



## Handyman fixes 'hurry up and wait' problem

**By Joe Gagnon  
Appliance Doctor**

I wonder how many men in this country are married to Martha Stewart? I know I am, and with great pride, as I see all of the talents that Valorie possesses.

Recently she decided to renovate the lower level man's bathroom in the house and seeing as how I'm the only guy in the house, it's mine. She pulls the medicine cabinet out of the wall and wants the hole filled in with a piece of drywall, then she can't get the wall-paper off behind the toilet so she removes the toilet itself. Guess what folks, I'm getting a new toilet.

Not only that, I'm getting new toilet paper holder, towel bars, mirror, window shade and curtains and a complete new paint job. Oops - I forgot, a new door and new faucet assembly for the sink.

This all shows how thorough a school principal can be and how some of the responsibility falls on my shoulders. She can't lift the new toilet, the door or sheet of drywall and because I'm as handy as a frog on a surf board, I call in my handy-guy named Walter. He tells me he will be at our home the next morning at 8 a.m. sharp and I kind of chuckle a little. I figure that nobody in the United States shows up at 8 a.m. sharp, but the next day the door bell rings, you guessed it, 7:59 a.m. and sharp.

I asked Walter to sit down with me and have a cup of coffee. I wanted to ask him a question which was, "What is your biggest strength as a little business?" His answer shows great wisdom from a common man who wields a hammer, but so did Moses when he carried two stone tablets. He replied, "Mr. Gagnon, when you need service today, the majority of appointments made and committed to are always late, especially those small jobs like yours which so many big companies don't have time to do. There is nothing more irritating than going to a doctor's appointment set up for 4 p.m. and he or she doesn't see you until 5 p.m. There are many service providers today who simply tell you to be home all day between 9 and 6 and they don't show up at all, or not even a phone call.

"When a service provider of any sort fails to keep a promise or commitment they have automatically built in a certain amount of "mistrust" into the customer's train of thought. Even though you may still get the job, even after the abuse of a person's precious time, it is now human nature that they will be skeptical of the price you charge and the quality of your work. Make one tiny little mistake during the job and it is now a big thing in the consumers mind.

"All of this is so important to me that I've been thinking of doing something different. I would like to offer a homeowner a discount of \$50 anytime I don't show up at the time I promised. I already know that this is one of my biggest strengths in business and think of the strong bond that I would build with every consumer I do work for."

Folks, I sat at the kitchen table with Walter and listened to his conversation with great interest. I have stood in front of customer service companies giving seminars for many years and I don't believe I have ever made my point as pronounced as Walter did with me. Big business in this country could learn a lot from him and from you, if they could listen. Stay tuned.

*Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.*