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Spread the Word



Many small business owners such as water dealers like you often find it a struggle to gain new business. While some remain content with the status of their business and clientele, many wonder what else they can do to expand their market reach.

After digging a little deeper, we usually find that these dealers thrive on referrals alone. If you rely on word-of-mouth customers, it is no wonder that you serve the same customers again and again.

If you want to get your business' message out there, you have to put your message out there. It seems to me that not enough water dealers take advantage of simple advertising opportunities such as

local newspapers or radio stations. Even advertising on your dealership's website will help.

After a quick search of "water dealers" in the Chicagoland area, I found that there are only 11 dealers listed on www.yellowpages.com. I would like to think that there are much more than 11 dealers serving the greater metropolitan Chicago area. We can therefore conclude that these 11 dealers will have the competitive edge over the water dealers in the area who are not listed in the Yellow Pages. If somebody needs a filter change or water softener ASAP, they are more likely to call a dealer listed in an easy-to-read directory rather than ask around for referrals from family and friends.

Another dilemma that is challenging small business owners today is the current state of our economy. When the economy is down and the threat of recession looms heavily, the natural reaction for businesses is to cut all ancillary expenditures. Unfortunately, advertising and marketing is often the first to get the axe.

Because many businesses don't see an instant monetary return on their marketing investments, the thought tends to be that it is okay to cut back on advertisements until the market recovers. This way of thinking, however, will only put you further behind your competition. Once again, if your message is not out there for consumers to catch wind of, it is as if you do not exist.

So, if you are a water dealer who is contemplating the advertising investment but do not know where to begin, do not get discouraged. Start by creating a website. With tools such as Google and Yahoo infesting our world today, by having a Web presence you automatically make yourself one click away from reaching new customers.

If you decide to run a small ad in a local newspaper but you're not the creative type, don't worry because it's not as hard as you may think. Begin by creating one simple message that you want to relay to the public. If you are running a special on salt, something as simple as "SALT SALE" will grab readers' attention. Not only is this a simple message, I think it also creates curiosity and will leave consumers wanting more information. Make sure your ad guides the reader to a website where they will be able to obtain all the necessary information, and your salt sale will most likely be a success.

Today's world is fast-paced and information moves even faster. Research shows that Americans are exposed to an average of 3,000 advertising messages in a single day. If you want your business to grow, make sure your message is one of them.

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coming up next month

The April issue of *Water Quality Products* will feature water vending, well/groundwater, bottled water, testing services, resins, sales techniques, WQA Forum and IOA Column. Be sure to visit www.wqpmag.com for daily industry news updates.