



National Independent Fire Alarm Distributors Association

May 2017

Calendar of Events

NIFAD

Annual Meeting

June 2-4, 2017

Boston, MA

NFPA Convention

June 4-7, 2017

Boston, MA

ISC East

November 15-16, 2017

Javits Center, NY

AFFA National Codes Conference

To Be

Determined

NFPA Convention

June 11-14, 2018

Las Vegas, NV

From the President's Desk

"Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got. Taking a break from all your worries sure would help a lot. Wouldn't you like to get away?"

Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came.

*You wanna be where you can see, our troubles are all the same
You wanna be where everybody knows you're name"...CHEERS.*



These lines remind me of the Annual NIFAD conference, the attendees and the atmosphere of the meetings. A place and time to discuss business troubles, trials and successes. A place and time to learn from your peers from across the country. A time to connect with some of the best friends in the business.

The NIFAD Annual Conference is being held June 2nd through 4th at the Westin Copley Place in historic Boston, home of the Bull & Finch Pub (now Cheers) which was the inspiration for Cheers the sitcom.

Anna has done a phenomenal job putting together a program that we are proud to present to you. The Town Hall Meeting – always a favorite time of the meeting – will continue this year on Saturday. We have some dynamic and informed speakers coming in Sunday morning. Sunday afternoon's agenda has changed. Instead of having vendors come in and pitch product from the floor, we will be 'speed dating' them. We will break into small groups and visit each one for a short time, giving the vendors more one on one time which will allow you to ask more direct questions and see the product or agenda up close.

Friday evening (7:00-8:30) consist of a cocktail reception in the lobby bar, affording us all time to greet and catch up with one another in an informal setting. Saturday evening dinner will be at the Lucca Back Bay restaurant located a couple of blocks from the hotel.

If you have not made your reservations, please do so very soon. It will be a weekend that will pay dividends to your business. Be sure to spend some extra time exploring one of the most historic cities in this great country.

See you in June,

Mike Nelson
NIFAD President

R2's Code Corner

by Richard Roberts, Industry Affairs Manager

Codes and Standards Update

1. State/Municipal Code Adoption:
 - a. San Francisco:
 - The demand for wireless low-frequency sounders will be in high demand after a new San Francisco ordinance will require approximately 2,800 existing apartment buildings to be provided with an audible fire alarm signal in “all” living units.
 - The ordinance requires owners of existing apartment buildings to upgrade the fire alarm system, if necessary, to comply with the 75dBA sound pressure level requirement for sleeping areas set forth in the 2013 edition of NFPA 72. Building owners have until July 1, 2021 to comply with the ordinance. The San Francisco Fire Department enforcement of the audible alarm signal will be as follows:
 1. The low frequency 520Hz signal “will be” required in all existing sleeping areas that have no horns or speakers installed
 2. The low frequency 520Hz signal “will not be” required if the existing sleeping areas already have horns or speakers installed.
 - b. Connecticut:
 - The 2016 Fire Code is based on the 2012 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC). Several noteworthy changes are as follows:
 - Fire alarm systems installed in newly constructed schools will be required to utilize an emergency voice/alarm communication (EVAC) system for occupant notification instead of using horns
 - An automatic smoke detection system will be required in common spaces outside of dwelling/sleeping units of college and university buildings in order to reduce property damage and civilian casualties
 - To improve the waking effectiveness for high risk segments of the population, fire alarm systems are required to produce the low frequency audible alarm signal in all sleeping areas to awaken people. Several examples are hotel and dormitory sleeping rooms as well as dwelling unit bedrooms within apartment buildings
 - CO detection is now required in hotels, apartment buildings, dormitories, nursing homes and hospitals to reduce the occurrence of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning
 - c. Ohio:
 - The Ohio Board of Building Standards adopted an amendment to the Ohio Building Code (OBC) that requires fire alarm systems in new Group E occupancies (K-12 schools) with an occupant load greater than 30 to utilize an EVAC system for occupant notification.
 - The EVAC amendment is found in page 468 in the Ohio Building Code Amendments and became effective on 01/01/2016.
2. National Research Council of Canada (NRCC):
 - 2020 edition of the National Building Code of Canada:
 - The Canada Fire Alarm Association (CFAA) will submit a proposal that seeks to allow system-connected CO detectors to be installed in lieu of CO alarms in the 2020 edition of the National Building Code of Canada

- The 2015 edition of the National Building Code of Canada only allows CO alarms conforming to CAN/CSA-6.19 to be installed because there was no ULC product standard covering system-connected CO detectors during the development of the Code. The first edition of CAN/ULC-S588, relating system-connected CO detectors, was published this year. This standard will be used as a basis for a modification to the 2020 edition to permit the use of CO detectors because many end-users or system designers want the added benefit of a detection device that is designed and listed to be connected to a system.

3. Research Projects:

a. Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Indirect Viewing of Notification Appliances Task Group (TG):

- The UL Task Group on Indirect Viewing of Notification Appliances is finalizing the data analysis from two rounds of testing which seeks to ascertain the optimum detection level for human when exposed to LED strobes.
- The data analysis is expected to be completed in May and the next step will be to publish a White Paper (WP) covering all the test data and a recommendation for changes to NFPA 72 and UL 1971. Once the WP is completed the Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF) will initiate a research project to hire an independent 3rd party to review and validate all the technical data in the document.
- The reason the research is needed is in recent years Light Emitting Diode (LED) technology has entered the marketplace for strobes. A 2011 the FPRF report concluded current LED technology is viable for direct viewing applications; however, it “may” not be viable for indirect viewing applications where the strobe light is behind a person. In the indirect viewing application the light from the visible notification appliance needs to be reflected off the walls and/or ceiling in order to alert the building occupants.

b. Smoke Detector Spacing for High Ceiling Spaces:

- The Fire Protection Research Foundation (FPRF) has initiated a research project to determine the impact of ceiling height on the spacing of smoke detectors.
- The research will conduct a literature review of all currently available test data and develop a research plan to fill the knowledge gaps. Depending on the data collected the findings of the research may be used for changes to NFPA 72 and the model fire codes (International Fire Code and NFPA 101).
- The reason for the research project is there are no smoke detector spacing requirements for ceilings between 10 and 30 feet in NFPA 72. However, there is a table that allows for reduction of spacing for heat detection. There has been confusion in design and code enforcement on what to do when smoke detectors are installed on higher ceilings.

4. United States Department of Defense (DoD):

• Unified Facilities Criteria (UFC) 4-021-01 for Mass Notification Systems:

- The 2010 edition of 4-021-01 has entered a revision cycle to create the 2018 edition. In February the DoD released first draft of changes to the 2010 edition and they are now seeking public comment.
- This UFC document is essential for the security of military personnel as it requires in-building and wide-area mass notification systems in all military buildings located inside and outside the United States.

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5 Key Customer Service Mistakes You Need to Avoid

By Jennifer Post, Business News Daily

Customer service is the backbone of a successful business. It could be the difference between good reviews and repeat customers, and word getting around about negative customer experiences and people avoiding your business altogether.

Given that customer service is so important, it is valuable to know some of the most common customer service mistakes. Customer service experts lent their expertise to Business News Daily and shared how to avoid them.

The mistakes

1. Over-automation

Just because it can be automated does not mean it should be, and it also does not mean the automation will automatically translate into cost savings. Don't automate just because you can. Avoid erasing all personalization and direct contact with the customer. When possible, provide a variety of different communication modes, as some customers prefer online chat while others want to talk to a person over the phone. "Give them that option. Don't force customers to use frustrating phone trees," said Dana Brownlee, founder of consulting firm Professionalism Matters.



2. Failing to listen

Assuming you know what the customer wants, instead of listening to the customer, is a big mistake. "Teach listening skills throughout the organization, especially to (customer service representatives)," said Brownlee. "Develop processes that 'force' CSRs to really listen to customers – get rid of CSR scripts."

3. Being reactive

Instead of proactive Instead of thinking about how to delight customers on the front end and avoid getting the calls, many companies fall into the reactive approach of being satisfied with somewhat mediocre products or service and thinking of customer service as something that happens on the back end when there are complaints or problems. Take time to conduct process analysis, continuous process improvement and root cause analysis to truly improve your product service.

"Require every employee to take (five) customer service calls a month to maintain connection to the customer. Incorporate customer service goals into every employee's compensation/bonus structure," Brownlee said.

4. Undervaluing customer service staff

It's a shame that very often the staff members who interact with customers the most are paid and valued the least. To avoid this mistake, Brownlee said, "Hire better staff, pay them more, and reward them for providing great service."

5. Not giving customers what they want

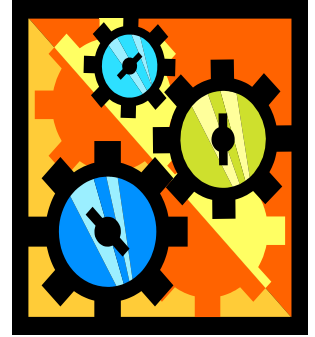
According to Robert C. Johnson, CEO of TeamSupport, customers want accurate answers or quick, efficient and respectful solutions, and getting that to the customer is the most important thing, even if the answer or solution is not ideal.

"Make sure the employees (who interact) with customers have access to the right information and are listening to their concerns," Johnson said. "Ensure communication is realistic – it's always better to under-promise and over-deliver on that promise than the other way around."

Avoiding customer service mistakes

Customer service is proving to be a vital part of a successful business. But where does it start? Employees may not know where to turn for advice on customer service, or how to get the right information.

"A culture of exceptional customer service must start at the top. It can't be just a slide in a presentation or a cliché saying that employees are expected to follow," Johnson said. The CEO needs to set the tone, invest in the right team members and technology, and lead by actions as well as words.



A survey conducted by Professionalism Matters also found that scripts are not the way to deal with customer service complaints. Customer service representatives need to be trained to work to resolve a customer's specific situation, as opposed to the "if they say this, you say that" approach.

Correcting mistakes when they happen

No one is perfect. Whether due to a lack of focus, understanding, guidance or diligence, mistakes will happen.

"Sometimes we move too fast, and sometimes things just happen. At the end of the day, it's how you recover from these mistakes that's important," Johnson said. "Good companies own both the good and the bad things that happen."

The key is knowing how to rectify the situation once it has happened and making sure that the customer still receives the best customer service, despite some bumps along the way to a resolution.

Johnson suggested reaching out to the customer and owning up to the problem with empathetic and sincere communication. Formulate a response strategy, such as a timeline for communication, and execute it quickly.

It's also critical for customer service representatives to apologize on behalf of the company immediately if the company dropped the ball in any way, Brownlee said in the Professionalism Matters survey.

"There's nothing wrong with simply expressing regret that the customer is experiencing anguish, even if they haven't determined yet if the company was at fault," Brownlee said.

Once the situation has been rectified, take your own internal action independent of the customer, said Johnson.

"Sit down with your team to understand all the details, including what specifically happened, why it happened, and the actions that can be taken to avoid similar problems in the future," he said.

**2017
NIFAD Annual Meeting
June 2-4, 2017
The Westin Copley Place, Boston**



Make your reservations now for the
2017 NIFAD conference.

NIFAD has sleeping rooms blocked June 6-9, 2017.

Our room rate is \$299 single or double.

*The Westin Copley Place Hotel offers several dining options on-site,
a bar and lounge, a fitness studio, workspace and spa.*

The number to call for reservations is 1-866-716-8108
To receive the group rate callers must identify their affiliation with NIFAD.