I’ve got a pet peeve. Yes, and when someone strokes it without permission, I have to say something about it. My pet’s name is “No Job Too Big or Too Small,” or “Nojob” for short.

Someone petted Nojob just the other day by mentioning how tough it is to get new business in this economy. After a few qualifying questions, I discovered that this particular small business person was going after mega-corps for cleaning jobs – exclusively. While this is a noble goal, most mega-corps have layers upon layers of red tape to cut through for one to finally get an opportunity even to be considered for making a quotation to possibly handle some of the cleaning business somewhere in the system, maybe. Put on your gloves boys and girls, because Nojob’s getting ready to bite!

Unless your cleaning company is a national chain with mega-resources to match the needs of mega-corps, you need to take a step back and think:

**Layer Number One:** if you don’t have the ability to handle a particular type of client, don’t take them on! This does not mean that at some point your company can’t take the job, only that you take the job when you know beyond doubt that you can do a good one. Otherwise, you’ll end up losing the new business. Not only that, but you’ll damage your company’s reputation. Building a good reputation in this industry, where word-of-mouth advertising can make or break a cleaning company, should be your biggest concern. Do a fabulous job within your capabilities. Guard your reputation like an armored knight!

**Layer Number Two:** involves product knowledge. You’ve heard me harp on this before. To quote from Sarris, the bad alien in the sci-fi spoof Galaxy Quest, “You think that I am a fool – that the Commander does not know every bolt, every weld, of his ship?” A cleaning contractor’s product, or “ship,” contains many facets, from accounting and inventory, to material safety, to proper cleaning methods, to human resources, to taxation, to sales techniques – it’s all in the boat and much more. The trick is to continue to increase your knowledge of all areas in your vessel.

With growth in your knowledge comes the possibility of growth in your business. Skills must be acquired, especially those pertaining to sales and presentation. Either you do it yourself, or you hire a professional salesperson to do it for you. However, if you hire a
representative, make absolutely sure they understand not to oversell your company’s abilities. (See Layer Number One.)

**Layer Number Three** is the avoidance of delusions of grandeur. We all start getting the “swelled head” after we’ve been stroked for doing a good job. Confidence builds, so we jump out to top the last good job with something even better. But, as Nojob can tell you from experience, this is a fleeting sensation that evaporates at the first sign of inability to complete a task. Not only do we lose our confidence, we start the mouths a’wagging about the poor performance we provided. For a salesperson, I would term this “salesperson slump.” It is the downside of the bell curve, or the slippery slope of decreasing business.

Stretching our muscles is fine; over-stretching causes pain and injuries. Grow a business of course; only make sure to build in a controlled fashion.

The idea that “no job is too big” is ludicrous, as I’ve just pointed out. What about small jobs though?

**Layer Number Four**, or “no job is too small,” has detrimental effects on our business too. This concerns the concept of costing, or pricing our products and services. Let’s take an example. The factors involved are thus:

My company has three employees including me, myself, and I.

I have one pickup truck loaded with sundry cleaning tools and products.

Five small offices, each with less than 20 employees, are the perfect size for me to handle.

I just obtained a new customer through word-of-mouth – a small church. I hated to turn them down because I could use the extra money.

Now, I’m heading out to go clean the church. It’s about an hour’s drive from my furthest small office, well outside of my normal route between jobs. The question: is it worth it? Well, maybe, maybe not. It depends on the costs involved.

Churches have lots of nooks and crannies, especially under pews and chairs. They take a lot of extra time and labor that normal office cleaning does not. Plus, there’s the cost of travel and maintenance on the old truck to think about. Uh oh, and small churches normally don’t have a lot of money to spend on cleaning maintenance, so the pay is low compared to the other business I already have. Hummmmm, I don’t want to upset anyone though, so I continue on my way to handle the job. With some newly acquired knowledge about costing my jobs, I still wonder if this is the right way to grow my business. Figures like these start rumbling through my head:

My hourly rate is based upon X dollars invested in cleaning chemicals, truck, gas, storage space rental, office equipment, cleaning equipment, bonded insurance, taxes, in short, the factors that detract money from my profits, termed “overhead.” After I’ve tallied all that, I have to make at least $36.85 per hour to cover the overhead, fund my wage, and make a small profit to reinvest. I can handle cleaning each of these small offices in just under an hour per unit. The office units fall within the size range...
of about 500 square feet each. So, five hours times $36.85 divided by 2500 total square feet, means billing of about 7 cents per square foot. The jobs are simple and fairly easy on my back too.

I find that cleaning the church takes a full eight hours every week after 5:00 PM on Friday. Things have to be nice and tidy when the church opens for Sunday morning service, so this is the best time for my cleaning to occur. By multiplying my necessary hourly rate of $36.85 by 8, this totals $294.80 billed to the church. They are a little slow to pay, relying on donations as they do, but usually the check comes within thirty days. The church is actually 6200 square feet too, much bigger than the other jobs combined. Eight hours times $36.85 divided by 6200 square feet, means a billed rate of about 4.75 cents per square foot – that’s 2.25 cents per square foot less money than the offices, and my back aches something fierce the rest of the weekend. Not only am I working longer and harder, but I’m actually taking half the pay, well below my threshold for making my wage after overhead. After careful consideration, I find that handling the church business is costing me money!

Sometimes it is necessary to walk away from prospective business to preserve the bottom line. These instances will become less frequent if you do the math up front before taking on more work. While the above example is fairly simplistic, peeling back the layers to get to the nitty-gritty is important. This is called qualifying the prospect, a staple philosophy in Selling.

Still think no job is too big or too small? No matter what mathematical formula you use to arrive at your bottom line, facts are facts. Some jobs are definitely too small and some jobs are ludicrously large. It is all based on your individual contracting company’s costs of doing business.

Everyone’s company may be different, but the math works for all – even the one-horse operation. Do your best with what you have, but increase profits by increasing your knowledge. Ensure that your reputation is paramount and secure all along the way by learning to screen jobs with grace; otherwise, they will cut into your profits.

Grow into larger jobs as you obtain the necessary tools of education and equipment. Don’t end up like Nojob – dejected, neglected, angry...and out of business. Muzzle the beast by doing the diligence of qualifying your prospective customers before taking on the extra work!
Rust Remover Plus™

Rust Remover Plus™ is a perfect choice for removing tough oil and rust stains from concrete and exposed aggregate surfaces. Just spray it onto dry concrete with a pump up garden or chemical sprayer and watch the rust and oil stains disappear. After a 5 to 10 minute dwell time, you can pressure wash the area with a 40 degree tip. Rust Remover Plus™ will brighten the concrete as it dries.

(*) Denotes $27.00 shipping surcharge by UPS.

Our Soft Wash Machines are Contractor TESTED & Contractor APPROVED!™

Soft Wash in a Box™ Complete System

The Soft Wash in a Box is built in a heavy duty locking aluminum box for protection against the weather and theft. The unit uses a powerful 12 volt Flojet Pentaflex pump that will pump up to 7 GPM at 80 PSI, a heavy duty corrosion resistant on/off switch, and a breaker to protect electrical components. A chemical resistant three way polypropylene flow valve is used to control flow through your system. The system can be ordered with one or two tanks.

A single tank system allows the user to pump concentrated cleaning agents from their original containers directly to the systems blending tank, and redirect flow from the hose reel back to the blending tank to agitate the mix.

A double tank system allows the user to pump concentrated cleaning agents from the original container directly to one of the two tanks. Then redirect the flow from the tank containing the concentrate to the mixing tank. This eliminates the need to make multiple trips back to the shop to get a blend for each job. It also reduces the amount of liquid on the truck, so that blends can be made at the job site by just adding water.

Mustang

- 12 volt, 7 GPM, 80 PSI, Flojet diaphragm pump with a maximum temperature of 160°F
- Water tight battery box
- 10' x 16" aircraft grade aluminum frame
- ½" x 24" PVC Wand
- VJ-0080B Brass Nozzle
- ¾" x 225' Rubber Hose
- Clear Vinyl Tubing with a mesh filter screen.

Colt

- 12 volt, 100 PSI diaphragm pump with a max temp of 140°F
- JA-8000 Soft Wash Gun
- 1/2" x 24" PVC Wand
- 1/4" stainless steel quick coupler socket
- 4 1/4" stainless steel quick coupler plugs
- Four V-Jet Nozzles 0°, 15°, 25°, 40°
- 200' of 5/8" poly braid hose
- 50 mesh filter screen

The FLOJET Accumulator Tank gives you the best of both worlds! High flow when you need it and the ability to restrict the flow for sensitive situations. When the pump starts, liquid enters the reservoir compressing the bladder until the maximum pressure for the pressure switch is reached then the pump shuts off. Pump stays off until the minimum pressure is reached. Then pump turns on, reducing cycling leading to longer switch and pump life.