

ORFED

Objectives and Purposes

The principal objective of this Association shall be to create an organization of professional fire equipment distributors. This organization shall be dedicated to improving the fire equipment industry in Oregon through gathering and disseminating information and ideas which will improve the state's fire protection and increase the competence of the fire equipment industry in the State of Oregon. Each member of this association acknowledges the responsibility inherent in the sale and maintenance of fire protection equipment distributed by it and pledges to perform its work and service its customers with the high degree of honesty, skill and integrity that such responsibility infers.

Customer service

it's what it's all about!

Companies who have great customer service do very well in our industry. As you may have noticed, this fire stuff is complicated, even for some in the industry. Imagine that your client has no idea what is required to be done. "You need to break it down for them, and educate." As I described it to one of my techs some years back, "explain it to them like they are 5 years old". No, I do not mean to be condescending, I mean that you need to break it down for the client so that they have a clear understanding of the requirements, and what the ramifications are if they fail to meet the code requirement. Just like talking to your child, "sure you can do that, but there are consequences for your actions." It may be the easiest conversation to have with your client, but clear expectations are key.

Here are some of the winning characteristics.

Be Honest and Genuine- As Bruce Carter put it, do the right thing when no one is watching. Sell as though you are selling to your mother.

Know your product- Know what you have available, and what the price is. If you show confidence in your knowledge, your client will have confidence in your ability to meet their needs. If you don't know the answer, don't guess. Let your client know that you will find out. Then follow up with your promise. Be the professional.

Be Friendly- People like to do business with cheerful, happy people. If you are sad because it's been raining for 3 months, paste a smile on your face and fake it, it sells. Visualize yourself as an enthusiastic person.

Be neat and organized- All of us have known a technician who's dash board is covered with paperwork. You can bet their customers were not be impressed when they stepped out of their service van, and paperwork, soda cans and food wrappers fell out. You know they are wondering if their paperwork will die in that techs van. Have a place for everything, and have everything in its place.

Have great communication with your client- Speak concisely, Speak Simply, and listen intently. When a complaint comes in, Listen! Don't argue, don't interrupt, don't dispute. Keep your mouth shut until its time to validate their concerns and apologize. Put yourself in their position. "I am sorry this happened to you" goes a long way with an upset client, and lets them know you understand their frustration, and are going to help. Then, do just that and help. Follow up with a phone call with your client, to check in to ensure that the issue has been resolved.

If you calibrate the way you operate, you may find yourself a much happier, and more effective technician. It starts with you!

Frank Lude

ORFED President

From The President

The state of our industry is Strong!

Oregon is growing, and ORFED member companies are reaping the rewards. Most of us have our calendars full for the next several weeks to several months, and the phone is ringing off of the hook. Some companies are actually turning away work due to a lack of manpower. Construction is increasing again, and many other trades are also experiencing a lack of trained technicians. We need to ensure that the new technicians in our industry are trained correctly, and appropriately, and that they conduct themselves in a dignified and professional manner.

There are more employment opportunities than ever before.

Every fire equipment company in the nation is looking for good help RIGHT NOW. Fire systems are becoming more complicated, and so are the laws governing its installation, and inspection. Companies need employees who are self-motivated, and driven to succeed. I have spoken with several managers, and owners over the last several weeks, and the answers are frequently the same. "If I could find 5 more great technicians to add to my awesome tech pool, everything would be fantastic!" Companies need technicians to step up to the plate. Some of us in management weren't born into a family business, some of us stepped up as technicians, and accepted more responsibility. Check your bathroom mirror tomorrow morning, and see if that guy is ready to step up. As Oregon grows, our companies, and our employees need to grow with it. Start your education early, document your time. If your particular discipline has a NICET certification applicable, start that process today, don't be scared or intimidated, be confident, it WILL pay off!

It's now easier to wind up in a courtroom.

There are changes every time a code book is re-issued. Changes in the Oregon Fire Code, CMS, and NFPA occur frequently. You as the responsible professional are required to know the changes, and implement them. When an incident occurs, and equipment fails you, and everyone else whoever touched the gear will be named in the lawsuit. If you think about the last report you wrote, can you justify every answer, and be able to defend yourself, and your company? Be clear, concise, and to the point. Ensure that your contact understands the condition of their equipment, and what needs to happen next. If you don't explain it to them, you will be left to fill in the gaps during deposition. "existing non-conforming" comments will ensure you get to talk with opposing council.

There are more education opportunities than ever before.

At no time in history has information moved at the speed, and frequency it does today. Smart phones allow you to take webinars in your van. For example, there are free apps for your phone to use flash cards to study for examinations. Yes, this will take some effort on your part to leave your Facebook app alone, but the payoff is an education, and no one can take that from you.

The future belongs to you.

In April of 1989, Don Begley was relinquishing the NAFED president chair, He spoke to the new leaders of this association are pushing ahead to guide NAFED on a sure path to success in the 1990's. "I anticipate that your association will continue its trend of controlled growth. Like a thousand points of light, we build on our current strengths and focus on our members needs." The industry needs good people, who are willing to invest themselves in what we do. WE can make ORFED, the best training and education platform available in the Region. This industry needs technicians who are willing to invest in their own future.

The future of this industry is in your hands. What will you do with it?



Announcements

New Mailing Address:

Doug Vandecoevering
Treasurer
Oregon Fire Equipment Distributors
2038 NW Aloclek Dr. Ste. 220
Hillsboro, OR 97124

New Website:

www.orfed.com has had a facelift!
Please take a moment to check it out.
We send a huge thank you to Jeff
Wallace for tackling our redesign. It
looks great Jeff! Thank you!

Annual Spring Training

It is that time again! Our conference committee has been hard at work putting together this year's training conference. The registration form has the training break down, and is attached.

Please mark your calendars for Saturday May 20th. We are at the Embassy Suites by the Portland Airport this year. We have a [specialized webpage](#) you can book a room through if you are staying. Reservations must be made by April 27th to receive the group rate. Our group code is OFD if you would rather call in a reservation.

Newsletter Participation

Q&A

We would like to include a question and answer part to our newsletter. So, if there has ever been a question you haven't been able to get answered, or you never wanted to ask, send it to us! You can use the contact us form on our new website to submit questions.

Articles

We would also like to encourage all of you to shoot us some article ideas! What comes up in your shop? What information do you want to see shared? Would you be interested in writing something for the newsletter? Let us know!

Dates to Remember

May 19, 2017	7pm-10pm	Owner's meeting/Vendor reception	Embassy Suites - Portland Airport
May 20, 2017	7:30 registration	Annual Training Conference	Embassy Suites - Portland Airport
July 10, 2017	9am	Board meeting - Open to everyone	Metro Safety & Fire, Inc.