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When you call Bergquist, you get your questions answered by the people who **know** propane equipment.



Blending Tradition with Technology: The Evolving Face of Customer Service in the Propane Industry

By Trebby Catron | Butane Propane News | November 2025

The Proven Pillars of Customer Service



Trebby Catron

Customer service in the propane industry has always been about more than simply delivering fuel—it has been about building trust. In the early days, service was defined by personal relationships, like the driver who knew every family on his route, the office staff who recognized a customer's voice on the phone and the technician who showed up at all hours when the heat went out. As the industry grew, so did the expectations, with customers demanding not just reliability, but convenience, transparency and speed.

The rise of digital platforms, automated billing, and remote tank monitoring has transformed the way propane companies interact with their customers, yet the heart of the business remains the same: providing comfort and security. To stay relevant, companies must continuously adapt their approach to match changing consumer needs. Before we look ahead to what's next, it's worth looking back at how far customer service has come.

I started in this industry in 1987 as a young bobtail driver and had the good fortune to experience customer service in a very personal and meaningful manner. I had a particular older couple in Blountsville, Indiana and this was always my last stop on my delivery schedule, because I knew I would spend 30 minutes sitting at their kitchen table

eating cookies and drinking a perfectly chilled glass of milk talking about the weather or the local high school sports team. As they say, those were the good ole days. Still, there are many areas of customer service that are just as important today as back then, including:

- **Personal Relationships:** Many customers still value the familiarity of calling their local rep by name or waving to the driver who's been servicing their home for years.
- **Responsiveness:** Our ability to respond to service calls—especially in emergencies—has always been a hallmark of great service.
- **Integrity and Trust:** In a business that involves safety and energy supply, trust is everything. Consistently showing up and doing the job right earns long-term loyalty.

These aren't things we can afford to leave behind. But to stay competitive and meet rising customer expectations, we must now bring those same values into a digital age.

New Tools, Same Commitment

Modern technology is changing how customers expect to do business. Fortunately, many of these tools can actually enhance—not replace—our traditional service strengths.

Customer Portals & Mobile Apps

Today's customer wants convenience. Secure portals and mobile apps let them:

- Track deliveries in real-time
- View tank levels and usage history
- Schedule service appointments
- Pay bills online

continued on page 3

Bergquist Welcomes New Leaders and Celebrates Key Promotions to Lead the Charge in Innovation and Growth



Trevor Brewster comes on board as Director of Business Automation and AI, a new role to optimize operations and service. With 20+ years in entrepreneurship, management, customer service, tech, and finance, Brewster will deploy automation and AI to streamline workflows, cut repetitive tasks, and centralize product knowledge—freeing teams for customer-focused work. “I’m excited to join at this pivotal time,” says Brewster. “Automation and AI will simplify processes, reduce manual efforts, and enable faster, more effective customer service—empowering our team to build stronger relationships.” As CEO Lauren Clark emphasizes, Brewster’s initiatives highlight our dedication to innovative tools that meet evolving customer needs.



Natalya Zaytseva joins Bergquist as Director of Marketing to enhance customer support and brand growth in the propane sector. With over 20 years of leadership, including roles at Crystal Flash Energy, Merlin, and X-Rite Pantone—where she drove commercialization strategies for lead generation and sales—Zaytseva will advance our marketing by boosting visibility, deepening relationships, and aligning initiatives with business goals. “This is an amazing opportunity to be part of a company committed to its customers and the industry,” says Zaytseva. “I look forward to expanding Bergquist’s brand, connecting meaningfully with customers, and supporting their goals alongside our vision.” CEO Lauren Clark notes that Zaytseva’s expertise reinforces our focus on innovation and superior customer experiences.



Dean Wooldridge joins the Bergquist’s family as Inside Sales Representative, starting with propane marketer support and expanding to truck builder and bulk plant accounts. Boasting nearly 40 years in propane—from delivery driver in Indiana, to Suburban Propane branch manager in 2005, to recent warehouse manager at Paul Akers near Indianapolis—Dean’s operational insights will drive tailored solutions and partnerships. His deep industry knowledge promises immediate value to our team. Join us in warmly welcoming Dean to the Bergquist family as he contributes to our success in the propane community.



Scott Valerius is welcomed by the Bergquist IT Department in Toledo, where he will bolster security, infrastructure, and system projects. With 10+ years in IT, a Bachelor’s in Information Technology, and CompTIA Security+ certification, Scott’s skills ensure seamless, secure operations. Scott’s proactive expertise aligns seamlessly with our innovative environment. We’re excited to welcome you aboard, Scott! Your contributions are sure to make a significant impact!” notes Jay Leach, Director of IT.



Bergquist celebrates **Matt Kitchens’ promotion** to Area Sales Manager for Kentucky and Tennessee, advancing our regional growth and service excellence. A 10-year veteran who recently led compressor and pump repairs in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Kitchens brings hands-on leadership from warehouse to customer relations. He will now oversee sales, fortify partnerships, and deliver efficient propane solutions. “My warehouse start gave me full appreciation for the business,” says Kitchens. “I am proud to build partnerships and help communities with safe, reliable propane.” VP of Sales Joe Montroy adds, “Matt’s customer insight and connectivity make him ideal—benefiting KY and TN clients with his responsiveness.” Congratulations, Matt; this reflects your dedication and our talent investment.

'Just Keep Fighting, Don't Give Up'

In the September 2025 issue of *Butane Propane News*, Bergquist's Mike Vigliotti reflects on the challenges of living with an ALS diagnosis, finding purpose in advocating for research funding and leaning on the support of friends & family. Scan the QR code to read the whole article.



Mike and his wife, Kris, pose in front of a McAdams truck.

Blending Tradition with Technology

continued from page 1

This 24/7 access empowers the customer, reduces phone traffic for our teams and improves transparency.

Smart Tank Monitoring

Remote tank monitors are transforming the way we schedule deliveries. Instead of relying on the calendar or guesswork, we can monitor usage and deliver just in time, reducing run-outs and optimizing routes. This also strengthens our commitment to proactive service.

Automated Communications

Customers expect timely updates—whether it's a text reminder about an upcoming delivery or a follow-up email after a service call. Automated systems make this easy, freeing up staff while improving the customer experience.

CRM Systems for Personalized Service

Modern Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms help us keep track of service history, preferences and customer interactions. It ensures every team member—whether in the office or on the road—has the information needed to serve the customer like an old friend.

Challenges to Watch

Technology is a powerful ally, but it comes with caution:

- **Don't Lose the Human Touch:** Automation should support—not replace—real relationships. A chatbot can't replace a friendly voice during a winter outage.
- **Data Security:** As we collect more customer data, protecting that information is part of good customer service.
- **Training:** Your team needs the right training to make full use of these systems and to help customers who may not be tech-savvy.

The Path Forward: Blending the Best of Both Worlds

The future of propane customer service isn't about choosing between tradition and technology—it's about integrating both. Our long-standing values of safety, dependability and personal connection must remain the core of our business. But by embracing smart tools and digital platforms, we can deliver those values more efficiently, more proactively and with greater convenience than ever before.

Let's not forget: technology doesn't build trust—people do. But technology, when used wisely, helps us do it better. Looking forward, the next chapter of customer service in the propane industry will be defined by how well companies harness new technology. Tools like AI-driven chat support, predictive analytics and automated scheduling are no longer futuristic concepts—they're becoming standard expectations. These innovations give customers faster answers, more personalized solutions and greater peace of mind, while giving companies valuable insights to anticipate needs and prevent problems before they arise.

By embracing these advancements, propane companies can do more than keep pace with customer expectations—they can strengthen loyalty, streamline operations and unlock new opportunities for growth. At its core, technology is not replacing the human touch that has always defined the industry, it's enhancing it and allowing providers to deliver the same trusted service in smarter, more responsive ways.

Treby Catron is Area Sales Manager for Indiana and Illinois at Bergquist, Inc. He has more than 35 years of delivery, management, sales, and leadership experience with retail propane and wholesale equipment distribution organizations.

Bergquist Bulletin

FALL/WINTER 2025



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS NPGA Southeastern & International Propane Expo

Get ready to fuel up on the latest industry insights and innovations at the 2026 NPGA Southeastern & International Propane Expo, happening April 19-21 at the Music City Center in Nashville, TN. As you already know, this premier event brings together propane professionals from across the globe for networking, education, and groundbreaking solutions that drive our sector forward.

We are excited to exhibit at the event once again and look forward to **seeing you at our booth!** Stop by to explore our cutting-edge propane innovations that are redefining reliability and performance. Whether you are optimizing operations or seeking eco-friendly upgrades, our team will be on hand with **demos, expert advice, and exclusive previews tailored to your needs.**

Plan your trip today and let's connect in Music City. Register now at npgaexpo.org. We look forward to powering up together!

