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Letter from the Executive

By Tom Wessner,

Hello Friends,

It's hard to believe that another year is drawing to a close. It seems like as soon as I get used to writing 2011, it's time to start all over again. Hopefully this year has been as productive for you as it has been for us here at ACCA-WPA

We've been working hard this year to give you the tools you need to be successful. And that's even more important as the industry continues to face new and unforeseen economic challenges.

Hopefully you're ready for the challenges – and opportunities – the new year represents. If not, let us know what we can do to help. Training, technical, legal, and marketing expertise are yours for the asking. Hope to hear from you soon, even if it's just to say hello.

Tom Wessner
ACCA-WPA
President

Marketing

Price Yourself For Profit

By Adams Hudson

Some of you probably feel that your customers won't appreciate or understand a price increase. If so, please know that the only cure for this self-imposed guilt trip is to realize it is NOT illegal or immoral to distinguish yourself from your competition in ways other than what color truck you drive.

Hey, all of you buy similar equipment for similar prices from similar sources. Don't bore me – or your customers – with why “your” brand is superior right now. Your customers don't care... yet.

All that customers care about is getting their problem solved. “Fix me!” is their collective cry. If you THINK your customers will say, “Fix me at the cheapest price possible or else,” then you have my permission to let them go “or-elsewhere” for a kid with two left hands, a rusty pair of channel-locks and a job ticket written on a fast-food napkin.

Distinguish yourself by a higher degree of value and benefit. Faster service, more service, longer service, better guarantees, etc. There are 3 ways and only 3 ways to do this: More convenience, higher value, lower risk. Do all of these and you're beyond the crowd... and deserving of more dollars as a result.

Price your jobs for profit. Your ideal retail replacement margins should be 50-55% gross. You know what your industry is charging, and now you need to ask yourself if you're worth it.

Think of it this way. Your attorney charges \$200 an hour. Your accountant is at \$125. How many fires have they spotted? How many water-ruined homes? How many CO poisonings? Not many I'd guess.

If you've done any of these things, you've shown integrity, respect, and caring. If that's not worth more than your current paycheck, I don't know what is.

Don't keep your prices low simply to “fit in” with the competition. Your mission is to give a value to your customers. That's all that matters.

Adams Hudson is ACCA's National Marketing Partner. You can request his free marketing ezine and free marketing reports by emailing FreeACCAstuff@hudsonink.com.

Know What You're Selling

What are you really selling? Before you answer, let's talk about what you're *not* selling. You're not selling air conditioning and heating.

Can you imagine coming across a customer in a Southern state who asks, "Why would I need air conditioning?" Can you imagine any customer in a Northern state asking, "Why would I need a heating unit in my home?"

Though climate control was once only for the wealthy, air conditioning and heating are now seen as necessities in almost all U.S. households and businesses.

Do you think that because you're selling a "necessity" your job should be easy? Do you think that since air conditioning and heating needs are here to stay, your business is too? The simple answer is: only if you know what you're selling.

Since HVAC units have become a requirement for nearly every building, the consumer does not just demand a unit. They demand:

1. Trustworthy service from a reliable dealer (*46% cite as their primary purchasing reason.*)
2. Features *that translate into* benefits to them (*23%*)
3. Excellent quality, brand-name products (*15%*)
4. Price (*11%*)
5. Other (*5%*)

You should be encouraged reading that list – especially notice that "price" was #4 on the list. Yes, that's the little number that all weak salespeople claim is the reason that "all my customers are buying from so-and-so..."

The point is, maybe "so-and-so" explains his products better, sounds more credible, gives better guarantees AND has a price that translates into higher value.

If you don't believe me (or my half brain), then I'd be willing to bet that your company is in for some rocky times. If you *do* believe this, then you must do one or more of the following:

- Change your marketing to target more customers who are less price-resistant.
- Increase your *product benefits* to increase your competitive advantage.
- Learn how to clearly communicate your superiority in value-oriented terms to the customer.

Do all three and you win – and win big. No competition can withstand this "triple threat" except for the weak-kneed response to lower prices. Believe me, customers do want to save money, but they don't want cheap. Sell them value – not cheapness – and they'll buy.

"I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?"

ACCA has announced the launch of a new Radiant & Hydronics Council (RHC) to provide specific services to this vital segment of the HVACR industry.

The constantly changing indoor environment sector requires contractors of all kinds to master a wide variety of technologies; including air, hydronic, solar, geothermal, and many other alternative energy services.

For more information, contact Kimya Bailey Cajchun at radiant@acca.org or 703-824-8845.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

SmartWords

"I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody."

Bill Cosby

Product Spotlight

Manual S – Residential Equipment Selection

Manual S shows you how to select and size heating and cooling equipment for any job.

List Price: \$57.69

Member Price: \$40.39

Members Save \$17!

Product Code: 36

Get your copy of Manual S at www.acca.org/store.

ACCA Benefit Highlight

Online Groups

ACCA's Online Groups offer a robust, custom system that allows members of various groups to communicate with each other through online messaging, including the uploading and downloading of files and documents. For each group you belong to, you can choose whether or not to receive email notifications, and how often (per message, daily digest, or weekly digest). Our Networks are open to all members to join, allowing for free exchange of ideas and answers. Our Private Groups allow for committees, chapters, MIX Groups and other closed groups to communicate confidentially. You can see which groups you have access to at My ACCA.

The Art of Management

It's A "Quality User" Kind Of Thing

You'll be hearing that phrase more in the future. It is an emerging trend in business that begs us to identify the brightest, most influential, quality conscious of our market groups. For you, it would be those customers who you feel are representative of a forward thinker, or an astute businessperson, or clearly a rational member of a large group of customers.

Build excellent relationships with them... ask for their ideas... even ask them to critique you, your company, your approach, on how things could move swifter or better. Very small cash incentives or inexpensive gifts (such as movie passes, meals, or a free Clean and Check) are usually enough to lubricate the flow of ideas such as...

What do you feel "quality" is? Some may say "product," some may say "service" some may say "reliability." This elusive subject of quality is perceived differently by all different types of consumers, and if you're pushing "service" on "product oriented" buyers, you're missing the boat. And most likely many sales.

The perception of quality is EXACTLY what the customer perceives it is. Nothing more, nothing less. The average customer will be right about quality because he is the end user of quality. Whether you use brass, nylon or zinc fittings may not be as important to him as whether the outdoor unit is attractive or not.

Ask your customers what they think quality is, and you can get an entirely new definition of how you can sell quality. Ask. Sell. Ask. Sell.

Rule Breaking 101

"Being rejected by a prospect means you're a poor salesperson."

FALSE: Accept the fact that you will get "no" for an answer. Don't take it personally. Even the best salespeople don't have a 100% closing ratio so let it go. Remember, every "no" brings you closer to a "yes" – but you'll never get there if you give up.

News Flash

The Latest from ACCA National

**NATE/gas furnace
Refresher Class & Testing
Rockville, MD
December 10, 2011**

NATE (North American Technician Excellence) is the leading certification program for technicians in HVAC industry.

The Core Exam covers safety, tools, soft skills, principles of heat transfer, total comfort, and electrical. An HVAC technician must pass the Core Exam and at least one of the Specialty Exams to become a Certified Technician.

There are five separate Specialty Exams – air conditioning, air distribution, gas heating, heat pumps, and oil heating. There are two types: installation and service (service technicians are automatically certified as installation technicians, as well).

The Core Exam consists of 50 questions and each Specialty Exam consists of 100 questions. Test timing for the Core Exam and one Specialty Exam is a maximum of 4 hours.

For more information or to have a registration form faxed to you call 301-384-ACCA.