

# How to Close More First-Time Spa Buyers

## CRITICAL MARKETING TOOLS TO INCREASE YOUR CLOSURE RATE OF FIRST-TIME SPA BUYERS. BY DAVID CARLETON

According to recent industry surveys, dealers sell almost 50 percent of all new spas to first-time buyers. That's powerful information that you should take advantage of to help grow your business.

Here's what a typical spa purchase process might look like and what you should do to increase your closure rate of first-timers.

### STEP 1: REFERRALS

Many prospective first-time buyers don't know a lot about spas, so they do what most people do: they ask friends and relatives what models and manufacturers they like and what retailers they would recommend.

Over 40 percent of the small business owners who participated in a recent Internet poll revealed that referrals brought them the biggest returns, even over traditional marketing methods. Why? Because a referred prospect comes to you pre-disposed to buy your products.

What this means is that you need to have a well-oiled referral-marketing system in place. A good referral marketing system should leverage all your other sales and marketing efforts and be capable of producing quality results over a long period of time. My method of choice is postcards because they can be personalized, are simple to use and are inexpensive.

### STEP 2: RESEARCH

Prospective buyers often rely on the Internet to do research relating to features, prices, warranty, maintenance, etc. The Internet helps educate them so that they can start visiting dealers armed with at least a semblance of basic knowledge.

In the initial stages of the purchasing process, buyers are looking for unbiased information. In exchange for a prospect's name and email address, you can provide this to them on your Web site, or you can make in-store-only resources available as a way to entice them to visit your showroom. For example, a marketing piece along the lines of a

"Special Report" entitled "7 Spa Buying Mistakes and How to Avoid Them" can be very effective. These types of reports will immediately attract the attention of first-time buyers.

In addition to using your Web site as a resource for first-timers, you also need to specifically target this often-untapped market in your ads. How? Home Depot uses free seminars and workshops. Walk into any Home Depot on a Saturday morning and you're likely to see dozens of prospective customers attending seminars on topics as diverse as how to put up a ceiling fan, how to lay ceramic tile or how to install a closet organizer. And guess what? Store traffic increases and sales go up! So you might want to consider offering quick and easy workshops on subjects such as water chemistry, winterizing your spa or even the benefits of aromatherapy.

### STEP 3: STORE VISIT

Prospective buyers will probably visit a minimum of three dealers before they decide which one gets their business.

What do prospects see when they first walk into your store? Many spa showrooms are laid out "warehouse style" with model after model lined up in straight-arrow rows. To a first-time buyer, that long line-up can be very intimidating, and they can easily become overwhelmed by the sheer number of choices.

Is there a better way? How about a sign or even a separate area of the store dedicated just to first-time buyers? It could even say: "First-Time Buyer Information Center." This would be the place where you keep your "Special Reports" and where your sales staff is trained to understand the nuances of closing first-timers.

With just a few simple changes to your Web site, ads and showroom, you should quickly see an increase in the number of brand-new spa buyers you close. ■

Prospective spa buyers will probably visit a minimum of three dealers before they decide which one gets their business. We've provided you with a trio of tools to help make sure they choose you over your competitor.



# How to Harness the Power of Testimonials

**SINCERE TESTIMONIALS OFTEN PROMPT PROMISING REFERRALS. HERE ARE SOME EASY-TO-IMPLEMENT IDEAS FOR GETTING GREAT TESTIMONIALS. BY DAVID CARLETON**



## ABOUT DAVID CARLETON

Industry expert David Carleton is the President of Street Smart Sales and Marketing, producers of *Boot Camp for Spa Retailers*. With a 30-year track record of success, Carleton has worked in the sales and marketing trenches for companies ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500s. He spent six years as a vice president with a major U.S.-based spa manufacturer, and in that capacity was responsible for developing programs that helped hundreds of dealers in 30 countries generate leads, enhance their marketing effectiveness and grow their sales numbers.

Testimonials are one of the most powerful yet under-utilized and overlooked tools you can apply to your marketing efforts. They build trust, get attention and overcome the skepticism of even the toughest buyers. They are neutral third-party endorsements that are more credible than any award or advertisement.

Customers who give you great testimonials are also candidates to give you great referrals and end up becoming more loyal to your dealership. By the way, testimonials should always be about how great your store is, how great the buying experience was or how wonderful your customer service is. I do not recommend using testimonials that are 'spa-brand specific' since you may at some point change brands.

Here are four tips for getting more testimonials and increasing their quality and useability:

- 1** After you deliver a new spa to your customer, tell them that you want to bring over their 'New Customer Gift Basket' on Saturday and that you'll be asking them for their testimonial at that time. In addition, I suggest you get a photo of them either in the spa or standing by it. Putting a face to a name makes the testimonial more believable and friendly to potential buyers.
- 2** Whenever someone mentions something positive about their buying experience, ask them if they'd mind putting it in writing.
- 3** Make it as easy as possible for a customer to give you a testimonial. Instead of making a customer write out his/her testimonial, why not use a digital recorder or even a Testimonial Hotline? Here's a real example: 800-391-6309 x6300.
- 4** Want to get the best testimonials possible? Try this: Write out what you would consider to be a great testimonial, turn it into survey questions and then give the survey to your customers. Be sure to include areas that specifically address your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) and help substantiate your claims.

After you gather your photos and testimonials, create a 'Wall of Fame' where you can post them all for prospective spa buyers to see.

It's a fact: Getting and using testimonials like this will help you close more sales. ■



# Spa Dealer Marketing Boot Camps Announced

LEARN GUERRILLA TACTICS THAT THE SPA COMPANIES DON'T TEACH YOU – NEW MARKETING BOOT CAMPS DEDICATED TO TEACHING LEADING-EDGE TECHNIQUES TO DRIVE PROSPECTS INTO YOUR SHOWROOM

In order to market and sell with strategic focus and high-powered intensity, spa dealers need expert advice and solid information regarding strategies and tactics that have been proven to work.

That's where the Spa Dealer Marketing Boot Camp can help.

*SpaRetailer* is pleased to sponsor the Spa Boot Camps, which are dedicated to teaching dealers leading-edge techniques to drive prospects into the showroom and help seal the deal. "Dealers need information that will help them out-smart, out-market and out-perform the competition," says David T. Wood, Publisher of *SpaRetailer*.

"Boot Camp is a rigorous two-day workshop/seminar that will help them do just that, whether the competition is the other guy down the street or luxury items like boats, plasma TVs or vacation hot-spots."

## THERE'S PLENTY OF CUSTOMERS WHO WANT TO BUY SPAS

No matter what brand a dealer sells or how bad the economy is perceived to be, there are still plenty of customers willing and able to purchase big-ticket items. The problem for dealers often lies in knowing how to implement savvy marketing strategies that target these specific types of consumers, that pique their interest in spas and ultimately, that close the sale.

During Boot Camp, decision-makers such as owners, general managers and company presidents learn how to identify niche marketing opportunities,

how to shorten the sales cycle by as much as 50 percent and how to exponentially increase traffic flow and lead generation. In addition, innovative and state-of-the-art Web site and Internet marketing strategies are discussed and analyzed.

## LEARN SAVVY TECHNIQUES FROM INDUSTRY EXPERTS

As the President of Street Smart Sales and Marketing, Spa Dealer Boot Camp is taught by a recognized industry expert, David Carleton. With a 30-year track record of success, Carleton has worked in the sales and marketing trenches for companies ranging from start-ups to Fortune 500s. He spent the last six years as a Vice President with a major U.S.-based spa manufacturer, and in that capacity, was responsible for developing programs that helped hundreds of dealers in thirty countries generate leads, enhance their marketing effectiveness and grow their sales numbers.

"I didn't just wake up one morning and magically know everything there is to know about effective marketing and lead generation," says Carleton. "Over many years, I've seen, learned and absorbed the best marketing practices from the best companies and industries and I've crystallized them into a seminar that will knock the socks off of spa dealers." ■

*For more information, including how to register for Boot Camp and enrollment fees, call 480-367-9444 or visit [SPADEALERBOOTCAMP.COM](http://SPADEALERBOOTCAMP.COM).*

### SPA DEALER BOOT CAMP DATES

*January 14-15, 2008*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

*January 21-22, 2008*

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

*January 28-29, 2008*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

*February 11-12, 2008*

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

*March 10-11, 2008*

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

*March 17-18, 2008*

ORLANDO, FLORIDA