

Agraffe Graffiti

Newsletter of the Phoenix Chapter of the Piano Technicians Guild

June 2009

President's Message: What Can Grand Rapids Do For You?



Scott Helms, RPT

So why should I go to the PTG Annual Convention and Technical Institute, and where the heck is Grand Rapids, anyway?! These words may have gone through your head in the last few months. I'd like to offer some answers to both questions.

We probably all remember the time when we first forayed into the world of piano technology, and the amount of information we had to absorb was completely overwhelming. We probably have some members who are still feeling that way. The best approach is to be exposed to it over and over again, whether we understand it yet or not. Each time you sit through a class about a topic, you learn and internalize a little bit more about it. At first, you might not understand any of it, but as you keep thinking about what was discussed, and then hear about it again in the next class, eventually it starts to become less "fuzzy", until finally you get it. For technicians who are in that phase of their education, the Technical Institute classes are invaluable. You can choose classes that interest you or that hit on your weak areas. While you might not come home as an expert on the topic, you'll be much closer to grasping it. You will certainly come home with new knowledge and techniques you can apply immediately to boost the quality and efficiency of your work.

This process doesn't end even after you've been a technician in the field for years. For example, it was 11 years ago that I first started studying Piano Technology. I can't begin to tell you how many voicing classes I've been to in the last 11 years, including some all-day classes and some that I've paid extra for. I still don't consider myself to be a great voicer, but I am *much* more confident

than I was even a year ago, simply because of PTG classes. Whether you consider yourself to be a novice or an expert on any given topic, you can learn something new from other technicians.

If you really *are* an expert on a topic, we need you!! We are always searching for new topics and instructors for our chapter technical sessions. By attending the Institute classes on topics you are very familiar with, you can observe **how** the instructor teaches the class, what supporting materials they use, and what was effective or not in the presentation. Use this opportunity to think about how you would teach the class locally, and then come back to Phoenix and share your knowledge with those of us who aren't able to go to Institute.

Now, a little about Grand Rapids: I am extremely excited that the convention is being held there, because it's the area I moved here from almost 3 years ago. Grand Rapids is the home of my former PTG chapter, and it's in the southwest quarter of the lower peninsula of Michigan. It's about an hour drive to Lake Michigan, which is absolutely beautiful (you wouldn't know you weren't at the ocean). In Grand Rapids, one really cool attraction is called Meijer Gardens. This is a huge botanical garden and sculpture park, and it's well worth seeing. Another great thing about going to Annual Convention, besides learning more about your craft, is that there is also time for you to do some sightseeing and make it a little tax-deductible vacation! I really hope some of our members who haven't gone in the past make it a point to go this year. You'll be glad you did!

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PHOENIX, ARIZONA CHAPTER

President:
Scott Helms, RPT

Vice President:
G. Eliot Lee, RPT

Treasurer:
Wendell Smock

Secretary & Editor:
Mark Purney, RPT

Our Previous Meeting

The May Meeting was devoted entirely to Chapter Business.

Officer Elections: All four previous officers were re-elected for the coming year.

2010 Seminar Committee: Peg Browne was appointed to lead, and has great plans for January!

Bylaws Changes: The bulk of the meeting was devoted to going through each point of the proposed bylaws changes. With a few additional modifications and clarifications, the changes were approved by vote. The most significant changes made at the meeting: (Article IX) In the future, the chapter will not pay to send the alternate to Council, except in the event the delegate cannot attend. (Article XII) The 2/3 vote required to dissolve the chapter is now specified as 2/3 of the entire membership, not 2/3 of voting members present at a meeting.

Our Next Meeting

Business Practices

Eliot Lee, RPT will be discussing business techniques, with a focus on websites and managing customer databases.

Location: Eliot's home
(See back page for map)
4131 E. Pinchot Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85018



Time: June 1, 2009 at 7:30 PM



It seems like only yesterday that I tuned my first piano. That's why I find it hard to believe I will be attending my third National PTG Convention already in just a few weeks.

Mark Purney, RPT As I reflect on this new career, I realize how glad I am that, through buying my piano, I met Wes Flinn. Wes introduced me to Jim Coleman Sr., who taught me a great deal, and helped me get started. I owe a debt of gratitude to many people in the PTG, and I look forward to spending time with many of them

again in Grand Rapids this July.

Last year at the PTG Convention in Anaheim, my wife and I had the opportunity to get to know Wim Bles and his wife. Wim is the kind of guy I'd want to hire to tune my piano (if I lived in Hawaii and tragically misplaced my tuning hammers). His article on customer relations is something we all should read. I've chosen to reprint it on the next page. One of the things I love about piano work is the opportunity to meet and work with new people on a regular basis. My engineering career never provided that!

Where is Our Chapter Library?

If you know the whereabouts of the Phoenix Chapter Library, please contact one of the officers so that we can begin to once again make this resource available to members. Thanks!

ATTENTION PHOENIX PTG MEMBERS

We need YOU!

We are in need of instructors for the coming year. If you have a specific topic you wish to teach, or you are just willing to work with us on planning a lesson, you can make a huge difference for the Phoenix Chapter by sharing your knowledge and experience. Member suggestions for lesson topics are always welcome, too!

Educational Opportunity for Associates:

Eliot Lee will be teaching restringing on a Hamilton upright at the North Pointe Academy in Glendale. Associate members are invited to bring their tools, PACE books, etc., and participate with some hands-on skill development. Call Eliot at (602) 957-1711 or (602) 481-9684 for scheduling (this class will occur on weekdays between 8AM and 2PM)

Dealing With Customers *by Wim Blee, RPT, from the June 2007 PTG Journal*

There is a lot of psychology involved when dealing with customers. How you react, talk, and work with your customers will help you in your relations with them. Although technical trouble-shooting is important, sometimes the problems aren't with the piano.

What customers remember most is how they are treated when they talk to you, either to set up an appointment, ask a question, or complain about the work you did. When a customer calls you on the phone, you never know if you are dealing with someone who is "just shopping around," or it's someone representing a school district with 100 pianos – willing to pay full price. Therefore, we need to treat each person with whom we come in contact as the most important person in the world.

A big rule of thumb when talking to a customer is to know what it feels like to be on the other end. In other words, don't forget the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Treat each customer like you want to be treated.

We live in a service-oriented society. People skills are as important, and sometimes more important, than technical skills. The customer is a person who buys your service. You should always keep in mind, for instance, that no matter how aggravating answering the phone might seem, that the customer calling you is not an interruption to your work, the customer is your work.

When customers call a place of business, they are looking to make a long-lasting relationship with that business. How you deal with those customers will make a big difference in whether or not you're going to keep those customers.

Research has found that there are lots of reasons why customers do not go back to a place of business. One percent of your customers have died. Obviously there isn't much you can do about that. Three percent of your customers moved out of town. Again, not much you can do about them.

Five percent of your customers have formed other loyalties, like a neighbor, a friend, or a relative, etc. Depending on the closeness of that relationship, you're most likely going to lose that customer. Nine percent of the time customers

leave for competitive reasons, like a coupon, or an ad in the paper, or a recommendation from a friend. Don't give up on these customers. Unless the other technician does a noticeably better job than you, you have a good chance of gaining that customer back, but for now, you've lost the income, at least for a while. Fifteen percent of the time, customers leave because of service dissatisfaction. Chances are, you're not going to get this customer back, although there is still a chance.

The most overwhelming reason customers do not go back to a place of business, 68 percent of the time, is because of indifferent attitudes or rudeness on the part of a representative of the company. There are many forms of this indifferent attitude and/or rudeness. The phone wasn't answered right away, or not at all. The person answering the phone was rude, or didn't know the answer, or showed indifference to the caller. The service representative was rude on the job, didn't know his/her work, or showed indifference to the customer or the product that was serviced. The common thread here, whether real or perceived, is a feeling of "indifference."

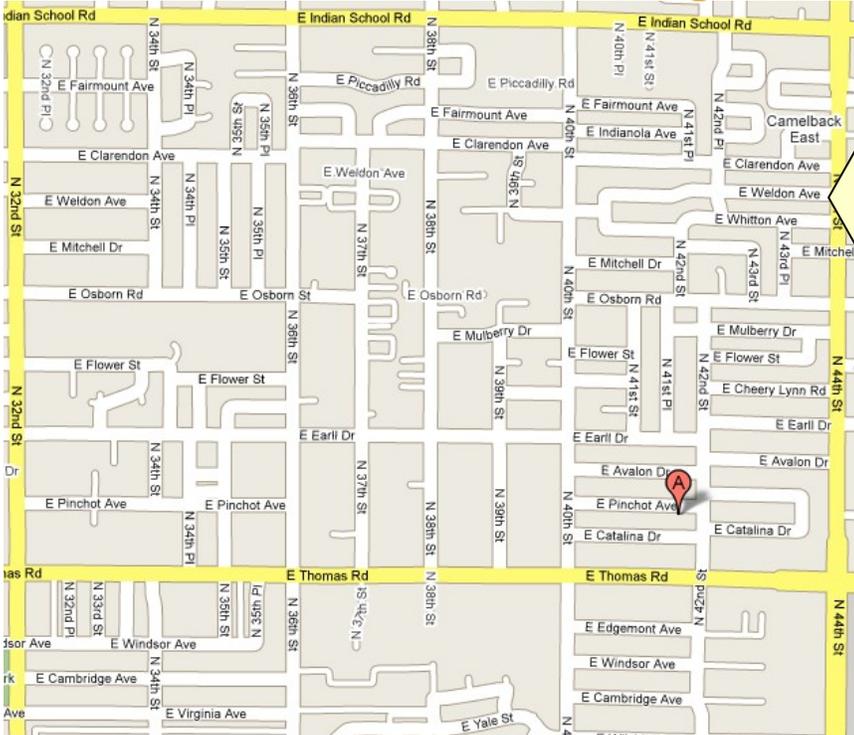
To avoid the situation, there are things you can do from the moment you come in contact with the customer by following the Seven C's of customer service:

1. **Customer comes first.** This is an effective means to take care of the customer. Let customers know they are important to you.
2. **Craftsmanship.** Know the technical aspects of your job.
3. **Courtesy.** Treat customers as you would like to be treated.
4. **Confidence.** Show that you know what you are doing.
5. **Creativeness.** Find new ways to solve recurring problems.
6. **Calmness.** If a customer gets mad at you, take it professionally, not personally.
7. **Caring.** What goes around, comes around.

Using these seven points will help build a strong business relationship, keep the customers you already have, and add to your customer base.

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Map to our next meeting
Monday, June 1st at 7:30 PM

Home of Eliot Lee
4131 E. Pinchot Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85018

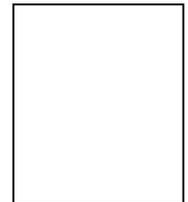


**PIANO
TECHNICIANS
GUILD**

PHOENIX, ARIZONA CHAPTER

All expressions of opinion and all statements of supposed facts in this letter are published on the authority of the authors listed and are not to be regarded as expressing the views of the Phoenix Chapter or the Piano Technicians Guild unless such statements or opinions have been adopted by the Phoenix Chapter or the Guild.

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