



# PSA News

*The Association for Service Professionals*

## Take the Step to Improve Your Company's Health

By Randy Carney, PSA Executive Director

Small employers- you are probably tired of hearing about it, but do you really need to have a fitness or wellness program for your employees?

The short answer is yes, it's in the best interests of both your employees and your company to develop a plan. Everyone is aware of all the talk about the Affordable Care Act and other concerns over costs involving health care, but the one thing that you can do as an employer is to offer healthy options to your employees, thus hopefully reducing their health care costs- and yours, too.

Let's face it- our society has become largely sedentary. Many employees are tied to their desks all day working computers, while others are more mobile, but spend a lot of time driving around in service vehicles and downing less than ideal menu options. Stress is a constant in everyone's life today, and diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol and weight control issues plague us as never before.

So, what can we do about it? You're not a large company that offers all sorts of health and wellness programs like the big guys do. Even so, there are many lower cost or even free options that you can take advantage of to help drive a healthier lifestyle for your employees.

Start with you vending machines or break rooms- clean out the junk food and offer healthy alternatives like granola bars or lower-calorie foods. Offer fruit or healthy snacks to your staff one day a week. Start a weight loss contest, or perhaps set up a company fitness program, partnering with a local fitness club. Some companies provide their employees with "fast food facts", so if they are on the road, they can make healthier choices when they do pull up at the take out window. Or, offer your employees health risk assessments through your insurance carrier or by working with a local health care provider- offer your employees a premium of some type to complete the assessment- maybe a couple movie tickets or a similar promotion.

Take a look at your company's demographics... if you have many men in their 50's, maybe you can offer prostate screenings in conjunction with a local clinic. If you have a large female staff, consider screenings and testing for breast cancer. If you are in a fast paced and stressful environment, maybe you offer blood pressure screening opportunities. Local hospitals will almost always cooperate with you if you'd like to have speakers visit your company to talk about health issues and fitness options in your community. Regular employee meetings are a great place to hold discussions like this.

Even small things like walking contests will go a long way toward improving your team's health situation. Pedometers are reasonably inexpensive- buy one for each of your employees and set up teams to see who can walk the most in a month's time, and give prizes to the winners. It doesn't have to be extravagant, and it may help develop a healthy team competition around the office (as long as the competition part doesn't get out of hand!). At any rate, any additional steps that the employee takes are going to work toward improving their overall fitness.

You can offer the same thing in a weight loss competition, or any other activity that is going to work to improve an employee's overall wellness. One small business even had employees get into teams to shop for what they believe are healthier options for meals and snacks- their shopping carts were then evaluated by a nutrition professional for the best choices, and members of the winning team received gift cards from the grocery store.

Roughly 25% of health care costs incurred by workers are estimated to be directly related to health risks that can be modified by diet, exercise, tobacco use or lessening other risk factors. The Affordable Care Act does offer incentives to help promote employer wellness programs and to encourage employers to support healthier workplaces.

Everybody has an opinion of the new health care laws, but the fact is that, while we have new technology and business practices, they are not always conducive to a healthier lifestyle and work environment. As a society, we need to do more to improve our overall health and physical fitness, and a more active and aware workplace is a great place to start. This present employers with a way to help keep their health costs in line, protect their employees, and make their business a better and more inviting place to work. It's a win all the way around, so take a look at the opportunities that exists in your community to take this step. Talk to your staff and see what they have to say- that's a great place to start and get their buy-in!

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This is also a great tool to use in order to test your existing technician workforce in identifying areas where training or mentoring may be required.

The PSA Technician Evaluation program can be ordered through the PSA website at [psaworld.com/member tools](http://psaworld.com/member tools). The cost is \$39.95.

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# Am I Running My Business, Or Is It Running Me?

By Steven Friedman

Over the years I have seen many businesses. While every business is different, they all have many things in common. As many of you know it is not easy to run a business- customers, suppliers, employees, rent, banks, taxes and a host of other issues you need to deal with every day. These are our short term day to day challenges, and sometimes they interfere with your long term goals. However, how you manage these challenges is very different. Does this dictate how you run your business?

## **Do you step into the office wondering what crisis you will have to deal with next?**

If that sounds like your typical day, then you are reacting to issues, your business may be controlling you. Sometimes we have to deal with these issues, but it is how we deal with them that matters.

For example, last week my office manager called me to tell me that a customer called her to tell her that the technician did not complete the repair. This was news to us as the technician had told us they completed the repair. I had to drop what I was doing and react to the situation. Things like this need to be addressed promptly.

We had to react to this situation. The customer was not happy as they had to contact us, the office spent a lot of time speaking to the customer, and I had to deal with this with the office. It took out a significant of time among several people to address this issue, and eventually resolve it. Once it was resolved we thought that this is an opportunity to better manage the company. We then instituted some procedures to prevent this from happening in the future.

If all we did is resolve the situation and not plug the hole in our procedures we would be letting our business manage us. What would you do?

In 24 hours we put in a new procedure that not only identifies this issue going forward but gives us an additional feedback from our customers. In addition, the time it takes to execute our new procedure is negligible to the time we spend reacting to problems. Today as I am writing this we identified another issue along these same lines, and are proactively addressing it.

## **Do you map out your week and carve out time to see how you can improve your business?**

Perhaps you should be marketing service for different appliances or manufacturers, but you need training first. Perhaps you could make a lot more money if you become certified on sealed systems. Maybe you need an additional tech; maybe you need an office person.

Maybe you need less.

Is there someone you can partner with? Adding manufacturers, warranty companies, technicians, all can generate revenue and more money for you, but if you don't manage it properly you can lose a lot of money and even your business.

Adding revenue is not necessarily a good thing. Remember that we are in business to make money. These issues are part of managing the business, there is not a right or wrong answer it is what best fits your business and your goals. However, if you are not contemplating these (and other things) because you are too busy, you are letting your business manage you.

## **Do you set long term goals for your business?**

What revenue and profits do you want for your business? How do you plan on getting there?

**If you don't know where you are going you'll never get there.** Create a road map to get to where you want to go, and examine it regularly to ensure you are moving in the right direction.

## **Do you review your financial performance monthly?**

I spoke to an Appliance Repair company recently about merging and/or acquiring them, the owner told me that he waits for the phone to ring. He then proceeded to tell me all things I could do to make his business better. That is why his business is worth so much more. Why would I pay him for his business that I'm going to improve?

When I reviewed the financial performance of his business, nothing made sense. I really can't discuss details as they are confidential, but suffice it to say when I questioned him with some very specific questions on the company's performance he could not give me a straight answer.

Do you know these answers for your business? What percentage of your business is warranty work, extended warranty, cod? Do you know how much money you make on parts?

Of course we passed on acquiring, as very simple questions we asked could not get answered. Even as simple as how many calls do you make in a week, and what is your average revenue per call could not be answered.

**At the end of the day do you go home happy that your day is over? Or are you ready for tomorrow?**

If you think your business has taken control of you it is difficult to change immediately, however, there are a few things you can do to start to help you take control of your business.

1. Write down your goals whatever they are, revenue, time horizons, profits, etc...
2. Develop a plan to attain those goals
3. Start executing your plan
4. Revise the plan

Look at your business as a road trip to Disney World. You start by getting a map and seeing where you want to go, and then you may decide on stops you want to make along the way, and how long it will take you to get to the park.

But expect detours along the way, and even changing your destination is fine, but if you just got in the car and hoped you get to Disney World in 3 days, without a map or plan. You know it is in Florida and you hope to find it, but it will take longer to get there if you get there at all.

Know where you want to go, make strides to get there. You still might not make it, but you've at least given yourself a chance. Failing to plan is a plan to fail!

**About Steven Friedman - Currently Mr. Friedman is a Senior Director for Veteran's Alliance Resourcing, where he helps businesses in the supply chain obtain customers and resources. In addition, Mr. Friedman is working with some smaller appliance and CE repair operations expanding their customer base and streamlining their processes. Prior to that Mr. Friedman spent 17 years as the CFO for Stainsafe, during this time they acquired many companies, obtained credit lines and work with private equity companies. He also spent 3 1/2 years as a CFO consultant helping small and medium size businesses, and 3 1/2 years as a CPA working with small, medium and large size businesses.**

## **Are Longer Warranty's Making a Comeback?**

### ***Haier becomes first refrigerator maker to offer a lifetime compressor warranty***

Haier's new high capacity refrigerators, launching in the European market, feature a lifetime warranty on their compressors. The new refrigerators have storage capacity of up to 792L.

"The new guarantee coincides with the launch of our latest ultra-large capacity refrigerators and that is no accident," said Jean-Franck Badalian, Marketing General Manager for Haier Europe white goods. "They are wider (100.5 cm) and higher (90 cm) than most refrigerators but the standard depth of 76 cm means these refrigerators fit perfectly into the modern kitchen. These products are designed to have a longer than average lifespan so the warranty makes sense."

He pointed out that Haier was already the first European brand to offer a 12-year warranty on compressors across its A++ energy class.

# Thoughts from the Executive Director

By Randy Carney, PSA Executive Director

Well, summer is past and it's time to turn your thoughts to fall. Remember when the appliance service business seemed to slow up about this time of the year? Made you think you could at least get a breath before the holiday season workload hit. It's not really like that anymore... maybe it slows a bit after the first of the year, but it seems like its year-round busy these days. That's OK for the bottom line, of course, but it *was* nice to get that little break, wasn't it?



Cripes- the end of September is here! Better get to some thoughts...

- I have the pleasure of talking with members of the Appliance Parts Distributors Association (APDA) the last weekend of September. It's a chance to renew some long standing friendships and work with a group that is vital to the success of any appliance service business. These folks are working hard to support your business, and often have to work through challenges similar to what an independent servicer does, with manufacturers, off shore suppliers, etc. In the coming months, we hope to start a series of articles focusing on the partnership of the servicers and the PD's, so keep an eye out for what we hope will be some great information on improving your business relationship with your parts supplier!
- You probably have seen the promotional information for NASC 2015 in Orlando next spring, and I hope that you have taken advantage of the early bird rates that we have offered. Depending when you get this, you may still have time to sign up at the \$449 rate. The 2015 convention is being held at the Rosen Plaza Hotel, which is a great venue, right in the middle of Orlando's International Drive shopping district, and with a lot of attractions right in the vicinity, so be sure to strike while the rates are lowest. We would love to see ALL of our members at NASC 2015, so don't be left out!
- As part of our promotion of NASC 2015, we will be focusing on some of our sponsors and the variety of tools and services they offer. In the coming months, keep an eye on PSA News for information from these folks, who make our convention and efforts possible. They provide some great info, so keep an eye out!
- And, finally, it has been a whole year since I joined PSA as Executive Director! I've learned a lot (got a lot more to learn, of course), and I have had the opportunity to speak with many of you, either by phone or at NASC 2014 in Nashville. We continue to build a first rate association, but even after 25+ years, we do not know everything. Be sure to let us know of ideas that you might have for anything that you think we might be able to help with, be it new articles, classes, webinars, or anything you would like us to approach the industry with. Remember- we are here to support you, and we welcome questions, comments, or suggestions. Don't be shy!



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# The Biggest Online Marketing Method Missed By Most Appliance Service Companies

By Mark Maupin

*Most business owners are always looking for ways to get more business, but they are overlooking one major method that almost anyone can do. It is simple and will catch more customers looking to pay for appliance repair service.*

How can a one-man band can take down an entire appliance repair organization—even a giant company—with just an advertising budget on a shoestring?

Many appliance repair business owners would love to get more business, and almost all business owners know that there is a huge market on the Internet. However, most appliance service companies overlook a somewhat easy marketing method.

What is this easy marketing method?

Answer: Google Plus Business Listings

## **Why is it so important to have a Google Plus Business listing?**

Here are some pertinent statistics that will make a difference in the way an appliance repair service markets its business:

- Over 50% of all adults own a mobile phone
- Nearly 2/3 of Americans 25-34 own mobile phone
- Nearly one-half of research on mobile phone begin with search engines
- 74% of US consumers use location-based services on their mobile phone
- By 2015, over 80% of US cell users will have mobile phone

So what do all of those statistics really mean?

Many people already own and use mobile phones. They use them for socializing, but they also use them to search for answers to questions, such as “appliance repair (city).” They want to find someone locally who can repair their broken appliance. So it is important to understand how searches work on mobile phones.

Well over 70% of all searches are done on Google. Most mobile phones run on Android, which is owned by Google. Therefore, it makes sense to figure patterns about how Google searches work. People use Google, and they use mobile phones. No matter the appliance repair company size—a small one-man band or a giant company—this is essential.

## **What shows on Google searches?**

When a person speaks into his mobile phone, he might say something like “appliance repair salt lake city” to see what results show.

The first listings are paid listings with Google AdWords. Usually, there are two or three of these listings. After that is what many appliance repair service owners overlook: Google Plus Business page listings. In the old days, there were called Google Places listings, but most people sort of see these as the maps, similar to Yellow Pages listings (although Google’s listings are different than Yellow Pages).

That’s right. Those Google Plus Business Page listings are the first free results that mobile phone searches show, at least for local search terms, like “appliance repair denver.” Both small and large companies get listed here. The smart appliance repair service makes sure they are on that part of the page.

## **Is it hard to create Google Plus Business Page listings?**

No, it is not difficult to create Google Plus Business page listings. In fact, most people find it easy. It is simply a form with blanks, asking questions like company name, street address, city, phone number, etc.

The Google listing even allows businesses to list hours of operation and share pictures.

One of the most attractive features of listing a business on Google is that it gives an option for people running businesses from their homes. It allows someone to list a business without showing the address.

To complete a Google Plus Business Page listing, here is all that is needed:

Phone Number

Gmail Account

Address to Receive Postcard from Google



Once the person submits a business to be listed on Google Plus, then there is about a ten to twenty day waiting period. Google sends a postcard to the physical address submitted. They do this to ensure that the person entering an address is not using a phony address. On this postcard, there is a five or six digit verification code. It is really easy to see, as this number is in large letters on an otherwise small postcard. Log into the system; enter this validation code, and the Google Plus Business Page listing will be live online within a few days. Sometimes, the listing will be live immediately after submitting the code.

### **Is it possible to do anything to make one listing show over another?**

It is great to submit a listing, but some cities have many other businesses of the same type that already created a similar Google Plus Business Page.

It would be nice to be the first business listed. Google never gives instructions how to “hop over” other, more established business listings, but here are a few tips, based on a combination of research from other experts and actual personal experience:

- Select the right category (or multiple categories, if necessary).
- Get customer reviews. How can a company get them? Simply ask the customer.
- Attach a website that is relevant to the business (i.e. a company website or listing)
- Get Citations

### **What are Citations? Why are they important?**

Google appears to give favor to business that have a lot of relevance and seems to be well-known within the community.

One of the ways Google appears to check for this “relevance” is through citations. Citations are places online that list (a) the company name and either (b) a street address or (c) a phone number and city/state combination.

Example (b) – Citation

The Country’s Best Appliance Service  
123 Main Street, Anytown, Montana 43210

Example (c) – Citation

The Country’s Best Appliance Service  
Anytown, Montana 43210  
(999) 555-1212

The more places these are listed online, the better chance of the Google Places Business Page listing will become relevant and possibly be listed higher amongst the other listings for that city. Sometimes, a listing might show in multiple cities, but that is not common.

### **OK, citations are important, but how can a company get them?**

Yes, the more citations a company can get online, the better chance of Google putting its listing online in a position closer to the top of the page. The closer to the top of the page a company is listed, the more calls that company tends to generate.

So it is important to figure how to get as many citation listings as possible.

Here are some suggested places for a company to get citations:

- Video Sites
- Directory Sites
- Press Releases
- Landing Pages
- Blogs
- Registrations Profiles
- Comments inside blogs, articles, videos, etc.

Essentially, citations help bring relevance to a company name and associates it with a location. This is amazingly helpful for local searches.

Recall: 74% of US consumers use location-based services on their mobile phone. According to LocalVox, “88% of consumers who search for a type of local business on a mobile device call or go to that business within 24 hours.” Think it is important to find ways to get on top of local searches?

Any service business that wants more customers to call them wants to find ways to be listed online for local search phrases. Take these steps, and any appliance repair service business will get more customers.

**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](mailto:Maupin.Mark@gmail.com).**

# How Sending Electricity Began...

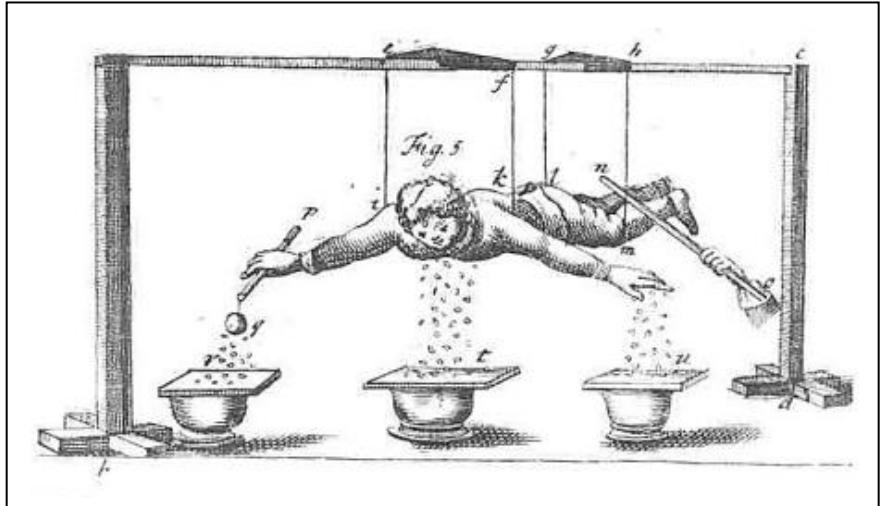
By Jim Campbell, Mcap

**Stephen Gray** was pursuing a long series of experiments with electricity. In producing charge on a long glass tube, he discovered in 1729 that he could communicate the electrical effect to other objects by direct connection. Using string, he could charge an object over 50 feet from the rubbed tube, but oddly enough some other substances, such as silk thread, would not carry charge. Brass wire would transmit charge even better. These experiments with charged strings and glass tubes revealed the properties of conduction, insulation, and transmission.

The depiction above shows one of Gray's most famous experiments, in which he showed that a boy suspended by (insulating) silk cords could be charged (with the glass tube) and then as a (conducting) body could (electrostatically) attract small objects.

Dramatic experiments such as these became quite well-known. Finally, after Newton's death in 1732, Gray was admitted as a member of the Royal Society in recognition of his efforts, but he died destitute a few years later in 1736. Today, our entire power system is based on his experiments, and of course, those of others. We can thank our lucky stars that such discoveries have benefitted mankind for centuries, including jobs like ours.

(Look where we are now, thanks to guys like this!)



## BAT's All Over the Country!

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

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.

The following is the ongoing plan for BAT sessions in 2014- please keep your eye on PSA News and our web site [www.psaworld.com](http://www.psaworld.com), for the latest BAT information...

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Gas Water Heaters, operation and testing components

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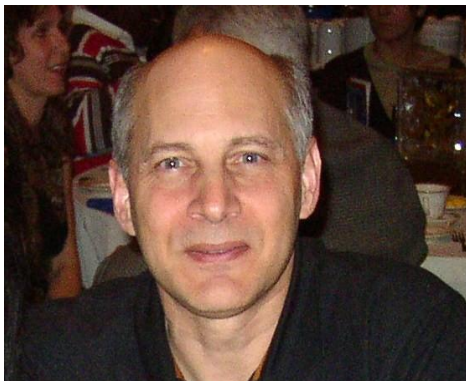
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## Day 1-Basic: Electricity

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

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