

Create your own *busy season*



The economy and cold winter combined have hurt many carpet cleaners.

Jump-start your spring season with smart marketing and bring the jobs to you.

By **Joe Polish**

This has been a very interesting past 12 months, from a marketing perspective.

Gas prices have gone from sky high to rock bottom.

The economy has flourished for some and tanked for most.

The weather has gone from global warming to global freezing.

With distractions like these, what is a small business owner to do?

Get back to work.

There is a saying that where there is anxiety, there is always opportunity. And there is absolutely opportunity in this industry.

We seem to forget that when there are recessions, and people stay home more often, in-home service demand actually grows.

You simply need to remind them that they need you. You need to market to get their attention.

I am watching some cleaners struggle right now, while I'm seeing others having their best year ever, despite the economy and despite the crazy weather.

What's the difference?

It's their response to it.

It's being proactive instead of simply expecting and accepting bad times and doing nothing about it.

It's being creative instead of just complaining.

How do you create your own busy season?

You see what's working for others and do the *same things*.

Do more of what's working

When we consult business owners, the first question we ask is "What is working for you *right now*?"

Every business has something that is working for them.

An ad, a newsletter, a referral program, a business joint venture, a website, a business network, a sales letter sequence, a free recorded message system, a client appreciation system, etc.

Something is working right now.

The quickest path to creating more business is to identify where your jobs are coming from right now, and doing more of it.

If you send out 500 flyers to a neighborhood to generate new business successfully, then send out 1,000.

If your five-around door hangers bring



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you a few jobs a week, then start doing 25-around.

If a carpet retailer sends you jobs, find another location to create another joint venture endorsement.

If a sales letter/offer brought you new jobs, then sequence that same letter/offer into a second or third notice to maximize your sales response. Keep doing it until it's not profitable any longer.

If your off-line direct mail campaigns are bringing you new business, add on-line campaigns to expand your reach.

If new customers are finding you through Google, then work on improving your search engine optimization so more cleaning service seekers will find you.

Business owners think they need something entirely *new* to get more business when the simplest step is to just roll-out more of what's already working for them.

Then move to see what works for others and model them.

This doesn't mean only modeling cleaning companies, because there are great marketing ideas out there in every business sector.

That is why having a "marketing mindset" is so valuable.

You can find marketing gold everywhere you look; you can apply those ideas to your own business.

Go deep with referrals

With referrals, a simple two-part rule applies — be referable, and reward the behavior you want more of.

Being referable, of course, means delivering great work and service. You need to be a company worth talking about to others.

Most good companies are getting referrals right now, but many in a very haphazard way.

If you were to increase that number of referrals to three, five or 10 times your current number, you would have your "busy" season.

So how do you do this? By building a strategy for collecting and maximizing re-

errals. Here are four ways:

1. Ask for referrals: Nothing in life happens until you ask for the sale. So when you have finished a great job for a client, and they are thrilled with you, be sure to give them your referral request form so they can share you with their friends and colleagues. Most companies can double or triple their number of referrals by simply adding this step to their cleaning process. Just *ask* for referrals.

2. Follow-up with referrals: Once you have a list of names, you need a process for delivering them a compelling offer to try out your services. A sequence of letters with a time-sensitive offer, and a lot of "social proof" of words from happy clients — including the friend who referred them to you — will help convert these referral leads into referral jobs.

3. Reward referrals that turn into jobs: Your reward can be a small gift, a gift card to a local store, \$10 cash — my clients find that five \$2 bills work great — or 10 percent of the job — a common reward used in our business endorsement relationships. Because you are giving a special to the person referred to you, and rewarding the source of that job, it is a win/win/win for all three of you.

4. Super-charge your unpaid sales force: Show additional appreciation to your referral sources through thanking them in your newsletter and through customer appreciation events. Another great way to boost your referrals is to run a contest where every referral gets them a ticket in a drawing to win a night on the town or a weekend cruise. The more they refer, the better their

chances of winning. Through this you create a team of clients out selling your business to others.

Create "reason why" offers

Every marketing campaign needs a compelling hook to grab a target market's attention and a compelling offer — with a deadline — to get them to take action.

Some of the top performing campaigns in the past year have used current events as a "reason why" they are making offers for their services.

One entrepreneur used a free gas card as a reason to use her company during the high fuel price crisis.

Another created a "bailout plan" offer to help his longtime clients save money if they booked a job in the next 30 days.

Another, in his coldest month, made a "fight unemployment" offer for his longtime clients to save money if they booked now in order to keep his team busy and employed.

Going back to that quote that where there is anxiety there is opportunity, there are an endless number of hooks you can create campaigns around.

Or even better, take past working campaigns you've used and tweak them to reflect today's hot buttons.

Here are four ideas to help boost readership and response to your campaigns.

1 Grab their attention with grabbers

People are overwhelmed with mail and marketing messages, so you need to do something to make sure that your envelope gets opened.

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“We seem to forget that when there are recessions, and people stay home more, in-home service demand actually grows.”



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One strategy used powerfully is “grabbers” — something attached to the letter to make it lumpy and grab their attention.

We’ve used everything from band-aids to aspirin to playing cards to dollar bills on sales letters. We’ve even mailed out a marketing message attached to a coconut — all to get the attention of a client.

You can have the best marketing piece on the planet, but if they don’t even open the envelope, it won’t work.

So adding a grabber and spinning it into

a reason for the letter helps add theater and involvement to your marketing ... both of which helps boost response.

2 Targeted gift rather than a blanket discount

If you say your price is 60 cents per square foot, but you are constantly running 20 percent off offers all year round, then there is no sense of urgency to act and also no integrity in your prices.

Constant large discounts can make consumers believe that your prices are too high to begin with.

This is why it’s important to give a “reason why” you are making any offer.

You may be slow and want to reward those who act now to help you keep busy.

You may want to give your longtime cli-

What if you could make more money cleaning carpets in a month than you now earn all year?

[CLICK HERE](#)

RICH CLEANER SYSTEM

The image displays a variety of marketing materials for the 'Rich Cleaner System'. At the top right, the text 'RICH CLEANER SYSTEM' is prominently displayed. Below this, there are several items:

- Two large blue books titled 'HOW TO GET MORE CLIENTS IN A MONTH THAN YOU NOW GET ALL YEAR' by Joe Polish. One is labeled 'Marketing Tool 1' and the other '105 Money Making Strategies'.
- A '3 CD Set' and a '6 DVD Set' with titles like 'HOW TO GET MORE CLIENTS IN A MONTH THAN YOU NOW GET ALL YEAR'.
- Several spiral-bound notebooks, including 'QUICK START GUIDE TO FAST CASH', 'WATER RESTORATION SPECIALISTS MARKETING TOOLS KIT', and 'CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE'.
- Multiple CD and DVD discs with various titles such as 'The Carpet Cleaner's Employee Handbook', 'Joe's Letters', 'Quickstart To FAST CASH!', 'Carpet Protection Ready Work!', 'The True Cost Of Doing Business', 'Carpet Protection Ready Work!', 'The Anatomy Of A Million Dollar A Year Cleaning Business', 'How To Turn \$1 Bill Into \$100 Bill', 'Powerful Secrets Marketing Strategy To Thriving Your Business', and 'The Anatomy Of A Million Dollar A Year Cleaning Business'.
- Other items include a '100,000 Ad Sampler Kit', a 'CONFIRMATION' card, and various brochures and flyers, some with 'THANK YOU' and 'YOUR FREE!' text.

ents a reward for being so loyal to you.

You may want to give a referred new customer a special because they've been referred by a longtime client.

Your reasons are yours, but give one for the offer, and be sure you have a deadline so they act on it.

3 Give clients an opportunity to help you help others

Some clients will be more motivated by an opportunity to help others than a "money off" offer.

In fact, rather than take a 10 percent discount, they may want you to give that piece of the invoice to a charity you are supporting.

We've had very successful fundraising drives for Toys for Tots, Make a Wish, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, American Red Cross, and several other charitable organizations.

This allows consumers to help a cause they care about by choosing to do business with you.

4 Reward clients for buying additional services

Another strategy to help create your own busy season is to increase the size of the jobs you are already going on.

A great "reason why" to offer money off additional services in the home is that you are already there so there is no additional travel cost.

You can pass that savings directly to the client and give them the opportunity to add hard surface cleaning, upholstery cleaning or mattress cleaning to the carpet cleaning invoice you have with them.

Maximize every single campaign

Marketing should never be episodic. It should not be one single shot, but multiple shots.

The analogy I always use is a boxer.

It's never one big punch that creates the knockout.

It's left and right hooks and jabs over time that eventually wins the fight.

Marketing is no different.

There is not one big ad or single strategy that will create your busy season.

It's a combination of sequenced marketing messages delivered in the mailbox and in-box that helps generate sales.

You will lose a ton of time and energy trying to create new campaigns from scratch and testing them.

But by taking each single campaign that works and adding more steps — by mail, by e-mail and by phone — you will maximize the money made from every single campaign.

In fact, in our tracking of members' marketing, we've shown that most campaigns

generate more sales in the second and third notices than the initial one.

But, most business owners stop after one effort. They don't even know that they've left most of their money behind by not going deep with their campaign.

No matter the economic or weather conditions, with the right marketing mindset any business can create their own busy season ... if they really want to. *CM*

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