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Tips for Operating Your Auto Appearance Business

By Allen Oakes

CA.- December 3, 2007, To make jobs run smoothly, there must be an obvious, well-documented and fully communicated operational system. In other words, the planning that occurs prior to taking on a full recon account is directly proportional to your profit margin. Several processes proven to work are:

Lead Sheets:

When an inquiry comes in, get every possible detail. Determine the structure: is it a retail customer wanting work done at their home or business? If a hail job, is an insurance company involved? Gather as much contact information as possible. Ask for the reference the client used to reach you so you can track the effectiveness of your advertising for marketing purposes.

Sales:

Always be selling. Tell people what you do for a living. Ask them if they know anybody needing your services. When completed with a job, send that customer a thank you card and include some business cards and let them know your business has been built on referrals. Watch what happens!

When visiting auto dealerships, sell your company to all departments; new, used and service. When you discuss with a manager your business services and your desire to work with them, be sure to ask the important questions like: how many used vehicles do you sell per month? What is your average monthly recon expense? Are you happy with your current vendors? What is it you're unhappy with? Ask the proper questions of the client. Most clients know what they want and know what they don't want. What they don't know is why doing business with you is a better business decision for them. Let them know the time and money they'll save by dealing with one vendor for multiple services. Offer a free trial. Just get your foot in the door and provide a quality service and the rest will fall into place. Remember, the manager knows the functional problems they currently have, so be sure to identify what it is and provide a solution.

Develop an Accurate Estimate:

Surprisingly, this obvious task is one of the biggest killers of a decent profit margin. A detailed accounting of prior jobs, profit margins, materials and time should be reviewed and compared to the current job. An indication of an inexperienced and probably short-lived business person is one who

does not have a proper system for estimation.

Hopefully, these few simple steps can help you streamline your production process, and increase your profit margin.

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