

Letter from the Executive

By Tom Wessner

Hello Friends,

Well, June is here and with it, half of 2011 has already sped by. Seems like just yesterday we were getting ready for the holidays, and now it's already time for summer vacation.

As temps continue to climb, hopefully your business will heat up as well. Remember though, that there is a difference between being busy, and being profitable. You've got to position your prices and your image if you want to achieve your maximum sales success this season.

And we're here to help you do just that. If there's anything you need, just let us know. Your success is our success!

Tom Wessner
ACCA-WPA Presidnet

Have a Wonderful
Summer.

Marketing

Create Off-Peak Income in Peak Season

By Adams Hudson

Maintenance agreements are a great source of income for the off-peak season. They get your techs into your customers' homes twice a year for a pre-season tune-up, which brings in income for the service itself as well as any upgrades – a programmable thermostat, anyone?

But your best chance to sign customers up is going to be during the very busy times. After all, that's when they'll be calling you for their heating emergencies, and that's the entry point into their homes before the maintenance agreement is established.

When you're in a rush, it's human nature to say, "I can't do that right now. I've got all the business I can take care of as it is." But think of it this way: what you do on the busiest day of the year can have an impact on whether you're taking a call on the slowest day of the year.

The process works like this: you're called into the home for service or a repair. The first thing you do is address exactly what the customer has called you out to do.

Just as you complete the job, and before you shove an invoice in their general direction, you show the customer...

1. What you did (either on the invoice or maintenance agreement form)
2. What you found
3. What this service can help prevent
4. How they can be better at preventive maintenance (filtration, etc.)
5. The price for today's service

Next – after they agree and understand the value – you utter the following question which will change your conversion rate dramatically: "Would you mind if I showed you a way to save \$10 in 10 seconds?"

You will almost certainly get a "yes" (or they didn't hear the question!) At this point, you begin discussing your maintenance agreement.

The message you're trying to convey is that you're not trying to *sell* them anything; you're trying to give them a discount. That's something you can believe in, and soon your customer will too.

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

Quit Trying To Get Your Customers to Upgrade Their Equipment

By Drew Cameron

That's right, you read that correctly. It's not a typo, but rather a mandate. We all learn Sir Isaac Newton's Third Law, The Law of Motion, at some point early in our lives. To paraphrase: *For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.*

When you try to convince someone of something you are exerting a certain amount of force to prove your point, no matter how gentle your demeanor may be. The force you exert will be met with resistance and/or apprehension from your customer and yield low or no sales.

To reverse this disastrous effect, stop telling your customers they should replace their equipment and start asking them a series of questions that lead them to determine for themselves that it might make sense to consider replacing their equipment at this time.

Most salespeople that attempt to sell something feel compelled to tell potential customers everything they know about their products and services and why they should buy. Customers tend to have their guard up when dealing with anyone trying to sell them anything and doubt a fair percentage of what salespeople say. The larger the expense, the more guarded the customer.

As I say in training and coaching sessions: *Seek first to listen and hear before seeking to be heard, and seek first to understand before seeking to be understood.* This holds true on **ALL** service, maintenance, and sales calls.

Simply put, you need to change your mindset and goal on the sales call if you want to rise to a higher level of success, especially when opportunities are few or in lean times. When you seek the truth about what the customer really wants, you will find that the customer is more open and honest with you since you are more open and honest with them. This will cause your sales and referrals to flourish.

Inquire about what the customer likes and dislikes about their current system; if they could improve something what would it be; are they happy with the comfort level; is the system noisy; are they satisfied with the energy bills; and many other questions along these lines that help you better understand how your customer interfaces with their system and how they like to live their lives in their home. The answers you gain are exactly what the customer wants to have and is willing to buy if it makes sense.

Drew is a renowned and much sought after speaker, trainer, coach, and consultant for HVAC, Indoor Air Quality, Plumbing, Electrical, Fuel Oil Service and Delivery and other Home Services contractors, usually booked out for months in advance. You can reach him at drew@hvacsellutions.com or visit his website, www.hvacsellutions.com.

"I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?"

Did you know that ACCA has released its first iPad app? The ACCA DuctWheel is a new mobile version of ACCA's popular Duct Sizing Slide Rule. Using the DuctWheel app instead of the standard duct slide rule, contractors and designers can lock the wheel in place, zoom in for easier reading, flip between two wheels for calculations, or take a screenshot of the wheel in position. You can learn more about the new DuctWheel iPad app at www.acca.org/mobile.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

SmartWords

"As a small businessperson, you have no greater leverage than the truth."

John Greenleaf Whittier

Product Spotlight

HVAC Marketing is not easy. How much to spend? How do you begin to create a complete "system" of high performance ads and the method to implement them? The HVAC Marketing PowerPack is filled with dozens of proven tools – including direct mail letters, newspaper ads, radio scripts, post card designs, and much more. Get yours right now at www.acca.org/store.

ACCA Benefit Highlight

Hot Topics! Webinars

As needed, ACCA offers "Hot Topics" webinars exclusively for our members, covering breaking news or items of urgent importance to the HVACR industry. Members may participate in "Hot Topics" at no charge, and as soon as possible after the webinars are held we make recordings available for viewing online.

You can see the archive of past webinars at www.acca.org/members/hot-topics.

The Art of Management

Positive Attitudes Are Positive Producers

In a research project at the University of Pittsburgh, a group of volunteers were taught how to use a word processing program. Three research assistants were "planted" to pose as students in the program.

One assistant spoke to other students nearby of how great the program was, and how beneficial they thought its application could be. Another assistant spoke only of the terrible quality, poor services, how they could hardly hear the teacher and - in general - how lousy the entire idea was. A third assistant said nothing.

The people seated nearest the positive person grasped the program quicker, used it more effectively, and even came up with different more creative ways to use the program. They took more eagerly anticipated turns at using the program that was set up as a demonstrator.

The group nearest the negative person hardly wanted to even try the program. They showed little interest with questions, and primarily shunned even offering ideas for improvement.

This demonstrates the "one bad apple" theory to its fullest. Do not let a negative situation, or negative employee pull down a crowd around him or her. And likewise, encourage your "upbeat" employees to stay that way, or even spread them around your different departments. Encourage them to speak at key meetings to get the crowd toward the positive side of things. Bounce ideas off of them. Let others see that the attitude makes a difference in performance, respect, and company promotion.

Rule Breaking 101

"Sending your techs to training seminars automatically means you will have a better business."

FALSE: Ten percent. That's a low – but dead accurate – figure of what people learn at seminars that carries over to the workplace. To make sure that your reps actually learned something, ask for a review of the material.

News Flash

The Latest from
ACCA National

Contracting Week

Nashville, TN

October 18-21, 2011

Start your planning now:

Whether you happen to be a residential contractor, a commercial contractor, a business owner, a service manager, an operations or office manager, a geothermal contractor — or any combo of the above! **Contracting Week 2011** will show you the path to innovation and success in your business and career. Join ACCA and *The ACHR News* in Nashville for a new series of learning events guaranteed to propel your contracting business, and your personal career, farther ahead than ever.

Four specialized events this year include an all-new two-day conference on technology and business systems, and a special one-day roundtable on geothermal HVAC. Plus, the Fourth Annual Service Managers Forum boasts an all-new, two-track program, and the Eighth Annual Commercial Contracting Roundtable will feature a series of learning labs aimed at commercial owners and executives.

You can learn more about Contracting Week at: www.acca.org/education/contractingweek.