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The Challenge

Last month you were given the **Information** and the **Example** for doing Sizing and Layouts. As promised, this month we give you the **Challenge**, to try out your skills.

A customer has requested ceramic infrared panels to dry both sides of a glass fiber material being coated with a resin material.

The facts:

Glass fiber and resin film

His speed is 308 ft. per hour.

The material width is 33.46 inches

The weight per square foot is:

glass fiber- .0583 lbs./sq.ft.

resin- .088 lbs./sq.ft.

acid water- .0163 lbs./sq.ft.

Assume the emissivity of resin is .90.

The final temperature is 392°F.

Ambient temperature is 65°F.

The voltage is 380V, 3 phase, 50 Hz

Exterior panel dimensions: 36" x 48"

Using the above information, and the formulas presented in last month's newsletter, what would you recommend for this customer? We will need type of heater, numbers and design of heaters, wattage and distance from the material.

Anyone who sends us their answer, accompanied by their calculations, will receive a free gift.

Fax submissions to: Attn: Deitz 616-784-7775.

Only one submission per company, please. Good Luck!

Contact either of our sales locations:

www.InfraredHeaters.com

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Help! I Can't Compete Because the Other Guy's Price is Lower!

Price competition is a worldwide problem, one that has been around forever and will probably be around forever. If the product is already offered at a fair market price, continuous lowering of the price does not solve the problem. In fact, it only makes the problem worse by creating a "price war" in which the customer benefits greatly, but the distributors lose even if they win, because the sale is not worth the meager profit margin that remains. For this reason, we prefer to keep our prices steady, and instead 1.) take on new approaches to selling, and 2.) take on new customers to sell to.

1.) New approaches to selling:

Find your customer's need. Although price always appears to be the issue, it almost always is not. Delivery is usually more important than price. It is interesting to note that in selling, the first person to bring up price is usually the seller who assumes that is the issue, when it probably is not. They need to talk further with the customer to establish what their need really is.

Keeping a good variety and number of stock elements and advertising this fact will assure a customer of immediate delivery.

Stocking agreements are often very tempting to customers. Find out what they use and offer to keep them in stock if they sign an agreement to buy a specified number per year.

Know what you are talking about. Train your sales staff on the product and especially its applications. Customers like to buy from people who sound like they know what they are talking about. Note: protect your knowledge. Often times customers will call for your expertise, then buy the product cheaper from someone else. Use fabricated part numbers so that they will not be able to order elsewhere.

Stock related items so that customers can buy the whole "system". It is expensive to issue purchase orders. If they can buy several items from you it will save them time and money.

Establish a relationship with the customer. No one expects loyalty from customers today. Customers do, however, appreciate personal interest. Know what they do and how they do it. Show them how they can improve their process and their profits. Call them to see if you can help them with an order, and call to thank them after they have ordered it.

Be easy to do business with. This doesn't mean that you give them cheap prices and long payment terms. This means that you have a simple order entry procedure, that you acknowledge their order and keep them advised of any changes. You have clear, fair policies that are understood by everyone so that there are no "surprises" in doing business with you. Apologize when you are in error and make it up to them even if you lose your profit. (The customer is not responsible for your mistakes.) If the next mistake is theirs, they will take their loss much easier.

2.) Take on new customers

Bigger is no longer better. Selling 5 elements at 35% profit is the same as selling 35 elements at 5% profit margin. Look for customers that need a few elements, but on a regular basis, at a high profit margin.

Look for customers that could benefit from switching their process to ceramic elements, and explain those benefits to them.

Avoid large volume customers that want the elements for next to nothing. In fact, refer them to your competition. Your competitor will be so busy selling elements for nothing that they will not have time to serve the "high profit" small customers.

Look for new applications. Ceramic elements can be used almost anywhere that electric heat is used and probably more effectively and efficiently. Find those areas and help develop the application. Your efforts will label you as an "expert" and you will come to be recognized and appreciated as the leading authority.

Selling is no longer simply answering the question "how much". Selling is educating the consumer on what is available and how it could meet their need, so before you can do that, you must discover what their need is. It takes a continuous cycle of research, effort, organization, expertise, and constant evaluation of the purpose and direction of that cycle, to sell your product and to continue to sell it profitably.