cluttered trips clearly. Most of the time, it was great, but there were a few trips and moments that give me the jitters, even after 20 years. How did I get through that? As Clark Griswold mused, "I know that smell."



Oh, well- if you have already been out on a trip this summer, I hope it was everything you wanted it to be, and if it's coming up, have a great time. Be safe, stay cool, and live it up!

And now- on to the big stuff..

- I **TRY** not to be overtly political here, because there is certainly enough of that in the world, especially in this country right now. But when somebody says something stupid and it at least kind of touches on the appliance service industry, I'm gonna talk about it. Secretary of State John Kerry recently told a climate change (formerly global warming) conference that the loss of ozone in the atmosphere due to man-made chemicals (read- Freon) was as big a danger to mankind as was ISIS. Uh... OK. So the mind numbing questionable science is one thing, while slaughtering innocents and fomenting terror throughout the world is far more horrible? Right.

I will leave this to be considered in the context of your own belief system- political and otherwise, but I continue to decry the lack of thought and conscience that goes into comments like this. This guy was once a presidential candidate...sigh.

- Happier topic- NASC 2016 is coming to Dallas September 26-29. We have a great lineup of both technical and business classes planned, with manufacturers like Electrolux, General Electric, LG, Bosch, Samsung, Dacor, Haier and Leibherr holding classes. In addition, there will be discussion groups, educational team meetings and many other activities, including the trade show. We are excited over the schedule this year and plan to introduce new features to the industry's longest running convention, and we hope you will join us! Be sure to check out the registration information elsewhere in this issue, and we'll see you in Texas!
- Elsewhere in this issue, you'll see an article from PSA member Jesse Hurst of Alpine Appliance in Michigan. We would like to thank Jesse for putting this article together to share with you all, and we want to remind all of our members that you are welcome to submit articles for publication in PSA News at any time. In fact, we want you to! You all have stories to tell- often, they are great stories that may well help your peers, and we want you to share them. If you have something to add to PSA News, or even a story idea, let me know at rcarney@psaworld.com.

Are you a great technician?

Prove it to your customers and your peers by becoming a certified Master Technician.

Certification is free if you attend NASC 2016 in Dallas,
September 26 – 29, 2016

PSA Welcomes New Members in July!

We'd like to extend a big welcome to our new PSA members that joined in July. We're glad to have you all on board and look forward to working with you in the months and years ahead!

Apple Appliance Service Company
Uniontown, OH

Bill's Appliance Repair
Bishop, CA

Bragdon Appliance Service
Marengo, IA

Brian's Appliance
Pittsburg, KS

Northeast Service Center
Claremont, NH

Right Now Marketing
Highland, MI

The Appliance Care Company
Belton, MO

Virginia Electronics
Ashland, VA

Smart Appliances: Lots of Attention, but Low Market Adoption

by Laura Hamilton, Editor- CED Magazine

"Smart appliances have generated lots of attention, but market adoption is low due to low product availability, higher costs and use cases that do not address customer needs," Tom Kerber, director, research, home controls and energy at Parks Associates, observes. "Focusing on applications that consumers value will help increase demand. For example, the most desired capabilities for smart stoves or ovens are features that prevent food from burning or overcooking."

New consumer research from Parks finds that less than 5 percent of U.S. broadband households own a smart appliance such as a full-sized refrigerator, oven, dishwasher or washer/dryer that can be monitored or controlled using a smartphone, tablet or computer. However, the report shows that 18 percent of consumers plan to buy a smart appliance in the next 12 months.

"Purchase intentions of major appliances that can be connected to the Internet have grown from 9 percent in early 2014 to 18 percent in late 2015," Kerber notes. "However, the fact that actual adoption rates are far lower reflects a disconnect in the industry. Recipe apps and features get lots of attention in marketing smart stoves and refrigerators, but in today's U.S. broadband households, nearly 60 percent of meals are prepared without a recipe. Only 19 percent use a recipe from an Internet source. For smart appliances to be successful, manufacturers need to understand how consumers want to use these devices."

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The Professional Service Association and New Leaf Service Contracts are pleased to announce a new, easy to sell extended service contract program for all members of the association.

PSA members can earn significant commissions simply by talking to their customers when they are in-home during warranty or non-warranty repairs.

Here's how it works...

Case #1:

You have been called out to repair a refrigerator with one month remaining on the factory warranty. You know this because the customer has shown you the bill-of-sale and you have already copied the receipt for proof to the manufacturer that the product is eligible to be repaired under warranty.

Your customer is happy because the repair is covered but you know without the manufacturer's coverage this repair would cost \$495. You have a full day ahead of you but take one minute to let your customer know the factory is covering the cost of this repair but had it not been under warranty, the repair cost would have been \$495. Let them know PSA offers an extended warranty for an additional two years past the factory warranty, which is expiring in 30 days, for only \$150 (example only).

No deductibles, no hidden service charges and your firm will be designated as the preferred servicer on this plan. Many customers will want the extra protection, so you simply sign into the PSA authorized web portal, enter the customer's product and payment information, attach a copy of the receipt and you're done.

It's like squeezing another job into an already packed day.....without working late. New Leaf will send the customer a copy of their plan and the terms and conditions.

Case #2:

A long-time customer has requested service on a 4-year old dryer that has stopped working. You know what's wrong based on your experience with the brand. After repairing their front-load dryer at a cost of \$275, let them know PSA has a program that will cover repairs with no deductions or hidden charges for the next two years for \$99 (estimate). Peace of mind coverage on older appliances already in service. After they purchase the plan from you, there is a short 30-day wait before any claims can be filed.

- Extended service plans promote customer loyalty. Your firm is the preferred servicer on plans you sell.**
- Add profit similar to making another repair call.....without the repair call.**
- Hassle-free ownership experience for your customers.**

Sign up as a New Leaf Authorized Servicer.

Come on board as an authorized dealer of New Leaf extended service plans.

Get paid for selling protection plans that provide peace of mind for your new and existing clients.

Come by and meet New Leaf at our Booth at PSA's National Convention in Dallas. New Leaf will also be conducting a seminar on "Selling Extended Service Plans – Why It's a Good Idea for Your Customers and You"

PSA Service Library for 2016 is Now Available

The 2016 version of the PSA Service Library is now available. This new version comes to you in the form of a 64GB Flash Drive complete with appliance service information and also with HVAC products included. The 2015 version double the capacity and contains 40% more information than was included on the previous 2015 version. The cost of this valuable tool is \$130 that includes the flash drive, software and data. Since we provide you with the data free of charge, what you are paying \$130 for is the cost of the 64 GB flash drive and the time to compile and develop the program plus the shipping and handling of the library all of which we have to pay for. The data alone is worth thousands of dollars if you were to obtain it individually from the providers. Because of the size of the library it will only be available on the flash drive. Just plug it into the USB port and it runs right off the flash drive.

Another feature again this year is the model number search engine to help speed up locating the correct information for the product you are working on.

Just think how impressed your customer will be with your professionalism as your technician accesses technical information right in her own kitchen as the repair progresses.

Just think about the time saved in completing the service on each call. Just think what that will do for your productivity and improved profits.

Not only does this library provide many of the popular brands of appliance technical information but for those of you who also do HVAC, the library includes technical information on furnaces, boilers and central air conditioners by make and model numbers.

Brands included are ADC, Amana, American, A O Smith, Apollo, Asko, Blodgett, Bosch, Crosley, Dacor, DCS, Electrolux, Fisher/Paykel, GE, Girbau, Haier, Hatco, Ice-O-Matic, Kenmore, LG, Manitowoc, Maytag, Miele, Oasis, Rheem/Ruud, Rinnai, Samsung, Scotsman, Sharp, Speed Queen, Sub Zero/Wolf, U Line, Viking/Wolf Plus HVAC brands like American Standard, Carrier, GE, Goodman, Lennox, LG, McDonald Miller, Peerless, Trinity, Weil McLain, York and many others well.

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The library also includes training materials and service bulletins in both appliances and in HVAC to bring you up to date on the latest technology in order to give you an edge on your competition to perform at a level your customer will be impressed with and refer you to their neighbors.

So, if you have been dragging your feet about joining PSA, this is a benefit worth many times over the cost of your membership. PSA is always working for you to make you more professional, efficient, knowledgeable and profitable.

Don't delay another minute, sign up today and take advantage of this fantastic offer. You can join PSA on-line at www.psaworld.com.

Don't be left behind ...Join PSA Today!!!

Leaving the J.O.B. behind!

By Jesse L. Hurst
Alpine Appliance

Is J.O.B. an acronym for "Just Over Broke"? Many small business owners aren't entrepreneurs. They are technicians. They aren't people that eat, sleep, and breathe the love for starting and running new businesses. To the contrary, most small business owners are the labors of a given trade that have decided to "be their own boss."

They are the brick layers, the plumbers and the pie bakers who have worked for someone else and one day said, "I can do this trade as good as or even better than my boss. All he or she does is sit in the office and get rich off of me and boss me around. I am the one that actually does the work around here." And slowly the idea of being their own boss begins to grow...

Jump ahead a few years and take a snap shot of the new business after the technician has become his/her own boss and started his own company. He caught on real quick that marketing is a huge skill set that he needs to create in himself or go into debt paying someone else to do. Instead of one boss, he now has many bosses. Each customer is a mini boss to him. Those loved ones counting on his pay check that is now very slim are also mini bosses that he is trying to please. Business hours no longer exist (even while he's sleeping, he's working!) He realizes that there is a ton of work that goes into office work in general like book keeping, phone calls, ordering parts etc. He is ever working on a growing list of industry vendor accounts & third-party contracts. In short, there is a lot of blood, sweat and tears that go into being your own boss. But he never regrets the freedom (which isn't free) and the exhilaration of having created his own business and reigned in the wild world of business ownership!

But his biggest problem is he is only making a wage or less. He doesn't really own a business at all. He owns a job. He is owns a "just over broke" business. He can't afford retirement. He skimps on his own medical insurance. He would love to contribute financially to charities both local and abroad but doesn't have the resources to do so.

If you can know where to set your rates you've taken care of a huge issue in your life and in the life of your new business. Now if you've attended any business management classes or conventions, you'll sooner or later hear about the importance of knowing your cost of doing business. Cost of doing business is the sum total of all the expense necessary to operate a business. It is extremely helpful in many ways to know your C.O.D.B. however if you are a newer business owner, it will **not** crack the code to know how much you need to charge for your services. There are too many dollar amounts that are unknown.

A huge question for new business owners is, "How much shall I pay myself?" (Just google that question and you'll find that no one knows the answer.) If you are working from your home, like I do, and you base your rates on your CODB what will you do when you out grow your home? Jump all your rates overnight to cover a lease or mortgage? If you are skimping by without insurance or a retirement fund you'll need to get some figures to throw into the equation for that. If a stay at home family member is doing your book keeping or answering your phone calls, you'll need to put a value to their time in order to calculate a CODB that will get your rates where they need to be. While all this is very important and should truly be done by newer business owners (or better yet, before you go into business for yourself) it is really very difficult to accomplish, especially for a one or two man shop.

You have to ration your energies. May I propose that you throw your time and talent into one of the many things your new business is demanding from you and leave the question of rates up to someone else? Someone who has been operating a successful, professional business for quite a few years, has a growing business, a bright financial future for himself and his staff and has a solid grasp on the CODB for a real business and does not just own a job? Find some predefined rates today.

I battled with the question for some time, "How much should I pay myself?" Maybe I should be making a lot more than I am. Maybe I should be making double what I am. I kept thinking, If only someone would just tell me how much I should charge for my services, I'd charge those rates and discover what kind of a salary I could draw! Maybe there would even be enough left over to grow my business!

In your search of predefined rates you'll need to know what good ones look like to search out the best from the good. So what will they look like?

They'll be flat rate & they'll be embarrassingly high. They are completely up to date within the last year or two years at the most (Hey let's just face it, every day we are seeing new things we never dreamed of a few years ago) If you choose the highest rates out there you can discount them a little but you should also be open to the idea of raising them too! The product lineup has changed immensely over the last few years and the horizon is saturated with exponential change. Yes, consumers still have access to appliances that are too cheap to repair but manufactures are just bombarding consumers with expensive upsell features that are taking the ticket price up there to where cost of repair is a very viable and needed option.

Now I know some of you are saying, "This is backwards. This is faulty advice." Maybe it is and if you have a better solution- I'd love to hear it. But you'll also need to explain why we haven't gotten further ahead in this industry. Why are manufactures still getting by with paying us starvation rates from the stone ages? Why does our industry have the lowest profit margins of comparable industries like HVAC or water treatment equipment? Why are schools dropping appliance repair courses? (They want to teach people trades that they can make money in!)

P.S. - It is not my intention in proving one point to discount knowing your CODB. I believe it is extremely important so I'll put in a plug for it here. Knowing my CODB helped me immensely by showing what my average cost per service call was. Follow me through this: If you added all your expenses for one year and divided that dollar amount by the number of service calls you would have the average cost per service call. Example- your business expenses are \$100,000 and you ran 675 calls. Your average cost per service call is \$148. Every job you walk away with less than that you will need a job that you are making quite a bit more than that figure to make it up.



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existing technician workforce in identifying areas where training or mentoring may be required.

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