

Tough Times call for Tough Tactics (part 1)
Gale R. Brown, President, Lead Builder Seminars

I don't believe there has ever been a time in history quite like the year we've just experienced. While our country has been at war before, we've never lived through anything like the devastation of 9/11. Following that event, we've had a precipitous decline on Wall Street, corporate scandals in America like Enron and WorldCom and a total lack of confidence in our financial future on the part of American consumers.

This distressing news has created sales declines in every business and we've had a reverse "trickle down" effect in the fenestration industry. Since consumers drive sales, we've seen declines in orders from dealers who are consumer-driven, declines from distributors who sell to dealers and sales declines have now gone up the pyramid to the fabricators.

While we can't change the economy or the situation on Wall Street, we can start with the "last three feet" where it all begins.... the sale to the consumer. We've got to work smarter, not harder to attract them. That's where Lead Builders can help. Our company is completely devoted to helping your customers generate qualified leads to drive sales up the chain, because every sale begins with a lead.

Your dealers can have the best product demonstrations in the industry with great "pitch" books, marketing materials, literature and sales closing techniques. But the bottom line is that none of these sales tools will do any good if you can't get in front of a prospect!

I enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of you at your summer conference in Turf Valley. Your Board of Directors has retained Lead Builders to present a ½-day Educational Seminar as part of your Winter Meeting in Philadelphia in January 2003. At that seminar I'm going to cover the following three topics:

Lead Builders 101 – "Install Once, Sell Twice" This comprehensive session provides the building blocks of dynamic marketing around a job site. You'll learn basic ways to generate leads and take advantage of your best new prospects – people within easy reach (and visibility) of the job you've just completed.

Many fabricators provide their customers with great looking literature and marketing materials (as I previously did in my corporate marketing role). Some dealers even wanted these materials imprinted with their own names and logos. But what did they provide me? Some fuzzy photocopied logo that Joe's cousin drew "way back when." It was out-of-date, unprofessional looking and totally unusable! That's part of the "basics" I'll cover in my seminar.

Dealers also need to get up to date with their company's image and look at ways to promote their name and logo everywhere – on literature, tee shirts and hats their installers wear, trucks and job site signs and their newsletter and web site. Don't have a newsletter or web site? We'll show you how to create them, what

they should include, where to get filler copy and most important how to use them to land new business.

Lead Builders 102 – “Creating No-Cost, Low-Cost Leads” You’ll learn the two top ways to set up an advertising budget to get leads and the formula for growth. We’ll show you how to determine the number of leads you need. How can a dealer put together an advertising budget, when he’s given away money all year long for high school yearbooks, Little League programs and fundraisers for the school band? Yes, those are worthwhile causes. But every barrel has a bottom to it. If you add up all the different ways to spend your money throughout the year for goodwill, you’ll soon run out of money to promote those activities or sustain your company.

Your money has to work hard to get you leads at minimal cost and to help build repeat and referral business. We’ll give you an overview of ways to achieve this goal at our half-day seminar in January. This **2-Day Seminar** includes a lot of detail on unique and creative ways to do that including newsletters, canvassing, database marketing, real estate programs, effective use of Yellow Pages, participation in shows, fairs and festivals, special events, co-op promotions you can use with a lead box program, public relations, unique ways to use print, effective direct mailers and the most effective ways to use TV and radio when you **can** spend some advertising dollars to kick off your Spring and Fall seasons.

Lead Builders 201 – “Shows, Fairs & Festivals” Understand the differences for each kind of show, how and why to participate, how to staff your booth, attract attention and track leads. Get many new ideas on how to increase attendance and attract prospects to your booth. Learn how to pick the right event, locate the most visible booth space and the four steps to ensure booth staff success. We’ll also give you a lead form and teach you how to develop an effective lead follow-up plan to ensure significant R.O.I.

We’ll show you many examples of great programs that have worked well for lots of dealers. But since you’ll learn about them at our January seminar, I won’t get into any details here. What I do want to stress is that it’s time to get creative and look at ways to generate leads that are non-traditional. I’m going to include some specific ideas for you in the second part of this article in the next newsletter.

Now you know why you need to come to NWDA’s January Educational Seminar and bring some dealers you want to help. Contact Lynn McCullough at NWDA headquarters or a Board Member, or check out their web site at www.ndwa.net for registration information. I look forward to visiting with you and, hopefully, doing a full two-day seminar for NWDA members and their customers in the future.