

National Institute
of Restoration, Inc.
nir-inc.com



2008

OnSite

Volume 11 • Issue 3 March 2008

MARKETING MATTERS

Making your classified ads sell

One advertising medium often overlooked is the lowly classified ad. Marketing consultant Kevin Nunley says that classifieds are an affordable and effective way to advertise if done correctly.

There are four rules for making classified ads work for your business:

Target your best prospects. Who is reading the newspaper, website or other publication? The local bargain shopper probably targets working-class people looking for inexpensive bargains while the daily newspaper reaches homeowners.

Write a good headline. The headline makes or breaks the ad. People skim the first few words – usually printed in bold – to get a split second idea of whether or not they are interested. Pack as much information as you can into a few words.

Keep your ad body short. Short ads cost less. Don't worry about complete sentences. Just lay out essential information and how the product benefits the reader. Some words that work well: free, new, amazing, now, how to, easy.

Track your ad. You need to find out which ads work and which don't or you are wasting your money. Create a separate web page for response to each ad or have people responding to your ad call the office and ask for an extension number.

Watch out when registering your domain

If you have found a domain name you like and want to see if it is available, be careful who else you let know about your choice before you register it.

The best way to check on the availability of a domain name is to type it into a Google search. If you get a message that the site is not found or IE cannot display the page, chances are you can register your domain name with no problems.

Dozens of internet sites handle domain

HIGHLIGHTS

- Nuts & bolts
- Working smarter
- 2008 Executive Leadership Conference

NIR helps you boost your business

From networking to education to marketing assistance, NIR supports restoration specialists. **434.973.4200**

registrations. So after you do your Google search and find a domain name is available, go to a registrar like Go Daddy (godaddy.com) or Name.com (two reputable sites) and complete the registration.

If you do your domain name search on the same site that sells registrations you could be in for a surprise if you don't register the name immediately. Some of the less-than-honest sites will immediately capture the name you searched on and take it. Then the company will offer to sell it to you – a major rip-off.

Tax breaks for small businesses

The Economic Stimulus bill

President Bush signed into law on Valentine's Day offers some bonuses for small businesses.

An addition added by the Senate gives businesses an expansion of "bonus depreciation" which allows investments in tangible property, computer software or improvements to leased property to be more speedily depreciated.

Another provision of the bill will increase deductions that small businesses can list as expenses rather than depreciate.

National Federation of Independent Business tax counsel Bill Rys calls the bill a good product from the perspective of small business.



NUTS AND BOLTS

The three great essentials to achieving anything worthwhile are
1st -- hard work; 2nd -- stick-to-itivness; 3rd -- common sense.

--Thomas Edison

Mark your calendar for May 14-16

NIR's 2008 Executive Leadership Conference will be held in Phoenix, AZ on May 14-16 starting with a special project management workshop on May 14. On May 15-16, the longest-running conference of insurance restoration professionals will bring you dynamic speakers, motivational roundtables and the best networking opportunities in the industry.

Check the website (www.nir-inc.com) or call NIR (434.973.4200) for more information.



WORKING SMARTER

Shoot your computer!

By Martin Woods

Woods Restoration Services, LLC

When I started my sales activities in this industry, email was a distant invention with a promise to change the way business development was done.



Well, it's here now and it certainly has changed the way we develop business – for the worse. E mail is the worst friend a business development rep can have! It should be taken out of your arsenal completely. Go into your bathroom and drop your laptop in the toilet and throw your Blackberry in behind it.

How could I be so against something that makes communicating with your client so easy? Simple. Email makes reps lazy.

They start to think that sending email is the same as real sales. Instead of getting off their duffs and going to see clients or calling them,

they send an email and think that really means something. Sending a hand-written letter that shows some effort is replaced by a few key lame strokes. Making a presentation has been replaced by adding an "attachment." Birthday cards that once were kept around for a week or two are immediately sent to a "virtual trash can." Phone calls are replaced by one impersonal letters on screen. Creativity is an afterthought.

Computer screens have become the preeminent hiding place for business reps. Reps hide behind fortified bunkers so they never really have to come out of their comfort zone. They send emails rather than make phone calls. They can avoid all rejections this way. Time that should be spent in the field in front of your customers is replaced by fingers pecking away on a key board.

What else don't I like about e mail? It has no body language to interpret. It teaches you nothing about your client. It shows no effort. It doesn't further a personal relationship. There's no small talk to find commonality. It is far too



easy for a client to delete you. It makes it easy for your client to give you bad news where they might be less inclined to do it to your face.

When a client e mails you, call them back or better yet, stop in a see them. Don't fall in to their email trap.

So take the plunge. Consider it a sin to email a client. Get in their face. Sit in their office. Get them on the phone. Set yourself apart by going back in time to a day when reps got to know their clients as human beings and not just some lights flashing on a screen.

Don't even get me started on text messaging.

Redoubling efforts on sales

Although businesses should always look for ways to improve service and do more networking, economic downturns highlight the need for these best practices.

- Get involved in community organizations or charities;
- Get on a committee
- Make it a goal to meet new people every day.
- Reconnect with present or past customers. They are usually the best source for new business.
- Give customers something extra in the way of discounts, additional services or other perks.

Let NIR Open Doors For You

Keep in touch with your clients by giving them information they can use.

Send NIR's popular newsletter on the insurance industry including business tips to all of your agents and adjusters.

Contact NIR to learn more:
434.973.4200
nir@nir-inc.com



It's time to hunker down

With the problems in the housing market and a likely tightening of credit, now is a good time for all small businesses to do some belt-tightening and keep an eagle eye on costs. The economic slowdown has already had an impact on businesses in the building industry and their suppliers.



While credit is getting tighter, small firms with good credit and solid cash flow can find money to expand if they look long enough. According to a report from the National Federation of Independent Businesses, small community banks that have avoided high-risk securities and poor lending practices are still offering credit to small businesses.

The bright side of business for those in the construction industry is in remodeling. The home improvement market is showing signs of healthy activity as people spend money on small projects when they cannot move or sell their homes.

Right ways to deal with insubordination

Insubordination on the job—usually direct refusal to follow a supervisor's orders – often results in termination. Because employees may argue that they did not understand that their actions could lead to disciplinary consequences, here are some guidelines for dealing with that problem.

- Be sure the request is legitimate, reasonable and falls within the employee's job responsibilities.
- Make sure the employee clearly understands what you want him to do and realizes that it is a directive.
- If the employee continues to protest, inform him that you expect him to follow through.
- With continued resistance, inform the employee you are giving a direct order and his noncompliance could be grounds for disciplinary action.
- If he still resists, follow through with the appropriate action.

DISCLAIMER: This material has been compiled by National Institute of Restoration, Inc. for the use and convenience of representatives of the insurance industry. While its use should be helpful, it should not be relied upon without additional consultation with National Institute of Restoration, Inc.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES