

# BUILDING A **Recurring Service Business** TO SUSTAIN A **Seasonal Hearth Business**

**BY KYLE TITSWORTH**

In the COVID years, many of us in the hearth industry found ourselves overwhelmed with demand. Customers were home, focused on their living spaces, and eager to invest in their fireplaces. To meet the surge, we expanded our teams, hiring more technicians, adding service coordinators, and growing our businesses. But now that the world has returned to its usual pace, many of us are faced with a pressing question: How do we sustain that growth? Do we cut back, or do we evolve?

For years, our service model was reactive. We waited for customers to call for cleanings or repairs, braced for the inevitable winter influx, and then scrambled to manage (and often fumbled) the overwhelming demand. To encourage off-season work, we tried marketing discounted service rates in the summer, hoping

customers would book ahead. We cold-called when we had time, prayed the phone would ring, and ultimately relied on seasonal spikes to carry us through the year. It was inefficient, unpredictable, and frankly exhausting.

We knew we needed a better system. That's when we took a hard look at our business and realized a staggering truth: 30 to 50% of our service work between September and January consisted of annual cleanings, work that should have been handled months earlier. By clogging up our schedule with cleanings in the busiest time of year, we were unable to serve customers with actual problems. Not only was this hurting our ability to provide quality service, but it was costing us revenue and pushing frustrated customers to competitors who could fit them in sooner.

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Do we cut back, or do we evolve?”**



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So we developed a new approach, one that put us in control of our service schedule rather than leaving it to chance. We launched a recurring service program—a system designed to shift preventative maintenance into the off-season, free up winter availability for urgent issues, and create a steady, predictable revenue stream.

We wanted to keep our program simple so that it worked for us and was a no-brainer for customers. When customers call our service department or purchase a new product, they’re given the option to sign up for our recurring service program. Here’s the deal:

- **We schedule their annual fireplace cleaning between April and August.**
- **They receive 10% off their cleaning and any service parts or labor that may be needed in the following 365 days.**
- **They must continue scheduling preventative maintenance every year to maintain their discount.**

This structure creates a win-win. Customers get peace of mind knowing their fireplace will be serviced on time at a discount, and we gain control over our service schedule by shifting routine work out of the winter months and keeping our team busy during the summer.

In the past, we had tried traditional off-season marketing tactics, email campaigns, seasonal discounts, and “beat the winter rush” promotions. But the reality is, no matter how many times you remind them, customers don’t think about their fireplace until they need it at the same time as everyone else. By the time the first cold snap hits, they’re scrambling to get on our schedule.

With our recurring service program, we take the initiative. Instead of hoping customers call us in the summer, we call them. We organize our recurring service customers in a simple Google Sheet and track their last service date and contact attempts. Each year, we schedule them in the same month, which creates a structure for us to follow and prevents end-of-summer scrambling to call everyone.

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As participation increases, so does our ability to sustain our workforce year-round. By booking four cleanings per day, a single technician can complete 400+ cleanings each off-season and still have a lighter workload than in the winter. More summer cleanings will eventually mean more technicians on staff, which will in turn improve our winter service capacity. No more scheduling months out or losing business to faster competitors.

Implementing a recurring service model has been one of the many keys to transforming our business away from a seasonal business. In-

stead of fluctuating wildly between feast and famine, we now have a steady stream of predictable revenue. Beyond the financial benefits, our customers are happier. They get timely scheduling, discounted service, and—most importantly—a fireplace that’s always ready when they need it. Meanwhile, our team gets to operate with less stress, better planning, and a more balanced workload.

If you’re struggling with the seasonal roller-coaster of the hearth business, consider how a recurring service program could fit into your operation. Whether you’re dealing with fireplaces, grills, hot tubs, or any other product that requires maintenance, the key is the same: Move routine service into the off-season, lock in annual appointments, and create a system that benefits both you and your customers.

Simply put, sustainability in this industry isn’t just about selling more—it’s about building a business that thrives year-round. Recurring service is one of the simplest, most effective ways to do just that. And once you implement it, you’ll wonder why you didn’t do it sooner.