

## Letter from the Executive

*By Tom Wessner*

Hello Friends,

The holidays are right around the corner – and that means another year has flown by. Seems like the older I get, the faster they go!

Of course, I'm sure part of the reason time seems to fly is because here at ACCA-WPA we stay busy. I'm not sure there's such a thing as a "slow" period for us! Hopefully the same can be said of your business. If not, then take advantage of your ACCA membership for ways to stimulate business growth.

This year ACCA has offered an unprecedented number of training opportunities. And with the new webinar series, you don't even have to leave your office.

We hope your current business climate keeps you warm now and through the rest of the season. Let us know how we can help.

Tom Wessner  
ACCA-WPA President

## Marketing

### Send a "Different" Message This Holiday Season

*By Adams Hudson*

Two marketing "truisms" are especially relevant for this time of year:

- 1) you cannot stand out by sameness; and
- 2) any sales message sent between December 10 and January 12 is a waste of money.

Holiday cards offer the best chance to address both issues while making an important customer retention contact. Customers get the right message at the right time to a very valuable group of people – your customer base – and in a way that lifts their spirits and expresses appreciation for their business. A good thing.

Send something with an unexpected graphic and a message that's "you" instead of the "Have a Great Holiday Season" yawn, yawn, type of message everyone sends. Tie in your appreciation of them and your business' role in their home or office.

You can check out some samples of this type of memorable, different, and distinct cards at [www.hudsonink.com](http://www.hudsonink.com). Each year, we keep the cards of the highest response, and add fresh new designs.

Whether you choose ours or have your own personal cards designed and printed, just make sure you make contact with customers in "the spirit of the season." After all, you don't want to forget your customers during the holidays if you're counting on them to remember you throughout the year. But because you don't want to 'sell' to them either, holiday cards are a much better way to go.

Another great benefit to the Holiday Card strategy is to send them first-class to your entire customer base, which will "clean" your list of undeliverable addresses during the year. This saves you a fortune in postage over the year since you can send subsequent mailings at "standard" (bulk) rate.

When you send a Holiday Card, the word-of-mouth alone should more than pay for itself...along with being remembered enough to keep *your* customers out of the Yellow Pages! Now that should help guarantee that you have Happy Holidays.

*Adams Hudson is ACCA's National Marketing Partner. You can request his free marketing ezine and free marketing reports by emailing [FreeACCAstuff@hudsonink.com](mailto:FreeACCAstuff@hudsonink.com).*

## Simple Sales Strategies

### The Simple Task of Selling

Many people perceive selling as simply a task of persuading someone to buy something. Yet if it were that simple, everyone would be a success, right? The truth is, the “sales” business has an overall failure rate of 95%. That means that almost everyone who goes into sales, fails and gets out. I don’t say that to discourage you, but to prepare you to be in that other 5%.

In the case of HVAC sales, your customer doesn’t come to you and browse through the shelves of your warehouse. You have to bring your “store” to them.

You must present your business’ solutions through carefully designed techniques. In most cases, as you know, the customer does not know what he or she needs. This is critically important. You are there to provide the answers and the value. And it can all be done through the three essential steps of a strong presentation:

- Fully discuss the features, advantages, and benefits of your product.
- Demonstrate its usage – how it works, how to take care of it.
- Explain your value or selling proposition. What’s in it for your customer? What risk are you willing to take from them? How is the value raised *beyond* the price?

The sales presentation is the time when the salesperson uncovers and satisfies the needs of a single buyer to the mutual, long-term benefit of both the consumer and the HVAC contractor. But, like I said, there’s a LOT of opportunity for failure in any sales business. So please, for your sake, be aware of some trouble-spots to avoid:

- **Don’t assume you know what your prospects want to buy before they tell you.** Your prospects don’t want to be cornered into a sale, and if you come off as the All Knowing Dictator of Contracting, you’re not going to get *nearly* as many sales as you could.
- **Don’t forget to qualify prospects.** If you’re not asking *early on* about their interest in financing, you’re wasting productive time. If you’re not asking when they plan to move, but have worked them up a super system with a 20-year warranty, you’ll be refiguring (or losing) the deal. Qualify wisely.
- **Don’t assume the prospect trusts you without earning it.** You’ve got to prove yourself, and handling objections is a great way to do it. Answer frankly, accurately, and confidently in plain English.

Your business team must fight for its business through good selling techniques. Selling is the process of effectively presenting the value of your products and services to a potential customer. It is about influencing and persuading. It offers a relationship. And it’s an opportunity to build trust.

## “I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?”

Ever wonder where you can find relevant training and information on breaking news in the industry? Look no further...

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.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

### SmartWords

“Success is often the result of taking a misstep in the right direction.”

Al Bernstein

## Product Spotlight

### ComfortU Annual Membership

Participate in live, interactive training without taking time away from work. Or access online training archives – whenever you want – 24/7. You can save 10% by purchasing an annual subscription. Plus, for upcoming classes and available archives, visit [www.acca.org/comfortu/](http://www.acca.org/comfortu/).

Get your annual membership at [www.acca.org/store](http://www.acca.org/store).

## ACCA Benefit Highlight

### Contractor's Guides

**ACCA Members Only:** ACCA has launched a new series of e-books addressing important topics for contracting business owners. Written in easy-to-understand language, we make complicated concepts more accessible so you can make sure you are operating at peak performance and in compliance with the law and marketplace.

Learn more at <https://www.acca.org/members/downloads/guides>.

## The Art of Management

### There's No "I" In "Team"

A strong team goes a long way toward a strong business. Remember the old adage "A house divided itself cannot stand"? Well, the same thing goes for your contracting company. You have to pull together as a team or you'll all fail. Here are some tips for uniting your workplace:

1. **Have clear goals.** And *express* them clearly. If your employees don't have a measurable goal in sight, then their just forging – hopefully ahead – blindly. With clear goals, employees begin at the same place and understand where they're going.
2. **Provide training.** The world – and the contracting industry – is constantly changing. That means that even the most experienced members of your team need training to stay at the top of their game. Remember, training isn't a cost; it's an investment in having the best business possible.
3. **Loosen the reins.** That means giving employees the power to make decisions. When you've invested in loyal employees, trust goes a long way toward making their job – and yours – a lot easier. Let them know that they don't have to run to you with every little question; some decisions are theirs to make.
4. **Meet regularly.** We're not talking about office group therapy here. But scheduled meetings cement the team. It's a time for everyone to come together and evaluate the business as a whole. Plus you'll get valuable information and insight that only comes from the security provided by a group dynamic.

## Rule Breaking 101

***A slow economy means slow business.***

**FALSE:** No matter the state of the economy, people still need heating and air conditioning; they still need IAQ options to help them breathe a little easier. The question is, do they need them from you? Make sure they do by using relationships to build sales.

## News Flash

### The Latest from ACCA National

**Residential EPIC Training  
Arlington, VA  
November 1-4, 2011**

EPIC classes position HVACR professionals to teach residential and commercial heating and cooling system design principles using standard-setting manuals and materials from ACCA's Environmental Systems Library.

Upon completion of the course exam, the attendee is recognized by ACCA as an EPIC instructor.

This class, taught by ACCA technical consultant and author of the industry standard Manual J Hank Rutkowski, provides three-and-a-half days of instruction in residential heating and cooling system design principles using ACCA's industry-standard manuals and materials from the ACCA Environmental Systems Library.

Who should attend Residential EPIC: Anyone committed to becoming certified in HVAC systems design and training.

For more information visit [www.acca.org](http://www.acca.org).