

Cost-Effective, Targeted Sales Through Association Partnerships

Today more than ever, companies are targeting their marketing efforts and dollars in very tactical ways. Advertising is becoming less directed to mass audiences and increasingly allocated to trade-specific publications, digests aimed at particular occupations, and television channels that cater to specific interests. Vehicles used now go beyond print ads and TV spots to include e-mail blasts and pop-up ads.

For the sales professional, anything that saves time and money to secure new business is key to gaining a competitive advantage. That means connecting with your target market as cost-effectively, quickly and often as possible.

Sales professionals are partnering with associations that represent their target market as the cost-effective way to realize sales. Smart corporate sales, marketing and communications teams are recognizing that partnering with associations whose members are your buyers is the best way to gain an advantage, while limiting – and often sharing – costs.

While exact numbers are unknown, there are well over 80,000 associations in Canada representing virtually every occupation and business sector, as well as multiple sub-groups within each. There is undoubtedly more than one organization out there whose membership is your potential market.

CPSA's membership of 30,000 sales and marketing professionals presents an opportunity to increase revenue while providing corporate investors with cost-effective, tactical sales opportunities.

"Sponsoring CPSA's professional development programs is a fit for Avis", says Linda Bianchi, regional travel manager at Avis Rent A Car. "We are very focused on providing sales training and tools for our sales staff. We also use attendance at these classes to provide training at no charge for our employees while providing them with excellent networking opportunities".

Partnering with associations can garner companies benefits that range from repetitive promotion through Web sites, electronic newsletters and publications, to direct sales opportunities at events. And all targeted to a particular market.

"By sponsoring CPSA's online newsletter, *Sales Exchange*, we have received over 35,000 hits to our Web site last year alone," says Julie Leish, national sales manager, Choice Hotels Canada Inc. "That's a lot of traffic that we would not otherwise receive."

Such partnerships can also involve sponsorship that excludes your competition. Since early 2003, Choice Hotels has been the exclusive hotel sponsor of *Sales Exchange*. "Our sponsorship relationship with CPSA and the exclusivity it provides in our business category allows for competitive advantage and top of mind awareness of our brands", says Leish.

An appropriate range and variety of sponsorship opportunities available can allow your company to identify what works best for your approach to sales.

Pottruff & Smith Insurance Brokers Inc. sponsor CPSA's general reception at the Annual Sales Hall of Fame Awards as well as the CSP reception held that same evening. Kevin Smith, executive vice-president, sales and marketing with Pottruff & Smith says sponsoring the events provides his company with a chance to support the kind of informal and sociable occasions that often lay the groundwork for future business. "We like the relaxed opportunity these events provide for sales professionals to get reacquainted and make new contacts." ☺

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