**Presentation Killers**

Hi everybody, welcome back. Kenny Chapman here, the Blue Collar Coach, your contractor coach and sales and customer service trainer.

Today I want to talk to you about something that I’m seeing in the field as much as I’m riding in different companies. I’m going in and doing onsite consulting, training, coaching, riding in the truck with the service techs, and seeing the real challenges that they have.

One of our goals here at the Blue Collar Coach is to be relatable to you, and we understand that we can’t simply stand in the front of the room and tell you what to do. This is because once we get out in the field, the game doesn’t always get played the same way that it does in the front of the room.

The customer doesn’t always follow our script. Would you agree? This is absolutely true, right?

So, I get to go out and see different things, and I get to be in great companies at the same time. Really, it’s only successful companies that hire me to come in and do my full-week, onsite training and program with them. So, these are great customers that I’m involved with. And what I see both in my own company, as well as companies that I consult with and interact with is that **we always have opportunities to strengthen our presentation** as selling technicians.

Now, guys, I get the fact that you didn’t get into this industry to be “salespeople” and to have all this public speaking time. And you didn’t get in to be a teacher, trainer and an educator to our customers.

But you know what?

In the company that you’ve chosen to work with, this is the reality. And the reality is that nowadays the technical things that you do sometimes become almost secondary to the **human interaction** and the **education process** that takes place.

Now, please understand, I’m not minimizing anything technically. I’m a big believer in licensed technicians and hiring and training skilled labor in our forces. But that being said, *that’s not enough anymore*.

See, the technical ability that you have is simply the ability to play the game anymore. It’s like sitting down at the poker table in Las Vegas and you need to throw a couple chips into the middle of the table to have a hand dealt to you. Well, that’s kind of the way it is with technical aptitude today. You need to be able to get the job done, but that’s just to sit at the table and play the game. **Now, the game has changed**, and we have to make better presentations with our customers while we’re sitting at the kitchen table.

Now, I’ve talked about it in other videos, but I’m going to reinforce it here as to, “Why do I want to be at the kitchen table?”

Why do you think that is?

We could stand. We could stand out by the truck. We could stand in the basement. We could stand by the equipment. We could be out by the panel, if we’re electricians.

**But I want to be at the kitchen table.** Why do you think that is?

-It’s because it’s a safe place in the home.

-It’s a comfortable place in the home.

-Strangers don’t sit at the kitchen table.

See, there’s a psychological thing that takes place, because you only have friends and family and people that you care about sit at that kitchen table.

A lot of family decisions are made at the kitchen table. So, we want to take all these subconscious, psychological thoughts that our customer has and just use them (but not using them against them) to help them appreciate us a little bit more. It helps them to build a little bit more trust and to get on that same page with us. And today’s video is all about “presentation killers.”

So, I’m going to share with you five key things I see that kill presentations more often than not.

**Five Presentation Killers**

We’ll just jump right into the first one here.

Now, I’m only talking about the part of the service call where we’re sitting down. We’ve got a quality option sheet filled out. We’re talking to the customer about what potential things need to be addressed, enhanced, upgraded or repaired in their home, whatever the case might be. We are just focusing on this interaction. I’ve got my option sheet. I’m having my conversation.

Here are things that kill presentations, my friends.

**#1: Unclear Thinking**

The first presentation killer is unclear thinking. What I mean by that is that I see technicians sit down at the table, and all of a sudden, (we’ve often been on the call for 30 or 40 minutes, by the time we get to this point) it’s like we just dropped them out of the sky into the seat! Suddenly they’re sitting there, stammering around unsure of how to lead into the presentation. They’re all over the board, and it’s like, “Whoa, wait a minute. Guys, get your thoughts clear.”

That’s the reason I have you *go out to the truck* to fill out your option sheets. There are different schools of though on this. I believe you need to go to the truck because:

-It gives you a chance to take a breath.

-It gives you a chance to get your thoughts together.

-You can develop your plan of what the presentation’s going to look like. What’s the flow going to be?

So, get your thoughts clear with a direction about what you want to accomplish when you go in to sit down and present the options.

We’re not hard selling here.

We’re not pushy.

We’re not having an arm wrestling match at the kitchen table.

That’s not what this is about.

This is about a **well-structured, well-put together, well-thought out** human interaction to educate the customer about what the options are, why we’re offering them, and what the benefit is to them.

So, the first issue that I see that kills presentations is simply unclear thinking.

**#2: Lack of Structure**

Number two is about the presentation lacking structure. I mentioned structure a couple of minutes ago. Unclear thinking is an internal thing. That’s about *us.*

Now, the ‘no structure’ part ties back to that option sheet. I’ll see techs that might have a decent option sheet (with four or five things on it) but they’re all over the board. Then, all of a sudden, they’re showing two different types of pricing, but *they haven’t talked about a service agreement yet.* And the customer’s thinking, “What’s going on here?”

When I see technicians get halfway through a presentation, and the customer is going, “Whoa, wait a minute, wait a minute. Why are there two prices here? What’s going on here?” It’s like, “Oh, no.”

We’ve all had it happen. I get it, guys. There’s a lot of stuff that you’ve got to do out there. I understand that. I’m not minimizing that at all.

I’m trying to help you realize things that I see from a third-party perspective, with trained eyes and ears. I don’t do this to beat up the technicians that I ride along with, but to help them *become more successful*; I’m in this for you, guys.

If I can help you accomplish more, then the company and clients are going to be taken care of. That’s a non-issue.

We’ve got to look at:

-How is our presentation structured?

-What am I leading with first?

I had better be **leading with something relevant to the reason that they called me, or that came up during the discovery portion** of the service call to really understand why it’s relevant.

I talked about relevance earlier, as far as me to you, and what we do at Blue Collar, helping you become more successful. Well, the structure of your presentation also has to be *relevant to the customer’s situation.*

So, we’re leading with either the reason that they called us, or if it’s an inspection situation, we’re leading with what we found, and what opportunities, upgrades, or enhancements might be available to them.

Whatever that case is, **get clear and utilize your option sheet.** That’s why I’m such a big advocate of putting in two, three, four, five, six, or seven things.

I’ve ridden with technicians that have used three and four option sheets on one call, because they’ve broken it up. “We found so much stuff I need to do, here’s the master bath. Here’s the one on that. Here the basement. Here’s everything in the mechanical room in the basement. Here’s another one for the kitchen area because you were talking about maybe changing out that sink and garbage disposal,” and so on and so forth.

So, instead of having 15 things lined out on one little option sheet, this technician broke it up and said, “Okay, here are four options in the kitchen. Here are five options in the basement. Here are six options in the master bath.” Then we just talk about them one at a time.

Many technicians I ride with are afraid of taking that approach. I don’t want you to overwhelm your customer, but here’s the thing: *how much* you have to talk about is never going to overwhelm the customer. **The *way* that it’s talked about is what overwhelms the customer.**

We get it in our heads, “Oh, my gosh, Kenny’s crazy. You know, I tried that thing, and I went out, and I asked a lot of great questions. I slowed down and I got some good things on my option sheet, and then by the time I got to the fourth or the fifth one, the customer’s glazing over, and they just said, ‘Oh, no, no. I don’t want all that.’”

Well, that’s not the problem, that you had too many options, it’s **how you presented it and how you structured it**.

So, that’s the second thing that I see as a challenge. First, we’re unclear with our thoughts. Second, we don’t have a good structure to our presentation.

**#3: Lack of Relatable Stories**

Third, we don’t have good, relatable stories. There’s that word again. Can you see a theme today? It’s about *relatable stories*.

How can we engage this customer in something separate from the work we’re there to do today?

You are a plumber. You are an electrician. You are an HVAC technician. You are a carpet cleaner. You are a mold remediation specialist. Whatever the technical work you do is not what’s going to help you accomplish closing a good sale with a good add-on opportunity for your customer. **The relationship is where that happens**.

So, you’ve got to be relatable to them. You can’t be just a stranger service provider in their home. You’ve got to be relatable. You’ve got to help them understand **why you’re the right person for the job.**

A couple of weeks ago, I was on a ride-along with a technician. This story is kind of twofold, but what I’ll lead with is that we were going in and just working on a toilet. He was trying to get a new toilet sale here. It was an older unit. He did a great job of getting through the house. He found that one of the other toilets had been replaced. There’s always a reason to connect now. They’ve already done that one when they remodeled the bathroom.

He asked, “Well, what about this toilet? It’s the same age; it’s giving you the same trouble.” So, he was doing some things correctly, but *he hadn’t connected with this homeowner* that we were working with.

And so, our discussion was all technical. It was all about features and benefits of a toilet, why they need a new toilet, and what the new toilet’s going to do. That’s all well and good, and that’s necessary. We *need* to do those things. But we need to do them structured a little differently, and during the presentation, not just when we’re diagnosing the situation.

So, an interesting thing happened. We go out the truck. We build the option sheet. We come back in, and we had no connection with this guy whatsoever. He seemed a little distracted throughout the call. We’ve all had those customers – right? We just really weren’t connecting.

Well, we walk back in, and the technician did a great thing. He said, “Hey, can we sit at the kitchen table? I’d like to go over a couple of options with you.”

The customer replied, “Certainly.”

By the way, I never see people say, “No, we can’t do that.” We have this thought in our heads that people freak out if we ask to go to the kitchen table. I see it happen all the time. *They’ll let you sit at the table.*

So, we walk over to the kitchen table, and **the technician did something brilliant.**

He glanced over at the wall, and on the wall there were two military flags. In the room next to where I shoot my videos here, I’ve got my father’s flag in a triangular flag case. It is the flag from his casket when he was buried in Riverside, California, at a military cemetery. And you know what? That flag means a lot to me. And you know what else? Everybody that has one of those flags, *it means a lot to them.*

Now, this technician I was with, he was a previous Navy kid. He had been in the Navy and had that experience. So, he recognized the two flags, and there was a plaque between them, and he said, “I noticed those flags. Tell me about that.”

The guy (literally, ladies and gentlemen) turns on a dime.

Immediately I knew we were going to get a sale today. Up to that point, I had no idea *because he was distracted.*

The guy just opens up. He brightens up. He says, “Well, I was in the Navy, and the one on the right is my father, and the one on the left is my grandfather. And then that plaque in the middle, would you believe the Navy actually came and presented me with that plaque? I’ve got three kids that are currently in the Navy, two sons and a daughter, all serving.”

Then the technician says, “Oh, I was in the Navy, too. Thank you for your service.”

“Well, no, thank you for your service,” the customer says. And then he opened it up. And he (the homeowner) said, “Yeah, the Navy came and they presented that to me at my work.” He said, “See, I’m a police officer.”

And I said, “Well, wow, that’s a real service, thank you for that.” Being relatable, showing gratitude for our customer, saying “Thank you for your service.”

“Well, yeah,” he said, “you know, it can always be crazy. Right now I’m actually on administrative leave, just like you see on TV, for using deadly force. I was forced to shoot somebody last week, and it ended in a fatal wound, and they died. So, I’m on paid administrative leave while they do all this stuff they’ve got to do. You know, they’re researching me. They’re going through all the evidence.”

And I’m thinking, “What!?”

I mean, I teach and train this stuff all the time, and I see with my own eyes how I talk about customers being distracted. **We never know what’s going on with a customer.**

Here’s a guy that doesn’t know if he’s going to be in jail or be at work in 30 days, based on how the investigation turns out. Holy smokes!

Now, because we brought that up, we had a relatable story, something that made sense to this gentleman, and he just opened up. We became like-minded people. We became other people that were like him.

People buy from people that they know, like, and trust.

That became us.

We made a sale that day, even though he didn’t know if he was going to have a job moving forward. **That’s the power of relatable stories**, my friends.

We’ve got to look for those things. Pay attention. Look for things that are relatable for them, that have nothing to do with the reason that you’re called in there. Okay? So the number three presentation killer is lack of relatable stories.

**#4: Lack of Connection**

The number four presentation killer is lack of connection. What I mean by this is on the emotional side of things. A relatable story will draw that out, but sometimes if there’s no way that you can find something (which I don’t agree that there ever is) you’ve got to find a way to connect with this customer.

One of the things we talked about recently in my organization, in my company training, is almost making it a game. Find how you can open up this customer. What is it? What does it take?

I used to think, “Well, I need to know something about what I’m talking about in order to connect with the customer.” *Au contraire*, that’s not true.

See, I don’t do a lot of boating. I go to Lake Powell a couple times a year. I get on the ocean once in a while. But I’m not a boat captain by any means. I don’t know how to drive a boat or whatever. So, oftentimes, if I would have seen a boat in a driveway, I would have thought, “I can’t really talk about the boat, because I don’t know much about it.”

No, that’s wrong.

I want to talk about the boat, because it’s obviously something that’s important to them. It can be something easy like, “Man, I noticed that cool boat out there. Tell me about that. Is that a hobby or a passion of yours?” You’ll find out immediately. Or maybe it’s, “I’ve been interested in boating, but I’ve never really driven other than a couple of rentals on small lakes and stuff like that. How do you learn how to get that thing turning right? It seems like I’d just be banging up against the dock– that’s really a learned skill.”

There you go…connection. Emotional connection. That’s what it’s about.

The fourth way I see presentations killed is that there’s no emotional connection with the customer. We need to ramp that up, my friends.

**#5: Poor Openings and Closings**

The fifth thing that I see is poor opening and poor closings.

Now, you guys know I’m an advocate for: **the better you learn how to open, you’ll never have to close again.** I’ll say it, and I’ll say it again, and you’ll hear it from me *again and again and again*.

So, the better you get at opening with a client, and opening up the client, the better your results. It’s not just saying, “Hi, I’m Kenny with Peterson,” **it’s about opening that customer up**. Then when we get them opened up, really good things happen.

But I see technicians just show up at the door and say, “Hi, I’m Kenny with Peterson. I understand you’ve got an electrical issue today. Can you show me the panel? Okay, great.”

Getting the customer to open up isn’t as basic as asking what they think about the day’s weather. I mean, come on. There’s no emotional connection there. (Unless it’s after some crazy weather or something.)

You’ve got to find that connection. That’s part of the opening process. **The better you open, the better you close**.

All I mean by closing (I’m not a hard, pushy sales guy) is that ***I want you to ask for the darn sale*.** As you’re going through the presentation, when you get to the end ask, “How shall I proceed? Which one of these makes the most sense for you?”

Just ask the question.

Ask for the sale, my friends.

**Pay attention to these five things:**

1. *Get clear about your thoughts*. Don’t allow unclear thinking to kill your presentation.
2. *Have a good structure for your presentation*. Know what you’re going to do and where you’re going to go with it. Don’t let a lack of structure kill your presentation.

1. *Find some relatable stories*. Pay attention to what those are. You’ve lived a lot of life. When I first started public speaking, I was like, “I don’t know. I don’t have anything to relate with audiences.” And then I had mentors drawing things out of me, and I started realizing, “Whoa. I’ve lived some life.” And guess what? That’s relatable to people. Now I tell those stories, and *I share who I am and what I’m about.* Now, that’s different in a keynote speech, but it’s not different because it’s human interaction. We just go about it differently on the service call, but we’ve got to be relatable.
2. *Lack of connection*. Don’t allow that to get in your way. Find a way to connect, guys. It’s not just about the tools. It’s not just about the product. **The customer buys you first, then they buy the company, and then ultimately they buy the equipment or the product that we’re talking about.** Yet we put all this time, energy, and effort into the product that we’re talking about only.
3. Develop a better opening and you’ll never have to worry about closing again. Don’t allow these things to stand in your way.

**Four Important Pointers to Focus On**

Focus on these four things for me right now:

**#1. Slow down with your presentations.**

More often than not, the presentation goes too quickly. We’re not slowing down and asking customers questions in between because we’re worried. We’re nervous. And I get it; when I’m with technicians, I understand that. I’m a professional. I’m there to check it out, see what I can do to help, but it’s not always translated that way.

**#2. Manage your nerves.**

Slow down, and then manage your nerves. It’s not about you; it’s about them.

**#3. Stay the course.**

If you get a little bumped off track, that’s why I want you to have good structure to your presentation. Stay the course as you’re going through these things.

**#4. Don’t take it personally.**

You’re going to get kicked out of some houses. So what? Get over it. Don’t take it personally. Give it every single thing you’ve got, every day, every call, every process, and let the results play out.

Don’t let these five presentation killers get in your way, my friends.

You’ve got what it takes. I believe in you; you can do this. Just dig in. Pay attention to these things, and I want you to get out there and get better results. I’m here for you.

I’m Kenny Chapman, the Blue Collar Coach. Until we see each other again, I want you to have a better than fantastic week, and I’ll see you next time.