

# Use paper salesmen to create more sales

Give sales fliers a try to push items off your truck.

BY PHIL SASSO

**Q** I hand out my promo pieces every week and they do a good job bringing in sales. But I've talked to some dealers that are getting a lot more business from their handouts than I am. I figure everyone sees the same basic deals. What could be the big difference?

**A** Everyone loves a deal. (Especially in this economy.) And there is no better way to promote your weekly or monthly deals than with the promotional fliers from your flag or your WD. (You might think of them as "paper salesmen.") They definitely make closing a sale easier.

But handing a customer a flier and walking away isn't really selling. You're much better off using the flier as a tool to connect with your customer.

"In many cases, it's the way to start a conversation," says Don Russell Digital Marketing Manager at Cornwell Tools. "If you don't carry tools in, then you'd better be carrying literature in. And hopefully both."

Russell says sales of a product increase dramatically when it's featured in print. "Shooting from the hip,

I think you could easily say it's two to three times the monthly volume when an item's in a flier."

A sophisticated dealer will know what's on promotion and how that lines up with what his customers want, says Russell. "The dealer will walk into a shop with the flier or tool in his hand and say 'Hey, you were looking at this last month. Now it's on sale and I can give you a deal on it.' Then he'll review features and benefits and he'll use the flier to close the deal."

## Make a wish list

The successful dealer is able to make this sales connection by keeping a good customer "wish list." In fact, a wish list is so integral to the success of a dealer that "it's not even worth talking about not doing it," says Russell with a laugh at his own use of double negatives.

Keeping your wish lists up-to-date is as crucial as carrying in a tool bag or carrying in your fliers. With the average top-tier dealer seeing over 300 customers a week,

keeping track of a customer's wants and needs requires keeping a detailed, current wish list for every customer.

"There is no way that a human being is going to remember what every guy wants," says Russell. "If he doesn't write it down or put it into his [wish list] program to be prompted when he comes to that stop next week, that opportunity is going to pass him by."

According to Russell, the killer combo in tool marketing is to: "maintain your wish list, carry in tools, and distribute your fliers and literature. If you do those three things consistently, it's really hard to see how you're not going to be successful at selling tools."

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## SALES Q & A

**Q**

Should I create my own handouts? Sometimes I feel like I want to promote products that my flag isn't promoting. Is that a waste of my time?

**A**

It's not a waste of time at all. A lot of guys successfully put together fliers to promote unique items they carry or special purchases they picked up. Just be sure you keep a good balance between making it look professional and wasting too much time making it look professional.

Cornwell's Russell told me that Cornwell has launched an innova-

tive Flyer Builder program to give dealers an online tool to build their own custom fliers featuring whatever products they want to offer.

"No matter how good we are at corporate, no matter how clear our crystal ball is, we are still not as good as a dealer in his own territory," says Russell. "He may know a certain product that will sell better for him. Or he may have purchased items at a rally or at a district manager's meeting or have something on his truck that he needs to move. Now he can build his own flier with his own products -- that's like the best thing he can do in his territory."

Basically, the Cornwell Flyer Builder has a series of templates to choose from. Using the online system, the dealer selects any items in the Cornwell catalog (or uploads pho-

tos of his own products like a used toolbox) and chooses his promotional offer and/or pricing. The system allows a dealer to create and print out a professional-looking, one-page flier featuring a series of items and his name at the bottom in about five to 10 minutes, says Russell.

"When I introduced the Flyer Builder at the (Cornwell) Rally, I asked the dealers in the room to raise

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their hands if they still had products on their truck from their original inventory," says Russell. There were dealers who had been in the business two years and dealers who had been in the business more than 20 years. "Every hand shot up."

Using a custom flier like this, dealers can now move those items, says Russell.

Perhaps you're not artistic or aren't good with layout software. If your flag doesn't offer an online application like Cornwell's, consider working with a local copy shop or talented student to pull together a flier for you.

### Use what's already there

But don't reinvent the wheel. The promotional literature from your flag or WD are often all you need to boost sales. Their team usually works very hard to pull together a good mix of products that covers the spectrum from body shop to general repair to performance shop. And manufacturer's literature is usually developed to fully cover all a tool's features and benefits.

To customize your fliers, maybe all you need to do is buy a roll of address labels with your name and phone number so that your customer's remember who gave them a WD catalog or product brochure.

Whatever you choose to do, just be sure you use your literature to strike up a conversation with your customers.

Keep in mind that the number one reason your customers are buying from you is not your handouts -- it's you. ■

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