

# TECHNICIAN'S ADVISORY

Steven Richford  
BDMA SenTech  
BDMA HonFellow

*The Technicians' Advisory column is intended to add to a technician's existing knowledge base and offer alternative solutions to specific issues.*

*It is not intended as a definitive tutorial, nor to imply the recommendation of a particular methodology, since all situations must be assessed individually and any action taken is entirely the responsibility of the technician or organisation involved.*

## BEING PROFESSIONAL

**W**hat do you think of the medical profession – doctors and nurses? Do you have an opinion on their “professionalism”. Do you see them held in high respect in our society? What about lawyers, or accountants? What is your view of firemen or soldiers? Professional status is a fragile quality. Bankers, for example, have tumbled in public estimation as we puzzle over the economic crisis and identify who we can blame.

Professionalism isn't just about qualifications. It's about delivering services that meet people's expectations, it's about being seen to do the best possible job you can, it's about attitude and the desire to be good at what you do. So, how do you view damage management practitioners?

### TIMES ARE CHANGING

There is evidence that our industry is beginning to see new pathways opening up as the importance of our contribution is better understood. At a time when insurers are looking to keep a firm handle on claims costs, we are in a position to be recognised more and more as a service that can deliver savings through an intelligent and professional approach to restoration.

With advances in technology, and increased education, technicians now have a wide-ranging toolkit which allows us to deliver solutions that are appropriate to each individual situation. This also means we are able to more closely meet the expectations of both insurers and property owners.

Customer expectations have risen in recent years, as people have become used to improved services in many walks of life – supermarkets, restaurants, petrol stations, for example.

Increased incidences of flooding, combined with high profile media coverage, mean that flood victims have a better understanding of what they should expect, even if they have not experienced flooding before. Since much of the comment has been critical, however, customers will also need reassurance

“... advances in technology ... mean we are better able to meet the expectations of both insurers and property owners ...”

from the contractor and will want to feel restoration of their property is in the hands of professionals.

As the insurer's representative we need to be aware of their objectives. They want to satisfy their customers and retain them in the future, and this is more likely to be achieved if the customer feels they have been treated well and fairly by everyone involved. We can also contribute to more cost effective and timely claims resolution through the choices we make.

When dealing with any claim we should always have the bigger picture in mind, not only looking at the options for restoration, but relating these to the overall needs of both the insurer and the customer.

In order to reinforce the message that, as professionals, we are able to offer real value in the claims process, we should be promoting and developing our capacity to prevent secondary damage and demonstrating the benefits of the latest technology, both of which can reduce overall claims spend.

The BDMA has been delivering this message on our behalf, but we all have a part to play by ensuring we provide a competent professional service.

### CHALLENGES AHEAD

For many of us this is truly a period of transition.

We will undoubtedly be increasingly expected to deliver more advanced solutions and justify how our decisions affect overall claims costs. But new equipment costs money, and the cost benefits offered as a result of such investment will need to be reflected in realistic pricing structures.

These are the challenges we will face as the professionalism of our industry is increasingly recognised and they are challenges we will have to resolve if we are to be respected as professional practitioners in our own right.