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Volume 5, Issue 5

Letter from the Executive

By Tom Wessner

Hello Friends,

May is upon us and that means temperatures are on the rise. Of course, as the heat index climbs, hopefully so will the number of calls to your business.

But, if the phone's not ringing, regardless of the temperature, you can use marketing to stimulate the sales you need. After all, you're working with the weather, not *for* the weather.

If there's anything that we here at ACCA-WPA can do to help your business be better in the coming season, please, let us know. We're here to make sure that you – and your business – get the most out of your ACCA membership. And it's our pleasure to serve.

Tom Wessner
ACCA-WPA President

Marketing

How to Choose “Your” Market

By Adams Hudson

Sometimes people call the market *anyone in your service area*, and that's a nice broad definition. This is fine for your “All Purpose” ads, but to maximize results for *Direct Response*, we need to make sure the message and market “match” with reasonably targeted accuracy.

To use a tool analogy, this is like comparing Channel Locks to a Stubby ratchet drive with a 7/16” socket. One works “okay” for many applications; the other works perfectly on specialized applications. The market means the *most likely respondents* to your direct response offer, as chosen by what you plan to offer them. Markets can be “chosen” in innumerable ways, including:

- **Age of Home** – Very important based on the message. We aimed a ductless system replacement to known homeowners with plaster wall, appealing to their love/hate/respect of same. Highest response rate for this specialized system in the company's history.
- **Travel Radius** – Smart if you want to select short drive times between respondents and stagger your mailing/zoned inserts accordingly.
- **Age of System** – Perhaps the most meaningful indicator of system replacement. (You'd better be keeping up with this for your own in-house list as we've been advising for years.)
- **Frequency of Repair** – Another ‘in house’ list segment that solves your troubled customer's problems. The highest % response we *ever* got was aimed at owners of a particular type of system (gas air conditioner) that had been troublesome. The manufacturer wisely wanted to end the complaints. Though a small list, the contractor sold 22% of the list new systems.
- **Shared Circle of Influence** – Here you agree with a tangential business owner to write and send an approved endorsement to their base, including information about your company. Shared endorsement is like being introduced to thousands as a known and trusted friend, with similarly outstanding results.

Find “who's” buying from you now based on the above. Then choose who you *want* as customers and target them with an attractive, well-timed offer. You will succeed.

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

Use The “Feel, Felt, Found” Close for More Sales

World famous sales trainer Zig Ziglar made a fortune in sales before he made another one as a trainer. Then another one as an author... and another as a top speaker.

His sales career lasted so long because his methods worked and were repeated by thousands of students. One of his best and most famous closes is adapted here for your HVAC sales.

Your prospects are in a bind. They stammer their objections and you respond. They seek an understanding that *you may have* about your systems and offer, but they’re left woefully without... and can’t make a decision. Here’s the most personable and helpful way to get them over the hump while using the genius of testimonials, all rolled into one:

“Mr. Homeowner, I can totally understand your concern and feel the same way. In fact, many of our other <QTY> installations over the past <#> years felt the same sense of indecision. But almost all of those people got other prices too. They did their research and weighed it all out.

What they found after spending, oh, 8-20 hours of additional appointments and shopping time is that our *value* was highest. They got all the benefits you see offered here <point to proposal> from us – but even at a *higher or lower* price from others – weren’t able to beat the value.

Either way you want to go is fine with me. You can spend a lot more time shopping to arrive at the same conclusion, or go ahead and schedule this installation now.”

See how simple and persuasive that is? If you have a Presentation Binder containing your competitor’s bids, you’ll be even more persuasive by showing them what others offer. But you can see that this relatively short close uses almost every persuasive trigger known without being pushy.

If they remain hesitant, a quick flip to your testimonials (also should in your binder) may put them over the top.

But remember, you express empathy in “I feel.” Then you recognize a similarity in “they felt.” Soon thereafter, you save prospects from the time and hassle of more shopping to reach the same conclusion with “they found.”

The “Feel, Felt, Found” close is among the most time-tested, clearly logical *and emotional* closes you’ll ever use. I feel you felt that others found the same thing to be true.

“I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?”

Need a little help with your wireless business solutions? One of ACCA's new partners, Openstream, helps businesses harness the power of the wireless revolution to intelligently communicate and interact with employees and customers.

Their MobileForceOne solution takes care of a contractor's entire mobile computing needs – Mobile Device, Phone & Wireless Data Plan, Software & Applications, Training, and Customer Support – for a low monthly fee. Learn more at www.openstream.com.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

SmartWords

“People with clear, written goals, accomplish far more in a shorter period of time than people without them could ever imagine.”

Brian Tracy

Techno Tidbit

Did you know that there’s a comprehensive system that combines HVAC equipment and computers to provide energy efficiency? The e-Logix™ system allows the system to find inefficiencies in air distribution and automatically correct them – or signal the need for an expert technician. Check it out at:

www.achrnews.com/Articles/Products/BNP_GUID_9-5-2006_A_1000000000000786289

ACCA Benefit Highlight

USA Refrigerants

USA Refrigerants (www.usarefrigerants.com), distributes refrigerants to HVAC Contractors, HVAC Wholesalers and Automotive Parts Wholesalers. Utilizing a comprehensive network of national distribution centers, warehouses and EPA Certified refrigerant reclamation facilities, the company provides fast and efficient deliveries to its customers throughout most of the continental U.S.

"ACCA is a dynamic organization with first-class professional contractors," says Michael Mulligan, USA Refrigerants Vice President of Marketing and Sales. "We are pleased to be associated with ACCA and support the Corporate Partner program which so greatly benefits the HVACR contracting community."

The Art of Management

Why Financing Is Smart Management

Have you taken a close look lately at the financing options you're offering customers? The range among contractors can be anything from being willing to accept credit card payment to offering "same as cash" financing.

Whatever the duration – 18 months, 12 months, 90 days – high-income customers like "same as cash" because it helps them manage the cash flow during a big-ticket purchase. Typically, the financially savvy will follow the requirements and keep coming back for more services.

But there's also the other side of the spectrum – lower-income customers who simply do not have the upfront resources to take on a large household improvement. Offering financing terms not only makes it tempting, but actually makes it possible for them to make a decision.

Contractors have used the services of such companies as G.E. Finance, Wells Fargo, American General, Service Finance Company, as well as local finance companies.

Regardless of who you choose, it may be wise to remember that they are not necessarily all alike. That illustration was made for us once when a client had sold four jobs that were turned down in financing. Because one of these was a retired couple who owed no one, he was perplexed enough to try another finance company. The result was financing for not just one but all four jobs to the tune of \$11,000 in sales. So, was that worth double-checking with another company or not?

Rule Breaking 101

"There's no such thing as too much selling."

False: When every contact from you to your customers is a sales piece, the relationship does more than suffer – it can downright wither and then die. Why? Because your customers want to know you appreciate them for more than the checks they write. Show them you do, and the sales will follow as a natural result.

News Flash

The Latest from
ACCA National

Effective Financial Analysis
& Key Performance
Indicators for Contractors
May 20, 2010
2pm Eastern

You may know what you should charge per hour in each department and you may have an idea of the level of profits you should be generating, but if you're honest, do you do what you need to track each month to ensure you hit your projected goals?

This session will cover what needs to be tracked each month within your company and will specifically cover the twenty-four key performance indicators against which each and every service technician should be measured. Step one is to set the goal. Step two is to accurately measure performance against that goal. If you want to find out what needs to be tracked within your company to ensure profitable growth, you need to attend this session!

About the Presenter: Tom Grandy has over 30 years experience in industry and small business. He is the founder and president of Grandy & Associates. The vision of Grandy & Associates is to "teach contractors how to run profitable businesses".

You can learn more about this *ComfortU* seminar at www.acca.org.