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GUIDE**



Wake up, marketers

by Rich Porayko

I heard a disturbing story recently from the editor of this magazine. He told me he invited over 100 Win-Door exhibitors to submit product information for this Win-Door preview issue. You know how many companies sent submissions? Seven. Out of over 100 exhibitors. That's under seven per cent.

Unfortunately, that's about normal for this industry. The companies who couldn't be bothered to send submissions had already spent thousands on a booth and will continue to spend more on travel, accommodation, parking, meals, rentals cars, displays and samples. Yet they completely ignore a free chance to promote all of these investments. It is hard to get a window fabricator or dealer out of the office and into a trade show at the best of times. In order to maximize ROI on your event dollars, marketers should promote trade shows and sponsorships as much as possible in advance and touch members of the market that are not even going to be attending the event. With any trade show booth or sponsorship, the actual event is only a small part of the equation. The journey to the show is as important as the show itself. The best and busiest booths in the business have spent time and effort scheduling meetings with customers, press and suppliers to create a buzz. They don't just set up and hope people are going to stumble across their booths. It only makes sense to get as much out of your investment as you possibly can, otherwise, why even bother? Maximizing the return on your marketing dollar is just as important as maximizing your ROI everywhere else in your business. That's what the Lean business philosophy is all about.

Whatever else you do, when a trade publication is offering free editorial, take it. You can afford to stop marketing when you are not looking for growth because you have a monopoly on the market, your customers love your service, your pricing is perfect, there are zero defects and no back orders ever. Then let me know when you are hiring, because everyone in the industry will want to know your secret. Otherwise, there is no excuse for

failing to execute basic promotion by taking advantage of free advertising on the rare occasion it is available.

Advance promotion and event management aside (booth etiquette is another topic altogether), follow-ups are the hardest and most important part of the event marketing puzzle, and usually the most poorly executed. I have a lot of respect for sales reps that follow up after trade shows. The ones that don't follow up, not so much. If someone with a project they want to discuss asks for a catalogue or a phone call, send them a catalogue or give them a call. This is a hot lead. All leads generated should be entered into some sort of a CRM database or spreadsheet for a general follow up.

As a freelance writer, I get the chance to speak with a broad range of people from throughout the world of glass construction and architecture. There are companies that are easy to work with and others that are difficult to work with. When I wear my marketing consultant hat, a big part of my role is to literally make the lives of the media easier. Making it easy for the media to cover your activities sounds like a no-brainer, however, only seven per cent of marketers in this industry are actually doing it.

Improving your marketing approach is not as hard as it may seem. To be visible, you need to be active. Assigning someone to be active and responsible in marketing your company is a huge step in the right direction. If no one is accountable, your marketing efforts will fail. Someone at your company needs to own marketing. If you don't already have a marketer on board, take a close look at your existing staff. A lot of people are closet marketers and enjoy the creativity.

Stay tuned for future columns for tips, tricks and rants on how to get the biggest bang out of your marketing buck.

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