

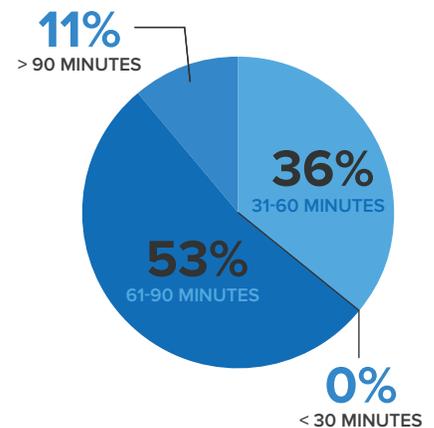


In June, EGIA surveyed its network of contractors on In-Home Sales. Below is a summary of the results.

One of the pillars of any successful contracting company is the in-home sales process. The ability to connect with the customer in their home – to quickly cultivate a relationship that can yield long-term value for both the customer and the contractor – is one of the most important skills a contractor can possess. Last month, we asked contractors all about their in-home sales processes to see what’s currently working for our members and what isn’t.

How long is your average in-home sales visit?

A number of factors go into a good sales visit, but the importance of the length of the meeting shouldn’t be overlooked. Too short, and the contractor may fail to include all valuable information. Too long, and the homeowner may lose interest and miss key details. So what’s the sweet spot? 61-90 minutes said **53%** of our respondents, the top duration ahead of 31-60 minutes (**36%**) and 90+ minutes (**11%**), while not one respondent said they average fewer than 30 minutes. The average adult attention-span is said to be anywhere from 8 seconds to 20 minutes, although of course one can choose to refocus on the same topic repeatedly. Those statistics simply underscore that, if your sales pitch is an hour to an hour-and-a-half, you need to ensure that you’re engaging and reengaging the customer throughout.



What format of presentation aid does your company use to deliver in-home sales presentations?

The digital shift continues, but the majority of our contractors still find value in traditional print materials in their presentations. **53%** favor print items like booklets and pamphlets during sales visits, while digital resources – like laptops and iPads – are used by **47%** of respondents. There are merits to both, of course – print pieces allowing the option of leaving literature with the customer, while digital can be a more interactive, comprehensive experience – but those incorporating print all by itself or alongside digital are not necessarily technophobes: A variety of data still bear out the efficacy of physical marketing collateral in increasing sales.

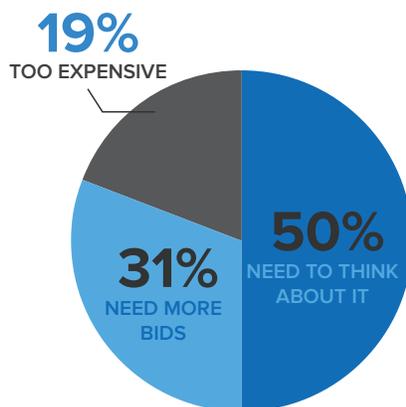
Which of the following is included in your in-home sales presentations?

Next, we wanted know which elements contractors ensure they always include in their presentation. Far and away, the most frequently occurring pieces are warranty information and financing options, always included in the sales visits of **89%** and **87%** of respondents, respectively. But the vast majority of those surveyed also include several other features, notably photos of previous work (**69%**), energy savings statistics (**69%**), technical information (**67%**) and satisfaction guarantees (**64%**). The survey data seem to illustrate that most contractors are presenting the same information – with a few exceptions like video (**24%**) and energy modeling (**3%**) – meaning, perhaps predictably, that sales success with homeowners largely lies in the relationship the contractor is able to build more than in unique bells and whistles.

“ When quoting a replacement for heating and air conditioning, we talk about energy savings, improvement of the duct system, advantages of new equipment and often there is a comparison of replacing a costly part and warranty versus installing a new unit and warranties. ”

-HVAC Contractor in Northern California

What is the most common objection you get during the in-home sales process?



Every contractor is familiar with the Big 3 Objections: “I need to think about it [or talk to my wife],” “I need at least three bids,” and “That’s too expensive.” When we asked which was the most commonly received objection, they came in in that same order, at **50%**, **31%** and **19%**, respectively. Of course, the important thing isn’t which objection you hear most often, but rather that you’re prepared to respond to any and all objections. Weldon Long, New York Times bestselling author and EGIA Contractor University faculty member, advocates the use of four simple words when cutting through homeowners’ apprehension: “Will you trust me?”

Is a limited time special incentive offered to customers to help close the sale immediately?

Offering customers a limited-time incentive in order to close a deal immediately, rather than leave with an “I’ll call you,” is often thought of as a common practice in the industry. Yet, according to our respondents, most contractors eschew that strategy. Just **45%** sweeten the deal with an incentive, against **55%** that don’t. Of those who do offer incentives, common options reported included waiving repair fees, rebates or financing specials, and discounts ranging from five to ten percent.

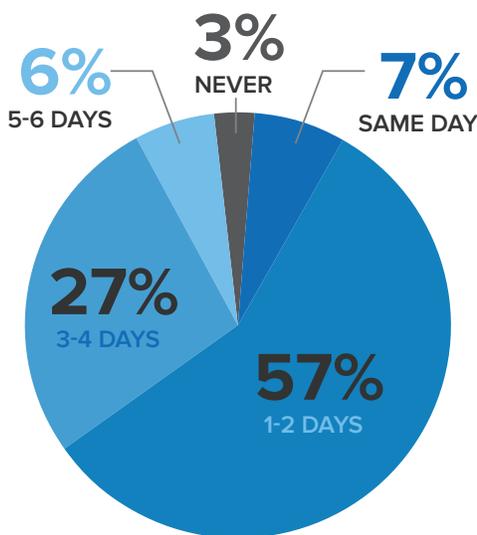


Are your salespeople instructed specifically to ask for the sale, rather than just leave a proposal, before leaving the home?

Speaking of Weldon Long, in his legendary sales training courses he cites the biggest problem in many contractors' sales visits is a fairly simple one: Most just finish by leaving a proposal or a business card with a request that the homeowner call back – they don't finish by explicitly asking for the sale. Thankfully, when we polled our members most did not have that issue. **79%** indicated that they always specifically ask for the sale, rather than letting the request be implicit – many even citing Weldon's influence in their commitment to the strategy – while **21%** don't specifically make the request. While it can't guarantee success on every single sales visit, the simple act of verbalizing the sales request can be enough to move the homeowner into the purchasing mindset and create a sense of immediacy that's enough to close the sale.

“ Build value. Build a relationship. Get the customer involved in the process. Never talk tech, always talk about the benefits. We use iPads that allow us to bring visuals into the process, which we have found to work well. Always, always ask for the order. ”

-HVAC, Electrical & Plumbing Contractor in Wyoming



On average, how long do your company or salespeople wait before following up with customers who did not agree to a sale on the spot?

Finally, on those occasions when the customer simply isn't ready to purchase the day of visit, we asked contractors how long they wait to follow-up. By a wide margin – **57%** – 1-2 days was the most common response. **27%** wait 3-4 days however and **7%** even revive the relationship later that day. There's no absolute consensus on the best amount of time to wait on a follow-up, but many experts agree that even more important than the cooling time is that a salesperson establishes with the customer a precise timeframe for the follow-up while on the initial visit. That can help cut down on missed calls and voicemails, and starts the follow-up process off on a cooperative foot.

Learn More About In-Home Sales

In-Home Sales Processes is one of the ten core areas of focus for EGIA Contractor University, which aggregates all of the tools, educational resources and training programs that contractors need to take their business to the next level. To learn more about In-Home Sales best practices and strategies, as well as the other nine core topics, visit EGIA.org/University.

You can learn more about the EGIA Snapshot Survey program at:
www.egia.org/SnapshotSurveys