



## Innovative Snowfighters Sell Performance and Expertise

Of the concerns commercial snowfighters voice about adding liquids to their winter operations toolbox, perhaps the most challenging is how to sell the property owner on liquid services and build them into their contracts.

To properly address this concern one must first understand what it is they are really 'selling.' *If you largely rely on selling the 'materials' you use, whether that's rock salt or liquids, you may not be selling to your full advantage.* However, if you take the approach that you are selling performance, utilizing highly specialized tools designed to achieve specific performance goals under certain conditions ... now you position yourself as a seasoned professional with a strategy that can give you a competitive advantage.

## Performance Advantages of Liquids for Property Owners

- Achieves safety objectives faster, optimizing traffic flow and reducing the risk of slip and fall accidents.
- Reduces salt usage resulting in less damage to:
  - Landscaping – Less bounce, less scatter, less burn
  - Entrance ways – Less tracked indoors
  - Parking lots and sidewalks – Fewer freeze/thaw cycles result in less concrete spalling
- Improves performance outcomes in varied storm conditions, and at lower temperatures.
- Reduces chlorides that can help fulfill requirements for LEED v4 certification.
- Provides additional options for achieving contract goals and minimizing costs when salt is scarce or costly.

As government moves to regulate more sustainable practices and public priorities shift, property owners seeking to minimize damage to their properties from the overuse of chlorides are beginning to reject the 'more salt is better' mentality.

## Steps to Gain Client 'Buy-In'

Detailing for your customer a comprehensive service strategy that efficiently meets their needs and employs technologies proven to deliver value-added results will demonstrate your company's ability to deliver on performance and safeguard their property. Consider these easy steps when approaching your clients about liquids:

1. Walk the property with the client to identify priority areas and concerns. This is best done when it's raining and easier to see runoff where trouble spots occur, which provides an opening to discuss how liquids can address specific concerns.
2. Assess the customer's real motivation and prioritize their needs ... even though they may stress cost, it's often not their primary concern. **Property Owners and Facility Managers** are increasingly receptive to the benefits of liquids, especially the expedited achievement of safety outcomes.
3. If cost is their concern, ask them to consider the real 'costs' and inconvenience involved with potential loss of business, increased slip and fall liability or the 'costs' of cleanup, repair and replacement of property damaged by failure to utilize Best Management Practices. Clients will see that liquid services provide added value that may 'cost' them less in the long run.
4. **Property Management Companies** can pose a greater challenge when integrating liquids as they are typically all about cost. These clients must be helped to understand that if they want you to indemnify themselves against slip and fall accidents, then you – the expert – have to reserve the right to choose the tools and timing of operations best suited to accomplishing that requirement and which also minimizes your liability.
5. In your Snow and Ice Management plan, detail the types of materials, timing of operations and outcomes they can expect using visuals to illustrate liquid results compared to those produced by conventional methods.

## Contract Tips:

Keep the following in mind when integrating liquids into different types of contract structures:

**Time and Materials:** This is the most challenging for the contractor and where the client will see the greatest variance. You will need to establish a rate and determine if it is an applied or unapplied rate. If billed in the customary way, both materials and time should decrease, enabling you to service more accounts per event.

**Per Application, Per Event:** You can usually quote liquid applications as you currently bill your services. Regional supply of certain deicers may factor in.

**Seasonal or Lump Sum:** This is the easiest contract to incorporate liquid strategies without major changes. However, provisions need to be included for seasons that fall beneath or exceed a reasonable threshold.

As the commercial service provider becomes more proficient in developing and diversifying their service options, it becomes advantageous to gravitate to per-event or seasonal contracts that allow for maximization of profit through efficiency while providing substantial benefits to property owners.

The key to selling any service is to know your customer's needs and sell on the merits of performance. To optimize performance, you have to know your goals and employ the appropriate tools at the right time to achieve them. In the end, property owners don't want to have to think about winter maintenance issues ... that's what they are paying you – the expert – to do. All they want is to trust that you can deliver when the snow flies.

## Liquid vs. Solid Application Benefits for the Contractor

| Property Type              | Motivation             | Liquids Can Perform Better | Liquids & Solids Perform Equally | Solids Can Perform Better |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zero Tolerance             | Safety                 | ✓                          |                                  |                           |
|                            | Mobility – Convenience |                            | ✓                                |                           |
| Insurance Protection       | Snow Removal Effort    | ✓                          |                                  |                           |
| Basic Concerns for Tenants | Budget                 |                            | ✓                                |                           |

### Contract Type

|                      |  |   |  |   |
|----------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Time & Materials     |  |   |  | ✓ |
| Seasonal or Lump Sum |  | ✓ |  |   |
| Per Event / Per Push |  | ✓ |  |   |

### Material Capability

|                            |  |   |   |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Speed                      |  | ✓ |   |   |
| Accuracy of Application    |  | ✓ |   |   |
| Application Rates          |  | ✓ |   |   |
| Storage                    |  |   |   | ✓ |
| Availability               |  |   | ✓ |   |
| Potential Impact on Profit |  | ✓ |   |   |

We would like to acknowledge Randy Goings of EnviroTech Services, Dale Keep of Ice and Snow Technologies, Josh Nichols of The Brickman Group and Shannon Shaw for their contributions to this piece.