

50 GREAT WAYS TO ADD VALUE

- 1. Having the right inventory in stock at the right time.
 - 2. Providing customers with information on new products.
 - 3. Knowing the National Electrical Code changes and being able to help customers learn about their impact on product features and applications.
 - 4. Offering customers a line of credit.
 - 5. Delivering products to the job site or plant.
 - 6. Providing accurate, timely pricing information.
 - 7. Conducting business in an ethical, professional manner.
 - 8. Making emergency deliveries.
 - 9. Having a 24-hour hot line.
 - 10. Organizing counter days, in-house training or trade shows so customers can meet with manufacturers.
 - 11. Being open on Saturdays.
 - 12. Accepting Visa, MasterCard or Discover to help out smaller customers with low credit limits.
 - 13. Handling returns and defective products.
 - 14. Staging orders on big projects.
 - 15. Training customers on new products.
 - 16. Calling on customers at their convenience in their place of business with trained salespeople.
 - 17. Offering customers a single source of supply for hundreds of manufacturers.
 - 18. Offering customers advice on the bookkeeping end of their businesses.
 - 19. Putting together a "system" or package of products that work together.
 - 20. "Kitting" products for manufacturing plants that need a certain group of electrical or electronic components to be built into the products they make.
 - 21. Helping customers with problem-solving and trouble-shooting applications.
 - 22. Knowing local building codes and practices.
 - 23. Identifying material and its source.
 - 24. Standing behind the products you sell.
 - 25. Providing substitutions.
 - 26. Doing take-offs for customers
 - 27. Making extensive quotations for customers' project bids.
 - 28. Demonstrating products.
 - 29. Coordinating just-in-time deliveries to manufacturing plants.
 - 30. Keeping customers competitive.
 - 31. Providing product information, catalogs and technical bulletins in either printed or online form (PDFs, electronic catalogs, etc.).
 - 32. Having capable in-house salespeople to handle questions, expediting and repeat orders and product specialists to answer technical questions.
 - 33. Giving third-party recommendations on products you sell.
 - 34. Offering customers who use you as their main source of electrical supplies special incentives such as dating, special delivery, training, etc.
 - 35. Bringing manufacturers' reps or field salespeople to customer job sites to help with product-related problems.
 - 36. Sourcing hard-to-find products for customers.
 - 37. Being a dependable, local source of supply.
 - 38. Giving customers report cards so they can grade your company on various aspects of your service.
 - 39. Taking customers as your guests to local electrical shows so they can learn about new products on the market.
 - 40. Organizing trade fairs at customer locations with some of your key suppliers.
 - 41. Saving customers shopping time by stocking non-electrical job-site supplies such as water coolers, ladders, foul-weather gear, maps, shovels, etc.
 - 42. Offering a tool-rental program for more expensive power equipment such as power benders and generators.
 - 43. Providing industrial plants with full-time, on-site tool crib stocking.
 - 44. Working with distributors of other construction and industrial supplies to provide customers with a one-stop source of supply for MRO-oriented products.
 - 45. Providing key customers with demonstration models of tools or samples of new supplies so they can evaluate the products under job-site conditions.
 - 46. Providing accurate computerized information for customers.
 - 47. Offering customers e-mail as an option to send in orders, request information, etc.
 - 48. Taking orders through electronic data interchange (EDI) to cut down on paperwork errors.
 - 49. Maintaining a website that offers 24-hour access to product information, order status, company services, etc. Give yourself an extra point if you utilize IDEA's Industry Data Warehouse (IDW).
 - 50. If you have expertise in-house, helping key customers build their own websites.
- What other value-added services does your company offer? List them below and give yourself a point for each. (Use more paper, if needed).
51. _____

52. _____

- Scoring.** Get out a pen or pencil and check off the practices your company presently uses. No points for "planning to, someday," but if your company is developing one of these strategies, give yourself a half-point. Count up the checks, and don't forget the bonus points, as noted. Score one point for each check.
- A score of 40 or more.** Your company is a pioneer and clearly ahead of the pack, using the latest thinking in the electrical wholesaling industry. Don't stop now, though. Work with your employees to come up with 50 more ideas to polish your company's performance.
- A score of 30 to 39.** You are on your way, but there's room for improvement. Get your company up to the next level, and then start working on those 50 new ideas.
- A score of 29 or less.** Some competitors have gotten a jump on you in molding their companies into professional marketing organizations. It's time to sit down with your key people and take a hard look at what it will take to catch up.