

THE EDITOR'S GDS* FILE

Note: Garage Door Services (aka GDS) is "The worst garage door company in the nation," as reported in our fall 2015 cover story.

Confronting BAD BOB on the phone

What would you say if you had a chance to talk directly to a technician from Garage Door Services who was in the process of ripping off a customer and doing it in *your company's name*?

This is exactly what happened on Feb. 15 to Frank Arrigoni, the owner of Elite Garage Door Service in Charlotte, N.C. Frank had just received a phone call from a homeowner in Cary, N.C., 160 miles away, who was concerned about a technician in his garage at that very moment. The homeowner, whom we will call "John," phoned Elite Garage Door Service because the technician claimed to be from Elite.

The backstory

A little backstory is important here. Four months earlier, this homeowner had called the same Bad Bob to install a new opener on his garage door (for \$560). However, it seems that the operator attachment bracket had detached from the top section, necessitating the Feb. 15 service call. The (GDS) technician was replacing the door's two torsion springs (for \$510), and John had grown suspicious and was concerned that he was being ripped off.

So John called Elite to find out what a spring replacement should cost. Frank told him, "We get \$289 plus tax." Since Frank had had many problems with the GDS in his market, he quickly realized what was going on.

Frank immediately forwarded him our article on "The worst garage door company in the nation." Then he explained that GDS goes by hundreds of names, that they send subcontractors without any markings on their trucks, and that they're all routed from a call center in Dallas.

Frank also noted that Cary is well outside of his service area, recommending that John immediately call Overhead Door Company of Raleigh. John seemed unsure of what to do. After all, the tech was in his garage, finishing installing two springs, and John now realized that the new springs may have been unnecessary.

"What's the name of your company?"

Frank bluntly told John, "Tell him to pack up and leave, or you'll call the cops." So John went into his garage and asked the tech directly, "What's the name of your company?"

The tech told John, "Elite Garage Door Service," and he added something about his company buying out other companies in the area.

Frank spoke into John's ear, "He's lying to you. If I were you, I would tell him to just take his springs down and leave."

John replied to Frank that, sure enough, the tech's truck had no company logo or anything. Frustrated and feeling trapped, John said, "Aw, man, you can't trust anyone these days."

"You're lying."

John, who seemed reluctant to confront the technician directly, said to Frank, "Do you mind if YOU talk to him?"

Frank chuckled and said he would. "It could be funny," he added. So John gave his phone to the tech, and Frank asked him, "What company are you with?"

Tech: "Elite Garage Door Services."

Frank: "Well, guess what? My name is Frank Arrigoni, and I am the owner of Elite Garage Door Service Incorporated. You're lying. I know who you are."

The tech changed his answer and said firmly, "We're OVERHEAD DOORS."

Frank: "You're Overhead Door Company of Raleigh?"

Tech: "Yes."

Frank: "What's your phone number?"

(Silence)

Frank: "You don't even know the phone number to your own company?"

Tech: "I don't memorize numbers of my own company."

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*GDS goes by many names, such as Neighborhood Garage Door Service, Yes Garage Door Service, Fox Overhead Garage Doors, and dozens more.

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Everybody is Overhead?

Frank: “Check your phone. What’s the phone number to Overhead Door Company of Raleigh?”

Tech: “I’m trying to find it ... It is 919-336-1845.”

“Nope,” said Frank. “That’s not the phone number to Overhead Door Company of Raleigh, and you are not from Overhead Door Company of Raleigh.”

The tech answered, “Everybody in the garage door business is Overhead.”

The tech spills the beans

Frank: “Well, you just told me that you were Overhead Door Company of Raleigh.”

Tech: “Of Elite, yes. Elite. When our invoices are sent out, it says Elite on them. We’re out of Dallas, Texas.”

He didn’t realize that he had just given away the true identity of his company.

Frank, knowing GDS’s practices, said, “Your invoices say, ‘Elite Garage Door Repairs LLC’ because you’re ripping off our name. You’re not Elite Garage Door Services ... You don’t even know who you work for. I know

who you are. You’re GDS.”

Tech: “We’re Elite.”

“No, you’re not,” said Frank. “What’s the web address? What’s your website name?”

Tech: “I don’t have ... it’s through our company.” He added, “I don’t need to explain myself to somebody.”

Frank: “I think you do because you’re trying to rip this guy off.”

The conversation soon digressed into an argument about the right springs for the door and the appropriate pricing, and the tech questioned Frank’s door knowledge and experience.

Frank quickly shot back that he is IDEA accredited and one of only 51 IDEA Certified Master Technicians in the United States and Canada.

The tech finally quit talking and gave the phone back to John, the homeowner.

The homeowner steps in

John then said to the tech, “This is really fishy and weird, but I want you to take out what you did, and ...”

The tech interrupted him, “I’m not gonna do all that. I’m giving you a great price on the deal ...”

John: “Just please take it down.”

Tech: “I’m gonna charge you.”

John: “No, you’re not gonna charge us. Look, everything’s really weird. Your company is really weird. I’m not really sure if the springs you put up are any good.”

The tech interrupted John again until John’s wife spoke up: “Please take it (the springs) back out of there. There’s too much complication. Just ...”

The tech objected again, but she persisted: “I understand, but there’s too much complication. We’ve been

screwed over before. You need to take everything out and be done with this now.”

The T.O. gets on the line

The tech soon called the Dallas office. As we noted in our “Worst garage door company” story, GDS techs are required to call the office whenever a customer gets irate or when the bill will be less than \$150. GDS then gets the “T.O.” on the line, who strong-arms the customer into doing the deal.

Frank tried to intercede, urging John, “You just tell him, if he doesn’t leave, you’re going to call the cops. Simple as that. He’s trespassing. He can take down the springs, or he can just pack up and leave, period.”

Frank suddenly got cut off. But two hours later, John sent Frank an email, thanking him for his help and revealing how the story ended. The email reported that the tech “became really agitated and flustered” and eventually lowered his price to \$200. John said, “We paid \$200 to get him out of here.”

Ronnie Mosley, vice president of Overhead Door of Raleigh, went out to John’s house the next day, free of charge, to make sure that the installation was correct and safe. Mosley said that this was the second call he’d received that week from customers who had a problem with GDS.

Lessons?

What do we learn from this story? Frank Arrigoni did a lot of things right.

1. First, he distinguished himself as a credible authority in his market by being IDEA accredited and by earning the coveted IDEA Master Technician patch.
2. He knew his facts, having learned exactly how Bad Bob operates.
3. He took the time to help a customer, even when he had absolutely nothing to gain.
4. He even handled the customer’s difficult (and potentially dangerous) task of confronting the tech directly. Further, Frank never resorted to bad language but was direct, factual, and professional.
5. Not content with just being an honest, reputable company, Frank is standing up to those who are destroying the good reputation of door dealers throughout the country.

Be like Frank. ■

To respond to this story, send an email to the editor at trw@tomwadsworth.com.

