

ROOFING CONTRACTOR



Drew Cope, owner of Cope Construction & Renovation, Cochranville, PA.

WOW! What a Word-of-Mouth Referral

Here's how you can build a loyal tribe of raving fans

What if the product or service you provide is so great that your customers cannot wait to tell their family, friends, and neighbors about it? They become your company's fans and they are literally driving business your way. Drew Cope, owner of Cope Construction & Renovation, Cochranville, Pa., calls such customers, "Our loyal tribe of raving fans." In our podcast interview with Cope, he shared just how powerful these word-of-mouth referrals can be and how his team takes deliberate steps to obtain them.

"In 2015, I posted an image to our Facebook business page with a quote that read, 'Successful companies provide an amazing customer experience to get customers to become a brand advocate who will promote your store.' And with that image, I quoted Tony Robbins: 'Raving fans are critical to a growing business,'" said Cope. "If you've ever researched the principles behind the full immersive experience that Disney creates in their theme parks – from the line into the ride – you know Walt Disney

spoke in similar terms as he tried to set the vision for his company so many years ago.”

5 Core Values

Cope says it all begins with outstanding customer service broken down into what he calls his company’s five core values, which are emphasized the day someone is hired at Cope Construction.

“When we onboard you, these are the things you’re responsible for in making sure our customers absolutely love everything about our company,” he says.

Timely communication. “This is paramount,” Cope says. “All emails and phone calls get returned within 24 hours except on a Sunday. Inbound Facebook requests are responded to within the hour. We anticipate and meet the need of the customer before they ask. We always ask our team to show up five minutes early for an appointment with the customer. If we’re not going to arrive on time, the field staff calls our office staff and the office staff then calls the customer.”

Cope says the most common, frequent complaint his team hears from customers is that other contractors don’t return phone calls and don’t show up for scheduled appointments.

Impeccable Work Ethic. “I only hire people who are serious about doing good work,” Cope says. “Everything we do is with honesty and integrity. We show up to work as if it’s our calling, it’s our mission, it’s our assignment rather than a job. We show up to work like the NFL quarterback showing up at the Super Bowl pumped up and ready to give it 110% every day.”

Cope asks his team to exceed the customer’s expectations in every regard and to go the extra mile.

Collaborate. “If you really want to create raving fans – if you want customers who feel compelled to tell the world, you have to collaborate like a solutions-oriented dream team. Our entire team has to work together,” Cope says.

He gives an example of batching questions for the client into one single list instead of contacting the client each time a question surfaces during the project. It reduces interruptions and maximizes time.

“Focus on solutions, not just identifying problems. Train your team to say, ‘Dear Customer, while working on your home I noticed this. It could be a problem because of this. We are recommending this. Here’s the cost to do that.’ It’s all solutions-oriented,” Cope says.

Foster a Healthy Work Environment Through Stewardship. “We take this through two different routes. One, we tell our team you cannot smoke on the customer’s job site. No cursing. You can’t wash out your paint brushes in the customer’s kitchen sink,” says Cope. “We want to keep the project area clean and be mindful of the customer at all times in what we say and do.”

Cope also asks this of his employees with the way they interact and treat each other and how they maintain the physical work area at the office.

“I believe a healthy and clean work environment helps everyone to be ready to come to work and be excited about work,” he says.

The second aspect of stewardship is taking care of the company tools, equipment, and vehicles.

“Make sure the oil is full. Keep the tires aired up. Take care of the things God has blessed us with and don’t squander them. Don’t waste them,” Cope says.

Dominate the Local Market. “For us, we want to dominate the local home improvement market. So how can we train our brains to think bigger and really dominate?” Cope said. “We need to be willing to do what our competition is unwilling to do to better serve our clients. Maybe it’s the way we go the extra mile to keep the house clean while we’re onsite working on the project. We’re not going to leave a mess. It’s not uncommon for a homeowner to tell us after a project, ‘My house is cleaner when you left than when you

“If you really want to create raving fans — if you want customers who feel compelled to tell the world, you have to collaborate like a solutions-oriented dream team. Our entire team has to work together.”

–DREW COPE, COPE CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION

first arrived. How did you do that?”

Cope says it is much easier and less time consuming to thoroughly prep before a project with drop cloths in the house, for example, than to have to clean up the mess his team created on unprotected areas.

“We want to become the most reputable contractor in this region. How are we going to do that? By wowing our customers,” Cope says. “Creating such an outstanding customer service experience that they feel compelled to tell the world.”

Set the Table with Future Pacing

Cope recommends that businesses make reviews and referrals a central theme in their marketing and sales process. This includes what Cope calls “Future Pacing” — setting the stage from the time the customer first contacts the contractor that if the project is completed the way the customer hopes, the customer will in turn make a referral.

“We want to set the expectation with the client that if we accomplish this, are you willing to do this?” he explains.

For however long a project lasts, anytime a homeowner compliments Cope or his team, he politely suggests that the homeowner make some notes about that so they can include it in the referral they’ll be making eventually.

“We’re future pacing them,” he says.

Cope encourages empowering team members to ask homeowners for referrals. It

does not have to exclusively be the owner of the company asking for the referrals and reviews.

Cope Construction & Renovation equips team members with a script that guides them through the process of asking for a referral. During our podcast interview, Cope and I role played using the script to try to secure a referral from me acting as the customer. It flowed rather smoothly and I very likely would have made a referral based on Cope's guiding me through the process so easily.

Cope says his best tip for getting team members to take outstanding care of your clients is to make sure that you as an employer are taking great care of your team.

"We have an Employee First policy here. In a day and age where employers are sometimes alienating their staff, causing massive turnover, we have made the decision to take great care of our customers, by ensuring we retain and grow our amazing staff," Cope says. "We work hard to show our team that we trust them. We empower them to make decisions. We want team members who have an owner's mindset – who understand self-reliance, personal responsibility, personal discipline, and a solid work ethic. And a little appreciation as the employer goes a long way. It motivates our team to bring their best to the task at hand every day."

About the author: Paul Scelsi is marketing communications manager at Air Vent Inc. and leader of its Attic Ventilation: Ask the Expert™ seminars (airvent.com). He hosts the podcast, "Airing it out with Air Vent," and he's the chairman of the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association Ventilation Task Force. He is the author of the book, Grab and Hold Their Attention: Creating and Delivering Presentations that Move Your Audience to Action.