Who Should Train Me?

BY KENNETH CASEBIER

ike many in the HVACR industry, I started in installs with little training and even less experience. I learned the basics about equipment, tools, ductwork and how to pass an inspection on the job. I knew if I wanted to advance, I needed to formally expand on my knowledge. To be completely honest, money was my main motivator. In fact, at the time, this was my only reason for working in the HVAC field. I had yet to dive deep into the technical and fascinating work on the service side.

I decided to enroll in a two-year technician program expecting to be the “World’s Best Service Tech” once I finished…or at least a fully trained competent one. I quickly realized that, while the program was effective, it hardly was all the training I would need. I filled in the gaps in my knowledge with rules of thumb.

After several years in the field, I transitioned to a company laden with talented and knowledgeable employees. This transition was a pivotal point in my career, as it made me realize how little I really knew. The guidance at this company opened my eyes to the wide array of free resources available. One of these resources was the HVACR School Podcast hosted by Bryan Orr, which I latched onto. In following Bryan, I found there is an entire world of information made affordable and available that would enable me to advance my career the way I wanted it to go.

Along the way, I’ve met many professionals of all walks of life. The mindset of every person I met was as diverse as the United States population. There were many who believed the employer should provide all training, while others were willing to settle for only a portion and some believed it rests solely in the hands of the individual. I am hesitant to admit that I tend to lean towards the latter.

I hope some of you will follow me on this. An individual who wants to become an engineer doesn’t find an employer and demand education in order to become an engineer. Instead, it is the individual’s responsibility to obtain and fund the education needed prior to finding employment. This speaks to the old adage that you get out of something what you put into it. To rise to a desired level of prestige and pay, I feel an employee must invest in himself as much, if not more, than an employer.

Where Do I Start?

I have encountered many different mindsets within HVACR, which includes education, experience, motivation and attitude. It has been my experience that those who were intrinsically motivated and personally sought additional knowledge were those that advanced rapidly. There is little doubt that, for some, formal education or costly trainings may not always be an option. This cannot be used, however, as a permanent justification in turning the reins over to your employer and putting them in control of you reaching your full potential.

Many of the most successful people in the world today are highly motivated and driven individuals. While Bill Gates is most commonly known for founding Microsoft, his entrepreneurship hardly stops there. His ventures also include developing a self-sustained and deployable toilet that will clean the water to the level of pure drinking water. Gates, as a software giant, expanded and decided to tackle problems of civilization beyond the multibillion-dollar industry he helped develop.

The motivation Bill Gates exhibits is what propels careers into unimaginable possibilities. We are only limited by our own willingness to learn, advance, and thrive in an industry with unlimited possibilities. From installs, service, sales, ownership, instructing, designing, article writing, to even tool production/manufacturing. The possibilities are almost as endless as the U.S. tax laws.

Though I agree employers should invest in employees training in order assist in expanding the workforce, this should not be the only possibility employees consider when seeking further education. Instead, I urge those of you who are not afforded employer-sponsored training to invest in yourself. You’re worth it.

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Troubleshooting Answer

This diagnosis comes from a real-life case that was incorrectly diagnosed as a motor bearing issue.

Squealing and other loud noises from the blower motor are often immediately attributed to either visible issues with the blower wheel or the blower motor. In this case, the blower wheel is slipping on the hub, resulting in the loud noise, the low motor current and multiple symptoms of low indoor airflow.