

## Remodeler's Exchange

**SHAW:** We learned very quickly that working with a competent marketing company was expensive. We decided to do some marketing work in-house and then use a marketing company for the work we could not handle in-house. You still need a marketing firm on your board of directors, but you need to understand exactly what their role is in your company. There are plenty of marketing and branding efforts you can do in-house. We used to spend \$80,000 to \$100,000 annually on marketing, and a lot of that money was going toward a marketing firm. We have expanded our marketing efforts on the Internet in an effort to drive everyone back to our website. We have found that all different marketing areas, and the goal for each area, is to drive them to the website to fill out the form and send that to us requesting work. When it comes to the logos on our trucks, yard signs, flyers, or whatever communication we use with any type of branding, the object is to drive them back to that website.

**SWARTZ:** *What type of lead generation have you used that did not work as you had planned?*

**SHAW:** We did a wonderful marketing piece that was incredible. It was 3D model that showed different versions of a design each time you turned the piece a different direction. It was a gorgeous piece, we spent over \$30,000 having it designed and sent to our key areas. I can tell you now that we didn't get one sale from that piece. We learned a hard lesson. You can have all of this great marketing and advertising in place, but if you are not lead tracking and evaluating your marketing on a month-by-month basis, you are going to find yourself falling for these major, expensive hurdles that could end up in a bad experience. When you talk to a client, find out what marketing is working. The first thing we do when talking to a client is ask them how they heard about our company. They typically have one response. If you have 12 different marketing efforts, and you're given one answer over and over, you typically leave that answer alone. But you need to keep digging to find out there may be two-to-five marketing sources that impacted

the decision to call your firm. To ensure your marketing efforts are effective, you need to find out from the leads of all the different mediums that have heard about your company.

**We spend a good amount of our marketing budget toward online ads.**

— DAVID SILVERSTEIN

**SILVERSTEIN:** We've done tons of things wrong, but we are happy to learn from our mistakes. We've done similar marketing programs in the past like Bill's, but one that comes to mind is a direct mail campaign. We spent thousands of dollars on a program that wasn't successful. Some companies have success with direct mail but we did not. We focus our efforts online such as Facebook. It's not everything we want it to be, but it's inexpensive to advertise and less effective on Facebook. It's more expensive to advertise with Google because it yields better results.

**SWARTZ:** *What is the best way to qualify a lead?*

**SHAW:** We've talked a lot about the website about being the front line or the first in that qualifying process. This is done because the information you have and how you handle the type of projects you offer, the types of services you provide, the areas you work, all are funnels the client or potential lead is going to look at to determine whether they are going to fill in that request for information. The next filter is the initial phone call and I only do that—I do have people that will take that call if I am not here. There is a form that must be filled out to get the basic information, and this allows me to do background preparation for the client. When I know

the basics about the client, I do a background search on the client. I use the Appraisal District, Google Maps, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Before I talk to this client, I want to know find out everything about them—where they work, how many kids they have, what they look like, a picture of their home, what the Appraisal District says the home is worth, how many bedrooms and baths, size of the lot, when the home was built, and has it been remodeled. By the time I get on the phone with them, I know quite a bit about their background. The reason I do that is because when you get into the conversation, the object is to start building trust. When you know a lot of information about a potential client, it's easier to carry on a conversation and fill out the sales lead form. I have 11 questions I go through before I am going to make an appointment to see this potential client. That initial phone call will be between 30 and 45 minutes. I am not going out on a lead call until I know this potential client is a good lead for our company. The initial visit at the home is the final qualification step.

**SILVERSTEIN:** Online advertising usually puts potential clients into one of the three areas in which we do our business. The best advertising for roofing and construction component are PPL websites as well as Angie's List and online PPC through Google and Yahoo. For remodeling and design build, these methods are more difficult because you get a lot of people that are just window shopping and they are not ready to make a buying decision. They may not make a decision for a few years. I agree with Bill's comments in regard to qualifying people for design-build work because you are dealing with very large dollar amounts for kitchens, bathrooms, and additions—these are very personal projects to the homeowner. The handyman work is a byproduct of the roofing and construction services advertisements. You will get homeowners who want to repair a roof versus replace a roof. This also helps keep the person tied to our company and increases the potential for business in the long-term. Once it comes time to replace that roof, they will call us. **PR**