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## Letter from the Executive

*By Tom Wessner*

Hello Friends,

Not only is the end of the summer fast approaching, but the second half of the year is well underway. Before you know it, we'll be geared up for Black Friday and then Christmas is just around the corner.

I hope this season has been a successful one for you. With tax credits as an incentive, selling higher-end systems should have been easier than ever. If not, give us a call here at ACCA-WPA. There's tons of training materials available from ACCA and our preferred partners.

That's why ACCA-WPA is here – to make sure you get the most from your ACCA membership and your business. If there's anything we can do to serve you better, just let us know.

Tom Wessner  
ACCA-WPA President

## Marketing

### The Power of the Word "Free"

*By Adams Hudson*

Truths don't change. There's one I love, but gets misconstrued: "You must give to get." It works in business, friendships, marriage, child-raising, and was the core mantra of a peaceful teacher 2,000 years ago.

Giveaways work. Free stuff works. The *most powerful* marketing word that exists is "free." I wish I could come up with a better one, but it hasn't been invented yet. That's why I love *the intelligent use* of this word.

But it also maddens me too. That's because giveaways are everywhere, continually overused, over-said, and in one huge way, very overrated. The giveaway has become the circus barker's byword of "too good to be true," thus the occasional "gimmicky" description. The result is that legions of potential customers respond first with, "what's the catch?" When used *unwisely*, the word "free" repels as many – or more – than it attracts.

**When to use it:** In Direct Response ads (one of the five basic message 'types' of ads you definitely should use) free is the gateway to response. It lowers the barrier to leads, and gains acceptance, causing those seeking a risk-free way to gain your service offering to be magically drawn to the phone. But only when used as a way to *offer something of value and validity that supports the core offer*.

In other words, when testing air quality, installing UV filtration, or working on humidity solutions, offer a free "safe air" filter (with your logo on it of course) or something related to the quality of their air. This supports and increases the value of your already highly-prized service and pulls it closer to irresistible. This is critical. Why?

The entire reason you run Direct Response ads is to create a flood of leads, based on the irresistibility of the offer. "Free" things add to that attraction. When you insert a limitation or a deadline, you drive home the "sense of urgency" which means the lead count rises even faster in an effort to "beat" the limitation.

So use "free", but use it wisely. If you do, you'll gain more results, better customer relations, and more bang for your marketing dollar. All because you were willing to "give to get".

*Adams Hudson is ACCA's National Marketing Partner, winner of the Dan Kennedy National Sales Letter Contest, and author of Contractor Marketing Secrets. He is also available to speak at local and Chapter events.*

### Testimonials Turn Your Claims Into Sales

You can tell your prospects all day long how great you are, but it sure goes a lot farther when *someone else* backs up your view of yourself. That's where testimonials come into the picture.

Plus, there is a strong implication that testimonials from real people are 'true and unbiased' whereas a salesperson's claims are often perceived as neither. Remember that if you make a statement about your service or superiority, it's a *claim*. If a customer who has used you says the same thing, it becomes a *fact*. So, if you've got a happy customer, put it in writing, and you've got a testimonial.

#### Where Do Testimonials Come From?

The problem with testimonials is that many people *say* they'll give them, but never find the time. They got busy. They meant to. They would, but it's just that... oh, phooey. Don't worry. There are easy ways you can help them *find* the time. In fact, *you'll do it for them*. To help get this praise into print, stick to a few ground rules:

- **Ask.** When you know someone is pleased with your service, ask for a testimonial. And get it right away. Don't wait until they've forgotten your name and what you did for them.
- **Get permission.** You will need to get permission from your customer to use his testimonial in any way, shape or form. Remember, this must be signed permission on specific wording of the testimonial.
- **Be specific.** "You're great!" may be something you love to hear, but in a testimonial, it's not nearly as effective as, "I was a little skeptical about your energy savings claim, but after I got my first utility bill, my jaw dropped. We saved \$61.88 over the previous month! And we expect to get savings all year long. Thanks for your commitment, courtesy and quality."
- **Make it a habit.** While it's possible a testimonial will magically appear in your mailbox, it's not likely. You have to be proactive about getting them, and the best way to be proactive is to make it a habit. Make it a part of your routine. Establish a system that includes this as a 'check off' item at the end of a service or installation, such as "Testimonial Form completed?" to help the technician remember.
- **Make it easy.** Create a page of testimonials that your customers can check-off. They can change them, write anew, or simply check as is! And offer your customer incentives for their strong testimonials – maybe a discount on the service being provided or future discounts.

#### What to Do With All the Testimonials?

A great place is one or more pages in your Sales Presentation Binder to help prospects see that others may have shared similar concerns, lived in a similar house, or same neighborhood. Your closing ratio will increase using testimonials. Pages of testimonials are very powerful motivators. A strong assemblage of testimonials will undoubtedly increase the credibility you deserve while settling unspoken fears, and increase your sales as a result. Use them and profit.

### "I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?"

Want to get ACCA manuals and training materials on the go? That's why ACCA has announced that it will be releasing its technical manuals and standards in electronic format for e-readers. These manuals can be purchased and read on a computer, an iPad, an iPhone, a Kindle, an Android phone, or a BlackBerry.

Information on ACCA's e-books, including purchase and software information, is available online at [www.acca.org/ebooks](http://www.acca.org/ebooks).

ACCA hopes to release all of its core manuals in e-reader format by the first quarter of 2011.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

#### SmartWords

"Make your product easier to buy than your competition or you will find your customers buying from them not you."

Mark Cuban

#### Techno Tidbit

Did you know that a company called Thermo King developed an HVAC system for buses that's located in the roof rather than in the rear of the bus? They designed the new system to replace rear HVAC units while maintaining size and price restrictions. See more at <http://company.ingersollrand.com/news/pages/NewsStory.aspx?ID=442>.

## ACCA Benefit Highlight

### Member Orientation

Get the most out of your membership in ACCA by participating in one of our monthly orientation webinars. ACCA membership director Kimya Bailey Cajchun will explain how to access and use all of the many services and benefits that are available exclusively for ACCA members. The orientation is conducted as a live webinar and conference call, allowing you to ask any questions you like and learn how to put the power of ACCA to work for your company's bottom line.

ACCA Orientation is held the second Tuesday of each month at 4 p.m. Eastern and is open to members only. You must register in advance at [www.acca.org/orientation/](http://www.acca.org/orientation/). After you register, we will send you the access information for the orientation.

## The Art of Management

### Motivate Your Employees Without Spending A Dime

You may think that it takes expensive bonus plans or compensation packages to motivate your employees. But while those things make nice additions to a paycheck, they're not necessarily the best way to get the most from your employees. In the same way your customers are triggered to buy from you for emotional reasons, your employees are triggered to greater performance based on the desires for:

- **Activity.** No one likes to spend the day twiddling their thumbs. Having enough work makes an employee feel productive and important – and thus, motivated.
- **Ownership.** When an employee has a share in the results of your company's efforts, a pride of ownership develops. It's part of the team mentality that says, "Hey, I helped do that!", and it leads to greater job satisfaction and performance.
- **Competence.** Believe it or not, your employees want to know that they're doing their job correctly – and being the best at what they do is a strong motivator for success.
- **Achievement.** No one says, "Hey, aren't you glad we missed the sales numbers this week?" Employees are motivated by knowing what they're aiming for and having the tools to get there – even if it's a challenge.
- **Recognition.** Giving credit where credit is due goes a long way toward happy, loyal employees. And once they've earned your praise, they'll be looking for ways to repeat the success – for them and for you.

## Rule Breaking 101

### ***"Selling with the tax credits is complicated."***

**FALSE:** Like any other sale, it's all about how you present it. Green is a hot topic, so focus on reduced carbon output, the return on investment customers receive, and energy savings. The tax credits are set to expire in December, so this is your last chance to snag these higher-end sales before they're gone for good.

## News Flash

### The Latest from ACCA National

#### Contracting Week

October 5-10, 2010  
Fort Worth, Texas

The events of "Contracting Week 2010" will be held at the Sheraton Fort Worth in Fort Worth, Texas from October 5 - October 10, 2010. You can register or get more information by visiting [www.contractingweek.com](http://www.contractingweek.com), or by calling 703-824-8856.

- Kicking off the week on October 5 and 6 is the Green Contracting Summit. Green contracting is a mindset approach being driven by policy and cultural shifts that cannot be ignored.
- The 7th Annual Commercial Contracting Roundtable will be held October 7 and 8. This intensive program features a whole new lineup of 12 seminars led by leading contractors and experts offering insights into leadership, operations, and service innovation.
- Also held October 7 and 8, the 3rd Annual National HVACR Service Managers Forum, which has a new series of networking events and seminars focused on management skills, team development, and lead generation.
- Closing off the week on October 9 and 10 is the brand-new Refrigeration Contracting Roundtable. This forum will feature discussions and expert presentations on a number of topics.