

COMMERCIAL WATER LOSS:

“It’s the same thing as residential...”

except when it’s totally different!”

There are two schools of thought when it comes to commercial water loss. There are those that seek to simplify them, making them no more than just a residential loss, but bigger. Others will strike fear into the residential restorer, telling stories of woe and danger that make the restorer run away in fright. As with most dichotomies, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.



At its core, a commercial water loss can be viewed as just another water loss, with some unique

differences and hurdles that must be acknowledged and overcome. Yes, the science of drying remains the same, but some of the structural materials may be different than in a normal home. Yes, the source of the payment for the services is either coming from the property owner or their insurance carrier, **but the path to getting the funds moving is far different.** And yes, your obligations to your client are the same, but their needs will, undoubtedly, be different and more demanding than most homeowners.

There are some areas of the project that will be drastically different, however, and in many cases are not things that you are used to encountering in your normal course of operations. Things like the volume or types of equipment and labor needed, the financial burden that you will have to bear, and the need for developed relationships with resource providers can throw a monkey wrench into even the most seasoned residential restorer’s dreams of commercial success.

The biggest single concern that I hear from every residential restorer is that the “learning curve” to get into commercial water restoration is too risky and too expensive. Nearly every commercial guy got his start through “on-the-job” training; basically, he got a job, did it poorly, learned from his mistakes, and then moved on to the next one. The ones still at it were able to learn enough “right things” before they ran out of patience - or money!



Is it possible to shorten the learning curve and open the door to more participation in this market segment? My simple answer is “YES!” I entered this industry ten years ago, after a 25 year Wall Street career. Admittedly, I am a businessperson, not a restorer. I have spent my time in the restoration industry teaching and coaching owners on the business and financial aspects of their businesses. In these past ten years, I have been heartened to notice a trend developing that is a great sign for all of us. In today’s market, there is a ton of project and field training available. Anyone, from any walk of life, can enter our marketplace and quickly be trained on *how* to provide residential mitigation services and a water or fire loss. Look at the proliferation of restoration companies in your area- it seems like everyone with a van has the words “Water, Fire, Mold” emblazoned across the side. Every one of you has been to a WRT class, and the trend is even greater today for continued expertise. “Master Technicians” are becoming more and more common, and that is always a good thing.

What has been lacking for a long time, but is just starting to take hold, is the ability for owners to become more educated in the **business** aspect of their business. There have only been a handful of trainers for this education process. At The CREST Network, I preach that we are not restorers; rather, we are businessmen and women that do restoration. If you think of yourself as a businessman first, then you will prioritize the parts of your business that need attention. **Education geared to the owner is a necessity, especially when you are trying to enter the commercial market.**



For commercial restoration, **education** is the antidote for “trial and error.” Only recently has there been a trend toward education in this area. There are several “large loss” classes popping up around the country, and each one offers a fresh and unique perspective. If you attend a class, you can get an understanding of what this market segment has in store for you. Be prepared, however, to be intimidated. Many of the speakers, unfortunately, like to use these sessions as a “brag book” on their largest jobs. Interesting as these anecdotes may be, they provide little value to the prospective restorer. Others want to scare you with war stories of the big, bad loss. Those are realities, and bad things can happen to anyone, but just telling the tale without any education or advice will not keep it from happening again. We all need to hear real, tangible advice and tips to help us navigate the waters.

At The CREST Network, you will be hearing something completely different. You will hear about an opportunity to learn- *truly learn*- from those who have done it, are doing it, and want to share their knowledge with you so that you can do it as well. **This training and coaching covers every aspect of the commercial water loss- marketing for it, signing it up, executing it, and billing and getting paid for it.** You will know what equipment you will need to own, what relationships you will need to develop, and what financial and logistical hurdles you may need to overcome to be successful. The entire focus of CREST is on **educating** you. Whether you want to do millions of dollars of commercial work, or simply want to make sure that you are doing the right thing on those three or four commercial jobs you currently get, CREST is there for you to explore.

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