

"Optimizing Your Own Service Experience" was on target. What many of your readers don't realize is that equipment service is a customizable product, and every customer wants and needs something different. Customers are always right, but they have a responsibility to ask for what they want.

Throughout my career, when I have encountered unhappy customers, they've had needs that they haven't expressed to their servicers. Typically, once customers sit down with the service provider and explain their needs, they are surprised at how quickly the servicer "turns it around."

Servicers can't do it alone, no matter how hard we try or how many agents we add. As a national service manager for one of the largest equipment manufacturers recently told me, "I have never had more servicers than I do today, and [yet] I have more service problems than I have ever had."

In fact, there's an epidemic now of manufacturers adding servicers in an effort to provide a choice to end users. But as they add these "authorized" service companies, ironically, the effects include:

- Reducing local inventory, as inventory turns at each service company are lowered
 - Making it more difficult for the factories to provide service support to technicians in the field
 - Making it more difficult to provide factory training
- It's a death spiral for quality service.

For best results, I urge operators to handle their service providers in the same way they handle other important vendors: specify needs, request a proposal, select a vendor.

And, equally important, when you have a problem with your service company, call the company directly, don't call the manufacturer. (If your meat delivery always arrives late, you don't call the slaughterhouse.)

If you tell us what you want, and what we're doing wrong, you may be surprised at how quickly we "turn it around."

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