

VENTILATION VIEWS

News, opinions, ideas and technical advice from the ventilation specialists at Air Vent

ISSUE FOCUS:

Presenting Attic Ventilation to the Homeowner

Why Include Attic Ventilation in Every Roofing Proposal

Reducing callbacks is just one reason

Successful roofing contractors recognize the need for proper attic ventilation and include it with every shingle job. Doing so can help reduce callbacks, raise the professionalism of you and your company, build new business through customer loyalty and referrals, and can lead to increased profits per job.

Unfortunately, professional roofing contractors are in competition with “fly-by-night” or “low-ball” contractors — contractors primarily interested in bidding the lowest possible price just to get the job. If that means not specifying or improperly specifying attic ventilation, fine. “As long as I get the job,” seems to be the mindset of such contractors.

Here’s a closer look at the reasons it’s the smart, successful roofing contractor who specifies proper attic ventilation.

Fewer callbacks. One way to help reduce the number of callbacks you receive is to specify the job correctly from the start. That means including proper attic ventilation in your bids. Here’s why:

Today’s homes are more airtight than they were 30 or 40 years ago because building materials are much more thermally efficient. Costly consequences like heat buildup (which can lead to higher utility bills and premature shingle deterioration) and moisture buildup (which can lead to mold, mildew, wood rot and damaged insulation) can occur in today’s more airtight homes. Proper attic ventilation will help prevent these problems.



Shingle warranties typically require it. Failure to provide proper attic ventilation may result in a diminished warranty duration or even the voiding of the shingle manufacturer’s warranty. Is the “fly-by-night” contractor explaining this to the homeowner who is about to spend money on new shingles? Probably not. Especially if he has skipped or taken a short-cut approach to attic ventilation in order to make a lower bid.

The bottom line? Professional contractors understand that few homeowners are willing to jeopardize the shingle warranty in order to save a few bucks on attic ventilation. Protect the homeowner’s investment by including proper attic ventilation.

Increased profits. By including proper attic ventilation in their bids, professional roofing contractors can earn more profits per job because they will be factoring in materials and labor that the “low-ball” contractor isn’t. Educate the homeowner why your price is higher by reviewing the shingle warranty requirements and the year-round benefits of proper attic ventilation. We have free sales tools to further help you educate the homeowner (*see page 3*).

Quick sales tips:

- 1) To distinguish yourself from the “low-ball” contractor during the bidding process, separate your shingle and labor costs from your attic ventilation costs. This way, the homeowner can compare apples to apples. The homeowner will see your shingle/labor costs separately and then can review your attic ventilation costs and your reasoning for including it.
- 2) Cut off the wrapper on the shingles where it describes proper attic ventilation requirements and show it to the homeowner. Let the shingle manufacturer’s requirements do the talking for you.

ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE HOMEOWNER

HELPING HOMEOWNERS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTIC VENTILATION IS AN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS. APPROACH IT WITH THE MENTALITY THAT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DELIVER SOME HIGH-PRESSURE SALES PITCH. INSTEAD, KNOW THAT YOU ARE OFFERING THE HOMEOWNERS SOMETHING THAT THEY NEED. HERE'S WHY.

- 1 Heat buildup.** Today's homes are more airtight than ever before. Heat can build up in the attic and eventually seep into the living spaces of the home. That can make appliances work harder and increase the utility bills. Meanwhile, the heat buildup can lead to premature shingle deterioration.
- 2 Moisture buildup.** The typical family of four generates 2 to 4 gallons of moisture daily from cooking, showers, cleaning and laundry. This moisture rises into the attic. If not properly ventilated, it can lead to mold and mildew, damage the roof deck and reduce the efficiency of the insulation.
- 3 Protecting their investment.** Most shingle manufacturers require proper attic ventilation as a condition of the shingle warranty's validity. Alert homeowners that proper attic ventilation will help protect their investment in their new roof. To help you educate homeowners, use the free Air Vent sales tools listed on page 3.

We asked roofing professionals to share some of their tips that work for them when they are presenting attic ventilation systems to the homeowner.

Here's what they said.

1. Warn them about wear and tear on the roof. "In my opinion, the best way to sell attic ventilation is to explain that with it you can maximize the life expectancy of the roof." — *David Stonecipher, Crimson Contractors, Inc., Tuscaloosa, AL*

2. Tell them it's a wise investment. "Attic ventilation is an easy sell in my market because the homeowners are educated about the importance of proper attic ventilation. I explain to them that it will give them optimum wear out of the roof. I'm usually selling them premium shingles. For a few extra dollars they can help protect their investment by installing proper attic ventilation."
— *Ron Stinson, B.F. Stinson & Sons Inc., Louisville, KY.*

3. Explain it will help prevent ice buildup. "I tell homeowners that if we can keep the attic as cool as the outside temperature, we can help prevent ice buildup on the roof, which is a major concern in my market. Plus, I explain to them that most shingle manufacturers require proper attic ventilation in order to fully warrant the shingles." — *George Rozhon, Rozhon Roofing, Mercer, WI.*

4. Show the shingles. "A surprisingly large number of houses in our area have minimal or no attic ventilation of any kind. Associated with this lack of ventilation is a 'knuckling' of the shingle tabs on the existing roof. This gives us a visual selling tool when talking with the homeowner about the need for proper attic ventilation. I tell them that attic ventilation will help prevent heat buildup which can lead to premature shingle deterioration."
— *Mark Allison, Allison & Daniels, Inc., Penn Yan, NY.*



5. Highlight lower utility bills. "I highlight the benefit of lower heating and cooling bills." — *John Weipert, Battle Creek Roofing, Battle Creek, MI.* "I've had homeowners, who previously didn't have any attic ventilation, tell me they've saved up to a third on their air conditioning bill after I've installed proper attic ventilation."
— *John Hossler, Hossler Construction, York Springs, PA.*

6. Go into the attic. "What allows me to sell attic ventilation at the price I desire is inspecting the attic and using the Attic Ventilation Inspection form (see page 3).

No one else even goes into the attic, so that makes me different from the start. When I review the form with the homeowner, I explain that I'm offering an entire roofing system, not just vents."
— *Scott Lough, Lough Brothers Roofing, Terre Haute, IN.*

7. Emphasize airflow. "I emphasize to the consumer that the reason I mainly specify ridge vents for attic ventilation is because they provide the most airflow."
— *Marvin Moorehead, Shutt Roofing Company, Bloomington, IL.*

8. Build credibility. "Most of my customers understand the need for attic ventilation or trust my recommendation. I build credibility with homeowners by doing the job right, which means using the right product. This has allowed me to develop references for future jobs." — *Archie Hunt, Hunt Contracting, Waterford, MI*

9. Tell them you have it. "I tell homeowners that I installed proper attic ventilation on my house."
— *Al Corman, A.L. Corman Roofing, Greensboro, NC.*

To help you educate the homeowner about the importance of proper attic ventilation, take advantage of these free sales tools from Air Vent. To order, call 1-800-AIR-VENT.

FREE TOOLS TO HELP YOU SELL ATTIC VENTILATION

Attic Ventilation Inspection form

(50 sheets per pad). Homeowners look to and depend on roofing contractors for expert recommendations. The Attic Ventilation Inspection form helps contractors make a complete evaluation and specification for attic ventilation and helps close the sale. The back of the form quickly highlights the benefits of attic ventilation. On the front is a detailed checklist so you can do an interior and exterior house inspection.

Warranty coverage.

Air Vent's ShingleVent® II and Multi-Pitch FilterVent® ridge vents are backed by a limited, transferable warranty which includes our exclusive 5-year Replacement Plus™ Protection. Replacement Plus provides reimbursement for all labor costs incurred in removing any defective vent and installing the vent replacement, in addition to the replacement product itself, in the event a defect occurs within five years of the date of installation.

Attic Ventilation for Today's Homes DVD/VHS video (5 minutes).

This video explains to homeowners why attic ventilation is important and why, in particular, ridge vents are the most effective exhaust vent on the market. There's also footage comparing different types of ridge vents. Viewers are directed to their professional roofing contractor to install an Air Vent attic ventilation system.

Hammer Home the Difference CD.

Richard Kaller, a consultant to the remodeling industry, pinpoints ways contractors can increase their margins by presenting attic ventilation products as part of every roofing job that they sell. It includes role-playing scenarios in which the contractor addresses the homeowner's questions.

Homeowner Presentation Kit (HOP Kit).

This is an excellent sales tool for roofing contractors when you are face to face with the homeowner. The HOP Kit includes a block sample of Air Vent ridge vents, giving the homeowner a chance to touch and see the product up close. Leave-behind literature inside the Kit further educates the homeowner and helps close the sale. HOP Kits are available for ShingleVent® II and Multi-Pitch FilterVent®. And call us for a free copy of our CD-ROM *Why Today's Homes Need Attic Ventilation* that you can show or give to homeowners.

Educational seminars and professional credentials.

Air Vent holds free *Attic Ventilation: Ask The Expert™* seminars in cities across the country. These seminars feature a thorough overview of attic ventilation principles, installation tips for special applications and a Q & A with a technical expert. Every seminar attendee receives a certificate acknowledging that he or she is knowledgeable in proper attic ventilation principles. Visit www.airvent.com for more details.

When the Homeowner Says, 'No!'

Sometimes all the education in the world won't help the homeowner understand the importance of proper attic ventilation. The homeowner wants you to reroof the house, but doesn't want to pay for proper attic ventilation. What do you do then?

Many roofing contractors have told us they are protecting themselves and their businesses with a disclaimer. Have the homeowner sign a disclaimer that clearly explains that you, the roofing contractor, are not responsible for any warranty claims on or damage to the shingles that are the result of improper attic ventilation.

Roofing contractors tell us that the disclaimer itself sometimes sells attic ventilation. Seeing a waiver specific to attic ventilation in black and white and being asked to sign the waiver sometimes convinces the homeowner to buy proper attic ventilation.

One of the best ways a roofing contractor can grow his business is through referrals. Often, the first thing a homeowner does when he or she is ready to buy remodeling services is to ask around for the name of a good contractor. A personal recommendation is given heavy emphasis by the homeowner.

You can increase the frequency of referral leads by marketing to previous customers and by expanding the circle of people referring their friends and coworkers.

But first things first. In order to get previous customers to *want* to recommend your services, you must first satisfy them.

Are Your Customers Satisfied?

If you're not already doing some type of formal, written follow-up, consider sending a letter or form to each customer a week or two after the job. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope to increase the returns. In the letter or form ask your customers if they're satisfied with the services you provided. Leave room for more than just "yes" or "no" answers so customers can elaborate if they wish.

In addition to helping you analyze your service level, the follow-up forms will put subtle pressure on your installers who now know their performance may be reported. If nothing else, the homeowner will respect your company for caring enough to ask for feedback, even if the homeowner chooses not to mail the form to you.

Turning Satisfaction into Referrals

To generate referrals from former customers, you must plant the seed early. Stay in close contact so your name is always in front of your customers. Here are some ideas to help generate new leads from former customers.

Incorporate it into your sales presentation. When first meeting with potential new customers, explain that much of your business comes through referral. This is a sign of a quality company and will help you sell. Let potential customers know that this puts extra pressure on you to leave them satisfied because you hope they will tell others what a good job you did. You're already setting the stage for years of referring.

Reward referring customers. Consider giving a small gift of thanks and appreciation to former customers who make referrals. Gifts could include a restaurant gift certificate or a discount coupon on future remodeling work.

Say thank you. The best way to get someone to do something is to praise him or her for doing it. Be sure to thank customers for every referral. Just a quick phone call or a short note of thanks goes a long way toward future referrals.

Keep in touch. Try to stay in touch with former customers three or four times during the year. This will help build a solid referral foundation. To do it, you'll probably need to develop a mailing list of names and addresses. How you stay in touch is less important than the fact that you do it. You can keep in touch by sending holiday cards, newsletters, tickets to a local home or mall show where you'll be exhibiting, passes to an open house or invitations to a seminar where you'll be presenting. You can also keep in touch by offering the other services that you provide: siding, windows, insulation, gutters, etc.

Here are sample questions you could incorporate into your follow-up form:

- Did you find the salesperson well-informed, courteous and on time?
- Do you have any suggestions to improve our sales presentation?
- Were our installers on schedule, courteous, neat and respectful of your home and yard?
- Has the finished job lived up to your expectations?
- Is there anything that our company could have done to have made your job run more smoothly?
- On a satisfaction scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate our performance?
- May we use you as a reference?
- Is there someone you would like to refer to us today? (Leave space for name, address and phone number.)
- If you would include two referrals, we will gladly send you a \$10 gift certificate as a thank you.
- Please add any other comments you would like:



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