



# Communication Cascade

**CONTENT:** Technicians Connecting with Engineers!

In May, a team of folks concentrating on driving product quality improvements and increased consumer loyalty began a pilot through the Whirlpool Techline. The idea... Provide an avenue for our authorized service technicians to contact engineers with product issues being seen in the field.

Using the same dial-in number (1-800-253-2870), technicians now receive an additional VRU option (#5) allowing the caller to provide feedback to our Whirlpool engineers by product category (Laundry, Cooking, Refrigeration, and Cleaning). The message tells the caller that their 'voice' is extremely important, and that we'd like to receive feedback on any concerns or questions. Whether regarding serviceability, installation, design/feature recommendations, or consumer use and care questions... the engineers want to hear anything the technicians are willing to share.

The pilot began as word-of-mouth through the field service organization, and already the team has been able to identify a measurable benefit. One such story began with a phone call from a technician with Jackson Home Appliance named Steve. Steve left a voicemail message for the cooking engineer stating he'd seen 2 ranges in the last 2 weeks with the same issue. It was Whirlpool Range Model RF262LXST0, and he informed the engineer that our *bulkhead connectors for the cooktop weren't being installed into place... leaving the installation guy with*

*nowhere to plug the cooktop in. Steve just thought that we should be made aware.*

Well, Steve's call got the ball rolling. The phone message was forwarded to the Cooking Product Team to inquire whether or not this was something that should be evaluated. The team, of course, began asking questions...

- How could these ranges pass our functional test?
- Is it likely a loose, or not fully seated issue?
- Do we get units in the repair bay for this?
- Any ideas on how to prevent?

One of the engineers also followed up directly with Steve, and together everyone learned that the two harness connector blocks that snap/lock into the heat shield were not properly seated together when they left the factory, and therefore were falling apart during transit. All involved agreed... this was not something that would have easily been seen on the assembly line once the rear cover was installed. So, the fix was simple... make the wiring inspector aware of the problem (as he is the one that sees this area of the range prior to the cover assembly) to watch for any loose harness block connections or connections not fully seated.

Just think... if this issue had not been identified:

- the number of phone calls to the CXC
- the number of follow-up service visits needed to properly install and provide use to a newly purchased range
- the number of customer impressions around our product quality
- the possible dissatisfaction with the overall purchase and ownership experience by our customer

The technicians in the field must be talking, as the pilot program received notoriety through the July issue of Appliance Service News. Under 'Agitate & Spin', Mike Staats (alias, Captain Toolhead) wrote an article about the program and encouraged technicians to take advantage of it. He stated, "Many major appliance technicians have been wanting to constructively bend the ear of a product engineer for a long time. Here's your chance."