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## Letter from the Executive

*By Tom Wessner*

Hello Friends,

Can you believe that the year is half over? Here at ACCA-WPA we've been going, going, going all year – I'm starting to feel like the Energizer<sup>®</sup> bunny!

Luckily that busyness translates into progress for ACCA-WPA and for ACCA as a whole. There are several new member benefits and preferred partners to make all our jobs a little easier – and your ACCA membership more valuable! (Be sure to check all of them out at [www.acca.org](http://www.acca.org).)

We hope you're making positive headway in your own company, too. As we know in our industry, the heat brings welcome business. Make sure you make the most of every call this season – and let us know how we can help!

Tom Wessner  
ACCA-WPA President

## Marketing

### Closing More Sales

*By Adams Hudson*

It's so close you can touch it. Your customer is about to sign on the dotted line for a big-ticket purchase that gets you your commission.

This is, naturally, the point anyone even in the periphery of sales wants to reach: the customer buys the product. But focusing on this moment is not the way to get there. Don't be so concerned about the end that you forget the middle, and don't get in such a hurry for the middle that you forget the beginning.

So let's back up a few minutes. Back up an hour, maybe, to your knock on the door. Before your customer sees your face, remember your purpose. You are not focused on what you want to achieve but on what your customer wants to achieve. From there...

- **Be likeable.** As you know, people buy from people they like, and one way to be likeable is to show an interest in the other person. Pay attention to your customer, ask questions, figure out what concerns he has, look for ways to reassure him and find a solution to his problem. Now, wouldn't you like a person like that?
- **Be enthusiastic.** Your customer is going to like your solution once you demonstrate how it solves his problem. So don't hesitate to be upbeat about what you've got to tell.
- **Communicate clear benefits** – You can talk all you want to about systems, efficiency, prices, financing, maintenance and your superiority. If the customer can't fit this into his "What's in it for me?" mentality, you may as well just go home. Close on benefits and solutions that make sense to the customer.
- **Watch for buying signs.** Your customer is giving you signals all along the way. Be sensitive to what his hesitations, questions, concerns, and piqued interest are telling you. Are there obstacles to overcome? A trial close can answer that question.

Above all, remember, the end of the sale is the beginning of a relationship. And that's the path to more closed sales.

*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

### How to Market When Temps Heat Up

There are two times that you should always market your business: when you're busy, and when you're slow. The slow times seem obvious. You're in need of incoming calls and scheduled appointments, so you send out direct response offers to your customers and prospects, or run ads in the newspaper and radio to generate activity. But when you think about it, the busy times should be just as obvious. The best time to go fishing is when the fish are biting, right?

Right. The time to gain market share is when your market is busy and buying. For example, how successful do you think ads for tax preparation services are in, say, July? But run them in April – when these accountants are as busy as they can possibly be – and they scoop up more clients during the height of their most active days, generating a level of work that can carry them through the months to come.

They don't have to make the tax preparation ads Direct Response to generate calls. No special offers needed at all. They've just got to get a name, phone number and presence into the market. And that's pretty much the same situation you're in when your busy season hits.

So, the weather is warming, and now you've got a community of folks who are getting a little warm in their own homes. Their HVAC systems are not operating efficiently, and they need help – anything from a tune-up to a new system itself.

They're going to need this, most likely, when you're already very busy. And because the warmer days mean more people are uncomfortable, that also means more people are entering the market.

What should you do? Grab your fishing pole and head for the pond! The weather has placed people in the market for you, and they are looking for:

1. Names they trust. (A company they already use or were referred to.)
2. Names they know. (A company that has a strong "top of mind awareness".)
3. People they *don't know* but want to trust.

You can help them see you in this list with a marketing approach that builds image, builds awareness and gets your name in their minds. And you can do that through All-Purpose ads, Image ads and TOMA ads – all great vehicles for getting your name in the market when people are in the market choosing among your competitors.

The goal of busy times is to be successful enough that you can cover yourself during the slow times. So, remember, every opportunity that comes your way on a very busy day is also the way you are going to recover from the slow day that's just a few months down the road. The tax preparers know this well. They reach into the market and scoop up everything they can, as quickly as they can. So listen to the lessons from the folks who know the numbers and get busy while there is business to get.

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

ACCA has launched a new website for the industry featuring contractor profiles, industry news, and business intelligence. [www.ContractorExcellence.com](http://www.ContractorExcellence.com) includes specialty articles from *Contractor Excellence*, as well as a steady stream of online-only features designed to help contractors get new ideas and stay fully informed about the dynamic contracting industry. Not just about a magazine, [www.ContractorExcellence.com](http://www.ContractorExcellence.com) is built for the web, allowing conversation throughout the entire site, so contractors can discuss and debate the issues.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

### SmartWords

"Take the attitude of a student, never be too big to ask questions, never know too much to learn something new."

Og Mandino

### Techno Tidbit

Did you know that Lennox has developed a heating and cooling system that uses solar power? The SunSource Home Energy System reduces the power used by residential air conditioners and heat pumps, and can also "operate other devices in the home that consume electricity... when the heating and cooling system is not running." Check it out at [www.earthtechling.com/2010/01/new-lennox-hvac-home-system-uses-solar-power/](http://www.earthtechling.com/2010/01/new-lennox-hvac-home-system-uses-solar-power/).

## ACCA Benefit Highlight

### Guide to Technician Compensation & Overtime

Federal rules on compensation and overtime can be notoriously tricky, especially in an industry like contracting, where a number of different compensation scenarios may be in place. So ACCA released a new e-book, "The Official Contractor's Guide to Technician Compensation & Overtime," for its members and it is available at no charge. The e-book covers the basics of federal law and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employee classification (hourly vs. salary), overtime calculation, record-keeping requirements, and answers to frequently asked questions. "The Official Contractor's Guide to Technician Compensation & Overtime" is a benefit of ACCA membership and may be downloaded at [www.acca.org/guides/](http://www.acca.org/guides/).

## The Art of Management

### Sales and Personal Qualities

Let's say you have an average technician with great people skills, and an excellent technician with poor people skills. You'll have a much easier time trying to improve the technical abilities of the former than the relational abilities of the latter. That's because the ability to relate well to others is the foundation of effective selling. Who will be the sales stars on your in-home tech team? While you take a look at the potential for their selling skills, consider their personal attributes as well.

- **Do they have good judgment?** It comes in common sense, a level of maturity, an ability to make decisions, a willingness to step out on a limb if needed. Basically, they know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em. And by playing their cards right, they'll up-sell their way to better profits.
- **Do they exercise tact?** Do they consider how their words and actions will affect other people? If they disagree with a customer, can they explain their own position without becoming offensive or argumentative? Are they willing to let the customer "be right" – even when they know so much better?
- **Do they have a good attitude?** Are they friendly, helpful, optimistic? Are they willing to pitch in? Or do they mumble and complain (bad sign – especially if it's in front of customers!)?

People tend to buy from people they like, and remember, likeable people usually have good judgment, tact and a good attitude. And when you find those people on your tech team, you find gold.

## Rule Breaking 101

***"When business is good, there's no need to advertise."***

**FALSE:** If many people are in the market shopping for goods and services, *that seems like a pretty darn good time to be advertising.* In super busy times, you can use advertising to generate sales for only **the most profitable jobs**, allowing the weather to bring you the volume jobs. It's nice to be selective.

## News Flash

### The Latest from ACCA National

**20 Steps to Successful  
Leadership  
June 17, 2010  
2pm Eastern**

This program covers the essential tasks required for success in team leadership. Becoming a team leader, manager, supervisor or coach requires specific skills, methods and tasks. This presentation will not only assist experienced managers, but also provide a checklist of key skills required to be the best leader possible for those recently entering a management position.

**About the Presenter:** Frank Besednjak is president and CEO of The Training Source, Inc. training and consulting company. With over twenty-five years experience and a proven track record of managing local, national and international field service operations for Sony, RCA and General Electric, Frank provides unique ideas and perspectives on becoming successful in customer service and contracting. He has consulted with organizations as large as Sears Home Services along with assisting small, one to five employee contracting businesses in improving performance.

You can learn more about this *ComfortU* seminar at [www.acca.org](http://www.acca.org).

