

24. Establishing the Price

There's more than meets the eye.

You now have a formula for pricing the job that allows for adequate compensation of your employees, factors in overhead expenses, and provides for a predetermined level of profit for you and your business. We are now going to be discussing in this chapter are all the elements that need to be considered in order to determine how much work is involved and how long of time it will take to perform the work.

No "Standard" Price

- There's no set formula (or "answer-key method") to price a cleaning job because even very similar homes on the outside do not have much in common when it comes to cleaning them on the inside. We are going to teach you what to consider to be able to accurately and profitably price cleaning work in your area.
- Even if there were such things as a "typical" three-bedroom, two-bath home and you had ten identical copies of such a home, they could be entirely different from a cleaning perspective.
- In one of the three-bedroom, two-bath houses might be a family of four, plus a dog, a cat, and a parrot, with clutter throughout the house, a kitchen used for preparing three big meals a day, floors that are constantly polished on, and bedrooms that are nearly always in use.
- In the other three-bedroom, two-bathroom house might live a professional couple who happen to be lawyers who spend most of their time at work, who have no pets, have few furnishings, never use the kitchen (they make coffee in the microwave they go to work), and who never use the 2nd bathroom. Certainly, the price for cleaning these "identical" homes should not be the same. We're going to teach you how to see the differences and what to look for to be able to arrive at a fair job price.
- There can also be a vast difference between cleaning the same house the first time and then cleaning it again two weeks later. Some homes you clean will be in pristine condition when you first see them. Others will be a dirty mess. You want both as customers, you just don't want to price them the same the first time you clean them, even though the clean one and the dirty one may have the same price for weekly or biweekly cleaning once you get the dirty one nice and clean.

Looking for Dirt

- The price for cleaning the first time depends on the accumulation of dirt and grime in the house. When you clean the first time you can be cleaning dirt and grime that's been accumulating for years. When you clean repetitively, you are only cleaning away the dirt and grime that has accumulated in the last week or two since you last cleaned the house.
- It's obvious that if no one has cleaned the house in months, it's going to be dirty. But what about the person who says that she cleans it every week, but the house is still quite dirty. Maybe the person isn't a very good house cleaner — maybe she doesn't know about your company's high cleaning standards. However, if someone the first time you clean a home, it's probably not clean enough to do it more.
- The most important thing you're doing when you go to a customer's home for a consultation (or *consultation*) is to bring this prospect into a customer's home to find out how clean the house is now and how dirty it's probably get before you clean it.
- Before you prepare your quotation, find out whether the customer is interested in a one-time cleaning or in a regularly scheduled service — you don't already know. (*The client may hedge their bets by asking you to tell you that whether they use you on a one-time basis depends on the price. That's fine. You just need to know whether they're a prospect or not.*)

Onetime Cleaning

- A client who is only going to clean once. Maybe they're getting ready to *(just had)* a big party, or they have company coming, they've just moved in, or are getting ready to move out. Whatever the reason, they aren't at this time interested in having you clean the house every week or every other week.

A client interested in a onetime cleaning, needs to walk through the house with you when you're preparing your quote and tell you exactly what they want done. The client who wants a onetime cleaning may have very definite ideas of what they want cleaned. Often, not much more than what they want done is light housecleaning. They may want vacuuming under all the furniture, the walls and the ceilings in the bathrooms washed, miniblinds wiped clean, and so forth. Take good notes of what they want cleaned. Make sure they understand that they need to tell you exactly what they want done.

- Good notes are also important when you're preparing your quote because often the person who is giving you all this information won't be there when you do the actual cleaning. Write in complete sentences, not in cryptic short sentences that won't mean anything to you later on.
- It also might be a week or two before you look at the quote. Make sure you can read your own writing. While you're writing, make sure that others can read your writing also. Even if you have other teams other than your own — what happens if you go on vacation and your team comes to clean without you?

First-Time Cleaning

- This is a customer who wants you to clean regularly. You can do that, if the house needs it. *It usually does.* You should do a heavy-cleaning first. Once that's out of the way, it's easier to keep it that way when you come to clean regularly. Do a housecleaning every week or every other week.
- If they're interested in weekly or biweekly service, it's not absolutely necessary that you walk through the house with you, but it's best if they do. Tell them you know generally what you will do in each room: *kitchen, bathrooms thoroughly, including washing floors, dust and vacuum the rest of the house*) but it's best if you could point out to them anything special that may need to be done. Ask them if there are anything especially important to them, including items that should be touched, or things we should be careful of — such as a precariously balanced lamp shade, for example.
- When you have a quote, for example, you need to ask what items need to be cleaned the first-time you clean that don't need to be cleaned regularly. Sometimes this will be clear to you — molding or baseboards thick with dust or a bathroom shower that has been neglected for months. Other items that need to be cleaned the first time but not so clear and you should ask the client. Examples include whether to clean the oven or the inside of the refrigerator.
- You can also suggest to the customer certain cleaning that should be done — like moving the furniture to be able to vacuum behind and under it and (or) washing dirty walls in a bathroom instead of just wiping away the fingerprints. It's a good idea to do more of a real "spring cleaning" of the house the first time through. Doing a spring clean (or heavy clean) will increase the amount of money you charge them for the first cleaning, but just as importantly, you want to get the house really clean. By getting the house really clean the first time, when you come back to clean it again (*i.e.: start the weekly or*

biweekly cleaning) the work will be easier and the house will stay looking better longer.

- It's not always obvious that there is a lot of work to do the first time you clean for them. Look carefully. You don't necessarily have to run your finger along the baseboards or on the window sills (that *isn't a bad idea*), but you need to know how much dirt is on these things or in these places. There's a big difference in cleaning time. For example, if the baseboards just need a feather duster to clean them, that's one thing; if they need to be thoroughly vacuumed with a crevice tool attachment, or if they need to have every surface cleaned with a spray and then sprayed and wiped clean.

The Danger in Under Pricing First-Time Cleanings

- Don't under price the customer on a first-time cleaning. If you do weekly or biweekly cleaning work, you should follow up with a customer who is prepared to pay out substantially more for the regular cleanings assigned to do the work. In reality, a first-time cleaning is relatively unimportant to you because it's the regular cleaning that will ultimately generate long-term income.
- But there is no guarantee that an under-priced customer will actually become a regular customer. If you enter into a written agreement (that is, a contract when you agree to a minimum number of cleaning visits in exchange for a regular first time price, a practice that is not common in the residential cleaning business).
- Under-paid jobs are often a result of frustration and turnover in cleaning services. People who work on piece work (commission). It's not fair to the employer to have people working for substandard wages. And it's not fair to the worker, either. And it may be illegal if it would require the worker to work more hours on the job for the week (including all related time, such as waiting office time, travel time and actual cleaning time) resulting in employees earning less than the minimum federal or state hourly wage requirement.

If you have high employee turnover, lose good workers because of low pay, and are continually hiring new employees, you're apt to lose customers, too. That is a real danger when employees are paid on a piece-work or revenue-sharing basis. Your customers don't like new employees coming to clean all the time, and new employees are not as well-trained or as proficient as experienced ones. It's really hard on your business if you upset your employees by pricing a first-time cleaning job low, and then the customer moves and never becomes a regular client.

- The other problem with under pricing when employees are being paid on a percentage or predetermined revenue sharing is that your workers will tend to do a sloppy job in an effort to get finished with the work. They will cut corners when they realize that there is too much work for the amount of money involved. If you priced it low just to get the customer, and end up with a dissatisfied customer because your cleaners cut corners, once again it cost you money to price too low.
- The bottom line is this. If you're going to clean a house, make sure that the job is really worth in order to get the client's business. You should be prepared to absorb the cost of labor yourself. Do not expect your employees to be penalized for this. If you decide to price low, you must make sure your workers are guaranteed a minimum hourly rate, even if they're paid on a revenue sharing basis. Quality is always important at all times, but can be particularly critical on first-time cleanings.

You Can Justify a High Price for First-Time Cleaning

- There's nothing more frustrating than telling the customer that the baseboards are dusty. They know it — that's why they called you in the first place. It must be mentioned when you bring up a problem area. For example, baseboards that really are a problem in many homes because they've not been dusted in a long time.
- If the baseboards are dirty, tell the customer that you need to "catch-up" on cleaning them. Tell her that the first time you clean, you'll clean and wax the baseboards. Then, as part of your regular cleaning service, your team will dust some of them each time you clean. They will never get so dirty again.
- A dirty shower is another good example of something to point out to the customer when it obviously needs cleaning attention. You can do this quite politely by telling the customer that you will make the shower "look like new again." And, by mentioning a few of these obviously dirty areas, the customer will be more apt to understand when you quote a higher price for cleaning the house for the first time than for the regular weekly or biweekly visits that will follow.

Routine Scheduled Cleanings

- Cleaning a dirty house onetime or the first-time is much harder work and usually a lot less fun than cleaning a basically clean house every

week or two. Also, cleaning a very dirty house is slower. Efficiency suffers because the work isn't as standardized as cleaning the same house over and over again. You don't develop as smooth a routine cleaning ten different houses as you do when you clean the same house ten times.

- More important than how hard or how much fun repeat cleaning is or isn't — it's much more profitable. It's also a steady source of income. When you have a full schedule of repeat customers, you have a steady and reliable income on into the future without continually worrying about getting new or additional customers. You can fill up one team with repeat customers and, if you can't keep them, you can start another team and do the same thing and so forth — all the time increasing your income.
- When you can use more customer time, the more work you do, you will be happy (*or at least willing*) to clean a house just to do a move-in or move-out cleaning. That's what you're really interested in is repeat business. Even monthly cleanings are nearly as profitable as weekly ones. Weekly customers are often difficult to clean after a month and, because a few people want to be cleaned on a more regular schedule, they can also be a good schedule.
- Let's learn how to price cleaning the house for the onetime or, hopefully, a first-time cleaning, being well aware that you're encouraging repeat cleaning business that can be done on a regular schedule. In your pricing, you want to get the first-time cleaning done on a schedule to get someone cleaning the home on a weekly or bi-weekly schedule.

The Competitive Pricing

- Before starting your first home, gather information about competitors in your area. What you learn about what competitors in your area are charging will help you learn what's going on in your market. But you aren't getting this information just to try to match prices with your competitors.
- If you're going to offer a service superior to anyone else in town. You need better cleaning techniques, better equipment, better advertising, and better trained personnel. When you have that type of an organization, you should charge more than the mediocre cleaning services you'll be competing with.
- You really shouldn't mind if you hear someone make the comment about your company: "Expensive, but good." That's a wonderful description — one that many competitors would love to have. Take

advantage of your superior service and charge somewhat more than your competitors.

- If you're just starting your business, you're going to practice cleaning a few homes for friends, neighbors or relatives before you start advertising or sending your first team out to perform a cleaning. Naturally, you're going to practice pricing these homes as well. Don't try to price the first home before you clean it — but do price it before you clean it (*Price the rest of your practice cleanings before you do them*).
- By the way, one of your practice cleanings should be a second cleaning of the homes a second time. That cleaning will give you valuable experience with repetitive cleaning — and make it the last cleaning you do. You may be discouraged about how slow you are, but you can't practice on one-time cleanings.

In-Home Price Quotation

- Be sure and get all the information about a customer when you make the appointment. Specially things such as telephone numbers. You may not need them now, but you never know when you might need them in an emergency. Get both cross streets for this address and even directions if you need them.
- It is a good idea to inquire about a client before you give her your price for a cleaning. Many items concerning pets, number of adults, children, allergies, etc. will have a bearing on your repeat business.
- Use the Cleaning Worksheet to record information about the house and when you do the estimate. As you go through the house, write the name of each room on the left side of the form as you come to it. To the right of the name of the room, write any description or other information you want to remember or save about the room.
 - Examples in the kitchen might be:
 - When . . . "No-wax type floor, do not use floor cleaner-polish."
 - Sparsely furnished - easy to clean."
 - "Customer wants inside of microwave wiped out each time."
 - "Clean area of sliding glass door to patio where dog's nose makes smudges."
- Use the Cleaning Worksheet to record how much time you estimate it will take to do the extra work the first-time you clean here. We realize

that at this point you may not have any idea how long different cleaning jobs will take, but you will start to learn after doing just your first practice cleaning. By the time you have done four or five practice cleanings, you will have much more knowledge and confidence.

- It also greatly simplifies estimating when you view the job that needs to be done the first-time in very small increments. For example, if the stove top is clearly dirtier than it would be if you were cleaning it regularly, estimate how long it would take to clean the wool and get it completely clean again. Perhaps you decide it would take you about 10 minutes. Put a "10" in the estimate column "stove top."
- You are going to create notes that will apply to the room and the related time for each room in the "ROOM NOTES" column on the left hand side of the worksheet. Let's use the kitchen as an example.
- You are going to create notes that will apply to what you will do and the related time for each room in the "EXTRA WORK" column on the left hand side of the worksheet. Let's use the kitchen as an example.

Worksheet

Client Name:			Date:	
Address:				
City:		ZIP:	Home Phone:	
Desired Schedule:			Work Phone:	Ext:
ROOM	ROOM NOTES	TIME EST	EXTRA WORK: 1ST / ONE TIME	TIME EST
<i>Kitchen</i>	<i>Large kitchen, dark appliances, shiny tile floor, otherwise routine</i>	<i>35 min</i>	<i>Floor (needs extra scrubbing first time)</i>	<i>30 min</i>
			<i>Counter tops, grout needs to be cleaned with toothbrush</i>	<i>15 min</i>
			<i>Balance of room (to remove fingerprints, etc.)</i>	<i>20 min</i>

... large kitchen, nothing unusual, dark color appliances that will require some extra work on routine cleaning visits, very shiny tile floor (the shiny tile is difficult to clean because shiny surfaces tend to leave streaks).

... "EXTRA WORK" these are the kind of notes you might add for the first cleaning. You would normally clean the oven and inside the refrigerator on your first visit, which could add another 30 or more minutes to the time we're showing here. If so, this would mean an extra 95 minutes in the kitchen on your first kitchen cleaning.

- When you have gone through the entire house this way, total the estimated minutes that represent the extra work to be done at the house the first-time you clean (B on the Worksheet). Then divide the amount of time each room will take to clean in subsequent cleaning visits (A on the Worksheet).

(A) EST TOTAL TIME FOR REPEAT, ROUTINE CLEANING	205 min	(B) TOTAL TIME FOR EXTRA WORK ON 1ST TIME OR ONETIME CLEANING	320 min
1. "P" FACTOR $(A) \times PPM$		(C) TOTAL TIME ON 1ST VISIT $(A) + (B)$	525 min
2. "O" FACTOR		(D) "P" FACTOR $(C) \times PPM$	\$122.54
3. "M" FACTOR $1. + 2. \times M$		(E) "O" FACTOR	\$30.00
4. Other Fees or Surcharges* x		(F) "M" FACTOR $(D) + (E) \times M$	\$50.34
REGULAR, REPEAT CLEANING PRICE	$1 + 2 + 3 + 4.$	1ST TIME/ONETIME CLEANING PRICE $(D) + (E) + (F)$	<u>\$202.87</u>

- Calculate the total minutes required for the first cleaning visit by adding the total of (A) minutes (for example, to the total of (B) – an extra 320 minutes). Add (A) and put this total in (C). To be accurate, the total in (C) in the example we're using comes to 525 minutes.

IMPORTANT: ALWAYS ADD 30 MINUTES OF TRAVEL TIME IN THE CALCULATION FOR REPEAT CLEANING IN (A). ALWAYS BE SURE TO INCLUDE TRAVEL AS PART OF THIS CALCULATION. ACTUAL CLEANING TIME IN THIS ILLUSTRATION WOULD BE 185 MINUTES.

- You will now calculate your "P" factor in (D). To make this calculation easier, you need to convert your Payroll and Payroll Burden cost from hourly to "minutes". For example, if your total "P" factor (average hourly wage PLUS FICA, FUCA, FUTA and Workers' Comp expense) is \$14 per hour, your "PPM" number would be 23.34¢/minute. (\$14 divided by 60 minutes). Multiply (C) by 23.34 ¢. Your "P" factor here would be \$122.54
- Now, in (E) you would enter your "O" factor. Remember, this is the fixed Overhead amount that you will assess on each cleaning. We'll go ahead and use the standard \$30 in this illustration, but you may elect

to choose \$50 or \$75 to help pay for the cost of advertising to and selling this new client (as we discussed in the last chapter).

- We're now ready to add your Markup, which is also the number that we're targeting for your profit on this cleaning. Add the (D) and (E) and multiply the total by your predetermined profit percentage. You're looking for a 25% profit, so let's go ahead and mark our cost up by 33%. The number you will enter in (F) is \$50.34 in our example here.
- Remember our formula: $POM = CP$. Add up (D), (E), (F), and (G) and our price for cleaning this home is \$202.87. If you're required to collect sales tax on your price in your state, you would collect this over and above the amount of your cleaning price. (You may wish to add the amount of your profit of leaving it at \$202.87)

The Price for Regular, Repeat Cleaning

- The preceding example also allow you to determine the price for ongoing, routine home cleaning on a regularly scheduled basis. You've determined that the amount of time it will take to clean this home after a thorough cleaning will be 205 minutes, including an allocation for travel time.

(A) EST TOTAL TIME FOR REPEAT, ROUTINE CLEANING	205 min	(B) TOTAL TIME FOR EXTRA WORK ON 1ST TIME OR ONETIME CLEANING	320 min
1. "P" FACTOR $(A) \times PPM$	<u>47.85</u>	(C) TOTAL TIME ON 1ST VISIT $(A) + (B)$	525 min
2. "O" FACTOR	<u>30.00</u>	(D) "P" FACTOR	$(C) \times PPM$ \$105.00
3. "M" FACTOR $1. + 2. \times M$	<u>25.70</u>	(E) "O" FACTOR	25.00
4. Other Fees or Surcharges* x		$(D) + (E) \times M$	42.90
REGULAR, REPEAT CLEANING PRICE	$1 + 2 + 3 + 4.$ \$103.55	1ST TIME/ONETIME CLEANING PRICE $(D) + (E) + (F)$	\$172.90

- All we have to do now is enter our POM factors. We determined that your "P" factor is 23.34¢/minute. The number in "1." becomes: $205 \times 23.23¢ = \$47.85$

- Our "O" factor is \$30. Enter this in "2."
- Add the total of "1" and "2" together and multiply the total by your markup. We're using 33% as our markup to arrive at a 25% profit. Our "M" factor in this example turns out to be \$25.70.
- Item "4" provides the opportunity to add an additional charge for specific surcharges. For example, the longer time period between each routine cleaning visit, the more time and money will accumulate and the more work it will take to clean the home. You may choose to add \$20 to the price if the client schedules cleanings every two weeks instead of every week, and probably \$40 if the cleanings are only once a month.
- For this client, your regular cleaning price (between cleanings) would be \$103.55 (and you may round this up to \$104).

First-Time or Onetime Price Range

- You will occasionally pleasantly surprise people who said they only wanted a one-time clean but change their mind after they see how great the house looks when you finish the cleaning job. Since you price the repetitive cleanings separately, you have that price readily available to the customer any time you need it.
- You add the cost of hourly or biweekly service to the price for the extra work involved in the first of cleaning the house. Even if this is a one-time clean, you still need to add in the cost of weekly or biweekly service because these weekly or biweekly prices are quite straight forward and it's not difficult to estimate them.
- Your first-time clean can range from as low as what you would charge to clean a car as high as several hundred (*even a thousand*) dollars. There is no "normal" or "standard" price. It depends on how dirty the home is and what they want to have cleaned.

Because of the wide range of prices, don't try to guess prices for first-time or one-time cleans over the telephone. Tell people it "really depends on how much work there is to do." You can tell them you can give them an idea of the price for repeat cleaning, but you just can't do that for the initial cleaning visit.

People will ask what your hourly rate is. Actually, you won't have an hourly rate if you follow our recommended pricing guidelines. While the overall cost of the job could be translated into an hourly rate, that rate will vary with our pricing formula. However, you do need to calculate time involved in doing the work because you have an hourly

wage goal for your employees and Payroll Cost is part of the pricing calculation.

- If you give the customer an hourly rate, they may even ask you to return some of the money if you finish the work a bit quicker than you thought. One way to get out of telling the customer your rate is to tell the customer that "you price the work by the amount of work to be done at their home to the amount of work you do at other homes."

Pricing Repeat Cleanings

- There are a lot of variables when you price repeat cleanings. However, the range of repeat cleaning prices is usually less than what you charge for first-time jobs. This usually simplifies pricing for weekly, biweekly or monthly cleaning.
- If you do a Competitive Bid, you will need to know what other clients are being quoted for repeat cleanings. You need to know this so that you are able to respond to clients who may challenge your job. When you charge a price, remember that price is only a consideration. It may be the only question prospective clients ask. Especially if they have not hired a professional cleaning service before, they have not hired on for a long, long time.
- It is important to remember that you cannot try to be all things to all people. You cannot sell a VW to a customer with a Volkswagen budget, nor can you sell a VW to a customer who didn't know the difference between a VW and a Volkswagen. That's why the in-home consultation report provides the opportunity to explain what you can do and proudly justify the value the client will receive in return for the money they invest with your service.

Things that Tend to Increase the Price

- There are some things that tend to make the price of cleaning a house on a repeat basis go up:
 1. Large house
 2. Extra bathrooms
 3. Large kitchen
 4. Large family (*especially with young children*)
 5. Dogs, cats, and birds
 6. Older homes and homes with more than one floor

7. Full, small rooms
8. Many things in the house (*clutter*)
9. Collections of things (*like 100 porcelain frogs*)
10. Clear glass shower doors
11. Dark colored appliances in kitchen or dark bathroom fixtures
12. Dark colored carpeting
13. Carpeting on top of carpeting
14. Glass shelves and (or) glass tables
15. Stairs (*carpeted or not*)
16. Wood stairs with a carpet runner
17. Quarry tile—especially in the kitchen
18. Very shiny floor (*they tend to show scratches*)
19. Tile with grout (*kitchen counters, shower doors,*
20. Numerous throw rugs
21. More than one bed to make
22. Outdoor work such as sweeping windows, decks
23. Houses that open into a yard especially with kids
dirt
24. Buildings with dog men if you have to leave and must wait
for them to let you in
25. Customers who don't give you keys
26. Biweekly or monthly cleaning schedule

Factors that Tend to Increase the Job Offer

- Here are some things that make a cleaning job easier:

1. Working hours that are not too long
2. Larger homes
3. Cleaned kitchen and bathrooms
4. Fewer stairs than to a hallway
5. Furnishings that are easy to move
6. Sparsely furnished
7. Bedrooms where no one uses the shower or tub
8. Empty rooms or rooms not used (*especially happens with older people whose children have moved away*)
9. Shower curtains instead of shower doors
10. No beds to make
11. Small kitchens
12. Apartments in a building where you already have a customer or
next door to an existing customer.
13. Clients who pick up after themselves
14. Nonsmoking household
15. Clients who rarely use the kitchen
16. Weekly cleaning schedule

What if You Priced it Wrong?

- *What if you Priced it Wrong?* Guarantee your price for three weeks. If you were wrong, then change the weekly or biweekly price to the correct one and tell the customer that the price is now guaranteed not to change for six months or more as long as their home and its condition or contents don't change.
- You're only human and luckily so are your customers. Most will understand, especially if the quality and reliability of the first three cleaning jobs was superior. And your customers will appreciate the guarantee. Now they don't have to wonder what you will do if you raise prices willy-nilly any time you feel like it.

Beyond the Numbers

- When you first arrive for your cleaning appointment, be friendly, and smile at the customer when they answer the door. Introduce yourself quickly (*no awkward pause*) and offer the customer that what you would like to do is *give a tour through the house*. Most people are happy to do this. If you say, "Where do you want to start?", you can tell them anywhere they would like.
- Once you are in the room of the house, you have a number of things to do. You also become conversational. Notice and comment on things that catch your attention or that you like. E.g., "What a beautiful parrot! Is there anything we need to do when cleaning it or is it an okay bird?" "What a great fabric." "What a nice bedspread." "Do you require any special cleaning maintenance?"
- If you see other people you see, such as family members or neighbors, write down the names of other family members or of the house, write them down. This is good information to have. Your customer will be favorably impressed when you or your team arrives next week or so later to do the cleaning and remember the dog's name, for example.
- When a customer will give you very important information as you walk through the house together. An example is, "Cobwebs are the most important thing about cleaning to me. I just hate them." When someone says something like that, write it down and circle it! You must make very sure that this information gets passed on to the cleaners so that when they clean here, they always pay particular attention to cobwebs.
- Different things about cleaning are particularly important to different people. It may be the stove top, or the master bathroom, or even the

master bathroom shower, but whenever a customer tells you what's really important to him or her about housecleaning—write it down!

- Ask questions, clarify, and understand what you need to know to set an accurate price because when you finish going through the house, it's time to close the sale. If you need a minute or so to set the price, tell the customer. Most will offer you a seat at the dining table and tell you to take all the time you need.

2 Exceptional Cleaning Problems

1. Occasionally, you will run into a household that has more of an organizational problem than a cleaning problem. For example, the kitchen may have dirty pots, pans, and more dirty dishes on the counter tops. Children's toys might be scattered throughout the house, along with dirty clothes, pairs of shoes, and more dirty clothes in the family room and on the dining room table. This house needs to be picked up before it can be cleaned. Make sure that the customer knows the difference.

- ❖ One nice way to handle this is to mention that you can do a much better job of cleaning if the customer "clears the decks" before your team comes to do the work. Let the customer know that you and your team don't know how to put these things away and that your price includes the time they will need to get away so the team can easily reach the surfaces that need cleaning. Be prepared to discuss this again with the customer when you arrive to clean the house if he or she doesn't do it.

The customer needs to understand that because you clean "by the room," you can't do a "light housecleaning." When you do a "light housecleaning," the customer needs to have the house picked up so that you can get at the surfaces that need cleaning.

If the customer wants you to do some of the daily work of picking up and putting away dishes, etc., you should adjust their rate to reflect the extra work that needs to be done here before you can even start the regular cleaning.

2. This doesn't happen often, but occasionally you'll go see a house that is so dirty that you wouldn't want to clean it. Whether you're actually working for a team or not, that's a good test: If the house is so dirty that you wouldn't want to clean it yourself, then don't send a team to do it for the customer. Politely turn the work down. Tell them you're over-scheduled. If you know the name of a competitor who might be able to help them, offer that information.

Pricing Review

- a) Review *Pricing for Profit* again.
- b) Review this chapter again.
- c) Practice cleaning your first home.
- d) Fill out a Cleaning Worksheet for the practice home which you will be cleaning it (*Fill out a Cleaning Worksheet before the first of your practice cleanings*).
- e) Estimate the time needed to do extra work in one-time cleaning situations on very small jobs. (*i.e., cleaning a stove front --5 min., etc.*)
- f) Total the time for all the "extra work" jobs and multiply that total times your rate per minute (PPM).
- g) Add this total to the total repetitive cleaning time to establish the job price for the first-time or onetime cleaning.
- h) Using our recommended pricing formula, calculate the cost of first- or Onetime cleaning AND the cost of routine, regular cleanings thereafter.

Document relating to
Establishing the Price

Cleaning Price Worksheet

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