



ways to work Smarter, *not* Harder

by Larry Miller, owner of Larry Miller, Inc., and IWCA Board Member

The International Window Cleaning Association (IWCA) encourages members to share stories about what they've learned in the business – good and bad. The more we learn, the better we can do our work and keep our business growing. One thing I've learned, sometimes the hard way, is that it can be a real “pane” for window cleaning professionals to try to do everything themselves. Here are five tips you could use to step up your window cleaning business.

1. Spend Less Time Running Around Doing Estimates



Picture yourself being freed up from all that hectic driving around or time on the phone you may still be doing to provide residential window cleaning estimates.

Think what better things you could do with all those hours and money you spend on gas.

That's something I was talking about at the last IWCA Convention when I ran into Curt Kempton. Turns out that Curt has a way to make giving and getting window cleaning estimates a whole lot simpler, thanks to technology.

ResponsiBid is a product designed to help residential customers (prospective and current) use an online form to prepare an estimate. It only takes two to five minutes to fill out the form and submit it. They get an automatically calculated basic estimate promptly. If it costs too much for their budget, they walk away which is also a simple way to prequalify leads. Find an online form service and for a monthly

service fee you can focus more on what you do best, window cleaning.

2. Don't Get Stuck in an Office

Phone call overload? Who's fielding all those calls? Service companies like exec-u-sist provide people that answer your phones to bring all that into line for you. Find a U.S. based phone service that can answer phones, make appointments and help you stay in contact when you're on the road. Having such a “virtual office” can pay off in countless ways.



For instance, if somebody calls with a question about an estimate, the service company can get you on the phone in a conference call so you can provide attention directly to your customers promptly. It frees you up from unnecessary interruptions and distractions when you're on the job.

3. Stop Trying to Play “Tech Geek”

You know how to clean all kinds of windows but if you're like me, probably not Microsoft Windows! That's why it's smart to find a professional IT guy to help keep your website and computer running smoothly and up to date. I count on Charles Dean, founder of Science & Technology Solutions, Inc.

Now I can even get all the information I need to keep things running right from my cell phone. It's like having all the resources in the office, on my phone. So I can see online estimates by email wherever I am. That keeps us all coordinated and communicating “on the same page.” Having an IT professional on call can help take your window cleaning business

to a whole new level.

4. Be Prepared for “Breaking” News

Homeowners may be unaware of small cracks or chips in windows or a ripped screen. When we first get to a home, we do a visual walk-around inspection before we start work. We may spot damage then and call the homeowner right away to report and see how they want to handle it. We work with a local, reputable repair company called American Screen and Glass in Sterling.

Choose a company that can provide a free online estimate to your customers promptly and schedule an appointment to pick up the screens and/or do repairs right on the property. When they're pleased with results, they'll recommend that company to their friends and neighbors and that's a good reflection on you.

5. Leave Basic Paperwork to a Professional

Accounting, bookkeeping and tax preparation are a necessary part of doing

business. But personally, I'd rather be out meeting people and sharing business leads. Paperwork can be demanding. Your time is more valuable speaking with prospective customers and business partners. Find a reliable professional and/or firm to take care of that work and focus on your networking.

Outsourcing, as I've described here, is becoming more and more popular as a way to grow your business while keeping payroll and overhead costs affordable. Once you've made those contacts, you can find and share business referrals with them, too.

Larry Millir is the owner of Larry Miller, Inc., in Ashburn, Virginia, and a member of the BOD for the IWCA. To learn more about the International Window Cleaning Association,



GAIN THE SUPPORT OF THE ORIGINAL POWER WASHING TRADE ORGANIZATION JOIN THE EXPERIENCE...

Since 1992 the PWNA has represented contractors in the Power Washing industry. We stand for all power washers: fleet washing, concrete cleaning, kitchen exhaust, wood restoration, as well as everything in between. The PWNA provides quality education and certification to power wash contractors along with conventions, networking opportunities, and a clear voice for our industry.



VISIT US ON



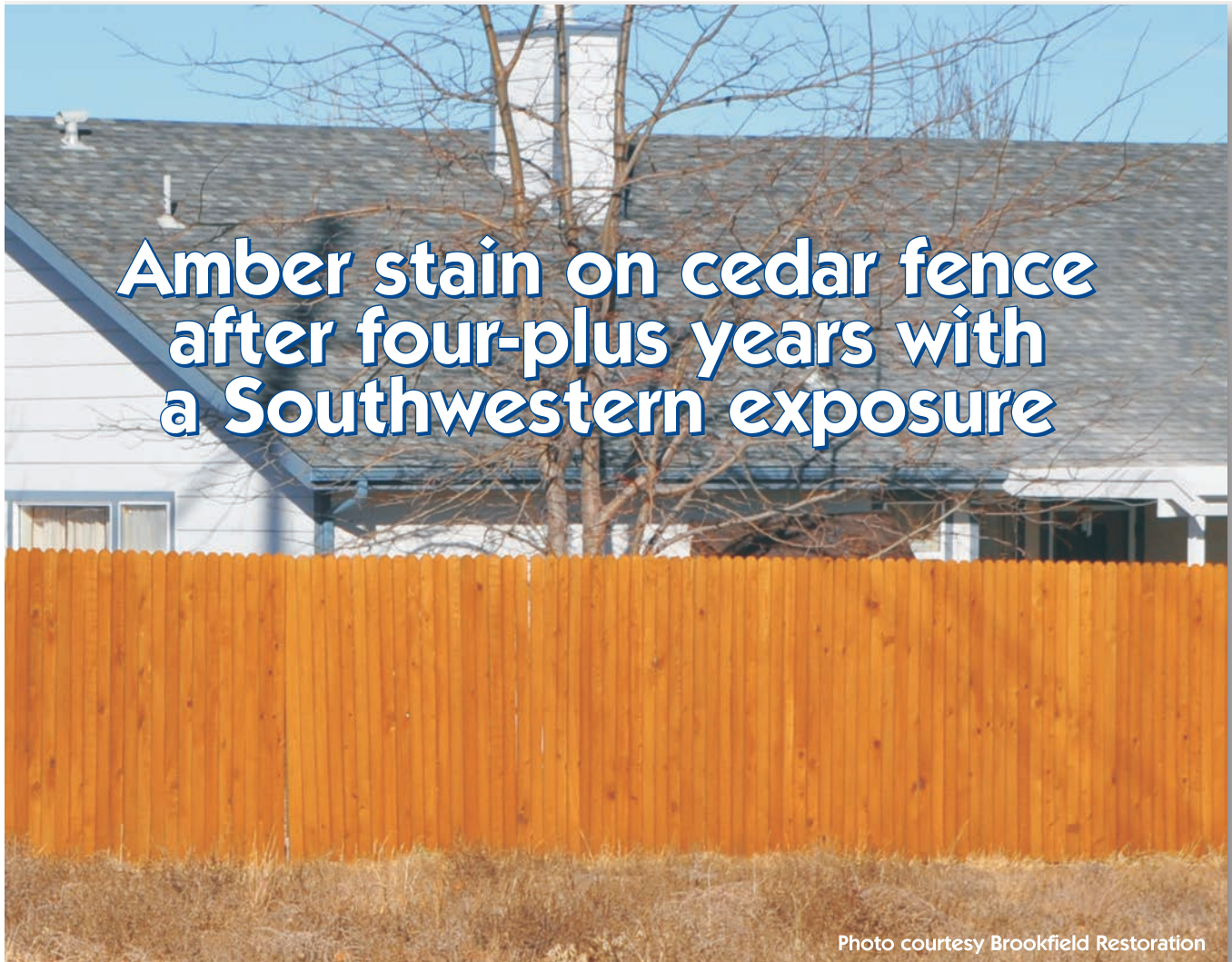
Visit www.pwna.org for more info on becoming a member.



POWER WASHERS OF NORTH AMERICA
PH 800-393-7962 | FX 651-213-0369 | WWW.PWNA.ORG



ARMSTRONG'S WOOD STAINS



Armstrong Wood Stains are available in twelve attractive colors

**Long Lasting, Easy to Apply
and a Breeze to Maintain**

**For FREE sample cans,
call or email us now at info@armclark.com**

Manufacturers of VOC-Compliant, Oil-Based Wood Finishes Since 1989

(800) 916-8211 • www.armclark.com

PLEASE VISIT THE WEB'S PREMIERE SITES FOR OUTDOOR WOOD RESTORATION TOPICS AND DISCUSSIONS,
www.thegrimescene.com/forums www.thewoodpros.com