

# Frequently Asked Questions

by GARRY UPTON

*Over the course of 2006, this space will identify opportunities within customers' homes that you may not have observed in the past. The opportunities are based on a recent homeowner survey conducted by Decision Analyst, Inc.*

**This Month's FAQ (part 2):** *My boss told me to listen more and be more observant in the home. What am I supposed to look for? What am I listening for? Why is this important?*

Last month (*CB*, January 2006, p. 16) we began answering this question by highlighting what service technicians should look for in a home. We covered checking the air delivery system, observing homeowner living styles, and looking for do-it-yourself repairs. We continue with the following:

■ **Do the tests.** Once you find out how customers tried to improve their home comfort around the central system, you'll have a better idea what is missing in their whole house comfort. To do this:

- Check duct work for air flow/leaks

- Check the house for correct moisture levels (Does water form in windows? Is the woodwork dry and cracking? Is mold forming in corners and cracks?)

■ **Are they saving energy?** If homeowners have engaged any energy conservation activities, you'll have a better feeling for what they might do to save energy (save costs on heating and cooling).

■ **Identify solutions** to the home's lack of comfort. This will pay off in more than one way:

- Customers who are more comfortable and happier believe more in you as their comfort provider
- A sale made by you that won't be made by your competition.

■ **Note all your observations:**

- Build a template that will make such

observations easy to accomplish in the field or on the computer

- Consider a process that includes creation of proposals from your findings
- Determine the best way to share such information with your customer.

■ **Make sure to place your company's name** and phone number in a high traffic area in the home. Recent research reveals even when customers truly like you as their contractor, they'll only call you back half the time they need your expertise. Why? They simply don't remember your name.

That's all until next time. 

Garry Upton of *Decision Analyst, Inc.* shares his insights and interpretations of a study of 19,000 homeowners, and probes what they look for in HVAC contractors. To learn more about this study, or purchase it, you can contact Garry at [gupton@decisionanalyst.com](mailto:gupton@decisionanalyst.com).