



JUST & ONLY ARE FOUR-LETTER WORDS

JUST A TRIM

BY DANVERS CHILD, CJF

In the course of any given week, how many times do you find yourself saying, “It’s just a trim,” or “I’ve only got trims to do”??

Sure, you know that the trim is the foundation for everything we do, and you’d never intentionally diminish it or undervalue it. In fact, if you were putting together a list of the most important elements of farriery, it’s likely that it would be at the top of your list.

So, when we say it’s “just a trim,” to another farrier, it doesn’t do any real damage or harm. Other farriers know what we mean. They know that we’re making reference to the time that’s involved, the fact that we have little overhead involved, that we know we’re not going to get a callback for a lost shoe, or whatever.

But when we say the same thing to a client or to horse owners in general, they

hear something entirely different. What they hear is “it’s just a trim” because it’s simple, it’s mindless, and it’s not of any great value. Basically, they hear us saying that the trim is nothing of great importance.

Subsequently, every time we say “it’s just a trim,” we’re de-valuing, diminishing, and downgrading one of the most important elements of our daily work and one of the foundational elements of our entire profession. Ultimately, we’re sending a message that’s just the opposite of what we would be saying if we were carefully choosing our words.

But we don’t stop there. We often further diminish the importance of the trim by pricing it low. We start figuring it as a daily business item instead of a foundational element, which traps us into thinking in terms of inventory involved and time for the task. In the process, we

start taking ourselves for granted, and we fail to factor in the skill, knowledge, and talent that we’re selling.

As a result, every time we do a cheap trim, we devalue the foundational element of what we do. We cheapen the fact that the trim requires a knowledge base that we’ve spent years building, and we cheapen the fact that it’s the basic unit of our business and our profession.

So... we’ve failed to market the trim. We’ve undervalued it by speaking of it in a diminutive manner, and we’ve further undervalued it by selling it cheap. And what happens as a result of our marketing failure?

Our individual practices suffer; we lose money by not helping the client see the value of the trim and by selling those trims cheap. But it’s more than our in-



dividual practices that lose out. We, as individuals and as a professional group, begin to lose a portion of our business.

Basically, our devaluing of the trim provides an open door for other individuals and groups to come in and market the trim as a vital and valuable concern. Within this growing group of “trimmers,” you find a few knowledgeable, experienced hoofcare professionals. More often, you find an impassioned, self-taught or weekend educated zealot.

While the average “trimmer” may not have a knowledge base comparable to the professional farrier’s, they take a passionate approach concerning the value of what they do. While they may sell more than a modicum of junk science and misinformation, they avidly and fervently work to market it and sell it.

Ultimately, we’ve undervalued and devalued the trim to the point that we have created an opportunity for a group of folks to come into our market, to build a major marketing campaign, and to rival for ownership of the trim.

Article & Photos copyright Danvers Child, CJF