

Letter from the Executive

Hello Friends,

Hopefully 2008 has started off with a bang for all our ACCA Texas members. We've certainly been busy, and hopefully you'll be reaping the benefits of those efforts over the next several months.

Anyone in the contracting industry knows that the construction meltdown is going to affect everyone. Experts are predicting a recession and a minimum of 10 months for the housing market to recover. That means worried consumers and unhappy homeowners.

Over the course of the next year we'll be there to provide a helping hand to keep your business going and your customers coming back.

That's part of the value of your ACCA membership – you know we're always working to make your business stronger, easier to manage, and more profitable.

Todd B. McAlister
ACCA Texas
Executive Director

Marketing

By Adams Hudson

It's a wasted opportunity to leave a customer's home without leaving *something* behind – something besides a high-dollar invoice, that is.

As you wrap up a call, you want to offer something that will thank your customer for his business, will help him remember you when he has future service needs, and will give him an easy way to refer a friend. One of the best ways to take care of all three areas is with a customer retention brochure.

A brochure is a great customer retention piece, but you could be particularly smart about it and lower the printing cost substantially – while tripling the reach of your leads.

Here's how: call up a friendly business owner who has a business that complements yours. Perhaps you are a heating and air contractor, and he is a plumbing contractor. Or a lawn care contractor. Or a pest control contractor. In other words, you're looking to partner with someone who has a shared ideal – in this case, home ownership and maintenance.

Next, ask to discuss a cross-promotion arrangement that can result in more leads and more sales – for less money. The idea, you explain, is that the two of you can go partner to create a joint brochure that includes services information and coupons from both companies. (You can stick with just the one partner, or bring in a third if you're both agreeable.)

The brochures you create together will be one of two types – a customer retention piece or a lead-generating piece. Creating both types is preferable – especially since you're saving tons on printing costs already.

The first type, as mentioned earlier, is given to current customers. The second is used for new customers or new homeowners only; it thanks them for their business and tells them about other great dealers in their area. Guess what? You've boosted your retention, leads and sales just by having another contractor take a coupon brochure to their customer with your name on it.

The great thing about customer brochures is that customers stay out of the Yellow Pages! The next time they need a system replaced or a duct cleaning, you will be the one they call instead of rushing off to find the names and numbers of all your competitors.

10 Second Management

"You shouldn't be on your company's mailing list."

FALSE: You should mail letters to your salespeople and technicians at the same time. Two things happen: 1) You find out when your letters are delivered AND if there are any areas that receive them late, 2) Your employees who may have missed or forgotten about the mailed offer get a reminder.

ACCA Benefit Highlight

Ask A Tax Attorney

Succeeding as a contractor requires you to manage your company well financially. Great tradespeople go bankrupt (even if they're busy) because of poor budgeting, cash flow, and money management.

Through ACCA's partnership with law firm **Adams & Reese**, members can receive answers to general questions about federal tax issues from Robert Woolfarth, one of the nation's leading tax attorneys. Submit your question at www.acca.org.

News & Events

February

Continuing Education Schedule

- ◆ Arlington-February 23rd
- ◆ Austin-February 23rd
- ◆ Denton-February 16th
- ◆ El Paso-February 16th
- ◆ Harlingen-February 9th
- ◆ Houston-February 23rd
- ◆ San Antonio-February 16th

License Preparatory Course

- ◆ Austin, February 15-16th, 2008
- ◆ Arlington, February 21-24th, 2008-contact ACCA NTX at www.acca-ntx.org

Texas Training Opportunities

Greater Houston- www.accagh.org

Feb. 13 Variable Speed Furnaces

North Texas- www.acca-ntx.org

Feb 12-14-Water Furnace-Service Install Course

Feb 26-Service Roundtable Seminar

Feb 27-Codes Class

March 3-4, 10-11-Nate Core Prep

March 4-Finding Sales That Other's Don't See

March 11-Service Managers Seminar

South Plains- www.accasouthplains.org

Feb 14-NATE Prep

Feb 18-NATE Exam

Feb 19-Heat Pump w/ Electric Heat Course

Feb 27-NATE Gas Heat w/ Combustion Course

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Online Learning for the HVAC/R Industry

Residential Systems Design - San Antonio, TX (February 19-21, 2008)

Quality HVAC system design is the foundation for a professional installation. ACCA's unique three-day training teaches heat transfer fundamentals as a foundation for computer-assisted load calculation.

Attendees will receive: Manual J8 – Load Calculation Manual, Essential Elements Workbook; Right-Suite™ UNIVERSAL; Demo Software; Manual S – Equipment Selection Manual; Manual D – Duct Design Manual; Manual T – Grille & Register Selection Manual; . Successful participants will receive an ACCA Certificate of Completion.

Requirements: Attendees must bring a laptop to the class with Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Excel already installed. Some experience with Excel is helpful.

Training Agenda

Tuesday – 8:30 to 4:30

- Manual J 8th edition overview
- Right-Suite™ UNIVERSAL – Load Exercise 1
- Right-Suite™ UNIVERSAL – Load Exercise 2
- Homework – Essential Elements Workbook

Wednesday – 8:30 to 4:30

- Right-Suite™ UNIVERSAL – Load Exercise 3
- Manual S – Equipment Selection
- Manual D – Duct Design
- Right-Suite™ UNIVERSAL – Duct Design
- Homework – Answer questions from Manual S and Manual D.

Thursday – 8:30 to Noon

- Manual T – Grille & Register Selection
- Right-Suite™ UNIVERSAL – Reports

Who should attend: Contractors and their sales staffs, design and utility personnel, wholesalers, energy commission officials, licensing and code officials, and others interested in learning the proper application of residential system design.

Visit www.acca.org for more information.