

TROJAN

T O D A Y

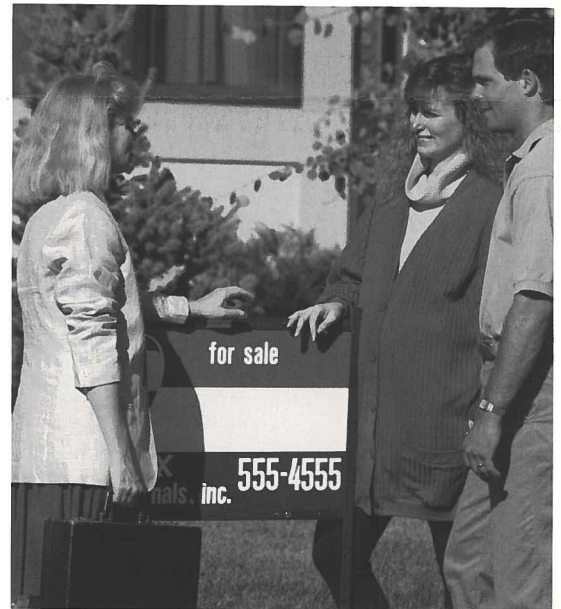
Lessons From Moving

BY INGRID KIDD GOLDFARB, PRESIDENT

I moved recently. After seventeen years in the same house, the stress of sorting, purging and packing was exhausting. Even more stressful was the necessity of dealing with a variety of “service” people; i.e. telephone installers, cable technicians, painters, contractors, realtors, bankers, plumbers and electricians. We had some excellent experiences; we also had some that were frustrating and less than satisfying.

Trojan is a customer service company. Your dental practice is also a “customer service center.” From setting appointments, presenting treatment plans, billing and collecting, filing insurance claims and handling unhappy patients, everyone on the staff needs to be in tune with the customer service philosophy of the practice. Your longevity and success depend on service just as much as they depend on the clinical skills of the dentist and hygienists.

Here are a few things I’ve been reminded of recently. They’re important lessons for Trojan ... and may be helpful reminders to your practice.



- Listen to your customers. Don’t assume anyone’s needs and desires are the same as anyone else’s. Even if you are unable to meet someone’s wishes, give the respect of listening to see if there is a way to solve the problem.
- Be honest – even when the truth isn’t what you think someone wants to hear. If you don’t know the answer, admit it and promise to find out and get back with a reply.
- When you say you will call back, DO. Nothing irritates more, or destroys confidence, like unmet promises.
- Make sure there is someone to speak to who has authority. You will lose a client after a person has re-told her problem several times, only to be told “I agree with you but unfortunately I don’t have authority to do anything.”
- Explain what you are going to do . . . but don’t get too technical. Save the clinical talk for colleagues. Be especially cautious of using acronyms that are unfamiliar to your customers.

- Make sure both parties clearly understand the charges and procedures in advance. Provide proposals in writing and honor them.
- Always remember you are paid from your customer’s money.
- Happy customers talk; unhappy customers talk louder.

And finally I share with you a few “truths” about remodeling and moving:

- It always costs more than they tell you.
- It always takes longer than estimated.
- Every little change leads to a much bigger project.
- In the end, if you get what you wanted, it’s all worth it.

“Nothing happens unless first a dream.”

Carl Sandburg