

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

**David Heimer:** Hi, this is David Heimer. Just a quick note about this episode of Profiles In Prosperity. Typically, our podcast interviews are pretty short, 20 minutes or less. But this interview with Crystal Williams went over that. Usually, we just edit the interview until it was short enough, but this time we couldn't find anything we wanted to cut. So we split it into two episodes. This is the second of the two, Crystals is a great interviewee with lots of information. I think you'll quickly see why she was named Woman Of The Year.

**Intro:** Welcome to Profiles In Prosperity. The leading podcast for residential service contractors, sponsored by Service Roundtable, and hosted by David Heimer.

**David Heimer:** So you've talked a lot about your family that's in the business. You work with Your dad, your brother, and then you've got some other relatives also. So, what is your secret for working together and keeping good family relationships?

**Crystal Williams:** This is not going to be a popular answer, but, understanding who's the boss. So I'm not the boss. A lot of times you'll catch me calling them Irvin and Trey, and even my aunt. I'm from East Texas. So a little Redneck Country. The aunt that works here, we call her aunt Sissy. So all growing up, she was aunt Sissy to me. But here I'll call her Teresa, because I want everybody to understand here that I'm under the same pressure, if you will, to perform as our parts runner, as our installers, as our CSR, as our sales guys. I don't just get a free pass. So my first piece of advice on working with your family is, understanding who is the boss. And then making those clear understandings. Now, when I came into the business, I mean, of course, Irvin trumps Trey, but Trey is the boss. So if Trey comes in here and tells me, hey, you gotta work Saturday, I'm not going to argue back and say, no, I'm not Or if he comes to me and

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

says, hey, you didn't perform, or this, you went over budget or you need to stop and get this done. It's a yes sir, type of relationship, because at the end of the day, family or not, he still signs my paycheck.

Now, on Sunday afternoon, after church, and we're all having lunch, it's a totally different relationship. We are able to do a pretty good job of separating business and home. Every once in a while at the dinner table, we'll get into a conversation about something. But for the most part, when our wives, and children, and our mom, and sister are there, me and Trey and Irvin, we're not really going to sit there and talk about business. And so, again, it's just kind of swallowing your pride, if you will, because any of, especially some of my AVAD group, some of those ladies there, they'll know I'm pretty bossy and dominant, but, I know my place in the company. And I feel very respected and welcomed here, but I also know that I'm not the boss. So I think that's the first thing.

The second thing that I think is important about working with family, is that you have to work harder than any of your employees. One of the things I'm really proud of about Trey. If we're working a big job on Saturday, he's the first one at the job site. He's the first one there, he's unloading products, just like everybody else. Or we had a really, and everybody has dealt with this, a really bad house. I mean, it was just pretty disgusting, and the installers were like, I'm not going. Trey went and installed the system. And for me, you know, nobody wants to do some of the stuff that I ended up doing after work, before work, and on weekends. But, in reality, I have to work harder than every employee because I never want to be the employer that sucks. Well, you know, too bad, you can't find my boss. He's gone every day, or he's out of here by noon. You know, Trey, normally, is one of the first ones here and one of the last ones to leave. Same

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

thing for holidays, you know, we're going to take the holidays off, but we don't take five days at Christmas off, especially when we're blowing and going. And so that would probably be my second thing is, you have to work harder than every single employee.

The third thing is get in the trenches with them, you know. My marketing team for instance, this weekend is our parade in Nacogdoches, our Christmas parade. And you know, it takes a lot to get these parades going, and you know, you have to hook up a sound system and hook up a snow machine, and all your lighting has to be right, and you have to get in line and not run over anybody you know. You have to get somebody that's willing to dress up, this year we're Frosty the Snowman and stuff like that. Well, if my girl in Nacogdoches didn't feel like I had already been through that I think it would be hard for her. But she saw how hard I worked for less and how many hours I put in. So again, I just think that, unfortunately, when you're a family-owned business, you really have to set an example, and set the bar really high, so that people say, man, I can't say that my boss isn't working, you know, so that's a couple of things.

**David Heimer:** You are a woman in a male-dominated industry, it's just, the heating and air conditioning Industry just is. What does our industry need to make it more women-friendly? Or maybe you don't think it does. What do you think about it?

**Crystal Williams:** Well, I'll Be real honest. I think if I were a technician, an installer, even a comfort advisor, a sales person, maybe my take on this would be different. But, from my role, of where I sit, which is really the only seat I feel comfortable giving a perspective from, I've been nothing but welcomed, at everything I've been to. So I think that our industry is very welcoming of women. What I think we have to overcome, as women, this also might not be a popular answer, but, I think as women, there's another

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

time when we have to work harder to get it across to people. So again, I live in rural East Texas. I can tell you right now, if a female technician showed up at grandpa Joe's house, who's lived here 70 years and blah, blah, blah. He's going to have a hard time taking \$1,300.00 repair advice from a female technician, no matter how I sugar coat that, our customers are not quite as prepared for females, especially here where we are.

But, I think that with the right training, and if we are just progressively moving forward and we know what we're talking about, I believe, right now, there's probably plenty of women that can stand toe to toe with any male technician out there. Okay, if not better. Because I think females, sometimes they have a little bit, different grasp on things, especially when it comes to relating to customers. I think that their emotional side can be a strong, positive thing there, to really, I mean, really engage with customers. I think that we just have to work a little harder to prove our point. But eventually, it's going to become the norm when a female drives up. But as far as the industry, I mean, I think that we bring our own special sauce to the crowd here, to the party.

I meet lots of creative men all the time, tons of them, especially at the Service Roundtable. But in the end, you know, I think God designed us women to have - you know, we're the empathetic ones, tend to be. We tend to be the bleeding hearts, we tend to be more emotional and the cobblers and things like that, a lot of us. And I think that we need to work that angle. And so, you know, I came into our company and I took on employee engagement. Well, we've had a couple of tragic things happen. We've had one of our technician's fathers get tragically killed. We've had our operations manager lose a newborn baby, you know, tragic things happen. Well, that's when women can really shine too. That's when we really can take our God-given talents of being

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

empathetic to people.

And we know when to show up with food, and when to show up with flowers. And sometimes I will literally tell Trey, "hey, this is what I think you need to do." And he will do it, and then he'll come and say, "why in the world did you have me do that?" I wanted to order flowers for our new installation manager's wife, I want you to go take them to her office. He was like, "what?" You know, but I said, listen, as a female, when your husband goes to work every day and he comes home, and he doesn't want to be on call, or he's hot, or, you know, he gets a check, and now it feels like everybody makes more money than him or whatever. I need that wife to have a connection with us, so that she is his support. And she's like, oh gosh, we know we'll make it through this. It's just a, you know, it's just the summertime. But if she never meets Trey or meets me and gets one-on-one conversation, I think a lot of times that we lose that connection. And so, women are powerful assets to companies. So they should always be revered for what they bring to the situation. But if I had to say, I think that there's plenty of opportunities, lots of opportunities for women to be successful on the technical side of this industry. I think we just have to convince women that they can do it, and that they won't be overshadowed, and that they will excel at that.

**David Heimer:** You've been very successful, even at your young age. You're still a young person. What are three of your rules for business success? Or tell me about your favorite business book.

**Crystal Williams:** Well, I was thinking about that. I once read this book, and I read quite a bit and I do a lot of podcasting things. But, one of my favorite books is called The Raving Fans. Now, again, I'm a marketer, so I'm all about customer service and making

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

people feel happy, and all of that. But I read this book about creating raving fans. And I've mentioned it in a couple of presentations that I've given here with our Chamber of Commerce. But it is all about just going the extra mile on customer service. And if I had to choose something that I think truly separates our company, a lot of people will say customer service. I say the customer experience, it's an experience to do business with our company. You're going to feel like, man, that was awesome. Because from the moment you begin interacting with our company, the very moment, whether it is through a gaming app with some digital media, through a billboard campaign, through our radio jingle, I want all of it to be top-notch and performing well, where people feel like, gosh, this was an awesome experience.

Sometimes our favorite thing to hear is, who would have ever thought this from a heating and air conditioning company. I love to get that response. So, I work really hard, but it's called Raving Fans by Ken Blanchard. Irvin is the one who told me to read it. And, I'm not sure, maybe Dave Rothacker told him to read it. But it's a short read, but it just talks about this company. Anyway, it was just a unique thing. If I had to choose some particular things that really - I wish people would implement into their own businesses if they haven't. And number one is that customer experience, and the journey of a customer when they're dealing with your company. The first Wednesday of every month, we have a company meeting and I always try to do something. So one month our Sales Manager, Shana, had this idea that we wanted to literally go through the process. And so, we had chairs sitting at the front of the room, and the customer called and they talked to the CSR, and the CSR booked the call, and then the technician went out and the dispatcher. And at the end of it, we talked about, kind of like the telephone game, how some information kind of got lost in the mix. And also how many people interacted with our customers, that one bad apple could have spoiled all of

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

the goodness that had taken place. And it was just an eye-opening thing.

So making sure that you understand as a business owner, or as an office manager, or whichever role you're taking on in your company, do you truly understand the journey that every customer goes through with your company? From the phone call, to the last person that leaves their home. What exactly do they go through? And have you checked on each of those touch points? Have you actually engaged with those and gone through it to understand what it's about? And so you can create those customer relationships and build a fan club basically, brand advocates for MacWilliams and Son. I want to be a buzz in communities because I can not believe how people did this.

Another thing I think is networking. Networking is not just going out to lunch every other day or the same group. When I say networking, I work in a room. So if I'm going to a chamber event or I'm going to a fundraising event I've got business cards, I'm introducing myself and I'm asking, hey, if we can ever be of service, let me know. You know, and I'm serving, actively serving on boards. Boards like the junior achievement of Angelina County, Angelina Beautiful Clean Board, The Museum Boards, The Habitat for Humanity Board. We get on the boards so that we know what their true needs are. But also when people see how giving we are, those directors of those organizations and those chambers and things like that, they really start spreading the word, like, "gosh, I truly liked those people from MacWilliams and Son" and things like that.

But you have to network every single day, especially anytime you can break into new groups that aren't the same people you see every day. Because people do business with people they have relationships with. There's no way around that. So this is going to sound really self-promoting. When I go into these new markets, I tell my girls, "hey, you

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

go in, and you just start building relationships. In building relationships you will take business from other companies because they're stuck in their office behind a desk. Because they feel like they can't ever get away. Or they'll say, I'm too busy working." Well, while you're working, our marketing people are taking your business. Because we're building these relationships.

And then, I'm going to have to say that people need to increase how they communicate with their customers, and with their potential customers. Are your vehicles wrapped? And if you're a part of Service Nation, that's old news by now, you should know, you have got to get your vehicles wrapped, or at least attractively done, where people are noticing them. There's no reason, with all the resources we have to not be doing some type of mail-outs, or a newsletter, or something on Facebook. We love Home Service Chats. I can actually show where we have sold systems through Home Service Chats. And I keep it my responsibility to update those things, update my business profile with Home Service Chat so that they'd have good answers.

But when you want to talk about communication, people want instant answers. And I'm not saying you got to work every time, you know, all day long, 24 hours a day. But if people can access your company, then they don't mind waiting a little bit. But you know, I think a lot of times we're like, we sit back and expect customers to come to us. And those of us that are clawing for every customer, we're taking them from you, because we were just there. They can send a Google question and I'm going to get it at 11:00 at night. I don't have to answer it right then, but by 7:00 the next morning, I've answered it. You know people, I mean, they'll just send through Google chat, you know, they'll just send a message off of our Google map pack, you know, they'll say, "hey, do you guys come to Corrigan?" Well, if it's after I'm asleep, of course I don't answer it. But as soon

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

as I do see it, I answer and say, "oh yes sir, we'd love to take care of you. Let me go ahead and get you booked. What's a good phone number?" And I mean, we book lots of calls that way, but that's because our communication lines are very open, through direct mail, through texts, Facebook, through chat. Our website is responsive. You know, we've got Contact Us tabs. If you're on our website and you can't figure out how to contact us, I mean, Ray Charles could figure out how to contact us.

**David Heimer:** By the way, we did a podcast with Trevor Flanagan of Home Service Chats, and it is a great service. I mean, a lot of our members use it and say great things. But it was really interesting to talk with him and learn more about it, and why it's so powerful and what differentiates them.

**Crystal Williams:** And you know, this is a little side note, but, one of the things I'll look for when I'm in Vegas or when I go to Orlando this spring when I go to the trade shows, I want to encourage people. You need to ask other people, "hey, Home Service Chats, who is using you, that's here?" I promise you, they've seen Trevor. He saw me. So he would be able to say, "Crystal is here, go talk with Crystal." And I think a lot of us are very forthcoming with the pros and the cons of these different businesses. And what a resource, man, what a resource to be able to go up to a Chris Hunter or an Angie Snow, or any of them, and say, "hey, I saw where you're using the Podium. What do you think about Podium?" I think a lot of times people are super afraid of, you know, Service Titan. It is a huge monetary investment.

Well, my gosh, there's a room full of people at your disposal. And so if you're not taking advantage of who you're sitting next to, even finding somebody that's in your area of the United States, or maybe is similar in size to what you are. I mean, you know, if you're in

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

a Metro Market, your life is a lot different than mine. Okay. But those of us, there may be more rules, or are over the 5 million mark or under the million mark. I mean, reach out to those people because that is how we have learned about some of the best tools. We are used to your success. We've never used your success until Irvin came home from one of the shows and had one of their coolers. And I was like, "what is this? This is the coolest thing." But only because he was kind of willing to step out of his comfort zone a little bit and talk to them. And they said, well, I talked to so-and-so and they're using them. And so, just like I said earlier, when I said network, don't forget at these industry shows, people are right there man. And you should just really take advantage of that.

**David Heimer:** Yep. They are fabulous opportunities for networking at Service World Expo, and our spring event. Both great ways to learn about best practices, great ways to network with other people, great ways to meet vendors, and great ways to meet people like you.

**Crystal Williams:** Oh, thank you so much. I'll just tell you one last thing and I didn't touch on this, and I could do a whole nother conversation about this. But you know, your employee engagement, you can work really hard at networking and getting the right advertising package together. And, you're working these events, and you're, you know, doing all these things in your community. But if you haven't engaged with your employees and really built them up, and encouraged them, and made them better, then your work may be for naught. Because they're going to get out there and not perform at the level that you want them to. So my last little bit of encouragement is to dive in, and cover your team, not just with prayer, but with resources, and encouragement, and love, and comfort. And you will see a huge turnaround, because even the grumpiest old technician, when they start getting little words of affirmation, or little tokens of thanks, or

## **Episode 37 - Crystal Williams - 2018 Service World Woman of the Year (Part 2) [00:19:35]**

more resources, maybe they want to quit smoking or anything like that. And they start getting those resources from you, you will be surprised at how quickly their attitudes start shifting into a more positive effect. But, I super enjoyed this so much. I can talk to anything.

**David Heimer:** Well, thank you. This has been absolutely fabulous. And I know the people who listened to this podcast are going to get a lot out of it. So Crystal Williams, thank you so much for doing this. And I look forward to seeing you again in the future.

**Crystal Williams:** Thank you so much.

**Outro:** We're always looking for good ideas and interviews for our podcast. If you have an idea, or maybe you think you should be interviewed, just shoot an email to [profiles Prosperity@service roundtable.com](mailto:profiles Prosperity@service roundtable.com). That's [profiles Prosperity@service roundtable.com](mailto:profiles Prosperity@service roundtable.com). If you think what we're doing has any value, it would be very helpful if you would give us a great rating on iTunes. Thanks for your support. We hope to see you again soon. Bye!