

- Simple Sales Strategies
- Does ACCA Have That?
- The Art of Management

## Letter from the Executive

By KeeAnn DeVora

Hello Friends,

Hopefully your 2011 has gotten off to a good start. Here at ACCA San Antonio, we've hit the ground running and are looking forward to a spectacular year helping ACCA members just like you!

Your ACCA membership gives you everything from social events to technical workshops, with a little of everything in between – MIX groups, ComfortU, advice from the experts, and your ACCAdemics.

Be sure to check out [www.acca.org](http://www.acca.org) for a full list of all the benefits you receive as an ACCA member. And if there's anything else we can do for you, please let us know – that's what we're here for!

*KeeAnn DeVora*

KeeAnn DeVora  
Executive Director

## Marketing

### Creating the Buzz Effect

By Adams Hudson

Publicity is the most powerful form of marketing communication your company can possibly have. In fact, anytime you get publicity, simply multiply the space or time where you're featured by 3, then calculate what an ad of that size would cost. That is the sheer 'cost' approach, but it often bears no relation to the true value. Why do you need publicity? Here are real-world reasons that everyone should understand.

- **Publicity makes people believe more in YOUR business.** It's really simple. If the media writes an article about you or your contracting business, it sends a message. This company must be special somehow, or the media wouldn't bother writing about them. While we often witness the media being slammed in opinion polls, during dinner and when we get together for drinks, EVERY poll or test I've heard about that measures the believability factor of an article (editorial) against advertising has one result: People believe articles (editorial) and news broadcasts far more than they ever believe in advertising.
- **Publicity separates you from your competitor.** Again, there are hundreds of contractors in your area. So who's the best? Who knows? But what a potential customer does know is that the media wanted you for the interview and not your competitor down the street. Suddenly, YOU'RE the one that stands out.
- **Publicity makes you an expert.** There are a variety of ways to become an expert. One way is just to say, "I'm an expert." But who cares if no one KNOWS that you're an expert. There's a better way that doesn't smack of puffing out your chest. Get the media to quote you in a story about water heaters or appear in a television segment about how to reduce heating costs and suddenly you're an expert. I like the word "anoit" because that is what the media is doing to your reputation.
- **Publicity puts you on the short list of your customer's buying decision.** Remember I mentioned earlier that if you make no effort with publicity, there's a strong chance that potential customers will NOT have an opinion about your business because they won't even know you exist? You need publicity so that when a customer is in a buying mood, they think of your company because they've seen or heard about it in the media. If you get on enough short lists of potential customers, you WILL close some of those deals. And make more money.

Adams Hudson is ACCA's National Marketing Partner. Be sure to check out his seminar "Web Marketing Avalanche" at the 2011 ACCA Expo in San Antonio. You can request his free marketing ezine and free marketing reports by emailing [FreeACCAstuff@hudsonink.com](mailto:FreeACCAstuff@hudsonink.com).

## Simple Sales Strategies

### Sales Meets Marketing

Marketing is a method by which sales opportunities are created. Marketing can bring you the leads, but if you can't close 'em, what's the point?

For the best salespeople, their skills are *not* natural. They're trained – and train others – to sense when a buyer is in suspended disbelief (a good state by the way) or when they're eager for you to get to the price. They're trained to recognize when they've pushed internal 'buy' buttons, and need to bring out the proposal *that second*. The transition to the proposal should look as natural as breathing. Yet it's ordered, intentional, and studied.

You can't get this good by "winging it." Training is the only way. It helps improve our marketing to homeowners and it'll help you close more sales, at higher prices. Here's how:

- Share **your marketing promotions** with the entire staff at a weekly meeting. A simple plan is better than no plan.
- During the meeting, all must know **where the ads are running**. **Make sure to "offer" details and deadlines** (if you don't use deadlines or limits, you're losing *lots* of leads). Nothing is worse than a customer service representative (CSR) getting a call from an excited homeowner grasping a hot letter and responding, "I don't have a clue what you're referring to." Buzz kill.
- All techs, salespeople, and CSRs **must know your intended upsell for each offer**. For an IAQ inspection that's included with any service, or the maintenance agreement package included with an equipment upgrade. The logic is that if they enter the home with *no* upsell then they'll either leave with either a standard or no sale. If given an upsell, they get one more level to raise average transaction size.
- Whether these sales close or not, you must **follow up**. Your CSRs and eager salespeople *will follow up* with a planned script to make sure needs are met, more information given, and referrals requested. The credibility gained by doing this – sale or no sale – guarantees your differentiation and future calls.
- **Extra Sales Bump:** The last sales follow-up comes back to marketing. This is where you send the "unclosed prospect letter" to all fitting the description –average sales rate from sending it is 4%.

See, it's an intentional system. Whatever you're offering this season, marketing and sales must work like a team. When they're unified, the effect compounds to maximize leads, closing ratios, transaction sizes, and referral rates.

### "I Wonder if ACCA Has That for Me?"

Needs simplified, practical procedures for calculating both heat loss and heat gain for residential structures using unitary a/c equipment? Lots of contractors do, which is why ACCA has Manual J 8th Edition training available next month March 15-17, 2011.

#### Who should attend:

Contractors, design and utility personnel, wholesalers, energy commission officials, licensing and code officials.

For more information email: [Kelly.McMillan@acca.org](mailto:Kelly.McMillan@acca.org)

Yeah. ACCA has that for you.

### SmartWords

"The art of leadership is saying no, not yes. It is very easy to say yes."

Tony Blair

### Techno Tidbit

Did you know that a company, Illumra, has solar-powered, wireless door/window sensors that can cut energy waste by 20-60%? The sensors disable blowers or adjust temperature points when windows or doors are left open. Onboard energy storage even lets the sensor operate for days at a time in total darkness. Check it out at [www.illumra.com](http://www.illumra.com).

## Board Members Perspective:

San Antonio welcomes our national chapter and all of affiliates to town for the annual Indoor Air Expo being held February 15-17 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. What a great Valentines Day gift for you spouse!

In all seriousness, this is our big moment and it would be great if we could go out and attract some of the local, non-ACCA contractors to at least go to the exhibit hall and see what is new in the industry and what ACCA might be able to help them with.

Some might ask, "How can ACCA help me?"

We all know ACCA is valuable to our business and our industry, but we may not have the reasons why on the top of our mind. Just a few that I can think of: building relationships with the city, state, and national governments to work in the best interests of our industry; management information exchange (MIX) groups to share experience about business operations, and access to training programs such as ACCA Manuals J and D, Quality Installations and Quality Preventive Maintenance. Surely there are more reasons to belong to ACCA that you can tout to someone out there who is looking for some guidance. Someone may not even realize it now, but we all need help at one time or another.

I would ask vendors, suppliers, partners, and most of all contractors to look around and listen for potential new members. As stated in last month's perspective, the group as a whole will burn hotter and longer toward a common purpose than individuals without a specific direction. This is our chance to help raise the bar in San Antonio by including as many companies in the industry as we can find to focus on the same common goals and assist in overcoming the same obstacles. Raising the bar, as some might put it, means the high tide raises all of the boats in the harbor, even the smallest of rafts will benefit.

A secondary note, our replacement community project for Heat the Town, Operation Indoor Comfort is underway. OIC's mission is to assist burned or injured veterans with their heating and cooling system repairs and maintenance. These men and women can become uncomfortable with the slightest changes in temperature so a fine-tuned, functioning hvac system is very important to them. This is our way of helping thank the veterans and their families for their sacrifice to our nation. It is the least we can do. If you want to become part of OIC, please e-mail [tim@keepsacool.com](mailto:tim@keepsacool.com) - subject OIC and I will get you on the list to help out our local veterans and provide you with the details of the mission.

God Bless America.

Tim Bruce

## The Art of Management

### Cut Conflict with Internal Customer Service

One extremely important – yet perhaps one of the least pleasant – aspects of management is conflict resolution among employees.

To some degree or another, some level of conflict will probably arise between two or more employees at some point in time. And in the event of any major conflicts, management's help in resolving the issue will almost definitely be needed. However, Internal Customer Services can resolve the majority of conflicts before they escalate and begin to affect your business as a whole.

Internal Customer Service is the manner in which co-workers interact. Once you have realized that this is an important part of your company, you must also come to terms that it is inherently difficult to give exceptional customer service to any external customer if there is conflict, unhappiness, or lack of respect within the workplace.

A few tips for a healthier, happier, more productive workplace:

- Make sure each employee knows your company's mission.
- Each employee must realize that Internal Customer Service is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace.
- Realize and respecting each other's differences.
- Respect each employee's personal space.

Internal Customer Service is a valuable concept to keep in mind. Everyone benefits from exceptional customer service through reduced conflict, increased respect, and a greater degree of overall happiness.

## News Flash

### The Latest from ACCA National

#### Commercial Design for Quality Installation

Arlington, VA

February 1-3, 2011

If your company needs simplified procedures for calculating both heat loss and heat gain for small commercial 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 components of a facility's heating and cooling load using computer based software.

While emphasis is placed on identification and calculation of peak load conditions, discussion is also directed toward the structure's needs under part-load conditions. Much of the information covered is based on the ASHRAE Handbook of Fundamentals.

#### Prerequisites:

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

To learn more, email:  
[Kelly.McMillan@acca.org](mailto:Kelly.McMillan@acca.org)

## News & Events

### February

- Commercial Design for Quality Installation – Arlington, VA (2/1-3)
- **2011 ACCA Conference & Indoor Air Expo – San Antonio, TX (2/15-2/17)**

## Hot Topics Now

### *Start Strong*

- The biggest thing to do during this time is gather more names for your hottest list. Watch for zip code response penetration.
- Allergy season is gearing up, so let prospects and customers know that you offer IAQ solutions and allergy relief.

We thank our Suppliers for their continued support and sponsorship of  
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