

Cleaning Up With Advertising

This month, client Jerry Prezler, owner of Commercial Cleaning and Restoration Services shares how changing his service has helped him improve his marketing results.

Q: Jerry, you recently made a change in the kind of services we provide to you. Would you share with our readers what motivated that change?

Jerry: Well, it's pretty simple. I've been in business about three years, and I have six employees. I started as a one-man company, so I was never in the office for calls. I found out pretty fast that I needed a reliable voice mail system. That's how I became your customer. The voice mail service was sound and reliable. It gave me peace of mind when I went home at the end of the day.

Q: Then what prompted you to change?

Jerry: I wanted to find a source of new clients, so I contracted to run some ads in our local newspaper. That's when I learned something the hard way, and I wasn't prepared for it. The newspaper is delivered in the evening. When people saw my ad, it was after regular working hours. People picked up the phone and called in the evening, but by then they just got my voice mail.

Q: So what happened?

Jerry: I had 17 hang ups on my voice mail in the morning and no orders.

Q: And then what?

Jerry: (Grins) I believe I called and complained that my voice mail wasn't working. Of course it was, but you took the time to check and to talk to me about what was happening with my business. That was really the key. You helped me realize that people won't usually place orders with a machine. We also talked about some of the alternative services you could provide us.

Q: So what did you do?

Jerry: Well, I tried to save money. When we ran an ad, I had the staff take turns staying late to answer the phone. I tried to have them rotate so they wouldn't lose too much time with their families. My service guys didn't seem to think they should have to answer phones, and when they did, the results weren't all that good. When my office assistant stayed, she did a great job with the customers, but she has a family and they need her too. Plus, it was costing me a fortune in overtime – almost as much as the ads!

Q: Then what?

Jerry: I finally got smart and realized that my efforts to pinch pennies were costing me customers, lots of overtime, and disrupting my staff. So that's when I made the switch to live customer service representatives. Our ads finally started to pay for themselves. When I come in each morning after an ad runs, I have a queue of customers lined up by your operators! Plus, all of the orders are emailed to my office assistant who enters them into our system right away.

Because she enters the work orders right away, we can keep better track of our cleaning supply inventory. By managing our supply inventory, we are actually paying for the whole service. I couldn't be happier. In fact, we are expanding our newspaper advertising into a nearby community. We're growing, we're learning, and we're getting better every day.

