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# Beyond GREAT SERVICE

The Technician's Role in  
*Proactive Business Growth*

**JIM BASTON**

*For Service Technicians, Managers & CEOs*





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## Author Biography

### Jim Baston



Jim Baston is President of BBA Consulting Group Inc., a consulting and training firm located in Ontario, Canada. Since founding BBA Consulting Group in 2001, Jim has focused his attention on helping technical service companies develop and implement strategies to reap the windfall profits that are trapped in their existing business development resources.

As a key component of his company's offering, Jim spearheaded the development of a service initiative called ***Proactive Service***<sup>®</sup> to successfully engage field service technicians more actively in business development activities. He has worked with service firms across North America to help them develop the systems and focus to create a successful program. Jim has worked with and trained more than 2,000 service technicians in a broad range of service industries. Jim has also developed and delivered a workshop specifically for Service Managers called ***Coaching the Proactive Service***<sup>®</sup> ***Team***. This program is designed to help field service managers reinforce and support the skills necessary for their technicians to be more proactive in business development activities.

Jim holds an MBA from the University of Toronto, and has lectured on marketing management and strategic planning at Seneca College in Toronto. Jim has achieved the recognition as a Certified Management Consultant (CMC) and is a member of the Canadian Association of Management Consultants and the Canadian Society for Training and Development.



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## Facts Sheet

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Beyond GREAT SERVICE</b> <b>The Technician's Role in <i>Proactive</i> Business Growth</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Baston, Jim</b>
<b>Publisher:</b>	<b>I C Publishing 2012</b> <b>905-853-1968</b> <b>29 McKenzie Drive,</b> <b>Holland Landing, ON, L9N 1H2</b>
<b>ISBN (paperback):</b>	<b>978-0-9868582-6-0</b>
<b>ISBN (e-book):</b>	<b>978-0-9868582-7-7</b>
<b>ISBN (e-reader):</b>	<b>978-0-9868582-8-4</b>
<b>Number of Pages:</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Size of book:</b>	<b>6" x 9"</b> <b>paperback, perfect binding</b>
<b>Bar Coded:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Price:</b>	<b>\$21.95 (excluding tax)</b>



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## Chapter Excerpts

### Chapter 2 – Reflection (page 8)

“In addition to providing service on his equipment, we could take time to review Joe’s key goals, and keep him up to date with the latest technologies to help him achieve those goals. If we also used our knowledge and expertise to help Joe understand the options available, we could help him reduce costs and drive up profitability, despite the downward pressure on what he can charge. This could even assist him with increasing revenues.”

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### Chapter 5 – The Technician’s Role (page 31)

“So you’re saying that we need to help our technicians realize that discussing opportunities they feel are in the customer’s interest is a service, and not a sale. In other words, you’re recommending that we not teach our service people to *sell*, but rather that we should teach them to *serve*.”

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### Chapter 10 – Defining Beyond Great Service (page 72)

“Angus stands up. Charlie is surprised and more than a little concerned. It looks to Charlie as if Angus is going to walk out of the room. If Charlie can’t get Angus on board, then the whole initiative is lost, or at least, greatly compromised. ‘Charlie, in all the time I have worked for this company, this is the first time that management has talked about business development by putting the customer first. Usually the question is: *What other services can we sell to our customers?* i.e. what can our customers do for us. What you’re asking, that is if I hear you correctly, is: *What can we do for our customers?* The results might be the same—more sales—but the motivation is quite different. I like it!’”

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## **Chapter 14 – Fine Tuning (page 99)**

“If we’re going to be successful, then we need to give the techs regular and ongoing feedback on their progress, just like Jenna’s riding coach. I realize that we can’t logically provide feedback in the real time manner that Jenna receives, but we can provide it on a regular basis and reinforce desired behavior. By doing this, not only are we helping individual techs, we are also demonstrating to the entire team that we see this as being very important.”

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## **Chapter 15 – Gaining Buy-in (page 108)**

“He begins, ‘Ms. Smith, here at Novus we realize that you are faced with increasing competition resulting in tremendous pressure on pricing and profitability. We would like to offer you a service that goes beyond simply excellent maintenance. In addition to maintaining your equipment to ensure that it runs as efficiently and cost effectively as possible, we’d like to offer proactive suggestions that will help you be more successful. To paraphrase an old concept, in a traditional service provider relationship, you hire the hands of the service firm; at Novus we also offer you our heads. Our technicians are experts in their fields and are trained to use that expertise to identify ways that you can run your facility/plant/hospital/etc. more efficiently and effectively.’”

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## **Epilogue – The Results (page 119)**

“All of this is good, but Charlie knows that the real reason for this initial success has been due to the efforts of Ken and the technicians. For some, this process has merely validated their own personal (and successful) approach to serving their customers. To others, however, what has been asked of them is a significant change in approach and with this change, a significant increase in discomfort. Charlie and Ken both know that without constant support and constructive feedback, people faced with significant change often revert back to their original habits over time. That is why most initiatives of this nature fail. It’s also why Charlie feels that a major portion of the credit for the success of their new approach is due to Ken’s great example and leadership.”

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## Testimonials

“Struggling to take that leap from vendor to trusted partner? In *Beyond GREAT SERVICE*, Jim once again provides accurate insight and a workable plan that can transform your existing customer relationships into long term partnerships and provide prospects with a unique value proposition.”

*Steve Horwood, Business Development Manager – Southwest Ontario,  
Black & McDonald Limited*

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“*Beyond GREAT SERVICE* is a must read book for anyone managing in a service-oriented business who cares about their customer, the bottom line and the future of their business. It brings to life in an imaginative way the *Proactive Service*® methodology that Jim has made a cornerstone of his interactive training experiences.

In a highly competitive market, the lessons and exercises on service differentiation illustrate how you can amaze your customers with service excellence like no other.”

*Peter Mosney, Director and Country Manager, IDEXX Canada*

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“*Beyond GREAT SERVICE* provides a sound, practical approach that will engage your field workforce in the delivery of exceptional service and communicating value.”

*Greg Sowder, Senior Vice President of Operations, Linc Service*

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“...A timely and practical book for service contractors. It is deceptive in its brevity, providing a concise roadmap to accelerating profits while at the same time, improving your customer relationships. The simple instructions are enormously powerful tools. Put this at the top of your shopping list.”

*Daryl Sharkey, Executive Director, Mechanical Service Contractors of Canada*

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## F.A.Q.s

### **What inspired you to write this book?**

I had spent several years working with service companies and watched them struggle to get their technicians more involved in business development activities, with little success. It became apparent that there were some fundamental issues which were impeding success. Unless these issues are addressed, management will always be disappointed with the outcomes, regardless of the amount of time and other resources used, or the positive intentions of management. I felt the book would be a good way to highlight those issues and to provide some specific strategies on how to deal with them.

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### **What do you want others to gain from your book?**

Ultimately, I would like readers to successfully engage in proactive business development. I personally think this is a win/win situation. The customer wins by working with companies and individuals who understand their needs and goals, and are genuinely looking for ways to help achieve them. The service company wins because this approach can generate significantly higher revenues at good margins without adding to overhead (additional sales resources). And because this approach can generate an exceptional customer experience, retention rates improve. The individual technician wins because they develop new skills that make them more valuable to their customers and to their employers.

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### **What was your creative process for this project?**

The idea had been on my mind for some time. The concepts expressed in the book are based on the work I have done with technicians all over North America, and from ideas that were generously shared by people I have had the pleasure to meet and work with across several service industries. I have written a number of articles which helped me to formalize my thoughts, so when it came to write the book, it was simply a matter of putting the ideas on paper.

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### **Why did you choose the story-telling format you used?**

I wanted to write a “how-to” book on the subject, but I struggled with what form it would take. I chose to go with a fictional account because I thought it might be more interesting for the reader and I hoped that the reader would see elements of themselves in the characters. There were also some people issues that needed to be considered, and I thought the story approach would allow me to explore those interpersonal issues more effectively than a straightforward “how-to” book.

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### **What’s next for you as an author?**

I have a few ideas that I am working on—all based on the service industry and what strategies management can take to differentiate themselves and create a sustainable competitive advantage.

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## **Publisher's Note**

Jim's attention to detail and fascinating gift of story-telling to teach a powerful and much-needed message is ingenious. It's rare to find in one person all the qualities that Jim Baston possesses; and it's obvious he knows his stuff. Although written specifically for the service industry, *Beyond GREAT SERVICE* is an excellent read for all of us who care about both the bottom line and great business relations for life. Highly professional and committed to excellence! As publisher and editor of *Beyond GREAT SERVICE*, it was an honour to be a part of bringing this work to life, and I'm sure there's much more to come from Jim Baston of BBA Consulting Group Inc., so stay tuned!

Sheri Andrunyk  
Publisher, Editor, Author, Speaker & Consultant  
I C Publishing & Insightful Communications  
I C Publishing ... Committed To Quality Content



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