

Letter from the Executive

By Tom Wessner,

Hello Friends,

Hopefully your 2011 has gotten off to a good start. Here at ACCA-WPA, we've hit the ground running and are looking forward to a spectacular year helping ACCA members just like you!

Your ACCA membership gives you everything from social events to technical workshops, with a little of everything in between – MIX groups, ComfortU, advice from the experts, and your ACCAdemics.

Be sure to check out www.acca.org for a full list of all the benefits you receive as an ACCA member. And if there's anything else we can do for you, please let us know – that's what we're here for!

Tom Wessner
ACCA-WPA President

Marketing

Creating the Buzz Effect

By Adams Hudson

Publicity is the most powerful form of marketing communication your company can possibly have. In fact, anytime you get publicity, simply multiply the space or time where you're featured by 3, then calculate what an ad of that size would cost. That is the sheer „cost' approach, but it often bears no relation to the true value. Why do you need publicity? Here are real-world reasons that everyone should understand.

- **Publicity makes people believe more in YOUR business.** It's really simple. If the media writes an article about you or your contracting business, it sends a message. This company must be special somehow, or the media wouldn't bother writing about them. While we often witness the media being slammed in opinion polls, during dinner and when we get together for drinks, EVERY poll or test I've heard about that measures the believability factor of an article (editorial) against advertising has one result: People believe articles (editorial) and news broadcasts far more than they ever believe in advertising.
- **Publicity separates you from your competitor.** Again, there are hundreds of contractors in your area. So who's the best? Who knows? But what a potential customer does know is that the media wanted you for the interview and not your competitor down the street. Suddenly, YOU'RE the one that stands out.
- **Publicity makes you an expert.** There are a variety of ways to become an expert. One way is just to say, "I'm an expert." But who cares if no one KNOWS that you're an expert. There's a better way that doesn't smack of puffing out your chest. Get the media to quote you in a story about water heaters or appear in a television segment about how to reduce heating costs and suddenly you're an expert. I like the word "anoint" because that is what the media is doing to your reputation.
- **Publicity puts you on the short list of your customer's buying decision.** Remember I mentioned earlier that if you make no effort with publicity, there's a strong chance that potential customers will NOT have an opinion about your business because they won't even know you exist? You need publicity so that when a customer is in a buying mood, they think of your company because they've seen or heard about it in the media. If you get on enough short lists of potential customers, you WILL close some of those deals. And make more money.

Adams Hudson is ACCA's National Marketing Partner. Be sure to check out his seminar "Web Marketing Avalanche" at the 2011 ACCA Expo in San Antonio. You can request his free marketing ezine and free marketing reports by emailing FreeACCAstuff@hudsonink.com.

Simple Sales Strategies

Sales Meets Marketing

Marketing is a method by which sales opportunities are created. Marketing can bring you the leads, but if you can't close „em, what's the point?

For the best salespeople, their skills are *not* natural. They're trained – and train others – to sense when a buyer is in suspended disbelief (a good state by the way) or when they're eager for you to get to the price. They're trained to recognize when they've pushed internal „buy' buttons, and need to bring out the proposal *that second*. The transition to the proposal should look as natural as breathing. Yet it's ordered, intentional, and studied.

You can't get this good by “winging it.” Training is the only way. It helps improve our marketing to homeowners and it'll help you close more sales, at higher prices. Here's how:

- Share **your marketing promotions** with the entire staff at a weekly meeting. A simple plan is better than no plan.
- During the meeting, all must know **where the ads are running**. **Make sure to “offer” details and deadlines** (if you don't use deadlines or limits, you're losing *lots* of leads). Nothing is worse than a customer service representative (CSR) getting a call from an excited homeowner grasping a hot letter and responding, “I don't have a clue what you're referring to.” Buzz kill.
- All techs, salespeople, and CSRs **must know your intended upsell for each offer**. For an IAQ inspection that's included with any service, or the maintenance agreement package included with an equipment upgrade. The logic is that if they enter the home with *no* upsell then they'll either leave with either a standard or no sale. If given an upsell, they get one more level to raise average transaction size.
- Whether these sales close or not, you must **follow up**. Your CSRs and eager salespeople *will follow up* with a planned script to make sure needs are met, more information given, and referrals requested. The credibility gained by doing this – sale or no sale – guarantees your differentiation and future calls.
- **Extra Sales Bump:** The last sales follow-up comes back to marketing. This is where you send the “unclosed prospect letter” to all fitting the description –average sales rate from sending it is 4%.

See, it's an intentional system. Whatever you're offering this season, marketing and sales must work like a team. When they're unified, the effect compounds to maximize leads, closing ratios, transaction sizes, and referral rates.

“I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?”

Needs simplified, practical procedures for calculating both heat loss and heat gain for residential structures using unitary a/c equipment? Lots of contractors do, which is why ACCA has Manual J 8th Edition training available next month March 15-17, 2011.

Who should attend:

Contractors, design and utility personnel, wholesalers, energy commission officials, licensing and code officials.

For more information email: Kelly.McMillan@acca.org

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

SmartWords

“The art of leadership is saying no, not yes. It is very easy to say yes.”

Tony Blair

Techno Tidbit

Did you know that a company, Iillumra, has solar-powered, wireless door/window sensors that can cut energy waste by 20-60%? The sensors disable blowers or adjust temperature points when windows or doors are left open. Onboard energy storage even lets the sensor operate for days at a time in total darkness. Check it out at www.illumra.com.

ACCA Benefit Highlight

New ComforTool on Updated 25c tax Credits

The newest addition to this series of flyers, "High Efficiency + Tax Credits = Savings" explains the changes that were made to the 25c tax credits with the passage of the tax extender bill. "The changes to the 25c tax credits sparked a lot of questions from ACCA members and requests for information that they could share with their customers," says Paul T. Stalknecht, ACCA President & CEO. "This ComforTool meets those needs and will continue to be a valuable resource for contractors throughout 2011 when explaining these changes to customers."

ACCA members can download the ComforTool at www.acca.org/comfortools.

The Art of Management

Cut Conflict with Internal Customer Service

One extremely important – yet perhaps one of the least pleasant – aspects of management is conflict resolution among employees.

To some degree or another, some level of conflict will probably arise between two or more employees at some point in time. And in the event of any major conflicts, management's help in resolving the issue will almost definitely be needed. However, Internal Customer Services can resolve the majority of conflicts before they escalate and begin to affect your business as a whole.

Internal Customer Service is the manner in which co-workers interact. Once you have realized that this is an important part of your company, you must also come to terms that it is inherently difficult to give exceptional customer service to any external customer if there is conflict, unhappiness, or lack of respect within the workplace.

A few tips for a healthier, happier, more productive workplace:

- Make sure each employee knows your company's mission.
- Each employee must realize that Internal Customer Service is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace.
- Realize and respect each other's differences.
- Respect each employee's personal space.

Internal Customer Service is a valuable concept to keep in mind. Everyone benefits from exceptional customer service through reduced conflict, increased respect, and a greater degree of overall happiness.

Rule Breaking 101

"You shouldn't be on your company's mailing list."

FALSE: You should mail letters to your salespeople and technicians at the same time. Two things happen: 1) You find out when your letters are delivered AND if there are any areas that receive them late, 2) Your employees who may have missed or forgotten about the mailed offer get a reminder.

News Flash

The Latest from ACCA National

Commercial Design for Quality Installation

Arlington, VA

February 1-3, 2011

If your company needs simplified procedures for calculating both heat loss and heat gain for small commercial structures using unitary a/c equipment, this Manual N training is for you.

With a focus on ACCA's Manual N5AE this training helps contractors develop an understanding of how to calculate the various components of a facility's heating and cooling load using computer based software.

While emphasis is placed on identification and calculation of peak load conditions, discussion is also directed toward the structure's needs under part-load conditions. Much of the information covered is based on the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals.

Prerequisites:

Students will be expected to understand the basics of Microsoft® Windows.

To learn more, email:
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