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Letter from the Executive

By KeeAnn DeVora

Hello Friends,

April has arrived, and that means almost a third of 2011 has already come and gone.

Hopefully these months have been filled with business, and not just the art of keeping “busy”. As we all know, there are plenty of ways to stay busy without making money – and that’s a recipe for disaster on your company’s bottom line.

That’s part of why your ACCA membership is so important. You get the tools and support you need to stay busy *and* build a better, more profitable business.

If there’s anything we here at ACCA San Antonio can do to help, let us know – that’s why we’re here.

KeeAnn DeVora
Executive Director

Marketing

IAQ Sales Made Easy

By Adams Hudson

Too many contractors focus on how much their product or service “costs” homeowners. Others look at “payback.” Yet I much prefer *selling against the market comparison*.

As an inside strategy, we do not “sell” CDs. We offer “Audio Seminars” instead. Nor do I sell “books,” but we do offer “study courses.” In either case, which is the more expensive? So I don’t put myself against a \$10 or \$20 product; I put my products against those in the hundreds or thousands.

For IAQ, don’t ever think of a “\$800 UV light” or “\$1200 filter” but more as an alternative to what *not* having these cost. Such as doctors visits, missed work and school (14 million absences a year according to the EPA) – and show how you can alleviate the pain, inconvenience, and cost to them. In this way, your solution is far less costly. And it’s not like you’re reinventing the wheel here. The solutions already exist:

- **Whole house humidifying/dehumidifying systems.** Certain environments make it easier for germs, bacteria, and viruses to proliferate. Too moist and mold or mites pose a problem. Too dry and the natural mucus that protects against irritants dries and becomes ineffective. Make humidity checks part of your IAQ screening process and help stop problems before they start.
- **Air filtration systems.** Systems exist that can effectively remove 99.97% of small particle pollutants. That means mold, pet dander, and allergens are almost completely eliminated and removed from the home air supply. Think that’s something an asthma or allergy sufferer might want to know is available?
- **UV light purification.** UV lights are able to break apart molecular binds and even kill viruses. In fact, UV lights are so effective that the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) recommends them in homeless shelters to prevent the spread of illnesses, *including* tuberculosis.

If positioned well, IAQ basically sells itself. Include your IAQ message in your newsletter, in your Spring tune-up postcards and in Press Releases to a hungry features editor who is sick of the same old “Spring allergy” stories.

Just decide you want and deserve another stream of income, then go for it. You can add dollars, customers, and benefits to a very needy market. They’d rather pay you for this anyway; all you have to do is effectively market it. And isn’t that a breath of fresh air?

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

Tips for Successful Negotiating

Good salespeople are good negotiators. So are good buyers, which make this an interesting dance. The “old” style of sales and negotiation was to “sneak up” on weaknesses and fears, and then play heavily on them until the other person relented. This is pure high-pressure, marked by substantial repercussions including buyer remorse, future vow to disuse, bad-mouthing, and even lawsuits.

The “new,” more successful, negotiation still operates from a position of strength, but instead of playing off of their weaknesses, you *help them gain the benefits* you present.

That’s why your initial survey is so important. You are to find out the answers that frame the negotiation. What are their needs? What pressures do they feel? What options do they have?

Before you begin, you must know what you *can* negotiate. If you’ve got a margin to uphold, or a dollar amount you cannot go less than, then that is it. You’ve got to hold the line, but always remember —

Do not ever be put in the position of “Take it or leave it” on the first offer. This cuts your negotiation to the point of seeming unfairness in light of the regular negotiator.

Likewise, don’t always have to “check with the office” on every request. Know that you’ve got certain leeway within guidelines to make your own deal as needed. If you can add in a programmable thermostat, or filter upgrade with no additional cost, this can become part of your response instead of fumbling for what you can or cannot do. It’s also important to avoid these mistakes, which can cost you the sale, your integrity, and probably some sleep:

- **Giving up without getting.** Everything must have value. If you give up something, get something in return, even if it’s just your competitor’s proposals or a referral or a written testimonial. Never give without getting.
- **Quitting too soon.** Far too many salespeople quit the negotiation process before they have been able to take it to a point that is beyond the uncomfortable. Work to the point where both you and your prospect are happy with the outcome. If you have come this far, don’t quit too soon. A sales call that comes down to negotiation is one near closing. However, learn a lesson from it and don’t let your next call become a negotiation.

Now that you know what to avoid, you can delve into the right things to do for the best negotiating outcome. Realize that many customers are negotiating “silently” while you’re presenting. They’re thinking of ways to cut; items to get you to include; and issues of competition they can throw your way.

“I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?”

Need in-depth training at your fingertips?

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 www.acca.org/members/downloads/guides.

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

SmartWords

“In the business world, the rearview mirror is always clearer than the windshield.”

Warren Buffett

Techno Tidbit

Did you know there’s an extensive range of boiler products that can easily retrofit existing equipment? It enables cost efficient optimization of combustion. The manufacturer, says these packages allow upgrades and conversions of almost any equipment from any manufacturer. To learn more, you can check it out at www.achrnews.com/Articles/Products.

ACCA Benefit Highlight

Hot Topics! Webinars

ACCA offers “Hot Topics” webinars exclusively for 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, recordings are made available for viewing online.

Learn more at www.acca.org/members/hot-topics.

The Art of Management

5 Great Management Insights

People skills. This one element of management can make or break your company. From interactions with employees and other businesses to furthering relationships with customers, nothing is more certain to stop you in your tracks than poor interpersonal communication. America’s top CEO’s understand that and have ranked the most important skills for managers below:

1. **Give or share importance.** The #1 *failure* of managers is “ego driven, self-centered directive”. Promote team strength, not your importance.
2. **Share your vision.** If they don’t know where you’re going, how do you expect them to follow?
3. **Admit your mistakes.** Since I presume you’re human, it’s ok to goof. It’s even more ok to admit it. If you hide mistakes, why wouldn’t employees?
4. **Stay connected.** Many managers look forward to the day when they can sit back, detached. Don’t be tempted. Even if you’ve earned the right to pull back, have weekly phone-ins, mini-meetings, or regular on-site appearances.
5. **Make your job and competition fun.** Sound impossible? Then you’ve gotten too serious. Have fun with team and individual goals. If you can’t think of a way to make your job fun, you’re in the wrong job.

Without people, you have no customers, sales, or business. So make enhancing your people skills a management priority. But remember – they won’t do any good until you put them into practice.

Rule Breaking 101

“The weather dictates the success of your business.”

False: Sure, the weather impacts and influences your business. But *you* dictate your success. That means thinking creatively to outsmart your competition and turning “slow” times into money makers.

News Flash

The Latest from ACCA National

Commercial Design for Quality Installation

Arlington, VA

April 12-14, 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 N training is for you.

With a focus on ACCA’s Manual N5AE, this training helps contractors develop an understanding of how to calculate the various parts of a commercial facility’s heating and cooling load using computer based 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:
Kelly.McMillan@acca.org

News & Events

April

- Commercial Design for Quality Installation – Arlington, VA (4/12-14)
- Residential EPIC Training – Arlington, VA (4/19-22)
- BBQ Cook Off and Clay Shoot 4/15
- **ACCA SA, ABC, AMERICRANE AND THE SCOTTISH RITES FUNDRAISER 5/13**

Hot Topics Now

Breathe Easier

- This is a big month for IAQ – especially allergy related.
- Use the two-step upsell approach from tune-up to Maintenance Agreement. Broad marketing for the MA just isn't going to work, but you can use your Newsletter to make a smooth transition. Keep using your PowerPack ads and Postcards to spread the message.

We Thank our suppliers for their support and sponsorship of ACCA San Antonio



A NOTE FROM YOUR BOARD

Ok, so it my turn to say something positive about what is going on in the world, our area and industry. I guess I had better get on the internet and see what the headline topics out there are. Lets see, fighting in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Ivory Coast. Also, let's not forget Afghanistan and Iraq. Ok, ok, nuclear meltdown going on in Japan, guess there no good news there. Ok, let look at national news. The republicans and Democrats can't balance a budget, unemployment still high, and a gallon of gasoline just keeps on going up and up.

Well I guess I had just better not say anything, wait a minute I'm getting an e-mail from KeeAnn. What is this? A story about someone doing something with out asking for anything in return. Can't be, wait a minute I vaguely remember a couple of other things. Let see Steve White with Americrane working with the Scottish Rite Learning Center to raise money for kids with special needs in reading. Wait here's another...what this? Tim Bruce running a program to help some of the Veterans in our area get their heating and cooling systems fixed. Wait here's another one, Tom Damiani working with the Special Olympics. What are these guys thinking? None of these guys will ever make the news headlines, or add any thing to their bottom line. I, for one, am glad that these people are all members of ACCA and want to thank them for their hard work. When you see them you can thank them too.

Dave Knight