

IAQ by Gord Cooke

Your nose: the most important tool?



As you approach the busy winter season remember to take the right tools to every sales call. Of course you need brochures, quote forms, business cards, demonstration tools and ample enthusiasm. There may be other technical tools of the trade you find useful like flashlights, inspection mirrors, hand tools to access equipment and thermometers. In addition, let me suggest a few tools to help your customers resolve air quality problems they might not even know they have.

The most important tool is your nose. On every call you bring a "fresh" nose to the customer's home. While it might seem a tad offensive to say "boy it sure stinks in here", you can be very helpful if you mention that you detect a musty smell or a chemical smell. You can say things like "I'm curious, can you tell me you feel the need to use a plug in air freshener?". You will be surprised by the conversations you will initiate by gently reminding them of odours they may have become used to.

Another important tool is a hygrometer. Since relative humidity is such an important factor in comfort and air quality, you need to help clients take control of it. But first you need to measure it and thereby focus their attention on it. Window condensation is often a great indicator of high humidity levels but only during cold weather and even then people often assume it's a window problem and not a ventilation opportunity. Buy a good hygrometer. Traditional sling psychrometers are excellent but a little fiddly to use. There are inexpensive digital hygrometers available at electronics stores such as Radio Shack or The Source. Your favorite wholesaler will also carry more accurate and faster responding hygrometers.

So as you head out for sales call this winter, carrying a hygrometer and being keenly aware of the smells you encounter will help you help your customer improve the air in their homes. Have a great winter season!

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