

FOR THE ELITE OF THE DRYCLEANING INDUSTRY

Do You Live Up To Your Advertising?

*“Staying ahead
of the competition”*



BY
DENNIS MCCRORY

Every day, drycleaners like many other companies, spend millions of dollars promoting their businesses. They use every type of advertising and marketing approach ever created. Most of it is wasted money thrown at an impulse idea or pressured by a high-powered “account executive.” But advertising only makes promises about your

service. Whether or not your service actually lives up to that promise depends on employees, who succeed or fail at living up to customers expectations.

I remember, several years ago, when I first came to the Golomb Group, an entrepreneurial businessman from California called me wanting to promote a drop store he d opened a year or so earlier. His main plant maintained a good volume and he saw no need to market that location (but that s another story).

He wanted me to give him a surefire way to increase his sales at this drop store and, of

course, to fulfill the plan for him. I told him the easiest and cheapest way to do this was to select one of our stock postcards, make a generous offer, and let us mail them, on a monthly basis, to his best prospects. Simple enough, and something we ve successfully done for hundreds of drycleaners across the United States.

Now this particular businessman owned a wide variety of businesses in the area of California where he lived. He spent most of his time riding in the back of his chauffeur driven Mercedes-Benz. From there he ran his varied business interests, save for face-to-face business meetings and the occasional visit to one of his businesses. Sounds like fun, but not what I would consider the ideal way to manage any kind of service business, especially a drycleaning operation.

He wanted my expert advice on every aspect of the mailing program. First, on selecting the target market. I proposed “average to above-average income prospects living within a 1½ mile radius of the

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drop store. He liked this idea except “why not target only the really affluent people, who make \$150,000+ a year, and whose homes are worth a million dollars or more?”

I explained that he was eliminating the middle to upper-middle class clients, who sometimes are more frequent customers than the very rich. While he appreciated my advice, he was sure his way was smarter.

He wanted my best opinion as to what his offer should be, to attract these affluent prospects. I explained that the stronger the offer, the better the draw would be. I suggested, 25% off all drycleaning brought in with the postcard. He laughingly agreed that 25% off would indeed be a nice offer to prospective customers, however, that would be an expensive proposition on his part and “we could probably attract just as many customers with an offer of 10% off.”

His next question was: “How can we be sure none of my regular customers get this offer?” To which I replied: “I think we want to be sure that all of your regular customers do get this offer.” After all, Stan Golomb’s original philosophy, when he founded this company, was that there are three ways to increase your sales. One, is to get new customers. Which is difficult and expensive. Two, is to get your regular customers to use you more frequently. And, three, is to get your regular customers to bring in larger orders. Two of these three ways to increase your sales are from your regular customers. Why would

you not want to market to them?!

Even though he “respected my opinion,” or so he said, he was, after all, a successful businessman, in his own right, and opted in favor of leaving his regular customers out of the marketing mix.

At this point, he was calling me every other day, first thing in the morning: 8 a.m. my time: 6 a.m. California time. By then, he was already at work, riding in the back of his Mercedes. He wanted to know when the cards were being printed? Then, when were they being mailed? And, naturally, why hadn’t they been delivered, yet?

Finally, the cards were delivered. The resulting increase in sales was barely a blip on his radar. He was upset, to say the least, and wanted answers, from me, as to why, after all of this careful planning and my “expert advice,” would the results be so dismal. I pointed out that, while I had given my best advice, that was not exactly the course he had elected to follow.

I reminded him that he chose to target only highly affluent prospects, thereby eliminating some very good potential upper-middle-class people. That he reduced the offer to an amount that produced very little incentive. And, that he bypassed those most likely to respond: his regular customers.

He agreed “to give me one last chance” to prove

**“What
was the
problem?
And why
didn’t I have
the answer?”**

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You May Already Have “Dry Cleaner’s Disease”



BY ED ROTH

When I was much younger I helped my Dad by working in his new dry cleaning business. He had been a worker for so many years and yearned to have his own business. When the opportunity opened up to buy a

partnership into his cousin’s dry cleaners, he jumped at the chance to get out of the grips of working for a boss and own his own business. Michael Gerber of E-Myth fame calls it the entrepreneurial seizure. My father was a very likeable guy. He always had his shtick with the customers. He would be schmoozing and telling jokes and really enjoying his time at the counter. It was the early 60s and his business grew as he put in a newfangled shirt unit and placed it right up front in the call office for all to see. Shirts were 18 cents at the time, and I think he raised it to 22 cents when the volume grew. Just before the 69 fallout of wash and wear and double knits, my dad bought out his

partner and the store was his alone. Things were great although the 69 shakeout wasn’t fun. That is, things were great until my father developed “Dry Cleaner’s Disease”.

I’ll never forget the day my father threw Judy LoCasio out of the store for insinuating that perhaps the stain on the pants was not there when she brought it in. “If you don’t like the way we do the cleaning, bring it somewhere else,” shouted my Dad as Judy stormed out the front door on the way to her car. I remember chasing after her and explaining that my Dad was having a bad day, and that I would take care of the stain. Of course it came right out in the next cleaning cycle. It seemed so strange to me that my Dad would throw out a customer and be so rude. Of course, the disease only spreads and the virus gets worse and soon it consumes every part of you. I tried to talk to my Dad and explain that a simple, “Let us try again” was the best way to go, but he said he was sick of customers blaming him and they could take their business elsewhere. I vowed never to be like my Dad. I honed my customer service skills by reading books, joining the Golomb Group, and attending seminar after seminar on how best to treat a customer. My schmoozing became better than my Dad’s and I increased business tremendously when I took over the store. That is, my customer service skills were great until the day that Mr. Markowitz walked in and claimed that our charge of \$22 for shortening his sleeves was highway robbery, and that Sym’s (the store of purchase) would do it for \$8.00, and if I didn’t do it for \$8.00 he would tell everyone he knew how I robbed him. I turned red, told him what I thought, and told him to take it back to Sym’s. Then I immediately went to the phone and called Dennis McCrory. “Ha,” I said, “I finally got you Dennis. I found a situation where the customer is NOT always right” and I proceeded to tell Dennis the story. He listened

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Members Only

Would you like to read your
Golomb Group newsletter on line?

It’s now available under the
“Members’ Section” of our website
www.golombgroup.com.

Simply enter the
USER NAME: “golombmember”
PASSWORD: “iamawinner”

We’ll be changing these from time
to time, so keep posted!

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politely and when I finished he said to me, “Ed, it’s time that you stepped away from the counter and let your CSR’s take care of the customers.” Unknowingly, I had caught my Dad’s disease. The story is relevant today because at one of my cost/management groups, one of the elite cleaners told the story of his new promotion. For Lincoln’s Birthday he sent out a card with a penny on it and the promotion was to “Bring in three pieces, the third piece would cost just a penny.” There was a problem with the promotion. Mrs. Potter called and said she brought in two pants last week. Could she bring in the third piece tomorrow and pay just a penny? The CSR told her absolutely not. Then Mrs. Blitz called and said that she just had three shirts delivered, could she get a credit for the cost of the third shirt? His partner told Mrs. Blitz she was nuts, couldn’t she read, and hung up. Although the promotion would start in a few days on Lincoln’s Birthday several customers called to have it apply to their current orders. They were told “No.” The owner had told us he had wanted the CSR’s just to make the customer happy, but the promotion was causing these problems.

I was amazed that this “couture cleaner” had such problems. I had always looked up to his customer service and elite status in the dry cleaning industry. I asked him “How can you have such problems? You’ve always been my hero. I thought these were problems that we had, but not you.” He explained that some of his workers, including his own partner, were inflicted with the virus that causes “Dry Cleaner’s Disease” and there is nothing he can do about it. He pulled one manager off the counter after getting numerous complaints,

but it was just part of doing business. How can he buck his own partner? That’s how people get after time. Now the CSR’s are scared to treat people too nice and give them the coupon for fear that his partner will yell at them, “You did WHAT for Mrs. Smith?”

Another very successful cleaner chimed in, “Why are we the only industry that has to cater to the customer the way we do?

They don’t extend the coupon for me at CVS or Radio Shack or Key Foods. If it expired, I can’t use it. Why do we have to take such crap from every customer?” It’s a good question and the more important question is, how did we catch the virus and how can we contain it? Does anyone know an antidote that we can give to rid the body of this dreadful disease?

In a visit to Milt & Edie’s in Los Angeles with the Masters of Marketing group we visited with Milt Chortkoff. Milt is the 76-year-old owner, with the passion and vigor of a 15 year old. Milt’s motto is a simple 5 word saying, “All Customers Leave Happy, Always.” He has

signs up and keeps reminding the workers to honor this simple saying, no matter what. It’s not easy to do. Especially if you have the virus.

Our management group discussed the virus and the phenomenon and talked about how sooner or later it gets you. Kind of like the movie “Invasion of the Body Snatchers.” It creeps up on you while you are asleep and you don’t even know you are infected. It’s very tough to fight, and even tougher

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“I was amazed that this ‘couture cleaner’ had such problems.”

YOU MAY ALREADY HAVE “DRY CLEANER’S DISEASE”
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to cure. Sometimes you must just succumb to the inevitable and get away from the counter as Dennis suggested I do after hearing my story.

The Golomb Group is all about making sure the virus never gets to you. It s all about making sure that the customer IS always right and ALWAYS LEAVES HAPPY. Some of the cleaners made the point that the CSR s fought the customers as if the money saved was their own. An amazing thing to see. “It s not even their money, why don t they just make the customer happy?” A good question. Is it human nature? Is it not wanting to be taken advantage of? Is it just hanging your head out the window as the character in the movie “Network” did, while he screamed “I had enough and I m not going to take it anymore?”

I ll tell you all the answer:
I DON T KNOW !!!!!

I m writing this article because the first step in the cure is realizing that the disease exists. The second step is stopping the virus in its tracks and making sure it is contained. Isolate it. Quarantine it. Fire it if you have to. Just make sure you keep it out of your store. If it infects one employee it will spread and infect them all. If it infects you.... You re done... toasted.. finished ...kaput!!! So fasten down the hatches and tighten up all the possible leaks where the virus can enter. Next month I ll report on a way of attacking the virus and fighting back against sudden outbreaks of the “Dry Cleaner s Disease.” ◆

Ed Roth is the owner of U.N. Cleaners in Flushing, NY. He is an active member of the Golomb Group. If you have comments or questions about Ed's articles, please contact him by e-mail: edrothun@aol.com or tel:(718) 969-0207

Correction

You'll remember when you received your quarterly report last month, there was an anomaly we couldn't explain: the lowest priced cleaner in the Northwest showed the greatest sales increase. After that report was sent out, we received a late filing from a member who had been on vacation. His sales increased 13% for the fourth quarter and 11% for all of 2007. His prices, at \$17.95 per suit and \$2.55 per shirt, were the highest in the region.

Again, our members who are charging the most are showing the highest sales increases.

Debbie Schuster

Blossom Hill Cleaners

Los Gatos, CA

Somewhere during her childhood I'm sure that Debbie Schuster read the book *How Green Was My Valley*, because she is living that title through her work in Silicon Valley near San Jose, California.

Situated perfectly at the intersection of Los Gatos Boulevard and Blossom Hill Road sits a perfect shopping center that includes Blossom Hill Cleaners. It also includes a Whole Foods supermarket, which sets the tone for the area. The area is full of very wealthy people who care an incredible amount about the environment. To set herself apart from the other cleaners in the area, Debbie took their passion for environmental responsibility very seriously. She built a beautiful call office that includes wall paper made from recycled crushed PVC piping. She also did the one, single most important thing that has made her the most successful cleaners in the entire area. She switched to Green Earth solvent. For Debbie, this is the single most important change that has made her business so successful. Debbie is, by far, the highest priced cleaner in her area. She charges \$25.00 per suit and \$3.25 per laundered shirt. Other cleaners in her area are not even close to that. Yet, she has customers that travel 45 miles to bring their clothes to Blossom Hill Cleaners.

How did she come to be so successful that loyal clients will travel so far to bring their clothes to her? Let's look at this dynamic woman from the start.

Debbie is a third generation dry cleaner. Both her grandfathers

owned successful dry cleaning operations. Her Mom and Dad actually met in a dry cleaners. Her Dad was working for his father, and her Mom had answered an ad for a job as a counter person, in the same plant. Whether it was their passion for cleaning, or possibly the perc fumes in the air, they naturally fell in love. At some point her Dad took over the operation from his father, but family problems and

Making More Green With Green Earth

different personalities caused her Dad to leave the cleaners and find a job as a Sanitone salesman in the area. Starting a family and traveling on the road to sell soap didn't suit her Dad too well, so he bought Blossom Hill Cleaners from one of the industry stalwarts in the area, Hix Sturman. A shopping center was being built across the street that her Dad thought would make a better location. He physically

moved the entire store to the new shopping center, by himself, using only one forklift. Today, Blossom Hill Cleaners is the only original tenant in that shopping center built in 1962. Six years ago, Debbie's Dad decided to retire and Debbie took over the operation. Debbie had a lot on her plate, being a single Mom with a 12 year old daughter, but has prospered as the owner of Blossom Hill. The store is medium sized (1700 square feet) and has 3 pressing stations, a Lightning Unipress shirt unit, and her pride and joy, a Green Earth cleaning machine. She designed a beautiful call office to reflect her environmental passion. Debbie had the Green Earth machine installed 5 years ago and credits the publicity of her environmental awareness and commitment as the main reasons for her success. Her Green Earth logos are everywhere. Her picture and story are on the covers of many of the most important periodicals and newspapers of the area. The story about her use of environmental friendly solvent is everywhere in the San Jose area. To understand this, you must understand the area as being right smack in the middle of Silicon Valley, where the clientele are very wealthy and will spend their money as they see fit. Mostly to reward businesses that reflect their own values and concerns. Her Green Earth commitment fits right into the community's wishes, desires and passion. Most of the other cleaners in the area do not share her passion for the community and its needs. Obviously, they are not the business people that Debbie is.

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MEMBER PROFILE
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Of course, the Green Earth machine is not the only reason for Blossom Hill's success. Debbie is a perfectionist. She makes sure every button is sewed on tightly, and every stain is removed. The pressing must be perfect: leaving no button impressions and no hanging threads. There are several areas along the path of the clothes production and assembly where every piece gets inspected carefully. She believes people will pay more for top quality.

Located in Silicon Valley brings its share of problems too. The hamburger flippers at McDonald's get \$10 an hour and Debbie must pay more to get quality people. This is another area where Debbie breaks the mold. "If you pay cheap, you get cheap. If you penny pinch, it will come back to bite you. If you don't treat people right, you will pay for it in the end. If you value your employees, they will value their job. If they value their jobs, you will attract customers who value a quality cleaning job done on their clothes." These are all Debbie's "Laws of Attraction" axioms. She lives by them every day. Sometimes she gets customers who mention that they cannot pay the prices that Blossom Hill charges. Debbie does not back down, but states that she understands, but is unwilling to pay her people any less than they deserve, and is unwilling to sacrifice quality standards for sub-quality work.

One day Debbie stumbled on a "City Search" website in the San Jose area. Customers put their rating on everything located in San Jose on this City Search site. The Green Earth environmental stan-

dard, as well as Blossom Hill Cleaners outstanding quality and customer service, has moved clients to put their feelings on the City Search site. She has since become the #1 rated cleaner and it has been a great asset to her business to be rated so highly. It cost \$100 a month to belong to the site, but it is well worth it for Debbie. Another use of the internet is that if you Google Green Earth, and put in her zip code, you come up with Blossom Hill Cleaners. Then, you can see all her newspaper articles, press releases, and radio and TV interviews.

Debbie also has a fun way of rewarding her customers. She will randomly give out free movie tickets with popcorn vouchers. She is also a health food advocate and loves "Mona Vie" Juice, which she loves to talk about and promote.

Debbie's philosophy about life helps her in her successful business. "In life, you get back what you put in. If you think positive, you'll get positive results. If you stay upbeat, you'll get upbeat. No negativity. It's wasted energy. I believe in the good in everything. I believe in being kind and generous and compassionate to people. I enjoy attending fund raisers and community activities, and meeting new people. The networking alone has increased people's awareness of Blossom Hill Cleaners and its commitment to the values of the people of San Jose and Silicon Valley".

Of course with a very successful and busy store comes many of the same problems that we all share. When asked what part of the busi-

ness she dreaded, Debbie said, "I hate having to deal with the stress of employees not showing up. My worst day was when one employee informed me she was going on disability. The same day another employee was caught stealing, and a third employee had called in sick. To top things off, I was training a new employee and it was her first day on the job. Of course, it was the busiest week of the year and there I was, alone with only one other employee, who was there for the first day. What a nightmare. I can still remember the customers waiting in line outside the door and there I was, not being able to get anything done. That is the part of the business that I dread the most."

Thankfully, for Debbie and for most of us, the good days outnumber the bad ones. Her ideas of positive attraction keep Debbie going and keep Blossom Hill Cleaners as the #1 rated cleaner in the area. It's a lot of hard work and dedication, but the benefits can be seen each day in her busy call office and work areas.

One of Debbie's hobbies is a real estate club where she learns about the opportunities and benefits of buying real estate. Some day she hopes to be able to retire and relax by one of her real estate purchases, while drinking her delicious Mona Vie Juice. In the meantime, you can catch her in her office working on the successful public relations campaigns that keep the Blossom Hill Cleaners name in the hearts and minds of most Silicon Valley residents. ♦

The Cost Of A New Route Customer



BY JAMES PEUSTER

Quite often I am asked how much it costs to acquire a new route customer and I have seen, heard and researched these costs, and the numbers continue to amaze me. I see in forums, emails and other

forms of conversation various dollar amounts about how much someone would or has paid to build their business one by one. I usually respond with the dreaded, "results may vary." However, I do know one thing, with all the various forms of marketing and selling, the costs of acquiring is looking around the \$50 to \$180 range.

With all the costs of direct mail, print advertising, sales staff and the actual time to implement the marketing procedures, this is a realistic range to examine. I know of some that have paid \$200 to \$400 per customer when purchasing an existing route. So what does that mean to you in developing Million Dollar Routes?

I look at it this way, with all the features and benefits of starting, growing, maintaining or even adding

another route, it is critical to do 2 things. One, have a strategic marketing plan in place and two, implement a retention plan as well. On all my projects, I make it mandatory for clients to have a strategic proactive system in place so that there is no recycling of customers.

So going back to your marketing plan, it is critical to recognize what works and what doesn't. Door-to-door has its advantages and disadvantages, just as direct mail, door-hangers, leaving bags, internet and other forms of advertising for routes. But here is what I know; if the average cost of acquiring a new route customer is, let's say, \$100, then you'd better have a prequalifying system in play as well. I mean, you don't break even until the customer enters the 4th, 5th, 6th or 7th month. Again, just because the average cost is \$100, doesn't guarantee that they will be a long-term customer.

What I do say is that you and I know it is a numbers game. Some will become long-term \$30 to \$60 a month customers if not more. Some will be one-hit wonders and be one and done. Some may not use you at all while others will refer you all day long. Like I have written before, if you want to grow your routes, you have to market the routes and a door-to-door plan is a great way to go. It is amazing how operators will be willing to pay \$1000 to \$5000 up front for marketing, but won't dish out money to a "live" salesperson. The bottom line is that your marketing team must be properly trained and be given every opportunity to succeed so that you can succeed. To me, the problem is not finding a good salesperson, but keeping a good salesperson. Then, develop a successful retention program and your routes will grow. ♦

James Peuster is a nationally known author, speaker, trainer, and coach who specializes in route development through Marketing, Management and Maintenance training. James has costs groups specifically designed for route costs and growth and his website is www.theouteopro.com

"Your ability to set goals, make plans and take action on them determines the course of your life. The very act of thinking and planning unlocks your mental powers, triggers your creativity and increases your mental and physical energies."

Brian Tracy
Author "Million Dollar Habits"

DO YOU LIVE UP TO YOUR ADVERTISING?
(Continued from page 2)

that this whole concept of advertising and marketing wasn't just some hocus-pocus scam to relieve him of his hard-earned money.

We planned another mailing, offering 25% off to all customers and prospects with incomes over \$50,000.

A couple of weeks later the cards were delivered and we all sat anxiously awaiting the response. He in the back of his Mercedes and me in my office. To everyone's amazement, the response was pathetic. Very few people responded, including reg-

ular customers, and the sales increase was hardly worth the effort.

By this time he was calling me at 8 a.m. on a daily basis. If I was such a "marketing guru" why wasn't his cash register ringing!

I was stumped. I had already gone down my list of prerequisites: Do you do quality work? Do you give fast, friendly service? Is your store open at convenient times for the traffic flow? Is your store easily accessible from both directions? He had answered all of these in the affirmative.

What was the problem? And, "why didn't I have the answer?"

As fate would have it, a couple of weeks later his store manager, and primary counterperson, was ill and the businessman brought in his niece to cover for her. The niece began to hear horror stories from the few die-hard customers, who still frequented this location. The manager was rude to everyone: the other employees; the customers; basically, anyone who dared to cross the threshold of this store. And, since this businessman seldom even visited the store himself, he was totally unaware of the real problem.

Most people might conclude, from here, that the manager was the problem for this store's inability to bolster sales. The manager wasn't the real problem. The real problem was this particular businessman's lack of communication, both with his customers and especially with his employees. It's every businessperson's responsibility to not only know how their customers are being treated, but to direct the customer care plan.

Without a functioning customer care plan, all the advertising in the world won't save your business. ♦

Did You Pass?

In December we sent out a sample of our Valentine postcard and several Members opted to send these to their customers.

Don and Dale Velez of Young's Cleaners in New Orleans sent 250 cards to customers at each of their two locations. They offered a one time 25% off on drycleaning. One location had 66 out of 250 customers respond for a total return of 26%. That's about what we would have expected. However, the second store had 140 responses out of 250 for a 56% return. Their total response for the two stores was 41%.

Which goes to show, if you love your customers, they'll love you in return!

THE GOLOMB GROUP WELCOMES THIS MONTH'S NEW MEMBERS

Eva Keleman

Chibi Dry Cleaners
Streetsboro, OH

Bernie Elbaum

Dryclean World
Shaumburg, IL

Drew Spoto

Elite Cleaners
Boca Raton, FL

Amin Visram

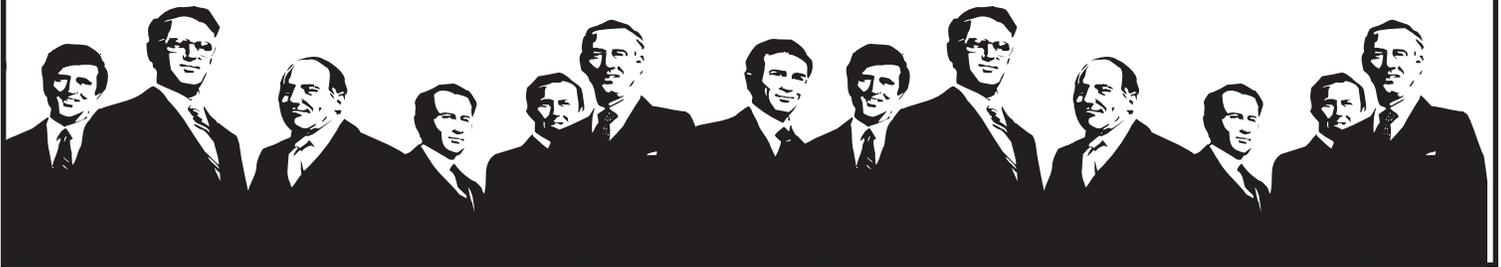
Fosters Fine Cleaners
Dallas, TX

Carrie Gregory

*Newark Cleaners
& Shoe Repair*
Newark, OH

Mark Tillet

Sheldon Cleaners
Elk Grove, CA



“Should I have Routes?”

A Webinar by James Peuster

Monday, April 14, 2008

6:30 Central Time

The Golomb Group is proud to announce that James Peuster is conducting a live Webinar on **Monday, April 14, 2008**. The topic will be “Should I Have Routes” and is geared to those who struggle with the concept of routes or struggle building their delivery services. For more information or to sign up, go to www.theroutepro.com, cost is **\$39.00**.

Read This Before You Raise Your Prices Again

By Don Desrosiers

Consider this: When you buy a toy for a child – it could be anything – a train set, a tricycle or bicycle, anything it seems, you are not really buying a tricycle, you are buying a kit to build one! Why should the manufacturer send parts off to a third world country to have it assembled when “Joe consumer” will happily accept a build-it-yourself version?

But they are hardly alone. UPS doesn't need to print shipping labels anymore. That must save them lots of money. Shippers gladly do all of the work with their own labor, printer, paper and ink. The same is true for the US Postal service. You can get a Post Office license, and pay extra for the privilege and pay for the paper as well as the labor and printer costs. Boarding pass for your flight? Print it yourself!

And that is hardly the end of it. Even Cleaner's Supply will send you things that are kits to build them yourself. Need a sweater rack? No problem. You can't really buy one, but you can buy a kit with all the parts and complete instructions. Need a bagging stand? No problem. Same deal. Do you want to buy a sheet of 3/4" plywood? Try it. The sign may say 3/4", but the small print indicates that what you're buying is 23/32" thick. They give you less, charge you more and we accept it. Have you tried to buy a 9x12 rug? It ain't happening, pal.

I doubt that there is anything that we can do that is similar to this, but this sure is food for thought. And the fact that we probably cannot do something similar to this in our businesses actually furthers my point. Sure, we are a service business, but so are UPS and the US Postal Service.

The fact is, drycleaners provide the same complete service that we have always provided. In fact more, when you think about the free home delivery and pickup that so many of you offer. Can you imagine buying a tricycle from Toys 'R' Us, over the phone, and without an extra charge an employee of theirs would deliver to your doorstep, fully assembled? That is so “off-the-wall” that it sounds like I am being a wiseguy!

The fact is, we still provide a full complete service and we do more for our customers then we used to, not less. The point is that you should never be afraid to pass on increases in your costs to your customers. Other businesses cut corners, cut labor and still charge you more. These are great examples to mention to your customers if and when they comment about the price increase that you are planning, don't you think?

“If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.”

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10 Tips

For Effective Website Marketing

You can significantly improve your profit margins by converting a larger percentage of your website visitors into customers. Consider the ideas presented here before building your website or, if you already have a web presence, review your site to be sure these elements are a part of it.

Tip #1. Consider all the elements. Your website elements like: headlines, content, page layout, image placement, button size and color, all play a major role in how well your website converts visitors into customers.

Tip #2. Have a compelling benefit. Include information that is of real value to the customer, like clothing care tips from DLI and NCA. An internet coupon is another genuine benefit that will drive visitors to your site.

Tip #3. Best search terms. Either you or your web designer must know the best search terms for search engine optimization and pay-per-click listings. This cannot be left to chance. You must know what terms your targeted visitors are searching on. Failure to do so can kill the return on your search engine marketing investment.

Tip #4. Search engine ranking is important. Search engine rankings are too important to treat casually. You must consistently pay attention to your organic rankings, and your competitors rankings. This is the foundation for continuous improvement of your search rankings.

Tip #5. Optimize landing pages for local search terms. Conversions start with qualified visitors finding what they are looking for. Optimized landing pages give the search engines what they need to rank your site at the top.

Tip #6. Have a “pull component” in your website. Today websites are like phone numbers, every business has one. You must find a way to differentiate yourself from your competitors and give your prospective visitors a compelling reason to visit your website.

Tip #7. Use your “pull component” in both online and off-line marketing. Once you have a compelling reason to get visitors to your website you must let them know about it in all of your advertising. By aggressively getting the word out you can gain an important advantage over your competition.

Tip #8. It's more important that your webmaster be a marketing expert than a technical expert. A well-meaning, technically competent, webmaster can inadvertently kill the marketing elements of your website. For example, too little content, too much content, duplicate content, and unspiderable content, can ruin your chances for top search engine rankings.

Tip #9. Not including a website marketing advisor as part of your team. Website success is not a technical accomplishment. Website success is the result of good marketing. You must identify appropriate traffic building strategies and see to it that your strategies are properly executed and the results are monitored.

Tip #10. Make your site interactive. Give customers and visitors a way to contact you through your website and, above all, promptly respond when they do!

How much would your profits increase if you could boost your website results by 10%, 20%, or even 30%? And don't forget the lifetime value of these new customers and any referrals they bring.

