

Advertising Sales Tips

IDEAS FOR ASSOCIATION PUBLISHERS

Selling Your Association's Product on the Time Continuum

So, your association offers a full menu of products designed to attract the advertising and exhibit space of your industry's suppliers. And, if yours is like many other associations, you sell each of these as separate products, perhaps, you even use different sales staff to sell them. If you think this model is working, think again, because the customers that you sell to want more value than your current structure delivers—and they are getting it from your competitors.

Think of your customers' needs as being on a time continuum and you have products which are able to meet those specific time-driven goals. Let's look at

an example. A medium size association offers advertising on a number of its products as well as exhibit space at its face-to-face events. Its website is updated daily, it sends out an e-newsletter every Friday, publishes a monthly print magazine and holds an annual convention with exhibits. In reality, what this association has to offer is a variety of combinations of ways that an industry supplier can reach the market represented by the association or professional society.

Rather than selling individual products, your sales staff should be selling the full array of products as a single solution that spans the time continuum. The advertiser can reach the market daily or on a specific day with a web ad, weekly through the e-newsletter, monthly with a print ad, or annually as an exhibitor at the convention. Working with his salesperson, the client can develop a customized marketing strategy for how and when it

delivers its message to your association's membership. There are many possible permutations of this approach. For instance, an advertiser is planning to announce the launch of a new product tomorrow. He wants to advertise it, but doesn't want to wait a month until the next issue of your magazine is published, and he doesn't want his competitors learning about the new product until after it is released. The solution: he should purchase an ad on your organization's website today, so

the market will hear about it tomorrow. As news of the product reaches the customers, he should schedule an ad in the next available issue of your e-newsletter

that will not only describe the new product, but also drive traffic to the special area of the company's website designed to promote it. Finally, once established, he should plan on demonstrating the product as an exhibitor at your next event. The result: this customer's tactical marketing goals were met through the use of your association's multiple offerings packaged and sold to him in a way that met his needs.

When you speak to your customers and perspective advertisers, listen to what they are saying. Ask them what the goals are for their advertising and marketing investments and develop a customized and unique plan that meets those goals and expectations. In the end, sales is about delivering value, and by understanding the time continuum of your organization's offerings, you will be better able to deliver the maximum value being asked of you.



Summer Tasks

Although most of us think of summer as the time to kick back, take things a little easier, and enjoy some much-needed time off, it is also the time of year to get ready for the important fall selling season. Following are some of the important things you should look at in the coming months as you prepare for 2010 sales:

Editorial Calendar—

Working with your organization's editor, begin planning what major topics will be covered as feature stories in 2010. You should also start to plan for special issues such as a buyer's guide, annual report, or other special topic that will attract advertisers. The calendar should also include information about which issues will be distributed at your association's meetings, conferences, and conventions as well as events produced by others. Your editorial calendar is one of the most important parts of your media kit and will be utilized by advertisers and their agencies as they make their media purchasing plans.

Advertising Rates—Will you be increasing your advertising rates for 2010? If so, by how much? Now is the perfect time to do the necessary research so that

you can devise a rate structure for next year that will keep you competitive while assuring that your direct and indirect costs are covered. Talk to your printer to find out if they will be increasing their charges for their services or the paper they use to produce your magazine. Check to see if there will be any increases in postal rates for the class of postage you use.

2010 Media Kit—Over the next several months you should develop and produce your 2010 advertising media kit. This is the perfect time to assess your current kit's content and determine what changes or additional information you want to add to it. It's also time to start planning for the design and production of the kit and all of its contents, as well as the form your kit will take in its electronic version available on your organization's website.

Strategic Planning—This is probably the most important task to begin now. What are the goals for your publication for the year ahead? The budget process will require that you set revenue goals, but there are others to be considered. Are there companies or entire categories of advertisers you want to see purchase space in

your magazine or on your website? If so, how will you get that to happen? Is the sales structure that is currently in place as effective as it can be? Is your publication holding its market share? Are you regularly communicating with your customers and prospects and is this communication delivering the results you had expected? These are issues that should be assessed now so that improvements can be made as the fall selling season begins.

Cross-selling Opportunities—Now is also a great time to look at all of the products and services offered by your association to the supplier community and create programs and incentives that are designed to increase income while also enhancing the value your association's clients receive through their relationships with you. In today's market, advertisers spend their money with the media that delivers the most value and exposure. Through a program of cross-selling, your association can take advantage of its strengths by meeting and exceeding the expectations of your customers.

Enjoy the summer, but also plan ahead for the fall and all of next year.

Advertising Sales Experts, Inc. offers several services, each designed to develop and maximize non-dues revenues for associations and professional societies. Our services include: print and web advertising sales, exhibit sales, sponsorship sales, and technologies that support those products including virtual trade shows and video production. Call today to set up a meeting to discuss your organization's revenue producing products and how we can partner with you to maximize the revenue each generates.