



JOHN FRYE

Technical know-how is important but "packaging" your skill is equally important if you hope to become truly successful.

SHOWMANSHIP IN SERVICING

"SOME people really slay me!" Barney exclaimed, throwing down the nut-driver he had been using to tighten chassis bolts on a radio.

"What brings this on?" Mac, his employer, inquired.

"Last night I stopped in at my cousin Harry's for a look at his new color set. It was working beautifully, but you should have heard him gripe. And do you know what about? He was bellyaching because the service technician who came out to set up the receiver used a cracked service mirror in making some of the purity and convergence adjustments!

"Here I pay seven hundred clams for that color set," says my cousin Harry, "and they send out a clown with worn-out equipment and a cracked mirror to adjust it. All that jazz the salesman gave me about how I was buying the finest color set, assembled in the most modern factory by the finest craftsmen, and then some dope goofs up the whole thing by squinting into a cracked mirror while messing with those little knobs!"

"I told cousin Harry I knew the technician who did the set-up and that he was far from being a dope. I explained he only used the mirror for making rough adjustments necessary at the rear of the set and that the crack could not possibly make any difference in these. Really critical adjustments were made with the technician looking directly at the face of the tube. But Harry wasn't buying. No one will ever convince him his color set is working correctly simply because the technician used a cracked service mirror. Doesn't it make you sick the way some customers will latch onto some unimportant action on the part of the technician or some irrelevant item of his equipment or appearance—something that has nothing whatever to do with his competence—and condemn his whole performance because of that one measly little nit-picking (quote) fault (unquote)?"

"Let's not hasten to condemn the customer for being hasty in condemning the technician," Mac suggested with a grin. "Take a look at things from his point of view. He's not a technician; so he can't be expected to know what's important and what's not in work done on his set. All he can do is fall back on things he *does* know something about: the neatness and cleanness of the technician, the appearance and quantity of his equipment, his professional deportment or lack of it, and his attitude toward his work. From observation of these things the customer forms an opinion about the technician that, right or wrong, is very important. It determines whether the technician will be called again, and it dictates what the customer says to his friends about the technician. The fellow who performed the set-up with the aid of a cracked mirror may be a cracker-jack technician, but he would be wise to put more showmanship into his work."

"Oh come on now!" Barney objected. "Don't tell me you're advocating that service technicians waste a lot of time going through useless hocus-pocus just to impress the customer!"

"Showmanship is not useless hocus-pocus," Mac said calmly. "Neither does it have to be cheap, misleading, unethical, or anything else of which you need be ashamed. Showmanship is simply presenting your wares, your abilities,

or your message in the clearest and most effective light possible. The housewife calls on showmanship when she arranges a salad to appeal to the eye as well as the palate—and the meal is more enjoyable for her effort. Presidential candidates who put on makeup before appearing in front of TV cameras to debate great and serious issues are using showmanship."

"Guess I was a little offside," Barney grudgingly admitted. "I suppose there's nothing wrong with putting your best foot forward—and making sure the customer sees that foot. You got some specific ideas about how a service technician can use showmanship?"

"That I have. The basic idea is simply to convince the customer of your ability, your preparation, and your good intentions as far as fixing his set is concerned. You want to impress him subtly but unmistakably on all three counts. There should be no need to mention neatness and cleanliness. If the technician needs to be told about these matters, he's in the wrong business. No one wants a dirty, unkempt man in his living room, no matter how much he knows about electronics. If he doesn't care about himself, it's pretty hard to believe he cares about anything else.

"But cleanliness and neatness should extend beyond his person to include his equipment. We know a grease-smudged meter face and frayed test leads have nothing to do with the accuracy of the meter's readings, but the customer does not know this. For his benefit, test equipment should always look shining-new and show evidence of having been treated with tender, loving care. Obviously, a cracked service mirror is out!

"This brings up another point. Some technicians pride themselves on being able to perform a high percentage of home service calls with only the aid of a v.o.m. They are making a mistake. You would not be favorably impressed by a garage that had only a screwdriver, a monkey wrench, and a ballpeen hammer in the way of tools, now would you? The technician who employs a minimum of instruments is not impressing the customer with his superior technical ability. The idea being planted is that you need to invest very little money in equipment to do service work!

"When a technician carries in a full tube caddy, a neatly arranged tools-and-parts kit, a tube tester, a v.o.m. or v.t.v.m., and complete service data on the customer's black and white receiver, he is announcing without actually saying a word: 'See; I've spared no expense to equip myself completely to service your set.' Moreover, with the equipment right at hand, the technician will find real use for most of it. The tube tester will spot marginal tubes otherwise overlooked and possibly causing a call-back. Reference to the service data will save time in identifying adjustments, locating check points, and even in replacing tubes in blind sockets. As more and more work is performed in the home, fewer and fewer customers ever see the equipment we have here in the shop; so it's increasingly important they be shown we're not 'screwdriver mechanics.' After they catch a glimpse of our fragile and expensive equipment in operation, they will be better pre-

prepared to pay a reasonable service charge."

"You said something about the technician's attitude toward his work. Where does showmanship get into that?"

"I think we both know technicians who try to impress others with their technical sophistication by down-grading practically every receiver they work on. They snarl at flimsy printed circuits and at hard-to-remove tubes. They are contemptuous of small speakers, light cabinets, and production shortcuts of any kind. When you see them in action, you get the impression they suspect the set manufacturer, the set itself, and maybe even the customer of being in league just to annoy and frustrate them.

"Now this is no good. Criticizing a customer's set hacks away at his pride of possession and impugns his judgment in buying the receiver in the first place.

"A smart technician keeps disparaging opinions of the receiver to himself. He works in a cheerful, unhurried, thorough manner; and he shows respect for the customer's receiver by the careful way he handles it. Whenever possible—which is practically always—he notices and corrects small defects in the performance of the receiver the customer has not seen for himself. I mean things like improper centering, slight pincushioning, poor linearity, slightly noisy sound, or poor focusing. He conveys the impression he likes service work and is a perfectionist. Incidentally, if you need to be convinced of the importance of seeming happy at your work, just notice the determined smiles on the faces of commercial givers, singers, and even acrobatic dancers on TV. And remember performing artists are old hands at showmanship."

"It seems to me all this showmanship is designed simply to improve the image of the service technician," Barney suggested.

"If you insist on using a word that's becoming a little fly-blown, yes," Mac agreed. "The picture that pops into the average man's mind when he hears 'service technician' might be called an image, but that image is very likely to look exactly like the fellow who fixes the average man's TV set. Building an image is an integrating process very similar to building the vertical sync pulse in a receiver. The image is composed of all the individual technicians with whom the public comes in contact. Only when these technicians present uniform high quality impressions will those impressions add together to produce a satisfactory image. That means all of us must be constantly and keenly aware of the impression we are making on our customers. We must build our own image. No copywriter can do it for us."

After a little pause, Mac continued with a grin: "I was just thinking of a

good example of what showmanship can do for a technician. A few years back we had a real radio nut in this town. Norm was a young bachelor who ate, drank, and breathed electronics. He was so busy studying and experimenting with electronics he had little time for anything else. He seldom combed his hair; his clothes were usually missing a button or so; it seemed he always needed a shave. He ran a little hole-in-the-wall service shop to keep from starving, and he worked for practically nothing, but he did know his electronics.

"Finally a girl saw something in him others missed and married him. They moved away, and I did not see him for four or five years; and when I did see him I scarcely knew him. He was neat as a pin, well-dressed, driving a fine car; and he had a very responsible well-paying job with an airways company. That girl had used showmanship to repackage the electronic know-how inside Norm, and there were plenty of takers."

"I get the message!" Barney interrupted. "All I have to do if I want to succeed is to brush my teeth, keep smiling, and get married. I'm not sure it's worth it!" ▲

Largest Radar Telescope (Continued from page 45)

protection from the high winds, the reflector surface is guyed down so that its tolerance is ± 1 inch.

Electronics

The transmitter used in this installation has an output of 2.5 megawatts peak and 150 kw. average power. It is also capable of transmitting a 100-kw. c.w. signal for special purposes. Shaping and timing circuits enable the operator to tailor the transmitted pulses to any desired values.

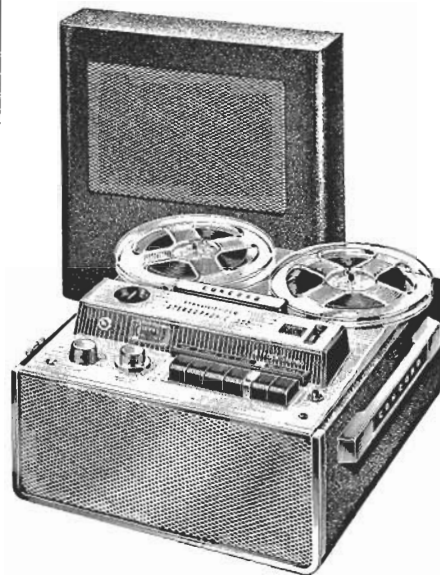
Operating frequency is presently limited to 430 mc. with a stability better than 2.5 parts in 10⁶. This frequency was chosen because it best suits the needs of the present observations. At some later date, other frequencies will be added.

As the actual transmitter and receiver are located alongside one of the support towers, the transmission waveguide is over 500 wavelengths long and consists of about 1300 feet of waveguide. Total run from the transmitter to the antenna is about one-third of a mile with system attenuation less than 1.8 db.

The receivers are equipped with two low-noise front-ends to permit reception of both horizontally and vertically polarized signals simultaneously. Each includes a parametric amplifier, low-noise r.f. stages, crystal mixer and a 30-mc. i.f. amplifier. The remainder of the system is located within the operations building. ▲

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