



3 Ways to Draw More Customers Into Your Business

A business is only as strong as its customer base. And in competitive markets like outdoor power equipment and powersports, it's extremely important to promote your business and bring in as many customers as possible to stay ahead of the competition.

Of course there are some obvious things you should already be doing to promote word of mouth referrals such as greeting the customer, treating them fairly and providing fast and efficient service. However, you may not be aware of some simple practices you could implement into your business that could cause the number of people who enter your store to skyrocket.

So here's 3 ways you can draw more customers into your business:

Establish a Strong Referral Program. One of the most surefire ways to create great word of mouth about your business is to establish a customer referral program. The better you treat your customers, the more they will talk about you to their friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. And, if you acknowledge those customers for their referrals, you'll create even more loyalty.

So how do you put this plan in motion? It's simple... if someone comes into your business and mentions one of your customers referred them, you should have a plan set in stone where that customer is automatically called and thanked. By showing your appreciation, they will feel good about doing business with you and are more likely to spread the word.

Or, you could take your program a step further and offer incentives for referrals. For example, you could send a follow-up letter to your customers after they have made a purchase. Explain how 80% of new business comes from referrals — and if they are satisfied with your service, recommend your business and you'll give them a reward. It can be as simple as a coupon at your business, a gift certificate to a restaurant, or buying them a small gift.

(continued on Page 4)

DEALER SECRETS TO SUCCESS

“Historic Pounds Motor Company Takes Their Computerization to the Next Level with *Ideal*”



Steve Pounds, Linda Dion, Peggy Cash, Michael Pounds, Sherry Skipper and Mark Maddalena of Pounds Motor Company

This is your opportunity to learn how Michael Pounds and Pounds Motor Company, a well-known OPE business that has been serving its customers since 1914, successfully made the switch into business management computerization. By remodeling their shop and implementing *Ideal 6.0 for Windows*, the business first known for patenting the rubber tire on the tractor is now reducing hours of time on inventory management and rapidly increasing efficiency in its service department.

Question: Pounds Motor Company has been in business for over 90 years. In what ways has the business changed over the years and how have you dealt with those changes?

Michael: “My great grandfather began the business by selling Ford cars and tractors. The citrus business down here was booming, so he decided to focus on tractors because we were the only business around here that repaired them. He was the first person ever to put rubber tires on the tractor and he

patented the idea in 1928. He also put an extra gear in the tractors that made them speed up and become much faster. Everyone wanted these improvements made so they brought them here.

The freezes in the 80s resulted in most citrus farmers moving their business away from here so we had to get into something else. We decided to start selling lawn equipment because most of the old citrus groves were bought up by real estate developers, and with this boom in residential developments came a similar boom in the need for landscaping.

Our building also used to look like a 1930s garage inside. So we got with one of our main suppliers, Stihl, and they came in and gutted our whole building out and put in a beautiful showroom and a tile floor.”

Question: What do you consider to be the strengths of your business compared to most other retailers?

(continued on Page 2)

Inside This Issue

3 Ways to Draw More Customers Into Your Business	1&4
Dealer Secrets to Success	1, 2 & 3
Ideal Records Best Sales Month Ever!	3
Did You Know?	3

Pounds Motor Company: OPE dealership has seen many changes over 92 years...

(continued from Page 1)



One of Pounds' biggest improvements during its 92 years of business was having Stihl renovate the entire shop and design a new showroom.

Michael: "Because we are a family-owned business, the atmosphere is more personal. People come in, especially repeat customers so you start learning their names. I guess they like that feel of having someone know who they are instead of just going into some place like Best Buy or Sears."

Question: Customer service is obviously a critical part of a successful dealership. What have you done to keep your customers satisfied?

Michael: "When it comes to commercial equipment and commercial customers, they are usually top priority. That's their business, that's what they live by, and they need to get their equipment going. We try to address their concerns as fast and efficient as we can. Then there is the homeowner. We actually have it set up so one mechanic is in charge of homeowners and two mechanics are in charge of commercial. We try to get them done in a speedy fashion. We also offer pick-up and delivery service.

We are also just friendly. We reward the people who do a lot of business with us at Christmas time. We give them gift certificates to nice restaurants. If it's a really good customer, we will give them a free piece of two-cycle equipment or whatever they want like a backpack blower or trimmer."

Question: How do you track which customers you want to offer these gifts to?

Michael: "Now we track them with *Ideal*. To be honest with you, the old system we had wouldn't even allow us to do what *Ideal* does. With our old system, we'd probably have to get old invoices out and start adding them

together to figure out totals. It was a very bad system. But with *Ideal*... I love *Ideal*!"

Question: What features in *Ideal* do you find useful for implementing gift incentives to customers?

Michael: "There are two reports I like. The *Sales by Volume* will flat out tell you what your profit is and what your percentage is and you can basically run anything you want... what customer, what item, what part. The other report I like is the *Sales Invoice by Item* so you can track units you sold and who you sold them to. That helps us out a lot."

Question: What are the top three practices you've incorporated to manage your service department more effectively?

Michael: "Well the biggest thing is that we've put one person in charge of all equipment repairs. She's in charge of checking in the equipment, placing it in the computer and then when that person calls and wants to know the status, she's the one that checks it out. She's also the one that makes the invoices and calls the customer when equipment is done. That has been a tremendous relief with everyone else. Before, when someone called to find out if their mower was ready, I had to stop what I was doing and find out. We actually have three big buildings and there was no telling where the equipment was so we'd have to walk around. It's so much easier now."

Question: Is there anything in *Ideal* that's helped you manage your service department?

Michael: "Oh yes. I love those work orders. What's great about those is that you can enter the model number, the serial number, what it's in for and what they are asking for. It's so great because when someone brings back a piece of equipment and say that they just had it in for this problem, it's so much easier for me to bring it back up and say what they had it in for and what they asked us to do. I've already had people bring in equipment several times and say that we did this and it's still not working right and I've come to find out that it's not even the same piece of equipment that was in here. It's really nice to be able to do that. I just can't say enough about the *Ideal* system!"

Question: Has there been anything in *Ideal* that's helped you reduce the amount of time that you spend on your inventory?

Michael: "Well one thing that *Ideal* does is reduce the time it takes to enter inventory in the computer - especially the equipment and serializing numbers. In the old system, we'd have to fill in the description and you'd have to sit there and type in the model number and set the pricing. In *Ideal* all you have to do is bring up the model number and it already has all the information and the pricing and all you have to do is enter the serial number. For example, when we order Stihl, and especially in the summer months, a big order would probably take two hours of one person entering the Stihl equipment into the computer. With *Ideal* we can have it done in probably 15 minutes. It's just so much easier to do."

Question: What concerns did you have when you were trying to decide if you should purchase *Ideal*?

Michael: "The biggest concern, especially with my father and grandfather, was the financial investment. When you first get a system there

Pounds Motor Company

Location: Winter Garden, FL

Opened: 1914

Owner: Herbert Pounds

Employees: 14

Merchandise:

lawn mowers and hand-held equipment

Top 5 Brands:

Stihl, Scag, Ferris, Snapper, Husqvarna



Pounds' new service counter

is so much money involved. We had our system since the late 80s and devoted so much money to updates and upgrades. Once you've thrown all that money into it, it's hard to make the decision to invest again in a new system. That was the big worry. I guess the other thing you worry about is the down time from the transition of one system to another."

Question: Was your last system the first time you went to computerization?

Michael: "Yes. We were basically forced into it. We were still a tractor dealer at the time.

The distributor that we sold the tractors from held yearly dealer meetings and they told all the dealers that they were switching to computer systems and all the dealers had to switch if they wanted to continue being a dealer. So they brought in computer programmers from all around and the dealers were able to talk to everybody and find out what system would suit them and which

system they wanted. And my grandfather, who really doesn't know anything about computers, went to the cheapest guy he could find. That's how we got started with that."

Question: What was the one deciding factor that made you purchase Ideal?

Michael: "The recommendation from Stihl. I remember I was talking to Tony Betros, their computer whiz, and asked him what system he recommended because we were so tired of our system and he mentioned *Ideal* all the time. Then at the last dealer meeting we went to, *Ideal* was there so we decided to look at the system and got some information about it. After the meeting, I called Tony and asked him some more questions and he, in turn, got in touch with an *Ideal* salesperson and they got in touch with me and we went from there."

Question: What features in Ideal have you benefited the most from?

Michael: "Entering inventory is so much easier. I know writing up equipment for work orders takes a little more time than it used to, but in the long run it saves so much more time for people when they drop off and pick up their equipment. We also really like the reports. The secretary appreciates it especially because it's so much easier for her to run visuals for financing, accounts receivable, and reports for commission. I think everything about *Ideal* is great."

Best Sales Month Ever!

***Ideal* beats its highest sales month ever by 46%...**

In November 2005, *Ideal* had its best month ever! In fact, *Ideal* beat its next closest month by 46%!

That's a huge difference and the truth is that *Ideal* had a great 2005. And this winter looks to be its busiest ever. *Ideal* has been selling a lot of software systems and is very excited about the future.

Another contributing factor to the boost in sales is that more and more *Ideal* users are realizing that they're much better off getting their hardware and software directly from *Ideal* because they end up with a more reliable solution. This has led to more hardware sales.

So now's your chance to find out why *Ideal* has established itself as the leading provider of business management software for OPE and Powersports dealers...

To learn how you can take control of your inventory, manage your service department more efficiently, speed up the sales process, boost profits, and more, call **800-737-1620** to schedule a personal one-on-one online demo with an *Ideal* sales representative.

DID YOU KNOW ?

You Can Track the "True" Cost of Your Wholegoods and Various Options Through *Ideal*

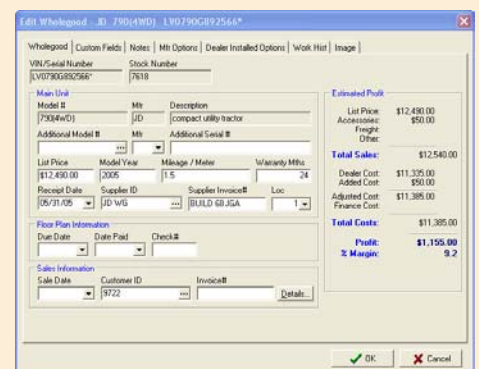
***Ideal 6.0's* Wholegood Options and Internal Work Orders** allow you to track the "true" cost of your wholegoods and track various options with each wholegood, including manufacturer options and dealer added options. This gives you the complete ability to track your wholegoods from the time you receive the units and perform the dealer preparation, to the time you place them on your showroom floor.

For example, when you receive a motorcycle, *Ideal* has fields for you to record the factory installed options including color, special notes, etc. You can also track all of the necessary dealer preparation work by creating an Internal Work Order. This will allow you to track the final assembly, any necessary fluids

that have been added, warranty work, freight damage, tune ups, etc.

Once this Internal Work Order is completed, the information can be posted to the General Ledger and/or a Sales Report so the revenue/profit margin can be reported prior to the wholegood being sold. It will also automatically adjust the cost of the wholegood to reflect the additional service, labor, parts, etc. This will provide you with an accurate account of the activities of the service department in real-time and allow for a true integration between your service, parts, and sales departments.

For additional information about *Ideal*, log on to www.idealcomputersystems.com/demo to view a self-paced presentation.



***Ideal's* Wholegood Screen**

Drawing Customers Into Your Business: How to reach more prospects...

(continued from Page 1)

It's been proven time and time again that if someone is acknowledged or rewarded for an action, they will do it more often. And what better way to create even stronger relations with your current customers than to thank them for helping you!

Implement a Drip Marketing Program.

A good way to promote your business and stay ahead of the competition is drip marketing. The more times you touch a person, the more familiar they will become with your business and the better chance they will develop a trust in what you say. This can be done in a variety of ways including letters, post cards, coupons, keychains with your company logo, etc. Be creative! Everyone absorbs information in different ways so the more methods you use to reach people, the better.

The most important thing to remember when using drip marketing is that repetition is key, but you also need to have a reason for sending information and it has to be interesting. This will take some careful thought and planning on your part. The key is providing the prospects with valuable information and not just a sales

pitch. You know from personal experience that a piece of mail you receive that is solely a sales pitch gets tossed. But if something grabs your attention and you learn something from it or get some use out of it, you are more willing to take interest in the product and want to know more.

For example, a powersports business could send a quarterly newsletter that includes helpful tips about motorcycle maintenance, how to solve common problems, how to choose a motorcycle that's right for you, etc. - any information that sparks your target market's interest.

Another important reminder about drip marketing is to not overdo it because we all know people can get easily annoyed. Try a strategically timed drip marketing campaign on a quarterly or an every-other-month basis.

Create Host-Beneficiary Relationships.

If done properly, this can be an extremely powerful method in obtaining more customers. The trick is for you (the beneficiary) to find a non-competitive business (the host) that can work as your ally. Figure out what businesses

already have strong relationships with the types of people you do business with. Contact those companies and try to work out a mutually beneficial arrangement.

For example, if you have an outdoor power equipment business, you may want to work out a deal with a real estate company. Each time a realtor sells a house to a first-time homeowner, they could recommend buying a lawn mower or hedge trimmer and offer a promotional coupon to your business. In return you can offer the realtor a percentage of the sale for anyone who uses that coupon. It's critical that your offer is appealing enough to get the host excited and believe they will gain something by helping you. Think about it... it's not easy getting a new customer and imagine how beneficial it will be to have this new customer do a lifetime of business with you based from that first initial sale.

By implementing at least a couple of these practices into your business plan, you'll pave the way for more customers to take interest and frequent your store and easily generate more sales. 📌