



## Quality Service Associates ...THE DIFFERENCE IS SERVICE

By Jan Wilson

**"We want more-than-satisfied customers."** When asked about the characteristics of such a customer, Peter Bredlau Jr., owner of Quality Service Associates (QSA), a leading New Jersey HVAC company, doesn't hesitate.

"A satisfied customer will call up my competitors to see if he can get a better quote on a job," Bredlau says. "A more-than-satisfied customer will immediately recommend my company to others looking for the services I provide."

QSA's customers are more than satisfied because of the skill of its mechanics, their attention to detail and the firm's strong business ethics. Expanding upon the legacy left by his father, Bredlau is quickly taking his commercial HVAC firm to the next level and gaining a reputation as the go-to heating and cooling professional for commercial properties throughout New Jersey.

### A FAMILY AFFAIR

QSA was incorporated in 1983, by Peter Bredlau Sr. "It was already a thriving company at that time, and I grew

up in it, working during the summers and eventually learning the business," Bredlau Jr. says. In the beginning, the company focused strictly on service work, but the younger Bredlau quickly realized that there were other things that the firm could be doing to increase service to its customers and improve its own bottom line. "While we were repairing systems, we weren't installing them at all," he says. "When people needed to buy systems they had to go to another company, and that didn't seem right to me," he says. Soon the company added small replacement projects and tenant fit outs to its repertoire.

***"I'm a roll-up-the-sleeves kind of guy. I spend at least half of my time at our job sites."***

**Peter Bredlau, Jr., Owner  
Quality Service Associates**

The younger Bredlau assumed control of the company five years ago and is very active in business associations including The Entrepreneur's Organization and the Executive Association of New Jersey, where he is the incoming



LEFT: Peter Bredlau Jr.  
ABOVE: 70 South Orange Avenue

chairman. He is committed to maintaining a “phenomenal” culture among the 20 employees at the firm. “We are a small company with a family-like atmosphere,” he says, “so I am involved in my employees’ lives. I try to know about their ups and downs and I maintain an open door policy so that people know that they can come to me with their concerns.”

QSA’s staff includes 15 mechanics and other support personnel, and he says that maintaining a high quality workforce is always a top priority. “I look for mechanics with excellent technical skills and at least five years of experience,” he says, noting that he then takes those experienced professionals and trains them further “to QSA’s exacting standards.” He notes that QSA is one of the larger non-union HVAC companies in New Jersey and that one of the unusual features of his business is that he sends his experienced mechanics out to do routine maintenance. “Many customers don’t realize how many problems can be spotted during the routine maintenance checks,” he says. “Yet some firms send newly trained professionals out who may not catch everything.”

Bredlau adds that he is an extremely hands-on manager himself, who spends half of his time on the jobsites. “I’m a roll-up-the-sleeves kind of guy,” he says. “Clients just don’t see me at the beginning when I am estimating the job.”

## OFFICE BUILDING FOCUS

QSA specializes in providing its services to office building clients ranging anywhere from 20,000 to 200,000 SF. Its geographic range is from Trenton to Woodcliff Lakes. Bredlau says that he enjoys the prestige and high pressure associated with working in top-flight office properties. “In an office building, owners are dedicated to keeping the building up to the highest standards and satisfying their tenants,” he says. “Therefore, when something isn’t working correctly, it’s an urgent situation. These are the kind of situations to which we respond well.” QSA’s business is divided equally between maintenance and construction projects.

He says that he builds his client base the old fashioned way: “I still make cold calls; I still pound the pavement,” he says. “The key is to get in front of the property managers and to realize that it takes some time to establish relationships.” QSA maintains contracts with top property management firms including Eastman Companies, Hampshire,

Grubb & Ellis, the Hundal Group and Professional Consortium. His firm receives anywhere from 15 to 25 calls for service per day.

With his business growing 30 percent in the last year, versus 5 percent in a typical year, Bredlau also has to be careful to keep the level of business in line with the staffing. “If I have too many customers and

***“QSA’s bid was very competitive and the job was well done. Peter was always on the job. He gave it a lot of personal attention and he was great with the tenants and that was key. He always worked around their needs.”***

**Steven Lee, Retail Property Manager  
Eastman Companies**

not enough staff I can't guarantee same-day service," he says. "When I sit across from customers and sell my services, I have to be honest about the amount of business I can handle."

## DESIGN/BUILD EXPERTISE

Bredlau, who calls construction "my love and my passion," completed a major HVAC replacement project for an Eastman Companies building at **70 South Orange Avenue** in Livingston. This design/build project was a direct outgrowth of a six-year relationship with the property manager.

"We serviced their buildings, and they gave me the opportunity to work on a tenant fit-out," says Bredlau. "From there, we created a good relationship where they realized that I

***"QSA does a seamless job. They maintain a good balance between us as the landlord and they also understand that the tenant is also an important part of the equation. They bend over backwards for our building."***

**Miguel Inacio, Property Manager  
Hampshire Companies**

The biggest challenge of any design/build project however, is collaboration between client and contractor. "You have to look at the client's budget and his needs," Bredlau says. "Some clients want more than they really need, and some clients think that they can get everything that they need at half of what it should logically cost.

I have to understand what their real budget is and pull everything together."

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## THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Bredlau notes that his business is on the "path to further growth" and says that he will have 25 to 30 mechanics working for him within the next five years. His vision includes creating



Peter Bredlau Jr.

could bring in larger projects on time and within budget."

Working with Trane Company, QSA did the project in two phases, with the first completed in August 2006 and the second finished in December 2007. The building now has over 200 tons of QSA's HVAC equipment. "There were four 50 ton HVAC rooftop units and over 80 VAV (variable air volume) boxes that needed to be replaced," says Bredlau. "One of the most important features of the upgrade is that

the property manager is now able to log on to the systems' control system from a remote location."

Also complicating these kinds of projects are the fact that they need to be completed when the building is typically not occupied. "We start working on a Friday night and everything has to be fully operational by Monday," Bredlau says.

***"QSA pays great attention to detail and that ultimately made the project succeed. They are a customer-centered, customer-oriented group and that really came through on this job. They didn't know what they were wading into but they made it work."***

**Al Metzger, Sales Engineer  
Trane Company**

a construction department, with project managers to manage his increasing design/build business. With 500 to 600 current clients, he notes that his business is in the mid-sized range, and likely to remain that way in the current economic climate, because a solid portion of his business is maintenance.

The reason that his clients remain with him, Bredlau says, is that his mechanics get the job done right the first time, which means that during times when everyone else is scrambling with service calls—dur-

ing a heat wave or a cold snap for instance—he can often be found right at his desk. "When you call an HVAC professional and you catch him at his desk on the first really warm day of the summer, rather than dispatching his mechanics to places where his equipment is breaking down, you know he is doing something right." ■