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MARKETING AUTHORITY



11 Free and engaging marketing tactics

Marketing costs money or takes time. If you have more time than money, here are 11 ways to market your plumbing company that do not cost a dime.

1. Create a company Facebook Page: This is free and it's your chance to engage your customers and crow about your company. Post information that your customers will find interesting and occasionally post a coupon.

Some plumbers make the mistake of thinking Facebook and other social media are wastes of time. Instead, think of them as networking from your desktop or mobile phone. You do not need to drive to a networking event and you do not need to spend hours. Short bursts of time though out the day are actually better.

2. Create a Pinterest Page: Pinterest is dominated by women. Seventy-one percent of users, according to Pinterest are women. Why does this matter? Who calls you for service, men or women?

Pinterest is very visual. Women use it to create wish lists. This gives you a chance to show higher end, designer grade plumbing products. Just make sure that one of your Pinterest boards is dedicated to local events like, "Things to do with kids in yourtown," or "Your-town events page." This attracts people from your community, who can then notice your boards featuring bathroom bling, kitchen décor, water conservation and aging in place.

3. Complete your Google Local Page: Google allows any local business to build a profile. This helps you rise in the rankings when someone in your

community searches for a plumber. Once again, this is free. Think of it as a free mini-webpage. The more complete your listing, the better you will rank.

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Fill out your location, add photos and videos, and solicit reviews.

4. Start a company YouTube Channel: Anyone can make videos and post them with a good phone and an Internet connection. Worry more about content than quality. Make videos of the interesting things you run across while doing service. Make videos with homeowner tips, concluding that they can always call you and you will make the problem go away.

5. Collect email addresses and email people monthly: The way to collect email addresses is to ask for them. People are used to providing them now. If you want, you can incent people by telling them at the time they request service that you have a \$10 coupon you can email to them. Or, you can offer to email a bio and photo of the plumber you are dispatching.

Once you build an email list, reach out to them every month. Alternate a consumer newsletter, with a special offer, with a consumer interest piece. Every email should promise savings for the consumer.

6. Adopt a spot: If you have three

or four people, it normally takes about half an hour one day a month to police the medians of a busy road, picking up litter. Most towns will give you signage

at the spot, recognizing your company. When you pick up trash, pick a time when the road is well traveled and wear t-shirts with the company name and logo emblazoned large on the back.

7. Be a Boy Scout: When you see a stranded motorist, stop and help. Tell your plumbers to stop as well. Find ways to do good deeds for others with no thought of recompense and the good feelings and social media buzz will surprise you. As one contractor remarked about a consumer who took a picture of one of his trucks while helping a motorist and posted it on social media, "You just can't buy this."

8. Volunteer: When you volunteer you become part of the community. You start to become recognized as one of the "community" contractors that gives you a leg up over the big boxes and Internet companies. Always wear company apparel when you volunteers. You do not have to hype your business, just be there and participate.

9. Practice affinity marketing: Affinity marketing occurs when you support an organization or cause that has a loyal following. When you do business

with one of the supporters, you make a small donation to the organization. In return, the organization promotes you to its supporters. Is it free? Yes, because you are essentially discounting booked work. For the organization, it's a painless fundraiser. Churches (or church choirs), homeowners associations, parent teacher organizations, and non-profits are just a few of the organizations open to raising money through affinity marketing.

10. Speak at service clubs: Service clubs like Rotary, Lion's, Optimist, Kiwanis, and Civitan all need weekly speakers. Contact the clubs (some even maintain speaker's bureaus) and offer to speak. Subjects can be water conservation for homes and businesses, preventing home floods, green plumbing, aging in place, and so on.

11. Ask for referrals: Surprising as it sounds, people do not know you need referrals. Most people are not business oriented, so it never crosses their minds. Ask everyone you do business with for referrals and be appreciative when you receive them.

To get even more referrals, give lots of referrals yourself. When you make a referral, don't leave it to chance. People do not always tell someone they were referred. Call the person you made the referral to and tell him you referred him and to expect a call. You want credit for making the referral. **G**

For a free copy of the Service Roundtable's Guide to Affinity Marketing, call 877.262.3341 and ask for the Success Team or reach out through the website at ServiceRoundtable.com.

Rescue Rooter of SLC donates services to veteran in need

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH — Rescue Rooter of Salt Lake City, a network



David Gardner and Craig, an ARS technician.

branch of American Residential Services (ARS) in Memphis, Tennessee, donated over \$17,500 in products and services to David Gardner, a Salt Lake City veteran.

The ARS employees, in conjunction with several local vendors, were able to fix the pipe burst for Gardner at no charge.

The team at ARS reached out to several willing vendors whom also leant their support, including Staker Parson's, Pro Pipe, Peterson Supply, As-

phalt Masters, Wasatch Barricades and Springville City.

"Mr. Gardner has expressed numerous times how grateful he is for all that we are doing," said Tracy Nevin, general manager of Rescue Rooter of Salt Lake City. "This makes our Salt Lake City team feel incredibly proud to be able to help and honor a well deserving veteran and his family."

Donating to a veteran in need is part of a company-wide initiative for ARS and its branches nationwide. The

program, called ARS Cares, is aimed at donating a HVAC system or water heater to a veteran in need. "It is a privilege to be able to serve those who have selflessly served our country," said Dave Slott, ARS Co-CEO.

ARS will be working in targeted markets alongside specific veterans' services agencies in order to complete this project. Also, ARS employees in every branch across the U.S. will be engaging in volunteer and civic opportunities geared towards veterans' services. **G**