

Top 5 Marketing (continued from page 10)

and website quote requests are made as well as some websites offer a 'guest book' feature. If you utilize a follow up CRM service such as Victory Solutions they do an excellent job of obtaining emails, also. Other creative ways to acquire customer emails include a kiosk promoting raffles for free giveaways, etc. It can take a little time to funnel all of these emails into one data base, but after you get the system set up, it's well worth the time and effort. There are many benefits of email marketing including no postage and printing costs, promoting upcoming events, promotions, and in general keeping in contact with your proven loyal customers. Yes, you will have many deleted, and even someone who sends you back a tacky email, but the benefits outweigh the negatives by far.

'SEM' stands for 'Search Engine Marketing' which are the paid for highlighted ads you see at the top and sides of the search engine pages. SEM and pay per click are also effective tools for procuring new leads, but can also get expensive and studies show that customers are more likely to click on the non 'paid for' links.

One other form of internet marketing tool is buying leads from a 3rd party provider such as www.powersportstv.com. For \$5 or \$10 you can purchase leads in your area. Although I don't have a lot of experience with this, I know it's very popular in the automotive industry.

Please note, all of these strategies are intended to generate sales leads through your website, and many dealers are generating as many as 25 or 30 leads but not doing anything with them. In order to optimize this 'hidden marketing asset' this holiday season, be sure you take action and follow up quickly on all internet leads you generate. "It's not the big that eat the small, it's the fast that eat the slow!"

Hidden Marketing Asset # 4: Merchandising

The goal of leveraging your hidden marketing assets is to maximize every sales opportunity. In other words, once we drive the customer into our store, we want to convert more 'just lookers' into buyers and increase the average amount that each of those buyers spend. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by having a clean well laid out professionally merchandised store. Jim Rasmus of Retail Designs and Associates is THE authority for Dealership layout, store design, and literally wrote the book on merchandising for the Powersports Industry. It's called 'Winning in the Powersports Industry' and if you don't have a copy then you should. It can be purchased from his website at www.retaildesignassociates.com.

As a Powersports Dealer, you are a retail business and you're true competition is every other retail business that is fighting for the expendable portion of every family's income. Do you think Macy's will have their store decorated for the Holidays? You bet.....what about Best Buy and Bass Pro Shop's? Your Dealership needs to be merchandised both internally and externally to leverage this powerful 'Hidden Marketing Asset'.



The outside of your dealership represents the all important holiday spirited first impression. In fact your location is arguably the most important of all of your hidden marketing assets. Units with red bows, ATV's pulling trailers decorated like Santa pulling a sleigh, holiday themed signage, and banners, lay-away today, special holiday financing, lights and more can all create excitement and convert a passerby into a prospect during this holiday season.

The inside is just as important, and once that passerby enters, the layout should easily guide their direction as they hear holiday music and feel the cheer before being promptly and courteously greeted by a smiling energetic staff member wearing Christmas stocking caps. More holiday themes and red bows on bikes and accessories with deadline driven holiday incentive signage should be carefully placed throughout the store in strategic places with professional sign holders.

Mannequins are what Jim calls 'Silent Salespeople' and are another great way to show off popular clothing and create the feeling of action and excitement to promote additional holiday sales. Merchandising both inside and out can be done creatively without spending a fortune and you can usually get several years use out of your decorations.

Packaging is another great way to leverage your marketing efforts. Just like a McDonalds #1 combo, look at creative way to increase your sales per transaction by creating holiday packages such as a Bike Cover, S-100 Cleaning Kit, and a rain suit all packaged together. Merchandising is another powerful hidden marketing asset that can increase your conversion rate and dollars per transaction without significantly increasing your expense.

Hidden Marketing Asset # 5: The Telephone

Your dealership spends thousands and thousands of dollars to make the telephone ring. From store location to advertising, expensive phone systems and phone bills, literally tens of thousands of dollars are spent to generate customer responses.

Since there are really only 3 ways a customer can take action let's examine 100 responses to the Sales Department inquiring about a new or used unit. Let's say that 50 customers walk in, 40 call on the telephone, and 10 are internet leads. Of the 50 that walk in let's say 20% or 10 buy. That leaves 40 walk-ins who visited the store but didn't make a purchase. What needs to happen to those 40 unsold customers? They need to have a follow up call placed by the Salesperson or management. What about the 10 that were sold? They also need a 'thank you for your business' / referral prospecting follow up call. So therefore, 50 out of 50 of your walk-ins are tied to telephone performance right?

Now, what about the 40 customers who called in? Well since they phoned in, obviously the only chance of converting them into an appointment hinges upon phone skills. So far 90 out of 100 of the customer responses have had a corresponding relationship to phone skills right?

What about the last 10 internet leads? Well, although it's important that they have a quick email response, the very next thing that should happen is to pick up the phone and call that prospect. Why? Because, it's very hard to develop rapport,



interview and investigate customer hot buttons, build value in the dealership, learn about potential trade-ins, etc via email. It's always best to pick up the phone and call all internet leads. So now if you call all 10 internet leads, that means that 100 out of 100 or 100% of your business ties back to telephone skills. Since you're already paying for all of the overhead to generate

these 100 responses, maximizing this extremely powerful 'hidden marketing asset' can literally add 5 digits of additional profit to your bottom line without spending one extra penny.

I recently ran into a good Dealership U client who had completed our 'phone skills' training. She told me that she had been handling the phones at her dealership for 26 years and when asked to do this training felt reluctant. She then went on to explain just how much she enjoyed it, as well as how much she learned. Professionalism, politeness, courtesy, enthusiasm, voice tone and inflection, how to capture customers contact information, how to secure appointments, build value, take messages, and make follow up outbound dials are just some of the key components required to maximize this 'hidden marketing asset'.

On a side note, it's always great to change your on-hold message and music to incorporate a holiday theme. Leveraging the power of the telephone can go a long way in increasing the number of prospects who come to the store as well as the conversion rate of those prospects.

Conclusion:

Having a successful holiday season isn't about executing one magical marketing campaign. There isn't any one silver bullet that will automatically increase your holiday sales by 200%. A truly successful dealership has a holiday marketing plan and understands how to leverage its 'Hidden Marketing Assets' to the fullest. This means capitalizing on money that is already being spent to get a maximum return on that investment. This means having fun this holiday season, taking action and focusing on the proven best practices that generate the most profitable return. Merry Christmas! ☺

Phone Skills



- Did you know that as much as 90% of your business depends on how your sales team works the phones?
- When was the last time you mystery-shopped your sales team?
- Do they answer the phones with enthusiasm?
- Have they been trained on how to get the customer's name and number?
- Are they bypassing price and trying to sell the appointment?