

Letter from the Executive

By Tom Wessner

Hello Friends,

Can you believe that it's already May? We're in the last stretch of Spring and already Summer is just around the corner. Here at ACCA-WPA, it's been a busy season, and we hope the same can be said for your business.

After all, when you're pushing add-on services, tune-ups, IAQ, and maintenance agreements, it can be hard to find a spare moment in the day!

Plus, the great thing about ACCA is that your membership provides you with the tools you need to stay a step ahead of the competition.

So, if there's anything we can do to help here at ACCA-WPA, let us know!

Tom Wessner
ACCA-WPA President

Marketing

A Great Close Begins with a Great Opening

By Adams Hudson

How well you close is perhaps the ultimate judge of your sales success. But how you open has a lot to do with whether or not you get to close at all!

There are many different ways to open, and which one you choose will depend on your audience (illustrating the importance of knowing your prospects well).

You might choose to open your presentation by saying something like, "One of the great things about doing business with..." to imply that there are many great things, and to gain and hold a customer's interest. Other attention-grabbing opening options include:

- **Startling statistics** – "I was just reading that if your system is over 8 years old, a new system generally saves more in repairs and energy than the new one costs! You don't often find a machine that buys itself..."
- **A rhetorical or open-ended question** – "Did you know that 55% of your energy bill goes toward warming and cooling your home? That's why it just makes good sense..."
- **An analogy.** "Usually, repairing a system that age is kind of like putting a \$100 saddle on a \$10 horse." (Or for female: "Repairing a system that age is kind of like getting a \$100 alteration on an outdated dress.")
- **An anecdote.** "I was just around the corner from you last week, with an almost identical situation. Must be catching! Turns out that we were able to solve their problems pretty easily by..."

With any of these opening strategies, make sure they apply to the subject at hand and in some way involve the prospect.

Presenting is serious business, but it should also be entertaining. A good opener will get your presentation off to a great start. And another thing that's just as true: a great start gets you one step closer to a great close.

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

Simple Sales Strategies

What's the Best HVAC Sales Personality?

If you hire the wrong type of salesperson, you'll have poor results. In one year, a \$1m HVAC retail business can easily have 300-500 leads (depending on replacement to service mix).

The "wrong" type salesperson who is closing 25% instead of 35%, is costing you 30-50 jobs a year! That's \$120,000-\$200,000 a year... on 10 measly percentage points in closing ratio.

Choose salespeople wisely and match their skills to the job and their customers. The "match rate" shown is their acceptance and trust level by customers in our industry.

- 1) The hard "Closer" has only a 34% "match" rate with customers in our business. Why? Because installations require more time, more thought, more understanding than the closer can muster. He also irritates as many as he sells.
- 2) The "Consultant" does much better. He takes his time, and listens intently. He takes no risks scaring prospects into a decision. However, he's pretty slow. His match rate is 64%. The only reason it's not higher is that his professional air can occasionally be regarded as stiff, and not terribly relaxing for homeowners.
- 3) The "Display" seller does poorly. Why? His stand back and "there it is" approach or his over-description of technical function wears poorly on prospects. They trust his *initial* knowledge, yet waver at giving up thousands of dollars for vaguely described benefits. Just 10% "match" with customers.
- 4) The "Relationship" salesperson does the best in this industry. His style is to understand and relate to the customer. Trust building, credibility earning discourse is their specialty. The pressure is low, but the trust is usually so high that the customer tends to exert his own buy signals because they "feel" comfortable. Additionally, a long time purchase like cooling and heating must be tended to by a trustable, consistent, reliable type. Their match rate is an astounding 72%.

See how your current sales staff rates. If you identify any salespeople as "non relationship", make immediate plans for training toward that goal.

"I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?"

Want to stay up to date on the politics that affect our industry?

We thought so. After all, it's important for contractors to have a voice in the legislation that affects their businesses. That's why ACCA has an online Government Affairs section of the website that includes a Grassroots Action Center.

The Grassroots Action Center makes it easy for you to reach your member of Congress with the right message, at the right time. You can learn more at: www.capwiz.com/acca/home/.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

SmartWords

"Designing your product for monetization first, and people second will probably leave you with neither."

Tara Hunt

Techno Tidbit

Did you know there's an HVAC system that uses both ground source and air source heat pumps? According to the manufacturer, GeoEnergy Enterprises, the system "does not require ground water, water pumping or anti-freeze agents to function" – and can be installed in a relatively small space. Learn more at: www.geoenergyusa.com/column.htm

ACCA Benefit Highlight

ACCA Career Center

Finding qualified talent for HVACR positions requires a multi-faceted approach. We're pleased to offer one more option to include in the mix for your recruitment efforts. ACCA has often been asked by members if they could post job listings online. If you are seeking candidates for an open position, you may post your job online at: <http://r.listpilot.net/c/acca/651j9mw/2lz59>

This is a new member benefit, at no additional charge. There is no limit to how many jobs you may post, or how often. You can even upload a company logo for each job. Each job is online for 30 days but may be re-posted.

The Art of Management

Pay For The Gain In Business... Or There Might Not Be One

It used to be that salespeople were the only ones on incentives, but some business owners got the bright idea that everyone should be eligible for performance-based pay. Now we see many companies adopting this strategy in some unconventional places.

Hourly workers can all be encouraged with incentives that aid in the reaching of company goals. How to implement incentives? Job boards with specified goals are the most publicly enticing way. If a 10-hour install gets done in eight, pay for 10. Let workers know that there can be much more than eight hours of pay in an eight-hour workday and you'll see efficiency increase substantially.

Tell your receptionist that you hired an independent caller to call each week and rate her manner and tone, as well as the efficiency with which she handles the caller. If she "passes the test" with the caller, she gets \$50. You will find a more pleasant and prompt receptionist beginning now.

Tell your office manager you'll split any savings they scour. A drop in phone rates, a better postage deal, printing savings, supply items... If you split it with them, they'll find it.

All of these efficiencies and savings continue on down the line. You get the benefits of a smoother running company and your employees get the idea that you care what they think, as well as a financial boost for the help. There is no loser in this at all. It works for everyone.

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

Residential Design for Quality
Installation

Arlington, VA

May 17-19, 2011

If your company needs simplified and practical procedures for calculating both heat loss and gain for residential structures using unitary a/c equipment, this Manual J 8th Edition training is for you.

With a focus on ACCA's *Manual J - 8th Abridged Edition*, this training helps contractors develop an understanding of how to calculate the many various components of a residential heating and cooling load - both manually and by using computer-assisted software.

This three day experience will give you all of the tools necessary to Design for Quality Installation. In addition, you'll get a peek at some extremely helpful software that can dramatically minimize the time required to perform the required calculations and system design without sacrificing either quality or accuracy.

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

To learn more, email:
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