

## Letter from the Executive

By Tom Wessner,

Hello Friends,

Well, 2010 is officially well underway, and that means that your business plan should be in place and on schedule.

As you know, there's no such thing as being too far ahead, so staying on track now puts you in position to have one of your best years ever.

On the other hand, the only people who benefit from a lack of planning and goal setting on your part are your competitors. And no one can afford that in today's economy.

Your membership with ACCA is part of what sets you apart from your competition, and so here at ACCA-WPA we hope you're taking advantage of the benefits you're entitled to. And, as always, let us know how we can help!

Tom Wessner  
ACCA-WPA President

## Marketing

### What's Loyalty Got To Do With It?

By Adams Hudson

You already know that the new construction meltdown, if it hasn't already, is going to cause contractors from that sector to flood the service market. That means that if you're not doing something to stop them, your customers are up for grabs. And with families to take care of and dim prospects for possibly the next year, these guys have a lot of motivation to give prospects what they're looking for.

So where does that leave you? Well, you've got to instill a sense of loyalty in your customers that ties them to you with unbreakable bonds of relationship. And here's how...

1. **Be on your best behavior early in the relationship.** Think about it. When you were dating, weren't you far more inclined to excuse a bad night if you'd already had a couple of good dates with the person? Customers are the same way. If they've already had a positive interaction with your company, they're far more likely to forgive a misstep later in the relationship. In fact, research shows that they'll allow *eight* missteps...but it all starts with putting your best foot forward.
2. **Remind them why they chose you in the first place.** That means reinforcing your value with above and beyond service. If you're at their home to fix their system and see that they could use a new filter, do it while you're there. If you're replacing wire and notice a blown bulb, replace it, free of charge. Sometimes it's the small things that make the most impact.
3. **Show your appreciation.** You're not just getting profits from your customers, you're getting their trust – and that deserves appreciation. Show them that you value your relationship by sending them your newsletter, offering customer only discounts, and periodically sending small gifts to your best customers.

It's easy to keep a relationship with a customer if you're standing out from the competition, But if you're not, you've got no one to blame for lost loyalty but yourself.

*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.*

## Simple Sales Strategies

### Get The Most Out of Your Home Show Exhibit

Home Show expenses must be considered marketing costs. In my view – all marketing “costs” should be termed “investments”. Marketing is to get leads, leads are for sales, and sales are... if I have to tell you this, you’re not really in business. So...

Think of your display as an advertisement. The most important part? A “headline” that immediately *grabs and benefits* the home show attendee. I underline that because the money-loser displays are almost always self-impressed shrines to their creators. The “I, we, me, us, our” mentality that dooms advertising does the same to your home show display. Focus on your strongest immediate benefit to the attendee.

What about handouts? Do you give lots of things with your name on it in hopes that these people will develop a need? Or do you reserve freebies for more likely prospects? Check this out:

- **Rule 1:** Forget the high dollar glossy stuff. Make your handout easily copyable (especially if you need at the show). Two color handouts on standard paper are just as effective as expensive, 4-color die-cut pieces. How? Only one way...
- **Rule 2:** Make it interesting and beneficial. Drab copy about how you’ve been around for 75 years or pictures of your latest acquisition are big time yawners. Just tell people what they get, how they get it, and why any of this matters. That’s interesting because it’s about them.
- **Rule 3:** Increase its “shelf-life” and value by calling a handout a “Special Report” (or other) with a provocative subtitle like, “The Truth Behind Buying ‘Too Much’ Equipment” or “7 Ways to Outsell Your Competition, Starting Tomorrow”. Customers want and expect information that helps them. Weave your sales message into this report and you’ll look far more like an “expert advisor” than a “salesperson”.

#### The Most Valuable Part of a Home Show

If you don’t get contact information from prospects, you may as well stay home and watch cartoons. Getting a business card that entitles them to a discount, more info, a free survey, whatever is absolutely the most important thing you can gain.

Ask how they prefer to communicate – “Would you prefer I call your cell, email, or the main number here?”

*The next most valuable part is using that information.* An alarming 81% of vendors have little or no systematic follow up. That’s why it is imperative that you break that sub-standard performance!

Send them the literature, call them, put them on your e-zine list but stay in touch with them or you can rightfully consider your efforts wasted.

**Summary:** Home Shows are exciting, fun, and can be extremely profitable. But you must do it right. Since most don’t, that makes your good efforts even more rewarding! Have fun.

## “I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?”

Ever need a supplier for your company’s HVACR product or service needs, but you’re just not sure who to trust?

You’re not the only one. That’s why ACCA created the first **HVAC Industry Marketplace**, a listing of the industry’s premier partners for your business needs. Now you know where to turn without spending hours of time and frustration looking for the right fit.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

### SmartWords

“Winners are losers who got up and gave it one more try.”

*Dennis DeYoung*

## Techno Tidbit

In response to European deadlines, Delphi is working with automakers to reduce the Global Warming Potential of vehicles. Using the refrigerant R-1234yf, the global warming potential is four as opposed to 1,430 when the coolant R-134a is used. Learn more at: <http://www.greencarcongress.com/2009/09/delphi-r1234yf-20090911.html>.

## ACCA Benefit Highlight

### ***Websites Done Right with Market Hardware***

You need the same credibility on-line that you have in the real world, and that means you need a professionally designed website. But few – if any – contractors have the time, energy, and expertise required to design and operate a site – and still do contracting. That's why ACCA partnered with Market Hardware, a web design firm that specializes in lead-generating websites.

ACCA members will receive a special "Members Only" discount, plus free monthly website reports. Visit [www.acca.org](http://www.acca.org) or [www.markethardware.com](http://www.markethardware.com) for more information on a website that works.

## The Art of Management

### **6 Rules For Management Success**

Imagine a business without management. Employees come and go as they please. Customers may or may not be serviced in a timely, efficient manner. Records are virtually nonexistent. No rules, no structure. A business without management *isn't* a business – it's a disaster. Here are a few things to help you manage your business with finesse:

1. **Don't be a know it all.** Hire people with the expertise and let them run their departments. Too much of your strong-armed suggestions on matters out of your expertise can cause failure.
2. **Give or share importance.** The number 1 *failure* of managers is "ego driven, self-centered directive". Promote team strength, not your importance.
3. **Live within your means.** Keep decent office space and an overhead that works. Cut needless expenses. Look at Yellow Page ads, overnight postage, long distance, and expense allowances. Use the money you save on growing the business.
4. **Stop the politics.** If you've got closed-door politicking whispers at the water cooler, or backbiting between departments, you've got trouble. Set an example of teamwork and cooperation, and your employees will follow.
5. **Admit your mistakes.** Since I presume you're human, it's okay to goof. It's more okay to admit it. If you hide mistakes, why wouldn't employees?
6. **Stay connected.** Many owners and managers look forward to the day when they can sit back, detached. Don't be tempted. Even if you've earned the right to pull back, have weekly phone-ins, mini-meetings, or regular on-site appearances.

## Rule Breaking 101

**"The best way to increase response in the Yellow Pages is with a bigger, more colorful ad, in more sections."**

**FALSE:** The ad's "message" (how it is written and laid out) regularly trumps size. The point is to get the *lowest cost per lead with a sane budget*. That budget should be in the 24-31% range of your total marketing allowance, less if you can get away with it.

## News Flash

The Latest from  
ACCA National

**42<sup>nd</sup> ACCA Conference and  
Indoor Expo  
March 7-9, 2010  
Tampa, FL**

The ACCA Conference is the leading educational event designed specifically for the best HVACR contractors in America. Each year, ACCA's Conference examines the "re-imagining" of the industry as we constantly shift our focus to meet the ever-changing needs of the contractor marketplace. For 2010, the ACCA Conference features:

- Over 30 Learning Labs, 75-minute workshops on a wide variety of topics selected through national surveys of thousands of contractors.
- Thought-provoking keynotes from top business thinkers, including Lowell Catlett and Dewitt Jones.
- The CEO/Contractor Forum, where CEOs from the leading HVACR manufacturers appear before the ACCA audience, and take questions from contractors.
- New: A special pre-conference "Open Floor Consulting Session" where you can ask any question you like of the top marketing consultants in the HVACR industry.

And of course, held in conjunction with the ACCA Conference is the Indoor Air Expo, the nation's leading marketplace for HVACR decision makers. Learn more at [www.acca.org](http://www.acca.org).

