

You Never Know Who's Watching!



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Being in the home cleaning service can sometimes be a challenging experience on many levels. First off of course, there is the challenge of setting up the business: hiring employees, how and where to advertise, figuring out what products to use, what services to offer, how to set up the office, how to manage the books, and how to obtain clients. Even after that is all worked out, you realize there are so many other details to attend to like, what to charge, what if a client wants a refund? What to do if something is broken in the home, how to determine the best way to set up a schedule, will we accept charge cards, checks and/or cash? All of the above are the things we hopefully learn as we talk to our financial advisors, colleagues and business partners. We know most of these tasks must be worked out not only in the cleaning business, but most businesses. There are some matters however that only those in the businesses where we must enter private homes can be extra challenging.

Unlike shops, stores, and offices where clients come in to purchase goods or services on the owner's turf, businesses such as ours, where we must go to the customer's homes, can leave us vulnerable to all sorts of strange happenings. We've definitely had our share. To give you a heads up and perhaps some entertainment, I will enlighten and unload.

Not too long ago, we were hired to clean a residence quite a distance away from the office. The woman told us she saw our website and liked all the services we had to offer. My office manager explained our policies, and the woman signed up for an initial cleaning. By all

accounts, my manager said the customer sounded like a nice, normal person and the credit card was valid. The appointment was set for a Friday morning. The crew I assigned to this particular job showed up on time, full of vim and vigor (as usual!) stocked the company car and set on their way. They were given 3 houses to clean that day, the initial and two regulars. All was fine until the GPS directions landed the crew on a dead end street with no homes on it! After a few calls back and forth to the office, we determined it was one of those streets that comes to an end and then continues up a block after a cross street beyond the dead end part! What a pain and time waster to find the way to the other part of the street. It was like that maze game-trying to get around all the one way dead ends! Not a good way to start. Finally locating the home, (which I was told looked a bit like the Addams Family meets The Munsters) the crew manager called to say they could not determine where the front door was! Around and around they circled the home like little mice trying to find the cheese. They knew it must be somewhere- but where? After having to place a call to the homeowner, we learned the front door was actually through the garage door! And who doesn't have two doors? I smelled fire hazard. This home was getting on my nerves! Trying to stay positive I instructed the crew to proceed. After the meet and greet, the crew unloaded the car and started their work. As usual the one crew member headed straight to the bedrooms, while the other started in the kitchen. Unbeknownst to either of the crew members, the lady who hired us didn't live alone. There was another resident in the unnerving house and it kept annoying my

crew members! The first tell tale sign that there was another presence was the loud, gut wrenching screech that practically knocked my crew leader off the step stool in the kitchen. Polly the large parrot (or whatever its name was!) scared the living daylight out of the ladies all the way from the living room. After it's first blood curdling cry, and the ladies practically dropping dead of heart attacks, the damned red-feathered fowl became a nuisance throughout the entire job !My poor crew members had finally gained their composure after realizing what had descended on them, and now they had to put up with insults and tattling! The parrot apparently was taught vocabulary by a drunken sailor and my crew members didn't know whether to laugh or blush! They weren't laughing however when the darn thing turned on them and starting squawking and flapping when they turned on the vacuum cleaner. Every time the crew member moved this crazy bird had something to say! My crew members were a wreck and just wanted out! Oddly enough, the

homeowner never came into the rooms while they were cleaning. But then again I don't think she had to. She got the full report all the way across the house from the winged maniac! By the end of that job, the employees were unraveled, we never made it to the other homes, and the day was shot. You just can't make this stuff up!

Sincerely,

Teresa Ward
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