

# THE SPEC SHEET

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## Maintaining Customer Focus

### I Can't Get No...Satisfaction

It's glaringly apparent that business today is less focused on customer satisfaction. More and more, growing businesses are trying to pass off their service responsibilities to the customer. Grocery stores are installing scan-and-bag-your-own groceries lanes. Infuriating credit card services send customers into a spiral of electronic phone prompts. So how does a company balance the perfect ratio of function and charm? How do they create a business that runs efficiently and still has customer service as a priority?

ISP Painting may not have all the answers, but over the last decade, they have managed to keep a highly competitive business, growing, operating smoothly and maintaining focus on their clients' needs. Their success is rooted in a simple balance of three key elements; Technology, Infrastructure and Training.

#### Technology

Technology has become the cornerstone to efficiency in all business. The trick to using technology, is that it is used to *improve* customer communications as opposed to *eliminating* them. ISP has embraced technology, and as a result, streamlined operations. In addition to using a networked computer system and web site, ([www.isppainting.com](http://www.isppainting.com)), ISP has added digital-photo/cell phones with e-mail capabilities, to each crew's tool box. The high tech phone allows ISP Crew Supervisors to photograph jobs before, during and in completion. They can then send the

photos instantly to awaiting clients, located hundreds of miles away. The phones' e-mail capabilities have become an invaluable communication tool for clients. For example, specification checklists are a crucial part of the ISP workday. The ease in which a crew is able to revise and share the list electronically with clients (sometimes several times throughout the day), eliminates costly mistakes and minimizes any blurred communication. The efficiency of communicating through photos, faxes and email, saves ISP and their clients, time and money. Photos give clients a peace-of-mind that both verbal and written checklists can't.

#### Infrastructure

As important as the technology and tools that a company uses are, the people that use them are more important. Sites need to be managed effectively and accountability maintained throughout each step of a job. By creating a multi-level management system for every project, superior quality control and efficiency can't help but be the end product. ISP projects are assigned a qualified Team Supervisor, who in turn, is in constant contact with the Project Manager. Project Managers are in charge of the crew. Realizing that 9 to 5 no longer exists in today's crazy workplace, ISP project management is available to clients 24/7. Specifications electronically

pass through the multiple levels of ISP management for each levels' approval. This ensures that the work is performed correctly the first time around. This method saves ISP a costly return to the site and once again brings reassurance of quality workmanship to the client.

#### Training

You wouldn't want your doctor to discontinue his or her training after graduating medical school and you wouldn't want your painting company to discontinue learning about industry improvements after setting up shop. ISP believes in training their staff regularly. New products are constantly emerging that solve critical issues in painting. It benefits both ISP and the client, to be first in line to learn about new methods and products. Training is also important when assembling a crew for a job. ISP specially trains a crew for a client's individual job needs and physically moves them from site to site in a multi-location project. The benefit: No retraining of crews at each location, a marked efficiency in time and excellent quality control. A win-win outcome for both ISP and the client.

The obsession with growth seems to have trampled the very thing that keeps a business alive: The Customer. Each advancement a company makes, must first evaluate the effect on the customer. Otherwise, you are neglecting the purpose of being in business at all. ISP believes in old fashioned customer service with a 21st century twist.

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An Association Representing Retail Facilities Maintenance  
Allied Member

**MBE**

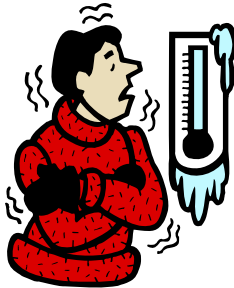
MINORITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE



# Paint & Product News

## Baby, It's Cold Outside

Assumptions are often made that paint can only be applied when weather conditions are warm. In the past, this was a safe assumption. In fact, most paints *should not* be applied when the air temperature or the surface being painted is below 50° F. But there is good news for the *not so fair weather* climates. The paint industry makes a good living selling paint in harsher climates, because of the effect the elements have on exterior painted surfaces. To better serve the Northern climates, they have formulated products that do well in low temperature application. Products that can be applied when air, surface or material temperatures may drop to as low as 35°F.



The key to success is proper surface preparation and the use of specialized low temperature latex paints.

For cold weather success we suggest these important guidelines:

1. Do not apply the low temp paint if the *air temperature* is below 35°F, or is predicted to drop below 35°F within the next 2 hours after painting. Traditional paint requires 24 hours to dry, low temp paint requires 2.
2. Do not apply the paint if the *surface temperature* is below the recommended minimum. For example; If the temperature in the night was 25°F, and you are painting aluminum siding, even though the air temperature may have risen to 35°F, the siding itself is probably still too cold.

Temperature mistakes will cut years off the lifespan of a paint job causing cracking, peeling and poor adhesion. Low temperature paint products are a breakthrough for those of us that battle Old Man Winter. If only they could make winter shorter.

## CUSTOMER NEWS- *We couldn't do it without you!*



Bath & Body Works

ISP recently finished a major project with **Consolidated Repair Services**. We removed awnings, repaired damage and painted surfaces for 389 **Bath & Body Works** locations in 43 states. All of the work was completed in a two-week time frame with only 4 days to assemble and train crews. In spite of all that pressure, ISP completed the work on time and added digital photo cell phones to our tool boxes.

New clients for ISP include **Max & Erma's Restaurants, Inc.** and **Williams-Sonoma, Inc.**

We completed our first Max & Erma's in Illinois. ISP painted the exterior for a Williams-Sonoma store and the exterior and an interior faux finish for a **Pottery Barn** in Wisconsin.

ISP would like to welcome new client **Car Toys, Inc.** based in Washington state. They have 16 locations on the West coast.

ISP recently wrapped up it's first project with **Sterling Jewelers, Inc.** in Eatontown, NJ, completing a **Kay Jewelers**.

ISP is still working hard with our repeat customers and are in the process of painting a second **Fox and Hound** restaurant in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

In the hopper for this month – **Midas Corporate Center** in Itasca, IL and **Retail Brand**



# Questions & Comments

**Q** Security is important to our company, especially in today's heightened climate. What steps does ISP take to ensure the integrity of crews sent to customer locations?

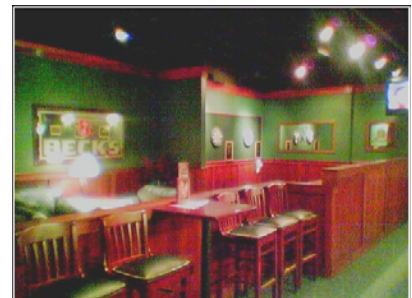
**A** Recently, ISP painted the retail facility at Andrews Air Force Base. Each crew member, working at the base, was asked to provide their social security number and drivers license for background checks, days before we were to arrive. On the day of our carefully planned arrival, our vehicles were searched as we drove on site. ISP staff felt good that the US Government took these careful security steps, because they were similar to the steps ISP takes in our own background check of crew and staff. Although we don't make it a practice to search our crew's cars, we do ask for a social security number and drivers license. We verify the information through databases that also give reports on any criminal history. We prefer that our crew members have professional and/or personal references and then we make sure to follow up on them. The honesty and integrity of our crew is paramount to the trust a customer has in ISP. We know that if they pass our check system, they will pass our clients'.

Mike Liszka –COO, ISP

Experiencing a difficult challenge? Need advice? Have an opinion or question? Please let us know.

Send us an email: [mdec@isppainting.com](mailto:mdec@isppainting.com)  
Or FAX ISP at (847) 202-8375

**Alliance**, painting a **Brooks Brothers** clothing store in Boston, MA.



Fox & Hound Interior