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**For Your Consideration...**

**To:** HVAC Contracting Sales Professionals

**From:** Richard Harshaw

**Subject:** Script to Qualify a Prospect

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When I worked for Blue Springs Heating and Air Conditioning<sup>1</sup> in 1979-1980, I ran the service department and also did the replacement sales (usually in the late afternoons and evenings, or on weekends). I quickly learned that not every person I went to see cared to spend what I was asking for my products and services, and wasting this time was frustrating. When I learned that about 25% of the market is price driven (and therefore the other 75% is NOT price driven), I developed and starting using the following script to great success. I offer it to you as a consideration and a way to set yourself apart early on in the sales process.

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“Thank you for calling Blue Springs Heating and Air Conditioning! I am looking forward to working with you. But before we agree to meet, there are a couple of things I need to tell you about us so you will know what lies in store. When Carl started this company nineteen years ago, he had to make a decision: should he offer his customers the best quality equipment that could be found, engineer the job with precision, and install it with highly-trained personnel—or should he offer his customers cut-rate systems and cut corners in the process in order to cut the price? I am glad to say that Carl chose to go the road of quality, and I would bet that you are glad he did, aren’t you?”

[Let the customer respond to this; they almost always said “Yes!” Few people will admit they enjoy buying junk.]

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<sup>1</sup> Located in Blue Springs, MO

“Great! Now you should also know then that because we use the best equipment available, correctly engineer every job, and use highly-trained and skilled installing crews, we cannot do that on the cheap—and stay in business! So you need to know up front that if I come to see you, it will be to solve your needs in the best way possible, and our price will probably be a little higher than what you might be expecting. In fact, I know from experience that I am almost always higher than my competitors, but given our company’s philosophy, I am proud to offer my customers the very best from the very start.

“I also know that there are times when spending a lot of money on a new comfort system is not a good idea. For instance, you may be putting your home on the market soon and rarely do you get back out of the sale price the money you put into the home to get it ready to sell. Or you may have some major expenses coming up that you need to keep your budget cleared to handle, such as college expenses or medical situations.

“Knowing that we are going to be on the high side of the price spectrum, let me ask you a key question: is your primary decision point the initial price of the job, or are you willing to spend perhaps a little more than you thought you needed to in order to get everything you wanted?”

[Let them answer.]

**Customer says, “Well, we really are worried about that initial price.”**

“Thanks for your candor and honesty on that. I appreciate it very much. Unfortunately, I cannot help you, as I cannot use the equipment we use, do the engineering, and have it all installed by our skilled crews without charging enough to remain in business to do that. There is a dealer near you, however, who does that line of work. You may find him to be helpful. His name is [name here] and his phone number is [number]. I am sure that if you called him, he would be glad to come out and see you.”

**If the customer says, “No, what you say makes sense. If the value is there, I am willing to pay for it.”**

“Great! When would be a good time for me to see you?” I then set the appointment and do the sales call.

When I knock on the door, I already know that they have invited me into their home to make a presentation for which I am going to ask them to spend more money than almost everyone else they talk to. In fact, if I am not high, they might be disappointed. So I had better quote a price that reflects quality, engineering and skill!

*PS: In about 1 case out of every 4, the customer would call me back a week or so later after having the cheaper dealer I recommended had made his call and want my opinion after all. I almost always sold those jobs too!*

Facts:

- Average of \$750 higher per job than my competition (\$2,228 in 2008 dollars)
- Closed about 65% of my appointments
- Closed about 75% of the appointments I referred away and who came back to me later
- Suggested about 25% of my callers deal with a lower-priced contractor