

13 MEMBERS



(From L to R): Larry Haith, General Manager, NAPA AUTO PARTS/Riebe's Auto Parts/Taylor Auto Parts; Jean Phillips, NAPA AUTO PARTS/Taylor Auto Parts; Steve Dringenbert, NAPA AUTO PARTS/Lakeside Auto Parts; Tom Zeek, NAPA AUTO PARTS/Lakeside Auto Parts; Tom Curran, Sales Manager for NAPA AUTO PARTS/Fallon Auto Parts, Inc.



Dick Barrett
NAPA AUTO PARTS/
Guernsey Auto Parts Co.
Cambridge, OH
Served by NAPA Columbus

If there's one thing I've learned over the years, it's that you can't advertise enough. In order to stay ahead of the competition you've got to keep your store's name constantly in the minds of your consumers.

As important and necessary as advertising is, though, it doesn't always come cheap. However, through the actions of the Columbus local ad council, all of us who are members have learned that you can run promotions far more successfully, and at a lower cost per store, as a group than we ever could as individual stores.

Our council was formed in 1983 and we now have 13 members who represent 150 stores. Any jobber serviced by the Columbus Distribution Center and participating in the NAPA National Advertising Program can join the council. The council generates its operating budget by asking participating NAPA AUTO PARTS stores to contribute .4% of their purchases and freezing their regular co-op funds. Additional monies are created by taking advantage of various manufacturer's co-op programs during the most opportunistic times of the year. For example, we utilized the co-op funds from NAPA Filters for a promotion that ran during this year's Spring Car Care Days Sale.

Our council decided at the outset of its existence to direct all advertising to both our traditional and retail customers. That's because, in the Columbus DC. area, the majority of our retail competition is found in the bigger trading areas, but most of our stores are located in smaller towns. However, no matter where a NAPA AUTO PARTS store is located, that store has at least one traditional customer. For the most part, then, our retail advertising is confined to our bigger trading areas while our traditional customer advertising is spread over the entire Columbus DC. area.

Because of who we target our advertising to, the council also felt that we would get better results by utilizing more television and newspaper image-building advertising than price/product-oriented advertising. Thus, our ads are constantly telling both of our consumer groups about what NAPA AUTO PARTS stores have to offer — quality parts

and service at competitive prices.

An example of our council's advertising philosophy is a tune-up special we're promoting this fall. Essentially, the promotion informs motorists that they can get "X" amount off a tune-up at participating service dealers. Not only will this promotion help our traditional customers' business, but it will also increase the stores' sales of tune-up items to our traditional customers and to D-I-Yers who want to do their own tune-up.

Television spots describing the promotion will air, over a two week time period, on certain local shows. The time buys and flight plan, as well as the creation of the spots, were handled by our advertising agency. And while the members of the council gave their final approval to everything the agency came up with, the details on what shows to purchase spots on and the actual spending of funds were handled by our DC's Sales Manager and the ad agency.

In addition to image advertising, we also have plans to do newspaper retail advertising for the rest of the year. Our ad agency recommended that continually keeping our stores' names in the consumers' minds would let us successfully challenge our competition for a bigger share of the retail market.

After looking at our budget, we decided that a newspaper ad, running once every other week, would be our best approach. Through a round-robin discussion, we came up with four items to display in our first ad. The members of the council also felt that every one of the ads should include oil, filters and batteries because these are popular items among retailers. The decision to use four items instead of some other number was based on the fact that our competition tends to run ads that show only one or two well-priced items and the rest is just a lot of "filler." Our thought was that four items would show that NAPA AUTO PARTS stores have a wider coverage of parts and would give us more continuity in our advertising.

I think there are two factors which have made our local ad council successful — having our DC's Sales Manager handle the media details with our ad agency and letting him have the authority to spend the council's money. Letting the Sales Manager handle these details for us further reduces the amount of time we need to spend on advertising, letting us devote more time to selling parts.

Local ad councils are a must in my opinion. That's because they seem to be the most successful way to take the best of NAPA's national image-building advertising and combine it with price/product advertising, to appeal, on the local level, to a broad range of owners.

Editor's Note: Currently, there are 47 local advertising councils in the NAPA system, serving almost 4,000 NAPA AUTO PARTS store owners/managers.

which showed all the sale items and participating NAPA AUTO PARTS stores' locations, ran for a five day block during the promotion. In addition to the advertising, many of the participating stores placed facsimiles of the newspaper ad in their windows and over the counter. The stores also strategically merchandised the sale items and other related products to further enhance the promotion and their business.

The results of this promotion were very successful. Overall the participating NAPA AUTO PARTS stores who supported/contributed to the local ad council sold 12 truckloads of NAPA Oil and over 180 of the engines. My store saw a 40% increase in sales for just the first three days in which the promotion was advertised in Fallon, NV.

Careful planning and knowing our market area are two important factors that have made our local ad council a success. And the advertising which we have implemented is bringing more and more consumers inside our stores. That's good news for all of us!