



PSA News

The Association for Service Professionals

Never Stop Learning and Improving!

By Randy Carney- PSA Executive Director

According to statistics gathered annually by PSA, there has been substantial growth in the number of service centers supporting major appliance service over the past few years. Since 2010, the industry has added more than 6,500 appliance service companies, reversing a trend over the previous 10 years that saw erosion in major appliance service companies of well over 2,000 providers.

Much of the increase can be traced to electronics service companies switching over to appliance service. Some of this is a result of the entry of companies such as LG, Samsung and Haier into the appliance market, and carrying their service providers with them. For the most part, however, it appears that design and serviceability factors, along with warranty rates and the perception that many electronics are “not worth repair” have led the service force to look into new opportunities.

This does not mean that we have a serious surplus of appliance service companies; indeed, as noted in earlier articles, our industry still suffers from a shortage of qualified service technicians. And while many electronics service providers have made the move to appliance service, the need for training and improved product knowledge continue to be key issues.

For those of us that have been in the service industry throughout our lives, we know that a well-trained and professional workforce is vital, and helps to raise the image and impression of all of our members. PSA introduced the Certified Appliance Professional (CAP) program in an effort to raise the quality of service by establishing a benchmark that provided an industry standard for professionals in the appliance service industry. Over the years, that program has grown to include not only technicians but service managers, graduate technicians, installers and service center support staff, all in an effort to help drive higher standards of performance with the appliance service industry.

In addition, PSA has worked closely with both post-secondary schools and vocational high schools to develop and improve curriculum in order to provide the most up to date material used to train the future leaders of our industry.

There remains a need for business owners to constantly work on their own skills. Running a successful service entity requires you to be a combination of a financial, organizational, human resources, procurement and customer relations expert, and it is important that owners and managers hone their skills and stay current on best practices in all of these areas. Industry associations like PSA offer training and guidance in these areas, as do local schools and colleges. Be sure to look into opportunities to improve yourselves- it is not a cost, but an investment into the success of your business.

Information and peer contact is critical to the success of your business. Work closely with your parts suppliers- they are a tremendous source of information about the appliance business, If you are a warranty service provider, your manufacturer representatives are a key contact point, but do not overlook the need to converse with and stay in touch with other service providers. This is where involvement with a professional association such as PSA is important; you can work daily with your peers in the business to stay in touch with issues in the industry and they may impact you. In addition, the ability to share repair information and touch on other matters of importance to your business are always welcome. If there is something that is causing you concern, whether it be a repair issue or another issue that relates to your business, you are likely not the first person to have run into it. Your support system is as close as your computer or phone- leverage that as an additional training tool.

As our industry grows and expands, the differentiation will become evident to those companies that continue to educate themselves and project a professional appearance. They will become the leaders and success stories and the businesses that everyone else will want to emulate. Take the time now to make sure that your company will be one of the leaders, and not a follower. Never stop trying to improve, never stop taking the next step and never, ever, allow your eye to wander off the prize. Have your techs, staff and your entire business trained and certified, and get ready to stay in the forefront of an exciting and expanding industry!

Communication – The Key to Customer Satisfaction

By Lauren Brodner- Office Manager, Callahan's Appliance, Inc.

I began working in the service industry as a part time, work from home mom; just myself and one tech. Everything was simple enough then to communicate and not very much was lost in translation. Six years later, I manage a full time appliance repair company with four office staff employees, seven technicians and a satellite office. Needless to say, there are many more opportunities for failure in the communication arena!

I consider our office staff is our first line of "defense" with our customers. Typically, no one is calling our company for a good reason; they're calling because something they spent a lot of money on is broken and they want it fixed ASAP. It's our job in the office to turn this into a positive experience. No matter what type of scheduling tool your company may use, make sure that all of your office employees are able to access and add notes regarding communication with customers. Nothing will infuriate an already unhappy customer more than having to explain their problem to a second or third person. Take thorough notes regarding customer complaints, make sure all of their contact information is correct and absolutely make sure any special concessions or promises that are being made to the customer are documented in their profile. Proper notes and updates are essential from the start to ensure everyone does their job properly.

Once a thorough profile has been built for your customer, it is now up to the technician to follow through and keep the customer happy. The office has provided them with the "who, what, where, when and why", and now it's their job to move forward with that information. Mobile communication has made information sharing so much more efficient. Our technicians have remote access to all of their customer information on a tablet. All of the notes our office puts in are available to them at the touch of a button. Texting is also a great way to keep everyone in the loop. Customer cancels? Customer would like a different number to be called when the tech is on the way? Absolutely make sure to update in the computer system, but take the extra step and text the technician to be certain that he saw the changes made. Everyone will appreciate the thorough job that was done.

Once the technician is face to face with the customer, it's not just their responsibility to repair the broken appliance. They must be clear and concise with their customers. In other words, they must think before they speak. One of our technicians may tell a customer that "there is not repair for this unit". Our understanding of the statement is that there is nothing we can fix because there is nothing wrong with the unit. The customer, however, may have interpreted the statement as "this is not repairable and needs to be replaced". Subtle wording can cause a big problem later on when that customer is looking for their new appliance only to learn the service company told the manufacturer or third party vendor that there was nothing wrong with it.

Also, when technicians are communicating with their customers, they also must be sure to note any promises or concessions that they have made to the customer. Some of our technicians may provide a courtesy extended warranty, going to their home after hours or on a weekend to install a part, etc. If the office staff is not aware of said concessions, it does not do well for the customer's confidence in our abilities. That little bit of extra time and care put into thorough note taking can mean a huge difference in customer satisfaction levels.

Finally, shared information between offices or other service providers can be a huge help in improving customer satisfaction and growth in business. I continue to learn every day and networking with other office managers offers a great opportunity to enhance efficiency. At the PSA convention, for instance, I was able to meet some wonderful people and we were able to share helpful things that have worked in our offices and with our technicians. We have also been able to help each other with technical systems such as Rosswire, parts look up through various suppliers, and billing and scheduling issues with third party vendors.

Sharing knowledge and detailed communication leads to growth and success. I strive to improve our ability to communicate within our company and look forward to working with others to learn all I can to grow our business.

Volunteering at PSA-

The Technology Committee

By Jim Campbell, MCap

How many times have you found yourself at a customer's home, only to discover you are seeing a particular model for the first time? My guess is, a lot more than usual lately.

While having a computer or smartphone at your disposal is a very useful tool, your real familiarity with a product will come thru experience coupled with solid technical information. After all, haven't we learned that there are only so many ways to make a product? As long as we are comfortable reading schematics and knowing how to use a voltmeter instead of a Ouija board, every product out there can be diagnosed and repaired. Our focus here at PSA is to keep up with the changes in product technology and provide some sort of formal training on newer models as they become popular. Also, foremost on our minds these days, is advancing the technicians' knowledge from what may be basic diagnostic skills to more advanced methods and practices. The things we learned 10 years ago may not apply in today's applications, but through continuing education, we can stay up with progress as it happens.

The Technology Committee is also responsible for the PSA Service Library. What an invaluable tool this has been for our membership, and our plans include making the Library accessible online in the near future. This way, providing updates will be more convenient than using a storage device on your computer. As committee chairman, I am always open to suggestions from the membership on which subjects they would like to see specific training on. We will not only try to have this for you at next year's convention, but expect to put many new courses out in the field as Advanced Appliance Training. This will boost the already-popular Basic Appliance Training Program we have provided the past few years. Subject such as advanced electrical diagnostics/schematic interpretation, advanced refrigeration and cooking courses are currently under construction. Currently, we have six official trainers who have volunteered their time to participate in this program, and are always looking for fresh talent among our membership. Even if training is not your thing, serving as a committee member gives you the opportunity to help provide any new bulletins or training updates that you might encounter as an authorized servicer/dealer. Your participation makes us all a little more professional!

PSANet
is the Industry's
most important source
for
Technical information and
Troubleshooting Assistance

Should you buy a large appliance online?

Delivery is often free, but don't expect to skip out on the sales tax

Consumer Reports

Buying a small appliance—say, a blender or toaster—online is one thing, but what about big-ticket items, such as a refrigerator or washing machine? In a recent survey, in which Consumer Reports asked more than 21,000 readers to tell us about their appliance shopping experiences in the last year, only 11 percent of respondents said they took the plunge and bought a major appliance online. It can be a money-saving strategy, but keep these tips in mind:

Taxes usually apply

Though you might be able to save on shipping, don't count on the purchase being tax-free. The rules are complicated and vary by state, so the best policy is to assume that the tax will be included.

It still pays to shop in stores

Spending a few thousand bucks on a refrigerator, range, or other high-priced appliance without first seeing it in person can be a pricey leap of faith. That's why we recommend a hands-on visit to a store showroom before you make a big purchase online. Be on the lookout for flimsy parts, tricky-to-handle controls, or other flaws that could be annoying, especially on appliances that you use every day.

Always try to get a better deal

It's not quite as easy as walking up to a salesperson in the store, but once you get through to the right customer-service rep (either by phone or online chat), it's worth asking whether the price is negotiable. In our national reader survey, people who haggled spent about \$100 less on their appliance purchase.

What to do with your old unit

Many brick-and-mortar retailers offer free haul-away of old units. Online shoppers typically have to get rid of their appliances on their own. Check with your utility company to see if it offers free haul-away as part of an energy efficiency program. You might even receive a small rebate, say \$50, for removing an older, energy-wasting appliance from the power grid. If the unit is still working, consider donating it to a local charity.

Where to buy large appliances online

Abt Electronics. Superb selection in the 100,000-square-foot showroom of this Chicago area-based appliance store is one reason that Abt Electronics has landed at the top of our [appliance retailer survey](#) year after year for large appliance sales. Abt delivers free within 100 miles of its store, and orders of \$35 or more are shipped free within the continental U.S. Readers give the retailer high marks across the board.

Amazon.com. A favorite of our readers for buying small appliances, Amazon didn't get top marks for price—that was Costco. But for selection, product quality, ease of checkout, and other categories, it gets top honors in [our appliance survey](#). You can also buy large appliances on Amazon's website although the order may be fulfilled by one of Amazon's partners. According to [Amazon's customer service policy](#), "large item shipping is free of charge," but check details before submitting your order.

—Adapted from *ShopSmart* magazine

Thoughts from the Executive Director

By Randy Carney, PSA Executive Director

OK... by now, most of you know that I live in Iowa. That doesn't resonate with a lot of people. In some cases, they know nothing about the state (you sure grow some great potatoes out there), or they know and despise it (I'm looking at you, Minnesota), or are vague (Oh, I think I drove through it once, but it was at night- I'm sure they were thinking of Nebraska- that's the best time to go through there).

At any rate, we have a middling college football team (and another one that is decidedly less than middling), no pro sports, mountains, seashore, or lakes of note. We get the worst of weather- hot, humid summers and bitterly cold winters (fall is nice, however). Why live there, anyway?

3 words... fresh sweet corn. And that's all I have to say about that! Now, on to a few notes...



- Many of you have been dropping a word here or there, wondering where and when NASC 2016 is going to take place. Be sure to pay attention to PSA News in August- all will be revealed then. We will have a great early bird special for you, and information on all the key details, so we're asking you to wait another month. Hang in there!
- From all indication, the annual Skills USA competition went very well. The national competition moved from its longtime home in Kansas City to Louisville, KY this year, and all reports were positive. We'll have more information on the results and activities associated with the major appliance competitions for you, hopefully in the August issue.
- While the news out west has not been good, with their long lasting drought and continuing lack of rain, there was an interesting article about Lake Mead, near Las Vegas. It seems the lake has dropped so much over the past several years that areas that 20 years ago were less than 100+ feet of water are now high and dry. Included are a long lost town that was founded nearly 150 years ago by Mormons, and the infamous B-29 bomber that crashed into the lake during World War II (it's now in only around 100 feet of water, making it accessible to divers). While this is all very cool, I'm sure the folks out there would prefer to have the water heading back to its normal levels.

Coming Soon!

NASC-2016

Keep your dates open for a big surprise at PSA's National Appliance Service Convention

Basic Appliance Training

PSA Certified B.A.T. Training Program



Carmine D'Alessandro, Mcap, CSM
PSA Official Appliance Technology Instructor

3 Full Days
Only
\$425.00
Including Lunch each Day

Date: September 22-23-24, 2015
Tues, Wed, Thurs

Time: 8 am-4:30 pm

Where: Tribles Appliance Parts
2 Madison Rd
Fairfield, NJ 07004

Day 1-Basic: Electricity

Electrical Safety
Theory, Voltage, Amperage, Wattage, Resistance
Ohm's Law and application of Ohm's law
Alternating and Direct Current
Circuit Fundamentals, series, parallel, combination circuits
Electrical component operation and testing
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
Refrigeration system components
Refrigeration system components operation
Fundamentals and application of refrigeration systems
Refrigerants
Troubleshooting refrigeration systems
EPA Requirements and Refrigerant Recovery



To Register:

Go to www.psaworld.com and click on
Basic Appliance Training Registration
Or call PSA directly at
1-888-777-8851
Payment due at registration
Limited seating

- **Send Your New Tech!**
- **Send Your Tech That Needs Help in These areas!**
- **Send the Old Guy Who Just Needs a Refresher!**



71 Columbia Street
Cohoes NY 12047
Phone 1-888-777-8851

BAT's All Over the Country!

PSA's Basic Appliance Training (BAT) initiative is continuing to sweep the country in 2015!

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.

There is one BAT class confirmed in early 2015- please keep your eye on the December PSA News and our web site www.psaworld.com, for the complete 2015 BAT and PSA training schedule...

- September-** **Tribble's Appliance Parts- Fairfield, NJ- September 22-24**
- October-** **Dey Distributing- Minneapolis – St Paul, MN (dates tbd)**
- November-** **Pending**
- December-** **Appliance Parts Depot- Phoenix, AZ (dates tbd)**

The Real Value of Localized Search Engine Optimization

By: Mark Maupin, Right Now Marketing

If you've ever done keyword research, you've seen that major search terms garner tremendous traffic; but that analysis more than likely also showed you that there is plenty of competition trying to get attention under those search terms. Popular keywords tend to be dominated by the companies with the largest marketing budgets – because a lot of time and effort goes into being number one (or even two through ten) for such terms. Your niche, as an independent business that doesn't have hundreds of thousands of dollars to throw at SEO, is to do a bit of a spin on the common search terms – making them specific to your areas of service.

When people in your service areas do a search for appliance repair services, they will usually search using specific terms like: "Anytown appliance repair" or "appliance repair in Anytown" rather than just a generalized search. Even the least experienced search engine user is aware that using localized terms will provide them with much better results. To boost those search results, Google even serves up some listings based on proximity to the searchers.

There is significant value to be realized in marketing through focused channels. Let's say your small to mid-sized business is located within a huge shopping mall, and at the other end of the mall is a major corporation that offers the exact same products and services. Your smaller operation is likely to suffer if you attempt to go directly up against the major industry player. While one business may be just as good as the next when it comes to quality products and services; there can be a big difference in their levels of success regarding market-share.

The key to the smaller business' success is to focus their marketing on picking up customers in their corner of the mall.

Using localized keywords can be your company's way of dominating your local market – without a great deal of intrusion from larger players who are more focused on wider coverage. Your focused keyword usage can lead to a great deal of business in the specific areas that you serve on a regular basis. Focused keywords give you the home court advantage, you might say.

Video training tape at <http://www.rightnowmarketing.org> or You can call Mark Maupin of Right Now Marketing Group for any questions or additional info (248) 939-6232 or email him at Maupin.Mark@gmail.com.