

IDEAS

Coupons, Cross Marketing, the Internet and PR

Four other inexpensive methods to introduce and market your services!

The Truth about Coupons

Coupons are a great way to advertise or market your carwash. Direct mail, value pack coupon mailings, on-site discount distributions, and coupon offers at cross marketing locations are a few ways to use coupons. Flat, paper coupons that are used like money work best. Show off your best services by using coupons to urge customers to sample your higher-priced menu items. **Unitec's VIP Wash Coupons** offer entry system owners another sales opportunity to build customer loyalty.

Coupon Code Promotions. Coupon codes can be used with Unitec's Wash Select II and Wash Select II POS systems. Coupon codes can be configured to issue a discount to a customer, or groups of customers, towards the purchase of a wash. Consider running a Val-Pak (www.valpak.com) ad, distributed to specific zip codes, and including a coupon code in the ad that offers a dollar amount off your highest wash. The code can be used over and over again. The result: new customers will visit your carwash and use your advertised (highest) wash. Best of all, coupon codes go where plastic cards can't go. Just remember that it can be tough to control code usage, so don't give away the store.

All about Cross Marketing

On Site: Almost all site owners can benefit from internal cross merchandising by marketing the add-on services at your site. Signage in the hallways, lobby, and waiting areas of your lube and wash facilities is a good way to advertise the additional services you offer. Along with signs, give customers access to brochures explaining the services offered at your carwash. Don't forget the importance of employee enthusiasm! It can make or break the success of any cross-merchandising program. Providing a direct financial incentive motivates most employees.

Off Site: Cross merchandising at another location is a win-win situation for both businesses. You promote the other businesses services at your carwash, and he reciprocates at his location. Cross marketing builds on the relationships already established between the partnering company and its customers. Here are a few important rules:

- Always partner with a reputable business
- Join with companies trying to reach the same market and the same customer base as your carwash
- Make sure that your business partner benefits from the cross promotion

Use Coupons: Coupons can be a sure-fire way to increase lube business or help cross-market your lube shop with a carwash or detail center. Contact car dealerships, real-estate offices and pizzerias to see if they'll participate in a cross marketing campaign. Leave a coupon in the glove box of every new car sold; send them out with pizza deliveries, etc. Other possibilities include restaurants, apartment complexes, nonprofit organizations, florists, and schools.

MARKETING TIP

Lazy Days Carwash

Let's Make A Deal

The new car dealership down the street is the perfect cross marketing partner for the Lazy Days Carwash. By offering the dealer discounted wash coupons (First wash is Free) to give to every new car buyer, Lazy Days has driven a lot of new business to their site. But this promotion isn't a one-way street. Lazy Days has on site signage promoting the car dealership. The dealer is happy with the partnership, noting that he has been getting visits from carwash customers when they're ready to buy a new car.



Tapping into Internet Power

Elements of a great website: When creating your website, keep the following points in mind:

- Create the site from the customer's point of view
- Keep it informative and up-to-date
- Make it fun and interesting
- Make it easy to find and easy to navigate
- Make it easy to read
- Make sure there's a way to capture your customer's information – offer a loyalty club sign-up or mailing list sign-up to notify customers of special promotions, new services and online discounts
- No spam
- Display a privacy policy

Internet Exposure: Take advantage of the Internet by piggybacking on “listing” sites. Chambers of Commerce, regional economic development agencies and local municipalities frequently maintain web sites to promote business development and attract visitors to their area. Listing on these sites is usually free. Here are some other Internet listing resources:

- Local newspaper site - expand the free yellow pages-type listing to include more information
- Chamber of Commerce site - offer business-to-business promotions
- Tourist/visitor sites - note your location near popular attractions; traveling salesmen will want clean cars
- Municipal sites - used to showcase a city's economic vitality and offerings; make your presence known
- Local shopping sites - try wedding planning sites (clean cars for the wedding) or auto services sites (clean cars make better trade-ins)
- Cross Marketing – post a web listing on any sites with which you cross market services

Getting Free Publicity

Public Relations. Do-it-yourself PR is another way to gain exposure. Become an expert by contacting your local papers and offering yourself as an expert source on specific issues. Get published by writing articles on topics that would be of interest to readers (proper vehicle care is a good one) and send them to local papers. Or just write a press release on any new developments with your carwash and submit them to newspapers.