

MS THIS FALL

surprise the audience by announcing the next door prize winner (i.e., "if you're holding ticket number such and such, you just won a . . ."). Following the entire program presentation was a question and answer session.

To facilitate the planned series of follow-up calls, Arnold kept a roster of those dealer customers that had attended the meeting as well as a separate list of those that had been invited but unable to attend. The next step was to coordinate sales teams — consisting of Vic Arnold, his outside salespeople and representatives from both the NAPA Albuquerque Distribution Center and certain manufacturers — and assign each a list of customers to call upon. Using the rosters that had been kept, the sales teams knew in advance whether or not each customer had attended the preliminary meeting. If so, they simply had to go in and ask for their commitment. ("These calls were relatively easy," says Arnold. "Sometimes we'd just walk in the door and before we could even say anything the dealer would say, 'Glad you're here — sign me up!'")

If the customer had not attended the meeting, the sales teams knew they had to go in prepared to explain each of the programs in their entirety.

To get his sales teams enthused about making these follow-up calls, Arnold devised an incentive program for them. On their own, the sales teams made the follow-up blitz a contest between each group — a challenge to see which one could call on and obtain commitments from the most customers. The challenge worked: within two days of the original dealer meeting, Parts Unlimited's sales teams had called upon 60-65 organizations.

The Spring Car Care Days dealer sign kits were presented as follows: although the dealer would be charged for the sign kit (they were sold at cost), Parts Unlimited's

sales teams stressed that when a dealer purchased a sign kit and became registered as a participating Spring Car Care Days dealer, he automatically received the benefits of tying into a major national advertising campaign. To make this tie-in more realistic, Vic Arnold purchased a large newspaper ad under the banner of Parts Unlimited and listed each of the participating Spring Car Care Days dealers. He then purchased two months of radio spots (30-second) and divided them between his participating dealers. This way, each customer had the name of his business mentioned individually — without the names of any of the other participating dealers — on at least three radio commercials.

To accomplish this, Arnold willingly used monies from his regular advertising budget. "I certainly don't feel I lost anything by doing this," he says. "In fact, I feel I've gained in terms of the stronger relationship I now have with these customers. And to me, that's important — that's what these programs are all about."

Arnold continues, "I strongly feel that one of the reasons Parts Unlimited has been so successful for the ten years we've been in business is because we've always worked to maintain a strong dealer relationship, and we guard this reputation closely. We would never want them to feel we cater to the retail trade above the dealer. Of course, we encourage retail trade, but never at the expense of the dealer."

Parts Unlimited's sales teams also hung the dealer sign kits for participating customers — as Arnold puts it, "as a safety precaution."

"I'm well aware of mankind's propensity for procrastination — something our customers are certainly not exempt from. So even though we were sure they had every intention of having the sign kits up in time, we decided to hang them for our customers

— just in case."

The sales teams also used these follow-up calls to enroll customers in NAPA's Automotive Service Management Course and 1983's merchandising awards program in addition to the Spring Car Care Days. And sign up customers they did: Within the two days of sales calls following the meeting, the teams had sold 40 Spring Car Care Days dealer sign kits, had signed up 23 enrollments for the Automotive Service Management Course and enrolled 39 customers in the merchandise awards program.

As Parts Unlimited heads into its fall promotions, Vic Arnold sees no need for another formal dealer meeting. Instead, he's planning another round of team sales calls to again obtain commitments for both Fall Car Care Days and the Automotive Service Management Course.

Arnold figures that it will now be easier to generate additional enrollments for the Automotive Service Management Course because Parts Unlimited has already held its first session and the dealer response has been "absolutely positive. In fact," he continues, "one of our customers whose opinion I respect the most — a top-notch mechanic who was a runner-up finalist in last year's NAPA/NIASE Mechanic of the Year program — was in our first session, so I asked him what he thought of the course. He said that, without a doubt, it was one of the most significant programs he's ever participated in."

Arnold sees no problem with keeping dealer participation high for the Fall Car Care Days. "As our customers so enthusiastically reacted to their participation in the Spring Car Care Days, all we're planning to do for the fall promotion is to visit each and simply say, 'Hey, you want to keep a good thing going?'"

OTHELLO AUTO PARTS

Othello Auto Parts, located in Othello, Washington and serviced by the NAPA Spokane Distribution Center, is another business that enjoyed much success with its dealer spring promotions by employing a two-step sales approach.

Othello Auto Parts is owned by Mrs. Gail Gross and managed by Don Matheny; it was Matheny who presented NAPA's programs to their dealer customers. Utilizing a two-step sales approach — albeit a dif-

*46% of all trips
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Othello Auto Parts)*

ferent concept than that used by Parts Unlimited's Vic Arnold — Matheny successfully generated high levels of dealer participation for Othello Auto Parts' spring promotions. (As a matter of fact, 46% of all dealer trips sold out of the NAPA Spokane Distribution Center were generated by Matheny.) Here's how he did it . . .

Rather than hold one large dealer meeting, Matheny decided to present certain of
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