**Value First and Foremost**

Hi, everybody, Kenny Chapman here, the Blue Collar Coach, your contractor coach and sales trainer coming to you live with a video this month about building value first and upfront on the call.

**Build Value Right Away!**

The first portion of the call is *before we make a presentation*, ladies and gentlemen. This goes from the time I arrive at the home, showing up with clarity in my mind of what I want to accomplish on this call.

What are the habits I’m going to challenge, the actions I’m going to take? Demonstrating the perseverance and persistence by never giving up while showing gratitude to my customer for the opportunity to work in their home because they have so many other choices. Then wrapping that all up with enthusiasm as I demonstrate what I’m doing and why I’m the right choice in this customer’s home.

I do tons of training and ride-alongs. I’ve been on the road a lot lately before recording this video, and one of the things I just wanted to share is how I see where we’re lacking delivering and demonstrating strong value on the front end of things.

What do I mean by this?

I mean that it’s really common and I see it often, guys, where I go through and look at the initial problem. I ask them questions. I find out a little bit about the customer and then I go, “Okay. Well, I’ve got to get to my truck,” write some options, and, boom, “Here you go.”

And they’re still making a buying decision primarily based on price.

We haven’t given them enough upfront.

We haven’t talked about differentiation of warranties.

We haven’t utilized benefit statements.

We haven’t uncovered enough information from them to be able to utilize *the power of because.*

**Use the Power of “Because”**

When I say, “*Because* you told me you have four young children and you're the one taking that cold shower in the morning, *because* you told me that, I wanted to make sure you're aware that we have this type of a water heater available. *Because* you had told me that you're tired of all the sneezing and the coughing going on in the home, we’ve got this electrostatic air cleaner.”

Whatever the case might be, but if we don’t have the information, then we’re just making hollow offers based on **what we think they might need**, and they’re making buying decisions primarily based on the prices that we show them out of the book.

*I want them making buying decisions based on you*, my friend!

As we’ve talked about in the past, there are a couple of things I want to reinforce today and then I want to share three things about how you're going to be able to build more value upfront which means you're going to **close more deals at higher tickets**.

You're going to make more money, and **you're going to provide better customer service**.

Does that sound like a win to you?

I certainly hope so because it sounds like a win to me, and that’s what we’re doing every single day with the technicians that we’re working with that are willing to implement the strategies we’re talking about.

Let me say that again: **Technicians that are *willing* to implement the strategies and the tools** that we’re talking about.

I can go onsite. I can spend a week with each one of you riding along demonstrating strategy, talking about what’s important and why it works and this and that and then I get out of the truck, and whatever you're going to do is what you're going to do.

**Build Value Using *Know, Like, Trust***

But here’s what I know: People buy from people that they know, like and trust.

It’s almost like a buzzword. It’s almost lost its’ edge and its value because, anytime when I’m at a live event, if I’m teaching our service sales success school, I ask, *who do people buy from?*

We get a host of answers, and we chunk them down, and the bottom line is that they’ve got to know you. They’ve got to like you, and they’ve got to trust you.

If they don’t know you, **how can they like you?** And if they don’t like you, **how can they trust you?** And if they don’t trust you then **they can’t buy from you**. Okay?

It’s not rocket science, but it’s a disconnect in our mind as technicians. I’m a technician at heart, too. I came straight out of the truck into growing my business and managing and doing different things and now back to the truck and training and riding along side by side with you guys, and I see things. All I’m doing is bringing you information to help you.

It’s not about beating things into you. It’s not about making you a robot. It’s not about making you something that you're not. It’s rather about **helping you become all that you can be within the system.**

**Build Rapport With Your Customer**

A customer has to know you, my friends. How do they get to know you with you walking in and talking to a water heater?

How do they get to know you when you address the cabinet or the furnace and you start with, “Oh, hello there, Mr. Goodman. Mr. Amana. Mrs. Trane?” It’s like I get the fact that sometimes we’re more comfortable talking to a piece of equipment than to a customer, but the equipment’s not buying from you. The customer’s the one that’s going to make a choice to invest with us or not.

**Spend More Time Before The Presentation**

We’ve got to **spend more time with them** on the frontend.

Now, this isn’t about killing billable hour efficiency. This is about increasing billable hour efficiency. This isn’t about getting you slowed down so you run less calls in the day. This is about getting you to slow down so you offer more things that your customer invests in and you run less calls in a day. Okay?

So, ultimately, this is the proven recipe, but we get away from it.

I’m advocating **spending some time upfront**.

That’s why, when we go and address a situation, we have to go to emergency water shutoff or go back upstairs to the thermostat. It’s like, “Well, I’ll just grab the thermostat on the way down.” *No.*

Go to the equipment. Come back up. Have some time with the customer so we **get a chance to talk and be able to see some things.** *Oh, that’s some nice artwork there. I like the color of the carpet. Wow, the granite’s nice. Did you remodel that?*

It takes time to do that.

As soon as you go straight to the problem, you go into technical mindset. You're fixing it. You're building an option sheet in your mind. *Hmm.* Then the customer is taking the backseat. The customer’s just hanging back going, “Okay. Well, what does this have to do with me? It’s how much?” when you get to the price because **you don’t have a connection**.

They want to buy from friends.

Now I’m not saying you have to be best friends with all your customers, but I’m saying they’ve got to realize *you're a real person.* There’s chaos in this world. There’s tragedy in this world. There are crazy people in this world including us as technicians sometimes. Right?

**Stack the Odds In Your Favor**

We’ve got to stack the odds in our favor. All I advocate for you guys is **stacking the odds in our favor anytime and every time** we possibly can.

So we’ve got to get that done to the best of our ability. The best way to do that is by **opening up and having a conversation.**

This past week, I saw a carbon monoxide detector sold because of a music stand. The technician just brought it up and said, “Oh, I noticed a music stand down in the basement next to the furnace. Do you play?” “No. My late husband played,” and began talking about that he played this standup string instrument, and I happened to be riding with a technician that was a drummer. So he knew about it, and they started talking, and I went away.

They developed a little bit of a rapport. He offered a high level carbon monoxide detector, a low level carbon monoxide detector, and she decided to invest in it instead of, *oh, I saw you two seconds when you got here and then you went in the basement for the tune-up. Now you're coming up trying to sell me something.*

It makes sense, guys. I don’t want you to be hard salespeople. **I want you to be great educators**, and great educators learn from their customers.

**Building Value for Your Customer**

How do I build more value upfront?

What does it mean to a customer?

What are the things that they’re interested in?

Value depends on the purpose. Right? They say beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Well, **value lies in the hands of the person whose perception drives the value.**

**The Value of a Drink**

Think about this. We’ve been gone almost a month. I was on the road, and I got home last Friday. I had a birthday while I was on the road, so some local friends said, “Hey, let’s go out and have a nice dinner on the town and celebrate your birthday after the fact.” Okay, cool. That’s great. Let’s go catch up with some friends.

So we go to dinner and then, okay, well, let’s go have an after dinner drink, and we had told them we’re not staying out late. We’ve been on the road. We don’t want to be out late tonight. We’re not doing any crazy shots or anything like that.

So we get to this bar after dinner. Christy and I are just going to have one drink, get a cab and go home, and so one of our buddies was like, “Oh, shots of such and such.” He’s quite a bit younger than us, and I don’t even remember what it was. And it doesn’t matter what it was because, see, in that environment, a free shot has a lot of value to a lot of people. Right? “Hey, Kenny. Here’s a shot, man. It’s your birthday. It’s free.” *I don’t care.* I don’t want it. It has no value to me because I’m going home to get a good night of sleep tonight. Tonight’s just not a party night.

So what’s the value of the drink? Is it that it can be a nice party thing and relax? Is it that it costs $9.00 and somebody’s handing me $9.00 for free? But in *my perception*, I want a good night of sleep. I don’t want to feel fuzzy tomorrow. So **this drink has no value to me.**

**Ask Questions to Build Value**

I see technicians working to build value in things that customers haven’t alluded to at all.

**That’s why we’ve got to ask questions upfront.**

How long have you lived here?

How long do you plan to live here?

How many people live in the home?

When’s the last time it had any work done?

Have you remodeled?

Have you thought about remodeling?

You can build in all these kinds of questions for each and every call (for the most part) to be able to uncover information. Then talk about the value of the service agreement that they’re on if you're there for a service agreement inspection or a tune-up.

“Well, one of the great things, because you're a service agreement customer, is that you do keep that priority service or you do still get the discounts on anything that we do in the home today. One of the great things about our service agreement is you get that extended warranty.”

**Build Value Upfront to Avoid Objections**

Whatever the case is, we’ve got to build these things upfront because all kinds of technicians get to the table, make a presentation, and the customer goes, “Oh, well, that seems like a lot of money,” and then they go, “Oh, yeah but our company’s been in business for 26 years, and we do have the longest warranties in the valley.” Well, where was that *before* I had to make a buying decision?

Now I’m trying to get back to the table because they pushed me away from it. So now I use the objection as a reminder, “Well, I know, Miss Jones, it might seem like a little more than some other companies, but remember, we’ve been around for 26 years. And that long warranty that we put on there, we’re going to be around another 26, so we’re going to be here to serve that.”

Now I don’t need to throw anybody under the bus, but I can present a seed of doubt. Fifteen percent of our marketplace as contractors turns over every year nationwide. So what does that mean? **Almost one in five companies aren’t going to be here next year**. They’ll be replaced. There will be a company, but it’s going to be under a different name or whatever. Right?

So we’ve got to educate our customers on the frontend. I’ll also see technicians present something that they customer says, “Okay. Yeah. Let’s go ahead and replace the faucet.” “Okay. Great. I just need a signature here.”

I’ll watch the technician literally relax and *then* start asking questions! Ask questions early in the call.

**Get Customers Talking Right Away**

Last week, I was on a call and on our way out of the house the technician said, “Oh, I noticed that piece art there.” The lady said, “Yeah. One of these days, maybe I’ll get around to finishing it.” It was on canvas on a stand in the living room.

I wondered if he was going to ask about it but *ask about it earlier*. Now we’re heading out, and she’s going, “Oh, yeah. Maybe I’ll get around to finishing it.” Well, she’s an artist. *This is important to her.*

How about when we’re going back and forth, back to the bathroom, back and up down the stairs. “Oh, I noticed you got a piece of art there. Are you an artist?” **Get them talking earlier.**

You are the value, my friend. You.

**Three Investment Decisions Customers Make**

Customers make three buying decisions every time they’re able to invest with us.

First, they make a decision to invest in: **you as a technician**.

Then they make a decision to invest in: **the company that you represent.**

Then ultimately, they make a decision to invest in: **the product or the service** that you're asking them to invest in.

First you, then the company, then product and service, but I see technicians go in and *lead with product and service*. “Oh, I work for a pretty good company, and, oh, yeah. I’m going to be the one doing the work.”

Come on, man. This is about you. **This is about differentiating**. This is about setting the bar to a higher level for yourself and against your competition.

**Three Things to Help You Build More Value**

There are three things I want you to focus on this week.

**#1: Connect with the customer (outside of the initial issue at hand) earlier in the call.**

Now, that doesn’t mean we start immediately tight out of the gate. You get there and ask a couple of questions about what’s going on. *Get to the immediate problem first.*

Now I begin opening up.

Now that’s why I want to get to the water shutoff. I want to get to the thermostat. I want to get to the electrical panel to have some time to talk with them. The solution has arrived. Their duress level is already going down because there’s a service tech there.

Exude confidence.

Ask the good questions.

Connect earlier with the customer, outside of the problem, earlier in the call. That’s the first thing I want you to focus on.

**#2: Keep them engaged throughout the call.**

If you're doing tune-up, if you're doing something in the basement, if it’s not a demand call or you're in the garage or you're in the attic, it’s easy to just get sucked into just *do this, do this, do this, test this, test that and test that.* Okay. Boom. I’m done.

I see this happen all the time with technicians.

You’ve got to go back and forth. If you can’t put the client in the attic with you or whatever, that’s fine, but you’ve got to come out of the attic and walk down and **talk to them** about the part and talk to them about what you're doing a test on your way to the truck.

Go back and forth, so you humanize with them and then you mention something and you connect and you talk. That’s what it’s all about. That’s what sets you free.

So, keeping them engaged is the second thing. We’re connecting *earlier,* keeping them engaged at a higher level.

**#3: Exude enthusiasm!**

I want you to allow your enthusiasm to show, and if you need a little shot of it, by gosh, you need to get on it. Get a shot of it because life is too short not to enjoy what you do. You put on that uniform every day and you're going out there and you're getting cut and you're getting burned and you're working in cold conditions and hot conditions and all these kinds of things for your customer.

It’s a big deal, guys. You're not “just a” technician.

You're a service professional in this industry **taking care of the health and welfare of this nation**.

That’s what it’s all about. They might be able to shut down our government for a few days, which is going on at the time I’m recording this, but they can’t shut down plumbing and HVAC contractors or everything stops. Think about that for a minute.

You’ve got this.

Connect earlier.

Keep customers engaged.

Exude your confidence through the process.

**Build value first**, and then offer solutions.

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