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Marketing for Green BSCs

By **Stephen P. Ashkin** posted 01/13/2011

For most building service cleaning contractors (BSCs), marketing success is dependent on three things: persistence, presentation, and price.

Persistence

Persistence is key to any effective marketing program and for BSCs, this invariably means cold calling. The more persistent contractors are, the more cold calls they will make, and the more new clients they

are likely to secure. In a sense, it becomes a "numbers game."

Presentation

Proper presentation by dressing neat, clean, and for success is also crucial. Decision-makers begin to judge BSCs (or any vendor) immediately by how they look and act and if these initial perceptions are poor, it can be very hard to overcome.

Price

Finally, it cannot be denied that price is always a factor. However, with time and experience, most BSCs improve their bidding skills so that they can bid competitively and still make an acceptable profit on their accounts

The Fourth Factor

However, a fourth marketing success component is now evolving and soon may become as prominent a factor in marketing success as persistence, presentation, and price. And that fourth component is being green. More and more facilities from schools and universities to office buildings, which are the bread-and-butter customers of most BSCs now insist on green cleaning. This means that BSCs have to learn how to market their business as green.

The following are some suggestions on how BSCs can accomplish this and start marketing themselves as green cleaning contractors:

Walk the walk. Talking green and being green are two different things. Before a BSC can call its company a green cleaning contractor, it must attend classes, seminars, and seek certifications from ISSA's [Green Cleaning University](#) and the association's [Cleaning](#)

Learn More About ISSA's Green Cleaning University!

Did you know you can go back to school with ISSA? ISSA Green Cleaning University (GCU) is the gathering place for individuals interested in developing their knowledge of the issues, skills, and techniques involved in creating and maintaining healthy, high-performance facilities. GCU also offers the only industry title that recognizes sales and training professionals for their green expertise: [ISSA Green Cleaning Professional](#).

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[Industry Management Standard or CIMS](#) program. In other words: Learn green, know green, and be green.

Join a green organization. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), to name one worthy organization, has chapters throughout the country. BSCs will not only improve their image by joining a green organization, but membership also has many benefits. For instance, BSCs are able to find out about the latest trends and directions in environmental issues as well as tap into the networking opportunities provided by these chapters, often attended by local facility managers. This can be a golden opportunity for BSCs to meet some very important potential clients in their communities.

Why go green? There are still scores of facility managers who are teetering on going green. Often, they have misconceptions about the quality of green cleaning products or their cost. Your proposals should be armed with facts and information verifying that the use of green cleaning products helps improve worker morale, student test scores, and that the products are comparable to conventional cleaning products in virtually every way.

Toot your horn. The fact that your company has been trained and offers green cleaning services should be prominently posted on all marketing materials, including brochures, cards, the company Web site, and even your monthly invoice. Any and all green certifications should also be highlighted, along with any green organizations the company is affiliated with. Many BSCs have found it beneficial to create a special section on their Web sites just for addressing green cleaning issues.

Green your proposals. Most BSC proposals include a "schedule of services." For a green cleaning contractor, this should also include a listing of the types of cleaning products and equipment that will be used in the facility and why they are green. Have the cleaning chemicals been certified by an honored green certification organization or do they meet these criteria? Are vacuum cleaners HEPA-filtered?

Be a point person. Facilities are seeking the USGBC's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED certification at a very fast pace and because green cleaning is now a requirement for certification, they will want to know how green cleaning can earn them points. Be sure this information is included in your proposal.


Make quick hits. Some other items to consider include offering prospective clients a "take-back" program. This involves working with distributors that will allow conventional cleaning products to be replaced with green cleaning products at the start of service. Make sure your cards and marketing materials indicate they are printed on recycled paper. It's just another indication you are walking the talk. Consider changing the company name and/or slogan to reflect that green is an important part of your business.

Finally, to impress upon the manager that you know your green stuff, take the time to include tips and suggestions in your proposal that apply specifically to their facility helping to make it greener, healthier, and operate in a more sustainable manner whether it involves cleaning or not. This final step can have the greatest sales and marketing impact of all.



Related Video

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