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10 reasons why consumer opinion is low for carpet cleaners and other service professionals

By Laura Bankston

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Too many service professionals believe and rely on the common adage "50% of success is just showing up."

In fact, they seem to act that, "If half of my success is just showing up, I don't really have to do anything and will get by just fine."

You may be thinking that's totally insane! But what else could they be thinking? For, here are the 10 reasons why people distrust, hate, and avoid in-home service professionals like the bubonic plague:

REASON #1: THEY DON'T RETURN PHONE CALLS—well, hey. Maybe that's even too generous. Half the time you can't even get someone to answer the phone. You'll find that only 90% of service business don't even answer their business phone. Most rely purely on voice mail or answering machines to take your calls. And you'll be lucky if ANY of those even return your call!

Just a few weeks ago I was in need of a new lawn mowing service. I called EVERY lawn mowing service in the yellow pages. I got an answering machine for every phone number except one. On each answering machine, I left the message that I need weekly lawn service for my home and to call me to set up a time or let me know if they needed to see the place first.

Did I get a call back? NO. Not one of them called me back and it's been over two weeks.

And then, the one that I did get a "live" person—you know how that went? I called the number and got a "hello?" I thought maybe I had the wrong number. So, I asked if this was such and such business. The lady acted like she never heard of it. I double checked the phone number with her and it was the right number. I apologized and told her I was calling from the yellow pages and that they had the wrong

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number listed.

"Oh." She said. "He be back soon."

You've got to be kidding me. Needless to say, I didn't invite them out to my home. But any other service that would have just CALLED ME BACK would have gotten my business. That's a shame.

So, I decided to my service industry: carpet cleaning. I started down the list of 98 carpet cleaners in my area—after 20 answering machines. I just gave up.

Why should anyone put with that? And for those that do finally call you back, why should they be PAID for such rude, inconsiderate, selfish,

"I-Know-You-Need-Me-So-I'll-Call-You-If-And-When-I-Feel-Like-It" attitude?

REASON #2: THEY DON'T SHOW UP ON TIME

When's the last time you had a service professional show up on time? After all, aren't you the one that re-arranged your whole schedule—had to take off work, have someone else pick up the kids from school, or whatever—just so you could have the "honor" of having them show up at your home when it's convenient for them?

After all, that's how they act. Like it's somehow a privilege for you to have their service; rather than how it should be—a privilege for THEM to be serving YOU.

But, again, I've been too generous. It's hard to even GET an exact appointment time for someone to show up on time.

Don't you just love it when you call someone for service, and they say, "O.K. We'll be there between 1–5 p.m. on Tuesday." Geez, like you have nothing to do but take a whole unpaid day off just to get your stuff taken care of?

My cable company—which happens to be the ONLY cable company in Anchorage—told me this when I needed service for a repair that was a problem with THEIR cable box in my home: "The tech will be there between 10a.m.–5p.m., so you'll need to be there when he arrives or you'll have to reschedule your appt." So, on the day appointed—I had to run to the store real quick. A 10 minute trip. I even called the cable company to let them know that I would be back in 20 min. Still, I returned home to find a tag on my door that I had missed service and to call to reschedule. I WAS TICKED!

For all the money you pay, why should you have to but up with that?

REASON #3: THEY DON'T SHOW UP AT ALL

I'm sure that exact thing has happened to you more times that you can count on your finger and toes—even if you have four sets of each.

Nothing is more aggravating than to go through all you have to just to be home for the

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appointment—and they never show up!!

I bet this one has happened to you like it has me. You buy new carpet. You schedule with the installer for Tuesday—sometime during the day mind you, no specific time—and he never shows up.

So you call at the end of Tuesday. After 5 tries, you finally get to him on his cell phone. "Oh," he explains. "This job took me much longer than I expected and I'll be there tomorrow for sure." No apology. No specific time for the next day.

What, are you supposed to give your two weeks notice at work just to have service done?

REASON #4: THEY SHOW UP LOOKING LIKE A 'JUST RELEASED' PRISON INMATE

Let's face it. Most women end up scheduling service appointments because they tend to take care of the stuff in the home. But the man is present at the appointment 99% of the time. Why? Because most service professionals look gnarly and untrustworthy. Women just don't feel safe being alone in their home with them.

And since so many professionals show up looking like felons, TWO people have to take off work. The woman so she can show what she wants done and make sure it gets done to her satisfaction; and the

man to act as the most advanced "protection" and "anti-scam" technology.

Again, why should you have to PAY someone to look and act like that in YOUR home?

REASON #5: THEY DON'T DO A GOOD JOB

Now you can take away all your extra finger and toes and you probably can't even fill up your fingers with professionals that actually do a Good job. What about EXCELLENT work? No. We have to put up with less than good. Barely passable work.

What happened to taking pride in work? What happened to honesty and integrity? Apparently it's becoming a thing of the past.

Service Professionals do such a poor job at their work that they can't offer a guarantee of any kind. They'd go broke if they did that. They simply do a poor job, feeding on your necessity; forcing you to move on to someone else and "hope" for better next time.

REASON #6: THEY LEAVE A MESS

You know, like the painter that doesn't bring a drop cloth, gets paint on your carpet, takes your money, and leaves...

The plumber that fixes the leaky pipe in your crawl space, comes out, tracks mud and dirt on your carpet, takes your money and leaves...

The cable installer that walks with shoes on in your home, drills a hole in your wall, goes back outside to hook things up, comes back inside, leaves sheetrock and dirt on your carpet, takes your money, and

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leaves.

Maybe they must think their mess magically disappears or something. No. Obviously they expect you to clean up after them or they'd clean up themselves, right?

You shouldn't have to pay for a service and then clean up their mess. But it happens over and over.

REASON #7: THEY PLAY LOUD MUSIC, CUSS, AND MAKE A LOT OF NOISE

How someone can do that in your home is beyond me.

It's YOUR home, and maybe you've even got small children. But they act like your stuff is theirs or that your not even around.

Cleaners are especially guilty of this. Sure. I like to have music playing when I'm working; but what gives them the right to turn on your stereo—with or without asking—while working in your home?

They are there as a paid employee to provide a service and leave. Not to be provided with every comfort that belongs to you.

And what about your children? How dare someone use filthy language or off-color jokes that will poison the minds of the ones you so carefully molding? They should be kicked out of your home.

And, how many times have you been on YOUR phone in YOUR home but can't hear because of the worker's noise or the cleaner turning on the vacuum right next to you? Really. That's just too much.

REASON #8: THEY ARE UNPROFESSIONAL AND CAN'T COMMUNICATE

They're called "service professionals" because they're supposed to be professional. But they aren't. Maybe that's why we call them "workers"—just using the word "professional" in regards to them degrades the term.

To deserve the honor of "professional", one should be clean-cut, polite, competent, credentialed, and literate.

You may wonder if you know any "professionals" at all? Obviously most service workers don't look the part; and to add insult to injury, they can't talk it either.

They can't talk in terms you understand

They can't even repeat the concerns you express

They can't tell you what to expect from their service

They don't know the meaning of everyday words you use

You can't expect anything satisfactory from someone who can't even communicate on a rudimentary level.

REASON #9: THEY SMOKE AND SMELL OF SMOKE

If you smoke, then this probably doesn't bother you. And so it may be news to you that most of us

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DON'T smoke and can't stand to have it blown in our face or even smell it on your clothes.

And not only that, but those of us who DON'T smoke avoid it for our health. And breathing your 2nd hand smoke is downright UNHEALTHY—so we don't want to be around it.

Really, I personally think this should be the #1 reason why service professionals are avoided like the bubonic plague. Because tobacco smoke kills you—just not as quickly.

REASON #10: THEY USE 'BAIT AND SWITCH' SALES TACTICS

Or sleezy ones, or dis-honest ones...whatever you want to call it.

"Bait and Switch" is probably the most common one. You know. The promise of one price—even from an estimate or coupon—and then being told the price will be higher because of...whatever.

Like the carpet cleaning coupon you get for \$9.95 a room. You clean 3 rooms, expecting a bill of \$29.85; but you are handed one for \$480.23.

"What's the deal?" you ask.

And then you get the run-around that the \$9.95 a room was only for rooms under 25 square feet and only for rooms that were cleaned with the basic process. And since all your rooms were over 25 square feet, and since all your rooms required more than the basic process, your rooms were cleaned at the rate of \$1.25 per square foot.

CONCLUSION:

It's a wonder at all that there is an industry for service professionals. There probably only is due to the public need for it.

But what if you were provided with a simple tool that let you avoid the service industry, you'd grab it,

wouldn't you?

Well, you have the opportunity to avoid the carpet cleaning industry. You don't have to give any carpet cleaner the opportunity to pull even one of these 10 on you when you clean your carpet yourself!

Visit <http://www.cleanmyowncarpet.com> right now!

Laura is an advocate for ethical services and consumer education. She teaches people how to clean their own carpet at <http://www.cleanmyowncarpet.com> and is available for questions at laura@cleanmyowncarpet.com

Steam Cleaners - The Purest Way To Clean

By Tyson J Stevenson

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Steam cleaners are machines that clean surfaces using steam or hot water. Steam cleaners are usually used to kill allergens, dust mites, bacteria, mold, fungus etc on the surface being cleaned. Steam cleaners are used in hospitals, hotels, bakeries, restaurants, pharmacies, etc. Household steam cleaners are used to cleanse kitchens, bathrooms, carpets etc. Steam cleaners can be used to clean almost any surface like floors, curtains, furniture, and almost any surface which is heat resistant. There are two types of steam cleaners, traditional steam cleaners and vapor steam cleaners.

A traditional steam cleaner uses hot water to clean the surface. The traditional steam cleaner consists of a boiler, a collecting tank, a hose and brushes. Hot water is sprayed under pressure on the surface being cleaned. Then rotating brushes scrub the surface and the dirty water is suction extracted into the container. Some traditional steam cleaners also use cleaning agents to clean, while most rely on steam and brushes to do the job. Cleaning agents help to remove spots and grime on the surface. The use of traditional steam cleaners is usually restricted to floors only.

A vapor steam cleaner consists of a water container with a heater attachment (collectively known as boiler), a hose and a nozzle. Water is boiled in the container under pressure to produce super heated steam or dry steam. Dry steam is a steam which is heated to more than 100 degrees Celsius. This dry steam is then passed through a hose to the nozzle and onto the surface being cleaned under pressure. This loosens the dirt and grime on the surface being cleaned. Then a vacuum cleaner is used to clean the surface.

The steam generated in a vapor steam cleaner has very low moisture content, usually up to 5 percent. So when a surface is cleaned by steam it becomes dry within few minutes. They generally do not have continuous water supply hence are more convenient to use. Vapor steam cleaners can be used to clean any heat resistant surface like vehicle interiors, windows, bathrooms, etc with proper attachments. Vapor steam cleaners are generally used by people suffering from allergies or who do not want cleaning by chemicals.

There are specialized steam cleaners for carpets called carpet cleaners. They do not use steam but use hot water to clean the carpet. After wetting the carpet, the area is scrubbed with brushes and then the dirty water is sucked back into the receptacle. The carpet is left to dry. Switching on the Air Conditioner in a room dries the carpet quickly as it removes humidity from the air. Once the carpet is dry, it should be vacuumed to clean it thoroughly.

Steam cleaners can have an independent water container or continuous water supply. Continuous water supply is more convenient as the tank need not be refilled repeatedly. The dirty water is expelled after cleaning.

There are many models available in the market. The cost ranges from \$100 for residential models to \$2000 for commercial models. Before buying the buyer should look for boiler capacity, the attachments, mobility, warranty, user manual, demo CDs etc.

Tyson J Stevenson writes on a wide variety of "every day" subjects, always with valuable news & reviews. Expect to see his name often. A related resource is

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information can be found at

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